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FOXFIRE

— *Traditional Baking* —



Edited by

FOXFIRE STUDENTS

Traditional Baking

The Foxfire Americana Library
Edited by Foxfire Students



Anchor Books
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A NOTE ABOUT THE FOXFIRE AMERICANA LIBRARY

For almost half a century, high school students in the Foxfire program in Rabun County, Georgia, have collected oral histories of their elders from the southern Appalachian region in an attempt to preserve a part of the rapidly vanishing heritage and dialect. The Foxfire Fund, Inc., has brought that philosophy of simple living to millions of readers, starting with the bestselling success of *The Foxfire Book* in the early 1970s. Their series of fifteen books and counting has taught creative self-sufficiency and has preserved the stories, crafts, and customs of the unique Appalachian culture for future generations.

Traditionally, books in the Foxfire series have included a little something for everyone in each and every volume. For the first time ever, through the creation of The Foxfire Americana Library, this forty-five-year collection of knowledge has been organized by subject. Whether down-home recipes or simple tips for both your household and garden, each book holds a wealth of tried-and-true information, all passed down by unforgettable people with unforgettable voices.

BREADS

CORN PONES

1 pint corn meal
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 tablespoon lard
milk

Mix together meal, powder, and salt, cut in lard, and add enough milk to make a stiff batter. Form into ponies with hands (or add some milk and drop from the end of a spoon), and place in a greased pan. Bake in a hot oven for about half an hour.

CORN CAKES

2 cups corn meal
1 kitchen spoon flour
2 eggs
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 tablespoon melted butter or lard
milk

Beat eggs, add meal, flour, salt, baking powder, and butter. Add enough milk to make a thin batter. Pour out onto a hot griddle and flip to other side when brown. Good with butter and syrup.

HUSH PUPPIES—Mix 1 cup flour, 1 cup corn meal, and a pinch of salt and soda. Add 1 egg and buttermilk until it is the right consistency to hold its shape when rolled into a ball. Mix in 1 medium onion chopped up, roll into balls about an inch to 2 inches across, and drop into a couple inches of hot fat. Let them deep fry until they're brown and crispy; drain a bit on some paper, and serve hot.

LIGHT BREAD

1 cake yeast
3 teaspoons sugar
1 pint warm water

2 medium potatoes
2 teaspoons salt
flour

Dissolve the yeast in 1 cup of the water. Cook the potatoes, mash very fine, and add yeast along with 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon sugar, and the rest of the water. Put in a jar and leave in a warm place to rise. Sift flour, and mix it in with the yeast mixture along with 1 more teaspoon salt and 2 more teaspoons sugar. Keep adding flour until it makes a firm dough. Let rise to double, knead, and make into loaves. Let rise for one hour, and then bake at about 350° until it tests done.

BRAN BREAD—Mix together 1 quart each of bran flour, white flour, and buttermilk. Add 1 cup each of seeded raisins and molasses, and last mix in 1 teaspoon each of baking soda and salt. Put into loaf pans and bake until done.

RYE BREAD—Sift together 1 cup of wheat flour, 1 cup rye flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of corn meal, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1 teaspoon baking powder.

Add enough buttermilk to make a firm dough, adding $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of soda per cup of buttermilk. Cut in 3 tablespoons of shortening, mix thoroughly, and roll out to about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Cut as you would biscuits, place on greased sheet, and bake at 450° for ten to twelve minutes.

CRACKLIN' BREAD—Prepare corn bread by using 2 cups of corn meal, 2 teaspoons of salt, 1 cup of buttermilk, 1 teaspoon of soda, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of baking powder. Mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cracklin's into the mixture. If it is too dry use some lukewarm water to make the right consistency for corn bread. Put in oven and cook until brown.

ASH CAKES—Mix up dough for corn bread, and make sure it's thick enough to hold its shape. Clean out a corner of the fireplace, put the "cake" in it, and cover it with a clean cloth. Put hot ashes over the cloth, then put hot coals on top of that. It takes about half an hour.

MOLASSES SWEET BREAD—Sift together 2 cups flour, 2 teaspoons baking powder, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon soda,

2 teaspoons ginger, and 1 teaspoon cinnamon. Add $\frac{1}{3}$ cup melted butter, 1 cup molasses (or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar and $\frac{2}{3}$ cup molasses), $\frac{3}{4}$ cup buttermilk, and 1 egg. Mix well, pour into a loaf pan, and bake at 350° for about fifty minutes.

OLD-FASHIONED GINGERBREAD

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter
1 cup molasses
2 cups flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon soda
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons ginger
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour milk
nuts or raisins if desired

Mix all ingredients together, put into a large loaf pan, and bake for about an hour. (This recipe is at least a hundred years old.)

SYRUP BREAD

Mix up flour, soda, salt, and buttermilk as you would for a plain bread recipe, and instead of using sugar to sweeten it, use homemade syrup. Bake like any other bread.

CAKES

CARROT PUDDING OR CAKE

1/2 cup sifted flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
3/4 teaspoon baking soda
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/3 cup milk
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
2/3 cup sugar
2/3 cup currants
2/3 cup raisins
2/3 cup grated raw
potatoes
1 cup grated raw carrots

Mix and sift ingredients. Add the fruits, stir until well coated, then stir in potatoes, carrots, and milk. Pour into a greased pan and cover with a lid and steam in a large pan of hot water for 2¹/₂ hours.

Serve with *Carrot Pudding Sauce*, made as follows: Mix 1 cup powdered sugar, 1 large teaspoon vanilla or wine, and the yolks of two eggs. Beat. When ready to serve, add 1/2 pint cream whipped.

PUMPKIN CAKE

1 1/2 cups corn oil
2 cups sugar
3 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 scant teaspoons soda
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons vanilla
4 eggs

2 cups pumpkin
1 cup raisins or fruit cake mix
1 cup chopped nuts
2 teaspoons pumpkin spice

Mix corn oil, sugar, flour, spice, powder, soda, salt, and pumpkin. Add eggs beaten well. Add vanilla, nuts, and raisins that have been mixed with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of extra flour. Bake in a loaf pan for about an hour at 400–450°.

DRIED APPLE CAKE—Mix up a regular white or yellow cake recipe, and bake it in four thin layers. Mix 1 pint dried apples with 1 pint of water, and cook until thick and the apples are mashed. Sweeten to taste with syrup and add some spices. Let cool a bit, and spread the mixture between the layers and on top of the cake. You can cover the sides if you want.

MOLASSES COOKIES

1 cup brown sugar
1 egg
1 cup molasses
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup melted lard or butter
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup boiling water salt to taste

Add enough flour to knead. Roll, cut out, and bake in hot oven.

PIES

TAME GOOSEBERRY PIE—Mix 2 cups of berries with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sugar, and cook, stirring to mash the berries, until thick. Make some plain biscuit dough, roll out, and cut into 1" wide strips. Pour the berries into a pie plate, lay the strips of dough crosswise on the berries, and bake at about 450° until the crust is done.

SWEET POTATO PIE

2 cups sweet potatoes, diced and cooked
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup molasses
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ginger
 $\frac{1}{2}$ stick butter
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sweet milk pinch of salt
biscuit dough
other spices if desired

Mix together all the ingredients except the dough and bring to a boil. Cut rolled dough into cubes and drop into boiling mixture. Put thin slices of dough on top. Put pan in oven and bake until crust is brown.

BLACKBERRY COBBLER

Blackberry, enough for one pie
sugar to taste
butter, small amount
biscuit dough, enough for several biscuits

Cook the blackberries until they come to a boil, add as much or little sugar as you want, and then add some butter. Cook until thick. Roll out the dough, cut as for biscuits, and drop into the blackberries. Then roll some dough thin, cut into strips, and place on top of the blackberries. Set the pan in the oven until the crust on top is brown.

MOLASSES CANDY—Combine 1 cup of molasses, 1 cup of water, a few grains of salt. Boil ingredients (do not stir) to hard ball stage. Remove from the fire, and let stand until cool enough to hold in well greased hands. After pulling for some

time it will change from brown to a yellowish color. Cut into pieces.

AUNT ARIE'S RECIPE FOR EGG CUSTARD

(Cooked on a wood stove)

Plain biscuit dough

One egg

1 cup sweet milk

1 handful flour

1 teaspoon nutmeg

$\frac{1}{2}$ teacup of sugar

Line a small pie pan with plain biscuit dough rolled thin. Then, in a separate bowl, mix up one egg (beaten well), one cup of sweet milk, a handful of flour, a teaspoon of nutmeg, a half a teacup of sugar.

Mix it all up well, pour it into the crust, and, using just a little wood so the fire won't be too hot, bake it slowly until it sets. It will "blubber up"—or bubble, and then the bubbles will settle.

At this point, it is ready to eat. Serves four.

CHURNING YOUR OWN BUTTER

The churn is usually a 4–5 gallon stoneware jar with a wooden lid and a dasher. It should be filled half, or slightly over half, full with rich milk which should be mostly cream.

Then set the churn aside so that the cream can “turn,” or clabber. The time required for this step depends on the temperature of the cream. In the summer, for instance, the cream can be “poured up” one night and churned the next. The cream will be ready in three days if it is warmed on alternate sides by a fireplace in the winter.

It is important that the clabbered cream be churned when it has turned. One test of readiness is to tilt the churn to its side. The liquid should hold together in one form, separating cleanly from the sides of the container. If left too long, the cream will curdle and separate, and it will not make good butter. On the other hand, if churned too early while it is still “blinky milk,” or sour milk, it won’t make good butter either.

The butter itself is made by agitating the clabbered milk with a dasher which, in many cases, is a homemade affair. It consists of a stick similar to a broom handle, one end of which is nailed to the center of either a cross (two slats 4” long, 2” wide, and $\frac{1}{2}$ ” thick attached together) or a circular piece of wood 1” thick, 4” in diameter, containing four holes, each 1” in diameter spaced equidistant around the center.



ILLUSTRATION 1 Margaret Norton still churns several times a week. Her butter is not only used by several families in the area, but also sold in the local supermarket.

The dasher is inserted into the churn, and the churn's opening is covered by a tightly fitting wooden lid which has a hole in its center for the dasher stick. The lid prevents splattering as the dasher is agitated up and down. The clabbered cream must be continually agitated by this up and down motion of the dasher for thirty to forty minutes.

The temperature of the cream has a great deal to do with the time required in churning and the quality of the final product. If the clabbered cream is too warm, the result will be soft white puffy butter. Cold water will improve the texture.

Clabbered milk that is too cold, on the other hand, will yield specks, or small balls of butter that refuse to stick together.

Hot water, stirred with the dasher into the cold liquid, will help gather the butter.

When the butter gathers adequately, remove the lid and stir gently with the dasher in a sideways motion bringing the butter together ([ILLUSTRATION 2](#)). Lift the lumps of butter out, drain, and place them in a bowl. The experts that we interviewed disagreed on the next step. Mrs. Norton next places her butter in the refrigerator overnight to chill it. Then she molds it, adding salt ($\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon per pint of butter).



ILLUSTRATION 2 Gathering the butter.

Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Phillips feel that rinsing the butter with cold water immediately after taking it from the churn gives it a fresher flavor and causes it to keep longer. They also add salt to boost the flavor. The liquid left in the churn after the butter has been removed is buttermilk.

Ice and a cold mold will make butter molding easier. If you haven't kept the butter in the refrigerator overnight, drop ice into the bowl of butter and stir it through the warm butter with

clean hands. Then squeeze out any water and press the butter into a mold. When it is filled, push down on the handle of the mold, which acts like a piston, thus releasing the “print” of butter. It should weight out at approximately a half pound, or a pound, depending on the size of the mold used.

Then store the butter in a cool place, ready to spread on hot breads or to use in making cakes.

To get a small amount of butter and buttermilk in a hurry, an ordinary glass jar can be used. The clabbered milk should be shaken for approximately twenty minutes in the container. Then proceed as above.

Need a diversion to make the time go faster? You might like to try the traditional chant that the churner said in time to the up and down movements of the dasher. The arrows indicate the dasher movement.

↓ ↑ ↓ ↑
Come butter come

↓ ↑ ↓ ↑
Come butter come

↓ ↑ ↓ ↑
Peter standing at the gate

↓ ↑ ↓ ↑
Waiting for a butter cake

↓ ↑ ↓ ↑
Come butter come.

BUTTER CHURNS

Many years ago men who worked skillfully with wood were indispensable to those around them. Everything from houses to banjos required wood, and men who knew how to work with wood were needed in every community. One essential trade was that of a cooper—someone who made kegs, barrels, buckets, and other related vessels. These wooden containers were used to hold cornmeal, water, salted meat, nails—anything that could be stored or carried in them.

We at *Foxfire* had been interested for a long time in finding a master of this trade, but could not locate anyone who was still actively working at it. Finally, Mr. Bill Henry, a member of the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild and one of our subscribers, told us of a friend of his in Sneedville, Tennessee who was still making churns, buckets and large wooden tubs. He offered to direct us there and introduce us, and we gratefully accepted. Four of our staff members went to Sneedville and ended up spending an entire day with Alex Stewart—watching, listening, and recording as he made a churn. We found him to be one of the most interesting men we have ever met.

Born and reared on Newman Ridge within sight of his present home, Mr. Stewart grew up watching and learning from his father and grandfather, both of whom had worked with wood all their lives. From them he learned to cut and season his own wood and make all his own tools by hand. The outbuildings on his farm include a small sawmill and a blacksmith shop where he forges the tools he works with. He has power tools as well, but he prefers his own handmade manual and foot-powered tools, feeling that he has better control with them and gets the job done just as quickly.

In the course of the day we spent with Mr. Stewart, we were not only impressed with his work, but with the things he said. He readily answered all our questions and often made interesting comments of his own.



ILLUSTRATION 3 Alex Stewart

“I’ve made all my tools, matter a’fact, ever’thing I got. Well, this [shaving horse] I guess is about fifty years old. I used t’have another’un. It got old, an’ I made this’un. If I’ve got it right, this is th’scond one there is in the United States made like this. They’s one more like it, and I made it. My grandfather, I learnt this from him. He made ever’thing—wheels, anything could be thought about, he made it, an’ I got th’pattern off’a his’n. An’ m’daddy—he worked at it as long as he lived. I’ve been doin’ it since I’uz old enough t’do it ... about sixty-five or seventy years. When I’uz young, ever’time I’d get a chance, I’uz a’foolin’ with it. Yeah, I just delighted in it. Anything that you delight in, it ain’t any trouble for you t’do it, but somethin’ you don’t delight in, it’s pretty hard.

“Yeah, I made these tools. I used t’make about anything I wanted to. It’s a lot better than stuff you buy. It makes me feel

good. I've made many of a churn an' sold it for two dollars. No, not a regret, not in this line [of work].”

Mr. Stewart also displayed a ready humor and often had us smiling or laughing as he worked and talked. One of the most pleasant and touching surprises we had that day occurred at noon when we discovered Mr. Stewart's daughter had prepared a wonderful dinner for all of us. The large table fairly groaned under the weight of all the good food. We ate an incredible amount and then trooped back out to continue our work, well satisfied.

A description of Alex Stewart would not be complete without telling about the workshop where he spends so much time. It is located in the barn which stands behind and to the left of his house. Probably the first thing one notices in walking into the barn is the sight and smell of cedar, stacked in the corner to dry, and lying all over the floor in the form of chips and shavings. Mr. Stewart uses cedar to make his churns, buckets, and other containers because cedar doesn't shrink when drying out after it has been wet. Some people use poplar as it is also easy to work with, but it is apt to shrink after it has been wet if water is not left in it.

On the right-hand wall hang the handmade tools. In their respective places stand the handmade shaving horse, foot-powered lathe, and jointer. Also scattered about are various things he has made—churns, barrels, buckets, piggins, and a big, wooden washtub. It was here that we discovered that he also makes rolling pins, bread boards, brooms, ingenious little wooden puzzles, and many other things. His son, Milum, showed us many of these things and told us about them.

Alex Stewart did indeed become a person for whom we developed a vast amount of respect and admiration as we watched and listened to him, and at the end of the day, when we were forced to say good-by and head back, we all agreed that we came away with much more than the directions for this chapter.

LAURIE BRUNSON

[Ed. note—Since this was written, Alex Stewart has retired and donated all his tools to a museum in Tennessee.]

Photographs by Stan Echols and Gary Warfield.



ILLUSTRATION 4 Alex poses with examples of his work: a churn, piggin (foreground), tub, and bucket. The dimensions of the churn follow.

Capacity: approximately five gallons; height: $20\frac{3}{4}$ inches; diameter of top: $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches; diameter of bottom (head): 10 inches; circumference at top: $24\frac{7}{8}$ inches; circumference at bottom (head): 34 inches; average width of staves at top: $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches; average width of staves at bottom: $2\frac{1}{16}$ inches; width of hoops: $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches; length of dasher: 32 inches; dasher crosspieces: 2 inches wide by $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches long; diameter of dasher: 1 inch.

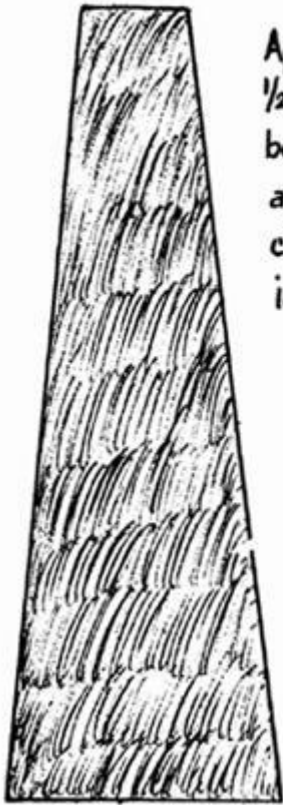


ILLUSTRATION 5 **Step 1:** Cut the cedar in the fall when the sap is down. Stack it up to dry for about six months. When you're ready to make a churn, split the cedar into staves with a stave froe.



ILLUSTRATION 6 **Step 2:** Measure fifteen to twenty staves and saw them off to the same length. The length is decided by the size of the churn needed. (The churn featured in this chapter has staves $20\frac{3}{4}$ inches long. Sixteen staves were used.) Smooth the staves on a shaving horse and start tapering slightly “by guess.” All the staves should be tapered so that they are narrower at the top than at the bottom.

Front View of Stave



Approximately
 $\frac{1}{2}$ " wider at
bottom than
at top for
churn pictured
in this article

Side View

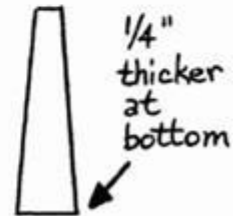


ILLUSTRATION 7 **Step 3:** Shave off the sides of the staves at the top end so the staves will be about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thicker at the bottom end than at the top end. This helps to keep the hoops from sliding down when they are added later. This churn's sixteen staves had an average width of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the top (no stave was less than $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, nor more than $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide) and $2\frac{1}{16}$ inches at the bottom (no stave less than $\frac{11}{16}$ inch, nor more than $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches wide). Fitting in the last stave (**Step 5**, [ILLUSTRATION 18](#)) compensates for the inconsistency in stave width.

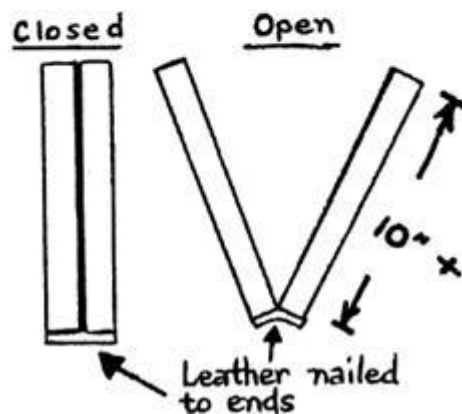
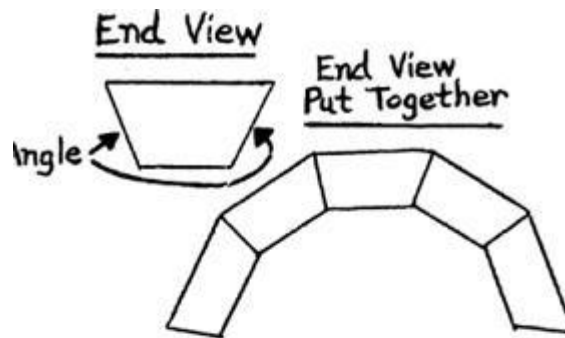


ILLUSTRATION 8 Decide what the diameter of the head will be (8 inches, 10 inches, 12 inches, etc.). The diameter of the head (which is the bottom of the churn) determines what angle the stave edges must have to fit together correctly. Mr. Stewart made a gauge to use as an easy guide for angling his stave edges. The gauge is simply two small boards, $10'' \times \frac{3}{4}'' \times \frac{3}{4}''$, joined on one end with a leather hinge.

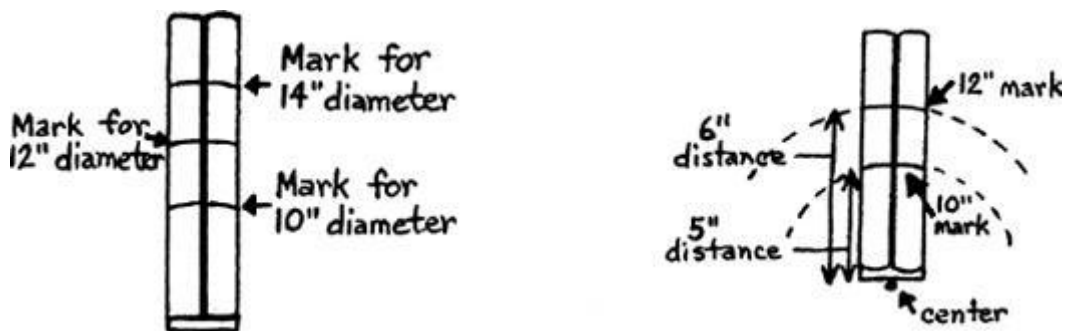


ILLUSTRATION 9 These two diagrams illustrate how the gauge is marked for various diameters. The placement for the marks on the gauge are determined by measuring off the radius of each desired diameter (using a compass) from the hinged end of the gauge. The hinged end is treated as the center of the proposed circle (head), with the marks on the gauge representing a part of the circumference of that circle.



ILLUSTRATION 10 Alex uses a compass to mark his gauge for different-sized churn heads.



ILLUSTRATION 11 Using a long-jointer, wood is planed from the edges of each stave until the angled edges fit the gauge.

Checking edge angle of stave
used for churn with 10" head
diameter

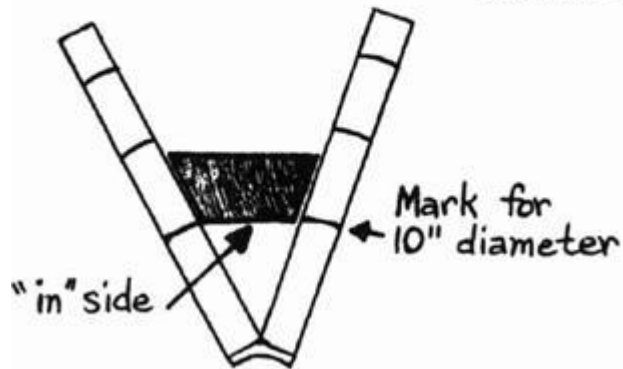


ILLUSTRATION 12 The angled edges must fit the gauge as illustrated. The "in" side of the stave is the side placed on the mark.



ILLUSTRATION 13 Alex checks his stave angle on the gauge. The correct angle should be maintained as closely as possible for the full length of the stave. However, the angle does not have to be perfect. The wood, being pliable, seats itself. The last stave to be fitted (**Step 5, [ILLUSTRATION 18](#)**) has to be driven into place. This closes most of the cracks which may result from slight errors in the angles of the other staves.



ILLUSTRATION 14 **Step 4:** After staves are tapered and sides angled, Alex prepares to fit them into two temporary hoops.

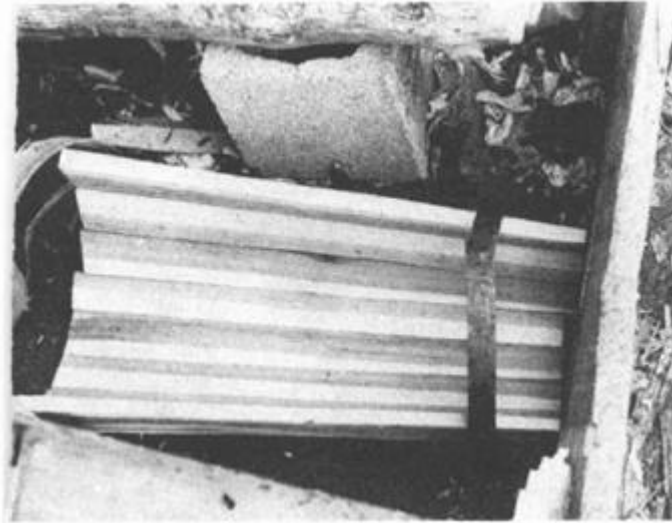


ILLUSTRATION 15 The large hoop goes around the bottom (head) and the small one around the top. (Alex used a metal hoop for the top end and an old wooden hoop with a double knot fastening it at the bottom end.)

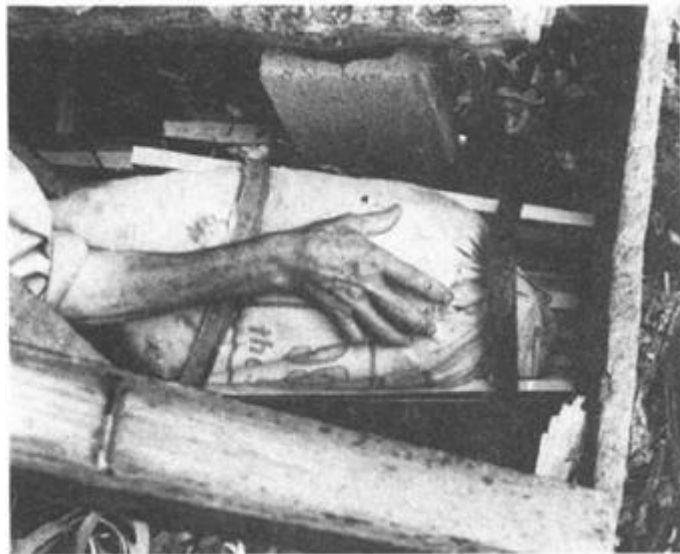


ILLUSTRATION 16 Alex pushes a straw-filled bag between the hoops to hold the shape as the staves are added.



ILLUSTRATION 17 The staves are added carefully.



ILLUSTRATION 18 **Step 5:** Use a hammer to fit in the last stave. If it won't fit, adjust the other staves with the jointer. A tight fit is absolutely necessary.



ILLUSTRATION 19 A chisel can be used as shown to help fit the last stave.



ILLUSTRATION 20 **Step 6:** Pull out the bag and hammer the staves until they are even.



ILLUSTRATION 21 Trim off uneven edges on the bottom with a pocketknife. Use a hammer to adjust the bands to higher or lower positions (for a better fit).

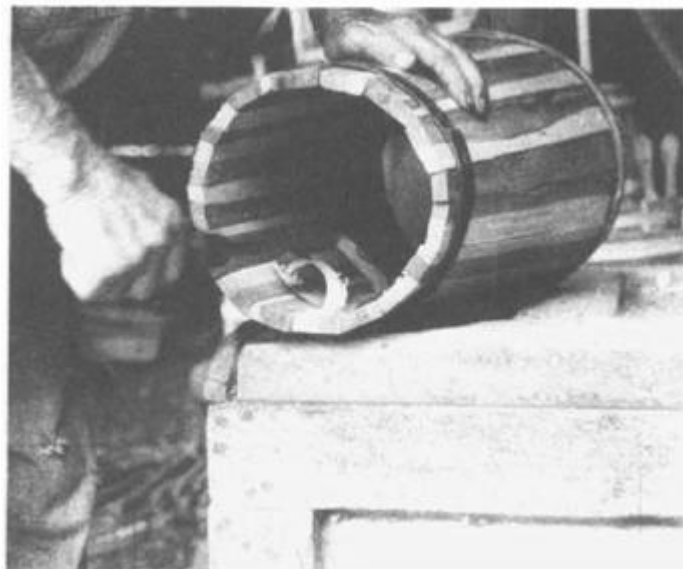


ILLUSTRATION 22 **Step 7:** Using a round-shave, smooth (or dress) the inside of the churn. It is especially important to smooth the inside near the bottom end, where the head will be fitted.



ILLUSTRATION 23 **Step 8:** Use a rasp to smooth the outer edges of the top and bottom. The churn must sit straight and flat.



ILLUSTRATION 24 **Step 9:** Use a croze ([ILLUSTRATION 25](#)) to cut a groove for the head to fit in.

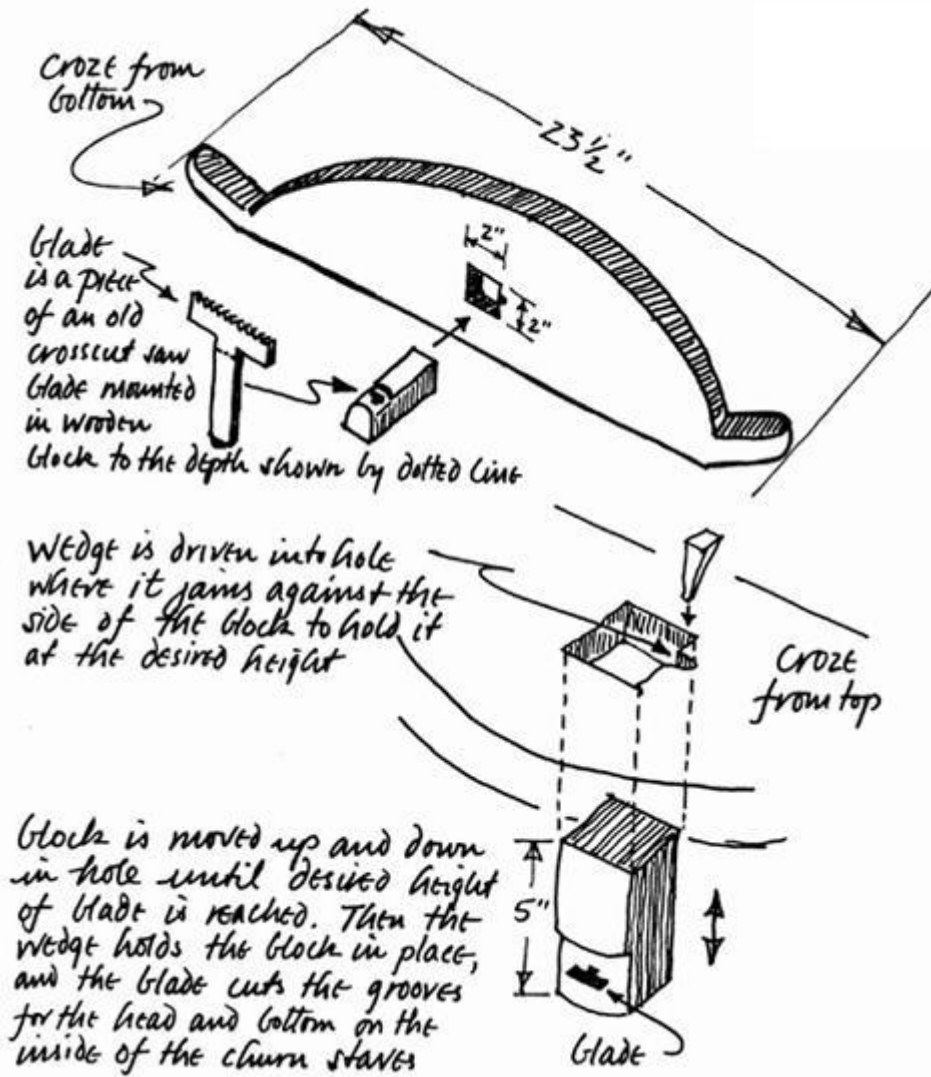


ILLUSTRATION 25

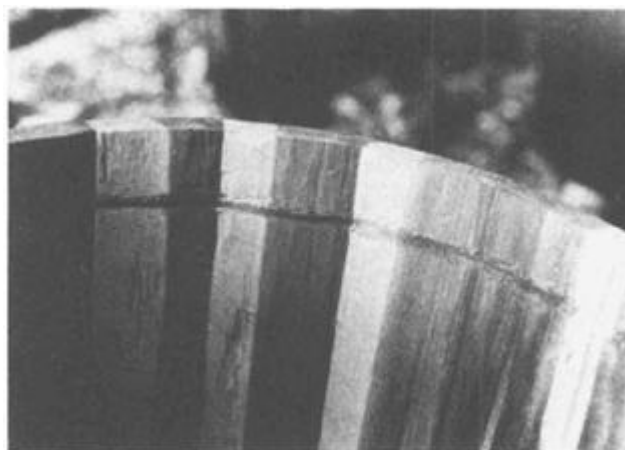


ILLUSTRATION 26 This groove was cut one inch from the bottom edge of the staves.



ILLUSTRATION 27 **Step 10:** Use cedar board(s) for the head (the bottom of the churn). Use any size board and as many pieces of board as needed to make the proper size circle. Use a compass to mark the proper size.



ILLUSTRATION 28 Cut off the board piece with a handsaw.



ILLUSTRATION 29 For this churn, Alex used two pieces of board to make two half-circles.



ILLUSTRATION 30 **Step 11:** Use a shaving horse and drawing knife to smooth both pieces.



ILLUSTRATION 31 Remark a half-circle on each piece with a compass.



ILLUSTRATION 32 Begin to cut the half-circles out with a handsaw. Saw as close to the edge of the half-circle as possible.



ILLUSTRATION 33 Trim the edges of the half-circle with a pocketknife.

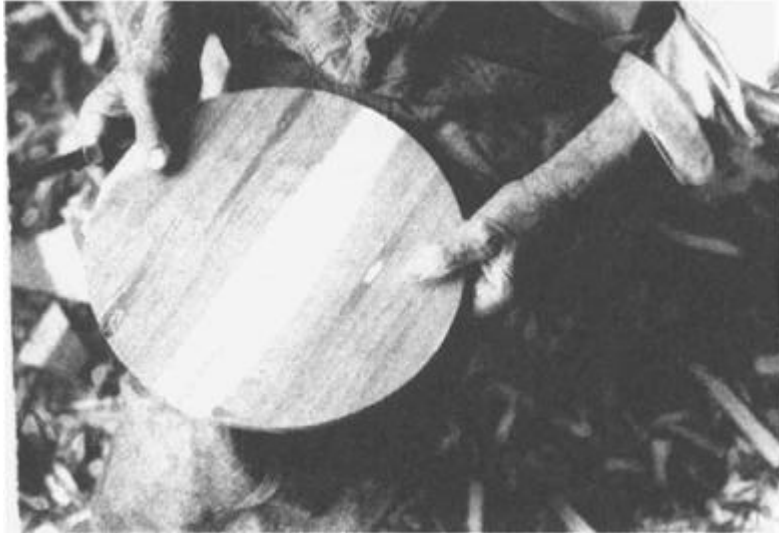


ILLUSTRATION 34 After trimming, hold the half-circles together and check the smoothness of the circumference.



ILLUSTRATION 35 **Step 12:** Begin to bevel the edges of the half-circles with a drawing knife.

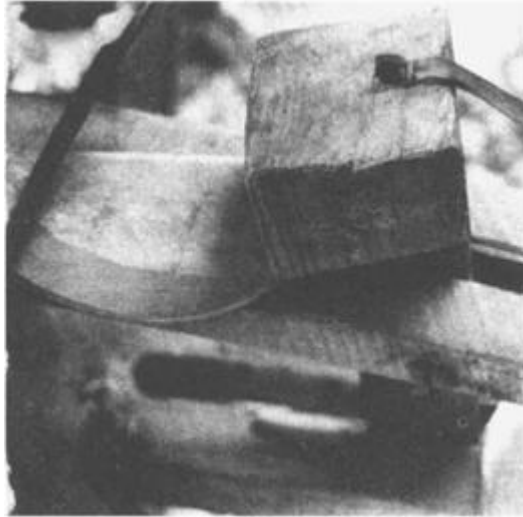


ILLUSTRATION 36 Finish beveling the edges, and smooth off with a pocketknife.



ILLUSTRATION 37 **Step 13:** Take the bottom (head) hoop off. Fit the two halves of the head into the groove made by the croze. Put another temporary hoop on that fits in the middle of the churn. (Alex replaced the bottom wooden hoop with a metal middle hoop.)



ILLUSTRATION 38 With a chisel and hammer, force the middle hoop down as tightly as possible.



ILLUSTRATION 39 Tap the staves with a hammer to make sure the head is in the groove tightly. Keep tightening the hoop with a chisel and hammer.

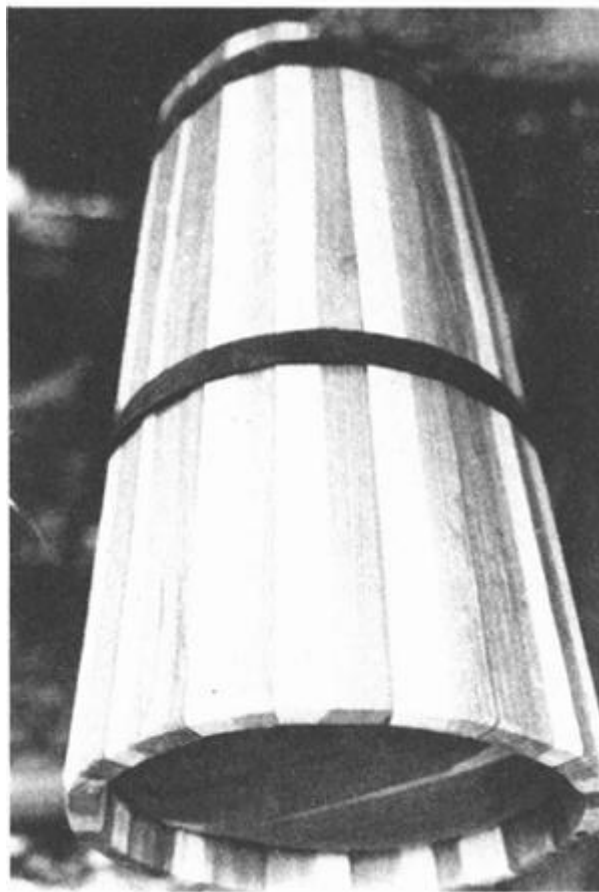


ILLUSTRATION 40 When the middle hoop is tight, the staves and head should be secure if the churn is lifted.



ILLUSTRATION 41 **Step 14:** With the temporary bands still on, smooth outside of the churn with a wood rasp.



ILLUSTRATION 42 **Step 15:** To measure for a permanent bottom hoop, take a string and measure the very bottom of the churn.



ILLUSTRATION 43 **Step 16:** For the hoops, use green white oak. If the oak is dry, soak it overnight. Split the oak into strips using a froe and mallet. Measure the length with string, allowing six extra inches for the notch and lock.



ILLUSTRATION 44 **Step 17:** With a drawing knife and shaving horse, smooth the oak pieces to $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick and 1 to $\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide.

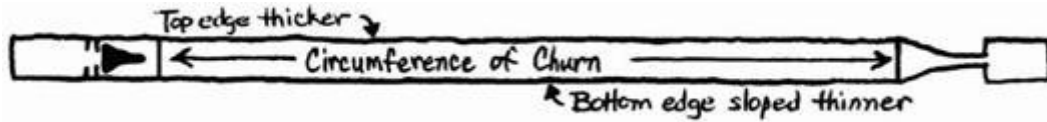


ILLUSTRATION 45 Mark the length of the circumference of the churn on an oak piece, allowing three extra inches on each end for the lock. The top edge (edge toward the small end of the churn) should be made thicker than the bottom edge for a tighter fit. Use a pocketknife to smooth, if necessary.



ILLUSTRATION 46 **Step 18:** Begin to shape one hoop end with a pocketknife; the hoop end is shaved as it is shaped. Each hoop will eventually fit around the churn and the ends will fasten together.



ILLUSTRATION 47 To create the notch, place the chisel down on the hoop and hammer it through the hoop to make the first hole.



ILLUSTRATION 48 Make a second hole with the chisel.



ILLUSTRATION 49 Using a pocketknife, begin to cut out and shape the notch. Continue to shape the notch as shown.



ILLUSTRATION 50 On the opposite end of the hoop, cut with a knife as shown, until the inner side ([ILLUSTRATION 51](#)) and the outer side ([ILLUSTRATION 52](#)) are finished.



ILLUSTRATION 51



ILLUSTRATION 52



ILLUSTRATION 53 **Step 19:** Bend the hoop around your knee to make it curve, and hook the ends of the hoop together (*right*).

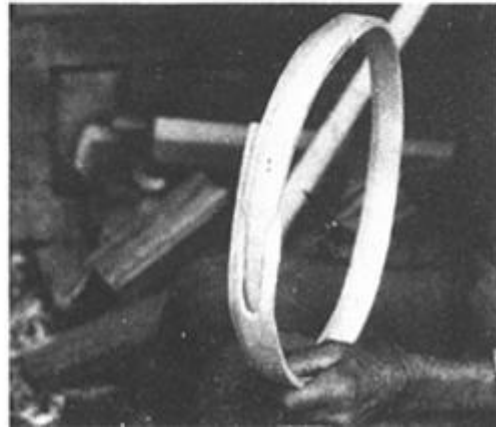


ILLUSTRATION 54 Trim the edges with a pocketknife (*top*), and shave the inside of the joint (where the ends come together) with a pocketknife to fit flush with hoop. Finished hoop should appear as shown (*bottom*).



ILLUSTRATION 55 **Step 20:** Put the hoop around the churn and force it down to the bottom (head) of the churn with a hammer and stick of wood—keep the thick edge of the hoop up, toward the narrow (top) part of the churn.

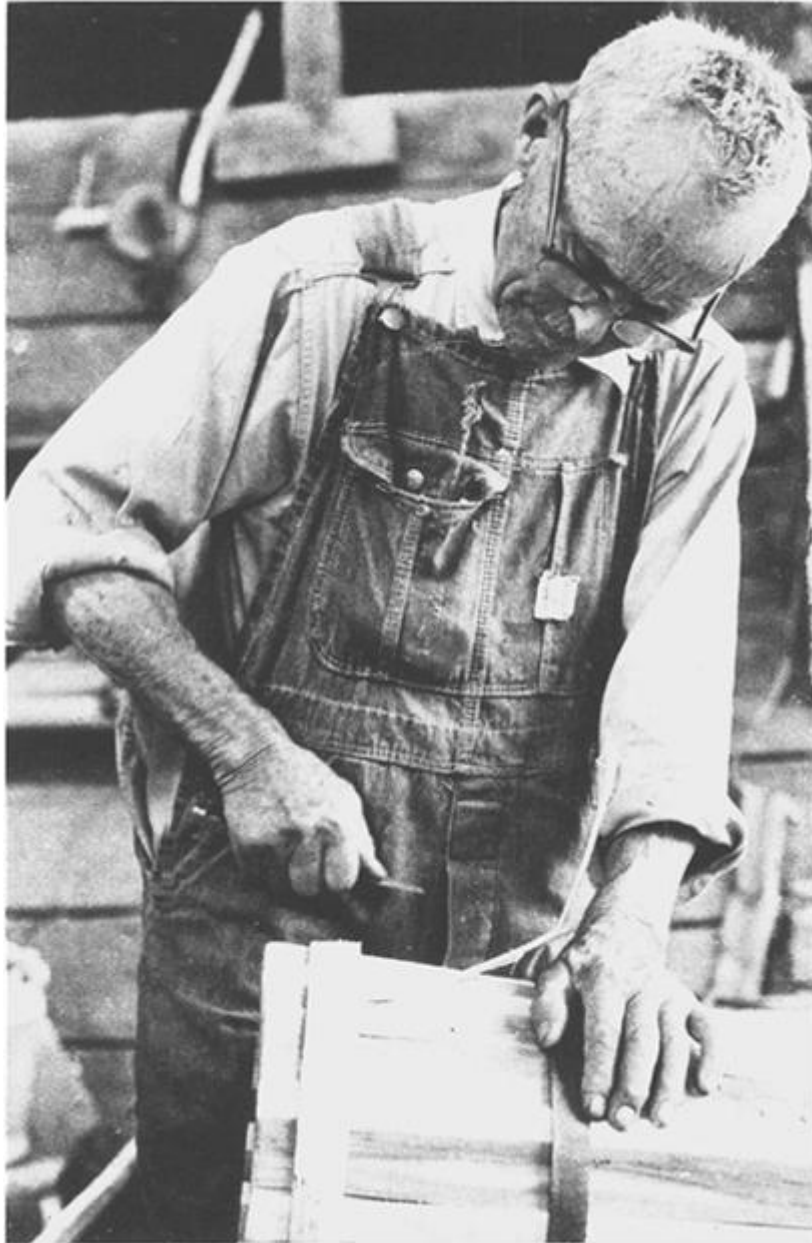


ILLUSTRATION 56 **Step 21:** With a pocketknife, trim off some of the thickness of the top side of the hoop. Smooth the outside of the churn with a rasp again.



ILLUSTRATION 57 **Step 22:** Add three more hoops, using the same procedure. With a handsaw, cut off the staves at top to even them. Use a rasp to smooth the top and bevel the edge.



ILLUSTRATION 58 **Step 23:** For the lid, obtain the circumference using the same procedure as for the head ([ILLUSTRATION 27](#)–[ILLUSTRATION 36](#)). For groove on

the underside of the lid, use a handsaw and trim with a pocketknife and rasp. Drill a hole slightly larger than the diameter of the dasher handle in the center.



ILLUSTRATION 59 The top should fit right on top of the churn, with a hole in the middle that the dasher handle can easily slide through.



ILLUSTRATION 60 Step 24: For the dasher handle, use oak or maple and turn on a foot-powered lathe (see *Foxfire 2*, p.164), leaving an extra chunk of thickness toward the bottom to prevent the crosspieces from being forced up the handle (*top*). Use two pieces of cedar for the crosspieces, shaped as shown. Drill a hole in the middle of the crosspieces to fit the stick in. Smooth with a pocketknife and force the crosspieces onto the handle. Small nails or pegs can be driven in the bottom to hold the cross-pieces securely to the handle (*bottom*).

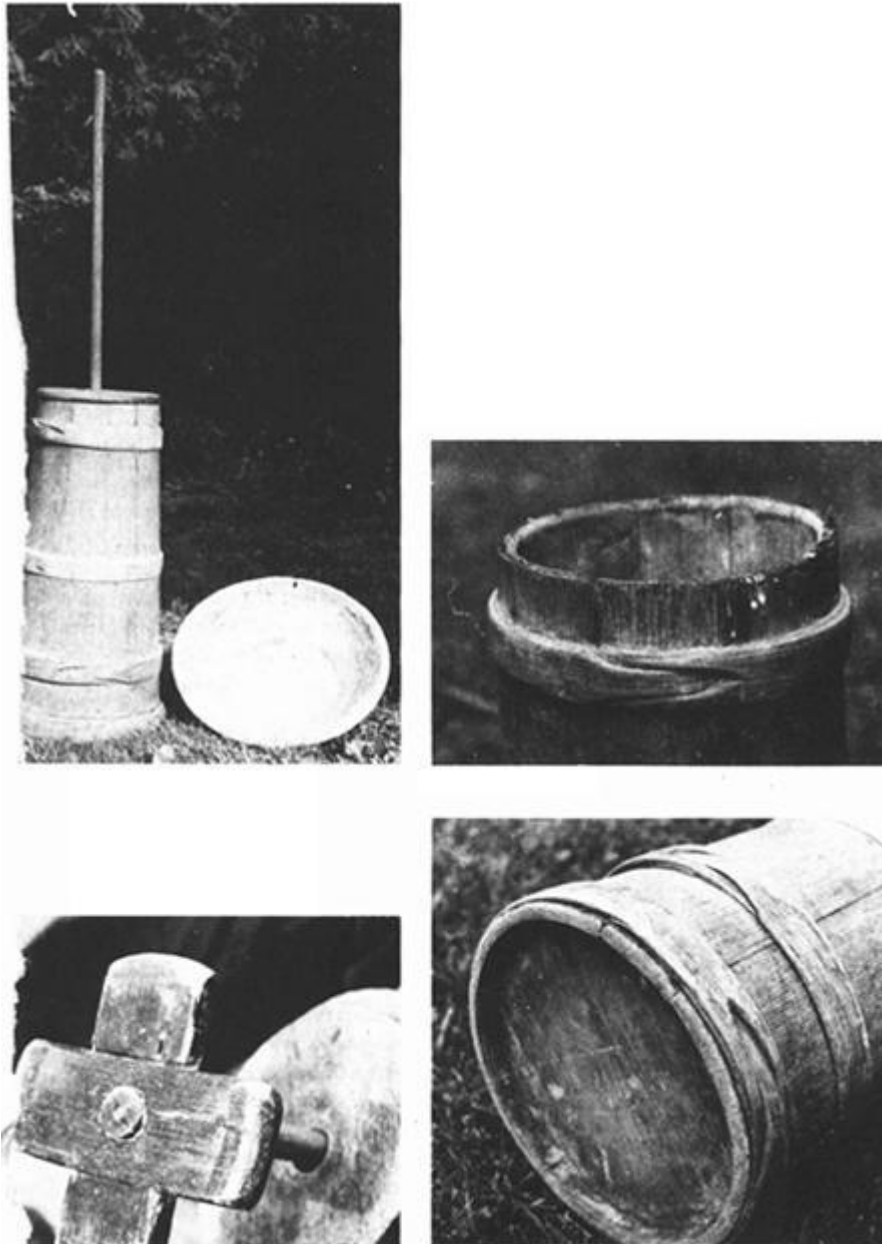


ILLUSTRATION 61 This 145-year-old churn, passed on to one of our contacts by his grandmother, shows how accurately Alex Stewart has maintained the traditional pattern for his own churns. The difference is that the churn (and the equally old wooden bowl) pictured here are made of yellow poplar—a wood more frequently used than cedar, as it would not affect the taste of the butter in the way cedar might.

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— *Traditional Baking* —



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