

Seymour Table

Featured Piece of the Month – December 2021

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In 2019, I visited the Peabody Essex Museum as a student in Phil Lowe's Furniture Institute of Massachusetts. At the museum we saw several pieces of furniture made by John and Thomas Seymour from the early 1800's. I was fascinated by the pieces and in the back of my mind I thought someday I would make one of their pieces. Forward to 2021, I decided to build a version of a Thomas Seymour's dressing table made in 1810. A photo of the original piece is shown to the right.



In the early 1800's Seymour built many of these dressing tables with mirrors for wealthy clients in Boston. The finished piece I built is shown to the right.



There were no measurements for the piece, so I by started making a free hand sketch with the dimensions based on the photo. From there, I made full scale drawings of the table. I purchased the wood for the project from Northland Forest Products in Kingston, NH. A photo of the milled walnut and eastern pine is to the right.



A couple photos of the case construction are shown below.



The sides are mortised and tenoned into the rough legs. The front 2" wide rails are twin tenoned to the legs. The small cabinet at the top will hold three small drawers. I made a practice leg to work out how to build the Birdseye Maple veneer and the ebony and holly stringing. I made the veneer slightly wider than the finished width, then cut a 1/8" wide slot for the stringing with a micro fence system on my small router.

I cut the tapered legs on the bandsaw, then cleaned up the edges with a smoothing plane. To the right is a photo of the piece with the completed legs and drawer fronts. Note the arrow and dart banding on the edge of the tabletop. I purchased all the banding from Inlay Bandings.



I applied the Birdseye maple veneer to the drawer faces with a hammered hot hide glue technique. The perimeter of each drawer has cross grain walnut with holly and ebony banding. Cutting and fitting the 45° corners was challenging.

This photo shows all four legs. I made the walnut feet from a pattern, cutting as much as I could on the bandsaw, and then sanding the balance of the curved surfaces.



The photo to the right shows the case glue up. I practiced the glue up a couple times before completing it.



This photo shows a closeup of the leg fluting and the curved detail on each side of the fluting. I cut the slots with a [3/16"](#) rounding bit on my router table. The photo also shows the curly maple banding around the perimeter of the bottom of the case.



The hand cut dovetails on the drawers are shown in the photo to the right.



I finished the table with two coats of Danish oil and a coat of wax. This project was challenging in every facet with no let up. It really made me respect the talents of Thomas Seymour who made the original piece over 200 years ago with no power tools.