11

KEY RACK

Cherry, Walnut

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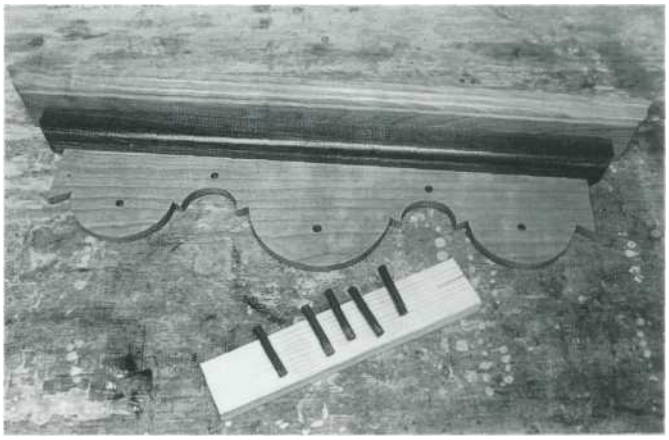
MAKING THE KEY RACK

After the stock has been dimensioned, lay out and cut the scrollwork with the band saw. Remove saw marks with a paring chisel, a wood file and some sandpaper. Care must be taken when cleaning up the scroll's sharp points since they can be easily broken off because of the grain runout on both sides of the points.

Next, form the moulded edges on the walnut mid-section with a shaper or a table-mounted router. Any of a number of different cutters would work nicely for this profile.

Cut a 7/16" X 5/16″ stopped rabbet along the bottom of the walnut mid-section to house the top of the scrollwork. You can do this by hand with a mallet and chisels or on the table saw using the method for cutting the stopped groove discussed in chapter five. You could use a similar method to cut the stopped rabbet with a table-mounted router, although it would take several passes.

Join the shelf and the mid-section with glue and a simple butt joint, as the width of the areas being joined provides ample glue surface. Fasten the scrollwork into its rabbet with glue and several 3/4" no. 6 wood screws.



Because it would have been difficult to wipe excess finish from the scrolled back while working around the five pegs, they were removed during finishing, then glued into place.

You can turn the pegs on a lathe or cut them from a length of 1/4″ walnut dowel available from Constantine's. Glue these into the 1/4″ mortises drilled in the scrollwork.

WOODWORKING MISTAKES

In the second issue of *Home Furniture* magazine, Alan Breed wrote an account of his experiences during the construction of a reproduction of one of the masterpieces of American cabinetmaking: a six-shell secretary built by John Goddard late in the eighteenth century. Before beginning any shop work, Breed took detailed measurements, rubbings and photos of the original, which awaited auction at Christie's in New York. (The original later sold for $12.1 million.) Although he found the level of craftsmanship to be superb, he also found mistakes "like planing a little too deeply on the upper door stiles and exposing the mortises for the rail tenons."

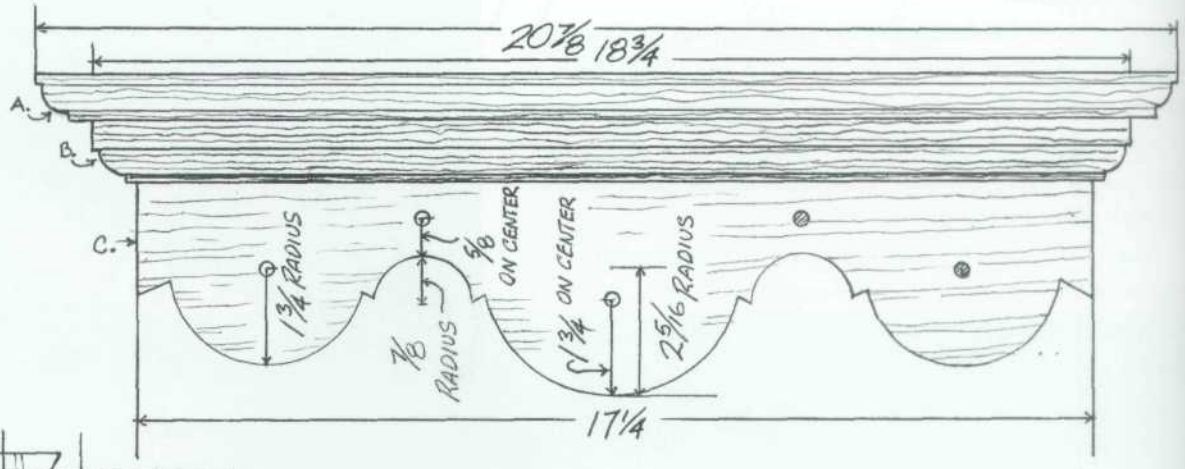
For those of us whose skills fall a good bit short of John Goddard's, this is reassuring. Just as we sometimes struggle in the shop, so did he.

With each piece I built for this book, for example, there is at least one nagging detail I wish I'd managed a little better. It might be an area of roughened finish. (I could have wiped the piece more thoroughly.) It might be a gap showing beside a through tenon. (I could have taken more time paring the mortise.) It might be an imperfect color match on a glued-up panel. (I could have dressed more lumber prior to choosing the pieces I would use.)

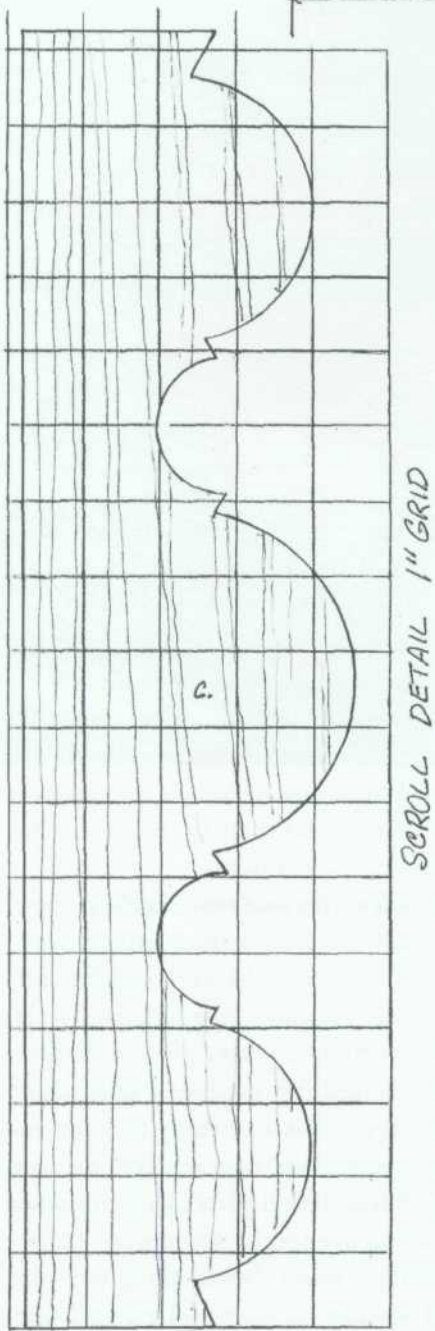
What follows are some of the more common fixes I use in my shop, each of which was employed at least once in the preparation of projects for this book:

1. ***Make a new part.*** Sometimes, after struggling for hours to make a piece come together, this most obvious solution can be emotionally difficult to face, but it is almost always the best solution. An hour spent cutting out a new end panel for a case on which the dovetails simply don't fit is better spent than an hour given to attempts at patching up such a joint.

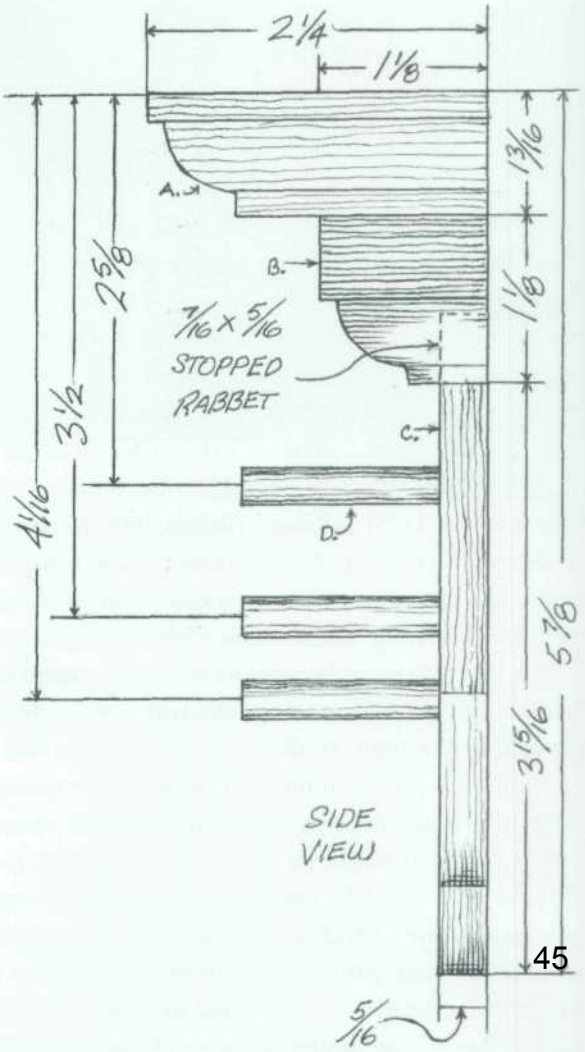
2. ***Mix up some yellow glue and sanding dust.*** Some times a set of dovetails will have a small gap or two beside a pin or tail. If the rest of the work is sufficiently well done, a filler made of yellow glue (aliphatic resin) and dust created by machine-sanding a piece of the same species as that being joined can produce a satisfactory appearance. It's not as good as a perfectly fit joint, but the results are much better than those achieved by using commercially made fillers. This is particularly true when working with photoreactive species like cherry. Com mercially prepared fillers won't darken along with the surrounding wood whereas the dust and glue mixture



FRONT VIEW



SCROLL DETAIL 1" GRID



SIDE
VIEW

will, having been created from the same photoreactive material.

3. ***Trust the glue.*** Sometimes, no matter how carefully we work, a part will split during a test assembly, but this is rarely the disaster it may at first appear to be.

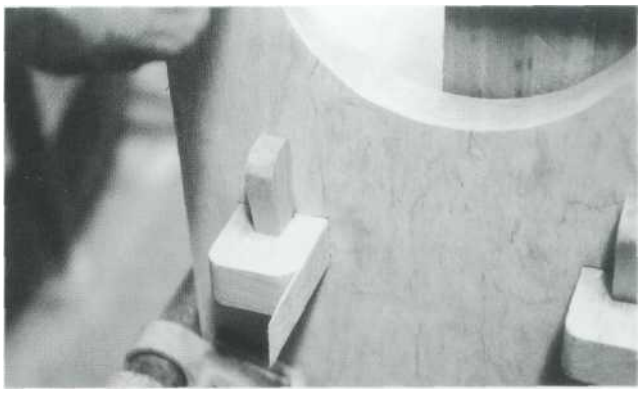
If the split runs the full length of the part and the two sides can be separated cleanly, a coat of glue on each fractured face and an hour in a set of clamps will restore the part to its original strength.

If the split only runs a couple of inches along the length of a longer piece, you can work glue into the split with a little patience. First, apply a generous layer of glue to the part, directly over the split. Then work the split open and closed a number of times, causing the glue to migrate down into the gap. When it appears that the glue has worked all the way through the split, wash the excess off of the surface, and clamp the part until the glue has cured.

4. ***Modify the piece.*** In places that can't be reached with shaving tools, I use a wood file to remove band saw marks from scrollwork. In cleaning up the scrollwork for the key rack at the beginning of this chapter, I got a little too aggressive with the file and flaked off some chips from one of the sharp points near the central arc. I worked that point down until I was beyond the torn-out grain, but when I stepped back from the part, I could see that that particular point was visibly different than the other three.

The solution? With a file, I carefully removed enough material from the other three points so that they matched the one on which I'd made my error.

5. ***Graft in new material.*** While building the figured oak magazine stand (chapter twelve), I got a poor fit on the mortise for one of the eight tusk tenons. The gap was fairly noticeable, and I would have liked to have made a new shelf, but I had no more oak with that particular wavy grain.



A gap was visible on one side of the tusk tenon so a sliver has been grafted onto the tenon to fill it.

To hide the Me" gap, I ripped a thin sliver from a piece of scrap having grain and color similar to the tusk tenon that fit through the bad mortise. Then, with a C-clamp and a couple of scrap pads, I glued the sliver to the side of the tusk tenon after sliding one end of the sliver into the 1/16" gap. When the glue had dried, I cut away the excess and blended the sliver into the curve at the end of the tusk tenon.

The gap hadn't made the joint structurally unsound, and the glued on sliver did conceal the gap, but this wasn't a perfect solution. When that particular tusk tenon is sighted from above, it's clear that there's a little more material on one side of the walnut wedge than there is on the other.

MATERIALS LIST

A	Shelf	1 pc.	13/16 × 2¼ × 20⅞
B	Mid-section	1 pc.	1⅛ × 1⅛ × 18¾
C	Scroll	1 pc.	5/16 × 4⅜ × 17¼
D	Peg	5 pcs.	¼ × 1⅝
E	Screws		¾" no. 6