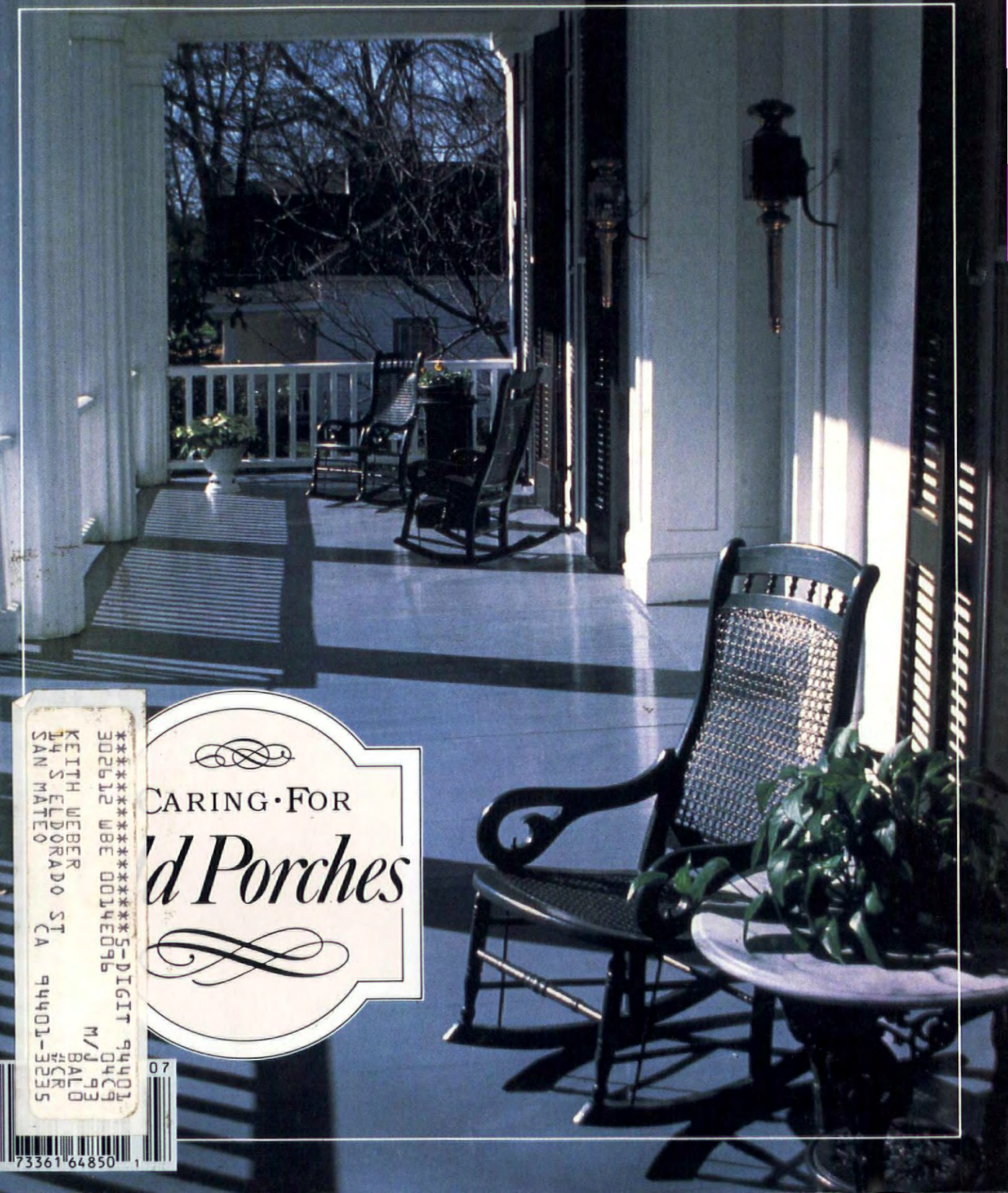


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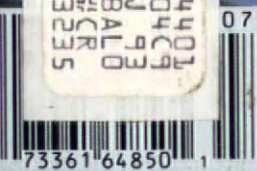
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Old-House Journal

Vol. XVIII No. 4

July/August 1990



page 47



page 41



page 58

✦✦✦ Caring For Old Porches ✦✦✦

The Story of Porches

by Jeffrey Wilkinson

30

Before the sputtering automobile took over the street, the American porch was a social institution as well as an architectural statement. Here's its history

How to Build Porch Piers from Fiber Tube Forms

by John Leeke

38

When a porch restoration extends to the foundation, consider building concrete piers using tube forms, to save on materials and installation time

Restoring a Period Porch

by Jerry Trescott

41

Photographic evidence played a big part in determining how to rebuild a circa-1840 porch in Maryland

Reviving Old Railings

by Gordon Bock

45

Expert techniques for replacing and reinforcing damaged porch rails and balusters

✦✦✦ Features ✦✦✦

The Prairie School

by James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell

47

The uniquely American architecture that defined the early-20th century continues to influence designers today

Greek Revival Tragicomedy

by Ruth Mossok Johnson

53

In this drama of old-house living, moving a circa-1840 farmhouse took much more than just getting the building up on wheels

continued on page 4

Cover: A view down the 50-foot-long portico of an 1859 Greek Revival in Covington, Georgia.
Photo by Joseph E. Patrick Jr.

❖❖❖ Departments ❖❖❖

Editor's Page 6

"Let's go sit on the stoop"

Letters 8

New sources for architectural salvage and advice on window-sash colors

Restorer's Notebook 18

A simple method for prying stubborn nails

Outside the Old House 20

The glory of the Victorian window box

Ask OHJ 24

Staircase-repair techniques and remedies for rising damp

Who They Were 26

Greene & Greene, masters of the California Bungalow

Old-House Mechanic 58

The right jacks for the right jobs

Restoration Products 62

Picket fences, screen doors, Craftsman rugs and curtains

Historic House Plans 66

Cottage and farmhouse blueprints you can order

Restoration Services 74

Emporium 76

Products Network 84

Advertisers' Index 87

Remuddling 88

A victimized verandah in Sullivans Island, South Carolina

Vernacular Houses 90

Pensacola Creole Cottages



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“...let's go sit on the stoop.”

The big thing in Brooklyn isn't the porch, it's the front stoop. The word is a corruption of the Dutch term for “step,” and it's where we sit when we don't want to be inside but we're not really going out, when we're looking for the transition between busy day and family time, when it's just too damn hot on a summer night and the rustling leaves beckon us to sit, with a cold gin and tonic, looking for whatever breeze might come along before it's time to go to bed.

Years ago, in the country, I lived in a house called Salamovka. It was a neglected house, ceded under pressure by private owners to a reluctant park service, and already in very bad repair. I have rich memories of these summers, and most of them are of time spent in the messy farmhouse kitchen and on the porch.

The porch was wide, running the full length of two sides of that big, big house, an outdoor room that could legitimately be called a verandah. Another porch (too rotted to use) was on the shady side of Salamovka, and there was a plain, rail-less deck on the back.

The porch roof leaked buckets, of course, and balusters were missing by the running foot, but there was so much porch it didn't seem to matter. From the front porch we'd watch the weather gather in a valley at the bend in the river. Even with the

leaks, we felt safe enough to stay there through violent August thunderstorms. The porch was a passage-way between front hall and kitchen, library and dining room — an outdoor corridor that smelled of honey-suckle and that went around, not through, the occupied rooms. The side porch was the place to haul

stoop-sitting is a social commitment, reserved for weekends. Neighbors get a good look at you, you see the new puppies, read your book with the yelps of neighborhood kids as background. People are more sociable toward us since we got a dog; they stop to comment or pet him through the fence. And in this work-centered, private era when social announcements are quaint niceties of the long-ago past, only our stoop-sitting will announce our baby's arrival (just in time for the autumn leaves).

I like my stoop a lot but I still wish I had a porch. It wouldn't have to be fancy, but I've been without one so long, if I had one now I'd probably dress it up, buy some wicker chairs and hang potted plants. I wonder about the front porches I see that people don't use, that they let rot away. How can they resist the deepening sky at twilight, the household talks that stay calm when they're mur-

mured outdoors, the moonlit quiet on a sleepless night? Don't they know what they're missing?

Some people blame the automobile for the demise of the American front porch. I have a different idea.

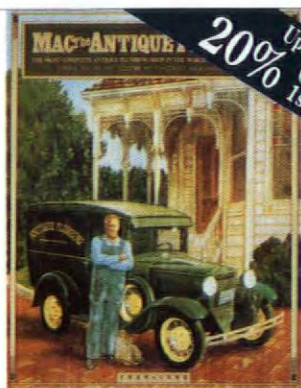
We didn't have a television at Salamovka.

Antonia Jones



sweet corn out of the kitchen, sit on the stair listening to the *screeek* and *thwack* of the screen door and shuck the corn. Youngsters could join in too because it didn't matter if silk got all over the place; you were outdoors. But it felt sheltered, and I could keep an eye on the stove.

Comfortable habits stay with us, even as life changes. In the years since those summers, I've been sitting on the stoop. In daylight hours,



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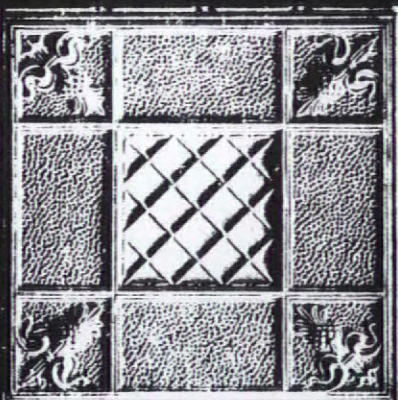
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Nutting Doing

Dear OHJ,

I know, I know, I am behind in my reading. But I just finished the July/August 1989 issue, and imagine my surprise when I saw an article on Wallace Nutting [*"Who They Were"*]. Two of my paternal grandmother's sisters were "Nutting girls" who colored his pictures. My father has pictures Nutting painted, which used my great-aunts as models. What fun to see an article on him!

— Tomi Fay Forbes
Cedarburg, Wis.

Tower Update

Dear OHJ,

After sending my letter concerning the design of the ogee tower roof of our 1886 Queen Anne [*"Ask OHJ," May/June 1990*], we were able to locate an old photograph of our house. We date the picture at approximately 1896 because the little girl in the foreground was born in 1889, and she appears to be about seven years old. Although the top of the tower is obscured by the direct sunlight shin-

ing from behind the house, its original design is clearly visible. Contrary to speculation, there never was a cornice separating a distinct roof from the tower side walls. Instead, the tower was built as one continuous field of cedar shingles with cut and woven corners. To restore the tower, our contractor will have to steam the shingles and bend them to conform to the curved shape of the roof.

We would appreciate hearing from *OHJ* readers who know of any similar towers that exist. Our present problem is how the tower should be stained or painted in relation to the rest of the house. Leaving the shingles bare would be unattractive (at least for several years until they age). Painting the tower to match, say, the third-floor dormer will create a maintenance problem. Staining the tower will set it off from the rest of the house in a way that just may not work. We'd like the tower to appear to belong to the rest of the house, not to stick out like a sore thumb.

— Richard L. Alfred
Newton, Mass.



An old photo sheds new light on the character of the Alfreds's tower.

Ivy Alert

Dear OHJ,

I would like to amend an answer you provided in the "Ask OHJ" column of your March/April 1990 issue. Your reply to Mildred L. Mavousik concerning ivy growth on masonry may be basically true for newer masonry, but it is not necessarily true of all masonry, particularly the old kind.

I restore cobblestone masonry structures that generally date from the early through mid 1800s. The mortars then utilized in construction were soft lime mortars. Although strong, this type of mortar is more susceptible to ivy damage than newer mortars. If the ivy has anchored into the mortar already and is left on the wall, there will inevitably be extensive damage. Fracturing begun by the ivy allows increased damage from water intrusion, and that damage opens new areas for the ivy to anchor. Once the process has begun, it can be stopped only by removing the ivy and repairing the mortar.

The bottom line is this: Ivy may look nice, but *get it off your walls*.

— Bruce A. Midkiff
Albion, N.Y.

Salvage(rs) to the Rescue

Dear OHJ,

I enjoyed your article on architectural salvage in the March/April 1990 issue. It will help people realize the importance of saving old building parts.

My husband and I have an architectural-salvage store in Wausau, Wisconsin. We've been open for seven months now and have made a big impact on salvage in our area. People travel from far and near to see what we have. Some say our shop is like a museum.

There are a few people who get offended by our store — they feel we only destroy old buildings for the salvage. That's not true: My husband also owns Masters Restoration, a firm

continued on page 10

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continued from page 8

that specializes in buying and restoring old structures. He even goes as far as to move them in order to preserve them.

Thank you *OHJ* for remembering we salvagers who care!

— Kimberly Kearns
Kimberly's Old-House Gallery
620 Third Street
Wausau, WI 54401

Dear *OHJ*,

I enjoyed the March/April *OHJ*, as I do every issue. The feature on architectural salvage was of interest to me as I maintain a 2,000-sq.ft. warehouse of parts as a sideline of the restoration business. As you listed two other suppliers in central New York, I thought I should let you know of our existence, too.

We live in what we sometimes feel is the armpit of preservation, because

we lose most battles to save what's left of our architectural heritage. This trend shows no signs of ceasing, as the city of Syracuse recently instituted a "no review" demolition-permit policy. Often these buildings are lost with little or no regard for salvage. We are currently involved in a battle to save the circa 1820 home of one of the founding fathers of the city.

— Jeff Finch
Golgotha Restoration Services
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Authors' Query

Dear *OHJ*,

Elizabeth Pomada and Michael Larsen, the authors of the four *Painted Ladies* books, are writing *The Painted Ladies Guide to Victorian California*.

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Please send names, addresses, phone numbers, and, if possible, color photos to Elizabeth Pomada, 1029 Jones St., San Francisco, CA 94109, or call (415) 673-0939 after July 10. Those who make suggestions will be acknowledged in the book.

— Michael Larsen
San Francisco, Calif.

Salvage Success

Dear *OHJ*,

I did so much enjoy your article "Architectural Salvage to the Rescue." I have "salvaged-up" my 1905 house and have it very close to finished.

continued on page 12

The traditional roof that's never out of style!



The "tin" roof (it's actually terne metal)... the right choice for your new or remodeled house

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continued from page 10

People laughed at my "half-a-house in the garage," but for each stage of my restoration, I had what I needed to do it authentically. I bought doors, door frames, hardware, sinks, lavatories, windows — you name it — from sales, shops, and our local salvage yard. My doorbell came from the Saffay House. The built-in bookcase in my study was built in in the Porter Mansion; it cost me \$5 and looks as if it has always been where I have it. (The back was coped to fit the baseboards there, and it fits perfectly here!)

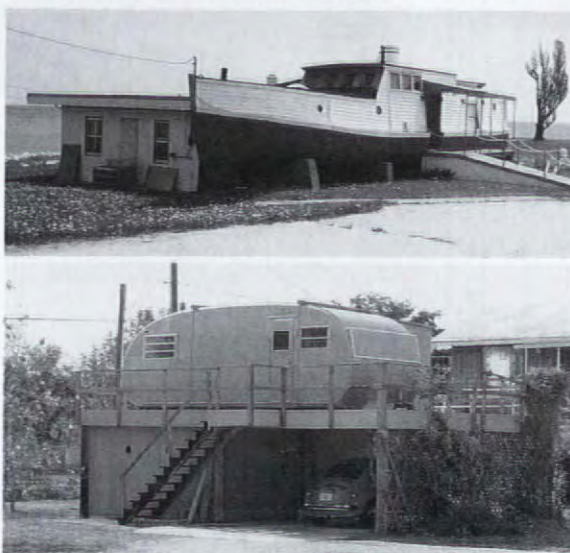
By having parts of razed houses serving a second life in our home, they gain some ongoing usefulness, suit my house far better than reproductions, and in most cases were bargains to boot.

— Catherine Cline
Jacksonville, Fla.

Odd-House Journal

Dear OHJ,

Here are a couple of houses near the water (and 2400 miles apart).



Houses near the water can be a little different. . .

The boat-become-house is located north of St. Ignace, Michigan, beside a large bay in northern Lake Huron. Most likely a fishing boat, it has been

modified with a shed addition on the starboard side. The second example is from the Florida Keys. Being within a quarter mile of the ocean, the house is raised so hurricane-inspired waters can flow beneath. (The carport below keeps the hot sun off the car.)

Both houses show respect for user identity and the budget (no jumbo mortgages).

— Don Price
Ann Arbor, Mich.
continued on page 14

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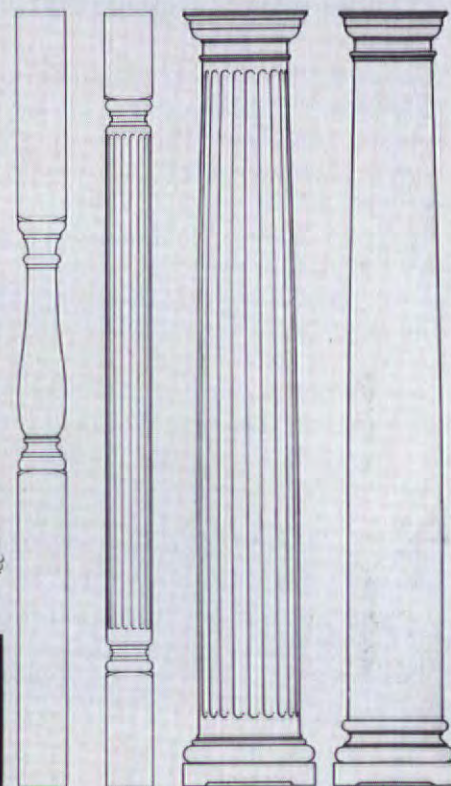
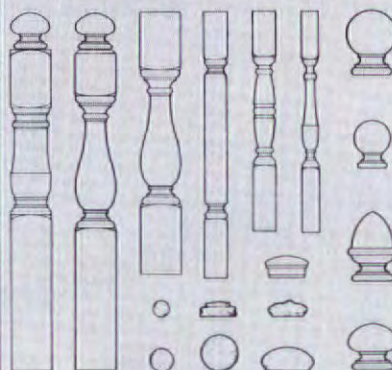
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continued from page 12

Correction

Cupolas from the Webb Manufacturing Company are made entirely of wood, not high-performance plastic as was reported in the May/June "Restoration Products." Louvers are sold separately.

"Mystery Box" Explained?

Dear OHJ,

The curiosity pictured on page 24 of the May/June issue is known to me as a potato bin. I have lived in a number of pre-war apartments in Manhattan and Brooklyn, and my memory is that each of them had such a compartment. It was on the outside wall under the kitchen window. My mother always used hers to store potatoes — it was dark and cool most of the year — and therefore I use mine the same way. Onions were also stored in the "potato"

bin, for the same reason.

We now live in a 1926 house without a potato bin. Potatoes keep poorly in this house — there is no similar dark and cool spot.

— Sara Schoenwetter
Sunnyside, N.Y.

Dear OHJ,

I read with interest your reference to the "Mystery Box" that Mr. Kaplan found in his New York apartment. As a veteran of several pre-war apartments on Manhattan's Upper West Side, I have always found one of these boxes on an exterior wall in the kitchen, below the window — usually tightly sealed by numerous layers of paint. My belief is that the device is called an onion bin and is used for the storage of foods such as onions and potatoes, which keep best in a cool, dark place.

In the tiny kitchens I have had to work in, the extra storage space has been welcome. It's where you can always find my onions.

— Joseph Pierson
New York, N.Y.

Living Color

Dear OHJ,

Regarding the letter about paint color for window sash [*"Ask OHJ," May/June 1990*]: Although it is true that the normal practice in the Victorian era was to paint sashes dark, it was by no means universal. Light and sunshine were no great treats in the Victorian interior, as they badly faded the inside colors, which were not color-fast as they are today.

A dark sash also makes a house look closed up and dark — not great advantages today, since so many of

continued on page 16

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continued from page 14

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I have become a great proselytizer for light-colored windows. Glaring white is not a good idea, of course, but a soft, light-valued hue used in a two-color frame/sash combination can maintain the Victorian feeling while keeping the house sunny, more open, and more convivial.

— James Martin
The Color People,
Restoration Graphics
Denver, Col.

Connecticut in Georgia

Dear OHJ,

We recently purchased this Queen Anne house located in Sonarville, Georgia, outside of Fairmont. It was built in the 1890s (we think!). We

have been told that it is a replica of a house in Connecticut — the original owners sent architects to Connecticut to copy the house. We would love to

hear from *Old-House Journal* readers who are familiar with that home.

— Gwin Phillips
Fairmont, Ga



Chris Phillips with his Connecticut-come-to-Georgia Queen Anne.

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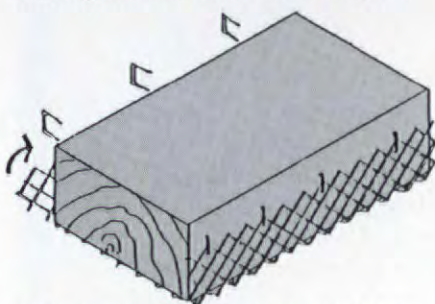
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Brick-Cleaning Tool

A useful tool for cleaning old mortar off exposed brick or taking down high spots in rough plaster can be made from a small block of wood (2×4 cutoff) and metal lath (the diamond-patterned stuff that always



A block of wood and some metal lath can become a useful tool.

seems to cut your hands). Carefully cut a rectangular piece of the lath to the same length as the 2×4 and about two inches wider. Bend the lath around the sides of the wood and fasten with small fence staples.

I found this tool more effective than a wire brush for cleaning brick, and it created much less dust. When I finished with it, I removed the staples and reused the lath to patch a hole in one of my walls.

— John Youger
Columbus, Ohio

Rub It the Right Way

To polish badly corroded and pitted old faucets and plumbing fixtures, I use auto rubbing compound. Vigorously apply the compound with a damp rag. For those hard-to-get areas, coat an old toothbrush, fish line, or string with the compound.

— Alwin F. Kaule
Hot Springs Village, Ark.

Newspaper Item

While repairing a floor I discovered an oldtimer's flooring-shimming technique: If your floor patch is low, fold a piece of newspaper to get whatever size and thickness you require. You're also leaving an interest-

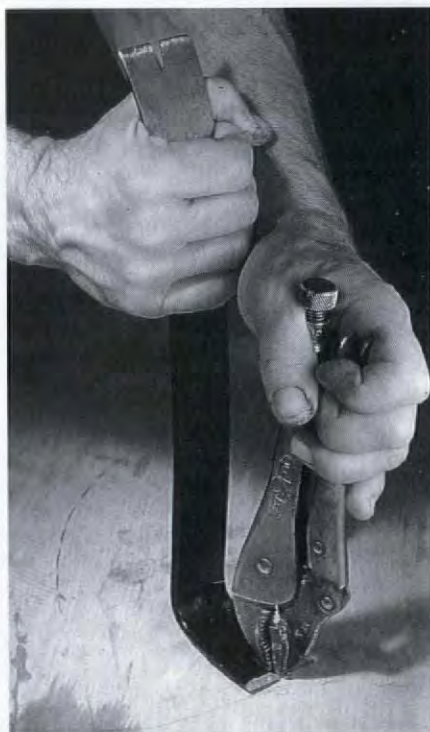
ing time capsule — after finding such a shim, I now know that our floors were installed in 1924.

— Dan Miller
Elgin, Ill.

Prying Nails the Easy Way

We wanted to restore our kitchen floor and began to tear up the added floors. (There were two layers of underlayment sandwiched between four finished floors.) After the dust had settled, we were left with several hundred nails protruding from the original maple floor. Pulling these nails with a hammer or a pry bar proved hopeless, as they broke from the bending action of the tools. Instead, we removed them by clamping vise-grips on each nail and prying on the vise-grip with a flat pry bar. This pulled the nails straight up without damaging the floor. Any broken nails were recessed with a nail set.

— Jerry and Terri Buser
Momence, Ill.



Pesky nails can be removed quickly, cleanly, and without strain by using a vise-grip and a flat pry bar.

Stencilling Tip

I wanted a stencilled border in my hall but couldn't stand on a ladder looking up for long periods of time. So I purchased plain wallpaper, laid it out on my ping-pong table, stencilled it, and then hung it.

— Genevieve Simmons
Nauvoo, Ill.

Bright Ideas

Here are some tips on the humble subject of light-bulb replacement.

If you're experiencing premature replacements in a particular fixture, it could be due to vibration, such as the constant slamming of a nearby door, or having the bulb located directly under a staircase or in a workshop with large power tools (drill press, bandsaw, etc.). The solution is to replace the dead bulb with one marked "Rough Service." These bulbs can be purchased at any automobile-supply house or at most hardware stores and are usually offered at 50, 75, and 100 wattages.

When a particular bulb is in an especially difficult location, where a great deal of effort and even some danger is required to change it, use a higher *voltage* bulb. Replace a 75-W./115-V. bulb with a 100-W./130-V. bulb. Such bulbs are usually obtainable only at electrical-supply houses, but they're worth the effort of locating them. The substitution will put less stress on the filament, thereby yielding a greater life cycle (although it will also have a bit less light output).

— Roger S. Apted
Milton, Wis.

TIPS TO SHARE? Do you have any hints or short cuts that might help other old-house owners? We'll pay \$25 for any how-to items used in this "Restorer's Notebook" column. Write to Notebook Editor, The Old-House Journal, 435 Ninth Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215.



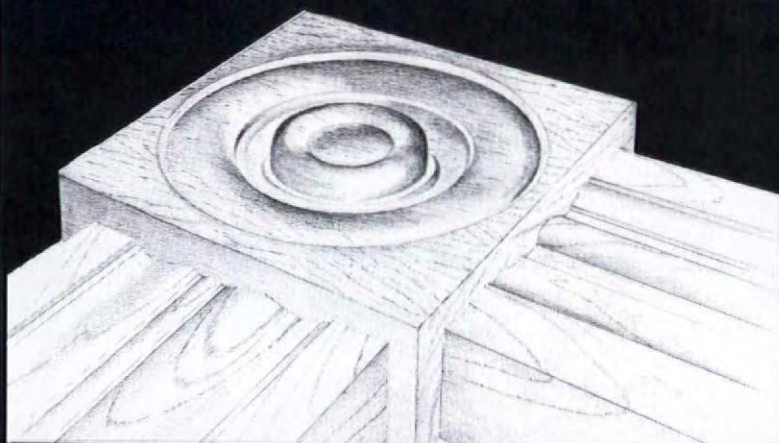
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BRASS CLASSICS

During the mid-19th century, when most U.S. cities were enjoying their youth, millions of

Americans left their rural homes to throng toward the great metropolises. Although cities could boast all sorts of cultural benefits, they were lacking in horticultural virtues. The new urbanites quickly began to long for Mother Nature.

For many city dwellers, the answer lay in a window garden, and so the exterior window box was born. The boxes reaped the benefits of unobstructed sunlight and also caught the cooling breezes. Decoratively, they did double duty. Residents gazing outdoors were presented with a pretty vista, and passers-by with "an agreeable change from the never-ending brick and stone of the city." So stated Peter Henderson, staunch supporter of the new method of planting, in *Practical Floriculture* (1879).

All city neighborhoods were bursting with flowering boxes. "Even the most squalid abodes of vice and poverty are often relieved by a miniature flower garden on the sill," wrote Peter Henderson. Window boxes were inexpensive gardens within reach of all economic classes. Although fancy boxes of unglazed terra cotta or cork were occasionally displayed, most Victorians planted homemade wooden boxes with a zinc liner that would be made to order by the tinman.

The basic box was approximately 4 to 5 feet long and 6 to 8 inches wide.

Of course, the lady of the house often employed her creative talents to improve upon the plain design. Rustic versions were the most popu-

lar, with split acorns, pinecones, and crushed seashells glued on the outside. Patterned oil cloth or fancy tiles were also often applied. But why

bother with the intricate handiwork when beautiful blossoms and foliage would surely cover the sides within a few short weeks?

Window boxes were planted with typical Victorian excess. Whereas the rule of thumb for modern gardeners is to limit a large window box to no more than three or four different plants, Victorians crammed their boxes full to bursting. Very often, 15 different plants shared the same box, with perhaps only one or two specimens representing each of the species.

In the 19th-century, gardeners leaned heavily on bulbs; hyacinths, tulips, jonquils, crocuses, and snowdrops often brightened sunny sills in spring. Yet many of today's window-box superstars began their careers before the turn of the century. Then as now, begonias, petunias, zonal geraniums (Victorians preferred the dwarf types), verbenas, alyssum, portulaca, lobelia, carnations, ivy, primroses, and nasturtiums were all highly recommended.

There were a few surprise attractions, such as creeping phlox, morning glories, feverfew, sedums, and passion flowers, with morning glories and passion flowers probably employed for only a limited engagement. But we might take a few cues from the Victorians. Nineteenth-century gardeners grew some perfectly appropriate plants such

as mignonette, tradescantias, and heliotropes, which are rarely used for

continued on page 22



WINDOW BOXES *Victorian Legacy*

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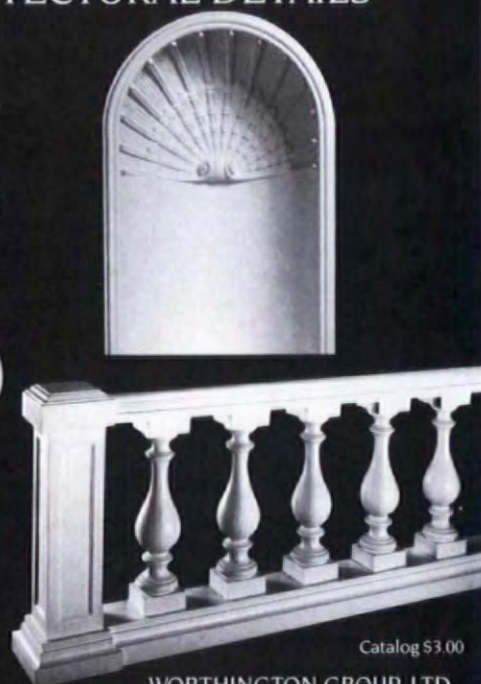


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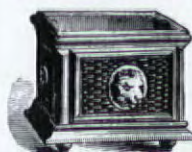

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continued from page 20



"As the boxes are usually too high to allow a close examination, and the sides soon become draped with drooping plants, an ordinary box... will answer as well as a more expensive one," according to Peter Henderson.

window boxes today but are certainly equal to the task. Many gardening books also urged gardeners to edge their boxes with *Lysimachia nummularia*, known as moneywort, which



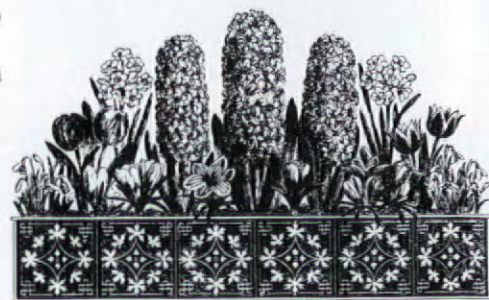
Both small and large window boxes were pictured in *The Window Flower Garden* in 1901.

sent its round leaves showering down four feet over the edge of the window box.

Before a single flower was planted, the box was lined with an inch of charcoal to sweeten the soil and then filled with a stiff mix of loam, sand, leaf mould, and well-aged barnyard manure. (Manure was deleted if bulbs were to go in the box.) Next, the plants were slipped directly into the soil. Green moss was laid between plants to hide the unsightly brown dirt. If a gardener preferred leaving her plants potted in their clay containers, the window box was filled with sphagnum moss instead of soil, to prevent the plants from drying out too frequently.

Watering was a chore before indoor plumbing: One 19th-century gardening book warned that window boxes were known to dry out four times a day in the city heat. Gardeners were also urged to syringe their plants weekly to wash off the dirt and dust from the nearby streets — and, of course, to groom and prune plants regularly.

Window boxes were worth the work. After all, if a window box was well grown, the lady of the house had a bouquet at her finger-



A window box of hyacinths, tulips, and crocuses from *The Ladies' Floral Cabinet*, 1886.

tips throughout the entire season. And the city could come into full blossom as well.

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Bungalow or No?

Q Could you help me identify the style of my home? Dating back to 1913, it used to be a one-storey house; the upstairs was built in 1981, replacing a remuddled-looking 1965 addition. I'd like to know what this house could have looked like originally.

What really puzzles me is that the living and dining rooms are absolutely typical of the Craftsman style — dark woodwork, lots of mouldings, window seats, built-in bookshelves, etc. — but to me, the house just doesn't look like a bungalow. . . .

— Pascale Steig
Medford, Oreg.

A Before the second storey was added, your house may indeed have had a classic early bungalow form. Low-pitched gable roofs were widely used on bungalows in the 1910s and '20s, but hip roofs were also characteristic of the style, especially for one-storey houses. (At least two such houses were highlighted in *The Craftsman*.) The roof's pyramidal shape also had a strong tie to the Bengalese folkhouses from which the

eyebrow windows were sometimes incorporated into the hip roof and may have been part of your house as well. The diagonal braces on your porch posts are a common turn-of-the-century treatment that also found its way into bungalows that featured broad porches.

Staircase Repair

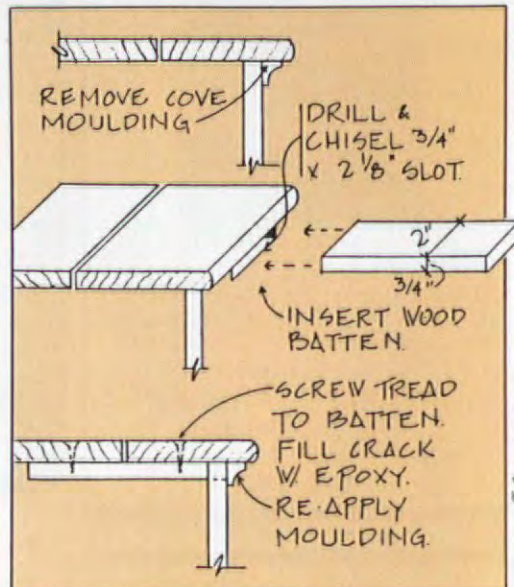
Q We have a problem of cracked treads on our stairs. (There are only three steps to be repaired; the others are in excellent condition.) They no longer provide adequate support and bow under the weight of an adult. The treads were put in place from behind and are no longer accessible because the underside is now finished. Can you tell us what is the best method of removing and repairing our treads?

— Scott and Susan Hoffman
LaCrosse, Wis.

A The best approach requires access to the treads from the underside of the staircase; "The Best Way to Replace a Tread or Riser" in the March 1983 *OHJ* gives all the details. But if you don't want to go all out — and you don't mind a repair that will end up looking like a repair — there's a simpler method whereby you can fix the treads in place rather than remove and replace them.

Cut slots in the risers and install two or three battens under each tread (see illustration

below). Drill shank holes in the treads and screw the treads to the battens with Shetrock screws. Countersink the screws. You may want to apply adhesive (yellow carpenter's glue or aliphatic resin) to the top of the batten before sliding it into



Illustrations: Jeff Williamson

place, but this isn't absolutely necessary. Fill the tread crack with thickened epoxy consolidant (see "How To Use Epoxies," May/June 1989 *OHJ*); other fillers will crack and eventually fall out because they are not flexible enough.

Black Shellac

Q I have a Victorian house built in 1850. All of the interior doors are black. I believe they've been painted with black varnish, but I've been unable to find this or to get any information on it. Please tell me what to use, as I'd like to maintain the doors properly.

— Mary J. Leonard
Metropolis, Ill.

A Your doors may be ebonized with black shellac, a once-popular finish made by tinting shellac with lampblack. You can test for it by rubbing an inconspicuous corner of the door with denatured alcohol; if



It may not look like a bungalow... but it is.

term "bungalow" is derived.

One or more small dormers or

the finish dissolves, it's shellac. In restoring the doors, try to reduce the surface oxidation and scale *without* removing the original finish down to bare wood. Experiment with fine steel wool and a finish-restoring product made specifically for furniture.

A modern version of black shellac may be special ordered from Johnson Paint Company, 355 Newbury Street, Dept. OHJ, Boston, MA 02115; (617) 536-4838.

Out, Damp Spot!

Q *I have a problem with my 1869 brick row house. The outside is all concrete, badly done, and the walls stuccoed. When I bought the house four years ago, the plaster on the lower two feet of the exterior walls of the first storey, those facing the side alley and backyard, was severely damaged by dampness and virtually fell off. I furred and dry-walled most of these walls, but in two small sections this was not feasible, so I re-plastered directly on the brick. It was primed with oil-based primer and then latex paint was applied. Now the paint is bubbling and peeling badly.*

I have scraped and re-painted several times, but the problem keeps happening. What causes this dampness? Contractors just shrug their shoulders when I ask about it. Is there a cure?

— Edward Johnson
Philadelphia, Penn.

A Your walls may be suffering from *rising damp*, a condition in which groundwater is sucked up into the masonry walls through capillary action and then released at the interior and exterior surfaces, often with salts that can affect wood, paint, or plaster. In the past 100 years or so, it has been common practice to build a *damp course* of metal or slate into masonry walls to block

moisture's path so that rising damp cannot occur. Buildings constructed before then, however, sometimes suffer from this problem because the damp course has failed or was never installed at all.

Rising damp can be difficult to prevent completely. In dire cases, a new damp course may be installed by slotting mortar joints or removing a course of brick and then adding slate, metal, or other material as a barrier. High-tech chemical and electro-osmotic systems that accomplish the same end have been tried in Europe, but less drastic measures often can reduce the problem to a manageable level.

First, check the drainage of rainwater around the outside of the house. Gutter downspouts or foundation grading that do not direct water away from the building can contribute to the problem. (Your "badly done" concrete may also be at fault here.) Second, consider installing footing drains. These are perforated plastic, ceramic, or concrete pipes buried near the footing level of the wall which collect rainwater and duct it away, thus lowering the groundwater level and reducing the moisture that can be wicked up into the masonry.

An excellent report that covers causes and remedies for rising damp is *Moisture Problems in Historic Masonry Walls: Diagnosis and Treatment* by Baird M. Smith (G.P.O. stock number 024-005-00872-1). It's available for \$2.25 per copy from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402; (202) 783-3238.

General interest questions will be answered in print. The Editors can't promise to respond to all questions personally, but we try. Send your questions with photos or sketches to Questions Editor, The Old-House Journal, 435 Ninth Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215.

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WHO THEY WERE

by Jeff Wilkinson



GREENE & GREENE ARCHT

I seek till I find what is truly useful and then I try to make it beautiful.

— Charles Greene

At the same time Prairie School architects were redefining American residential architecture in the Midwest, a small firm of two brothers was building bungalows in California — houses that are among the most beautiful we have, and which influenced residential design nationwide.

Although forever associated with California, the Greene brothers were born in Ohio — Charles Sumner in 1868 and Henry Mather in 1870. They were raised in St. Louis, home of the first high school in America with a manual-training curriculum. The boys were enrolled by their father, who'd decided they should be architects, and there they learned the woodworking skills that were to have such an impact on their work. Henry was interested in engineering and ready to attend university upon graduation, but Charles, drawn to painting and poetry, was not. They agreed to a two-year program in architecture offered at M.I.T., after which they would complete their degrees through apprenticeships. In 1891 Charles went to work for H. Langford Warren of Boston, and Henry at Shepley, Rutan, & Coolidge (for-

merly H.H. Richardson's firm).

The brothers might well have become established East Coast architects had not their parents relocated to Pasadena. Lonely and in poor health, they begged their sons to join them, and after Charles lost his job in 1893, he and Henry headed west. Having gone through one of the greatest land speculation booms in U.S. history, Pasadena in the 1890s was an intellectual and cultural center, full of wealthy families. Here the Greenes received their first commission, the design of a small cottage for their father's friend, John Breiner.

Although fairly typical of the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival designs of the period, the Greenes' work between 1893 and 1903 reveals a search for a more personal building idiom. Their notes show a concern for designing buildings

appropriate to their environment, as well as an appreciation of California's old Spanish missions.

In 1899 Henry married; Charles followed suit in 1901. Charles and his wife honeymooned in England and returned just in time to read the first issue of Gustav Stickley's *The Craftsman*, which had an immediate and lasting impact on the Greenes' work: Their next house was completely furnished with Stickley furniture, and they subsequently came to embrace Stickley's ideals of echoing structural design in interior decor and the landscape siting of a house.

The years 1903 through 1907 were tremendously creative ones. Ideas that were to mature in their "ultimate bungalows," as the Greenes' later work came to be called, grew with each new commission. Many of these houses were modest in size, but with each one the Greenes experimented with new architectural details and room arrangements. The Culbertson House (1903) used clinker bricks, cobblestones, and a horizontal band of casement win-

dows; it was also one of the first designs in which a pergola, or open-roofed structure, was treated as an extension of the house. The Arturo Bandini House (1903) adopted early Cali-

continued on page 28

Top: The Blacker House (1907) has a Swiss Chalet character, but its verandahs and large overhangs are recognizably Californian. Below: Charles (left) and Henry in the 1940s.





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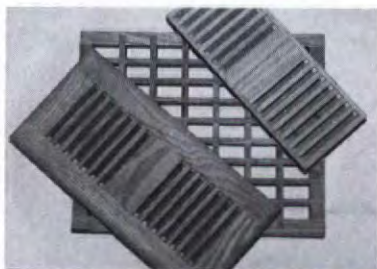
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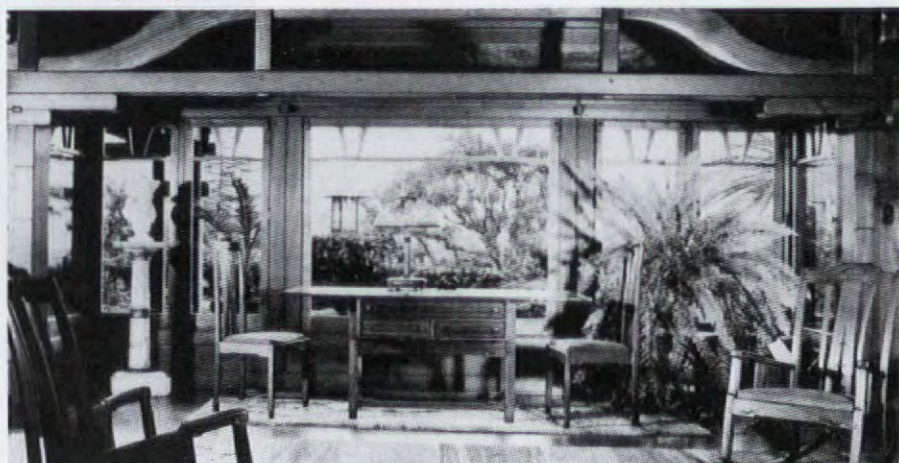


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WHO THEY WERE

continued from page 26



Above: a view of the alcove in the living room of the Gamble House (1909). Note the unique teak spandrel and the casement-window detail.

fornia vernacular architecture: The house was U-shaped with a series of one-room-deep chambers arranged around a central courtyard. A pergola enclosed the court. The interior had board-and-batten redwood ceilings and massive cobblestone fireplaces.

After the indoor/outdoor relationship of the Bandini House plan, with its investigation of Southern California's regional building methods, the Greenes were set on a new path from that of East Coast Arts and Crafts architects. They also became increasingly influenced by Japanese timber-framed structures. In fact, their inspired synthesis of Japanese, Spanish, and Craftsman principles once led Frank Lloyd Wright to remark, "I don't know how you do it!"

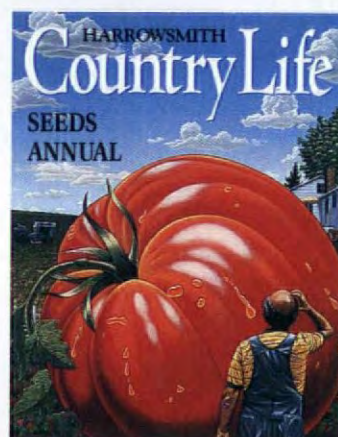
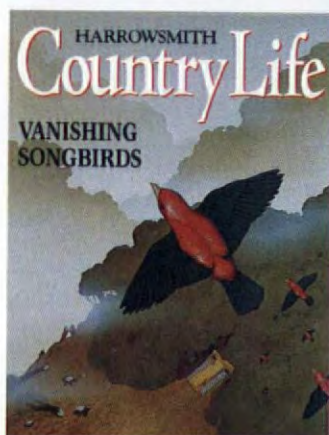
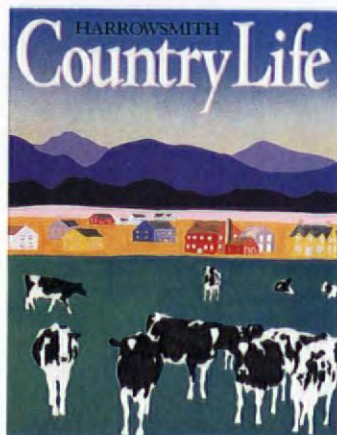
By 1907, the Greenes had mastered all the elements of the California Bungalow for which they were soon to be famous: the *porte cochere*, the exquisitely made and thoughtfully engineered redwood framing, the low-pitched roofs with long overhangs covering sleeping porches, the multiple terraces that typically captured a marvelous view of the Arroyo, and their custom-designed furniture and lighting fixtures. Fortunately, they also had developed a wealthy clientele — not only were their designs expensive, but the brothers also became notorious for tearing out completed work and hav-

ing it redone to their standards.

For the next several years, the firm of Greene & Greene was one of America's most prestigious residential design teams. Between 1907 and 1909 the brothers created what are now regarded as their masterpieces: the Gamble House, the Blacker House, and the Ford House, all in Pasadena. But they failed to notice that the light, ordered interiors of the Colonial Revival were growing more popular, and that many would-be clients could no longer afford the increasingly expensive Greene & Greene touch.

Worn out from years of intense work, Charles spent a year in London with his family in 1909, after which the firm began a slow decline. Having worked for years at separate locations (Charles in his studio home and Henry in the firm's office), they began to follow separate interests. Henry assumed more commercial work, and Charles moved north to Carmel, where he labored on a never-to-be-published novel. They dissolved their partnership in 1922, and Henry continued the firm's practice until his death in 1953. Charles studied Buddhism and pursued his writing and design until he passed away in 1957.

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Europeans have courtyards but Americans have their porches. Compare an Italian palazzo, with its interior court surrounded by an arcade, to the wrap-around wooden verandah on a Queen Anne manse: They are almost the inverse of each other. The word "porch" may stir memories of lazy summer days and romantic evenings on the porch swing . . . memories that seem to be of another time. The porch is less important these days than the deck or backyard patio. If you know old houses, though, you know the porch has a rich social and architectural past. And no one

can deny the importance of the porch in defining the style of an old house.

Virtually every style in American domestic architecture has managed to accommodate a porch of some type. So ubiquitous is it, in nearly all styles and periods, the porch may seem like an American invention. That is not the case. The porch has its roots in the ancient portico of Egyptian and Grecian architecture. Even the Victorian verandah made its way to North America from India (via Great Britain). What Americans *have* excelled at is adapting the porch to their homes and lifestyles. More than just pomp or shel-



Hanging plants and geraniums in flower boxes frame inviting rockers on a verandah in Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.

THE STORY OF PORCHES

An American Tradition



by Jeff Wilkinson

ter, the porch became a room for outdoor living, with furnishings and an etiquette of its own.

History books tell us that porches became a major stylistic feature around the 1850s. This is true if one considers only the Northeast (where most of the best-read historians lived and wrote). But porches have been a major part of Southern architecture since colonial days. A glance at French colonial architecture, from plantation homes to Creole cottages, shows porches to be a definitive feature. Some date to as early as the 1700s.

One theme in the story of the porch is its changing

function over time. Beginning with the ceremonial portico that was more a symbol of wealth and welcome than it was a connection to the outdoors, the porch at its height of popularity developed into specific functional types such as sleeping porches, porch pavilions, and enclosed service entries. Another theme, evident in the photos, is the development of porches by architectural style.

The rise and fall of the porch tells us a lot about our own culture. One of the biggest causes of the decline of porches was the automobile, which took over the street with its noise, speed, and pollution. "Countin' cars" hardly

PORCHES: A LEXICON

Arcade — A series of arches supported by columns or piers.

Baluster — One of a series of uprights used to support a handrail.

Balustrade — The low wall made up of **balusters** and railings, attached by posts to the deck.

Colonnade — A row of columns.

Colonnettes — Slender, turned wooden columns.

Gallery — From the French *galerie*, an exterior space under the main roof of a house. It sometimes refers to a full-width structure on an upper storey, as a balcony. Synonymous with **verandah** and **piazza**, the word is used regionally and for certain architectural styles.

Lattice — Openwork produced by interlacing of wood laths or other thin strips. Used as screening, especially under a porch.

Loggia — A covered **gallery** or passage supported by an **arcade** or **colonnade**, open on one or more sides and sometimes freestanding.

Pavilion Porch or **Gazebo Porch** — A roofed garden structure such as a gazebo or pavilion which is incorporated into an attached **verandah**.



Loggia



Verandah



Porch



Arcade

Pergola-Porch — A porch with an open roof (usually with exposed rafters or trellises) such as found in a garden pergola, popularized in the *Craftsman* magazine and common on Bungalow-style houses.

Peristyle — A promenade of columns surrounding a building or open court.

Piazza — Italian word to describe an open public space, usually square or oblong, surrounded by buildings; also the open courtyard in the center of a house or villa. During the 19th century, the term was used interchangeably with **verandah** to describe a porch.

Piercework — Ornamentation common in the late-Victorian period, created by cutting openings or shaped profiles in solid pieces of wood.

Porch — From the Latin *porticus* (see **portico**). Any exterior space, roofed and open-walled, attached to a house.

Porch Hood — An abbreviated form of the **portico**, a hood is a small roof placed over an entryway, supported by brackets or directly attached to the building wall.

Porte Cochere — Literally, "covered door." An attached carriage porch designed to permit passengers to alight from a vehicle and enter a building without being exposed to the weather. Its

continued on page 37

Top: This Italianate house with campanile in Poughkeepsie, New York, demonstrates that the porch is often the most expressive element, even on a grand house. Its piazza offers paired, turned colonnettes, a fan-motif balustrade, turned newels and ball finials. Also note the porte cochere to the right. **Bottom left:** The bandsaw inspired carpenters to new heights of expression. The vine motif on the sawn porch posts at the Carpenter Gothic-style Peter Davis House in Noank, Connecticut, (c.1855) is a work of art. **Bottom right:** A crescendo of balconies creates a visual line of descent in this Shingle-style house in Providence, Rhode Island. In this style more than any other, the porch was fully integrated and didn't have an "attached" look.

has the appeal of a quiet talk with neighbors and passersby. As cars took over out front, people (and porches) moved to the backyard. Today's patios and decks, as well as the family room with sliding glass doors to the yard, are the result of this retreat.

An indirect result of the automobile's arrival was the flowering of outlying suburbs with their larger building lots. By the 1930s, many houses — and, consequently, porch-sitting neighbors — were spaced too far apart for conversation. Some people miss all that. It's interesting that in such neo-Victorian developments as the one in Seaside, Florida, the designers mandated that each new house have a front porch . . . and that cars be limited and houses spaced closer together. The planners were seeking the pedestrian lifestyle upon which a front porch depends.

Porch Beginnings

As we'll see, the porch in America went through three phases, in vocabulary as well as function. They are portico, verandah, and porch.

The portico, precursor of all porches, is synonymous with Classical architecture. The portico of ancient Greece evolved as a formal framing device that, with its crowning pediment and elegant columns, defined an entryway, imparting an appearance of authority. The portico was well suited to use on public buildings and houses of religion and state.

Centuries later, porticoes returned during the Renaissance. One architect in particular, Andrea Palladio, is credited with the revival of Classical forms. The portico made its way to American soil via the British, who were greatly influenced by Palladio's buildings and books. Well-to-do colonial homebuilders of the South appreciated the formal beauty of the portico as well as its functional aspects. George Washington was one of them. In 1784, Washington added what may well be the first full-length-facade portico in North America to his home at Mount Vernon. Soon after, architect/statesman Thomas Jefferson incorporated a colonnaded portico into his home, Monticello. (Interestingly, the original structure was built with a double-storey porch, which Jefferson eventually redesigned in favor of the now-famous dome.) From here, the portico became a telling feature in America's longest running national style, the Greek Revival, which lasted from about 1825 to 1860.

During the Greek Revival period, the portico took many



Photo: Old-House Journal

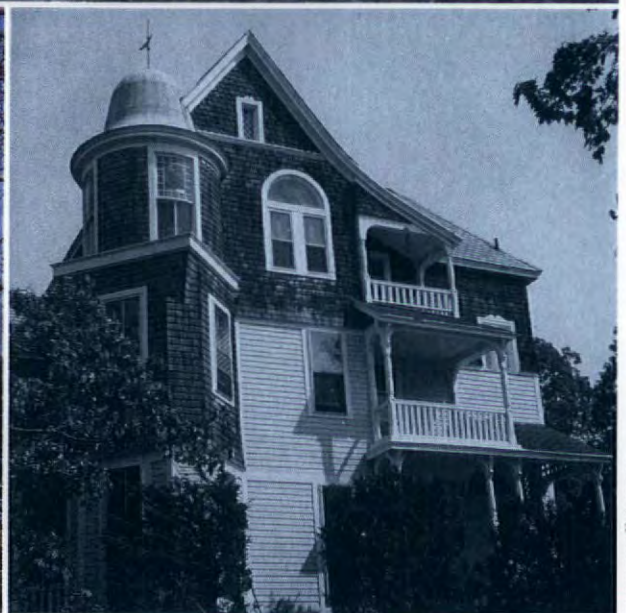


Photo: Jeff Wilkinson

shapes, depending in large part on the regional climate. Porticoes are ceremonial and symbolic; often our assessment of them ends there, but they were functional, too. In the South, for example, full-height entry porches and even full-facade, double-storey porches were popular to take advantage of breezes and provide shade. Nearly every rep-

resentation of Monticello shows furniture on its portico. By all means, the portico of the Southern plantation house was more than an authoritarian symbol. This outdoor space was used much like the later Victorian verandahs.

Nevertheless, it wasn't until the Greek Revival had passed from fashion in the 1850s, and Americans began to catch

wind of a new romantic and picturesque style — the Gothic Revival — that porches were truly appreciated for their usefulness.

Davis, Downing, & Romance

The first U.S. practitioner of the Gothic Revival style was a New York State architect named Alexander Jackson Davis. His 1837 book, *Rural Residences*, included many designs in this new style for people of a wide range of economic means. The style caught on quickly. (In fact, Davis became America's first mail-order architect when he began receiving letters asking for house plans, which he was all too happy to fulfill.)

But A.J. Davis would not be remembered as the popularizer of the Gothic Revival and its verandahs. Rather, it was a friend and admirer named Andrew Jackson Downing who would be credited with bringing the verandah to America's homes. Charming, charismatic, and witty, Downing had the personality and the words to preach the new lifestyle — one that called for verandahs and porches. A nurseryman and landscape designer, Downing had turned to architectural design to promulgate his insistence that a house should be designed in harmony with its surrounding natural landscape. As Downing himself pointed out in *Landscape Architecture* in 1844:

In this country, no architectural feature is more plainly expressive of purpose in our dwelling house than the verandah, or piazza. The unclouded splendor and fierce heat of our summer sun, render this very general appendage a source of real comfort and enjoyment. The long verandah around many of our country residences stand in stead of the paved terraces of the English mansions as the place for promenade; while during the warmer portions of the season, half of the days or evenings are passed there in the enjoyment of the cool breezes, secure under low roofs supported by the open colonnade, from the solar rays, or the dews of night. The obvious utility of the verandah in this climate, especially in the middle and southern states, will, therefore, excuse its adoption into any style of architecture.

And "any style" is on the mark. Soon no house could be without a porch. Verandahs were on the drafting boards of designers and offered in all the plan books. Not surprisingly, the most popular house plans were Gothic Revival-style cottages. Their porches were usually one-storey, some spanning the full facade, with flattened Gothic arches and separate roofs. Porches were also featured on Italianate houses, the prevailing architectural style from 1850 to 1880.

The porch was an important pawn in the style wars in the middle of the 19th century. What's interesting and often humorous is the way porch rhetoric was used in pushing new house styles. For example, Andrew Jackson Downing

in his campaign for the Gothic co-opted the verandah to the style, claiming its health benefits and condemning the Greek Revival to the past. In reality, many Greek Revival houses of the 1830s and '40s had larger porticoes and porches than did Downing's Gothic cottages. He was just smart enough to use that word "verandah." But surely

Photo: Glenna Coleman



Photo: Old-House Journal



Top left: Grey for deck and blue for ceiling are traditional colors, as seen on this Italianate verandah in Mystic, Connecticut (Parmenas Avery House, c. 1880). **Top right:** The last great American style to feature a porch was the Bungalow, in which the modern porch is treated as a void within the mass of the house. **Middle right:** During the 1800s, the verandah craze swept many seaside towns, and homes like this Greek Revival in Mystic, Connecticut, were significantly altered. **Bottom left:** A truly Southern contribution to the porch story is the full-facade porch, a style popular along the Mississippi River, which worked its way north. This Greek Revival, with its sawn "X" balustrade, is in Ottawa, Illinois. **Bottom right:** The porch pavilion was a favorite during the Colonial-Revival era. This one is on Brown Street in Providence, Rhode Island.



development of the colonnade (or a collision of the two), what is certain is that French and Spanish settlers were the first to build verandahs (though not so named) in North America. Their full-length or wrap-around galleries were a form borrowed from the West Indies. Usually extensions of the main roof and fully integrated into the house, the functional gallery allowed inhabitants to keep windows open during summer thunderstorms, and shaded the house's interior from the scorching sun. (See the Creole Cottage on the back cover.)

The use of the word piazza for verandah or porch has an interesting history itself, the long and the short of it being a mix-up of terms. Piazza is of course Italian for "square." Italian squares typically have a side or two with an arcade or colonnade. The word piazza thus came to be used in America to describe the structure of columns and roof, not the actual square. Which is to say, piazza and verandah mean the same thing.

Over time the verandah became more elaborate. The verandahs of Gothic Revival- and Italianate-style houses were much like oriental garden structures, but attached to the building. In fact, A.J. Davis's first verandahs were exactly that: wrought-iron structures with separate roofs, attached to the front entries. Eventually, railings and balustrades were added for a better sense of privacy.

After the Civil War, the development of the bandsaw and jig saw allowed carpenter-builders to embellish structures with affordable, machine-made sawn ornament sometimes called "fretwork." By this time in the Victorian era, the verandah (by any name) had come into its own. Conceived of as an outdoor living space, not merely a ceremonial appendage, the verandah or piazza or gallery was seen as the very symbol of leisure as well as a measure of the owner's economic success.



verandahs didn't originate on the Hudson River. . . .

Whence Came the Verandah?

The origin of the word "verandah" is disputably Hindi, and probably refers to oriental garden structures. Whether the attached structure had its roots in the Orient or is a de-

OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL



The Modern Porch

A hundred years ago, during the Victorian heyday of the porch, the word "porch" itself meant simply a covered entry over a door. It was a utilitarian word. Those outdoor living rooms *we* call porches were referred to then by more descriptive terms like "verandah" and "piazza." Our cur-

rent use of the word "porch," to describe any roofed open space attached to the building, came into vogue after the turn of this century, when architects and tastemakers sought to refer to simpler designs and to distance themselves from the fussiness of Victoriana. Words like "verandah" were passe.

Top: The verandah-as-living-room is captured in this old photograph. Furnishings that make it comfortable include striped canvas awnings, wicker chairs, rockers and settee, and straw matting on the deck. **Bottom left:** This L-shaped porch is created by the gable/wing configuration of a high-style, Quincy, Michigan, farmhouse. The convenient result was a second entrance leading into a side parlor. **Bottom right:** a classical portico on a Greek Revival in Marshall, Michigan.

The modern porch of the Craftsman, Bungalow, and Prairie Styles kept the functional aspects of the full-facade verandah, but its architects minimized or abandoned completely the use of brackets and fretwork, which were, in any case, time-consuming to maintain. The porch became more fully integrated or built in to the house, as in the Shingle style. The trend continued with Arts and Crafts-style houses, including Bungalows and some Prairie houses, with the porch sometimes more a void in the mass of the house than an appendage. A popular treatment projected the second-floor bedroom and supported it with heavy tapered piers to form a porch underneath.

How to Furnish the Porch

So we can see that what's American about the porch is its status as an outdoor living room. If your old house has a porch, a portico, or a verandah, it was undoubtedly meant to be lived in. Enjoy it by furnishing it.


Start with a paint tradition. Although balustrades, trim, and columns were usually painted to match or complement the house, it seems there was an unwritten code when it came to the porch deck and ceiling. The deck or flooring was almost always painted with battleship-grey enamel. The ceiling boards were painted sky blue, to enhance the outdoorsy effect.

To create the feeling of a room, outfit the verandah with rugs of straw, hemp, or sisal. Furniture is, of course, the main attraction for bringing the family out to the porch. Wicker, cast iron, bentwood, and wood and canvas are all traditional. (Don't forget the porch swing, historically called a glider.)

Selecting the right material and style of furniture is akin to furnishing a period interior, but with fewer rules and options. Early-Victorian wicker often had complicated twistings and reeding, whereas turn-of-the-century wicker got simpler, with reeds woven in and out in a lattice pattern sometimes referred to as the "Bar Harbor Style." Cast iron looks good under large classical porticoes, but so might wicker or bentwood. Craftsman-style porches should be rather easy to furnish: simple wicker and oak, and the still-plentiful knockoffs of Stickley's solid Mission porch pieces and Craftsman wicker.

Flowers are important. They provided the color and softness. In old photos, they appear in window boxes (see p. 20), in pots on railing or stairs, or blooming in wicker or cast-iron plant stands. Trellisses, too, were popular during the late-Victorian and turn-of-the-century periods, most often supporting climbing roses, wisteria, ivy, and morning

glory. Homeowners were instructed to bring indoor houseplants onto the porch in summer.

For both privacy and shade, canvas awnings and porch curtains of canvas, cloth, or reeding were used. The shades could be lowered and raised or pulled aside; awnings were taken down in the fall. And many houses flew the flag. 

continued from page 32

modern equivalent is the carport.

Portico — A roofed space, open or partly enclosed, forming the entrance and centerpiece of the facade of a temple, house, or public building, often with detached or attached (engaged) columns and a pediment.

Sawn-Wood Ornament — Ornamental woodwork, popular in the late-Victorian era for trim on porches and eaves. Various forms are also called gingerbread, scrollwork, or fretwork.

Sleeping Porch — Popular in the late 1800s and through the 1920s, the sleeping porch was usually adjacent to a bedroom (even frequently appearing on the second floor). Used especially on summer nights before air conditioning, it was advocated by "experts" of the period who prescribed fresh-air sleeping nearly year-round.

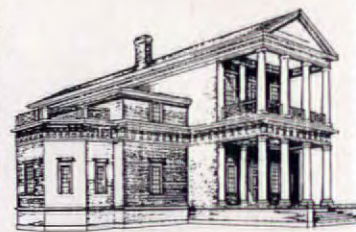
Stoop — The landing and stairs, covered or uncovered, leading to the main entrance of a house.

Umbra or Umbrage — From the Latin meaning "that which offers shade." Victorians used this word to refer to a porch or verandah.

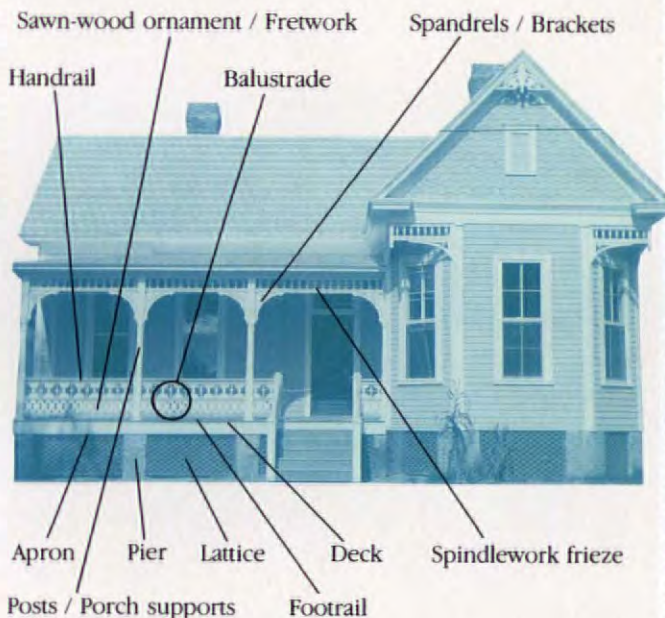
Verandah — From the Hindi word *varanda*, denoting a roofed, open gallery or balcony. It was used in the 19th century for a wide roofed porch extending along one or more sides of a building, and designed for outdoor living.



Piazza

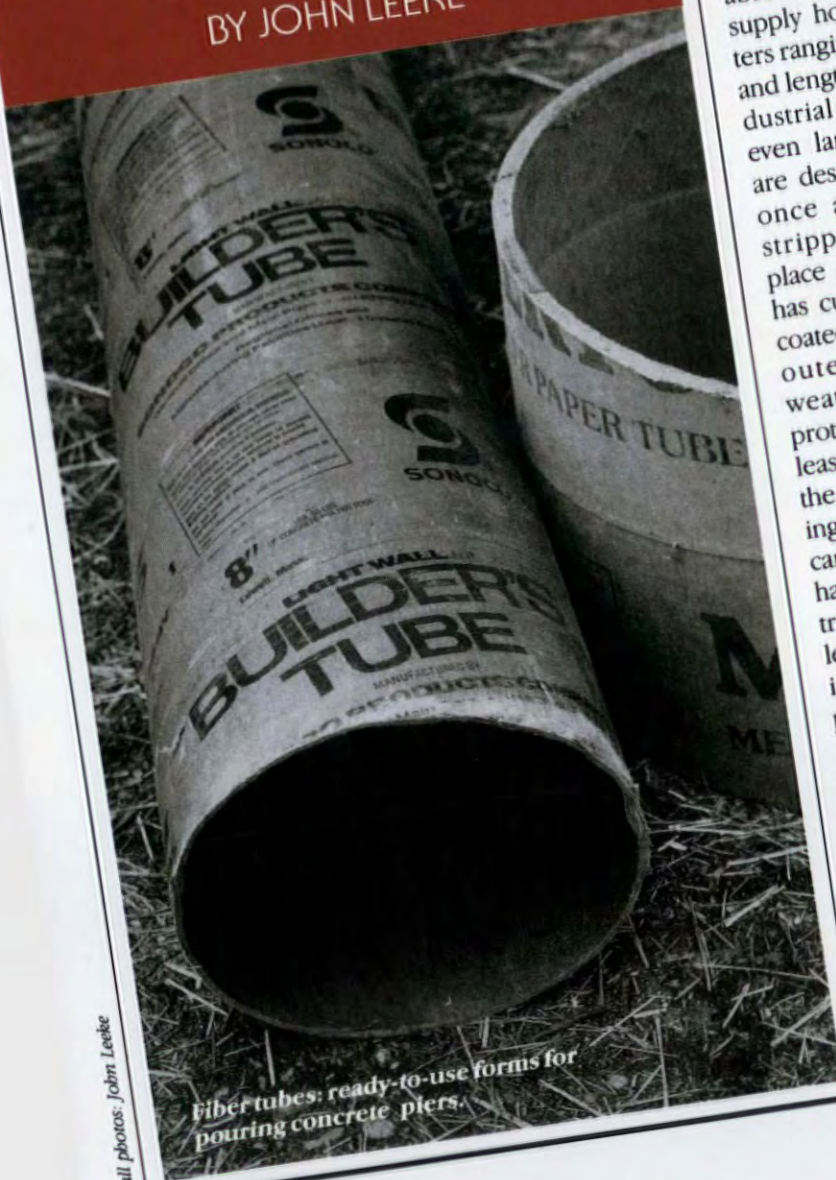


Double-Storey Portico



How TO BUILD PORCH PIERS WITH FIBER TUBE FORMS

BY JOHN LEEKE



Fiber tubes: ready-to-use forms for pouring concrete piers.

all photos: John Leeke

A

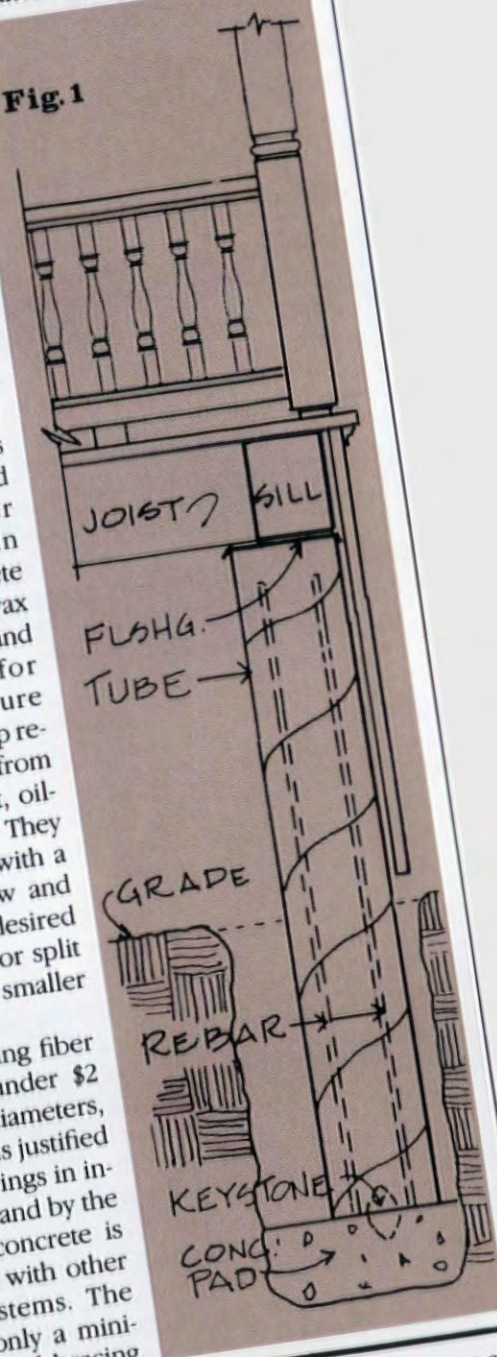
porch is only as sturdy as its foundation. So in restoring your porch, be sure to examine the legs upon which it rests. If rebuilding is necessary, using fiber tube forms to pour concrete piers can make a lot of sense. They are an economical way to provide stable structural support, and they needn't detract from the historic character of a house. Moreover, settling or winter frost heaving won't shift the porch, opening up joints between wooden parts and allowing water to run in, as sometimes happens with shallow foundations. Over many years, this repeated exposure to water and ice adds up to serious deterioration and expensive maintenance. Piers that stand on a wide pad and extend well below the frost line will be sturdy and help minimize future maintenance expenses.

Facts About Tube Forms

Tube forms are large cylinders of spirally plied cardboard-like fiber used to mold round concrete columns. They are available through building-supply houses in diameters ranging from 6" to 24" (and lengths up to 12'). (Industrial versions come even larger.) The forms are designed to be used once and then either stripped off or left in place after the concrete has cured. Most are wax coated on their inner and outer surfaces for weather and moisture protection, and to help release the concrete from the form; as a result, oiling is not required. They can be cut readily with a hand or power saw and trimmed to the desired length, sectioned, or split into half-round, or smaller partial columns.

The cost of using fiber tube forms — under \$2 per foot for 8" diameters, for example — is justified by the labor savings in installation time, and by the fact that less concrete is required than with other pier-form systems. The forms need only a minimum of external bracing

Fig. 1



JULY/AUGUST 1990

to keep them plumb while the concrete cures, making clamps and ties unnecessary. Cleanup is minimal as the forms are not reused.

Here's a list of what you'll require to build concrete piers from tube forms:

- Fiber tube forms: a sufficient length to build all piers; 8" diameter adequate for most projects.
- Ready-mix concrete: enough to fill tubes. The typical capacity for an 8" tube is 50 lbs. dry measure per foot of tube, or roughly 0.6 of an 80-lb. bag.
- Reinforcement bar (rebar): 1/4" diameter, as required (available at building- or masonry-supply houses).
- Brick-bat (piece of brick) or 3" stone: one per pier.
- Shovel: to dig hole.
- Cross-cut or sabre saw: to cut tubes to length.
- Hacksaw or bar cutter: to cut rebar to length.
- Sighting level, chalk line, etc.: to align tubes.

Installation

Step 1: Dig the hole.

Determine the approximate location for your piers. In most cases, you should site a pier directly under each porch post or column. Sometimes, piers are also needed under a joint in the sill or to support an especially long stretch of open porch. Hang a plumb bob from the underside of that portion of the porch you wish to support, and mark the position of the bob on the ground. Dig a hole at each pier location, making the hole approximately twice the diameter of the tube you're using. Also make it as deep as the frost depth for your area (about 3', for example, where winters are moderate) or until you hit hardpan. The bottom of the hole should be centered on the final position of the pier and should be flat.

Step 2: Pour the pad.

To form a pad for the pier, pour some concrete into the hole until it is five or six inches deep. Be careful not to knock dirt off the side of the hole — dirt mixed with concrete will compromise its strength. Settle or level the concrete roughly. While the concrete is still wet, set a brick-bat or 3" stone in the center of the pad so that half of it sticks up above the surface (see Figure #1); this stone acts as a key to prevent the pier from sliding off the pad. Let the pad set up for at least 24 hours.

Step 3: Position the tube.

Cut a piece of tube equal to the distance from the pad surface up to the final height required for the pier. Brush any dirt off the pad and set the tube on the pad directly over the keystone, then fill in six inches of dirt around the outside of the tube. Tamp the dirt to hold the tube in place. Check the tube with a level to be sure it is truly vertical and in the correct position, then continue to shovel in dirt and tamp it until the hole is filled. The compacted dirt will hold the tube in the correct position when the concrete is poured, and it is usually all the support that is needed for porch work. (Piers that extend more than 2' above ground may need temporary bracing.)

Step 4: Pour the concrete.

Cut pieces of rebar two inches shorter than the length of the tube. Prepare a batch of concrete and pour some into

the tube until it is about one foot deep (see below for what to do if tube access is blocked). Work the lengths of rebar into the concrete, placing them about 1 1/2" in from the side of the tube and about every four inches around the circumference of the tube. Continue to fill the tube, holding the rebar in the correct position. Settle and compact the concrete by working it with a wooden stick as it is poured into the tube. Check the pier one last time for correct positioning.

Step 5: Remove the tube. Let the concrete cure at least seven days before putting a load on the piers. The tube forms should remain in place during this process, as they assist with the hydration of the concrete; thus, other curing aids (such as wrapping the pier with damp burlap) won't be needed. Once the concrete has cured, strip the form by making two or more vertical cuts with a power saw and pulling the form apart, or by making one 12" cut with a linoleum knife and then peeling the form off spirally. Either way, avoid scoring or marking the surface of the column.

When Access to the Form is Blocked

When you install a pier under an existing porch, the top of the tube may be blocked by the sill it will eventually support. Here's how to place the tube in its final position and still fill it easily.

1. With a sabre saw, cut a 6"-high U-shaped opening in the top of the tube (see Figure #2). This is easiest to do before you position the tube.

2. Form a simple funnel out of sheet metal. A 2' length of 6"-diameter stove pipe works well. Leave the seam open and flatten one end of the pipe.

3. Have a friend hold the funnel in place as you shovel in

Fig. 2

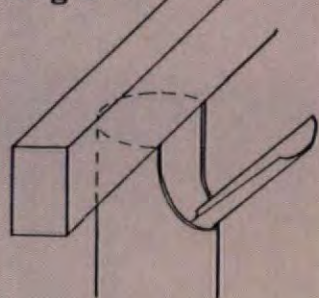
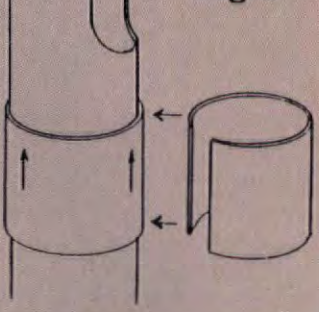


Fig. 3



When working solo on a tube with blocked access, hold the fill funnel in place with improvised straps.

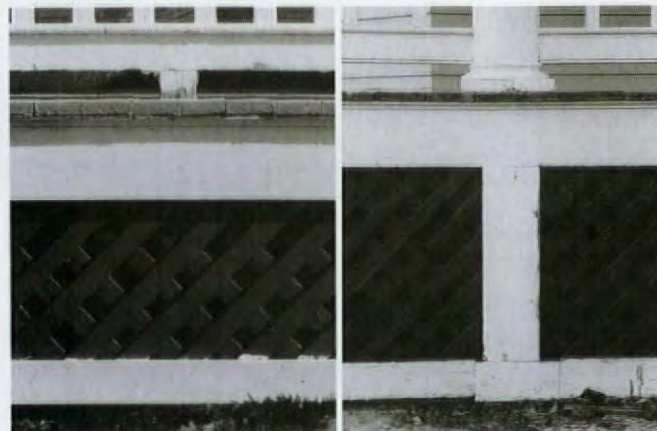


To fill a tube to capacity using a door, slide the door up the tube in stages as you add concrete mix (top), then top off the tube when the door is at its maximum height (above).

concrete. If you're working alone, rig up a sheet-metal strap fastened to the open end of the funnel and screwed to each side of the sill (see photo, page 39). Begin filling the form using this funnel.

4. When the concrete nears the bottom of the U-shaped opening, make a door to cover it (see Figure #3). Cut a 6" length of tube and split it up the side. "Clip" the door around the tube form. If the door doesn't open wide enough without breaking, remove a 1- to 3-inch strip along

Two traditional porch-apron treatments that will conceal a poured-concrete pier: lattice without stile (left) and lattice with stile (right).



the split to widen it. Slide up the door as you continue to fill the form. If there is not enough spring in the door to hold it in place, tie it closed with wire or cord, leaving it loose enough to slide.

With practice, I found I could run the concrete right up against the sheet-metal flashing and sill (see photos, left). If you have trouble with this, just get as close as you can (within an inch) and level the top surface of the concrete when you have finished. When the concrete has set, fill the gap with a short piece of board and tapered wood-shingle shims.

A Note About Under-Porch Appearance

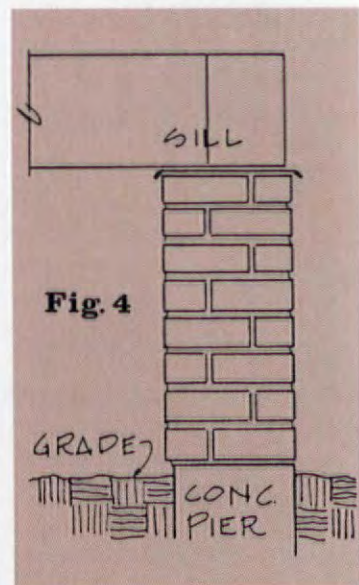
The above-grade appearance of concrete cylinders under the porch probably won't fit in with the historic character of your house. But as most old porches have a lattice framework to fill the gap between the ground and sill, the piers won't be readily visible. If your house is missing such latticework and you're not sure what style is appropriate, check old photos of the building or make note of what is used on porches of similarly styled houses in your neighborhood.

In my community, there are three types of lattice construction, and all of them can be handled easily with concrete piers.

Brick Pier: If you need brick piers, you can stop the concrete pier just above grade level and continue up to the sill with brick (see Figure #4).

Lattice without Stile: When your porch calls for a long run of lattice without any breaks, simply remove the tube form and paint the concrete pier black. Once the lattice is up, the pier will recede into the shadows (see photo, below left).

Lattice with Stile: It was common practice to divide the lattice with vertical stiles. Stylistically, this provides visual support for the column above. Practically, it hides your concrete pier (see photo, below right).



Future maintenance of whatever design you choose will be much easier if you build individually framed lattice sections, rather than just nail lattice to the porch. When you build the lattice, be sure to provide for access under the porch by installing at least one frame that swings out on hinges or removes easily with wood screws.

Contributing editor John Leeke is a consultant and contractor who helps homeowners, contractors, and architects maintain and understand early buildings: RR 1, Box 2947, Sanford, ME 04073; (207) 324-9597.



RESTORING A PERIOD **PORCH**

Documentation often makes a crucial difference in deciding whether to “go back” or not — to restore something that is old to its even older incarnation. It certainly did in Fred and Marty Myers’ case. Owners of a 19th-century Federal-style house located in Maryland (shown here), the Myers were fortunate to find historic photos that confirmed their sense that something about the facade and front porch was “not right.” Without such archeological evidence, restorations based on guesses are often doomed to failure — no matter that they’re undertaken with the best of intentions. Even with documentation, the Myers’ porch restoration was a tricky one. ◀

by Jerry Trescott

M

arty and Fred Myers purchased their circa-1840 brick house in 1977, shortly after they were married. The house, built in a late Federal style, stands in Uniontown, Maryland, a one-street village that is a collection of predominantly pre-1850 buildings. Although constructed at that time, their house had been radically altered over the years — including the porch.

Fred recognized that the principal facade, which appeared to be three storeys from the street, simply did not conform to the date of the house; neither did the shed roof, which sloped to the back. Through conversations with older residents in the area, Fred discovered that major storm damage to the house had occurred around 1900, which had led to the change to a shed roof from a gable roof. The front wall had been raised to three storeys at that time to capture attic space — although it was not the livable third floor it appeared to be from the street.

Both Marty and Fred wanted to restore the building to its 1840s form, and our firm, Mason-Dixon Restorations, had agreed to tackle the project. But the Myers were reluctant to proceed without archeological evidence of earlier details. Luckily, two period photographs turned up in 1985, discovered by a friend who was searching for historic material on Uniontown. The photos were from different eras: One appeared to be taken in the 1870s or '80s (judging by clothing worn by the subjects), and the other pictured the house in the early 1900s after the roof had changed. To Marty and Fred's surprise, however, the roof was only one of the modifications that had been made over time. Although at that time a full porch ran the length of the main house, both photos revealed that the original porch was roughly *half* its size; it had just framed the front door! Amazingly, when the porch was enlarged, the original posts had been retained and simply relocated within the longer porch. The photos also showed that a railing, constructed of short balusters and raised panels matching those in the front door, had once joined the posts. Unfortunately, these had been discarded when the porch was modified.

The village of Uniontown is in the National Register of

Historic Places and is also a local historic district. Any changes to buildings require approval by the Historic District Commission, and so the Myers made their application using the historic photos as evidence. I began the restoration after approval was given, in the fall of 1988. Phase One involved removing the shed roof, and then dropping the front wall to its original height. That project required little detective work, as the original brick was laid in a Flemish bond, whereas the later brickwork was done in a common bond. Next, I reconstructed the sawtooth brick cornice at the eave, and installed a standing-seam metal roof. In the summer of 1989, I eagerly started working on the porch.



Old Photos Lead to Other Finds

The porch restoration began with the demolition of the "new" porch. When the full-length porch was built in the early years of this century, the original posts were reused but repositioned as the porch was widened. With the pe-

The original porch was roughly half the size of the present one, and had just framed the front door. But when the porch was enlarged, the original posts were retained and relocated within the longer porch.

riod photo in hand, it was possible for me to determine the prior placement of these posts from the mortises cut into them for the railing. (The corner posts had two mortises 90 degrees apart; the inner posts had one.) A remnant of the wrought-iron latch for the old gate remained in place on one post, and also helped with positioning.

Next, I removed the 20th-century porch deck, revealing the early brick foundation. This masonry established the exact width of the 1840s porch and was also usable for the reconstruction. I discovered another clue on the brick wall of the house, where a "ghostline" of the railing was still apparent. This confirmed the railing height suggested by the mortises in the posts.

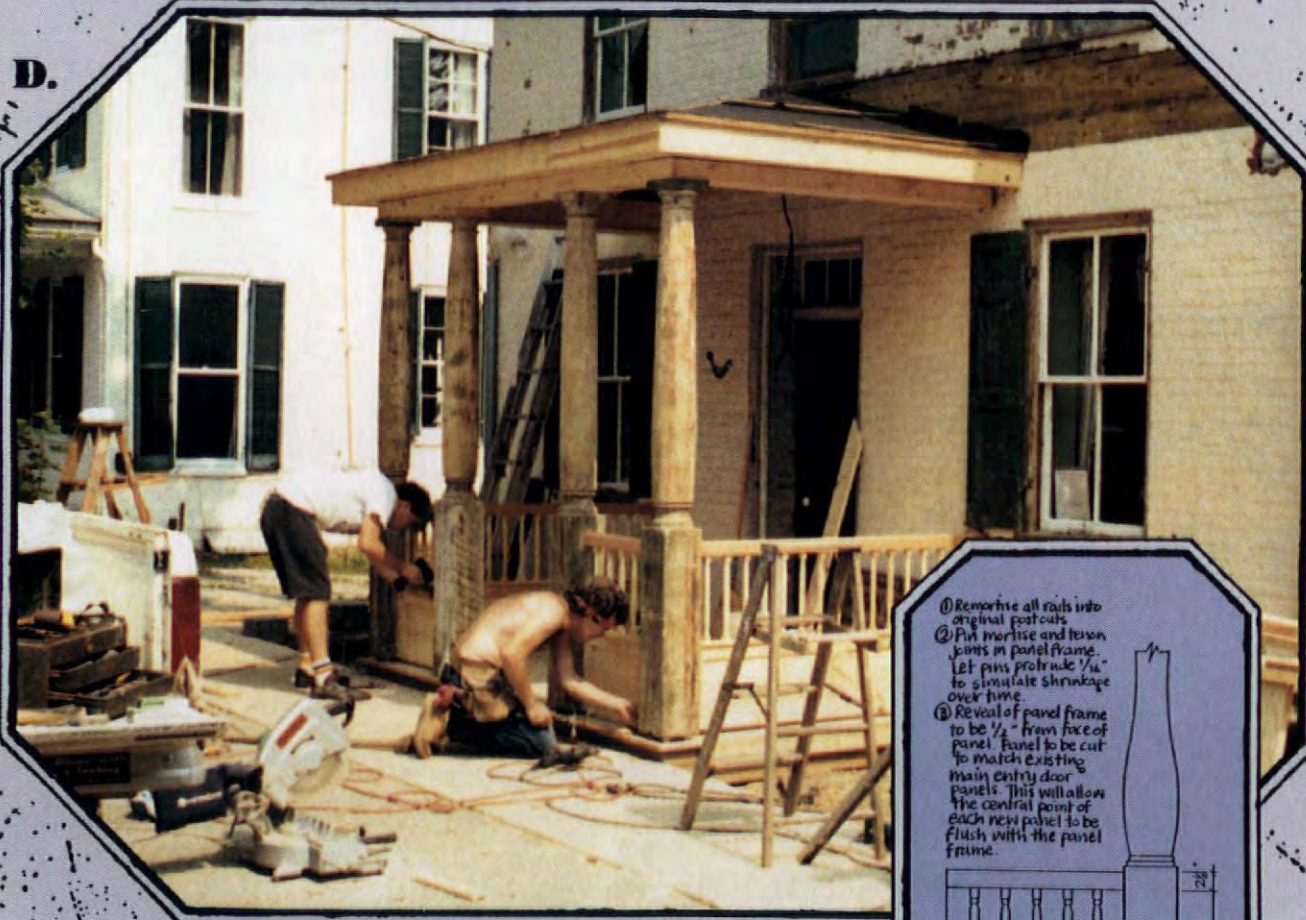
A similar ghostline clued me in to the roofline of the early porch and the dimensions of the porch cornice; these were difficult to determine solely from the photo due to the angle at which it was taken. Although the house had been painted at the time of the 20th-century porch expansion, the wall area covered by the first porch remained naked brick. The resulting outline indicated the original pitch of the roof, showing that it had peaked directly below the center second-storey window. In fact, I found bits of old roofing material upon checking the



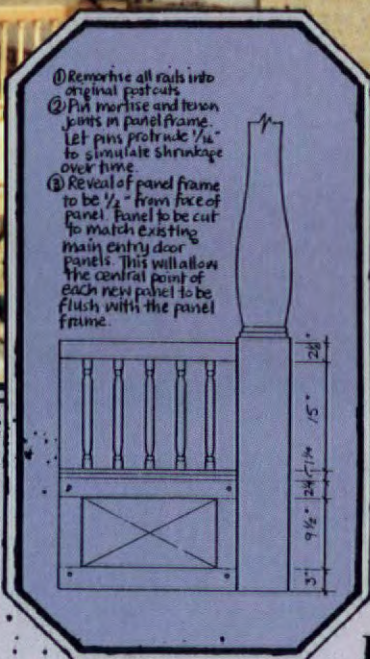
B.



C.



D.



E.

A. (Preceding page) In 1988 the house still retained the shed roof from c. 1900 and the full-width porch expansion from about 1915. **B.** The second historic photo from the turn of the century: new roof but old porch. **C.** Removing the full-width porch revealed a paint ghost on the brick facade, and a clue to the original porch roof pitch. **D.** Reconstructing the early porch meant building a new deck, railings, and roof, but reusing the original porch posts and brick foundation. **E.** The dimensions of the railing balusters and panels were scaled from the photos using evidence on the posts as a guide.

underside of the sill. Now how to re-create the porch cornice? It happened that a large ogee moulding I took from the later porch exactly matched the cornice moulding seen in the historic photo. With the Myers' approval, I decided to use this moulding in the reconstruction.

The Rebuilding Begins

I made scale drawings of elements that had disappeared in the early 1900s, again using the period photos as a guide. The dimensions of the posts were known, so I used these measurements to scale the railing, balusters, and raised panels that connected the posts. New parts were made from eastern white pine.

The porch posts were solid yellow pine and in excellent condition after nearly 150 years. So I decided to reuse them yet another time. When the full-width porch was built, the posts had been set on cast-iron porch supports set into concrete blocks, which undoubtedly contributed to their longevity. Supports were used in the restoration as well; this time, however, modern aluminum versions were selected for the job rather than the obtrusive cast-iron models, which couldn't be salvaged.

As mentioned, the original brick porch foundation was also put back into service. It too was in fine condition, not even needing repointing. I built a new deck on this foundation, using pressure-treated lumber for joists and sills and tongue-&-groove Douglas fir for flooring. All flooring joints were primed with thinned finish-coat paint before they were laid. Barely noticeable vent slots were constructed in the framing at ground level to promote under-floor air circulation.

The nature of the porch ceiling, hidden in the old photo, was a mystery without clues. Porch-ceiling wainscoting would have been an easy solution, but not historically correct for this project. After surveying other buildings in the area built at the same time, I decided instead to run a bead on 1" x 6" boards, rip them to random widths of 4", 5", and 6", and apply them to the ceiling. A porch light is a 20th-century necessity, so we settled on an exterior-grade "high hat" recessed light fixture in the porch ceiling. This allows for the conven-

ience of modern lighting without its source being readily visible. It also eliminated the need for a hanging or wall-hung lantern, which would never have been used historically, although they were a common feature by the 1930s and are common today.

A standing-seam roof that matched the main roof completed the work. It was flashed with sheet tin cut into the brick courses, as would have been done originally, rather than cementing 7" or 8" pieces up against the wall. The exposed metal was then painted to match the roof — also a period practice.

The Final Steps

Layers of paint revealed that the main entry and shop doors were originally painted dark green. This color was then computer-matched with a paint analyzer, and the chosen oil-based product applied.

With the porch reconstruction completed, the remainder of the project called for the return of historically accurate window sash and paint colors. I removed the 20th-century 2-over-2 windows and replaced them with historic 9-over-6 sash on the first floor, and 6-over-6 sash on the second floor. Old glass was used in all these windows. Colors for the project were selected in different ways. The period photo had what appeared to be white posts, door, window sash, and frames, with the handrail of the porch railing being a somewhat darker color. Layers of paint on these elements revealed that

the posts had always been white (as had the window and door frames), and that both the main entry door and the shop door originally were dark green. This color was then computer-matched with a sophisticated paint analyzer, and the chosen oil-based product was applied.

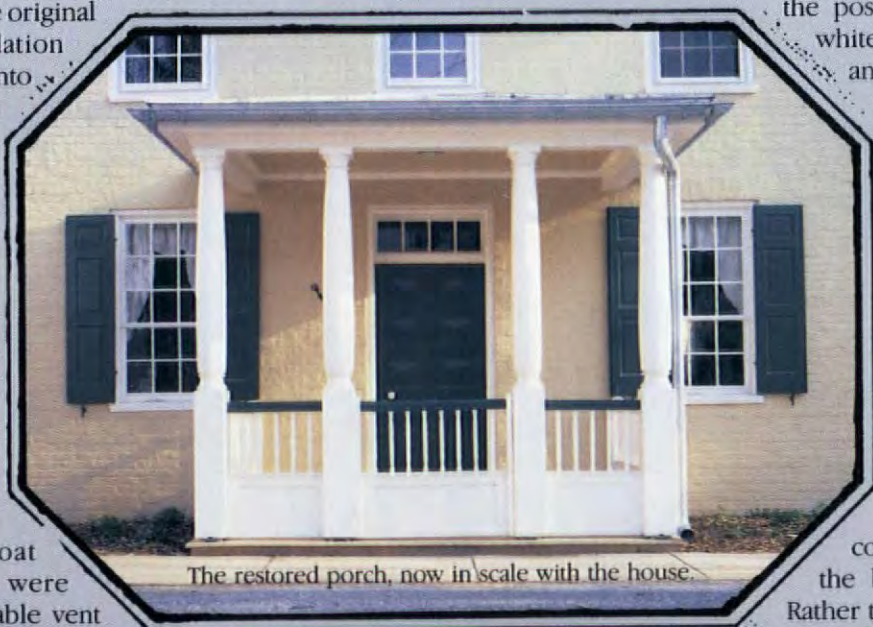
A historically accurate cream color was selected for the body of the house.

Rather than choose the standard late-19th-century colors of

slate grey for the porch floor and sky blue for the ceiling, both were painted the body color, only two shades darker.

The streetscape of Uniontown was dramatically altered by our restoration. A few months after completion, however, one neighbor said he had trouble recalling what the house looked like before the reconstruction, and that the porch appeared as if it had always been there.

Jerry Trescott is a restoration-design consultant practicing in the mid-Atlantic region, and is partners with Ron Nix in Mason-Dixon Restorations (3364 Uniontown Road, Uniontown, Maryland 21157).



The restored porch, now in scale with the house.



REVIVING

RAILINGS

R

ails and balusters on porches, it seems, are always a problem. If they've survived without being torn off or boxed in, then they're usually feeling their age from years of exposure and being sat on. Often, the whole balustrade is about to fall off. Here are some techniques for repair.

Hand Rails

The point where hand rails (also called cap rails) attach to columns or posts takes much or all of the weight of the rail (and a few fannies), and is prone to water penetration and rot. The majority of rails attach to columns or posts in a butt joint, where the rail end and support surface meet without overlapping. Three suggestions for attachment follow.

Toenailing: This connection, seen on much original work, is still worthwhile if the rail or support wood isn't too weak or chewed up to take a nail. Use galvanized finishing nails (for both weather resistance and grip), and predrill nail holes when possible to minimize the chance of splitting the rail end. Toescrewing is also feasible if there is enough

solid wood in the rail to accept the screws, recess the heads, and then plug them. Screws grab wood better than nails can, and will draw members together where gaps are a problem. Using galvanized, bronze, or stainless-steel screws improves weatherability, and the long, slim design of Sheetrock screws (in galva-



Shifting of the porch opened these toenailed rail joints, allowing water to enter and weaken the ends.

nized or stainless-steel versions) can come in handy.

Kneeplates: Kneeplates are a standard method of anchoring rails to bulkheads on boats and ships. They can also be used for porch work where toenailing is impractical, as long as the rail can be maneuvered away from the support to install the plate. Kneeplates need not be elaborate: Use store-bought corner braces or make them on site by fashioning extruded angle metal (such as aluminum) or bar stock to fit. First, the plate is mortised into the rail's end grain so it will be hidden when the rail is in place. Then the plate is positioned and screwed to the support, and the rail lowered onto it and secured from below. Of course, kneeplates also can be installed upside-down (and with less effort), but this method leaves them completely visible and exposed to the effects of the weather.



Knee plates mount to the porch support first. Then the rail (mortised at the end to accept the plate) is angled on and attached from below.

Rail bolts: These specialty fasteners are designed for joining and anchoring interior staircase rails. They are tricky to use, but will also work outdoors when the porch supports are of solid wood and when there is enough clearance to move the rail onto the mounted bolt. True rail bolts are half wood screw and half machine bolt, quite long (up to 6"), and have a special star-shaped nut that can be tightened from the side with a screwdriver. Rail bolts are getting hard to find in hardware stores, but common hanger bolts are almost as long and will usually suffice if notches are ground in the flats of the nut. Rail bolts require two holes in the rail end — one for the shaft of the bolt, and another at right angles to start and tighten the nut. The shaft hole



A banger bolt and adapted nut (above) will often double for a true rail bolt. The nut and machine screw fasten the rail through two holes (below left) after the wood screw has been anchored in the support. Foot rails (below right) last longest when constructed to shed water.

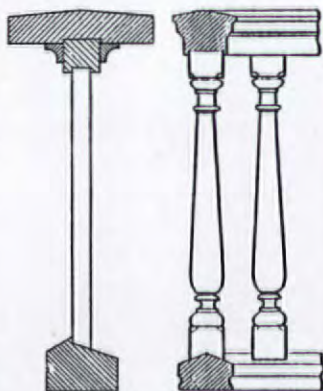
Before assembly, seal the end of the rail (and the area it covers on the support) by backpriming with prime coat or thinned topcoat paint. Rail end grain — like all end grain — is more likely to wick up water, which leads to paint loss and decay if it is left unprotected.

Foot Rails

Foot rails (the lower rails) have their own support and water problems. Without adequate bracing, they may sag over time, pulling balusters away from the hand rail and opening joints to water entry. The solution is to add support blocks every three or four feet of run — typically, a single block halfway down the rail. Popular designs are rectangles, trapezoid shapes, or uncomplicated turnings that match decoration on the porch. Support blocks last longest when they are simple, have a minimum of contact with the porch floor, and are painted on all surfaces before being toenailed in place.

Foot rails are also in a prime spot to collect snow and rain. Most are milled with a profile that sheds water readily, such as a camber (arch) or gable-like peak. If foot rails rest right on the porch floor, however, they prevent water from running off and trap it between rail and floor. The proper location for a foot rail is 3" to 5" off the floor, or roughly the height of the plinth block or base on which it rests at the supporting post or column.

Common railing designs: square balusters on a sloping foot rail (left), and turned balusters on a peaked foot rail.

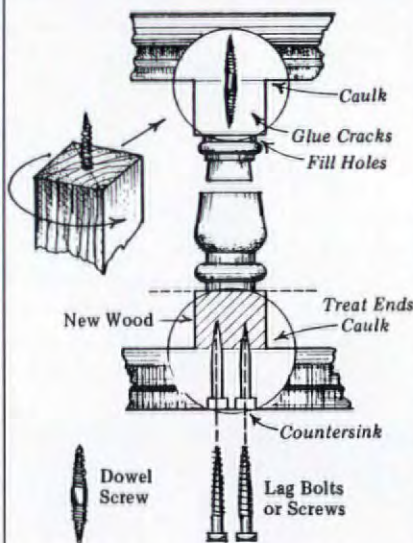
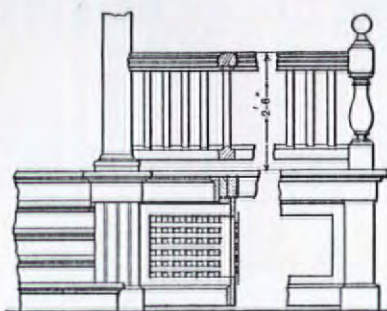


should be bored below the centerline of the rail so that the bolt will support the bulk of the rail when it is installed and the nut hole is not too deep to be workable.

When reattaching rails, remember that the rail support junction is a likely water trap. Reduce the chances that water will collect in this joint by fitting the rail end snugly to the contour of the support, particularly when meeting a curved form such as a turned post or column. Before assembly, seal the end of the rail (and the area it covers on the support) by backpriming with prime coat or thinned topcoat paint. Rail end grain — like all end grain — is more likely to wick up water, which leads to paint loss and decay if it is left unprotected.

Balusters

Open joints and exposed grain are also the Achilles' heel of the woodwork between the rails, whether turned or sawn. Many balusters are held captive in the top rail by a moulding or a rabbet and toenailed in place at the foot rail (or at both rails). When the old wood is too cracked or brittle for more toenailing, screws can be useful. Toescrewing baluster tops (after predrilling holes) is gentler than the blows of a hammer, and screw heads usually disappear under the hand rail. Where railing construction is such that balusters can be rotated in place, dowel screws (which have wood screws at both ends) sometimes work. First, pilot holes are bored in the baluster end and rail



Above: 1898 porch detail with railing relationships typical for the era (note the position of the foot rail on the column base). Below: Repair ideas for turned balusters include dowel screws at tops, lag bolts at bottoms, and replacing unturned sections with new stock.

underside. Then, the dowel screw is started in either piece and the baluster screwed into place. Dowel screws are less successful for baluster bottoms because of the shape of the rail; securing from below with the use of lag screws often works well.

Balusters are also prone to rot at their bottoms because the end grain lacks the protection of a top rail and is in a part of the porch which sees a lot of weather. When ends are identical (and deterioration is not extensive), balusters can sometimes be inverted in the railing, thereby relocating strong sections to the foot rail and weak sections under the hand rail. Where this isn't possible, repair is the next best route. Epoxy consolidants and fillers are a worthwhile investment for restoring hard-to-duplicate balusters such as turnings or sawn fretwork. Turned balusters with square ends are also candidates for partial replacement. Here, the damaged end is cut from the baluster right where the turned portion begins. Then, a new block of the same size is doweled and glued to the baluster, making a nearly invisible repair. When balusters are severely rotted, complete replacement (with stock or custom-made items) is the most practical option. Whatever the choice, backprime and caulk all joints before assembly to give the railing a head start on its next hundred years.

When balusters are severely rotted, complete replacement (with stock or custom-made items) is the most practical option. Whatever the choice, backprime and caulk all joints before assembly to give the railing a head start on its next hundred years.

THE PRAIRIE SCHOOL

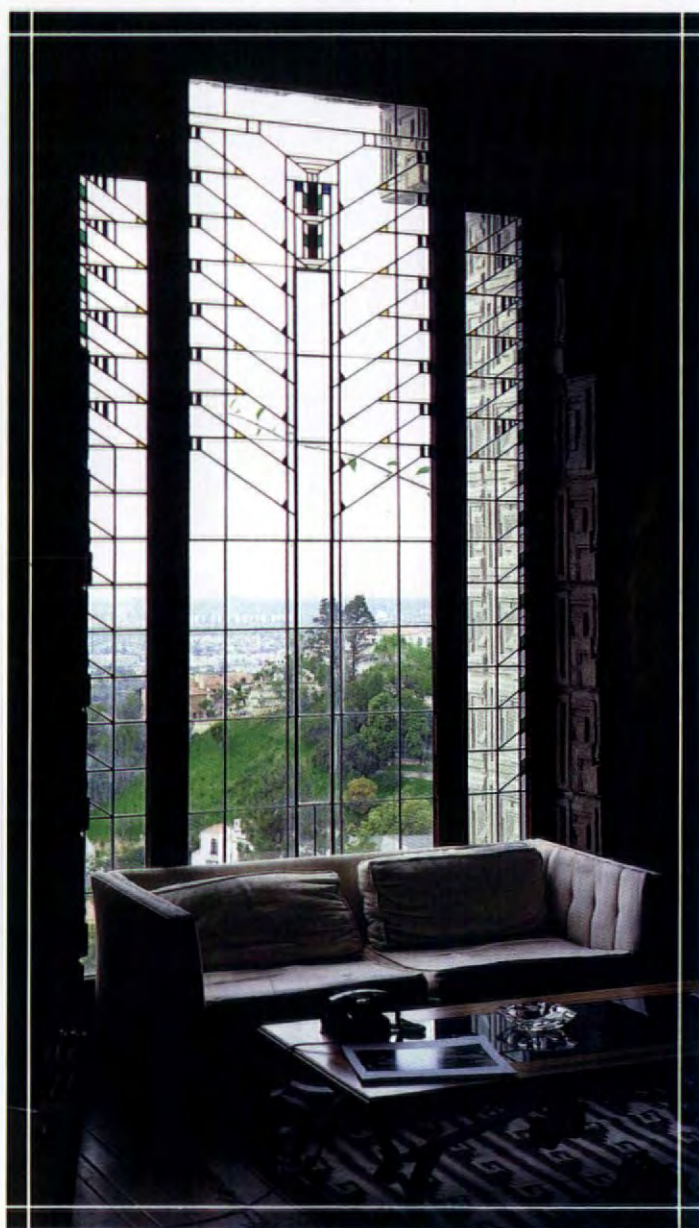
BY JAMES C.
MASSEY &
SHIRLEY
MAXWELL

~~~~~

America's suburbs abounded with Queen Anne-style peaks and turrets and machine-made ornament in the 1890s, but an almost unbelievable change was already in the air. For over two centuries we had copied and reinterpreted European styles and periods. Now an entirely new architecture — one that we still call “modern” — came to life on our Midwestern prairies. On the outskirts of Chicago, a group of young architects led by Frank Lloyd Wright was rethinking American building for the 20th century. Having helped produce the ultimate symbol of life in the industrial age, the skyscraper, these Midwesterners were ready to redefine the most basic building type, the house.

The Prairie School unofficially began in 1897, when Frank Lloyd Wright, Dwight Perkins, Robert Spencer, and Marion Hunt formed a coterie at Chicago's Steinway Hall, an eleven-storey office and theater building designed by Mr. Perkins. The Chicago School, as the movement initially was known, encompassed both skyscrapers and houses — not illogical, as many architects worked in both fields. Later, however, the term Chicago School was reserved for commercial-building designs, and Prairie Style or Prairie School was used to describe residential work. Considering its lasting impact and worldwide renown — it was the

*Stained glass was a major decorative element in the work of Prairie School architects. Frank Lloyd Wright's Charles Ennis House (1924) in Los Angeles exemplifies the Prairie School's effort to design entire environments for their clients.*



all photos: James Massey





*Chicago's Robie House (1908-09) stands as Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie School masterpiece. Its low, sweeping lines with vertical*

*accents and integration of interior and exterior space creates an impression of size on the small urban lot.*

first American architectural effort to be taken seriously in Europe — the Prairie School was short-lived in the United States. It flourished from 1900 until the beginning of the first world war, and then lost out to the fashion for revival styles, particularly the "Early American" Colonial Revival, in the post-war building boom. It never became the predominant style, although it had plenty of middle-class followers, particularly from Minnesota to Iowa.

**T**he low, earth-hugging Prairie house must have looked quite alien to eyes accustomed to mainstream, turn-of-the-century architecture. Easterners generally chose rather traditional Colonial Revival or European-inspired Beaux Arts-style houses in which to live. On the West Coast, those who wanted a change looked to the California Bungalow (see "Who They Were," page 26). In the Midwest, however, where cities were booming, there was a fresh crop of architects and clients who were open to new ideas not influenced by European historical precedents and formal architectural training.

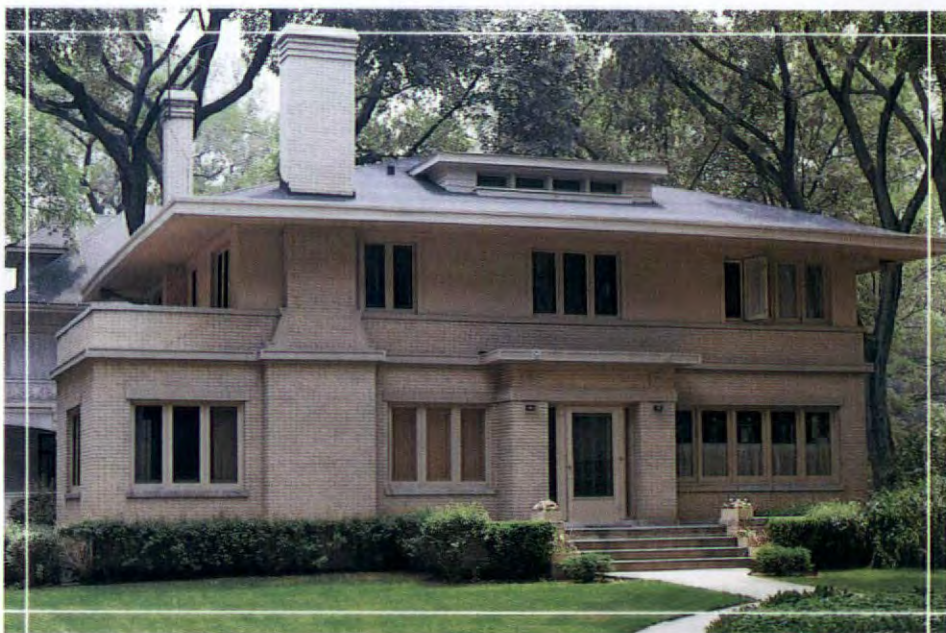
The new style did not spring up unheralded. Its designers had studied English art and social critic John Ruskin and the neo-gothicists, were well acquainted with the British Arts and Crafts movement, and were alert to the Japa-

nese aesthetic that became popular in the late-19th century. Gustav Stickley's magazine *The Craftsman* was also part of their design diet. But it was the influence of the Chicago architect Louis Sullivan that guided the young generation of architects to develop a truly regional style. Mr. Sullivan is credited with building the first skyscrapers and with the development of a remarkable system of terra-cotta ornamentation, but one of his greatest contributions was as an unofficial, beloved teacher. Many of the future Prairie architects worked in his firm of Adler and Sullivan, including Mr. Wright, who referred to him as "The Master." Mr. Sullivan's writings and his informal lectures, titled the "Kindergarten Chats," had a far-reaching influence. He tirelessly promoted a creative, individualistic approach to architecture not tied to style but to a way of thinking about buildings and building. He wanted to foster an architecture of democracy in the Jeffersonian tradition.

With an emphasis on fitting architecture into the environment, it is not surprising the final form Prairie houses took. Because prairies were flat, it followed that Prairie houses should be built low to the ground. Horizontal lines were punctuated by vertical elements — big chimneys, masonry piers, and tall casement windows — just as the prairie's horizon was broken by an occasional tree. The low roofline might be hipped, flat, or gabled, but it usually



*George W. Maber designed solid, somewhat traditional-looking buildings with gable roofs, but the low, wide sweep of the eaves for the William Ison House in Kenilworth, Illinois, suggests his alliance to Prairie values.*



had wide overhanging eaves and enclosed rafters, which provided shelter from the harsh prairie winds. There was no basement (unhealthy) or attic (inefficient). The general effect was likely to be that of a "high-waisted" building, with the visual emphasis placed on the top half of the second-floor level, accentuated by string courses or horizontal wood trim. The sturdy, square pillars that anchored the entrance and the corners of the building became almost a cliché of Prairie Style design.

Like Craftsman houses, Prairie houses claimed honesty in the choice of building materials. In contrast to the picturesque jumble of materials found in Queen Anne buildings, Prairie architects strove to use a single building material whenever possible. Although wood and stucco were often employed for economy's sake, masonry was

preferred — particularly the new, streamlined Roman brick in light colors.

Of the architects associated with the Prairie School, Frank Lloyd Wright was preeminent. As Sullivan's favorite assistant, Mr. Wright handled many of the firm's residential commissions while his bosses were busy with commercial buildings. Mr. Wright simultaneously built his own after-hours practice, much to Sullivan's displeasure when the

## READING THE OLD HOUSE

## THE PRAIRIE SCHOOL

Ribbon windows become part of the wall instead of holes punched into it — here a rectangular bay 1 sash deep by 6 wide  
Sash are casements with leaded glass in typical Prairie/Art & Crafts pattern

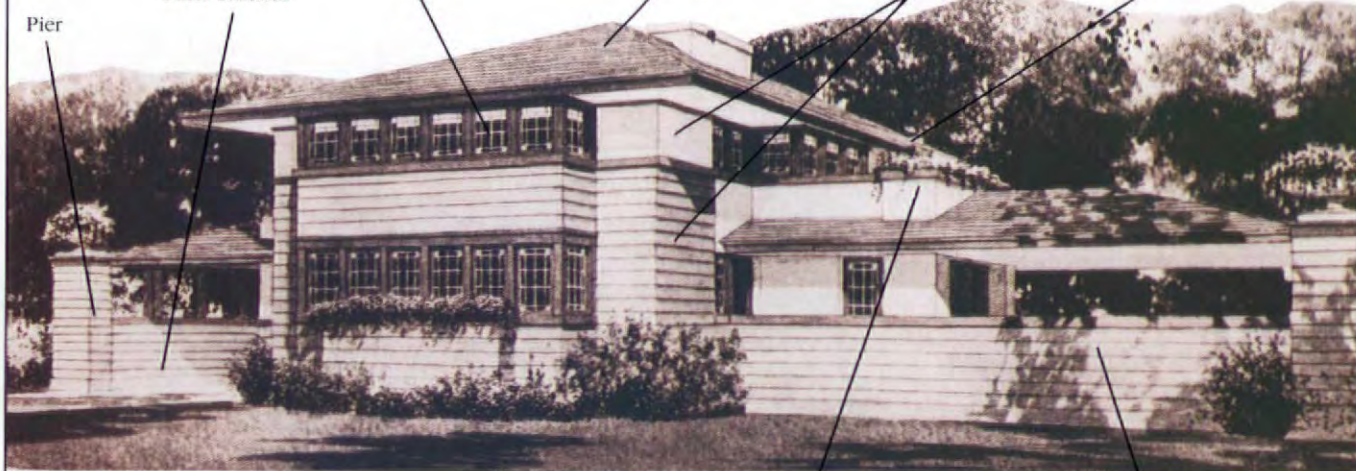
Low, pyramidal roof, massive but low and plain chimney

"Shirtwaist" effect: Wide clapboard siding with stucco at the second floor

Wide projecting eaves

Porte cochere

Pier



House is low to the ground (no raised basements)

2nd floor porch

Sideporch

**Key:** Low, sweeping horizontal planes cling to the Midwest landscape accented by vertical massing and projecting planes which provide counterpoint to the wide sweep of the house.

Source: Russell F. Whitehead, *Good Houses* — a collection of typical architectural styles in wood published by Weyerhaeuser Forest Products, 1922



"bootleg" enterprise came to light.

Following his awkward and rather sudden departure from Adler and Sullivan, one of Mr. Wright's first independent commissions was the William H. Winslow House in River Forest, Illinois (1893). Although it had a bit of floral ornament, a la Louis Sullivan, the Winslow House marked the first stage in the development of Mr. Wright's style. It was simpler and more

squared-off than later Prairie houses, but the important horizontal stresses were already evident, as well as a wonderful hipped, Prairie roofline. Conservative buildings with a family resemblance to the Winslow House became popular in the builder suburbs of the 1910s, but Mr. Wright had greater ambitions.

The citizens of a democracy, he declared, needed "something better than [a] box" in which to live. So he set out to dismantle the old, cold box to make way for a warm, "organic" architecture. Despite its distinctive exterior appearance, the real achievement of the Prairie house lay in its freed-up floorplan and the way it made walls, inside and out, seem to disappear. At its best, the Prairie house was not a collection of walls defining empty spaces, but



*Prairie School aesthetics are treated to a solid, middle-class interpretation in this Monrovia, California, bungalow — horizontal lines, ribbon windows, wide eaves, square piers at the entry.*

flowing space that deemphasized the surrounding walls. Windows were no longer simply holes punched into walls, but "light screens" that invited the outdoors in. Interior walls gave way to head-high movable partitions that allowed air, light, and people to circulate freely. Without walls, one centrally placed chimney was enough to warm the whole house, physically and psychologically. The

Prairie house was more than a "style" — it was a call to revolution in the design of living spaces.

Two relatively low-budget Prairie designs that Mr. Wright did in 1900 for *Ladies' Home Journal* ("A Home in a Prairie Town," February 1901, and "A Small House with 'Lots of Room in It,'" July 1901) were never built, but they were similar to more expensive houses that were constructed later. Their cross-shaped floorplans tell a lot about how the Prairie house was developing. Granted, the "Small House" has a gable roof as a sop to middle-class housewives. But the Prairie townhouse has a grand two-storey living room. These *Journal* designs helped disseminate the Prairie House idea to readers back East.

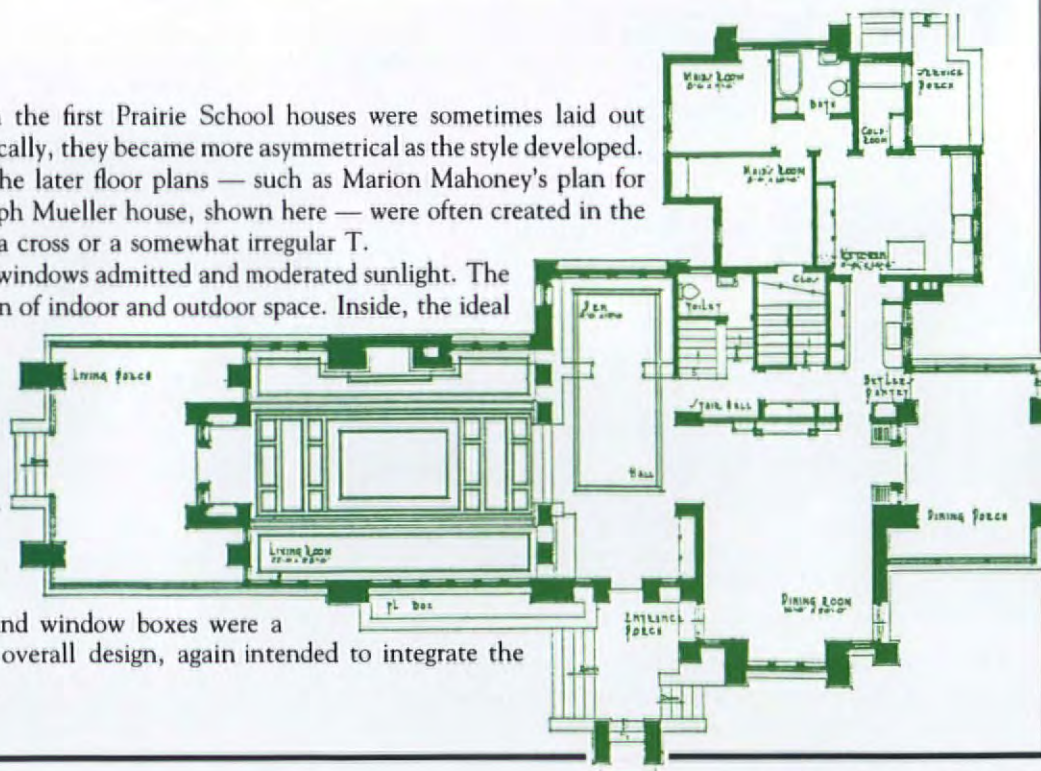
Mr. Wright's great Prairie School masterpiece was the

## READING THE FLOOR PLAN

Although the first Prairie School houses were sometimes laid out symmetrically, they became more asymmetrical as the style developed. In fact, the later floor plans — such as Marion Mahoney's plan for the Adolph Mueller house, shown here — were often created in the shape of a cross or a somewhat irregular T.

Strips, or ribbons, of windows admitted and moderated sunlight. The goal was total integration of indoor and outdoor space. Inside, the ideal

was a flowing, "one-room" floor plan, except where walls were needed for privacy, as in bedrooms and service areas. Porches, terraces, and *porte cochères* extended the horizontal sweep of the house. Planters and window boxes were a significant part of the overall design, again intended to integrate the inner and outer spaces.





Frederick Robie House in Chicago's South Side (1908). The Robie House is designed to fit an urban corner lot — a far cry from the Prairie ideal of sweeping suburban lawns. Yet it gives the impression of great spaciousness, and meets Prairie standards in other important ways as well. For one thing, it has hardly any exterior walls; instead, long rows of windows beckon the outdoors in and lead out again to sheltered porches. It also has three complex levels of hipped roofs, a massive central chimney, and is constructed of Roman brick and concrete bands, all flowing horizontally.

**F**rank Lloyd Wright's personal life, always subject to unexpected detours, led him to Europe for an extended spell in 1910, and later to Japan and California. The Prairie

School did not just dry up and blow away with Mr. Wright's departure, however (although he was known to propagate such an idea). It continued to flourish as other architects found the limelight and developed their own styles. Some had been Mr. Wright's coworkers at Adler and Sullivan, and his colleagues on the top floors of Steinway Hall.

*Left: The William Gray Purcell House (1913) in Minneapolis, Minnesota, was designed by Purcell & Elmslie, who were Frank Lloyd Wright's strongest competitors before World War One. Right: Mr. Wright first used decorative "textile" cement block on the Mrs.*



*Wood banding on stucco became a favorite exterior treatment of the Prairie School, as seen in Frank Lloyd Wright's Edward R. Hills Residence (1906) in Oak Park, Illinois.*

Among the most prominent of these were the Minneapolis architects William Purcell and George Elmslie, whose firm produced some of the best work of this style including the Harold Bradley House (1911) in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, and the Merchants Bank (1912, with George Feick) in Winona, Minnesota. Walter Burley Griffin, another no-

*James Madison Millard House ("La Miniatura," 1923) in Pasadena, California. (Actually, Walter Burley Griffin had developed a workable system of concrete blocks called Knitlock in 1917, well before Mr. Wright's efforts.)*





table Prairie School architect, began his career in Mr. Wright's office and pioneered a split-level, vertical organization of space in contrast to Mr. Wright's horizontal flow. Mr. Griffin went on to international fame with his prize-winning design for the new Australian city, Canberra. Marion Mahoney, who later married Mr. Griffin, was an MIT graduate whose contribution to the Chicago School was mainly in the form of beautiful renderings, many of which she executed for Mr. Wright's office. She also designed,

under Mr. Wright's direction, much of the furniture and interior ornament for his houses. Barry Byrne entered Mr. Wright's studio in 1902 and remained until 1908, when he started his own practice. Two important houses by Byrne — the Franke House (1914) in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and the Clarke House (1915) in Fairfield, Iowa — show a more cubic, severe (see Reading the Floor Plan, page 50) enclosure of space and traces of Mr. Sullivan's sense of form. Other notable Prairie School architects include Robert C.

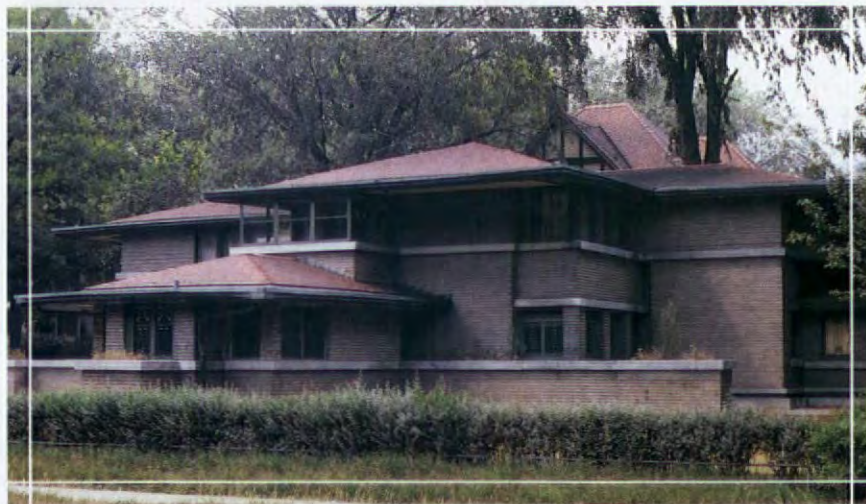
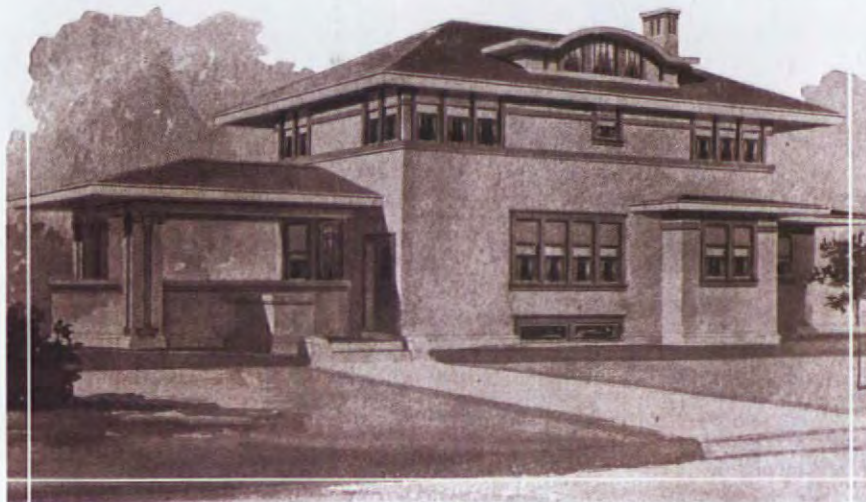
Spencer, Jr., who wrote more than twenty articles for *House Beautiful*; Thomas Tallmadge; John S. Van Bergen; George W. Maher; Vernon S. Watson; Charles E. White, Jr.; William Drummond; Eben E. Roberts; and George Niedecker, who designed several of Mr. Wright's better interiors, including those of the Coonley and Robie residences.

Along with the *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Craftsman* articles, the Prairie-house concept was also spread by pattern books, published in the Midwest and distributed nationally, which offered plans at low prices. A good example is *Radford's Cement Houses and How to Build Them* (The Radford Architectural Company, Chicago, 1909), which presented several designs that nicely blended Prairie styling with early-20th-century building technology. Many such houses, built from pattern-book plans or designed by local architects, are scattered about the country, especially in the Midwest. The favorite vernacular form was a Foursquare with an off-center entrance and hipped roof, but gable roofs were also common.

Prairie houses shared some general characteristics with Stickley's Craftsman homes and Greene & Greene's California Bungalow: simple exteriors, functional floor plans, integration of house and environment, and an emphasis on horizontal lines and wide eaves. There was also a common interest in carefully finished interiors featuring natural woods, often set into panels on plastered walls; large fireplaces, frequently surrounded by richly colored, unpatterned tilework; and an overall emphasis on human scale.



Top: Radford's office produced hundreds of Prairie School plans, including this 1909 design, #8215 from Radford's *Cement Houses*. Middle: Copper sheathing at the ribbon windows distinguishes Frank Lloyd Wright's Meyer May House (1909) in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Bottom: Ribbon windows, flat roofs, and wide eaves are features of architect William Drummond's house (1910) in River Forest, Illinois.







# GREEK REVIVAL TRAGICOMEDY



*In this old-house-living drama, moving a  
circa-1840 farmhouse took much more than  
just getting the building up on wheels.*

BY RUTH MOSSOK JOHNSON





What motivates someone to uproot her husband from the small historic house he loves . . . have another old house cut in half and trucked across a major thoroughfare disturbing traffic flow for two days . . . subject her family to camplike living conditions for almost two years . . . and incur incredible expense, frustration, and heartache — just to have an 1840 Greek Revival farmhouse for us to restore and call home?

I'm not sure.

But thus begins the story of David McCall Johnston, artist, and Ruth Mossok Johnson, me, his so-motivated wife.

The real seeds for this adventure were sown at a lunch that I had with my architect friend, Betty Lee Seydler-Sweatt. Bent on keeping David in the Detroit area (despite his readiness to relocate business and family to the East), I made the mistake of asking Betty Lee whether she knew of any historic houses in danger of being demolished. I was counting heavily upon David, who loves restoring old houses, being unable to walk away from a new

challenge. I hadn't counted, however, on how quickly Betty Lee would say yes. Her full response — "the Gravelins House" — was all I needed to hear. I jumped up from the table and grabbed my friend by the arm. We left lunch

behind and drove to a 19th-century farmhouse that I'd passed dozens of times without noticing it, behind a drive-in hamburger stand in a thicket of overgrown foliage and trees.

"It's perfect," I heard myself announce after a brief tour, noting the house's generous proportions, ample closet space, and generally needy condition. Betty chuckled as I drove home in a frenzy to tell David what we were going to do.

David did not chuckle. He stared at me blankly and slapped his forehead, saying, "You are kidding, aren't you? Do you know what's involved?" But he knew I wasn't kidding. This was



*Above: our "mobile home" en route. Left: Here's how our kitchen looked — note the severed furring — after it was joined to the rest of the house.*



my vision, one in which I knew he'd be a willing partner — no matter what was involved.

The first couple of steps seem uncomplicated in retrospect. I logged a lot of miles looking for an appropriate piece of property on which to site the house. At the same time, I contacted the Farmington Historic Commission to inquire about the details of obtaining the house. I also set about the task of getting a mortgage.

We were incredibly fortunate to find a large wooded lot in Franklin, Michigan, secluded from shopping malls and office buildings. And the Historic Commission was thrilled that we were undertaking this project. The mortgage? Impossible! What bank would finance *pieces* of a house? They viewed our plans not just with skepticism but with utter disbelief. Needless to say, we were dismayed — until we found a credit union willing to provide the funds.

It didn't get easier after that. Finding a house mover for this unusual job proved difficult and time-consuming. After countless phone calls, we finally connected with a fellow who had moved homes for Greenfield Village, the respected museum in Dearborn, Michigan, a complex of over 100 restored buildings.

By this time, the project was in full swing, with Betty Lee on the payroll and David, thankfully, committed to going ahead. I can still picture him several days before our house was scheduled to go up on skids, giving what I fondly recall as his "sermon on the mound." With great gusto and not a bit of bravado, he shared knowledge gained from four previous restorations, describing in technical terms how easy it was to disjoin a house using crowbars in the corners. When the day came for the house to be separated, I stood in horror as the workman took a buzz saw and sliced through the house in neither a corner nor the area David had prescribed! Moments later, my horror turned to hysterical laughter as I recalled Dav-

## I stood in horror as the workman took a buzz saw and simply sliced through our house.

id's incredibly authoritative-sounding words. The house, now severed in two, went up on skids, along with the barn and garage. Tarpaulins and sheets of plastic were draped across the exposed sections in readiness for a mid-August move. And there it stood for months, while we attempted to coordinate all the players and permits. We dealt with house movers, county officials, the City, gas company, telephone company, electric company, police, cable-TV channels, and traffic personnel, to name just a few.

With each passing day, David and I became more frantic.

Our money was tied up, our nerves jangled. The worst part was that we were now living in a tiny cottage because our own home had sold unexpectedly in one day. The cottage, a horrible excuse for a house but the only available rental in the city, was so small that you had to walk in a single file to get from room to room. Our family ate in shifts seated on a couch pulled up to the dining room table. A veteran of many years of summer camp, I'd always told David I could live anywhere. But camp sure looked good at this point.

On the two coldest days of the year, in December, our Greek Revival house and all its associated pieces moved. It was placed on the designated site after two days en route, and there it was to endure seven months of snow, rain, wind, and hail. The Michigan elements ripped at the torn tarpaulins as we waited for a builder to bid on this mess we called "my vision" and friends jokingly called our "mobile home." David, depressed, refused to even drive by the house.

Betty Lee had put out the word that we were looking for a contractor. Not surprisingly, contractors were afraid of the project —



*Above: Our half-a-house is met with wholehearted dismay by Betty Lee and my Dad. Left: The foundation of poured concrete and concrete blocks was built up in the hole over which the house was suspended.*





and not just because David and I insisted on a respectful restoration.

That following July, we were ready to begin. Builder, architect, mason, plumbers, electricians, well digger, roofing expert, carpenters, plaster specialists, surveyors, building engineers, assorted craftspersons. . . . It seemed a miracle that this cast of thousands (for so it appeared) assembled on cue.

The subsequent work and the general chaos that ensued is another story in itself. In recalling those days, in the hottest summer in Michigan's recorded history, I still laugh to think of my dear father entering the house and to see the carpenters tearing up the



1950 hardwood flooring. "My goodness, Ruth," he exclaimed. "They're ripping out the only *good* thing in this whole house!"

He couldn't fathom the thing of beauty that our house would become. Even David and I despaired sometimes of seeing my vision — by now, *our* vision — realized. But of course it was. The labor of love has become a house of love. It simply had come on a difficult journey.



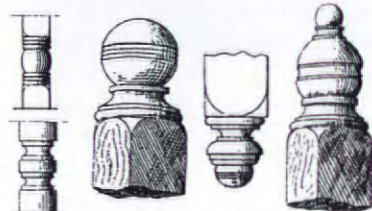
*Above: Greek columns were missing from our front porch, which had been entirely glassed in. We had appropriate columns reproduced. Left: In the restored living room, Americana collectibles find a home on an antique "smiling whale" shelf.*



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Photos: Gordon Bock

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lumping house parts — like porches — sometimes need a lift. Enlisting automotive jacks for

even light-duty construction jacking is a poor idea. These devices are built with only temporary service in mind and their capacity is limited to a couple of tons or so. The proper tools for lifting sections of buildings are heavy-duty portable jacks. These are hand-operated machines capable of lifting very heavy loads short distances. Three types are common:

- **Bell-bottom screw jacks ("house jacks"):** Screw jacks operate on the threaded-screw-and-nut principle, which gives them impressive lifting capacities, up to 24 tons in large models. Screw jacks have long been favorites for leveling and moving houses because of their simple con-

## JACKS HEAVY-DUTY

struction, positive operation (there is little chance a screw will slip), and gradual, gentle movement. To jack, the screw is rotated up out of the threaded base, either by turning the head with a bar slipped through holes (like a capstain) or working a ratcheted lever. Screw jacks should be clearly labeled with their rated sustaining capacity — the maximum load in tons which they are designed to sustain.

- **Ratchet jacks ("railroad jacks"):** Ratchet jacks employ a rack-and-lever mechanism to jack via leverage — much like an automobile bumper jack. They operate much quicker than a screw jack, and have been put to work for decades in shipyards and for jacking empty boxcars to make repairs. In operation, downward pressure on an inserted handle pries up the central toothed rack of the jack one tooth at a time, locking it at the new height with a spring-loaded pawl (catch). Most ratchet jacks have two lifting points, a central cap and a lower, off-center "toe" for jacking

where there is very low clearance. Ratchet jacks are usually labeled with two capacity ratings, sustaining and lifting. While the sustaining capacity may be substantial (up to 20 tons), the lifting capacity may be much less (12 tons, for instance) because of the physical effort required to operate the jack.

- **Hydraulic jacks ("whiskey jacks"):** Hydraulic jacks depend on the movement of oil, rather than a mechanical means, to lift loads. They are compact, which makes them well suited for jacking in tight spaces. They also have excellent lifting capacities (2 to 55 tons is common for heavy duty units) and, while not as fast as a ratchet jack, require much less effort to operate. Because of their efficiency and ease of operation, hydraulic jacks are very popular for all kinds of lifting and pressing applications. Hydraulic jacks should always have their maximum safe load indicated on a nameplate on the body of the tool.

*continued on page 60*

**a. Hydraulic jacks** in 2-, 5-, and 20-ton sizes. Caps in small models may screw out to aid set-up.

**b. Bell-bottom screw jack.**

**c. Ratchet jack.** The lifting "toe" (just above the base) moves with the main rack.





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continued from page 58



Left: When possible, use a bearing plate ( $\frac{1}{8}$ "- $\frac{1}{4}$ " steel plate) between the jack and the work to distribute the force of the jack over a broader surface. Right: Always stand clear of the bar or lever when jacking, in case it kicks back or gives way suddenly.

Businesses that deal in construction or rigging equipment usually sell heavy-duty jacks, or they can be rented from tool rental companies. Screw and ratchet jacks are big, expensive (\$150 and up), and fairly specialized tools, so consider leasing by the week for \$30 to \$50.



afety is a critical part of using heavy-duty jacks. The potential for disaster is very real if a jack slips or fails, dropping the weight of a load all at once. The first step is to inspect the jack itself:

- Make sure you fully understand the operation of the jack in both lifting and release modes. Ratchet jacks, in particular, may be designed with two release methods: reverse ratchet (for lowering under load) and speed trip (for rapid lowering under no-load conditions). Speed-trip releases can be hazardous if engaged accidentally, and jacks with this feature are generally not used on potentially dangerous jobs.
- Inspect the jack for damage or telltale signs of wear. Look for: 1)

cracked or damaged housings, 2) loose fasteners (bolts or rivets), 3) poorly operating swivel heads or caps, 4) worn or damaged threads, 5) rack teeth that are chipped, cracked or broken, 6) wear or defective operation of rack and safety pawl, 7) leaking hydraulic fluid, 8) scored or otherwise damaged plunger. *Never* use damaged jacks.

Proper set up is also a part of safe jack usage:

- Never load a jack beyond its rated lifting capacity.
- Position the jack so there is adequate room to swing its bar.
- Provide a firm support under the jack base so it won't move under load. Brace the jack if there is a possibility that it will move during jacking. If the load is being lifted completely by several jacks so that it is otherwise unsupported, it should be braced with lateral struts to prevent the jacks from walking over all at once.
- Never set up a jack directly on the ground. Even soil that appears to be firm can compact easily and may shift, upsetting the jack. Instead,

place the jack on wide, thick boards, or cribbing.

- Never locate a jack near digging or excavated earth, or where there will be digging in the future. Plan placement so the jack won't have to be relocated halfway through the job.
- Always set the jack up plumb, on a horizontal surface. Jacks should also be placed directly under the load; off-center loading greatly increases the chances a jack will tip over.

Last, follow good procedure when using a jack:

- Never use oversize bars or "cheaters" — only those meant for the jack. Always remove the bar or lever when finished jacking.
- Never extend a jack screw, rack, or ram out of its case beyond its designed limits.
- Continually watch the work and the jack for signs of problems. Shifting or tipping of the jack may mean improper support, and increase the chance of the jack buckling out from under the load. Watch for movement in the work that may shift or release suddenly. When possible, jack with a partner.
- Follow the load with cribbing or blocking to support it in case the jack fails. Once the load is lifted to its final height, crib or block it with wedges so that the jack is completely relieved of the load.
- Don't rush. Jacking patiently, a step at a time, reduces the possibility of making careless mistakes that can lead to injuries. Slow, gradual lifting also minimizes the shock to the load being lifted (two-to-three turns per day on a screw jack may be plenty when leveling large building sections).

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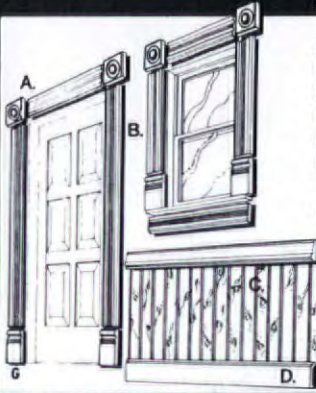
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## Double-Duty Deck Aid

Don't let the name fool you. The new Maine Deck Bracket is useful for building decks *and* restoring old verandahs and porches because they're all plagued by the same problems: sill rot and ant infestation. The deck bracket prevents the moisture buildup that promotes these conditions by creating a ventilation space between building and deck. It is bolted directly to the sill or framing of the building, and then attaches to



*A deck bracket prevents moisture buildup by separating the deck or porch from the house.*

the porch frame by a double header. It retails for \$19.95 per bracket and is available from lumberyards and home centers. For a list of distributors, contact Crawford Products, Inc., 30 Winter Street, Dept. OHJ, West Hanover, MA 02339; (800) 225-5832.

## Traditional Screen Doors

New England Screen Door Company's reproduction screen doors are solidly made of mahogany and cedar, in eight traditional New England



*The first screen doors date from the 1890s.*

styles such as the door pictured left. Door patterns are true to the originals, but have been updated to feature removable screens so that in winter you can substitute panels of tempered glass (sold separately). Prices, including hardware, range from \$310 to \$600; custom sizes cost \$50 extra. For information: New England Screen Door Company, P.O. Box 128, Dept. OHJ, Bristol, ME 04539; (207) 563-1588.

## Porch-Post Bases

The bases for porch posts and columns should "breathe" to promote air circulation and drainage. Temple Aluminum Foundry makes such bases — unobtrusive compared to industrial versions, which overlap the bottom of the post. The base nails to the bottom of the wood post, and pressure from the porch holds it in place. Aluminum porch-post bases cost from about \$1 to \$13 apiece, depending on size, and are available at most lumberyards. For your local distributor, contact Temple Aluminum Foundry, Inc., P.O. Box 44, Dept. OHJ, Temple, PA 19560; (215) 926-2125.

*Porch-post bases range in size from 2" x 4" to 12" x 12".*



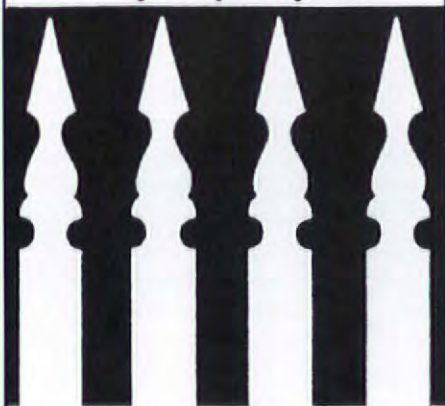
## Picket Authentic

If you've always envisioned your "dream" home surrounded by a white picket fence, then check out Texas Standard Picket Company's Victorian pickets. The company's cedar picket is an exact reproduction of one from the fence of an 1847 house in Castroville, Texas. The picket (left) first appeared on the Western frontier during the mid-1800s and peaked in popularity around the turn of the century, perhaps as a result of circuit-riding Methodist preachers who carried the design with them as they moved. The cost: \$2 per picket. For information: Texas Standard Picket Company, 606 W. 17th St., Ste. 304, Dept. OHJ, Austin, Texas 78701; (512) 472-1101.

*In this Victorian fence, frontier meets fleur-de-lis.*



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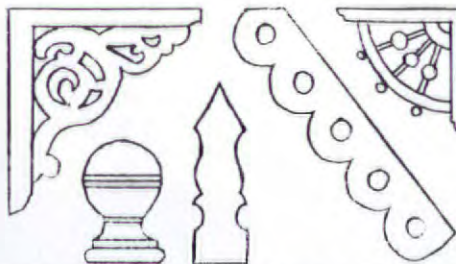
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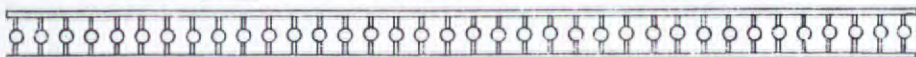
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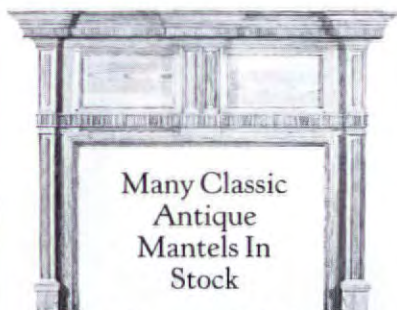
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## Greene & Greene Table

For each of their major residences, the Greene brothers handcrafted furniture to blend with the rich wood tones and motifs of the interiors (see "Who They Were," page 26). Designed for the Charles M. Pratt House in 1909, this octagonal living room/library table (shown below) is reproduced by furniture-maker James Randell. The table is crafted in mahogany with ebony and sterling-silver inlay. Its dimensions are 29" H x 54" W x 36" D. Made to order, it costs \$8,750. For information: James Randell, 768 North Fair Oaks Ave., Dept. OHJ, Pasadena, CA 91103-3044; (818) 792-5025.



*The table's silver inlay contrasts with the geometry of its drawer and legs.*

## Craftsman Curtains

"Give special attention to fabrics and needlework so that there may be no



*photo: Don Betts*

*Patterns that combine both stencilling and needlework are also available for the curtains.*

discordant note in the interiors," advised Gustav Stickley in *Craftsman Furnishings for the Home* (1912). And so he did. Today, Craftsman Curtains and Linens reproduces many of

his patterns for their handcrafted products made of textured fabrics. The Checkerberry Border Stencil on the curtain panel (shown left) is a bold design that originated at the turn of the century, and the poinsettia table runner is a natural flax-colored linen embroidered with white linen floss. All curtains and linens also can be made from a kit. Prices vary. For information: Craftsman Curtains and Linens, 1 Cider Mill Lane, Dept. OHJ, Upton, MA 01568; (508) 529-3416.

## Prairie-Style Print Table

When Frank Lloyd Wright built his own Oak Park, Illinois, studio, he also designed an elegant table for viewing his Japanese prints. A reproduction of this print table, as it became known, is now available. It's a gateleg table that opens up, making it useful as an occasional table in a room with limited space. Made of quarter-sawn oak with a medium



*This print table was also used in Frank Lloyd Wright's Francis Little House and the Susan Lawrence Dana House.*

brown finish, the table's dimensions are 46" H x 48" W x 44" D. Price is \$6,400, made to order only. Write for a free catalog: Heinz & Co., 1701 Clyde Park, SW, Dept. OHJ, Grand Rapids, MI 49509; (616) 243-9666.

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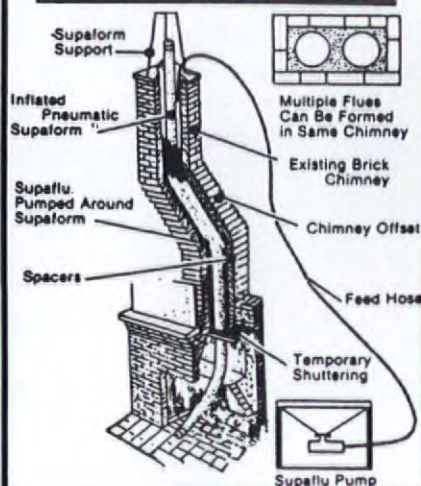
*All of the area-rug patterns also can be adapted for stair runners.*

*photo: Don Betts*



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For the houses shown in this issue, blueprints include:

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- **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.
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**M**ail-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.*

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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# LOUISIANA COTTAGE



The American Greek-Revival influence on the original Creole cottage resulted in this five-bay, center-hall house, which was popular in Louisiana from about 1830 to 1870. The raised floor makes it similar to those featured in Vernacular Houses (see back cover).

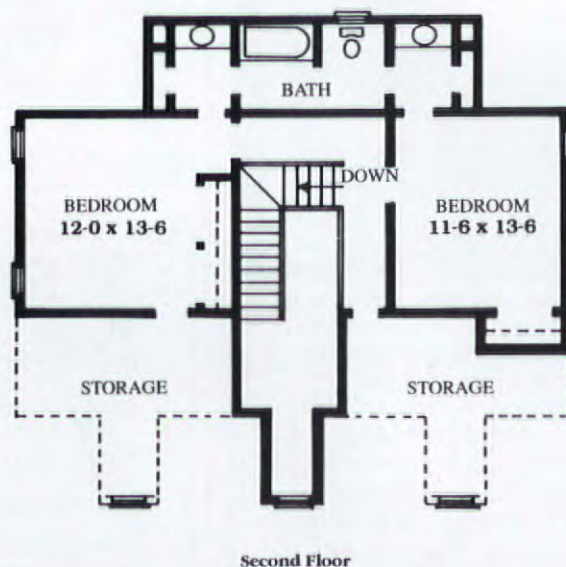
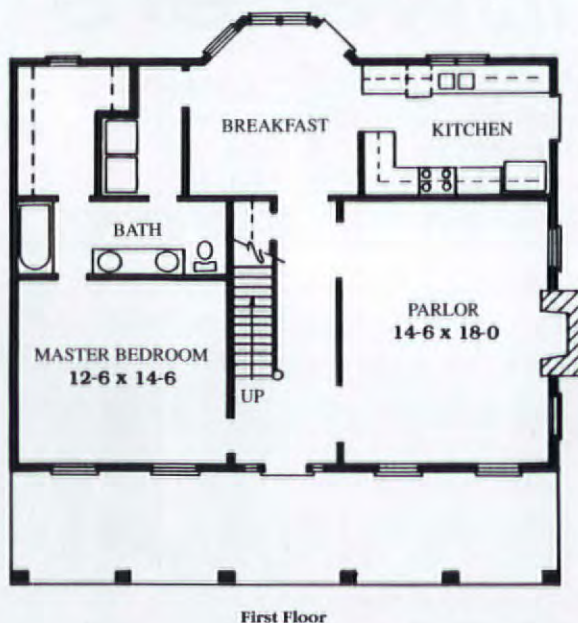
The floor plan is fairly compact, and makes economical use of all available space—note the storage areas tucked into the second storey. But

the house can still be easily added onto should expansion be necessary. The full-width porch enhances the house's overall proportions.

## Plan E-08A-HR

Cost: \$200  
\$250 (set of 5)  
\$285 (set of 8)

SQUARE FOOTAGE.....1758  
FIRST FLOOR.....1129  
SECOND FLOOR.....629  
CEILING HEIGHT  
FIRST FLOOR.....9  
SECOND FLOOR.....8  
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DEPTH.....40





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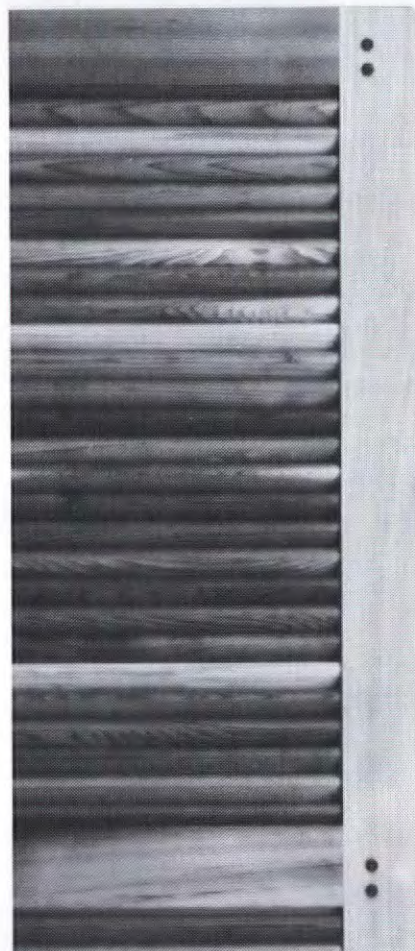


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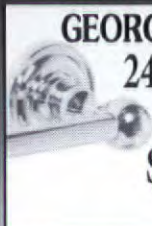


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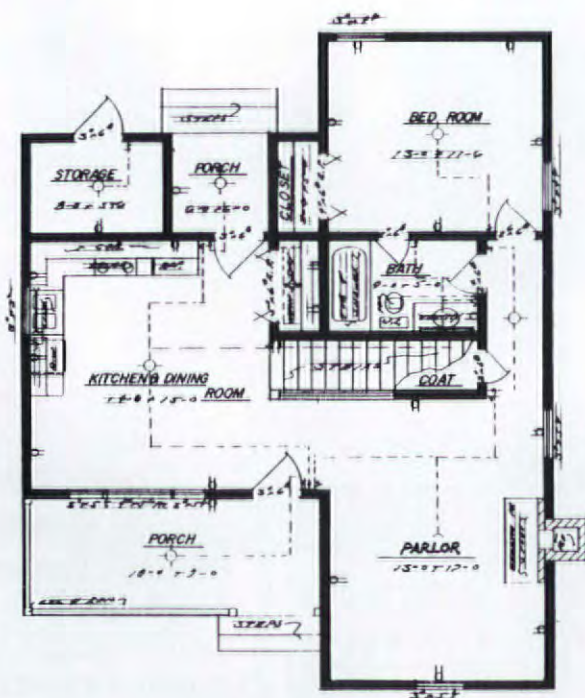


# T-PLAN FARMHOUSE

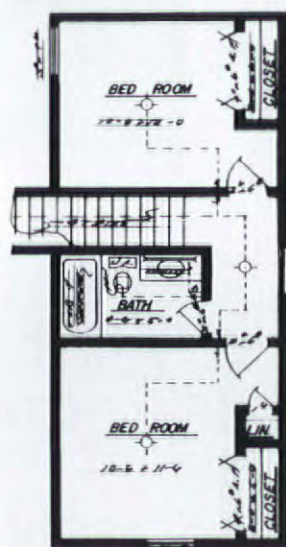


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room, which has the advantage of both an adjacent full front porch and a rear service porch. The first-floor bedroom could also serve as a study or guest bedroom.



First Floor



Second Floor

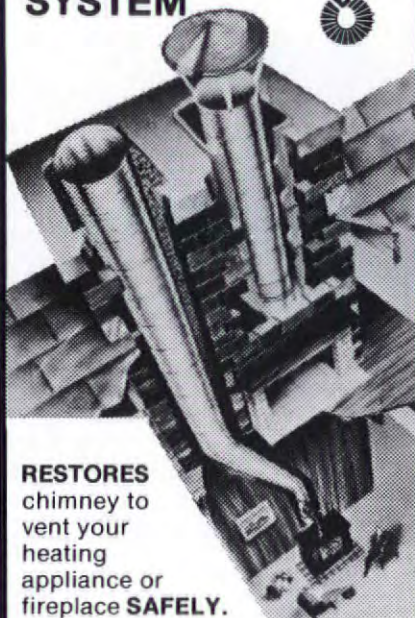
## Plan V-01A-WL

Cost: \$115  
\$185 (set of 5)  
\$236 (set of 8)

|                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| SQUARE FOOTAGE .....     | 1307 |
| FIRST FLOOR .....        | 922  |
| SECOND FLOOR .....       | 385  |
| CEILING HEIGHT .....     |      |
| FIRST FLOOR .....        | 9    |
| SECOND FLOOR .....       | 8    |
| OVERALL DIMENSIONS ..... |      |
| WIDTH .....              | 32   |
| DEPTH .....              | 38   |



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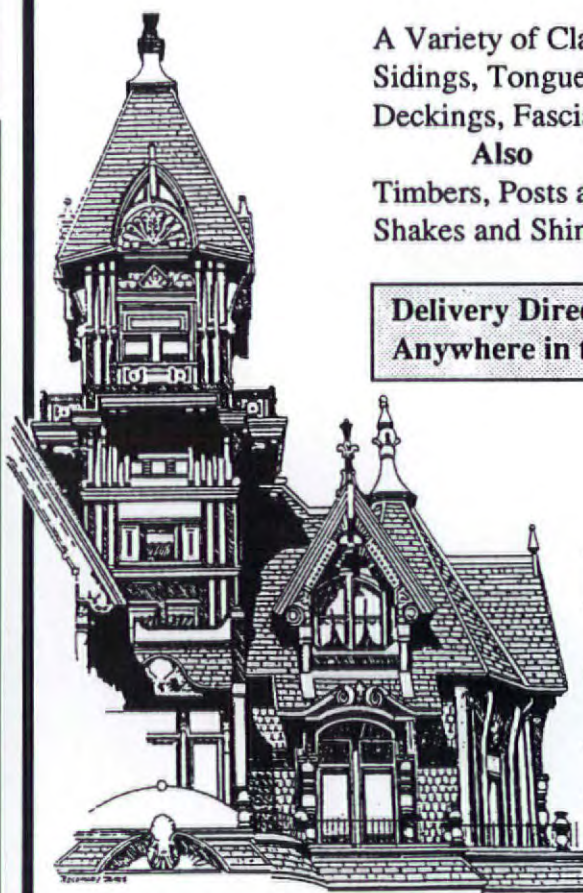
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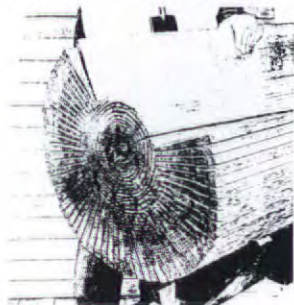
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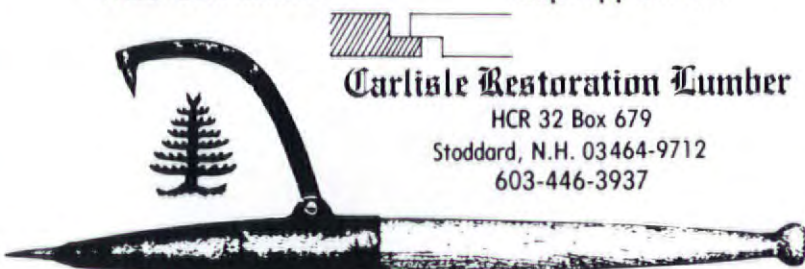
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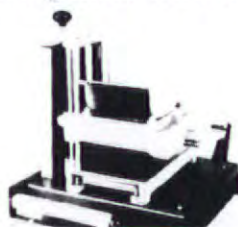


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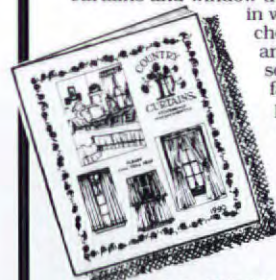
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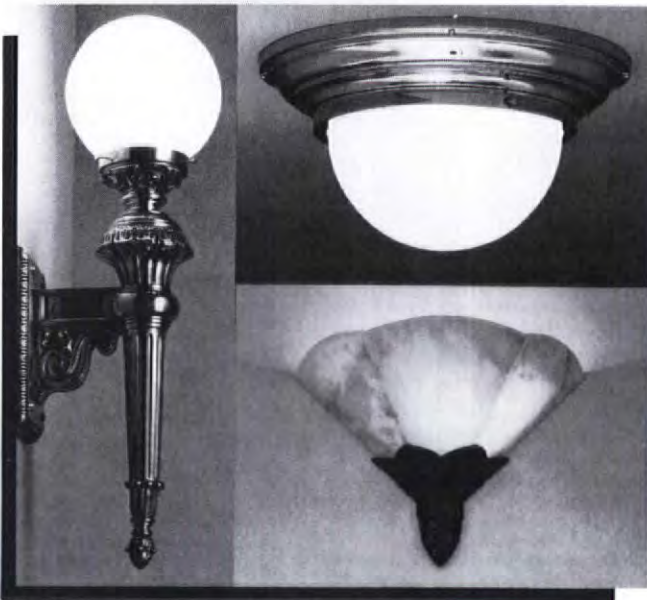


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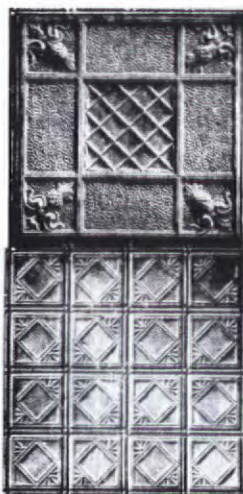
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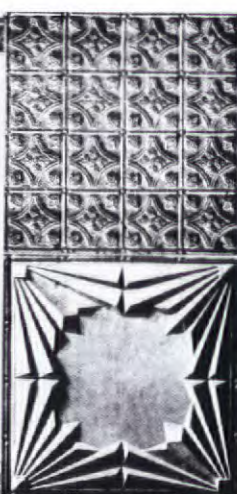
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**VICTORIAN LIBRARY SHELVES** — Include 2 cast-iron scrolled side brackets and 7-1/2" x 36" shelf. \$45.00 each plus C.O.D. shipping. Not many left. Contact: Michael P. Maxim, 4220 London Rd., Duluth MN 55804, or call for more information: (218) 525-4485.

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**WALNUT CONSOLE TABLE** — 1920s LifeTime Furniture (OHJ Nov/Dec '88); mission hassock; 2 Victorian "petticoat" chairs (concave front stretchers). Grand Rapids bookcase and chair, 1935-40 Oakmasters line, original finish: China cabinet, wing chair, captain's chair, coffee table. Send stamped, self-addressed envelope for photos, details. Barber/LaConte, 1262 Chestnut, Bowling Green KY 42101.

**IRON FENCE** — Hairpin and arrow pattern. 42" high. 34 sections 8' long, 3 shorter sections. \$2500. sold as lot. Call: (317) 762-6698.

## MEETINGS & EVENTS

**PAINTED FINISHES, RESTORATION AND GILDING/PATINAS** — The Finishing School Inc., known internationally for one-day classes, is offering two special week-long sessions: August 6-10, Glazing and Color; August 13-17, Marbling. For information: 17 Maple Drive Great Neck NY 11021, (516) 487-2270.

**ABC'S OF INNKEEPING** — The Conyers House in the Blue Ridge Foothills near Sperryville, VA is offering a one-day seminar for prospective innkeepers. The course covers everything imaginable. Sunday, July 22, 1990 from 10 am until 4 pm or until the last question is answered. For more information call: (703) 987-8025.

**BENJAMIN HARRISON'S 157TH BIRTHDAY** — The President Benjamin Harrison Home in Indianapolis, IN will be celebrating his birthday anniversary on August 19, 1990 from 12:30 to 4:00 pm. The 74th Army Band will present a free concert. Tours of the Victorian mansion will be \$2. For information call: (317) 631-1898.

**4TH ANNUAL LOG CABIN DAY** — June 24, 1990. Arts and crafts, musicians, lecturers, and a special emphasis on the 150th anniversary of the Log Cabin Campaign of William Henry Harrison will be featured at more than 25 log cabins and historic villages in Michigan. Send a SASE to: Log Cabin Society of Michigan, 3503 Edwards Rd., Sodus MI 49126, (616) 944-5719.

## BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS

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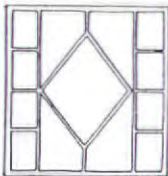
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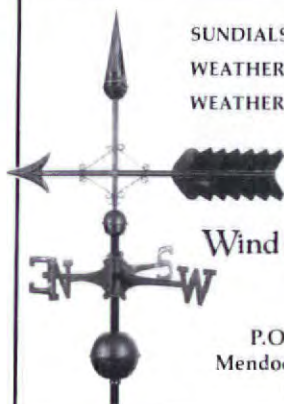
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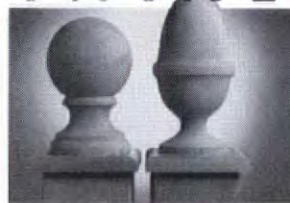
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**215. Moisture Vents** — Small, screened metal louvers, 1" to 6" dia., release moisture trapped in walls, cornices, soffits, etc. Just drill holes and press in place. Free literature. **Midget Louver.**

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# ADVERTISER'S INDEX

| Products<br>Network<br>No.                | Page<br>No.       |                                       |       |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 20 AA Abbingdon Affiliates .....          | 81                | 101 Devenco Products .....            | 21    |
| 31 Abatron .....                          | 11                | 384 Dura Glaze .....                  | 27    |
| 23 Ahren's Chimney Technique .....        | 71                | Elcanco .....                         | 83    |
| 83 Allied Windows .....                   | 15                | 487 Empire Woodworks .....            | 79    |
| 260 American Heritage Shutters .....      | 25                | 170 Enviro-Chem .....                 | 67    |
| 354 Andersen Windows .....                |                   | 55 Erie Landmark Co. ....             | 61    |
| ..... Inside Front Cover                  |                   | 221 The Fan Man .....                 | 57    |
| Anthony Wood Products .....               | 77                | Fastenation .....                     | 79    |
| 500 Architectural Caricatures .....       | 75                | 294 Fischer & Jirouch .....           | 11    |
| 443 Architectural Cataloguer, USA .....   | 27                | 488 Follansbee Steel .....            | 10    |
| 512 Arroyo Craftsman .....                | 57                | 350 Fourth Bay .....                  | 9     |
| 340 Arvid's Historic Woods .....          | 61                | 317 Grand Era Reproductions .....     | 57    |
| 18 Ball & Ball .....                      | 17                | 387 Granville Manufacturing Co. ....  | 13    |
| 425 The Bank Architectural Antiques ..... | 11                | Hardware Plus .....                   | 81    |
| 193 Bathroom Machineries .....            | 61                | Harrowsmith - Country Living .....    | 29    |
| 511 Bear Creek Lumber Inc. ....           | 71                | 454 Hicksville Woodworks Co. ....     | 63    |
| 73 Bendheim Glass .....                   | 14                | 501 Homelife .....                    | 81    |
| 442 Blue Ox Millworks .....               | 67                | Horton Brasses .....                  | 77    |
| 27 Bradbury & Bradbury .....              | 14                | 309 JB Products .....                 | 57    |
| 21 Brass Light Gallery .....              | 19                | 2 The Joinery .....                   | 21    |
| Bruce Post Company .....                  | 83                | 498 Kinco .....                       | 65    |
| 408 Buckley Rumford Fireplace Co. ....    | 23                | 334 King's Chandelier Company .....   | 81    |
| 473 By-Gone Days Antiques, Inc. ....      | 63                | 455 Lamson -Taylor Custom Doors ..... | 23    |
| 510 Camden Window & Millwork .....        | 59                | Lone Star Ironworks .....             | 81    |
| 59 Campbellsville Industries .....        | 73                | 110 Mac The Antique Plumber .....     | 7     |
| 91 Carlisle Restoration Lumber .....      | 75                | MacQuarrie & Niccum .....             | 81    |
| 192 Carter Canopies .....                 | 79                | 173 Mad River Woodworks .....         | 65    |
| 239 Cedar Guild .....                     | 73                | 503 Mansion Industries .....          | 11    |
| 312 Certified Chimney Sweeps .....        | 12                | 9 Marvin Windows .....                | 16    |
| 242 Chadsworth, Inc. ....                 | 9,28              | 410 Maurer & Shepherd Joiners .....   | 77    |
| 35 Charles Street Supply .....            | 17                | 504 Michael's Classic Wicker .....    | 27    |
| 47 Chelsea Decorative Metal Co. ....      | 7                 | 215 Midget Louver Co. ....            | 61    |
| Chicago Old Telephone Co. ....            | 79                | 16 Midwest Wood Products .....        | 83    |
| 26 Classic Accents .....                  | 25                | 505 Moultrie Manufacturing Co. ....   | 61    |
| The Color People .....                    | 81                | 506 National Decks, Inc. ....         | 75    |
| 159 Conant Custom Brass .....             | 27                | 113 National Supafllu Systems .....   | 65    |
| 461 Conservation Services .....           | 23                | 507 New England Woodturners .....     | 9     |
| 499 Counselor Profiles .....              | 19                | 5 Nixalite .....                      | 19    |
| 42 Country Curtains .....                 | 75                | North Fields Restorations .....       | 73    |
| Crawford's Old House Store .....          | 83                | 56 Oak Crest Manufacturing .....      | 59    |
| 98 Cross VINYLattice .....                | 71                | 32 Old Wagon Factory .....            | 69    |
| 397 Crown City Hardware .....             | 65                | 303 Ole Fashion Things .....          | 15    |
| 44 Cumberland Woodcraft .....             | 17                | 424 On Site Wood Restoration .....    | 23    |
| Custom Woodturnings .....                 | 57                | 53 Oregon Wooden Screen Door .....    | 67    |
| 502 DAP, Inc. ....                        | Inside Back Cover | Our House Productions .....           | 81    |
|                                           |                   | 238 Pagliacco Turning & Milling ..... | 13    |
|                                           |                   | 114 Perma Ceram Enterprises .....     | 73    |
|                                           |                   | 319 Perma Glaze, Inc. ....            | 13    |
|                                           |                   | Phone Wizard .....                    | 77    |
|                                           |                   | 508 Plantation Mantels .....          | 67    |
|                                           |                   | 38 Protech Systems Inc. ....          | 71    |
|                                           |                   | 64 Readybuilt Products .....          | 22    |
|                                           |                   | Reggio Register .....                 | 81    |
|                                           |                   | 10 Rejuvenation Lamp & Fixture        |       |
|                                           |                   | Company .....                         | 22    |
|                                           |                   | Rocky Mountain Painting .....         | 83    |
|                                           |                   | 11 Roy Electric Co. ....              | 67    |
|                                           |                   | 365 Rutland Products .....            | 21    |
|                                           |                   | Salt & Chestnut .....                 | 79    |
|                                           |                   | 1 Schwerd Manufacturing .....         | 5     |
|                                           |                   | 7 Shuttercraft .....                  | 83    |
|                                           |                   | Sky Lodge Farm .....                  | 81    |
|                                           |                   | 513 Smith and Company .....           | 77    |
|                                           |                   | 481 J. E. Smith .....                 | 69    |
|                                           |                   | 30 Smith-Cornell .....                | 65    |
|                                           |                   | 209 Southampton Antiques .....        | 79    |
|                                           |                   | 14 Steptoe & Wife .....               | 83    |
|                                           |                   | 122 Stewart Iron Works .....          | 65    |
|                                           |                   | L & JG Stickley .....                 | 2     |
|                                           |                   | 437 Taunton Press .....               | 7     |
|                                           |                   | 434 Texas Standard Picket Co. ....    | 63    |
|                                           |                   | Touchstone Woodworks .....            | 83    |
|                                           |                   | 360 Wayne Towle, Inc. ....            | 63    |
|                                           |                   | Treasure The Past .....               | 83    |
|                                           |                   | Tremont Nail Co. ....                 | 79    |
|                                           |                   | 469 Triarco, Inc. ....                | 27    |
|                                           |                   | 476 Tub Doctor .....                  | 23    |
|                                           |                   | 400 Urban Archaeology .....           | 77    |
|                                           |                   | 4 Victorian Lighting Works .....      | 69    |
|                                           |                   | Victorian Warehouse .....             | 73    |
|                                           |                   | 13 Vintage Wood Works .....           | 15    |
|                                           |                   | 401 Vixen Hill .....                  | 69    |
|                                           |                   | 128 W.F. Norman Corp. ....            | 59,61 |
|                                           |                   | 509 Albert J. Wagner & Son .....      | 79    |
|                                           |                   | 438 Ward Clapboard Mill .....         | 75    |
|                                           |                   | 284 Whitco/Vincent Whitney .....      | 67    |
|                                           |                   | Williamsburg Blacksmith .....         | 83    |
|                                           |                   | 439 Williams & Hussey .....           | 75    |
|                                           |                   | Wind & Weather .....                  | 83    |
|                                           |                   | The Wood Factory .....                | 83    |
|                                           |                   | 409 Woodstock Soapstone Co. ....      | 63    |
|                                           |                   | 71 Worthington Group .....            | 21    |

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## Victimized Verandah

**A**ny old-house lover traveling through the South can expect to see (and be charmed by) a vernacular design style that was especially popular around the turn of the century: homes with two-tiered, full-facade porches. Unfortunately, travelers can also expect to see (and be saddened by) houses that have been lost to remuddling.

Our examples are located in Sullivan's Island, South Carolina. The handsome and distinctive porch on



*When is a porch not a porch? When it's been enclosed in aluminum siding and perforated with windows (top).*

the house pictured above is still intact. Also preserved are the triple doors of the entrance and the run of full-length windows.

But on the house shown at the top of the page, the upper verandah has

been converted into an enclosed living space. (One can only hope that the brick columns — now supporting the additional weight of furniture and people — have footings and girders adequate to the new stress.) Aluminum siding frames off-the-rack jalousie windows, and the original entryway is history.

Charles Kellner, who submitted these photographs, reports that these houses are next to one another and "make a striking contrast." No further comment.



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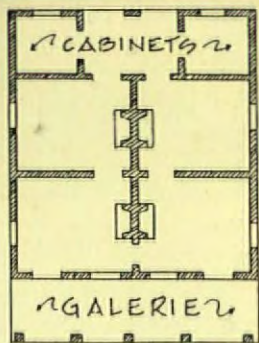
# Vernacular Houses



The Creole Cottage is derived from Acadian and Caribbean influences, both of which were brought to the Gulf Coast by immigrants of French ancestry. Creole Cottages are found from Texas to Tallahassee, but one of the greatest concentrations is in Pensacola, Florida.

Most of the Pensacola cottages were built between 1800 and 1860; the house style remained popular up until the 1880s. Unlike the Creole Cottages in New Orleans, which were built chiefly of stuccoed brick, the Florida houses were almost entirely wood framed with a raised first floor. Typical floor plans are arranged with four main rooms — sometimes divided by a central hallway — and two smaller rooms off to the back, called cabinets (pronounced *ca-bi-nays*). These most often served as guest bedrooms and storage areas. A small interior porch occupied the space between the cabinets, although many of these are now obscured by rear additions. The most notable feature of these cottages, however, is the wide porch

## Pensacola Creole Cottages



Left: typical floorplan of an early Pensacola cottage, of which only a few have survived. Later houses generally featured a central hallway.

or *galerie*, which dominates the front and is incorporated into the gable roof by means of extended rafters. Combined with wood shutters, these porches provided natural cooling for the cottages in a hot climate.

— Dr. Diana Jarvis Godwin  
Pensacola, Fla.