

THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

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Renovation And Maintenance Ideas For The Antique House

Bathrooms In The Old House

by Carolyn Flaherty

THE BATHROOM can be a real problem for the old-house restorer. Since many old houses didn't even have bathrooms in their previous life, it is sometimes a room that cannot be restored. The problem is more of relating it in general appearance to the rest of the house.

WHILE IT IS often easier and preferable to the old-house owner to have a completely modern bathroom, there are those who do not like the impact of a modern room in an old house. There is a great deal of available information for the planning and decoration of the modern bathroom and, therefore, there is no need to repeat any of it in this article. Rather, this is an effort at assisting the old-house owner who wants to retain or re-create a functional room with an ambiance related to the rest of the house.

THERE WAS, of course, no such thing as an Early American bathroom. Therefore there are no reproduction toilet articles that are not gimmicky. The sight of the valiant U. S. eagle adorning a cutesy plastic-pine "Colonial" toilet seat cover is accompanied by the apparition of early statesmen whirling in their



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Coming Next Month

RESTORING A LONDON ROW HOUSE

respective graves. The little gold eagle on every practical and decorative object has become as much of a nuisance as the city pigeon.

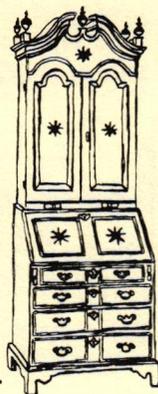
A BATHROOM in an Early American house is either a much later addition or converted bedroom with plain twentieth century fixtures. Decoration is therefore the only way to relate the bathroom to the main body of the house. A converted bedroom-to-bathroom usually means a rather large bathroom by modern standards.

COLOR, TEXTURE and pattern are the necessary ingredients. With a good choice of paint, paper and lighting fixtures, the room can be an extension of the style and period of the rest of the house.

WALLS can be papered with one of the many good reproduction wallpapers. Many of these papers come with a vinyl coating that makes them more durable but does not affect their old-fashioned appearance. Stencilled walls will give an Early American look to plaster walls. The patterns can be protected by applying a polyurethane or conventional varnish. The bathroom is a wonderful place to experiment with the stencilling technique because of the smaller size of the room. A small all-over design in a wallpaper or stencilled

(Continued on page 8)

Refinishing Furniture Using The Stuhr Museum Method



By Kent M. Bush, Exhibits Director
Stuhr Museum, Grand Island, Neb.

THE TRADITIONAL METHOD of refinishing furniture is a long and tedious process, involving the removal of the original finish (and sometimes stain), light sanding, and the re-application of stain and finish. There is a faster, better way to renew traditional finishes. Unfortunately, this method does not work with painted or mock-grained items. But it is an excellent method for traditional varnish or shellac finishes.

THE STUHR MUSEUM METHOD uses a mixture of solvents to melt, clean and remix the original finish, flushing off accumulated wax, dirt and grime in the process. The process thus revives the original finish without exposing the actual wood or stain to harsh chemicals or abrasives.

TO MAKE THE REFINISHING SOLUTION, we mix the following solvents in a one-to-one ratio:

Toluene
Methyl Chloride
Acetone
Methanol or Denatured Alcohol
Benzene

WE GENERALLY PURCHASE one gallon of each, and store the mixture in a 5-gal. metal can. (We have yet to find a plastic container that will stand up to this mixture.)

USE A SMALL AMOUNT of the refinisher (about one cup) at a time in a flat metal pan, such as a pie tin. Wet a #0 or #1 steel wool pad with the solution, and lightly scrub the surface using a circular motion. Work in overlapping areas about the size of a dinner plate, working from top to bottom on vertical surfaces. As the finish melts, the steel wool will load up, and continued rinsing of the pad in the solution is required. This part of the process removes the wax, dirt and grime that has built up over the years—and serves to seal up and cover nicks, scratches and alligator checks so common to old furniture.

USING FRESH SOLUTION and #000 steel wool, go over the item, rubbing with the grain. This removes your previous work marks, and picks up the smaller particles of dirt. Follow this with an over-all wipe down using a clean, soft cloth—well saturated with clean solu-

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Editor	R. A. Clem Labine
Decorative Arts Editor	Carolyn Flaherty
Circulation Director	Paul T. McLoughlin
Circulation Assistant	Joan O'Reilly
Midwest Editor	Anne Flaherty
Staff Photographer	James M. Kalett
Contributing Editors	Claire Wood Labine James R. McGrath R. A. Labine, Sr.
Advertising Representative	Curtis Dewees

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tion. This removes all traces of steel wool, and serves to flatten the remaining finish to an even coat. Let the piece stand overnight so the fresh surface will harden.

W E THEN USE PURE TUNG OIL as a protective coat. Rub the oil into the piece using a soft rag, working with the grain. One coat will provide a satin finish; two or more will provide a gloss. Tung oil is superior to varnish or shellac in that it will not chip, crack, or turn white or hazy.

Notes From The Readers...

Danger In Burning Off Lead Paint

To The Editor:

There have been at least three cases of lead poisoning in our area among people who are restoring old houses. The problem arose, apparently, during the removal of old lead-based paint. Using a torch to burn paint off puts lead particles into the air. So does sanding and scraping. These particles are easily absorbed when breathing and swallowing. Children and pregnant women are said to be especially vulnerable to lead poisoning. Among the symptoms of lead poisoning are headaches, dizziness, poor appetite and abdominal pain.

Children and pregnant women should stay away from areas of paint removal. Respirators should be worn; ventilation should be adequate. Other protective steps are showering, washing the hair, rinsing mouth when work is through, throwing dusty work clothes into the laundry, and damp-mopping the work area to get rid of lead-contaminated dust.

Marie Grimaldi
Baltimore, Md.

Saving Two Southern Victorian Fancies

By Claire Wood Labine

"NOTHING IS MORE SATISFYING than to take something which was once beautiful and which is now a pitiful, sad, abandoned eyesore and to restore it to its original state of usefulness and beauty." This is the philosophy of Mrs. Edward Lane, Jr., of Jacksonville, Florida. Beneficiaries of her outlook have been two glorious carpenter-fantasy houses, which have served as inspiration to Jacksonville's thriving restoration-preservation movement.

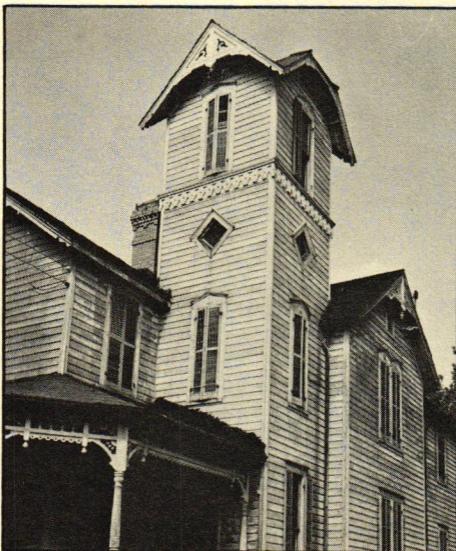
THE RICKER HOUSE on Oak Street had long been part of the collective consciousness of Jacksonville. Built in 1893 by Ernest and Catherine Ricker to accommodate a growing family, the house escaped the catastrophic fire of 1901, which destroyed a major part of the city's Victorian architecture. Mrs. Ricker lived in the house through her 100th birthday, and when she died in 1967 it was sold to the neighboring Presbyterian church. The house stood empty for two years until the church, needing room for expansion but reluc-



Tragedy was barely averted on moving day as tower brushed against overhanging tree.

tant to destroy the building, offered to give it to anyone who would have it moved.

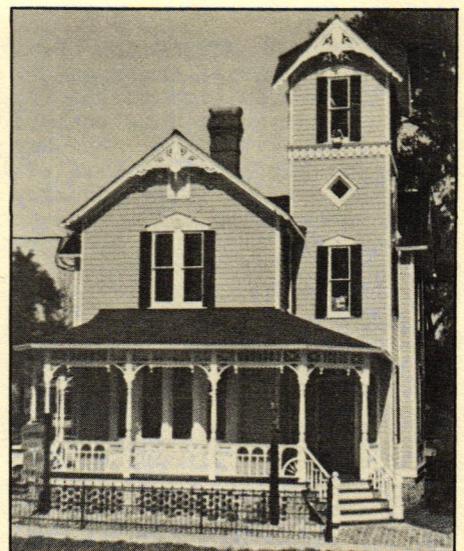
MRS. LANE HAD LOVED the Ricker house from childhood. Sadly, she had observed the house's decline. As it became clear that no one was going to accept the church's offer, Mrs. Lane remarked to a friend that if she were only guaranteed a tenant, she'd under-



Exterior was in dire need of scraping and painting.



Boat wheel motif shows up in porch spindlework.



Safe on new site, the house is now fully restored.

take the move and restoration herself. It so happened that the friend was on the verge of opening a Pappagallo shoe boutique and needed space to rent. The Ricker house was saved.

THE FIRST PROBLEM was where to put the house. Mrs. Lane promptly found a lot on Post St., two blocks away. Next problem was the foundation. She bought bricks from an old house being taken down in another part of town, and had a local mason copy the original foundation brick for brick. The Hygema Moving Co. of Jacksonville navigated the house the two blocks to its new site—the only perilous moment occurring when the tower had to be maneuvered around the branch of a gigantic oak tree.

ONCE SECURE ON ITS NEW FOUNDATION, the house was subjected to only one major change: The original terne metal roof was in bad shape and had to be replaced with asbestos shingles. Floors were sanded, stained and waxed. Walls were replastered; doors and mouldings were sanded and waxed. Outside walls, shutters and gingerbread were all sanded and repainted. They required two coats of primer and two finish coats. Colors selected were yellow for the walls, black for shutters and roof, with the gingerbread accented in white.

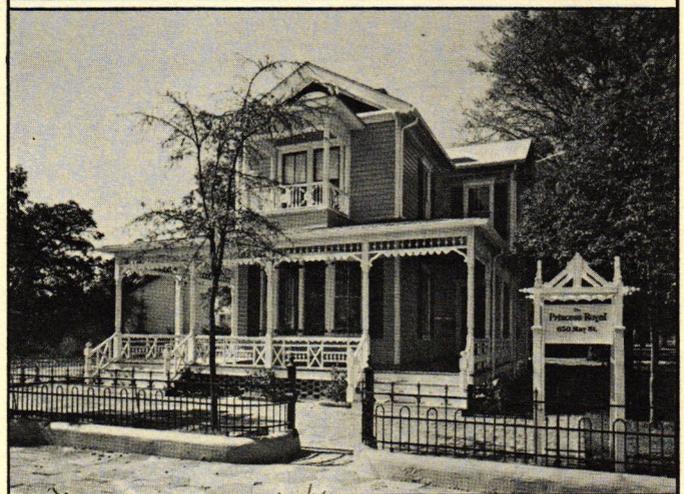
THE ORIGINAL IRON FENCE made the move, too, and after a little scraping and painting was re-united with its wooden friend of 82 years. The brick sidewalk in front of the new site was made from the bricks of the original foundation on Oak St. The steamboat wheel motif in the porch spindlework was repeated in the new brickwork.

INSIDE, the house was re-wired, re-plumbed and air-conditioned without damaging the interior detailing. The most interesting feature inside the house is a circular stairway that winds up through the four-storey tower, narrowing as it goes. Most of the wood in the house is North Florida heart pine...which has proved amazingly resistant to the termites that plague many houses in that part of Florida.

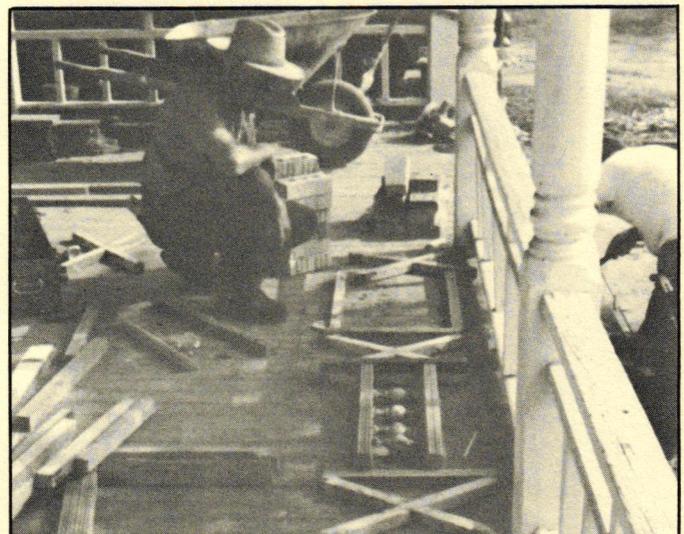
BY 1970, THE HOUSE—now christened the Queen Victoria—was open and self-supporting. In addition to the Pappagallo boutique, other tenants included a tea shop and a handcraft center. Encouraged by the success of her first venture with creative preservation, Mrs. Lane acquired a second abandoned house in 1972. The second restoration was more difficult because the house had been vacant over a longer period of time—and subjected to considerable vandalism.

WHEN FINALLY RESTORED—with the aid of recycled parts—the second house, now called the Princess Royal, also was able to find tenants quickly. One of the original tenants from the Queen Victoria moved into larger quarters in the Princess Royal. Upstairs is the Jacksonville Arts Assembly, which finds the elegant and romantic old house an appropriate setting for its activities.

THESE TWO SUPERB OLD HOUSES prove that thoughtful, tasteful restoration makes good economic sense! ■ ■



The Princess Royal, "pitiful and abandoned," bereft of most of its gingerbread, was restored with salvaged spindlework—like a giant jigsaw puzzle—recycled from three demolished houses.



Worker ponders how to put salvaged spindlework together. To make the task challenging, there were parts from three separate patterns—all jumbled up.

Repairing Lincrusta-Walton

LINCRUSTA-WALTON is a heavy wall covering that was popular for hallways and parlors during the late 19th century. Lincrusta has raised patterns made with steel rollers. The first half of its name derives from its similarity to linoleum; the latter part from the man that invented it. Imported from England and Belgium, it came in large rolls and was soaked in a tub for many hours before applying. Beige in its natural state, it was generally coated with a brownish varnish. No longer available in America, it is an amazingly durable surface and still remains in many old houses. If you have some and a portion is missing or damaged, here is a way to repair it.

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

1. #10 white Plastico (liquid rubber latex)
2. 1 lb. backing compound
3. 1 lb. papier mache compound
(The above items can be purchased at art supply stores.)
4. Wheat paste (used for hanging wallpaper)
5. 3-in. putty knife
6. 3-in. paint brush (cheap)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Select the best area for duplication on your wall where the relief is most pronounced. Be certain that the area selected includes all of the pattern which can be subsequently repeated as often as necessary to fill the missing section.
2. It is recommended that not more than a 12-sq.-in. section mould be attempted.
3. Clean the area selected with soap and water. Dry.
4. Follow directions for use of Plastico and apply to area.
5. Apply first two coats carefully and successively, allowing the first to dry before applying the second. Do not brush over wet application. Apply eight coats according to directions.
6. Mix backing compound and latex to consistency for easy spreading and non-dripping.
7. With 3-in. putty-knife spread over mould-making surface as evenly as possible.
8. When backing compound application is no longer tacky, apply two more coats of latex according to directions.
9. After 48 hours peel mould from wall, and sprinkle with corn starch or talcum powder to prevent mould from sticking together.

10. Wash mould in warm soapy water. If parts of mould have stuck together they may be pulled apart while washing mould.

11. Dry mould and place on smooth surface.

12. Mix papier mache with water being careful to remove all lumps.

13. Press papier mache evenly into mould and allow to dry thoroughly. A hair dryer may be used to hasten drying which will still require several days.

14. When papier mache has dried in mould, you will want to apply sheet of wrapping paper to its surface for added strength. Cover wrapping paper rather than papier mache with wheat paste and turn upside down over mould to affix. (Applying the wheat paste directly to dried papier mache in the mould will soften and perhaps damage it.)

15. Allow to dry.

16. Turn over mould on table and remove from papier mache. You now have a 12-in.-sq. section of Lincrusta to fill the damaged or missing section of wall.

17. Prepare wall area and measure papier mache carefully. Your finished product will be slightly smaller due to unavoidable shrinkage. Adjustments will be necessary in matching the new piece to the original and it will not be perfect.

18. When attaching the new piece to the wall, apply wheat paste to backing as quickly and as carefully as possible. Do NOT handle papier mache more than necessary.

19. The new section may be held in place with pins or small staples while drying in place and should be removed before painting. Small seams may be smoothed by filling with spackle before painting or varnishing.

20. Repeat from #12 on as often as necessary to repair larger areas of missing Lincrusta.

The instructions above were prepared by Agnes Pritchard, plasterwoman, who is associated with San Francisco Victoriana. Specialists in custom-made architectural millwork, San Francisco Victoriana also is a leading West Coast Restoration firm. Although they supply many items for restoring houses, they would like us to point out that they cannot supply Lincrusta-Walton. For more information on what they do have, contact: San Francisco Victoriana, 606 Natoma Street, San Francisco, CA 94103. (415) 864-5477.

Repairing Slate Roofs

By R. A. Clem Labine

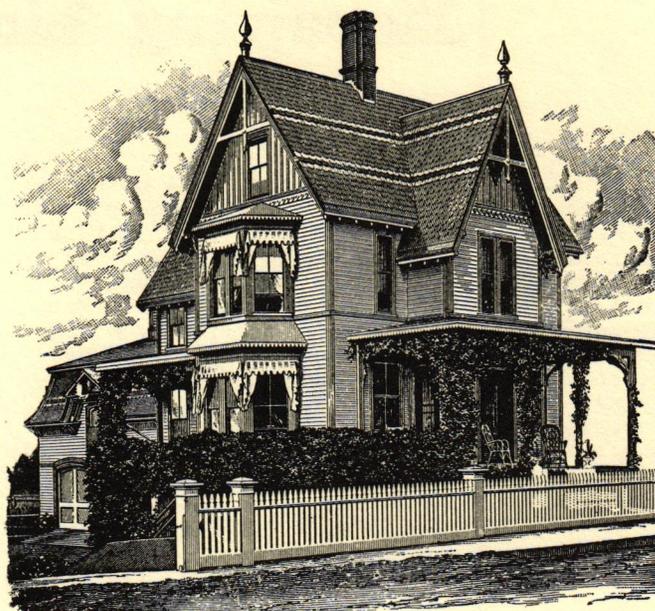
SLATE IS AN ATTRACTIVE AND EXTREMELY durable roofing material. Therefore, if your old house has a slate roof—either showing or else covered by a more "modern" roofing material—every attempt should be made to repair and restore the existing slate. This will probably mean fighting off hordes of roofing contractors who will tell you that it is "impossible" to repair slate and who instead want to sing the praises of the line of asphalt shingles they are pushing this month.

WHILE THE INITIAL COST of repairing a slate roof will often be higher than an overlayment of modern materials, the longer service life of slate usually makes up for this higher cost. And none of the contemporary materials can match the beauty of a well-laid slate roof.

MR. AVERAGE ROOFING CONTRACTOR is probably right on one count: If he insists that it can't be done, then it does mean that he can't do it! Slate is, in fact, a tricky material for roofers who are not experienced in its installation and repair. Many problems that you see today in old slate roofs are not the fault of the material itself, but rather are caused by faulty installation.

LEAKS IN SLATE ROOFS are normally caused by one of two conditions: (1) Deteriorated flashings; (2) Missing slates. If visual inspection doesn't reveal any missing slates, then the flashings are the likely culprit. More about this later.

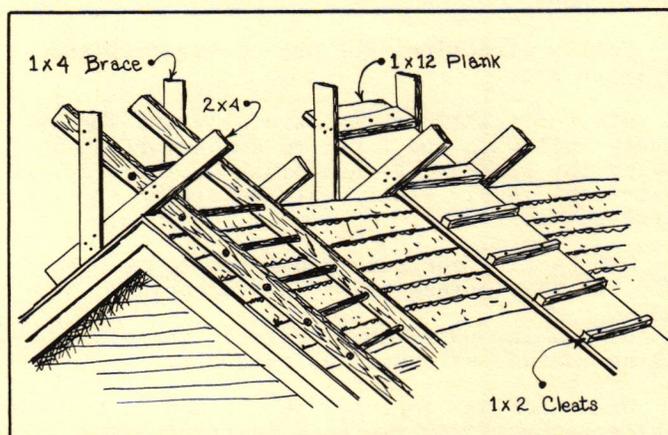
SLATES COME LOOSE usually for one of two reasons: The slate itself has cracked, or the nails holding it have rusted through. Slates are subject to frost damage—especially in the upper half, which is kept damp by the overlapping slate above. Because slate is a natural product—cut from a sedimentary rock—there are liable to be a few slates in a roof that are more porous than the others and thus subject to cracking by absorbing



water. Should a frost follow, the water will freeze and expand, subjecting the slate to mechanical stress.

MORE SERIOUS is the slate that let go because its holding nails rusted through. If it happened to one set of nails, there is the likelihood that it will be happening soon to other slates. This is definitely caused by faulty installation. If the condition becomes serious, it may require lifting all of the old slates and relaying them—this time using copper nails.

MOST OFTEN, however, the problem is just one of replacing a few broken slates. While this is not often thought of as a do-it-yourself job, it can be done by a competent handyperson—who is not afraid of heights! If there are any doubts in your mind, however, you are probably best off seeking out a roofer with experience in handling slate.

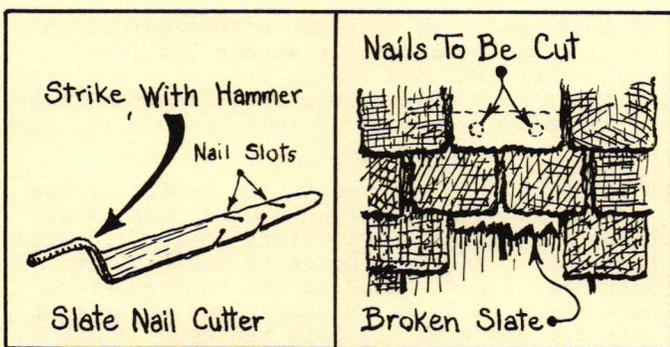


Two types of supports used in roofing repair to provide footing and distribute weight evenly over large area.

SLATE IS A BRITTLE MATERIAL; roofers (or you) should never step directly on the slates—they may break. Experienced roofers use various types of supports to distribute their weight while they are working on the slates.

TO REPLACE A BROKEN SLATE, first step is to remove the remainder of the broken slate and/or the nails that originally held it. This is accomplished with a roofer's tool called (appropriately) a slate nail cutter. If you don't happen to have one of these laying around your toolbox—and you can't buy one at your friendly neighborhood hardware store—a workable version can be fabricated at a local metalworking shop.

SLIDE THE NAIL CUTTER up under the broken slate and hook it around the nail. Strike the cutter with a hammer, moving the cutter sharply downward. This will cut the nails and free the end of the damaged slate.



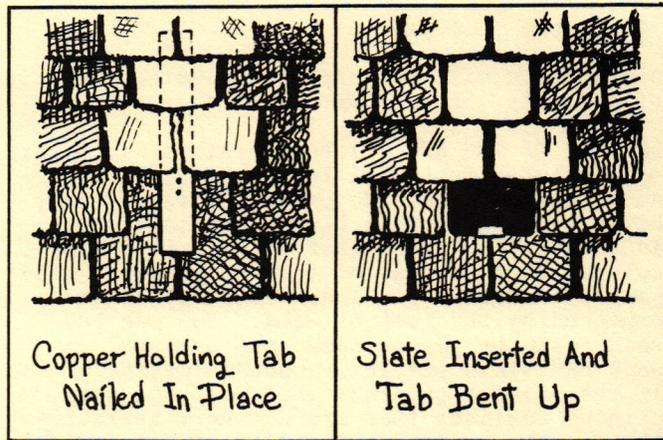
IF THERE'S ONLY A SHORT STUB of slate left, you may also be able to cut the nails by sliding a hacksaw blade up under the old slate and cutting the nails by sawing.

AFTER THE BROKEN SLATE and nails have been removed, a copper holding tab is nailed in the seam between the slates, as shown in the diagram. The copper strip should be at least two inches wide and long enough to extend up under the slates as shown. Be sure to use copper nails. The replacement slate is then slipped into position and the copper tab is bent up to hold the slate in place. Any excess copper strip beyond that needed to form a mechanically secure hook is cut off with tinsnips.

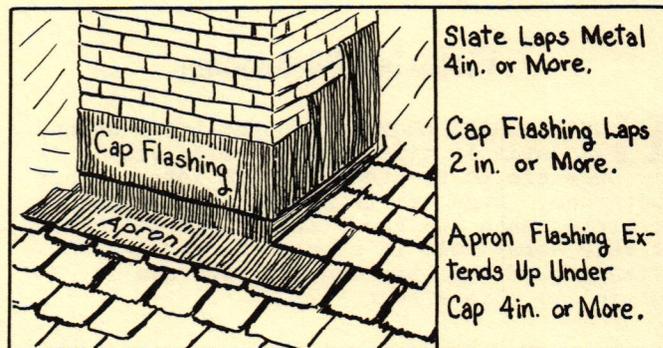
Flashing

LEAKS IN FLASHING often show up as wet spots on walls and ceilings. Inspect the flashings at those points—and above—in valleys, and around chimneys, dormers, etc. Around chimneys the flashing may come loose at the top where it is set into the mortar. Where mortar has loosened and fallen out, it should be repointed. Liberal use of roofing compound or flashing cement will seal small holes and cracks.

IF EXPOSED METAL FLASHING shows signs of rusting, it can be wire-brushed and painted with a good-quality metal primer. The paint coat should be renewed as required to prevent



further rusting. If the flashing in the valley is rusted through or too narrow, some slates will have to be taken up and the flashing replaced. This isn't too difficult in an open valley (where you can see the flashing) but is quite a production with a closed valley (where the slates have been laid over the flashing).



VERY OLD SLATE ROOFS sometimes fail because the holding nails have rusted away. In these cases, the slates may have to be removed and the entire roof re-laid, including the underlay materials. If the decision is made to remove all the slates, you should take advantage of this opportunity to give the roof timbers a thorough inspection. All loose boards should be renailed, and any decayed boards replaced. Before laying down the new roofing felt, the sheathing boards should be swept clean, and protruding nails set in.

ALL SLATES THAT ARE STILL in good condition can be re-used. Use corrosion-resistant large-headed slating nails. Nails should not be driven too tightly—they should barely touch the slate. This is exactly opposite from the technique used in laying wood shingles, where you want the nails driven tight. ■ ■

Slate materials can be purchased from The Structural Slate Company. They have branch offices in 11 major cities around the U.S. For list of offices or other information, contact: The Structural Slate Co., Pen Argyl, Penn. 18072. Telephone (215) 863-4141.

(Continued from page 1)

application will camouflage the irregularities of an oddly shaped room.

SOME OF THE NEW colored bathtubs and other fixtures look well in the "new" Early American bathroom. Major manufacturers have bayberry greens, rich blues, and soft golds in their lines--hues that go well with the colors found in many of the reproduction wall-papers and fabrics. These deep shades are enhanced by the look of wood. You can buy ready-made or custom-made tubs enclosed in wood and sinks set into a wooden cabinet. If the present bathroom includes some worn, painted cabinets that are not very attractive, they can be grained to simulate the appearance of wood.

OBVIOUSLY, REPRODUCTIONS of Colonial lighting fixtures and hardware will help create a traditional look. A bathroom window offers another opportunity to restate the decorating theme. A simple arrangement of white or documentary print fabric in a tie-back or plain Shaker-style (similar to cafe curtains) would be appropriate.

Victorian Bathrooms

HOUSES BUILT AROUND 1850 and later demand an entirely different point of view. It is possible to re-create a late 19th century bathroom. Even if the period you restore to is later than the house itself, it will most likely marry well in character. An understanding of the 19th century bathroom is useful in this effort.

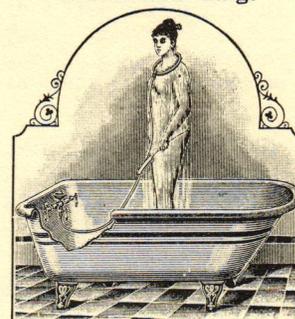
IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE 20TH CENTURY that bathrooms were in general use. As late as the 70's, even in affluent households the zinc tub was still placed in front of the bedroom fire for adults and the kitchen fire for children. Fortunately for the servants who had to fill and empty the large tubs, frequent bathing was thought to bring on lung disease and so the job was generally a weekly procedure.

THE VICTORIANS were also wont to go to great lengths to disguise sanitary fittings with washbasins hidden in dressers, huge hooded baths in wardrobes, and toilets inset into all manner of cabinets. Actually, this latter custom was not new. Fine cabinetmakers like Sheraton and Hepplewhite did some of their finest work when turning out commodes for the wealthy.

EARLY BATHROOMS, with tub, sink and toilet all in one room, were large. Pipes were concealed by boxing in tubs and toilets,

usually with varnished mahogany. Washbasins were set in bureau-like cabinets with marble tops. Other articles of furniture were placed in the bathroom for storage or relaxation--chairs, sofas, bureaus with heavily framed mirrors. Stained glass windows provided both privacy and elegance.

Shower Bath Ring.



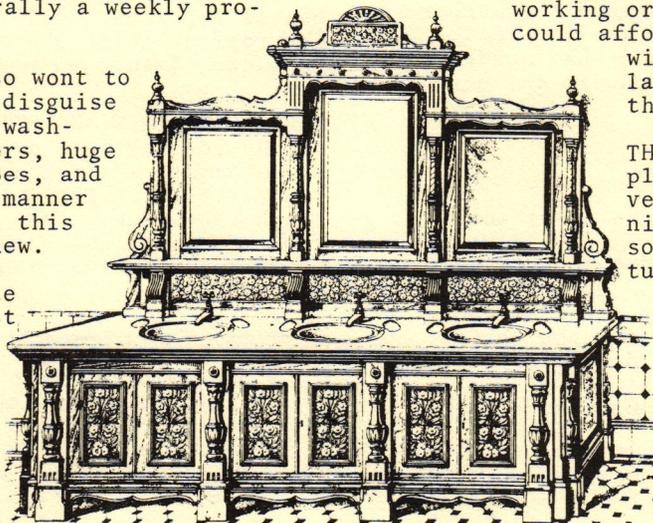
JUST BEFORE THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, a more open look, in the interests of cleanliness, became fashionable. Pipes were exposed so that they could be cleaned more easily and germs could not gather in enclosed spaces. Floors and walls were tiled, and tubs had ball and claw feet. A new innovation was the shower bath.

BY 1900 cast iron bathtubs with a porcelain coating had replaced the wooden box lined with sheet lead and sunken tubs with ornamental tiles were coming into use. Bathrooms tiled in pastel colors were not common until the 1920's.

BATHS WERE OFTEN placed in the center of the room during the Victorian era--a "new" idea being used by many decorators today for large bathrooms. In the nineteenth century, it sometimes didn't occur to the houseowner to have the bath installed any place other than were the old zinc hip-bath had been -- in front of the fire. Plumbing was generally installed in a former bedroom as the house-builder had not thought to make provision for a separate room to hold bathing and toilet facilities.

THE MOST ELEGANT and comfortable bathrooms were designed in the prosperous Edwardian era. King Edward VII, a man much concerned with pleasant surroundings, commissioned the gentleman dapper, one Mr. Crapper, to devise some of the most innovative sanitary fittings and fixtures ever made, then or now. The bathroom Mr. Crapper designed at Sandringham House in England is still in perfect working order. In fact, the few that could afford them were offered a wider choice of tubs, toilets, lavatories and hardware than the many are offered today.

THE TECHNOLOGY of bathroom plumbing has really advanced very little since the beginning of the century, and if some of the elegant, old fixtures were available today as reproductions they would no doubt find a large market. Today's fixtures tend to be less well designed for the body. Tubs are too small, washbasins are too low with the faucets placed so close to the back that you can't get your hands wet, and the hardware is awkward to handle.



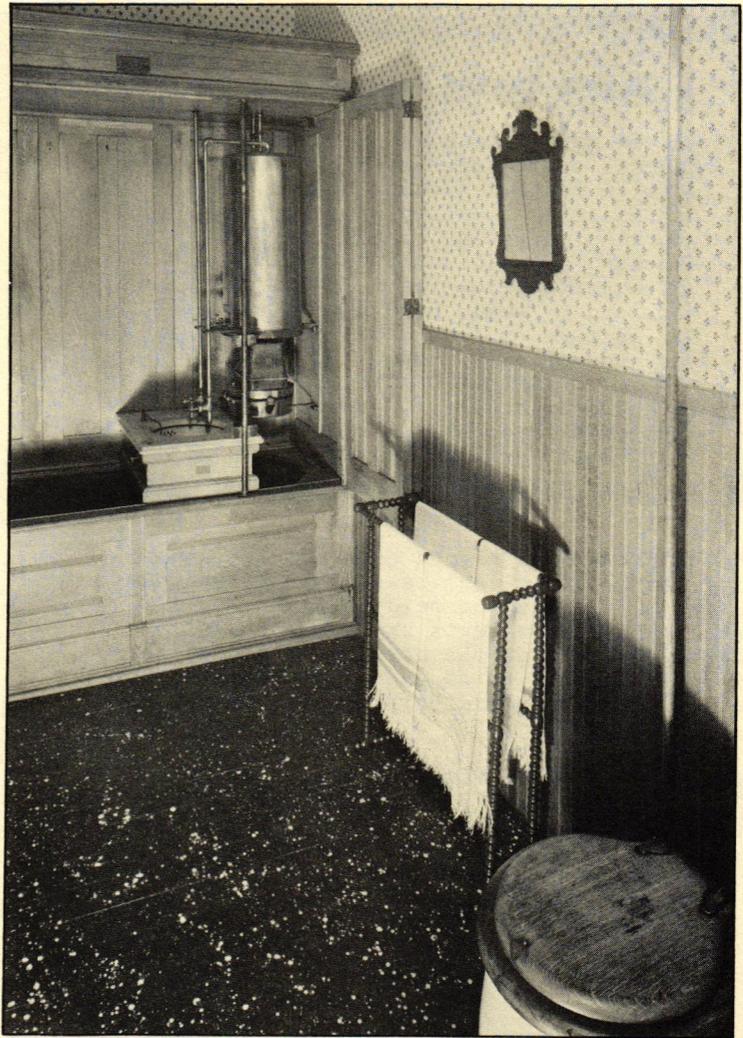
The Doulton & Co. Three Person Lavatory

A Real Victorian Bathroom

The photo at right is of the bathroom in the Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Hartford, Connecticut. Built in 1871, Mrs. Stowe lived in it from 1873 until her death in 1896.

The side walls are papered over tongue-and-groove wainscoting. The floor is spatter-painted in five colors, commonly done in the 19th century. The small cherry mirror belonged to Mrs. Stowe and the spool-turned towel rack is a typical Victorian accessory. The very ingenious contraption on the end wall combines a tin-lined bathtub and sink with a kerosene heater. At the very top is a tank, which feeds the heating tank. The marble sink is on two tracks with a brass pull. Folded doors can be closed to completely hide it from view. The tank toilet (the top is hidden in the picture) is a "front flush" type with the bowl in the shape of an elephant trunk.

The Harriet Beecher Stowe House is part of the Stowe-Day Foundation and is open year-round. Information can be obtained by phoning the Nook Farm Visitors' Center (203) 525-9317. A free folder can be obtained by writing: The Stowe-Day Foundation, 77 Forest Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06105.



Some Suggestions For The Old Bathroom

WHEREVER POSSIBLE, keep the old fixtures and replace or repair parts. The old porcelain fixtures frequently are chipped and stained. Often these can be salvaged by re-surfacing with epoxy, such as the Marshalls' did with their old bathtub (see pg. 11). The two-part epoxy systems are the best. The porcelain first has to be thoroughly cleaned to remove all traces of soap and grime.

THOROUGH WASHING with trisodium phosphate or washing soda, followed by rinsing with mineral spirits will remove both water-soluble and oil-soluble contaminants. Chips in the porcelain have to be filled in with epoxy metal fillers. Then the entire fixture is sanded with wet-and-dry sandpaper to create a "tooth" for the epoxy surface coating. After mixing according to manufacturers' directions, the epoxy material is applied with a brush. A

second coat is normally applied about 24 hr. later after scuff-sanding the first coat. One brand of epoxy that has been used with good results is "Klenk's Epoxy Tub & Tile Finish," manufactured by Zynolyte Products, Compton, Calif. An epoxy finish can be expected to last several years; then it will have to be sanded and new coating applied.

IT MAY BE THAT the old fixtures are awkwardly arranged. A plumber can re-arrange them and perhaps storage space can be added at the same time. An attractive old cabinet or bureau will lend period atmosphere. While looking over the old fixtures, it can also be decided whether the pipes and plumbing are to be exposed or boxed in with wood. Both ways had their decades of popularity.



Some of the bathroom accessories offered in the Sears, Roebuck and Co. Catalog of 1902.

Source For Old Faucets & Parts

If you have difficulty finding old faucets or replacement parts you may want to contact Anthony Dentro. He has built up a nation-wide business by stocking parts and pieces for old faucets. He will also make up parts to your specification. If you are ordering by mail, he'd need a sample of the type of faucet or part you are seeking--or else a detailed drawing. Contact: Anthony Dentro, Dentro Plumbing Specialties, 63-42 Woodhaven Boulevard, Rego Park, New York. Telephone: (212) 672-6882.

THE ESSENTIALS of a good bathroom are simplicity, style and cleanliness. Early bathrooms had as much attention paid to floor, wall and lighting treatments as to the fixtures themselves. It is the care given to all these elements as well as to the decorative accessories that gives an old bathroom its charm.

AS IN ANY OTHER ROOM, a bathroom can be given character and visual interest by emphasizing architectural details and wall divisions. Wood mouldings can be added for finishing at the top of wallpaper, or to divide the walls into panels. Keep wainscoting if you are lucky enough to have it. Probably made of softwood, it will most likely not be worth stripping but can be painted, grained or antiqued. Wallpaper borders can lend an old fashioned effect. Old walls that tend to crack and peel can be covered with a texture paint and accented with ceramic tile borders.

TEXTURES play an important part--real marble, ceramic tile, wood. Granite was a favorite English surface for lavatory tops and slate was often used. Painted imitations of these materials were also quite common. But the modern plastic versions of these materials--plastic marbelized tiles, plastic wood paneling, etc.--will destroy the nostalgic atmosphere.

Source For Little White Tiles

If you have an old-fashioned tiled floor with little white or white and black tiles, you may have an area where some are missing. Tile Distributors has replacement tiles and they will ship them through the mail. They have a 1 in. white hexagon tile and a "spiral weave" which is four white tiles with a black tile center. The minimum order is one square foot. Write to Ron Mirando at Tile Distributors, 7 Kings Highway, New Rochelle, N. Y. 10801. Tel. (914) 633-7200.

STAINED AND LEADED GLASS WINDOWS were used for elegance and privacy in Victorian and Edwardian bathrooms. If you don't have one, and installing a new one is too expensive, a panel over the existing window can be used for the same effect. It is much less expensive than installing a window.

WOOD SHUTTERS are an attractive, sensible way to treat windows as is the Roman shade--a shade that folds accordion-style and pulls up and down like a Venetian blind.

A CERAMIC TILE FLOOR IS the most practical kind for the bathroom. It has the greatest moisture-resistance and is very attractive. It can also be quite expensive. However, a good deal of the cost is for the installation and the competent do-it-yourselfer can save a large portion of the cost by installing it himself. If you have a practical, old-fashioned little-white-tiled floor, you can add a bit of comfort and color with an area rug. But the wall-to-wall carpeting shown today for bathrooms is out of character in the period room. If there is an old wood floor in poor condition, spatter-painting or stencilling can give it a lift. They would have to be coated with a water-resistant polyurethane or conventional varnish.

IF THE BATHROOM does not have a period lighting fixture and adding one is not practical, there are many plain globe types of modern fixtures that look very well with Victorian decoration. Attractive hardware also adds a great deal of charm to the room. The Old-House Journal Buyers' Guide lists many firms who make good reproduction hardware. A wood or brass drapery pole makes an elegant towel rack. An oval Victorian mirror instead of an antiseptic medicine chest mirror makes a world of difference, but then it is necessary to find another old wall-cabinet for the medicine.

WHEN ADDING A NEW BATHROOM to the old-house the fixtures can be installed on one wall to save money; that is, on the "wet wall"--the one that contains the piping. Although this is not always the best arrangement for decoration, it does save a great deal in plumber's fees. When installing a shower, remember that a shower curtain and rod is not only less expensive than glass doors but also more in keeping with the old house.

IF YOU PLAN TO DECORATE in period style then white fixtures are the best choice, as colored ones are a recent innovation. When buying fixtures from a plumber remember that they usually purchase only one brand and if you want another type you will have to study the catalogs of various firms yourself.

CAST IRON tubs with a porcelain finish are the highest priced but the most durable. They hold heat well insuring a comfortable bath and holds a finish well and resists chipping. Steel tubs are almost as good and slightly lower in price. But the new fiberglass-reinforced polyesters are overly sleek in appearance and will scratch easily. ■

An Edwardian Bathroom In Brooklyn

WHEN NORMA AND JIM MARSHALL MOVED into their brownstone in Brooklyn they had an old bathroom with everything in it painted parrot green. They suspected that there might be some nice wood and brass under all that paint. The first step was to win the argument with the local plumber who wanted to take it all out and put in new. The second was to strip off the old paint. The faucets are brass and the roll-rim on the tub and the toilet tank and seat are wood with marble sink and slabs under the sink and tub. The tub had to be re-surfaced.

The sophisticated, appealing bathroom they have today is the result of paint, paper and attention to details. Norma wanted a large-patterned wallpaper reminiscent of the Art Nouveau period. A semi-custom made paper, she was able to pick the colors that filled in the flowers. She picked two of her favorite earth-tone shades--a dark burnt orange and an olive-drab similar to bronze. The wainscoting is painted in the olive-drab. They bought a mixed-in-the-store paint but had to add a little of this and that to match. The outside of the tub, rug, shower curtain and chair are in various shades of the burnt orange-rust color.

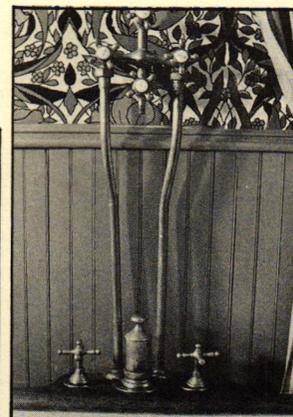
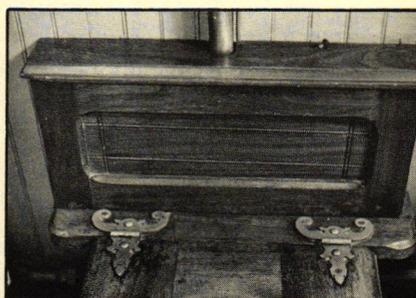


The large window presented a large decorating problem. After rejecting curtains, shades, etc. they selected a very modern Levolor Venetian blind with narrow slats. This type of blind does not have the tapes and assorted hardware of the usual kind, and they come in unusual colors. The Marshalls' is a bronze tone and blends beautifully with the similar shades in the room.

Since there was only a wood-framed mirror over the sink, Norma added a small oak wall-cabinet on the opposite wall as well as a standing one underneath for additional storage. The old fixtures that the Marshalls were so adamant about keeping have not only lent themselves well to the charming period bathroom they have created, but they also work as well as any modern counterparts they could have installed.



Photos on this page
by Jim Kalett.



Products For The Old House

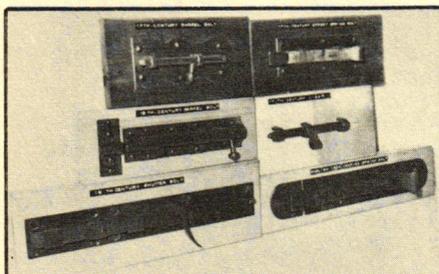
Hand-Forged Hardware

ALBERT ERIKSSON is an accomplished ironworker who has executed hand-forged hardware for many historic restorations around the country. Among the standard designs that he executes are many types of door hardware, including:

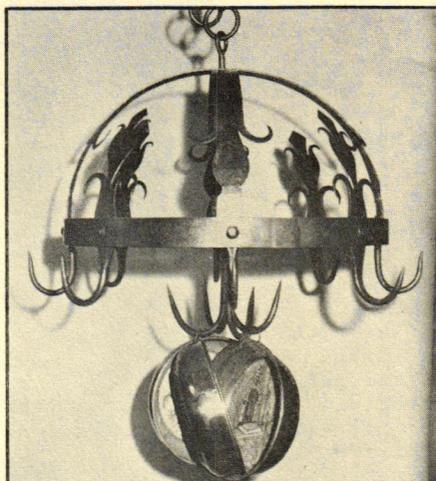
- Thumb Latches
- Rat-Tail Bar Latches
- Spring Bolts
- Cigar Bolts
- Hasps & Hooks
- Strap Hinges
- H, H&L Hinges
- Butterfly Hinges
- Locks, Keys

ALSO, he makes shutter hardware, including:

- Strap Hinges
- Shutter Dogs



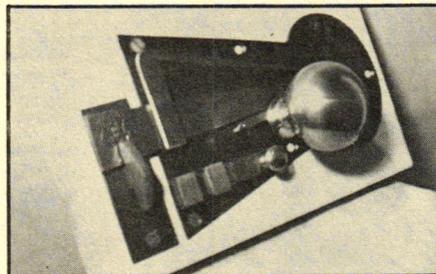
Barrel bolts for doors and shutters.



"Dutch crown" meat hook, 24 in. wide—17th century.

- Ring Pulls
- Shutter Bar Locks & Keys
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HE ALSO DOES custom blacksmithing, working from your blueprints or measurements. Address inquiries to: Albert Eriksson, 417 Arthurkill Rd. Staten Island, NY 10308.



Wishbone latch with slide bolt and two brass knobs.

Milk Paint

MILK HAS BEEN USED as a binder for paint for several thousand years. Milk paint was popular in the American colonies because the ingredients were found readily around most households.

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MILK PAINTS can be used for an authentic effect when refinishing furniture, on woodwork in an Early American interior and for wall stenciling. Enough powder to make a quart of milk paint costs \$5.00; \$16 for a gallon size. For an informative brochure and color samples, write to: Charles E. Thibeau, The Old-Fashioned Milk Paint Co., Box 222, Groton, Mass. 01450.

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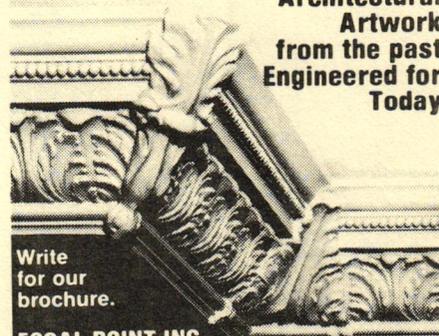
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