WOODWORKER'S JOURNAL
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Classic Project

In this plan you'll find:

- Step-by-step construction instruction.
- A complete bill of materials.
- Construction drawings and related photos.
- Tips to help you complete the project and become a better woodworker.

Colonial Sign


GIFT SHOP

Colonial Sign

A handsome sign always seems to add a little charm to the family homestead. As shown, our sign is compact enough to mount just about anywhere. Hanging from a post by the driveway entrance or mounted on the porch near the front door, it will proudly proclaim who dwells within. With the 1½ in. high letters (I) shown you should also have room for the house number. A source for the letters and numbers is listed in the Bill of Materials, but since many hardware stores now carry wood letter and number packages you may also find them locally.

The sign doesn't require much stock. As shown in the cutting diagram, the top and base (A), bottom (B), crest (C), blocks (D) and cap (E) can all be cut from a 1 x 6 board that's about 3 ft. long. All these parts—except for the cap—are ¾ in. thick. A hand plane will quickly reduce a small section of stock to the ⅝ in. thickness the cap requires. We used pine for our sign, but almost any wood that turns easily will do since it will be painted.

Cut the top and base to length and width, then cut the groove for the signboard (F), drill the column (H) holes, and establish the ½ in. radius stepped roundover all around. The router and a ½ in. diameter straight cutter are the best way to cut the groove, but you'll need to use a chisel to square the groove ends.

Transfer the profiles for the bottom and crest to the stock for these parts, using the grid patterns as a guide. Cut them out with a band saw or jigsaw, then sand smooth. Cut the blocks and cap to the sizes shown and use a ¼ in. roundover bit in the router table to radius the edges of the cap. The signboard is a section of ½ in. thick plywood. We used exterior construction plywood, but if you have some marine-grade plywood, that's even a better choice.

You'll need turning blocks for the finial (G) and columns. Start with 1½ in. square turning blocks for the column turnings, and a 1¾ in. square turning block for the finial. Note that the top and bottom halves of the column turning are symmetrical. We used a combination of gouges, a roundnose, and a skew chisel for the turning work. Don't forget to include the tenon lengths plus a little extra when you cut your turning stock to length. Final sand the column turnings while still mounted in the lathe. For the finial, you'll need to trim the extra stock and then smooth the top end after removal from the lathe.

July/August 1990 43

Published in *Woodworker's Journal* July/August 1990

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Colonial Sign

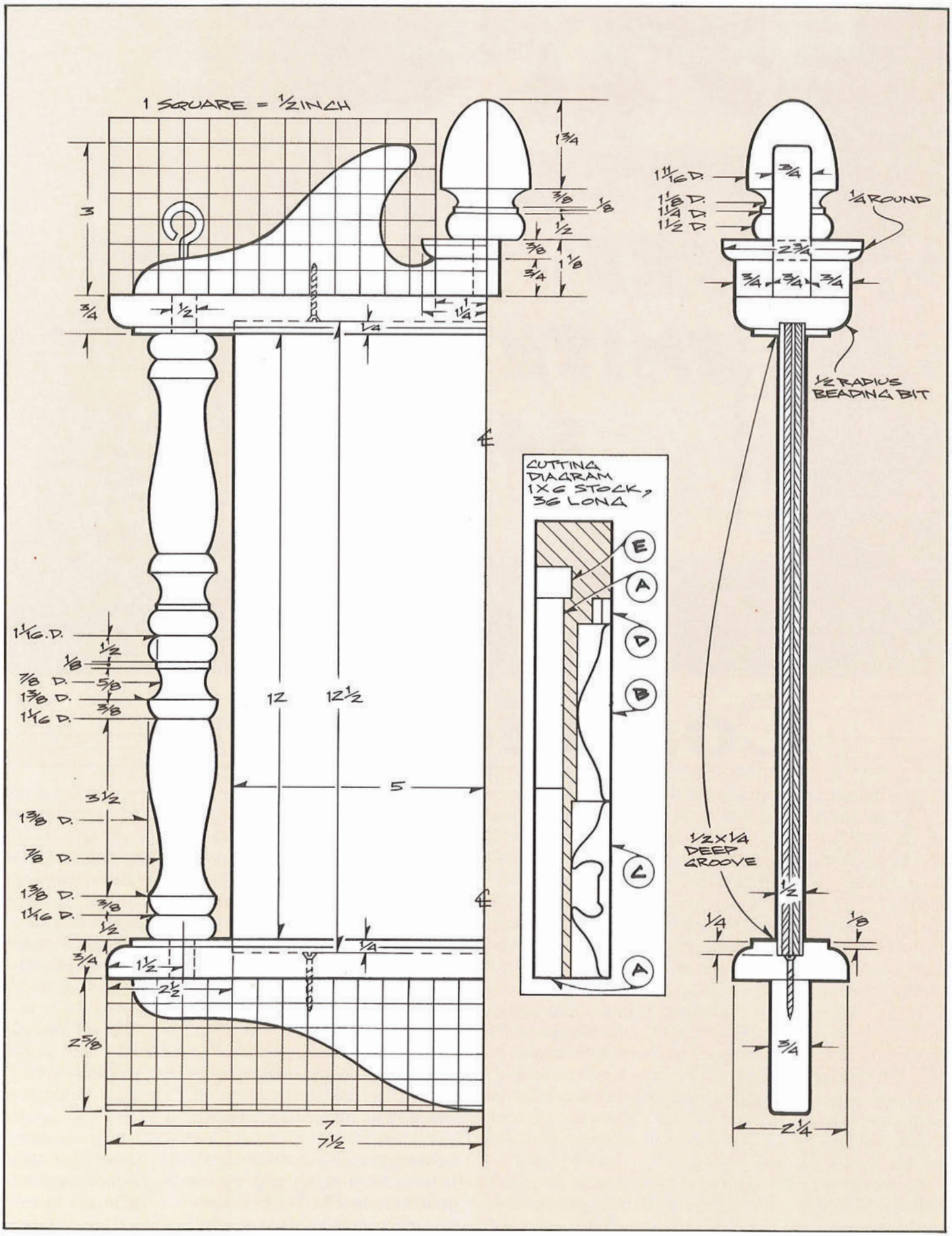
A handsome sign always seems to add a little charm to the family homestead. As shown, our sign is compact enough to mount just about anywhere. Hanging from a post by the driveway entrance or mounted on the porch near the front door, it will proudly proclaim who dwells within. With the 1 1/2 in. high letters (I) shown you should also have room for the house number. A source for the letters and numbers is listed in the Bill of Materials, but since many hardware stores now carry wood letter and number packages you may also find them locally.

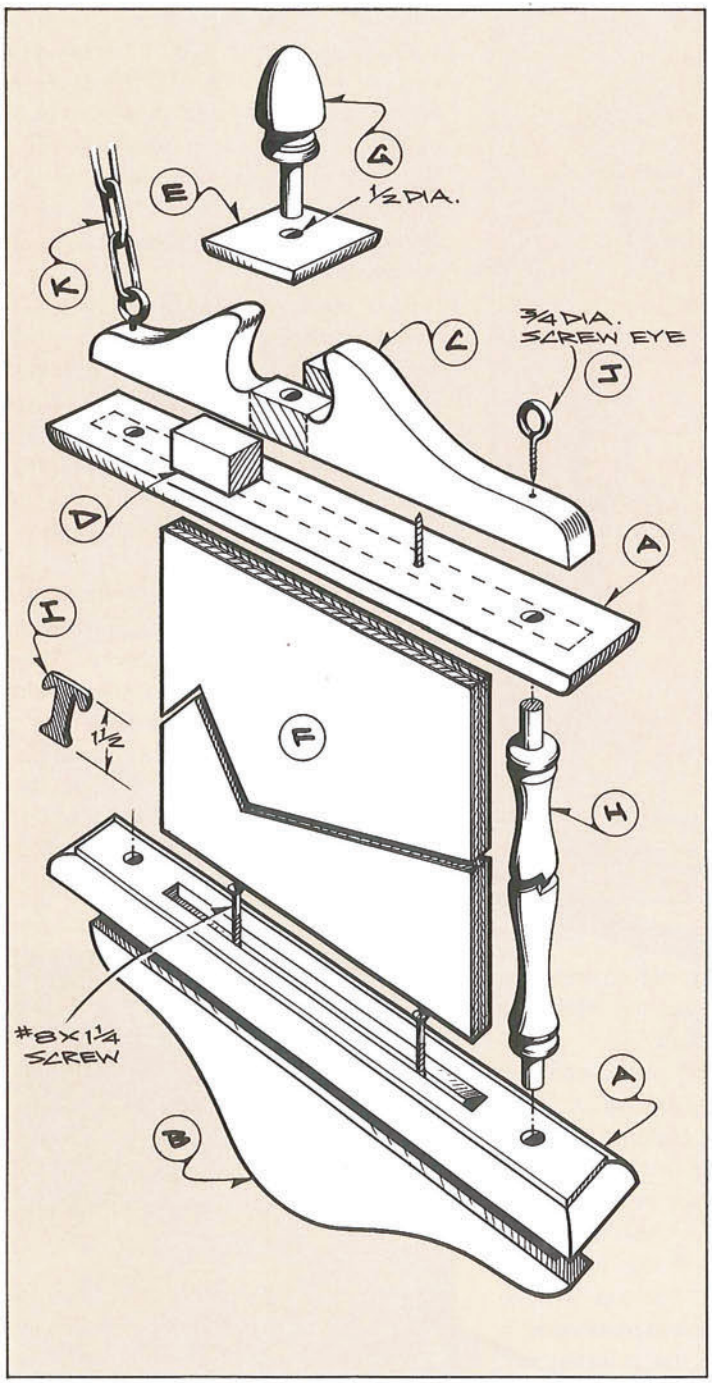
The sign doesn't require much stock. As shown in the cutting diagram, the top and base (A), bottom (B), crest (C), blocks (D) and cap (E) can all be cut from a 1 x 6 board that's about 3 ft. long. All these parts—except for the cap—are 3/4 in. thick. A hand plane will quickly reduce a small section of stock to the 3/8 in. thickness the cap requires. We used pine for our sign, but almost any wood that turns easily will do since it will be painted.

Cut the top and base to length and width, then cut the groove for the signboard (F), drill the column (H) holes, and establish the 1/2 in. radius stepped roundover all around. The router and a 1/2 in. diameter straight cutter are the best way to cut the groove, but you'll need to use a chisel to square the groove ends.

Transfer the profiles for the bottom and crest to the stock for these parts, using the grid patterns as a guide. Cut them out with a band saw or jigsaw, then sand smooth. Cut the blocks and cap to the sizes shown and use a 1/4 in. roundover bit in the router table to radius the edges of the cap. The signboard is a section of 1/2 in. thick plywood. We used exterior construction plywood, but if you have some marine-grade plywood, that's even a better choice.

You'll need turning blocks for the finial (G) and columns. Start with 1 1/2 in. square turning blocks for the column turnings, and a 1 3/4 in. square turning block for the finial. Note that the top and bottom halves of the column turning are symmetrical. We used a combination of gouges, a roundnose, and a skew chisel for the turning work. Don't forget to include the tenon lengths plus a little extra when you cut your turning stock to length. Final sand the column turnings while still mounted in the lathe. For the finial, you'll need to trim the extra stock and then smooth the top end after removal from the lathe.





We used a waterproof epoxy for the sign assembly. Your local hardware store should have a good selection of epoxies to choose from. First glue the crest and bottom to the top and base. This is a good long grain glue joint, but to reinforce the joint we added screws inserted through countersunk holes drilled in the groove bottoms (see exploded view). Then glue the two blocks on either side of the crest as shown. Add the cap, and drill for the 1/2 in. diameter tenon on the finial end. Finally, add the signboard and columns, sandwiched between the top and bottom assemblies.

We painted our sign with a primer coat and then a top coat of white exterior enamel. Make sure all surfaces are well-sanded, especially the exposed edges of the plywood. If the plywood edges have voids, use auto-body filler or an exterior-rated caulk to fill them. You can add a bead of white silicone caulk to fill gaps at the plywood-in-groove joint after painting, or use a paintable caulk before applying the finish.

Bill of Materials
(all dimensions actual)

Part	Description	Size	No. Req'd.
A	Top/Base	3/4 x 2 1/4 x 15	2
B	Bottom	3/4 x 2 5/8 x 14	1
C	Crest	3/4 x 3 x 14	1
D	Block	3/4 x 3/4 x 2	2
E	Cap	3/8 x 2 3/4 x 2 1/2	1
F	Signboard	1/2 x 10 x 12 1/2	1
G	Finial	as shown	1
H	Column	as shown	2
I	Letter/Number*	1 1/2 high	as req'd
J	Screw Eye	3/4 dia.	as req'd
K	Chain	as shown	as req'd

* Letters and numbers are available from Meisel Hardware Specialties, P.O. Box 70, Mound, MN 55364; Tel. 1-800-441-9870. Individual letter and number packs (four in a pack) are $.49 each. An apostrophe pack (four in the pack) is also available for $.49. A complete alphabet set (four of each letter, A-Z) is $12; order part no. 601-AZ. A complete number set (four of each number, 0-9) is $4.75; order part no. 601-09. Include $2.50 per order for shipping and handling.

The letters and numbers are painted separately before mounting. With a short name you can just run the letters across the sign board, but with a longer name you may need to use a diagonal placement. Mount the letters and numbers with brads and add some paint over the brad heads to protect them from rust.

The best way to mount the sign is with screw eyes (J) and chain (K). The chain shown in the photo is an electrical fixture swag chain, but galvanized chain is a better choice if the sign will be exposed to weather. Your local hardware store should carry galvanized chain, which is typically sold by the foot. Try to keep the chain as short as possible to avoid damage should the sign whip about in a windstorm. The best protection against windstorm damage is a mount that also anchors the sign with a screw eye and chain at the bottom, but you'll need a double rail support for this.

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Thank you again for your purchase, and happy woodworking!

Matt Becker
Internet Production Coordinator