

Buskirk Restoration, Inc.

413 Fleming Rd. No 12 Charleston, South Carolina 29412

Biography of Russell Buskirk



Born in Huntington, West Virginia in 1954, Russell grew-up on a farm just outside White Sulphur Springs, WV. With a family lineage of woodworking, he was always tinkering or building something. At the age of ten, Russell disassembled the family Index mantle clock to “see how it worked.” To his and others surprise, the clock worked when he put it back together.

Swimming lessons at The Greenbrier Hotel exposed Russell to Classical Roman and Greek architecture at an early and formative age. Classes in art and drafting were in preparation for a career in graphic art that did not come to pass.

After building and restoring houses, barns and commercial buildings in Virginia, Kentucky, and West Virginia, he went to Woodland Photography School. A position at Alterman Studios brought Russell to Charleston in 1984. When he left two years later, three people were needed to replace him.

In 1986 Russell answered an ad in the classified, “Wanted some one to work on antique furniture, inquire within...” Needless to say, he got the job. With his natural talent and opportunity to hone his restoration skills, Russell quickly became the master woodworker and master restorer, and shop manager for the local shop. He worked on pieces later placed in major collections such as MESDA, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, The Charleston Museum, The John Rivers Collection, and The Philadelphia Museum of Art. His attention to detail established the quality and historically accurate standards for restorations in Charleston.

Russell started his own shop in 1994 and worked for dealers and individuals. Establishing a specialty in inlay restoration, he restored important pieces from Charleston, Baltimore, and other cities that are now in the before mentioned collections as well as the George Kaufman Collection. He was commissioned to reproduce five pieces of furniture for the newly restored Charleston County Courthouse and received the Samuel Gaillard Stoney award from Historic Charleston Foundation.

With a desire for further education; Russell attended the class on Microscopic Wood Identification at U. Mass. and all three years of the MESDA Summer Institute. He now teaches at the MESDA Fall and Summer Institutes, and has lectured at The Charleston Antique Symposium and The Winter Antique Show. An article about inlay making was published in The Catalog of Antiques and Fine Art in 2003.

Russell has been on the American Furniture Vetting Committee of The Winter Antique Show since 2004. He joined the MESDA Advisory Board in 2005, and is also a member of AIC, Charleston Library Society, Decorative Arts Trust, Friends of Drayton Hall, Friends of MESDA, and the South Carolina Historical Society.

Russell is also an avid whitewater and surf kayaker. He has been paddling class IV and V rivers such as the Gauley, New, and Tallulah for ten years. He has won numerous first, second, and third place medals for Surf Kayak Competitions in the past few years. After making the 2005 East Coast Surf Kayaking Team, he helped the team tie for second place at the Worlds Surf Kayak Competition in Costa Rica.