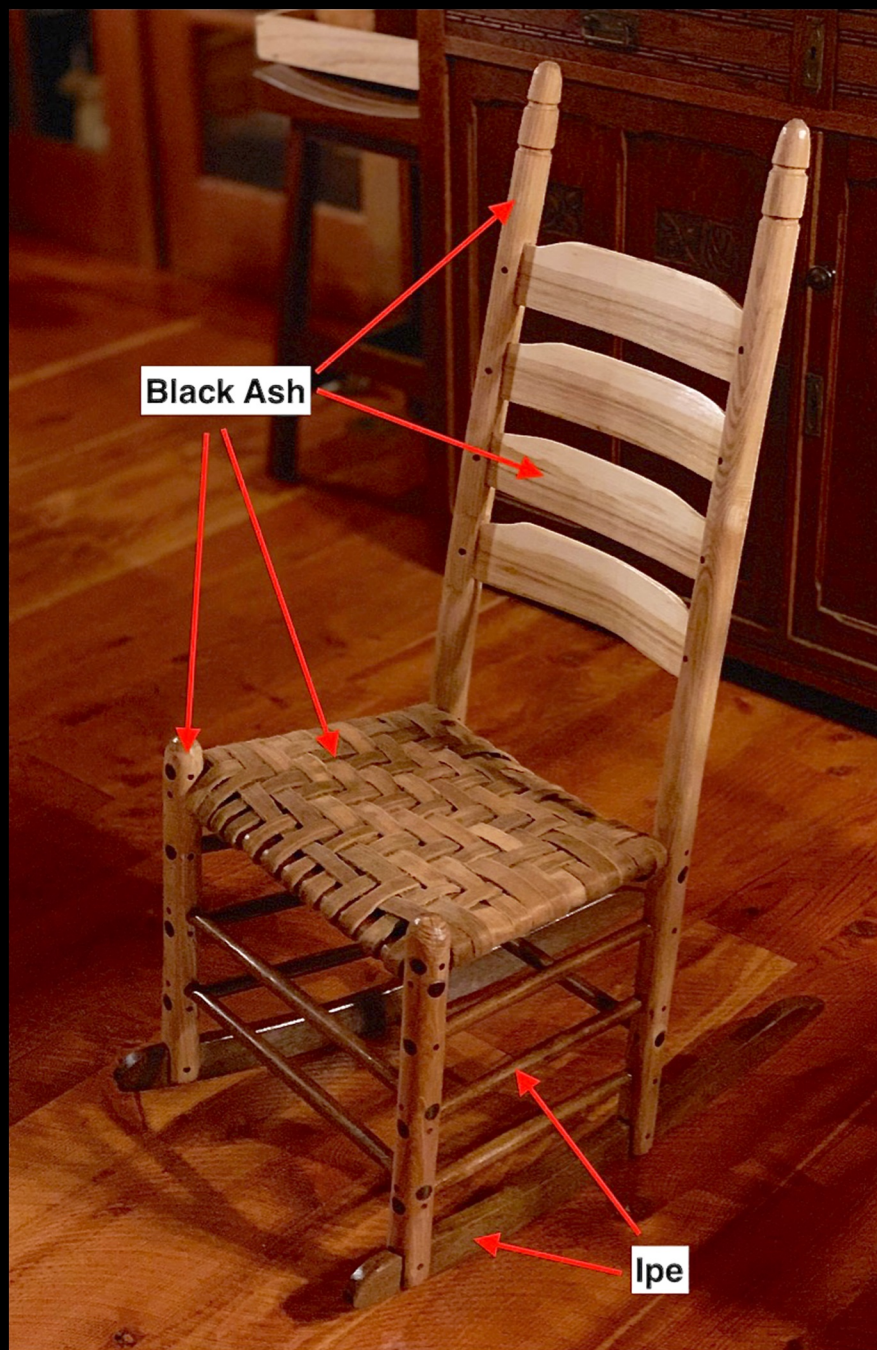




A Rocker Made From a Tree



Black Ash

Ipe



The story begins in the late winter of 2017 when we harvested some high quality black ash logs off our woods. These were milled into quarter-sawn lumber in January 2018, stickered, end-sealed, and then air-dried undercover for a year



Mike Sterner and local sawmiller and friend, Randy Boyle helped process the logs into lumber









The rocker's front and back posts would be cut from these straight-grained, quarter-sawn 8/4" boards.



During January 2019, I took core samples from several smaller diameter black ash trees in our woods to identify a tree with the ideal growth rings (#1) for stripping bark splits for weaving the rocker seat, and for riving out shakes for the rocker back slats.



One 10" dia. tree yielded two ideal 8' sticks.



The bark surface was first stripped with a drawknife. The bark was then lightly pounded with the back of an axe head to separate the bark from the inner wood. Next, deep parallel cuts were made with a knife into 3" strips.





Next the bark was slowly pulled up to separate the bark strip from the log, pounding along the cut to facilitate the lifting of the strip.







The stripped logs were then split in half using wood gluts and a maul.



The split halves were again split into quarter rails. The rails were then bucked into 16" billets to be later rived into shakes for the back slats.



The billets were rived with a froe and maul to make the rough backslat shakes.



After final shaping with a drawknife on the shaving bench, the green backslates were placed into a bending frame to create the desired backslat concave shape.



The back posts were steamed and bent to achieve the correct back angle. The front posts, the lpe seat and cross supports were roughed out with a draw knife and spokeshave.



Here are all the finished components ready for assembly.



Mortises were bored into the front and back posts to accept the tenons of the seat and cross supports.



The back slats were laid out to mark the correct tenon positions and depths. The mortises were first bored and then chisled out.





Final assembly: the Ipe rockers were cut and attached to the front and back posts with a bridle joint. Finally, hand-shaped $\frac{1}{4}$ " dowels were drilled and driven to secure every mortise and tenon joint.



Final details, sanding , and finishing with two coats of shellac.



The black ash seat splits were first soaked overnight in warm water and then cut to a uniform $\frac{3}{4}$ " width. The seat is woven in a traditional herringbone pattern. Once dry, the woven seat will shrink and tighten the entire frame to become rock solid and extremely durable.



The rocker design is an interpretation of a traditional Appalachian “low-sitting, sewing or hand-work rocker.” It is a small rocker designed to be set next to a fireplace or wood stove as a comfortable seat to be used for winter mending and handcraft chores.



The ipe wood used for the rockers and cross supports was sourced during the early 1990's from the Lomerio Community Sawmill (seen here), and their 125,000 acre FSC-certified forest in the Chiquitania Forest Reserve in Eastern Bolivia.