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## JOURNAL

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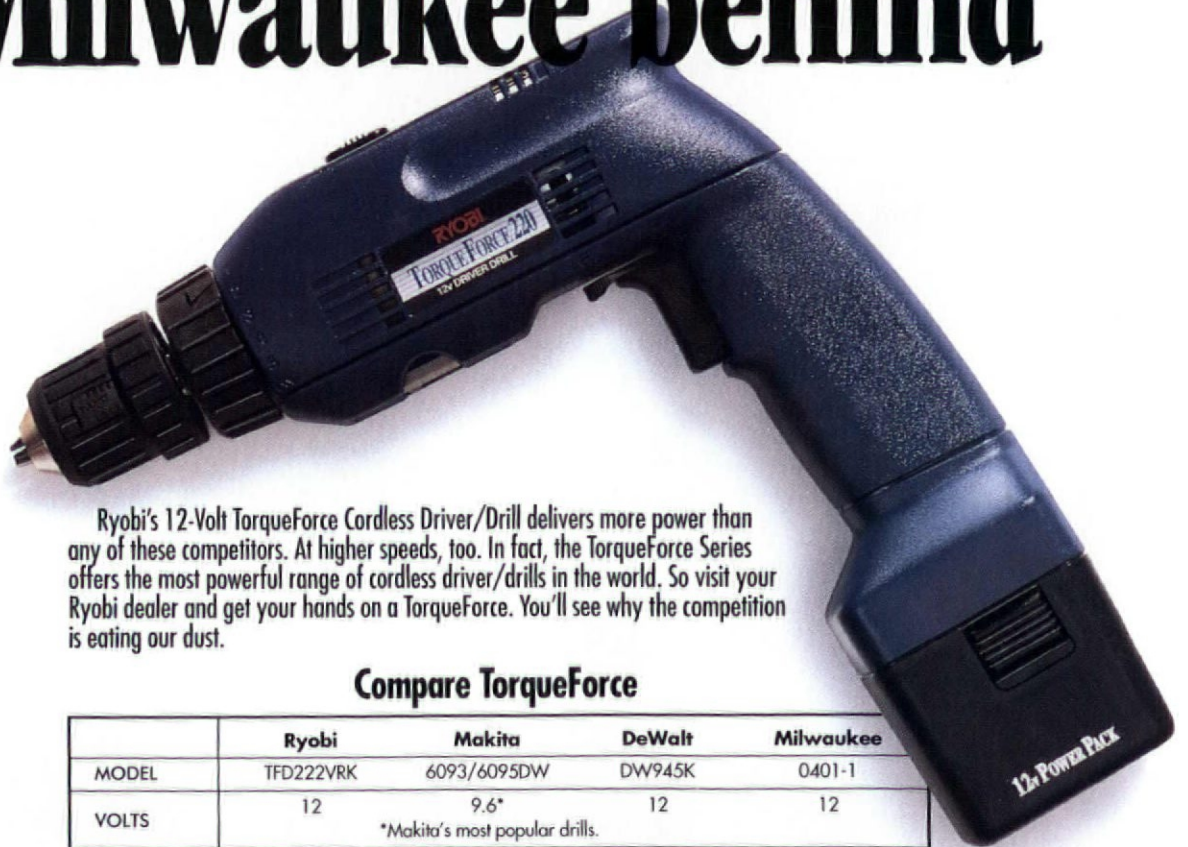
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Inside: 1992 Index

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# OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

Volume XX, Number 6



28

## Rebuilding Fireplaces

*Working fireplaces need a major overhaul every half-century or so, especially when hearths crack and mortar joints leak. This article explains how to rebuild firebox masonry for another lifetime of service.*

BY CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS

34

## Maintaining Mantels

*Everyday wear-and-tear and the vagaries of fashion can take its toll on a mantel. Here's some techniques for solving the most common restoration problems.*

BY LYNN ELLIOTT



38

## Brilliant-Cut Glass

*A master craftsman describes the origin of and process for making Victorian ornamental door and window glass, with advice on its care.*

BY THOMAS TISCH

41

## Shopping for Special Hinges

*A buyer's guide for hinges that solve tricky door problems and tips on their use.*

BY GORDON BOCK

44

## Row House Restoration on a Shoe-String Budget

*Barter and budgeting bring back a Bronx row house in this tale of old-house living without credit.*

BY WILLIAM MORSE

52

## The 1992 OHJ Index

*A guide to all the articles featured in the past year of OHJ.*



ON THE COVER: *A central fireplace at Jefford's Tavern in York, Maine, a c.1700 building on the National Register of Historic Places. Photograph by Steve Marsel.*

# DEPARTMENTS

6 >  
**Editor's Page**  
*A Look at 1993*



8  
**Letters**

*Comments on countertops and more early wire fences.*

16  
**Restorer's Notebook**

*An inventive doorbell system and graining tips.*

< 18  
**Reading the Old House**

*Ending the confusion over Colonial gambrel roofs.*



20  
**Outside the Old House**

*Using archival photos for period landscaping.*

24  
**Ask OHJ**

*Safe cracking and sub-floor insulation.*

48  
**Old-House Mechanic**

*Modern power-driven screws for old-house work.*

56  
**Restoration Products**

*Traditional glass and fun finery for the holidays.*

60 >  
**House Plans**

*A Southern low-country house and a gabled Georgian.*

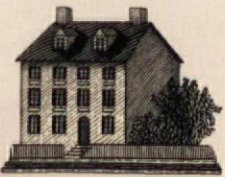
82  
**Remuddling**

*Readers Say: No-Go Bungalow.*

84  
**Vernacular Houses**

*Beverly Jogs of Massachusetts.*

RESTORATION SERVICES	70
EMPORIUM	72
PRODUCT NETWORK	78

# OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

VOLUME XX, NUMBER 6

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Subscription service (800) 234-3797; Back issues (\$4.95/copy); (508) 281-8803; Advertising: (508) 283-4721. We are happy to accept editorial contributions to Old-House Journal. Query letters that include an outline of the proposed article are preferred. All manuscripts will be reviewed, and returned if unacceptable. However, we cannot be responsible for non-receipt or loss — please keep copies of all materials sent. ©Copyright 1992 by Old-House Journal Corp. All rights reserved.

Old-House Journal (ISSN 0094-0178) is published bimonthly for \$24 per year by Old-House Journal Corporation, 2 Main Street, Gloucester, MA 01930. Telephone (508) 283-3200. Subscriptions in Canada \$34 per year, payable in U.S. funds.

Second-class postage paid at Gloucester, MA and at additional entries. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Old-House Journal, P.O. Box 58017, Boulder, CO 80322-8017.

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# EDITOR'S PAGE

## Looking to the Future



**I**T'S BEEN NEARLY A YEAR SINCE OHJ arrived at our new home and the past months have been busy and full. We're still settling in, of course, and getting used to a new town, new friends, and a new (old) building, but things are starting to fall into place. Desks and cabinets have found their own level on the seasoned floors, and our library shows signs of coming out of its moving-box hibernation and into a beautiful brick-walled reading room. We've even uncovered more fireplaces — one with a beehive oven — and this winter we'll take a page or two out of the hearth-rebuilding and mantel-cleaning articles in this issue to whip some improvements on them.

The coming months look exciting, too. We've kept our editorial antennae tuned to find more useful old-house information and many of the articles you've asked for are already taking shape for 1993. Here's some subjects that are in the wings:

☛ **Interior Finishes and Surfaces** — A lot of folks said they liked this year's Interiors issue, so coming up next in January/February will be articles on interior surfaces and treatments: post-Victorian plaster finishes, decorative wall frames, and an exploration of the mysteries of composition ornament — that stuff that looks like carved wood but is closer to clay. In addition, many of you wrote with compliments and questions about the

attractive "leather" lincrusta wainscot shown in a photo earlier in the year. This technique, and many other stunning effects possible with this historic material, will be explained in an issue due this spring.

☛ **Bungalows** — OHJ was one of the first publications to recognize the importance and widespread appeal of bungalows, those innovative houses that sprung up everywhere in the early decades of this century. Although



*"Love is a bung-a-low, where roses grow ..."*

we've never flagged in our commitment to them, it has been a while since we've run any bungalow-specific articles. Next year look for advice on building California bungalow steps, and more on colors and interiors appropriate for the bungalow era.

☛ **Exterior Details** — House exteriors always need attention and we'll try and cover a variety of hot spots in 1993, from restoring shutters and repairing woodwork on a Greek Revival doorway to making stone columns and choosing paint schemes for 20th century romantic houses. We'll also get

Outside The Old House with pages on antique peonies, historic lawns, pruning shrubs, and outdoor pumps.

☛ **Summer Old Houses** — A wealth of letters and conversations over the years have made us aware that not every old house is a primary residence. How do you keep up and restore a summer house or family homestead that's a wonderful escape place, but impractical to live in all year round? These buildings have unique problems such as security, winterizing, and absentee maintenance, as well as their own special history. We'll look at many of these concerns in a whole issue next summer.

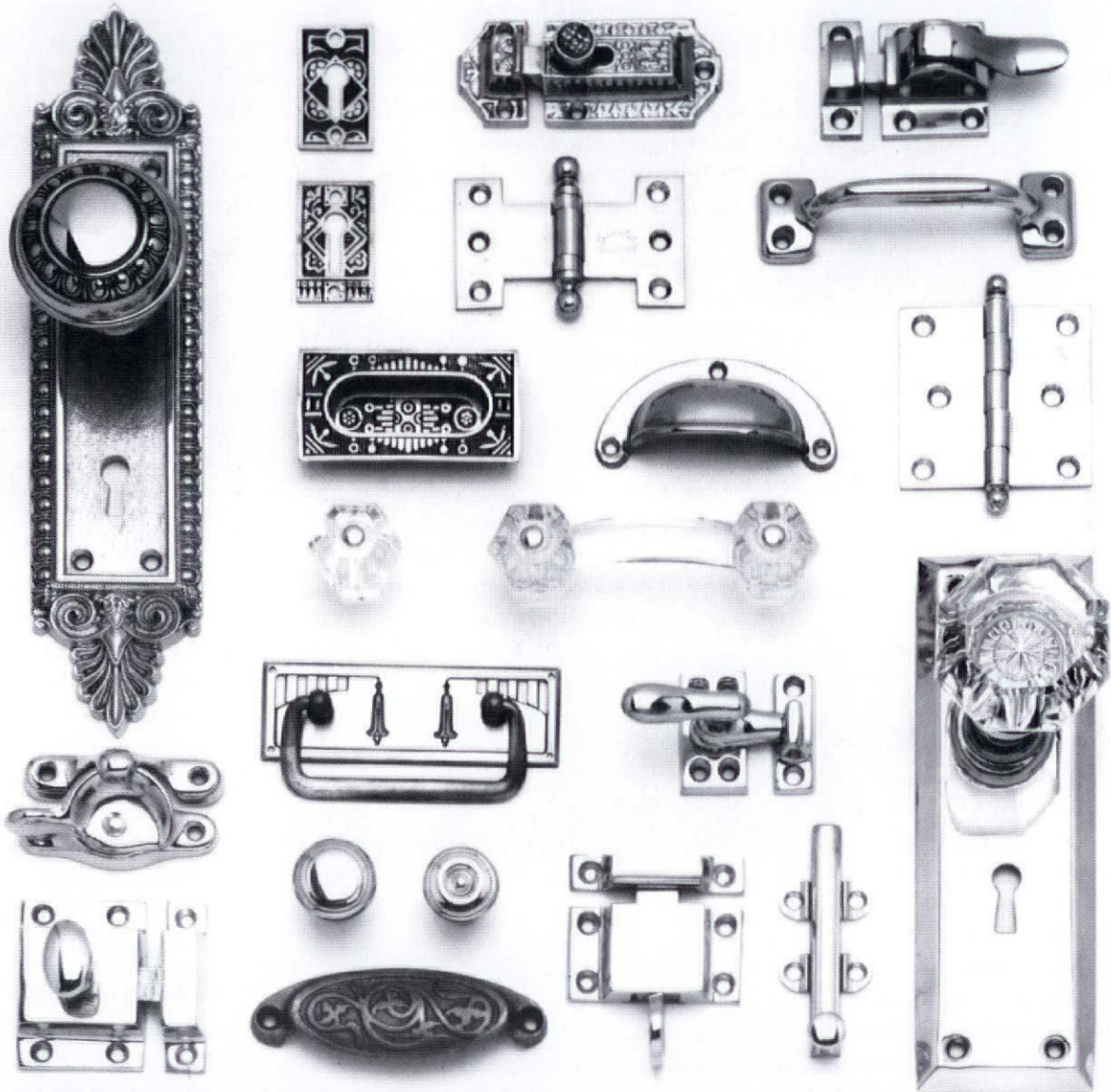
☛ **The Big Two-O** — It's hard to believe, but by this time next year Old-House Journal will be celebrating its 20th birthday. It seems like only last month we were cleaning up after the 15th anniversary issue and taking stock of all we'd accomplished. Where does five years — or for that matter 20 years — go? Two decades of restoring houses is a good benchmark to pause and find out, so in the September/October issue we'll reflect a little on how far preservation has come and where OHJ is headed. We'll also have stories of reader-built new old-houses — and a special surprise!



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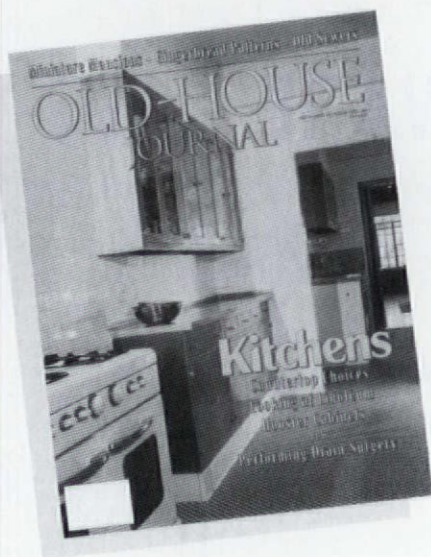
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# LETTERS



## Counter Points

Dear OHJ,

TO MY KNOWLEDGE, GLAZED ONE-INCH, white, hexagonal tiles used so commonly in the 'teens through the 1930s are not available today. ["Traditional Countertops," Sept/Oct] If you're trying to simulate a pre-World War II tile setting, it's important to push the individual pieces tightly together. A careful look at old tile settings will show that modern grout gaps were rarely used. (This is also true for the unglazed one-inch hexes still widely available and used for bathroom floors.) The hexes attached to plastic webbing (mentioned in the article) are another sure way to get an inappropriate look, as the modern gaps are pre-set.

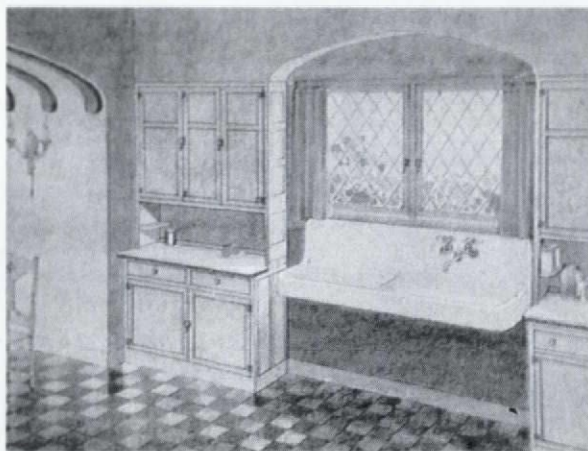
Coloring the grout ruins the look of a pre-war tile setting — [the grout] was always white. Roedel Tile here in Portland, Oregon, (503-285-9878) has a remarkable stock of old ceramic tiles still in their dusty boxes.

— STEVE AUSTIN  
Portland, Ore.

MARBLE, GRANITE, AND OTHER HARD stone surfaces can often be made to look new by following practical hints that focus on stain removal. Additionally, solid and liquid chemicals may restore the surface.

The estimates for pricing of marble and granite appear to be quite high. Perhaps [the author] is talking about the fully installed price! Marbles and granites can be bought from \$35 per square foot upwards to \$175 per square foot. Canadian marble and granites are readily available, as are hard stones from South America, Asian rim countries, China, Central America, as well as domestic suppliers in the U.S.

Also available today are man-made agglomerate stones that have the appearance of marble or granite. Some interesting composite stones, made from quartz sand, have a full range of colors. Terrazzo matrix stone is another hard-stone alternative.



*Linoleum floors and enameled-metal counters in an up-to-date 1928 kitchen.*

Finally, sealers currently available help inhibit staining. These products are non-yellowing and environmentally safe.

— EDWARD J. GURRY, *President*  
*Master Marble Care of America, Inc.*  
Braintree, Mass.

Mr. Gurry sent along a fact sheet that we haven't room to reprint here. If you would like more information on refinishing stone countertops, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Master Marble Care, 174 Forbes Rd., Suite 212, Dept. OHJ, Braintree, MA 02184. — the editors

THANKS FOR INCLUDING DESIGNS IN TILE. Please note that our correct address is Box 358, Dept. OHJ, Mount Shasta, CA 96067; phone 916-926-2629.

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— SELENE SELTZER  
Mount Shasta, Calif.

## Roller-Skate Abuse

THE 75-YEAR-OLD BATTLESHIP linoleum ["Before Vinyl. . .", Sept/Oct] in the kitchen of the Woodrow Wilson house was of particular interest, as the original owner, Henry P. Fairbanks, was my grandfather. When I told my mother of the reference to her childhood house, she added that she would roller-skate on rainy days on the same kitchen floor. What a product!

— PETER R. HALE  
Boston, Mass.



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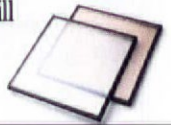


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## LETTERS

### Wire Fence Found

I JUST RETURNED FROM A STUDY TRIP TO Cuba. There are layers of architecture of every style imaginable — Spanish Colonial, Beaux Arts, Deco, Art Nouveau, Moorish, International Style, and 1950s Modern. Happily, there are no Post-Modern buildings because recent economic conditions have limited new construction. But, the reason I brought



*This iron-wire fence with decorative cast-orns is in Cristobal Colon Cemetery, Cuba.*

the trip up is because I found some iron wire fence. The fence was surrounding a monument at the Cristobal Colon Cemetery, supposedly the most elaborate and monumental cemetery in Latin America. I don't have an exact date for the fence, but judging by the style of the monument it enclosed I would guess turn of the century. The cemetery was opened in 1870.

— KATHLEEN RANDALL  
*New York, New York*

### Postwar Historic

DON'T LET READERS GIVE YOU too much grief about including post-war homes. ["Post-war Houses," the last in OHJ's long-running style series, July/August.] As a longtime (if not always faithful) reader of your magazine, I always felt that when I

could finally afford to buy my own home, my house would be the type featured in OHJ. But when we actually went out to buy, the older homes were either outside commuting distance, or cost two or three times what we could afford — even the "fixers." So we ended up buying what I think is the true-value home in our area: a 1950s split-level daylight Rambler. No remuddling here. The original owner sold it to us pretty much as it was built over a generation ago.

Clearly, parts of the house needed work, but OHJ, my fantasy magazine of so many years, wasn't much help. Would future generations curse us if we replaced the aqua-and-gold starburst cabinets in the bathroom? Or the "nifty 'fifties" light fixtures?

Maybe my house isn't what many of your readers have in mind when they think of old houses. But my

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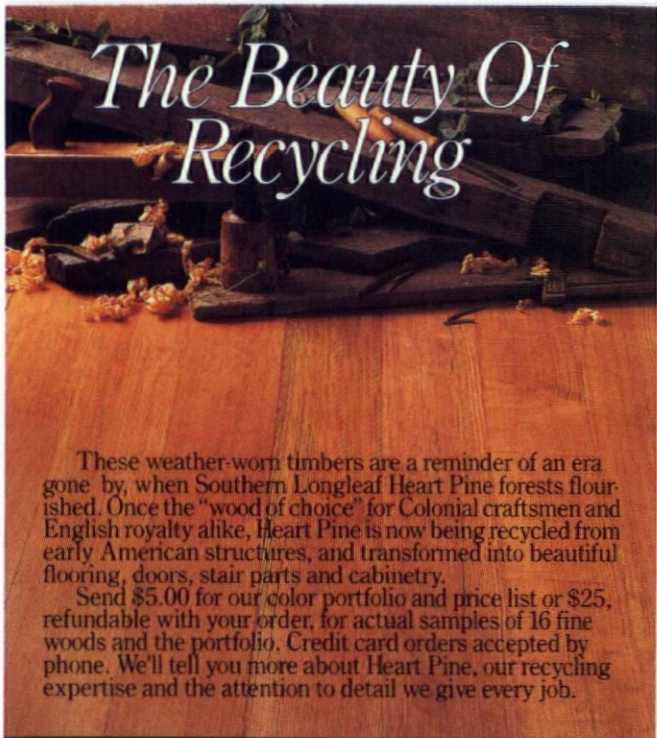
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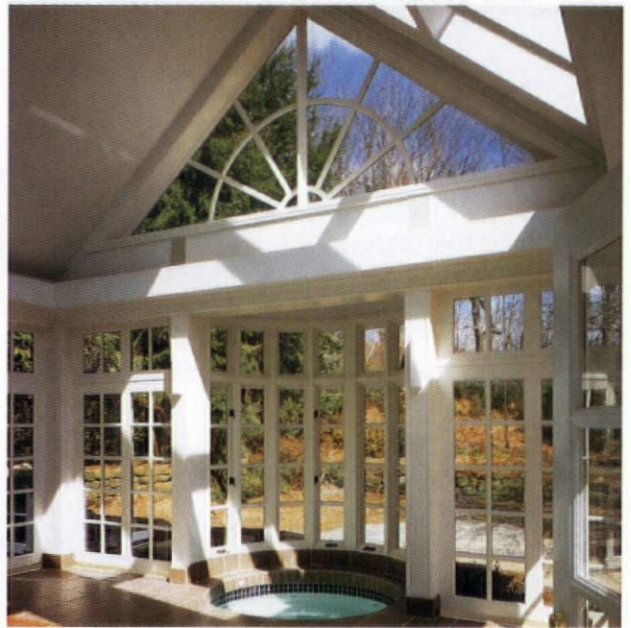
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## LETTERS

house is as old, perhaps, as some of the houses you featured when I first started reading your magazine. I'm looking forward to more post-war house articles.

—CLAIRE PETER SKY  
Bellevue, Wash.



### Love Your Vernacular

I CAME ACROSS your old-house journal yesterday and was pleasantly surprised to see that it is published in Gloucester. Forty years ago I lived there. I sure miss the beautiful architecture of New England.

— WALT EVENS  
Klamath Falls, Ore.

*After years of walking the brownstoned streets of Brooklyn, memorizing cornice details and marvelling at carved griffins on 1880s builders' houses, I'm thrilled to be learning a whole new vocabulary: from center-chimney Georgians and McIntire fences to clapboarded Cape Ann Italianates. Paint failure along the coast is pretty dramatic, too!*

— Patricia Poore

### Bee Wary

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED in my experience; my husband and I had a large vegetable garden, so we ignored the bees going in and out of a tiny hole at the eave on the corner of our 1883 Second Empire home. [See "Bee-Viction" query in Ask OHJ], Sept/Oct.]

After my husband's death, I no longer had a garden, and painters refused to paint that corner of the house. I tried a few things, [including an] exterminator. Finally, [during] work to restore the side porch where the bees were, the carpenter tore off some siding on the house to find a huge wall of honeycomb. This was removed and the carpenter took the honeycomb home to show his children. They decided they would take it to school for show-and-tell, and put it in their garage till Monday. They left for the weekend and came home to find their garage swarming with bees!

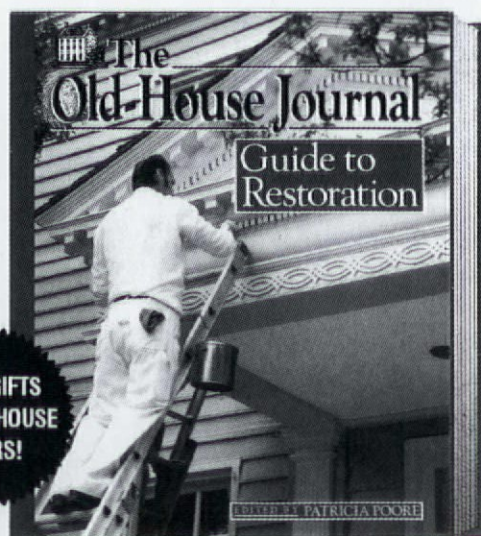
— MARTHA B. JOHN  
Columbia, Missouri

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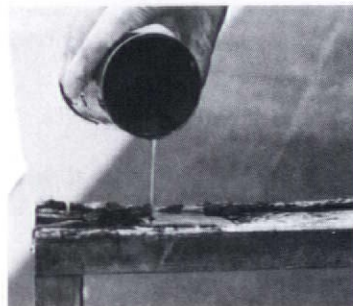
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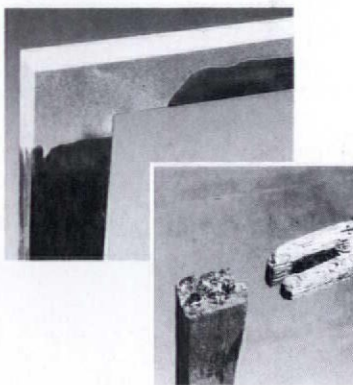
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## LETTERS

### A Fascinating Fellow

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• Catherine Beecher, *American Woman's Home*

• Henry Rutton, *Ventilation and Warming of Buildings*

(Henry Rutton was a Canadian engineer and a fascinating fellow. He published his book in 1860.)

— GENE LEGER

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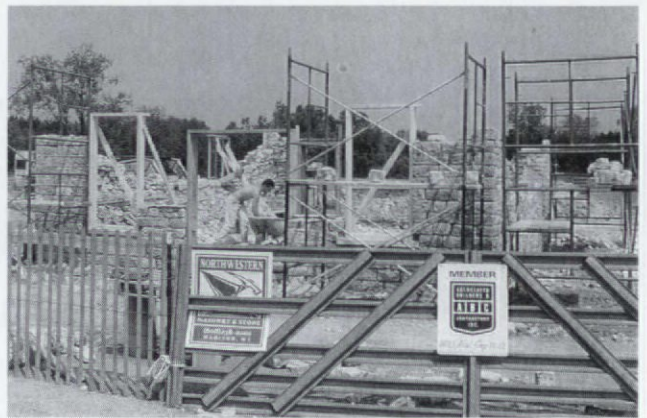
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after completing about two-thirds of the building so far, it looks as if we'll have a building with the same character and impact as the original.

— JACOB ARNDT  
Madison, Wis.

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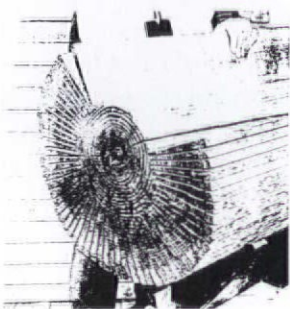
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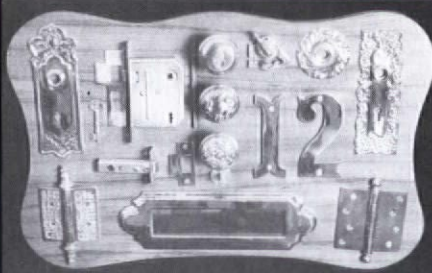
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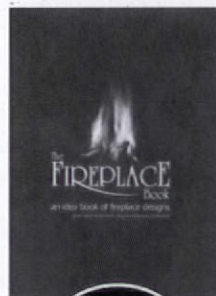
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M-03

# RESTORER'S NOTEBOOK

## Stepping Down

STEPLADDERS SEE A LOT OF USE AND LIKE any "staircase" the first step is the one that gets the most wear. Rather than bothering to repair this step when it becomes unsafe or — heaven forbid — discard the whole ladder, my carpenter Uncle's time-honored solution was to simply shorten the ladder. If you trim the legs right at the top of the offending step (and then close the ladder to mark the mating pair for cutting), you have a slightly shorter ladder, but one with a sound first step and still the correct rise. Large ladders can be trimmed two or three times before they're better used as fireplace kindling.

— CHILA GRANDE  
Cody, Wyoming

## Northwest Graining

DAZED BY THE PROSPECT OF STRIPPING layers of enamel from the beamed dining room ceiling of our 1908 house we reluctantly considered applying a faux finish after reading the Jan/Feb 1992 OHJ article on graining. Our task was to replicate vertical grain Douglas fir stained a rich walnut color. This scheme is used extensively throughout the Pacific Northwest, thanks to the region's lush fir forests. We shouldn't have wasted time fretting over the decision as the result is splendid.

We found that a finely-notched mastic spreader covered with cloth, and the coarse bristles of a wallpaper brush were good tools for achieving a fir look. After the glaze dried, we applied two coats of dark stain to match the tint of our other woodwork. A hint to other potential grainers: Take lots of time experimenting with grain color and glaze spreading before you start your project. By the time we had finished our ceiling, we had developed

some graining techniques we wish we had known at the start.

— FRED LEESON  
Portland, Oregon

*To cut out a bad first step, trim the ladder just above the worn-out tread, then shorten the other legs the same amount.*



## Audible Air Ducts

OUR HUGE OLD HOUSE WAS IN DESPERATE need of a doorbell system, particularly since we had missed several visitors when we couldn't hear them knocking. Unfortunately, we found that even the loudest doorbell couldn't be heard throughout the entire house. Two bells would require too much wire, plus the effort of fishing all the wire in the walls. We also faced the issue of hiding the bell itself — it didn't fit in with my wife's decor. After some thought we found an interesting way to solve both problems. Our solution was to place the bell inside a cold air duct at floor level. This hid the mechanism, and the ring reverberated through the ductwork system reaching the entire house.

— DAN MILLER  
Elgin, Ill.

## Dapper Scrapers

STRIPPING PAINT FROM OLD DOORS, SASH, and wood trim can be made

easier with this no-scratch scraper. Slice hardware store-bought dowels at a bias into 3" pieces to make scoops for paint loosened by a heat gun or chemical strippers. Select dowel diameters to fit your contours. The dowels are hardwood and stay sharp a good while. When one gets dull, throw it away and grab a new one.

— KEVIN CULLEN  
Danville, Ill.

## Detail Tips

IN THE COURSE OF DOING A LOT OF THE small jobs around our old house I have come up with some tricks that work for me and may be of help to other restorers:

✦ For saving small amounts of left-over paint that will be needed for touchups later, a zip-lock type plastic bag makes a good storage container. After the excess air is removed, it prevents the hard skin that occurs in a half-empty paint can. When touchups are needed, a lower corner of the bag can be clipped off for easy straining into your paint container.

✦ When caulking in locations where a finger or damp cloth won't work for tooling and smoothing the bead, a stiff acrylic artist's paintbrush may work. These brushes are good for producing a smooth finish and can reach and seal those places not accessible with a caulking gun alone. The brush can be cleaned up with a suitable solvent later.

✦ Some fingers in my rubber work gloves wear through before others. Rather than discard them, I save these old gloves and cut off the fingers that are still good, then tape them over the worn-through fingers of the gloves I am wearing. This helps in recycling the gloves and saving my hands.

— ANGIE DEPAEPE  
Moline, Ill.





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# READING THE OLD HOUSE

## Queen Anne? Dutch Colonial? Colonial Revival?

by James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell

Dear OHJ:

Although my 1884 Victorian was sold to me as a Queen Anne, it became apparent that it was probably more of a Dutch Colonial. Here in the Midwest, most Dutch Colonials are two-gable, barn-style structures. Does the four-gable style have a particular designation, or is it a composite of styles? I soon hope to replace the columns on the front porch and would welcome any information on what I should attempt to match.

— Donald R. Martinson  
Wauwatosa, Wisc.

**T**HIS IS AN INTERESTING PROBLEM, BUT not an unusual one, since very few American houses come close to stylistic purity. No matter how far most Colonial Revival houses may have strayed from their 18th-century antecedents — and stray they certainly did — their historical and contemporary aspects were combined in manners that make them easy to tag in a general sort of way. Simple lines and boxy shapes recalled homes of the pre-Victorian era, while modern ideas like wraparound porches and generous window area paid homage to the comfortable, community-oriented lifestyle of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The confusion in this case stems from the cross-gabled gambrel roof. Dutch Colonial houses have gambrel roofs, but not cross-gabled gambrel roofs (see photo to right). Our reader's house (top), although quite simple, still evokes the Queen Anne style with its large cross gable and complex form. It has elements of the early Colonial Revival as well, such

as its triple windows: two sets on the first floor flanking the front door and a central one on the second floor topped by a simple, round-arch attic window. The symmetry and straightforward design are also clearly moving in the direction of the Colonial Revival and away from the picturesque, irregular forms of the Queen Anne.

An especially attractive feature of the house is the diamond-paned upper

sash above a single large sash. This is typical of the Queen Anne Style and is also found on early Colonial Revivals. We are delighted that the inappropriate modern cast-iron porch columns are slated for early replacement. Plain, rounded columns with a small base and cap would be much more suitable. Check the porch for evidence of earlier columns and for the possibility of paired columns.



**Cross-gabled gambrel roofs mark this 1884 house (above) as a Colonial Revival, built at the beginning of the style's rise to favor. The roof plan — a single ridge with two gambrel ends — is characteristic in this Dutch Colonial (revival) house in Morris Plains, New Jersey (left).**

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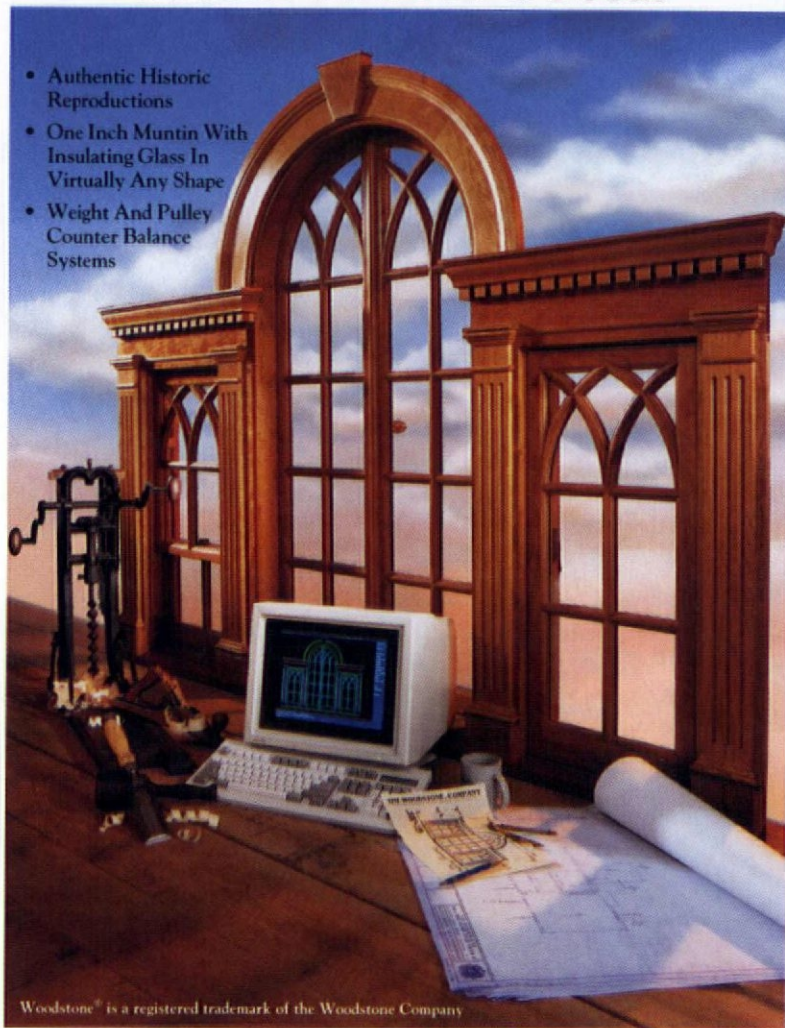
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# OUTSIDE THE OLD HOUSE

## Looking at Archival Photos

by Eleanor Bailey

**F**EW OLD HOUSES COME WITH their original landscaping intact, and most offer little or no indication about designs or materials used prior to the 20th century. Restoring a site to its former appearance — or just recapturing a former spirit — requires careful research using a variety of sources. The writings of landscape historians and early gardeners are useful for understanding larger trends in landscape design, but for a close look at a particular locale (and, perhaps, your own property) old photographs can be invaluable.

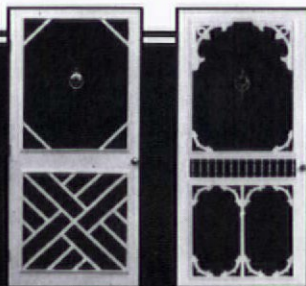
Photography was introduced to America in the second quarter of the 19th century and by mid-century photographers were producing fine views

of local houses and homesteads. Truly lucky old-house owners may inherit old photographs along with their buildings, but for most acquiring a useful print will involve a search. Your local historical society is a good place to begin. Many societies collect and preserve historic photographs and, who knows, your house may be rep-

*An orchard, a vegetable garden, and a dirt path — the realities of rural landscaping — show clearly in the yard of this mid-19th century house. Closer inspection (inset) reveals a plant stand on the side porch and a few low plantings.*

resented in their collection. Even if it is not, perusing pictures of other local houses will give you ideas and a sense of general fashions. Libraries and museums also maintain photo collections and newspapers may have similar archives. Local preservation organizations or photo collectors might even





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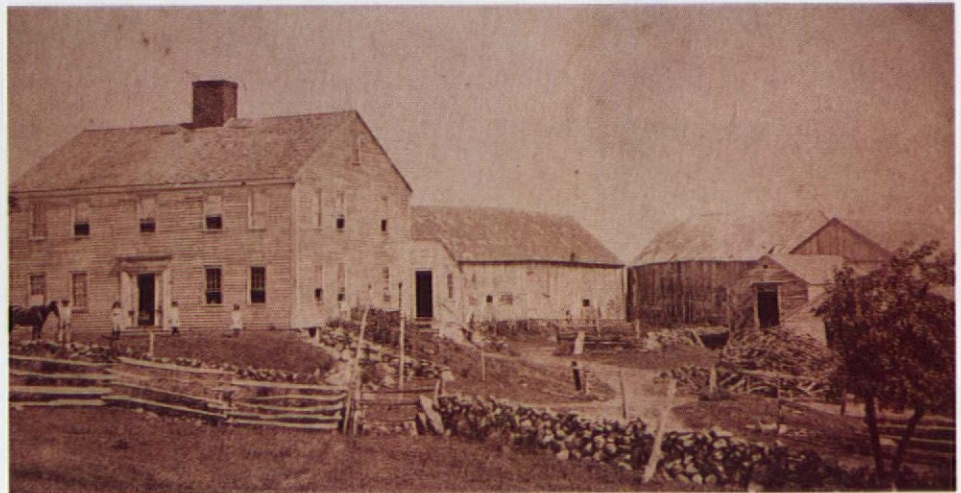
## OUTSIDE THE OLD HOUSE

have published a photographic history of your area that includes streetscapes, house portraits, and overviews of neighborhoods.

Examining old photographs requires observation skills, good light, and usually a magnifying device of some sort. Develop your skills by looking carefully at all areas of the photograph and trying to identify them. Locate walks and drives and attempt to determine how or if they are paved. Look for trees, shrubs, vines, annuals and perennials. Where are they placed? Can you identify the species? Note any fencing and its design. Where is it placed and for what purpose? Are there garden ornaments, planters, seats, or statues?

As most photographs will be small relative to the scene they represent, important details may not be apparent without strong light and magnification. Good room lamps, drafting lamps, or other household fixtures can be handy light sources. You will be surprised to see how much detail emerges (particularly in areas of low contrast) as the photo is better illuminated. A magnifier will enlarge elements in a photograph and often clarify indistinct or confusing details. Magnification power is expressed in terms of a multiplier: a 5x magnifier has the power to increase the image to five times the size of the original. Lens quality improves the clarity of the image. The finer the lens, the sharper the image and, generally, the higher the price.

Magnifiers may be hand-held or stationary. A hand-held lens protects old photographs from wear and tear but requires a steady hand. A stationary lens provides and holds a focussed



*Top: Only a stone wall and split-rail fence surrounded this West Newbury, Mass. farm in 1886. Above: A lack of foundation plantings marks this residential lot, but note the porch vines on the right.*

image, but should not be placed on top of rare or fragile photos. Hand-held magnifiers are typically 3x power and are often available with a 5x mini lens for under \$20. They provide the safest and best means of viewing the entire photograph. Loupes are stationary magnifiers that provide higher power, but focus on only a portion of an image. When used in combination, a magnifying glass and a 8x or 10x loupe will help unravel the mysteries of many photographs. Office supply stores, photography shops, hobby centers, and drug stores all sell magnifiers. The view

through a poor quality device will be disappointing so it pays to compare items before purchasing.

Photo research may provide a design for a fence, a list of possible trees to plant, or ideas for paving materials and garden ornaments. Research may also reveal that at one time your house had little or no landscaping, an uncut lawn, one giant shade tree, and vegetables in the front yard. If the latter is true, you may not wish to recapture it, but having looked at many photos in the process, you will at least be armed with some historically appropriate alternatives.

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# ASK OHJ

## SAFE ASSUMPTIONS

**Q** WE OWN A HIGH QUALITY HOME built in 1922-24 where a safe was installed during the original construction. The previous owner did not have the combination and informed us that the manufacturer, Chicago Automatic Machine Company, had long since ceased doing business. The local locksmith advised against removing the safe as it would cause wall damage. Our walls are thick poured concrete. Is there anyway we can obtain the combination to our safe?



— MR. AND MRS. ROSS ANDREWS  
*Rockford, Ill.*

**A** WALL SAFES SUCH AS THE ONE you have inherited were popular by the 1920s for houses and apartments (as well as offices and hotels) because they didn't tie up floor space as a freestanding safe might. They were also inconspicuous and, according to ads, provided "greater secrecy" as demonstrated by many a vintage mystery movie. Your locksmith is probably right about removal. Wall safes, which were also popular in rectangular models, frequently had a thick steel backing plate to hold the unit in the wall and prevent tampering. By nature, they were installed in heavy brick or poured concrete walls to make them fireproof as well as burglarproof. After 70 years, the odds of finding records for the combination to your safe are close to nil, especially since it could have been

changed at any time. Safe manipulation or drilling open and repairing the unit are your only real options, but you might try Left-24, Right-16, Left-9, or Left-25, Right-14, Left-10 ...

## UNDER-FOOT INSULATION

**Q** WHILE DOING A REPAIR PROJECT on an 1879 mansion — old for the West Coast — we found a plaster infill laid on 1x6x8 boards supported between the floor joists and some inches below the softwood floor and subfloor. The condition was observed at first floor joists over a crawlspace and did not occur on the floors above. We have not encountered this type of construction before — has anyone else?

— MORRIS NEIL FINISY  
*San Rafael, Calif.*

**A** THE UNDER-FLOOR PLASTERING you have discovered, is not unique. Sometimes referred to as "pugging," it is an early type of thermal insulation and usually built over an unheated crawlspace where noise was not a concern. In most buildings, a dead-air space is created by applying rough plaster between the joists over rudimentary cleats or sheathing, but

variations (such as using clay mud, straw-and-plaster batts, or manufactured materials) have been noted. While not a universal practice, it does seem to have had a far-flung history. We've heard of examples in Ohio that date to the 1840s, and OHJ contributor Jim Massey notes that a similar system was used in all floors of the 1832 Mead Hall at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey.

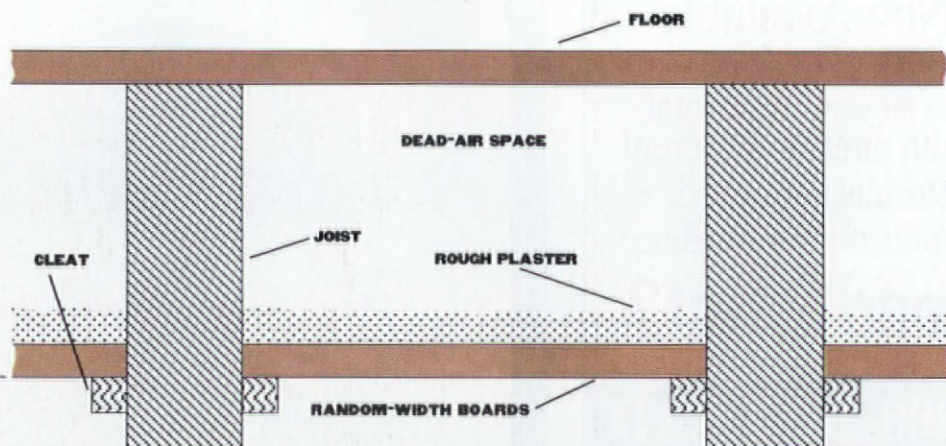
## SERIAL BRICKS

**Q** MY HUSBAND AND I ARE RESTORING a 200-year old log house. The chimneys were completed in 1820 of brick hand made on site. It seems the builder had marked certain bricks with numbers etched into the face before they were fired. Only about one-third of the bricks had been marked. My husband believes that this was the system used by the brickmaker to keep up with his daily production. We would appreciate any information you might offer in solving this mystery.

— CATHY NASH  
*Danielsville, Georgia*

*Rough plaster "pugging" between floor joists creates an early thermal barrier over a crawlspace.*

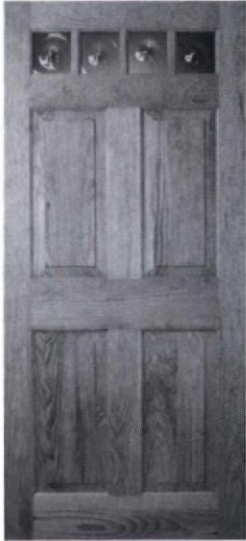
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**A** HANDMADE BRICKS WERE COMMON until well after the first brickmaking machines started to appear in the 1830s. With help, an expert brickmolder was capable of making over 3,000 bricks a day by forming wet clay in wood molds — the “soft-mud” process. Using different methods to lubricate the molds created different finishes on the surface to produce, say, water-struck or sand-struck brick. Other features such as holes or frogs (depressions in one face made with a mold or even a finger) saved clay and improved the mortar bond. It’s hard to speculate about the purpose of individual numbering, unless it was to check the hardness of the bricks after firing, which was never uniform.

### CHINKING SINKS

**Q** I HAVE A 1910 SOAPSTONE KITCHEN sink still in regular use. My problem is that the cement that fills the crack between the flat bottom and the upright sides has been largely washed away. I have to flush out the crack to prevent soap and bits of food from accumulating and I fear there may one day be leaks here. Can you suggest what sort of materials I can use to fill the crack and overcome this problem?

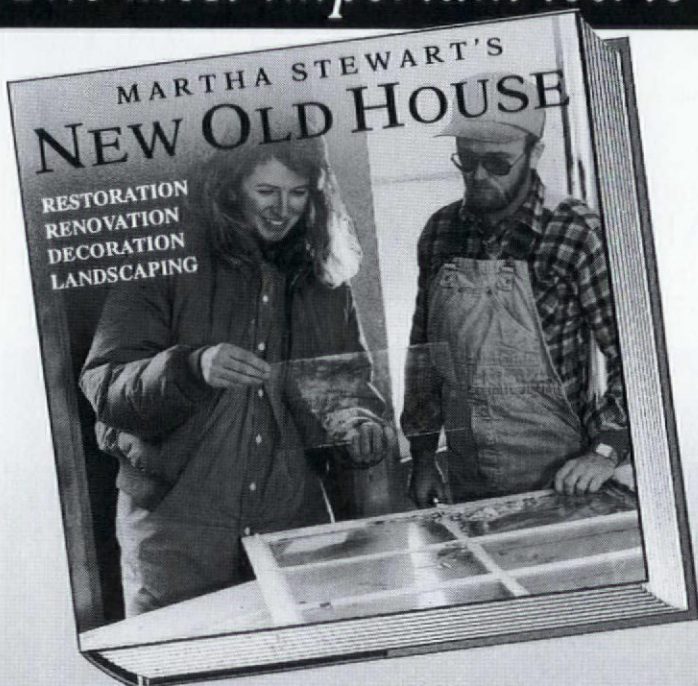
— ERIC PARKMAN SMITH  
Concord, Mass..

**A** CHANCES ARE YOUR SINK WAS assembled with a glycerine-based caulk, a material that is no longer available. If the joints are

eroded but not leaking, apply a good quality waterproof silicone sealant such as those made for marine or aquarium use. Thoroughly scrape and clean all loose caulk from the joint with a knife, then wash the area and allow to dry before resealing. If the joints are leaking, use an epoxy cement made for stone. Clean the joint and mask it off before applying the cement. While the epoxy may leave a noticeable black line, it should produce a long-lasting repair.

General-interest questions will be answered in print. The Editors can't promise to respond to all questions personally, but we try. Send your questions to: Questions Editor, Old-House Journal, 2 Main Street, Gloucester, MA 01930.

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—RALPH AND TERRY KOVEL

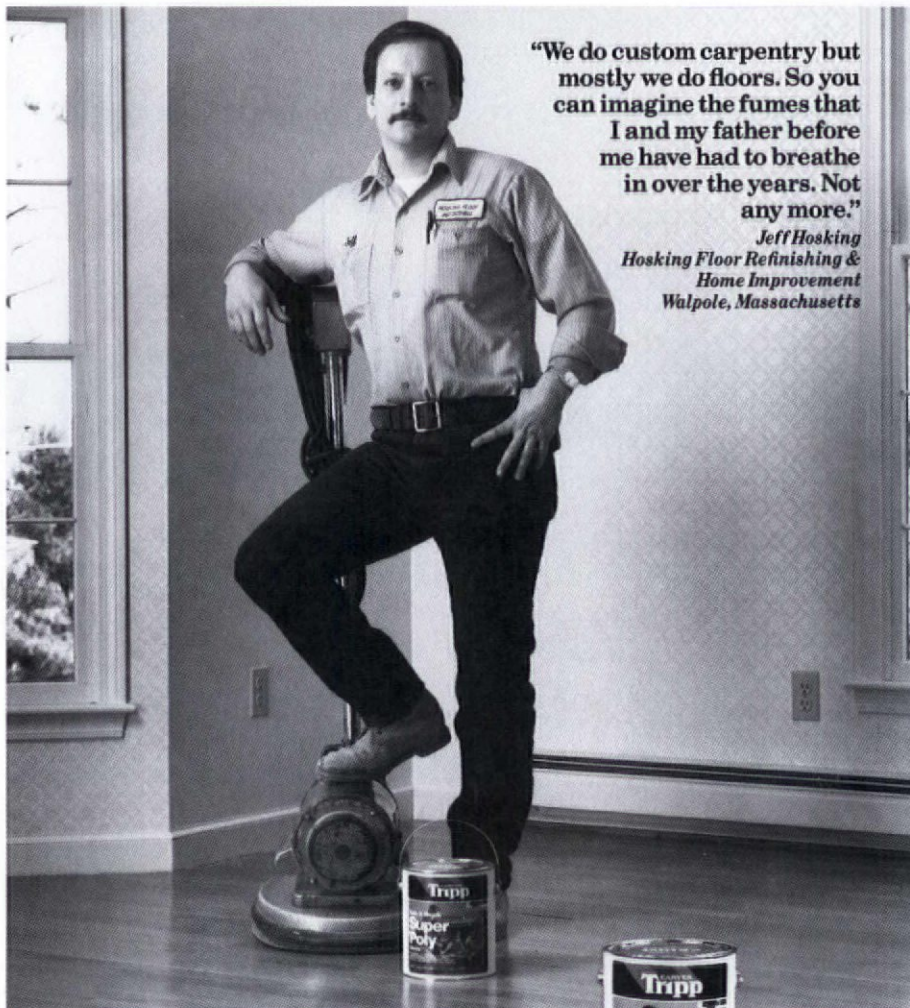
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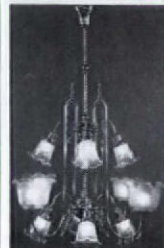
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# Rebuilding Fireplaces

BY CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS

**A** GOOD WORKING FIREPLACE is a pleasure in any home. Often the centerpiece for holidays, family gatherings, and parties, it adds an ambiance of warmth and good cheer. Many older homes have more than one fireplace — often one for each room — and a working fireplace in the kitchen for cooking. My c. 1887 Queen Anne in the northern Georgia mountains has nine. All fireplaces have a couple of things in common. First, our predecessors really did know how to build them. Second, after 90 or more years of use, even the best-built fireplace will probably need some repair.

There are only a few things that can go wrong with a fireplace. Though this sounds simplistic, all you have is a foundation, hearth, firebox, smoke chamber, and the chimney mass. One or more of these components can have problems, but since they are composed of bricks and mortar they can be repaired. If your fireplace needs to be rebuilt, you may want to hire a professional or you may want to tackle the job yourself.

Either way, bear in mind this is a dirty job. It can be messy and tedious and the materials are heavy (94 lbs. for each sack of cement). There must also be great attention to detail — remember, we are playing with fire here. However, if you follow these guidelines you will have a fireplace that is long-lasting, efficient, and safe.

## Look for Problems

THE FIREBOX IS THE FIRST PART OF A fireplace to go, and the first place to look for problems. Picture the brick firebox as a separate entity, an “insert” if you will. This lining needs repair when it has deteriorated due to age, older soft materials, or just plain poor craftsmanship. A well-built firebox should last for 40 or more years of regular use and a basic repair can add another lifetime of service. Although most Victorian fireplaces were made of brick, the repair techniques described here are designed for retrofitting a stone fireplace as well.

Start your inspection with the

foundation and look for settling and cracks. Most settling takes place shortly after construction, sometimes due to inadequate support but most often the result of water. Check the condition of gutters and groundwater drainage. Stabilize the chimney before you address any other problems, even if you must reinforce the foundation and install a French drain.

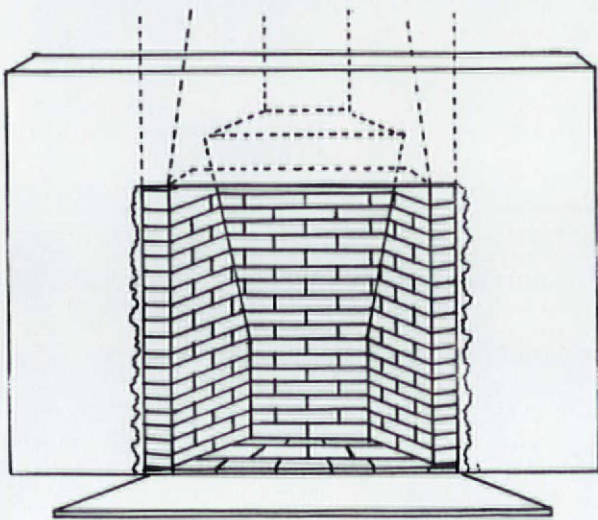
Look at the hearth. If there is a crack across the front or middle or it has sunk there is a reason. For the past 100 years or so of modern framing methods, hearths have been suspended from the floor system. This makes them subject to vibration and stresses from the weight of the masonry. Once a hearth cracks, it can cause the floor to settle with it. The solution is to tear out the old hearth and incorporate the new one into the chimney mass.

---

*Even firebrick and fireclay eventually succumb to intense heat produced by burning wood and coal, but these materials can be renewed.*

Photograph by Steve Marsel





*In a well-built fireplace, the firebox is constructed as an insert or liner in the overall mass that can be replaced as it wears out.*

## Demolition

THE KEY TO A GOOD DEMOLITION JOB IS CLEANLINESS, ESPECIALLY in an occupied house. The dust from any tear-out is prolific, but old coal-burners are probably the worse. Tear-out creates a fine soot that will travel throughout the entire house. One solution to the mess is to repaint after the fireplace repairs are complete.

Another approach is a surgical-style demolition (almost) that is possible if you are careful. First, seal off the room and plastic everything. Remove furniture, drapes, and any article that can be transported. Use old sheets, and taped down builder's paper (red rosin paper) for coverings elsewhere. Protect floors from small chips of brick that cause scratches and dents when walked on by putting down builder's paper, then old blankets or furniture pads.

When all your preparation is done, the actual demolition begins. Consider this phase of the repair much like dentistry on a large scale. Wear a protective dust mask and eyeglasses or goggles. Use a good, top-of-the-line double-filtered vacuum. A regular-grade shop vac does not filter the finest dust particles and will actually blow these everywhere. The neatest trick I have come across recently was passed on by a contractor friend and it works! Lay a window fan down on the top of the chimney during tearout. It will pull out 90% of the fine dust that would otherwise permeate every inch of the house — plus, you don't have to breathe it.



*A "surgical" firebox demolition.*

If you have not already removed the mantel, do so now. Most Victorian wood mantels are held in place by nails or screws that are driven into wood pegs set in the masonry. Often as few as four are used, making it easy to pull the mantel away. Remember to replace any pegs that are old, dried out, or shrunk with age before resetting the mantle. Whittle new ones and set them in place with construction adhesive. If your mantel is marble or slate it will probably be set in a similar fashion with wire brackets mounted in pluglike plaster divots. Handle marble and stone carefully.

If your hearth is cracked or sinking and must be repaired, get ready for a big load to the dump. Usually, the hearth is suspended in the floor by a wooden form that resembles a lobster trap. Take out all of the hearth brick and then break down into the floor of the firebox at least a foot.

Take your time during tear-out because a lot can be learned about the fireplace's construction during the process. Be sure to take measurements, make sketches, and even snap photos to help you remember how to put it together again. Take out cracked, loose, and broken brick and mortar until you get to good, sound work (or as close as it gets). If the original fireplace worked well and had a good draw, don't tamper with the dimensions too much; stick with what worked before. At some point you should come to the main chimney mass, resembling a larger fireplace.

Most older brick chimneys were actually built so that the firebox could be repaired when it burned out. If you're lucky enough to have this convenient sleeve, you're in great shape.

Keep safety in the back of your mind while doing demolition or later stages of your fireplace rebuild. Watch for bogus work and anything that does not conform to standard masonry practice — or common sense. I have seen otherwise well-constructed fireplaces that had wood lintels tied to the house framing or were sitting right on the joists with mere inches between fire and floor. Although there were no standard building codes 100 years ago, it is especially important to conform with modern codes in fireplace repair. A good rule is to maintain 8" of solid masonry between your

fire and any wood or non-masonry material. Keep a 2" gap between any fireplace masonry and the house framing, and check your local codes. Remember, we are playing with fire here.

## New Hearth and Firebox Floor

Begin your new hearth, if needed, by squaring off the opening and cleaning up the rough edges. Next, fit a piece of corrugated steel into the space so you can pour the new

hearth as one solid masonry unit. Put in steel rebar on wire as needed for reinforcement (see drawing below). If you are going to have a gas log lighter or gas log set, plan for the line before you pour. The hearth mix is: 1 shovel portland cement, 2 shovels sand, and 1/2 shovel gravel. Mix these in a wheelbarrow, wet the area, and pour a recessed floor and hearth to allow for the firebox brick floor. The new hearth should be about 1' thick, but may taper to the front as it meets the floor framing. Let the new hearth cure for 72 hours before continuing.

Before laying out the firebox, first lay in the floor. Old-house floors are seldom level and for this reason you need to determine the height of the fireplace (as well as its angle) in relation to the floor. To do this, just set a nail in the floor on each end of the hearth front and stretch a string across as a guide. Then, find the center point and check it for level. Soak the hearth floor before laying in the firebox floor or it will suck the water out of the mix making it set up way too fast. The firebox floor mix is: 2 shovels sand to 1 shovel portland cement. Spread the mix evenly to the desired thickness and just set your soaked fire-



Top: A good work area has raw materials and soaking brick right at hand. Bottom: Laying in new firebrick.

brick in the wet mortar bed. Add or remove "mud" to reach the proper height. If your floor mix is too dry the bricks will not bond; if it is too wet they will "swim." When your bed is just right, the bricks will set in easily. Check for level using your two-foot level and tap the bricks into place until you have a floor. Fill the joints later with soupy fireclay mix.

### Firebox

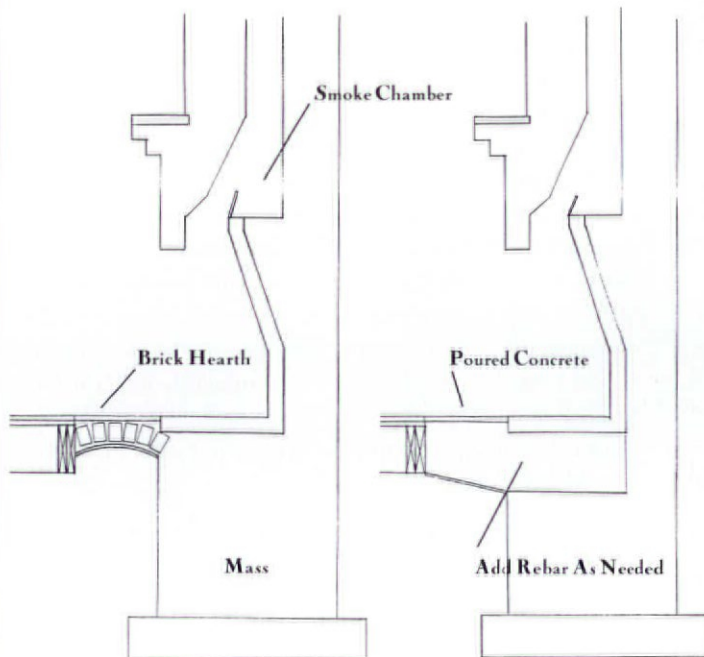
THERE ARE MANY THEORIES ON what makes a fireplace draw, but the principles are basic and simple. At the top of the list is the proportion of the smoke chamber, which must be at least 2/3 the volume of

the firebox — very important so that smoke and gasses can exchange. The flue opening area, too, must coordinate with the firebox — that is, be 1/10 or greater than the size of the fireplace opening. For example, a firebox 32 in. wide by 28 in. high equals 876 sq. in.; a flue opening 10 in. by 10 in. equals 100 sq. in.. Don't push the proportions too much smaller than 1/10 or you may run into problems.

After you have completed demolition, prepared your work area, and laid your firebrick floor, you are ready to work on the firebox. From the smallest coal burner to a cooking fireplace you can walk in, firebox sizes may vary but the construction is basically the same. Use a good quality firebrick (made of refractory material that withstands high temperatures). If you need to "antique" the firebrick later to match original work, use soot from the demolition mixed with water. Be sure to soak your brick first. Keep a five-gallon bucket of fresh water handy and soak several at a time in preparation for laying. Soak brick until the bubbles stop. If they soak too long, set them aside to absorb the surface water so they'll be ready to lay. Bricks that are too wet will dilute the fireclay mix and make a mess.

Mix your fireclay in a bucket either by hand or with a drill-and-paddle mixer. Go for a soft paste consistency; it will need tempering (moistening and remixing) often as you work. The formula for fireclay mix is: 1 shovel fireclay, 1/2 shovel sand, 1/2 shovel portland cement. This is a "plus-or-minus" mix.

Old-time hearths (left) are built as an arch that often cracks where it meets the fireplace mass. Repair (right) means breaking out the old hearth and firebox floor and rebuilding them as one piece of poured masonry.



The sand provides some body and the portland makes it set up so you can continue building. My father built our home fireplace over 40 years ago using pure fireclay and it's still going strong. However, fireclay alone takes forever to set. The mix can be varied to suit your tastes. If you want a little smoother mix, use a little more fireclay; if you want a little quicker set-up, use more portland.

Begin layout of the firebox using a straightedge and marking pencil to determine width, depth, and angle. Build-

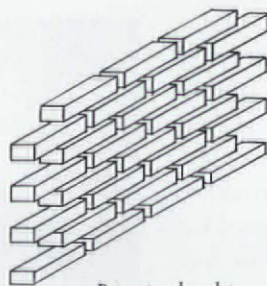
## Materials

ALL THE REQUIRED MATERIALS ARE GENERIC, AND CAN BE purchased at any masonry supply company or brickyard. A typical shopping list includes:

- (2) sacks portland cement
- (1) sack mortar mix
- (1) sack fireclay
- masonry sand as needed
- #57 gravel (small to average pea, for hearth)
- steel lintel (3/16" x 4" x 4" angle iron, width of the fireplace plus 6" overhang each side)
- firebrick (40-50 for a coal-burning firebox, 150 or more for a wood-burning firebox)

By carefully shopping for materials and scrounging a little you can realize substantial savings. The backs of brick and masonry yards may yield odd lots of brick or open bundles that the owners will be glad to sell to you, often at a discount. Bring along your five gallon buckets to shovel up sand and gravel from where large trucks are loaded, often for free or a small fee. This way you avoid buying a whole ton and the delivery charge — or worse — buying bags of sand. Find your steel for the lintel and hearth bottom at a scrap or salvage yard, usually for a couple of dollars expense. There are treasures in scrap piles! I have done more than one rebuild in my own home for under \$100 total materials cost for each fireplace. Had I hired a mason, the cost could have been \$1500 or more.

I recommend mixing your own mortar from scratch for the various phases of fireplace repair rather than using simple mortar mix or redi-mix cements. Use your own judgement when adding water for consistency, and don't worry too much about exact measurements. These mixes can vary a good deal and still have integrity. Make up only as much as you need at the time, and use any excess to backfill the firebox or other areas. Fill all voids with masonry to prevent smoke leaks or fire.



*Running bond is typical for firebox construction.*

ing the firebox is fairly straightforward work once you have established your layout. Using standard brick bonds, spread the fireclay mix like you would butter bread. Mortar joints should be 1/8" and no more than 1/4" thick. To insure a good bond, press the brick into place. Excess mortar will "goosh" out, so scrape this off and return it to your batch or

throw it in the sack for fill. If your mix is correct and your brick is "wet" it will slide into place. Align the brick with a light tap of your trowel butt and use your level often. This mix sets up very quickly, so when you position your brick get it right fast so as not to loose the bond. Occasionally scrape excess mortar from your work and finish cleaning the surface with fresh water and a soft sponge. Clean very lightly so as not to wash mortar from the joints. When you have completed your firebox-to-smokesheff height, be sure to backfill behind your firebrick with mortar mix to make as solid chimney mass.

## Dampers

CAST-IRON DAMPERS ARE A THING OF THE PAST IN MY OPINION. They are cumbersome, dirty, and sit right in the chimney throat right where they are just as likely to impede the flow of gasses as they are to control draft. They are also a natural trap for soot, leaves, and squirrel nests. If you get water down your chimney, they will rust. If you must use a cast-iron damper, install it according to the manufacturer's directions and position it on the smokesheff at least 8" above the lintel. The most common cause of a smoking fireplace is a damper set too low on the firebox.

My favorite dampers are top-sealing units (such as those made by Lyemance International) that mount directly on the flue liner at the chimney cap. Made of cast aluminum and stainless steel, they keep out rain, birds, and squirrels, will not rust, and are operated by a stainless steel pull cord. If you do not have terra cotta flue tile liners in your chimney, you can still use a top damper with a little extra work. Simply find a tile about the same size as your flue opening and mount it on top of your chimney. Use nails to temporarily hold the liner in place until the mortar sets. Be sure to apply a good mortar wash on the chimney to prevent water intrusion and insure a good seal.

## Coal-Burners

COAL-BURNING FIREPLACES ARE HISTORICALLY APPROPRIATE (many Victorian houses have them), fuel-efficient, and put out a suprising amount of heat. They will burn wood, too



— just be sure it's dry so it's easy to start.

Rebuilding a coal-burner is a slightly different procedure than rebuilding a wood-burner. After removing the mantel, check the front offset, the area where the brick either steps in or is built out to accommodate the mantel. The offset is seldom bonded to the fireplace mass and often can be pulled away with minimal effort. When it comes time to replace this front, anchor the new brick to the fireplace mass with brick ties or nails driven into the face of the masonry and bond with an offset mix of 2 shovels sand, 1 shovel mortar mix.

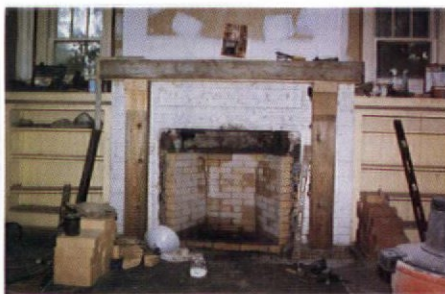
In addition, the sequence of construction for coal-burners is more difficult in that you must lay in your firebrick last in order to allow for the metal fireplace surround. The order to proceed is 1) repair hearth; 2) repair fascia (facade); 3) repair smoke chamber; 4) install tile, marble, or stone; 5) mount metal surround (anchored with wires to the main body of the chimney). The final step is laying in the firebrick, making sure that you plan for the coal basket that mounts onto the surround.

### Smoke Chamber

AS SOON AS YOU GET TO LINTEL HEIGHT, IT IS TIME TO FINISH up the smoke chamber while you still have access before closing in the front. This is a good time to take final measurements and do any last-minute demolition. Then parge or stucco the back and the sides. The smoother the smoke chamber is, the less chance it will create eddies and restrict the natural flow of the smoke. Parging also eliminates the possibility of smoke leaks due to faulty construction, cracks, or deterioration of the masonry. Use a parge mix of: 1 large shovel sand, 1 small shovel mortar mix, 1 small shovel portland cement. This mix is very rich and sticky, will set up quickly, and be hard as flint when dry.

Make sure your surface is clean and wet down all existing masonry before doing any work. A spray bottle is great for wetting confined areas, but a sponge or water brush is handy too. This job is a pain in the neck to do and the work space is tight. Wear glasses and a mask. I cut out neck and arm holes in a garbage bag and put a smaller bag on my head to keep mix out of my hair. Send the children out of the house. This is not a pretty picture and the grunts, groans, and caustic remarks may not be best for young ears.

Trowel on the parge mix as smoothly as possible. If this is difficult (sometimes it is impossible) I use rubber gloves to throw it on and spread it with my hands. Once



*Firebox complete up to lintel height and ready for smoke chamber parging.*

you have an adequate coating, you can finish it off with a trowel after it sets a bit. Do not apply the parge with bare hands as it will tear the hide right off. If your smoke chamber is very oddly shaped or virtually impossible to parge, you can solve this problem using expanded metal lath. Cut the lath to the desired smoke chamber form, nail or wire it in place, and coat with parge mix. After this coat sets, you can backfill as desired. I use this method often and it works, especially

when closing in the breast.

Once you have parged the sides and back of the smoke chamber, set the lintel in a bed of mortar and brick up the breast (front). Finish all interior and exterior brick work and the firebox is complete. Then parge the interior breast and, if you need to level or prep your front, float on a coat of parging mix to even the face of the fireplace. Last, use your level to achieve a smooth, even surface to apply the finishing touches such as tile, stucco, or marble. 🏠

*Christopher Phillips specializes in restoration masonry south of the Mason-Dixon line (Eighteenth Century Fireplaces, Yarborough Mill, Fairmount, Georgia 30139; 706/625-0785).*



*Final surface components, such as decorative tile surrounds and the mantelpiece itself, are applied to the leveled breast to complete the job.*

# Maintenance

By Lynn Elliott

**M**ANTELS AND THEIR ASSOCIATED PARTS FORM THE DECORATIVE dressing around a fireplace, but they, too, are exposed to elements and agents that cause them to wear and soil — sometimes beyond repair. Smoke and combustion byproducts, water, food, wax, and years of handling all leave their mark. Even well-intentioned cleaning with soaps and waxes can build up over decades, obscuring finishes and details. Perhaps most devastating are remodelings and other aesthetic upgrades that overpaint wood or stone, rob the ensemble of features such as mirrors, wood turnings, and tile or, in the worst case, do away with the entire mantel.

The situation isn't hopeless, though. When it comes to cleaning and restoring surfaces, all of the five main mantel materials — marble, slate, metal, wood, and brick — will respond to tender loving care if the right preparations and methods are used. To help, we've sorted out a variety of techniques for each surface to get any old-house owner through the most common mantel restoration problems.

## MARBLE

**Cleaning** To remove plain dirt from marble, use water and a mild detergent (such as Ivory Liquid) applied with a medium-stiff natural or plastic bristle brush (avoid wire or steel wool). Removing stains can be more of a challenge because

marble is a porous stone and drawing the stain out usually requires a poultice. As a poultice dries, the solvent migrates back into the mixture carrying the stain. Therefore, the poultice should be at least ¼-inch thick, so that more solvent can come in contact with the stain. When working with a poultice, pre-wet the area around stain to avoid spreading it. Then cover the treated area with plastic wrap for up to 48 hours.

After the plastic is removed, allow the poultice to thoroughly dry and scrape off with a plastic spatula. (Don't use a metal scraper!) The absorbent can be anything clean and white, such as whiting, talc, Fuller's earth, tin oxide, tissues, or paper towels. For black and other dark marbles, don't use a white powder poultice because some residue may remain in the pores. Stick to white blotting paper instead.

*For stubborn stains, try these formulas:*

**Smoke Stain Poultice:** an absorbent plus a powdered alkaline cleaner (like baking soda) and water.

**Oil Stain Poultice** (butter, wax, crayon, etc.):

an absorbent plus acetone or naphtha or mineral spirits.

**Organic Stain Poultice:** an absorbent plus full-strength household ammonia or 20% hydrogen peroxide.

**Rust Stain Poultice:** A commercial rust stain poultice may only require one application. The home remedy calls for a two-step process. First, make a soaking solution from one quart of water and ¼ lb. of sodium hydrosulfate crystals. Apply this solution to the stain with a wet cloth, and leave cloth on the stain for at least 15 minutes. Next, place about ¼" of sodium citrate crystals over the damp stain, and cover with a thick poultice of water and a powdered absorbent. Cover the poultice with plastic wrap and leave for at least 48 hours. Then remove the plastic and allow to dry. Since these chemicals not readily available, professional help from a marble supplier may be needed.

**Polishing** For minor scratches and etching, use a moistened felt pad and tin oxide to rub out marks. Rinse and dry thoroughly with a soft cloth. For a



*Victorian mantels were the focal point for decorative bric-a-brac.*



*Note the wooden mantelshelf set above this early-18th-century fireplace.*

# n g Mantels



*The refined moulding and simple design of this 1790s mantel was typical for the period.*

fine-honed finish, use a wet-dry finishing sandpaper. Sand with a series of 80-, 120-, 320-, 400-grit papers. Dark marble will require continuing to 600-grit. Be sure to keep the surface wet and frequently wipe off the waste produced. Follow up with a buffing powder (tin oxide or aluminum oxide). Use water and a hand rubbing pad or buffing wheel. For the final finish, rub on a good polish formulated specifically for marble. Since a final polish may be all that is needed to revive the surface, try this step before resorting to other methods.

**Paint Removal** Paint on marble mantels can be removed with

standard solvent-based paint strippers, but use a wooden or plastic scraper so you don't gouge the marble. To remove last traces, reapply the paint remover and scrub with soft bristle brush.

## SLATE

**Cleaning** Dirt can be removed with household cleaners or Murphy's Oil Soap. For more stubborn stains, try oxalic acid or a solution of one part muriatic acid to three parts water. Rub on with a soft cloth and rinse thoroughly.

**Polishing** Like marble, rough marks in slate can be sanded out with wet/dry finishing sandpaper. Once the dust is removed and the slate is washed, it will return to a uniform color. For a dark and shiny finish, try a mixture of 3 or 4 parts turpentine and 1 part boiled linseed oil rubbed onto a honed slate. Use only a few drops of the mixture for several square feet of slate and rub in with a soft, lintfree cloth. Mineral oil can also revive the finish on slate and acts as a good sealer. Once again, make sure to wipe with a soft cloth and leave only a thin film.

**Paint Removal** The solvent in chemical paint strippers will not react with slate and can be used for paint removal (test first to evaluate results). However, be aware that damage may have already been done. The slate absorbs the oil in the paint, leaving a stain

which is nearly impossible to remove.

## METALS

**Cleaning** To remove soot and grime, good ol' soap and water makes the best cleaner, but be sure the fireplace is dried well immediately afterwards, particularly for cast iron. For discolorations or stains, use an appropriate commercial metal cleaner.

**Paint Removal** Paint doesn't bond well with metal, so it shouldn't be difficult to strip. For cast-iron pieces, try a liquid stripper. After the chemical has done the work, rinse and thor-

## Mantel Glossary

**Andirons** (or **Firedogs**): A pair of upright metal supports with a horizontal bar that are meant to hold the logs for the fire. After coal came into use, they were replaced by grates.

**Architrave**: Below the frieze, the lowest member of the entablature that rests on the pilasters or columns.

**Bolection Moulding**: A projecting moulding that covers a joint between two elements at different levels.

**Cornice**: The projecting moulding that crowns an entablature.

**Coving Jamb**s: The concave or curved jambs of a fireplace, which narrow toward the back.

**Entablature**: The section that consists of the cornice, frieze, and architrave, which rests on the pilasters or columns.

**Fender**: Common in the 18th century, a low, brass or iron guard that became necessary to catch any falling coals from the new grates that raised the height of the fire.

**Firebacks**: A cast-iron liner or screen placed behind the fire

to protect the brickwork from damage.

**Fireboard**: A decorative board that fits into the framework of the fireplace and prevent drafts when the chimney isn't being used.

**Fire Irons**: Fireplace accessories or equipment, such as tongs, shovels, or brushes.

**Firescreen**: An ornamental screen placed in front of the fire for protection from the heat or sparks.

**Fireplace Surrounds**: The encircling border, often decorated with tiles, around the fireplace opening.

**Frieze**: The panel above the architrave, usually plain or decorated with applied ornaments.

**Grate**: Used to hold coals, the earliest type was a metal basket. In the 18th century, cast-iron grates with urn-shaped sides were built-in.

**Hood**: A projected covering set in the wall over a fire.

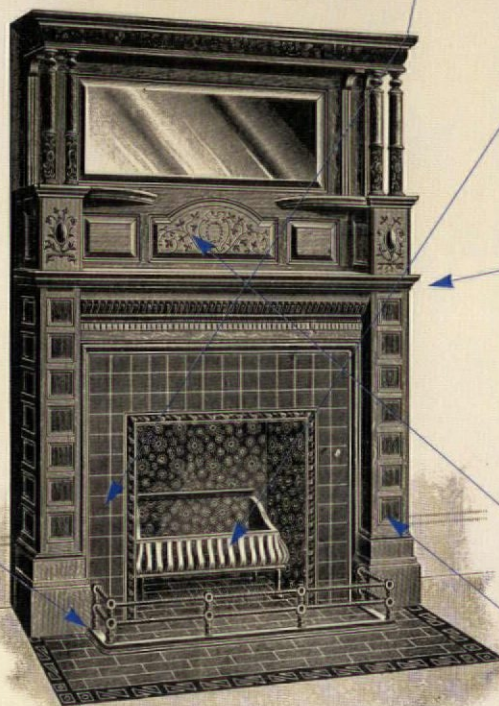
**Mantel** (or **Mantelshef**): In its simplest form, a shelf placed over a fireplace opening.

**Mantelpiece**: The mantel with side supports that surround a fireplace opening, usually in ornamental stone, brick, or wood.

**Overmantel**: A carved wood or stone panel set above the mantelpiece.

**Pilasters**: The vertical supports for the mantelshef, usually decorative.

THE 19TH CENTURY MANTEL



oughly dry the mantel. Follow up immediately with a good metal polish. Vigorous but careful brushing with a stiff wire brush or a wire sanding wheel will also take paint off cast parts.

### W O O D

**Cleaning** For painted wood, wash with mild soap and water. Rinse with clear water and dry afterward. Wash glossy enamel with plain hot water or 1 teaspoon washing soda with 1 gallon of hot water.

*For defects in clear finishes, try these formulas:*

**White Stains**: If the stain is in the finish, try rubbing with mineral spirits or use a paste of rottenstone (or pumicestone) and linseed oil. First, rub the paste gently in the direction of the grain. If successful, then rub plain linseed oil over the spot to restore the luster. If this doesn't work, the stain is in the wood itself. The finish needs to be stripped so that the stain can be bleached with household bleach or, for stubborn stains, oxal-

ic acid. Let stand for an hour, rinse, and sand. Repeat if necessary. Also consider staining the mantel slightly to camouflage the marks, but remember that this will darken the wood. **Cigarette Burns**: Rub fine steel wool in a wet bar of soap and use it to gently rub out burn marks. Light burns may be removed with rottenstone and linseed-oil paste rubbed into the burn, but deep burns may have to be sanded out. Rub in the same direction as the grain.

**Oil or Grease**: Use brown (lye) soap. If the stain is stubborn, saturate a piece of cotton with hydrogen peroxide and lay it over the stain. Then put ammonia-soaked cotton over that to draw out the stain.

**Alcohol**: Wipe up spills immediately and rub the spot with the palm of a hand or a cloth moistened with oil polish. On an old stain, use a paste of rottenstone and linseed oil. Paste wax and fine steel wool may also work.

**Paint Removal** The same tools and chemical paint strippers

used for interior woodwork may be used for wood mantels. However, stripper applied to decorative elements such as beadwork or column capitals molded from "compo" (wood fiber and glue) will destroy them. Test all areas of the mantel first in an inconspicuous spot before proceeding further.

## BRICK


**Cleaning** Soot is best removed with gentle mechanical methods such as a natural bristle brush, water, and a little soap. For dirt that does not respond to this treatment, try commercial masonry cleaners.

**Oil stains:** First try cleaning with soap, scouring powder, then TSP, followed by a poultice and a solvent such as trichlorethylene. A poultice containing 5% sodium hydroxide (caustic soda) may also work.

**Paint Removal** Complete paint removal from brick masonry is difficult because of the rough, porous surface. Burning

and sandblasting are effective, but pose health and safety hazards. Chemical stripping may clean enough of the surface so that areas where paint remains can be disguised with touch-up colors that match the masonry.

Although the care and cleaning of your mantel is part of fireplace restoration, mantel maintenance isn't going to be much help if you don't have one or if it's missing sections. Fortunately, there's no dearth of reproduction Georgian, Federal, and Victorian mantels — including every possible Louis style. Salvaged originals and reproduction fireplace accessories can still be located too (see Suppliers List).

Since the mantel is often the chief decorative feature in a room, you'll want to choose a replacement that's from the appropriate period. But how do you know which one is right for your room? Before you start looking at reproductions, study the styles and get to know the different parts of the mantel. The glossary on page 36 is a good place to start. 

## Suppliers List

### ♦ ANTIQUE MANTELS

Architectural Antiques Exchange  
715 North 2nd St., Dept. OHJ  
Philadelphia, PA 19123  
(215) 922-3669  
*antique mantels in marble, slate, cast iron, and wood. Also have antique overmantel mirrors.*

Olde Theatre Architectural Salvage Company  
2045 Broadway, Dept. OHJ  
Kansas City, MO 64108  
(816) 283-3740  
*antique mantels in wood, cast-iron, slate, and marble.*

Salvage One  
Architectural Artifacts  
1524 South Sangamon St.,  
Dept. OHJ  
Chicago, IL 60608  
(312) 733-0098  
*wood, marble, and cast-iron antique mantels as well as andirons, screens, and fenders.*

### ♦ REPRODUCTION MANTELS

Danny Alessandro Ltd.  
Edwin Jackson Inc.  
307 E. 60th St., Dept. OHJ  
New York, NY 10022  
(212) 421-1928

*antique and reproduction mantels in wood, marble, and limestone*

Architectural Components  
26 N. Leverett Rd., Dept.  
OHJ  
Montague, MA 01351  
(413) 367-9441  
*custom wood mantels in any style, also panelled fireplace walls.*

Buckingham-Virginia Slate Corp.  
P.O. Box 8, Dept. OHJ  
Arvonnia, VA 23004  
(804) 581-1132  
*slate mantels.*

Decorator's Supply Corp.  
3610 S. Morgan St.,  
Dept. OHJ  
Chicago, IL 60609  
(312) 847-6300  
*wood mantels in Georgian, Federal, and Colonial Revival styles.*

Draper & Draper, Ltd.  
200 Lexington Ave., Dept.  
OHJ  
New York, NY 10016  
(212) 679-0547  
*antique and reproduction mantels in marble, cast iron, slate, and wood.*

Raymond Enkeboll Designs  
16506 Avalon Blvd.,

Dept. OHJ  
Carson, CA 90746  
(310) 532-1400  
*carved wood mantels*

Gawet Marble & Granite, Inc.  
Route 4 West, Dept. OHJ  
Center Rutland, VT 05736  
(800) 323-6398 or (802) 773  
8868  
*marble or granite mantels.*

Hallidays America, Inc.  
P.O. Box 731, Dept. OHJ  
Sparta, NJ 07871  
(201) 729-8876  
*hand-carved wood mantels and mouldings as well as fireplace accessories.*

Heritage Mantels  
P.O. Box 240, Dept. OHJ  
Southport, CT 06490  
(203) 335-0552  
*marble mantels.*

### ♦ ACCESSORIES/TOOLS

The Country Iron Foundry  
P.O. Box 600, Dept. O211  
Paoli, PA 19301  
(215) 296-7122  
*reproduction cast-iron firebacks.*

Hearth Realities  
P.O. Box 38093, Dept. OHJ

Atlanta, GA 30334  
(404) 627-3719  
*cast-iron fireplace accessories, including a reproduction hanging basket grate for coal fireplaces.*

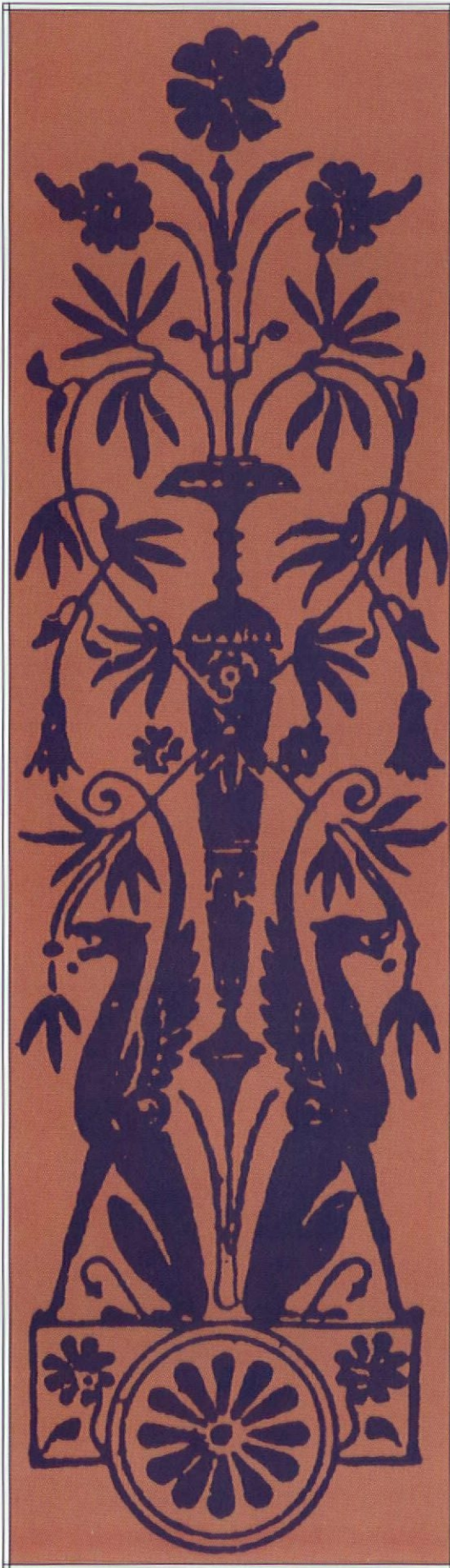
Olde Virginia Trading Co.  
P.O. Box 438, Dept. OHJ  
Williamsburg, VA 23185  
(804) 564-0600  
*fireboards/firescreens in wood and fabric.*

Sporthill Inc.  
P.O. Box 468, Dept. OHJ  
Redding Ridge, CT 06876  
(203) 268-6648  
*club fenders.*

### ♦ TILE

H&R Johnson  
P.O. Box 8066, Dept. OHJ  
Suffolk, VA 23438  
(804) 986-2127  
*encaustic and other historic reproduction tiles.*

Charles Rupert Designs  
2004 Oak Bay Avenue,  
Dept. OHJ  
Victoria, B.C. Canada  
V8R 1E4  
(604) 592-4916  
*reproduction tiles in Victorian and Art Nouveau styles.*



# BRILLIAN

## *Engraved Decoration for Doors and Windows*

BY THOMAS TISCH

**D**URING THE VICTORIAN ERA, MANY homes as well as places of business were embellished with a unique type of ornamental glass: brilliant-cut glass. Sometimes called wheel-cut glass (after the tools used in the process), this beautiful and elaborate technique was usually reserved for prominent display in entrance doors, sidelights, transoms, or interior doors. Designs ranged from simple geometric patterns and star cuts to more intricate florals, some featuring foliage, baskets, bits of architecture, and bird motifs. Commercial applications included fancy lettering and numerals. All were intended to demonstrate the refined taste of the owner.

# T-CUT GLASS



Above, a brilliant-cut panel suitable for a front door. Opposite, a late-Victorian catalog pattern for cut-glass. This pattern, and several others, sold for under \$2.

## CUTTING-EDGE HISTORY

GRINDING, CUTTING, AND POLISHING ARE among the oldest techniques used to shape and decorate glass. The ancient Egyptians were already cutting glass 4000 years ago by using tools adapted from lapidary (gemstone) work. Simple forms of brilliant-style cutting were practiced almost as soon as plate glass was invented in France in the 17th century. At that time, most plate glass was used to make mirrors, which were an extravagant luxury. The early manufacturing process was capable of producing only relatively small units, so in order to cover greater areas two or more panels were mounted in one large frame. Glass cutting was used to decorate and disguise the joints where

panes met. Soon, the uncomplicated geometric designs of early cutting evolved into more elaborate patterns. These techniques, developed for plate glass, were used later in the 19th century to cut window glass. Most Victorian brilliant-cut glass was produced on frosted rather than clear glass because the polished cutting looks more dramatic. Many outstanding examples of the art still survive.

The basic techniques of brilliant-glass cutting have changed little over the centuries. Abrasives have improved and machines are now powered by electric motors, but cuts are still made by hand without guides or templates, and the artist must rely on patience and skill.

## CRAFTING GLASS

TO DUPLICATE A DESIGN, ONE STARTS BY taking a rubbing off an original panel. (If the original glass is lost or the piece is for a new door or window, graphic elements from existing period glass can be adapted to create a design in an appropriate style.) Afterwards, the artist transfers the design to a piece of frosted glass by carefully tracing the rubbing. (Frosting is accomplished by abrasive grinding or by acid-fogging. Sandblasting is not used because it leaves a pitted surface.)

The actual cutting is done with a tool called a glasscutting lathe. Like a benchgrinder, the glasscutting lathe is one or more vertical wheels mounted to a horizontal shaft driven by a motor. The edge of each wheel is shaped to a specific profile: flat, miter (V-formed), and round. The profiles can be shaped to varying degrees, with

one that is just a little rounder than the next used for quite a different cut.

Some designs can be executed with just one stone. By knowing which part of the wheel to cut with and just how to pull the glass, the experienced artist can produce a variety of very different-looking cuts. However, even the most skilled craftsman cannot produce all designs with the same tool. A complete shop will have at least 20 stones ranging from 2" to 30" in diameter and 1/4" to 2" in thickness, and often many more. Originally, cutting wheels were made from natural stone, particularly the carboniferous sandstone quarried at Craighleith, near Edinburgh, Scotland. Natural stones are still being used today, but man-made materials such as aluminum oxide are more durable and uniform and can be produced to the specific needs of cutting.

The cutting process is a very delicate one. The glass is incised to a depth of 1/16" at most, and a light hand is required to guide the panel over the wheel. The glass must be handled flu-

*Glass on the wheel is cut on the frosted surface according to a transferred outline.*



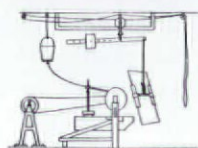
idly, to achieve graceful lines, but also surely enough to maintain control. Panels can be 4' or more across; even with the aid of a counterweight to suspend the glass, cutting becomes a formidable task. Each cut must be cooled by water applied from a small hose and spread to the wheel by a sponge attached to a board. Cutting alone leaves the design very smooth and translucent, but not yet "brilliant," and is sometimes used to achieve beautiful effects, especially in combination with highly polished areas.

In most cases, though, the entire design will be polished. The wheels used for polishing are similar to the ones used for cutting, but need to be relatively soft and porous to hold the polishing compound. Most are made of wood or cork; the polishing agent (pumice polish mixed with water) is applied to the wheel. Every cut must be polished individually. After the pumice, one final polish is needed to give the glass its brilliance. For this step, a soft woolfelt wheel coated with cerium oxide is used. This modern polishing powder works fast and gives the glass a perfectly smooth and sparkling finish. After polishing the panel is cleaned. Some touch-up may be required, but now the panel is ready to be installed.

#### REVIVING FOUND ART

DURING RESTORATION, SOME LUCKY NEW OWNERS may discover wheelcut glass in pocket doors or transoms hiding under layers of paint. Careful cleaning along the following lines will restore these treasures to their former glory:


- To remove dirt and grime, a simple soap-and-water solution still works best.
- Do not use abrasive materials of any kind when cleaning. Avoid scrubbing with steel wool or cleaning pads as these, too, will scratch the panel's surface.
- To clean painted-over windows use a good-quality paint stripper. Work gently with brushes, cloths, and plastic spatulas rather than scraping with sharp implements such as metal putty knives.



*Above: Elaborate pocket door panels in a 19th-century New York City row house. Left, note the glass counterweight and water-lubricated wheel in this c.1900 glasscutting lathe.*

➤ During cleaning one may discover broken panels or sections that have been replaced with regular glass. The cost of replacing a brilliant-cut window depends primarily on the design, but factors such as removal, reinstallation, and the size of the panel also come into play. Prices can range from \$60 to \$350 per square foot.

Finding craftspeople to reproduce lost or broken panels can be difficult, as wheel cutting is a dying art that takes time to learn. Check the listings in glass-arts publications or

restoration resources such as The Old-House Journal Catalog. In our fast-moving world, the beauty of light reflecting and refracting off individually polished brilliant cuts is well worth preserving. 

*Thomas Tisch began his technical training in Austria, where his family has been crafting glass for three generations. At their new studio (P.O. Box 753, Trumansburgh, NY 14886; 607/387-8473) he and his wife Aurelia continue their work as brilliant-cut glass artists and restorers.*



# SHOPPING FOR SPECIAL DOOR HINGES

BY GORDON BOCK

**A**LMOST EVERYONE IS FAMILIAR with the garden-variety butt hinge, that ubiquitous piece of hardware that opens like a book and keeps a door swinging year after year.

This is just the simplest of hinges, though. Over decades — and especially since the industrial revolution — the hardware industry has evolved many variations on the hinge theme, some decorative (especially for historical and less-demanding cabinet hardware) and some strictly functional. Here we're going to take a look at a few of the latter, the commonly used, but probably never thought about, special-purpose workhorse door hinges, most of which have been around for a century and many much more.

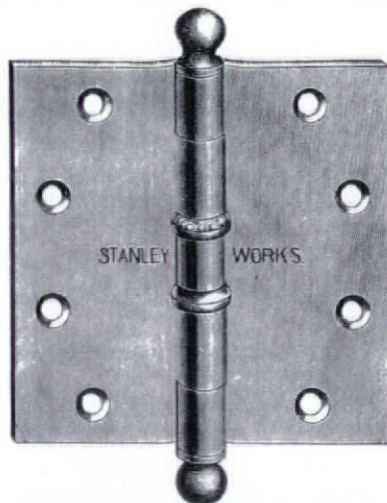
First, understanding a little hardware nomenclature helps with identifying hinge parts and buying them later.

**Leaf** — One of the two plates that, when jointed, form a hinge.

**Knuckle** — The rolled portion of the leaf that holds the pin and forms the joint of the hinge. Five-knuckle hinges are most common.

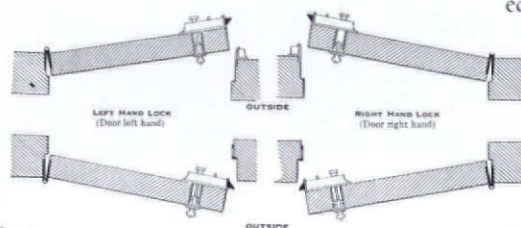
**Pivot** — A device that uses a fixed pin and a single joint to allow hinged movement.

**Hand** — The direction or swing of a door. A door can be either right hand



*The standard butt hinge, here with ball bearings at the center knuckle.*

or left hand, depending upon the side that the hinges are mounted on, and normal or reverse depending upon how it opens to the outside. Some hinges are universal or reversible and can operate in any one of these conditions, but those hinges that require a specific orientation are referred to as handed.



*Each hardware manufacturer has their own system for determining door hand; check before ordering hinges.*

**Mortise or Surface** — Full mortise hinges are designed so that the leaves can be set into the door butt and the jamb and so are hidden when the door is closed; full surface hinges are installed on the surface of the door and frame and are completely visible when the door is closed. Hinges may also be made as hybrids called half-mortise and half-surface.

Here are some classic problem-solving hinges and what you should know about them.

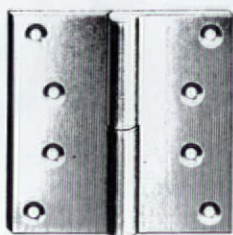
## LOOSE-JOINT HINGES

LOOSE-JOINT HINGES ARE BUTT HINGES that have a fixed pin and only two knuckles, meaning that they come apart without removing a pin. This design allows the door to be removed readily (in a storage room, for example, where it may be an obstacle) and they have been popular since the mid-19th century when improved manufacturing started to make them practical. The loose joint means these hinges are handed and if one or both are not installed upright, they won't work. Because they only have two knuckles, loose-joint hinges also have a clean appearance.

## RISING-BUTT HINGES

THESE ARE CONVENTIONAL LOOKING BUTT hinges until one examines the knuckles, which are manufactured in a spiral or helix, rather than cut square. As

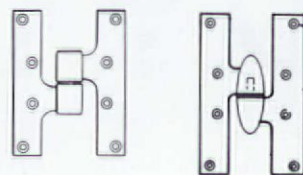
the door opens and the leaves work against each other, the hinge raises the door slightly allowing it to clear small-but-troublesome obstructions such as carpets or an uneven floor — a common old-house situation. Since the helix fights gravity, these hinges are also self-closing. Rising-butt hinges are handed and must be installed so that they work together.



A loose-joint hinge.

these hinges has made them popular for “modern” interiors in this century, particularly in office settings. Both these hinges are made with loose joints and

have the same practical advantage as plain loose-joint hinges. Both are also handed and must be installed with the pin up for them to work correctly. Olive-knuckle and paumelle hinges are often special-order items.



Rising-butt hinges (top) have helical knuckles; paumelle and olive-knuckle hinges (above) have greatly reduced knuckles.

#### OLIVE-KNUCKLE AND PAUMELLE HINGES

THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURE IN AN OLIVE-KNUCKLE hinge is the single, tapered, decorative knuckle. This is the only part of the hinge that shows when the door is closed, and these hinges are chosen when such a low profile is important. Related and slightly less traditional in design are paumelle hinges (the term is French for hinge). The stripped-down profile of

#### BALL-BEARING BUTT HINGES

ALL DOORS IN THE LIVING AREAS OF A house get a lot of use, with an average bathroom door opening and closing as many as 9,000 times a year. Front doors are usually the heaviest and typically see the most use — over 15,000 cycles — and so may benefit from hinges that have ball bearings in between two or more of the knuckles. These hinges, common by 1900, are more expensive,

but they reduce wear and resultant sagging and help the door to move quietly with less friction. Most ball-bearing butt hinges have removable hinge pins and are mortised into the jamb and door butt like common butt hinges. Oil-impregnated or anti-friction bearings are also used to achieve the same efficiency as ball bearings.

## DOOR AND HINGE PROBLEMS

### CAUSES AND CURES



Strap hinge

CONDITION	POSSIBLE CAUSE	CURE
• Door closes on its own	Door off balance	Move bottom hinge 1/8" to one side.
• Door binds on threshold at outer corner	Top hinge	If loose, reattach with longer screws; otherwise try setting top hinge deeper in mortise, shimming bottom hinge, or swapping top and bottom hinges.
• Door rests on hinge-side jamb	Bottom hinge	Repair similar to above.
• Door squeaks	Lack of lubrication	Starting with top hinge (most likely culprit) remove pins one at a time and lubricate with light oil or graphite until noise stops.
• Hinge screws won't hold	Worn holes in jamb	Plug holes with steel wool, match sticks and glue, or dowels and glue, then set screws in same or offset location.
• Play in hinge joint, misaligned knuckles	Worn hinge pin	Pin may not be set completely in joint; otherwise, try replacing pin, crimping knuckles in a vice, or replacing hinge.
• Door resists movement	One or more hinges not plumb or in line	Shim or remortise offending hinge.

## PARLIAMENT HINGES

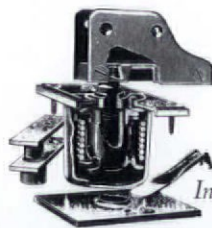
PARLIAMENT HINGES ARE DESIGNED TO overcome obstacles such as deep trim mouldings that tend to interfere with the operation of regular butt hinges. In regular use through most of the 19th century, their extended leaf width makes for a wide swing that creates a gap of two or more inches beyond the wall when the hinge is fully open. Most often seen on shutters and windows, they are also used occasionally on French doors and interior doors that have trouble clearing deep frames or plinth blocks. Parliament hinges purchased for doors should be heavy enough to support the door and have a strong enough joint (three or more knuckles) to provide sustained service.

## STRAP AND TEE HINGES

STRAP HINGES HAVE BEEN around a long, long time and are used for heavy, wide doors. Plain versions are usually reserved for outdoor applications such as cellar or outbuilding doors; decorative or ornamental types are popular on front entrance doors. These are surface-mounted hinges that attach to the face of the door and wall so that the leaves can provide maximum support. Tee hinges have one short leaf for attaching to the jamb; the other long leaf attaches to the door, often across a horizontal rail.

## SPRING-BUTT HINGES

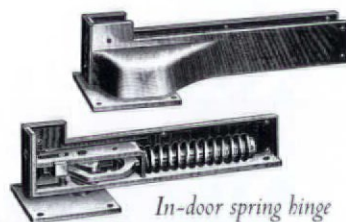
SPRING-BUTT HINGES COME IN MANY SIZES and designs, and have been in use since before the Civil War. This is strictly practical hardware selected when it is



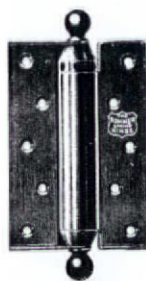
*In-floor spring hinge*



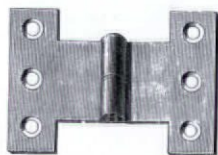
*Top pivot*



*In-door spring hinge*



*Spring-butt hinge*



*Parliament hinge*



*Tee hinge*

important that the door (such as an outside door on a vestibule) remain closed. They employ a barrel-and-pin arrangement incorporating one or more springs that store energy when the door is opened, and release it to close the door. Common spring-butt hinges are available in single-acting (that only allow the door to open one way) and double-acting (allowing the door to operate in both directions) models. Spring tension is adjustable, but the door will not check (rest) in an open position. It is important to correctly size the hinge to not only the thickness of the door, but its weight. For longest spring life, most manufacturers recommend installing the largest size hinge the door butt allows.

## CHECKING SPRING HINGES

DOORS THAT NEED TO BE self-closing but still have the ability to remain open when desired make use of checking spring hinges.

This hinge is ideal for pantry doors, and historically there have been two types manufactured. Floor spring hinges house the spring-and-pivot mechanism in a case 3" to 4" deep that is mortised into the floor. The spring returns the door to the closed position unless an indent in the pivot pin holds it open. In-door or "surface" spring hinges house similar machinery in the bottom of the door, working with a pivot fixed in the floor. For both

types of hinges the pivot at the top of the door is simply a pin and bearing plate. Arrangements to release the door from the hinges vary from manufacturer to manufacturer, but most involve moving the top pin out of the bearing plate — that is, either pulling a spring-loaded pin down into the door, or lifting a gravity-held pin up into the header of the door frame. New residential-grade floor spring hinges are increasingly hard to find today (several long-time manufacturers have discontinued them), however in-door spring hinges are still being made. 🏠

## SUPPLIERS

**BALL AND BALL**  
463 West Lincoln Highway,  
Dept. OHJ  
Exton, PA 19341  
(215) 363-7330  
*Rising-butt hinges, parliament hinges,  
olive-knuckle hinges, period hardware.*

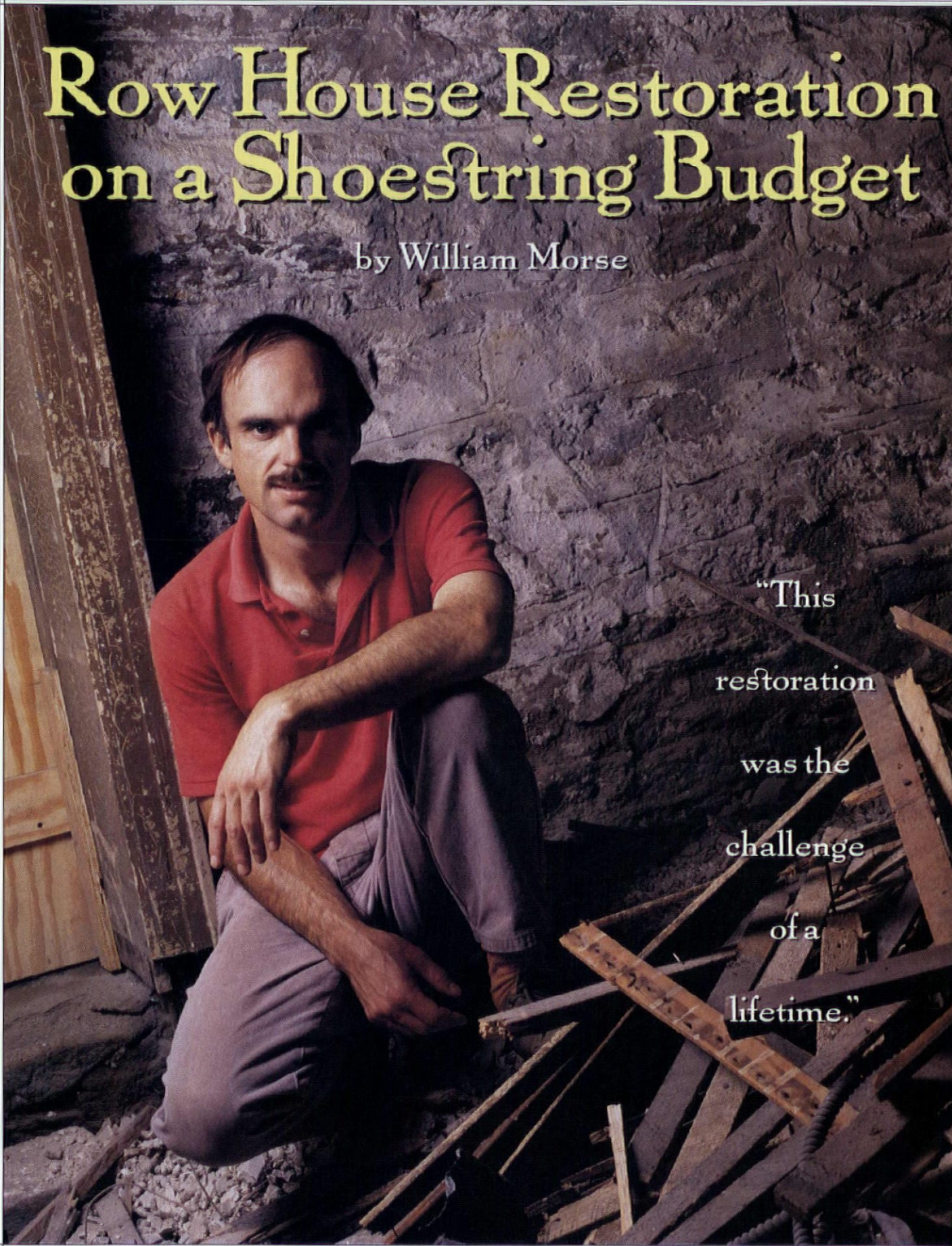
**BOMMER INDUSTRIES, INC.**  
P.O. Box 187, Dept. OHJ  
Landrum, SC 29356  
(803) 457 3301  
*Spring-butt hinges, in-door checking  
hinges; call for nearest distributor.*

**CROWN CITY HARDWARE**  
1047 N. Allen Ave., Dept. OHJ  
Pasadena, CA 91104  
(818) 794-1188  
*Parliament hinges, wide-throw butt  
hinges, other hard-to-find hardware.*

**STANLEY HARDWARE**  
Division of the Stanley Works  
195 Lake Street, Dept. OHJ  
New Britain, CT 06050  
(203) 225-5111  
*Paunelle, olive-knuckle hinges, broad  
hardware line; call for nearest distributor.*

# Row House Restoration on a Shoestring Budget

by William Morse



"This  
restoration  
was the  
challenge  
of a  
lifetime."



I WAS ATTRACTED TO NEGLECTED BUILDINGS EVEN AT AN early age. On a cross-country road trip made before the interstate highways were built, my family drove past dozens of abandoned houses, stores, and barns. A youthful backseat driver, I urged my father to stop and explore each of these wrecks. It would have tried the patience of Job, but it didn't bother him. In college, this need to take up a hammer followed me. After graduation, I found a job in New York City and decided to live in the northernmost borough, the Bronx. A textbook example of urban decay, the Bronx offered block after block of abandoned buildings. I walked the streets for hours, reliving that past road trip.

A house in a group of vacant, two-family row houses grabbed my attention. The detached row house No. 1545, with its bay windows and rusty cornice stamped with swags of fruit and laurels, was constructed of brick, and beneath all of its grit and rust it had character. Its stoop was made of solid brownstone, and its railings were wrought iron. A year later, I looked up the deed and contacted the owner. He was expecting a rehab loan for this house and two others he'd purchased, but the loans never materialized. (After these houses were abandoned, the Department of Housing and Urban Development was saddled with them.) With a flashlight, a hammer, and a screwdriver, the owner and I made an inspection tour. The walls and half of the ceilings were either loose plaster or just lath, but the beams proved solid and the stairway was in good shape. Scavengers had ripped out all the plumbing fixtures, leaving holes in the bathroom floors. They had also helped themselves to the doors, windows, and radiators. And in the back of the house, a rotted wooden addition was falling apart.

Eventually, the owner and I reached an agreement. In exchange for payment of back taxes (dating from the H.U.D. sale) and a net profit of \$1,500 apiece, I'd be given title on No. 1545 and her more destitute sister, No. 1541. At the time,



*The improving neighborhood (top) encouraged me with my project (above).*

I didn't have much money for contractors and didn't want the strings that came along with credit. This house was going to be mine, free and clear, and I wanted to restore it by the pay-as-you-go, learn-as-you-go approach. I read every "how-to" book I could get my hands on at the library, trying to grasp the vast array of materials and tools available to the home restorer. Neatly drawn color diagrams were attractive to look at, but my house wasn't a cut-away view. It hid more than it revealed.

Because of graduate-school obligations, I would be leaving the area that fall. This gave me just three months to secure both buildings from the elements and the overly curious. The tasks of fencing, repointing the mortar, and roofing left me exhausted. Also, the demolition of the wooden addition left doorways on both floors to be bricked up.

The neighbors probably didn't think I'd be back. Nine months make for a long hibernation and school demanded my entire attention. I had the opportunity to stay on as a teaching assistant — a relatively easy lifestyle with few bills, no dirty hands, and no sore back. I could have just forgotten about redoing the house, held on to it, and sold it when the area picked up. But I couldn't abandon the project: This restoration was the challenge of a lifetime.

### False Economy and Faithful Help

THE FOLLOWING SUMMER I DID RETURN, BRINGING REINFORCEMENTS. My grandfather, a retired electrician with plumbing and carpentry experience, and my father came to help out with the demolition. The floor was covered in most places with unglued linoleum, so we left it for protection. Opening

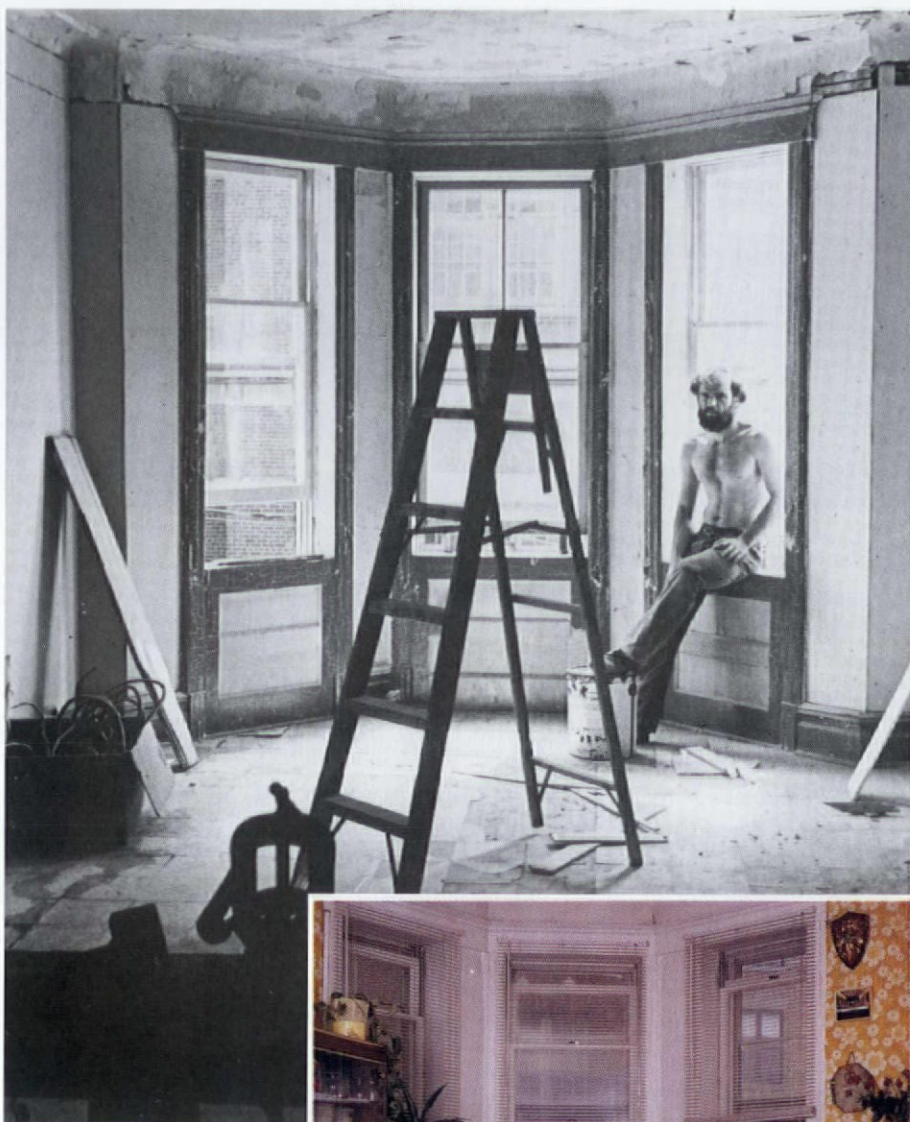
the tin-sealed windows, we shoveled off the loose plaster covering the walls and ceilings. Ornate plaster medallions were put in a safe place.

Since the old line was broken and shut off at the main, our water came from a fire hydrant. A long extension cord from a house three lots over kept milk and beer cool in a second-hand refrigerator. When we were all too tired to play cards or even speak, the radio filled the entertainment void. My grandfather heated water for coffee using his plumber's torch, but cooking steaks or frying burgers was more demanding. For that, we set up a grille in the back yard. So for seven or eight days at a stretch, we were urban pioneers. After the cleanup was done, my father went back to his regular job (with relief, I imagine). However, my grandfather stayed on, taking the constant dust in stride, jotting down measurements and making mental notes.

The contractor took less than a day digging a new water line in from the street. From the gate valve in the basement, we ran copper to a spigot temporarily installed in the second floor kitchen. Getting rid of the water was more difficult and here I made a few bad calls.

New PVC plastic pipe took care of the kitchen vent and drain, but I frugally stuck with the original cast-iron soil stack, complete with unnoticed cracks and stoppages that would prove a serious problem in the colder months to come.

In the bathroom, I saw a tiled concrete wall and panicked at the thought of demolition, opting instead to clean out the old drain lines, inch by troublesome inch. This infuriating experience was repeated in the basement, where the water waste line ran to the sewer under six inches of concrete. Unclogging the narrow, rust-encrusted pipe was a nightmare and I've probably earned a spot in hell for my blasphemy — perhaps there's a section reserved for do-it-yourselfers who refuse to rent jack hammers.

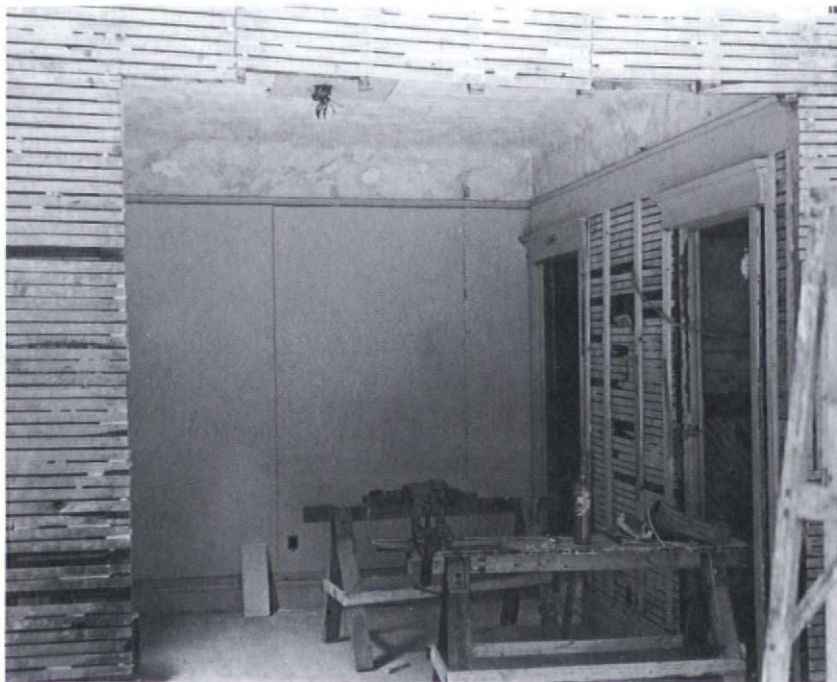


*Surveying my progress during ceiling repair (above).*

*Wallpaper really transformed the room (right).*



Friends, remodeling their home in favor of a more contemporary look, gave me a toilet, a wide pedestal sink, and kitchen cabinets. We gratefully put these items aside for future use. As would often be the case, we found ourselves working within the narrow confines of unmovable beams and solid masonry, but finally managed to squeeze in a standard-size tub. After much fidgeting with the risers and p-trap, the



*Electrical work was efficient while the walls were down to exposed lath.*

first cold water bath was drawn. (Well, it *was* summer.) Next, we poured concrete around the toilet's waste sweep, and mounted the bowl and tank. (Now we could dispense with the coffee cans and garden hose.) We hooked up risers for the sink and, with a drain in place, had a working bathroom.

With the forthcoming arrival of materials and appliances, the tin seal blocking the main entrance had to be replaced. Again, in an effort to put off expense, I looked for an alternative to the millworks. The house next door, No. 1547, was identical and still abandoned. Beneath its tin sheeting were the doors I needed. Armed with a crowbar, hammer, and screwdriver, I liberated them and resealed the house. With heavy Plexiglass and a dead-bolt lock, No. 1545 finally had a serviceable front entry.

### **Out of Hibernation and Into a Neighborhood**

THE REAPPEARANCE OF WINDOWS AND ENTRY DOORS GAVE US A great psychological boost. The house came alive with warm sunshine brightening even the most obscure corners. What a transformation! The dark, almost sinister aspect of the house vanished. The three-year hibernation of No. 1545 was over and passersby started to take notice. Young couples pushing strollers asked about an apartment and strangers offered tools at a discount — a brother or cousin could get me anything I wanted. (I got into the habit of saying no.)

Still trying to keep within a tight budget, I learned "the art of the deal" and began bartering for materials and services. An electrical contractor doing business in the area expressed an


interest in buying sister house No. 1541. (To lure buyers, I'd given the facade a much-needed coat of paint.) He had the license required by the utility representative; I had the house he wanted and another that needed wiring. So we made a trade. Within a couple of weeks, service panels appeared on each floor. The eventual renovation of No. 1541 was assured, and the contractor and I became good neighbors.

To save initial expense, I stayed with the original gas heating system (and later suffered the inefficiencies of radiators and the one-pipe steam system). Winter was fast approaching and I wanted an end to the deathly chill permeating the house. Through my neighbor, a junk dealer supplied me with replacement radiators, and the new boiler installation only took a few days.

When the rooms were sufficiently heated, I turned my attention

toward the interior doors, trim, and ceilings. To find panel doors and trim, I visited demolition sites where old doors were often used as barricades and — for the price of a six-pack of beer — the crew would put aside window and door trim, stair balustrades, and baseboards. Only occasionally did I tour salvage yards. People on a low budget may be tempted to go scavenging with a tape measure and crowbar in abandoned buildings, but this is a dangerous practice. Many buildings stay vacant for years, and vandalism, arson, and the elements take their toll. Floors may collapse, or you may run into a hostile group of squatters.

Decorative plaster medallions had originally highlighted the high ceilings in the living rooms and master bedrooms. When putting these pieces back in place, we secured them with long screws and washers. Adding a new dimension to the rooms, my mother lent a hand with her wallpapering talents. Last of all, we stripped the linoleum off the hardwood floors. Finally, the stage was set for the long awaited rugs, plants, and furniture.

Through long and often solitary hours of work, I came to learn (or at least appreciate) the rewards of patience and perseverance, and the value of commitment toward a goal. Over the years, as I worked 40-hour weeks to support the next phase of restoration, this obligation to the house became an ongoing part of my life. There were no loans, no lines of credit. I answered only to myself, making mistakes, correcting them, and carrying on. The challenge was personal, but the meeting of that challenge was communal. What made an abandoned house a home was the involvement of neighbors and family. 

# OLD-HOUSE MECHANIC

## Power Screws

by John Leeke

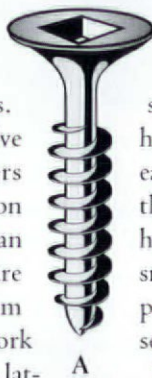
**“POWER SCREWS”** IS MY nickname for a system of special screws combined with an electric drill and driving bits that can solve many old-house fastening problems. These screws, commonly called Sheetrock or drywall screws, are made with materials and designs that go far beyond ordinary wood screws in strength and useful features. They provide a strong, positive grip, and their slim diameters and sharp threads reduce friction so longer or stronger screws can be driven. In addition, they are easily removed, making them good for temporary jobs or work that may have to be opened up later. One carpenter I know says these screws are so “slick and quick” they make some traditional methods he would rather use — say, a mortise-and-tenon joint — hard to justify economically.

Each type of screw is designed to perform best in specific applications with specific materials. Normally, the head is adapted for the material you are screwing on and the point and threads are tailored to the base material. In old-house work I often end up using screws for other than their intended purpose, so I usually carry a variety in my kit. If one screw is breaking or just not working smoothly, I try to determine the cause and select another type. Understanding different screw characteristics helps in this problem solving approach.

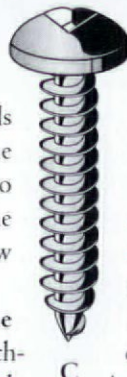


### SCREW TYPES

**Drywall flat head screw** — The most commonly available screw, a drywall screw can have a drill point and threads that minimize stripping in steel studs (A), or it can have a sharper point for an easy start in wood with threads that resist pull-out (B). The head has a “bugle” shape to smoothly spin and depress the paper of drywall as the screw seats flush with the surface.



**Round-head face-frame screw** — In a pocket-screw attachment the wide, flat shoulders on the screw head (C) distribute the force against the end-grain at the bottom of the pocket. They could be used any place extra holding power is needed and a raised head is not objectionable.



**Finish screw** — For light loads, the small head of this screw is driven below the surface (D). This would be useful for fastening spring-bent finish trim around a curved wall, a job where nails would not hold. The hole could be filled and painted over for better appearance or weather resistance.



**Nib screw** — A ridge on the underside of the flat head automatically cuts a countersink as the screw is driven. This adaptation is designed

for hard materials such as particle board, hardwoods, and soft plastics that are brittle or likely to split without countersinking the head

**Shank slotted screw** — These screws have a groove in the tip and threads that tap the material as the screw is driven. This helps to prevent splitting and eases driving in dense materials like aged hardwoods. Still, brittle materials like some plastics may chip and crack with this screw.

### METALS

Though there are a variety of metallic finishes available, most screws are made from one of these metals:

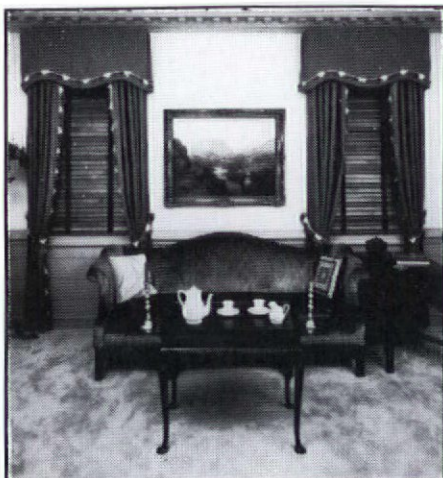
**High-carbon steel** — A high-carbon content along with hardening and tempering gives these screws greater strength than ordinary wood screws made of mild steel. However, these screws should not be used

where they will be subject to high shear loads (such as scaffolding) unless the joint is carefully designed and engineered. High-carbon steel is also more susceptible to rusting than the low- and medium-carbon steel, so manufacturers coat these screws with a variety of materials to resist corrosion (see box page 50).

**Stainless steel** — Far more corrosion-resistant than high-carbon steel but, of course, at a price. Typically, stainless steel screws are not as strong as high-carbon steel screws.

**Brass** — Solid brass screws are relatively soft; these and brass-plated





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# OLD-HOUSE MECHANIC

screws are usually chosen for their decorative appeal.

**Bronze** — Stronger than brass, bronze screws should be used with copper or bronze hardware or sheet metal to avoid the galvanic action that occurs with steel screws.

## DRIVES

The specially designed head recess and mating bit are an important part of the system.

Phillips head drives have the distinctive "X" shape or cross slot pattern on the head (E). With this drive the bit is less likely to slip off the head of the screw than with a standard slotted screw. Yet when driving takes a lot of torque, Phillips head bits tend to twist and lift up out of the screw.

Square drives form a rectangular hole in the head of the screw (F). This provides a very positive connection between the driver and the screw making twist-out less likely, but the bit does not release as easily as a Phillips drive. Originally, square drives were sold as being tamper-proof, though square-drive bits and screwdrivers are now common.

Combination drives are shaped so that the screw can be driven with a

square drive bit or a Phillips bit (G).

Individual bits are made for both Phillips and square drives (H), and there are double-ended bits with Phillips on one end and square on the other. Specially designed bits (such as the Vermont American Phillips Iso-Temp-Claw bit) have serrations at the tip to improve grip and keep the bit from jumping out under high torque.



H

Power screws first came into common use for hanging drywall on metal studs, then the cabinetmaking and furniture industries adopted them and developed new types. In just the past few years mail-order companies have made the screws available in smaller quantities to tradespeople and homeowners. Here are just a few of the advantages power screws have in my own old-house work:

**Limiting vibration** — When working around glass, ceramics, plaster, and slate shingles use screws to avoid the destructive vibration that is common with nails.

**Strength and long reach** — The long, thin profile of these screws lends them to applications not possible with

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ordinary wood screws, such as replacing loose butt hinge screws. With a range of lengths on hand I just keep trying longer screws until one grabs onto something solid within the door jamb.

**Pressure Control** — Since screws are tightened incrementally you can easily control the pressure applied. This is critical in projects such as reattaching loose plaster with plaster washers. Final hand tightening snugs up the screw-and-washer without crushing the fragile plaster.

Most common drywall screws are made overseas. They are a commodity manufactured at the lowest cost to meet the relatively low strength requirements of hanging drywall on wood and steel studs. Higher-strength screws are made in this country for the production woodworking market and are best suited for the variable conditions and new uses you are likely to dream up in working on your old house.

## STEEL SCREW COATINGS

**Black Phosphate** — Gives minor rust resistance during storage and shipping. OK for interior or temporary use only.

**Mechanical or Impingement Galvanized** — This zinc coating is thin and may not cover the entire surface. OK for interiors.

**Yellow Zinc Plating** — A thin, continuous electro-plating that does not have a long service life. OK for interiors.

**Hot-Dip Galvanized** — A rust-resistant coating, but thickness limited. OK for interior, high-moisture locations.

**Polymer coating** — Rust-resistant coating similar to latex paint. OK for limited exterior uses.

**Ceramic Coating** — A baked-on enamel. OK for exterior uses where medium resistance to corrosion is sufficient.

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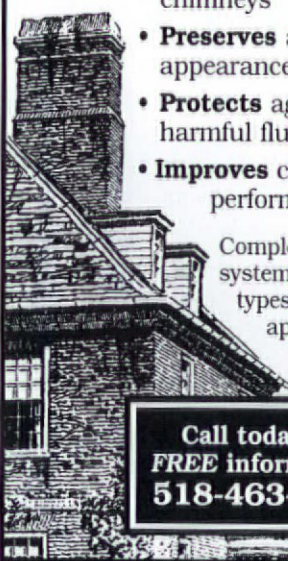
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by Lynn Elliott

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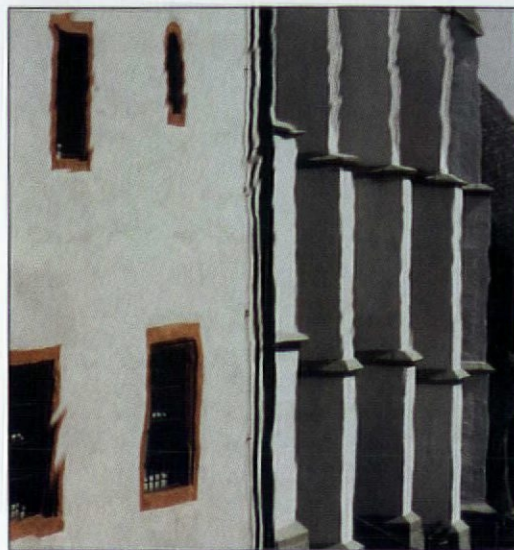
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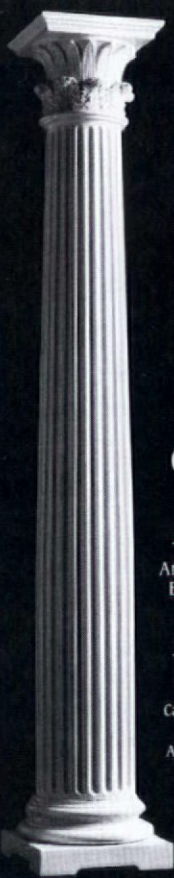
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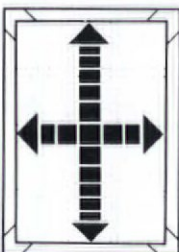
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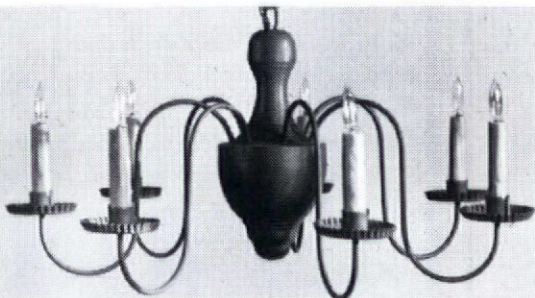


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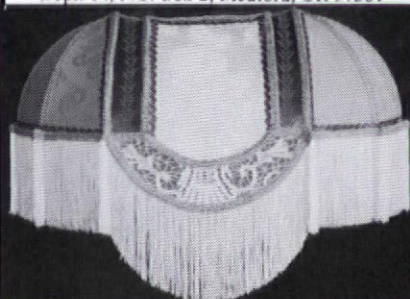
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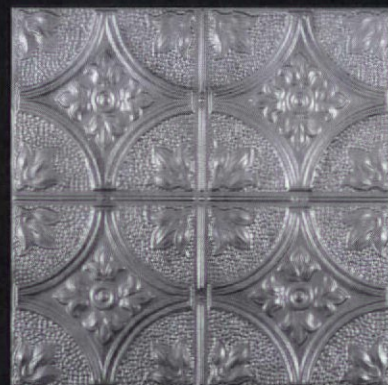
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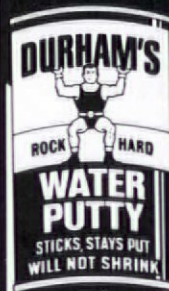
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# Historic House Plans



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

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

For the houses shown in this issue, blueprints include:

- Foundation plan for basement or crawl space. (Crawl space plans can easily be adapted for full basements by your builder.)
- Detailed floor plans showing all dimensions for framing, plus detailed layout and location of electrical and plumbing components.
- Interior elevations are included in some plans, showing interior views of kitchen, bath, fireplace, built-ins, and cabinet designs.
- Window and door schedule.

- Building cross sections: cornice, fireplace, and cabinet sections when needed to help your builder understand major interior details.
- Framing diagrams that show layouts of framing pieces and their locations for roof, first and second floors.
- Energy-saving specs, including vapor barriers, insulated sheathing, caulking and foam-sealant areas, batt insulation, and attic exhaust ventilators.

Why order multiple sets? If you're serious about

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

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

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

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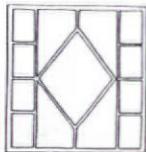
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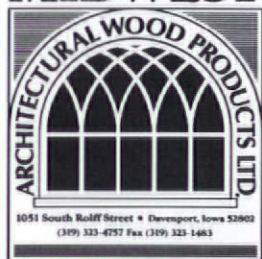
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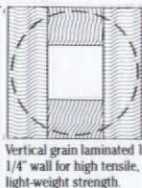
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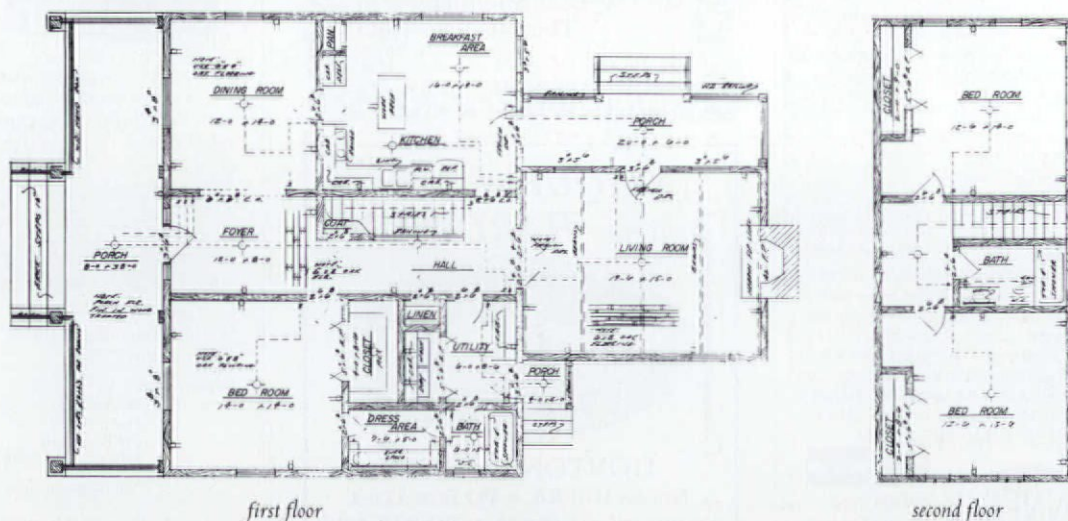
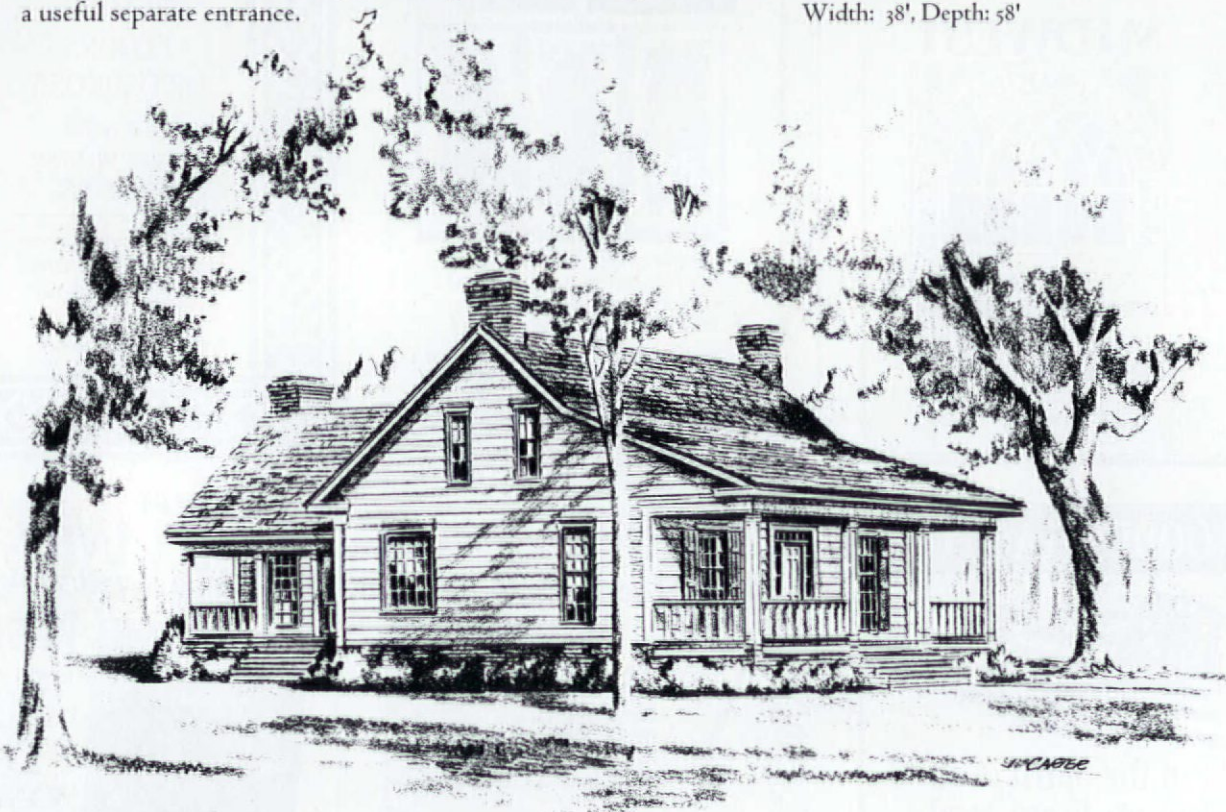
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Plan: WL-03-EA

Costs: \$125; \$185 (set of 5); \$236 (set of 8)  
 Square Footage: 2,049' (total), 1,441' (first floor),  
 608' (second floor)  
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 Width: 38', Depth: 58'



first floor

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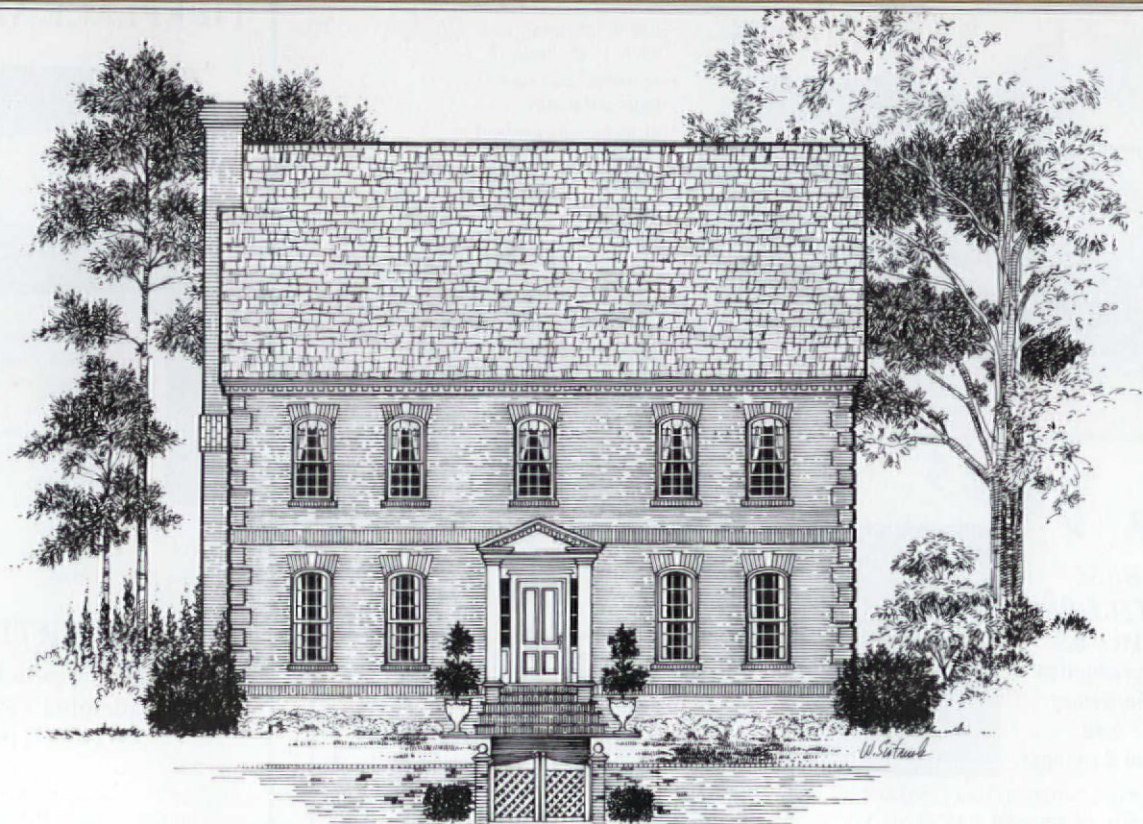
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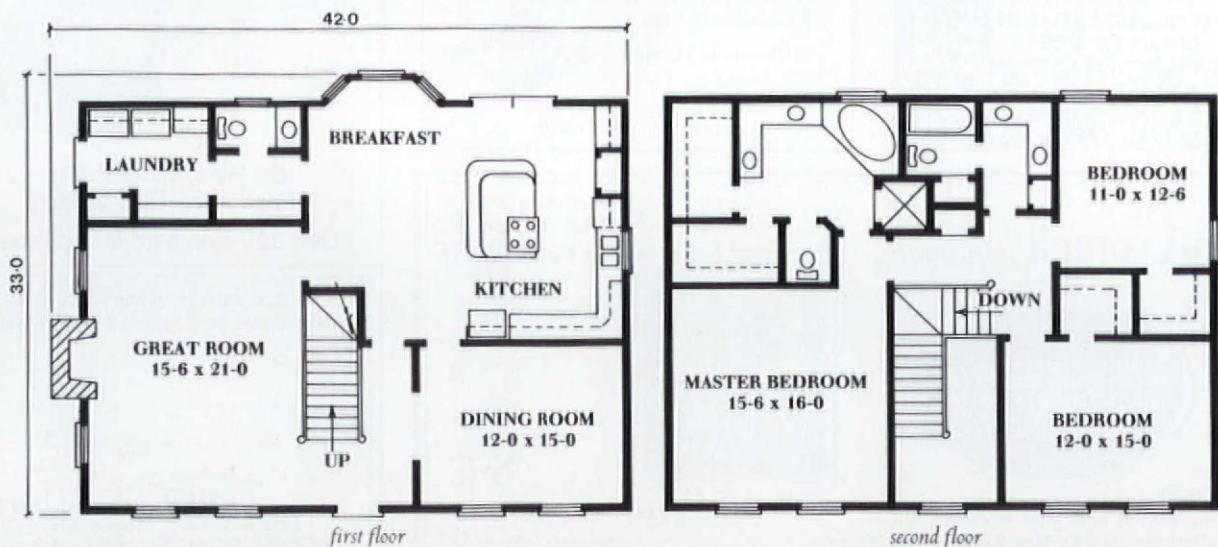
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Plan: HR-33-EA

Costs: \$250; \$300 (set of 5); \$335 (set of 8)  
 Square Footage: 2,378 (total), 1,266 (first floor),  
 1,112 (second floor)

Ceiling Height: 9' (first floor), 9' (second floor)  
 Overall Dimensions: Width: 42', Depth: 33'



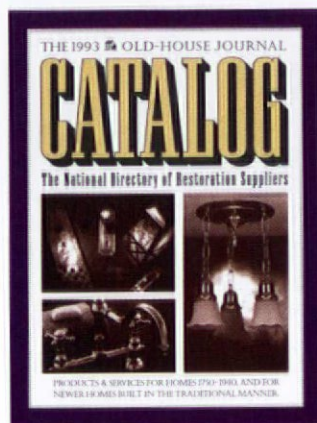


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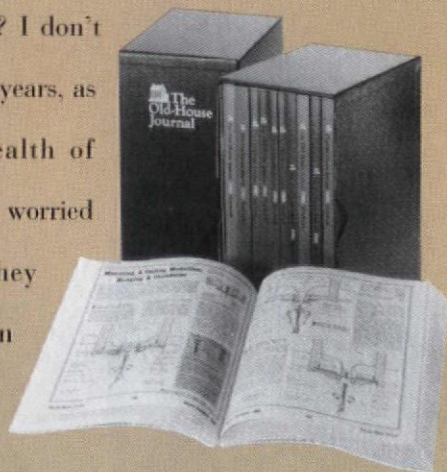
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five-volume and a ten-volume Yearbook set. Both sets contain every article, every source, every tip published in OHJ from 1985 through 1989 (5-volumes for \$59) or 1980 through 1989 (10-volumes for \$109). That's \$35 to \$80 off the cost of the Yearbooks purchased separately, and it includes a free Cumulative Index. ♦ For the nineties, we're offering the year's original issues in sets of six for the same price as a yearbook, \$18.95. Use the order form to specify which set you'd like: 1990, 1991, 1992. ♦ Both the Yearbook set and the 1990s sets can be ordered by marking the right box on the envelope order-form and enclosing a check. Or call (508) 281-8803 and use your MasterCard or Visa.

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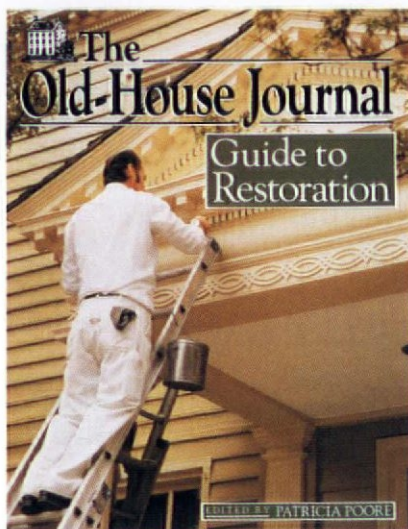
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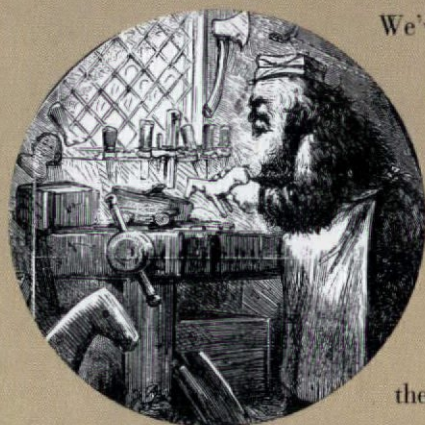
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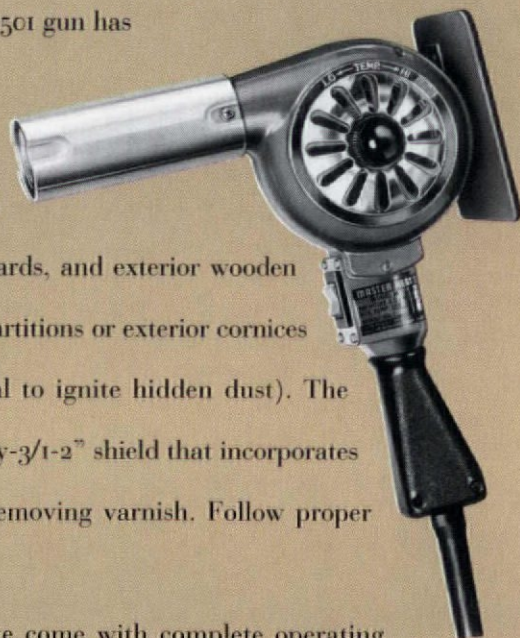
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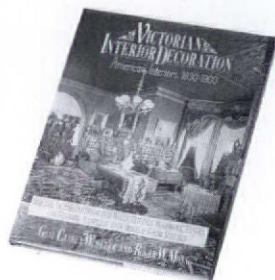
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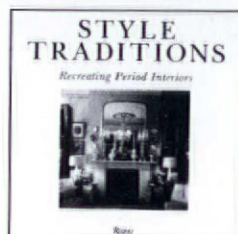
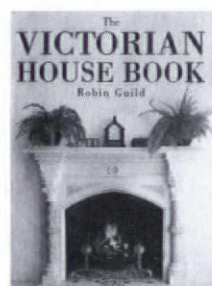
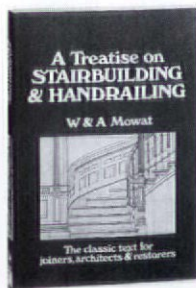
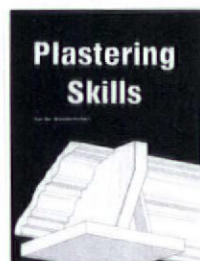
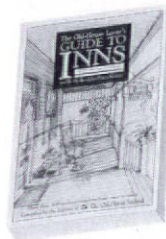
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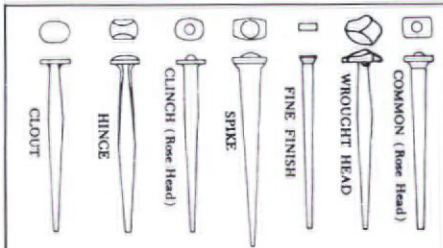
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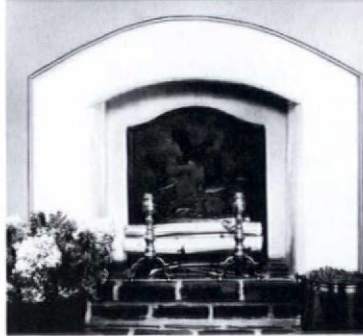


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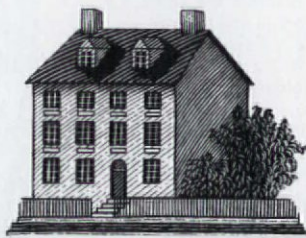
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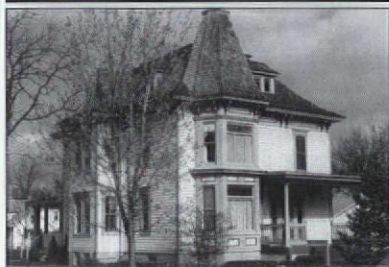
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**IPSWICH, MA** — circa 1810 Federal in historic district, ten rooms, five fireplaces, 2-1/2 storey barn. Walk to stores, bicycle to ocean beaches. Near commuter railroad to Boston. \$210,000. Call (508) 356-0901.

**JONESBOROUGH, TN** — 1850s two-storey solid brick Georgian house, 1.2 acres in historic district. Remodeled inside 1980s completely new wiring, plumbing, 11 rooms, updated kitchens, three baths, central air, heat. Porches added 1912, 3,500 sq. ft., outbuildings, original floors. \$175,000. (615) 753-6345 or 753-7231.

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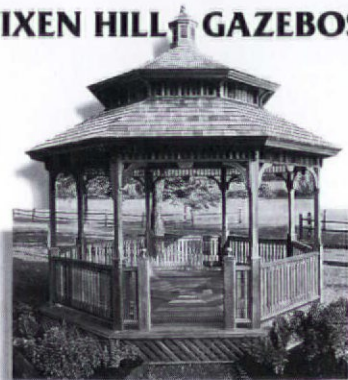
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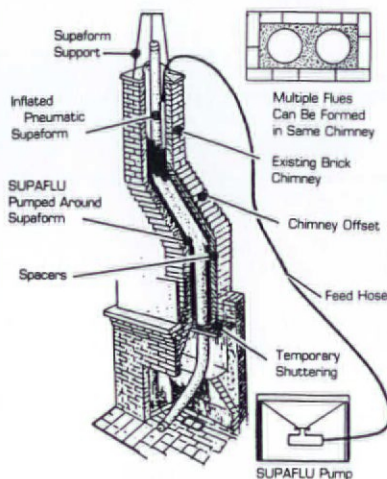
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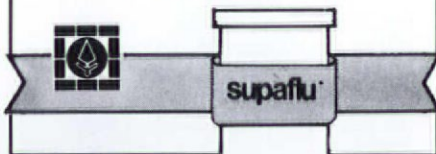
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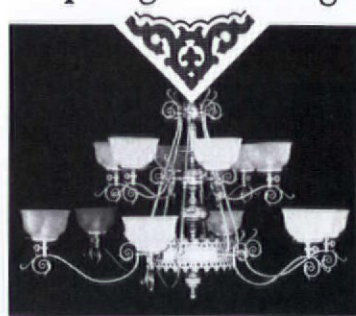


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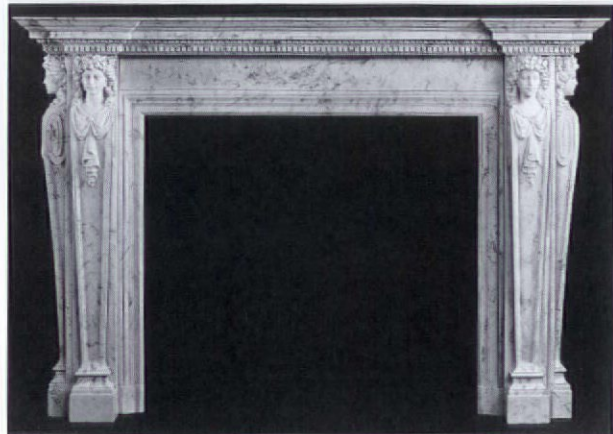
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STOCKTON SPRINGS, ME — Circa 1880s Maine farmhouse, attached shed. 2-car garage. 3-1/2+/- acres, organically gardened, woodlands, panoramic view of Penobscot Bay. House complete and sound, needs some TLC. Location central to Bangor, Camden, Bar Harbor; 1-1/2 hours to Augusta. Call Daniel Harrison (207) 567-4156.



EAST JORDAN, MI — 1906 Queen Anne in heart of Northwest Michigan's tourist region (Lake Charlevoix). Renovated, original woodwork, leaded windows, hardwood floors. Three-stories, 7 bedrooms, 5-1/2 baths, high quality period antiques included. Currently an increasingly popular B&B. \$199,000. Call (616) 556-3434.

PHILADELPHIA, PA — 1903 city mansion included on the Pennsylvania historic resource survey. Beautiful and built to last. This granite home possesses numerous distinctive features and amenities. Minutes from universities and hospitals. \$295,000. Call (215) 879-3097.

FREEPORT, NOVA SCOTIA — 150 year old seaside house in quiet fishing village. Award winning restoration. Furnished with antiques. New cedar shingles, wiring, well, plumbing, septic and much more. Must be sold \$75,000 Can. (902) 861-1900 evenings.

ESSEX COUNTY, NY — Magnificent restored 31 room 1880 Victorian brick mansion, with 20 BR, 14 BA, 15,000 SF on 9.5 wooded acres, near Lake Placid. Central location, day's drive from 7 metro centers totalling 40 million. Replacement cost \$2.25 million (at \$150 SF), but listed at \$895K, owner financing or lease-option available to qualified buyer or group with plans to develop as elegant B&B, ski lodge, private club, etc. Will reduce price to best offer over \$595K from OHJ reader for immediate sale. (518) 647-5775 or (619) 941-0748 to see.

MCGREGOR, IA — Circa 1870s 7-unit apartment building in historic rivertown on Mississippi River in scenic NE Iowa. Great as investment or can be remodeled as a B&B. \$69,500. For more information, call Larry at (319) 873-3781 or (319) 873-3641.

SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE, VA — Eligible for Historical Register. Handmade solid brick, Greek Revival detailing, 6 fireplaces, and much more. 5.32 acres in a resort community surrounding 500 mile of shoreline. \$125,000. (703) 721-5577; MBL, Route 2, Box 511, Wirtz, VA 24184.

CHATHAM, VA — Charming, 2-storey, turn-of-the-century farmhouse on 60 quiet acres, minutes from historic Chatham. 3-4 bedrooms, complete baths, large country kitchen, den, dining room, music room, Florida room, and 4 working fireplaces. Beaded board ceilings and walls throughout. Large deck, fruit trees, grapevines, gardens. Bold creek, meandering stream and

springs. Outbuildings plus real "outhouse." Partial fencing. Completely renovated, low taxes, and tobacco available. \$155,000 owner/agent. (804) 432-9776.

OIL CITY, PA — ultimate retreat. 5 BR Colonial on 18.5 private acres. Constructed 1935 by local millionaire. Huge stone fireplaces, slate roof, 3-1/2 baths, servant quarters, pond. Adjacent 2,000 acres gameland. Current rental income 1,200/mo. 159K. (717) 352-7770.

SNOHOMISH, WA — 1912 Craftsman Style in Pacific Northwest's antique capital. 4 bedrooms, large living room, formal dining room, wood floors, original woodwork, river rock front porch, corner double lot in town. Beautifully renovated. House is light, bright. \$165,000. Call (206) 568-8405.

FRANKLIN, TN — 1840s farmhouse, completely renovated, 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, 4 fireplaces, 3,800+ sq. ft. 18 fenced acres with original barn. Poplar, pine and oak floors. Beautiful staircase, large rooms, great country kitchen. Minutes to Nashville. \$195,000. (615) 791-5989.

CLEVELAND, OH — Downing-styled Gothic Revival in historic district. Five minutes to downtown. Cherry and maple floors. Reproduction gas light. 10' x 16' country kitchen with 9' window overlooking large backyard. 2 bedrooms, study, 1-1/2 baths, 1st floor laundry. \$129,000; (216) 546-0759.

CUMBERLAND, VA — Ca. 1756 Langhorne House. Classic brick 2-over-2 with English basement and 19th-century frame additions. Original slate roof, 9/9 windows, heart pine flooring, walnut staircase. Five working fireplaces. Approximately 3,000 sq. ft. living space. 15 acres. Smokehouse, garage, workshops. \$99,000 firm. (914) 353-5810.

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BELFAST, ME — Stately 1840 Greek Revival. National Register. 15 restored rooms (7 bedrooms), large cherry kitchen, 3 full bathrooms, two half-baths, attached large garage/barn, widows' walk, charming gazebo, lovely grounds, Penobscot Bay views, 2 acres. Owner

sale, price \$575,000. Call for info packet. 8 A.M. - 9 P.M. EST, leave message please. (207) 338-1136.

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ARCHITECTURAL SOURCE BOOK — *The Work of Dwight James Baum: Architect* by Dwight James Baum. New York: Helburn Publishing Company. Contact: Jack F. Alarcon, 741 Club House Drive, Aptos, CA 95003; (408) 688-1673.

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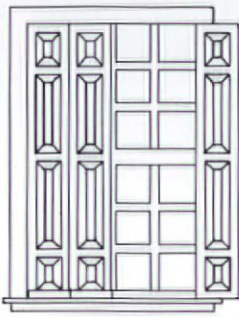
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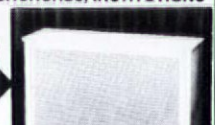
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## Events

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**DODGE HOUSE VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS** — Nov. 24 - Dec. 31 in Council Bluffs, IA. In keeping with the Victorian spirit, every nook and cranny of Dodge House will be decorated with greenery, lace, and yards of ribbon. The Historic General Dodge House, (712) 322-2406.

**GREENWICH CHRISTMAS ANTIQUES SHOW** — Dec. 4-6 in Greenwich, CT. Luncheon and High Tea every day. Lectures by Charles F. Hummel & David Anthony Easton. Patron's Reception (Dec. 3). Call N. Pendergast Jones, Show Manager, at (203) 869-6899.

**7TH ANNUAL VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS** — Dec. 5 & 6 in Los Angeles, CA. Return in time for a 19th-century Xmas with costumed carolers, bell ringers, and Santa in his sleigh — all w/in a Victorian home. Banning Residence Museum of Los Angeles, (213) 548-7777.

**HISTORIC HOMES CHRISTMAS TOUR** — December 5 & 6 in Abilene, Kansas. 8 to 10 19th-century homes decorated to offer a unique touring experience. \$10/person. Contact: Tour, Box 506, Abilene, KS 67410, include business size SASE, (913) 263-7336.

**HOLIDAY ON THE HILL** — Dec. 5 & 6 in Des Moines, IA. The tour will consist of six decorated homes and a neighborhood resplendent with the holiday spirit. Victorian crafts, fine foods, neighbors dressed in costumes, and strolling carolers. For ticket information, write Sherman Hill Association, 756 16th, Des Moines, IA 50314.

**CHRISTMAS IN ODESSA TOUR** — Dec. 5 & 6 in Odessa DE. Festivities begin with the opening of the Xmas shop, a juried craft show, and the country homes tour conducted by bus. At 5 P.M., the town comes alive with a candlelight tour. For ticket information, call the Women's Club of Odessa at (302) 378-4900.

**27TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT TOUR OF HOMES** — Dec. 6 in Marietta, PA. The tour will feature 8 private homes and 5 public buildings. Weary visitors can hitch a ride on a horse drawn carriage. For tickets, call (717) 426-1229.

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Circle the numbers of the items you want, and enclose \$3 for processing. We'll forward your request to the appropriate companies. They will mail the literature directly to you...which should arrive 30 to 60 days from receipt of your request. Price of literature, if any, follows the number. Your check, including the \$3 processing fee should be made out to Old-House Journal.

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9212

# ADVERTISERS' INDEX

PRODUCTS NETWORK NO.	PAGE NO.		
20	AA Abbingdon Affiliates	71	221 The Fan Man
31	Abatron	13	Fastenation
639	Aberdeen Group	15	294 Fischer & Jirouch
	Addison Hardware Company	75	560 Gates Moore Lighting
23	Ahren's Chimney Technique	49	355 Heat-N-Glo
517	Albany Woodworks	19	Heirloom Reproductions
	American Heritage Shutters	71	617 Hennessy House
354	Andersen Windows	9	Heritage Brass Company
	Anthony Wood Products	73	644 Heritage Mantels Inc.
	Architectural Components	57	580 Historic Floors Of Oshkosh
340	Arvid's Historic Woods	55	565 HomeSaver Chimney Liners
18	Ball & Ball	23	Horton Brasses
193	Bathroom Machineries	15	309 J.B. Products
73	Bendheim Glass	23	J.R. Burrows & Company
27	Bradbury & Bradbury	49	2 The Joinery Company
	Brandon Industries	77	492 The Kennebec Company
	The Brickyard	75	L'Esperance Tile
	Campbellsville Industries	71	LaHaye Bronze
602	Centre Mills Antique Wood	63	Lampshades of Antique
312	Certified Chimney Contractors	27	455 Lamson-Taylor Custom Doors
242	Chadsworth	57	Lead Check
561	Charles Rupert Designs	59	MacQuarrie & Niccum
35	Charles Street Supply	51	540 Maple Grove Restorations
47	Chelsea Decorative Metal	59	Martha M. House Furniture
	Clarkson Potter Publishers	26	9 Marvin Windows
26	Classic Accents	57	215 Midget Louver Co.
159	Conant Custom Brass	51	16 Midwest Architectural Wood Products
603	Country Designs	49	Monarch
307	Country Iron Foundry	71	593 N.O.P.E.
	Crawford's Old House Store	75	National Decks
397	Crown City Hardware	7	113 National Supaflo Products
44	Cumberland Woodcraft	61	5 Nixalite of America
518	Custom Wood Turnings	49	527 North Fields Restorations
637	Danny Alessandro	10	32 The Old Wagon Factory
245	Decorator's Supply	25	53 Oregon Wooden Screen Door
	Denninger Cupolas & Weathervanes	77	Parks Corporation/Carver Tripp
	Designs In Tile	77	Period Details Inc.
101	Devenco Louver Products	49	38 Protech Systems Inc.
595	Donald Durham Company	59	496 Raymond E. Enkebol Designs
	Dutton Studio Books	12	10 Rejuvenation Lamp & Fixture
487	Empire Woodworks	55	40 Richard E. Thibaut Inc.
630	Energy Innovations Inc.	57	11 Roy Electric Company
	Epoch Designs	63	365 Rutland Products
55	Erie Landmark	55	6 bi America Corporation
	Eugenia's Place	73	1 Schwerd Manufacturing
			Shutter Depot
			Shuttercraft
			30 Smith-Cornell
			Snelling's Thermo-Vac
			Stair Specialist, Inc.
			535 Star Bronze Company
			539 Sterling-Clark-Lurton Corporation
			Temple University Press
			Touchstone Woodworks
			Tremont Nail Company
			585 Tuff-Kote Company
			638 U.S. Department of the Interior
			627 U.S. Door & Millwork
			400 Urban Archeology
			470 Urban Artifacts
			Van Dyke's
			Victor Trading Co. & Mfg.
			576 Victorian Collectibles
			4 Victorian Lighting Works
			Vintage Wood Works
			Vixen Hill
			128 W.F. Norman Corporation
			438 Ward Clapboard Mill
			641 Watkins Incorporated
			284 Whitco/Vincent Whitney
			439 Williams & Hussey
			194 Woodstone Company
			643 The Woodworkers' Store

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# REMUDDLING

[opinion]



## READERS SAY: NO-GO BUNGALOW

**L**AST MAY, OUR REMUDDLING MAILBOX WAS SUDDENLY overflowing with letters from the Seattle, Washington, area. What focussed the attention of so many readers on the same 1906 bungalow? Turns out it was a Sunday-supplement magazine article that showcased the newly remud...er...remodeled house. Here're some reader reactions:

"Updated features look dated the minute the contractor lays down his screw-gun. As people get bored with high tech, the simple dignity of the 1906 bungalow will be missed."  
— Greg Abmann, Seattle

"I don't know which is more astonishing — the damage done to a perfectly innocent old house, or the fact that the [media] chose to glorify it...."  
— John Ross, Seattle

"I am in the process of un-muddling a 1907 bungalow



*This Seattle Sunday supplement story outraged OHJ readers because it glorified the remodeling (top).*

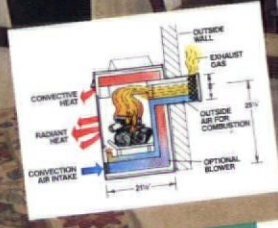
that was unfortunately 'updated' several times in the 1950s and 1960s. I can't wait till they try to sell this architecturally playful structure."

—Kathy Johnson, Seattle

But perhaps Pauline V. Smetka of Seattle put it most eloquently of all: "Ugh!"



Now standard with burning embers.



This Corner Entertainment Center optimizes a corner (takes only 9 square feet of floor space).  
Model 6000GDV with burning embers and the classic Corner Surround and Top (CCS-36/CCT-36).

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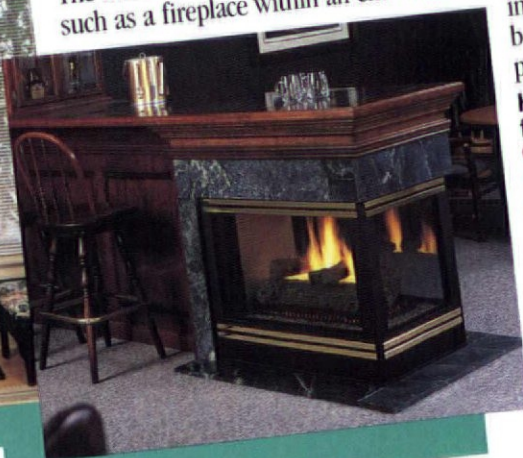
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Model 6000GDV pictured with our optional Polished Chrome Front



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\*Remodeling Contractor Magazine, Cost VS. Value Report, May 1987, 1988, 1989.

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HEAT-N-GLO Fireplace Products, Inc., 6665 W. Hwy. 13, Savage, MN 55378

# Vernacular Houses



*(above) With just enough room for a staircase, Beverly Jogs, like the one on this Essex County house, are a common sight on Boston's North Shore.*

*(inset) Note how the jut-by's roofline echoes the gambrel roof of this Gloucester, Massachusetts, house.*

## The Beverly Jog of Massachusetts



**A**N ARCHITECTURAL PECULIARITY found almost exclusively around Essex County, Massachusetts, the "Beverly Jog" is a type of addition that appears on Georgian houses. Built in the late 1700s, the jog may have originated in the city of Beverly, which would account for its name. However, when the roof is gambrel-shaped, the jog addition is also called a "jut-by". In the early 1930s, a writer described the jut-by as "that New England way of cutting a corner out of a house in the manner of a piece of cheese!"

Typically, the Beverly Jog is added to one side and at the back of a house. Whether the roof is gambrel or gable, the jog begins slightly in front or in back of the ridgepole. The most distinctive part of the jog, which extends out from the main body of the house, is very narrow and sometimes just wide enough for a hallway and a steep staircase. On the exterior wall and facing the street, the jog frequently has a side entrance, as well as a second- or third-storey window placed directly above the doorway. The

addition often continued around to the back part of the house, thereby creating a few more rooms. By the end of the 18th century, most of these houses were being shared by two families, and the jog provided much needed extra living space.

Most likely, the jog was set back and narrowly constructed so that the otherwise perfect symmetry of Georgian-style houses would not be interrupted. Also, if viewed from the side, the jog is camouflaged because the addition's roofline follows the roofline of the main house exactly. As a testament to its popularity and usefulness, many houses with one — or even two — Beverly Jogs can still be spotted along the North Shore of Boston.

— KERRY NORMAND  
Gloucester, Mass.