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## Preservation News:

### Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Don't forget to send us your "Houstories"! We're still collecting "houstories" from people who love their older homes so we can tell the story of your historic home!

Did you save your home from a wrecking ball? Did you restore it to its previous glory? Was it passed down to you from generation after generation in your family? Did you find it after

hunting for a historic home? Have you researched its history and found all kinds of interesting goodies about it? Do you just plain, old love the architecture of your historic home?

If you'd like to have your "houstory" featured, contact Lois at 717.291.4688 or [lgroshong@historic-restorations.com](mailto:lgroshong@historic-restorations.com).

## Preservation Education: Lead Safety in Preservation Projects

As if often the case with historic restoration projects, the Norden window restoration did involve lead paint. This is always a concern, but with a 1-year-old baby girl in the house, this was especially a concern for this project for these reasons:

- Lead can affect children's brains & developing nervous systems
- Lead is especially dangerous to children under six years of age
- Projects that disturb painted surfaces can create dust, and lead in dust is the most common way people are exposed to lead

The steps we are taking to make sure the Nordens and their precious baby girl were protected from lead poisoning are:

1. Keeping our work area contained to prevent lead contamination in the home
2. Choosing paint stripping methods that do not generate as much dust
3. Cleaning up thoroughly and with the federally recommended methods for lead handling

Federal law requires contractors that disturb painted surfaces in homes built before 1978 to be certified and follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination. Always ask to see a contractor's certification!



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## The Norden Project in West Chester



## Introduction

I can hardly believe I am sitting down to write my November newsletter greetings... where did this year go?

Later this month we all get to enjoy Thanksgiving, a time of year many of us use to reflect on thankfulness. I know I do, and this year I am especially thankful for the connections we've made. And once again for the places we've helped preserve. I know I always say this, and I know it probably sounds so over-done to people, but it really is an honor to us to be preserving our architectural legacy for future generations. Preservation ensures that the future will have a past. And that's something we're very thankful to be a part of.



This month we've focused our newsletter on a project we recently finished in Chester County. We're restoring the windows and installing exterior storm windows. But to be honest... the house history is almost more interesting than our project! I think you'll really enjoy reading about it. I know I did. What I enjoyed even more are the homeowners – the Nordens LOVE their home and its history. They are proud to be stewards of this piece of our architectural legacy and their “houstory” is one we'll be featuring in an upcoming newsletter. Don't forget – we want your “houstories” too! We've got more information about that inside the newsletter.

Puppy Penelope is thriving, though just when we thought she couldn't get any more willful...she does. (If anyone knows of a good puppy boarding school, let me know. We're also not ruling out the idea of a puppy military academy or a “Scared Straight” program for puppies, so you could always send me those resources too!) She enjoys her nights at the house and her days at the office (her sisters like when she leaves the house for the day!), and we enjoy her at the office. Though we would appreciate if she would stop digging in all the trash cans.

This month, Penelope's featuring maintenance in her column, a topic many people don't think about when it comes to preservation. Preservation isn't just about big restoration projects! Maintaining what's already there is the ultimate preservation tool. Penelope did a fantastic job learning about the topic and has a great offer for you, so definitely don't miss her column!

As always, if you have any questions, or need anything, let me know.

*Daniell*

## Preservation Education: Historical Stone Houses and Pennsylvania

The relationship between stone houses and Pennsylvania's historic architecture is so strongly entwined that when you say “historic home in Pennsylvania” the first image most people will have is one of a PA German stone farmhouse. Or the quintessential stone barn. And let's not forget the stone taverns, churches, and mills. Sensing a theme here?

You should be, and for good reason – the abundance of both stone deposits and skilled masons in the colonies (and later in the early states), coupled with Pennsylvania's heavy Germanic architectural influences, meant that stone buildings became the most common permanent structures in Pennsylvania.

As with most architecture, stone structures are filled with nuances careful observations pick up that might not be noticed at first glance.

The stone used was of several different types – reddish sandstone and bluish granite are the most common, but you will also find limestone, mica, and even a gray-green “serpentine” stone on PA's historic stone buildings. Generally speaking, the stone used would all have been locally quarried stone, as it was easiest and least expensive to use local resources. So you won't often find a historic home of red sandstone in an area where only blue granite stones can be found in the ground.

But the stones weren't the only thing that varied – you will also see different stone cuts and laying patterns, as well as different pointing techniques if you look closely enough. These differences were all a matter of aesthetics and grandeur of the home.

Functional stone farmhouses more practical in nature for families of modest means utilized field stones that generally weren't cut or shaped (or barely so), laid in any particular pattern, or finely pointed. These are the farmhouses that look as though the stones and joints were applied a bit “messily”.

The more elegant the home and the more wealthy the family, the more the stones would be cut and shaped, laid with specific patterns, and pointed with finely detailed joints in different styles. These are the stone homes that look “polished” and “refined”.



Our historic stone masonry, along with other historic masonry like brick work, needs special care and consideration in its preservation. To make sure you are preserving your historic masonry properly, follow the guidance in the National Park Service's Preservation Brief #2 regarding masonry buildings: <http://1.usa.gov/1t2D8Bk>

## Preservation In Progress: The Norden Project



*Nestled along the oldest road in West Chester is West Chester's oldest inhabited structure – a Colonial period stone farmhouse currently owned by the Norden family.*

Built in 1712 the house is constructed with the local green serpentine stone often found in Chester County historic homes and a single-room deep linear floor plan.

While it's a gorgeous home and a historically significant piece of architecture in its own right, the house gained even more significance when author Joseph Hergesheimer purchased the home and began an extensive restoration and addition process in 1925 with renowned architect Brognard Okie. A process he would document in his 1926 book *From an Old House*.

Before beginning the project, Hergesheimer and his wife had been living in the house – a house they valued for its history:

“The tranquility of the very aged walls...spread over us its influence. ...it owned a very palpable isolation from current affairs and sounds. It was impossible, almost, to call from one room to the other, the walls of the successive additions were so thick; and to go into the cellar was to leave behind everything that had happened since the Revolution. ...we accepted with pride the two centuries that here lay behind us.”

It made sense, then, that Hergesheimer would seek out an architect who was equally interested in preserving the history of the home and the sense of history it carried with it when it was time to restore and expand the home – Brognard Okie. Though Hergesheimer seemed to worry that perhaps their shared appreciation of traditional design and details posed a problem:

“A special danger had developed in connection with my inordinate love of detail: it might be reasonable for another many in my circumstances to rebuild this house, but where would I stop? Dorothy couldn't guess. That, however, did not bother the architect; he listed to the tale of what I liked and demanded with a growing and unconcealed pleasure. My passion for detail was his.”

The restoration and addition project's standards were impeccable. Okie insisted on using old barn lumber for the wood because he believed the lumber from the 20's wasn't good anymore. (He may have been right, depending on the mill he may not have gotten old growth wood anymore in the 20's.) Screws were too modern too – all wood was joined together with pegs or square nails. (He once returned an entire shipment of doors because they had been screwed together.) The hardware for the doors and windows were all original antiques that predated the house that he had acquired from around the world.

Those standards are clearly evident as architecture experts applaud Okie's efforts, often noting that it's almost impossible to tell where the original ends and Okie's work begins.



“Historic Restorations' knowledge and experience is a huge benefit. But so is their cleanliness – some days we couldn't even tell that anyone was here.”

### OUR WORK AT THE HOUSE

Our project at the house is somewhat unusual for us. We've restored all 32 windows on the home, but this time we're actually restoring windows that haven't been horribly neglected and deteriorated over time. It's refreshing to find historic windows that aren't in the terrible shape that we are used to seeing.

And because they aren't in terrible shape, we're actually able to do the restoration work with the windows in place. With barely any disruption we're repairing the windows, replacing cloth sash cords with bronze sash chain, painting the windows, and installing Allied storm windows (a great historically sensitive choice, for more information see: <http://bit.ly/1rUQyzV>).



# Penelope's Preservation Pointers:

## Maintenance IS Preservation



Hi everybody! Mommy, Daddy, Grandma and Grandpa have been busy teaching me all about preservation (and obeying, which they say I don't always

do so well, but they need to give me my independence – I'm a big dog now!), but this month they taught me something that I didn't think had anything to do with preservation. Maintenance. (*That was my vocabulary word for the month.*)

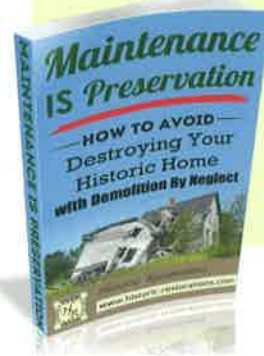
I thought maintenance was something men in funny green suits did at big commercial buildings, but it turns out that it's important to historic buildings, too. Grandma tells me without proper maintenance historic buildings can end up being destroyed by something called "demolition by neglect"... No, that's wrong... "demolition by neglect". And she should know, she's the Chairperson of the Lancaster Historical Commission. (*I know I got that right, I checked my notes.*)

And I don't know about you, but "demolition by neglect" sounds pretty scary to me. Think of all the historic buildings we could lose if they aren't maintained properly! There was so much to learn about maintaining a historic building, and I'm so upset, so scared about losing historic buildings if people don't maintain them that I spent three whole days researching and writing a report on how to properly maintain a historic building.

I thought I should take it to Congress or the President or something, but Mommy says we can do something even better with it: offer it to you – people who actually own, live in, or work on historic buildings. Boy, is my Mommy smart!

So here is my report, it will make me very happy if I hear everyone has requested one! (*Because I am pretty sure Daddy will give me a treat for every report that goes out to reward me for helping to spread the word. And I love treats!*)

Get in touch with my personal assistant, Moira, and tell her you want your free copy!



Get your **FREE** copy of our full 10-page report on:

**Maintenance IS Preservation: How to Avoid Destroying Your Historic Home with Demolition by Neglect**

Includes detailed information on:

- Typical areas that require maintenance
- Recommended inspection schedules
- Inspection guidelines
- Maintenance tips
- How to contract maintenance & repair work

Contact Moira at  
717.291.4688 or  
mkarahalis@Historic-  
Restorations.com  
For Your Free Copy!

## Upcoming Events

### Introduction to the History and Art of Quilts

Tuesday, November 18, 6-8pm, [LancasterHistory.org](http://LancasterHistory.org), Lancaster, PA

Get to know the history of quilting in Lancaster County and learn a little bit more about the history of the county at the same time. This two-hour evening workshop highlights 10 quilts from LancasterHistory.org's collection. There is a limit of 15 people for this workshop.

**\$15 for members, \$20 for non-members. Call 717.392.4633 to register or visit: [www.lancasterhistory.org/events/classes-lectures-workshops](http://www.lancasterhistory.org/events/classes-lectures-workshops)**

### Tips For Successful Preservation Projects

Wednesday, November 19, 7pm, presented virtually by *Historic Restorations*

**For more information or to register: call 717-291-4688 or email [dkeperling@historic-restorations.com](mailto:dkeperling@historic-restorations.com).**

### "Days of the Belsnickel" Dinner Tour

Wednesday, December 3, 5:30-9pm, *Landis Valley Museum, Lancaster, PA*  
Guided tours of the decorated village and wagon rides to the 1856 Historic Landis Valley House Hotel where a delicious meal will be served and the Belsnickel will visit.

**Call Jamie at the Landis Valley Museum to register: 717.581.0591**

### Deck the Halls Gala

Tuesday, December 9, 5:30-7pm, *Historical Society of Dauphin County, Harrisburg, PA*  
Held in the National Landmark John Harris-Simon Cameron Mansion in Harrisburg, the Deck the Halls Gala is THE major fundraising event for the Historical Society of Dauphin County. The Society uses their funds for educational programs and to maintain their research archives and the National Landmark Harris-Cameron Mansion built in 1766.

**For more information: [www.dauphincountyhistory.org/events/#12-9](http://www.dauphincountyhistory.org/events/#12-9)**

### Christmas at the Mansion

Sunday, December 14, 1-4pm, *Historical Society of Dauphin County, Harrisburg, PA*  
Santa will be coming to the John Harris-Simon Cameron Mansion on December 8th! Come and see the mansion beautifully decorated for the holidays, including a special exhibit of antique toys. Light refreshments will be served and museum shop items will be available for purchase.

**Admission is a \$5 suggested donation for adults and children 12 and under are Free. For more information: [www.dauphincountyhistory.org/events/#12-9](http://www.dauphincountyhistory.org/events/#12-9)**

### Christmas at the Cloister

Monday & Tuesday, December 8 & 9, 6:30pm, 7:45pm, and 9pm each night, *The Ephrata Cloister, Ephrata, PA*  
Tickets are \$6 and seating is limited. Advance tickets are required, members can purchase tickets beginning November 1st and non-members can purchase tickets after November 8th.

**For more information: <http://www.ephratacloister.org/events.htm>**