Colonial Homes Surely Constructed to Endure

Those who are familiar with the construction methods employed by New England coast house builders of the Colonial period are generally impressed by the foundation work. Today, after a century or more, one may find these foundations unshaken. Labor was cheap in earlier times; construction material close at hand. Perhaps such massive bases for the superstructure were needlessly extravagant, yet one must admire the honest work that has stood the tests of time.

At East Winthrop, Maine, there stands a massive Colonial dwelling, 107 years old, that has one of these typical foundations. It is formed of enormous granite slabs which are laid up three feet thick. It is tradition among descendants of the original owners that three yokes of oxen were required to haul some of these great stones to the spot.

Quite frequently one will come across one of these Colonial houses with stone chimney bases 20 feet square while on the ground floor there will be tunnels through the heart of the chimney, forming unique hallways from one part of the main floor to another. Foundations and chimneys were built to withstand the onslaughts of floods, earthquakes and centuries. Fire occasionally razes cleanly one of these Colonial dwellings, yet the hand of man is always necessary to tear apart that honest masonry.

Moose Given Points of Superiority Over Horse

The Swedish moose is a dangerous competitor to the horse, says a Stockholm Associated Press dispatch.

Some years ago a harnessed moose easily took first place in a horse race, but was refused first prize because the judges decided it was out of the competition.

Moose were used as saddle and draft horses several centuries ago until prohibited by a royal decree, as it was feared a criminal astride a moose could easily outdistance his horse-powered pursuers.

A Swedish country gentleman caught a moose bull as a calf and broke him for mail service. The animal proved more practical than a horse, since no gates had to be opened, the moose clearing them all without difficulty.

At one time a military expert proposed a moose cavalry regiment, asserting that a moose squadron would put fright into a whole horse regiment. The scheme was left untried.

Paper Has Kept Growth

In the United States the history of paper is the history of the country. When the Revolutionary war broke out there was hardly enough paper available to wad the guns of the soldiers or upon which to write the orders of their officers. There was virtually no paper. By 1810, however, the use had increased to about one pound per capita per year. It had grown to over eight pounds in 1850. The Civil war greatly accelerated consumption, which reached 25 pounds in 1869. In 1899 it was 57 pounds; in 1923, 150 pounds, and today the people of the nation annually consume more than their own weight in paper.

Bell-Ringing Clocks

Perhaps the earliest tower clock with bell-ringing mechanism was one made by Peter Lightfoot, a monk of Glastonbury, England, about 1325, writes Satis N. Coleman in his book, "Bells." Connected with this clock were automatic figures which struck a bell on the hours. These performing figures pleased the public, and many of the town clocks of Europe were provided with such figures to ring the bells on the hours. They were used for proclaiming time long before the introduction of clock dials.—Detroit News.

Unbreakable Glass

The bureau of standards says that in general non-shatterable glass is of three distinct types. One of these is unusually thick; another consists of two or more layers of glass cemented together with an organic binder, such as celluloid, and the third is prepared by special heat treatment. The first of these can be identified by its relatively great thickness, the second by examining the edge of the glass for laminated structure, and the third by its irregular figures, seen when the glass is examined in polarized light.

Tinned Stuff Used in Navy

More than 19,000,000 pounds of canned goods are consumed by the sailors of the United States navy in a year. Canned tomatoes take the lead in vegetables, followed by peas, corn and stringless beans. Among fruits, peaches lead, followed closely by pineapple, then come prunes, applesauce, apricots, pears, figs and raisins. Figs are relatively new in the canned goods products, but the navy uses them to the extent of 540,000 pounds annually.

Thrifty, Lying Americans?

About one-half of the homes in the United States are owned by men with incomes less than $2,000. So, after all, this thing of saying Americans are not thrifty is based on imagination instead of facts. We guess that about 99 per cent of what we Americans say is untrue. We have developed into a race of liars, we regret to say.—Atchison Globe.



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THE IRRESISTIBLE SALESMAN

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THUMP, thump, thump! Somebody knocking at the kitchen door. Portia Watson thrust her head out of an upstairs window "Who's there?" she demanded.

The face that looked up at her was so unexpectedly winning that the dust-rag she was flirting over the sill escaped from her hand. As it snow flaked down the young man reached up and caught it. Twisting it into a ball, he flung it back to Portia, who caught it. The scowl with which she always greeted strangers of this kind gave way to a smile. When Portia smiled she was mysteriously charming, something she had not been at eighteen.

"What do you want?" she asked more gently.

"You!" he challenged her, head flung back. He was colored like a ripe chestnut in the sun. Bareheaded, his shirt was open at the throat, his sleeves were rolled up. He grinned and his teeth flashed white in his ruddy, boyish countenance. "Come on down a minute, lady. I got something here you'll be interested in."

"Can't bother. I'm busy. Besides, I never buy of peddlers."

"Come on down, please, lady!"

Portia hesitated. Suddenly she left the window and ran downstairs.

When she reached the kitchen door she found him playing with Smoky. Portia's gray cat was voted a pest by the neighborhood. He caught birdlings, he scratched the tentatively caressing hands of infants, he yowled on moonlit nights. Ill humored and badly behaved was Smoky at best, yet here he was flopping like a fish on the stones of the back walk, purring at the peddler's feet.

"Nice cat!" The boy gave Smoky a friendly mauling. He straightened up and pushing toward Portia a baby carriage which he had taken from the green truck waiting at the curb.

A wave of indignant red flooded Portia's face. She gasped.

The young peddler pushed the baby carriage back and forth before his prospective customer. It was woven of reeds and it had cunning peek windows in its tan-colored top Smoky curled about the wheels of the vehicle. At last he leaped into the carriage.

Portia darted agonized glances at the adjoining houses. Mrs. Grant and Maria Cole were both out, but likely to return home at any instant. If either of them saw her she would never hear the last of it. She thought wildly of running in and slamming the door in the boy's face. But there was a look in his eyes that convinced her that he would thump on the back door until she came out again. By that time everybody in the neighborhood would know that a peddler was trying to sell Portia Watson, spinster, forty years old, a baby carriage.

Better to buy the thing and get rid of him quickly.

"How—how much is it?" she asked weakly.

He gave a price that was reasonable. Portia ran and got her purse. She emptied the contents on his brown palm. One cent short, but he let that go.

"Anybody at home next door?" he inquired.

"N-no. But you can sell a carriage at No. 8 Oak street if you hurry right over there," she panted.

"Thanks. I'll do that." He leaped toward the green truck.

Portia dragged her purchase into the house and locked the door. Almost at that very instant Mrs. Grant drove home, with her Maria Cole, whom she had picked up downtown where they were both pursuing their morning's marketing.

Saved! Portia sank limply into a chair. She snatched off her pink dusting-cap and with it wiped away beads of perspiration from among her curl-pins.

Conscience began to stir. Why had she sent the peddler to No. 8 Oak street? She tried to think why that particular spot had leaped into her mind. It was a casualty. She hadn't the least idea who lived at No. 8 Oak street.

Twenty minutes before Portia had been contentedly putting her bedroom to rights. Now everything in her life seemed to be upside down. If only she hadn't looked out of the window into a pair of dark eyes, which made her remember keenly something she hoped she had forgotten long, long ago.

She must get rid of that baby carriage. Her club met at her house that night. There was no place to hide the thing from the dozen women who would swarm all over the place.

Portia dashed upstairs. She wrenched her hair from curl-pins, did it in a neat way. She powdered her nose, changed her clothes.

Back downstairs, out to the shed, where she kept the old touring car which her brother had left behind for her when he married. Ordinarily she hesitated to put the breath of life into the ancient engine, but her very desperation now lent her courage. She backed the car up to the kitchen door. When she had covered the baby carriage with a blanket she hoisted it into the tonneau. At least two pairs of wondering eyes watched her as she whisked away.

Portia raced for open country. But when she reached a lonely spot the engine went dead.

Portia got out and inspected the works. She didn't have much idea of them. She looked around for a house. None in sight. But in a distant field was a man cutting grass with a mowing-machine drawn by a pair of black horses. She waved to him frantically. He ran to her rescue.

When he climbed over the stone wall into the road beside her she nearly collapsed. They stared at each other in astonishment, neither expecting to find the other there. But he spoke casually.

"Having engine trouble, Portia? Let's see if I can help you."

It was their first meeting in twenty years. Maria Cole had whispered into Portia's ear something about Charlie Russell which Portia had been silly enough to believe. She had pitched into Charlie. He had sent both her and Maria to the worst place he could think of. He was through. After that there were no more happy evenings for Portia, no more happy things for her hope chest. Charlie married another girl. But before this happened Portia had learned that Maria had lied out of jealous spite.

After rummaging through the engine Charlie shook his head.

"I'll tell you what you better do, Portia. Let me tow you over to my place. 'Tisn't far, just out of sight 'round the bend. My boy Frank's a crackerjack at machinery. He'll be home to dinner. That's pretty soon now."

Portia had to consent. But she did some tall thinking while Charlie hastened after his team. She was miles from town. Also she was miles from Emmy Hutson's, to whom she was taking the baby carriage. Emmy was poor and she had just had a baby.

The black team, led by Charlie, tugged the car, steered by Portia, through a busy lane, up to a pleasant white house.

"There you are!" Charlie laughed. "Now, I'll just tell our housekeeper that she's going to have somebody besides Frank and me to eat her chicken and cherry pie this noon. Come, have a seat in the porch hammock, Portia. You look warm and tired."

The same old Charlie, a bit domineering, but oh, oh, so kind. Portia sank into the porch hammock. Emotion fluttered her. She hadn't heard that Charlie's wife was dead. But there were so many Russells in that locality, the fact might have escaped her. Or, possibly, it had happened while she was out West with her brother Jim last year.

Thunder of wheels. A green truck whirled out of the lane into the dooryard. Out jumped the peddler. He saw Portia. "Well, say! Am I seeing double? Or is it you, lady?"

And now Portia understood everything. This was Charlie's son. No wonder she had found him irresistible.

"That old hen you sent me to chased me off the premises," the boy said, grinning. "You're some little liar."

In the end it all come right. Frank not only fixed Portia's car, but he delivered the baby carriage to Emmy Hutson.

On the screened-in back porch there was a regular dinner party.

"Frank's a whiz at peddling," Charlie said. "Earned his own college money that way. He could sell a fur coat to a Sandwich islander."

The chestnut-brown boy and the woman with frosted dark hair exchanged an understanding smile.

Small Inhabitants of Salt and Fresh Water

"Unquestionably the smallest fish and the most diminutive of all vertebrates," was the description given by Dr. Albert W. Herre to a tiny Philippine goby, barely three-sixteenths of an inch long, which he discussed in an article in Science. This Lilliputian fish inhabits the tidal creeks near the town of Malabon, a few miles north of Manila. Only 75 specimens are known to science. The three-sixteenths in size of the male is what wins the championship for tininess among backboned animals. The female fish is a bit longer, reaching a little over a quarter of an inch. Both males and females are very slim, and their bodies are particularly transparent, the only really visible parts being their large black eyes. Another species of goby found in a fresh-water lake is only a trifle larger. This species is much more abundant, however, and is captured in millions by the natives and used for food. This fish thus has the distinction of being the world's smallest commercial fish.

What Is a Billion?

In a race to count a billion, Americans would always beat Germans, and Frenchmen would defeat Englishmen. Why? The answer is easy, says Popular Science Monthly. It has nothing to do with the ability of the contestants. It is merely because in Germany and England a billion means a million million and in France and the United States it means only a thousand million.

At a recent world power conference, held in London, papers were read by scientists from many countries. They spoke in terms of billions that meant different values. Delegates were confused and misunderstandings arose. A question that must be settled in the near future is: How much is a billion?

Fly on Windscreen

"Do you mean to tell me you couldn't see me coming on a straight piece of road like this?" said the owner of the very small car after the collision.

"Sorry, guv'nor," said the lorry driver, "I thought it were a fly on me windscreen."

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Californians Proud of Mission Fathers' Work

The first settlement of California is attributed to Father Junipero Serra, who founded the mission of San Diego de Alcala. For the next 13 years he traveled on foot north and south over a distance of 600 miles, establishing and fostering missions and preaching to the natives. During those 13 years he founded nine missions, which were afterward expanded to 22 by his successors. The history of California began with—and for more than half a century was the history of—these missions, of their founding and operations. About a century ago, however, they began to decline in power and influence, but they are still regarded with reverence by the Californians, as a part of the history of their state and of its foundation. Some of these missions are now in ruins, but others are in good repair, and still open for service.

Umbrella Held Danger

The earliest English writer to mention umbrellas regarded them with suspicion. In the Seventeenth century a British traveler, having returned from Italy, wrote:

"In hot regions, to avoid the beames of the sunne in some places (as in Italy) they carry umbrels, or things like a little canopy, over their heads; but a learned physician told me that the use of them was dangerous, because they gather the heate into a pyramidall point, and thence cast it down perpendicularly upon the head, except they know how to carry them."—Detroit News.

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