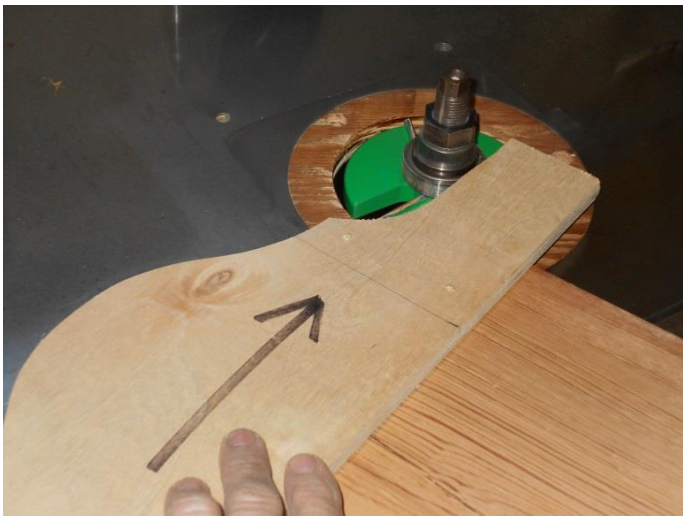
Making Curved Moldings

Many times, especially on things such as headboards and doors, moldings must be made to match a given radius. These are some of the processes that I've used in various pieces over the years. In this case it happens to be on a door. The door is made of old recycled pine and fir with just one coat of wipe on oil finish topped off with a tinted wax.

The stiles and rails are cut to size and shape. Mortices and tenons are cut and then, using a slot cutter in the router, a groove is cut in the interior edges of both the stiles and rails. The door is then glued together. The panels go in later…. WHAT? This is actually a pretty old method for making doors and it opens up (get it?) all kinds of design possibilities. The groove receives a spline. The panel sets between the splines and the molding is attached to the splines.



Using a panel raising cutter with a bearing in the shaper, I'm "raising" the panel. I used a template attached to the panel for the shaped top and bottom but installed the shaper fence to do the straight edges. Notice that I am feeding from left to right which is opposite of what you would do on a router table. Because the shaper can run in forward or reverse you can flip and orient the cutter so that it cuts above or below the workpiece.

Now with a different cutter, bearing and template I'll shape the molding that will hold the panels in the door. The molded edge is then band sawed off and sanded to the line to fit.

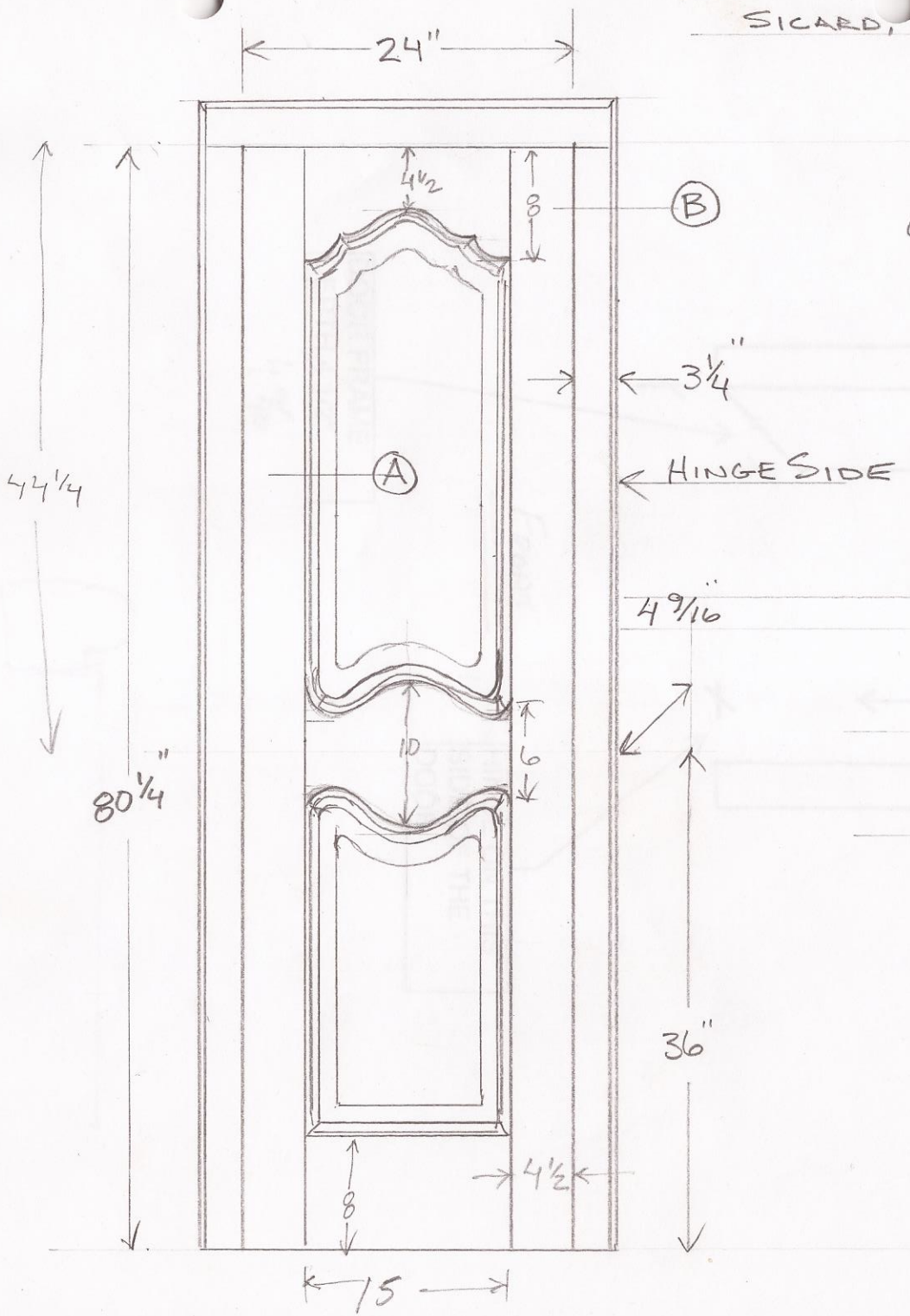
The molding is mitered and attached to one side registering onto the spline.

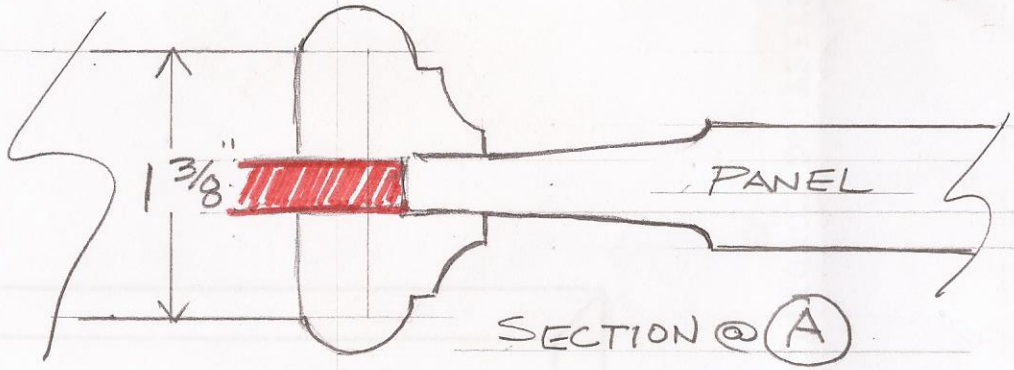
With the molding in place on one side, the panel is then put in place and the molding is fitted to the opposite side. The photo at right shows the completed upper right corner with the finish applied.
The intent with the finish is to make the door look as though it's been around for awhile.

Now, why go through all this trouble and not just use the shaper or router to cut the same profile into the edges of the stiles and rails?
Look at the drawing at the end of this article, specifically the "Section @ A". That should give you a pretty good idea of how this all goes together. The "red" represents the spline.

When the outermost surface of the molded edge protrudes beyond the face surface of the stiles and rails, there is no router or shaper cutter (that I know of) that can do that. UNLESS you were to run the wood on edge and then "bring down" the surface of the stiles and rails which would mean much more work, probably by hand. That could be done but in this case we have curved edges which makes it (again, as far as I know) impossible with modern tools.
Ahh but remember… this is an old method for making doors and they must have done it this way for a reason.

SICARD, DOOR (AWP) SCALE: 1IN = 1FT
T. LANDRY 2-16





Rough Opening 26½ X 82⅜ X 4⅜