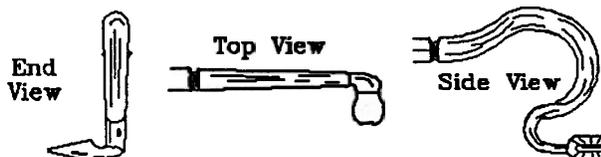
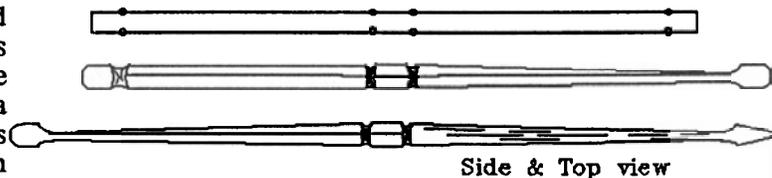
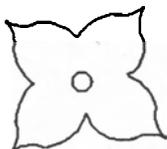


## Northern Italian Cassone Handle circa 1550-1575 S.A.Bloom

The original objects are found on an ornately carved, walnut chest (lidded and footed) in the possession of H.Stetser of St.Petersburg, FL (who graciously provided access, measurements, and drawings). The chest is of northern Italian origins from the third quarter of the 16th century. It measures 42" long x 21" wide by 22" high. The handles are round, with a gentle taper and are scored near the center on the front surface. The ends of the handles are flattened and turned at 90 degrees. The ends act as stops so that when lifting the chest, the handles cannot go beyond a perpendicular position, thus preventing the lifter's hands from being crushed. After 400 years, the chest shows little damage from the stops. In the project described below, I've added rosettes behind the handles as a precaution as I suspect that they will be needed on a soft-wood chest. I also altered the design by leaving the center section as a square bead.



Start with a 2' 13" long piece of 1/2" square stock and mark them at 3/4" and 6" from each end. Lightly fuller at the 3/4" marks & incise a groove at the 6" marks. Taper from the 6" to the 3/4" position and round the stock (I found that a belt sander helped substantially). Form the ends into wedge-shaped oval finials. Bend the tapers through two decreasing curves and turn the finial at 90 degrees as shown. A handle will measure approximately 8" x 4".



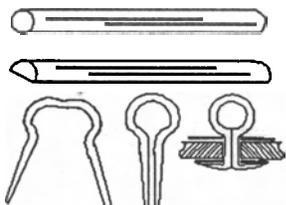
Cut the 4 rosettes from 16-gauge sheet steel and use a chisel to incise veination patterns. Drill a 1/2" hole in the center and make short angled cuts in each leaf edge. Bend back the metal at the cut, creating a serration and a triangle of metal which can be driven into the wood to secure the rosette.

Form the 4 eyelets from 3/8" round stock swaged into half-rounds. Draw out the legs. Make sure the eyes are large enough to accomodate the handle just proximal to the finials and shape the legs so that they will fit through the holes in the rosettes. When satisfied, install them on the handles.

Determine the spacing on the handle between the eyelet attachment points. Drill 1/2" holes in the chest, place & secure the rosettes over the holes (orient the leaves so that the finial will contact metal, not wood), insert the eyelets, place washers over the legs inside the chest and clench the legs over the washers.

I find that a through wire brushing followed by a coat of clear acrylic spray generates a pleasing surface finish.

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