

# A Shapely Shaker Shelf

The mouldings dress up the shelf while building the drawer increases your skills.

In the 1989 edition of the Willis Henry Shaker auction of ephemera, woodenware and furniture, this Canterbury, N.H., shelf immediately caught my eye. I've incorporated a few size and construction variations from the antique in my version, but this design is true to the spirit of the original.

You'll find a use for those scraps from earlier projects if you decide to paint this piece. Mixed woods are often found in antique furniture. Don't be afraid to try it (if you don't have enough scraps, head to the home center).

Building the drawer for this shelf is a new technique for the "I Can Do That" column. Don't freak on me! It appears more complex than it is and your list of "got-to-do" projects will grow once this skill is in your arsenal.

## Curvy Bottoms Add Appeal

Each side of the shelf has three curves or arc cuts. Each arc evolves from the previous arc, starting with the smallest radius at the lower, rear corner of each side.



The best way to cut crown moulding at the miter saw is to position the moulding upside down to how it's installed on your project. As you mark the cut line, also note the direction of the 45° cut.



Photo by Al Parrish

Crosscut the sides to length and draw the pattern on the pieces. Cut the profile with the jigsaw then clean up any rough edges with a rasp and sandpaper.

Next, square one end of the stock and crosscut the five rails that fit between the sides. Position and clamp a stop block at the miter saw to cut each piece to the same length. Then pull out the pocket-screw jig. You have holes to drill.

Each rail requires two pocket-screw holes per end. Also, the top face rail needs three extra holes, spaced evenly and along the grain, to attach the top. The drawer rail will need one hole that is centered, also along the grain, to hold the drawer rail flush with the lower face rail. Also, drill a hole in the center of the each side. These will be used to attach the top.

## Step to Successful Assembly

The steps to assemble the case need to be completed in a specific order to allow you access to the pocket-screw holes. First, attach the top face rail and lower face rail flush with the front edge of the sides. Next, install the top nailing rail  $\frac{3}{4}$ " in from the back edge of the sides.

Cut the top to length and position the

partially assembled case on the underside of the top. Make sure the case is centered on the top and flush at the back edge. Add the screws and the top is attached. To finish construction of the case, install the drawer rail and the lower nailing rail.

Place the project on its top with the front facing you and fit the mouldings against the project. Make the first set of moulding cuts at the miter saw, leaving the side moulding extra long. Match those cuts to form the left-front corner. Hold the front moulding tight to the case and move to the next corner of the project to find the cut line.

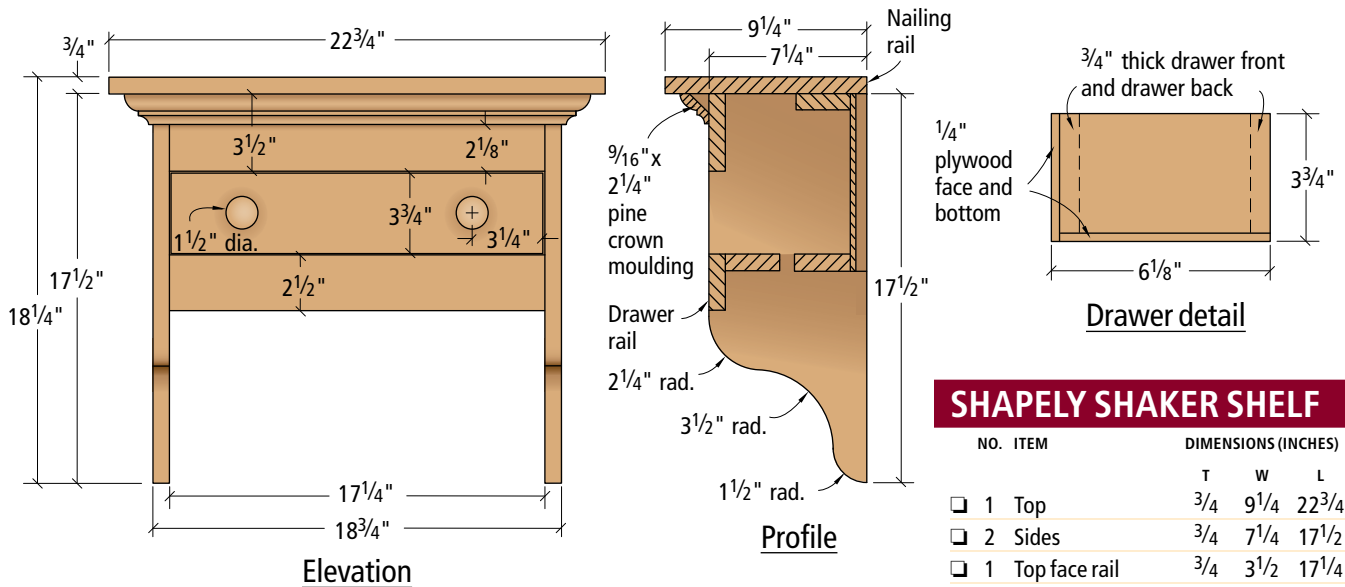
Mark the cut line for the second cut on the front moulding as well as the angle of cut.



Marking the cut line for the second cut on moulding requires an exact layout. A ruler or straightedge held tight to the sides will reveal the location for the cut.

by Glen D. Huey

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Illustrations by Mary Jane Favorite

## SHAPELY SHAKER SHELF

NO.	ITEM	DIMENSIONS (INCHES)		
		T	W	L
❑ 1	Top	3/4	9 1/4	22 3/4
❑ 2	Sides	3/4	7 1/4	17 1/2
❑ 1	Top face rail	3/4	3 1/2	17 1/4
❑ 1	Lower face rail	3/4	2 1/2	17 1/4
❑ 1	Drawer rail	3/4	2 1/2	17 1/4
❑ 2	Nailing rails	3/4	2 1/2	17 1/4
❑ 2	Drawer sides	3/4	3 1/2	5 7/8
❑ 2	Drawer front/back	3/4	3 1/2	15 3/4
❑ 1	Drawer face	1/4	3 3/4	17 1/4
❑ 1	Drawer bottom	1/4	5 7/8	17 1/4
❑ 1	Case back	1/4	8	17 1/4
❑ 1	Crown moulding	9/16	2 1/4	48
❑ 2	Wooden knobs	1 1/2" diameter		

Head back to the miter saw to complete the cuts for the second corner.

Position the side mouldings and mark a line at the back edge of the shelf. The 90° cut is made with the piece flat at the miter saw. Add glue to the miters and attach the mouldings with 3d nails. (For additional information on fitting mouldings, download the free manual at [ICanDoThatExtras.com](http://ICanDoThatExtras.com)).

### Building an Inset Drawer

You already have the skills to build a drawer. You just need to know how to cut with a jigsaw, drill pocket-screw holes and hammer nails.

To properly fit an inset drawer, the front should be about 1/8" smaller than the opening – 1/16" on either edge. Measure the opening from side to side and subtract 1/8". Then subtract the thickness of the two sides (1 1/2") to arrive at the cut length of the front and back

of the drawer box. Drill two pocket-screw holes at each end of these pieces.

Next, cut the drawer sides to size and attach the front to the sides with pocket screws. Careful alignment of the joint makes attaching the drawer face stronger. Complete the drawer box by installing the back piece.

The drawer bottom is 1/4" plywood. Measure the footprint of the box then cut the bottom with the jigsaw. Smooth rough cuts with a plane and attach the bottom with 3d nails.

Measure for the drawer face, including the thickness of the plywood bottom. Cut the plywood a little oversized, then add glue to the front rail of the drawer box, position the box onto the drawer face and add clamps as shown below.

Once the glue is dry trim the face with your plane, making the box and face flush on

all sides. Finally, install store-bought wooden knobs.

To complete the shelf, knock off any sharp edges with #100-grit sandpaper, apply two coats of your favorite paint color, then cut and install the plywood back with 3d finish nails. Your Shaker-inspired shelf is ready to hang. **PW**



Building the drawer with pocket screws is a simple task. But, it is necessary to achieve a flush fit between the front and sides. The level joint makes the best connection when attaching the drawer face with glue.



The aesthetics of the drawer, which shows no screws during normal use, is achieved by turning the pocket screws toward the outside of the drawer box and covering the front with the drawer face. Cut the face oversized and trim flush with your plane.

## ABOUT THIS COLUMN

Our "I Can Do That" column features projects that can be completed by any woodworker with a modest (but decent) kit of tools in less than two days of shop time, and using raw materials that are available at any home center. We offer a free online manual in PDF format that explains all the tools and shows you how to perform the basic operations in a step-by-step format. You'll learn to rip with a jigsaw, crosscut



with a miter saw and drill straight with the help of our manual.

To download the free manual, visit [ICanDoThatExtras.com](http://ICanDoThatExtras.com).