

Restoring Number Strips on Antique Cabinets

by Sky Shipley, Skyline Type Foundry



If you have any antique oak Hamilton cabinetry in your shop—specifically, galley cabinets or strip material racks—the steel number strips on them are likely illegible in some degree due to age, fading, rust, and grime. Here's how to restore them to new condition.

1. Strip them to bare metal using paint remover, and with an awl scratch out any matter lodged in the stamped numbers. Wipe down with lacquer thinner to remove all residue of paint remover.
2. Hang the strip vertically to prevent accumulation of paint in the stamped numbers, and spray them with the lightest possible coat of paint. In this case our old favorite for press restorations was used, Rustoleum Gloss Black.
3. There is a special crayon made specifically for filling color into stamped or engraved lettering, the brand is **Lacquer-Stik® Fill-In Paint** (LA-CO Industries, markal.com, 847-956-7600). This can be obtained retail in various colors from McMaster-Carr industrial supply. The original Hamilton finish was white on black; we selected the Gold crayon to be a little less stark. Apply the crayon to each number on your painted strip, carefully wipe away the excess, and you're done!

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