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## EC1172 Making Old Chairs New

Rizpah A. Douglass

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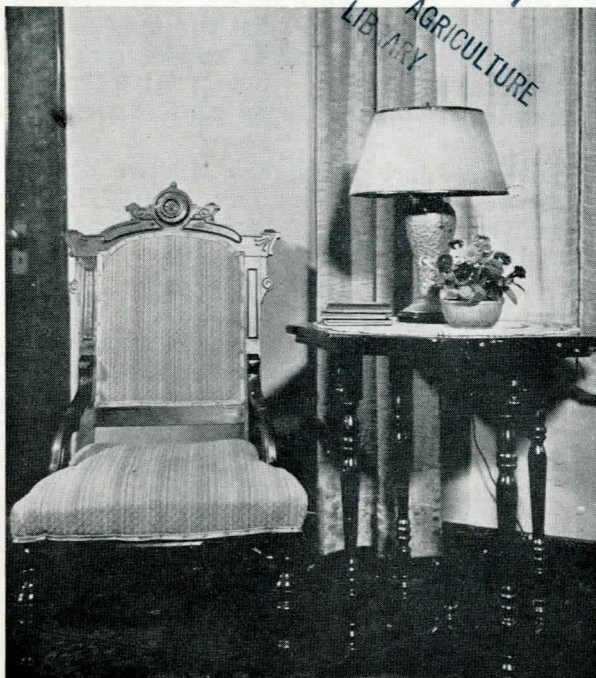
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## Making Old Chairs New



The University of Nebraska Agricultural College Extension Service  
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W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

# Making Old Chairs New

BY RIZPAH DOUGLASS

A comfortable chair is a real satisfaction. To have such chairs in every room in the house is a joy to all the members of the family. Chairs on the porch and in the yard give opportunity for the family to sit and rest, altho it may be for just a moment or two. To have comfortable chairs conveniently placed in the kitchen or living room is important. It pays to rest frequently, and what fun it is to sit a minute or so in an attractive chair that is padded and fits the back just right to rest weary bones. Comfortable chairs give any room a hospitable feeling and make conversation more enjoyable.

Many chairs that are not now attractive or comfortable may be made so with little or no expense. This circular is designed to give suggestions on some of the possibilities for improving old chairs.

Some may be old and worn, but these can be made over by the use of paint or by adding pillows or covers. Others will need parts of worn upholstery replaced or springs readjusted, while others will need new cane seats.

When a chair has the three essentials of good furniture—good lines, comfort, and durability—it is worth reclaiming; for it is possible for every homemaker to obtain satisfactory results if directions are carefully followed.

## MAKING CHAIRS COMFORTABLE

Many old chairs that are now ugly or uncomfortable may be made usable and attractive. The homemaker will need to look the chair over carefully and consider its possibilities.

The reason why a rocking chair is more comfortable than a straight chair is because it is possible to tilt the chair to a more comfortable angle. A straight chair which is uncomfortable can often be improved by cutting off the back legs from  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch to 1 inch. A chair seat should slope toward the back, and the deeper the seat, the nearer it should be to the floor. If the seat is broad and deep, cutting off the legs a little will make the chair more comfortable.

Kitchen chairs which are so old that they are splintered and rough may be improved by a cushion made just the size and shape of the seat. An apron or ruffle (See Figures 3 and 4) on this cushion will help to hold it in place. Secure it with ties at the back and at the front underneath the ruffle. (See Figures 1 and 2).



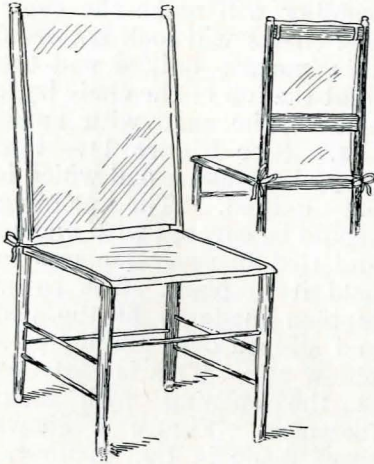


Fig. 1

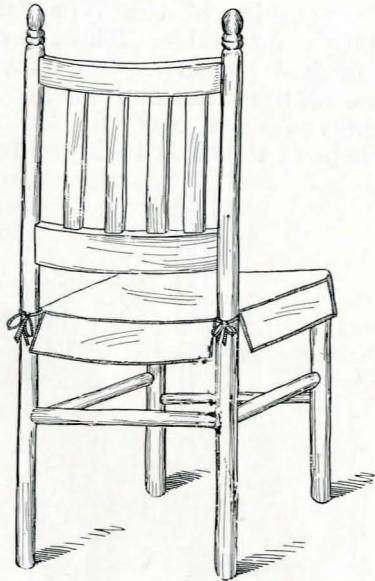


Fig. 2

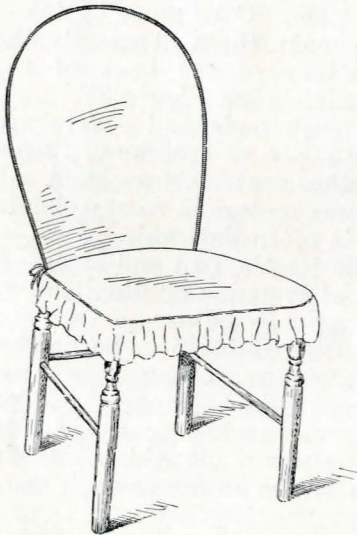


Fig. 3

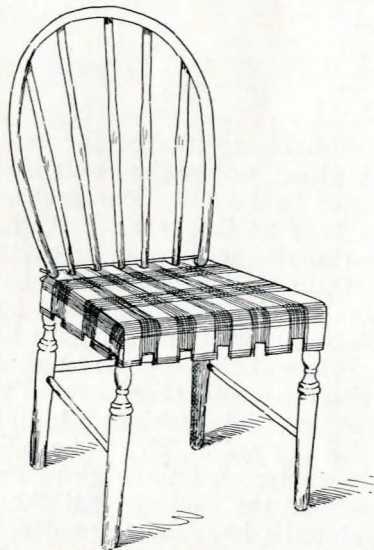


Fig. 4

A cushion of this type should be thin and flat to be the most comfortable. Three layers of sheet wadding would be sufficient padding. Too much padding will make the chair too high and uncomfortable. Some chairs will look better if the backs are covered. To do this, make a quilted pad the shape of the chair back and fasten at the top of the chair back

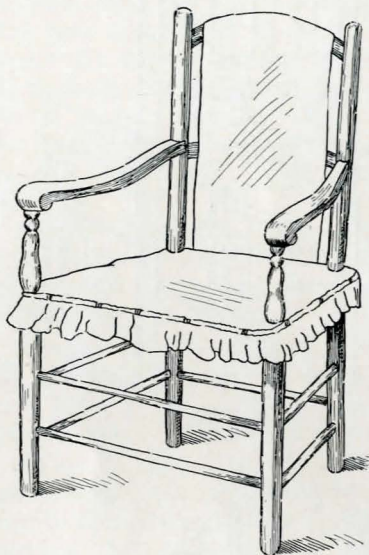


Fig. 5

and at the seat with small ties. (See Figure 1). One may also make a pad which is not quilted. The padding should be covered with muslin and tied in several places to hold it in place. The cover is then made to fit the pad and slipped over similar to a pillow slip. This is fastened at the opening with snap fasteners. Figure 5 shows cover made in this manner.

Some women have made a cover for the back of a chair that resembles a pillow slip. It goes down over both sides of the back and is tied at the bottom. Care must be taken to make these fit exactly the contour of the back of the chair. (See Figure 3).

Materials suitable for making such pads and covers are gingham, unbleached muslin, flour sacks, or cretonne. Sometimes feed sacks, flour sacks, or other materials on hand can be used as they are; or dyeing these materials some color to harmonize with rugs or curtains is often desirable.

Quilt block designs may be made for the pad and back. A combination of muslin and bands of cretonne or gingham, or plain muslin trimmed with bias tape may be used.

Some chairs that are ugly but comfortable may be padded with old quilts, then covered with cretonne. One woman made over an old fashioned high-backed rocker. It was padded with old quilts, etc. The padding was tacked or sewed onto the chair. A slip cover of cretonne was made which entirely covered the chair except the ends of the rockers which were painted a harmonizing color.



## REFINISHING OLD CHAIRS

**Remove unnecessary decorations.** Meaningless, machine-made carvings are often found glued upon furniture, especially golden oak. These can be removed easily by the use of a chisel, case knife, or flat instrument. Pry them off by placing the chisel under a corner and loosening the glue. These decorations are especially unsightly if they are large and naturalistic in design. Simple, plain lines are more to be desired than over-decorated, elaborate furniture.

**Remove old finish.** If the chair is hard wood and is to be finished in the natural wood finish, more desirable results can be obtained if all the old finish is removed. There are two methods for accomplishing this:

- a. **Scraping.** Use a varnish scraper, a knife, glass, sand paper, or steel wool. This method is slow but makes a smooth surface if carefully done.
- b. **Softening the paint or varnish.** A commercial or homemade remover may be used. The commercial remover is easily applied. The wood must be rubbed with denaturated alcohol or benzine following the application, in order to prevent it from reacting with the wood. The homemade varnish remover is hard on the hands and will darken the wood.

**Homemade varnish remover.** Take 4 T. laundry starch or cornstarch, 1 quart water, and 2 T. concentrated lye. Dissolve the starch in cold water, cook until thick. Dissolve the lye and pour it into the starch mixture. Use an old granite kettle or crockery container to prepare this mixture as the lye will react with other materials.

Tie a cloth on a stick to make a swab, apply the lye mixture to a small surface at a time and allow to stand a few minutes or until the varnish or paint is softened. Scrape off into a newspaper. Where the surface is not flat, a steel brush or steel wool can be used to get into the cracks or grooves. Wipe as clean as possible, then wipe with a cloth saturated with vinegar. This is important because the vinegar counteracts the lye and prevents it from burning the wood.

When the chair is to have a natural finish, oxalic acid should be used to bleach the wood if it has been darkened by the lye. Dissolve 1 T. of oxalic acid crystals in 1 pt. of warm water. Apply to the surface; allow to stand about one-half hour. Repeat if necessary. Wipe dry, rub with a cloth moistened with benzine or denaturated alcohol.

**Make necessary repairs.** Before going further all repairs should be made. All broken parts should be replaced and loose places reglued. Scrape off all old glue. Where

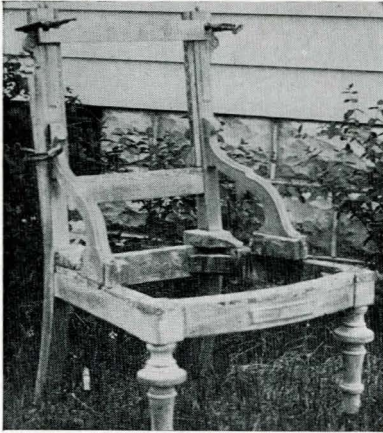


Fig. 6

possible wash the glue out, allow to dry, spread on new glue, and brace the part together for several days. Quilting frame clamps are excellent for holding the parts together until the glue has hardened. Rope or wire is successful where clamp cannot be used. (See Figures 6 and 7).

Rockers that are broken off at the leg of the chair may be fastened on again by making a new dowel pin. (See Figure 8). This pin is inserted up the end of the leg of the chair and down into the rocker. (See Figure 9). Also rockers may be screwed on by putting a long slender screw into the rocker for the screw, glue the leg to the top side of the rocker, then insert the screw and screw tightly. Sink the head to prevent uneven rocking. (See Figure 10). A flat headed screw would be best for this purpose.

Loose veneer or broken parts should be reglued and held firmly in place until thoroly dry. Sometimes a narrow screw is inserted thru the leg to catch the end of the inserted rung. (See Figure 11). The screw head should be sunk, then covered with plastic wood.

Many times a chair is weakly joined at the back of the seat. Examine under the seat to see if glued parts have

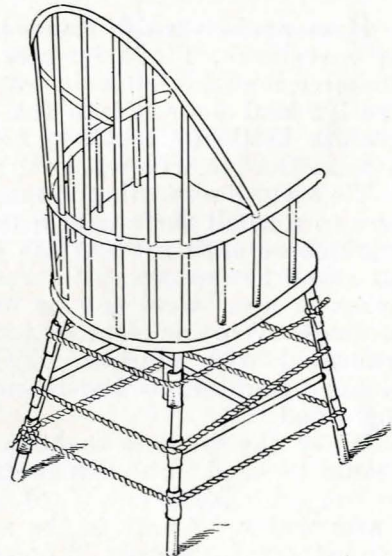


Fig. 7



separated or screws are out. If so, reglue and rescrew. If further bracing is needed brace it at the angle underneath. (See Figure 12). Broken legs of chairs may be fitted to

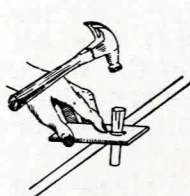


Fig. 8



Fig. 9

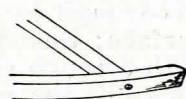


Fig. 10

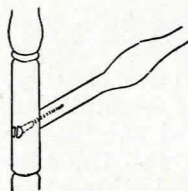


Fig. 11

gether, glued and braced with a piece of iron screwed to the leg past the broken part. (See Figure 13). Place the iron on the inside of the leg to make it less conspicuous.

Deep holes and cracks may be filled with plastic wood or shellac gum which can be purchased in colors to match the wood. Shellac gum is heated like sealing wax and dropped in the crack or hole. Plastic wood should be stained before applying. Stain darker than wood as it dries lighter. It can also be purchased already stained.

**Produce a smooth surface.** Producing a smooth surface is one of the most important steps, as a rough surface will never refinish satisfactorily. Have all surfaces perfectly dry. Rub with sandpaper until wood is smooth. If surface is flat use a small block of wood under sandpaper. Sandpaper with the grain of the wood where possible. Use steel wool on carvings, grooves, or curved surfaces where sandpaper will not fit. Start with a No. 1 sandpaper and finish with a No. 00 or 000. Brush or wipe off all dust. Some dents or marks may be removed by putting a damp cloth over them, holding a hot iron over the cloth. This swells the wood and eliminates the dent.

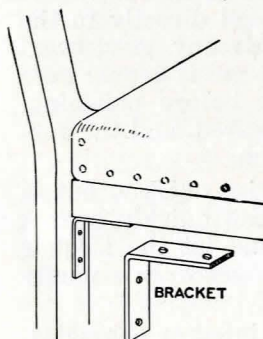


Fig. 12

**Apply stain to hardwoods to obtain the desired color.** (If the chair is to be painted, this step may be omitted.)

A dry powdered stain is the most satisfactory as it can be mixed with enough turpentine to get the desired color. Mix well, brush on the wood, and wipe immediately with a clean cloth. This makes a uniform color. If



Fig. 13



a darker color is desired, make a second application. Allow to dry thoroly. Lightly sandpaper with No. 000.

**Apply a filler.** A paste filler should be used on porous woods such as oak, walnut, or mahogany. Brush over the surface; then when practically dry (not glossy) wipe off with a rough cloth, rubbing across the grain of the wood. This fills the pores. Then wipe the wood clean, rubbing with the grain of the wood. Sandpaper lightly after the filler has dried thoroly (24 hours).

For close grained woods—maple, cherry, and pine,—one may use varnish or shellac thinned about half with turpentine or alcohol.

**Apply the final finish.** Varnish and shellac both give a hard, glossy finish unless they are rubbed down. Apply a thin coat of either varnish or shellac, allow to dry thoroly, and rub with No. 000 sandpaper. Apply the second and third coat if needed, allow to dry thoroly and sandpaper between each coat. To produce a dull finish rub the surface with a cloth moistened in linseed oil and dipped in powdered pumice stone. After rubbing lightly, brush off surplus stone and oil with a clean cloth. Apply a coat of wax upon the varnished or shellacked surfaces to protect the finish. Apply wax as directed under a wax finish below.

The *oil finish* is good for furniture which does not receive hard usage. It is beautiful but gives little protection to the wood. Moisten a cloth in raw linseed oil and rub well into the wood. Rub across the grain, then with the grain. Repeat as often as necessary to obtain a desirable finish.

*Wax* is a desirable final finish over varnish, shellac, or oil, as it gives a dull satin effect and protects the finish. However, it can be used as the only finish applied directly to the wood after the staining is completed. Use any good wax, apply a thin coat using a circular motion to get it evenly over the surface. Allow to dry several hours before polishing. Rub until all traces of the wax have disappeared, and the surface feels smooth and not sticky to the touch.

*Lacquer* is sometimes used because it dries quickly, but is very difficult to use on this account. Spread quickly over a small area, stroke in one direction only, and let the lacquer flow on from the brush. *Do not try to go back over* a partly dried surface.

*Paint or enamel.* If the chair is to be painted or enameled, it is not always necessary to remove all the old finish. Sandpaper all the surface and especially the rough spots. If the

paint has chipped off, these spots may be painted with a small brush. When dry, sandpaper to the original surface.

Apply a thin coat of flat paint thinned with turpentine. Allow this to dry thoroughly overnight in a room free from lint, dust, and insects. When dry, smooth with a fine sandpaper. The second coat should be flat paint of the desired color, but not thinned. The third coat consists of one-half flat paint and one-half enamel of the desired color. Make sure that the paint is dry and smooth before applying each coat. Sandpaper between each coat.

Apply enamel for the last coat to produce a hard surface. Care should be taken not to leave brush strokes and not to use too much enamel, as this will dry in drips and cause an uneven surface.

A finer finish will result if the last coat of paint or enamel is rubbed down with powdered pumice stone and oil. (See directions under varnish and shellac.) This gives an excellent wearing finish with a soft, dull gloss.

**Colors suitable for furniture.** Painting furniture one color is frequently a wise choice. However, if additional color is desired, more interest may be added by using harmonizing bands, stencils, or linings. There are two principles to remember when 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.

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. Avoid too much trim or hit and miss spots of contrasting color on chair rounds and legs.

*Suitable places for trimming.*

1. Edges of chair seat.
2. Top edge of a square backed chair. (See Figure 14).
3. Where the construction makes one part project beyond another, the edge of the projection may be painted a harmonizing color.

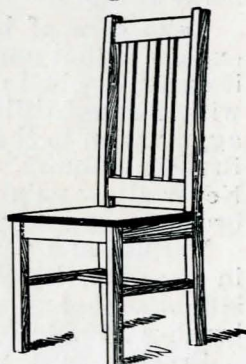


Fig. 14



*Colors for chairs.**Background**Trim*

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 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   |

*Painted wicker chairs.* A wicker chair such as Figure 15, if in good repair, can be painted and made to look attractive either for a living room or for a porch. A two-tone effect can be made by applying the light color first and allowing it to dry. Then apply the darker color over all the chair and before it is 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. 15

Attractive porch or lawn furniture may be made from old discarded chairs or benches: 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 awnings will help to add notes of color without over-doing it. Pads and cushions in awning stripe are often more attractive than cretonne of floral design.

**Take care of brushes.** Good paint brushes are rather expensive, but one is justified in buying them as they make it easier to obtain a smooth, even surface. A cheap brush with coarse bristles that are continually coming out, is an aggravation to the worker and also makes a rough surface. Brushes require care to keep them in good condition. Never allow paint or varnish to dry in a brush. Have one brush for paint and another for varnish.

Varnish and paint brushes are cleaned by washing them in gasoline, kerosene, or turpentine. These liquids are **inflammable** and should not be used in the house. Shellac brushes have to be cleaned in denatured alcohol.

Brushes used with lacquer are cleaned in a thinning solution which is purchased with lacquer.

After the brushes are cleaned they should be washed in soap and water and wiped with a cloth to straighten the bristles; when dry, wrap in newspaper, if not to be used for

some time. If the brushes are to be used often they may be kept in a container which will suspend them in the proper amount of liquid. (See Figure 16). If brush is to be used occasionally for several days, it should be placed in water to keep it from drying.

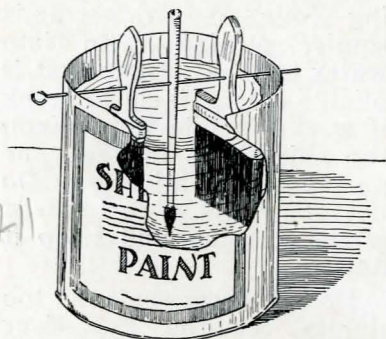


Fig. 16

### REPAIRING BROKEN CANE CHAIRS

Many beautiful chairs have been carried to the attic or discarded because the cane has been broken. Sometimes a ready-made chair seat has been tacked on because the owner did not know how to recane or that that recaning would be too expensive.

Now that the old-fashioned cane furniture has become new-fashioned and is so popular, homemakers are resurrecting from the garret and cellar their old broken cane chairs.

The **equipment needed** is very simple. The **cane** can be purchased in bundles of 1000 feet. This is usually enough for 3 or 4 chairs. It comes in fine, medium, or coarse grades. The medium quality is generally used. A heavier quality for the binding around the edges comes in bundles of 500 feet lengths.

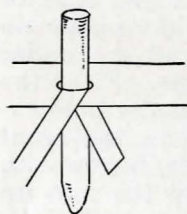


Fig. 17

Ten or twelve wooden pegs whittled from soft wood are used to hold the cane secure while the rest of the weaving is being done. (See Figure 17).

A square pointed wedge is needed to force the cane to lie parallel. (See Figure 18).

An ice pick or awl, scissors or knife, sponge or cloth, a piece of bacon rind, and a pan of water complete the equipment.



Fig. 18

**Prepare the chair** for recaning by examining the old cane to see how it is fastened, cut the cane from the chair close to the edge. Then remove the remainder from the holes by using the pick to loosen it.



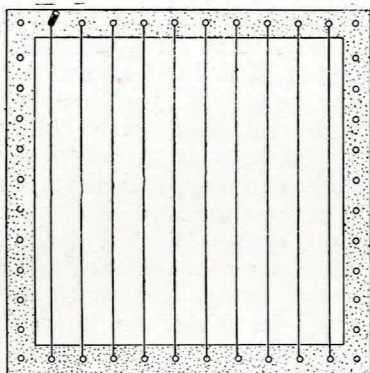


Fig. 19

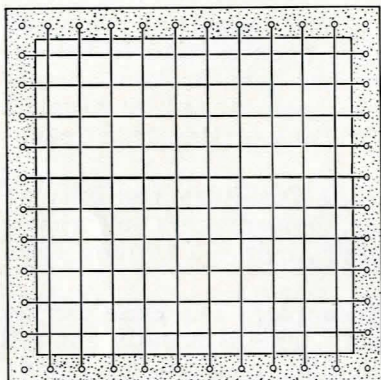


Fig. 20

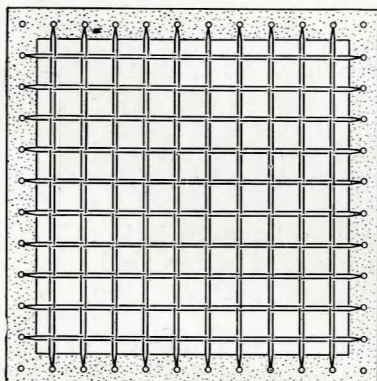


Fig. 21

If the chair needs refinishing, complete that work before starting to recane.

**Prepare the cane** by rolling four or five strands singly, putting them into water to soak. Cane that is pliable is less likely to crack if worked while wet. Keep the shiny side of the cane on the top at all times. Do not allow the cane to twist while weaving and keep it damp.

Do not draw the cane too tightly for the first four steps, for they tighten during the weaving. Keep the cane running straight and parallel. Weave no more than two or three inches before pulling the strands thru.

#### DIRECTIONS FOR CANING A CHAIR SEAT

##### Square or rectangular seat.

Step 1. Start at the hole next to the corner at the back left-hand side. Put the end of the cane down thru the hole about 3 inches; place a plug in the hole to hold it. **The right side of the cane should appear on both the top and the under side of the frame.** Place the cane down thru the hole exactly opposite on the front part of the chair, fasten with a peg, now draw the cane up thru the next hole to the right on the front part of the frame. Carry it to the back and repeat from back to front, and vice versa, until the entire chair opening is

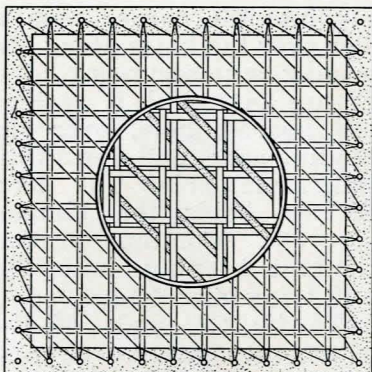


Fig. 22

Step 4. In this step the strands run parallel to Step 2 and in the same holes. This step is woven, starting at the right back corner at the hole next to the corner. Weave the cane over the strands of Step 3 and under the strands of Step 1. Always push the strands of Step 3 to the right. Weave a few strands, then pull the cane thru, as this will avoid breaking or twisting the cane. (See Figure 21).

Step 5. This is the first diagonal strand. Start at the left-hand corner of the back and weave diagonally across to the right-hand corner of the front of the frame. Weave **under** the groups that run from the back to the front and **over** the groups that run crosswise. Two strands run into each corner hole. (See Figure 22).

Step 6. Start the strands at the right-hand corner at the back and weave diagonally to the left-hand corner of the front of the frame. Weave **over** the groups running from the back to the front and **under** the groups running crosswise. Two strands run in each corner hole. (See Figure 23).

**Binding.** The binding cane should be large enough to cover the holes. If the seat is curved at the corners the corners of the binding may be one piece. When the corners are square a piece must be used for each side. Fasten

stretched over with cane going one way. (See Figure 19).

Step 2. The strands are drawn across the frame from the left to the right and vice versa. The strands are at right angles to the strands of Step 1 and lying on top. (See Figure 20).

Step 3. This step is the exact repetition of Step 1. The cane extends across the frame in the same direction and in the same holes.

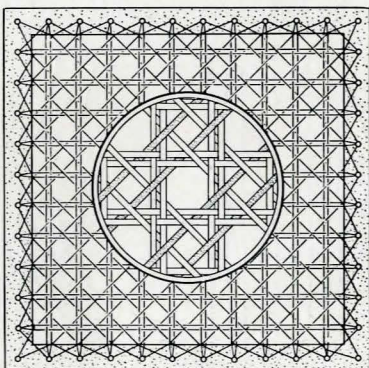


Fig. 23



one end of the binding securely into the corner with a wooden peg. Place the remainder over the holes along the edge. Fasten the end of the weaving cane securely. (See

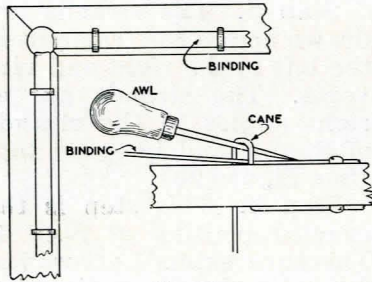


Fig. 24

Figure 24). Pull it up thru the nearest hole, over the binding cane, and down thru the same hole. The loop formed holds the binding securely. Continue around the seat, keeping binder flat and tying strand taut.

To tie the ends of the cane, turn seat over and push the end under the nearest strand on the underside

of the seat (without crossing any holes). Push end over and under again; cut off, leaving  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. Cane must be very wet to be pliable enough to tie. (See Figure 25).

**Variations in shapes of chair seats.** If a chair seat is not square, slight variations in weaving will need to be made.

Count the holes in the back rail and insert a peg in the center one; do the same on the front rail. Start at the center in step 1 instead of the corner as directed in above steps. Continue to carry the cane from back to front, working to the left

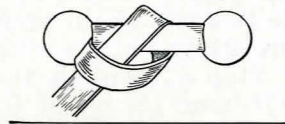


Fig. 25

until all the holes along the back are used. If there are any holes not used in the front rail, weave from these holes to the holes on the side rail, keeping strands parallel to the

weaving already done. (See Figure 26). Do **not** use the corner holes in the back or front rails. Repeat on the right half to complete the first step. The rest is the same as for a square seat.

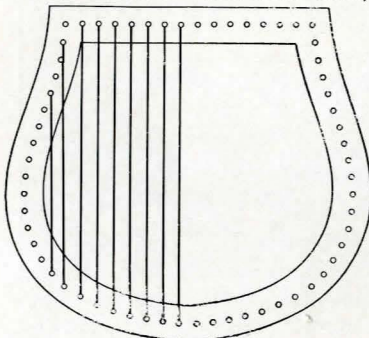


Fig. 26

**Woven Chair Seats.** Tie one strand of rope or raffia around the right-hand rail. (See Figure 27). Pass the cord from here over and around the front rail, up from under this

rail, and around the right-hand rail, across and over the left-hand rail, up to center and around the front rail. Come up to inside of stool and over the back rail. Tighten and

adjust to the corner. Carry strand over the left-hand rail at the back, and come up to the inside of the stool. Tighten and put over the right-hand rail at the back corner.

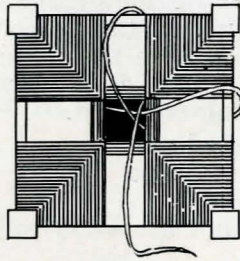
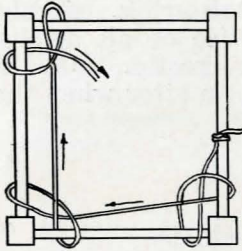


Fig. 27

Now put over the back rail and up to the center. Tighten and repeat until all is filled in.

After the first row is put in the strands running parallel to the rail are considered

as a part of the rail itself; when the strand goes over or under the rail, it will go over or under all the strands running parallel to it. (See Figure 27).

When the seat is about half woven, put a padding of corn husks or cardboard between the layers. If the seat is oblong the side rails will become covered before the front ones. This remaining space is filled by passing the cord around the front and back rail in the form of a figure eight. (See Figure 28). At the finish, push cord to wrong side and tie.

**Finish of cane and woven chair seats.** Cane or rush bottom chairs may be stained a dark color. Brush on stain, allow to stand a few minutes. Wipe off with clean cloth. Dry and shellac. If desired, just shellac may be used as a finish.

A coarse rope, binding twine, raffia, or fibre may be used satisfactorily in place of cane or rush.

#### REPAIRING UPHOLSTERED CHAIRS

Reupholstering is a most practical home craft. Money can be saved and considerable satisfaction gained from having one's favorite chair in good repair. It is possible to do this work at home, for when the upholstery is

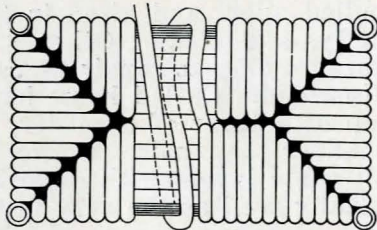


Fig. 28

pulled apart, it is found that it is a simple job. Often all that is necessary is to retie the springs and replace the upholstery. An uneven bulge in a chair cushion usually



indicates that a spring has come untied, not broken as is supposed by some people.

**General directions.** Repairing and refinishing should all be complete before beginning the reupholstering. As the upholstering is removed take careful notice of all details. This will help to replace the material correctly. Have a room to work where dust and dirt will not matter when the upholstering is being removed.

**Materials needed are:**

Hammer—not too large

Screwdriver

Tack puller—is not necessary but convenient

Large scissors

Common tacks—large and small

Pinchers to pull webbing tight

Twine—to sew and tie springs

Covering for stuffing. The springs are covered with an inexpensive material—burlap or muslin. Unbleached muslin is suitable for covering the stuffing. A smooth cloth or paper cambric is used for underneath the seat to keep out the dust.

Webbing. This is used to hold the springs. In many cases the webbing already on the chair is good enough; it only needs restretching and tacking down. If old or torn, it will need replacing. Webbing is sold at a department or hardware store or at a mail order house for a few cents a yard.

Springs. Use the springs on the chair unless rusted or broken. Springs to replace broken ones can usually be found at an auto repair shop or junk heap.

Stuffing. Use the old stuffing in the chair. It can be pulled apart and aired in the sun, which makes it light, fluffy, and clean. Other stuffing may be purchased at garages or auto repair shops as the seat stuffing is usually discarded. Curled horse hair is the best. This, if put on top of a layer of excelsior, will reduce the cost. Tow is cheaper than hair. Cotton should not be used unless in alternate layers with excelsior, hair, or tow. Wadding is usually used as the very last layer before the cloth is put on. However, layers of cotton batting may be used instead.

Upholstery needles are necessary for certain types of chairs. A long needle to fasten the springs to the webbing, a curved needle for fastening the stuffing to the spring and

a circle needle for sewing the boxing. (See Figure 29). A triangular pointed needle will make it easier to sew thru leather.

A "regulator" is a bent wire sharpened at the end; it is used to adjust the stuffing by packing it around after the covering has been put on.

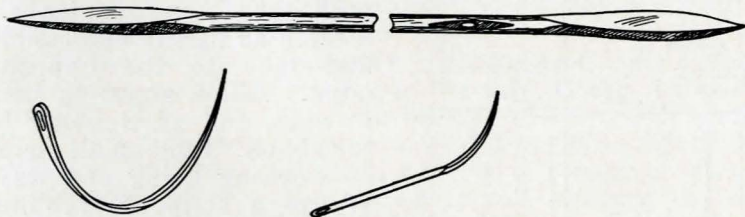


Fig. 29

Tacks that are long and slender with a large head are best for holding the webbing and covering. Gimp nails have small round heads which imbed themselves in the gimp and do not show. Brass headed or leather-headed tacks may be used if desired.

Top covering. The materials used are either textiles, leather, or leather substitutes. Of the textiles, choose one that harmonizes in texture with the chair and other things in the room. Oak chairs seem to need tapestry, rep, velours, cretonnes, linens, or woolen fabrics, while walnut seems to need silk, rep, brocade, or velvet.

Gimp or braid is a narrow edging used to cover the tacks of the upholstery.

#### DIRECTIONS FOR UPHOLSTERING CHAIRS WITHOUT SPRINGS

**Hard wooden edged seat.** This type is found in some dining room chairs and stools. The stuffing is laid on a board, covered with muslin, and tacked down. Use the "regulator" to force the stuffing toward the edge. Use tow, hair, or excelsior because cotton will mat. Over the tacked muslin put a layer of wadding, then stretch the top covering. (On all upholstering tack

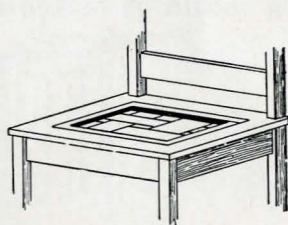


Fig. 30a

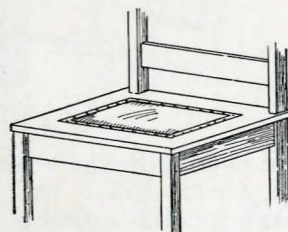


Fig. 30b



the middle of the sides of the cloth first, then work toward the corners.)

**Soft seat chairs with webbing bottoms.** The chair shown in Figure 30b is what is called a flat frame work chair. Nail the webbing to the underneath as in Figure 30a. Tack

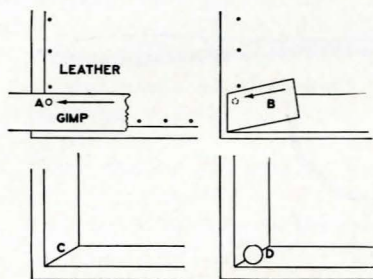


Fig. 31

the webbing to the edge with three or four tacks. Stretch as tightly as possible and tack to the opposite edge. Allow about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch at each end of webbing to turn back. Tack on all strips of webbing going one way. Weave a strip of webbing going the other way and tack one end. Stretch and tack the other end. Repeat

until all webbing is tacked into place. Next turn down the surplus webbing and tack with three or four more tacks.

Under that tack some burlap, then a layer of muslin or cambric. This is to prevent the stuffing from falling out. A mound of stuffing is now placed in the seat with a layer of cotton or wadding on top. Tack down a muslin covering over this. If there is a slight depression in the wood all around the inner edge of the wood, the muslin covering should be tacked in this so that the braid will lie flat

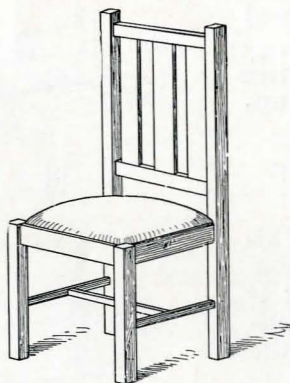


Fig. 32

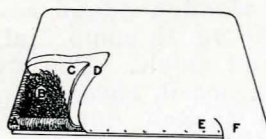
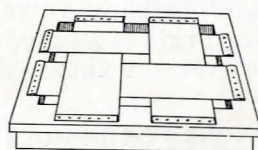


Fig. 33

and even with the wood part of the chair. Now tack down the cover, place the gimp around and tack down with large headed upholstery tacks at even intervals. To turn a mitered corner, tack the edge as shown in View A, Fig-

ure 31, with a small tack. Fold braid back over tack, as in View B. Fold across the corner as in View C. Put in a gimp or upholstery tack as in View D, Figure 31.

Some dining room chairs have set-in seats as in Fig. 32. The frame, Figure 33, is detachable and is screwed into the framework underneath the seat of the chair. Turn the chair over, unscrew, and lift out the cushion. Nail the webbing on top of the frame, Figure 33a. Over this tack burlap and make a hard edge. Hard edged rolls are done by tacking a strip of burlap to the side of the frame near the top. It is then nailed back over, and a roll of stuffing or a cord is inserted, View A of Figure 33b. Stuff with excelsior, tow and hair, then a layer of wadding, View B. Cover with muslin. The muslin is tacked along the outer edge of the frame, View E. Over all of this stretch the upholstery which is large enough to go around the sides and is tacked underneath the frame, View F. This framework is made smaller than the place it fits, for the upholstery comes down over the edge and makes it snug. When all is completed, screw the seat to the chair.

#### DIRECTIONS FOR UPHOLSTERING CHAIRS WITH SPRINGS

**Spring seat with hard edge.** This type of chair is the most important as there are more chairs of this kind than of any other. In this kind, room is left for the springs in the construction of the chair. There is a so-called hard edge to this chair but it is made with the stuffing rather than of wood. A sagging seat or unevenness indicates need of repair, as the stuffing has shifted off the springs which will wear out the cover.

In taking a chair apart, observe every detail as this will help in putting it back again. Save any part that is not too worn. Save the stuffing as it can be cleaned and fluffed so that it is as good as new.

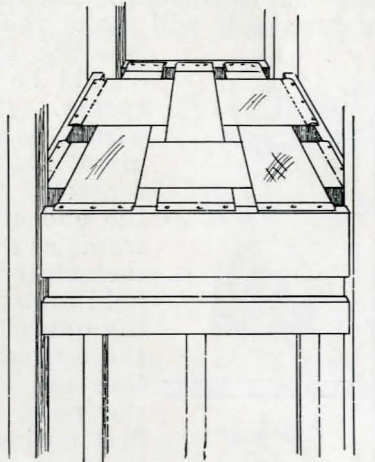


Fig. 34

Tighten or renail the webbing to the bottom of the chair. (See Figure 34). Arrange the springs so that they will come at the intersection of the webbing. The springs should



be two or three inches from the edge of the seat. Place the springs so that the end points of the wire which are turned down are at the top. With a long needle and durable twine sew the springs to the webbing as in Figure 35.

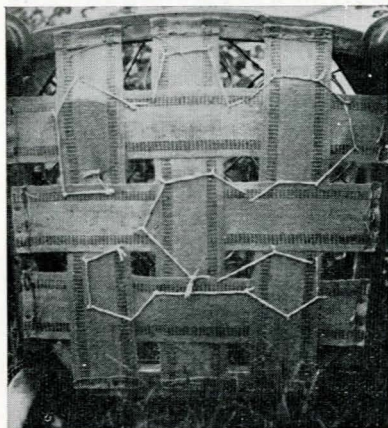


Fig. 35

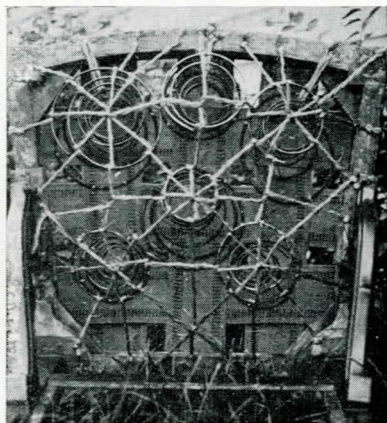


Fig. 36

Next tie down the springs with a heavy twine. This is important as the twine bears all of the strain. If one fastening breaks it will make the seat uneven and will cause wearing of the upholstery. The cord should be tied eight times across each spring. (See Figure 36). The same cord goes across successive springs. Begin at a point on the frame opposite the center of the spring. Make a knot at the end of the cord and tack down on frame as at A, Figure 37. Put a second tack close to the first as at B. This will hold better. Pull cord across springs to the opposite side of the seat, straighten the springs and pull them down until they are six or seven inches high. At the point where the cord touches the first spring, hold the spring and cord together with one hand and with the other, make a knot.

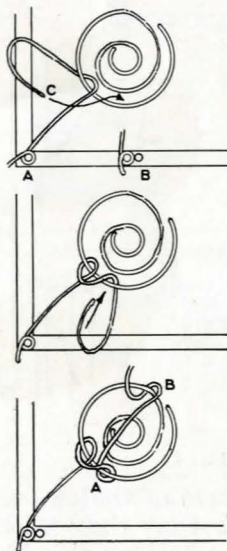


Fig. 37

The knot is made as in Figure 37 by placing the cord over the wire and up at the left of the taut wire it crosses the cord on top and over the wire again,

coming up on the right side, where it is tucked under the cord and parallel to the twine at the start. Proceed across the spring to the opposite side and tie across the whole seat.

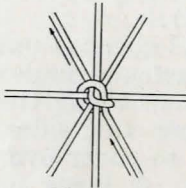


Fig. 38

This knot will not slip and wears longer than most others. Do not pull other cords tighter than the first one; the last one across a spring should fasten the others in the center of the spring. (See Figure 38).

Now stretch burlap or other heavy material over the spring and tack. Fold edges under and do not pull tighter than the springs. Stitch burlap to springs with a long curved needle and sewing twine. (See Figure 39). Place the stuffing. Use a generous amount and have it overlap the edges. (See Figure 40). Now tack another

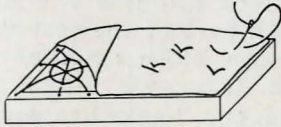


Fig. 39

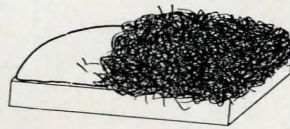


Fig. 40

piece of burlap or muslin over the stuffing. Stitch down as in Figure 41. The stitches are taken thru the burlap stuffing, coming out underneath the seat. Stitch once around the edge just outside the line of springs. Pull stitches tight and fasten. Sew a few times in the center.



Fig. 41

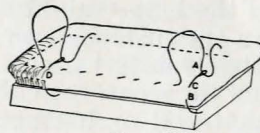


Fig. 42

The hard edge on this chair is made at this step. It is made by stitching up and down thru the edge until a firm roll is formed. Begin at a corner with a curved needle and sewing twine. The stitches are taken as at A, Figure 42, the first time around. The lower stitch is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches above the row of tacks and the upper stitch is halfway between the frame edge and the edge of the springs. The second time around, take smaller stitches, securing them now and then with a catch stitch; the third time around the stitch is the same as the first.

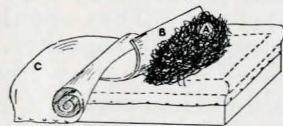


Fig. 43



If a very soft seat is desired another layer of stuffing and wadding may be added. For a less cushiony seat merely add a layer of wadding or cotton batting. Lay a muslin covering over all and tack down, being especially careful to fold neatly at the corners. (See Figure 43).



Fig. 44

Now the final cover is put on. This is fastened under the framework or along the sides. If along the sides, gimp is added to cover over the raw edge. A large or small headed gimp tack may be used. If the large headed tack is used, be sure to space them evenly along the edge. Last of all, line the underneath part of the seat with a smooth cloth such as cambric.

If the back has springs, finish as the seat. If merely padded, place webbing, padding, and sew securely. Cover with muslin, then with final covering. Usually the front part of the back of the chair is padded more than the back.

If the back or seat of the chair is buttoned, do not tack the back covering permanently until the buttoning is done. Mark the place for the buttons, placing alternately in rows. Thread the longstraight upholstery needle with linen twine, put thru the cushion from the back, thread thru the shank of the button, reinsert needle  $\frac{1}{4}$  on an inch from where it came thru and tie securely at the back. Cover the back with the same material or harmonizing material.

#### REPAIRING REMOVABLE CUSHIONS

**Box cushion with springs.** Chair, Figure 44, may have a cushion with springs or it may be merely padded. The cushion with springs is similar to those used on davenportes which are made with spring units for a foundation. Remove covering and padding; save both. Examine springs carefully. They should each be encased in muslin and the group sewed together. If any are broken they may be replaced for four or five cents a spring. Mend the case to hold each securely. Now sew a layer of excelsior and hair completely over the springs, having the top and bottom thicker than the sides. Cover this with a layer of cotton

batting. Cover with muslin by cutting two pieces for top and bottom. These pieces should be one inch larger on all sides than the cushion. Cut four pieces lengthwise of material for the sides. These pieces should be one inch larger on all sides also. Pin all pieces in place, begin at the center, and pin toward the corners. Sew firmly with a back stitch and trim off the seams.

The final covering is made of the same material as the rest of the chair or of material that harmonizes with the other furnishings in the room. Cut the covering using the old cover for pattern; be sure to allow for seams. Pin to cushion, wrong side out, remove, and stitch all except one side. Turn and place over cushion. Blind stitch the last seam in place. If cording is desired, cut a bias strip of material 2 inches wide, fold in half, right side out, and place between the layers of cloth at the seams, the folded edge in. Stitch, allowing about  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch for cord. Run several strands of coarse string thru to fill out the fold which makes the cordlike effect.

**Cushion without springs.** Take measurements of old cushion, then remove covering. Fluff up stuffing, air, and clean.

Use heavy cotton material for under cover. Cut top and bottom pieces the same size (each one inch longer and one inch wider than the desired size of cushion). Cut a side strip five inches wide and three inches longer than the sum length of sides and ends. Turn under ends of side strip one inch and baste. Begin at middle of one side of top piece and baste top piece and side together. Join bottom piece to side piece in the same manner. (The ends of the side piece will overlap leaving a place to insert the filling.) Stitch quarter-inch seams. Turn right side out and box seam the edges and corners. This is done by stitching one-eighth inch in from all edges and corners.

Turn the cover wrong side out. On the top, bottom, sides, and ends baste securely a thick layer of cotton batting; turn the cover right side out and fill with hair, tow, or excelsior, packing it firmly. Begin at the farther corners and stuff each tightly and then fill in between; continue to fill from the sides toward the center. Shake and spread the material with the hands to prevent lumping, pat the cushion on the outside to keep it flat and the edges well squared. When no more will go in sew up the opening and smooth any irregularity of stuffing.



Shape the cushion by sewing diagonally thru the top and side beginning on the top, two inches from the edge. Bring the needle diagonally down thru two inches of the depth of the cushion. Insert the needle again one-half inch to the left of the last stitch. When upper edge is shaped, reverse and shape bottom edge in the same way. Tack center of cushion at regular intervals to hold the stuffing in place.

The outer cover may be made of cretonne, linen, silk, rep, damask, velour, or tapestry. The top and the bottom are cut one inch wider and longer than the finished cushion. Each is centered and basted to place over the edge of the cushion and fastened to position with a long slant stitch. The side piece for outer cover is cut one inch wider than the finished cushion and three inches longer than the sum length of sides and ends. Turn the ends of strip under one-half inch and baste. Turn the side edges under one-half inch. Pipe, bind, cord, or leave edges plain. Fasten strip to cushion by pinning to place, starting at the center of one side. Sew to cushion using slip or blind stitch. Blind stitch where sides pieces join.