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OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1993

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OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

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PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE MARSEL

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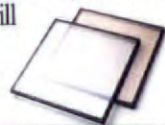


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Editor's Page

THE PIERS



I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK ABOUT the wonderful old-house people whose paths have crossed mine, as we celebrate 20 years. The person who looms largest, of course, is OHJ's founder, Clem Labine. (He's still in Brooklyn, publishing *Traditional Building*.) Clem was a mentor to me, but he didn't teach me about publishing, really, or even about restoration. He taught me ways of thinking.

Formally educated as a chemical engineer, Clem loves distillation. Why muck around (as I often did) with cloudy philosophies when there's a job at hand? The only way to be effective, Clem taught me, is to keep it simple. And so he is the master of the quotable quote. Several of his rules are the piers in the foundation upon which OHJ still rests.

**Never destroy good old work.
To thine own style be true.**

I'VE COME TO APPRECIATE THE UN-failing utility of these rules, always presented as a pair. *Never destroy good old work* does not presuppose that all old work is good. You can fix bad original design; you can squat in your old house, restoring nothing; you can put a brand-new wing to the east, and still follow this rule. All it asks is that you exercise humility during your short tenure in a historic house.

To thine own style be true makes no unfair request that you be museum-accurate, nor are you asked to spend inordinate amounts of money putting back what time (and merciless owners) have taken away. It merely admonishes you, in whatever repair or



addition you do undertake, to consider the period and style of your house, saving the house's integrity, and saving you money and guesswork.

**Anything worth doing
is worth doing to excess.**

CLEM DOESN'T JUST LIKE THINGS VICTORIAN, he *is* Victorian. So this rule is his personal credo. I think the expression started as justification for his brownstone, in which (after painstaking restoration) he indulged every Aesthetic Movement decorating fantasy imagination could conjure. I like it: It motivates, while "anything worth doing is worth doing right" dictates.

**Stand in one place and say
the same thing over and over.
Eventually they'll hear you.**

THE BEST ADVICE I'VE EVER GOTTEN. It is tempting to run with the tide, to please the crowd, to chase novelty. The truth is, the only way an individual (or a small magazine) can have an

OHJ headquarters staff.

FRONT ROW: Laura Marshall, Joanne Christopher, Gordon Bock, Karen Fuhrman, Nanci Virgilio.

MIDDLE ROW: Becky Bernie, Pam Martin, Lynn Elliott, Patricia Poore, Bill O'Donnell, Inga Soderberg, Cazzzy Smith, Claire MacMaster.

REAR: Cathie Hull, Pat Mitchell, Jim LaBelle, Ellen Higgins.

impact is to be consistent. OHJ has grown and evolved, yet the text of any article that appeared in the 1970s could essentially be rerun today. OHJ's mission has remained that constant.

An old house is a way of life.

DON'T WE ALL KNOW IT! NOW MY life includes old buildings at our office, at home, and in the magazine. It's as satisfying as life gets.

Thanks, Clem.

Patricia Poore

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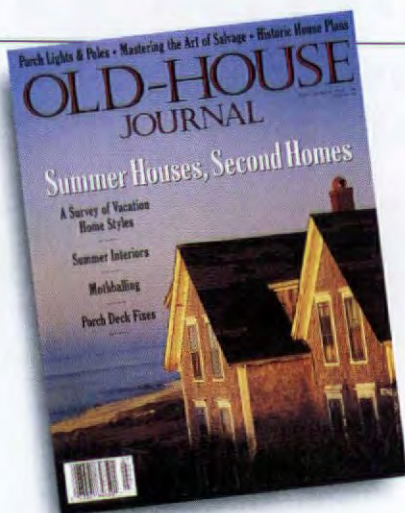
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Letters



Grandma Houses

DEAR OHJ,
I WAS TICKLED WHEN I READ ABOUT "Sunday Houses" [*Vernacular Houses, July/August 1993*]. My aunt, Selma Lund of Lake Lillian, Minnesota, has one of these on her farmland, and when we were kids we used to call it "The Grandma House." It has one room with a spiral staircase leading to the loft and is in excellent condition. She would like to give it to the historical society in her area and hopefully they will take it. I would like to see it saved. Thanks for the history on these houses.

— MARILYN VEJTRUBA
Minneapolis, Minn.

Connemara Confusion

I ENJOYED JULY/AUGUST'S "SECOND Houses and Summer Homes," by James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell. However, it was Carl Sandburg and not his archrival, Robert Frost, whose last home, Connemara, is located near Flat Rock, North Carolina.

— GEORGE W. BOSTIAN
Davidson, North Carolina

In Zane Grey Territory

YOUR ARTICLE ON STABILIZING AND restoring old-house porches [*July/August 1993*] features photographs of the Zane Grey House in Lackawaxen,

Pennsylvania. The Grey Family used the house in Lackawaxen as a vacation and second home, making it a good example for your special issue on summer and second homes. The National Park Service purchased the house in 1989 and in addition to restoring the porch, has restored the original color scheme.

The Zane Grey House is open to the public at no charge, daily from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and on weekends in May, September, and October. Within sight of the Zane Grey House is the Roebling Bridge, the oldest wire suspension bridge in the Western Hemisphere. Visitors to the area can learn about the restoration of both historic sites.

— JOHN T. HUTZKY
Superintendent,
National Park Service
Upper Delaware Scenic
Recreational River
Narrowsburg, New York

Stained Glass Search

AS PART OF A RESEARCH PROJECT for *Stained Glass Quarterly* and the Michigan Census of Stained Glass Windows, I am trying to locate examples of a special type of stained glass window, known as "mosaic windows" or "mercury mosaic windows," that date from 1880-1900.

These windows were fabricated by the Belcher Mosaic Glass Company in Newark, New Jersey, and are unusual in that neither lead came nor copper foil was used in their construction. Instead, the pieces of glass were placed on a gummed surface of asbestos with another piece of asbestos placed on top to hold the glass in position. An alloy of metal was then poured into the works. Wire may have been laid in the channels around the glass to add additional support.

The pieces of glass may be small triangles or squares, with faceted jewel-
[Continued on page 12]



With its porch overlooking the Delaware River, this American Foursquare (built in 1905, with several later additions) was home to Zane Grey—dentist, ballplayer, famous angler, and prolific "Father of the Western Novel."

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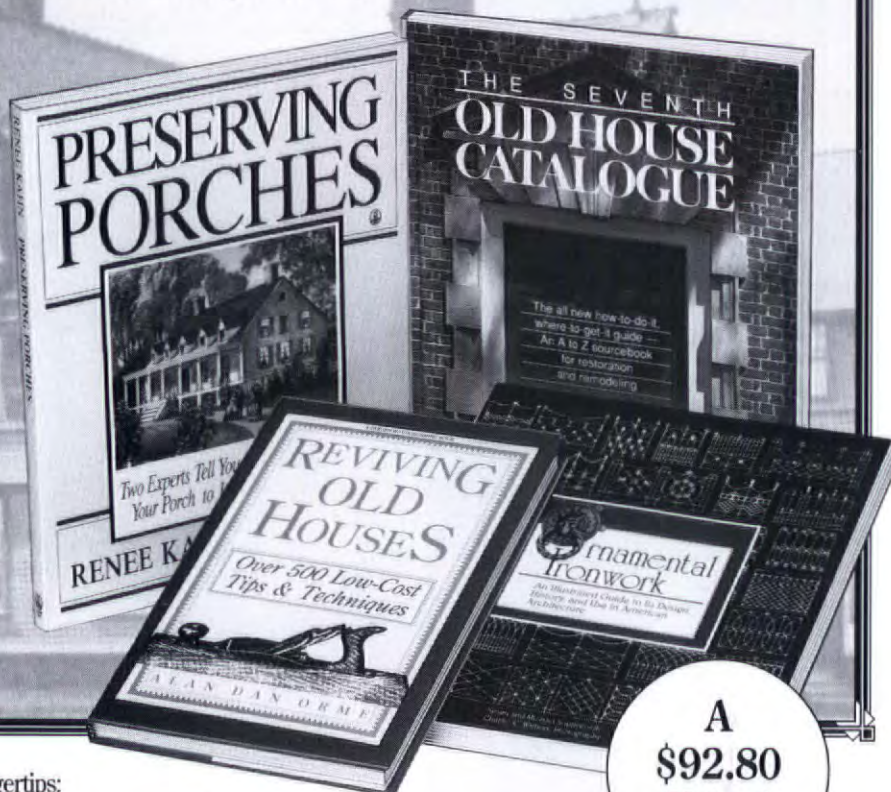
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Softcover. Publisher's Price: \$16.95

Preserving Porches

Two Experts Tell You How to Restore Your
Porch to Its Original Beauty

by Renee Kahn and Ellen Meagher

Discover how to make any porch structurally sound, while preserving the original design. Included are complete step-by-step instructions for everything from simple repairs to total overhauls, plus listings of suppliers and specialty stores. Over 160 photographs and drawings and a full glossary complement the text.

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by Susan and Michael Southworth

Learn styles of ironwork; how to repair and maintain iron fences, balconies and grilles; where to find organizations, museums, and publications related to ironwork; and, the best mail-order sources for supplies. Includes a guide to notable regional examples of historic ironwork, plus over 200 photographs and illustrations.

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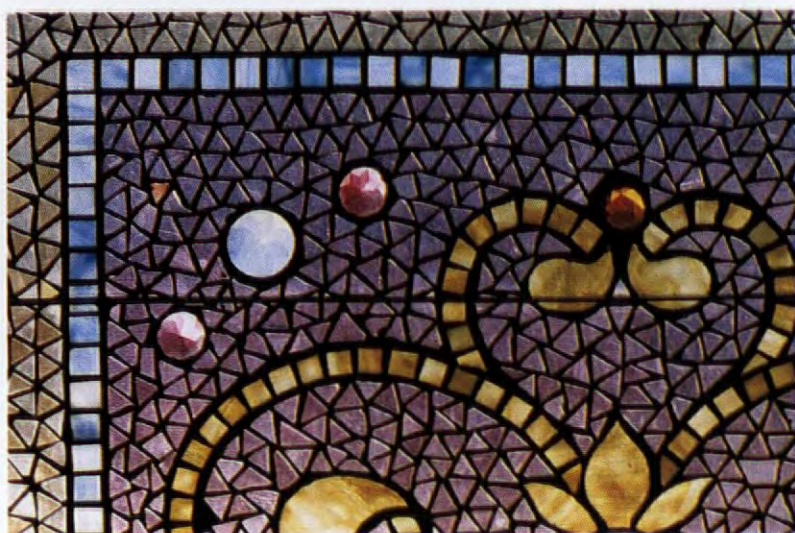
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Letters



Constructed with a patented poured-metal process, this "mosaic window" is in the 1890 House Museum, in Cortland, New York.

[Continued from page 10]

els or cabachons. There may also be figures, or just decorative patterns. The windows are found in both residential and church situations. I'd appreciate hearing from any *OHJ* readers with information or examples of this type of stained glass.

— BARBARA E. KRUEGER
Stained Glass Association of America
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Turned Stone Debate

I WOULD NOT SAY THAT MR. ARNDT is nuts, considering what beautiful work he does [*"Lathe-Turned Stone," May/June 1993*]. I would say that the weights, torques and equipment involved are not for any but experienced machine shop workers. Let me comment briefly that a powerful variable-speed motor is a big deal, not a normal item. The motor he calls for, with speeds from 12 to 80 RPM, has yet to be created.

His idea of entasis ("the gradual narrowing at both ends of the

column"), is weird. Please refer to *The American Vignola* by W.R. Ware (W.W. Norton Co.) for proportions and the easy math behind classical grace.

Breaking of balusters while turning is too common to report. My company casts all these things, with rebar straight through them for strength and assembly pins. Modern concrete casters are using rich sandmix concretes, proportioning cement colors to match existing stone. Please be careful, folks.

— DAN SPECTOR
Archicast
Memphis, Tenn.

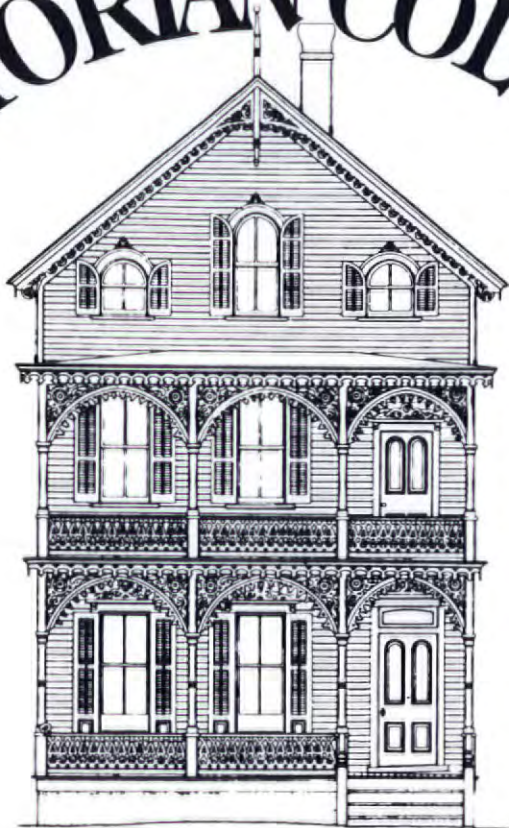
THE AUTHOR RESPONDS:

I am in complete sympathy with Mr. Spector's regard for safety. We have a healthy respect for safe lathe operation after turning a hundred or so balusters and nearly two dozen half-ton columns. When using any power equipment, always work within the tolerances indicated by the manufacturer.

As far as purchasing equipment,
[Continued on page 14]

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Letters

[Continued from page 12]

Fleet Farm here in the Midwest has all of the available hardware for the jobsite lathe. In other areas, look to W.W. Grainger, Inc. or other machine suppliers. Grainger's offers Dayton Adjustable Speed Drives, electric motors with right angle speed reducers (order stock no. 4Z370; 12 to 72 RPM).

A person who has regular hands-on masonry and shop experience should set up the jobsite lathe and do the turning. (I would not say a farm kid here could set the lathe up on a farm tractor power take-off shaft, but it has been suggested.) A journeyman mason, say, with some experience in limestone knows the material well enough to contour it without much breakage.

Limestone is so wonderfully soft and consistent, especially right out of the quarry, in the lathe it's like shaving soap. Marble is almost as easy to turn. True turned stone shows no mold marks and is pleasing to all of us. I encourage anyone to discover how accessible this medium can be.

— JACOB ARNDT

*Northwestern Masonry & Stone
Madison, Wisconsin*

EDITOR'S NOTE:

W.W. Grainger, Inc. is a wholesaler of industrial and commercial equipment and supplies. Purchasers must be associated with a business.

Restoration Exhibition

I WANT TO INVITE YOUR READERS to Restoration '93 Exhibition and Conference, to be held December 6-8, 1993, at the Boston Hynes Convention Center. The three-day event offers old-house owners a chance to see and compare "in the flesh" hundreds of products and services for restoring historic homes. On the exhibit floor and in the conference program, you'll find out how to keep

your house safe and solid, and how to decorate it.

Restoration '93 is the North American debut of an established and successful European event. Over 150 exhibitors from across America and Europe have already signed up. The event is organized by RAI/EGI Exhibitions, Inc. Contact Restoration '93 at (617) 933-6663 for visitor information, (617) 933-9699 for exhibitor information, or fax (617) 933-8744.

— STEVE SCHUYLER

*RAI/EGI Exhibitions, Inc.
Boston, Mass.*

Salvage Satisfaction

I REALLY ENJOY OHJ AND LOOK FORWARD to reading each new issue. Thanks for the wonderful magazine.

In the July/August issue, I especially liked Jo-Ellen Matusik's story, "Mastering the Art of Salvage." It reminded me of our Victorian cottage restoration in Oregon. I recall being so happy to find the levers to open and close transom windows at an old hotel sale — only another restorer knows the elation I speak of!

My reason for writing is pure curiosity about that article — specifically, the photo of the bathroom on page 54. Is that a tub under the window? If so, is it original, and to what purpose is the lid? If not a tub, what is it?

— KATHY KIMBALL

Grand Marais, Minn.

Our curiosity was piqued as well. To answer that question, we called Ms. Matusik and she explained that the cabinet is not a tub and never was. Inside is a laundry chute to the basement. The Matusiks built the window seat above to conceal it.

— THE EDITORS

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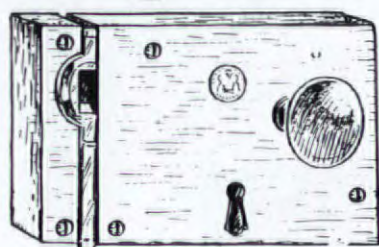
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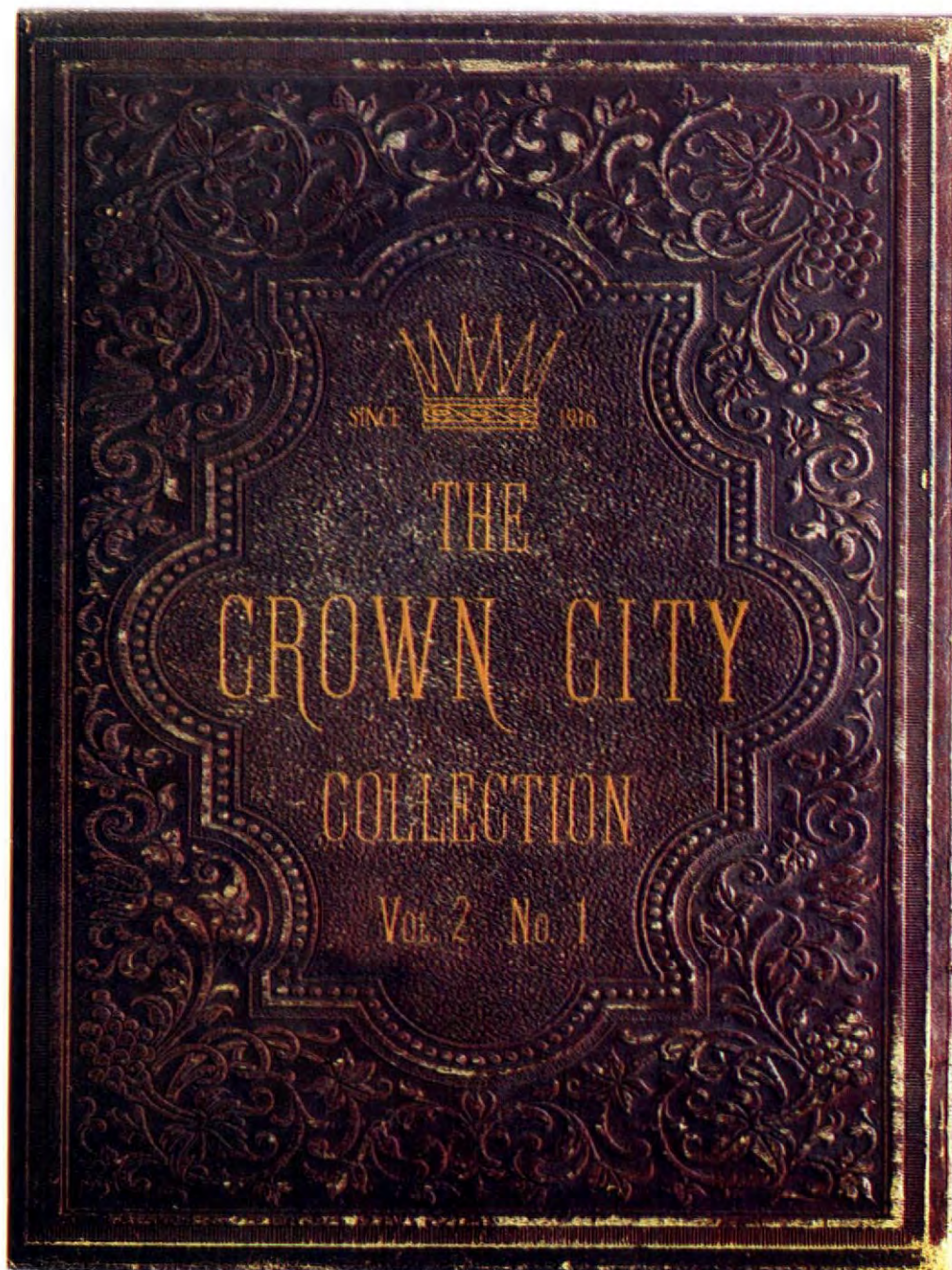
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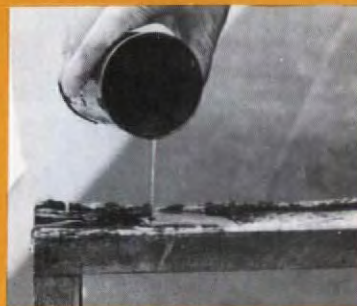
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Winner:

Charlene Adkins, Columbia, Missouri.

A stunning incorporation of Anaglypta® creates the perfect backdrop for Art Deco furnishings in a 1939 house. Of special interest is the uniquely appropriate airbrushed finish on the wallcovering.

Finalist No. 1:

Duane and Martha Hubbs, Stillwater, Minnesota.

The owners hung and finished two Lincrusta® friezes: one to imitate embossed copper, the other tooled leather. Striking finishes and masterful use of the friezes.

Finalist No. 2:

Christine and Charles Dunn, Staten Island, New York.

Superior finishing techniques on the Edwardian dado: terra cotta basecoat followed by a custom-mixed glaze, rag-rolled and scumbled. Notable hand-applied gold-tone highlights and a satin varnish.

Honorable Mentions:

Michael Shannon, Kavanaugh House, San Francisco.

Handsome application of a Lincrusta® dado in a high-traffic stair hall.

Anthony Cinturati, Astoria, New York.

Innovative, cost-conscious use of a deep Lincrusta® frieze over Sheetrock® to replace a missing plaster cornice frieze.

Kevin and Cindy North, Herndon, Virginia.

Elegant, appropriately understated use of monochrome-painted Lincrusta® in a conjectural bathroom in a 1794 house.

"We were thoroughly impressed, not only with the number of enthusiastic entries, but also with the quality of the installations and the imaginative uses of Anaglypta and Lincrusta."

—The Judges

THE JUDGES

- John Canning, John Canning & Co. Ltd., painting decorators
- Shirley Maxwell, Massey-Maxwell Associates
- James C. Massey, National Preservation Institute
- J. Randall Cotton, Philadelphia Historic Preservation Corp.
- Annette Mahon, Crown Berger Ltd. Representative
- Gordon H. Bock, Old-House Journal Representative

Award winners and their projects will be celebrated in a spring issue of Old-House Journal.

Reading the Old House

STONE HOUSES THAT SAY "KANSAS CITY"

by James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell

I BELIEVE THAT MY OLD HOUSE IS a Mission- or Prairie-style house. Can you confirm this? My research indicates that the house was built in 1911 for a jeweller and cost approximately \$11,000 to build. Also, what are the white wooden overhangs protruding from the front of the house? Do they have a purpose besides aesthetics?

—MARTHA RIGBY
Kansas City, Missouri

WONDERFUL! — OUR CHANCE TO TALK about a phenomenon we noted with pleasure when we last visited Kansas City: the exuberant stone buildings. These big, gutsy houses (churches, etc.) typify turn-of-the-century architecture in K.C. But, stylistically, they run the gamut from Art Nouveau to Craftsman to Colonial Revival to Prairie-influenced. What ties them together is their air of undaunted confidence. The rough-cut stone treatment is not just unapologetic, it's downright confrontational!

To get to your question: Is this 1911 house properly called Mission-style? Prairie style? Neither, really, al-



The Rigbys' stone house in Kansas City, Missouri, exhibits a combination of influences, including Craftsman and Colonial Revival. Note the decorative rafters that form a pergola porch across the building, a popular Arts & Crafts feature.

though the horizontal lines and high-set windows at the second storey do evoke the Prairie style, and the red tile roof suggests some influence from the Mission Revival or Mediterranean style.

Most of the house's character-defining elements, however, relate to the Colonial Revival and the Craftsman (American Arts & Crafts) styles. The two gabled dormers with their multipaned windows, and the arched center

dormer with its miniature palladian window ensemble, speak of the early, eclectic Colonial Revival, which revived everything from early Georgian through Federal.

The deep, bracketed dormer eaves, on the other hand, are typical of the Craftsman style, the "modern movement" in the early years of this century. Beside the porch and on the side of the house, those open-roofed porches sporting decorative rafters are called pergolas. Pergolas were a quintessentially Craftsman device intended to provide a transition between the house and the out-of-doors. Practically, they give porchlike shel-



The grandest of the K.C. stone houses may be Mineral Hall, a National Register property that shares time and place with our readers' house above, though its details are Art Nouveau.

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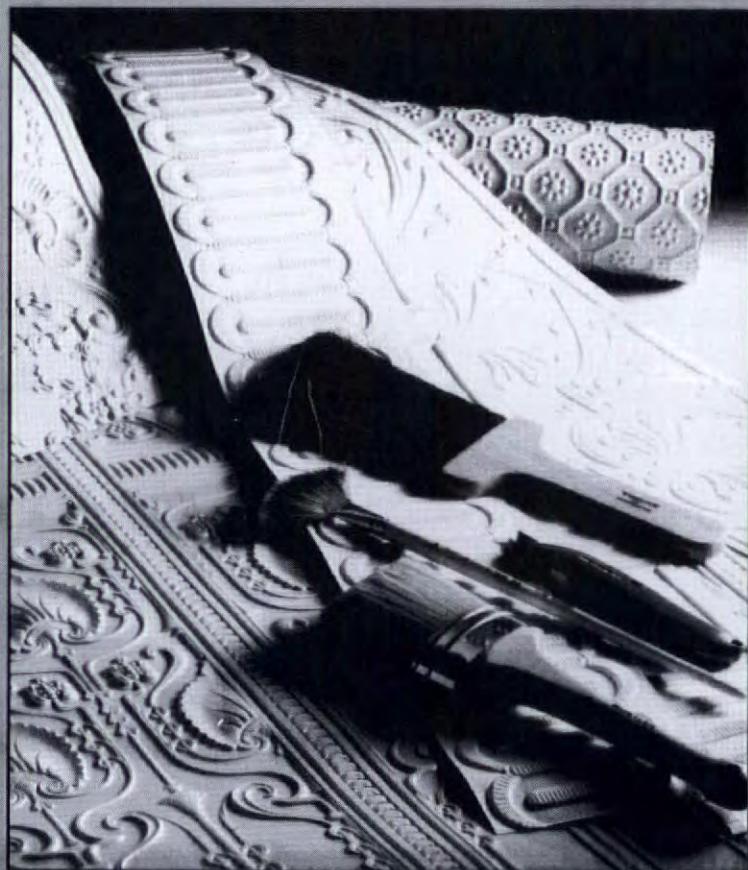
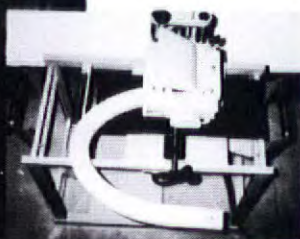


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Reading the Old House

ter and provide broken shade without cutting off light to the interior. They also provide climbing space for the vines that often embellish Craftsman houses and gardens.

To see one of the grandest residential examples of K.C. stone construction, go visit Mineral Hall (1903-1904, with a 1905 addition). Formerly the residence of Roland E. Bruner, the mansion was designed by a major Kansas City architect, Louis S. Curtiss, to house the mining tycoon and his 10,000-piece rock collection. While you're there, note Mineral Hall's beautiful, leaded-glass entry in the Art Nouveau style — a rarity in the United States, where Art Nouveau never really took hold.

We often encounter confusion be-

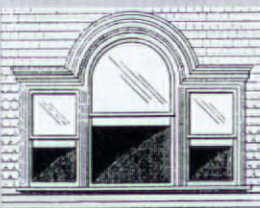
tween Mission and Craftsman styles in architecture. It may come from the different meanings of "mission," depending on whether it refers to buildings or to furnishings. Mission-style furniture is a product of the Arts & Crafts and, particularly, the Craftsman movement, in which all good furni-

ture was expected to express and fulfill its purpose (or "mission") in a straightforward, well-crafted way. Mission-style buildings (actually, Mission Revival-style), rather, are related to the architecture of early Spanish missions, or churches, in the southwestern and western United States.

T E R M I N O L O G Y

Palladian Window: *Also called Venetian, Serlian, or Diocletian.*

A large window with three openings, divided by posts, columns, or piers resembling pilasters. Each sidelight is topped by flat lintels; the center light is wider and sometimes arched. Often used by Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio (1508-80), it became the hallmark of Palladianism in 17th- and 18th-century England. In the U.S., variations can be found in the Adam, Queen Anne, Shingle, Colonial Revival, and Neoclassical styles.



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Who They Were

WILLIAM RADFORD

by Neal Vogel

IN THE FIRST YEARS OF THE 20TH century, housebuilding was booming. Chicago and the Midwest was a major center for innovations such as ready-cut buildings and mail-order materials—and home base for the early mass-marketer of construction publications, William A. Radford.

Born in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, in 1865, Radford was one of eight children. He attended public school in Oshkosh and later joined Radford Brothers Sash and Door Company, where he developed a good working knowledge of building construction. Advancing through the company to become Secretary and Treasurer in 1890, he married Helen M. Manuel the same year in Wichita. By 1899, Radford had two sons and an address in Riverside, Illinois: Frederick Law Olmsted's planned community for

those who wanted the "amenities of the city in the country"—not a surprising choice for a man who seems to have had an interest in farming and outdoor life. Apparently, Radford was also socially and athletically inclined, as he was a Mason and Shriner with membership in several prestigious Chicago clubs.

Despite the lack of an advanced education, by 1902 William Radford had founded The Radford Architectural Company. Little information is known about his leap into publishing or where his resources came from, but judging by the output, it was a lucrative business. Radford Architectural published three monthly journals, more than 40 books on construction, and over 1000 complete plans and specifications for residential, farm, and small commercial buildings. In 1911, it was advertised as the "Largest Architectural Establishment in the World."

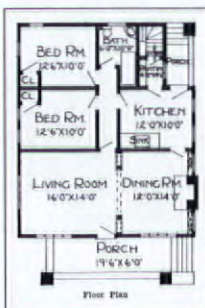
Radford assembled a pre-eminent team of early-20th-century authors, educators, and practitioners who thrust the company into the forefront of construction publishing. Most avid readers of old books will recognize a few of his collaborators: Frank E. Kidder, originator of the *Kidder-Parker Architects' and Builders' Handbook* (reprinted over a dozen times since 1884); Alfred G. King, author of *Practical Steam and Hot Water Heating and Ventilation* (1908); Ira O. Baker, author of *A Treatise on Masonry Construction* (1899). These men established the national standards for any builder during a time of rapid changes.

Radford himself ranked among the industry's most prolific authors and editors. He was the founder and Editor in Chief of the magazine *American Carpenter and Builder* (1905-1929), as well as *Beautiful Homes*, *Farm Mechanics*, and *Cement World*. Moreover, he wrote the books *Practical Carpentry* (c. 1905), *The Steel Square* (c. 1907), and *Cement Houses and How to Build Them* (1909).

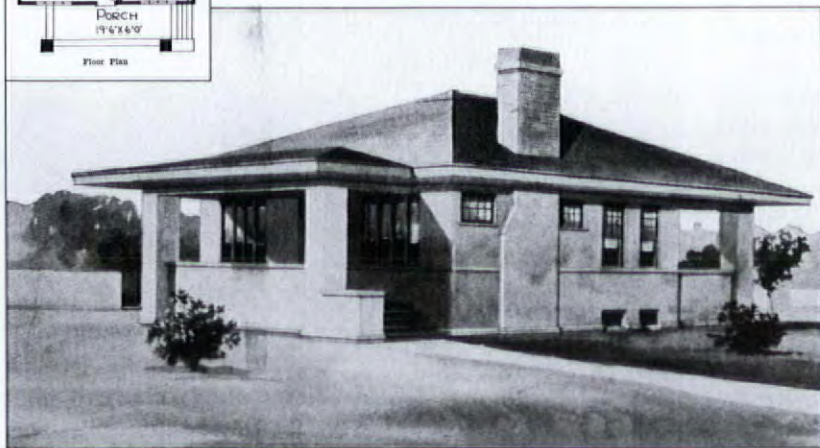
The publications that streamed from the succession of Radford offices in Chicago and New York were developed to meet the needs of the building tradesman. A letter quoted in the Preface to *Radford's Portfolio of Details of Building Construction* (published in 1911 and now reprinted by Dover Publications) reads: "We carpenters in small country towns usually have to be the architect, contrac-



Radford
about 1905



A 1908
bungalow in
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Prairie vein



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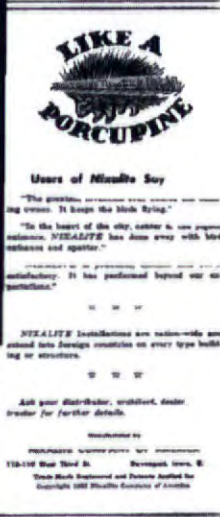
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Who They Were

tor, foreman, and carpenter, all rolled into one. We are the 'whole cheese,' but when we wish to do something extra nice or up-to-date, we find ourselves up against it."

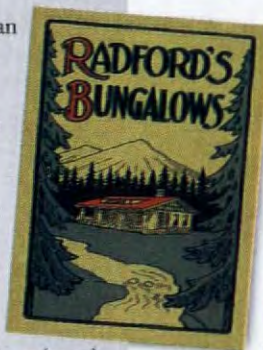
Radford had all the pieces for success: a working background in the trades, a talented staff of construction experts, and a keen awareness of revolutionary developments in the building industry. He was undoubtedly inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright, among other hometown architects, and, through his publishing company, helped the ideas of what is now called the Prairie School sweep the nation.

Admittedly, Radford did not possess formal architectural training, and his published designs were

Radford's many books reached thousands of builders, and whole towns show the stamp of his designs.

Selected Books by the Radford Architectural Company

- The Radford American Homes — 100 House Plans (1903)
- Radford's Cyclopedia of Construction (12 volumes, c. 1908)
- Practical Plans for Barns (1908)
- Radford's Artistic Bungalows (1908)
- Stores and Flat Buildings (1909)
- Garages (1910)
- Architectural Drawing (1912)
- Estimating and Contracting (1913)
- Our Farm and Building Book (1914)
- Architectural Details for Every Type of Building (1921)

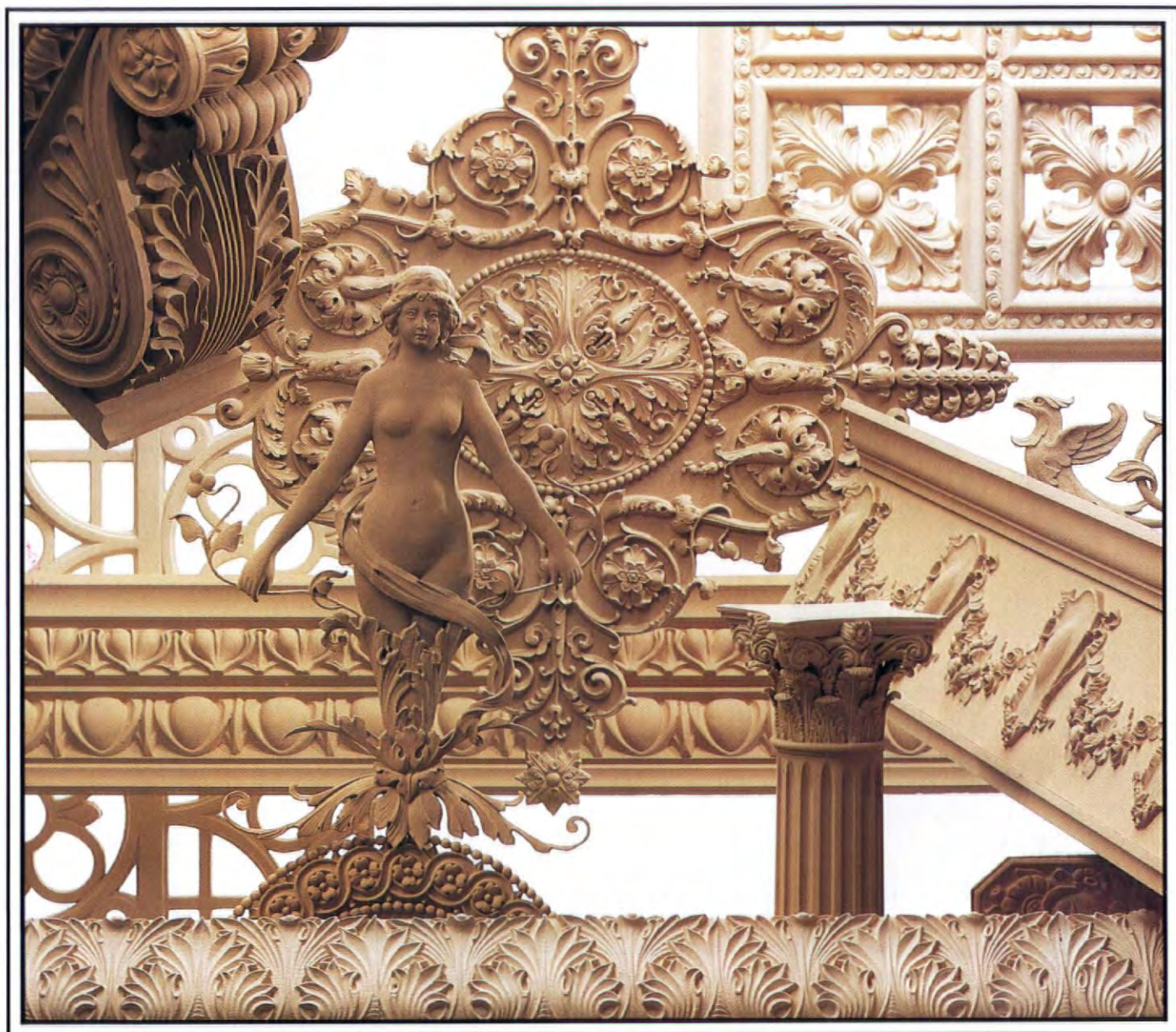


often lackluster versions of Queen Anne, or American Foursquare houses with extended eaves. Some plans for interior details, though, show a greater understanding of Prairie School tastes — probably the result of his early years handling millwork at the family lumberyard. It seems that Radford simply thought of himself as a good construction journalist. Historical tidbits often appear in Radford publications — the editor, perhaps, indulging his interest in the evolution of construction — but aesthetic issues were generally glossed over, and there were no renowned architects or designers on staff.

Radford did not shy away from new building materials and published several early references at the dawn of widespread concrete use. Typical was a five-volume set entitled *Radford's Cyclopedia of Cement Construction* (1910). Written by the most knowledgeable concrete men in America, it featured over 1700 pages with "constant emphasis laid on the practical as distinguished from the theoretical mode of treatment."

About the time the building industry collapsed at the onset of the Great Depression, William Radford retired and moved to his ranch in Cupertino, California. It was there he died in 1943. Radford publications often pop up in antiquarian book stores and are worth pursuing for any old-house enthusiast. Look for the company's shining lighthouse logo — a beacon of enlightenment for the early-20th-century builder.

Neal A. Vogel manages a technical services program for Inspired Partnerships in Chicago.



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Ask OHJ

Dyeing for a Match

My wife and I have replaced some missing oak mouldings in our 1904 house, but are having problems matching the color of the original shellac finish. Is it possible that a pigmented or colored shellac was used?

— PAUL BURGMAYER
Wayne, Penn.

AGE ALONE DARKENS shellac considerably, but occasionally clear and amber shellacs were tinted. One old-time (and inexpensive) method was to dissolve a bit of colored sealing wax in alcohol and add it to the shellac. The preferred colorants, however, were powdered aniline dyes, which are still available today. Unlike stains, the dyes alter the color without muddying the wood grain. After dissolving the dyes in alcohol, they can be used either directly on the wood or as tint in the shellac. One supplier is Johnson Paint Company, 355 Newbury Street, Dept. OHJ, Boston, MA 02115; (617) 536-4838.

Patina Problems

On the 1910 mansion we are restoring there are 5 1/2 tons of exterior copper that have blackened. I cannot find any commercial products that will remove these darkened portions. Any suggestions?

— JAN BACHRACH
Decatur, Illinois

WITH SEVERAL YEARS OF WEATHERING, copper typically forms a natural green-grey patina (depending upon locale) that helps it resist further corrosion. Black stains such as yours can have many sources — a reaction



The stained copper balustrades and cornices of this Mediterranean-style mansion may respond to chemical cleaning or "agri-blasting."

with nearby chemicals or metals, say, or local air pollution — and a scientific analysis of the patina is the best way to zero-in on the cause. Though black stains generally won't harm the metal, they can be unsightly, and cleaning such a large surface will require professional help. The Copper Development Association, Inc. suggests two approaches to cleaning that avoid permanent damage to the copper:

- Mechanical cleaning of encrusted deposits with walnut shell dust. More gentle than sandblasting or glass-beading, the dust is blown from a nozzle at 30 psi and directed at the edge of the crust so that it lifts off the surface.
- Chemical cleaning of patina with

an acid solution. A mixture of six parts concentrated phosphoric acid and one part concentrated nitric acid is diluted no less than 50 percent with water to a pH between 1 and 1.5. The solution is left on the copper for one minute, then removed with sponges soaked in sodium bicarbonate solution. Remaining acid is neutralized with a water rinse and a paste of sodium bicarbonate, followed by a treatment with ammonium oxalate.

Testing first will be an important part of choosing an effective method, as will using proper safety procedures.

For more information on copper, contact the CDA at (212)251-7200.

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— STANLEY NEWMAN
Massapequa Park, New York

A bit-type key opens this entry door rim lock, made by the Russell and Erwin Co. in 1865.



[Continued on page 30]



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Ask OHJ

[Continued from page 28]

A LOT DEPENDS UPON THE NATURE OF the lock and key. Easiest to copy are the now common pin-tumbler keys with saw-toothed edges, first developed in the 1860s but rare prior to 1900. Reproducing the older bit-type keys, with their distinctive winged ends, is more difficult but not impossible. Bit keys worked a tremendous variety of pocket-mounted mortise locks (popular from 1850 to 1950), and earlier surface-mounted rim locks (common until the early-20th century). Antique lock experts can often identify and locate a suitable original or reproduction key blank, whether the lock has its key or not. As a last resort, a custom casting can be made, but original keys (especially brass) are usually



A 1904 millwork catalog shows several stock picket designs in production since the 1880s.

worn after years of use and a simple duplicate may not work. To take accurate measurements and ensure that new keys fit properly, the locksmith needs the lock. One antique lock specialist is D.S. Locksmithing Co., 220 East Sixth Street, Dept. OHJ, Jacksonville, FL 32206; (904) 356-5396.

Period Pickets

We would like to build a picket fence around the front yard of our 1905 house. Could you provide us with pictures, drawings, or sketches of the proper type of fence?

— RANDY & SUSAN PENNINGTON
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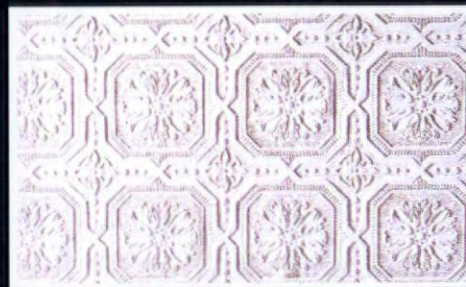
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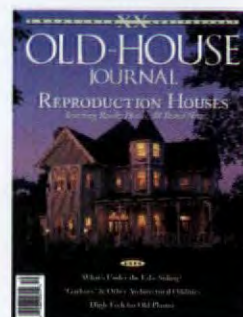
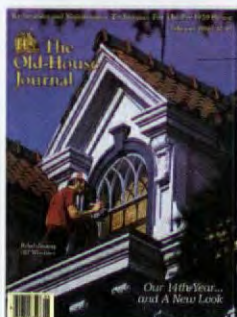
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THE NEWSLETTER THAT BECAME A MAGAZINE — AND THE CULT THAT WENT MAINSTREAM

BY GORDON BOCK, EDITOR

THIS MORNING BILL O'DONNELL AND I CLIMBED TO the cupola. The access isn't easy, so I've never been up there, although OHJ has been headquartered in this 1810 landmark for two years. The cupola is really a little house perched on a big brick building; it felt good to be in close quarters with carpentry, windows, sunshine and sky. What a view, four storeys high with seagulls in the lifting fog! They sometimes call such cupolas "monitors," and now I know why. (By the way, our rooftop expedition was to check access and view for a possible fireworks party; it turned into an inspection when we found rot and old-house borers!)

I looked out at the houses all around us, none of them new. While a few need work, many show fresh paint and other signs of attention. I was seeing a relatively new view of old houses, a view out of favor just a generation ago, when old houses were thought of as "used." Restoring (and maintaining) old houses is accepted now, no longer a cult activity of the eccentric rich, restoring chateaux in France or the eccentric poor, fixer-upping without resort to modernization. The general public has embraced old houses for what they are: architectural antiques.

For 20 years, of course, OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL has stood its ground, outside the trend-setting that goes on in decorating magazines, sharing information about how to repair and preserve old houses. I'd like to think our fidelity helped bring about the change — at first because the newsletter was read by preservationists and decorating editors, and now because of the magazine's 300,000 readers. Just as the restoration and renovation field has emerged slowly, so did OHJ, growing from a slim, typewritten newsletter in 1973 to the issue in your hands. With the continued strength of the renovation market — and the new readers who've found OHJ — there's no question that we old-house lovers have emerged.

I believe the interest will continue. New construction is fraught with difficulty, from economics to zoning to environmental concern. The renovation industry, on the other hand, is taking the waves of the recent recession better than the rest of the building world. That's due largely to economics — when people can't afford to build, generally they invest in existing housing. But I venture to say there are ideals at work here, too, and sound economics that will survive the end of a recession. Renovators, both individual and for-profit, have a better appreciation for old buildings. Recycling by

saving the labor and materials already embodied in existing buildings has hit its stride.

I see continued interest in two other trends, as well. The first is the overdue attention to health and safety, personal and environmental. I occasionally shudder when I read some early OHJ advice today. Caveats to avoid the use of then-available flammable, carcinogenic paint strippers in confined indoor spaces sound wildly understated when you know that 220-grit sandpaper today is labeled "Warning: Wear eye, face, and body protection."

The impact of the tools and materials we use on old buildings will only become more of an issue as we learn how they truly affect us and our planet. Although the time may come again for some early building practices (shellac-based coatings and borate preservatives, as examples, are having a minor renaissance), many of the products we consider "traditional" are already changing radically or disappearing altogether. I remember editing an article in 1989 on low-voc paints, just as "California regulations" were spreading. Writing about the end of oil-based paints seemed almost like science fiction, even four years ago, but it's a reality we face along with the coatings industry. Lead paint abatement will continue to be an old-house problem. For preservation-minded renovators, the challenge is to balance abatement with the potential loss of historic finishes, and even building elements.

The second continuing trend brings better news: the growth of a restoration- and renovation-products industry. If you restored a house before the mid-'70s, you know you were pretty much on your own when it came to paint colors, millwork, wallpaper, windows, or hardware. Everything was do-it-yourself, research-it-yourself, go-find-it-yourself. A lot was make-do. Back in our newsletter days, we didn't



One trend that'll continue: our overdue attention to the health and safety of renovators and the environment.

in "the early days." Reprints of archival catalogues, guides, and reference books actually spell out the details of old-house construction. Together with the broad range of materials, furnishings, and finishes, such information makes restoration more accurate.

WHAT'S AHEAD?

AS THE 21ST CENTURY FINALLY HEAVES INTO VIEW, OUR NOTION of what's old is changing. A generation ago, historical societies dealt with architecture of the colonial period. When OHJ started out, "the antique house" our logo defined was Victorian (and usually urban). Over time, we've broadened our definition to include houses and small commercial buildings in rural areas and in the early streetcar suburbs. We taught ourselves and our readers the difference between "Victorian" — a period — and the styles of the period: Gothic, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Shingle. We broke new ground in 1982 with the Comfortable House series, giving consideration to Bungalows and a name to such early 20th century houses as the American Foursquare. Our wider net gathered into our purview all houses built


OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL was born of the Brooklyn "brownstone revival" in the early 1970s, but broadened its scope long before our move to New England.



up until World War II — a convenient (if apocalyptic) benchmark after which both building materials and tastes changed dramatically.

At a recent gathering here in Gloucester, contributing editor Jim Massey, ever mindful of the official rules of Preservation, warned us that the Postwar House will turn 50 in 1995. We've always said we're about "plaster and hardwood," but the future may bring Sheetrock and Formica. (We broached the subject of ranch houses and split-levels in 1992, as the coda for Jim and Shirley's style series.) Those "cold-war houses" many of us grew up in are not being built

anymore. They are, as they say, history.

Regarding the future of OHJ and restoration: I like the view from here. There is plenty of ground yet to cover, inside and out. (I'm thinking of period interiors; outbuildings and historic landscapes.) We continue to enjoy doing our best to put together a good-looking publication that's of real use to anyone involved with old buildings, whether the interest is professional or very personal. Old houses, I know, are beautiful and irreplaceable parts of our history and culture. Helping you enjoy your house now, and helping you preserve it for future generations, is very satisfying work. 

A PRESERVATIONIST, BITTEN BY THE BUG

I DISCOVERED OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, around the time my wife Kate and I bought an 1830s brick house in New Hampshire. In hindsight, buying that house was an extremely naive and brash decision. But we've had no regrets.

Up to that time, you see, I had lived only in "new" environments, first in suburban Los Angeles, then suburban Chicago. One of my favorite after-school pastimes as a child was to play at the construction sites of the new homes going up all around us. Behind our house was a vast undeveloped piece of land which we kids called "the prairie," an unwittingly ironic reference. Within a decade, this land was filled with new streets, new homes and apartments, and new shopping centers.

So moving to rural New England was culture shock to us. Here *everything* was old. If living in an early-19th-century house was a novelty to us, it wasn't to our neighbors — that's just the way things were. But through OHJ — back then, a quirky, folksy, glorified newsletter — we learned that there were apparently many other daffy people who lived in and restored old houses by choice. And I learned lots of practical stuff in OHJ — like not to re-point old brick with portland cement, and how to reglaze windows.

Soon I had been bitten hard by the old-house bug. I went off to earn a master's degree in historic preservation, and became what OHJ Editor Gordon Bock calls a "card-carrying preservationist." I'm not sure whether this label is a good thing or a bad thing to the staff and readers of OHJ. Some preservationists (certainly not anybody I know) have an opinion of their profession that assumes exclusivity. To them, OHJ, in its humor and clarity, is for amateurs.

I have a colleague who reported that, when he was at graduate school, historic-preservation students were actually discouraged from reading OHJ. "Too simplistic."

But despite the contraband status of the early OHJ, the students read it anyway, using it as a kind of restoration "Cliff Notes" to decipher the sometimes inscrutable lectures.

That's why I'm proud to have been associated with OHJ for the past nine years. It consistently offers up practical and digestible information for real people who live in and fix up real historic houses. And even though historic preservation has risen to the level of a profession, it remains at its core a grass-roots effort for which every old-house restorer is a compelling spokesperson.

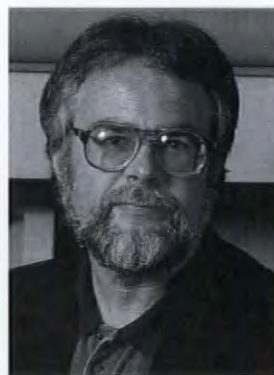
My prediction for OHJ's future? It will become increasingly more useful for both amateur and professional alike: a place where novices can become more knowledgeable, and "old-timers" can be reminded of why we still love what we do.

Happy 20th Anniversary, OHJ!

— J. RANDALL COTTON

J. RANDALL COTTON

spends his days with significant landmarks and historic churches; his practical side was honed through ownership of his own old house — and his years writing for homeowners. Randy's greatest role here has been to stir the editorial pot, spontaneously coming up with such departures as Concrete Block Houses (a ground-breaker from 1984) and everything you ever wanted to know about old-fashioned Awnings (1985). He's told readers about ceiling fans, the earliest floors, architectural salvage — you could say he's interested in everything including The Kitchen Sink! (1987). Please contact Randy through OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL.



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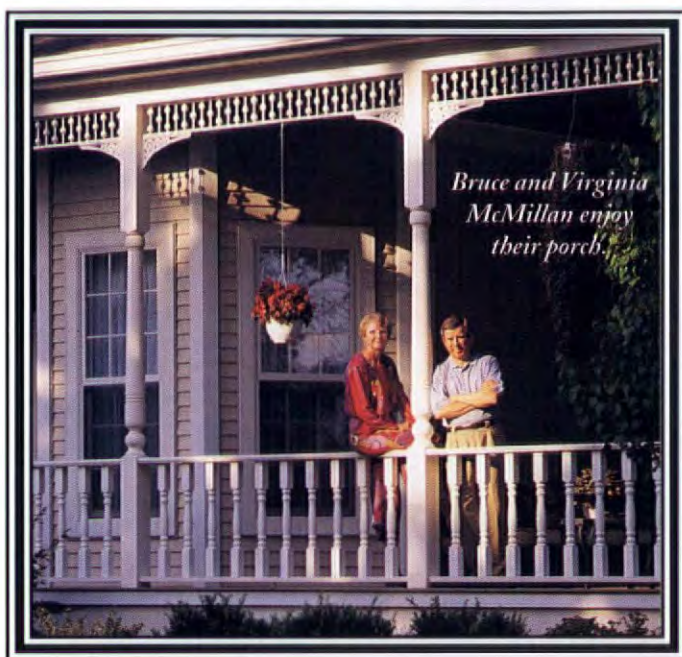
MAIL-ORDER HOUSE PLANS HAVE A LONG HISTORY. From the planbooks of the Palliser Brothers, George Barber, and R.W. Shoppell in the late-19th century to William Radford, William Comstock, and countless home magazines in the 20th century, houses have been built from published plans for over a hundred years — and the practice still continues today. OHJ joined the plans-by-mail ranks a mere five years ago with the Historic House Plans department. Since then, we've been curious to see how the plans turned out, so we tracked down a number of readers who have built "new-old" houses. ♦ New-house people may not seem like old-house people, but they are. They have taken into consideration more than just what style of house to

build or what type of roofing to use. They have looked at nearby houses and neighborhoods, carefully considering how their new building will fit into the historic streetscape. ♦ After

losing her Victorian house in a devastating fire, Virginia McMillan decided to meticulously build a Barber plan that was similar to her original house. For retiree Carl Martens, who had moved on in his life but not in his love for historic houses, a new-old house plan let him build on a lot close to his family's homestead. Not surprisingly, each

project was approached with the same respect, care, and sense of responsibility usually reserved for restoration — except that the hard work is done *before* moving in, not after.

— Lynn Elliott



Bruce and Virginia McMillan enjoy their porch.

These OHJ readers built new versions of historic houses from mail-order plans — a longstanding American architectural tradition



VICTORIAN BARBER HOUSE WITH TOWER

Owners: Bruce & Virginia McMillan, Springfield, Illinois

Plan Number: HR-10-VI

Date Construction Started: March 1991

Completion Date: December 23, 1991

Cost of Construction: \$300,000

IN SEPTEMBER 1990, OUR 135-YEAR-old home burned. We were devastated! Being old-house lovers, we faced the agonizing decision of whether to rebuild or look for another older home. Since we loved our neighborhood and our 1.5 acre lot, we began to look for house plans that would have the character of our original house. We very quickly found what we were looking for in the Victorian "Barber House with

Tower." [George Barber was a 19th-century mail-order architect in Knoxville, Tenn.]

After months of negotiating with the county building code department (the house was taller than codes permitted), we began construction in March 1991. We selected a contractor with an excellent reputation who had never built a house like this one. The poor man! I am sure if he heard me say

"I want this house to look old" one more time, he would have screamed.

I never had any desire to build and probably wouldn't have if I weren't forced into it by the fire. We did not have the luxury of planning ahead of time. Instead, we were suddenly faced with replacing a home and all of its furnishings and our belongings while continuing to lead busy professional lives. Our satisfaction was in seeing decisions come together into a finished product.

Two days before Christmas 1991, we moved into our "new-old" house. My biggest thrill came when a delivery person had trouble finding the house because he said he was looking for a new one!

— VIRGINIA MCMILLAN
Springfield, Illinois



SOUTHERN QUEEN ANNE

Owner: Rodger S. Whipple, Jacksonville, Oregon

Plan Number: HH-02-VI

Date Construction Started: October 1992

Completion Date: January 1993

Cost of Construction: \$80/sq. ft., including all woodwork & masonry fireplace.

I WANTED TO BUILD IN JACKSONVILLE, Oregon, which is an 1850s gold mining town whose housing boom ended in the 1890s. I was looking for a plan that would be appropriate for the time period. The Southern Queen Anne plan fit the bill and its overall design appealed to me, particularly the delightful roofline. I made a few changes, including adding a second dormer, a wrap-around porch on the back, a side door, and a utility room. I found it to be a good plan with a tight design, but it's not for the inexperienced carpenter.

—RODGER S. WHIPPLE
Jacksonville, Oregon



TIDEWATER LITTLE-HOUSE

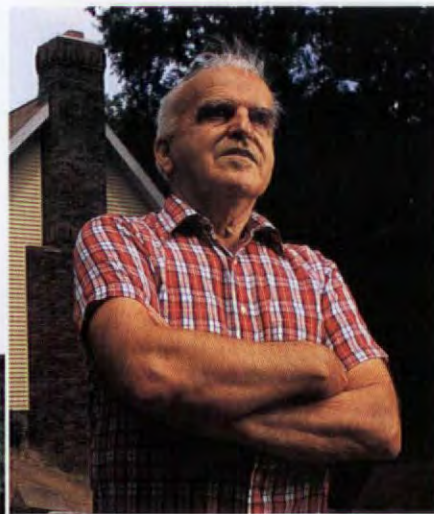
Owners: Carl Martens, Rochester, New York

Plan Number: TA-01-EA

Date Construction Started: June 1992

Completion Date: October 1992

Cost of Construction: \$125,000



I WAS RETIRED AND LIVING ALONE ON a limited income with a century-old farmhouse in need of paint, replacement windows, and insulation — not to mention an acre and a half of lawn that seemed to be bigger each time I mowed it. With these thoughts running through my mind, I would check the OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL house plans each month, mentally weighing what I liked or didn't like.

The town approved a subdivision of the property and I chose a half-acre parcel narrowly situated behind the original farm house and near a wooded hill. The Tidewater Little-House plan suited my needs. It was the right size and had an interesting floor plan that fit on the back portion of my lot. The new house would be close to the old so I wanted them to harmonize. The

**A delivery man
asked, "Is this a new
house or are you
repairing an old house
that had a fire?"**

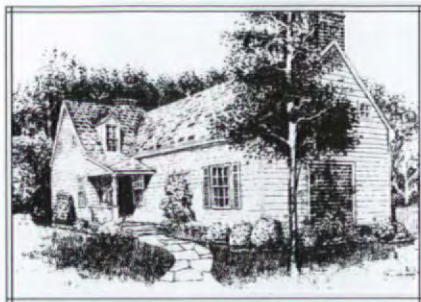
roof line was ideal because it matched the one on the old family homestead.

Town codes forced me to increase the overall size of the house. Making a house larger is no problem, but keeping the "old" look can be difficult. A turned post, salvaged from the farmhouse, was used on the front porch, and a round stained-glass window lights the entry. Also, a bay window was incorporated in the rear to reflect one on the old house. To enhance the exterior, a

semi-circular drive and a curved walkway will be completed this year.

I think the look of a guest house or tenant house has been achieved. During construction, a delivery man asked, "Is this a new house or are you repairing an old house that had a fire?" I felt that was the best compliment he could have made.

— CARL MARTENS
Rochester, New York



ANTEBELLUM COTTAGE

Owners: James & Paula Danforth, Cotuit, Massachusetts

Plan Number: HR-13-VI

Date Construction Started: May 1991

Completion Date: Still in progress

Cost of Construction: \$150,000

WE WERE FIRST ATTRACTED TO the Antebellum plan by our love of older homes. We liked the overall design, layout, and especially the front porch. The total square footage was just the size we wanted for a summer home.

Actually, we had already purchased another set of house plans from a different magazine. The building permit had been issued, the house was

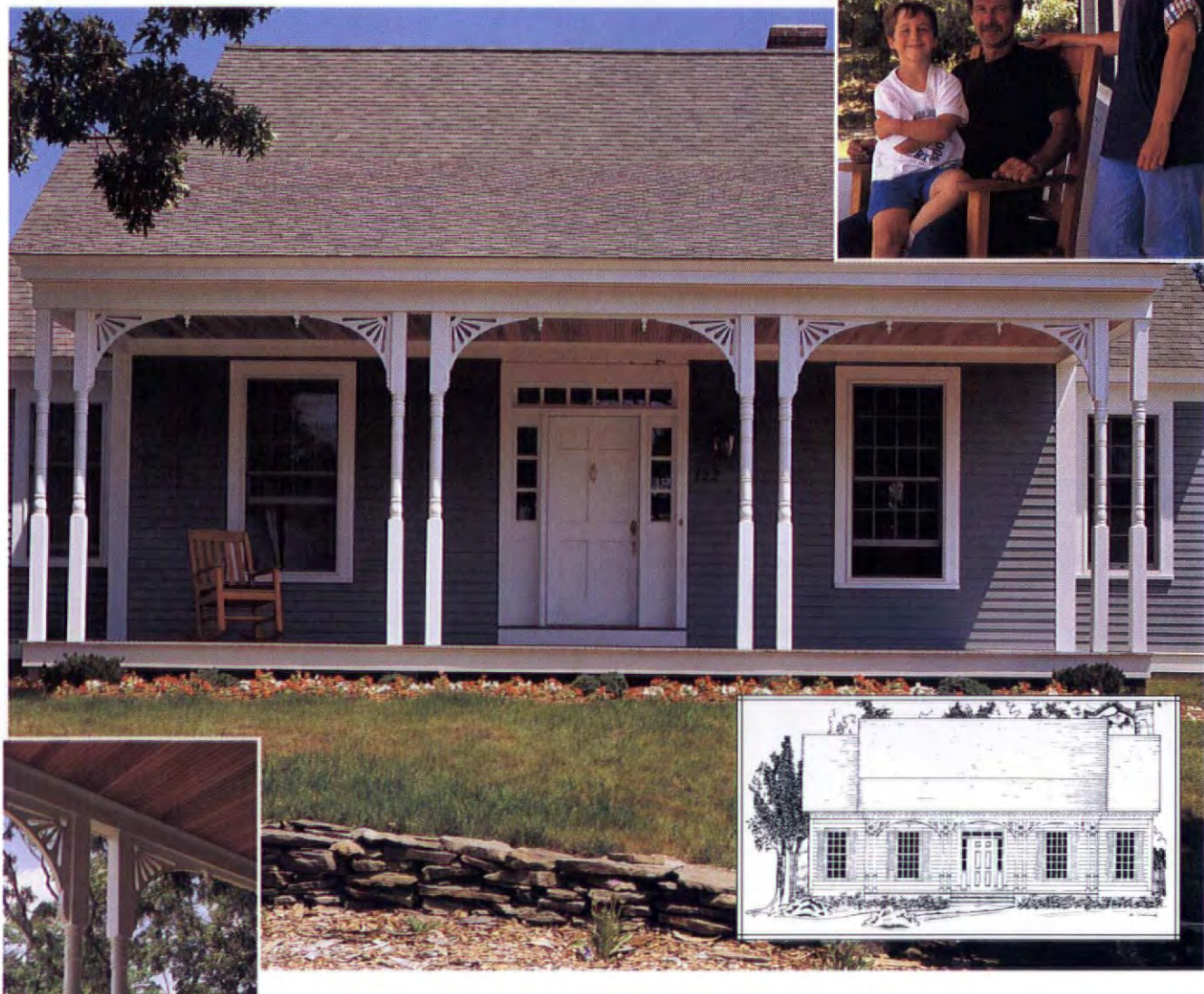
already staked out, and we were ready to start ground breaking when we saw the Antebellum Cottage in the *OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL*. We knew at once that this plan was *it* for us, and immediately put everything else on hold. The house was started in May of 1991, and we have worked on it only as a weekend project since we do almost everything ourselves.

We used cedar clapboards on the

front and white cedar shingles on the rest of the house, which is a traditional look for Cape Cod. For the interior of the house, we are installing 12" antique chestnut flooring in the kitchen and wide pine boards in the rest of the house. We still have all the finish work to complete, including baseboards, base mouldings, and the window and door trim.

This is a summer residence in the village of Cotuit. The completion date for the finish work is unknown. At times, it seems that it is the never-ending project.

— JAMES AND PAULA DANFORTH
Cotuit, Massachusetts



TOWN COTTAGE

Owners: LeRoy & Kim DeMasellis, Ortonville, Michigan

Plan Number: HR-05-VI

Date Construction Started: June 1991

Completion Date: September 1991

Cost of Construction: \$120,000

WE BUILT THE TOWN COTTAGE ourselves in just 90 days in the summer of 1991 and modified it to suit our needs. We added 4' to the parlor room, a half-bath and laundry room at the rear of the house, and also a basement. We tried to maintain the Victorian look wherever possible. Our home is called Rosewood Cottage; we have placed its name on a sign with our favorite Bible verse at the beginning of the drive.

—LEROY AND KIM DEMASELLIS
Ortonville, Mich.



VICTORIAN CARRIAGE HOUSE

Owners: Ron Sharpee (a), R.E. Moffatt (b), Thomas Pryzby (c)

Plan Number: CD-03-GA

Date Construction Started: April '92 (a), May '92 (b), October '91 (c)

Completion Date: In progress (a), June '92 (b), March '92 (c)

Cost of Construction: \$18,000 (a), \$60,000 (b), \$20,000 (c)

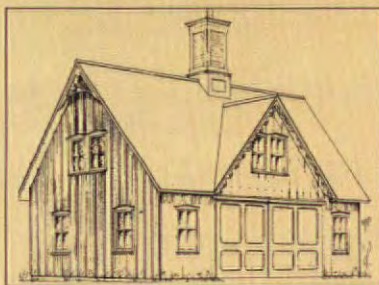
THE FOLKS ON THIS PAGE HAVE built one of our most popular designs. But this plan isn't a house, it's an outbuilding — not that that made a difference to the Moffatts, who converted the Victorian Carriage barn into a retirement home. These folks needed more space for cars, workshops, and small businesses, but wanted an outbuilding plan that wouldn't compete with their existing house.

...

WE LIVE ON AN OLD FARMstead that was settled in the mid-1800s by Norwegian immigrants. The present house and barn



were built in a simple utilitarian design near the end of the century. We were faced with two problems. The garage on our property was probably built in the 1960s, and its ranch-house style looked out of place. Second, my wife Debbie is a weaver and her looms require quite a bit of space. We had talked for several years about building an addition on our small house, but the cost, location, and aesthetics prevented this from happening. While reading the July/August 1991 issue, we discovered



the Victorian Carriage Barn plan and immediately fell in love with it. Since the dimensions were similar, we decided to build the Carriage Barn over our existing garage walls. The unique roof and traditional board-and-batten siding of the new garage look more comfortable on our property than the first one.

— RON SHARPEE
DeForest, Wisconsin

FOR SEVERAL YEARS, MY WIFE Karen and I searched for a location on Prince Edward Island to build a retirement home. We purchased 3.5 acres of land overlooking the Stanley River, then tried to find a plan. We saw the Victorian Carriage Barn in your magazine and it suited us to a "T." The design, especially the roof pitch and the gables, was very eye-catching and more appealing than those we had looked at in the ever-so-many planbooks.

The building is made of pine with shiplap cedar on the outside. We winterized the family room/kitchen on the main level, but at this time the Carriage House is only used in the Spring, Summer, and Fall. In the future, the airtight wooden stove will provide comfort in all seasons.



Eventually, we might put the Carriage house on a foundation and add a winter kitchen to the rear of the building.

This is the first property we have ever built, and we feel this Victorian house plan was a great success. We consider the planning and completion of our Victorian Carriage House to be a high point in the life of our family.

— R.E. MOFFATT
Prince Edward Isl., Nova Scotia

WE BUILT THE VICTORIAN Carriage Barn next to our home in Canton, New York, and we have received many compliments on the building. Right now, the garage has a game room upstairs, but we may use it for a small business in the future. The cupola was omitted to keep the building in proportion with our house and a side door was substituted for one of the windows. From time-to-time, we notice cars driving by slowly with the occupants craning their necks for a better view.

— THOMAS PRYZBY
Canton, New York



PRIMITIVE PLASTER

USING MODERN MATERIALS TO

REPAIR AND STABILIZE HISTORIC PLASTER WALLS

BY JOHN LEEKE

CLAY-SOIL PLASTER IS A SIMPLE INTERIOR FINISH USUALLY found in settlement-period houses. Also known as mud plaster, its main ingredient is clay dug from the ground. Sand was included to prevent cracks as it dried, and natural fibers reinforced the plaster when it did crack. When mixed with water, this plastic mixture was worked onto walls and ceilings by hand or with trowels. ♦ Since water redissolves the clay easily, exterior mud plaster seldom lasted more than a few years. It fares better indoors, but even here it is not as durable as lime-and-sand plaster. The owner of this 18th-century house wanted to save as much of this historic plaster as possible. Using this project, I'll explain how we developed a matching recipe for this unique plaster, stabilized the loose areas, and consolidated the dusty surface with 1990s techniques and materials — which you can use to rescue many kinds of plaster walls.

Clay-Soil Plaster Was Widespread

SETTLEMENT LIFE WAS ROUGH. BASIC SHELTER WAS BUILT as quickly as possible using readily available materials, and the lime and gypsum that make more serviceable plaster were not common until local sources or outside suppliers were established. Even when available they were costly and used sparingly only to improve clay-soil plaster. Most settlement in North America was based on agriculture, so farm materials — straw and hay, cattle hair and manure, and clay earth — are almost always found in plasters from this period.

Clay-soil plaster has a history all across North Amer-

ica. In the Southwest, 18th- and 19th-century builders of adobe structures packed and smoothed mud plaster onto walls built of sun-dried brick and sandstone. Prairie settlers building rammed-earth and sod houses in Kansas and Nebraska during the last half of the 19th century used mud plaster to make their buildings more livable. Even as late as the early 20th century, Ukrainian settlers in Alberta, Canada, spread mud plaster on their log house walls. It is easy to imagine mud plaster walls in these basic shelters, but it was also used in refined buildings in New England throughout the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Parson Smith House in Windham, Maine, is owned by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA). This two-storey, Georgian-style house was built in the early 1760s when inland sections of what is now southern Maine were just being settled. While investigating the construction of the house with Gregory Clancey from SPNEA's Conservation Center, I discovered clay-soil plaster. Along with paneled woodwork and mouldings, it was used when the house was first built to finish four of the 18 rooms.

The clay-soil plaster was troweled onto rived (split-wood) lath made with simple hand tools. More rooms were finished after 1794 in a stronger wall built of split-board lath and a



single coat of lime-sand plaster. The boards were sawn by a local water-powered sawmill and split to form keyways as the board was nailed to the studs. In the 1840s the rest of the rooms were plastered with a harder two-coat lime-sand mix on individually sawn lath. Both the lime and lath were probably shipped in from some distance. This progression of three distinctly different plastering systems makes the house an important record of interior finishes over a long time.

After we surveyed the plaster in all 18 rooms of the house, I found three common faults: 1) cracks; 2) detached or loose plaster; 3) missing plaster or later repairs that were poorly done. Overall, about 15 square feet of clay plaster was missing among several small patches. Most of the plaster was well attached, but its surface was disintegrating and dusting off. We noted all of this on simple sketches so as to develop a comprehensive repair project.

Farmyard Physics

PLASTER REPAIRS SHOULD ALWAYS MATCH THE ORIGINAL plaster system as closely as possible.

If new plaster is stronger, or expands and shrinks at a different rate, it can damage the existing material around it.

The 1760s Parson Smith House in Maine is a refined Georgian-style building with mud plastered rooms.

Historic clay-soil plaster is made with clay soil, sand, manure, and fibers such as linen or grass — here, still green.

To avoid these problems, we wanted to determine the strength and formulation of the original plaster in some detail. Since our project did not have the budget for a scholarly study of the plaster, we used what I call kitchen chemistry and farmyard physics. We took samples of the existing clay-soil plaster from areas in good condition (areas already damaged by, say, water may be weak or changed in composition) and put them through some simple tests to shed light on their composition.

- Our examination of the plaster chunks showed a grey



I N J E C T E D A D H E S I V E

PLASTER OF ANY KIND will often buckle away from the wall if the keys break so it is no longer anchored to the lath. This is especially true for ceilings, where gravity puts additional stress on the plaster. Before we could fill in the missing areas of our clay-plaster walls, we had to reattach the loose plaster surrounding the openings. To do this we turned to modern cartridge-type construction adhesives made for securing floor and wall panels to framing. We carefully tested several common brands to find a product that 1) remained flexible after curing to permit the plaster to move and 2) matched the pH of the bonding agent in our new plaster. (For more on injection adhesives, see "Saving Irreplaceable Plaster," November/December 1987 OHJ.) Injection adhesive bonding uses these basic methods to adhere the plaster back to the lath.

- 1) Carefully remove small amounts of crumbling plaster back to sound plaster if the problem area is open. If the problem area is closed or inaccessible from behind, make small cleanout holes in the plaster (especially at the bottom on walls) to clean out debris that would prevent repositioning on the lath.
- 2) Bore holes in the surrounding area of loose plaster. Hold the weak plaster carefully in place to prevent unnecessary damage.
- 3) Squirt a priming solution into the holes to wet dry, dusty surfaces and stabilize any minor debris between plaster and lath. We used the C-21 bonding agent in a plastic hair-dye applicator. Then inject adhesive into the gap between plaster and lath. Our final choice for this project was Macco brand latex Liquid Nails, a styrene-butadine based product.
- 4) Press the plaster in place against the lath with carefully applied pressure. Shore with plywood and temporary braces. Use wax paper or 2-mil poly sheeting over the plaster, and add foam rubber or carpet backing as a cushion if the surface is uneven. Leave in place until the adhesive sets — about a day for our project.
- 5) Clean up the oozed adhesive with a razor knife and solvent after it has set and the plywood is removed.



BONDING



color, hair content of some kind, and a surface that scratched easily and sparkled in bright sunlight. Applying heavy finger pressure crumpled the plaster to chunks about $\frac{1}{2}$ " across (the weaker the plaster, the smaller the chunks). Inspection with a 30x pocket microscope revealed the sparkling bits were tiny, flat plates — probably mica. There was a lot of the mica and other fine material right near the surface; larger grains of sand were distributed deeper within. Probably, the plaster was water-trowel finished with a metal trowel: A wooden float would have left some of the larger particles right at the surface.

- Testing with household materials gave us insights about the white flecks we found among the sand grains and grey clay. We knew it was standard practice 200 years ago to add lime to the clay mix, so I crushed a small chunk of plaster on a dinner plate, then added a drop of ordinary vinegar. If there was lime (a caustic), it should react with the vinegar (an acid) to produce gasses. A peek in the pocket microscope showed the white flecks were merrily bubbling away — a good bet they were lime. To make sure it wasn't just air coming out of the dry plaster, we tested another sample with plain water. There were no bubbles, supporting the results of the first test.

- Separating out the components furthered our analysis. First we measured the rough volume of the plaster chunks, then pulverized them and sifted out the hair. Oxen with red hair were common in the area when the house was built so it was no surprise to find the hair in the plaster was red, about $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " long. The remaining powder was fairly fine and uniform. Clearly, the early builders had sifted their materials before mixing this plaster.

- Performing a sediment test determined the proportions. I filled a glass jar half with powdered plaster and half with water, then gave it a few shakes to completely mix the contents. By the next morning, there were layers of heavy sand on the bottom, then silt particles, then fine grey clay, and clear water on top. The lines between the layers were not perfect, but it was easy to see the proportions and use them as samples in our search for similar materials.

The Search for Materials

ALWAYS CONSIDER THE ORIGINAL SOURCE WHEN REPLACING historic materials. The clay for the Parson Smith House probably came from the cellar excavation or a nearby clay bank. We took samples from a hole out behind the house and the river bank under a mile away, then compared them to our analysis sample. There was a brickmaking yard on the next road over so we got some of their clay, too.

Historically, clay is prepared by letting the clods overwinter in the rain and sun so the freeze-thaw cycles will break them down. We dried our clay for a couple of weeks on tarps in the barn loft where sun could shine on it. Next, we pulverized the clods into powder with a sledge hammer, using

CONSOLIDATION SAFETY

USING SOLVENT-THINNED consolidants in an enclosed area is a process that generates high fume levels and requires great care to work safely. Xylene, in particular, is a flammable liquid and a potential health hazard, so plenty of ventilation (creating negative forced-air pressure with explosion-proof fans is recommended) and protective clothing are critical. We followed all of the recommendations in the Material Safety Data Sheets that came with these products, including protecting our eyes with goggles and exposed skin with coveralls and gloves. Respirators were checked often for effective operation and cartridges changed many times a day. Furthermore, no one was living in the house when we applied the consolidant, and it remained vacant for several weeks after the work was complete.

a 2' x 3' bottomless box to catch the flying clumps. Finally, we sifted the clay through 60-gauge screening to remove gravel, stones, and debris. The result was a uniform, dry clay that ranged from a fine powder to cornmeal-sized particles.

We located a source for yellow sand with a wide range of particle sizes that matched the analysis samples very closely. Finding hair was more of a problem. Human hair will not work because its surface is hard and smooth, and none of the nearby farms had red cattle. (Even if they did, I'm not sure what the farmers would have thought if we asked to shave their cows.) Goat hair used to be available through masonry suppliers, but no longer. Peter Lord, the plasterer, stopped by the local dog grooming shop and we ended up using cocker spaniel hair.

We adapted these ingredients and the basic information about the original plaster into the techniques and recipes we needed. To make new plaster mortar, we started with soil as close as possible to pure clay, then mixed in sand to prevent shrinkage cracks. Sand weakens the plaster, however, so we had to add fibers for reinforcement. Our strategy was to begin with the original plaster data and vary one ingredient at a time to overcome shrinkage cracks and other problems. Peter formed each test recipe into "cookies" and let them cure.

After three rounds of testing over two weeks and 13 variations, we arrived at a recipe that produced a plaster very similar to the original:

- 3 parts sand
- 1 part silty clay soil
- 1 part pure clay
- 1 part lime
- mixing liquid: 50% drinking water combined with 50%

C-21 Silpro brand acrylic emulsion bonding agent (see suppliers list)

Binding the Unstable Plaster

SOMETIMES THE LIME OR CLAY BINDER IN PLASTER LOSES its ability to hold together the aggregate — sand, in most cases. Possible causes are: 1) not enough binder in the original mix; 2) chemical changes within the plaster since it was applied; 3) binder that has leached out because of water. Localized areas of crumbling plaster may be related to a water leak. Decay in lath and house framing may also be present, and the leak will have to be corrected before the plaster is repaired.

The surface of our old clay-soil plaster would brush off in a cloud of dust with the swipe of a hand. A close look with the pocket microscope revealed a loose and crumbling surface about 1/32" to 1/16" deep, but beneath that the plaster was still sound. The cause may have been the original mix, which contained only a small amount of binding lime, and moisture condensing on the plaster during many unheated winters. In our case, the surface was too loose to hang wallpaper on — the planned decoration.

We decided to consolidate the unstable surface with liquid resin, an effective but tricky — and potentially hazardous — technique. The ideal resin would soak through the entire thickness of the crumbling plaster, binding the loose particles as it hardened. Good penetration is critical. A consolidant that only soaks in a little creates a strong outer skin that could break at the unconsolidated layer and peel off the wall. This is especially true if the plaster is stressed or dam-

To test application methods and plaster performance, Peter troweled 1' x 1' test sections of each recipe on a sample panel made of lath.





Peter applied our consolidant mix in three coats, using a bristle brush for edges and a roller for fields.

aged later.

At first we considered an alkyd resin product, Kyanoil Sealer and Reinforcing Oil (Kyanize Paints, Everett, Massachusetts). This is a mixture of safflower oil and alkyd resins in petroleum spirits that is similar to varnish and readily available. (We have had great success using such products to consolidate exterior weathered wood before priming.) However, acrylic resins are supposed to last longer than alkyds, and since the owner wanted an especially long-lasting treatment, we looked for an acrylic resin product. We settled on Acryloid B-67MT (Rohm and Haas Co., Philadelphia), an acrylic copolymer resin similar to that used in "latex" paints and not available on a consumer basis.

Since Acryloid B-67MT is a clear, syrupy liquid, we had to thin it with a mixture of xylene and mineral spirits so it would penetrate the plaster. Xylene is a strong, aromatic hydrocarbon solvent often used to thin this type of resin, and we had to take special precautions for reasons of safety (see box, opposite page) and compatibility. An alternative similar to our consolidant mix that is readily available is SilPro's Masonry Lusta. (Though this product is fast-drying because it contains only xylene, evaporation might be slowed by adding mineral spirits.)

Consolidating with Care

AFTER THE PLASTER REPAIRS WERE COMPLETE, PETER PREPARED the surface by removing small bits of leftover wallpaper and treating a mildewed area with bleach solution. Our consolidant formula was:

1 part xylene
3 parts mineral spirits
4 parts Acryloid B67MT

Working in a clean, five-gallon plastic bucket with a tight-fitting lid to prevent evaporation, Peter mixed the xylene and mineral spirits together first to form a solvent solution. Then, stirring constantly, he poured in a thin stream of Acryloid to produce a 22.5% resin-to-solvent mixture.

We determined how much consolidant to apply to each wall by first seeing how deep it penetrated in a limited area. As it turned out, we needed three coats, which also provided for even coverage. From here, some simple math gave us the amount of consolidant to apply in each coat, as well as figures to calculate how much resin and solvent would be needed.

To treat each section of wall, Peter first cut in the edges by spreading the consolidant mix with a natural bristle brush. Then he filled in the broad areas with a 3/16" nap roller. Altogether, he mixed and applied seven gallons of consolidant to 274 square feet of wall. We learned from one manufacturer that xylene might draw brown resins out of the injected bonding adhesives and bleed through light colored paints or wallpaper. Since we couldn't determine how xylene might affect the acrylic emulsion additive either, we were careful not to get consolidant on the infill repairs.

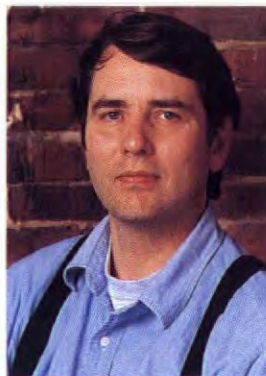
The result of all these repairs was the preservation of the original plaster. Though the materials and techniques have been around only a decade or so, they should give these walls another couple centuries of useful life.

SUPPLIERS

► **Preservation Resource Group**
Box 1768, Dept. OHJ
Rockville, MD 20849
(300) 309-2222
Panasonic Light Scope pocket microscope.

► **Silpro Masonry Systems, Inc.**
2 New England Way, Dept. OHJ
Ayer, MA 01432
(800) 343 1501
C-21 acrylic emulsion masonry admixture; Masonry Lusta clear acrylic masonry sealer.

JOHN LEEKE first wrote for OHJ in October 1982; he told us how to repair exterior wood columns. Since then, he's written on epoxies and gutters, porch decks and plaster — all with the practitioner's perspective and the hands-on detail that make his how-to articles so valuable. Readers can contact John through OHJ, or in his preservation consultant role at RRT, Box 2947, Sanford, Maine 04073; (207) 324-9597.



Browsing through odd house types ~

FOR THIS SPECIAL ISSUE, we've put together a very personal list of houses that tickle our architectural fancy. An "odd lot" is what a stockbroker might call each of the houses. We do, too, not necessarily because they are outlandish — usually far from it — but because they are too interesting to ignore. Some exist in only small numbers; most have a prosaic provenance. A few are examples of academic building, but many are vernacular houses, products of local conventions and conditions. Still others gained popularity through printed sources: "pop" buildings, we call them. Some are downright eccentric. We certainly hope you'll find something to please you among this architectural "rummage sale."

*by James C. Massey
~ and Shirley Maxwell*



THE OLD, FAMILIAR I-HOUSE

WE LOVE THE I-HOUSE BECAUSE IT IS SO EASY to understand and so easy to spot. It shows through under any stylish veneer, in any building material, and with almost any number of wings and sheds and ells attached. The clues are simple: one room deep, two storeys high, gable roof with the long side to the front, a chimney at each end, three or five openings across each storey. I-houses are a staple of rural vernacular building throughout the upper and middle South and Midwest. The name is drawn from Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, the states in which social geographers first classified the form in the 1960s. However, "I" might just as easily have come from the long, narrow shape of the building.

Built most often of brick or wood frame, but also found in stone or log, the I-house came out of the English tradition. Though its greatest popularity was in the mid-to-late 19th century, it has been around in English-settled areas since the 18th century. The so-called Virginia I's have three openings across the front: a door dead center flanked by two windows on the first floor and three windows on the second. The "Classic" I's common in the midwest have five openings per floor: two windows on either side of the door, five windows on the second floor. The chimneys may be interior ones, flush with the wall, or exterior. Southern I-houses are more likely to have exterior chimneys. The symmetrical I-house facade conceals a center-hall plan with one room on either side, usually with an ell attached

L R U M M A G E S A L E

at the rear. Even in small I-houses, the rooms are often exceptionally pleasant spaces because they catch light from three sides. Front porches were common, but not universal; sometimes they were one-storey high, sometimes two. The tall, narrow frame of the I took easily to ornamentation in whatever style was current.

The I-house could accommodate other useful variations as well. Think about this: If you turn a rural I-house gable end to the street, what do you get? A house that works on a narrow city lot, such as a Charleston single house. With its secluded side piazza entrance walled off from the street, visitors must first pass through a front door that leads to — surprise! — the porch. Only then do they discover the real front door, by which they reach a one-room-deep, center-hall-with-one-room-per-side house that's suspiciously like an I-house. ♦

Left: Basic in form and looking much like its name, this eastern Virginia I-House stands in Irvington. Right: Reorient an I-house and the result is very close to Charleston, South Carolina's famous single houses.



Raised Creole Cottages, such as this example in Montgomery, Alabama, are a vernacular house type well-adapted to the heat and high waters of their coastal domain.

IN PRAISE OF RAISED CREOLE COTTAGES

RAISED CREOLE COTTAGES ARE INDIGENOUS to the Mississippi Valley and the Gulf Coast of Louisiana, Alabama, and northwest Florida. They, too, can take on the frills and furbelows of any style or period, or they can be served up plain but tasty. Found in areas with early French settlement patterns, they are usually square, little, hipped- or gable-roof houses, of four to six rooms, sometimes with a center hall. They are set on blocks above the ground so that cooling air (and, in wet places, flood waters) can circulate below. Their elevated circumstances and deep, integral porches keep the temperature and humidity to mostly bearable levels. We find them unfailingly suggestive of small-town Southern life. ♦

SHOTGUNS, AND CAMELBACKS

FOUND MOSTLY, THOUGH NOT EXCLUSIVELY, in the South, particularly along the Gulf Coast, Shotguns are based on a simple form, albeit one richly varied in its regional interpretations. One narrow room wide, generally one storey high (with exceptions), and several rooms deep, these houses first appeared in rural areas, possibly based on those remembered by slaves from Haiti. Their slim profile made them ideal for city lots as well. When more space was needed, there were three ways to go: back, up, or back-and-up. Two-storey additions at the rear, sometimes jogging out a bit toward the lot line, resulted in a "camelback" or "humpback" Shotgun. Twin Shotguns built with a party wall between them were an economical way of making room for extended families or rental units, as they provided nominal privacy by means of separate front entrances. They did require two lots though. Front porches are optional, universal in rural areas but sometimes omitted in town.

Today, Shotguns are popular with young professionals looking for close-by housing in several historic areas of Mobile, New



In New Orleans, twin Shotgun houses are a common way to increase the living space of this ubiquitous southern house type.

Orleans, and Louisville. Almost everywhere, grassy lawns and tasteful plantings have replaced the intricate broom patterns of swept-dirt yards. Gone, too, are the front-porch array of lard-can flowerpots full of red geraniums that once blessed Southern Shotgun neighborhoods. We try to think of it as progress. ♦

U R B A N TINYS

WE'RE TICKLED BY SOME OTHER URBAN VERNACULARS as well. The bandbox, for instance, is a Philadelphia phenomenon in which a small rental house is built at the back of the lot on the alley. Two or three storeys high with one room per floor, the bandbox might be called the 18th-century equivalent of the garage apartment. Not the most desirable space, perhaps, but popular with tenants in need of low rents. Along those lines, we would like to offer here our candidate for the title of "Tiniest Town House," an eight-foot-wide (give or take a hair) late-Victorian in Alexandria, Virginia's Old Town section. We don't know what inspired its construction, but we like it. ♦

Our Alexandria, Virginia, candidate for the title of "Tiniest Town House" — possibly no more than 8' wide.



POP HOUSES

CERTAIN BUILDINGS WE THINK OF AS “POP” HOUSES — offshoots of popular 20th-century culture, when every shelter magazine, ready-cut catalog, and planbook offered a gimmick or two.

Take the Garlow (short for garage-bungalow), promoted in four different versions by *The Home* magazine in its 1923 supplement. The editors assured their readers that simply by erecting a few temporary partitions, it was possible to have a homey little four-room cottage, complete with bath and kitchenette, in which to live for a few years while saving money. When at last they were able to afford to build their permanent home adjacent, they could “turn their faithful garlow into a two-car garage.” The Garlow seems like an infinitely more practical idea than the attached garage that converted magically to a carpeted party room on demand.

The “WNAC Home Harmonious” was a 1927 advertising scheme featuring an ordinary English-style suburban



Before houses with attached garages became popular, the Garlow appended the house to the garage.

house. Touted by the “Home Builder’s Department” of a Massachusetts radio station and sponsored by contractors, developers, and building suppliers to educate listeners about home building and buying, the model home featured a large niche built into the living room wall — for the radio, of course. ♦



LOOSE IN BUNGALOW LAND

EVEN OUR OLD FRIEND THE BUNGALOW HAS HAD ITS endearing vagaries, especially in California, Bungalow Land itself. Note, for instance, a confection affectionately termed the “airplane” bungalow, a sort of flying carpet of a house with extravagantly upswept eaves.

In fact, the penchant for “bungalizing” the names of all sorts of unrelated buildings began early in this century and shows few signs of abating to this day. It has led to oddities like the “Bungalow Court,” of which many are

courts but few are true bungalows. The Coronado, California, courts pictured here feature little Spanish-Revival haciendas, from their tile roofs to their shapely white stucco walls. And in Los Angeles, we found an Egyptian Revival bungalow court too good to pass up. We’re happy to overlook the misnomers, not just because the courts were a grand and economical way to house the flood of Easterners who came to California in the 1920s and ’30s, but also because the buildings make us smile. ♦

This Coronado, California, bungalow court is ringed not with bungalows, but Spanish Revival houses.



SLAB-ROCK HOUSES

THE SLAB-ROCK HOUSE WAS FIRST BROUGHT TO OUR attention in southwestern Missouri, and we thought it was simply a regional curiosity. Imagine our surprise when we got back home to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and discovered the same method used in houses built from the 1910s to 1950s. Now it's a family game to spot slab-rock houses in previously unsuspected places.

Slab-rock dwellings and other rock-faced houses are a 20th-century variation on the older cobblestone house tradition. The technique may have been based also on the cement-and-gravel wall construction method promulgated in the late 19th century. Orson Squire Fowler's book *Home for*

Slab-rock houses, such as this Springfield, Missouri, home with interesting brick details, turned an agricultural bulletin technique into a folk craft.

All: The Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building pushed gravel wall construction in the 1850s, and Gustav Stickley's Craftsman publications gave it another shove in the early 20th century. Especially popular in rural areas, slab-rock construction got a boost from 1930s agricultural extension bulletins explaining the technique.

Despite its "pop" origins, slab-rock building was also a true folk craft passed on mouth-to-mouth and hand-to-hand, with local and personal adaptations. The flat, smooth slices of rock embedded in cement were an economical use of indigenous materials (mostly limestone, which split easily). Often the use of stone and concrete went beyond being an economical veneer and was structural as well. In some rock-faced houses, the walls are formed of a rather dry cement mixture combined with pebbles, then poured into wooden forms, with flat, smooth slices of rock embedded in cement on the exterior. In other examples, standard frame construction is covered with slices of rock. In Missouri, and probably elsewhere, this was sometimes used as a way of stabilizing and rebuilding existing frame houses that were the worse for wear, a process known as "rocking" the house.

What we like best about slab-rock construction, though, is its eye-popping combination of colors and shapes. The mortar joints were often formed by homemade tools, such as bent-and-cut pipe, in raised "rope" or "vine" profiles. These were then further emphasized with paint — say, an unmistakable stripe of red. (For an eye catcher, see the aptly titled "Ozark Giraffes," *Vernacular Houses*, Jan./Feb. 1990 OHJ.) ♦

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WE REALLY CAN'T LEAVE WITHOUT MENTIONING the houses we wish we could show you, if only we knew where to find them. Rumors of a post-World War II housing development built next to a small private airstrip (yes, on purpose!) intrigues us because it seems to illustrate so well the optimism of the era's building boom. Several years ago we heard of a 1940s novelty in the Washington, D.C., area called a Chevy house. The idea, we're told, was that when you bought one of the developer's little starter houses with an attached garage, you also became the owner of a brand new Chevrolet parked in the driveway. We'd like to see these houses that fill up the odd lots of our imaginary suburbs. Let us know if you run into any of them! 🏠

MASSEY/MAXWELL

James Massey and Shirley Maxwell, with OHJ since 1984, are best known for their hit series on old-house styles (1988 through 1992). You'll find their column "Reading the Old House" in every issue. We're honored to work with this team, whose careers have included education and project management. (Jim is former Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey and current President of the National Preservation Institute.) You can reach them on OHJ matters through the magazine, or professionally through Massey-Maxwell Associates, Box 263, Strasburg, VA 22657; (703) 465-4566.



TAKE IT OFF... HERE'S HOW

SUBSTITUTE SIDING



NO PROJECT SAYS restoration quite like peeling away the modern skins that cover many old houses. Re-

moving these later coverings (sometimes two and three layers thick!) to reveal dusty-but-lively original walls is the most dramatic of unmuddling activities. Siding removal had its first flush of popularity (and press) in the late 1970s and early 1980s; since then OHJ hasn't published much on the subject. It's still a common practice, however — one that has gotten more sophisticated. So to update anyone thinking about undoing the sagging facelift visited upon their old house, we've put together these factsheets with how-to tips and information you ought to know.



Look what was under the blankly homogenous second skin of this large Victorian house: clapboards, fancy-butt shingles, and carved eaves-brackets.

What is Substitute Siding?

TRADITIONAL SIDING MATERIALS such as clapboards, wood shingles, and stucco have been used to clad and reclad log, wood-frame, and even masonry buildings for generations. Yet completely redressing a house for purposes of low maintenance or a cosmetic upgrade did not really take off until a host of new man-made building materials appeared after 1900. Composition products made of asphalt-and-mineral, asbestos-cement, or compressed cellulose fiber had the advantages of factory uniformity and engineered longevity, as did the new breeds of sheet metal. Most were designed as roofing materials. When they were tried on side-

walls, some spawned a new siding industry.



BY KAREN FUHRMAN & GORDON BOCK

Many houses were built using these new materials as the intended siding material. In 1906, asbestos manufacturers marketed shingles and sheathing "for roofing and general construction." Sears, Roebuck and Co. offered "Oriental Slate Surfaced Siding" asphalt shingles on their mail-order houses. However, it is when these sidings are not original to the house (or close to original) that restorers are inclined to remove them. The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* advocates retaining the his-



*What's wrong with this picture?
Could it be the 20th-century siding
on the oldest house in Boston?
(Pierce House, c. 1650)*

toric materials in a building wherever possible, and if a feature must be replaced, "the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials." For this reason, resurfacing materials that differ significantly from the original siding are often called substitute siding.

How substitute sidings are used can also have an impact on the building. Installers may have cut back or removed details such as door trim or decorative brackets. In addition, these materials do age and suffer damage that requires maintenance or replacement. They may even camouflage more serious deterioration — all situations restorers are likely to face if they choose to remove substitute sidings.

REMOVING THE SIDING

STRIPPING THE APPLIED SKIN OFF a house is more than a weekend job, but it's often easier than the mammoth task it appears, especially if tackled one side at a time. Demolition is basically the reverse process of installation and requires much less finesse. Every job is different, but here are some

general points. Remove a small section of siding in an inconspicuous area first for clues about what's underneath. A sample, though, is no guarantee of what you will find across the house. Be prepared for multiple layers of materials, including furring strips, various papers, other types of non-original siding, and hundreds of nails. Close and seal all windows before beginning, and arm yourself with an assortment of demolition tools: pry bars, hammers, chisels, cat's paw, wonderbar, nippers, nailset, wheelbarrow, hardhat, goggles and heavy work gloves.

ASPHALT COMPOSITION SIDING is heavy, tears easily, and is put up with many nails. Removal is similar to stripping an asphalt-shingled roof — labor intensive but not complex.

- Cover the ground with heavy-duty tarps to protect bushes and lawns from falling debris.

- Remove the top course first to reveal the nails of the next level.

- Use a flat prybar (wonderbar) for minimum surface damage.

One 1929 siding method: asbestos-cement shingles are "Dutch Lapped" sideways, and fastened with nails and wire storm-anchors.

Slip the flat end under a shingle so the fulcrum straddles a nail, and push on the bar to pry the shingle. Pull remaining nails with the bar's teardrop-shaped hole.

- Experiment with various tools to develop a method. Roof tear-off shovels with toothed blades may be worthwhile for broad areas. Large wrecking bars can plow materials and pull nails.

- Consider the weather. Old siding may strip in bigger pieces on cool days.

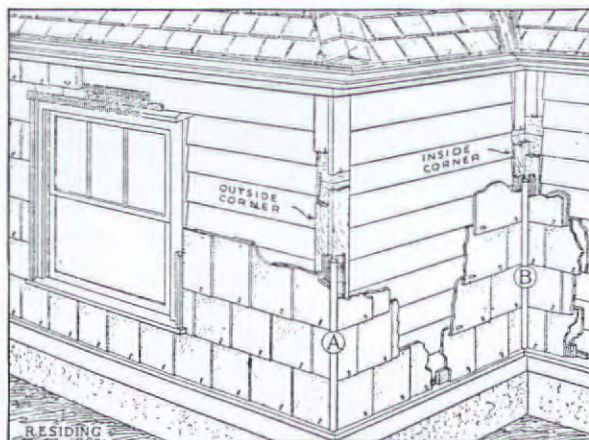
ASBESTOS-CEMENT SHINGLES are heavy and brittle, but can be removed as whole units. Most types are installed with loose-fitting nails at the butt edge that only grab that shingle. Once these nails are cut, shingles can be removed in successive courses, working from bottom to top.

- Soak shingles with a spray or mist of water before handling to reduce the chances of releasing asbestos fibers.

- Gently break the bottom course with light hammer blows. This creates an airspace under the next course.

- Then, push the shingles of the next row against the house to bare the nailheads, and snip the nails. This method causes less breakage than trying to pry up the shingles or nails. Each shingle should easily slide out in one piece.

TROWELLED COVERINGS applied directly to masonry may be difficult to remove. Materials troweled over lath are



Substitute Siding Specifically

A WIDE RANGE OF man-made claddings have been used by remodellers to cover original old-house exteriors. Most are composition products that imitate natural materials. Other obscure concoctions took a firm departure from tradition. For example, the "Merit Wall Method," a tar-and-stonechip spray process, gave the effect of a huge metallflake balloon stretched over a house. Regardless of the type, all substitute sidings were promoted for the same reasons — a quick upgrade followed by low maintenance. Here are a few of the most common:

◆ **PRESSED-METAL PANELS:** Advances in metallurgy and machinery in the 1880s spurred economical production of perhaps the earliest mass-produced substitute siding. Usually



"Rock Face Brick" steel siding, c.1910.

formed from steel, sheets were crimped or pressed to simulate brick, stone, clapboard, beaded board, or shingles, then galvanized or painted. They remained widely available until World War II.

◆ ASPHALT COMPOSITION SHINGLES:

The introduction of asphalt-based products for ready-to-roll roofing in the 1880s led to its use as siding. Basic rolls and shingles were essentially heavy felt saturated with bituminous compounds, then coated with crushed stone for increased durability. Hexagons, diamonds, and interlocking shapes were designed for wind resistance or easy installation; other types came in sheets. Pigmented granules were perfected for shingles in 1906, making possible the colors and patterns that resemble masonry.



Asbestos-cement "Thatch Butt" shingles.

◆ ASBESTOS-CEMENT SHINGLES:

Another siding that evolved from roofing technology, these shingles were first available soon after 1900. Formed under pressure, the dense, rigid, fire- and weather-resistant shingles are composed of asbestos fibers bonded with portland cement. A variety of shapes were popular until the 1970s, with smooth or grain-textured surfaces, factory-applied colors, and pre-drilled holes for face-nailing. A

clapboard style was offered briefly in the mid-1940s.

◆ TROWELED COVERINGS:

Veneers of stucco, or cementitious stucco-like materials, have often been applied to both masonry and wood-frame buildings to cover poorly-maintained brickwork, or for a remodeling facelift. A multitude of mid-20th-century products (including Baltimore's famous Formstone), were trowelled over metal lath, or directly onto original siding. In convincing imitations of true masonry, topcoats were colored and tooled to look like brick or stone.

◆ ALUMINUM SIDING:

Developed after World War II and popular through the 1950s and '60s, aluminum siding installation peaked in the '70s. These lightweight interlocking metal panels usually resemble smooth or textured wood

clapboards. Factory-finished in pastel colors, aluminum detail pieces also cover soffits, corners, vents, and window and door trim.

◆ VINYL SIDING:

Introduced in 1963, vinyl currently accounts for almost one-third of the total siding market. The interlocking panels are made from white or colored polyvinyl chloride (PVC), and are immune to rust or mildew. Varieties now include a narrow-width clapboard look-alike.

This row of houses in Alexandria, Virginia, shows off a collection of substitute siding materials. In the foreground, stucco-like Permatone has been slathered on and tooled, while Bricktex, an asphalt product, fronts the second house from the left.





Furring strips are commonly used to level a wall under aluminum siding.

easiest. Large mesh sizes mean more material stuck to the siding underneath.

- Work off a scaffold; stand above and away from heavy, falling debris.
- Start at the top of the wall; break through with a hammer and chisel, or start where it's already pulling away.
- Force a crowbar behind the mesh, work it in, and pull straight back to loosen.
- Pull by hand on loosened siding, to avoid hammering or prying damage to the original surface.
- Peel loosened sections back away from the wall and cut the exposed lath.
- Protect brick edges. Use a block of wood under a pry bar and pull nails in a direction parallel to the mortar joint.

ALUMINUM AND VINYL SIDING are both installed in interlocking panels or strips from the bottom up, and are re-

moved easiest in the reverse order.

- A "zip tool" is handy for unlocking vinyl. This flat, hand-sized prybar with a hooked end is available from siding dealers and large discount hardware stores. Slip it into a horizontal seam, push it up behind the panel, and grab the bottom

of the panel above. Slide and pull down on the zip tool to unlock the two panels.

- Remove the first panel at the top to reveal the nailing edge of the panel below and pull nails with care.
- Older vinyl siding tends to be stiffer and may require extra effort.

PREPARING THE BUILDING

THE CONDITION OF THE ORIGINAL siding and structural members is impossible to predict until the house is uncovered. Potential repairs include: a) neglected maintenance problems that initiated the residing in the first place b) installation damage, and c) interim deterioration. This phase of the project is often the most difficult and labor-intensive. However, some stripped houses reveal well-preserved walls that require only minor repairs, plenty of putty, and a thorough preparation and paint job.

- Check for moisture damage and determine its causes.
- Repair gutter, soffit, and roof leaks.
- Examine sills and other support systems. Severe problems may require recommendations from a structural engineer.
- Replace rotted or severely damaged siding with matching material.
- Replace badly spalled masonry units.

Perhaps limit replacement to high visibility areas near doors and windows.

- Replace original trim that was removed to accommodate substitute siding; remove extra moulding from casings that were built out.
- Restore window and door openings to their correct size if they were reduced. Carefully chip out any cinder block, cement, or gravel and mortar used as filler.
- Fill nail holes soon after the siding is stripped to keep moisture out. Paintable caulks or glazing compounds work well for small holes; for larger holes, epoxy-based wood fillers have shown good outdoor performance.
- Repoint damaged mortar joints and small nail holes in brick or block masonry units using matching mortar.
- Kill mildew with diluted bleach.
- Scrub grime and dirt off with a solution of detergent or TSP.



Stripping the wide, monotone, asbestos-cement shingles from this 1886 Queen Anne in Wheaton, Illinois, revealed little moisture damage but plenty of nailholes. Repairs included replacing missing trim boards, and cracked shingles and clapboards. Well-protected by new paint, the house will soon receive a plaque from the city historical society.

DISPOSING OF DEBRIS

DISPOSING OF DEMOLITION DEBRIS used to be relatively simple: haul it to the dump. However, shrinking landfill space and environmental concerns have made disposal more difficult and more expensive, especially in urban areas on the West Coast and in the Northeast. Landfills and incinerators often put large-volume building debris in special waste and price categories — if they accept it at all. In some cases, disposal accounts for as much as one-third of demolition costs, but varies greatly, depending on the type of siding and geographic location.

1) **INVESTIGATE DISPOSAL RESTRICTIONS** and options *before* stripping your house. Check with your building inspector for solid waste restrictions and necessary demolition permits. Your state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) can also supply disposal and recycling information. Specify the material when asking for guidelines. Regulations may be different at federal, state, and local levels, but the strictest will apply.

2) **CHOOSE A METHOD.** If you hire a contractor to remove the siding, disposal is usually included in the price, but he or she will probably have to meet stricter requirements. If you do the work yourself, consider hiring a reputable waste disposal company to take care of the debris. Costs to haul (pick-up and transport) and tip (drop the load at a destination) are by volume or by weight.

3) **BE SURE THAT ASBESTOS-CONTAINING MATERIALS (ACMS)** are disposed of properly. The EPA currently has no regu-

lations for disposal of non-friable asbestos (such as asbestos-cement), and it is generally not classified as hazardous waste. Still, all ACMS pose special problems and the greatest disposal expense.

- Homeowners remain legally responsible for disposal even when contractors remove the siding. Obtain proper paperwork for liability protection.

- In many states, contractors and haulers must be licensed to handle friable ACMS, and landfills must be EPA-approved to accept them.

- Because non-friable ACMS may become friable, many companies treat all ACMS the same, and follow friable asbestos regulations even when handling non-friable material. ACMS must be double-bagged in 6-mil polyethylene (available from safety-equipment suppliers) and properly labeled. Asbestos haulers often fulfill this requirement by employing a special bag-like lining in their containers. ACMS are

then delivered to the landfill in a large, single package.

4) **DETERMINE IF** your siding can be reclaimed. All types of cladding (except ACMS and lead contaminated materials) are potentially reusable. But, fluctuating markets and a lack of profitable technology currently keep most materials out of a recycling loop. However, construction and demolition debris disposal is gaining national attention. (In the U.S., it comprises 20%-30% of solid waste.) More disposal regulations are on the horizon, and more recycling systems may follow. By con-

tacting scrap dealers and reprocessing centers in your area, you may find:

- Vinyl siding is not often recycled



Three layers of material are peeled back to expose a hole that used to be the corner post.

A leaking gutter channelled water behind the siding, and the structural member rotted away.

About Asbestos

ASBESTOS-CEMENT MATERIAL is the most intimidating siding to remove because of health risks. Single-family residence homeowners can legally remove asbestos-cement siding themselves, but proper safety precautions and careful handling are extremely important — a sloppy removal job will spread the microscopic fibers. Contractors should be trained and licensed for asbestos removal, and comply with OSHA requirements.

Asbestos-containing materials (ACMS) that easily crumble or crush into powder are classified as friable and readily release asbestos fibers. Asbestos-cement shingles are non-friable, and considered safe unless disturbed because the asbestos is contained in the shingle binder. However, the EPA finds no "safe level" of asbestos fibers, and considers all ACMS potentially hazardous.

When working with any form of asbestos, always use the correct respirator with HEPA filters, not a simple dust mask. Shower immediately after finishing work. Dispose of clothing or wash separately. For more information, consult your EPA Regional Asbestos Coordinator.

because of its weathered condition and low market value.

- Asphalt shingle recycling is successful in the New Jersey area, and is slowly expanding in the United States and Canada.

- Aluminum is the most profitable scrap siding, although paint or backing material contaminate it slightly and may lower its value. At the very least it can be taken away free of charge.

Restorer's

N O T E B O O K

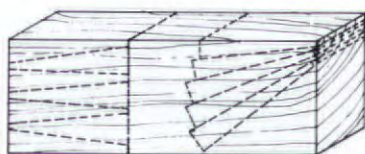
Stop-gap Pipe Repair

I HAVE ANOTHER PLUMBING REPAIR tip to add to Gordon Bock's article, "Stopping Spring Leaks" [July/August 1993 OHJ].

I found cold weather had split several copper pipes, but I was caught without a blowtorch. For a temporary solution, I cut pieces from a rubber floor mat and used them like a compress on each leak. Screw-type automotive hose

clamps did the trick of securing these gaskets until I could get the proper tools and parts for repairs.

— CHRIS DRESSLE
Durham, North Carolina



Properly cut wedges maximize long grain strength, while wedges cut across the grain will split when hammered.

Worthy Wedges

SCRAP CEDAR SHINGLES MAKE great light-duty shims. But for many carpentry projects, such as building staircases and cabinets, or for setting up shoring, durable hardwood wedges work best. It's easy to make your own split-resistant wedges.

Cut the taper with the grain, and cut with an alternating pattern for uniform size and minimal waste.

— THOMAS HACKER
Topeka, Kansas

Window Cleaning Contract

HERE'S A TIP WHEN HAVING THE outside of your house painted:

ask for a bid on washing the windows, too. Most painters can schedule it in for a reasonable price. Discuss it before the job starts to make sure that all old and new paint splatters, dust, dirt and grime will be removed. Painters can make quick work of window cleaning because they've already figured out how to rig the hard-to-get-to areas, and the storm windows and screens are already off. This final touch benefits both parties — sparkling windows make a great paint job look even better.

— MINNIE EBLING
Louisville, Kentucky



Pipe insulation fitted over a ladder rung provides a protective cushion for shins or thighs.

glacial acetic acid for processing photographic prints. I diluted this in the ratio of four parts water to one part acid in a plant misting spray bottle that has the fluid ounce markings on the side. Soaking the surface repeatedly so that it remains wet for an hour or so does the trick. The fumes from acetic acid are also very potent, though they do not affect metals like muriatic acid.

Excellent ventilation is still mandatory.

— TABB SCHREDER
Toledo, Ohio

Shin Saver

I WAS TIRED OF GETTING those sore spots on my shins and thighs every time I got up on the extension ladder for any length of time. So, I took a piece of $\frac{3}{4}$ " plastic pipe insulation and cut a piece to match the

width of the rungs on my ladder. What a difference having the give of the insulation and the larger radius to lean against. Depending on the size of the rungs, either $\frac{3}{4}$ " or 1" will work. The natural clamping action of the insulation means it does not have to be fastened and can be moved easily from one rung to another.

— JIM DIMITRIOUS
Belvidere, Illinois

Neutralizing Caustic Strippers

WHEN I USED A CAUSTIC-BASED stripper to remove paint from poplar, a relatively soft hardwood, the chemical had lots of time to penetrate the wood. It quickly became apparent that neutralizing with vinegar was totally inadequate. Muriatic acid can also be used as a neutralizing agent. However, it can cause severe skin burns, and it is a strong oxidizing agent.

A trip to the local photographic supply store revealed that they sell

SHARE YOUR SOLUTIONS!

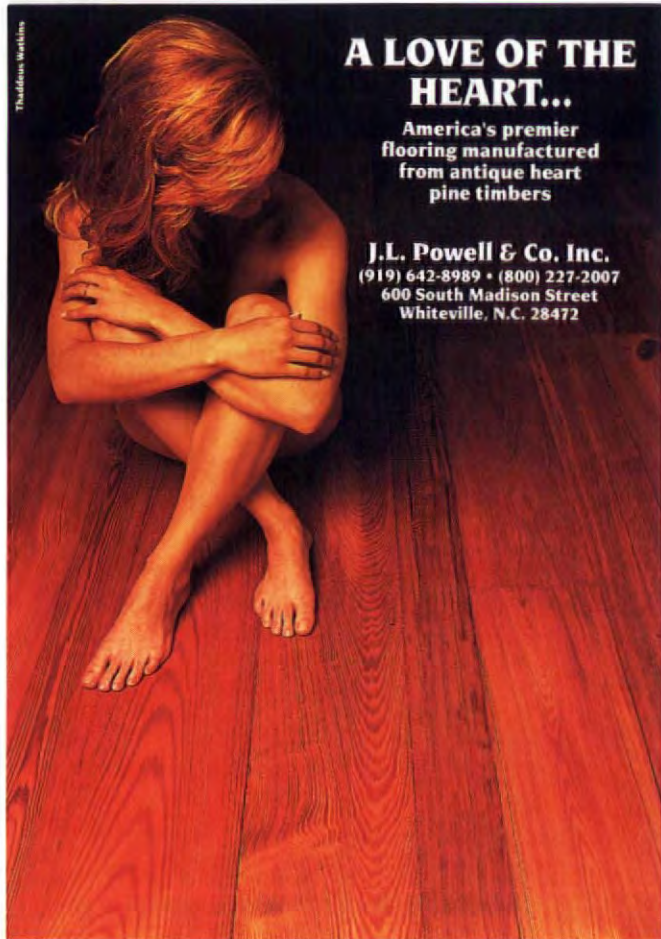
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Restoration Products

POST-VICTORIAN PIECES

by Lynn Elliott

Desirable Doors

TAKING A CUE FROM THE Craftsman and Mission-style houses of California, Simpson Door Company has two new doors in its Catalina Series that are appropriate for post-Victorian exteriors. Made of Douglas fir or Western hemlock, the doors have vertical lights of beveled glass divided by wide muntins of wood. The French-door-style Catalina I features four lights of glass above and below the lock rail. The Catalina II replaces the bottom lights with raised wood panels. Matching sidelights and insulating glass are available in both styles. The Catalina doors come in heights of 6'8" and 7', and widths ranging from 2'6" to 3'6". For information, contact Simpson Door Company, P.O. Box 210, 400 Simpson Ave. McCleary, WA 98557; (206) 495-3291.



Vertical beveled-glass lights are a classic post-Victorian door detail and featured on the Catalina Series doors.

stract, geometric designs would compliment any Arts & Crafts interior. Each stencil is laser cut from 5-mil mylar and is marked with registration holes for easy alignment. Most patterns consist of a single stencil plate, but some of the more complex designs have two or three overlays. Application instructions are included with each stencil. Custom stencils and hand-painted scenes and wall decorations are also available. The stencils range in price from \$12 to \$68. For information, contact Helen Foster Stencils, 20 Chestnut St., Tilton, NH 03276; (603) 286-7214.



The Rose Frieze from Helen Foster draws on stylized nature, a favorite Arts & Crafts stencil motif.

Border Lines

WONDERING WHAT TO DO WITH your walls? Helen Foster Stencils offers a line of Craftsman and Prairie-style stencil designs that would turn Harvey Ellis's head. The friezes, borders, and medallions in two-dimensional, natural motifs and ab-

hand-wedged together using pre-Civil War woodworking and chairmaking skills, and the seats and backs are hand-woven in cane. The 48½" high "Big Billy" rocker has Mission Oak styling with wide armrests and cantilevered rockers. It comes in a Natural Oak, Golden Oak, or Provincial Oak finish.

The Rocker Shop also offers their Melson Classic rocker with turned posts as well as a collection of swings, footstools, and children's rockers.

The shop uses an assortment of antique woodworking and steam-bending equipment that took five years to assemble, and was formed in 1966 by the Melson family. Less than 700 rocking chairs are produced per year, and it takes six weeks to make each rocker. The "Big Billy" rocker costs \$450. For information, contact The Rocker Shop of Marietta, Georgia, 1421 White Circle, NW, P.O. Box 12, Marietta, GA 30061; (800) 531-3635 or (404) 427-2618.

The oversized framework and double-woven seat of the "Big Billy" rocker.



Rockers of Ages

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The Duke Mansion in Charlotte, NC, recently had its 53 rooms redecorated by members of the American Society of Interior Designers including Carol Hutchison shown here.



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Hooked on Rugs

YOU'LL WANT TO TREAD LIGHTLY on the beautiful handmade rugs from Waterfield Studio. The collection includes a diverse number of oval, round, and runner rugs, such as the American Gameboard rug, shown below, which is based on a 19th-century gameboard motif. Other designs, like the Topiary Garden, Morn-



Based on the 19th-century "Checkered Game of Life," the vibrantly colored American Gameboard rug is hand-hooked in wool.

ing Glory Runner, and Victorian Notecard, would enhance any traditional interior. From soft pastels to rich hues, the designs can be recolored or enlarged to meet custom specifications, and certain rugs can be personalized with names or dates. Made from 100% virgin wool, all rugs have a latex backing. They range in size from 2' x 3' to 4' x 6' and in price from \$255 to \$810. For information, contact Waterfield Studio, 8 Winchester Pl., Winchester, MA 01890; (617) 729-6909.

A custom-woven carpet in William Morris's "Poppy" design graces the Lyman Estate.

A Plethora of Patterns

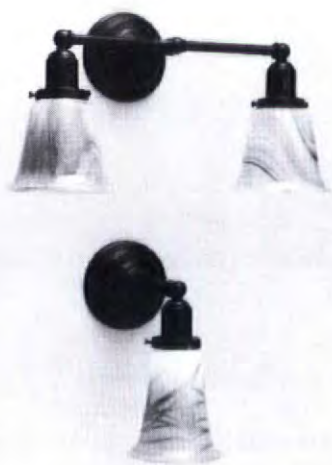
FOR AUTHENTIC CARPET PATTERNS, look no further than J. R. Burrows & Company. With access to the largest collection of 19th-century patterns in North America, Burrows offers English Wilton and Brussels carpets in designs from the 1790s to the 1920s as well as English Axminster carpets in designs by William Morris. All of the custom-woven carpets are exact reproductions using the archives of the Woodward Grosvenor Mill in England. One of the original makers of Morris carpets, the mill has over 10,000 documented patterns. Nottingham lace curtains and hand-printed wallpapers in English Aesthetic and Queen Anne Revival designs are also available. For information, contact J. R. Burrows & Company, 393 Union St., P. O. Box 522, Rockland, MA 02370; (617) 982-1812.



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Note the rich and varied tones of this ¾" thick, heart pine flooring.



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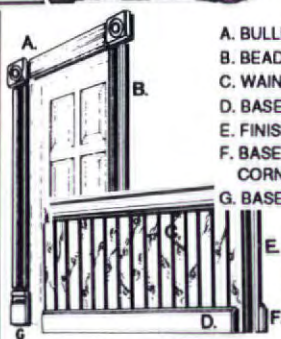
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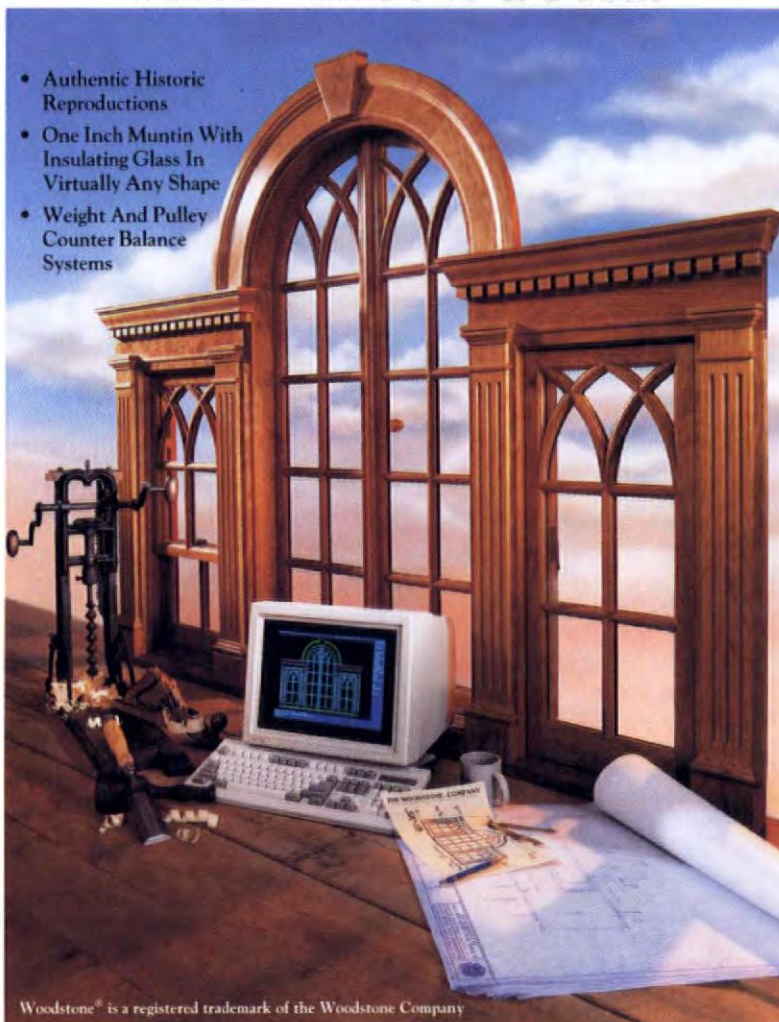
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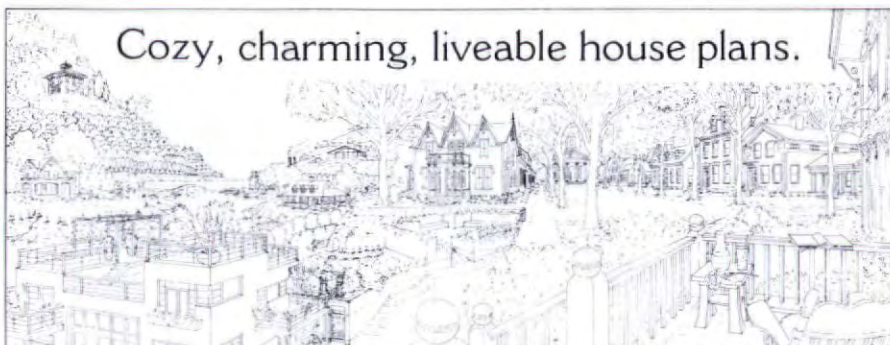
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The Homestead Partners

Historic House Plans

Mail-order plans have a long history in shaping the residential architecture of the country. Of the thousands of house plans available today, few exhibit good design and a grasp of historical proportion and detail. So, in response to requests from OHJ readers, the editors have "done the homework": We've hand-picked plans. In each issue, we offer the most attractive, authentic, and buildable of the historical designs, from all periods of American architectural history. Let us know what plans you're looking for.

You can order actual blueprints for all the houses featured. 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.

Why order multiple sets? If you're serious about building, you'll need a set

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

Other notes: (1) Plans are copyrighted, and they are printed for you when you order. Therefore, they are not refundable. If you order additional sets of the same plan within 30 days of your original order, you can purchase them for \$15

each. (2) Mirror-reverse plans are useful when the house would fit the site better "floppe." 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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Plan: HH-05-PV

Cost: \$200; \$260 (set of 3); \$300 (set of 8)

Square Footage: 1,876'

First Floor: 956' (plus 310' porch)

Second Floor: 920'

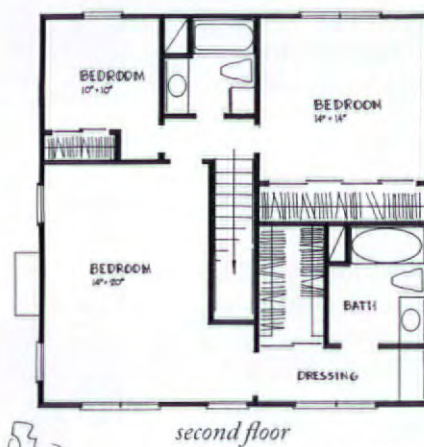
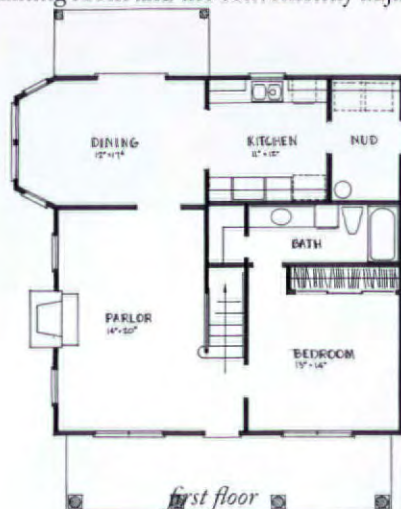
Ceiling Height:

9' (first floor); 8' (second floor)

Overall Dimensions:

Width: 30' 4"

Depth: 30' 4"



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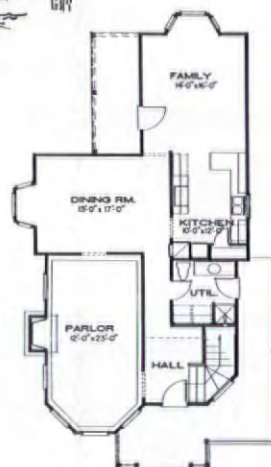
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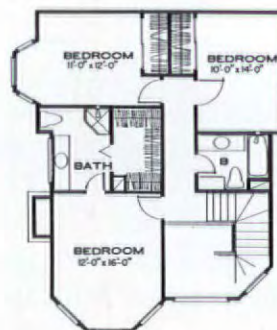
Cameo-Window Queen Anne



THE CAMEO WINDOW, A CROSS-OVER DETAIL FOUND ON both Queen Anne and Colonial Revival houses, is the focal point of this two-storey Victorian. Other details, such as the gable ornaments and the wrap-around porch with gingerbread, add to the house's appeal. Downstairs, the kitchen, which was planned with efficiency in mind, services both the formal dining room and the family room. The upstairs bedrooms, two of which have bay windows, are generously sized and have ample closet space.



first floor



second floor

Plan: HH-06-VI

Cost: \$230; \$290 (set of 5); \$330 (set of 8)

Square Footage: 2,251'

First Floor: 1,093' (plus 310' porch)

Second Floor: 839'

Ceiling Height: 9' (first floor); 9' (second floor)

Overall Dimensions:


Width: 26' 4"

Depth: 51' 4"

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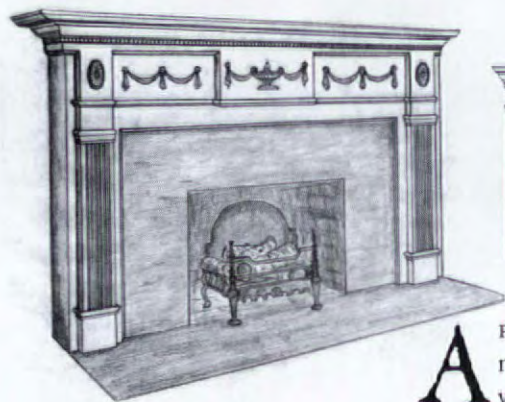
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Georgian-Style Mantel



Plan: HB-01-AD

Cost: \$50

Shipping: \$3.50

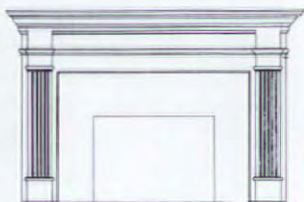
Overall Dimensions:

Height: 40"-48"

Width: 60"-65"

Depth: 3-1/2"

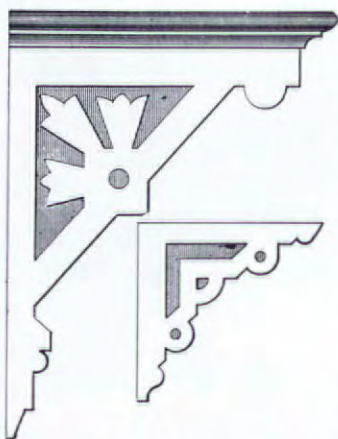
Fireplace Opening: 24" x 36"



A PROJECT FOR THE INTERMEDIATE-level woodworker, this Georgian-style mantel with Adamesque ornamentation would complement the interior of any 18th-century or Colonial Revival house. The pattern can be made in three different styles (shown above), allowing the mantel to be tailored to suit the room

decor. The plans detail the stages of construction, the sequence of moulding applications, and, in critical areas, full-scale moulding layouts. Mantel plans are easily rescaled so that they can be adapted to any fireplace opening or code requirements. A suppliers list for materials, such as moulding, carving, and appliques, is also included.

Porch Piercework



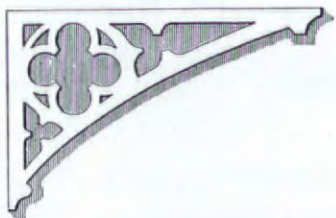
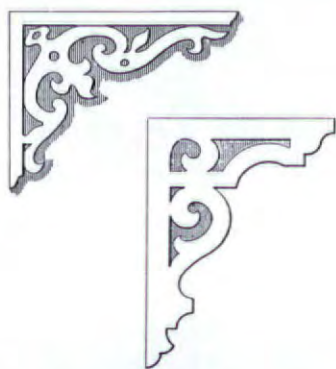
Plan: DT-01-AD

Cost: \$17.50

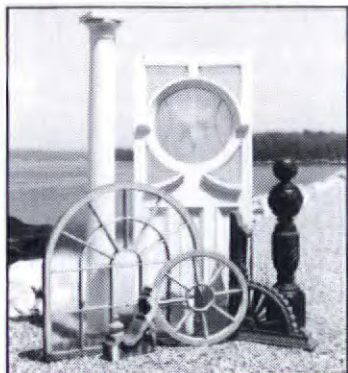
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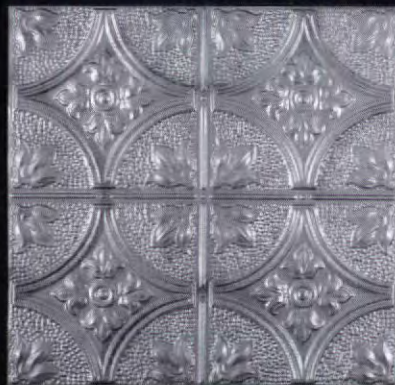
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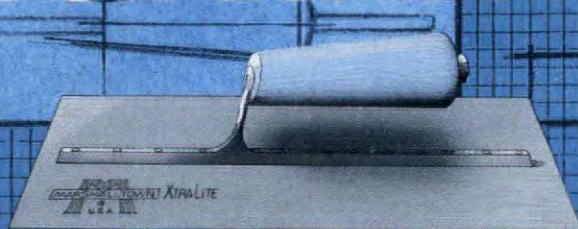
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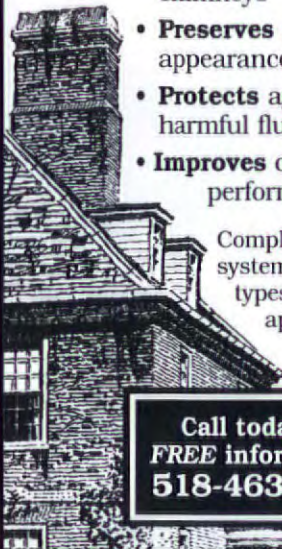
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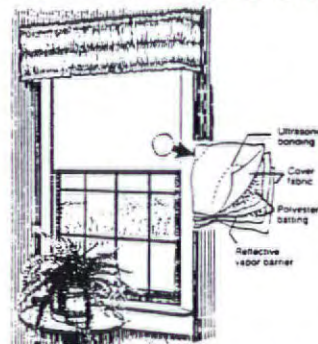
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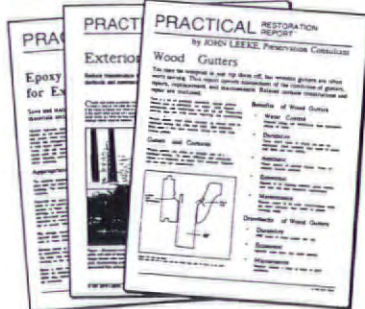
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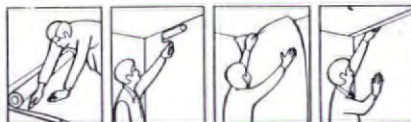
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GOLD COAST TOUR — September 12 in Davenport, IA. Established in 1836, the Gold Coast tour includes Victorian, Craftsman, and Shotgun houses. Call (309) 794-7263.

SEARSPORT B&B TOUR — September 12 in Searsport, ME. Tour of area historic B&B Inns with concert following at Penobscot Marine Museum. For tickets, call Ann Moffitt at (207) 548-2529.

ELGIN HISTORIC HOUSEWALK TOUR — September 13 in Elgin, IL. Features homes set on the tree-lined streets of Elgin's historic neighborhoods. Call (708) 742-3750.

OLD WASHINGTON ST. FESTIVAL — September 18 & 19 in Muncie, IN. Walk the streets or ride horse drawn carriages through Muncie's historic district. Tour Victorian era homes and enjoy music. Write Muncie's Visitor's Bureau for details.

LECTURE ON VICTORIAN GARDENS — September 20 in Montclair, NJ. At 8 pm, Ellen McClland, Historical Horticulturalist, will speak on "Victorian Gardens." Call (201) 743-9627.

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HYDE PARK FESTIVAL & TOUR — September 25 & 26 in Kansas City, MO. The city's largest historic district, along the Santa Fe Trail, will host a street fair and historic house tour. Call (816) 561-HPNA.

MORRISTOWN HOUSE TOUR — September 26 in Morristown, NJ. A walking tour of Victorian homes. Tickets will include an "English Tea Party." Proceeds for the historic Colles Mansion. Call (201) 538-1206.

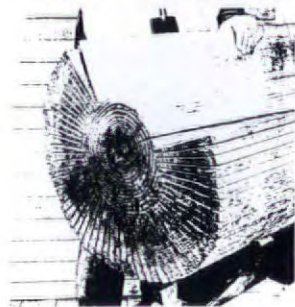
SHADYSIDE HOUSE TOUR — October 3 in Pittsburgh, PA. Self-guided walking tour visits 8 elegant private homes in eclectic Victorian neighborhood. Call (412) 361-3771.

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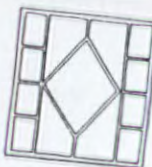
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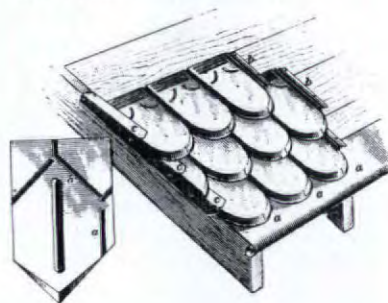
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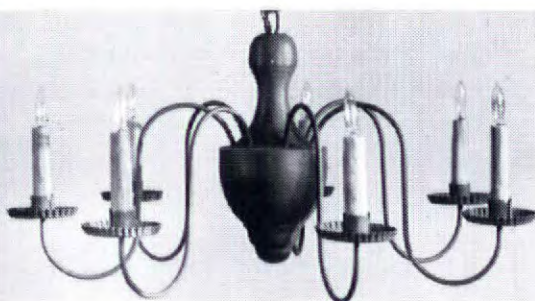
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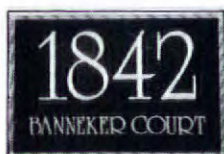
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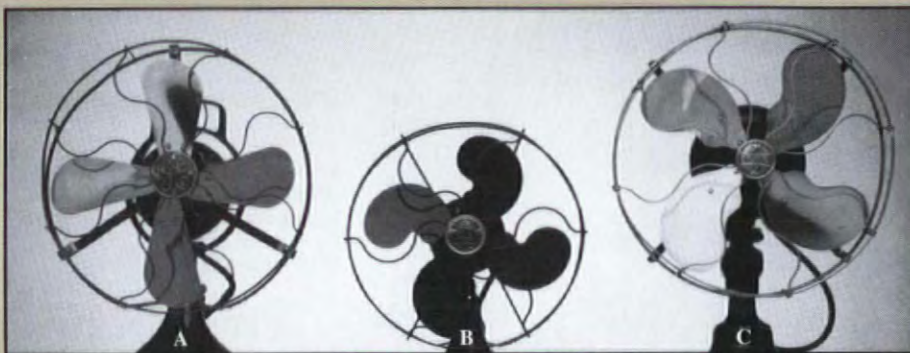


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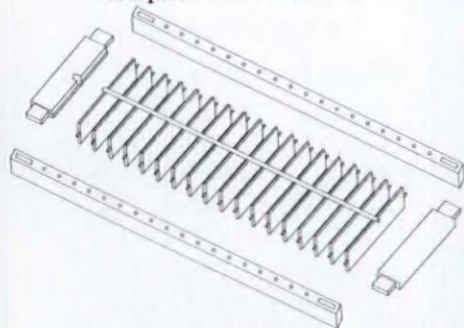
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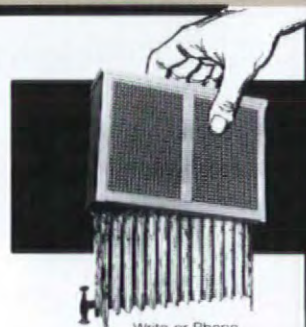
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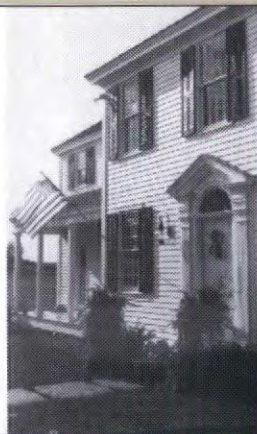
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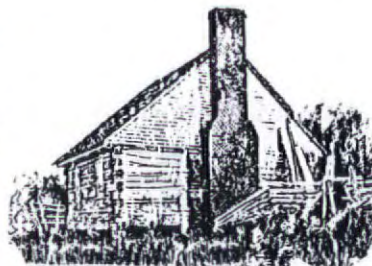
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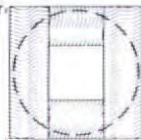
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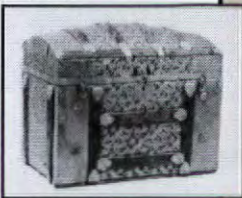
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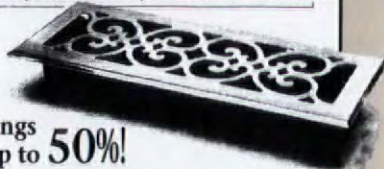
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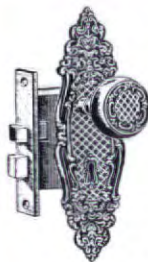


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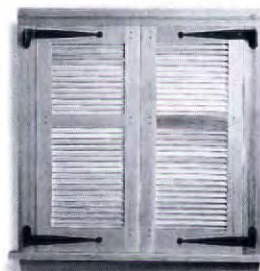


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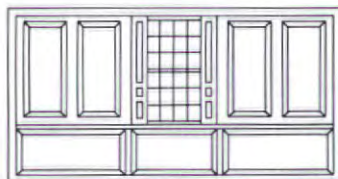
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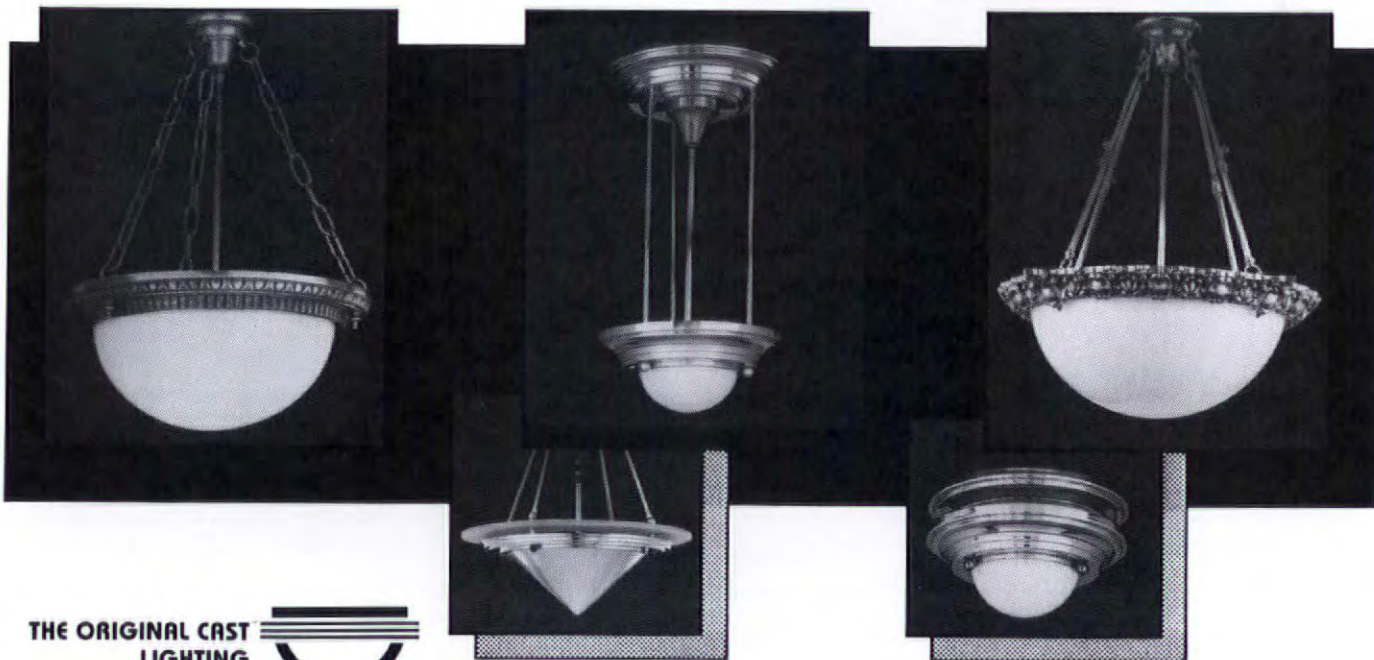
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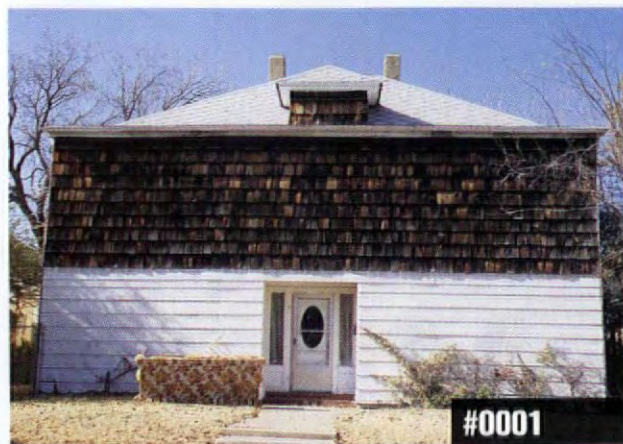
October, 1981

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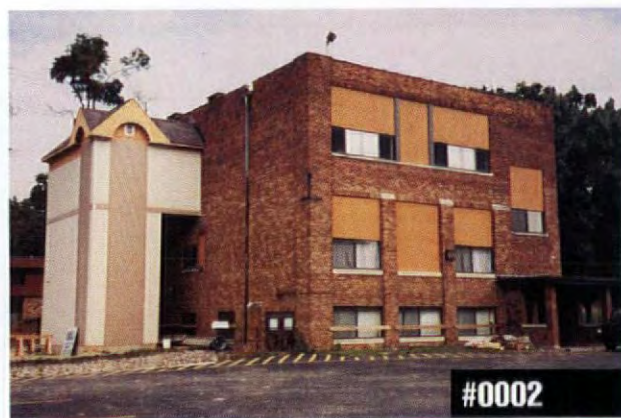
— UPDATE —

September, 1993

Each Remuddling perpetrator has a different MO, but six common repeat offenders are in the lineup below. Have you witnessed one of these cases in your neighborhood? If so, you could get a \$50 reward. Snap some color shots and contact the Remuddling Editor at 2 Main St., Gloucester, Mass. 01930.



0 0 0 1 Mega-Buck Monopoly — After being conned by product ads with dubious themes, owners gamble that they'll never paint clapboards again. Unfortunately, there are very few winners in this high-stakes game of product poker. Here a Foursquare bets on an aluminum siding-wood shingle combination — and loses.



0 0 0 2 Callous Conversion — Harv Whitman II submitted this Remuddling with the comment, "A beautiful old school is now an incredible example of do-it-as-cheap-as-you-can." Indeed, in this kind of building-shell game, whole windows disappear under nut-colored coverings, and walls switch quickly from brick to flakeboard and siding. Obviously, while they were looking after the children, no one was minding the building.

d l i n g

#0003 Modernist Mania — Instead of using cement galoshes, these days development dons are making old buildings “disappear” by smothering them in paint and substitute materials until they look new. At a recent stakeout, a metal panel roof and wall mural duo were caught red-handed holding hostage a 19th-century row house with a mansard roof.



#0003

#0004 Asinine Additions (a.k.a. “appendage-itis”) — “Failure to exercise sound judgement” — the dictionary definition of *asinine* — is a very public enemy when it leads to breaking stylistic rules on large buildings. Who would believe the masterminds of this expansion had the original architecture covered?



#0004



#0005

#0005 Creative Chaos

— This house laundering racket results in countless facade forgeries. For example, you don’t have to examine this counterfeit Tudor too closely to realize that it is actually a half-timbered and stuccoed Queen Anne being palmed off as a Post-Victorian. Although a neighboring building isn’t in mint condition, it’s the real thing.



#0006 Technological Trashing — When satellite dishes overpower old-house roofs or solar panels tie up whole walls, architecture is getting mugged by applied science.

In this case, an unsuspecting Foursquare is jumped by a solid-glass curtain wall and robbed of its entire original facade.



#0006

Our thanks to the members of the Remuddling Neighborhood Watch Program: Michael S. McDermott, Harv Whitman II, Calvin Guthrie, Larry Mallow, Tomi Fay Forbes, and Lauri Hilgemann.

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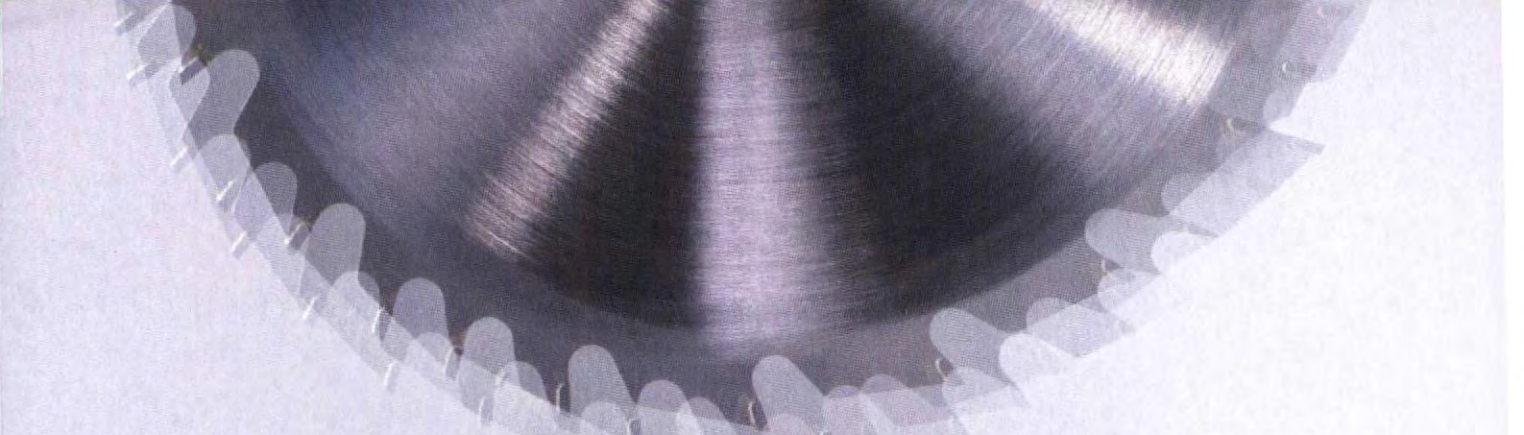
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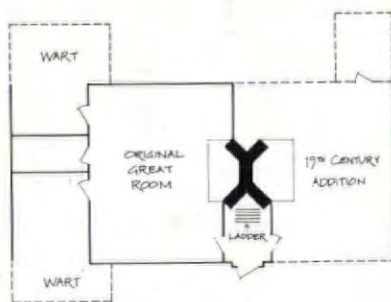
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Warts, such as the two additions on this Whale House, created extra living space in these compact cottages.

WHALE HOUSES OF NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS

THE VILLAGE OF SIASCONSET (called 'Sconset) on the island of Nantucket owes its picturesque charm to the rose-covered cottages known as Whale Houses. Built between 1675 and 1846, these 1½-storey houses were originally temporary shelters for the six-man crews of whaling boats. Clustered close to the shore for siting migrating whales, they are often only 10' to 20' apart.

Whale Houses were built with post-and-beam construction and had low ridgepoles — in some cases only 13½' from the ground. Exteriors and roofs were clad with horizontal shiplap siding, which was later replaced with wood shingles. The doors were usually two



boards fastened with a cross batten, and only shutters protected the window openings from the severe northeast weather.

The first Whale Houses were simple one-room shacks, but over time the men stayed longer and the typical house became one "great room" with a dirt floor and a chim-

A floor plan of "Auld Lang Syne": After the construction of the 19th-century addition, the loft ladder was moved from the great room to alongside the fireplace.

ney, two small sleeping quarters, and a partial loft, accessible only by a steep ladder. When the whalers' wives began to accompany their husbands, more room was needed. Additions, called *warts*, were constructed by extending the gabled roof to 4' off the ground.

Used mostly during the summer months, approximately 40 Whale Houses still exist, including four from the 17th century. Together they form the core of 'Sconset's Historic District.

— GAYLE KIELY
Arlington, Mass.