

THE BARK

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THE
AMERICAN
CHESTNUT
FOUNDATION

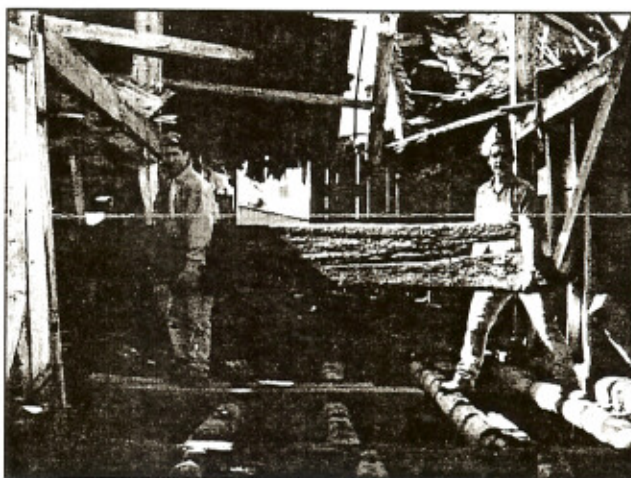
The Newsletter of The American Chestnut Foundation

Member Profile

Ken Salem

Member Ken Salem of Northampton, Massachusetts, says "I grew up amid this kind of thing. My dad, for example, restored a building built by the grandson of the first boy born on the Mayflower. Then I took down a barn for my family that we planned to resurrect. I built a couple of beds with the chestnut in it, and the wood moved me, it had a mystique for me." And it changed his life. Putting eleven years as a stockbroker and two years in a family restaurant business behind him, Ken is now owner of Salem Board & Beam, a company that recycles unrestorable historic barns and buildings into handcrafted Shaker-style hardwood furniture. Most of the wood Ken and his crew salvage and work with is chestnut.

Ken searches for unreclaimable barns and buildings throughout Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Vermont and takes them apart with the loving care with which they were



TACF member Ken Salem and partner Rich Jackshtis save a chestnut floor plank in a barn in Hardwick, Massachusetts.

put together. (The materials he can't use are sold to antique dealers, architects, interior designers, and others.) Then he and his colleagues, among them Ken's partner Rich Jackshtis, a "man extremely well-versed in two-hundred-year-old ways of doing things," create fine furniture using traditional methods—mortise and tenon and dovetail joinery, hand planing, and hand-rubbed finishes. The result, he says, is furniture "with a warm glow that releases an energy that it has stored for centuries." Ken provides each piece of furniture with a photograph and history of its parent building.

When he first became interested in recycling chestnut, Ken thought the tree had disappeared "forever" from its native forests. He knows now of the work of TACF, and shares our enthusiasm for enlightening people about the tree and its properties and its role in American history. And so Ken has pledged a portion of the proceeds

of the sale of every piece of furniture created by Salem Board & Beam to TACF.

At the urging of Ken's wife Nadine (without whose terrific support, Ken says, he wouldn't have been able to undertake this enterprise begun just a year ago), Salem Board & Beam offers furniture pieces in just about everyone's price range, beginning at about \$150 and climbing into the several thousands of dollars. Members who want to learn more about Ken Salem's company can call Salem Board & Beam at (413) 585-0078.