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Making Gavels

by William W. Klenke

[This article originally appeared in THE ART OF WOODTURNING in 1921, yet is timeless in both concept and simplicity. Perhaps the leader of your woodturning club could use one?]

In designing a gavel and in selecting wood for the same, there are a few requirements we have to meet. Since a gavel is used in somewhat the same manner as a mallet (in that we strike a blow with both), the first essential will be to use a hard wood. This stands the blow better, and hard woods being heavier, the blow is more easily delivered. The wood must be sonorous, so that sound is given forth.

During periods of excitement, it is often necessary to use a gavel quickly, and little attention is paid to where the gavel strikes; hence the ends must be well rounded.

To meet all these requirements, a wood such as rosewood, ebony, or cocobolo serves very well.

The stock for the head is 2-1/4" x 2-1/4" x 4-1/2". Turn as follows:

- (a) Rough down to the largest diameter.
- (b) Cut to length (leaving the same amount of waste wood at each end).
- (c) Locate the center line.
- (d) Lay off the work from both sides of this line.

Note: It is advisable, at the point (c) to make a small hole with the dividers, so that when boring the hole for the handle, it will be in the exact center.

When turning a cove, having a fillet at each side, it is advisable to ignore the cove entirely until the fillets are cut clean, then work out the cove. Before cutting the work loose, bore the hole for the handle. This should be done in the lathe, the work being clamped tightly between centers.

