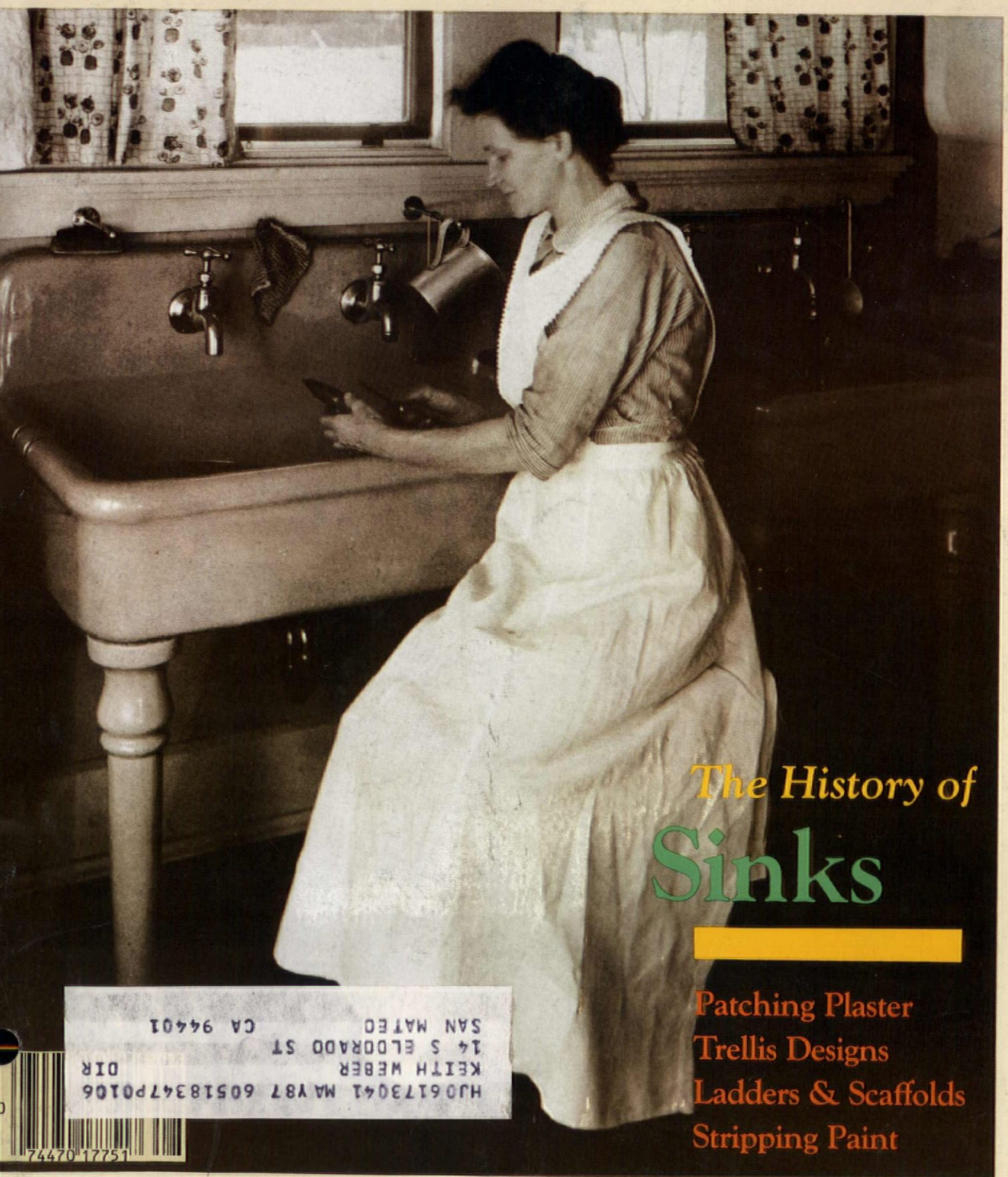
Restoration and Maintenance Techniques

Old-House Journal

August 1986 / $2.95



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Contents

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Cover: 1910 photograph courtesy of the Bettmann Archive, New York.

The Kitchen Question

PEOPLE WHO OWN eighteenth-century houses don't worry about doing a true period kitchen. A dirt-floored outbuilding with an open fire is unthinkable. People who own 1920s or '30s (or '50s) houses might be tempted, however. All of us wonder how a modern kitchen can be put sensitively into a period house.

FOR A LONG TIME, kitchens were exempted from restoration (bathrooms, too, before pedestal sinks and clawfoot tubs regained justifiable popularity). We've watched that assumption soften lately. (The New Yorker cartoonist noticed it, too.) This tentative but growing interest in period kitchen design led to the Sinks feature in this issue.

NOBODY WANTS to trade in the fridge for an ice box (the ice man doesn't come around anymore). But restorers are starting to have a better eye for period space planning and details. There's less phony Victorianizing and more low-key authenticity in kitchens these days. It may show up in a tongue-and-groove wainscot that's left alone during remodelling. Maybe one good period piece -- a free-standing cabinet, an antique range -- is used in a simple modern kitchen.

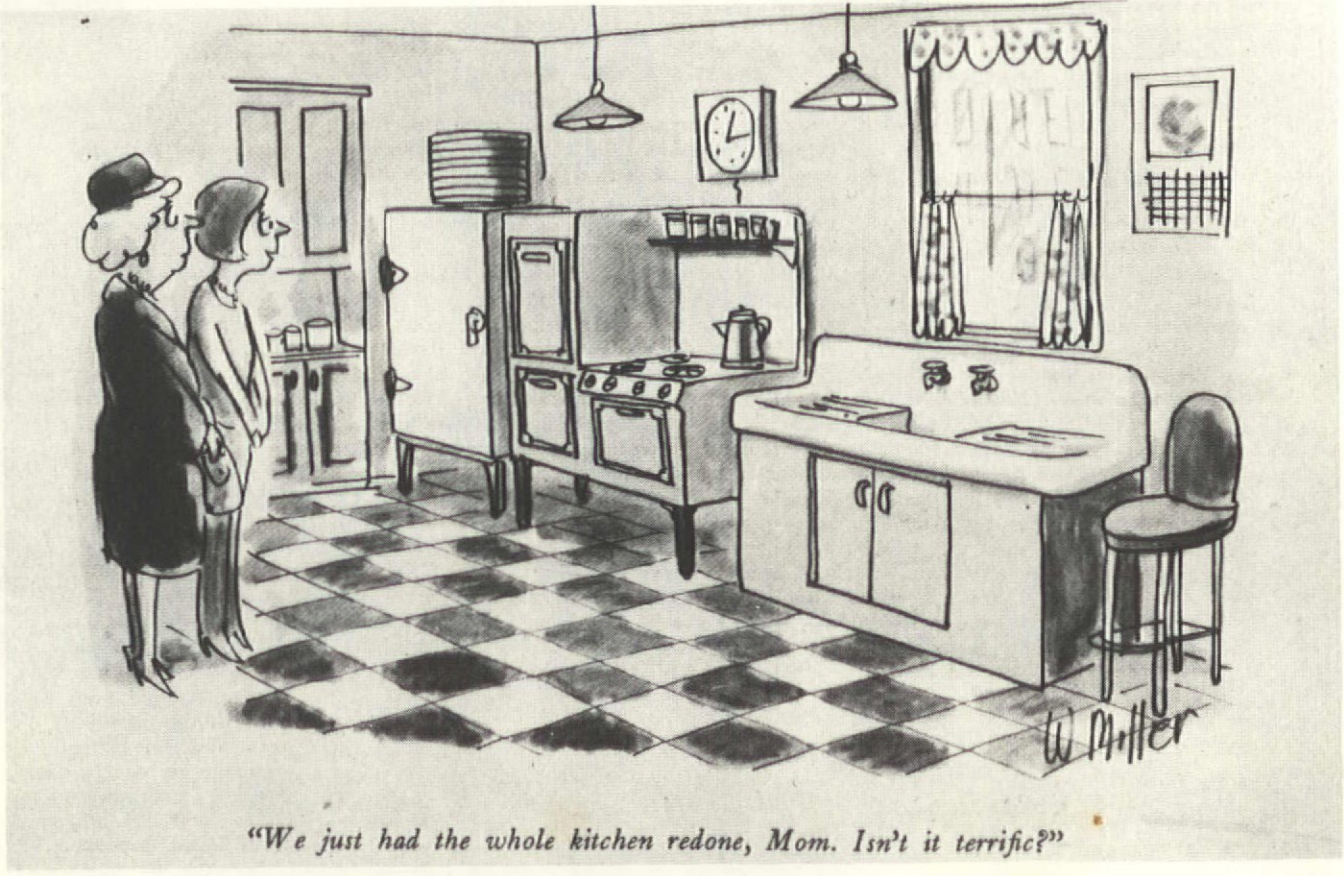
I WAS NOT ONLY amused but also surprised when I saw this cartoon. I thought the trend toward period kitchens was an Old-House-Journal-reader phenomenon. Now that we know how to do parlors and bedrooms -- and even bathrooms -- the kitchen is the next frontier. And probably the most difficult challenge yet. It's a lot of fun to research and create a period kitchen -- but will you be able to live with the outcome? Worse, could it affect resale of the house?

WE'LL EXPLORE the period kitchen in a special issue next year. Here are some topics -- let me know if you can contribute:

- RESTORATION of an extant period kitchen; sensitive update.
- PRESERVATION of a later kitchen (example: preserving a well done 1940s kitchen in an 1895 house).
- INTEGRATION of a new kitchen in a pre-1860 house.
- DESIGN of a new kitchen (period-inspired or not) to go in an addition.
- RE-CREATION of an authentic kitchen -- say, a 1930s kitchen in a 1930s house.

PLEASE SEND some photos and a letter describing the work to KITCHENS, OHJ, 69A Seventh Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11217.

P. Moore



"We just had the whole kitchen redone, Mom. Isn't it terrific?"

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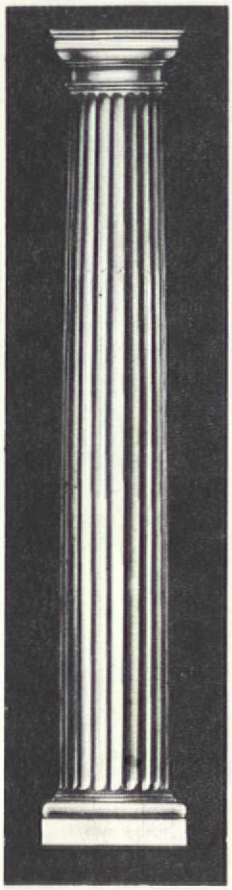

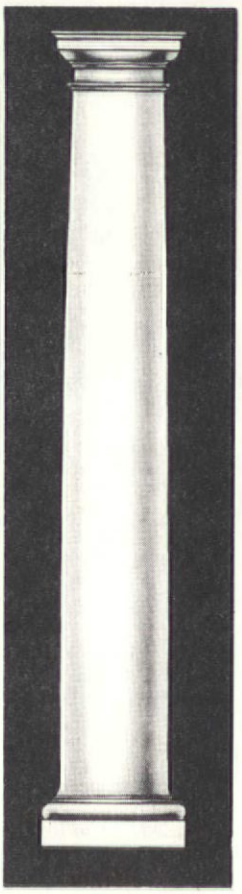

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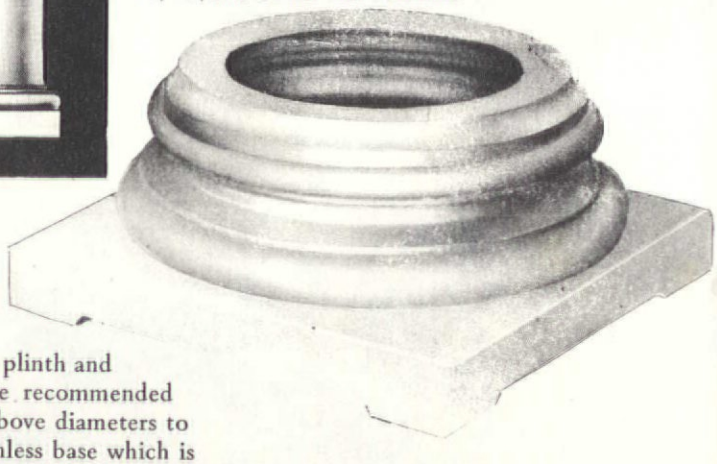

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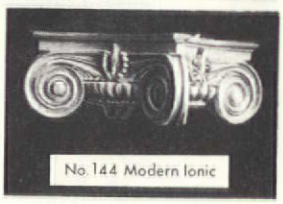

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Letters

More On Mortar

Dear Patricia,

Regarding "Chinking, Daubing, & You" in the March 1986 "Ask OHJ," I suggest that Western log-cabin restorers who still have unanswered questions contact Greg Olson, Contractor and Architectural Conservator, 6872 Witzel Road SE, Salem, OR 97301.

Greg has restored several important log houses and has made detailed studies of their original daubing compositions. One in particular used whole milk in the basic lime-sand mixture because the cream content provided important water-repellent qualities -- useful folk knowledge. The use of portland cement in a daubing mix is decidedly modern and might not be appropriate for a historic building.

I wonder about Douglas Reed's recommendation that riverbed sands be used. While this may be a factor in matching sands in some parts of the country, in many others the "store bought" sand comes from the same riverbeds that the do-it-yourselfer might dig in. It may be the only difference is whether washed sand or "site run" (unwashed) sand is used. Sand-particle grading, sharpness, and mineral content may be factors in a mortar or daubing's strength, durability, and appearance, but to less of an extent than whether it is unwashed and contains a high percentage of silt and clays or organic matter. "Elasticity" as a factor of the sand is questionable, except as used to describe its dirtiness and bond with the cements.

-- Al Staehli, A.I.A.
Portland, Ore.

Thanks, OHJ

Dear Editor:

Just wanted to let you know how helpful your Journal has become! My firm has been doing restoration and rehab projects for years, and we use OHJ all the time. We found the recent issue on painting to be full of great information. I gave it to my spec writer for a job in progress. The level of detail in OHJ is impressive.

-- Bernard Rothzeid, F.A.I.A.
New York, N.Y.

Paint-Color Options

Dear Patricia,

Your special report on Exterior Painting (May 1986 OHJ) was very comprehensive and informative.

What it overlooked is how to choose colors which will not fade or have a minor fade factor over the years, what makes a color "cover," and sheen.

Do not select a color with an ultra-deep base which is "shot" by formula into a white base. If a deep and/or intensive color is sought, then at least start with a major paint company which has a factory-colored base closest to the color you wish to achieve.

However, for best results, "intermix" standard, factory-ground colors. For example, go to Fuller O'Brien and intermix two parts "Ultra Blue" with one part "Ultra Black" to achieve an oil or acrylic Navy Blue which won't appreciably fade for up to eight years.

Factory-ground colors of medium, light, or dark color values, or combinations thereof, and different color hues can be mixed together to get great, long-lasting results.

Correct, meticulous and (unfortunately) laborious surface preparation cannot be too strongly emphasized for long-term results.

A color which "covers" or takes one coat over almost any underlying color has "opacity" or opaqueness.

Choosing pretty pastels will almost surely end up in two or three coatings for solid coverage. This results in added material and labor expense, not to mention frustration or the feeling that you purchased an inferior-quality paint.

This pitfall can be avoided by choosing a color which has at least a small amount of raw umber, raw sienna, or lamp black. These are the most opaque colorants.

Four types of sheens that are available: Flat, satin, semi-gloss, and gloss. Various sheens, and even paint brands, may be intermixed, as long as they are stirred well, contrary to warnings on the directions (but remember to keep oil- and water-based materials separate!).

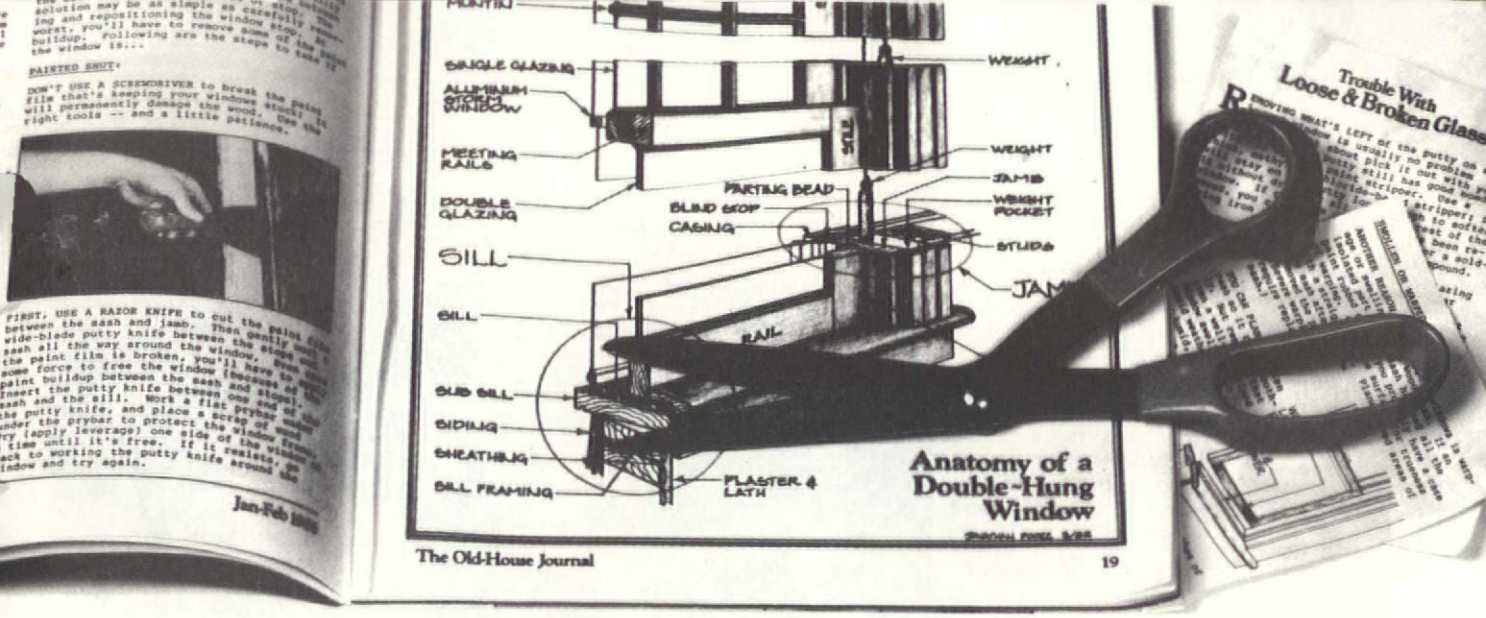
Variations on sheen contrast is an important dimension of a beautiful paint job. For example, satin on the main body, semi-gloss on the major trim, and flat in small, well balanced accent areas.

Gloss oil-based paints lose their sheen in one to three years, depending on the exposure.

Semi-gloss acrylic enamels will retain their sheens five to seven years, depending on the exposure.

-- Don & Bob Buckter
Color Consultants
S.F. and L.A., Cal.

The Burr/Otero House in Monrovia, California — Color Design: Bob Buckter



How The OHJ Professional Subscription Was Designed For Professionals, By Professionals

By Patricia Poore
OHJ Editor

The occasion was a meeting of the Association for Preservation Technology, an international organization of 2,000 members. I serve on its Board of Directors.

During the meeting, architect Max F. interjected a few comments about The Old-House Journal. "You have back issues bound into books, don't you?" he asked. I said yes, and he continued, "I have a subscription but I'd like the Yearbook every year, too. My staff cuts up the issues to file articles or product information. Besides, we're always taking them out into the field for contractors to use. By the end of the year, there's nothing left to put on the reference shelf!

"You ought to have some sort of deal so that your professional readers get the OHJ Yearbook automatically. Then we can have an indexed, bound volume of just the editorial material for reference."

Michael L., an engineer, added, "Sure! And why don't you throw in the Catalog, too? My office needs one every year, and it would be easier to order the Yearbook and Catalog together."

"It could be part of a Professional Subscription to the magazine," someone else concluded.

There was immediate concurrence around the table: If you're among the one-third of our readers who routinely use OHJ as a "tool of the trade," it would be more convenient and efficient to order the subscription, the Yearbook and the Catalog all at once.

And so the OHJ Professional Subscription was born. Or more accurately, "designed" for professionals, by professionals.

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Where Credit Is Due

Dear Ms. Poore,

In the May 1986 issue of The Old-House Journal, I read with interest the article on "Uncovering Decorative Painting." However, I was concerned with the crediting by Ms. Olson of the interior of Aspen's Wheeler Opera House as among the works undertaken by her studio.

Indeed, Ms. Olson assisted the architectural firm in preparing its specifications for the re-creation of the interior finishes, and her studio supplied three canvas pieces for installation. However, all major decorative finishes in the auditorium, i.e. the ceiling, coves, procenium, stage, and side boxes, were executed by The Grammar of Ornament, Inc.

These finishes include the graining and gilding of the auditorium's ceiling beams, opera boxes, procenium, and wainscotting. Similarly, all stencilled designs, striping, and gilding are the work of The Grammar of Ornament, Inc.

We request a clarification of this matter at the earliest possible opportunity in the OHJ.

We applaud your continuing publication of articles "demystifying" the craft of the ornamenter, and we look forward to your work in the future.

-- Ken Miller, President
The Grammar of Ornament
Denver, Col.

An Electro-Static Tip

Dear OHJ,

I thoroughly enjoyed the Painting issue (May 1986), especially as I am a painter. In your "Ask OHJ" column you answered a question dealing with the painting of metal kitchen cabinets. I agree with your response as far as it goes, but you failed to recommend a procedure for applying the Rustoleum. Our shop uses an electro-static sprayer for a number of metal surfaces, with beautiful results. The sprayer charges the paint and the metal, reducing the amount of overspray and increasing the chances of getting a great finish. A contractor using the gun may be very expensive, but renting the equipment may be possible.

Special preparations must also be made to the paint itself. The paint is usually thinned using naptha and ketone. The ketone (MEK or Methyl Ethyl Ketone) is used to enhance the paint's ability to hold the electro-static charge. The full directions for the process are somewhat complicated for a letter, but if rental is at all possible, I'm sure the agent can provide all the necessary information.

We use the electro-static sprayer for lockers, metal furniture, and the like, with excellent results. For something as nice as kitchen cabinets, the extra effort is definitely worthwhile.

-- Park Furlong
Painter-Prince
Laurel, Md.

The O.H.P. Understand

Dear Editor:

I have been enjoying the OHJ very much. Color cover looks good (miss the holes).

I especially like Ms. Poore's commentary on old-house living. I live in a construction site -- have been for three years and expect to for six more. Helps to know other people are doing it too. There's a need for an "Old-House Therapy Group" for venting frustrations of walls collapsing, etc. N.H.P (New-House People) just don't understand!

I now realize that if God wanted me to fix my roof, He wouldn't have invented plastic buckets.

-- Ellen Kardell
Victorian Glassworks
Washington, D.C.

"Migraine" Responses

Dear Editors:

I awoke this morning to look up at the cracked, wrinkled, dingy moons and stars on my ceiling paper and felt that same "old-house depression" I've had off and on for about two years now. Up and out into the "gonna be beautiful" hall and open stairway, down past the "needs to be stripped" woodwork, into the country kitchen full of warped cupboards for my coffee. I sat at the table and looked up at "the beginning of the end" of the tongue-and-groove ceiling job, the bare plasterboard where my tile splashback "will be real soon" and at the uneven windows that "need to be done." My two-year-old is playing ball with himself: He rolls it out, the sloping floor rolls it back. Then I picked up my OHJ for my periodic dose of Old-House Vitamin B-12.

However, my "it'll get done one of these days" husband should have hidden it. Instead of finding "how I turned this dump into a mansion in five years and stayed married," I found "Migraine Castle." My first reaction was to call my husband at work and say "I told you so! Please, buy me a ranch house, something with no coal furnace to shovel into or out of. Something with storm windows, and thermostats, and doors that close, and, and, and...." But then I got hold of myself and peeked at "Remuddling," swept the newest batch of sawdust off the kitchen floor, and dreamed over a new wallpaper book. I got back into my "aren't we lucky to live in such a neat old house" frame of mind.

Keep up the good work -- but please, next month can't we have another shot of B-12? I really need it!

-- Dolores Johnson
Logan Station, Penn.

Dear OHJ,

I just finished reading David and Brenda Ferre's "Migraine Castle," and feel compelled to write -- I want to help dispell any fears that may arise in the hearts of present or about-to-become old-house people.

I am an old-house owner myself and have been through many catastrophes of the type the Ferres experienced. I can readily sympathize. However, a lack of personal funds should not scare anyone away from an old beauty.

There are loan programs which every old-house person should know about. The two most readily available are Housing & Urban Development's (HUD) FHA 203(k) Rehabilitation Loan Program and the Federal National Mortgage Association's (FNMA) Rehabilitation loan. Both may be used to purchase or refinance homes that qualify as true rehabilitation projects. For single-family homes, the maximum mortgage allowed on FNMA's program is $133,250; HUD's maximum is $90,000. (The FHA loan limit differs around the country.) Higher amounts are available on multi-family dwellings of up to four units.

I am a Mortgage Banker and the head of my firm's Rehabilitation Loan Division. If anyone in the greater D.C. area would like more details, I'd be glad to be of service.

-- Ian R. McFarland
Account Executive
Ronzetti Mortgage
and Investment Corp.
10195 Main St., Suite A
Fairfax, Va. 22031
(703) 352-1360

Dear Ms. Poore:

We just received the May 1986 OHJ. I have finished reading the "Migraine Castle" article and am driven to write some comments on Mr. Ferre's essay.

It is obvious that the Ferres should never have been allowed away from a condo or housing development. One doesn't remove the furnace because it uses a lot of oil without arranging to install another one. If they were not planning on installing the furnace right away, they could have waited to buy it until they were ready to install (freeing working capital).

The thing in the article to which I objected most was that they listed the property with a local broker for $29,900 and with the OHJ for $35,000.

I do agree with one of his comments, that if one is not knowledgeable about structures one should hire someone who is to check out the place before buying.

I am not enchanted by articles like this and would not like to read any more of them.

-- Marilyn L. Sibley
Flemington, N.J.

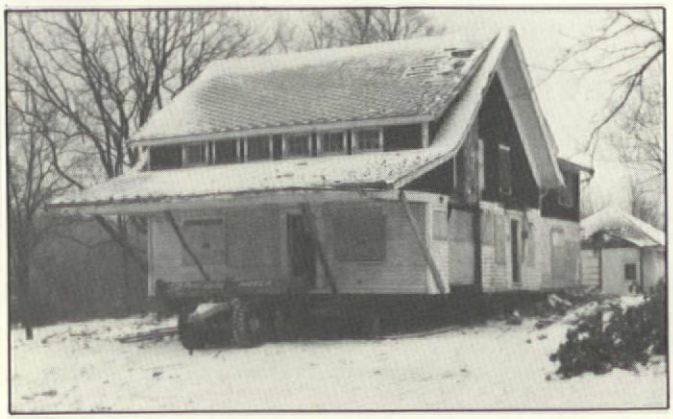
Before & After

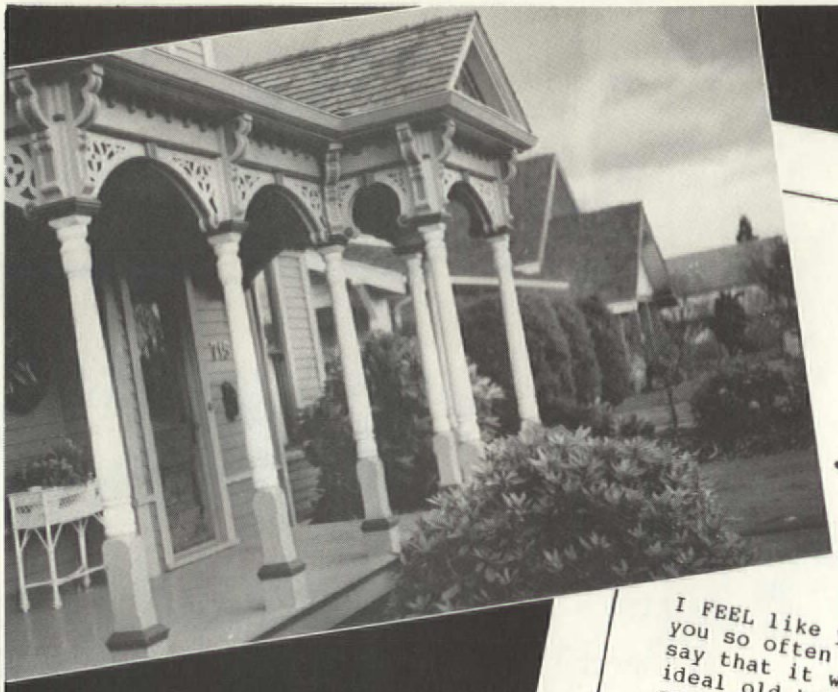
Dear OHJ:

Enclosed are before-&-after photos of my house. The first shows the structure when it was purchased and moved. In the second, the house has been set in place at its new site and is in the process of restoration.

-- Steve Lomske
Northville, Mich.

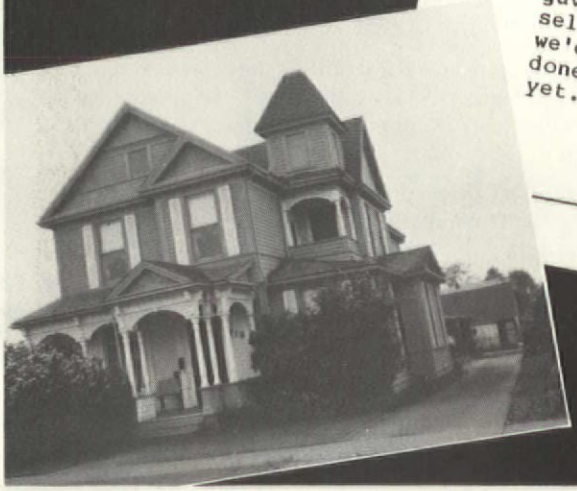
[For what NOT to do to an old house, see Mr. Lomske's photos in this issue's "Remuddling," page 312. -- ed.]





Old-House Living ...

BY STEVE & BARB FREEMAN



Before

Dear Folks at OHJ —

I FEEL like you're part of the family, we go to you so often for advice. In fact, you might even say that it was through you that we found our ideal old house. We saw it in the Emporium section....

> CENTRALIA, WA — 1894 Queen Anne w / square turret, gazebo-like side porch. 35 doors w / orig. ornate brass hardware..Woodwork w / Eastlake carving. Orig. brass lighting fixtures. Curved staircase. Needs only new roof, painting, rewiring, and lots of love. (206) 555-1212.

THE ODD THING WAS, we already owned the house. It was our own ad.

WE HAD LIVED in that house, working on it bit by bit, for a couple of years. We'd begun to think that it owned us. We felt defeated, just trying to stay ahead of all the decay we encountered: decay of the wooden sill, decay of the wooden sashes, decay of the sandstone foundation, decay of the bank account, and ultimately, decay of the attitude. We decided that it would be best if we sold the house to some richer and more patient old-house lover.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, our glowing description brought interested customers. We found ourselves mailing out photo essays and giving house tours, explaining all the virtues of our beautiful house. It gave us a strange feeling, as if we were trying to sell Grandma to the gypsies. Before we knew it, we'd changed our minds. After all the work we had done, we were not going to give up on the old girl yet.

IT HAS BEEN sixteen years since my wife and I first noticed a big grey house looming behind some bushes in the rain. We were strongly attracted to it, but we had just bought a 1929 bungalow and so did not make an effort to find out more about it. A few years later, my wife and I decided we needed a bigger home. By then, there was only one person living in our house -- a wise old lady, full of memories of her many years in the house. We told her that we would like a chance to buy her house when she was ready. She said she would put us on her list.

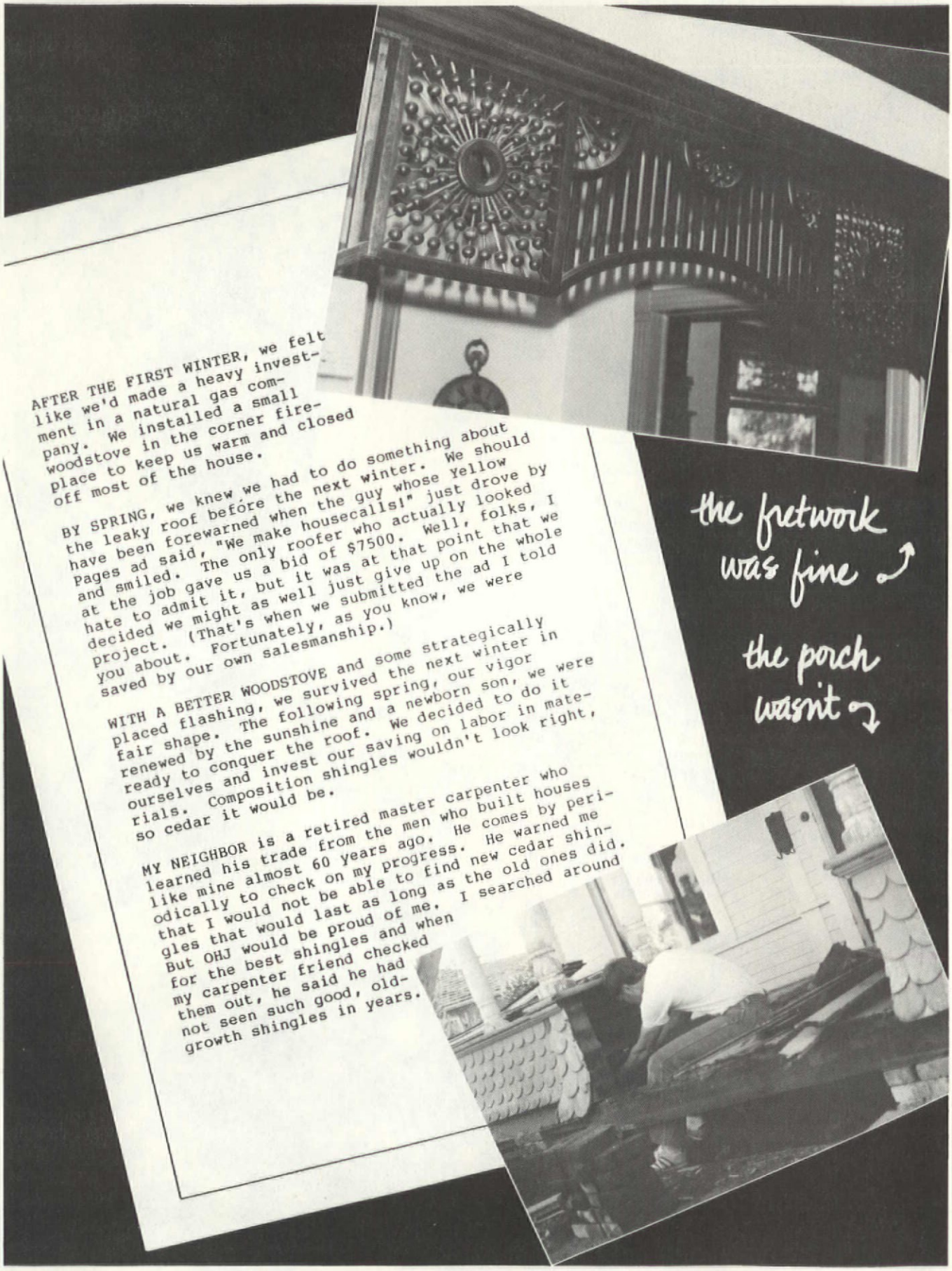
THAT LIST was three pages long. But it mostly contained people who wanted to make the place into apartments; people who wanted to lower ceilings and panel walls. She even had people who wanted to put on aluminum siding. But, as I said, she was a wise lady, and she wanted to sell to someone who would preserve the house. A few months later, she phoned to tell us that it was ours if we still wanted it.

THAT WAS six years ago. In that time, we have experienced highs and lows beyond the comprehension of most of the "modern" world. It is, after all, very hard to get intimately involved with a mobile home or a pre-fab.

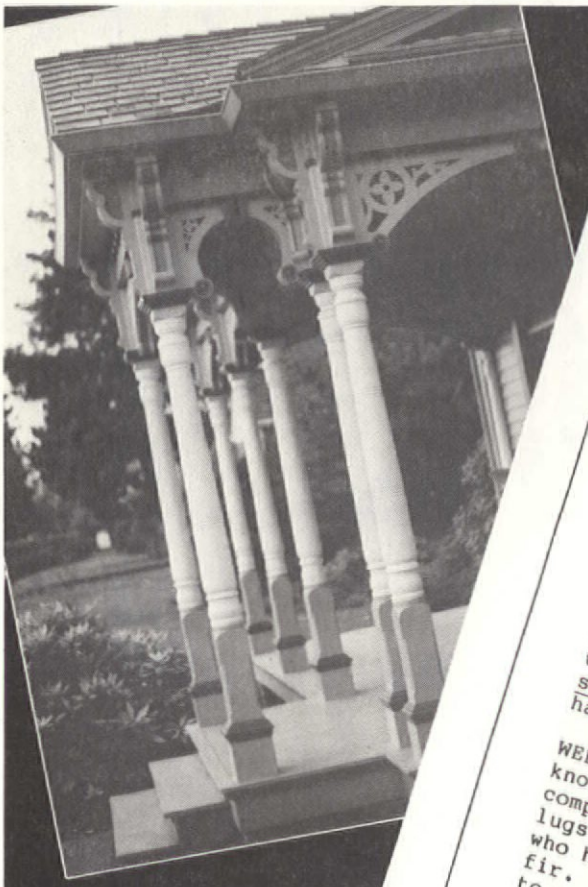
WHEN WE FIRST bought the house, we were full of ambition. We started by painting two of the rooms, which were an unappealing rose beige. Well, we did the two rooms, then kept on going into the entryway, along the stairs, and down the hall.... They were all connected! And it took as much paint and time to paint two rooms and a couple of halls as it had taken to paint our entire bungalow.

WITHIN THE FIRST WEEKS we developed a system for finding each other in the 13 rooms: "Stand still and start counting out loud, and I'll come find you!"

After →


AFTER THE FIRST WINTER, we felt like we'd made a heavy investment in a natural gas company. We installed a small woodstove in the corner fireplace to keep us warm and closed off most of the house.
BY SPRING, we knew we had to do something about the leaky roof before the next winter. We should have been forewarned when the guy whose yellow Pages ad said, "We make housecalls!" just drove by and smiled. The only roofer who actually looked at the job gave us a bid of $7500. Well, folks, I hate to admit it, but it was at that point that we decided we might as well just give up on the whole project. (That's when we submitted the ad I told you about. Fortunately, as you know, we were saved by our own salesmanship.)
WITH A BETTER WOODSTOVE and some strategically placed flashing, we survived the next winter in fair shape. The following spring, our vigor renewed by the sunshine and a newborn son, we were ready to conquer the roof. We decided to do it ourselves and invest our saving on labor in materials. Composition shingles wouldn't look right, so cedar it would be.
MY NEIGHBOR is a retired master carpenter who learned his trade from the men who built houses like mine almost 60 years ago. He comes by periodically to check on my progress. He warned me that I would not be able to find new cedar shingles that would last as long as the old ones did. But OHJ would be proud of me, I searched around for the best shingles and when my carpenter friend checked them out, he said he had not seen such good, old-growth shingles in years.
the fretwork was fine
the porch wasn't

edited by Julia Lichtblau



OUR MOST RECENT ENDEAVOR, the porch, is actually what got me to sit down and write this letter. This porch project started out to be relatively simple -- replacing rotten floorboards. But, while removing them, I realized the railing was not original. Someone had converted the old railing into a wall by inserting a nice fat two-by-ten, which eventually caused the lower two feet of the posts to rot. Fortunately, the carpenter had used parts of the original rail for bracing inside the new wall, so I had a model from which to re-create the old one.

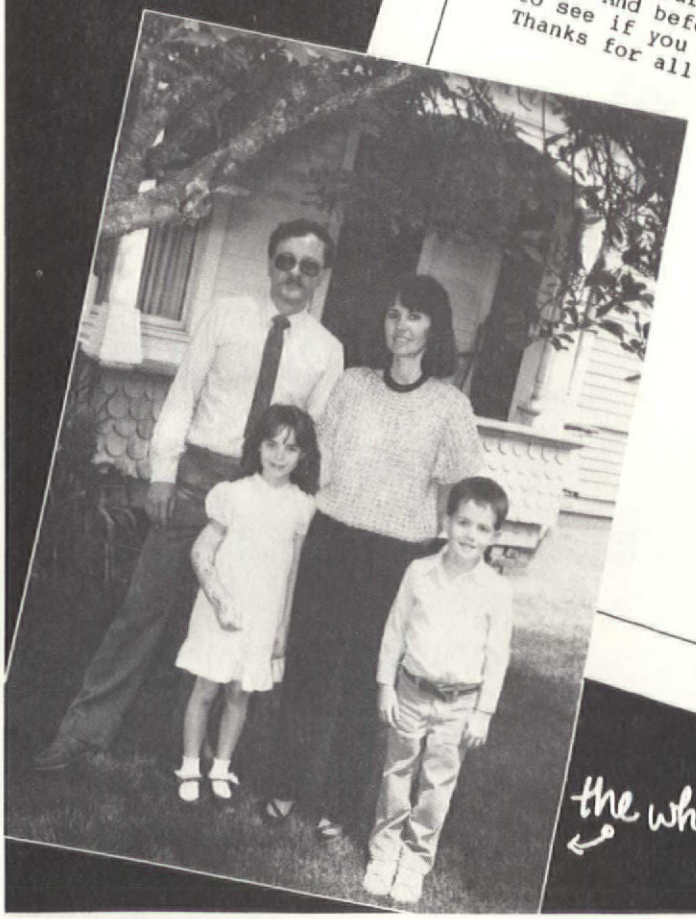
AND WE FINALLY bought a modern, gas-fired boiler (just in time for a drop in gas prices). The old one had been converted to sawdust, coal, and finally to just plain dollar-bills, it seemed. The new one has cut our heating costs by 20%. We're thrilled, of course, but it is discouraging to put soooo much money into things like boilers -- it's hard to fit them into house tours.

WELL, folks at OHJ, I'm sure you'll be glad to know that we're still making progress. We found a company that re-made our sashes, complete with lugs. I have another old woodworker-acquaintance who has a large planer and a hoard of old-growth fir. And before I start any job, I always check to see if you have any advice that might help. Thanks for all the help and encouragement so far!

Love from a devoted family in Centralia, Washington,

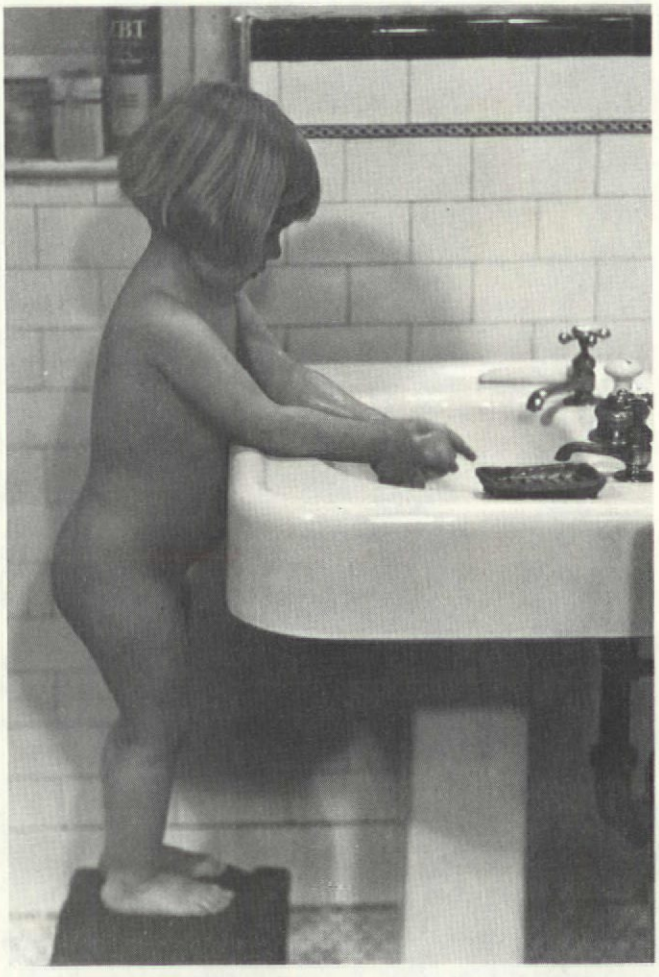
Steve & Barb

Steve and Barb Freeman



the whole fan-damily

SINKS



BY J. RANDALL COTTON

GETTING HOT AND COLD WATER from a kitchen or bathroom sink is taken for granted nowadays, yet as little as 100 years ago it was a pure luxury. As recently as 1930, less than one out of ten rural American homes had running water in a bathroom, and only 16% had piped-in water. In the 1920s, water systems were more common in the cities, yet one out of four homes didn't have a sink with running water, and only half had bathrooms as we now know them.

NO ONE RESTORING OR LIVING in an old house, however, would choose to be so "authentic" as to omit sinks, even though they may not be original to the house. Modern kitchen and bathroom sinks are concessions to today's way of life, even in the most meticulous restorations. Yet for those wishing to go an extra step, there are alternative solutions -- so-called "period" sinks can add to the particular flavor of your house. To understand what type of sink might be appropriate for you, a little background history is in order.

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, water for washing, drinking, and cooking was hauled from a stream, spring, or well. (Occasionally, rainwater was collected in cisterns as a source of soft water, preferred for bathing and washing.) Only rarely did advanced cities, such as ancient Rome, have anything like a running-water system. Water was hand-carried in buckets from the nearest source into the house, where it was transferred to a variety of tubs and bowls; an arduous task by today's standards, but an accepted way of life worldwide (including pre-industrial America).

BUCKETS, TROUGHS, bowls, tubs, or anything else that held water were the forerunners of our modern sinks. These vessels were made of a variety of materials, including wood, stone, metal, or porcelain. In early America, food preparation and dishwashing were commonly done in a wooden tub that was usually set on a kitchen table. Water for bathing (an infrequent activity at best) was also put in bowls or small tubs. The whole concept of a bathroom was unheard of until the 1800s -- the 'great outdoors' served our forebears' needs for personal hygiene just fine.

COURTESY OF THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE

This photograph was taken in the 1920s, but the kitchen, with its single-faucet drysink and turn-of-century stove, clearly recalls an earlier era.

IN THIS COUNTRY, it wasn't until the late 18th century that something resembling a bathroom sink came about: the washstand. Following English prototypes, washstands were simply small tables on which were placed pitcher-and-bowl sets; sometimes the bowl rested in a hole cut into the table top. Washstands reflected the popular furniture styles of the day -- Eastlake, Renaissance Revival, Hepplewhite, Chippendale, Empire, -- but regardless of their style, almost all had a backboard that served as a splashboard; many had shelves or small drawers for soap and other toiletries. During the 19th century, washstands became larger and bulkier, often with towel bars along the sides and a cupboard below to store the chamberpot (our first indoor toilets).

FROM ABOUT 1820 TO 1900, another piece of furniture -- the drysink -- was also commonly used in American homes. This was a low, wooden cabinet with a trough built into the top. This trough was often lined with zinc or lead sheets, and held bowls or buckets of water for use in food preparation or dishwashing. Like washstands, drysinks had back splashboards and shelves or drawers for cleaning supplies. But drysinks were usually very functional in design and only nominally reflected the prevailing furniture styles.

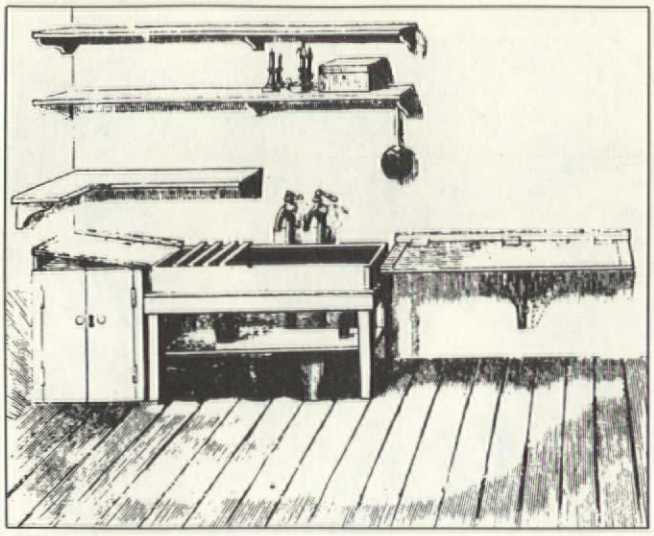
THUS, THE WASHSTAND was the precursor of the bathroom sink; the drysink, the forerunner of the kitchen sink. So it isn't surprising that, in their quest for authenticity, many house restorers have converted drysinks and washstands into perfectly usable sinks with running water. By introducing faucets through the splashboard and providing for a watertight basin with a drain, these furniture pieces offer attractive adaptive-reuse options (particularly appropriate for owners of houses that predate the last quarter of the 19th century). Victorian-era washstands can still be found at reasonable prices in many antique stores. (Converting a washstand or drysink into a sink with running water will destroy some of its value as an antique, so it's best to stick to the common factory-produced pieces rather than the high-quality formal examples.)

THE ERA OF RUNNING WATER

THE FIRST MUNICIPAL WATER SYSTEM in America was built in 1802 in Philadelphia. After an initial resistance to buying water, city dwellers accepted the idea, and by 1850, 83 American cities had their own systems. At first, they were steam-powered, with the water filtered through charcoal or sand. Early distribution networks consisted of cast-iron or wooden pipes.

DURING THE MID-1800S, the adoption of water and sewer systems, along with such advancements as central heating and balloon-framing techniques, changed the way the typical American house functioned and looked. Interior spaces became more specialized -- the living room, library, dressing room, dining room, laundry -- and the kitchen became less the all-purpose, live-in "family room" it was in colonial times. (The indoor bathroom was pretty much a new concept altogether.) After the Civil War, the "domestic science" movement, as espoused by Catherine Beecher, her sister Harriet Beecher Stowe, and others, did much to popularize efficient, labor-saving kitchen and bathroom designs.

DURING THESE FORMATIVE YEARS, sinks became a fixed and integral part of the house. Not surprisingly, these sinks resembled what they had replaced. In the illustrations of Stowe, Beecher, and A.J. Downing, the kitchen sinks are very similar to drysinks except for the addition of faucets and drains. The first bathroom sinks (also called "lavatories")



Here's "a convenient kitchen sink" of 1865, from *The American Agriculturist*. The wooden sink has storage space to its left and below; the work shelf at its right folds against the wall.

initially resembled a washstand; slick ceramic models came later.

WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS may not have been available in many rural areas, yet the idea of a permanent sink took hold -- often with a hand pump attached to one end. Advancements in pump design and their mass production (which made them relatively inexpensive) brought indoor running water even to remote farmhouses. Hand pumps connected to sinks remained popular and were offered in Sears and Ward catalogs well into the 20th century.

DURING THIS TIME, hot water was generated in a small boiler that was usually connected to the wood- or coal-fired kitchen stove. Later, boilers connected to the furnace supplied hot water throughout the house, including the bathroom sink and tub which eventually came to be seen as necessities.

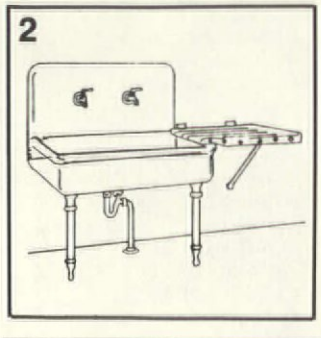
THE SINK COMES INTO ITS OWN

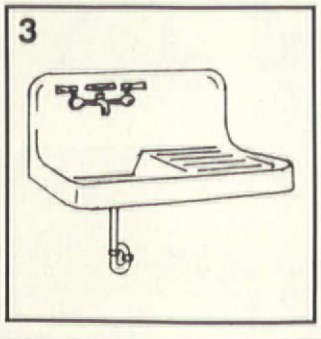
MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS in sink designs came later in the 19th century, as the "sanitary movement" (as some contemporaries called it) became popular. Kitchen and bathroom designs were given a great deal of "scientific" thought regarding efficiency, motion study, and sanitation. The elements of the kitchen -- such as the stove, icebox, work areas, and sink -- were no longer thought of as individual free-standing pieces, but rather as a whole. This was the beginning of the "continuous work surface" concept, in which standardized table, stove, and sink heights, coupled with mass-produced kitchen components, eventually evolved into the modern kitchen.

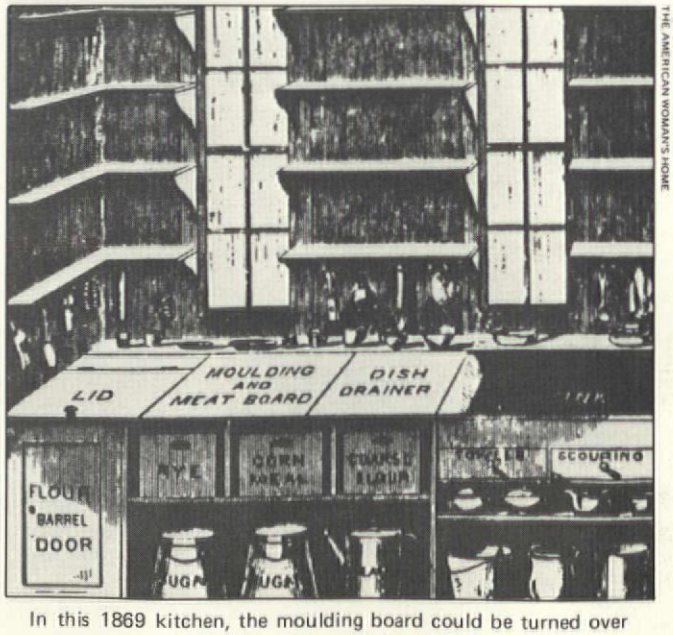
WHITE, because of its association with sanitation, became the prevalent color for sinks and the other fixtures and surfaces in bathrooms and kitchens. This obsession with sterility led one observer to complain that when cutting up "a fowl in these kitchens one felt quite like a surgeon performing a major operation." White retained its dominance until the 1920s, when there was a return to color in wall coverings, floors, and even ceramic sinks.

THE HEYDAY OF SINK DESIGNS (approximately 1890 to 1930) saw a proliferation in materials and styles. The old metal-lined wooden sink gave way to models in cast iron, enamel, porcelain, china, stainless steel, galvanized iron, zinc, tin, soapstone, and even marble. In kitchens,

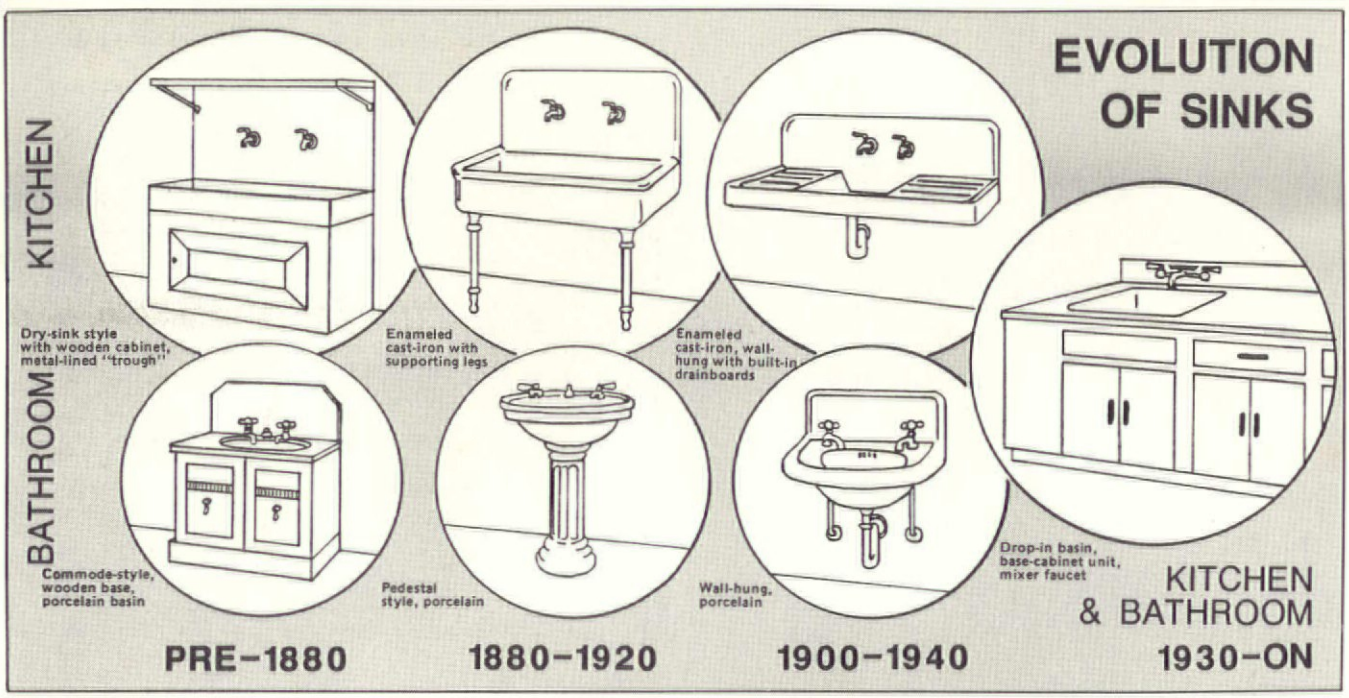
1) The 19th-century drysink was the precursor of the kitchen sink. With the introduction of hot and cold running-water faucets through the backboard and a drain into the zinc-lined trough, the age of the kitchen sink began.
2) The earliest kitchen sinks were free-standing, usually on cast-iron legs that were often painted white to match the enamel or porcelain.
3) A later development was the wall-mounted sink.







In this 1869 kitchen, the moulding board could be turned over and used as a preparation surface over the sink.



enamel, metal, and soapstone sinks were the most popular because of their durability. China (porcelain) and marble sinks were popular for bathrooms, as they were considered more elegant.

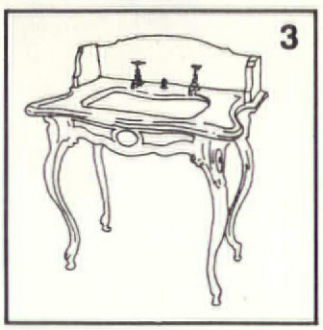
ENAMELED SINKS, often referred to as "enamelware" or "whiteware," were manufactured as early as the 1870s. They were made by casting an iron sink, reheating it to a red-hot state, and then uniformly sprinkling ground glass over it; once cooled, the enamel surface was smooth and shiny. By 1900, enamelware had become the most popular type of kitchen sink.

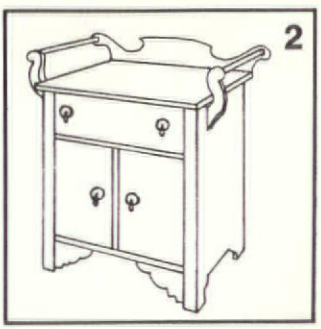
SOAPSTONE, long used for a variety of items, was also a popular material for sinks. Its advocates praised soapstone because it didn't absorb acids or grease, as marble did; could be cleaned easily; and didn't chip like enamelware. Marble, a more delicate stone, was usually restricted to top-of-the-line bathroom sinks. (In 1855, a marble sink with silver-plated fixtures cost $50, a tidy sum in those days.) One-piece marble sinks were the most expensive, and so the basin and sink top were usually separate pieces. Often a marble top was combined with a porcelain bowl.

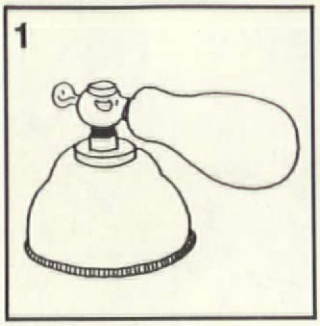
PORCELAIN, particularly popular for bathroom lavatories, was a vitreous material made from cast clay fired in a kiln and then coated with a glass-like glaze during a second firing. Because it was manufactured by a casting process, porcelain was produced in a wide array of elegant shapes. At the other end of the scale, cast-iron sinks were the cheapest but required periodic "oiling" to prevent rusting. Galvanized iron, and later stainless steel, eliminated this problem.

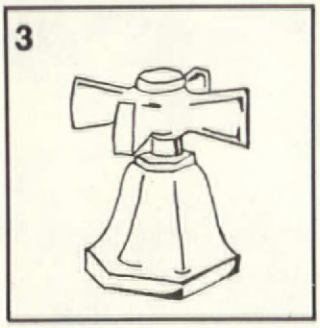
EARLY KITCHEN SINKS had basins of generous proportions, larger than today. Double side-by-side basins were common, especially for cast-iron enamelware. The earliest sinks were free-standing, like furniture, usually resting on cast-iron legs (often painted white to match the enamel or porcelain). The legs imitated table legs with fluting, ball or claw feet, and a variety of details simulating lathe-turning. Later, the back of the sink was hung on the wall, and the front was supported by large cast-iron brackets or a pair of legs. Kitchen sinks sold in early-20th-century Sears catalogs offered an option of either brackets or legs. For bathroom lavatories, the pedestal type was extremely popular.

1) This washstand, circa 1840, reflects popular furniture styles of its era. The hole in the top accommodated a porcelain wash bowl.
2) Side towel bars and a lower cupboard for storing the chamber pot characterize this Victorian-era washstand. The next evolutionary step would be . . .
3) . . . the early bathroom lavatory. This typical example has the basin set in its top and attached running-water faucets.









Three Types Of Faucets

1) A single-pronged, "lever" style, with handle and base of porcelain.

2) A four-pronged, "cross" (or spoke) style, with porcelain handle and chromed base.

3) "Cross" with chromed handle and base.

ARCHITECTURALLY, kitchen and bathroom sinks reflected the details of the times. In the late-Victorian era, sinks had routed, incised, carved, and turned designs, all imitatively cast into enamel or porcelain models. Scallop-shaped basins, angular bevel-edged tops and splashboards, even wooden Eastlake-styled cabinet bases appeared in bathroom lavatories.

AS THE NATION TURNED to the Colonial Revival, sinks became less elaborate, with cleaner, more refined lines. Classical elements showed up in the ogee-shaped edges of the splashboard, oval-shaped bowls, and particularly the pedestal bases which often looked like classical-order columns. Throughout the early 20th century, sink designs became even simpler -- almost all architectural detail was dropped and edges were rounded, giving them a unified sculptural look. This trend was in part due to the "sanitary" movement which viewed elaborate designs as providing a multitude of dirt-catching nooks and crannies. Simple lines, rolled rims, and streamlined design was the favored look of the 1920s and beyond.

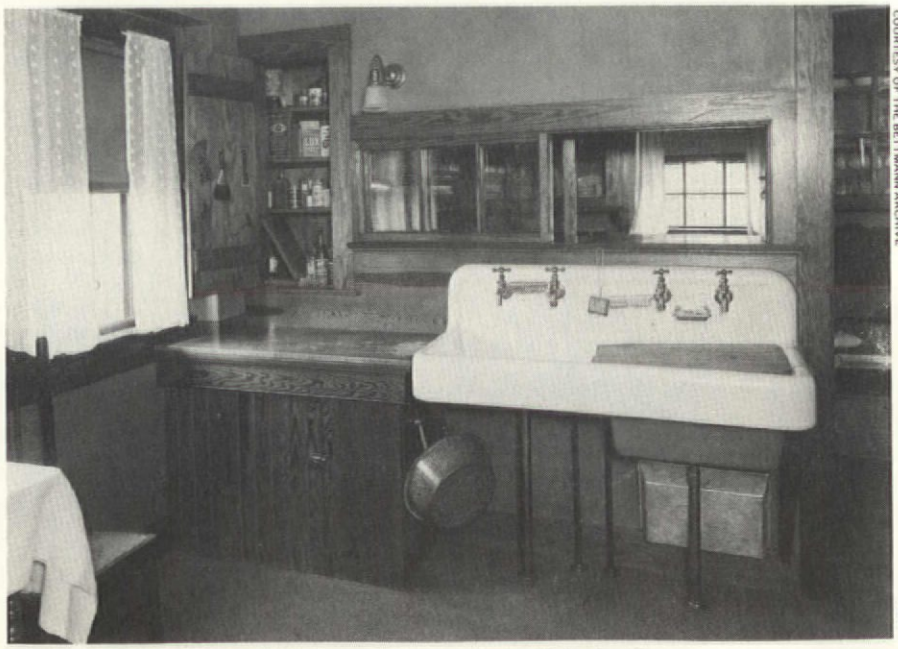
CONTINUOUS COUNTERTOPS with drop-in sink basins, the kind we know today, first appeared during the 1930s. This development was partly due to progressive schools of architecture, such as the Bauhaus, which sought uniform solutions for house design. Countertops became a standard 36" high and 24-25" deep. Modern materials were used: linoleum and Formica for countertops, stainless steel for basins. Base cabinets, with drop-in sink and stove units, ran around the kitchen perimeter and were usually topped by continuous wall cabinets.

FAUCETS, DRAINS, ETC.

THE EARLIEST FAUCETS were merely water cocks in which a handle was directly connected to a valve in the water line. These were capable of functioning in only two positions: on and off. Although cocks are still occasionally used (as in line-shut-off valves, for example), by the late 1800s they were largely superseded by compression-valve faucets. In a compression valve, a rubber washer is attached to the end of a metal stem and is seated against the body of the faucet when fully closed. A compression-valve faucet allows for a continuous range of water flow from fully on to fully off.

INITIALLY, there were separate faucets for hot and cold water. They were usually made of iron, often nickel plated. Top-of-the-line faucets were brass or copper, but some were even gold or silver-plated. Chrome plating was introduced after the turn of the century. Faucet handles were also plated, but perhaps most commonly were made of porcelain. Two styles of handles were prevalent: a four-pronged knob ("cross" style) and a single prong ("lever" style, a type still popular in Europe). The words "HOT" and "COLD" were usually inscribed directly into the handle, or sometimes on porcelain buttons set into the top of the faucet.

SPOUTS WERE FIXED INITIALLY, but by this century swinging spouts were usual for kitchen



COURTESY OF THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE

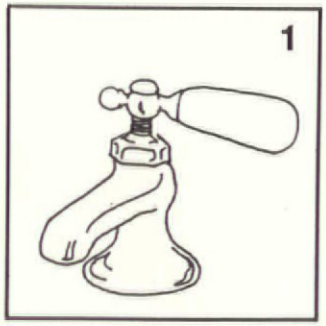
This circa 1900 photograph shows a wall-mounted, double-basin sink. Work surfaces are provided by the cupboard at left and by the cutting board placed over the sink's right basin.

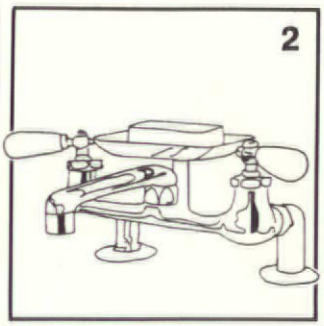
sinks. High, goose-neck spouts were an early type that is currently enjoying popularity again. Spray attachments on flexible hoses showed up as early as 1915 in some kitchens. "Mixers," in which the hot- and cold-water handles were connected to a single central spout, were a welcome development (as anyone who still has separate hot- and cold-water faucets can attest). By 1920, mixers were commonplace.

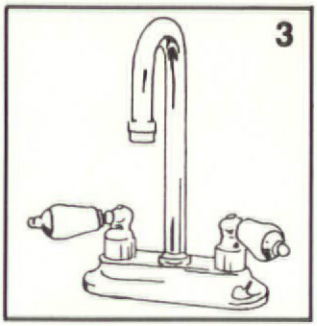
KITCHEN DRAINBOARDS evolved from simple, fold-back wooden shelves (hinged on the wall next to the sink) to metal shelves flanking the sink and permanently affixed by brackets. Metal drainboards usually had ribs pressed into their surface to direct the water back into the sink. By the 1920s, most kitchen enamelware sinks had integral drainboards incorporated into either side of a double-basin center.

OTHER SINK-RELATED INVENTIONS appeared in the early 20th century. Automatic dishwashers which connected to the kitchen faucet arrived in the '20s. In 1929, General Electric introduced the "electric sink," their term for an electric garbage disposal. Countertops adjacent to the kitchen sink, at first made of soapstone, slate, or zinc sheets, eventually were made of new products such as linoleum, asphalt tiles, or Formica. The "butcher-block" look, popular for countertops today, actually was used as early as 1917 when one-inch white maple strips were used.

IN THE BATHROOM, pedestal-base sinks remained popular. Amenities such as soap receptacles and towel bars were incorporated into sink designs. From 1900 on, mirrors, toothbrush holders, and drinking-glass niches were mounted into the wall above the sink.







Three Types Of Spouts

1) Spout and faucet in one unit, with "lever" handle.

2) "Mixer" with hot- and cold-water handles visibly connecting into a single spout.

3) "Mixer" with goose-neck spout and hidden connection.

LIVING WITH OLD-STYLED SINKS

IF YOU'D LIKE to include "period" sinks as part of your restoration, the first step is to decide on the type and style most appropriate to the era of your particular house. Finding the right sink isn't too difficult -- there are three primary sources: salvage, reproductions, and adaptive re-use.

ARCHITECTURAL SALVAGE DEALERS are excellent sources for finding old kitchen and bathroom sinks. Check your local Yellow Pages under "Salvage," "Junk Dealers," or "Plumbing Fixtures & Supplies," or refer to the list of salvage dealers in The Old-House Journal Buyer's Guide Catalog, to see if there's anyone near you. Here are some things to look for when selecting a sink from a salvager:

- BE SURE the sink will fit in the space you allot for it.

- CHECK THE BASIN for cracks and chips that can cause leaks -- fill the bowl with water, if possible. Cracks in the pedestal of a lavatory may present a structural problem, but minor chips and cracks are often only aesthetic flaws.

- CHECK THE FINISH -- worn or discolored enamel can be professionally repaired, but it can be expensive. Blemishes on the finishes shouldn't dissuade you from considering a sink you really like, however.

The illustration is from 1921, but the sink is comparatively old fashioned, being supported by legs. (Note, however, the built-in work surface in the right portion of the sink.)

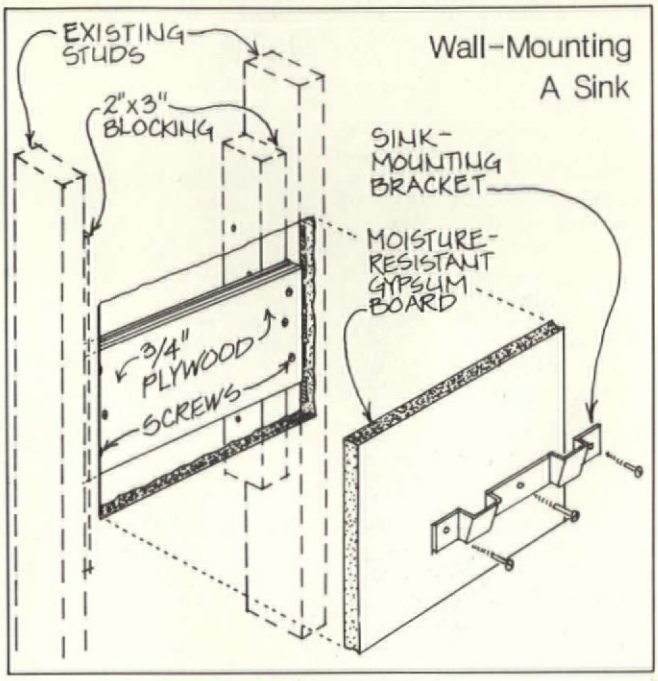
• TRY TO GET as complete a sink as possible, including all the original fixtures, fittings, etc. Fitting sizes have changed over the years, so it may be difficult to get new ones that will fit an old sink. Try to find an old sink which retains its connections, particularly the original supply stem nuts.

• BE SURE the mounting tabs on the back of wall-hung sinks are intact and sturdy.

USING SALVAGED SINKS

SEVERAL OHJ ARTICLES have covered the 'how-to' of installing old sinks: "About Old-House Plumbing," Aug.-Sept. '83; "Caring For Antique Plumbing Fixtures," April '77; "Restoring Marble Sinks," July '77. Another excellent reference is Salvaged Treasures by Michael Litchfield and Rosmarie Haucherr (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1983). Most of the procedures in installing old sinks fall within the range of common plumbing practices, but there are a few points to note:

• YOU'LL PROBABLY have to use a number of adaptors to make the fittings of the old sink connect to your modern plumbing system. Don't despair -- a well stocked plumbing-supply house should have a variety of them.



COURTESY OF THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE

The smooth, gleaming surfaces of the wall-mounted sink match the simplicity and elegance of this turn-of-century bathroom.

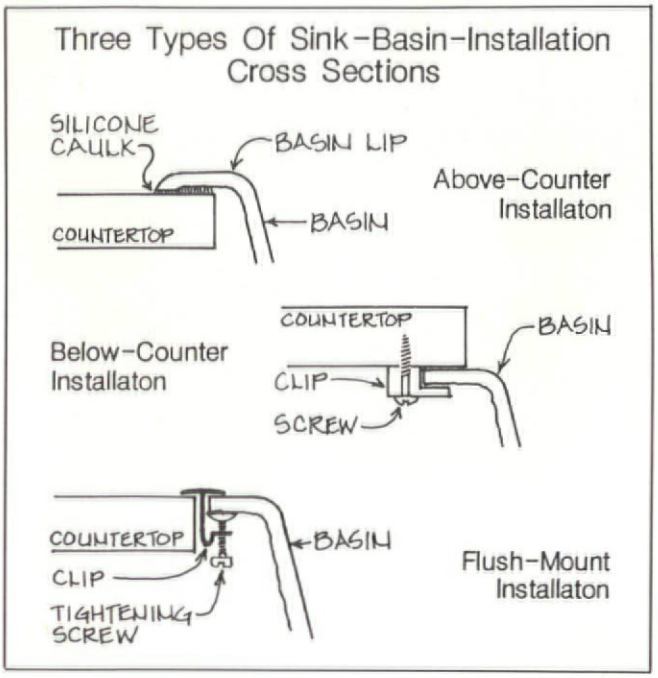
• OLD FAUCETS AND DRAINS, because of their age, may be leaky. Usually this is easily alleviated by replacing the gaskets. But remember how you disassemble an old faucet, because many vintage models are put together differently from modern faucets.

• DO-IT-YOURSELF PAINT TOUCH-UPS for enamel finishes are available, but they're generally inadequate. Color matching is very difficult and the patched areas quickly wear off under normal use. Unless you're prepared for a complete but expensive re-enamelling job by a professional, it's probably best to live with a worn enamel finish -- it makes no difference to the integrity of the sink. Many stains can be removed with common cleaning products.

• IF THE OLD SINK is wall mounted, it is very important to attach the mounting bracket to a sturdy wall surface. If you aren't mounting a sink where a previous one was hung, reinforce the wall by introducing a horizontal wood block that spans two adjacent wall studs. Cut the plaster and lath back to the inside edge of the adjacent studs. Fasten 2x3 blocking to the studs. (If possible, use a screw gun to prevent plaster damage from hammering.) Mount the blocking far enough back so that when you screw a piece of plywood to the blocking and gypsum board to the plywood, the gypsum board is flush with plaster. Fasten the sink bracket through the gypsum board into the plywood.

REPRODUCTION SINKS

MOST MAJOR SINK MANUFACTURERS now produce at least one "antique-style" design as part of



their line; several smaller companies specialize solely in period designs. Page 278 offers a list of some of these suppliers and manufacturers, but any large plumbing-supply house should be able to order reproduction models for you. Remember to choose a design that's appropriate for your house -- many Victorian-era sinks would be too fancy for an early-20th-century house. The same is true for reproduction hardware (i.e., drains, knobs, faucets); earlier styles were more ornamental.

YOU'LL FIND A VARIETY of bathroom lavatory reproductions from which to choose, particularly attractive pedestal models. An even wider array of antique-style fixtures is available. However, very few old-style kitchen sink reproductions are available. Apparently, the more utilitarian look of an old kitchen sink has not yet found its way into our 'nostalgic' hearts. One source, the Vermont Soapstone Company, makes an attractive soapstone kitchen model complete with a side drainboard. (But perhaps your best source for old kitchen sinks will be salvage, not reproductions.)

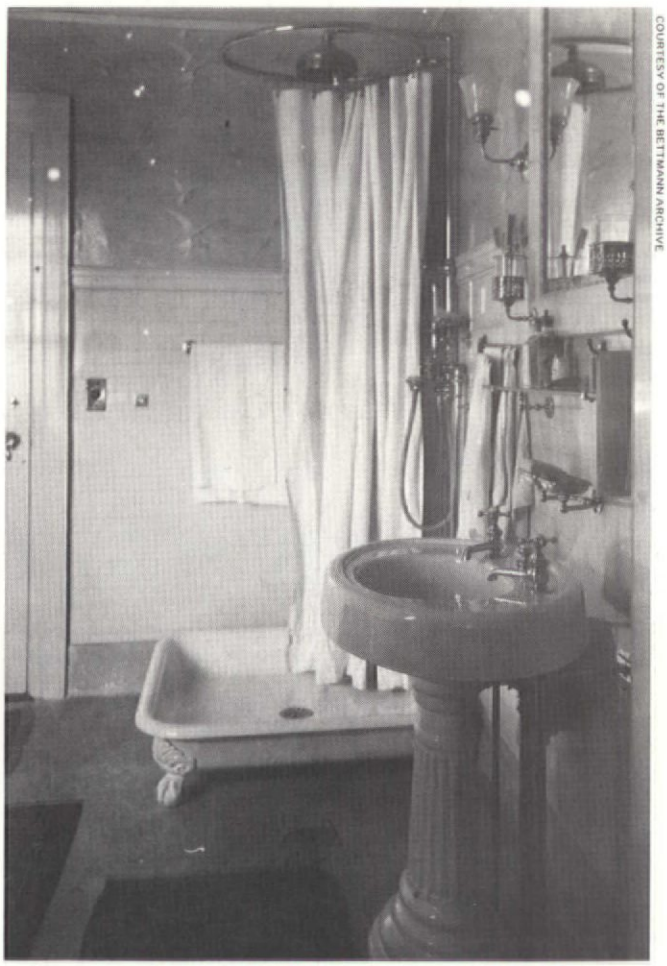
SOME ADAPTIVE RE-USE IDEAS

AS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED, old washstands and drysinks make good pieces for conversion to sinks. Fortunately, antique-style basins are readily available from many suppliers and come in a wide range of materials, including china, marble, enamel, copper, soapstone, cast iron, and stainless steel. The basins can be fitted into the top of a washstand in the same way as they would into a modern base cabinet.

SPEAKING OF BASE CABINETS, you don't have to settle for modern pre-fabricated designs. Anyone with reasonably competent skills can build custom base units which reflect the architectural character of your house. For example, narrow, beaded tongue-and-groove "matchboards" were a popular material for wainscotting in kitchens and bathrooms from Victorian times into this century, and they're still available today. A custom-made base cabinet incorporating beaded boards as siding or in door panels would be an especially appropriate design. Other period details might include simple incised designs, glass knobs, panelled sides and doors, or natural wood finishes (especially oak). Look for design inspirations in the details of other antique furniture pieces such as Hoosier cabinets, old ice chests, pie safes, or linen chests.

EVEN A THOROUGHLY MODERN SINK can be made to appear more 'old-fashioned' by simply replacing the fixtures with period reproductions. A wide variety is available from the companies listed, ranging from very expensive, solid-brass fixture sets to less-expensive, chrome- or nickel-plated models.

J. RANDALL COTTON is a long-time OHJ subscriber and a frequent contributor to our pages. He's currently Project Manager for Middle States Preservation in Wayne, Pennsylvania.



COURTESY OF THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE

A beautiful pedestal sink highlights this well-appurtenanced, circa 1910 Massachusetts bathroom.

SINKS: SOURCES

A-BALL PLUMBING SUPPLY, 1703 W. Burnside St., Dept. OHJ, Portland, OR 97209. (503) 228-0026. Pedestal sinks; copper, brass, & china basins; variety of faucet sets. Free catalog.

BARCLAY PRODUCTS LMTD., 424 N. Oakley Blvd., Dept. OHJ, Chicago, IL 60612. (312) 243-1444. Extensive line of period hardware; also some porcelain sinks, solid brass basins. Free catalog.

BESCO PLUMBING & HEATING SALES CORP., 729 Atlantic Ave., Dept. OHJ, Boston, MA 02111. (617) 432-4535. In addition to a large stock of salvaged pieces in their warehouse, they also have several lines of reproduction sinks, basins, and hardware. Catalog, $5.

BONA DECORATIVE HARDWARE, 3073 Madison Rd., Dept. OHJ, Cincinnati, OH 45209. (513) 321-7877. Reproduction hardware, including top-of-the-line Broadway Collection. Catalog, $2.

CRANE PLUMBING, 2020 Dempster Plaza, Ste. 1235, Dept. OHJ, Evanston, IL 60202. (800) 648-9700. One of the country's largest fixture manufacturers; mostly modern designs, but has several porcelain-enameled, steel kitchen sinks and lavatories reminiscent of 1920s. Free catalog.

D.E.A./BATHROOM MACHINERIES, 495 Main St., P.O. Box 1020-OH, Murphys, CA 95247. (209) 728-3860. Reproduction sinks, basins, and hardware. Oak bathroom vanity. Catalog, $2.

ELJER PLUMBINGWARE, 3 Gateway Center, Dept. OHJ, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. (412) 553-7200. Major manufacturer with mostly modern line, but has several enameled cast-iron sinks of 1900-1930 period. Also Victorian line of hardware. Free catalog for the trade; call for distributors.

MAC THE ANTIQUE PLUMBER, 885 57th St., Dept. OHJ, Sacramento, CA 95819. (916) 454-4507. Porcelain pedestal basins & sinks; brass basins; hardware (reproduction and salvage). Catalog, $3 (refundable).

P.E. GUERIN, INC., 21-25 Jane St., Dept. BD-I, New York, NY 10014. (212) 243-5270. Large collection of sink basins in a variety of materials; some faucet hardware. Catalog, $5.

REMODELERS & RENOVATORS, 512 W. Idaho St., Dept. OHJ, Boise, ID 83702. (208) 344-8612. Reproduction sinks, basins, and hardware, including unusual oak pedestal sink. Catalog, $2.

RESTORATION WORKS, P.O. Box 486, Dept. OHJ, Buffalo, NY 14205. (716) 856-8000. Line of reproduction brass hardware and porcelain bathroom accessories. Catalog, $2.

S. CHRIS RHEINSCHILD, 2220 Carlton Way, Dept. OHJ, Santa Barbara, CA 93109. (805) 962-8598. Line of reproduction sinks and hardware including an attractive marble vanity top and handmade copper kitchen sink which is a copy of an old one. Brochure, $1.

THE SINK FACTORY, 2140 San Pablo Avenue, Dept. OHJ, Berkeley, CA 94702. (415) 548-3967. Reproduction china pedestal lavatories, porcelain basins. Also carries Chicago Faucets line of hardware. Will do custom designs. Catalog, $3.

SUNRISE SPECIALTY, 2204 San Pablo Avenue, Dept. COHJ, Berkeley, CA 94702. (415) 845-4751. Authentic line of reproduction bathroom faucets and sinks. Catalog, $3.

VERMONT SOAPSTONE CO., RR 1, Box 514, Dept. OHJ, Perkinsville, VT 05151. Custom-made soapstone sinks for kitchens, including drainboards, backsplash. Brochure, $.50.

WALKER MERCANTILE CO., P.O. Box 129, Dept. OHJ, Bellevue, TN 37221. (615) 646-5084. Full line of old-style bathroom fixtures, solid brass and copper kitchen sinks. Solid copper bathtubs with wooden rims. Catalog, $5.80. Also (800) 645-3213 USA; 325-5037 TN.

WATERCOLORS, INC., Dept. OHJ, Garrison on Hudson, NY 10524. (914) 424-3327. European line of faucets includes brass, porcelain, and brightly colored enameled models. Catalog available through architects, designers, or contractors.

W.T. WEAVER, 1208 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Dept. OHJ, Washington, DC 20007. (202) 333-4200. Reproduction line of faucets and sinks. Catalog, $2.50.

Flow-On Paint Stripping

A Good Compromise Between Hand-Stripping and Dip-Stripping

by Bill O'Donnell

NO MATTER how large or small, fine or ordinary your paint-stripping job, you must first decide whether to strip it by hand or send it out to a local stripping shop. Stripping by hand is the most controllable way to strip wood, and the most likely to produce excellent results. It has significant drawbacks, though: It's time-consuming, messy, and irritating (to skin, eyes, nose, and temper). It's not surprising that many people would rather send the work out, even if that means dismantling woodwork. But there are disadvantages to the strip-shop option, too. Because hand-stripping is labor intensive and thus very expensive, most shops dip the piece in stripping chemicals. That can lead to raised, fuzzy grain, a greying of the wood, loosened glue joints, or bubbling veneer.

Hand-stripping assures excellent results. This photo demonstrates one of its drawbacks — the mess.

THERE EXISTS a third option: the flow-on or cold-tray method. This shop method saves you money over hand stripping, yet avoids many of the problems that occur when wood is dipped.

About Strip Shops

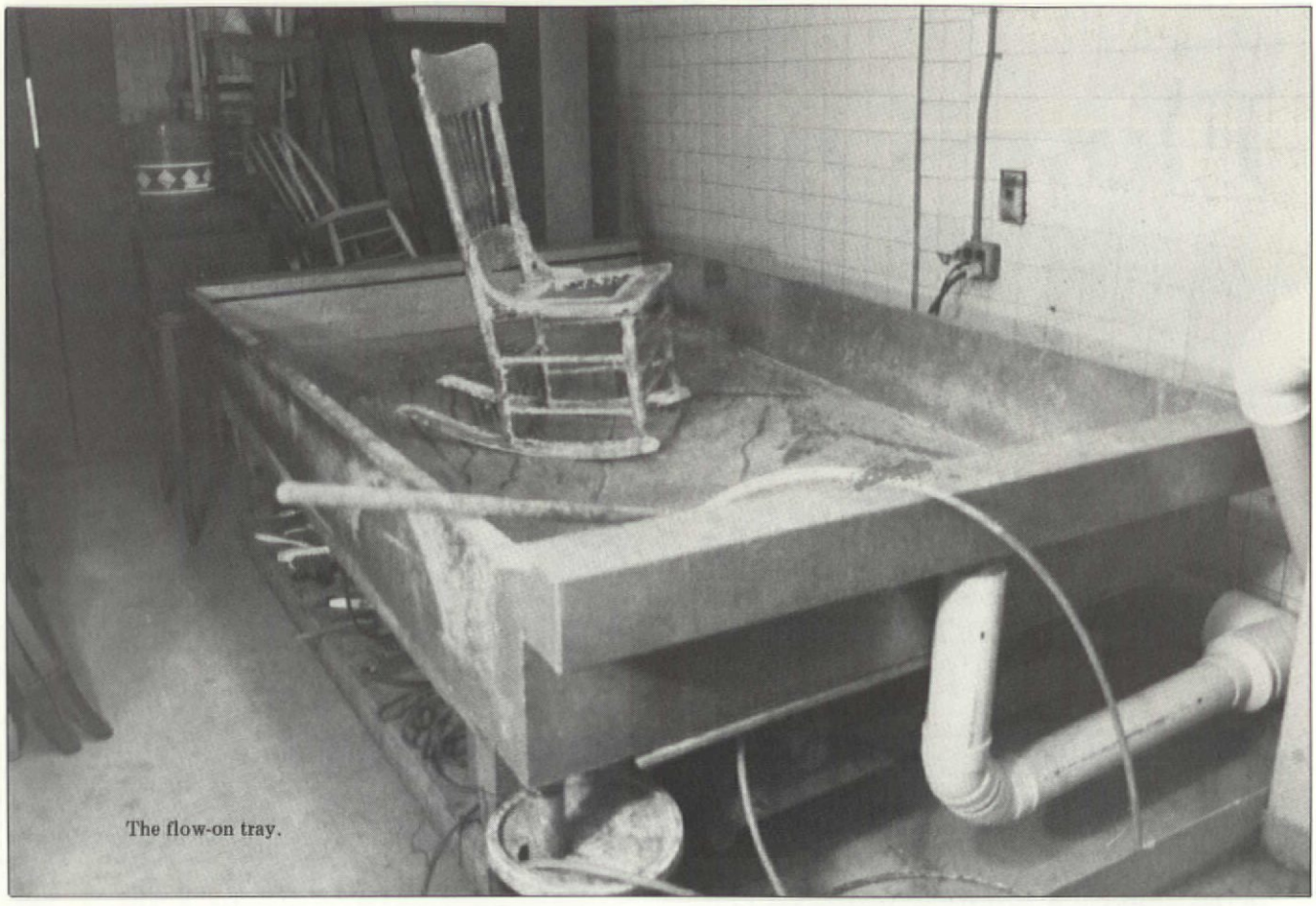
BEFORE WE DESCRIBE the flow-on method in more detail, let's review what usually happens to your furniture or woodwork at a strip shop. We've all heard horror stories about using dip stripping to remove paint. Yet there are many people who've had great luck with it, and who will never hand-strip again. Satisfactory results depend on the experience and care of the stripper, and the method used. When you take your wood to the shop, they'll introduce it to one (or more) of the following:

(1) A "cold tank" filled with a paint stripper based on methylene chloride.

(2) A "hot tank" containing a solution of lye or trisodium phosphate (TSP) in water. These tanks operate from 125 to 180 degrees F.

(3) A bleach tank containing oxalic acid. This tank neutralizes the caustic from the hot tank, and bleaches out any darkening of the wood that occurred in previous steps.

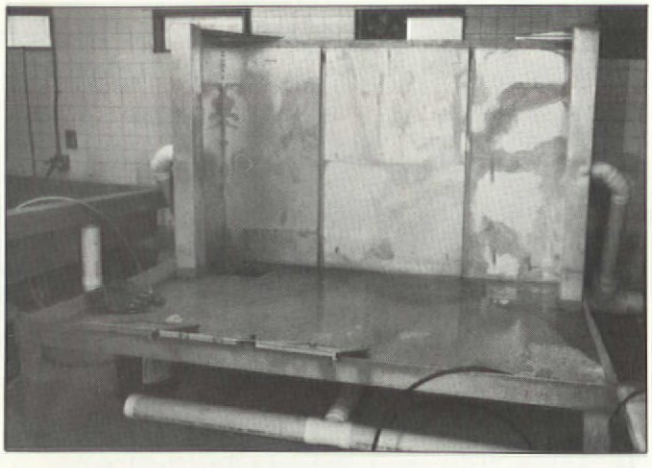
(4) A "cold tray" in which the piece will be coated (not immersed) with a methylene-chloride-based stripper. This is the equipment used in the flow-on method.



The flow-on tray.

MOST PROBLEMS OCCUR in the hot tank. Caustic strippers remove old finishes very effectively. But in the hands of a careless operator, caustic strippers will not only dissolve old glues, but will also attack the surface of the wood itself. And since it is a hot aqueous solution, you'll probably wind up with some raised grain.

OF COURSE, HOT TANKS do have some usefulness. We know some fine, reputable shops that have hot tanks. It is important for the customer (as well as the strip-shop operator) to recognize the difference between fine furniture or fine architectural trim, and run-of-the-mill woodwork. A quick dip in the hot tank might be fine for paint-encrusted baseboards, but it's likely to be a disaster for an oak dresser or walnut wainscotting.



The water-rinse booth.

COLD TANKS are less harsh than hot tanks. They are called "cold" because they operate at room temperature. They're filled with a methylene-chloride-based stripper. The cold tank avoids soaking wood in an aqueous solution; nonetheless, the wood is being completely immersed in a strong chemical. The wood will absorb some of the chemical; how much depends on how long it is soaked. So it is possible to get some swelling and raised grain.

Flow-On Stripping

THE COLD TRAY or "flow on" method is the gentlest of all. It's very similar to hand stripping in that the piece is not immersed in strong chemicals. Rather, a methylene-chloride-based stripper is pumped onto the piece through a nozzle. As the used chemical runs off the piece, it collects at one end of the tray. A coarse screen removes large pieces of stripped paint, and the chemical is recycled back onto the woodwork.

ONCE THE MAJORITY of the finish is loose, the cold-tray operator scrapes off the softened paint or varnish with a putty knife. More stripper is pumped back onto the piece to

Scraping off the softened paint.

remove the remaining finish. Some especially intricate areas require hand cleanup with picks, small scrapers, or a brass brush.

THE STRIPPED PIECE is then transferred to a water-rinsing tray to remove the remaining chemical and dissolved paint. A small amount of water is sprayed onto the piece at high pressure to halt the stripping action of the chemical and remove all traces of the old finish.

THE WATER RINSE is the step most likely to cause problems. If a minimal amount of water is used, there should be no adverse effects. However, should the operator get carried away and drench the piece under a continuing stream, it may lift the veneer, raise the grain, or cause splitting or warping. There is no substitute for a knowledgeable and conscientious strip-shop operator. No matter how gentle the techniques, a careless or inexperienced operator can damage the wood.

Advantages

LESS STRIPPER IS USED than with either hand-stripping or dip-stripping. As with hand-stripping, the chemicals are applied only where they're needed. Therefore, no chemical soaks into bare wood. Unlike hand-stripping, the chemical is reused. A five-gallon bucket of stripper is usually all that's required for an entire day's stripping.

Power rinsing the goop.

LESS STRIPPER means less waste for the shop and lower cost to you. In many ways, flow-on stripping is less hazardous than other stripping methods. The flow-on trays used by BIX Process Systems, Inc.* (a nationwide distributor of stripping equipment) feature an integral ventilation system. Fumes from the stripping chemicals used are heavier than air and settle within the walls of the tray. Vents along the sides of the tray exhaust outdoors through a powerful fan.

Where Does It Go?

THE FLOW-ON METHOD is more ecologically sound than some other stripping methods. Because the stripping chemicals are recycled, less waste is produced. At the end of each day, the sludge is collected and stored. Once a drum has been filled, the solid wastes are disposed of in an approved site according to EPA standards.

LIQUID EFFLUENT produced in the water-rinsing tray goes through a 300-gallon filtration tank where it passes through three progressively finer filters that remove most of the solids. The water is then forced through an activated charcoal filter to remove the finest solids and much of the suspended solvent. Depending on state and local requirements, it is then introduced to the municipal sewerage system, leached into the soil, or contained for disposal in an approved landfill.

* BIX sells flow-on stripping equipment and chemicals to independently-owned strip shops throughout the country. For the name of a company in your area that uses the BIX system write to:

BIX Process Systems, Inc.
Plumtrees Road
P.O. Box 309
Bethel, CT 06801
(203) 743-3263

THE DISPOSITION OF FERNS

by Ron Pilling

"NOT SO LONG as the woods are filled with beautiful ferns ... need you feel yourself an utterly disinherited child of nature, and deprived of its artistic use." Following these words of wisdom from the 1869 American Woman's Home, homemakers took to the forest to gather ferns for decorating drawing rooms and hallways. As indoor gardening became more popular after the Civil War, many other plants were picked from the wild and purchased from gardening shops, but the fern was still especially prized.

Ferns under glass.

COMBINED with palms and flowering plants, framed with climbing ivy, ferns represented all that was best in nature. The lessons to be learned from a working relationship with things natural were held up as the epitome of virtue. In his 1871 book Window Gardening, Henry T. Williams praised indoor gardening as "a sign of healthy sentiment, for the presence of flowers always aids in the development of refinement and an elevated taste."

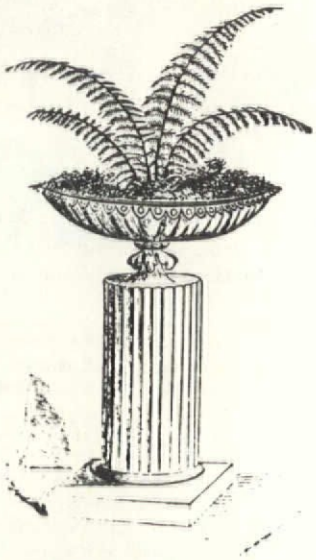
THERE WERE practical reasons for the popularity of ferns in Victorian homes. They grow well in shady places or in rooms with heavily draped windows. They're easy to care for in hanging baskets and grow well from a variety of showy wall planters. Early directions for growing ferns emphasize that they need to be watered but twice a week, once in a "shower" that soaks the leaves and cleans any dust that has settled on the fronds.

SOME VARIETIES are very delicate and require a sheltered environment. The Wardian Case, invented in 1829, was the forerunner of today's terrarium, and made it possible to raise these less-hardy ferns in New York and London parlours. Some elaborate Wardian Cases featured ornate cast-iron frames into which plate glass was set. Unfortunately, few have survived; they're almost non-existent at antique shows and auctions. The smaller versions, however, were created a century ago from glass domes that are easy to find today. Pedestal tables called "fern stands" were made especially for dome gardens. The plants-under-glass were placed on these high tables where they could easily be enjoyed.

An ornate, cast-iron stand could display a grouping of domed gardens.

FERNS WERE PLANTED in pottery bowls into which the dome fit securely. The gardener began with a thin layer of gravel on the bottom of the bowl for drainage. Then (according to a recipe from the 1869 American Woman's Home), the soil was prepared by mixing two parts of dark, rich forest soil with one part lighter meadow soil, one part sand, and a sprinkling of charcoal.

WHEN FERNS were planted in glass domes, the soil was generally covered with moss also gathered in the wild. The idea was to create a miniature forest inside the dome. Plants that grew wild were preferred not only for their economy but also because they brought the gardener a bit closer to nature. There was a certain enlightenment that could be experienced only by gathering plants in the forest rather than at the nurseryman's.

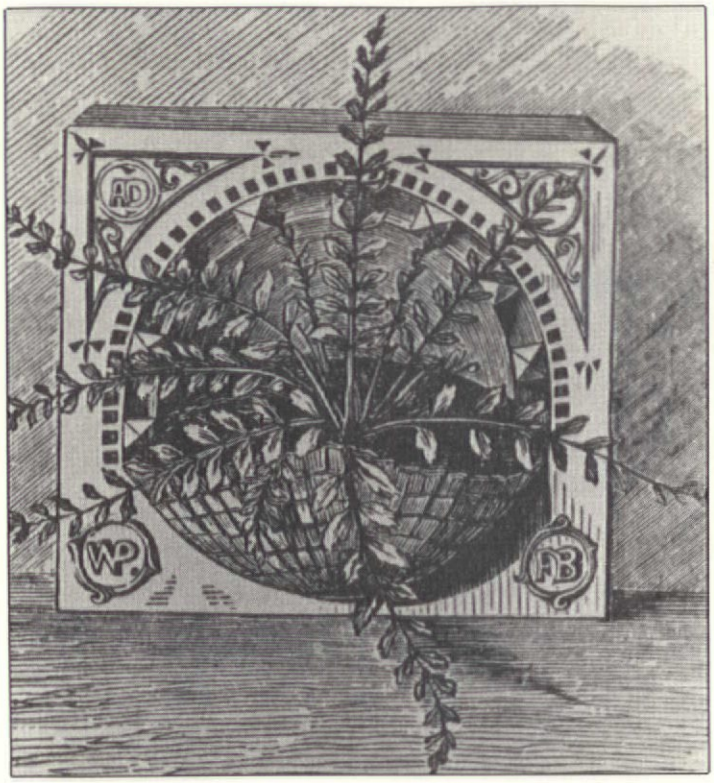


Pedestals called 'fern stands' highlighted the showiest ferns.

Ferns At Large

FERNS need not be planted under glass, however; Victorians displayed them in pots, implanted in sponges and baskets of moss, and used them as the centerpieces of large arrangements in flat dishes. Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, in the aforementioned American Woman's Home, made some suggestions about "the disposition of ferns."

THEY ADVISED HOMEMAKERS to employ a tin pie pan condemned to the ash heap because of dents or holes. After painting the tin green and filling it with their recommended garden soil, "plant all sorts of ferns, together



A "fern brick" of terra cotta often rested in the front of the fireplace opening during the summer months. Putting potted plants in unused fireplaces was a century-old tradition by the mid-1800s.

"Rustic terra-cotta arbourettes" were sold in nurseries and by mail. The hollow interior was filled with potting soil, and the ferns often shared space with flowering bulbs.

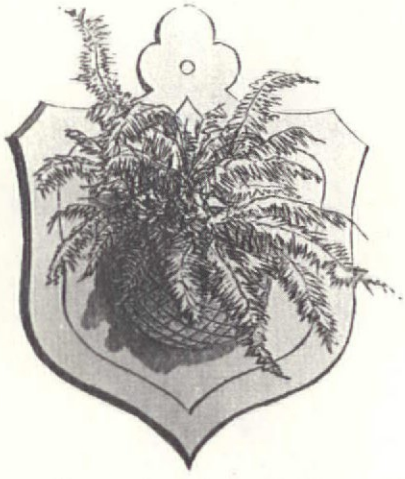
with some few swamp grasses; and around the edge put a border of money plant or periwinkle to hang over. This will need to be watered twice a week, and will grow and thrive all summer long in a corner of your room. Should you prefer, you can suspend it from wires and make a hanging-basket."

ONCE AGAIN, the goal in combining various plants in the same container is to create a vignette of nature. It wasn't necessary for the plants to be ones found in close proximity in the wild, only that there be several types flourishing side-by-side in the pot. After all, the periwinkle that Beecher and Stowe talk about doesn't grow on shady forest floors near ferns; neither do their swamp grasses. But as the fern was the showiest forest plant available in most of North America, it was usually the focus of small indoor plantings.

On The Wall

AMONG the most interesting homes for ferns were those mounted to the wall. Again we will turn to the Beecher-Stowe book for an example: "Take a piece of flat board sawed out something like a shield, with a hole at the top for hanging it up. Upon the board nail an ox-muzzle flattened on one side; or make something of the kind with stiff wire. Line this with a sheet of close moss, which appears green behind the wire net-work. You can fill it with loose, spongy moss ... and plant therein great plumes of fern; they will continue to grow there and hang peacefully over."

THE HANGING POT was also a favorite fern container. Its popularity among today's amateur gardeners is nothing new -- pots were suspended from hooks all over Victorian homes. Because they were easily moved and easily tended, hanging pots were the favored container for many houseplants. But they were not the white plastic variety so common for today's Fuschia and Wandering Jew. Pots had to be decorated to be suitable for hanging in the drawing room, and here the 1880s home-decorating experts were full of suggestions.



A wall-mounted pot for hanging ferns could be fashioned from wire and filled with moss.

MRS. C.S. JONES worked with the aforementioned Henry T. Williams on Household Elegancies, Suggestions In Household Art, published in 1875 (and now available in reprint).* Much of their sage advice concerned how to properly display houseplants from hanging containers. "A beautiful hanging basket ... is composed of a wooden bowl such is found in any kitchen, stained with a decoction ... of vinegar in which a few pieces of rusty iron have been placed for a few hours."

*Available from The American Life Foundation, Watkins Glen, NY 14891.

"EXOTIC GREENS"

A Choice Of Ferns For Victorian Window Gardens

"Their daily growth will afford you very interesting and pleasant study." Ferns need not have large, drooping fronds — some are quite delicate. The ones described here enjoyed a wide popularity a century ago.

Rabbit Foot's Fern (Polypodium aureum) grows from a furry stem. The root system is shallow, making the plant ideal for shallow dishes.

Licorice Fern (Polypodium glycyrrhiza) has one- to three-foot fronds with pointed leaflets. It was brought to eastern cities from the American West, where it grows wild.

Christmas Fern (Polystichum acrostichoides) is robust and forms symmetrical crowns of fronds. Victorians prized it for holiday decoration, hence the name. Its one- to three-foot fronds have rounded ends.

Maiden's Hair Fern (Adiantum) is said to have the power to restore, thicken, or curl hair. There are many varieties of this delicate, airy foliage. The Southern Maidenhair has elongated oval fronds that form lacy canopies as they droop from their pot. Variegated Maidenhair Fern has streaks of white on its tiny green leaves.

Staghorn Fern (Platycerium bifurcatum) is a perfect plant for wall-mounted planters (like the "ox-muzzle" arrangement described by Catherine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe in *The American Woman's Home*). They are named for the shape of their fronds, which usually hang over a foot long.

Silver Fern (Pityrogramma calomelanos) is a member of a species that secretes a colored substance that gives the plant its name. The fragile fronds grow to three feet tall. Cousins of this delicate fern have leaves of gold, yellow, or pale orange.

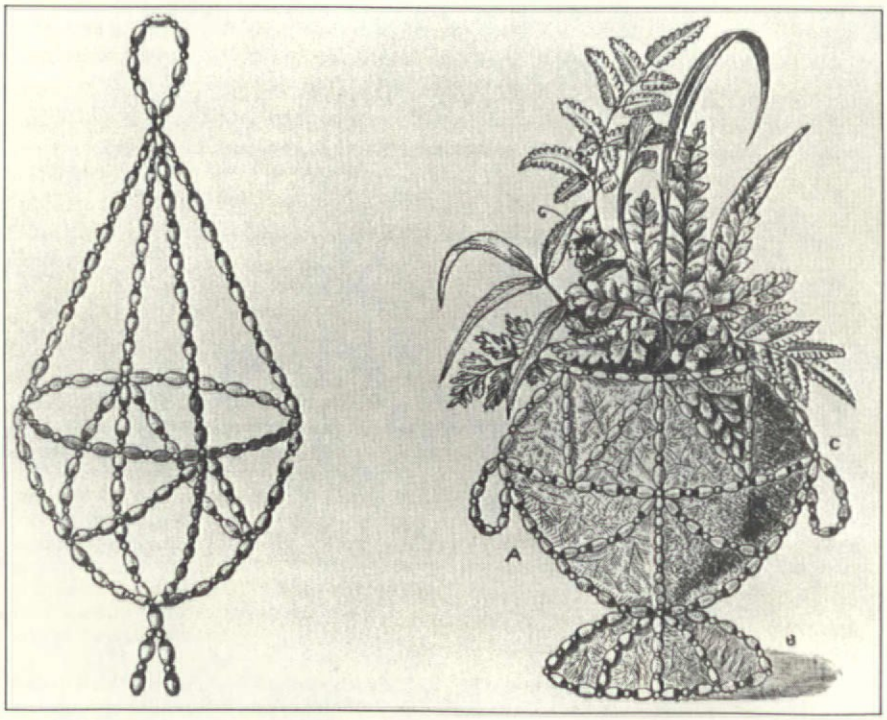
Climbing Fern (Lygodium palmatum) sends out thin, wiry leaf stalks that wrap around nearby supports. It has hand-shaped leaflets, each a maximum of two inches across. Also called the Hartford Fern, it was the first plant ever protected by legislation: In 1869, the Connecticut legislature recognized that uncontrolled collection was threatening the fern.

YET ANOTHER HANGING BASKET is covered with pine cones, acorns, and a variety of nuts gathered in the forest. These bits of nature are sewn or pasted to brown paper which is then used to cover the plant container. Nut and seed work was all the rage in the 1880s, and this included using produce from the garden when possible. One hanging-pot variation called for stringing fresh, soft beans on wire. Large glass beads were interspersed with the beans. The wires would then be artistically bent and joined to cover the pot and the wires used to suspend it. When selecting the beans and beads, "care must be taken to produce a pleasing contrast or tasteful combinations."

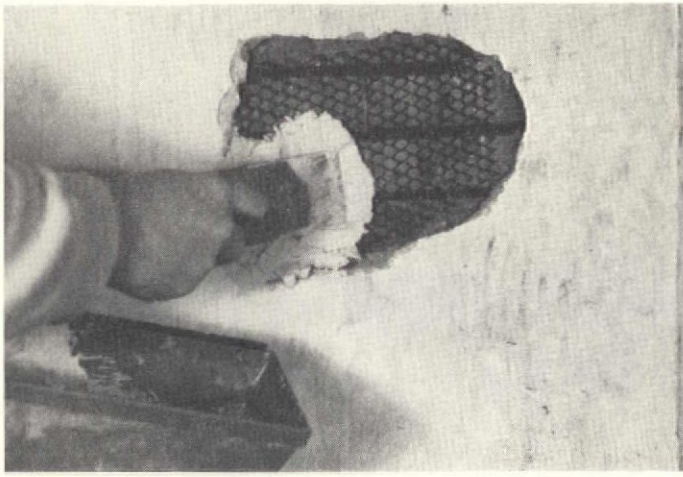
FERNS THUS PLANTED in a hanging pot could be moved at the whim of the home gardener. Artistic arrangement of indoor plants was very important. In many interior photographs from the end of the 19th century, lush parlour gardens are placed at tall windows -- and ferns are always prominent. Huge pots of graceful ferns stand on marble-topped tables; others are scattered around the floor near the window, while more hang from hooks in the walls. And trails of ivy wander everywhere, tying the whole thing together.

THOSE WHO COULD AFFORD to add conservatories to their homes did so. Many were elaborate additions of wood and glass, some with direct entrances from the parlour or hallway. Houseplants could be brought into the conservatory for renewal after some days in a dark, airless corner. There was often artificial heat and large gasoliers with reflectors to provide light.

VICTORIANS took great satisfaction from the art of cultivating houseplants. Ferns aren't always easy to grow, but being lush and showy they suited the Victorian appreciation for grandeur and opulence. Also, as William Seale reminds us in his book The Tasteful Interlude, the Victorians attached a special meaning to their gardening acumen: "Healthy and well-maintained houseplants and flowers, besides being organic and thus aesthetically appealing, were the proud symbols of the vigilant housewife."



Glass beads and colored beans are strung alternately on wire for this hanging basket. The bowl is covered with oak leaves and stems.



THREE-COAT PLASTER PATCHING

Whether it's the finish coat only or failure down to lath, this is the best way to patch.

by Walter Jowers

WHEN THE REALTOR first showed me through my new (1916) house, my first reaction was, "Awright! Lots of bad plaster!" Unprepared for this response, he asked what I was so happy about. "I'll be the only one to make an offer on this house," I told him. "Most people would sooner buy a house infested with rabid skunks than one with crumbly walls. They think the house is about to fall down."

WHILE IT'S TRUE that deteriorated plaster can be a sign of serious problems -- excessive settlement, plumbing leaks, roof or gutter leaks, or water penetration through exterior walls -- small areas of limited failure exist in virtually every old house. With some inexpensive tools and materials, and a little knowledge, it's easy to repair these minor blemishes.

YOU WILL NOT be transformed into a master plasterer simply by reading this article. We'll cover only patches (surrounded by sound plaster) that are no bigger than the length of a straight-edge. But you will (we hope) get the confidence to patch small holes in walls and ceilings.

What You'll Need

PATCHING WALLS is a skill that falls somewhere between the trades of plastering and drywall finishing. You'll need some tools from each trade:

Plastering Tools
- Hawk
- Slicker (flexible straight-edge)
- Plasterer's trowel
- Margin trowel
- Mortarboard and mudpan

Drywall Tools
- 6" taping knife
- 12" taping knife
- Joint tape (cloth mesh preferred)
- Stiff putty knife

Miscellaneous Tools
- Goggles, work gloves, and dust mask
- Hammer and cold chisel
- Needlenose pliers and wire cutter
- Screwgun and drill
- Spray bottle and dropcloths
- Tin snips

SOME of the following materials may not be found in your local hardware store or home center. A supply house that sells to contractors is the best source. If you have trouble finding these materials, call United States Gypsum.* USG will direct you to the nearest supplier of their products.

- Metal Lath -- Also called diamond mesh or expanded metal lath, it comes in bundles of ten 27x96-inch steets (equivalent to 20 square yards). Cost: $20-$25 per bundle.

- 18-Gauge Tie Wire; Drywall Nails -- You use these to secure the lath.

- Perlite Gypsum Plaster -- You use this for the scratch and brown coats (bottom two coats) of a patch. There are three types -- regular, which is what you want for patching interior walls and ceilings; masonry type, for use over highly absorbent surfaces; and Type S, for specific UL-listed assemblies (not something you're likely to need). I use USG Structo-Lite (regular). Cost: $7-$8 per 100-lb. bag.

- Gauging Plaster -- You mix this with finish lime for the final coat. Cost: $7-$9 per 100-lb. bag.

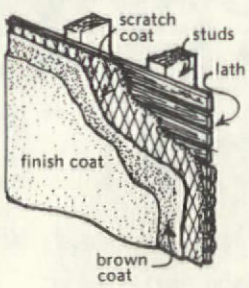
- Finish Lime -- I use USG Ivory autoclave (double-hydrated) finish lime. You can mix it instantly on-site. Single-hydrated finish limes must be slaked (soaked overnight) so you have to mix it the day before you use it. Some plasterers prefer the single-hydrated lime, claiming it has better workability. I find the two identical. Cost: $8-$9 per 50-lb. bag.

Removing The Loose Stuff

VERY OFTEN, only the top coat of plaster will be failing. Scrape off all loose finish coat with a putty knife. If water damage caused the finish coat to fail, you may find the underlying coats of plaster (although firmly keyed) are crumbly and soft. If this is the case, it too will have to be removed. To test, poke the corner of a putty knife into the brown coat. If it cuts through easily, the existing coat will not be able to hold new finish plaster. Remove it as described below.

* USG phone numbers — South: (404) 393-0770, East: (914) 332-0800, Central: (312) 321-4101, West: (818) 956-1882.

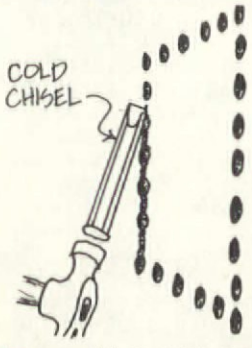
ON THOSE AREAS that have failed all the way to lath, make a three-coat repair. The first coat (scratch coat) stiffens the lath and provides a consistent base for the second (brown) coat. The brown coat is applied over the scratch coat and is built up to about 1/8 to 1/16 inch below the finished wall surface, providing a smooth, level base for the third (finish) coat. Complete failure of plaster that requires a three coat repair is usually localized around doors and windows, on stair soffits and, in a restoration project, wherever plumbers or electricians have been.



BEFORE YOU can make a patch, you have to cut out the bad plaster. Don't just start banging away with a hammer and chisel -- this indelicate approach is sure to loosen sound plaster and expand the area of damage. Wear a dust mask, goggles and gloves, and pull loose plaster from the walls with your hands. If the bad plaster is hard to pull away, a flat pry-bar will help bring it down. Be certain you have removed or resecured all loose plaster.

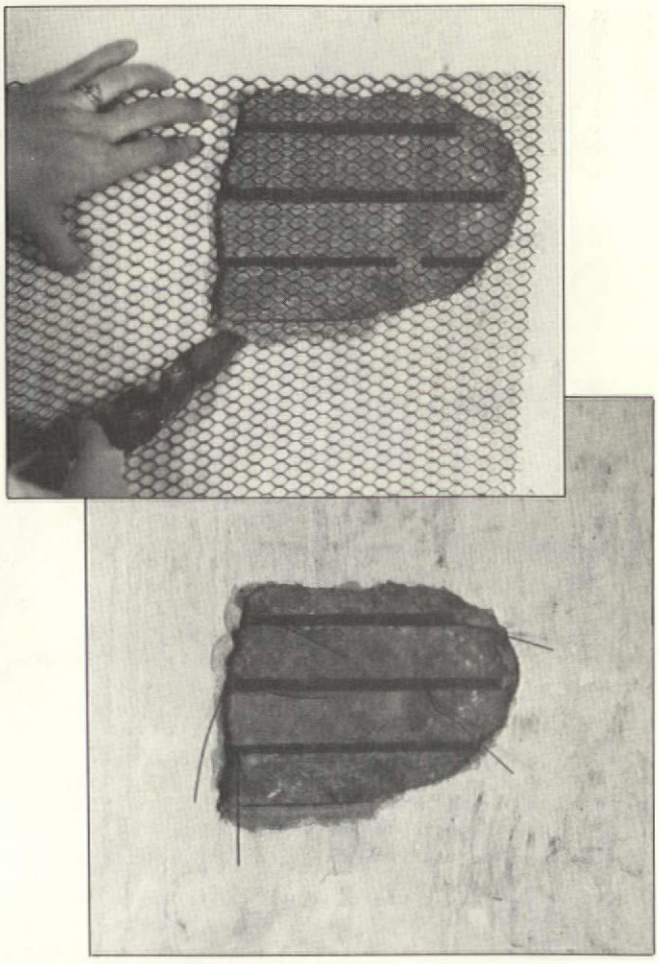
USE PLASTER WASHERS to resecure weakly-keyed areas of sound plaster to the wall or ceiling. Plaster washers pull bowed areas back up tight to the lath or structural framing (an especially good idea if the bulging section includes ornamental plaster). You can order plaster washers from Charles Street Supply.*

SOMETIMES YOU MUST remove sound plaster (say, to add an electrical outlet or gain access to plumbing). Drill holes in the line of your cut with a carbide drill bit, then carefully cut directly from hole to hole with a cold chisel. Hold the chisel at a shallow angle when you cut into the wall or ceiling. Don't just bash away at the face of the plaster -- the lath will bounce and loosen nearby plaster. Then cut the resulting plaster "island" free from the lath by chipping the keys from the side (again holding the chisel at a low angle).



NOW THAT YOU'VE exposed more wood lath, you'll probably find that some of it has pulled away from the studs. If necessary, cut the plaster back to the stud, and resecure the lath with drywall nails. Predrilling the old lath will lessen the chances of splitting it. If there are a few broken lath between the studs, don't worry about them; you'll be bridging over them with metal lath anyway. Knock any plaster that's stuck between the lath back into the wall cavity. Vacuum all dust, loose plaster, and other debris from the hole with a shop-vac (plaster dust will destroy a household vacuum), or sweep it out with an old paintbrush.

* Charles Street Supply Company, 54 Charles St., Dept. OHJ, Boston, MA 02114. (617) 367-9046.



Cut the metal lath to the exact dimensions of the hole. Then use tie wires to secure it to the old wood lath.

Lathing Up

TO ENSURE a durable patch, install metal lath over the wood lath. Metal lath provides better keying than wood lath and lessens the likelihood of cracking caused by the old wood lath drawing too much moisture out of the plaster.

DRIVE A FINISHING NAIL into an exposed stud or drill a hole in the lath and push a finishing nail in place. Take a piece of lath slightly bigger than the hole and hang it on the nail. This gives you a "third hand" to hold the lath in place while you cut it to conform to the hole. Cut the lath to shape with tin snips. For small holes, snip the ribs in the lath one at a time rather than using the tin snips like scissors -- it's easier on your hands, and you'll be able to cut a more precise pattern.

USE TIE WIRE to secure the metal lath over the wood lath. Bend a six-inch-long piece of wire into an elongated "U" and pull it around the old wood lath. Twist it tight with needlenose pliers and snip off the excess. Space the tie wires every six inches. To secure the lath at

Cutting plaster from the hawk . . .

and applying it to the lath.

studs, drive 1" drywall screws between the lath into the stud. Always install the metal lath horizontally -- it'll hold the wet plaster better.

Mixing The Mud

WHEN YOU WORK with plaster, keeping your tools clean is all-important. Keep a bucket of water handy just to rinse your tools. Mix each type of plaster in a separate bucket and don't use the same scoop for different materials. When you finish a work session, clean and dry your tools immediately. Put waterproof dropcloths under the areas where you mix and apply plaster -- you'll drop a considerable amount.

FOR THE SCRATCH and brown coats, I use regular USG Structo-Lite. It's "instant" plaster; you just add it to water. The biggest trick for a novice plasterer is deciding how much to mix up. If you mix up more than you can use before it starts to stiffen -- about one hour -- you're going to have some waste. I find that I can use about half a five-gallon bucket in an hour. The professional plasterer that worked on my house could use about twice that amount. But it really depends on the type of plaster failure you have. You'll spend more time (and less material) repairing many little patches than you will filling a large area of failed plaster.

TO MIX MY customary half-bucketful, I pour about two quarts of cold, drinkable water into the bucket, then dump in about a third of a bucketful of plaster. Professionals normally mix plaster in a mortar pan with a hoe, but I prefer to mix it right in the bucket with a mixer attachment on my electric drill, then fine-tune the mix by adding a little more water or plaster until the consistency of the mix is right. The ideal mix is fairly stiff. To make sure the plaster cures properly, keep the room you're working in above 55 degrees F. until the plaster has set. Provide plenty of ventilation as the plaster cures.

• The scratch coat

THOROUGHLY MOISTEN the old wood lath with a spray bottle, so it won't draw moisture out of the wet plaster. To get the plaster from your hawk to your trowel, hold the hawk slanted about 45 degrees toward your body (you can only do this for a second or two -- any longer and you'll be wearing the plaster). Now cut into the plaster with your plasterer's trowel thumb side down. Bring the plaster directly to the wall with your plasterer's trowel. Apply it to the wall in an arcing motion (left to right for righthanders), making sure to work it well between the lath. Keep the hawk close to the wall under the trowel to catch falling plaster. Use a margin trowel to work the plaster into edges and corners. It's sometimes easier to throw plaster off the end of the margin trowel into the patch than pack it into hard-to-reach areas.

PROFESSIONAL PLASTERERS make it look easy when, with considerable elan and sleight of trowel, they bring the plaster from the mortarboard to the hawk and effortlessly sweep it onto the wall. You and I are a bit more clumsy, though, so make sure you've put down dropcloths: Until you get the hang of it, you'll spill a lot of plaster.

DON'T BUILD the scratch coat up any thicker than the old scratch coat (about 1/8 to 1/4 inch). As it starts to set, score shallow, random scratches in it diagonally about every inch or so to give the next coat something to grab. Let the scratch coat set for 48 hours.

Scratch-coating a fairly large area of failed plaster on a ceiling. Note the plaster washers securing the edges of the existing plaster.

- **The brown coat**

USE THE SAME plaster (Structo-Lite) for the brown coat that you used for the scratch coat. It's mixed the same way and applied in pretty much the same manner; the difference is that you want to make it smooth and level so that it will provide a solid, level base for the finish coat. To do this, run a slicker over the entire patch after you apply the coat. A slicker is nothing more than a long, flexible straight-edge; it's available where you buy other plastering tools. I use a two-foot-long straight-edge/paint guard that I bought at the hardware store as a slicker; some plasterers prefer a length of beveled siding.

KEEP THE BROWN COAT below the level of the surrounding finish coat by about 1/8 inch. When you're done "dressing" the brown coat, sponge or scrape the wet Structo-Lite off the surrounding finish coat. As the brown coat starts to set, knock off any high spots that you missed during your touch-ups. Plasterers use an angle plane (a specialized trowel with several sharp blades set at various angles) for this, but any sharp edge works well. Let the brown coat set for 48 hours before applying the finish coat.

- **Mixing the finish coat**

A LOT OF PEOPLE think applying the finish coat is going to be the toughest step. Not true. The real trick is to make a proper mix (the first time) and to work quickly, though not frantically. If it takes you 20 minutes to mix the plaster, it will be nearly set before you can get it on your hawk. You might want to practice the steps outlined below on the smallest patches before mixing up a large batch to do a big area. Once you gain confidence, finish coat work is easy -- providing your first two coats were properly applied.

THE STEPS OUTLINED below also apply to patching walls and ceilings where the scratch and brown coats are okay, but the finish coat has delaminated (a common condition in houses that have suffered slight water damage or have been left vacant without heating and cooling). If you're applying finish coat over an old brown coat, there's an important additional step: You must moisten the existing brown coat well before applying the finish coat (unnecessary on a newly-applied brown coat). The old plaster will absorb water faster, causing cracks in the finish coat as it starts to dry.

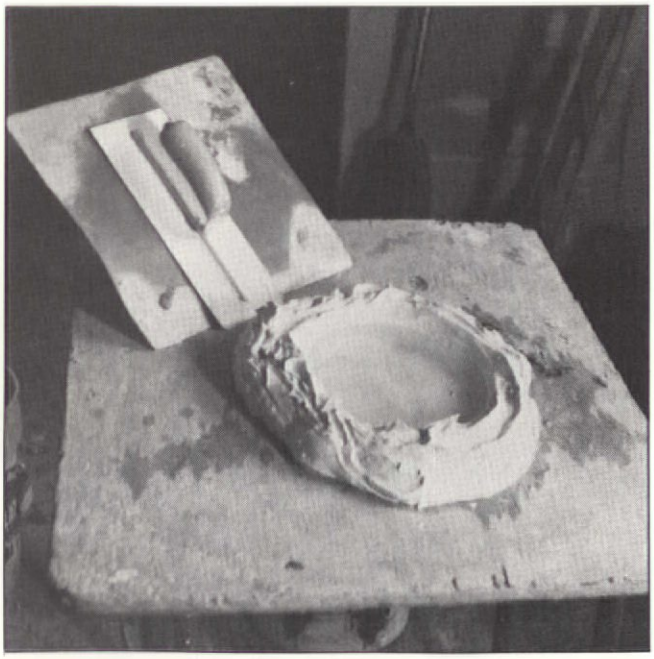
Smoothing the brown coat with a slicker.

MIXING PLASTER for the finish coat means working with lime. Lime is very caustic; it can damage your eyes, burn your lungs and nasal passages, and irritate your skin. Be sure to wear goggles, a dust mask (or better yet, a respirator), and latex gloves when you mix lime. Store it away from children and pets.

PLACE ABOUT TWO QUARTS of cold, drinkable water into a five-gallon plastic bucket, then scoop in autoclave finish lime until it starts to float, rather than sink into the water. (If you're using single-hydrated lime, you'll have to sift the lime into water the day before, and let it slake overnight before mixing.) Mix thoroughly with a mixer attachment on an electric drill, or by hand with a pointing trowel. Then, just as with gypsum plaster, fine-tune the mix by adding small amounts of water or lime as necessary, working for a mix in which all the lime is wet, and there are no lumps or standing water. This mixture of lime and water is called lime putty and should be about the consistency of joint compound.

NOW YOU'LL NEED a mortarboard, which is simply a board on which you'll mix the ingredients for the finish coat. It should be smooth enough not to splinter when you run a trowel across it. A scrap of plywood placed over a couple of sawhorses works nicely.

TOSS SOME LIME PUTTY onto the mortarboard. Use your margin trowel to form it into a ring. Now fill the center of the ring about two-thirds full with cold, clear water. Slowly sprinkle in gauging plaster until the water can't take up anymore. You want about one part gauging plaster to three parts lime putty. Mix the water and the plaster in the middle of the ring together -- it should be a bit stiffer than the lime putty. Then, fold in the lime putty, and mix until all of the ingredients are well acquainted. What's on your mortarboard now is finish plaster. Get to work: It sets up pretty quickly.



The lime putty ring on a mortarboard.

Why Not Sheetrock Patches?

MANY DO-IT-YOURSELF books and magazines, including OHJ (December 1983), discuss patching plaster using pieces of drywall (Sheetrock). To do this, you remove the damaged plaster back to two studs (so there's something substantial to screw the drywall into), cut the drywall to fit the opening, and tape the joints between the new drywall and existing plaster with tape and joint compound. This patching method does work, and has advantages for certain applications. But for filling small holes, it has some drawbacks:

- You have to cut the plaster back to the nearest studs or joists. Plaster isn't so accommodating as to fail on 16-in. centers. If a small area of plaster has failed between two studs, you'd have to cut away perfectly good plaster.
- You have to try to get the Sheetrock flush with the existing plaster. Plaster, because it was applied wet and worked by hand, is seldom of uniform thickness. It's usually 5/8" here, 9/16" there, etc. Drywall is uniform. Even if you fuss with shims, it's tough to get the patch flush with the old plaster. But your plaster patch can be made to match irregularities in thickness and surface texture.
- You have to make a neat hole in the old plaster to accommodate the drywall. After the patch is made, you're more likely to see the straight lines (and textural uniformity) of the drywall patch than you are to notice an asymmetrical plaster patch.

- **The finish coat**

USE YOUR PLASTERER'S TROWEL to pull the plaster onto your hawk. Then, using the motions described above for applying the scratch and brown coats, trowel it into the patch. It's not difficult to work the finish coat smooth -- for me, it's easier than working with spackling or joint compound. The finish plaster will stiffen as you level and smooth it; as it does, you can add little dabs of plaster to fill in hollows, and you can smooth out ridges. To get the finish coat really slick, spray a fine mist of water onto the plaster and make a few final passes with your trowel. Straighten edges or corners with your margin trowel.

ONCE THE FINISH plaster starts to set, discard any that you haven't used -- don't try to "retemper" it (extend its life by adding water). Retempering will not slow the chemical reaction; it will only weaken the resulting plaster. It's not hard to tell when the plaster has "gone off;" it becomes stiff and unworkable. You'll soon learn how much you can use before it starts to set; then you can adjust the sizes of your batches accordingly.

LET THE FINISH coat cure for about a week, then check for shrinkage. You may find a few spots where the new finish coat has shrunken away from the old one. Tape the cracks with cloth mesh tape and joint compound as you would tape any minor plaster cracks (see "What's Possible In Plaster Restoration" in the November 1983 OHJ). Large cracks should be chipped out and replastered.

Reaching High Places

Using Ladders and Scaffolds Indoors

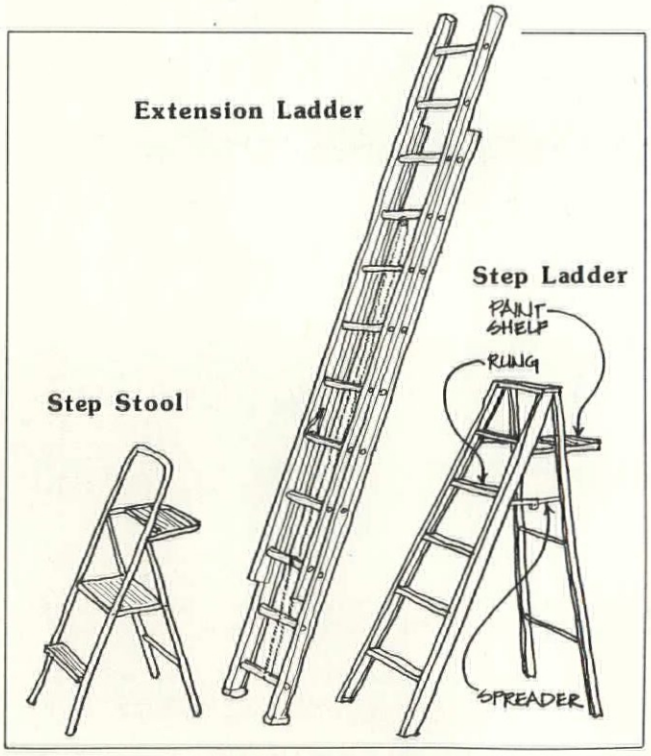
by Patricia Poore

YOU'VE PROBABLY GOT two ladders around the house: a six-foot stepladder for odd jobs indoors, and an aluminum extension ladder to get at gutters outdoors. These ladders are versatile and nice to have around. But they are hardly the safest, most efficient, or most comfortable way to reach high places for many of the jobs you'll tackle.

WE COVERED THE BASICS of exterior scaffolding in an earlier article -- refer back to "A Scaffolding Primer," OHJ July 1985. The following article is a lot simpler and probably of use to more people. It will cover various ways to work at heights indoors. Although we'll start off with ladders, we'll concentrate more on simple scaffold arrangements.

Ladder Types

YOU CAN BUY everything from a step stool to an extension ladder that reaches 40 feet. For indoor use, a sturdy two-foot step stool and a high-quality six-foot stepladder are the basics. Aluminum ladders are good, as long as you don't buy the cheapest ones. Their advantage is their lighter weight -- a big advantage. You can move them with one hand, so you don't have to put down your hawk, paintbrush, or whatever every time you move the ladder a couple of feet. Aluminum ladders make unpleasant noises, and they leave black marks on your clothes and hands as well as scuffing the wall surface they're leaned against. They also conduct electricity, which is why we don't recommend aluminum extension ladders for use near electrical wires.



WOOD LADDERS are strong, a little cheaper, and less likely to mar the wall. They tend to get loose in the joints and a little wobbly with heavy use.

FIBERGLASS LADDERS are also available. Electricians often use them because they are lightweight, sturdy, and non-conductive. For a safe, medium-commercial-grade six-foot stepladder, expect to pay $55 for wood, $65 for aluminum, and $95 for (heavy-duty) fiberglass.

LADDERS COME in different grades as well as different materials. A light-duty ladder, more often called "homeowner grade," is rated at 200 lbs., and some of its construction details are lighter-duty than commercial-grade ladders. A medium commercial-grade ladder is rated at 225 lbs. for wood, 250 for aluminum. Industrial or heavy-duty ladders are rated at 250 or even 300 lbs. and take the most abuse.

LADDERS ARE REFERRED TO by their standing height when folded. You don't go up six feet with a six-foot ladder, because you can't stand above the second-to-top rung. Actually, your additional reach is a little under four feet with a six-foot stepladder.

A STEP STOOL (24 to 26 inches) is safe and convenient for jobs like hanging window coverings, wall-painting up to plate-rail or picture-rail height, or grouting bathroom tiles. At around $25, a step stool is such a low-cost item (compared to other ladders) that it only makes sense to buy a top-quality one. Be sure to get one with a safety grab bar.

YOU WON'T OFTEN NEED an extension ladder for indoor work. (About $100 for a good 20-foot one.) It'll come in handy for setting up a scaffold in a stairwell. We'll get to that.

Scaffolds

IF YOU'VE GOT some good ladders, why would you use a scaffold? Well, have you ever gotten a case of "rung feet"? It happens when you work from a ladder doing a task that takes hours and hours -- like paint stripping or decorative painting. Besides the foot pain, standing on a ladder is extremely fatiguing to the body. You have to balance carefully and hold on while you reach up or out. Because you can't reach too far, you have to move the ladder often, climbing up and down.

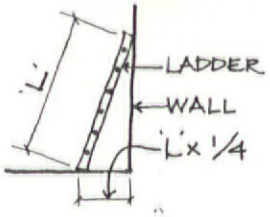
DOs and DON'Ts of LADDER SAFETY

WORKING FROM A LADDER is pretty straightforward — everybody does it. Yet falls from ladders are the most common cause of serious restoration-related injuries. Don't take safety for granted!

(1) DO use the right ladder for the job. If you use a ladder that's too short, you'll be tempted to stand on the top rung. If you use one that's too tall, you'll be uncomfortably far away from the wall when you're working at lower heights.

(2) DO make sure the spreaders are locked into position before you climb the ladder.

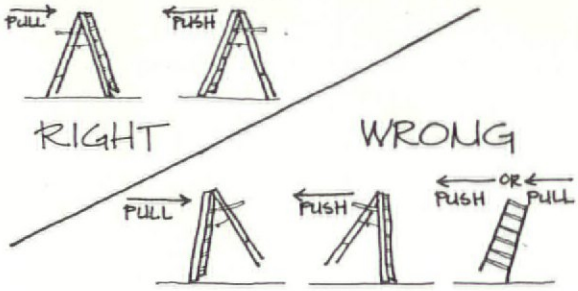
(3) DON'T stand on the highest step or top platform, and don't put any weight on the pail shelf — it will not support you.



(4) DO follow the 25% rule — that is, 1/4 of ladder length away from the wall at the base. A ten-foot ladder would thus be set 2.5 feet away from the bottom of the wall.

(5) DON'T lean out over the side of a stepladder, because it will tip sideways.

(6) DON'T over-reach. Sure, it's a pain to get down off the ladder, move it, and climb back up. But it's worse to take a fall. If you're working on something that requires a long reach, set up scaffolding instead.



(7) DO position the ladder so it won't tip, if the job calls for you to pull or push on something.

(8) DO keep the door wide open — or close it and lock it — when you're working from a ladder near a doorway.

THIS IS WHERE scaffolds come in. If you know you'll be doing a job that requires many hours of working up high, a scaffold is more convenient, more comfortable, and SAFER than a ladder. A scaffold is better for stripping ceiling beams, stencilling a frieze, and running a plaster moulding. (I dare you to try running mouldings from a ladder!)

HERE ARE THE ADVANTAGES of scaffolding over ladders:

- A wider platform to stand on. It's a lot easier and safer to stand on a plank than on ladder rungs.

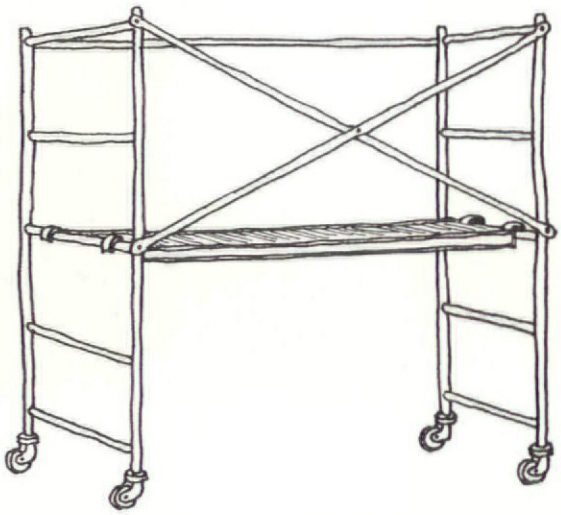
- Greater reach. You know how limited your reach is from a ladder. On a scaffold, you can walk perhaps eight feet across, bend down, or even sit on the platform.

- Access to tools. Ever walked up and down, up and down to bring various tools with you? Scaffolding can hold stencils, paint and brushes, or heat plate, putty knife and scraper (on shelves, not on the platform).

- Safety. For all the reasons above, carefully planned scaffolding is safer than a ladder. If you're working above five feet or if people will pass under the scaffold, you should also erect a safety rail and install toeboards.

Rented Scaffolding

THE REST OF THE ARTICLE will deal with inexpensive, homemade scaffolds that are built to suit the task. But first we should mention rolling platform scaffolding, a useful type for indoor work, which is available for rental. It is welded-tube scaffolding, similar to the type covered in our previous article, but it is narrower and it rolls on casters (so it's easy to move). Wheels would be useless or dangerous on the uneven terrain outdoors, but they are relatively safe on interior floors. Even though the casters lock, we suggest that wheels always be chocked before you climb onto the platform.



Rolling (Rentable) Scaffold

SCAFFOLD SAFETY

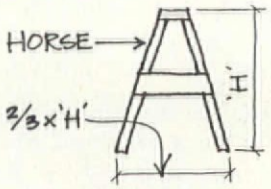
Scaffolds 10 feet or higher

(Use these safety features above five feet if you are nervous or clumsy.)

- Guardrails should be installed. They should be of at least 2x4 stock, and 42 inches high.
- A midrail should be installed at the halfway point between guard rail and planks, and should be of 1x6 stock.
- Uprights should be installed no less than every eight feet.
- Toeboards with a minimum height of four inches should be installed on all sides (to keep objects from sliding off the scaffold).
- Wire mesh should be fastened between the toeboards and midrails if there is any chance of objects being dropped or if people are working underneath the scaffold.

Horse Scaffolds

The lateral spread of the legs should be not less than two-thirds of the height of the horse.



General

- For scaffolding that utilizes a ladder as a support: Ladders must be placed or fastened to prevent the bottom of the ladder from kicking out.
- Platform planks must be scaffold-grade or equivalent, and at least two inches thick.
- The planks should extend over the bearing surfaces on each end by 12 inches to allow for board creep.
- On a span of eight feet, the walking surface must have a minimum width of 18 inches.

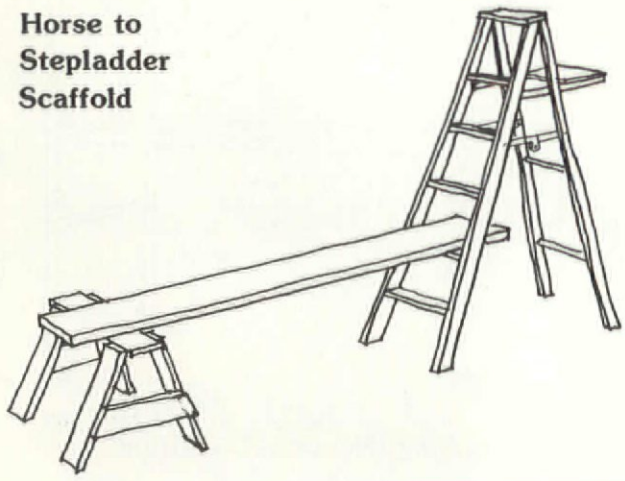
A ROLLING SCAFFOLD will cost no more than $75 to $95 a month to rent. Try the Yellow Pages under "Scaffolds-Rental". If you rent from an all-purpose rental place, be sure to check the condition of the scaffold. Reject bent tubing, casters that don't lock, and warped or knotty planks.

Scaffolding to Suit

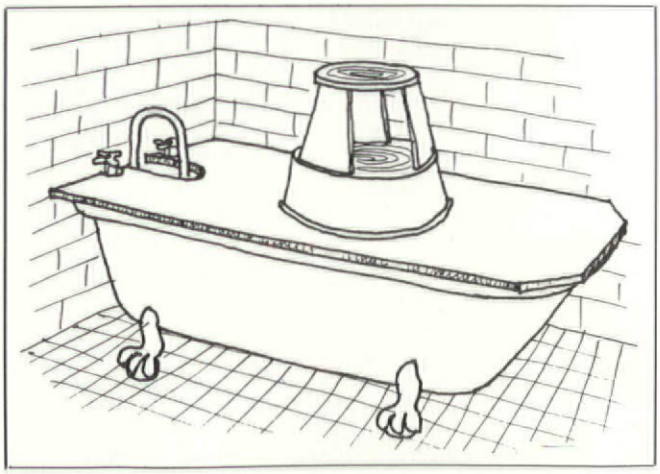
THE TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS that follow describe home-built scaffolding suited to common restoration tasks.

BELOW is the simplest scaffold, good for raising you eighteen inches to three feet above the floor. The plank can also span between two stepladders. Be sure to overhang the plank six to 12 inches -- but don't stand at the end.

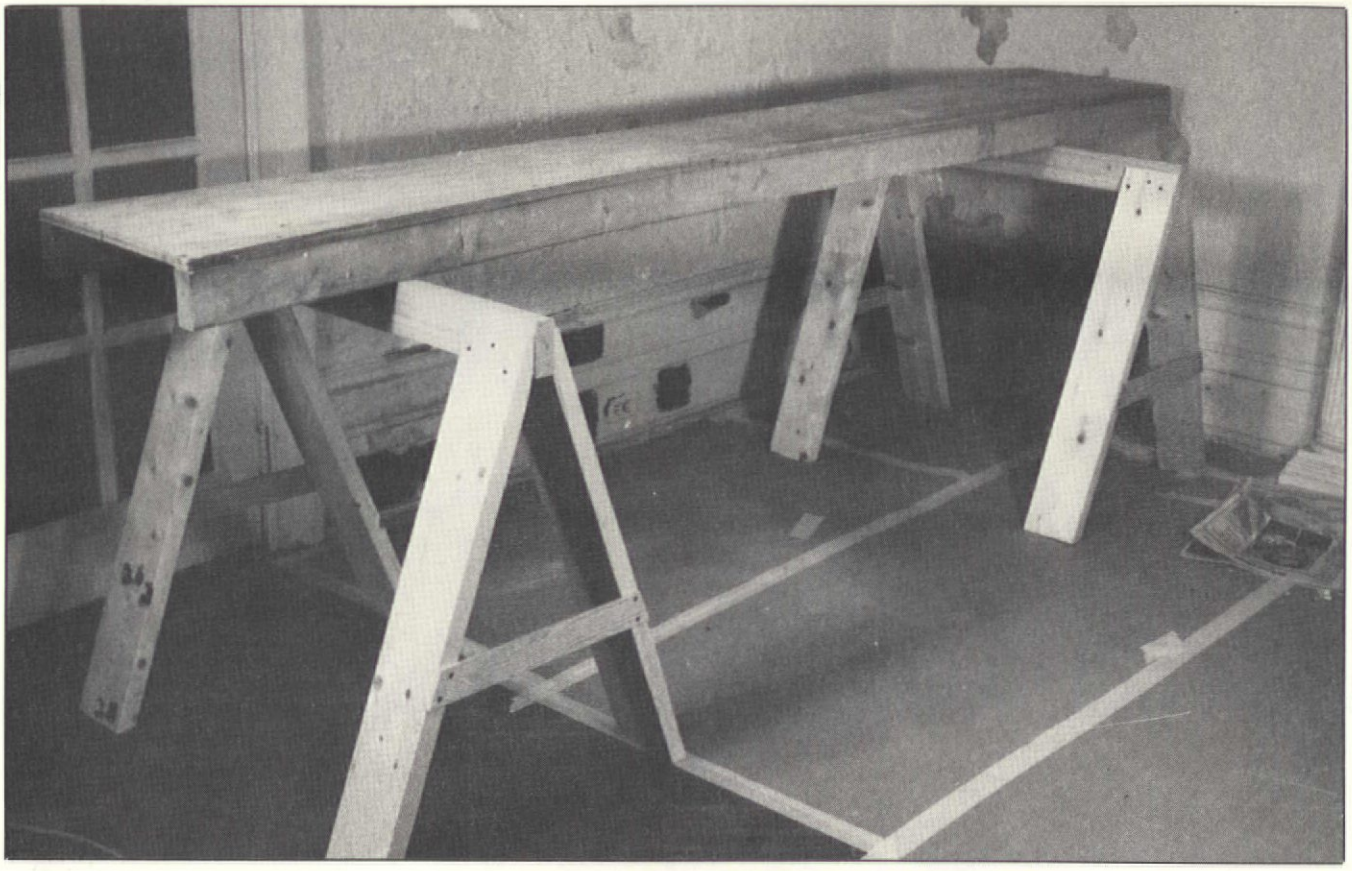
Horse to Stepladder Scaffold



ANOTHER USEFUL kind of step stool is the rolling library stool in the illustration below. We bought one specifically for reaching the high shelves in the kitchen, but it's become the favored "stepladder" for repair jobs. This kind of stool is tremendously convenient because it rolls freely until you stand on it -- your weight forces the rollers up inside and the stool grabs firmly. You can kick it here and there even with your hands full. Best of all, it cannot tip over. Because it takes up very little room, it's useful for tight spaces such as closets and vestibules. (The library stool costs about $30; some housewares stores have them now, and you can order one from an office supply store.)



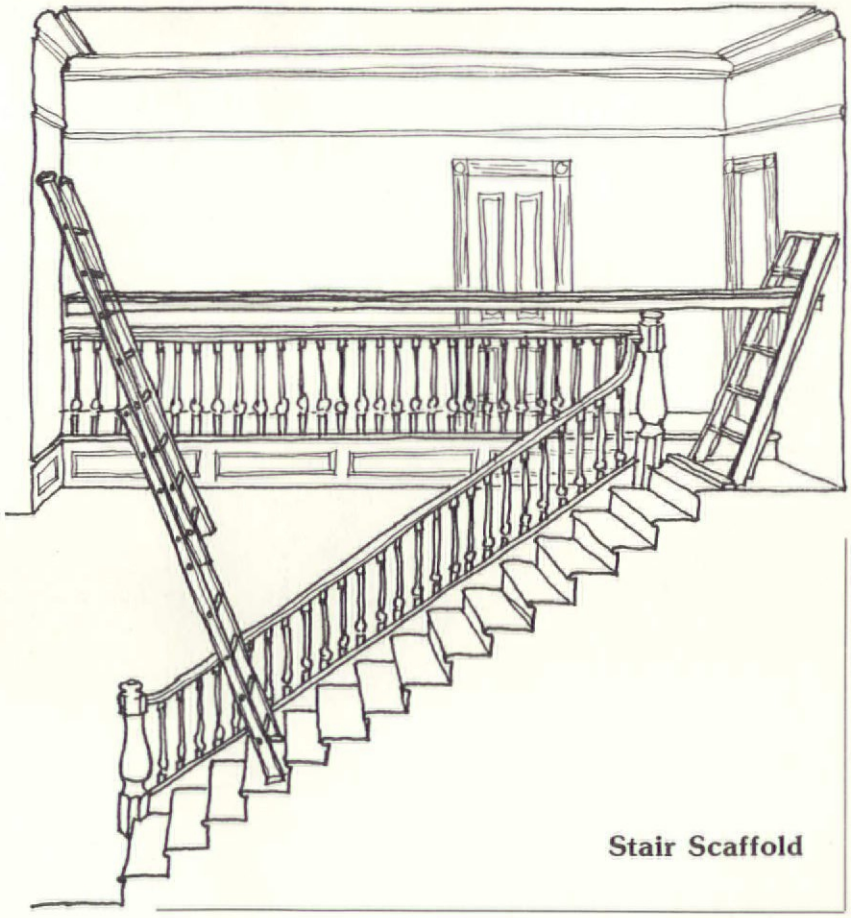
IN THE DRAWING, the library stool sits on a piece of 3/4-inch plywood, set over a bathtub. The plywood protects the tub from damage and also acts as a work platform. If you've ever fought with the legs of a stepladder around the fixtures in a small bathroom, you can appreciate this set-up.



THE PHOTO shows a scaffold, 10 feet long (8-foot working span), that was created for a ceiling-beam stripping project. The saw-horses have 2x6 legs with 2x4 cross-pieces (gussets are plywood scraps). The horses were put together with 2-inch drywall screws (not nails) for strength. A couple of hints: Build one horse a little narrower so they stack. If you use a screw gun, you can also back the screws out to disassemble the horses.

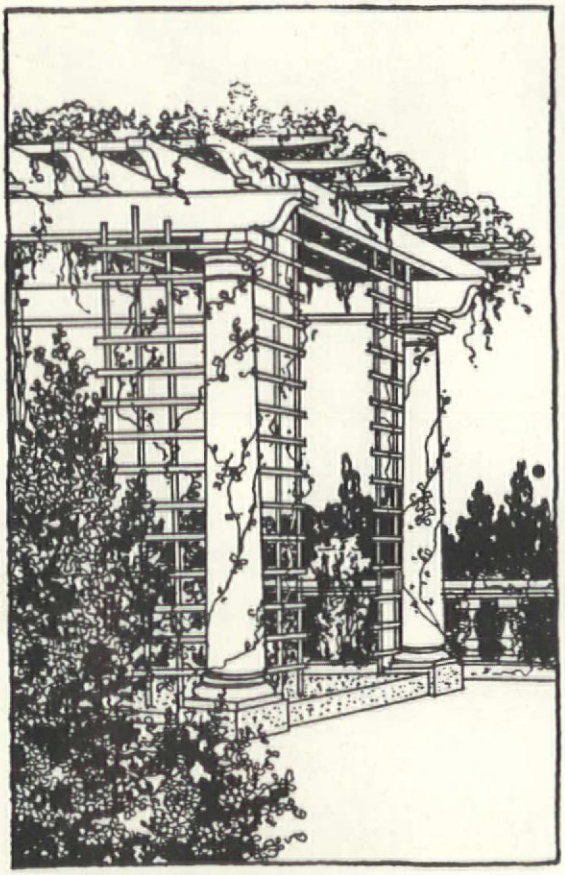
THE SCAFFOLD'S PLATFORM is 3/4-inch plywood, about 20 inches wide, screwed to continuous 2x4 ribs.

THE STAIR SCAFFOLD set-up shown at right stretches the limits of what you can work from safely without guard-rails. Be sure the plank you use is sufficient to span between the ladders; you can rent safe aluminum scaffold planks. A cleat nailed to the floor keeps the legs of the leaning stepladder on the upper landing from kicking out. Clean rags wrapped around the tops of the ladder stiles keep them from marring the head wall.



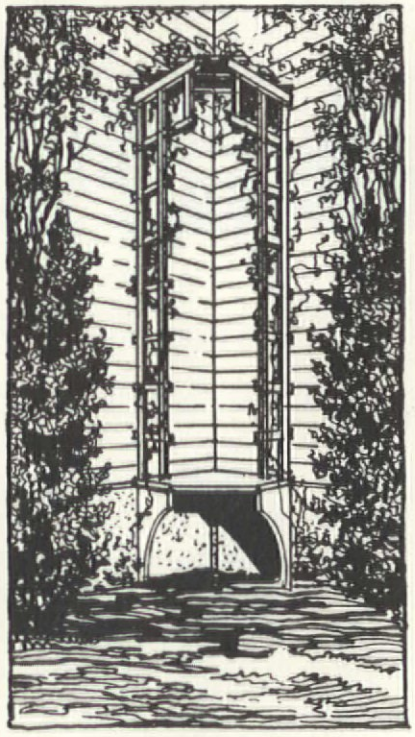
Stair Scaffold

TRELLISES



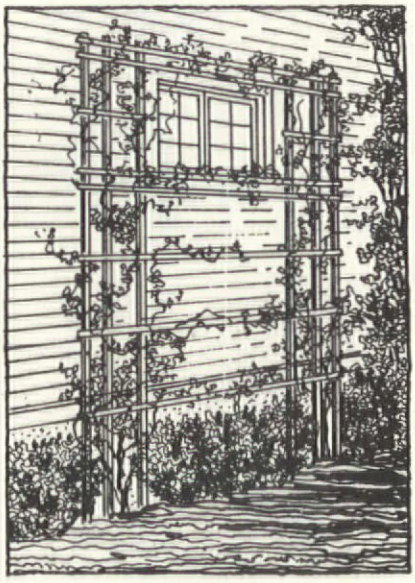
A PERGOLA ENTRY.

A Pergola Entry is the most stylish and expensive of the trellises pictured in this spread — a survivor from the pre-World War One Arts & Crafts movement. All that's required is a pair of store-bought Tuscan columns, some fancy scroll-sawing of beam ends, and simple ladder trellis on a concrete slab covered with a decorative arrangement of plain tiles.



CORNER TRELLIS & FLOWER POT SHELF.

The *Corner Trellis & Flower Pot Shelf* is the oddity in this survey. It's tough to get vines to behave in corners, so this approach might work. The pot shelf would permit a changing variety of colorful bloom. But this should be used with caution: The function of the five other trellises is to mark and enliven a wall, an entrance, or a window; the function of this corner trellis is to obliterate the juncture of two walls and enlarge the perception of the two walls as one.



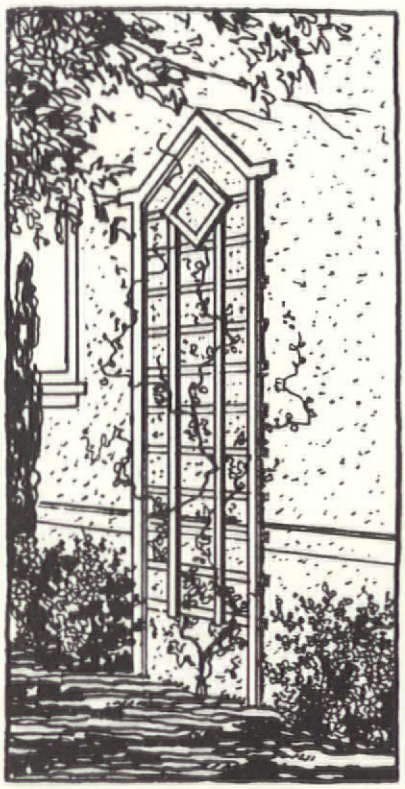
TRELLIS AND SIDE WALL ORNAMENT.

The *Trellis And Side Wall Ornament* brings life — metaphorically and literally — to a plain expanse of wall and its tiny window. Like the other

THE VICTORIANS said that the better house was the one that linked man with Nature, and since then there have been many ways to establish that prized bond — bay windows, conservatories, terrariums, flower boxes, hanging plants, herbacious borders, sinuous walks and roads, foundation plantings, climbing vines, arbors, gazebos, pergolas, and trellises. And it's worth recalling that Victorian porches, verandahs, and piazzas were often designed with lattice-like supports that provided a place on which vines and flowers could climb.

THIS DEEP-ROOTED NEED to link the house with Nature survived the demise of Victorian house styles. By the 1920s, the romantic points of reference were Ye Olde England and Ye Olde Colonial America. The former was driven by the cottage gardens of Gertrude Jekyll (author of such books as *Colour In The Garden* and *Gardens For Small Country Houses*); the latter, by the colored photographs of Wallace Nutting. At the popular level, six illustrations from William Radford's *Architectural Details* of 1921, seen on these two pages, show what the imaginative use of trellises can do to unite the post-Victorian home with Nature.

ARCH TRELLIS OVER A WINDOW.



LATTICE ORNAMENT FOR A WALL.

A TRELLIS AND SEAT ENTRY.

examples shown, the object is to unite the house with nature without harming the structure. (If the vines were permitted to grow on the house itself, the siding inevitably would begin to rot.)

Arch Trellis Over A Window is an interesting placement of an ornamental device which is more commonly used over a gateway.

The *Lattice Ornament For A Wall* is so simple that it can be made in any size and any pattern.

A Trellis And Seat Entry would be perfect for a pair of French doors that served as an exit into the garden. The seat ends can be easily band-sawn. The posts are 4x4s. (These days, the arch could be a pair of plastic tubes.) Adding this kind of trellis to the house does more than integrate one's home with the surrounding environment — it gives the homeowner what is essentially a miniature porch!

Restorer's Notebook

Making It Last

STORING PAINT for future touch-ups can be a real problem. Opening and resealing a can of paint every time you touch-up a few nicks will eventually distort the lid or get paint in the lip. In either case, a vapor-tight seal is impossible and the paint either forms a skin or dries out completely.

I avoid this problem by drilling a 1/8-inch hole in the lid and plugging the hole with a large self-tapping screw. Enough paint can easily be poured out through the hole for touch-up jobs. When the screw is replaced, the paint in its threads forms a very tight seal -- so tight that future stirring to remove a skin is unnecessary; vigorous shaking is sufficient. I've stored a quart of paint for nearly ten years this way, and it still flows easily.

-- Bill Walters, St. Augustine, Fla.

Simplifying Stripping

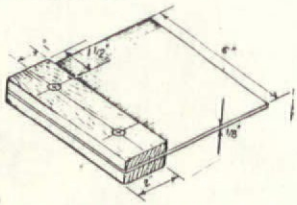
I RECOMMEND USING a simple kitchen tool, such as a large or small cake-frosting knife, when stripping layers of old paint from Victorian mouldings with a heat gun or heat plate. Its curved tip follows the contours of your moulding easily and quickly, removing the paint faster than a conventionally shaped putty knife -- and it won't scratch or mar the wood.

-- R.A. Mawhinney, Monroe, Wisc.

A Heat Shield Look-Alike

TWO OF THE TIPS I read in the June 1986 OHJ have prompted me to add my comments:

1. Joseph Patay recommends using a heat shield to protect glass when removing paint from window sash ("Restorer's Notebook"). It occurs to me that his homemade deflector is a "dead ringer" for my pastry scraper. So if you don't want to construct one, check your local kitchen supply store.



2. In his excellent door-repair article, Jonathan Poore recommends drilling and doweling stripped screw holes. I find it easier to fill the holes with ribbon epoxy. The stuff I use comes in two "ribbons," one blue and one yellow. Mix a piece of each together and blend until you get a uniform shade of green. Then just pack it into the hole. After it hardens, you can drill through it just like wood, and it holds the screws well. This method is especially well suited to holes near the edge of a piece of wood -- where driving a dowel might split the wood. I've had success using this technique in a number of patching projects.

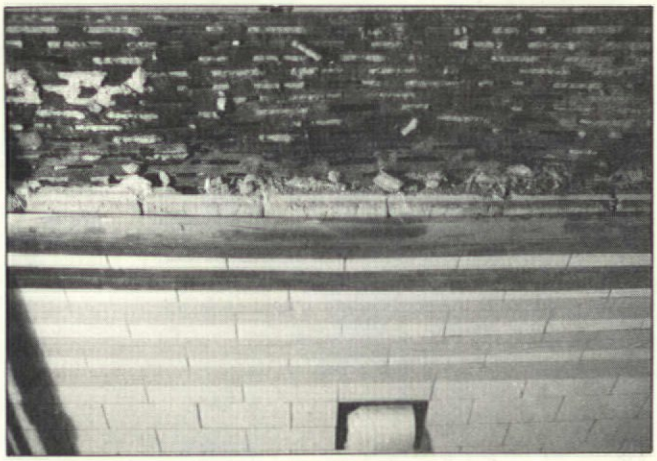
-- Tom MacGregor, Plainfield, Vt.

Tape Those Tiles

MY HUSBAND AND I had no choice. The plaster in our second-floor bathroom was so bad simple patching wouldn't do. It all had to come down to make room for (sigh) water-resistant Sheetrock. The problem was, regardless of how carefully we chipped away at the old plaster, the tiles on the wall below kept working loose and falling to the floor. We broke four hard-to-replace tiles before a simple solution dawned on me.

I bought some two-inch masking tape and ran it horizontally across all of the tile joints in the first four courses. The tiles kept working loose, but they couldn't fall to the floor because they were all taped together. After the plaster demolition was complete, we carefully removed the loose tiles one at a time and marked the location of each tile on the back for later installation.

-- Joan Mezzina, Bayonne, N.J.



Defeating Knots

FACED WITH THE PROBLEM of knots in new pine boards and water stains on old plaster, which show through layers of shellac, primer, and paint, I finally came across a fantastic product: "Kilz" by Masterchem Industries (P.O. Box 2666, St. Louis, MO 63116). It's about $6 a quart at our local hardware store. One or two coats on the most persistent problem areas and the stains are gone forever (or in our case, 2-1/2 years with no bleed-through!). And it dries in only half an hour.

-- Elaine M. Czora, Ontario, N.Y.

Tips To Share? Do you have any hints or short cuts that might help other old-house owners? We'll pay $25 for any short how-to items that are used in this "Restorer's Notebook" column. Write to Notebook Editor, The Old-House Journal, 69A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217.

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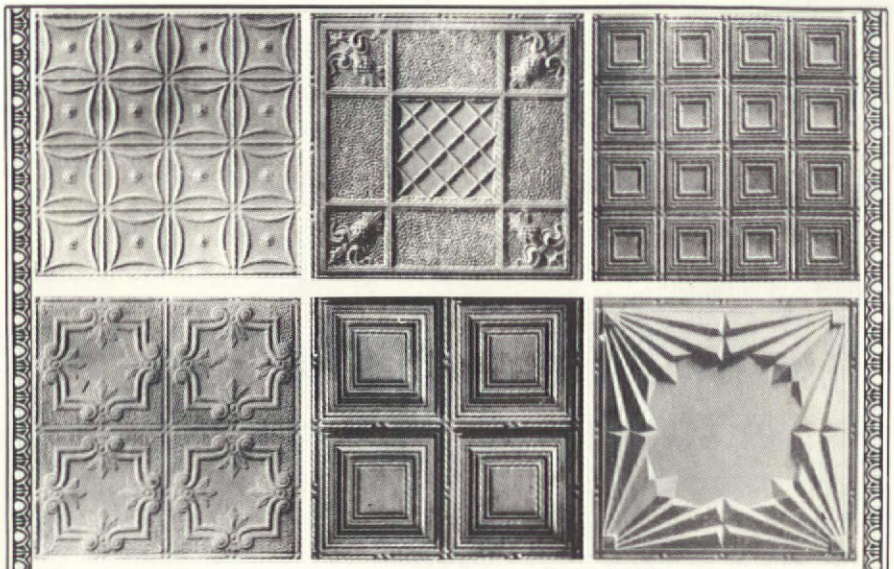

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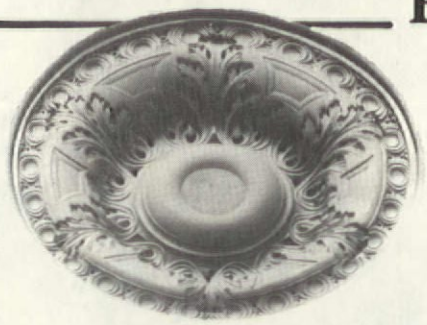
Restoration Products

by Eve Kahn



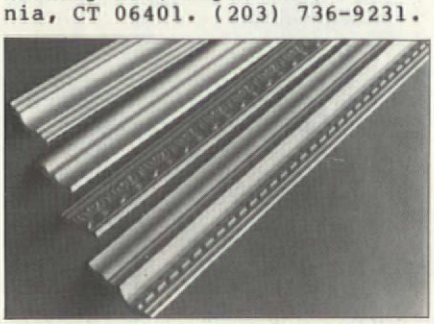
Moulding & Ornament

If you're looking for attractive ceiling ornaments and moulding, Nomaco offers two lines of products that look just like plaster but won't consume your decorating budget -- all cost substantially less than plaster or wood. The simpler line, Nomastyl, consists of extruded moulding and stamped ceiling ornaments made of polystyrene. There are nine moulding profiles available, and the ceiling medallions range from tiny two-inch rosettes to two-foot ceiling centers.

Arstyl, the more elaborate and expensive line, consists of eight types of crown moulding -- floral, egg-and-dart, denticulated -- plus framing with either curved or floral corners. The ceiling ornaments include stars, circles, and ovals, ranging in diameter from six inches to almost three feet. All are made of polyurethane, and details are reinforced with foil.

Installation of these pieces is simple. Since they're very light you don't have to worry about the burden on your plaster. All you need is filler adhesive or contact glue and a clean surface; a fine-tooth saw or even a sharp knife will suffice for trimming moulding.

You can order Nomaco products by mail, or write or call for a list of the distributors in your area. Nomaco Inc., Hershey Dr., Dept. OHJ, Ansonia, CT 06401. (203) 736-9231.



Period Clothing to Sew

Saundra Altman subtitles her company Past Patterns, "The Historical Pattern Company Devoted to Authenticity," and she means it. Her collection of pattern reproductions has two divisions. The first consists of exact duplicates of old patterns from 1830 to 1950. Dabblers beware: These replicas do not make for easy sewing. They do not come in modern dress sizes, and they retain the flaws of the originals: like oversize busts and wasp waists in the 1890s, or flattened bosoms in the flapper era.

Saundra also offers an easier collection. All of these have been adapted for modern, uncorseted sizes 10 to 20, but are otherwise strictly based on old designs.

The interesting and attractive catalogue includes sewing advice and tidbits from the history of fashion, and it even recommends appropriate underwear. The "adaptations" brochure runs $5. There are separate catalogs for the exact duplicates: 1901-1950 ($4.25), the 'teens and the '20s ($3 each), and the '30s and '40s ($.50 each). Past Patterns, PO Box 7587, Dept. OHJ, Grand Rapids, MI 49510. (616) 245-9456.

Peggy Powell

pre-1850

Colonial Lighting

If you're considering lighting for your pre-1850 house, whether it be chandeliers, lanterns, or sconces, you should invest $3 in Richard Scofield's Period Lighting Fixtures catalog. The catalog itself is a small primer on the history of early lighting; it will help you select the proper size and style of fixtures. There's a section on how to identify authentically re-created construction features. Where possible the origins and approximate dates of the fixtures are supplied.

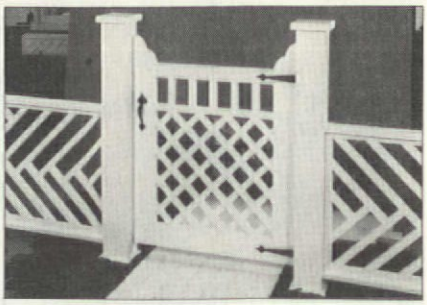
The catalog comes with a little packet of samples to help you pick a color and finish; all have been antiqued with a patina. All fixtures are handcrafted and can be ordered either electrified or for use with candles. One thing that impressed us was the ingenious way Richard manages to hide the wires inside the hooks of his chandeliers. Richard offers what he believes is the largest and most historically accurate collection of wall sconces to be found in a catalog, and indeed the variety is impressive. Be prepared to order and wait, since each item is made to order. (These things take time!) Richard D. Scofield, Dept. OHJ., 1 Main St., Chester, CT 06412. (203) 526-3690.

Heart-Pine Woodwork

The Joinery Company salvages heart pine from factories and warehouses that are being torn down, and remills it into flooring. Several grades are available; the most expensive ($5.31 per square foot) contains 97% heartwood and is completely free of knots. You can also get old heart-pine flooring; the edges and bottoms have been remilled for easier installation, but the patina of the surface is untouched.

The photos here show what else The Joinery offers: exquisite reproduction woodwork of the 18th and early 19th centuries. The cabinets, mantels, furniture, stair parts, and wainscotting are authentic and beautifully crafted. The company's nationwide clientele includes Colonial Williamsburg. Some pieces are in stock, like six-panel doors and Georgian newel posts. The company also does much custom work. Various types of wood, such as wormy chestnut, mahogany, or walnut, and finishes can be ordered as well. You can obtain their portfolio, which comes with photos of some recent work, for $5. Their showroom is well worth a visit (make an appointment), for it's made entirely of recycled wood: floors, stairs, doors, even window sash and trim. The Joinery Company, PO Box 518, Dept. OHJ, Tarboro, NC 27886. (919) 823-3306.

The Joinery Company made the woodwork and furniture for this room in Nashville, N.C.

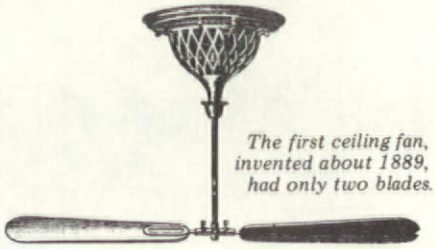


Doors, Gates, & More

Working out of a restored wagon factory dating back to the Civil War, the craftsmen at The Old Wagon Factory produce a fine collection of wooden screen doors, porch railings, garden gates, and planters in a variety of designs, suitable for Victorian or post-Victorian houses.

For porches, both open and screened, there's Victorian railing made of spruce. The scroll-sawn balusters have cut-out decorations; the 7-by-24-by-3/4-in. units come primed and sell for $20 each. Chippendale railing with diagonal stickwork also comes primed; it's 30 in. high and sells for $30 per ft. Another product we like is their Chippendale garden gate, custom-made to fit your opening. Sizes up to 38 in. wide sell for $185. There's lots more in the $2 catalog. The Old Wagon Factory, Dept. OHJ, 103 Russell St., P.O. Box 1427, Clarksville, VA 23927. (804) 374-5787.

Antique Electric Fans

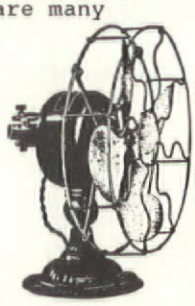


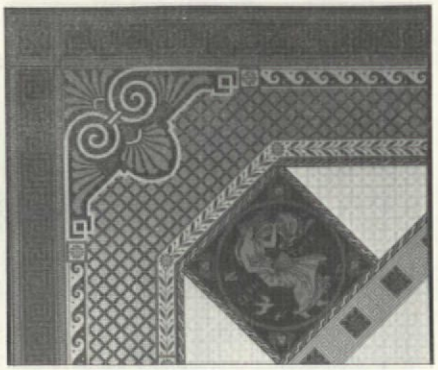
The first ceiling fan, invented about 1889, had only two blades.

Ken Horan has always been fascinated by fans. In the 1960s, when fans went out of fashion, they were removed and discarded by the thousands: "You could buy truckloads for $5," Ken recalls. He started researching fans, which led inevitably to collecting. He now runs a company that buys, restores, and sells ceiling and desk fans of all eras, from the earliest two-bladers of the 1890s through Art Deco.

Prices depend upon the condition, degree of ornament (the simpler ones are less expensive), and rarity. For example, a fairly common desk fan in as-is condition may cost $50; a restored desk fan from the early 1900s may cost $500. Ceiling fans range from $350 to $2500.

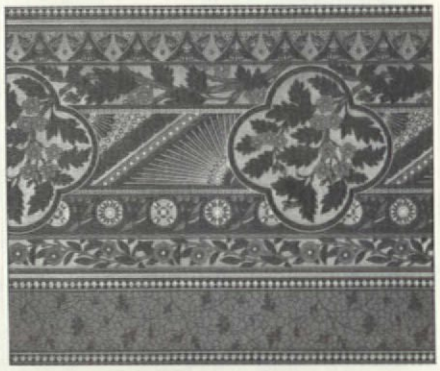
Ken strongly believes that old fans, restored to working order, are far superior in materials and craftsmanship to reproductions. He keeps several popular models in stock. He generally leaves fans unrestored until someone wants to buy them, because he offers all kinds of custom restoration work, like painting, plating, and replacing blades. His free flyer shows some of the models he typically has on hand, but there are many others to choose from. You can get the company's catalog of reproduction lighting for $3. M-H Lamp & Fan Co., 7231-1/2 N. Sheridan Rd., Dept. OHJ, Chicago, IL 60626. (312) 743-2225.

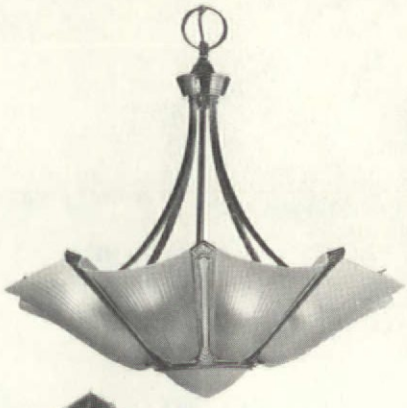


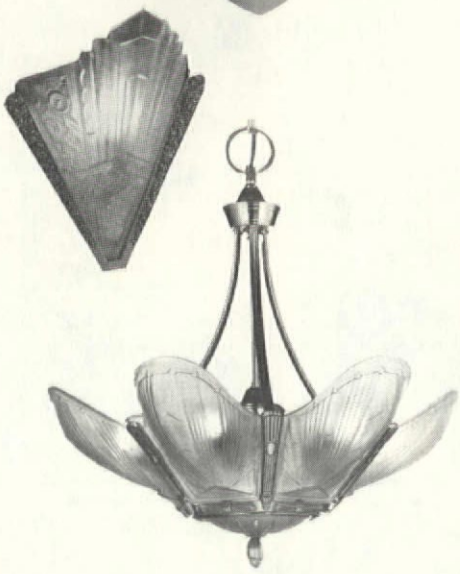


New from Bradbury

Even the brochure for Bradbury & Bradbury's latest wallpaper collection is gorgeous. The Neo-Grec roomset (ceiling component shown above) is now available in five colorways: terra cotta, cream and gilt, jasper green, dove blue, and "ashes of rose." The brochure with color sheets costs $1, and samples can be purchased for $7. Also two new friezes have been produced. "Emelita's Frieze" is an exact reproduction of an existing frieze in an 1884 house. "Iris" is an adaptation of a Walter Crane frieze. Each comes in only one (exquisite) colorway; samples are $2.50. Bradbury & Bradbury, PO Box 155, Dept. OHJ, Benicia, CA 94510. (707) 746-1900.







Art Deco Lighting

If you've tried to find Art Deco fixtures in the antique stores recently, you know that they don't show up much, and when they do, they're swiftly snapped up. Fortunately Metropolitan Lighting Fixture Company supplies a collection of quality reproductions. Made in original moulds, with a little tarnish they'll be indistinguishable from their ancestors.

Both ceiling and wall fixtures come in polished brass or satin nickel (gold or silver color), and they're available through architects and interior designers only. The prices range from $2067 to $2721 for ceiling fixtures and $381 to $396 for wall fixtures (there's a 50% trade discount). The color brochure, which also contains the rest of the company's extensive line, is $5. Metropolitan Lighting Fixture Co. Inc., 1010 Third Avenue, Dept. OHJ, New York, NY 10021. (212) 838-2425.

Saarinen Furniture

These beautiful pieces were designed by architect Eliel Saarinen between 1928 and 1930 for his own home. They're now being reproduced as part of Arkitektura's "Cranbrook Collection," named for the artists' colony and school where Saarinen lived. The collection also includes several adaptations of Saarinen's designs, along with several new pieces, like side tables, that fill in what Saarinen didn't provide. The prices are not cheap; they range from $1750 for a small cigarette table to $8100 for a spectacular round table with flared legs and intricate marquetry. The company does offer trade discounts, and they send out a handsome free information packet with photos of each piece and a price list. Arkitektura, PO Box 210, Dept. OHJ, Princeton, NJ 08540. (609) 683-9654.

On the inside of this hardwood cabinet's doors are Art Deco peacocks, inlaid in exotic veneers.

This solid maple chair has ebony and enamel ribs on both front and back.

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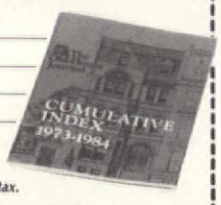

The Old-House Journal cat is sitting on the answer to one of your old-house problems!

Our office cat, Chester, tends to sit around most of the day. But when we need him to catch a mouse, he's right there, earning his keep.

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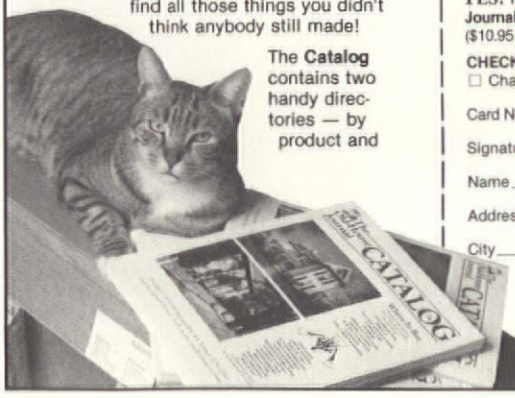

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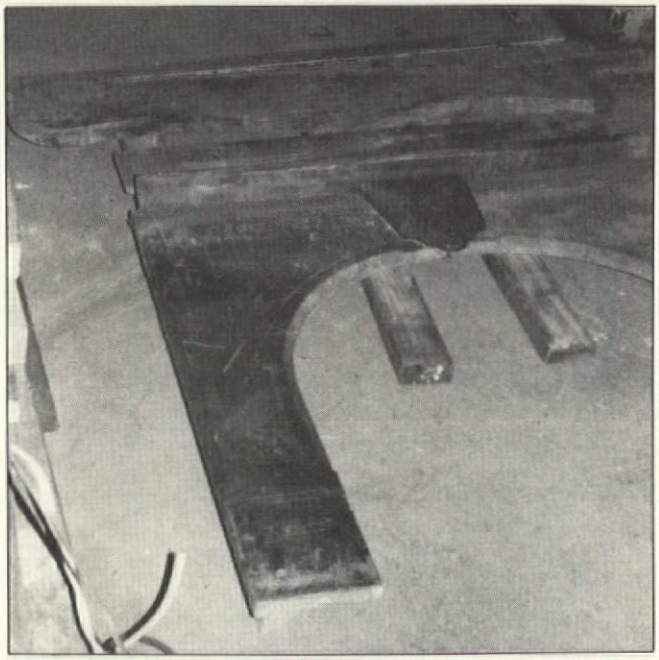
A Mantel Mystery

Q: MY HUSBAND AND I live in a stone house which we think was built in the late 1780s. In the house, we found an unassembled slate mantel that we want to restore. Two things puzzle us. On the back of each piece of the mantel are the identifying marks "J17:88G" -- could these signify the date (1788) and maybe the craftsman's initials (JG)? Secondly, the keystone and the two side



pieces were painted to look as though their centers were inlaid with marble. We're told that this marbleizing technique is Victorian, not colonial. Could the marbleizing be original to the mantel if it was indeed made in 1788? We'd like to restore the mantel to its original condition.

-- Lorraine Dalrymple, Warminster, Pa.

A: WHAT A FIND! The "G" looks more like a "6" to us -- maybe it means June or July 6, 1788. Another possibility is that the mark was inscribed on June or July 17, 1886. We're not sure whether the mantel is a colonial-era piece. The design of it is similar to pieces we've seen from the mid- to late-19th century. The marbleizing is almost certainly not colonial; more likely it was done in Victorian times.

[If any of our readers can interpret the inscription and tell us more about the mantel, we'd love to hear from them.]

Combatting Silicone

Q: APPROXIMATELY three years ago, we had the paint stripped from the exterior of our brick townhouse. After the stripping, the brick was sprayed with silicone to provide a protective coating. Unfortunately, the silicone also coated the glass of our windows. We have tried household cleaners, alcohol, and paint stripper to remove the stuff, but to no avail. Can you make any suggestions?

-- Lisa Heller, Jersey City, N.J.

A: OUR FIRST SUGGESTION is to get a hold of the people who sprayed the silicone and have it removed at their cost. Masking surfaces that were not to receive the spray must have been specified in the contract -- failing to protect the windows showed poor judgment and bad workmanship.

If this is impossible, you're left with two choices:

1) Scrape it off with a razor blade in a holder. If you keep changing the blades so you're always working with sharp ones, you can remove even the thinnest of coatings.

2) Apply a thin, watery-type paint stripper to soften the silicone, and then scrape it off. (The disadvantage is that the stripper will remove paint from the sash.)

The Stain That Wouldn't Die

Q: MY PLASTER CEILING is underneath a crawl space insulated with 3.5 inches of fiberglass. A leak in the roof has long been repaired, yet I still get cracked, chipped paint and water stains. The ceiling has twice been scraped and primed with BIN. Is it possible that the insulation has remained wet, and is causing the problem? Would venting the crawlspace remedy this situation?

-- Virginia Zimmerman, Richmond Hill, N.Y.

A: YOU SAY THAT the leak was repaired, so it's doubtful that the insulation is still damp. If inadequate ventilation was the problem, you'd have more headaches than just a patch of peeling paint: The entire ceiling would be experiencing paint failure, and you'd have peeling paint on the exterior of the house outside the crawlspace, too.

Simple water stains would have been hidden under the shellac you used to seal the problem areas. It's likely that the plaster itself has been damaged by the leak, and so requires patching, not just sealing -- plaster loses its ability to hold paint after it's been exposed to water. Chances are you'll have to remove the bad plaster and patch it with Sheetrock or fresh plaster.

General interest questions from subscribers will be answered in print. The Editors can't promise to reply to all questions personally—but we try. Send your questions with sketches or photos to Questions Editor, The Old-House Journal, 69A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217.

The Emporium

REAL ESTATE

NORTH DIGHTON, MA — Post-&-beam bungalow, approx. 200 years old, renovations started. 4 BR, 1 bath, needs TLC. 2-storey, 20-x-60-ft. barn, used for storage & dog-training classes. 12-x-16-ft. kennel, new, w/ in-door/outdoor runs. 2 storage sheds. 6 acres, 45 mi. SW of Boston, 15 mi. NE of Providence, R.I. Zoned bus./res. agric. Owner financing considered. $160,000. J. C. Giroux, 2480 Winthrop, Rt. 44, N. Dighton, MA 02764. (617) 654-2018 days, (617) 252-6304 eves.

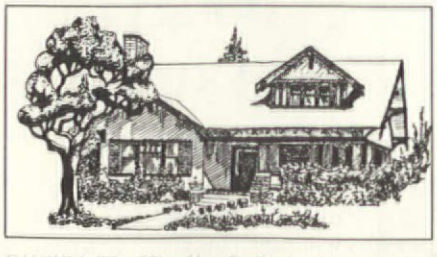
BOSTON, MA — Back Bay. Preserved townhouse. Orig. oak woodwork: 4 FP w/ mirror mantels, staircase, doors, stained-glass entry, windows, floors; light fixtures, Anaglypta, & hardware, painstakingly preserved. 4-flr. single family w/ grandmother unit on ground flr. New utilities, 18-x-10-ft. deck, ample parking. $625,000. (617) 266-7823.

MILLBRIDGE, ME — Antique shop in the process of being lovingly restored. Charming, high-tourist seacoast community. Intricate details, polychrome paint job. 2 sunny apartments. Full stock of antiques, art supplies, crafts, etc. for store. $59,000, to old-house lovers only. Ruth Whitehead-Aston, Gouldsboro, ME 04607. (207) 546-7315.

WARSAW, KY — Cincinnati area. "Blackmore House," a 10-room, solid brick, 1828 Georgian commanding this river resort's most pivotal property. Double parlors, 7 FP, 13-ft. ceilings, 12-ft. windows, grand mouldings, heart-pine floors, & orig. hardware. On Nat'l Register. Zoned commercial. Ideal tea room/antique shop/art gallery, or executive residence. $125,000. (305) 432-3197 or (606) 567-2267.

OWENSBORO, KY — 2550-sq.ft., 3-BR, 2-bath log home. Large LR, DR, family room. Wood stove converted to electricity. Detached 3-car log garage, 1-acre lot, 4 mi. from city limits. Antique lover's dream. 2 central AC units, gas heat. Below appraisal: $114,500. Jim Davis, Jr., (502) 683-5377.

NEW YORK, NY — Queens. 1904 Queen Anne frame w/ wraparound porch, gingerbread, stained glass. Beautiful area, 62 x 100 ft., 2-car garage. 1st flr.: 3 rooms, bath, hardwood flrs. 2nd flr.: 5-room apartment. 3rd flr.: 3 rooms, bath, large storage area. Full basement. $270,000. (718) 639-3130 after 9:30 p.m.



YAMHILL CO., OR — Near Portland, wine-growing region, across from city park. Renovated 3000-sq.ft. 1914 bungalow w/ 5 BR, 2½ baths, den, LR, DR, garage. $95,000. Larry Cooper, 251 Park Dr., McMinnville, OR 97128. (503) 472-7732.

WAUKEGAN, IL — C. 1872, Nat'l Register, Second Empire, 4300 sq.ft. 1 hr. commute to Chicago. $165,000. Call collect. (312) 249-3340.

ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NY — C. 1938. 5 BR, 2½ baths, LR, DR, family room, eat-in kitchen, 2 FP, full attic & basement, 2 porches, 2-car detached garage w/ 2 driveways, gas heat, 130-x-130-ft. corner property. $270,000. (516) 766-3098.

TENNESSEE — 78-acre hill farm. 4500-sq.ft., 5-year-old, rustic, 2-storey home w/ basement. Spring water, secluded, 5 mi. to town; near lake, 60 mi. E of Nashville. Ideal retirement. $125,000, $75,000 down. Owner financing balance at 10%. (214) 576-8702.

MILWAUKEE, WI — Dutch Colonial Revival (1907-8). 4 BR, unique oak-&-maple woodwork, mahogany library w/ built-ins, country kitchen, 1½ baths, modern mechanicals, art-tiled Vict. FP in DR. East side of town near school & park. (617) 628-2585.

FLUVANNA CO., VA — 1830s 2-over-2-over-2 house w/ beaded siding, English basement. Carved stair & fan window. On 77.8 acres near James River. Has basic plumbing & electricity. $89,500. Deborah Murdock, McLean, Faulconer Inc., 503 Faulconer Dr., Charlottesville, VA 22901. (804) 589-3083 or 295-1131.

HORNELL, NY — Hardware store, 1895. Original cond. 2-storey brick. Gleaming wood interior w/ 6000 drawers & cubbyholes. Exquisite maple flrs., counters w/ nail bins underneath. Adjacent: brick warehouse. Upstate N.Y., 1 hr. Rochester. Willing to sell interior separately. (607) 324-4880 after 5:30 p.m.

LOWELL, MA — Nat'l Register property known as Jonathan Bowers Round House, built of granite. Long spiral staircase leads to cupola w/ breathtaking view of renovated canal city of Lowell. George Zitis, Century 21 Heritage Real Estate. (617) 692-8598.

TRAPHILL, NC — Blue Ridge Mountains. Adapt interior of 1882 Traphill Bargain Store to suit your needs. 85% renovated: new roof & gutters, new electrical & plumbing systems. On 1 acre in picturesque Blue Ridge foothills, near Stone Mt. State Park. $27,500 w/ protective covenants. Anne Williams, Historic Preservation Foundation of NC, PO Box 9349, Hickory, NC 28603. (704) 322-8705.

MILWAUKEE, WI — 1904 2-storey frame, highest point in city. 2 mi. from Lake Michigan or downtown, fully insulated, solar heat, hot water; oak woodwork, flrs., 11-ft. buffet, French doors, leaded & bevelled glass, 9 rooms, finished attic, full basement, sauna, double lot, 8 flower beds, organic garden, 3-car garage. $47,500. 2915 N. 1st, Milwaukee, WI 53212. (414) 264-4752.

WOODSTOCK, NY — 100-year-old house. Small barn, shed. 5.2 acres. Beautiful mountain views. Secluded, quiet road. 2-storey, 4-BR house needs much work, including plumbing, heat, shoring up of wood flrs., staircase, beams, cupboard. 1800 sq.ft. Apple trees, birch & hemlock woods. Spring well. $100,000. (718) 768-6166 or (914) 679-8569.

GORE MOUNTAIN, NY — Adirondacks. C. 1793 farmhouse in original cond. w/ 2 working FP, brick oven, barn, 53+ acres w/ stand of pine. 4 hrs. NYC. Lake George & ski region. $58,500. Pearsall Realty, Wevertown, NY 12866. (518) 251-2422.

HOPEDALE, OH — 19 mi. from Steubenville, Ohio, & 60 mi. from Pittsburgh. Magnificent hist. home built in 1829. Mint cond., 12 large rooms, library, spiral staircase, full country kitchen, FPs, on 1 acre. Suitable for country inn. $69,000 — sacrifice. Sandra Hart Rand, 10 Ballingswood Rd., Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716. (201) 291-4903.

PRAIRIE DU SAC, WI — 25 min. from Madison. 1860 12-room Greek Revival. 3000 sq.ft., 3 baths, FPs, large entrance hall w/ open stairway, pine flrs., garage, garden, grape arbor, & energy efficiency. Restoration near completion. $84,500. (608) 643-6548.

SAN DIEGO, CA — Alphonzo Risley home, 1888 Vict. Rehabilitated. 2700 sq.ft. plus finished attic. City hist. site. 2 units w/ private entries. Quiet cul-de-sac; biking distance from zoo & downtown. Views of bay, Pt. Loma, Mexico, & park. Lots of redwood stickwork, natural woodwork inside. Secluded backyard, spa. $215,000. Owner, (619) 235-6398.

CARTHAGE, MO — C. 1900 Queen Anne. 2750 sq.ft., 4 BR, 2 baths. New insulation, wiring, exterior paint, roof, storms, new forced air furnace. Interior contains all natural woodwork, 2 double-mantel FP & large sliding doors. Full basement. Guest house included w/ property. $62,500. Steve Clark, 1003 Clinton St., Carthage, MO 64836. (417) 358-5312 or 358-1048.

CLAVERACK, NY — In hist. Columbia County. Eyebrow colonial, c. 1810, w/ barn & outbldgs. Fairy-tale setting w/ stream & small pond. House & barn in good cond. Private, but 10 min. to Amtrak in Hudson, N.Y. $145,000. (718) 499-1611.

CHICAGO, IL — Nat'l-Register Ropp-Grabill House. Italianate, c. 1860. 9 rooms, 5 BR. Orig. woodwork, windows, doors, porches. Gas FP. Large lot. Close to all transportation. Hist. Old Irving Park area. $229,000. Liz Wilson, Burton Realty, (312) 583-8445.

WOODVILLE, AL — 25 mi. from Huntsville, Ala. Classic farmhouse, c. 1918. 2400 sq.ft. 5 BR, LR, DR, large upstairs playroom, wood floors, lovely mantel w/ bookcase. New wiring, plumbing, paint. On 2 lots, ¾ acre total. Some cosmetic work needed inside. $60,000. Rt. 2, Box 18, Woodville, AL 35776. (205) 776-3176.

ITHACA, NY—"A.D. 1883" barn, imaginatively adapted to residential & studio space. One of the last upstate loose-hay barns. 11,000 sq.ft. in heart of Finger Lakes near Cornell Univ. 135 acres. Brochure available. $135,000. "A.D. 1883 Barn," c/o R. Contini, 124 Coddington Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850. (607) 273-5796.

JONESBOROUGH, TN — Built in 1885. LR w/ 8-ft. mirrored oak mantel, 2 BRs, DR w/ oak mantels, 1 BR/parlor w/ bay window, screened back porch, kitchen, laundry, bath w/ clawfoot tub, 2/3 acre. Easy access to Tri-City area. $58,000. Beth Boswell, 110 S. 3rd Ave., Jonesborough, TN 37659. (615) 753-8540.

CHELSEA, VT — 19th.-cent., 3-BR farmhouse on 20 beautiful, hilly acres. 4-stall barn. Outbldgs. Stream on property. Access to ski areas. Great views from up to 100 additional acres available. Mix of wooded & open land. 6% financing available: $48,000. (617) 734-5721.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CA — Completely restored Italianate, built 1887. 2 storeys plus finished carriage house. Beautifully detailed inside & out. Stained glass, brass lighting fixtures, 2 working FP. Widow's walk, whirlpool spa, fully insulated, full basement, large lot, zoned commercial. Perfect for B&B, office, or elegant living. $229,000. (619) 477-8031.

RESTORATION SERVICES

WHAT DO YOU NEED for your restoration? I will locate it for you. Barn boards, hardware, trim, whatever. No item too large or small. Send me your specs. Cost plus freight plus reasonable finder's fee. Include complete address & tel. no. The House Detective, RD 2, Box 69, Cincinnatus, NY 13040. (607) 863-4471.

FROM STRIP TO FINISH. Wayne Towle Inc. is greater Boston's acknowledged expert in fine architectural wood stripping, finishing, & fine period detailing. Historic & contemporary finishes are our specialty. References, portfolio, insured. (617) 738-9121.

PAINTER/CARPENTER available in Boston & vicinity. Call & book early! Interior work, ceiling repairs, sagging floors & staircases, hallways, & painting, etc. DownEast Decorators, E. L. Felch. (617) 282-1662.

HELP WITH YOUR OLD HOUSE: Our professional services can help you understand, restore, & enjoy it: architectural services for restoration & remodeling, technical & historical advice, troubleshooting, historical research, & more. Allen Charles Hill, AIA, Historic Preservation & Architecture, 25 Englewood Rd., Winchester, MA 01890. (617) 729-0748.

ONE-DAY WORKSHOPS in graining, gilding, glazing, marbleizing, & restoration. Small classes featuring lectures, demonstrations, & closely supervised hands-on instruction. For professionals & amateurs. The Finishing School, 1 Elm St., Great Neck, NY 11021. (516) 487-2270.

STENCILS — Victorian & country. Large collection of authentic English Vict. designs. Custom-made to fit your restoration. Original country designs great for quilts, floors, country furniture. Services include making stencils, workshops for groups or individuals, custom stencilling on buildings or fabrics. Mary B. Powers, 917 S. Park St., Kalamazoo, MI 49001. (616) 345-9295.

WOOD FINISHING PROGRAM. 10½-month course in furniture service including spot repair, color matching, wood technology, furniture repair, duplicating parts, stripping, finishing materials & techniques. Starting dates, 8/20/86 & 2/2/87. Dakota County Technical Institute, 1300 145th St., Rosemount, MN 55068. (612) 423-2281.

The Emporium

FOR SALE

PERSONALIZED STATIONERY — Your home illustrated on fine-quality stationery for letterheads, note cards, holiday cards, invitations, announcements, etc. Calligraphy available. Makes a thoughtful gift. Samples upon request. Vincent Lisi, Brownstone Graphics, 106 Berkeley Pl., Brooklyn, NY 11217. (718) 230-0510.

STATUE OF LIBERTY rivets. The only part of the statue you can hold in your hand! We made 25,000 for the restoration of "The Lady," we're selling the extras at cost; proceeds donated to charity. $1.75 each. Nancy Stein, 1711 Manse Jolly Rd., Anderson, SC 29621.

GAS RADIATOR, cast iron & steel w/ jewels, 4 tubes, 18 in. W, 34 in. H, $150. Ornate iron gate w/ latch, 44 in. W, 51 in. H, $150. Kasmark & Marshall leaded-glass shade, cherry pattern (red, green, white, & amber), 23 in. W, $325. Negotiable. Beth or Jim, (717) 362-3477.

FIREPLACE INSERT, cast iron, antique, very ornate. Angel on each side w/ cross & lions sleeping in field w/ sheep. Manufacturer: Sheppard & Co., N.Y. 38 in. W x 36 in. H overall, firebox 22 x 10 in. Make offer. (201) 363-7072.

TILE ROOF SHINGLES, flat clay. About 5000 pieces (15 squares) plus accessories. $1 each or best offer. Also, 2 antique oak fireplace mantels w/ bevelled mirrors & shelves, good cond., need refinishing. B. Seals, 512 S. 34th St., Middlesboro, KY 40965. (606) 248-6535 eves.

ARTS & CRAFTS FURNITURE: Limbert's oak dining set, c. 1920. Orig. owner, mint cond. Table, 42 x 36 in. w/ 3 12-in. leaves, 12 chairs w/ orig. upholstery, sideboard, court cupboard, & server. $6000. P. Briscoe, 127 S. James, Ludington, MI 49431. (616) 845-5888 days or leave message at (312) 852-5400.

OOPS! WE GOOFED. Fine quality oriental runner of Middle Eastern origin. Beautiful, but too wide for our staircase. 244 in. L x 31 in. W. Beige background w/ rust, blue, & green decoration. Never walked on! Send SASE for photos & price. Brenda Frazier, 127 S. Main St., Muncy, PA 17756.

SOLID BRASS CHANDELIER, turn of the century. Slightly erotic design w/ male figures. Approx. 3 ft. H, 3 ft. 4 in. across. Asking $3000 plus shipping. Bien, 2022 16th St. NW, Washington, DC 20009. (202) 332-1870.

CARVED WOODEN MOULDING, 4 in. x 100+ feet. Also: Boukara rug, finest quality, new, 7½ x 11 ft.; walnut oval gateleg table; mahogany Vict. library table & etagere w/ bevelled mirrors; & ball-&-claw tub. Reasonable prices. (201) 761-0038 eves.

ENGLISH BARN FRAME, 100% hand hewn, disassembled & stored indoors. Perlins measure 45 ft. 7 in. x 36 ft. 5½ in. 16 ft. from floor to top perlin. Some repairs needed; I can repair or sell as is. Completely restorable. I will help w/ re-erection. C. 1780. Beautiful home or business. Phil, (718) 740-0388 weekday eves.

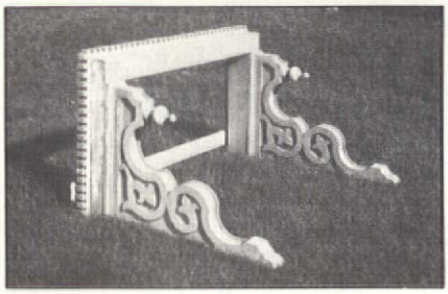
WOOD/COAL STOVE, Glenwood Home Grand 6-burner type (modern). Presently in use; works well. $850. Thomas P. Day, 1714 Kingstown Rd., W. Kingstown, RI 02892.

IMPORTED ENGLISH STAINED GLASS (windows & doors) & better quality English furniture. Direct from our stocks in Great Britain. Large selection. Regency, Vict., Edwardian. Write or call for sale announcements: Nottingham Gallery, 339 Bellvale Rd., Warwick, NY 10990. (914) 986-1487.

TELEPHONES, ACCESSORIES. Almost any style imaginable to 1900. Small, fully functional, old oak crankers, $69. Old steel wallphones, $69. 26-in. woodwalls, $129. Repro dial candlesticks, $29; old, $78. Original 1913 flashy Danish Frenchphones w/ original green cords, pinstriping, working, $55. Art Deco (1938), polished, FCC compliance, $18. Parts, walljacks, $1. (608) 582-4124, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. CST.

GAS RADIATOR, cast iron & steel w/ jewels, 4 tubes, 18 in. W, 34 in. H, $150. Ornate iron gate w/ latch, 44 in. W, 51 in. H, $150. Kasmark & Marshall leaded-glass shade, cherry pattern (red, green, white, & amber), 23 in. W, $325. Negotiable. Beth or Jim, (717) 362-3477.

GAS MANTLES, Weisbach no. 4, 5 dozen, $4 per mantle. Deldare ware, perfect cond.: teapot (breaking cover), sugar bowl & cream pitcher (scenes of village life), plate & saucer (ye towne crier). $500 for lot. R. L. Hunker, PO Box 178, Peninsula, OH 44264. (216) 657-2211.



PORCH CANOPY supported by decorative wooden brackets. Well-defined dentils. Exc. cond. Ready to hang & install new roofing. Canopy is 30 x 56 in., brackets are 25 x 36 in. $600. Jim, (603) 228-1246 eves.

KITCHEN STOVE & parlor stove, $100 each. Cabinets & misc. wood for shelves, from 1862 & 1870 farmhouses, $350 all. Front door from 1840 Greek Revival townhouse, oak, $350. Brass hardware: locks, doorknobs, etc., $200 all. Paul Cisco, Columbia Stn., Ohio. (216) 236-5610.

OAK-GRAINED TONGUE & GROOVE PINE, 1 x 6 ft., approx. 175 linear ft. Minor touch-up needed, free. ¾-in. square ceramic mosaic tile, 3 to 5 gallon pails full; mostly terra cotta color, some buff & green, $100. Roger, (617) 426-9720.

CLAWFOOT BATHTUB needs new home, $50. Jack Zimmerman, 330 S. Water, Loudonville, OH 44842. (419) 994-5165.

PEN & INK OF YOUR HOME for 6-x-8 matting, $40 plus postage. Send clear photo (5 x 7 or larger if possible) from preferred angle. Include address & phone number. Watercolors, oils, & larger sizes also available. Call for more information. No collect calls please. Monticello, Georgia. (404) 468-8629.

DINING ROOM FURNITURE, solid oak: small Mission buffet w/ plate rail, original finish still in good cond.; 4 Thomasville chairs, T-back style w/ leather seats; square extension table, 42 sq.in., 5 fluted legs, 3 leaves. Asking $1000 for all; will sell separately. Sharyn or Phil Mathews, (203) 456-1920 eves. or weekends.

INTERIOR NESTING SHUTTERS, all panel or panel & louver. Different sizes. Mostly fir, some Honduran mahogany. Fine cond., need stripping. Send SASE for measurements & prices (or willing to swap). Dale M. Hellegers, 234 Summit Ave., Jenkintown, PA 19046. (215) 884-9038.

CEILING FANS, 5, c. 1910, good cond., all operating, 52 in. W, 4 (walnut?) paddles. 3 matching w/ copper top housing, black housing, & "GE" emblem in aluminum. 2 unmarked, 1 w/ copper bottom & hub. P. Bernhardt, 4000 Cathedral Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20016. (202) 965-1902 (home), (202) 647-9616 (work).

EMBROIDERED TABLECLOTHS: 1 w/ lace trim, 68 in. round; 1 w/ plain edge, 52 x 72 in. Both floral patterns. $50 each. Mona A. Niemuth, R. 2, Box 320, Weyauwega, WI 54983.

CUSTOM HOUSE DRAWINGS. From your photo — a finely detailed pen-&-ink drawing of your home, historical landmark, or business. May be ordered reproduced on notepaper. Judy Hausmann, RR 2, Box 71, Bowdoinham, ME 04008. (207) 729-4327.

CAST-IRON RADIATORS w/ decoration, for steam system only. 12 available in various sizes. Also, 11 plain radiators, for use in 2-pipe heating system (steam or hot water). 2327 Daniels Rd., Ellicott City, MD 21043. (301) 465-7799.

ROSEWOOD PIANO, upright, 1878. Henry F. Miller no. 8904. Professionally restored in 1985. Exceptional instrument for discriminating collector or musician only. Photo, information, cassette. John P. Krauss, Piano Rebuilder, 16400 Upton Rd., Apt. 1, E. Lansing, MI 48823. (517) 339-3646.

PEDESTAL & CORNER SINKS & footed tubs. Have assortment, will deliver & can send photos. Dan Kelley, S.R. B, Box 397, Franklin, LA 70538. (318) 867-4405.

FRENCH HAVILAND CHINA for your Vict. dining room. 95-piece set for 12 in Albany, no. 107A, traditional Greek Key border in yellow & black w/ lavish gold trim. $1800 plus shipping. Mrs. Alden, 1718 Airport Ct., Placerville, CA 95667. (916) 626-5672.

GAS STREETLIGHTS, 2, w/ globes, $125 each, you pay shipping. Photo available on request. K. T. Kramer, 1114 E. Palmetto Ave., Melbourne, FL 32901. (305) 676-4024.

THE TWO BEST HEAT TOOLS FOR STRIPPING PAINT

That's a strong claim to make, but we stand by it. The OHJ editors have tested the heat tools available, and these two are still the best: the strongest, most efficient, longest-lasting heat tools you can buy. The Heat Gun and Heat Plate are designed to provide years of service on heavy-duty jobs. The other paint-stripping tools now available don't compare: They're not industrial quality, are made largely of plastic, have a lower heat output, and break down all too quickly.

Together, the Heat Gun and Heat Plate described below can solve your most difficult paint-stripping projects. Refinishing experts agree that, whenever practicable, hand stripping wood pieces is preferable to dipping them in a strong chemical bath. The Heat Gun and Heat Plate are the best overall tools for taking paint off wood surfaces. They make paint removal safe, quick, and economical.

Heat is a fast method because the paint bubbles & lifts as you go along. There is no waiting for chemicals to soak in, no multiple recoatings, and far less cleanup. Unlike stripping with chemicals, all layers of paint are removed in a single pass.

As for economy: Because these tools are long-lasting, industrial products, the initial expense is made up in savings on the $18 to $22 per gallon stripper that you're no longer buying in quantity. Even after heavy use, a worn-out heating element on a gun can be replaced by the owner for about $7.

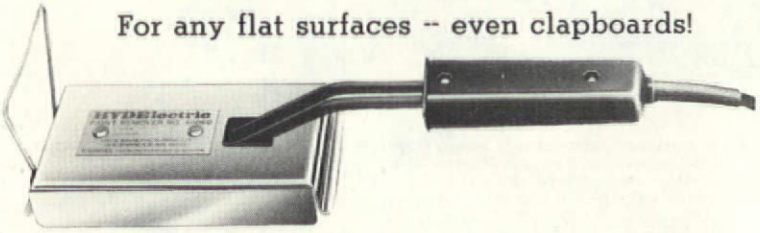
The Heat Gun

Ideal for moulded & turned woodwork!

Over 10,000 OHJ subscribers have purchased the **Heavy-Duty Heat Gun**, and discovered the best tool for stripping paint from interior woodwork. (A small amount of chemical cleaner is suggested for tight crevices and cleanup, but the Heat Gun does most of the work.) It will reduce the hazard of inhaling methylene chloride vapors present in paint removers. Another major safety feature is the Heat Gun's operating temperature, which is lower than that of a blowtorch or propane torch, thus minimizing the danger of vaporizing lead. **The Master HG-501 Heat Gun** operates at 500 to 750°F, draws 15 amps at 120 volts, and has a rugged, die-cast aluminum body — no plastics!

The Heat Plate

For any flat surfaces -- even clapboards!



After testing all of the available heat tools, the OHJ editors recommend the **HYDElectric Heat Plate** as the best tool for stripping clapboards, shingles, doors, large panels, and any flat surface. The Heat Plate draws 7 amps at 120 volts. Its electric resistance heating coil heats the surface to be stripped to a temperature of 550 to 800°F. The nickel-plated steel shield reflects the maximum amount of heat from the coil to the surface. And among the Heat Plate's safety features is a wire frame that supports the unit, so you can set it down without having to shut it off.

Both the **Heavy-Duty Heat Gun** and the **HYDElectric Heat Plate** come with complete operating & safety instructions, and are backed by The Old-House Journal Guarantee: If your unit should malfunction for any reason within two months of purchase, return it to us and we'll replace it.

The Heat Gun is available for only $77.95; the Heat Plate for only $39.95. (These prices include fast UPS shipping.) You can order either or both by filling out the Order Form in this issue, or by sending a check or money order to The Old-House Journal, 69A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217.

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69A Seventh Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11217
Telephone (718) 636-4619

The Emporium

INNS AND HISTORIC HOUSES

KEY WEST — Built in 1884, the Blue Parrot Inn is located in the heart of Key West Historic District. Clean, comfortable rooms w/ A/C & ceiling fans. Coffee & juice served every morning in our rose garden. Summer rates: $25 for 2 (shared bath), $35 (private bath). Major credit cards accepted, reservations recommended. 916 Elizabeth St., Key West, FL 33040. (305) 296-0033.

INNquest — computerized national directory of inns, B&Bs, lodges, & other special places to stay. Enjoy modern convenience when seeking vintage or otherwise unique accommodations. Detailed, up-to-date information for all of your lodging needs available toll free. Call (800) 221-INNS or (301) 864-7233, M-F, 10-6 EST.

SUSSEX COUNTY, NJ — Lakefront, authentic log lodge on wooded acre. For rent Sept. to May. Fully furnished, 3 bedrooms, stone fireplace in huge living room, eat-in kitchen, loft, screened porch. On cover of House Beautiful. (201) 948-3179 or (212) 546-6381.

THE PARMENTER HOUSE. Enjoy the domestic amenities of our lovingly restored Vict. B&B while benefiting from the clear mountain air of our idyllic lakeside village. Hiking, biking, canoeing, & swimming. Summer theater & free concerts in nearby Weston. Brochure. Box 106OHJ, Belmont, VT 05730. (802) 259-2009.

WASHINGTON, DC — Enjoy the charm of a European-style bed & breakfast in our Vict. home, furnished in antiques & turn-of-the-century artwork. We're well located, hospitable, & inexpensive. Brochure. Kalorama Guest House, 2700 Cathedral Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20008. (202) 328-0860.

TERRACE MANOR Bed & Breakfast. 1902 historic landmark w/ original stained-glass windows, rare wood panelling, & antique furnishings. 5 rooms w/ private baths. Full breakfasts. Passes to Hollywood's Magic Castle. 1353 Alvarado Terrace, Los Angeles, CA 90006. (213) 381-1478.

COASTAL MAINE — B&B in 1860 Nat'l Register home. Comfortable, gracious accommodations in antiques capital of Maine. Brochure. McGilvery House, Box 588, Searsport, ME 04974. (207) 548-6289.

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

SAUTTER HOUSE FIVE: Wallpapers of a German-American farmstead. Text, color/b&w photos of wall coverings, 1860s to 1916, Nebraska's pioneer period. Historically documented. 1983, 33 pp., paperback, 8½ by 11, $8.50 + $1.50 shipping. Bulk rate available. Douglas County Historical Society, PO Box 11398, Omaha, NE 68111. (402) 455-9990.

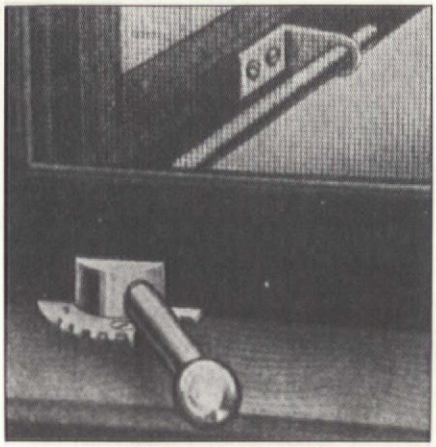
WANTED

CANVAS, pink-&-white-striped, ready-made privacy screens for porches. On rollers w/ cord pull to adjust height. Halls, 111 Mechanic St., Bradford, PA 16701. (814) 368-7930.

DOORKNOBS: I collect doorknobs, and would like to buy or trade for old unusual brass knobs w/ animal or human figures, colored glass, & hand-painted porcelain. Debbie Fellenz, 2216 Cherokee St., St. Louis, MO 63118. (314) 776-8363.

PROPERTIES IN NEED of restoration, any cond., for commercial or residential use, eastern U.S. DEK, PO Box 8, Germansville, PA 18053.

KITCHEN CABINETS, wall & counter, for turn-of-century house. Prefer glass-paned doors. Church hall, school, or laboratory cabinets fine. Need at least 15 linear ft. of counter cabinets, 14 linear ft. of 4-ft.-high wall cabinets. Dale M. Hellegers, 234 Summit Ave., Jenkintown, PA 19046. (215) 884-9038.



CASEMENT WINDOW HARDWARE, 1910. Advertised in Stickley's Craftsman magazine as "The Bulldog," this device allows window to be operated through storm or screen by way of knob & ratchet. Need to replace missing units w/ this or similar device. (201) 599-2966 noon to 3 p.m. EST.

RACKS for 1934 Monitor Top Refrigerator & small chimney-sized Hoosier-style cabinet. Sharyn or Phil Mathews. (203) 456-1920, eves. or weekends.

DOOR HARDWARE, late 1800s. Need complete & incomplete Carpenter Patent Locks of varying sizes, Rogers Patent Locks, silver & non-plated knob-&-key escutcheons, knobs, knob shafts, hinges (2- & 5-knuckle cast-iron butt), & closet locks. Must be in working or salvageable cond. Paul Cross or Joe McCormick, 201 W. 7th St., Columbia, TN 38401. Phone collect. (615) 381-3005, M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

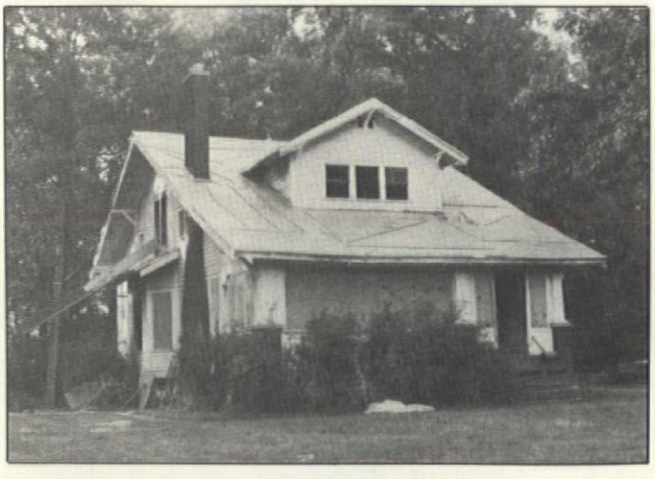
FASHION & WOMEN'S MAGAZINES: clothing, pattern, & general catalogs from 1850 to 1925. Condition not important if clothing pictures are clear. List title, date (w/ month), size, page no., condition, type of clothing featured, & price. Include SASE. Taylor, Rt. 2, Box 119, Redfield, SD 57469.

BREWERY, SCOUT, FAUST, DOLLS: any pre-Prohibition St. Louis brewery items (steins, matchsafes, glasses, etc.), early Boy Scout collectibles (badges, pins, games, etc.), memorabilia from Tony Faust Restaurant (early St. Louis landmark), & antique bisque dolls. Please send description & price. Oliver & Barbara Sappington, 8623 Commercial Blvd., Pevely, MO 63070. (314) 479-4779.

ANTIQUE TILES: I collect all types of American & European ceramic tiles of the Vict., Art Deco, & Art Nouveau periods; encaustic, printed, hand-painted, pressed, silk-screened, stencilled, air-brushed. Al Dawe, One 4th Pl., Brooklyn, NY 11231. (718) 624-5688.

TRADES AND SWAPS

DOORKNOBS & HARDWARE: We will trade doorknobs or other hardware you need. Send rubbings of what you need and what you have to trade. We have about 4000 knob sets available. We also buy singles or pairs of knobs. Grandpa Snazzy's, 1832 S. Broadway, Denver, CO 80210.

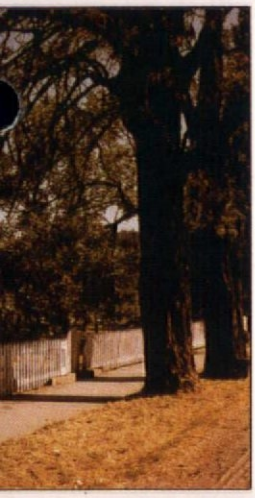


A fire was only the first misfortune to befall this Michigan Bungalow (above). The building was gutted, stripped of its exterior detail, and remodeled into a windowless expanse of vertical wood siding (top).

WE RECEIVED these photos from subscriber Steve Lomske of Northville, Michigan. In his letter, he explained how a proud but ailing Bungalow was reduced to a coffinlike box:

"I WAS DRIVING HOME from work when I passed this remodeling project. Being an architect and also a Bungalow restorer, I stopped and introduced myself to the builder. The inside of the house had suffered water damage due to a fire, which had ruined the oak floors. My first reaction was to restore the house, and I offered the builder my services. However, he had dreams of creating an 'expensive contemporary showplace' for future condo development. My opinion was if he was not going to restore, then he should save himself the money and time and simply bulldoze the structure in a day or so. Instead, the builder spent weeks tearing out the existing overhangs, oak floor, and ornate staircase; the house was stripped of history. As the 'after' photo [above] shows, the builder failed at both restoration and creating a 'contemporary showplace.' Another fine Bungalow bites the dust. The only identifiable item remaining is the chimney located toward the left of the roof."

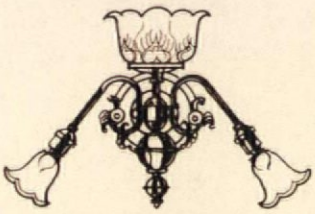
ATALOG



Where-To-Buy

Products & Services
for inside and outside
the old house:

GINGERBREAD TRIM
MANTELS
OLD-STYLE ROOFING & SIDING
CLAWFOOT TUBS
IRONWORK
STAINED & ETCHED GLASS
PARQUET FLOORING
PLASTER CEILING PIECES
STAIRCASES
PORCH SWINGS & ROCKERS



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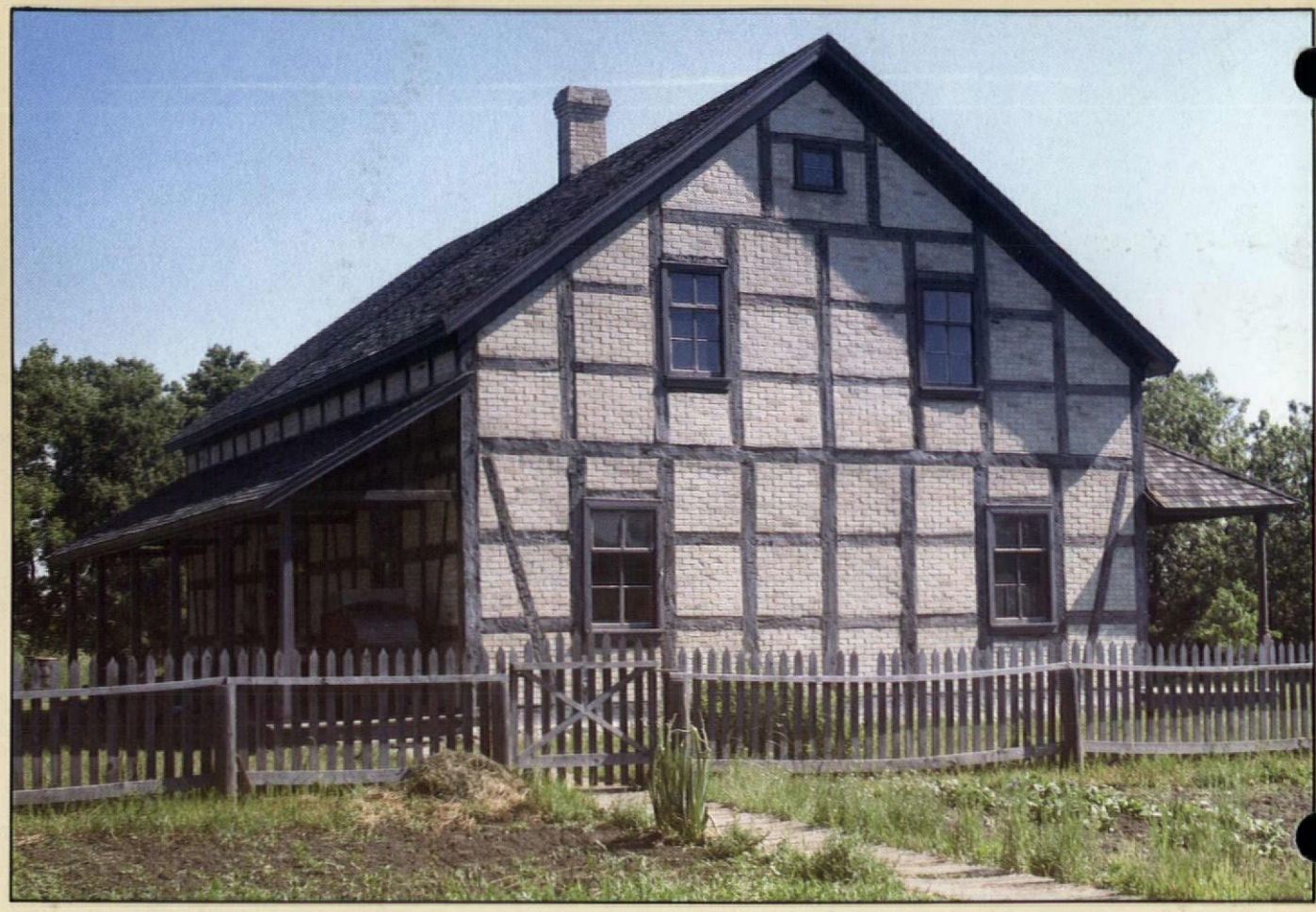
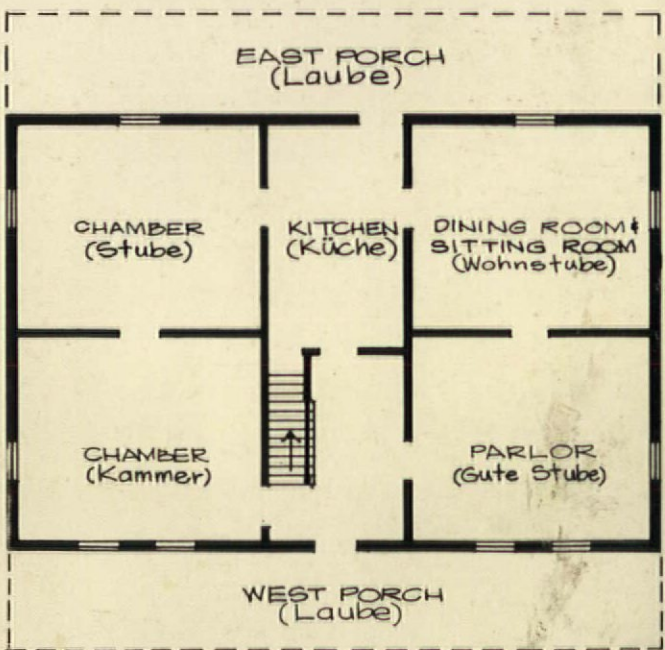


FACHWERK

Immigrants from northern Germany built hundreds of distinctive half-timber, or *Fachwerk*, structures in east-central Wisconsin. Developed in their homeland as a response to shortages of wood, this ancient building method incorporated a sturdy, braced framework of hewn timbers, nogged with mud and straw or brick. The walls were most often covered with weather-boards or plaster pargeting.

The houses were usually symmetrical. Inside, two rooms flanked each side of a central hall where separate stairways led to the second floor and basement. Wood-burning stoves provided heat, although some early houses had a huge, walk-in central fireplace, or *schwarze Küche*, used also for cooking, baking, and smoking meat.

The photo and floorplan show a house built by Friedrich Koepsell, a Prussian master carpenter and farmer, c. 1858. Now restored to its 1880 appearance, with a front porch (a subsequent addition), it is part of a German farmstead exhibit at Old World Wisconsin.



— submitted by William H. Tishler
Professor of Landscape Architecture
University of Wisconsin, Madison