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## EC1169 Improvement of the Farmstead thru Paint

Rizpah A. Douglass

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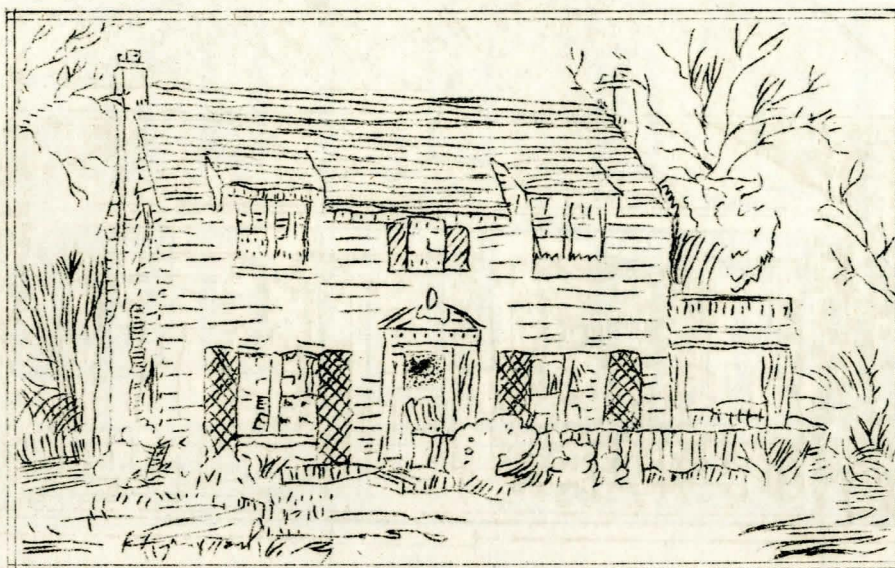
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Nebraska  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK  
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS  
U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept of Agr. Cooperating  
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

Extension  
Circular  
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IMPROVEMENT OF THE FARMSTEAD THRU PAINT



Paint is a commodity that influences our lives in several different ways. From the investment standpoint, paint and varnish are invaluable. They afford the home a protection that can be attained in no other way. Thus far no equivalent has been found that prevents the wood from decaying. If the surface is protected the depreciation is not as great, and thus saves money. From the health standpoint, paint seals the pores of the wood and prevents the entrance of moisture. An harmoniously painted home that presents a neat and attractive appearance sends forth people who are ready to meet the affairs of life with proper confidence and pride, while shabby homes are more apt to make people have less confidence and ability. Pride in one's possessions adds greatly to one's ability to accomplish things he sets out to do because it gives a feeling of self worth or confidence.

Consider the Farmstead as a Whole

Instead of merely thinking of the house as the only building needing consideration, the appearance of the whole group of buildings makes up the picture one sees from a distance or when driving by. One is aware of an incompleteness when a dingy barn stands out in contrast to a freshly painted dwelling. Likewise we will want to consider the color for the whole group when they are painted. The attractive appearance is somewhat spoiled by a red barn which is beside a trim white house or one painted in tones of cream color and brown. How much more pleasing it would be to have it painted to match the dwelling. This would give unity and harmony to the property.

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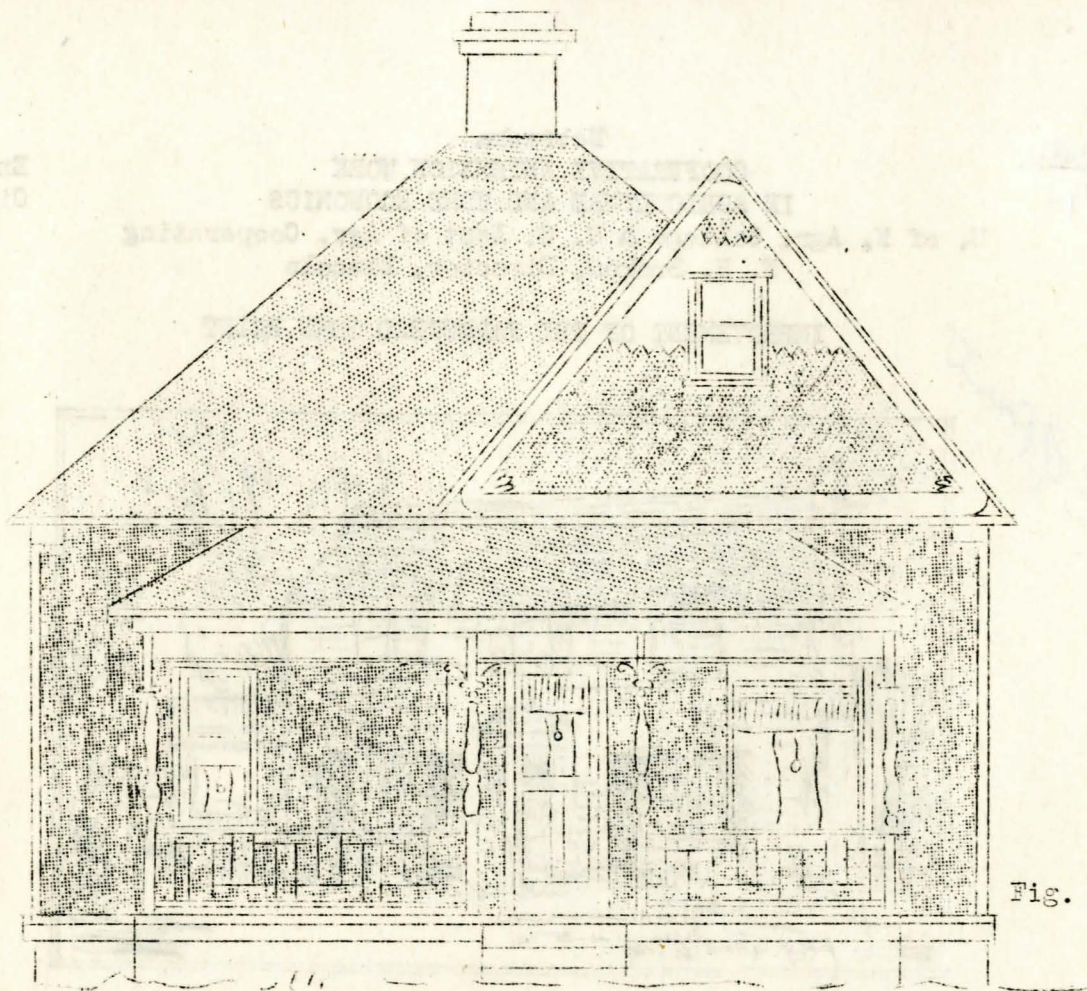


Fig. 2

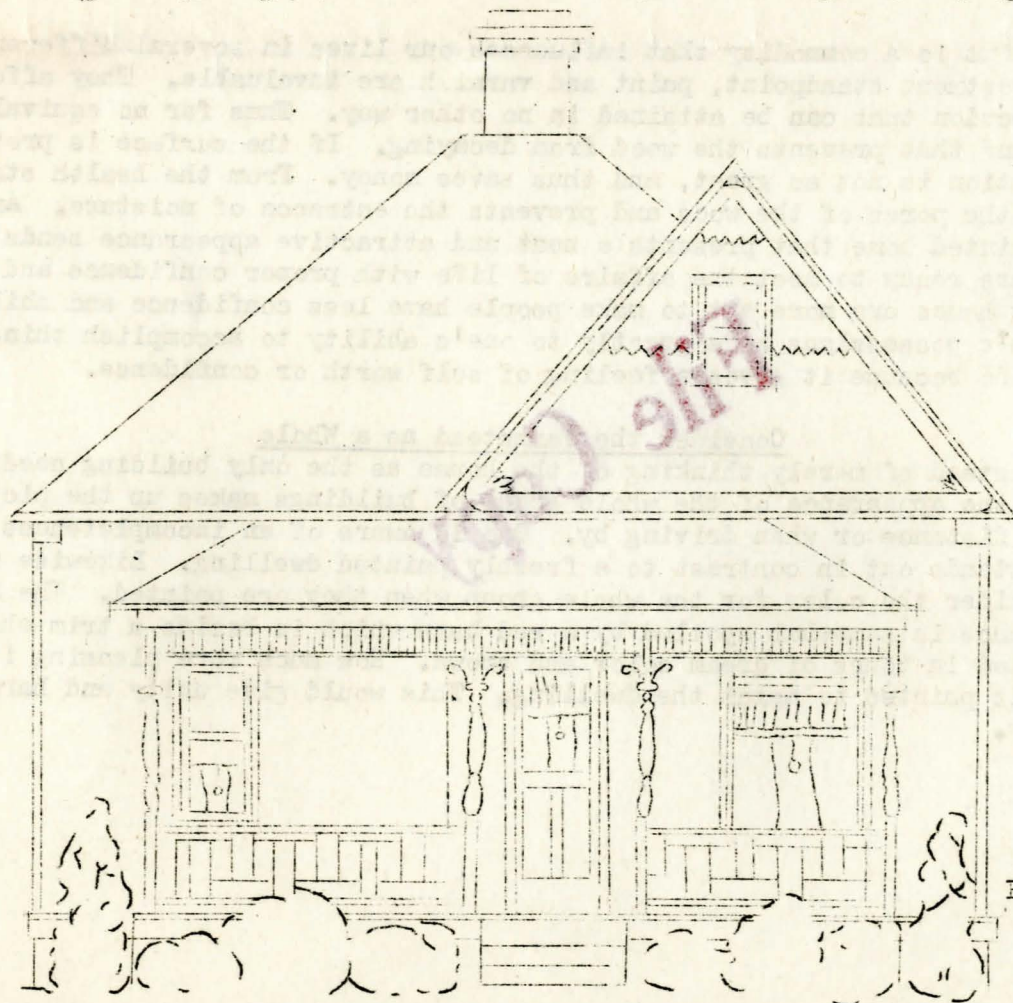


Fig. 3



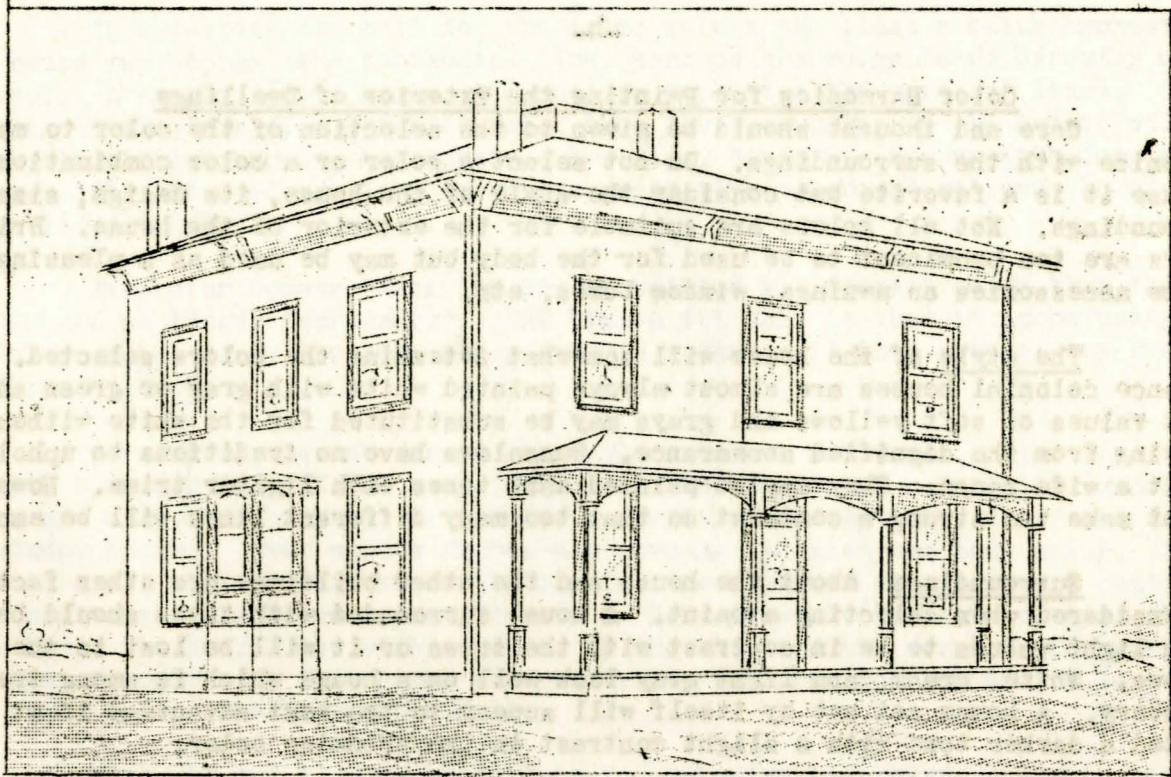


Fig. 4  
Too Square

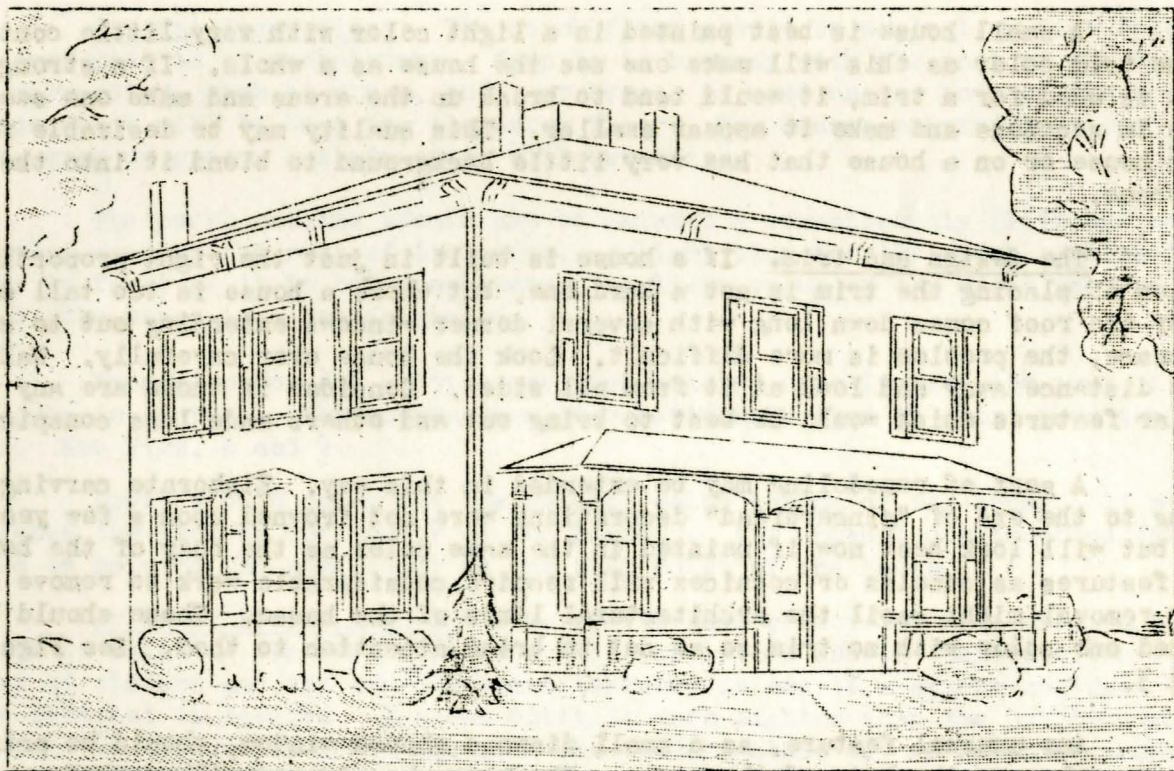


Fig. 5  
Shutters add horizontal lines



### Color Harmonies for Painting the Exterior of Dwellings

Care and thought should be given to the selection of the color to make it harmonize with the surroundings. Do not select a color or a color combination just because it is a favorite but consider the style of the house, its design, size, and surroundings. Not all colors are suitable for the exterior of the house. Bright colors are too prominent to be used for the body but may be used as a pleasing accent in the accessories as awnings, window boxes, etc.

The style of the house will somewhat determine the colors selected. For instance colonial houses are almost always painted white with gray or green shutters. Light values of soft yellows and grays may be substituted for the white without detracting from the dignified appearance. Bungalows have no traditions to uphold and permit a wide range. They may be painted dark tones with lighter trims. However, do not make too strong a contrast so that too many different lines will be emphasized.

Surroundings about the house and the other buildings are other factors to be considered when selecting a paint. A house surrounded with trees should be painted in light values to be in contrast with the trees or it will be lost in the shadows. White, cream, and light gray look well on a house which is among trees and shrubbery. A house set out by itself will appear to the best advantage if it is painted a darker tone with a slight contrast in the trimming color.

The size of the house somewhat determines the color selected. Light colors make a house appear larger. Therefore, a large house surrounded by dense foliage, warm grays or tans will provide a contrast and yet not make the house appear too large.

A small house is best painted in a light color with very little contrast in the trim color as this will make one see the house as a whole. If a strong contrast is used for a trim, it would tend to break up the areas and make one see the house in sections and make it appear smaller. This quality may be desirable for a large house or on a house that has very little background to blend it into the landscape.

The design and trim. If a house is built in just the right proportion, the problem of placing the trim is not a hard one, but where a house is too tall or too low or the roof comes down long with several dormer windows extending out to cut up the space, the problem is more difficult. Look the house over carefully. Walk a short distance away and look at it from all sides. Consider if there are any particular features which would be best to bring out and others made less conspicuous.

A sort of remodeling may be extended in this way. Elaborate carvings that belong to the era of "gingerbread" decorations were not frowned upon a few years ago, but will look best now if painted in the same color as the body of the house. Such features as cupolas or cornices will require considerable work to remove and their removal might spoil the architectural lines of the house. These should be painted one color with no trim so as not to bring attention to them. See Figs. 2 and 3.

Any unusual feature, as a small diamond shaped window, should be painted the same color as the body of the house. These can be covered with a shade and then closed with wall board on the inside when a room is repapered. This does not cost as much as to remove the window and improves the inside appearance.



In selecting the part for the trim, select the lines needing emphasis. A tall house may emphasize a horizontal line, perhaps the verge board directly under the roof. A nearly square house will need to emphasize the vertical lines. The addition of shutters of a brighter color than the body color of the house, will tend to make this house appear less square. See Figs. 4 and 5. Houses with long narrow windows will also need shutters to give a decorative touch and relieve the plainness. Figs. 6 and 7.

Two color houses where the top is painted a different color than the bottom, are no longer fashionable. The reason for this is that it lacks unity. If the darker paint is at the top, the matter is worse as it then appears top heavy. See Figs. 8 and 9.

Present day tastes demand two color schemes, not three. Also good taste suggests that far less of the trim is colored than formerly, especially when bright colors are used. Frequently, trim color is confined to shutters, the front door and window sashes. Even window frames are nowadays painted the body color. If the house is small with several windows, to paint the frame of the windows a contrasting color might make the house appear "spotty". Here it would be best to paint the whole house the body color with screens, or the door and the verge board underneath the eaves a contrast. This gives enough variety but does not cut up the large areas into small ones. See Figs. 10 and 11.

Figs. 12 and 13 show what lines to emphasize when windows are poorly arranged.

Figs. 14 and 15 show how a small house may be made attractive with very little expense.

General Suggestions: The porch floor should be neutral or dust color and never made to be conspicuous. Keep it in harmony with the rest of the house. If a warm color, such as cream, buff, or brown, is used on the body of the house, a stone color will be best for the porch floor. For houses painted in a cool color, white, gray or green, a slate color will harmonize.

The porch ceiling should not be painted a conspicuously different color from that used on the rest of the house. A light blue for the porch ceiling is no longer in favor as it is too conspicuous. A light value of the color used on the body of the house is a better choice.

Exposed pipes and gutters are best painted exactly like the part in which they come in contact. This makes them less noticeable than to paint them the trim color. See Figs. 8 and 9.

Roofs should carry out the general color scheme of the house. It sometimes furnishes the warm or cool color to the harmony. Any unusual construction features should be painted the same color as the body color of the house.

Brick or Stucco Houses. Some of the same principles will need to be considered in painting the wood part of a brick or stucco house. Consider the size, the number of windows and the architectural features to see if a strong contrast or a close contrast is desired. A color which is much lighter than the building materials will tend to cut up the space and make the windows stand out as separate areas. If there are many windows and of different sizes, it would be best to use a color slightly lighter than the body color. For a red brick, buff color is more practical than a green. Green must be very dull to harmonize with the red brick and the shrubs about the house. A gray stucco may be trimmed in a white or dull green. White stucco may be trimmed in green, cream or buff. Cream or buff harmonizes with brown stucco.



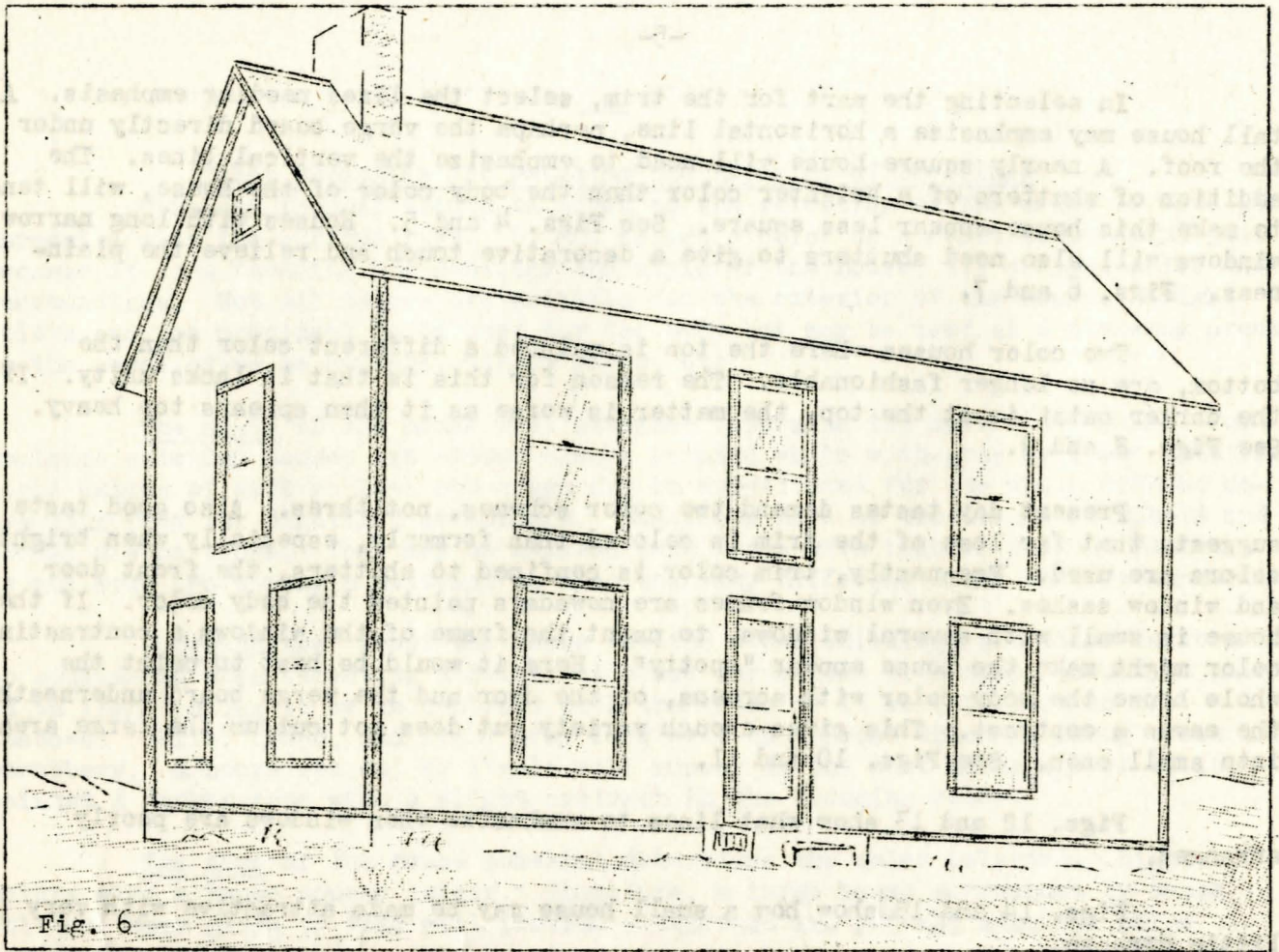


Fig. 6

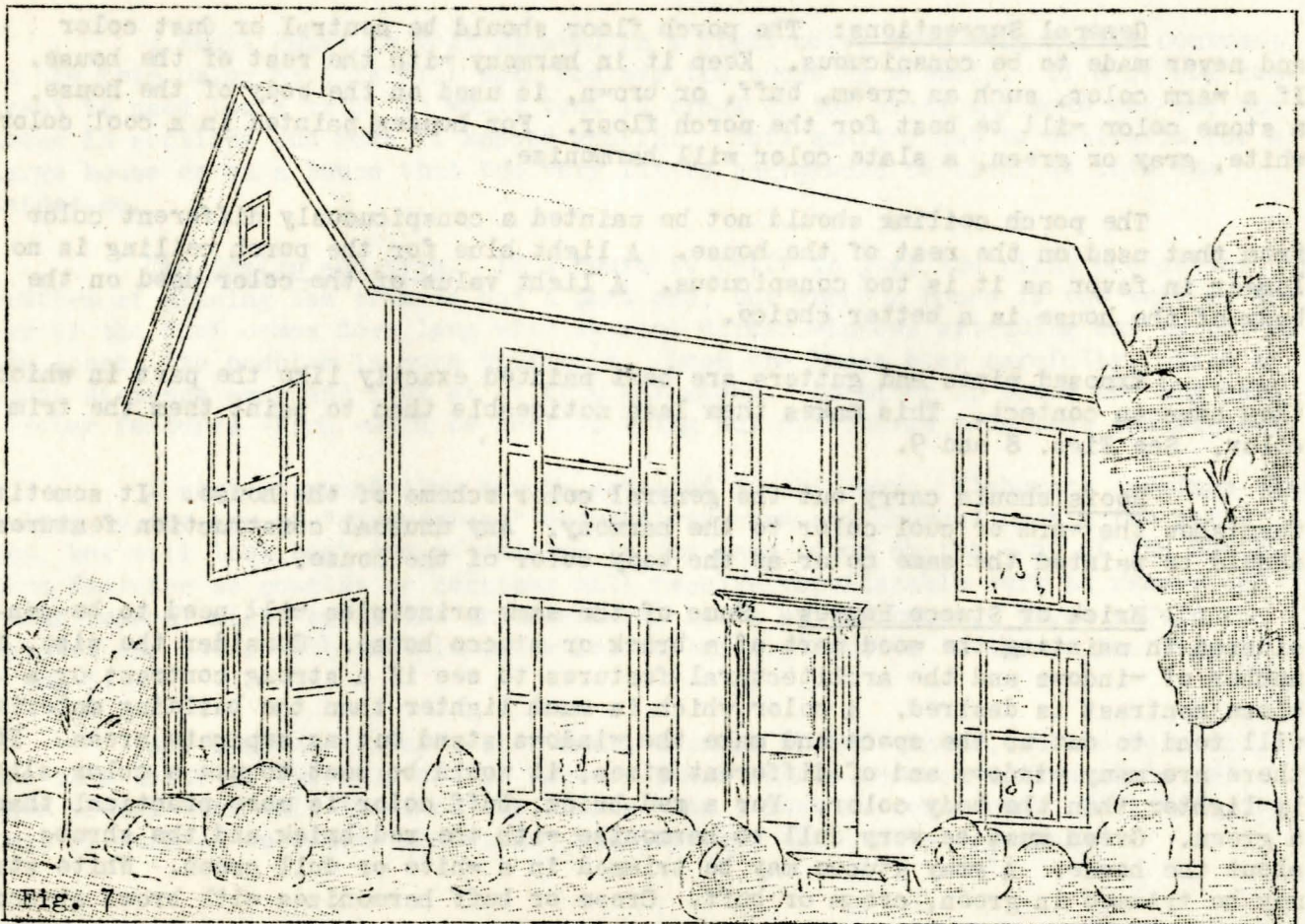


Fig. 7



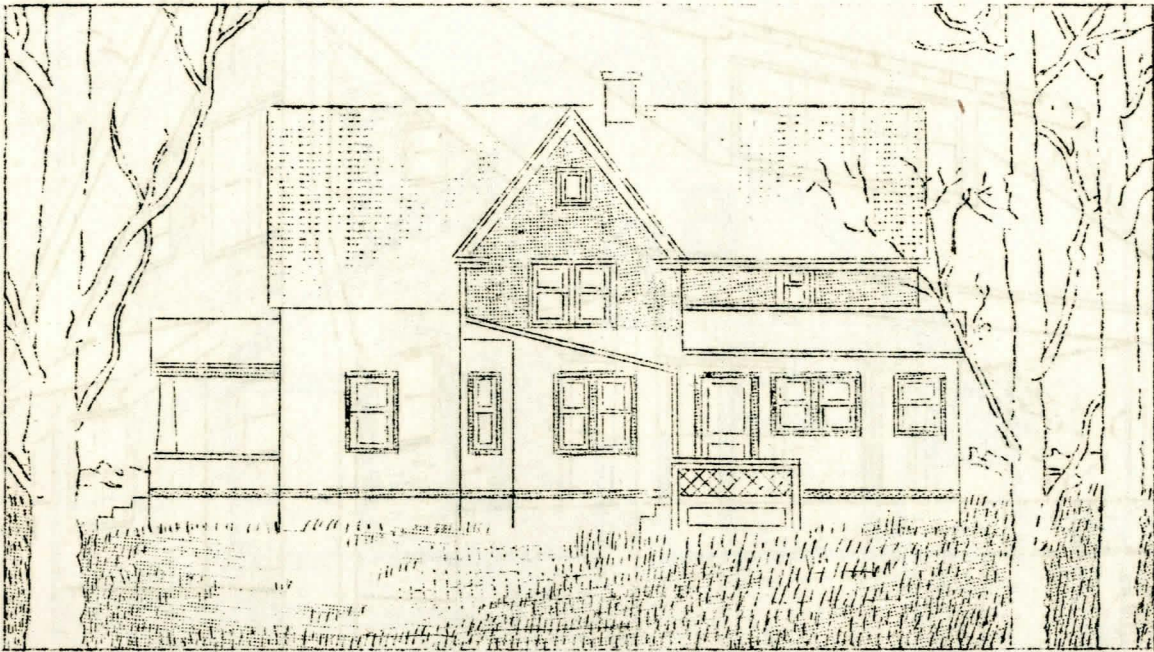


Fig. 8  
Top part too dark.

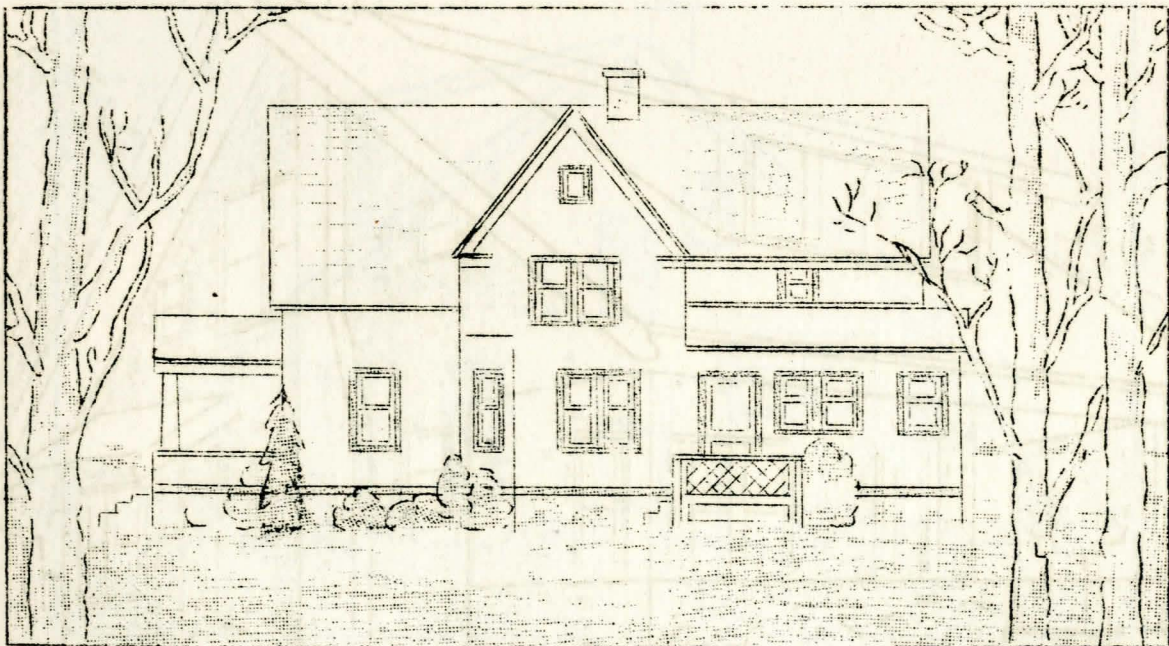


Fig. 9  
Windows trimmed too brings out good features.



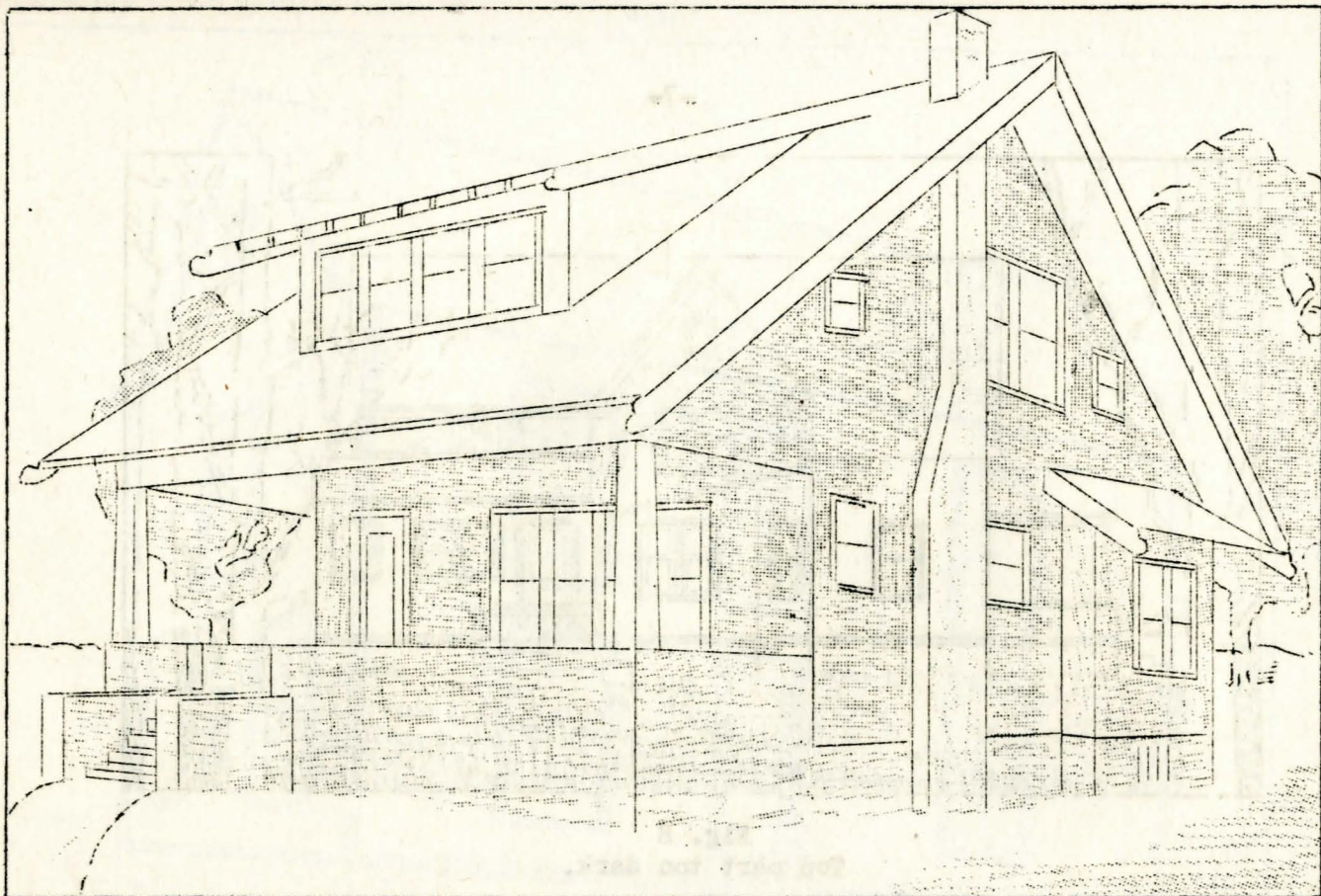


Fig. 10 - Poor  
Brick house with too bright a trim.

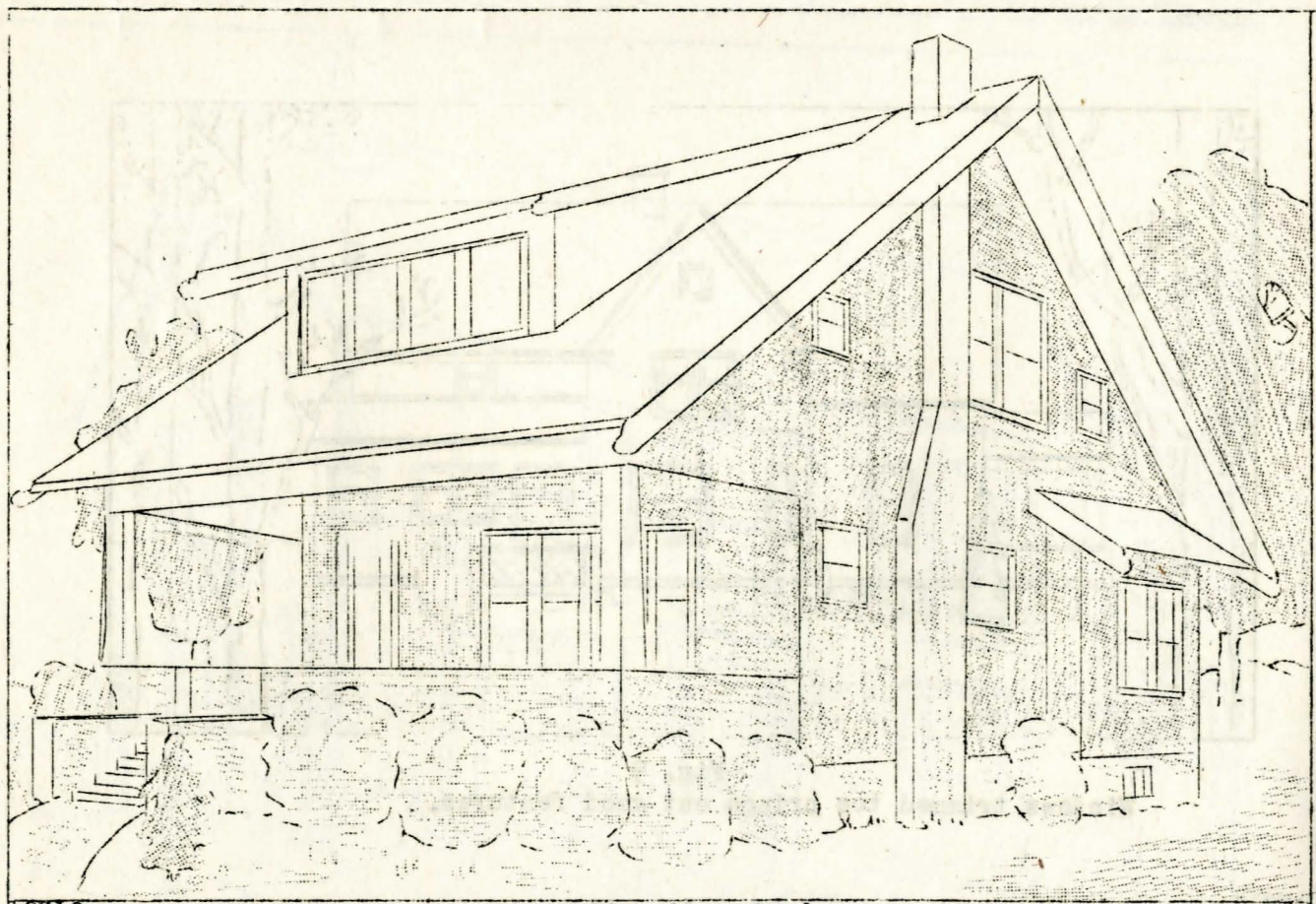


Fig. 11 - Good  
Brick house with trim slightly lighter color value



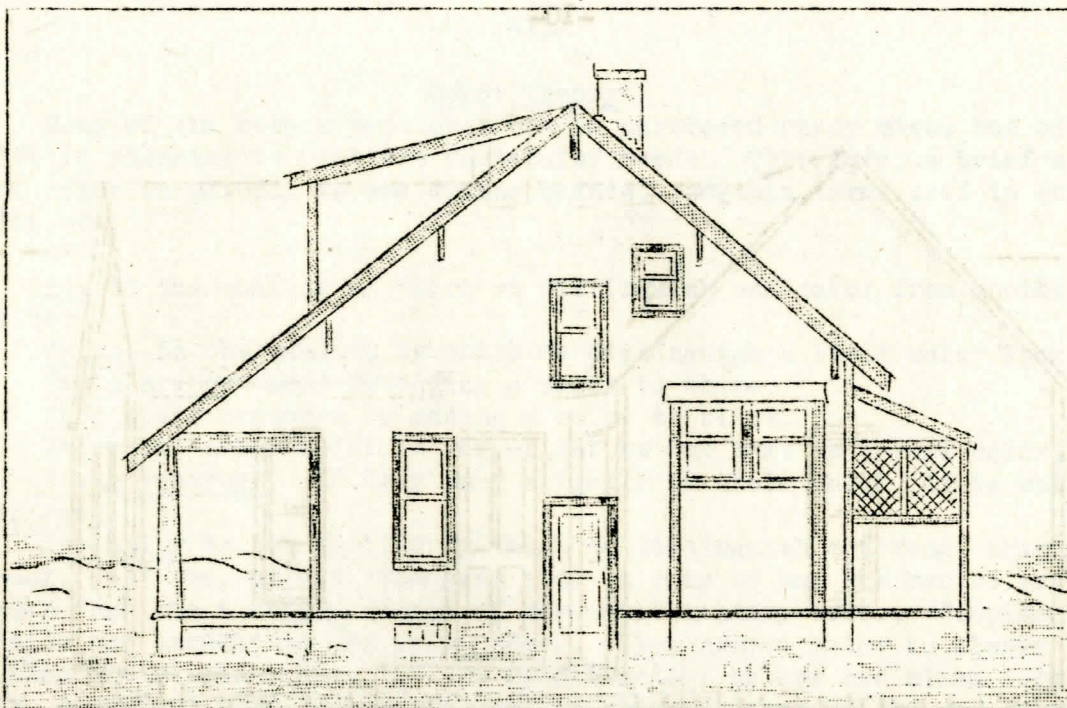


Fig. 12  
Windows show prominently when painted a contrasting color.

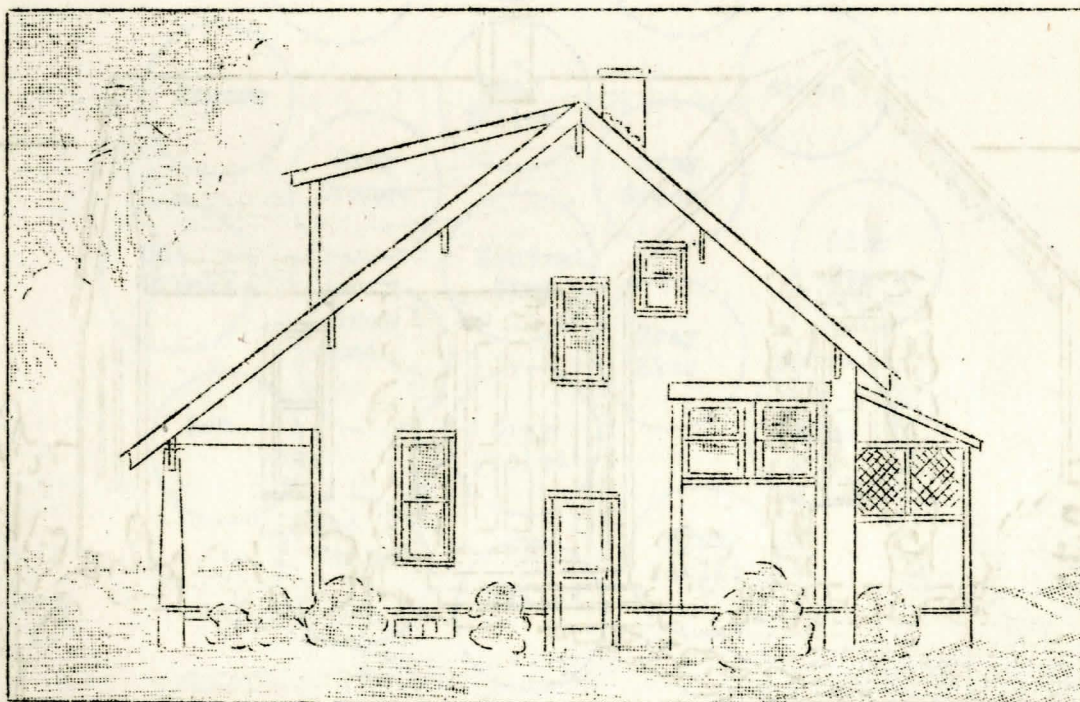


Fig. 13  
Windows show less if painted body color



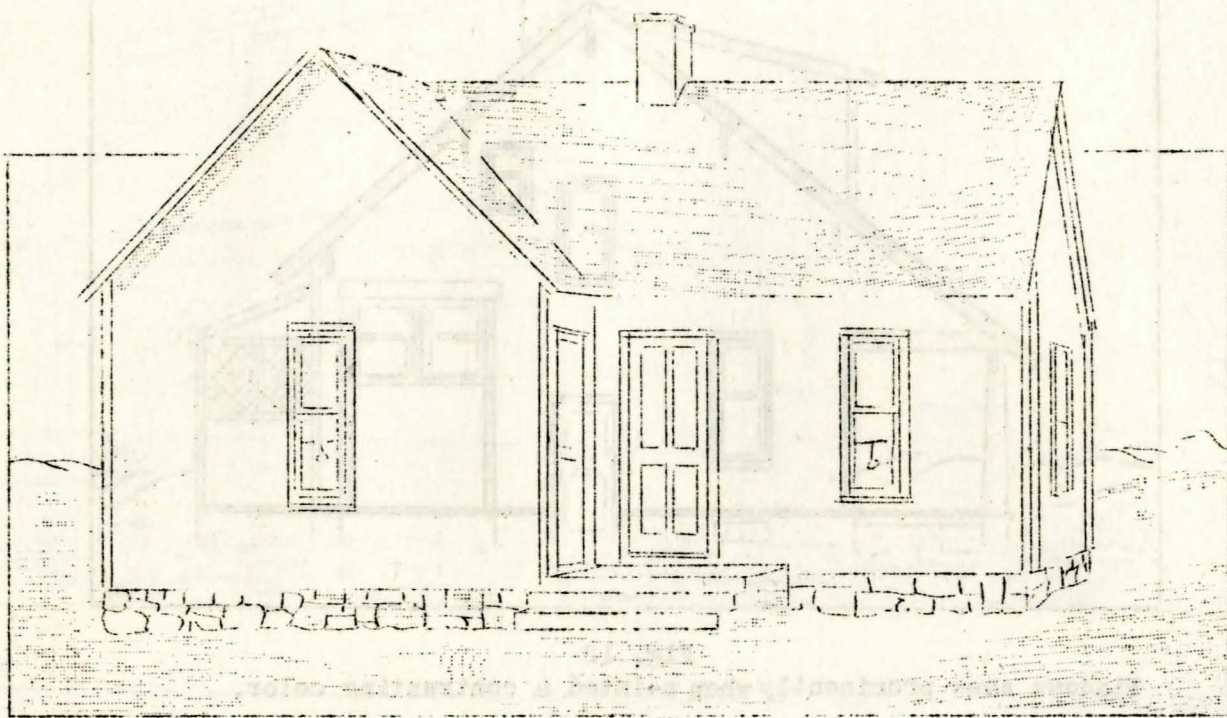


Fig. 14

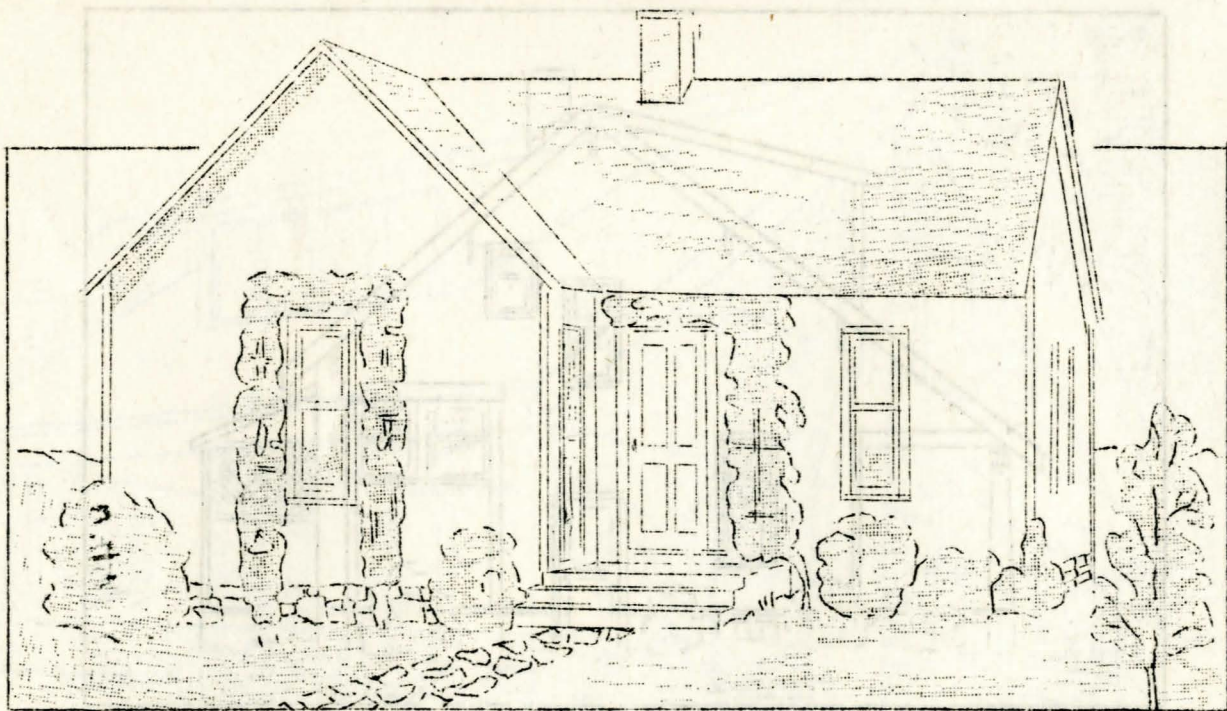


Fig. 15



### Color Theory

Many of the colors mentioned can be purchased ready mixed but often they need a little changing to meet the particular needs. Therefore, a brief study of the theory of color is helpful to one mixing paints. Certain terms used in connection with color are:

Hue is the quality by which we distinguish one color from another as green from yellow.

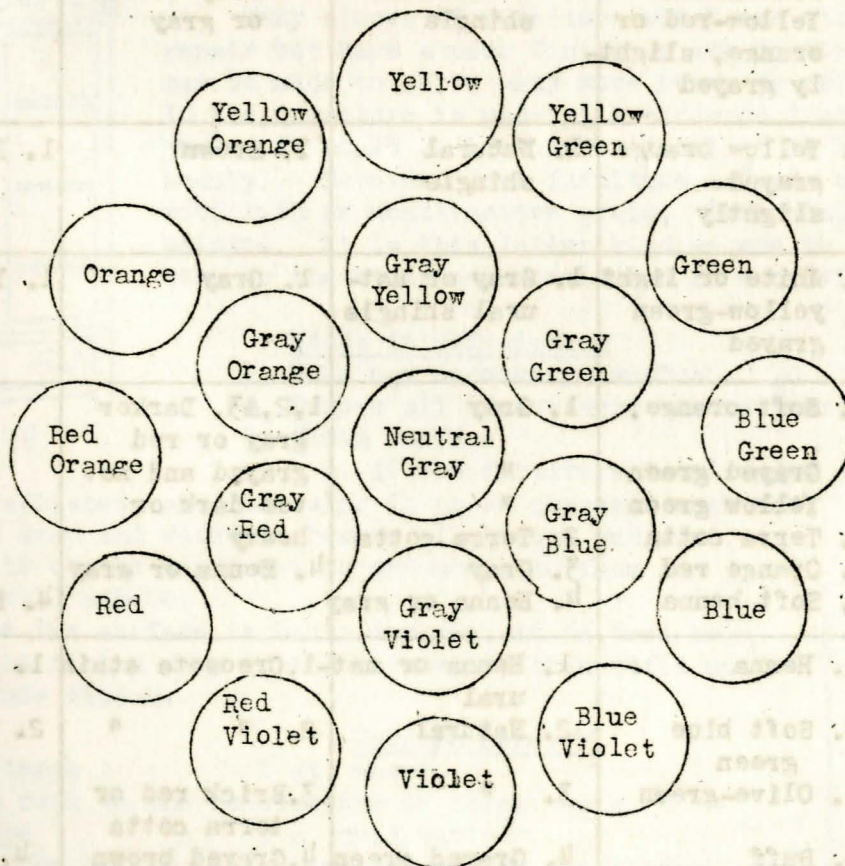
Value is the quality by which we distinguish a light color from a dark one

Tints are produced by adding a color to white.

Shades are produced by adding a color to black.

Where one color which is very light is put next to a dark color, it is called a strong contrast. If they vary slightly in their value, it is called a close contrast.

Intensity is the quality by which we distinguish a strong, bright color from a weak, dull one, as red from gray red. A gray of any hue can be produced by mixing with that hue a slight amount of the complementary color. Complementary colors are opposite one another on the color wheel. Thus grayed color is always less intense than the original hue. If two complementary colors are mixed together carefully, a perfect gray can be produced in which neither of the complementaries can be distinguished.





SUGGESTED COLOR HARMONIES FOR FARMSTEADS

Body color of house	HOUSE		BARN	
	Trim	Roof	Body color	Trim, if desired
White	1. Warm light gray Green blue 2. Olive-green	1. Green " " " " 2. Natural shingle	1. Warm gray " " " " 2. " "	1. Light gray or white 2. Olive green
Cream or ivory	1. Yellow-green All colors above except gray. 2. Terra cotta 3. Soft henna red	1. Green 2. Terra cotta 3. Henna red	1. Tan or grayed buff 2. Grayed brown stain 3. "	1. Dark red or soft orange or russet 2. Terra cotta 3. Henna (light)
Light grayed straw-color	1. White Blue-green Yellow-red or orange, slightly grayed	1. Silver gray or natural shingle	1. Lichen green Gray brown or gray	1. Soft grayed orange doors
Buff and creosote brown	1. Yellow orange grayed slightly	1. Natural shingle	1. Brown	1. Buff doors
Colonial yellow	1. White or light yellow-green grayed	1. Gray or natural shingle	1. Gray	1. Yellow-green
Warm gray or stone color	1. Soft orange, Grayed green Yellow green 2. Terra cotta 3. Orange red 4. Soft henna	1. Gray " " " " 2. Terra cotta 3. Gray 4. Henna or gray	1,2,&3. Darker gray or red grayed and not too dark or heavy 4. Henna or gray	4. Henna
Tan	1. Henna 2. Soft blue green 3. Olive-green 4. Buff	1. Henna or natural 2. Natural 3. " 4. Grayed green	1. Creosote stain 2. " " 3. Brick red or terra cotta 4. Grayed brown	1. Henna 2. Blue-green 4. Blue-green

Summary of Points to be Considered in Selection of Color for the Exterior of Houses

1. A light shade will make a house appear larger and a darker color will make it appear smaller.



2. When a light and dark color are used together the contrast is strong, thus cutting up the areas and making the house appear smaller.
3. Using colors of close value will make a house appear larger.
4. To cover up undesirable architectural features paint the trim the same color as the body of the house.
5. To change the apparent proportion of a house emphasize those lines that will carry the eye in the direction desired. Generally we should emphasize the horizontal in the country.
6. Avoid spotty effects. Plain elegance is a good rule. Such colors as pink, cherry, red, vermilion, and dark blue are not appropriate for outdoor use and are not lasting. In place of them, use cream, ivory, colonial yellow, buff, gray, brown, and dull green.
7. Avoid bright colors in large areas. Even small houses should not be painted with a color that is too bright.
8. Much of the ready mixed paint will need white added to it and often a color will need a little of the complement added. A good plan is to purchase a small quantity of the complementary color at the same time as the body color is purchased. Then mix a small quantity and try it out by allowing to dry on a board, as paint is brighter when wet than when dry.

### PAINTED FURNITURE

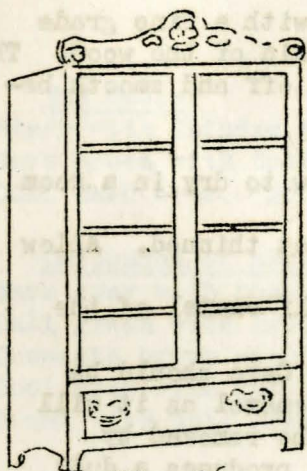


Fig. 16

Many pieces of furniture which are still in good repair but have a poor finish or are unattractive in color may be made to serve many more years by refinishing them. If the furniture is made of a hardwood that will show a grain, it would be best to refinish it to bring out this beauty. However, some furniture is made of soft wood or wood with an unattractive grain. This kind would be best painted. It is this latter kind we are to be concerned with here as the other was considered in a previous project.

#### Steps in Refinishing

1. Make any necessary repairs.
2. Remove all unnecessary decorations.
3. Clean surface.

a. If the furniture is already painted or varnished, and the color is to be changed, wash the surface with soap and water to remove all grease and dirt. Sandpaper with coarse sandpaper to produce a surface to which paint will adhere.

b. Where the surface is badly damaged, it is best to remove all the finish down to the bare wood, then build up an entirely new finish.

#### Varnish Remover

4 T. starch

1 qt. water

Mix and cook to the consistency of thick paste.

2 T. lye

$\frac{1}{2}$  c. cold water

Dissolve the lye in cold water and add to the starch paste. (Use a crockery or enameled dish, not tin or aluminum.)

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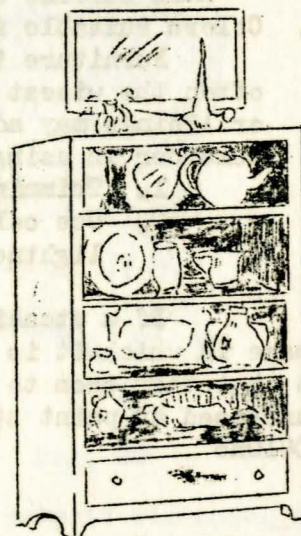


Fig. 17



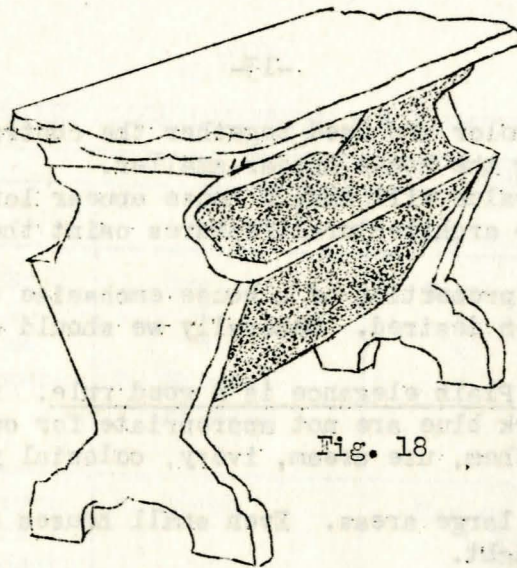


Fig. 18

Apply the paste to a small area, allow to remain a few minutes or until the old surface paste softens. Scrape the surface with a putty knife or spatula and wipe the old varnish into a newspaper. Apply the paste to another portion and repeat the process. Wash the wood surface, then apply vinegar to neutralize the lye. Wipe the surface as dry as possible.

4. Produce a smooth surface.

Sandpaper with a medium coarse sandpaper, then finish with a fine grade held over a small block of wood. Be sure to rub with the grain of the wood. This process is an important one for if the surface is not dusted off and smooth before the paint is applied, it can never hope to be.

5. Painting

- a. Apply a coat of flat paint thinned with turpentine. Allow to dry in a room free from dust and lint. Smooth with fine sandpaper.
- b. Apply a second coat of flat paint the desired color but not thinned. Allow to dry. Sandpaper.
- c. The third coat consists of one-half flat paint and one-half enamel of the desired color. Allow to dry. Sandpaper.
- d. Apply enamel for the last coat to produce a hard finish. Care should be taken not to leave brush strokes and not to use too much enamel as it will dry in drips and cause an uneven surface. The shine may be removed by rubbing with powdered pumice stone and linseed oil. This produces a dull hard surface which is easily cleaned.

6. Colors suitable for furniture.

Furniture that is painted one color without trimming is always safe and often the wisest choice. If one prefers, bands in harmonizing colors or stencils or linings may add interest to painted furniture. There are two principles to remember in using trimming of this kind:

1. Trimming should follow structural lines.
2. Use colors that do not make a strong contrast in their darkness and lightness.

Structural Lines

If a stencil is desired, use one that conforms to the general shape of the space in which it is placed. The parts of a stencil design should be close enough so that they seem to belong together. Furniture transfer designs in color may be purchased at paint stores and art shops and applied according to directions.



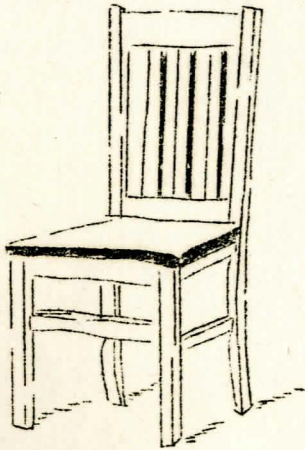


Fig. 19

Bands are also applied to follow structural lines. Avoid too much trim or hit and miss spots of contrasting color on chair rounds and legs.

Suitable places for trim on furniture.

1. Edges of chair seat.
2. Top edge of a square backed chair. See Fig. 19.
3. Inside of book shelves or cupboards. See Fig. 17
4. Inside edge of a mirror frame.
5. Edge of table or end table. Fig. 18
6. Where the construction makes one part project beyond another, the edge of the projection may be painted.

Colors Suitable for Furniture

<u>Background</u>	<u>Trim</u>
1. Ivory - - - - -	Light apple green
2. Ivory - - - - -	Soft medium blue
3. Yellow - - - - -	Light yellow green
4. Sand color- - - - -	Grayish orchid
5. Apple green - - - - -	Light yellow
6. Blue gray - - - - -	Medium dark blue

End Table

- Black with Chinese red trim.
- Dark brown with dulled orange trim.
- Dull dark blue. No trim color.

Cupboards or shelves (Choose a color to harmonize with the room)

- Warm gray with rose lining.
- Dull green with lavender lining.
- Creosote brown with dull orange lining.
- Cool gray with dull medium blue lining.
- Brown with dull green lining.

A wicker chair such as Fig. 20, if in good repair, can be painted a two tone effect and made to look very attractive either for a living room or for a porch. To make the two tone effect, apply the light color first and allow to dry. Apply the darker color over all the chair and before thoroly dry wipe off the surplus paint. Different values of the same color give a good effect, or cream with dark brown, or dull green with a dark brown.

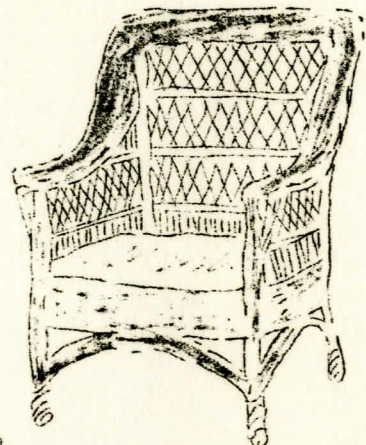


Fig. 20

Attractive porch or lawn furniture may be made from old discarded chairs or benches. Be sure they will blend in with the color of the lawn. Soft blue greens, apple greens, white or tan with dulled orange trim blend better than using intense colors with a strong contrast between their lightness and darkness.

Gay colored pillows of cretonne or striped awning will help to add notes of color without over doing it. Pads and cushions in awning stripe are often more attractive than cretonne in floral design.

(Prepared by Rizpah A. Douglass, State Extension Agent, Home Beautification)