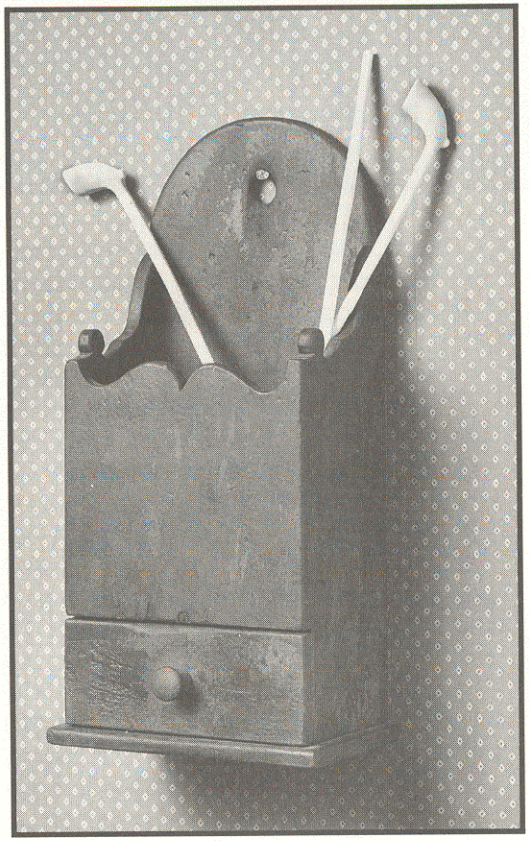
PIPE BOX

Pipe boxes held the long-stemmed clay pipes that were popular during the colonial period. The pipes went in the top compartment, or well, while tobacco was kept in the drawer.

Clay pipes went out of fashion long ago, and smoking of any sort now seems to be following the same road to oblivion. Pipe boxes, however, have never been more popular. They are handy for incoming or outgoing mail and make delightful containers for dried-flower arrangements. Pipe boxes, like other clearly antiquated furnishings, give our homes an air of rootedness in our past, even if we no longer indulge in the practices that gave rise to them.



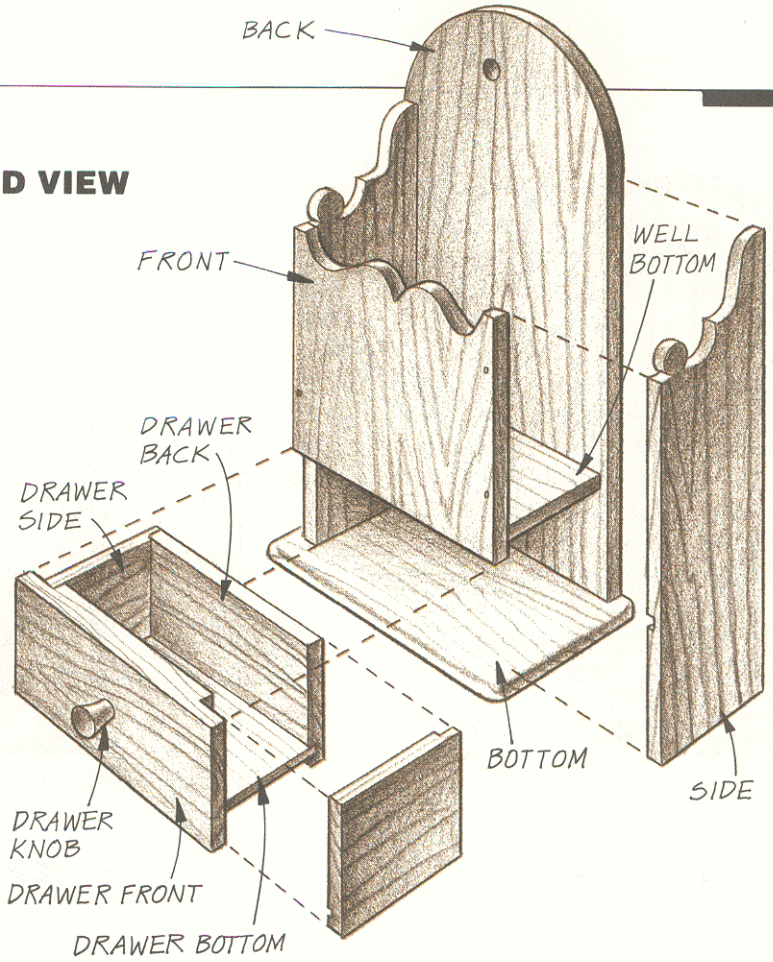
Except for the drawer front, the pipe box is made entirely from ½-inch-thick pine. Hardwoods are equally suitable. The parts are butt-joined and held with cut brads set flush with the surface of the wood. The original red finish has been painted over with dark green paint, much of which has worn off.

1 Cut the parts to size. If you lack a thickness-planing capability, have your lumber supplier plane stock to ½ inch thick. Cut the parts to the dimensions specified by the Cutting List. The drawer front can be made the required thickness by gluing together two ½-inch-thick pieces. If you glue a 5 15/16-inch-long piece centered on an 8-inch-long piece, you won't need to cut rabbets on the ends of the front.

2 Cut the dadoes for the well bottom. The bottom of the well in the pipe box fits in ½-inch-wide, ¼-inch-deep dadoes in the front, back, and sides. The dadoes in the front and back must stop short of the edges so they won't show on the sides of the pipe box.

Use a ½-inch straight router bit and the router's fence attachment to cut the dadoes. Note that the dadoes in the sides and back are 3½ inches from the

EXPLODED VIEW

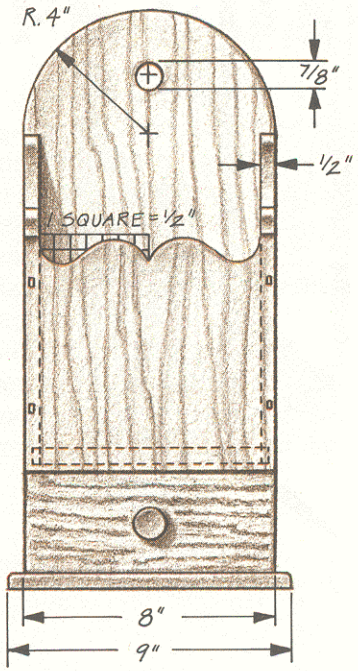


CUTTING LIST

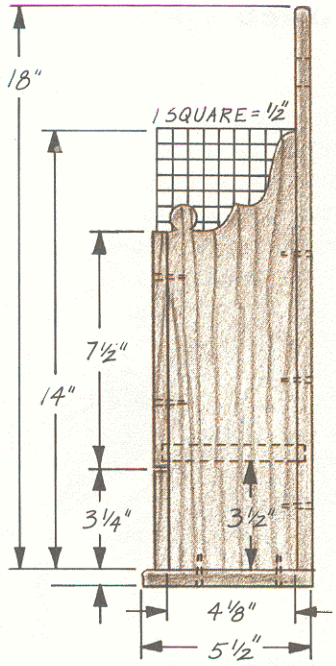
Part	Dimensions
Front	½″ × 8″ × 7¾″
Back	½″ × 8″ × 18″
Sides (2)	½″ × 4⅛″ × 14″
Well bottom	½″ × 7½″ × 4½″
Bottom	½″ × 5½″ × 9″
Drawer front	1″ × 3 3/16″ × 8″
Drawer sides (2)	½″ × 3 3/16″ × 4″
Drawer back	½″ × 3″ × 6⅜″
Drawer bottom	½″ × 3⅜″ × 6⅜″
Drawer knob	1″ dia. × 1¾″

Hardware

2d cut brads. Available from many building-supply stores and from Tremont Nail Company, P.O. Box 111, Wareham, MA 02571; (508) 295–0038. Item #CRB-2.



FRONT VIEW



SIDE VIEW

bottom edge but the dado in the front is only ¼ inch from the bottom edge. The dadoes run clear across the width of the sides but stop ¼ inch short of the edges of the front and back. Square the ends of the stopped dadoes with a chisel.

3 Radius the back piece. The top of the back piece is a 4-inch-radius semi-circle. Draw the curve with a compass, then saw it with a coping saw. Smooth the curve with a fine rasp and sandpaper. Drill a ⅞-inch-diameter hole in the back piece, centered 2⅛ inches from the top.

4 Cut out the top shape of the sides. The top ends of the side pieces are decoratively shaped. Lay out the pattern shown in the *Side View* on one of the sides. Tape or clamp the two sides together and saw to the line with the coping saw. Clean up the sawn edges with files and sandpaper.

5 Cut out the front scroll design. The scroll on the top of the front piece is symmetrical as shown in the *Front View.* It will be easiest to make a paper pattern of one half of it and trace the pattern on the stock.

The length of the front piece given in the Cutting List is ¼ inch longer than shown in the drawing to allow you to adjust the curve to match the side. Assemble the front, two sides, and well bottom without glue or nails and mark where the shape of the sides meet the front piece. Align the front scroll pattern with these marks and trace it. Saw to the line and smooth the sawn edges as you did before.

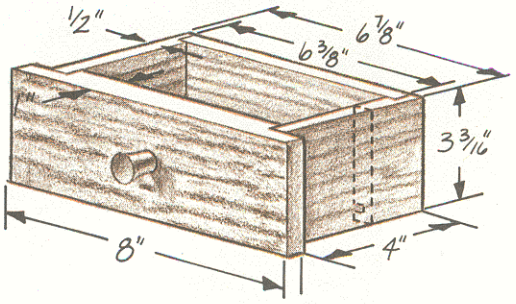
6 Round the front and side edges of the base. The edges of the base are not rounded uniformly as they would be if they were rounded-over with a router. Instead, they seem to have been blunted with a plane. The front edge below the drawer has worn down even more. Reproduce these shapes now, before assembling the box.

7 Assemble the pipe box. Sand the remaining box parts and assemble the box with glue and cut brads. The well bottom doesn't need to be glued but keep it in position as you assemble the front, back, and sides to make sure the dadoes line up, and to make sure you don't forget it. Let the glue in these joints dry, then glue and nail the bottom of the box in place.

8 Make the drawer-front rabbets for the drawer sides. Check that the drawer front fits easily between the front and bottom of the box and trim the drawer parts if necessary. If you're making the drawer front out of a single thick piece of wood instead of gluing it up as suggested earlier, saw 1$\frac{1}{32}$-inch × ½-inch rabbets on the ends.

9 Cut the drawer-back rabbets in the drawer sides. Saw the ½-inch-wide, ¼-inch-deep rabbets in the back end of both drawer sides as shown in the *Drawer Detail.* If you have a tenoning jig, you can cut the shoulders and then cut out the waste with the stock on end. But don't try to saw the stock on end without a tenoning jig. If you don't have a jig, cut the rabbets with a succession of saw kerfs parallel to the shoulder cut. Since the drawer sides are quite small, you might want to cut the rabbets on both ends of a longer piece, then cut the sides from the ends of the longer piece.

10 Cut the drawer-bottom groove and assemble the drawer. The edges of the drawer bottom are beveled to fit a ¼-inch-wide



DRAWER DETAIL

groove. Rip the groove in the drawer front, sides, and back with a dado cutter, or in two or three passes with a saw blade. Bevel the edges of the drawer bottom with a hand plane to fit the groove.

Sand the drawer parts, then glue and nail the drawer sides in the drawer-front rabbets. Slide the drawer bottom in place, then glue and nail the drawer back to the drawer sides. Don't glue the drawer bottom, since it's captive on all four sides.

11 Make and attach the drawer knob. Turn the drawer knob on the lathe, if you have one. The knob on the original has an integral tenon as shown in the *Drawer Detail.* Drill a ½-inch hole in the center of the drawer front and glue the knob in place. If you don't have a lathe, buy a small knob at a hardware store. Most manufactured knobs attach with a screw.

12 Complete the pipe box. Apply a finish to your own liking. Both paint and natural finishes are appropriate. The box in the photo was originally painted a dark red, then at some point repainted a green that is almost black. The green has worn through revealing the earlier red. You can reproduce this appearance by painting very dark green over red and then sanding through the green at natural wear areas.