

INTERIOR MOTIVES

# Painted furniture held interest



NAOMI STONE LEVY

Painted furniture of Early American derivation, prior to the American Revolution, was most simple in form and almost primitive in character.

The early settlers brought some of their possessions with them to the New World, but that which was produced here was mostly

made of pine or ash. The colonists' basic needs were utilitarian; ergo the pieces were straightforward, durable and usable.

Eventually there seemed to be a need to enhance this simple furniture's appearance. Painting it was logical. At first it was a light wash of a single

color, not always completely covering the wood. At a later date another light wash was added, again not always covering. The second wash rarely matched the first, which created an interesting double finish color.

Chests with lift tops, cabinets, cupboards and Welsh dressers were for storage (before closets) and of course tables and chairs were the necessities of life. All of the preceding were more cherished if they were painted, and the painting of them became more sophisticated as time elapsed.

Truly Early American furniture pieces (antiques, if you will) are a far cry from that found in stores. You can create awesome and individual examples with ingenuity.

"Pennsylvania Dutch" bears imita-

tion. These early settlers executed some prodigious designs, and handpainted them on the fronts and sides of cabinets and on the tops of chests. Search at antique shows and shops for the whimsical and charming. You can even buy stencils of delightful patterns and color them to suit your needs.

In the history of painted furniture we find more elegance in French and Oriental, much later in time. They often used lacquer. The basic color usually was black, but white, red and other colors were also available. Designs were added.

The most decorative was named "Coromandel," gorgeous beyond my descriptive powers. You must actually see it to comprehend. Again I suggest a visit to antique shops to identify Coromandel.

Naomi Stone Levy, a Franklin resident, is an interior designer and a former secretary of the American Society of Interior Designers. You can leave her a message by dialing (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1897.

## Colorworks offers art show at new studio

Join a double celebration at Colorworks, 32506 Northwestern Highway in Farmington Hills, Wednesday-Thursday, Oct. 23-24.

Preview Colorworks' wonderful new studio of custom interior design and attend its annual fall fine art event. The art show presents works in various media by more than 100 artists.

Fine art, great food and good company will be featured. Hours are 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday.

Call (810) 851-7540 for information.

## Books, American art focus of talks

Is there gold in your attic? Visit the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 19, for a lecture on what makes a book rare and valuable.

Robert Gaylor, the curator of rare

books at Oakland University, will offer assess but not formally appraise books.

Judy Knowles of the Detroit Institute of Arts speakers bureau will show slides, "American Art with a Michigan Connection," 10 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 2.

Admission is \$2 for adults, \$1 for senior citizens and students. The museum is on Van Hoosen Road, one mile east of Rochester Road, off Tienken and four miles north of M-59. Preregistration is requested. Call (810) 656-4663.

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