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# OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

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## Summer Houses, Second Homes

A Survey of Vacation  
Home Styles

Summer Interiors

Mothballing

Porch Deck Fixes



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# OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

Volume XXI, Number 4



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## Second Houses and Summer Homes

*From the Newport "cottages" of the Gilded Age to the early-20th-century camps, bungalows, and recreation buildings, an architectural tour of non-primary residences.*

BY JAMES C. MASSEY AND SHIRLEY MAXWELL

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# EDITOR'S PAGE

## This Space for Message



**T**HE ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE will be good, useful warm-weather reading for anyone with an old house, but they came together with an eye towards an often-overlooked type of historic building. Judging by the letters and photos that have come our way over the years, not a few OHJ readers are involved with "second" old houses. Though a little hard to define, these are houses originally built to be lived in only part of the year, or houses acquired or inherited on top of a main residence that are now used much the same way. They're summer houses or mountain cabins, shoreside getaways or country homesteads, forgotten buildings or future homes — any place where the water might run rusty when you first turn it on.

A vacation home is most people's idea of a second old house. They're usually built to beat the regular climate, in a spot where it's cooler or warmer. The surroundings are for fishing or skiing, in the mountains, say, or by the water. Many of these buildings have been around a while and are now old houses, restored and otherwise. The first visit of a new season means sweeping out the bugs and seeing what maintenance needs doing; which parts have broken or blown off

and what plants have grown back. Opening up can be like rummaging around in your own memory. Looking through an attic of familiar good-time furniture or drawers of clothes that are like old friends. Using a yard-

ily retainers getting on in years, these buildings have outlived their original use. No one stays there anymore. The luckiest of these houses become recreation centers for family get-togethers, a place for Fourth of July fireworks on the lawn, or painting parties where everyone pitches in to spruce the "old lady" up. Some, however, are close to orphans, the victims of divided ownership and the dwindling interest of the inheritors. For many, the area has changed, or it's too long a drive just to sit on the porch and watch fireflies.

Summer old houses and second homes are special places, both architecturally and emotionally. They are the sites for care-free hours, a change of pace, a nicer location. Yet, these build-

ings have needs and problems of their own. Who cares for them when the people are away? How do you keep them going when it's not getting any easier to sustain a house? We'll try to find a few of the answers in this issue.

*Edna Beck*



*Second houses I have known — one now gone and one coming back.*

stick from a long-gone store. Lighting a fire with last summer's newspaper and watching the headlines curl away in smoke (they were pretty trivial after all).

Another type of second old house is not quite so glamorous, but no less common. It might be the family farm or homestead in a rural area where, perhaps, the grandparents lived and worked. Like faithful fam-





# THE FIRST THING WE DID TO HELP REMODEL THIS OLD HUNTING LODGE WAS START FIRING QUESTIONS.



When the new owners of this converted hunting lodge began renovating it in 1991, they asked architect Katherine Cartrett of Mulfinger, Susanka and Mahady to recapture its original rustic charm, using only the finest, high-performance building products available.

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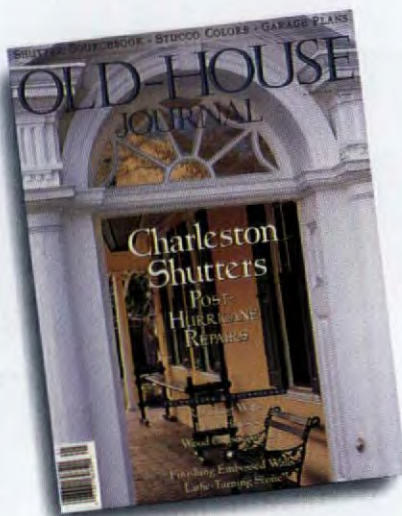
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# LETTERS



## Plank House Feedback

Dear OHJ,

I READ "HOUSES WITHOUT FRAMES" with great interest because my old house is of vertical plank construction. When we stripped the plaster from the inside walls of the "newer" addition (built around the turn of the century), we were amazed that the 16' wall had no visible means of support. (A building inspector commented that it couldn't have originally been a barn because barns were better built.)

The original c. 1875 section of the house is built with vertical plank construction; two later additions were of horizontal planks. We have no clue as to the original exterior covering of the house, but sometime in the early 1900s, it was covered in stucco, which had glass fragments pressed into it.

Thanks for the article! My husband and I thought we had a house built by loons who had no idea what they were doing. Yes, plank construction *is* hard to believe!

—MARGARET EMERY  
Nazareth, Penn.

SOME YEARS AGO, WHEN WORKING IN Anchorage, Alaska, I encountered an example of plank-on-plank con-

struction: a large (75' x 250'), two-storey warehouse. The exterior had been covered with asbestos-cement shingles, but the interior was exposed. The planks were roughly 2 x 6 and would have been erected about 1920-1935.

As you may know, vertical plank construction is also very common in Hawaii. After 1880, most of the small, hipped-roof cottages built on the islands for settlers appear to be this construction. I understand that most of the wood is redwood shipped from sawmills in Eureka, California. I would be interested in learning about any information or sources regarding these Hawaiian cottages.

— RICK WILLIAMS  
Seattle, Wash.

## More On Shutters

I CAN'T TURN A COLOR-BLIND EYE TO Robert J. Albrecht's marvelous article on repairing Charleston shutters and Kurt Habel's excellent "Shutter Sourcebook" in the May/June issue, which arrived the day after my

return from Charleston (where I had been doing some color consulting).

On my visit, I discovered that Charlestonians were rejecting the rich, greenish black of some modern "shutter green" paints because it was too green and not black enough. Historically, the dark green was made by adding lampblack to a basic ochre-color earth pigment. Today, anyone can approximate Charleston Green by mixing one quart of green paint with three quarts of black paint.

— JOHN CROSBY FREEMAN  
Norristown, Penn.

## Days of Wine and Candles

THANK YOU PATRICIA POORE FOR YOUR commentary entitled "Chill Out and Light a Candle" [*Editor's Page, March/April 1993*]. My husband and I could have signed our names as authors to the article. We, too, have succumbed once again to the pursuit of our hobby — restoring an 11-room, 1870s Italianate.

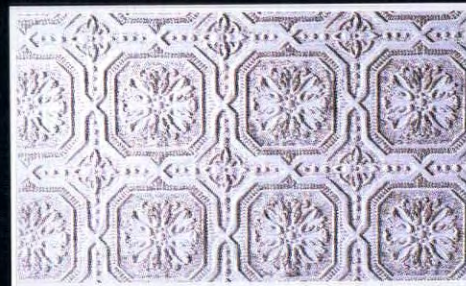
For the third time, we have pulled up our roots and planted ourselves



*The vertical plank construction seen under the clapboards of this Ithaca, New York, house is a technique found across North America.*



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## LETTERS

and children into the pit of sagging floors, grime, and plaster dust. Each home we have purchased in the past 14 years has been bigger and in worse shape than its predecessor. (At least we've become more skilled restorers, if not a bit irrational.)

Thank goodness for understanding friends, family, and our collection of *OHJs*. They give us the support and help we need.

Moving, restoring, and "camping out" is stressful, but there is solace and reward in knowing that we have recycled each house back to life. Other owners will come along to inhabit our past projects, but with each move, we have taken the "soul" of the home with us.

Yes, we think this overwhelming

"where do we begin" undertaking is going to be fun. And yes, we, too, have bought cases of candles and wine.

— TIM AND CAROL MCCULLOUGH  
Noblesville, Ind.

### Graining Tool

I REALLY LIKED YOUR ARTICLE ON wood graining [*"The Fine Art of Graining,"* January/February 1992]. After I made a close inspection of the Victorian gem I had acquired, I found all the marvelous woodwork had been grained. So that became the solution to the problem of mismatched wood. But how to grain? Our library was of little help, and the local paint store looked at me as if I was crazy. Then, I [checked] my *OHJs*. Pow! Right before my eyes

was a picture of the tools and a great article on graining. *OHJ* is now a "tool" I can't afford to do without.

— MICHAEL WENTHUR  
Hanford, Cali.



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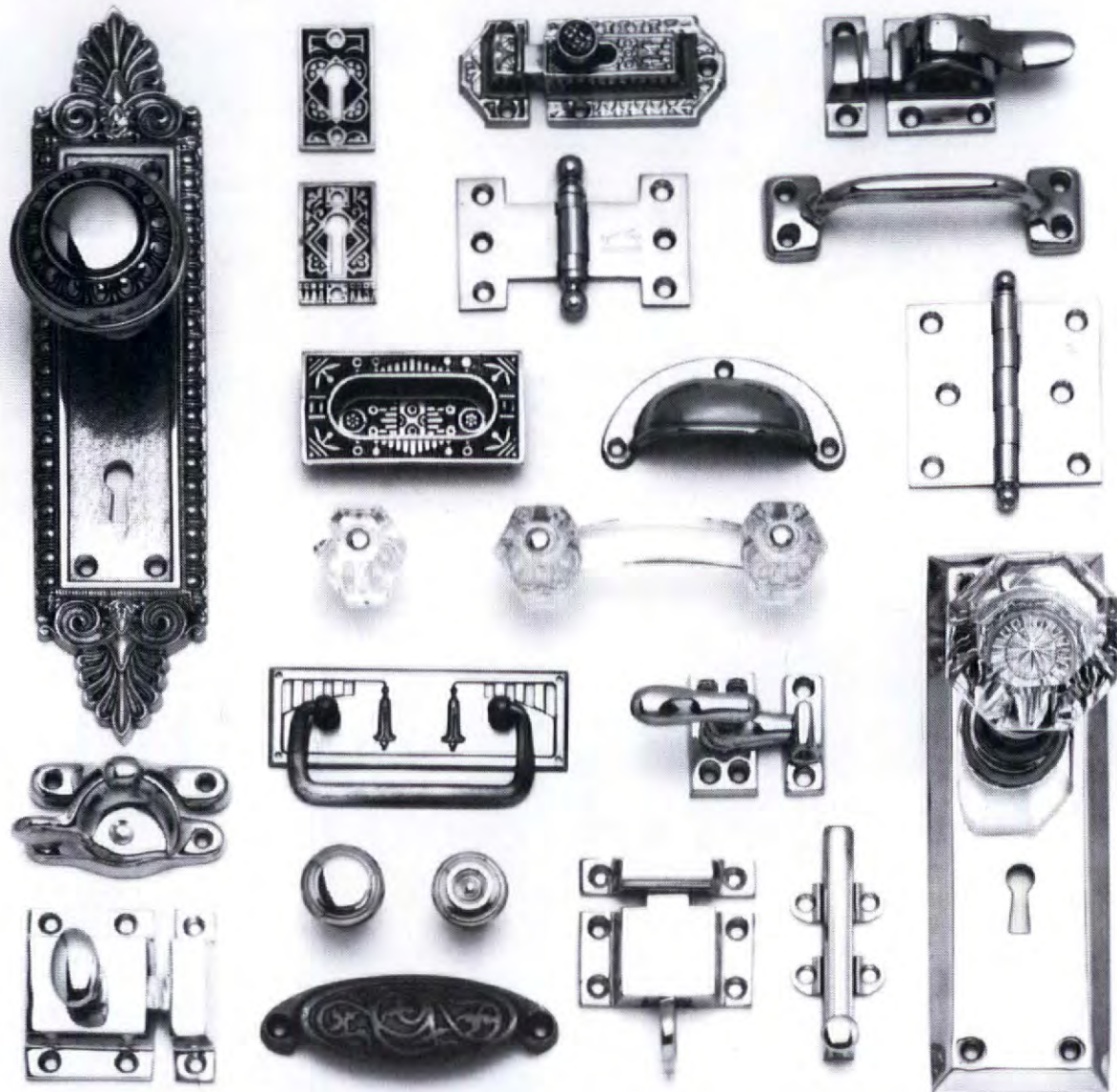


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## LETTERS

### Rooting Out the Problem

CONCERNING ROOT PROBLEMS IN OLD clay pipe sewers [*"Ask OHJ," May/June 1993*], I once had the same problem. Finally, I got tired of digging and patching, and went to a dealer and bought four 20' lengths of bell-joint PVC pipe. Starting at the house foundation, I removed all the old pipe for 20'. Then, I beveled the end of the first joint. Taking some 2 x 4 scraps and a sledge hammer, I started the new joint on the old pipe. Just as a precaution, I greased the outside of the bell joint and cemented the inside. Then, I inserted the next joint.

Turns down a slope have to have an ell installed; reconnections at the house are made with a cou-

pling and clamps. I haven't had any trouble since, and my only expense was \$80 for 80' of new line.

—IRV AARON  
Birmingham, Ala.

### Remuddling Update

I WISH TO ADD A "P.S." TO THE Remuddling in your May/June issue. The unfortunate building in question is home to an *architectural* firm!

—DEBI GRIMLAND  
Parker, Colo.

### Western Stars

REGARDING THE STAR WALL WASHERS [*"Ask OHJ," May/June 1993*], we currently have several hundred in stock. They are not reproductions,

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—GAIL SMITH  
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### Tips from the Trenches

I AM CONDUCTING RESEARCH FOR A book of "tips from the trenches" from those homeowners actively pursuing home restoration projects. To complete this project, I'd like input from *OHJ* readers. Please send tips to: 5012 N. Hwy. 67, Sedalia, CO 80135.

—K. STEWART  
Sedalia, Colo.

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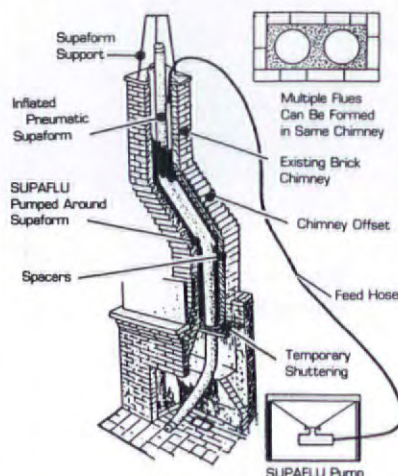
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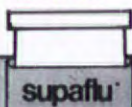


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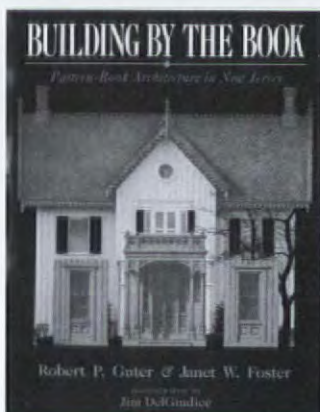
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old and new, have been  
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of their own.

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and Janet Foster. Though *Building  
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mer base in Brooklyn), the sources  
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the mail-order and ready-cut house  
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to buildings in any state. Easily one  
of the most attractive books on the  
subject, it makes exceptional use of  
period details and artwork by pair-  
ing them with stunning black-and-  
white photos of surviving buildings.  
The déjà-vu effect is remarkable —  
no doubt, because we all have seen  
these houses somewhere.



## **The Naturally Elegant Home**

by Janet Marinelli with Robert Kourik;  
Pub: Little, Brown and Company, 1271  
Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY  
10020; (800) 343-9204; 1992; 256  
pages, color; \$45.00 plus \$2.00 ship-  
ping, hardcover.

PART OF THE MODERN ENVIRON-  
mental building movement's  
maturing is its rediscovery and re-  
employment of simple-but-effective  
ideas that appear in  
many houses built 50  
to 200 years ago. In  
*The Naturally Elegant  
Home*, Janet Marinelli,  
who knows old  
houses well from her  
days as an OHJ edi-  
tor, has put together  
a beautiful book that  
constantly acknowl-  
edges the practical  
value of time-tested  
features like south-  
facing windows, awnings, cupola  
ventilators, and deep roof overhangs  
— to name just a few. Besides a look  
at some contemporary organic-  
design houses with strong vernacular

parentage (An Updated  
Cracker House in  
Florida, for instance,  
and An Earth-Walled  
Bungalow in Cali-  
fornia), there's useful  
information for old-  
house owners here too.  
Janet, now editor for  
the renowned Brooklyn  
Botanic Garden hand-  
book series, has some  
historically minded  
ideas about environmental gardens,  
landscapes, and plantings, such as  
making use of windbreaks, pergolas,  
and even annual vines trained on a  
trellis for window shade. Also of

note are the many lyrical drawings by  
Jeff Wilkinson, yet another OHJ  
alumnus. While this book focusses  
on handsome, earth-sensitive ideas  
for new houses, it's one that doesn't  
ignore the contributions of historic  
architecture to solving some old  
problems.

## **The Lost Art of Steam Heating**

by Dan Holohan; Pub: Dan Holohan  
Associates, Inc., 63 North Oakdale Ave.,  
Bethpage, NY 11714; (516) 796 9276; 1992;  
296 pages, b&w; \$34.95 ppd, softcover.

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ably warmed up to one of Dan  
Holohan's enlightening articles on  
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ing systems. Dan has now pub-  
lished *The Lost Art of Steam Heating*  
— seventeen expansive chapters on  
the principles and problem-solving  
that make this still-common old-  
house amenity work. Some short  
lessons on the underlying physics  
and mechanics provide the under-  
standing for operating these sys-  
tems smoothly and efficiently (still

very possible),  
while sections on  
vents, traps, boil-  
ers, and radiators  
share plenty of  
practical advice on  
keeping them in-  
tune and free of  
trouble. Though  
today's contractors  
often curse when  
they see — let  
alone try to fix —

simple steam-heat hang-ups, after  
reading Dan's entertainingly clear  
explanations you'll wonder what  
all the hissing was about.

— G.B.

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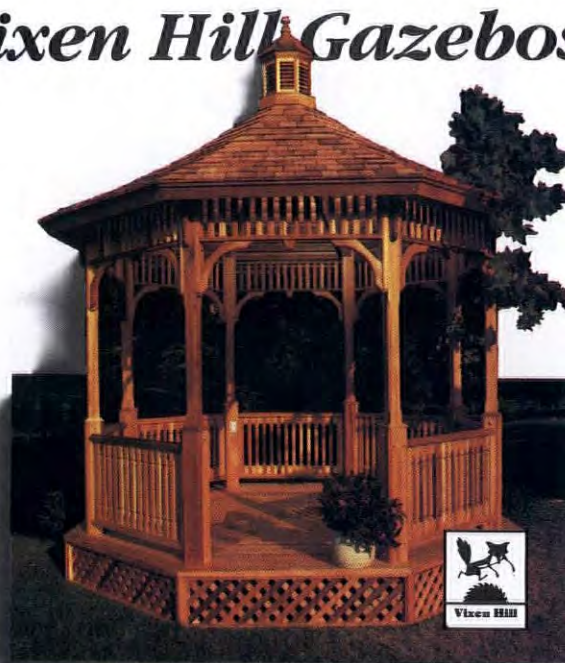


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# READING THE OLD HOUSE

## A Foursquare with Prairie Airs

by James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell

**W**E HAVE DONE QUITE A lot of research on the owners of our home in Oklahoma City, built in 1905, but we don't really know a lot about the exterior style. We have been told it is a Foursquare bungalow.

— GENE & JAN THURMAN  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

THE HANDSOME HOUSE IN THE PHOTO below was as stylish as one could have wanted when it was built. It still is. A Foursquare it may be, but a bungalow — not! The pyramidal roof of this large house is the antithesis of the low, sweeping, gable front that defines the bungalow — the height of which, incidentally, is almost always limited to one or one-and-a-half storeys.

Certainly the house has its roots in the American Foursquare. To judge from the expanse of the entryway, though, this house has a generous center hall. That raises a question about the precise definition of a Foursquare: Does the presence of a center hall disqualify a house? Rigorously de-

defined, Foursquares have four rooms on each floor, with the stairway located in one of the rooms rather than in a separate hall. The point is



*Prairie embellishments and plenty of porches put this house beyond a modest Foursquare.*



debatable, but we vote for four-squariness in this case.

The photos show unusually ample proportions, an architecturally enriched porch with second-floor railings, and massive, hipped, double dormers. The entryway is large and inviting, with striking patterns of stained and beveled glass in the transom and sidelights. All these things indicate stylistic pretensions far beyond basic Foursquare. It shows that an elegant house can result from the well-considered embellishment of an American standard.

But, since Foursquares are a house type rather than a style, that still leaves us with the style question. There's a clue in the wide, paneled eave planciers at the second floor and roof, which project around and beyond the first-floor bay windows and porches, and even extend



*(top) The straightforward, box-like shape and hipped roof of this 1926 Foursquare are typical of the house type. (inset) The Thurman's more elaborate version includes wide panel-decorated planciers—a Prairie School-style detail.*

around the large attic dormers. This feature suggests the influence of the Prairie School. It's a bit early though, at 1905, since the Prairie School did not come to prominence until about 1910.

This points to a common dilemma: written documentation and physical evidence are often at odds. Builders' invoices, newspaper articles, stylistic features, and distinctive or new construction techniques may all suggest a likely birth-date for your house.



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# OUTSIDE THE OLD HOUSE

## Sitting Outside 1865-1940

by Scott G. Kunst

**T** EAK BENCHES, RESIN LOUNGERS, and French cafe chairs may be fashionable today, but instead of settling for a modern convention for your old garden—or porch, patio, or gazebo—consider



*The Express Body Corp. offered this 1920s wooden pergola with built-in benches*

er what people outdoors were sitting on way back when your garden was new.

Until well into the 1800s, outdoor furniture for most Americans was simply utilitarian. The yard was a place for work, not leisure. Rough, home-made stools and benches were good enough for plucking chickens. When something nicer was required, indoor chairs were hauled outside. Only the rich could afford special outdoor furniture, such as the fashionable Chinese-Chippendale benches Thomas Jefferson designed for Monticello.

As Romanticism began to promote a friendlier view of nature, the middle class came to regard ornamental gardening as uplifting. In the 1840s, Andrew Jackson Downing praised gar-

dening and porches as ways of connecting home and outdoors. He recommended rustic furniture, made from bark-covered branches and gnarled roots, for modest home-grounds and parts of larger estates. Rustic furniture remained a favorite well into the early 1900s. Factories turned out thousands of pieces, and scores of books and articles offered do-it-yourself directions. As wealth and free time multiplied in America, porches and leisure-garden-ing grew in importance, and the demand for outdoor seating grew as well.

### Metal

CAST-IRON FURNITURE WAS A WONDER OF



*Wire "peacock" chairs are delicate but comfortable.*

the Industrial Revolution and a Victorian favorite, although it was never really cheap. (See "Garden-Variety Cast Iron," January/February 1990 *OHJ*.) Woven-wire porch furniture appeared in the last quarter of the 19th century and was still being sold by Sears Ro-

buck in the early 1900s. From about the 1920s into the '30s, bent and pressed-steel lawn chairs were in vogue and were painted a variety of period colors.

### Wicker

WHILE RUSTIC AND CAST-IRON FURNISHINGS were usually yard-bound, wicker became a favorite for porches. Once considered a poor-person's furnishing, wicker's ornamental and exotic qualities gained it entree into many stylish Victorian parlors starting about 1850, and before long it graced countless verandas. Wicker became a fixture at posh resorts, reached the height of its popularity around the turn of the century, and remained common through the 1930s. Styles kept pace with changing fashion, from rococo Victorian to muscular Moderne. Old wicker is still around but hard to date, so beware. Repairs are tricky but possible, by reweaving the damaged area with matching material. Compatible new wicker, happily, abounds.

### Canvas and Cloth

FOLDING CAMP CHAIRS WITH CANVAS seats and backs were widely used during the Civil War. Afterwards, manufacturers promoted civilian uses, and what we now call "director's chairs" were frequently carried onto porches or into gardens. (To make a new chair look

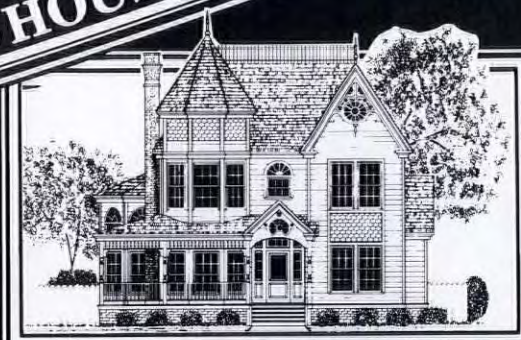
*The Craftsman magazine in 1914 endorsed simple furnishings.*





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# OUTSIDE THE OLD HOUSE

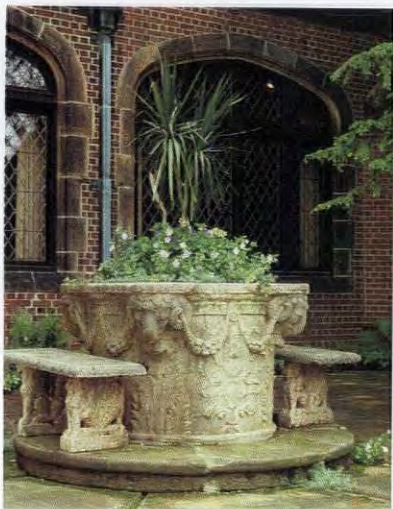


*Elegant early-20th-century benches were usually painted (above). The Goshen Manufacturing Co. offered four-passenger lawn swings about 1900 (right).*

old, try dark brown or green paint and dark, striped canvas.) Later, hammocks appeared, usually on porches, and remained symbols of summertime ease well into this century. Diverse originals survive, some heavily fringed, others boxy and cushioned.

Low-slung canvas deck chairs appeared around 1900 and were popular through the 1940s. Built for lounging, these chairs reflect the more informal, post-Victorian approach to

*Stone benches surround an old well-head at an Akron, Ohio estate.*



outdoor living. Today's models are similar, though cloth and finishing are often clearly modern.

## In the Swing

ALONG WITH PORCHES CAME PORCH swings. Most surviving examples date from 1890 to 1930 or so (some with cushions for added comfort) and new models are widely available. Lawn swings, most popular near the turn of the century, are free-standing wooden structures supporting a swing or two. Modern models, however, often lack the delicacy of most originals. Gliders date to the early part of this century and remained popular into the 1950s. Though they look like simple couches, a moving suspension allows them to glide soothingly forward and back.

## Stone and Concrete

CARVED STONEWORK HAS ALWAYS BEEN expensive and therefore rare in gardens. Stone benches, however, were favored in early-20th-century estate landscapes, where they lent an Old-World air of

permanence. Concrete was a new and wonderful material in the early 1900s, and a few imaginative examples of rustic concrete seating survive.

## 20th-Century Wood

AS ENTHUSIASM FOR INDUSTRIALISM waned at the turn of the century, handcraftsmanship and traditional materials regained favor. In the garden, this meant renewed interest in wooden seating, often in Colonial, Tudor, or Arts & Crafts modes. Today, handsome teak furniture is widely sold for outdoor use. Natural teak, however, was rare in the first half of the century when most wooden garden furniture was painted. Fine examples survive at many restored estates. High-backed Colonial Revival benches graced many front porches in the early 1900s, and seats built into garden arches, arbors, and pergolas were also popular. Probably the best-known outdoor chair of the early 1900s is the wooden, painted Adirondak. Originally called the Westport and patented in 1905, it appears in countless variations today.

Lawn and porch furniture is a lively business and available through local retailers or many mail-order suppliers (consult the 1993 OHJ Catalog for extensive listings).

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# ASK OHJ

## Furniture Facts

**Q** I HAVE A LARGE WALNUT SIDEBOARD with burl trim, manufactured by Berkey and Gay. Can you tell me where this company was located and when they were in production? The piece is 6' long with unusual curved doors on each end of the front, a pair of doors in the center topped by a large silver-drawer lined with green felt, and a smaller drawer on each side.

— ELLEN BRADBURY  
Franklin, Tenn.



*The massive and simplified lines of this sideboard are typical of c.1900 Grand Rapids furniture.*

**A** THE BERKEY AND GAY COMPANY was one of the original manufacturers of mass-market furniture to come out of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Incorporated in 1873, they produced elaborate yet affordable pieces such as yours until 1948. In an effort to promote the midwestern industry, Berkey and Gay displayed an ornate walnut bedroom set at the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876. The three-company exhibit quickly became a nationwide sensation, and public response turned the city overnight into a major center of manufacturing. Since then, as many as 800 furniture companies have been based in Grand Rapids.

The Public Museum of Grand Rapids owns many pieces made by Berkey and Gay, and plans to publish an extensive book about the city's furniture companies in 1994. Until then, the museum offers a pamphlet called "Grand Rapids Made — A Brief History of the Grand Rapids Furniture Industry" which includes a chronology of furniture manufacturers from 1836 to 1984, and a bibliography for further reading. For a copy, send \$2.75 to: The Curiosity Shop, Public Museum of Grand Rapids, 54 Jefferson SE, Grand Rapids, MI, 49503.

## Pet Odor Problems

**Q** SINCE PURCHASING a 1900 Queen Anne cottage whose deceased owner was a less-than-neat man with 40 cats, I've begun to doubt my sanity. I'm shoveling out

the filth but the odor is horrendous! The walls are wide planks and the floors are hardwood. Is there any way to completely get rid of this cat odor?

— JUDY WINCHESTER  
Millsap, Texas

**A** A PET-ODOR PROBLEM OF THIS magnitude will probably require a combination of mechanical and chemical removal. Most of the "aroma" is usually concentrated in the top layers of wood finish. And, though it's a labor-intensive job, stripping it will remove much of the smell. To neutralize remaining odors and stains (or to treat smaller problem areas), use commercial products available through veterinarians and pet stores. Or, try a favorite homemade remedy of undiluted white vinegar sprayed through a mister. Chemical



*The firebox of a combination wood/gas range requires a safe clearance from combustible materials.*

preparations usually work best with several light applications rather than one heavy dose. Refinishing the wood with several coats of shellac, varnish, or polyurethane helps seal any remaining offensiveness.

## Range Requirements

**Q** WE LOVE OUR OLD COMBINATION wood/gas cookstove, but how do we remodel around it? Is there any safe way to have the stove closer to the wall than the standard 18" clearance? We'd like to keep the heater operational for power outages.

— JERRY AND CARLA USTAITIS  
Rutland, Mass.

**A** THE FIRST THING TO DO IS TO check your stove and see if an installation clearance is specified by the listing organization (such as Underwriter's Laboratory) or the manufacturer. For unlisted solid-fuel burning ranges, the National Fire Protection Association recommends a min-

[Continued on page 26]

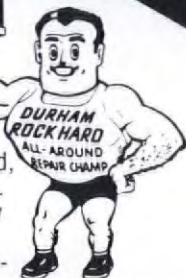


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## ASK OHJ

[Continued from page 24]

imum distance of 36" from any combustible material. However, if a wall, for instance, is protected in an approved way, this clearance may be reduced by about half. Some commonly used protectors are:

- 24-gauge (0.024" thick) sheet metal supported on noncombustible 1" spacers to create a ventilated air space.
- ½" noncombustible insulation board on 1" spacers.
- 3 ½" thick masonry wall with a ventilated air space.

The clearance under any circumstances should not fall below 12", and the wall surface must not be papered or have cellulose insulation behind it. Bear in mind, too, that installation will have to meet local codes,

and its safety will ultimately be determined by the building inspector.

### Latex and Linseed

**Q** WE'VE READ ABOUT THE BENEFITS of applying linseed oil cut with turpentine to weathered wood before priming with oil-based primer. Would a latex primer work on top of the linseed oil?

— BILL SCHEEL  
Stillwater, Minn.

**A** FOR HEAVILY WEATHERED WOOD, most manufacturers continue to recommend oil-based primers rather than water-based primers under latex topcoats. Oil-based primers bond well with the linseed oil undercoat, and with either an oil or latex topcoat. It's important to

check with the paint manufacturer about specific product compatibility.

Applying linseed oil as a pre-primer seal coat on bare, weathered wood is a treatment that OHJ has touted for years. After thorough surface preparation (scraping, sanding, etc.) apply a liberal coat of boiled linseed oil mixed 2:1 with turpentine or mineral spirits. For heavily weathered wood, use a 1:1 mix. Allow it to dry for 24 hours, and repeat if necessary. Allow three days' drying time before priming.

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 to: Questions Editor, Old-House Journal, 2 Main Street, Gloucester, MA 01930.

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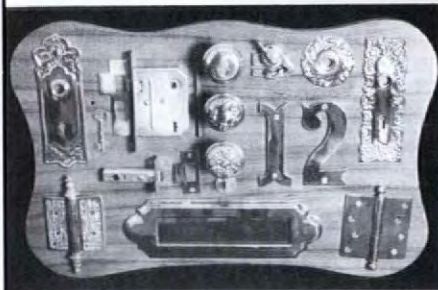
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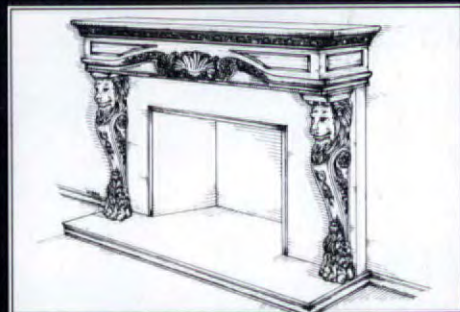
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OLD-HOUSE  
JOURNAL

# SECOND HOUSES AND SUMMER HOMES

*by James C. Massey and  
Shirley Maxwell*

*Vacation homes range from The Breakers, an extravagant "cottage" in Newport, Rhode Island, to this simple cabin (right) in the Adirondack Mountains of New York.*



**I**T'S THE OTHER HALF OF THE AMERICAN DREAM: NO SOONER do some people have a decent roof over their heads than they start looking around for another roof. Not instead of, mind you, but in addition to the one they are already committed to mending and patching. They want it in a warmer place or a cooler place; a quieter place, or a livelier place. Mainly, they want it in a different place, a place where life is easier and more fun than it is at home.

It's certainly an old, old dream. The ancient Romans had their villas, far away from the congestion and heat of the city. American Indians were known to seek an easier, more abundant summer life, often in places where sun and seafood were plentiful. Cape May, New Jersey, for instance, was a popular seaside retreat for the Leni Lenape Indians hundreds of years before the Victorian era and its gingerbread houses. America's founding fathers had their country retreats, too. Even Thomas Jefferson, the incurable workaholic, withdrew in his later years from his mountaintop home at Monticello to Poplar Forest, a small octagonal house he had built 80 miles away. There he could read and think in solitude, safe from the demands of guests, politics, and plantation management.

In the United States, the impulse to "get away from it all" became something of a national imperative after the Civil War, as the Industrial Revolution belatedly began to bear its fruit, both sweet and sour. Cities had become full of ugliness, crowds, pollution, disease, warped values, confusion, and job-related stress. More people had more time, more money, and more reasons to want to get out of town. Certainly many leading writers of the day, such as Henry David Thoreau and A. J. Downing, told them they ought to get out of town as often as possible, for the sake of their mental, moral, and physical health.

Before long, virtually every seashore, lakeshore, riverside, mountain range, woodland, and desert in the United States had attracted its share of second-home builders. In the rush to claim the healthful advantages of sun and fresh

air, cabins, cottages, mansions, tents, and shacks sprang up across the continent. Before the advent of railroads and, later, automobiles, getting to the shore or the mountains was not easy, even for the wealthy. But, as the 19th and 20th centuries progressed, the seasonal escape gradually became a game that almost everyone could play, with certain variations according to class and wealth.

### *Gilded-Age Getaways*

IN THE LATE-19TH CENTURY, THE RICH (PARTICULARLY THE VERY, very rich) journeyed by train or steamship with their entourages and their marriageable offspring to palatial, heavily staffed summer "cottages" in places like Newport, Rhode Island, Saratoga, New York, and the Massachusetts Berkshires. Most of these resort areas had no shortage of hotels, inns, race tracks, and other diversions. These social opportunities catered to the tastes of wealthy

visitors, but rubbing elbows with just any silken elbow was quickly seen to be a bit too — well, too common.

"Sensible and self-contained persons," sniffed Harper's New Monthly Magazine in August, 1874, "have become weary of discomfort, dissipation, and heterogeneous crowds under the name of pleasure, preferring to choose their own society, and to make their own domestic arrangements. . . . [The] decided tendency is to what is known as cottage life. . . ."

Some "cottages"! At any rate, self-containment was a tendency that persisted into the 20th

century, as more remote locations — especially in Florida and California — were made accessible by expanded railroad systems, faster trains, better roads, and more reliable automobiles.

Architects were called on to provide appropriate designs for the enormous summer cottages of their wealthy clients. In the 1870s and 1880s, H. H. Richardson came up with an altogether new architectural style, eventually called the Shingle Style. The William Watts-Sherman House in Newport, built in 1876 (later added to by Stanford White, of McKim, Mead and White), combined pink granite with sandstone trim, shingles, half-timbering, and stucco. By the

## *From Seaside Mansions to Backwoods*

### *Cabins — a Look at Vacation*

### *Dwellings and Part-time Abodes*





mid-1870s, Newport was filling up with French villas, Swiss chalets, and English cottages, as well as some other large houses "so composite and inharmonious as to defy determination."

"As a place of summer residence Newport has no peer," Harper's purred, "There is an air of gentility about Newport

that few watering places have.

... There are no horse-jockeys, blacklegs, billiard-markers, nor cozeners masquerading in the ill-fitting garments of gentlemen;

no ballet-dancers, clairvoyants, demireps, nor adventuresses flashing in jewels and jadery."

So much for Saratoga, that tasteless bastion of the merely wealthy. The cost of erecting and furnishing a Newport villa of any appreciable elegance was from \$50,000 to \$200,000. And well worth it, if Harper's is to be believed: "It is pleasant to drive through the fashionable quarters and observe how comfortable, if not contented, large incomes can render most people."

The building boom continued for decades. Marble House, the home of the William K. Vanderbilts, was finished in 1892, a triumph of classicism for prolific designer Richard Morris Hunt. An architect of several Newport homes, Hunt

completed another classical mansion, The Breakers, for Cornelius Vanderbilt in 1895. The Elms, completed in 1902, was designed for coal magnate Edward Julius Berwind by Horace Trumbauer. Imposing as the exteriors of these so-called cottages were, the interiors were more than a match for them. Modern visitors to the Elms (which, like a number of Newport mansions, is now a house museum) are advised by the official guidebook to "enjoy what is, in truth, an American palace."

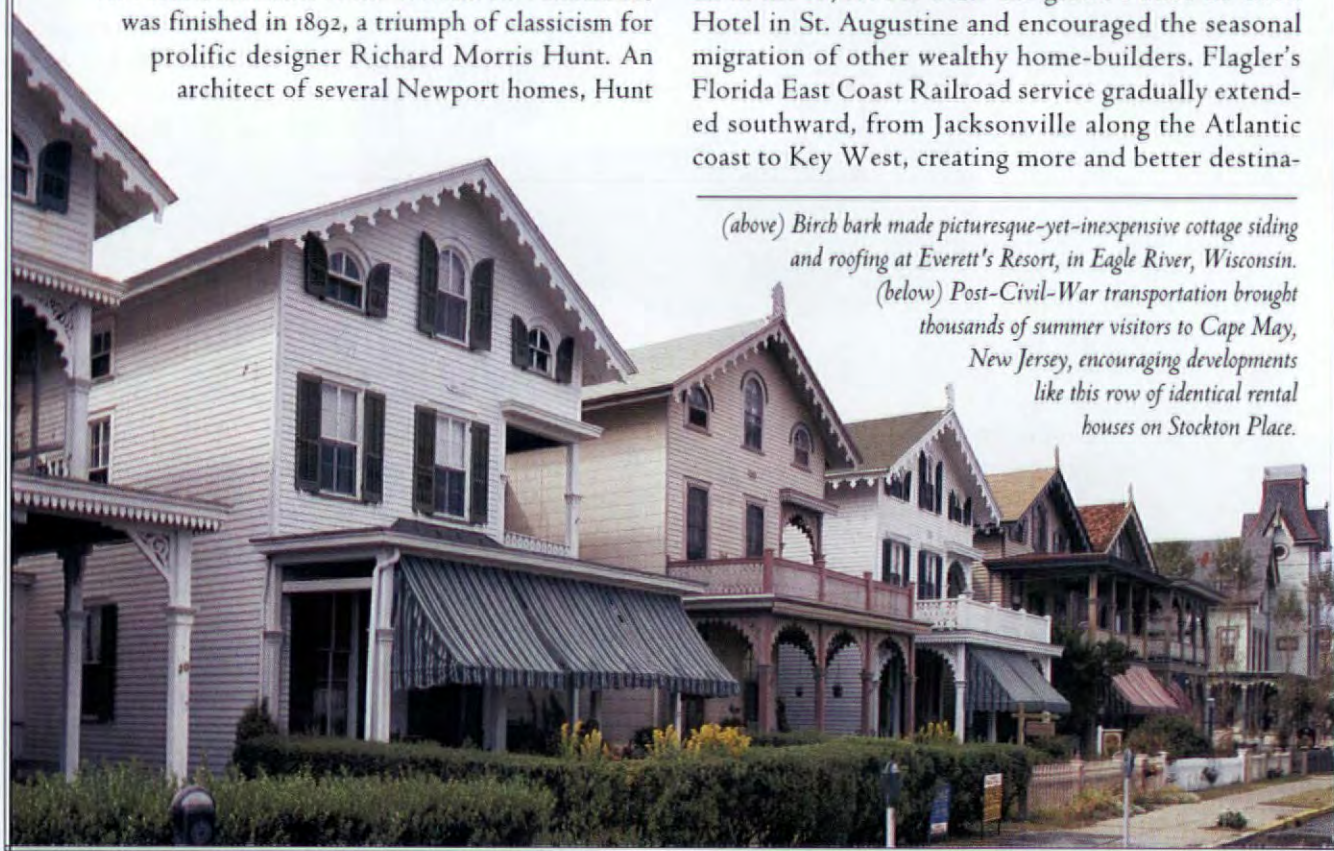
The little Berkshire town of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, acquired a reputation late in the century as "an inland Newport" because of its popularity as a summer watering hole for wealthy members of the Gilded Age. Among its summer houses is Naumkeag, a shingled and gabled Norman-style "cottage-villa" designed by Stanford White for the family of the prominent attorney and diplomat, Joseph Hodges Choate. The Choate family spent many happy summers there before settling on a name for the estate, an Indian word meaning "haven of comfort." Naumkeag, also known for its gardens, is now a museum property of the Trustees of the Reservation.

### *Places in the Sun*

OBVIOUSLY, IF SUMMER HOMES WERE DESIRED IN COOL PLACES, there was a mirror-image need for winter homes in warm places. Henry Flagler, who went south for his wife's health, opened railroad service to northern Florida in the 1870s. He built the grand Ponce de Leon Hotel in St. Augustine and encouraged the seasonal migration of other wealthy home-builders. Flagler's Florida East Coast Railroad service gradually extended southward, from Jacksonville along the Atlantic coast to Key West, creating more and better destina-

(above) Birch bark made picturesque-yet-inexpensive cottage siding and roofing at Everett's Resort, in Eagle River, Wisconsin.

(below) Post-Civil-War transportation brought thousands of summer visitors to Cape May, New Jersey, encouraging developments like this row of identical rental houses on Stockton Place.







*A house in Barnegat, New Jersey, is equipped with porches and an unusual cupola for sea views and breezes. (below) The new national parks stimulated interest in rustic getaways, such as these Yosemite Lodge cabins in California.*

tions for winter visitors, who could arrive in relative comfort by Pullman car.

At Vizcaya, the James Deering Mansion (constructed 1913-1916 near Miami, Florida), the owner and architects F. Burrall Hoffman, Jr. and Paul Chalfin recreated a Mediterranean doge's palace in the Florida wilderness. With its own small fire department, landing dock, and lavish interior, the huge estate (now the Dade County Museum) illustrates the sudden appearance in the late-19th and early-20th centuries of a sort of American royalty: the super-rich.

The rich also ventured westward for the winter, particularly to southern California — Pasadena, Santa Barbara, Montecito, and La Jolla, for instance. The David Gamble House in Pasadena, built with Proctor and Gamble money made in Cincinnati, was Greene and Greene's wonderful "ultimate bungalow" design.

Simply affluent winter vacationers, and persons suffering from lung ailments and other diseases, sought respite in the wooden cottages of southern towns like Pinehurst, in upland North Carolina. Now a world-class golf resort, Pinehurst appealed to southerners hoping to escape the heat of the lowlands as well as to Yankees looking for sunshine among the pines. Flat Rock, Hendersonville, and Asheville, North Carolina, are resort towns with similar origins. The New England poet Robert Frost chose to warm his bones at his winter house, Connemara, in Flat Rock.

### *Escape for the Average Family*

NOT ONLY THE RICH BENEFITED FROM BETTER, FASTER TRANSPORTATION. The genesis of the middle-class American vacation house as we know it (usually a summer home) also came with the development of the railroad system. The ride was more likely to be coach class than Pullman car, and the distances were usually shorter. Some prominent suburbs began as summer-house areas for the wealthy — along Philadelphia's Main Line, for instance, or in New Jersey, and along the Hudson River. But the train also carried middle-class city dwellers to suburbs that had been specifically built for more relaxed — and often temporary — family living.

The joyful discovery by city dwellers of nearby rural areas, preferably at the seashore, followed quickly once there was an easy way to reach them. By 1900, travelers could get from Philadelphia to Atlantic City, queen of the New Jersey resorts, in an hour on nonstop local express trains. In these healthful surroundings, mothers and children enjoyed the fresh air all week before rushing to the station on Friday





evening to welcome a tired father arriving from his job in the hectic and overheated city.

The railroads also spawned such summer phenomena as religious camps and resort villages, which became common in the last quarter of the 19th century. The middle class flocked by the thousands to these meeting places, blending religion, education, fresh air, and fun.

Wesleyan Grove, in Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard, began as a Methodist tent-camp in

(right) In the 1930s, popular books fueled a trend towards owner-built retreats. (below) Fanciful Gothic trim fronts hundreds of miniature houses in Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.



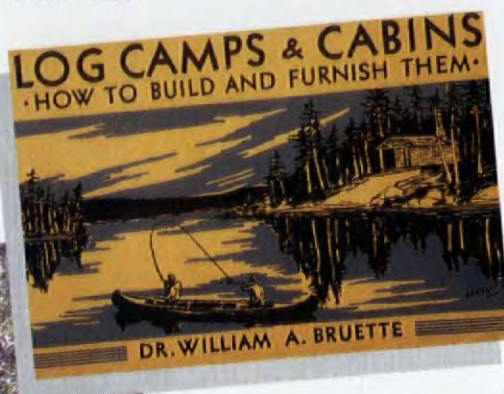
the mid-19th century. The first small wooden house constructed in 1859 set off a building boom, and wood-sided structures replaced canvas ones on the narrow lots. By 1900 more than a thousand of the brightly painted houses created a festive village for visiting Methodist families. The closely packed rows of houses had balconies above the front doors, elaborately carved bargeboards, pointed-arch windows, vertical board siding, and other decorative devices.

Although the density of the construction suggests an awesome vulnerability to fire, nearly 300 of the houses still survive, in what has been called the greatest concentration of Gothic Revival cottages in the world. Oak Bluffs is now a National Historic Landmark.

Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, still a favorite escape for Washington, D.C.'s white-collar population, also had its

roots in the camp-meeting tradition. And, like many other midwestern resorts, Mackinac Island, Michigan, with its large, comfortable frame Queen Anne-style houses, grew out of one of the hundreds of Methodist camp meeting grounds that dotted the area.

Automobile traffic is banned on the island. Visitors arrive by ferry and get around by horse and buggy.



### *Weekends at the Water*

COME JUNE, AFTER A HARDWORKING WINTER AS A FISHING community, many a coastal village was given over to the pleasures of the summer people. Many of Nantucket's finest houses, which originally served generations of seagoing families, became the warm-weather homes of off-island owners in the 20th century.

At the eastern end of the island, whalers' tiny wooden shanties were first intended as crude shelters from the weather for spring and fall fishing expeditions at remote Siasconset beaches. They proved popular with the fishermen's families as well when the weather got hot. To accommodate the extra bed space and other amenities needed for a growing brood, miniature extensions, locally called "warts," were added willy-nilly as needed. In the 1880s, after the whaling industry collapsed, a shortline railroad carried summer visitors out from Nantucket Town. Some newcomers built summer houses that imitated the shanty construction; others took over older structures or built new, shingled structures. Provincetown, Cape Cod, Cape Ann, and Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, attracted similar attention from the vacationing public.

Other vacationers went to Maine. At Bar Harbor, Kennebunkport, Northeast Harbor, and other prime spots, summer visitors restored old houses and built new ones. For many years the Bar Harbor Express sped husbands and fathers from Philadelphia and New York to their vacationing families and carried them back to the city again on Sunday night, ready for work on Monday morning.



## Mountain Cabins

SECOND HOUSES WERE NOT ALL ABOUT SUMMER AND SUNSHINE, however. Some people preferred a more rugged lifestyle and actively sought out cold-weather haunts in mountains and forests. The Adirondack Mountain camps of New York, for instance, became almost synonymous with the hunting-fishing-camping craze of the late-19th and early-20th centuries. In remote wooded areas, where building materials were close at hand, log cabins enjoyed renewed popularity in the 1920s and 1930s, as rustic homes or hunting lodges.

"The cabin in the forest, on the banks of a quiet lake or buried in the wilderness back of beyond, is an expression of man's desire to escape the exactions of civilization and secure rest and seclusion by a return to the primitive," rhapsodized one writer.

Hand-built by the owners or by knowledgeable local labor, the cabins sheltered from one to a dozen hunters, or a single family. They were used in all seasons, although winter vacations seem to have been largely a male preoccupation. Instructions for the construction of log cabins were found in popular magazines and publications, as well as bulletins of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, with many variations in size, plan, and construction techniques. A typical owner/builder's tool kit included: "a pair of sharp axes, a plane, handsaw, two hammers, a 2" auger, a carpenter's lev-

el and chalk-line, two cant-dogs or peaveys (used in handling logs), a steel measuring tape, and a chisel with a blade 3" wide," plus a big cross-cut saw for cutting and trimming logs.

Whether intended for summer or winter use, log cabins almost always included a substantial fireplace for light, warmth on chilly days and nights, and a generally cheerful atmosphere. Clay-and-log chimneys, while acknowledged as being less safe than those of stone or brick, were sometimes chosen as the most attractively rustic, and no doubt, the easiest and cheapest to build at a remote site.



## Ready-made Second Homes

FOR VACATIONERS IN A HURRY, prefabricated buildings (finished, painted, and ready to assemble on the site of the buyer's choice) became available soon after the Civil War. In 1883, the Portable House and Manufacturing Company

of New York advertised an assortment of prefabricated structures suitable for almost any purpose from "summer resorts and winter use" to railroad stations and hotels. By the early-20th century, summer-house builders could choose among catalog plans and ready-cut houses from companies like Sears Roebuck, Montgomery Ward, Aladdin, Gordon van Tine, and others. Nearly every company's catalog included at least a few designs, specifically aimed at the summer-house market: small, uninsulated cot-

tages of two, three, or four rooms, that came with or without bathrooms and kitchens.

Bathrooms, in fact, were generally a pleasant but unnecessary luxury in the second house — a realistic attitude,



*The Yoho & Merritt firm in Seattle, Washington, marketed planbooks for "portable" and inexpensive second homes like this 1926 bungalow (above).*

*Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida, is a 1930 Mediterranean-style fantasy built for Marjorie Meriwether Post's winter home (left).*





*A classic shingle and porch beach house built in 1881, Sandanwede in Nantucket, Massachusetts, marks the change from a fishing island to a summer-house island.*

site. One wag suggested that the term bungalow should be defined as "any house that looks as if it cost less to build than it actually did." In California, which quickly earned the title of "Bungalow Land," the structures housed new year-round residents, as well as those who came to escape a hard eastern winter.

Artists have always been particularly attracted to the kind of beautiful settings

given that running water at the cottage or camp site was far from a universal amenity. At ocean or lake beaches, a daily swim took care of hygiene, and in good weather, dishwashing and cooking could be done outdoors (on the porch or under a convenient tree) using water brought from nearby lakes, rivers, or creeks. If there was a kitchen, it was likely to include a hand-pumped water source. Electricity also was an iffy proposition and depended on the location of the vacation site. Early in the century, light at the more remote retreats was supplied by kerosene lanterns or by acetylene gas, which was brighter.

Before they came to be taken seriously as permanent housing, bungalows were essentially seen as summer or temporary houses for warm-weather areas. They were quickly and cheaply built, light in weight, and so inherently flimsy and frivolous-looking that they immediately suggested summer fun. Bungalow cities soon replaced tent cities as cheap summer houses in many areas. Although there was some question about what, exactly, a bungalow ought to look like, there was at least general agreement among its earliest proponents that it should be an informal house with a large porch and a low roof, preferably on a rather "natural" looking

that surround many summer houses. Daniel Chester French (best known as the sculptor of the seated Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C.), summered contentedly in Stockbridge, though in a far less pretentious house than Naumkeag. Chesterwood, a relatively modest home and studio, was designed by French's friend Henry Bacon and was only gradually winterized to make year-round residence possible. As French wistfully told one visitor to Chesterwood, "I live here six months of the year — in heaven. The other six months I live, well — in New York." Waiting, no doubt, like the rest of us, for the next great getaway into an endless summer of leisure and luxury.



*The location of the Hawthorne House, an attractive Victorian cottage in Pinehurst, North Carolina, offers both a warm escape from northern winters and cool relief from southern summers.*





# Mothballing Buildings

How To Put Houses Safely in Hibernation

BY J. RANDALL COTTON

The windows were mostly broken and boarded up, and the wood on the front porch was caved in and rotten, so they couldn't go up. It looked like the whole house was ready to fall down ... Evelyn said, "What a shame they let this place go. I'll bet it was beautiful at one time."

— FANNIE FLAGG, *FRIED GREEN TOMATOES AT THE WHISTLE STOP CAFE*

THE BEST PROTECTION FOR AN OLD HOUSE is a caring resident, someone to clean and maintain the property regularly and be around when storms and intruders threaten. But what protects a house left unoccupied for an extended period of time?

A house can languish in a stewardship limbo when owners relocate on short notice or there is an estate to settle before new owners take possession. At other times, restorers may buy an irresistible old house well before they have

the cash to make their diamond-in-the-rough livable. And thousands of seasonal homes, many built to be used just part of the year, are regularly closed

up for months at a stretch, decade after decade. Regardless of the reason, any old house that will be unoccupied for more than, say, a month should be put into a kind of cold storage for its own good.

Mothballing, as this process is often called, has

long been used to deactivate and dehumidify ships warehoused while in the water. As applied to houses, it is, for the most part, a combination of simple protective measures and common-sense ideas. Along with some low-tech security techniques, mothballing protects



*Prepared with only an optimistic sign, this vacant old house fends for itself near Jefferson City, Pennsylvania.*

a vacant house from the ill effects of weather, animal — and human — pests, disasters, and the inexorable process of decay till the day it is occupied again.





*Attic and basement window vents allow air circulation in the mothballed Booker Tenement in Williamsburg, Virginia. Vents are substantial wood-louver construction that deflect water and resist tampering.*

## Keep Out the Elements

MOTHER NATURE IS RELENTLESS IN HER attack on building materials, so when an old house is unattended, preventive measures become critical. The primary goal is to make the house weathertight.

Start with a thorough inspection of the house, especially exterior areas that may allow water to enter if in disrepair. Pay particular attention to:

☛ **Roofs** — Replace missing or badly deteriorated shingles. Repair cracks or bubbles in flat (built-up) roofs. Check that flashing is intact and clear of debris in valleys, around chimneys, and against parapet walls.

☛ **Gutters and Downspouts** — Cleaning leaves and debris out of gutters, downspouts, and drains is crucial. If the house will be unoccupied for more than six months, arrange to have this job done for you, preferably in autumn and again in spring. Also, check gutters for proper pitch, repair failed joints or leaks, and fix disconnected downspouts or obstructed drains.

## ☛ Masonry Walls and Chimneys —

Repoint any washed out or deteriorated joints. Check for rotted or spalled brick or stone and loose coping stones in places such as parapet walls.

☛ **Wood Sills, Siding, Frames, Doors, and Windows** — Look for rot or structural failures. Caulk or

weatherstrip open joints. Repair missing or cracked window putty. Perform routine paint maintenance, especially on vulnerable horizontal surfaces.

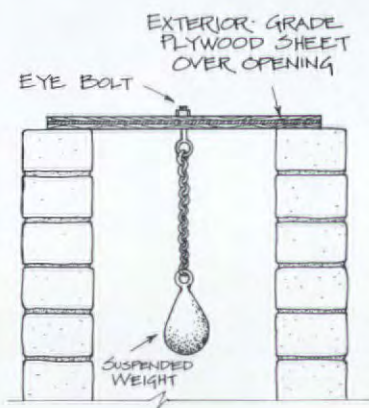
☛ **Landscaping.** Prune trees limbs that overhang the house, and trim overgrown shrubs or vines that can trap moisture against the house, especially at the foundation. Prevent potential wind damage by securing or stowing outdoor furniture, shutters, awnings, and antennas.

## Protect from Pests

WHEN HUMANS LEAVE THE premises, critters are happy to move in. Insect and animal hijinks can be devastating. Moths make short work of upholstery, drapery, and clothes. Bird and bat guano can destroy floor finishes and

create a health hazard. Mice are notoriously persistent gnawers of wood — as well as plaster and even electrical wires. Squirrels (and their reviled rat cousins) wreak havoc with insulating materials, and horde a wide range of household goods for nesting materials, creating fire hazards.

It may be impossible to keep all varmints out of a vacant house, but you can certainly reduce their opportunities. Close up all openings except those needed for ventilation. Replace broken window glass and fix torn porch screens. Repair holes in soffits and eaves. Screen open areas under porches or crawlspaces. Similarly, you may need to block or screen the exterior vents of sewer lines, clothes dryers, or ovens. To close off a chimney top, an old trick is to cap it with a sheet of exterior-grade plywood held in place by a weight (see drawing). If chimneys are to remain open for ventilation, a framed screen or metal ventilating cap on top will do the job.



*Along with closed dampers, plywood and a sash (or similar) weight will prevent animals and debris from entering chimneys.*



Despite all these precautions, some pests may still get in, so remove or safely store anything edible. This includes items humans wouldn't dream of eating, such as leather, paper, soap, and textiles. Poisons and traps only tend to create — rather than prevent — a mess if the bait is taken. Finally, it's to your advantage to have the house inspected and treated for termites, powder-post beetles, and other six-legged creatures.

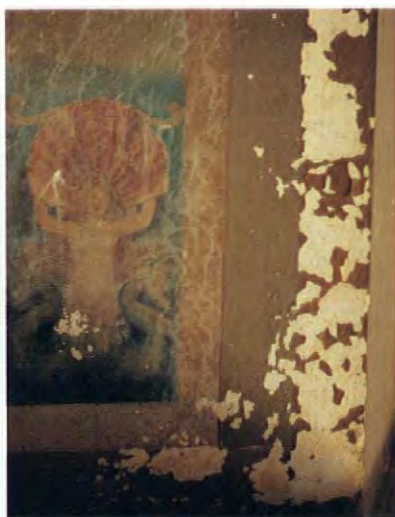
### Tidy Up Before You Close Up

SIMPLE DOMESTIC PRECAUTIONS WILL protect the house contents. Empty all trash and wash out garbage containers. Remove all hazardous materials such as flammable liquids, poisons, and oil- or solvent-soaked rags — spontaneous combustion can occur. Clean out old newspapers, straw, or cardboard. In houses left unheated, also remove items that can freeze and burst: canned foods, spray cans, cleaning supplies, or cans of paint.

Cover upholstered furniture with sheets or drop cloths to protect them. Sprinkle moth balls (claimed to repel rodents, too) underneath the coverings and cushions, and also in garment bags to protect clothing. Strong light can cause carpets, upholstery, even paint finishes to fade, so adjust blinds and curtains to eliminate direct sunlight. Clean out and disconnect electrical appliances. Leave the doors to refrigerators and dishwashers open to allow air circulation, and put in a box of baking soda or a saucerful of ordinary charcoal briquettes to keep them sweet (also good for ovens). Keep toilet seats down, however, to bar "visitors" seeking water.

### Shut Down Utilities and Systems

THERE IS NO CONSENSUS AMONG EXPERTS as to whether an unoccupied house should be heated during cold months. Everyone agrees, though, that real damage can result from damp, unventilated conditions.



*Severe moisture condensation has left runs and flaking on a century-old mural.*

Maintaining a "background" temperature of about 45° F is one way to effectively reduce the relative humidity and circulate air, but this does have disadvantages. Besides burning fuel, unattended heating systems are potential fire hazards (electric or kerosene space heaters should never be used). Furthermore, a wintertime electrical or heating-system failure can allow water lines to freeze and burst.

So unless there's a compelling reason to do otherwise, heating systems can be turned off if adequate ventilation and freeze protection are provided. Start by shutting off the fuel lines that supply oil, natural gas, or propane. Turn off the power to the furnace, shut water-supply pipes, and drain all water or steam lines after opening the radiator valves. (Antifreeze may also be an option; check with a plumber). The electrical service itself can be shut off at the main service panel or circuit breaker.

Plumbing systems face the greatest threat from freezing. Ice can easily burst the strongest pipes, and when it thaws, water gushes unchecked through the breaks causing severe damage. To winterize plumbing:

- ❑ Close the main supply-line valve, usually located where it enters the

house. If the house has a well, you may need to close a valve at the pump.

- ❑ Open all the faucets and leave them open while the house is unoccupied. Remember to open outdoor spigots.

- ❑ Open the drain valves (usually located at the lowest point of the system) to purge the lines of water. Also drain tanks such as hot-water heaters, furnace boilers, and toilet water closets. It's a good idea to label or secure the heating controls of hot-water heaters and furnaces so they cannot be energized while empty, which will destroy them (removing fuses is one idea).

- ❑ Winterize traps below sinks, floor drains, and showers that will still hold water. Open drain plugs first, if accessible. Then add non-toxic antifreeze (available at RV suppliers, marine, and hardware stores). One cup per trap should be sufficient.

- ❑ Remove as much water as possible from toilet bowls and tank closets first (this usually requires small cups and sponges), then add enough antifreeze to replenish the trap seal.

- ❑ Blow out lines (or systems) that do not drain well with compressed air, or prime them with non-toxic antifreeze.



*Where power is available, humidistats (the box here) can monitor interiors to activate ventilating fans.*



## Ventilate, Ventilate, Ventilate!

AN UNHEATED, MOTHBALLED HOUSE IS highly susceptible to interior moisture damage. Humid air can condense on interior surfaces during cool nights with devastating effect. Mildew may form on wallpaper, plaster walls can crack, wood floors and wainscot panels can warp. The challenge is to strike a balance between buttoning up the house for security and allowing for ventilation.

First, curtail as many moisture sources as possible. Lay down plastic sheets on the dirt floors of basements or crawlspaces. Be sure that gutters, downspouts, and drains are in working order. Leave open all interior doors, including closets, appliances, cabinets, utility rooms, attics, and basements.

Many old houses exhibit some "natural" ventilation due to leaky windows, gaps in floorboards, or lack of insulation and storm windows. In some cases this provides enough air movement, but most houses require a more positive flow. Ventilation is especially important in the basement and attic so that air can be exchanged. Cool air

that enters through basement windows or vents rises through the house in a "chimney" effect (aided by warming sunlight), and exits out attic vents.

To promote this circulation, leave both basement and attic windows open, but install louvers or screens to prevent water and animal entry. Install vents in the gable ends, along the ridge, or in the soffits and eaves if additional attic air movement is needed. A standard rule of thumb for determining adequate attic ventilation is: One square-foot of open ventilation per 100 square feet of attic floor space. More ventilation may be needed if moist conditions persist.

You may also have to vent as much as 50% of each window by raising the lower sash and installing louvers. Each situation is different, and use of window vents must be balanced with concern for security. Metal window vents and louvers are usually light duty and may not offer enough protection. Custom wooden louvers, such as those used by the National Park Service, are stronger and more attractive, but also more expensive.

Circulating and exhaust fans can greatly reduce interior humidity (especially if placed in the attic), but require a safe source of electricity. They can be automatically controlled by thermostats, humidistats, or a combination of both. Have someone monitor the conditions in the house to determine if more ventilation is required.

## Set Up Security

AN UNOCCUPIED HOUSE IS AN INVITING target for thieves and vandals but it does not have to look abandoned. Stop mail and newspaper deliveries and have the grass cut and the yard maintained. Hard-wired (not battery powered) detection systems will signal the presence of intruders or fire but installa-



*In a St. Louis, Missouri, row house, trompe l'oeil designs on window coverings make a motballed building more "street-friendly."*

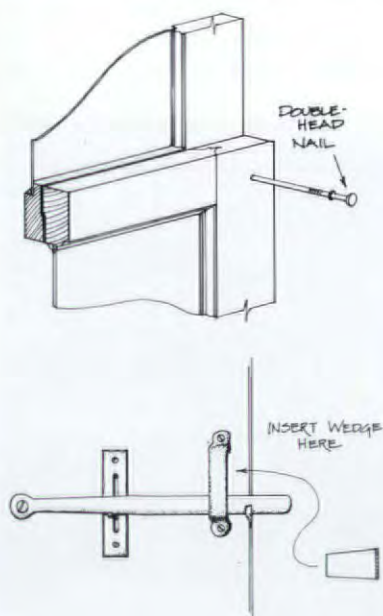
tion of sophisticated systems can run up to several thousand dollars.

Exterior doors can be beefed-up in a number of traditional ways. Install interior cross-bars or add surface-mounted bolts or chain guards, both of which are available in historically accurate reproductions. When a house will be unoccupied for a long time, nailing plywood panels to the frames can damage woodwork and does not provide for ventilation. With a little cunning, however, you can devise equally simple coverings that are strong and reusable, and will preserve details until the house can be opened and occupied once again.

*Special thanks to Sharon Park, AIA, of the National Park Service.*

## Further Reading

The National Park Service Preservation Brief on the temporary stabilization of unoccupied historic buildings will be available in early 1994. **Contact:** National Park Service Preservation Assistance Division, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC, 20013.



*Simple security tricks: a double-headed nail inserted through both sashes (top) locks windows; wedges make door catches inoperative (bottom).*



# Covering Doors and Windows

## Methods for Long-Term Security

BY FRANK BRISCOE

SOMETIMES THE FIRST step in restoration is to secure the building until work can get under way. Recently, I became involved in just such a project in south Texas where vandals were stealing irreplaceable features such as doors, and dangerous conditions inside the buildings could injure trespassers and pose a liability to owners.



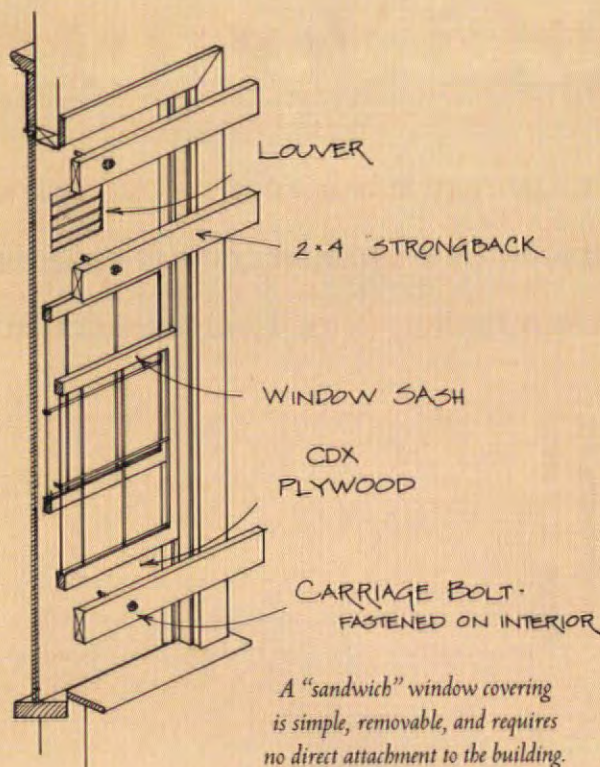
*Multiple stud lumber strongbacks on a door interior. Transom vents were already present.*

In a project like ours, which has a variety of door and window openings in varying states of repair, no single covering method was best. Yet any approach had to 1) avoid

damage to the historic fabric of the building, 2) allow air circulation, 3) be operable, in some cases, so we could get in the interior, and 4) detract as little as possible from the historic character of the facade.

The designs we wound up adopting used plywood, which is difficult to break through because of its laminated layers. Carriage bolts, which expose only round heads to the exterior, were the fasteners of choice, but one-way screws and ring-shanked nails also make a secure covering. Using these materials, one can make at least two types of temporary coverings that do not entail nailing into window or door frames and risk splitting wood.

One method creates a kind of sandwich around the jamb. Plywood on the outside can be secured with carriage bolts to either another piece of plywood or "strongbacks" of 2x lumber on the inside. This creates a very strong covering that is particularly well-suited to double-hung windows. By sliding the sash together in the middle of the window, there is



space at the top and bottom for the bolts to pass through without altering the window.

Another method is to construct a frame within deep window or door jambs, then fasten the exterior covering to it. Such a frame can simply be 2x4s or 2x6s set vertically against each jamb and wedged in place with similar members set horizontally. (Cut the horizontal members slightly longer than the distance between the vertical members for a tight fit.) This method usually does not require removing doors or hinges, an advantage that earns it high preservation marks.

Both techniques can be adapted to accommodate a tamper-proof door if hinges and lock hasps

are through-bolted to prevent prying. On coverings that were due to stay in place for a long time, we even added facsimiles of louvered shutters to relieve the boarded-up "Orphan Annie" look.



*A common — but inappropriate — method of closing in that is as ineffective as it is unsightly.*



# CONTROLLING OLD-H

**THINKING HARD ABOUT YOUR OLD HOUSE MAY NOT SOUND LIKE RESTORATION, BUT ORGANIZING ITS MAINTENANCE INTO A PROGRAM CAN BE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN CHOOSING THE RIGHT PAINT. BY JOHN LEEKE**

**P** LANNING FOR AN OLD HOUSE CAN BE OVERWHELMING. So many things need attention, a common reaction is to just make the place look good and then hope for the best. However, dealing with maintenance problems only as they occur wastes time, money, and effort in a maze of disparate activities. A better approach is learning to control deterioration by rethinking the ways you maintain your building. This is particularly true if you are the owner of a second or summer old house and away from the property for long periods at a time.

Often, the value of regular maintenance doesn't sink in until disaster strikes. Many times I've been called to a house after the owners awake to find their gutters and cornices laying in a decayed heap on the lawn. All at once, decades of ignored maintenance finally claims their undivided attention. They realize there is a huge backlog waiting: peeling paint to recoat, stuck windows to free, a broken screen door to fix, and on and on. If this scenario sounds familiar, or you already worry about giving your building the care it deserves with limited resources, step back and take a deep breath. It is time to establish a maintenance program. This is a plan that gives you the confidence and fresh perspective necessary to put your building back in shape and to keep it that way. Here we'll use the case of a decayed cornice (see box p. 41) to examine how a maintenance programming system works.

*Peeling paint on a wood gutter is a call for maintenance, but the real attention every old house needs is prioritizing upkeep so that deterioration is checked before it gets out of control.*

## WHAT IS MAINTENANCE?

WITHOUT MAINTENANCE, A BUILDING'S MATERIALS BEGIN TO deteriorate immediately. Parts fail after a few years, and soon systems fall apart. Eventually, the whole building will fall down and "melt" back into the earth without a trace.

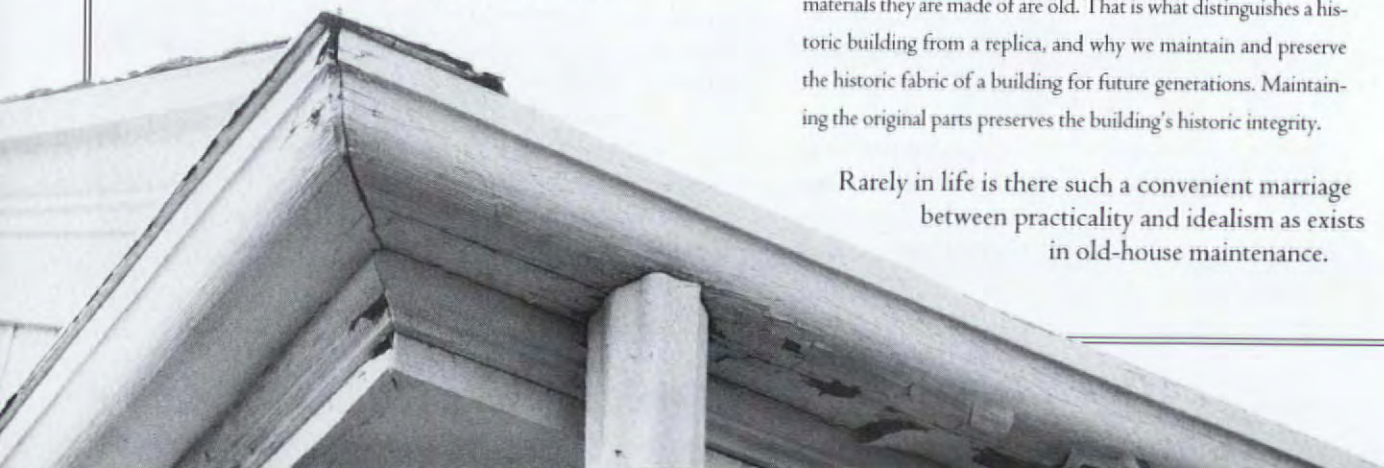
It makes sense to keep a building standing rather than let it fall down and build a new one. Because building materials continue to deteriorate if left on their own, they require on-going attention to maintain the building's condition. This is the cycle of deterioration and renewal. Maintenance is a continuing process — not a single task that can be done once and forgotten.

There are two basic reasons for maintaining the existing parts in an old house rather than replacing them. Roger Reed of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission summed them up nicely:

The practical argument is that maintenance is more efficient. It saves money, time, and effort by limiting the need for future expensive work, such as wholesale replacement of a window lost through neglect. Moreover, replacement material is often inferior to original material. For example, modern fast-growth wood is generally inferior to old slow-growth wood used in old buildings. Maintaining the original wood makes sense because it is less prone to deterioration.

The philosophical argument is that historic buildings are an important part of our heritage. Frequently, our homes and institutional buildings (such as churches) are the most powerful ties we have to our own past. However, they are historic only insofar as the materials they are made of are old. That is what distinguishes a historic building from a replica, and why we maintain and preserve the historic fabric of a building for future generations. Maintaining the original parts preserves the building's historic integrity.

Rarely in life is there such a convenient marriage between practicality and idealism as exists in old-house maintenance.





# HOUSE MAINTENANCE



## A CASE HISTORY

*Trouble started in a large Victorian house when overhanging trees left debris in a wooden gutter. The neglected debris trapped excessive moisture in the wood, peeling the paint, and eventually causing decay and a leak. The leak decayed the cornice, and water washing down the outside over years damaged the wall. When a big rain storm hit, the cornice fell off the building. This allowed water to pour into the walls, damaging costly reproduction wallpaper and flooding a parquet floor in the parlor.*

## MANAGING MAINTENANCE

IT'S EASY, OF COURSE, TO KEEP A SINGLE GUTTER IN WORKING order, but faced with maintaining the rest of the gutters, dozens of doors and windows, and two acres of lawn mowing, those gutters are easily forgotten. The key is establishing priorities. You can't go right from observation to action. You have to abstract the information — in other words, make lists. With a comprehensive, systematic approach to managing maintenance, you can assure attention to even the smallest detail.

This may seem daunting at first, but don't worry. You don't have to think of or attempt everything at once. In fact, the three main tactics used in a maintenance program are:

- 1) Divide difficult tasks into smaller, "do-able" parts.
- 2) Combine — or spread out — those parts, making them

easier to plan for and accomplish.

- 3) Take action.

Practically all management activities fit neatly into four categories: Assessment, Planning, Maintenance, and Evaluation. You can ease the job of managing maintenance by combining similar activities into these categories and doing each type of activity all at once. Synchronize these activities into the maintenance cycle to improve your efficiency. For example:

- Assess all conditions late in the fall.
- Plan all work during the winter.
- Maintain the building during the spring and summer.
- Evaluate the results early in the fall.

After you go through the cycle a few times, the improvement in maintenance means there will be far fewer emergencies to break up this efficient routine.



## DESIGNING A MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

A PROGRAM IS A LIST OF ACTIVITIES. A MAINTENANCE PROGRAM controls how often the maintenance cycle repeats. It defines, prioritizes, and schedules all maintenance activities for a building. By specifying in detail, where, when, and what maintenance activities will take place, you control and limit deterioration.

## COMMON TYPES OF MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS

**NOMINAL** Little is done to the house until there is a major change in use, ownership, or condition.  
**Maintenance Quality:** Highly reactive

*Interior housekeeping is at a minimum; when the house gets so dirty the inhabitants can't stand it, someone cleans up. System maintenance is nil; the furnace blows up, so it gets replaced.*

**Effectiveness:** Low

*The property doesn't serve the needs of its users very well and is gradually being used up. If the window shutters need painting, they are simply removed and hauled to the dump.*

**Preservation Merits:** None

*When the value of the property falls below the cost of a new building, economics might dictate it be torn down and replaced.*

**UNFOCUSSED** Frequently includes very active housekeeping, lawn care, and painting. Results can be good, but often serious problems are glossed over. There is money, time, and motivation, but exactly what maintenance is needed may not be clear.

**Maintenance Quality:** Remedial and reactive

*Most maintenance beyond lawn care and painting is corrective; when a gutter falls off, it's put back up or replaced. However, the cause of the problem may not have been recognized.*

**Effectiveness:** Limited

*The house looks good, but has occasional problems that range from minor to extensive and expensive.*

**Preservation Merits:** Limited

*In correcting problems through replacement, important historic details are lost.*

**EFFICIENT** Someone who knows about buildings is in charge; maintenance is on-going.

**Maintenance Quality:** Pro-active (vs. reactive)

*Corrective maintenance projects have improved the building; preventive maintenance is beginning to be used.*

**Effectiveness:** Good

*The building is in good condition at a reasonable cost.*

**Preservation Merits:** High

*Loss of important historic fabric is reduced to a minimum.*

## The Cycle of Effective Maintenance



You may think, "I can't be bothered with something as formal and organized as a maintenance program. After all, the time could be better spent actually working on the building." In fact, every building already has a maintenance program. You just have to come to terms with what kind of program controls the maintenance on your building. Most single-family residences are managed with nominal or unfocused programs (see box at left).

To design a maintenance program tailored to your building, begin with an Initial Assessment. Then list all the planned projects in a Maintenance Plan such as that shown on p. 45. Afterwards, schedule them into a cycle that repeats often enough to meet the needs of your house.

Buildings with nominal maintenance often have extended cycles that range from 40 to 50 years. The cycle repeats when these buildings have a major change in use, ownership, or when they just begin to fall apart. This often results in major loss of original building parts. When the frequency of maintenance is three to five years or less, the building is kept in better condition with little loss of early fabric. The first few times you put a maintenance cycle to work, repeat the cycle at least once a year. This will familiarize you with the routine and allow you to benefit from some of the advantages, such as reducing emergencies, early in the game. Large institutions with many buildings will probably need to repeat the cycle on a yearly basis. A small church or a homeowner with a single building may be able to step back to a cycle spread over three or five years.

## ASSESSING THE BUILDING

ASSESSMENT PROVIDES AN OVERALL AND ACCURATE VIEW OF



the entire property. This will help you set the maintenance goals and objectives.

Begin with a complete Initial Assessment inspection that will give a detailed, critical review of all parts of the building and grounds. This must be performed by someone who has an understanding of how the building was meant to work when it was built and a knowledge of modern technologies. An impartial outside advisor, such as a preservation consultant, building inspector, or technical representative (to properly evaluate, say, a chimney) might be required. If you do your own assessment, familiarity with the house and your feelings toward it may cloud your observations. Try these methods to give you a fresh perspective:

- Perform the inspection right after a long trip.
- Cut a rectangle in a 9" x 12" piece of cardboard. Hold it at arm's length and view the building through this frame. This isolates the building, or the parts you are looking at, from the surroundings.
- View the building by looking in a mirror.
- Take notes and make sketches. Recording conditions in writing forces you to pinpoint and clarify your findings and thoughts.

To make maintenance programming work, it is important to note the building's subtle conditions and then take appropriate action on the underlying cause. In the cornice case history, for example, peeling paint on the gutter indicated there was excessive moisture in the wood years before the cornice was decayed. As the paint got worse it was scraped and repainted, but this was just a reaction to the symptom. A more appropriate treatment would have zeroed-in on the fundamental cause by cleaning out the gutter and cutting back tree branches.

When you find poor conditions, perform a little interrogation exercise to determine their fundamental cause. Ask at least five questions, similar to the Who, What, Where, When, and Why queries used in newspaper reporting. Begin with the obvious. For example:

*Why did the cornice fall off?* [Ice]

*Why was it weak?* [Moisture decay]

*Why was moisture in the gutter?* [Debris]

*Where did the debris come from?* [Trees]

At this point it looks like debris buildup is the cause. Rebuilding the cornice and cleaning the gutters regularly should take care of it. Still if you ask a few more questions, another cause surfaces.

*Are there other moisture problems?* [Bathroom condensation]

*Why was there so much ice buildup?* [Lack of insulation]

Probing down to this level reveals the fundamental cause: heat loss. Adding insulation, and retrofitting vapor

## DETERIORATION

**A**LL BUILDINGS ARE MADE OF MATERIALS THAT deteriorate. Some, like exterior paint or wood, can degrade within a few years. Exterior paint weathers away as sunlight breaks down the binder and rainwater washes away the pigment. Without protection from the sun, the surface of the wood weathers away at the rate of about 1/4" per century. Moisture builds up in the fiber promoting fungal decay that can consume the wood completely within a few years or months.

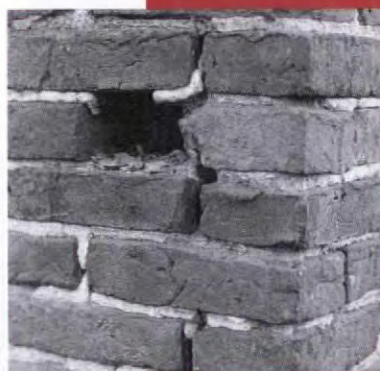


*Ultra-violet rays decompose wood fibers; rain washes them away.*

Other materials, like masonry, deteriorate over decades and centuries. In stone and brick masonry, rainwater dissolves the binder in the mortar. When the remaining sand washes away, gaps are left in the mortar joints and water enters the wall, soaking the stone or brick. When the water freezes and expands, a stone or brick may break in two or erode away.

When a material fails, the building part no longer performs its function. A gutter's function is to catch water and channel it along the edge of the roof to specific points where it drains away. When fungal decay eats out the bottom of a wooden gutter, it is no longer watertight. The leak in the gutter is also a weak link that limits the performance of the drainage system — the outlets, elbows, downspouts, and drainage lines that carry the water down to the ground and away from the building.

Even critical building systems far away from a failing part can be affected by the pouring water, including the building's masonry foundation.



*Water erodes mortar joints and even soft brick.*



PROJECT SHEET, Project Name: CORNICE update: 1 6 94, SHT#: 2  
 page #: 4 (On Site Inspection Notes reference), prepared by: JOHN L.

Type of Work: ☒ preservation ☒ corrective maintenance ☒ one time cyclic: times per in-house, contract  
☒ restoration ☒ preventive maintenance ☒ in-house, contract  
☒ repair ☒ unscheduled maintenance

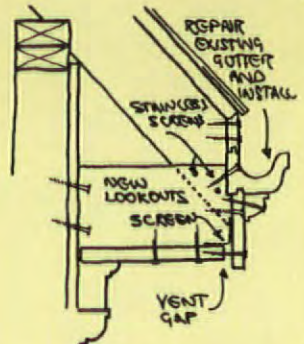
goal supported: - PRESERVE, - MAINTAIN, - IMPROVE

objective supported: - PRESERVE, - MAINTAIN, - IMPROVE

Location & Element affected: - EAST CORNICE

Treatment & Methods:

- CLOSE HOLE WITH POLY + LATH
- REBUILD CORNICE
  - REPAIR GUTTERS (EPOXY)
  - REPLACE FACIA & SOFFIT
  - PRIME AND BACK PRIME ALL WOOD
- INSULATE WALLS
  - ADD VAPOR RETARDER



Materials: description	amount	supplier
- EPOXY CONSOLIDANT + FILLER	2 QT.	HEATON
- EPOXY INSECT SCREEN	12 SQ. FT.	MANH. HD.
- PINE (EASTERN WHITE)	55 RD. FT.	STOCK

Costs: description	planned	actual
- MATERIALS	\$45.00	\$65.00
- LABOR AT \$12.00/Hr (4.5 Hrs. (CLOSING))	\$54.00	\$73.00
- CONTRACT TO REBUILD CORNICE	7,100.00	7,000.00

Task	Name	phone	Company, address, phone
CLOSING ONE PALTON	SSS-1127		STAFF
REBUILDING DAVE DODD	SSS-1124		RESTORATIONS INC.
JACK DODD			

Identify type of work, say, with checkoff boxes.

List goals.

Outline treatments & methods for the work to be done.

Record "as done" information here, including methods, costs, and who did the work.

demonstrates how the cost of the project will affect overall costs. An overall plan such as this gives a comprehensive long-term view of maintenance activities and costs.

## MAINTAINING THE BUILDING AND MAKING DECISIONS

TO KEEP THE MAINTENANCE CYCLE ROLLING and on-track, it is important that there be only one person responsible for the program. Where responsibility is shared, maintenance programs never truly pull out of the reactive rut. This includes sharing responsibility with someone as close as a spouse or as distant as a corporation. In every case where I have seen gutters falling off the building, there was either no one assuming responsibility for maintenance or there were many people trying to share responsibility.

In my own family we struggled for years to improve and maintain our house. Then we decided my wife would be the manager and I would be the worker. By putting one person in charge, the situation improved overnight.

If you find it difficult to make the choices that lead to efficient maintenance, never fear, the building products industry stands ready to choose for you. Seasonal advertising campaigns prompt, cajole, and sometimes trick homeowners into maintaining their buildings. This may coincide with the needs of an old building, and it may not. Siding and replacement-window manufacturers and installers are notorious for creating markets and sales where work is not needed. You should base maintenance on the needs of your family and the building, not on the needs of some profit-motivated business. Of course, you may still use those suppliers and installers, but use them on your own terms.

## EVALUATING THE RESULTS

THE FINAL STEP IN THE CYCLE IS TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE the success of repairs and maintenance. The results can, in turn, be used to improve the performance, cost, or timing of future projects. For instance, if you find evidence that a certain paint isn't holding up after two years, or galvanized flashing is just as effective as lead-coated copper, it may influence how you do the same work next time around. Feedback such as this is important because it completes the "loop" of maintenance activities, thereby giving the next cycle some concrete results on which to build.

A Project Sheet such as this lays out the work and program aspects of a job, such as priority, costs, and maintenance performer.

retarders and vents in the cornice will prevent future problems. Always look for the fundamental cause of poor conditions or you will only be treating the symptoms.

## PLANNING THE WORK

IN THE PLANNING PART OF A CYCLE, YOU DETERMINE WHAT maintenance needs to be done, when to do it, who will do it, and how much it will cost. Thorough planning creates the lead time necessary for handling the unexpected conditions so often encountered when working on historic buildings.

Creating project sheets that outline the work to be done for unique repairs or routine maintenance tasks aids planning. For example, the project sheet for the damaged cornice (above) includes the three main phases of the work: closing the hole, rebuilding the cornice, and adding preventive insulation. It also spells out how the work fits into the cycle, what the materials and costs are, and who will do the work.

The next step is to fit the cornice project into the overall maintenance plan (such as on p. 45). This establishes the cornice's priority in reference to other needed work and



## A PROGRAM IN PRACTICE

THE CORNICE DISASTER MENTIONED EARLIER CAUGHT THE OWNERS completely by surprise. After a little reflection, they realized they hadn't even considered cleaning out the gutters and, what's more, there could be other problems brewing in the building. At a loss for where to begin, they called me for help and I started them on their own program.

We surveyed their entire property, noting conditions and causes. Then we sat down to review the findings. Problem areas included decayed and unsafe front porch steps, a broken screen door out back, all of the exterior paint (peeling due to heavy paint buildup), and the windows (some in sad shape and more that didn't work right).

Over the next few weeks we planned several corrective maintenance projects that would bring these areas back up to a condition that would be easier and less costly to maintain. I showed them how to lay out each project on a Maintenance Plan that scheduled each project and its cost over the next several years.

*This sample Maintenance Plan is all bookkeeping, but it puts the value of specific maintenance projects in long-term perspective.*

MAINTENANCE PLAN  
UPDATE: 3/9/93

Project Location description	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	TOTAL
<b>CORRECTIVE MAINTENANCE</b>								
Steps (SAFETY HAZARD) #1								
Front door restore								1800
Cornice (EMERGENCY) #2								
north wall cleanup, close hole								120
preserve, rebuild								2100
Screen Door #3								
back porch repair, rehang								125
Exterior Paint #4								
strip, prime, 2 coat								
North Facade								6000
South Facade								7500
West Facade								4000
East Facade								4000
Porch								3000
TOTAL								24500
Windows #5								
saab: strip, repair, replace, paint								
frame: strip, epoxy								
bill, repaint								
10% Most Damaged								
North Facade								1500
South Facade								1650
West Facade								1650
East Facade								1650
TOTAL								8100
<b>INTERIOR REPAIRS #6</b>								
Parlor Water Damage								
parquet floor preserve								
plaster & paper preserve								
TOTAL								2200
<b>PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE</b>								
Roof repairs								400
Gutters & Downspouts								100
Clean out								100
repairs								120
Drainage								200
Clean out								50
repairs								50
trim trees, shrubs								50
Exterior Woodwork								100
repairs								1200
Paint								1000
scrape, touchup								500
Doors & Windows								200
adjust, maintain								800
Housekeeping								9000
<b>UNSCHEDULED MAINTENANCE</b>								
TOTAL								7000
<b>YEARLY TOTALS ('94 dollars)</b>	14000	13000	12000	10000	8000	8000		
	0 43415	34270	26120	23070	17570	14370		

Make a cost section to show when each project will be done and what the cost is expected to be.

List projects at the left in order of priority; here, each listing shows the project name, location, a brief description, and the project sheet to which it refers.

Account for projects phased over several years in the far right column.

Total each year's column of costs at the bottom of the sheet. This forecasts the total maintenance costs for each year into the future.

Referring to the comprehensive survey, we set up a plan that projected maintenance a few years ahead so the owners could easily see their cornice project in a wider context. It was not the most urgent — nor the most costly — maintenance they had to face. The front steps could seriously injure anyone so that claimed the highest priority. Dealing with the exterior paint problem would be a far more substantial expense since it encompassed the entire exterior.

The laundry list of minor items was taken care of by scheduling preventive maintenance tasks such as gutter cleaning, spot paint repairs, housekeeping, roof repairs, and minor door and window work. This would keep the rest of the building in good condition. It took some careful thought and financial juggling, but they worked out a maintenance program that was consistent with their housing needs and respectful of their financial means.

Late in the fall, the owners assess their own conditions, walking around the building and making a list of areas that require attention. During the winter, the plan is adjusted to meet the changes in conditions, after reviewing the program. Every two or three years they call me back for an objective review of their plans, and to help them investigate

trouble spots and develop treatments for specific problems. Each spring and early summer, they follow through and maintain the building, making progress on long-term projects as well as spot maintenance and emergency repairs. During summer and autumn, when all the hands-on projects are completed and these folks like to sit back and enjoy their home, they evaluate their hard work to see how conditions have improved.

Why bother with maintenance programming? It saves old buildings and it saves money. A study of the Maintenance Plan shows that the costs for rebuilding this cornice were \$6,020. That's enough to pay for the 25 years of routine gutter cleaning at \$170 a year (that would have prevented the damage) with nearly \$1,800 left over. In these difficult economic times \$1,800 could be put to better use than feeding fungi.

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



**W**HAT BETTER PART OF A HOUSE TO TAKE IN NICE WEATHER than a porch, but what part of a porch takes more abuse from the weather than the deck? Porch decks — or floors, if you like — support not only rockers, tables with lemonade, and people, but the rest of the porch. Like Atlas, they carry this load while largely unprotected from rain, sun, and snow. Not surprisingly, their vulnerable, horizontal position means porch decks often develop problems or give out before the rest of the structure. If you're planning on repairing or rebuilding a deck, here are some details to keep in mind for a quality job that will last.

**DESIGN** — To survive, porch decks have to shed water — mostly from rain, but also from melting snow — and dry rapidly. Two time-tested design features aid the process. First, lay the decking with joints running at right angles to the house wall. This way, water will drain off the edge of the porch, rather than be trapped as it crosses each joint. Second, slope the deck away from the building to promote runoff. Exact pitch is not critical, and can be influenced by the design of the rest of the porch (steep decks may look odd in relation to roofs or other porch features). Typically, the drop on a 10'-wide deck is between 1" and 2".

The design of framing can vary, but it must be sufficient to support the deck without a subfloor (almost never used because it prevents underside ventilation of the deck). The framing usually incorporates ample bridging or blocking between major members, and in new work these connections can be made more secure by using construction adhesive (such as PL 200 or Liquid Nails) along with joist hangers or toe-nailing.

**MATERIALS** — Masonry floors of stone, concrete, or tile became popular for post-Victorian porches, but the most likely material for decks is wood. Early-19th century porch decks were often butt-jointed or ship-lapped, and in locales where rain or snow is prevalent, square-cut or bull-nosed boards laid with spaces provided maximum runoff and ventilation. After 1850, woodworking machinery made matched lumber common so tongue-and-groove flooring soon became widespread.

Unless historical evidence suggests otherwise, tongue-and-groove flooring is the most suitable choice for a porch deck. It creates an integral surface that is strong and smooth with a uniform appearance. It also prevents rusty nailheads by concealing them from the weather. Wood species such as heart pine, white pine, cypress, and spruce have been used for decks in the past. Redwood, pressure-treated yellow pine, and Douglas-fir are the commonly available choices today. Though yellow pine and redwood are problematic for painting (and are sometimes stained for this reason), Douglas-fir holds all coatings well. As with any flooring, clear, vertical-grain stock is the ideal choice to resist cupping and wear and to hold paint. Where thickness is an option, full 1" (or even 1-1/4") stock produces a more solid deck than common 3/4" stock, with a potentially longer life.

# HITTING ON PORCH DECKS BY GORDON BOCK



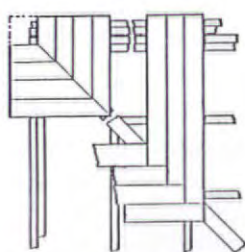
**INSTALLATION** — Moisture and sun exposure, of course, are the primary threats to a porch deck. The roof protects areas close to the house, but the last third or so of the deck is prone to daily direct sun, as well as rain and standing snow. Most vulnerable is the end grain of the boards at the porch edge. This part of the tree's structure is like a bundle of straws that will wick up moisture readily, making it the first area on the board to loose paint and decay. Installing deck boards with a few simple measures will prolong their life.

Water that finds its way between boards often causes paint failure at the joints. To limit this penetration, lay in each board with a bead of inexpensive paintable caulk (some use a thick coat of primer) after waterproofing and priming. Run the sealant right in the groove of each board — a messy, but uncomplicated step — just before fitting and nailing in place. Then clean excess off the completed floor before the finish paint coats go on. Where the deck changes direction, board ends can meet in either miter or herringbone joints and should also be caulked.

Simple details at board ends will also help. Adding nosing along the deck perimeter not only contributes a refined appearance, it caps the end grain and limits water penetra-

*A carefully rebuilt porch completes the Zane Grey homestead in Lackawaxen, Pennsylvania.*





Mitered and herringbone-laid deck corners.

water falls clear of the deck, rather than running back under the boards to the joist or fascia.

Speaking of fascia, any trim board applied over the deck framing may trap moisture unless there is air circulation behind it. For the trim out by installing it on 1" nailers to create a space between it and the joist or header. Good ventilation under the deck is very important as well. Use open-mesh lattice for skirting, not solid panels; vents may be needed where the deck comes close to the ground. Not near the deck but critical to its health nonetheless are gutters along the roof perimeter that will limit rain runoff and splashback.

**PAINTING** — Paint is the only real shield a porch deck has and good application increases its effectiveness. Treating boards with a paintable water repellent before priming is highly recommended because it keeps water that sits on the surface from penetrating the wood. Water repellents can be storebought (with or without a preservative ingredient, which


is seldom necessary) or homemade (see "Painting Exterior Wood," May/June 1991 *OHI*). They are best applied by soaking boards for three or more minutes in a trough such as an old length of gutter. Liberal brushing will also work, especially if areas that "drink up" the repellent are recoated, paying particular attention to end grain. Allow to dry for 48 hours, then coat all sides with an oil-based primer — especially bottoms —

Continuous gutters above and well-ventilated skirts below are essential for controlling deck moisture exposure.

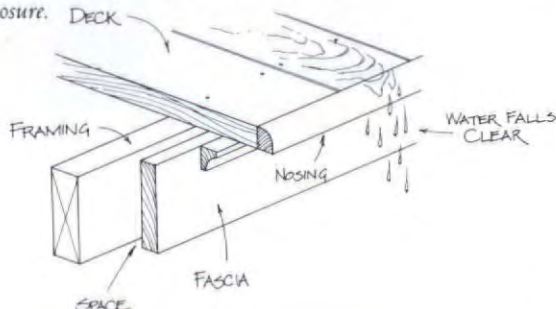


An under-deck view reveals deck boards protected with white primer backpainting and caulk at joints. Pressure-treated framing lumber stands up to high moisture levels near the ground.

to limit moisture pickup from underneath the deck.

Once the deck is installed, finish it with two or more coats of good quality porch or deck paint. Traditional, semi- or high-gloss oil-based porch-and-deck enamels are very durable and still a good choice where available in our low-VOC age. Epoxy-based versions are tough too and have shown good performance on exposure-prone areas such as porches. Semitransparent penetrating stains are a popular (though not strictly historical) option for deck coatings. These products are usually water repellents with a significant pigment content that helps to protect the wood. Choose quality products with a high solids content and apply them according to the manufacturer's recommendations for best porch performance. 

Simple carpentry details limit the effects of water at the deck edge — the area most prone to exposure.





# S U M M E R

**I**NTERIORS IN THE SECOND HOUSE usually mean second-hand. It's not hard to find understuffed Louis XV couches, oddly enough, next to rickety Windsor chairs in, say, a Shingle-style building. However, this eclectic mix of furnishings was no less common for decorating in the past than it is today. Out-of-style or well-used pieces, given a new life in a vacation home, were an inexpensive way to furnish. Often, antiques might survive generations unnoticed in their unremarkable, summer furniture roles — that is, until reappreciated as valuable heirlooms by a sharp-eyed, visiting cousin.

Yet, amid the castoffs, the summer interiors of historic vacation homes did have an evocative style of their own that hinged on three features. First, two types of furniture, wicker and rustic, reflected the natural surroundings. Rooms full of wicker, sheer curtains, and rag rugs gave a light, airy feel to houses by the shore; rustic furniture, Japanese screens, and Indian blankets reflected the summer-winter use of mountain house interiors. Then, in the early-20th century, summerlike rooms, such as sunroom and sleeping porches, were added onto houses — in the city as well as in the country. Meant to be peaceful retreats, these rooms had plenty of light, plants, and comfortable furnishings. True to the season which inspired them, wicker, rustic furniture, and sunrooms attempted to bring a bit of the outdoors indoors.



*Brightly painted wicker:  
The definitive summer  
furniture.*



*Canton Chair*

Widespread and Ever-Popular: Wicker  
DURING THE MID-19TH CENTURY, THERE wasn't a set style for summer interiors.

Instead, houses were "summerized" — that is, elaborate furnishings were protected with muslin, linen, or chintz slip covers. In preparation for the warm months, heavy draperies were replaced with white curtains in a light material or lace panels. Expensive, thick rugs were rolled up and natural straw matting was used in their place.

## Yesterday's Decoration of Warm-Weather Rooms as a Cue for Today

~ by Lynn Elliott ~



# INTERIORS

It was during this time that the ubiquitous summer furniture — wicker — first caught the public's attention. Its popularity would continue well into the 20th century, making it the most widely used furniture for summer interiors. Wicker is a catch-all term for any vinelike plant woven around a supporting frame to make furniture. Raw materials included rush, reed, rattan, willow, raffia, fiber, cane, bamboo, and dried grass. In the

1850s, Cyrus Wakefield recognized wicker's potential as inexpensive furniture, and soon found that its strength and flexible nature was well-suited to ornate Victorian designs.

Wicker started out as a novelty item for Victorians, providing a touch of the exotic to even the most staid sitting rooms. But when its useful combination of formal chair design with natural materials could no longer be overlooked, wicker quickly went from the parlor to the porch. Its light weight and weather-resistant nature was perfect for creating a "room outdoors" on the porch or in the garden. Most wicker furniture from this period was made of rattan, a material that was difficult to stain or paint. Fortunately, the tastes of the day dictated that wicker should be left in its natural state or only lightly stained. The most notable wicker furniture of the period was the hourglass chair, also called the Canton chair, which was introduced at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition.



Toward the end of the century, Victorians preferred painted or stained wicker, so interest in rattan began to wane. New materials, such as willow and bamboo, were introduced, and a

taste for "exotic" styles grew out of a vogue for summer parlors inspired by the Orient. Chairs of rattan and bamboo were made in the so-called "Chinese," "Japanese," and "Moorish" styles. Wicker furniture also began to be designed for specific purposes, such as lounge chairs

with magazine pockets for porches.

## The Reign of Rustic

DURING THE MID- TO LATE-19TH CENTURY, a taste for rustic furniture based on the natural form of twigs and branches was also growing, particularly for mountainous or wooded settings. Although rustic was popular, few interiors (with the exception of the Great Camps) used more than one

or two rustic pieces, so the style's scope was more limited than wicker.

Classic rustic work was created mainly in the Appalachian and Adirondack areas, and the designs and materials of both regions were very different. From Asheville to Virginia Springs, Appalachian chairmakers were influenced by the fashion whims of summer residents, who brought pictures of Gothic Revival designs from Europe to be copied. So this cross-pollination produced designs that were rarely indigeneous to the area.

From the 1820s to the 1850s, the earliest rustic pieces were crafted in the Appalachian Mountains. Greatly influenced by the Gothic Revival style, the furniture was usually made of rhododendron, a yellow-orange wood that is almost indestructible. Gothic Revival rustic settees with the characteristic diaper (diamond-shaped) pattern could be found all over the East Coast. All of the

*A veranda lined with wicker and woven-cane rockers (above) is turned into an outdoor parlor by the simple addition of rugs. A sunroom (below) filled with plants and wicker, including a Victorian "comfort" rocker, is an inviting spot.*







*Sleeping porches were considered invaluable from a health standpoint because fresh air was constantly circulating in the room. Canvas roll-up blinds were recommended for protection from strong winds or bright sun.*

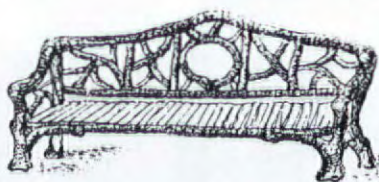
an abundance of rockers as well as chairs, chaises, and tables. To complete the woodsy setting, walls were adorned with guns, fishing rods, snowshoes, and animal skins. American Indian blankets covered rustic four-post beds, and Japanese screens, fans, and paper lanterns added a softer, aesthetic touch to the burly surroundings.

#### The Garden in the House

BY THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, HOUSE designs began to take advantage of pleasant weather with features, such as sun rooms and sleeping porches. As central heating caught on, porches were also enclosed. In 1915, The Craftsman observed that "suburban and country houses are being planned not only with porches and sleeping balconies, terraces and pergolas, but also with sunrooms, conservatories and breakfast rooms whose windows let in sunshine."

Gone were the days of the stiff, formal conservatories full of carefully cultivated, rare blossoms. These comfortable, semi-outdoor rooms were brightly lit by generous windows and, occasionally, sloping glass roofs. Walls and ceilings covered with trelliswork and vines brought the "garden into the house." Palms and ferns were artfully arranged among the willow, painted wood, or rustic furniture. In most rooms,

pieces emphasized the natural deformities of the wood, such as forks, burls, and roots. After the Civil War, craftsmen drew on their own traditions instead of those from Europe to create original rustic pieces. Made from white oak, hickory, or ash with rush or splint bottoms, ladder-back chairs combined the crafts of chairmaking and basketry.



*Gothic Revival Rustic Settee*

Bentwood was the next rustic style, and its heyday lasted from 1880 to 1940. The intricate designs of bentwood furniture, such as the contour chair, are held together by the tension of the curved hickory or white oak pieces.

Meanwhile, in upstate New York, a number of sportsmen built permanent summer residences in the Adirondack mountains. Known as the Great Camps, these buildings were an architectural mix of Swiss chalet and Gothic style that were complemented

by rustic furniture. Unlike Appalachian versions, Adirondack furniture was made by the carpenters of the Great Camps, who were more at home with a steel square than bentwood. Rather than

emphasizing the natural form of the furniture, they imposed classical designs, so the pieces have a controlled look to them. Mosaic

twigwork, sometimes called "Swiss work," is a characteristic feature of Adirondack furniture. The twigwork patterns were based on quilt designs or geometric motifs.

The Great Camps carried the decoration of rustic interiors to an extreme. Rustic rooms were filled with

*An Adirondack-style bedroom: Rugged-looking four-poster beds are complemented by rustic chairs, animal skin rugs, and walls decorated with American Indian artifacts.*







*With the canvas blind lowered, it is hard to tell this well-appointed "room" is on the porch.*

the floors were glazed tiles in muted tones of olive green, brown, terra cotta, buff, or blue, and the walls were often brick. A few well-placed lights with their radiance diffused through mellow glass domes, soft silk shades — or, best of all, a screen of ferns — gave a pleasant glow to the surroundings.

Wicker furniture was almost always used in these "outdoor" rooms, but rustic hickory pieces could also be found. During the 19th century, indi-

vidual pieces of wicker were used to make a statement, but in the early-20th century, sets of wicker furniture — matching chairs, tables, and settees — and long, low steamer lounge chairs were in demand. Wicker was stained in a variety of natural colors: rock gray, golden or tree-trunk brown, every shade of

green, and even flower colors. It also continued to be made in Victorian styles; manufacturers didn't experiment with new, bolder designs until after the 1920s.

Since the emphasis was on affordable, but good-looking, furnishings, all of this wicker and rustic furniture was complemented by chintz, cretonne (a printed, unglazed cotton or linen cloth rare today), or embroidered canvas cushions and pillows. Rag rugs in a matching color would complete the setting.

New Trends and Fading Fashions AS TASTES SHIFTED AWAY from ornate Victorian styles toward more angular, Arts & Crafts designs, the pages of wicker catalogs were soon filled with straight-lined, Mission-style pieces. In the early 1900s, wickerwork was designed with open latticework to lessen labor costs, but with the new styles came a demand for closely woven furniture, causing a second wave of mechanization in the wicker industry. First came the introduction "fiber," machine-twisted paper treated with glue size that might be wrapped around flexible wire. Its inexpensive production was a boon to manufacturers.

Mass-produced rustic furniture,

like wicker, also became a popular decorative scheme in hotels and resorts. As the demand grew, a number of factories were established in Indiana. The first and most well-known was the Old Hickory Chair Company, which is still in business. Since hickory was plentiful in the area, the company bent saplings around metal frames to create settees, tables, and chairs.

After 1920, mass-produced wicker was influenced by the Art Deco movement, and the diamond pattern became prevalent on the backs of chairs and settees. Unlike previous wicker furniture, these pieces relied on thick cushions with inner springs for comfort, rather than on wickerwork alone. By the 1930s, the poor quality of machine-made

*The rectilinear lines of Mission-style furniture, such as this stick reed set, were favored for post-Victorian summer interiors.*



wicker and the short-lived interest in Art Deco eventually led to a decline in wicker's long-held popularity. Rustic furniture was also still being made, but like wicker, the fashion fizzled by the 1940s. Innovations like air conditioning, increased automobile use, and most importantly, the backyard patio had changed the patterns of summer life — and the tastes for summer interiors. ■

## Suppliers

### Adirondack Store & Gallery

109 Saranac Ave., Dept. OHJ  
Lake Placid, NY 12946

(518) 523-2646

— antique rustic furniture.

### Wicker Fixer

Route 1, Box 349, Dept. OHJ  
Ozark, MO 65721

(417) 485-6148

— antique wicker, and repair services.

### Old Hickory Furniture Co.

403 South Noble St., Dept. OHJ  
Shelbyville, IN 46176

(317) 398-3151

— rustic hickory furniture.



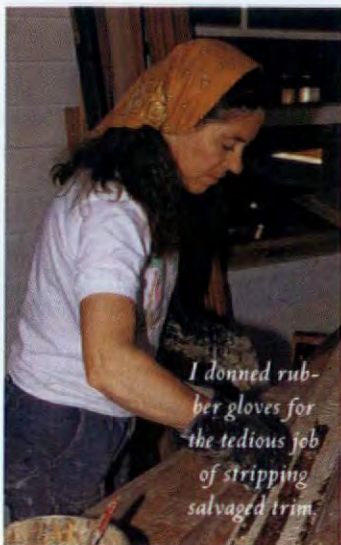
# Mastering ~ the ~ Art ~ of SALVAGE

Old-House Living and the Hunt for Architectural Antiques • by Jo-Ellen Matusik

**W**HAT HAPPENS WHEN your once-grand Queen Anne has lost most of its original woodwork, decorative tin ceilings, and stained glass windows? You become an old-house detective, a scavenger, and a master of salvage. At least, that's what happened to me.

My husband, Don, and I vowed never to buy to what real estate agents kindly refer to as "a handyman special," much less get involved in a major renovation project. But those vows were forgotten on a rainy November day in 1988 when I found my dream house. It was the eyesore of Union Avenue, that elegant boulevard leading to Saratoga Springs' famous thoroughbred race course.

When we inspected the building, I, like most old-house people, looked beyond what was, in order to focus on what could be. Walking across the mud pit that served as



*I donned rubber gloves for the tedious job of stripping salvaged trim.*

the front yard, I ignored the structure's startling tendency to tilt westward and concentrated instead on the possibility of reproducing the original wrap-around porch. Inside, rain poured down 2½ storeys through a "swiss cheese" roof to puddle on what was left of the oak floors. Sagging clapboards were visible through rotted studs exposed



*Once, ugly blue tarps covered a hole in the roof (left). Now, the house sports a five-color paint scheme (right).*

by decayed lath and plaster. Despite this dilapidated state, my mind whirled with possibilities and plans. As I toured the building, I imagined this near ruin as it had once been — a comfortable, gracious home.

Don and I drove the thirty miles north to our 1970s Cape in excited conversation. There was no question that we would return the house to its period, while sensitively incorporating modern conveniences. Taking stock of what little original material remained, such as the oak staircase, we decided to use salvaged architectural parts and well-made reproductions to replace what was missing. As preservationists, both of us are concerned about the loss of any historic building. Yet, we accept the fact that buildings are modernized or demolished and prefer to see salvaged items used to renew older structures, rather than displayed as conversation pieces in high-rise condos. So we agreed to acquire salvage only from reputable dealers, or if it was destined for the landfill.

After we signed the contract, I became an old-house detective, pouring through books and magazines for the 1870-1890 period and making lists of design elements in a stenographer's pad. (Before the project was finished, I filled three pads with notes, ideas, diagrams, and measurements.) I attended lectures by experts in Victorian interiors and landscaping, wandered through local house museums, and toured Queen Annes in Saratoga. I created "wish lists" of items that needed to be replaced (lighting, pocket doors, sinks) and period extras I'd like to find (stained glass, ornate transoms, and tin ceilings).

## Studying the Salvage Game

DURING THIS TIME, I ALSO STUDIED THE ART OF SALVAGE. I Poured through books and magazines, noting the types of salvage



parts available and hints on what to look for to ensure the parts could be used in our project. I sought out friends who had collected and used salvaged parts in their renovated Victorians. They provided information on sources and techniques for restoring these items. Consulting the phone book, I located several salvage yards in the area, including the Historic Albany Foundation Parts Warehouse. I toured these establishments and asked lots of questions to further educate myself. A friend presented me with my first "new home" gift, a copy of the *Old-House Journal Catalog*. I spent hours leafing through it and jotting down sources for items we needed.

Then, armed with my wish list, tape measure, and notepad (with required measurements for pocket doors, radiators, and other items), Don and I covered five states searching for desired items. We haunted antique shops and festivals, auctions, scrap yards, garage sales, and flea markets. We regularly discovered the best buys where an item was an odd piece, not part of an architectural antique inventory. Initially, we looked for any item on our list, but when our treasure trove grew, we began to concentrate on the more elusive items, like ornate hot water radiators.

We soon learned other tricks of the salvage game:

☛ **Develop X-ray vision** — See beyond those layers of paint, rust, and tarnish. At an antiques festival, we asked a dealer if he had any Victorian toilet paper holders. He rummaged through the back of his truck and pulled out a beat-up metal object with a heavy back plate and frame. "I planned to clean it up and straighten it out, but haven't had the chance," he explained. "If you want, you can have it for ten bucks." Muriatic acid, fine steel wool, and lots of rubbing uncovered a solid brass toilet paper holder. Our find now adds an unusual detail to our master bath.

☛ **Be persistent** — Ask about interesting pieces not prominently displayed. Browsing around a crowded antique shop in Marblehead, Massachusetts, I noticed a magnificent crystal chandelier boxed up and tucked in a corner. When questioned about it, the owner said, "Oh that. It's got a crack in it. I loaned it to someone and she dropped it. It's a thousand dollar piece. Now, I'll never sell it."

The crack would never be visible hanging from our ten-foot dining room ceiling. "I might be able to use it," I said nonchalantly. "How much would you take for it?"

"How about a hundred dollars?"



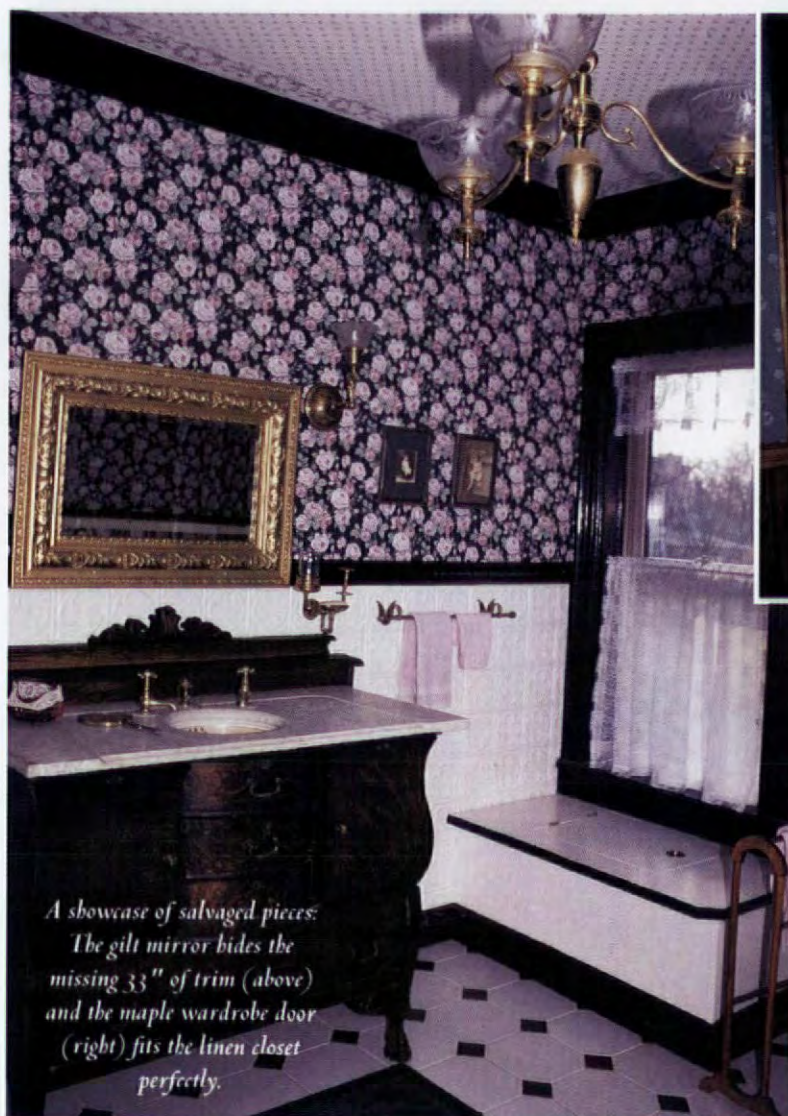
*Bought for a song, the "cracked" salvaged chandelier hits a high note in the dining room.*

Don and I had our new chandelier tucked in our Pontiac wagon before I released my breath.

☛ **Take a chance** — Trust your judgement. At a farmhouse auction in Saratoga County, I spotted an ugly green double door and a red mirrored door. I had no idea where I might use them, but they looked promising. I knew the other bidders were shaking their heads at the crazy woman willing to pay ten dollars each for these cast-offs. The first turned out to be oak and became the perfect addition to our main floor coat closet; the latter — a maple wardrobe door with a bevelled mirror — is a period touch in our bathroom.

☛ **Spread the word about your needs** — Tell friends and acquaintances about your project, as well as the people you meet during salvage hunts. Leave your name and phone number with the salvage dealers, noting the types of items you're seeking. Our persistence paid off. Not only did we get referrals from antique dealers for smaller items, but one of my husband's business associates told him about five





*A showcase of salvaged pieces: The gilt mirror hides the missing 33" of trim (above) and the maple wardrobe door (right) fits the linen closet perfectly.*



could no longer serve its original purpose. After a thorough cleaning, I mounted the grate in my kitchen where it hangs as a historical footnote to the original construction of our home.

### Organization Is The Key

WHEN NOT SALVAGING OR VISITING THE worksite, I spent hours coordinating all of the new-old parts into a cohesive unit. I commuted to the site every day, arriving before the crew and remaining after they left. I ran out of time to record in my steno books, so I began to fill cassette tapes with accounts of the progress and setbacks. I was boss, decision maker, and

homes that were to be demolished in a nearby city. After calling City Hall, Don discovered that no one planned to salvage anything. Since the owners of one house had not signed a purchase contract with the city, we negotiated personally with them for the salvage rights. For the remaining houses, we dealt directly with the demolition contractor.

☛ *Cultivate a creative mind* — Imagine new uses for items. While removing linoleum from a bathroom, we uncovered an ornate cast-iron heating grate. Naturally, I wanted to



keep it in the house, but since we opted for hot water radiators, it

*Here the Victorian toilet paper holder (right) awaits installation.*

worker, and so fell on the couch in exhaustion every evening after dinner.

Although living in a house during renovation is difficult, our long-distance restoration project came with its own pitfalls. For instance, one day I arrived to witness my crew discarding "useless" papers they'd found packed in the walls. I rescued as many of these time capsules as possible. My daily participation solved this lack of supervision, but there were new problems.

Since I couldn't just run home for something, I became very organized. Lists filled my pockets with notes on items to take to the site, to bring home, and to pick up as well as tasks to discuss with the crew and family activities not to miss. I made a 5" x 8" index card for each room of the house, on which I indicated measurements and many details, such as the lighting fixtures I hoped to find or the ceiling, floor, and wall treatments I planned. As the work progressed, I updated these cards to include items purchased





*Salvaged from one of five homes being demolished, the stripped tin wainscoting is smoothed with fine steel wool before priming.*

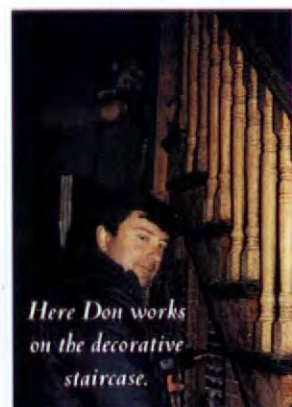
for each room, including paint colors and wallpapers. On the back of each card, I indicated the placement of the wallpapers I'd coordinated for that room. These cards were always in my pocketbook and served not only as a running record of "what was," and a reminder of what I needed to look for, but provided an encouraging vision of "what could be" when set-backs and problems seemed overwhelming.

At both houses, I kept sketches of the exterior facade and floor and landscape plans. I also left work clothes at the site and carried a tool bag back and forth so I wasn't caught short without a screwdriver or putty knife when I needed one. In my stenobook, I recorded tasks to be completed, their order of completion, and the projected date for finishing. I also listed all pertinent phone numbers on the inside cover of the book for quick reference.

Each day when I arrived on site, I met with the contractor to discuss any problems or changes. This is when I'd present him with a newly salvaged piece, like the mirrored wardrobe door, and ask him to "build a linen closet" to match

it. Then I'd review the punch lists for the crew and either join in their task or attack one I'd assigned myself, like cleaning up a brass fireplace insert.

While on site, I worked on projects that could only be accomplished there, leaving most planning, telephoning, and paint selection for evenings and weekends. However, no



*Here Don works on the decorative staircase.*

matter how tired I was, I made a conscious effort to save part of each evening for conversation with my daughters. I also set time aside to discuss major problems with Don and celebrate each success. Salvaging occupied our weekends.

### Matching Up the Salvage Puzzle

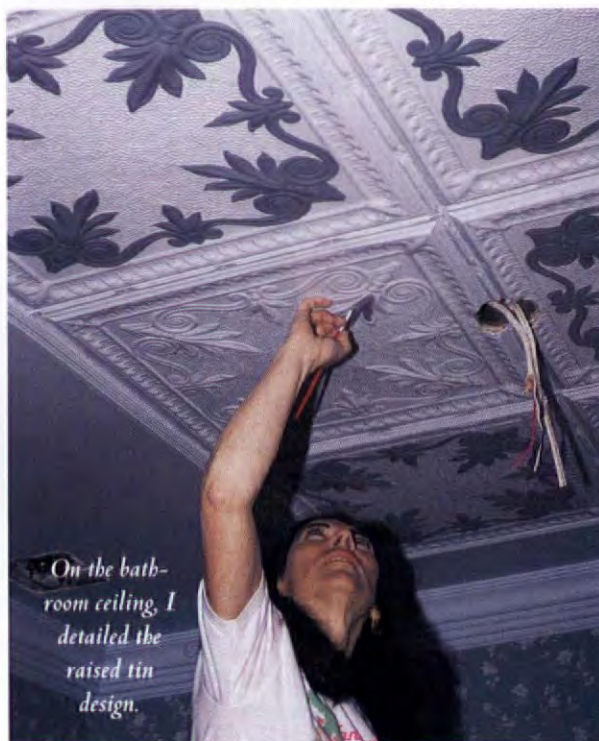
SUDDENLY, THE SHEETROCKERS APPEARED AND WE HAD WALLS! It was time to fit the giant jigsaw puzzle together. We sorted through wainscoting, casings, and baseboards to determine where each would go judging by wood, style, and

amounts available. We donned heavy rubber gloves for the tedious job of stripping, refinishing, and staining.

A problem arose when we got to the tin wainscoting in the master bath. We were 33" short of the tin chair rail. Don and I puzzled over that for a day until I exclaimed, "I've got a gilt, beveled-glass mirror I was going to hang over the sink." We measured it — 34"! No one would know there's no chair rail behind the mirror.

I also used a salvaged stained glass window to solve another problem. I was unhappy that our daughter Taryn's bathroom, being an inside room, was so dark. Then I visited Lyndhurst Mansion in Tarrytown, New York, and noticed windows built into inside rooms. It was a great idea, but the bathroom adjoined the storage room and I didn't want the clutter visible. The solution? I installed a stained glass window in the wall facing a large, exterior window in the storage area. Voilà, daylight without a view!

By 1991, our Queen Anne, dressed in a five-color paint scheme and surrounded by a Victorian-inspired landscape, held her head proudly among the other restored homes along Union Avenue. As our family gathered around the parlor fireplace for our first Christmas in our "new" home, Don and I felt a glow of satisfaction. We had achieved the goal of restoring our Queen Anne through the harmonious blend of original, salvaged, and reproduction elements. And we're still salvaging. Our latest project involved repairing and restoring an ornate cast-iron fence. It now encloses my Victorian-style herb and flower garden — but that's another story.



*On the bathroom ceiling, I detailed the raised tin design.*



# OLD-HOUSE MECHANIC

## Stopping Spring Leaks

by Gordon Bock

**E**ARLY SPRING IS WHEN TREE sap starts to run. It's also when water begins to flow in my summer old house as I commission the plumbing after a dormant winter. Right now, I'm repairing some leaks and splits in copper pipe with methods I get to practice every year.

Rigid copper pipe is no match for leftover water that freezes to ice. It loosens or blows apart weak joints, or expands at mid-line until the copper splits in a puffed-out smile. However, sweat-soldered pipe repairs are easy to make and only require a propane torch, lead-free solder, flux, a few hand tools, and a little care.

- Unsolder a joint for repair by heating the fitting with the torch until beads or shiny spots indicate the solder has begun to flow. Then gently tap the joint apart, being careful not to fling hot solder as the lines are released. If the solder refuses to soften, apply some fresh solder to make it flow.

- Prepare joints in older pipe carefully by thoroughly cleaning all mating parts until they show bright copper. Solder won't bond to pipe that is dirty or patinaed. Use emery paper or steel wool and a small steel brush made for cleaning fittings.

- Clear the line of all water before making repairs. Any residual moisture — even a few drops — will keep the copper from reaching sweating temperature. Dip lines slightly before working to make sure they are empty, and leave valves open at either end.



*Copper pipe procedures (top to bottom): a split caused by leftover water; clean old pipe to bright copper before sweating; in a good joint, solder flows readily between fitting and pipe without buildup; a repair clamp sandwiches a rubber gasket over the leak.*

- Repair splits by replacing the pipe section, splicing in a new section with couplings or, where conditions permit, cutting out the defect as close as possible and rejoining the pipe with a single coupling.

- Sweat connections by applying flux to mating surfaces, then assembling. Next, use the hot, inner cone of the torch flame to first heat the pipe, then the fitting. Apply solder by touching it to the heated copper — not melting it with the torch. Capillary action should draw solder quickly into the joint. A properly made joint is lean, smooth, and shiny, often with a small bead at the bottom. A weak “cold” joint (caused by poor work or moving the joint before it has cooled) will look lumpy and crystalline.

- Shield the surrounding materials from fire and scorching while sweating. Use thick wood or metal scraps as torch backups, and watch that solder does not drop on synthetic carpets and the like, which will melt instantly.

- When caught short of parts, an emergency repair can be made by closing the split as best as possible with pliers, then bridging over the wound with solder. This repair is only a temporary measure, however, and should be done over as soon as proper materials are available.

- Repair clamps (sold at hardware stores) bolt a seal over the leak and come in several designs for a quick fix.

- Account for the low spots or house settlement that caused the break in the first place. Then, correct the pipe pitch or install bleeder valves so you don't get leaks in the same spot next year.



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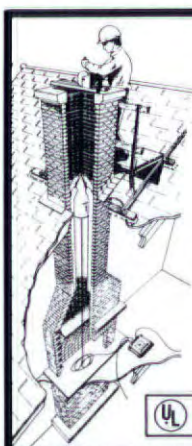
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# RESTORER'S NOTEBOOK

## Circular Saw Jig

TRIMMING DOOR BOTTOMS OR cutting veneer plywood with a portable circular saw is much easier with a versatile, sturdy straightedge. To make one, cut a piece of 1/2" plywood 1' wide by 3', 4', or 8' long (depending on the project). Cut a



*A portable, reusable guide is easy to make from scrap lumber.*

2"-wide piece of pine the same length, and attach the pine 5" from the edge by screwing up through the bottom of the plywood. Then place the sole plate of your circular saw against the pine and run it the

length of the plywood, trimming the excess. To use the jig, measure and mark the wood to be cut and lay the guide on top. Line up the straight-edge, and clamp. Your jig will produce straight cuts without scratching painted surfaces or lifting the edges on finish plywood.

— MIKE POIRIER  
Beverly, Mass.

## Jelly-Bucket Source

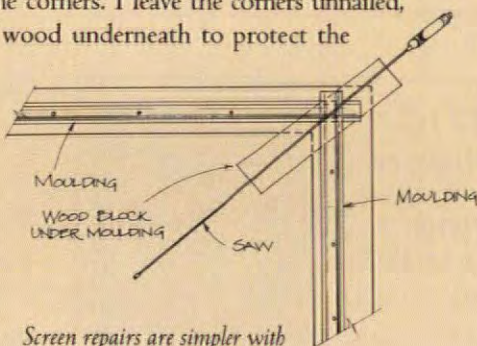
ON MANY OLD-HOUSE PROJECTS, I need more empty buckets than I have. They're essential for carrying tools, mixing paint, washing brushes, and tossing trash. Two bolted underneath each end of a plank make an easy-to-move scaffold. They can even be transformed into stilts, by duct-taping workboots on top. When I run out of buckets, I've found that donut shops can be a cheap source. Many buy their jellies in 45 lb. pails (a little smaller than 5 gallons), and will sell the empties for about \$1.

— ADRIAN SCHANNE  
Toledo, Ohio

## Quick Corner-Cutting

I HAVE A SHORTCUT METHOD OF MITERING CORNERS ON SCREEN moulding that is faster than using a miter box. I cut each piece of moulding with 2" of extra length and nail them onto the screen frame, overlapping the pieces at the corners. I leave the corners unnailed, and slide a thin block of wood underneath to protect the screen. By sawing through the overlap, I can miter both moulding pieces at once. When the block is removed, the moulding falls into place with a perfect fit and can then be securely nailed.

— DAN RIPLEY  
Knoxville, Tenn.

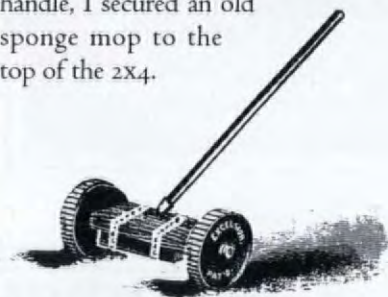


*Screen repairs are simpler with this miter method.*

## Nail Magnet

AFTER COMPLETING A CARPENTRY project, I discovered a nasty problem. I'd been careful in my cleanup, but a number of nails remained scattered in the dirt and grass. My solution was to construct a homemade "nail sweeper."

First, I lashed a large bar magnet underneath an 8" 2x4 using plumbing straps. (Science or hobby equipment suppliers are good magnet sources.) I drilled holes in the ends of the 2x4 and used lag screws to mount a pair of 6" go-cart wheels. For a handle, I secured an old sponge mop to the top of the 2x4.



*An inexpensive magnet-on-wheels can help clean up a job site.*

At the end of each workday, a few minutes spent rolling the nail finder over the ground picks up the dropped nails. To remove the nails from the magnet, I wear heavy-duty work gloves, turn the sweeper on its side, and pull the nails off.

— ALBERT ODELL  
Beaumont, Texas

**TIPS TO SHARE?** Do you have any hints or shortcuts that might help other old-house owners? We'll pay \$25 for any how-to items used in this "Restorer's Notebook" column. Write to Notebook Editor, The Old-House Journal, 2 Main Street, Gloucester, MA 01930.



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# RESTORATION PRODUCTS

## Porch Lights, Poles, and Perennials

by Lynn Elliott

### Flag Flying

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*Although they can be made up to 40' long, the best pole lengths for houses are 20' and 25'.*



*Perennial Pleasures stock is field grown, and the seed is harvested from species plants.*

13-star Betsy Ross-style), a custom-engraved brass owner's plaque, and a galvanized iron mounting base. The base is anchored into cement, and once mounted, the pole can be lowered by a pivot bolt for maintenance or to secure during high-wind weather. For a free brochure, write to Hennessy House, 423 Tehama, San Francisco, CA 94103; (800) 285-2122.

### Period Perennials

**N**EVER BEEN A GENIUS AT GENUSES or a specialist at species? It's no reason to let your garden dull in comparison to the nifty three-color paint scheme on your Queen Anne. Perennial Pleasures Nursery is overflowing with antique perennial flowering plants and herbs, and their catalog is a botanical boon for novice gardeners. Divided into periods — 17th century, 18th century, first half and second half of the 19th century, and herbs — the catalog makes picking the right choice easy. So forget about petunias, geraniums,

and clipped yews, and fill your garden with Old-Fashioned Bleeding Heart, Obedient Plant, and Sneezeweed (which doesn't make you sneeze). For a catalog, send \$2 to Perennial Pleasures Nursery, 2 Brickhouse Rd., East Hardwick, VT 05836; (802) 472-5104.

### Exterior Illumination

**S**WINGING WITH A FRIEND ON A dark porch has its advantages, but there are times when you want to cast a little light on the situation. When looking for porch lights, check out Rejuvenation Lamp & Fixture Company. They have a number of light fixtures that are appropriate for post-Victorian porches, such as the Alsea. Finished with a black, oil-based enamel, the cast-iron Alsea was a standard Craftsman porch bracket design, and can be fitted with several different shades. Other porch lights, like Victorian and Mission-style brackets, ceiling fixtures, and Craftsman lanterns are available. The Alsea wall bracket costs \$46; the shade is \$15. For a free catalog, write to Rejuvenation Lamp & Fixture Company, 1100 S.E. Grand Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97214; (503) 231-1900.



*The Alsea is shown with an interior satin etch shade.*





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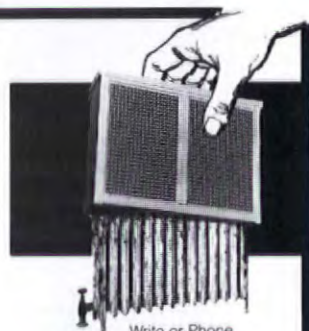
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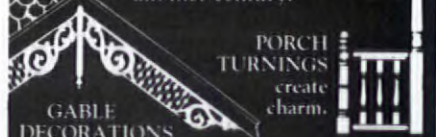
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fan to cool our old ballroom office.) Grainger's is also a good place to find commercial-grade hand and power tools, electrical supplies, lights, pumps, and general machinery. Branches are located in every state; consult the white pages of your phone book for one in your area, or to order the inches-thick General Catalog.

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# Historic House Plans



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. These plans are designed to conform to national building-code standards. However, the requirements of your site and local building codes mean you'll probably need the assistance of a professional designer (your builder may qualify) or an architect.

For the houses shown in this issue, blueprints include:

- Foundation plan for basement or crawl space. (Crawl space plans can easily be adapted for full basements by your builder.)
- Detailed floor plans showing dimensions for framing. Some may also have detailed layouts and show the 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.

- Building cross sections: cornice, fireplace, and cabinet sections when needed to help your builder understand major interior details.

- Framing diagrams that show layouts of framing pieces and their locations for roof, first and second floors.

- Energy-saving specs, where noteworthy, are included, such as vapor barriers, insulated sheathing, caulking and foam-sealant areas, batt insulation, and attic exhaust ventilators.

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

Other notes: (1) Plans are copyrighted, and they are printed for you when you order. Therefore, they are not refundable. If you order additional sets of the same plan within 30 days of your

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

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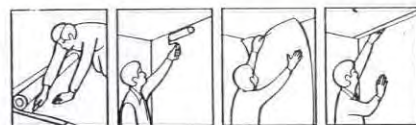


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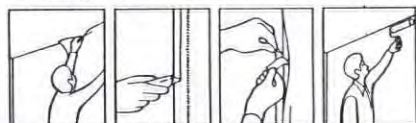
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4. Trim excess mat where wall meets ceiling



5. Trim mat at baseboard and windows
6. Trim mat around outlets, switches, etc.
7. Apply second coat of saturant to wet mat
8. Apply 1st coat of saturant to adjacent area



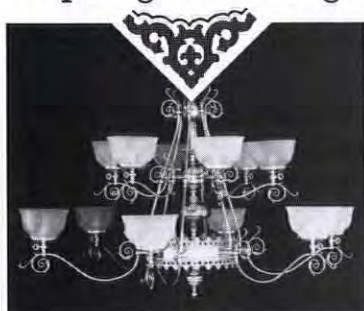
9. Apply mat to 2nd area, overlapping by 1"
10. Cut down center of overlap (both layers)
11. Remove mat strips on both sides of cut
12. Apply 2nd coat of saturant (include seam)

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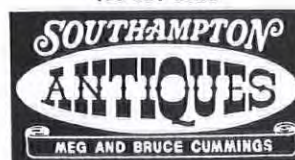


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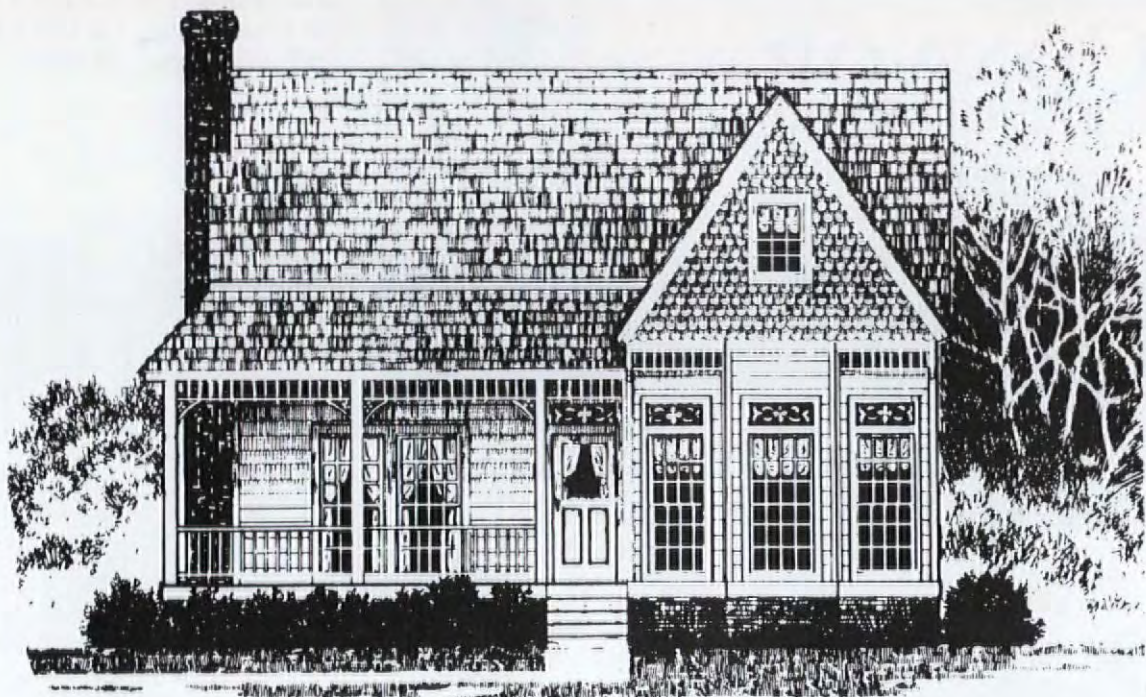


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Plan: HR-16-VI

Costs: \$250; \$300 (set of 5); \$335 (set of 8)

Square Footage: 1,920' (total), 1,192' (first floor), 728' (second floor)

Ceiling Height: 9' (first floor), 8' (second floor)

Overall Dimensions:

Width: 35'

Depth: 46'



first floor



second floor



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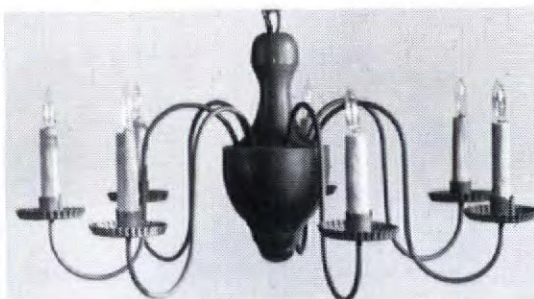
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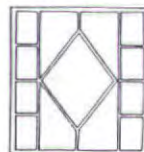
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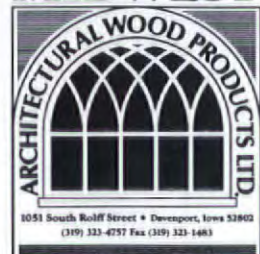
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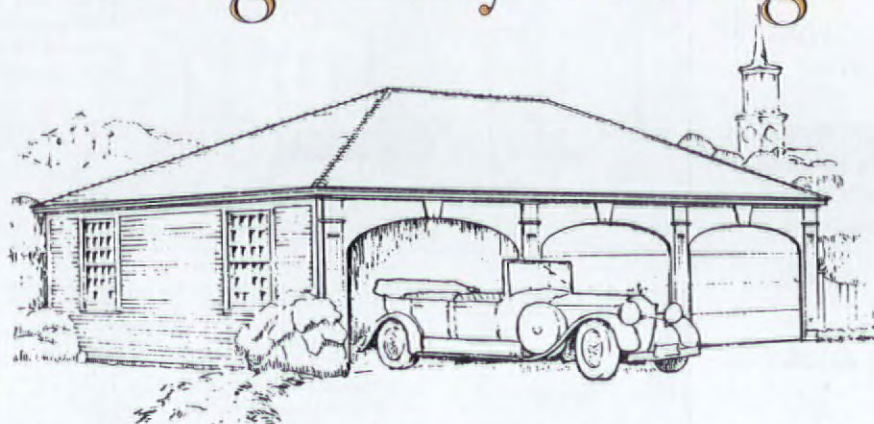
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**D**ETAILS, SUCH AS THE FLUTED pilasters and the graceful archways, on this elegant, three-car garage would suit the formality of any Georgian- or Adam-style house. Also, with the well-proportioned car bays,

there's no need to struggle when parking the family caravan. The plans contain easy-to-understand details for constructing the details and archways. Note the useful storage lofts over the end bays.

Plan: CD-14-GA

Costs: \$50

Square Footage: 728'

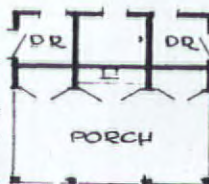
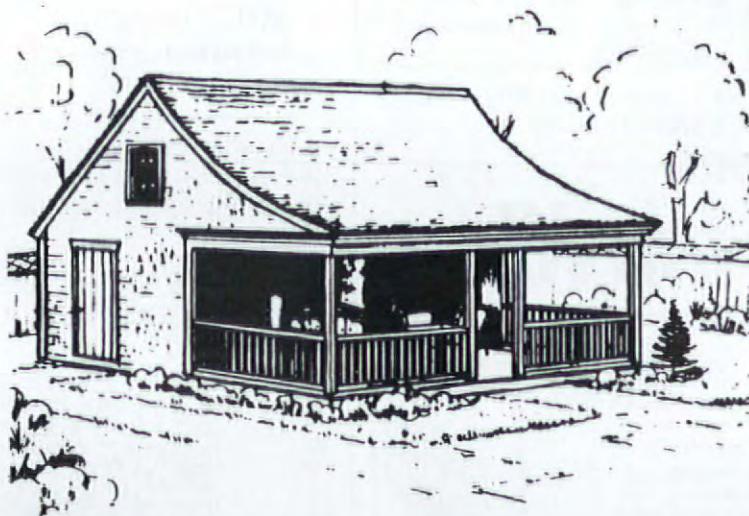
Height: 15'3" (to ridge)

Overall Dimensions:

Width: 22'

Depth: 31'

# Lakeside Cabana



Plan: CD-15-GA

Costs: \$50

Square Footage: 440'

Height: 16'6"

Overall Dimensions:

Width: 20'

Depth: 22'

**R**EMINISCENT OF THE TURN-of-the-century changing rooms found along the shore, this multi-function Lakeside Cabana has two dressing rooms with outside showers and

an equipment room in the back. The wide-open porch, with a wet bar and two storage areas for lawn chairs, is a great place for entertaining. With a little imagination and a slight change to the floor

plan, this useful building can be a boat house or even a pool house for holding pumps and filters. This plan requires water, a sanitary drain, and electrical connections.



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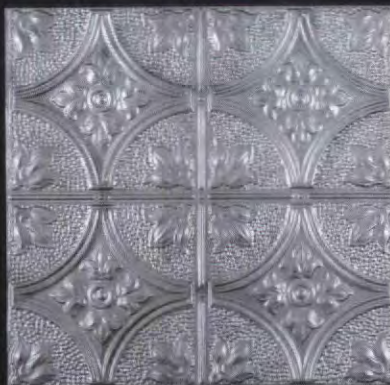
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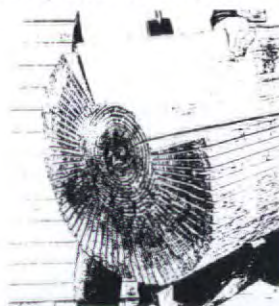
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**BLACKWOOD, NJ** — C.1890, 12 room Victorian plus additional small house on 75' x 200' corner lot. Presently a two-family. Originally a funeral home, has 14' ceilings downstairs, 10' ceilings on 2nd floor, and 7' ceilings on finished 3rd floor plus an attic with pegged and numbered beams. Wraparound porch. \$169,900. Call (609) 228-4878.

**WEST ORANGE, NJ** — 1901, 10 room, 3-storey Colonial with 5 BRs and 3-1/2 baths. 24' x 26' living room with fireplace. Enclosed front porch. 150' x 103' corner lot. Walk to NYC transportation. \$239,000. Description & floor plan available. Call owner (201) 736-5070.

**BROOKLYN, NY** — Sunset Park Historic District. Beautifully restored 1892 Italianate brownstone, exquisite detail. Three stories, 11 rooms, 2 baths, 2,500 sq. ft. Legal two-family, rental history. Tin ceilings, Eastlake woodwork, 5 mantels. New mechanicals and kitchens. \$199,000. (215) 885-0482.

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**MASSAPEQUA, NY** — Will Rogers lived here. Historic restored 1888 Queen Anne. 15 rooms, 3 baths, ornate mouldings, fireplace, sunroom, wrap-around porches, stable/garage, barn out-house on 3/4 acre. Walk to bay \$269,000. Call owners Bill & Maria (516) 541-3740.

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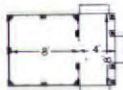
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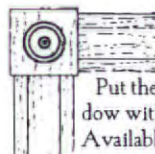
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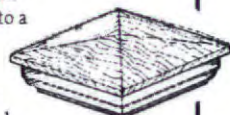


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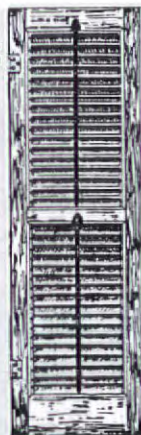
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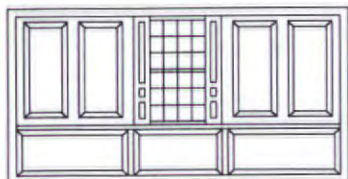
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# REMUDDLING

[opinion]

## Cloistered Craftsman

**I**N 1959, THIS ARTS & CRAFTS house was altered into a church by three unorthodox additions. James M. Graham, who lives in Washington, D.C., sent in these photos as a testament. Walls of concrete and glass block now shroud what was once a peaceful porch retreat. A similar reformation banished the stickwork side entrance. The last member to join this masonry flock is the brown

brick wayside pulpit — definitely not a divine sign.

In comparison, the brother building just across the street is a pure vision of Arts & Crafts details. The open porch with its stone columns is still a welcoming place to congregate, and the gabled side entrance retains its praiseworthy stickwork and triangular braces. Finally, the

unobstructed lawn and missing announcement marker is something to celebrate.

Although the house was converted in good faith, even the unfinished whitewash job can't unify this architectural schism.

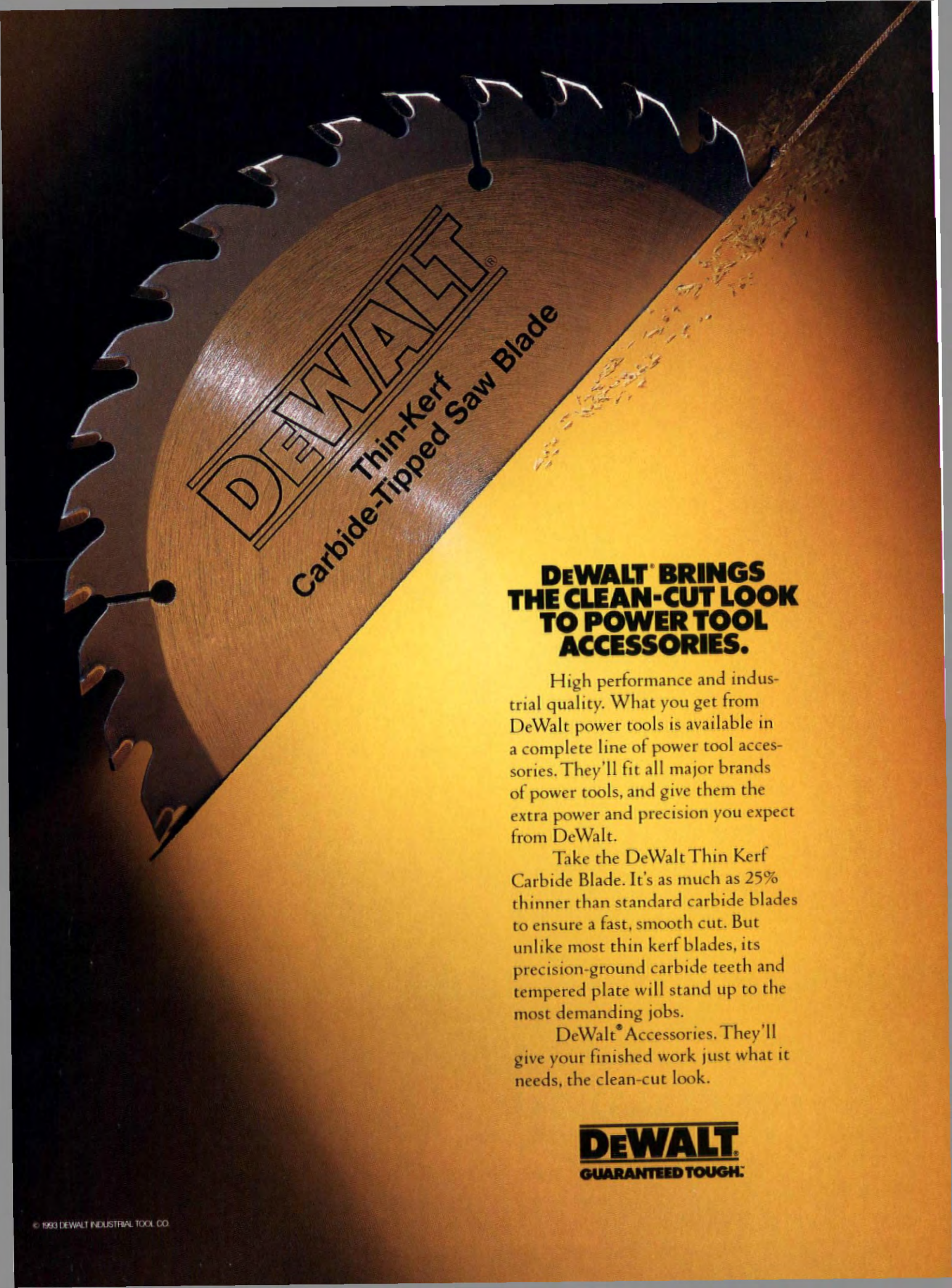


*Converted into a church, this Craftsman house (left) is now hidden behind concrete blocks. A nearby neighbor (above) with its stickwork intact reveals how the church once looked.*



**WIN FAME AND \$50:** If you spot a classic example of remuddling, send us clear color slides. We'll award \$50 if your photos are selected. The message is more dramatic if you send along a picture of a similar unremuddled building. Remuddling Editor, Old-House Journal, 2 Main Street, Gloucester, MA 01930.





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# Sunday Houses of Fredericksburg, Texas

**I**N THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY WEST OF AUSTIN, THE faithful farmers and townspeople of Fredericksburg sought only the best preachers for their community church, and traveled from many miles around to hear them each week. When they came to town for the church services and shopping, the frugal farmers would stay with friends or relatives rather than pay for a hotel room. One tradition has it that a particular farmer's weekend welcome was eventually outworn, so he decided to build his own house for use on Sundays. Whether this is true or not, during the mid-19th and early-20th centuries, the idea caught on and soon dozens of "Sunday Houses" went up on small lots on the outskirts of town and around churchyards.



(above) The outside staircase is a telltale sign of a Sunday House. (below) Since meals weren't prepared at Sunday Houses, kitchen additions were later needed.

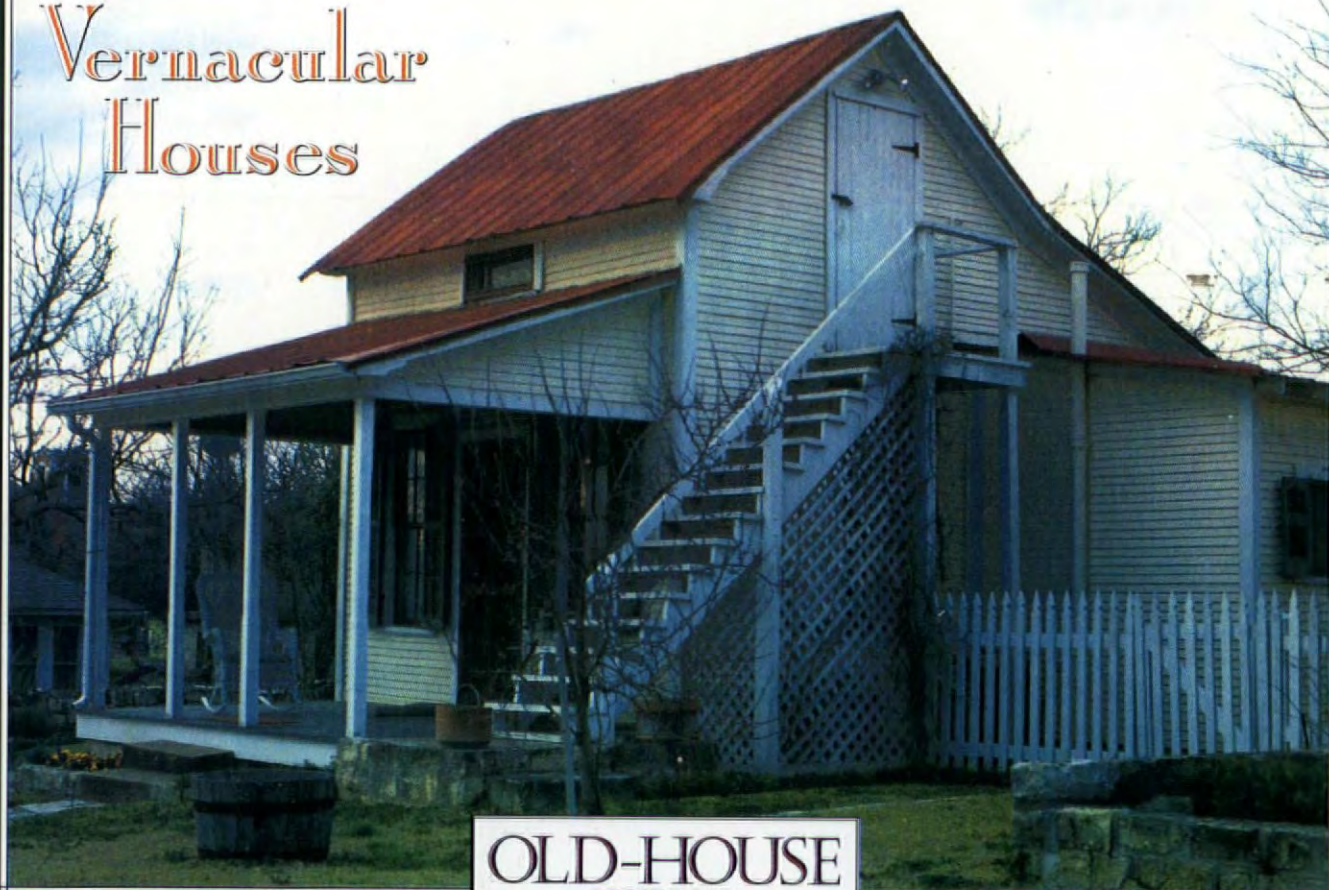
Since Fredericksburg had been settled in the 1840s by German immigrants, many Sunday Houses were wood or fachwerk (timber frame with stone infill) structures. A few were built from local limestone, the material of choice for finer Fredericksburg buildings. These small buildings generally consisted of one or two rooms downstairs and a loft

upstairs. To conserve interior space, a simple, outdoor stairway led upstairs to the sleeping area.

Sunday Houses were not only used for Sundays, but also for when there was a show in town or for special occasions, such as holidays. As the family grew in size, shedlike additions were attached to the back. A surprising number (over 25) of these elegant second houses still survive.

— FRANK BRISCOE  
Richmond, Texas

## Vernacular Houses



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