

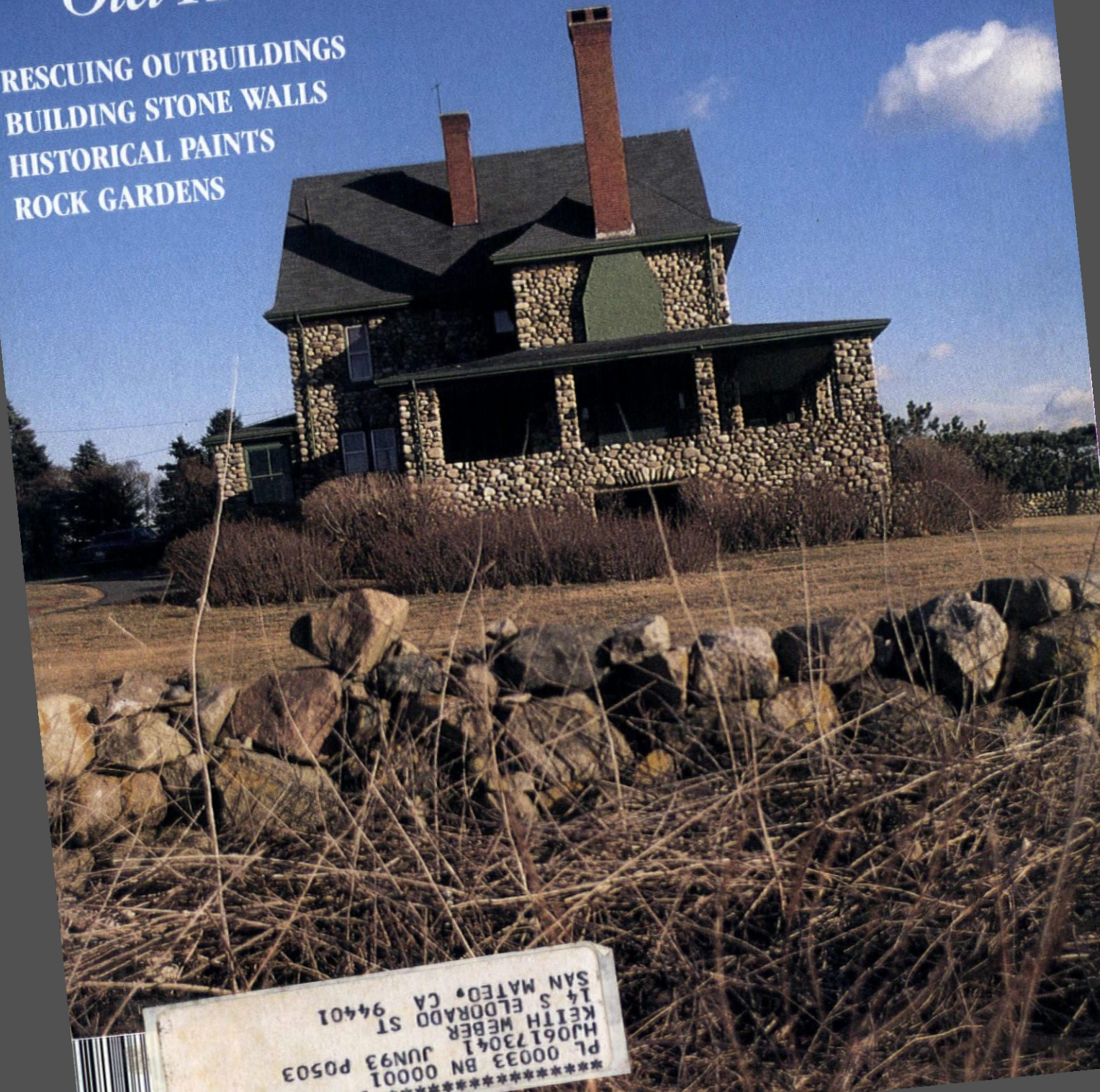
Old-House Journal

MAY/JUNE 1988 \$3.95

RESTORATION TECHNIQUES

Outside the Old House

RESCUING OUTBUILDINGS
BUILDING STONE WALLS
HISTORICAL PAINTS
ROCK GARDENS



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Cover: Turn-of-the-century beachstone house and rubble wall on the New England coast.
(Photographed by Jonathan Poore.)

An Outdoors Issue

Putting together a springtime issue in the dead of winter was a great tonic for us. Immersed in tumbling stone walls, period gardens, dilapidated outbuildings, and old-time house paint, the days seemed less grey.

This issue gave me more than spring fever. It renewed my enthusiasm: Restoration is not just about stripping wood and stopping yet another leak. It's about getting truly involved with the place where you live — beyond the house itself. Buy an old house, and interests expand.

In 1986, we ran two articles about period garages. Before that, I hadn't much noticed garages, but suddenly, there they were — here a garage made of stone, there a converted carriage house.

Now it's rock gardens. I hadn't remembered seeing gardens like those Janet describes, much less known they were an early-20th-century fad. But on a recent trip to Illinois, I visited a house in a post-Victorian neighborhood. Walking around back (past the Prairie-style garage), I spotted a pile of lava rocks around a small pool. Hmmm. . . . The owner informed me that her rock garden



was original, and that there were lots of them still around.

So, after 15 years, we can still break new territory. I'm amazed at where this interest in old houses has taken us.

Ghost Stories

Our official 15th-anniversary issue is September/October 1988. We'll celebrate by reprising a subject we've touched on only once before (in our 10th-anniversary issue).

The subject is previous inhabitants who haven't quite vacated. Ghosts, you might say. Others call it "a funny feeling."

Whatever it is, that funny feeling comes up in conversations with readers. Those who bring it up are not wacky. Pragmatic people describing the technical aspects of their current project casually mention the effect major work has on the "noises" or the "spirit" in the house.



I want your story. It doesn't have to be "spooky" — simple, unsensational accounts are usually the most absorbing, especially when they're compared and found to have common elements. If you've ever suspected you're sharing your house, or that memories linger a bit too substantively, this is your chance to tell a sympathetic audience. *Please respond by June 10:* OHJ, 69A Seventh Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11217. Thanks!

OHJ Grant Winners

Winners of OHJ's Preservation Groups Grant Drawing for 1987, chosen by lottery, are:

- ☆ **Waco, Texas:** Sanger-Heights Neighborhood Assn.
- ☆ **Findley, Ohio:** Historic Preservation Guild of Hancock County
- ☆ **Plainfield, New Jersey:** Plainfield C.A.N.
- ☆ **Des Moines, Iowa:** Sherman Hill Assn.
- ☆ **Winchester, Kentucky:** Historic Thomson Subdivision

The Gifford Park Association of Elgin, Illinois, earned the grant that goes to the group who sold the largest number of subscriptions (269). Congratulations — and THANK YOU to all the groups who participated.

The Revenue-Sharing and Grant Programs have been renewed for 1988. Any group, big or small, can sell subscriptions to OHJ for \$16 instead of \$21, a 24% saving. Your group keeps half the money collected (\$8 each, or \$96 for each dozen subs and renewals sold). Each participating group becomes eligible for one of six unrestricted \$1,000 grants.



This is, of course, a subscription-promotion program. But it's a win-win deal: Our money goes to help preservation groups, instead of into additional direct mail campaigns.

The deadline for getting in your subs is December 15. For details and subscription forms, write or call GROUPS, Old-House Journal, 69A Seventh Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11217. (718) 636-4514.

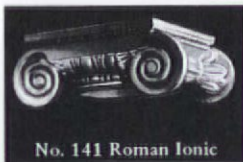
— Patricia Poore

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Struck By Lightning

Dear Patricia Poore,

It was with surprise and interest that I discovered Nantucket's "Oldest House," the Jethro Coffin House (ca. 1686) featured in your January/February 1988 article, "Colonial Houses." I thought OHJ readers would be interested to learn what fate has befallen this National Historic Landmark, owned by the Nantucket Historical Association since 1923. On October 1, 1987, the house was struck by lightning during a torrential down-

pour. The effects were devastating. Lightning traveled down the chimney to the electrical box, at which point a violent explosion occurred. The exterior portion of the famous "Horseshoe Chimney" was blown apart, and portions of the 17th-century chimney mass below were seriously damaged. Part of the roof was lifted off the house, and sills were bowed to a maximum of nearly four inches off the foundation. The entire structure was racked, with joints separated and rafters, purlins, and tie beams bro-

ken, cracked, and crushed. Many leaded casement windows, installed during the 1927 restoration, were blown out of their frames.

Documents indicate that the Coffin House, associated with two of Nantucket's founding families, has been fascinating island visitors since as early as the 1860s. Called the "Oldest House" since about that time, it has been open to the public every summer since 1897. While the structure has been stabilized to withstand winter snow loads and gale-force winds, it is endangered, with the potential loss of important historic fabric a distinct reality.

Now, as the restoration effort is undertaken, the Nantucket Historical Association wishes the public to know that their concern and support will be greatly appreciated. The two-year restoration will require financial support from all those groups and individuals who value the survival of historic structures on the American landscape and recognize the importance of preserving the precious few 17th-century structures which remain. Donations can be sent to "Oldest House" Emergency Fund, c/o The Nantucket Historical Association, Box 1016, Nantucket, MA 02554.

— Victoria Taylor Hawkins
Nantucket, Mass.

Dear 'Hooked'...

Dear OHJ:

This is for "Hooked" [September/October 1987 OHJ, p. 4], Robert C. Sampson from Charleston, West Virginia, who is enjoying his old bungalow. I, too, decided long ago that I am an old-house person. My first choice would be to restore a Victorian home, but since they are in short supply and beyond my budget, I settled for a 1921 bungalow.

My bungalow had been kept in excellent condition, but inhabitants along the way had painted over all of the beautiful old woodwork and made other minor changes in the

continued on page 6

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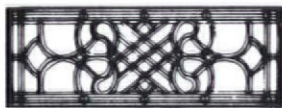
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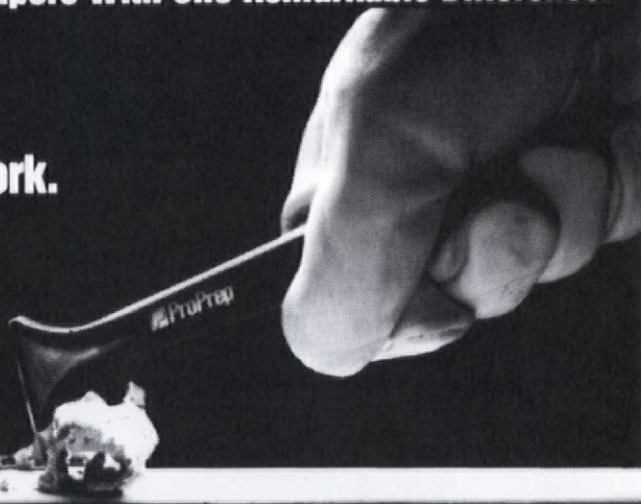
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10 INTERCHANGEABLE BLADES



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continued from page 4
 name of modernization. About two years ago, I undertook the project of completely restoring my charming old house. With the help of a very

talented "jack-of-all-trades," we completely stripped the paint from all woodwork and sent for restoration hardware (from advertisers in OHJ). We remodeled the bathroom and

kitchen. My modest bungalow is now a showplace. I love to watch the expressions on people's faces when they first walk in.

So yes, Robert, there *are* old-house ladies. What kind of help do you need?

— Elaine Woolley
 Reedley, Cal.



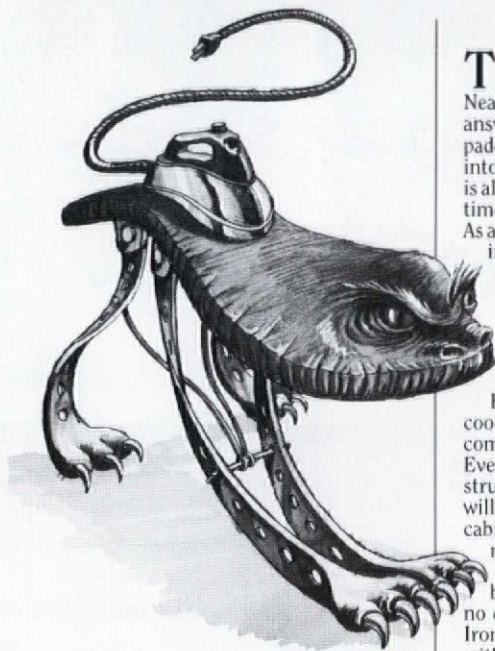
Horizontal-Plank House

Dear Editors,

I am writing in response to the letter from Mr. and Mrs. Louis Maire of Walkerville, Maryland ["*Unique Construction?*" in "Ask OHJ," September/October 1987 OHJ].

There is a fascinating and elegant horizontal-plank house located in Fulton, Texas (on the Gulf Coast). The house was built between 1874 and 1877 by George Fulton, a bridge builder and railroad engineer. The Fulton Mansion is a Second Empire
continued on page 8

Iron·A·Way Put The Beast In Its Place... In A Built-in Ironing Center!



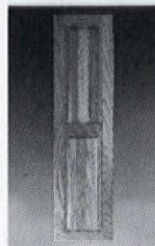
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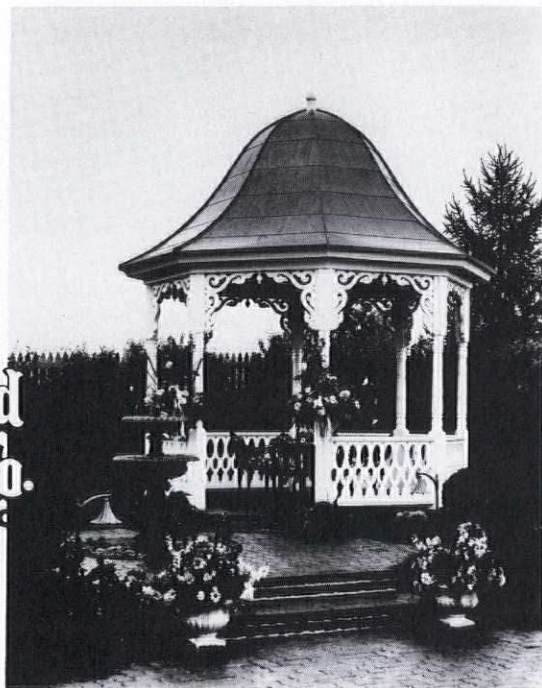
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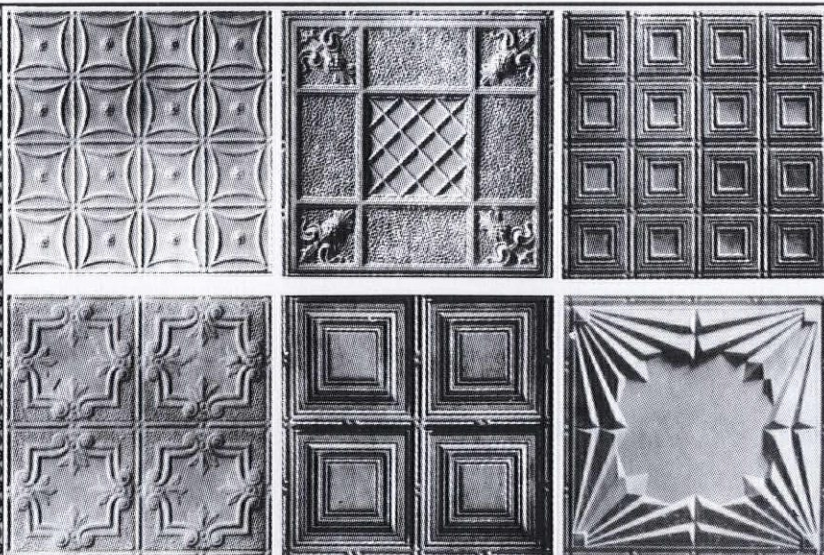
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LETTERS

continued from page 6

house with four floors and 6200 square feet of space. The home was equipped with central hot-air heating, gas lighting, and indoor plumbing.

The house is constructed of 1½-by-5-inch pine planks, stacked and staggered horizontally. This type of construction was used on both exterior and interior walls, ceilings, and floors. The unusually sturdy construction has helped the house withstand hurricanes that have hit this area since the house was completed.

The Fulton Mansion is now owned by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. It has been renovated and refurnished, and is open year-round for visitors.

— Paula Ussery
Fulton, Texas

A Quality Paint Stripper

Dear Patricia Poore,

Your article on stripping paint

[January/February 1988, p. 38] covered most of the tricks. I have come across a minor miracle that you didn't mention, however, and I'm happy to share my little secret.

Paint flecks and a colored haze remain in the pores of wood, and the amount of sanding required is laborious and ruins the patina. I came across a marine product that takes away the paint and haze without marring the patina — and it really does work.

Use a two-part teak cleaner, a boat product that will take off lacquer. On the East Coast, a common brand is Snappy-Teak Nu; on the West Coast, look for Teka. It costs about \$8 per gallon, retail. Part A is the cleaner/remover; dilute it 40% to 50% with water and put it in a clearly labelled spray bottle. Spray it on the stripped wood and you'll see the remaining paint melt almost immediately. I scrub it down with 3M pads (the beige ones with medium scratch).

This stuff will remove even milk paint and the old lead-based oil paints.

Part B is the all-important neutralizer. Use it immediately after light scrubbing, to avoid burning the wood. After you neutralize, rinse lightly with clear water and let the wood dry. Only a light sanding with medium-fine paper will be necessary.

— Karen Narsiff
Epifanes Yacht Finishes
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

The Joy Of PVC

Dear OHJ,

I am replying to the person who was so upset about the PVC lattice advertisement. I was delighted to find that lattice was made out of PVC, because we are fighting termites in our area. I hate to have the lattice under our porch up four inches from the ground — not only for the look of it but also because animals

continued on page 10

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continued from page 8

tend to wander under there. With PVC, I can fit the lattice from the ground to the porch exactly, and not worry about providing easy access for termites. I believe it will be indistinguishable from wood lattice at a distance of several feet. We are very eager to find a supplier near us (western suburb of Chicago).

Keep up the great work!

— Kathy Baker
Lombard, Ill.

More Joy Of PVC

Dear OHJ,

You recently received a lot of flack for advertising PVC lattice, and I thought you might appreciate a positive comment on the product. Our firm, Robert G. Neiley Architects, and particularly Robert G. Neiley himself, is primarily involved in and known for historic preservation. When we first heard of the PVC lattice, it was

the joke-of-the-day in our office. However, a certain residential-addition project required just the qualities PVC lattice offers. We gave it a try and are extremely happy with its performance and visual appeal.

— Janet Porter Shotwell
Boston, Mass.

'Bad' Old Neighborhoods

Dear Old-House Journal,

As I read OHJ, I've noticed from time to time remarks referring to the avoidance of old houses in so-called "bad neighborhoods" (most recently in "Tale Of Two Families," January/February 1988 OHJ). Two years ago, my husband and I were looking for an old house to call our very own. We found that in the "good neighborhoods" the old houses were either too remuddled or too expensive. So we became daring, and looked in the most notorious part of Portland: Inner Northeast. Wow! What

a treasure trove! The area has one of the finest clutches of old houses in the city. We found a beautiful Victorian for the relatively *big* price of \$32,000 — most Victorians here go for a lot less.

Granted, living in the most notorious part of Portland was initially scary. We also had to deal with the double whammy of people not understanding our attraction for an old house, coupled with "You live *WHERE?* Oh, my God! Aren't you afraid!?"

However, we have found a certain specialness in the community around us . . . people who love their old houses enough to *fight* for them rather than run away. It is a true lesson in courage and determination. For our wonderful Victorian neighborhoods, we have organized protest marches, community forums, meetings with both state and local offi-

continued on page 12



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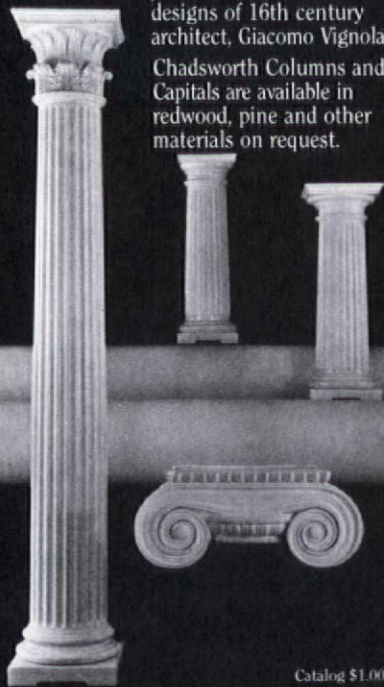
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LETTERS

continued from page 10

cial, and citizen crime patrols. We are sending out a clear message: We want our neighborhoods back!

Amazingly enough, the effort has been paying off. We are seeing a gradual turn-around for the better. Granted, "bad neighborhoods" may not be for everyone, but they need not be simply written off either. I will say, however, that one cannot be faint of heart and still be an urban pioneer — for it is a true challenge and test of spirit, just as pioneering was in days of old.

— Karla Cimino
Portland, Or.

[OH] started life as a brownstoner's newsletter in the early '70s, when "back to the city" was still a revolutionary concept, and whole neighborhoods were "red-lined" — named for secret delineations on a map at the bank, marking where mortgages

weren't given. Those "bad" neighborhoods have become the "good" ones. Preservation of old houses has led to and continues to lead to preservation of neighborhoods. Good luck! — ed.]

Free OHJs in Maryland!

Dear Ms. Poore,

In my rural family practice, patients are welcome to take magazines from my waiting room home with them, leaving the newest copy. Magazines such as *Organic Gardening, Sail, Ebony, Southern Living, and Colonial Homes* are usually the first to go. *Sports Illustrated, Maryland, Sporting News, Time, and National Geographic* are never taken home. Before your switch to your new format, *Old-House Journal* was always left to sit in increasing stacks. Now, even the newest copy doesn't stay long. I have resorted to one subscription for

home and one for office so I get to read it, too. Thank you for your articles and magazine features, especially "Vernacular Houses" (of which the lower shore has several types).

— R.C. Shoemaker, M.D.
Historic Remodelers of the
Lower Shore
Pocomoke City, Md.

The Cold Old House

Dear OHJ,

We moved into our 1904, two-story home on December 28, and used 500 gallons of heating propane during the next month. (We later learned that the previous owner had said she wouldn't spend another winter in that cold, old house.) With a young family to raise, we couldn't see spending so much money for heating bills, so we set out to make

continued on page 14

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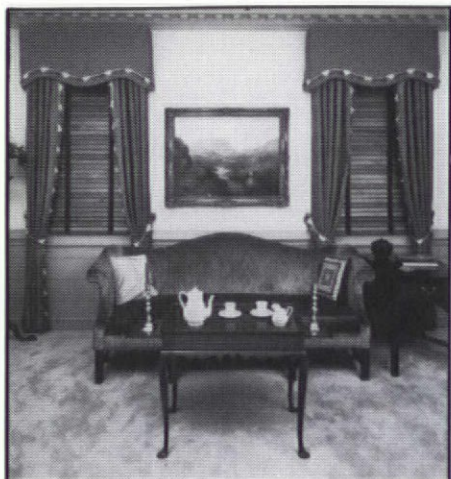
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LETTERS

continued from page 12
improvements that would cut our heating costs. We had insulation blown into walls and attic (there was none), and carpeted cold floors. We had two new flues built — something we considered a must for an older home in which wood will be used for fuel. We put in a wood circulator, centrally located, and a wood cookstove in the kitchen, both equipped with heat reclaimers. Instead of lowering high ceilings, we installed ceiling fans to pull down the warm air. A large humidifier now adds four to five gallons of moisture to the air daily (a necessity for hot, dry air).

We now have a very warm, energy-efficient home which suits our lifestyle and work schedule, and allows us to spend our money on other things. We feel that woodburning is

not for everyone, as it requires careful monitoring; but for us, it is the perfect solution to our energy needs.

— Dale & Dianna Callahan
Morrisville, Mo.

fortitude can withstand the critique of others.

— Martha Stancil
Mantachie, Miss.

Intestinal Fortitude

Dear OHJ,

THANK YOU for your article on the Editor's Page of the November/December 1987 OHJ [*"You Paid Money for This Dump?"*].

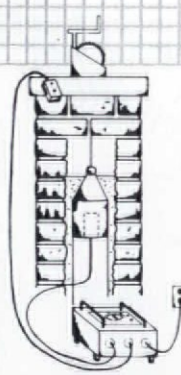
Many times we have received the same reactions as you have described in your article. As I read it, I could remember the same looks of astonishment on the faces of friends and relatives who have seen our "dump." I plan to mat and frame the Editor's Page, as a constant reminder to me that determination and intestinal

Roofing Source

Dear Editor,

As a new advertiser with Old-House Journal, I would like to follow up the "Tile Tips" letter in the Jan/Feb 1988 OHJ, and point out that The Roof Center has an extensive supply of new and used slate and tile roofing, as well as a complete selection of roofing tools. We would be glad to help any of your readers who send us a dimensioned sketch of the item they need.

— Seth L. Warfield
President, The Roof Center
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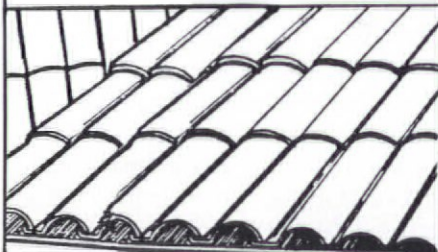
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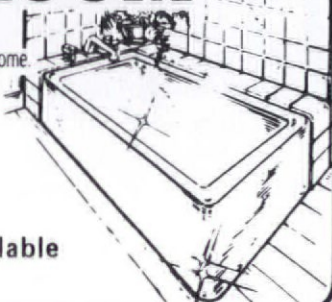
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Neo-Colonial Colors

Q My house was built in 1914 by "Slidin' Billy" Watson, the highest-paid vaudeville performer of his time, and the inventor of what later became Michael Jackson's "moon-walk" (the "slide" in "Slidin' Billy"). I found this out one day when there was a knock on my door and Billy's great-great-granddaughter was on my porch, visiting the area from Pbilly and hoping to find out about Billy. We have since become friends, and she provides fascinating clippings and snippets of information about that time in history — a history my house is part of. Buying an old house can indeed lead to unforeseen adventures!

I think, thanks to information the Journal has provided, that this is a Neo-Colonial house. There are many houses in Freeport which resemble this one — I guess the architect was pretty popular. But we cannot trace his name. I'd be interested in hearing from anyone who might have ideas about the original floorplan.

By the way, while Victorian houses are not supposed to be white, I've seen this house in various other colors, and this combination (which I inherited and maintained) looks the best.

Oh, I almost forgot: After Slidin', this house was owned by Nazis, and

they painted "Liebe der Fuhrer" in the garage. Being Jewish, and very much a social activist, I have left it up, just as a reminder. After all, they lost the war, and I won the house!

— E. Sue Blume
Freeport, N.Y.

A Neo-Colonial the house is — not close enough to any earlier style to be called a Revival, but definitely exhibiting that post-Victorian interest in classical details! The front bay and the cove brackets are Victorian holdovers, but other details are from the Georgian-Federal-Classical tradition: the strong gable returns in the dormer, the three windows that allude to a Palladian window, the pedimented doorway, the Ionic columns.

The house dates after the Victorian era, but its transitional character allows a lot of leeway in picking a color scheme. Full-blown late-Victorian polychromy wouldn't be appropriate, but you could make a case for a subtle multi-color paint job. In keeping with the classical details, "colonial revival" colors — white, cream, pale grey, pale blue-grey — could be used. Your existing white with dark-green trim could very well have been the original colors. That combination, common for country houses during most of the 19th cen-

tury, enjoyed a popular revival in the 'teens and 'twenties.

Canvas On Cement

Q I have read John Leeke's article on canvassing the wood floor of a porch [May/June 1987 OHJ]. My question is, can the same or a similar process be used to canvas a cement floor?

I have a medium-sized, enclosed breezeway-type porch with a cement floor. The floor is 45 to 50 years old, with some cracks from frost heaving. Most of the surface is quite smooth, but part is very rough. I would appreciate any help you could give me!

— Janet McQueen Hauser
Lake Bluff, Ill.

A John Leeke replies: "Acrylic adhesives would glue the canvas to the concrete effectively where it is smooth but not where it is rough. If there is movement in the cracks, it could break the paint film and let the canvas deteriorate. It could work, but the question I can't answer is, 'How long will it last?' I recommend against it.

"You should first improve the drainage of rainwater away from the exterior edge of the slab. Once any movement in the cracks has stabilized, widen the cracks with a chisel and fill them with acrylic-modified cement-patching compound or epoxy grout. Basement-waterproofing companies and some masons know how to use these materials.

"If the rough surface is due to powdering, it can be stabilized with a few treatments of water glass. Water glass is a silica-and-water solution that may be difficult to find — try industrial or chemical suppliers or rural-area farm stores (it's used to store and preserve eggs). Try this out (on a small area first): Thin the solution with water. Vacuum the surface, then brush or pour on the solution. Spread it around so it soaks into the dry spots. Let it dry and harden for several days; repeat if necessary."

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RESTORER'S NOTEBOOK

Keim Paint

Discovering calcimine paint on your ceiling is almost grounds for putting your dear old house on the market, because the stuff is so atrociously hard to remove. Not removing it, of course, means sure failure of any covering.

Or does it? If you want to use latex or oil-based paint, then yes, the lime-based calcimine must be scraped entirely off. But you can paint directly on calcimine (or on unpainted plaster) with German-made Keim paint. This paint was developed over a hundred years ago to reproduce the clear colors of fresco; it bonds chemically with lime, creating a surface that breathes (a plus for areas with condensation problems) and colors that don't fade.

Keim paint is available from S. Wolf & Sons, 771 Ninth Avenue, New York, NY 10019. It is not cheap, but it sure beats scraping a ceiling!

— Dale M. Hellegers
Jenkintown, Penn.

[The problem with calcimine in old houses, of course, is that it has usually already been painted over and the whole mess is failing. No paint will "glue" flaking paint back to the ceiling. But this product has a welcome application in painting bare plaster or for special finishes. — ed.]

Electrolux vs. Wallpaper

Dan and Kathy Roberts' letter on wallpaper removal [*Restorer's Notebook, Nov/Dec 1987*] was one of the best tips on the real nitty-gritty of wallpaper removal — the necessity of removing everything from the room that may be in the way, and of slitting the wallpaper.

But they missed the easiest way of removing wallpaper: Use the spray bottle (designed to blow paint, insect repellent, or whatever) which comes with an old Electrolux vacuum cleaner. Hitch up the hose to the exhaust of the vacuum cleaner so that it blows out. Fill the bottle blower with

warm water, put it onto the nozzle of the vacuum cleaner, and turn on the switch. It produces a fine spray of water, easily controlled, which soaks a massive area of wallpaper at once — and with few drips.

I've used the Electrolux sprayer since childhood to remove wallpaper. It has been effective on multilayered paper and single-layered vinyl, as well as on painted wallpaper (after it's been effectively scored). I've never tried a steamer because this method is so quick.

Incidentally, after one has stripped a few walls of wallpaper, as I have, the temptation to paint or wallpaper over old wallpaper leaves forever. It is so much easier to strip down walls (especially if you're dealing with old plaster), repair that, and then go on from there — you'll never again layer one decor above another.

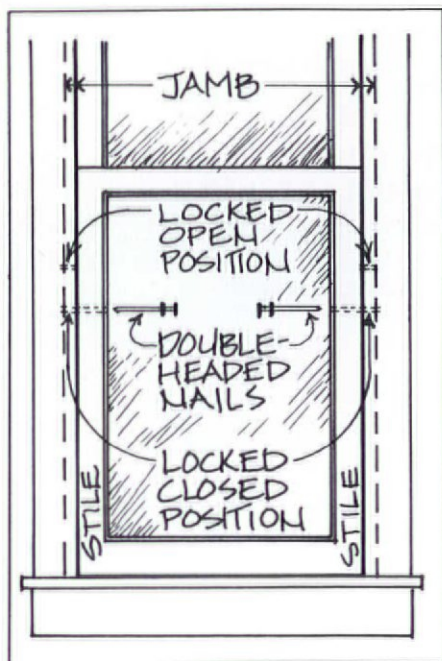
I've had Electrolux sprayer bottles kicking around my house for most of my 50 years, so I have no idea if they're available today! But the bottle is just a totally low-tech sprayer that's attached to a mason jar: a basic sprayer assembly activated by plopping your finger over a hole to create a vacuum.

— J.A. Williams
Bronxville, N.Y.

Two Heads Are Better

When I bought my 1890 house four years ago, it still had its original cast-iron ornamental sash locks. I freed up the sashes, replaced the broken sash cords, rehung the weights, and stripped mounds of paint off the old sash locks. Within a couple of months, a burglar pried up on a bottom sash with the nose of a shovel. The shovel gave him enough leverage to snap in two the pretty little cast-iron sash lock, and he raised the sash and walked right in.

I didn't have the heart to replace those old sash locks with something stronger, but they obviously needed reinforcement. I didn't like the looks of those gizmos that lock your win-



dows shut with a key-operated lock, and the sash pins I saw advertised in catalogs were too big and brassy for my house, and too expensive (considering how many I'd need). So I bought a small sack of 16d double-headed nails, primed them with metal primer, and painted them the same color as the window sash. Then I drilled a hole through the side of each stile of each movable sash — the hole being only slightly larger than the nails, so that the nail has to be gently coaxed in or out. When pushed in, the double nail heads are barely noticeable. Now I can pin the window shut, or pin it open a few inches during the summer to let air in — and keep burglars out. And best of all, I still use the old sash locks.

— Greg Ahman
Seattle, Wash.

Iron Your Tiles Away

The vinyl-tiled floor in the bedrooms of my house was in sound condition, except for several cracked and indented tiles where heavy furniture had rested. From previous experience, I knew that trying to pry tiles loose with a putty knife would severely gouge and splinter the under-

lying plywood. And I was afraid that the concentrated blast from a heat gun would damage the surrounding good tiles.

The solution? I "ironed" each individual tile I wished to replace. First I laid a piece of fabric on the floor. Then I slowly moved an iron, turned to its lowest heat setting, over one tile. In about two minutes, I easily lifted the entire tile with a wide putty knife, leaving the subflooring intact. I repeated the process on the other damaged tiles.

— David Lee Drotar
Castleton-on-Hudson, N.Y.

Low-Tech, High Shine

While working on my 1924 house, I developed a low-tech method for polishing small items of brass or bronze hardware (screw heads, sash lifts, door knobs). First, I remove the tarnish, grime, and paint specks with the fine edge of a commercially available sanding pad. Second, I finish polishing with an old toothbrush dipped in a commercial brass and copper cleaner ("Twinkle"). The toothbrush easily gets into all the nooks and crannies, and the hardware can be rinsed under the faucet. Make sure all items are dried and buffed with a soft cloth, and that fingerprints are completely removed. Third, I carefully place or insert screws and pointed objects into a large piece of foam packing material (the stuff that's in TV or computer boxes). This allows easy removal to a workshop or outdoors for the final step: spraying with two or three coats of clear lacquer.

— Richard C. Crisson
Middletown, R.I.

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

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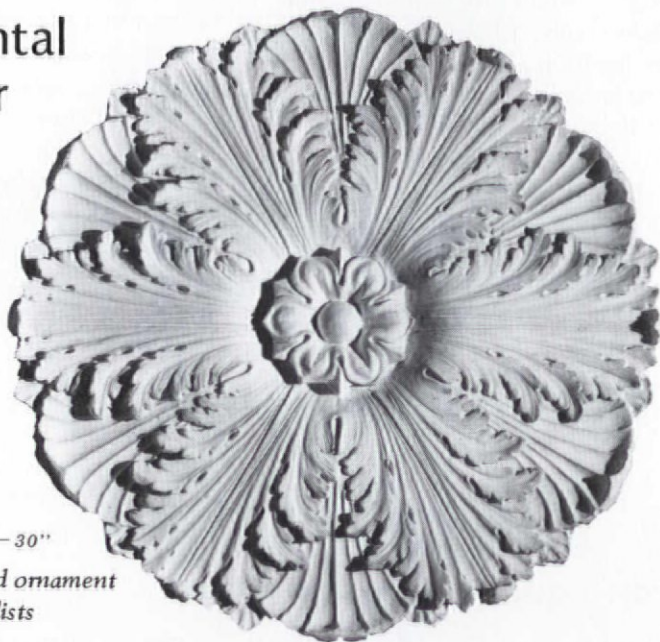
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six years later, was such a hit it was said to rival Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in popular acclaim. In fact, it was called "one of the most successful books in the annals of the pub-

lishing business" in *The Real David Harum*, a second book about David Hannum, written by Arthur T. Vance and published in 1900.

The house was also immortalized by film and, later, radio. In March 1934, Will Rogers played David in the movie "David Harum." The radio show, entitled — you guessed it — "David Harum," was aired daily by the NBC network.

Through the years, the David Harum House, as it came to be known, was a private home, a tourist home, an antique

shop, a restaurant. For years, the building lay vacant and neglected. Seven years ago, the Stone family came to the rescue: Ed, at the time a supervisor at Smith Corona Marchant, and Connie and their sons — two “theirs” (Eddie, then age 11, and Keith, age 8) and two “hers” (Danny, then 17, and Dennis, age 21 and then serving in the army).

Once Upon a Time...

Homer is a homey small town with broad, tree-lined streets, a fine assortment of 19th-century houses, and a relatively unspoiled Victorian business district. In Westcott's novel, the town is called “Homeville.” Nearby Syracuse and Rochester are “Syrchester.” Preble, the town just north of Homer where David Harum's kids were born, is “Peeble.” Westcott makes David Harum accuse Aunt Polly of being as narrow-minded as “them seven-day Baptists over in Peeble,” who were so narrow, David said, that 14 of them could sit beside each other in a buggy-seat and not cover the cushion.

According to biographer Arthur T. Vance, the real David Hannum was a character himself. His love of horse flesh was so “all-absorbing,” he'd swap horses 15, even 20 times per day. If Hannum ever got the worst of a horse-trade, says Vance, “the event has not yet been recorded.”

If there *was* anything Hannum liked more than a good horse trade, it was a good joke. According to Vance, “Hannum was one of the first who saw the possibilities of money-making in the Cardiff Giant [the notorious 19th-century scam], and he secured an interest, in partnership with Dr. Westcott, father of the author of the novel. When Dr. Westcott died, Hannum tried to sell his share, but up to the time of his death was sole owner of the famous humbug.” The golden rule of this horse-swapping philosopher: “Do unto the other fellow what the other fellow 'ud like to do to you, and do it fust.”

David Hannum began without a cent in the world, proceeded to make a fortune, and in Vance's words, died “poorer than a church mouse.” But that's getting ahead of

the story.

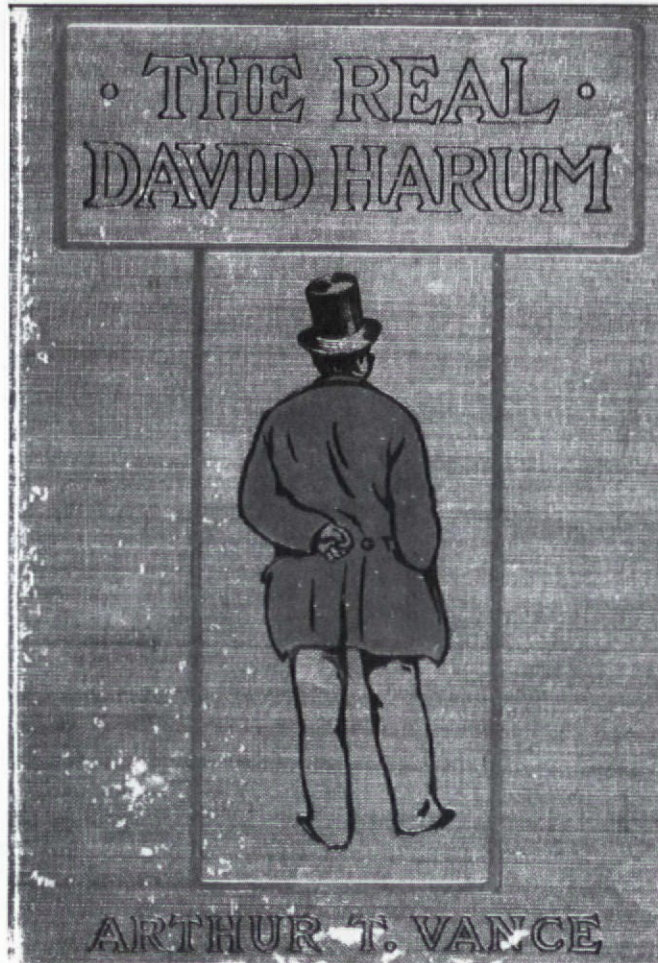
The Stones

Seven years ago,” Ed Stone says, “I said to Connie, ‘We should find another house to restore.’ We were living in a ranch house at the time. But we were no strangers to renovation. We'd fixed up two old houses before: an old farmhouse in McGraw and a Victorian in Cortland — both in New York State. It was the end of May, in 1981, when

we saw in a newspaper ad that there was an open house at the ‘historic David Harum House,’ and I said to Connie, ‘Let's go take a look.’

“The house was in sad condition. Nearly 25 years without paint had taken its toll on the exterior. And you can imagine what the interior was like after eight years of being boarded up, not to mention the plumbing. Still, there was so much interest in the dilapidated, 4,700-square-foot Federal that 160 locals filed through that day, mostly curiosity seekers. Some said it would take forever to paint and paper. Others swore it'd cost at least \$150,000 to restore the place.

“The price was a firm \$55,000 — an awful lot of money, it seemed, for a handyman special. But by that time we were hooked. We decided to sell our nearly new camper and other belongings to raise some cash. In several



The real David Harum was David Hannum, a flamboyant banker, farmer, and horse trader.



weeks, we had sewn up the deal.”

The Restoration

One of David Harum's mottoes was “A reasonable amount of fleas is good for a dog. They keep him from brooding on bein’ a dog.” A motto for the Stones during their early days at the David Harum house could have been “An unreasonable amount of repair work is good for a family. It keeps ’em from brooding on what they’ve gotten themselves into.”

First there were the plumbing problems. “When the water was turned on,” Ed remembers, “it seemed like there was water, water everywhere. Eventually, we managed to fix all the leaks, and proceeded to repair the drainage system.”

The Stones’ second major discovery was that the house consumed energy the way a hog consumes corn. “This we discovered,” says Ed, “when our first heating bill arrived.

“We decided that since much of the plaster was poor, it’d be best to gut out most of the exterior walls and insulate. If we’d had elaborately moulded plaster, we would have opted to blow in insulation and use vapor barrier interior paints and vinyl wallpapers for more protection. But that wasn’t the case.

“That first winter we completed insulating and drywalling 11 of the 14

rooms. We’d drywalled 275 linear feet of exterior walls and 230 linear feet of interior walls! We also replaced five ceilings with drywall and used greenboard in the baths.

“Where re-plastering was required, we’d remove the old plaster, wet down the wood lath with a water spray, and re-plaster with Gypsolite or Structo-lite, finishing up with skim coats of joint compound.

“Connie did most of the joint compounding, and when all was said and done, she’d used sixteen 60-pound pails of joint compound — nearly 1,000 pounds! The kids used to complain about all the white joint compound blotches, wonder-

ing ‘Why can’t we be like normal people and have a small, *finished* house?’

“In order to insulate behind our Asher Benjamin-style circular staircase, we had to cut two small entry openings — one on either side. Then we entered the walls.

“Fortunately for me and the house, Connie was small enough to squeeze in and scale the full 20-foot height inside the wall. She’d climb the wall the way a mountain climber would — one foot behind her and one in front — and I’d hand her the insulation. That alone took a couple of weekends.”

Ed says all that insulating was well worth the time and effort. The Stones were able to downsize their boiler from 428,000 to 240,000 BTUs. Their heating bills were halved.

Then there was the chimney. “The chimney looked good on the outside,” says Ed, “but below the roofline, it was an accident waiting to happen. The second year, I

had my older boys remove the old bricks. The plan was to use concrete blocks below the roofline and bricks from there on up. I installed a new footing, and began laying block, awfully glad my oldest boy, home on leave from the army, was around to help. However, he disappeared when we were working on the first floor and didn’t return till we were on the roof. Later on, his girlfriend brought me a peace token — a bottle of wine — but it was little consolation at the time.”

As for the exterior of the house, it was, well, a mess. Ed says it took Connie three weeks to fix the broken windows, reputty them, and repair the few storm windows that were



Hannum, pictured here in driving costume, made a fortune but died “poorer than a church mouse.”



David Harum Homestead. Homer, N. Y.

there. He ended up making eighteen new wooden storms, and Connie set the glass or plastic and primed and painted them.

"During our first year," remembers Ed, "it seemed like whenever we tried to paint the exterior it would rain. Finally, we had a mild, dry week in late November, and Connie managed to paint the front of the house just before the first snowfall.

"The next summer we both spent our vacation stripping paint from the left and right sides of the building. We figure we removed paint from about 2,000 square feet of clapboard. Then we sanded and primed each section to keep moisture out. At times, there just weren't enough daylight hours, and we had to get out the spotlights. Fortunately, the weather improved the second year, and we were almost able to finish.

"The metal roof, probably terne plate, was rusted but basically sound. Wherever possible, we sanded and primed it with a red primer and finished up with silver Rust-o-leum. The rear section had a badly worn asphalt aluminum coating, and we re-coated it with a fibrated asbestos aluminum coating. Connie did much of the roof work, and at times I didn't want to look when she was near the edge."

Then there was the widow's walk. Says Ed, "This old structure measured about 2½ feet high by 4 feet wide by 11 feet long

and was so badly rotted I was afraid it'd blow right off in a storm." Measurements were taken, and it was rebuilt as close as possible to the original dimensions. All components were made from pressure-treated or preservative-treated wood, and original joinery methods were used.

And let's not forget the interior. Fourteen rooms were rehabilitated and re-wallpapered, as well as three bathrooms.

The End

Misfortune had befallen the occupants of the David Harum House once before, and for awhile it looked as if history were about to repeat itself. According to biographer Arthur Vance, during the Civil War, farms were selling cheap, and Hannum snapped up a lot of them. Land continued to go up, and he could have sold at an enormous profit, but he made the one big financial mistake of his life and kept on buying. Prices dropped to nothing, and David Hannum lost almost everything, except his house. "It seemed to be," wrote Vance, "that henceforth everything was against him; in thrifty central New York, poverty is always looked upon as a misfortune and sometimes a crime."

The Stones had been at the David Harum House for two years when Ed was laid off. Says Connie, "We were

about half done with the house. We thought we'd have to give it up.

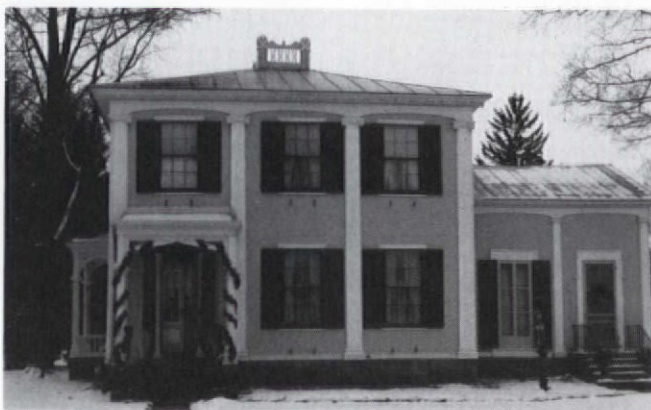
"Then we started to do some thinking and came up with the idea of turning the place into a bed & breakfast. We ran some ads and did pretty well that first year. We also took in senior citizens who needed a home but not continual medical care. That saved the day for us. Now Ed's back at work, and the bed & breakfast is a big success."

As David Harum might have said, the Stones are "as busy as a hummin' bird with two tails," with their b&b, the three seniors that share their home, and all the restoring still to be done. The Stones figure that, all told, they've already put more than 6,000 hours of work into the house. "People used to tell us that we'd probably never finish or go broke or both," says Ed. "Apparently, we've proved them wrong."



photo by Bob Dunn

Ed and Connie Stone and Ed, Jr., in 1981, one week after buying the David Harum House.

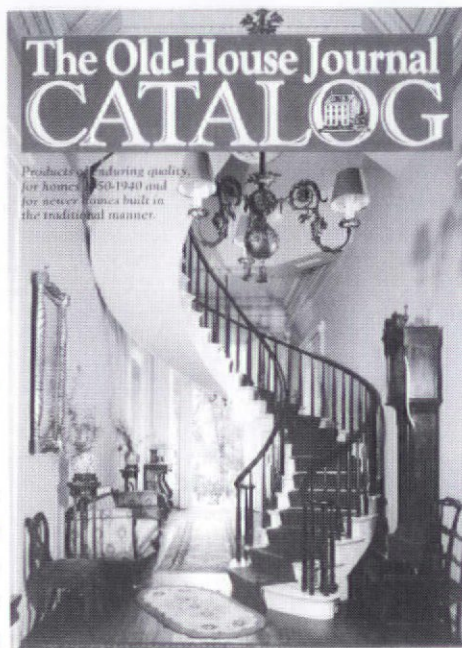


If the novel *David Harum* had never been written, this would be just another handsome Federal house.

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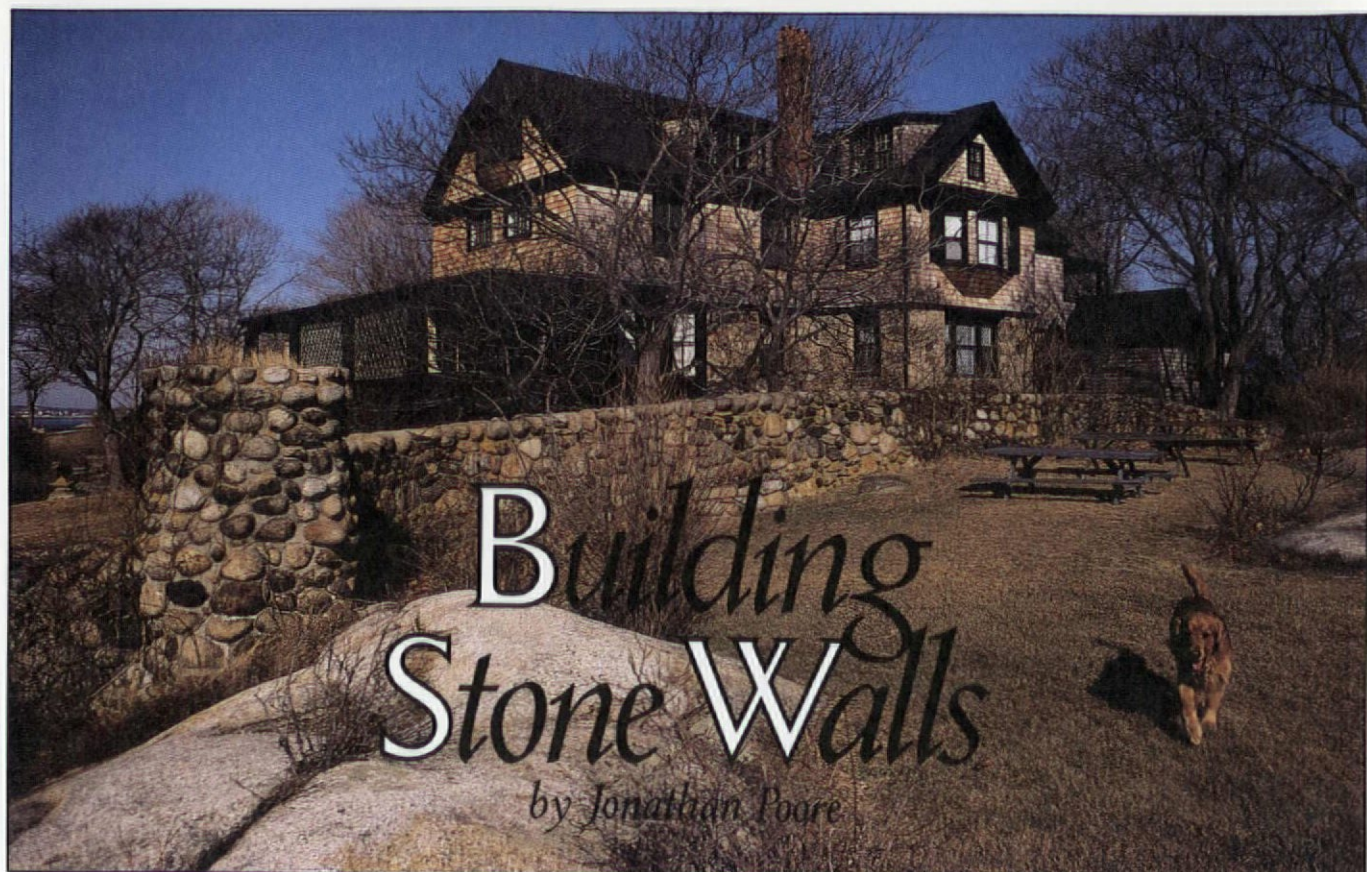
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... AND MUCH MORE!



photos & drawings by Jonathan Poore

I was inspired to write this article by the granite walls of Cape Ann, Massachusetts — my home grounds. They're everywhere: tumbling fieldstone boundary walls in the woods, dressed yet whimsical walls of orange granite blocks cut in hexagons, and all manner in between.

Nothing, in my opinion, enhances the landscape around an old house like a stone wall. The wall is a timeless construction as soon as it's built, and it appears more historic, or more appropriate, somehow, than the house itself.

The stone walls of Cape Ann are remarkably consistent in their adherence to OHJ's golden rule, "To thine own style be true." In contemplating your stone wall project, remember that a rough fieldstone wall looks best with a rustic farmhouse, or an Arts & Crafts Bungalow. A classic Georgian or Tudor Revival house would do better with a dressed wall. Take your cue from existing stonework on your property or your neighbors' (look at foundations, pillars, and other walls).

Types of Rock

There are some things you should know about stone, such as the three basic categories of rock:

IGNEOUS ROCK is the hardest, densest rock. Formed by the cooling of molten rock, it doesn't have clearly defined layers or cleavage planes — which makes it relatively difficult to split. Granite and basalt are examples of igneous rock.

SEDIMENTARY ROCK is generally softer and less dense than igneous rock. It's formed by the consolidation of sed-

iment layers, and this layering provides cleavage planes along which the rock will split cleanly. Sandstone, limestone, and shale are common sedimentary rocks.

METAMORPHIC ROCK is igneous or sedimentary rock that has been changed by heat, pressure, and chemical reaction. Slate, schist, gneiss, and marble are metamorphic rocks. Generally, metamorphic rocks are layered and have more prominent cleavage planes than those of igneous rocks, making them relatively easy to split.

Sources of Stone

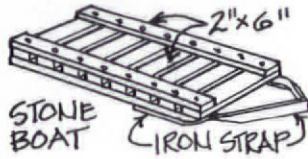
If there are not enough stones on your property, consider a few unusual sources before you resort to purchasing stone. Salvaged stone from abandoned cellar holes, old stone walls, or other stone structures is one option. Try highway construction sites where blasting is being done. You can also check U.S. Geological Survey maps of your area for active or abandoned quarries and gravel pits. Quarries often generate enormous slag piles of discarded stone; it's considered inferior for commercial use, but it's generally more than adequate for building a stone wall or foundation. You may be able to get stone from the above sources for the cost of hauling them away.

Buy from a supplier if you're looking for cut and dressed stone. You may have to go that route if you need stone of a particular type and color to match existing stone. However you get the stones, make sure that when you unload them at the site, you deposit them as close as possible to their final location — it beats lifting and hauling them around.

How To Build a Dry-Laid Stone Wall

Tools & Equipment

For yourself: heavy leather or abrasive-coated work gloves, sturdy boots with reinforced toes, goggles, and a strong constitution backed by plenty of patience. **For dislodging and moving stones:** 5-ft. or longer crowbar, pinch bar (with curved end), wood planks and wood blocks, spade, mattock/pickax, wood or metal rollers (1 or 2 feet long by 1 to 4 inches in diameter), and garden cart or wheelbarrow. **For moving large stones:** four-wheel drive vehicle or tractor, logging chain, and stone boat (a wood platform dragged behind the vehicle). **For splitting and dressing stones:** 15- to 25-lb. sledgehammer, 3-lb. sledgehammer, 3-lb. stone-mason's hammer, metal wedges, an assortment of cold chisels. A rockhound's gad-py bar, which is designed to be hammered into cracks, can also be useful for splitting stone. **For layout:** wood stakes, chalk line, plumb bob, line level, mason's level, and a true plank on which to lay the level.

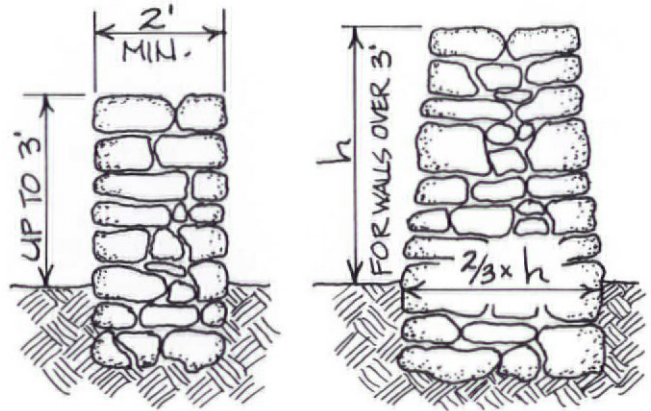


Layout

One of the first considerations is how high the wall will be. Height affects the width required, as well as the depth you'll need to excavate for a footing. For a low wall a foot or so high, it isn't necessary to do any excavation, although

the wall will settle slightly into the topsoil. For higher walls, it's best to remove at least the topsoil; for walls over three feet high, the footing should extend below the frost line. A wall up to 3 feet high should be at least 2 feet wide. Walls higher than 3 feet may be tapered toward the top, but the width of the base must be $\frac{2}{3}$ of the height.

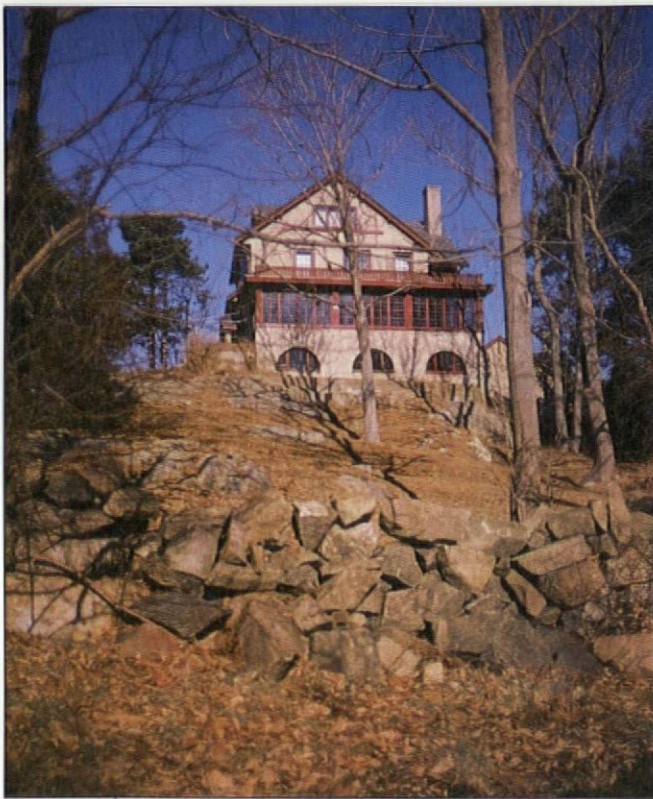
Once the height, width, and length of the proposed wall



have been determined, it's possible to calculate how much stone is needed. Multiply the height (from the base of the footing to the top of the wall) by the width (average width if the wall is tapered) by the overall length of the wall. The product is the number of cubic feet in the wall. There are 27 cubic feet in a cubic yard, so divide the number of cubic feet by 27 to determine how many yards of stone you'll need.



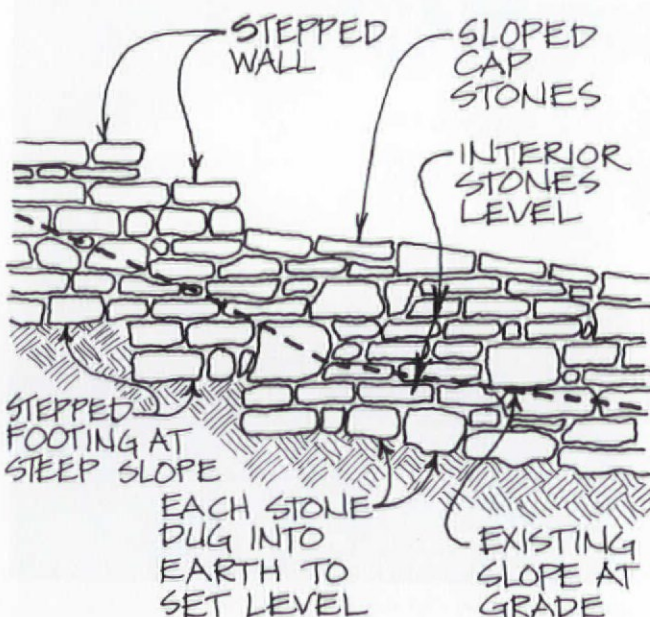
Although not particularly stable, this picturesque pile on the ocean can be easily relaid as it tumbles: The wall is low and the stones are small.



An Arts & Crafts house and a naturalistic yard of boulder outcroppings and rubble walls.

Another major consideration in laying out a wall is the terrain. If the wall will be climbing a gentle slope, its profile can follow the slope; but the footing and main body of the wall should be laid level, with only the capping stones following the pitch of the slope.

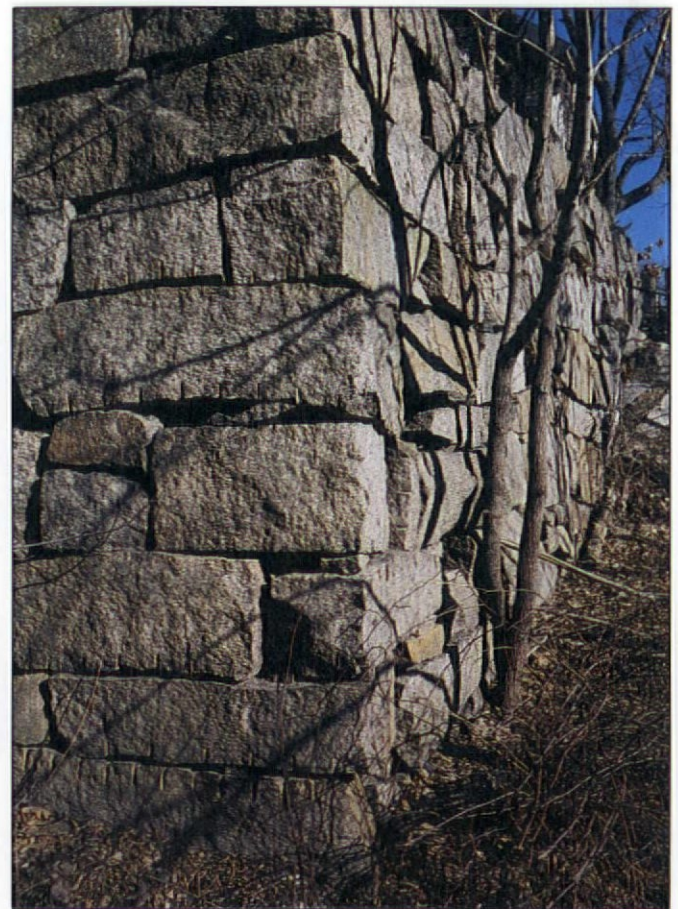
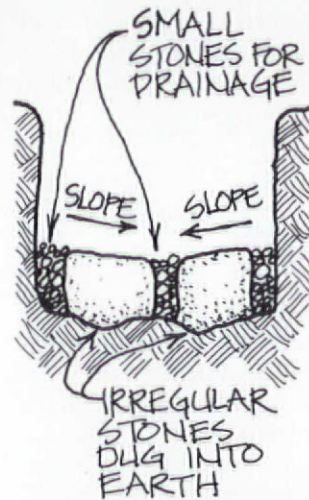
A steeper slope will require stepping the footing and the wall so that each section is level. If the footing stones and stones within a wall are not laid level, the freeze/thaw cycles will cause the stones to gradually shift down the hill — and the wall will begin to fall apart.



Stake out the location and dimensions of the wall. Stretch string between the stakes so that it's level (use the line level). The string can be moved up the stakes as a level guide for each course. Be sure to remove underbrush, stumps, and saplings which may disturb the wall with their roots as they grow.

Construction

Even though the footing course will never be visible, it's very important to lay it carefully so that the wall will stand for a long time to come. Use the largest, most irregular stones for the first course. Large stones will be more stable; the most irregular side can be dug into the earth, with the flattest side facing up as a surface on which you can continue to build the wall. Leave a couple of inches of space between each stone, and fill in these spaces with smaller stones and gravel for drainage. One technique for insuring stability is to slope each course to the center of



Hand-drilled holes for splitting are apparent in this high, stable wall of cut granite.

the wall so that gravity pulls the stones down and in toward the wall's center. (This is especially important for field-stone or rubble walls.)

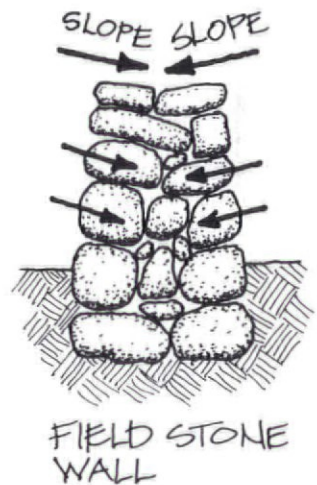
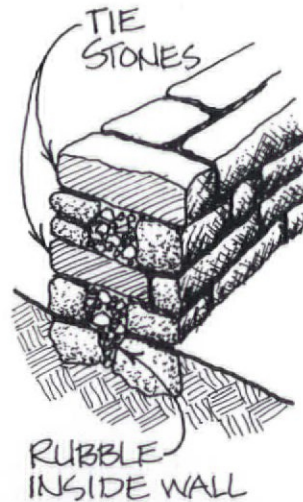
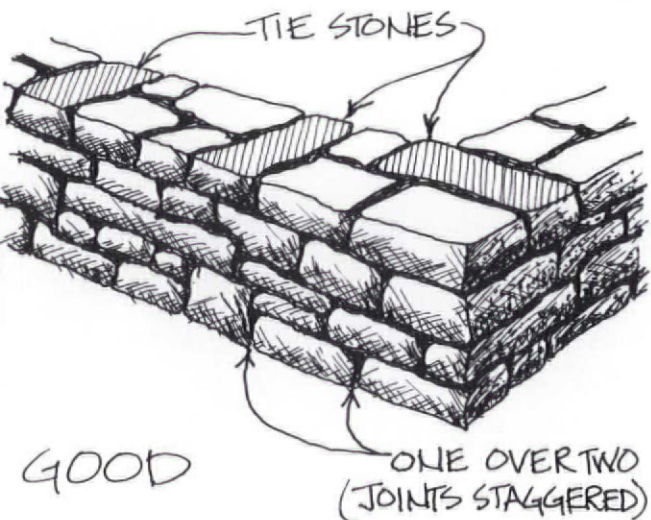
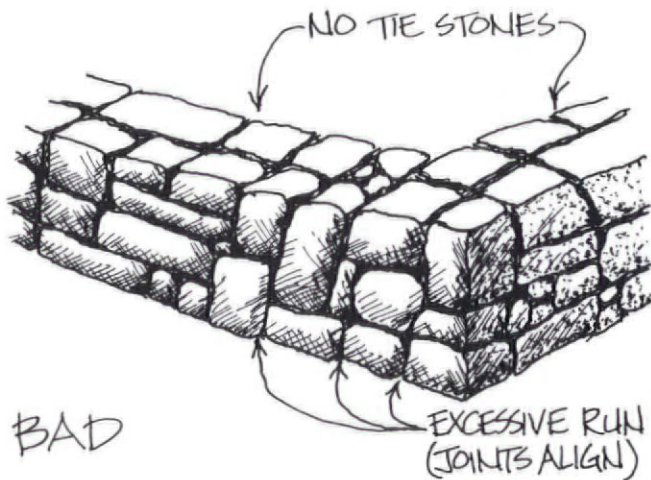
Each stone should be placed following the one-over-two principle: each stone bearing on at least two others in the course below. This ties the wall together, making it more stable. Ideally, no vertical joints should line up from course to course, either internally or on the face of the wall. If too many of them line up — if the wall has 'too much run' — the wall will be weak at those points, and may fall apart from freeze/thaw cycles or from being bumped.

Place a tie stone every 6 to 8 feet. This large stone, placed across the wall from one face to the other, bonds together the two sides of the wall. Tie stones should be placed in each course. When laying a rubble or fieldstone wall, place tie stones more frequently, because these types of walls aren't as well bonded as a wall made with flat stones.



A rough-dressed wall that has excellent chinking.

If you are forced to use a mixture of good stones and small rubble, put the rubble on the inside of the wall, with the large stones keeping it in place. Some small stones may be used as wedges or chinking to help level up larger stones and keep them from wobbling. It's always best to try to shift the larger stones around, or even dress them a little, to get them to set firmly, rather than rely too heavily on chinking (see sidebar, "Splitting & Dressing Stone," page 32). Chinking may loosen and fall out in time.



A picturesque and tumbling boundary wall of dry-laid fieldstones.

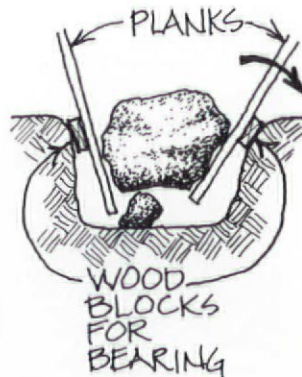


A mortared wall of uniform fieldstones.

Set large stones with their best edge out and on display at the face of the wall. Try to save the largest, best stones for the top course, corners, and finished ends. These locations have the most surfaces showing and require large, heavy stones for stability.

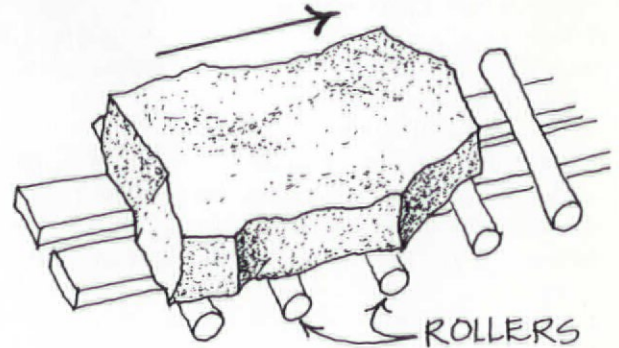
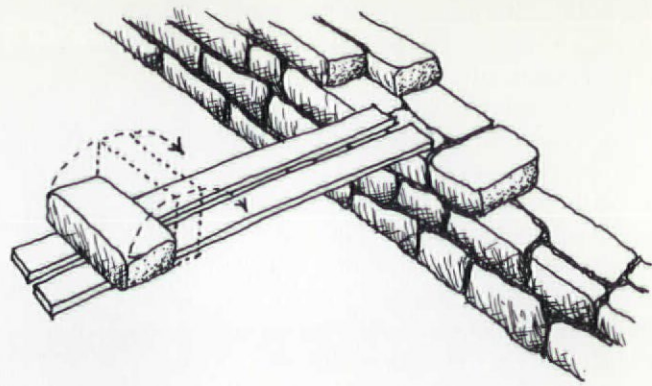
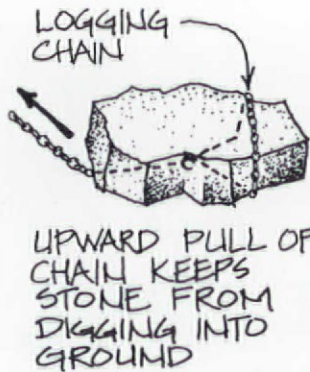
Moving Large Stones

The use of simple levers, ramps, and rollers can ease the task of dislodging and moving large stones. To dislodge a partially buried boulder, dig out around it enough to get two opposing planks (levers) under it. Alternately pry up one side, then the other, and drop stones or wood blocks under the boulder to keep it from settling back into the hole. When the stone is free



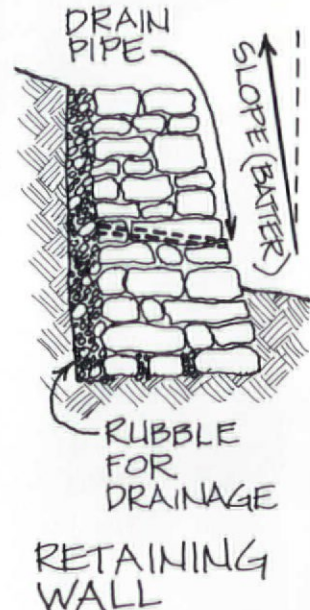
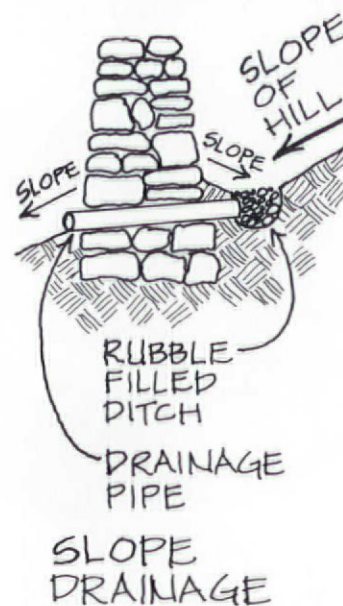
enough, slip a plank all the way under it; now you have a ramp on which the stone can be rolled up or hauled out with a chain attached to a winch or vehicle.

Once the stone is on level ground, it can be towed for a short distance with a logging chain, or rolled onto a stone boat and dragged. To get the stone to the top of the wall, use a plank ramp and flip the stone end over end, up the ramp, or roll it up on rollers.



Drainage

Good drainage is important for the stability of a stone wall. Running water can undermine a wall; trapped water, if it freezes, can knock a wall apart. When backfilling a completed wall, slope the earth away from the wall on both sides. If the wall is built on a slope, provide a drainage ditch as required.



Retaining walls also require good drainage, especially between the wall and the earth that's being retained. Retaining walls should also lean into what they're retaining with a sufficient slope, or "batter."

Mortared Stone Walls

A mortared wall is far more difficult to build well than a dry-laid wall. Harder to maintain too, because the very rigidity of mortared stone walls frequently results in a peculiar fragility: Any thermal expansion or contraction, any heaving from frost will begin to break mortar joints. And any cracks or voids where water can enter the joints will lead to more and more spalling with each freeze/thaw cycle.

To build a mortared wall which will last, the first step is to be sure the footing extends below the frost line and is well drained — following the same principles of drainage for dry-laid walls. Techniques for laying a mortared wall are also the same as those for a dry-laid wall: Large irregular stones first, one over two on succeeding courses, tie stones at regular intervals, and the best, largest stones for the top course.

Ideally, all of the open spaces in the wall should be filled with mortar, so water can't enter any space and get trapped. One way to insure a neat, thorough job is to bed the stones in mortar first; then come back after the wall is finished and point the joints. This way, you don't have the problem of damaging the finished joints of lower courses as you set stones above them. Cracks or disturbances in the bedding mortar during construction are far less problematic than damage to finished mortar joints. Another advantage to this approach is that you can then point the wall from top to bottom; pointing from the bottom up invariably means slopping mortar on the finished joints below.

Pointing separately from bedding also allows you to tailor the strength of the mix to your specific needs. Using a weaker mix (softer mortar) for bedding helps allow for movement in the wall. A typical bedding mix can consist of 1 part portland cement, 2 parts hydrated lime, and approximately 12 parts sand; for a pointing mix, you can try 1 part cement, 2 parts lime, and about 9 parts sand.

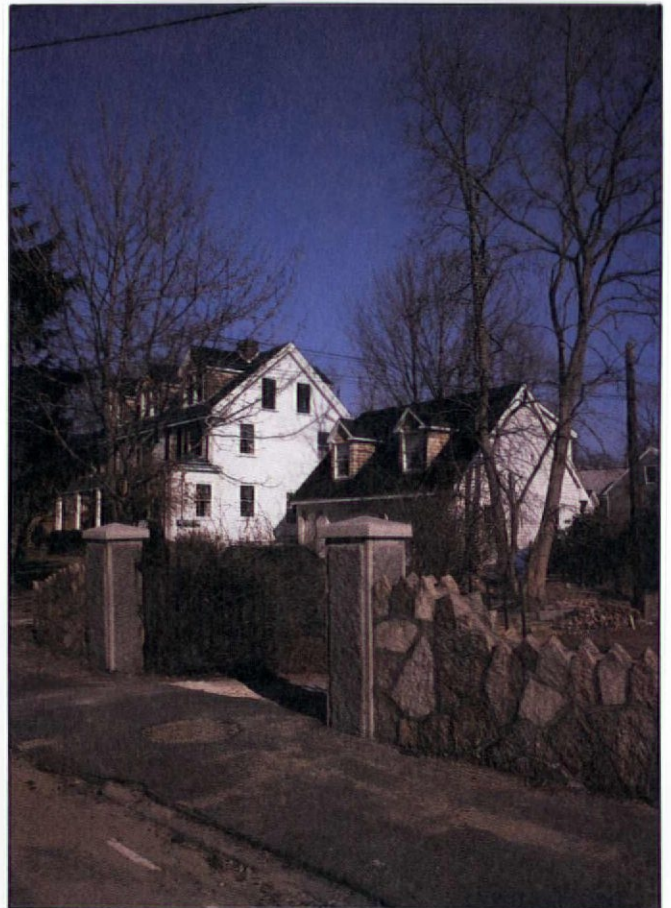
Be sure to wet the stones before bedding them, especially porous stones. Leave the joints recessed back about an inch, so there will be enough room for you to point them later.

Pointing

Wet the stones before pointing. Be sure to pack the joint completely so there are no voids. Let the mortared joint set a little before attempting to dress it. It's easier to dress mortar which has become slightly crumbly. Wide joints may have to be built out in several layers so the mortar doesn't slump out while it is still wet. It may be useful to lay a plank under the area being pointed so that any mortar



A mortared wall that decoratively combines rounded beachstones and a single middle course of cut blocks of orange granite.



Irregular stones with a decorative cap meet formal piers.

which gets dropped can be reused. Be sure the finished joint will shed water — any water that can collect on a lip or enter a joint will eventually cause spalling. Try to keep the wall moist for about five days: Cover it with plastic or wet it occasionally (or do both).

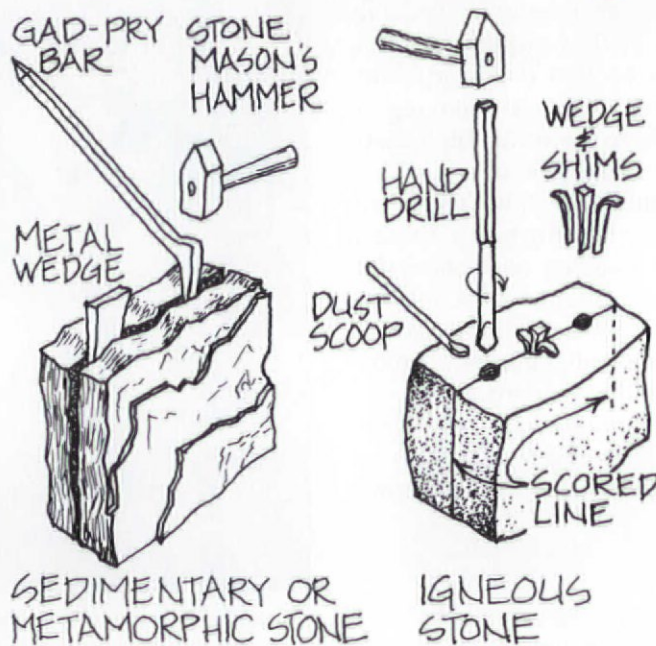


Splitting & Dressing Stone

Splitting and dressing stone is slow, difficult work — and, on a large scale, impractical. But you may find that a few pieces require shaping if they're to be used.

To split a sedimentary or metamorphic stone (one which has a discernible grain), chip along the grain with the bevelled end of a mason's hammer until a crack opens up. Drive metal wedges into the crack until the stone opens up enough for you to pry it apart with a crowbar.

To split granite, mark a line across the face and down the sides of the stone. Score the stone along the line with a hammer and chisel (about 1/8" deep). Using a hand drill and a 3-lb. sledgehammer, drill holes in the face of the stone about 6" apart along the line. Rotate the drill slightly after each blow. As the dust builds up, clear it out of the hole with



a dust scoop, or else the dust will stop the drilling action. Drill the holes deep enough so the wedges won't hit bottom when they're driven in. Insert the shims and wedges in the holes, then hit each wedge, rhythmically and evenly, with a single blow of the hammer. Go up and down the row of wedges in succession, giving each one a single blow. This will insure that the stone splits evenly along the line.

After splitting any stone, knock off sharp edges or unwanted protuberances with the mason's hammer, or chisel them off.

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Why would anybody go out of the way to simulate shortcomings which paint manufacturers have struggled for over a century to overcome? Because it would seem that people — historic preservationists and homeowners alike — sense that modern paint on an antique building lacks “something,” no matter how accurate the color scheme.

Research has revealed that early exterior paint had a unique warmth, vibrancy, and hand-crafted irregularity which disappeared after 1860, when machine-made paints became popular. The plastic-like uniformity of today's product, fine for contemporary homes, shows none of these characteristics, and looks subtly out of place on, say, a building made of hand-sawn lumber.

Experiments with reproducing authentic-looking exterior paints started in the museum community, and continue to this day. For historians at Colonial Williamsburg in the 1930s, determining accurate 18th-century colors was the first concern. It soon led them into the realm of texture and sheen, and projects for making new handmade paint from “scratch” were started — at Williamsburg, George Washington's Mount Vernon in Virginia, and Richmond-town Restorations in New York. Actually, making new old-time paint is beyond the scope of what any old-house owner would tackle, and is even impractical for historic preservationists (take our word for it). But experiments with the ingredients have given us a good picture of what pre-1860 paints were like. To gain some insights into how historic finishes might be approximated today, let's look at how early paint was made.

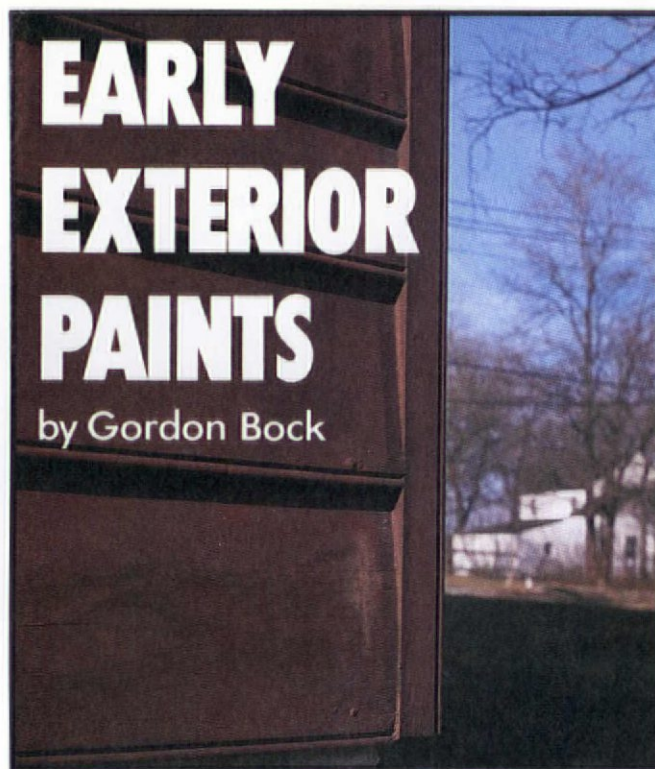
MATERIALS

I. VEHICLES

The basic liquid or *vehicle* for early paint was usually linseed oil. Produced by pressing flax seed, linseed is a vegetable drying oil that absorbs oxygen without the aid of other chemicals, and becomes very close to solid under most conditions. Walnut, hempseed, and poppyseed oils also exhibit this effect and were used in the 1700s, but linseed oil had been known since the pre-Christian era; by 1800, it was the main drying oil in America. It was often used alone as the most basic of coverings, giving bare wood some protection and turning it brown-black over a period of years. It could also be combined with a pigment (usually Spanish brown) and spread as a protective coloring on wood shingle roofs, a technique still practiced today.

II. WHITE PIGMENTS

Linseed oil alone can function as a protective oil, but to make paint it must be combined with some sort of pigment. Where an opaque, protective covering is needed, a *white-biding* pigment is employed, and since 400 B.C., the best such pigment had always been lead. Raw lead has to be processed into white lead in order to work as a pigment, and the first factory in the U.S. for this purpose was started



The museum ideal: handmade paint.

in 1804 by Samuel Wetherill & Sons in Philadelphia. Of the five manufacturing methods then known, the oldest and most common was the “Dutch process,” where perforated lead discs were suspended over pots containing an acid solution (often vinegar, kept warm by decomposing horse dung!) for close to three months. The result was basic carbonate white lead. Mixed together, white lead and linseed oil made a simple white paint that could be used as is, applied as a primer for later coats, or mixed with other pigments to produce colored paint.

III. COLORED PIGMENTS

Colored pigments were imported if they couldn't be produced easily here, and came from mineral, vegetable, and even animal sources. Names like *Spanish* brown and *Venetian* red suggest that some pigments once had a specific origin and composition. But by the early 1800s, many such terms had become generic, representing a general class of color that could be produced from more than one substance. Dry pigments might be purchased “by the keg” or barrel, sometimes as combinations of colors. Lake pigments, the source of many reds, were bright, translucent, organic dyes (from materials as exotic as crushed cochineal beetles or cooked Brazil wood) that were combined with an inorganic carrier. They came as cakes and drops or, when in a semi-solid state, in ox or sheep bladders. Availability of pigments must have varied greatly, but the following might be a representative assortment of the variety an early painter had to work with:

Red Lead — Essentially lead that has been calcined (heated until all water is driven off). Red lead could be used as a drier for linseed oil, an extender for expensive reds, or a pigment in its own right.



Somehow inadequate? Modern latex.

Spanish White — Both a pigment and a filler, Spanish white was frequently chalk soaked in a mixture of water and alum. It was also derived from pure clay.

Spruce Yellow — A dark, ochre-colored mineral pigment made from one of the hydrated forms of iron oxide.

English Ochre — Another ochre like Spruce Yellow, so named for its origin.

Lampblack — The soot of flames from one of several fuels. Lampblack has to be reheated to drive off residual greasiness before it can be used as a pigment.

Verdigris — A green pigment produced by a variety of means. A typical process was to corrode copper or brass with a vegetable acid such as vinegar.

Spanish Brown — A widely used, inexpensive pigment that had many sources. Most Spanish browns were either natural or artificially produced iron oxides.

Venetian Red — Often interchanged with Spanish brown, it was a mixture of iron oxide and various other minerals.

Prussian Blue — The first invented pigment on record, Prussian blue appeared in Berlin around 1700. The original formula includes equal amounts of dried blood and pearl ash, added to alum, copperas (hydrated ferrous sulfate), and muriatic acid.

Umbre — A broadly classified natural red pigment, at one time imported from Cyprus.

Indian Red — Originally a natural pigment from the East Indies, Indian red was artificially made by the mid-1700s and had, as a result, become closer in hue to scarlet.

Vermilion — Manufactured from quicksilver and sulfur, vermilion was supplied to most of the world by the Dutch.

IV. SOLVENTS, DRIERS, AND BINDERS

Turpentine, distilled from pine resins, was the principal early solvent. Lead oxide, sugar of lead, and vitriol were often added as catalysts to speed the drying of linseed oil (as Japan drier is used today). Casein, derived from milk, occasionally saw use as a binding agent.

TOOLS

Raw pigments had to be finely ground in some sort of mill in order to be suitable for paint. Before the advent of steam-powered machinery, a typical hand apparatus was like the existing "Boston Mill," a large granite ball that rolled in a three-foot stone trough. For the finest grinding, a slab-and-muller (flat granite block "mortar" and large, flat-edged pebble "pestle") was used. Another insight comes from *Directions for House and Ship Painting* by Hezekiah Reynolds (1812), the earliest known American book on the subject. Reynold's pet grinding method was to hang an iron ball by a rope or a chain and work it around in an iron kettle.

Housepainting brushes were often referred to as "tools," and were constructed differently from those used to-

day. Rather than flat and broad, they were round with long "wire-wound" bristles, usually made of hog hair. Bristle tips were not machine-flagged in the modern way to give smooth paint finishes, so Reynolds' advice was to use only "half-worn brushes for finish work" and save new ones for priming. "Pencils" were very small brushes with tapered tips.

PAINTING

Paint for any job was probably fabricated on site. The first step was to clarify the linseed oil by boiling it with red lead in a copper or brass pot. Then the appropriate pigments were ground until "by feeling you perceive no coarse particles," a process that regularly took all of a 14-hour day. Interior paints, it seems, were first ground-in-oil (mixed with oil) before being combined with the clarified linseed oil, while exterior paints used the pigments dry. Once all pigments were ground, oil was added a little at a time until the proper consistency was achieved.

The finished paint job was different from those we see today. The high linseed oil content of handmade paint gave it a characteristic sheen. When the job was new, it showed a lot of gloss over most surfaces, and then would dull to a much-subtler "matte" look over two or three seasons. Even when fresh, the imperfections inherent in using a natural oil applied with coarse, handmade brushes produced dull streaks in the overall finish. These could be overcome, to some degree, by applying more coats of paint.

Linseed oil had other idiosyncrasies as well. It yellowed as it aged, especially in areas where it received little sunlight. This yellowing had some effect on light pigments, such as white, but was dramatic in colors like Prussian blue which, in time, it turned a shade of green. Linseed oil also dried slowly, and in spots sometimes not at all, both tricky finish problems that ready-mixed paint manufacturers

strove to overcome in the past 100 years.

Hand-ground pigments had their own effect on the look of early paint. Modern pigments are very uniformly ground and distributed through the vehicle, with the cheapest paints using high percentages of dyes as well. Hand-made paints were all pigment, and their crude, hand-ground nature meant that particle size (and, hence, color) was never uniform. Many colors streaked slightly as they were painted on, or showed little islands of color on close inspection. The coarse quality of hand-ground pigments also influenced how they reflected light. Individual grains appear large and quite angular under a microscope, and these larger-than-modern surfaces bounce back light in such a way that the paint coat looks vivid and alive. The ratio of pigment to vehicle was also very high (much more than that of 20th-century paint), and made these paints quite thick and heavy-bodied. When painted on with coarse, round brushes, the finish had a "ropiness" or visible texture, one that was still apparent even after weathering outdoors.

Finally, hand-ground pigments were "fugitive," meaning they faded or changed color as they aged. Both Prussian blue and verdigris were notorious for having lives of only a few seasons in their original shades, but other colors suffered as well. Vermilion sometimes turned brown if it wasn't stabilized first with flour of sulfur, and ochres were similarly affected by high temperatures.

THE OLD LOOK FROM MODERN MATERIALS

How do you simulate a hand-ground exterior paint? The subject is still in its infancy, but some promising techniques are slowly being developed. Much is borrowed from work in replicating the interior finishes in historic buildings, such as that by conservator Matthew Mosca at Mount Vernon. After extensive paint analysis to determine the original coloring in one room, Mr. Mosca fabricated a new-old paint of near-traditional verdigris (green) pigments and modern Liquitex-brand base with excellent results. Other projects include those by William McMillen at Richmondtown Restorations, where a variety of dry pigments were blended with linseed oil-based paints to achieve a broad palette of interior colors. Indeed, while they can't endorse remixing or otherwise tampering with their laboratory-controlled products, the Benjamin Moore Co. unofficially encourages preservationists to experiment with paint formulas in looking for new effects — or rather, *old* effects.

Manipulating modern materials to get the look of hand-made exterior paint involves experimenting with untried



Linseed oil-rich paint has a depth and sheen appropriate for historic houses.

methods, and is so new an idea that results can't be guaranteed. That said, if the look of a pre-1860 paint would be appropriate for your house, here are some ideas:

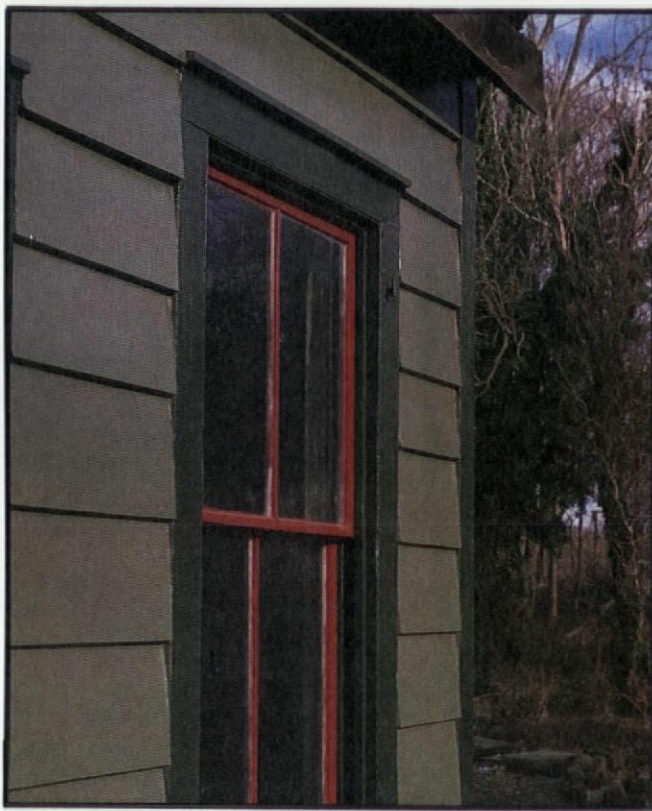
★ Using high gloss or near-high gloss finish paint on all surfaces would be a basic way to simulate the sheen of a high linseed oil handmade exterior paint, offers William Flynt of Historic Deerfield. Since the finish on even modern paint wears in time, the look after several seasons would still be roughly comparable to an early paint.

★ If a little more authenticity is warranted, try to paint with an all linseed oil-based product. These paints are still available from some manufacturers (see products list, p. 37) and come the closest in a ready-mixed paint to the linseed oil content of handmade paint. "Nothing can duplicate the look of a linseed-oil paint," states McMillen.

★ Barring the availability of a true linseed-oil paint, choose an alkyd-based product, preferably one with a high vehicle-to-pigment-to-thinner ratio listed on the label. Alkyd paints don't always make use of linseed oil, but they are oil-based (tobacco seed oil or soya oil), and will be a better choice over latex, which contains no oil.

★ "If you are working with the color white, try using one of the 'chalking' white paints to match the aging characteristic of handmade paint," says Morgan Phillips of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. Modern titanium white pigments come in two crystalline forms: rutile and anatase (the older variety). Anatase-based paints are more likely to chalk, a characteristic that is actually engineered into some whites. The thinking is to have the paint film surface weather off continually, taking dirt with it and keeping the white fresh-looking. The resulting matte finish is a look-alike for old-time lead white after a couple of seasons. (Don't use a chalking paint above unpainted masonry, however; it will leave hard-to-remove paint streaking on the brick or stone.)

★ To fashion a thicker-bodied paint as a substitute for the heavy pigment content of early mixes, try leaving the



A good bet: linseed oil-based paint.

can open to the air for a period before painting. "This will allow some of the solvents to evaporate," says Grant Doherty of Kyanize Paints, "but it will also start a skin across the surface which will have to be removed." Experiment with exposure times before painting.

★ For any paint selected, try working with the modern equivalent of an old-style round brush. Specialized products (such as "bridge" brushes for painting ironwork, or pounce brushes used in glazing) come close to the long bristles and distinctive taper of early brushes, and will help give a paint job an authentic-looking "signature." Many interesting styles are available through brush manufacturers and comprehensive paint dealers (see products list); these are quality tools and they're fun to work with.

For those willing to take their chances experimenting for an even more authentic look, there are various techniques to "doctor" a modern linseed oil-based paint. While none of these ideas involve truly dangerous materials or combinations, it should be noted that tampering with the formula for any manufacturer's paint usually voids their warranty, and has some potential for damage if the new paint doesn't hold up. Also, good painting practices are still necessary — such as using "compatible films": primer and subsequent coats that are meant to work together, or are from the same manufacturer. Remember, too, that no paint will hold up on a poor substrate such as a flaking latex-and-oil sandwich.

★ To go further in simulating the sheen of early paint, try stepping up the oil content of a production linseed oil paint. Using raw oil (which doesn't dry out as quickly as boiled) will give the best results, but a drier such as Japan might have to be added to help the additional oil dry in a

reasonable period. Be sparing in the use of driers, however (between two and four ounces per gallon), or the paint will dry too hard and won't "give" with changes in weather. Thinning with turpentine is permissible, but an excess here will flatten the sheen of the oil. Quantities are all a matter of taste. Experiment first.

★ Finely ground chalk (whiting) is another additive that has been used with interesting effect in interior paint replication, and might be tried for exterior work. Chalk was used historically as an inexpensive extender in old paints (as it is today), and contributed a milky, material-like look to the final job. Linseed oil and chalk have nearly the same index of refraction, so that when light hits a chalk-containing paint layer, it penetrates deeply before being reflected back, and creates the look of a thick, slightly translucent film.

All recent work with "chalked-up" paint has been interior, and so its long-term durability is an open question. Two guidelines should be kept in mind. First, adding chalk alone to a base paint may saturate the pigment portion of the vehicle-to-pigment-to-thinner ratio for some paints. To be on the safe side, add some linseed oil with the chalk to maintain the balance. Second, test patches would be recommended (both for life and looks) before proceeding with an entire house.

★ For ambitious historic-paint buffs, the technique to try is adding colored pigments to a ready-mixed base. The best results are obtained by starting with a white or neutral linseed oil paint, and mixing in pigments as if one were actually making handmade lead paint. More oil can also be added later.

The most authentic-looking paint will be produced by using pigments that are as close as possible to the composition of early ones. Such items are getting hard to find these days, but *dry* pigments generally behave most like their hand-ground cousins and have a similar range of palette. *Pure-In-Oil* colors — pigments ground in linseed oil — mix readily with oil-based paints. *Universal Tinting* colors are modern liquid pigments for custom blending of paints, and can be an acceptable second choice if dry pigments can't be found. Regrettably, in some areas these products are also being discontinued. *Japan* colors (pigments ground in gum and resins) are a third alternative; they're still sold for the sign-painting trade, and provide an excellent pigment source for many bases. For all pigments, the color associated with each name may vary from manufacturer to manufacturer, and is probably only an approximation of those from the past centuries.

To make up paint, start a test batch by adding the pigments in measured quantities to a small (measured) amount of base. Once a promising color blend is reached, it can be tested by painting a patch on a pane of glass (where it will dry quickly). If the color is a success, make up full-size batches by mixing pigments into base paint in the correct proportions. A power paint mixer of some sort is a great help here. If dry pigments are being used, experiment with grinding-in-oil (for a more uniform dispersion) versus adding them dry. Dry-added pigments are

more difficult to mix in, but exhibit a classic hand-made paint trait. When applied, microscopic clumps of pigment are further broken down by the action of the brush, and the finish develops a deeper color the more it is worked. Since paint strokes are never all the same pressure, streaking also occurs just as it would for a hand-ground coating. Reynolds is writing about the same effect with Prussian blue when he recommends "pressing the brush harder than in laying other colors."

Again, working formulas for authentic-looking single-pigment and compound colors will have to be arrived at experimentally, but the following combinations parallel the mixtures Reynolds suggests, and are a place to start:

White: Often cut with a little Prussian blue or lampblack to reduce glare.

Prussian Blue: Often cut with a little lampblack to mute vibrancy.

Black: Lampblack in white paint, perhaps with a little Prussian blue.

Grey: Lampblack in white paint (perhaps half as much as for black).

Green: Prussian blue and ochre.

Orange: Spanish brown or Venetian red in white until the desired strength is achieved.

Chocolate: Spanish brown and lampblack into white.

Have fun and let us know how you do.



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Everett, MA 02149
(617) 387-5000

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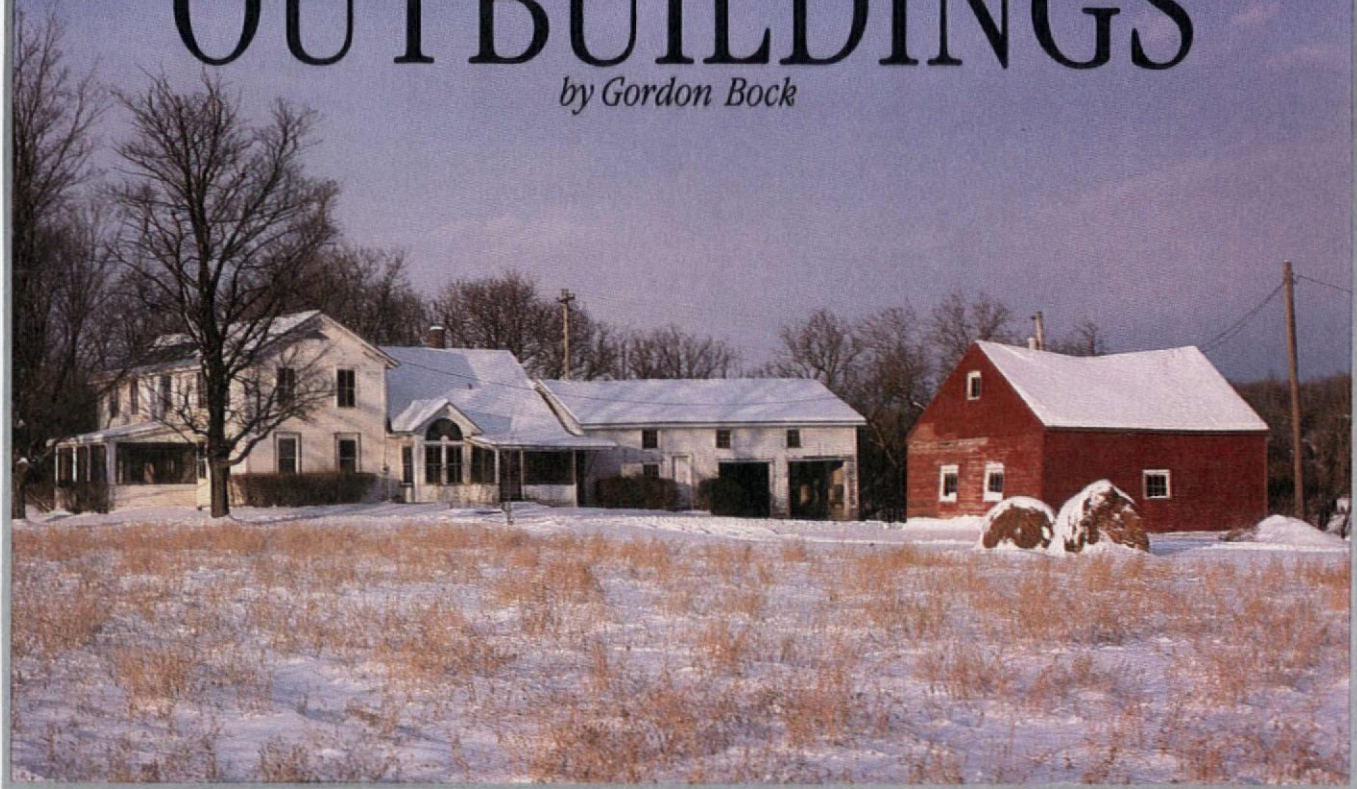
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Wooster, OH 44691
(216) 264-4440

Key to abbreviations:

B = brushes
H = historic-color paints
L = linseed oil-based paints
P = pigments

Rescuing OUTBUILDINGS

by Gordon Bock



Friends kid me about all the weekends I devote to my obsession: resurrecting a neglected family homestead in Pennsylvania. I must admit, I spend a lot of time working on the main house. But they've yet to catch on to my other mission: bringing back the satellite structures — the outbuildings. I can't whack away on the main house and watch it improve, and at the same time ignore the tool shed, the summer kitchen, the well house, or the tractor barn which are also crying for maintenance.

For me, outbuildings *are* the homestead or farmstead. The land and service buildings that support the main house are what give the place history and context, setting it apart from suburban dwellings. In the days before plumbing, refrigerators, or central heat, the outhouse, icehouse, and woodshed did these jobs for anyone living outside of a city. Twentieth-century inventions have made these "dependencies" obsolete today, but I feel a 'stead-house would still look naked without them. You may not have livestock for your barn, or need a milk shed to put cream in your coffee, but knocking these little buildings down or letting benign neglect eat them away will, at the very least, take away the sense of dimension you feel when walking around your grounds.

I'm not alone, either. Jim Askins of the National Park

Service has a professional preservationist's interest in outbuildings, as head of the Williamsport Preservation Training Center in Maryland. For his work, outbuildings are "an essential part of the historical context of a homestead or farmstead." In historic sites, they sometimes stand as the only evidence of an economy and way of life now gone. In some areas, too, their construction is a rare record of early immigrant building methods before ethnic techniques were homogenized into American ways. John Bruce Dodd, a restoration architect in Layton, New Jersey, has grown to share the same views. In the course of preparing a government report on historic structures, Dodd inventoried hundreds of "O.B.s" (as he and his wife call them) owned by the federal government in a project that covered the Mid-Atlantic states and several years.

As I continue to work on my outbuildings, and help other people with theirs, I've collected a kind of two-phase compendium of ideas and techniques for saving them. Some tips are my own discoveries, others are common knowledge or borrowed from different technologies. *None of it is complete.* Also, I've limited myself pretty much to the wood-frame building, because this is by far the most popular construction method, and is used even in structures made of adobe or stone. Again, what follows is not comprehensive, but it's a place to start.

STABILIZATION

The situation I come up against is: Yes, I want to throw some money and effort into that tool shed, but a new roof on the main house has to come first (or we'll have "running water" in more than just the bathroom). When faced with this clash of priorities, I do as much as I can to stabilize or "mothball" the outbuilding so it can resist the elements, and prevent it from slipping past The Point Of No Return (to be discussed later).

Making the building watertight is usually job number one. Water inside any wooden building causes lumber problems, from warping and splitting (where the wood expands and distorts) to rotting (live fungi eating away the wood). Water gets in by three avenues:

Rain is the most common source of water. Unfortunately, outbuildings have a long history of being roofed with economical materials — wood shingles or sheet metal on open nailers — and then being forgotten. Once a few shingles blow off or the sheet metal rusts through, rainwater runs in along the nailers and supporting framing, and rot starts. Eventually the weakened framing and roof will collapse under its own weight, if the burden of snow doesn't bring it down sooner.

Stabilizing a leaking roof, then, is a top-level priority. My technique is to attack the problem with the most cost-effective means for the moment, while keeping an eye toward how a permanent repair will be made later. Covering the entire roof with plastic, tarpaper, sheet metal, fiberglass, roll roofing, or tarps is a valid technique. Making watertight, localized repairs with, say, leftover asphalt shingles is also worthwhile. Your goal, for the time being, is to simply keep water out.

Rain also can enter into walls through broken windows, missing doors, or openings in the siding. These should be closed in with the best means at hand, but *interior moisture* should be considered as well. Historical architect Thomas

Solon (who works in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area) says that windows and other portals where light penetrates will warm the inside of the building, circulating the air and minimizing the negative effects of dampness. To maintain this natural system, windows should be covered with clear plastic, not with opaque materials such as tarpaper or lumber. Ventilation for the escape of trapped moisture is usually not a problem with the simple, loose construction of most outbuildings. Still, never seal them so tightly that interiors cannot breathe.

Ground or runoff water is the third source of water problems. Neglected outbuildings most often sit on neglected building sites, and the growth of plants or a shifting of the landscape will channel melting snow and rainwater into the foundations instead of away from them. Outbuildings are notorious for being built close to the ground or into hills, and this only compounds the damage runoff water can do. Stabilization may mean digging culverts to channel water away, or regrading foundations temporarily.

Once the invasion of water has been halted, the next job is to make the outbuilding structurally sound. This stabilization is, once again, just to help the outbuilding hold its own against wind, snow, or its own weight. Structural problems vary widely (and each has its own solution), but I make much use of shoring when a building is in danger of collapsing.

Buildings that teeter on their foundations like collapsed boxes, or walls that bulge almost to breaking, are candidates for raking shores. These are beams erected perpendicularly between the ground and the sick wall, at 60 to 70 degrees, so that further movement is prevented. I use timbers (such as heavy pieces of construction lumber or small felled trees), and set the ground end on a block in a well-tamped "notch" in the earth. The wall end is positioned so that it supports a structural member in the building (like the plate the rafters rest on), or a large board



The entire building may need work, but stabilizing a leaky roof is the first critical step.



nailed across the wall as a cleat. Two mating wedges on the ground end are tapped together just until the shore takes the load off the building — no more — and are inspected regularly for shifting.

Dead shores are vertical beams used to stabilize dead (vertically acting) load problems such as broken roofs or walls with missing foundations. Shoring here is also between the ground and a building member, with wood blocks used at both ends of the timber. For dead shoring, the wedges should be inserted at the top of the timber and, again, be tightened not to correct the problem, but just keep it from getting worse. Jacking-type steel columns also work well, and any dead shore should be braced with lumber so that it can't shift or fall over.

The third priority is to keep critters out. And by "critters," I mean vandals, rodents, and insects. Vandals have the biggest potential for doing damage to an outbuilding (i.e., setting it on fire); fortunately, they can be discouraged by securing all the openings into the building. Use of bars, grates, or spaced planks of lumber will prevent access through windows while still letting in light. Rodents do less damage, perhaps, but are harder to control. One trick is to nail chicken wire over holes in eaves or under foundations — anywhere there is evidence of entry. Insects, such as wasps, are the peskiest to keep out (especially when they are determined to live there), but the hole-plugging technique helps keep them at bay.

"THE POINT OF NO RETURN"

I'll stabilize a building to buy time for the day when I have the money or manpower to invest in it. I have learned, however, to put enthusiasm aside and evaluate whether the building is worth working on at all, or what the scale of the project is going to be. I've come up with two methods of assessment.

One method is an old rule-of-thumb for fire-damaged houses: If you can salvage more than three-fifths, it's worth rebuilding. Even if you're not planning a complete rebuild, such a guideline is good for evaluating the condition of a building. If investing less than two-fifths in new materials and effort will produce a sound structure, you're probably not throwing "good money after bad." If it looks as though more would be needed, you're in the realm of a "labor of love," and a completely new building might be more economical.

The other method is to estimate a dollar figure for the

work you *know* would have to be done. For instance, that tool shed I want to rebuild probably has several hidden problems, but at the very least it needs a new roof, a door, and a paint job. The calculated cost for these materials alone comes to \$580, so that becomes the minimum figure for the project. Now ask yourself, does that put it over-budget and out of the question? If I have the money to spend, I can extrapolate from this base by adding another 30% or so to cover unanticipated supplies. If this is still OK, I get a handle on the labor by doubling the materials cost — a very crude equation for estimating what I might pay someone else to do the work, and another way to look at the scale of the project.

If the outbuilding passes either of these tests (and I'm kind of a softie when it comes to grades), then I figure it hasn't slipped past The Point Of No Return and become a candidate for salvage or firewood.

REPAIR IDEAS

Neglected outbuildings are case studies of what lack of maintenance can do to a structure. It may not look good. On the other hand, outbuildings are usually simple, workaday buildings that respond quickly to a little attention. Their unsophisticated construction actually helps in slapping them back into shape because they lack the interior



walls, multiple rooms, services (such as plumbing), or even floors that get in the way with many major house repairs.

Some say, "If you don't have a roof and a foundation, you don't have a building," so these are the two areas I attack first when rehabbing.

ROOFS

I use the three-fifths equation to evaluate the condition of a roof. If less than that can be saved, the damage very likely extends into the support framing, not just the roof covering. This means it will be more efficient to remove the entire roof anyway to make repairs to the framing.

Damaged rafters can be replaced entirely if the roof is removed. Barring this, they can also be mended, sistered, or flitched. In mending a rafter (or any beam), sections of identical lumber are placed on either side of the weak or broken section, and through-bolted to effect a splint-like repair. In sistering a weak rafter, another length of lumber as long as is practical is maneuvered in alongside it, and then both are nailed together to share the load. Flitching employs metal flitch plates to strengthen weak rafters. They

can be used like lumber in the mending method or inserted singly between sistered rafters.

FOUNDATIONS AND SILLS

Large outbuildings such as stables and barns may have substantial foundations by necessity; smaller buildings typically get by with much less. As mentioned, the classic outbuilding sill is only inches off the ground, resting on a base of perhaps a few courses of roughly mortared or dry-laid stone, or maybe just a few strategically placed boulders. They seldom extend below ground, so frost is their biggest enemy, heaving and shifting them over the years. Luckily, repairs need not be elaborate. Collapsed foundations can be renewed simply by relaying. Other cases where settling has occurred can be made level again by adding a "fudge" course of shim stones.

The condition of a foundation and sill can often be determined just by looking at it from inside and outside the building. To see subtler "creeping out" of the walls at ground level, use the picture-frame technique. Cut a true square or rectangle in a piece of cardboard (or use a real picture frame), and view the building from various angles through this "window." Framed within the right angles of the window, out-of-plumb walls, creeping sills, and other shifts in the structure suddenly become obvious.



If I have to do major sill or foundation work, I wait until I've lightened the load by removing unsalvageable roofing and other defective materials. Then I proceed with any jacking or levering around the base. Rotted outbuilding sills are very common in my experience. Their close proximity to the ground subjects them to runoff water, splash-back from roof drainage, and wood-eating insects like termites and ants. Occasionally it's worthwhile to splice in a new piece of sill if the damage is localized and the wall is long. Be aware, though, that adding joints to such a critical member tends to defeat its purpose. On small buildings, I opt for replacing the sill along an entire wall, particularly when it can be done with a single timber. (Changing sills is also the time to raise the level of the foundation above 18 inches if termites are known to be a problem.) I also use pressure-treated lumber for the replacement so (I hope) the job won't have to be done again while I'm still around.

The project goes surprisingly fast on many small sheds and houses: 1) Jack up the affected side, much like a car; 2) knock out the old sill (it usually falls out); 3) clean any nails out of wall studs and posts; 4) trim and insert the



new sill; 5) drop the building back down and nail it to the new sill.

WALLS

A problem that plagues all small outbuildings is twisting or leaning of the structure. Because they're built simply and rarely stand more than a single storey, they usually lack the diagonal bracing given bigger buildings to prevent deformation. In reviving an outbuilding, your aim is to straighten the building to plumb again, and to brace it in some fashion so it stays that way.

My technique calls for using a sledgehammer and a block-and-tackle or a "come-along" (a self-wincing tool consisting of a hook, cable, and ratcheted spool). Once the sill and foundation are as fixed as the project permits, and while the rest of the building is in its most stripped condition, I attach the block-and-tackle or come-along between a suitable anchor (such as a tree) and the worst-offending corner of the building. By tightening up on the tackle or come-along, I can gradually pull that side of the building into line, checking as I go with a level. It is a step-by-step process: first tension on the corner, then coaxing the wall further by tapping it at various spots with the sledgehammer — tension, coax, tension, coax. . . .

Once the corner is as close to plumb as possible in one direction (and often a little more for spring-back), the new position can be secured by nailing a brace at 45 degrees to the corner from floor to ceiling. Few buildings twist or lean out of shape in only one direction, so there's usually more than one corner to be trued in this manner. Each corner might need to be aligned in two directions (the planes of each wall) as well. Once the walls are square again to a reasonable degree, the new roof (if any) can be put on and the rest of the building revived.

Relocation is an interesting closing idea that has more possibilities for outbuildings than any other structure. For small buildings, the same no-frills construction details (like primitive foundations) that aid repair, also make moving them to other sites very feasible. In the last century, rolling a henhouse or bunkhouse across the farmyard to a new home involved little more than logs (as rollers) and a team of oxen. Today, the same results can be achieved with construction equipment like a truck and a heavy-duty trailer. Moving is a whole area beyond repair to think about, but it is one more technique that can be applied to the same end: saving outbuildings.



Post-Victorian

by Janet Marinelli

The year was 1777. A British naturalist and his librarian, a Swedish botanist, set sail to Iceland in pursuit of alpine plants, got sidetracked at the summit of the volcano Hekla, and carted down a mountain of lava. Back in Britannia, it was combined with 40 tons of stone from the Tower of London, crumbling at the time, as well as assorted flints, chinks, and broken London bricks. A few plants were added to the rubble heap, at the site of what is now the famous Chelsea Physic Garden. Europe's first rock garden was born.

Within 50 years, similar "rockeries," as they were called, were an essential feature of almost every stylish garden. They've had garden purists seething ever since.

Up With Nature

In the mid-18th century in England, and about a hundred years later here in North America, the "natural style" in gardening emerged. Its followers despised the gardens of the day, which they considered slavishly geometrical, not to mention the fact that gardeners had gone berserk over topiary. Evergreens were being tortured into lollypops, peacocks, and other ungodly shapes; the poet Alexander Pope predicted the next step would be a topiary of "ADAM and Eve in Yew; Adam a little shatter'd by the fall of the Tree of Knowledge in the great Storm; Eve and the Serpent very flourishing..."

Enough is enough, said the adherents of the new natural style. They called for gardens patterned after wild, untamed, picturesque Nature (with a capital "N"). Rock gardens were one result of this new interest in nature. What could be more sublimely wild, after all, than the jagged, ice-and-wind-blasted home of the alpine plants every bot-

anist worth his salt was scouring the earth for?

Sir Frank Crisp created one of the most celebrated rock gardens of the following century. Built in England in the 1890s, it was a model of the Swiss Alps, complete with gorges, passes, waterfalls, a miniature Matterhorn, and tiny mountain goats that could be seen through a telescope. For better or worse, however, most Victorian rock gardens on this side of the Atlantic looked more like the Chelsea Physic Garden's than Sir Frank's.

The post-Victorian avant-garde tried to rekindle the love affair with nature, and anything remotely resembling the typical Victorian garden had them foaming at the mouth. In 1908, the *Ladies Home Journal* attacked the ever-popular Victorian carpet bed (see April 1985 OHJ) in an article entitled "Pimples on Nature's Face." ("Stereotyped beds of screaming geraniums," the author called them, breaking into a sweat. "And if we are spared the owner's initials in party-colors, we are fortunate!") In the 1920s and '30s, rock gardening became extremely popular. However, in a 1934 book on rock gardens for *McCalls*, Montague Free was still grumbling about the rockeries erupting from the center of so many American lawns "like Gargantuan hot-cross buns, lavishly spotted with raisins."

The proper post-Victorian rock garden could, however, be either "naturalistic" or "architectural" (built around terraces and retaining walls). Post-Victorians loved gardens with different levels, and the slopes between them were ideal places for rock gardens. The retaining walls frequently used to shore up the garden's various levels were perfect candidates for rock gardens, too. So were the stone walls that often surrounded early-20th-century grounds. Pictured on page 44 is a garden combining an informal rock garden designed around a natural rock outcrop with one built around a retaining wall.



What to Avoid.

Two lessons from period illustrators on how not to design a rock garden. Nineteenth-century garden purists were quite adamant on the subject.

Rock Gardens & Wall Gardens



photo by John Voit, Landscape Architect

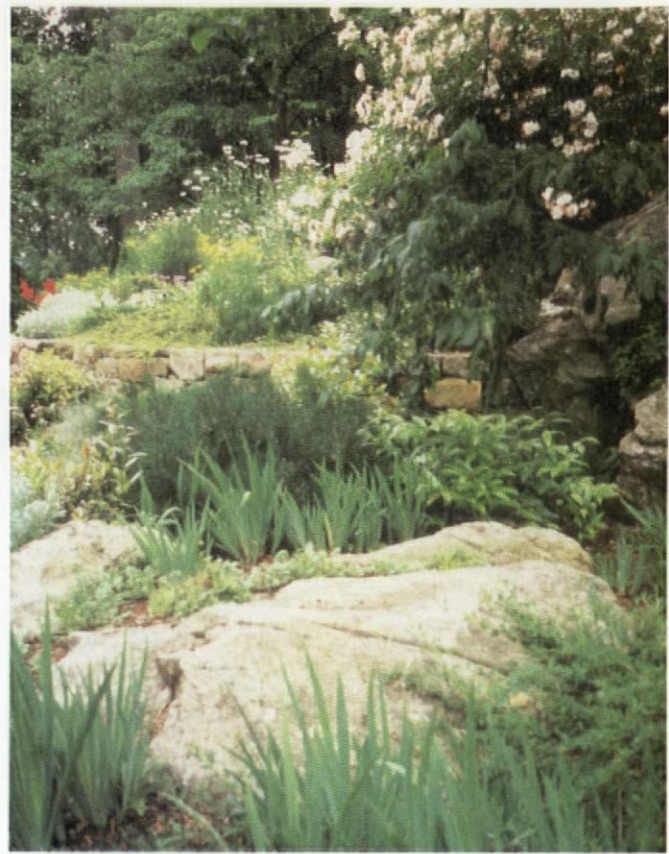
Making a Rock Garden

In the words of one early-20th-century rock gardener, "The rock garden's only creed is nature." Location was the key, and sticking the rock garden in the middle of the lawn was definitely *not* the thing to do. "The grounds of a home may well be compared with the living room of a house," pontificated another period writer, "in which no housewife would ever place some entirely extraneous article of furniture such as a washing machine . . . It is nearly as bad a breach of good housekeeping to so isolate a rock garden that it immediately inspires the question, 'What on earth is it doing here?'"

Making use of a natural rock outcrop on the property was considered much better form. In *American Rock Gardens* (1929), Stephen F. Hamblin wrote that if no natural rocks exist, "it would be folly, as a rule, to drag them in." If the urge for a rock garden is beyond control, however, he recommends that it at least be moved out of the center of the lawn and linked to the wild garden on the edge of the property — but not under trees, since alpines, as a rule, live above the tree line and like at least half a day of sun.

If he or she had no natural rock outcrop to work with, the rock gardener was advised to simulate a kind of natural glacial scree, or rock-strewn slope, like the one pictured below. When working with stones of this "cannon ball type," Montague Free said, "the correct caper is to use rocks sparingly and plants plentifully." Not surprisingly, local rocks were considered the most fitting.

Period writers generally weren't big on committing a plan to paper before proceeding to haul around the rocks. It is not, however, a bad idea. The first thing to plan is an entrance to the garden via either paths or stone steps. Picturesque touches like cascades, rivulets, and pools were much admired by early rock gardeners, but only if they could be pulled off convincingly.



This proper post-Victorian rock garden in Danville, Indiana, has a natural rock outcrop and a retaining wall.

Actual construction should be done in the fall, so the rock garden has time to settle before planting in spring. One way to go about this is to remove the topsoil from the area and set it aside. Then shape up the exposed subsoil to conform to your plan. If you need a bit of contour, follow Free's recommendation to make a tiny valley by digging out the center of the rock garden for a walk and using the soil for added height on either side.

Drainage is critical in rock gardens, and that's the next thing to consider. A porous topsoil on a gravelly subsoil will probably suffice. But a heavy, clay-like soil and subsoil will need some attending to. Post-Victorians might have added a 12" layer of coal ashes to the subsoil for drainage, but stones, broken brick, or other rubble will work just as well. Coarse builder's sand (never beach sand) will improve a clay topsoil. However, organic matter such as leafmould or peatmoss should be added, too, or you'll end up with concrete. You may have to add some lime to this mixture as well, since most rock plants like soil close to neutral in pH. You probably won't need fertilizer, though; rock plants survive naturally under the most trying conditions, and too much nitrogen will result not in



If their landscapes were rockless, but the urge to rock garden was strong, post-Victorians were told to simulate a boulder-strewn slope, like this one.

photo by Scott G. Kunst

photo by John Voit, Landscape Architect



photo by Jamie Gibbs, Landscape Architect

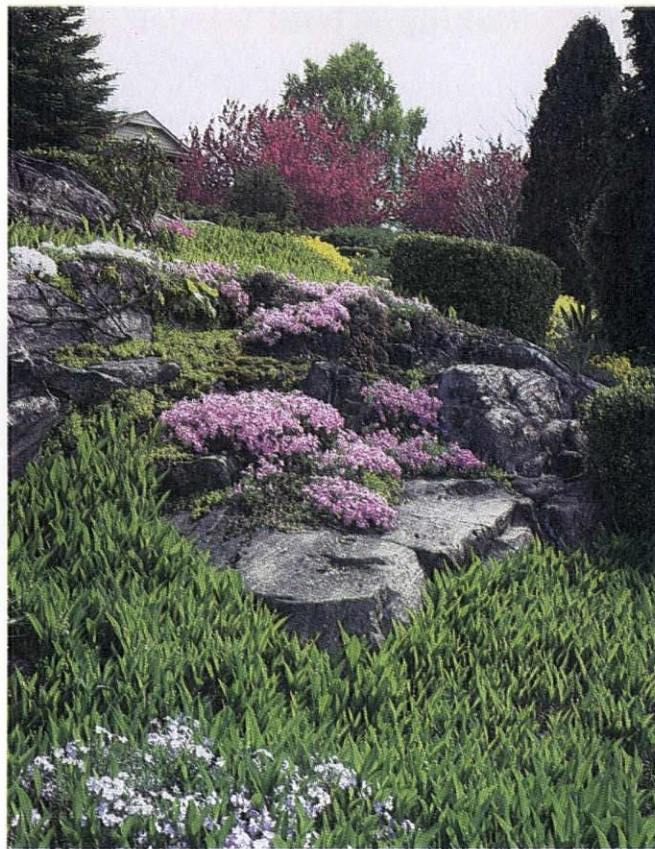


photo by Jamie Gibbs, Landscape Architect

What a difference a month makes: A Westport, Connecticut, rock garden in early spring, left, and mid-spring, right, bursting into bloom.

that prized, lean look of alpines in the wild, but rather in tubby plants. Spread $\frac{3}{4}$ of the topsoil you set aside over the site; save the rest for filling in between the rocks.

Now you're ready for "the truly exciting job" (Free's words, not mine) — moving the rocks around. Irregularly shaped rocks of various sizes are best; the exact size of course depends on the scale of your garden. Start from the bottom of the slope and work up. Period garden writers were adamant about the importance of setting each rock with its largest surface to the ground and making sure at least two-thirds of it is buried (standard advice that was frequently ignored). One rock gardener said, as if he learned the hard way, "Ram the soil very well round it so that the final result is complete stability which even your heaviest friend cannot disturb." Then use the remaining topsoil to fill every nook and cranny between the rocks so that roots reaching down for moisture do not encounter a vacuum.

Post-Victorian purists believed the rock garden should be a place sacred to alpines, "the brave little perennials of the mountain." Stephen Hamblin went so far as to exhort American rock gardeners to pay more attention to our native alpine plants, but most were

content simply to garden in a new, naturalistic way with an assortment of low-growing plants (see page 47). Their rock gardens looked a lot like the one pictured below. This home-made, early-20th-century rockery in Ann Arbor's Old West Side Historic District is essentially a pile of stones, however artfully planted, and probably would have had Hamblin, Free, and other "high-style" rock gardeners turning up their noses.

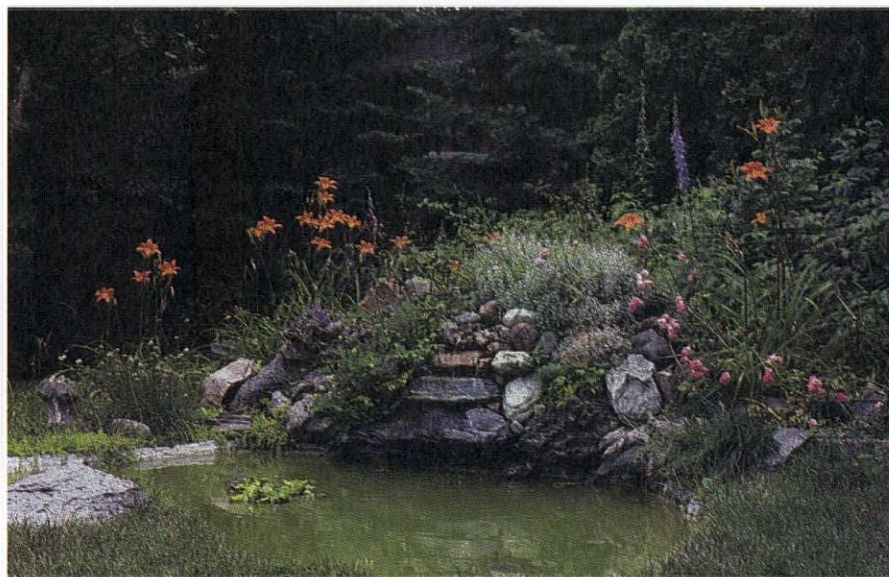


photo by Scott G. Kunst

This post-Victorian garden in Ann Arbor, Michigan, essentially a pile of stones, would probably have had purists turning up their noses.

Making a Wall Garden

In 1859, A.J. Downing, one of the first to introduce the natural style of gardening to this country, griped that "Nothing is more common, in the places of cockneys who become inhabitants of the country, than a display immediately around the dwelling of a spruce paling of carpentry, neatly made, and painted white or green; an abomination among the fresh fields, of which no person of taste could be guilty." Downing did, however, have a weakness for "an old stone wall covered with creepers and climbing plants."

Aesthetics aside, the big advantage of wall gardens is that they don't require minor mountaineering to build and tend. What's more, even picky alpine plants are more apt to grow in a dry wall than in the rest of the rock garden.

Although it's technically possible to cram plants into the crevices of an existing stone wall, it's much easier on your plants (and your knuckles) to plant as you build. The article on page 26 includes step-by-step instructions on how to build a stone wall. But if you want the wall to be a garden, too, you'll need to make some modifications.


Whether you're constructing a freestanding or a retaining wall, it should have a "batter" — that is, a slight slope inward from the bottom to the top of the wall so rain can enter the cracks and water the plants. The less batter, though, the better looking the wall; 3" per foot of height is a good rule of thumb.

Since frost is likely to wreak havoc on a battered wall, providing for drainage is extremely important. A layer of broken stones or other drainage material should be placed between the stone face of the retaining wall and the earth it supports. A pipe to carry excess water from the bottom of this drainage area away from the wall wouldn't hurt, either. And a freestanding wall garden should actually be a double wall, with drainage material in the middle; another bonus of a double wall is that it will need only 1" of

batter per foot of height. Laying each row of stones in your wall garden so that they slope slightly downward from the facing edge will also improve drainage. See illustrations below.

The smaller the plants, at least to start, the better their chances of survival in the cracks between the rocks. Use only enough soil to cover the roots; a lean and gritty soil — about ¾ coarse sand and chips and the rest rotted leafmould — is best. Use chinks of rock in the cracks to support the plant crowns and prevent what little soil there is from washing away.

Choose plants appropriate for the exposure of your wall. Woolly yarrow, for one, likes full sun, while *campanulas* prefer partial shade. Keep in mind, too, that different types of rock will create different microenvironments. Soil around granite tends to be acidic, for example; around limestone, it tends to be alkaline. Plants often prefer one or the other; you'll either need to choose accordingly or work in the appropriate nutrients (limestone grit for alkalinity, say, or leafmould to lower the soil's pH) as you plant.

Make sure cascading plants have enough room to spill down the wall without crowding out less aggressive plants below. Plant the top of the wall as well as its face. And make sure you have more plants than you think you'll need; the average wall garden will absorb many more plants than the equivalent square footage of flat ground. The lushly planted wall garden below is a spectacular example. 

Resources

If you love rock gardens but don't feel up to designing and building one yourself, the following firms that do period landscapes can help:

Jamie Gibbs and Associates
340 East 93rd Street
Suite 14C
New York, NY 10128

Scott G. Kunst
Old House Gardens
536 Third Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

John Voit
Landscape Architect
1078 Post Road
Darien, CT 06820

photo by Estelle Gerard, Brooklyn Botanic Garden



Period writers approved of "an old stone wall covered with creepers and climbing plants." The lushly planted wall above is in Brooklyn, New York.

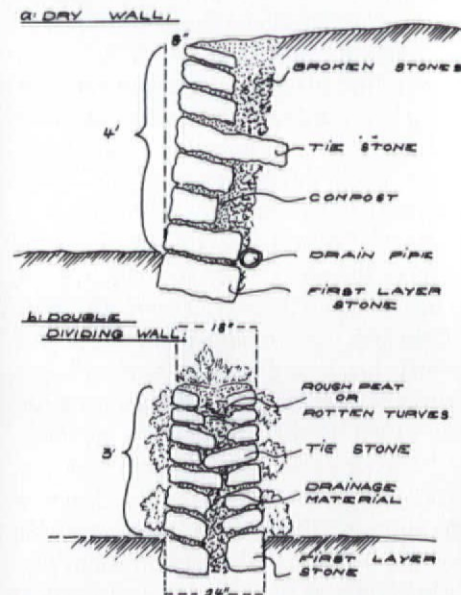


Illustration by Karl H. Grieshaber published in *Rock Gardening*, Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Plants & Gardens handbook #91.



Moss pinks and columbine

Here are some of the most popular post-Victorian rock plants. They can be found at most nurseries and garden centers.

Perennials

Houseleeks (*Sempervivum*)

Grow naturally in crevices and rocks in the high mountains of Europe and the Middle East. Leaves form colorful rosettes. Panicles of star-shaped flowers in summer.

Maiden pink (*Dianthus deltoides*)

Creeping plant for filling in tiny cracks in flat or sloping places. Showy flowers in late spring or early summer.

Moss pink (*Phlox subulata*)

Prickly, evergreen foliage forms mats. Many varieties with white, pink, red, purple, or blue flowers in spring. A good plant for cascading down a rock face.

Mother-of-thyme (*Thymus Serpyllum*)

Creeping plant with small, aromatic leaves and rose-purple flowers in summer.

Perennial candytuft (*Iberis sempervirens*)

A European native with narrow, evergreen leaves and white flowers in spring. Good cascading plant.

Rock aster (*Aster alpinus*)

An early-summer bloomer with violet daisies on 12" stems. For flat areas and tops of rock ledges, above the creeping plants.

Snow-in-summer (*Cerastium tomentosum*)

Cascading plant native to the mountains of Italy and Sicily. Grey-green, wooly leaves with white flowers in spring.

Stonecrops (*Sedum*)

Sedum dasyphyllum is one small variety that makes mats of grey-blue leaves and bears pink flowers in summer.



Hens-and-chicks



Everett Ortner, Brooklyn Botanic Garden



Glory-of-the-snow

A good vertical accent.

Juniper (*Juniperus*)

Juniperus horizontalis 'Bar Harbor', a prostrate juniper with long, trailing branches, can be seen on the Maine coast.

Dwarf Hinoki cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Nana')

A slow-growing little shrub with dark-green foliage, native to Japan.

Rose daphne (*Daphne Cneorum*)

Narrow evergreen leaves on slightly trailing stems. Deep pink, fragrant flower clusters in spring.

Also **barberry, rhododendron, even roses.**

Wall Gardens

Basket-of-gold (*Aurinia saxatilis* or *Alyssum saxatilis*)

Grows naturally on limestone cliffs in Europe and Turkey. Long, grey-green leaves. Bright yellow flowers 12" high in spring.

Rock soapwort (*Saponaria Ocymoides*)

A reliable wall plant native to the Alps. Clusters of starlike pink flowers on long stems in early summer.

Tussock bellflower (*Campanula carpatica*)

Grows upright to 12" with flowers in shades of white, blue, and mauve in summer. Native of the Carpathian Mountains.

Wooly yarrow (*Achillea tomentosa*)

From the dry slopes of Europe and western Asia. Makes a creeping mat of finely dissected, grey-green leaves. Flat clusters of yellow flowers in early summer.

Also **pinks, (*Dianthus*), moss pinks, mother-of-thyme, stonecrops, and houseleeks** (see above under perennials).

Rock Plants

Also **purple rock cress (*Aubrieta deltoidea*), dwarf iris, and columbines (*Aquilegia*).**

Bulbs

Glory-of-the-snow (*Chionodoxa*)

Have several blue, white-eyed, star-shaped flowers per stem in early spring. Native to Crete, Cyprus, and Asia Minor.

Grape hyacinths (*Muscari*)

From Italy and the Balkans. *Muscari botryoides* is a good, dwarf variety with blue or white flowers in spring.

Snowdrops (*Galanthus*)

Native to Europe and Asia. All varieties are good for rock gardens. Drooping, white, bell-shaped flowers in spring.

Squills (*Scilla*)

Scilla siberica is one variety, native to Siberia. Early spring flowers in shades of blue or white.

Shrubs

Dwarf Alberta spruce (*Picea glauca*)

After many years, will reach a height of 10'.



Snow-in-summer



Basket-of-gold

all photos by Scott G. Kunst, except where noted

FRENCH & GERMAN HOUSES

by James C. Massey & Shirley Maxwell

Almost everyone is familiar with the building traditions brought to America by British settlers. But immigrants from Germany, France, Spain, Holland, Sweden, and other European countries brought their own traditions, too. These building traditions hung on well into the 19th century, and often reappeared with the next group of newcomers. They account for many of the regional differences that charm and fascinate old-house enthusiasts today. For this article, we'll focus on the houses built by the German and French immigrants.

French and German building traditions spread throughout the eastern half of North America, following their practitioners. Today, German houses that look a lot like their prototypes along the Rhine River can be found in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, and also in former Moravian religious settlements from New Jersey and Pennsylvania to North Carolina and the Virgin Islands. In the mid-19th century, a new wave of German immigrants to Texas, Wisconsin, and Missouri built New World houses based on the building traditions of home. Settlers from

France, or from French colonies in the West Indies and Canada, built their own vernacular style around the Gulf of Mexico from Florida to Louisiana and along the Mississippi River north to Missouri and Illinois.

German Traditions

The earliest German buildings in this country were usually made of rubble stone or heavy timber framing filled in, or "nogged," with bricks. This half-timber construction, known as *fachwerk*, was not done for decorative effect, although restored *fachwerk* buildings can be very handsome. *Fachwerk* was a utilitarian compromise that made the most of two common building materials. In the old country buildings were nogged because forests, and thus timber for building, were in short supply; in America the timber framework helped compensate for the shortage of lime, needed for strong mortar and hard bricks. In fact, *fachwerk* was often stuccoed or sheathed with wood siding to protect the soft bricks.



The Bolduc House (c. 1787), in Ste. Genevieve, Mo., has the deep rear porch common to French houses.



Two German houses: Above, the Herblein-Bertolett Cabin (c. 1737), an early homestead in Birdsboro, Pa. Below, the half-timbered Pelster House (c. 1844), near New Haven, Mo.



All photos by James C. Massey except where noted.

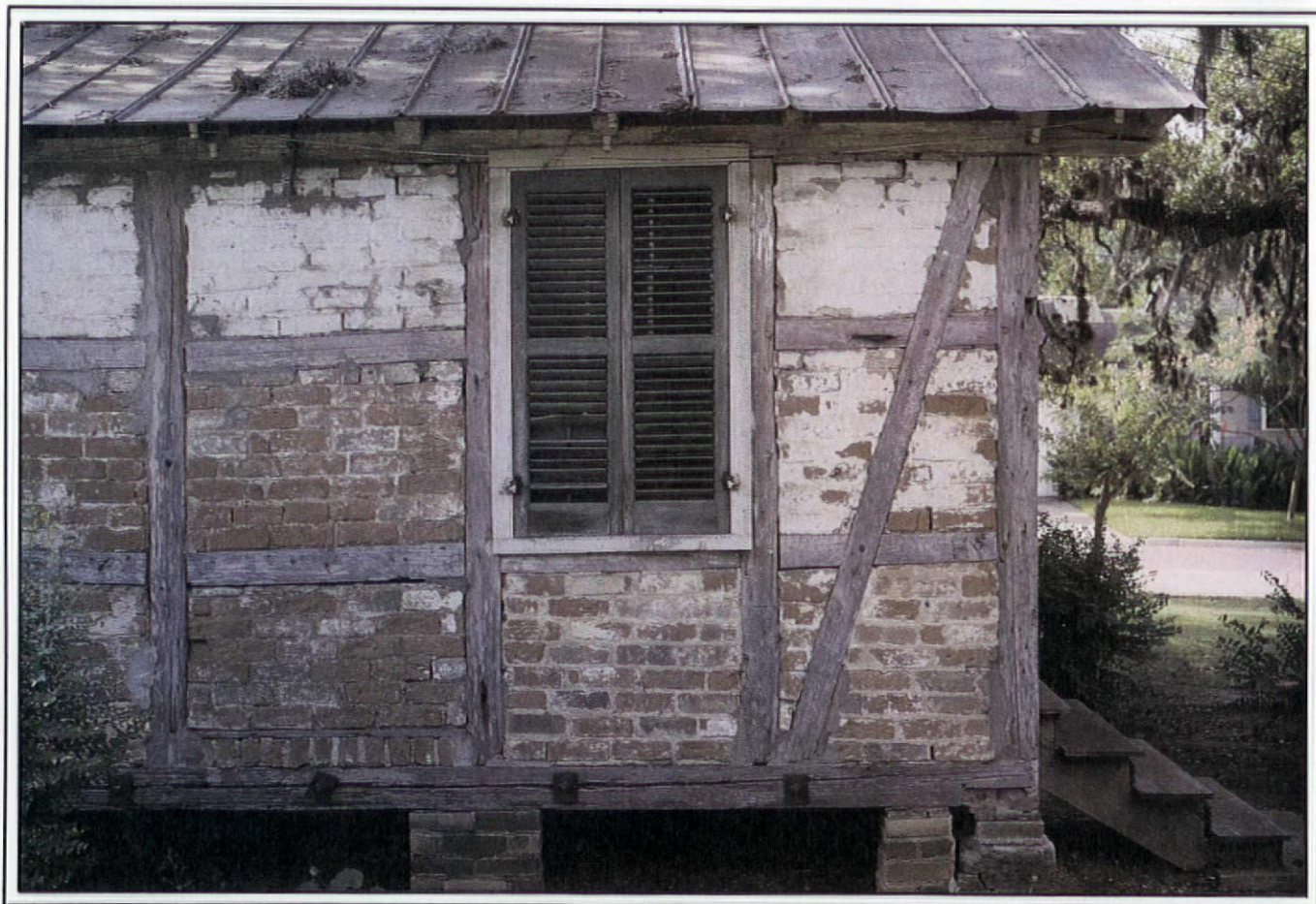
The history of the Single Brothers' House in the Moravian settlement of Old Salem, North Carolina (illustrated at right), is a testament to the fragility of *fachwerk*. Constructed in 1769, the *fachwerk* house was soon stuccoed to protect it from the weather. In 1825 it was sheathed with clapboards. When the Brothers' House was restored in this century as part of the museum village, the clapboards and stucco layers were carefully removed.

Fachwerk was quickly replaced by brick or frame construction in the East, but reappeared in German-settled areas of the Midwest, where it's called *deutscher Verband*. There it may be filled with either stone or straw and clay. To show just how persistent building traditions can be: The half-timbered Stiehl House in La Grange, Texas (pictured below), now used as a library, was built c. 1852, even though the techniques for constructing a lighter-weight frame were by then well known and the materials relatively easy to find.



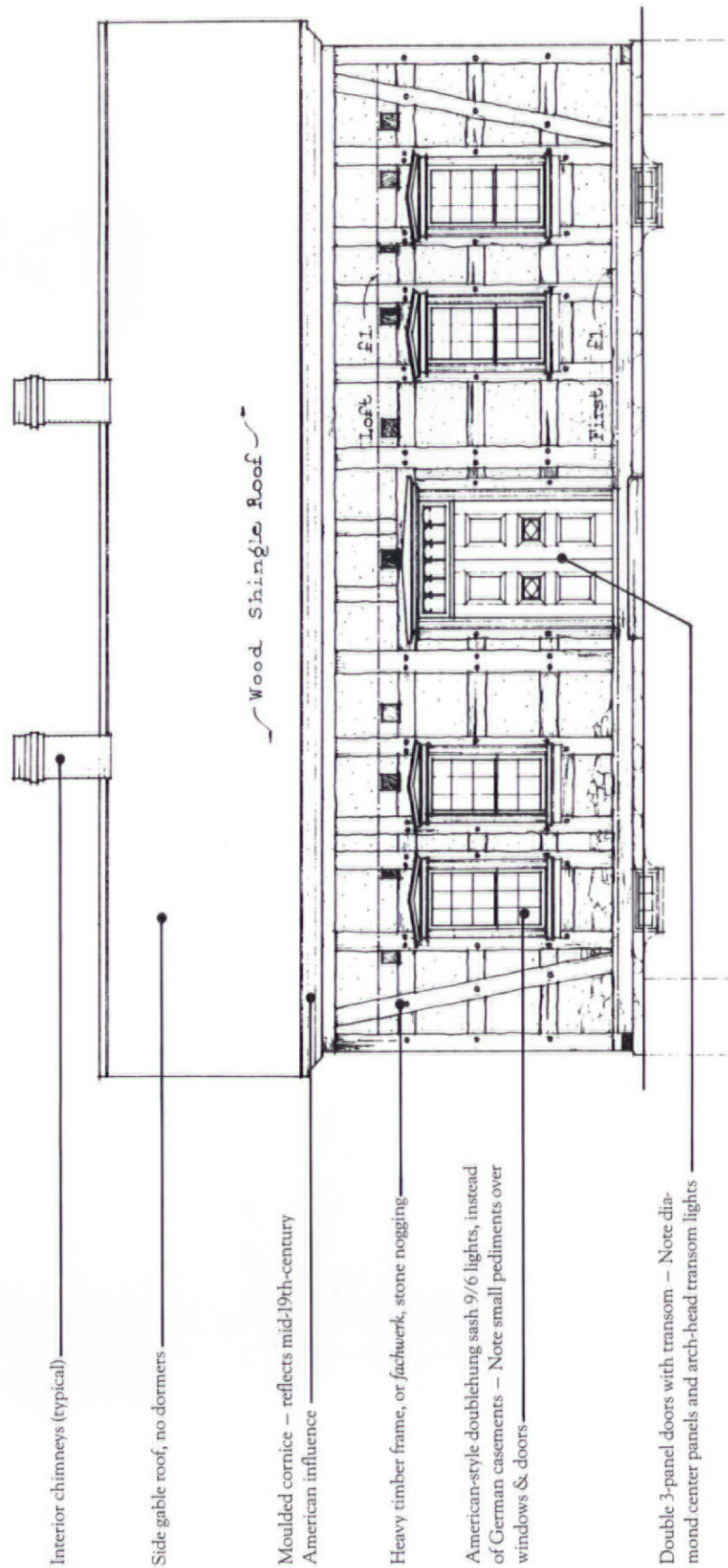
Above: *Single Brothers' House (1769) in the Moravian settlement of Old Salem, N.C. This large, half-timbered structure also typifies other German building traditions, including the pent eave above the first floor.*

Below: *The Stiehl House (1852) in La Grange, Texas; a late example of German half-timbered construction.*



THE GERMAN TRADITION

Krause House, c. 1848, Kirchhayn, Wisconsin
**HALF-TIMBERED HOUSE TYPICAL OF MID-19th-CENTURY
 GERMAN SETTLEMENTS IN WISCONSIN, MISSOURI, AND TEXAS**



NOTE: These *fachwerk* houses were sometimes sheathed or plastered. In rare instances barn & house were combined in Wisconsin and Missouri, becoming the housebarn.

SOURCE: HABS
 RICHARD W.E. PERRIN, DEL.

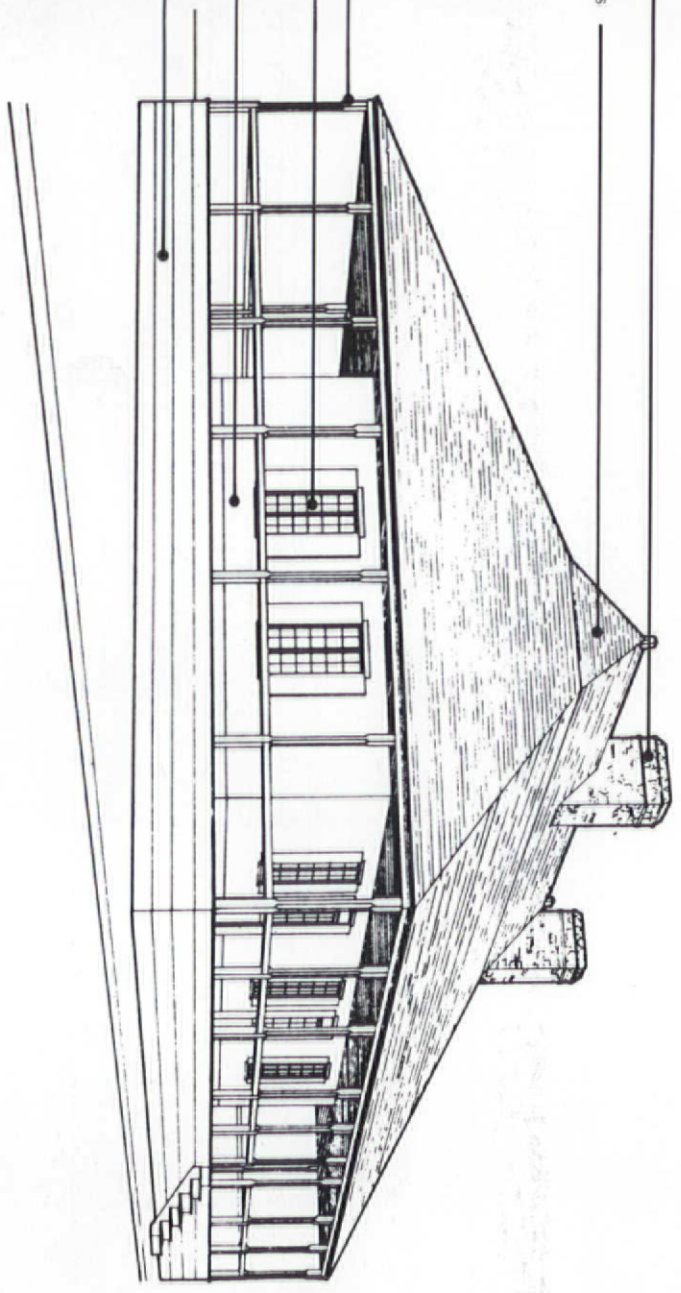
THE FRENCH TRADITION

Bolduc House c. 1787, Ste. Genevieve, Missouri
 A TYPICAL FRENCH CREOLE HOUSE

READING
 THE
 OLD
 HOUSE

Massive stone chimneys _____
 Steep French hip roof or pavilion – no dormers _____

Wrap around porch or gallery _____
 Double casement windows _____
 One storey with large unlighted Attic used for storage _____
 Board skirting _____



PERSPECTIVE VIEW
 FROM SOUTH-EAST
 < RESTORATION >

SOURCE: HAAS
 FRANK R. LESLIE, DEL.

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THE BOLDUC HOUSE

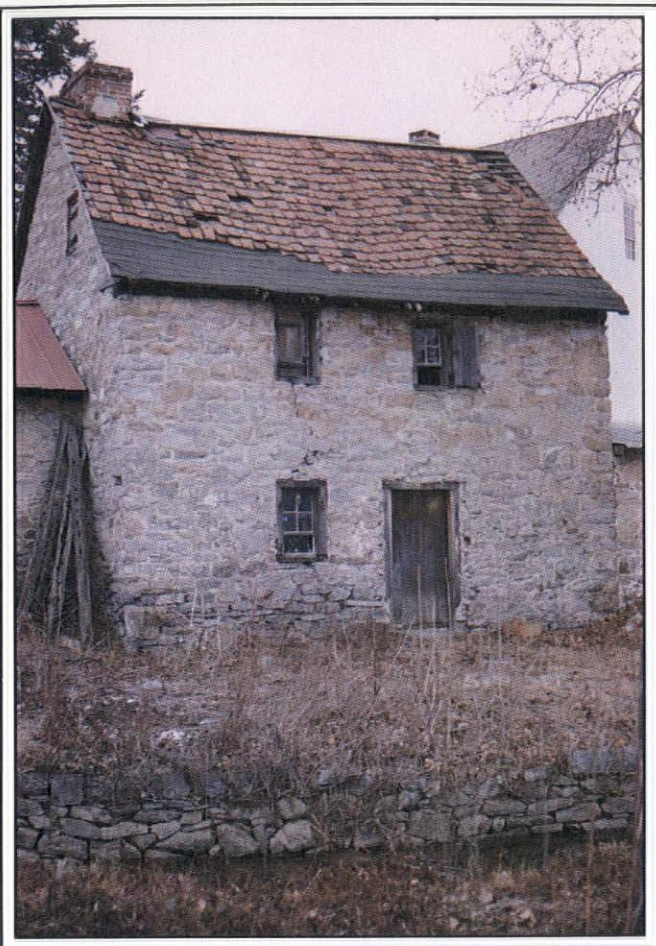
NAME OF STRUCTURE
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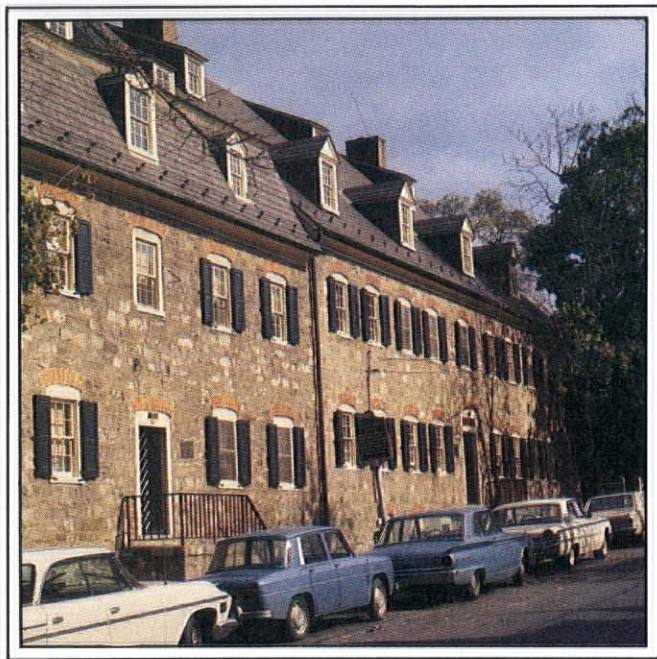
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Two German houses: Left, the Bertolett Homestead (1736) in Oley Valley, Pa. — a typical example of the sturdy stone construction preferred by German settlers. Below, the Sisters' House (1744 & 1772) in Bethlehem, Pa.; this urban, German-style house has a gambrel roof and two tiers of dormers.



Other German building traditions are also apparent in the Single Brothers' House: the pent roof above the first floor, for example, and the steep gable roof that results in a two-storey attic. A similar Moravian structure, the Sisters' House in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, shown at right, has a German gambrel roof with two tiers of dormers.

Since the Moravians lived communally, their buildings usually are large, arranged in clusters in planned villages. There are many other, more representative, examples of German buildings intended for single families and rural settings. A typical expression of German influence in early American building is the single-storey cabin with an interior chimney and stove designed to serve both the kitchen and the *stube*, or parlor. Three excellent examples are shown on this and the following page. All are of sturdy stone construction, a strong Germanic preference. (Horizontal log construction, however, was also common.) In stone buildings, segmentally arched window and door lintels relieved much of the stress of the heavy building material. Doors typically were constructed of diagonal boards, like those at Fort Zeller on the next page, but few pioneer dwellings had such elaborately carved stone lintels and door surrounds. Fort Zeller's "kick" roof, with a slight flare near the edge, is supported by ceiling joists that extend through the exterior walls. These through-the-wall joists were a fairly common feature of Germanic construction, but by now the joist ends of many houses have succumbed to rot and decay. Often, the Germans built above fresh-

water springs, ensuring a safe, all-weather supply for themselves and their animals. Very high attics often included space for storing grain. In German areas of Missouri and Wisconsin, a few traditional German housebarns can still be found. In these structures family and farm animals shared the same roof, if not the same living space.

Before the advent of the balloon-framed house in the 1830s, all wood construction in the U.S. was by definition heavy-timber construction. The only questions were how much timber of what size to use and how to put it together. It's generally believed that the Swedes built the first horizontal log structures in America. But this country's lush forests offered a ready supply of the raw material, and other European settlers, including the Germans, began building them. The log house soon became common in the Northeast and, of course, as settlement moved westward, it became the house type that we remember as a symbol of the frontier.

German houses usually didn't have porches. They often did have pent roofs, or pent eaves, jutting out between the first and second storeys to shelter doors and windows on the first floor. Roofs were often covered with flat red tiles, and a few of these tile roofs are still around — at Ephrata Cloister in Lititz, Pennsylvania, for example.

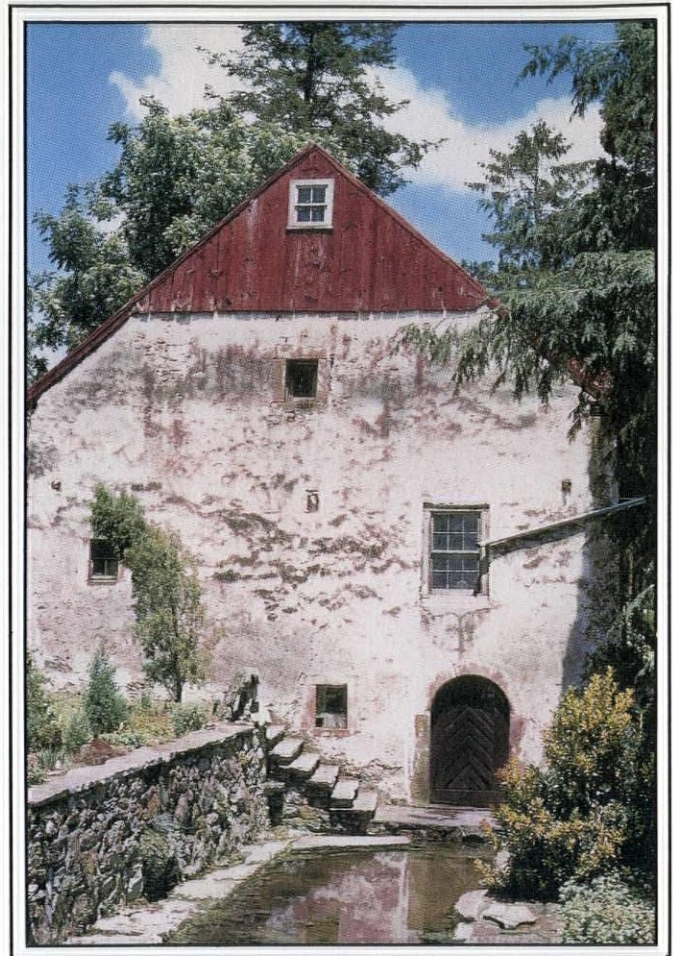
French Traditions

French house-building in the New World was very different. While French settlers knew how to build with horizontally laid logs (a process they called *piece-sur-piece*), early French houses in America were often built of vertical posts sunk into the ground *poteaux-en-terre* fashion — literally, “posts in the ground.” Unfortunately, most of these early structures have fallen victim to damp earth and insects. Pictured opposite, below, is one exception, the Bequet-Ribault House in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, recently restored by private owners. Dendrochronology, a complex process used to estimate the age of tree rings in its timbers, has set the date of this house at c. 1809.

Other houses, also often short-lived, were built *poteaux-sur-solle*, with their posts mortised into a sill resting on the ground. *Poteaux-en-terre* and *poteaux-sur-solle* are more closely related to half-timbering (which the French called *colombage*) than to horizontal-log construction, since the spaces between the upright posts were nogged with bricks or *bousillage*, a mixture of clay and dried moss. Wooden braces helped hold the nogging in place, and wood siding or an exterior plaster coat were additional protection. Still, the structures were very vulnerable to water damage. Examples of *poteaux-sur-solle* construction have been documented as late as 1850. On the opposite page, above, is an important restored example in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, where the largest single concentration of these early buildings can be found.

The French solved the problem of rotting foundations and melting nogging with the one-storey raised cottage. It became the hallmark of French-influenced architecture in the Gulf Coast states. Built by immigrants from the French West Indies who had lots of experience with heat and torrential rain, these houses stood on piers that allowed air to flow freely beneath the buildings. No wooden structural members touched the ground, and if the piers rotted, they could be replaced. Steep, double-pitched, hipped roofs sent rainwater cascading downward, and deep porches kept it safely away from walls and windows.

The gable-sided house with front and often rear porches tucked under a single-pitch roof was a slightly later development. It became very popular around New Orleans. In these houses, an exterior staircase to the second floor was often sheltered by the roof. Chimneys usually were on interior walls. The design of urban buildings, like the attached townhouses of New Orleans's Vieux Carre, was not always amenable to a floored porch. These urban houses commonly had an overhang, or *abat-vent*, supported by iron brackets or rafter extensions; sit-



Two German houses: Above, Fort Zeller (1745), in New-
manstown, Pa., with a typical “kick” roof supported by ceiling
joists that extend through the exterior walls. Below, the Scheif-
ferstadt (mid-18th century), in Frederick, Md.; another hand-
some construction in stone.






Two French houses in Missouri: Above, the *Amoureux House* (c. 1785), with the double-pitched, hipped roof and deep porch common to French houses on the Gulf Coast. Below, the *Bequet-Ribault House* (1809), with vertical posts sunk into the ground.

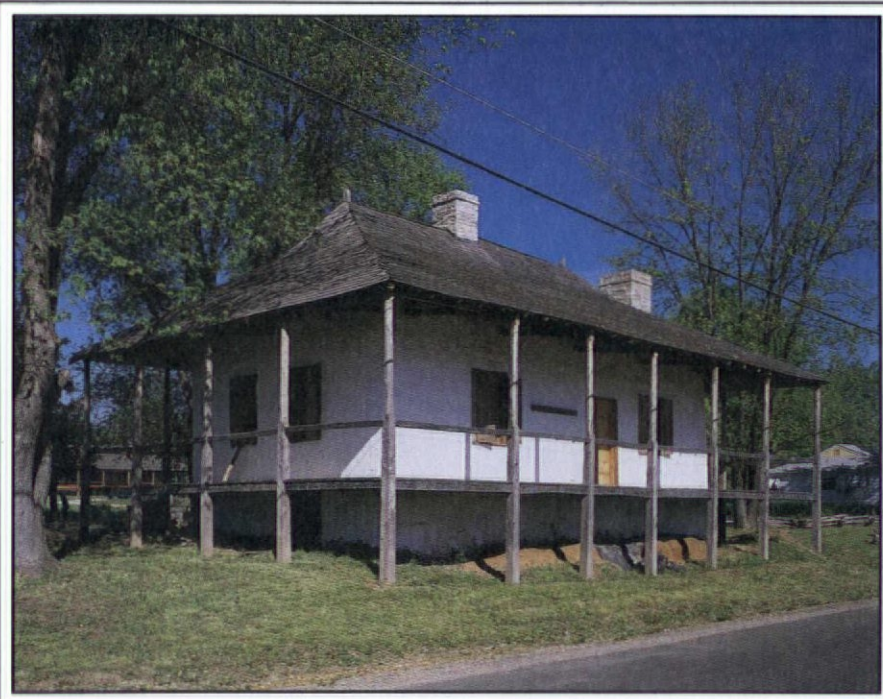
uated above the *abat-vent* was often a lovely wrought-iron balcony.

The flared roof and the *galerie*, or deep, encircling porch, of French Colonial dwellings in the Mississippi Valley arrived by very different routes. But they've been seen

together so often that they now seem like one phenomenon. The steep, central portion of the roof, or *pavilion*, was brought by French colonists from Quebec, where it helped dispatch rain from their thatched roofs. The *galerie* was brought to America by the West Indian French.

Like other vernacular designs from the Colonial period, those of French settlers incorporated elements of the Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival styles as they came along. Center-hall floorplans and symmetrical facades, hipped roofs and doublehung sashes — they all slipped easily into the old vernacular, creating by the 1830s an unmistakable creole style. 

The next issue marks a hiatus in OHJ's style series, but Jim and Shirley will be back in September/October with a survey of Greek Revival houses.



Three of these books have countless ideas you can adapt to your period landscape. The fourth is a look at the techniques involved in building stone, log, and earth houses.

The Garden Border Book

by Mary Keen. Photographs and plans by Gemma Nesbitt. 153 pages with 60 color photographs and 30 garden plans. Capability's Books, Box 114, Deer Park, WI 54007. (800) 247-8154. Hardcover. \$29.50 ppd.

This beautiful book examines the intricate art of garden border design — particularly in the English style, very much in vogue right now. Thirty famous English gardens are described and critiqued at length. They include Rosemary Verey's August herb garden, an undulating drift of greys, whites, greens, and golds, and Amanda Garmoyle's raised, circular bed of alpine plants (see page 42).

Although there is little advice on cultivation, the garden plans accompanying each write-up do include complete plant listings with both common and Latin names. Garden dimensions and exposures are also indicated. And you'll find a helpful list of sources for plants and seeds in both the U.S. and Great Britain.

The Country House Garden

by Gervase Jackson-Stops and James Pipkin. 224 pages with 160 color photographs. The New York Graphic Society/Little, Brown and Company, 205 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016. Hardcover. \$37.50 ppd.

This is another homage to the English garden. The book describes the evolution of the garden to a high art form, and explores the art's various elements — avenues and gates, parterres and topiary, temples and fountains, and much more.

Look at this book for the sheer pleasure of the photographs. There are no how-to hints, but the pictures are so wonderfully inviting you'll want to step right into them.



This precisely clipped topiary garden, above, is at Levens Hall in Cumbria, England, and was planted between 1689 and 1712.

Native Trees, Shrubs, and Vines for Urban and Rural America

by Gary L. Hightshoe. 819 pages, illustrated with black-and-white drawings throughout. Van Nostrand Reinhold, 115 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003. Hardcover. \$84.95 ppd.

This encyclopedic volume is a tremendous resource. As Mr. Hightshoe points out in his introduction, we are in an era when many landscape designers are striving to maintain or restore the ecological context of the gardens they create. That entails using native trees and shrubs, which generally are also hardier and easier to work with than modern hybrids.

Using this extremely well organized reference, you can determine the look and the needs of virtually any native tree, shrub, or vine that strikes your fancy. Plant listings include a photograph or drawing, a climate zone map showing the plant's natural range, common and Latin names, and detailed information on everything from foliage and soil needs to the plant's tolerance of city living.

Although this is a book designed for professionals, it's so well orga-

nized and clearly written that anyone with a serious interest in the subject will find it useful.

Stone, Log, and Earth Houses

by Magnus Berglund. 152 pages, profusely illustrated with color and black-and-white photographs, line drawings, and floor plans. The Taunton Press, 63 South Main Street, Box 355, Newtown, CT 06470. Softcover. \$15.95 ppd.

Magnus Berglund first got involved with houses as a remodeling contractor, but soon found his real love was building with stone, logs, earth, and other "elemental materials." In this book, he covers the techniques involved in working with stone, logs, and earth (both rammed and adobe), the pros and cons of each material, and how people have built with them through the ages. He also takes a detailed, step-by-step look at the construction of nine houses in New Mexico and on the West Coast. The houses are attractive and, according to Mr. Berglund, inexpensive and energy-efficient. He also claims that getting mortgages and okays from the local building inspector is no insurmountable problem.

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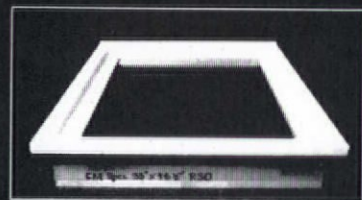
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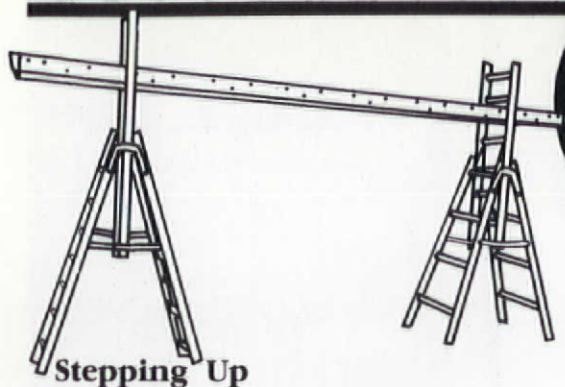
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Stepping Up

If Gordon Bock's article on page 33 has inspired you to repaint your house, you may want to think about replacing that teetering old ladder you've been making do with. Lynn Ladder and Scaffolding Co.'s 100-page catalog includes everything from stepstools to industrial-grade scaffold systems, plus a full complement of accessories. What's more, it tells you how to choose a ladder or scaffolding and how to use it safely. Working with scaffolding can be dangerous, and the company has been active in setting safety standards for the industry. (See "A Scaffolding Primer," July 1985 OHJ.)

Depending on your budget and the projects you intend to tackle, Lynn Ladder's Alan Kline recommends either an extension ladder that reaches at least up to your gut-

ters (wooden ladders generally are the better buy); a pair of heavy-duty, 61-pound, wooden trestles with an extended length of 11'11" and a 16-foot-long aluminum stage, like the setup above (\$527); or some light-duty scaffold (a rolling, two-section, tubular-steel tower costs \$700).

Lynn Ladder and Scaffolding Co., P.O. Box 346, Dept. OHJ, 220 South Common St., West Lynn, MA 01905. (617) 598-6010.

Bluestone Revival

Eleven years ago Bruce O'Brien took over New York Quarries, Inc., the company founded by his dad in 1954. Virtually singlehandedly, the O'Briens have revived quarrying in New York's Hudson Valley region, a livelihood abandoned during the 1920s and '30s. If you're planning a

stone wall or rock garden (see articles on pages 26 and 42), you may want to give New York Quarries a call.

Bruce likes Delaware County or Alcove bluestones for retaining walls, since they're flat and easy to work with and deep enough to tie back into the embankment. Alcove bluestone, known historically as North River or Hudson River bluestone, comes in striking blues, browns, and rusts. It runs \$45/ton, and you can figure on getting 15 sq.ft./ton in a 2-ft.-high retaining wall.

For freestanding walls, Bruce is fond of limerock, also known as Onandaga stone, a grey-and-beige limestone with a warm, weathered, rustic look. Limerock costs \$110/ton, and each ton will cover about 15 sq.ft. of freestanding wall 2 ft. high. Alcove bluestone and limerock in boulder form are great for rock gardens, too.

New York Quarries can send you free information on its various stones. Bruce also operates a separate stonework company, O'Brien Stone Erectors. You can reach either company at P.O. Box 43, Dept. OHJ, Rte. 111, Alcove, NY 12007. (518) 756-3138.

Growth Industry

Although interest in historic landscapes is blossoming, few nurseries specialize in early-20th-century plants, much less ones grown in pre-1850 gardens. But in recent months, we're happy to report, a few have sprouted up.

For about a year, the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants has been digging around for early American plants, particularly those grown by the nation's third president, an avid gardener. The Center's free seed list includes rare, 17th-century varieties with quaint names like Loves-lies-bleeding (*Amaranthus caudatus*). Seed packets cost \$1.25 apiece,

plus \$2.50 for shipping and handling per order. Write The Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants, Monticello, P.O. Box 316, Dept. OHJ, Charlottesville, VA 22902.

After restoring her 1835 home in Union, Connecticut, Marilyn Barlow turned her attention to the garden and realized she had a tough row to hoe. Nobody could tell her which plants to use in her period land-

scape, much less where to find them. After extensive research, she decided to fill this hole in the garden trade herself.

Select Seeds, her home-based business, offers an extensive variety of historic annual and perennial seeds for \$1.25 per packet, plus 10% postage and handling. Marilyn's catalog costs \$1.50. Write Select Seeds, Dept. OHJ, 81 Stickney Hill Road, Union, CT 06076.





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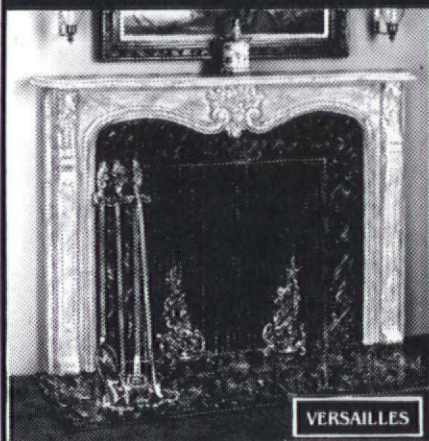
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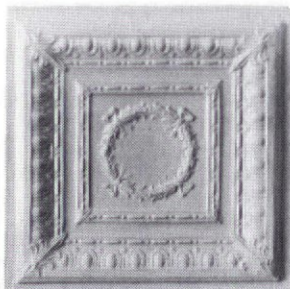
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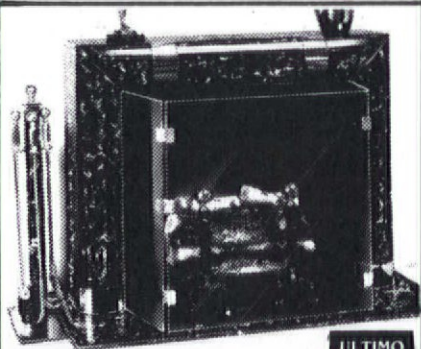
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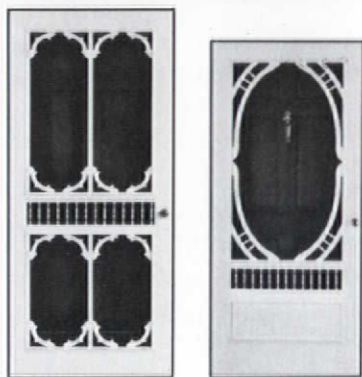
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Victorian Screen Doors

Over the years, if Victorian screen doors weren't ripped off with the rest of a home's original fanciwork in the name of modernization, they fell apart and were replaced by models that didn't exactly complement the period exterior. The Old Wagon Factory offers a variety of combination storm-and-screen doors suitable for Victorian houses. They're all hand-made from solid hardwood with brass or cast-iron fittings.

The door pictured below, right costs \$360 for standard 32" x 81" and

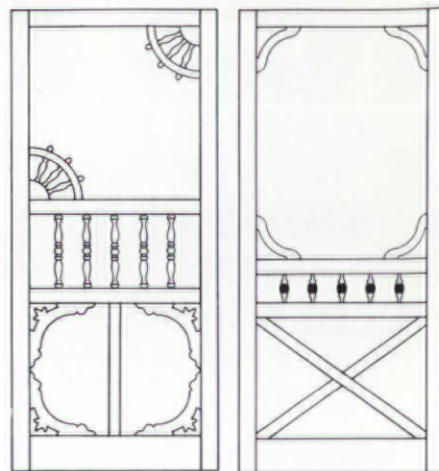


36" x 81" sizes and \$390 for custom sizes; the one to its left is \$330 in the standard sizes and \$30 more for custom sizes. The company also has a line of Chippendale-style storm-and-screen doors.

For a catalog, send \$2 to The Old Wagon Factory, P.O. Box 1427, Dept. OJE8, Clarksville, VA 23927. (804) 374-5787.

Do-It-Yourself Doors

If you'd prefer to make a door yourself, *Ornate Victorian Screen Door Pattern & Plan Book* can help. The 21-page sourcebook was compiled by Dan and Pat Miller after researching doors for their Elgin, Illinois, home. It includes patterns and instructions for screen or combination storm-and-screen doors with Victorian scroll-



work and ball-and-spindle designs.

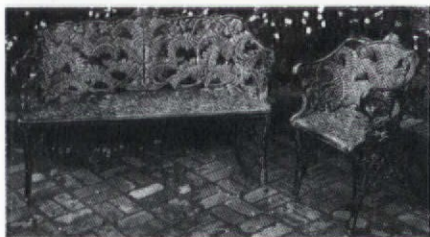
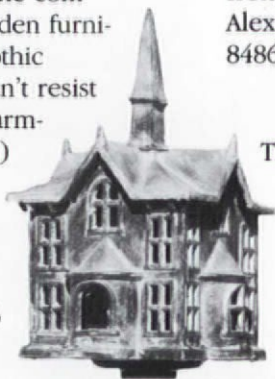
Various combinations of brackets and spindles are suggested (two of the designs are illustrated above), but you can also use the full-size templates provided in any combination that suits your fancy. Various suppliers are also listed.

You can get a copy by sending \$5, which includes postage and handling, to Dan Miller, 155 S. Gifford, Dept. OHJ, Elgin, IL 60120.

Cast-Iron Ornaments

Victorians loved cast-iron ornaments in their landscapes, and Robinson Iron has one of the most extensive lines of reproductions around — from urns and statuary to finials and fountains.

Among the most delightful garden furniture of the period were the cast-iron pieces featuring whimsical fern designs; Robinson Iron's reproduction chair (\$750) and settee (\$1,190) are pictured right. The company also makes garden furniture in rustic and gothic styles. And we couldn't resist showing you the charming birdhouse (\$220) right. Each piece is available in a variety of finishes, including gloss white, matte or gloss black, verdigris, and bronzing.



Robinson Iron's catalog, full of color photographs of elegant Victorian gardens, costs \$3. Robinson Iron, P.O. Drawer 1235, Dept. OHJ, Alexander City, AL 35010. (205) 329-8486.

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found at most major depots during the 19th century) to their line. When owner Mike Harrel saw the mailbox, below, on a Savannah estate, he knew he had to offer it as well. The 4'-high mailbox is cast iron, comes in green or black with a solid-brass mail drop, and costs \$95.50.

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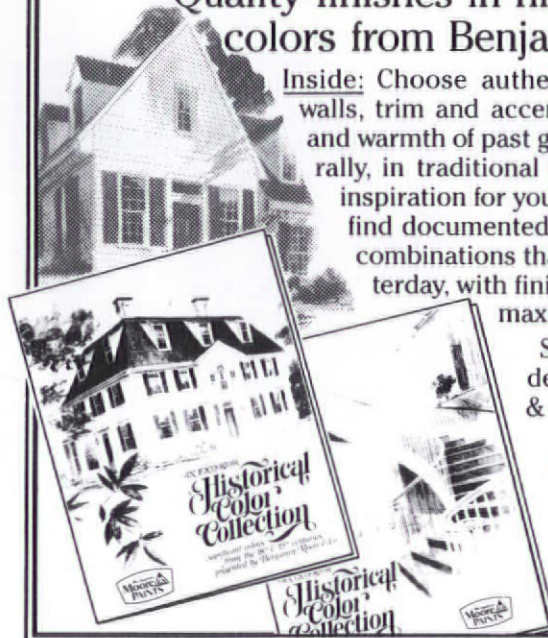
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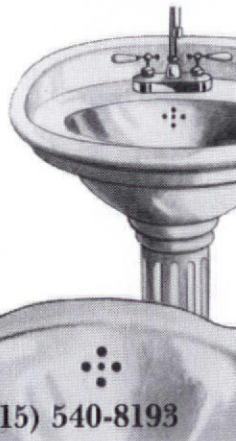


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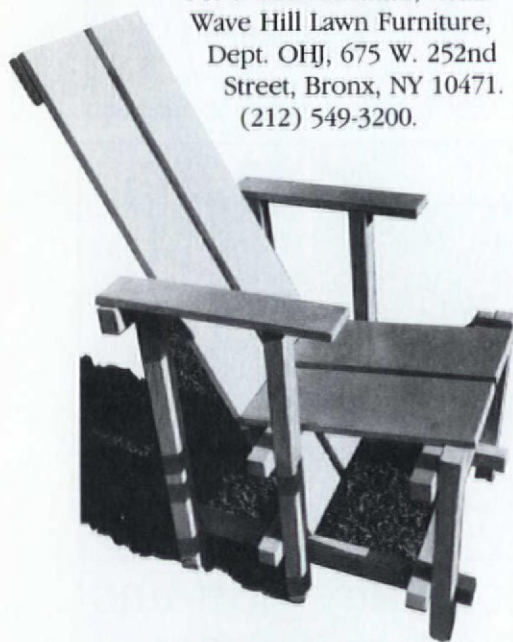


Wave Hill Lawn Chair

Anyone who visits Wave Hill, a public garden in the Bronx, New York City's northernmost borough, can't help but notice the handsome lawn chairs that grace the grounds. Last year, Wave Hill decided to make them available to the public.

The Wave Hill Lawn Chair, below, is based on a 1918 design by Dutch architect Gerrit Rietveld, and it's an interesting alternative to the Adirondack chair and its ubiquitous redwood counterparts. The chair is completely handcrafted of solid pine and comes fully assembled and ready to finish. It costs \$125, plus \$15 for shipping; if you live outside the New York metropolitan area, you'll have to arrange for shipping yourself.

For a free brochure, write Wave Hill Lawn Furniture, Dept. OHJ, 675 W. 252nd Street, Bronx, NY 10471. (212) 549-3200.



American Bench

The current craze for English gardens has created a brisk trade in the kind of wooden benches tucked in intimate corners of Sissinghurst, Hidcote, and other English gardens. The bench, above, center, available from Smith & Hawken, caught our eye because it's indigenous to the American Southwest.

The *portal*, or porch, is an important architectural feature throughout



the Southwest. And that's where you'll find these benches, often in a picturesque weathered or even dilapidated state. The original benches were made of pine; for durability, Smith & Hawken has made theirs of heavy redwood timber. Each one is handmade, approximately 4' x 38-3/8" x 17", and embellished with carving. The benches cost \$575 and are shipped fully assembled.

You can reach Smith & Hawken at 25 Corte Madera, Dept. OHJ, Mill Valley, CA 94941. (415) 383-4050.

Planters, Italian Style

Post-Victorian gardeners admired the classic Italian garden, which often featured terra-cotta planters like the ones below and above, right. Made in Italy and offered by Kuma Enterprises in New York, they're based on designs by early-twentieth-century French landscape architect Tobias Loup de Viane.



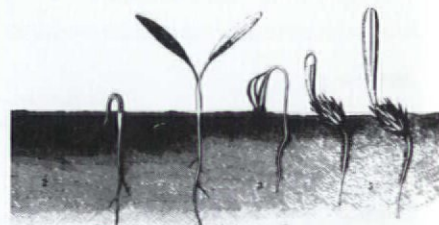
"Medici," pictured below, is 18" high and 20" in diameter and costs \$400. "Nettuno," right, is 41" high and 35" in diameter and costs \$3,000.



The company will send you its handsome portfolio for free, but you'll need an interior decorator or architect to place the order for you. Write Kuma Enterprises at 11 East 57th St., Dept. OHJ, New York, NY 10022. (212) 888-4818.

Shake, Scatter, & Grow

It's not surprising that Arts & Crafts proponents, trying to blur the distinction between the garden and the wild, would want to invite birds and



other creatures into their midst. Earthen Joys offers a number of pre-mixed seed collections designed to do just that. They come in handy containers that resemble large salt and pepper shakers.

One collection is designed to lure hummingbirds into your backyard; another, butterflies. The Cottage Garden collection features the kind of old-fashioned flowers that probably flourished in your Grandma's garden. Still another mix is designed to be an olfactory delight; fragrance is a dimension all-but-forgotten in most modern gardens. Each collection costs \$9.95 and will cover 300 square feet.

For \$2, Earthen Joys can provide you with a copy of its catalog. Earthen Joys, 1412 11th St., Dept. OHJ, Astoria, OR 97103. 1-(800) 451-4540.



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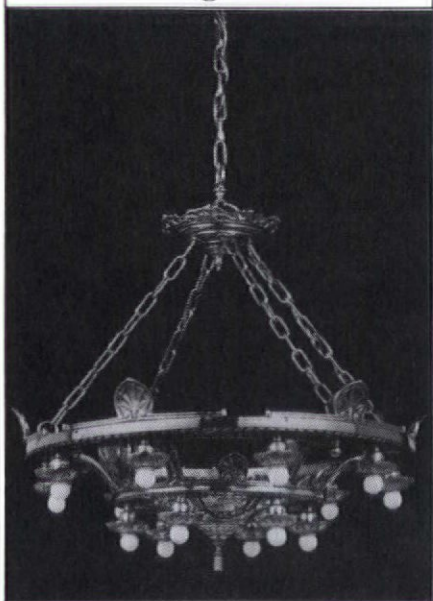
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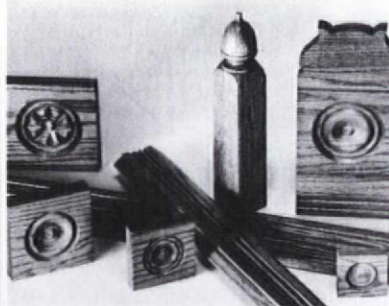
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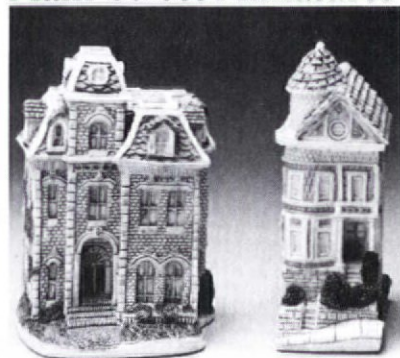


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Perhaps you don't envy the projects in store for old-house owners with dilapidated outbuildings (see page 38), but you do wish you had an outdoor place to store tools or sip tea. The following companies can provide you with plans or completely assembled structures that complement your period house.

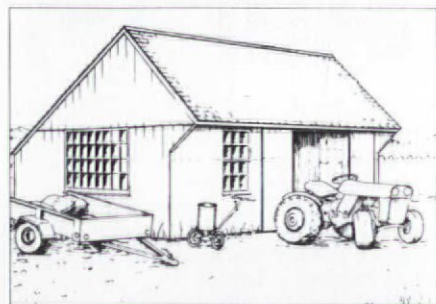
Outbuilding Plans

Country Designs specializes in plans for garages, barns, sheds, playhouses, and other structures compatible with period architecture. All plans are designed for the do-it-yourselfer. To make the plans easy to understand, structural as well as decorative features like cornices and entryways are laid out in great detail, and the draw-



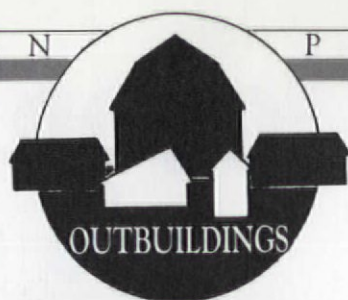
ings are done in a large scale that's easy to read.

Plans for the 8' x 8' garden shed above cost \$7.50 ppd. The equipment shed, called the "toy box," pictured



above is 15'6" x 20', and plans cost \$22 ppd. Country Designs' 25-page catalog, which costs \$3, also includes plans for bungalow-style pool houses, Victorian gazebos and well houses, and period fences.

Country Designs, P.O. Box 774, Dept. OHJ, Essex, CT 06426. (203) 767-1046.



Japanesque Outbuildings

If Japanesque is to your liking, you can get a tea house or *machai* (waiting arbor) from Fuji Group America.

In Japan, it's traditional for guests to approach the waiting arbor after entering the outer tea garden. They take their seats on the bench, with the most honored guest closest to the tea house, and wait for the tea master to summon them.

Both the waiting arbor (\$5,000), pictured above, and the tea house (\$30,000) are made of cedar from the Shino Forest in Japan. They're assembled here in America.

Fuji Group America, Inc., 1901 Ave. of the Stars, #1774, Dept. OHJ, Los Angeles, CA 90067. (213) 621-2703.

She Does Gazebos

Janet Baldi, the owner of Gazebo of Greenwich, a Connecticut-based company, sells hand-crafted, octagonal-shaped gazebos with graceful "ogive," or inward-curved, cedar-shake roofs. The gazebo, illustrated below, is available in 10', 12', and 14' sizes finished with white primer or pale beige bleaching oil. Steps and interior benches are included.

The 12' model, unassembled, costs approximately \$8000. In the Northeast, it can be delivered and installed for an additional \$1000.

For more information, call Janet at (203) 629-2391.



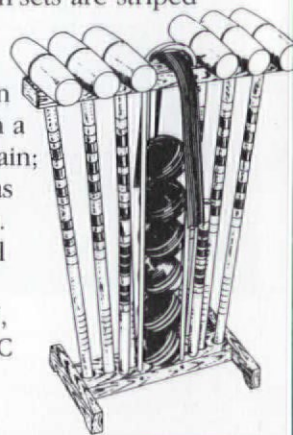
Croquet Sets

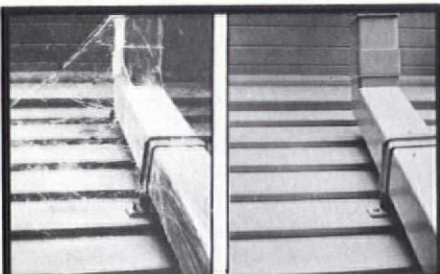
What can be more romantic than a game of croquet on a late afternoon in summer, with crickets chirping and fireflies about to appear? The Mast General Store has two croquet sets: Skowhegan, a deluxe set for six players (\$55.95), and Camden, available in four- or six-player sets (\$34.95 and \$43.95, respectively).

The Skowhegan comes with a wheeled rack, and the mallet heads are machine-turned and fitted with high-impact caps to make them last.

Handles of both sets are striped and grooved for good grip. The Skowhegan is finished with a deep walnut stain; the Camden has a natural finish.

Mast General Store, Hwy 194, Dept. OHJ, Valle Crucis, NC 28691. (704) 963-6511.





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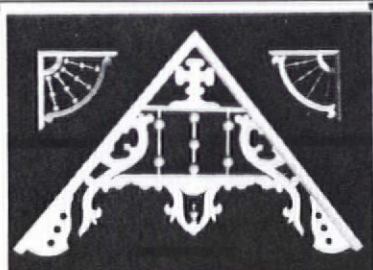
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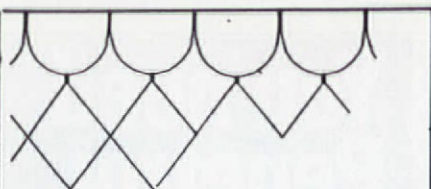
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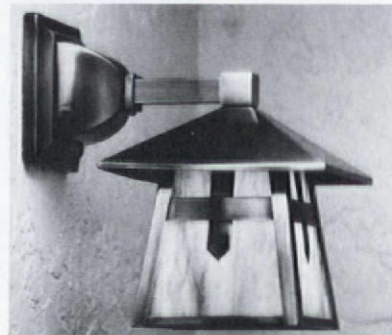
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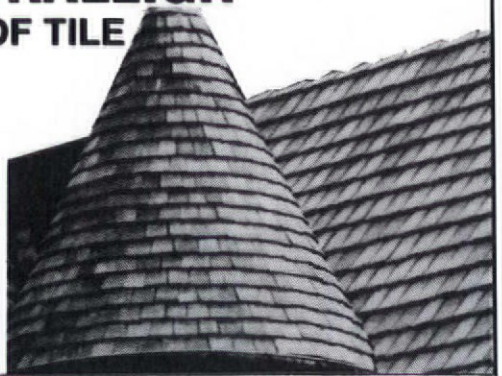
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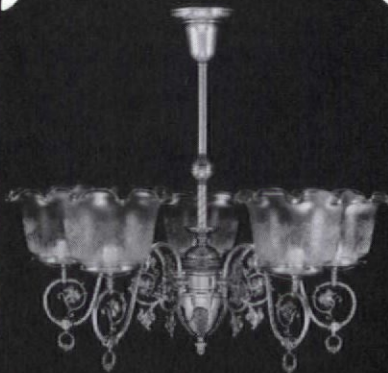
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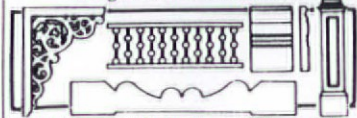
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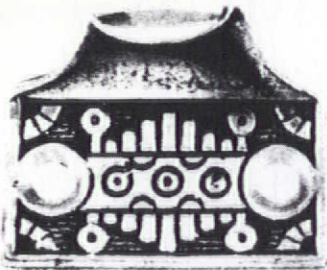
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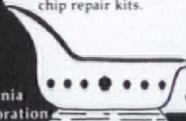
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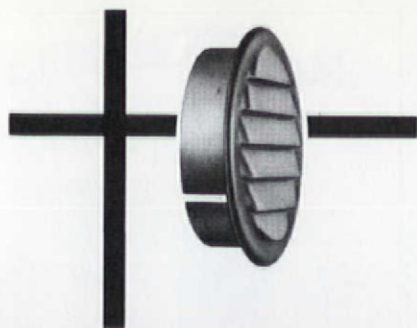
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MEETINGS & EVENTS

VICTORIAN SOCIETY SUMMER SCHOOLS will take place in Newport, RI, June 4-18, and London, England, July 2-22. Both schools provide a scholarly introduction to the Victorian period, with particular emphasis on architecture. For a descriptive brochure or application, write to The Victorian Society in America, 219 South Sixth Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106. (215) 627-4252.

VICTORIAN ARCHITECTURE: In an exhibition running until June 15, 1989, the Connecticut Valley His-

torical Museum will showcase the styles that were common in and around Springfield, MA. Four key styles will be studied in detail: Gothic, Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, & Romanesque. For more information, write the Museum at 194 State Street, Springfield, MA 01103, or call (413) 732-3080.

"INSIDE CAPE MAY," June 24, 25, & 26. Sponsored by the Cape May County Art League, the weekend will feature a different group of building interiors on Saturday, June 25, & Sunday, June 26. A number of homes will be on the tour for the first time. For additional information, contact the Art League, Box 596, 1050 Washington Street, Cape May, NJ 08204. (609) 884-8628.

HIGH TEA & HIGH JINX: An array of tea sets with accompanying accoutrements will be displayed in various rooms throughout the Woodruff-Fontaine House, a restored & furnished Victorian mansion. Mannequins dressed in period clothing will be shown in vignettes portraying High Tea, Family Tea, Morning Calls, Receptions, and other entertainments. Exhibit runs through October 30. Woodruff-Fontaine House, 680 Adams Avenue, Memphis, TN 38105. (901) 526-1469.

PRESERVATION CONFERENCE: 'Your Old House,' sessions on renovating old structures, foundation to roof. Expert counsel. Tour examples. Fee. May 27-28, Donaldson Brown Center, VA Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Contact Gibson Worsham, New River Valley Preservation League, Rte. 2, Box 431, Christiansburg, VA 24073. (703) 552-4730.

WORKSHOP: New Materials Used In Historic Structures, May 19, 8 AM to 5:30 PM, San Francisco, CA. Will cover use, criteria for selection, manufacture, and installation of substitute materials; a case study will focus on the replication of terra cotta with fiberglass. Registration: \$75 for APT members; \$85 for non-members; \$50 for APT student & senior members; \$55 for student & senior non-members. Contact Western Chapter of APT, PO Box 42458, San Francisco, CA 94142.

LEARNING WEEKS IN ARCHAEOLOGY: Participants will have an opportunity to work in the field with foundation archeologists doing excavation at several important Historic Area properties. A series of six 2-week sessions are planned, including May 15-27, June 12-24, July 17-19, Aug. 28-Sept. 9, & Sept. 18-30. There are 12 openings for each session, and registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Full 2-week session, \$650; single-week, \$400. Fee includes the program, meals, special tours, & field trips. For registration or additional information on housing options & costs, write Marley R. Brown, Director of Archaeological Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, PO Box C, Williamsburg, VA 23187.

PETERSBURG HISTORIC HOUSE TOUR: Preservation In Progress. Sunday, June 12, 11 AM to 5 PM. Contact Petersburg Historic Preservation Assoc., PO Box 3, Petersburg, IL 62675.

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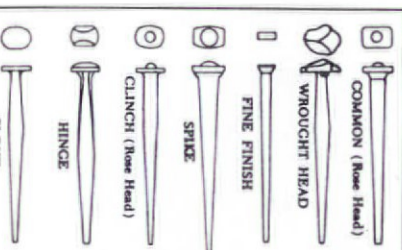
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TV Heat Guns Aren't So Hot

OHJ's editors have been conducting extensive tests on all the new plastic heat guns that have been advertised on TV. And we've come to the conclusion that the red, all-metal Master HG-501 takes off the most paint in the least time.

Family Handyman magazine found the same thing. In test results reported in the March 1985 issue, the *Family Handyman* reviewer said of the Master HG-501: "It did the best job for me."

Although The Old-House Journal has been selling the Master HG-501 for several years, we have no ties to Master. (We are free to sell *any* heat gun — or no heat gun at all.) We offer the Master HG-501 because it is an industrial

tool that is not generally available to homeowners. For our readers who want the best, we'll continue to make available the all-metal HG-501 by mail.

The Master HG-501 vs. TV Heat Guns

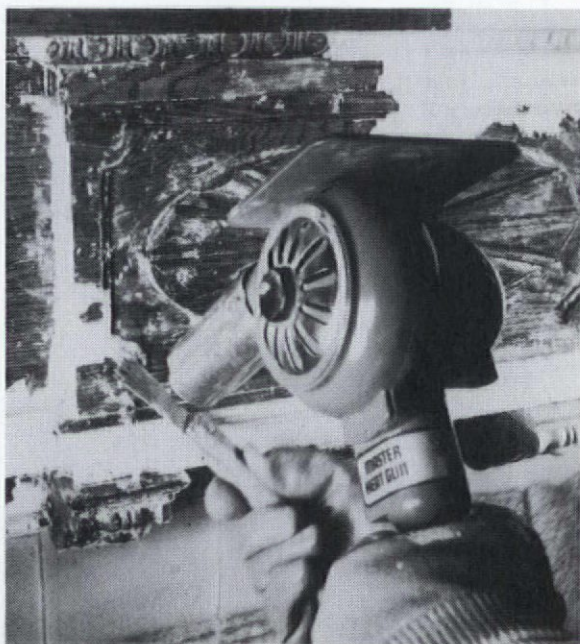
In our tests, we found three major differences between the Master HG-501 and the mass-market TV heat guns: (1) the phrase "high-impact corrosion-resistant material" means "plastic." The HG-501, on the other hand, has an industrial-quality, cast-aluminum body that will stand a lot of rugged use. (2) With cheaper heat guns, heat output drops off after a while —

which means slower paint stripping. The HG-501 runs at a steady, efficient temperature, hour after hour. (3) When a cheaper heat gun is dead, it's dead. By contrast, the long-lasting ceramic heating element in the HG-501 is *replaceable*. When it eventually burns out, you can put a new one in yourself for \$8. (OHJ maintains a stock of replacement elements.)

Also, with the HG-501 you get two helpful flyers prepared by our editors: One gives hints and tips for stripping with heat; the other explains lead poisoning and fire hazards. OHJ is the *only* heat-gun supplier to give full details on the dangers posed by lead-based paint.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE HG-501:

- **Fastest, cleanest way to strip paint. Heat guns are NOT recommended for varnish, shellac, or milk paint.**
- **UL approved.**
- **Adjustable air-intake varies temperature from 500° F. to 750° F.**
- **Draws 14 amps at 115 volts.**
- **Rugged, die-cast aluminum body — no plastics.**
- **Handy built-in tool stand.**
- **6-month manufacturer's warranty.**



The OHJ Guarantee: If a gun malfunctions within 60 days of purchase, return it to us and we'll replace it free. Price: \$77.95 — including UPS shipping. Use Order Form in this issue.

HOW WE CAME TO SELL THE HG-501

OHJ created the market for paint-stripping heat guns. In 1976, Patricia & Wilkie Talbert of Oakland told us about a remarkable way they'd discovered to strip paint in their home: with an industrial tool, the HG-501 heat gun. We printed their letter and were deluged with phone calls and letters from people who couldn't find this wonder tool.

We learned that the HG-501 was meant for shrink-wrapping plastic packaging. It was made by a Wisconsin manufacturer who wasn't interested in the retail market. So, as a reader service, we became a mail-order distributor. Since then, more than 12,000 OHJ subscribers have bought the Master HG-501.

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201. **Antique Street Lighting** — Keep the historic character of your neighborhood with authentic antique street lamps — completely reconditioned. Individual components allow you to customize your lamp. Free brochure. **LampLight Industries**.

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opinion... Remuddling




Two California makeovers: Left, a semi-bungalow semi-bungled; below, a victimized Victorian.

GOOPED

Both these remuddlings are from California, but the urge to encase old houses in sticky goop is a phenomenon all-too-familiar throughout the country. (Then again, California is the home of the La Brea Tar Pits — maybe there's a connection!)

Certainly the 1920s house in Monrovia, pictured left, above, has been fossilized in all that stucco. Charlotte and Lee Schamadan, who sent the photograph, informed us that "the stucco is pale yellow, the roof is light green, and the bay is aluminum in basic black."

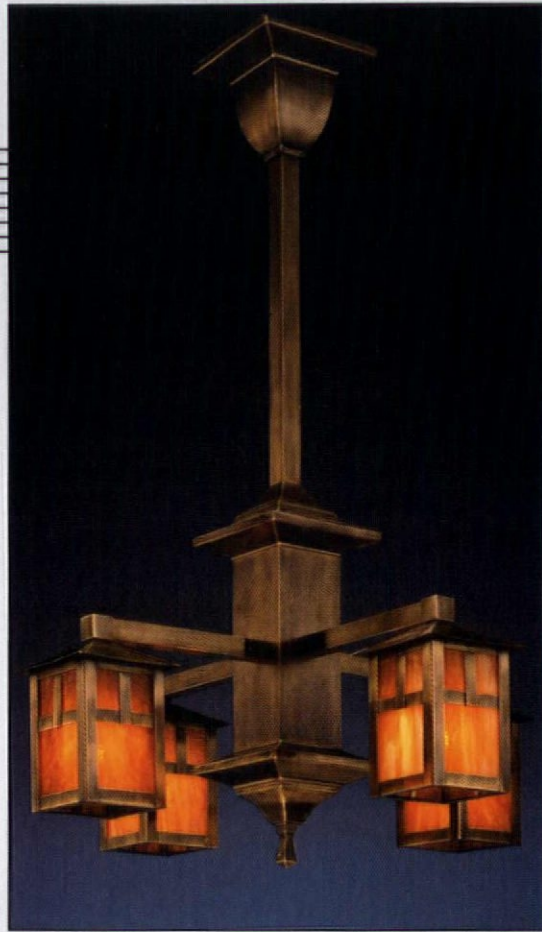
Larry Dane Brimmer submitted the Victorian houses pictured left, below. They started life as identical twins in a San Francisco streetscape, but now they look as if one's been through a time warp. The one on the left, besides having been coated with extreme prejudice (in a vaguely morbid dark-green hue), is a victim of remodeller's malpractice: radical cornice-ectomy, triple refenestration, and amputation of the portico. 



WIN FAME AND \$50: If you spot a classic example of remuddling, send us a clear black & white photo. We'll award \$50 if your photos are selected. The message is more dramatic if you send along a picture of a similar unremuddled building. Remuddling Editor, The Old-House Journal, 69A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217.

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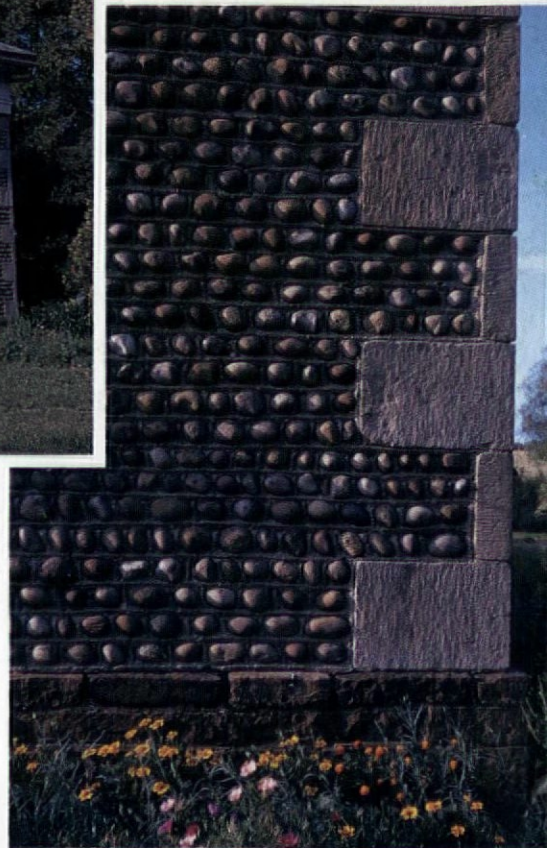


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COBBLESTONES



Three cobblerstones in upstate New York: Above, a typical Greek Revival farmhouse, the most common style of the cobblerstone era. At right, detail of another Greek Revival farmhouse, showing the cut quoins found in almost all cobblerstone buildings. Below, a house in Arts & Crafts style.

Sometime in the mid-1820s, the first cobblerstone structure was built in upstate New York. This new style featured carefully matched cobbles laid in rows in natural lime mortar. For the next 40 years, the cobblerstone style appeared from Lake Ontario south to the Finger Lakes region, and spread west as far as the Illinois-Wisconsin border, where the second-largest group of American cobblerstone buildings was constructed in the 1840s and '50s.

Most cobblerstone structures were farmhouses, from simple to grandiose, but almost every kind of building was constructed in this regional mode. And most of the cobblerstone houses were in the Greek Revival style. However, virtually all of the popular architectural styles of the 19th century appeared in cobblerstone. Within one generation, nearly 1,000 cobblerstone structures were built.

— Robert W. Frasch

Mr. Frasch is the Director of the School of Science and Man at the Rochester Museum and Science Center, a former Chairman of the Rochester Preservation Board, and currently a trustee of the Cobblestone Society. He is co-author of a forthcoming book on cobblerstone landmarks.

