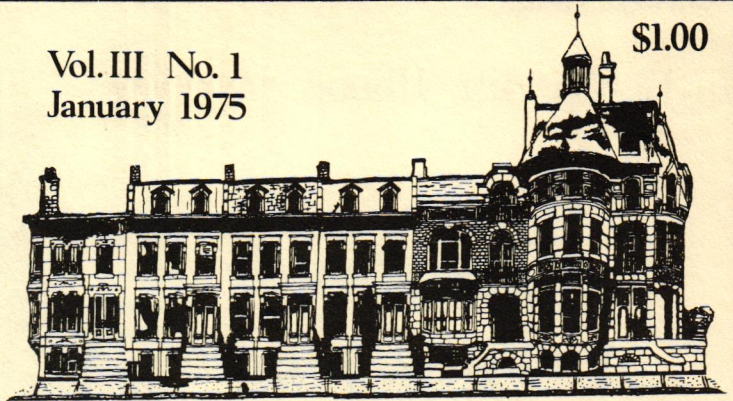


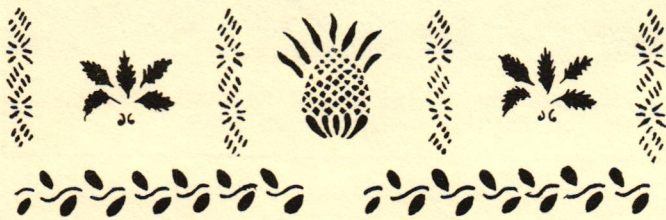
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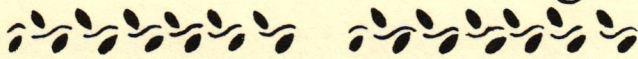
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Renovation And Maintenance Ideas For The Antique House



Early American Wall Stencilling



by Carolyn Flaherty

A GREAT DEAL OF THE WARMTH AND CHARM of colonial rooms was contributed by stencilled walls. Popular through the last quarter of the 18th century and up to about 1840, walls with bold, simple patterns and clear, strong colors were part of the environment for many an Early American homeowner desiring to add color and ornament to his home.

JOURNEYMEN ARTISTS WERE NO DOUBT RESPONSIBLE for a great many decorative walls. There are legends in many New England towns surrounding stencilled walls in a tavern, painted in return for prolific feats of wining and dining on the part of the wandering painter. A picture emerges of the routes of some of these itinerants from the similarity of patterns, probably made from the same stencils, in a tavern and nearby homes in a town, then another town, following a path back and forth across the northeast.

ONE OF THESE JOURNEYMEN was Moses Eaton, who later turned to farming. His kit of stencils and brushes was found in the attic of his house in Dublin, New Hampshire, and is now in the possession of The Society For The



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Coming Next Month

VICTORIAN STENCILLING

Preservation Of New England Antiquities. Eaton's designs were cut on heavy paper, usually coated with shellac, paint, or oil to make them more durable, and one set has been found made out of leather. Stencils for the journeyman artist had to be durable not only to be used over and over, but to withstand the rolling and packing as they went from place to place.



EATON'S STENCILS do not have any register marks for accurate placing of one stencil next to another, indicating that he probably depended solely on his eye and the upper straight edge of the stencil. It is likely that a chalked cord was used by many artists, especially for vertical bands.

LOCAL ARTISANS, often with other trades and occupations, probably did stencilling when it was requested. Once a pattern is chosen and a stencil made, no great skill is required to apply it to a wall. Unlike wallpapering, there is no need for a smooth wall, or cutting and measuring.

FRIEZES (the border running around the top of a wall) and borders over the chair rail (the molding about 30 in. up from the floor) and large, all-over patterns are fairly simple.

PAINT IS APPLIED SPARINGLY to the open portions, taking care not to
(Continued on page 8)

Old-House Living...

In Bishop Hill, Illinois

Restored: A "Hopeless" 1865 Greek Revival Ruin



This is how the abandoned 1865 Greek Revival structure looked when the Darragh's bought it in 1969.

By Anne Flaherty, Midwestern Editor

THE TALE OF Alex and Sally Darragh of Bishop Hill, Illinois, is a classic old-house romance: An historic house...abandoned and falling into ruin...miraculously restored to life. Of course, like many old-house romances, the "miracle" involved a mind-boggling amount of work by the people responsible for the restoration.

THE DARRAGHS, a barely-30 couple with four small children, bought their Greek Revival homestead six years ago. Their life since has been a diary of continuous restoration. "There was no electricity, no plumbing and no heat," recalls Alex, "But we did have a family of raccoons in residence!"

"OUR HOUSE WAS BUILT THE YEAR THE CIVIL WAR ended," Alex continues, "by Swan Swanson, one of the seven original founders of the Bishop Hill Colony. When we bought it in 1969—from an elderly descendent of Mr. Swanson—it had been vacant for 28 years."

BISHOP HILL was founded in 1846 by a group of Swedish Jansenists, who had gone there seeking religious freedom. Today, Bishop Hill—a small rural village in northwestern Illinois—retains its quiet charm. Classes in the traditional colony crafts are offered in the old blacksmith's shop. Residents of the village instruct visitors in the arts of caning, spinning, weaving, quilting, pottery and the

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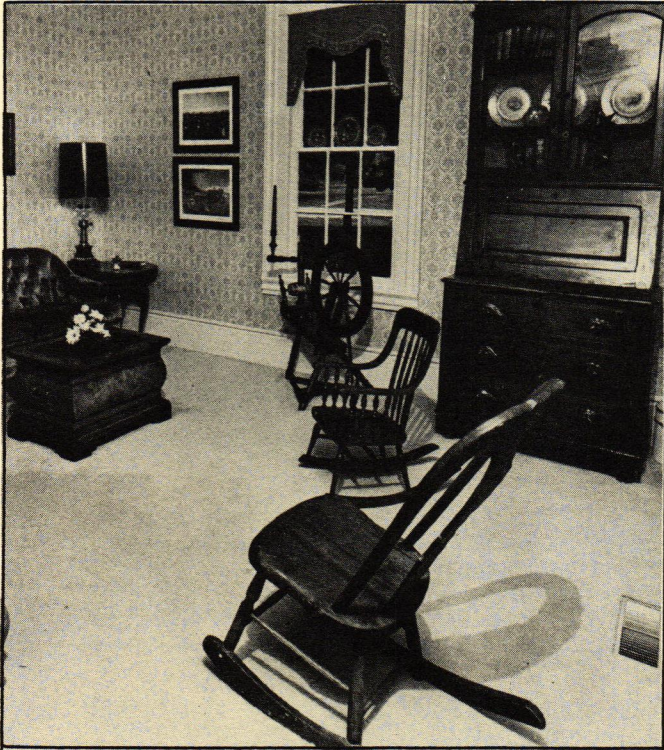
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Restoring the exterior, now painted pale yellow with white trim, included repair and painting of 36 shutters—a task that took the better portion of a winter.

Photos: Daily Dispatch, Moline, Ill.



In the front parlor, simple lambrequin on window accents the wavy glass panes in the original sash. Among the family antiques are a Darragh family spinning wheel and a 200-yr.-old signed walnut rocker.



Alex Darragh designed and built this 9-ft. trestle table for the dining room. The pressed wood side chairs were found in the house. The original combed pine wood-work frames the door and window.

making of brooms and candlesticks. Bishop Hill has been designated a National Landmark and has its own active Historical Society.

THE DARRAGH's house is only one of two examples of Greek Revival architecture in Bishop Hill (the other is the original hospital building). The house had always been referred to simply as "the grey house" and was rumored to have been haunted. It was surrounded with dense vegetation. Alex had to cut down 150 saplings just to be able to see the house.

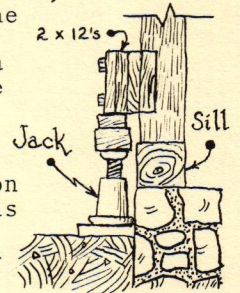
BEFORE THE COUPLE COULD EVEN BEGIN their extensive restoration (which they accomplished completely without professional help) they hauled three tons of debris from the interior. "You wouldn't have believed the mess," Sally recalls. "The junk was piled up knee deep all through the 10 rooms." Eleven months of work passed before the house was even habitable.

ALEX, AN ELECTRICIAN, spent every spare moment working on the house. He rewired it, installed the plumbing and fixtures himself, put in the heating plant, re-roofed the entire structure, replaced sway-backed beams in the basement, and even jacked up the house to replace the sills. Alex says he got most of his know-how from books, with assistance from the Director of the Bishop Hill Historical Society (the couple wanted everything to be authentic).

REPLACING THE SILLS in the house was probably the trickiest undertaking. The sills, which were massive 8" x 8" hand-hewn beams, had nonetheless rotted out because the house had been

constructed with internal downspouts (drilled out sections of wood that acted like wood pipe) which had cracked—flooding water over the sills for many years before the Darraghs arrived and had to deal with the resulting damage.

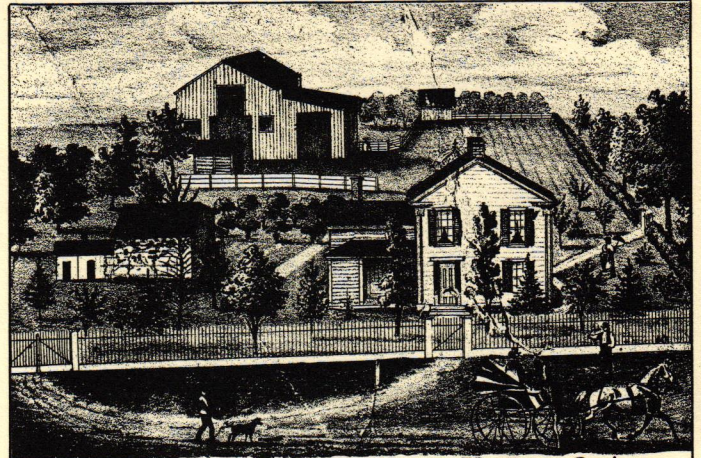
TO JACK UP THE HOUSE in order to replace the sills, Alex first had to remove the clapboard siding for about 3 ft. up from the foundation. He then notched the studs to let in a 2 x 12 that ran parallel to the foundation. The 2 x 12 was lag-bolted to the studs, then three more 2 x 12's were bolted to the face of the first 2 x 12. The net effect was the bolting of a massive beam to the side of the house that acted as a lifting "handle" for the three house jacks that were used. Once the house had been lifted a fraction of an inch, the old rotted sills could be torn out and the new sills (five 2 x 8's bolted together) slipped into place.



OF COURSE, SUCH HOUSE PROBLEMS never occur in isolation. The floor joists had been mortised into the sills—and naturally the ends of the joists were also rotted. Alex cut off the rotted ends and re-attached them to the new sills with lengths of steel angle that were bolted to both the sills and the joists. Says Alex of his massive house surgery: "Lifting a house is a colossal job, but when you don't know the consequences it's not nearly as scary as it is afterwards, when you realize what could have happened!"



In the top of an old barn that came with the property were these self-portraits—dated 1876—of the original owner's sons. Other examples of the boys' artwork were found under peeling wallpaper in the house.



RES. of S. SWANSON, BISHOP HILL, WELLER TWP. Henry Co. ILL.

This old drawing is the only evidence of how Swan Swanson's farm originally looked. Barn to the left of the house is the only remaining farm building. Just a few of the old iron fence pickets have been found.

SALLY DARRAGH, a talented artist, has recreated an Early American interior that is in keeping with the Greek Revival style of architecture. She has chosen wallpapers and paints in soft colonial colors that complement the patina of the original combed pine woodwork that was luckily intact when the couple bought the house. Combing was a colony art in which the woodwork was painted and then combed, giving an interesting grain-like texture.

WAVY OLD HAND-BLOWN WINDOW PANES, miraculously unbroken over the years, have been highlighted with simple lambrequins or unbleached muslin curtains. Among their prize antiques are a child's cherry rocker used by Alex's father, and a Darragh family spinning wheel. Most cherished is a hand-carved walnut sewing or nursing rocker that is close to 200 years old. It was made and signed by Scutter Hart Darragh, a descendent of John Hart—one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

THE WALLS INSIDE had been as badly neglected as the outside. They hadn't been papered in 50 years. Layer upon layer of the crackly old stuff had to be scraped off. "But we were really lucky that there wasn't a lot of destruction to the property after being vacant so long," Sally declares. "The only real vandalism was a mantel that had been ripped from the fireplace in the dining room."

NOW FITTED INTO THE DINING ROOM FIREPLACE is an old black laundry stove—but not until they had played a frustrating game of hide and seek. Alex and Sally kept finding pieces of the stove scattered all over the property. But they despaired of ever putting it back together because they couldn't find one of the cast iron legs. "But when Alex jacked up the foundation, there it was!" Sally says gleefully. "How it got under there I'll never understand."

THE DARRAGH's house, built with a handy walk-in pantry, second set of stairs and servants' quarters (now a dormitory for the two oldest

boys), also came with a wondrous ramshackle barn that contained a wealth of treasures. There they found a tombstone of Swan Swanson's first wife, Christena. They surmise that the simple stone had been replaced with a more elegant one later, and the original monument had just been stuck in the barn. Upstairs in the barn's loft was their most exciting discovery: Self-portraits of Swan Swanson's four sons and underneath them their carved names and the date—November 10, 1876.

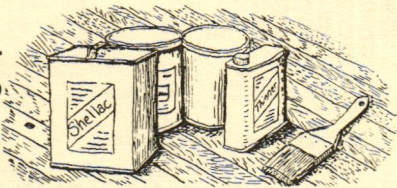
WITH MOST OF THE WORK BEHIND THEM, the Darraghs have the satisfaction of not only having created their family dwelling with their own hands, but also having saved a priceless piece of Illinois history.

Cleaning Old Hardware

SEVERAL TECHNIQUES can be used to remove paint from old iron hardware. You can drop the piece in a can of commercial paint remover (effective but expensive). Or make a solution of lye-type drain opener like Drano in a plastic (not aluminum!) bucket and dunk the piece until the paint loosens. Soaking in a TSP solution (like "Mex") also works. If you don't have any chemicals but have a well-stocked pantry, try simmering the piece for an hour in tomato juice (a mild acid) in a covered pan. Or you can burn the paint off in the fireplace or with a propane torch. Then rub with fine steel wool.

TO FINISH THE CLEANED IRON, you can apply a paste wax and buff. Or wipe on a thin coating of warm tung oil or linseed oil. Wipe off all excess with soft cloths. If black paint must be used, add some red pigment so the result won't be as lifeless as flat black.

Selecting The Best Floor Finish



MANY OF THE CURRENT DO-IT-YOURSELF manuals would lead you to believe that the choice of a floor finish today is very simple: "Polyurethane." But after extensive contacts with users, the technical staff of The Journal has concluded that the advantages of polyurethane have been vastly over-sold to the consuming public.

THERE IS A RANGE of highly satisfactory finishes available to the old-house owner...and polyurethane is only one of them. The choice of the best finish for your application depends upon: (1) Amount of traffic the floor will have; (2) Final appearance you want; (3) Amount of time you are willing to spend applying and maintaining the finish.

BEFORE STARTING ANY FINISHING OPERATION, be sure to vacuum the room thoroughly to remove all traces of dust. This includes dust on baseboards, windowsills, etc. that could be blown onto a wet finish by a stray breeze.

WHETHER OR NOT TO STAIN is the first decision after the floor has been sanded. Bear in mind that once the finish is applied the floor will appear darker than the raw sanded wood. You can get a good idea of what the floor will look like with a clear finish by sloshing mineral spirits (benzine) or turpentine over several square feet. This "wet look" gives a good approximation of the finished floor.

IF YOU DECIDE YOU WANT A DARKER COLOR, you can use any of the commercial oil stains. Be sure, however, that the stain is compatible with the final finish you have picked. Polyurethanes, especially, are not compatible with certain stains. Lighter shades are obtained by letting the stain soak in only a few minutes, then wiping off excess with soft, absorbent cloths. Or you can lighten a stain by thinning with turpentine. Darker shades are achieved by letting the stain soak in for 15-20 min. before wiping. See The Journal, July 1974 p. 5 for more on mixing stains.

OIL STAIN SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DRY at least overnight—and preferably 48 hr.—before applying the finish. It is advisable to wipe the stained surface down with soft cloths one more time. If a conventional varnish is to be used over stain, it's best to seal the stain with a shellac wash—one part 4# white shellac

To Patch Or Not To Patch

In old houses, floors often have "discrepancies" that are so deep that they can't be sanded out. Real philosophical questions arise as to how far one should go to remove these blemishes.

Badly damaged boards, of course, should be completely replaced (see The Journal, May 1974 p. 10). But there is another kind of damage where there can be real differences of opinion as to whether repairs are called for. Some people want to restore surfaces so they look exactly like new. Others prefer to leave the imperfections—because they are part of the history and character of the entire house.

For example, a woman recently contacted The Journal about the best way to plug bullet holes in a floor. It seems that she had just purchased an old rooming house and evidently one of the previous occupants had a rather spectacular way to request more heat.

She was told that the holes could be drilled and plugged with dowels; or filled with whitelead tinted with the proper colors-in-oil; or filled with a mixture of sawdust and white glue, then stained.

But, we suggested, shouldn't the bullet holes be considered part of the history of the floor and just left alone? After all, people with an 18th century house would point with pride to scuff marks made by horses stabled there during the Revolution. So 100 years from now, won't people be pointing with equal pride to early 20th century bullet holes? --R. A. L.

thinned with 6 parts denatured alcohol—allowing the shellac to dry at least 24 hr.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should a paint store person ever talk you into using a varnish stain! This is a varnish into which coloring matter has been pre-mixed. Whereas an oil stain can enhance grain, a varnish stain will vastly diminish the grain. Using a varnish stain is like applying a sheet of Formica.

Different Coats For Different Folks

CHART ON THE NEXT PAGE summarizes the pros and cons of the various floor finishes. The longest-lasting finishes are those that put a film on the surface. Foot traffic then wears away the film of finish rather than the fibers of the floor. One drawback of these film-forming finishes is that the film that protects the floor also acts as a light reflector. So that any varnished floor—even the "satin finish"—will have some sheen.

THE SOFT, RICH LUSTRE that one associates with old wood comes from the penetrating type fin-

ishes—the ones that soak into the pores of the wood. These finishes, such as penetrating sealers and linseed oil, act by filling in between the wood fibers at the surface, rather than by forming a protective coating on top of the wood. Thus the penetrating finishes have less abrasion resistance than the film-forming types. So the homeowner who opts for the penetrating finish is faced with the prospect of either waxing (for added wear life) or frequent touch-ups in high traffic areas. Penetrating finishes, however, are easier to touch up than most varnishes. Just brush on more of the penetrating finish, allow to soak in and wipe off any excess.



HERE ARE TWO BASIC TYPES of varnish: Oil varnish and spirit varnish. Oil varnish polymerizes on exposure to air and forms a coating that is chemically bonded to itself and to the wood. Polyurethane and commercial varnishes (of the long-drying type) fall into this category. Once dried, only a chemical varnish remover will dissolve the film. This presents the problem of getting good adhesion between touch-up coats and the old film of varnish. To obtain adhesion, the old finish should be sanded with #0 sandpaper to eliminate all gloss. This provides a "tooth" for the new varnish coat to adhere to. (After

Formula For Old-Fashioned Oil Finish

The following recipe has been used with good results on old pine plank floors:

1 qt. Boiled Linseed Oil	1 qt. Turpentine
1 pt. White Vinegar	Burnt Umber Pigment In Oil

Mixture is to be applied to floor from which all traces of old finish, wax, grease, etc. have been removed. Mix vinegar, linseed oil and turpentine in large container. If darker color is desired for floor, mix small amount of burnt umber into mixture and test on some little-seen section of floor. Let dry overnight, buff, and add more umber if necessary. NOTE: floor will darken with age, so there's no need to hurry to get immediate dark effect. Apply finish sparingly and wipe up excess with soft cloths. Buff. Allow to dry at least 5 days. Repeat process. Finish can be cleaned by damp mopping with mild soap. In high-traffic areas, additional coats can be applied as necessary. Be sure to clean floor with mild soap and allow to dry overnight before applying and buffing the touch-up coats.

Floor Finish Selector

FINISH TYPE		ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
SURFACE FILM TYPES	Shellac	Inexpensive. Easy to apply and touch up by blend-patching.	Not long wearing. Should be waxed. Vulnerable to water. Becomes brittle with age.
	Conventional Varnish	Moderate cost. Longer wearing and more stain resistant than shellac.	Long drying time. May require filler on oak floors. Surface has gloss. Waxing recommended.
	Quick-Dry Varnish	Fast drying allows room to be put back in service sooner. Easy to touch up by blend-patching. No waxing needed.	Medium wear life. Surface has a gloss.
	Poly-Urethane	Hardest surface of all varnishes. Long-wearing and highly resistant to staining and scarring when properly applied. No waxing.	Can be mis-applied. Not compatible with certain stains; plastic film can separate from wood. Can't blend-patch. Surface has a gloss.
PENETRATING TYPES	Penetrating Sealer	Easy to apply and touch up. Doesn't leave glossy reflective film on the surface.	Not long wearing. Waxing is recommended.
	Oil Finish	Final finish has rich lustre and patina; easy to touch up.	Not long wearing. Long drying time. Will darken with age.

An Architect's Specification For Restoring A 1795 Pine Floor

Sanding can do harm to pre-1800 flooring, especially to the type of pine flooring used in Tidewater Virginia and similar areas.

I have recently written a specification covering repair and refinishing of some 1795 flooring. I am indebted to Mr. P. Buchanan of Williamsburg, Va., for some of the technical data included.

In some areas, badly damaged boards had to be replaced with new pieces of 5/4" (nominal) boards of quarter-sawn air-dried heart pine. So the specification covers the finishing of both the new and old boards.

Finishing New Flooring

- a. Go over floor with steel wool pads on buffing machine and hand scraper...DO NOT USE SANDER...to obtain proper smooth surfaces.
- b. Seal boards with liberal coat of boiled linseed oil and let dry completely (3 to 10 days, depending on weather).

- c. Apply second coat of boiled linseed oil to which a small amount of coloring has been added as required to obtain a uniform appearance of the floor. (Do not put coloring into first coat.) Allow to dry completely.
- d. Apply light coat of floor wax.

Finishing Existing Flooring

- a. Remove any paint, etc., with a water-soluble paint remover.
- b. Clean boards with a caustic cleaner such as "Double X Cleaner" manufactured by Schalk Mfgs., 2400 Vaux Hall Rd., Union, N.J. 07083. Steps (a) and (b) are to be done with bristle brushes. Do not use wire brushes.
- c. Buff floors with steel wool pads and hand scrape as necessary to obtain smooth clean surfaces. Do not use sanders.
- d. Apply light coat of floor wax.

Frederick Herman, A. I. A.
Spigel, Carter, Zinkl, Herman
500 Plume East
Norfolk, Virginia 23510

sanding, carefully wipe up all dust with a soft cloth moistened with turpentine.)

SPIRIT VARNISHES form a coating by evaporation of the solvent. These varnishes can be re-dissolved by applying more solvent. Shellac and the quick-dry varnishes (such as Fabulon) fall into the category of spirit varnishes. It is easy to touch up a spirit varnish by blend-patching. The solvent in the fresh coat partially dissolves the old surface so that the two coats fuse tightly together. (If there is any wax or dirt on the old finish, this would be washed off, of course, before blend-patching.)

FOR OLD PINE AND SOFTWOOD FLOORS, there's no doubt that an oil finish will give the richest appearance. The only question is whether the homeowner can afford the slightly longer drying time these finishes require and is willing to do the touch-up maintenance that will be needed. Touch-up is quite easy, however: Just wipe on more oil.

Some Very Personal Prejudices

IN THE CHART ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE, we have attempted an even-handed evaluation of all the finishes—giving them all "equal time." But based on personal experience, the author has acquired a set of preferences and prejudices that I'll pass along for what they're worth.

FIRST, I can't see the sense of anyone using shellac or conventional varnish on floors. Shellac has little abrasion resistance and so

requires continual waxing. Who needs that? As for conventional varnish, if you are willing to put up with the long drying time you might as well go for the longer-lasting polyurethane.

MANY DO-IT-YOURSELF MANUALS knock the quick-dry varnishes because they are not long-lasting. Nonsense! I have used quick-dry varnishes on hardwood floors with excellent results: 6 years of wear (and still going), no waxing needed, with only minor touch-ups required in a couple of high-wear spots. Quick-dry varnish dries tack-free in 15 min. and can be re-coated in 1 hour. This means you can sand and finish a floor in one (albeit a long one) day.

I USED A LAMBS WOOL APPLICATOR and wiped on three thin coats of the varnish (four in high traffic areas). Three thin coats are more effective than two thick coats. Floor thus coated should dry 24 hr. before being subjected to much foot traffic. I obtained excellent results with "Quick-15" made by Mantrose-Hauser, New York. Another excellent product is "Fabulon" made by Pierce & Stevens.

A QUICK-DRY VARNISH is the best compromise when you need a tough, no-wax finish and you need to get the floor back in service as soon as possible. Polyurethanes have a much longer drying time—and I have never been particularly happy with the results. Others I know swear by polyurethane. So if you use a polyurethane and aren't pleased...don't blame me!

WHEN YOU WANT TO LAVISH A LOT OF LOVE on a floor...and get a soft lustrous result...oil is definitely the thing to use. But to do the job right you should use at least two coats...allowing a week's drying time for each coat. You can get by without waxing if you wipe on more oil as needed.


--R. A. Labine





(Stencilling-Cont'd from page 1)

get paint on the underside of the stencil. From the old walls that remain, there is no evidence that any colors were shaded.

OF COURSE, WHEN A ROOM is stencilled in some of the more complicated versions, with freizes, borders, and large patterns separated by uprights, either a very good natural eye or a careful room plan is needed. However, the stenciller has the advantage of being able to leave out certain parts of a pattern when approaching a door, etc., and being able to cheat slightly with the open spaces.

 SOME OF THE MOST original and charmingly naive patterns found were probably done by a person who had seen a stencilled wall in a tavern or on a visit to a neighboring town, and tried their hand at decorating their own walls.

UNLIKE MORE DURABLE decorative features of Early American life such as furniture, pottery, and paintings, the walls surrounding the colonist's everyday life have been most vulnerable to time. Repainting, washing and papering have left little to record this art. 

 BUT WHAT REMAINS shows that stencilling was very popular in New England, particularly away from the commercial centers where wallpapers could be bought. Wallpaper was imported from France and England and although much in favor, it was still fairly expensive. The popular papers of the time no doubt influenced both the artist's designs and the homeowner's desires. All-over patterns most obviously simulate wallpaper, and many of the papers featured representations of architectural features like freize, chair rail border, etc. Stripes were very fashionable, and were reflected in the vertical uprights used by the stenciller.

ONCE MACHINE-MADE AMERICAN wallpaper became readily available and inexpensive, stencilling as a means to decorate walls all but disappeared by the second half of the 19th century. But the unique quality of stencilling, with its ability to adapt to the individual proportions of a room and its irregularities, has never been duplicated.

ALTHOUGH MOST OF THE STENCILLED WALLS that remain or have been uncovered are in New England, some have been found as far west as Ohio, often with the same patterns found in New England. Stencilled walls have not found in significant numbers further south than New York.

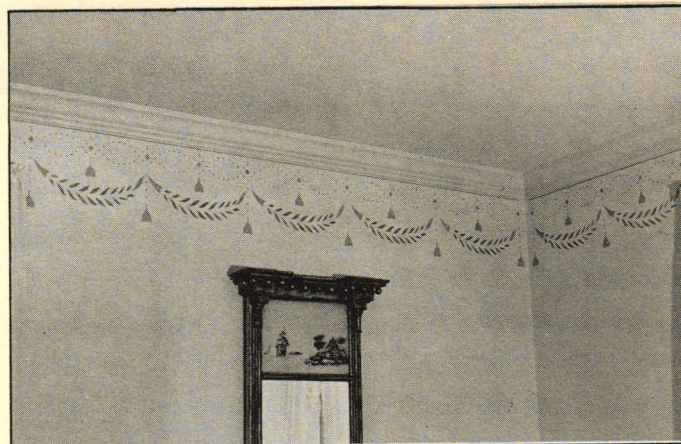

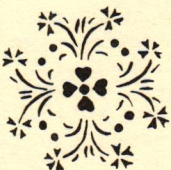



Photo: Handcrafted Walls


Stencilled frieze in a bedroom in New Canaan, Connecticut. The design is a Handcrafted Walls adaptation of a pattern found in New Hampshire. Colors are medium blue and pastel pink on a white ground.

ALTHOUGH PENNSYLVANIA is rich in the stylized floral and geometric stencilling on furniture and barn walls done by the early German settlers, they apparently did not use this means of decoration on the inside walls. 

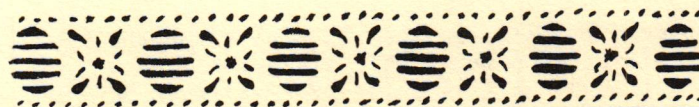
Colors And Patterns

A VARIETY OF geometric and foliage patterns were popular. Some seemed to have special meanings. Moses Eaton was fond of the pineapple which was a symbol of hospitality in colonial times. Bells are found very often, particularly in friezes. They were probably wedding bells, and there is evidence that a homeowner often had wedding bells stencilled to welcome a new bride into the house. 

 MANY FRIEZE BORDERS have swags, festoons and tassels reminiscent of French drapery. Weeping willows, the Federal eagle, sunbursts, woven baskets and vases filled with flowers were also popular for the larger decorations, particularly over the mantelpieces.

BORDERS FAVORED FLOWERING VINES, roses, laurel leaves and stylized leaves. They were often edged with dot and dash patterns, or combined with small hearts or flowers. 

THE FLAT COLORS USED FOR STENCILLING were either milk or oil paints. Pigments ground



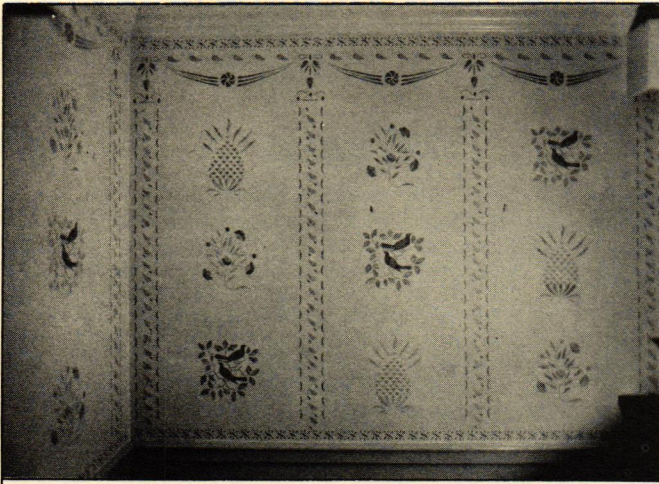


Photo: Handcrafted Walls

Dining room walls in a Ridgefield, Conn., home. Stencilled by Handcrafted Walls, the larger designs are separated by vertical uprights, and bordered by a frieze and chair rail design. All patterns are close adaptations of originals from Ohio and New England, except for the birds, taken from an old quilt. In five colors; umbered green, ochre, red, blue and black on a white ground.

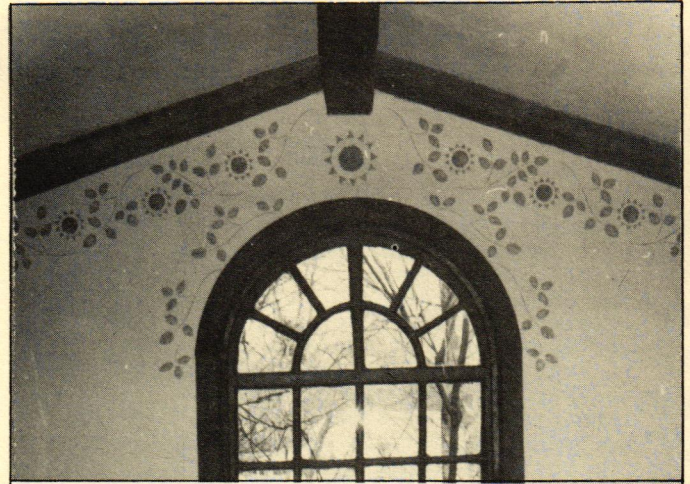


Photo: Handcrafted Walls

Stencilled sunburst design in a bedroom in New Canaan, Conn. An original Handcrafted Walls design—colors are ochre, Venetian red, and Prussian blue. The pattern is carried around the window, emphasizing an important architectural feature of the room. An important advantage of stencilling—as compared with wallpaper—is its flexibility to adapt to specific features in a room.

in oil, and ready for mixing, were sold as early as 1724 in Boston. Paint was frequently mixed with oil as a vehicle. In many rural dwellings, however, the thriftiest medium was one that every household had a large supply of—skimmed milk.

UNFORTUNATELY, MILK PAINT was not very durable and even the tarvern owner and housewife's warnings not to wash the painted walls did not prevent the loss of many of these walls.

BLACK, GREENS, YELLOWS, PINKS and reds with some red-browns and blues are the colors that have predominated in the walls remaining. For background color, either the original plaster or yellow and red ochres were most common, and some deep pinks and blues.

WHILE MOST STENCILLERS probably used the dry pigments mixed with oil or milk, restorationists occasionally have only been able to duplicate some of the odd shades by using berry or beet juice, or some other vegetable substance. Whether some artists made their own natural dyes as a rule, or only when they ran out of pigment, is guesswork.

THE COLORS ARE NOT EASY to duplicate today unless a good, well-pigmented oil or milk paint is used, but more difficult is to conceive the use of color as boldly as did these artists. There is a huge difference in the "bold and clear" colors of yesterday and the "bright" colors shown in slick magazines today.

IT TAKES SOME LOOKING at pictures of old walls in museums or source books and paint chips from manufacturers of reproduction colors (see page 10) to get the feel of the richness and warmth they created.

FOR EXAMPLE, Moses Eaton's daughter remembered a room in their house with soft raspberry walls and deep green and red decorations! That Moses Eaton liked strong red and green is evident from the traces of paint on his stencils.

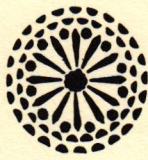
VERY DIFFERENT is another house in New Hampshire with a room with pale pink walls, divided with a black line from the light gray background of the frieze with festoons, tassels, and medallions in two shades of light blue with blue-black markings.

THESE DARING COLOR SCHEMES and sharply defined patterns were the background for the simple lines of Early American furniture. Such rooms had a minimum of colored fabric. A room today would have to be as simple as the original to contain so much color and pattern on the walls. But even if the room has more color, fabric and "things" than its original state, a border or frieze pattern can give an authentic and colorful effect.

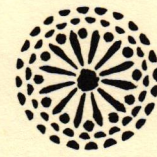
THE PALE, WASHED-OUT LOOK often associated with Early American decoration and painted walls is not the way these walls look when they have been found under paper, in closets, or other protection, but rather the way an unrestored stencilled wall looks after 150 years of the ravages of time have washed it out.

MANY OF THE REDS, GREENS, and blues used were "umbered" or had ochre added. This gave a deep but not dull look—the dark colors like mulberry, Prussian blue or chrome were always quite intense in appearance.

(Continued on page 11)



Aids For Wall Stencilling



Books

"Early American Stencils on Walls and Furniture" by Janet Waring. This is the most important and valuable book available on the art of stencilling. Compiled from the author's research and her own vast collection of stencil designs taken from rooms and furniture, it contains 130 plates (7 full-page color) illustrating patterns and the arrangements of stencils. (All the line drawings of stencil designs in the accompanying article are reproductions of the patterns found by Janet Waring.) Beginning with a short history of stencilling, she discusses walls, floors and furniture, including information on the tools and materials used. Paperbound, with sewn signatures, it is an excellent reprint of the original 1937 volume. \$4.00, plus 35¢ postage and handling, from Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick Street, New York, N. Y. 10014.

Paints

THE TURCO PAINT AND VARNISH COMPANY reproduces authentic colonial colors in high-quality modern paints. Their colors are taken from houses in Old Sturbridge Village and duplicate the warm, rich ochres, greens and reds of the colonial period. Turco will send sample paint chips, historical information and literature at your request. Write to: The Turco Paint and Varnish Co., 212-220 Race Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19106.

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG PAINTS, manufactured by Martin Senour Paints, is a large selection of reproduction colonial paint colors. The Williamsburg Catalog (reviewed in the July issue of The Old-House Journal, page 11) has 3 pages of paint chips including Raleigh Tavern Chinese Red, Ludwell Tenement Gold, and other deep colors. They also manufacture a Simulated Whitewash, imitating the rough, grainy texture and off-white color of homemade whitewash. Catalog is \$2.95 postpaid from Craft House, Williamsburg, Virginia, 23185.

GENUINE MILK PAINT is still being mixed by Miss Kitty—a batch at a time in her kitchen. Colors are Shaker Red, Moravian Yellow, Windsor Green, Zoar Blue, Quaker Green, Amish Orange, Dutch Blue and Meeting House Gray and is shipped in milk cartons. It is \$2.00 for a ½ pt. (mixes to 1 pint), \$3.85 for 1 pt. (mixes to 1 qt.) plus \$1.50 for shipping. Because of the fragility of milk paint used on walls, she recommends using a clear, flat-finish spray (like Krylon) to protect patterns, and in between applications of overlapping colors to prevent bleeding. Order from: Miss Kitty's Keeping Room Kolors, P. O. Box 4182, Buckroe Station, Hampton, Virginia, 23664.

Stencil Patterns

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION on New England Antiquities will send you a photostat of any of the stencils in the Moses Eaton kit. The charge is \$1.00 per patent—if a particular pattern uses 2, 3 or 4 different stencils, they will send copies of all of them for \$1.00. The pattern can then be traced on heavy paper. Unfortunately, the Society does not have any literature available and so it is necessary to know which stencils you wish to order. The patterns are pictured in Figs. 58 and 59 of "Early American Stencils on Walls and Furniture" listed on this page. The patterns include wedding bells, a willow tree, and frieze and border patterns. Address your order to Danny Lohnes, The Society For The Preservation of New England Antiquities, 141 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA, 02114.



Professional Stencilling

HANDCRAFTED WALLS is a firm of 20th century artists using the old craft techniques of the seventeen and eighteen hundreds. They do all their work by hand, from the cutting of the stencils to their application on the wall. They have a large portfolio of Early American designs adapted from originals found in old houses as well as their own creations. Some of their patterns have been adapted from treasured possessions of the homeowner—from old quilts to the label on an old can of pears. Their service is surprisingly inexpensive (comparable to a good wallpaper professionally hung). They will travel to any part of the country, adding a reasonable travel expense to their fee outside the Connecticut-New York area. Call or write: Handcrafted Walls, P. O. Box 262, New Milford, Conn. 06776; call 203-355-1517



Stencilled pattern on floor of entranceway in an 1830 farmhouse in Kent Hollow, Conn. The original Handcrafted Walls design is done in many bright colors on a pale, creamy yellow background.

(Stencilling—Continued from page 9)

STENCILLING IS A FAIRLY SIMPLE technique and requires few tools. Paint, stencils, cutting tools and paint brushes are about all that is necessary.

PAINT—Any good oil or milk paint with a lot of pigment is suitable.

STENCILS—Can be made from a variety of paper types. There is no need for the heavily coated paper or leather used by the original stencillers since they will not be used as often or carried around for a great length of time. Handcrafted Walls uses different kinds of material; simple brown paper coated with shellac to sheets of Mylar (plastic sheets available at art supply stores) which are very durable and easy to cut. Any weight of paper can be used, with judgment as to how much you care to spend, how often they are to be used, and how long they are meant to last. (They can be stored for touch-up or restoration work later on.)

CUTTING TOOLS—An X-acto knife (available in art supply stores or hobby and craft shops) makes the best cutting tool. A single-edge razor will also work well on most papers.

BRUSHES—A variety of brushes is needed. Round brushes work best and you will need small ones for small cut-outs and a couple of larger ones.

STENCIL PATTERNS can be made from original designs, a design adapted from a plate, carpet, quilt, books featuring traditional motifs, or

any simple, pleasing pattern.

A WHOLE DESIGN CAN be traced onto one stencil, or you may want to make more than one. Two stencils help in separating the colors. For instance, a bouquet of red flowers and green leaves could have one stencil for the green leaves. The one for the red flowers could have one leaf (an extra) to help match up the pattern. Stencillers mostly match by eye, but it also helps to make a chalk mark on the wall where the next stencil goes. It is sometimes a good idea to try them out on the basement or attic walls, or inside the closet, to get the hang of it.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER is to apply the paint very sparingly. Otherwise it can run. With very little paint on the brush, start in the middle of a large space and work it out to the edges. For a small space, you can start on the apron of the stencil and work back and forth over the cut-out.

FOR FRIEZES AND BORDERS, the top or bottom edge of the stencil acts as a guide in keeping the patterns running in a straight line. All-over patterns will require careful layout, using a plumb bob and chalk line.

STENCILLING WILL look well in any room in an Early American house. But its flexibility to adapt to the proportions of a room make it a useful decorating technique for rooms of any period that have irregular features or a lack of architectural features. Stencilled walls and floors can brighten and enrich otherwise dull areas of house—dark hallways, walls along the stairway or old, bumpy walls.



Helpful Publications You Can Send For



Victorian Public Houses

The Victorian institution of the public house is explored in this beautifully written and illustrated book. Victorian pubs were created with the grandeur of the period—otherwise absent from the lives of the working class. These lush surroundings are illustrated in color and black and white, with attention to details of architecture, stained glass and cabinet-work. It is of great value to anyone attempting to re-create the ambience of the era in an establishment. It is also a superb guidebook for the traveler, whether actual or armchair. Available from Gargoyles, Ltd., who also sell restaurant and bar fittings, both old pieces and custom-made. To order "Victorian Public Houses" send \$10.00, plus 50¢ postage and handling, to Gargoyles, Ltd., 512 S. Third St., Phila., PA, 19147.

Source Book On American Interiors

This book is a collection of over 200 full-page pictures taken from oil paintings, water colors, drawings, and photographs illustrating the in-

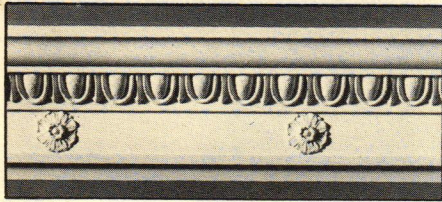
teriors of American houses from 1659 to 1876. The accompanying text points out details concerning furniture, wallpaper, drapes, floors, carpets, stencilling, ornaments, pets, food and flowers in each picture. It provides a wealth of pictorial information on how rooms really looked. "Americans At Home" is \$14.95, includes postage and handling, from the Scribner Bookstore, 597 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York, 10017.

Neighborhood Revival Newsletter

One of the organizations that has had the greatest success in promoting restoration of city neighborhoods has been the Brownstone Revival Committee. Their newsletter, "The Brownstoner," is published 5 times a year and is crammed with news and ideas from people involved with the "back to the city" movement. The newsletter, which comes with your \$5/yr. membership, is worthwhile reading for anyone involved with neighborhood promotional activities, city or otherwise. For free sample copy, write: Dorothy Kahn, Brownstone Revival Committee, Rm. 1825, 230 Park Ave., New York, NY 10017.

The Centennial Exhibition Of 1876

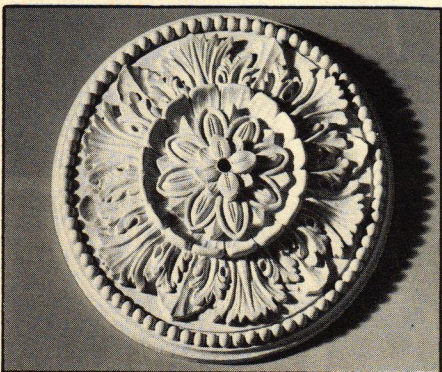
Products For The Old House



Reproduction Medallions & Cornices

If the interior plasterwork in your house is badly damaged—or has been stripped away by previous "remuddlers"—you should know about Focal Point, Inc. This small Georgia firm is turning out high-quality, accurately scaled reproductions of period cornices and medallions. Their products have all the dimension and crispness of cast plasterwork, but are molded from lightweight, easily handled polymers. Thus a cornice that would require several pieces of plasterwork can be molded in one piece by Focal Point. The resulting complex molding, which comes in 10-ft. lengths, is nonetheless very easy to install.

The material is approximately the density of white pine and can be worked with carpenter's tools. Joints can be cut in a miter box; installation is with nails or screws. Material will take any paint. Samples are available. For an informative folder that shows the selection of patterns and gives ordering information, write: Focal Point, Inc., 3760 Lower Roswell Rd., Marietta, Georgia 30060. Telephone is (404) 971-7172.



"THE GLORIOUS ENTERPRISE" was the phrase used to describe the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 by its architect-in-chief, H. J. Schwarzmann.

This well-written and handsome book, by John Maass, is among many things, a fascinating biography of this strange immigrant to America who designed 34 of the 249 structures in the Exhibition at the age of 28. He then faded into relative obscurity.

It is also the story of the great exhibition in Philadelphia—of special interest today because of the approaching Bicentennial. "Centennials are illogical...but the celebration of such illogical anniversaries may themselves be of historical significance. They are, in fact, of great interest because they reveal the self-images of nations."

Maass explores the self-image of the America of almost 100 years ago, what it put forth as its virtues and announced to be its assets and the opinions of its citizenry (including some notables like Walt Whitman and Ralph Waldo Emerson).

He explores the European

influence on the great, young country—and America's impact on Europe.

Maass is both a scholar and an entertaining writer. The multitude of facts he has gathered (assembled for the first time in a modern study) is liberally laced with anecdotes, quotes and comments.

In his important chapter about the art exhibited by the contributing countries, Maass gleefully explains why "No such array of feminine pulchritude in marble and paint had ever been seen in Victorian America before" and the reaction to it.

This is an important book for anyone interested in art, architecture, landscape design, planning, mass communications, exhibitions, etc., and for those who just enjoy a good story, especially when it's true.



"The Glorious Enterprise" by John Maass, is a large, hardcover book, well illustrated with 72 photos, engravings and line drawings.

To order, send \$15.00 (includes postage and handling) to the American Life Foundation, Watkins Glen, New York, 14891.

--C. F.

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Jeremy lived in a modern, convenient, clean, trouble-free apartment.

He secretly longed, however, to own an old house. Every morning as he slipped through the sterile lobby, Jeremy imagined himself instead striding through his own foyer to stand, imperially slim, atop his own stairs surveying the passing scene.

But fearing scorn from his practical-minded friends, Jeremy dared not give voice to his dream. And thus he despaired of ever taking the first step that would make his dream come true. Then he met Gwendolyn. To her, Jeremy poured out the secrets of his heart. Not only was Gwendolyn understanding—she also knew about The Old-House Journal.

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Moral: Be a friend in need. Give The Old-House Journal. We'll send a certificate identifying you as the benefactor.