

Hmmm...And That Louis XIV Chair Would Make an Excellent Drill Press

by Matt Hark

My father was a grocery store manager; he couldn't even drive a nail. So I guess I must have my grandfather's genes, which were then passed on to my son Richard, whom I admire as a master craftsman.

My grandfather came to the United States from Germany in the mid-1800s, where he'd been a wagon maker and wheel maker. Upon arrival, he found work as a woodworker and carver at a Buffalo, N.Y., piano factory. About 150 years ago, he built himself a rugged chest of drawers that was finally passed on to me.

In 1946, following Navy duty in World War II, I worked as a wood pattern maker at Buffalo Forge Co. in Buffalo, N.Y. I started at 70¢ an hour as an apprentice and received a 5¢ an hour raise every six months. I soon married and eventually raised three children.

We had no money to spare for a "real" table saw, so I mounted a power saw on top of my grandfather's chest, using my mother's extra oak table leaves, a saw bearing from Sears, an old 1/4-hp washing machine motor, and wood screw handles from a broken parallel clamp. Later, I modified the saw to accept an 8-inch disc sander and a dado cutter.

I used the saw for many years until, finally, my wife surprised me with a Shopsmith, which does just about everything (except store clothing). Although I no longer use it, I've kept the old saw mounted on my grandfather's chest.



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Blade depth is set by raising the top on twin screw handles, sloping it away from the operator. The sliding fence has an 8-inch rip capacity. And, naturally, the drawers are great for accessory storage. Now, about those magnetic featherboards....