

OREGON WOOD WORKS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Our Next Meeting</i>	3
<i>Lessons Learned</i>	3
<i>"Tiny" Tips</i>	3
<i>Maudie Kerns Show</i>	4
<i>Call for Volunteers</i>	5
<i>Best of the NW Show</i>	5
<i>Classifieds</i>	6

**ABOUT OUR NEW
FORMAT:**

Do you enjoy reading the articles in our "new" newsletter? Then consider becoming one of our contributing writers. If you're a woodworker, you've got a lot of great ideas and expertise to share. You don't have to be a great writer; we can help you get your ideas down on paper. Contact Bob Oswald at 503-985-7137 if you'd like to share your ideas at: bobnan@teleport.com

Have a great idea for a new name for the newsletter? Contact Christin Smith at :

fundingsolutionsnw@comcast.net

CHARLESTON EARLY AMERICAN FURNITURE

BY LEE JOHNSON

Last March, during my wife's Spring Vacation, we decided to visit the "Low Country" in the American Southeast: Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia. No special reason; we'd just never been there.

Now generally, I always try to do a day or two of furniture and fitments research wherever we go (and then charge off part of the trip), but I had been sadly disappointed a couple of years ago on a visit to Atlanta to discover the Historic Center had very little to offer in the way of indigenous furniture. It all either got burned up in "The War" (the Civil War is still "The War" to them), or was crude, rustic stuff

cobbled together after The War.

So frankly, I didn't expect much in the way of historic furniture from Charleston. Early American furniture came from the North; Philadelphia, New York, Rhode Island. Any fool knows that. The South was mostly plantations, right? They had no manufacturing to speak of, and so they imported most all of their fine furniture from the North, or from England, France, Scotland, et. al., right?

We had toured some wonderful old homes, some delightful gardens, been informed that when the piazza door is open, the occupants are receiving, but when closed, one po-

lately walks by. My wife and her sister had trundled off to the central market to fondle local goods, and I had free time to saunter down King Street, Charleston's antique row.

In the finer antique shops on King Street, there are fine antiques. Four figures is bargain time, and five figures is common, and to my surprise, many of the pieces carrying the highest price tags were labeled with unconfirmed suspicions of having been made locally. The styles were largely English-based, just like Northeastern 18th and early 19th century pieces, *Cont'd on page two...*

URGENT: LAST CALL FOR ENTRIES!

This is last call for anyone who wishes to put something in the Best of Northwest/Guild of Oregon Woodworkers show that will be at the Portland Convention Center on December 4th & 5th. There will be a booth for the general members to put in their work; there is no charge for this opportunity.

There will also be a booth for the professionals that are not taking a full booth. The charge will be \$10.00 per item and they can be for sale. The deadline for these entries is November 30th, so if you plan to put anything in please let me know so we can program you in the booth.

Call or email George E. DuBois 504-365-7636 email: duboisge@comcast.net.

CHARLESTON EARLY AMERICAN FURNITURE

CONT'D FROM PAGE ONE

with some obvious French influence cropping up now and then. I'm getting interested.

I drifted into a corner shop, and saw immediately that this one was high-end. Most everything in the place was low-to-mid tens of thousands. There was a delightful little tray-top tea table centrally displayed, with a fairly lengthy story on a tent placard on top. The table was clearly well executed with gracefully shaped and proportioned cabriole legs on well-carved ball and claw feet.

I noticed something a little strange about the ball-and-claw. The last "knuckle" on the foot, just above the claw itself, was somewhat bulbous. I'd never seen one like it. So I started reading the story: found such-and-such a place, authenticated by Pooh-bah and Snarky of Highnose Ltd., secondary wood Black Cyprus ... (hmm, so that's how they decide it's local) ... Got down to the price: \$550,000. Five hundred and fifty K?! Jeeze! It's just sitting out here where

this fat old guy from Portland can bend over and drool a little on it, or spill his coke on it, or

The proprietor must have seen me double-taking and carefully backing away and came over to chat – I figure business for \$550,000 pieces might move a little slow, and he had time on his hands.

So I got the start of my education about Charleston-made Early American furniture from this pleasant man surrounded by his expensive furniture. He told me that there had been a prodigious quantity of lovely furniture made in Charleston from the late 1600's right on through the early 1800's when mechanization took over.

Much or most of it was made of mahogany from the West Indies, to which Charleston was tightly tied both politically and economically. But Charleston-made furniture from the period is rare.

"Why so expensive?" I asked, "and why isn't this tea table being purchased by a museum if it is so rare?"

"The museums are out of money," he replied. "And these pieces are so rare because so few of them have survived. I found this one at

an auction (he quite pointedly did not say where, so I assumed it was impolitic to ask), turned it upside down, put the black light on it, and found the Black Cyprus blocking. That and the large last knuckle on the claw foot clearly identify it as Charleston-made."

"So if there was lots of furniture made here, what's happened to it?"

He gave me the rueful head-shake. "Fires and more fires, flood, hurricanes, an occasional small tornado, and the hot, humid summers. And, of course, The War."

Of course. "The War".

We talked for a while, and I explained what I'm doing in my shop with period and period adaptations. He sent me down the street to a small book store, and wrote out two titles for me: [Charleston Furniture 1700-1825](#) and [The Early Architecture of Charleston](#) (both published by the University of South Carolina Press— references below.

Cont'd on page four...

"...authenticated by Pooh-bah and Snarky of Highnose Ltd..."

SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS!

Our sponsors help support the Guild and help make the newsletter and other Guild activities possible. And, as a special bonus to you, many offer discounts. (See the back page of the newsletter for a list of our sponsors.) Patronize their businesses and, when you do visit them, be sure to thank them and tell them how much you appreciate their continued support of the Guild!

OUR NEXT MEETING

The December meeting will be the Guild Christmas party at Lee Johnson's house. Normal meeting night, December 15th at 7pm. It's a potluck, so bring your favorite dish. The Guild will provide beverages, plates, and utensils. There is an optional gift exchange, so if you bring of gift, you can take one from under the tree; maximum value of \$25. Handmade items are appreciated too.

Address: 2551 NW Pinnacle Drive
Phone: 503.292.4340 or cell phone 971.219.0839

From the East Side & North:

Take the Fremont Bridge, Vaughn Exit, Left onto NW 23rd Ave
Go to NW 23rd and Lovejoy
West on NW Lovejoy, which becomes NW Cornell Rd.
Follow Cornell all the way to the top (about 3 miles)
At the four-way stop, turn right (north) onto NW Skyline Drive
About one mile, next four-way stop, turn left onto NW Thompson
Take the first left onto NW Pinnacle Drive (development sign is "Skyline Summit")
It's the 6th house on the right – white southern colonial with big front porch
(a wreath will probably be covering the house numbers)

For the West and South:

Northbound on Hwy 217, take Barnes Rd West exit (last before Hwy 26)
Take Barnes to Miller Rd (little shopping center)
Left on Miller, go to the next stop light (NW Cornell)
Turn right on Cornell
At the top of the hill (four-way stop), turn left onto Skyline Drive
Follow the rest from above – left on Thompson, left onto Pinnacle.

***"Don't forget our
annual Christmas
meeting."***

I LEARNED ABOUT WOODWORKING FROM THAT: LESSONS LEARNED

BY BOB OSWALD

I have a number of Jet tools and they serve me well. However, one major flaw in all Jet designs is the fence lock: on two bandsaws and my new SuperSaw, the fence lock does not have a good tactile feel. I was ripping 100 strips and failed to notice that the fence was creeping slowly westward. With precise width match required, it trashed 50 parts and I had to start over. I analyzed the fence and discovered I just needed to use more force (significantly more) when locking the fence. Other tools have an over-center feel that confirms the lock.

"TINY" TIPS

Just nicked a new set of jointer blades? Offset two of the blades in opposite directions, half the width of the nick.

CHARLESTON EARLY AMERICAN FURNITURE

CONT'D FROM PAGE TWO...

If you have any interest in “fitments” (built-ins, paneling, fireplaces, etc.) from the Pre-Revolutionary Period, Post-Revolutionary or Antebellum Periods, send for the latter book. It is full of wonderful photographs and line drawings – some of the best I’ve ever seen anywhere of interior woodwork.

But for antique furniture buffs, it is the first title, Charleston Furniture, that’s worth its \$19.95 price many times over. Written by E. Milby Burton, who was director of the Charleston Museum for forty years (so the back cover tells me), it is a delightful compendium of not only the 1700–1825 furniture industry in Charleston, but is also a fount of information about the cabi-

netmakers themselves, the kinds of woods they used, where they got their tools, what kind of furniture they made and how much it cost, and who their customers were.

He fits the furniture industry into the full history of the period. For instance, Charleston was enormously wealthy at about the time of the Revolution. Annual exports to England from 1763 to 1773 averaged almost 390,000 pounds sterling. By comparison, New York did about 71,000 pounds and Philadelphia, about 34,000. Rice, Indigo and low-land cotton (high quality long fibre) made the planters very rich. (But lest we forget, most of this money was accumulated at the horrible cost of human slavery.)

These guys could af-

ford good furniture, and they loved to give parties, so they built beautiful houses and furnished them well. One cabinet-maker named Thomas Elfe (whose account books for an extended period have survived) made about 1,500 pieces of furniture from 1768 to 1775. At that same time, there were about 80 cabinetmakers listed in the city directory, so even though Elfe obviously had a large operation, we can safely assume that a great deal of furniture was being made at the time.

What happened to it all? Fire: almost all of the Charleston peninsula has burned down at one time or another; hurricanes: Burton notes that They hit Charleston with *Cont’d on page five...*

“...hurricanes...”

MAUDE KERNS ART CENTER SHOWING

BY STEPHEN WHITE

The Maude Kerns Art Center, a nonprofit art center in Eugene, Oregon presents Oregon Made For Interiors (OMFI), a juried exhibit of contemporary, functional art. Established in 1985, this biennial exhibit is consistently one of the most popular, best-attended shows presented at the Center. Handcrafted furniture is the centerpiece of the exhibit, which also includes other arts and crafts to enhance interior décor.

In preparation for the 2005, show we are making a special effort to reach out to Oregon artists and craftspeople who are creating work of exceptional quality and inviting them to submit their work for this upcoming show. In order to promote fine woodworking in general and selected artists in particular, the 2005 OMFI will be publicized widely, awarding cash prizes and will include special gallery talks. We hope you will consider submitting for this show. Please contact Stephen White (Light Sculptor)/Guest Curator OMFI 2005 LightSculpture@aol.com 541-896-3467/344-2124.

CHARLESTON EARLY AMERICAN FURNITURE

CONT'D FROM PAGE FOUR...

“monotonous regularity”; war: Charleston was thoroughly burned and/or looted in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Civil War; climate: the hot, humid, semi-tropical summers can pull furniture apart like crowbars.

Many of the pieces that have survived are works of art that rival anything being built at the time “back home” in England, or in Philadelphia or New York or Rhode Island. Charleston cabinetmakers had one significant advantage: the closeness both geographi-

cally and economically to the West Indies. Some of the crotch mahogany veneers are unparalleled, and the solid mahogany furniture is rich with straight grain from what must have been huge logs.

So next time someone like me goes on a tear about Early American furniture – trying to impress you with his or her knowledge – just listen for a while and then ask, “And how does that compare with Charleston Early American?” And when they can’t answer, just say, “Oh. I see.”

Thank them and walk away. But you might be wise to get the book before you pull that one just in case they do know something about it.

References: Charleston Furniture 1700 – 1825, E. Milby Burton, University of South Carolina Press, ISBN 1-57003-147-9; The Early Architecture of Charleston, Edited by Albert Simons and Samuel Lapham, Jr., University of South Carolina Press, ISBN 0-87249-708-9.

“Many of the pieces that have survived are works of art...”

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!

BY GEORGE DUBOIS

We need some additional volunteers for the Best of the Northwest/Guild of Oregon Woodworkers “big” show for both Saturday and Sunday, December 4th and 5th. There are two shifts per day: 10am to 2pm and 2pm to 6pm. Free admission and free parking for all volunteers. Guild volunteers are also invited to attend the Saturday evening soiree. We need three people for each shift on each day. This will be a lot of fun, so get back to me ASAP at 503-365-7636 or via email at: duboisge@comcast.net.

IT'S A FIRST! The BEST OF THE NORTHWEST JOINS with the GUILD OF OREGON WOODWORKERS.

BY GEORGE DUBOIS

Experience holiday gift shopping at the first combined Best of the Northwest/Guild of Oregon Woodworkers show. Over 200 of the region’s most outstanding artists selected for this show bring a wide array of wood sculpture and functional pieces, including metal, glass, jewelry, wearable art, pottery, photography, mixed media, fiber arts, and basketry. Select from the outstanding work of: Best of the Northwest Artists, the Guild of Oregon Woodworkers, the Portland Weavers’ Guild, and the Creative Metal Arts Guild. Admission is \$5 for adults (with free re-entry); kids under 12 are free. Take the MAX Blue Line to the Portland Convention Center at 777 MLK Jr. Blvd. For information, contact the Northwest Crafts Alliance: 206-525-5926

www.nwcraftsalliance.com (see their discount coupon) or the Guild at: www.guildoforegonwoodworkers.com. The runs December 4th and 5th from 10a-6p.

Guild of Oregon Woodworkers

PO Box 13744
Portland, OR 97213

Phone: 503-391-7890
Email: jldubay@comcast.net

We're on the Web!

www.guildoforegonwoodworkers.com

The Guild of Oregon Woodworkers is a group of professional and amateur woodworkers like you, committed to developing our craftsmanship and woodworking business skills. The Guild offers many benefits for members, including: monthly educational meetings, participation in a variety of woodworking forums, including woodworking shows, monthly newsletter, mentoring program to help members develop their skills in specific areas, and a network of business partners, the key to our development as members and as a Guild, providing additional learning opportunities, discounts, and a network of support. For information on how you can become a member, contact Guild President John DuBay at 503-391-7890.

CLASSIFIEDS

Editors Note: Classifieds are due on 5pm on the Wednesday following the Guild meeting. Submit your ad to Christin Smith at: fundingsolutionsnw@comcast.net. Pictures included as space allows.



JET 22" Planer 5 HP 3 Phase motor, Less than 50 hrs. run time, Asking \$1700. Rotary Single Phase-3 Phase Converter, Asking \$500. Both for \$2000 Contact Dick Chase at 503-692-0350 or e-mail res8xeui@verizon.net

Oregon Black Walnut, 1/4 through 24/4 –matched tabletops, figure lumber (over 300,000 B.F. inventory), veneer .040 (1mm) thick enough to sand, leaves up to 20" wide and 12 ft. long. Contact Goby Walnut Products at (541) 926-1079 or www.gobywalnut.com

Classes, seminars, demos, and such...

Northwest Woodworking Studio (503) 284-1644;
<http://www.northwestwoodworking.com>.

Rockler Woodworking (503) 672-7266 www.rockler.com

Oregon College of Art and Craft (503) 297-5544 www.ocac.edu

Woodcraft (503) 684-1428; <http://www.woodcraft.com>

Woodcrafters 212 NE 6th Ave., Portland (503) 231-0226

GUILD OF OREGON WOODWORKERS

P. O. BOX 13744 PORTLAND, OR 97218

The Guild is Proud to be Sponsored by:

Barbo Machinery, Portland
Bridge City Tool Works, Portland
Crosscut Hardwoods, Portland
Euro Assembly Systems, Forest Grove
Goby Walnut Products, Albany
Hardwood Industries, Tualatin
Lumber Products, Tualatin
Northwest Woodworking Studio, Portland
Oregon College of Art and Craft, Portland
Rockler Woodworking, Beaverton
The Tool Peddler, Portland
Woodcraft, Tigard
Woodcrafters, Portland