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Old-House Journal

December 1986 / \$2.95



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ANNUAL INDEX IN THIS ISSUE



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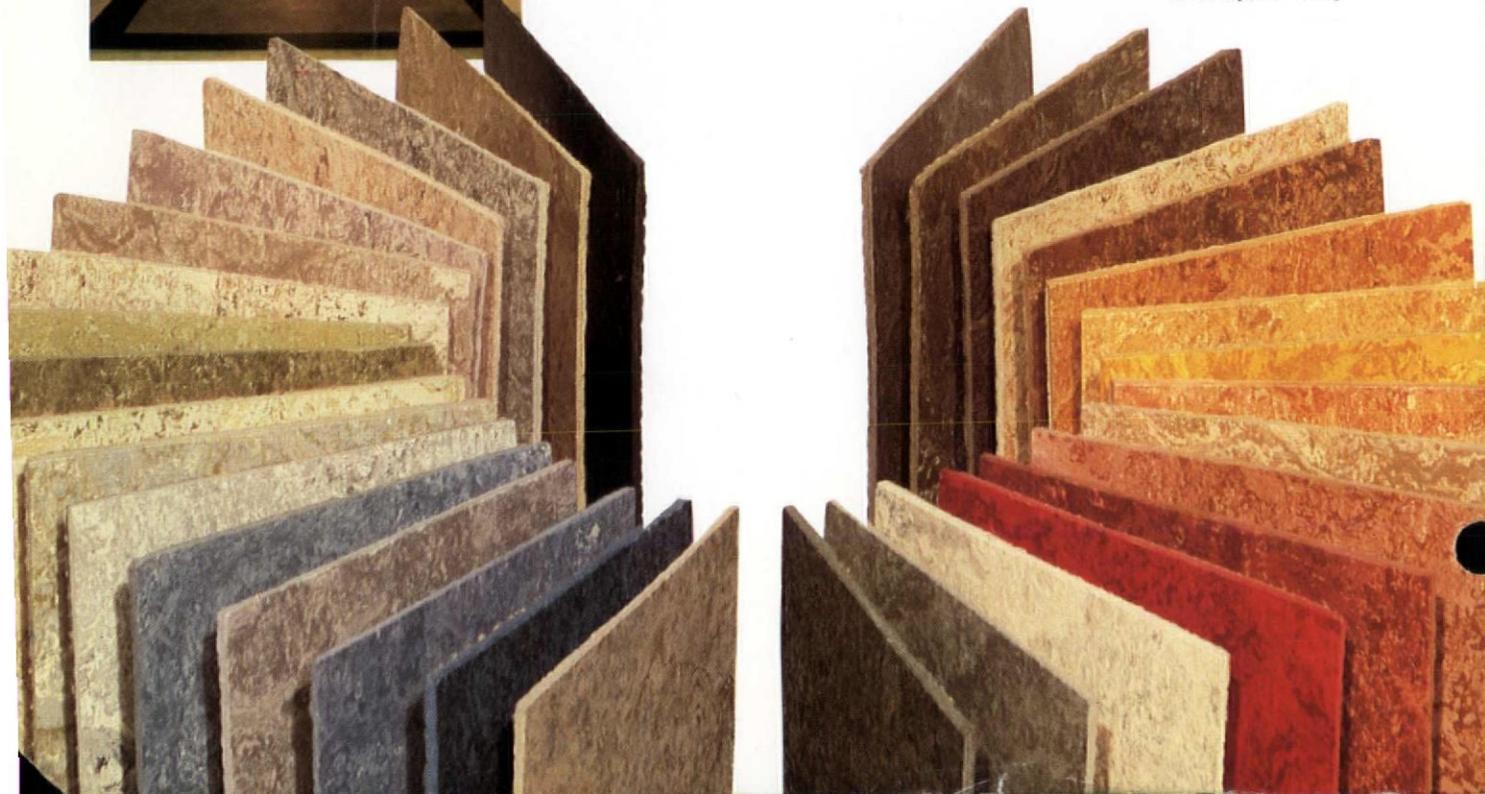
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Cover: Photo of an 18th-century fireplace courtesy of the Bettmann Archive;
hand-colored by Bekka Lindstrom.

LAST MONDAY Tricia came to work looking tired. But it wasn't the weekend's construction dirt or a surprise leak in the plumbing that had her down.

"WHY DON'T you write about managing kids?" she asked. "Maybe somebody will send in good suggestions on how to keep children happy without letting them wreck the house or kill themselves." (We detected mild exasperation.)

"WHEN they're babies, you worry about toxic dust. When they start crawling, you worry about nails and holes in the floor. But the real headache starts when they get old enough to want to 'help.' Willy took a keyhole saw to the porcelain bathtub yesterday. 'Just like Daddy,' he said. I told him Daddy saws wood, not tubs. Now I'm worried about the wainscot!"

(Actually, Tricia and John are great with the kids. Restoration is taking a little longer -- but it's entertaining.)

KIDS WANT to help, and they can. Willy hands nails to John. He puts joint compound on the hawk. (They lay a sacrificial dropcloth over the heavy one.) He holds one end of the measuring tape. He can even be convinced to just stick around and watch, as long as he gets to wear a painter's cap like his dad's.

THEY'RE SUBJECT TO a few rules and constraints, of course, that you wouldn't think of without having small-fry underfoot. Some safety rules:

- Gates in doorways become even more important when the blocked room is full of nails and power tools.

RESTORATION KIDS



- Duct-taping a heavy plastic dropcloth or shower curtain as a barrier works amazingly well -- it makes whatever's beyond look forbidding.
- Keep the toolbox locked.
- Install high hooks to hang up the scary stuff (drill, Skil-saw) so you aren't always running to the basement to retrieve things.
- When you stack lumber against a wall, always tie it together and to the wall.

- Take the time to pull nails from woodwork you've removed.
- Cover up even dead electrical wires so children don't get used to touching them.
- Cover salvaged pieces that are likely to have lead paint.

THEN THERE ARE things that'll turn your kid into a real helper someday:

- Spend time explaining what you're doing and why. Teach respect for the work and the inherent dangers. Willy understood the danger of open stairwells and sharp tools as young as two.
- Establish a "help area" where your child can keep his or her own set of tools. Always clean up together.

THERE ARE times when it's better if the kids leave, however. Demolition is disturbing to many adults, and can be devastating to children. The noise and mess are real dangers -- and the feeling that "home" is being destroyed may be even worse.

TRICIA SAYS they learned that the hard way. When their front stoop was being demolished, three-year-old Willy screamed and cried -- and that was exterior demolition. In general, kids shouldn't be around during:

- demolition or extremely noisy activity
- major paint-stripping
- disruptive moving, such as clearing out a previously occupied room to prepare it for restoration.

A FINAL thought: Keep a sense of humor. You'll need it when your kid sees Mommy chipping out bad plaster, and decides to help . . . on a good wall. (Oh well, another story.)

Tricia

OHJ NEWS

WAY BACK WHEN, in the hey-day of the IBM Correcting Selectric Typewriter, the editorial department at OHJ got hooked on "in-house typesetting." In essence, we already had that publishing luxury when we took typed copy and glued it directly to a layout board.

(Most other magazines send their typed manuscripts out to a typesetter, where it is coded and printed out as better-looking typeset copy.)

In the old days, we hated typing manuscripts a zillion times between edits, but we loved having control over the copy 'til the last minute.

Then came the micro and word processing. No more retyping long passages! But the output was still plain old

Courier typewriter type. So, even though we'd entered the computer age, our type still looked a little funky. (Just like this, in fact.)

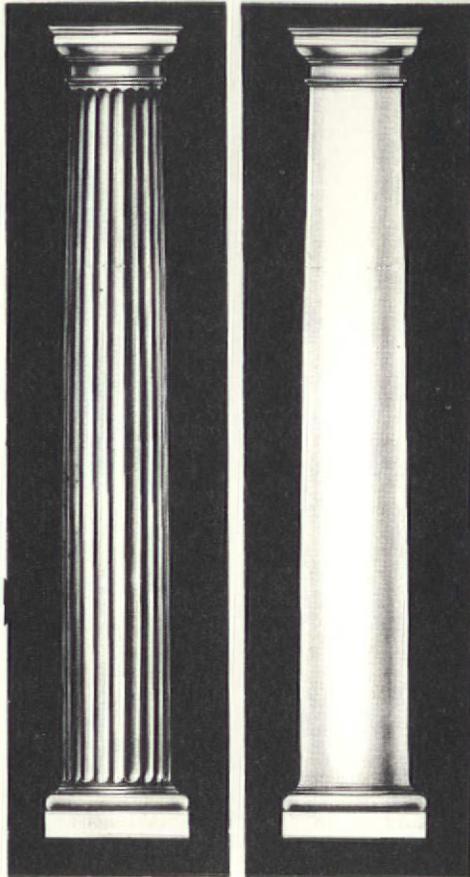
But now (trumpets please) we've got a laser printer that can make our type look better and more readable. In house!

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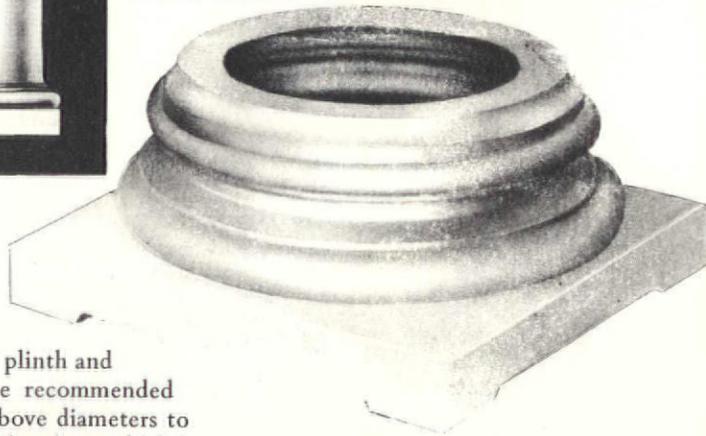


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Illustration by
Eric Sloane

The "Two-Hole" Variety

Dear OHJ:

I may have the answer to Patricia Williams' inquiry (October 1986 OHJ) concerning the outhouse on her property.

After reading her letter, I went straight to my bookshelf and pulled four books, all by the same author: historian, artist, antiquarian, early-American buff, and meteorologist Eric Sloane. In three of these books, Mr. Sloane points out that "the outhouse once meant any outbuilding on the early American farm," whereas the name for this particular structure was the "privy" or "private-house." Historian Sloane goes on to say that the privy was most often not only of the "two-hole" variety, but also of the two-door variety: one door for the ladies and one for the gentlemen. (This was certainly the case for the privy outside the town hall, school, church, and any other public building.)

On each door was an insignia, just as the town's shoemaker, blacksmith, lawyer, or tavern owner had the appropriate insignia over his door. On the men's side of the privy was a carving of the sun (Sol, symbolizing man); on the women's side, a carving of the moon (Luna, symbolizing woman).

Antiquarian Sloane, I'm certain, did his homework and therefore dictated to Artist Sloane that the moon be "a waning moon in its final quarter" (i.e., the points go to the right). And believe me, Meteorologist Sloane knows his moons.

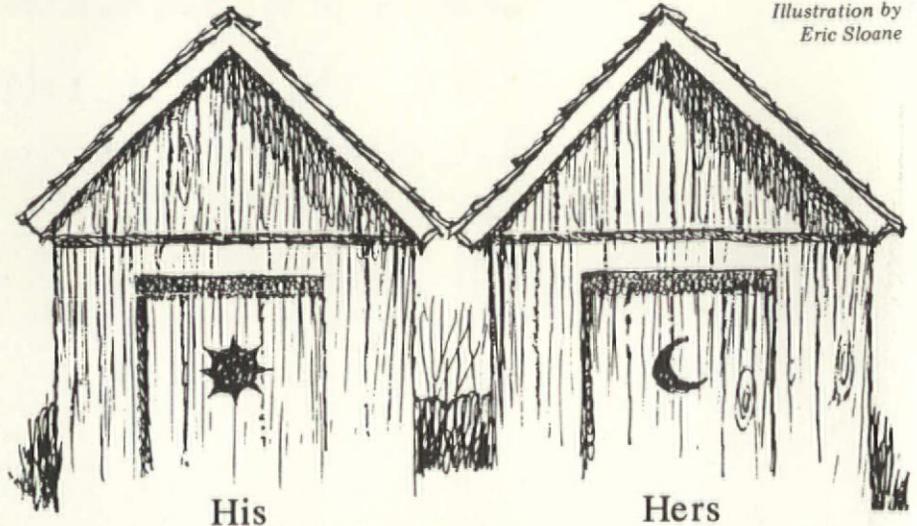
-- Tom Flagg
Jersey City, N.J.

A Fiery Fate

Dear Ms. Poore:

Thank you for the cover of the October issue: the picture of the old Greenlaw house in Northport, Maine. I grew up in a nearby community and will move back in November, after 45 years away. Over the years, people have watched the changes occur in the "haunted" house, have brought visitors to photograph it, and have checked it out after storms.

Unfortunately, the new owner ordered that it be burned.



In spite of many pleas to leave it alone, the old landmark experienced the ultimate in remodeling when it was torched. [See November 1986 editorial, p. 410. -- ed.]

No, there was no question of restoration -- it wouldn't have been worth it even before its back broke years ago. But it was doing no harm, and its deliberate destruction is resented.

-- F. Eleanor Warner
Lexington, Mass.

In Praise Of Cypress

Dear Editors:

I enjoyed your article "Wood Woes" in the September OHJ, and would like to see a follow-up about natural rot- and termite-resistant woods such as redwood, cedar, and cypress. I am a sawyer and dealer in old cypress (milled from old sunken logs). In southern Louisiana and Florida and other parts of the South, cypress has earned a reputation for holding up in jungle-like conditions where other woods fail very easily. No harmful chemicals are needed -- and it has a very pleasing grain pattern.

-- Dan Kelley
Franklin, La.

More Lumber Tips

Dear Patricia:

Larry Jones' article "Wood Woes" in the September OHJ was right on target.

As a professional home inspector, I am often asked for suggestions on working with pressure-treated lumber, especially for outdoor construction. It will be nice to refer clients to this article.

As an old carpenter, I'd like to offer two more "Tips For Better Luck" working with pressure-treated lumber:

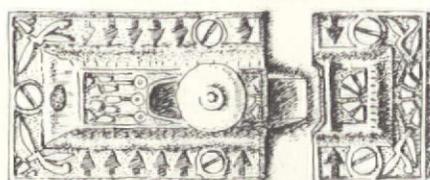
1) PUT IT TOGETHER PROMPTLY. Lumber for small projects (6'-x-10' deck) will not stack with sufficient weight for air-drying. Removed from the larger stack at the lumber yard and left unused in your yard, it may warp to amusing and useless shapes in a very short time. Plan your work schedule so you can assemble the project promptly, using proper fasteners. If you must store lumber, keep it off the ground and out of the rain.

2) INSTALL DECK BOARDS "RIGHT SIDE UP." Place each board so that the curve formed by growth rings (visible at board-ends) has its arch pointing upwards. As boards dry, they usually cup in the same shape as this arch. Cupped deck boards with the arch-top facing down will hold rain/snow water, get slippery, and deteriorate even faster than boards installed as I suggest. If you don't believe this works, simply examine any deck which has some deteriorated boards -- the first ones to go are usually the ones installed "upside down."

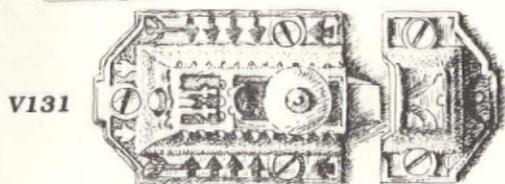
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-- Dan Friedman
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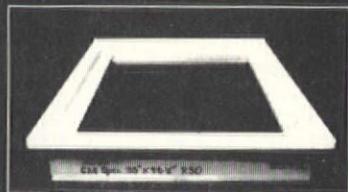
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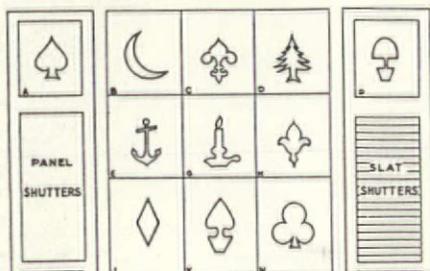
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Discovering Cut-Outs

Dear Eye:

It was great fun digging out material to help you prepare your article, "Shutter Cut-Outs" (October 1986 OHJ). My eye has now gotten the knack of spotting a pierced shutter at 100 paces! In my ordinary daily rounds of Lexington, Waltham, and surrounding suburbs, I've found every one of the designs shown on this page from Brosco's 1935 Book of Designs catalog.



I thought your readers would also be interested in this patriotic "Minuteman" design (found on two different buildings in Lexington).

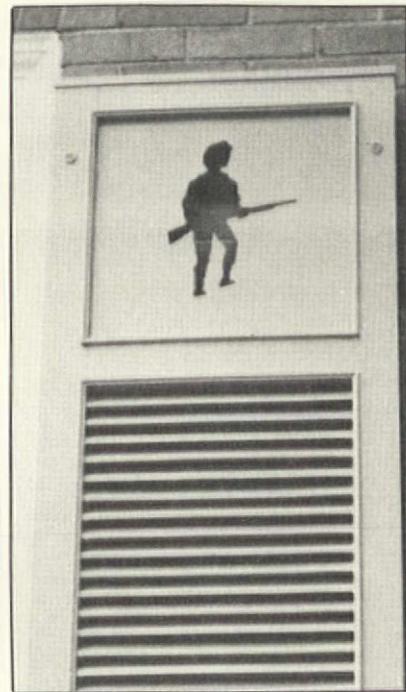
-- Sara B. Chase
 Director, Conservation Center
 Society for the Preservation
 of New England Antiquities
 Waltham, Mass.

Some Paint Comments

Dear Editors:

Your magazine is always fascinating. The May '86 issue, devoted almost entirely to painting, is outstanding -- it offers some excellent advice and tips. I would like to suggest a few additions:

1) The term "holiday" (page 172) applies to a discontinuity in a coating film, of which paint is one type. Holidays are not restricted to brush application, although they probably are more of a problem with low-quality brushes than with good ones. Holidays also occur with roller and spray application. Some of them are caused by small inclusions -- dust particles, small fibers, or bugs with kamikaze inclinations. If the inclusion occurs while applying the paint, it may be possible to remove it. If it occurs after application but before the paint sets, the best protection is a second coat of paint. (I refuse to comment on people who have the time to watch paint dry.) In



most cases, the best insurance against holidays is two (or more) coats of paint.

2) In cleaning a paint brush (page 174), a very handy implement is a pet-grooming comb. It is made of metal, with long, thin teeth that readily penetrate the brush; and with the handle at the end of the comb, your hands are less exposed to whatever solvent that's used for cleaning. (These combs are available quite reasonably at discount drug and variety stores that have pet supplies.)

-- V.I. Montenyohl
 Aiken, S.C.

Stain Experience

To the Editor:

My experience with solid-color oil-based stains has proved that they are much more versatile than your article "Exterior Stains" (June 1986) states. In the past 10 years, I've used them (Olympic and Benjamin Moore) on wood with heavy coatings of paint and stain; on bare, new galvanized steel; on bare aluminum; and on baked-enamel finishes. All these applications have proven to be very durable, with not one failure having occurred.

The most important aspect of any coating project is preparation. All surfaces must be clean and dry. I am

convinced that solid-color, oil-based stain will perform well on any properly-prepared surface, even glass.

On question about latex stains: How do they qualify as stains if they don't penetrate the surface being treated? Could it be that they're essentially thin latex paints?

-- Roger T. Panek
 Architect
 Dover, Mass.

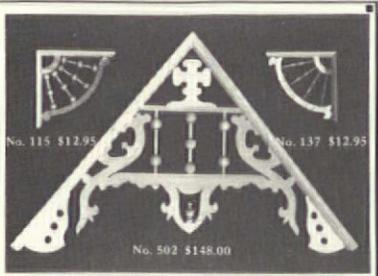
Antique Apples

Dear Editor:

The brief article "Period Livestock" in the October OHJ prompted me to write this letter. Can you or any of your readers direct me to a source for old apple-tree stock? I am seeking Red Ashokean and Pearman's Apple Stock. (Botanical gardens, libraries, and historic preservation organizations have been to no avail.) I know vegetables are fairly easy to find and many flowers are still available. But fruits are hard to locate.

-- Dr. Clark S. Marlor
 Brooklyn, N.Y.

[Southmeadow Fruit Gardens has all sorts of rare, early fruit varieties -- including the apple-tree stocks you're searching for. Their address is Lakeside, Michigan 49116; or phone (616) 469-2865. -- ed.]



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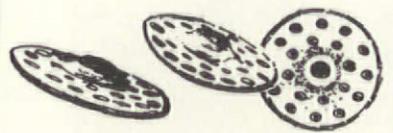
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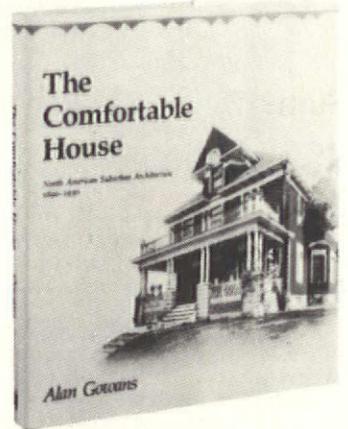
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Caveat Emptor

Dear Editors:

A word of caution on low-e glass (October 1986 OHJ, page 396). It took a lot of effort to find a sample of this glass, and then more time to have my five large windows made -- few people would work with it. Everything looked great, but when the first one was installed, I went outside to admire it. Ugh!

Low-e glass looks good from the inside looking out (and from some angles on the outside). BUT standing directly in front of my 1874 Chicago Cottage in our National Register Historic District (The Old Town Triangle), the glass looked more like a green-and-blue mirror -- it was definitely out of character with the house. It also cleans like cellophane and scratches. Neither the sash-maker nor the installer will ever work with it again.

I replaced it all with regular, double-strength glass and weatherstripping. This was a nightmare -- an expen-

sive lesson of several hundred dollars!

-- Leigh Sills
Chicago, Ill.

He Can't Help Himself

Dear Pat and Clem:

I don't often write to magazine editors, but in this case I can't help myself. The crisp, clear copy and well-designed layout enhance the always-interesting articles. Each issue has some interesting tidbit or handy tip that I can use in my own renovation. Keep up the fine work!

Michael H. Baribeau
Manager/REALTOR
Bath, Maine

Geography Lesson

Dear Ms. Poore:

I am an Old-House Journal subscriber. And I'm deeply offended!

On the back page of the October 1986 issue, you've got misinformation about German-Russian Plains Houses. For

your information, the "Russians" who migrated from "western Russia, north of Odessa," were UKRAINIANS.

Odessa is in the Ukraine -- not Russia. Ukrainians emigrated to the Great Plains in the late-19th and early-20th centuries because the terrain and agricultural attributes of the region reminded them of their motherland.

-- Bohdan Zachary
Los Angeles, Cal.

[Actually, they were neither Ukrainians nor Russians; they were German nationals. But Odessa is in the Ukraine. We regret any offense this oversight may have caused. -- ed.]



A German-Ukrainian Plains House



What Mrs. Bieber neglected to tell you about her old house.

When you bought your old house from Mrs. Bieber, she told you plenty: the history of the family . . . how Uncle Harry nearly cracked his head on the loose basement stair (it's the third one down) . . . the year she repainted the entire inside in peppermint green . . .

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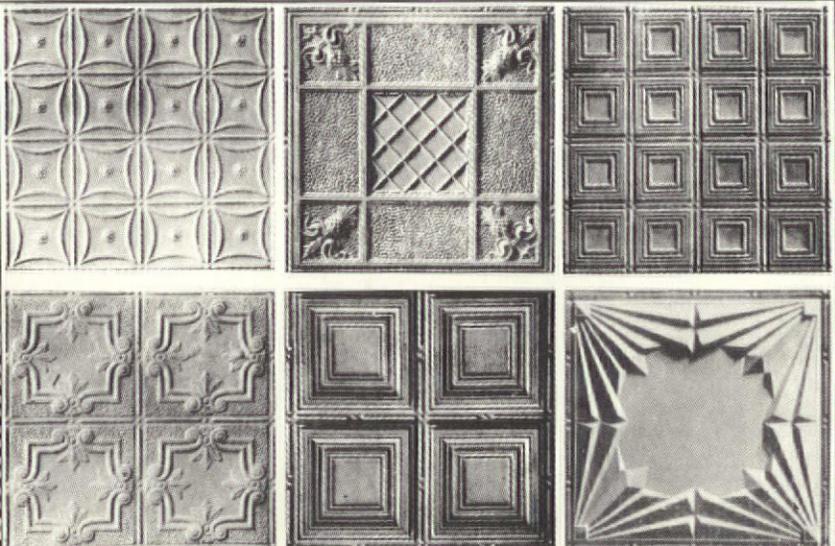
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P.O. Box 635 J
Whitmore Lake, MI 48189

Muddled Main Street

Q: OUR MAIN STREET has been terribly remuddled. We need guidance to help restore the storefronts in our small town. The buildings were built between 1880 and 1920. We've found very little published material on how to successfully rehabilitate business districts. We've seen pretty before-and-after pictures, but with little explanation of how the changes were implemented.

Not long ago, two out-of-state motorists pulled to a fast halt and got out to take photos of the worst examples of PermaStone and vertical cedar siding. I live in dread that they'll submit the pictures to The Old-House Journal for "Remuddling of the Month." Please help us!

-- Deanna Cooper, Auxvasse, Mo.

A: THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL is currently gathering information for a future article on storefront restoration. (Examples of successful business-district rehabilitations are eagerly sought.) In the meantime, contact the Main Street Program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation for more information: 1785 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. They'll be a tremendous help to you.

Out, Damp Spot

Q: THE PLASTER WALL in our foyer becomes wet periodically. The affected area is from the baseboard upward, approximately 2-1/2 feet. There is also sporadic dampness in an isolated area about halfway up the stairs. We've had our tin roof checked and repaired where seams had split open. The plaster was applied directly over brick with no air space. The wall has wallpaper on it and can look perfectly dry, but if the humidity goes up, it will be soaked in a matter of hours -- even on days when there has been no rain. We're considering furring out the wall, insulating, and finishing with gypsum board. Are we on the right track?

-- Susan Yeingst, Carlisle, Penn.

A: FURRING OUT THE WALLS may alleviate your moisture problems as long as you provide a vapor barrier. But chances are you needn't rip out all that plaster. Your problem is isolated in a couple of small areas, so it sounds like faulty mortar joints are to blame. The bricks on your home's exterior may need repointing. When you run your air conditioner, water vapor between the bricks condenses where it touches the relatively cool plaster. Also, check the soil around your foyer; if it's abnormally damp, it surely is contributing to your problem.

Before you repair the damaged areas of plaster, use a cementitious product such as Thoroseal™ to waterproof the inside surface of the bricks. This will help ensure that the problem won't recur. It makes more sense to isolate and solve the problem and patch the damaged plaster then it does to demolish the plaster and build new walls.

Insulation Dilemma

Q: I AM INVOLVED in the renovation of a small miner's cottage in Virginia City, Nevada, which was built in 1875. The house is based on a barn-type construction method, and has no wall studs. Can you point me in the right direction on how to insulate such a house?



As you can see from the photograph of the kitchen, all there is is wallpaper over a building paper of some sort of muslin ("Cabot A"), and then long wooden planks. Between the cracks of those planks you can see the exterior clapboard -- and sunlight. (Note how the electrical cable and switch box cannot be recessed because there is no stud-wall cavity.) If we erect stud-wall framing on all exterior walls, we'll reduce the dimension of the very small rooms by critical inches -- one room is already not quite 8' x 8'. Also, adding plaster board will destroy the wonderful depth of the window-frame moulding.

-- Kathleen E. McCarthy, Concord, Calif.

A: UNFORTUNATELY, any means you use to insulate the house will involve a compromise: Something will have to change, be it room size, exterior covering, or moulding profiles. The best approach is to frame out the stud walls and stuff them with fiberglass-batt insulation. A four- to six-inch space would provide the best insulation, but you can always cheat it down to save floor space (although this will reduce R-value). As far as the window-trim profiles are concerned, you can always remove the casings and block them out away from the window frame. Of course, you'll have to rip a wide jamb to reach the casings, thereby increasing the depth of the window pocket.

General interest questions from subscribers will be answered in print. The Editors can't promise to reply to all questions personally—but we try. Send your questions with sketches or photos to Questions Editor, The Old-House Journal, 69A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217.

I Strip For A Living. And For My Money, The Best Heat Gun Is The Master HG-501.

"I'm a paint stripping contractor, so I'm always looking for the most efficient tools. I've tried all the new plastic heat guns on the market. And believe me, the all-metal Master HG-501 is still the best. It's got lots more stripping power. Besides, it's almost bulletproof; it'll take a lot of abuse and keep on working. That's important to me, because my tools have to be on the job 8 hours a day, 5 days a week."

— Hal Peller

OHJ's editors have been conducting extensive tests on all the new plastic heat guns that have been advertised on TV. And we've come to the same conclusion as Hal Peller: The red, all-metal Master HG-501 takes off the most paint in the shortest time.

Family Handyman magazine found the same thing. In test results reported in the March 1985 issue, the *Family Handyman* reviewer said of the Master HG-501: "It did the best job for me."

Although The Old-House Journal has been selling the Master HG-501 for several years, we have no ties to Master. (We are free to sell *any* heat gun — or no heat gun at all.) We offer the Master HG-501 because it is an industrial tool that is not generally available to home-



The HG-501 blows hot air into carvings — causing paint to melt. The tool is ideal for stripping ornamental woodwork, and will strip flat work as well.

owners. For our readers who want the best, we'll continue to make available the all-metal HG-501 by mail.

THE HG-501 vs. TV HEAT GUNS

In our tests, we found three major differences between the Master HG-501 and the mass-market TV heat guns: (1) the phrase "high-impact corrosion resistant material" means "plastic." The HG-501, on the other hand, has an industrial-quality cast-aluminum body that will stand a lot of rugged use. (2) With cheaper heat guns, heat output drops off after a while — which means slower paint stripping. The HG-501 runs at a steady efficient temperature, hour after hour. (3) When a cheaper heat gun is dead, it's dead. By contrast, the long-lasting ceramic heating element in the HG-501 is *replaceable*. When it eventually burns out, you can put a new one in yourself for \$8. (OHJ maintains a stock of replacement elements.)

Also, with the HG-501 you get two helpful flyers prepared by our editors: one gives hints and tips for stripping with heat; the other explains lead poisoning and fire hazards. OHJ is the *only* heat gun supplier to give full details on the dangers posed by lead-based paint.

HOW WE CAME TO SELL THE MASTER HG-501

The Old-House Journal created the market for paint stripping heat guns. Back in 1976, Patricia & Wilkie Talbert of Oakland, Calif., told us about a remarkable way they'd discovered to strip paint in their home: using an industrial tool called a heat gun. We published their letter. . .then were deluged with phone calls and letters from people who couldn't find this wonder tool, the HG-501.



Hal Peller, President — Allstrip, Inc. — Ridgewood, N.Y. — (718) 326-0124

Further investigation revealed that it was a tool meant for shrink-wrapping plastic packaging. The HG-501 was made by a Wisconsin manufacturer who wasn't interested in the retail market. So, as a reader service, The Old-House Journal became a mail-order distributor. Since then, more than 12,000 OHJ subscribers have bought the HG-501. . .and revolutionized the way America strips paint.

Specifications for the HG-501:

- Fastest, cleanest way to strip paint. Heat guns are NOT recommended for varnish, shellac, or milk paint.
- UL approved.
- Adjustable air intake varies temperature between 500 F. and 750 F.
- Draws 14 amps at 115 volts.
- Rugged die-cast aluminum body — no plastics.
- Handy built-in tool stand.
- 6-month manufacturer's warranty.
- Guaranteed by The Old-House Journal: If a gun malfunctions within 60 days of purchase, return it to OHJ and we'll replace it free.
- Price: \$77.95 — including UPS shipping. Use Order Form in this issue.

Old-House Living

IT'S
WORTH
IT...

IF YOU
LEARN
TO
LAUGH



by Frances Gay

YOU HAVE TO LAUGH when you own an old house. This I know because of the great inaugural bath.

DUE TO LIMITED finances, my husband and I moved into an "as-is" 1890s Queen Anne. Fortunately we were young and foolish then, so it didn't matter that parents and friends thought we were crazy. They were sure the house was held together only by friendly termites holding hands. They were sure it would collapse around us as soon as we upset the insect ecology.

THE DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM needed refurbishing first: We could look through the unstable floor right down to the foundation.

MY PARTNER in this scheme casually mentioned one night, as I was drifting into dreams of our beautifully restored house, that he would remove all the bathroom fixtures in the morning. He didn't seem concerned that he knew absolutely nothing about plumbing. He only knew he couldn't afford a plumber. I asked how he would perform this feat. In youth and innocence, he replied calmly, "I read a book." My restoration dreams momentarily vanished, replaced by nightmares of water

pouring throughout the house.

THE NEXT DAY I gladly departed for work. ("Are you sure you want to tackle this?" "Oh sure, nothing to it! See you later, dear!") I whispered a little prayer, "Oh God, please protect Victoria (our nickname for the house)" and left. Not once that day did I have the nerve to call to ask how work was progressing. Maybe all would go well; in any case, it was better not to know.

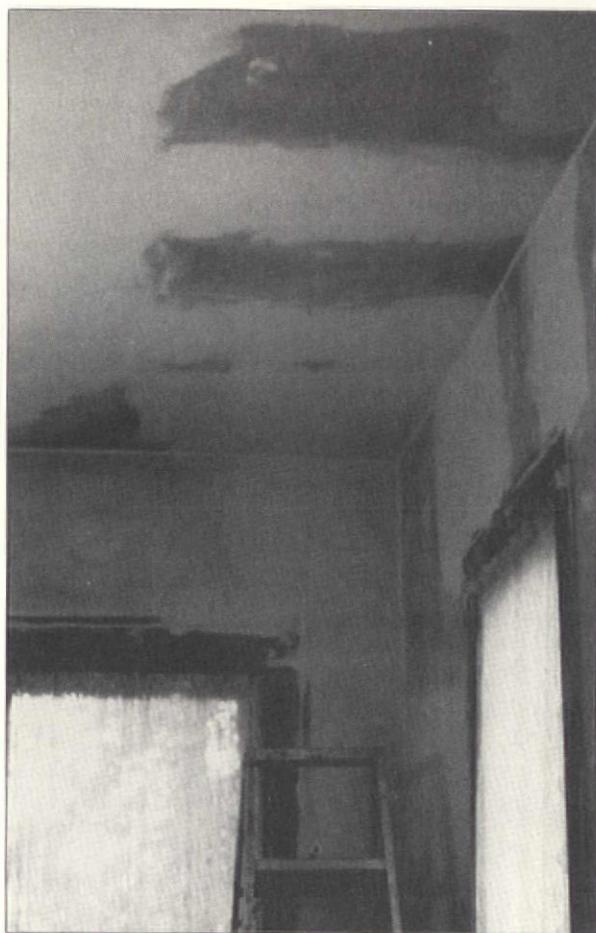
WHEN I RETURNED, I was surprised to find no flooded floors or spraying geysers. All the fixtures, safely removed, stood majestically in an adjoining room, which was to become our beautiful bedroom. Nothing was broken or chipped, and my proud partner insisted the project had been easy. "Absolutely nothing to it!"

WORK CONTINUED smoothly for days. Walls and woodwork were painted, floors repaired, and fixtures re-installed with equal confidence. Then the bedroom was complete and, with great excitement, we moved back in, happy to stop sleeping with paint cans, ladders, and other tools of the trade. We reminisced about the horrible pink paint we'd found in the house, and about how we didn't know to prime before painting, and so the walls have five coats of paint. (After the first coat, the walls had looked like road maps, because of all the patched plaster. Remember, we were novices, and this was years ago in the pre-Old-House-Journal era.)

NOW WE WERE ready to enjoy living in our newly decorated suite. All the doomsayers had been wrong! I went to take my first bath in the restored bathroom. Our white miniature poodle Dixie followed me. She loved my nightly bath; her favorite treat at the end of a day was to lick a soapy hand. We were having a marvelous time when suddenly the tub tilted backward and the geyser, no longer expected, rose from



The library's spectacular fireplace, complete with embossed tiles, was carefully stripped of a coat of white paint.



The dining room walls called for much plaster repair.

the foot of the tub. Dixie barked with delight as I screamed for help. Help didn't come, because he was soaking in the upstairs tub, gloating over his successful plumbing job, imagining how pleasant and memorable my first bath would be. Memorable all right, for both of us; clad only in a towel, he had to race downstairs and go out in the cold to enter the basement and shut off the water.

IT SEEMED THE SCREWS bolting the claw feet to the tub weren't tight enough, so the legs gave way. To this day, two large paint cans sit under the tub, just in case the feet decide to move again. (No one sees them, but they give me a sense of security.) For a long time Dixie would peer around the bathroom door to check weather conditions before entering. She wasn't taking any chances of an unscheduled shower!

ONLY AFTER ALL these years can we look back and laugh. And there are more stories, mostly about our naivete. When we bought Victoria, we asked the realtor if the roof leaked. "Absolutely not," was the reply. One thunderstorm later, we were running around in the attic from

rafter to rafter with pans to catch the water. Still, with the optimistic enthusiasm of an old-house lover, I reassured my partner not to fear. I suggested, as a joke, that we ask God to drop a limb on the leaking section so we could then have it repaired.... Don't ever do that, unless you're serious! Two weeks later, in another storm, a limb crashed exactly on the leaking portion of the slate roof. After some lengthy discussions, the insurance company agreed to replace the damaged roof -- but cancelled our policy. Later we found a more understanding insurer, who likes old houses, too.

AS IF THAT is not enough to make you pack your possessions and head for a tract house.... Still we stayed to see what new challenge would arise. After all, life was getting interesting. We were the historic preservation pioneers of Charlotte. Articles appeared in the local newspapers about our beautiful project. People knocked on the door on Sunday to ask for tours. Our house offered about as much privacy as a fishbowl.

THE FIRST WINTER we thought we would freeze to death; it snowed every Wednesday for a month. We began to suspect that all



Beautiful details, like the parlor fretwork, remained sound.



Antique paintings hang near a well-stocked buffet.

the people who doubted our sanity were right; our brains, more than likely, had frozen. Because the kitchen was unheated, we drew straws in the morning to see who would get served breakfast in bed. The second winter I devised a way to guarantee I always drew the right straw. I was served coffee, juice, and the rest as any Victorian lady should be. The next summer we painted and caulked, insulated the attic, and had the radiators overhauled. Today the house is toasty warm (more or less) in the winter.



OUR NEXT EPISODE revolved around my affinity for little furry creatures. I usually give them names, homes, and food. But sometimes I draw the line, as in the case of the midnight appearance of a flying squirrel on our landing. He provided a show that would have put the man on the flying trapeze to shame, flying from staircase to gasolier to table and back again. To catch him we closed off doors after each swing, and then placed a trap, baited with a tasty entree, in the entrance hall. We waited to hear the trap door close. After what seemed hours it banged shut, and we took our friend outside and freed him. The next day we



The restored library is a Victorian showplace.

investigated and closed off all access to the interior for friends with furry coats (Dixie excepted).

THE ONLY TENANTS we still have are little bandits. Although we live minutes from the heart of the city in an early street-car suburb, we are blessed with lots of wild animals. For years we heard bumps in the night on the roof but were too sleepy to investigate. About eight o'clock one night, my curiosity finally won and I crept upstairs to a window where I could see the roof. There stood a raccoon, as surprised to see me as I was to see her. That was the beginning of a long relationship. Since then, a family of raccoons has occupied one or more of our unused chimneys. As it is impossible to tell them apart I never know whether I'm conversing with mother, daughter, granddaughter, or great-granddaughter, but we do have babies each spring. The mother comes down nightly to eat her ration of dog food. Sometimes we visit; she eats out of my hand or sits atop the back porch lattice, taking a rest from motherhood.

SIXTEEN YEARS have passed, and while I reminisced for this article, the question arose: "Was it worth it?" Well, at first we were only looking for an old house to refurbish, and not planning to become

curators of Charlotte's most opulent Victorian landmark. We had spent seven-and-a-half years in military-base housing, plus one year in a new house, and there wasn't much to occupy our time. Victoria certainly took care of that problem. We often wondered if there would ever be enough hours to do everything. But eventually we reached a point where we could relax and begin showing off the results of our hard work. Sharing makes it all worthwhile.

SO DON'T WORRY if people think you're slightly daffy. After all, can they tell stories about their new houses? Have they had as much fun as you have lately -- come on, it is fun, if you learn to laugh a little.



Your house, like mine, has been around a long time, and with your tender loving care it will survive. And so will you!

Frances Gay is active preservationist who has taught restoration courses and served on the Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission. She is currently Director of Development at Architectural and Engineering Concepts, P.A., a restoration architecture firm.

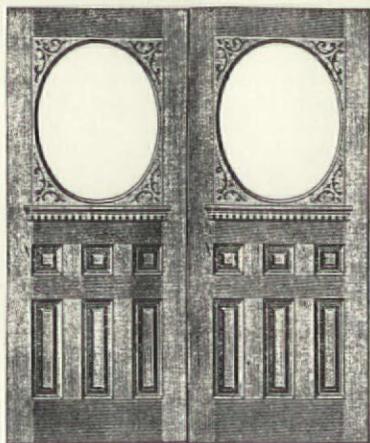


"Victoria" stands proud, painted yellow with white trim.



WEATHERSTRIPPING

ENTRY



DOORS

by Jonathan Poore

THE PRIMARY PURPOSE of door weatherstripping is to limit air infiltration. Take a look at the fit of the door in the jamb. If the door binds or if there are large gaps between the door and jamb or stops, repair before weatherstripping. (See "How to Fix Old Doors," June 1986 OHJ.) It's a waste of time to weatherstrip a door that doesn't fit well.

CHOOSE a type of weatherstrip by these four criteria:

1. Effectiveness -- Why bother otherwise?
2. Aesthetics -- Exterior doors are quite visible.
3. Durability -- Will it last long enough to warrant the time it takes to install it?
4. Ease of installation -- This affects cost if it must be carpenter installed. The cost of materials is minor by comparison.

EFFECTIVENESS is an obvious consideration. Don't install cheap "hardware-store variety" vinyl or vinyl-and-aluminum weatherstrip on



doors. The cheap vinyl type is usually self-stick -- and doesn't adhere well to old, rough woodwork, regardless of how well you wash it. Cheap vinyl weatherstrip gets brittle and may crack as it ages or when it gets cold. The inexpensive vinyl-bead weatherstrip that's set in a strip of soft aluminum (it usually comes on a roll) is just as

ineffective. The aluminum is so flexible and the vinyl so rigid that you can't fasten it in enough places to make even contact.

WEATHERSTRIPPING is effective only if you can still shut the door easily after it's installed. Let's face it: A weatherstripped door accidentally left ajar is less effective than a closed, unweatherstripped door. Most of the hardware-store variety, self-adhesive foam (polyurethane or PVC) presents this problem. The joint you're trying to seal usually varies in width. The manufacturer's instructions will tell you to layer the foam in the widest part of the gap. But that means increasing

1/8" thickness at a time. The extra thickness makes the door hard to shut because there's too much foam to compress.

AESTHETICS cannot be overlooked when you're working on an entry door. Avoid cluttering the door with a lot of surface-mounted weatherstripping. The least offensive location for surface-mounted weatherstripping is a sweep at the bottom of the door. It's away from eye level, away from any decorative hardware or details.

DURABILITY means cost effectiveness. You don't want to have to re-weatherstrip your door every year. Therefore:

- Avoid vinyl beads on the threshold. They wear out quickly when you walk on them.
- Avoid cheap vinyl as previously discussed.
- Avoid foam weatherstripping. It decomposes (gets crumbly) in a year or two.
- Avoid anything vulnerable. The edges of a door receive a tremendous amount of abuse, so make sure your weatherstrip is up to it, or locate it in a protected spot -- such as mortised into the door edge, or tucked in next to the stop.

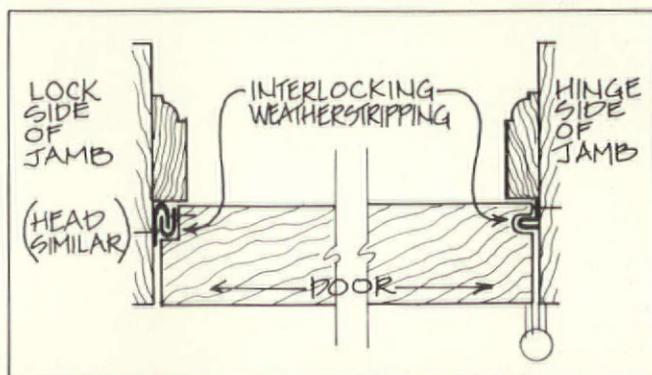
EASE OF INSTALLATION is important but... if you spend a little extra time putting in well-designed, high-quality weatherstripping now, you won't have to do it again for a long time. Interlocking (or integral) weatherstripping will last many decades if properly installed.

TYPES OF WEATHERSTRIP

USUALLY the same type of weatherstrip is used at the head, hinge jamb, and lock jamb. A different type is used at the sill.

THERE ARE TWO major categories of weatherstripping: interlocking and resilient. The advantage of interlocking is that once installed it becomes an integral part of the door (even visually). It also allows the door to close and latch completely unimpeded. The disadvantage is that it requires carpentry skills to install. The edge of the door must be rabbeted with a router to receive the weatherstrip, and the two pieces (on the door and jamb) must mate accurately. It could be argued that interlocking weatherstrip does not seal as well as resilient because it doesn't provide continuous contact. The longevity and ease of operation of interlocking weatherstrip outweighs the disadvantage, though.

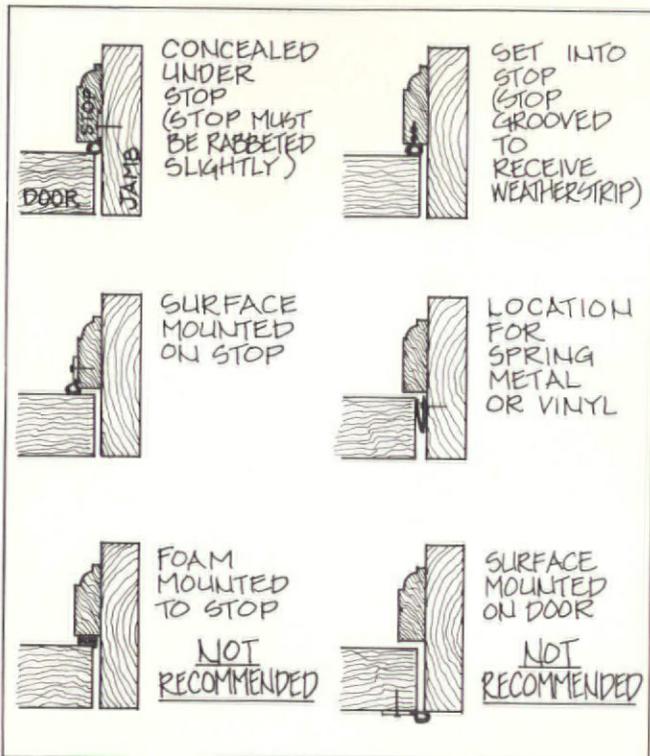
RESILIENT WEATHERSTRIPPING is that kind which flexes, bends, or compresses somehow as contact is made, thereby sealing the joint. The



contact part of the strip must "give" enough to allow the door to shut, yet must be durable. There are six materials to choose from:

1. Silicone
2. EPDM rubber
3. Neoprene
4. Vinyl
5. Wool pile (or synthetic pile)
6. Spring metal

SILICONE AND EPDM have the best "memory." That is, they don't permanently compress; they will always return to their original shape. Silicone and EPDM also remain flexible at low temperature.



NEOPRENE has similar characteristics but is less expensive and less durable. Vinyl is less durable, ages sooner, and becomes less flexible when cold.

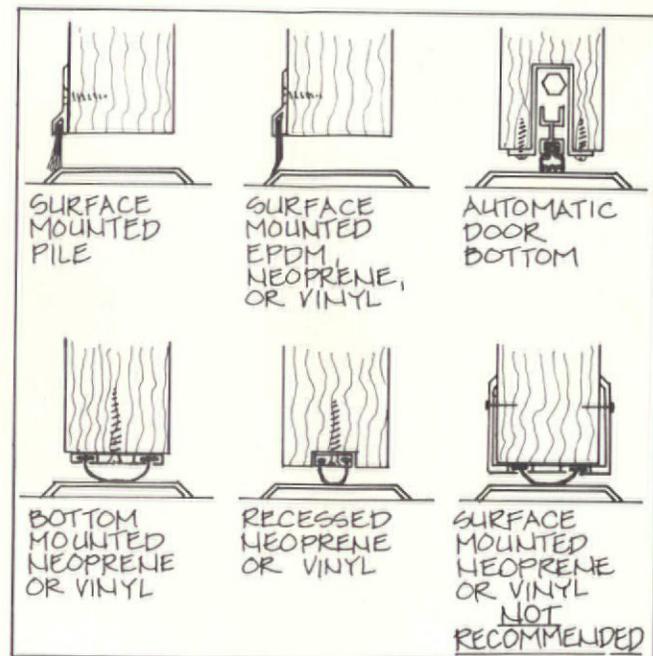
WOOL OR SYNTHETIC PILE weatherstrips are better suited for door sweeps than for the jambs because they can span a large gap. For less money, you can buy wool or synthetic felt -- less resilient than pile.

SPRING METAL is very durable but can create friction, making the door a little harder to close.

SOURCES

Accurate Metal Weatherstrip Co. Inc., 725 S. Fulton Ave., Mount Vernon, NY 10550. (914) 668-6042. Interlocking, EPDM rubber, neoprene, vinyl, wool/synthetic pile, bronze and zinc spring-metal.

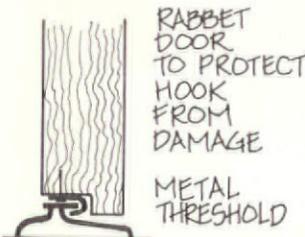
Pemko Co., Box 3780, Ventura, CA 93006. (805) 642-2600. Interlocking, silicone, EPDM rubber, neoprene, vinyl, wool and synthetic pile, spring-metal.



DOOR BOTTOM SEALS / SWEEPS

ALL BOTTOM SEALS or sweeps should close against a threshold so they don't have to drag across the floor. There are three basic types of door bottom seals or sweeps: interlocking; resilient; and automatic (drop down).

INTERLOCKING is always a good choice for reasons previously discussed. It does, however, necessitate installing a compatible threshold to receive the hook on the door. Thresholds and hooks are available in bronze or aluminum so they will match your existing door hardware.



INTERLOCK AT THRESHOLD

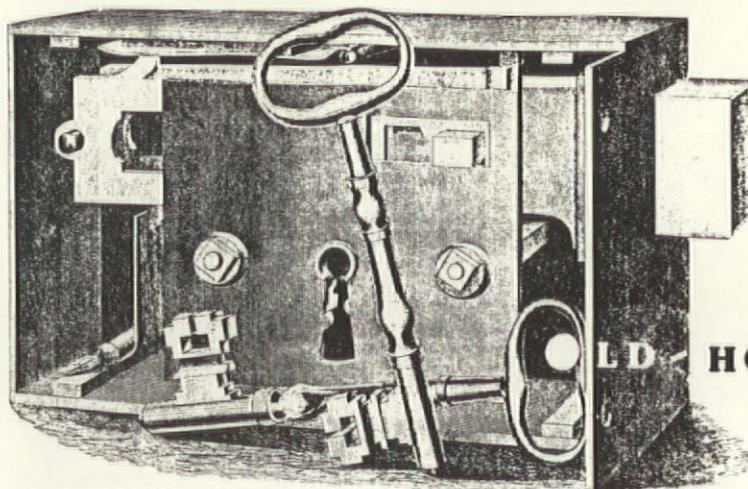
RESILIENT sweeps or bottom seals are available in all of the same materials as resilient head/jamb weatherstrips. In the box above are some available configurations. Many different design variations exist; these are most typical.

AUTOMATIC door bottoms are the high-tech solution to weatherstripping. They are the most expensive and most difficult to keep properly adjusted. When they are correctly installed and adjusted, they work very nicely. But if they're maladjusted, they can make the door bind, or fail to form a good seal. As you shut the door, a button hits the hinge side of the jamb, causing the seal to drop down snugly against the threshold.

Resource Conservation Technology Inc., 2633 N. Calvert St., Baltimore, MD 21218. (301) 366-1146. Silicone, EPDM rubber.

Schlegel Corp., Retroseal Division, PO Box 23197, Rochester, NY 14692. (716) 427-7200. Wool-and-synthetic-blend pile.

Zero International, 415 Concord Ave., Bronx, NY 10455. (212) 585-3230. Interlocking, silicone, neoprene, wool pile, spring-metal.



PART TWO

Locks & Alarms

HOUSE SECURITY

by David Swearingen

A COMMON old-house security error is installation of unauthentic locks on entry doors. The front door is a focal point of any building, and contributes greatly to that all-important "first impression." The glossary on page 475 chronicles the development of various types of locks. This will give you a clear idea what styles are authentic for the period of your house.

BOTH RIM AND MORTISE locks have simple, large mechanisms housed in heavy metal cases. The mechanisms are easily accessible, so the lock will function for many years without breaking, and if a part does wear out, it can be replaced easily. Some rim locks made over 400 years ago are still in service.

RIM AND MORTISE LOCKS have been made somewhat obsolete in recent years by cylindrical and tubular locks. Not because modern locks are better, but because they are easier and faster for builders to install. Mortise locks are frequently specified for commercial and government buildings. Reproductions of solid brass Colonial rim locks are available, but they are very expensive (\$250-\$350) and do not offer much security unless furnished with an unauthentic pin tumbler cylinder.

KEY-IN-KNOB LOCKSETS are grossly unauthentic and offer virtually no security. Likewise, the average tubular deadbolt is no obstacle to a determined thief. Even if the cylinder is encased in a solid hardened ring, the entire unit can be popped right off the door instantly by forcing a crowbar or claw hammer under the cylinder housing. Many burglars slip an awl around the housing and flip back the deadbolt so quickly and silently, it looks like they're using the key.

THERE IS an inherent weakness in any tubular installed on a wood door that opens inward. Even the best tubulars leave only 1/4 to 3/8" of wood around the tube, and any force applied to the door is concentrated on that thin slice of wood. With one swift kick, the tube breaks right through the door.

A RECENT IMPROVEMENT over the old tubular deadbolt is the cylindrical deadbolt. This is an exceedingly durable lock, yet the mechanism is so simple that malfunctions are rare, and

repair is inexpensive. The most notable manufacturer of such a lock is the Lori Corporation. It's a very good security lock.

COMPARING TYPES

GENERALLY SPEAKING, mortise locks are the most secure and durable locks, but rim locks are best for thin doors because none of the door needs to be cut away. While a pin-tumbler mortise lock does have an exposed cylinder, it projects less than tubular cylinders. It is much less obtrusive, and more secure. The cylinder is the weakest point of a mortise lock; it must have a hardened slip ring.

MORTISE LOCKS require a pocket be cut out of the door. Because so much material is removed, it may seem that a door with a mortise lock can be kicked in more easily than one with a tubular lock. This is not the case. Only a very narrow band of wood need be broken to kick in a door with a tubular or cylindrical lock. Conversely, the large case of a mortise lock spreads the force out over a big area, so it takes more force to break through the door.

CASE IN POINT: A week after I installed a mortise lock in the door pictured at right, it was attacked by burglars. This door opens off a narrow corridor, so the burglars set up a jack across the hallway. With the bottom of the jack against the opposite wall, they started tightening it. This put more pressure on the door than anyone could by kicking it. When the door began to crack, the cracks ran up and down the length of the door rather than straight through it. Such extreme force was applied that the jack finally collapsed into the corridor wall, foiling their scheme.

JIMMY RESISTANCE

MOST ANTIQUE LOCKS had only one-half inch throw bolts as opposed to the one-inch throws available today. Longer bolts are better, but their advantages are overrated considering the weaknesses previously detailed. Old-time locks had short throws for two reasons:

1. Because of the nature of bit key operation, bolt throw was generally equal to the length of the key bit. One-inch throw bolts were

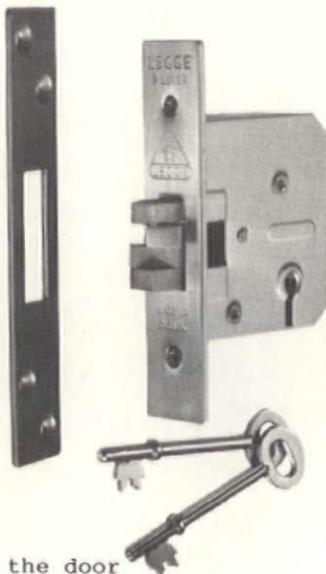
available, but required turning the key two complete turns. They were secure, but never very popular because of the inconvenience.

2. There was less need for longer throws years ago. Doors and frames were made from solid wood and closely fitted by carpenters who took pride in their work. A one-half-inch throw on those doors provided better security than a one-inch throw on today's pulpy wood doors that have big gaps between door and frame.

THE "TOGLOCK" by Almet Manufacturing prevents jimmying by interlocking the door and frame with expanding claw bolts. Locksmiths have hailed this "revolutionary new invention" as being "a generation ahead in deadbolt security." While Almet does have a good product, it's hardly "revolutionary." Similar claw bolts were available in bit key mortise locks nearly a century ago. If you look hard enough, you can still find old-fashioned lever locks with jimmy-resistant claw bolts.

SALVAGING ORIGINALS

IF YOU'RE LUCKY, the original locks are intact on your house, or you'll be able to find some nice antiques from other sources. In either case, you'll want to restore them. Locks can be complicated, and so are probably best left to an experienced locksmith. Most locksmiths won't be interested in working on old locks; they'd rather sell you a new one. You'll likely have to fix them yourself.



FIRST, REMOVE the knobs. A small screw in the shank of the inside knob holds the knob fast to the spindle. Remove any paint buildup in the slot of the screw to avoid "stripping" the screw -- replacements aren't easy to find. Loosen the screw, and the knob will either pull straight off or will screw off. Then pull the outer knob and spindle straight out.

RIM LOCKS are usually attached by four screws, one at each corner. Mortise locks are secured with two screws in the edge of the door. After removing these screws, pull the lock out by yanking on the latch or deadbolt. You may have to pry gently through the knob holes and around the front of the lock. Some locks will be very stubborn, but work patiently so you don't damage the door.

TO EXPOSE the internal mechanism, remove the one or two screws that hold the cover on the case. Remove the cover carefully so you don't lose any springs or other small parts that may fall out. Ideally, you'll have another lock that you can leave open, undisturbed, to serve as a model. If your lock has multiple levers, be very careful to keep track of the order you remove them in.

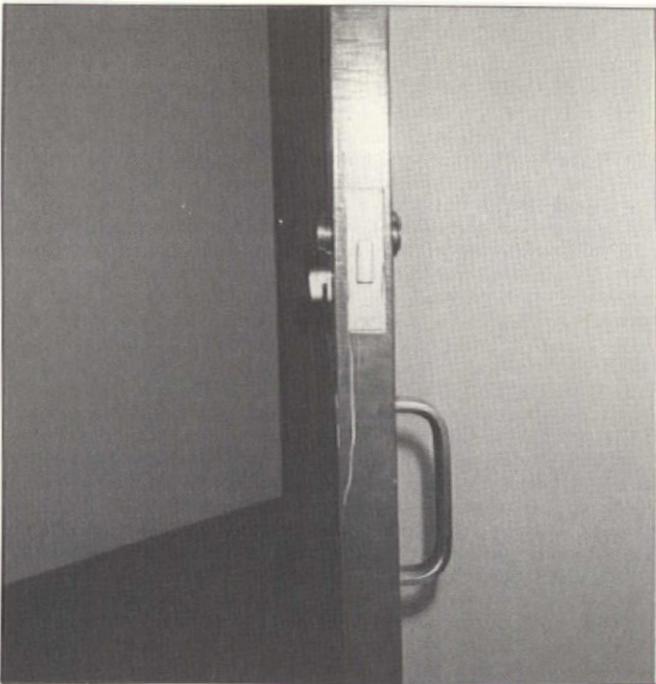
CLEAN EVERY PART thoroughly. This may involve degreasing, wire brushing to remove rust, and paint removal from the front plate, latch, and deadbolt. Often, one or two of the springs will be broken. Hardware stores carry a large assortment of replacement springs; locksmiths, too, should have replacements. Have a locksmith replace broken lever springs. If the post the levers are pivoted on is loose, use a small hammer to "rivet" the fixed end into the case more solidly.

REPAIR BROKEN PARTS by brazing. Solder is inadequate for most lock repairs. If the cast-iron case is cracked or broken, weld the outside of the case. The bolt may be bent (it's likely made of soft brass or bronze). You can straighten it in a vise, but do so carefully and slowly.

AFTER EVERY PART has been cleaned and repaired, reassemble the lock with great care to ensure that each part is where it belongs. The slightest deviation may keep the lock from functioning properly. After the lock is reassembled, lubricate all moving parts with a very thin oil -- 3-in-1 Oil, or sewing machine or gun oil is appropriate. Spray lubricants like Tri-flow and LPS are also good. Lubricants make the lock work more smoothly, and prevent rust.

IF YOU NEED a key for your lock, see a locksmith. Aside from the skill required to cut a key accurately, you may need a PhD in key making just to locate the proper key blank. Around the turn of the century, lock makers were producing thousands of different key blanks for their locks. Using the proper blank makes a big difference in how well the key will work.

REATTACHING THE LOCK to the door is basically a matter of reversing what you did to get it off. When you put the knobs back on your door, be careful not to screw the knob onto the spindle too far, or the knobs will bind. If it's too loose, there will be excessive rattling.



AN ALARM SYSTEM can be a very worthwhile investment. Not only does it give you a second line of defense against intrusion, but it can also incorporate other important safety features such as fire and medical protection. An alarm system is an especially good idea for houses that are isolated, in high-crime areas, difficult to secure, or full of priceless belongings.

LIMITED SPACE precludes us from describing all available alarm systems and their various components. We can introduce you to some of the most important features and limitations, though. If you decide that an alarm system is for you, pick up a copy of The Burglar Alarm Book by Doug Kirkpatrick*. This excellent and comprehensive text demystifies alarm systems without assuming that the reader has an advanced degree in electronics theory.

ALARM SYSTEMS can generally be divided into three types: hard-wired, line carrier, and wireless. Some systems use a combination of these three types. Hard-wired means that the alarm components are physically connected with wires (just like your lights, switches, and outlets are). Line carriers use your existing electrical circuit. Wireless transmitters use radio waves.

REPUTABLE alarm installers will tell you hard wiring is obsolete; wireless is the only way to go. I disagree. I think they say that because hard-wired installation requires care, patience, and hard work -- now that's the part that is obsolete today. Although wireless technology is advancing, I still believe that hard-wired systems provide the most reliable protection in most situations.

MANY HOMEOWNERS have been scared away from hard-wired systems because of the high cost. The components are actually cheaper than those of wireless systems. The extra cost is the labor that's involved in installing the system. This can be a real boon to the do-it-yourselfer. You could install a hard-wired system yourself for half the price of a good wireless system.

SYSTEMS THAT USE wireless transmitters do have their advantages, especially in an old house. If you have a lot of ornamental plaster and fine woodwork, the last thing you want to do is fish wires through the house. In that case a wireless system like that made available by Premier Communications is the way to go.

BURGLAR ALARM SYSTEMS provide two types of protection: perimeter and interior. The cheapest alarms provide only one or the other. You really need both types, and they should be on two separate circuits. Here's why:

- If a burglar circumvents or defeats the perimeter circuit, he'll be detected by the

interior circuit.

- If one system fails, you're still covered.
- Separate circuits allow you to turn off the interior circuit when you are at home, while still keeping the perimeter circuit armed to protect your family from intruders. (They're often called day and night circuits.)
- Separate circuits enable your system to provide a different response to an attempted break-in than to a successful break-in.



PERIMETER PROTECTION, also called "point of entry" protection, is your first line of defense in a home security system. It can be kept on when you are at home. This, and the fact that perimeter protection can be completely hidden, are the biggest advantages, particularly for old-house owners.

IDEALLY, you'll have an alarm on your fence and an alarm on the grounds around your house to detect prowlers. In most cases this is impractical. Install wired window screens and alarms on your screen doors. This is an especially good practice for old-house owners. An alarm that goes off when a burglar breaks down your door is fine for summoning help and scaring him off. But it didn't help your hand-carved, leaded glass door that was just destroyed. An alarm that sounds an ear-splitting whelp the instant he penetrates the screen door is likely to scare him away before he damages irreplaceable doors and windows.

IN ADDITION to screen alarms, you should have sensors on your doors and windows themselves. Preserve the pristine appearance of your vintage doors and windows by using recessed (concealed) magnetic switches or plunger switches. Foil tape on windows is terribly unauthentic and totally unnecessary. If you feel you must detect glass breakage, there are better ways -- like using a wireless sensor.



INTERIOR PROTECTION is provided by a variety of devices which detect an intruder inside your house. Although more prone to false alarms than perimeter sensors, interior detectors are also harder to defeat. Thieves broke into a Fanny Mae house (just three blocks from my own home) by sawing a hole through the floor. No perimeter system would have stopped them, but an interior alarm certainly would have.

THE INTERIOR ALARM system should activate a "repel system." Once an intruder has forced his way into your house, you want to get him out as quickly as possible. This is best done by installing a number of "speakers" (a technical term for noisemakers) throughout the house in hidden places like return-air ducts. Install the very loudest speakers you can buy. Atlas' Q3 speaker, powered by a Moose JDS100 driver, can turn the toughest thug into quivering jelly. Never mind if you actually deafen him; he'll get his hearing back when he goes before the judge.

* Baker Publishing, 9348 Monogram Ave., Sepulveda, Calif. 91343.

A COMPLETE SECURITY system includes a number of safety features in addition to the two types of intrusion protection already described. Safety protection requires a third circuit, known as a "24-hour circuit." It has no "on/off" switch, as it must be on continuously alert to provide "other protections": smoke and heat detectors, emergency panic buttons, calls for medical help, poisonous gas detectors, flood detectors, freezer failures, or just about anything else that you want to continuously monitor.

Atlas' Q3 speaker, powered by a Moose JDS100 driver, can turn the toughest thug into quivering jelly. Never mind if you deafen him; he'll get his hearing back when he goes before the judge.



ALL OF YOUR ALARM components will be connected into a central unit called the control box. Be sure it features an auto shut-off to satisfy legal requirements that are in effect in most cities. And of course, auto reset so that it will automatically re-arm itself after it shuts down.

The best control boxes contain batteries that are continuously recharged, so your system will always have power even if the house current fails. Permanent gel-cells provide the best battery power.

MOUNT ALL exterior speakers, sirens, and bells out of reach. Ideally, they'll be in a tamperproof box, or mounted behind louvers in your attic to protect them from the weather and from being sabotaged by intruders. A strobe light high on the exterior of your house will enable emergency vehicles to find your house much faster.

ALTHOUGH ALL ALARM SYSTEMS can be turned on and off at the control box, you will find it more convenient to install one or more remote on/off switches at convenient locations. Place the control box in an out-of-the-way, secure spot.

REMOTE SWITCHES may be either key-operated or digital pads (which use a push-button combination). Many systems are controlled by a switch located outside the front door; if you choose this location, it can be concealed behind a hinged mailbox to maintain the integrity of your restoration.

Addresses of Listed Companies

Almet Manufacturing, 9166 Viau Boulevard, Montreal, Quebec, Can. H1R 2V8. (514) 326-9780

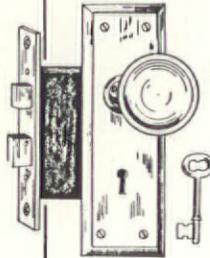
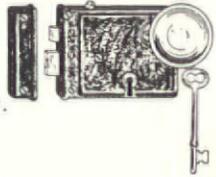
Lori Corporation, Old Turnpike Road, PO Box 490, Southington, Conn. 06489. (203) 621-3601

Premier Communications, Box 1513, Dept. OHJ, High Point, N.C. 27261. (919) 841-4355

The Evolution of Locks

RIM LOCK – BIT KEY

The earliest locks were self-contained in a large, rectangular box that was mounted on the rim (surface) of the door. Used on residential and commercial buildings through the early 20th century.

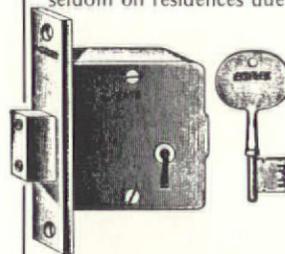
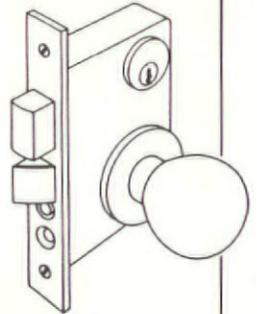


MORTISE LOCK – BIT KEY

In 1835, a new type of lock was invented that was mounted entirely within the door. It was installed in a pocket that had been mortised out, hence the name. Commonly used on buildings from 1850 to 1950.

MORTISE LOCK

Mortise locks using pin tumblers were invented in 1865, but very few were actually produced prior to 1900. These locks were used on fine residences and commercial buildings from the '20s to the '40s. Still used on commercial properties, but seldom on residences due to high cost.

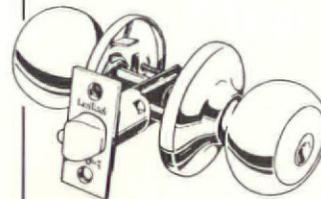
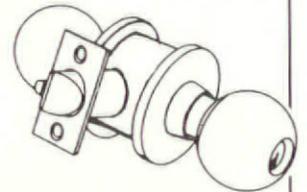


AUXILIARY DEADBOLT – BIT KEY

The complete locksets described above consisted of a lock case containing both a latch and a deadbolt. Small bit key deadbolts were often used in conjunction with locksets to provide additional security.

CYLINDRICAL KEY-IN-KNOB

Invented about 1925, the cylindrical lockset was slow to gain acceptance. It derives its name from the cylinder-like housing that contains its mechanism. Inherently insecure and expensive to repair.

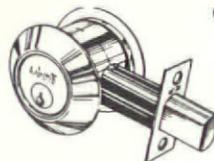
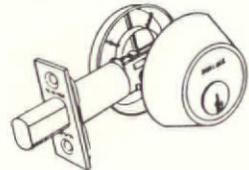


TUBULAR KEY-IN-KNOB

This lock is similar to the cylindrical K-I-K described above, but a cheaper version. Consists of little more than a latch tube and two knobs. Provides minimum security, yet has been used on 95% of post-1950 houses.

TUBULAR DEADBOLT

Invented in 1932, this is a small auxiliary deadlock consisting of little more than a tube and one or two cylinders. Inherently weak and insecure.



CYLINDRICAL DEADBOLT

Invented in 1971, this lock looks just like a tubular deadbolt, but the construction is entirely different. Much more secure than a tubular. Can be used authentically on houses dating back to the 1930s.

REPRODUCING EMBOSSSED TILE

In the March 1986 OHJ, we published an article on collecting Victorian embossed tiles. It prompted David and Lorma Wiebe of Kearney, Nebraska, to write and tell us their uncomplicated method for reproducing these scarce tiles. We sent the Wiebes' information to two experts: Susan Warren Lanman, author of the original article and an avid collector; and Susan Tindall, a specialist in the preservation of architectural ceramics. "Could reproducing embossed tiles really be this simple?" we asked. The answer was yes — if you aren't looking for a perfect match and if you have luck on your side. For this article, we've incorporated Ms. Lanman's and Ms. Tindall's comments into the Wiebes' text.

THIRTEEN YEARS AGO, we bought our 1888 house and were delighted to find it had three original fireplaces. Two were in perfect condition and surrounded by intact embossed tiles. The one in the dining room, however, had been heavily used and hadn't fared as well. Many of its tiles were loose, and about 15 were cracked or broken.

WE DECIDED to reproduce the ruined tiles ourselves; working with a ceramist who lives nearby, we developed a method that gives quite satisfactory results. And the first step is to find a good ceramist -- someone to fire the tiles and experiment with glazes for you (unless you have your own firing facilities and some experience in this kind of work).

MAKE A FLAT WOODEN BOX of 1/2-in. plywood. It should be large enough to extend some 4" beyond the tile on all sides, and about 2" deep. Seal it with shellac so the wood won't draw moisture out of the plaster. The box has to be tight enough to keep the plaster from leaking out, so seal all the joints with clay or silicone caulk.

CAREFULLY REMOVE the tile you wish to copy. Thinly coat it with a mould-release agent such as tincture of green soap (available at art- or sculpture-supply stores and at some building-supply dealers). Use clay to affix the tile to the bottom of the box -- be sure no plaster can get underneath the tile, or you'll never get it out of the box. Mix plaster of



This tile, with its simple design and high relief, is relatively easy to reproduce.

paris (or even better, number-two moulding plaster, available at some art-supply stores and most masonry or sculpture suppliers) according to the directions and pour it into the box. Tap and stir it gently to remove air bubbles.

THE PLASTER will become warm to the touch as it hardens; let it cool down again, and then knock the box apart and gently pry the tile loose. Don't wait too long or it will be impossible to remove. Let the mould dry for about two weeks. Use plaster to fill in any air holes in the finished mould.

YOU CAN'T EXPECT the finished tile to look exactly like its neighbors. You'll be using "slip" (liquid clay) to make the reproduction, and slip will shrink about 20% as it dries -- an 8" slip-cast tile turns into a 6-1/2" tile. But there are ways to compensate for shrinkage. The ceramist can press modeling clay into the mould, which leads to only 3-6% shrinkage and less warping. Or you can enlarge the mould by stretching the pattern at the edges, and deepening and accentuating the design with common, inexpensive sculpting tools. (Make sure it's 20% thicker, too.)

THE CRITICAL THING is that the overall length and width of the tile match that of its neighbors. So enlarge the dimensions of the mould by 20% at this stage. If the pattern doesn't match exactly, it won't be too noticeable. But if the replacement tile is too small, the grout lines around it will be fatter -- and that's really noticeable. (Likewise, if you overcompensate and make a tile that's too big, it won't fit! Better test-fire one to check its size before you order a dozen.)

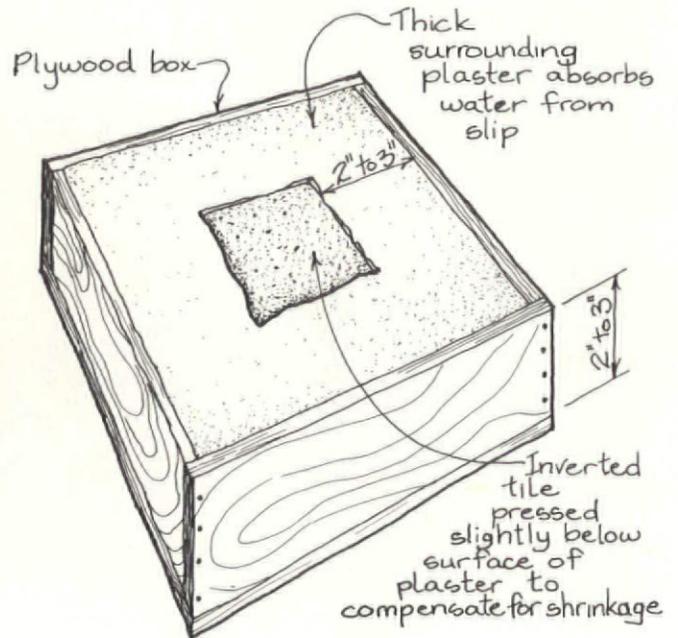
KEEP IN MIND: The image in the mould is reversed, so look at the tile in a mirror while you work on the mould. Simple designs with heavily raised surfaces are easier to reproduce than tiles with complex patterns and low



The complicated, low-relief pattern of this tile makes reproduction more difficult.

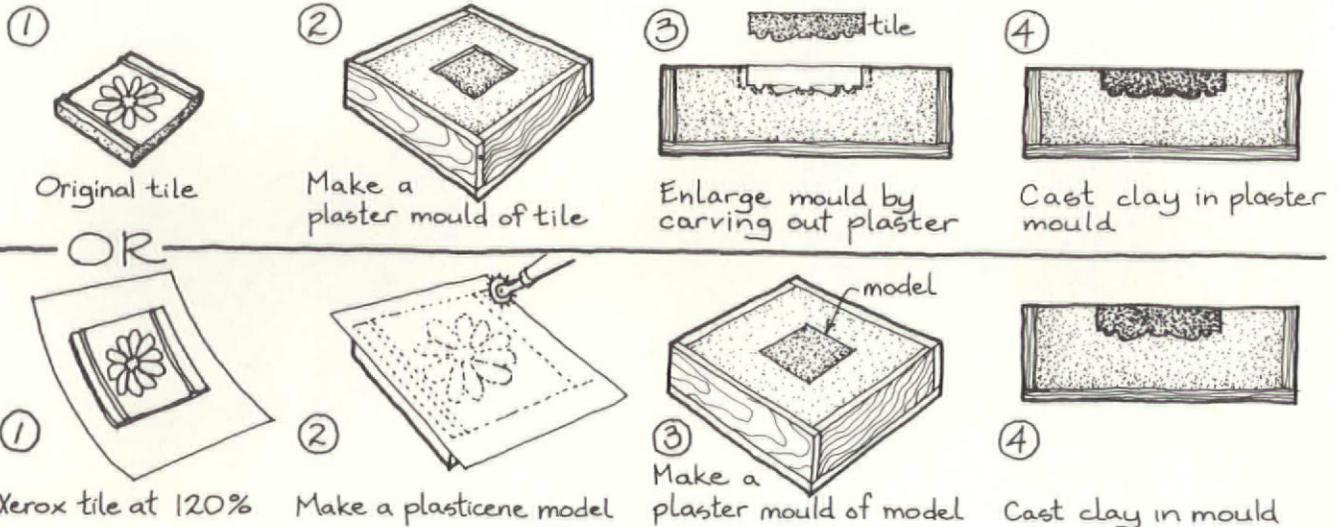
relief (use extra care if yours is one of the latter).

ANOTHER METHOD is to make a 20%-enlarged photocopy of the tile and place it over plasticine, which is available at art- or sculpture-supply stores. (If your local stores don't carry it, you can always buy those kits for kids with packages of multi-colored plasticine -- you'll end up paying about \$15 for enough to make your tile.) Trace around the photocopy with either a razor blade or a pattern-marking wheel, and then carve an exact replica of the tile out of the plasticine, using the photocopy as a guide. Seal the replica with shellac (to keep the plasticine oils from leaking into the plaster) and cast it in the box as you would a tile. Plasticine is much easier to remove from plaster than tile, so you'll have to perform only minor touch-ups on your mould.



ONCE THE MOULD IS READY, take it to the ceramist to have the tiles made. Touch up any imperfections before they're fired. You'll want to obtain a good matching color, so have the ceramist experiment with the under-glaze and glaze. Of course, the original glaze formulas were carefully guarded information; your ceramist may find the colors difficult to match, which means you might have to settle for an approximation. Also, try to have the glaze "pool" in the valleys of the design, as the original tile-makers did.

AS FOR CONE SETTING, your ceramist will undoubtedly have some advice here. Cone 06 is the most frequently used temperature firing point, and most readily-available commercial glazes use this setting. Cone 04 may make the tiles more durable. Consider having a couple of experimental tiles cast and fired, to see which cone setting works best.





POST-VICTORIAN HOUSES

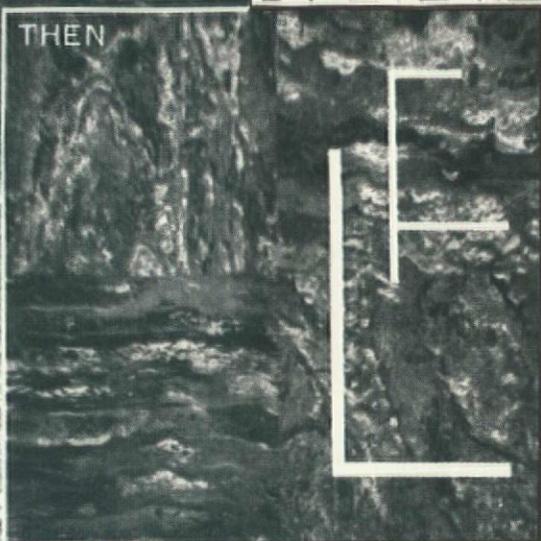
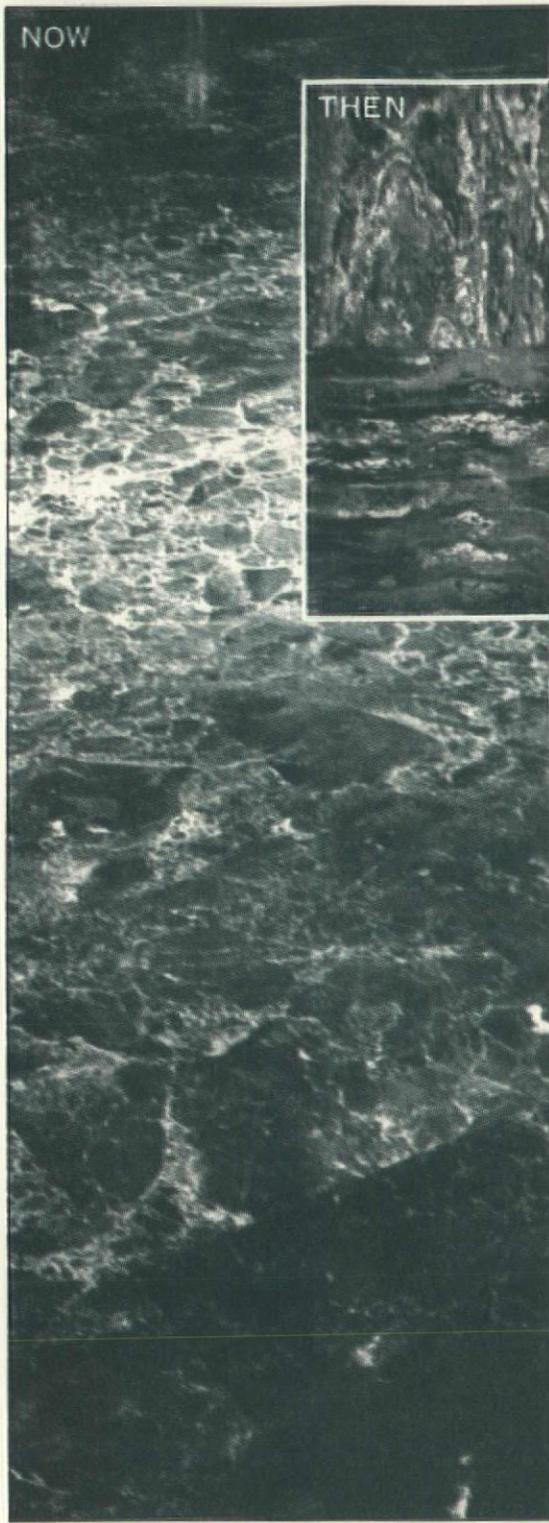
NOW

BY EVE KAHN

THEN

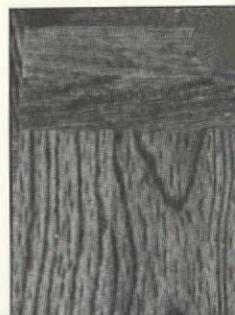
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FINDING
INOLEUM

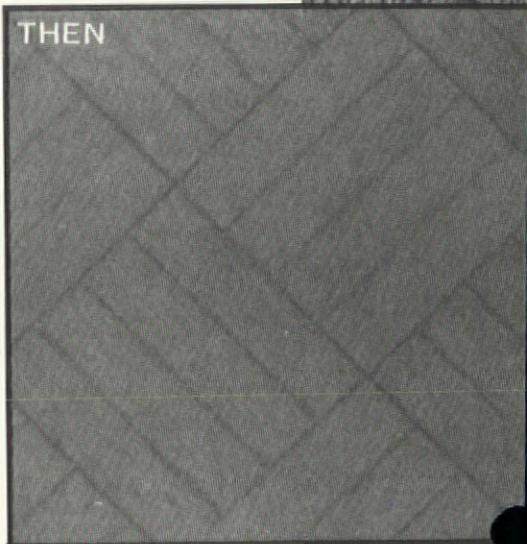


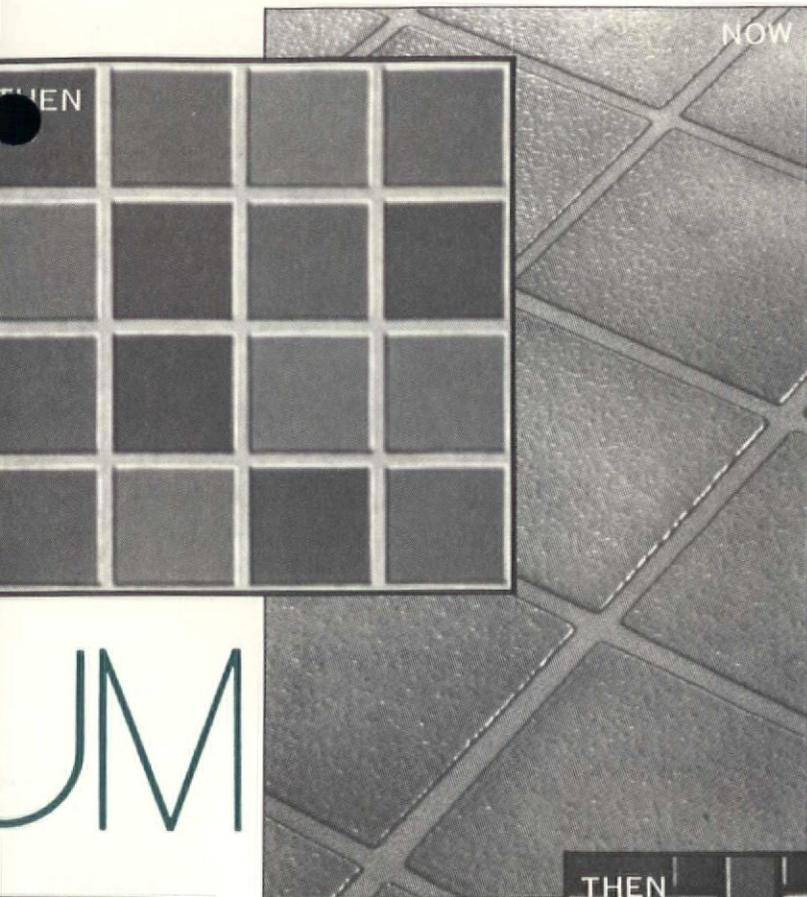
WE GET WEEKLY calls from people trying to locate linoleum. The real thing — linseed oil, wood dust, cork, resins — isn't made in the U.S. anymore. Major manufacturers stopped making it around 1974. (See OHJ January, 1982 for a complete history of the linoleum industry.) We offer several solutions: You can purchase the real thing from distributors of European and Canadian linoleum. You can buy vinyl-tile "rugs" that look like linoleum. Or you can buy standard vinyl tiles, some of which look like old-fashioned linoleum. Beware: Unlike linoleum, most vinyl has a textured surface.

WE COMPARED old linoleum catalogs to current vinyl-tile catalogs of Armstrong and Congoleum. Both have new patterns that recall the old: marble, parquet, and cork imitations; irregularly arranged rectangles; old-style figures. Armstrong's



THEN



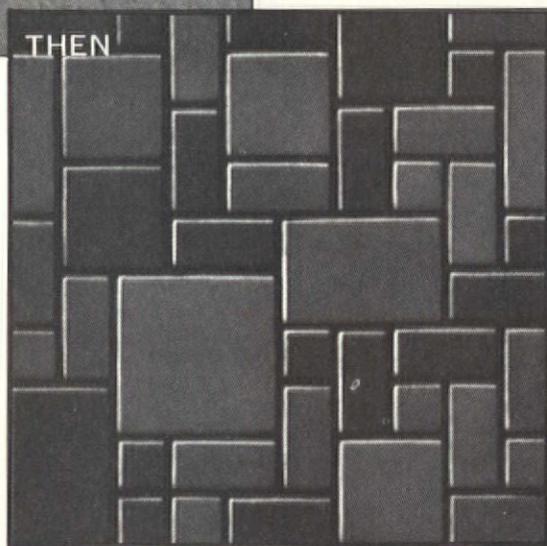


JM



funkiest designs — martini glasses or fedoras with gloves, for example — are tile inserts that look straight out of the 1940s. (You get custom colors, even Art Deco letters.) Armstrong and Congoleum are available at most floor-covering stores, where you'll probably turn up other vinyl flooring that resembles linoleum.

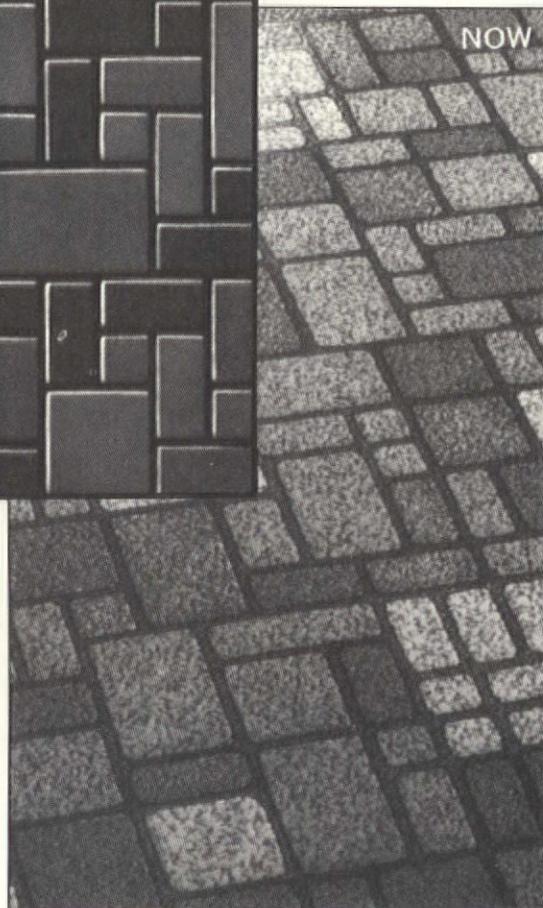
WE ALSO FOUND linoleum makers in Europe and Canada. Their flooring has the marble-like swirls and mottled tones of old linoleum (the more colorful the swirl, the more old-fashioned the look). Nobody has re-created the tiny-tile or floral designs of yesteryear. Linoleum today comes in 6-ft.-wide sheets and 1- or 2-sq.ft. tiles. To make small, period-style pieces, cut the linoleum with a mat knife, or find a professional who has a cutting machine. Companies listed on these pages provide literature, samples, and instructions for maintaining linoleum.



ALL "THEN" DESIGNS shown are from our c. 1930 linoleum catalogs. The designs labelled "now" are vinyl, except where noted (see pages 480 and 481). Listed below are linoleum distributors and one manufacturer of linoleum-style vinyl rugs.

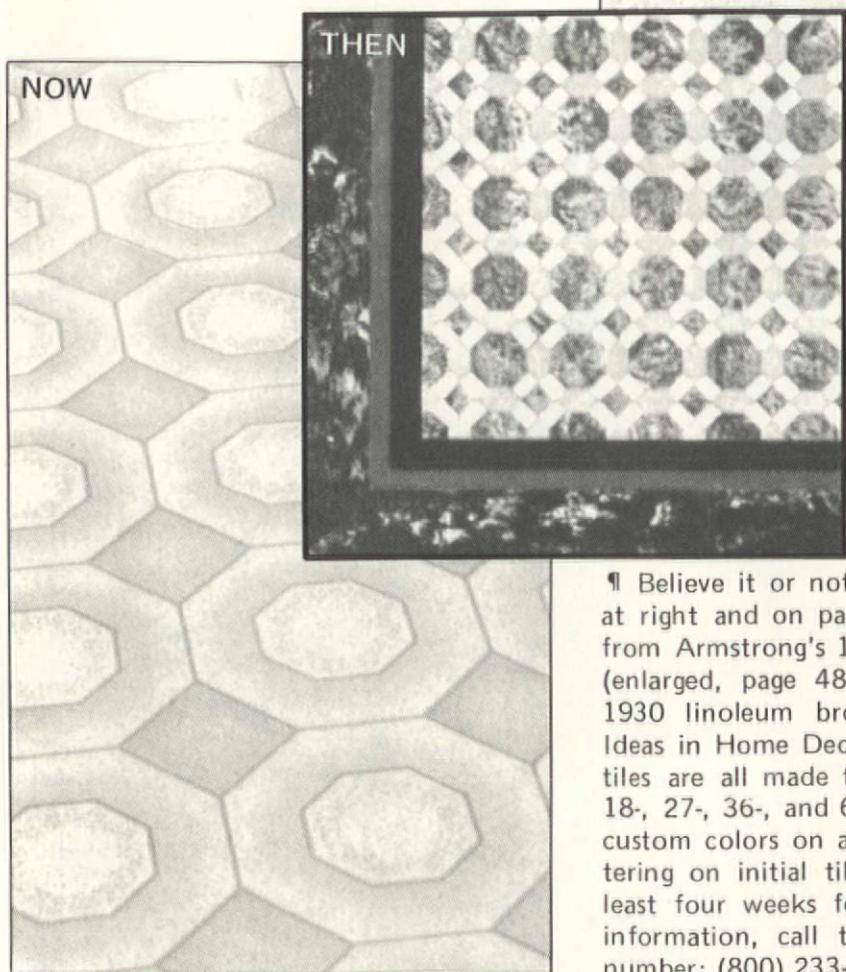
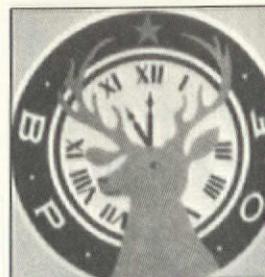
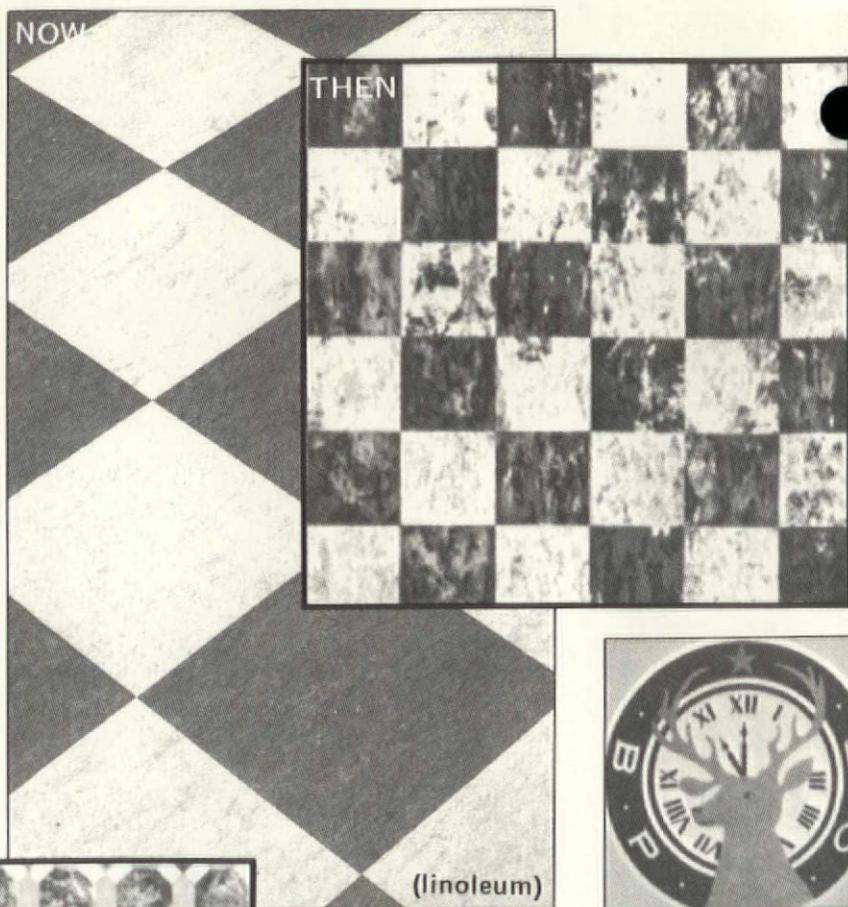
¶ Domco Industries Ltd. manufactures sheet linoleum in eight marble-like tones. Average prices are \$2 to \$2.25 per sq.ft. Contact the company for a distributor near you. Domco Indust. Ltd., 1001, Yamaska, E., Dept. OHJ, Farnham, Que. J2N 2R4 Canada. (514) 866-5461.

¶ Gerbert Ltd. distributes Nairn linoleum, made in Scotland. It's the only importer we found who will deal directly with consumers. Their Armourtile 90 (3.2 mm thick, eight colors) and Armourtile 200 (2.0 mm thick, ten colors) linoleum tiles are 30 by 30 cm (about 1 sq.ft.), have old-style swirls, and come in boxes of 50. Armourtile 90 sells for about \$100 per box (\$2 per sq.ft.); Armourtile 200, \$75 per box (\$1.50 per sq.ft.). Flooring contractors receive a 25% discount. Gerbert Ltd., Box 4944, Dept. OHJ, Lancaster, PA 17604. (717) 299-5035 or 299-5083.



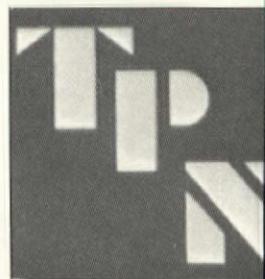
¶ Forbo N.A. makes the "Linoflex" tiles shown at right. (Superimposed is a similar pattern from 1930.) The tiles measure 30 by 30 cm (approx. 1 sq.ft.) and 2.5 mm thick. They come in ten grainy colors, including red, blue, orange, ivory, black, brown, grey, coral, green, and white. Forbo also makes "Marmoleum," a sheet linoleum, in some 30 colors. Marmoleum looks a bit more like old linoleum, but Linoflex comes in a more manageable size. Both cost between \$2.25 and \$3 per sq.ft. Forbo N.A., Suite A, 218 W. Orange St., Dept. OHJ, Lancaster, PA 17603. (717) 291-5874 or (800) 233-0475.

¶ Linoleum City is a supplier of Hollywood props that sells all kinds of linoleum: tile and sheet, solid-color and imitation marble. They also have pieces of old linoleum on hand. No literature; write with your specific needs. Linoleum City, 5657 Santa Monica Blvd., Dept. OHJ, Hollywood, CA 90038. (213) 463-1729.



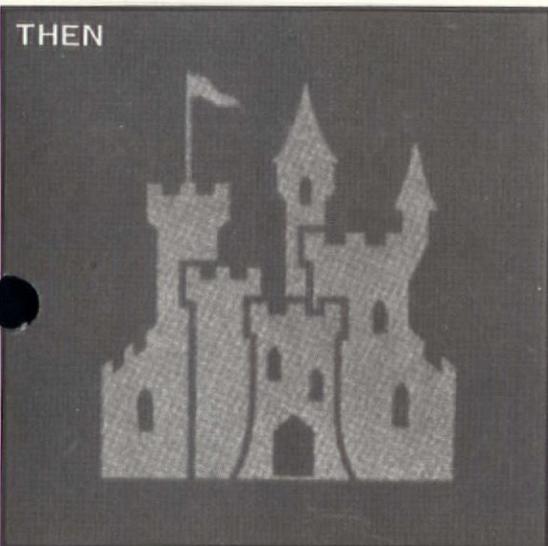
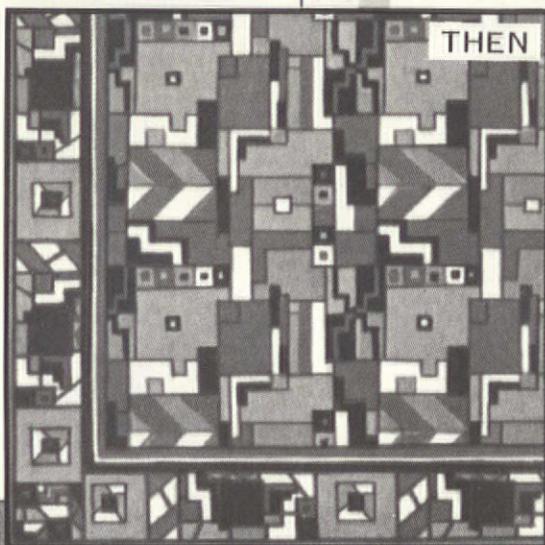
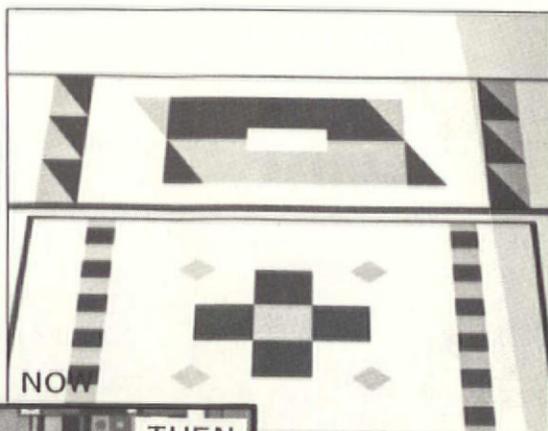
At left is an inlaid-tile linoleum pattern from 1930. Nobody sells borders like this anymore, but it's easy enough to create your own. To make the trim, cut strips of solid-color linoleum; called battleship linoleum, it's available from Forbo N.A. and Linoleum City (addresses listed above left).

¶ Believe it or not, the single tiles shown at right and on page 481, top left, come from Armstrong's 1986 catalog. The castle (enlarged, page 481), though, is from a 1930 linoleum brochure entitled, "New Ideas in Home Decoration." Armstrong's tiles are all made to order; they come in 18-, 27-, 36-, and 63-in. squares. You get custom colors on all tiles and custom lettering on initial tiles. Expect to wait at least four weeks for delivery. For more information, call the company's toll-free number: (800) 233-3823.

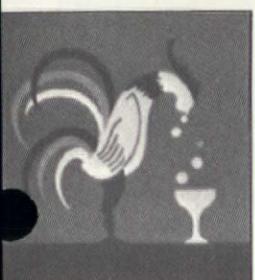
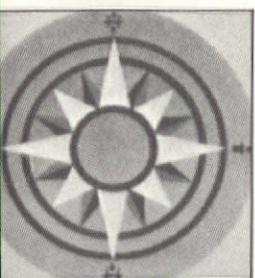




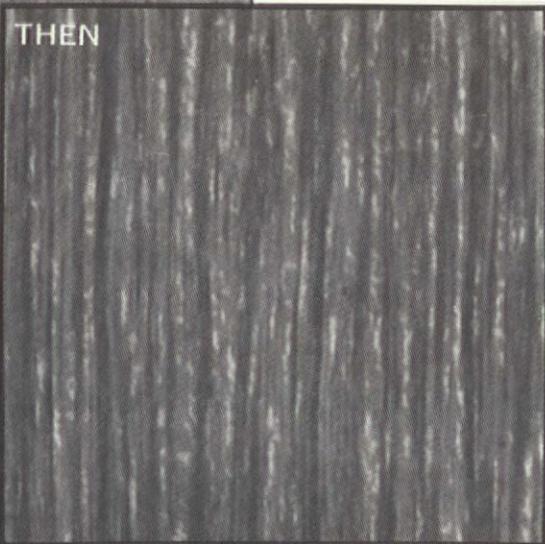
¶ A2Z makes "hard rugs" out of pieces of ¼-in. vinyl tile. "Navajoleum," shown at right with its c. 1930 ancestor, recalls Native American designs and comes in three colorways. "Classic Quilt" looks like a diamond-patterned quilt (one colorway: grey, black, and white). The four sizes, as shown, range from 2-½'x4' to 3'x8' or 4'x6'. Prices range from \$350 to \$700. The company will do custom work in vinyl or linoleum (prices upon request) and they will also ship pieces of vinyl tile so that you can create your own arrangements. A2Z, 5526 W. Pico Blvd., Dept. OHJ, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 937-2072.



¶ DLW stands for Deutsche Linoleum Werke AG, founded in Germany in 1926. They offer 46 shades and thicknesses of linoleum, all handsome and similar to old linoleum. Prices of between \$1.60 and \$2.50 per sq.ft. include estimated installation. Shown at left is DLW's "jaspe"-pattern sheet linoleum, popular since 1930

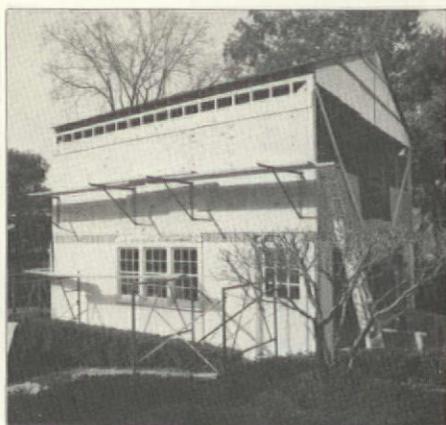


NOW



(inset, left). DLW also sells PVC tiles that measure about 2 sq.ft. each and have the matte surface and marble-like swirls of old linoleum. PVC tiles cost between \$2.30 and \$2.75 per sq.ft. installed. Call for the name of your distributor. DLW Flooring, Anderson, Dewald & Assocs., 2750 Northaven, Ste. 210, Dept. OHJ, Dallas, TX 75229. (214) 247-4955. 🏠

(linoleum)



A COMPATIBLE GARAGE

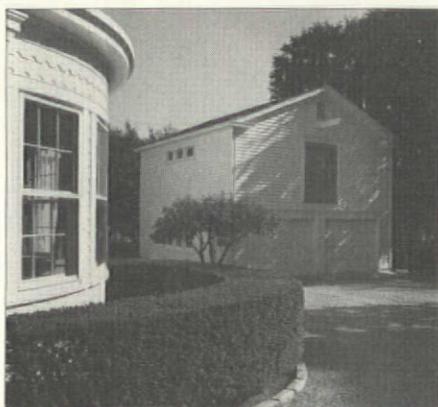
To follow up October's article on designing old-house garages, here's a successful case history by architect Richard Bergmann.

PROBLEM: My squat, 1950s, two-car garage was drastically out of proportion with my 1836 Greek Revival home. Making the two buildings more compatible offered several benefits: I could make the garage look like a carriage house, which a house of this vintage would once have had. I'd get much-needed space on the second floor for a workshop. The surrounding historic district would be served: The 1950s garage had no appeal, and detracted from an otherwise consistent neighborhood (the district nomination forms called it a non-contributing building).

AS I'M A RESTORATION architect, I was able to draw up plans myself. I opted to raise the roof on the dated little garage, rather than tear it down. A local house-moving firm, The Monroe Company of Norwalk, Conn., provided the necessary services. Fortunately the garage had approximately the same roof pitch as the house, so all we did was raise the roof to create a second storey.

THE PHOTOS ABOVE show the roof being lifted. The house movers jacked up the roof and supported it with cribbing (railroad ties). Then carpenters put down new floor joists and walls. The roof was lowered onto the new walls, the cribbing removed, and the floor completed.

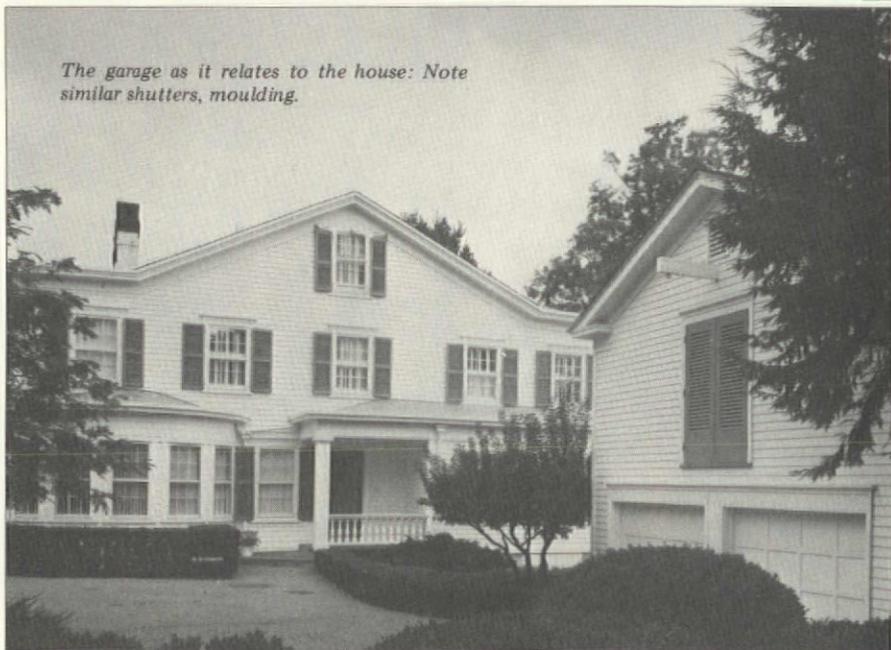
I INSTALLED three basement-size windows on the side facade, and two salvaged double-hung windows in the rear gable. In the main gable I put a pair of louvered doors;



they open to move machinery in and out, close up tight in winter, and complement the shutters on the main house. Above them projects an old mahogany beam; in the past beams like this were used to hoist hay, but they work on modern machinery and supplies just as well. I replaced the garage-door glazing with Masonite panels, to make the doors look more like true carriage-house doors. Finally, I added corner boards and moulding -- simpler versions of those on the house -- along the roof and around doors and windows.

I THINK THIS sympathetic approach improves properties where the garage is unrelated, unremarkable, and detached -- where the garage was a design afterthought.

The garage as it relates to the house: Note similar shutters, moulding.



NEW!!

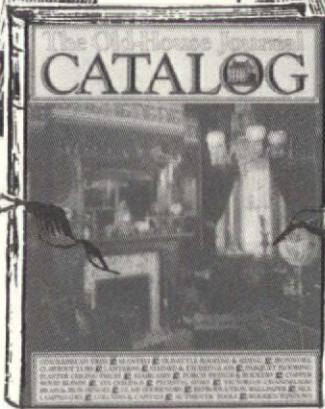
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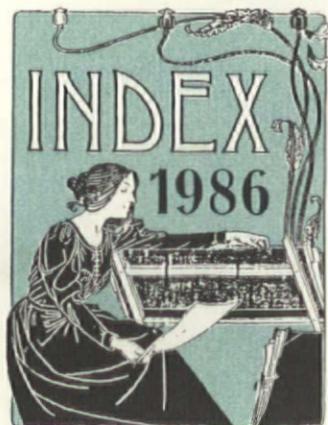
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panies who will custom-duplicate your millwork and hardware, paint your house in historic colors, and reline your chimney?

We personally contacted each company listed to insure that this, our largest catalog ever, is also our most accurate. Each company entry includes complete addresses, phone numbers, and availability of literature. Three indexes make that wealth of information easy to work with. And most of the companies sell or distribute nationally, so you can do business whether you live in Manhattan or North Dakota.

The 1987 OHJ Catalog is just \$11.95 to current subscribers; \$14.95 to non-subscribers. Send check directly, or use Order Form at the back of this issue.



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Wrap It Up

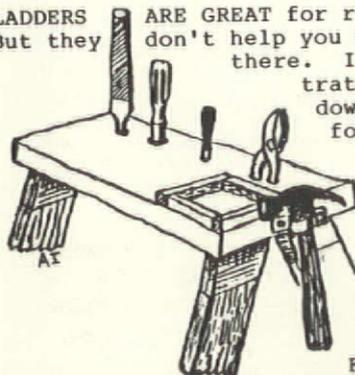
I RECENTLY STRIPPED several lengths of delicately carved, soft pine mouldings. The mouldings had deep recesses that made it difficult to remove paint without damaging the pieces. I carefully removed the moulding and placed each piece on a length of aluminum foil that was slightly longer than the longest length of pine. I then applied a liberal coat of paste-type paint remover and wrapped the foil securely around the woodwork. I returned several hours later and wiped the moulding clean with a piece of burlap. A quick and easy mineral spirit rinse completely the relatively painless process.

The aluminum foil inhibits evaporation, and so allows the stripper to work longer -- softening the paint in even the deepest grooves. I saved money, time, and didn't mar the wood in the least.

-- Nate Bekemeier
New Bedford, Mass.

Top Rung

LADDERS ARE GREAT for reaching high places. But they don't help you much once you're up there. It becomes very frustrating climbing up and down every time you forget (or drop) a tool. Before I work from a ladder, I work on the ladder.



DRILL a few holes of varying diameter in the top to hold handtools so they won't fall off. Fasten one or two broom clips to the side of the ladder -- they're great for holding hammers and the like. Finally, tack some scrap lumber to the ladder in the shape of a square to make a spill-proof place to keep small nails and screws.

-- Douglas Anderson
Ontario, Canada

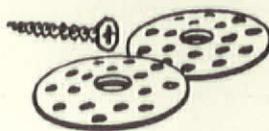
Be Good To Yourself

AFTER A MESSY DAY of battling to restore your old house, you're likely to find yourself covered with paint, grease, or other goo. Most folks reach for a container of mineral spirits to clean their skin. Try cold cream instead. Although it's not as powerful a solvent (it'll take a little longer), it's a lot kinder to your skin -- and it leaves you smelling better, too.

-- Rosalie Friend
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Drywall Tip

IN YOUR OCTOBER ISSUE, you mentioned covering texture finishes with gypsum wallboard ("Unwanted Texture Finish"). I recently laminated a cracked, roughly-textured ceiling with 1/4" Sheetrock. The uneven surface made it difficult to screw the Sheetrock in place without tearing the paper. I could push the board in place with one hand, but when I let go, the screw would pull through the Sheetrock. Solution: Plaster washers. I used two or three plaster washers with drywall screws to pull the Sheetrock up tight to the ceiling. They dimpled (but didn't tear) the paper. Two coats of joint compound concealed them completely.



-- George Foley
Green Bay, Wisc.

Card Shark

I SPENT a recent Saturday sanding several hundred feet of just-stripped oak cove moulding. It was tedious work. I planned to get together with some friends for a game of poker that evening. Looking forward to cutting the cards gave me an idea: I wrapped my fine sandpaper around about twenty playing cards, and used them as a sanding block. The edge of the cards conformed perfectly to the shape of the moulding and spared me many splinters.

-- Charlie Wilson
Kansas City, Mo.

Backside Brazing

I LEARNED THE HARD WAY that cast iron is very brittle: I was tapping on a stubborn hinge pin and my fancy Victorian door hinge broke. After overcoming my sickness, I began to think of ways to repair this accident. I concluded that welding was my only chance; however, I didn't want any weld to show on the outside of the hinge. A retired machinist neighbor repaired my hinge by grinding away part of the back of the hinge to leave room for the weld so it wouldn't be visible on the face of the hinge. Excess weld on the back was all right, because the mortise on the door could be deepened slightly in that spot to accommodate the weld. (Check your Yellow Pages for a welding shop in your area.)

-- Dan Miller
Elgin, Ill.

Tips To Share? Do you have any hints or short cuts that might help other old-house owners? We'll pay \$25 for any short how-to items that are used in this "Restorer's Notebook" column. Write to Notebook Editor, The Old-House Journal, 69A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217.

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Restoration Products

Reviewed by Eve Kahn

Greek Revival & Japanesque Wallpaper



From the 18th through the 19th centuries, imitation-stone wallpaper was stock-in-trade at wallpaper stores. The paper that Thibaut is reproducing comes from a c. 1830 Greek Revival house in Connecticut. Thibaut offers it in the original gold on ecru and three other colorways, for \$14.95 per roll. It's well suited for any Greek Revival or Federal house.

Thibaut also found a wonderful c. 1881 Japanesque paper to reproduce. It looks Japanese at first glance, but upon closer examination the turkey motif in the border reveals American origins. The paper costs \$20.95 per roll, the border \$7 per yard. Thibaut offers the original mauve and cream on silver plus three other colorways. All papers, part of the company's Historic Homes of America collection, are pre-pasted, strippable, and vinyl-coated. Richard E. Thibaut Inc., 706 S. 21st St., Dept. OHJ, Irvington, NJ 07111. (201) 399-7888.



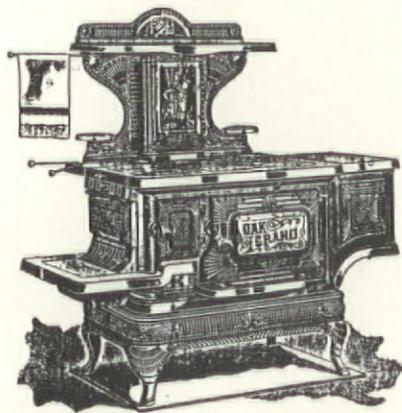
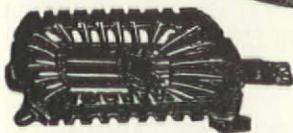
Stove-Part Supplier



The world of stove parts is extremely complicated. Literally hundreds of types of wood- and coal-burning stoves have been produced. Kenneth Spahr, owner of Washington Stove Parts, has been in the business for 20 years and still, he says, "I don't know it all, not by a long shot."

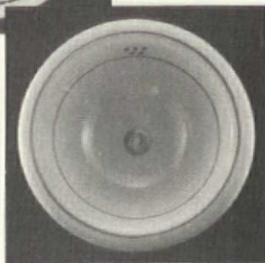
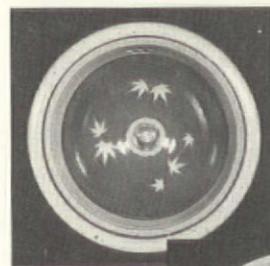
If your stove is missing parts, Kenneth has thousands of replacements on hand, from door handles to fireboxes. What he doesn't have he can usually get or have cast. His specialty is New England-made parts, but he has sources for other brands as well.

Delivery for pieces on hand is one to two weeks; for castings, four to six weeks.



Kenneth guarantees fit and quality: "I do not send parts that are not correct." (The subscriber who recommended him told us, "He works diligently to accommodate customer inquiries.") Kenneth asks customers to be very specific about their needs and to send cash up front; stove grates, for example, cost between \$65 and \$100, depending on size, complexity, and scarcity. A free information sheet describes frequently-requested parts. Washington Stove Parts, Box 206, Dept. OHJ, Washington, ME 04574. (207) 845-2263.

Drop-In Sinks



Above, a Japanesque sink; right, a blue pinstripe sink suitable for colonial and Colonial Revival homes.

Norstad Pottery offers some 20 styles of drop-in sinks; several are appropriate for old houses. All are handmade of high-fire vitreous stoneware, and Norstad guarantees them against cracking and chipping.

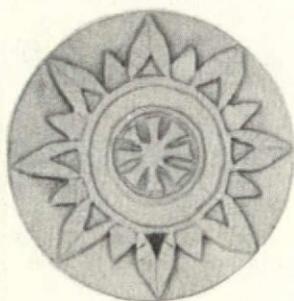
Six sizes are available, from 13-1/2 to 20-1/2 in. in diameter. Prices range from \$165 to \$295, FOB Richmond, California (shipped UPS). Custom work can be ordered (there's an additional charge and a longer delivery time). A color brochure depicting all styles is free. Norstad Pottery, 253 S. 25th St., Dept. OHJ, Richmond, CA 94804. (415) 620-0200. Showroom: 1201 Bridgeway, Sausalito, CA 94965. (415) 332-5306.

Waxing & Polishing at My House



I waxed a table with Renaissance[™] micro-crystalline wax a few weeks ago. I felt a little funny applying \$1.50-an-ounce wax to a \$3 table, but it was easy, and the piece looks great: It has a soft sheen, and I used only a tablespoon of wax.

Renaissance[™] is the same wax the British Museum has used, and the manufacturer says the product works as well on marble, metal, and leather. The coating protects from liquids, heat, and finger marks. It retards moisture penetration, oxidation, and tarnish, and doesn't have to be re-applied often. It's also clear, colorless, and easy to apply (you just dab a small amount on a rag and buff; I can verify that).



Malleable Moulding

Installing moulding on bumpy, bulging, or curved old plaster can be a problem. No matter how you manipulate the strip of moulding, you end up with gaps between it and the wall. Flex Moulding offers a solution: polyester moulding, flexible enough to conform to the most irregular surfaces.

Flex does both custom reproductions and stock designs. Stock pieces range from simplest classical to elaborate Japanese. Along with moulding, Flex makes furniture parts, wall ornament, rosettes, columns, and plaques. There's no minimum order, and

An eight-ounce can costs \$11.95, FOB Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. Cereus Inc., 184 Warburton Ave., Dept. OHJ, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706. (914) 693-8698.



After I waxed the table, I was on a roll, so I decided to polish a dusty, tarnished bronze lamp. I squeezed out a drop of Simichrome, let it work on the lamp for a few seconds, and -- this is a true story -- when I wiped away the excess, the spot I'd polished was gleaming. I'd never suspected such a pretty lamp lay underneath the dirt!

Simichrome is a powerful yet gentle metal polish that's been around for a long time. It's been most popular for use on motorcycles (every man over age 30 who walked by my desk this week said, "Great stuff! I used to use it on my motorcycle"). You can find it in antique shops, motorcycle- and car-supply stores, as well as home centers and hardware stores. A 50-gram tube (approx. 2 ozs.) costs \$3.80;

for the serious polisher Simichrome also comes in 250-gram cans (about 9 ozs.) for \$11.10. Contact the company if you can't find a distributor near you. Competition Chemicals Inc., PO Box 820, 715 Railroad St., Dept. OHJ, Iowa Falls, IA 50126-0820. (515) 648-5121.

New-Old Cookstoves

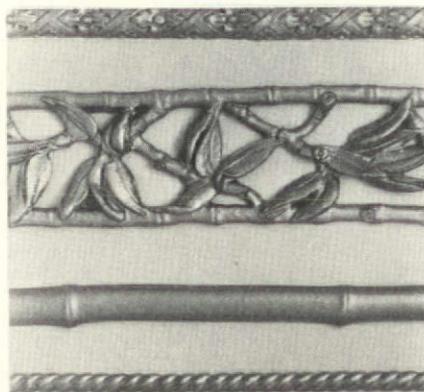
From the outside, Elmira's Model 6000 electric range looks just like a c. 1910-25 stove. But inside are hidden practical modern features like a built-in exhaust fan and switches that turn off burners left on too long. All controls are cleverly disguised. The unit is rather wide -- four feet -- but that leaves room for storing utensils, pots and pans. And it has four square feet of stove-top work space!

Model 6000 costs \$2495. Elmira also manufactures wood- and coal-burning stoves in two traditional styles. The "Oval" has an open area under

the resin can be mixed to any consistency you want -- floppy (for moulding) or solid (for supporting columns).

Moulding costs between \$.75 and \$8 per foot, depending on complexity. Other pieces are equally inexpensive, especially in comparison with plaster and wood. Flex moulding is also lighter, something else to consider when you're installing it on old plaster.

A full catalog is free. Flex Moulding Inc., 16 E. Lafayette St., Dept. OHJ, Hackensack, NJ 07601. (201) 487-8080.



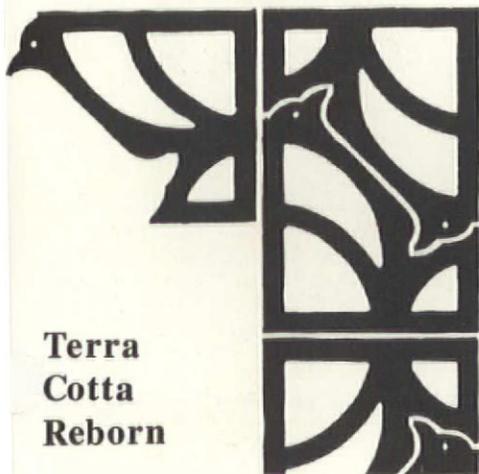
the oven and costs \$2295. The "Sweetheart", with a solid base, costs \$1695. Optional hot-water reservoirs are \$200.

There are Elmira dealers around the U.S.; contact the main office for a free brochure and the name of a dealer near you. Elmira Stove Works, 22 Church St. W., Dept. OHJ, Elmira, Ontario, Canada N3B 1M3. (519) 669-5103.



Canadian Source

Getting old-house parts hasn't been easy in Canada. But the situation is improving, we're told, thanks in part to Steptoe's Old House Store. This one-stop source has almost anything a restorer could want: cast-iron Victorian staircases, tin ceilings, architectural details, Victorian wallpapers, embossed wall-coverings, lighting, furniture, and more. The company has just moved into an 11,000-sq.ft. warehouse/showroom, which, they report, is "rapidly filling with new products." Steptoe's Old House Store Ltd., 322 Geary Ave., Dept. OHJ, Toronto, Ont., Canada M6H 2C7. (416) 537-5772.

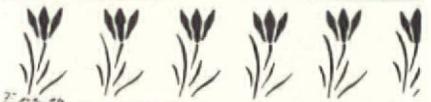


Terra Cotta Reborn

for post-Victorian buildings

Craftsman Stencils

Here's a source of Craftsman-inspired floral stencils: Rasa Arbas, a West-Coast designer, has created seven designs that would make great decorative friezes. You have a choice of alpine-strawberry, crocus, ficus, lily-of-the-valley, jasmine, violet, or long-stemmed-rose motifs. Each pattern is \$5, payable in check or money order, and comes with easy-to-follow instructions (no special skills or materials



needed). Be sure to send a self-addressed, stamped, #10 envelope with your order. Rasa Arbas, 306 22nd St., Dept. OHJ, Santa Monica, CA 90402. (213) 395-5529.

Stand-Up Desks

We liked the name right off: The Stand-Up Desk Company. It brought visions of a mom-and-pop factory of yesteryear. And yes, that's all they make: stand-up desks, with spare styling that would look great in any Bungalow, Prairie, Mission, or Craftsman house.

The company claims many famous people did their best work at stand-up desks, like Thomas Jefferson, Virginia Woolf, and Ernest Hemingway. It's also said that working while standing, with one foot slightly elevated, is beneficial for bad backs. The desks are crafted in a choice of red (\$1000) or white (\$1100) oak, walnut (\$1175), or mahogany (\$1275). Matching stools cost \$310 (\$375 for mahogany). Each desk comes with a brass foot rest, storage compartments, a pen-and-pencil groove in the front, and a flat area in the back (handy for the telephone or a mug of coffee). Optional features include brass trim, casters, a storage rack between stretchers, and gold

tooling on the leather writing surface. Best of all, desks are made for your height.

Shipping costs between \$35 (Washington, D.C. area) and \$250 (Pacific region). Stools cost \$35 to ship (free in the

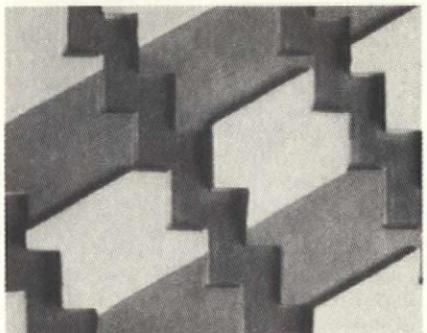


Washington area). The Stand-Up Desk Co., 5207 Baltimore Ave., Dept. OHJ, Bethesda, MD 20816. (301) 657-3630.

Used on many storefronts and some houses in the early 20th century, decorative terra cotta practically disappeared by the 1950s. But it's now making a comeback. The National Building Museum's recent exhibit, "Ornamental Architecture Reborn: A New Terra Cotta Vocabulary," featured winners of a terra-cotta design contest. Ludowici Celadon is reproducing each design.

The pieces range from the serious to the silly, and from \$400 for a hand-painted plaque to \$4 for the pigeon bracket at left. Custom sizes and colors can be ordered. The company provides a brochure

showing all designs. Ludowici Celadon, 4757 Tile Plant Rd., Dept. OHJ, New Lexington, OH 43764. (614) 342-1995.

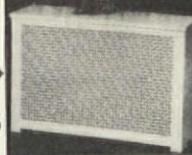


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FRENCH DOOR, 18 lites, 32 in. W, 97 in. H, 1-3/8 in. thick. Interior lock, glass knobs. Straight, plumb, & tight. Painted white. V. good cond. \$100 cash & carry. Hugh Steckman, 338 E. Main St., Everett, PA 15537. (814) 652-6336.

TILE ROOF: FREE to good home, as donation to non-profit group or tax-deductible charity. 45 - 50 squares (100 sq.ft.). Jamestown design by Ludowici Celadon; looks just like weathered shingles. Exc. cond., from house built in 1953. Must be picked up in Marion, Mass., before Dec. 31. Carol & Kit, (617) 997-5977.

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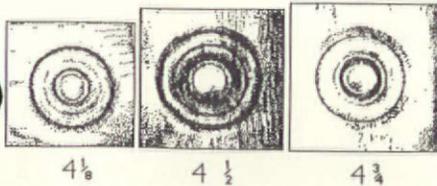
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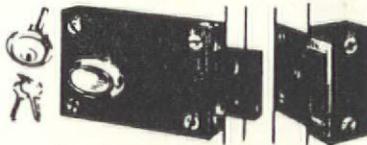
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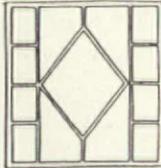
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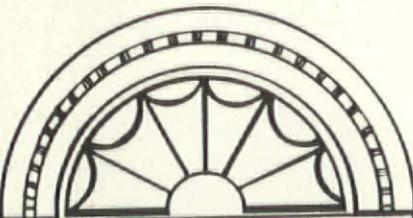


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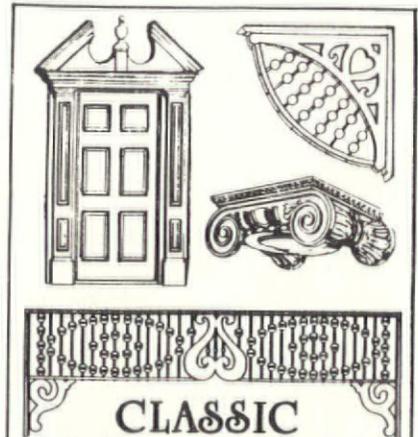
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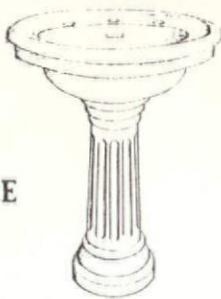


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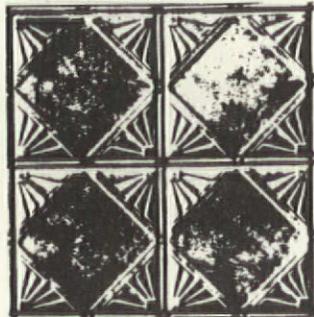
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MEETINGS & EVENTS

CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT TOURS, Dec. 13 to 21, eves., 6 to 9 p.m., Sundays 1 to 9 p.m. Adults, \$2.50; children, \$1.25. Music, traditional decorations, shopping, refreshments. Belle Grove Plantation, PO Box 137, Middletown, VA 22645. (703) 869-2028.

HOME INSPECTOR'S TRAINING SEMINARS: 5-day comprehensive training courses in home inspection, Jan. 12 to 16, 1987. Attendees should have basic knowledge residential construction. Property Inspector's Institute, 8811 Stonehaven Ct., Potomac, MD 20854. (301) 983-9371.

NASHVILLE, TN — Christmas in Lockeland Springs home tour. Sun., Dec. 14, 12 to 5 p.m., admission \$4. 8th annual tour; begins at Holly St. Fire Hall, features pre-1939 architecture, traditional decorations, vintage automobiles. LSNA, PO Box 60734, Nashville, TN 37206.

CHRISTMAS HOUSE TOUR by candlelight of hist. Tulpehocken Station District in Germantown, Phila. Dec. 14, 3 to 7 p.m. Tour begins after Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion's annual Dickens Christmas party (12 to 5 p.m.). Tickets in advance or at Maxwell Mansion, Tulpehocken & Greene Sts. (215) 438-1861.

8TH ANNUAL VICT. CHRISTMAS at History House, 218 Washington St., Cumberland, MD 21502. Dec. 9 to 13 & 16 to 19, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. 18-room Vict. mansion decorated for Christmas. Candlelight tour, Dec. 16 & 19 from 7 to 9 p.m. Afternoon tea, Dec. 12, 1:30 to 4 p.m. Allegany County Hist. Soc., 218 Washington St., Cumberland, MD 21502. (301) 777-8678.



CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT TOUR. Recapture the magic of an 1889 Christmas in a restored Vict. mansion. Unique decorating ideas; antiques, collectibles, gift certificates for sale. December 3 to 22, 7 p.m. Reservations requested. Heritage Park B&B, 2470 Heritage Park Row, San Diego, CA 92110. (619) 295-7088.

LYNCHBURG, VA — Candlelight tour of Diamond Hill & Garland Hill hist. districts, Dec. 14. Features 8 hist. homes, 2 hospitality houses, & a "storybook" house where kids can hear Christmas tales. Reproduction of 1886 trolley provides transportation. Noon to 7 p.m. Tickets, \$6 per person. Lynchburg Visitor Center, (804) 847-1811.

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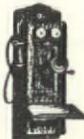
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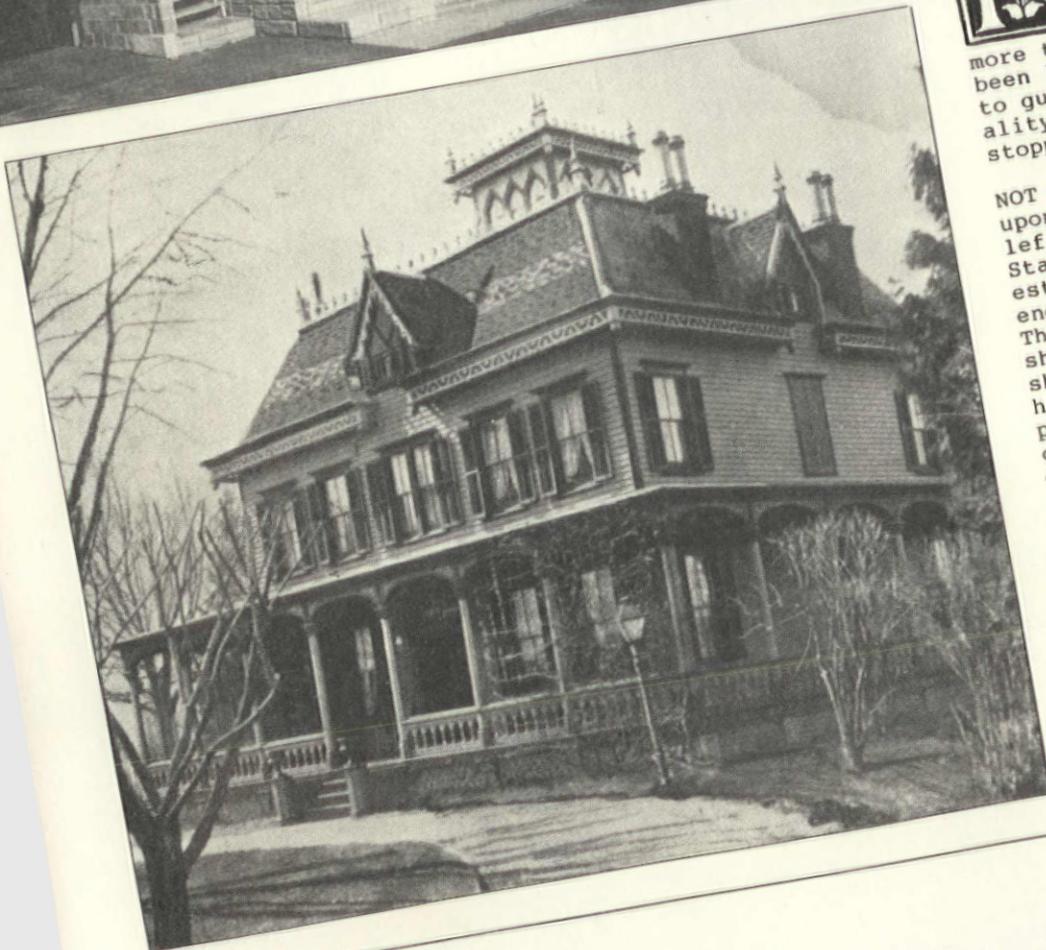
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opinion...

Remuddling



The house today (above, front view; left, rear view). Below, the house in 1892.



The Mystery House

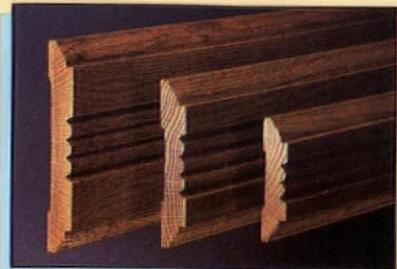


RENEE KAHN, an architectural historian in Stamford, Connecticut, had shaken her head over this eyesore (above and left) more than once. What had it been like? She could begin to guess, but the harsh reality of the PermaStone box stopped imagination dead.

NOT TOO LONG AGO, Renee came upon this old photo (lower left) in an 1892 book about Stamford. "The Larches, estate of Warren Roosevelt, engineer," read the caption. The structure was long gone, she was sure -- certainly, she'd have noticed such a house! As she turned the page, though, the dormers caught her eye; they looked ominously familiar. Later she drove by the ugly building and confirmed her worst suspicions. That featureless box, unrecognizable but for its dormers, was once The Larches.

"I WISH they'd torn the house down," laments Renee. "Then the old photo would be a pleasant view of what had been, rather than a painful reminder of today's errors."
-- Eve Kahn

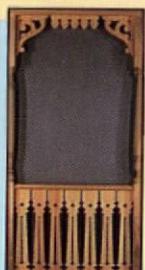
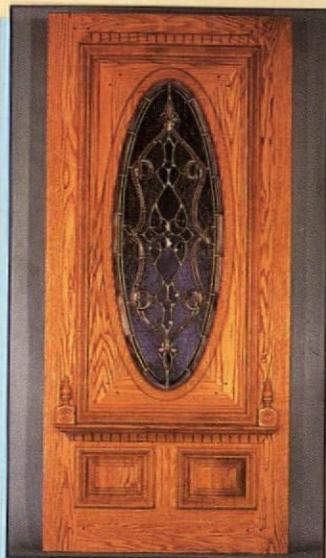
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Small-town store/houses in the South

If vernacular houses are those that cannot be analyzed in the scholarly sense, because they're quirky, or regional, or remarkable only for how they fit into a context other than architectural . . . then these humble buildings are vernacular. They housed such enterprises as general stores, hardware stores and fix-it shops, and at the same time were home to the people who ran the store. These two buildings, in Hampton and in Langley, South Carolina, are typical of early - 20th - century store / houses that were once universal in the South.

The first-storey plan was open to accommodate showcases, display racks, pickle barrels. Spans were supported by posts that were pressed into service as bulletin boards for hand-lettered signs advertising the Special of the Day or admonishing, "Please don't ask for credit." A back stair (or sometimes a covered outdoor stair) led to the second-storey living quarters, where room layouts varied. A common arrangement had the living room in front; a door led from living room to second-storey porch.

These buildings are notable not so much for their contribution to our architectural heritage as for their contribution to small-town life. These store houses were quite literally the last stands of neighborhood shopkeeper who, though they were so frugal as to build house and store on the same foundation, were replaced (almost overnight it seems) by absentee retailers whose stores bear names with sufficient fixes like "-A-Rama."

— Walter Jowers, Nashville, Tennessee
(formerly of Burnettsville, S.C.)

