



Lincoln bought his Springfield home for \$1,500, in 1844, from the pastor who married him and Mary Todd. Now restored by the state, it houses many authenticated Lincoln belongings, such as the footstool from which the one in the photo at right was copied.



You Can Make It!

FOOTSTOOL FROM ABE

By DAVID WARREN

What started out to be a family camping trip to the Lincoln shrines in Illinois ended in my happening upon a piece of furniture that belonged to Abraham Lincoln—this cane footstool. It caught my attention immediately as an easy piece to copy.

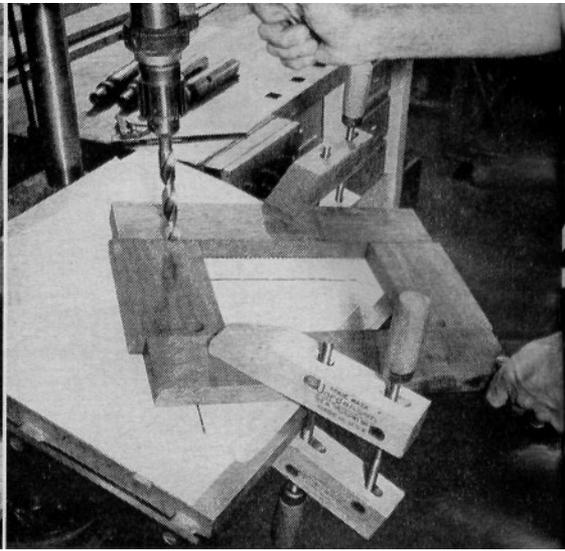
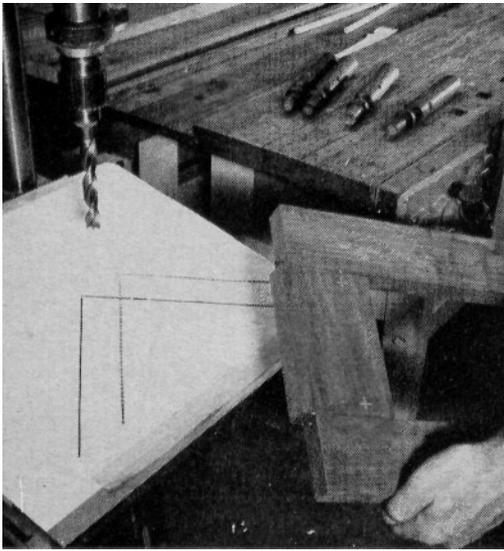
During the trip home, while the children chattered about the cabins at New Salem and their riverboat trip on the Sangamon, I mused about the fun I'd have working with walnut and learning to cane while producing a copy of the footstool we had seen—and had been permitted to measure—in Lincoln's Springfield home.

It meets all the requirements of a good footstool: lightweight but strong, functional but attractive. The cane gives it a light, airy appearance; the leg design insures strength and durability. All the material necessary for the project can be purchased from mail-order supply houses such as Craftsman Wood Service Co., 2727 S. Mary St., Chicago 60647.

Making the stool. There is a charm in the slight imperfections that creep into almost every handcrafted article. Measurements of the original stool disclosed that the legs varied slightly in diameter, the ends differed in width $1/16$ " , and the oval top was in fact asymmetrical.

Start by cutting the four top pieces and planing them to $15/16$ " thick. Dowel and

Continued



3 To get equal leg splay, tilt drill-press table 13 degrees. Tape paper to table, and place work under bit. Lower quill so bit presses on center point marked for leg hole. Lock quill in this position.

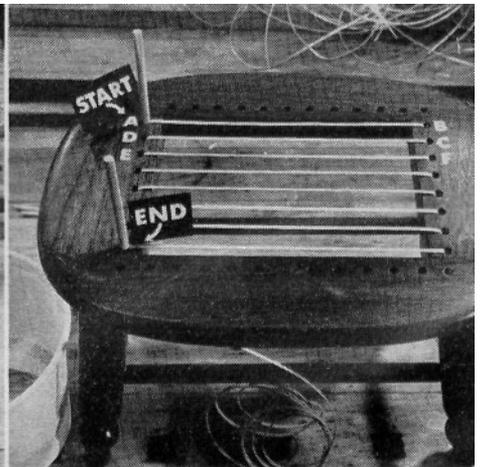
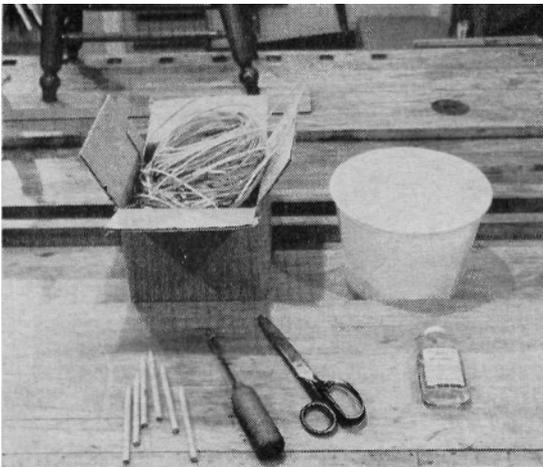
Pivot work until inside edges are 45 degrees to table edge and mark paper (left). Clamp work on guideline and drill 5/8" hole in this and opposite corners. Make similar line for other two holes.

glue them into a rectangle. Only the inside dimensions of the rectangle need to be accurate.

While the top is drying, turn the four legs. Sand all turnings completely before removing from the lathe. Mark and bore each stretcher hole.

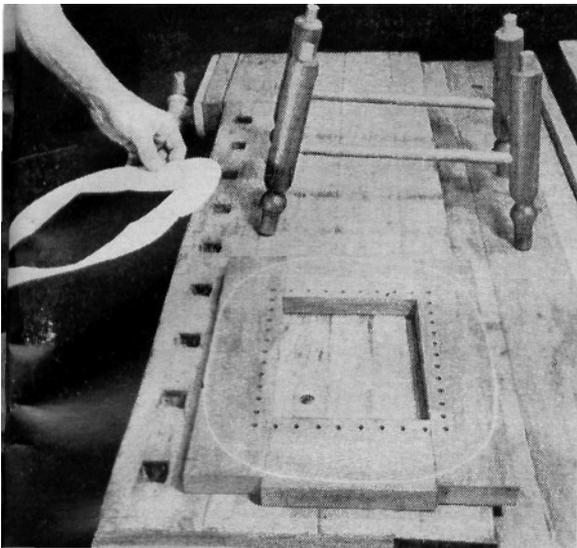
Next, bore the four leg tenon holes in the underside of the top. The photos show how to set up the drill press. Mark the 1/4" cane holes on the top and bore them. (Note that the spacing varies on sides and ends.) To finish, countersink each hole 1/8" on the underside.

Here's how you do the caning part of the project



Step 1. Make pegs from 4" lengths of 1/4" dowel pointed in a pencil sharpener. You will also need an awl, scissors, glycerine, water. After soaking cane, start weaving by inserting 4" through hole A and

secure with a peg. Pass strand to the right, insert through hole B, pull taut, and bring up through hole C. Repeat back and forth till all holes are filled. Coil the excess cane at the end for a later step.



4 To lay out the top, prepare a template on cardboard folded into quarters. A light-colored pencil (white or pink, for example) shows up well on walnut and is easy to follow when cutting perimeter.



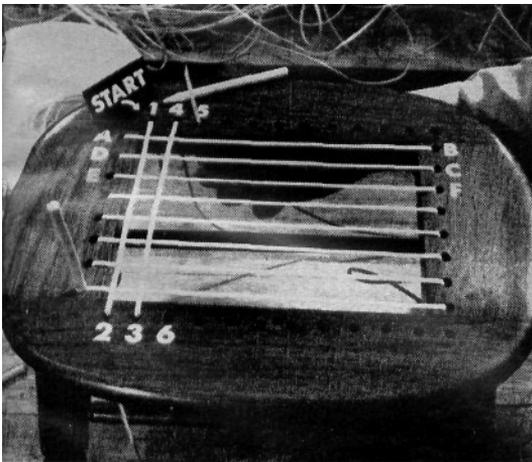
5 Trestle is square when diagonal measurements are equal. (Note that caning holes are drilled before final assembly.) With glue dry, a disk sander finishes feet to the proper length and angle.

Assemble the legs and top, and check the length of the stretchers in case your stool varies from the plan. Then turn the stretchers. The $\frac{1}{2}$ " tenons on the original were hand-carved for a drive fit. Whether made by hand or with power, gouge a small groove along the tenons to permit

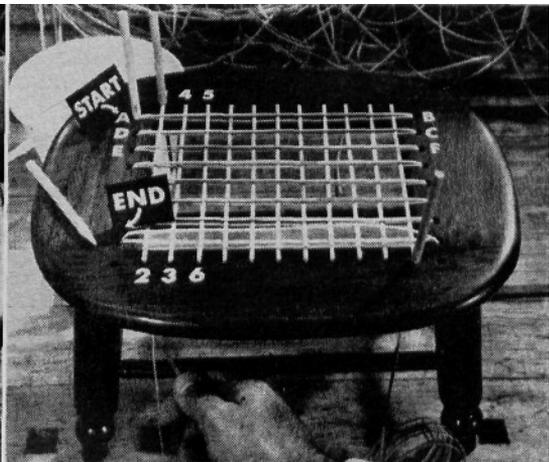
all glue and air to escape from the hole.

Lay out and cut the top's outside contour. After rounding the top edge with a spokeshave or block plane (do end grains first), finish-sand the piece. Since final assembly locks the stool together, make a test assembly.

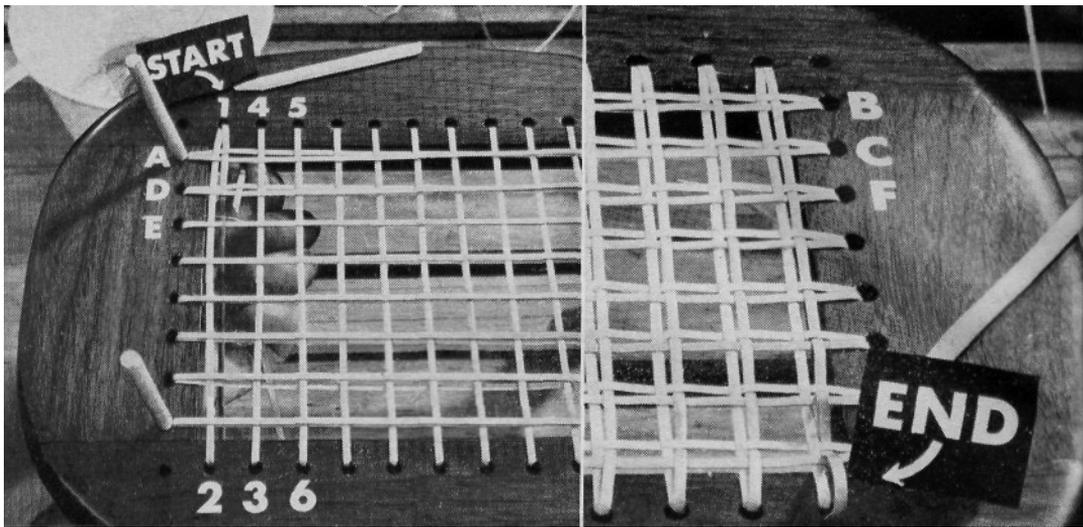
Continued



Step 2. Put 4" of cane down in hole 1, peg, and bring strand toward you. Insert into hole 2, pull taut, and bring up through hole 3. Continue weaving this way until all holes are filled as in Step 1.

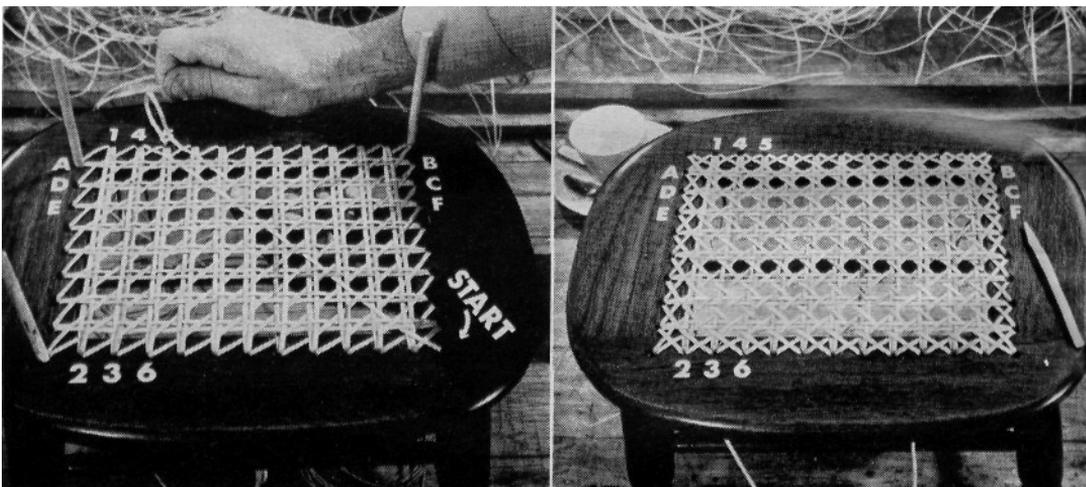


Step 3. This step is simply a repeat of the Step 1 weaving, but the strands of cane are kept to the side of those strung initially. Cane must be kept moistened. Text gives the solution to use.



Step 4. This is similar to Step 2, but this time cane is woven *under* Step 1 and *over* Step 3 strands (under the strands below, over the strands on top). After weaving first four strands, pull entire length

through. Here again, strands are kept to the side of cane previously woven in Step 2. To arrange the cane into neat squares, simply squeeze the strands together with your thumb and index finger.



Step 6. This is the opposite of the previous step. Strand runs under Steps 1 and 3 strands, and over those of Steps 2 and 4. Additionally, it runs over and under the strand woven in Step 5. After com-

pleting the caning operation, dampen the panel thoroughly and arrange the octagonal holes uniformly, using a peg. To keep the panel from becoming stiff, wipe it occasionally with a damp cloth.

The finish. The original shows neither wear nor distress marks. The principal signs of age are the craze marks in the varnish. To give the stool a finish that would take scuffing from shoes, I filled the open-grain walnut and applied satin-finish polyurethane varnish to all the wood surfaces.

Caning the top. Experts say a small

rectangle such as this is the simplest caning job you can tackle. After doing it, I agree. The photo sequence gives the steps.

To start, select a long strand and snip the end to a point. Next, soak it for about 10 minutes in a solution of three tablespoonfuls of glycerine, mixed with two cups of water. Two tricks I learned: (1)