

# How to build a TEA cabinet

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The process Illustrated

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Freestanding Tea Cabinet

Japanese Inspired

Junior Furniture Studio

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Under Instruction of Prof. Richard  
Prisco

# **Design and build a cabinet that incorporates historic reference and solves a problem**

Q: What will it hold? How is the reveal to be considered? Does it allow any view of its interior? Is it to be colored or left to its natural state?

*A: It will hold four tea bowls, a small kettle, four types of tea, and a serving tray. The doors will conceal these items with floral-pressed rice paper doors. And as the Japanese culture admired material honesty and simplicity, I will give it a natural oiled finish to accentuate the shine and shimmer*

# Historical context

The *Chinese* are credited with discovering tea as a beverage some 4,000 years ago. When tea began to gain a *British* following in the 17th century, it was served mostly in coffeehouses that already existed, admitting only men. As a result, women of the family adopted tea on their own ground. Tea drinking became much more of an at-home activity.

Women soon realized that they were feeling hungry and faint around five o'clock and started serving tea with assorted sandwiches and small cakes, thus creating the afternoon tea.

Eventually this evolved into High tea, which was served around the same time in working class homes. The high tea was a hearty meal consisting of cold meats, cheeses and bread, eaten when the men came home from the factories or field.

**! Problem: people have busy lives. Having a designated tea area can introduce an area where your thoughts can simmer**



# Japanese Craftsmanship Examples:



## **Japanese Tea Ceremonies:**

Had two utensils:

- Hishaku (Ladle)
- Chasaku ( Tea Scoop)

Water was stored in Mizusashi (earthware container)

and poured into Chawans (tea bowls)

Bowls have two images:

- Sakura (cherry blossom)
- Autumn (maple leaves)

## **My western adaptation:**

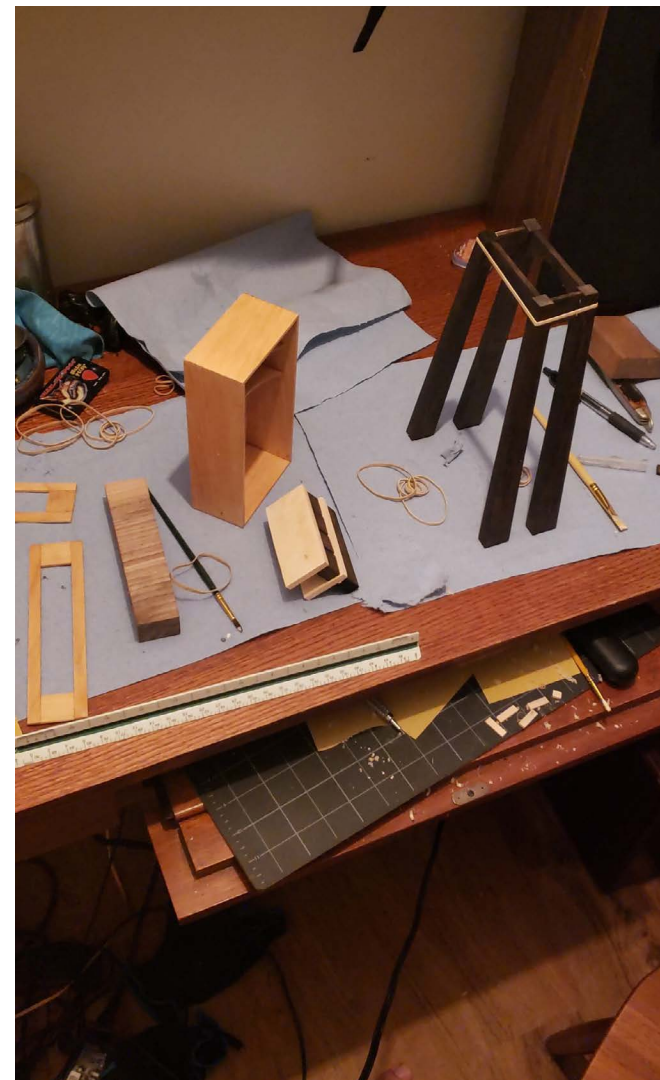
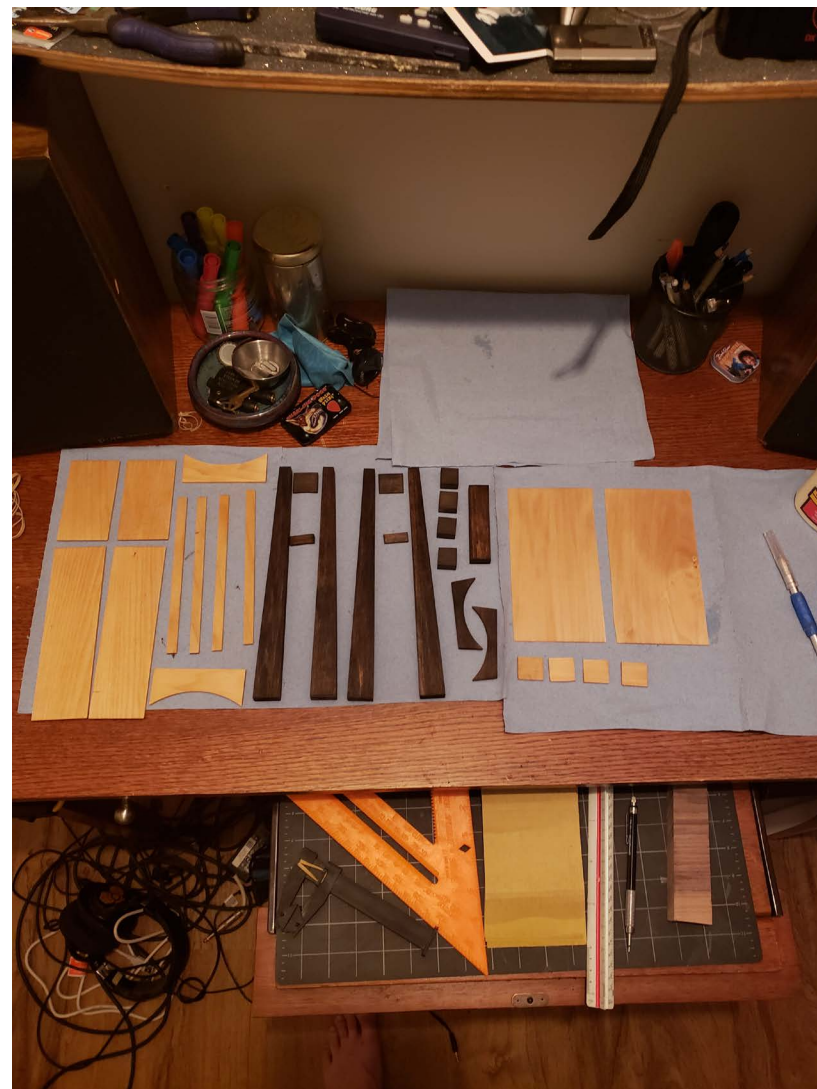
four drawers for four types of teas:

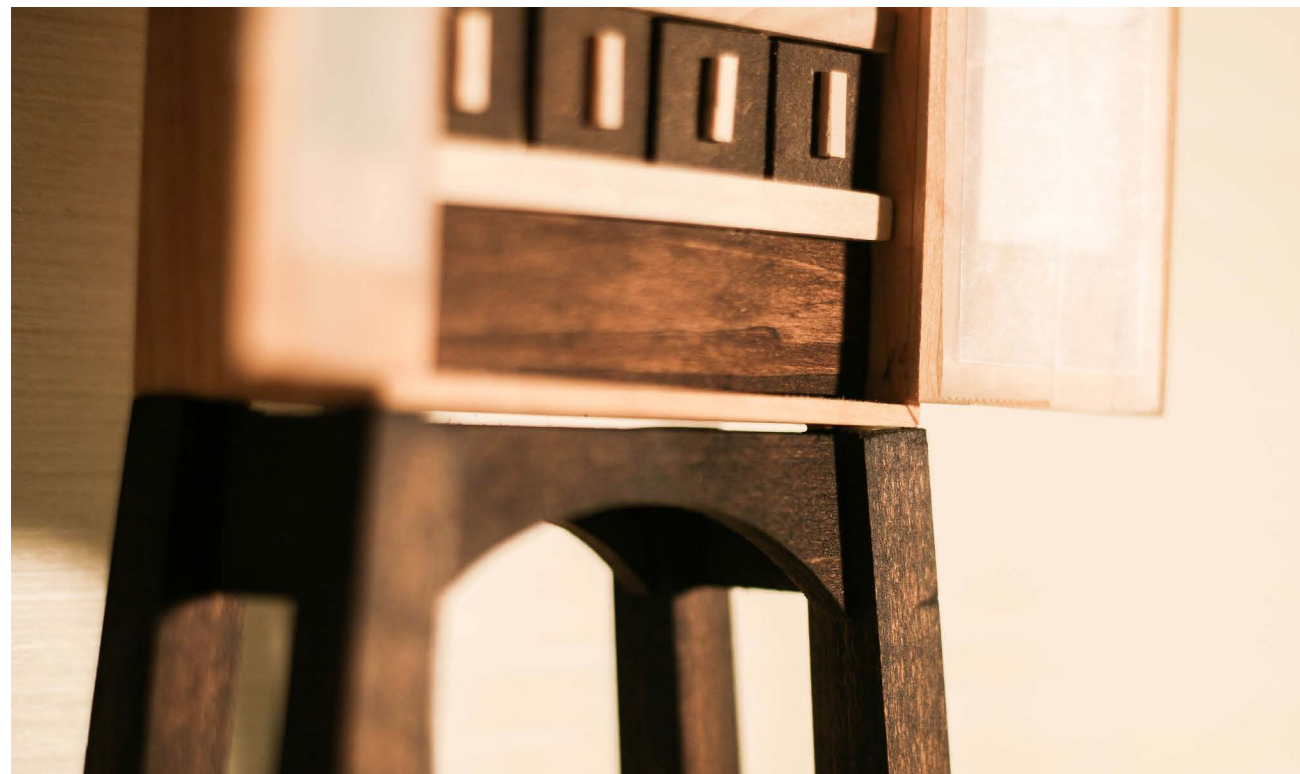
- black
- green
- white
- oolong

Serving tray

because most people drink loose or bagged tea in the US, I decided to forgo the more culturally esoteric utensils, yet still include design details that gave a bow to japansese culture

# Quarter Scale Model: Basswood + wax paper







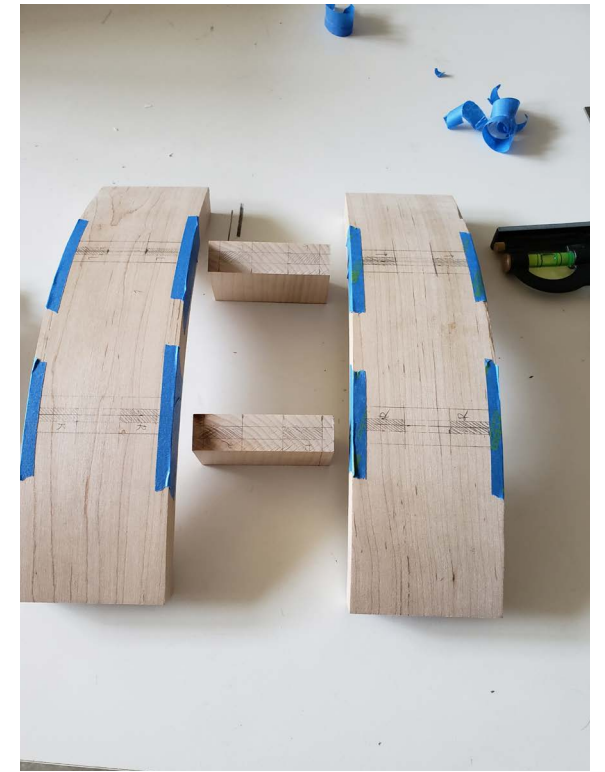
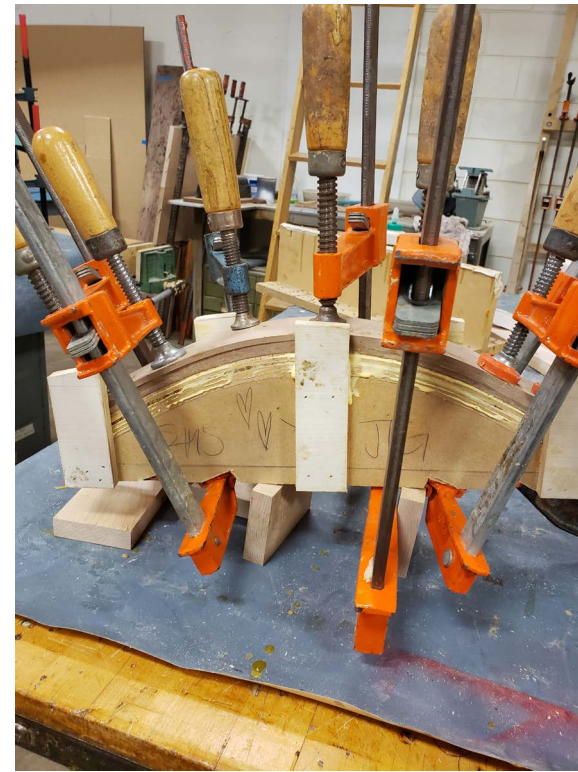
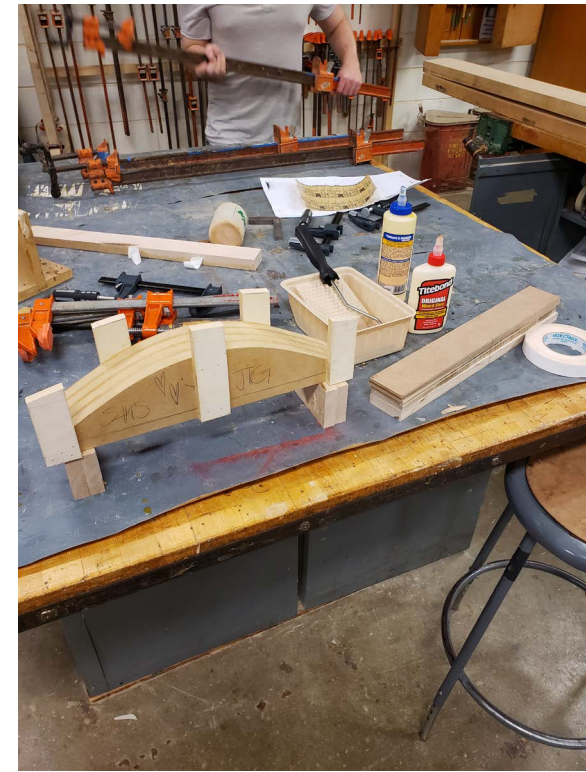
# Volume study:

To more thoroughly understand how the final piece is to be constructed, we constructed a model out of lesser materials.

What I learned:

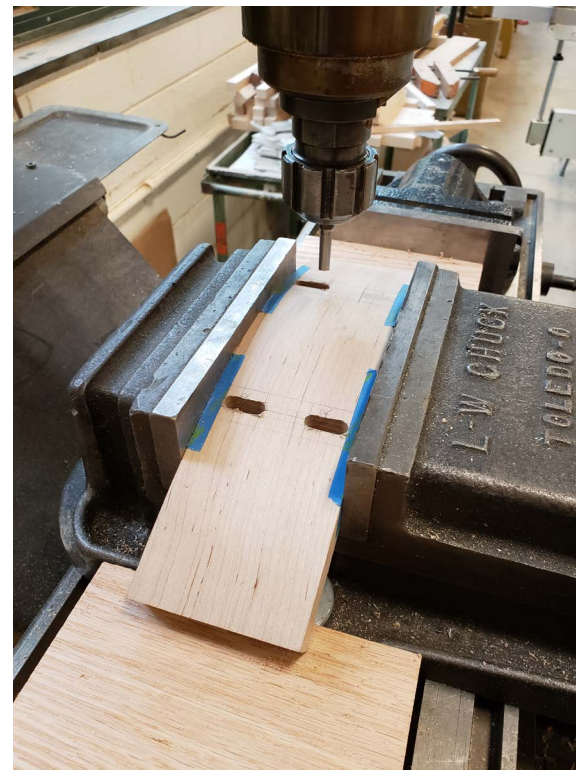
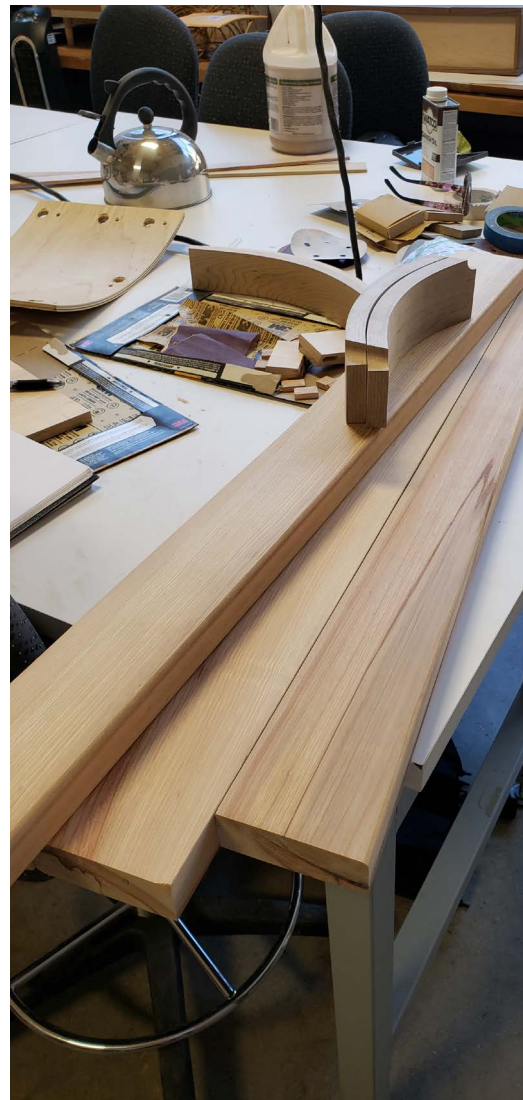
- I didn't need three inches of height for my bottom tray. Two would suffice
- The bottom leg connector would be difficult to construct, so my professor advised me to make a bent lamination
- I could make the doors less chunky





Cypress Legs

Bent Lamination



# Miters

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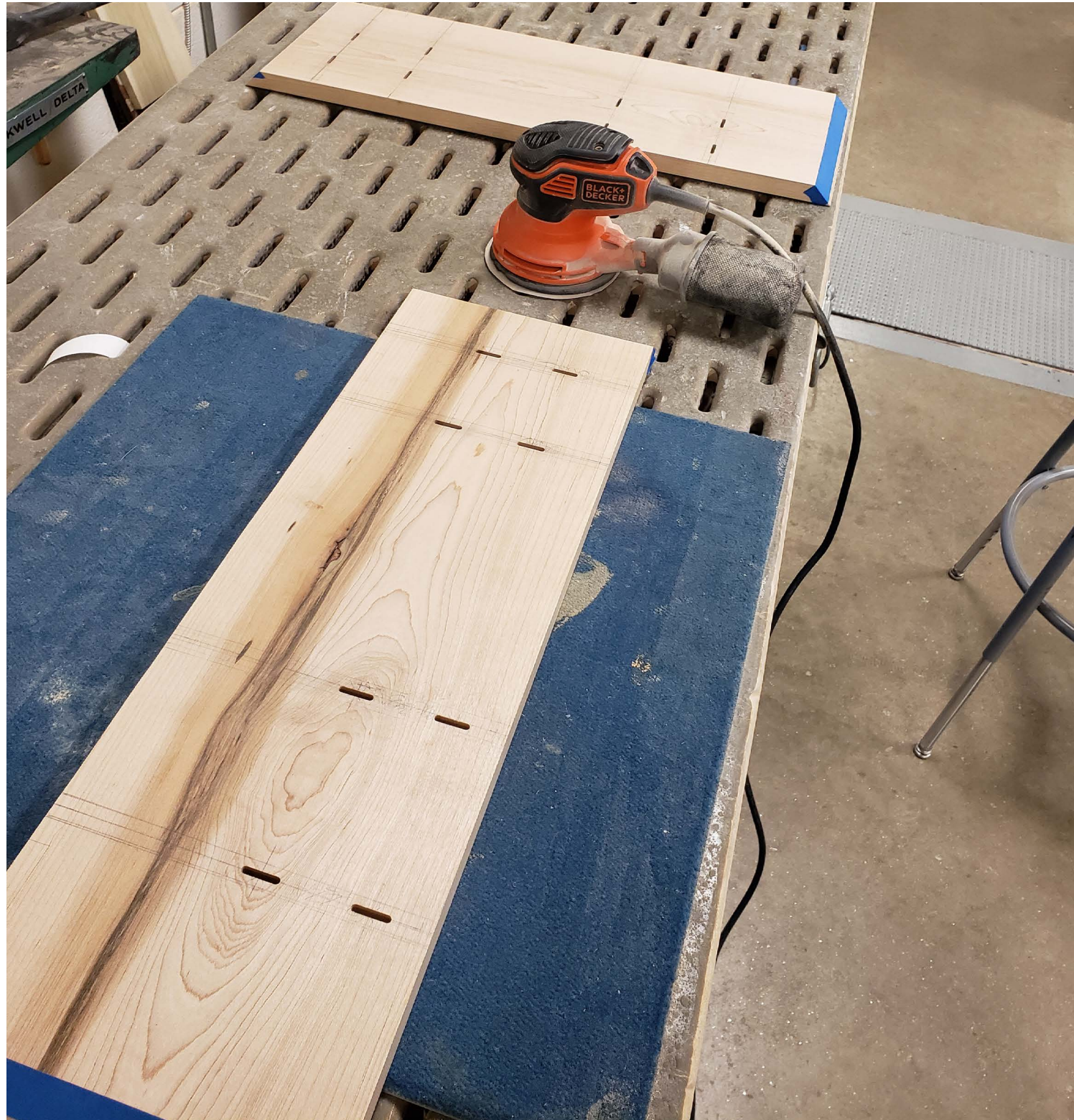
The utmost care should be taken when cutting the four panels that make the cabinet carcass. Multiple test pieces were experimented on in order to get clean and tight miters



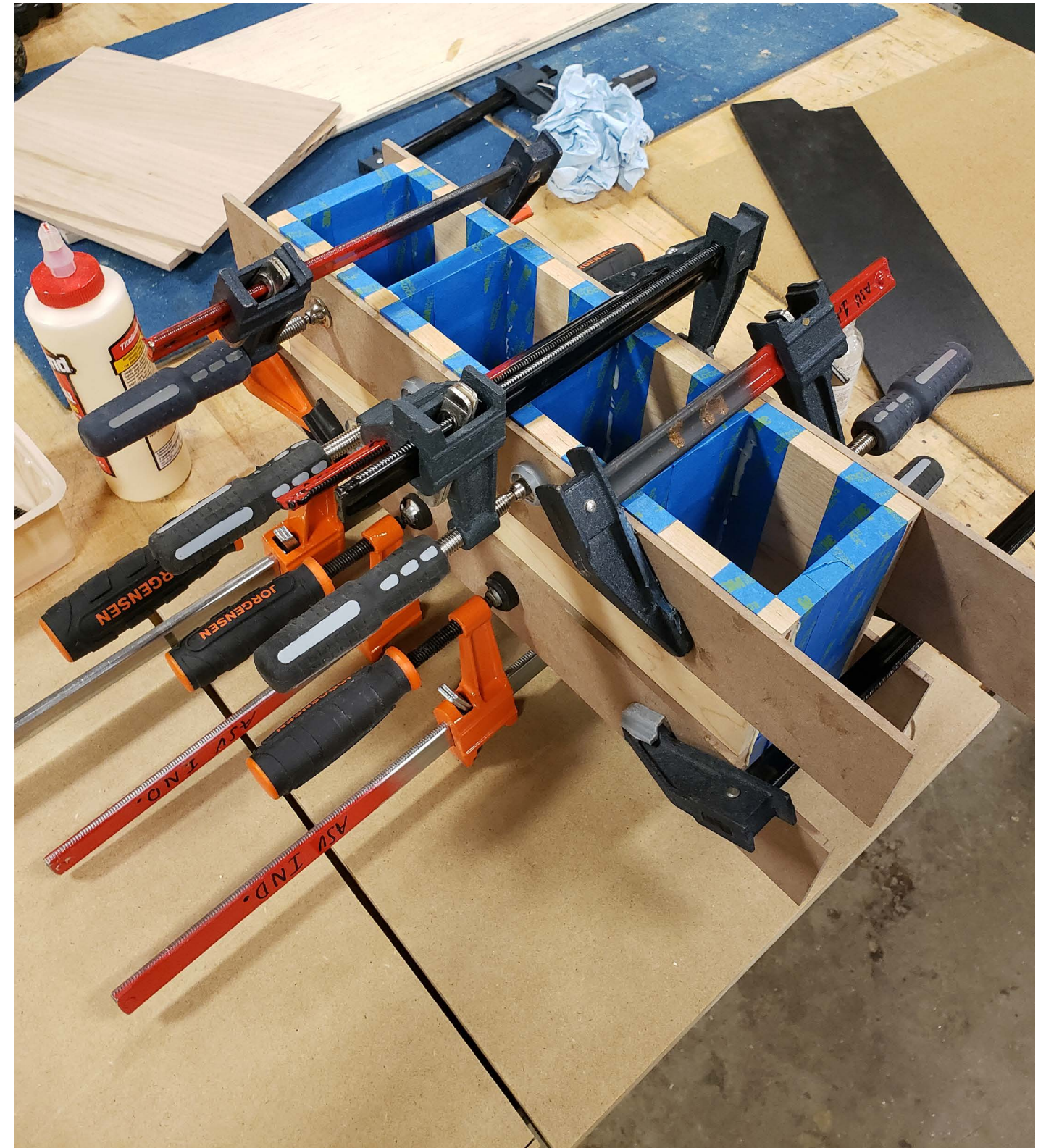
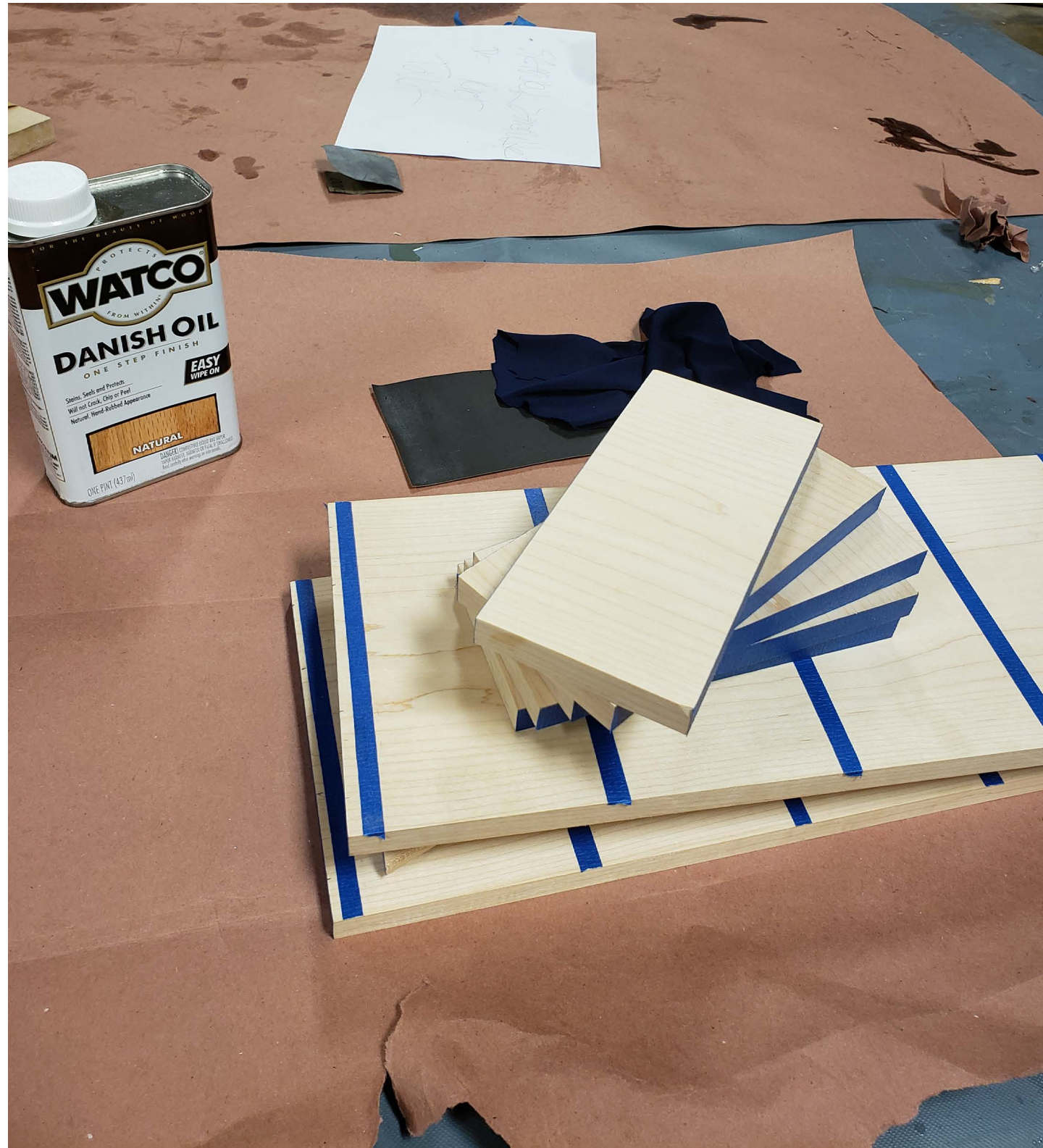
# Sizing the tea shelves



# Sanding carcass



# Tea Shelf Glue-up



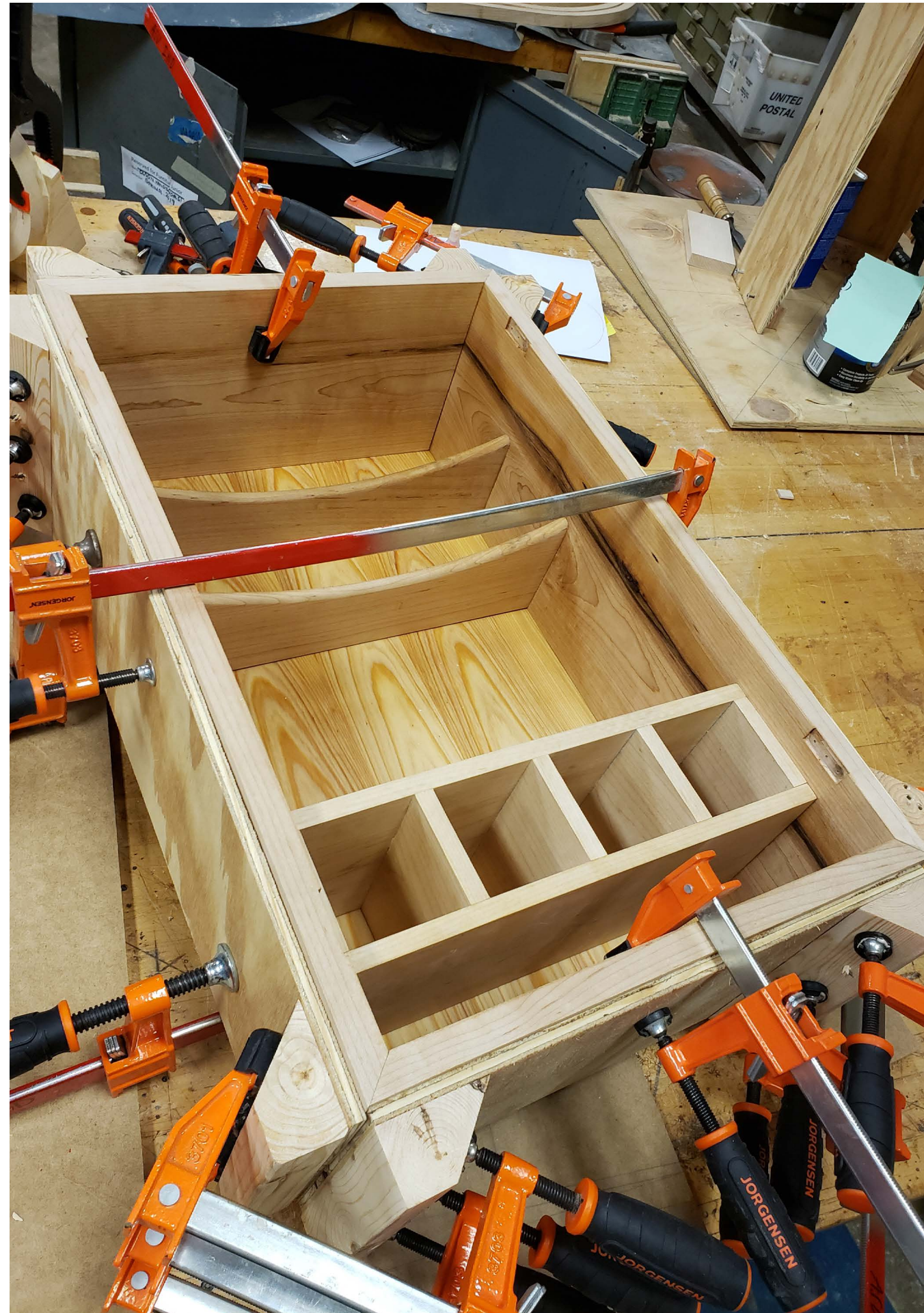


Prefinishing shelves + Constructing Tea Drawers



# Final Glue-up

As I had already glued up the shelving unit, the carcass glue up was a breeze. It also helped to have four helpers.





# Price + Labor LOGS

Because of the non-regimented workflow, I was not able to accurately record the labor of constructing this cabinet. In the future I will have a better idea how to record the work time.

The total material cost was \$649

	A	B	C	D	E
1	40	MDF + 2x4			hours: DESIGN
2	40	MDF + 2x4			7
3	20	Ortho Print			8
4	50	pliers + angle tools + oil + grease			3
5	163	Wood for legs and carcass			3
6	36	saw + epoxy + glue brush			10
7	15	cork for lamination			10
8	30	square + brushes + tape			40
9	72	Wood for legs and carcass			55
10	93	hinges			65
11	7	lamination roller + tray			
12	10	glue			
13	18	screws			
14	20	earmuffs			
15	10	sandpaper			
16	15	beeswax+oil			
17	10	danish oil			
18	649	TOTAL			