

25th
Anniversary



To my small Hearth His fire came—
And all my House aglow
Did fan and rock, with sudden light—
'Twas Sunrise—'twas the Sky—

Impanelled from no Summer brief—
With limit of Decay—
'Twas Noon—without the News of Night—
Nay, Nature, it was Day—

—“638,” Emily Dickinson

A Connecticut Yankee in Penn's Woods



The chronicle of Tim & Cindy's home is at last coming to an end. This old house has journeyed from place to place. It began its existence as heaps of lumber and brick and stone which were transformed into a stately Connecticut Valley house in the late 1700's, was picked up and moved, and then became a heap of lumber and brick and stone once again. The lumber and brick heaps then migrated south to the Susquehanna Valley and lived in a barn for a while. Finally, like the phoenix of mythology, the house that lived within those heaps was resurrected; unlike the mythological phoenix, it took a multitude of human hands to effect this resurrection.

(See our Spring, Summer, and Fall 2011 issues for the first three chapters in the saga of Tim & Cindy's house.)

The original c.1788 structure had fireplaces in the primary rooms of the 1st and 2nd floors. Tim & Cindy chose not to rebuild the 2nd floor fireplaces. At some point in time, perhaps the mid-1800's, the residence was converted to a public tavern. During that renovation, the formal Dining Room (Photo #1) underwent some major changes. The shared wall between the Dining Room and the rear Keeping Room was opened up and what had been a partition wall with a door was replaced with a wide, open archway. The stately paneled fireplace wall was covered over with lath and plaster, and the fireplace opening was reduced in size. At that time, or perhaps during an even later renovation, a stovepipe hole was cut through the

paneling above the fireplace opening. Also during a later renovation, the archway was closed back in with a thin board wall with a set of double-doors.

Reconstructing the room (Photo #2) — and all the other rooms in the house — meant letting the available original materials and the evidence found in or on those materials, and sometimes conjecture, dictate how each room should be finished. For example, the ghost markings and bazillion nail holes in the wall paneling gave clear evidence that the wall had been lathed and plastered over, and



the hole above the fireplace proved that the room was eventually heated by a stove instead of the fireplace. But the original paneling clearly indicated how large the original fireplace opening was. Where no

original trims were available, such as around the firebox, we went straight to an excellent sourcebook — Henry Kauffman's 1972 classic, The American Fireplace — for design elements, which we then custom-made in our workshop.

Although the archway was a later renovation, Tim & Cindy chose to retain the archway. All the wood paneling and trim were painted in a green milk-paint which closely mimics the original color.

The floors are original throughout the entire 1st floor. Of all the salvaged original heart-pine flooring, enough of it was still in usable condition to finish the 1st floor. This original flooring is butt jointed, a typical New England style of floor boards.

The layout of Tim & Cindy's house is based squarely on the original layout of the house, and old photos of the interior were used to establish the layout as well as the placement of each of the fireplaces. The Keeping Room, through the archway and behind the Dining Room, naturally boasts a large cooking fireplace. (Photo #3) Because this had been a strictly utilitarian fireplace, with no embellishments as in the other more formal rooms, we had to use those old photos to establish its size and



can see how the side and rear of the bake-oven dome is smack up against the Parlor fireplace, and the many flues are converging from all sides above him. It was just like the proverbial “stuffing 10 pounds of stuff into a 5-pound bag.”

The very confined front entry, so typical of New England homes of that period, has a stairway (Photo #7) that proved to be a real jigsaw puzzle for the guys. All the original parts had been salvaged; however, the original configuration proved to be problematic. According to modern code restrictions, the stairway

probable layout. The outer “face” brick (one of the “heaps”) are original to the house, but to meet code and ensure safety, the firebox itself is laid up with modern fire-brick. A bake-oven was original to this location so our mason, Sonny Weaver, laid in a modern pre-cast bake-oven — a major cost-saver since laying up an authentic squirrel-tail bake-oven is very labor intensive. (Photo #4)

Through another door — essentially going around the massive central chimney — is the Parlor (Photo #5) with its more formal attributes, similar to the Dining Room. Much of the original fireplace surround and paneling was intact with the exception of the closet door to the right of the fireplace. We reproduced a door and also deepened the area behind the door by using some of the space under the adjacent entry stair to make this a more functional closet for Tim & Cindy.

Laying up these three back-to-back-to-back fireplaces plus bake-oven was no small feat for Sonny. (Photo #6) While laying up the firebox for the Parlor fireplace, you



was too narrow, the treads were too shallow, the rises too high, and the balusters too short. Because the entry space was very limited and there was no way it could be enlarged, and because the family generally would be using another stairway in the new addition, this old stair-



way was permitted to remain intact with just a few changes to get it closer to code requirements.

Since we had no means of lengthening the run of the stairway, the treads and risers could remain “as is,” which was a bonus in that we could retain the two-centuries-old wear marks that make an old stairway so endearing. However, we did have to reproduce new, longer balusters and newel posts.

The last area of the old house to be completed was the “buttery” or pantry. **(Photo #8)** This narrow room also serves as a mud-room since it does have a door that exits directly onto the rear porch. The design of the buttery (or pantry) shelf unit was inspired by a magazine photo of a buttery in a restored home from the same period. The unit was fashioned from vintage wall and floor boards that Tim & Cindy had salvaged from the unused portions of “the heap.”

Tim & Cindy’s new-old house doesn’t consist of only the 1788 portion. Architects John Cox and Bruce Evans designed a large modern wing that masterfully blends the old and the new.

A large and inviting kitchen and gathering area make up most of the 1st floor of the addition. The sunroom area **(Photo #9)** takes in a broad vista of the surrounding fields, woods, and creek through entire walls of floor-to-ceiling windows. New random-width oak flooring provides a warm glow and long-lasting durability. The flooring is face-nailed like the flooring in the adjacent old portion of the house.

The kitchen comprises the other half of the area. **(Photo #10)** The cabinetry, by Jim Tshudy, is designed to look like a collection of old furniture, such as an old dry-sink, a corner cupboard, a pie-safe and others. All the cabinetry is constructed of cherry wood, is painted in a



3-color palate, and has a combination of cherry wood and soapstone countertops.

The small prep sink next to the stove masquerades as an old dry-sink with a furniture-style wall cabinet above. **(Photo #11)** The much larger work sink across the aisle is also made of soapstone. **(Photo #12)** This large sink is actually made of slabs of soapstone that have been fitted and bonded together to form the over-sized basin. The outer top edge has a gentle depression along its length as though it has seen years of use. The dishwasher is disguised behind cabinet door fronts. The hub of the kitchen, the stove-top, is a 6-burner semi-commercial cooktop with a convenient pot-filler set into the back wall. **(Photo #13)** Spice racks are fitted into pull-outs camouflaged as side pilasters in the base cabinet.



A tall “corner cupboard” (Photo #14) houses small appliances and the microwave oven, and another furniture-style wall cabinet (Photo #15) completes the cabinetry for the back wall.

Tall cabinets are stationed at each end of the kitchen; one (not shown) houses the refrigerator and appears for all the world to be an old, painted storage cupboard. The other (Photo #16) certainly looks like a free-standing, 19th-century, pierced-tin pie cupboard. But open the doors, which conveniently retract back into the cabinet, and you just may find pies....baking in the stacked double ovens! (Photo #17)



A project such as this is not for the faint of heart. Putting together this enormous jigsaw puzzle was a massive and lengthy undertaking, with uncertainty at every turn. Tim & Cindy spent an entire year attending weekly job-site meetings,



asking questions and giving critical input for the resurrection of their old house and the new addition. But, considering that Tim & Cindy purchased their old house — literally, “heaps of lumber and brick” — over the internet speaks volumes about their hearts. There’s no timidity found there. ☺

A Virtual Renovation Project: www.restorenmore.com

We completed a “renovation” project back in 2005, at the end of which I (Denise) said, “Phew, am I ever glad that’s over and done with, and I hope I never have to go back there again!” Was I speaking negatively about a client’s project? Absolutely not!! I was, instead, gratefully relieved that our then-new website was completed. In my mind, the job was done and the curtains were hung. But, like any physical structure, after it’s been lived in a while, you start seeing where some minor enhancements or major improvements could make that space a great deal better. So, this time last year, we hired a “virtual remodeling company” to renovate restore-n-more-dot-com.

Sharon Tschudy, of Trump-Tschudy Design, served as general contractor. Sharon has been producing our newsletters for years now and also produced our initial website. Who better to head up a team charged with taking an already beautiful “structure” and improving it? But how does one improve on an already visually interesting website?

Well, there are very important things like SEO (search engine optimization). Don’t ask me for a technical explanation; suffice it to say that incorporating the right words in the right places on the right pages helps immensely when someone is searching the web for a restoration contractor, for example.

Besides SEO, there are other considerations, such as making it even more user-friendly, adding an FAQ section (frequently asked questions) for first-timers visitors, including a map to indicate the geographical area in which we work, and adding loads more of goodies. Our most recent “goodie” is a time-lapse video of a recent log addition reconstruction.

Sharon tells me we now need a “presence” on Facebook and other social-media sites. Since this area of responsibility tends to land on my desk, I’m here to say that I’m not sure I’m ready for that yet.



Time-lapse video on home page and additions portfolio page. Words and phrases (SEO) will signal Google and other search engines to find and list Restore 'N More.



The home page helps you dig deep into many, many Restore 'N More projects. To view a specific project, go to the menu, select either restorations, renovations, additions, rural structures, public structures or details. The menu item page will open. Click “Browse our portfolio” to find specific information and photos for that menu item.



For a quick view of our project listing, click the portfolio link at the bottom of every web page.

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Gary's Exceptional Excerpts

The 18th-Century Fireplace

Everyone knows that styles in architecture develop gradually. Rarely is there a date which can be regarded as the precise time when a complete change from one style to another occurred.... It is generally agreed by architectural historians that the first major change in America came at the turn of the eighteenth century. At that time European medieval characteristics were being abandoned, and Georgian features were slowly coming to the fore. And, to further define the evolution in style, the eighteenth century is often divided into halves, making 1750 the dividing line between the simply functional and the later, more fastidious, Georgian....

Regional differences in architectural style in America became minimized throughout the eighteenth century. This trend can be accounted for partially by the fact that the entire Atlantic seaboard had become a vast English colony, dominated by all facets of English culture.... The major exception to this English dominance occurred in Pennsylvania, where the hinterland rapidly filled up with people of Germanic origin from the Rhineland. This migration had a profound effect on the developing architectural styles in Pennsylvania.... The trend toward English styles was abetted by the importation of books on the subject of English architecture. And, finally, a number of English builders who came to America successfully imprinted English concepts on the architecture of the New World.

The survey of architecture in the seventeenth century terminated with a description of styles found in New England.... The house plan usually called for a construction of wood built around a large central chimney in which a number of fireplaces were built.... Attention had been directed toward the functions of the fireplace and the chimney with only a little evidence pointing toward increased interest in ornamenting these important adjuncts of the house.

In the last half of the century fireplace walls were covered with wainscot (vertical sheathing) which was unpainted with molded edges, although installations of this type later were often painted. This treatment of the fireplace wall was well suited to the trend of the time, for it was reasonably

easy to install and it provided some decorative quality to an otherwise uninteresting room. Of course, in some houses all the walls of important rooms, and even the ceilings, were covered with an inner layer of wood.

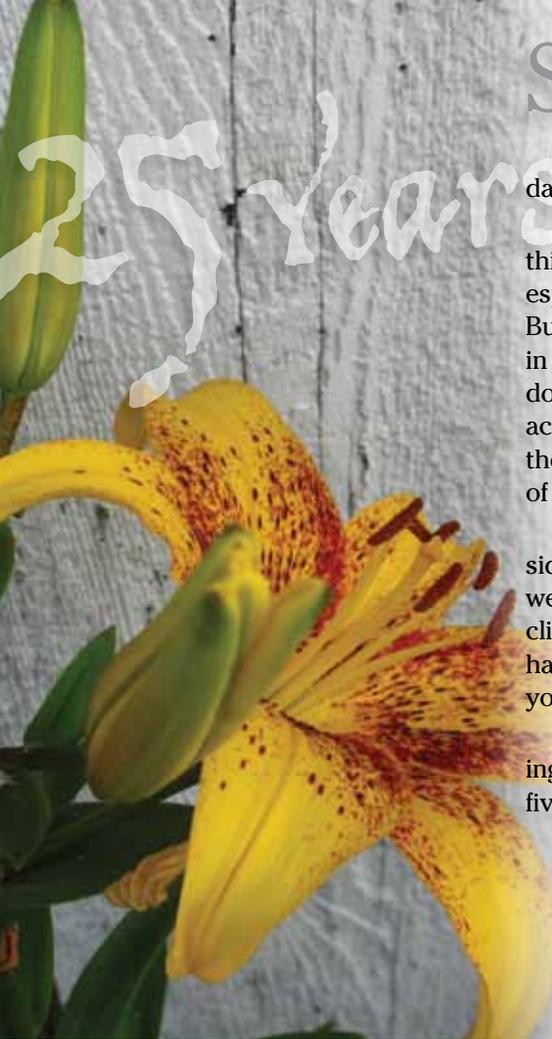
The floor plan of the seventeenth-century house was carried along into the eighteenth century, and the use of sheathing was continued, particularly in outlying districts. In the first quarter of the eighteenth century a new treatment for fireplace walls appeared, consisting of intersecting horizontal and vertical strips of wood call "stiles and rails" with openings between them into which beveled panels were fitted. The whole arrangement was usually made of white pine, free of knots, and well seasoned, as there is little distortion after the assembly was made. The rails and stiles were mortised together and fastened with two wooden pegs in each joint. The panels were of various shapes and sizes, and most of them had a beveled edge about one or one-and-a-half inches wide.... This arrangement of strips and boards is generally called "paneling," in contrast with the earlier vertical boarding which is properly known as "sheathing."

The arrangement of the earliest panels often shows the craftsman's love for asymmetrical balance, or possibly his disregard for careful planning. He appears to have started working at one end of the wall, solving his problems as he met them. There seems to have been little concern for locating the fireplace in the middle of the fireplace wall, and the door to the porch was not always balanced by a closet door on the other side of the fireplace.

The fire chamber of the fireplace was usually built of brick, with stone remaining the favorite for large kitchen fireplaces. Stone and wood were continued for lintels, wood being preferred for very large openings.... The grander openings were framed with a large bolection molding, above which on rare occasions a shallow mantel shelf was added. Above the shelf were placed two horizontal panels, the larger one often being covered with an oil painting.



Gary



Silver

Oh, my, but time sure has a way of slipping by so quickly. It seems like only yesterday.....and yet it seems so long ago....

Twenty-five years ago, Restore 'N More was not much more than a pipe-dream, something we hoped would last longer than statistics give a new start-up small business, especially considering that the construction industry has one of the worst survival rates. But, high hopes and menacing statistics have a way of lighting a fire in some people. And in the case of Gary, and then Don, you just don't tell these guys that something can't be done or is doomed to failure. Hard-headedness can be a virtue. ("Determined" is a more accurate and politically-correct word to describe them, but I've earned the right to call them hard-headed. I'm married to the one and have had to put up with the shenanigans of the other for all these years!)

But it took far more than these very determined guys to get this far on the survival side of the statistical bar graph. It took dedicated employees, like Dennis and Karen, as well as suppliers and subcontractors who partnered with us. Above all, it took you — our clients — who have trusted us with your own dreams for your treasured homes. And then have come back to us with yet more dreams to be made real. Some of you have even sent your now-grown children to us with their dreams! (Now, that just makes me feel old!)

We thank you for getting us through the first quarter century! Restore 'N More is looking forward to serving you, your children, and your grandchildren over the next twenty-five years.

“A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.”

—Proverbs 22:1

Be joyful always...

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