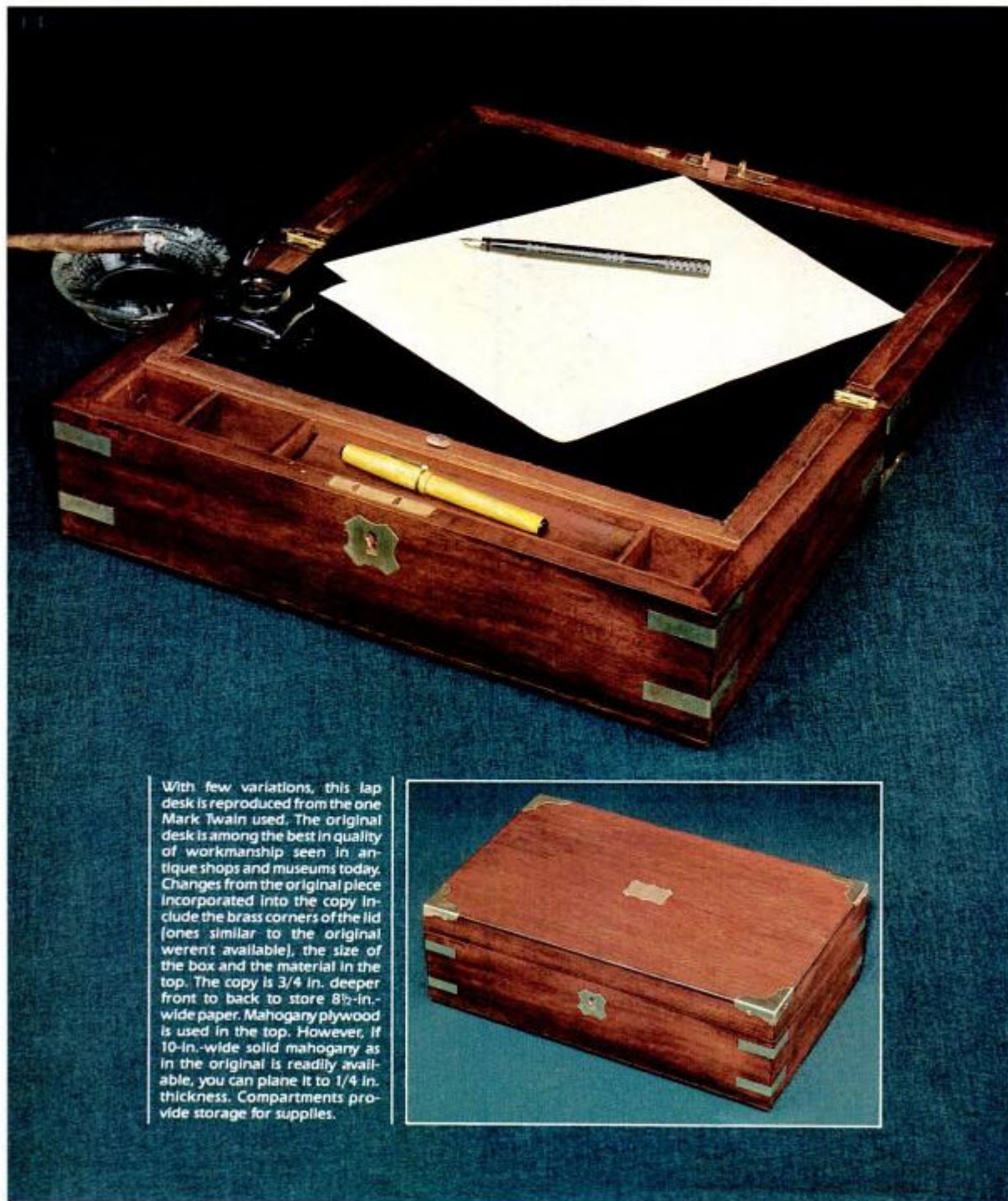
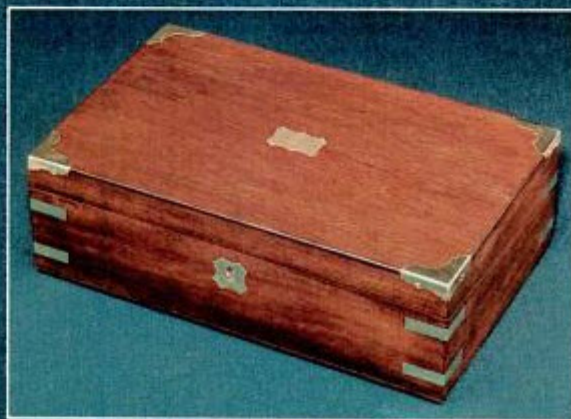


PM Reproductions

A Classic Lap Desk You Can Build



With few variations, this lap desk is reproduced from the one Mark Twain used. The original desk is among the best in quality of workmanship seen in antique shops and museums today. Changes from the original piece incorporated into the copy include the brass corners of the lid (ones similar to the original weren't available), the size of the box and the material in the top. The copy is 3/4 in. deeper front to back to store 8 1/2-in.-wide paper. Mahogany plywood is used in the top. However, if 10-in.-wide solid mahogany as in the original is readily available, you can plane it to 1/4 in. thickness. Compartments provide storage for supplies.



This is a reproduction of the desk that Mark Twain used. You can build one in two weekend sessions.

BY RALPH WILKES

PM photos: Color by Walter Jackson; black and white by the author

This mahogany lap desk is a close reproduction of Mark Twain's desk, now in his collection at Elmira College, Elmira, N.Y. As I handled and measured the original, I thought how significant a role this little piece of furniture must have played in Twain's daily life. Perhaps on this velvet panel he wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. The compartments may have held the notes for *Life On The Mississippi*.

Today, a lap desk is still a convenient box to store the essentials for writing. When opened, the slanted, velvet-covered panels provide a handy writing surface.

The corners of the lap desk are mitered so they show no end grain. Glue and nail the front, back and ends; then add the top and bottom.

