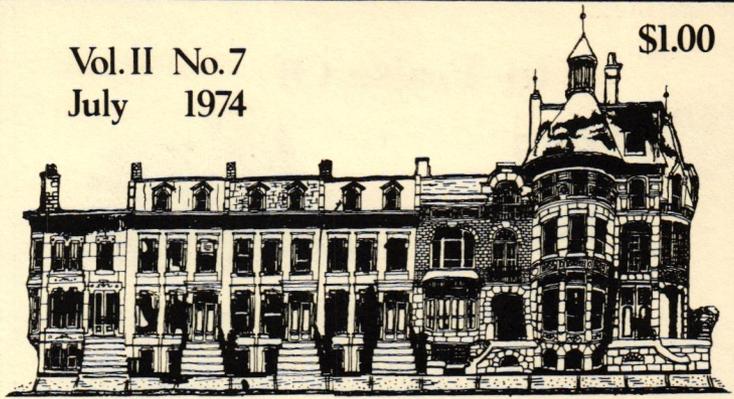


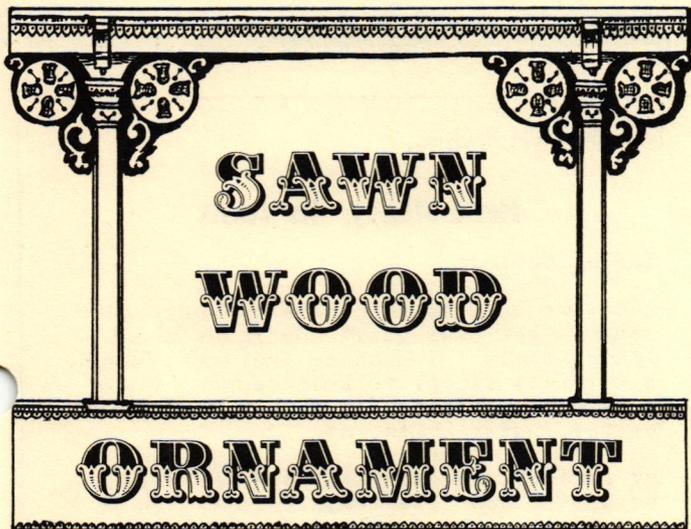
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Renovation And Maintenance Ideas For The Antique House

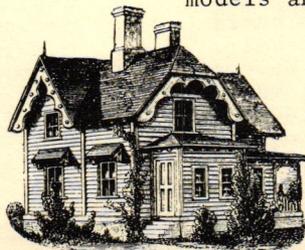


by Carolyn Flaherty

THE GREAT VICTORIAN ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM for imitating, adapting and creating new forms in building have left us with a wealth of detail to appreciate and, hopefully, preserve.

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING FACETS of the vitality of the era is the sawn wood ornament. Created by carpenter-builders with many levels of knowledge and sophistication, it is apparent that the reason for sawn wood ornament was simply a desire to create design for its own sake. For this reason, the sawn wood ornament is a folk art that should take its place with other respected native American artistic expressions such as primitive painting and quilting.

THE MORE SOPHISTICATED AND PROSPEROUS Victorians had homes built for them by trained architects who used every previous style and form to erect Grecian, Roman, Italian and Gothic Revival buildings. Contemporary fashions such as the mansard roof in France were quickly incorporated into Victorian building. But lack of wealth did not prevent the bur-



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Coming Next Month

A SERIES ON MAJOR STYLES OF THE PAST

geoning middle class from striving to erect a home of "quality."

LOCAL CARPENTER-BUILDERS did their utmost to satisfy both their own and their client's desire for the rich detail and proliferation of decoration that marked the era. Sawn wood was often a cheap substitute for the carved and turned wood that ornamented more lavish buildings.

HOME BUILDING WAS SOMEWHAT STANDARDIZED by popular "house-pattern" books. One of the most popular was Andrew Jackson Downing's "Cottage Residences." Downing published plans and pictures for country houses in Gothic, Italian villa and Elizabethan styles among others. He also used the Alpine chalet with its deeply overhanging eaves and sawn wood ornamentation as inspiration for a typical Downing cottage. Architects like Calvert Vaux and Samuel Sloan were also putting out books with designs and suggestions.

THESE STYLES WERE USED BY LOCAL BUILDERS as models and inspirations in a wonderful combination of styles and imitations. Using indigenous wood and a jigsaw, bandsaw or scroll saw driven by steam or foot treadle, they made ornaments for eaves, brackets, porches and gates by sawing out shapes, drilling or cutting holes, and by adding wooden appliques. Just as Downing himself felt that
(Continued on p. 9)

Perspective...

In Praise Of

Victorian Houses



UNTIL QUITE RECENTLY, Victorian houses were dismissed by most people as "ugly monstrosities." Even many old-house lovers, who were charmed by Early American homes, believed that anything built after 1850 was the product of degraded taste.

FORTUNATELY, THIS BLANKET DISMISSAL of an entire era is changing. The only plentiful stock of old houses in the U.S. still awaiting restoration are late 19th century homes—products of the post-Civil War building boom. So today's restorer with a limited budget almost invariably is restricted to buying a house built after 1860.

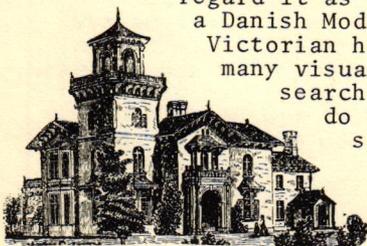
THE RESTORATION TREND has forced a re-evaluation of Victorian design standards. It's easy to see how someone trained in the "Form Follows Function" school would be quick to denounce Victorian architecture as over-ornamented and vulgar. But such sweeping condemnations tell more about the ignorance of the judge than about the merit of the thing being judged.

VICTORIAN ARCHITECTURE is a memorial to a dynamic and creative part of U.S. history...an era that saw the country transformed from a rural society to an industrial giant. The houses reflect the same inventiveness, confidence and aesthetic striving that energized the entire period. Victorians saw their houses as more than shelter. They were seeking to make the house itself a work of art. To them, ornament was not extraneous detail, but rather the refinement that made the home a thing of beauty.



OUR OWN TASTE may not find a particular house or design pleasing. But if nothing else, we must stand in awe of the audacity and creativity that produced it. And in the creation of their highly ornamented homes, the Victorians achieved feats of craftsmanship that cannot be duplicated today—partly because of the cost of labor, and partly because few of today's workmen possess the patience or the skills.

THOSE WHO COME INTO POSSESSION of a Victorian house should love it for what it is...and not regard it as a starting point for a Danish Modern remodeling. The Victorian housebuilders created many visual delights in their search for beauty. We can do far worse than to preserve their handiwork for future generations to wonder at.



--R. A. Labine

THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

Published Monthly For People Who Love Old Houses

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Notes From The Readers...

Redundancy In Tools

To The Editor:

I may be able to help some of your other readers get over guilt complexes about losing tools. I used to feel that I was a terribly sloppy workman because I was constantly looking for my hammer, screwdriver, putty knife, etc.

My anxiety was relieved when the neighborhood's best craftsman told me how he solved the same problem: He simply buys three of everything. It's easy to lose one or two tools, but by the time you've lost the third, the first one almost invariably has come to light.

I invested about \$30 in triplicates of all my frequently used items. The saving in time and frayed temper more than repaid this modest investment.

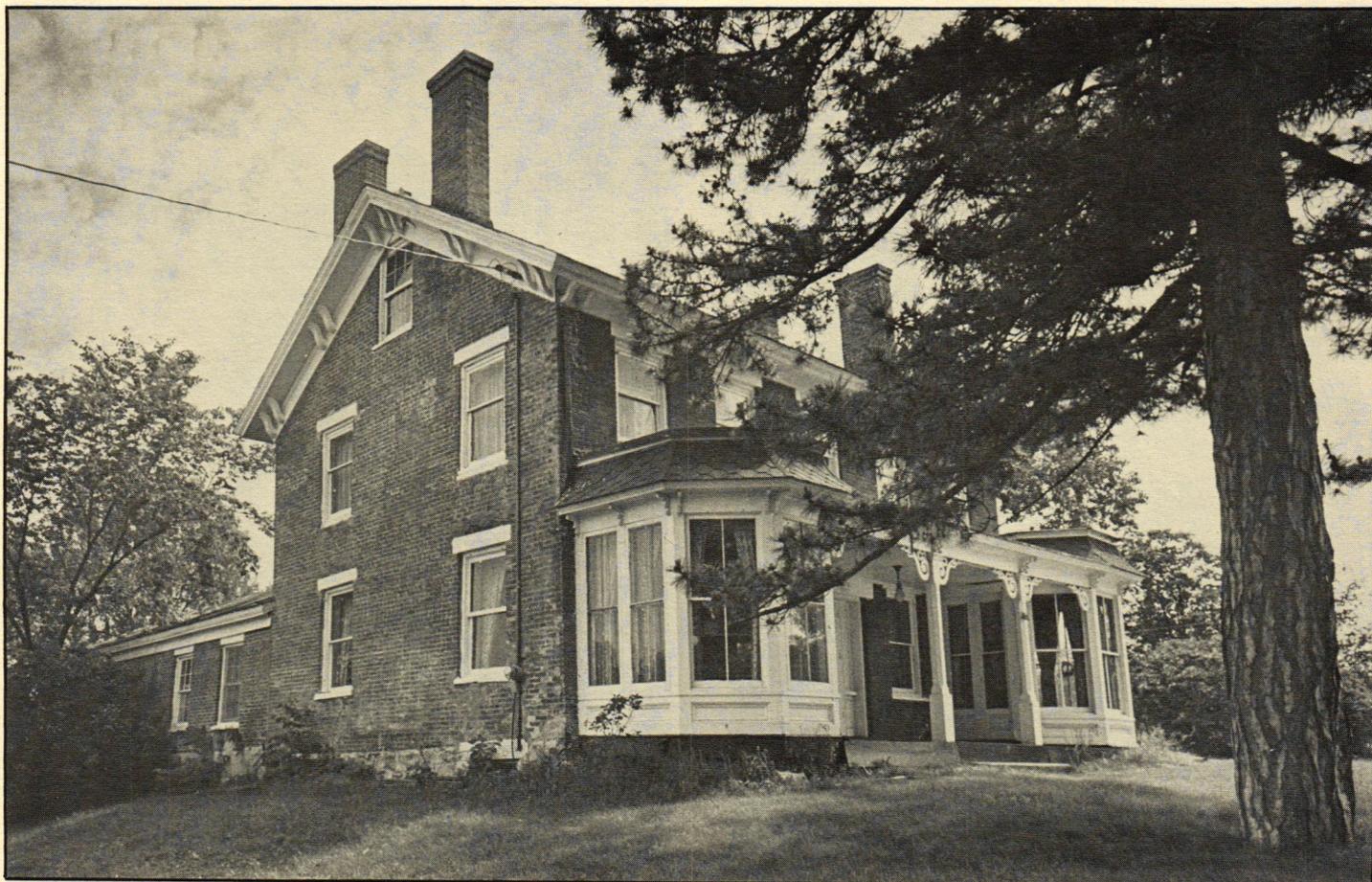
Fred M. Wales
Tulsa, Okla.

Removing Milk Paint

To The Editor:

We were trying to strip paint from an old chest of drawers and encountered a layer that resisted the best paint remover we could buy. A neighbor told us it was probably milk paint, which can only be removed with ammonia. Using household ammonia straight from the bottle, I was able to scrub the paint off with fine steel wool after the surface had been wet with the ammonia for about 15 min.

Cynthia Robbins
Attleboro, Mass.



Old-House Living...

A Pre-Civil War Manse On The Mississippi

By Anne Flaherty

TRY TO IMAGINE LIVING in a pre-Civil War mansion. Add to that fantasy historical speculation that Abraham Lincoln may have lodged in your upper halls. Compound that dream with impending registration of your home on the Illinois State and National Registers of Historic Places. Then situate your red brick vision on the picturesque banks of the Mississippi, in a quaint Illinois river town called Hampton.

SOUND HOPELESSLY UNOBTAINABLE? It was just fiction for Michael and Karen Fariss, too, until four years ago, when the young couple bought just such an antique dream for the incredible price of \$15,000.

"Of course it was a wreck," quips Mrs. Fariss, a petite redhead who is as equally at home with a can of patching plaster as she is with a needlepoint canvas. "Almost six months of repairs were necessary before we could even move in. About a month of diligent sanding and scraping went into the two bays alone. They were rotting and leaked terribly. I wanted them to be restored first since they're the focal points of the exterior," reminisces Mrs. Fariss.

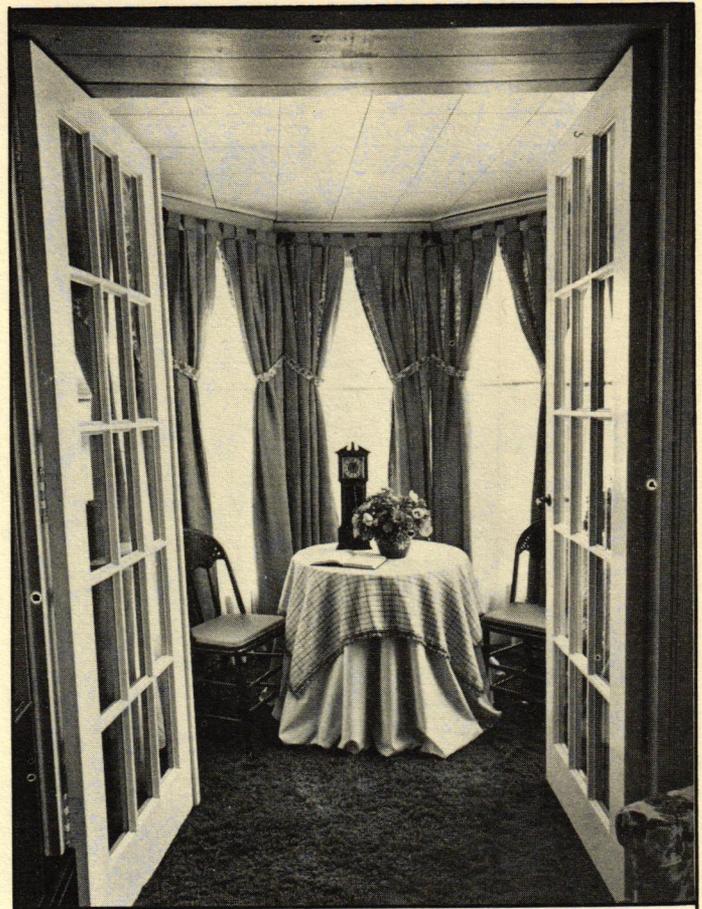
THE ELEGANT BAY ROOMS, each with a door that opens onto the large front porch, have been transformed into a quiet studio on one side and a wicker-furnished garden spot on the other. "Those weeks of work are a small price for the satisfaction of having a spectacular view of the greatest river in the country, and knowing that Abraham Lincoln himself may have enjoyed the same view when he stayed here," remarks Karen.

THE FARISSES ARE ONLY THE FOURTH OWNERS of the house in more than 125 years. And for 40 of those years, the house was abandoned. The brick manse, with its stately bays, proud chimneys, carriage house and summer kitchen is believed to have been owned originally by Maverick W. Wright, a Hampton pioneer. The Farisses' abstract lists Wright's purchase date as 1835. However, a local historian believes that the house might actually have been built earlier than that.

Wright's pioneer citizenship plus the home's location on one of the finest building sites all tend to support its reputation as the first house built in the town. The house may also be the oldest in the county, since Hampton was incorporated some 20 years before any other



Karen Fariss works a needlepoint in her remodeled summer kitchen. She is sitting on an authentic Lincoln rocker that literally floated down-river to their front door! Behind kitchen is a walk-in pantry, and beyond lies the carriage house.



West bay room is a cozy solarium isolated from the rest of the house by French doors. Although not decorated in period-museum fashion, The Farisses have not allowed any history-changing alterations to be made in the basic structure.

township in Rock Island County. The house's link to Lincoln dates back to 1856 when he was an attorney representing one side in a litigation at the county seat. Since the home's owner was a wealthy meat packer and one of the area's prominent citizens, local legend that has Lincoln paying a visit to Mr. Wright certainly doesn't strain credibility.

WHEN THE FARISSES BOUGHT THE 10-ROOM HOUSE, their goal was to fill the first floor with antiques and gifts and open a small tea room. The plan called for the two of them to occupy the top floor with their two frisky setter pups. The arrival of two sons dictated a change in plans. Now, four years later, the "Curiosity Shoppe" is gone, but the antiques have stayed—and all 10 rooms are part of the family's living space.

KAREN FARISS, an interior designer, has managed to coax the ancient homestead into the 20th century without destroying any historical value. While they have allowed for individuality in decoration, the Farisses have been careful not to alter any of the basic fabric of the house.

"I've always loved antiques and collected them," says Mrs. Fariss. "For example, the dining room butterfly table and Windsor back chairs are heirlooms from my husband's family in Neb-

raska. The coffee table in the family room is really an antique wagon. The pie safe in the kitchen is authentic, and so is the Lincoln rocker by the hearth." The valuable rocker actually floated downriver to the house. Karen stripped it and had the seat and back re-caned.

ORIGINALLY, the house boasted at least four fireplaces—and perhaps as many as eight. All but one of them was plastered over when the Farisses bought the place. Plans for re-opening some of them are still in the restoration-yet-to-be-done stage.

THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO DOORS to each room. Michael Fariss' theory is that this might have been a safety feature...providing additional escape possibilities in the event of Indian attack. When the home was built, there were still Black Hawk Indian tribes roaming the Mississippi River valley.

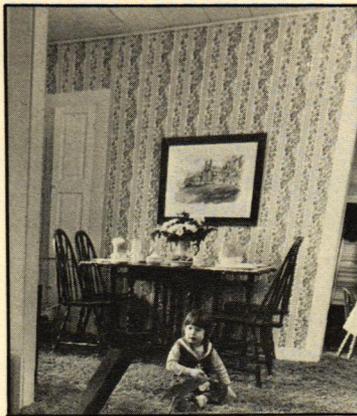
FURTHER SIGNS OF THE HOUSE'S ANTIQUITY are its dirt and stone basement and roof rafters of hand-hewn logs. Bark still clings to some of these whole-tree beams. "In the event the house is registered, a dendrochronologist will determine the precise age of the structure by examining the rings in the rafter beams," explains Michael. (Ed. Note: For anyone who, like the editor, doesn't know what a

dendrochronologist is, it's a person who makes a science of studying trees.)

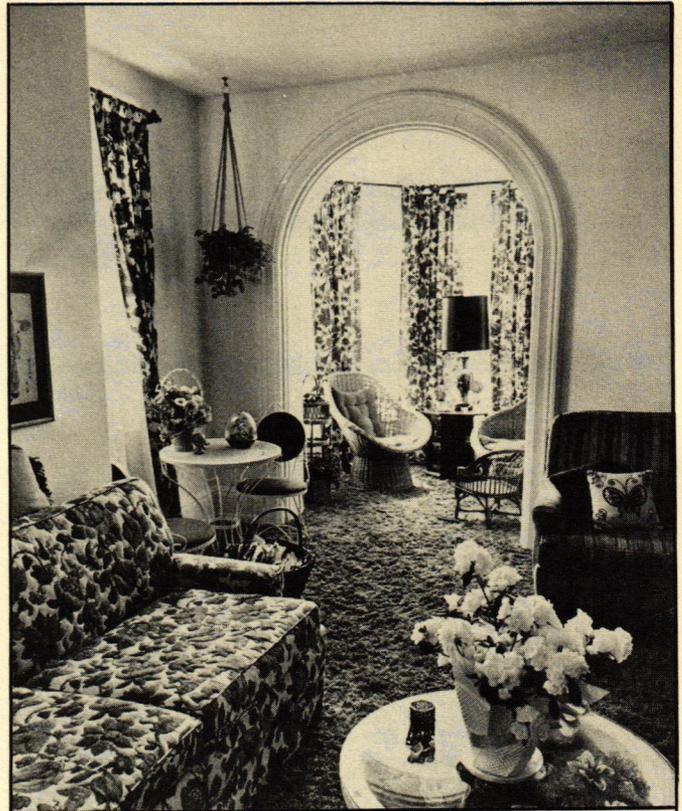
FUTURE RESTORATION projects include tuck-pointing the exterior, hanging antique shutters, and transforming the carriage house into a guest wing.

"It seems as though we'll never catch up with the basic maintenance," sighs Karen. "The porch needs to be raised this year, and the first floor is sagging. Last year we finally installed storm windows. But we've been very cautious about making any changes. We have a piece of tangible history, and we'd hate to destroy any of it."

We're sure Abe Lincoln would approve.



Dining room is furnished with antiques and family heirlooms.



East bay room seen through archway from parlor is used as a garden nook and is furnished with comfortable wicker.

Anne Flaherty is a feature writer and section editor for the Moline Daily Dispatch. Old houses, she says, are her favorite subject. Anne also is a needle-point designer specializing (naturally) in old houses and barns.

Mix Your Own Wood Stain



PEOPLE WITH A LOVE FOR FINE WOOD have a natural aversion to wood stains. Adding color to a wood artificially seems like a sacrilege. But there are times when stains are unavoidable...such as when a restoration calls for patching new wood into old and you've got to match the color and shading of the old wood as best you can.

SIMPLEST WAY TO APPROACH A STAINING JOB, of course, is to use commercially available stains right from the can. The best type is "penetrating oil" stain. This does not carry a pigment and therefore won't obscure the natural grain of the wood.

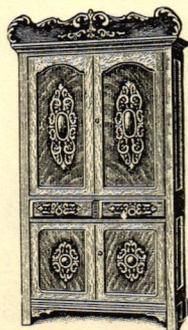
THE ABSOLUTELY WORST MATERIAL you can use is a varnish stain. This is a combination of varnish and color, and tends to leave an opaque, lifeless film on the wood. Might as well cover it with Formica.

THE PROBLEM with commercially prepared stains on matching jobs, of course, is

that it's just dumb luck if you happen to find a stain that gives an exact match just as it comes from the can. More often than not, you'll have to mix up a stain to your own specifications.

IF YOU DON'T NEED A DEEP, DARK SHADE, you can start by blending commercial stains. With three shades—Mahogany, Maple and Walnut—you can create just about any color. For example, you can make brown mahogany by adding walnut to maple. (Commercial mahogany stain is always reddish.) Cherry can be made by adding maple or walnut/maple to mahogany. Any of these mixtures can be lightened by thinning with turpentine.

GREATER VARIETY OF SHADES can be obtained when you mix your own stains from scratch, for these can be made as dark as you require. Start with two tubes of pigment ground in oil: burnt umber (a very dark brown) and burnt sienna (a pinkish red). Mix small amounts together with turpentine until you find the desired shade. Then add 4 tablespoons of Japan drier for each ½ pint of stain. Some cabinetmakers prefer a carrier made of equal parts of turpentine, benzol and boiled linseed oil—as long as lacquer won't be used over the stain. Some wood finishers swear by aniline dye stains. They come in two types—water soluble or alcohol soluble—but they are not carried in most paint stores. ❀❀❀



Running Electrical Wire



By James R. McGrath

OLD HOUSES were not designed for the miracles of all-electric living. While that may be a blessing in some ways, there are certain minimum standards of convenience and electrical safety you want your house to meet. A renovation of an old electrical system can be an expensive—and harrowing—process.

IN THIS ARTICLE we'll review one of the most vexing aspects of an electrical renovation—running wires through an old house. Whether you are doing the work yourself or having it done for you, these tips can be valuable. Electricians who are unfamiliar with old houses will often insist that wire can't be run between certain points...or that some ornate plasterwork will have to be hacked away...or that running exposed surface wiring is the only way a job can be accomplished.

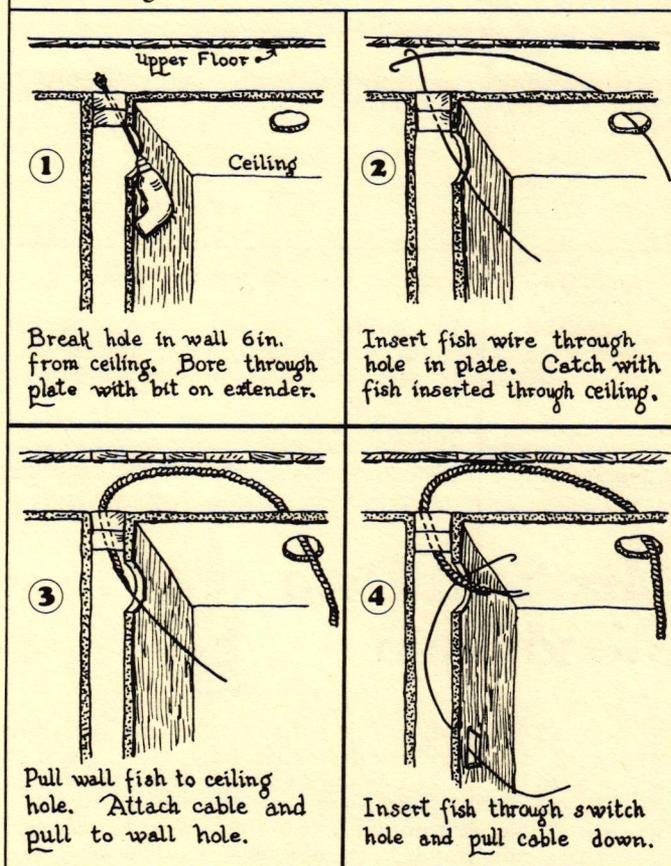
BY STUDYING THE ANATOMY OF YOUR HOUSE—and planning exactly where the wire is to run—you'll be prepared for the "it can't be done" arguments. The easiest (and cheapest) way to run wire is through the "secret passages" built into your house—the pipe chases, vents, crawl spaces, etc. A guide to finding these hidden passages was contained in an article in the January 1974 issue of *The Journal*.

MANY ELECTRICIANS hate to work on old houses because the bulk of the work isn't electrical; it's more like carpentry. To run wire through partitions, under floors, behind walls and over ceilings requires an intimate knowledge of the innards of a house. That's why the two most important tools in running wire in an old house are not pliers and wire cutters, but rather plaster chisel and fish wire.

THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES are based on the assumption that you're doing electrical work yourself (local codes permitting). But even if you're not familiar enough with electricity to handle 110-volt and 220-volt wiring, the same wire-running techniques also apply to such low-voltage applications such as doorbells, intercoms and hi-fi systems where there is no safety hazard involved.

THE FIRST RULE OF RUNNING WIRE IS: Always have a helper. My own experience has taught that having 4 hands on the job rather than 2 doesn't

Installing Wall Switch: Wire Parallel to Joists

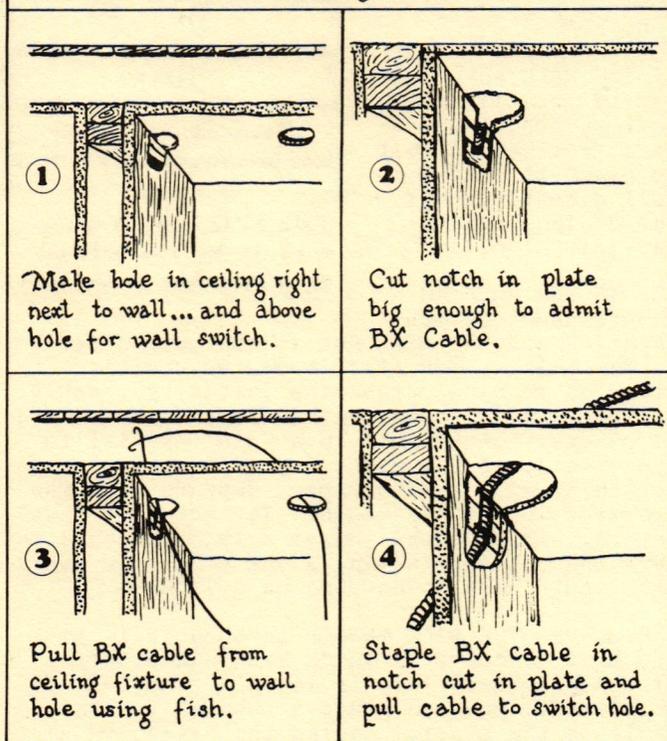


just make a job twice as easy. There are some wire snaking operations that are simply impossible to do by yourself. So before attempting any complicated wire running, be sure you have lined up the spouse or friend for help.

Going Fishing

KEY TO RUNNING ELECTRICAL CABLE in an old house is learning how to use fish wire (sometimes also called a "snake"). Electricians' fish wire is steel tape about 3/16 in. wide and 1/16 in. thick. It is flexible enough to go around corners, yet stiff enough not to buckle when being pushed through

Method #2 for Running Switch Wire



partitions. Fish wire is inexpensive, so you should have at least two long ones (about 30 ft.) and a couple of short ones (10 ft.)—plus a 4-ft. "hooker"—on hand if you are getting involved with any extensive projects.

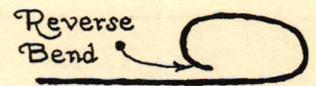
THE THEORY OF USING FISH WIRE is simple enough. If you want to run BX electrical cable between points A & B in a partition, you simply break open small holes at A and B. Fish wire is pushed in at A and shoved into the partition until you (or your helper) can see it through the Point B hole. BX cable is then attached to the end of the fish wire at B and the fish is pulled back at A. The cable is threaded through the partition as the fish is withdrawn. Simple!

OF COURSE, reality is seldom as simple as theory. There are dozens of different obstacles lurking inside ceilings, floors and walls just waiting to snag your fish wire. A fish wire can hang up on a piece of lath, a chunk of old plaster, bridging, firestops, existing electrical wire—and even abandoned fish wire! (During a recent ceiling restoration, I found a highly serviceable 50-ft. fish between the joists that some long-departed electrician had abandoned after getting it impossibly snagged in some bridging. You could almost hear his cuss words as he tried to work it loose!)

BEYOND A FEW HINTS THAT I'LL PASS ALONG, about the only other counsel one can offer on using fish wire are the restorer's two stand-bys: Patience and Persistence.

BEFORE SENDING A FISH WIRE INTO A PARTITION, make sure you've made a neatly rounded hook on the end (this is a two-plier operation).

By putting a good reverse bend on the end you'll help avoid snags when pulling back on the fish.



FISH HAVE A PRONOUNCED CURL in them because they are stored rolled up. This curl can be made to work for you. Orienting the curl in one direction tends to put the hook along one specific surface in a passage. If you hit a



Curl carries fish into blockage. Try again!



Turning fish over puts hook against opposite surface. Push on!

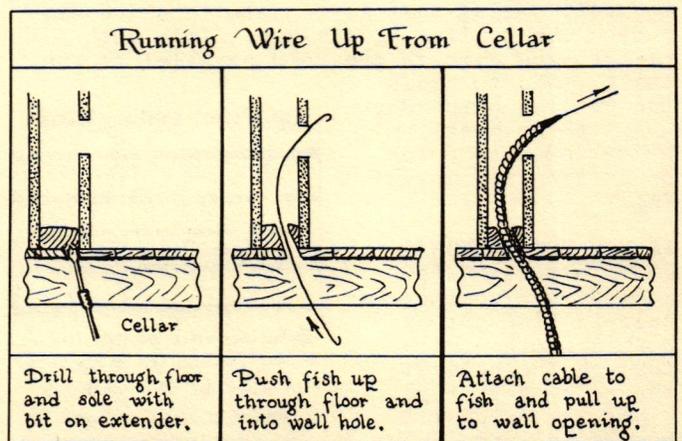
blockage, withdraw the fish and turn it over so the curl is facing in the opposite direction. This maneuver will force the hook to the opposite surface and will often take your fish by the obstacle.

THE OTHER TRICK TO USING FISH is developing the art of the wiggle. Often a fish can't be pushed by an obstacle with brute force. But by wiggling and shaking it—along with steady pressure—you can make the hook on the end jump around the obstruction.

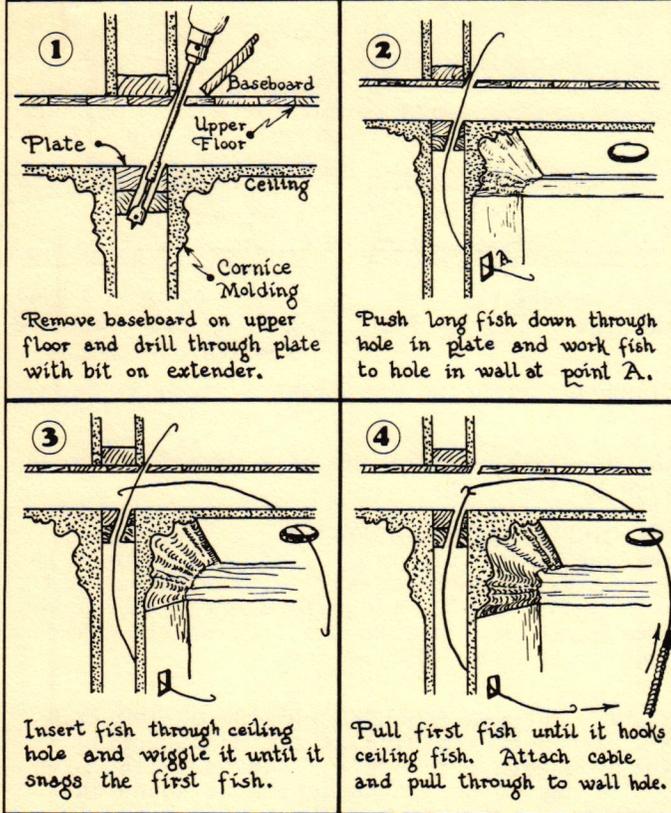
WHEN THE RUN INVOLVES LINKING UP TWO FISH (as in the drawing at the upper left), even more patience is required. You have to depend on a combination of sound and touch to determine when the two fish are in contact, and then carefully withdraw one so that the two hooks link together.

AS A LAST RESORT, if you find you can't get a fish beyond a certain point no matter what you try, you can always open the partition at that point. It's not an elegant solution, but you get at the problem quickly. And it is often better to spend 1 hour patching a hole—after having solved the problem—than to spend an hour in utter frustration trying to force a fish by an obstacle that just won't yield.

BESIDES FISH WIRE, other tools you'll need for running electrical cable are a hammer, a cold chisel (for hacking plaster), a keyhole saw (for cutting lath), and a power drill with carbide-tipped bits (for drilling in plaster),



How To Run Cable Around Ornate Plaster Ceiling Cornice

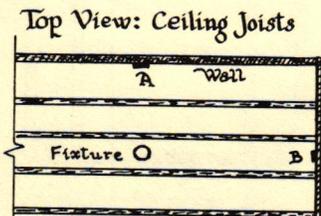
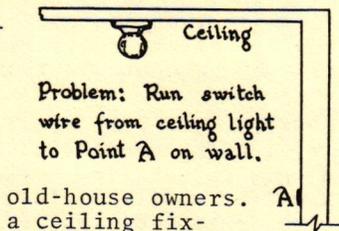


spade bits (for boring beams) and a bit extender. And of course you'll need your standard kit of plaster patching tools.

Planning The Run

BEFORE SETTING HAMMER to plaster, consider all possible ways to get cable between the starting point and end point. For example, take the problem shown at the right—a common one for old-house owners. To add a wall switch to a ceiling fixture, you have to run wire from ceiling to wall. First task is to note in which direction the ceiling joists run. It's much simpler to run wire in the void parallel to the joists than to cross the ceiling perpendicular to the beams—which requires a lot of cutting and notching.

IF YOU DON'T KNOW in which direction the joists run, you may be able to find out by probing with a wire through the hole at the ceiling fixture. Otherwise, you will have to do some prob-



To install wall switch for ceiling fixture, it's simpler to run wire to B—parallel to joists—than to Point A which requires crossing joists.

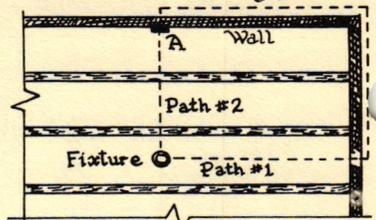
ing with a nail or drill (holes can be readily patched with spackle).

IF YOU HAVE any lee-way in locating the wall switch, obviously it will be easiest to place it on the wall directly under one of the between-joists voids.

BUT IF YOU HAVE NO choice about switch location and the wire has to run perpendicular to the joists, you still have two choices. Instead of running across the joists, you could select Path #1 shown in the diagram above. The wire comes to the wall in a void parallel to the joists, then crosses the wall studs to the switch location. The choice depends upon the construction of the house. The across-the-wall method, although the longer path, does have the advantage of eliminating a lot of ceiling work that would have to be done on a ladder.

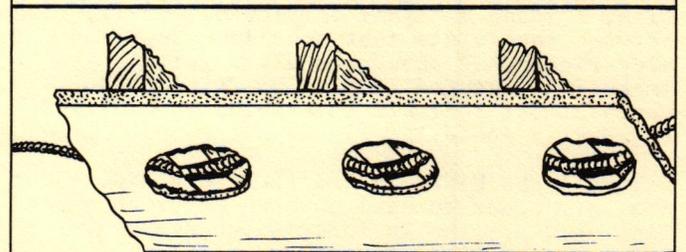
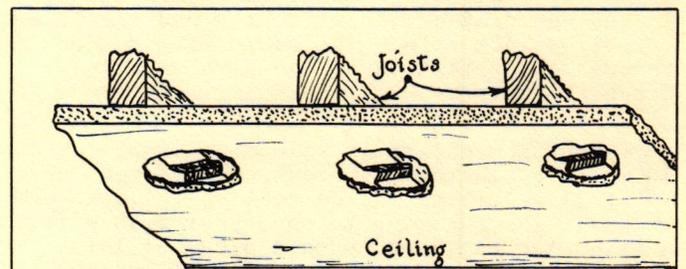
THE ACROSS-THE-WALL METHOD is especially attractive if there is thick lath and plaster, plus a baseboard that is readily removed. In this event, you can gouge a channel for the cable in the plaster behind the baseboard and not have to worry about a lot of patching because the baseboard will conceal the cable. Crossing the ceiling joists is also simplified if you are working on the top floor. In this case, you can usually take the cable up and over through the attic or crawl space.

Top View: Ceiling Joists



Path #1 to Point A allows wire to be run parallel to joists, then across wall.

James R. McGrath is a member of The Old-House Journal's board of technical consultants. He is also a personnel executive with one of the Fortune 500 firms.

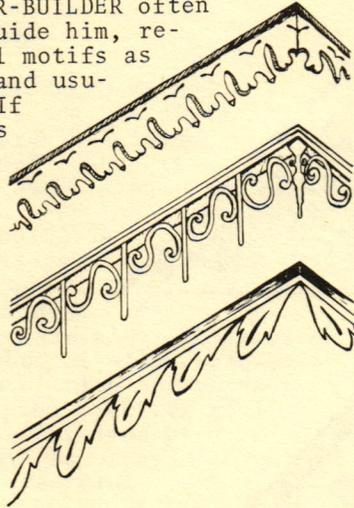


Running Wire Perpendicular to Ceiling Joists

the immensely popular Greek Revival style with its horizontal, masculine line was not sufficiently decorative, so did many local carpenters. They may have simply rebelled against the plain box-house within their limits of architectural capabilities or their client's financial means.

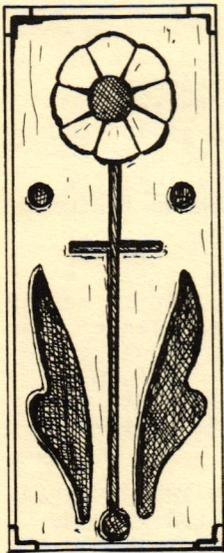
THE LOCAL CARPENTER-BUILDER often let imagination guide him, re-creating classical motifs as they remembered them, and usually mixing periods. If classical knowledge was limited, they created flowers, sunrises, unique shapes of their own liking, and sometimes even religious or sexual symbols of a naive sort.

THEY USED SAWN WOOD alone, or in combination with turned or chiseled ornaments if the budget permitted. Often the wood they used was



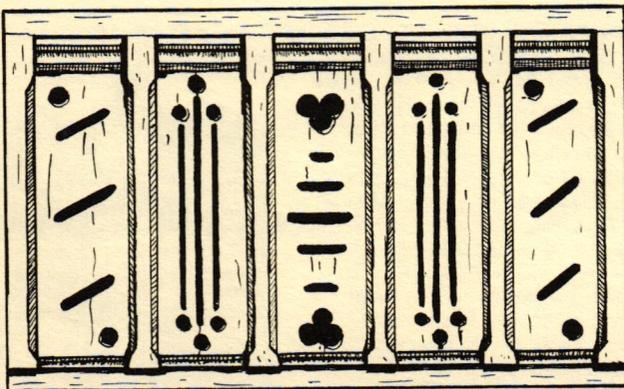
left over from the actual house they had built.

A FAMILIARITY WITH THE Victorian heritage we have left to us today gives some knowledge of the wealth of ideas that found their way onto many houses from grand to simple. In many of these, sawn wood ornamentation is the distinguishing feature of certain styles, many of which are found exclusively in just one part of the country.



THE HUDSON RIVER AREA OF New York in particular, and much of upstate New York featured many of the aforementioned Downing and Calvert Vaux inspired houses. Downing popularized the

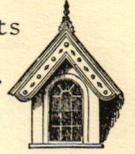
verandah, and great detail is concentrated on the verandah, gables and eaves of these houses.



THE RATHER AUSTERE ITALIAN villa style took on a different look in this area. Wood ornamentation was added and became more and more fanciful. The use of large, decorative brackets under the cornice gave this Americanized Italian style the name "Hudson River Bracketed."

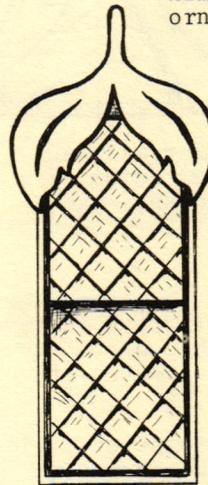


THE ALPINE CHALET style recommended by Downing as being "quaint in ornaments and details" depended on carved wood cut-outs or graceful shapes on the bargeboards on steeply sloped roofs for its style. The fact that most carpenter-builders had never seen an Alpine chalet probably accounted for the fact that they could add these Swiss-style details freely to houses in completely different proportions and shapes from a chalet.



WHILE ANOTHER TASTE-MAKER of the Victorian era, Charles Locke Eastlake, was influencing both interior and exterior design with his Gothic Revival in England, Victorian Gothic became a popular American style. Popular periodicals spread news of impressive buildings being built in this style. Once again the carpenter-builder took what appealed to him and incorporated it into his ornamentation. Simple houses

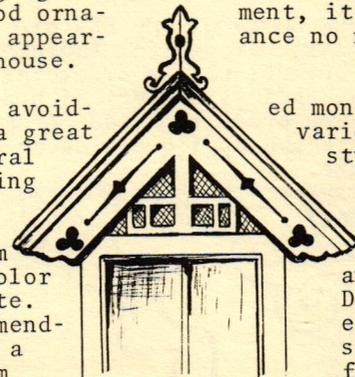
around the country often featured a trefoil or quatrefoil in vergeboard, gable or porch trim. Wood trim adorned pointed gothic windows, or as in the illustration at the left, cut-out leaf forms topped diamond shaped window panes. These decorative hoods make the windows of the Vermont cottage on which they are found appear taller and pointed.



OUT OF THESE ADAPTATIONS came a style known as Carpenter's Gothic. Usually a box-like house with high peaked roofs, it was distinguished by very fanciful wood trim, somewhat

resembling Gothic forms. Differing from other wood trims in that it usually painted dark colors against a lighter house, the trim was curved, swagged, scrolled or lacy. Meriting the term "gingerbread" more than any other type of wood ornament, it gave a doll-house appearance large the house.

VICTORIANS avoided only with a great architectural variety of colors. were seldom monotone color rarely white. Vaux recommended tones with a darker trim



ed monotony not variety of styles but a wide paint var- Houses painted a and were Downing and ed earth slightly for country

houses. The use of colors found in the surrounding landscape was one school of thought but just as often fanciful combinations such as pink with red trim were used. Paint colors were used to point up the rich details of the house. Sawn wood ornaments were often painted two shades of gray in city houses.

SOME OF THE MOST imaginative uses of wood ornament can be found on the decorative board covering the projected portion of a gabled roof, called a vergeboard or a bargeboard. Decorative wood pieces were also added in the triangle at the top. Starting with plain wood boards, usually 1 or 2 inches thick (Downing specified 2" stock) the carpenter, with saw and drill, set out to add the finishing touches to his handiwork. With a bandsaw he would cut patterns on the edges of the boards. Having shaped the outer edges, he could go on to create more complex patterns by cutting away some of the middle of the board.

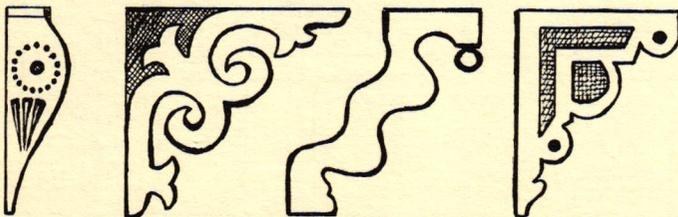
WITH BRACE AND BIT, he bored holes—in many fanciful combinations. For example, 4 holes grouped together became a quatrefoil—or with a slot-stem added the 4 holes could become the head of a flower.

MORE ELABORATE HOLE patterns were created by using a drill and keyhole saw to cut slots, squares, diamonds, and curves. Sometimes more than half the wood was cut away—the remainder forming delicate wood tracery.

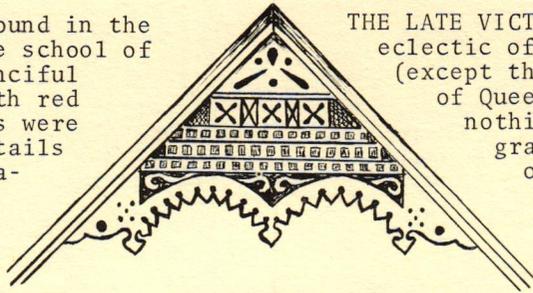
FOR GREATER DIMENSIONAL EFFECT, the carpenter used the applique technique—cutting a pattern from a board and then nailing the cut-out to another board. Very elaborate effects were created using this build-up process.

TOWARD THE END OF THE 1800's, the stick-style ornament became very popular. Economics undoubtedly played a part, because less drilling and sawing was required on the carpenter's part. This style also appealed to the thrifty carpenter, for he could use all of the leftover scraps of wood to put the final ornamental touches on the house.

MOST PATTERN BOOKS OF THE ERA did not illustrate many bracket designs therefore the local carpenter-builder had to create his own patterns. The endless variety of brackets that resulted show every technique of scrollwork, holes, slots and applique used on other areas of the house.

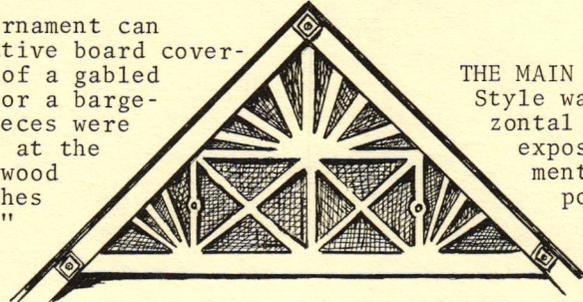


THE LATE VICTORIAN QUEEN ANNE STYLE, most eclectic of all, combining so many styles (except the architecture of the period of Queen Anne which it had virtually nothing to do with) was tall and graceful. Some of the loveliest ornamental wood porch decoration can be found on these houses.

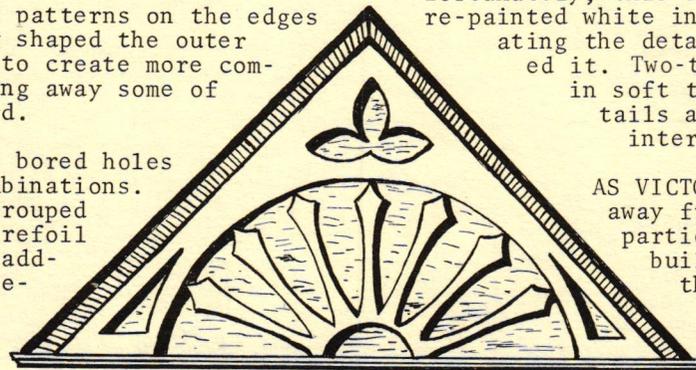


QUEEN ANNE and elements of the Swiss chalet combined to form a mode known as "Stick Style."

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTIC OF THE Stick Style was the arrangement of horizontal and vertical timbers, semi-exposed. Geometric stick arrangements often adorned gables and porches. Wood ornaments, scrolled and pierced, ran along the bottom of horizontal timbers and beneath windows and cornices. Unfortunately, this style has too often been re-painted white in modern times, obliterating the details which had distinguished it. Two-tone painting, particularly in soft tones, picks out the details and retains the visual interest.



AS VICTORIANS WENT WEST, further away from the sources of these particular styles, carpenter-builders depended more on their imaginations. Exotic Far Eastern touches on gables and eaves, and Chinese porch railings are not uncommon features of far western Victorian houses.

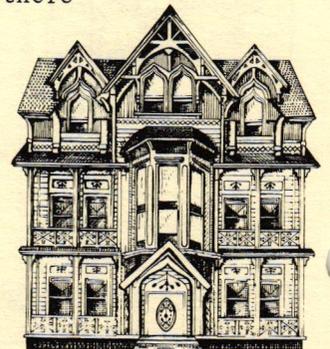


THE SAN FRANCISCO AREA still retains a wealth of Victorian houses. Built mostly with "gold" money, even the average "workman's" house has an enormous amount of decorative detail. Using native California redwood, carpenters freely copied motifs from the most elegant homes onto ordinary city houses.

ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR STYLES IN THE BAY AREA is an Italian villa type constructed of wood. Queen Anne and Stick Styles are numerous often with an Eastlake-type motif. Possibly inspired by the beauty of the sun over the San Francisco Bay, carpenters of the area used sunbursts and sunrise motifs in profusion.

SHOWING THE RISE OF INTEREST in restoring these old San Francisco houses, there is a new firm in the area that specializes in re-creating the elaborate wood ornament used on these houses. They are San Francisco Victoriana, 606 Natoma Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

We hope there will soon be more firms that re-create wood ornament around the country for us to report in The Journal.





✓ Williamsburg Catalog

Not only does the catalog of Williamsburg reproductions provide a source for obtaining a huge variety of furniture and decorative accessories for the home—it is also a lovely book to browse through. It begins with an historical essay on Colonial Williamsburg and attractive color photos of the restorations. The furniture collection is prefaced by a review of the styles reproduced and an illustrated glossary of terms from "apron" to "wainscot." Fabrics, bedspreads and wall coverings receive the same careful attention, and the mystery of measuring and ordering is dispelled by careful instructions and illustrations. Included are lighting fixtures, hardware, ceramics and glassware, and gift items such as prints, historical books, and the famous Williamsburg dried flowers. Complete price lists and an index is provided.

Interior and exterior paints are displayed in color. An interesting and esoteric item is a full or half hide of leather. A book that could solve a lot of future gift-buying problems, it also makes a terrific present for yourself. "Williamsburg Reproductions — Interior Designs for Today's Living." \$2.95 post-paid from Craft House, Williamsburg, VA 23185.

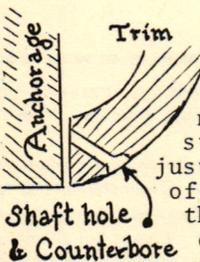
Connecticut's Old Houses

This 76-page softcover book will interest anyone who is restoring an Early American home. While concentrating on old Connecticut houses, much of the information on construction techniques and materials is relevant to New England houses generally. With the great amount of detail in the text, the reader only wishes there were more illustrations. "Connecticut's Old Houses" can be ordered for \$2.50 from: Pequot Press, Old Chester Road, Chester, Conn. 06412.

Restoring & Re-Creating Sawn Wood Ornament

ONE NICE THING about sawn wood ornamentation is that it is easy to restore. Its original popularity derived from the fact that the carpenter could cut and install it at the building site—which made this type of ornament inexpensive.

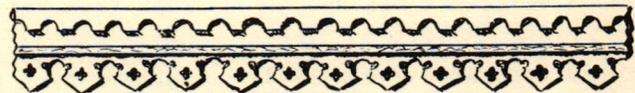
IF THE TRIM HAS SMALL PATCHES OF ROT, you may be able to salvage the original by using specialized marine repair products (see The Journal, May 1974, p. 2).



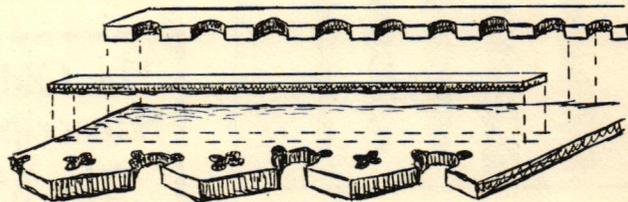
PIECES THAT ARE LOOSE can be re-secured with strategically located nails or screws. Some 4" (or longer) screws give maximum holding power. To install, drill a hole in the trim just big enough to pass the shank of the screw and counterbore so that screwhead is below surface of the wood. If wood in the anchorage is tough, you may also want to drill a pilot hole for the screw threads. A power screwdriver makes screwing into tough wood easier, as will lubricating the threads with soap. Cover screwhead with putty before painting.

TO DUPLICATE MISSING TRIM, most patterns can be closely matched using only a sabre saw and a portable drill, shaping replacement pieces from standard 1" or 2" pine lumber. If you can't match the original exactly, the important thing with exterior trim is to duplicate the mass and rhythm of the original. As long as you can fill in vacant spaces with reasonable facsimiles, very few people will ever detect the new

work. Seemingly complex detail can be built up from simple pieces. For example, this ornate sculpted gingerbread



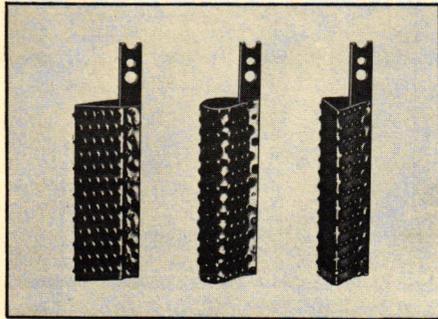
can be duplicated from three pieces of 1" pine stock that are shaped with sabre saw and drill:



WHERE PAINT IS PEELING BADLY, thoroughly remove loose flakes with putty knife and wire brush. If wood has been unpainted for a long time, it would be a good idea to saturate it with a pentachlorophenol wood preservative. The preservative will retard rot, provide water repellency and act as primer for the paint. Special attention should be paid to flat surfaces and areas that trap water.

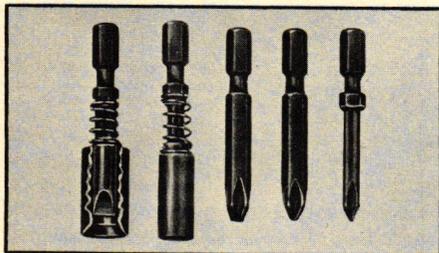
Painting trim is such a laborious task that you want to do the best possible job the first time so you don't have to re-do the job in 18 months. Be sure to use a high-quality paint and apply carefully in accordance with manufacturer's directions.

Products For The Old House



Power Rasps

Here's an inexpensive way to add versatility to your sabre saw. Inserting these sabre rasps in your saw converts it to a power filer. Ideal for cleaning up rough edges left by sabre-saw cuts. Three-part set includes a flat rasp for finishing straight lines and rectangles, a round shape for curves and round corners, and a wedge shape for sharp corners. Tools have 180 teeth that are said to produce smooth finish on wood, wallboard and plastics without clogging and without ever requiring sharpening. Set No. 1600M is \$2.98 postpaid from Arco Tools, 421 W. 203 St., New York, NY 10034.



Quickie Power Screwdriver

If you own a variable-speed drill, you can have a power screwdriver for just a few dollars more. This power bit set contains two flat bits with screw holders for #4 through #14 slotted screws—plus #1, #2 and #3 Phillips head bits. All you have to do is slip a bit into your drill chuck and you are ready to drive screws—with electricity providing most of the muscle. Set No. 720M of 5 power screwdriver bits is \$3.45 postpaid from Arco Tools, 421 W. 203 St., New York, NY 10034.

Source Of Plastering Know-How

FOR SOME REASON unknown to us, there is more mystery about the plasterer's art than any other building trade. There is a conspicuous lack of books on the subject—and the home handyman manuals gloss over wet plasterwork very rapidly. Apparently it's a lot easier to write about gypsum board.

At last we have found a plastering text that we can wholeheartedly recommend to The Journal's readers. The book, "Plastering Skill and Practice," is crammed with the kind of detailed, trade-secret information you'll wish you knew years ago. To acquire this kind of know-how 100 years ago, you would have had to apprentice yourself to a master mason for 4 years.

One reason for the book's clarity is that it is designed primarily as a textbook for schools teaching the plastering trade. As a result, the language is simple...but the presentation of information is thorough and easy to understand.

The book starts with an illuminating section on the characteristics of lime and plaster of paris, and goes on to give explicit directions for the

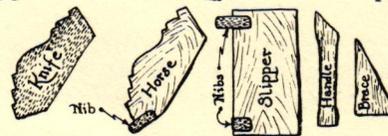
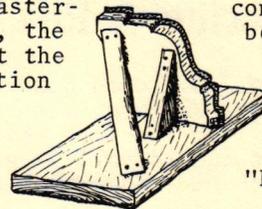
preparation of lime-plaster mixes. Also extremely valuable for those who have been struggling along with tools available from the local hardware store is the section on plastering tools. Chances are you'll find tools that you didn't know existed—but which will solve problems you've already faced.

Of particular interest to restorers will be the chapter on ornamental plasterwork. It contains step-by-step instructions on how to create every type of cornice and run-in-place molding—including directions on how to make your own running mold. Very little space is devoted, however, to the making of cast plaster moldings...a small defect in an otherwise excellent and comprehensive book.

As an added bonus, the book is well-produced, which is becoming all too rare in book publishing. Paper and binding are of high quality, and illustrations are numerous and instructive.

"Plastering Skill and Practice" can be ordered for \$10.95 from: American Technical Society, 848 East 58th St., Chicago, Illinois 60637.

--R. A. Labine



Assembled Cornice Mold & Components

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