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Longing for old-house living

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Evaluating Old Wiring
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Cover: Home lighting in a 1911 Craftsman house. Photo by Ray Stubblebine.
READER'S PAGE

Answers to Our Informal Survey in OHJ's 15th Anniversary Issue

In our September-October 1988 issue, we left a page blank and headed it "Reader's Page." It had doodle space for cover design ideas. It also had a rambling assortment of survey questions. The big, enthusiastic response from readers was great fun for the editors to paw through. So to everybody who wrote, thank you for your opinions and suggestions — some of which have already been taken! Read on.

— Patricia Poore

One reader wants a column devoted to house moving. . . .

We asked what past OHJ article has been the most useful. Your responses were as varied as the articles, from Cisterns to Post-Victorian Built-Ins. If any type of article got more votes than others, it was paint (both applying it and stripping it off). Technical articles were generally cited more than decorative ones, but past articles on kitchens and bathrooms get honorable mention. (OHJ readers amaze me with their insatiable appetite for tough technical topics; a reader in Whitestone, N.Y., named a technical topic in all but one question. Even under "decorating articles wanted," he wrote, "Restoring a Plaster Ceiling.")

One reader thinks what's most useful is "the where-to-buy-it info! I got hexagonal floor tiles when contractors said 'you can't get those anymore,' and also cast-iron radiators, balusters, etc."

Probably the most useful insights we got were from hearing what technical and how-to articles you want. You're reading our minds (or we're reading yours): You asked for articles on Old Wiring and on Marbling (both in this very issue). And you asked for Setting Up a Home Shop, Chimney Repairs, Stencilling, and Choosing a Contractor — all coming in 1989.

We'll get to work, too, researching Moving Old Buildings and Salvaging House Parts, because these two topics came up several times.

Newer readers mentioned lots of topics that have been covered in the past few years. One person asked for an alphabetical listing of past articles. Just a reminder: OHJ has a Cumulative Index to all articles 1973-1986, and the back issues are available as Yearbooks. (See page 71 for more information.)

Readers' suggestions for Departments are great! Perhaps thinking of our "outdoors" issue, May-June 1988, many people asked for regular coverage of outdoor stuff. So we added a new department: Outside the Old House premieres on page 16. It'll cover topics requested: period gardens and landscape, gazebos, arbors and trellises and pergolas, stone walls, walks and drives, fences, and outbuildings.

Some of you, on the other hand, want OHJ to be a humor magazine. (Come on! you know we're dead serious about restoration.) We had calls for "a humor section" and a "tacky new product award." One reader wants stories about The Mushroom Factor in every issue. (The mysterious force that causes any old-house project to expand endlessly until the limits of time and budget are exceeded.) And somebody else suggests a department with the simple heading, "Funny Restoration Stories." (I get the feeling the line between comedy and tragedy would be a fine one.)

Period decorating, interiors, and furnishings got a lot of attention. Readers supplied potential subjects for decorating articles, and asked for regular departments on furnishings and interiors. Articles requested ran from high-style Victorian to the budget-conscious. Among the titles: Affordable Period Decorating; Recreating Colonial Interiors; Practical Period Bathrooms; Civil War-Era Interiors; Decorating in the 1930s. Some people were very specific: Furnishing for Low Ceilings; Window Treatments for Arch-Top Windows; Sizing a Victorian Chandelier to the Room; Nurseries of the Early-20th Century.

The owner of this 19-room house is coping with weekend guests.
SCHWERD'S
wood columns

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EDITOR’S PAGE

“Devote a special issue every year to storefront restoration.”

Montana Yard; Grand Landscape for a Small Lot; Outdoor Patio/Dining Rooms; Historic Sidewalks; Victorian Garden Follies — Sham Ruins, Etc.

House plans: request for an adapted Viking longhouse. Hmmm.

The most open-ended question on the survey was “what type of article should we do that we don’t do now?” Well, I asked for it . . . and

some of it, I’m not sure what to do with. These are the most idiosyncratic requests, calls for help in whatever is close to the reader’s heart.


I can’t make any promises on the above, but you never know: Once in an editor’s consciousness, themes often present themselves in print.

Requests for house style articles were right on target with editorial plans. It’s worth mentioning that more readers are interested in vernacular or “hybrid” styles than high-brow houses. (Judging by your letters, the word “vernacular” has become a regular part of the old-house vocabulary — something new since the introduction of our back-cover

Century; Old Laundry Rooms. (A couple of you asked for an article on gas/electric and early electric lighting; it’s in this issue.)

We’ll take the hint and increase our practical coverage of interiors and furnishings.

As I mentioned before, landscaping and gardening got as much attention as did decorating articles. Again, requests ran from the grandiose to the practical: Landscaping a Large

one subscriber asked for an article on topiary; it’s coming in the May-June issue.

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The "double house" is a vernacular form in Coatesville, Penn.

Here and right: proposed 50th anniversary covers. Who knows?

Formica repair. Why not? — we've already done linoleum.

Finally, my favorite: Scrawled at the top of one survey (which was the actual page torn from OHJ): "Am at vacation at the beach — no xerox machine here — can you return original?"

When I go to the beach, I take Glamour or People. I couldn't believe that someone finds OHJ that entertaining. Needless to say, I sent him a whole new issue, all pages intact, in an envelope. First class.
or has any information concerning restoration techniques for historic concrete block of this type, please contact us.

— Kelly Ryan
Richard Bergmann Architects
63 Park Street
New Canaan, CT 06840

Classified Meetings

Dear Patricia,

I could write and tell you how the technical articles in Old-House Journal have helped us save thousands of dollars. I could tell you that the information on house styles, preservation, products, etc., that OHJ has provided is invaluable. I could tell you about the inspiration and laughter the magazine has given my wife and me when we were in the depths (and debts) of despair. But you have heard all that before. Let’s face it, Old-House Journal is the most beneficial publication available to anyone interested, or living, in an old house.

However, there is one area of OHJ which has not gotten the recognition it deserves: the Emporium section. We have had the opportunity to use it twice, once as a buyer and once as a seller. Both times, it has given us a most rewarding and heart-warming experience.

One time about two years ago, there was an ad for some gas lamps and other stuff. The phone number was in the same area as ours, so we called. Unfortunately, the lamps were sold. We went to visit anyway, and ended up having a delightful afternoon with a young man who was restoring an 1860s row house in a depressed city. It is always nice to meet another old-house person, but more than that, we got to hear his experiences as an urban pioneer trying to turn a neighborhood around. It was very rewarding — and we did walk away with a nice oil lamp that is now hanging in our front room.

The second time we used the Emporium, we were the advertisers. We had tried to sell some antique furniture in the local paper. Most of the callers had no idea what Eastlake or Victorian was. We got tired of people coming over to the house and saying, “It’s not quite what we were looking for.” Then the idea struck: Let’s advertise in Old-House Journal. Not only is the Emporium free, but also OHJ readers would know, right off the bat, what Eastlake is. Sure enough, not long after the ad appeared, a woman who lived outside Philadelphia called. She lived in an 1882 Stick Style house and was in the process of furnishing it with period antiques. She came over the next evening with her two children. We had a nice visit talking about antiques and sharing the “joys” of old-house living. And the Eastlake chairs were just what she was looking for.

The Emporium is a classified-ad section, for crying out loud — something every magazine has. Still my experience says that there is something special about this one. Maybe it is the common bond that the buyers and sellers share. After all, old-house living is a way of life. Maybe it’s the fact that Old-House Journal is a special magazine with a special personality. Those of us that subscribe to it are kind of special too.

— Richard Lewis
Medford, N.J.

Aw, Shucks. . . .

We’ve gotten an unusual number of heartwarming letters lately. Here are a few that didn’t make us blush too much. The encouragement feels terrific. Thank you very much to all of you who write. — P. Poore

Dear Ms. Poore,

My first exposure to Old-House Journal occurred with your July/August 1988 issue.

I was indeed surprised to find a periodical such as yours existed, with its excellent coverage of architecture. . .

continued on page 8
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OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL
You have helped further the understanding and appreciation of our culture and traditions in architecture.

— Craig B. Kelford, AIA
Rolling Hills Estates, Calif.

Dear Patricia,

In your October 1985 issue, you published “Seduction in South Dakota,” the story of my “conversion” to preservation. You may remember that I mentioned in the article that I had bought all your Yearbooks from 1976 up to the time I started the actual work on my house in June 1985.

Whenever I would find a person who claimed he could do what I wanted done, I would ask how he intended to do the particular project. Then we would see what OHJ recommended, and whatever his earlier plans, we still did it your way. And I have continued to subscribe and read every issue, even though my efforts are done and the house — now considered a local showplace — is up for sale.

I am certain that my self-confidence came mostly from what I had read in your publications. I learned to be obstinate and insist that the woodwork be stripped of old, darkened shellac. I learned to ignore the derision when it was noised around town that “that woman is actually going to wallpaper her front room with peacocks.” I began to trust the hours of research I had put in and the previously untapped sense of color which surfaced from somewhere in my being just when I needed it most. (Those peacocks looked utterly ridiculous to me when I first saw them, too!)

But I knew very early that I could not take credit for all of it. Although my house possesses nothing that “goes bump in the night,” it definitely does have its own personality. When I tried to ignore its idiosyncrasies my house told me of my error, continued on page 10
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and I would set to work to make things right.

As was bound to happen, articles in recent issues of OHJ tell me things I wish I’d known three years ago. And I wish I’d known that I was acting as my own general contractor — I thought I was just hiring an assortment of people to do the rewiring, the new heating system, the new roof, and the myriad types of carpentry and decorating which had to be done.

While the neighbor ladies tut-tutted at the hard labor I was putting in — there were times when I simply could not get out of bed the next day — I denied that it was really work because it was all so satisfying.

Now I must rest from my labors. I’ll soon be 66, and so it is time to sit back, survey what I have done, and say to myself, “It is good.”

Thank you so very much for all your help.

— Betty Dove Wright
Deadwood, S.D.

Dear Ms. Poore,
I continue to find your magazine a fascinating mix of romantic visionary ideals and hard-headed commonsense solutions. Keep it up!

— Donald L. McKinsey
Charlotte, N.C.

Colonial Revival

Dear OHJ:
I was interested in reading George Wilkinson’s inquiry in the November/December ‘88 issue (“Colonial Revival,” Ask OHJ). His house was designed by Boston architect Royal Barry Wills, who, prior to World War Two, built numerous houses in the Colonial Revival style on the east side of Melrose, Massachusetts. He was particularly fond of designing Cape Cod cottages, and there are many examples of his designs in New England.

I have lived in several of his houses — I grew up in one in Needham, which won the Better Homes & Gardens prize. Later, he designed a colonial center entrance for me, which his oldest son built while his younger son supervised the building.

Mr. Wills wrote several books, including Homes for Good Living.

continued on page 12

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continued from page 10
More Homes for Good Living, and Living on the Level.
— George Williams
Kensington, N.H.

[A plan for a similar Georgian house with hipped roof appears on page 58.]

A Pegged Floor

Dear Editor,

Sometime last spring, my wife and I decided to embark on a modest cosmetic change in the living room of our 1727 Saltbox home. All the woodwork, including the large mantel, had several layers of paint over varnish. After considering the alternatives, we felt it best to remove the woodwork and strip it before applying any new finish.

The Mushroom Factor took over, and now our living room is, well, primitive. The plaster has been removed from the ceiling, revealing the very unusual summer beam and joists, and the fireplace wall has had the plaster removed, revealing the original, beautiful paneling. In addition, all the brick creating a modern fireplace have been removed, revealing the large stone fireplace.

Now we have also removed the 1950s tongue-and-groove oak flooring, revealing the original flooring. Other “old-house nuts” have visited, oohing and aahing over the fascinating craftsmanship and details. A restoration expert was also consulted, and as a result the project is stalled. The problem is that there are several unique features that demand professional documentation and analysis, and these require time and funding.

We can live for a time with the room under construction, with plastic over the doorways, and living room furniture scattered to other rooms, but how long will it take to get these preliminary and important tasks done? As yet, no one knows.

To do what needs to be done requires professional help, or at least professional consultation, and is beyond the means of my wife and me. (She’s a teacher and I’m a clergyman.) Historical groups find it all very interesting and want us to preserve this early record of housebuilding, but no one is offering any financial help. Who knows where all this will lead!

I went back to the March/April ’88 issue of OHJ and re-read “The Bare Facts About Early Floors,” and the other related articles. After our old flooring was revealed, the articles proved even more interesting.

Specifically, I want to add to the information provided by Mr. Cotton. While white pine may have been the favorite wood, our floor appears to...
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continued from page 12

be oak — apparently, from one tree.
(Flooring on the second floor and
the attic was yellow pine and chest­
ut, with an occasional oak board.)

And here is the most interesting
discovery of all. Our oak floor was
pegged with pegs 1" to 1 1/4". To date,
no one who has seen our floor has
ever seen any other pegged floor.
This may be at least one "historical
precedent," though the size of the
pegs is very different from the plugs
used to cover the countersunk
screws mentioned in the article.

We don't know what we're going
to do yet, but we need to proceed,
and want to do so without destroying
the unique aspects of our "living
museum."

— Robert D. McNaughton
Cromwell, Conn

We showed your letter to John Obed
Curtis, director of the Curatorial De-
partment at Old Sturbridge Village.
He found this floor to be "perfectly
extraordinary. A pegged floor in a
stable is rare enough, but in my 30
years' experience, I've seen no prece­
dent for its domestic use. I urge the
McNaughtons to cover and protect
the floor — even a simple 3/8" ply­
wood overlay and something
over that, building in a trap door so
that at least part of the original floor
can still be viewed."

Andrew Ladygo, Architectural Con­
servator at the Society for the Preser­
vation of New England Antiquities,
was equally impressed. He seconded
John's recommendation and added:
"J. Frederick Kelly's Early Domest­
ic Architecture of Connecticut discusses
oak as a favored early flooring, but
we haven't seen much of it. And
pegged floors have usually been re­
stored based on hearsay, not physical
evidence — until now. It's very im­
portant that they do nothing to alter

or remove the original materials."

Obviously, all the experts agree
that the original floor should not be
removed. If you don't want to donate
your living room to museum science,
it seems the advice to overlay the
floor — but allow access — is most
sensible. — ed.

**Architectural Specter**

Dear OHJ,

The Ghost Stories were interesting
and believable, and a fun way to cel­
brate your 15th anniversary [OHJ,
Sept./Oct. 1988]. But I hope you'll
keep doing what you do best: the
how-to restoration stuff I can't find
anywhere else.

Otherwise, you'll have to change
your name to Fine Househaunting or
Wooden Ghost. Or Historic
Premonition.

— N. Trops
Brooklyn, N.Y.
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Mail-order plant catalogs arrive daily on gardeners' doorsteps at this time of year because now is the time to plan for spring planting. Commercial nurseries carry mostly modern hybrids, but some antique varieties can be found buried in their catalogs. The 1851 "Festiva Maxima," for example, is still a ubiquitous best-selling peony.

No one nursery will meet all your needs. (There is, alas, no "Williamsburg-in-a-Can.") Curl up in front of a roaring fire with some of these catalogs, which are especially useful to the old-house gardener.

The Fragrant Path, PO Box 328, Dept. OHJ, Fort Calhoun, NE 68023. Catalog. $1.
In an engagingly personal catalog, the Fragrant Path offers "seeds for fragrant, rare, and old-fashioned plants." These range from tiny creepers to 75-foot trees and include prairie flowers, herbs, and enough vines to please Victorian tastemaker A.J. Downing.

Historic Plant Center, Monticello, PO Box 316, Dept. OHJ, Charlottesville, VA 22902. Free catalog.
Thomas Jefferson was an avid gardener, and the caretakers of his estate, Monticello, recently established an ambitious Historic Plant Center. The center's short but growing seed list includes the striking hyacinth-bean vine with rosy-purple flowers and reddish pods.

Logee's Greenhouses, 55 North St., Dept. OHJ, Danielson, CT 06239. Catalog. $3.
To fill a porch basket or cast-iron urn, turn to Logee's. Established in 1892, they carry a ravishing selection of conservatory plants, including many antiques. Try the Victorian geranium "Mrs. Cox" with leaves of yellow, green, and red, or one of a dozen passionflowers.

Carefree, fragrant, and lush, old roses are making a big comeback. Mainstream catalogs offer a few, but specialist growers offer hundreds. Roses of Yesterday and Today is a top-notch source with an informative catalog.

Select Seeds, 81 Stickney Hill Rd., Dept. OHJ, Union, CT 06076. Free catalog.
Select Seeds got its start when owner Marilyn Barlow went looking for historic plants for the garden of her 1830s house. Now in its third year, it's the country's only nursery devoted exclusively to antique flowers.

Thompson and Morgan, PO Box 1308, Dept. OHJ, Jackson, NJ 08527. Free catalog.
Enormously comprehensive, the catalog of Thompson and Morgan, a British-based firm, offers seed for everything from ornamental bananas to 42 pansies. Only a few are historic, but that still adds up to a lot.

Wayside Gardens highlights the new and unusual, but their broad offering of nursery stock includes historic plants as well — "Distinction" hyacinth, "Rock's Variety" tree peony, and others. Their color photographs are useful, too.

Scott G. Kunst heads a company that designs period landscapes: Old House Gardens, 536 Third Street, Dept. OHJ, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. (313) 995-1486.
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Old-House Journal CATALOG

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Animal Pests

Q I'm writing for advice about a serious squirrel problem we are having here at the Valentine-Varian House Museum. What route would you suggest for their removal? To whom can you refer us for help?

— Joseph D. Connors
Manager, Valentine-Varian House
Bronx, NY.

A There are no magic solutions to getting rid of animal pests. The most successful — and humane — method is to trap and relocate the critters. You can get live-animal cage traps of varying sizes (squirrel/chipmunk, rabbit/muskrat, raccoon/woodchuck, etc.) from Woodstream Corp., Box 327, Lititz, PA 17543; (717) 626-2125. Their catalog of Havahart® traps is free (as is a catalog of humane rodent traps).

We'd also like to recommend Richard A. Patterson's book, There's a Bat in the Attic and a Woodchuck in the Garden. He's written a knowledgeable and thorough explanation on how to cope with a range of animal troublemakers, from rodents and snakes to birds and bats. It's available for $5 ppd. from Indian Creek Nature Center, 6665 Otis Road SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52401.

To keep them from coming back, of course, you'll have to do a thorough inspection of the attic, basement, and crawlspace for points of entry. Seal 'em all up.

Sill Fungi

Q My house was built around 1830; about 1900, it was disassembled and moved to another site. The building is now on a stone foundation and the basement is damp. I cannot change this construc-
Your sill fungus is most assuredly the result of dampness in the basement. Fungi are live organisms, actually eating the wood fiber for food, and they need three things to survive: food, air, and water. You can’t remove the first two, so it’s the water that has to go. Look into treating the symptom — by ventilating the basement or installing a dehumidifier — as well as treating the cause: Is the house being subjected to run-off from rain, roof gutters, or hidden springs? A temporary measure would be to use a fungicide and poison the organisms. This won’t work indefinitely, however, if the basement remains damp. And ignoring the fungi is no solution.

A summer tip: High-heat black paint, but when I started using a wire brush to remove the rust, the nickel came through. Can you tell me how to clean off the rust and bring out the nickel finish? I also need to know how to seal the nickel so it won’t rust again. — Rose McDonald Zanesville, Ohio

Any good-quality metal polish recommended for nickel, such as Noxon, should work for cleaning and polishing your stove’s nickel plating. You may find, however, that the plating has worn off in places, and that’s why the rust is showing through. In this case, if these trim parts can be removed from the stove, you should send them to a plating shop and have them replated. (Check first on the cost and availability of such a service before taking the stove apart.)

Another tip: High-heat paint is ok for painting cast-iron and steel stoves black, but the traditional material is stove black, a concoction of lamp-black, kerosene, and other mysterious ingredients, which comes in a small can like shoe dye. You probably won’t find it in a city, but it sometimes can be found in good hardware stores in rural areas. Or you can order it from H.F. Staples & Co., Webb Drive, Box 956, Dept. OHJ, Merrimack, NH 03054; (603) 889-8600.

Stove Restoration

I bought a gas stove at a yard sale last summer. I did some research on it, learned that the company that made it went out of business in 1941. But I located a lady who worked for the company, and she thinks the stove was made between 1880 and 1900.

I was going to paint the stove with high-heat black paint, but when I started using a wire brush to remove the rust, the nickel came through. Can you tell me how to clean off the rust and bring out the nickel finish? I also need to know how to seal the nickel so it won’t rust again.

— Rose McDonald Zanesville, Ohio

The original finish in an 1860 house; the beams were not meant to be exposed.

Plaster Marks

My husband and I have bought a house that was built in 1860. We want to leave the beams exposed as we redo each room, and so we need to know how to clean plaster marks off the beams.

— Beverly Boan Lamberville, N.J.

You should be able to remove plaster marks from the wood by gentle scraping with a wirebrush. After you’ve gotten off the bulk of the plaster, you can remove what remains with a solution of warm water and detergent or TSP (trisodium phosphate). Plaster is lime- or gypsum-based, and water soluble — just go at it with an abrasive kitchen sponge or pot scrubber.

Just a note: Plaster would have been the original finish in an 1860 house; the beams were not meant to be exposed.
Big Bed, Narrow Stair

How do you get a queen-size boxSpring up that Victorian stairwell? My wife and I recently moved into an early Victorian cottage, and we met with this predicament. Our favorite bed would not make it through the stairwell or through any window. A friend suggested cutting the boxspring in two. I removed the fabric underneath and some of the staples holding the quilting. My friend kept the quilted side away from the saw as I cut all the framing running the width of the boxspring. It folded very nicely, and I spliced the framing back together with 12-inch-long boards after it was in the bedroom. (Don't use any glue on your splices; you'll probably need to take the boxspring apart if you ever have to move it downstairs.)

— Tom Elliott
Richmond, Virg.

Foil with Oil

A great way to remove tar or oil-based paint from your hands and tools is to use cooking oil or baby oil instead of harsh solvents that can damage your skin. Just put a little oil in your hands and rub them together; the paint will come right off. The same goes for your tools. It sometimes will remove paint spots from your clothes, too!

— Michael G. Cohan
Oak Lawn, Ill

Floor Stripping

Some floors in our old house had been heavily painted with green enamel. Previous owners sanded the floors, gave up midway, and varnished over the whole mess!

Wanting to restore what we knew to be wide-board, honey-toned pine floors, we used many trusted chemical removers—all to no avail. Even our beloved heat gun failed to make a dent in the glass-like enamel finish.

Enter a product which worked and was pleasant to use, with only a faint peroxide odor: Brookstone Paint Striper #08793. We ordered it from Brookstone, 5 Vose Farm Road, Peterborough, NH 03458; (603) 924-9541.

Our procedure:
1) Mix and apply as directed on the container.
2) Cover the coated floor with strips of Saran Wrap to keep the paste moist.
3) Wait two hours. Then, working in areas about 3' x 5', remove the plastic wrap, lift and discard loosened paint gunk with a putty knife.
4) Scrub the floor with a brush and hot water. Wash and rinse with rags and clean water.
5) If necessary, repeat the process on areas where paint still remains.
6) When the floor is clean, rinse with white vinegar and water.
7) Allow the floor to dry for a few days before sanding and finishing.

Dorothy and Larry Serravalli
High Falls, N.Y.

Support Your Door

I used some scrap pieces of 2 x 4 to build two supports to strip the beautiful old heart-pine doors in my 1904 house. It's easy to build and easy to use—and makes the job easier if you have to work on a lot of doors.

The door is supported on a nail through each of the supports, so it can be rotated and secured with another nail on the top brace. Then you strip one side, flip it over, and do the other side. When it's dry, refinish it and let it dry just for a half hour or so; then flip it over and do the other side.

With the door supported horizontally, the finish won't run. Moulding can also be stripped and refinished with several pieces fastened to both sides of a large plank of plywood (or even an old door) with finishing nails.

If dust is a problem, let the finish dry completely while the door is turned over; then do the top side. My doors now have a beautiful, smooth, speck-free finish.

— Irvin Aaron
Birmingham, Alabama

TIPS TO SHARE? Do you have any hints or shortcuts that might help other old-house owners? We'll pay $25 for any how-to items used in this "Restorer's Notebook" column. Write to Notebook Editor, The Old-House Journal, 69A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217.
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Benjamin Moore PAINTS
since the turn of this century, the house we knew as Matthew Pines has presided quietly over a North Carolina hilltop. My grandmother kept the pine saplings meticulously topped, a sort of hedge lining the county dirt road that circled past our driveway. Those pines now tower 20 feet in the air, but from the front porch, you can still see the mountains.

Matthew Pines was built as a boardinghouse for Charlestonians fleeing the summer heat. A dining room, now a great room, was centrally placed for access from the back kitchen and from the back and side porches. Upstairs, four very large, high-ceilinged bedrooms, each with its own fireplace, provided grand accommodations for the visitors from the city. (Altogether, there were 23 rooms and 11 working fireplaces!)

My grandfather and grandmother, Charles and Eloise Matthew, had planned to purchase the property with DuBose Heyward, the Charleston author of Porgy; they would name it Matt Heyven. However, Mr. Heyward (known to us as "Uncle Bo") died before it could be bought. Weese and Gramp bought it anyway in the 1930s, and named it Matthew Pines.

For more than 40 years, this graceful old house sheltered my family. It was a place for cousins to be reunited in summer. It was the place I brought my children and my cousin Chad brought his.

In 1976, after Gramp died, Matthew Pines was put up for sale. By then, even my mother's generation was elderly and living in Florida, and Mother and her four brothers and sisters needed the money from the sale to help out with retirement. My five cousins and I couldn't afford to buy the house, as much as we wanted to. So there was an estate sale — the kind where antiques dealers come in and tag everything, then thundering hordes of strangers come through the house, grabbing and carting off the stuff your life is made of.
Matthew Pines’ four-and-a-half acres included an apple orchard, woods, and a cleared slope where my grandfather planted crabapples and a few silver birch trees. (Silver birches reminded Gramp of his boyhood in Nova Scotia.) I remember that, in spring, violets colored most of the slope purple, and yellow jonquils lined the driveway, competing for attention with the pink azaleas and Gramp’s “Red Emperor” tulips. By summer, Gramp’s rose trellis at the front porch would be laden with large red roses, and his small vegetable and flower gardens behind the house would be overflowing with dahlias, grapes, tomatoes, and squash.

Wide stone steps led up to Matthew Pines’ large, welcoming front porch. As you entered the front hall, our dining room was on the left. It was used only on holidays. When I was young, I used to love the beautiful mahogany china cabinet in that room. It had mirrored sides, glass shelves, and carved pineapple finials. From the time I was in high school, I polished this cabinet, carefully removing the set of Royal Doulton’s “Old Leeds Sprays” piece by piece.

Down the front hall on the right, just before the stairway, was the room that was my grandfather’s and then my mother’s. It had built-in cedar cabinets that Weese used for linens. A piece of linoleum was tacked over the fireplace to keep out the draft; a gas heater was used to heat the room. Over the heater, a hole was cut into the ceiling and the floor above it, and a register was put in so that my room on the second floor could be heated — more or less. Because it led from the front hall through to the big room (as we called it), Weese called that bedroom “Highway 66.”

There was an estate sale — the kind where antiques dealers come in and tag everything, then thundering hordes of strangers come through the house, grabbing and carting off the stuff your life is made of.

The house was built with indoor plumbing (so much for rustic living). But that didn’t stop Gramp from using the shower on the back porch in all but the bitterest weather. Gramp’s shower is gone now. The set tubs are still there; we used to bathe in them as tots. On that same porch, a neighbor who worked for my grandmother did the laundry year after year, using an old wringer-washer, before hanging out the clothes under the fragrant pines to dry. My grandfather would often take the clothes down in the evening, singing, “Bringing in the sheets, bringing in the sheets,” in his powerful baritone voice.

Originally, I’m told, Matthew Pines had mustard-color clapboard, with white trim. But I only remember it with white asbestos shingles, with dark green trim. There was a wonderful tin roof upon which the rain would patter and thump, especially in summer. You could hear it best in the breakfast nook/canning shed at the back of the house. Gramp made home brew, Weese canned beans and preserves, and we used to eat back there. The awninged window looked out at the mountains. Gramp’s blue morning glories climbed the window and peeked at us at breakfast.
s children, we were very fortunate to have this warm family retreat to nurture our imaginations. We had a wishing rock, almost hidden by mountain laurel, where we could sit and wish for what children wish for. We had a bunny stump — a hollowed tree stump where a very generous bunny would leave candy or other treats for us. We collected water in Mason jars off the back porch during downpours, and stored acorns from the oak trees in jars under the front porch. We caught fireflies on warm summer evenings, running around the lawns until it was too dark to see, while our parents sat on the front porch talking and laughing in the old cypress-knee furniture my grandmother found in Florida.

That porch holds so many memories! There was an American flag on one corner that we always waved when visitors left. They could be way down the county road and came to steal the seed. He kept a detailed log of the weather, as well as a daily journal of plantings and goings-on about the house. A former Canadian woodsman, Gramp would regale us with his tales of the Kennebecasis River. His brother Harrison ("Uncle Hatch"), who remained in Canada, would send us maple leaves, letters written on birch bark, and dubious seaweed delicacies that none of us children could stand.

Gramp's screened porch off the cottage near the main house was wonderful for family gatherings, when we didn't picnic or barbecue on the lawn below. (The brick barbecue area is falling down now. My uncle John Lewis, an artist, designed and built an ultra-modern barbecue, and Gramp never missed a chance to make fun of it. Of course, he was joking.) When that porch was being built in the 1950s, my cousins Margo and Charles narrowly missed being hit by lightning, which burst from a summer afternoon sky, hit a large pine and a metal whirligig, ran up the side of the porch, knocked off shingles, then was gone.

The porch was built in the 1950s, my cousins Margo and Charles narrowly missed being hit by lightning, which burst from a summer afternoon sky, hit a large pine and a metal whirligig, ran up the side of the porch, knocked off shingles, then was gone.
The pink azalea I planted when my son Chris was born is gone. The holly tree we planted over my grandmother's ashes in the woods is 12 feet high; we could barely find it for the underbrush.

I can smell the pines and feel the sun on my face, as if I were there on the front porch. That house has my heart and soul in its cracking plaster.

As we drove up the driveway, tears welled up in my eyes. No one has lived in this house for four years, and only renters lived there for years before that.

I've written to the current owner, but she's never replied. I've been told the house is for sale for more than $100,000 — much too much for me to afford. Neither can my cousins afford it: John just bought a house for his growing family; Alice, his sister, works with street kids in Columbia, South Carolina; Chad lives abroad; Chad's sister Margo isn't getting rich working for a small Southern newspaper.

I think of Matthew Pines so often. Sometimes I can almost smell the pines and feel the sun on my face, as if I were there on the front porch. That house has my heart and soul in its cracking plaster and even in its remuddled avocado-colored shutters. If there's any way on earth, I'll have Matthew Pines back in our family. If I can't get it back, I'd be happy to see the house lived in and loved.
EVALUATING ELECTRICAL WIRING

By Gordon Bock

Compared to water and gas, electricity is the youngest service, and the one that truly makes the modern house possible. In its short hundred years, domestic electric wiring has undergone a technical metamorphosis every two decades or so, and has grown from a temperamental novelty to a highly reliable resource. For owners of houses wired with one of these old systems — and most pre-1940 houses are — the big question is: Where do I stand?

The answer is not always simple and has at least two sides: legality and safety. The legality of existing wiring has to be determined case by case. The National Electrical Code (begun in 1897) is a set of model electrical safety requirements published for building and insurance inspectors and electrical contractors, and has no legal power of its own. Most cities and towns adopt the code as their standard, but they are also free to interpret and enforce it according to their needs. The result is that many an obsolete system that would not be permitted in new work is allowed to remain in service if deemed to be in safe condition. A pass or fail depends on the local codes, and the judgment of the inspector.

The safety of old wiring, then, is the most important issue. The best remedy for any questionable circuit is, of course, disconnecting the system and installing new materials. In fact, electric wiring of any age has a finite life and might have to be replaced in the future.

While old wiring is in service, its safety can be improved by understanding what the system is and inspecting it with an eye for its known problem areas. Old houses are frequently wired with combinations of systems (for instance, cleats and knob and tube and BX cable). Understanding the age and specific shortcomings of each type is important in determining whether it is workable, in need of repair, or completely obsolete. In addition, much old wiring falls short of the modern standards for insulation, current-carrying capacity, and grounding. Applying some basic practices, though, can keep these systems operating within their designed limits and help them run safely.

PRE-1940 WIRING SYSTEMS

Electricity had no purpose in houses until it became a means to light them. The change came in 1879, when Thomas Edison built upon the experiments of many others to produce a practical incandescent light bulb. Tom, also something of a businessman, realized that the market for his bulbs would be soft if no one had access to the energy that made them work. By 1882 he was operating the first plant specifically designed to supply electricity on demand to any consumer: Pearl Street Station in New York City.

Tom's power was DC (Direct Current), a cumbersome first choice for domestic electricity. Direct current is not transmitted easily over long distances, and buildings had to be wired

fig. 1

in the "tree" fashion (fig. 1) to feed early power-hungry bulbs. That is, the wire diameter was gauged down from the bottom to the top of the house by load. Exposed systems became the popular choice for finished buildings. The wires were stretched between cleats or knobs spaced about four feet apart, and run in open view on walls and up staircases to reach the next floor.

CLEATS AND INSULATORS

Wooden cleats (fig. 2) supporting an exposed system, the earliest (and cheapest) wiring method, had disadvantages that were recognized early
Knob and tube wiring was a concealed (hidden in walls and under floors) version of the exposed knob system. Porcelain knobs (fig. 6) carried individual lines along open runs (such as the length of a floor joist), while tubes of the same material (fig. 7) were inserted through the wood as protectors when making runs perpendicular to framing (fig. 8). Knob spacing was still a maximum of four-and-a-half feet, and wires had to be located at least one inch off the carrying surface and five inches from other wires. Where wires had to cross each other in close proximity, tubes were also employed as protective sheathing by taping them in place on the wire (fig. 9). Loom (made of woven fabric) was usually slipped over wire ends where they connected with switches, outlets, fuse boxes, or other terminations.

Knob and tube could be installed cost-effectively in both new and existing construction, and thus was highly popular, despite its flaws, from the 1890s until after 1920. The considera-
on tap lines could heat up to the combustion point, a threat recognized before the turn of the century. Dampness, too, was still an enemy, particularly when parallel knob runs were laid out — contrary to most regulations — on the same rafter or floor joist. Although it saw later use in rural areas, there was a strong call for the outlawing of knob and tube by 1921.

MOULDING
Wood and metal surface mouldings were a solution to the aesthetic problems of exposed wiring systems. Retrofitting existing houses with the new power was a big chunk of the early electrical business, but a concealed system was prohibitively expensive for some customers. Mouldings, however, made it possible to wire a building with a non-concealed system that didn’t look like railroad tracks, and at about 50% of the cost of concealed.

Wood mouldings (fig. 11) were decorative, inexpensive, easy to use, and a big hit early on. They were assembled from two weatherproof-painted pieces: a base strip channeled to accept either two or three wires, and a cap that was usually beaded with some ornamental design. Layouts could be planned so that they harmonized with a room by following its lines (much like interior trim) and still service lights and other electrical apparatus.

Metal mouldings (fig. 12) appeared shortly after 1900, and were outselling wood by the 1920s. Also a base-and-cap design, they were made from galvanized sheet metal and were usually large enough to hold four #14 wires. Metal moulding was slim and took paint well, and thus was relatively inconspicuous. As a safety measure, all mouldings had to be grounded at at least two points.

Despite its many advantages, metal moulding had limitations. It could not be used where dampness was a threat, and the National Electrical Code restricted its use to surface wiring. Early types had no galvanizing along the cut edges of the metal, which opened the possibility of either sharp edges or rust compromising the wiring insulation and causing shorts. Improved versions of metal mouldings are still on the market today, and are approved for most dry, surface installations.

Wiring in plaster was supposed to produce a high-quality concealed job. The method was straightforward: insulated wires were simply mortared
over while running cornices, repairing or finishing walls, or laying brickwork. Besides making faults nearly impossible to locate and messy to repair, this kind of wiring was doomed technically. The lime in either plaster or brick mortar decomposed the insulation, rendering the system highly dangerous. The National Electrical Code stopped recommending wiring in plaster by 1901.

**Conduit**

Conduit and pipe, always considered the best wiring methods money could buy, had a limited appeal for houses because they took, roughly, twice the money to buy.

**Rigid conduit** (fig. 13), made from nonmetallic fiber for a brief early period, was primarily iron or steel piping. The plumbing of gaslight systems undoubtedly spawned the idea of protecting electric wiring with pipe and, indeed, wires were snaked through defunct gas pipes in countless retrofits. In time, the same gauge pipe and fittings, galvanized or enameled on their interiors, were also used for new work.

Flexible steel conduit (fig. 14), also known as Greenfield after the inventor of one model, was manufactured from galvanized steel strips assembled in a manner that allowed the finished "pipe" to be readily articulated in almost any direction. In use, it was first run through walls and voids, secured at bends, and then snaked with wiring to complete the installation. Flexible conduit appeared at the turn of the century, and seemed to be an ideal means to wire a finished building. It provided good mechanical protection for the wiring, it was well adapted to retrofit installations and it was easy to work with. Like rigid conduit, though, there was a potential for problems if the wiring insulation failed and sought a ground through the steel. The multiple flexible sections did not provide an unbroken electrical path (as a continuous wire or pipe might), and rust or poor connections along the way could become high-resistance "hot spots" that might heat to the point of combustion. Modern versions of flexible conduit are extensively used, subject to local code requirements.

**Armed Cable**

Similar in concept to flexible conduit, armored cable (fig. 15) came prefabricated with the wiring in place and protected by a continuous spiral galvanized-metal strip. Cable was made practical by (and relied upon) improved insulation compounds that stayed intact when bent in tight turns. The popular versions were known as BX and BXL (which had an interior lead sheath for damp applications).
Rust, again, is early armored cable's worst enemy. The sheet-metal armor was ungalvanized along its edges after cutting (much like metal moulding), and rusted over time. Like flexible conduit, hot spots and sparks were found to develop along the spiral if it should accidentally become a ground path. Years later, the problem was compounded in many installations by hooking up the armor as a working, "third wire" ground — a job it was never intended to perform. The dangers of this practice led to code restrictions for BX in the past. Today, armored cable is manufactured with continuous ground conductors and rust-inhibiting armor, and is approved by the National Electrical Code for dry, residential applications (fig. 16).

INSULATION, CURRENT-CARRYING CAPACITY, AND GROUNDING

INSULATION
Electrical insulation, always the Achilles heel of early wiring, is no less of a problem as these systems age. Mr. Edison resorted to cloth strips soaked in linseed oil, asphalt, and wax after laying bare wires in wood tracks (underground) failed miserably. Prepared papers and varnished cloths in the 1800s had a fair tolerance to heat (about 150 degrees), but succumbed to moisture. Natural rubber compounds stood up to water, but melted in heat and oxidized (dried out and cracked) in air. Care and caution can improve the safety of old insulation still in use.

- No old insulation can withstand the effects of moisture. Old wiring in damp locations should be replaced.
- Rubber insulation (the standard before 1930) seems to have a life of about 25 years, so any such system still in use is operating beyond its expectancy. In this light, disturbing old wiring is very risky, as it can crack or break off insulation that is no longer supple, exposing bare copper wire. Extreme care should be taken when altering or even inspecting old lines.
- Rubber insulation deteriorates more rapidly in open air than when confined in a conduit, say, or armored cable assembly. Therefore, most of the insulation on open wiring systems (like knob and tube) is frequently very brittle and a potential hazard. Confined wiring, on the other hand, may only be cracking where it leaves its enclosure to make connections at switches and outlets. These leads can be improved by wrapping with vinyl electrical tape or covering with heat-shrink tubing. In the case of armored cable, it is often possible to cut back to fresher insulation if there is enough slack in the cable. (Power must be disconnected before performing either of these operations.)

CURRENT CARRYING CAPACITY
Old wiring has limited current (amperage) carrying capacity. Most pre-1940 systems were only intended to power lights and the odd radio, refrigerator, waffle or curling iron. Their branch lines are commonly #14 AWG wire, which is rated to carry no more than 15 amperes of load. (In contrast, the general service wiring of contemporary houses is frequently #12 — a size larger.) To avoid a fire hazard, it is important to make sure that old wiring isn't overloaded by today's complement of air conditioners and microwave ovens.

- The combined wattage of all the lights and appliances on a branch circuit should not exceed the current rating of the fuse (or circuit breaker) protecting that circuit. For example: watts = amperes × volts; therefore, a 15-ampere fuse (multiplied by 115 volts, the usual figure) should not have to handle more than 1,725 watts.
- The fuse protecting any circuit should be appropriate for the gauge of the wiring. Oversize fuses (installed in an attempt to get more capacity from the circuit) allow a line to carry more current than it is designed for, with overheating and fire as a potential result. To determine the correct fuse size for old wiring, first disconnect the power, then measure the diameter of the copper conductor with a wire gauge (fig. 17) and apply this table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wire Size</th>
<th>Maximum Fuse Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#14</td>
<td>15 Amperes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#12</td>
<td>20 Amperes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>30 Amperes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GROUNDING
A ground-continuity test is valuable for determining if the safety leg on three-pin outlets actually is connected to ground. Since the 1950s, the National Electric Code has required that new domestic wiring be three-wire grounded, but many three-pin outlets have also been retrofitted to old BX and conduit systems using armor or pipe as the ground conductor. To make sure the electrical path is not interrupted by breaks or loose connections, the ground can be checked either by an electrician, or by using simple test devices like those on page 70.
WIRING TIPS FOR THE DO-IT-YOURSELFER...
WHICH HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH ELECTRICITY

BY DAN MILLER, ELGIN, ILLINOIS

After installing 6,000 feet of new electrical wiring in our 1875 Italianate home and carriage house, I might have been awarded a doctorate from the School of Hard Knocks. I learned many things nobody writes about ... and I'd like to share them with other restoration enthusiasts.

Read everything you can on the subject. You're just as intelligent as the electrician but lack his specific knowledge and experience. I read three books. Reading those parts of the National Electrical Code book which apply to residential wiring is a must. (Your library should have a copy; a good electrical supply house can sell you one.) I spent an afternoon reading the library reference copy. Later, I broke down and bought my own as I had to refer to it so often. I caught our inspector projecting his biases without code backing. When I quoted the code book, he backed down. Read the code book to put yourself on an equal footing with your inspector.

After your crash course, go to City Hall, buy a permit, and talk to the electrical inspector concerning your city's possible variances from the National Code. View the inspector as a valuable consultant provided by your town — not as someone out to restrict your rights. His help and final inspection could prevent a major disaster. If ever you have doubts on how to proceed, call your inspector before going forward, to avoid having to redo your work later. Do not have a negative confrontation with him. Know what you're talking about, but keep him on your side.

... the newly-educated do-it-yourselfer completes the perfect splice.
Get bids from licensed contractors. Bids of $5,000 forced us to do the job ourselves, but while the electrician was here, I learned a lot about how he would proceed. Before signing a contract, ask for names and addresses of previous clients whose houses are similar to yours. Call these references and ask them about the contractor’s workmanship and reliability. Get permission to actually inspect the work.

At this point, you’ll either hire the contractor or, if it’s allowed and you’re up for it, you’ll do the job yourself. A middle ground, helpful to both the electrical contractor and your budget, is to have the electrician do the technical work while you do the rest — opening walls, cleaning up, etc.

Do-it-yourselfers must buy or rent the correct tools and supplies. I’ll mention only those not covered in a typical wiring manual:

- First, you must have knee pads. You don’t know your knees are sore until it’s too late. In my case, it was worse. I knelt on a sharp piece of plaster while crawling above our cistern. For $100, a doctor told me that I had pre-patella bursitis. Two weeks of my valuable vacation (i.e., wiring) time were lost as I lay on my back or in a splint. It’s surprising how much the loss of a working knee can limit what you can do around an old house.

- The second most important tool is a variable-speed reciprocating saw. Milwaukee makes one with a blade for every purpose. A reciprocating saw can, for example, cut the tongue off a plaster blade while crawling above our cistern. For $100, a doctor told me that I had a pre-patella bursitis. Two weeks of my valuable vacation (i.e., wiring) time were lost as I lay on my back or in a splint. It’s surprising how much the loss of a working knee can limit what you can do around an old house.

- Notching a joist or beam compromises its load-bearing capacity. If you must cross a joist, drill a hole at least 1 1/2 inches below its top surface.

- Another invaluable tool is a variable-speed reversing drill. (It’s nice if it’s cordless.) Attach all of your boxes and conduit fasteners with self-starting hex-head sheetmetal screws. A magnetic bit on the drill holds the screw for you. The drill/screw is held with one hand and the box or fastener with the other. It’s very quick and easy. (With a hammer and nail, it takes three hands.)

- The real beauty of the screws is that if you misplace a box, you can take it down in seconds by reversing the drill — instead of beating on it with hammer and pry bar. Buy self-feeding bits to drill through joists or studs. Without them, energy and time expended is multiplied by ten. Buy an inexpensive spade bit to drill through plaster; plaster dulls steel in a hurry. If it gets hard to drill, sharpen the bit with a grinder. I kept a small, hand-held grinder close by and sharpened it frequently.

- Don’t buy a standard ribbon fish line for fishing through conduit or flexible conduit. A Sparks aviation fish line will cut work and frustration in half. There are places where a standard fish line won’t go. The Sparks is expensive — about $1 per foot — but it’ll go anywhere. The money is well worth the time and aggravation saved.

- I found a huge tool belt invaluable. Without it, I spent too much time looking for tools. Get in the habit of putting each tool back in its place.

- Buy several rolls of colored electrical tape. It’s very handy to label different circuits for your use now, and for the benefit of future owners. I taped each splice with the color of the circuit it belonged to for further clarification.

- Buy two or more rolls of each color of wire so that multiple circuits can be pulled through conduit at the same time. Many electricians feel that #14 wire is marginal for tomorrow’s electric use. It might be preferable to use #12 wire throughout; ask your local inspector what he recommends.

- Walkie-talkies are great. Borrow or buy a set. My wife (and co-fisher) couldn’t yell loud enough for me to hear her in the attic.

- Last tip on supplies: Buy them in quantity from large supply houses. Prices will be better than at the local hardware store and the salespeople’s savvy will be useful. Don’t be afraid to ask for a contractor’s discount. You are the contractor, and you’re buying in contractor quantities. While waiting for your parts, look around. You’re probably surrounded by electricians. Casually pick their brains while waiting. I’ve been known to take a list of questions with me. If the salesman couldn’t answer, the electricians always piped in to show off their knowledge. I learned as much at the counter as I did from the books I read.

If you take up floorboards in the attic, number them and their accompanying joist on masking tape. When replacing the boards, don’t nail them down. They’ll jiggle a little but, left loose, they’ll afford easy access for you and future owners. If the boards must be secured, attach them using screws. (Try to plan your attic work for nights or winter. I lost 15 pounds in three weeks spent in the attic in July.)

I highly recommend that you try doing your wiring yourself. So much of it is tedious grunt work — drilling holes and fishing wire. Why pay someone $40 an hour (or more) for grunt work? If you feel you can’t do it, at least look for a contractor who will let you do some of the tedious work. I saved $5,000 on the installation of our forced-air system by cutting the holes and removing the old steam system every night, my contractor left me a note listing things I could do to help.

Try it yourself! Experience the exhilaration of a major accomplishment and money savings.

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Dan Miller

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1989
SWITCHES

BY IRA P. GOLD

Early wall, ceiling, and table fixtures were operated by a key-type switch built into the fixture (similar to lamp sockets today). In the 1880s, builders began encasing the wires in specially designed wood or metal mouldings attached to the wall. A few of these disguised circuits used porcelain-covered knife switches on the wall. Then the surface-mounted rotary snap switch made its debut.

As the '90s approached, the push-button switch was introduced. This switch was soon the most heavily promoted of all residential switches (those used in 110-volt circuits), and remained the most popular switch for the next 40 or 50 years.

Most electrical systems in use at the time utilized DC. Direct current has the effect of "holding onto" something once it comes in contact. That made it necessary to design spring-loaded switches so that a certain amount of tension could build up before causing the blades to "snap" away from the contacts quickly enough to avoid drawing out a long and potentially dangerous arc. This resulted in the distinctive click or "snapping" sound — a sound some find as nostalgic as the slam of a screen door.

The trade catalogs of 1898 showed a selection of tumble switches — the great-granddads of today's toggle switch. They apparently did not gain the popularity of the push-button switch until after AC became the standard. It would seem that breaking the hold of DC was more easily accomplished by pushing, than by lifting with the side of a finger. But, sometime before World War II, the industry decided that the elaborate mechanisms were becoming too costly and unnecessary. For whatever reasons, the tumble switch was the one chosen to be redesigned and made practical and compatible with the new wiring and codes.

Except for farm and some industrial applications, DC was all but superseded as the war began. In the mid-1950s, Leviton Electrical Co. produced the last of their push-buttons.

The restoration boom of the 1970s created a new interest in the push-button switch. In 1985, Peter Brevoort of Michigan began manufacturing new push-button switches that he and an electrical engineer had redesigned to meet all modern codes. The new switches retain the same outward appearance — and the mandatory snap — of the originals.

Push-button switches and compatible switch plates are available by mail from Classic Accents, PO Box 1181, Dept. OHIJ, Southgate, MI 48195; (313) 282-5525.

These were sold for 25 years at $.25 per bulb.

Tungsten filament bulbs were widely available by 1911, and had more than double the light output of the GEM lamps. They were produced with clear envelopes (both tipped and untipped) and characteristic zigzag filaments into the 1930s.

Early electric fixtures were often designed for the bulbs of the era, and so become overly bright with modern bulbs. To simulate the old-bulb look, you can use low-wattage ornamental or special-purpose bulbs that are unfrosted. You can also reduce the light output of lamps or chandeliers with a dimmer.

Reproduction period lightbulbs with carbon and tungsten filaments are available from Bradford Consultants, PO Box 4020, Dept. OHIJ, Alameda, CA 94501; (415) 523-1968.

— Gordon Bock

BULBS

The incandescent lightbulb evolved in stages, too. At first, glass envelopes were hand-blown, and even after machine manufacturing took over, they remained "tipped" and unfrosted until the 1920s. The light changed as well, growing whiter and brighter as better filaments were invented. A quick history:

Edison's bulb was typical of most lightbulbs up to the turn of the century. Its carbon filament gave off yellow-orange light at roughly the intensity of today's 25-watt bulb.

GEM lamps (for General Electric Metalized) appeared in 1905, with an improved filament that burned about 30% brighter than carbon alone, and didn't blacken the envelope as it aged.
ecch, it looks like an upside-down bedpan!"
"It's so kitschy!"

To the c. 1990 sensibility, some early-20th-century lighting fixtures are hard to take. And how many of us would be caught dead with a naked lightbulb dangling, turn-of-the-century-style, from the ceiling in the middle of the living room?

To post-Victorians, electricity in any form was worth showing off. One early tastemaker absolutely gushed over the possibility of having electric hall and staircase lights with one switch at the bottom to turn them on, and another on the bedroom floor to turn them off. The extra expense of this wiring arrangement, she calculated, would be repaid by savings on the hall carpets, "as I am sure the man does not exist who can carry a bed-candle upstairs without spilling the grease."

Electricity had other advantages. Since they no longer had to deal with fuel pipes, fuel wells, and the other accoutrements of gas, oil, and kerosene fixtures, designers were free to create lighting in virtually any shape or material that struck their fancy. Electricity sparked what has been called the single most creative period in the annals of domestic lighting — an incredibly inventive period that produced lights that were extraordinarily imaginative if at times, er, bizarre.

If you're looking for lighting fixtures for your turn-of-the-century house, there are three things to keep in mind. The most important is the year your house was built. A house constructed c. 1900 originally would have had fixtures that look a lot different from those in a house constructed in the 1920s, or even 1910. A second consideration is the style of your house. Although homeowners were far from pedantic about putting only, say, Arts and Crafts fixtures in their Craftsman house, you certainly can't go wrong by letting house style guide your choice of fixtures. And turn-of-the-century Americans were most fussy about fixtures for their living rooms and dining rooms. For kitchens, bathrooms, and basements, they made do with more functional lights.
The earliest electric lights looked a lot like gaslights, and for good reason. In its infancy, from the early 1880s until about 1910, electricity was not the most reliable energy source, and gas companies lost no time telling homeowners it was only prudent to have both gas and electric fixtures. Fixture manufacturers began supplying lights that made use of both energy sources.

This didn’t require much in the way of redesign. Like typical late-19th-century gas fixtures, the combination fixtures, called gasolier-electroliers when they hung from the ceiling, consisted of metal fuel pipes and fuel wells and decorative glass bowls to diffuse the light. The one concession to the Electric Age was a redesigned bell-shaped glass shade more in keeping with the contours of the electric lightbulb.

While the larger gas globes faced up, the bell-shaped shades were angled down.

As the gas component of the fixture became little more than an emergency feature, gas “candles” began replacing the large gas bowls (see illustration above, second from left). Reflecting the eclectic tastes in interior decorating, the combination gas/electric fixtures were available in a plethora of period styles, from Greek to Empire to Colonial.

From the beginning, some intrepid souls were willing to risk all-electric fixtures in their houses. A favorite fixture was a bare bulb, either screwed into a plain socket or dangling from a wire attached to the ceiling. This quintessential, functional fixture continued to be standard in many interiors well into the 1920s, especially in kitchens, bathrooms, and other utilitarian rooms. After 1910, when the intensely bright tungsten-filament bulb became available, these fixtures often had frosted bowls or globes to soften the light.

Since hanging light fixtures were impractical in the low-ceilinged interiors of many early-20th-century houses, manufacturers came up with truncated fixtures, including pan lights (see illustration above, far right). Pan lights were almost ubiquitous in bedrooms and less formal family rooms from about 1910 to 1930.

OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL
EARLY DECORATIVE FIXTURES

If your house was built after 1910, it should be restored with lighting fixtures intended exclusively for electricity, unless there's solid evidence that electricity was not yet available; in most areas, it was. In fact, as early as 1900, electricity had become so dependable and so widespread that all-electric fixtures, or electroliers, began replacing the gas-electric styles. But manufacturers were reluctant to design anything too drastic, so early electroliers looked the same as their gas-electric counterparts — "gas" pipes, fuel wells and all.

Sometime around 1905, manufacturers began to venture from the rigid, pipe-style suspension of the old gas-lights. Flexible chain suspension became the rage, and so did "shower" fixtures — fixtures consisting of a number of electric lights hanging by chains from a plate attached to the ceiling (see illustration above).

But it was the tungsten-filament bulb that really revolutionized electric lighting. Glare was always a bit of a problem with the downward-facing bulbs of most electroliers. In an 1891 book, Mrs. J.E.H. Gordon described a dinner party she'd recently attended: "There was a round table seating 10 guests, and 10 lamps with lemon-yellow shades were hung ... so that the light was focused into the eyes and face of everyone sitting at the table, like a horrid detective little bulls-eye, showing up every wrinkle and line in the face. No one over the age of 18, should be asked to sit beneath such a light!" "Eye strain!" became the battlecry of champions of the "indirect" lighting fixtures which appeared around 1908 and worked by reflecting light off the ceiling. There was a brief flurry of true indirect fixtures c. 1910-1915, opaque bowls suspended from chains. But most "indirect" fixtures in the 'teens and the 1920s were really semi-indirect. The translucent bowls used in these fixtures reflected light off the ceiling and also cast it directly downward. There were also hybrid bowl-and-shower fixtures and bowl-and-chandelier designs (see illustration above right, and photo above).
ART NOUVEAU

The flexibility of electric wiring and the development of new materials like Louis Comfort Tiffany's hand-made opalescent glass for lampshades coincided with turn-of-the-century design movements, resulting in some exquisite lighting fixtures — and some real howlers.

Art Nouveau, a style inspired by nature, particularly the plant world, was the first design movement to sweep the lighting industry off its feet. Art Nouveau's most prominent practitioner was Louis Comfort Tiffany, whose lamps, with spectacular leaded-glass shades, were first offered to the public in 1895. His most famous masterpieces, including the wisteria lamp (see illustration above left), were created by 1900.

Suddenly, mass-produced fixtures in the form of lilies, morning glories, and tulips were in virtually every American parlor. The lightbulb was the flowerbud, shades and sockets were the leaves and petals, and other parts of the fixture functioned as vines, stems, and trunks. One bizarre hybrid table lamp was comprised of a female form sprouting leaves and blossoms. This came to be called the femme-fleur.

The most common mass-produced Art Nouveau lighting fixture between 1900 and 1920 was the "husk," a stem-like socket for an exposed lightbulb "bud." In more elaborate variations on the theme, multiple husks, clutching their lightbulbs, dangled from the chains of shower fixtures.

Art Nouveau aesthetics, popularized, also resulted in "art glass" table lamps and ceiling fixtures, but these weren't as painstakingly designed and detailed as their high-style Tiffany prototypes. Many were edged with deep, beaded fringe.

Art-glass fixtures were de rigueur from about 1900 to 1915. By 1913, Elsie de Wolfe, decorator for the rich and famous, was turning up her nose at this "vulgar fashion of having a huge mass of colored glass and beads suspended from near-brass chains in the dining rooms of certain [read "middle class"] apartments and houses."
ENGLISH REVIVAL

Like Arts and Crafts interiors, the English Revival interiors of the Tudor Revivals, English Cottages, and English Country Houses so popular in America between about 1900 and 1930 were based on simplicity. "There is no pretense about the English House," wrote Curtis and Companies in their 1920 mail-order catalog. "Its charm lies in its informality and its simplicity. It is built for comfort, not for show."

Timbered ceilings like the one in the illustration at left, which appeared in the 1930 publication, New Ideas in Home Decoration by Hazel Dell Brown, were a hallmark of English Revival interiors. Large, circular, wrought-iron or bronze chandeliers, recalling those found in the medieval English houses that were the prototypes of this revival style, were hung from the exposed beams or rafters. However, these medieval-looking chandeliers usually held round electric lightbulbs, not candles.

Candlestick-style sconces, also electrified, often illuminated the panelled rooms that were another common feature of the Tudor Revival house. The Tudor sconce and "Early English" ceiling fixture illustrated above right were designed by M. Luckiesh, director of General Electric's Lighting Research Laboratory. He added parchment shades to both fixtures to minimize glare from their electric bulbs.

ARTS & CRAFTS

While femme-fleurs and those "dreadful domes," as Elsie de Wolfe called art-glass ceiling fixtures, were appearing in dining rooms and living rooms across the country, Arts and Crafts designers were trying, in Gustav Stickley's words, "to place within the reach of the middle class purchaser, articles of practical use, which are at the same time, works of art." The sparsely ornamented geometric outlines of Arts and Crafts furnishings were a stark contrast to Art Nouveau's wavy lines and stylized ornament in floral and female forms.

Stickley believed that lighting was of utmost importance in the Craftsman interior and his fixtures, made mostly of hammered copper (though iron, brass, and fumed oak were also used), were rough-finished to avoid a highly polished, machine-made look. The metalwork designs were rarely very intricate, since Stickley urged his readers to make the fixtures themselves at home. The shades on Craftsman and other A&C lighting fixtures were made of mica, colored glass, or woven willow.

The illustration on page 34, from a 1905 issue of The Craftsman, shows a favorite Craftsman method of lighting a room: Lanterns hang from exposed ceiling beams, and sconces are used on each side of the recessed window-seat. The table lamp was designed to burn oil, but Stickley, California-based Dirk Van Erp, and other Arts & Crafts designers also made electrified table lamps. A favorite Craftsman way to light the dining room was to use a row of lanterns hanging from the beam above the dining table.
By the turn of the century, there was afoot a great patriotic feeling that America should have her own house style. Most historians trace this change of heart back to the New England log-house kitchen, complete with spinning wheel and candlesticks, that was exhibited at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. The Georgian style became the symbolic house of America — no matter that it was imported wholesale from England; by the 1890s, it had been here long enough to be considered native.

Early Colonial Revival houses often had Victorian massing, with a few Colonial details grafted on. The average interior probably had neo-Georgian woodwork, painted white, with perhaps a reproduction Windsor chair and a spinning wheel in the midst of Victorian clutter. The Colonial Revival gas-electric fixtures in these houses were also essentially Victorian, with a veneer of Early America in their scrolled arms and garland motifs (see illustration above left). Some wealthy Americans, however, were doing painstaking restorations and using antique 18th-century lighting fixtures or faithful reproductions.

Colonial Revival houses of the 1920s an'30s included their own, all-electric versions of 18th-century lighting fixtures. Colonial-looking “chandeliers” with electric lightbulbs, not candles, were favorite dining room fixtures. (The Colonial Revival dining room at right, complete with imitation Georgian chandelier, is from the 1927 Universal Design Book for builders.) Electrified candlesticks and sconces were also extremely popular. So were "Colonialized” generic fixtures such as hanging bowls and showers (see illustrations above: second, third, and fourth from left).

ART DECO

By the mid-1920s, Art Deco, America's first industrial design vocabulary, was catching on. During Deco's heyday, objects in the streamlined style could be found in every room, closet, and cabinet — and hanging from the ceiling or wall (see illustrations of an Art Deco sconce and ceiling fixture above right).

Art Deco kitchens and bathrooms were particularly slick, sleek showcases of the style. Deco baths were often clad in gleaming Vitrolite in patterns of different color. Bullet-shaped faucet handles, angular shower heads, and futuristic lighting fixtures added to the Deco look.
Turn-of-the-century lighting fixtures and lamps are available today — and they're a relatively inexpensive yet dramatic way to give period ambiance to interiors. Most of the following companies offer reproduction gas-electric fixtures. (The gas components of these all-electric fixtures are, of course, just for show.) Reproductions of early electric fixtures are also easy to find, as are functional fixtures suitable for bathrooms and kitchens. Showers and hanging bowls are rarer, although a handful of companies have begun reproducing them in the past few years.

Colonial Revival is the most popular style in reproduction right now, especially in its turn-of-the-century designs. If you’re trying to furnish a later, 1920s- or ‘30s-vintage Colonial Revival, you might use the generic fixtures of the era — hanging bowls with Colonial Revival motifs, for instance. Or consider one of the many 18th-century reproduction lighting fixtures now readily available.

An increasing number of companies now offer reproductions of Arts and Crafts and Art Deco fixtures. We know of no one reproducing specifically English Revival lighting fixtures; your best bet would be to use a generic period fixture or look around for a restored antique.

No matter what the style of your house, don’t assume that reproduction lighting is your only option. Reconditioned early-20th-century fixtures aren’t hard to find, and in many cases they’re quite competitive in price with reproductions. In fact, so many dealers across the country sell reconditioned antique lighting that we decided to limit the following list to those who offer reproductions.

**Arroyo Craftsman**
2080-B Central Ave., Dept. OHJ
Duarte, CA 91010
(818) 359-3298
A variety of American Arts and Crafts lanterns made of solid brass with a verdigris patina finish.

**Art Directions**
6120 Delmar Blvd., Dept. OHJ
St. Louis, MO 63112
(314) 863-1895
Art Deco fixtures and functional fixtures suitable for kitchens and other utilitarian rooms.

**Boyd Lighting Company**
56 Twelfth St., Dept. OHJ
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 431-4300
The “Glasgow” table lamp, ceiling fixture, and pendant, in the style of Scottish Arts and Crafts designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

**Brasslight, Inc.**
90 Main St., Dept. OHJ
Nyack, NY 10960
(914) 353-0567
Turn-of-the-century gasolier-electroliers, electroliers, and sconces.

**Brass Light Gallery**
719 S. 5th St., Dept. OHJ
Milwaukee, WI 53204
(414) 383-0675
The “Goldenrod Collection” of American Arts and Crafts lighting, including sconces, table lamps, and ceiling fixtures.

**Classic Illumination, Inc.**
2743 Ninth St., Dept. OHJ
Berkeley, CA 94710
(415) 849-1842
Turn-of-the-century gasolier-electroliers, electroliers, and sconces, a c. 1920 hanging bowl fixture, and Art Deco fixtures. Trade only.

**D'Lights**
533 West Windsor Rd., Dept. OHJ
Glendale, CA 91204
(818) 956-5656
Turn-of-the-century gasolier-electroliers, electroliers, and sconces, a variety of pendant fixtures (plain models as well as models with silk fringed shades and glass shades with beaded fringe), a pan light, and several Art Deco fixtures.

**Frombruche**
132 N. Main St., Dept. OHJ
Spring Valley, NY 10977
(800) 537-6319
Electroliers, sconces, and utilitarian pendant fixtures.
Pan light by D'Lights

Metropolitan Lighting Fixture Co., Inc.
315 E. 62nd St., Dept. OHJ
New York, NY 10021
(212) 838-2425
Art Deco pendant fixtures and sconces made from original moulds.

Nowell's, Inc.
Gate Five Rd. at Harbor Dr., Dept. OHJ
Sausalito, CA 94966
(415) 332-4933
An interesting selection of turn-of-the-century electroliers, including showers, as well as gasolier-electroliers and sconces.

Ocean View Lighting
2743 Ninth St., Dept. OHJ
Berkeley, CA 94710
(415) 841-2937
Turn-of-the-century gasolier-electroliers, electroliers, and sconces, a c. 1920 hanging bowl fixture, and Art Deco fixtures. Retail sales.

Progress Lighting
Eric Ave. and G St., Dept. OHJ
Philadelphia, PA 19134
(215) 289-1200
A Colonial Revival gasolier-electrolier reproduced from a c. 1900 design of the Gibson Fixture Works, plus a hall fixture and sconce adapted from the same design.

Rejuvenation Lamp & Fixture Co.
901 N. Skidmore, Dept. OHJ
Portland, OR 97217
(503) 249-0774
Turn-of-the-century gasolier-electroliers, electroliers, and sconces, abbreviated shower fixtures, c. 1920-style hanging bowl fixtures, utilitarian pendant fixtures, and "The Craftsman Collection" of American Arts and Crafts ceiling fixtures, sconces, and table lamps.

Renaissance Marketing, Inc.
PO Box 360, Dept. OHJ
Lake Orion, MI 48035
(313) 693-1109
A reproduction of Louis Comfort Tiffany's 12-stem Lily table lamp and several table and stand-up lamps, ceiling fixtures, and sconces based on this design, as well as other Art Nouveau-style table lamps.

St. Louis Antique Lighting Company
801 N. Skinker, Dept. OHJ
St. Louis, MO 63130
(314) 863-1414
Turn-of-the-century gasolier-electroliers, electroliers, and sconces, and utilitarian fixtures.

Victorian Lightcrafters, Ltd.
100 Box 350, Dept. OHJ
Slate Hill, NY 10973
(914) 355-1300
An interesting selection of turn-of-the-century electroliers, including showers, as well as gasolier-electroliers and sconces.

Victorian Lighting Works
251 S. Pennsylvania Ave., PO Box 469, Dept. OHJ
Centre Hall, PA 16828
(814) 364-9577
Turn-of-the-century gasolier-electroliers, electroliers, and sconces.

Victorian Reproduction Lighting Company
PO Box 579, Dept. OHJ
Minneapolis, MN 55458
(612) 338-3636
A Colonial Revival gasolier-electrolier reproduced from a c. 1900 design of the Gibson Fixture Works, plus a hall fixture and sconce adapted from the same design.

Bowl-and-shower fixture, Victorian Reproduction Lighting

Colonial Revival sconce, Progress Lighting

St. Louis Antique Lighting Company
801 N. Skinker, Dept. OHJ
St. Louis, MO 63130
(314) 863-1414
Turn-of-the-century gasolier-electroliers, electroliers, and sconces, and utilitarian fixtures.

Victorian Lightcrafters, Ltd.
100 Box 350, Dept. OHJ
Slate Hill, NY 10973
(914) 355-1300
An interesting selection of turn-of-the-century electroliers, including showers, as well as gasolier-electroliers and sconces.

Victorian Lighting Works
251 S. Pennsylvania Ave., PO Box 469, Dept. OHJ
Centre Hall, PA 16828
(814) 364-9577
Turn-of-the-century gasolier-electroliers, electroliers, and sconces.

Victorian Reproduction Lighting Company
PO Box 579, Dept. OHJ
Minneapolis, MN 55458
(612) 338-3636
A Colonial Revival gasolier-electrolier reproduced from a c. 1900 design of the Gibson Fixture Works, plus a hall fixture and sconce adapted from the same design.
Marbleizing is the painting technique that gives a representation of marble. This decorative effect, also known as marbling or faux marbre, has probably been around as long as people have been admiring natural marble. Some of the earliest known marbling was found in the villas of Pompeii. Marbleizing was then, and still is, an economical alternative to the real thing. But it’s also a stylish put-on in its own right, and has been since the Renaissance — by which time it had attained such cachet that it graced even the grandest palaces, whose occupants surely could have afforded real marble.

In America, marbling was a part of the decorator’s bag of tricks throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. The technique was especially popular in the early to middle decades of the 19th century. In Georgian, Adam, Greek Revival, and Italianate interiors, marbleizing was used on columns, wainscot, even entire walls.

Whether you choose to meticulously copy a particular marble or loosely interpret its “spirit,” the first step is the same: Become a student of marble. A good place to start is the local tile shop. Its inventory of 12” x 12” samples will include a vast array of marble colors and patterns. Carefully examine the similarities and differences. What are the color combinations? Is there a grain? How do the veins run? Are there chips, cracks, particles, or quartz patches?

The tile store will probably have one or two marbles in stock that you can buy by the tile. Others must be ordered, usually in bulk. The temptation is to get the tile store to let you borrow a sample tile. Try to resist: You’ll drive yourself crazy attempting to copy from such a small piece. You need to scrutinize larger samples.

Large expanses of marble aren’t hard to find. Check the Post Office, town hall, the neighborhood school, bank, or church, your favorite department store or ice-cream parlor. Go to the opera. Study floors, tabletops, counters, dadoes. Note the distances between veins and between large patches of color.

Magazines are another good resource. Whenever I come across color photographs of marble, I clip and file them. Fashion and decorating magazines and toy Christmas catalogs are the best places to look.

Once you’ve decided on a marble to mimic, note its background color, as well as the colors comprising the veins. If you want to try your hand at something purely interpretive, simply select hues in your color scheme and tint your paints and glazes accordingly. (See page 44 for glaze formulas.)

Whether you decide on exact reproduction or imaginative interpretation, the prep work is the same — getting as smooth a surface as possible on which to apply your paint. Since you’re striving for the highly polished surface of real marble, this is of paramount importance.

Whether you’re marbling a molding or a mantel, then, the first step is to sand. Then sand some more. (If you’re working with bare wood, you may want to apply a sanding sealer first. On extremely grainy wood like oak, you might want to use wood filler or gesso.) Vacuum and wipe with a tack rag. Now prime with an alkyd-or shellac-based primer sealer. Pay particular attention to knots in the wood.

Fill imperfections with a high-quality, non-shrinking filler (I use Spackle Lite), not ordinary spackling or joint compound, which may shrink. One thing to consider is how much to “work against your surface” and how much to “work with it.” While recently marbling an old mantel, I decided not to caulk the joints. (If caulk fails, it tears, spoiling the illusion of marble.) Instead, I used the joints as places to stop and start my marbling. In other words, I didn’t try to make the mantel look like one huge hunk of marble but rather a construction of smaller slabs. I also didn’t fill corner imperfections, instead disguising them as chips and cracks in the “marble.”

Apply at least two coats of primer. Sand between coats. If it’s still not like glass, sand and apply another coat of primer. Use a good, soft brush. Some people advise using a short nap roller to eliminate brush strokes, while others recommend using a lint-free cloth to lightly “pat” brush strokes away. You can tint the final prime coat close to the background color of your marble-to-be.
Marbleizing With Glaze

The way it's usually done, marbleizing is just another glazing technique. (See OH January/February 1988). There are other ways to marble, which I'll discuss later, but glazing is the easiest. Here's an overview of how it's done:

1) The Ground Coat

After the last prime coat is dry and has been sanded smooth and wiped with a tack rag, paint on two top coats of a semigloss alkyd paint the color of the darkest shade of the undertone, or background color, of your marble sample. (The glaze that will be applied over this base should be tinted the lightest shade of the undertone. Therefore, when the glaze is "distressed," all varying shades in between will appear.) To simulate some marbles — white, for example — it's best to paint the base in the lightest shade of the undertone. Use a high-quality paint and one that takes a long time to dry, since the longer a paint takes to dry, the more time it has to level out. Thinning with mineral spirits can help achieve a flatter, smoother finish.

2) The Undertone Glaze

When the ground coat is dry, prepare a glaze the color of the lightest shade in the marble's undertone.

a) Begin in an inconspicuous spot — when you're marbleing a baseboard, a good place to start is behind the couch. But start the job only after having spent some time practicing on a piece of scrap wood or in a closet. Work on a 3-foot section at a time.

b) With a brush, daub on the glaze. Leave some areas exposed while spreading it on thick in others.

c) "Rag" the entire area with a bunched-up, clean, and lint-free cloth. This will mottle the background, creating lights and darks, bare spots and shadows. Be sure to turn the rag frequently and bunch it rather than roll it into a ball. You can create different textures using other materials to distress the glaze: paper towels, plastic wrap, newspaper, burlap, terry cloth, and so on.

d) Soften the uneven, dappled ground by lightly dragging a soft, dry brush over the entire surface. A badger blender brush works best but is expensive. Any soft, two- or three-inch brush will suffice. Work in all directions, but be careful not to work so long that you erase all the shadows and make the glaze uniform.

e) To expose more ground color, remove excess glaze by pouncing gently with a rag dipped in paint thinner while you continue to soften with your dry brush.

3) Broad Veining

Mix a glaze tinted to match the broad veins in the marble that you're using as your sample. Apply this glaze with a medium-sized brush, in long, parallel squiggles, varying thickness and direction.

I can't stress enough that the biggest problem in marbleizing (temptation, I should say) is to put "10 pounds of veins in a five-pound piece of marble." Chances are you'll start with something small, a mantel perhaps, yet try to cram in every sort of vein or quartz patch you've ever seen. Plant the phrase "open space" in your mind. And remember that the veins should never be evenly spaced, or they'll look like stripes.

a) Pounce lightly with a rag to "hush" the veins. Distress some areas more than others; afterwards, blend with your dry brush, going with and against the direction of the vein to soften the edges. (Do not dip the brush in paint thinner at this point or you'll end up with streaks in the color.) One option is to soften with a goose- or turkey-wing feather; the feather's variegated edges will slightly drag the glazes over one another to create hairline veins.

b) Constantly step back as you go along to examine your work. Remember what it was you liked about the marble.

Glaze Formulas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A) McCloskey's Glaze coat</th>
<th>E) 3 parts glaze coat</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 part alkyd paint</td>
<td>1 part raw linseed oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 part mineral spirits</td>
<td>1 part alkyd paint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Flattening Oil</td>
<td>1 part mineral spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) 5 parts mineral spirits</td>
<td>5 parts alkyd paint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 parts raw linseed oil</td>
<td>2 parts Japan dryer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 parts McCloskey's Glaze Coat</td>
<td>2 parts varnish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D) 1 part boiled linseed oil</td>
<td>2 parts mineral spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 part varnish</td>
<td>H) 2 parts alkyd paint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 part turpentine</td>
<td>1 part mineral spirits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tools of the trade: a variety of feathers for different veining effects.
you're trying to imitate. If need be, pounce with a rag dipped in thinner and blend some more to remove color; or apply more glaze to add color.

4) Fine Veining

Mix the glaze or glazes to match the smaller veins of the marble. They may be all the same color, or many colors. Some may be relatively thick; others, hairline thin. Instead of mixing several glazes, you can purchase artists' tube oils in the colors of the small veins (or in the colors that can be mixed for these veins). Apply the oils by first dipping a brush into a clear glaze mix and then into a squeeze of the artists' oil color. Styrofoam meat trays make good pallettes. (Never use universal tinting colors for these purposes.)

a) Apply the finest veins with a thin-pointed lettering brush, feather, or sword liner. Paint in the veins by following shadows in the undertone and larger veins. (See page 47.) Hold your painting tool loosely, allowing it to dance about, twist, squiggle, and dart back and forth as it travels across the glaze.

b) Dip a toothbrush into the tinted glaze. After spraying off the excess, hold it a few inches from the surface and draw your thumb across the bristles. Splatter to the extent dictated by the marble you're mimicking.

c) Soften with the blender brush in the direction of the fine veins. This blurring of lines will mimic depth. (You never want sharp edges.) If the vein is too dark, brush in a perpendicular direction and pounce with a rag. Practice beforehand to discover how long to let the glaze set up before brushing, how much pressure to apply with the brush, and how long to brush and in what direction.

d) Continue to add veins, criss-crossing them, connecting them, letting them run astray. Some white glaze can be added when you want to mimic quartz. Apply in thick patches here and there, connecting the patches with fine white veins. Blend and soften.

e) Dip a toothbrush in some paint thinner. Spray out the excess. Then, holding the brush a few inches from the surface, splatter a fine mist onto the freshly marbleized surface. The result should be a dappled effect. Blend if necessary. (Be very careful on vertical surfaces, or you may end up with drips and runs.)

f) Using the end of the small brush, a toothpick, or your fingernail, draw in hairline cracks. Wider, crystalline fractures can be simulated with a finger wrapped in a rag or by dragging a brush or feather dipped in paint thinner across the surface.

g) Some decorators apply additional fine white lines after the entire surface has dried completely. They argue that this enhances the three-dimensional effect. Keep in mind that you can always add more veins once the surface is dry. So try initially to put in too few veins.

5) The Finish

Allow two to three days for the glaze to dry. Then apply at least two thin coats of an eggshell or semi-gloss oil varnish or polyurethane. This not only will protect the glaze, but it'll also further enhance the illusion of depth while contributing the high polish of real marble. The more coats you add, the greater sense of depth you get.

a) Use a heavy-duty varnish or polyurethane for floors; a bartop varnish for counters and tabletops.

b) Some folks add a small amount of white alkyd paint to the varnish to prevent "ambering." Similarly, you can change the color of your marbling slightly at this point by tinting your varnish accordingly.

c) Beware of drips. Continuously look over the varnished surface, casting the light from side to side in an effort to catch the runs.

These are only guidelines; feel free to improvise. Bear in mind that no two pieces of natural marble are alike. So who's to say your imaginative marble is incorrect?

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Formula "C" is best used as a clear base or in conjunction with artists' oil colors. Formulas "E" through "H" are progressively more opaque, because the more paint you add, the more opaque the glaze becomes. Formula "H" is really just thinned paint, but it will still distress like a glaze. Generally, the more transparent formulas are best for the undertones; the more opaque ones, for veining. Some of the most complex marbleizing is created by first applying an undertone, letting it dry, then going over the entire surface again with a different-color transparent glaze. The underlying glaze tones will show through, enhancing the illusion of depth. To tint glazes, it's easiest to simply purchase an alkyd paint in the desired color and add it to your formula. If you prefer, you can use white alkyd paint and tint the formula with universal tinting colors from individual tubes. A more foolproof method than mixing your own colors is selecting a color at your paint store, then asking the dealer to give you a small quantity of its tint mix. Some colors, however, are created using a "dark base." Added alone, tint mixes for those colors will not darken your glaze adequately. Consult your paint dealer when choosing a color. (See "How to Glaze Walls & Ceilings," OHJ January/February 1988, for more tips on tinting and working with glazes.)

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— James L. Jansen

Jars and Styrofoam meat trays are great for mixing glazes.
Marbleizing With Latex

If you absolutely cannot stand the messy clean-up, long drying time, and noxious smell of oil-based products (or if you live in southern California, where they've been banned by air-quality authorities), take heart: Marbleizing can be done with latex paints. And with latex, you can conceivably marbleize something in a single day. However, I've found that latex is more difficult to manipulate into a convincing counterfeit. Practice is the key.

Do not use a latex primer on bare wood; it may raise the grain. Instead, prime with a shellac-based primer. It can be sanded and recoated in an hour or less, and you can clean up with household ammonia and/or Fantastik. Sand and prime repeatedly until the surface is absolutely smooth.

When the last coat of primer is dry, apply the first latex top coat in the undertone color of your marble. (Working with a semi-gloss is easier, but any sheen will do.) As you go along, pounce out the brush strokes and lightly rag the wet latex to slightly expose the white primer in spots. (Remember, different materials used for pouncing — a rag, paper towel, newspaper, etc. — will distress the paint in different patterns, so experiment first.) Let dry. Repeat this procedure for a second top coat. It helps to slightly lighten or darken the second coat by adding some white paint or color. You can begin veining while this coat is still wet, but it's easier to let it dry before proceeding.

For the veins, any latex paint works. I recommend tube acrylics (Liquitex, for example) because they're available in small quantities and they can be purchased from your local art supplier. Begin with the larger of the fine veins. Combine the color or mixed colors with some water until the consistency is creamy.

The wetter the vein, the easier it is to blend. Concentrate on one vein at a time. Working diagonally, outline some of the undertone shadows. Immediately soften with your blender brush, using rapid light strokes in all directions. Rag to lighten some areas.

Wet and wring out a natural sponge, daub some of the vein color, then blot the sponge on newsprint to remove excess paint. Using the sponge, darken areas along some of the veins to create the broad, coarse veins and large areas of color. As you go, blot with a dry rag to soften. If necessary, blot with a second moist sponge to remove and blend the wet paint.

With a smaller brush dipped in the appropriate hue, go over the veins a second time, following them roughly. Twirl the brush, letting it go astray occasionally to connect up with other veins. Pounce some areas with a rag before softening with the blender brush.

Using a small, pointed brush, draw in the finest veins. Some should be thick with paint, others watered down, to create the illusion of depth. After painting each vein, blend with the dry brush — never a wet brush, which will wipe everything out.

Paint in contrasting fine veins connecting with the larger veins. Depending on the marble look desired, you may or may not want to blend these fine veins. Step back and assess your work. To lighten an area, daub with a moist sponge. Let the water sit for a few seconds, then blot with a rag. Repeat the entire procedure if you need more veins. (You most likely don't.) Add fractures by running a line of water with the thin brush across the surface. Wait a few seconds before lightly rubbing in the direction of the run with a rag.

Finish with two or more coats of varnish. There are now latex varnishes that are water soluble and that will not amber.

Mechanical Techniques

There are other techniques that allude to marble, without seeking to be convincing representations. Chief advantage: they're quick. Chief disadvantage: they're messy. Unless you're marbling a large, flat, preferably horizontal surface, you're better off using one of the techniques discussed above.

STRING LASHING

This method makes use of several pieces of string of varying lengths and thicknesses.

1) Over a prepared undertone, spread a thin, clear coat of glaze.
2) Take your pieces of string (perhaps even a rope) and dip them into the prepared glaze(s).
3) Let the string drain. Blot on newsprint.
4) Using the string like a whip, lash the surface. The color whipped onto the glaze becomes the veins. Repeat as necessary with different colors and string sizes. Try to run the veins roughly parallel, with a few branching off in other directions. Pounce away any unwanted veins. Blend and soften with a dry brush.
5) Protect with two coats of varnish.

(Personally, I wonder about people who enjoy this method.)

TEMPLATE MARBLING

This technique utilizes a template made of bits of rag and string.

1) Take a one- or two-foot-square piece of heavy brown wrapping paper (a grocery bag will work), and lay it flat.
2) Cut pieces of cotton waste, plastic wrap, paper towel, and sponge. Dip the pieces into one of the vein colors, wring them out, and place them indiscriminately on the paper backing. Follow the same procedure with string, connecting the rag pieces.
3) Sew or otherwise secure these bits and pieces to the wrapping paper.
4) Using the resulting template like a rubber stamp, press it against the surface to be marbleized. Rub over the sections with the string. Gently pull the template away from the wall. Repeat. Letting the template slide on the surface just a bit will broaden the veins. Turn the template frequently, and overlap some sections.
5) Protect with two coats of varnish.
After applying a black ground coat, Jim brushes on the undertone glaze.

Here, green-tinted glaze is applied with a feather to create broad veins.

Jim "brushes" each vein before it dries with a badger blender brush to blur sharp edges and add depth.

Ragging the undertone glaze with a bunched-up paper towel creates bare spots and shadous.

Fine white veins are added, following shadous in the undertone and larger veins.

It's possible to draw in hairline cracks with the end of a small brush, toothpick, or even your fingernail.
To simulate white marble, Jim applies grey broad veins over a white ground coat.

Here, he "brushes" the broad veins with a bunched-up, lint-free cloth.

Black glaze is feathered on to create the white marble's fine veins.

Wiping off the glaze in selected spots exposes some white ground coat, creating "quartz patches."

LATEX AND OIL

This method takes advantage of the fact that latex and oil-based products do not mix.

1) Over a ground coat of latex paint tinted to match the predominant undertone of the desired marble, apply a coat of turpentine.
2) Flicking a brush, splatter streaks of thinned latex paint in the vein color. (As water and oil do not mix, the turpentine serves as a shield.)
3) Dip a sponge in denatured alcohol and sponge the latex droplets over the turpentine. The alcohol mixes with the turps to create streaks. Splatter again. The latex paint will take better where previously sponged. Drag a sponge across for more texture. Daub the veins with a dry brush to create shadows.
4) Once the surface has dried completely, scrub off any undesired streaks or shadows by firmly rubbing with a clean rag.
5) Repeat steps 1 through 3 for more effect.
6) Protect with two coats of varnish.

In the interest of full disclosure, I should say that although I've seen this technique performed successfully, I've yet to master it myself.

James L. Jansen is a self-employed decorative painter working in the Greenwich, Connecticut, area.
The American Civil War was preceded, by a decade or so, by a different sort of strife within the world of architecture. A Battle of Styles was raging. Two picturesque Romantic styles were challenging Greek Revival's enormous popularity with the American public: the Gothic Revival and a new Italian style. For about 20 years, the Gothic Revival ran a close second. But by the 1860s, the Italian style was the most popular architectural style in America.
The heavy, bracketed cornice and other details make this Mendon, Illinois, house unmistakably Italianate. The house is painted in muted, stone-like colors.

There are all sorts of Italian-style houses — together they comprise one of the most common old-house styles in this country — but they fall into three basic categories: the Villa, Renaissance Revival, and Italianate styles. Villa-style houses were designed to look like farmhouses and villas built in Italy during the Renaissance. Two types of villas were built here: the irregularly shaped Italian Villa, and the Tuscan Villa, a simpler square building with deep, bracketed eaves. The Renaissance Revival style was based on the formal, highly symmetrical palaces, or palazzos, built during the Renaissance in Tuscany and northern Italy. It was used for mansions as well as townhouses, and can be recognized by its formal, symmetrical shape and heavy cornice. The more vernacular Italianate houses aren’t strictly villas or palazzos, but they do include many of the architectural details found on both types of buildings. Italianate houses weren’t built until the Villa styles were well established, and their popularity persisted until the late 1800s. All of the above Italian styles reached America by way of the British, who were building their own Italian-style houses in the 1830s and ’40s. They did not come directly from their Mediterranean source.
Why was the Italian style so popular? English Romantic poets Byron and Shelley lived in Italy early in the 19th century, and their well-known works glorified the Italian landscape, particularly its picturesque ruins. Popular 19th-century American landscape painters like Thomas Cole looked to Claude Lorraine and Nicholas Poussin, 17th-century European painters of Italian landscapes, for inspiration.

What’s more, the romance of Italy captivated America partly because the growing prosperity of the middle class enabled more and more Americans to travel, and a tour of Italy was an essential part of any educated person’s itinerary. But even those who could not afford a trans-Atlantic trip could read about the Italian countryside in such novels as Charles Dickens’ *Little Dorrit* (1857), Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun* (1860), and Henry James’ *Daisy Miller* (1879).

Many early proponents of the Italian style were the same tastemakers who advocated the Gothic Revival (and various other revival styles as well). Without Andrew Jackson Downing’s influence, for instance, Gothic might never have gotten off the ground. (See “Gothic Revival,” OHJ, November/December 1988.) But Downing’s two extremely popular books, *Cottage Residences* (1842) and *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850), included detailed plans for Italian villas as well as Gothic cottages.

Downing was very particular about what constituted a “villa.” A villa was the large country house of a cultured person of leisure — a person with enough money to maintain the place with “taste and elegance.” Considerably larger than a cottage, which could be cared for by a family, a villa required the attentions of a small army of servants. As for architectural considerations, Downing deemed an irregular plan most suitable for a villa, so he preferred the “Italian” form to the square, symmetrical, and (to him) more pedestrian “Tuscan.”

The Italian Villa’s asymmetrical shape meant that architects no longer had to sacrifice convenience for the sake of symmetry; floorplans could be designed to allow human traffic to flow easily throughout a house. Aside from asymmetry, the telltale signs of the Italian Villa include a low-pitched roof and deeply overhanging eaves supported by heavy, decorative brackets. Sometimes these houses have a center gable, relatively low-pitched, with overhanging eaves. But the Italian Villa’s defining feature, according to Downing and his circle of Romantics, was its square entrance tower or *campanile*, ideally placed somewhat off-center to enhance the building’s asymmetrical charm. It was usually tucked into the angle of an L-shaped plan and extended a storey or so above the rest of the house (see illustration below).

**A TYPICAL ITALIAN VILLA**

Keys to the Italian Villa: informal layout, picturesque appearance, asymmetrical, Italian-derived ornament, including broad eaves with brackets or consoles, square tower higher than house, round-arch windows and doors, balconies, & window hoods.

**READING THE OLD HOUSE**

Source: Calvert Vaux, *Villas and Cottages* (1857)
(This design credited to Downing and Vaux)
The much simpler Tuscan Villa was built far more frequently. Like Italian Villas, Tuscan Villas have heavily bracketed cornices. What distinguishes the Tuscan from the Italian style is its extremely symmetrical box shape and its flat roof with a belvedere centered on top (see photos left, top and center).

Renaissance Revival was a favorite style for city rowhouses of this era. Formal and symmetrical in shape, these townhouses feature a heavy, bracketed cornice and a stair or stoop to the piano nobile, or main (second) floor. The basement level of Renaissance Revival rowhouses is usually rusticated. Quoins, or heavy corner blocks, are another prominent form of exterior ornament. Entrance doors are heavily hooded, and there are often keystoned arches above the windows.

In its purest form, the Renaissance Revival palazzo was used more for public buildings than for houses, but a number of architects, including John Notman and Richard Upjohn, did produce some handsome mansions in the style. True palazzos were always built of masonry, either stuccoed brick or stone. Quoins typically set off the main building sections. Ornament is generally more restrained and classical in feeling than in the Italian Villa. Renaissance Revival eaves, for instance, are more likely to display sedate dentils and modillions rather than big, showy, paired brackets. The c. 1855 P.L. Hay House in Macon, Georgia (see opposite page, top), with its dignified semi-circular entrance porch flanked by slim Corinthian columns, its grand sweep of stone stairs, and its balustraded balcony, is opulent proof of how impressive the style could be.
The overwhelming majority of Italian-style houses, however, were vernacular, not high style or architect-designed. All a builder had to do was flip to one of the many Italian-inspired plans in one of the many pattern books published during the period. Even more often, builders started with a familiar-shaped house and simply added a few of the very fashionable Italianate details.

It would be impossible to list all the stylistic details of Italianate houses built in the United States during the 19th century. Because the Italian style was so popular, and because it was used for houses all along the East and West Coasts and throughout the Midwest, the variations are almost endless.

Italian-style houses were made of any available material, from brownstone to brick to wood. Generally, though, the materials were used in a way that would mimic the stone of their Italian Villa and palazzo models. Exterior surfaces were usually flat, often stuccoed, sometimes “pencilled” or scored to resemble masonry blocks, and painted in muted, stonelike colors.

As a rule, Italianate windows were large, using double-hung sash with two large panes of glass set one-over-one. Bay windows and oriels were common. So were windows with round-arch tops, and they frequently appeared in groups of two or three within a single frame. Windows were almost always shielded by flat-topped, rounded, or pediment-shaped hoods, or they were framed at top, sides, and bottom with wide, flat, scrolled trim.

Porches were a nearly universal feature of the Italianate house, especially small, one-storey, front-entrance porches. Larger one-storey porches, properly called verandas, became more and more popular as the century progressed. No matter what the size, the porch was always a major focal point of the facade. It led to double front doors, usually with round tops and moulded trim; round-arched panels produced a similar effect. Porch supports, most often square or with chamfered edges, appear frequently in pairs. Bracketed tops rather than column capitals are also distinctive to the style.

Since Americans were always willing to add a pinch or two of newfangled ornament to bring their houses in line with architectural fancies, the appearance of transitional houses at either end of the Italianate period was almost guaranteed. In the Westchester, New York, house pictured bottom, right, for instance, the concave mansard roofline of the campanile presages the Second Empire style just then becoming popular.

The Italianate style remained all the rage for several decades. It finally began to ebb in the 1880s, a victim of circumstance. For several years during the 1870s, post-Civil War economic troubles put a big dent in the number of homes being constructed in this country. By the time homebuilding resumed in full force, an entirely new repertoire of architectural styles — Romanesque, Queen Anne, Shingle-style, Stick-style, and Colonial Revival, a revival style based on our own early dwellings — had captured the American imagination.
Mail-order plans have a long history in shaping the residential architecture of the country. Of the thousands of house plans available today, few exhibit good design and a grasp of historical proportion and detail. So, in response to requests from OHJ readers, the editors have "done the homework": We've hand-picked plans. In each issue, we offer the most attractive, authentic, and buildable of the historical designs, from all periods of American architectural history. Let us know what plans you're looking for.

You can order actual blueprints for all the houses featured. Plans conform to national building-code standards — however, modifications are usually necessary for your site and local requirements, so you'll probably need the assistance of a professional designer (your builder may qualify) or an architect.

For the houses shown in this issue, blueprints include:

- **Foundation plan** for conventional crawlspace. (Can be adapted to basement plan by your builder.) Note: The plans for the two New England houses show fully excavated basements.
- **Detailed floor plans** showing all dimensions for framing, plus detailed layout and location of electrical and plumbing components.
- **Interior elevations** are included in some plans, showing interior views of kitchen, bath, fireplace, built-ins, and cabinet designs.
- **A window and door schedule.**
- **Building cross sections:** cornice, fireplace, and cabinet sections when needed to help your builder understand major interior details.
- **Framing diagrams** that show layouts of framing pieces and their locations for roof, first and second floors.
- **Energy-saving specs,** including vapor barriers, insulated sheathing, caulking and foam-sheathed areas, batt insulation, and attic exhaust ventilators.

Why order multiple sets? If you're serious about building, you'll need a set each for the general contractor, mortgage lender, electrician, plumber, heating/ventilating contractor, building permit department, other township use or interior designer, and one for yourself. Ordering the 8-set plan saves money and additional shipping charges.

Other notes: (1) Plans are copyrighted, and they are printed for you when you order. Therefore, they are not refundable. If you order additional sets of the same plan within 30 days of your original order, you can purchase them for $15 each. (2) Mirror-reverse plans are useful when the house would fit the site better "flopped." For this you need one set of mirror-reverse plans for the contractor; but because the reverse plans have backwards lettering and dimensions, all other sets should be ordered right-reading. (3) Heating and air-conditioning layouts are not included. You need a local mechanical contractor to size and locate the proper unit for your specific conditions of climate and site.

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OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL
We picked this plan in honor of OHJ's Gloucester office. Those of us on the lookout for such things have seen just such compact New England gambrels tucked into the landscape of Cape Ann. Some are hardly recognizable for the modifications and endless additions; others are unchanged. The illustration below right shows the house in its original form of the late-17th or early-18th century. The larger illustration depicts the house with additions, any or all of which can be constructed from the plans provided.
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More formal than the house on the previous page and a century later, this exterior is a reproduction of a historic house in eastern Massachusetts, begun about 1825. This is a house type that was popularized again during the Colonial Revival period of the 1920s and '30s. This architect planned a study/guest room downstairs with its own full bath that can also be entered from the stair hall. The family room-kitchen and living room each have a fireplace. Upstairs, there are seven closets serving four bedrooms and two baths.
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So many of the neo-Victorian house plans available today are merely low, ranch-style plans with Victorian exterior ornament, the proportions are wrong. Not so in this design: With its vertical emphasis, massing as well as detail mark it as authentic Victorian Revival. The facade is faithfully reproduced from a design by R.W. Shoppell of New York City, a late-Victorian-era carpenter/architect/publisher. The interior layout has been extensively modified in deference to modern concepts of kitchen, bath, and closets. (There's even a hot tub on the back terrace, if you're into it.)
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OLD HOUSE JOURNAL
GOOD BOOKS

Each of these books offers a treasure of usable information. The first volume reviewed is an indispensable resource for the do-it-yourself electrician. Roger Moss' guide sheds light on a subject every old-house enthusiast eventually must confront - choosing appropriate lighting fixtures. And if you're ever contemplating trying your hand at a fancy painted finish, you'll want to take a look at Nat Weinstein's book.

Electrical Wiring: Third Edition
by Thomas S. Colvin. 188 pages with 364 color illustrations. AAVIM, 120 Driftmier Engineering Center, Athens, GA 30602; (800) 228-4689. (Ask for manual no. 305.) $16 pdd.

Written with both the vocational student and do-it-yourself electrician in mind, Electrical Wiring is a hands-on course in wiring houses, utility structures, and farm buildings. Actually only the textbook portion of a larger teaching package, it starts with the electrical basics (understanding circuits, reading plans, description of terms and materials), and goes on to cover every aspect of new wiring with friendly, knowledgeable prose and large, uncluttered drawings.

The book doesn't miss a thing. There are pages on safety practices, selecting tools, bringing power into a building, grounding and working with conduit, as well as such standard topics as adding switches and fixtures. Each subject is exhaustively discussed (there are 13 pages on receptacles alone). Sections on locating appliance and general purpose circuits are right in step with the demands of modern households.

All the practices outlined comply with the National Electrical Code (exceptions for the Canadian code are also noted), and important "non-electrical" information - from estimating wiring costs to the best way to pull cable from a box - is not overlooked.

Lighting for Historic Buildings: A Guide to Selecting Reproductions
by Roger W. Moss. 192 pages, soft-bound, with black-and-white photos and illustrations throughout. The Preservation Press, Mail Order Division, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1600 H St., NW, Washington, DC 20006; (202) 673-4200. $15.95 pdd.

As Roger Moss points out, compared to other areas of restoration decorating - wallcoverings, fabrics, paint colors - the field of historic lighting is still in the Dark Ages. Moss' guide goes a long way towards providing homeowners with information that's illuminating as well as useful.

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Over the Kitchen Sink ...

Trust's "Historic Interiors" series. It divides the history of home lighting into five periods: candleholders (1620-1850); whale-oil, lard-oil, and burning-fluid fixtures (1783-1859); kerosene fixtures (1854-1934); gaslights (1817-1907); and electric lights (1879-1930). Another chapter deals exclusively with streetlights.

Each section begins with a discussion of typical fixtures and ends with a lengthy and well illustrated list of what reproductions are available and where you can find them. There's also an introductory chapter on lighting historic structures and what sorts of choices and compromises you're likely to face.

Woodgraining, Marbelizing and Glazing and Related Decorating Techniques

Nat Weinstein was one of OHJ's original contributors. He's also a nationally known craftsman who's specialized in decorative painted finishes for more than 35 years.

If you're looking for a basic, easy-to-understand primer on the art of the faux finish, take a look at Nat's new book. He concentrates primarily on two closely related techniques: woodgraining, the painting technique for simulating woods, particularly walnut and oak; and marbleizing, the painting technique that gives a representation of marble (see the article on page 42 in this issue). He also covers the more basic glazing techniques such as stippling, striating, and combing.

Nat describes each technique in plain English, step-by-step. He tells you how to mix the glazes and where to get the tools you need. He also tells you how to improvise hard-to-find tools for more exotic effects.

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Thibaut Wall Papers

Jim Masseys, co-author of OHJ's house-style series, is also Executive Vice President of the National Preservation Institute in Washington. Over lunch a few weeks back, he told us about NPI's latest collaboration with Richard Thibaut, Inc., America's oldest wallpaper manufacturer. Later this year, they'll be adding a batch of new period wallpapers to Thibaut's Historic Homes of America line, and they're now looking for wallpaper samples from American houses of the 18th, 19th, and early-20th century to use as the "documents."

Most of the 23 designs already in the collection came from privately owned old houses, not museums. So if there's some old wallpaper hidden under layers of newer papers in a closet, behind a large mirror, or tucked away in your attic, give Jim a call! If your paper is selected for inclusion in the new collection, you'll get a free room's worth, and a photo and brief history of your house will appear in the 11,000 sample books that Thibaut distributes to dealers and decorators.

For more information, contact Jim Masseys,
National Preservation Institute
National Building Museum
Judiciary Square, NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 393-0038.

We found the above illustration in a Thibaut ad that ran in a 1920 issue of House Beautiful — ed.

Period Mouldings

OHJ reader Greg Alimann recently tipped us off to an Everett, Washington, company called Arvid's Historic Woods. Arvid's, wrote Greg, "has excellent mouldings for Victorian and post-Victorian houses. And they will custom-mill for you."

The company's catalog currently includes 568 moulding profiles. About 150 new profiles are added every year: Every time a customer asks them to custom-duplicate a moulding, it goes into the next edition of the catalog. There is a $50 reproduction charge for custom work. All mouldings are made of hemlock, fir, mahogany, or oak. Arvid's will also custom-make mantels and doors.

Arvid's Historic Woods, 2820 Rucker Ave., Dept. OHJ, Everett, WA 98201; 1-800-6-ARVIDS. Catalog, $5.50.

Hardware Closeout

Hardware Plus recently acquired a large inventory of solid-brass, reproduction Victorian and Georgian door and cabinet hardware, and is offering it to the public at prices below wholesale. The hardware, which was to be the grand-opening stock of a new hardware store in Texas, sat in a warehouse for almost five years when the owners were unable to launch the business.

The collection includes the urn knocker at right, which usually retails for about $20; Hardware Plus' special closeout price is $5. A free closeout flyer is available.

Hardware Plus specializes in products for restoration professionals at discount prices — everything from plumbing and lighting fixtures to residential and commercial hardware to cupolas and wallpapers. For details, send $3.50 plus a business card or letterhead for a copy of their new, 200-page 1989 catalog. Owner Andrea Ridout says Hardware Plus will also sell to homeowners, but discounts will be based on the number of each item purchased.

Hardware Plus, 701 E. Kingsley Rd., Dept. OHJ, Garland, TX 75041; (214) 271-0319.
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Emerson, Circa 1900

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Tab Curtains

The Vermont Country Store offers the curtains illustrated at right. They're based on the simple window treatments found in many houses in the New England and Pennsylvania colonies.

Called tab curtains because they're designed to hang on a simple rod from fabric loops or "tabs," they come 80" wide and in six lengths, from 36" to 84". The curtains come in natural muslin, muslin with a Colonial floral print, or Osnaburg, an old-fashioned, loosely woven cotton fabric, in blue or beige. Depending on the size and fabric chosen, the curtains range in price from $19.95 to $39.75.

For more information, contact The Vermont Country Store, PO Box 3000, Dept. OHJ, Manchester, VT 05255; (802) 362-2400. Free catalog.

Documented Carpet

Family Heir-Loom Weavers has come out with the new stair and hall carpet above. Based on a c. 1870 carpet from the Goldy Paley Design and Resource Center in Philadelphia, the 22½"-wide, wool ingrained carpet is available in a tan ground with the pattern in either reds, greens, browns, or blues. It costs $70 a yard. Send $1 for a brochure and a swatch of the carpet.

Family Heir-Loom Weavers, RD #3, Box 59E, Dept. OHJ, Red Lion, PA 17356; (717) 246-2431.

Petite Rococo

If you're trying to furnish a foyer or small parlor, the scaled-down loveseat pictured below may be just what you're looking for. Offered by Martha M. House, it features intricate rococo carvings, including cut-through carvings on the back. The loveseat measures 64½" wide x 31" deep x 43" high and costs $1,299 freight collect.

Martha M. House, 1022 South Decatur St., Dept. OHJ, Montgomery, AL 36104; (205) 264-3558. Catalog, $2.
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Renaissance Revival Furniture

How do you decorate an Italian-style house?

Renaissance Revival was a favorite furniture style for villas, palazzos, and Italianate houses. Reproducing this massive, architectural, and often highly carved furniture gets expensive, but one reliable mail-order source for antique pieces is Antiquaria in Springfield, Massachusetts.

The Renaissance Revival cabinet at right is an example from Antiquaria's current inventory. The walnut cabinet, though large (it measures 47 1/2" high x 33 1/2" wide x 18 1/2" deep), is smaller than most formal cabinets in the style. It features a profusion of walnut burl veneer and incised decoration. It's available for $1650.

For $4, Dan and Lisa Sotak-Cooper, the owners of Antiquaria, will send you a copy of their quarterly mail-order catalog, which includes photos and descriptions of their changing inventory of Renaissance Revival and other American Victorian antiques.

Antiquaria, 60 Dartmouth St., Dept. OHJ, Springfield, MA 01109; (413) 781-6927.

Italianate Colors

What color should you paint your Italianate house?

The American Seal Division of Monsey Products Company, in collaboration with the Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation in New York, recently introduced "Saratoga Colors," 100 shades of authenticated exterior paint for old houses. An entire series of these colors is designed specifically for Italianates (other colors are for Federals, Greek Revivals, Second Empires, Queen Annes, Colonial Revivals, Carpenter Gothis, or Bungalows).

Saratoga Colors are available in both oil-base and acrylic-latex formulations, and can be applied to wood, masonry, and metal. The latex paints retail for $17 to $18 per gallon; the oil-based paints, $20 to $21 per gallon.

A foldout brochure with color chips is available free from Monsey Products/American Seal Division, PO Box 309, Waterford, NY 12188.

Fulper Revival

From 1909 until 1928, William Hill Fulper II produced an artware line at his Fulper Pottery in Flemington, New Jersey. Today, the Fulper artware line is prized by collectors for the vibrant color and texture of its glazes. Fulper died in 1928, and the following year, fire completely destroyed the pottery.

A few years ago, William Fulper's four granddaughters discovered six notebooks containing formulas for 65 of the coveted glazes, hand-written by the master potter himself. They recently established a new company, Fulper Glazes, to produce handcrafted tiles bearing their grandfather's famous glazes.

The photograph at right shows two of William Fulper's pots and new tile featuring his "Flowing Ivory" and "Mirror Black" glazes. Ten other glazes are currently available, and others are in the works. The tiles come in standard sizes, from 2" x 2" to 12" x 12"; 4" x 4" tiles retail for $40 per square foot. Three standard trim sizes are also available. According to Rada Fulper, the company is happy to do custom work.

For more information, call or write Fulper Glazes, Box 373, Dept. OHJ, Yardley, PA 19067; (212) 966-9772.
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OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL
Lampshade Kits

To help cut down on glare from the new electric bulbs, homeowners at the turn of the century often put ornate fabric shades on their table lamps. Some shades were embellished with hand-dyed lace, fringe, and a variety of trims.

Turn of the Century Lampshades of Bend, Oregon, now offers 10 styles of lampshades in kit form, including the "Tulip" lampshade pictured at right. Everything you need to make the shade is included in the kit, from wire frame to fabrics to needle, thread, and glue. Each kit also includes a 60-page booklet with step-by-step instructions.

Owners Tom and Patti Byram also sell more than 50 finished shades. Assembled, the Tulip lampshade costs $160; in kit form, $78.

Turn of the Century Lampshades, Inc., PO Box 6599, Dept. OHJ, Bend, OR 97708; (503) 382-1802.

Finished Lampshades

The following companies also manufacture ready-made lampshades in turn-of-the-century styles:


Shady Lady, 418 E. 2nd St., Dept. OHJ, Loveland, CO 80537; (303) 669-1080. Catalog, $3.50.

Yestershades, 3824 S.E. Stark St., Dept. OHJ, Portland, OR 97214; (503) 235-5645. Catalog, $3.50.

Lamp Cord

Over the years, we've gotten scads of calls from readers searching for the pale-green and yellow, fabric-covered, twisted lamp cord that was used for early electric ceiling fixtures and table lamps. OHJ reader Chuck Brasher of Grass Valley, California, tracked down one manufacturer, Carol Cable Co. of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. The company doesn't sell directly to the public, but one of its distributors, Tony Sirico of Industrial Solar in Burlington, Kansas, has been making the old-fashioned lamp cord available in small quantities to OHJ readers for the past several years. The 16-gauge, rubber-insulated, copper-strand conductor wire clad with cotton braid is UL-listed and costs $.57 a foot plus shipping.

For more information and a sample, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Tony Sirico, Industrial Solar Co., PO Box 117, Dept. OHJ, Burlington, KS 66839; (316) 364-2662.

Electrical Code Book

If you're grappling with the wiring system in your house, a copy of the national electrical code is a good thing to have on hand.

You can get a copy from the National Fire Protection Association in Quincy, Massachusetts. The National Electrical Code, a paperback edition, costs $23.38 ppd. However, you may find the hardbound National Electrical Code Handbook more helpful, since it includes the entire code, plus explanations and illustrations. It costs $45.38 ppd.

Both editions include the 1987 code, the most recently revised standard. They will be current until the code is updated again in 1990.

For more information, call or write the National Fire Protection Association, Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02269, (800) 344-3555.
"Dear OHJ," the letter began, "I followed up on an offer of OHJ back issues which was listed in your Emporium section — but alas, they'd already been sold. I really want to buy all the back issues I can get my hands on. Do you know of anyone else who might have some? Or could you sell me any old issues you have lying around?"

We can do better than that! Unlike other magazines, our back issues aren't "collector's items" with premium price tags. We keep back issues in print, bound into handsome books that we call OHJ Yearbooks.

Over the years, as new readers signed up, they worried about what they'd missed. They knew that the how-to information already published in OHJ wasn't out of date — and that topics covered recently probably wouldn't appear again for years. The demand for single-copy back issues became so great that we invented the Yearbooks: sturdy bound volumes meticulously indexed for easy use.

This year we're offering a full set of 1980s Yearbooks — eight volumes that include every article, every source, every tip published in OHJ from 1980 through 1987 — for $89. That's $48.55 off the cost of the Yearbooks purchased separately, and it includes a free copy of our Cumulative Index.

We're also offering a four-volume set of the most recent OHJ editorial, 1984-1987, for $49 — $14.80 off the cost of the volumes purchased one by one. And our Cumulative Index is available too — for $9.95.

Know someone who just bought an old house? Our Yearbooks make great gifts for these folks, as well as for your house. To get the Yearbooks, just mark the right box on the envelope order-form and enclose a check.
We can't count the number of times we've been asked which method is really best for removing paint. Well, we've seen "miracle" paint removers come and go. We've watched chemical paint strippers almost triple in price in the past 15 years. We've tried just about every heat tool on the market. In our opinion, if you've got more than a door or two to do, heat is the way to go. And the heat tools we reach for when stripping paint from our own wainscots and newel posts are the Heavy-Duty HG-501 Heat Gun and the Warner Heat Plate.

Heat is a fast method because all the paint bubbles and lifts as you go along. There's no waiting for chemicals to soak in, no multiple recoatings, and far less clean-up. Unlike stripping with chemicals, you can remove all layers of paint in a single pass. And because these tools are long-lasting, industrial products, their initial expense is more than made up in savings on the $18- to $22-per gallon stripper you're no longer buying in quantity.

The Heat Gun is the most efficient paint-removal tool for heavily painted porch parts, moldings, or other ornamental woodwork. Some chemical stripper is needed for clean-up, but 95% of the paint comes off during the heat-and-scrape. The Heat Gun is not recommended for use on hollow partitions or for stripping entire exteriors.

That's where the Heat Plate comes in handy. It's the most cost-effective and easy-to-use tool for stripping paint from broad, flat surfaces: doors, panelling, baseboards, and exterior wooden clapboards. And it's safer for use on hollow partitions and exterior cornices because there's no blown hot air that could ignite hidden dust. Neither the Heat Plate nor the Heat Gun are recommended for removing varnish.

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

To purchase either or both heat tools, use the envelope order-form. The Heat Gun costs $77.95 ppd; the Heat Plate, $47.95 ppd.
Used to be, old-house folks had to waste an awful lot of valuable time tracking down the right trowel or terra-cotta tile — time that could be better spent actually plastering or repairing the leaky roof! But the days of fruitless phone calls and wild goose chases are over: You'll find more than 10,000 products and services in the revised and updated 1989 edition of *The Old-House Journal Catalog* — including all those things hardware store clerks insist "just aren't made anymore."

The Catalog is the most complete, up-to-date, authoritative guide to high-quality restoration items around. It includes house parts you won't find anywhere else: push-button light switches, porch ornament, iron roof cresting, reproduction lighting fixtures, hand-blocked wallpaper, Victorian tile. Unusual services too: Where else could you find companies who will custom duplicate your millwork and hardware, paint your house in historic colors, repair your stained glass, reline your chimney, and recreate a period garden? What's more, most of the companies listed sell or distribute nationally, so you can do business with the firm that meets your needs, whether you live in Manhattan or North Dakota.

The 1989 edition of *The Old-House Journal Catalog* is crammed with important *new* information: There are more than 200 *new* companies which didn't appear in the 1988 edition. Also, hundreds of the other listings contain *new* products, prices, literature, addresses, and phone numbers which were added or changed since the previous edition. We spent a good part of the sweltering summer of 1988 personally contacting each and every company listed to make sure that our Catalog is as accurate as it is useful.

The *Old-House Journal Catalog* is organized for easy use. Each company entry includes complete address and phone number, and lets you know what kind of literature is available (and the price, if any). The Catalog Index has been meticulously cross-referenced; you won't go crazy trying to find "bulls-eye windows," say, because the Index tells you they can be found under "windows, special architectural shapes." Another great feature: a State Index that groups companies by city and state, so you can locate old-house suppliers nearest you.

To order this 8½ × 11-inch, 248-page, soft-bound book, enclose a check for $12.95 (a special subscribers' price which includes postage) in the envelope order-form. The *Old-House Journal Catalog* has got what it takes to bring your house from "has lots of potential" to "looks great!"
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THE CENTRAL PARK POST
In 1918, Henry Bacon, designer of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC., was selected by The City of New York to design a lamp post to carry the first outdoor electric lighting in Central Park. Bacon designed a post to blend with the plants and bushes growing in the park. Garlands of leaves, buds and stems can be seen on the post and a suggestion of upward growth thrust is apparent in the design of the central stem. It is considered to be the most beautiful of classic posts. Advanced Materials, Inc. has made molds from Bacon's original design and now makes available to architects, builders, developers and to the general public an exact replication of this lovely post in cast iron. The Central Park Post is eminently suitable for use in office and mall surroundings and lends dignity and status to the approaches to private homes, condominiums and estates.

The two-piece design makes the post easy to erect and substantially reduces replacement cost should either part be damaged. Post heights range from nine feet to twelve feet, six inches.

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OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL
Here are company catalogs and brochures worth writing for. And with the Request Form, you have a handy way to get as many catalogs as you need — just by filling out one form.

BUILDING COMPONENTS


38. Chimney Liner — Ventinox continuously welded liner connects chimney top to heat source without joints or breaks. Reduces creosote formation, increases heating efficiency, improves safety. Nationwide dealer network; free brochure. Protech Systems, Inc.

56. White Oak Shakes — Authentic hand-split white oak shakes, split sawn shingles, and smooth white oak shakes: the original Early American roofing. Rough shake, Sawn shingles: the original Early American roofing. White oak shakes, split sawn shingles, and smooth

60. White Oak Shingles — Sawn white oak shakes, split sawn shingles, and smooth white oak shingles: the original Early American roofing and siding. Hand-split white oak shakes have been documented by the American Wood Preserv

113. Chimney Liner — Ventinox continuously welded liner connects chimney top to heat source without joints or breaks. Reduces creosote formation, increases heating efficiency, improves safety. Nationwide dealer network; free brochure. Protech Systems, Inc.


279. Custom Windows — Custom replacement windows that look old, but meet current commer-


80. Historical Paint Colors — 18th and 19th century color combinations create the charm of yesterday, with modern formu las that provide modern wear and protection. Free historical color brochure. Benjamin Moore.

154. Wood Restoration — Three new epoxies restore rotted or damaged wood; low- viscosity penetrating encapsulates rotted fibers; resin filler and storm doors range from high-

9. Replacement Wood Windows — 16p. book-

16. Replacement Wood Sash — Wood sash in any size and shape: Divided lite, round top, curved, double-hung, fixed, casement, or storm sash. Insulated glass can be supplied. Also: shutters, screen doors, and trim. Illustrated brochure. Midwest Wood Products. $1.75.

32. Wooden Screen & Storm Doors — Wooden combination screen and storm doors have period look and are more thermally efficient than aluminum doors. Several styles (including Victorian and Chippendale) and all sizes. Catalog. Old Wagon Factory. $2.25.


83. Invisible Storm Windows — Match any window shape or color: removable storm windows available inside or outside-mounted, screen and glass panels. Fixed, magnetic, sliding, or lift-out styles. Free brochure. Allied Windows.

166. Custom Doors — Company specializes in doors of virtually any size, shape, and species of wood, to discuss your needs, simply call: 516-486-7878. The Doormen.


279. Custom Windows — Custom replacement windows that look old, but meet current commer-

332. Spring-Tite Interior Storm Windows — These windows are spring loaded to fit snugly inside your window casings. They can accommodate windows up to 1-1/2" out of square. Free information. National Energy Corporation.

FURNISHINGS


52. Oak Commode Seats — These U.S.-made commode seats are crafted from furniture-grade solid oak, hand-finished with moisture-resistant lacquer. Dark or golden oak. Other wood bathroom accessories available. Free brochure. DeWeese Woodworking.

94. Antique Telephones — Old telephone re-
stored with authentic parts, from dial to cord. Plug into modern systems. Durable materials; 1 yr. guarantee. Color brochure. Chicago Old Telephone Co. $1.25.

183. Radiator Enclosures — Handcrafted hardwood radiator covers are made to order. Hide ugly radiators with traditional looking woodwork; 50 years' experience. Brochure. Margate Cabinets. $2.25.


221. Restored Antique Fans — Restores and sells antique fans and fans, large changing inventory. The proprietor also wrote a book on the history of fans. Send for brochure with more details. The Fan Man. $1.25.


10. Craftsman Lighting — Reproduction Craftsman chandeliers and sconces fit right into any Bungalow, Mission, Foursquare, or traditional home. Excellent in solid brass or copper. Complete catalog. Rejuvenation House Parts. $3.25.


159. Ceiling Fixtures — Solid brass ceiling fixtures crafted in the highest quality. Available in polished brass or chrome. Company also offers custom fabrication, repair and refinishing; custom and antique lighting; brass and copper antiques. Send for free brochure. Conant Custom Brass.

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


286. Lighting Fixtures — Of every size, style, and period. About 1000 fixtures in various stages of restoration. Among available services: Recovering of silk shades, beading work, rewiring, custom design and lighting design consultation. For more information, call: (203) 787-1535. Aurora Lampworks.


333. Restored Antique Lighting — This company deals in fully restored antique lighting. Fixtures are repaired, rewired, cleaned, polished, and lacquered, and have all antique glass shades. Fixtures displayed at shop. Catalog. City Light. $2.25.

334. Chandeliers, Sconces and Candelabras — A huge collection of lighting fixtures, each assembled from imported and domestic parts. Brass and crystal reproductions of Victorian styles, and formal 18th century crystal. 96-page illustrated catalog. King's Chandelier. $3.25.

335. Antique Lighting — Supplies high-grade glass imported from France for the antique trade. Solid brass parts for lighting fixtures and floor lamps, including brass tubing of all sizes. The company has been restoring antique lighting for over 15 years. Catalog. Yankee Barn. $2.25.


342. Handcrafted shades — Victorian styling in silks, satins, lace and georgette. Trimmings from beads and silk fringe, custom work. 1930 style "parchment" shades, and antique style dressing screens or room dividers. Catalog fee is refundable. YesterShades. $3.75.

343. Arts & Crafts Lighting — This firm carries a full line of Arts & Crafts and Art Nouveau wall sconces, including the "Sticklecky Collection". Free catalog. American Deluxe Lighting.

344. Antique Lighting — This shop sells antique lighting fixtures with glass shades, and reproduction lighting fixtures and glass shades from period 1850 to 1925. Free information. Gaslight Times.

345. Lighting Fixtures — Retail sellers of fine antique and reproduction lighting fixtures & table lamps, including Art Deco. Catalog available. Ocean View Lighting. $3.25.

346. Street Lamps and Garden Ornament — Decorative, heavy cast-aluminum street lamps, porch sills, urns, sconces, mailboxes, etc. Many items cast from original turn-of-century molds. Color catalog fee refundable with purchase. Outdoor Decor. $5.25.


METALWORK


55. Historic Markers — Custom-made plaques for indoor or outdoor use. Standard solid-bronze cast plaques, 7 in. x 10 in., are $90 plus shipping. Other dimensions and styles available. Free brochure. Erie Landmark.


346. Street Lamps and Garden Ornament — Decorative, heavy cast-aluminum street lamps, porch sills, urns, sconces, mailboxes, etc. Many items cast from original turn-of-century molds. Color catalog fee refundable with purchase. Outdoor Decor. $5.25.

MILLWORK & ORNAMENT


101. Shutters & Blinds — Specializes in Colonial wooden blinds, movable louver, and raised panel shutters; all custom-made to window specifications. Pine or cedar, painted or stained to match any color. Free brochure. Devanco Products.

PRODUCTS NETWORK


340. Wood Mouldings — Internationally recognized company has over 500 beautiful wood mouldings. Call toll free: 800-6-ARVIDS, or send for 104-page catalog. Avid’s Historic Woods. $5.75.

PLUMBING & HARDWARE


82. Early American Hardware — Broad assortment of brass and iron hardware for exterior and interior doors, mailboxes, cabinet and shutter hardware, ornamental brackets, bath and fireplace accessories. Catalog fee refundable. Acorn Mfg. $5.25.


227. Porcelain Refinishing — Kits of professional-quality materials and easy instructions: terra-cotta repair; bathtub & basin refinishing; wall or floor tile refinishing; countertop resurfacing; appliance recoloring; fiberglass chip repairs. Catalog. Old Virginia Restoration. $2.25.

252. Soapstone Sinks — For kitchen, bath, or greenhouse: authentic soapstone sinks custom-made in the traditional manner to your drawing. Also: cut-to-cut of fireplaces, countertops, etc. Catalog. Vermont Soapstone. $7.75.

302. Restoration Hardware — Over 1000 different brass items for houses and furniture. Plumbing, lighting, wall and ceiling coverings, gingers, bread, and more. Catalog, and one-year mailings. Wholesale/Retail. Hardware-Plus. $3.75.

303. Fancy Plumbing Fixtures — Specializing in hard-to-find plumbing fixtures including pedestal lavatories. Clawfoot bathtubs in 4’ and 7’ sizes, custom finished in the color of your choice. Showroom also features brass, bronze and iron finish hardware. Photographs available on request; call (318) 234-7963. Ole Fashion Things.


RESTORATION SUPPLIES/SERVICES


272. Woodworking Supplies — New catalog includes 114 pages of veneers, woodparts, specialty hardware, tools, knobs, pulls, finishing supplies, books, kits, and plans. The Woodworker’s Store. $2.25.


329. Do-It-Yourself Manuals/Videos — Titles include electrical wiring, carpentry, plumbing, gardening and hundreds of others. Free catalogs. Call toll free: (800) 228-4689, AAVIM.

336. Restoration Book — Homes and interiors of the 1920s are brought alive in this fascinating book about how these homes were designed, built and furnished. 440 pgs. Call 612-260-3676, Richard O. Byrne.

337. Foundation Restoration — Since 1974, this firm has offered design, planning and consulting services for structural repairs. Installation of steel piers to bedrock or equal load-bearing strata. Over 50,000 piers installed nationwide. Call for more information: (800) 468-2603. Perma Jack.

Literature Request Form

Circle the numbers of the items you want. We'll forward your request to the appropriate companies. They will mail the literature directly to you...which should arrive 30 to 60 days from receipt of your request. Price of literature, if any, follows the number. You check, including the $2 processing fee, should be made out to Old-House Journal.

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**OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL**

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Did someone once say, "more is less?" That's an appropriate maxim for the two remuddlings shown on this page. New use or not, the decision to graft on such incongruous extensions has drastically distorted both houses. You can file these sad stories under "Additions That Subtract" — or, if you prefer, "Wings That Don't Fly."

The photo at left is from Muriel Kupper of Downers Grove, Illinois (the house is in Ontario); the photo above is from Sue Goddard of Mifflinburg, Pennsylvania. Our thanks to these OHJ readers.

WIN FAME AND $50: If you spot a classic example of remuddling, send us clear color slides. We'll award $50 if your photos are selected. The message is more dramatic if you send along a picture of a similar unremuddled building. Remuddling Editor, The Old-House Journal, 69A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217.
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The gable-front-and-wing house is a familiar sight in the Northeast, South, and Midwest United States, and every region calls it by a different name. OHJ has called turn-of-the-century suburban examples 'the Homestead house.' Colorado's name for it refers to the boom of the 1880s, when houses such as these in the mining town of Pitkin (elev. 9,200 ft.) were built.

Most of these Colorado workers' cottages feature the bay window and two entries — one to the formal room in the gable, and another to the wing room (which was often the kitchen). Such standardization suggests that they were built from catalog plans, or even pre-cut house "kits." (The railroad — and settlement — usually pre-dated establishment of a sawmill.)

Unlike the Greek Revival derivation apparent in Northeast examples, these houses show more the influence of the later Victorian Italianate. Both one-storey and two-storey forms exist.

— William Patrick O'Brien
Historian, National Park Service
Denver, Colorado

Vernacular Houses