

Past, Present, & Future

Friends of Historic Preservation Newsletter, Iowa City, IA Winter 1994, No. 24

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

ANNUAL MEETING FOR ALL MEMBERS

Sunday Afternoon, January 30, 1994

2:00 p.m., Lynn Street Cafe, Book Room

Refreshments provided

After a short business meeting, architectural historian

Jan Nash will discuss the Brewery Square and

College Hill Historic District Survey.

SALVAGE BARN SUCCESSSES

The Salvage Barn doesn't sell cheeseburgers. The Salvage Barn doesn't sell Ninja Turtles. Why? Well, the Salvage Barn isn't officially open, so how could it?

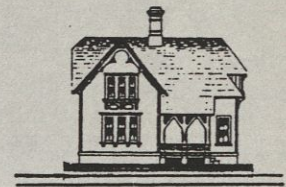
On the other hand, since it isn't open to sell cheeseburgers or Ninja Turtles, it has the opportunity to sell inexpensive house parts. How, you may ask, can this be, since it isn't officially open?

Because, down behind the Iowa City Community School District buildings behind Eagle Grocery at Wardway Plaza, on the first and third Saturdays of each month, from 9:00-1:00, several members of Friends of Historic Preservation actually do such things as unlock the doors, turn on the lights, pull nails, smile alot, answer questions, help people load things into their vans and pickups, and collect small amounts of money to both further the various means of

improving housing and expand the potential of FHP to help with these improvements.

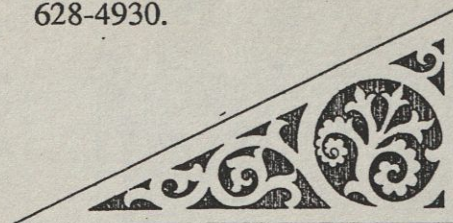
Flood damaged homes that are repairable can get some low cost doors, trim, etc. Homes that are damaged beyond repair can be a potential source of materials for fixing up other homes. And you'd be surprised what other things we can help out with--even if you're only doing a weekend project.

We always need volunteers to pull nails, organize materials, and just generally keep us company. Come on down, we'd love to see you! For more, call Roger Gwinnup, 628-4930.



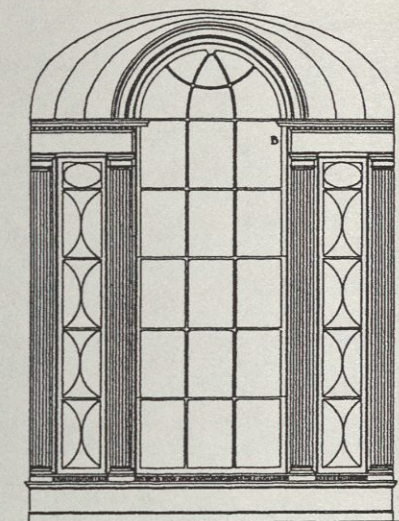
MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Unless you have joined FHP in the past few months it's time to renew your membership! Membership in Friends of Historic Preservation is an increasingly valuable commodity, entitling you to discounts at the Salvage Barn, this newsletter, invitations to open houses, and the annual membership gathering. Tell your friends about FHP! Your dues are tax deductible and with them you know you're helping preserve Iowa City's architectural heritage! Send your check to Friends of Historic Preservation, Box 2001, Iowa City, Iowa, 52244.



KNOW A HOUSE NEEDING TLC?

Friends of Historic Preservation is considering embarking on a major project, perhaps purchasing a house for a reasonable price and restoring it. The house we could consider must be reasonably priced, of course, and have potential. We are also considering sponsoring low interest loans or even grants for projects such as siding removal, painting, or porch restoration. What do you, as a member think of such ambitious plans? If you know of such an opportunity or have suggestions, please contact Steve Vanderwoude, 354-0953, or Roger Gwinnup, 628-4930.



BOOK REVIEWS

Glenn, Patricia Brown. *UNDER EVERY ROOF; A KID'S STYLE AND FIELD GUIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF AMERICAN HOUSES.* illus.

by Joe Stiles. Preservation Press, 1993. \$16.95, 112 p.

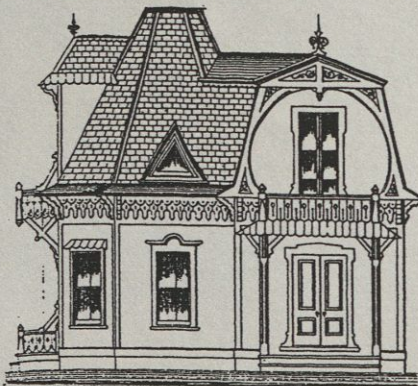
Wilson, Laura. *DAILY LIFE IN A VICTORIAN HOUSE.*

Preservation Press, 1993. \$16.95, 48 p.

The next generation of preservationists may very likely come from those children who are fortunate enough to be exposed to these two new publications of the Preservation Press. Like most good books written for children, however, adults will also find these books engrossing.

Glenn's book, *UNDER EVERY ROOF*, illustrated in color with cartoon-style drawings of National Register properties, is an excellent guide for children in the upper elementary grades. It is divided into three parts--why houses look the way they do; styles; and the Field Guide, which is used by readers

to identify housing in their neighborhoods. While there is a great deal of information, the text is broken up by both the drawings and plenty of white space, making this an easy book for parents to share with younger children. It deals with such disparate housing as mansions for the rich and creative housing for the homeless, with wildly original floor plans and with predictable pattern houses, and with prairie houses, mobile homes, fantasy houses, and ranch houses. The Field Guide is practical and useful, and is bound to help readers be more observant of the houses around them. A lively primer, its only real weakness is that the titles listed



for "further reading" are all adult titles. A bibliography of titles for children would have been helpful also.

DAILY LIFE IN A VICTORIAN HOUSE, by Laura Wilson, was first published in England and will cause readers to think of *Upstairs/Downstairs*. It traces the daily life of the Smith family and its household staff, who life in a London four-story row house in the 1870s. Interspersing photographs and drawings, each doublepage spread of this oversized book features a topic such as "Dressing Mrs. Smith," "The Kitchen," "Paying a Call," and "Albert at School." The details of the daily lives of Victorians are fascinating indeed, both upstairs and downstairs. Any fancier of British Victorian domestic life will get a fuller picture of the pleasures and difficulties of everyday existence in this colorful coffee table book.

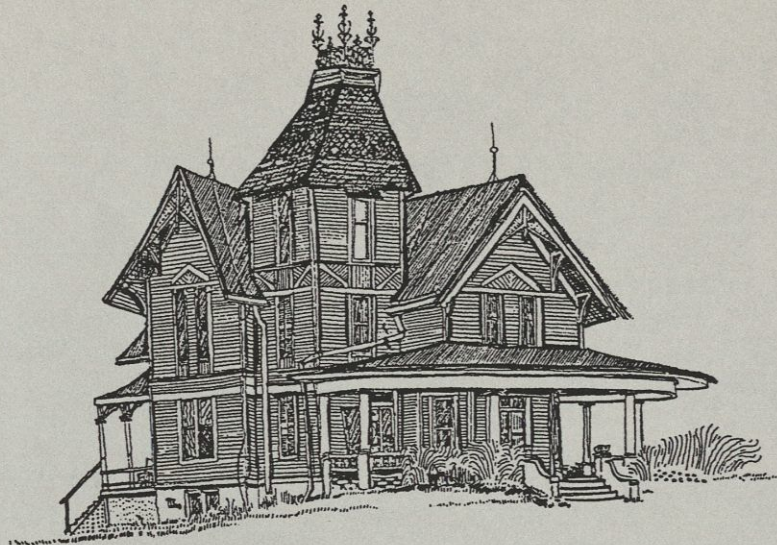
Paula Brandt

ENDANGERED STRUCTURES

This winter Iowa City has lost an unfortunate number of historic structures to fire and demolition. Still others are in danger from "development" and neglect. If you know of such buildings, please contact Friends of Historic Preservation and volunteer to help raise awareness of these pending losses. Too, attend and speak up at Planning and Zoning meetings, Neighborhood Association meetings, and Historic Preservation Commission meetings.

MEET THE BOARD!

In order to introduce those who represent you on the Board of FHP, each newsletter will profile one of the members. A recent addition to the board has been Joni Kinsey, who moved to Iowa City just over two years ago from St. Louis. An Oklahoma native, she teaches American art and architectural history at the University of Iowa, having received her Ph.D. from Washington University in 1989. Although her research interests range from American landscape to the American West, she has spent much of her spare time over the past two years renovating her own northside house, a 1920s cottage and is very interested in sharing stories with others who have tackled such a job!



110 East Mission Street
Strawberry Point, Iowa

House Calls

Dear Dr. Fixit:

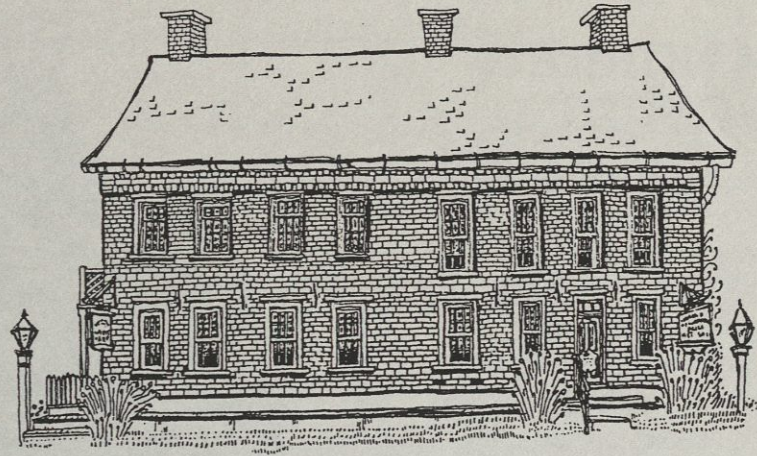
The finish on the oak woodwork in my old house has alligatored and is really dirty. I like the new refinishing products on the market, but they're so expensive. Are there cheaper ways to clean up this woodwork? Also, what to you think of an oil finish rather than varnish or polyurethane? Signed *CHEAP AND LAZY*

Dear Cheap and Lazy:

Actually, you're wise to think about alternatives to harsh, messy, and potentially dangerous traditional strippers. First, if the wood trim must stay on the walls, protect those walls and the floors with wide painters tape, rolls of brown paper that are partially gummed, or masking tape.

There are several methods you can try to clean the woodwork. One is to use either denatured alcohol or ammonia with as little water as you can stand, applied with fine steel wool. Use plain ammonia, not the foamy or scented types, and provide lots of ventilation.) Buy a range of steel wool, as different grades may be needed on different parts of the wood, and use paper towels to wipe off the excess goop as you go along. This will probably remove most of the finish. Don't panic if the wood looks alot brighter. For a final cleaning, wash with a purchased refinishers, following directions on the can. After this is completely dry, apply stain if you like, and then a final finish. An oil finish gives a soft natural look, is easy to apply, and is fairly durable. If there are children in your house who are likely to take crayons (or worse) to the woodwork, you're better off with varnish, shellac, or polyurethane. Take a piece of scrap oak and experiment with different finishes to see what you like.

Past, Present, and Future is published several times a year by Friends of Historic Preservation, Box 2001, Iowa City, Iowa, 52244. Contributors to this issue included Paula Brandt, Rogert Gwinnup, and Joni Kinsey. If you have information for future issues, or would like to volunteer with its mailing, please, call Joni Kinsey, 354-9529.



Iowa City History Books for Sale

We still have a large quantity of *Iowa City: An Illustrated History*, by Gerald Mansheim, a lovely and informative "coffee table" book that chronicles the development of our community from its earliest days. It makes an excellent gift; think about giving one to your favorite high school or college student for graduation or to newcomers to Iowa City that you know. For those of you at the university, this would make an appropriate memento for faculty visitors, new arrivals, or retirees. For realtors, it would make an especially nice housewarming gift for new homeowners! Tell your friends! Available at the Salvage Barn or local bookstores.



FRIENDS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
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