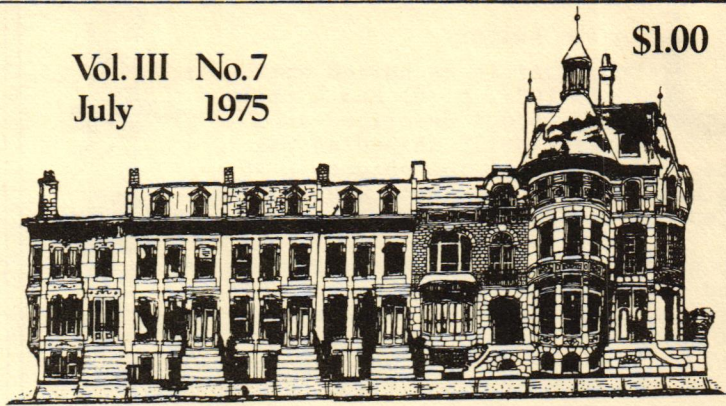


THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

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Renovation And Maintenance Ideas For The Antique House

Lighting For The Old House

By Jean T. Gillett, Gillett Restorations

WHEN PREPARATION of this article was suggested to me, my first thought was that it should be easy to write after nearly twenty-three years of wrestling with the problems of old houses, both my own and others. Then, when I began to try to reduce that experience to a simple, manageable formula, I discovered that there were many factors which went into making each decision. After analysis of the various lighting projects undertaken over the years, three factors kept recurring:

- (1) Function — was this to be general room lighting, or light for reading or work areas.
- (2) Style — in old houses, the basic architecture and age of the house determine the appropriate styles. Within the area of style, are you intending to create an exact restoration of the period, or are you allowing for the natural additions that would have been made over a period of time, including the lifetime of the original owner.
- (3) Personal taste — does the lamp or lighting effect please you? This seems to be the final determinant once the other criteria are met.

IN THE VERY EARLY SETTLEMENTS, the common light sources were the open fireplace, open font oil lamps (not kerosene), and candles

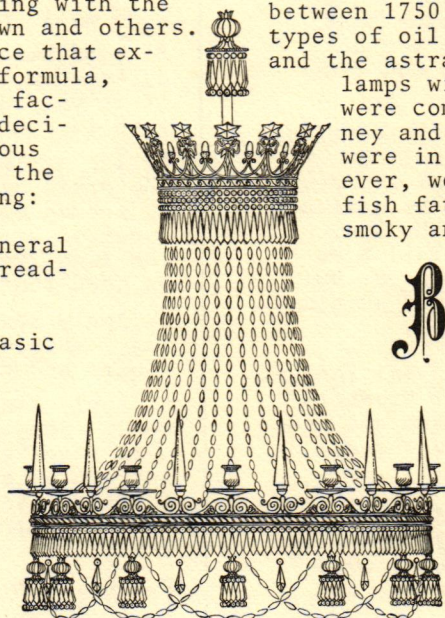
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Coming Next Month

PAINT & COLOR RESTORATION IN OLD HOUSES

for those who could afford them. Not until between 1750 and 1800 were the more efficient types of oil lamps such as the Argand burner and the astral lamps developed. By 1800, lamps with closed fonts and cloth wicks were common, and by 1830 the lamp chimney and shade had been perfected and were in common use. These lamps, however, were still fueled by animal and fish fats or oils and were frequently smoky and ill-smelling in use.



BETWEEN 1812 and 1860 natural gas was developed as a lighting source and will be found as the original light source in most city houses built between 1840 and 1900. In 1854 kerosene was discovered and by 1860 had been perfected and was readily available as a lamp fuel. With the development of the central draft burner and various patented improvements upon this principal, this provided an excellent reading or work lamp which could be placed wherever required in the room. Even in houses having gas lighting fixtures, kerosene or oil lamps were used where concentrated portable lighting was needed.

BY 1880 electric lighting was becoming available, and many houses built between then and 1900 will have combination gas-electric fix-

(Continued on page 8)

Notes From The Readers...



To The Editor:

Your article on buried artifacts (June 1975, p. 6) had a photo of an object described as a "mysteriously shaped animal shoe." I know what the object is—having made many of them when I worked on a Connecticut farm in my younger days.

The object is called a "bar way." It is used like a giant staple—driven into posts at openings in pasture fences. The bar ways hold 2-3 in. saplings that act as a gate to keep the animals in. But the saplings can be easily withdrawn if you have to get a wagon or tractor through.

We made bar ways by taking old discarded horse shoes, heating the ends red-hot, then drawing the ends out to a point by beating with a hammer.

Robert Atwood Meyer
The Yankee Silversmith Inn
Wallingford, Conn.

Using Stripping Tanks

To The Editor:

We operate a stripping service, removing finishes from metal, woods, marble, wicker, bamboo and plastics. We thought your readers might be interested in some of our experiences since paint stripping seems to be a major pre-occupation with many old-house owners.

We run both a "hot tank" and a "cold tank." In the hot tank is a 2% solution of sodium hydroxide (lye) at 100 to 130°F.; the cold tank holds a chemical paint remover. Part of the art of stripping is knowing into which tank to dip a piece. In general, we use the hot tank for most things except walnut and fruit woods.

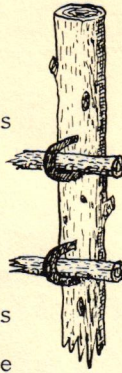
Although lye does have to be used with caution because it will attack wood, we find it an eminently satisfactory and economical stripper. We also throw in a little detergent to soften the water and hasten the action of the lye. Part of the secret is the dilute solution we use. Also, lye tends to bleach the wood, but rinsing with a 2% solution of muriatic acid and detergent restores the original color.

In our cold tank we use a chemical paint remover called 851-T made for us by Chemical Products Co. in Aberdeen, Md. We've tried them all and in our opinion this is the best. We use between 100 and 300 gallons per month.

There's little that can't be handled by dipping. Currently, we're doing a whole house in Felton, Del., including doors, windows, woodwork, and cupboards—literally from top to bottom!

Bob & Peggy Berger
The Big Dipper
Woodside, Del.

Ed. Note: Bob and Peggy also sent along some tips for refinishing wood that has been stripped. We've reproduced their suggestions in the adjacent box.



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Refinishing Stripped Wood

1. Make sure wood is dry before applying finish. Three or four days drying time is normal; five days in damp weather. Don't dry furniture in direct sun—the wood will warp.
2. Wood bleached by stripping can be darkened with stain. But don't over-stain; it is very difficult to remove stain from wood if you use too much.
3. The stripping process usually raises the grain of the wood, but once the grain is sanded smooth again you'll get a superior mirror-like surface for finishing. The final results are usually better than on wood that hasn't had the grain raised.
4. Apply sealer to hardwoods before sanding. This will stiffen the surface fibers and cut sanding time in half.
5. Apply stain before rubbing with steel wool. Sometimes one area will be rubbed with steel wool harder than another, causing uneven staining. Even better: Sand lightly, stain, apply sealer, then steel wool lightly between coats of final finish.
6. Oak, when new, requires a paste filler to fill the pores. After stripping, filler must be re-applied to achieve the glassy smoothness of new oak. Many refinishers skip this step, however, preferring the character of unfilled oak.
7. If re-gluing is required, stain before gluing. Glue closes the pores of the wood, preventing penetration of the stain.



BEFORE

Victorian Charm Re-created In San Francisco

by Judith Lynch Waldhorn



AFTER

THE 1906 Quake and Fire that devastated San Francisco destroyed many of its grandest Victorian mansions, those of the wealthy who lived on Nob Hill. However, it left untouched the legacy of the carpenter-builders who developed rows of wooden homes in the three predominant styles of the era: Italianate, San Francisco Stick and Queen Anne.

MANY OF THESE HOMES are in San Francisco's formerly unfashionable districts that form a crescent around downtown. These neighborhoods are experiencing a Victorian Revival, as whole blocks of homes are restored and brightened with new paint.

ONE OF THESE HOMES has been revived by Bob and Arlene Drechsler. Bob is a social studies teacher and Arlene is a nurse. Arlene was born in Honolulu, and Bob is a native San Franciscan who grew up in the Sunset District, an outlying residential section renowned for fog and monotonous rows of stucco houses. They needed a house that was immediately livable, but that would also give them "something to work with." They also wanted a view and a yard for Arlene's flowers and vegetables. They have strong feelings about San Francisco's older neighborhoods: "Victorian house people are more lively and colorful, just like their buildings."

AFTER INSPECTING 200 houses, they were growing frustrated, when a realtor told them of a "post-Victorian." Since its embellishments had been hidden by multi-colored aluminum siding, they didn't realize it was a Victorian until he took them inside, where they found parquet floors, elaborate rosettes, high ceilings and two carved wooden fireplaces with tile facing. They also saw a spectacular view of San Francisco, from Twin Peaks to the downtown skyline.

THE PREVIOUS OWNERS HATED to sell the house, which they had already done much to restore, but a promotion forced their move to Salt Lake City. Along with complete interior

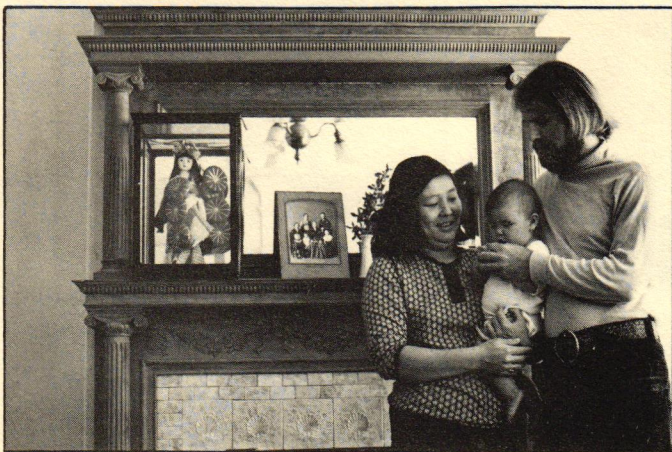
painting, they had also replaced deteriorated parquet flooring upstairs.

WHEN BOB AND ARLEENE'S BID was accepted, they first tried to refinance the existing loan. But the savings and loan association that held the mortgage was added to the stable of a Los Angeles-based company uninterested in San Francisco Victorians. They called a commercial bank, where they felt interest would be lower. The first one they called demanded 50 percent down! Next they enlisted the support of Bob's 93-year old grandfather, one of the oldest depositors at the Hibernia bank. At his suggestion, bank officials checked out the house. They approved the loan, with only 25 percent down payment because they felt the price was good, considering the panoramic view and the reviving neighborhood.

THE DRECHSLERS hadn't intended to restore the facade when they bought the house, but Bob was curious about what remained under the aluminum. He investigated the attic and pried open the gable window, which had been covered over. He peered up into the space between the aluminum and the original surface and was delighted to find the ornate carved redwood gable ornament still intact.

A WOMAN IN ARLEENE'S OFFICE led the Drechslers to San Francisco Victoriana by giving them a newspaper clipping telling about this new firm that designs and manufactures the millwork needed for authentic interior and exterior restoration of 19th century wooden buildings. When Bob visited their shop and showroom he was "hooked" immediately.

IN THE SUB-BASEMENT, the previous owners had found a cache of 1896 newspapers and the original plans for the house next door. Both were similar Queen Anne rowhouses; the Drechslers' house was covered with aluminum in 1961 and the neighboring house was defaced



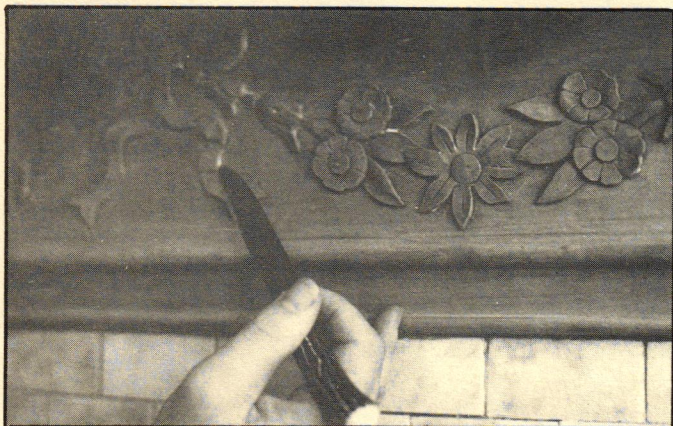
Arleene, Bob, and baby Jennifer Michiko, born during their "busy summer." The doll on the left was Jennifer's gift for "Girl's Day," a Japanese holiday honoring firstborn girls.

with stucco. With the original elevation and an old photograph, The Drechslers went to Victoriana, who used this historical information to design the restored facade.

BOB DECIDED TO install the millwork himself. It was a challenge he faced with confidence, although in retrospect he says, "It was more difficult than I imagined."

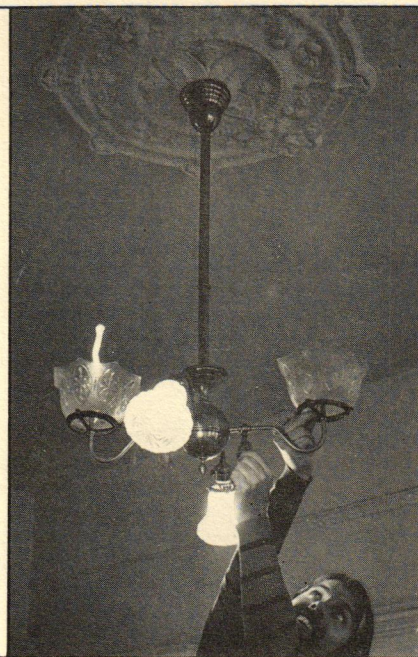
IN A DEBRIS BOX, the Drechslers found a set of 1909 correspondence course books on building. The carpentry lessons had some hints that helped Bob, his brother Richard, and friend Jim Henson install the millwork made by Victoriana. Bob gives John and Richard much credit for the success of the project; without their assistance, Bob says, the front would still be unfinished because the installation work is difficult for just one person.

TO REMOVE THE ALUMINUM SIDING, Bob clung to a 40-foot ladder, flinging down the ten-foot strips—no easy task in the summer winds that blow in from San Francisco Bay.



Bob is using a kitchen knife to remove the last remnants of green enamel on their second carved oak mantel.

The Drechslers have re-installed the kind of combination gas and electric fixtures that once illuminated most of the rooms. Gas is expensive, so they save it for dinner parties and other special celebrations. They have added Victorian hardware—doorknobs, window locks, etc., found in second-hand stores.



FROM THE INSIDE of the attic window, they kicked out the siding, then removed the rest by hanging out the window with a pole. Aseach piece was ripped off, something else was revealed, reminding Bob of an archeology dig. Bob estimates the millwork installation and painting took four months of ten-hour days—his entire summer vacation and part of the fall. A new front door plan with porch pillars and a spindlework archway will complete their exterior restoration.

Tips On Exterior Millwork

HERE ARE SOME TIPS from the Drechslers. They think other Victorian buyers might benefit from their experience:

- SINCE FACADE RESTORATION is like a jigsaw puzzle, be sure to know exactly where each piece goes and its relation to other millwork components. Make a detailed drawing before you begin. Make sure each piece is specifically scaled to the style and other embellishments of your own house.
- BOB FIGURES that on the days he had to work alone, he made 100 to 200 round trips up and down the scaffolding. He suggests that two people should do most of the exterior work.
- THE DRECHSLERS found out too late the back of new millwork should be primed, as well as the exposed part. They learned only after their new blue and white paint job ran during the rain, stained by the tannic acid in the wood. Now they must caulk all the edges and repaint some details.
- THEY ALSO SUGGEST that if you are doing any major exterior restoration using redwood, don't leave it outside without priming. Moisture may raise the grain, and you will have to re-sand.
- TAKE BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOGRAPHS to provide an inspirational record of your work.

San Francisco Victoriana

● **INVEST IN SOUND BASIC EQUIPMENT.** Bob suggests a good mitre box, which will accept up to 5-in. mouldings, a level and a right angle square. Bob had only a 1949 table-saw, but recommends a 10-in. radial arm cutoff saw. Good tools are expensive, so an equipment co-op would be useful for neighborhood preservationists.

● **BOB SAYS DON'T** be afraid to use bolts or lagscrews if they work. Sometimes nails are not sufficient to hold up heavy millwork, such as the 35-lb. brackets over their second story corner window.

● **THE DRECHSLERS** do recommend "misguided improvements" as a good home buy for other young couples. Among misguided improvements, however, some are better bargains than others. Johns-Manville asbestos shingles, tarpaper brick and aluminum siding usually come off easily, leaving millwork scars as a clue to authentic restoration. Look for a "misguided" house with some millwork intact, which has not been shorn of all embellishment.

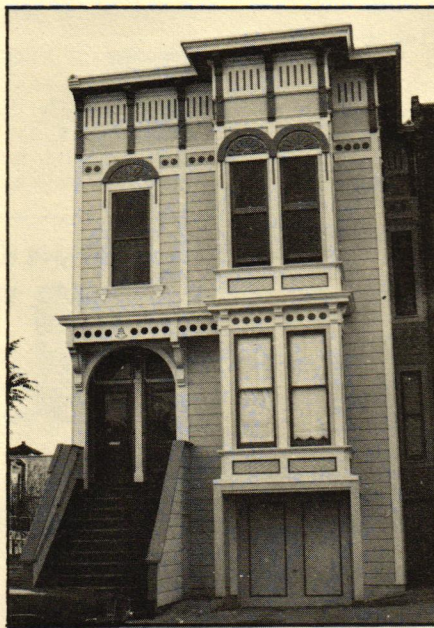
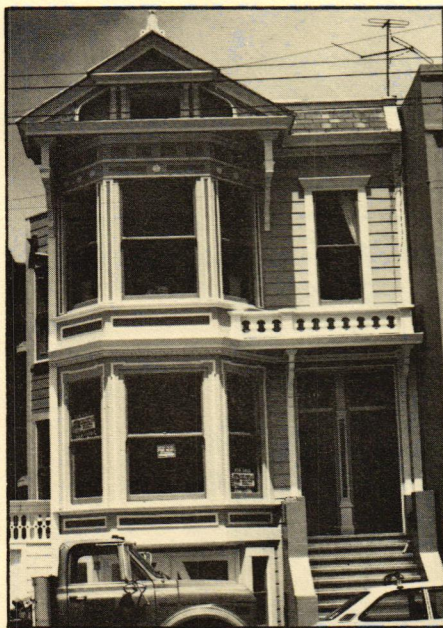
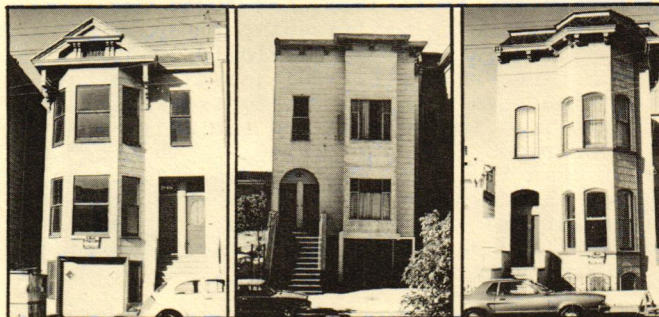
● **BEFORE HE BEGAN** installation on his own home, Bob searched out similar Victorians in the neighborhood. He found one nearby and sat in front of it for hours, memorizing its complicated moulding system. He found that his study helped him with his own house. Bob says that many owners of "remuddled" old houses can probably find houses similar to theirs in the original condition if they poke around enough.

AFTER MORE THAN two years of research and planning, San Francisco Victoriana was founded in 1973 by four partners, Brad Hallett, Gary Kray, Bill Lambert and Gary Root. They saw that public outcry over massive demolition of urban neighborhoods was halting much of the destruction which used to provide wrecking yards with leftover house parts. The firm was established to make authentic restoration possible when salvage was no longer available. Their design staff has an extensive collection of house pattern books and embellishment catalogs from which to draw authentic details and complete Victorian fronts.

ALTHOUGH THEIR custom-millwork is only for the San Francisco area, the firm has a line of Victorian hardware, plaster brackets and medallions, and sand- or acid-etched glass that can be ordered by mail. (Product listing on page 12 of Vol. III, No. 6 of The Journal.)

THE HOUSES PICTURED BELOW had been defaced by ingenious combinations of asbestos, tarpaper brick and aluminum. The aluminum windows of the middle house were replaced with wooden ones of the right proportions and the facades have been restored by Victoriana. This dramatic change on an otherwise drab block has already affected several nearby Victorians, now also being restored.

Judith Lynch Waldhorn is an Urban Planner at the Stanford Research Institute in Menlo Park, California. She also teaches a course at the University of California Extension in conjunction with San Francisco Victoriana called "Victorian Architecture—Construction and Re-Construction." She has just been awarded a Design Fellowship by the National Endowment for the Arts to study the Victorian carpenter-builders.





Rebuilding Fireplaces

By R. C. Hunter

QUITE OFTEN IN OLD HOUSES the original fireplaces have been removed because they had become unfashionable, unused or decrepit. Now, with escalating fuel costs, a working fireplace is again a highly desirable asset. Even more important, the growing interest in the sensitive restoration of old homes is bringing more and more people up against the problem of replacing a missing fireplace. Perhaps my experiences in restoring fireplaces in my 1890 Victorian house can help others to begin this task.

ASSUMING THERE IS NOTHING LEFT of the original fireplace, the first challenge is to figure out where the original fireplaces may have been. This can be quite difficult if the earlier owners did a careful job of removing them. The first step is to identify all the chimneys from the outside and the walls of which rooms they pass through. This may be harder than it seems. Not infrequently, the tops of chimneys were pulled off when fireplaces were no longer being used. The only remainder may be the chimney breast alongside an outside wall or in an attic.

USEFUL CLUES may also be found in the cellar where you can look for the base of chimney stacks. A cleanout door for the ash pit is a sure sign of a fireplace having existed somewhere overhead.

HAVING IDENTIFIED WALLS WITH chimney breasts that may conceal plastered-over fireplaces, there are a couple of other clues to look for before you start swinging the sledge hammer:

1. Check for patched flooring where the hearth would have been;
2. Remove the baseboard along the face of the chimney breast. The wall is usually not as carefully finished behind it and may show signs of the original opening. (When I pulled away my baseboard, 40 years of debris poured into the room!)
3. Try punching a small hole through the middle of a suspected opening. My fireplaces were just covered over with metal lath fastened to the opening and then plastered over.

IF THESE PRELIMINARY TESTS convince you that there is a fireplace opening behind the wall, now is the time for the sledge hammer! It's

best just to knock the plaster off first. If there's brickwork behind the plaster, look to see if the shape of the original opening is apparent. If it isn't, stop! You don't have a fireplace. But if there is the outline of an opening, knock the brickwork patch out, starting in the middle, and try not to break up the old masonry any more than necessary.

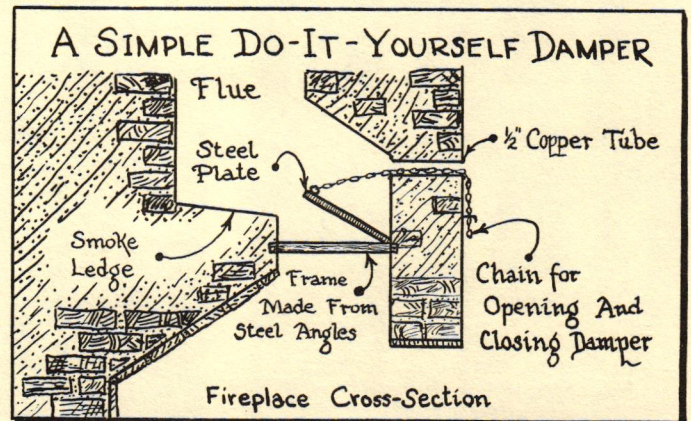
QUONCE THE OPENING IS CLEARED, you can then fully assess the extent of the project. You already know whether you'll have to rebuild the top of the chimney (\$350 to \$1,000). You may also have to re-line the flues, depending upon the condition of the masonry and local building codes. Sure danger signals: Badly crumbling masonry lining or missing or cracked, loose brickwork. Many house fires have been started by sparks that escaped through deteriorated flues. So it pays to take a safe and conservative course in evaluating the condition of the flues.

NOW COMES THE FIREPLACE ITSELF. It will almost certainly need a damper, a partial or complete firebox, a new hearth and the chimney breast extended out around the firebox.

THE DAMPER POSED THE GREATEST PROBLEM in rebuilding the fireplace in our bedroom. The only commercial dampers I could find were in very limited sizes and none of them fit the existing brickwork or scale I needed (our bedroom fireplace is rather small). I finally fabricated one myself, which has turned out to be far superior to anything else I have seen. It consists of a rectangle formed of angle iron, set into the masonry in the throat in front of the smoke ledge. A heavy piece of plate steel cut to size fits into the frame. The weight of the iron keeps the damper closed; a chain pulled through the front of the fireplace facing opens it.

THIS TYPE OF DAMPER has some distinct advantages: You can always tell whether the damper is open or closed (by looking at the chain); if it is closed you don't have to fumble around in the flames for the pull chain; and it is cheap—the materials only cost about \$6.

THE FIREBOX is built out of firebrick or any hard brick, and mortared—ideally—with fireclay (although you can probably get by with well-tooled joints of portland cement mortar). The firebox is built out beyond the chimney breast to give depth to the





Removing the baseboard reveals evidence of old firebox hidden behind the plaster. Debris from the old masonry that had accumulated in the firebox spills into room through slits in the patchwork.

fireplace and should be extended as far out as your mantel is deep.

IN SOME TYPES OF FIREPLACES (such as mine) a cast iron frame is mounted into this brickwork. I drove four masonry nails into the breast and fastened the frame to them with lengths of wire. The iron frame was held out the correct distance with blocks of wood, then the void was filled in with bricks. The firebox should be extended with additional brickwork (common brick) to the width and height of the opening formed by the arch.

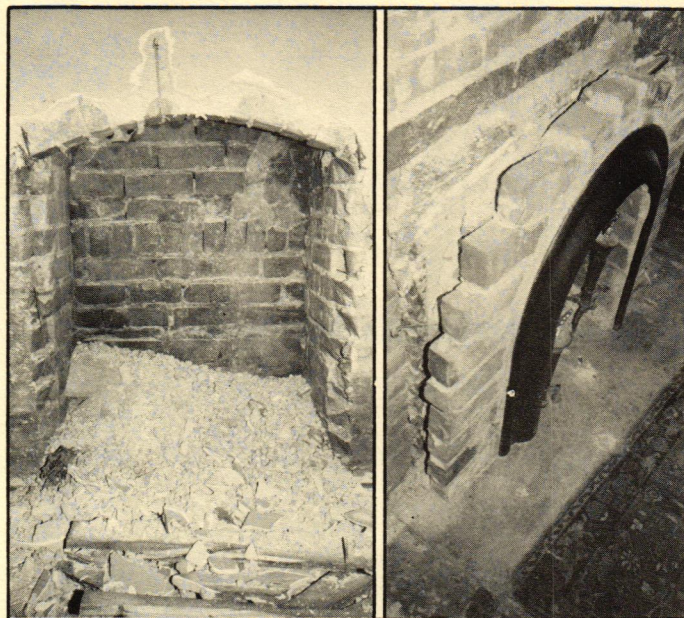
THE FIREBOX is usually not as large as the mantel opening...the difference generally being an area covered in decorative tiles or marble. Build the masonry out to within $\frac{1}{2}$ in. or so of the mantel, leaving enough room for the finish material (tile, etc.). Too, if you are using an iron frame, also leave a $\frac{1}{2}$ -in. groove behind it so you can slip the facing material in behind. This is a lot easier than trying to cut and fit the facing flush against the iron.

THE FACING MATERIALS are affixed directly to the masonry. For the tiles I used, I found plaster of paris an ideal adhesive. It sets up very quickly and dries hard and tight.

THE MANTEL IS NOW SET IN PLACE over the tiles and masonry. It should be fastened to the wall at the top and bottom with appropriate anchors. The hearth, if it must be rebuilt, should only involve tearing out the new floorboards to the original opening. I found the easiest approach was to pour and finish a cement slab in the usual manner, and then apply the decorative surface to it once the slab was dry. I used ceramic tile set in mastic, which I then grouted.

THAT'S IT. I think the average old-house handy person can do everything (I have) except the chimney work—and my biggest handicap there is my total fear of heights! So go look for those plastered-over fireplaces now...before you really need them. ■

R. C. "Chris" Hunter has gotten a lot of first-hand restoration experience working on his 1890 Romanesque Revival home in Detroit. This extraordinary house was shown in detail in the February 1975 issue of *The Old-House Journal*.



Knocking lath and plaster away reveals the old firebox (left). It clearly needs a new firebrick lining. Additional brickwork (right) extends chimney breast out to the iron framing arch.



Temporary wood piece (in lieu of tiles) is slipped behind the iron frame.

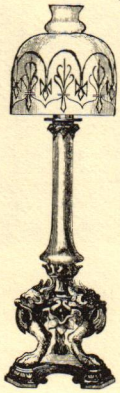


Finishing touch: Mantel attached to wall.

(Lighting--Continued from page 1)

tures combining the two light sources in one fixture. After 1900, most houses were built with electrical fixtures, except in rural areas. The styles closely parallel those used for gas fixtures until well into the 1920's. Utilitarian bare-bulb fixtures appear in the 1920-30 period. However, I know that very few people would care to live with these today.

Relate Fixtures To Architectural Style



Georgian or Victorian house.

THE FIRST STEP in deciding on the style you will use for lighting fixtures is to determine the age and architectural style of your house. You will then be able to select the appropriate style in fixtures. It is always helpful to know the environment and status of the original owner, though many times the simplicity or elegance of the original design can be determined by inspection of the millwork and trimmings of the house. This knowledge will help you avoid the mistake of putting a brilliant crystal fixture in a simple farmhouse or, conversely, putting a tinsmith's creation in an elaborate Georgian or Victorian house.

Selecting Fixtures

THERE ARE ALSO MANY PRACTICAL aspects to be considered when selecting fixtures--

- GENERAL ROOM LIGHTING. Examination of the ceiling and walls will usually reveal evidence of the original location and type of fixtures beginning with the introduction of gas lighting. Earlier candle chandeliers and oil lamps were supported with hooks or similar suspension devices which may not leave any permanent imprint.

Chandeliers and wall brackets with electrified candles or lamps can be installed with a "dimmer" switch to allow you to vary the lighting intensity. With the modern flame-shaped bulbs, this will most closely ap-

proximate the effect of the original lighting, while still allowing for greater light intensity when needed. Both dimmers and flame-shaped bulbs are available at lighting stores and most hardware stores.

- WORK AND UTILITY AREAS. My personal preference for work areas such as the kitchen is to have fluorescent thin-line fixtures mounted to the bottom of wall cabinets with a valance or skirt about 3" wide to conceal them and prevent glare. This will give you a good light over the counter surface without distracting from the room design.

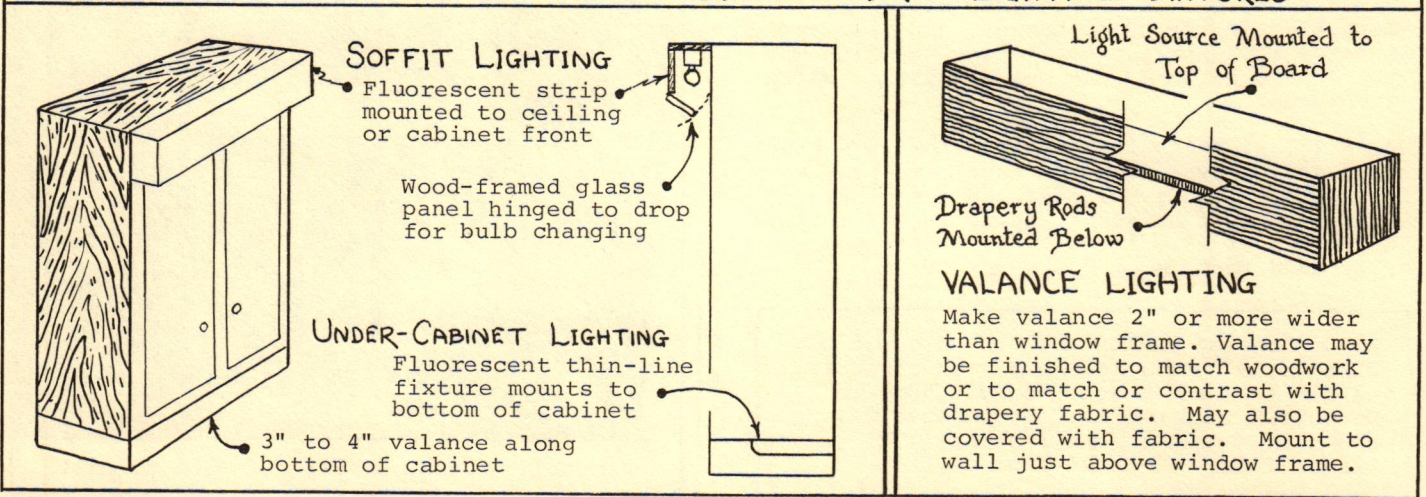
If the room ceiling needs re-plastering or repair, it may be possible to use a recessed fluorescent fixture with a glass cover panel which can provide general illumination without being intrusive. Indirect lighting can also be used in a soffit arrangement over wall cupboards. Antique lamps are rarely satisfactory for these settings except as lighting over a table or dining nook, or for general room illumination.

- INDIRECT LIGHTING. If you do not wish to use ceiling or wall lights, concealed indirect lighting may be installed in window valance mountings, or in cove lighting in restoration of cornices on ceilings.

If you have built-in bookcases or cupboards, especially those with glass shelves, lights may be installed inside the top of the cupboard so that it illuminates the items displayed on the shelves. Special stands are also available now for bottom lighting of art glass objects. In building shelving into a room, or restoring old shelving units, you may be able to incorporate soffit lighting in the design.

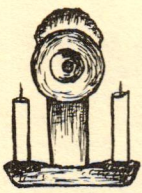
Your electrician can advise you about the best means of installing wiring for these devices, and also can recommend fluorescent or incandescent fixtures depending upon the type of lighting effect desired. In general, fluorescent will be more satisfactory for most indirect lighting applications because it does not generate heat and it uses less electricity for the same light output than a comparable incandescent.

SOME SCHEMES FOR CONCEALING CONTEMPORARY LIGHTING FIXTURES



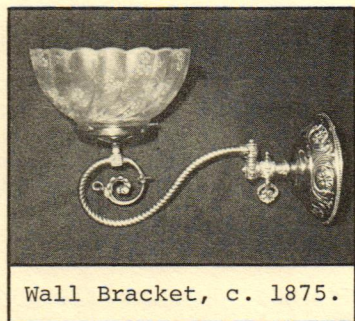
● SPOT LIGHTING--LAMPS. Many if not most, antique lamps can be electrified by a good craftsman. There are many styles which are suitable for all periods from Colonial through Victorian and that provide comfortable light for reading. Those striving for absolute authenticity will be more limited in their selections than someone who can accept the addition of some later styles.

Ceiling And Wall Fixtures



CANDLESTICK CHANDELIERS and wall brackets. Available in tin, brass, silver and silver plate, turned wood, wrought and cast iron, pewter, porcelain, gilt and crystal. These may be plain or with crystal or porcelain trim or decorations. Used from Colonial through Victorian times.

GAS FIXTURES. Made of cast iron, brass, bronze, gilt, and crystal, including designs from the very simple to the unbelievably ornate. Many are trimmed with crystal prisms or strings. Look for old glass in the shades, when possible. Some

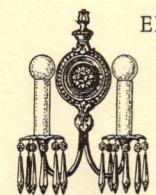


Wall Bracket, c. 1875.

glass shades are works of art in themselves.

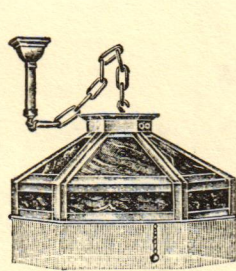
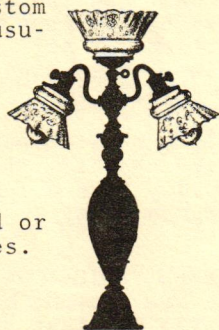


HALL LAMPS OR LIBRARY LAMPS. These hall or library lamps were usually based on a single oil lamp font suspended in a holder which could frequently be raised by means of gears and chains, both for filling and for positioning the light as desired. The chains must be fixed in place if these are to be electrified.



ELECTRIC FIXTURES. These were frequently adaptations of gas fixtures in the early manufacture. In combination gas-electric fixtures, the gas arms are arranged with the glass shade pointing downward. (Electric lights may point either way, but gas globes must always

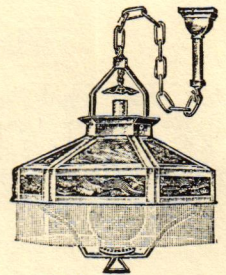
open toward the top.) Some custom crafted pieces are available, usually in the antique market. Many wall fixtures were also made, often with candle-type holders for the bulb. They ranged from very plain to trimmed versions with crystal drops. Some electric fixtures were of cast metal with painted or gilt finish and art glass shades. I have seen fixtures of cast plaster, gilded, with handmade leaded glass panels.



Electric Chandelier



Bracket Oil Lamp



Oil Chandelier

OIL LAMP CHANDELIERS AND WALL BRACKETS. Available with glass or metal fonts. Brackets or chandelier holders were made of iron, brass, silver plate, and gilt, with or without crystal or porcelain trim. Used from late Colonial through Victorian times.

Table And Floor Lamps

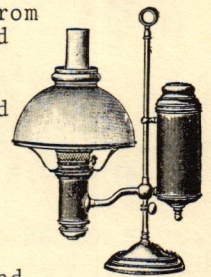
CANDELABRA. Some candlesticks had metal shades as part of the original design, or can have shades added without disturbing the design of the piece. These are quite suitable for electric candles, but do not usually give a good light for reading.

OIL LAMPS WITH CHIMNEY AND SHADE. These were in use from the mid-1700's to the present, so there are styles suitable for everything from Colonial through the Victorian periods.

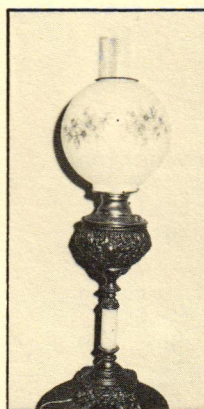


Banquet Lamp

Fonts were made of almost all workable metals, ranging from iron through silver and gilt. Glass lamps are fairly common, as well as glass fonts combined with metal, onyx, or marble bases. Sizes range from the miniature "night light" and "princess" sizes of 12 in. or less, to the table lamp of 18-24 in., the banquet lamp of 24-36 in., and piano lamps on floor stands from 48-60 in. tall.



Student Lamp



Banquet Lamp C. 1870 Electrified

LAMP BASES MAY BE of one-piece construction, or the font may set into a holder in the base or unscrew from its pedestal for cleaning. Central draft burners frequently have a metal font that is set into a decorative base holder. This is the easiest type to electrify without damaging the lamp.

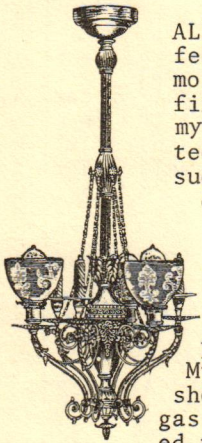
Oil lamps of this type provide the widest range of suitable designs that will provide good light for reading and working.



Adapting Old Fixtures

A GOOD CRAFTSMAN will alter an antique fixture or lamp as little as possible in electrifying it. The conscientious craftsman will advise against electrifying an antique lamp when he feels it will adversely affect its antique value. Most oil lamps with a central draft burner can be electrified without destroying the capability of being re-converted to oil. Glass font oil lamps are preferably electrified without drilling the glass font if they are an antique of any quality.

MANY ANTIQUE CANDELABRA chandeliers have hollow arms, which allow installation of electric candles without exterior wiring. Using the new types of wiring available, even oil lamp chandeliers can be wired so that this is not obvious.



ALL GAS FIXTURES have hollow tubes feeding to the burners, and for most of the chandeliers and wall fixtures the craftsman who does my wiring has developed a special technique allowing him to wire such fixtures without having to drill and solder the gas cock.

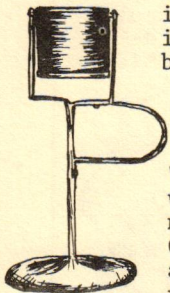
This allows those fixtures to be converted to gas again if desired. I have had some inquiries regarding using gas fixtures on gas where the piping still exists in a house.

My own feeling is that the system should be carefully checked by the gas company or a plumber experienced with such installations to be sure no leaks have developed over the years before this possibility is considered. With the new Duro-flame bulbs, an effect so close to that of gas can be achieved that I feel much safer with the electric installation.

EXAMINE ANY ANTIQUE FIXTURE or lamp carefully to insure that the wiring and repairs have been properly done. I have encountered many fixtures ruined beyond repair, at least insofar as their antique value is concerned, by earlier electrification which was badly done.

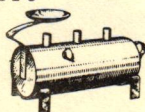
Reproductions

AN EXCELLENT RANGE of reproductions is available in Colonial styles, including the replicas authorized by Williamsburg and other museums.



Tin Swivel Betty

VICTORIAN REPRODUCTIONS, outside the so-called "pool table" or "billiard" lights, hall lamps and wall brackets, are much more difficult to find. Gas lamp reproductions are not in common supply.



Whale Oil Lamp

FOR SOME REASON, popular consumption seems to

have jumped from the Colonial to the "Tiffany," which is readily available in reproductions in all qualities from the dime-store plastic to handmade leaded glass creations.



Dome Shade



Glass Globe



Tin Shade



Glass Shade

TABLE LAMP REPRODUCTIONS range from the metal shaded tole candelabra through all styles of oil lamp reproductions. Many of these are quite authentic in detail of the design. For table lamps, I find simple lamps with a base in a candlestick, vase, or urn shape with a plain silk or parchment shade acceptable in almost any style house, and this is a good use for a slightly damaged antique piece.

THE LAMP WILL HAVE better proportions in relation to the room if kept under 36 in. in total height, and preferably slightly less. Personally, I don't care for teakettles, guns, etc., used as lamp bases, but I have seen statues set on a wooden or metal base with the lamp rod behind them which were attractive for the setting in which they were placed.

SINCE THE GOOD REPRODUCTIONS are expensive, it is well worth shopping around to see if a fixture of the period may not be available. Especially in the Victorian fixtures, you may find the price spread between the reproduction and the period fixture to be less than a third, in which case you will have value for your money in buying the antique.

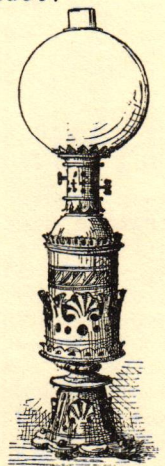
IF YOU KNOW YOUR PERIOD and have seen good examples of the type of lighting you are seeking, you may venture into the world of estate auctions and salvage yards. There are many bargains to be had from these sources, but many cautions should be observed also.

FIRST, is the piece complete and intact? Missing parts or pieces are becoming almost impossible to replace, and the expense of doing so may take the fixture out of the bargain category very rapidly.

SECOND, has the piece been damaged by previous repairs or earlier wiring? In that case, unless it is a gift it is not a bargain.

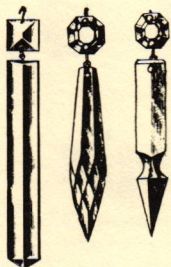
THIRD, does it have or require glass shades? This, too, can rapidly take a fixture out of the bargain class.

CURRENT PRICES ON GLASS SHADES in the New England area run from \$5 to \$35 on glass shades in 2 1/4 in.



Eastlake Gaselier

sizes, with art glass types going as high as \$100 each. The 4 in. and 5 in. gas shades currently range from \$8 to \$35 each, with cased and art glass types bringing much more. In my talks with dealers in other parts of the country, I find prices comparable or higher everywhere except the Midwest.



SCARCE OR UNUSUAL designs, or fixtures with a history related to a famous person or place may command much higher prices. These prices would include original or period glass, and you should expect some reduction in cost where modern glass has been used for replacement.

Jean T. Gillet is the owner of an 1884 Queen Anne house. Purchased as a remuddled boarding-house, she has restored it to its original lovely appearance. She is the owner of Gillett Restorations, specializing in Victorian antiques, architectural elements, and design consultation for the restoration of Nineteenth Century Architecture. Work is by mail order or appointment. Write to: Gillett Restorations, Box 63, Maynard, Mass., 01754. Tel. (617) 731-4492.

New Light On Old Lamps

Lighting the old house is an enormously complex subject that will be featured in *The Old-House Journal* many times in upcoming issues.

To help our readers make their way through the world of salvage yards, antique shops, and reproduction buying we are pleased to be able to offer, by special arrangement with the American Life Foundation, a valuable hardcover edition of an authoritative reference work originally published at \$15.

Packed with pictures from old catalogs and private collections, it explains lighting devices in the 18th and 19th centuries. There are articles by other experts in the field, a detailed index and bibliography, and special attention to parts and reassembly of old lamps.

To order "New Light On Old Lamps" by Dr. Larry Freeman, send \$9.75 (includes postage and handling) to:

The Old-House Journal
199 Berkeley Place
Brooklyn, New York 11217

Helpful Publications You Can Send For

Working Iron Yourself

Perhaps setting up a backyard forge isn't high on your list of priorities. But after reading this delightful 44-page booklet, you will at least add a backyard forge to the list of things you wish you had time to do. In addition to being a time-honored craft, there are many practical aspects to blacksmithing, including making Early American black iron objects, creating and repairing wrought iron, and general household repair. However, the author (Joe Pehoski—a practicing blacksmith) primarily stresses the creative satisfaction that comes from bending iron to your will. Written in an eminently clear and practical fashion, the booklet takes you through all the steps in acquiring tools, setting up the forge and making basic shapes and welds. To order this magnificent little text, send \$2.00 to: Joe Pehoski, Stuhr Museum, Box 126 C, Rt. 2, Grand Island, Nebraska 68801.

Fixing And Finishing Furniture

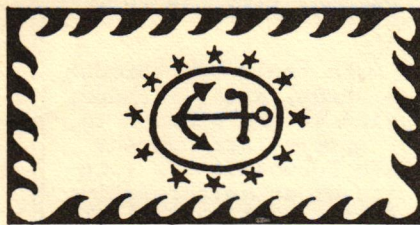
Many readers are already familiar with the common-sense hints and tips dispensed by Al Carrell in his "Super Handyman" newspaper column. Now Al has taken all of his accumulated know-how on the repair and refinishing of furniture and put it between hard covers. The resulting 180-page book is not a treatise on

antique restoration, but rather a text for fixing the furniture you love and live with every day. Al covers the simple and the sophisticated, from dealing with loose and squeaky rungs, through fancy decorating techniques such as stencilling and gilding. And a lot of Al's delightful sense of humor is blended in with his solid, practical advice. "Fix and Finish Furniture Guide" can be ordered for \$7.95 from: Prentice-Hall, Customer Mail Order Service, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632.

Home Repair Recipes

In his career as a house inspector, Alvin Ubell has seen frightful examples of structural decay. To help homeowners avoid the same fate for their houses, Ubell has assembled a 266-page home repair manual in cookbook form. Want to patch plaster, unclog drains, repair foundation cracks or fix a garden hose? Each problem is accompanied by a "recipe" complete with "ingredients" (tools and materials), diagrams, and the steps to follow to bring about the cure. Although the 102 recipes don't encompass the entire range of old-house problems, they do take in many of the common ones. And the "recipes" that are given are clear and complete. "Recipes for Home Repair" can be ordered for \$8.95 plus 60¢ postage and handling from: Quadrangle Books, Order Dept., 10 East 53rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10022.

Products For The Old House



Floorcloths

A NEW COMPANY is making reproductions of the painted "oyl" cloths that were popular floor treatments all during the 1700's and remained fashionable until the mid-1800's.

FLOORCLOTHS, INC. uses techniques that are almost identical to the original ones. Patterns are created by handpainting, stencilling, and silk-screening. They have a large selection of authentic 18th century geometrics and other Colonial patterns and 19th

century documentary designs.

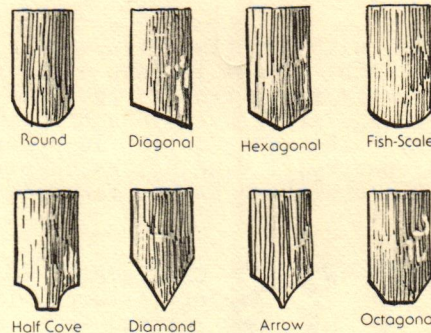
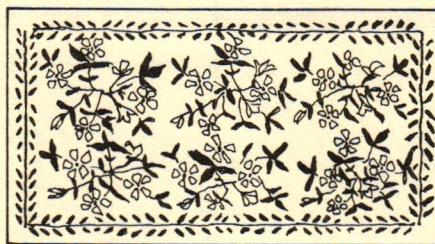
THEY WILL ALSO carry out anyone's original idea and copy fabric and wallpaper patterns. Available in area rug size or room size, they are elegant and practical for any room or even a porch. They require only soap and water to clean. Wearability is so reliable that the company gives a ten-year guarantee on traffic wear, fading paint, mildew, etc.

THE DESIGNS ARE PAINTED on heavy canvas in an oil-base medium. The secret is in the drying process and new chemicals. Finishes are hard-gloss or mellow semi-gloss patina.

THE COST OF A REPRODUCTION floorcloth is actually proportionally less than their historical counterparts. Prices range from \$5/sq. ft., to \$15/sq. ft. for custom-made designs.

EXAMPLES OF Floorcloths, Inc. work can be seen in the Baltimore Museum of Art and The Raleigh Tavern, Williamsburg. For a free brochure, write to: Floorcloths, Inc., 109 Main St., Annapolis, MD 21401.

PERIWINKLE - SIX COLORS




Fancy Butt Shingles

IRONICALLY, old-house owners are benefitting from a trend in modern architecture. Many of today's designers are rediscovering the exciting patterns and textures that can be created with specially cut shingles. (A. J. Downing was preaching this gospel in 1850!)

WITH DEMAND FOR FANCY SHINGLES rising, a major manufacturer has just introduced a line of western red cedar shingles in 9 specialty patterns. This can be good news for the owner of an old Queen Anne or shingle-style house who has been looking for replacement shingles in these fancy cuts. Shingles are 16" long and approximately 5" wide. They are designed to be applied with a 6" weather exposure and concealed nails.

MANY OF THE FANCY BUTT designs are custom-produced to meet individual orders, so allow sufficient time for production. Shingles are available through your dealer, or write: Shaker-town Corp., P.O. Box 400, Winlock, Washington 98596.

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