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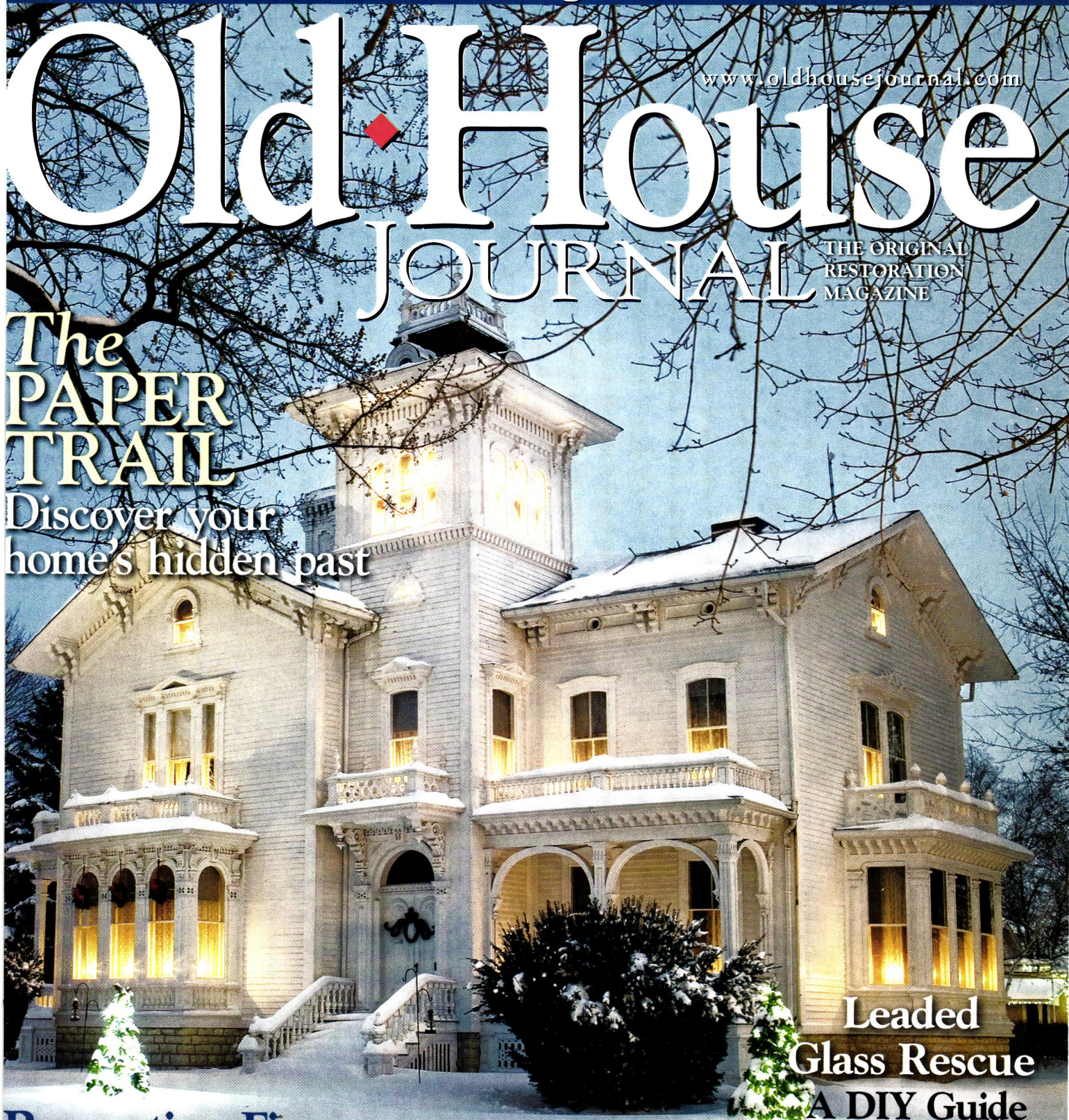
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Old House JOURNAL

THE ORIGINAL
RESTORATION
MAGAZINE

The PAPER TRAIL

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home's hidden past



Leaded Glass Rescue A DIY Guide

Preventing Fires

Protect yourself, preserve your house

Ditching the Duplex

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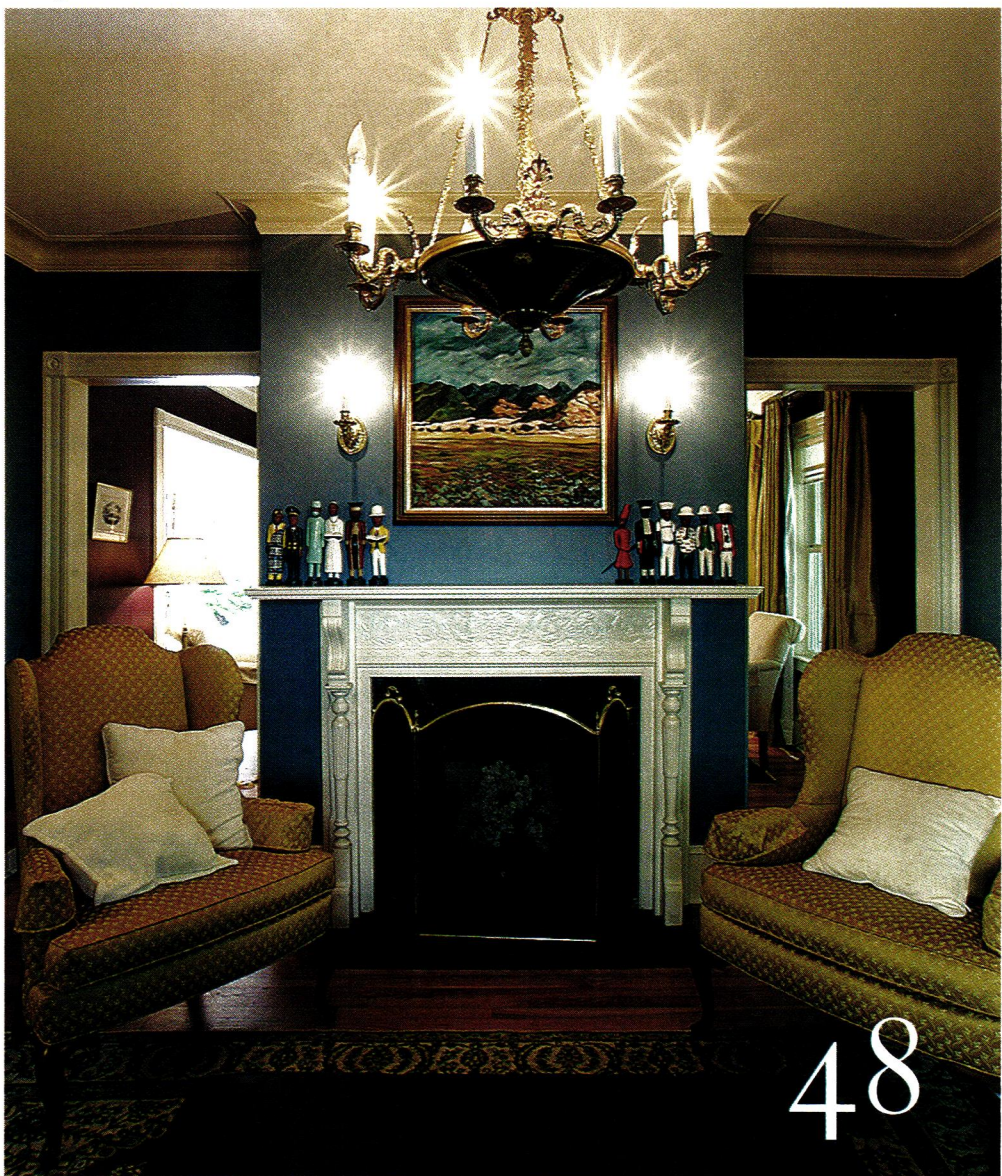
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Old House JOURNAL



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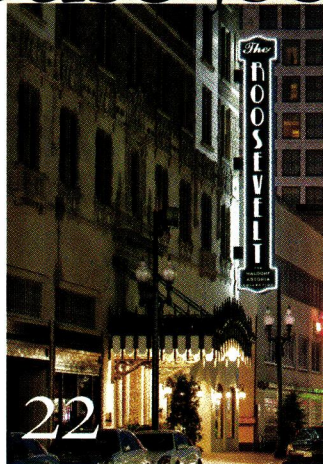
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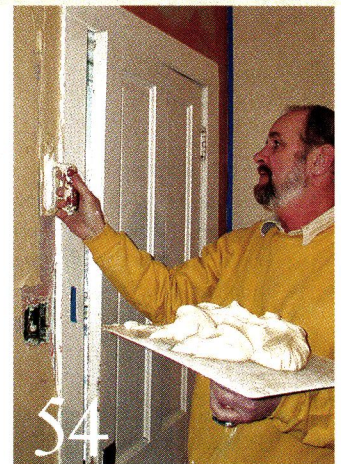
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On plaster walls, patching cracks and adding a color finish don't have to be separate procedures. Learn how to accomplish both by following a pro's two-in-one job.
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Repairing leaded glass isn't easy, but it can be done with a little time, research, and patience, as one intrepid DIYer discovers.
By LYNN ELLIOTT



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My Style



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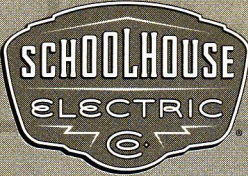
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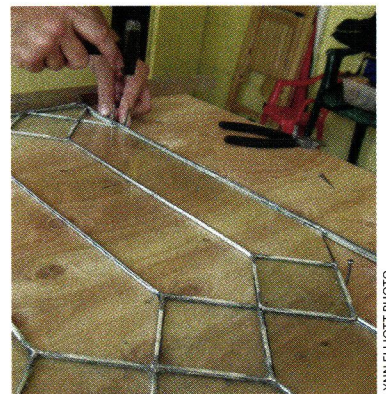
BARBARA RHINES PHOTO

Thoroughly Modern Massachusetts

Walter Gropius put the tiny town of Lincoln, Massachusetts, on the Modernist map when he took up residence there in the 1930s. Thanks to concerted preservation efforts, the town is still a wealth of early Modern architecture (like this cinder-block Bauhaus home, above and on page 44, that was rescued from a fire). See some of the highlights in our virtual tour.

Make a List, Check It Twice

Actually, we've got the first part covered. Before you embark upon a leaded-glass repair project using the instructions on page 57, head online to print out a checklist of all the tools and materials you'll need to gather before taking it on.



LYNN ELLIOTT PHOTO

Quiz Your Contractor

Looking to hire a contractor to help with your old-house restoration? You'll need to ask the tough questions in order to find the best man (or woman) for the job. Get started with our comprehensive list of queries to make before you hire.

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editor's note

Off-season Strategies



MARK W. ABBOTT PHOTO

WINTER'S HERE—what's an old-house aficionado to do? While the weather's not conducive to a majority of hands-on projects (particularly outside), it's a good time to step back and look at the big picture—like how to keep yourself and your house safe in the event of an emergency. Fires are scary; check out the video of one old-house blaze with devastating consequences on MyOldHouseJournal.com. The fire destroyed a landmark 1909 Neoclassical house in Jacksonville, Florida, its grand porch columns and original 12-over-1 windows now

lost forever (luckily, no one was hurt). According to newspaper reports, the cause was all too common: restoration work gone awry. In this case, it appears a blowtorch was being used to strip paint. Similarly, the historic Georgetown Library here in Washington, D.C., was engulfed by flames two years ago when a heat gun was



KRIS OLSON PHOTO

This Massachusetts house blaze was purportedly started by improper paint-stripping techniques. See story, page 40.

used improperly, causing serious damage. Find out what you can do to make your house less vulnerable, and keep your family safe, in this issue's informative feature, "Fighting Fires," on page 40. The off-season is also a good time to work on digging up your house's backstory. A variety of documents can help on this front, including early deeds, census records, and old newspapers. For information on how to start researching your old house, turn to "The Paper Trail" on page 30. Speaking of research, when regular contributor (and former OHJ staffer) Lynn Elliott decided to repair a leaded glass window fronting a built-in cabinet in her 1906 home, she hit the books to bone up on the best approach, leaving no stone unturned. Before you decide to dive into leaded glass work in your house, be sure you've looked at her step-by-step article, "Glass Action," on page 57. And for another look at methodical work practices, both Insider and Old-House Living explore restoration projects undertaken with professional help, handled the right way. In Insider, a nondescript Queen Anne built as a double gets turned into a grand single-family home (see "Double Play," page 48), while in Old-House Living, a homeowner slowly retools her Second Empire house with the help of a contractor (see "House Call," page 34), turning it into a jewel. Hope you enjoy these stories, and this holiday season, too.

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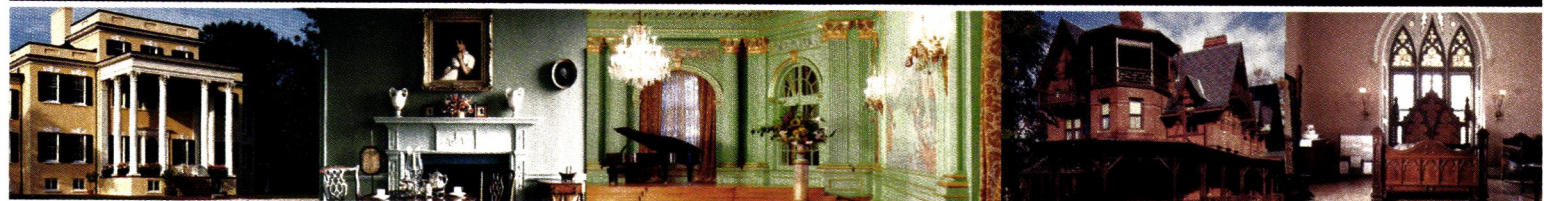
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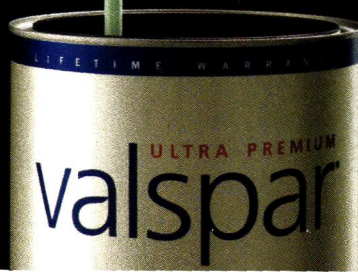
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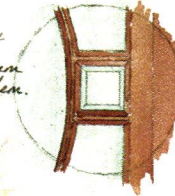
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If you could design your dream window,
what would it be?

This is a dream window with a very real purpose. I have a picture window in my family room which can't be opened.

This forces me either to turn on the air conditioning before it's needed in the rest of the house, or to roast. Usually the air conditioning wins out.

Square apertures to be sized to fit 4" x 4" glass bevels to create spectrum light patterns when the sun strikes them.

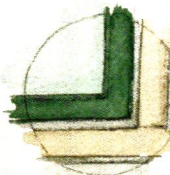


Muntins to be 1 1/8" simulated divided lites (SDL) throughout window design.

*Glass to have low emissivity coating & to be filled with argon between panes for a U value of .30
Designation - Low E3-366 w/argon*

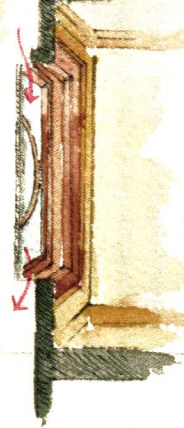
Venting picture unit to replace existing fixed picture window.

Natural cherry frame, sash, & muntins on interior of window to match color of existing trim.



*Clad colors for exterior:
Frame - pebble gray
Sash - evergreen*

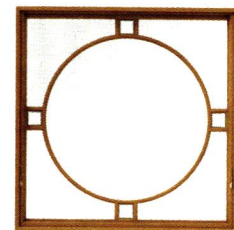
The window I envision is composed of two archetypal forms - a circle that frames the view held within a surrounding square. It's simple yet elegant, & best of all it's energy efficient and capable of providing natural ventilation when desired. A truly 'not so big' solution!



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Sarah Susanka

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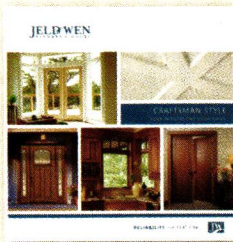
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letters

It's a Small World

When reading the story about Faith and Doug McDaniel's bungalow ("History Lessons," September/October), I recognized a familiar name. My mother, Mildred Dawn, was a friend of Billie McKinney's in Knoxville. I wonder if she and Billie ever talked about their childhood homes, for my mother grew up in a bungalow in Atlanta. When she moved to Danville, Kentucky, to be with her children and grandchildren, she moved into a 1910 bungalow that my husband and I restored for her. It was a wonderful two-bedroom house, and she lived there happily into her 90s.

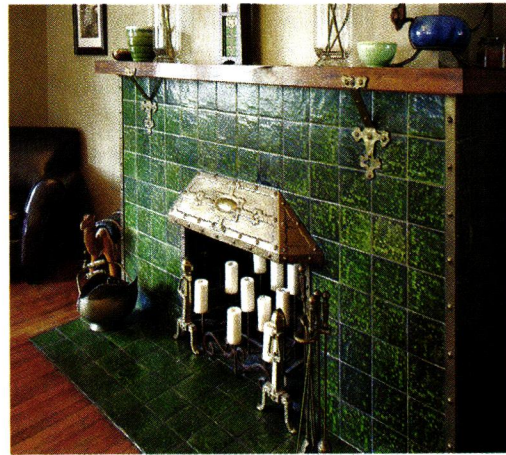
Emily Dawn Clark
Danville, Kentucky

Tracking Down Tile

While looking at the photo of the McDaniels' fireplace ("History Lessons"), I noticed the same mysterious green tiles I keep finding in houses of that vintage in this area. Various people have insisted that they are Rookwood, but I don't believe they are.

What can you tell me about them?

Ann Bennett
Knoxville, Tennessee



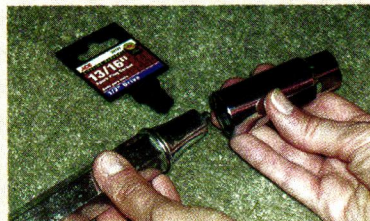
The homeowner checked with the Tile Heritage Foundation, who reported that "the tiles were made by the Cambridge Tile Manufacturing Co. in Covington, Ohio, across the river from Cincinnati. In fact, the brass hood, corbels, vertical angle strips, and even the mantel itself came as a unit for ease of installation. The mantels were referred to as Terra Vitrea; the tiles as Cambridge Faience." —Eds.

Reader Tip of the Month

When we replaced our worn 1949 bathroom sink with a new one, we wanted to keep the vintage Kohler chrome support legs. However, the legs turned out to be 1½" too short when matched with the new wall-mounted sink. A half-hour perusal of the local hardware store turned up a solution: A 13/16" automotive spark plug socket fits snugly over the foot of the support leg and adds exactly 1½". The chromed socket even offers the same hexagonal shape as the leg column.

We always joked that our vintage 1940s bathrooms were "early gas station" style!

Barbara Rhines
OHJ Contributor



Got a great tip to share with other old-house lovers? Let us know at OHJEditorial@homebuyerpubs.com.

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about the house

By CLARE MARTIN & LINDSEY THOMAS

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This year's conference will focus on the preservation of the modern metropolis, with lectures on historic building materials, Modernism, and post-war heritage. (800) 245-8673; apti.org

NOVEMBER 14-16
WILTON, CT

A Gathering of Craftsmen

Sponsored by the New England Historical Connection, this first-time show will feature several artisans working in the early American tradition. (203) 761-8646; nehistoricalconnection.com

DECEMBER 5-6
LOUISVILLE, KY
**33rd Annual Old
Louisville Holiday
House Tour**

In addition to a historic house-and-hotel tour, the event will include a Victorian-era tea party and a "spirited" poetry reading. (502) 635-5244; holidayhousetour.com

COMING SOON

The 23rd Annual Arts & Crafts Conference

(February 19-21 at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina) has announced its lecture series, which will include talks from curators, collectors, and authors on everything from artistic leather to pottery glazes. There will also be a live performance entitled "The Arts & Crafts Home," which will present, via actors in period costumes, a new take on American life circa 1910.

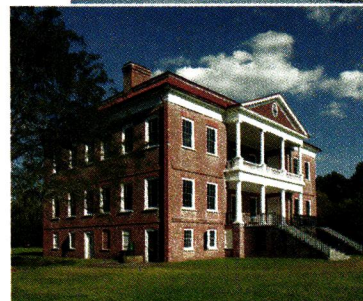
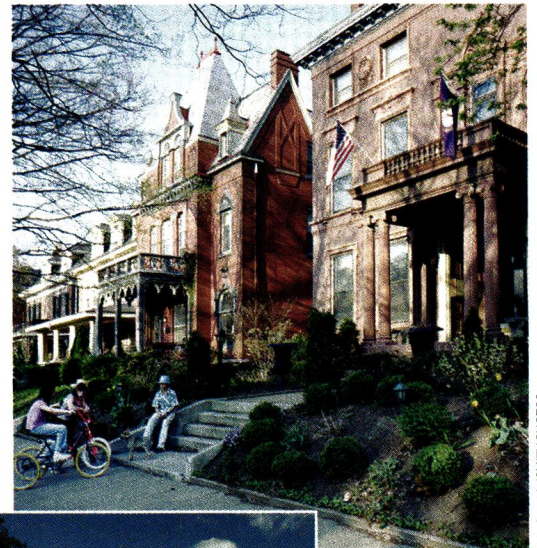
ON THE RADAR

Hit the Road

For most old-house aficionados, enthusiasm for older structures doesn't stop with our own abodes; it permeates every aspect of our lives—including vacations. If you enjoy searching for architectural inspiration on the road, you're in luck: The National Trust for Historic Preservation has just launched a travel-savvy new web site with a preservation bent and a social-networking twist. The site, Gozaic.com (the name is a play on the word "mosaic"), features information on thousands of destinations around the world that focus on, in the words of CEO John Williams, "heritage- and culture-rich experiences."

The site allows you to browse by destination (such as unexpected architecture mecca Buffalo, New York) or site (like the re-created Victorian village in Rugby, Tennessee) and get information on nearby dining, lodging, and special events, then create an itinerary based on your research. You also can check out reviews and photos from other users who have been there, or contribute your own. Groups centered around specific topics (like Civil War history) allow users with similar interests to connect.

Though the format of the site will seem familiar to users of general-interest travel sites, Williams hopes its focus on heritage destinations will set it apart from the pack: "We're not trying to help



Architecturally rich destinations like Louisville, Kentucky (top), and South Carolina's Drayton Hall plantation (bottom) are up for virtual exploration on Gozaic.

people plan their next beach vacation," he says. "We're emphasizing mind and life enrichment." For more information, visit gozaic.com.

OLD-HOUSE RESOURCE

Tools for the Taking

If you've got tons of work to do on your old house, it makes sense that you'll want to invest in a broad arsenal of tools. But what if you're only looking at a couple of projects, or need a really specialized tool? Do you really have to shell out big bucks for something you may only use once or twice?

Thankfully, no—not if your community has a tool library. The first one started in Berkeley in 1979, and a handful of others have sprung up across the country since, most in major cities like Seattle, Austin, Portland, or Kansas City.



They often work like traditional libraries (in fact, a few are actually run by public libraries): You register for a membership, check out the tool, and pay late fees if it's not returned within a specified time period. Some require a modest membership or maintenance fee; others are completely free. The stock tends to include all the basic tools required for old-house projects, including carpentry, masonry, electrical, garden, and power tools. For a list of tool libraries around the country, check out the West Philly Tool Library's site at westphillytools.org.

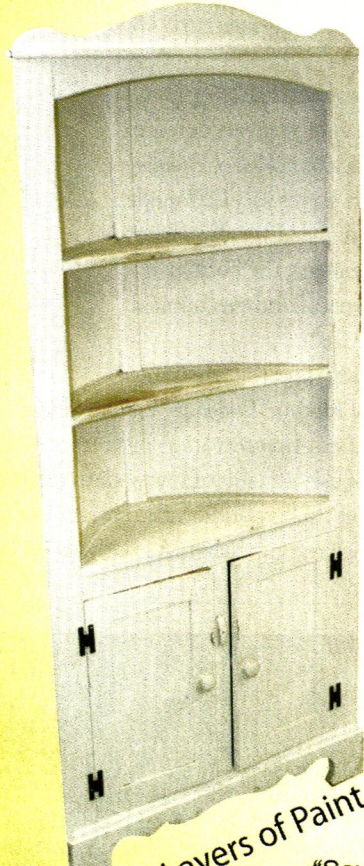
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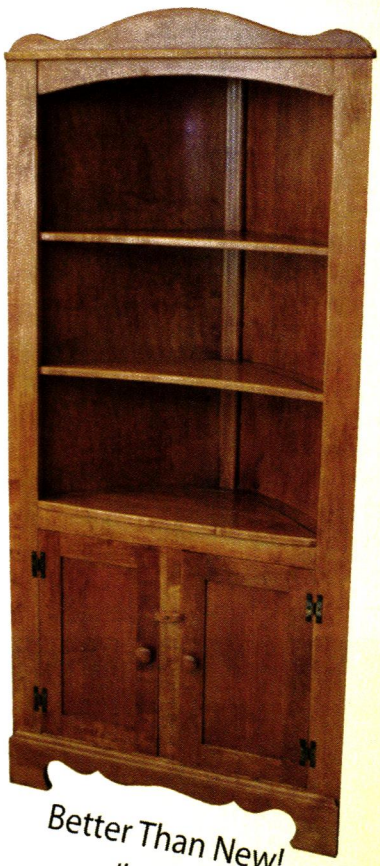
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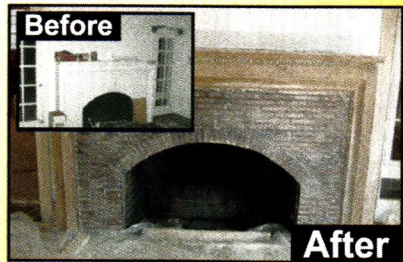
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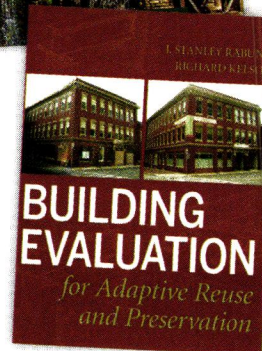
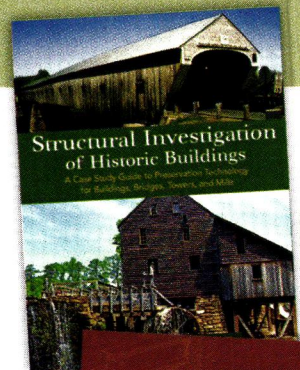
When the weather outside gets frightful, it's a delightful time to tackle interior projects that might have been pushed to the bottom of the to-do list during warmer months. A great place to start? Your walls. If plaster walls have minor cracks, turn to page 54 for a step-by-step guide to repairing them. If they just need a fresh coat of paint, go for water-based, low-VOC formulas, which will eliminate the need for open-window ventilation. (Plus, they're better for the environment and your health, too.)

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Deciding whether a historic structure can be successfully restored, rehabilitated, or reused—and whether doing so is financially feasible—can be a daunting task. Two new textbooks tackle this evaluation process and all its related components, from structural safety to sustainability.

Traditionally, there has been no systematic approach to assessing a building's viability for restoration; you either relied on gut instinct or hired an expert. But that's changed with J. Stanley Rabun and Richard Kelso's *Building Evaluation for Adaptive Reuse and Preservation*, which serves as a DIY guide to inspecting historic structures. Beginning with a detailed breakdown of historic architectural styles and their characteristic elements, the book walks readers through the step-by-step investigation of electrical and mechanical systems, plumbing, and accessibility.

And after you've saved that crumbling old building from the wrecking ball, you'll want to consult *Structural Investigation of Historic Buildings*, by David C. Fischetti. The book presents 10 illustrated case studies of preservation projects—including James Madison's Montpelier and the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse—to show how modern techniques can be applied to traditional building materials. With a brief background on the basics of structural engineering, the book explains preservation practices in a way that's helpful for both experts and novices.



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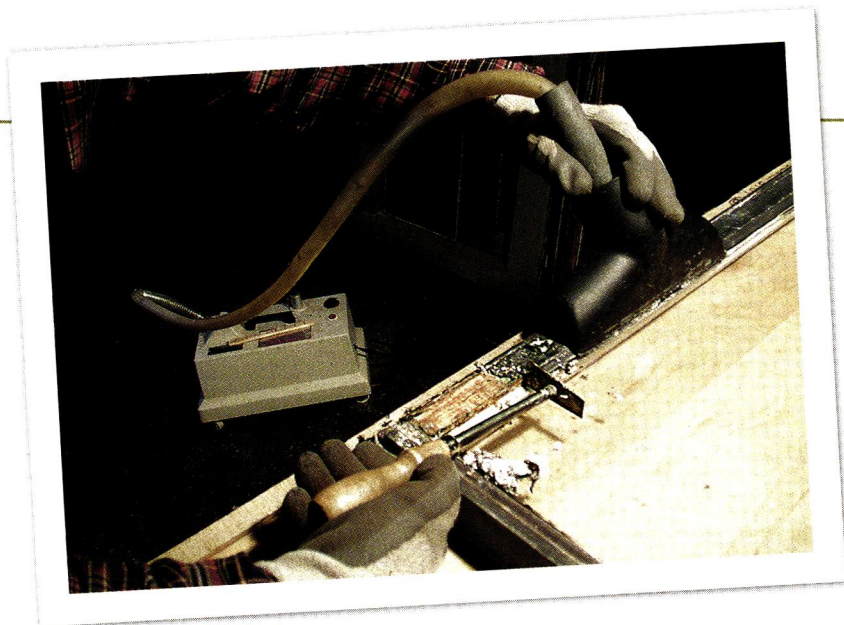
Q I'm working on refurbishing my home's original windows, but the caulking around the panes is hard as cement. When I try to remove the panes, I end up with broken glass. What's the secret to removing old, wavy panes from their frames easily and safely?

A **John Leeke:** While there's no sure-fire product that makes removing old glass panes easy—it will always be work—I have developed some good methods to make it safer. Two keys to effective deglazing are warming up the old putty and using a pull-type scraper to remove it.

Back in the 1970s, I heated putty with a standard hot-air gun, protecting the glass from breakage with aluminum foil pads folded ten sheets thick, then pried the putty loose with an ordinary putty knife. While this worked, it was slow going, blew lots of lead-containing dust around, and had a glass breakage rate of about 35 percent. (For these reasons, be sure to always wear safety glasses and gloves, and follow lead-safe work practices.)

In the 1980s, newer hot-air guns with controllable air temperature and volume settings and flat nozzles, used on their lowest settings, dropped the glass breakage rate to about 25 percent. When I added a custom-made air baffle to keep hot air off the glass, it eliminated the need for aluminum foil pads. Combined with a pull-type scraper, the process took half the time, and my breakage rate dropped to about 15 percent.

Now there are infrared paint-stripping lamps that warm the putty easily, but at 4" wide, their heat generation is difficult to control. Using them on exposed bare wood can result in charring, and you must work on a heat-resistant surface. Also, because this is a "dry" method, it generates lead dust that must be contained.



JOHN LEEKE PHOTO

Steam from the floor unit is delivered in a concentrated blast through the nozzle. Held over the sash, it softens the old putty and paint, allowing them to be scraped away easily.

Today my favorite method is to soften the putty with steam. It's slick and quick, and because it's a damp operation, it helps control lead dust. I use a portable steamer with a hose and a special head that guides the steam right along the hard putty line. Just a couple of minutes of steam softens the putty so that it crumbles out easily, and now my glass breakage rate is down to 2.5 percent.

To keep from breaking glass, all movement near and on the glass must be parallel (don't put any pressure on the glass when scraping), and always use a pull-type scraper. That way if you slip, all the force is away from the glass and it won't break. To remove glazing points, hook the sharp edge of the pull-type scraper into their soft metal points and pull them out along with the putty. Double-check to make sure all of the glazing points are removed, and that old putty beside and under the edge of the glass is loose. If not, you need another round of heat.

Handle glass carefully—always lift or pry it along the longer edge when removing or handling. This puts the stress across the shorter distance of glass, making it less likely to break. To work glass

loose from sash, lay the sash down flat on the bench, exterior side up, with the stile or rail hanging over the bench's edge. Grip the stile or rail with your thumb on top and your fingers underneath. Put the tips of your fingers against the inside edge of the wood sash where it meets the glass, and your fingernails against the glass. Gently curl your fingers, leveraging the end of your fingers on the wood; this presses your fingernails up against the lower side of the glass in a very controlled way. If you feel no movement in the glass, shift your grip to another area along the edge and try again until you do. Watch this "working edge" to see where the glass is not moving—it may be stuck on a glazing point or spot of well-adhered putty.

Working the sash on an easel in a near vertical position, instead of flat on a bench, also can help reduce your breakage rate. Glass trade professionals always store and handle glass vertically to prevent breakage. 🏠



Historic building specialist John Leeke is an OHJ contributing editor. For more information on windows, visit his web site historichomeworks.com.

Have questions about your old house? We'd love to answer them in future issues. Please send your questions to **Ask OHJ, 4125 Lafayette Center Dr., Suite 100, Chantilly, VA 20151** or by e-mail to OHJEditorial@homebuyerpubs.com.



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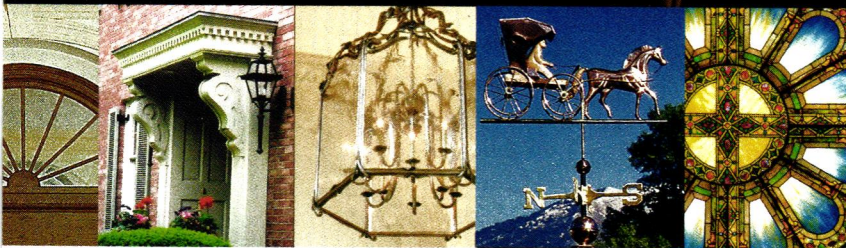
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period products

BY CLARE MARTIN

*Perfect products for vintage kitchens and baths;
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School Days

Schoolhouse lights—the opal-glass-shaded pendants that once illuminated early 20th-century educational buildings—have become a period-appropriate panacea for homeowners enamored by the design of contemporary pendant-lit kitchens but unwilling to sacrifice historical style. Meyda Custom Lighting's Schoolhouse Collection offers a range of new options, including the Rochelle mini pendant (right), which features a cloth-covered wire, a brass base with a burnished copper finish, and a delicately scalloped opal glass shade, putting an elegant twist on the basic schoolhouse shape. \$190 each. Call (800) 222-4009, or visit meyda.com.



Fresh Air

If the words “antique English wallpaper” conjure images of dark, stuffy drawing rooms, Farrow & Ball's new Special Edition II wallpaper collection will banish those thoughts for good. The collection's classic patterns, such as Brockhampton Star (top), copied from an 1870s sample from the Brockhampton Hall dining room, and Uppark (bottom), inspired by patterns in the grand 17th-century Uppark House, have been updated in a range of lighter-than-air colors. Even though the papers are made using traditional block-printing techniques, they've got a modern eco-friendly edge thanks to low-VOC paint and FSC-certified paper. \$215 per roll. Call (888) 511-1121, or visit farrow-ball.com.



Flash Back

Modern ranges, with all their high-tech features, are great for cooking convenience, but they tend to stick out like a sore thumb in vintage kitchens. Enter the new line of ranges from Big Chill. Featuring the same distinctive retro styling as the company's popular refrigerators, the ranges are made from heavy-duty commercial stainless steel and feature amenities like automatic electric ignition and a direct-fired ceramic infrared broiler. A choice of eight period-perfect colors like Jadite Green, Cherry Red, and Buttercup Yellow (left) ensures easy décor coordination. \$4,295. Call (877) 842-3269, or visit bigchillfridge.com.



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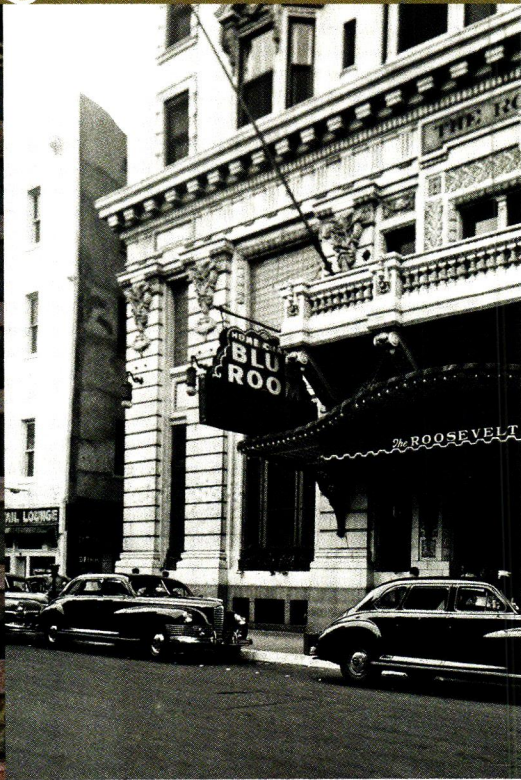
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historic retreats



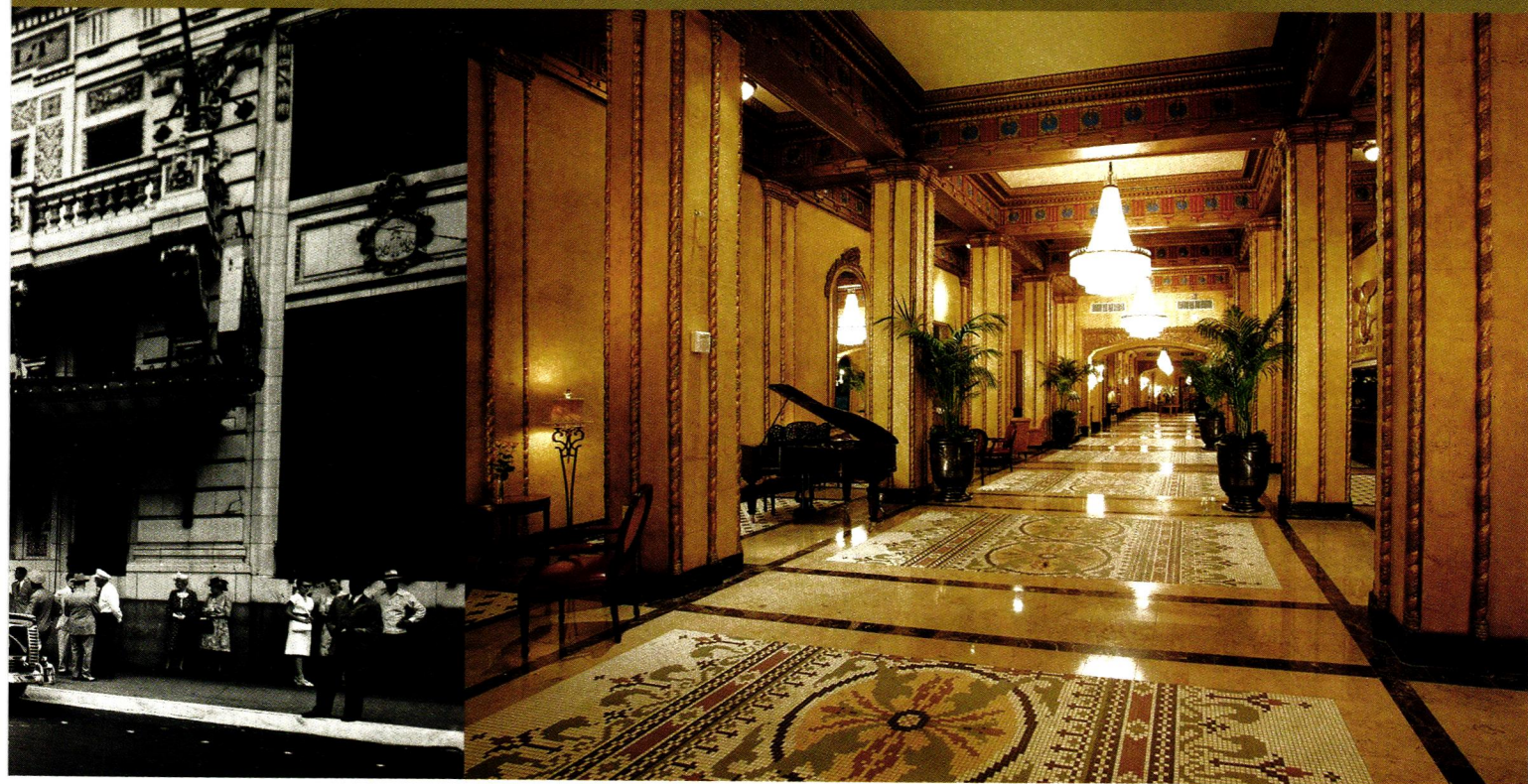
The Jazz Age legacy of The Roosevelt (above, in the 1940s) has been reimagined for a new century (left). In the main lobby (right), the original mosaic tile floor, hidden for years beneath carpet, was repaired and restored. Because parts of the floor were too damaged to save, smaller sections of mosaic were framed inside marble.

The recent reopening of New Orleans' Roosevelt Hotel marked more than just the completion of a historic restoration—the hotel has reinvented a piece of the city's history. The sheer presence of its glazed terracotta façade, brass doors, and glowing lanterns brings guests back to the Golden Age of New Orleans, when Canal Street sizzled with music, shopping, and theater. Over the years, the hotel's legacy of architectural brilliance had been buried under dropped

The Roosevelt Hotel

The hotel at the center of New Orleans' 1920s jazz scene makes a triumphant return from Katrina's devastation.

By DEBORAH BURST



ceilings and carpeted floors, and in 2005, the flood waters of Hurricane Katrina invaded the basement, destroying the electrical systems. Reopened in July after a \$145 million restoration, the Roosevelt stands as a testament to New Orleans' rebirth.

The 115-year-old hotel first opened its doors as the Grunewald in 1893, taking its name from the man who built it, German immigrant Louis Grunewald. In 1923 it was purchased by a group of New Orleans investors and rebranded the Roosevelt Hotel in honor of frequent guest Theodore Roosevelt. The hotel changed hands again in 1965 when it was purchased by Fairmont, who managed it until it was shuttered by Hurricane Katrina.

According to Jeff Dennison, the hotel's director of historic restoration and engineering, Fairmont began a series of mechanical and electrical repairs to fix the damage caused by Katrina, but abandoned the project due to escalating costs. The hotel lay dormant until August 2007, when the Waldorf Astoria Collection took over the building and began restoring it to its original grandeur. The two-year project employed nearly 400 people at its peak.

The restoration work exposed many long-forgotten trademarks of the hotel. Dennison himself uncovered the century-old Grunewald signage etched above the front entrance, which had been masked by a "Roosevelt" sign since 1926. Removal of the

lobby ductwork exposed 17½' ceilings crowned with gold filigree molding, and turn-of-the-century mosaic tile was revealed beneath the lobby carpet.

In its initial design, the tile had occupied the entire floor, but after half a century of use, many of the tiles were coming loose or breaking, hence the hotel's decision to cover it with lower-maintenance carpet, which Dennison guesses happened sometime in the 1940s. Although chemical cleaning and artistic reproduction helped restore a good portion of the original tile floor, it couldn't all be saved, so designers improvised by framing 9' x 14' sections of the tile with marble flooring.

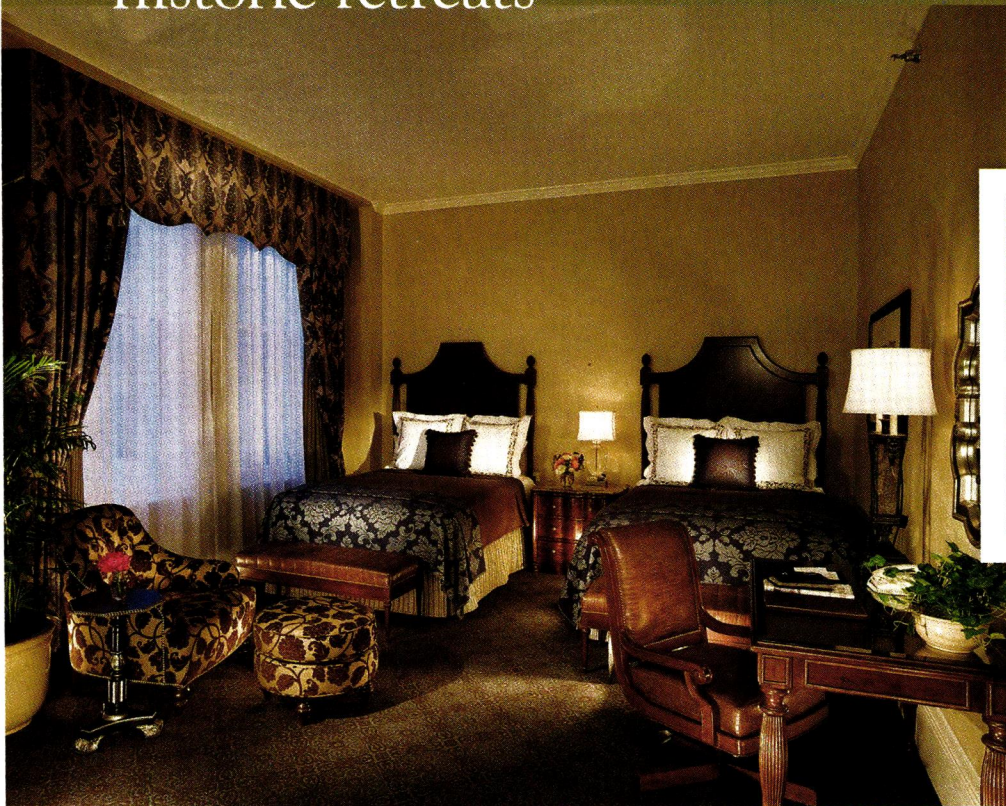
The lobby's original chandeliers also were refurbished, a process that took 14 months as restorers cleaned one crystal at a time with vinegar and water. Hundreds of pieces were missing, having broken over the years and never been replaced, so each crystal was sized and measured, and replaced with a near-perfect match ordered from Europe. "Every chandelier was taken down, cleaned, reassembled, and stored in large wooden boxes until they were ready to go up," says Dennison.

Drawing on a rich history that includes performers like Louis Armstrong, Ray Charles, and Frank Sinatra, the hotel's Blue Room will once again host live entertainment. An original wall of windows, previously covered by mirrors, now floods the room in soft light; the signature blue carpet and original chandeliers

"Every chandelier was taken down, cleaned, reassembled, and stored in large wooden boxes until they were ready to go up."

LEFT AND RIGHT: COURTESY OF THE ROOSEVELT HOTEL; MIDDLE: CHARLES L. FRANCK STUDIOS PHOTO COURTESY OF HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION

historic retreats



and sconces enhance the Jazz Age aesthetic. The former Palm Court Lounge, an adjacent room where people gathered prior to performances, is now a coffee shop, but its distinctive Art Deco features—including original domed lighting and a black/gray terrazzo floor inscribed with the letter “R,” installed in the early 20th century—have been fully restored.

The hotel’s other legendary gathering place, the Sazerac Bar (the favored watering hole of larger-than-life Louisiana governor Huey P. Long), also boasts original features returned to their former glory. The African mahogany walls were chemically stripped and hand-scraped and -sanded, but Depression-era murals by artist Paul Ninas still bear the stain of nicotine from the bar’s heady years.

Thanks to an illustrious restoration that bridges architectural history and design with modern-day amenities and technologies, the timeless elegance of the Roosevelt lives on in the hearts of New Orleanians and her faithful fans, sparking a new beginning for a tenacious city fighting to rebuild. 🏠



With its namesake carpet and original lighting, the Blue Room is primed to once again host iconic entertainers.

LEFT: Guest rooms, largely untouched by previous remodeling efforts and undamaged by Katrina floodwaters, were little changed during the restoration, except for 50 rooms that were combined to create mini suites.

ABOVE: The original entrance to the Sazerac Bar—so loved by former governor Huey P. Long that he had a highway constructed between Baton Rouge and New Orleans primarily to facilitate his journey there—is pure Art Deco. Women bellied up to the bar *en masse* in 1949 (top), when they were allowed to enter for the first time.

The Roosevelt Hotel

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Rooms range from \$139 to \$449 a night; suites are \$550 to \$4,000 a night. The Blue Room features live entertainment and a Sunday Jazz Brunch, and the Sazerac Bar is open daily until 2 a.m.

LEFT AND TOP RIGHT: COURTESY OF THE ROOSEVELT HOTEL; BOTTOM RIGHT: CHARLES L. FRANKS STUDIOS PHOTO COURTESY OF HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION

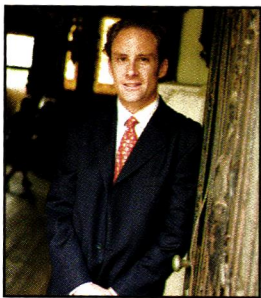
preservation perspectives



YPA volunteers gather on the steps of the National Negro Opera Company house, a building they're helping shore up and preserve.

PHOTOS COURTESY YOUNG PRESERVATIONISTS ASSOCIATION

Tomorrow's Promise



BOB NICK PHOTO

Pittsburgh's Young Preservationists Association is putting fresh faces to work on an old cause. We chatted with Dan Holland, founder and CEO, to learn how they're creating a buzz.

BY DEMETRA APOSPOROS

DEMETRA APOSPOROS: Where did the idea for the Young Preservationists Association originate?

DAN HOLLAND: It goes back to a visit to Pittsburgh's Hill District in 2002. I was in the midst of watching a building identified as a historic African American structure get demolished, and noticed all these people observing it go down—but there were no protests, no signs. The experience told me we really needed to get more people involved and to raise awareness—and what better way than to get young people tuned in? From the

very beginning, our singular focus has been on young people and preservation.

DA: How do you get kids excited about the program?

DH: We try to make the subject real for them with events like our "Wheeling Through History" bike tour, which is a two- or three-hour tour of historic neighborhoods. It's a fun, easy way to see a lot of architecture. We also run a Preserve Pittsburgh Summit, which is a really participatory event where we have a design challenge around historic sites.

This year, we toured four historic sites and solicited ideas for their future from the kids, the idea being to develop a model framework for how youth can help shape the future of historic sites. Michael Tomlan, director of Cornell's Historic Preservation Program, delivered the keynote address.

DA: What sorts of ideas did the kids come up with?

DH: These young people came up with a whole lot of good ideas for repurposing the buildings, from cafes and affordable housing to artist workspace and performing arts venues. The ideas just started pouring out. I think the exercise gave people a sense of empowerment.

DA: And what's your mechanism for making these changes happen?

DH: To the extent that we can provide assistance, support, and facilitation, we're there. There are many buildings that need help in our region. We can't fix them all, but we can push them along, give them a boost, ensure that our efforts take it to the next level. We see ourselves as a catalyst.

DA: Tell me about the YPA Promise Award.

AC: Instead of highlighting the achievements of lifelong preservationists, we highlight emerging leaders, to show the promise of the next generation. Essentially we're looking for someone who's demonstrated promise and community impact—for example, working on a building and trying to get young people involved. One of the awards highlighted a mayor in his 30s and his efforts to try to rebuild a town; another went to a young teacher with community priorities.

DA: You also have a rather innovative video contest outlined on your web site.

DH: Our preservation video contest is open to students under age 25, anybody with a creative mind and the ability to make a video and upload it

ARMSTRONG

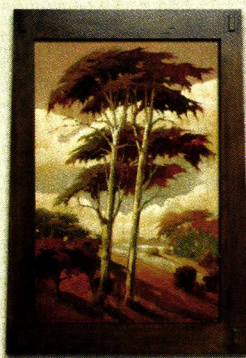
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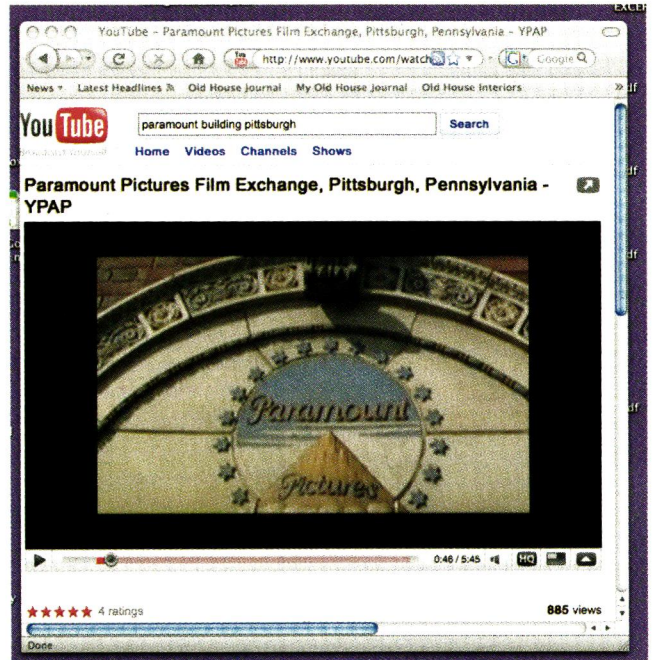
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The winning video on YouTube.

to YouTube—that's how they enter. We encourage them to tie themes to Main Street revitalization, African American history, something that will resonate. But we leave it up to them to be creative about it.

DA: And this year's winner unearthed a hidden building history?

DH: That's right. He's a film student, and he came up with this building relevant to film history, the Paramount Pictures Film Exchange Building, which is on a street people pass by at high speed. But if you slow down to take a look, it's a very interesting building, and it has a special history—it's a place where movies were shipped from the major studios. None of us experienced preservationists had ever heard of it, and we were fascinated. We're now pursuing it as a historic designation. The city just voted to recommend it to the city council, and they will hear it this fall. It's the first time a YouTube video has been introduced as evidence on a historic designation application.

DA: You seem to be garnering a lot of attention, and a few affiliates...

DH: We want to grow. We're on Facebook, we're on Twitter, and now we're on YouTube. The more ways we can get the word out about what we're doing, the more we can sell the gospel to young preservationists. 📺

For more information on the Young Preservationists Association, visit youngpreservationists.org.

old-house toolbox



RAY TSCHOEPE PHOTO

Yankee Screwdriver

An old-fashioned hand tool steps up when cordless drills give out.

BY RAY TSCHOEPE

Having spent several unproductive hours traveling back to the shop to replace or recharge the batteries in my cordless drill, I knew I had to find a solution to these delays. Little did I suspect that it would appear among a collection of hand tools passed down from my father.

Up until the 1980s, when cordless drills arrived on the market, almost every carpenter carried a simple mechanical device that resembles a heavy-duty screwdriver. Known as a "Yankee," it features a large wooden handle with an extending sleeve that slides over a solid steel shaft criss-crossed with spiraling grooves. Operation is simple, effective, and best of all, requires no batteries.

How It Works

When the handle is pushed forward, pins engage the spiral grooves to trans-

late the forward (pushing) motion into rotational spin, moving the screwdriver bit (straight or Phillips) inserted in the Yankee's tip. This pressure keeps the bit engaged and assists in driving the screw. An internal spring forces the handle back into the ready position. There's also a small three-position slide on the side of the outer sleeve that allows the screwdriver to reverse direction to extract screws, or to lock so it can be used exactly like a standard screwdriver.

What To Look For

The only potential issue with my old Yankee screwdriver? The notches and cuts in the bit shafts are fairly specific, so damaged or missing bits can be difficult to replace. However, my online search for a replacement Phillips bit turned up several companies still making Yankee screwdrivers and bits. What's more, these companies also offered an adapter that, when fitted into the bit holder, converts it to accept standard 1/4" hex shaft bits. With an adapter, the screwdriver can handle everything from square-drive to torx screws. More online searching turned up small Yankee screwdrivers designed to accept the 1/4" hex bits without the use of an adapter, a quick way to achieve the same result.

The Bottom Line

No, you won't be able to drive a pocket full of 2 1/2" screws with the Yankee. But you can install hardware, and easily drive screws up to 1 1/2" long. Best of all, you won't find yourself wasting time fetching new batteries or waiting for them to charge—just pull out your Yankee and keep on working. 🛠️



Ray Tschoepe, one of OHJ's contributing editors, is the director of conservation at the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust in Philadelphia.

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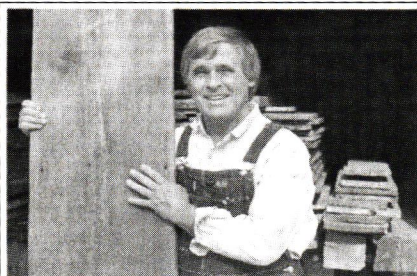
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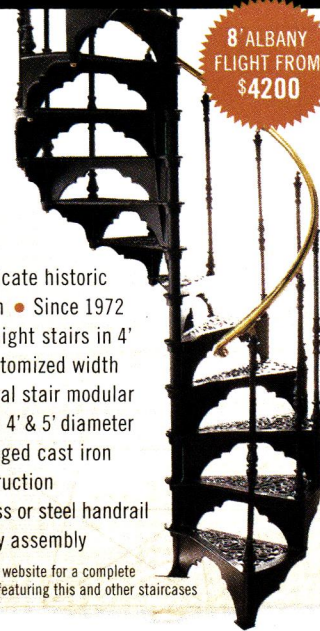
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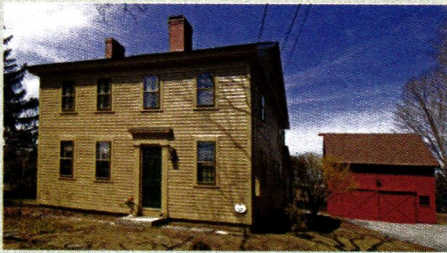
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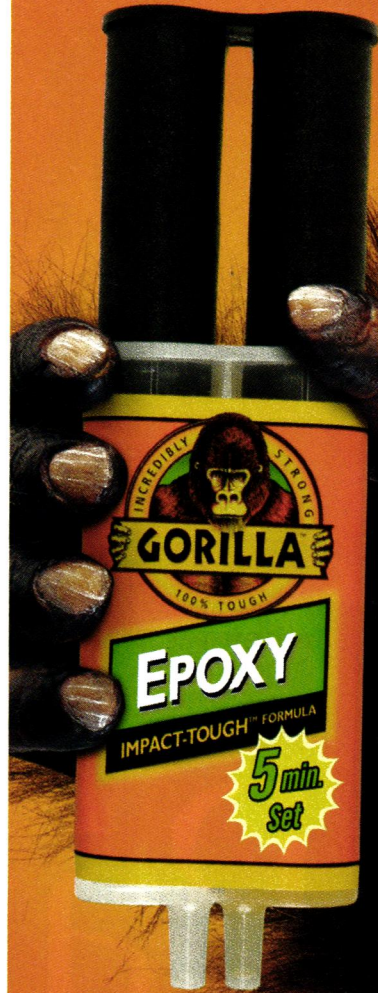
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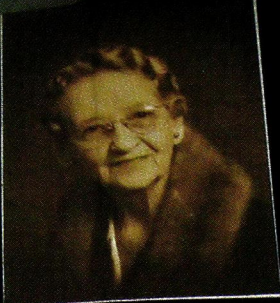
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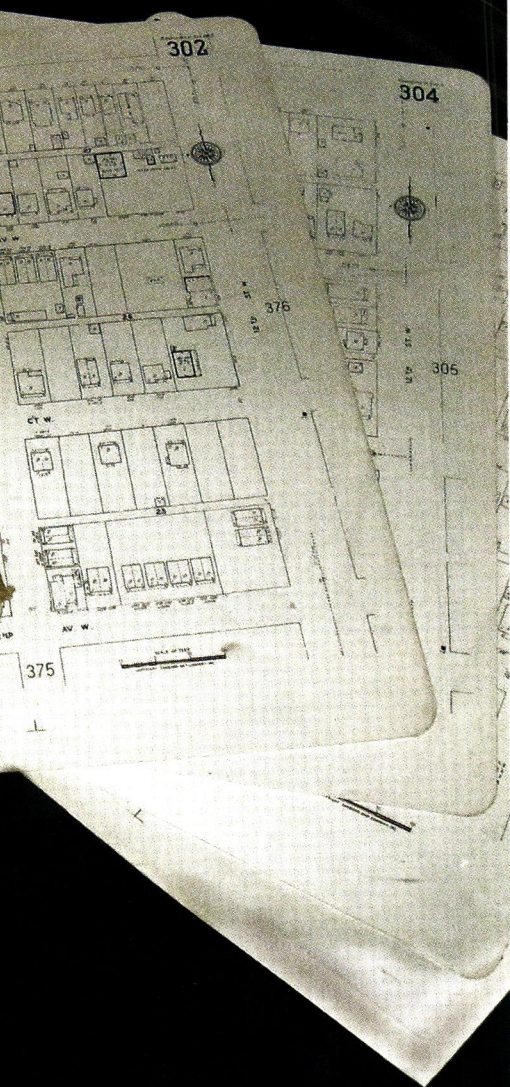
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The Paper Trail

By CHARITY VOGEL

Five easy-to-find resources can lead you to a whole new understanding of your old house.

BIRMINGHAM (AL) PUBLIC LIBRARY PHOTO

If you live in an old house, you're dwelling within the pages of a mystery tale. See that grand oak staircase? Brides in their finery have swept down it, smiles on their lips, butterflies in their stomachs. Love that gorgeously carved mantel? It's witnessed scores of holidays—many happy, perhaps a few sad.

That old chandelier in the foyer has shed its light on birthdays, breakups, homecomings, and wakes. And that spidery crack in the hallway's stained-glass window—wouldn't you love to know whether it landed there during a storm, a fistfight, or a child's headfirst tumble?

These mysteries may seem obscure, but there's no reason they need to remain so. The clues for unraveling the hidden past of your old house lie all around—close at hand and, for the most part, completely free. All you'll need to invest is a little bit of time and energy—but don't old-house owners have plenty of those resources on hand? With a bit of dogged detective work, you can track down the clues lurking in old documents to begin the process of uncovering the secrets of your old house.

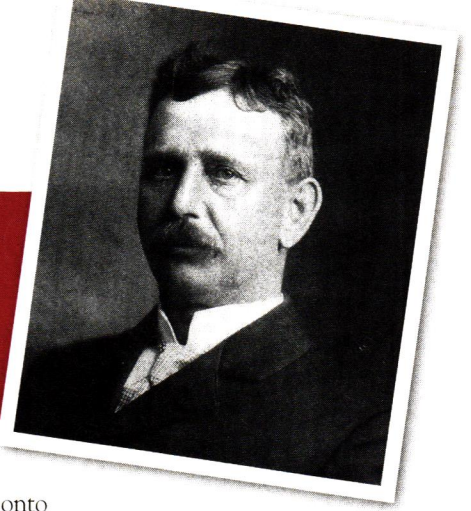
Step One:

The Basics

Before you can start unraveling mysteries, you'll need a solid overview of your home's life. Dig out your deed and title paperwork, which you received when you closed on your house. Jot down the name of the first owner, the year it was built, the year the original owner sold it, and the names of the owners since then, as well as the years they bought and sold the property. (This list of names



The author's diligent searching turned up both a photo of her home's builder (right) and a 1911 image of the house itself (below).



will come in handy in subsequent steps, so hang onto it.) This task might seem tedious, but you're building a timeline for your house—a foundation for further research.

As you do this, keep an eye out for any irregularities, because each one is a clue that could turn into a profitable lead. Did a certain family own the home for a long time? Did one owner buy and sell in quick succession? Did a woman own it, in an era when this wasn't common? A friend who owns an 1860s-era house in a rural village read her title closely and noticed that two spinster sisters co-owned the home in the 1930s. Intrigued, she researched their backgrounds and found out they were trained nurses who operated the house as a community hospital. Be alert for such odd bits of information—then follow your hunches!

Step Two:

Old Government Records

Don't be intimidated by archival records. They might seem dusty and dispiriting, but they can be easy to use and rewarding—it's just a matter of getting comfortable with them.

Census records dating back to the year your house was built are likely available in your area; call your largest local public library or a nearby university library and ask if they offer these records. Your county historical society or museum can be another repository for these documents. Make the trip to review census rosters from the year closest to the one your house was built, and you'll find some important details that will make your home's past spring to life. Census data from the 1800s and early 1900s includes such illuminating information as the names of all those living in a household at the time, their ages, occupations, places of birth, and sometimes more. Some census data also is available for free on the U.S. Census web site (census.gov), so you can start there as well; fee-based services like Ancestry.com also offer pdf documents of census records to

insider's TIP

Lawyers and title-company employees are experts at decoding tricky language on deed and title paperwork—even antique words and phrases that have fallen out of use. Ask a friend in one of these professions for help wading through the legalese on your documents. (In our area, the Angola Historic Homes Association brought in a title-company expert to help members decode complicated terminology at an evening workshop; if you belong to a home association, a similar presentation might be worth considering.)

insider's TIP

Don't be confused if some information about your home's owners seems contradictory; census-takers in the 1800s had varying levels of education, so sometimes ages can be off and birthplaces incorrect. Remember the researcher's golden rule: Find a second source to verify what you think you already know.

members, but you have to pay to subscribe. For most people, a trip to the nearest library—where free access and help in looking will be available—is likely the best bet.

Step Three:

The Internet

Once you've prepared a comprehensive list of your home's past occupants and read up on their backgrounds through census records, you're ready for a fun (if unpredictable) next step: Log on to the Internet and start hunting.

Using Google or other search engines, dig up any information you can find about the families who lived in your home, as well as the surrounding streets, neighborhoods, and landmarks. Visit genealogy web sites to research prior owners as if they were your own relatives—put questions out on message boards, and ask for help. Don't neglect cemetery web sites, which can offer ways to search for hard-to-find details about the people buried in them (such as maiden names and causes of death).

You also can tap into eBay or similar online auction and memorabilia sites to look for items and records that might open up further realms of information. This can be chancy, but lots of fun. While researching our 1898 folk Shingle Victorian, for example, we knew from census records that its builder, Frank F. Watt, had been a railroad conductor. Once we learned through genealogical research that he was employed by the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railway, we scoured eBay and found a company directory from 1900. Taking the chance—and risking a few bucks—we ordered it. When the hefty, 500-page volume arrived, we were elated to find a glossy

Use the information you find in census records to scour period newspapers for a deeper understanding of your house's story.

photograph of our home's builder inside! That portrait now hangs in our foyer. Follow any leads you find, because when it comes to online treasure-hunting, you never know where they might take you.

Step Four:

Vintage Newspapers and Magazines

Unearthing names and dates is a great start, but if you want to deepen your research and provide priceless color and emotion to your home's history, you need to find the details of your house's unique narrative. The key to this is simple: periodical research.

Try your local library for old newspapers from your town, from around the time your house was built. (If they don't have them, they'll know where you can find some.) You might luck out and get a stack of dry old back issues handed to you; more likely, you'll have to scroll through rolls of microfilm. But the results will be worth it: Nowhere else will you find the kind of detail and description you'll encounter in old newspapers and magazines. Back in the day, local papers covered social news of all kinds—dinner parties, haying trips, visits from out-of-town relatives—in addition to chronicling everything from world events to weather. They often covered construction of new homes, and may offer you information on where the builders got the materials used to build your house, why they made certain design decisions, and more. (Reading old papers from 1898 on microfilm, we learned that our home's builder

insider's TIP As you read, look for motivations and connections. When we read old newspapers from our tiny railroad village from the early 1900s and saw accounts of the long, severe illness that struck our home's builder soon after he finished our house, we began to understand what his family must have gone through when he died in 1904 and they sold the place soon after.



Local flea markets can be a great source for old photos and postcards.

HOWARD LEVINE PHOTO



A sign on the second story, visible in an old photo, reveals this California Queen Anne's previous life as a hospital.

spent five months overseeing construction of our house, and that its capacious cellar, with 2'-thick foundation walls, was marveled at by locals at the time.)

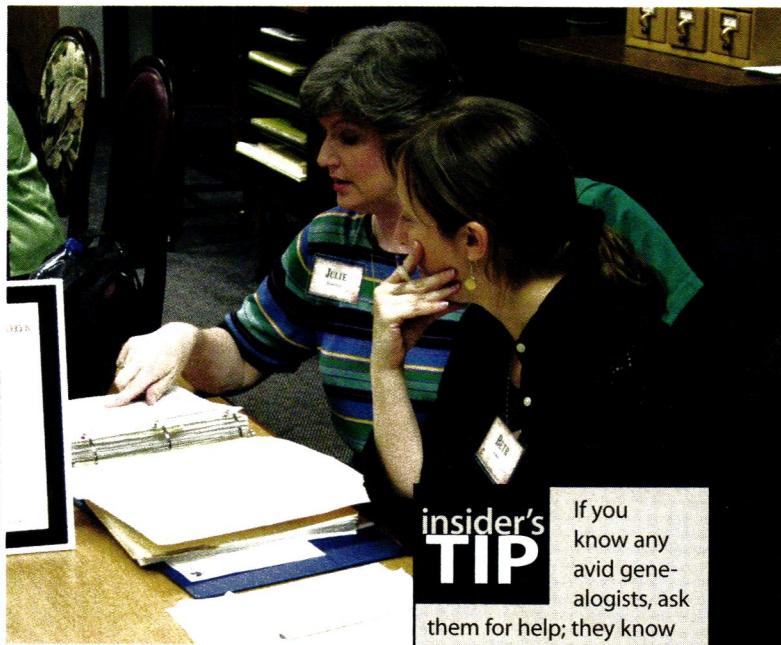
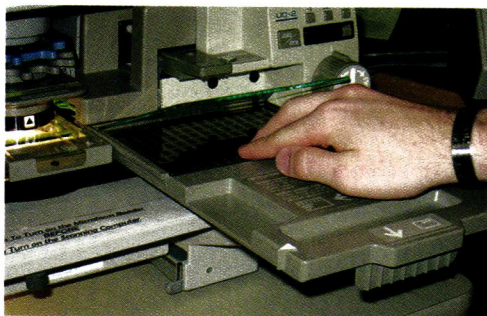
Read through newspapers from the year your house was built and then for a few years afterward, and you'll get a real sense of the one-of-a-kind setting and historical moment in which it was born. Keep notes on everything you find that mentions your house and its occupants—you don't want to have to go through this much microfilm ever again. (Trust me.)

Step Five:

Local History

If you don't already know your town's historian on a first-name basis, you need to. Local historical societies and museums are a great source of information for old-house researchers. You might unearth old photo albums, vintage diaries, programs from local events, old newspaper clippings and obituaries, or booklets published on centennials and other municipal anniversaries, all of which can be a rich source of pictures, facts, and anecdotes about your property and its owners.

Warning: You'll need patience for this phase of your research. After years of fruitless searching for an antique photograph of my home—all avenues proving to be frustrating dead ends—I finally found not one, but two old pictures of our 1898 house (dating to



UBC LIBRARY GRAPHICS PHOTO BY SANDIE CHEN

At public or university libraries, the staff can help you locate and make sense of archival records.

insider's TIP

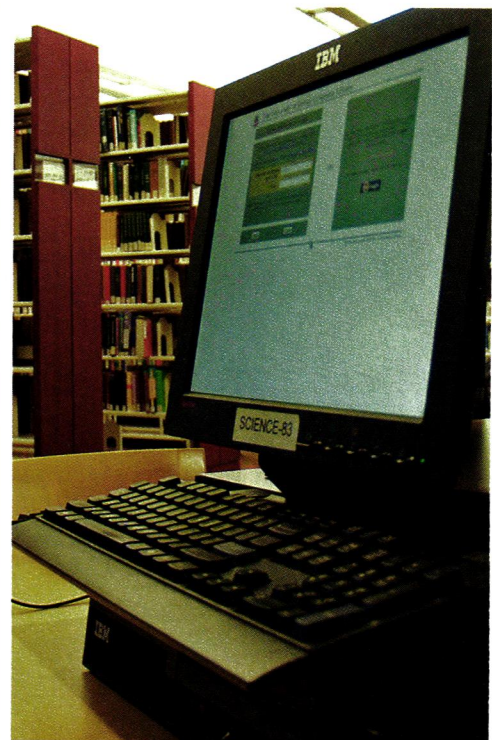
If you know any avid genealogists, ask them for help; they know lots of techniques for finding accurate data about people of past generations.

1911 and the 1920s, it appears) on the very same evening while rustling through an old box of unlabeled, unsorted photographs at our local historical society. It was a eureka moment—the sort that makes the often tedious process of researching a house's history totally worth it in the end. 🏠

Charity Vogel, Ph.D, a newspaper columnist and university instructor, has spoken about how to research old homes at the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society.

BELOW: Low-tech but time-honored research tools, microfiche (left) and microfilm (right) provide a portal to vintage newspaper articles.

RIGHT: The Internet makes research easier than ever. Start with search engines, but also check specialized sources like genealogy web sites.



LEFT TO RIGHT: OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES; MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY PHOTO BY JIM TOMLINSON



OLD-HOUSE LIVING

House Call

AN OLD-HOUSE CONTRACTOR GIVES HIS BEHIND-THE-SCENES PERSPECTIVE INTO A DECADE SPENT DOCTORING UP AN 1870 SECOND EMPIRE.

STORY BY CHARLIE ALLEN PHOTOS BY JON CRISPIN



LEFT: During the years they spent restoring the house, homeowner Kim McLanahan and contractor Charlie Allen—here enjoying their final project together, a new deck on the rear of the house—became friends and running partners.

BELOW: Original, decorative mortise door hardware was reinstalled on new doors.

OPPOSITE: Exterior projects such as removing the vinyl siding, installing new lattice panels, and selecting historically appropriate paint colors crowned the decade-long restoration process.

It's not unusual for old-house owners to find themselves challenged by their restoration needs. Bringing an old house back to the glory of its youth can be a daunting proposition, and without the time to research specific period details—and the skills to re-create them—repairing older houses can be a daunting prospect. But what if you had someone on your side who already knew the process inside and out? Enter a design-build contractor.

Boston homeowner Kim McLanahan had a couple of awkward additions and a laundry list of other problems to contend with in her 1870 Second Empire, and she knew she needed a contractor with old-house expertise to help her sort it out. She hired my company, Charlie Allen

Restorations, to help her solve her home's many challenges. Her list of concerns included a turn-of-the-century rear addition that interrupted the mansard roof; a kitchen expansion that was cold, awkward, and out-of-date; an exterior covered in vinyl siding; a cyclone fence; a brick foundation in need of repointing; rotting cellar windows; loose and drafty wood double-hung windows with aged aluminum storms; and a mansard roof that had been updated in three-tab fiberglass shingles. Kim also wanted to add a shower to a first-floor powder room. In addition to these tangible challenges, Kim was on a tight budget, and she needed to live in the house throughout the work, which meant the process had to be phased over several years.

We started by taking a step back to do some planning. Kim wanted the three second-floor bedrooms and her living

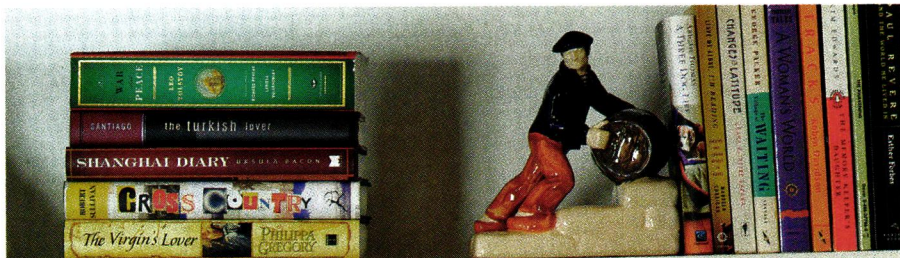
room and dining room walls, windows, and doors to remain largely undisturbed. They were the most original portions of the house, which hadn't been subjected to earlier remodeling endeavors. The kitchen and baths, on the other hand, had all been remodeled more than once in the 20th century, and Kim wanted to reverse the damage. The "work" in these rooms was done on paper first, and the designs went through several iterations until Kim felt the proposed changes would create the spaces she needed and wanted while maintaining the integrity of her old house.

The planning helped us figure out how to phase the construction work in an efficient way that would prevent us from going back to previously completed items or through finished spaces while undertaking work in the future. Our road map also helped us define what items to address





ABOVE: The sunny living room features built-in cabinetry, refinished hardwood floors, new double-hung wood windows, and a restored fireplace complete with a wood-burning insert and a cast-in-place chimney flue. **BELOW, LEFT:** "I had never embarked on anything like this before," says Kim (shown here in her restored entry hall), who worked closely with Charlie to ensure all the work done to the house met her expectations and budget. **BELOW, RIGHT:** Custom shelving offers a home for treasured mementos.





LEFT: The dining room features a restored hardwood floor of 2¼" flat-sawn, face-nailed oak; new double-hung wood windows; and freshly painted walls and trim.

BOTTOM: Refinishing the staircase proved to be one of the most challenging aspects of the restoration. After it had been completely stripped, the risers were painted to match the trim, treads were given a natural polyurethane finish, and the railing, balusters, and newel post were stained a rich brown for contrast.

in each phase so Kim could continue to occupy the house. We planned to stagger the bathroom renovations so Kim would always have a bathroom free to use. A basic, temporary kitchen was established in the dining room so Kim could prepare meals.

Once the kitchen had been gutted, however, our best-laid plans started to unravel. We could see that what was formerly the end wall of the house (before the addition had been tacked on) had been left unsupported. Two layers of kitchen ceiling and three layers of second-floor bathroom flooring had helped conceal this condition and the resulting stress. We couldn't put in a proper beam and straighten the

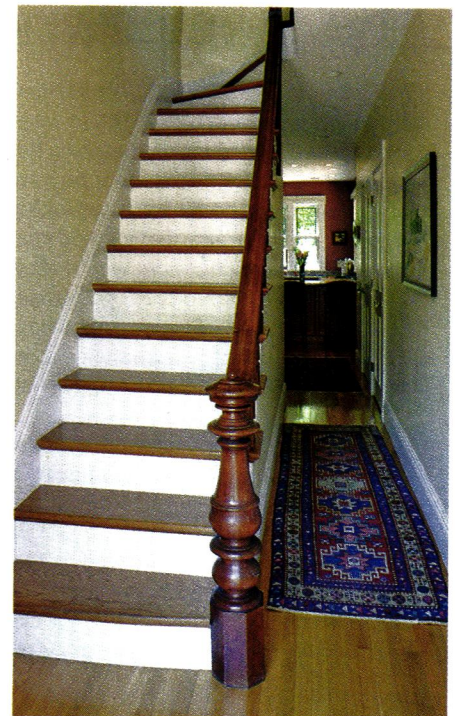
sagging floor joists without compromising the second-floor bathroom, so we had no choice but to take it offline, which left Kim showering at the gym for several weeks. And while working on the second-floor bathroom, we discovered damage to the roof rafters from a previous house fire. Fortunately, much of the damage was cut out to make room for the skylight, but we did have to resupport a small portion of the hip roof framing.

A few smaller projects over the next several years then addressed the bedrooms, study, and living room. Logically, Kim saved the dramatic exterior restoration work for the end of the process. It was joy-

ous work for us all, as we removed the vinyl siding, the cyclone fence, and aluminum gutters; restored the original window sills and mansard window buttresses, providing appropriate window and door backband moldings; and fabricated lattice panels and

Finding Help

Searching for a contractor or designer with experience in old-house restoration? Ask your local historical commission or society for referrals; they often keep a list of preferred contractors. Local branches of national contractor organizations like the National Association of the Remodeling Industry and the National Association of Home Builders also can be a good resource. (Tip: On the NARI site, look for winners of the Contractor of the Year Awards, especially in the Historical Renovation category.) Believe it or not, the best resource is right under your nose—keep an eye out for job signs of contractors working in your neighborhood on period homes.





The Homeowner's Perspective

The first time Kim McLanahan met with Charlie Allen back in 1998, her goals for her 19th-century Second Empire house were modest: She wanted to redo the kitchen and two bathrooms, install a working fireplace, and get rid of the “yucky vinyl siding” on the exterior. But as she soon learned, “Once you make one area look beautiful, the rest of the house starts to look kind of crappy in comparison.”

For the next decade, Kim worked closely with Charlie, taking on new projects as her schedule and budget would allow. The pair developed an amiable working relationship, with plenty of discussion on every decision that was made about the house. “I was very clear about what I wanted, but I definitely listened to any suggestions that came from their expertise,” Kim says. (She and Charlie eventually became friends off the job, too, chatting about projects on morning runs along the Charles River.)

As for living through the work over the years? “Looking back, it was hysterical,” says Kim, although she admits some mishaps—like having to create a makeshift shower by hanging a curtain from exposed 2x4s with a spare piece of knitting yarn, or coming home one day in the middle of February to find that a worker had accidentally switched off the heat—didn’t seem that funny at the time.

But now that the restoration is finished (the final project, a new deck, was completed in May), Kim only sees the positive. “I’m thrilled with it,” she says. “We did our best to make the spaces livable for 2009, yet respect the history of the house.”

—Clare Martin

reestablished wood gutters to aesthetically tie the addition back into the house. We also worked with the local historical commission to determine appropriate paint color options. The exterior restoration received a local Cambridge Historical Commission Preservation Award.

As Kim discovered, the challenges of an old-house restoration can stymie even the most eager old-house restorer once a project gets underway. But working with professionals on a restoration project doesn’t have to be equated with letting go or losing control—it’s just another way to get the job done. 🏠

Charlie Allen owns *Charlie Allen Restorations* in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and serves as a councilor on the Cambridge Historical Society.



ABOVE: A soothing color palette and refined wide-plank floors combine to create a restful retreat in a second-floor bedroom.



LEFT: A skylight added to the second-floor bathroom ushers plenty of natural light into the space. Beadboard wainscoting, a built-in cabinet, and an antique mirror contribute to the period feel of the room.

OPPOSITE: Kim opted to forgo cabinets on one wall of the revamped kitchen to maintain a connection to the outdoors.

Check out our list of questions to ask before you hire a contractor for your restoration project.

OldHouseJournal.com



This blaze at a historic home in Marblehead, Massachusetts, was reportedly caused by the process used to remove exterior paint.

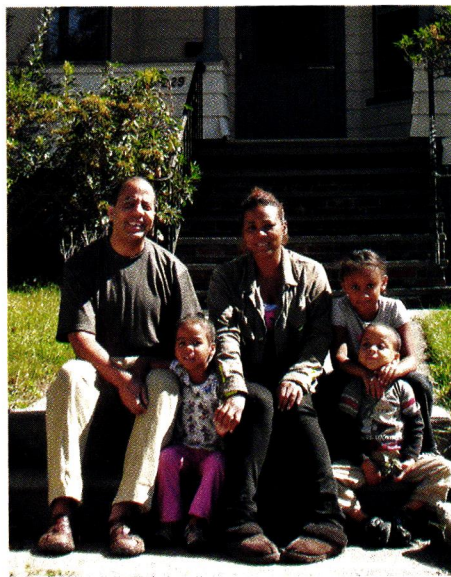
KRIS OLSON PHOTO

Fighting Fires

Learn the risks and plan ahead to ensure that you and your old house have the best possible chance of surviving a blaze. BY TONY SEIDEMAN

When most people walk into a historic house, they're looking to step further into the building to explore original details like stained glass, beautiful carved wood moldings, or magnificent parquet floors.

When Chuck Jennings steps into an old house, the first thing he thinks of is how to get out—especially if the structure is filled with the heat, smoke, and darkness of a blazing fire. That's because Jennings, an avid preservationist who loves old houses (he owns two—a 1918 Foursquare and an 1880s Queen Anne), is a professor of fire science at New York's John Jay College, and one of the nation's leading fire safety consultants.



Chuck Jennings, an avid preservationist and one of the nation's leading fire safety consultants, lives with his family in an 1880s Queen Anne home in upstate New York.

TONY SEIDEMAN PHOTO

Conversations with Jennings and other fire safety experts present a classic good news/bad news picture of old houses. With their thick plaster walls and usually robust construction, older homes are in many ways safer than modern ones. On the other hand, older houses often sit in poorer neighborhoods, which statistically puts them at greater risk. Many older buildings are also owned by older people, which can mean deferred maintenance, lacking resources, and consequently greater threats.

Perhaps the most important point to consider on fire safety is that in most cases, houses don't burn down by themselves. Human activities are the overwhelming reason most fires happen. In a way, that's good news, because people who recognize this can take the necessary steps to protect themselves.

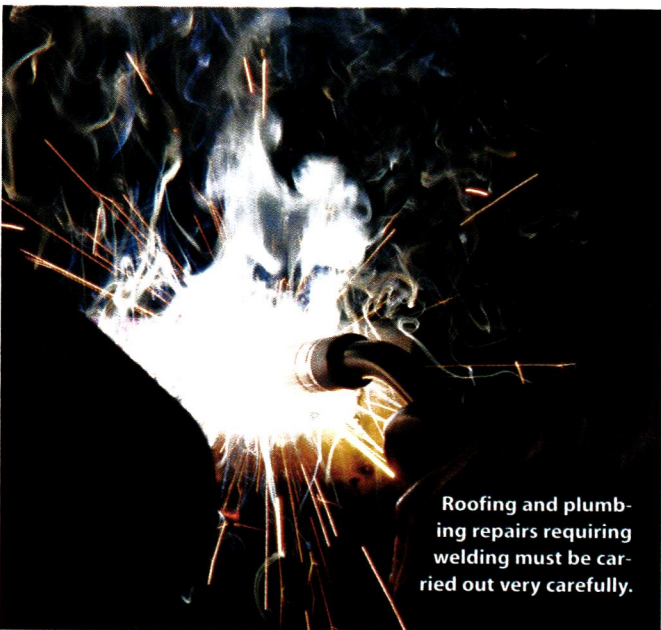
Prevention

Keeping fires from happening is the best way to reduce the risks they present. Jennings says one risk tops all others when it comes to fire safety: the restoration process itself. “The number-one threat to historic homes from a fire-safety perspective is contractors,” Jennings explains. Any time a home’s basic fabric is disturbed, it is vulnerable. But the real risk, says Jennings, comes from working with open flames.

If at all possible, try to avoid this type of work, which is typically concentrated to plumbing and roofing. Stephen Tilly, owner and principal of Stephen Tilly Architects, knows from personal experience how dangerous open flames can be in roof work. “We repaired a fire-damaged roofing job site that started when roofers were working on some flashing with a torch. Old tar paper beneath siding can go up in an instant. The workers didn’t notice that this had happened, and the flames traveled up one side in a wall, burning out an entire room in the house.” Torch-down roofing—a process where a modified bitumen roofing product is installed on a flat roof with a blowtorch—remains popular among many roofers, but it must be applied with extreme caution.

As for plumbing, Jennings advocates a “fire watch” any time an open flame is used. A lookout should observe the site for at least an hour to avoid the “lunch syndrome”—i.e., when a plumber has sweated a joint, goes out to lunch, and comes back to find half the local fire department surrounding a smoking wreck. Jennings isn’t a big fan of heat guns, either, and says using torches to remove paint is just a bad idea.

Establishing strict rules for work on your house—and following them—is vital. “Make sure your sprinkler system isn’t completely



Roofing and plumbing repairs requiring welding must be carried out very carefully.

ALEX WINNER PHOTO



© ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/DAVE RABOIN

Fire Facts

According to the United States Fire Administration, there were 414,000 fires in America in 2007, which killed 2,895 people and cost \$7.55 billion. About 110,000 of these fires took place in residential structures.

Extension cords are a major fire hazard—especially during the holiday season. Never overload cords or place them beneath rugs.

turned off,” Tilly advises. “You also can set up additional temporary smoke detection.”

After preservation work, the riskiest activities for historic homes are similar to those for newer ones. Food preparation ranks high among the cause of blazes. Adolescents and the elderly—both prone to distraction and forgetfulness—tend to pose the greatest risk. For adolescents, strict controls and definite rules can help reduce risks. Be clear about when they can cook and how. Rules can help the elderly as well, but technology can also provide an assist. Today there are tools available to increase cooking safety for older chefs, such as systems that keep pots and their contents from getting hotter than the ignition point of oil.

While cooking causes the most fires, blazes related to smoking are the most deadly. Once again, a few simple rules can significantly reduce risks. Never smoke in bed or when you’re sleepy. Always use a big ashtray, since larger ashtrays will contain cigarettes better and are less likely to spill. There are fire-resistant cigarettes on the market that put themselves out if they are not inhaled within a set period of time, so if you do want to smoke, you can avoid setting conflagrations. Or, best of all, you can quit.

Once human error is reduced, the next step is to examine the fabric of the house and the condition of its appliances. Bad wiring is a common cause of fire in old houses, Jennings says. Knob and tube electrical systems, when in good condition and not overloaded, are fundamentally safe. But many older homes have been subject to an endless variety of bad electrical work over the years; an inspection is always warranted.

Water leaks can cause fires by creating short circuits as moisture hits wires and electrical devices. Old appliances can be risks, as can improperly vented dryers. Extension cords are an all-too-common source of disaster. Use them with caution; make sure they



SAFETY-ELEMENT PHOTO

A device that fits over burners, keeping temperatures in check, can prevent fires caused by forgetfulness, common in elderly cooks.

Fire Rules

In the event of a fire, make sure you and your family know how to survive:

- ◆ Get out of the house as quickly as possible.
- ◆ Have a pre-set gathering place.
- ◆ Take a head count to make sure everybody is out.
- ◆ Never, ever go back into the home.
- ◆ Have a phone available to call for help—or use a neighbor's. Never go back into a burning building to call for help.

are appropriate for the task at hand. Putting an extension cord beneath a carpet is incredibly dangerous, and has caused damage or complete destruction to many a historic structure.

Chimneys and wood stoves are another risk. Inspect chimneys annually, especially if they are connected to a wood stove; creosote buildup is a fire hazard mitigated through regular cleaning. Use adequate fire protection anywhere a wood stove is set; check your man-

ual or call the manufacturer for guidelines, which vary by stove. You may need a permit to install a stove; not getting one could create problems with your homeowner's insurance. Even regular furnaces should never stand alone—they should be surrounded by some type of fire-resistant enclosure, even if only drywall. Keep materials and debris a safe distance away from furnaces as well, at least 36".

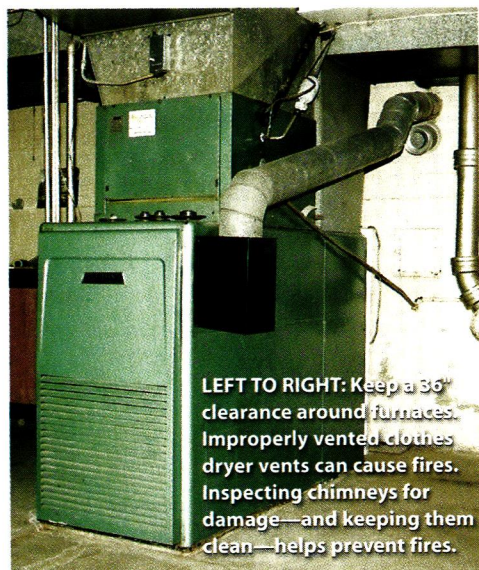
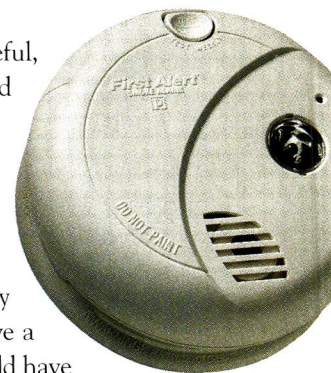
Protection

Because he's a thoughtful, careful, demanding purchaser, Jennings' old homes didn't need many alterations. But one thing he installed immediately was a hard-wired, battery-backup smoke alarm system, which will keep the house safe even during brief electrical interruptions. Every place where people sleep should have a smoke alarm, he says. Kitchens should have an alarm, too, but it should be placed far enough away from cooking surfaces to ensure it isn't constantly triggered, which can make it a nuisance and tempting to disconnect.

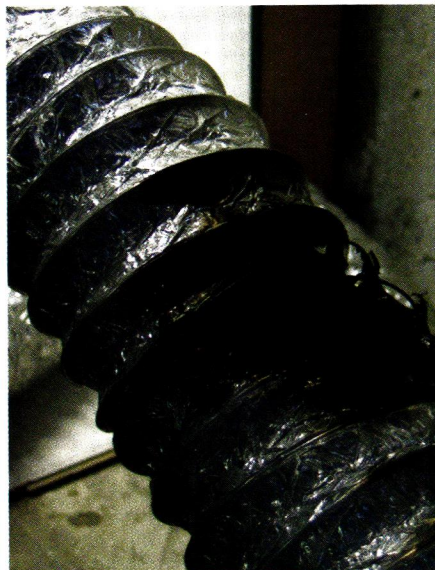
When it comes to alarm systems, Jennings recommends following the National Fire Protection Association's NFPA 72 standard. While wireless installations can reduce the cost and damage of installation, hard-wired systems do better when it comes to power outages and reliability. In hard-wired systems, all the alarms are connected to each other and to a central station, while wireless systems use small radio transmitters to communicate with each other and a central locale. "Wired is always better," says Tilly, and many building codes require hard-wired installations.

Sprinklers are another useful safety feature, albeit an expensive one. But costs—and damage from installations on historic

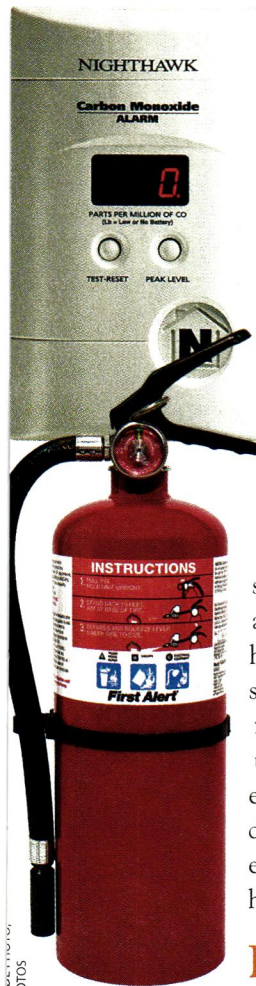
CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: Carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers, and smoke detectors are standard safety features that should make an appearance in every old house.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Keep a 36" clearance around furnaces. Improperly vented clothes dryer vents can cause fires. Inspecting chimneys for damage—and keeping them clean—helps prevent fires.



LEFT: BRUCE R. CASS PHOTO; MIDDLE: JEREMY STANLEY PHOTO; RIGHT: SWANN HOUSE BED & BREAKFAST; NATHAN WINTER PHOTO



structures—are far less today than they once were. Major innovations include the use of heat-resistant, flexible plastic pipes (PEX tubing) and high-pressure systems that produce a mist that can suffocate a fire without destroying historic materials. In many areas, sprinklers are only necessary at exit routes and high-risk areas to meet code demands and significantly improve safety. In recent years, states have adopted the International Building Code (IBC), but many have modified the overall regulations to meet the needs of their localities and regions. Check with local authorities before moving forward.

Most experts agree that every historic home should have fire extinguishers in kitchens and anywhere flames are likely to occur. Jennings himself isn't a fan of extinguishers, because he's seen homeowners add to disasters by trying to fight blazes themselves. Generally speaking, unless you are trained in the use of extinguishers and have the temperament to keep calm during an emergency, your time is better spent evacuating than attempting to fight fire with a handheld extinguisher.

Planning

Unfortunately, despite meticulous preparation, fires can still happen. But some basic planning can make a huge difference in saving lives and preventing injuries if or when a fire occurs.

If you have an historic preservation society, get them talking with the local fire department about minimum-impact firefighting, says Tilly, who recently had to deal with the impact of two fires—one in a community where preservation was a priority, and one where it was not. Though the fires were similar, the damage was exponentially greater in the town where preservation wasn't high on the radar. It's possible to fight fires without taking a house apart, and there's nothing wrong with asking fire departments to use this approach.

Once a serious blaze starts, you have just one to three minutes to safely get out. Always keep low; heat rises, and temperatures at head height can scorch lung tissue. In addition, smoke from a house fire is full of potentially lethal toxins and gases—another reason to stay close to the ground.

In a significant fire, the smoke is usually so thick that visibility rapidly drops to a matter of inches. That's why some people get lost—and die—within feet of safety. "Fire is destructive, and it's permanent," Jennings says. But it isn't inevitable, especially if you invest a relatively small amount of time and energy in preparation, prevention, and planning for escape. 🏠



MILD ARCHITECTS PHOTO; INSET: UPONOR PHOTO

The Brokaw-McDougall house in Tallahassee, Florida, installed a fire sprinkler system with flexible PEX tubing during renovation.

More Resources

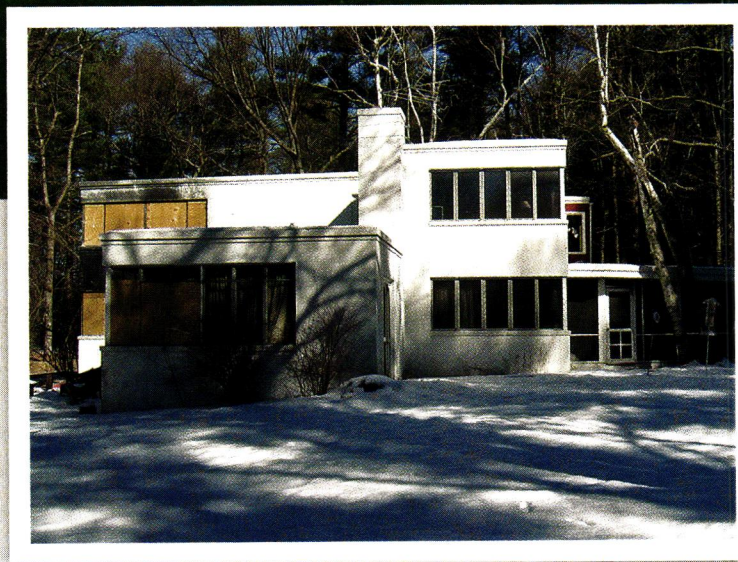
Fires seize a tremendous number of lives and dollars every year. As you might expect, the Internet is a wealth of information about dealing with blazes. Here are some of the best sites:

- ◆ **National Fire Protection Association**
nfpa.org
A good, detailed overview of fire safety
- ◆ **Be Fire Smart**
befiresmart.com
Sponsored by Liberty Mutual (for some reason, insurance companies really dislike fires), a straightforward site about fire prevention and safety
- ◆ **Consumer Products Safety Commission**
cpsc.gov
Data about fire-safe products
- ◆ **The Home Fire Sprinkler Association**
homefiresprinkler.org
A consumer-oriented organization that provides basic advice on fire safety
- ◆ **U.S. Fire Administration**
usfa.dhs.gov
Incredibly detailed statistics about fire, its causes, and the damage it does

—T.S.



Risen from the Ashes



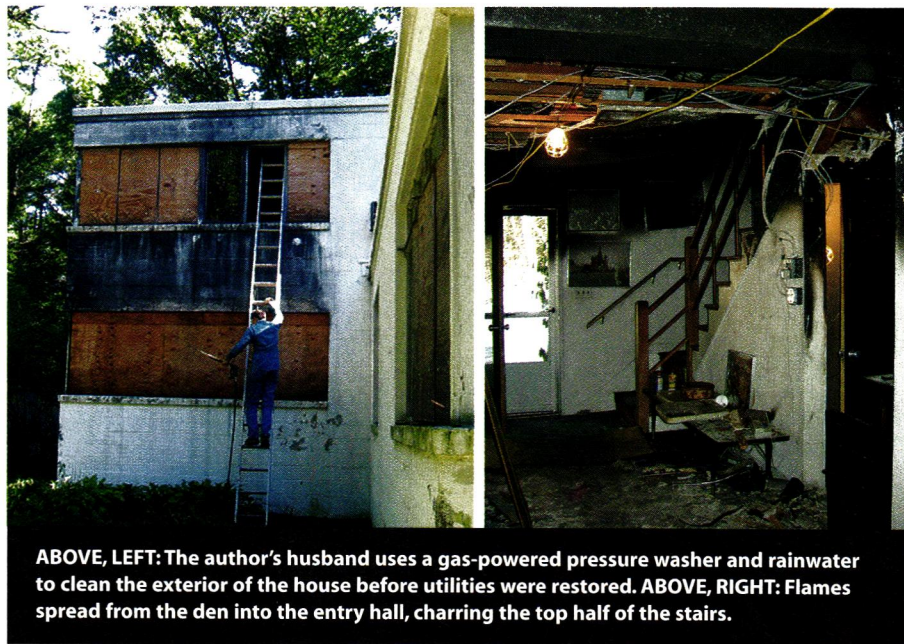
Sensing hidden potential through layers of damage, a Massachusetts couple buys and resurrects an original Bauhaus home in the wake of a devastating fire.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BARBARA RHINES

In the hot real-estate market of 2004, it took a true “fire sale” to find our home—a 1949 cinderblock house that had suffered major damage from a serious blaze. We purchased it “as is.”

Buying a burned house takes imagination. Our first walk-through revealed an apocalyptic scene. Chunks of plaster and household debris were piled knee-deep in the front entrance hall and the den, where the fire started. The firefighters had broken 38 windows in the house to allow smoke and heat to escape, and shards of glass mixed with black soot covered every surface like a lava flow. Then there was the smell—nothing compares to the odor of charred wood, plaster, and plastic. But the house was pure Bauhaus, and the layout was fantastic. Despite its appearance, we fell in love.

Cinderblock construction has plenty of naysayers (including several of the general contractors we interviewed), but the house handled the fire surprisingly well. In a stick-built house, the fire would have spread much more quickly from the den’s fireplace, destroying the master bedroom above and traveling through the roof. In this house, the second floor is a reinforced



ABOVE, LEFT: The author’s husband uses a gas-powered pressure washer and rainwater to clean the exterior of the house before utilities were restored. **ABOVE, RIGHT:** Flames spread from the den into the entry hall, charring the top half of the stairs.

concrete slab, so there was no structural damage. Most fortunate of all, the homeowners who’d lived in the house for 52 years escaped the fire unharmed.

When our selected general contractor fell through at the last minute, we decided to take another risk and become our own general contractor. We made all decisions based on two things: cost and speed. It was a strategy that meshed well with the goals of historical restoration because it kept us focused on simply putting the house back together. An unlimited time-

frame and budget might have lured us into over-renovating to the point of losing the original spirit of the house.

Where There’s Smoke

The house sat vacant for six months before we purchased it. The first week that we took possession, my husband, Mike, started working to remove soot from the exterior. This was tricky since the house had no working systems, including water (the well pump had frozen). Using fall nor’easters to our advantage, Mike ran a rubber tube from the flat roof and filled our empty hot tub with rainwater. Then we rented a gas-powered pressure washer



The living room’s original built-in shelves (complete with a round hole that once held an original 1940s speaker) were retained, and the concrete slab was topped with a floating cork floor.



The kitchen wasn't touched by the flames, but the smoke damage was extensive. New high-gloss IKEA cabinets mimic the look of 1940s-era metal versions.



and blasted the outside soot.

For the interior smoke damage, we hired a fire restoration company, Servpro. The first step was to remove the overpowering smell of smoke permeating the house. Servpro set up five ozone generators, which ran for three days. The machines produce ozone, which oxidizes the airborne odor-causing molecules.

Then the laborious cleaning process began. "People make mistakes trying to clean soot themselves," explains Steve Taylor, general manager of our local Servpro franchise. "Using water or household cleaners smears the soot around and can sometimes even set it into the underlying material."

The fire restoration workers painstakingly cleaned every square inch of the interior using vulcanized rubber sponges. Their goal was to remove any loose particles so the walls could be primed and painted. Mike and I followed them with Kilz oil-based primer (which is specially formulated to cover smoke damage) and painted the interior ourselves. Thanks to this careful process of cleaning, prepping, and promptly painting, we were able to save most of the original textured plaster despite the extensive smoke damage. We only needed to replaster in the den and hall, where the fire had destroyed the walls. And after four years and three humid summers, we've never smelled smoke.

Turning up the Heat

The house was designed in 1949 with radiant heating throughout the first floor. The concept was way ahead of its time, but the system itself was way past its prime. The life expectancy for original radiant heating systems was about 50 years, after which time corrosion tends to cause leaks in the piping embedded within the concrete floor. Our plumber tested for leaks by using an air compressor to pressurize the system. A check of the pressure gauge showed a significant loss of pressure after

12 hours—the pipes were shot. Our first thought was to install new radiant heat, which uses flexible tubing. But that meant either demolishing the floor to redo the piping or building it up by a few inches. Building up would have affected the steps to the sunken living room, as well as the room's built-in bookshelves, hearth, and French doors.

We decided to preserve the design of the sunken living room but compromised by adding hot-water baseboard heating and leaving the slab and its embedded

Financing a Fire-Damaged Property

Obtaining financing for a fire-damaged property wasn't easy, but we found that it helped to sit face-to-face with lenders to explain the situation. (It also didn't hurt that we had some hand-holding through the process.)

Peter Otoski, vice president of construction lending for First Federal Savings Bank of Boston, recalls our first meeting about the project. "It was unusual to find someone repairing a fire-damaged home. Most people would have asked for a construction loan to build from scratch."

The bank's construction department sent out an appraiser to assess the damage and determine the as-is value of the house. They then evaluated our work estimates to make sure the repair budget was realistic. We received a modification loan, which combined a construction loan with permanent financing. Money was set aside for the construction-loan phase. After the bank appraisers reviewed the work at the end of the project and saw that an occupancy permit was granted, the loan changed to permanent financing. Our modification (or one-time-close) loan enabled us to have only one set of closing costs.

We had to search carefully for builder's risk insurance, which is required for construction loans. One insurance company declined by presenting a catch-22 scenario—they didn't want to insure fire damage because if a fire occurred during construction, they wouldn't be able to determine the old fire damage from the new. With some searching, though, we found a company that was willing to work with us.

pipes alone. The trade-off was losing the original modern concept of having no visible heat source, but we simply didn't have the budget, time, or stomach to tear up the entire first floor and re-pour a slab with new tubing.

However, adding baseboard heating left us with an unheated concrete floor. When searching for flooring that would be both true to the time period and insulating, we hit upon the perfect solution: cork. We laid a vapor barrier and a floating cork floor directly onto the slab.

Window Worries

The house's wraparound aluminum ribbon windows are its main design element, adding modern luster both inside and out, but they presented a dilemma after the fire. The 1949 single-pane windows weren't exactly energy-efficient (the previous owners had even glued wood strips to some of the interior frames to prevent water condensation), and now 38 of them were broken. Then there was the problem of the den windows—the frames had actually melted and twisted in the fire. We needed to find replacements.

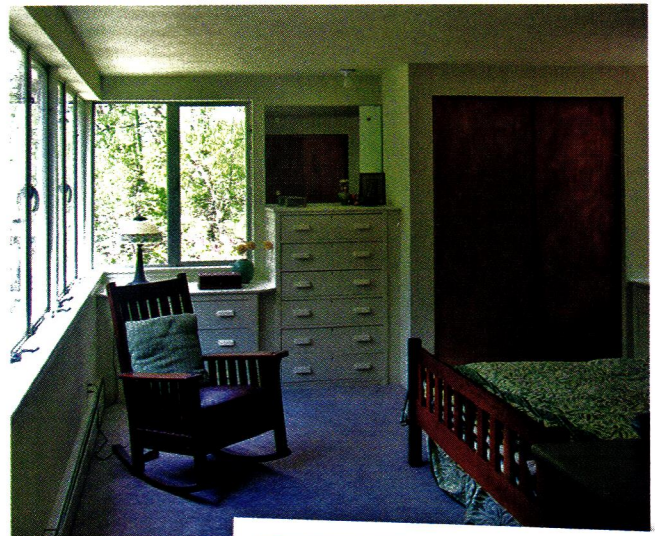
Naïvely, I carried an aluminum frame into a window shop. "I would like to replace 38 casement windows matching

this sample," I said. I quickly learned that unless I ordered custom windows at great cost, I was out of luck finding unclad aluminum replacements. Sticking to our goals of budget and speed, we found Gary Moliterno of Moliterno Glass, who was able to fit double-paned glass into the frames that were still intact.

But what about the melted frames in the den? We shopped around for standard casements and found that a line of Andersen Windows had the thinnest profile, which best matched the thin aluminum-frame windows. We chose a paintable exterior option for the vinyl-clad windows and painted them a light gray to match the appearance of the aluminum windows.

Friendly Fire

Ironically, the biggest projects we tackled on the house had little to do with the fire. If the house hadn't burned and we'd purchased it at market rate, we probably



The window frames upstairs weren't damaged in the fire, but were fitted with new double-paned glass for energy efficiency.

would have put nearly the same amount of money into upgrading the outdated systems, windows, flooring, and kitchen. The fire not only lowered the purchase price, but also deterred other would-be buyers. After the eight-month restoration was complete, a friend visited our house. She told us, "There is an old Korean superstition about living in a house that has had a fire. The fire cleanses old energies and brings good fortune." It's certainly proven true for our house. 🏠

Barbara Rhines, a longtime collector of 20th-century decorative arts, serves on the Board of the Friends of Modern Architecture/Lincoln (FoMA), a local group working to preserve the town of Lincoln's collection of early Modern houses.



The living room hosts an ever-changing array of mid-century furniture finds. The drapes were bought at auction and originally hung in the Seagram Building in New York City.

Visit other Modern gems with our virtual tour of the movement's roots in Lincoln, Massachusetts.

OldHouseJournal.com



Double *Play*

A Massachusetts family turns a Victorian-era duplex into a winning single-family home.



STORY BY DEMETRA APOSOROS
PHOTOS BY MELISSA ROMANIELLO

From the beginning, Helen Raynham loved the old-world feel of her circa-1900 Queen Anne in Winchester, Massachusetts. “It had a turret and a leafiness around the building. I remember going inside and seeing a window with sheer curtains blowing in the breeze—very Victorian—through which I glimpsed the trees outside,” she recalls. Helen and her husband, Richard Colvin, also appreciated the building’s location near the center of town on a quiet, established street. But the house wasn’t a perfect fit for the couple and their three children. While its two and a half stories boasted nearly 6,000 square feet, it had been built as a double, intended to house two families. And its exterior was ensconced in aluminum siding, bereft of the architectural detailing so prominent on the other fine, fancy Victorian buildings in the neighborhood. “The house had a lot of potential and the space seemed great,” says Richard, “but it hadn’t been well-maintained for a long time.” The couple knew it would take a major overhaul to create the house they wanted for their family’s home. So they turned to Mathew Cummings of Cummings Architects to help them transform the drab duplex into an up-to-date single that pays homage to its neighborhood’s roots.



OPPOSITE: The Queen Anne began life as a double house, with a firewall separating the two sides on all three floors. A lackluster, aluminum-sided exterior was made more inviting with the addition of a wrap-around porch. Decorative shingles and Stick-style detailing also warm up the home’s appearance, and better match the neighborhood’s high-style homes.

ABOVE: The master bedroom boasts a cozy seating area inside the turret.

LEFT: Newel posts on the main stairwell are original; the new crown molding was selected to complement them.



AFTER

BEFORE



Two original small kitchens (one in each side of the house) were combined and opened up to create what is now the focal point of the main floor. A columned half-wall at one side, and dark inlaid strips in the flooring on the other, mark spots where walls were removed. The new kitchen is light and airy, open to all the adjoining spaces; it's a place where the family spends much of their time.





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The breakfast nook boasts a wall of storage to organize the children's belongings. Eggplant walls in the living room are punctuated with new book-matched doorways, providing access to the dining room beyond. An oval element window sits beside a built-in sitting area that doubles as toy storage for the kids. "It's a nice, cozy place to sit on a snowy day; it feels very special," says architect Mat Cummings.



The challenges began at the front door. "The house was cut right down the middle, with an egress on each side, so we had two main entries we had to connect," explains Mat. The building also sat further from the street than its neighbors, which made it seem disconnected from the rest of the neighborhood. To create a more appropriate and inviting entry, Mat extended the two side porches into a big wraparound typical on many

Queen Annes, and added a front porch gable. "The wraparound porch brings the façade closer to the street," he says, while the gable, with a custom-designed scrollwork decoration, points visitors to the new front door. To further help the front façade, Mat added a beefed-up balustrade. "The handrail fits the era, but it's intentionally large because we're trying to break down the scale of the house from the street view."

Two-to-One

Inside, two separate homes were thoughtfully blended into one, keeping original staircases, mantels, and double French doors, but reworking many other details to create both public and private family spaces. In the kitchen, for example, the couple knew they wanted a combination of living and cooking areas. So the floor plan evolved into a space that was bright and defined, yet visible from adjoining rooms.



AFTER
BEFORE

The once-bland rear of the house was beautified with Victorian-era details and given a more human scale with the addition of a second-story gable, shutters and shingles, a pergola, and an oval element window.



On one side, Mat used a half wall with columns as a divider to facilitate easy views and a sense of connectedness, while a centrally located island serves as a gathering place. “In first period homes, the fireplace was where people gathered. This island is like the first period fireplace—everything revolves around it,” Mat says.

“I love the kitchen; it’s the whole focus of the house,” adds Helen.

Two walls were removed to create the new space—something Mat rarely recommends—but in a nod to history, their imprint remains in the bottom of the half wall and as a dark border inlaid in the kitchen’s new wood floor (which matches originals in other parts of the house). “If the first homeowners walked in,” says Mat,

“they could see 100-year-old layout behind the new one.”

In and Out

It would also be easy to recognize the previous lives of the dining room and den, since they began as mirror-image spaces with matching fireplaces along a common

wall. New doorways now flank the fireplace mantels, connecting the rooms and facilitating easy access between the two. “We wanted to create a nice, era-appropriate opening between the rooms,” says Mat. “Now if you want to sit down in the den after dinner, it’s easy to do.”

The den’s lighting selections, like those in the rest of the house, match the architecture and help define the room. Its turret boasts a chandelier that hangs low, inviting visitors to sit down and get comfortable in the cozy space. “Once we have a feel for a house, we use lighting to embellish areas,” says Mat. Likewise, recessed lighting appears only in the kitchen and the family room. “We never use recessed lighting in the public spaces of historic homes,” explains Mat, “only sparingly in family places. Recessed lighting has every opportunity of ruining the architecture.”

Such thoughtful attention to details extends outside the house, too. The rear yard, reached via French doors through the living room, boasts a pergola that echoes Victorian-era garden features, while allowing plenty of light to filter into the back rooms of the house. The pergola helps soften the home’s rear view, which was also initially out of scale. “The beginning house was very boring, and certainly not deserving of the neighborhood,” says Mat, referring to the surrounding mix of Second Empires, Queen Annes, and Stick- and Shingle-style houses. So Victorian-era exterior detailing was added via some Stick-style ornament and shingles in the gables, and the addition of shutters on second- and third-floor windows. “We wanted to preserve the existing window locations, but too much of the home’s exterior was taken up by siding. Shutters help

PRODUCTS:

All paints, Benjamin Moore. Exterior: Norco windows, Jeld-Wen; Cladding shingles, Maibec; Carriage House roof shingles, Certainteed; Rolling Hills, Cypress Green, Mannequin Cream, Mink Violet, and Deep Indigo paints. Entry Hall: Chancery chandeliers and sconces, Framburg; Century crown molding, Lynn Lumber; Filtered Sunlight paint. Kitchen: St. James cabinets, Legacy (Bob Fabrizio); Essex pendant and Stratford chandelier, Norwell Lighting; Quarter-sawn white oak floors with wenge inlay, Hoboken Floors; Doors, TruStile; White porcelain knobs and finial hinges, Emtek; Silken Pine paint. Living Room: Metropolitan Family Collection chandelier and sconces, Metropolitan Lighting; Dark Purple paint. Dining Room: Metropolitan Family Collection chandelier and sconces, Metropolitan Lighting; Buckland Blue paint.

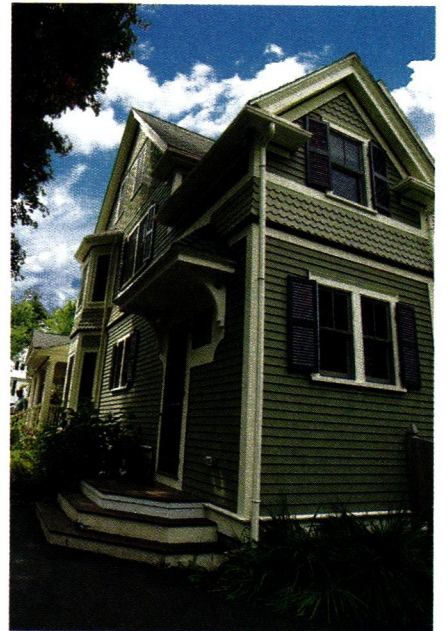


FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Lynn Lumber: lynnlumber.com
Maibec: maibec.com
Metropolitan Lighting: metropolitanlighting.net
Norwell Lighting: norwellinc.com
The Color People: colorpeople.com
TruStile: trustile.com

Helen used a similar approach in furnishing and finishing her home, pooling a team of talented professionals that included interior designer Jean Verbridge, landscape designer Laura Kuhn, and interior and exterior color consultants Bonnie Rosser Krims and The Color People. (“I believe a lot in designers,” she says.)

In the end, the blending of styles and specialists paid off; the couple is quite happy with the way the house has turned out. “We wanted to make a comfortable home where our family could grow up, a fine Victorian house that fit in with the character of the neighborhood,” says Richard. Helen agrees, but her favorite parts still seem to revolve around that turret—the one that made such a strong initial impression. “We have a treadmill inside the turret on the third floor,” she says. “You can run there with almost a 360-degree view, which is fabulous. It does shake the chandeliers a bit...but not too much.” 🏠



TOP: The dining room’s formal fireplace mantel is original. **ABOVE:** A new mudroom with a rear side entrance lets the kids come and go as they please, without tracking dirt through the formal areas of the house.

make windows look bigger, bringing the house down to a more human scale,” he explains. Architectural styles were evolving so quickly during the Victorian era that these houses can have a little bit of several different styles thrown in, says Mat. “It’s kind of like making chicken soup; you can mix different things together and get the flavor you want, as long as you use the right ingredients.”



Skim Coating in Color

If your plaster walls have settled and cracked, shore them up again using this technique that combines mesh-reinforced repairs with a color pigment finish. BY JACOB ARNDT

Plaster walls are like a thin skin applied over wood or steel lathe, so is it any wonder they yield as buildings settle or traffic vibrations wiggle them loose? While plaster is a remarkably resilient material, it's inevitable that it will gain a few cracks over time.

Many people paint or paper over such cracks to make them disappear, but these half-measures don't eliminate the fissures, which will eventually reappear.

Contractors tend to suggest various radical approaches as a solution—even completely removing the plaster and lathe, and replacing it with gypsum drywall.

A much less damaging, cost-effective approach is to re-anchor the plaster with

ABOVE: California's Bidwell mansion is clad in tinted plaster, a finished appearance that can be combined with repairs.

special screws and apply a nylon mesh fabric embedded in a thin coat of new plaster. Woodwork reveals are preserved, trim work isn't disturbed, and it's even possible to add your own color to the new plaster and combine repairs and finishing into one operation.

JAMES HUENINK PHOTO

SKILL level

Beginner to Intermediate

If you've done wall-papering or joint taping on drywall, you can manage this remedy—it's not much more work than a new paint job.

Getting Started

First, inspect the walls for any obvious issues that could have caused the cracks, like sagging beams or spreading walls. Old houses usually settle slowly over the years, causing stress that results in those familiar diagonal fissures over door and window openings. A horizontal crack can indicate lateral movement, a sign of structural problems that need addressing. Determine whether the settling is active by traversing a crack with tape and checking for signs of movement after several months. Inspect the supports in the basement and attic areas, looking for fissures in the foundation. If the cracks have been there a long time, they're often the result of slow settling and can be repaired without structural intervention.

Once you're satisfied that there's no active movement, it's time to address major cracks. Areas that have pulled away from the backer wall must be re-anchored with drywall screws set through 1" square cardboard washers (these help keep the screws from going too deep; you want to snug up to the plaster, not punch through it). For really damaged areas, apply screws about 4" apart.

Next, prepare the wall for the new plaster skim coat. You'll be trowelling a $\frac{1}{16}$ "- to $\frac{1}{8}$ "-thick layer of new plaster onto the wall, so set yourself up with a temporary bench with plenty of room for tools. Cover the floor with a drop cloth, because lime plaster will stain.

Clean the wall thoroughly with soap and water, then roll on a plaster bonder, which not only bonds the fresh plaster to the old surface, but also controls how much moisture the substrate pulls from the fresh plaster. Too much suction robs the new plaster of moisture needed to mature properly, resulting in shrinkage and a weak surface. Too little suction, though, and the plaster won't bond—it will be like applying plaster to ceramic glazed brick. So the



GAVAL OGLESBAY PHOTOS

plaster bond coat provides the glue and setting conditions for the new plaster.

Placing Plaster

Once the plaster bond dries (give it an hour or so), you're ready to plaster the wall. Start by mixing finish lime in a 5-gallon bucket, using a $\frac{1}{2}$ " drill with mixing blade. Add your pigment now, too, but don't be fooled by appearances—the putty will be much darker than the finished plaster on the wall, so be generous with pigment (but keep it below 5 percent of volume). The putty consistency should be akin to brick batter that can be held on a trowel sideways. This putty gets better with age—in fact, old Italian fresco artists insisted on five years' storage before use—and will store forever in a covered plastic bucket.

Think of your pigmented putty as a bucket of thick paint that needs a hard-

ener added before use. Place some putty on the plywood work surface, and make a donut shape with a reservoir in the center for water. Add gauging plaster—this is the stuff that makes the lime putty set up hard and durable on the wall. Sprinkle the gauging plaster in the water ring, adding enough to equal about half to a third of the volume of the lime putty, then mix the gauging in the water until you have a stiff batter. Finally, mix everything together on the board with a short trowel.

Once you have mixed the gauging plaster with the lime you need to work deliberately, as you'll have about 30 minutes to work it onto the wall and trowel it smooth before it sets. Plan to do one wall surface in a day.

Tools You'll Need

- ◆ ivory finish lime
- ◆ gauging plaster
- ◆ plaster bond
- ◆ nylon mesh (yellow, in rolls 4' x 100')
- ◆ regular drywall screws ($\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{1}{4}$ ")
- ◆ square plaster washers (cut from a cardboard box)
- ◆ lime-fast pigment
- ◆ 5-gallon bucket
- ◆ drill with mixing blade
- ◆ plywood board (mixing surface)
- ◆ trowels (steel, short, and long)
- ◆ temporary work bench
- ◆ drop cloth
- ◆ water bucket
- ◆ mason brush

LEFT: Serious cracks are re-attached with drywall screws and cardboard washers, then bolstered with nylon fabric. BELOW: Colored skim coat makes the wall good as new.



Preparation



MIX finish lime and pigment in a 5-gallon bucket using a drill with blade attachment.



FORM the resulting putty into a donut shape on the worktable; pour water in the reservoir.



ADD gauging plaster to the water, and mix it all together with a short trowel.

Application



APPLY plaster to the wall from the bottom up; work efficiently (you'll have a 30-min. window).



LAYER nylon mesh over cracks, embedding it into the first coat of plaster.



OVERLAP mesh over cracks for added insurance, then overplaster completely.

Crack Control

Now smear the plaster on the wall. I like to start in the bottom left corner and work upward as far as I can reach, laying the plaster on thin. Don't worry yet about uneven results or marks from the trowel—these lines will disappear with successive trowelings. Once you've covered the reachable surface, go over it one more time quickly, then place your plank onto supports so you can access the top of the wall and continue applying plaster from left to right.

Cracks that haven't pulled away from the backer lathe simply need bridging with nylon mesh; these walls will get two coats of plaster. As you place the plaster on the

wall, embed the nylon mesh into the first layer of plaster, covering the entire wall and overlapping cracks for insurance. The mesh is a reinforcing material that's very durable and easy to incorporate in your skim coat, yet it cuts easily with a pair of scissors. You'll need to overplaster the mesh coat after it sets to cover it completely.

Finessing Finishes

As the plaster begins to harden and you continue working it, you'll notice that trowel marks will gradually be erased (the plaster will start to feel soapy as it sets). You'll need to make three to four passes over the wall, troweling fresh putty and

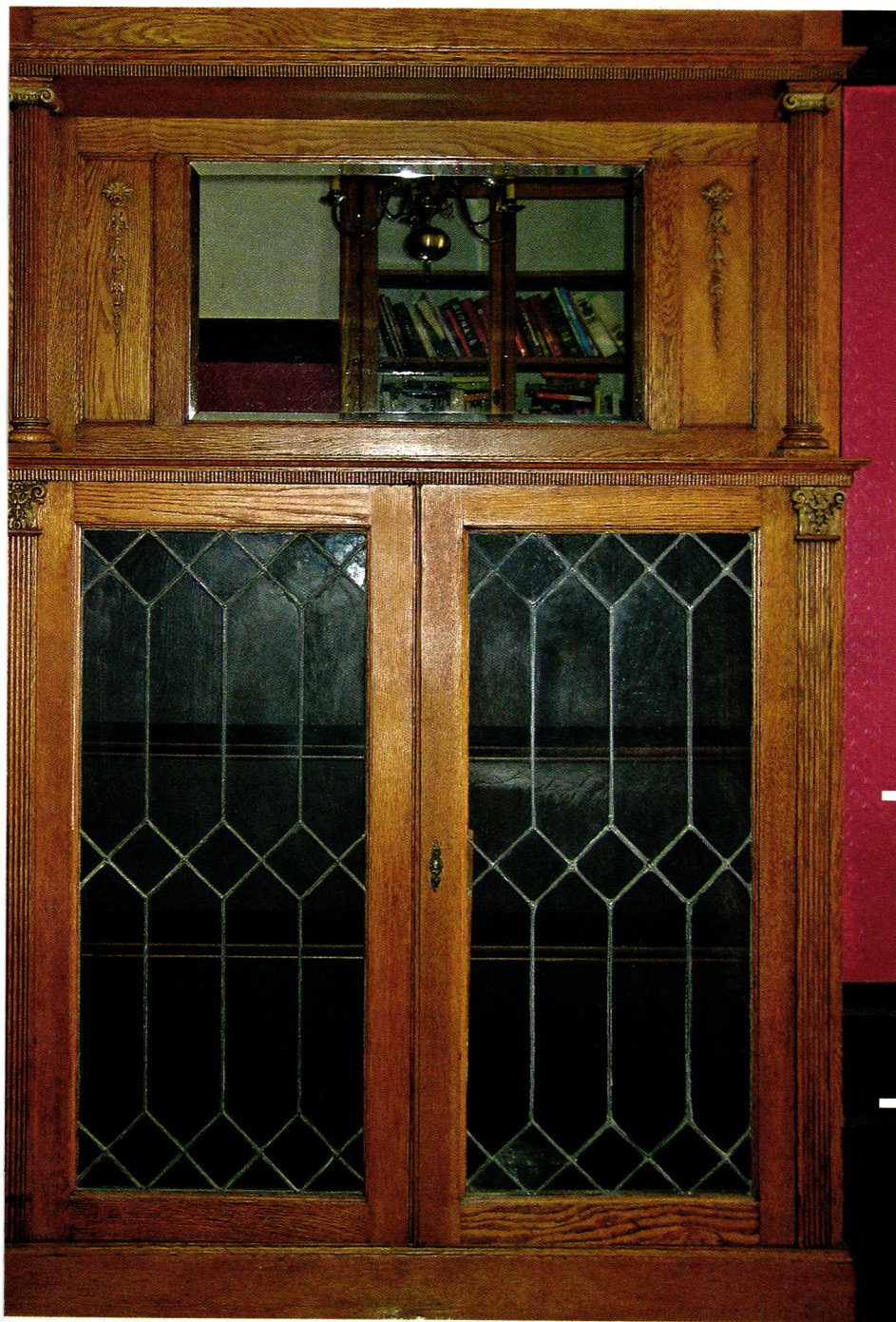
pressing it down to consolidate, until the wall is smooth. Mix the second coat of putty soon after applying the first; the first coat needs to remain moist enough to adhere well to your second coat. The trowelling procedure is the same, but without the addition of mesh it's a little easier.

As you gain experience, you can experiment with the surface finish. For a high polish, sprinkle water onto the smooth, setting plaster and work it with the steel trowel until the finish is glossy. If you prefer a matte finish, stop working the surface after you've removed all trowel marks. If you've taped corners where surfaces abut, be sure to pull masking tape before the new application sets up, which will give you a nice, clean edge. ■

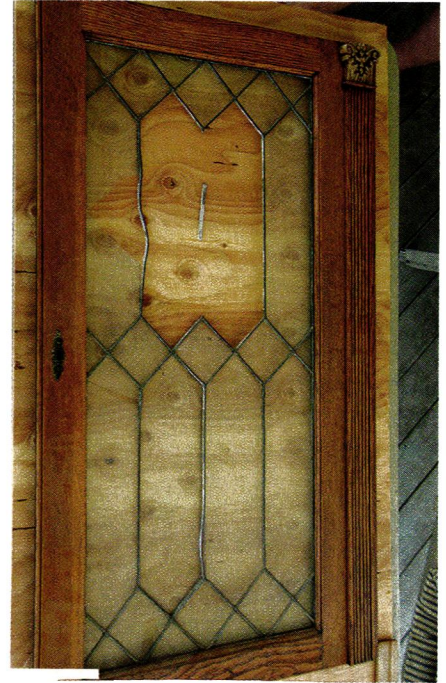
Jacob Arndt, principal of Northwestern Masonry & Stone Co. in Lake Mills, Wisconsin, has specialized in historic restoration masonry for three decades.

Clean Up Your Act

Keep materials away from the floor, as any particles encountered there will cause problems as you plaster. Keep all tools very clean; any old plaster introduced into new batches of putty will act as a catalyst, making it set up quickly and ruining the fresh batch. Keep a bucket of water and a mason brush handy for cleaning tools after applying each batch.



The leaded glass door fronting the author's built-in 1906 cabinet was broken and bowed (below), but after an in-depth repair project, it looks good as new again (left).



Looking at the missing panes and broken comes of the leaded glass doors fronting our 1906 built-in china cabinet, my husband, Todd, and I wondered how hard it would be to fix them ourselves. “Can novices repair leaded glass windows?” we asked each other.

Like most old-house owners, we like the challenge of repairing our home's broken pieces—and our brick row house in Brooklyn, New York, has had plenty of parts in need of fixing. So I decided to look into the logistics of leaded glass.

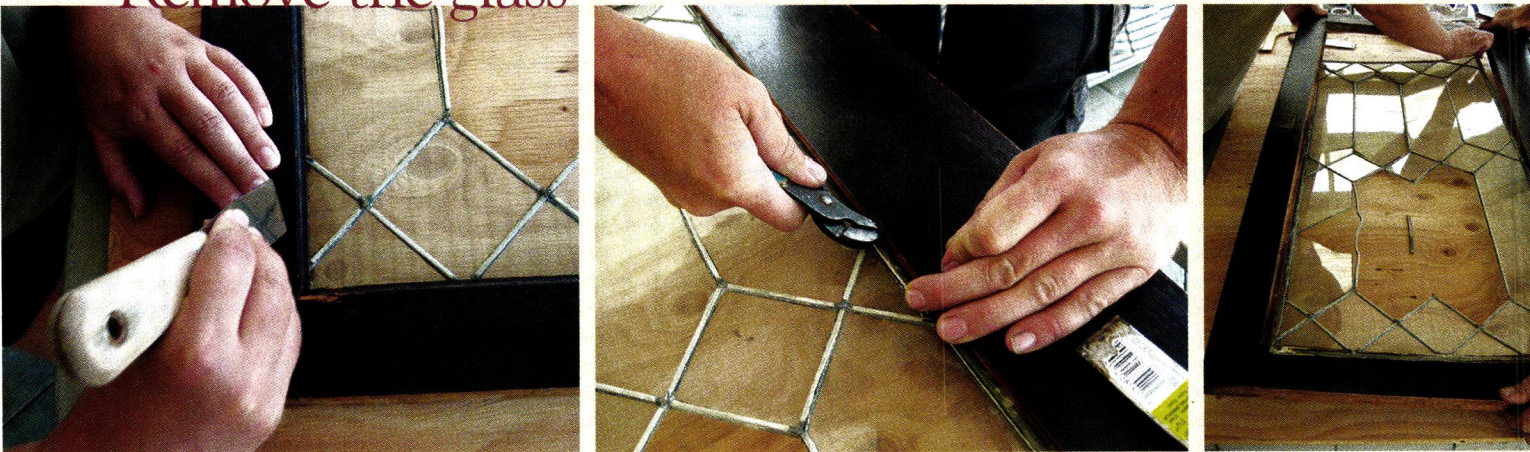
After much research and some project trial and error, I found that repairing leaded glass is possible, but it's not easy. It's a daunting task that requires a high level of skill. You need to be comfortable working with both glass and some toxic materials—it's more than just the lead that's harmful—and it also helps if you have some soldering experience. In other words, repairing leaded glass is not for the faint of heart—but it can be done.

Glass Action

Learn to repair your home's old leaded glass by following along with a fearless DIYer.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LYNN ELLIOTT

Remove the glass



LEFT TO RIGHT: To remove the glass, slip a putty knife between the trim and the frame, and pry trim loose using a gentle rocking motion. Next, take pliers to remaining finish nails. Gently slide the glass out of the frame and onto a stable work surface.

8 Steps to Repair Leaded Glass

Step 1: Assess the Damage

Take stock of what you have to work with. Simpler patterns are easier to repair, while more complex designs—windows with a curved pattern, for example—require more dexterity. The leaded glass door on our cabinet had myriad problems: cracked glass, missing panes, broken lead came, and broken, bowing solder joints that were causing the remaining intact glass to loosen. We knew the damaged glass and came had to be completely replaced, but we tried to save as much of the old came (which has a lifespan of about 100 years) as we could.



Necessary tools include a rotary tool, soldering gun, breaker pliers, and safety equipment.

Step 2: Prepare the Work Area and Materials

For the work surface, we laid a piece of $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood on a worktable and attached two furring strips ($1\frac{1}{4}$ " x 2") at a 45-degree angle to help hold the window in place while we worked. Check that everything is squared before attaching the strips with screws. For glass-cutting, we kept a 2' section of low-pile carpet handy to work on to help prevent cracking the glass.

Next, you need to stretch the lead came to make it rigid enough for use. Put one end of the lead came into a vise attached to the worktable and grab the other with pliers or lead stretchers. (Tip: Cut the 6' lead strip in half so it's a manageable size.) Keep the came straight, and pull the lead so that it stretches about 1" to $1\frac{1}{2}$ ". Because lead came is soft and bends easily, support it with two hands when moving it. If the nubs are closed up, use a putty knife or a fid to open them. (Alternatively, you can buy stretched lead from a local supplier, as we did.)

Step 3: Liberate the Glass

Glass needs to be worked on a flat surface, so we removed the door from the china cabinet and took the window out of its frame. Working from the back side of the door, we gently pried the trim from the window with putty knives. Slip the putty

knife between the trim and the frame, and use a gentle rocking motion to pry the trim loose. Next, pull out any remaining finish nails.

We used the putty knives to loosen the window from the frame, then slid it out onto the work surface, laying it front side down. When working on a leaded glass repair, it's best to work on the front first because lead can slip through the joints when soldering, leaving unattractive solder joints on the back of the piece. But our piece was so fragile that we decided to work on the back first and clean up any unsightly

Make a template



ABOVE: Create a template—a roadmap to repairs—by tracing the window on paper.

joints on the front after the window was stable enough to turn.

Step 4: Make a Template

If you have a missing pane of glass, a template can help create a replacement piece, or it can be laid underneath the window on the worktable as a guide. To make the template, take a piece of paper large enough to cover your window and secure it atop the window with tape. Using a pencil, make a rubbing of the window's design. Be sure to capture all the details before removing the template from the window. You can trace over the lines with a marker to make them clearer. For intricate windows, number and mark each piece on the template to keep track of its correct location. Measure the length and the width of the window and record them on the template.

Step 5: Begin Repairs

Wearing safety glasses, we used a rotary tool with a 1" circular blade attachment to cut the lead joints along the left edge to access damaged areas. Cut only halfway through the joints, and be careful not to cut adjacent glass. After completing one side, flip the window to do the other side. Because our window was so brittle, we slid it slightly off the edge of the worktable, keeping the glass supported while hang-

ing just the edge over the side, and made the cuts from underneath. (If you try this method, make sure you have a helper.) Another option is to cut a piece of plywood to fit over the window and plywood base, creating a "sandwich" that can be turned over.

We began assembling the bowed areas—where joints were cracking and the glass was loosening from the comes—trying to save the old leadwork where we could. We cleaned out the comes with put-

Size Matters

How large is your window? Heftier windows (larger than 36" in length) often begin to bow because the lead came can't support the design. Such big expanses of leaded glass typically had steel rods inserted into hollow lead or zinc came for added support—get professional help to repair these windows.

ty knives and box cutters, then tried fitting the loose glass back in the comes. Next we gently tapped the old lead came and glass back into place using the hammer and the wood handle of the putty knife or a small piece of scrap lead (hitting directly with a hammer can cause the glass to crack) and secured it with German glazing nails. The glazing nails should be lightly tapped into place so you can still move them easily.

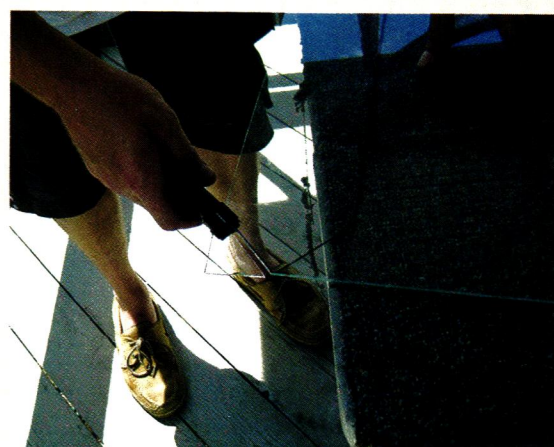
Step 6: Cut the Glass

When cutting replacement panes, we were lucky enough to have an intact original pane to use as a template. (If you don't have an intact piece, you can use the paper template as a guide.) Using a black marker, outline the template on the glass, then remove it. Next, score the glass with the glass cutter. Make sure to score inside the black lines; otherwise your replacement will be too big.

Hold the glass cutter between your middle and index finger, fitting it snugly against the joint between the two, and grasp the bottom with your index finger and thumb. Keep glass-cutter oil ready in a shallow bowl, and dip the cutter each time you score the glass. For straight scoring, butt the glass cutter against a ruler. Keep the cutter upright, and press firmly but not too hard, moving in a steady motion down the entire sheet. Practice on scrap glass first to perfect your technique.

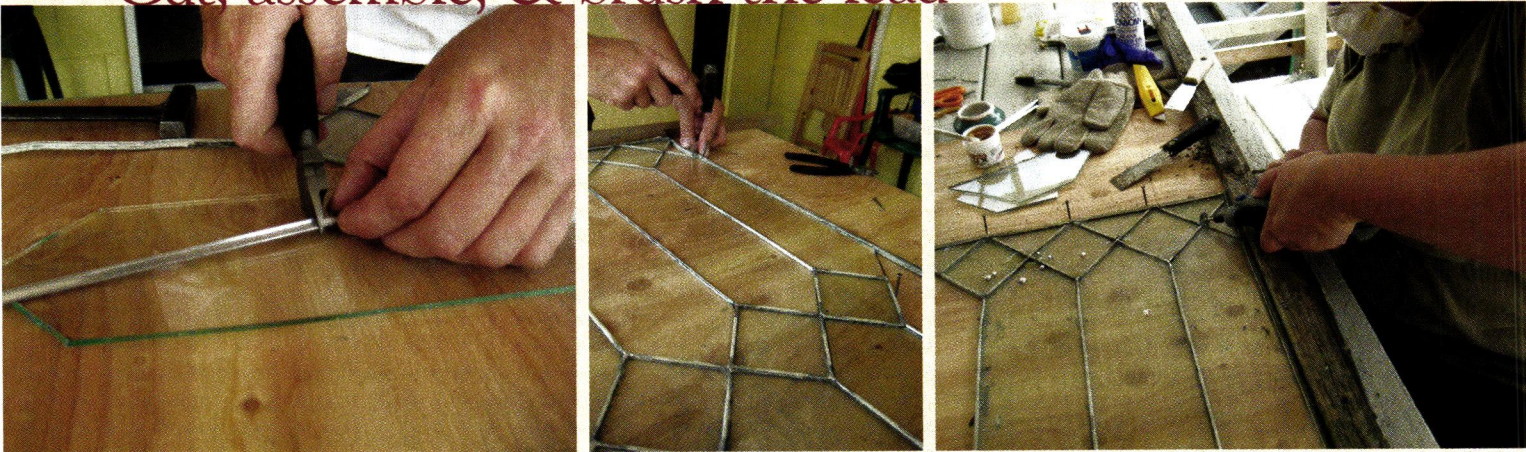
There are two ways to break scored glass. The first is to use breaker pliers, which I found easier as a beginner. Line the white line on the pliers up on your scored line and press down to snap the glass in a straight line. You also can slide the scored portion off the worktable's edge and use the rounded head of the glass cutter to tap along the scored line, then grasp the edge with your free hand and press down

& cut replacement panes



LEFT TO RIGHT: Using a rotary tool with a 1" circular blade attachment, carefully cut the old lead joints halfway through. To cut new panes, score glass with the glass cutter, holding it firmly and using a straightedge as a guide. Then, snap down along the score line with breaker pliers.

Cut, assemble, & brush the lead



LEFT TO RIGHT: Cut the new came to fit using lead nippers. Place the came along glass sections, then tap it into place with glazing nails. Before soldering, expose fresh lead on old joints by scraping came with a box cutter or using a rotary tool outfitted with a wire brush (above).

until the glass snaps in a straight line. Once you've created replacement panes, check the fit in the window by either comparing the panes against the template or against the remaining lead comes.

Step 7: Cut and Solder the Lead

Next, cut the lead came to fit. As beginners, lead nippers were our tool of choice (professionals use a lead knife). The flat side of the nippers makes a straight cut; the concave side a mitered one. Place a length of came where you need a new section. With the nippers, nick the spot where you want to make a cut—it should be slightly beyond the end of the glass to leave room for soldering—then tap the lead into place with glazing nails.

To effectively solder old lead joints, you must expose fresh lead, either by scraping the joints with a box cutter or by using the rotary tool with a wire brush, which tends to go much faster. Whatever the method, always wear a face mask for this work, as it creates a lot of dust and scraps. Clean up afterward with a shop vacuum.

Next, brush flux on all joints to be soldered (flux helps solder flow freely and adhere) and on the tip of the hot soldering iron, then clean the tip on a wet sponge (you should see water when you press on it). Glass cutter cleaners—sponges in a hard

plastic case—aren't very expensive, but you also can substitute an ordinary sponge in an appropriate container.

Place the solder near the joint and in a circular motion, move the iron across the joint, smoothing the solder into and across the joint. Don't leave the iron on the joint for more than two or three seconds, or you

risk melting the came. You may get solder drips on the glass, but they should easily slide or scrape off or with light scraping.

Check the joint—if you're unhappy with the soldering, let it cool and then work on it again, bearing in mind that the came can melt. When you're done, wipe down the window with paper towels and glass cleaner, then turn the window over and repeat the soldering process.

Safety First

Most people know that lead—and its dust—can cause health problems when inhaled or ingested, but some other leaded glass materials—like flux and glazing putty—are also toxic. Add broken glass, glass shards, and a soldering iron that operates at 600° or higher to the mix, and glass projects present numerous health hazards. Always take the following precautions:

- ◆ Work in a well-ventilated area; keep windows open in your workspace.
- ◆ Use a HEPA filtration system or air cleaner. If you don't have access to one, use a fan to blow dust and fumes away from you.
- ◆ Wear a face mask for the dustiest work, or better yet, a HEPA filter mask.
- ◆ Never eat, drink, or smoke near a leaded glass repair project.
- ◆ Don't touch your face or eyes while working on the project.
- ◆ Don't let children, pregnant women, or pets come anywhere near the lead.
- ◆ Always wear safety glasses when cutting glass. You can also wear cut-resistant cloth gloves when breaking glass for extra protection.
- ◆ Wash your hands frequently while working with lead and religiously each time you are finished, using a scrub brush and soap. It's also a good idea to change clothing (laundry before wearing again) and shower after each work session, too.
- ◆ Always follow the manufacturer's safety recommendations for the materials you are using. If they aren't on the packaging, you can usually find them online.
- ◆ Dispose of all lead and lead scraps according to your community's rules.

Solder & cement the window



LEFT TO RIGHT: Brush flux on joints, then melt solder into them with a hot soldering iron. Press glazing putty into spaces between came and glass, then remove excess putty, sprinkle the window with whiting, and brush it with a natural-bristle brush to create a dark patina.

Step 8: Cement the Window

The last step is cementing the panes in place with putty and whiting. Glazing putty has a shelf life—it should be moist with some oil showing on top. If your putty gets too hard, add a touch of linseed oil to soften it up, but don't overdo it—putty should be firm, not runny.

⚠️ ALERT

If your lead came has gray or white

powder on its surface (not the old putty) it may be lead oxide, which is highly toxic should only be handled by a professional.

Wearing latex gloves, take a ball-size portion of the putty and knead it for a minute or two. The putty will soften as you work it—some lumps are normal, but most smooth out. You can add a light sprinkling of whiting to the putty for strengthening, but we preferred the putty alone because too much whiting can dry out the putty.

Secure the panel with glazing nails, then take some putty and press it into the comes to fill spaces between the glass and the lead came. Don't put too much pressure on the window—you don't want to crack the glass. Some putty may leak through to the other side. Once you've completed the panel, clean around the seams with an awl or a fid, and remove excess putty with

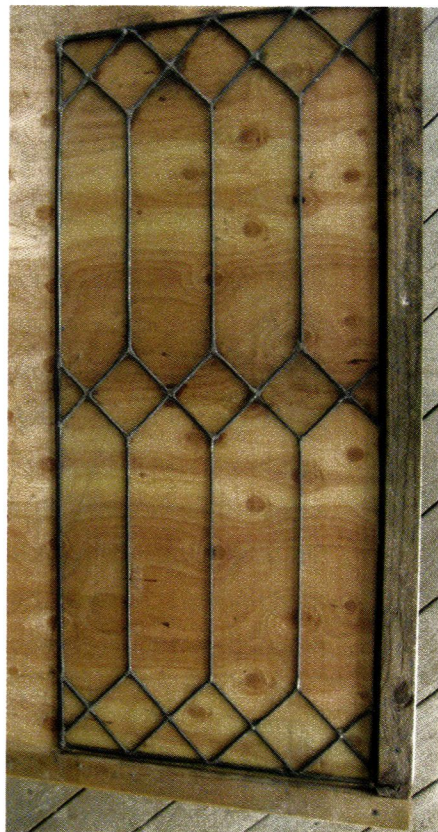
a little roll of the putty itself or a natural-bristle brush.

Whether or not you used whiting during kneading, you'll need to sprinkle some over the window at this point. Wear a face mask and sprinkle the whiting gently; try not to create a cloud of whiting dust. Next, gently spread the whiting around by moving a natural-bristle brush in a circular motion along the comes. The linseed oil should start drying up, and the lead will start to oxidize (turn darker), which is your cue to vacuum up the whiting. If there is residual oil, repeat the process with a second coating of whiting.

Take your natural-bristle brush and sweep the lead to create a dark patina. Doing this by hand can be tedious and labor-intensive, but we liked the results. A faster method mounts a bristle brush attachment on a drill. It's a good idea to break the brush in on the edge of the worktable first so bristles polish the lead instead of scratching it.

With the patina ready, we returned the window back its door frame and reattached the trim, giving our 1906 china cabinet a new lease on life. 🏠

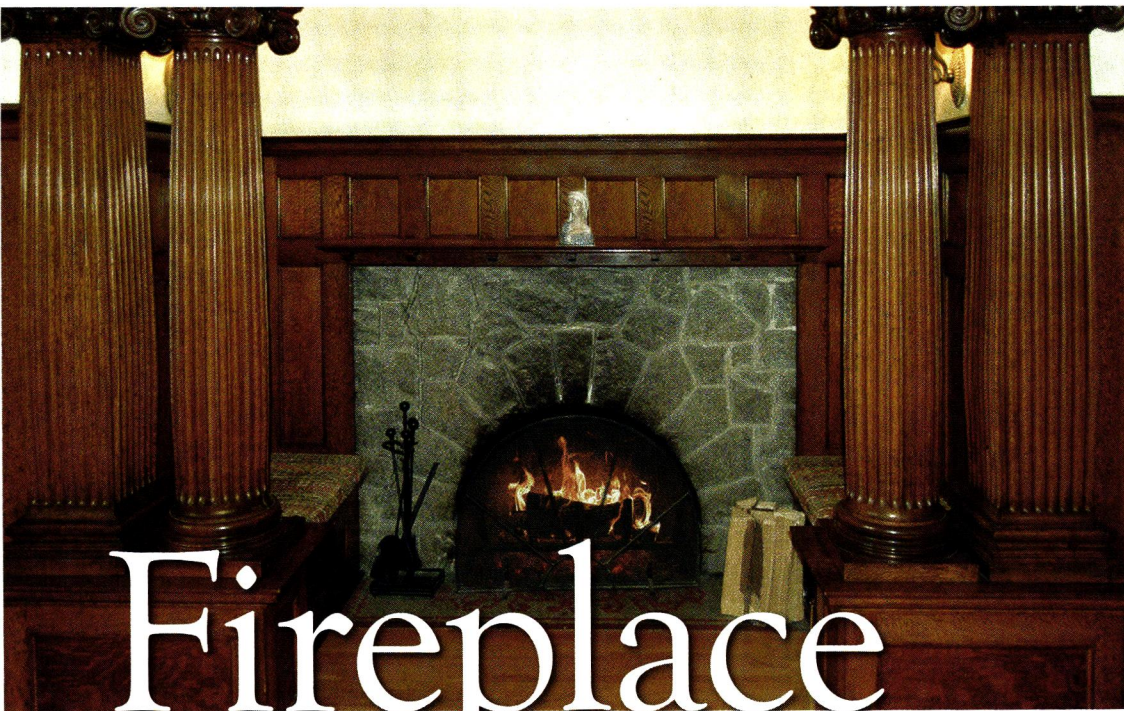
Former OHJ staffer **Lynn Elliott** is a copy editor for *Random House Children's Books* and has written numerous articles on repairing and decorating old houses.



The completed window—straight, secure, and bearing a dark, burnished patina—is ready to be returned to the cabinet door.

Go online to print out a checklist of materials needed for this project.

OldHouseJournal.com



Fireplace Finds

By the OHJ Editorial Staff

Relaxing in front of a crackling fire, mug of hot chocolate in one hand and a book in the other, is one of wintertime's great pleasures. Whether your house is among the oldest examples of American architecture or one of the newest at barely 50 years of age, it's likely that it harbors at least one fireplace. And while fireplaces and mantels come in a range of sizes and styles—from Colonial to mod and everything in between—they all need a few accoutrements to get fired up easily and safely on chilly nights: tools to tend flames, screens to thwart sparks, and andirons to contain logs. We've rounded up a couple examples of each that fit multiple house styles, in case

you need some inspiration to get the home fires burning.



ANDIRONS

LEFT: Scrolled andirons, Seven Pines Forge, (814) 797-1353; sevenpinesforge.com

ABOVE: Knife blade andirons with brass urns, Ball and Ball, (800) 257-3711; ballandball.com



Andirons

If you think andirons are purely for decoration, think again. These sturdy fireplace workhorses perform an important safety function by keeping burning logs contained, stopping them from rolling out into the adjoining room. They also help get fires going—the space beneath their feet provides the perfect spot for stuffing papers that help ignite blazes. Lastly, andirons facilitate airflow around the fire, letting logs burn more evenly.

Rustic, hand-wrought iron andirons would have been found in the earliest American homes, but their straightforward forms are also a good match for Arts & Crafts houses and even Tudor or Gothic homes.

By the 18th century, knife blade andirons were all the rage, and could come topped with urn or flame patterns in decorative brass. While such fancy andirons are a perfect fit for Colonial or Colonial Revival styles, they also can suit many Victorian houses.

TOOLS

LEFT: Italian brass tool set, Victorian Trading Co., (800) 700-2035; victoriantradingco.com

RIGHT: Arts & Crafts tool set, Napa Forge, (800) 227-1044; pilgrimhearth.com



Tools

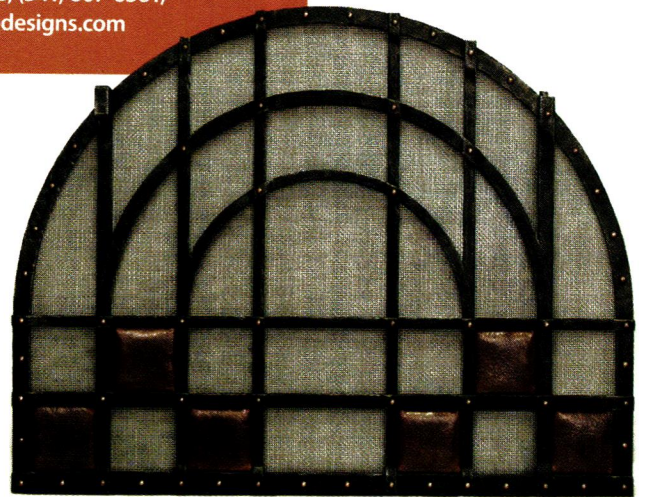
Unlike modern gas logs that burst into picturesque flame with the click of a button, creating the perfect fire the old-fashioned way requires a little poking a prodding (not to mention a bit of post-fire cleanup). Which is why every wood-burning hearth should be outfitted with a set of fire tools. You can buy tools individually, but if you're looking to coordinate them with the style of your house, a tool set is your best bet. Most sets include four basic pieces—a poker for stoking the fire, tongs for rearranging logs, plus a brush and shovel for ash cleanup—and usually have a common decorative element. Owners of Victorian-era homes, for instance, will want to look for sets with delicate filigrees that speak to the ornamentation of the period. Basic, sturdy wrought-iron sets can work in either Arts & Crafts or primitive early American homes, while ones rendered in shiny brass will fit well in high-style Colonial or Colonial Revival interiors.



SCREENS

LEFT: Copper scroll screen, Plow & Hearth, (800) 494-7544; plowandhearth.com

BELOW: Arched screen with hammered copper inserts, Archive Designs, (541) 607-6581; archivedesigns.com



Screens

They may seem unassuming (or even perhaps unnecessary), but fireplace screens are a multi-tasking mainstay for the hearth. Their purpose is threefold: First, they provide safety by keeping wayward sparks from flying into the room and causing serious damage. Second, they help control the fire's heat distribution. And finally, fireplace screens add a decorative touch to the hearth during both prime fire season and the dormant months. It's important, then, that in addition to being durable enough to stand up to the intense heat of a fire, a screen be in keeping with the

home's overall style. Fortunately, options are plentiful. Wrought-iron screens with showy swirls and scrolls are a common theme across many manufacturers, and are an easy fit in Victorian-era houses or refined Colonial ones (the scroll-pattern screen shown here, for example, was inspired by a gate at James Madison's Montpelier). Hefty materials like hand-forged iron and hammered copper often make an appearance on screens as well; when coupled with geometric designs, they're an ideal complement to Arts & Crafts interiors. 🏠

For many years the embassy of Indonesia, this 1903 French-inspired mansion was built for Thomas Walsh, who made his fortune in gold mining.



Beauvois

Arts

A Capital Idea

AMERICA'S ENTHRALLMENT WITH
A STATELY ARCHITECTURAL STYLE
LEAVES A MONUMENTAL IMPRESSION.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JAMES C. MASSEY AND SHIRLEY MAXWELL

The Beaux-Arts style, also called the American Renaissance, is about as formal as architecture can get. Based on classical European precedents—primarily French and Italian palaces and palazzos of the 16th to the 18th century—this grandly formal style transformed America’s major cities between the 1880s and the 1920s after being introduced at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago to an eager nation that had begun to tire of Victorian excesses. Soon, Beaux-Arts architecture was swept along by the turn-of-the-20th-century City Beautiful Movement, which left in its wake a sea of magnificent public buildings of polished stone, from state capitols, courthouses, and city halls to train stations, libraries, and museums.

Beaux Arts also produced some of the most costly and beautiful private homes ever seen in the United States—not only in cities, but also in resort towns and on country estates. Newly minted millionaires in Newport and San Francisco—and virtually all points in between—celebrated a prosperous new century by hiring the finest architects to build eye-popping mansions in the best of taste.

Take Washington, D.C., for instance. Washington emerged from a swampy marshland dominated by frumpy Victorian red brick and brownstone to become a sparkling city of white marble and limestone, its classically inspired buildings set among broad, axial avenues studded with monuments and reflecting pools. Under the leadership of Chicago architect Daniel H. Burnham, who had created the fabulous “White City” of the Chicago exposition, City Beautiful principles and Beaux-Arts architecture brought forth a capital city worthy of a great nation. More than a century after Pierre L’Enfant laid



TOP: With an unusual top-floor triple window, strapwork gables, and rooftop urns, this D.C. house shows its Dutch design roots. **RIGHT:** This 1909 mansion, home to the International Eastern Star Temple, was designed by Eugène Sanson and Horace Trumbauer.

out his plan for Washington, his ambitious scheme finally moved toward reality.

Formal Notes

In addition to French and Italian palaces and palazzos of the Renaissance and Baroque eras, Beaux-Arts inspiration came, albeit less frequently, from English Georgian or Classical Revival homes. But Beaux-Arts designs were never (well,

Changing Times

Northwest D.C.'s Massachusetts Avenue, now dubbed Embassy Row, was once a string of showy private residences arrayed along a broad boulevard, punctuated by sculpture-centered traffic circles and intended for stately promenades of carriages and Rolls-Royces. Today the traffic is composed of trucks, taxis, and SUVs, and the residences house foreign embassies and private clubs. Similarly, the District's Sixteenth Street Corridor was once a direct route to the White House from the private homes of capitalists drawn from every state of the Union to the nation's seat of power.

almost never) direct copies of earlier buildings. Instead, they were original, creative interpretations of Renaissance ideals and prototypes.

The essence of a Beaux-Arts building lay in its attention to classical forms and perfection of finish details. Beaux-Arts design was relentlessly logical, demanding rigorous symmetry, sophisticated use of axis and cross axis, and exquisite proportions.

In other words, it was the exact opposite of the fussy, rambling, picturesque, High Victorian styles that had preceded it. And civic America was more than ready to embrace it.

Building Beaux

Since wooden buildings lack the gravitas the style required, Beaux-Arts structures were invariably constructed of masonry, usually a light-colored, smooth-surfaced, ashlar-cut stone. Some buildings—such as those based on the English Georgian Revival style—were made of brick with stone decoration.

But the term “stone” needs to be

École Patrol

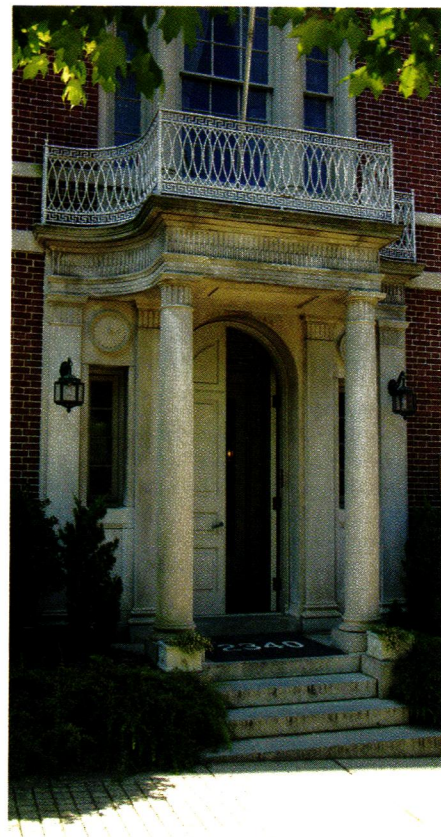
Literally the “School of Fine Arts”, the *École des Beaux Arts* was an actual government-sanctioned school, begun in 1671. But it was a school with a difference. Paris was its campus, the ateliers of prominent French architects were its classrooms, and aspiring architects from Europe and the United States were its student body.

The *École* was the single most important factor in professionalizing American architecture. The first Beaux-Arts-trained American architect, William Morris Hunt, studied there in 1846. The major influx of American students, however, came after the Civil War, when budding architects steamed across the Atlantic to work with the best of Europe's classically trained designers. By the 1890s, enough *École* graduates were working in the United States to provide training to novice architects in their own offices. When American universities began to offer professional architectural training, every faculty included at least one Beaux-Arts master.





THIS PAGE: The richness of carved stone ornament, typical of the Beaux-Arts, is notable in the 1924 Italian Embassy (left), the 1902 English Georgian Textile Museum by Waddy B. Wood (above), and the 1915 English Adamesque Woodrow Wilson House, also by Wood (right). **OPPOSITE:** These French-inspired mansions are now the embassies of Pakistan, left, and Haiti, right.



qualified. Decorative exterior elements on these stone buildings weren't necessarily carved out of solid limestone or marble. They might very well have been made from cast stone (a composite of ground stone and cement, much like some of today's engineered stone countertops), or from molded terracotta, or even from pressed tin painted to look like stone. When used atop a large building, these substitute materials were almost indistinguishable from ground level. They were also much lighter and easier to work with—not to mention infinitely cheaper—than the real thing.

Earmarks of the style were symmetrical facades, pedimented porticos, and columns and engaged pilasters with capitals, bases, and fluted or plain shafts in correct Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian orders from ancient Rome and Greece. There were often colonnades and columned entryways, which sometimes were elevated a full story above ground level and frequently had cast-iron-and-glass marquees and ornate wrought-iron decoration. Porte-cochères and rounded

pavilions also could be featured at the ends of buildings. Porches replaced formal terraces and conservatories. Buildings in the French idiom might feature mansard roofs, French doors, and curved window tops above fancy casement windows.

Architecture, landscape, and art were essential components of good Beaux-Arts design. Beautiful, formal grounds and gardens with vistas and sculptural accents abounded.

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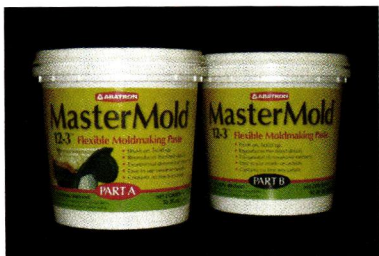
Powerful as the appeal of Beaux-Arts' "splendid excess" had been to the American imagination, it could not hold on in the face of the Great Depression. By 1930, it had lost its appeal for residential building, and even the federal government was having second thoughts about building such expensive real estate. Washington, D.C.'s Federal Triangle, the cluster of Neoclassical-style government buildings located between the White House and the Capitol and built between 1926 and 1938, became the last hurrah for the grand old style. 🏠

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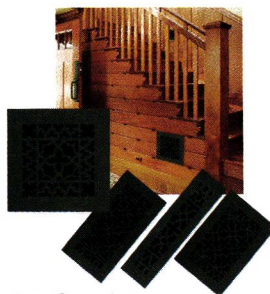


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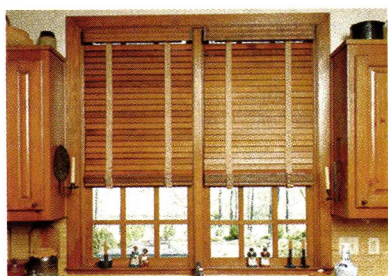


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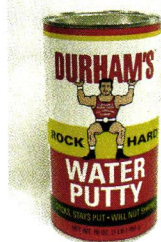
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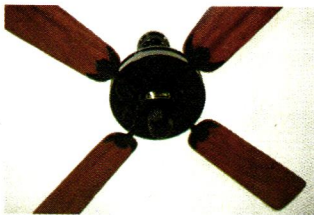
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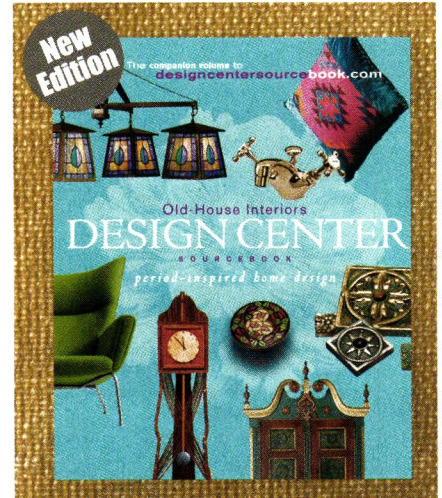
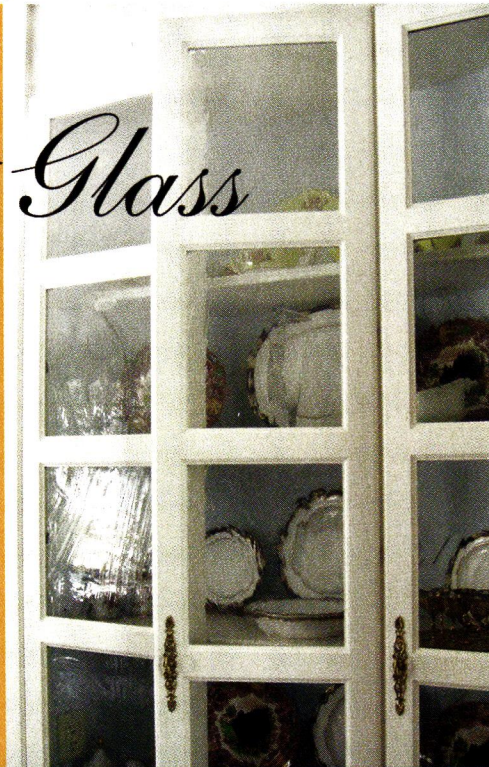
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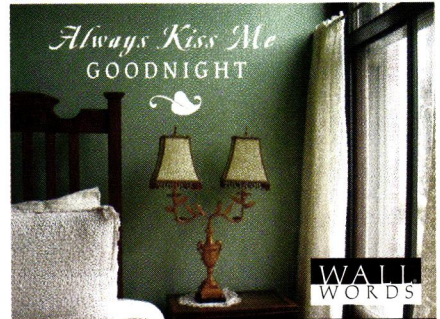
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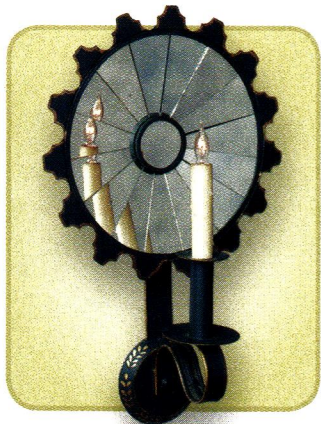
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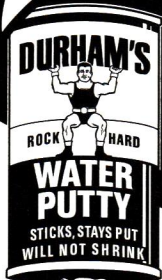
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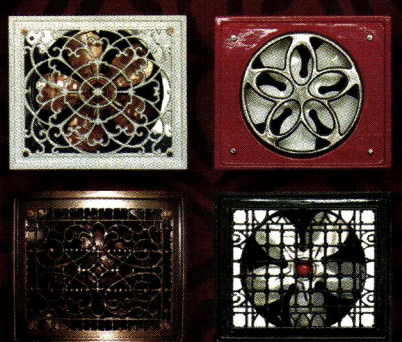


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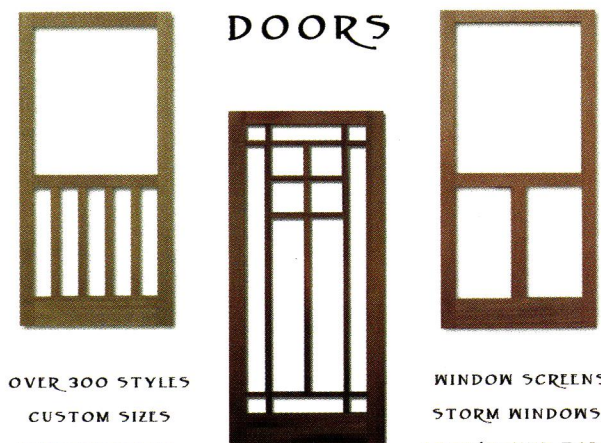
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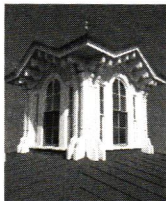
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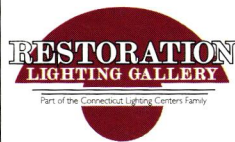
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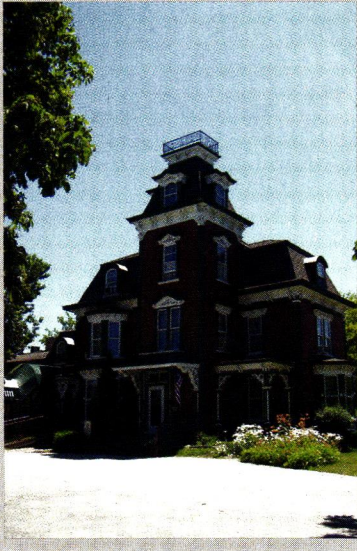
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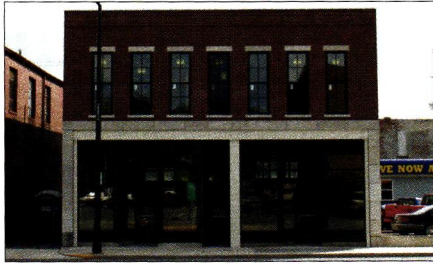
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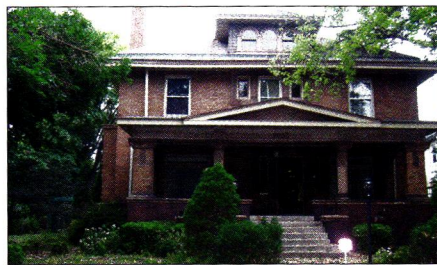
PORT AUSTIN, MI—Circa 1857 Second French Empire treasure is listed on the National Historic Register. This magnificent home rests in the heart of the village, three blocks from beautiful Lake Huron. Rich in architectural detail, and history, President James A. Garfield, was a frequent guest of the lumber baron - owner Charles Learned. Spiral cherry main staircase, second servants' stairway, 6 large bedrooms, seven baths, Victorian courtyard, and fountain. Sprawling side lawn holds bocce ball tournaments. An additional 1,400 sq.ft. house adjacent to inn is included with property. 2+/- acres in village. Current well-established lodging Inn, restaurant, and bar. \$689,000 Joe at 989-553-3828 or thegarfieldinn@hotmail.com. www.thegarfieldinn.com



DECATUR, GA—Steele-Cobb House, a surviving Plantation Plain style home, circa 1855, sits on 2 private acres. Architectural details include flush molding, hardwood floors, 4 fireplaces, paneled study and bay window. Master bedroom suite on 1st floor. Spacious kitchen and sunroom with lovely Koi pond and garden views. Duplex rental. Convenient to Emory University and CDC. \$899,900. Pam Hughes, Harry Norman Realtors, 404-851-0732.



LOGANSPORT, IN—A recent renovation has returned this 2-story 1880s brick building to its roots featuring a front façade with paneled brick cornice, new storefronts and upper floor windows. Fully tuckpointed. 1st floor with 2 storefronts is ready for build out. 2nd floor has 2, one-bedroom apartments; one being renovated. Eligible for Federal tax credits. Possible tax abatement. Protective covenants. \$88,750. Todd Zeiger, Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 800-450-4534.



MINNEAPOLIS, MN—This brick/stone mansion retains its classic exterior and interior with some modern upgrades. Beautiful, livable, family neighborhood home, featuring high beamed ceilings, natural woodwork, 5 fireplaces, 3 full bathrooms, finished basement and 2-story carriage house. Needs gentle restoration. 5,100 finished sq. ft. Sullivanesque Kees & Colbourn design with interior details by John S. Bradstreet. Historic designation pending. \$624,500. Bob Glancy, Coldwell Banker Burnet, 612-242-8122.



GREENFIELD, MO—Stately Home. Circa 1871. 3 bedroom, 2 bath brick home features 3 fireplaces, 16x23 living room, family room, formal dining room, large kitchen, a sunroom and a partial basement. Garage and barn. On almost 2 acres about 40 miles from Springfield MO. \$110,000. United Country, 800-999-1020, Ext. 108. www.unitedcountry.com/old American Treasures—a full color magazine of older and historic properties for sale. Just \$5.95.

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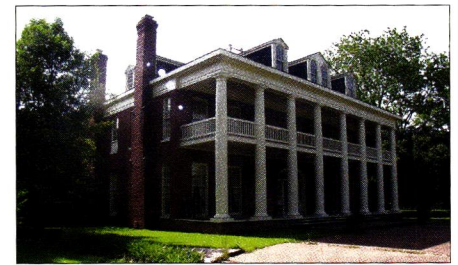
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YAZOO CITY, MS—Southern Plantation home and estate. 10,000+ sq. ft. interior features crystal chandelier, elaborate woodwork and millwork, belvedere, 6 fireplaces, and a basement. Circle drive with extensive landscaping and double-gated remote activated entrance. 5 outbuildings, in-ground pool with large patio and lighted tennis court. Large parking area. \$800,000. Pam Powers, Broker South Properties, 601-831-4505 or pampowers@liveinthesouth.com.

Historic Properties



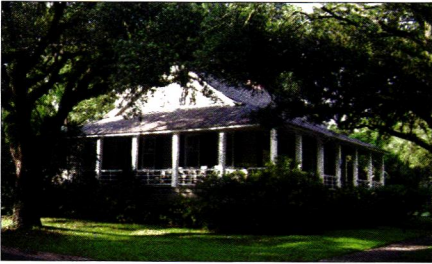
NISKAYUNA, NY—Own a piece of Niskayuna history! Circa 1790 colonial on an idyllic 2.5 acre setting, lovingly restored and maintained by long time owner. Sparkling in-ground pool, new 3-season sunroom and recent family room addition. Front and back staircases. Original beams in dining room. Much original flooring. Abuts nature preserve and Lock 7 park. Private, yet close to Rosendale School, bike trail and shopping. \$349,900. Laura Conrad, Broker, Purdy Realty, LLC, 518-384-1117. www.purdyrealty.com



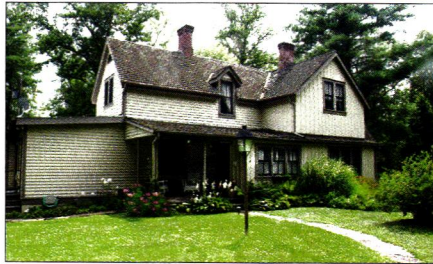
BRISTOL, PA—Set high and dry to capture the Delaware River views! Completely renovated from gleaming wood floors to original brass doorknobs. Living room with fireplace and French doors to porch. Windows in the dining and “river room” overlooking river. Master bedroom includes a sitting room with wall of windows opening to deck. 2 additional bedrooms and bath. Only 25 minutes to Princeton or Philadelphia. \$524,900. NT Callaway Real Estate, 215-862-6565. www.ntcallaway.com



OLEY, PA—‘The Doll House.’ PA Register of Historic Places, circa 1801 with many original attributes of an Old World Mill. Fully restored with modern comforts. Thick stone walls, massive fireplace, deep window sills and much more. Nestled in picturesque Oley Valley. 6+ wooded acres, streams, pond, barn, shed and original summer kitchen. Realtor.com MLS# 5572816. Call Carolyn Geyer of Prudential Fox & Roach Realtors with questions: 484-941-2742.



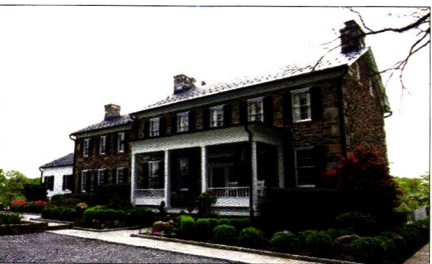
GEORGETOWN, SC—132 St. James Street, a one and one-half story 1830 Greek Revival, is on the National Registry. Graceful in its simplicity with well-proportioned rooms and broad piazza, it is a double house with 2 nearly square rooms on each side of the hall. High above the street. Wrap-around porch. Walk to marinas, harborwalk or to downtown with restaurants, shops, museums and churches. \$749,000. Frankie Hills, The Lachicotte Company, 843-446-0330. www.FrancesSellsHouses.com



RUGBY, TN—Adena Cottage. A rare opportunity to own an original 1880s Rugby home. Totally renovated with all the bells and whistles including the carriage house/studio. Main house is 4 bedrooms (master downstairs), 2 full baths, approx. 2,200 sq. ft. Price \$425,000. Call Gail Henry, Keller Williams Realty—Murfreesboro, TN. 615-579-5415 or 615-895-8000 or visit www.gailhenry.com



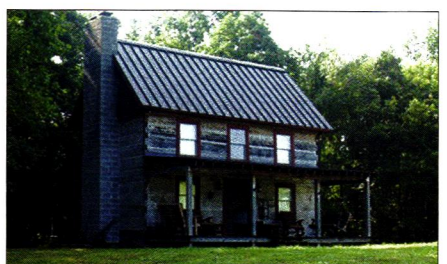
GEORGETOWN, TX—R.F. Young House is a Victorian style farmhouse built circa 1901 on 0.46 acre. Home was moved onto Main Street in 1978, walking distance to Historic Square! 3,300+ sq. ft. Original moldings, wood floors, transoms, stained glass and 4 fireplaces represent the era. A screened porch, flagstone patio, workshop with electricity and 2-car garage complete the picture. \$480,000. Nancy Knight, Lone Star Properties. 512-863-4442. www.nancyknight.com



HAMILTON, VA—Rockwood Manor. Established in 1854 is situated on 147+ pristine acres. This one of a kind Quaker manor home is completely renovated leaving no detail overlooked! This property features perfect horse pastures, riding trails, 3 ponds, amazing views, four board fencing, 1780's renovated log cabin guesthouse, bank barn, icehouse, smokehouse, swimming pool and much more! \$3,999,000. Windy Harris, 1757 Real Estate Company, 703-554-3815 or windy@callwindy.com



KEYSVILLE, VA—Roselawn. Classic 5,077 sq. ft. Gothic Revival on 1.96 acres built by Richard Gaulding in 1852. Original floors, mantels, and moldings embrace this 11 room, 6 bedroom, 4.5 bath beauty. Separate downstairs apartment with family room, 2 bedrooms and bath. Seven fireplaces with gas logs. Entire house has been upgraded mechanically and electrically. Central HVAC. Presently operating as a B&B. \$300,000. Max Sempowski, Antique Properties, 434-391-4855. www.oldhouseproperties.com



SUTTON, WV—A True Treasure. This pre-Civil War log home, originally built in VA, was dismantled and moved to WV where it sits amid 21 acres of peace and quiet. 4 bedrooms, 1 bath, living/dining combination, new kitchen and covered back porch. Stone fireplace. Fully furnished and decorated in country style. \$225,000. United Country, 800-999-1020, Ext. 108. www.unitedcountry.com/oldAmericanTreasure—a full color magazine of older and historic properties for sale. Just \$5.95.

unremuddling



Sticking Out

WE'VE ALL SEEN THEM BEFORE: old houses that are ground down through the years—due to neglect, deferred maintenance, or just plain homeowner cluelessness—losing their architectural detail. Such was the case with this low-key Victorian in a Midwestern neighborhood (left), which was dragged down by a wrought iron porch balustrade, a lack of window trim, and a bland steel-sided façade, in contrast to restored neighborhood examples (right) boasting turned wood balusters, defined window casings with cap fillets, and Stick-style ornamentation on the gables. The kicker? These photos are of the same Cincinnati house, before and after Frank Suareo's 10-year restoration.

"The house had been 'modernized' twice," Frank says, "in the '40s and the '60s. I thought I might find fish-scale shingles under the third floor's steel siding." Instead he found stickwork, which he re-created on a new porch gable, using other neighborhood houses as a guide. We think Frank's house used to stick out like a sore thumb. Now it sticks out as a fine example of what's possible when old houses inherit the right owner. 🏠

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