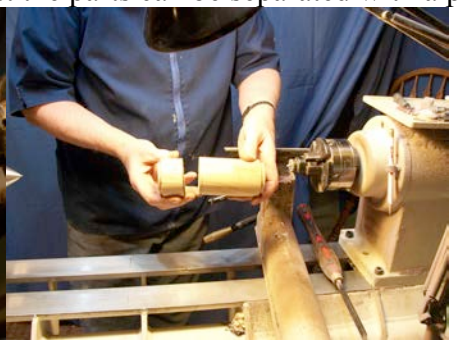
LIDDED BOX BASICS

The basic lidded box can be any size you choose. The boxes I typically make are two to three inches in diameter and may stand three or four inches in height. Maple, cherry, ash, walnut, or any hard wood are all good choices. The boxes I make generally have very simple shapes (egg shape), but are often embellished with liming wax, pyrography, dye or may be written on with a .005 pigma pen whti archival ink.

THE BODY OF THE BOX

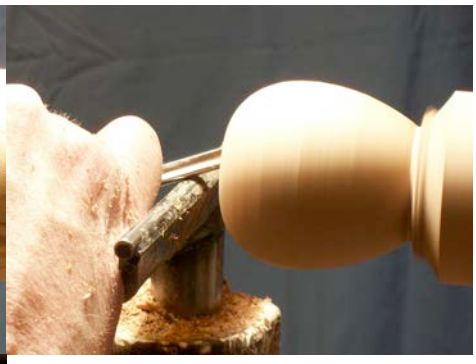
Place the turning stock between centers, true it up with the roughing gouge and using a ½" skew turn a tenon on each end so that the body of the box and the lid of the box can be held in a chuck. The top needs to be separated from the body of the box. I generally use a band saw with a V-block, but the parts can be separated with a parting tool.

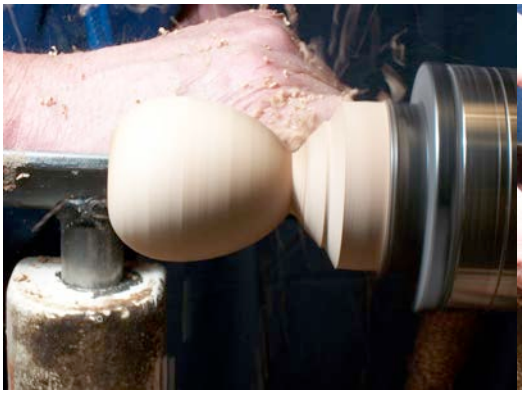
The box pictured is held in the #2 jaws of the chuck and is being shaped with a small (3/8") bowl gouge. Be sure to leave sufficient material at the base of the box to allow for hollowing later. Using a pencil, mark what will be the opening of the box. Use a fostner bit to drill out some of the interior. (Be careful not to drill to deep!)



Now is the time to begin hollowing. For this box, we can use a small round-nosed scraper, a small bent angle tool and a small spindle gouge. The small spindle gouge is used to enlarge the opening of the box as well as to clean up he opening a bit. (A small skew can also be used here, but the gouge may be a bit “safer”) The round-nosed scraper is used first to open the interior and give you some work room. The bent-angle tool is then used to hollow about the top third of the box. At that point, you should be able to use the round-nose scraper to complete hollowing the box.


Now that the box is hollowed, the lower half needs to be refined with the small bowl gouge. The box is then parted from the lathe. I like to leave a small tenon at the base of the box. This allows me to reverse the box and friction fit it on a waste block. The tenon allows me to bring the tail center up to support the box. This tenon is then turned away and the bottom of the box can be sanded.







THE LID

The lid material is placed in the #2 jaws of the chuck and is trued up with the either a spindle gouge or a small bowl gouge. (This will be the inside of the lid). I also like to make this section a little concave. The vernier caliphers are then used to mark the diameter of the opening of the box. One you have done this, you need to start refining the the fit of the lid to the box. I use a small spindle gouge followed up with a small round-nosed scraper for fine details.



Once the interior of the lid is turned and sanded, use the spindle gouge to start refining the top of the lid. The lid will then be friction fit into a waste block and turned to it's final shape. The vernier caliphers are used to mark the diameter of the lid and a square-nosed scraper is used to cut a rabbet for the friction fit. Once you have the lid snugly fit, use a small skew to turn a small divot which will serve as a guide for a drill bit for the knob of the box.




If you hve a good, snug friction fit, removal of the lid may be seem problematic. Actually, it's not much of a problem at all. Use a small parting tool to part away the wasteblock material. Be careful not to cut into the lid! At some point, the material holding the lid to the waste block will be removed and the lid will come free.

TURNING THE KNOB

To me, the knob either makes or breaks the look of the lidded box. I used to be satisfied with just a simple turned knob. It was OK, but was sometimes hard to grasp and just did not seem complete. I remember seeing some Raku boxes done by a potter. They were

very much like a box turned in wood, but the knobs were what intrigued me. In some ways, they are simply a knob with a “stick”, but they do seem to complete the look of the box.
Find a suitable “stick”. I like to use sticks that have some character. That is, they have curves or are irregular. I then take a small drill bit and mount it in my jacobs chuck in the headstock of my lathe. Place the “stick” on the quill of the tail stock for support and advance it until you have a small hole drilled in it. (You might consider using a set of optivisors, just so you can see what you are doing.) Put the stick aside.

Place a small piece of hardwood in the pin jaws of your lathe (about 3/8” x 3/8” x 2”). Turn to a cylinder. Using your skew laid flat, turn a tenon. The stick will fit onto that.

The rest of the knob can then be turned as well as a tenon to fit into the lhe lid of the box. Glue the “stick” onto the knob with the tenons, part the knob from the lathe and glue the knob into the lid of the box.

I often finish the knobs with a product made by “sophisticated finishes”. They make finishes like “copper topper”, and have finishes such as bronze, rust and pewter. The boxes are generally finished with waterlox, but any good oil finish would be suitable.

Enjoy. I hope this helps. Call me (570-784-6158) or e-mail (Bobrosand@gmail.com) me if you need help.