

WOODWORKER'S JOURNAL

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Classic Project

In this plan you'll find:

- Step-by-step construction instruction.
- A complete bill of materials.
- Construction drawings and related photos.
- Tips to help you complete the project and become a better woodworker.

Tabletop Armoire

Tabletop Armoire



This Tabletop Armoire is an elegant piece with classic proportions. It's perfect for use as a curio cabinet or perhaps a dresser-top jewelry chest. Our armoire is made of pine, but consider using a hardwood if you don't like the painted look.


Start with the top (A). As shown in the Top Detail, the top is built up of two boards to get the needed 1 1/4 in. thickness. Glue both boards together and when dry, rip the top in half along the dotted line. You can skip this ripping step if you have a bandsaw with a 6 1/4 in. or greater resaw capacity. If you plan on ripping the top in half before cutting the profile, add an extra 1/8 in. to the width of the stock to account for the material lost when the ripping cut is made.

Next, lay out the 5 1/2 in. and 6 1/4 in. radii on the edge of the top, as shown in the elevation. You'll need to do the layout on both of the pieces if you ripped the top in half. Cut the profile, then glue the two halves of the top back together, being careful to keep them in register. Use files and sandpaper to fair any unevenness and smooth away the bandsaw marks. But don't round the edges or cut the stopped dadoes for the side panel assemblies yet. You'll do that later, before you fit the top to the case.

The case is a frame-and-panel assembly.

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Published in *Woodworker's Journal* May/June 1990

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WJC029

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Start with the top (A). As shown in the Top Detail, the top is built up of two boards to get the needed $1\frac{3}{4}$ in. thickness. Glue both boards together and

when dry, rip the top in half along the dotted line. You can skip this ripping step if you have a bandsaw with a $6\frac{3}{4}$ in. or greater resaw capacity. If you plan on ripping the top in half before cutting the profile, add an extra $\frac{1}{8}$ in. to the width of the stock to account for the material lost when the ripping cut is made.

Next, lay out the $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. and $6\frac{1}{4}$ in. radii on the edge of the top, as shown in the elevation. You'll need to do the

layout on both of the pieces if you ripped the top in half. Cut the profile, then glue the two halves of the top back together, being careful to keep them in register. Use files and sandpaper to fair any unevenness and smooth away the bandsaw marks. But don't round the edges or cut the stopped dados for the side panel assemblies yet. You'll do that later, before you fit the top to the case.

The case is a frame-and-panel assem-

bly. Start by constructing the side frames. They consist of stiles (B) joined by a top rail (C) and bottom rail (D). The stiles are identical except that the front stiles have a 1/4 in. wide by 1/4 in. deep groove cut full-length on one edge, while the back stiles have this groove both on an edge and on a side (see Corner Detail). The 1/4 in. by 3/8 in. tongue on the top end of the side frame-and-panel, the profile on the lower end, the stopped dado for the shelf, and the grooves for the top and bottom front stretchers are all cut after the side frame-and-panels have been assembled.

Before starting any assemblies, cut the remaining case parts. Note that the side panels (E) and back panel (J) are both cut for an exact fit top to bottom,

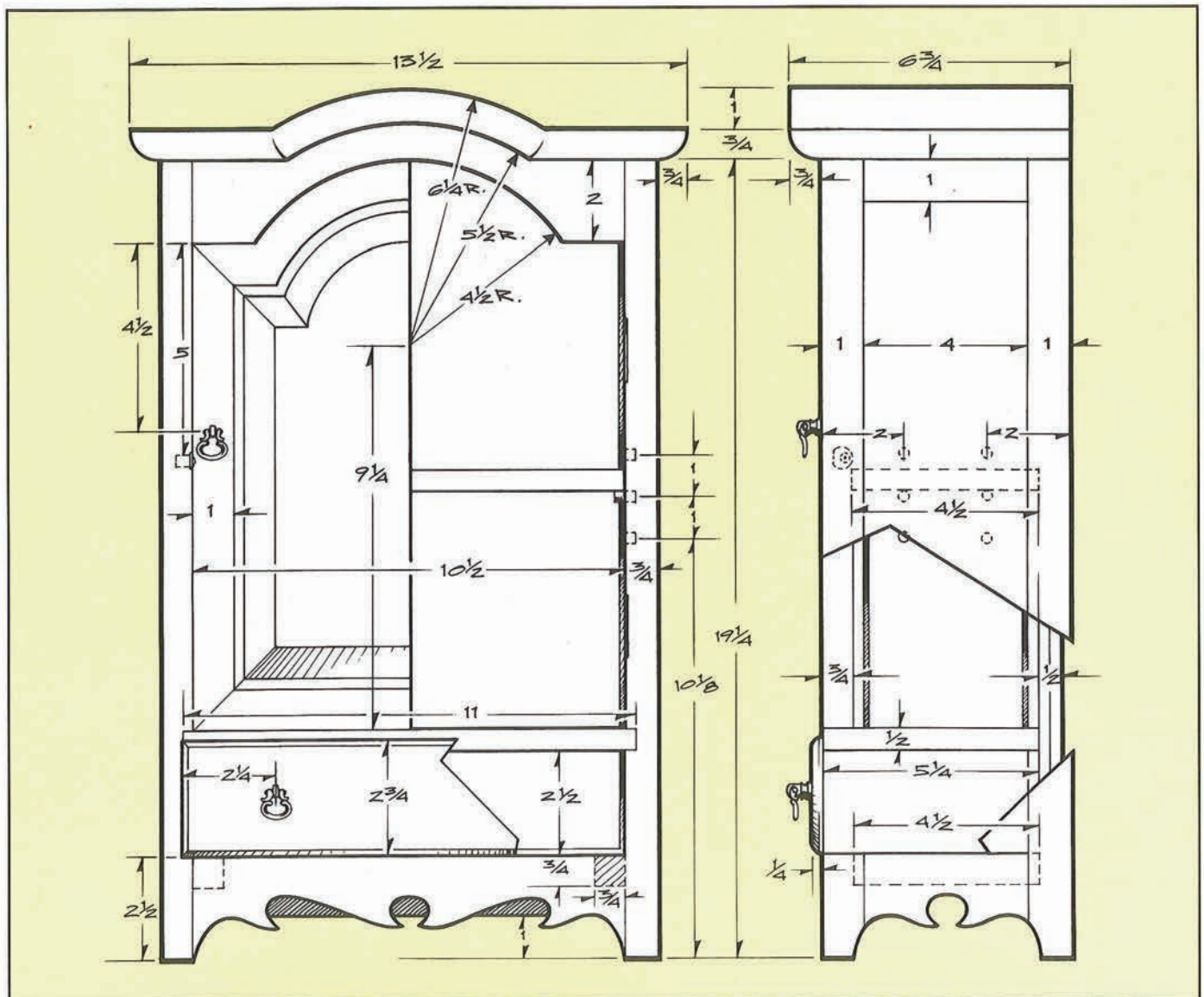
but allow a little room for wood movement side to side. We made our panels from solid stock, but if you use plywood instead, there's no need to allow extra room for wood movement. The panels are cut to size, and then a 1/4 in. by 1/4 in. rabbet is cut all around. If you make the panels from solid stock, and plan to paint the armoire, make the rabbet a little deeper so that the thickness of the tongue is about 1/32 in. less than the groove width. The tongue on the panels must be a little thinner than the groove so the paint won't peel off during assembly. We painted the panels first since if they're painted after assembly and there's some shrinkage, then an unsightly line would show.

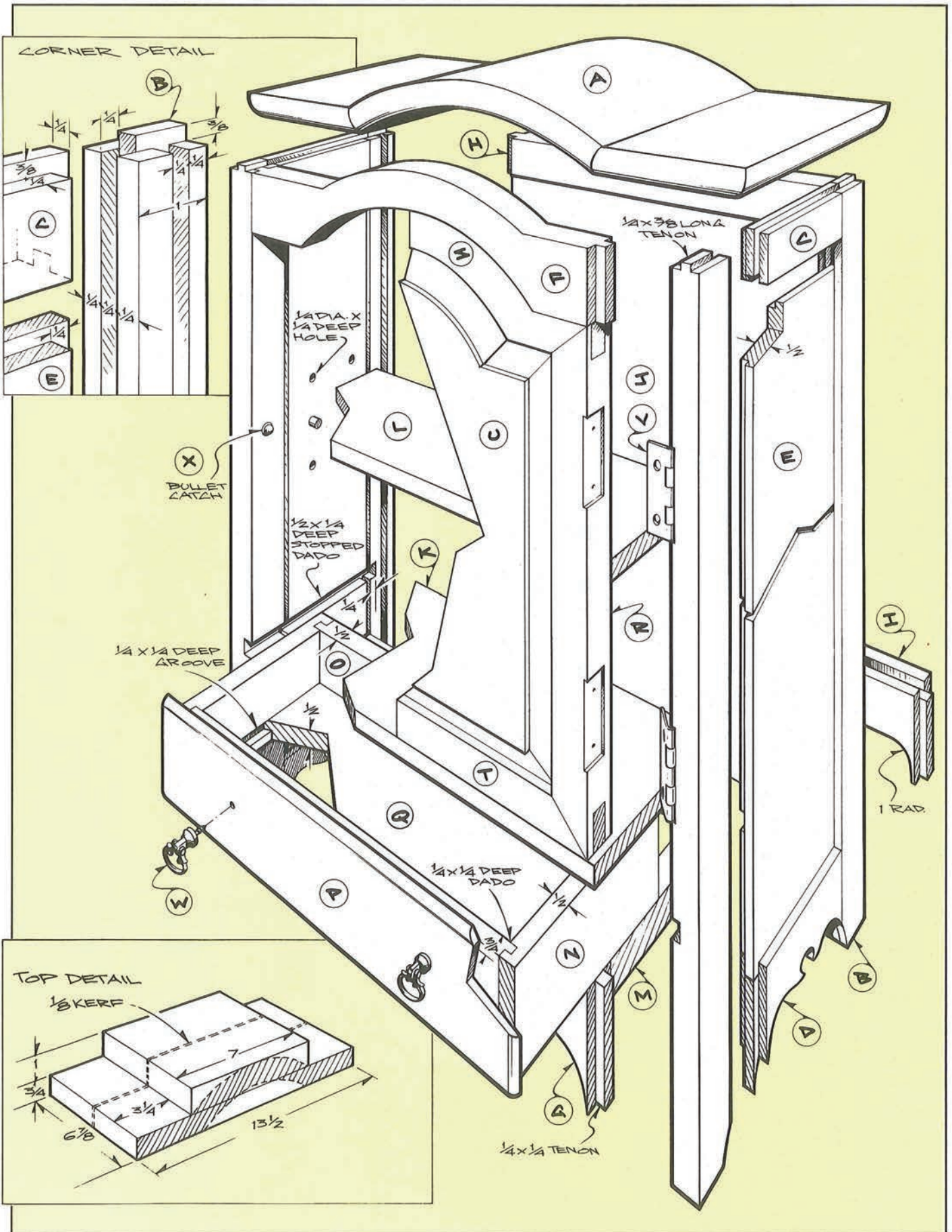
Also cut the front stretchers (F, G) and back stretchers (H, I). Note that the back

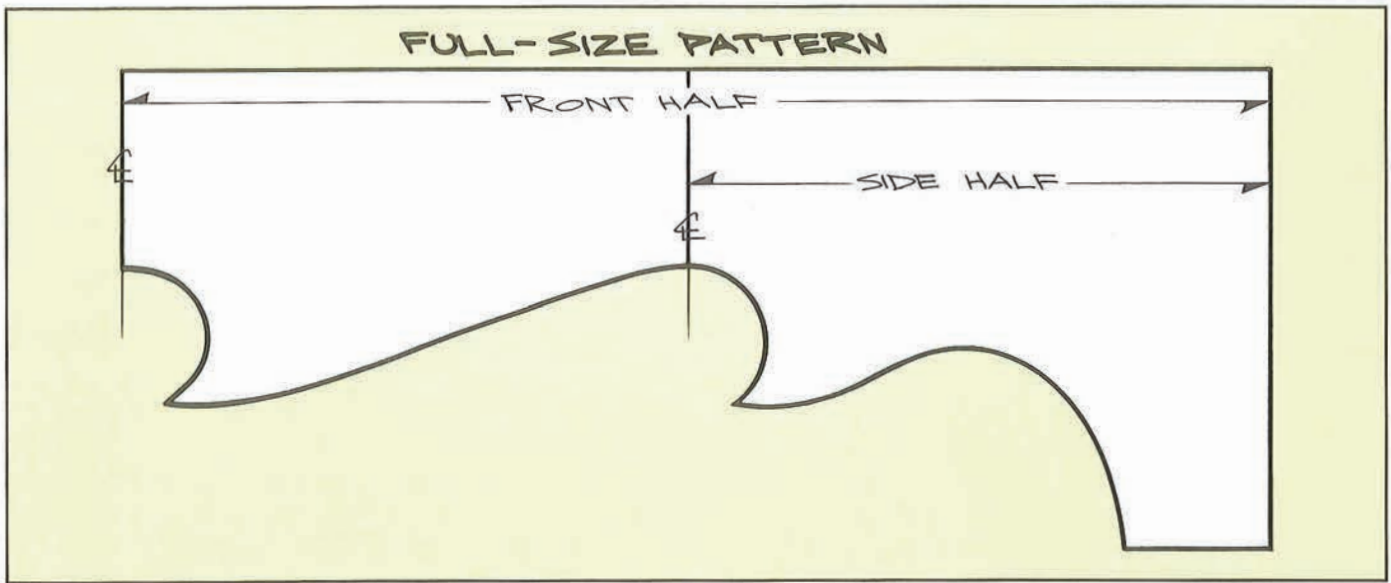
stretchers are both grooved to accept the back panel, and that the top stretchers both front and back must also be shaped to fit the top. But don't worry if you can't get a perfect fit. Any gaps between the top stretchers and the top will be filled and sanded before you paint.

Assemble the frame-and-panel sides. When dry, cut the profile on the bottom (see full-size half-pattern), and establish the 1/4 in. by 3/8 in. tongue on the top. Note that when you cut the bottom profile, you'll actually be cutting 1/4 in. deep into the stile. Be careful not to lose any of the short grain sections of the bottom rail. If any do break off, glue them back. At the final preparation stage prior to painting, you can sand any inconsistencies or fill any gaps.

Now cut the stopped dadoses in the







frame-and-panel sides for the bottom (K). Use the router equipped with a 1/2 in. straight cutter (you'll probably need several passes) and square the end of the cut with a 1/4 in. chisel. Also drill for the bullet catch (X) in the stile and drill the 1/4 in. diameter by 1/4 in. deep holes on the inside of the side panels for the shelf support pins. But take great care here so you don't break through the 1/2 in. thick panel. A drill press with a depth stop is the best choice for both these jobs.

The router equipped with a 1/4 in. diameter straight cutter is used to cut the grooves in the front stiles for the front rails. The grooves at both the top and bottom ends are stopped, and must be squared with a chisel. Now assemble the two frame-and-panel sides to the stretchers, back panel and bottom. The profile in the bottom front stretcher, and the cutout in the bottom back stretcher are both made after the case has been assembled. Transfer the front profile from the full-size half-pattern and use a coping saw or a hand-held jigsaw to cut it out. The back cutout is just a 1 in. radius at either end connected by a straight line. The coping or jigsaw is also used for this cutout. Use files and sandpaper to clean up the saw marks and any irregularities on the various profiles.

Place the top on the case to mark for the 1/4 in. wide by 3/8 in. deep stopped dados to fit the tongues on the sides. These dados are cut with the router and a straight bit, but you'll need at least three passes, each removing about 1/8 in.

Bill of Materials (all dimensions actual)


Part	Description	Size	No. Req'd.
A	Top	1 ³ / ₄ x 6 ³ / ₄ x 13 ¹ / ₂	1
B	Stile	3/4 x 1 x 19 ⁵ / ₈ *	4
C	Top Rail	3/4 x 1 ³ / ₈ x 4 ¹ / ₂ *	2
D	Bottom Rail	3/4 x 2 ¹ / ₂ x 4 ¹ / ₂ *	2
E	Side Panel	1/2 x 4 ³ / ₈ x 16 ¹ / ₄	2
F	Top Stretcher (Front)	3/4 x 3 x 11*	1
G	Bottom Stretcher (Front)	3/4 x 2 ¹ / ₂ x 11*	1
H	Top Stretcher (Back)	3/4 x 3 x 11*	1
I	Bottom Stretcher (Back)	3/4 x 2 ¹ / ₂ x 11*	1
J	Back Panel	1/2 x 10 ⁷ / ₈ x 15 ¹ / ₄	1
K	Bottom	1/2 x 5 ¹ / ₄ x 11	1
L	Shelf	1/2 x 4 ¹ / ₂ x 10 ¹ / ₂	1
M	Drawer Runner	3/4 x 3 ³ / ₄ x 4 ¹ / ₂	2
Drawer			
N	Side	1/2 x 2 ¹ / ₂ x 5 ¹ / ₄	2
O	Back	1/2 x 2 x 10	1
P	Front	3/4 x 2 ³ / ₄ x 11	1
Q	Bottom	1/2 x 5 x 10	1
Door			
R	Stile	3/4 x 1 x 11 ³ / ₄	2
S	Top Rail	3/4 x 3 x 10 ¹ / ₂ *	1
T	Bottom Rail	3/4 x 1 x 10 ¹ / ₂ *	1
U	Panel	3/4 x 9 x 12 ¹ / ₄	1
Hardware			
V	Hinge	1 ¹ / ₂ x 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2
W	Pull	5/8 wide <input type="checkbox"/>	3
X	Bullet Catch	3/8 long x 5/16 dia. <input type="checkbox"/>	1

* Length includes tongue or tenon(s)

of stock. Then round the edges of the top with a file and sandpaper, and assemble the top to the case. Cut the shelf (L) and drawer runners (M) to fit.

The drawer we show is a rabbet-and-dado construction. There's a 1/4 in. lip at the top and sides of the drawer front (P), and the bottom (Q) slides into a groove in the sides (N) and front. Drive a screw up into the lower edge of the back (O) to anchor the bottom. Our drawer bottom was made of 1/2 in. thick solid stock—the same as the panels—but you can also use plywood.

The door (R, S, T, U) is made as described in the Special Techniques article on page 23. When fitting the door to the case, you'll need to file a bevel on the inside of the door arch to provide clearance at the top front rail. Test fit the door, then file just enough away so the door doesn't catch as it closes.

Use a wood filler as needed to fill any gaps, sand smooth, then apply a base coat of sandable white primer. Sand with 320-grit sandpaper, then paint with a pink or coral enamel. The mottled look is achieved by dabbing on McCloskey Tungseal Colonial Maple Wood Stain No. 949. Use a cloth wad or pad (we used an old T-shirt) for the large surfaces, and a paintbrush to get into the corners. When dry, we sprayed on a coat of clear lacquer to seal the finish. 

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Thank you again for your purchase, and happy woodworking!

Matt Becker
Internet Production Coordinator