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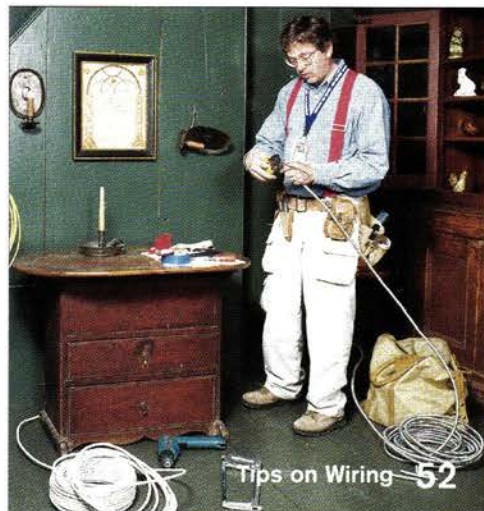
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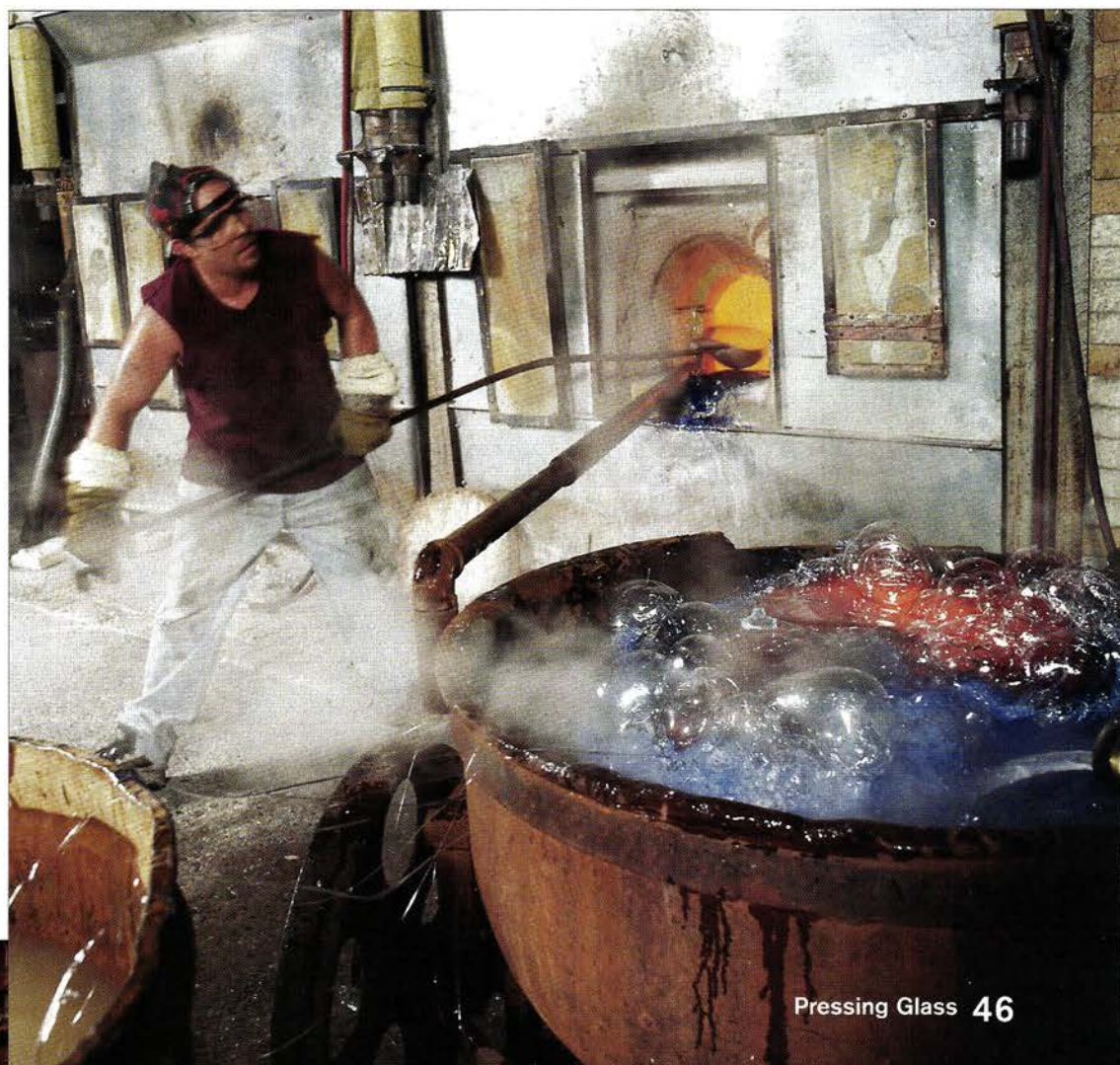


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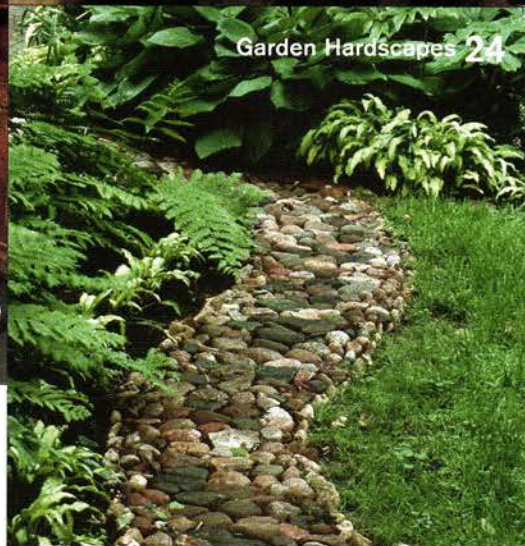
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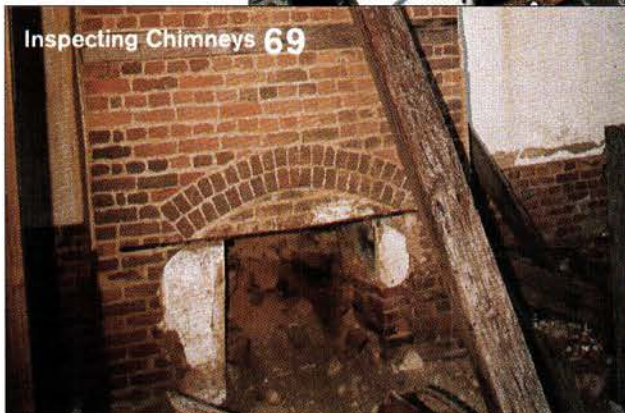
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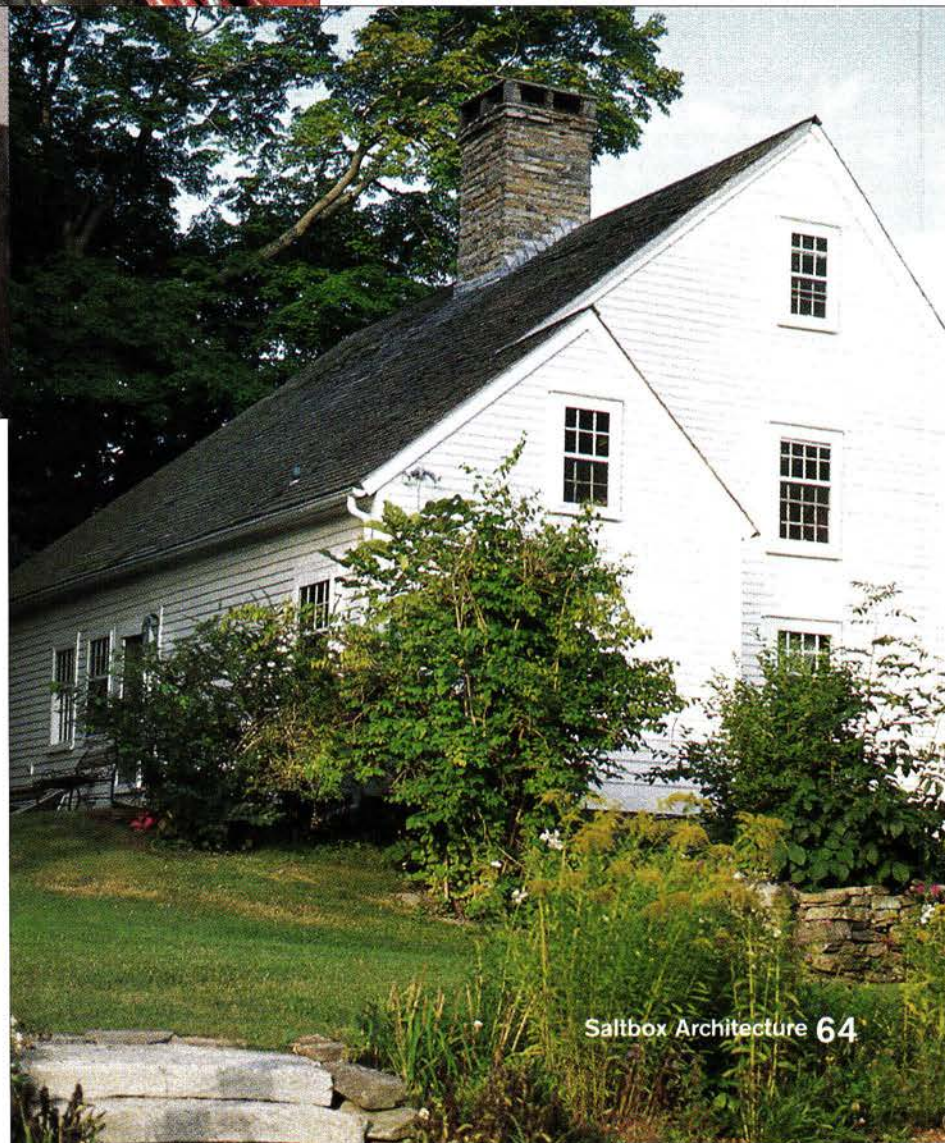
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Calling All Spirited Tales

One of the notions that folks in the restoration movement take to heart is that we are all merely caretakers of our old houses, tenants if you will, who someday will turn the responsibility over to new residents. Another belief held by more than a few old-house owners is that they are not the only current residents of their old house. For nearly 30 years, *Old-House Journal* editors have received regular letters from readers describing subtle but striking hints of kindred spirits sharing their old house. With an eye towards collecting some of these tales for a future issue, we'd like to hear more.

The idea is something of a tradition at OHJ. Long-time readers will remember that back in the 1980s we twice ran calls for ghost stories that ultimately became special editions of the "Old-House Living" feature in the 1983 and 1988 anniversary issues. The response was tremendous and the stories themselves often fascinating. We received scores of letters from all over North America, and one of the most revealing aspects was how different they were from the standard, often sensational accounts of the supernatural or paranormal. Yes, there were the occasional reports of hard-to-define "cold spots" or an inexplicable "presence," but none of the flying objects or ethereal ladies walking through walls that Hollywood has conditioned us to expect.

Instead, many letters described events and phenomena that, at first blush, do not

sound extraordinary at all: doors that suddenly resist opening; a small child greeting an invisible pet or person; tools or toys inexplicably appearing in odd places; the brief scent of heavy perfume. What made many writers take notice, however, was when these episodes repeated themselves, or they learned they might be linked to earlier events in the house. True to form, there was an unquestionable curiosity, sincerity, and ring of truth to each of these anecdotes. As Dr. Karlis Osis noted in the 1988 issue, OHJ readers are "a particular kind of people, who love the past; [they] seem to take it in stride."

Most interesting, though, was how so many letters fell into patterns or groups of similar events. These patterns or common experiences are what we tried to highlight in previous ghost-story issues with representative letters, and what we propose to do again in a future issue. If you have a spirited tale about living in an old house that you'd like to share, send your letter to: Ghost Stories, *Old-House Journal*, 1000 Potomac St. NW, Suite 102, Washington, DC 20007.

While the editors cannot return letters or guarantee their use, we will do our best to acknowledge all submissions. Till then, happy writing and we look forward to hearing from you.

James Noel Smith



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 **MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC**



ON THE LEVEL

The treatise on the American Foursquare [September/October] was a fitting complement to the preceding studies on architectural forms. May I be permitted to suggest an omission in this excellent presentation? Namely, the side, grade-level entrance that was under the landing of the stairs to the second floor. This undramatic design offered access to the kitchen and cellar by a few steps up or down from a small landing inside the grade-level door. The grade-level entrance was almost universal. I say "almost" because I lived in a Foursquare without such a feature.

RICHARD P. REECE
BERLIN HEIGHTS, OHIO

FARMERS' FOURSQUARE

Thank you for your article on the American Foursquare. I have been searching for information about this residential style to no avail. I live in a "cornbelt cube" built



in 1932 by a rural farm family to replace a home destroyed by fire, and want to redo the kitchen and bath, updated in the 1950s, to a style more appropriate to the 1930s. Can you provide references about interior and exterior appointments common to the Foursquare?

SHELLY J. YOUNG
FARINA, ILLINOIS

We had a lot of positive response to the Foursquare article. Unfortunately, we don't know of any books devoted solely to this style, although you can find sections on Foursquares in more general American architecture references. (See the next letter.) As our article emphasized, the Foursquare had a dizzying array of regional variations. For clues to your interior, look to other Illinois farmhouses of the 1930s. They would have been simple and solid, perhaps with a touch of the Prairie feel seen in the illustration on page 67 of that issue.

BY ANY OTHER NAME...

As co-author of *America's Favorite Homes* (with Rob Schweitzer, Wayne State University Press, 1990), which discusses the Foursquare style at length, I have a few comments on your article.

- Examination of countless floor plans in catalogues and plan books show that the houses are not just square, which is why we instead dubbed the style "Box House."
- Although many "unremuddled" Foursquare/Boxes present full-width front porches, not all do. Rather, the type of porch is one of the distinguishing factors among variants.

- I have concluded that the basic style of hipped roof over square or rectangular footprint predates the 1890s. In addition to some of the variations you noted, examples can be found of earlier 19th-century vernacular square, hipped-roof houses. One could argue that the 1884 Eisenhower home in Abilene, Kansas—unlikely to be the cutting edge of design—represents a transition from Italianate

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to Foursquare/Box, with the real difference probably in the interior layout.

- Another variant of the Box is the one-floor plan, still squarish and especially common in the South, Southwest, and on the West Coast.

Regardless, I heartily concur that these houses, by whatever name, are quintessentially American and have become popular subjects for restoration because they offer great value and space efficiency in combination with fine building materials and nostalgia.

MICHAEL W.R. DAVIS
ROYAL OAK, MICHIGAN

A TWOSQUARE?



My husband and I are in the process of saving a 1918 Foursquare and we couldn't be happier with it.

As elsewhere in the United States, Foursquares are quite numerous in the historic neighborhoods of Little Rock. We have a

variation not mentioned in the October article—the one-storey Foursquare. The National Historic Register application for Hillcrest, Little Rock's first streetcar suburb describes "...twenty-five houses which fall into no known style but resemble the American Foursquare in almost every aspect except they have only one story instead of two." These were set aside in a separate group.

Like its taller sister, the one-storey has a full-width front porch supported by columns or piers befitting its architectural variation, a pyramidal hipped roof, and prominent dormers. Some sport twin front dormers. Of course, this necessitates a different floor plan to accommodate all rooms being on the same floor.

JILL CURRAN
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

As in any field, there is disagreement among architectural scholars about terminology. Even when we agree on style names, we may not see eye-to-eye on definitions: When is a Foursquare not a Foursquare? From the number of people who write us asking, "What style is my house?" we believe most people like to hang clear-cut style names on their houses, but it's rarely that simple.

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Most retirees look forward to the day when they can abandon the family home for smaller quarters that require little or no upkeep. They can't wait to trade in endless lawn mowing and gutter cleaning for planned community living.

Not so for Louis and Carole Romano of Castroville, Texas. While a patio home on the 18th hole might appeal to some, this couple decided to invest their golden years in an 1847 Alsatian homestead. The en-

ergetic twosome spent five years restoring and enlarging the once crumbling structure before moving there permanently in May 1995.

Known for its hospitality and unique Alsatian-inspired architecture, Castroville is a sleepy hamlet some 30 miles west of San Antonio. Founded in 1844 by French-born Henri Castro, the town was settled by families primarily from the Alsace region of France. Bordering Luxembourg, Germany, and Switzerland, the Alsace region is a unique mélange of languages,

Jeff Tully



Saving Saint Therese *by Jeff Tully*

A couple from Castroville, Texas, resurrects an 1847 Alsatian homestead.

cultures, and traditions, much of which survives today in Castroville. The town's settlers gave European building techniques and architectural styles a Texas accent, though, with local building materials such as cypress and limestone.

Because Castroville was bypassed by the railroad that linked El Paso with San Antonio, the town escaped the development that often dooms a community's older building stock. The town retains most of the structures from its settlement more than 150 years

ago, making it something of an architectural Rip Van Winkle.

It was this step-back-in-time ambiance that attracted the Romanos. After restoring several 20th-century houses of varying ages and styles in San Antonio, the Romanos were eager to find an even older house to restore. Their requirements: historical and architectural significance in a smaller community outside the city, yet still close to family, friends, and business affairs in San Antonio.

"We always loved the architecture and quaintness of Castroville," says Louis. "Carole grew up in San Antonio and visited the town often over the years."

On a 1990 visit to Castroville the Romanos found the Bippert-Kueck House, which was miles from move-in condition. Last occupied in the late 1970s, it was deteriorated and open to the elements and filled with trash and debris. The roof had several large holes and many of the doors, shutters, and windows were missing.

The original Bippert-Kueck House was constructed around 1847 by Jacob Bippert as a 7 1/2' by 21' limestone dwelling with lime-plastered walls. The single room—which featured a front and back door, casement windows, and a corner fireplace—housed Bippert's family of nine.

Henry Kueck bought the property in 1869 and added two rooms separated by a long hallway. This addition incorporated



Carole Romano



Jeff Tully

Opposite: The roofline and French doors of the Romanos' addition echo the original structure.

Above: Stunned silence was the reaction of friends seeing the deteriorated structure for the first time.

Left: The plaque on the door to the right of Carole and Louis, outside the original house, honors Saint Therese of Lisieux, whose picture they found buried in mounds of trash.

the original Bippert House under its roof; its windows became frames for dining room cabinets.

In late 1990 the Romanos purchased the Bippert-Kueck House at a sheriff's sale of tax-foreclosed properties. On their way back home, Carole realized they had skipped an important step. "We didn't get a key to the front door, or did we?" she asked.

"Carole, I'm not even sure we have a front door," replied Louis. The Romanos later discovered the front door under a thicket of vines.

The Romanos began their work by removing the piles of debris, some a yard high. When they found a picture of Saint Therese of Lisieux in the midst of this rubbish they appointed her their "house saint" and began to call the house Ferme Sainte Therese in her honor.

Shortly after the clean-up, the couple invited friends from San Antonio out to see their latest project. When their visitors drove up, there was dead silence.

"Everyone got out of the car, and they were absolutely rooted to the ground, cutting eyes at each other. When they walked in and saw the condition of the house, they were shocked, they really thought we were crazy," says Carole.

But Louis and Carole were undaunted by their friends' reaction. "When I go into an old home, no matter how deteriorated it is, there is always something fascinating about it," she says. "That's what I love. It's the challenge of bringing it back to what it had been."

While Louis, a semi-retired engineer, and Carole, a retired educator, were experienced restorers, they were also aware that a mid-19th-century vernacular building would present unique challenges. They had also never restored a house outside of San Antonio. Fortunately, many of the Romanos' favorite crafts- and tradespeople were willing to trek out to the couples' two acres in Castroville.

Their plan called for retaining the 1847 and 1869 sections, removing mid-20th-century bedroom and kitchen additions that were deteriorating, and building a modern addition on the rear.

Subcontractors began by repairing the roof struc-

Below: Plasterers lined the walls with lime-stone plaster typical of early Castroville structures.



Carole Romano

Jeff Tully



Above: The second owner, Kueck, used the original windows as cabinets in his dining room.



Jeff Tully



Jeff Tul

Left: The original, single room, which housed 11 people in less than 160 square feet. Above: The original living room of Kueck's addition.

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The Romanos' addition connects to the original structure via an L-shaped gallery. Although they're technically in town, their two acres feels countrified with its wildflower meadow and Welsh ponies.



Jeff Tully

Jeff Tully



ture and sheathing and adding cedar shingles. Plasterers removed 1930s portland cement from exterior and interior walls and replaced it with a smooth limestone plaster found on many of Castroville's historic buildings. The team took great care to preserve the original windows, shutters, doors, exposed rafters, and fireplaces.

The asymmetrical rooflines of the 2,200-square-foot addition are representative of Alsatian architecture. Connected to the original house by a glass gallery that brings light to the older rooms, it includes a master bedroom and bath, sunroom, entry, guestroom, another bath, and kitchen. "I had to have a modern kitchen," says Carole. "I absolutely could not have dealt with a 19th-century kitchen."

This concession to the modern world is more than compensated for by the addition's cedar roofing, exterior plaster walls, wooden casement windows, and paired French doors, all of which pay homage to the original structure.

"The biggest difference between the restored home and our new addition is the absence of walls,"

says Louis. "Our living areas are bigger in the addition. This is an adult house."

The history of the house, the spaciousness of the sensitive addition, and the ambiance of Castroville have all added new dimensions to their quality of life, say the Romanos.

"It's been a change, because we don't have the noise or other problems of living in a city," says Carole. "We also can have our Welsh ponies at the back of the property."

Adds Louis: "Our neighborhood even has a red rooster and cat that are companions and walk up and down the street together, and if they aren't charming! It's wonderful."

The Romanos say that as stewards of the Bippert-Kueck homestead, they had two options.

"A house can be restored as cheaply as possible, or as well as possible. We chose to restore the historic house as well as possible," says Carole.

Louis agrees wholeheartedly. "By making a modern addition that blends with the original home's restoration, we think we have done best by the house, and ourselves." 🐾

Jeff Tully is a writer and preservation planner with the city of San Francisco.

ALSATIAN

OWNERS: Louis and Carole Romano

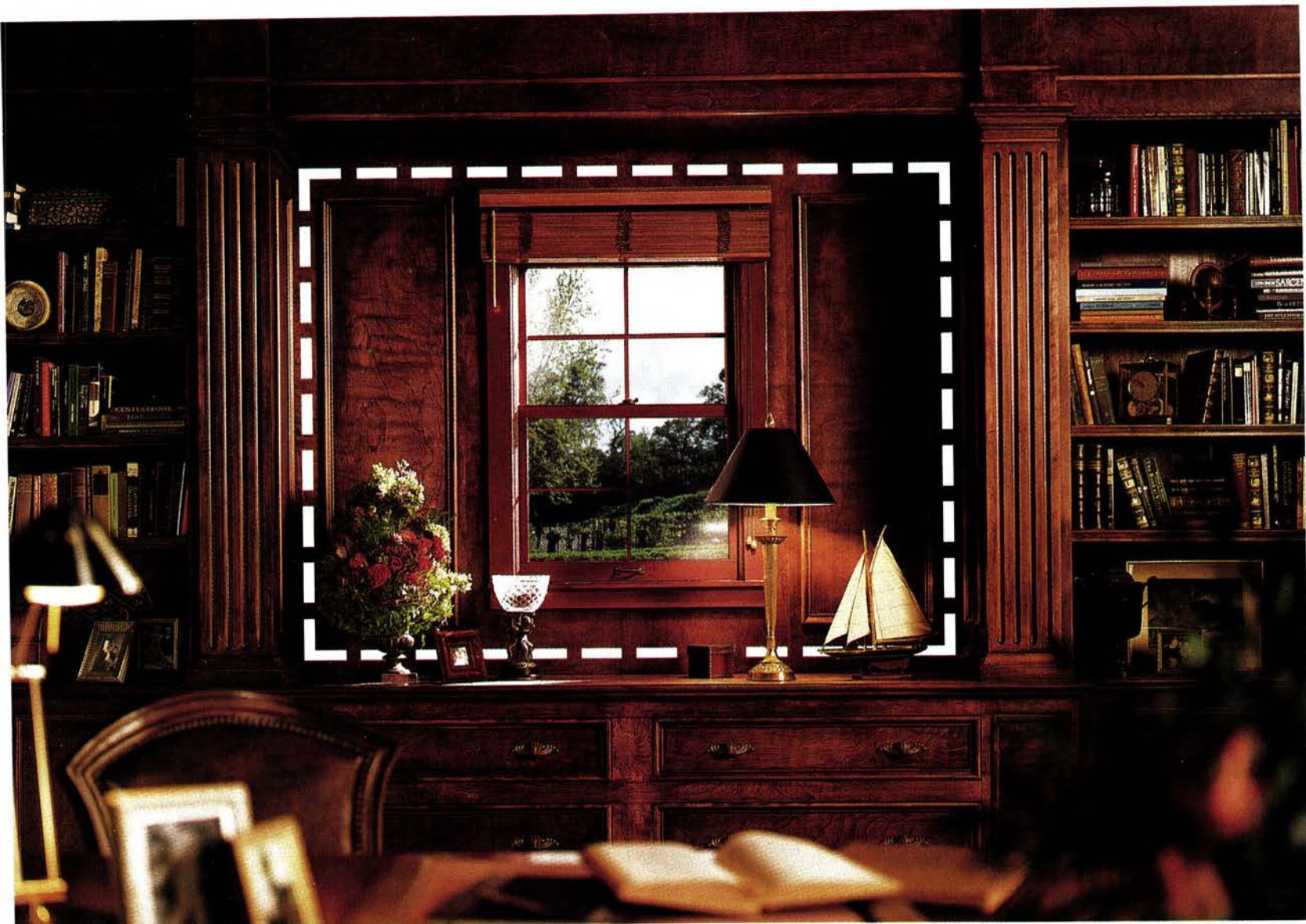
LOCATION: Castroville, Texas

DATE OF HOUSE: 1847

ON-GOING PROJECTS: Raising Welsh ponies

OF INTEREST: Addition echoes original structure

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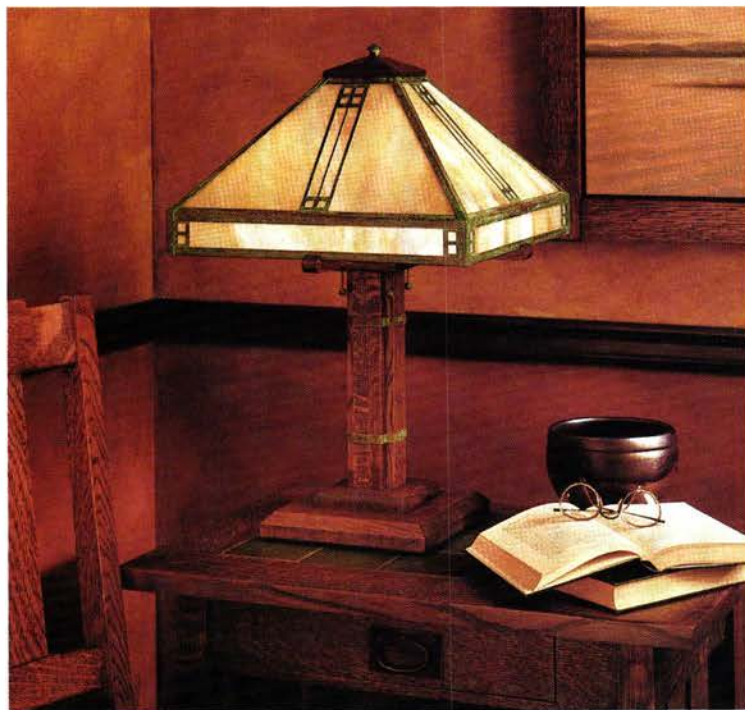
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At Home with a Range

You've inherited a fine vintage kitchen and you'd like to keep the original appliances. Yet you're ready to throw in the towel because the oven in your rare O'Keefe & Merritt range barely melts ice cubes and the porcelain on your GE Monitor Top refrigerator looks like it was left out in a hailstorm.

Before you stagger off with tear-stained face to buy run-of-the-mill 21st-century replacements, check out the Old Appliance Club and its newsletter, *The Old Road Home Magazine*.

Courtesy of Jack Santoro



Above: Santoro spent almost a year rehabbing his 1952 range. Right: From spring 2000, "Wow...Betty's Jacket is Doing the Mambo!"

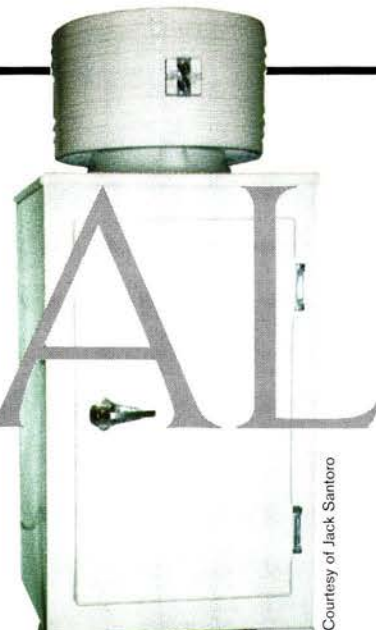


When his band fell apart three decades ago he spent some years moving and storing furniture before the day he played around with a customer's old stove and found he had a knack for appliance repairs. In 1994, after he'd restored thousands of old stoves, his graphic-artist wife, Erika, helped him design a half-page informational flyer for clients. He read the enthusiastic response as a call to spread the old-appliance gospel.

The club was founded by Jack Santoro, a former rock musician who lives in a 1920s bungalow in Ventura, California. When his band fell apart three decades ago he spent some years moving and storing furniture before the day he played around with a customer's old stove and found he had a knack for appliance repairs. In 1994, after he'd restored thousands of old stoves, his graphic-artist wife, Erika, helped him design a half-page informational flyer for clients. He read the enthusiastic response as a call to spread the old-appliance gospel.

The main reason old stoves and refrigerators are tossed, Santoro says, is simply because people don't know where to find parts and service. The Old Appliance network can help you get a thermostat fixed or a safety system added. Members can point you to some of the smaller accoutrements, such as ice cube trays and the salt-and-pepper shakers that once accessorized ranges.

"Nothing gets solved by sending these appliances to the dump," Santoro says. "They only



Courtesy of Jack Santoro

Hard to Top

Only about 5,000 American homes had refrigerators in 1926 when Christian Steestrup, chief engineer in GE's Schenectady plant, designed the Monitor Top. Until then, refrigerators were wooden and resembled bedroom furniture.

Although it had furniturelike legs, it was the first all-steel refrigerator and for a few years trounced the competition. The first models sold for \$525. It got its nickname because the exposed compressor crowning the cabinet reminded people of the turret atop the Civil War gunship named the Monitor.

GE made the Monitor Top for little more than a decade, at the end of which it had developed slightly less pronounced legs and a slide-out storage bin at the bottom. The shape of refrigerators as we know them today, with no legs and a concealed compressor, emerged from Kelvinator in 1929.

Early refrigerators were cooled by toxic gases such as ammonia, sulfur dioxide, and methyl chloride. In 1930, GM and DuPont jointly produced chlorofluorocarbons under the trade name Freon.



Courtesy of Peter Minton



Left: The Quickmeal range, all 750 pounds of it, from the 1920s. Below left: A single-slice, nickel-plated Toastmaster, introduced in 1927. Below: An ad for Magic Chef from the September 1932 Delineator magazine.

Courtesy of Jack Santoro



get covered up and sooner or later, have to be dealt with again." Not to mention that they are often beautiful or quirky.

Santoro's kitchen sports a 1936 Monitor Top GE refrigerator that has run like a top since 1971 when, lacking a network of resources, he combed scrap metal yards for junked appliance parts. His 1952 O'Keefe & Merritt Aristocrat stove had been partly melted in a fire. It took 11 months and parts from 11 other stoves to whip it in shape. Now the range roasts three chickens at once—the top and bottom rotating clockwise and the middle one counterclockwise. "It's like watching a little show," he told the *Los Angeles Times*.

For 30 dollars, club members get four issues of the newsletter—which may be the *Mad Magazine* of the old-house world—plus unlimited personal consultation on their appliance woes, referral to local resources, four classified ads, and an estimate of what their washer or vacuum might bring on the open market. Advertisements in the magazine also steer readers to repair sources.

In some cases owners ship appliances cross country or take a long weekend to haul them in for repair. "If you figure most of these appliances are going to be 'lifers,' the expense amounts to very lit-

tle—and the value is always accruing, especially if they're kept in good condition," Santoro says. His own repair business is limited to mail order and remanufacturing thermostats, safety valves, stove clocks, and timers, but includes telephone directions on removal and installation. He's written manuals on repairing and reviving porcelain, restoring parts made of Bakelite resins, repairing oven and broiler doors, and researching your stove.

The *Old-Road Home* is likely to contain a feature on the evolution of an appliance, such as the dishwasher, or a particular brand, such as Maytag. Departments are rich with reader-contributed photographs of small appliances as well as odd or unusual large appliances. For instance, there were stoves with built-in cigarette lighters and hair dryers, an electric dish drainer that zapped bacteria and warmed the room, and the 1950 Kenmore washing machine that had a special compartment for reusing suds.

The back page, "When Fun Was Free," is filled with zany, not necessarily appliance-related vintage ads for things like a musical toilet tissue holder and artichoke chewing gum.

Santoro says this "screwball" content (that's what one of his own covers called it) never draws complaints from his roughly 5,000 readers. "We run sort of an old-fashioned general store out in cyberspace. Folks come in from wherever, we shoot the breeze, have a chuckle or two, and send them away with what they need."

— by Kathleen Fisher

Contact JES Enterprises at P.O. Box 65, Ventura, CA 93002, (805) 643-3532, www.antiquetoves.com, or jes@west.net.

Mark Your Calendars for Boston

Restore Media, LLC, producer of the Restoration & Renovation Exhibition and Conference and publisher of *Old-House Journal*, expects this year's show, March 20-23 in Boston, to be the biggest ever, with 325 exhibitors.

Holding the event took on added importance after the national tragedy of September 11, says Ellen Glew, managing director. "It's a way we can do what President Bush asked of the nation, in getting back to work and shoring up our economy," she says. "But the Exhibition and Conference isn't just a place for buying and selling. It's a mobile community of people who have developed close ties. They need to reconnect with each other and reaffirm their shared values."

The exhibit hall will be enlivened by the introduction of R&R Live!, an area where artisans will demonstrate crafts such as furniture-making, gold-leafing, and decorative painting. The format will allow hands-on interaction between presenters and their audience.

As visitors register, they can peruse the New Product Showcase, a preview of exhibitors' "newest babies" that they can learn more about inside. This new feature



Boston's Old North Church

Anniversary

The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) is celebrating the 20th anniversary of its Stewardship Program this year. The program protects the historic character of privately owned properties through conservation easements. Protection extends from a building's exterior to its interior—including decorative painting and historic wallpaper. For information call Shantia Anderheggan director of the program at (781) 891-4882 ext. 225.

complements the Techniques & Technologies Showcase, a theater-style presentation area long part of the show.

The showcase site is where visitors will learn the winners of the new Palladio Awards, organized and co-produced by the show and *Traditional Building* and *Period Homes* magazines. These awards will recognize project teams for excellence in four categories: restoration, adaptive reuse, sympathetic additions, and reinterpretation of traditional forms and styles in new construction. Awards will be given for residential architecture and for commercial/civic/institutional architecture.

Among conference presentations will be an *Old-House Journal*-sponsored track on single-family homes. Representatives of the magazine will be at the *Old-House Journal* Pavilion—an “incubator” for first-time exhibitors.

Prior to the opening of the exhibits there will be an Executive Presentation Summit, co-produced by the show and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The summit is an advanced program for practicing professionals that will focus on the financial aspects of preservation. For more information on the upcoming show in Boston, visit restorationandrenovation.com.



Courtesy of SPNEA



The owners of the 1870 Sanford Covell House in Newport, Rhode Island, have placed preservation easements on the interiors of their house—including the Owen Jones-inspired stenciling on the stairway walls.

House History

Ever wonder about the lives your old house has encountered that helped to shape its façade and interior? The National Museum of American History’s permanent exhibit *Within These Walls* gives museumgoers a glimpse into the evolution of a 240-year-old structure from Ipswich, Massachusetts. Reconstructed within the museum’s walls, the house depicts the lives of five different families who occupied it through its history—from colonists and revolutionists to social reformers and Irish immigrants.

In 1963 the house was dismantled and moved to Washington, D.C., after a local historical society rescued it from the wrecking ball. Two years ago, curators began researching the house’s past. They discovered 150 artifacts from the structure along with information on more than 100 people who had lived there at one time or another.

Curators have recreated four of the ten rooms in different historic styles. The 1760 Georgian corner parlor represents the Choate family, the original owners, and showcases period mouldings and wall panelings. The second parlor depicts an 1820s renovation done in the Greek Revival-style by the Caldwell family, the second occupants. The curators rebuilt two outbuildings—an outhouse and storage facility—reminiscent of the 1890s. A 1940s kitchen represents the Scotts, the house’s last tenants.

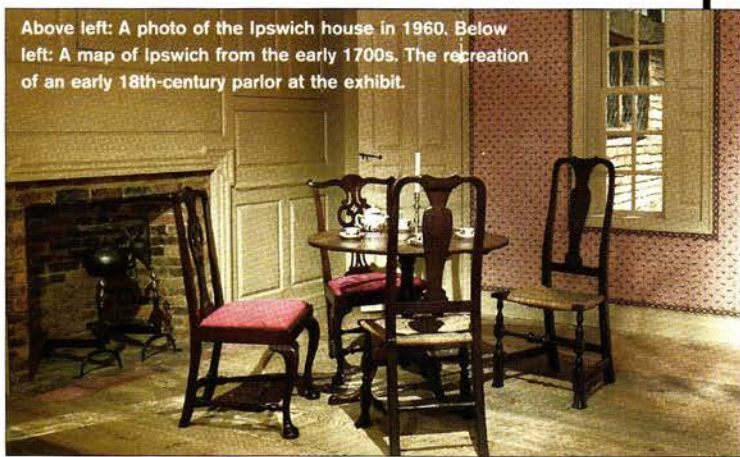
The exhibit also has a number of hands-on activities. For more information visit <http://americanhistory.si.edu/house>.



Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution



Above left: A photo of the Ipswich house in 1960. Below left: A map of Ipswich from the early 1700s. The recreation of an early 18th-century parlor at the exhibit.



Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution

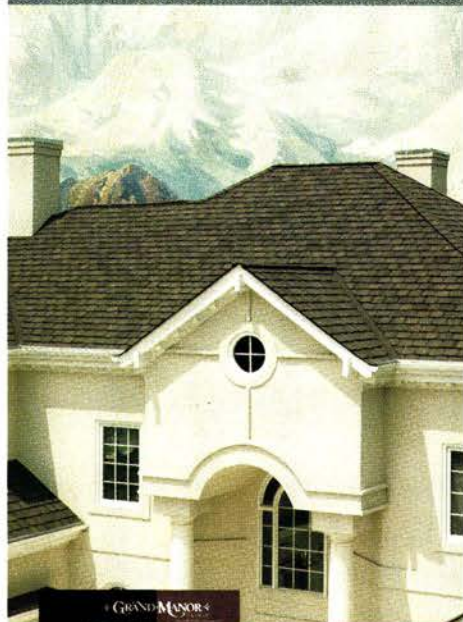
Arts & Crafts in NYC

The work of Candace Wheeler (1827-1924), America’s first important woman textile and interior designer, is being exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City through January 6. *Candace Wheeler: The Art and Enterprise of American Design*, surveys Wheeler’s life and

career through 105 textiles, wallpapers, paintings, photographs, and art objects. The focus is the years between 1877, when Wheeler founded the Society of Decorative Art in New York, and 1893, when she served as the interior decorator of the Women’s Building at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Her textile designs, many based upon American plants and flowers drawn in sinuously flowing patterns, are central to the exhibit. Also included are paintings, graphics, and furniture by her associates, such as Louis Comfort Tiffany and Lockwood de Forest. For more information call (212) 535-7710 or visit www.metmuseum.org

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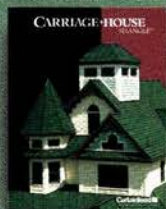
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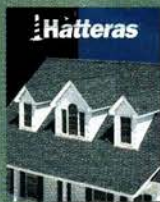
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B&B Focus

Haikuleana Plantation Inn,
Haiku, Maui, Hawaii

In the 1850s, Maui natives broke ground for a five-bedroom wood house that for the next 150 years would shelter a series of physicians caring for pineapple plantation workers. In 1989 a retired doctor turned Haikuleana (which means "responsibility for the land") into the island's first bed-and-breakfast. Current owners Ralph and Jeanne Blum fell in love with it on a 1994 vacation. Jeanne recalls: "Ralph was transfixed by a window display in a real estate office. He went inside, pulled out the display and announced with a dreamy look in his eye, 'I want to buy this place!'"



Ralph and Jeanne Blum had just made a down payment on 35 acres in Colorado when a real estate agency's window display changed their course.

The house was built with plantation-style features, such as a square plan, sloped tin roof, and raised floor for ventilation. A recent renovation had retained 12' ceilings and fretwork. The Blums—they're both authors, he on runes and she on holistic health for women—

added a deck with traditional "welcoming arms" stairs using 17 layers of hand-laminated wood to create their curves. The two-acre garden includes a pond and waterfall, plus native plants. Guests can visit the little-changed plantation settlement of Haiku, or take advantage of nearby beaches and rain-forest trails. 3 suites, \$100-200, 555 Haiku Road, Haiku, Maui, HI 96708, (808-575-7459), www.haikuleana.com

Today's Classic Homes

Tune in to the third season of "Today's Classic Homes" airing on PBS this winter—co-sponsored by OHJ. Host Mitch McDaniel and producer John Kennison take viewers behind the scenes of the restoration of the Kelnepe House, a 1924 Mediterranean villa in Jacksonville, Florida, and into the past of this roaring 1920s house style.

Through each of the 13 episodes, viewers will not only follow the restoration and renovation of the house, but also learn about the history of the different materials and techniques employed in building the original structure. McDaniel looks back at the origins of air conditioning, generators, storm shutters, garages, and propane heating throughout the series. He'll also discuss the new and innovative building methods incorporated into the restoration and renovation. Check your local PBS station for times and dates.



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Stone gives this garden a patina of age. The steps bring visitors to the upper level, visually and literally, while the front wall shores up the higher level and the back wall makes the space feel more private and protected.

Fences, paths, and trellises give shape to your cottage gardenscape.

Dem Garden Bones *By Susan Davis Price*

A profusion of flowers and herbs is the essence of a cottage garden. Yet that soft, exuberant look needs solid underpinnings to give it form and presence. Now that the leaves are off the trees and the perennials are at rest, it's the perfect time to assess or add hardscape features—the fences, paths, and trellises that make up the “bones” of your garden. They provide strong visual cues to make your garden feel more contained and private, on the one hand, and by drawing the eye out or up, also more expansive.

The surest way to set the stage is with informal, subdued elements. Ornate furnishings and Greek statuary strike a false note, but casual and rustic design features enhance the cottage garden feel.

Walls, Fences, and Gates

In our rural past, gardeners installed fences to keep animals out of the dooryard. In *Old Time Gardens* (1901), Alice Morse Earle observed, “Even when the front yard was but a narrow strip of land before a tiny cottage, it was carefully fenced in, with a gate that was rigidly closed and latched.” Today we’re more apt to use fences to corral our dogs and children. Yet even cottage gardeners who have neither can’t ignore the importance of fences for creating a cloistered atmosphere and a background for plantings. You can also use them to divide your garden into outdoor rooms, which somewhat counterintuitively make the space seem larger. Hedges, stone walls, fences, or an imaginative combination of the three all work well, but require varying amounts of labor and expense.

Stone walls are certainly the norm around many British and New England cottages. A garden surrounded by stone seems to have been planted forever. Where

stone is unavailable locally, though, walls are usually a pricey solution. Still, for the enterprising and relatively strong of back, constructing a stone wall can be a satisfying project. Even a low wall gives a sense of privacy without appearing imposing and formal, as brick or smooth masonry might.

Picket fences are the quintessential cottage garden enclosure, while split-rail fences look more at home in the West. Either choice is unpretentious, easily assembled, less expensive than stone, and help prop up floppy old-fashioned plants like gladiolus or foxglove. Picket fences are traditionally painted white, which provides crisp lines that pull together the jumble of colors found in most cottage gardens. Painting the fence to match the house or its trim strengthens the link between house and garden. If you don’t want to deal with periodic repainting, however, you can leave the fence natural.

English emigrants arrived with memories of green hedgerows, and left us a legacy of hedges around farms and cottages. Hedges range widely in price, depending on the plants’ size and species. Evergreen shrubs, such as yews, privet, or boxwood, provide a unifying background for plants but can be a bit too formal for cottage gardens and require frequent pruning. In an informal setting, a mixture of flowering shrubs provides a succession of blooms and an inter-



Photos by John Gregor



Top: Let plants flop over masonry walls and paths to heighten the soft, informal look of your cottage garden. Above: Evergreen hedges are a time-honored way of creating boundaries, but they'll need maintenance.



Left: The relaxed atmosphere of a cottage garden allows for a mix of formal statuary, recycled bricks, and the primitive bent twig wreath on the wooden gate. Right: A sinewy cobblestone path beckons visitors as it disappears among plantings; such a narrow walkway is best suited to solitary strollers.



Jenny Gregor

All other photos by John Gregor



Above: This wrought-iron fence and gate make the cottage garden seem a bit more formal, but its open design welcomes visitors. Below: A fence painted to match the door links garden and house.



esting tapestry of textures and foliage colors. The ancient hedges found around old houses have often become “mixed” plantings as nature adds flowering and even fruiting plants to the original rows. These more relaxed hedges can usually go without pruning, except for dead or damaged branches, until you decide they’ve outgrown their bounds.

A line of shrub roses can be romantic during the growing season, although lean on winter eye appeal. So-called landscape roses released in recent years are ever-blooming and disease tolerant, but lack the fragrance of old-fashioned heirloom roses.

Hedges not only need watering, periodic pest patrol, and possible pruning, but they take several years to mature to the point of providing enclosure and a solid backdrop. Clever gardeners can create the look of a hedge by installing a low wire fence and overplanting it with thick vines. A word of caution: Gardeners in much of the country should avoid fast-growing vines, such as English ivy and Japanese honeysuckle, which can take over entire neighborhoods.

If the fence or wall is the frame for the garden, the gate can be a focal point, helping to establish the garden’s character. A rustic twig gate hints at quaint, lighthearted space beyond; an aging wrought-iron entrance speaks of more restraint. An open-structured gate allows a glimpse into the garden while welcoming visitors. Typically the gate will echo the fence material, with perhaps a bit of flourish. With a hedge or stone wall, either wood or wrought iron looks appropriate.

Walkways

In any garden, pathways are not simply a firm surface underfoot. They guide viewers through planting areas, and as with fencing, the choice of material can further tie house and garden or add regional flavor. Aged bricks are the obvious choice for a brick house, for instance, while a boardwalk or crushed oyster shells would be perfect for a seaside cottage garden. Paths don’t need to be expensive or difficult to install. Even a smooth ribbon of grass can serve as a walkway and foil for exuberant borders. Packed and swept dirt has long been a folksy solution in the rural South and other regions where rainfall is sparse.

Cottage gardeners tend to be great scroungers. Recycled materials come with a patina of age, instantly making a garden seem more established. Each com-

munity will have its own resources, and other gardeners can often point out what's available. Here in Minneapolis, which launched a major street repair program 12 years ago, road construction crews often dig up granite pavers that have gardeners hovering around the sites like vultures. You can scrounge bricks from building demolition sites, or smooth, flat stones that wash up along river banks. Even old chunks of concrete laid like stepping stones will provide more texture and interest than a poured concrete sidewalk once moss or thyme is growing between and around them. Stick to one type of material; cottage garden plants keep the eye busy enough without introducing a riot of masonry colors and shapes. Whatever material you use, the path's surface will make a pleasing contrast with plants spilling over the edges, whether low-growing floppy plants like catmint (*Nepeta*) or more rounded clumps like lady's mantle (*Alchemilla*).

Make sure that the main path—from front gate to front door, or backdoor to shed, for instance—is wide enough to accommodate two people walking side by side, or a large wheelbarrow. Secondary paths that meander through the garden can be a bit narrower.

Trellises and Arches

What cottage garden would be complete without flowering vines and cascading roses to add that lush, slightly disheveled look? You can send plants skyward with any number of supports, from rustic cedars posts to elaborate open archways.

Keep the needs of the plant in mind. A rose like the Canadian explorer 'William Baffin' or the exuberant 'New Dawn' quickly grow heavy and need a stout support. Sweet peas or morning glories can be trained on a slender wire.

Think about what else you might achieve with your vertical element. In addition to being a ladder for vines, an archway over the gate adds drama to an entrance. Between two sections of the garden, an arch or pergola teases visitors with a glimpse of what lies on the other side. A trellis against a porch or an arbor over a bench offers shade and privacy.

Some gardeners make serviceable supports by lacing together scrap wood or flexible tree branches. Wire mesh attached to a post is barely visible once vines begin to grow. Abandoned clotheslines or found objects, such as rusty iron porch railings or old wooden ladders, can add a bit of whimsy. If quirky isn't your style, you can be more formal with a painted wood trellis or wrought iron.

Take some time this winter to stroll around your unclothed garden, envisioning ways you can use fences, paths, and trellises to add structural interest and help link it more firmly to your house or region. Some creative ideas now will give your cottage garden personal flair come spring.



Any number of materials can serve as trellises in a cottage garden. Below left: Wrought-iron pieces, whether intended as trellises or recycled from other uses, make sturdy plant supports. Below right: Bent twigs, a rustic garden adornment popular in the mid-1800s, can look almost as though they grew in the shape of arches.

Susan Davis Price is author of Growing Home: Stories of Ethnic Gardening, and Minnesota Gardens: An Illustrated History.





When the ideas of an English interior design critic were transplanted to America, they took surprising root in porches and gables.

Charles L. Eastlake and the Victorian Style That Wasn't

by Shirley Maxwell and James C. Massey

Charles Locke Eastlake had plenty to say on the subject of Victorian taste—and his English and American readers hung on every word. It was no surprise, really. Eastlake, the scion of a prominent British family, held excellent credentials as a tastemaker. Educated at the Royal Academy, his artistic sense honed by years of continental travel and architectural training, he was secretary of the Royal British Institute of Architects, secretary and keeper of the British National Gallery, and a respected art historian. (His 1872 book *A History of the Gothic Revival in England* cinched his status as a top scholar.) Writing in the popular press, however, had made Eastlake a household name—though not always to his liking.

Initially, Eastlake's modest goal was to tell the British public what was wrong, designwise, in their world. The 35-year-old critic was appalled by the sheer tackiness of the overwrought home furnishings and decorative objects foisted off on England's large and clueless middle class by mid-19th-century manufacturers and upholsterers (interior decorators to us). He wrote a series of articles pointing out the errors of eclectic "styles" while helpfully outlining some universal principles of good design. These principles, he believed (along with other reformers, such

as William Morris), were rooted in medieval craftsmanship. His essays formed the core of a best-selling book, *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery and Other Details*, published in London in 1868. In 1872, the first United States edition of Eastlake's *Hints* appeared, with six more to follow by 1881.

The trouble was, Americans put their own spin on Eastlake's ideas. Basically, what Eastlake said was, "Ornament should be simple, individually crafted and closely related to the materials, structure, and use of the object at hand." In other words: Less ornament, more substance.

What Americans heard was, "Indi-

James C. Massey



Facing page: The height of good taste in 1876, the parlor of Glenview Mansion (now the Hudson River Museum) in Yonkers, New York, is a textbook example of Eastlake furniture design. Note the incised decoration on the book carousel and chairs. Above: The ball-and-spindle fretwork that bands countless Queen Anne porches is the classic exterior manifestation of Eastlake.



Studying Eastlake's suggested chair from *Hints* (far left), it's easy to see how the incised rosette and rows of turnings metamorphosed into the frieze and entrance decoration on this porch (left).

James C. Massey



James C. Massey

Steam millworks found the perfect ornament vocabulary for their skills in Americanized Eastlake. The 1887 Villa Montezuma in San Diego, above, makes over-the-top use of incised fans, turnings, brackets, and chamfers in its tower alone.


vidualistic decoration equals good taste." In other words: Let 'er rip!

That's why the term "Eastlake," which by rights should suggest straightforward simplicity, stuck to some of the most aggressively ornamented houses in America's history. For, while Eastlake wrote mostly about furniture and interior decoration, the same principles also could be applied—and misapplied—to architecture. There never was an Eastlake "style" of architecture, but there was a robust, rectilinear, vaguely Gothic, suggestively structural type of wooden ornament. It was this incised (rather than high-relief) decorative millwork that Eastlake's readers in America imagined he was talking about and what they happily grafted to their ubiquitous late-19th-century Queen Anne-style houses.

The result was Queen Anne with an attitude. The houses were standard Queen Anne shapes, picturesque and irregular, with multiple gables and porches. The muscular ornament, though, looked as if it could actually support the porches and gables to which it was attached. There were thick wooden posts with squared-off or beveled edges, bulbous turned columns, heavy braces, and substantial pendants. Plus, every surface was fitted with fanciful yet sturdy-looking spindlework, showing off the virtuoso

abilities of technologically advanced lumberyards and sawmills that had sprung up in the building boom after the Civil War. America's everyman could now order his castle piece-by-piece and assemble it exactly as he wished, anywhere in the country. It was the American dream come true.

The same force impelled the furniture makers of Grand Rapids and other manufacturing centers to flood the market with "Eastlake" furniture of dubious quality and aesthetic appeal. In fact, Eastlake's name was used so often and so flagrantly by furniture makers and sellers that the author protested. "I find American tradesmen continually advertising what they are pleased to call 'Eastlake' furniture," said the critic, "with the production of which I have had nothing whatever to do and for the taste of which I should be very sorry to be considered responsible."

The so-called Eastlake style of ornament began dying out in the 1880s, to be replaced in the United States by the more delicate Colonial Revival and, eventually, by the new Arts & Crafts ideals of simplicity, "honest" construction (with joints and pegs showing), and unvarnished materials. Eastlake himself was relieved. Whatever they called it, his audience finally seemed to be getting his message. 

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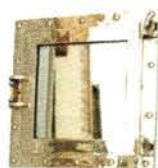
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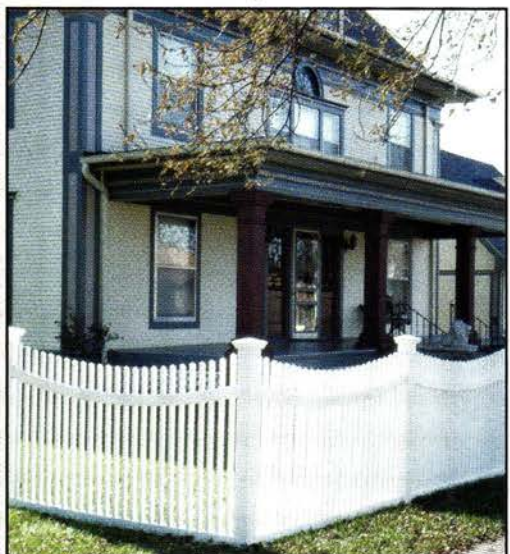
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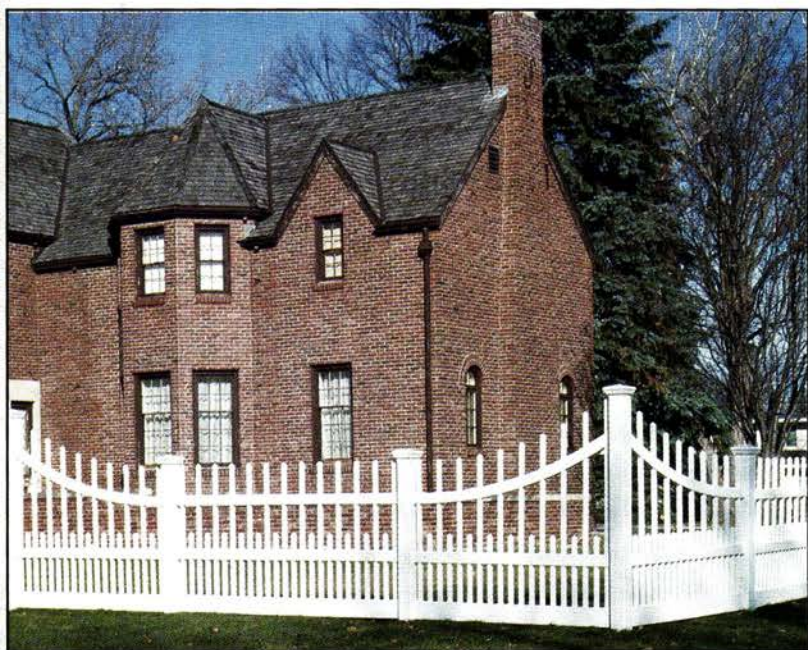
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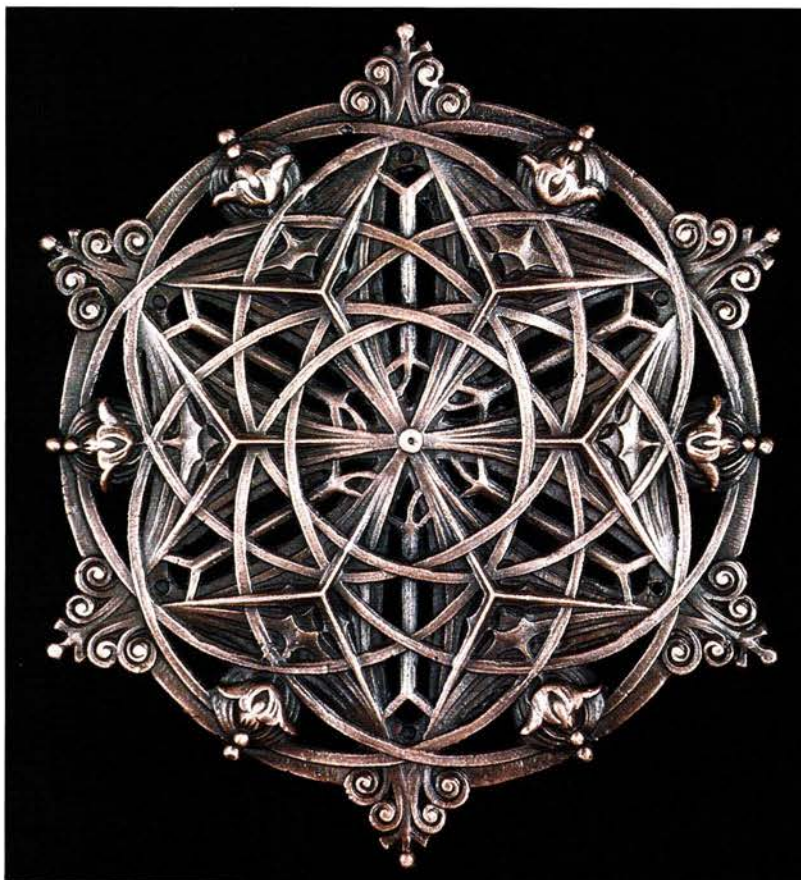
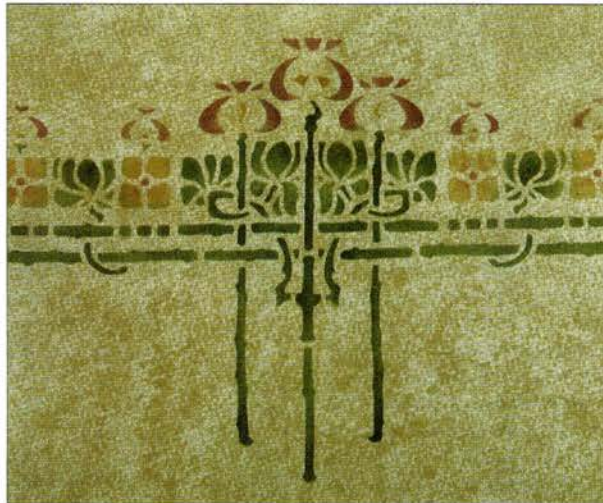


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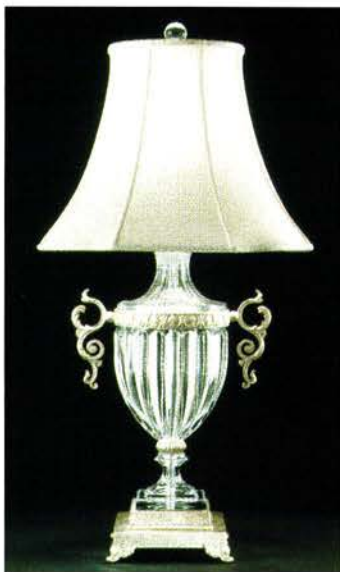
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CRYSTAL CLEAR

Schonbek chandeliers, first made in Bavaria 131 years ago, have found their way to Buckingham Palace and the White House but are a bit elaborate and imposing for just any Colonial Revival interior. With smaller houses and even condos in mind, the company has launched a line of crystal table lamps. Andrew Schonbek, president and CEO, says that while most crystal lamps are "a hodgepodge of crosshatching" to hide imperfections, using high-quality Bohemian crystal has allowed Schonbek to keep lines simple and give lamplight a prismatic quality. Choose from six styles with Italian cast trim in bronzes, silvers, and golds. Each lamp style has its own shade bedecked with British braid, and some are hand-painted to match the cast elements. Prices range from \$300 to \$750. For the name of a local dealer call (800) 836-1892, or visit www.schonbek.com. Circle 4 on resource card.

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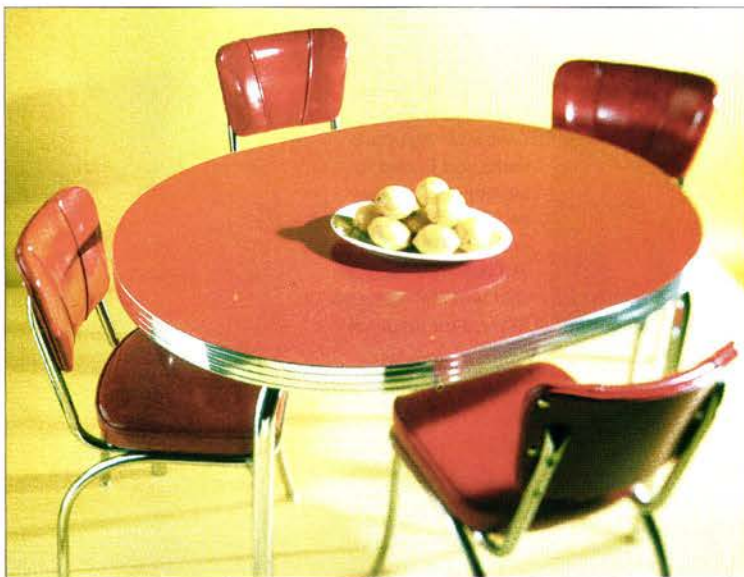


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When the New York City subway system was brand spanking new in the 1910s, its sleek modern look was enhanced by glazed, white rectangular tiles already helping kitchens and bathrooms conform to new standards of cleanliness. New Yorkers have called them "subway tiles" ever since, so it's appropriate that Ceramic Tile Trends has dubbed its new line of horizontal period tiles the Subway Series (a name that also honors those World Series baseball games played between two Big Apple teams). The white ground tiles are 3" x 6" with 1" x 1" black and white tiles for added visual interest. A 2" x 6" moulding tile is also available. Contact Ceramic Tile Trends, (214) 358-5557. Circle 7 on resource card.

DOUBLE MALTED, ANYONE?

Don't look now, but the 1940s and '50s are officially considered historic, and with them the chrome and laminate tables and counters that spelled eggs over-easy and cherry Cokes in diners all across America (not to mention milk and cookies at Grandma's). Pastense, maker of chrome diner furniture since 1927, is expanding into the residential market with its Cracked Ice dining set. The oval table is 36" x 48" and the four vinyl chairs have sewn welted detailing. The set is available in red, yellow, or grey at \$850, with custom orders welcome. Contact Pastense at (800) 556-2608, or visit www.pastense.com. Circle 6 on resource card.



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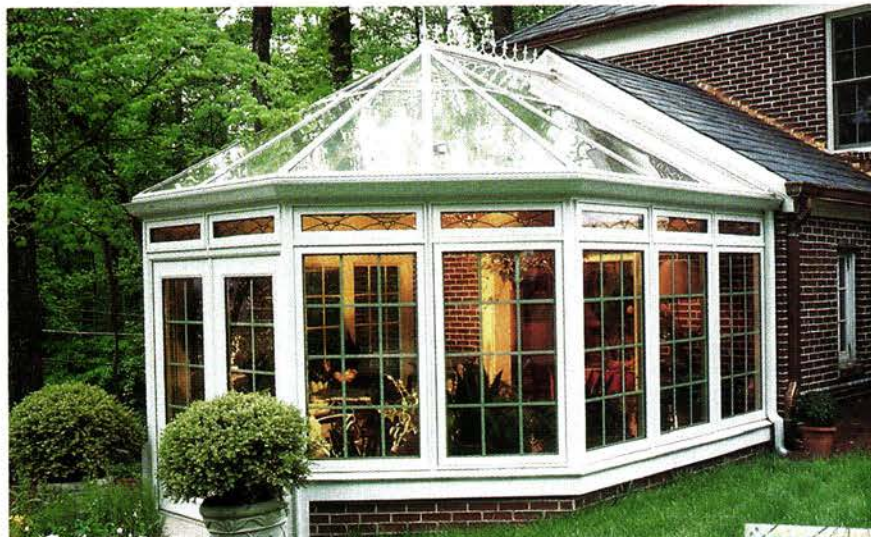
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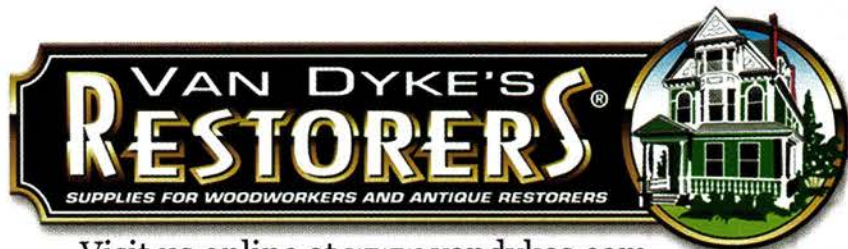
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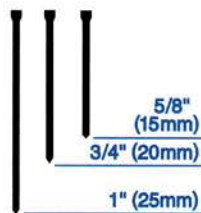
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One way to bring ornamental iron back to fine fettle is soaking off the paint down to bare metal.

Radiators in the Rough *by Gordon Bock*

One of the passions that separates old-house devotees from average homeowners is their love of radiators. While the rest of the residential world is happy to chuck their radiators whenever possible, restorers cherish them—the quirkier the better—and that includes decorating with period painting techniques. Unfortunately, the cast-iron ornament that makes early radiators so nifty is often buried under decades of paint, turning a bold filigree pattern into a vague, vestigial squiggle at best.

Stripping off this build-up is the first step to a crisp paint job but, like any stripping project, the process is easier said than done. The two common approaches for stripping a radiator in place are 1) slathering it with chemicals (a messy affair), and 2) chipping the paint away with hammers and wire brushes (time consuming). When it's disconnected from the system, some folks pay to send the radiator out for off-site stripping (usually sandblasting). However, if the object of your desire is small enough to move yourself, you might try this technique for dip-stripping radiators.

Build a tank Unless you have some kind of radiator-sized, corrosive-proof container already on hand, you'll need to build a "tank" for dipping your radiator. Taking light lumber—3/4" thick pine, 5/8" plywood, or scrap lumber suitable for a packing crate all work well—construct an open-top box or crate slightly larger than the radiator you intend to dip. The box does not have to be watertight or massive, but it should be strong enough to hold 100 pounds or so of cast iron and water without breaking, and deep enough to submerge at least half the unit. When you're done with the carpentry, line the box with a layer or two of heavy (4-mil or better) polyethylene plastic dropcloth or similar sheeting.

Prepare your radiator Besides scraping off any

easy-to-remove paint or wallpaper, you'll probably want to plug your radiator to prevent stripper from flowing inside. While there's no threat to the metal, stripper in the radiator columns doesn't help soften the paint outside, and it makes the radiator that much heavier to maneuver. Remove any steam or air vents and then plug these holes, along with the steam or hot-water inlet and outlet, with standard pipe plugs (available at good hardware stores or plumbing supply houses). Later, when the radiator is stripped, you can remove the plugs and flush the insides free of system scale, if you so desire.

Fill with stripper Place your radiator in the tank. Next, fill your tank with enough water to cover half the radiator, then stir in a dose of household lye to make your stripping solution. You won't need



Photos Barbara Krankenhans



Top: Typical for a caustic stripper, the lye solution softens a century of paint into sludge that lifts easily with scraping, but leaves the iron unaffected. **Left:** Stripping outdoors allowed my friend Fernando to hose down the radiator after each wire brushing. Note the regained detail on the left side.

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much—approximately six ounces per tankful. One container should be plenty for stripping one average-sized radiator, assuming two changes of solution. Follow the safety instructions on the container—lye is corrosive and the crystals will burn eyes and skin—and be sure to add the lye to the water, not the other way around. Let the radiator soak for several hours—overnight is typical.

Brush, rinse, and repeat Depending upon the nature of the paint, the number of layers, and the strength of your stripper, the lye will begin to noticeably soften and decompose the paint after about 12 hours. At this point it is practical to lift the radiator out of the solution and remove the sludge using any of the old-house restorer's typical arsenal of stripping tools. Putty knives and scrapers are fine for large areas; wire brushes—particularly small toothbrush-sized tools—are a must for details and tight spaces between columns. You might also invest in spiral wire brushes made for cleaning pipes in the plumbing trade. A good spray gun on a garden hose—or even a pressure washer—will help dislodge some paint. As you work, be sure to protect your eyes with goggles and your hands with rubber gloves.

As with any paint-stripping project, it will probably take several baths in the stripper, along with periodic brushing and detail chipping, to get your whole radiator down to clean cast iron. When you're satisfied with the results, give the entire radiator a thorough rinsing with fresh water and then dry it immediately. While there's no need to neutralize the metal

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surface, you should wash it free of all residues so the stripper won't impair the new paint. Also, now that your baby is down to bare metal, keep it away from water so that your naked "rad" won't rust before it gets its new coat of paint. 🏠



Top: Screw common pipe plugs into the steam or hot water ports just far enough to keep out the stripping solution. **Above:** Plastic makes the tank watertight and corrosive-proof. Build your box big enough to soak the radiator on two or more sides.

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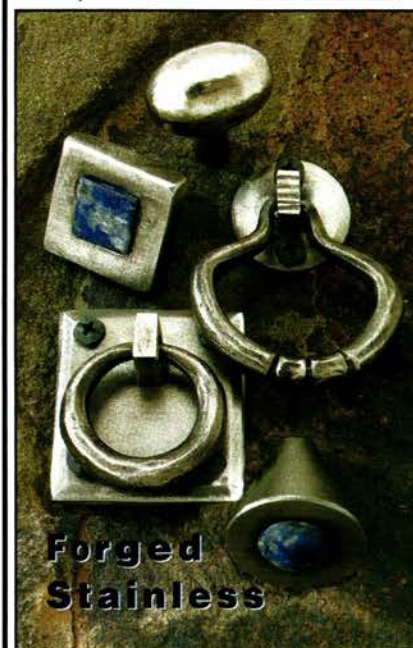
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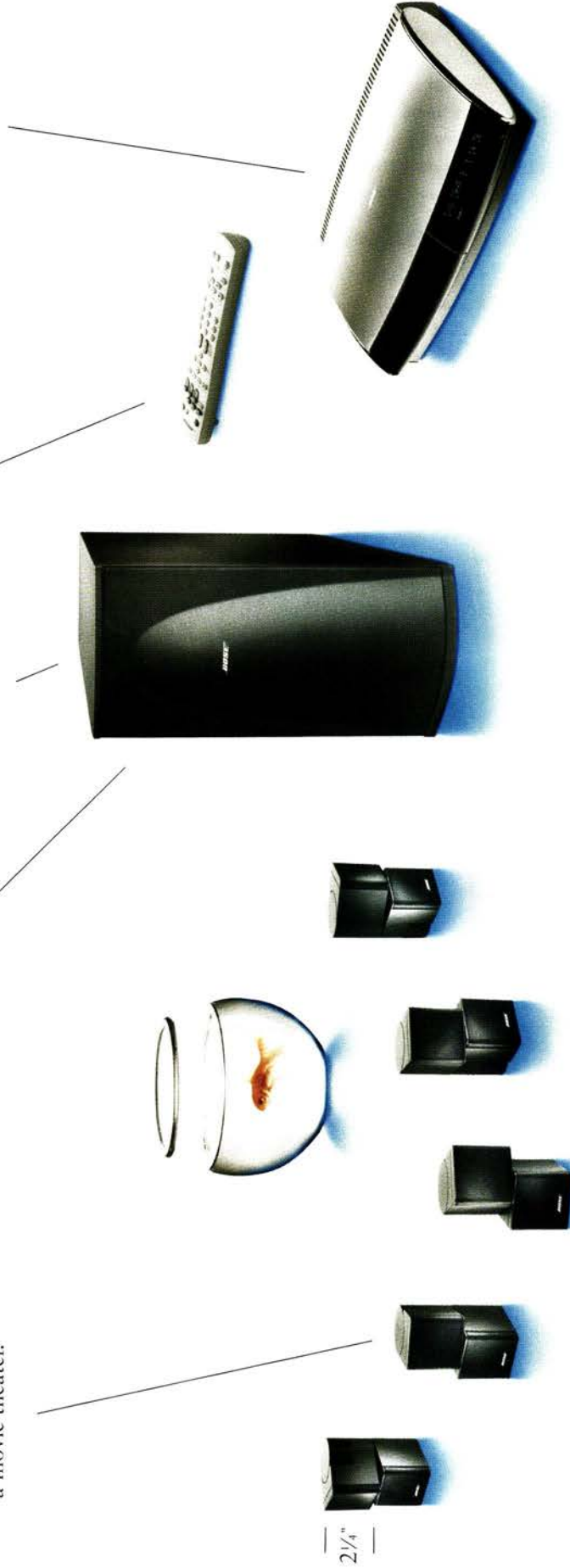
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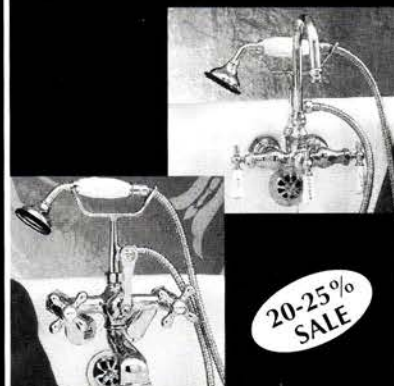
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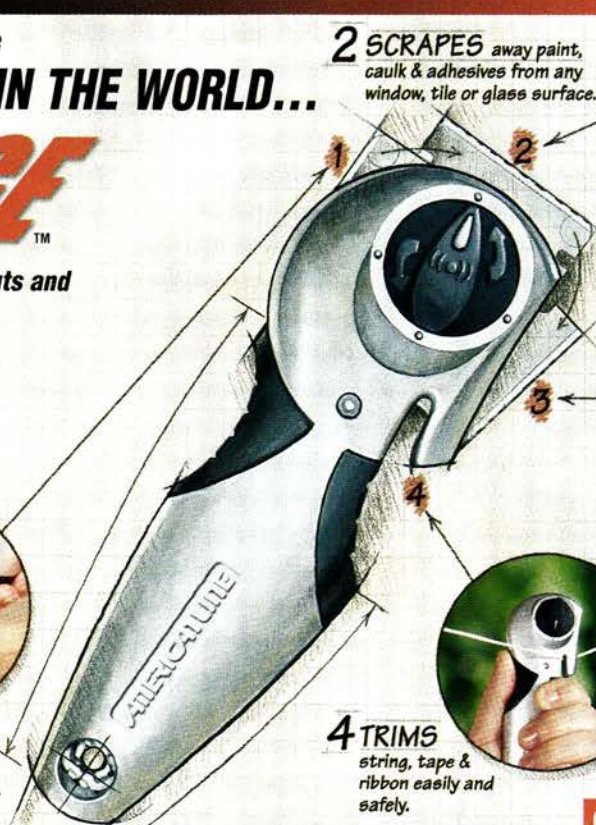
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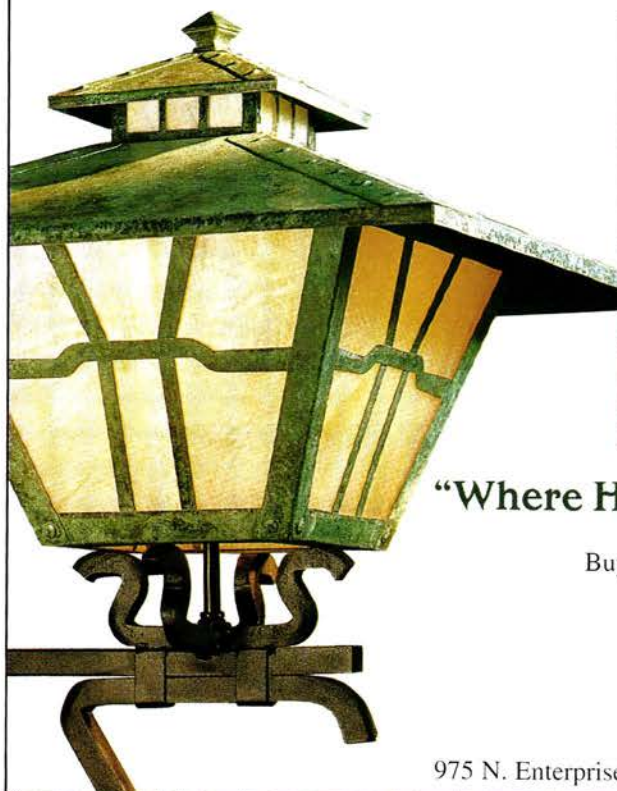
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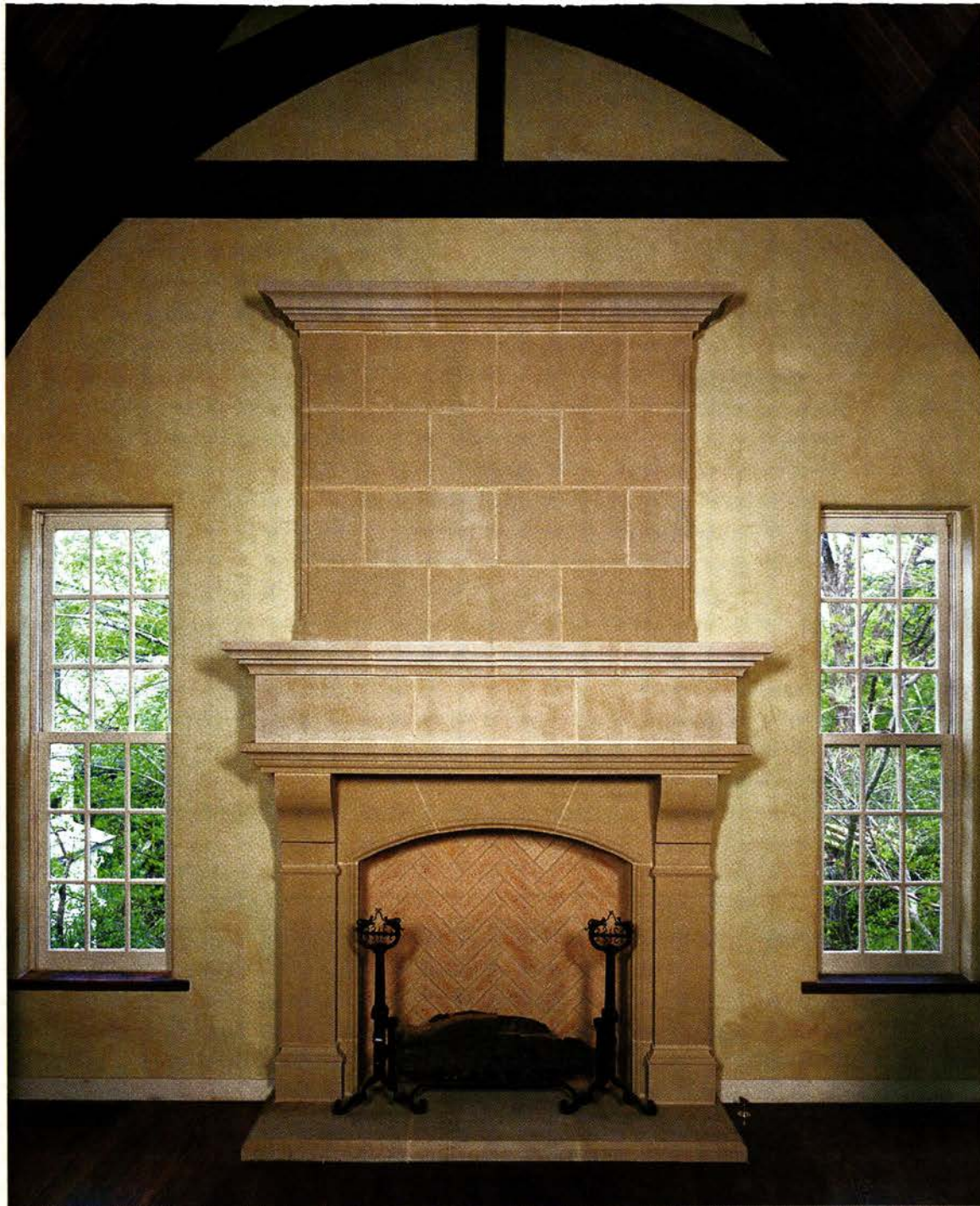
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OLDHOUSE JOURNAL



Techniques used to hide wiring in museums can be applied to old houses with minimal disruption of finished spaces.

—page 52



November/December 2001

The Saltbox, a one-and-a-half-room-deep house with a dramatic roof, is a fundamental house form that transcends eras.

—page 64



Pressing glass transformed the material from a luxury item to a commodity affordable to all.

—page 46



At the end of each day, Gillinder workers need to remove any colored glass remaining in clay pots in order to work with another color the following day. They add clear glass to the pot until it loses its hue, then ladle it into a cauldron of water where it crystallizes.

Lasting Impressions

The invention of pressed glass 180 years ago filled the need for thousands of new lighting and architectural products.

by Nancy E. Berry / photos by Andy Olenick

The pressed glass globes and shades shielding antique lamps in many old houses are not simply dust catchers, but luminescent reminders of America's industrial inventiveness. American glassmaking soared in the mid-1800s as the demand for mundane household items such as glass chimney lamps, globes, and smoke bells increased greatly. In the 1820s a new glassmaking technique—pressing—revolutionized the industry from one that once relied exclusively on skilled artisans to one augmented by molds and industrial power. By the 1850s the number of glass companies in this country had tripled. One company, Gillinder Glass, still uses century-old techniques and antique molds to manufacture pressed-glass products. From household items such as glass shades, vases, and tableware, Gillinder has diversified its product line over the years and today makes over 50 percent of all runway light lenses used at airports in this country. A visit to its factory provides a quick education in this uncommon blend of art and science, and insights into identifying and appreciating quality pressed glass.



The Art of Pressed Glass

In concept, pressed glass is molten glass pressed into a mold. Until the introduction of the pressing process, glassmaking had not changed in more than 4,000 years. Unlike the muscle-and-lung technique of blowing glass, in pressing, glass is forced into an iron mold with the mechanical pressure of a metal plunger.



Above: The Gillinder Glass factory in Port Jervis, New York, is owned and operated by the sixth generation of the Gillinder family. Today the company is one of only six glass manufacturers in the country that still melt glass in clay pots. **Below:** Founded in 1861 by William T. Gillinder, the company first produced globes, chimney lamps, and smoke bells for oil and gas lamps. Today Gillinder still sells glass lamp shades in its gift shop.



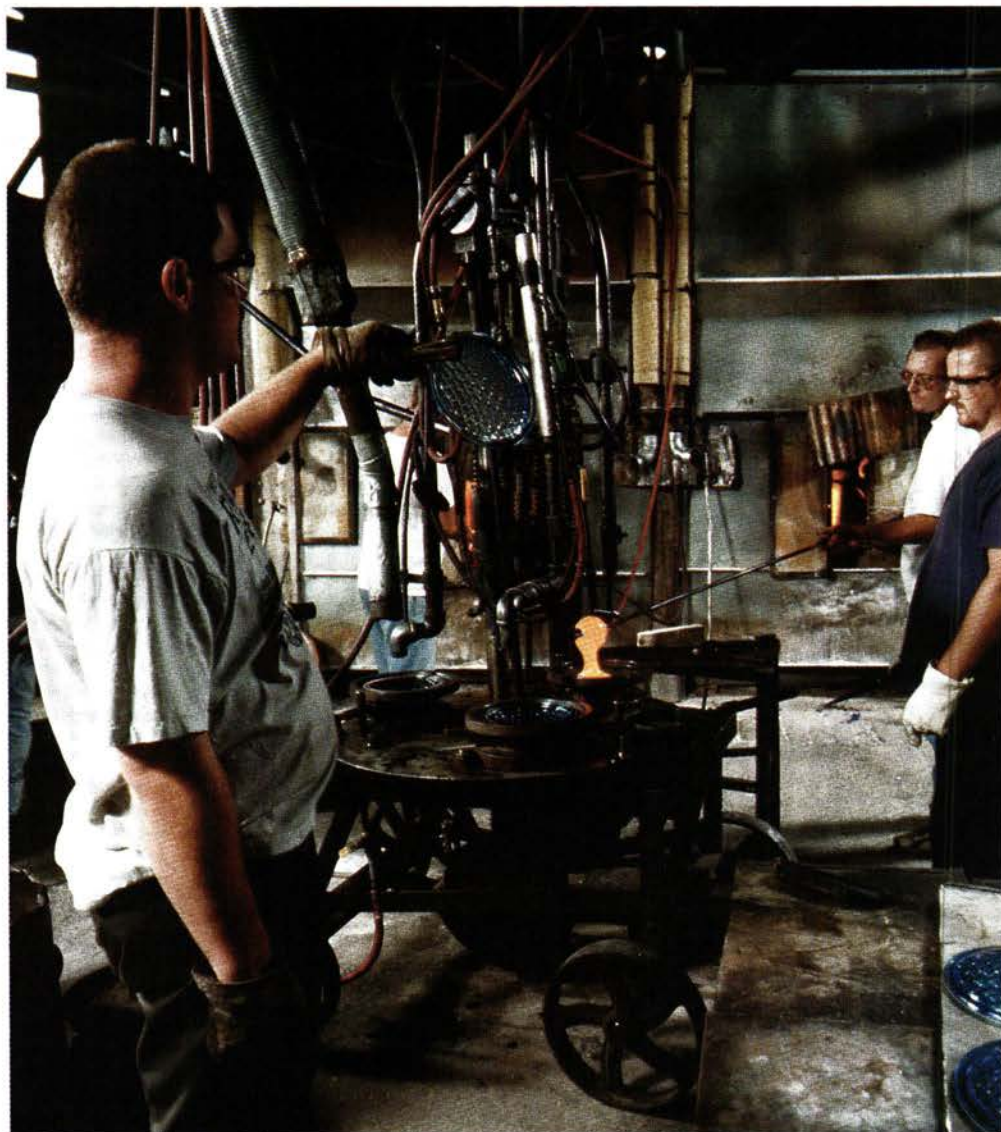
Because glass pressing enabled production of thousands of identical items, this innovation transformed glass from a luxury for the wealthy into a commodity that could be afforded by all. The technique also allowed for much more decorative, intricate, high-relief designs on everyday household objects. By the mid-1850s Deming Jarves, founder of the Boston and Sandwich Glass Company, estimated that glass companies were spending more than two million dollars on pressing machinery and molds alone.

The Factory Floor

The process of pressing glass has changed little at Gillinder Glass since it was introduced to the company in 1871. The factory, straight out of the Industrial Revolution, is a massive 1919 brick building that still houses the first 10-pot furnace on the site. (The original wooden structure burned down in 1912, but the furnace was used until 1994.) Three annealing ovens stretch 30' across the factory floor, and shelves of antique cast-iron



Above: The gatherer slides a puntil into the 2,000-degree Fahrenheit furnace that holds the clay pots of molten glass. He then twirls the rod, gathering glass onto the clay ball at the end of the rod. Each puntil is specially sized to gather just the right amount of glass for a particular product. Right: The gatherer pours the glass glob into the mold, while another worker simultaneously inspects the newly pressed product for imperfections.



molds line the walls. Fans constantly whirl to keep the glass workers cool as two furnaces glow day and night to melt a combination of sand, limestone, soda ash, and cullet (recycled glass) to 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit, transforming these elements into molten glass. When pure ingredients are used glass is clear, transparent, and colorless. Adding metallic oxides, minerals, and salts to the glass batch produces colored glass: copper makes green, cobalt makes blue, and manganese can result in pale brown or yellow.

The Pressing Process

On the factory floor, teams of three to four work at a rhythmic pace. Timing, good judgment, and dexterity are crucial to glass pressing. The two most important tools are the mold and the press. The 1920s-vintage press table is located close to the furnace to maintain the glass at a high temperature when it is being carried to the mold. The gatherer dips a puntil (a long rod with

a ceramic ball attached to the end) into the furnace that holds the clay pot full of molten glass; he then twirls onto the ceramic ball the amount of liquid that he judges suitable for the product and carries the glowing glass to a cast-iron mold set on the rotating pressing table. The gatherer must work quickly so the glass does not cool, which would make it too hard to work. As he carefully drops the liquid into the mold, another worker judges the correct amount of glass and clips the glass free from the rod with a pair of shears. The shears must be sharp and clean. If they are dull and the cutting action is too slow, the glass can cool down too quickly.

Another worker, the presser, then pulls the plunger down onto the liquid glass, pressing the glass into every crevice of the mold with the assistance of air power. Again the combination of timing and temperature is everything. If the glass is too hot it will not conform to the mold pattern, and if too cold the plunger could wrinkle the glass. In addition, the presser must know how much



Above left: Shearing the glass quickly is critical. Above right: A worker pulls the plunger down onto the glass mold, applying just the right pressure to ensure that the liquid glass conforms to the mold. Right: The glass is set on the annealing oven's conveyor belt where it cools over a three-hour period. The glass is then inspected for any blisters or bubbles that might have occurred during the cooling process.



SUPPLIERS

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www.lampglass.nu
Circle 22 on resource card.

CITY LIGHTS
(617) 547-1490
Circle 23 on resource card.

C. NERI
(215) 923-6669
www.neriantiquelighting.com
Circle 24 on resource card.

mold with the external air.

After this, the table is turned once again and another worker lifts the glass from the mold with iron tongs. He carries the now solid glass object to the conveyor belt of the annealing oven where it moves a mere 3" per minute, cooling for three hours before it is just warm to the touch. The goal is to cool the entire object at the same rate to avoid creating stresses in the glass. If the glass were to cool rapidly the outside of the product would naturally cool before the inside, and it would not form into one solid piece. Eventually, the glass would

"weight" or pressure to apply. If he applies too little, the glass will not fill the mold entirely, and if too much the glass object may be excessively thin in some areas.

Once he releases the plunger, he rotates the mold to the second station on the table where nozzles blow air directly onto the glass cooling it to a still scorching 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit. Another challenge for the presser is balancing the heat of the glass in the

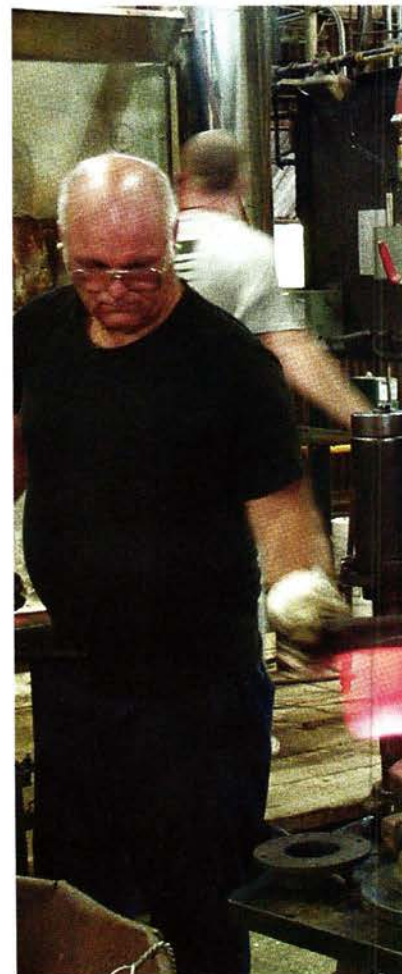
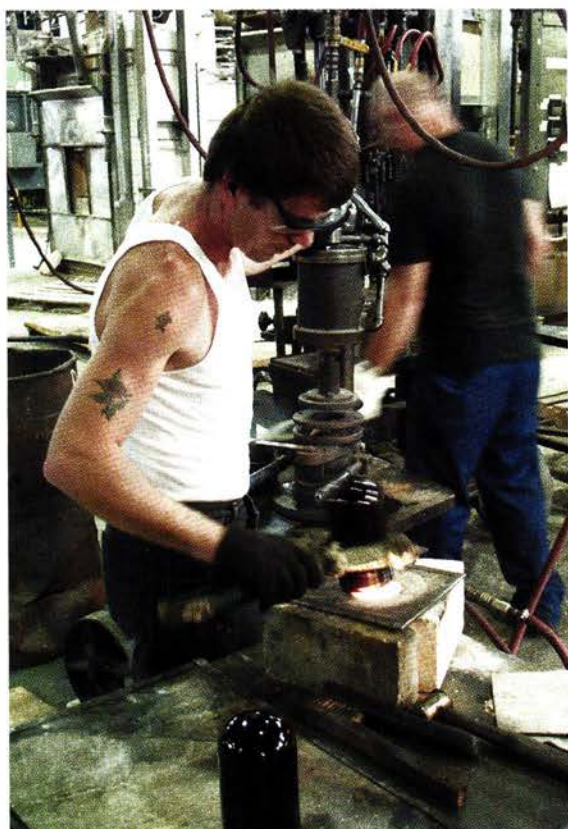
shatter if scratched. Once the items are cool enough to handle, they are inspected for any color or size imperfections. Throughout the day, with two groups working continually, the factory produces 1,000 objects.

Then & Now

The contemporary Gillinder factory is still largely a manual operation, although today electricity fuels the annealing conveyor belts that were once hand cranked. The company still uses many of its antique hand-carved molds but also employs new cast-iron molds that are laser cut. While manpower still operates the pressing machinery, computers now measure the ingredients for glass. Natural gas fuels the furnace that men once stoked 24 hours a day with wood and coal. One thing that hasn't changed over the years, however, is the timeless quality of the products. It is this quality that has allowed Gillinder to enjoy 140 years of glassmaking.



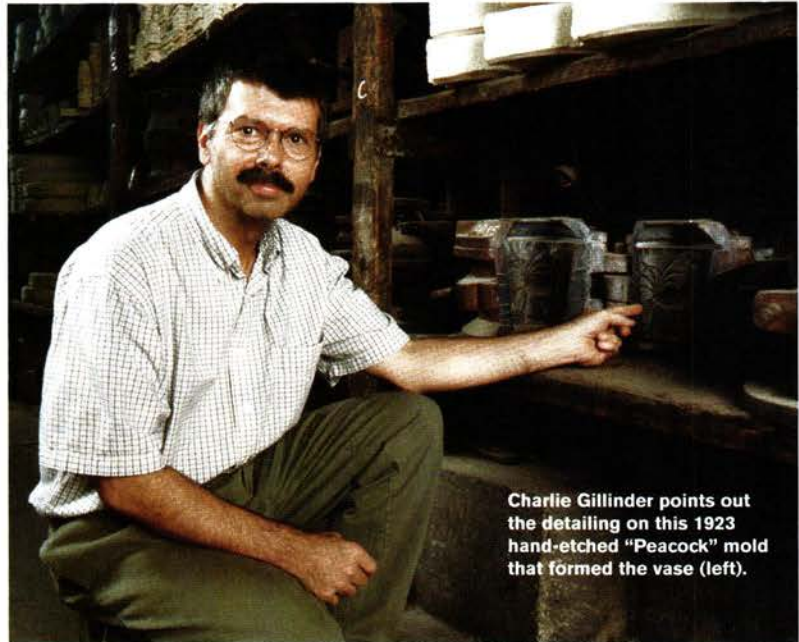
This shade (above) is one of the many pressed shade designs made at Gillinder Glass.



Collecting Objects of Art

When collecting antique pressed glassware, Gillinder Glass President Charlie Gillinder recommends looking for detail and clarity. "Newer pieces won't have the definition in design created by the hand-chiseled molds of the 19th and early 20th centuries," says Gillinder. "Also check a piece for a stamped date and name of the glasshouse that produced it. Pieces that are signed can demand a higher price on the market."

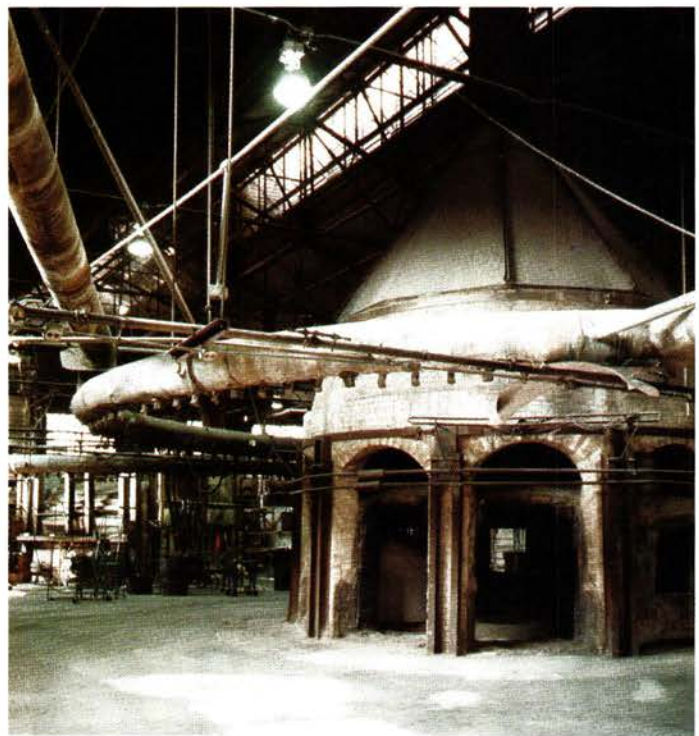
Lamp shades, vases, and tableware made from original molds can still be purchased at the Gillinder gift shop or through their Web site www.gillinderglass.com. They also offer tours of the pressing plant Monday through Friday. Call (845) 856-5375 for rates and times.



Charlie Gillinder points out the detailing on this 1923 hand-etched "Peacock" mold that formed the vase (left).



Far left: A worker sets a glass lens into a second mold to create a screw thread. Center: When working with red glass, the gatherer must clean the puntil after each use because the temperature difference between the molten residue on the rod and the next gathering will discolor the glass object. Left: The glass is carefully removed from the mold. Lubricants are not always needed. In many cases, the quick cooling of the glass after pressing helps separate it from the mold.



The original 10-clay pot furnace is still standing on the plant floor and was in use until 1994. A tunnel under the building was used to usher coal and wood to the furnace. Today's furnaces are heated with natural gas.

Hiding Wiring

by Adam Howard

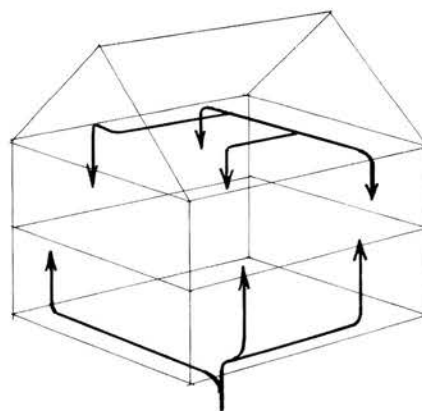
While the last wave of houses built before Edison's light were electrified decades ago, the demands of the wired age have spread many power and communications systems thin, sending homeowners searching for one more route back to the breaker box. Hiding the wiring—whether it's a 12/2 electrical line above a dining room plaster ceiling, or a computer cable running from the kitchen—without disturbing the period appearance or historic fabric of a room takes time and creative techniques.

Techniques are what conservators, curators, and contractors at Vermont's Shelburne Museum called on when they took to rewiring three 18th-century timber-

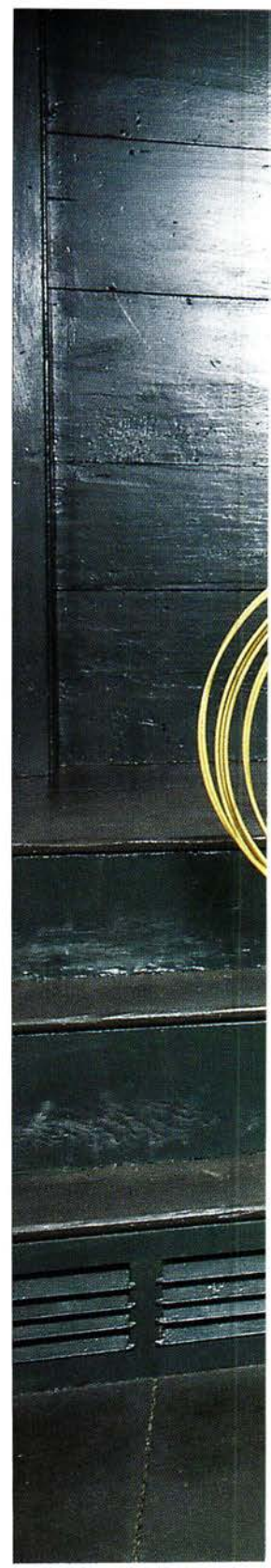
framed houses. According to project coordinator and carpenter David Furlong, the rewiring demanded arduous detail. "In a museum setting you really have to concentrate on losing the wiring because it just changes the whole meaning of the space," he says. "We can't get away with wire moulding here." Each house was stripped of its 1950s wiring and florescent lights towards the goal of offering visitors the feel of a period house without sacrificing modern lighting, security, and fire detection systems.

With an eye on creating a careful balance between a period house and an exhibition space, hiding wiring was imperative. For Furlong, a few tricks and some simple

Right: In the Prentiss House, David Furlong and his team found an ideal service chase in a former parlor closet. Beside an old HVAC duct they ran conduits for electric power, environmental sensors (for museum collections), and a fire detection air sampling system. **Far right:** In the typical two-storey house, it's practical to access the finished spaces from the attic above, and the cellar below.



Photos by Carolyn Bates. Illustrations by Rob Leanna



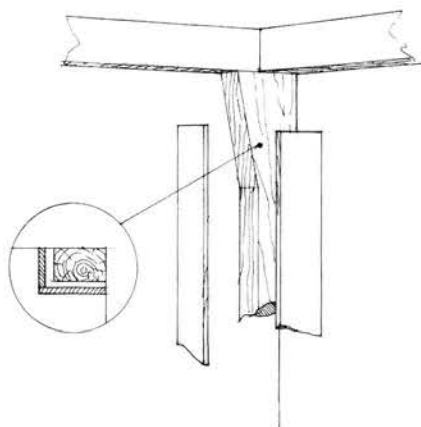
Methods for sensitively retrofitting electrical and signal systems in old houses.



Adding 21st-century service lines with no visible impact on the early 19th-century interior of Stencil House required simple tools, good planning, and some creative methods for using the avenues already present in the building.



This decorated casing in the Stencil House hides a gunstock corner post (see drawing) that provides an ideal vertical void for running lines. This trim happened to cover an early timber-framed member, but it could have just as well been plumbing in a later house.



guidelines allowed him and his crew to install fire and security systems without visible wires. Some of these specific techniques, as well as the broader ideas behind them, can be applied to many old houses with minimal disruption to the finished spaces.

Wiring Superhighways

Like any old-house project, planning is the key to success in running wiring. The folks at Shelburne began by listing their criteria, weighing lighting concerns against any wire exposure that could affect the mood of the room or alter its interpretation. After ironing out the tradeoffs between electrical necessity and curatorial pri-

orities, Furlong chose the routes to run wire for lighting, motion detectors, and outlets guided by two basic approaches.

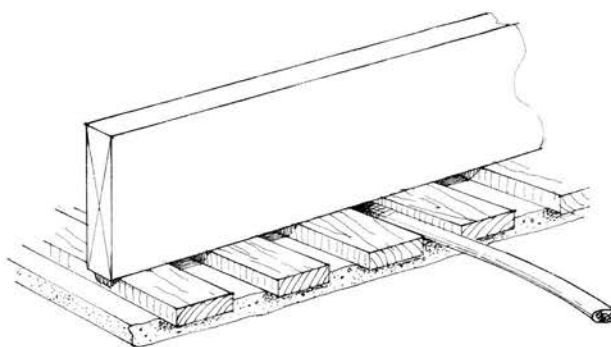
1) Snaking from the cellar up, and the attic down Furlong believes that finding main routes and doing the lion's share of work from the basement and attic is key

to limiting wire exposure. "I can get to the first floor from the basement, and in some cases I can get to the first floor from the attic, like in this Cape," he says. In the Stencil House—an 1804 Cape moved to the museum from Columbus, New York, in 1953 and named for its elaborate original stenciling in two first-storey rooms—an unfinished knee wall provided electricians with ample space for numerous wire runs and installations. Establishing these main routes also saves the time and money that would otherwise be used for localized demolition and rebuilding. "We don't do much between the ceiling and the floor if we can help it," he adds. "That might involve tearing up the floor and putting it back down."

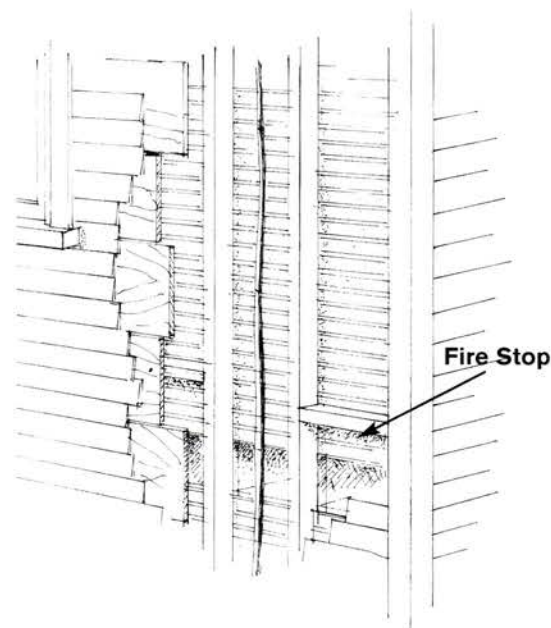
2) Utilizing existing chases Finding a good chase—that is, any continuous recess for running pipes, wires, and ductwork—is fundamental to a hidden wiring job. These spaces become the routes for wiring up and down to floors not accessible from basements and attics. For Furlong and company, the bigger the chase the better. "When I'm working with a good, big chaseway, I put everything in it," he says. If you are lucky, you may find chases



A basement view of the Prentiss House shows the lines for both electrical and fire-detection systems, branching off the central panel (near the light) to various runs up the house. Conventional electrician's staples and clips are both practical and reversible.



Left: Impossible to hide in an unfinished attic, this line will be later painted in wood tones. Above: Threading a Romex cable between the laths behind a ceiling. Right: The bays in balloon-framed walls make continuous chases except where blocked by fire stops.



built specifically for running services, but more likely in an old house you will also need to investigate the many vertical spaces originally intended for other purposes.

Built-in closets and cabinets Where they run floor to ceiling, the back corners of these storage spaces can offer ideal access. With thoughtful installation, wiring or conduits will only consume a minimal amount of usable space. In each of the three Shelburne houses, built-in jelly cupboards and closets provided a usable space and in some cases even a route between floors when there were no other options.

Pipe chases Look closely at the plumbing to bathrooms, kitchens, and radiators. Even better are waste pipes. Vented to the roof, they run the entire height of the building.

Abandoned HVAC ducts and shafts Houses once heated by forced air may have defunct metal ducts running in the walls. The same is true for gravity ventilation shafts. Laundry chutes and long-gone conveniences such as speaking tubes and mail chutes also run between floors.

Dumbwaiters Easy to identify because of their size, defunct dumbwaiter shafts offer a dead-drop for running wiring.

Even when the dumbwaiter is functional, there should be ample space in the shaft beyond the mechanics for a few wire runs.

Service stairwells Rarely seen by guests or, in the case of Shelburne, museum visitors, stairwells to the basement or attic can provide a large cavity giving access to walls and subfloors as well as for service outlets, telephone jacks, and wall lighting.

Voids near chimneys Furlong notes that the wooden framing that surrounds interior chimneys can typically offer an alternate avenue for wiring. "If I were wiring from scratch, I would be looking for what I could find around the masonry of the chimney," he says. In the Stencil House, Furlong was able to run much of the wiring to the attic through chimney voids, then access the second floor from the ceiling.

Balloon-framed walls Wood-framed houses built between 1850 and 1920 are usually balloon framed with studs that run uninterrupted from foundation sill to roof eave. Though the voids between these studs should be blocked at random heights with horizontal fire stops (see drawing above), finding the right bay will provide a broad chase between basement and upper floors.

Unfinished attached spaces An unfinished garage or storage shed attached to

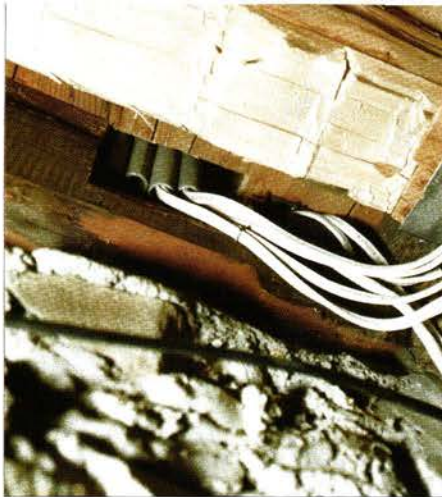
TOOLS & MATERIALS

electrician's staples
wire ties
diagonal wire cutters
hacksaw
1/2" wood chisel and hammer
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electrician's fish
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www.gardnerbender.com
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AMERICAN TOOL CO.
92 Grant. St.
P.O. Box 829
Wilmington, OH 45177-0829
Vice-Grip locking pliers, other tools.
Circle 20 on resource card.



Top: A void where the gunstock post in the Stencil House meets the foundation sill shows the exit for the four conduits Furlong was able to hide in the natural chase behind the casing. **Above:** More conduits fit conveniently behind the existing trim board in an attic after carefully popping the board loose.



Left: Each electrician has a favorite method for attaching fish tapes and pull cords to wires, but the main goal is to make sure the connection doesn't part. Furlong likes to loop one conductor back on the cable, then tie the cord to this eye. Taping the wire or cord in a long spiral guards against slipping. **Right:** The three houses at Shelburne all have a central chimney and, in many cases, fireplaces in each room of the house. Since museum policy prohibits fires in any building, these chimneys presented Furlong with a rare wiring opportunity and a cavernous highway that accessed nearly every room in each house.



an outside wall is, in effect, a giant chase between rooms or floors.

Trim Techniques

When it comes to hiding wiring, generally chases and large spaces are not the total solution for every run. You may have to hide individual lines behind small-scale features in a room. At Shelburne, Furlong took advantage of several classic wiring opportunities. Though the following ideas are based on the three post-and-beam houses at Shelburne Museum, residential houses of different construction eras may offer their own versions of these wire routes.

Casings In nearly all timber-framed houses of this genre, corner posts (and in some cases carrier beams, floor joists, and rafters) are encased with some sort of trim—typically planed 1x material. There is usually a void behind the casing that provides an excellent opportunity to thread

wire or even mount a receptacle. According to Furlong, the best way to access this space without removing the casing is from the basement. He laments that drilling might sometimes be necessary.

Crown mouldings Unlike metal wire moulding, its industrial cousin, crown moulding can either replicate the original detail or be the real McCoy. Nearly all crown moulding has a void on its undecorated side that is excellent for hiding wire. At Shelburne, replicated crown moulding was used to feed the delicate track lighting that illuminates objects in public rooms.

Lath joints To avoid drilling through floor joists, you may find room to slip wire between the lath joints in standard wood-lath plasterwork, and even in the irregular slits of hand-split accordion wood lath. Working from an unfinished ceiling or wall, in many cases it is plausible to run a wire in the interval that separates the bot-

tom of the joist and the plaster. Where working from the finished side is the only option, consider making a small hole in the plaster over a stud so you can thread the wire between lathing and patch later.

Baseboards and window apron mouldings Since interior walls were rarely plastered down to the floor, carefully removing a strategic baseboard or two will often provide access inside the wall for vertical runs, or for boring holes through studs horizontally across the wall. Popping off the horizontal apron moulding under the window can help too.

Snaking Techniques

The use of existing spaces makes it possible to keep traditional wire snaking to a minimum. Furlong admits, though, that no matter how well you use these spaces, reaching a specific outlet requires thought.

One of Furlong's favorite methods

is to use 3/4" I.D. schedule 40 PVC pipe wherever possible in place of a snake. His notion: Wherever you can get a snake you can get a small PVC pipe. "It's got flexibility, rigidity, and it's cheap and readily available," he says. "It's also smooth." He argues that once the pipe is in place, he can easily push a wire through to its objective. Furlong advises that, given enough room, it's wise to install more PVC than immediately required to keep the options open for future needs.


For example, by using several 10' lengths of PVC, Furlong was able to access the second-floor knee wall in two of the buildings from the cellar. The conduit's combination of properties allows him to poke it through insulated walls like a snake.

A typical project is bound to have situations that call for time-honored, low-tech approaches. Dropping a "mouse" or "messenger" (a string tied to any convenient weight, such as a large nut) will plumb the depths of a vertical chase. Snaking with an electrician's "fish" (a coiled steel tape) finds a route up a wall or across a ceiling. Small mirrors, such as those sold for cosmetic kits, can be handy for seeing into voids. When pulling coaxial cables—the kind used for cable TV signals—first strip

off several inches of the outer jacket and center conductor to reveal the woven copper outer conductor. Then tape the woven conductor to your fish or messenger like a Chinese handcuff so that it grips tighter as you pull.

Special Case Lighting

A museum house, like many old houses, presents a few unique problems that spawn inventive solutions. For instance, when curators called for reproduction electric candle sconces in the Prentis House to be wired to hidden power sources, Furlong was forced to "think outside of the box"—the junction box, that is.

These lighting fixtures were to be mounted to historic interior walls simply constructed of vertical wide-pine boards. "In this situation we have planed planks that are original to the building," he points out. "We're trying to demonstrate this candle lighting as closely as we can." Working from a pancake box, Furlong tucked 14-gauge black lamp cord in the vertical joint between two planks, then ran the cord back to a standard junction box on the second floor. "To simulate lighting in a museum setting, you've got to keep pushing the envelope with your wiring techniques." 



Left: The simulated candle sconce in the Stencil House actually hangs from a flush-mount pancake junction box. **Above:** On the other side of the wall, Furlong was able to slip the power cord between existing joints in the vertical plank wall.

Shelburne in Short

Located in northwest Vermont, Shelburne Museum is a unique museum of art, Americana, and historic architecture near the shores of Lake Champlain. Begun in 1947 with the collections of founder Electra Havemeyer Webb, the museum houses some 100,000 objects in 39 exhibit buildings. The three buildings discussed here—Stencil House, Dutton House, and Prentis House—are early 19th-century timber-framed buildings rewired from fall 1999 to spring 2001 as part of a campaign to maintain the structures and enhance their interpretation of typical mid-19th century domestic life. Shelburne Museum is open May 26 to October 14 (December 7 for selected exhibitions). For specific hours and general information, call (802) 985-3346; www.shelburnemuseum.org.



The Prentis House, built in 1773 in Hadley, Massachusetts, and moved to Shelburne in the 1950s, houses the decorative arts collections of Electra Webb and Katharine Prentis Murphy in newly reinterpreted settings.

*Pneumatic tools can be
love-at-first-try.*

Working On Air

by Kathleen Fisher

A lot of old-house owners may not have thought much about air tools because until recently, they were pretty much restricted to nailers and staplers manufactured for big-job contractors.

That's a reasonable application, since the compressors that drive air tools are most efficient when they work in brief spurts that match the rhythm of nailing and stapling. These tools can be used in more limited ways on old houses, for framing additions, for instance, or putting up miles of interior moulding.

Yet there is a larger array of air tools out there for restorers to tap, including chisels, wrenches, drills, sanders, washers, sandblasters, grinders, and painters. Several manufacturers have long offered "standard duty" tools for home use, while others are redesigning nailers and compressors to be more friendly and affordable for nonprofessionals. Some people say that once they've started using air tools they are positively addictive. They want more tools with fancier features. "A compressor has a billion uses," says Steve Jordan, OHJ contributing editor, who often recruits one

for sandblasting and adding texture to wall paint. "They're great for blowing dust away for painting prep, especially for hard-to-reach projects like radiators."

What is compressed air?

There's nothing mysterious or magical about a compressor. Essentially an air pump, it provides an alternative form of power by reducing, or compressing, a volume of air and as a result, increasing its pressure. This power is released when the air rushes through a hose into a tool and expands back to its original volume.

Most of us are familiar with large industrial compressors—the type that enable jack hammers to make that ear-splitting racket at construction sites. Compressors have a long list of other commercial uses, from firefighting to operat-

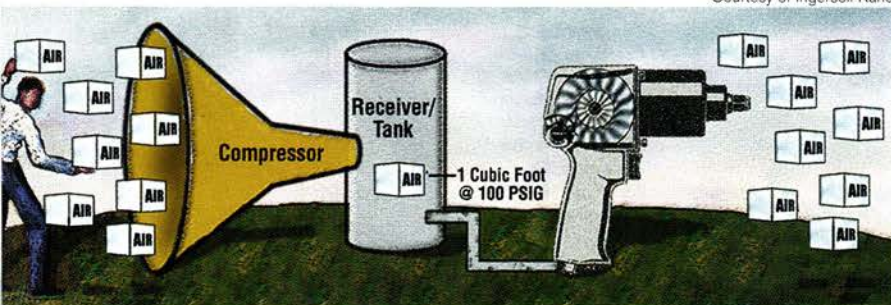
Small compressors are often sufficient for renovation work and periodic home maintenance. **A.** An oilless 1-horsepower Hitachi of the "pancake" style will power a brad or finish nailer. **B.** This 2-horsepower DeWalt was designed for easier hand carrying. **C.** Another Hitachi style has vertically stacked "hotdog" tanks with a total 4-gallon capacity. **D.** In slightly larger compressors, vertical tanks are space savers. This 5-horsepower model in Campbell-Hausfeld's Home Workshop Series ranges in tank size from 22 to 30 gallons.





Left: Porter-Cable recently introduced 18 new air tools. Below, left: A compressor releases energy when the air it contains expands back to its original volume.

Courtesy of Porter Cable



Courtesy of Ingersoll-Rand

Right: Before you buy a compressor, decide what tools you'll run with it, now and in the future. A small compressor can operate a spray gun or brad nailer, but not a high-speed sander or sandblaster.



D



| TOOL | TOOL OPERATING PRESSURE | TOOL AIR REQUIREMENT (CFM) | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | Air tool consumption based on 15 seconds per minute (25%) of operation.* | | | | | | | |
| SOCKET DRIVING | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 1/2" Impact Wrench | 90 PSI | | | | | | | | 8.0 |
| 3/8" Butterfly Wrench | 90 PSI | | | | 4.8 | | | | |
| 3/8" Ratchet | 90 PSI | | | | | 5.6 | | | |
| MATERIAL RESHAPING | | | | | | | | | |
| Air Hammer | 90 PSI | | | | | 5.6 | | | |
| Cut-Off Tool | 90 PSI | | | | | 5.3 | | | |
| Body Saw | 90 PSI | | 2.0 | | | | | | |
| Air Nibbler | 90 PSI | | | | | 5.6 | | | |
| Air Shear | 90 PSI | | | | | | | 7.0 | |
| 3/8" Drill | 90 PSI | | | | | | | 6.6 | |
| Die Grinder | 90 PSI | | | | | | 5.9 | | |
| FINISHING / SANDING | | | | | | | | | |
| 6" D.A. Sander | 90 PSI | | | | 4.1 | | | | |
| High Speed Sander | 90 PSI | | | | | | 6.4 | | |
| Jitterbug Sander | 90 PSI | | | | 4.25 | | | | |
| Straight Line Sander | 90 PSI | | 2.9 | | | | | | |
| SPRAY PAINTING | | | | | | | | | |
| Home/Hobby Spray Gun | 40 PSI | 0.6 | | | | | | | |
| Multi-Purpose Spray Gun | 40 PSI | 1.5 | | | | | | | |
| Air Brush Kit | 20 PSI | 0.3 | | | | | | | |
| Automotive Spray Gun | 40 PSI | | 2.3 | | | | | | |
| Touch-Up Spray Gun | 40 PSI | 1.2 | | | | | | | |
| SPECIALTY TOOLS | | | | | | | | | |
| Grease Gun | 90 PSI | 1.0 | | | | | | | |
| Caulk Gun | 30 PSI | 1.0 | | | | | | | |
| Engine Cleaner | 90 PSI | 1.25 | | | | | | | |
| Sand Blaster Kit | 90 PSI | | | | | 5.6 | | | |

*Air consumption tool rates can vary from different manufacturers.

ing rooms to recovery of maple syrup sap.

Air tools in general have a lot of advantages. The added energy source makes them more powerful and faster than similar electrical tools. (In the case of nailers, there are no similar tools.) Because the motor isn't in the tool itself, they are about 20 percent lighter and have fewer moving parts to wear out. Once you've invested in a compressor to run them—in some cases for less than 200 dollars—they can be half as expensive as the equivalent electric tool.

Most home-use compressors are powered by electricity. Gas-powered models are usually larger, intended for construction crews who lack access to electric power, and they can't be used indoors. Since your electricity source can be many feet away at the end of your air hose, you can more safely use the tool in wet areas, such as for repairing gutters.

What Do I Need to Know?

It's helpful to master some air-power terminology before deciding what compressor to buy. Some tools, such as sanders and impact wrenches, require more powerful compressors than does a touch-up spray painter or brad nailer.

Some manufacturers say 2.5 horsepower is more than enough power for a homeowner who will use the compressor only now and then, and that an electric motor this size is as much as a 115-volt, 20-amp circuit can handle. Campbell-Hausfeld, however, says the 5-horsepower compressors in their new "Home Workshop Series" will run on a standard circuit.

Look beyond the horsepower of the compressor, which is often given as "peak" horsepower, the level at which the motor will burn out. You don't need to know how powerful your compressor's motor is so much as how much air it can deliver to your tools, and you can get compressors that deliver more air at a given pressure with the same horsepower.

Manufacturers rate air tools by maximum pressure in pounds per square inch (psi), but more tellingly, by delivered air, or cubic feet per minute (CFM) produced at a given pressure, usually 90 psi, the pressure at which most small air tools run. Some use Standard CFM (SCFM), noting that air temperature, barometric pressure, and relative humidity affect CFM. One maker recommends multiplying your tool's required SCFM by 1.25 to determine how powerful a compressor to buy. (Keep in mind that you may want to add tools later, or if you have a second handyperson in the house, run more than one tool at once.)

Other considerations:

Oil versus oilless operation Oil-lubricated systems need more maintenance than oilless systems. They will last longer under heavy use, but an oilless system may be sufficient for occasional old-house projects.

Size and style of compressor You can hand-carry the smallest portable compressors, sometimes in shapes described as "hot dog" or "pancake," while slightly larger styles are mounted on wheels. Portable tanks are as small as four gallons weighing just over 32 pounds. Chores such as sanding and grinding require a heavier, stationary model. Tanks with a vertical, rather than horizontal, design take up less space.

Hoses The standard air hose is 3/8". The longer your hose, however, the lower your CFM. You should probably go up to a 1/2" hose if you work 60' or farther from the compressor. For close-quarters work in your garage, you can buy a hose that recoils.

Bells and whistles Air contains water that collects in the compressor tank, so users need to drain it after each use to prevent rust and corrosion. Some compres-



A



B



C



F



E



D

A. A finish nailer, such as this model from Craftsman, is a practical tool for an old-house owner, and the angled magazine allows easier maneuvering. B. Ingersoll-Rand says their Dual-Action Quiet Sander is vibration free. C. You might want to rent, rather than buy, a framing nailer, unless you're putting on a large addition. This is the Hitachi Common Round Head Framing Nailer. D. The Craftsman Palm-Air Driver drives nails 3/4" to 6" long in tight spots. E. This Porter-Cable rotary tool will polish, grind, sharpen, and edge a variety of materials. F. Craftsman's 2-in-1 Finishing Tool drives both crown staples and finish nails. G. Despite the name, air hammers work more like a chisel.

SUPPLIERS

Air tools are becoming more readily available at home and hardware stores, and you can buy them at many Web sites. To browse through catalogs or see the product line of one manufacturer, try these:

CRAFTSMAN
(800) 377-7414 (catalog includes tools from other manufacturers),
www.sears.com/craftsman.
Circle 25 on resource card.

CAMPBELL-HAUSFELD
(866) 247-6937
www.campbellhausfeld.com
Circle 26 on resource card.

DEWALT
(800) 433-9258
www.dewalt.com
Circle 27 on resource card.

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sors offer moisture filters and automatic tank drains to make this job easier. Thermal overload protection and after coolers guard against overheating.

The Tools

Over the decades, manufacturers have developed several general families of pneumatic tools, each comprising many specialized tools to serve the needs of a particular craft or industry. Here's just a sampling of them and how you might use them on an old house.

Construction and cabinetmaking Sure, nailers are faster than hand-nailing, but fans say that's only the beginning. They eliminate the need to countersink nails. They free a hand to hold whatever you're working on. While heavier than a hammer, they're less physically punishing. Users say there are no dings from misplaced hammer blows, fewer splits, and easier toe-nailing, although handling the tools takes some getting used to. Careless use will result in kickback or jamming, and poor design can blow exhaust in your face.

Most brands have two alternate modes of delivery. Bump, bounce, or contact firing lets a nail fly when the tool touches your target. Sequential nailing lets you control the speed with a trigger.

Framing nailers use only large nails. One advantage in an old house: They set up fewer vibrations than hand nailing so that if you're reframing a sagging wall, you're apt to have less cracked plaster on adjacent walls or ceilings. Air-driven nails are often coated with adhesive, which is melted by the friction of nail meeting wood and holds better.

Roofing nailers help get your house back under cover faster. Most have a base you can adjust to various shingle exposures, so you get nails in the same place in each one.

Finish nailers drive 15- or 16-gauge nails from 3/4" to 2 1/2" long and are more versatile, for interior trim or joinery, for

instance. **Brad nailers**, the baby of the family, are useful for making cabinets, attaching small pieces of trim and face frames, and clampless gluing. **Staplers** are handy where the work won't show: plywood soffits, cabinet backing, floor and counter underlay, upholstery, latticework, picture frames. Craftsman now offers one they say will countersink in hard wood.

Sanders for smoothing and shaping your wood come not only in rotary disc versions, but some manufacturers also make oscillating sanders that mimic the back-and-forth motions of hand sanding.

Machine and metalworking Air-powered metal grinders, chisels, and rust-scaling tools find ready application in repairing and refinishing steel windows and iron fencing. Pneumatic impact wrenches designed for driving nuts and bolts with controlled twisting power have even been used for production bolting of heavy timber frames.

Masonry Trow & Holden of Barre, Vermont, makes pneumatic chisels for sculpting and other stonework that restorers find ideal for removing old mortar before they repoint stone or brick walls. These tools don't stir up view-obscuring dust or cut into adjacent courses like grinders do, and work roughly three times as fast as a hammer and hand-held chisel.

Painting Air-powered spray painters have been retooled in recent years to be more environmentally friendly, with high-velocity low-volume (HVLV) systems that overspray less paint. Manufacturers sometimes call them "airless" sprayers. However, users still complain about overspray and difficulty with latex paints gumming them up.

Most major air-tool sellers are now touting gravity-feed sprayers. These have a clear paint container above the nozzle that lets you see how much paint you have left and, ostensibly and logically, delivers the paint to the nozzle with less waste. 🛠️

Glossary

CFM-cubic feet per minute The volume of air a compressor delivers in a minute is how much air power you'll have available to run your tool. The number is obtained by multiplying bore times stroke times revolutions-per-minute.

psi-pounds per square inch This is the air-flow pressure. The CFM decreases as the pressure increases, so it's easier to produce higher CFM at lower pressures. Applications may require a specific psi, but CFM runs your tool.

Delivered Air Air pressure alone doesn't operate your tool. You need CFM delivered air at a given pressure: CFM @ 90 psi is a typical rating.

Cut-in and cut-out pressure Small, one-stage compressors typically fill a tank with compressed air until it reaches a maximum or cut-out pressure of 125 psi. The compressor cuts in again when the tank pressure begins approaching that at which the tool operates—often 90 psi. (Contractors are more apt to buy two-stage models that allow for continuous use.) Differences in cut-in and cut-out pressure may mean less downtime.

In Search of Central Vacuums

At the turn of the last century, this innovative appliance revolutionized the way we kept house.

By Gordon Bock

Mention vacuum cleaners, and most people think of electrically powered machines they push or pull around the house. In today's cordless age, many folks take advantage of battery-powered vacuums that can be wielded with one hand, free from any 120-volt umbilical cord. What they may not realize, however, is that the vacuum cleaner goes back more than a century, and its earliest incarnation was not as a mobile appliance but a built-in system that like running water or gas lighting was piped and ported throughout the house—the central vacuum cleaner.

While portable electric vacuum cleaners date to at least 1908 (the year Hoover manufactured its first model), the first central vacuums were around as early as 1902 or before. Besides being one of the period's appealing new technological marvels, such as inventive bathroom equipment or automobiles, a central vacuum system made good economic sense to owners of large suburban houses in the years before World War I. Lots of rooms required lots of up-



keep, and in a time when domestic help was already finding better opportunities in the workplace, a vacuum on every floor would help close the "servant gap." Industrialist Franklin Sieberling installed such a system in his Tudor Revival mansion Stan Hywet Hall in Akron, Ohio, in the 1910s. Public buildings, such as auditoriums, were also experimenting with the system at the time.

The heart of central vacuum cleaners was in the basement. Pipes from throughout the house terminated at a pump, fan, or turbine that pulled air through a crude filter system and exhausted it outdoors.

The power was often supplied by early electric motors—but not always. Gasoline engines sometimes provided the motive power. Even more surprising to the modern world, illuminating gas companies, scrambling to hold their market against upstart electricity providers by offering new appliances, were pushing gas-powered central vacuums by 1914. In these devices, similar in construction to hot water heaters, the draft created by an open flame provided the suction. In fact, they actually incinerated the collected dust and dirt before it was discharged out the flue. Whatever the design, in two or three locations on upper floors pipes ended in spring-loaded valves or caps that opened to accept cleaning hoses and wands, then snapped shut to seal the tube.

Architects and domestic science critics—often early technophiles themselves—applauded the systems as being both practical and hygienic. “Many new houses are now equipped with vacuum cleaners in the basement quite as a matter of course,” wrote architect Charles E. White Jr. in 1914, “for one does not have to drag a machine around.” Another writer waxed, “The thoroughness of the central system in day-to-day cleaning has completely vanquished spring cleaning.” In an era when eliminating dust and dirt was hailed as a pri-

mary offensive against disease-spreading microbes, vacuum cleaners of all sorts were quickly crowned as hygienic marvels and “the most popular electrical household machine that there is” by 1927.

The popularity of the central vacuum waned dramatically when the boom years of the '20s gave way to the depression. House construction came to a near-halt in the 1930s and seems to have taken an equal toll on central vacuum installations, primarily a new-construction item. In any event, by the 1940s the vacuum cleaner market was overwhelmingly portable. Central systems were regarded as specialties at best, and relics at worst—that is, in the United States.

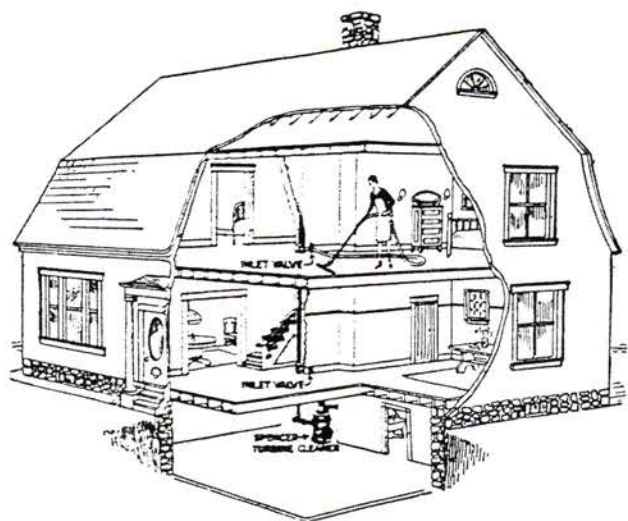
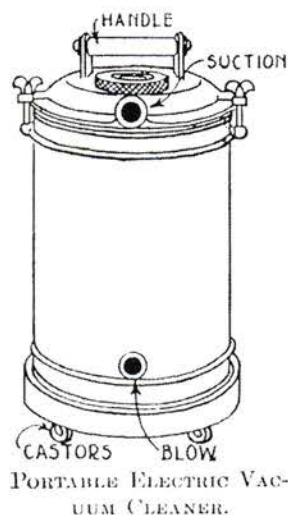
In Canada, however, the picture was quite the reverse. It seems that many Canadian households, with their strong cultural ties to France and England, favored not only European tastes in furnishings, such as tile floors, but the cleaning habits that went with them. This often translated to a preference for large, upright canister-style vacuum cleaners, and from here it was a short step to permanently installing a large cylindrical vacuum cleaner in the basement. On top of this, after 1940 many Canadian house

builders regularly outfitted all new houses with the piping for central vacuums, saving the equipment for later hook-up. With this practice the builder could offer an inexpensive sales perk, and the buyer could defer some

appliance costs. The result is some 80 percent of Canadian houses incorporate central vacuum systems, and several manufacturers are based there.

Central vacuum cleaners have been slow to return to American houses, but in recent decades the picture has been changing. Besides their traditional advantages of quiet operation and ease of use, they have enjoyed a renewed popularity for health reasons. Rather than recirculating exhaust in a room, central vacuums discharge it outside of the building—an asset for allergy-sensitive individuals. Today, they're no less convenient for cleaning the many rooms of a large Tudor or late Queen Anne house than they were in 1902. So if you're opening a lot of walls in the near future—that is when you are not playing cook, chauffeur, and maid—give some thought to adding a historically appropriate central vacuum.

Special thanks to The Hoover Company and the Hoover Historical Center, 1875 Easton St. N.W., North Canton, OH 44720-3331. For a tour schedule call (330) 499-0287.



Opposite page: Vacuum cleaners were the primary solution to the “servant problem” of the early 20th century. Left: Built into the house, central vacuums sited the main unit in the basement, running pipes to two or three valves per floor as in this 1930s illustration. Top: An early canister vacuum from 1914.

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Accented by the small gable addition in the foreground, the extended Saltbox roof of the 1774 Thomas Griswold House in Guilford, Connecticut, becomes even clearer—a classic example in clapboard siding.

Jane Booth Vollers

Saltboxes and Catslides

by Gordon Bock

(1660 - 1800)

What house can claim a more evocative name than the Saltbox? The image of a plain wood container with a broad lid pitched for accessing an essential store embodies all the handmade practicality of an antique world, and rightly so. As the name implies, the essence of the Saltbox is its roof—a long, usually continuous extension of the gable that is often intimidatingly steep. Original Saltboxes are among the oldest houses in North America, and their unmistakable profile is the product of a pre-industrial age.

Like many of the most elemental features found in old houses, the shape of the Saltbox had unabashedly practical origins. When the earliest English settlers arrived in the New World in the 1600s, they built basic two-storey houses two rooms wide modeled on the late medieval vernacular dwellings they knew in their homeland. By the mid-1700s their descendants—particularly in New England—were expanding these buildings off the rear to gain more interior space. The most efficient approach was to simply extend the existing roof over the new space. The result was a one-and-a-half-room-deep house with a dramatically different roof plan—one that, when the house was oriented with its back to the north, was also better suited to the long and bitter New England winters. The Saltbox, then, is a fundamental house form or type, and one that transcends eras.

Inside the Saltbox

Saltboxes springing from the 18th century or earlier invariably incorporate a massive central brick chimney. Hand-in-hand with it is a hall-and-parlor plan where the two main rooms—the hall (the cooking and eating room) and the parlor (a living space and sometimes bedroom space)—flank the front entrance. Directly in front of the entrance is a narrow enclosed staircase ascending to the upper rooms, used for sleeping and storage.

The idea of gaining extra space by adding a lean-to off the back was not novel—indeed, it appears in English houses built centuries earlier—but its use was modified to suit the specific needs of colonial Americans. In New England the new space extending the full width of the building generally became service

Jane Booth Vollers



Sunlight raking across the immense rear roof of the 1660 Hyland House in Guilford plays up the wide spacing of the timber rafters as waves in the shingling. Equally uneven is the back wall, the likely result of rooms added at different times.



Courtesy of Old Salem

James C. Massey



Top: Catslide cottages such as this one on the grounds of Bacon's Castle in Surrey, Virginia, fall short of a northern Saltbox's full two storeys, but display the same steep, continuous slope. **Above:** More common in the South is a double-pitched roof and an extended, rather than central, chimney, as seen on the Hagen House in Old Salem, North Carolina.



Paul Rocheleau



James C. Massey

Above: Though the main body of the 1725 Parsons House in Newington, New Hampshire, is only one room wide, placement of the 12/12 windows shows how large a Saltbox can be: five bays wide and over two stories tall. **Left:** In Louisiana, a catslide cottage with integral front porch and a low, long extension in back, realized in board-and-batten.

rooms that added to the utility of what were for the most part farmhouses. In some of the earliest examples, the new space was divided into two rooms, but by the mid-1700s it was pretty well standardized into three: a large central room flanked by two smaller rooms. When retrofitted with an additional hearth, the central room became the new kitchen, a move that shifted the hall's role to more of a sitting room. One small room off the kitchen became the pantry or buttery for keeping milk products and beverages. Often sited on the cooler, northeast corner, this storage space was also frequently built halfway between the ground floor and cellar. The other small room could be a workroom but, being conveniently near the warmth of the kitchen, it was often turned into a bedroom for elderly or infirm residents. Beyond this, a second staircase usually linked the new rooms to the floor above.

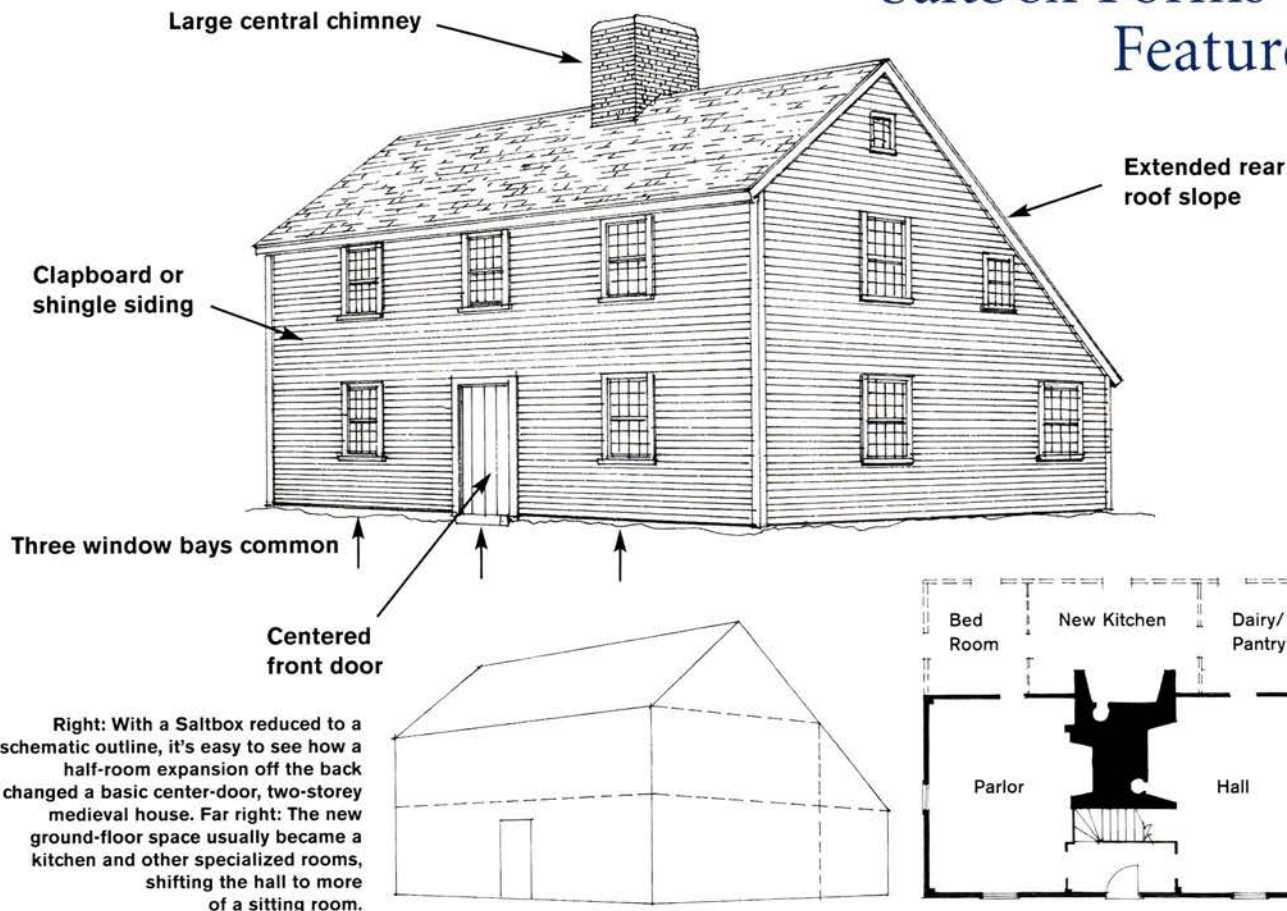
By virtue of the need to have sufficient headroom in the extension, Saltbox houses are commonly one-and-a-half-storeys or larger, though many one-storey buildings with a small workroom or storage area off the back also fit the mold. Other features are equally characteristic, though less dramatic or unique. Although chimneys were sometimes detailed with decorative patterns, ex-

terior embellishments were otherwise minimal or starkly nonexistent. Like Cape Cod houses, their close cousins, the original Saltboxes eschew dormers in the roof. Doorways are centered in the main facade, with one or two bays of windows on either side. Flourishes such as pediments, sidelights, or molded casings are rare in originals. Windows are small and spartan, originally diamond-paned leaded glass in 17th- and 18th-century originals, later double-hung sash in 8/12 or 6/6 patterns. The overall impression is of an austere, symmetrical house distinguished by the striking geometry of the unbalanced roof.

Catslides and Beyond

Though New England holds the mother lode of Saltboxes built before the industrial era, the Saltbox form is far from regional, and the lean-to extension has proved a practical solution for adding space in many times and places. The dramatic roof slope itself is often called a catslide—another charming moniker that is a particular favorite in the South. In fact, in the Tidewater region of Virginia and the Carolinas—the other broad well-spring of 17th-century English settlement—Saltbox-shaped houses

Saltbox Forms & Features



are sometimes referred to as catslide cottages (at least by architectural historians writing in the 1960s and '70s).

Though the examples are less rarified and therefore the definitions less clear, the term catslide often pops up in conjunction with any southern house that exhibits a catslide roof—be it the result of a room extension off the back, or sometimes a room-and-porch combination. Such houses are more likely to be only a storey-and-a-half high with broken, rather than continuous-slope roofs that are not as steep as their New England brethren. The house may also be raised above ground on brick or stone piers to help circulate cooling air in the warm summers.

In New England, the original post-medieval houses continued to be expanded into Saltboxes through the latter part of the 18th century. Although many builders resorted to this eminently efficient solution until the end of the timber-framed house era and later, generally such a prosaic shape began to look passe once the generations born in the new American republic had the means to build more sophisticated houses in the Georgian, Federal, and later, Greek Revival styles. As a recognizable house form, the Saltbox continued to recede and dissipate into the architec-

tural landscape through most of the 19th century.

By the 1890s, however, the continuing cycles of taste focused new light on the Saltbox shape as part of the burgeoning Colonial Revival movement—this time as a complete house rather than an adaptation. Never anywhere as popular as the high-style Georgian models, the Saltbox was nonetheless tapped as a design source on its home turf, and some large examples embellished with early Colonial Revival features, such as ornate dormers and swags, still stand in towns north of Boston. In the early 20th century, modern-era revivalists—notably Royal Barry Wills—turned to the Saltbox as another time-tested vernacular template for a practical, homey suburban house. Outside of New England, however, the Saltbox did not seem to have as much romantic appeal with the house-buying public of the 1940s and '50s as the Cape Cod house. It was too severe, perhaps, too medieval or, most likely, still too familiar from the farmsteads and pioneer dwellings that still dominated the countryside in the early 20th century. Even so, a half century after the last revival and nearly three since the originals, it's showing signs of coming back again in the neo-traditional neighborhoods of the early 21st century. 🏠



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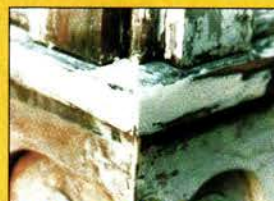
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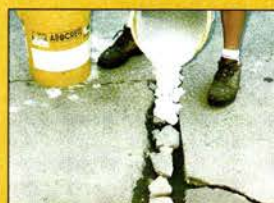
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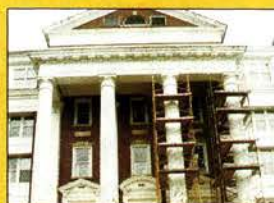
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BASICS

Chimney Checklist

By the OHJ Technical Staff

Chimneys and fireplaces are major architectural features, as well as part of the beauty and charm of old houses. When chimneys become faulty through age or abuse, however, they can quickly threaten the safety of a building and its occupants. Evaluating the status of a chimney 80 or more years old is often a two-level process: first determining if it was built adequately, then examining how it is faring through seasons of use. Though large or seriously deteriorated chimneys are best inspected by a professional, there's much an old-house owner can do to size up the condition of a historic chimney.

OLD CHIMNEYS

Chimneys that have been out of service for extended periods develop their own special problems. Before starting any fire, thoroughly inspect the chimney and hearth, using this checklist. If any condition is questionable, call in a professional. If the condition is good, move on to the Working Chimney Checklist.

☐ Give the chimney an overall inspection for sound-

When a chimney or fireplace looks this bad, its poor condition is obvious. The signs of problems in old-house chimneys are usually much subtler, though no less a potential threat to proper performance or safety.

Marianne Henderson

OLD-HOUSE BASICS

ness. Check for cracks and settling at the foundation, weathering of masonry, or evidence that the chimney is moving away from the house.

□ Look closely at the base of the chimney. The firebox should rest on thick reinforced masonry that extends into the earth. The hearth apron—in old houses usually cantilevered out in a half-arch—should be level and free of major cracks at the fireplace opening.

□ Check for excessive leaning above the roofline. (Chimneys tend to lean in the direction of the prevailing wind, not because of actual wind pressure, but due to the effects of burning sulphur-containing fuels that increase the expansion of the mortar joints on the lee side of the chimney.) Minor leaning is more an appearance problem than a structural one, but if the chimney shows signs of cracking and imbalance, it may have to be dismantled

to the roofline and rebuilt.

□ Confirm that the chimney is at least 3' higher than any roof surface where it comes through the building, and 2' higher than any roof surface within 10'. Shorter chimneys draw poorly or spew live sparks.

□ On exterior chimneys, inspect for weathering of the rack (where it expands into a fireplace). Racks may be protected with mortar wash, a course of paving brick, or a wide, flat stone. Mortar wash should fill each step of brick.

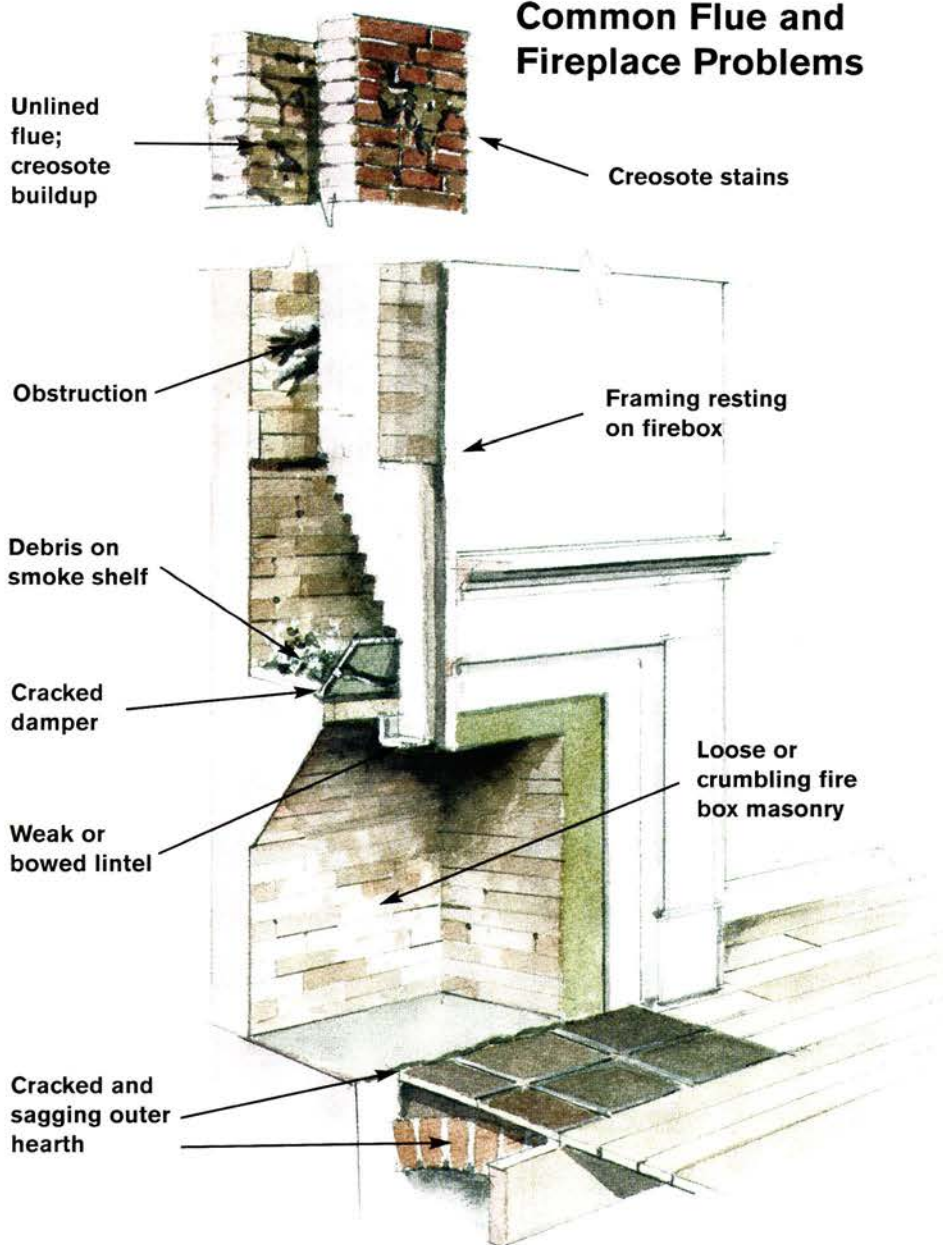
□ Determine if the chimney is lined. While flue liners are required for safety by modern building codes, many old-house chimneys were built before they became common practice shortly after 1900. Unlined chimneys may have deteriorated mortar inside the flue and require a liner (see Working Chimney Checklist).

□ Check for obstructions. If the chimney is straight, sight up and down the flue to determine if it is clear (see drawing page, 71). If the chimney has bends, use a smoke test (see Working Chimney Checklist). Locate obstructions by tying a rope to a heavy object (a window sash weight is ideal), then lowering the object down the flue until the rope goes slack. Measuring the amount of used rope indicates the distance to the plug. To clear the plug, cover all fireplace openings then try drawing the object up a few feet and dropping it on the obstruction until it breaks up. Persistent blockages (such as clusters of fallen bricks) may require you to break through the chimney wall.

□ Check the flue for mixed uses such as electric wires, pipes, television cables, and other service lines that have been run up the chimney while it was out of service. Such surprises must be relocated before the chimney can be recommissioned.

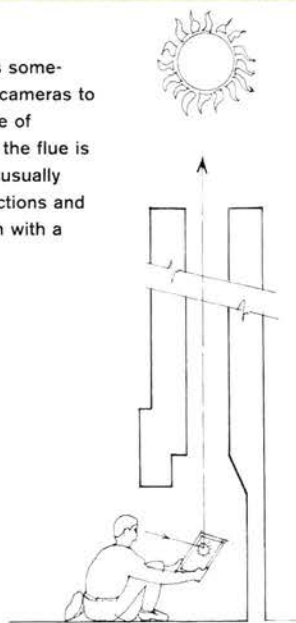
□ Check for poorly patched holes in the masonry, such as breaches repaired with brick pieces and wadded aluminum, or an unused stove thimble sealed with a

Common Flue and Fireplace Problems



Illustrations Rob Leanna

Chimney sweeps sometimes use video cameras to inspect the inside of a chimney, but if the flue is straight you can usually check for obstructions and general condition with a mirror.



metal "pie plate" cover. Either case may be wallpapered over, leaving telltale bulges as clues to their location. Such dubious seals can leak dangerous flue gasses or blow out during a chimney fire, letting smoke and flames into the room.

□ Check for a cleanout door at the base of the chimney. These doors are essential for cleaning and maintenance, but were never included in many old chimneys. Doors should be made of iron or other fireproof material and must seal tightly when closed.

□ Check inside the cleanout door. Soot, leaves, twigs, and nesting materials are normal in an unused chimney, but large deposits of old mortar and fallen brick may indicate deteriorating masonry.

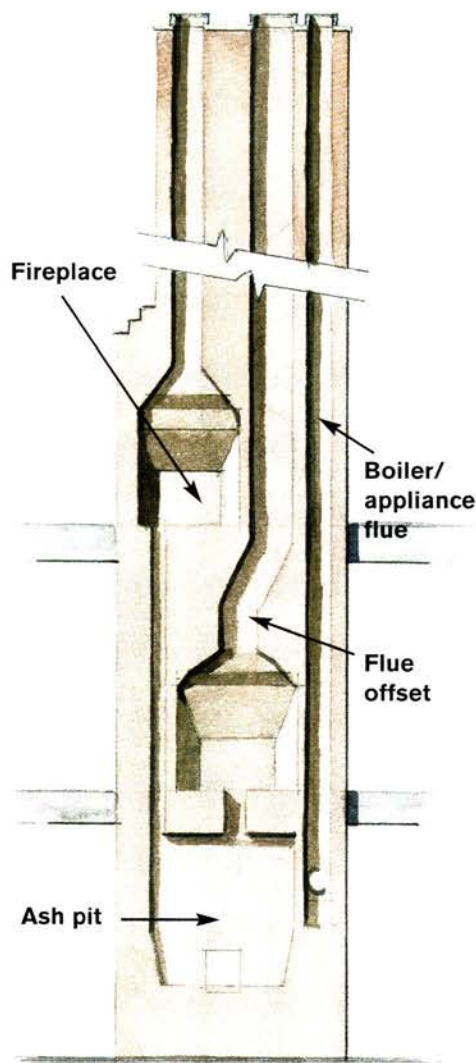
□ Check the throat (or top) of the flue for a damper. These devices reduce heat loss and aid fireplace efficiency, but many pre-1900 chimneys were built without them.

□ Check damper operation. Debris often collects on top of closed dampers in unused chimneys and prevents them from opening. To remove clogs, begin by digging around slots in the damper with a long tool, raking out soot and dirt. The process is messy, but eventually you will excavate a hole through the debris, creat-

ing a draft through the flue that will help draw away dust.

□ Make sure there is a minimum clearance of 2" between the firebox opening and the mantel, trim, or any combustible material. Also look for a minimum 2" clearance between flue masonry and framing of wall and ceiling.

□ Inspect the chimney cap. There should be an expansion joint between the cap and any flue liner. A cap that is cast or mortared directly to the liner often cracks or works loose because the liner cannot expand and contract. Also the cap



When inspecting the multi-flue chimneys found in many large houses, look for mixed uses, turns in flues, and breaches between flues that can cause dangerous backdrafting of gasses.

OLD-HOUSE BASICS

should be properly constructed with an overhang and drip groove to shed water (see drawing, page 72).

WORKING CHIMNEYS

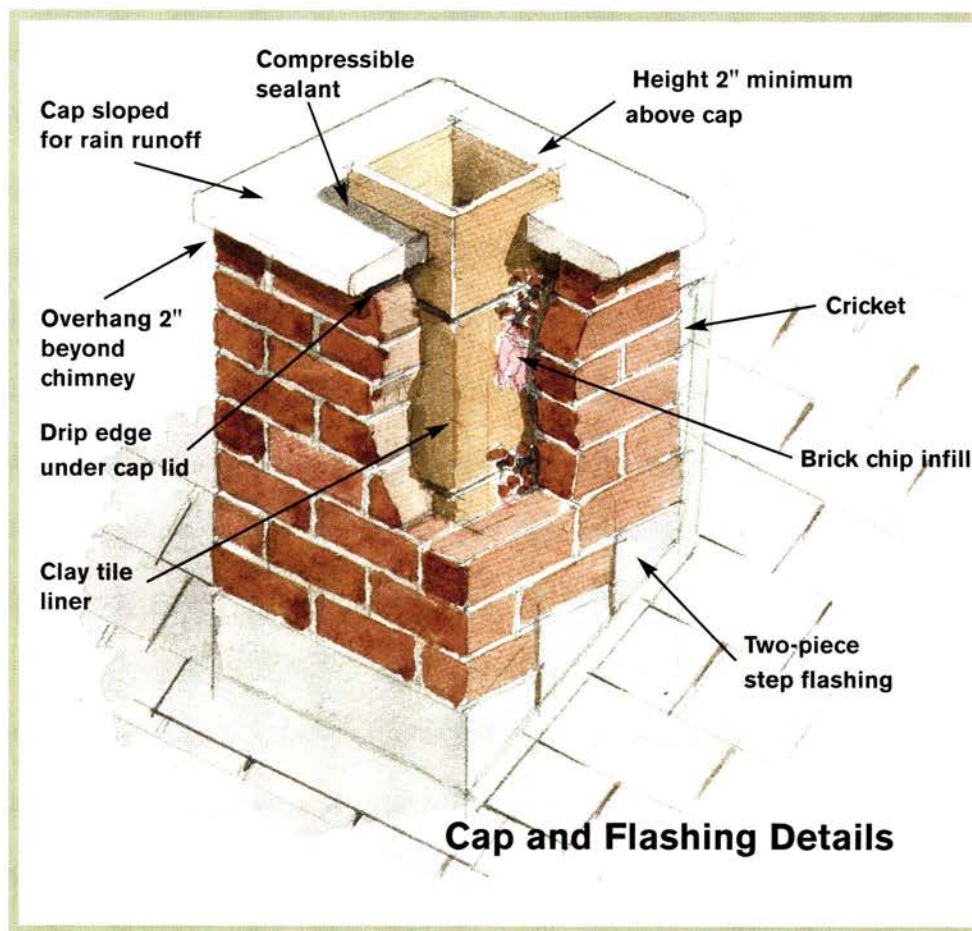
Chimneys that see regular service should be inspected once a year. Spring is recommended because the heating season is over and warm weather lies ahead for making repairs, but the byproducts of burning are still fresh and have had little time to corrode metal and mortar.

□ Check for cracks in the chimney; they may indicate failing masonry and leak dangerous gasses and flames. Visually inspect the chimney on the exterior and interior surfaces. To evaluate chimney integrity perform a smoke test: 1) close all known openings in the chimney, including the top; 2) place a smoke source (a small, smoky fire or a smoke bomb made for the heating trade) in the fireplace; 3) look for leaks—quickly identified by plumes of smoke seeping through the mortar.

□ Probe the exterior mortar joints with a pen knife. If any mortar is loose, crumbling, or more than 3/4" falls out easily with digging, it may be letting water into the flue.

□ Check the condition of the interior mortar joints. Look up the hearth with a mirror or through a stovepipe thimble. In an unlined chimney the corrosive action of burning byproducts literally erodes the masonry from the inside out, leaving half-empty mortar joints on the flue side. The remedy is to have the chimney relined, usually by a contractor employing one of several commercial processes (see Suppliers, page 73).

□ Check the chimney above the roofline for deteriorated flashing or open caulking where it meets the roofing. Look in the attic for stains on rafters or ceilings—evidence of leaks. Check the condition of the cricket, a tentlike flashing between the chimney and the uphill side of the roof. Seal open joints with a good grade of butyl,



silicone rubber, or polyurethane sealant compatible with the particular flashing metal.

☐ Check the cap for signs of heat cracking, storm damage, or weathering.

☐ Check the condition of the flue liner. Clay tile liners, widely used since the 1910s, can crack or separate, sometimes as the result of a chimney fire. The combustion byproducts of new high-efficiency heating plants and gas appliances may also affect them. Masonry and metal liners are newer but should also be examined.

☐ Examine the flue for soot or creosote bleeding through mortar joints. Investigate hidden areas, such as attic and storage areas, as well as living spaces. Faulty liners and mortar joints are usually to blame, but creosote buildup inside the chimney is also likely and a problem.

☐ Operate the damper and make sure it functions smoothly. Check for worn or missing cotter pins that link moving

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parts and replace them if necessary. Examine the base plate and anchoring mortar; if cracked or missing, repoint with refractory mortar.

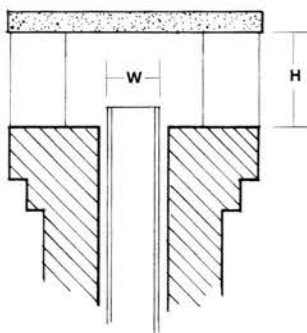
□ Examine the ash pit and empty it of ashes.

□ Clean the flue of soot and creosote buildup. This is usually a professional job, especially if the chimney is very dirty or hasn't been cleaned in a long time. Many chimney-cleaning brushes and devices are on the market, but the basic process remains the same: brushing soot and other combustion wastes off the flue walls from the top down, then vacuuming up the residue from the hearth and smoke shelf.

□ Check the smoke shelf for soot and debris, especially after cleaning.

□ Inspect stovepipe thimbles (and any stove installation). Thimbles should never protrude into the flue space where they will impede the draft, but they should

To avoid affecting the draft, the height (H) of a stone or concrete rain cap above the flue should be 1-1/4 times the width of the flue (W).



OLD-HOUSE BASICS

extend fully through the chimney wall and stop flush with the inside surface.

□ Where wood or coal stoves are installed in fireplaces, the connector pipe should continue inside the chimney at least to the beginning of the flue liner. However, stoves should not be installed in chimneys where the cross-sectional area of the flue is more than three times the cross-sectional area of the stove pipe.

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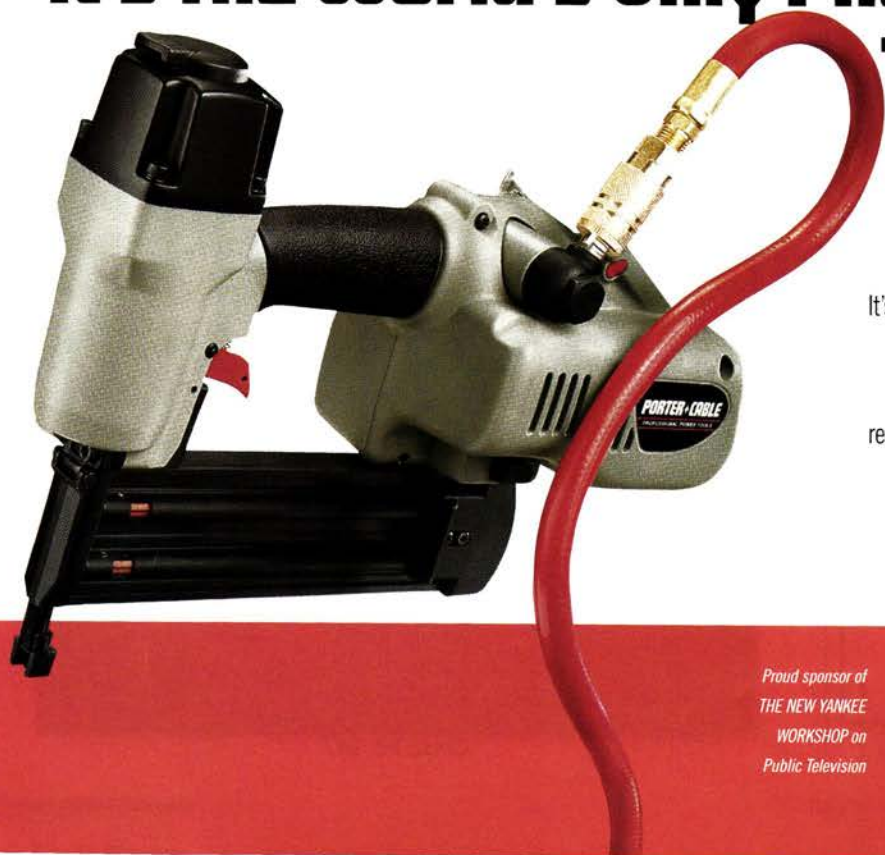
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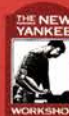
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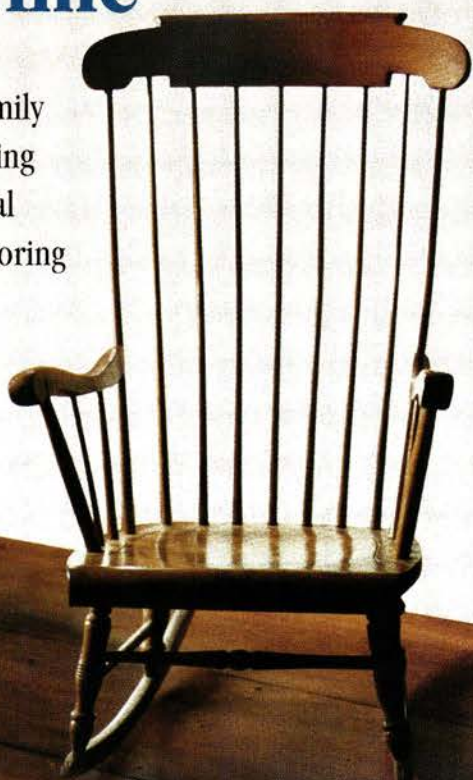


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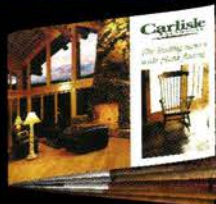
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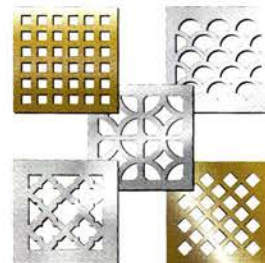
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OLD HOUSE ADVISOR



FRENCH METHODOLOGY

Due to a hailstorm, we need to replace the new asphalt French-method shingles on our 1928 bungalow addition roof. Our last supplier no longer makes them, so we'd appreciate any references for matching the original rigid asbestos-cement shingles.

—MARGARET HAAK-MUSE
PITTSBURG, TEXAS

French-method shingles—which are large, diamond shaped or roughly hexagonal—are one of the oldest continually manufactured types of man-made composition roofing. Asbestos-cement shingles were on the market as early as 1906, and color-coated asphalt versions saw wide use by 1925. Both types were popular not only for creating an attractive honeycomb pattern that lent a chateausque flair, but for their efficient coverage too. At 16" and longer per side, they were ideally adapted to over-roofing existing shingles as well as being suited for new installations.

Alas, Globe Building Materials, among the last remaining producers of asphalt

By the 1920s, French-method shingles were available in colors for over-roofing. Below: Wire anchors prevented the tabs of asbestos-cement shingles from lifting in winds.



French-method shingles, seems to have cut back production. There are other options. Eternit Inc., one of the oldest names in rigid composition roofing, does make a diamond-shaped, fiber cement product designed to visually evoke the old asbestos-cement French-method shingles. Contact them at (800) 233-3155 or www.eternitusa.com. You might also look into ATAS; contact them at (610) 395-8445 or www.atas.com. They make metal roof panels in diamond shapes.

TILE TECHNICALITY

The walls in our 1917 Prairie-style house are brick on the outside, hollow tile on the inside. This tile presents a very uneven surface where we want to replace the ceramic tile in the bathroom. Any advice you can give us?

—PAT VOGEL
MADISON, WISCONSIN

Hollow terra-cotta structural tile was a very up-to-date material at the turn of the 20th century, widely used for its fire-resistant qualities in both early apartment houses and freestanding dwellings. Common well into the 1920s, it was employed much like

concrete block is today. Walls could be clad in brick or stucco veneer on the outside, finished smooth with traditional plaster on the inside. Since the tiles were designed to present a stable structural base, there was no need for wood or wire lath and the plaster's brown (rough) coat was applied directly to the blocks.

Generally you should be able to finish your interior walls the same way today. Consult any good reference on plastering (such as *Plastering Skills* by F. Van Den Branden and Brian Hartsell, from American Technical Publishers) for methods on plastering to a solid base. Some plasterers advise that you wet the structural tile down thoroughly—as many as 10 times—to make sure it does not draw water out of the fresh plaster. You should also use a bonding agent (such as Plaster Weld by Larsen) before applying the rough coat.

CROWNING GLORIES

I want to install crown moulding in the dining room of my 1889 carriage house, but the ceiling is crooked. Is there any way to make the moulding appear straight?

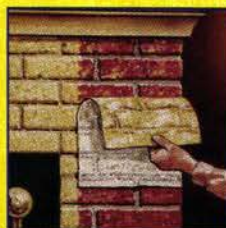
—ELLEN BAAK
LAKE DOUGLAS, NEW JERSEY

For the same reason that tall, lean people don't fill their wardrobes with vertically striped suits and dresses, folks with wavy walls stay away from wall treatments with geometric lines! As for your cornice, consider running it an inch or so below the ceiling. The effect will be the same, and the slight shadow will soften the line between the straight cornice edge and the irregular ceiling surface. 🏠

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from 36 to 320. You can buy sponges as 3 3/4" x 2 5/8" x 1" blocks for flat surfaces, or 4 1/2" x 5 1/2" x 3/16" flexible pads for hard-to-reach places, each for \$2.99. Sold through hardware stores. Circle 8 on resource card.



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Anyone who's ever painted windows dreads the chore. Either you need to meticulously cut in the paint with a sash brush or mask the glass with tape. If you cheat and try to scrape the paint off later, you risk damaging the putty seal. The Pane Simple is a paint removal system consisting of a glass scraper with a single-edge utility blade and large and small edge guards designed for both right- and lefthanders. Once the paint is dry, employing the scraper in tandem with the edge guard along the entire length of the window will prevent removing too little or too much paint. The suggested retail price is \$9.95. If you see a lot of glass in your future, contact Intromark Incorporated at (800) 851-6030. Circle 9 on resource card.

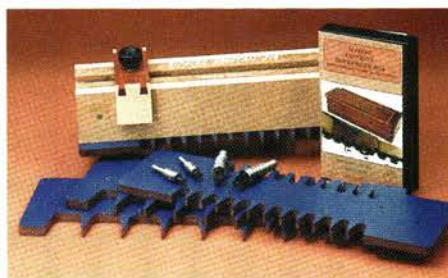
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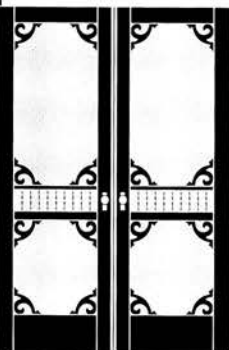
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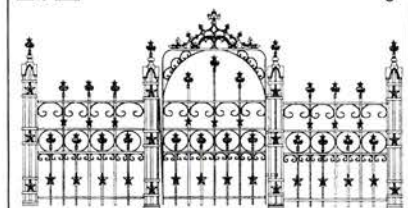
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From the vantage point of our post-dotcom-crash era, the story of Gustav Stickley's brilliant rise to national prominence after 1900 and his free fall to obscurity a few short years later begins to look like a fable for modern times. For a decade, of course, it seemed that Stickley could do no wrong, and his uncanny ability to catch the zeitgeist for a new lifestyle with a line of original and well-made furniture, as well as a now-legendary magazine, *The Craftsman*, has made him a fascinating figure for Arts & Crafts collectors and old-house restorers for years. Now Mark Alan Hewitt, architect, historian, and frequent OHJ author, has written an important new book that delves deeper into the motives and circumstances behind this remarkable man and his enterprise.

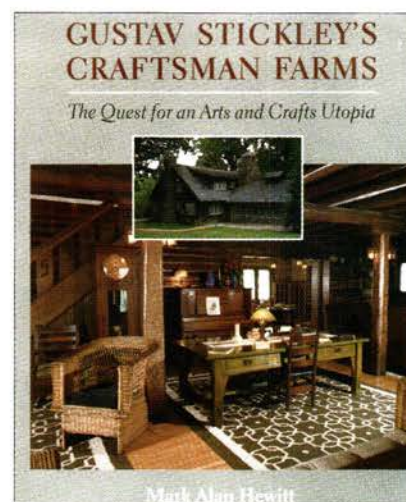
While Hewitt is a genuine admirer of Stickley the man and his accomplishments, his appreciation is not one of unchecked idolatry. Hewitt is quick to note the shortcomings of his complex subject, and indeed this is one of the themes of the book. Was this German-American pioneer boy really the designer of not only a highly successful line of furniture and furnishings, but some 200 house plans as well? Were these houses as ideally fit for a new, improved 20th-century lifestyle as Stickley and his promotional materials argued?

In one of the best sections of the book Hewitt takes a perceptive eye to the Craftsman Homebuilding Club and designs they produced. Among the most telling revelations is research showing that, at their peak,

Craftsman homes were popular enough to draw some critical arrows. An amazing bit of evidence is the "The Daftsman House: A Recipe," a 1911 parody from the upscale shelter magazine of the day, *Country Life in America*. Among the knowing barbs slung by the anonymous author is a plan drawing that is packed across the first floor with an "Ingle Nook, Reception Nook, Living Room Nook, Range Nook, Stair Nook," ad absurdum.

Apparently, even an uncommonly intuitive (and presumably self-taught) furniture designer had his limits when it came to residential architecture. In other pages Hewitt shows how most of the Craftsman plans are spins on one of three pseudo-vernacular house types: cabin, bungalow, and cottage. Was this merely a good marketing strategy, designed to extend the appeal of essentially the same house? Or was there more, a philosophical adherence to what Stickley viewed as an answer to the Arts & Crafts ideal of a simple life and the 20th-century need for a practical house? While the best of these designs are pleasing, elegant, and significant, some are less successful, with slightly chunky room arrangements, odd feature transitions, or aesthetic mismatches. As Hewitt shows, even the master's house, Craftsman Farms (now open to the public as the Stickley Museum), is not immune from these architectural hangnails. Like modernist architecture that reduces a house to a box in the hands of a less-than-talented designer, Arts & Crafts simplicity was easier to pontificate about than pull off.

— Gordon Bock



GUSTAV STICKLEY'S CRAFTSMAN FARMS THE QUEST FOR AN ARTS & CRAFTS UTOPIA

Mark Alan Hewitt

Syracuse University Press, 2001

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A view of Fleets Bay Neck in Lancaster County, Virginia. The labyrinth of sheltered shoreline, abundant woods, and rich soil inspired colonial leaders to put down roots here.

Neck Ties

Marianne Henderson

BY KATHLEEN FISHER

In the northernmost of three Virginia peninsulas that jut into the Chesapeake Bay are four counties rich not only in history but also soil and wildlife—a circulatory system of creeks and rivers beloved by kayakers, sailors, and fishermen.

Drive down one of the Northern Neck's few main roads and you see communities bypassed by the wealth and bustle of Washington, D.C., a couple hours north and west, and the regional influence of Richmond, little more than an hour south. The total population barely breaks 40,000.

Then take almost any side road among the towering loblollies and oaks, which will invariably end in a picturesque cove or inlet, and you quickly see why this is a weekend or retirement haven for burnt-out bureaucrats. Less visible than the natural beauty are the mansions of those who earned the Neck such sobriquets as “the cradle of the nation” and “the Athens of the New World.”

In Richmond County, south of Warsaw, for example, a narrow road ends at a wrought-iron blockade and slightly ominous,

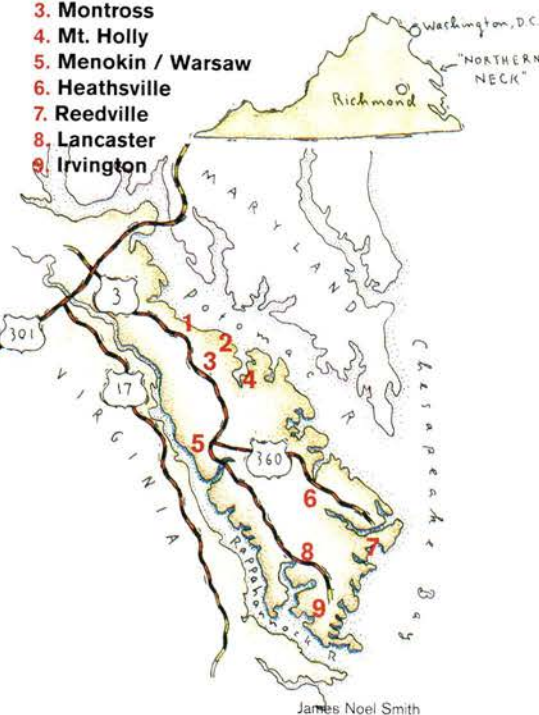
albeit untenanted guardhouse. Out of sight beyond is Sabine Hall, with its mirror-image formal gardens sloping down to the Rappahannock, the river that borders the Neck to the south as does the Potomac to its north. Patriot Landon Carter built the classical revival house in the 1730s. A century later descendants added a two-storey entry porch with massive columns and lowered the roof. In 1929 other members of the family—which still owns Sabine Hall—ordered a west wing to match one on the east.

A bit further upstream and also rarely open is Mt. Airy, a Palladian gem that John Tayloe II built in the 1750s of local brown sandstone with limestone trim and entrance bay. Curved covered passageways, originally used as conservatories, connect large identical dependencies flanking the main house.

When Tayloe's daughter Rebecca married Francis “Lightfoot” Lee (a signer of the Declaration) in 1769, his gift to them was Menokin, a sandstone Georgian mansion on 1,000 acres four miles northwest of present-day Warsaw. The house was falling to ruin

The sparsely traveled roads of this nature-blessed land are awash in colonial treasures.

1. George Washington's birthplace
2. Stratford Hall
3. Montross
4. Mt. Holly
5. Menokin / Warsaw
6. Heathsville
7. Reedville
8. Lancaster
9. Irvington



Right: Menokin, built in 1769 for a wedding between two patriot families, is now in ruins but the original is so thoroughly documented that it serves as an educational tool for architectural historians. A new roof was recently erected to protect it from further erosion.



Marianne Henderson



Left: The restoration of Hughlett's Tavern/Rice's Hotel was a labor of love by the community surrounding Heathsville. Here a visitor to one of its open houses inspects a model by Bob Butler of Kilmarnock, Virginia.

Marianne Henderson

Right: Thomas Lee, founder of the Ohio Company and acting governor of Virginia, built Stratford Hall in 1738, but it's best known as the birthplace of his grandson, Robert E. Lee.



Marianne Henderson

by the 1960s, but at the 11th hour, the new Menokin Foundation swooped in to take advantage of an "encyclopedia of Colonial architecture" in original measured drawings, descriptions, and old photographs, plus 18th-century woodwork that another group had rescued. The foundation has roofed over remnants of the two-storey, three-bay house to serve as what it calls "rubble with a cause"—a place to train students in historic preservation and landscapes, archeology, and nature conservation on the remaining 500 acres. You can visit Menokin by appointment.

In Westmoreland County to the north, presidents James Monroe and George Washington were born within tobacco-spitting distance of each other. Monroe's birth house off highway 205 is gone, although local historians have erected a monument and hope to eventually rebuild the structure. A recreation of Washington's birthplace, Wakefield, is open to the public.

Stratford Hall, the birthplace of Robert E. Lee, is north of nearby Montross on land overlooking the Potomac and can at least claim to be pretty much the original structure. The H-shaped house, of Flemish-bond brick with glazed grey headers, is open as a museum with a working farm.

Colonial Beach, northwest of Montross, was a mid-Atlantic hotspot 90 years ago. Washingtonians took the five-hour boat trip for 50 cents and stayed at the massive Colonial Beach Inn (with three meals) for two dollars. Go there not for the beach but to check out the Bell House, an 1883 Queen Anne where Alexander Graham Bell summered, now a bed-and-breakfast.

Traveling east on Highway 360—north from Warsaw or joining that route out of Montross—you'll come to Northumberland County (established in 1648) and its pretty county seat of Heathsville. The main road is lined with well-kept 19th-century houses and ancient specimen cedars and copper beeches. About halfway through

town (three minutes max) are the 1851 county courthouse, the Ball Memorial Library and Museum in the 1844 jail, and Hughlett's Tavern/Rice's Hotel.

The community is especially proud of the latter, which they restored with passion, patience, and a pittance. They know an ordinary was here before 1800. The side-gabled, clapboard structure with full-length second-storey balcony was Hughlett's Tavern when John Rice bought it in 1866, and his family operated it as an inn for the next half century.

For a big whiff of history and current-day water life you'll do no better than Reedville, where 360 dead-ends. Elijah Reed, a Maine sea captain, first came here in 1868 to catch menhaden, a small fish used for oil, fish meal, and fertilizer.

Reedville's Main Street was known as Millionaire's Row back around 1911, when the town was said to have the highest per capita income in the United States. At the end of this mile-long National Historic District are the Albert Morris House, a four-storey Queen Anne built in 1895 by another founder of the menhaden industry; and the Gables, an aptly named brick beauty where Morris partner and banker James Fisher thrust a schooner's mast between the third and fourth floors. The Morris House recently retired as a bed-and-breakfast, but you can still sleep at the Gables.

Midtown, so to speak, is the Reedville Fisherman's Museum, with displays of historic fishing tools and interpretations of early Northumberland life; access to the 1875 William Walker House, a typical waterman's home; and at its dock, a 1911 skipjack and other early 20th-century boats.

Lancaster (350 years old this year) is the Neck's most prosperous county, home to the swank Tide's Inn golf/marina complex in Irvington. On your way south on highway 200, keep an eye peeled for the turn left to Ditchley. Yet another Lee, Kendall, built the house in 1752 with a

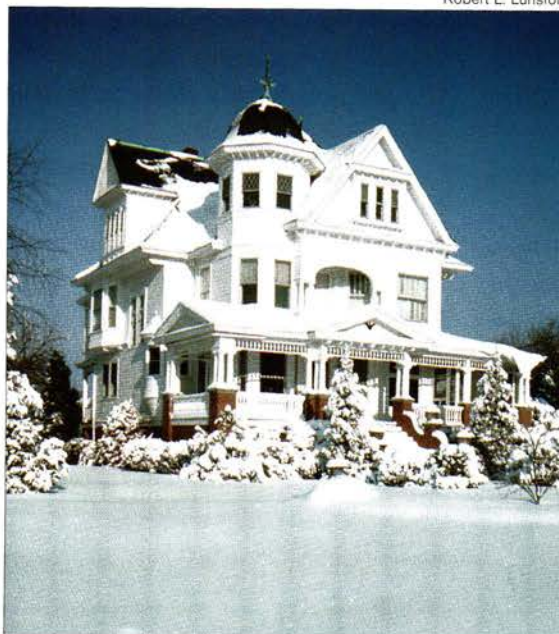


Robert L. Lunsford



Marianne Henderson

Robert L. Lunsford



The Gables (right at top) and the Morris House (left) helped give Reedville's Main Street the appellation "Millionaire's Row" about 90 years ago, when a small oily fish called menhaden made the town wealthy. A 1922 netting boat, the Elva C., (above) is moored at the dock of the Reedville Fisherman's Museum.



Left: The Hope and Glory Inn, originally a school, is an example of adaptive re-use. **Below left:** Ditchley was built by a Lee in 1752; the most recent addition was by a duPont in 1932. **Below right:** Tobacco baron Robert "King" Carter ordered the construction of Christ Church but didn't live to see it finished.



Robert L. Lunsford



Marianne Henderson

hipped roof and Flemish-bond brickwork inspired by English architecture handbooks. Later owners added asymmetrical flanking wings; front and rear pedimental porches in 1840; and in 1932, Northumberland native Jessie Ball duPont and her philanthropist husband Alfred I. duPont added a kitchen. You can see the house from the road and it's periodically open for group tours.

If you decide to head back toward Warsaw on Highway 3, you can get a glimpse from route 202 of Epping Hall, a simple two-storey clapboard house that was the birthplace of Mary Ball, George Washington's mother.

The Neck is rife with historic churches, but by far the most famous and well preserved is Christ Church outside of Irving-

ton. Robert "King" Carter—progenitor of our two presidents Harrison, Robert E. Lee, three declaration signers, and eight Virginia governors—commanded the brick church to be built but died before its completion in 1735. With flared eaves and elaborate masonry trim around the doors, it has a vaulted plaster ceiling, 4' high wainscotted box pews, and a triple-decker pulpit with a domed sounding board.

Also in Lancaster County is the Mary Ball Washington Museum. If you're just coming in to the area from Richmond or other points south, it's a good way to get launched on Neck lore. If you're thinking of leaving, it may persuade you to come back for further steeping in the area's incredible mix of Revolutionary history and endless aquatic vistas. 🏊

Historic Lodging

Visit the Northern Neck Tourism Council at www.northernneck.com. To visit Menokin, call (804) 333-1776. You can find phone numbers for other local attractions at www.nnwebs.com/services/travel.htm.

The area is rich in bed-and-breakfasts, including some of its most historically significant structures. Be sure to call for reservations, though, since some of them have recently taken down their shingles, while others are opening up.

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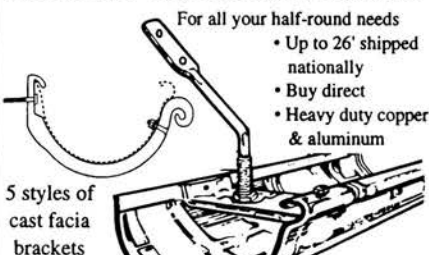
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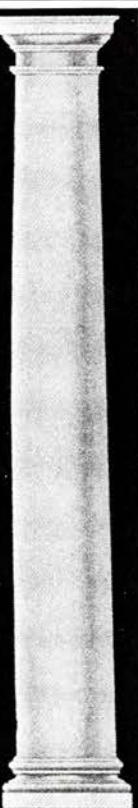


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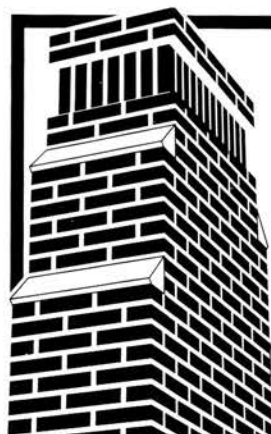
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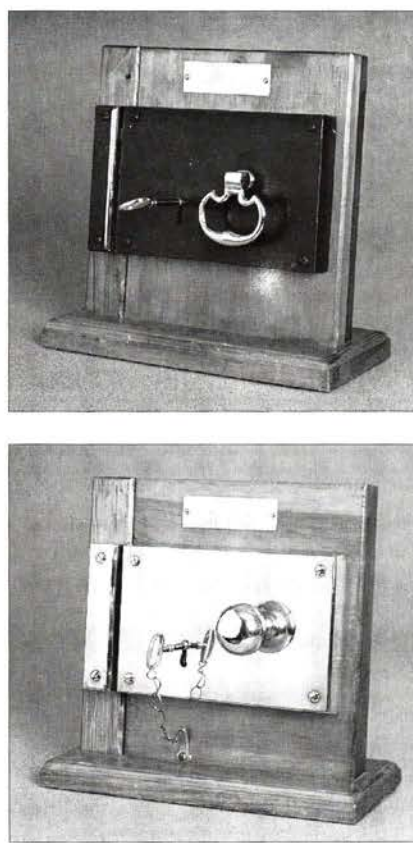
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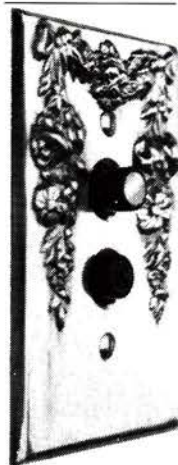
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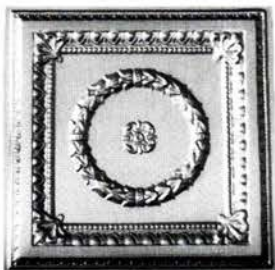
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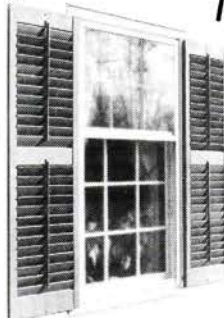
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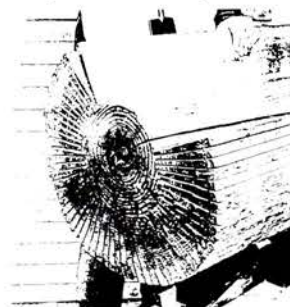
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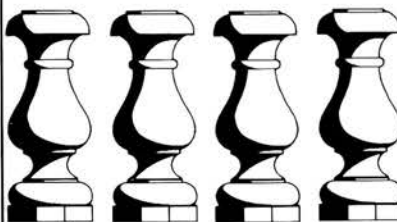
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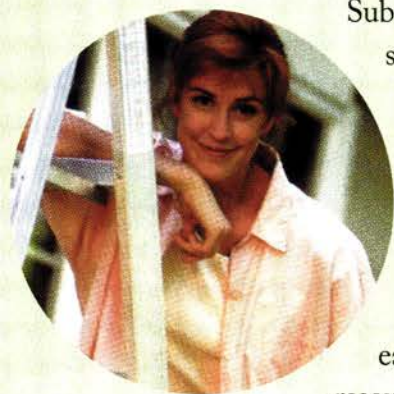
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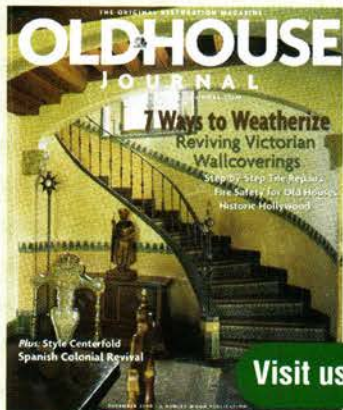
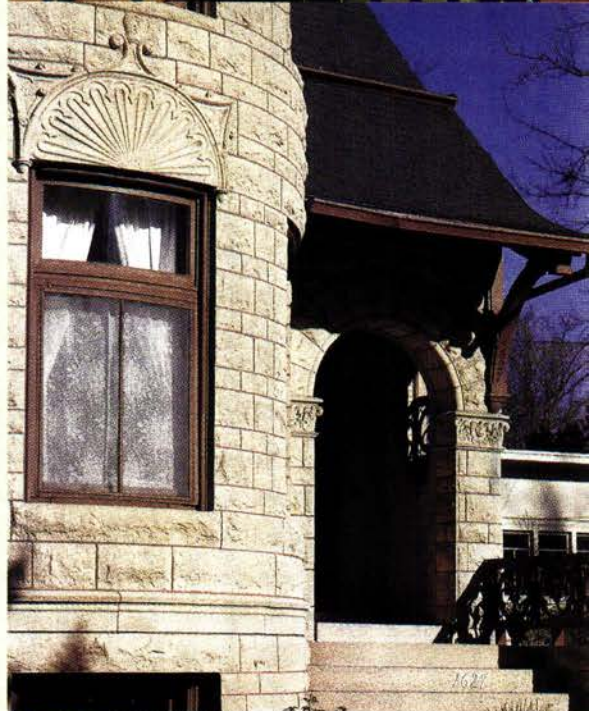
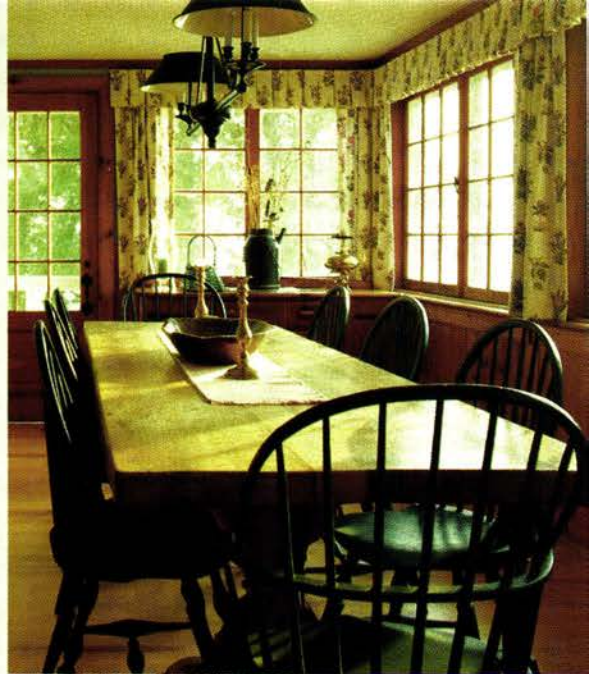
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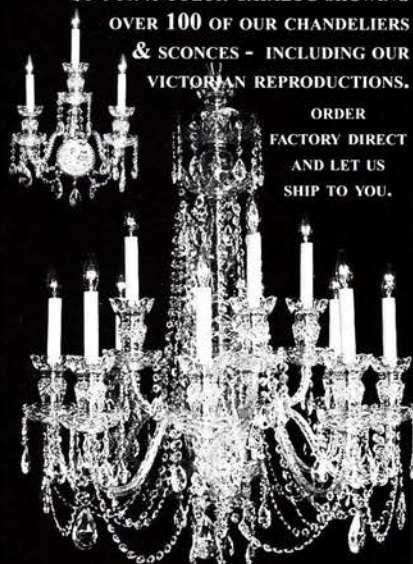
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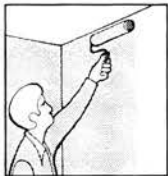
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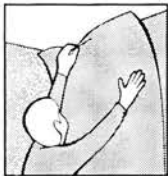
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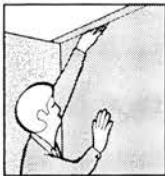
1. Cut fiberglass mat 2" longer than height.



2. Apply saturant to area to be covered.



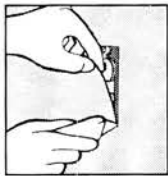
3. Apply fiberglass mat to wet surface.



4. Trim excess mat where wall meets ceiling.



5. Trim mat at baseboard and window.



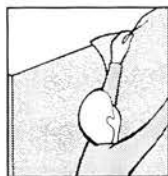
6. Trim mat at outlets, switches, etc.



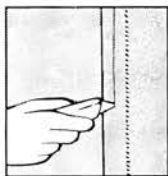
7. Apply second coat of saturant to wet mat.



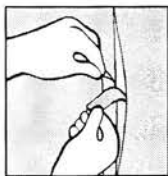
8. Apply 1st coat of saturant to adjacent area.



9. Apply mat to 2nd area, overlapping by 1".



10. Cut down center of overlap (both layers).



11. Remove mat strips on both sides of cut.



12. Apply 2nd coat of saturant (include seam)

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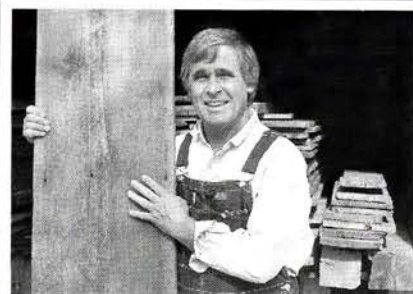


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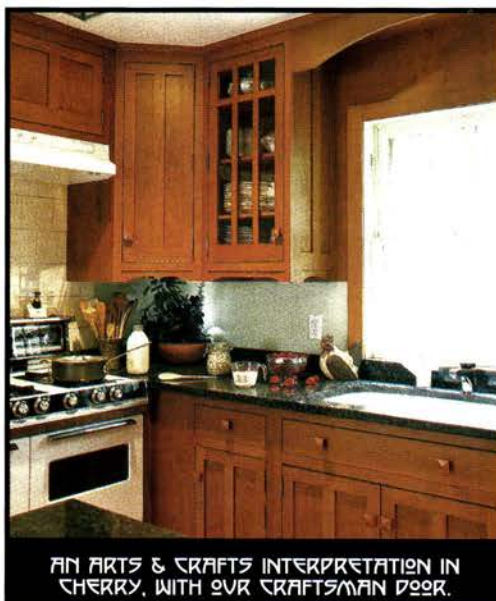


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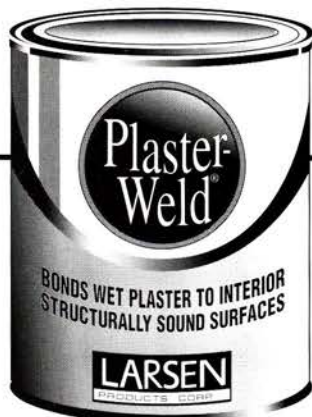
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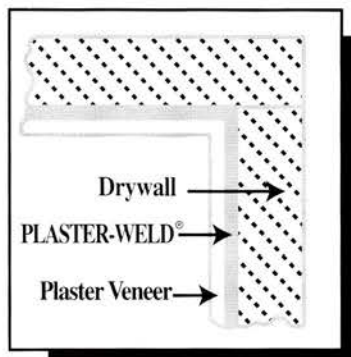
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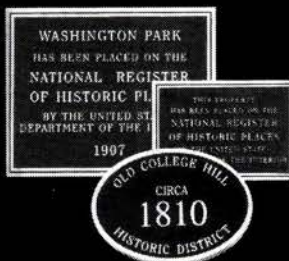
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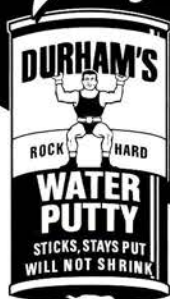


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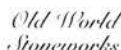
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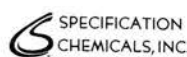
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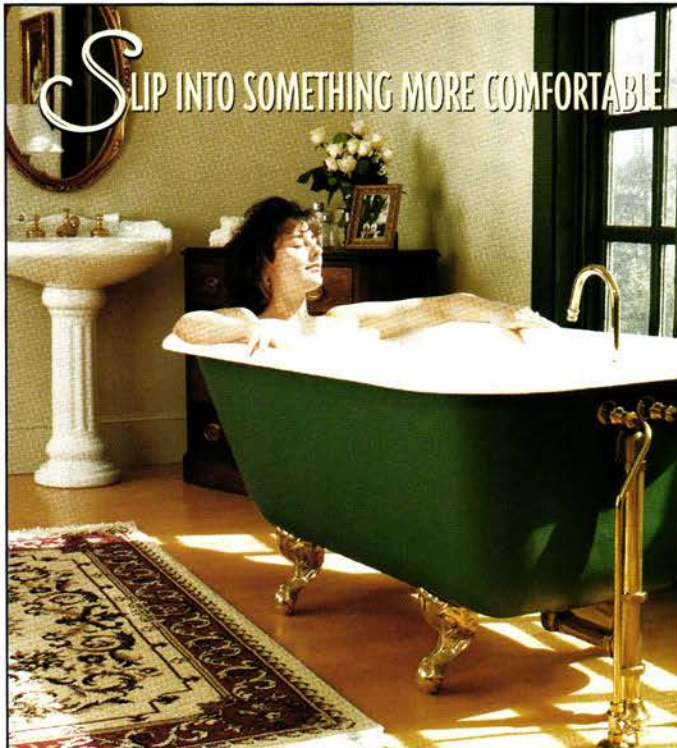
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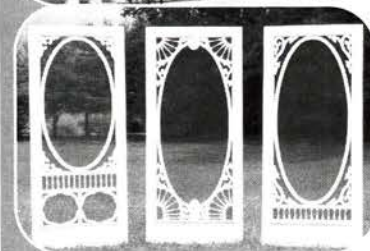
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Opinion



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