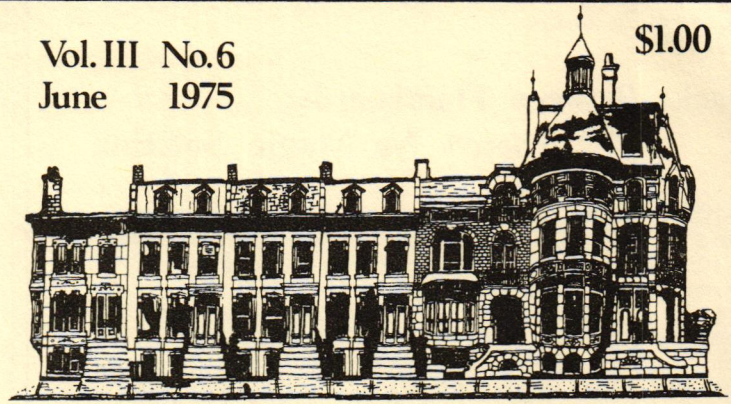


THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

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Renovation And Maintenance Ideas For The Antique House

How To GRAIN Like A Professional

by Howard Zucker

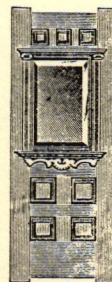
GRAINING IS A PAINTED IMITATION OF the grain of wood. It is an authentic, economical and interesting technique that can produce amazing results with a little practice.

BECAUSE IT IS SUCH AN inexpensive and durable finish, it is very practical for hallways, old kitchen cabinets, exterior doors, old doors, furniture, woodwork and floors.

GRAINING IS MUCH LESS EXPENSIVE than stripping, hanging paper or new carpentry. For instance, if a room contains old wainscoting that is not worth stripping but is unattractively painted, by graining the wainscoting you get the effect of wood and keep the architectural detail. This is much less expensive than new wood panelling that alters the look of a room and usually "modernizes" it.

IN OTHER INSTANCES, you may want to "match" a wood surface. If a new shutter is installed next to older ones, the new wood will most likely be more inexpensive than the type used in the past and not have the grain of the older wood. It is possible to grain the shutter in imitation of its neighbors.

GRAINED SURFACES do not show dirt and scuff marks as do painted surfaces and they retain their attractiveness far longer. It is also a useful finish for non-wood surfaces like: cabinets, radiator covers, connectors, grilles and switchplates.



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Coming Next Month

THE LIGHTING OF RESTORATIONS

YOUR FIRST ATTEMPTS AT GRAINING may not result in a work of art, but the effect will be similar enough to wood. For areas like baseboards, this is sufficient and will give you the necessary practice for tackling more decorative jobs.

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN IT IS BETTER to hire a professional decorator. If you apply the background coat and do your own final varnishing, you can save a great deal of money by having the professional just do the actual graining. And you can learn a lot by watching him.

UHERE ARE THREE PARTS to the graining procedure: Applying the background coat, making the wood grain with the graining stain, and varnishing. There is no magic in graining—it is a craft that anyone can learn. It is helpful to have a sample board and some pictures of wood you can copy if you don't have the real thing.

I USE MASONITE BOARDS 12" x 16" for testing colors. A practice or sample board lets you see how closely you are matching a natural wood and make necessary adjustments. The novice should limit the graining at first to the straight grains rather than the more complicated swirls of heart growth.

YOU ARE NOT TRYING FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC representation of wood but rather the lines and patterns that resemble the real thing.

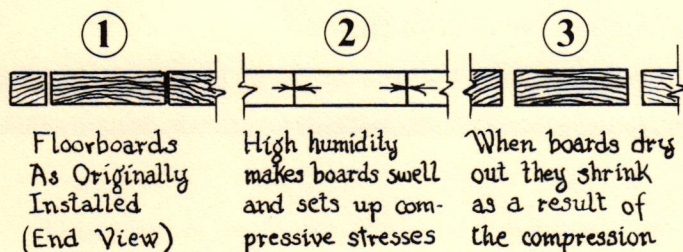
(Continued on page 8)

Cracks Between Floorboards: There's No Magic Solution

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the April issue, Phil Walton asked a question about what to do with floorboards over a crawl space that had shrunk alarmingly. We received a number of comments on this problem, and all seem agreed on one major point: Any attempt to fill the cracks with a rigid filler such as wood putty or sawdust and glue is doomed to failure. Even the use of wooden splines—a frequently mentioned remedy—has its drawbacks, as the following letter points out:

To The Editor:

Generally, cracks in wood floors are caused by compression shrinkage. A board that cannot swell in width because of its neighbors when its moisture content rises is put into compression. Upon drying out again, the board shrinks to less than its original width because of this compressive stress. After 30 or 40 heating seasons, the board has become sufficiently narrow that it no longer is put into compression when the moisture content rises—and thus the shrinking stops.



If the cracks are repaired with cements or splines, the compression process starts all over again. The solution we recommend is to first reduce the high moisture content (which generally occurs in the summer) by applying an adequate vapor barrier over the crawl space. This could be a polyethylene sheeting taped and lapped. After the moisture condition has been corrected, then relay the floor, realizing that several boards may have to be added.

This problem is quite common in areas of the country where humidity numbers exceed the temperature, and where wood floors have been installed over earth basements and crawl spaces.

J. Henry Chambers, Restoration Consultant
Chambers and Chambers Architects
Akron, Ohio

To The Editor:

Phil Walton's proposal to put tarpaper on the underside of the floor sounds plausible. Better yet would be to put 3½ inches of insulation—with vapor barrier toward the heated part of the house—between the joists. This will stop the breezes, as well as adding insulation. The insulation can be stapled in place fairly easily. If the fiber glass shows any tendency to pull away from the vapor barrier, you can staple chicken wire under the insulation.

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What about the cracks? One method is to slip in narrow strips of wood. The strips can be angle-nailed with long thin finish nails to one of the floorboards. (If you nail them to both floorboards, the expansion and contraction will pull the nails loose.) Another ingenious solution I have seen is to put a piece of hemp rope in the crack. It can be varnished, and the final result is quite attractive—as well as keeping high heels from getting caught in the cracks.

In my own house I have taken up several floors and re-laid them. I picked up the boards, numbered them, and then took them outside to scrape and sand all of the crud that had gotten into the cracks over the years. Before resetting the boards, I put down roofing felt or sheathing paper on the subfloor. I do this during the winter, when the boards are at their narrowest due to drying out.

Peter C. Hotton, House & Garden Editor
The Boston Globe
Boston, Mass.

A Tip For Patching Plaster

To The Editor:

For patching plaster, I have been using 1 part of sand added to 7 parts of USG Structolite. The sand makes the mix slip more easily off the trowel and reduces shrink. For a finish coat, I mix Structolite 50-50 with dry joint (drywall) compound.

There's also a product called "Mortar Creme" that I have used with very good results to improve the workability of portland cement mortar. The principal ingredient is pipe clay (also called fire clay) that is normally used for setting bricks in a firebox.

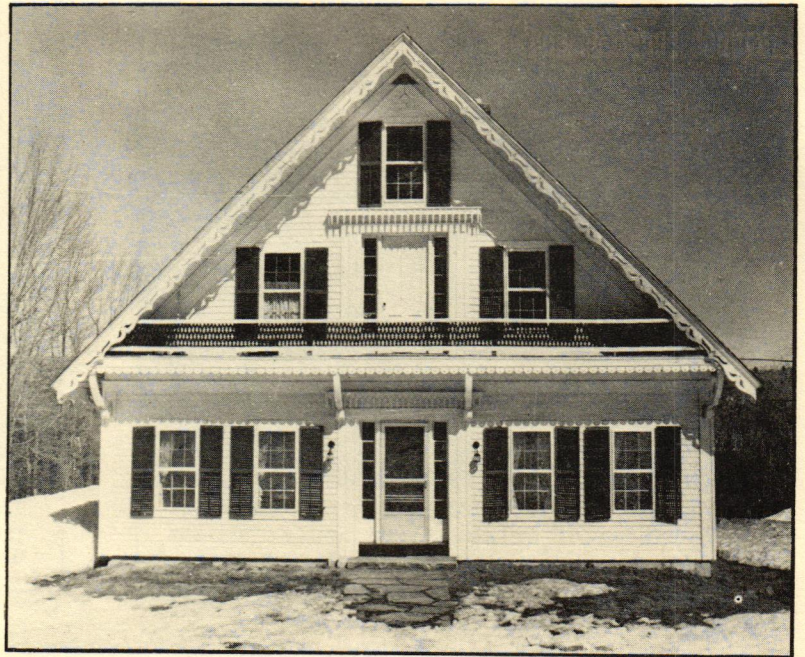
Kenneth Turner
Sacramento, Calif.

The Moving Story Of A Swiss Chalet In Vermont

by Joan Skeele

FOR MANY YEARS, travellers taking Vermont State Rte. 9 West on the way to Bennington noted a unique house nestled on the side of a hill. Though it was empty and neglected it managed to retain a dignity and sturdiness. Now the site stands empty. The house that intrigued passers-by for so long now sits on an open meadow amid old apple trees in Marlboro, Vermont.

IN 1971 THE HOUSE HAD BEEN SLATED for demolition. The New England Power had purchased the house and 300 acres of land many years earlier with the provision that the former owners could live there as long as they wished. When the last of the family died the power company tried to rent the house, but it had deteriorated too far. The company gave permission to employees to take anything of value from the house. Shutters, doors, wood stoves, even hinges and panelling were stripped. A bulldozer was moved in, and on the day before the



scheduled demolition a young reporter from The Bennington Banner drove by, discovered the bulldozer, and took quick action.

HE NOTIFIED THE POWER COMPANY that he and other interested interested people had previously succeeded in getting the house declared "historic" and listed by the Historic Sites Division, State of Vermont. Demolition was halted. The house, however, sat for another year, weathering wind, rain, snow and intruders.

WE HEARD THE HOUSE mentioned at a Sunday afternoon party in July of 1973. We vaguely remembered having passed by it and recalled its enchanting "gingerbread" appearance. Early the next day, we drove up to take a closer look. There it sat, the white paint faded to a dirty, soft grey, its front door boarded over, the shutters missing, window panes broken—but on each side of the front steps, as though in hope, snowball bushes were blooming. We decided right then that we wanted the house.

LATER, WE REFLECTED that it was fortunate that we had made that "leap of faith," because when we climbed in through an open window, we were assailed by wet, stale odors and the accumulated trash of years of neglect. We kicked aside debris to go up the stairs, noting the delicate stair rail of the center hall, still intact. Boards covered the glass lights on each side of the entry, making it dark as well as dingy. The upstairs bedrooms had low, sloping ceilings with lovely, faded wallpaper, rain-streaked from the leaking roof.

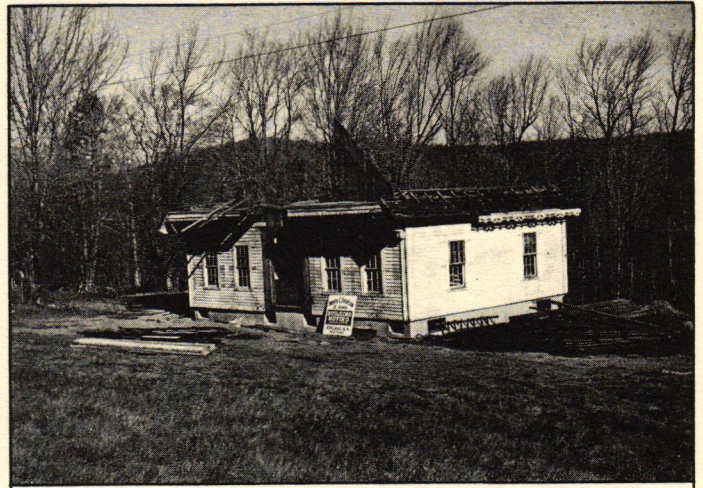
IT WAS A DISAPPOINTING TOUR, but we decided to proceed with plans to purchase the house. We called the power company when we reached home, and were assured we could buy the house for the sum of \$1. We then had to find a mover. After several phone calls, following



Built in the early 1800's, house was a derelict when purchased: Shutters and front door had been ripped off. Amazingly, the turned icicle trim—part of Swiss Chalet theme—had survived intact.



The Chalet, on its original site, showing the symptoms of an abandoned house: Broken windows, boarded doors and peeling paint.



To avoid the cost of having all the telephone wires and electric cables removed along Rte. 9, the house was dismantled.

leads that took us to towns in Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, and even briefly led us to consider the possibility of a firm in Pennsylvania who reportedly moved buildings with helicopters, we heard of a man in Ashland, New Hampshire, who had a good reputation—he had even moved covered bridges.

Before Henry Graton agreed to move the house, he went over it carefully from top to cellar. He declared it sound and saw no major problems in moving it. After all the hearings were over and permits finalized, Henry had to wait for the Highway Department to give its okay for the move down Route 9.

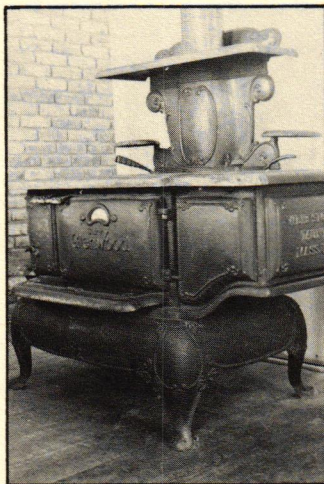


G N A GRAY, OVERCAST DAY in November, a friend phoned saying she had seen our house "going" down the highway. Henry hadn't informed us of the move.

ABOUT 7:30 p.m., the first half of the house arrived. We looked at it, snow falling on its old bathroom fixtures, the plastic sheet covering flapping in the wind, revealing as it moved the falling plaster and old wiring. We felt a despair that only later could we admit to each other. It wasn't until another week that the second half arrived, and this time the snow was in earnest.

FROM THAT POINT ON, work proceeded rapidly on the house. The second story had been designed to fit under the roof in Swiss chalet fashion, so once the rafters were in place, the house started to take shape again. The chimney and roof contractor moved in, working to beat the approaching cold weather and snow. He had acquired some old brick in New York State, and knew what we had in mind for the fireplace—a formal style that would go with the high-ceilinged house.

IT WAS AT THIS POINT THAT we decided to build a three-flue chimney on the inside wall of the



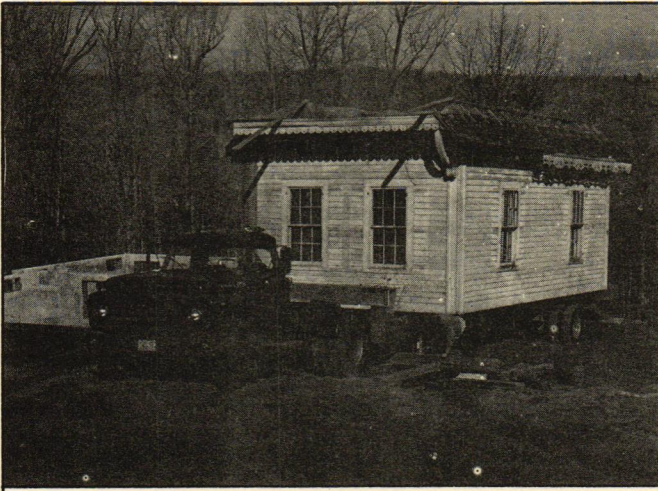
living room: One for the fireplace, one for a woodburning cookstove, and one for a furnace. We also had a wood stove hook-up in the basement to allow the foundation to cure over the first winter. We later succeeded in finding an antique fireplace front and mantelpiece that fitted the opening perfectly.

BOB, WITH OUR THREE SONS HELPING, tore out all the old plaster, the bathroom, plus other walls, to open up more space in the rear of the house. Although we first thought we would dismantle and rebuild the kitchen wing of the house, we discovered that although the wing was newer than the main house, it was not built with as great care. Several beams were rotted. We decided against the kitchen wing; instead we removed the bathroom wall and connecting wall plus the wall of the small bedroom closet at the rear of the dining room and had ample room for a kitchen and breakfast area. We feel that this was the original kitchen. The foundation we had built for the kitchen wing will be used for a connecting shed at the rear.

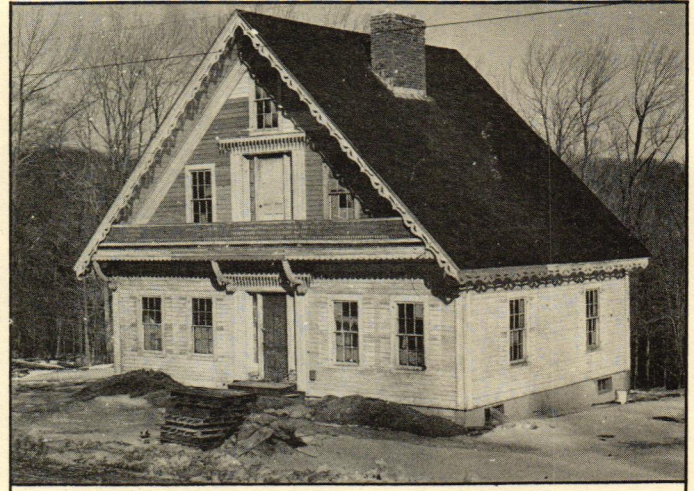
WE LOVE THE HOUSE—it is warm and friendly. The interior has a stark, Shaker-like feel to it. The ceilings are high and the windows (six over six) are low—an intriguing combination. The upstairs bedrooms have low, sloping ceilings, giving a sheltered feeling at night.

ALL THE WIDE-BOARD PINE FLOORS were restorable, except for the ones in the old bathroom area. These we replaced with new pine floors. We removed many layers of linoleum and old paint, even tar, then sanded the boards and applied two coats of Min-Wax Puritan Pine stain and sealer and many coats of wax.

ALL THE DOWNSTAIRS WALLS are painted white (Benjamin Moore Navajo White). The dining room has the original "feathered" grain wood-work and doors. The living room has bulls-eye corner-



The first story was also cut in half. Its second section begins the perilous journey down the mountainous highway.



Back together again, the house settles down on its new site in Marlboro and awaits restoration by the Skeeles.

ed window frames. We removed the dividing wall between the two parlors and made a long, open living room that goes the depth of the house.

THE OUTSIDE IS RESTORED TO ITS original white (Olympic solid color stain) with dark green shutters (Benjamin Moore Essex Green) rescued from a farmhouse that had burned. We have also found a matching front door—a real find and almost a twin to the door over the upstairs balcony.

THE HOUSE IS CLAPBOARD—traditionally New England except for the steep roof, balcony and gingerbread trim. The original owner-builder ran a lumber mill which probably accounts for its "covered bridge" stability and long, heavy timbers.

THE UNIQUE, SWISS CHARACTER of the house has proven to be well chosen for Vermont winters. The front door, unimpeded by snow due to the overhang of the roof and balcony, has remained accessible all winter. The steep roof prevents a deep snow build-up. We've been startled at night when the snow on the roof decides to let go with a swoosh.

ALTHOUGH THE HOUSE ONLY COST \$1, it wasn't quite that big a bargain. As you might imagine, the process of taking the house apart, moving the pieces, and then reassembling them on a new foundation is a breathtakingly complex—and therefore expensive—procedure. Total cost for the move, including the new foundation and all permits required, was \$19,000. And then we started to restore.

BUT IT HAS BEEN WORTH IT. People say the house looks as though it has always been there. And although there is much work yet to be done, we feel good about the progress we have made. Perhaps when it comes to restoring old houses, the pace of the tortoise is to be preferred over that of the hare. ■

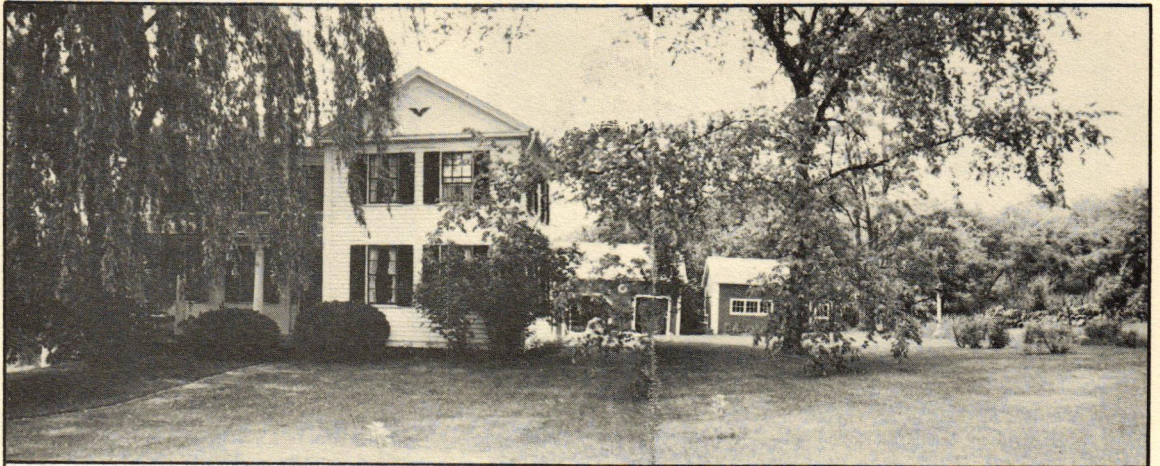
Joan Skeele is Sec./Coordinator, Marlboro Continuing Education Project. Her husband, Robert E. Skeele, is the Dean of the College, Marlboro, Vt. The Skeeles have four children, John (20), Matthew (18), David (14), and Susan (9). They moved to Marlboro in 1969 from Santa Fe, New Mexico where they had restored an adobe house.



Antique mantel was found for living room to replace one that had been ripped out.



Furnishings and decor have been kept simple to match the original interior woodwork.

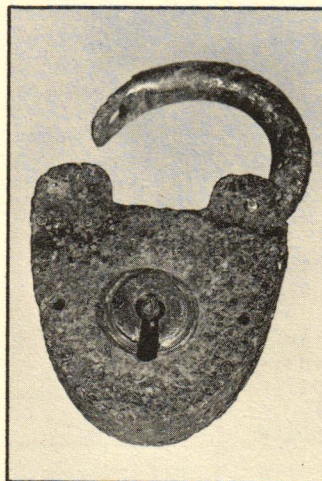


This 1828 Greek Revival house is now a residence in the middle of a suburban Connecticut community. But 1 ft. below the surface of the lawn is ample evidence of the property's origins as a working farm.

Locating Buried Artifacts

By Roland A. Labine, Sr.

MUCH OF THE JOY of living in an old house comes from the sense of sharing the same living space used by people from generations past. In my own case, although I was vaguely aware that my house had probably once been a farmhouse, it wasn't until I bought a metal detector that this past history of the house came dramatically to life.

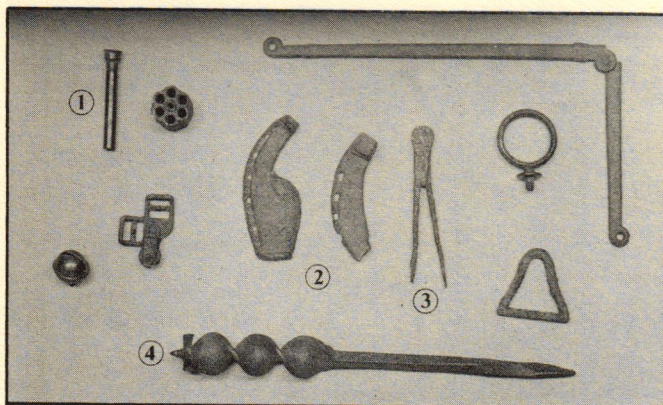


Prize find: A hand-forged padlock (ca. 1840) that has been restored to working order.

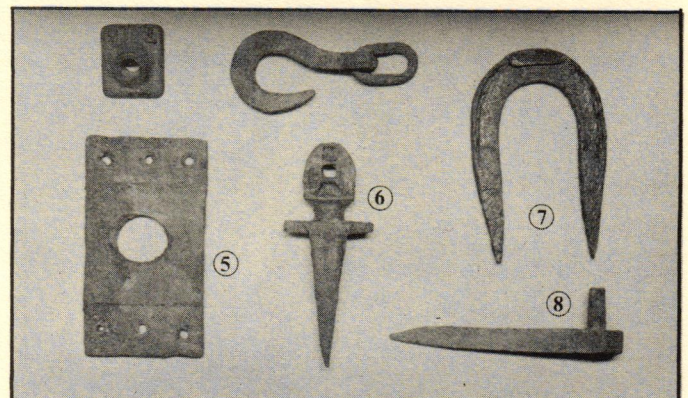
I DISCOVERED that 10-18 inches below the present surface of the ground is an amazingly rich trove of metal objects that tell a great deal about the everyday life of previous occupants of the house. The photos on this page represent only a small fraction of the artifacts I've found. Among some of my other discoveries: Indian Head pennies; door latches; innumerable pieces of hardware from horse and oxen harnesses; wagon and carriage fittings; axheads and other farm implements; penknives and children's toys.

ONE INCIDENTAL DISCOVERY: From the pattern of lost hardware from harnesses and carriages, I was able to trace the path of an old driveway on the property. There was no surface evidence whatsoever of this old pathway.

ANYONE WITH OPEN GROUND surrounding



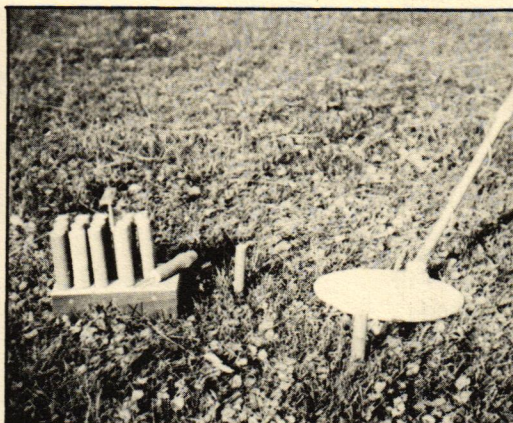
Among artifacts unearthed: (1) Tube used to insert ring in oxens' noses; (2) Oxen shoes; (3) Carpenter's dividers; (4) Bit with twisted shank—probably discarded during construction of the house.



(5) A turning plate from a wagon under-carriage; (6) Runner from a powered scythe; (7) A mysteriously shaped animal shoe; (8) A pintel—a type of barn door hinge pivot that was driven directly into door frame.



1. "Singing" of detector indicates metal beneath the surface.



2. Each "hot spot" in search area is marked with a wooden peg for later digging.



3. Turf is gently folded back with spading fork so that it can be replaced neatly when digging is done.

their house—whether city or country—can make similar discoveries. All it takes is the investment in the metal detector...and the time to run the survey.

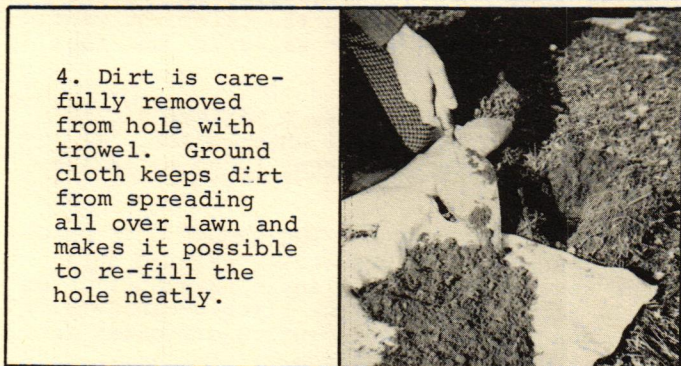
ABOUT METAL DETECTORS: They run anywhere from \$75 to \$400. In general, the more expensive ones are more sensitive (they detect smaller bits of metal deeper down) and stay in tune better (making them easier to operate). At a trade show I was able to test a wide variety of detectors and finally bought a Model 1899 made by Gold Mountain Co., 903 Business Parkway, Richardson, Tex. 75080. It cost around \$105 and I have found it satisfactory for my uses. It will detect a coin about 6 in. underground and an axhead up to 18 inches deep.

METAL DETECTORS of the type I use transmit a weak radio signal; when the search coil is over a piece of buried metal, the audible signal from the control box gets louder. You have to practice for a while to learn how to "read" the signal from the unit. For example, a coin near the surface will give a sharp intensification of the signal; a deeply buried axhead will give a weaker, more diffused signal increase. Depressions and holes in the ground will also give faint signal changes. But once you become familiar with your unit you can monitor it just like a radar operator.

I HAVE FOUND it most fruitful to mark off search grids, perhaps 10 ft. x 10 ft., and then conduct a careful search within this defined area. You can easily spend an entire afternoon searching and excavating an area of this size.

REGARDING EXCAVATION, you needn't worry that your yard will become full of potholes. I have excavated all over my lawn without leaving a trace. If the turf is folded back carefully and the dirt confined to a ground cloth—as shown in the photos—there will be no evidence of your archaeological diggings. ■

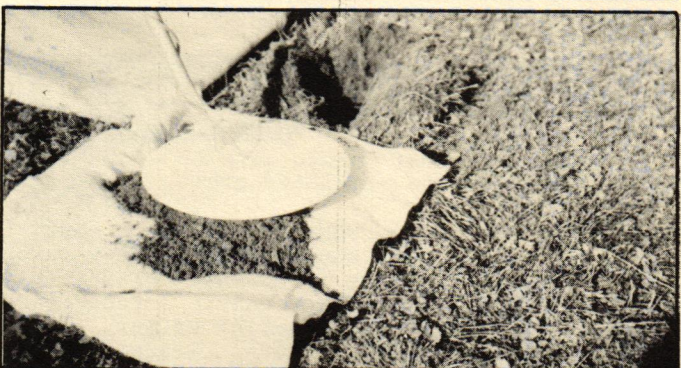
Roland A. Labine, Sr. is a consulting machine design engineer residing in Somers, Conn. He has transmitted his interest in old houses to his son, who is the Editor of The Old-House Journal.



4. Dirt is carefully removed from hole with trowel. Ground cloth keeps dirt from spreading all over lawn and makes it possible to re-fill the hole neatly.



5. Continual scanning with detector over hole tells you when metal object has been removed with the dirt.



6. Before re-filling hole and replacing turf, dirt is scanned with detector to make sure it doesn't conceal any other small metal objects.

(How To Grain—Continued from page 1)

Organic wood has imperfections and many accidental things you do may simulate real wood. Actually, color is the most important factor.

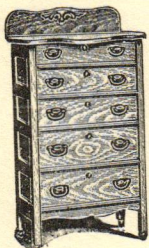
Background Coat

THE SURFACE TO BE GRAINED should be painted with an oil-base semi-gloss paint. The color you use for the ground coat is very important to the finished result. Pick out the lightest shade in the wood you are going to imitate and select a paint that is just a little lighter.

YOU CAN TINT THE OIL PAINT yourself by using colors in oil—raw umber, raw sienna, burnt umber, burnt sienna (Benjamin Moore oils preferred). Mixtures of some or all of these shades should duplicate any natural wood you are imitating. Or bring a piece of wood to the paint store and match the color you want to achieve from the color gallery. Let the store mix it for you.

I PERSONALLY PREFER to use a mixture of 1/2 semi-gloss and 1/2 enamel undercoater. It dries hard quicker and seems to be receptive to my stains.

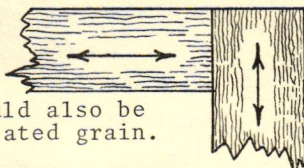
BUT, BEFORE YOU EVEN PUT THE GROUND COAT ON—clean the wood! On previously painted surfaces use deglosser (or liquid sandpaper). On really dirty surfaces like kitchen cabinets, wash down with a strong solution of Soilax to remove grease. Rinse clean.



FURNITURE SHOULD BE CLEANED even more thoroughly. Any wax residue will cause the finish to chip easily. I use a washing soda solution so strong that it must be applied with a brush. Coat the area and then scrub with fine steel wool to soften the wax. Then wash all of it off with clean water. Let a washed surface dry for a day.

ONE APPLICATION OF GROUND COAT is usually enough on previously painted surfaces. However, if it is an unsealed surface such as raw wood, unpainted plaster or sheet rock, you must use one or two coats of primer-sealer or enamel undercoater before the coat of semi-gloss.

WHEN LAYING ON THE PAINT, it should be brushed in the direction that wood goes. Sanding done before the ground coat should also be in direction of the simulated grain.



WHEN PAINTING A BACKGROUND for exterior work, avoid exterior finish house paints. They take too long to dry and are too shiny. Play safe and use exterior oil primer only. I recommend Ox-Line Trouble Shooter Exterior Primer. It also is fine for interior work. Since it comes in white only, tint it yourself, or let the paint store do it for you.

ALLOW the background coat to dry one day. It may take longer outside. Test by scratching

sharply with fingernail to make sure it is hard.

Tools

THERE ARE MANY TOOLS AVAILABLE that can be used for graining:

- Cotton waste, rags, cheesecloth or natural burlap.
- Rubber combs. These are available in some paint stores. I buy compounding rubbers in an auto store and cut out the teeth with a razor. Rubber combs create a vivid effect such as you often see on exterior doors in a yellowish oak-type graining. Putting the rubber inside a rag gives a more subtle and softer effect.
- Steel graining combs. Used for the same purpose as rubber combs.
- Check or pore rollers, over-grainers, stipplers, mottlers. (Available in some paint stores.)
- Badger blender.
- Liner: Striping or pencil brush.
- Steel wool.



THE TOOLS YOU USE TO GRAIN will come from personal preference. Most grainers only use some of the above.

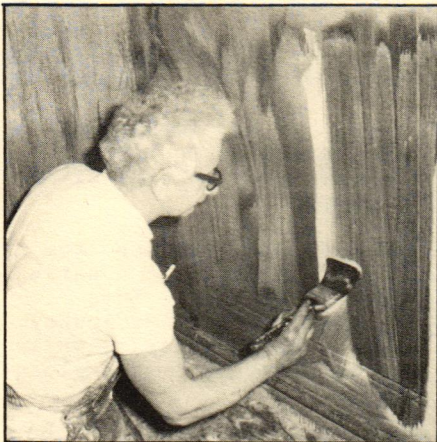
Graining Stains

TRADITIONALLY, graining has been done with oil stains or water stains—or a combination of both. Some grainers have found that a water stain achieves better appearance for certain types of wood. One advantage of water stains is that they dry immediately and the varnish can be applied right away. Some grainers use a water stain to simulate the pores of the wood and then apply an oil stain for the figured grains.

WATER STAINS CAN be mixed using 1/3 stale beer to 2/3 water or vinegar and water in equal parts, using dry colors. Or poster colors can be used alone with water.

THE OLD-TIME STAINS were usually made up of 1 part raw linseed oil, 2 parts turpentine, a fractional amount of dryers, and a "megilp." The megilp is what prevented the grain lines of the stain from running together. Whiting may be used as a megilp. But in general, the formulas used by old-time grainers are so complicated that describing them in detail will discourage most amateurs and send them back to their antiquing kits.

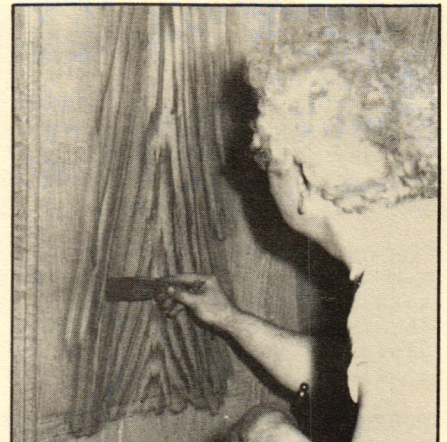
THERE ARE TWO STOREBOUGHT PRODUCTS that can be used successfully in lieu of the traditional mixtures. Either of them can be used as a staining mixture by adding oil colors. (I prefer Benjamin Moore.) They are glazing liquid or flattening oil. Either will achieve similar results.



Howard Zucker is spreading the stain very thinly over the dry ground coat.



After stain has set up, graining figures are made with cotton and stain.



The vivid lines are blended and softened with a dry brush or fine steel wool.

HOWEVER, LIKE MOST DECORATORS, I use my own stains to achieve the effects I am aiming for. One I commonly use, for 1 qt. of stain, is:

- 3 parts mineral spirits
- 1 part pure benzine
- 1/2 shot glass of boiled linseed oil
- A fractional amount of flat white paint
- Oil colors to achieve desired shade.

THE STAIN IS APPLIED VERY THIN. Brush it out sparingly as you spread it on. In general, the equivalent of one brushful of stain will cover ten times the area as one brushful of paint.

THE BIGGEST ADVANTAGE of this stain is that I don't have to grain it while wet as you do with other stains. When you have to work stains wet, you can only apply the stain to a small area at a time. My stain is used when it sets up and has dried "tack-free." It can set for 15 min. to a half hour. This gives more flexibility and allows you to apply it over a large area all at once.

Graining

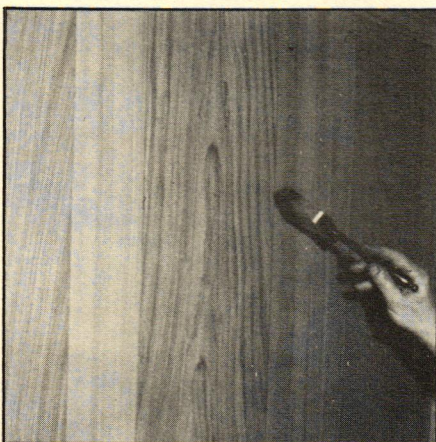
THE FIRST STEP is to cover the surface with the stain and let it set up. Constantly stir

the mixture to keep the oil from settling to the bottom. When it has set up, dip cotton waste or cheesecloth into stain, squeeze out, and make the graining patterns. Go in the direction that wood would go. When it has set up again, you can use fine steel wool or blender brush to make pores or soften effects.

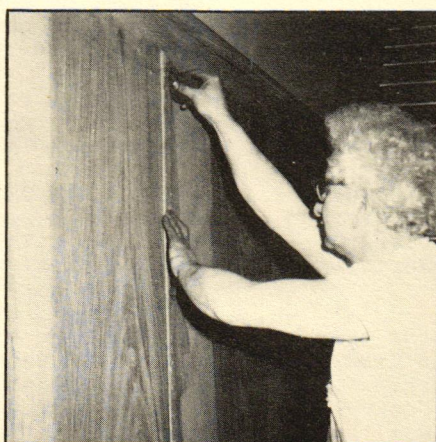
IT IS DIFFICULT TO PUT THE ACTUAL process of graining into words. However, by just drawing a rag or brush back and forth, you can get some effect of wood. And the various tools you select—rubber combs, brushes, etc., will add more variety. The stain itself is an almost magical thing.

IF YOU WISH TO IMITATE PANELLING, as in a hallway, use a hard carpenter's pencil to mark out the wall into stiles and panels. (Soft pencil lead will dissolve in the stain.) The vertical and horizontal stiles can be straight grain and the panels more complex swirls of heart growth. Make sure there is a clearly delineated change of grain direction where joints would butt.

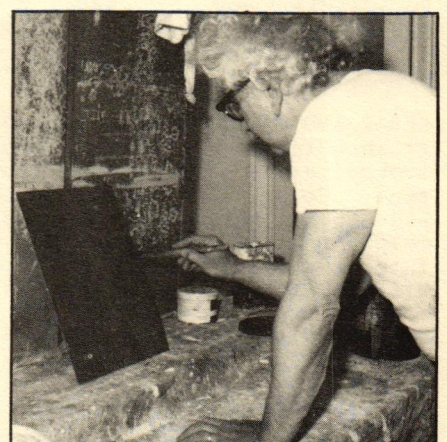
Note: Don't try to use store bought wood stains for graining. They are intended for staining natural wood and not for graining.



Making "medullary rays" with a brush—regular, horizontal patterns that occur in wood.



A straightedge is used to create the sharp outlines of vertical stiles.



A sample board is handy to test color and the reaction of the stain to finishes.

Overstaining

FURTHER ENRICHMENT WILL be achieved by over-staining—letting the first graining coat dry a day, and then repeating the graining process. Each time you go over it, you will add more depth and richness.

FOR AN ANTIQUE FINISH, a good overstain can be made with white flat paint made very thin with mineral spirits. Try an overglaze out on the sample board to make sure it does not dissolve the stain. If it does move it—shellac or varnish before overglazing.

OVERSTAINING OR OVERGLAZING can be used to darken your grain, alter the color or to antique it. It is done at least a day later, when the original job is dry. The original stains as an overgrainer will darken it considerably.

Pickling



PICKLING IS A DECORATIVE FINISH that gives a frosty effect to wood. It is achieved by reversing the graining process of putting dark over lighter. You grain with a thin white stain (white paint thinned as for the antique overglaze) on a darker background. This effect is often used on natural wood and on colored backgrounds such as red or blue paint.

Varnishing

THE PURPOSE OF VARNISHING is to protect the graining so that it can be washed. Other finishes are possible as an alternate to

varnish, but I think varnish is the best bet. It is durable and long-lasting and the easiest to do. The polyurethane varnishes are fine.

I USUALLY ALLOW THE STAIN to dry for two days before I varnish. The exception to this is a water stain, which may be ready to coat almost immediately after staining.

DIFFERENT LUSTERS ARE POSSIBLE, ranging from a high shine to a dead flat finish with a satin finish and a semi-gloss in between. Some paint-makers have all four, such as McCloskey. Others have only three, such as Valspar, while still others may only manufacture a semi-gloss and a high-gloss varnish.



AND THE FINISH IS NOT necessarily what you may expect from the label. One concern's semi-gloss may have the same luster as the satin finish from another concern. Only experience will tell you if you are getting the finish that you were looking for.

VARNISH ALSO brings back the color to what it was when wet. Graining stains dry differently and usually lighter. Water stains sometimes dry out to a fantastic degree. It is important to remember that varnish darkens when you are matching to a previously grained piece of wood or natural wood.

MAKE SURE THAT you use an exterior varnish for outside work. If the grained area is exposed to the sun it will require varnishing about once a year because sun attacks the varnish. Follow the instructions on the label for the proper thinning agent. Some varnishes ask for turpentine, others may permit any mineral spirits. Be methodical in applying the varnish. Criss-cross your brush strokes and then finish off as the wood goes, just as you did with your

Graining Is A Traditional Technique

GRAINING has had a rich history in America. In Colonial times, "fancypainters" advertised their skill at graining as well as stencilling, marbling, gilding and lacquering. Natural wood was often grained. This was usually plain pine which was grained to imitate cedar, mahogany, oak or maple, for the express purpose of giving elegance to the wood. Wood panelling and doors were the most common areas that were grained.

CEDAR AND MAHOGANY were the most popular grained finishes. Much of the early graining looked very different from the 19th century type. Cedar, the richest in color, usually had a pink painted background and the over-color, usually olive or drab, was blended into it while wet. This gave a colorful and vibrant effect.

THE TECHNIQUE of graining was brought over by English craftsmen. Regency England used graining in very elaborate decorating schemes. Good graining was thought to be a "conversation piece," and was done in many wealthy homes in conjunction with gilding and marbling. But along with the kind of graining that looked just like wood, there were types

that were meant to give an exaggerated appearance of wood. Leather combs and feathers were often employed.

IN THE 19th CENTURY, "faux bois" (literally false wood) was used extensively. A. J. Downing, in "Architecture of Country Houses" recommended grained woodwork as the most easy surface to care for "made smooth by varnishing." He recommended imitation of ash, maple, birch and oak. He deplored that "peculiarly yellow oak" as a better imitation of molasses than wood.

MANY GERMAN DECORATORS immigrated to the U. S. in the 19th century and brought the graining technique with them. It has always been very popular in large cities like New York and Baltimore for that reason. Hallways and exterior doors are frequently grained even today, and the city house often had grained floors and woodwork on the ground floor where the kitchen and servant's pantry were built with cheaper wood than the upper storeys. Graining in the Victorian period imitated wood as closely as possible. Decorators often used mechanical rollers and steel combs to do the job quickly and economically. --C.F.

grounding and staining. If you skip, you'll find out when you wash it, because you will be washing off the graining.

Touch-ups

SOMETIMES THERE IS DAMAGE right after the graining, before I've had a chance to varnish. But I still varnish before touching-up to avoid disturbing the stain. It is possible to do extensive touch-ups on work that has been done years before. It is surprising how grained surfaces can be effectively restored by washing, touching-up and re-varnishing.

DON'T TRY TO TOUCH-UP with your same graining stain. It can't be done. The basic idea is to take white, some thinners, and your basic

colors on a palette along with an artist's pencil brush of some kind, and to adjust the color for each touch-up.

IF I WANT TO SAVE THE JOB of re-varnishing, I use durable materials—either enamel which has the same luster as the varnish on the area being touched-up, or I use an appropriate varnish in the touch-up mixture. ■

Howard Zucker lives in Brooklyn, N.Y. A graduate of New York University, he has been a union journeyman for 30 years and is a member of the Brotherhood of Painters and Decorators. He is associated with The Rambusch Decorating Co., which is prominent in the field of historic restoration.

Helpful Publications You Can Send For

Historic Textiles

Brunschwig & Fils are specialists in documentary fabrics and wallpapers for museums and restorations. They have a new brochure available with color and black and white photographs from their many restorations including the du Pont Winterthur Museum, and the text is very informative with regard to dates and color. The very attractive booklet could be a useful tool in the authentic restoration of an old house. To order the booklet, "Historic Textiles Reproduced for Today," send \$1.00 to Brunschwig & Fils, Inc., Box OHJ, 979 Third Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10022.

Early American Doorways

Fypon doorways are low-cost reproductions of Colonial millwork. They are made of high-density polyurethane. The material can be worked like wood. Some of the entrances will accommodate non-standard openings, and all are easily installed. Featured are entire doorways, cross heads, pediments, sidelight trim, dormer heads and ornamental pediment acorns and urns. Catalog available from Fypon, Inc., 22 East 24th St., Baltimore, MD 21218.

Authentic Paint Colors

The colors used in 18th and 19th century Charleston, South Carolina, are reproduced by the Devoe Paint Company. Available in interior and exterior paint, the colors are mainly soft pastels and muted grays and greens. For paint chips of the 23 shades, literature and a print of Historic Rainbow Row, a waterfront street in Charleston, send \$1.00 to Devoe Paint, Historic Charleston Print, Box 1863, Louisville, KY 40201.

Home Security Systems

Among the many types of detectors made by the NuTone Division of Scovill are Fire Alarms, Early Warning Smoke Detectors, and Intruder Alarm Systems. Available in a broad price range, some systems combine all three detectors and some are combined with radio, home communication systems, and multiple smoke detectors. These high-quality detectors have been designed in cooperation with the Crime Prevention Bureaus and Fire Departments in the City of Cincinnati. All are UL listed. A catalog is available illustrating the many types, whether they are surface-mounted or built-in, and prices. Write to Nutone Div., P. O. Box 9050, Cincinnati, Ohio 45209, and ask for the "NuTone Idea Book."

Old-House Inspection Checklist

The Old-House Journal has just published a 4-page folder called "Inspection Checklist for Vintage Houses." It lists, in check-off fashion, the 73 most important mechanical and structural factors to examine when inspecting an old house for soundness.

Although designed primarily as a tool for those considering purchase of an old house, the Checklist can also be a useful tool for current owners of old houses...as a guide for an annual maintenance check-up. Regular inspections can help catch numerous little problems before they become big ones.

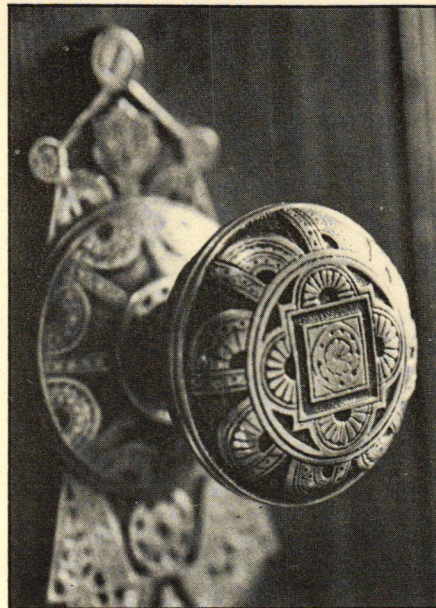
The folder contains check-off boxes, so it can be taken right on the inspection tour and the checks will serve as reminders later on. Although priced at 50¢, subscribers to The Journal can obtain a free copy by sending a stamped, self-addressed business-size envelope to: Checklist, Old-House Journal, 199 Berkeley Pl., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217.

Products For The Old House

Victorian Hardware

FINDING AUTHENTIC VICTORIAN hardware is pretty hard these days, unless you haunt antique shops or are a devotee of demolition sites. But now there is a company—San Francisco Victoriana—that is reproducing handsome solid bronze door hardware based on period designs.

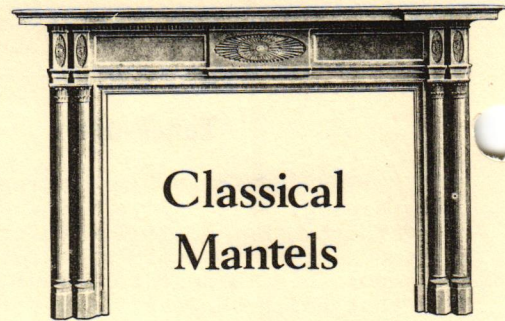
ALTHOUGH they don't have a wide selection (two doorknob designs; a front escutcheon plate; an interior rose; and a butt hinge with finials) the pieces capture the original Victorian exuberance of design



and excellence of manufacture. Prices are no more than what one pays these days for any well-made door hardware. The knob and escutcheon plate pictured, for example, sell at \$30.00 for the set.

SAN FRANCISCO VICTORIANA also offers: Solid brass coathooks, switchplates and door handles; plaster brackets (in twelve styles); plaster ceiling medallions (in 22 styles); and glass that is sand- or acid-etched. They also provide Victorian architectural millwork.

MANY OF THE ITEMS can be ordered by mail. To get free brochure and price list, write: Gary F. Kray, San Francisco Victoriana, 606 Natoma St., San Francisco, CA 94103. Telephone: (415) 864-5477.



Classical Mantels

YOU'LL WANT TO GET this 16-pg. catalog if: (1) you have to replace a missing mantel; and (2) if your house is in the Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival or Early Victorian styles. The catalog shows 14 mantel styles that are especially appropriate for houses built or decorated in classically influenced styles.

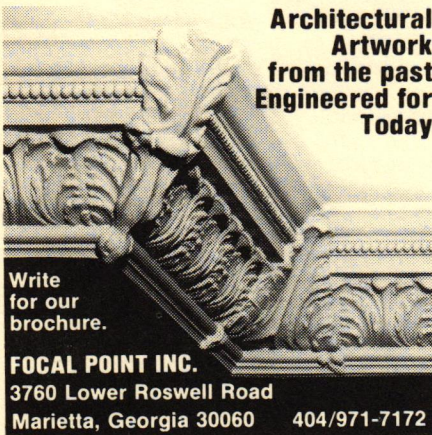
MANTELS are made of wood with applied composition ornament. Each mantel is made up to individual order to exacting standards. Prices range from \$290 to \$450.

CATALOG #131 can be had by sending 50¢ to Bill Grage, Decorators Supply Co., 3610 South Morgan St., Chicago, Ill. 60609. Tel. (312) 847-6300.

Architectural Ornaments

PAT AND VINCE DUNN are making plaster duplicates (white or brown) of carved stone faces from 19th century brownstones. For beautifully illustrated 16-page brochure, send \$1 to: Architectural Ornaments, P.O. Box 115, Little Neck, NY 11363.

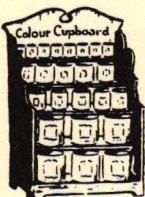
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