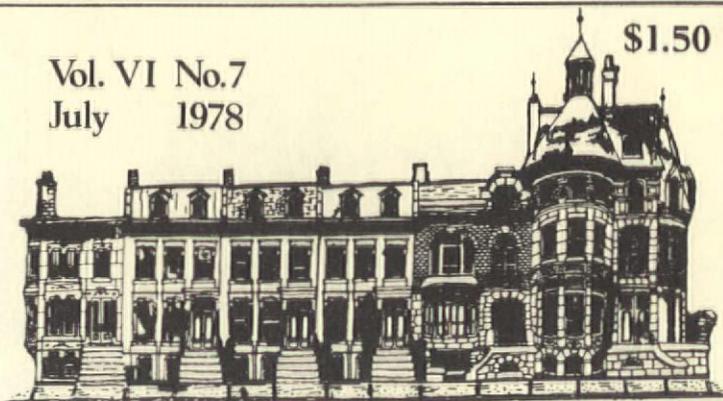


# THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

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Restoration And Maintenance Techniques For The Antique House



## The American Farmhouse

By Carolyn Flaherty

ANY JOURNAL READERS over the last few years have written in and asked for decorating advice in restoring a particular type of house. They have found that the house they own does not readily fit into the various style categories--Greek Revival, Gothic, Bungalow, etc. Usually, they send a photo along with their letter. Although the houses are different--some small, some large and sprawling, some with decorative detailing, some absolutely plain--they can be classified as the 19th century American Farmhouse.

IN THE 19TH CENTURY most American families were still farm families. So these farmhouses constitute a large portion of our old-house heritage. While a farmhouse could actually be, depending on the wealth of the original farmer, anything from a Greek Revival mansion in the South to a log house in the West, we will concentrate on a specific type in this article. These houses are generally plain and often without



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### Coming Next Month

CHIMNEY SWEEPING

any particular architectural style, but with a simplicity that can be charming in itself.

PART OF THE AMERICAN FOLKLORE is the early farmhouse with its unplastered, beamed ceiling and huge kitchen hearth. This style is well-documented and still widely imitated in contemporary decoration today. But these rustic features are actually 17th and 18th century and there are very few old-house owners who live in an authentic pre-Revolutionary farmhouse. And while the Colonial style is appealing, it is not relevant for those who want to restore their 19th century farmhouse with some authenticity.

### The Way It Was

THE MOST OBVIOUS FEATURE of the American farmhouse is a solid, substantial appearance. It was the center for a good deal of hard work and the interior and exterior reflected this fact. The self-sufficiency of the 19th century farm family is difficult to imagine today.

FOOD WAS NOT MERELY PREPARED--it was manufactured. There was baking, canning, preserving, taking care of the root cellar, making cheese, butter, candy, ice cream. The

(Continued on pg. 79)

# Saving Old Houses A New Way

By Clem Labine

**T**HE ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION is pioneering an entirely new concept in an effort to preserve the state's heritage of old houses. The Alabama project has exciting implications for the old-house movement all across the United States.

THE SIGNIFICANCE of the Alabama program is that, for the first time, a state government has officially recognized the economic importance of old-house restoration undertaken by private individuals. Because the Alabama Legislature summarized so concisely the economic benefits to the state, we have reproduced on the next page a portion of the resolution that established the state's innovative program.

ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED by Warner Floyd, Executive Director of the Alabama Historical Commission, the program is based on the assumption that there will never be enough money in the state treasury to fund all the worthwhile preservation projects. So, the reasoning goes, with the proper inspiration and back-up help, private money and interested individuals can be encouraged to save and restore many worthwhile old buildings.

THE VEHICLE for harnessing private energy—and pocketbooks—for old-house restoration is Alabama's Live-In-A-Landmark Council. With the exception of a salaried Executive Director, the Council is staffed entirely by people who serve without pay.

## Council Structure

**T**HE COUNCIL IS ORGANIZED on three levels: (1) There are 19 couples, appointed by the Governor, who make up the Council's Board of Directors; (2) Then there are 43 couples who make up the Advisory Board. There's at least one couple from every county in the state on the Advisory Board; (3) And there are individual homeowners who comprise the general membership. The general membership is expected to swell to 2,500 within the next 12 months.

MAKING THE PROGRAM politically palatable in this era of tight budgets is the extremely modest cost to state taxpayers. At the present time, the only expense to the state is an \$18,000 item in the budget for the Alabama Historical Commission that pays for a central office and the Council's Executive Director.



The Ray family, early members of the Council, live in this Steamboat Gothic home in Mobile's Oakleigh Garden District. Purchasing the house in 1971, the Rays have done extensive patching, painting, stripping and refinishing. One major project involved replacing floor furnaces with central heat and air conditioning.

## THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL<sup>®</sup>

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Ashe Cottage, in Demopolis, Ala., now looks as charming as it did in 1858 when built by Dr. William Ashe. Just a few years ago, however, the house was almost a total wreck, having been cut up into apartments, with a beauty shop in its parlor. That's when it was rescued by Martha and Joe Turner, who are members of the Advisory

Board of the Live-In-A-Landmark Council. The Turners moved the house to a new site across town and have done a complete restoration—right down to the cast iron fence in front. They've added a back wing that includes two bedrooms, three baths, a kitchen and dining room—all skillfully hidden behind the original structure.

WHILE INVESTING only a very small amount of money in the program, the state has gained the efforts of over 120 dedicated workers who are carrying out preservation activities that are of demonstrated benefit to the state.

IN RETURN, the Council staff members have the prestige conferred by recognition from the Governor and Alabama Legislature. Plus they are supported not only by the central office, but can also draw support from other state agencies such as the Alabama Historical Commission.

### How It Works

**O**BJECTIVE of the Live-In-A-Landmark Council is to promote—through a vigorous communications program—the idea of buying and restoring an old house. And after the purchase, the Council helps the buyer with a wide range of services, ranging from personal consultations to lists of craftsmen and contractors.

THE COUNCIL's Public Relations Committee, for example, has developed 2 slide presentations extolling the virtues of old-house living that are given to groups all across the state. And various Council members make themselves available to the Speakers Bureau run by the Historical Commission. The Council will be running a weekend seminar this fall and has two 28-sec. television spots in the works.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT function is the Council's Real Estate Committee. Through this committee, the Council tries to see that old houses that come on the market are purchased by sympathetic buyers. Part of the job of the 43 Advisory Board members around the state is to keep an eye out for old houses that come up for sale.

### How The State of Alabama Views Old Houses

WHEREAS Alabama has more than 1,000 antebellum homes, several thousand domestic structures constructed between 1865 and 1900 and tens of thousands of additional homes built prior to 1925; and

WHEREAS these stately pre-1861 mansions, one hundred-year-old cottages, and turn-of-the-century residences are among Alabama's most significant heritage assets; and

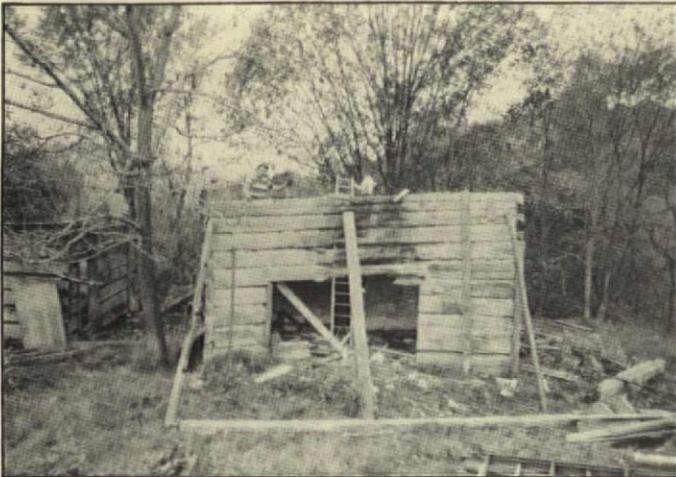
WHEREAS many of these architecturally noteworthy and historic homes are deteriorating due to neglect and changing commercial, residential and population patterns; and

WHEREAS hundreds of restored landmarks and dozens of stabilized, revitalized older communities are popular tourist attractions for pilgrimages and tours as well as appealing to sightseers for their restored exteriors and landscaped surroundings; and

WHEREAS Alabama families, particularly young married couples, are reclaiming the flavor and fiber of our rich heritage by adapting these domestic landmarks.

NOW, therefore be it resolved that the Alabama Legislature herewith establishes a State "Live in a Landmark Council" to work with the Alabama Historical Commission to promote the preservation, restoration, stabilization, adaptation and rehabilitation of separate and clustered domestic landmarks throughout the State by encouraging Alabamians to restore and live in these landmarks.

—From the Resolution of the Alabama Legislature establishing the Live-In-A-Landmark Council.



Looking for a showcase for adaptive re-use, Mike Mahan acquired an abandoned log cabin in northeast Tennessee. Logs were numbered and the cabin dismantled. Reconstructed



with a new roof, the log cabin was attached to a Swiss Chalet to form Mike's dental building. Windows were reproduced as close to the originals as possible.

THE REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE has just developed a working relationship with the Alabama State Realtors Assn. Through the Association's 24 regional boards, the availability of these old houses is being made known statewide.

THE PROCESS WORKS in reverse, too. People interested in buying historic houses are now coming to the Council and are being helped to find that "just right" old house.

### What Members Get

**A** HOMEOWNER IS ELIGIBLE to join the Council if the house is, or has the capability of being, registered with the National Register of Historic Places or the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage. Alabama has a very broad set of criteria for registering old houses. Basically, the state feels that any house built before 1925 should be regarded as part of Alabama's heritage and is probably eligible for registration.

ONCE ACCEPTED on the Alabama Register, homeowners get a letter telling them that they are now eligible for membership in the Live-In-A-Landmark Council. There's no fee for membership; they just have to fill out the application. For an additional \$11 they can get a membership package that includes a number of publications (including the Directory of Alabama craftsmen) and are put on the mailing list for the Council's quarterly newsletter and reports from the Alabama Historical Commission.

### For More Information

To get more information about the Council, contact: Marty Evers, Executive Director, Live-In-A-Landmark, c/o Alabama Historical Commission, 725 Monroe St., Montgomery Ala. 36104. Telephone (205) 832-6622.



Linda and Mike Mahan, co-chairpersons of the Live-In-A-Landmark Council, live in their own landmark: A restored 1850 home in Montevallo, Ala.

Also, for an additional \$25 members can get a bronze plaque for their home that is the official Historical Commission identification for landmarks.

**L**INDA AND MIKE MAHAN of Montevallo are the co-chairpersons of the Council—and the ones who are given a lot of credit for getting the Council off the ground. Professionally, Mike is a dentist (plus being chief of the 35-man volunteer Fire Dept.), while Linda is professor of education at the University of Montevallo.

THE MAHANS certainly practice what they preach. Their restored 1850 home was an abandoned derelict when they purchased it in 1964. And the waiting room of Mike's dental office was built from a recycled log cabin.

LINDA AND MIKE are helping to shape an exciting program that is being watched with great interest from all across the U.S. ■ ■

# Etched And Brilliant Cut Glass

By H. Weber Wilson

ONE OF THE MOST SPECTACULAR ELEMENTS of late Victorian architecture was "fancy windows." The use of colored, leaded glass is well known but etched, brilliant cut, and beveled glass created equally delightful effects for both windows and doors.

ETCHING IS DONE with hydrofluoric acid which eats away a portion of the glass surface, thus creating a design of contrasting texture and color. The polished surface is first coated with a "resist material" (originally beeswax but now a special contact paper) and the desired design cut through to the surface. Very fine detail is possible as the acid will react on whatever tiny area of glass is exposed. Conversely, the resist material must provide total protection, including edges, of the remaining surface it takes only one small "leak" to ruin an entire piece.

A SPECIAL TYPE of etched work employs "flashed glass" which is made of two layers: A base layer of normal thickness on top of which is "flashed" a micro-thin layer of another color. This process is done when the glass is molten, so when purchased in a shop, it looks as if it is a single, solid color.

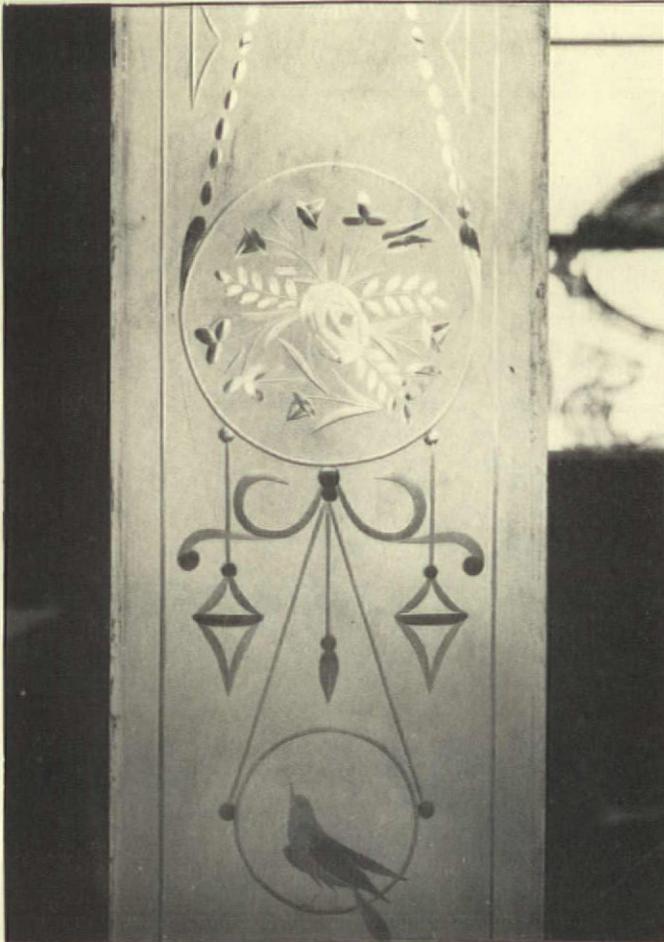
THE MOST COMMON FLASHED GLASS is red on white (clear), but it is also found as yellow on white, blue on yellow, red on blue and other combinations. You can tell if the piece of glass is flashed by holding the edge up to the light. The base color will then become evident.

FLASHING WAS ORIGINALLY developed in order to get light colors--solid red glass is so dark as to be almost black. A thin layer of red on white, however, allows the brilliant ruby color to become illuminated. Such glass was often employed for transom windows in which the address number --and often a fancy border or floral design--was etched through to the contrasting color (normally white). Rub your finger over such a piece of etched glass and you can feel where the thin, flashed layer was removed.

ANOTHER METHOD OF MAKING DESIGNS on window glass is called "brilliant cutting." This type of decoration is an extension of the engraving which has been done on glassware (such as tumblers, decanters, and bowls) since clear



Details of an etched panel. Such designs are first drawn through the resist material then placed in an acid bath which reacts on whatever small or irregular area of glass that becomes exposed. Note the fineness of detail in the hair, foliage, and folds of the garment--right down to the cross-hatched shading.



Cut glass panel from an inside entryway. The design areas are "brilliant" because they were polished after being incised by the cutting wheel. Although incorporating only "lines and spots," the artist was able to produce a wide variety of realistic figures.

"crystal" glass was developed in the late 1600's. The process for architectural cut glass was developed in the United States before the Civil War and is most frequently found decorating the doors of inside entryways. It was also employed for fancy lettering on shop windows.

**B**RILLIANT CUT DESIGNS look similar to those done by etching but the action of the acid leaves the glass with a "foggy" opaqueness. Cut glass, on the other hand, actually sparkles due to the fact that the lines are more deeply incised--and most importantly because the work has received the additional process of polishing.

GLASS POLISHING is an intriguing phenomenon, having been practiced since ancient times but still not fully understood, even with the most scientific equipment. Prior to polishing, glass must be ground or worn down to the desired shape, then smoothed until it has an even surface but is still opaque. These steps remove excess glass from the design area, a process in which specially graded abrasives produce smaller and smaller pits on the sur-

face. The actual process of polishing, however, occurs even beyond the scope of the electron microscope so that scientists can only theorize on how rough glass can be rubbed until it becomes perfectly smooth and almost invisible.

THE CURRENT THEORY is that water, which is present with the polishing agent, and the localized heat caused by the pressure of the polishing wheel, help cause a chemical reaction which creates a thin film or flowing layer which actually hides the tracks of the tiny abrasive grains.

BRILLIANT CUTTING was most frequently done on glass which was first fogged by acid or sand-blasting. The actual cutting process then required that the sheet of glass be held over a stationary, vertical cutting wheel; extra heavy pieces were suspended from the ceiling by a counter-balanced beam which could also move back and forth.

THE EDGE OF THE WHEEL, which rotated away from the craftsman, did the actual cutting, and was ground to one of three basic shapes. The sheet of glass was then run across the wheel to make lines, or was touched down on the rotating circumference to make various incisions or spots.

**W**HEELS WITH SQUARE EDGES cut straight, flat lines, the size determined by the width of the stone. Curved lines could also be cut with a flat edge although a wheel of three foot diameter cannot cut a curve of less than about two foot radius. Curved stones will produce ellipses if touched once and circles if the glass sheet is held level and spun completely around.

THE THIRD TYPE WHEEL was mitred into an obtuse "V", and was used to produce bevelled grooves or faceted lines. It also made stars and trellises as well as lettering with fancy fishtails or pointed serifs. After cutting, all the incisions were polished, first on a wooden wheel with water and pumic and then with a hard brush and a very fine abrasive known as "jeweler's rouge."

IT IS THIS EXTRA POLISHING PROCEDURE that gives the name to "brilliant cut" glass. But beyond the sparkle, it is an intriguing exercise to study a piece of well done cut glass and dissect the design elements, all of which are composed only of lines and spots. Such time-consuming work was proportionately costly, however, and because it was usually made with relatively thin, fragile glass--which was irreparable if cracked or broken--means that finding or owning a piece of this architectural artwork is an uncommon treat. ■

This article is the second in a series on glass by H. Weber Wilson. Next, Web will discuss bevelled glass. He is a specialist in antique and reproduction art glass. To contact him, write: Architectural Ecology, 447 East Catherine St., Chambersburg, PA 17201. Tele: (717) 263-2889.

kitchen also had often to accommodate farm hands and served as the "living room" for the family. All this activity made the kitchen the center of the house and it was generally a large, agreeable and serviceable room.

THE PARLOR was generally used only on special occasions. Most farmhouses did not have a dining room at all as the family ate in the kitchen.

THE SHAPE of the farmhouse often changed with the additions of bedchambers on the first floor and then with the addition of a second storey as it was needed. Additions often took the shape of a lean-to, giving the house a sprawling look.

THE PROBLEM WITH DECORATING these houses lies in making the interiors attractive while, at the same time, keeping the character of the house intact.

**T**O DO THIS, some thought has to be given to the way they were, and making decisions on what to re-create. Certainly there is an opportunity here for some "interpretative restoration;" in other words, giving the house perhaps more decoration than it originally had in its hard-working 19th century form. Since most farmhouses today are now "country houses," the light, fresh feeling of country decoration can be introduced.

IT MUST BE REMEMBERED that, in a farmhouse of 100 years ago, the austerity of some of the less affluent farms was not on purpose, but a result of money and time limitations. The lady of the house tried to make her home as appealing as her resources would permit. And it is in keeping with that spirit to make them today as charming as possible.



This room in Omaha, Nebraska, c. 1910, is typical of the "catalog style." The Golden Oak sideboard and oak chairs, the inexpensive wallpaper and border and the hanging lamp are all items easily bought through catalogs of the period.



This ten-room farmhouse in North Carolina, owned by Craig Herring, was built in the late 1800's by his grandparents. The projecting bay is a nod to Victorian styling, but the generous, box-like shape is in the Colonial tradition. The ell formed by the outbuildings and the porches give a large, sprawling appearance to the whole.

## The Kitchen

**T**HE MOST DRAMATIC CHANGE in kitchens in centuries happened in the 1860's with the introduction of the flat-topped cast-iron kitchen range. It came into general use very quickly and with it the large kitchen hearth disappeared as well as the kettles and pots on hooks. The heavy iron cooking utensils were replaced by lighter, steel-coated pans. Around this time piped water was also brought into the house. While the first gas cooker was shown at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, it did not come into general use in America until the 1880's. With these innovations, the "country kitchen" look also disappeared.

KITCHENS OFTEN HAD A HIGH wainscoting of unpainted, but stained, boards. Above that the walls were painted or whitewashed. Photos of the period often show wallpaper even behind the cast-iron stove. Although it seems very impractical to put wallpaper in the kitchen in those days before vinyl-coated paper, one can only assume that since the woman of the house spent so much time in the kitchen she wanted it as pretty as possible. Painted walls often have a floral (cabbage roses, etc.) paper border near the ceiling. Those who could afford it often had the kitchen walls covered to the ceiling with white tiles.

FLOORS IN THE FARMHOUSE were hardwood if the house was well-built. Keeping the kitchen clean was not an easy task. Soap was made on the stove, but floors were sometimes cleaned with wood ashes instead of soap because the alkali in them whitened the boards. While oilcloth was used as a table covering, it was too expensive (at \$2 a yard in 1875) to use on the floor. Linoleum, invented in England in 1860, was made of solidified linseed oil,

cork or wood dust with pigments on a backing of burlap or canvas. It was recommended as being easily washed, warmer, and more dust-free than wood floors.

A GAS, OIL OR ELECTRIC lighting fixture was generally hung over the stove to light the cooking area and an additional lamp placed elsewhere in the room. The kitchen often contained a small bookcase with publications like "The Country Gentlemen." If possible, a small carpet was added for warmth and decoration.

### The Parlor

**T**HE PARLOR was reserved for very special occasions, holidays and musical evenings. The musical evening was so popular that most parlors contained an organ. Furnishings for the parlor were often as elaborate as budgets would allow. The prevalent style could be called "catalog style." Away from shopping centers, farm wives pored through mail-order catalogs for the latest in clothing and furnishings. Mail order business grew in leaps and bounds in the last quarter of the 19th century.

BY THE END of the century all major manufacturers of furniture, wallpaper, paint, oil, gas and electric lighting all had their own mail order catalogs. And of course, the Sears catalog was in almost every home by the turn of the century.

FURNITURE was purchased in the popular Victorian Revival styles as well as the Colonial reproduction furniture that was in use after the Centennial Exhibition of 1876. It would not be unusual at the time to find reproduction Queen Anne chairs in the same room with a Renaissance Revival table.



This kitchen in the Harriet Beecher Stowe house is furnished in accordance with her home economics principles popular in the 1860's. Woodwork is grained chestnut, and shelves are shallow to avoid clutter. Note chair of much earlier period.

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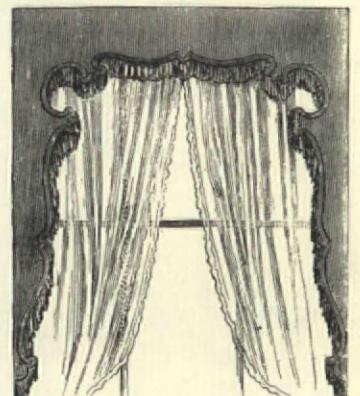
The 1902 Sears Catalogue recommended the paper on the left for halls, bedrooms and small stores and the more expensive paper on the right for parlors.

### Wallpaper

**W**ALLPAPER WAS INEXPENSIVE and perhaps the quickest way to change the appearance of a room. It was used abundantly in the kitchen, parlor and bedrooms. The patterns were not the high-style ones found in the Eastern city house but rather conventional floral and striped designs reminiscent of an earlier period.

### Fabric

**F**ABRIC, like wallpaper, was usually of the garden variety, not the high Victorian styles. In "American Woman's Home," by Harriet Beecher Stowe and Catharine Beecher, the use of white-muslin to give an air of elegance was advised. "No matter how coarse the muslin, so it be white and hang in graceful folds, there is a charm in it that supplies the want of multitudes of other things." The sisters recommended English chintz for upholstery (sofas, ottomans) and for lambrequins (valances) over muslin curtains.



ALSO RECOMMENDED FOR the gracious room was a center table covered with broadcloth, trimmed with a patterned border. Surely, most farm

women coveted a pair of pretty curtains and even some of the most unpretentious farmhouses appear in old photos with lace curtains in the windows.

## Furnishings

**F**LOORS WERE GENERALLY HARDWOOD, stained and oiled. Carpets were available in catalogs and a rag rug or an Axminster carpet would be ordered according to a family's means. All the artifacts of the typical Victorian room--what-not shelves, feathers or plumes, knick-knacks--were as beloved by the Victorian farm wife as they were by the city dweller. If the farmhouse parlor appears a little less cluttered in the visual records we have, it is because much of the fancywork like shell pictures, Berlin or bead work, is missing. The farm woman did not have time to create unessential items.

## Decorating The Farmhouse Today

**T**HE OLD-HOUSE OWNER decorating a 19th century farmhouse actually has a wider range of items in today's market than most. There is no need to search for hard-to-find items like large-patterned, high-styled Victorian wallpapers, expensive scenic papers used in the Federal period, late Victorian hardware, or any of the period items that are rarely reproduced.

A MISTAKE OFTEN MADE in decorating the 19th c. farmhouse is to create the look of a much earlier period. Avoid anachronisms like the unplastered, beamed ceiling and other "rustic" touches. The other error is to overdo the amount of decoration--too much fabric, too many accessories, etc. The most appealing feature of the farmhouse is its look of solidity--its substantial appearance. And the interior should reflect this quality. Simplicity is called for in wallpaper, fabric, floor coverings.

BECAUSE FARMHOUSE PARLORS were furnished with such a variety of furniture and accessories, almost any kind of furniture will fit in. Early American or turn-of-the-century reproduction Colonial looks fine, but don't overdo the Colonial look with accessories. A floral chintz or plain fabric would be better than an Early American print with stencilled designs or patterns taken from quilts. These belong in a much earlier room.

**I**F YOU ARE LUCKY ENOUGH to have antiques of any period they will fit right in. And, if you are buying furniture, you can feel secure that an eclectic mix of whatever you like will not be inappropriate because there is no "farmhouse style" as there is a Federal, Greek Revival or Queen Anne style.

THE DECORATING DECISIONS that make for authenticity come in when choosing wall treatments, fabrics for draperies, curtains and upholstery, and in floor coverings.



Chintz is used to decorate this kitchen/dining room for curtains, tablecloth, and as a wallcovering. The pattern, large birds with nests, eggs, and baskets of fruit, is of English origin. Fabric, by Waverly, is "Quincy Document."

## Source For Documentary Fabric

WAVERLY FABRICS is an excellent source for early 19th century reproductions. They have a new collection, "Merchant Princes", which is the third in a series of Sturbridge Village documentary reproduction fabrics.

THESE PRINTS are designs brought to France and England from the Far East and then imported to America. "Arborescence"--a large floral pattern; "Dorton Stripe--an old-fashioned floral plus stripe; or "Draper Chintz," "Hinckley Floral" and many others would all be pleasing in a 19th century farmhouse. To accompany these dominant patterns, there is a variety of mini-prints (taken from schoolgirl uniforms, book bindings, etc.) to use as accent pieces (tablecloths, pillows) or for an additional upholstered piece for variety.

WAVERLY FABRICS are available at most department stores and many fabric shops. If your local Waverly distributor does not yet have the "Merchant Princes' Collection" they can order any of these patterns for you. If you do not know where to purchase Waverly, you can write them for your nearest distributor. Write to: Barbara Egner, Waverly Fabrics, Dept. OHJ, 58 W. 40th St., New York, N. Y. 10019.

## Wallpaper

**B**ECAUSE WALLPAPER was so abundantly used in the farmhouse, you can use a wide variety of wallpapers, excluding the very expensive high-styles and any of the kitschy contemporary versions of "rustic" with little farmhouses all over it, etc. The papers used in farmhouses tended to be quite conventional floral patterns with borders. Many were not very attractive and are not reproduced today.

THERE ARE MANY PATTERNS from the early 19th century being manufactured in the documentary lines of firms like: Schumacher, Birge, S. M. Hexter (manufacturer for the Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum), Old Stone Mill. All of these firms are listed in the 1978 Old-House Journal Catalog. Many of these reproductions are classic English and French designs (many of which originally came from the Orient) that were then exported to America. These designs, like the simple floral stripe in all its variations, were adapted by firms like Sears all through the 19th century. Going back to the original patterns by way of a documentary reproduction will provide character as well as traditional colorings.

## Fabric

**F**ABRIC WAS ALSO sometimes used for wall coverings. There are two advantages to using fabric--it hides cracks in old walls in the same manner that canvas, applied by professional painters before painting, gives a smooth wall; it is often easier to obtain moderately priced fabric than a good documentary wallpaper. (Some very attractive chintz, in particular "Picadilly," is made by Cyrus Clark Co., and should be available at most department stores and fabric shops. For name of distributor, write to: Cyrus Clark Co., 267 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. They also have a free brochure on using fabric on walls.)

A CAUTION HERE--if you have vertical boards on your walls as many farmhouses do (see Old-House Living feature of June 1978) do not cover them. They were meant to be painted in a light color or white.

## FLOOR OILCLOTHS AND LINOLEUMS



Floor Oilcloth



Linoleum

A typical oilcloth and linoleum pattern from the 1902 Sears catalog.

## Hand Hooked Reproduction Rugs

THE HENRY FORD MUSEUM in Dearborn, Michigan, houses one of the great collections of Americana. Among its collection are fine hooked rugs. These rugs are reproduced for them by Mountain Rug Mills.

MANY OF THE RUG DESIGNS are quite unusual and would add greatly to the charm of a farmhouse. There are floral patterns, leaf designs, a Gothic or Moorish pattern, and geometrics. Sizes vary from room size to scatter rugs.

THE REPRODUCTIONS are hand-hooked in the original size and colorings of the exhibited rug but are also available in other dimensions and color combinations.

MOST PATTERNS can be special ordered in custom size and also reproduced to match or blend with your wallpaper, drapery, or upholstery fabrics.

FOR A DESCRIPTIVE BROCHURE, with photos of the rug collection, write to: Reproductions, Dept. OHJ, Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, MI 48121. Ask for the free Museum Rug Collection brochure.



## Floors

**H**ARDWOOD FLOORS ARE the ideal. Hooked rugs, small carpets or floorcloths make excellent accents. Because floorcloths are painted canvas, with a highly wear-resistant finish, they are quite similar in appearance to the floor oilcloths used years ago. (See Old-House Journal Catalog for a source for floorcloths.) Kitchen floors can be covered with many of the appropriate patterns of inlaid linoleum made by large firms like Armstrong.

BEWARE, however, of the trendy, new "rustic" patterns that simulate slate or cobblestones or other natural materials. They are inappropriate because these materials in their actual form would not have appeared on the floor of a 19th century farmhouse. ■■

# Restorer's Notebook

## Replacing Resilient Tile

HERE'S HOW I change out a damaged resilient tile: Cover the tile with a piece of shirt cardboard and then iron with a warm iron so that the heat loosens the mastic. Carefully lift the tile with a kitchen spatula. Place the removed tile on a piece of paper on a flat surface, mastic side up. Smooth it while still warm so it won't cool in a warped shape. Scrape off the old adhesive.

TO GET A REPLACEMENT TILE, lift another tile in similar fashion from an inconspicuous spot, such as from under the refrigerator or in a closet. Even if the replacement tile doesn't show the same wear as the surrounding tiles, it looks better than one that doesn't match at all.

TO GLUE DOWN these switched tiles, I have successfully used a tube of silicone sealant (which I happened to have around) rather than going out to buy a whole can of tile mastic.

Sally Hunter  
Alexandria, Va.

## Gluing Chairs

I HAD SEVERAL antique chairs with loose joints. After trying several techniques to squirt glue into the loose joints, I gave it up as a futile task. The makeshift gluing job quickly came undone.

FINALLY, a neighborhood cabinetmaker gave me the answer: Continue to use the chairs in their loose condition until the majority of the joints come unglued. Then take the chair entirely apart and start from scratch to reglue it. Only when the joints are completely open can you get a satisfactory gluing job.

OF COURSE, when you try to take a loose chair apart, invariably you find a couple of joints that are still glued tight. I solved this problem with a "soft hammer." I took one of my regular hammers and wrapped it heavily in old felt, securing the felt in place with fiberglass-reinforced strapping tape. With this tool I was able to knock apart the glued joints without damaging the wood or finish.

ONCE THE CHAIR IS COMPLETELY APART, scrape all old glue off the joints. If it is an old piece, the glue is probably animal hide glue, which is water soluble. To remove the last traces of this material, use hot water and coarse steel wool.

WHEN REGLUING a piece of fine furniture, I always use Franklin's Hide Glue because of its water solubility. I figure that in 50 years someone will have to go through the same regluing process and I want to make easy for them to get the old glue out. Modern synthetic

resin glues are not water soluble and there's no way to clean up an old joint without damaging the wood somewhat.

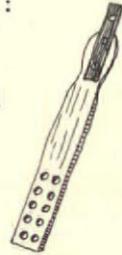
ALL JOINTS SHOULD BE GLUED and reassembled at one time. Then set the chair on a level piece of floor and twist the chair as necessary to get all the legs level. At this point, if there are any joints that have play in them, insert glue-soaked toothpicks (as many as the joint will take). If needed to draw all joints up tight, use a web clamp around the legs and weight the seat down heavily.

L. J. Davis  
Chicago, Ill.

## Some Painting Tips

HAVING TO PAINT the entire exterior and interior of our 1905 Colonial Revival house gave us plenty of incentive to think up all the shortcuts we could. Here's a couple of things that we've found helpful:

TO START PAINTING, you need a stirring paddle and something to open the paint can. I found that I could combine two tools in one. I took a metal mending plate and attached it to the end of my mixing paddle with a couple of short bolts. I also found that the mixing efficiency of the stirring paddle was markedly increased by boring a set of holes in it.



TRYING TO STIR a full gallon of paint is a bother; you always get spills down the sides. So now I always keep a clean empty paint can handy. When I come across a can that has really settled, the FIRST THING I do (before any stirring) is to pour the thin liquid into the spare gallon can. I can then really attack the sediment at the bottom and get it all into suspension. Then I gradually add the thin liquid back into the original can, mixing vigorously all the time.

TO AVOID THE MESS of drips down the side of the can that happen when the rim fills up with paint, I take a hammer and nail and punch a series of holes into the bottom of the groove. This way, the paint can drain back into the can. And since the lid seals by pressure against the side of the groove, these holes don't prevent a tight seal.



Albert Amato  
Detroit, Mich.

## Got Any Tips?

Do you have any hints or short cuts that might help other old-house owners? We'll pay \$15 for any short how-to items that are used in this "Restorer's Notebook" column. Send your hints to: Notebook Editor, The Old-House Journal, 199 Berkeley Pl., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217.

# Products For The Old House

## Fine Reproduction Hardware



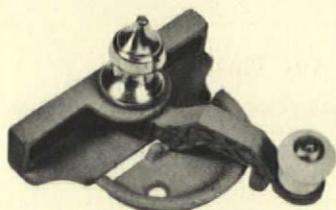
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Cast Iron Sash Lock

## Helpful Publications

### Maintaining Stone Buildings

**T**HE PRESERVATION LEAGUE of New York State has published an excellent technical leaflet on the subject of repairing and maintaining stone buildings.

THE FIRST STEP in maintaining and repairing a building is to identify the stone. There is section in the leaflet that gives the composition, history and geographical usage of: Marble, limestone, sandstone, granite and cobblestone.

OTHER TOPICS include: Causes of stone decay; Cleaning methods, Maintenance of cleaned buildings; Stone repair and mortar joints and pointing; Sources of stone restoration; and a Reading List.

COPIES of this leaflet, Technical Series/No. 5, "Property Owner's Guide to the Maintenance and Repair of Stone Buildings," are \$1.25, post-paid, from the Preservation League of New York State, Dept. OHJ, 13 Northern Boulevard, Albany, N. Y. 12210. Special rates are available for large quantity orders.

### Insulating Handbook

**A** COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH to the problem of heat loss in the old house is presented in a booklet, published by Greater Portland Landmarks, "Insulating the Old House: A Handbook for the Owner."

THE 48-PAGE BOOKLET discusses the particular values and built-in energy-efficient advantages of the old house as well as the drastic heating problems of a loose, drafty structure.

ALSO DISCUSSED is the severe problem that can result from improper installation of insulating materials: Moisture condensation and dry rot.

THE PUBLICATION also contains good information on the necessity and purpose of proper vapor barriers.

THE HANDBOOK may be obtained from: Greater Portland Landmarks Inc., Dept. OHJ, 165 State St., Portland, Maine 04101. Price is \$1.90, including postage and handling.

### New!

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