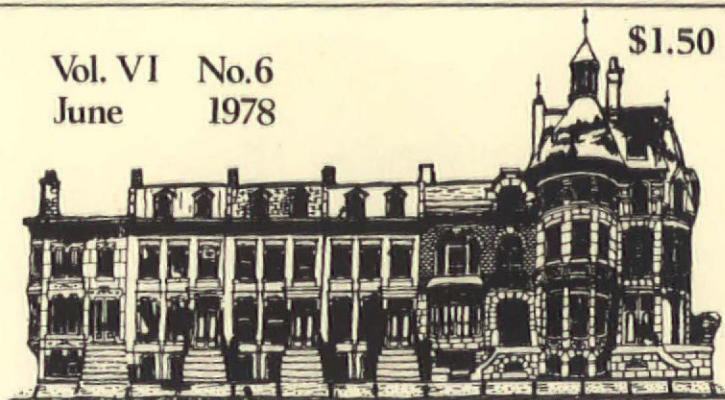


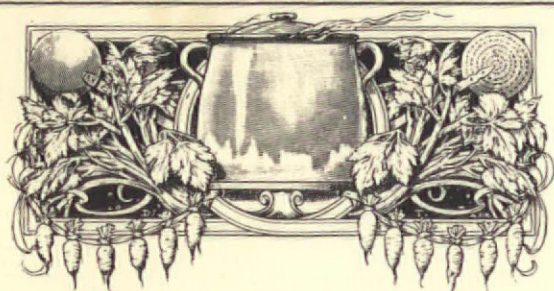
# THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

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Restoration And Maintenance Techniques For The Antique House



## The Kitchen Compromise

By David S. Gillespie, Chicago, Ill.

**F**OR THE OLD-HOUSE OWNER a kitchen can be one of the most challenging--and often frustrating--rooms in the house. Victorian kitchens, though often commodious, lacked most of the appliances now considered necessities by all but the hardiest. Thus the restorer ends up impaled on the horns of a dilemma: Keeping the flavor of the house means leaving out the amenities; Putting in the amenities means losing much of the flavor of the house. Clearly a case for compromise!

SEVERAL CHICAGO-AREA ARCHITECTS have been heard to comment that the kitchen is a write-off. Since it cannot be entirely Victorian it should be entirely modern. Yet it is possible for the old-house owner to get the best of both worlds. The problem is to retain the feel of the original house while adding the appliances, counters and cabinets considered necessary to a modern kitchen.

THE KEY TO SUCCESS here is good planning. The object of this effort is to eliminate the elements of surprise (usually nasty). You (and your contractors, if there are any) will want to know from the outset what the end result will be and all decisions should be carefully thought out before the last nail is driven.



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### Coming Next Month

ETCHED AND BEVELLED GLASS

I HAVE ALWAYS FOLLOWED A SET of basic steps leading to a series of decisions which should result in a good planning effort and a clear idea of what is to be accomplished in your kitchen. With some luck, you will have a kitchen that is not only functional but also a part of your house in keeping with whatever its style.

#### Step I

**T**O BEGIN WITH, you must decide on the "givens"--those elements that you cannot or do not want to change. First look at the room you are intending to use as a kitchen. What elements give it a sense of period and style? What makes it seem the fine old house that it is? A fireplace, chimney, windows and doors, woodwork, and even some fixtures are all candidates. Take your time identifying all these elements. Not only are they crucial to achieving the mix of old and new you are looking for but they are also the elements around which you will have to work.

ONCE THEY ARE REMOVED it will be very difficult to put them back. It is almost always a mistake to remove woodwork or to change window openings. The former gives identity to the interior connecting the room to others in the house and the lat-

(Continued on page 66)

## Regarding Lightning 'Experts'

To The Editor:

**Y**OUR ARTICLE in the April issue on lightning and its hazards was most interesting. But I would like to add a few comments on some of the so-called lightning "experts."

TEN YEARS AGO, a friend asked me to come by to inspect a prize tree at her Woodbury, Conn., home that had been hit by lightning. The tree was supposedly protected by a professionally installed lightning rod system.

**W**HEN I INVESTIGATED, I found that the entire grounding for the system consisted of two 1/2-in. iron rods driven into the earth. The lightning bolt had hit the tree trunk 15 ft. above ground, travelled to the dry earth (ignoring the grounding rods) and created a deep furrow to a spot 50 ft. away where it disappeared.

I DISCOVERED A PIECE of old iron fence protruding above the grass just where the bolt's furrow had disappeared. Further investigation revealed that: (1) The entire ground beneath the tree was dry fill, which was 12-15 ft. over the original swampy ground level; (2) The electrical grounds supplied by the lightning rod installer went only a few feet into this dry fill; (3) The iron fence I'd found had been buried when the fill was added. So its iron posts extended all the way down to the moist earth. That's why the lightning had found this path to "go to ground."

### Repeating The Mistake

**T**WO DAYS AFTER MY INSPECTION VISIT, an event occurred that is almost unbelievable. The lightning rod "specialist" who'd been called in by the owner was bending down at the base of the tree when I arrived. He was in the act of driving two more iron rods into the dry ground! The tree, he said, could be salvaged by a good tree surgeon, and that he was about to save it from any future lightning damage by "driving in a good ground."

I PRODUCED THE RECENTLY ISSUED copy of the National Electric Code and ordered the lightning "specialist" to stop. Then I read Sec. 280-81 out loud:

"GROUNDING: (Applies to lightning equipment as well as to system wiring.) Where available on the premises, a metal underground water pipe shall always be used as the grounding electrode regardless of its length and whether supplied by a community or a local underground water piping system, or by a well on the premises. Where the buried portion of the pipe (including any metal well-casing effectively bonded to the pipe) is less than 10 ft. long it shall be supplemented by the use of an additional electrode of a type specified in Sec. 250-82 or 250-83."

## THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL®

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**O**THER CODE SECTIONS deal with "made electrodes" and state that the resistance to ground shall never exceed 25 ohms. Where this resistance value is not met, two or more electrodes connected in parallel shall be used. Frequently, copper plates are installed and connected in parallel.

IN THIS WOODBURY CASE, the house water system and well casing was only 150 ft. away from the damaged tree. It became the new ground electrode under my supervision—amid many apologetic noises emanating from the lightning rod installer.

**W**HY HADN'T THE PROPER GROUNDING been used originally instead of the totally useless iron rods? "The water pipe was too far away." To save 150 ft. of lightning rod cable, the installer had completely ignored safety and common sense. If anyone had been standing near the maple tree when it was hit, they could easily have been killed.

UNDERWRITERS LABELS affixed to equipment are no guarantee of safety. They are important—but they apply only to the EQUIPMENT USED, not the installation! (I've even seen Underwriters Labels transferred from one piece of equipment to another by unscrupulous contractors!) In this example, even a lightning rod specialist with 20 years of experience was no assurance that the homeowner had purchased a safe protection system.

MY URGENT ADVICE to all homeowners confronted with lightning equipment problems: Have a careful inspection made by a licensed local inspector or a professional engineer licensed by the state who is familiar with all sections of the National Electric Code and who will insist on all sections of the Code being meticulously followed!

Lawrence M. Duryee, P.E.  
Middlebury, Conn

# A Southern Classic Gains New Life



**W**ITHIN EARSHOT of the historic Western and Atlantic railroad, not far from the Sandtown Road in Cobb County, near Atlanta, stands a house built in 1852 in the classic Southern style by a South Carolina miller named Simpson Manning. Manning brought his large family to Cobb County, Georgia, only twenty years after the Cherokee Treaty mandated the departure of the Cherokee on their "trail of tears" to a new home west of the Mississippi River.

THE MANNINGS BUILT THEIR HOUSE after the style of the up-country Greek Revival fashionable at the time in the Southern piedmont regions. This mode of the Greek Revival frequently substituted a verandah for the more classic columned porch, but retained the basic elements such as the central hall with two rooms entering from either side, and a stairway leading to the single large room on the second floor called the "dormitory room" which provided sleeping facilities for the children.

THERE WERE PAIRED INTERIOR CHIMNEYS that supplied fireplace openings to each of the rooms including a small fireplace on the second floor to heat the children's bedroom.

BY 1864, war came to Cobb County forcing the Manning family to "refugee" to South Carolina. The Manning House was directly in the path of Sherman's marching columns. Thousands of soldiers from both armies camped near the house and fought in the nearby battle of Manning's Mill in June, 1864. The house was struck several times by bullets (one of which remains lodged in the front door jamb today), and was used as a field hospital by the Federal soldiers. Blood stains seen on the floors of the

rooms remain today as grim reminders of those unhappy times. The Manning House passed from the hands of the family after the war and thereafter followed a succession of owners (and remodelings) until purchased by Dr. and Mrs. (Phil and Kay) Secrist in 1975.

**A**T THE TIME THE SECRISTS purchased the house it had been abandoned several months and was at the mercy of vandals and the natural elements. The roof was leaking badly, virtually all windows had been broken, hardware stolen from the doors and windows, and all mantels, save one, removed from the fireplaces. (A neighbor who daily passed the old house saw the damage being done by vandals and took the remaining hardware. He later found that the Secrists had moved and were restoring the house and happily presented them with this special gift.)

THE OWNER, a real estate firm more interested in the value of the land than the house, was considering burning the house because of the safety hazard it posed. Since the owners were asking more for the land than the Secrists felt they could pay and justify the expensive restoration the house would require, an arrangement for a \$1000 cash purchase of the house and its removal to a new site nearby was agreed upon.

BECAUSE THE PERMIT necessary for moving the house limited the height of the moving structure to 18 ft. (including the truck under it!), the Secrists found it necessary to disassemble the roof. The decking on the roof was found to be poplar of fairly recent vintage while the shingles were modern asbestos, there-

fore only the pine rafters, the bargeboard trim at the gable eaves, and the original heart pine clapboards on the gable faces were tagged and recorded and carefully dismantled.

**R**EMOVING AND CLEANING the chimney bricks proved to be a task that the family, including sons Jim, 16, and Scott, 14, could share and enjoy. The original sand and lime mortar was soft and the bricks came loose easily and reasonably clean. Work began at the chimney tops and moved down through the floors with the bricks being stacked neatly on the floor surfaces as work proceeded. In a short time the job was finished with surprisingly few broken bricks.

PREPARING THE HOUSE for the move included tearing away a front porch and two rooms attached to the rear of the house, all of which were found not to have been part of the original house. One of the early exciting finds was the discovery that the cheap asbestos shingle siding covered original heart pine weatherboarding nailed with 19th century cut nails. Kay had great fun tearing off this siding, and all thrilled to see the beautiful old building once again come to light.

FINALLY, the day came for the move. An experienced and professional house mover was employed. The house was constructed in such a way that only four cuts were necessary to separate the house into two sections for the move. A temporary wall was built in the hall to support the weight of the ceiling.

THE HOUSE WAS MOVED a distance of 5 miles and set on an 11 acre wooded lot. The cost of the move was \$3000, and the job was done in such an expert manner that the bricks remained stacked on the floor!

SINCE THE HOUSE was constructed in the braced frame manner, with handhewn floor sill beams and heavy timber braces mortised, tenoned, and pegged, the Secrists decided to build a foundation wall and rest the house on the wall so as to form a first floor at ground level and

thus expose the beautiful handhewn beams as the ceiling above.

**W**HILE THIS DECISION meant a departure from the strict definition of restoration since it replaced 4 ft. high brick pier supports with a foundation wall 8 ft. in height, it solved several engineering, aesthetic, and living space problems.

A UNIFORM WALL SURFACE meant a solid resting surface for tired and sagging floor sill beams (many of which gradually settled and straightened to conform with the surface of the wall). The workmanship of carpenter craftsmen of the 19th century could now be viewed for the first time, and the new area added almost one-third to the total floor area in the house, now exceeding 4000 sq. ft. of living space.

DUE TO VANDALISM before the Secrists acquired the house, all window sashes and glass had to be replaced. Fortunately, exterior and interior doors, all heart pine and constructed with pegs, were intact and in reasonably good shape. The raising of the house one storey necessitated the design and construction of an interior stairway to connect the ground level to the next floor. This was accomplished by adding a large sun porch across a portion of the back of the house. To give needed space on the first floor for laundry and bath facilities, a single storey attachment was added to the south side of the house, floored with wide brick, and roofed with a free-swinging concrete slab sundeck.

**W**ITHIN FOUR WEEKS after the beginning of the project, the carpenter aiding the Secrists left the job. Phil, who earns his living teaching history at a local college, found it necessary to learn carpentry skills. It was slow and difficult at first, but a little elementary research, resourcefulness, and patience began to produce satisfactory results. New walls were needed, old walls, ceilings and closets repaired, and the original stairway restored in an acceptable fashion.



View of hallway looking from front door toward enclosed sunporch and stairway to first floor.



Looking through the arches to the New Orleans kitchen. Note the handhewn pine beams (floor sills).



Music room on second floor retains original wide board pine floor and wide board wall and ceiling panelling. A beautiful "East-lake" style organ stands to the left of the mantel.



Second floor porch shows the darker paint (Charleston blue) accents on the porch brackets, balustrades, door and window frames contrasting with the sand-colored body paint.

**S**EVERAL PIECES of the original handrail and railing pickets were found behind the attic wall when the roof was being disassembled. Phil copied the pickets using a bandsaw, and hand-turned enough rail to replace the missing handrail.

THE CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT in carpentry was building the two-storey porch--a cooperative effort by Phil, Jim and Scott. The four porch columns (each 20 ft. long) were cut from the nearby woods and squared by a local sawmill. They were then planed by hand using a four-in. Sears-Roebuck power plane. Notching and exact lengths were accomplished by following a plan drawn by Phil. The porch project was completed in less than ten days and the overall effect was declared "pleasing" by job superintendent, Kay.

SINCE THERE WERE NO PICTURES available of the original porch, Phil took his cue from the ancient water line made by the hipped roof against the house; several other hints, structurally, remaining on the front surface of the house, and drawings and commentary from A.J. Downing's "The Architecture of Country Houses," published originally in the 1850's. Professional roofers were called in to cover the front and back porches with wooden shakes similar to the main roof. Professionals were also used to reconstruct the old chimneys (including three new fireplaces) and to build the "New Orleans" styled kitchen with brick arches on the first floor.

**M**ORE THAN SIXTEEN THOUSAND old bricks were cleaned and used to build these arches, the seven fireplaces, and two 37 ft. chimneys required. Besides the original brick from the Manning place, three additional chimneys of hand-made brick from a nearby house ruins were salvaged and used. Professional craftsmen were also employed to do the

electrical wiring, plumbing, and central heating system.

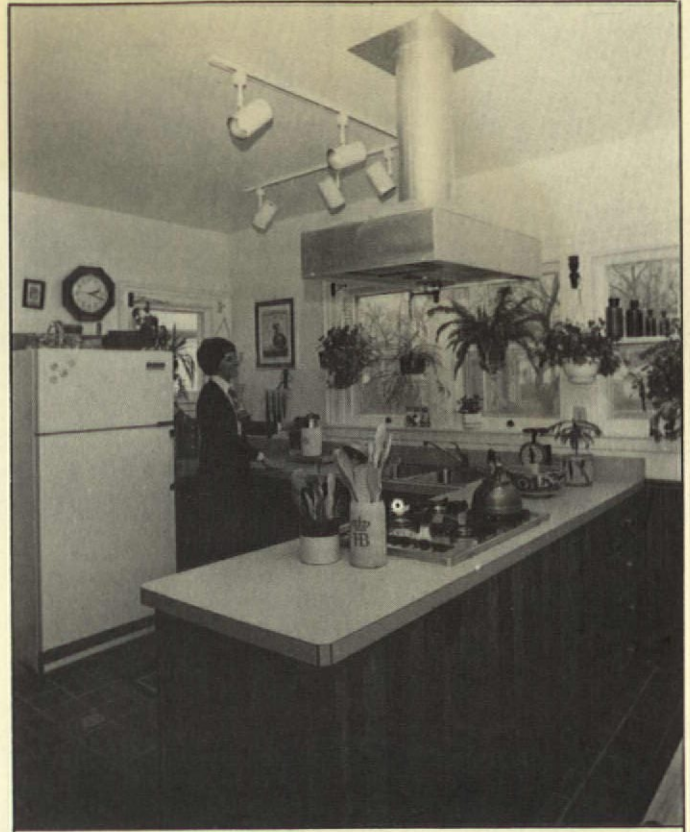
WITHIN SIX MONTHS following the move, the house began to take on a look of 19th century dignity. A stucco-like surface bonding cement (Surewall) covered the block foundation wall and pull-troweling produced a smooth surface which, with the fiber glass showing through, looked for all the world like old Virginia straw stucco. By June the house was ready to receive its "cosmetic" face lifting. Sand from the yard at the original house site was the inspiration for the shade of paint used on the exterior. The job of matching was done so expertly that a handful of sand held close to the painted surface blends in almost identically in tone, shade, and texture. The trim for windows, side lights, and porch brackets is the soft blue seen frequently in Charleston, S.C.

**T**HE WOOD WAS PREPARED for painting by Jim, Scott, and a friend, Tracy Tucker. There was extensive scraping, sanding, caulking, and nailing and piecing of loose or broken weatherboards. This was followed by a coat of good primer and two coats of paint. The three boys did the whole exterior, working an 8-hr. day five days a week for the entire summer...earning \$2.35 an hour for their toil. They did an admirable job...but no complaints were heard when September ended their labors and school began.

THE LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY has presented the Secrist's with a citation for restoring the historic Manning House during the Bicentennial year. The Secrist's' greatest satisfaction, however, has come not from public recognition, nor from the fact that their \$50,000 investment has been appraised for nearly twice that amount, but rather that the family has shared a unique and worthwhile experience in giving new life to this historic old house. ■■



The Victorian-style cabinets, built by the author, give the kitchen an old-fashioned ambiance.



While appliances are straightforwardly contemporary, the choice of reproduction lighting is an option to consider.

(Kitchen Compromise--Cont'd from pg. 61)

ter, besides effecting the interior space, are usually closely tied into the visual harmony of the building's exterior.

## Step II

**D**ECIDE THE OTHER GIVENS. What will the ultimate dimensions of the room be? Again, it is usually best to retain original ceiling heights which lend continuity between the kitchen and other rooms. Often, especially in houses built without kitchens, the space must be manufactured out of other rooms, closets, or whatever. The shape and total dimensions of the kitchen will depend on a number of considerations. Working people tend to have smaller kitchen requirements: a long, thin "Pullman" kitchen may do nicely. Families with lots of children may want more cooking space as well as an eating area. Using existing spaces that fit the scale of the house will be easiest and give the best results, but keep in mind that your kitchen need not be in the same room as the former owner's kitchen. If you are fortunate enough to be able to choose from among several rooms the space can be tailored to individual needs.

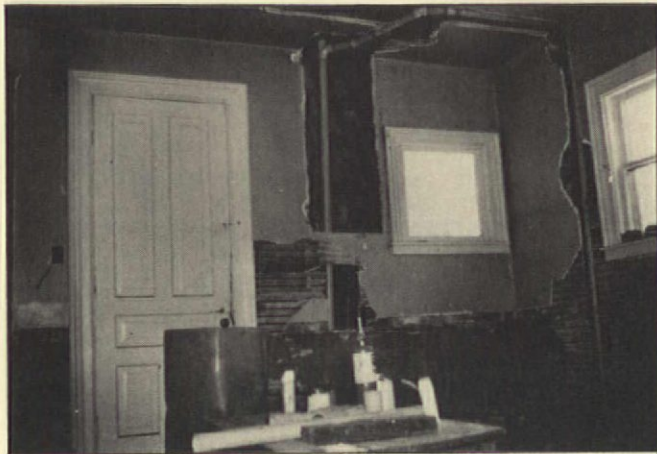
WHEN YOU HAVE DECIDED on the space to be used think about other major systems such as the heating, wiring and plumbing to be used. These

can affect other rooms in the house. Plumbing for a kitchen, for example, will normally require a two-inch vent going through the roof. Water feeds and waste pipes can usually be installed in the basement or crawl space with little difficulty but venting the kitchen may be a problem, particularly if you do not want to disturb the room above. Naturally, the best planning will leave that room until the kitchen is finished. But if you forgot, it may be possible to run the vent pipe up the wall, across the ceiling to a more expendable wall, and then up through the roof. Be sure to check local codes.

IF YOU ARE DOING the entire house or are doing a bath it will save time and money to either stack the bath above the kitchen or to have the bath back up to the kitchen so that the plumbing can serve both areas. The same problems will occur with heating pipes/ducts so plan that system at the same time.

## Step III

**A**T THIS POINT you have identified the "Givens." You know the location of the kitchen in the house, the overall dimensions of the space, the elements which will be retained to give your kitchen that special old-house ambiance, and you know the location of all systems. Working around those givens you must now fit in modern kitchen equipment.



Kitchen before work has begun showing only the "givens"--door, windows and woodwork.

ACTUALLY, PLANNING THE KITCHEN can be fun. It gives the dedicated restorer a chance to climb out of the crawl space and sit down with the other members of the household to throw around ideas. Begin with a scale drawing of the floor area carefully noting the size, location, and swing of window and door openings as well as any other givens already identified. Make some cutouts to indicate the size of major appliances--stove, ovens, sink, dishwasher, refrigerator and so on. A check of the Sears catalogue will give some common dimensions to work with. Now sit down with a beer and start playing with arrangements.

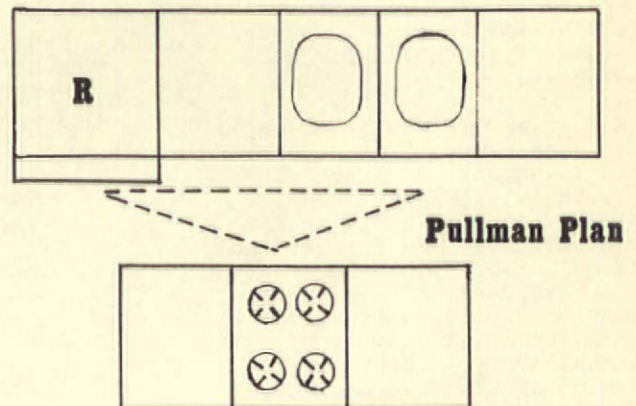
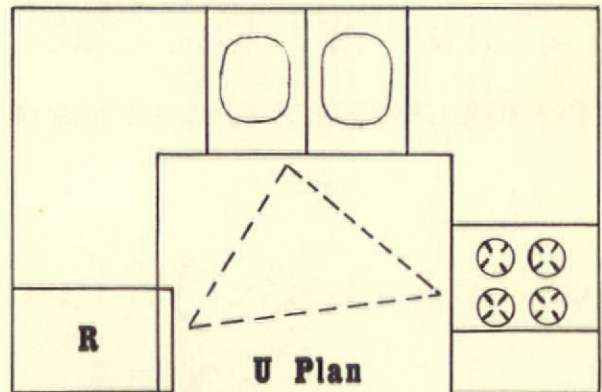
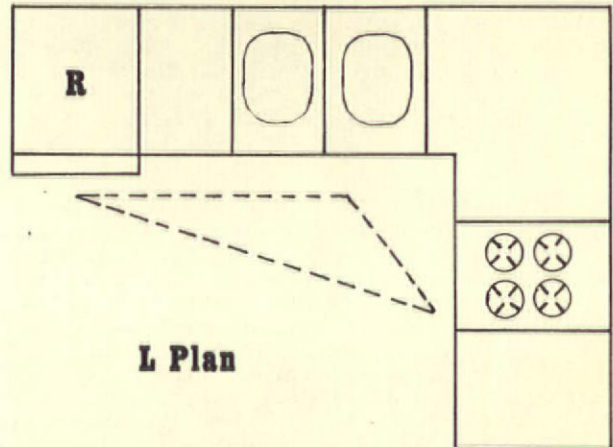
**M**OST PEOPLE END UP using one of three basic plans: "U", "L" or Pullman. Locating major appliances should be done on the basis of convenience groups around a basic "work triangle" with the sides somewhere between four and seven ft. This allows for free movement in the work area but is not so large that you have to walk half-way across the house to get at the refrigerator. The cook in your family may have some definite preference for one element and in that case you should start there.

MANY PEOPLE LIKE to have the sink under a window, for example. Dishwashers must be located next to the sink and should not be put in corners where they will hinder access to other cabinets when the dishwasher door is open. Placing the sink and dishwasher will dictate the location of rough plumbing/or the other way around, depending on your priorities.

SOME COUNTER SPACE is necessary on either side of the sink: 12 to 18 in. is a good minimum to work with. More counter space is advisable if no dishwasher is included in your plan or if a single bowl is to be used. At least 24 in. of counter space should be located beside both the refrigerator and the stove top for food preparation. A separate bake area near the ovens is also handy and might be provided with a dough board or marble slab. The cost of separate oven and cook top units is usually less than combination units although they are not portable. I prefer to build in these units creating distinct bake and stove-top cooking areas.

MOST COOKS WILL HAVE their own preferences but the main things to remember when designing your layout is to make it convenient. Traffic flow must be kept out of your work triangle. Storage spaces should be located where they are accessible and useful. Group appliances and spaces according to their use. Keep spaces small--no elements should be more than three steps from another element.

KEEP IN MIND that modern kitchens use a good deal of electricity--often requiring five or more separate circuits. Lights should



be planned to illuminate all work areas and can be included on another house circuit. Wall outlets should be placed every 3 ft. along counters and provision should be made for special appliances or other electrical needs. Dishwasher and disposal will require at least one circuit and don't forget to provide for a disposal on-off switch where it will not be turned on by accident. Electric ovens will also require a 220-v circuit.

### Step IV

**B**Y NOW YOUR DIAGRAM should show the location of appliances, counters, plumbing, and electrical outlets, as well as those elements which will remain intact. Next comes the task of choosing the right combination of contemporary and antique surfaces to give your kitchen both an identity with the old house and a feeling of modern convenience.

THE CONTEMPORARY LOOK of modern appliances cannot be avoided and why try? Let them speak for themselves. If your house had original cabinets, woodwork, windows, etc. you already have a good start. If not you will have to create an identity in keeping with the style of the house by choosing cabinets carefully and adding lighting fixtures, floor and counter surfaces, and other decorative items which will carry through the style of the building. Many good reproductions of woodwork, lighting fixtures, and stained glass are being made. Marble, stone, tile, or porcelain may be appropriate materials for floors and counter tops. The place where the original flavor can come through best, however, is in the cabinets.

**C**ABINETS CAN EMPHASIZE either the modern or the antique elements of your kitchen. In the accompanying photographs the cabinets were made to echo Victorian kitchen cabinets in size and basic appearance. Punched tin was used in the doors to resemble pie-safe doors and to break up the feeling of heavy wood panels. If you are trying to create a feeling of Victorian cabinetry, leave the ceiling high (9 ft. or over), carry your cabinets up to about 8 ft., and leave a space between the ceiling and the top of the cabinets. A large crown moulding will help considerably and for heaven's sake don't use a soffit!

OTHER VERY FINE CABINETS have been made out of original tongue and groove panelling and leaded glass panes original to the period in which the house was built. Equally striking kitchens have been produced by using very simple, modern cabinetry in combination with original woodwork, wainscot and other original elements. The choice is entirely yours.

**T**HE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL KITCHEN in an old house is that combination of old-house charm and 20th century convenience; it needs to be functional in the modern world and at the same time it should have the charm of an old house. Careful planning will give you that happy combination. If you have taken the time to think through your plans carefully you should have a pretty good idea of what the end result will be. The next steps are the easiest: Assemble all your materials, build the kitchen. Admittedly, those are the most time-consuming steps. But if the planning has been done thoughtfully you should have no great surprises and a great deal of satisfaction with the end result. ■■

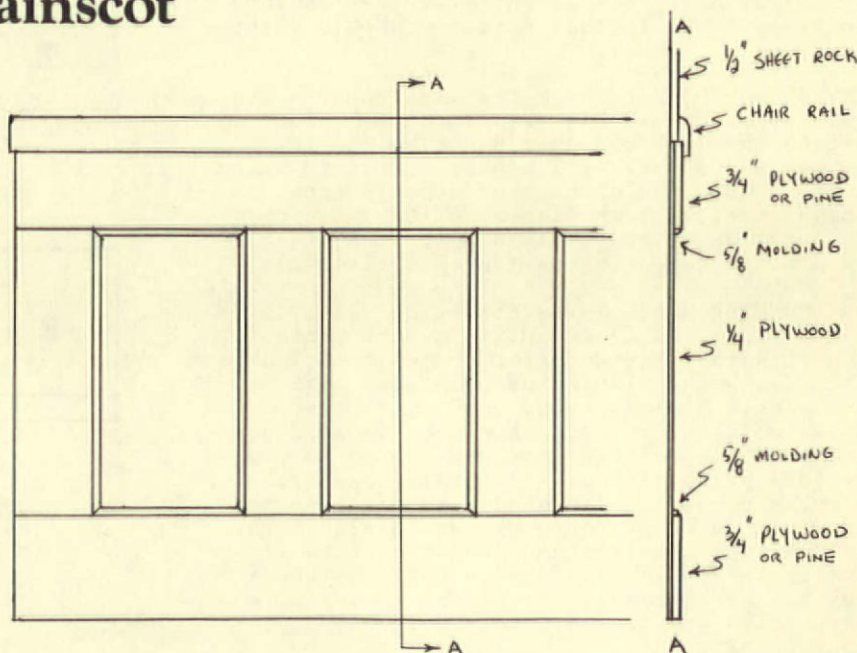
Notes From The Readers...

## An Inexpensive Wainscot

By Hilton Abbott,  
Springfield, Mass.

**Y**OUR MARCH ARTICLE on wainscotting moved me to share a less expensive technique where reproduction quality is not essential.

NAIL  $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. plywood to the wall studs and lay out panel size and location. Nail and glue horizontal strips of  $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. plywood or pine board to top and bottom. Then fit vertical pieces of  $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. board between the horizontal pieces. Use small moulding to frame each recessed panel and top off with a chair rail. This assembly would have to have a painted or grained finish. ■■





# Restoring Porch Latticework

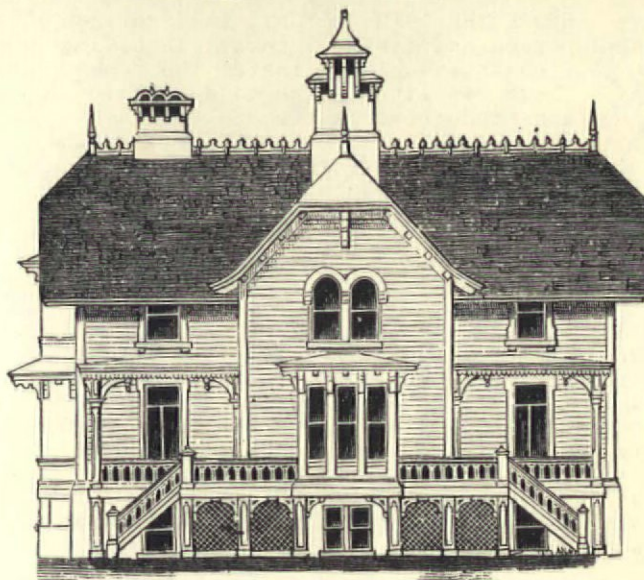
By Gary A. Micanek, Manchester, Missouri

**I**N REFURBISHING THE TWO PORCHES on our circa 1895 Queen Anne Victorian country house, I was able to rebuild the original porch latticework using most of the original materials. This article is meant to help the Victorian homeowner in rebuilding or replacing these lattices. The addition of porch latticework will add character to a house in case they were discarded by a previous owner. The following is a description of the procedures I used. This and the accompanying sketches will serve as a plan where necessary to build the latticework from stock lumber and lattice strips.

THE PORCH OPENINGS WERE measured for height, width, and squareness. The lattices were built to allow 1 in. of ground clearance. The frame was cut from 1 x 4 pine with 1 x 2 cleats at each end to hold the frame together. All pieces were painted with oil base primer before assembly. A square was used for alignment. See figure 1 showing the lattice from the back side during assembly.

**T**HE ORIGINAL STRIPS were used when they were not deteriorated. Replacement strips were white pine plaster lath salvaged from a demolition site. All strips were sanded individually with a portable belt sander and pre-primed before assembly to the outside frame. The first strip was positioned by measuring an equal distance from an inside corner of the frame. A lath was used as a measuring tool to insure all strips were installed at equal spacing parallel to the first strip. 2d common nails were used. When the first layer of strips had been completed, the entire assembly was painted on both sides with oil base house paint. The strips for the second layer were primed and painted individually prior to their assembly.

THE SECOND LAYER of strips was nailed at right angles to the first layer. Small pieces of strip were required as nailing blocks where the



first layer did not align to provide a firm nailing base. A line of nails was placed horizontally down the center of the lattice to minimize warping of the strips. These were clinched on the rear side.

THE FINISHED LATTICES were fastened to the porch posts and trim boards. See figure 2. Several were fastened using hinges to provide access under the porch. Care was taken to avoid soil coverage which would hasten rot and potential termite damage.

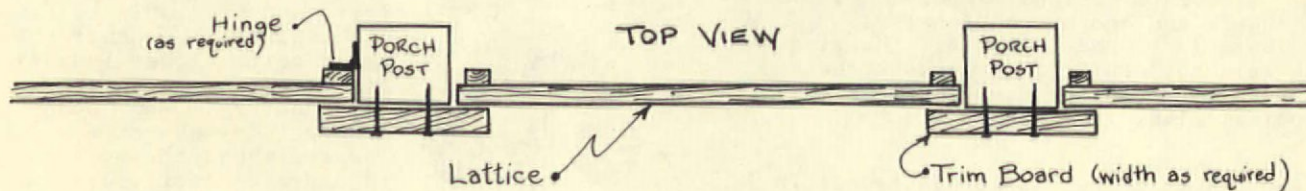
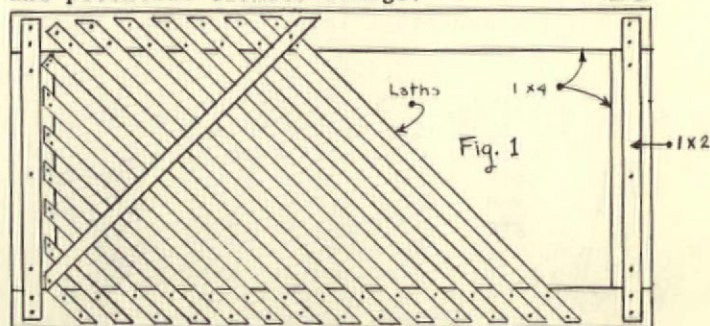


Fig. 2 Alignment of Latticework With Porch Posts

# 19th Century Window Gardens



BEFORE THE 19TH CENTURY, the average person had little interest in having flowers and plants inside the house. There was little time to devote to non-productive pastimes. But in the 19th century, with more time and money to spare, the Victorian homeowner took an avid interest in indoor gardening. In fact, a home was not thought to be a pleasant place unless it contained plants. Flowers were especially appreciated for their color and decorative possibilities.

THE MOST POPULAR PLANT throughout the 19th century was the geranium. It was the favorite both indoors and out, and was used in window boxes in the city often accompanied by a low plant like the petunia. Close behind in popularity was the fuschia. Its scarlet and purple flower delighted the Victorian color sense. It was often called the "ear drop" because of its similarity to ladies' earrings in the way it swung down from its spray.

A VERY POPULAR WAY to grow flowers and plants was in a window garden. Victorian bay and oriel windows were especially suited to this purpose. It was not uncommon to have two window gardens--one in a sunny location planted with begonia, ivy, geraniums, lantana; and another in a shaded spot planted with ferns, rubber plants, white petunias.

SHELVES were built in the window and the floor underneath was generally covered with zinc to protect the floor from moisture. Sometimes a curtain was hung below the sill to hide the watering can and other indoor gardening tools.



This window garden was suggested by Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1869. They described it as "a plain kind of window, ornamented with a variety of rural economical adornings." There is a Ward case in the center. On the left is a pot of fuschia and on the right a Calla lily. Two kinds of ivy grow out of boxes to climb around the rustic framework erected for that purpose.

HANGING BASKETS WERE as popular then as they are today.

Ready-made baskets were constructed from wire and painted black or green and fancy terra cotta pots were used.

Just as often they were homemade and decorated with pine cones and acorns which were glued on in elaborate designs. Wooden bowls and and coconut halves were fashioned into pots.

Hanging baskets were not confined to windows, but hung anywhere around the house where light would permit plant growth.



FERNS AND IVY were the staple plants for indoors, particularly in the winter months. Ferns were used in conservatories, Wardian cases (terrariums), jardinieres and on mantels.

GERMAN PEOPLE were particularly fond of ivy and introduced the art of training it into some of the most fanciful of Victorian plant decoration. It was used to outline

archways over doors, to form actual walls of ivy and to climb around picture frames, mirrors, etc. Victorians grew great tubs of ivy and were able to have an abundance of greenery because of the lower temperatures of houses in the 19th century. Many homeowners today who have lowered their thermostats to conserve energy are finding that healthier houseplants are one of the unexpected rewards.

Flower Pot Brackets.



FERN STAND, Wrought Iron Tripod

# Restorer's Notebook

## A Varnishing Trick

WHEN VARNISHING MY FLOORS, I used to run into problems with skipped areas in applying the second and third coats—since it is so hard to see what's been re-coated and what hasn't. I solved this problem with my flashlight: I rested the flashlight on the floor so that it shone across the area I was working on. The reflections made it easy to see which areas had wet varnish and which ones didn't. You just have to be careful that you don't leave the flashlight painted into a corner!

ONE OTHER TRICK helped me avoid scrubwoman's knees during this large floor refinishing project. I took large urethane foam sponges and attached them to the knees of my jeans with large safety pins. They eased the wear and tear considerably.

Mary Ryan  
Washington, D.C.

## Window Glass Know-How

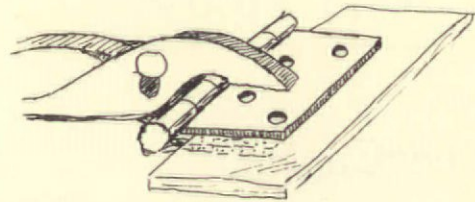
WE'VE HAD TO REPLACE a lot of broken window panes in our 1905 Colonial Revival. So of necessity we've come up with a few tricks for dealing with glass.

A SAFE WAY to break out remaining glass in a sash is to cut two pieces of paper the same size as the pane. Then coat the paper with rubber cement and glue it to both sides of the glass. You can then tap around the edges of the glass with a hammer without getting splinters flying all over the place.

GETTING THE OLD PUTTY out of the sash is the biggest problem. There are several tricks you can use, depending on what materials you have on hand. Old putty can be softened with various chemicals: Muriatic acid, paint remover or lacquer thinner will soften putty. These materials will usually attack paint, too, so unless you are planning to repaint the sash they have to be used very carefully. Heat softens old putty, too. You can use a propane torch, an electric hot-air gun or the tip of a soldering iron wrapped in aluminum foil (to keep it from being fouled by the putty). In using a propane torch or hot-air gun, you have to direct the heat carefully so that you don't break adjacent panes of glass from thermal shock.

IN CUTTING GLASS, it's very important that the straightedge you are using as a guide not move while you are cutting. You can help avoid slippage by putting strips of friction tape on the underside of the straightedge. Or coat the underside with soap (the soap washes off the glass easily).

JUST BEFORE YOU make the cut, take a small brush and lay in a bit of turpentine or light lubricating oil along the line that you'll be cutting.



ONCE THE GLASS IS SCORED with the glass cutter, the next task is to break the glass cleanly. This should be done as soon as possible after scoring the glass. I don't have any glazier's pliers (the kind with a wide grip), but I found that I could create a make-shift version that worked quite well. I found an old hinge that had a space equal to the thickness of a pane of glass when its leaves were closed parallel. I then added a strip of friction tape to each leaf for a better grip. This hinge, when held in the jaws of a regular set of pliers, works fine as a glass breaker.

ONE LAST TIP: I store my glass cutter in a small can with an inch of lubricating oil on the bottom. The oil protects the cutter tip from oxidation. When needed, I just wipe the excess oil off on an old rag, and the cutter is ready to go.

K. G. Aldrich  
Milwaukee, Wis.

## Tippy Paint Cans

HERE'S HOW I keep my paint can from tipping off the top of my stepladder when I'm working on high places. I found an old round cake pan that provides a fairly tight fit with the paint can I'm using. I drilled a hole in the center of the pan...and a hole in the top step of my ladder. A large nail dropped through the hole in the pan and the ladder keeps the pan from getting knocked off sideways. When the paint can is set in the pan, it has good stability. The pan can also serve as a tool tray and holder for screws and the like. And it is easy to dismount and store when not in use.

B. J. Jones  
Atlanta, Ga.

## Got Any Tips?

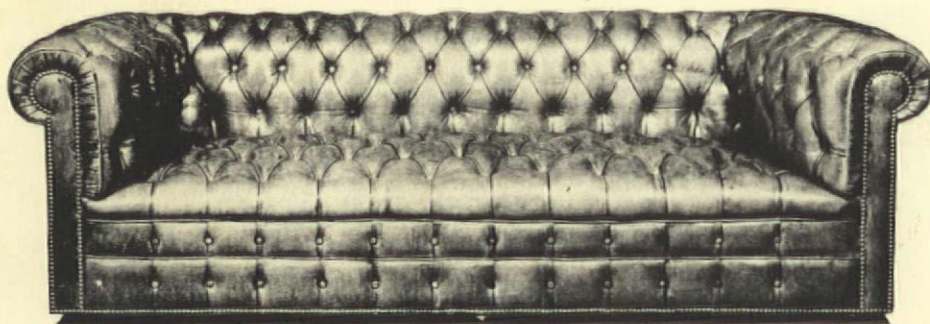
DO YOU HAVE any hints or short-cuts that might help other old-house owners? Our survey of reader opinion in the Feb. 1978 issue indicated that this is the kind of thing you, the readers, want more of. We'll pay \$15 for any of these short items that are used in this "Restorer's Notebook" column. Send your hints to: Notebook Editor, The Old-House Journal, 199 Berkeley Pl., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217.

# Products For The Old House

## The English Chesterfield Sofa

**T**HE CHESTERFIELD SOFA was originally made in the late 19th century and is as much a favorite style today as it was then. Much of its charm is in its ability to blend with period and non-period rooms.

THE ASHLEY FURNITURE WORKSHOPS in London makes these classic pieces in the same manner as the Victorians did. There is nothing prefabricated or mass produced. To create leather



furniture of lasting quality, each piece is handmade. The frame is individually constructed, and the springs and buttons are hand applied. Leather finish can be glazed, natural or antique and is available in a wide range of colors.

ASHLEY will send a free brochure describing the chesterfield and their other furniture reproductions. (Because surface mail takes so long, you may want to have it sent airmail for \$2.00) The brochure includes a price list. To get an idea of prices, a chesterfield delivered to New York City costs approximately \$1,500.

AS A SPECIAL SERVICE for customers desiring an original ches-

terfield, Ashley will reupholster an original Victorian frame. Write and have your name put on a waiting list (original frames are rare) and as they become available you will be notified. They cost approximately 25% more than the reproductions.

DAVID A. HALES, the proprietor of Ashley Furniture Workshops, is an Old-House Journal subscriber across the Atlantic and has visited us many times. He is quite an authority on Victorian furniture and probably knows more about the history of the chesterfield than anyone today.

HE INVITES JOURNAL readers who may be visiting England to stop in and see his London shop. Call first (01-229 6013) however, as the actual shop is different from his mailing address.

FOR A DESCRIPTIVE BROCHURE, write to: David A. Hales, Ashley Furniture Workshops, 3a Dawson Place, London W2, England.



## Replacement Window Channel

**O**LD WINDOW SASH has period character—but it is often loose-fitting and not very energy efficient. This creates a dilemma for people who want to cut heating/cooling bills, but who don't want to replace the old windows or add aluminum storm windows. The Quaker Replacement Window Channels may be a good answer. Several of The Journal's readers have reported good luck with them.

TO INSTALL new window channels, the stop moulding and parting strip are removed. The old sash are lifted from the frame and any counterweights are removed. The old sash are fit into the new channel and slipped back into the frame. The new channels are then secured to the old frame with nails or screws. The sash are held by friction, so no counterweights are needed.

ONLY LIMITATION is that channel can only accommodate sash that is 1 1/4" or 1 3/8" thick. Quaker Replacement Window Channels are available through most lumberyards, home centers and major hardware stores. They are made by Quaker City Mfg. Co., 701 Chester Pike, Sharon Hill, Pa. 19079.

### New!

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