

January – March 2018

The Magazine of the International Child Art Foundation

ChildArt



Preserving
Creativity

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Reader,

During discussions with Ashfaq Ishaq, Executive Director of the International ChildArt Foundation (ICAF), it became apparent to me that many of the qualities ICAF is promoting through their art program – empowerment, teamwork and collaborative innovations – are the same qualities that I see in many of the people I deal with in the architectural historic preservation community.

The diverse field of architectural preservation is constantly looking for members of the next generation that are fascinated by the hands-on aspects of interacting with their physical world. In an effort to show career options that may be somewhat outside of the normal path that is usually outlined by school counselors and parents. This issue of ChildArt has fourteen articles introducing the reader's to some of the outstanding members of the architectural preservation community. As you'll read, these are people that have allowed their passions to delineate the course of their lives. Over time and through experience they have trained themselves to see and understand the details of the built world. They have learned to not just look at the obvious but to see the details and nuances. This ability to be aware of variations in details is developed over time with guidance of mentors, a passion to understand the past and a desire to experience the thrill of creating a finished product that to others appears to be magic.

I hope in reading these articles you can imagine the world that can open up to you, whether through looking at the multiple layers of paint on the surface of a building, or creating plaster that rivals the finest marbles, or how the purchase of a house led to a career in architectural preservation, or finding that being a brick mason is so interesting that you ultimately earn a PhD in the subject. Here are fourteen stories of lives that followed paths that took them to careers that they look forward to each and every day. Can you imagine a career where you get to build the forts that you cobbled together as a child but now in grand scale as an adult?

Each story and path is different; the common threads are passion, mastering the eye/hand/mind process and the curiosity that knows there's always more to learn. Hopefully you will find these articles of interest and find comfort in knowing that a path less followed may be exactly the right path for you.

Enjoy,

J. Bryan Blundell,
Guest Editor
Preservation Resource Group



ChildArt

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INTERNATIONAL
CHILD ART
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A 501(c)(3) charity, the ICAF has been nurturing children's creativity and developing empathy through the arts since 1997. Published since 1998, *ChildArt* is a commercial-free arts learning, self-discovery, and global competency periodical written expressly for 10 to 14 year-olds but useful as a teaching tool for early educators and inspirational for creative individuals of all ages. Subscribe to *ChildArt* online at www.icaf.org.

When a child's creativity is ignored, it could be lost forever. Tax-deductible donations support children's creative and empathetic development. You can donate online at www.icaf.org or mail your check to: ICAF, P. O. Box 58133, Washington, DC 20037.

Preserving Creativity



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SCAGLIOLA

David Hayles

www.themagicofscagliola.com

The dome and the workshop at Beaver Palace Studios



David Hayles with inlaid scagliola table top

I am over 70 years old, a flower power hippy from the 1960s who completely upset my upright and blue blooded family. I am happiest when my hands are in a bucket of plaster, creating some art form in a creative state. My other joy, is waking up in the morning with all the things I love around me. This includes horses, my wife and my dogs, cats, chickens and peacocks — although I am never very happy when my horses bang on the front door of my dome at the wee hours of the morning demanding their breakfast treats.

I do find it difficult to understand why everybody has to walk around with their cell phones out all the time, not really being where they are, but in some kind of virtual space talking to someone else. I walk the streets and see people who I thought were off their rocker because they were talking to themselves, but it turns out they have an ear piece phone. I think it is a bit of a shame that there is less physical communication between people actually talking to each other face to face since the invention of texting. As yet, I have managed to enjoy my life without a cell phone, although I am planning on getting one soon, even us old folks have to try and keep up with modern technology eventually.

I think there is something important and poetic about being directly connected to your work, being able to put a lot of effort into something and then seeing its results. It really gives you a sense of accomplishment and joy. I have spent my whole life making scagliola, an artificial marble made from pigmented plaster. With scagliola, you start with dry plaster. Then you mix in rich, dry pigments in various amounts and mixes to get different colors and shades. Plaster of Paris normally sets very quickly, so you slow the time it takes to harden by mixing a glue with the water. You mix this glue water with the pigmented dry plaster mixes and watch the color immediately bloom. What you are left with then, are

funny piles of colored dough-like loaves. Now the magic of scagliola can begin. This is where you get creative. You take these blobs and cut and mix them in strange and mysterious ways, with other loaves and dry mixes as well. You cut and fold and throw and mix — anything that you think might produce an interesting design. Then it is time to put the scagliola in a mould, or around a column or on a wall, whatever you want to do with it. At this stage the scagliola looks blurry and muddy and a complete mess.

Not until you start sanding it down, do the beautiful designs start to reveal themselves. The more you sand and polish it, the more clear and marble like it becomes, and in the end of all the sanding and polishing, it looks just like real marble.

Examples of my work can be seen in places like the Buckingham Palace, the Windsor Castle, the Fort

Wayne Courthouse, the U.S. Capitol and the entrance to the Postal Museum in Washington, D.C. I have worked for five royal families all over the globe. I got to see the world thanks to working with my hands, and I have managed to meet some wonderful people along the way.

Like many trades of the hand, scagliola had faded into obscurity with modern advances in technology and culture. It is a pity that so many wonderful crafts and trades are being forgotten. It seems crazy to me that it is cheaper to buy a new washing machine, refrigerator, printer, or any appliance than it is to fix the original. I believe that old trades which require working with your hands and mind are making a comeback. I think I am playing a small part in bringing scagliola back into the designs and architecture of our culture. I now live quietly in my dome with my animals and wife and spend most of my time writing books and keeping scagliola alive when I am not doing many projects across my property in upstate New York.

Now go out there and get your hands dirty kids! You'll be glad you did.



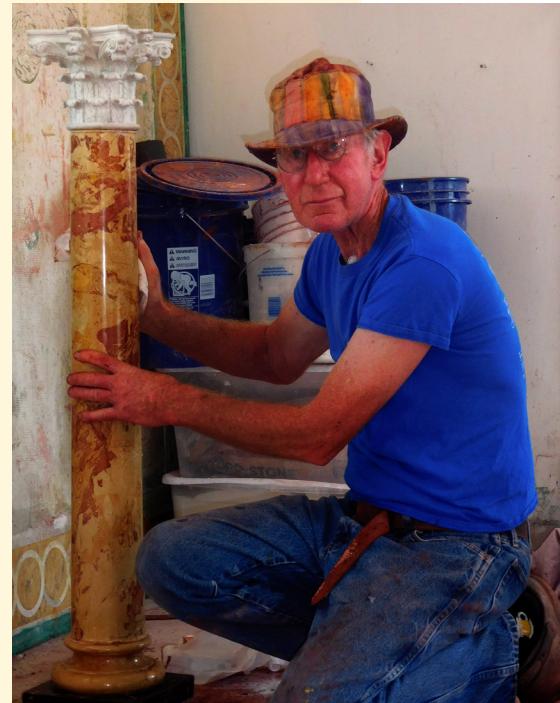
Getting hands dirty with pigmented plaster



Finished columns at The Court House in Fort Wayne Indiana



David catching butterflies at the King George V National Park in Malaysia



David Hayles with Scagliola column

I SEE PAINT

~Matthew Mosca

www.matthewjmosca.com

Ever since man has been on earth, he has been marking his territory often with paint. Early paints were made mostly from different types of clay, but as civilizations developed they discovered that pigments could be made from metals, plants, and ground up minerals. The problem with paint is that it often changes in color because the paint might be made with a drying oil that will discolor as it ages, or it might be made with a pigment that fades or turns black over time.

I use chemistry and microscopic examination to figure out what paint finishes looked like when they were new. Looking at small pieces of paint using a microscope can open up a new, largely unseen world!

When I am walking down a street of old houses in Baltimore where the woodwork has a heavy accumulation of paint layers, I cannot help but wonder what colors were used when the house was first constructed.

Did the owners repaint the house frequently? Paint was expensive then, hand made by grinding dry pigment with a binder — usually linseed oil — which would dry to a strong coating protecting the surface and providing color.

These houses below date to the late 18th Century and you can see that the wood board siding has a heavy accumulation of paint layers



Having the opportunity to examine the paint layers on the window frame of the house on the left and it showed a remarkable sequence of paint layers:

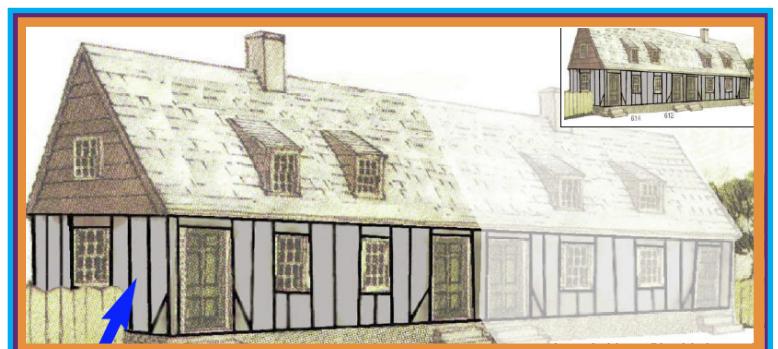
At the bottom of the photograph, you can see the wood in cross section: it resembles a honeycomb, showing the cell structure of the wood. The paint layers vary, and are separated by thin lines of oily soot deposits — indicating the sooty air of industrial Baltimore at the time. The colors are generally gray tones — these would not have gotten soiled by the accumulation of soot quite so fast as light colors would have.

Most of these paint layers were made with lead white as a base. This was one of the best pigments for exterior painting in that it promoted more rapid drying of the otherwise slow-drying linseed oil binder. The problem is that lead white is poisonous. It was banned from paint making in the United States in 1978. Here, at the left, is the same cross section of the window frame as seen above, however, it has been exposed to a solution of sodium sulfide that blackens all of the lead based paint layers. Note how many of the paint layers are prepared with lead white base, or with lead white in the combination of pigments.

There is a total of 24 separate paint finishes on this window frame. It was painted 24 separate times!



A cross section of the paint layers on the window frame of 614 S. Wolfe Street



View from south end of four unit building. Image depicts possible original exposed exterior frame and plaster rendering

The history of these houses indicate that they were built in a medieval manner: with wood posts that held up the roof and the spaces between the posts filled in with lower quality bricks and mortar, which was then covered with a lime and sand stucco. The stucco was painted with a lime whitewash that varied in color from white to gray. This was proven by the examination of the remnants of the stucco on the left side of the house. The blue arrow indicates where the sample was taken. The south wall, where the sample was taken, was covered over on the exterior by the adjacent brick building that was built many years later.

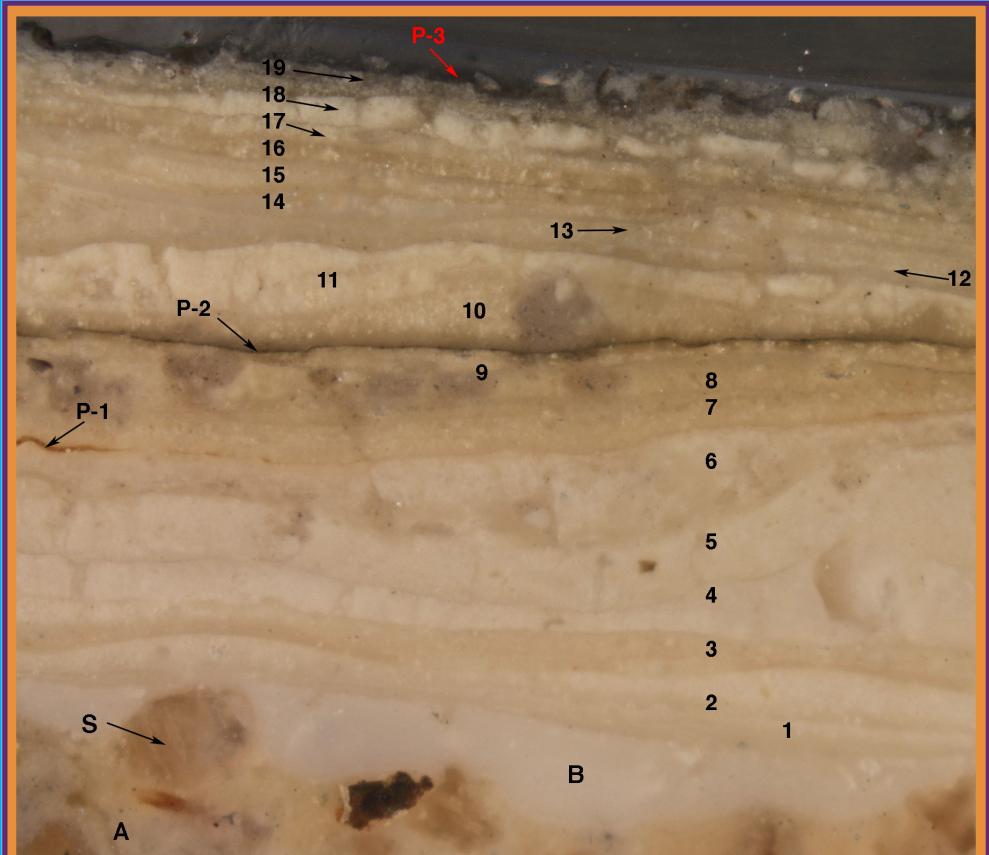
Looking at the sample under the microscope filled in missing information. The stucco itself is a thick layer that would have



Location on the interior



Exterior plaster extends above brick nogging



been applied with a trowel. This was made with sand, a little clay and lime. Lime was abundant in Baltimore, a port city on the Chesapeake Bay because of the great beds of oysters that were so abundant. The thin layer is the accumulated lime coatings.

A is the stucco coating (note the sand particle, S). This is finished with a thick lime finish coating B. Then there is a sequence of lime whitewash coatings, nineteen in total. These were probably applied every year. The heavy soot accumulations are seen at P-1, P-2 and P-3. See cross section at bottom left of page.

After the nineteenth application of the lime wash, the building next door was built, entombing the stucco behind a new brick wall.

The wood posts that supported the roof showed interesting evidence too:

Note: This detail of the wood framing shows the white tracing of lime exposure (A) on the side of the framing post. The exterior stucco appears to have been set back from the face of the post, by about 3/8" [D, dimension varies]. The dark brown on the surface of the post (E) may be a carbon material (pitch?) but not enough remained for actual identification.

What does this all tell us about life in early 19th century Baltimore? These houses were near the water, in a neighborhood known as Fells Point. They are very small and were built for the workers of the port: men who worked on the wood ships and their families. They had to be built with common materials: wood, stucco made of lime and sand, and covered with lime coatings. These houses needed nearly continuous maintenance. Every year the stucco had to be repaired and recoated with a new lime whitewash. And the wood posts were probably covered with pitch each year too. The occupants of these houses worked hard – at least six days a week at the port, when ships needed attention, and then taking care of the house itself.

Later when the house was covered with board siding, and the occupants could afford real paint, they would still have to paint and repaint on a regular basis. All of the materials of the past were softer and deteriorated faster than modern finishes.

With no electricity, and having to make everything by hand, the occupants of these houses lived closer in harmony with nature. The rear yards would have been given over to growing vegetables, washing and the out-house.

As one of an array of disciplines, paint analysis makes it possible to get a better understanding of the life of our forebears. Understanding the technology and materials of past times opens the door to realizing the skills, the understanding of natural materials and the hard work that was a constant feature of life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Matthew Mosca has been investigating architectural paint and other coatings since 1973

THE FORTS I BUILT

~ Glenn James

www.craftwrighttimberframes.com



A child's fort evolved to be exposed art in a home

Growing up I was the oldest of six children in our family. With six kids in the house, my parents had to spread attention around and the younger ones naturally needed more attention than the older ones. Needless to say, having to be creative with my own time was important. Education was stressed by my parents as a way to get "more" out of one's life. Along with schooling, my mother especially encouraged learning to read music and enjoy the arts. While I occupied my time with these things and organized sports, I could not wait to get out of school every day and go outside to play.

My favorite times were when I could be alone (due to so many people in our house) and to honor that peace of mind I would venture to the nearest woods and build forts, usually forts in trees. These structures may have been crumbly and rickety but they were mine and they were places of shelter. I used branches and twigs to turn what I imagined into a real place of my own and to me they were beautiful. If a design I had in mind let me fall to the ground, I would spend time figuring out how to make it better, cooler and as disguised as I could make it. And they were places that I could proudly show my friends, or hide from my parents. When I was old enough to work I gravitated to construction and became a carpenter's helper, today's equivalence to an apprenticeship. This work came easy to me and I enjoyed seeing something created and standing with my help and own hands. This was very rewarding for me, just like the forts I built when I was a young.

In college my concentration was political science. I thought I wanted to be in the diplomatic core. During my summer breaks

I would work in carpentry. After college and after testing and interviewing for the foreign service I realized I did not want to be like those people—I did not want to "work behind a desk". So I began a career as a carpenter building homes, churches, hotels and anything that would allow me to work in carpentry.

One day I read an article in "Mother Earth News" about a man and his Timber Framing Company. The heavy exposed timbers, joined together without nails, reminded me of the forts I built as a child. Needless to say I had to find this person and learn this craft and I offered to work for free. I found out that this type of building was very disciplined. There is a "proper" way to accomplish it and that it had developed many millennia ago and had been passed down – as a tradition, from master to apprentice for many generations of mankind. So basically I was back in "college" again. This college was different, it was FUN! It was physical. It was real.

In fact, it was so much fun for me that I excelled in it. My fort building and early carpentry work was paying off for me. After learning the very basics of timber framing, I researched and studied as much as possible. I couldn't get enough. Learning the "old" ways in this craft was learning the proper techniques for creating and preserving timber frames. Repairing a traditional structure must be done in traditional techniques to be done appropriately.

Today, I am still learning. Learning new things as one gets older makes you feel young. I seem to learn the most when I am dealing with any historic timber frame. I can see how it was built by a person

who lived 100's of years ago. I can see how they accomplished it and even how professionally they executed it. I can see the mistakes they may have made and the very unique ways they were able to fix their mistakes. This had made me realize that being a master (a teacher) at anything means to be able to fix ones mistakes properly.

Some of the most fun for me at work now is when a mistake is made. I get to see the proper repair and the learning moment for those around me, whom I teach this ancient craft. Some of the things I have learned through Timber Framing are:

- Design. This is the act of fittingly creating a space that touches the excitement of those who see it for many generations. I have learned that a design is a sustainable thing in that sense.
- Symmetry and asymmetry. These concepts are inherent in design but they very much enhance design as important elements.
- Technique. This is the correct motions one would take to accomplish the production of any design. Without knowing the proper technique (how to) the finished product will never be completed.
- Investigation. Learning the ways in which something had been accomplished in the past. These are the ways which provide the foundations of what we accomplish today;

- Teaching. I teach my craft (as a master) to those who work with me, it is quite rewarding to see them excel and surpass me. Teaching also serves to enable my craft to be passed along to future generations.

Proper execution of technique



Symmetry as a concept in design





High School photo of Clem Labine in 1953 when a student at Springfield, MA, Technical High School

This Greek Wave stencil design from a Dover Publications book was the starting point for a stencil used in the author's 1883 brownstone.

AN OLD HOUSE TRAINS A STENCILER

~ Clem Labine <https://www.period-homes.com/features/clem-labine-brownstone-renovation>

When I bought an 1883 brownstone in Brooklyn, New York, I had no idea what I was getting into. But it turned out that my beat-up, rundown old house would teach me many lessons—including a host of manual skills and the value of preserving historic architecture.

As I labored in the plaster dust, leaky piping, and sagging floors of the old wreck, I gradually became aware that beneath the dirt and broken woodwork were the bones of what had once been a handsome home. And I literally felt the house was talking to me . . . asking me to treat it kindly and restore it to the beauty it once possessed.

Restoring the house to its former glory is a monumental task because the work the house needs is painstaking and labor-intensive. This meant I had to do all the work because hiring other professionals would be too expensive since I was drawing the modest salary of a McGraw-Hill editor.

Paint stripping, woodwork refinishing, plaster repair, and window restoration were just a few of the skills I had to learn. But the craft that gave me the greatest pleasure and satisfaction was learning how to do decorative stenciling. I discovered that my brownstone had been built during the late Victorian era when stenciled decoration of walls and ceilings had been fashionable. Since do-it-yourself stenciling requires only a few dollars of paint and materials, my house was going to be decorated with Victorian stencils.

The craft of stenciling requires several skills: (a) Pattern selection; (b) Creating the stencil sheet you'll use in the work; (c) Laying out how to neatly fit the pattern to your wall or ceiling; and (d) Actually applying the paint. Some of the do-it-yourself manuals and how-to videos on YouTube make stenciling sound like a difficult skill that requires specialized brushes and exotic paints. Not so! I stenciled my entire house using regular household paints and normal paint brushes. YouTube videos, however, will show you a variety of techniques, so you pick up useful tips and gain enough confidence to experiment on your own.

For pattern selection, you can either purchase commercially available stencils or make your own. The advantage of making your stencils (like I did) is that you have complete freedom to create something entirely your own. In my case, I started by consulting readily available pattern books from the period; I found Dover Publications to be an excellent inexpensive source for authentic designs. Once you get a little experience, you'll find the world is filled with patterns and motifs you can adapt to stencil patterns. Once you select a pattern, it has to be sized to the scale you'll need for your surface. Today's digital photo-manipulation systems make this pretty easy.

After you have the pattern at correct size, next step is to make the working stencil sheet. I found that plain manila file folders work just fine for stencil material – and traced the pattern onto the cardstock. With the pattern on the manila cardstock, then just carefully cut out the pattern with an X-Acto knife. Coating the stencil sheet with a couple of coats of shellac or varnish makes it easy to clean excess paint off your stencil while you work.

It's a bit tricky to lay out the pattern on the space to be stenciled so that everything fits evenly at the ends and sides. Do a trial run with some light pencil marks and you'll soon get the hang of it. If you're laying out a border on all four sides of a rectangular space, you face the



Hand-applied stenciling in the author's dining room produces the same appearance the house had when it was built

problem of how to manage the turn at the corners neatly. Sometimes people make a special “turning block” stencil element to insert at each corner. If you study how border corners are handled on geometric carpets, you’ll pick up ideas on how to manage the turns gracefully.

Before applying paint to your final surface, practice your technique on a scrap piece of sheetrock or board. You must learn to avoid causing smudges by having excess paint leak through the edges of your pattern. Smudges are eliminated by frequently wiping your stencil clean and carefully limiting the amount of paint on your brush. Working with just a small amount of paint on the brush is completely different than the technique you use to paint a wall. That’s why some initial practice is needed.

Begin your practice by dipping about a half-inch of your brush into the can of paint you’ve selected. Then start swishing the brush onto a pad of folded newspaper until about 75% of the paint is removed. The brush should appear almost dry at this point. Then apply the almost-dry brush to the stencil in a swirling motion. Because there is so little paint on the brush, you won’t get “complete coverage” of paint onto your surface. But that’s OK; a stenciled image should be almost translucent with perhaps tiny skips here and there. After about 30 minutes of practice you should get the hang of it and be ready to start working on the surface to be decorated.

Before starting the real work, be sure to wipe any extraneous paint off the stencil. Working with a clean stencil at all times is the secret to avoiding unwanted paint smears. Use masking tape to hold the stencil in place, then start to apply paint with a circular swishing motion with the almost-dry brush as you learned in practice. When you finish printing all the elements in the first placement of your stencil pattern, just lift the masking tape and move the stencil sheet along to the next section.

In this way, I was able to decorate my house in authentic Victorian patterns. But the joy of stenciling was only one of many things I learned from the 1883 brownstone. The house educated me on how to look at architecture . . . how to see the beautiful details

This Greek Wave stencil design from a Dover Publications book was the starting point for a stencil used in the author's 1883 brownstone



A stencil of the Greek Wave pattern created this ornamental border over hallway paneling – just as would have been done in 1883



in historic buildings. My brownstone also taught me that old buildings are precious gifts handed down to us by previous generations—and that it’s our duty to preserve these architectural treasures to enrich the lives of those who follow. An additional gift to me was that my interest in historic architecture led me to start The Old-House Journal – a publication that passed along restoration and renovation secrets to new old-house owners. The house actually changed my life.

Over the years, it turns out my brownstone and I have had a mutually gratifying relationship. I restored the house to its original glory – and in return the house gave me a fulfilling new career promoting and preserving architectural beauty.



1980 - Gerard reconstructing the facade of an early 19th century cottage (Gerard Lynch©2017)

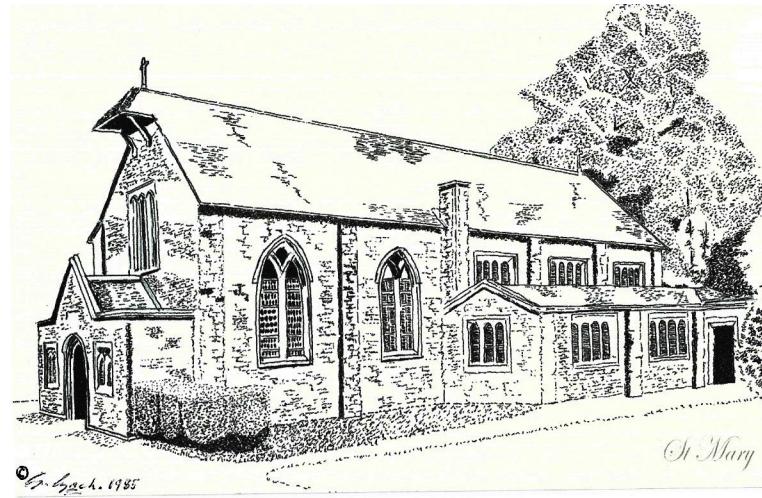
I have been very lucky to have had a long, enjoyable, and very interesting career working within a craft that I feel so passionate about. In school, I fell in love with the subjects of art and history and my work allows me to bring them into play on all of my projects. By continually learning about my craft and refining my skills, my career has not only been very satisfying, it has allowed me to earn a wage that gives me an excellent standard of living.

When I was born, in the mid-1950s, it was a time when children had to make their own entertainment. We would meet to play outside all day long, and at home, we would read or sketch and color-in, make things with plastocene, or build model planes, ships, etc. Playing was both hugely enjoyable and helped us to learn how to be resourceful with the little we had.

I always knew that I would work with my hands: but doing what I simply didn't know. Friends working within the construction industry said they could get me a job as a manual labourer, so I took that opportunity. The turning point in my life came when I was told to go mix mortar and carry bricks for a skilled bricklayer called Mr. Mick Quill. Over a period of weeks I marvelled at his ability to methodically organise and build his brickwork, and was particularly in awe of how he set out some very complicated details which involved several complex angles where the horizontal and inclined courses were skilfully interwoven; I knew then that this craft was to be my future.

I asked Mr. Quill if he would teach me and, seeing how keen I was, he kindly replied "Of course Gerard: I'll take you as far as I can." Delighted, I spoke to my parents who were supportive and I signed up for a commitment of learning over several years, known as an apprenticeship.

The first year included a five and a half day working week and was



IN ALL ITS WONDROUS THINGS

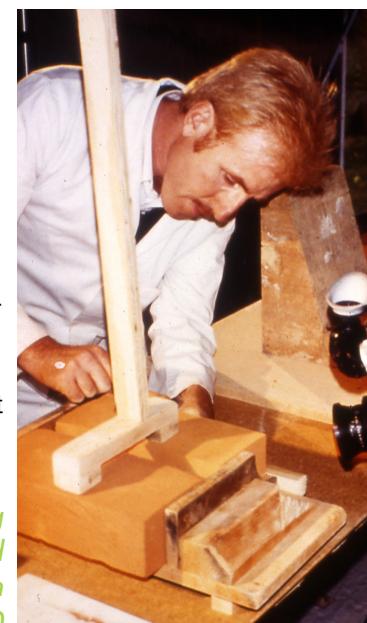
~ Dr Gerard Lynch

<http://theredmason.co.uk/>

called my 'Proofing Year.' Its purpose was to confirm my interest and ability. When that was completed, the next four-year phase was working on projects while also attending a Technical College, twelve miles away, one day a week as well as one evening of classes.

The skills required to be a first-class brickmason seem to come naturally to me. I worked very hard to learn as much as I could regarding craft theory and technology. When at school, in my earlier years, I disliked math, geometry and science. Suddenly I found I enjoyed them because they provided real meaning and purpose when applied to my everyday work. I passed all my examinations with distinction to become a fully qualified brickmason. In acknowledgement of my effort, I was awarded the silver and gold trowel as the country's leading apprentice.

Work involved both working on building new houses, factories and offices as well as repairing and restoring brickwork on old buildings. It was on the latter that I enjoyed working the most. I was able to bring into my work, my love of art and history. This blended with my desire to better understand and achieve the higher levels of traditional hand-crafting skills that I had observed in some historic masonry. So it was this that led to my long career in the world of preservation.



Gerard preparing a rubbing brick in a specially designed cutting box for 'Wall to Wall', a BBC TV series, aired in 1990

◀ 1985 - Gerard's drawing of St. Mary's RC (Gerard Lynch©2017)

To master any craft demands being passionate about it. A personal desire to fully commit to the discipline and hard work required not only during your apprenticeship but also the constant learning that occurs during your career. It is good to be patient and remain humble, understanding and accepting the unavoidable setbacks in this journey. Do not get frustrated or, worse, angry at the necessary constructive criticisms from those more skilled than you, about something you have created. It is all part of how you learn, gain experience, and grow in maturity both as a craftsman and as a person. If you truly commit to this and keep your eye on the final goal of becoming a skilled, creative worker within the world of historic building preservation, who knows what wonderful experiences, successes and benefits you might enjoy in the future.

Little did I know when I first left school and began my career as a brickmason that I would one day become an acknowledged master with my carvings displayed in states such as Maryland, Kentucky and Pennsylvania. That I would be responsible for reviving areas of lost craft knowledge and skills that I have now passed on to those keen to learn from around the world. That one day I would become Dr. Gerard Lynch by gaining a Ph.D. at a university. That I would have books and papers published and would be invited to lecture and meet and talk with senators as well as members of the British Royal family. That I would be called on to advise on the repair and restoration works on some of the most famous historic buildings, not only in Britain but across the world. That I would win many awards, such as "Freedom of the City of London" and many more. Quite incredible!

Today my 26-year-old son, Liam Lynch, is following in my footsteps in the art of the Red Mason, a historical term given to the masons who carved brick in the manner of the stonemasons. He is now



1983 - Gerard constructing a bullseye arch
(Gerard Lynch©2017)



2017 - Gerard and his 26 year old son, Liam, working on a sample panel for restoration works at Fulham Palace d. 1485 - 1509 (Gerard Lynch©2017)

applying his natural creativity in helping to preserve our nation's precious stock of historic brick-built buildings, and is finding this work extremely rewarding and satisfying.

So I call on all of you young people to think very seriously about life and your future and about using your head and your hands in creative, skilled ways. For in this modern society where most people are head down, buried in iPhones, and only seem to want to work in an office on computers or inside a factory serving robots, be different, be brave and connect with the real world that surrounds you and brings satisfaction in all its wondrous things.

There can be no doubt that the future will be very rewarding emotionally, spiritually, artistically, and financially for those who have committed to properly learning and mastering one of the skilled traditional building crafts. For then you would become one of the experts who brings his or her creativity to preserving the built heritage of your wonderful country.

1969 - Gerard as a young man at Fulbrook School (Gerard Lynch©2017)



Dr. Gerard Lynch, The Red Mason, is an internationally acknowledged master brickmason, carver, consultant, author and teacher.



SUBLIME PERFORMANCE

~ David Flaharty

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/david-flaharty-4974b523/>

I am a sculptor who works in his ornamental plastering studio in a small town north of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. My work involves the conservation and restoration of historic ornamental plaster elements as well as designing, producing and installing new ornamentation. What really interests me are Eighteenth through Twentieth Century decorative enrichments focusing on ceiling medallions, cornices, and ornamental metals. For more than 40 years, I have been involved in restorations at many historic houses and significant projects. These include, the Diplomatic Reception rooms at the U.S. Department of State, projects at the White House, and ornamental plasterwork in the American Wing period rooms at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

After my schooling, I rented a studio from an ornamental plasterer and became interested in one of his major projects to restore a church in South Philadelphia that had burned. My job was as a model maker for the project. That meant putting together doors, windows, columns, capitals, cornices, etc. to match the originals. One day while I was working, Edward Jones, the architect for the White House during the early 1970s, walked in. He looked at what I was doing and said: "That's it, you're on my team." My first project for him was a ceiling medallion in the Blue Room at the White House.

I was introduced to the Merchants House because of Jones and his involvement as the curator of the American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Edward Jones and I would walk through Greenwich Village in lower Manhattan after dinner on summer nights. We looked through parlor floor windows of Greek Revival houses and studied the ornamental plasterwork. None was more beautiful than the Merchants House.

New York City is my most favorite town. My first visit was to the New York World's Fair in 1939 with my parents, although I don't remember that. I do remember seeing the French ocean liner "The Normandie" on its side in dock on the Hudson River in 1942. Anyway, the chance to work on the Merchants House, a wonderful Greek Revival house with significant plaster interiors, thrilled me.

The designer/architects of the Merchants House were unique. That was made clear by studying other ornamental plasterwork in lower Manhattan. It revealed that there was very little which compares to the 1832 style of the Merchants House.

The Merchant's House has been described as "transitional" to the extent that its unrestrained Federal woodwork coexists handsomely with its robust Greek Revival plaster ornamentation. Indeed, the matching ceiling medallions in the double parlors are unquestionably the finest designs to survive into the late Twentieth Century and, in my opinion, they are superior to any composed during the American classical revival.

David Flaharty attended the Rhode Island School of Design and Cranbrook Academy of Art

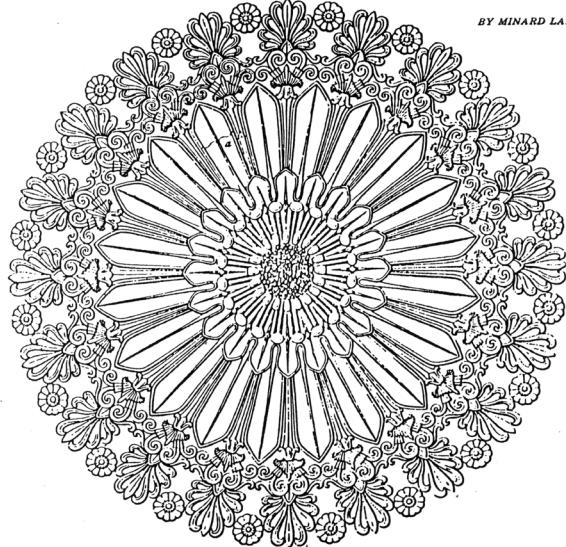


Figure 1: Plate 21

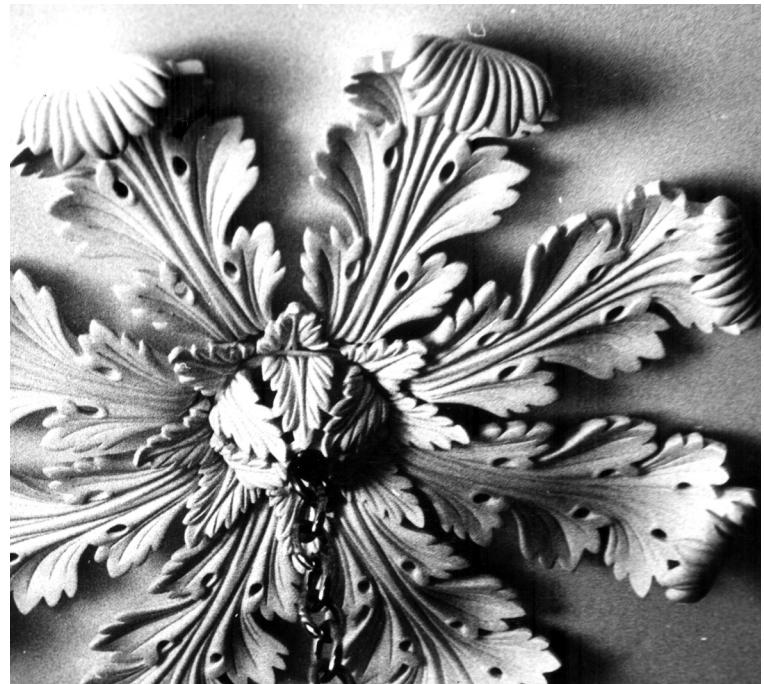
Builder-architects of typical lower Manhattan row houses generally specified flat plaster ceilings using three-coats of plaster on sawn wooden lath. Decorations / enrichments might have been bought from a local plaster shop. These designs often copied from period stylebooks, such as Minard LaFever's "The Beauties of Modern Architecture of 1835" (Fig 1).

The Merchant's House medallions, however, had greater detail and craftsmanship with recessed alternating acanthus foliate center clusters. To achieve this dramatic result, framing and lathing of the central ceiling joists was necessarily more elaborate than simply running joists level from party wall to party wall. Like many early houses in New York City, the Merchant's House has been subject to masonry settling, water intrusion and heavy vehicular traffic—all factors which cause plaster ceilings to fail. This was particularly true for the center of a ceiling with oversized ornamentation. Luckily for the Merchant's House, the unusually substantial framing allowed these medallions to withstand the forces of gravity regardless of the increased weight.

After the flat plastering was complete, reeded mouldings were turned on the ceilings. This was done using a mixture of gypsum and lime troweled ahead of revolving sheet metal template blade nailed to stocks and slippers. Off-site cast plaster enrichments, such as the illustrated center cluster, guilloche/rosette and surround acanthus foliage (see Fig. 2), were then set within and around the runs using a plaster adhesive.

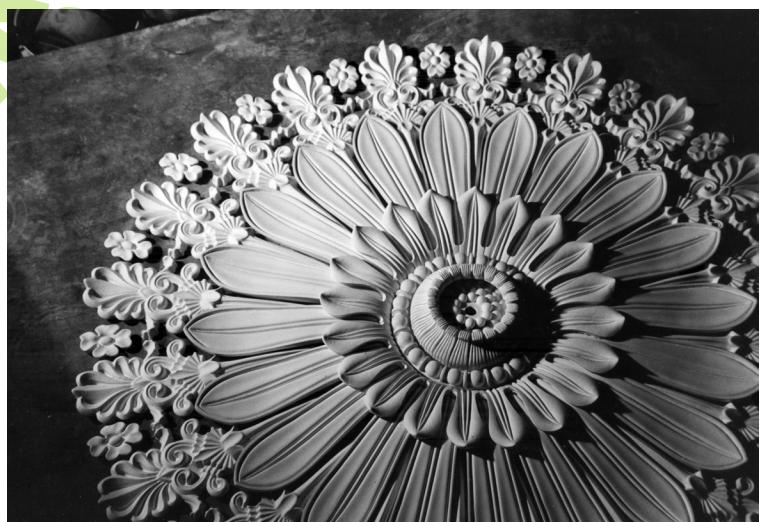
Students of Greek Revival plaster medallions will no doubt be pleased to learn that this medallion form has never been designed and executed more brilliantly than in the double parlors of the Merchant's House. As an avid voyeur, peering through windows of Greenwich Village townhouses, Edward Jones led me on tours of observing centerpieces composed with varying degrees of success, but none compared to those at the Old Merchant's House. There can be no question that the unidentified craft genius that fabricated this American classical revival plasterwork accomplished an unusually sublime performance.

David Flaherty as a young child



Ceiling medallion in author's dining room

Ornament created based on Plate 21





The George Peabody Library - A Cathedral of Books
(Photo credit: Ulf Wallin)

solve a problem or implement a change. Where numbers and words may fall short, a drawing can often complete the picture in our minds eye and be accessible to a broad group.

One of the ways I relate to my profession as a structural engineer along with my curiosity to understand the past, sometimes reminds me of driving a car. We use the rearview mirror to see where we've been but never lose sight of where we're going. This was particularly true when I stepped into the Peabody Library in Baltimore, MD, where the visual splendor of the interior tells us immediately that this is a great work of architecture from the past – a “Cathedral of Books.” However, envisioning this treasured resource for future generations would require acts of empathy, innovation and imagination, from a broad team of specialists.

The challenges being faced included a failing rooftop skylight, significant thermal inefficiency, and limited access within the attic space above the library. As a structural engineer, my challenge waited above the glass ceiling, or lay light, where wrought iron trusses from 1878 span across the atrium. (P-Trusses) The iron trusses, a combination of I-shaped beams and struts with diagonalized tie rods, were found to be very efficiently designed for the requirements and standards of the late 19th century, but at risk of failure when adding heavier, thermally-efficient skylight panels as well as new catwalks to get access over the lay light. In addition, our understanding of rooftop snow loading, with drift and unbalanced loads, is more advanced than when this building was designed, so the original structure had some significant weaknesses when evaluated based upon current standards. Reinforcing the trusses with new steel components was the answer, but how to do it, both from the design approach as well as from the actual construction, remained a challenge.

Working within a team of specialists, diversity of perspective is a strength. We all look at the problem from the vantage point of our

LOOKING BACK AND MOVING FORWARD: STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING FOR HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE

~ John Matteo

www.1200ae.com

I have enjoyed drawing from a very young age. I used to draw comics with some made up characters and adventures, or just sketches and doodles here and there. It was a great pleasure to spend time with pencil in hand, but what I now realize is that I was also developing my skills at graphical communication that I now use in my work on a daily basis. Like accuracy in numbers or clarity in words necessary in my professional life, accuracy and clarity of a drawing is very important in bringing the team together and allow them to develop a common idea. Various forms of drawing are useful in this process. In the early phases of design, a quick hand sketch, sometimes 2D or 3D can quickly communicate an idea or how to

Founding Principal at 1200 Architectural Engineers, John Matteo has a Masters in Civil Engineering from Princeton University, studied as Fulbright Scholar in Lausanne, Switzerland, and was a 2011 Fellow in Historic Preservation at the American Academy in Rome.



*Historic Iron Trusses
strengthened by new Steel
(Photo credit: Ulf Wallin)*

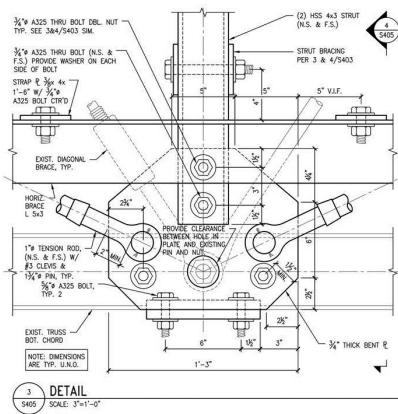
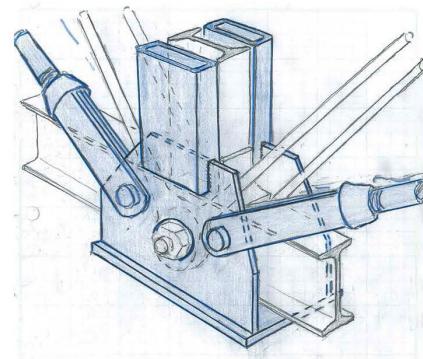
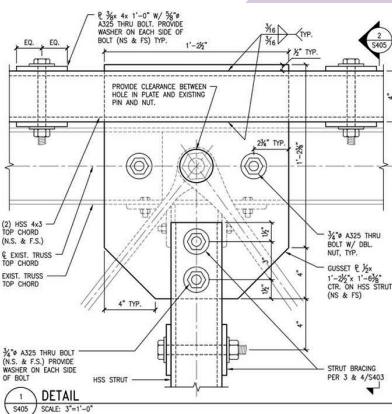
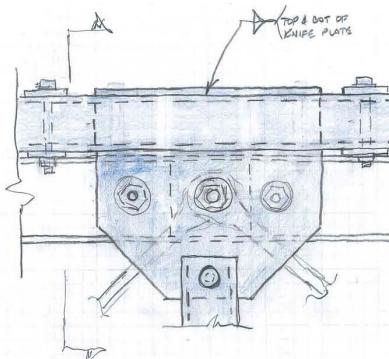
sustain this wonderful architectural resource and protect its cherished contents for years to come.

So, for me, all of this started with sketches and doodles along with made up characters and their adventures, and it is fun to think that I am still sketching and doodling the reality of my own adventures. You can too!

With great team effort and clear communication of all forms, the roof trusses were reinforced one by one, and the new catwalks and skylight panels set in place. Ultimately, the work done serves to

Once a direction is agreed upon, we must now communicate to another group of people – the builders. Here again, we still find that an illustrative graphic will help bring the expanded team together, but an additional demand for precise dimensions and sequence of construction quickly moves to the forefront. The people fabricating the steel need to know exactly what sizes and thicknesses are needed, while the people installing the pieces need to know how they will be lifted into place and that they will fit. Doing all this in a space six stories up, above a thin layer of glass ceiling, adds to the daunting challenge.

From Concept to Construction - Drawing for Architectural and Structural Designs



MYTH, EMPATHY, AND CHARLEY'S DREAM HOUSE

~Lilla Matheson Ohrstrom



<http://youngbloodartstudio.com/lilla-matheson-ohrstrom/>

The building site

Creativity is our human birthright that distinguishes us from other animals. So too is our ability to record history and return to past ideas to shape the future. How can we honor our traditions and spark our creativity where building is concerned? How can we keep alive historic crafts, while innovating for the needs of the future? How can children growing up in the 21st century use empathy as a tool?

Buildings shape us as much as we shape them. The spaces we live in matter and the texture, quality, and expression of those buildings touch a cord so visceral that we are not even aware of the effect without a conscious effort to ask these questions.

What does it mean to be a young person living in a world of technology, where images come fleeting from all directions, and we have the ability to manipulate entire imaginary worlds on our computer screens? How can we reconcile the time it takes to train a person to make fine crafts with the speed at which one can satiate their curiosity on the Internet? I have been witnessing a solution in my nephew, a budding architect.

Charley Hilliard is a young graduate from Montana State University and he has an opportunity to explore building and design while renovating an early 20th century farmhouse into an art studio and gallery. Renovating and restoring are often used interchangeably, but in the world of architecture they are not the same, and this story illustrates the sharp distinction.

Charley's project is a renovation, fixing up a circa 1900 building for modern day use. The project has become a platform for learning fine crafts. It incorporates empathy, innovation and creativity guided by two themes, MEMORY and PROCESS. Remembering how things used to be built, handcrafting the process of making mixes, with a fantasy story line influenced by Joseph Campbell's book, *The Hero's Journey*. Video games and fantasy literature also influence the design scheme.

Charley leads a small crew of two, Pat and Kelly, who call themselves The Warlock Workshop.

The spirit of Warlock Workshop is rooted in Christopher Alexander's philosophy, found in his book, "The Timeless Way."



The Warlock workshop crew

Our Pattern Languages

People can shape buildings for themselves, and have done it for centuries, by using languages which I call pattern languages. A pattern language gives each person who uses it, the power to create an infinite variety of new and unique buildings, just as his ordinary language gives him the power to create infinite sentences.

With a shared philosophy, they hand-plane stair rails, cut columns from poplar trees, and craft clay vents for the gable ends of the attic. Every element of the project is based on the storyline of Charley's vivid fantasy world of myth and archetype. Charley vacillates between drawing and planning on his computer, and working with his hands to construct the project. The actual building site has become a venue for an imaginary world with small rooms with names such as, The Palace, The War Room, Helen's Hall, and The Portal. Imaginary figures such as Fruit Bat and Sugar, the Princesses, and Wombat the Villain inhabit these spaces and architectural decisions are made with their story in mind. The process uses fantasy and archetype to drive architectural design. Traditional construction techniques make use of existing materials to fabricate something new.



*It starts with
drawing the myth
meets material*

The storyline begins at the outdoor Obelisk, a simple wooden pole shaped in the form of an Egyptian obelisk, hand painted with imagery representing the quest. It stands in a circle of trees.



Driving wooden tree nail into mortice and tenon joint between post and hewn top plate

The first room you enter is the hypostyle, a room with a roof supported by hand hewn poplar columns. According to the architects myth, in the hypostyle, you meet a vulture dragon who imparts wisdom on

you before you cross the threshold where you meet The Donkey Warlock on your way to The War Room. A big adobe chess



The Hypostyle

table influenced by primitive building techniques, and reflecting table for reading are features of The War Room. An art gallery is aggrandized with elevated ceilings, where some floor joists were removed to add height. Landscape paintings line the walls, each representing portals to inspire quests. The hand-planed stairrail passes a light fixture which represents The Floating Light Creature. Upstairs, you enter The Palace where you meet The Final Boss, the Eye of Venus in the west gable end. From here you transport out The Portal, a narrow corridor leading back to the upstairs of the hypostyle. This journey allows you to enter the Fay Realm.

According to Charley Hilliard, the architect:

In 100 years people will understand that there was a story happening here. Borrowing the spirit of those characters, holding the memory of time into whatever future is beyond us. It lends itself to a better experience of the place and an acceptance of change; the ability to craft memory into the project."

While a vivid imaginary world plays a role in this particular process the building process is very real. Hard work and physical investment are what get the structure up and operating. I became involved in the project when asked to help make clay vents for the gable ends of the building. This request is an example of abandoning historic accuracy in lieu of whimsy. As a ceramic artist, my studio was used

to design and fabricate the tiles. The tiles were rolled flat from wet clay, and cut to shape using a handmade star-shaped cardboard stencil. Each star was altered and individualized. Cracks are accepted as the Wabi-sabi (Japanese philosophy finding beauty in accepting imperfection, fragility, and modesty.)



Wet clay slab with star design in the making



Kelly, with light shining on her star, cardboard template in background



The author glazing a cracked tile, which will be repaired when encased in a wooden frame



Star tile after glazing

Charley's project seeks to understand traditions, and to be aware of influences which alter them. What we call Early American crafts are developed out of a European tradition, but our broader world view now has us look deeper at native American, African culture, Eastern culture, south American culture, and Islamic culture, all

of which we can access with the click of a mouse on a computer screen. Coming from those expansive traditions, honoring the craft traditions, which mark the pre-industrial colonial world, while respecting and incorporating both world crafts and modern technology, is a challenge for upcoming generations. Charley is toiling with this experiment when he introduces adobe and Wabi Sabi in his construction practice. This empathy for the greater world is shown through architectural decisions and the result is beautiful. It is of primary importance that questions about crafts, traditions and creativity continue to be asked and that working creatively with our hands continues to help us tactfully understand our historical and current selves.

Disclaimer

Thoughtful understanding of a building should be a prerequisite prior to any repair. Some buildings hold such beauty in original design and detail that they ought to be accurately restored. Understanding historic trades and valuing the past is paramount to preserving history. The building Charley renovated was not of such historic value that it needed accurate restoration. There are times when a building stands alone as a marker of time and beauty. Those buildings need tender restoration that honors them for their original integrity.

Further thoughts

Regardless of whether we are reconstructing a building to be historically accurate or renovating a building for new use, the way we interact with the space, such as how we use it, how we feel in it and how it shapes us is worth our attention. When you walk down the hallway of your school, how do you feel; how about the approach, the entryway? Are you safe, is your imagination sparked, is there anything in the space that soothes you, a spot for artwork, a window, that allows the light to cast a particular shadow, a surface texture that makes you want to touch it? Are you at ease, comforted? Is there anything in your view, the proportions of a room a door frame, an alcove, which spark a sense of aesthetic pleasure?

While there is room for all kinds of making, it is worth noting how objects and spaces make us feel. A machine-tooled item feels different from something handmade. Even something handmade from a different culture feels different than something handmade locally. Spaces and objects can help us feel a sense of pride, comfort or even awe. These are the spaces usually touched by hand and imbued with thoughtful care. Isn't it good to know that it is your birthright to tend to the spaces you dwell in and to the objects you use? Learning to craft things through experimentation and training allows a precious contribution to any community.

Lilla Matheson Ohrstrom grew up in a creative household, where her father was an architect and her mother an avid reader. Starting in kindergarten she knew she wanted to be an artist. She married an historic house specialist, Chris Ohrstrom, and participated in the restoration of five houses and even more out buildings. She has watched buildings go up and come down, be saved and demolished, be both spoiled by modern interpretations and redeemed by technology. Teaching creativity is her passion.

BLACKSMITHING AS PRESERVATION

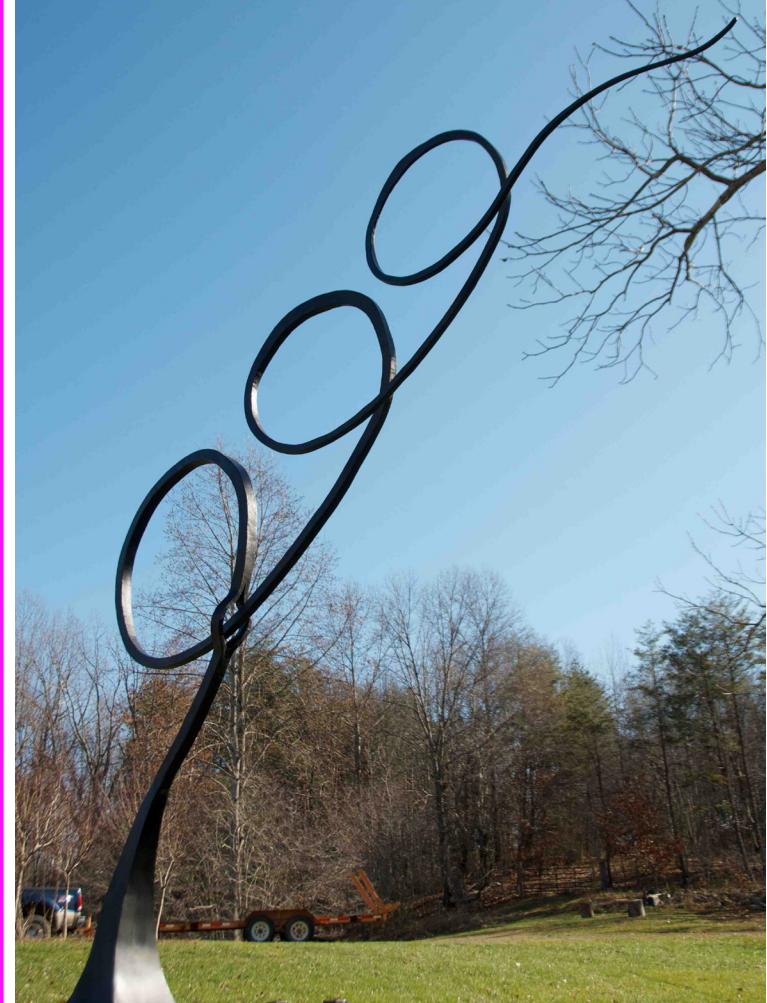
~Nol Putnam

www.nolputnam.com/-/nolputnam/

I grew up on a hard-scrabble farm in Northwestern Connecticut, in the days long before hand held videos or even television. Play time, or diversion from the task at hand, had to come from our own imagination. It is hard to overstate the importance of dreams. Teachers are often saying "Don't day dream." I would say "dream away to your heart's content."

Dreams are the unconscious building blocks of imagination and those images formed are the stepping stones into the future... your future. To transform our dreams into reality, we need creativity. How can I make this new idea into something tangible? Our farm had old buildings with old farm equipment and we were encouraged to tinker. There was a wood shop with a table saw and a lathe. At an

"Sirroco" - 2012, 10'x12'





*Folger Gate, Washington National Cathedral, 1994,
8'x4.5'*

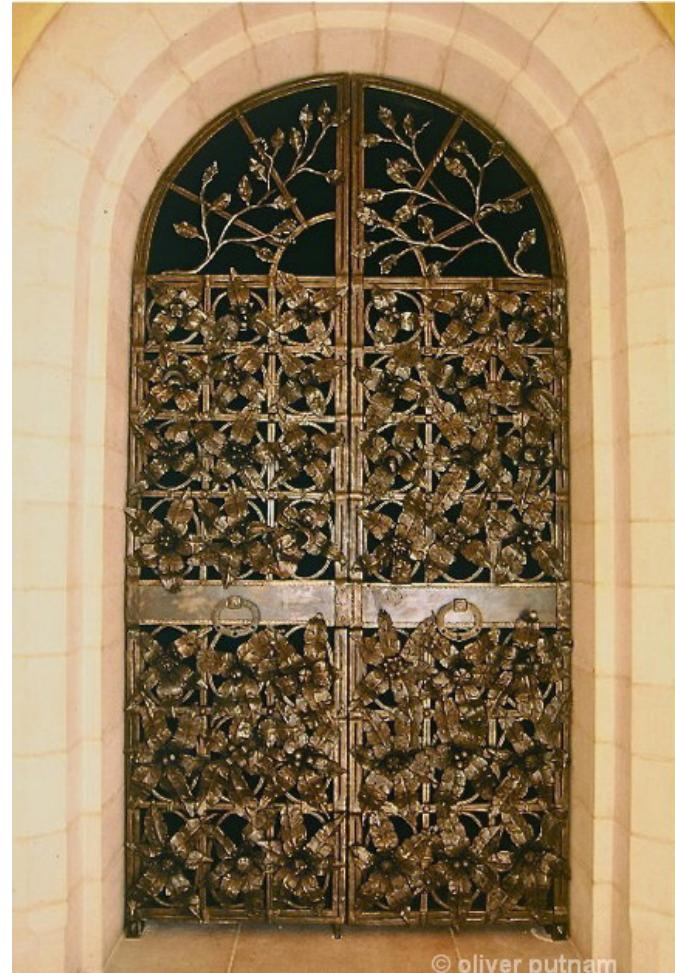
early age I was allowed to use both. All I had to do was leave the shop cleaner than when I found it!

I was never a good student until my last years of college. But I loved to read. The Brothers Grimm, adventure stories on the bounding main, later novels that showed the breadth of human experience.

After serving in the Army and after finishing college, I became a high school history teacher. I used my creativity every day to urge students toward greater understanding and deeper knowledge of the world and how we got to "here." Burnt out after fourteen years, I switched careers to become an artist, specifically, a blacksmith artist. Everything before seemed to be an apprenticeship for learning how to work hot iron.

We know that working with metals started around 10,000 years B.C. We see pictures on the walls of various pharaohs' tombs of people working bellows to fan the charcoal, making it hot enough to heat the metal enough to forge. The smelting of iron took greater heat. The men who transformed metal ore into useable gold, silver, or bronze and then iron took on mythical qualities in the minds of their people. "Don't mess with a smith...they make iron."

As with most professions, it takes time to learn the job, the craft, the profession. One does not arrive full of knowledge. It must be deliberately sought out and then made part of yourself in order to be useful. There were no schools readily available for blacksmithing. So...with a book in one hand, a hammer in the other, I taught myself through pictures and words to create things in iron. What could be



© oliver putnam

*Rousseau Gate, 1995, 13.5' wide,
copper, brass and iron*

better for work than to use the five sacred elements of the Ancient World – earth, fire, wind, water and the spirits?

As with most artists, my first creations were copies of things seen. How else to learn? But an imaginative and creative mind begins to create differences. What if I did this instead of that? Restoration work...hardware, railings, gates all have to be studied most carefully. How did the smith of 100 years ago create this piece? What were the steps taken? What tools did he use? Increasingly today we have many women smiths joining the profession and bringing great depth and richness of thought.

Empathy for the rigors of the trade, my forebears, creativity in making the gate, the hinge, the balcony, and imagination to first conceive the piece and then make it in the flesh (iron) are all alive and well today. To restore is to learn from earlier masters and become more proficient in our own day.

Forward!



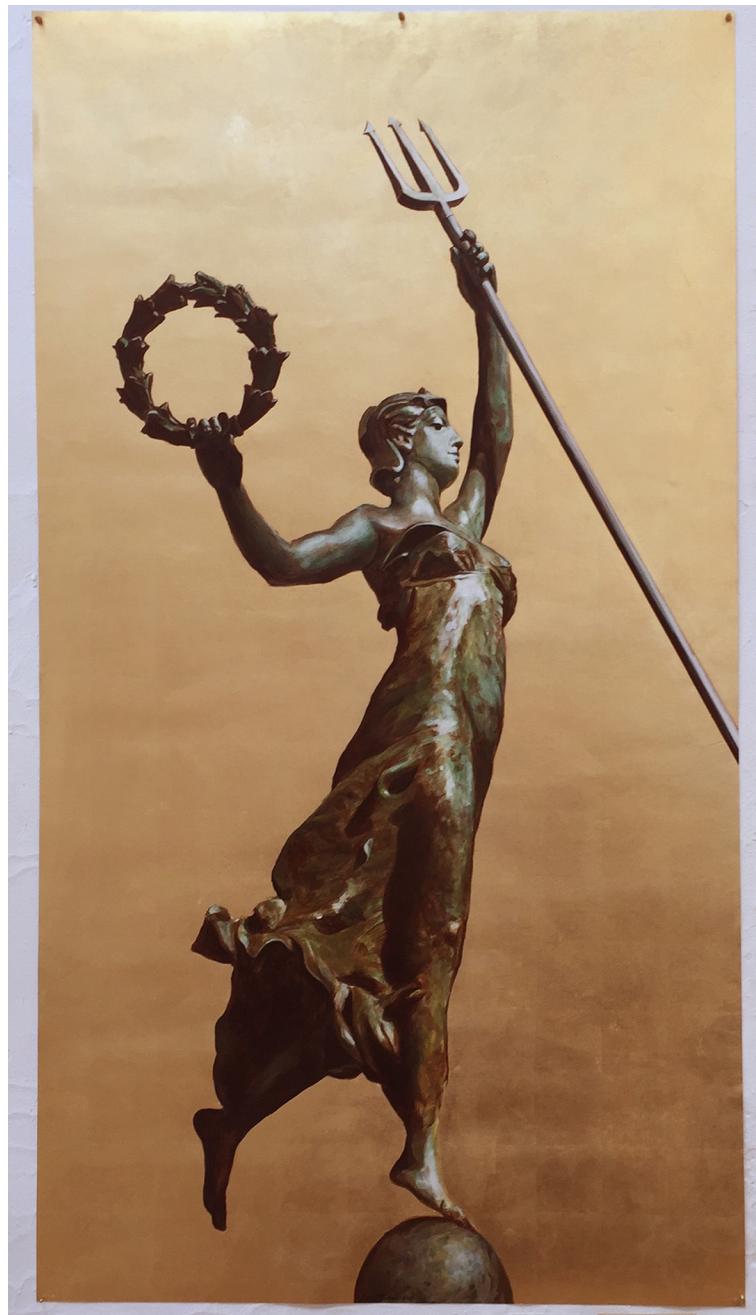
Nol on horse

Born in 1934, Mr. Putnam served in U.S. Army 1954-1957 and starting in 1959 he taught at the Lenox School where he had studied until the school closed down in 1970. He taught himself the art of blacksmithing and has been smithing and teaching around the country.

PRESERVING INSPIRATION

~Lynne Rutter

www.lynnerutter.com



Lynne's painting of a bronze statue on a gilded canvas, exhibited during the International Salon of Decorative Painters, in St Petersburg, Russia



Lynne Rutter at age 11
(photo credit: Beth Koch)

I am muralist and decorative artist living in San Francisco, CA. In my work I have traveled all over the place, and have a real love of painted architecture. For many years I worked restoring the painted decoration of old buildings, because of my interest in antique styles, as well as for the history of places. To have a career as an artist is an amazing dream. As a kid I didn't even consider it possible, to spend my time painting and designing: I thought that was something people got to do only for fun. Don't get me wrong, it is actually very hard work, and to be good at it takes a lot of practice and skill, but I love what I do so much that I don't mind the more difficult aspects of this work.

I got my first project mural painting when I was about eleven. An enormous display cabinet at my school was converted into a terrarium, and I helped to decorate the walls to look like a jungle, as a backdrop for the plants and creatures that would be living in that space. Doing this I learned two things about myself: that I really like to work on large paintings, rather than just little panels like on an easel; and that I liked the painting to have a purpose or specific place. This is what we call "site-specific" art, when something is designed for a particular space or room. And the word "backdrop" is important because I went on to do a lot of painting for backdrops and sets for theater productions, at first as a student or volunteer, then when I got older I got jobs doing this.



A large painted ceiling by Lynne Rutter in a California home, whose design was inspired by the ornament Lynne found in a church in Florence, Italy (photo credit: David Papas)

Another thing that really influenced my career path was traveling. As a teenager I travelled to Europe with my art history class, and I saw there so many very old churches and palaces where the art and the architecture were really integrated, working so beautifully together, with frescoed murals and decorative ornament on the ceilings, and I found this so inspiring. Many of the murals painted in the 16th-18th centuries were kind of dramatic and theatrical, and not surprisingly, painted by artists who also worked in theaters.

When I went to university I studied architecture and art, and through this I learned how to design and paint site-specific artwork like I had seen in my travels. Eventually all of these interests lead me to painting murals and ornament for people's homes, and in hotels and restaurants, and to restoring the painted ornament in beautiful old buildings.

I am the kind of person who rearranges the furniture in my house all the time, and I am always looking for new things to try. I love fabric, and books, and costumes, and history. I am a little obsessed with things like pigment and gold leaf and specialized tools and brushes, to the point where my art studio looks a bit like a mad scientist's laboratory.

I still travel a lot, and I have painter friends in many different countries, who also restore palaces and churches and decorate grand houses. Thanks to the internet we can keep in touch easily and even collaborate. These days I am known mostly for designing new decoration, but all of my work is still inspired by the history of my art, and by all of the incredible artists who decorated architecture in the centuries before me.



Lynne Rutter is a decorative artist with a passion for historic painted ornament, who has run her own atelier in San Francisco for over 25 years.

CREATING THE DOUBLE INFINITY WINDOW

~Simeon A. Warren



"I found out the hard way that the easy way is one day at a time. That's how we build cathedrals and maintain our heritage and culture."

Architectural Stone Carver and Professor of Stone Work
www.simeonawarren.space

An Architectural Stone Carver's job encompasses the ability to design stone work for buildings and then to carve multiple blocks of stone to reveal the required form and shape to build a building.



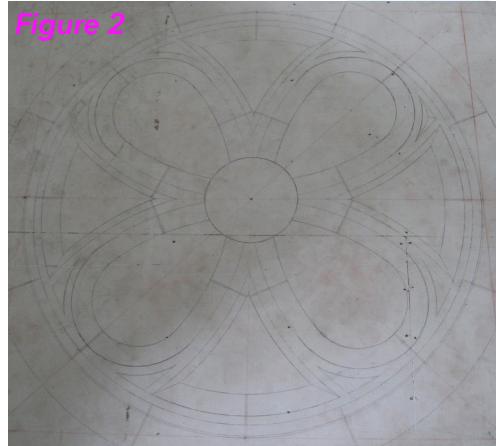
Figure 1: An Idea

My work starts with an idea. The idea comes from what we know, imagine or are asked to do. You cannot create stonework unless you have placed the idea on paper.

Figure 2: The Drawing

The beginning of an idea starts with a line. From simple lines and circles we can create shapes, forms and meanings. Complexity comes from this simplicity. But sometimes the ideas change, and shapes and forms evolve. Leading to something unexpected. The finished drawing is an evolution of thoughts, ideas and imagination but that's just the beginning.

Figure 2



Working Stone

Figure 3: From a drawing we can take shapes, or templates, which we place on the stone. These shapes allow us to draw flat lines on the stone.



Figure 4

Figure 4: Now our two dimensional drawing we can transfer the outlines of a three dimensional object from which we can create the objects internal surfaces.



Figure 5

Figure 5: From this simplicity we create order and with it comes complexity as we build up the multiple surfaces.



Figure 6

Figure 6: From a rough unorganized stone. We can create a new order. A single surface can lead to the creation of an octagon.

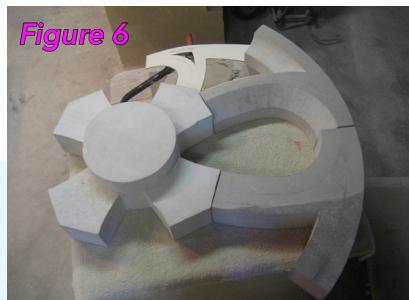


Figure 7

Figure 7: From the octagon we can create the spokes of a wheel. These become the legs of the surrounding stones, which form a rose window.



Figure 8

Figure 8: Once the basic shape is formed additional details can be added. Such as flowers in the case of the Rose Window.

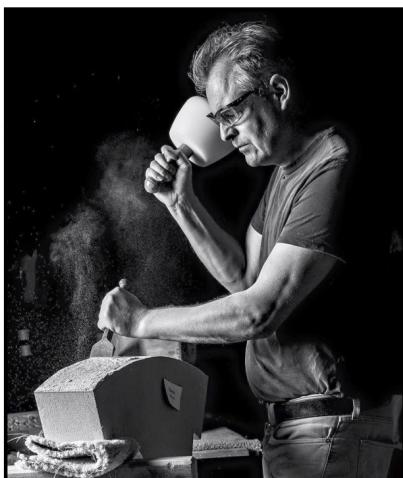




The basic geometry of the stone works formation is 5 circles. See if you can see the five circles



Some of the circles outline go beyond the shape of the stone. Draw circles with your finger



This is the kind of work I do on a daily basis. It is work that is challenging, exciting and fulfilling. It is also dirty and physically challenging requiring lifting and moving of heavy materials and tools. I learnt to do this work at Weymouth College in England. I then went on to work at Lincoln Cathedral as an apprentice and later became Deputy Yard Forman at Wells Cathedral.

Many people say this work cannot be done any more but stone is a material that will always be used by builders and designers and

clients who want their work to last. So we need to train a new generation of people to be able to work this material. This is why I built a college in Charleston South Carolina called the American College of the Building Arts and also teach workshops at Bryn Athyn College in Pennsylvania. It is my hope to teach students how to do the kind of work you see here.

Are you up to the challenge of creating buildings that last?



Lincoln Cathedral, my first apprenticeship job, when I was in my early 20's

Building that are sustainable? Carving the details of your life into structures for generations to wonder at in the future? If you like to draw and work with your hands what are you waiting for. Remember the beginning of a journey starts one day with a single line drawn on paper.

Special Thanks to my former students Margret Moore and also Daniella Helline, Sam Friedman and Cody James who created the double infinity window.

Introducing Mimi Moore

As a professor of young individuals it is a challenge to know how a student will develop. Many times as they walk into your class for the first time they seem wide-eyed with great expectation but no sense of the challenge to find their own path. It is my job to open a young person's eyes to the potential of what they can achieve. The more I show them, the more they realize things they either like to do or don't like to do. I hope that in my own way I can help them find their path.

Margret (Mimi) Moore came to me as a freshman student. she had never been far from home and living in Charleston, South Carolina was a big adventure for her. While she was with us I was able to send her to a number of opportunities which meant she had to go even further afield. Working in an industrial stone carving shop in Illinois, flying to England to work on the majestic Lincoln Cathedral. I am proud that what I taught her and the opportunities I was able to give her allowed her to employ her skills on U.S. State Capitals and also to run her own business.

I hope you appreciate the work she will show over the next few pages as much as I do.

KEEP THE LINE

Mimi Moore

www.moorecarver.com



*Mimi Moore,
12 years old*



*Mimi Moore working on
the Minnesota State Capital
building*



The first thing Simeon Warren taught me was "Keep the Line!" Through his tutelage over the years I was able to learn that there is only one way to approach stone carving and that is one day at a time.

In stone carving when it comes to historic preservation you have to be able to learn from the past in order to preserve it for the future. Growing up and throughout my high school years in South Carolina, my favorite classes were art related.

So I knew that when it came time to decide on where to go to college and what to do for a career, that it would be art-based. That in itself is a vague category. I got lucky and stumbled across The American College of the Building Arts in Charleston, SC and its mission was to train students in the art of the building trades. They were offering six different courses of study, fine carpentry, timber framing, plaster work, masonry, stone carving and blacksmithing. I thought to myself "Perfect! I can learn an artistic trade and receive a college degree".

When I first started looking into the school I was leaning towards blacksmithing. I attended next open house thinking I would be hanging out at the blacksmith booth. When I arrived, I saw Simeon demonstrating stone carving, and everything just clicked for me. I knew then and there that I wanted to be a stone carver. To this day I'm not sure I ever actually made it to the blacksmithing booth.

In August of 2016, I was working as part of a team of carvers, for Twin City Tile and Marble, on the Minnesota State Capital building that was undergoing a complete historic restoration job.

One of the projects I worked on was the complete removal and replacement of a festoon or swag detail that had a fault/crack running from the top down to the bottom of the stone. Because of this crack the stone was structurally unsound and needed to be replaced.

Before the piece was removed, I documented and drew up all aspects of the stone in order to properly duplicate it later on. The first step was to work up full scale drawings so that I could make templates to use when I carved the new piece. When the new stone was delivered to the construction site it measured 4'-4" wide, 3' high and 1'-2" deep. I had made a general size template that the sawyers were able to use to cut the stone down to a rough size. Then it was handed over to me so I could begin laying out the various section and face templates I made from the drawing. This is when I started the physical work of carving. Now the fun could really begin.

Using the surrounding stone and other festoons on the building with similar detail but in better condition, together what I had documented at the outset, I began to carve, approaching it the way I was trained one element and one step at a time. The first step is to rough out the general shape of all the different elements in the piece. This allowed me to drastically reduce the weight of the stone. Then, the stone was hoisted up the scaffold and placed near an existing festoon that had similar detail as the one being replaced.

Historic photo taken during construction of MN State Capital



Damage to the original piece before replacement



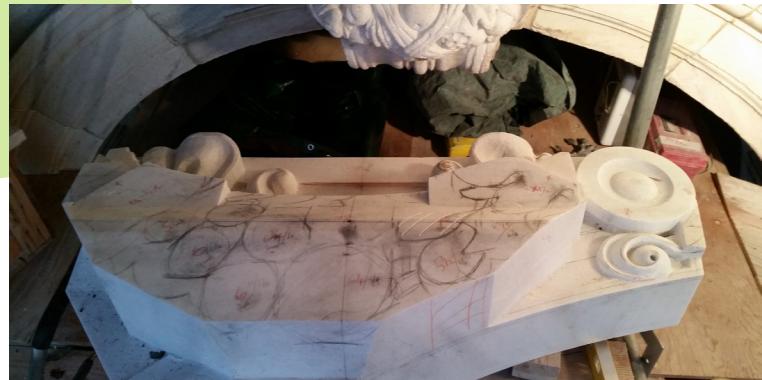
Old piece has to be removed and is ready for the new piece

I was able to look at the historic detail on the existing stone and my stone at the same time and this allowed me to use both my drawings and the original details that remained on the building to carve the new stone.

Once the stone was around 75% carved it was ready to be installed. Sometimes, all of the carving is done after the piece is installed but because the stone was so large we wanted to get as much weight off as we could before it was installed. That made it so that the scaffold could support the weight safely and make it easier to install.

When working on a restoration job it is important to do the final part of the carving after the stone is installed. This way the new stone details will match the historic stone surrounding it more accurately.

Now Simeon stated that stone carving is “one day at a time” kind of work and that refers to the mindset we should have when carving, because if you rush the carving, you will ruin the carving, there is no easy fix when it comes to stone. So, it is best to just relax and enjoy the work because that will give you the best result. As for deadlines though, the reality is that you usually have to give the boss a timeline for your work. When I complete a piece inside my timeline I feel a huge sense of accomplishment outside of the enjoyment I get from carving the stone. I have to say that without Simeon I would not have found this sense of accomplishment and love for my work. I count myself among the few very lucky people who love what they do and this is due to my teachers.



Roughing out the shape of the new piece



The new piece installed. Giving it a last going over



Mary carving an acanthus leaf
(one of the chapters in her new book "Carving the Acanthus Leaf")



Llene (Mary's older sister) and Mary while visiting a Caribbean Island as teenagers



First boat Mary's dad built. Mary is sitting on her dad's lap

DISCOVER YOUR DREAM

~ Mary May

www.marymaycarving.com



I have been carving wood for over 26 years, but this story is not about my woodcarving life. It is more about how I learned to not be afraid of living a dream. I can locate specific events and unique lifestyles in my childhood that have guided me towards this non-conventional career choice. Looking back, it is clear how living on a sailboat for two years of my young life created a spirit of adventure and creativity in a timid young girl.

My mom and dad had a dream of living and traveling on a sailboat. They had five young children, so we were going to join them on their adventure. My parents saved every penny so they could achieve their dream, and every weekend and evening for two years my dad worked on building his labor of love.



American Rococo ancanthus leaf design for a reproduction fireplace for a 1780's Charleston home

I was only three years old when we set sail, so I don't remember much of the next year of travel and adventure down the Mississippi River and to many Caribbean Islands. Seven years after our first boat trip, my dad got the boat bug again and built another, larger sailboat. This time I was 11 years old and my parents and their five energetic teenage children spent another amazing year traveling oceans and exploring new islands. I have fond and wonderful memories of discovering deserted islands, snorkeling reefs filled with vibrant sea life, and meeting fascinating people living their own adventurous boater's dream.

Mary May, a woodcarver who lives in Charleston, South Carolina, says: To begin with a blank piece of wood, to imagine the steps and process of how to achieve the design, to begin to slowly chip away and shape the wood, and to watch the shape evolve into a beautiful creation. What can be more satisfying than to create something beautiful with your hands? I remember in the movie "Chariots of Fire" when Eric Liddell ran he said "...when I run, I feel God's pleasure." That is how I feel when I carve.

Because living on a boat became our "normal" life for those 2 years it did not seem out of the ordinary or unique at the time. We realized not everyone lived like this, but we still had typical teenage issues to deal with. Eating canned Spam and corned beef hash every day got old very fast and seven people living within 54 feet of each other often became crowded at times. But in spite of the challenges, I can look back and see how that life created in each of us a spirit of adventure that helped us all believe that dreams are meant to be lived and experienced.

My parents never sat us down and explained "This is how to live your life and achieve your dreams". We simply watched them live their dreams, we lived it with them, and we absorbed that attitude and made it our own. We learned that even as people tried to discourage my parents from living this dream, and even though they were on a limited budget, if the desire were strong enough, nothing could stop them from achieving their goal. Where many see a wall that says "here and no further", my parents taught us to look over that wall to explore what was on the other side. What I find amazing now is that they did not live this lifestyle to prove anything to anyone. They simply had a dream and were not going to let anything or anyone stop them. And we have been so blessed by their life choice.

I'm not saying the boater's lifestyle is for everyone, and I don't encourage people to drop everything, quit their job and go live on a boat. But this same principal can be applied to wherever you are today. The basic attitude that my parents taught us was that life is meant to be lived, and each day is to be experienced. This can be something as simple as visiting a local zoo, a museum, speaking with an older person about their life experiences, or taking a trip to another city or another country. But the challenge is to live a life not based on other people's expectations of the "norm", but to discover your dream, and not be afraid to live it.

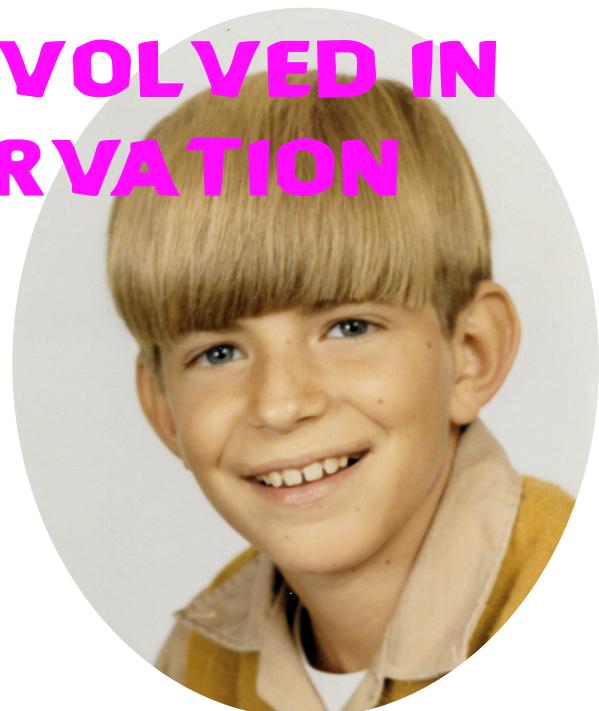
HOW I BECAME INVOLVED IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

~ Dave Mertz

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Professor David R. Mertz continues to serve as the director of the Building Preservation/Restoration Program at Belmont College in St. Clairsville, Ohio—a post he has held since the program's inception in 1989.

I remember when I was younger, someone telling me that I should pursue a career that I have a passion for so that work wouldn't feel like work...it would be fun. I always remembered that. While I have many passions in life, I have been lucky enough to weave together a number of them into what has become my career today.



At the age of eleven, I was cast as Brutus in our elementary school production of Julius Caesar. While I did my best to not get the part (acting was not cool in the 5th grade at Farmersville Elementary school), my teacher Mrs. Haldeman, saw something I didn't even see and to this day I am forever grateful. While I thoroughly enjoyed acting, I didn't pursue it until I reached my sophomore year of high school where I became a regular in Freedom High School theatrical productions. Little did I know that the skills I learned acting would someday be instrumental in my career.

I also loved history and I was good at it in school. In the 7th grade, my class participated in "Craftsmen Along the Monocacy," where we dressed up in colonial costumes and performed trades common to the 18th century for visitors of Historic Bethlehem. I learned how to pit-saw and it made history come alive. My parents helped develop that love of history by taking my sisters and I on day trips to places like Philadelphia to see the Liberty Bell and Valley Forge to see where Washington's troops spent the winter during the Revolutionary War.

Finally, I had a knack for art I inherited from my mother. I loved to draw and paint. My dad and grandfather built a house a year as a hobby. From the time I reached my teens, I was out on the jobsite helping out. I learned how to install insulation, perform trim carpentry, run electrical wire, etc. I guess it was only natural when it came time to go to college that I chose to pursue a career in architecture at Kansas State University. With architecture, I could pursue my artistic side. Before I graduated, I was asked to serve as a faculty assistant and was actually responsible for teaching a design class. From that moment on, I was hooked. I had that "ah-ha" moment when I decided that I really wanted to be a teacher. It just came so naturally to me from my days in theater.

As fate would have it, I stayed on and pursued my graduate degree in Historic Preservation while I continued to teach as a graduate assistant. My love of history was fueled by my new love of historic buildings. When I graduated again, I took a job in an architect's office but was not happy. I wanted to be in front of a class, I wanted to share my passion.

An opportunity presented itself in 1989, a chance to start a new program in historic preservation at a small technical college in Eastern Ohio. I convinced the college that they needed to teach people how to fix old historic buildings. Today, 28 years later, I'm still teaching people how to take care of historic structures and I love every minute of it.

There is no such thing as a typical day in my job. While part of my schedule is rigid and adheres to the start and stop times of the classes I teach, the rest of my schedule is always changing and is affected by the needs of the students, the college and the community. I will often spend a couple hours each day outside of class working with individual students on their class projects like building a bracket or running a plaster medallion. I spend a few hours each week handling the administrative duties of running a college program. I'm in constant contact with potential students and serve on a variety of committees that help govern the college. In my free time, I'm contacted by all kinds of people representing a variety of organizations who are looking for advice on how to care for their historic structures.

I often spend a lot of time on the road, walking with clients through their buildings, trying to figure out why their foundation is cracking or why their plaster is detaching from the ceiling. Sometimes, these structures are in famous buildings like Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's home in Virginia, or in the Governor's Mansion here in Ohio. I like that every day is different and that I have to spend a lot of time problem solving. I also like that on a daily basis, I get to work with the students in the shops, working with my hands, helping them build their projects. Helping my students become graduates, finding jobs, and building careers in historic preservation are my proudest moments. I really do love my job.

<http://www.belmontcollege.edu/news-archive/news-2014/belmont-college-professor-receives-national-award/>

MATCHING GAME

Match the author with a quote from their article.
You can find the answers on the back cover.

1. David Hayles

A. ____ It is more about how I learned to not be afraid of living a dream.

2. Matthew Mosca

B. ____ It really gives you a sense of accomplishment and joy.

3. Glenn James

C. ____ "dream away to your heart's content."

4. Clem Labine

D. ____ To master any craft demands being passionate about it.

5. Gerard Lynch

E. ____ I can see the mistakes they may have made and the very unique ways they were able to fix their mistakes.

6. David Flaharty

F. ____ Working within a team of specialists, diversity of perspective is a strength.

7. Mary May

G. ____ I like that every day is different and that I have to spend a lot of time problem solving.

8. John Matteo

H. ____ I count myself among the few very lucky people who love what they do and this is due to my teachers.

9. Lilla Matheson Orstrom

I. ____ - and in return the house gave me a fulfilling new career promoting and preserving architectural beauty.

10. Nol Putnam

J. ____ The beginning of an idea starts with a line.

11. Lynne Rutter

K. ____ ... using a microscope can open up a new, largely unseen world!

12. Simeon A. Warren

L. ____ I love what I do so much that I don't mind the more difficult aspects of this work.

13. Mimi Moore

M. ____ "That's it, you're on my team."

14. Dave Mertz

N. ____ Buildings shape us as much as we shape them.

Foster and Preserve Creativity to Brighten the World!



Matching Game answers from page 28:

A – 7
B – 1
C – 10

D – 5
E – 3
F – 8

G – 14
H – 13
I – 4

J – 12
K – 2
L – 11

M – 6
N – 9

The International Child Art Foundation invites your participation in the 6th Arts Olympiad—the world's largest arts program for the creative and empathic development of students aged 8 to 12.

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