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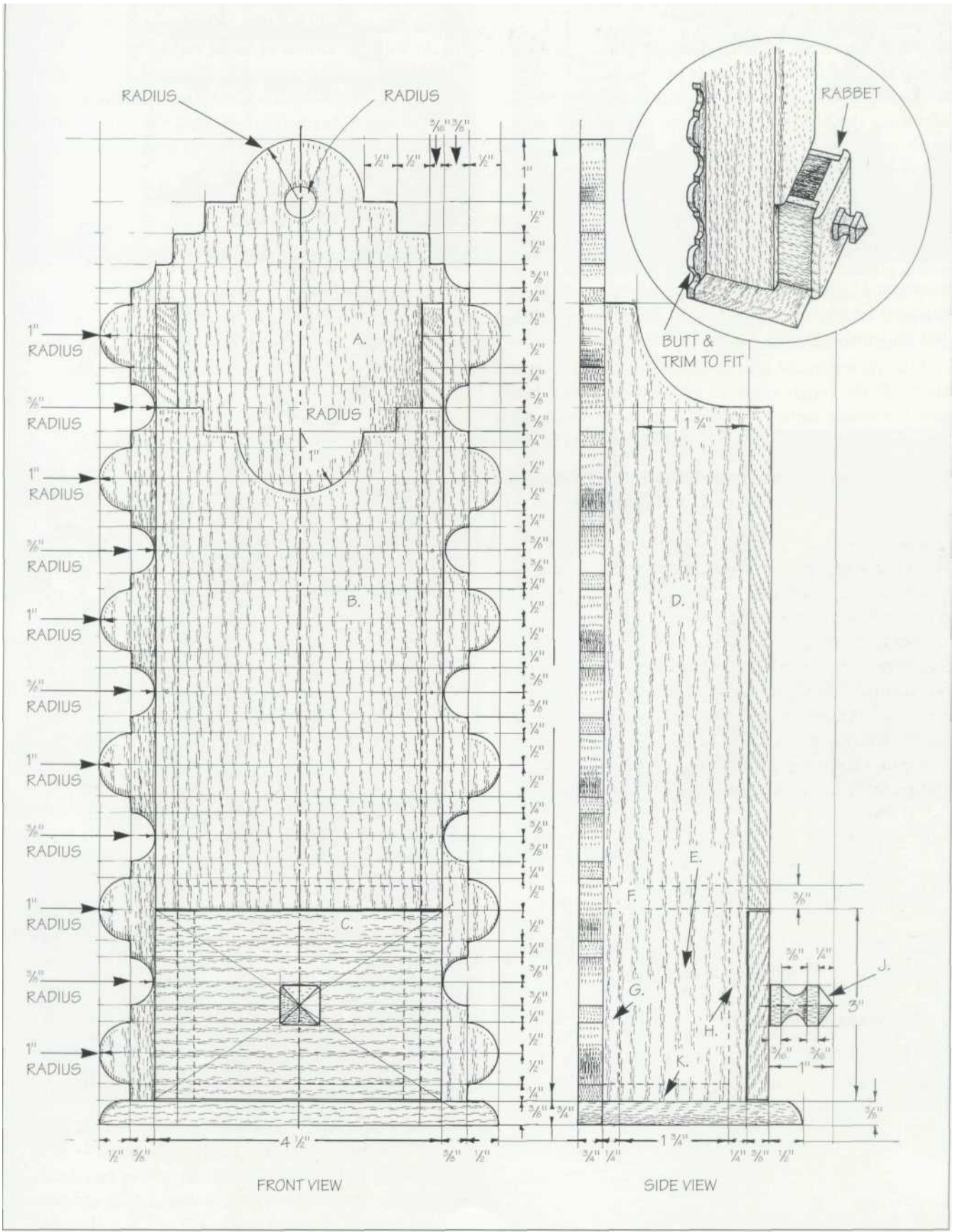
# Folk Art Pipe Box

I wonder why our great-great-great-grandparents put such a huge amount of energy and enthusiasm into making pieces of woodwork that were used for everyday chores. Okay, so they had to have such functional items as dough troughs, candle boxes and flour bins. But remembering that every stick of wood had to be laboriously cut, planed, fretted and finished by hand, why did they put extra time and trouble into decorating their woodwork with so many fancy curlicues?

If you want to try your hand at a piece of woodwork that perfectly illustrates this point, then this pipe box is for you. Inspired by an English eighteenth-century folk art original, boxes of a similar type, design and construction can be found all over—in England, in Wales, in Scotland, in America—in fact, just about anyplace people smoked long-stemmed clay pipes. The design of the box is beautifully fitting for its task. The pipes fit in the top half of the box, the "makings" fit in the little drawer, and the whole works hangs on the wall alongside the fireplace.

As to the fancy compass-worked edge design, it can be found on all kinds of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century woodwork—on everything from overmantel and cupboard shelves to bench trim, door surrounds and plate racks.





## MAKING THE PIPE BOX

Having set the wood out with all the dip-and-arch curves, fret out the design.

When you have made all the component parts and pencil labelled them so there is no doubting what goes where and how, then comes the tricky, sticky-finger task of putting the box together. I found that the best way to work was to drill, pin and glue the components in the following order: (1) the main backing board to the main baseboard; (2) the side boards to the backing board; (3) the inside-box piece that forms the bottom to the pipe part of the box; (4) the front to the box. And lastly, I glued, pinned and adjusted the little drawer to fit the box.

When you come to the little drawer knob, all you do is trim a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " X  $\frac{3}{4}$ "-square section of wood down to shape and plug it into a drilled hole.

Finally, when the glue is completely dry, trim and shape all the rough edges to a slightly rounded finish, give the whole works a rubdown with the finest-grade sandpaper, and then lay on a thin coat of wax or varnish.

### MATERIALS LIST

#### BOX

A Back board (1)	$\frac{3}{8}$ " $\times$ $6\frac{1}{4}$ " $\times$ $15\frac{1}{2}$ "—we used English oak throughout
B Front board (1)	$\frac{3}{8}$ " $\times$ $4\frac{1}{2}$ " $\times$ $7\frac{7}{8}$ "
C Side boards (2)	$\frac{3}{8}$ " $\times$ $2\frac{1}{4}$ " $\times$ $12\frac{1}{2}$ "
D Drawer sides (2)	$\frac{1}{4}$ " $\times$ $3$ " $\times$ $2\frac{1}{4}$ "
E Inside-box bottom (1)	$\frac{3}{8}$ " $\times$ $2\frac{1}{4}$ " $\times$ $3\frac{3}{4}$ "
F Drawer back (1)	$\frac{1}{4}$ " $\times$ $3$ " $\times$ $3\frac{1}{4}$ "
G Drawer front (1)	$\frac{5}{8}$ " $\times$ $3$ " $\times$ $4\frac{1}{2}$ "
H Box base (1)	$\frac{3}{8}$ " $\times$ $3\frac{1}{8}$ " $\times$ $6\frac{1}{4}$ "
I Knob (1)	$\frac{5}{8}$ " $\times$ $\frac{5}{8}$ " $\times$ $1\frac{3}{8}$ "
J Drawer base (1)	$\frac{1}{4}$ " $\times$ $2$ " $\times$ $3\frac{1}{4}$ "

*Note that all measurements are to the mark—meaning they make no allowance for cutting waste.*

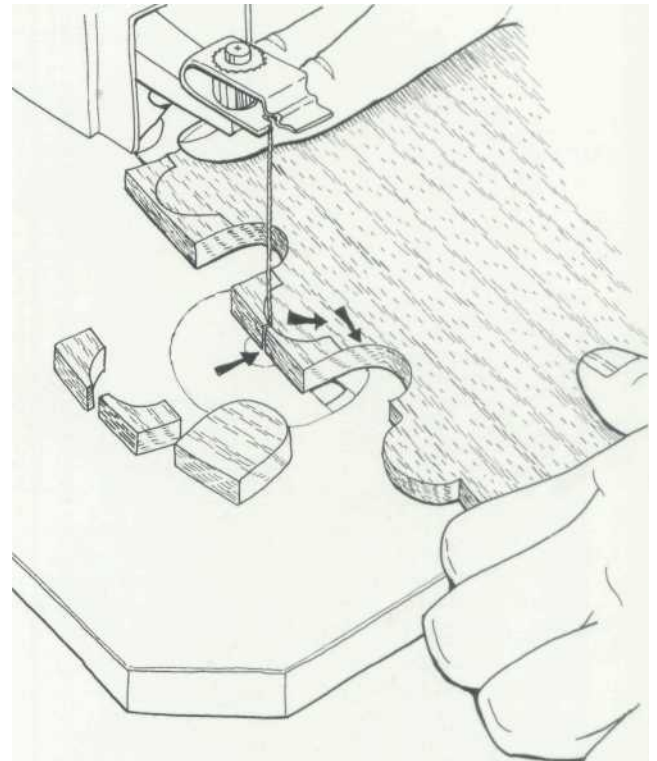
#### HARDWARE AND EXTRAS

- K Copper panel pins
- L PVA glue

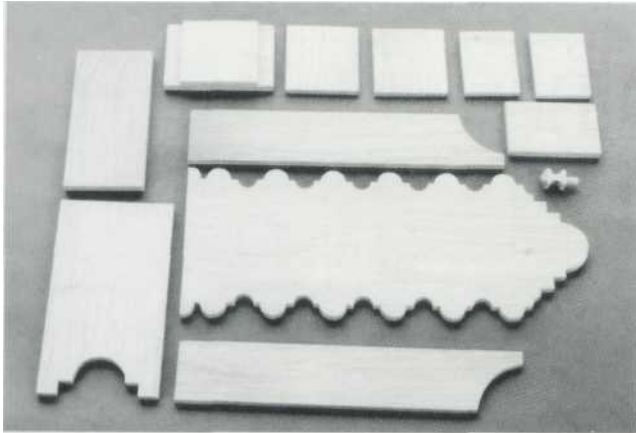
## SPECIAL TIP

If you have a good close-up look at museum boxes of this character, you will see that a good part of the charm has to do with the choice of wood and the degree of finish. For example, while a good native wood looks beautifully fresh and understated—something like cherry, maple, pine or oak is just perfect—a fancy wood like mahogany or one of the exotic African woods tends to look too precious or "overdressed."

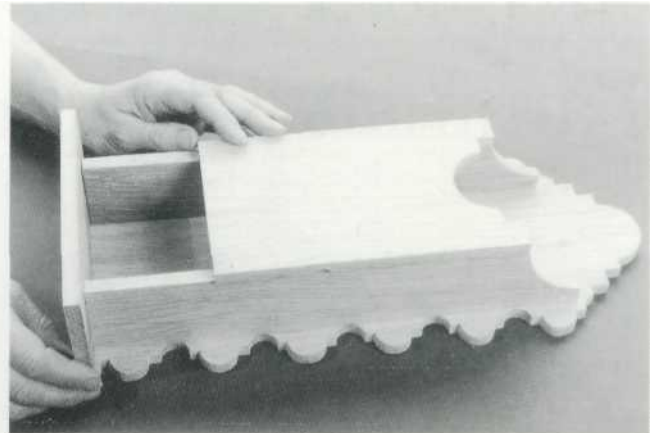
## STEP-BY-STEP STAGES



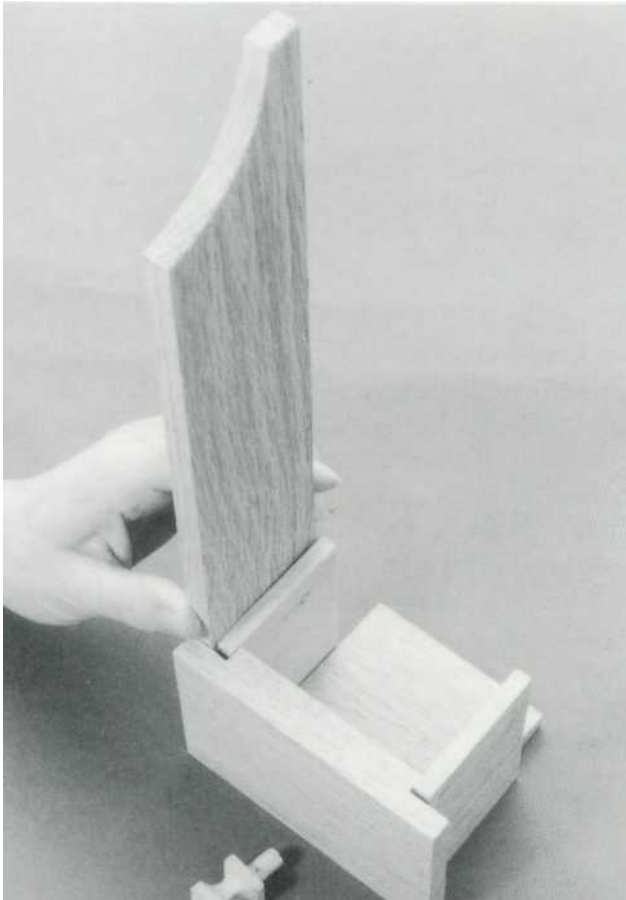
To work the fancy edge, start by cutting out all the deep concave U shapes—along the whole length of the wood—and then fret out the remaining convex forms. If you look at the arrows, you will notice that I always work in the direction of the grain—that is, two cuts that run down-and-out from the peak of the little bridge shape.



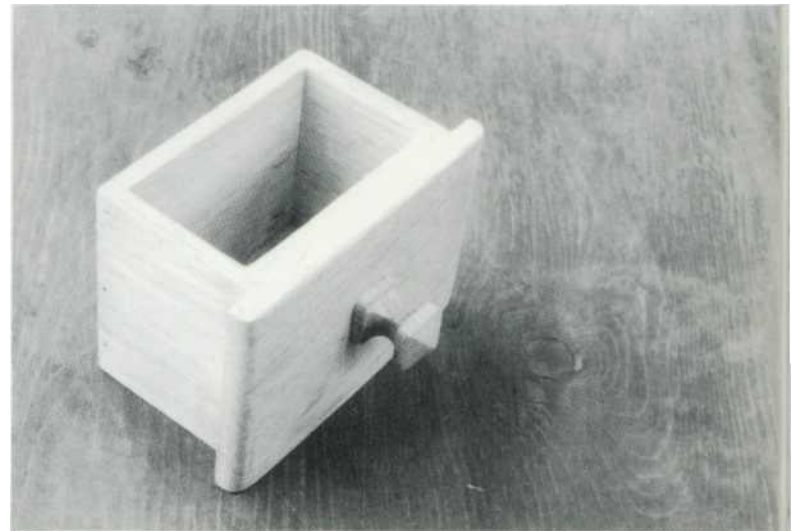
2 Having made all the component parts, pencil label them so that you know precisely how they fit one to another. If one side of a part is more attractive, or damaged, then now is the time to make decisions as to its placing.



3 Do a trial fitting to make sure that you haven't made any mistakes. Test for the squareness of the butting edges and mark in the position of the nail/panel pin holes.



4 Do a trial fitting of the sides of the box and the sides of the drawer. If necessary, you can trim back the rabbet and/or the thickness of the wood. Establish the position of the drawer pull by marking with crossed



5 Here's the finished drawer—all glued, pinned and rubbed down. Putting the drawer together is a little bit tricky, not because any single cut is complicated, but because the total form needs to be true, square and a good fit.