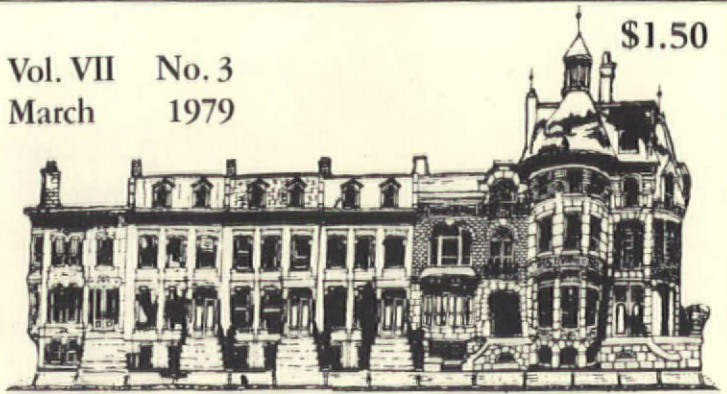


THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

Vol. VII No. 3
March 1979

\$1.50



Restoration And Maintenance Techniques For The Antique House



By Barbara Schiller

MY HUSBAND AND I BOUGHT our brick and brownstone house in Brooklyn's Park Slope Historic District because although sadly neglected, it had not been ruthlessly remodelled. It was structurally sound and needed only cosmetic work to make it as attractive as it once had been.

WE KNEW SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE about the dining room ceiling. Crumbling from long-ago water damage, its chipped center medallion hung dangerously by one corner. The master bedroom directly above had also suffered its share of water damage and neglect. Then there was the double parlor--decorative rosebuds were dropping like hailstones from the border trim of the ceilings, and there was a large ominous crack. We put the rosebuds away for safekeeping till the time and money came to restore the ceiling. It was hardly an immediate problem.

OUR ARCHITECT, Hal Einhorn, who specializes in restoration work, suggested we replace the dining room and bedroom ceilings with tin ceilings. We were not very impressed with that alternative until we saw the one he had installed in his beautiful Vic-



24" Multiple Plate No. 2465
\$8.50 per 100 square feet
Size of sheets 24 x 48 inches

In This Issue

Taping And Sanding.....	34
Removing Old Mortar From Bricks.....	35
Wood Fences.....	26
Installing Tin Ceiling.....	31
Disconnecting Hot Water Radiators.....	35

Coming Next Month

REMOVING PAINTED WALLPAPER

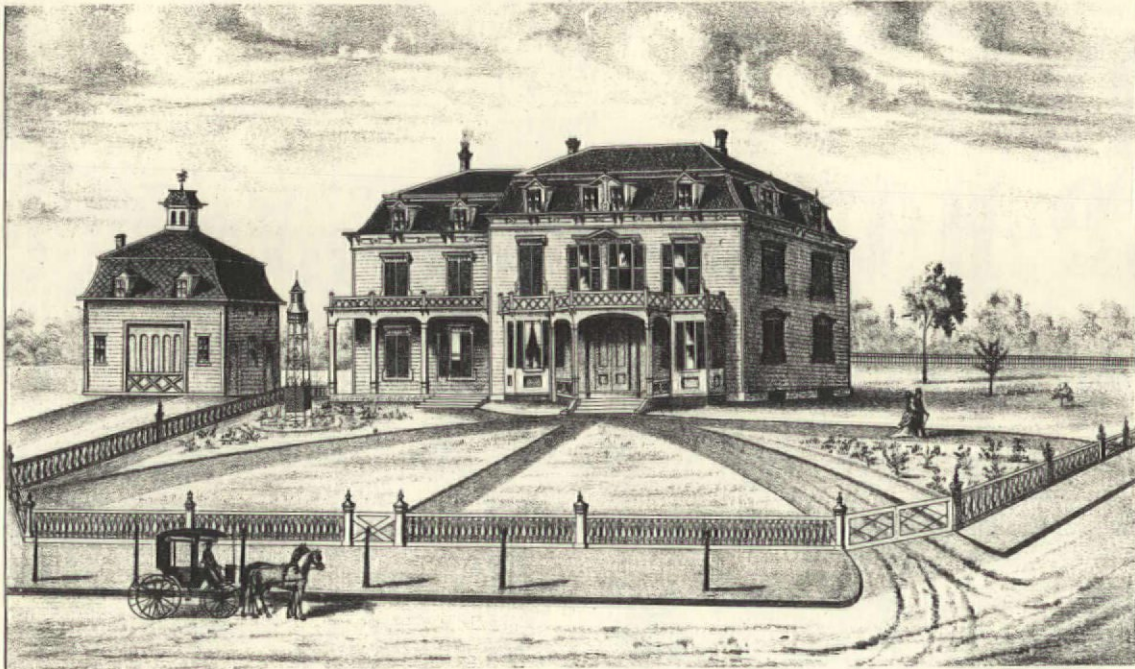
torian house. Right then and there we examined the designs available from one of the local companies that still sells and installs these once popular ceilings.

WE PICKED A CEILING AND CORNICE pattern that matched the feeling of the rest of the 1890 detail in our house. It would be installed at the appropriate time in the work schedule. And at a price cheaper than the complete plastering job the ceilings would have otherwise required. Plasterboard had not been considered an appropriate material for these two rooms.

A MARVELOUSLY SKILLED CRAFTSMAN installed the ceilings in the rooms (see p.31 for do-it-yourself instructions) taking about six hours for each. The shiny tin looked odd against the shabby walls.

AFTER THE WALLS in the bedroom were patch plastered, we painted the room. Suddenly everything looked startlingly different. The same transformation occurred in the dining room.

(Cont'd on page 29)



Fences

Part II ~ Wood

By Frederick Herman, AIA

THE MOST FAMOUS WOOD FENCE in history must be the one Mark Twain mentions in Tom Sawyer. For the average homeowner that fence may not offer much in the way of a guideline for fence design but it does point to the ongoing maintenance problems.

I AM GOING TO LIMIT myself in this article to what are regarded as the traditional type of residential wood fences, i.e., various types of picket fencing. This type of fence is usually referred to as a "good garden fence" and is usually associated with the old house--distinct from such types as brush fences, rail fences, and board fences. It also avoids the question of fencing for contemporary houses such as redwood fencing, lattice fencing, basket weave fencing, board-on-board fences and other types whose purpose is perhaps more for creating private outdoor spaces around patios and pools than it is to fulfill the traditional role of a fence--which is to mark boundaries.

WHEN CONTEMPLATING the erection of a picket fence, two major considerations enter into play. The first is a question of aesthetics and appropriateness, the second is "how to" get it up.

Selecting A Fence

AESTHETICALLY SPEAKING, there is no unanimity as to the desirability or appropriateness of fences. There is quite a difference in the

attitudes towards fences in the 18th and 19th centuries.

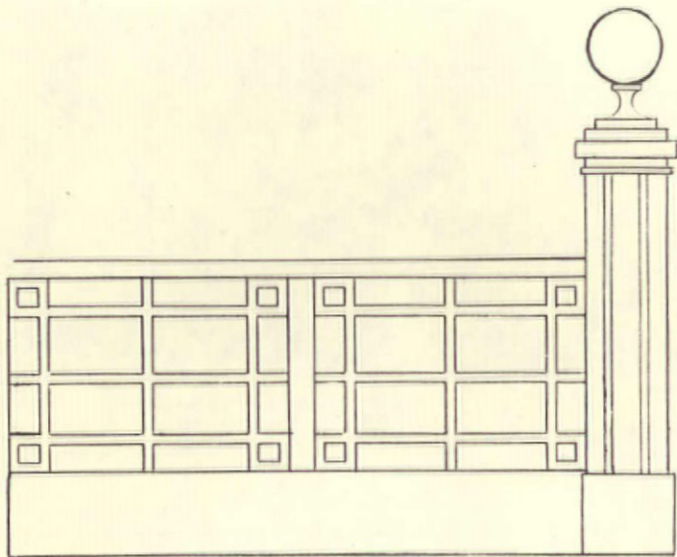
THE HOUSE BUILDER in the Colonial era must have considered the fence as important a part of the entire design as the doorway, window framings, and other important wood architectural details. Asher Benjamin, in his "Practical House Carpenter," published in 1830, (which later became the builder's bible) devoted a whole plate to fences designed in a Classic manner. He advised that if the house

THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL®

Published Monthly For People Who Love Old Houses

Editor	R.A. Clem Labine
Decorative Arts Editor	Carolyn Flaherty
Circulation Director	Paul T. McLoughlin
Circulation Assistants	Joan O'Reilly
	James Graham
	Shirley Zucker
	Michael Carew
Midwest Editor	Tom H. Gerhardt
Contributing Editors	Claire Wood Labine
	R.A. Labine, Sr.
	H. Weber Wilson
	Barbara Schiller

Published by The Old-House Journal Corporation, 69A Seventh Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217. Tel. (212) 636-4514. Subscriptions \$12/yr. in U.S., \$14/yr. in Canada; \$20/yr. elsewhere. Printed at Royal Offset Co., 34 W. 15th St., NYC 10011. Contents of the Old-House Journal® are fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without specific permission in writing from The Editor.



Fence design from an Asher Benjamin plate

were large and located on an elevated piece of ground, at a considerable distance from the road, the fence should be of the largest dimensions. But if the house were small and the fence would be near to it, then the fence ought to be small and low, so that it would not appear to be a principal in the structure.

19th Century Attitudes

IN THE 19TH CENTURY, as the romantic and picturesque styles of houses came into vogue, (Italianate, Gothic Revival, etc.) the influential architects who espoused these styles were basically anti-fence. The influential A. J. Downing felt in mid-19th century that, "Fences are often among the most unsightly and offensive objects in our country seats."



A handsome picket fence with panelled posts surrounds this Colonial house.

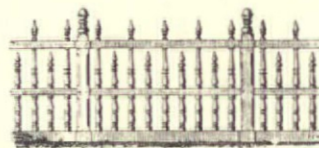
Picket

Fence Pattern

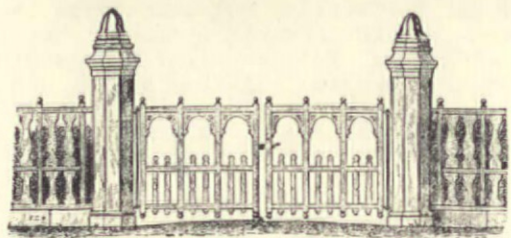


If you wish to build a Williamsburg style picket fence there is a full size pattern available to help you. The pattern gives four additional picket top styles besides the most common pointed style. There are also patterns for the posts, a list of materials and complete directions for installing, priming, painting, etc. To order, send \$2.50, plus 50¢ postage, to: Easi-Bild Pattern Company, Inc., Dept. OHJ, P. O. Box 215, Briarcliff Manor, N. Y. 10510. Ask for No. 315, Williamsburg Fence & Gate.

DOWNING DESIGNED HOUSES in a rural setting and did not like marked off spaces, preferring a natural, free-form look to the landscape. Reality dictated, however, that fences were often needed—especially for houses in suburban and city locations. Calvert Vaux, an architect whose houses were similarly romantic and picturesque, occasionally included a picket fence and did give some fence designs.



Designs from Calvert Vaux's book, "Villas & Cottages" first published in 1864.



BASE CORNER BEADS.

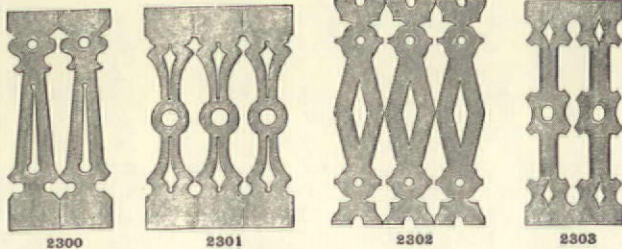


2298
Base Angle Bead, 1 1/4 x 13, \$4.00 per 100.

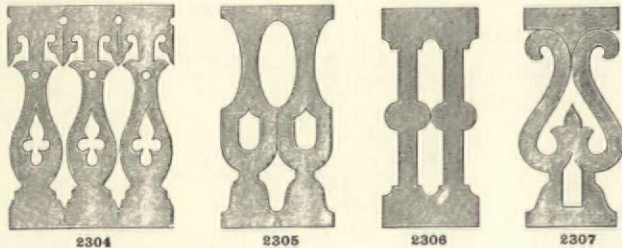


2299
Base Angle Bead, 1 1/4 x 13, \$6.00 per 100.

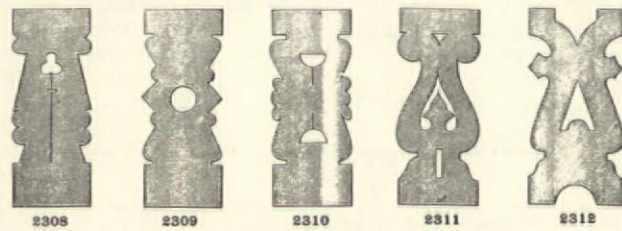
SAWED BALUSTERS.



2300 2301 2302 2303



2304 2305 2306 2307



2308 2309 2310 2311 2312

WRITE FOR PRICES.

As the 19th century wore on, fence designs became more fanciful. Catalogs offered fancy pickets as in the page above from a Rand McNally publication, c. 1890. Pattern books published designs for wooden fences as in the designs shown at right.

IT IS TEMPTING to say that all one would have to do to get a properly designed fence is to determine the age of one's house and then copy a fence from an appropriate pattern book. But the scale of the fence and especially of its posts and gates must be in keeping with your own house and this remains a fine point of judgement.

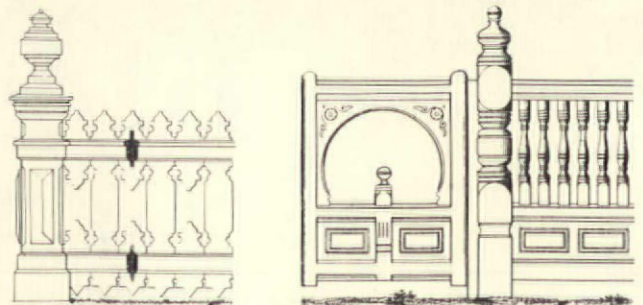
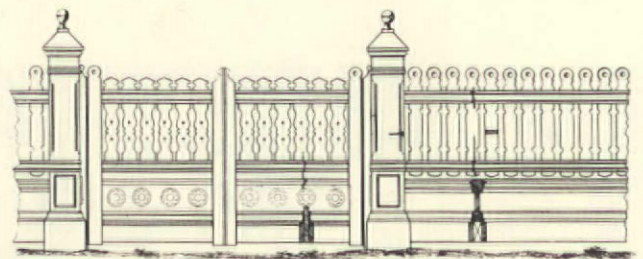
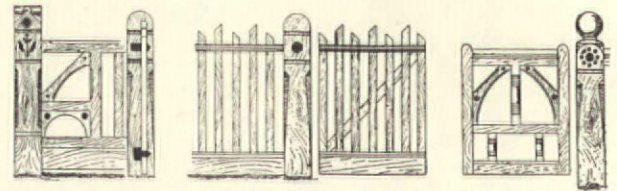
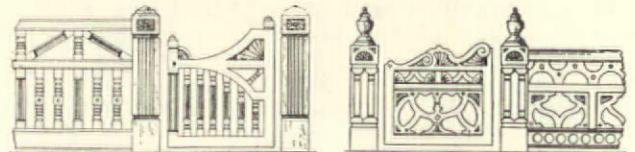
THE BEST BET IS TO START OUT with research to see if you can find any old photos or records showing what kind of fence might have surrounded your property. If this yields a blank then carefully study all available information and select a design that is appropriate. To play it safe remember that it is always better to go with the simple than with ornate. It is less apt to clash with the surroundings and in addition it has the great advantage of costing less.

NEXT MONTH: Building A Picket Fence



This 1890 photo depicts a square-picket fence with a fancy wooden gate.

Designs for Victorian Fences & Gates



(Cont'd. from p. 25)

AS IF TAKING THE HINT, half the ceiling in the front parlor suddenly fell down. Now it was an immediate problem. We set about trying to find a plasterer experienced in restoration work. One had retired, another had moved to Spain, the third had no telephone. The fourth gave us an estimate that was much more than we could afford and did not include restoring more than the minimum of details.

WE CALLED THE TIN CEILING COMPANY again. The ceiling for the 12 x 30 ft. space was done in less than two days and at a cost that averaged out to about ten dollars per square ft. for materials and labor. Once painted, the ceiling actually looked better than it had originally.

WE HAVE USED THE SAME PATTERN throughout our house. We had a choice of 19 ceiling patterns and 9 cornice patterns. There are filler patterns too. In the heyday of the use of metal ceilings, the company that did our work could have given us a choice of over 400 patterns and service of a staff of 20 draftsmen to custom design the installations.

THEY WERE POPULAR because they were easily ordered through catalogs, easy to install and reasonable in price. These reasons are still valid today. Their intricate designs give an authentic feeling of the old days that cannot be matched at the price by any other material. Now, thanks in good part to renovators of lofts and brownstones, metal ceilings are back in fashion.

TODAY THEY ARE MADE of tin plate and manufactured on the automatic presses of Barney Brainum-Shanker Steel, Inc., of Glendale, New York. This company has been pressing tin ceilings from dies since 1912 when there were 40 such companies.

THE TIN CEILINGS are sold in 2x8 ft. panels. If ordered direct from the manufacturer the price range is in the neighborhood of \$13 for the ceiling sheets if less than 50 are ordered and \$45 to \$150 per 100 lineal ft. for the cornices depending on size, pattern and quantity. A crating charge of \$20 is added on orders under \$250.

WHEN YOUR TIN SHEETS arrive, wash them with a solution of half vinegar, half water or with mineral spirits/paint thinner to remove any traces of oil from the stamping machines.

ONCE INSTALLED, prime with oil-based metal primer. After that the tin ceiling can be painted with any type of paint. If the ceiling is to be left unpainted, use clear lacquer on it.

TIN CEILING SHEETS are increasingly being used for walls in bathrooms and halls. For wall installations, lath rather than furring strips are used unless the window and door frames project enough to use furring strips.

THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL CATALOG lists addresses and phone numbers for tin ceiling suppliers.

A Glance Back At Tin Ceiling

AN IMPORTANT FACT to remember when using tin ceiling today is that it was never widely used as the original finish in the formal rooms. More often, it was used as an inexpensive way to conceal damaged plaster.

METAL CEILINGS first came into use as early as 1868 and were actually corrugated iron. By the late 1880's they were in wide use but mostly for hospitals, schools, and commercial buildings. By this time they were small and light metal sheets with stamped decorative designs.

ADVERTISEMENTS PROMOTED the stamped metal sheets as being: Safer--they could act as fire stops in case of fire; Economical--they were less expensive than plaster or wood ceilings.

AT THE HEIGHT of their popularity, c. 1895-1915, several companies specialized in metal ceilings. Most companies could offer a choice of over 400 patterns and the service of a staff of draftsmen to custom design your installation.

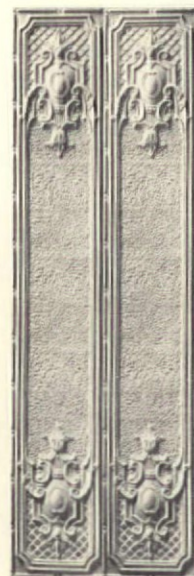
THE MATERIAL was available in a great variety of styles--Classical, Rococo, Gothic, and

later on--Art Deco. Texture was also an important design element as many patterns imitated stucco, brick or tile.

BUT THE BIGGEST difference in what was available then and now is in the form that the metal sheets came in. An entire room could be appropriately covered with metal.

THERE WERE SIDE WALL plates that came in 6 and 8 ft. heights. There were specially designed patterns to be used for dados with accompanying chair rails. Cornice and frieze designs came in a variety of depths.

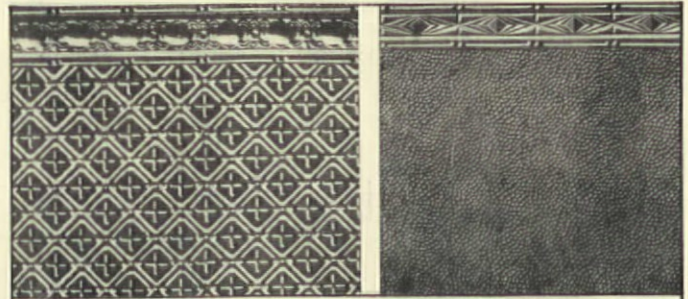
FOR CEILINGS, besides the sheets formed of small and large tiles, there were medallions in many diameters, moulded borders, square centers, rosettes,



Side Wall Plate No. 850
\$10.00 per 100 square feet
Size of sheets 24 x 72, and 24 x 96 inches



This photo of an office was featured in a turn-of-the-century steel ceiling catalog. Ceiling, cornice, walls, and dado are all covered with various forms of metal sheets.



These are two patterns still produced today that quite suitable for use as a dado. They are referred to in the tin ceiling catalogs as "Molded Filler."

THE AVAILABILITY years ago of the various wall panels, fillers, etc., meant that an entire room could be covered in an architecturally appropriate manner with material that was in the right proportion. And proportion today is the problem. Since the stamped metal sheets come in fairly small tile designs, they just cannot be used to cover large expanses of wall and, in some cases, not even large ceilings. You will be introducing a rather strong design element and it must be used with judgement. This is particularly important when a room already has a distinct architectural style to be found in woodwork, plaster frieze, mantels, etc.

HOWEVER, in most cases, tin ceiling can be used as it was years ago--as an economical way to cover a damaged ceiling or to create a dado--and to add some old-fashioned design in the bargain. --C.F.

ELABORATELY DESIGNED beam coverings that imitated an Elizabethan carved and beamed ceiling were offered, known as "False Beams and Wall Beams."

THE MOST COMMON use in homes of the metal sheets was for bathrooms and kitchens. The imitation stucco and tile were popular for dados and wall filler. An odd use of the material was for the underside of porch roofs. Because of the water problem, this apparently did not work well and it is seldom seen today.

THE STAMPED METAL was shipped from the factory with a coat of paint--gray, white or red oxide. Metal ceilings were then painted the same way as plaster ceilings.

A MUCH OVERLOOKED way to utilize tin ceiling is for dados in halls, kitchens and bathrooms. There are still patterns available that have the chair rail incorporated into the design. A wooden chair rail could be added to those patterns that do not have one. To simulate the look of Lincrusta-Walton (an imitation leather material that is no longer available) the painted stamped metal can be glazed in a tan-brown shade.



A typical commercial installation of tin ceiling in the New York office of Thomas Cook and Son travel agency, c. 1906.

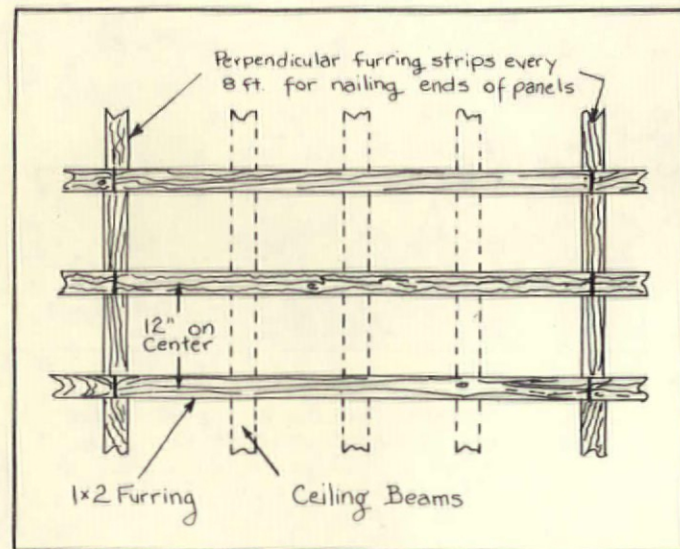
Installing A Tin Ceiling

IN THIS CASE HISTORY, the owners had decided to install a tin ceiling over a badly damaged plaster ceiling. It was not a do-it-yourself job, and the owners had found that it was cheaper to have a tin ceiling installed than to have a contractor put in a sheetrock ceiling. And of course, the metal ceiling was cheaper than having the old plaster removed and a new plaster-and-lath ceiling put in. This use of metal ceiling as an inexpensive cover-up for damaged plaster was one major reason why so much of the material was used in the early part of the 20th century.

ALSO, from a preservation standpoint, a tin ceiling installation is reversible. That is, at some future point the tin and furring strips could be removed and the original plaster restored. This assumes, of course, that no decorative mouldings or medallions are removed in the installation process.

THE BASIC INSTALLATION steps are fairly simple: First, install furring strips around the perimeter of the ceiling. Then find the center of the room and put up furring strips every 12 in. on center. You may have to put some shims or old lath under some of the furring strips in order to level the ceiling. Use 3-in. nails to attach the furring strips to the ceiling beams.

TIN CEILING sheets are 2 ft. wide and 8 ft. long. So you'll need additional strips of furring every 8 ft.—and perpendicular to the strips you installed first—in order to have a nailing surface where the ends of the metal



sheets overlap. You'll use 1-in. nails to attach the tin ceiling to the furring strips.

AFTER THE FLAT SHEETS are attached to the ceiling, a moulding strip is nailed to the ceiling and the walls to provide a finish. After it is nailed in position, any seams that don't lie perfectly flat are tapped gently with a hammer. When it is necessary to cut the metal to fit corners and odd shapes, it can be cut easily with tinsnips.

A PROFESSIONAL INSTALLER can put up a tin ceiling so that all the seams lie perfectly flat. If you're doing the job yourself, the odds are that you'll end up with places where there are small gaps where the sheets overlap. Not to worry. These can be filled with acrylic caulk before painting.

WHEN PAINTING the tin ceiling, make sure there aren't any oily patches on the metal left over from the factory. If there are, wash off with mineral spirits. Then use an oil-based metal primer followed by the finish coat.

SOME SAFETY NOTES: The edges of metal ceiling sheets are quite sharp and can slash your hands badly. Wear heavy work gloves! Mike Beck, the professional installer shown in the photos doesn't wear gloves because he has developed a feel for handling the material without cutting himself. But he strongly urges that do-it-yourselfers not imitate his casual manner of handling the material.

ALSO, A PROFESSIONAL like Mike is able to install a ceiling all by himself. But a novice would certainly want a helper to assist in holding the sheets in position while they are nailed. And scaffolding, such as Mike set up over sawhorses, makes installation a lot easier and safer than would be the case if you and your helper were teetering on stepladders.

SPECIAL THANKS for technical help with this article goes to:

AA-Abbingdon Ceiling Co., 2149 Utica Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11234. This company installs metal ceilings in the New York metropolitan area, and also sells metal ceiling material nationally.

C. A. Ohman, 455 Court St., Brooklyn, N.Y., supplies and installs metal ceilings in the New York metropolitan area.



1. Mike Beck of C. A. Ohman, Inc., provides a steady work surface for himself by making scaffolding out of heavy planks.



3. Additional furring strips are added, so that end result is strips that are 12 in. on centers. Strips are shimmed as needed to level the ceiling.



4. Metal panels are nailed to strips with 1-in. common nails, placing nails in the preformed bead. Mike holds loose end of panel with strip braced by his head.



2. Furring strips are nailed around perimeter of room. Center of room is then located, and lines are snapped for the furring strips on 24-in. centers. These have to be located quite precisely because the metal sheets are rigid and can't be adapted to non-parallel nailing strips.



5. To secure ends of the metal panels, additional pieces of furring strip have to be nailed perpendicular to the long furring strips. This provides a secure nailing surface so that ends of the panels will lay flat.



6. When metal panels need to be cut, such as at the edges and corners, job can be done with tinsnips. Beware of edges: They can be razor sharp!



8. Metal cornice overlaps the edge of the last metal ceiling panel. It is nailed to the furring strips top and bottom with nails spaced about every 12 in.



9. To make a neatly mitred corner, second piece of moulding is trimmed with tinsnips. Start cornice installation at corner furthest from door.



7. Next, furring strips are nailed to wall for the cornice. When smaller metal cornices are used, it usually is nailed directly to the wall.



10. Any open seams are flattened by tapping gently with a hammer and a wide chisel or the back of a nail head. Caulk might also be needed for perfect closure.

Restoring Damaged Plaster — Part II

Taping & Sanding

By David S. Gillespie, Chicago, Ill.

WORKING WITH TAPE COMPOUND to cover the cracks around your patches, you'll find that the larger cracks will require at least three coats. So resign yourself to this three-step process and don't try to shorten the time for the job by putting the compound on too thickly.

USING THE WIDE KNIFE in all but tight spots, fill the largest cracks, plus the seams between plaster and drywall patches, with tape compound. Then cover the cracks with drywall tape worked into the wet compound; make sure some compound oozes through the holes in the tape—that will ensure good adhesion. Be sure also to work out all air bubbles from under the tape. Then cover the tape with an additional layer of compound.

THE FIRST COAT should be applied so that it is all below or even with the level of the finish coat of plaster. Avoid large bumps and bulges in the wet compound, and do not leave any areas where the compound sticks out above the level of the old plaster. Remember: Any ridges or bumps you leave at this stage will have to be sanded later. It is far easier to remove imperfections while the compound is still in the plastic state.

WHEN IT IS THOROUGHLY DRY, the first coat will have shrunk and may have cracked in places. Using a stiff wall scraper, knock off any ridges and cut out with a razor blade any sections of loose tape. Re-cement these loose pieces with more tape compound. Then apply a second coat of tape compound, being careful to get a smooth even surface. If you applied the first coat too heavily...or if there are a large number of irregularities in the surface, you may have to sand between the first and second coats.

A Second Coat

THE SECOND COAT, if applied carefully, will fill all the cracks and major irregularities left in the first coat and begins the levelling process. If you want to avoid many subsequent coats, be extra careful with this step. Using the 12-in. blade, work the compound in a thin layer over the surface. Use long, even strokes; short jerky strokes create too many ridges.

JOINTS SHOULD BE FEATHERED 12 to 18 in. on either side of the joint—or more if necessary. Using light pressure, pull the knife across the crack at a shallow angle to the surface. The blade should be nearly flat so that as much as possible of the flat side skims along the plaster. This is strictly a matter of feel that you'll develop as you go along. The surface should feel flat as you draw the knife

through the wet compound. Don't use too much compound...or neglect to spread the compound a sufficient distance on both sides of the joint. Otherwise, you'll end up with a seam that has a noticeable bulge in the middle.

THE NEXT STEP is the worst. Sanding joint compound is just plain awful work. It gets in your hair, nose, ears and eyes—and forms a paste in your mouth. Be sure to wear a hat, goggles and some sort of mask to keep dust out of your lungs. Hospital masks are available at the corner drug store—and I usually buy several at a time.

Finishing Off

USING MEDIUM SANDPAPER, finish off rough edges and bumps, bringing the surface down as flat as possible. I always carry a pencil at this stage to mark places where another coat will be necessary. This part of the job is entirely tactile; your hands can detect low spots and bumps that aren't visible to the eye.

IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE to avoid much of the mess of sanding dust by "wet sanding." Use a damp sponge to go over the rough spots. Since the tape compound is water soluble, you can get a lot of levelling in this manner.

WHEN THE SANDING has been completed, go back over the surface with a third coat of compound. Hopefully, you'll need very little compound to fill the remaining hollows and the job should not take very long. Once that coat has dried, lightly sand all the newly applied compound. If you've worked carefully, you'll have a good flat surface at this point. Any small irregularities can be filled and sanded again.

ONE FINAL TIP on painting: The tape compound is highly absorbent, so seal it with a prime coat before final painting. And use an off white or cream color on ceilings. Either stark white or dark colors show any remaining blemishes to worst advantage.

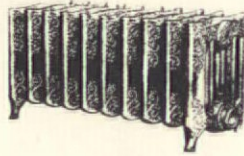
SURE, THIS TYPE of careful preparation is a lot of work. But when you see the smooth result you'll be more than amply rewarded. And by saving as much as possible of your original plaster, you'll have retained a lot of the important visual character of your house.

Patching Problem Cracks

SOME CRACKS return like old friends because they are caused by structural movement and/or expansion-contraction. Several patching systems are on the market to solve this specific problem. They use a glass fiber tape and synthetic resin adhesive. One such system is "Tuff-Patch" made by The Synkoloid Co., 400 Colgate Dr. S.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30336.

Restorer's Notebook

Disconnecting Hot-Water Radiators



THE ARTICLE "Sprucing Up Old Radiators" (OHJ Oct. 1978) contained much useful information. However, since several of the methods depended upon disconnecting the old radiators, I wanted to pass along some cautionary notes about the potential problems when you disconnect an old hot-water heating system.

I AM REHABILITATING an 1874 house with a hot-water heating system that was installed around the turn of the century. During the work, we removed each radiator. And we were sure we had done a good job reinstalling them—until we started the boiler to test the system.

OLD VALVES that were once satisfactory leaked terribly when the system was reconnected. We had to repeatedly disconnect each radiator, sand the coupling faces and use liberal amounts of teflon valve sealing compound before we were able to get a tight seal.

IN ADDITION, some of our radiators, especially in bays, were connected by long runs of exposed pipes that act as additional heating units. In removing the radiators, we unfortunately cracked some of the old pipes and elbows. We thought it would be an easy job to rethread and reattach new pipe, but such was not the case. Many of the old elbows were not standard sizes, but were rather obscure angles necessary to fit the radiators into the bays. Needless to say, these special couplings were no longer available.

AFTER SOME TROUBLE, we were able to fix some of our troubles by threading pipes at an angle so that the pipe and the available elbows more or less matched the angles of the bays. In some cases, however, the radiators no longer fit the bays the way they once did.

ALL OF THE ABOVE COMPLICATIONS made a half-day job into a three-day ordeal with consultations with plumbers, friends and various experts.

OUR FLOOR SANDER, who has a great deal of experience with old-house restoration in the Chicago area, put the subject in perspective for us (after our ordeal was over). He expressed surprise that we had ever disconnected our hot-water radiators. In his experience, reconnecting a steam radiator system presents few problems. However, old hot-water heating systems are a constant source of trouble if they are ever disconnected.

Marshall L. Silver, P.E.
Consulting Engineer
Highland Park, Illinois

Touch-Up Tips

SAVE EMPTY nail polish bottles. Clean them thoroughly, first with nail polish remover, and then with soap and water. Let the bottles and little brushes dry thoroughly.

WHENEVER you paint a room, piece of furniture, etc., save some of the paint by filling one of the clean bottles. (You can use a clean eye-dropper for dripless filling.) Then, whenever you need to touch up minor scratches and nicks, you have the paint right at hand for quick, non-messy cosmetic repairs.

Anne Roquemore
Montgomery, Ala.

FOR TOUCH-UP PAINTING, I always try to save some of the paint I've used. But there are some old original finishes in my house for which, naturally, I have no paint reserve.

SO I HAVE PURCHASED a set of artists acrylic colors—the paint that is sold in tubes at artist supply stores. (I bought an extra-large size of the white pigment, since you use a lot of white to tone down some of the very bright colors.)

WITH THIS SET of pigments, I can quickly mix up a small quantity of patching paint to touch up any surface. One happy discovery I made is that the raw umber pigment—just as it comes from the tube—is perfect for touching up the walnut graining in my house. Another nice feature of the acrylics is that they are water-soluble, so your artist's brush cleans up very quickly with soap and warm water.

Alice Kennedy
San Francisco Calif.

Removing Old Mortar From Bricks

IN THE PROCESS of restoring our 1750's colonial house, we discovered a trick that worked very well for removing old mortar from antique bricks. (Simply trying to bang the mortar off with a hammer is a slow, painful job—as well as harmful to the soft old bricks.)

WE BURIED the old bricks in a pile of oak leaves and left them out in the weather for about six months. After that time, the old mortar was softened to a point where it came off very easily. Presumably, it is the acidity in the oak leaves that breaks down the substances in the old mortar. This procedure proved to be both simple and quite safe for the old bricks.

Jane Freeman
Brimfield, Mass.

Got Any Tips?

Do you have any hints or short cuts that might help other old-house owners? We'll pay \$15 for any short how-to items that are used in this "Restorer's Notebook" column. Send your hints to: Notebook Editor, The Old-House Journal, 199 Berkeley Pl., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217.

Products For The Old House



Stove

Polish

BECAUSE SO MANY people are again using old-fashioned stoves for cooking and heating, many people are again looking for an old fashioned substance known as stove polish.

THE HOPE COMPANY manufactures a product known as Grill and Stove Black. It's heat resistant to 1400°F, and easy to apply--no brushes are required. It will restore luster and blackness to any cast iron surface and is particularly recommended for black cast iron stoves.

PRICE is \$4.95 for a 16 oz. can. To order, or for more information, write: The Hope Co., Inc., Dept. OHJ, Box 28431, St. Louis, MO 63141.

Period House Plans

HOUSE PLANS are available for both Colonial and Victorian styles. Architectural Period Houses is a firm that has of-authentic plans drawn from historic New England houses. They now have a Victorian brochure available with 12 designs.

THESE STYLES include a Bracketed Cottage, Carpenter's Gothic, Stick Style, Queen Anne and Shingle Style.

Two brochures, "New England Historic Houses," and "The Golden Age of Victorian" are available for \$3.00 each.

WRITE TO: Architectural Period Houses, Inc., Dept. OHJ, Mirick Road, Princeton, MA 01541.

Helpful Publications

The Carpenter Gothic Style

CARPENTER GOTHIC" is a new book that takes a delightful photographic survey of the style in the New England area.

FOR THE PURPOSE of this book, "Carpenter Gothic" is defined as any type of carved, wooden ornamentation used on American houses of varied architectural style, mainly before the Civil War. So, while most of the houses are quite gothic in design, there are also some stick and exotic houses included.

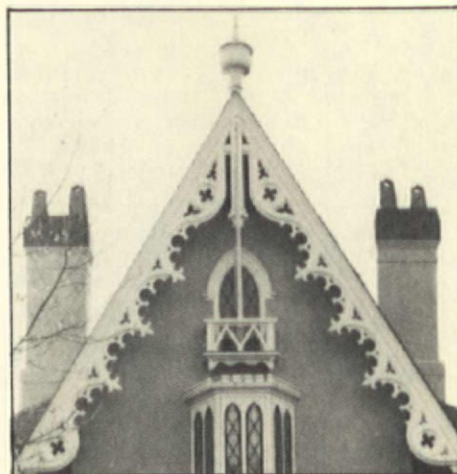
THE PHOTOS (mostly full-page plates) by Frederick L. Hamilton are stunning. And the text by Alma McArdle is informal, warm and informative.

ALMA McARDLE and co-author, Deirdre McArdle, trace the origin of Carpenter Gothic to its roots in the "picturesque revolt" against the rigid demands of the classic form, and discuss the influence of Downing, Pugin, and Davis.

BOOK is 160 pages, 8-1/4 x 11, hardcover, with 150 b/w photos

and line drawings, and an index and a selected bibliography.

"CARPENTER GOTHIC" is \$24.50. To order, send check to: Watson-Guptill Publications, 2160 Patterson Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45214.



Alexander Jackson Davis designed this house in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

New and Expanded!

1979 Catalog

- Directory of where to buy 7,282 items and services for the old house;
- 662 Companies listed;
- 203 of these sources are new—they didn't appear in the 1978 Catalog.

Single copies: \$7.95;
\$4.95 to subscribers
(Includes Postage and Handling)

The Old-House Journal
69A Seventh Avenue
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217

Subscriptions: The Old-House Journal

Enclosed is:

- \$12 for one year subscription
- \$15.95 for subscription + Buyers' Guide Catalog

Subscription is: Gift Personal

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Donor's Name _____

Mail to: The Old-House Journal, Dept. 7,
69A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217