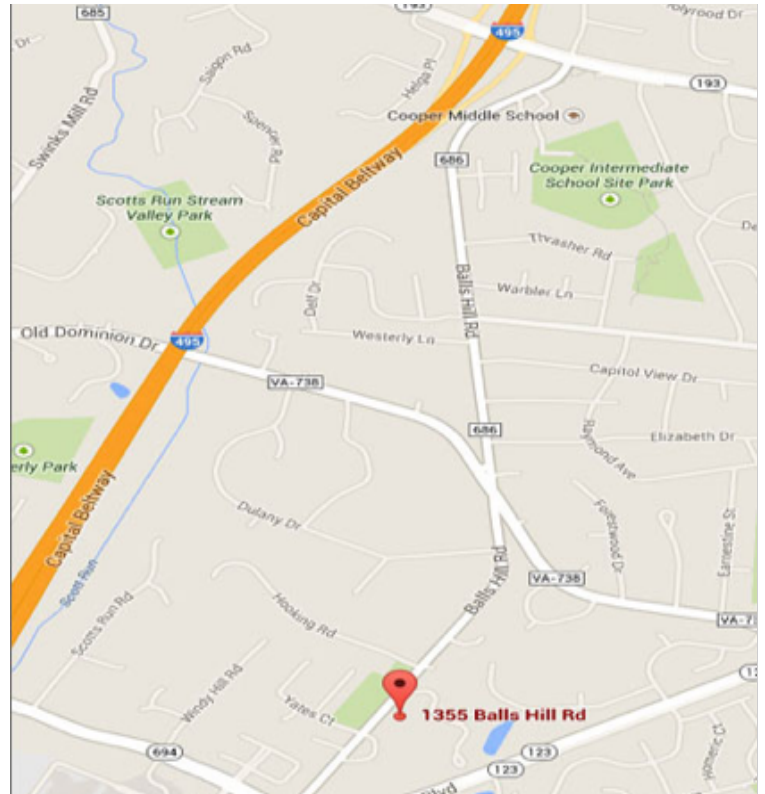


May Meeting

The PATINA Meeting scheduled for May 15, 2016 will feature Wes Highfill, who will demonstrate the process of making Marquetry using a Chevalet. Wes will show how a veneer is selected and assembled to form a stack. He will show how the patterns are defined, cut in sequence, and then combined to form a decorative panel.

Wes Highfill began woodworking in 1999, when he went to study at Rockingham Community College's Fine Woodworking program. In the years since, he has built a number of furniture pieces, for his home and for others. In 2012 and 2013, Wes learned French marquetry techniques from Patrick Edwards and Patrice Lejeune at the American School of French Marquetry (ASFM) in San Diego. At ASFM, he learned about cutting and assembling marquetry using techniques from the 18th century, including the Boulle method and piece by piece cutting. Today, Wes incorporates marquetry into both commissioned and speculative pieces. He also provides the hide glue and European kraft paper (both necessary in these French techniques) through his website: www.highfillcustomwoodworks.com.



DIRECTIONS AND MAP TO THE MEETING HALL

American Legion Post 270, 1355 Balls Hill Road, McLean VA 22101

A. The beltway from Maryland. Take Exit 44 (VA 193 Georgetown Pike). Cross over I-495 to the first light (Balls Hill Road). Turn right, go 1.4 miles to the meeting hall.

B. From inside the beltway, going north on the GW Parkway. Take the McLean Exit (Chain Bridge Road -Dolley Madison Blvd, VA. 123). Proceed on Dolley Madison Blvd about 4 miles to Old Dominion. Right about 1/2 mile about 1/2 mile to Balls Hill Road. Turn left and go about 1/2 mile to the meeting hall which will be on the left



A Mystery Solved

A few years ago as I was studying some pictures from the vitraux de la cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres or, the stained glass windows of Chartres Cathedral for those who do not speak French, I came across this picture of two workmen making chests. I was immediately drawn to it for several reasons. The first was because I noticed a plane in the picture. This window was made at the end of the 12th century, a time when most people tend to believe the only tool used by furniture makers and carpenters was an axe. I have even read books that postulated the idea that the plane had been “lost” and was only re-invented in the 14th century. Finding this picture, portraying a plane very much like those in use in the 15th or even the 19th century adds weight to the idea that the plane never actually “disappeared”.



Cabinetmakers at their craft, from a late 12th century window in Chartres Cathedral

Another reason that I was drawn to it was because it shows the form of one type of a chest made at that time period, (and for millennia before then) and seems to indicate a degree of ornamentation to the chest as well. Though the end of the 12th century is actually “late” in the history of the Middle Ages, most anyone referring to furniture from this period would call it “very early” for the simple fact that almost no furniture from any time earlier than this survives. Finding a good depiction of a piece of furniture from this period, then, is excit-

T. Johann G. von Katzenelnbogen

ing for anyone interested in the history of medieval furniture. Finding a picture depicting the making of that piece of furniture is even more exciting, and rare. As I studied the picture, I noticed an unfamiliar tool in the hands of the man on the left. Over the weeks and months, after first noticing this image, I pondered the tool, its actual form, and its use. I began to speculate that perhaps it was some sort of moulding shaper; i.e. a type of scratch stock, based on the parallel lines along the edge of the piece he is working. I began to think of how this could be fashioned and how it might function, and even got as far as holding a moulding plane blade at a scraping angle and trying to use it by pulling it towards me. The one thing I had not yet worked out in my mind, was how the tool's handle might have been attached.

Fast forward a few years, and on the 30th of November of last year (2015) I read an article posted by Peter Follansbee on his blog. <https://pfollansbee.wordpress.com/2015/11/30/tamas-gyenes-riven-beech-chests/> In this article, I saw a picture of Mr Tamas Gyenes using a tool to make grooves or rebates/rabbets on his chest parts. I had an instant “aha moment” of recognition. I was busy at the time, however, and did not have the time to pursue this notion further.



A picture of an antique Hungarian hornyoló, used for making rebate grooves

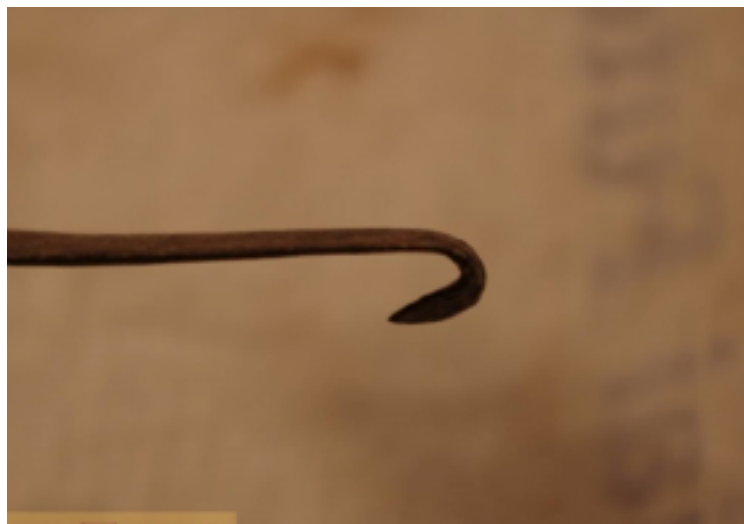
This past week, however, I looked up Mr Gyenes' website and then contacted him about the tool he was using. My suspicion was that it was the very same tool as that pictured in the Chartres window. He then sent me another more lengthy email a few days later, explaining about the tool and how it works etc. In Hungarian, it is called a *hornyoló*. It seems that the cathedral window artist even got the detail of the cutter on the tool right, as it is a 'U' shaped hook on the end of the tool. By holding this tool with both hands, one on the iron part, the other on the wooden handle, the artist pulls the tool through the wood, repeatedly removing strips as is done with a plane, until the desired depth is achieved. I assume that only skill and practice render straight and accurate rebates, as there is nothing, save the craftsman's dexterity to guide it.



The picture that sparked my interest.

Mr Gyenes works with green timber, and apparently that was the tradition as practiced by the makers in the period which he studies. In fact, working green wood was the tie that connected him, and Mr Follansbee in their initial exchange. There seems to have been a tradition of working green wood in the earliest period of American Colonialism. One could assume, then, that in medieval times, green wood was also worked, and thus the craftsmen depicted in this window may well have been doing exactly the same work as what Mr Gyenes is doing today; keeping alive a tradition that is actually thousands of years old.

Incidentally, he was completely unaware of the picture in Chartres Cathedral, and so was absolutely delighted to see this picture and learn that the tool he uses was much older than he had previously thought. I was very happy to be able to share such a find with him. I also hope this might be useful and enlightening to some of our group who are interested in early woodworking tools.



The business end of the tool, this 'hook' is what cuts away the timber to create the groove



Side view of the tool's 'hook'

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