

What's Inside:

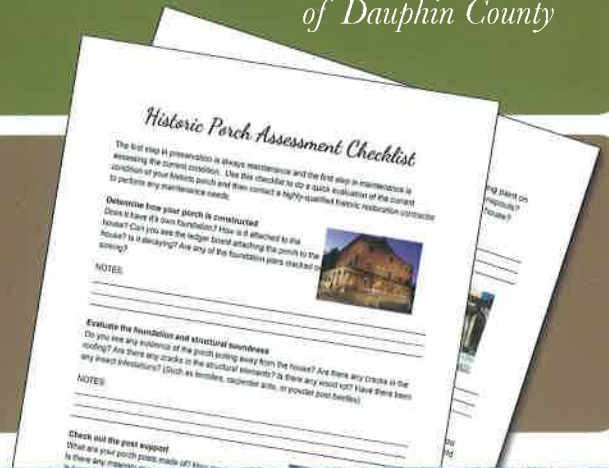
- A historic column company for historic preservation projects
- Preservation Education: Porch Terms
- The prettiest porch in Harrisburg
(if we do say so ourselves)
- Porches through the years

“We thank you for your hard work and the many extra hours of time Historic Restorations put into going above and beyond. We all also appreciated the tour of your shop which gave us added comfort in knowing that the work off site was being handled in a professional environment. Thank you so very much we look forward to having you do more work in the future for the society.”

Nicole McMullen, *Executive Director, Historical Society of Dauphin County*

Want our Historic Porch Assessment Checklist? It's a hot item, so grab them while you can!

Email Moria at mkarahalis@historic-restorations.com, call 717-291-4688, or visit www.historic-restorations.com/porches to get yours!



Historic Restorations

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*The John Harris-Simon Cameron
Mansion in Harrisburg*

Introduction

Summer is winding down, but there are a few warm days to still enjoy and I LOVE fall.

One of the things I like most about the warm weather (and not hazy, hot, and humid) is sitting on my front porch. My porch is one of my favorite spots for reading books, sipping iced tea, listening to the birds chirp and the kids playing, relaxing with friends, family, and neighbors... memories made on porches always bring a smile to my face.

My dream porch is a grand wrap-around farmhouse porch. The front porch I actually have is a very ordinary row-house front porch from the early 20th Century. But the real truth is, I'll take any porch you want to give me because I simply love porches. Tall ones, short ones, fat ones, skinny ones, fancy ones and plain ones, the outgoing ones that are always out front, and the shy ones that hang around the sides or at the back - they are all lovely to me.

If you're a fellow porch-lover, you'll enjoy ogling some porch pictures on Pinterest. (While you're there, make sure you visit our page at [pinterest.com/historrestor](https://www.pinterest.com/historrestor) and follow us!) Some of my favorite Pinterest porch searches are "historic wrap-around porches" and "antebellum porches", but don't forget to search for "historic porch restoration" too!

Last year we wrapped up our historic porch restoration project at the Harris-Cameron Mansion in Harrisburg (we were back this summer to repair the cornice and do some window restoration). That project really got me wondering about the history of porches and how they've evolved over the years, so we did some research and discovered some pretty interesting stuff about porches.

Because I like to share all this interesting stuff I learn, our newsletter this month is dedicated to the theme of porches. So grab your favorite drink, head out to your porch and start reading!

All my best,
Danell



Preservation In Progress: The John Harris-Simon Cameron Mansion in Harrisburg



HISTORY OF THE HARRIS' HOME

In the early 1700s, Harrisburg's founder, John Harris, immigrated from England after receiving a land grant. Upon arrival, he built a homestead on the bank of the Susquehanna River, established a trading post and a ferry business. Harris became known for his fair dealings and good relationship with local Native Americans.

After his death in 1748, his son, John Harris, Jr. inherited the home, business and continued the legacy of good relationships with local Native Americans. Tired of evacuating their original home whenever the river flooded, Harris moved his family in 1766. He chose the current site of the mansion after observing that even during the worst flooding, the river never reached the top of the rise in the ground the mansion sits on.

Originally constructed in the Georgian style of architecture using locally quarried limestone, the house had eight owners and each made changes. In the early 1800s a rear wing was added, and in 1863 the house underwent significant changes when Simon Cameron (seven-time U.S. Senator, Lincoln's first Secretary of War and former Ambassador to Russia) purchased the house and set out to convert it to a grand Victorian mansion in the Italianate style. When Cameron died, his sister donated the house and other family items to the Historical Society of Dauphin County.

OUR WORK ON THE HARRIS-CAMERON MANSION

Last year we worked with the Historical Society, Murphy & Dittenhafer Architects and McCoy Brothers to repair and restore the Victorian style front porch on the mansion.

The brick piers that supported the floor were falling apart. The corner of the roof system was completely rotted out due to spouting and gutters that weren't emptying water away from the porch, and there was a vermin infestation beneath the porch, compromising its structural stability.

On top of the disrepair, there were alterations to the style of the porch over the years. The Historical Society wanted the porch restored to its original style.

We got to work and started with a very careful demolition. There were a lot of important materials on the porch that we encased in plywood boxed to protect during the demolition process (the stone where George Washington stood in 1780, an original sandstone step that was already cracked, etc.). All the elements of the porch were carefully protected to prevent any damage during the construction process.

We removed all existing trim, arches, columns, floor, and skirtboard that could be salvaged and took them back to our shop where we removed lead paint, repaired pieces where necessary, fabricated new pieces as needed to match existing pieces and reassembled them. New columns and elliptical arches were fabricated from mahogany wood to match the style of the existing columns and arches.

We addressed the foundation issues by pouring a proper foundation and rebuilding the brick piers using a combination of the existing brick and salvaged brick. And we leveled the roof with a large, carrier beam on the front.

The finishing touches of the beautification process were repairing the flooring and ceiling. Originally made of vertical fir, mahogany was chosen instead for the spots that needed replaced. While mahogany would not have been used as an exterior wood when the porch was originally built, it is an acceptable replacement material in preservation standards and holds up better as an exterior wood than many original woods.



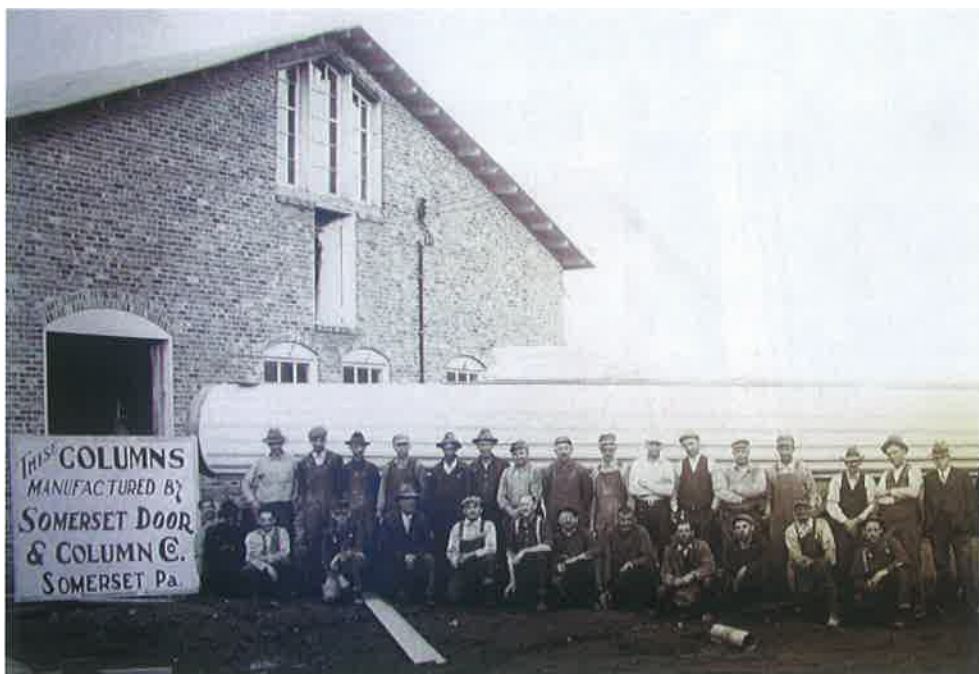
Preservation Spotlight: Somerset Door & Column Company

When we needed to reproduce a few columns at the Harris-Cameron Mansion porch restoration project to match existing columns we were salvaging - we turned to Somerset Door & Column Company.

For over 100 years, Somerset Door & Column Company has manufactured architectural wood columns, doors, and entryways. Built on tradition and authenticity, Somerset Door & Column uses trained artisan craftsmen and kiln-dried domestic and imported hardwoods to create long-lasting, high-quality custom doors and columns. While some manufacturers outsource parts of their production process, Somerset maintains complete control over the quality of their production process by fabricating everything on-site at their facilities.

We had previously worked with Somerset Door & Column on another historic porch restoration we did in Staten Island and knew their quality of work was commendable. Chuck is pretty picky about the vendors and contractors we work with (it's one of the things we like most about him) and he gives Somerset a solid two thumbs up.

"There isn't anything they can't do", he says.



To read the full mansion history, project details, & see all the before and after pictures, visit the project page at: [historic-restorations.com/portfolio/harris-mansion-harrisburg](https://www.historic-restorations.com/portfolio/harris-mansion-harrisburg)

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

HISTORIC HOUSE STORIES WANTED

WE WANT YOUR HOUSTORIES!



We're working on putting together a collection that features people who love their older homes, their stories, and why they love their historic homes.

Did you save your home from a wrecking ball?

Did you tear off vinyl siding and rip out Pergo to restore it to its previous glory?

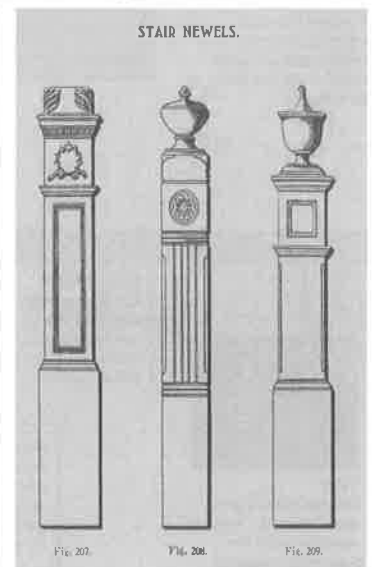
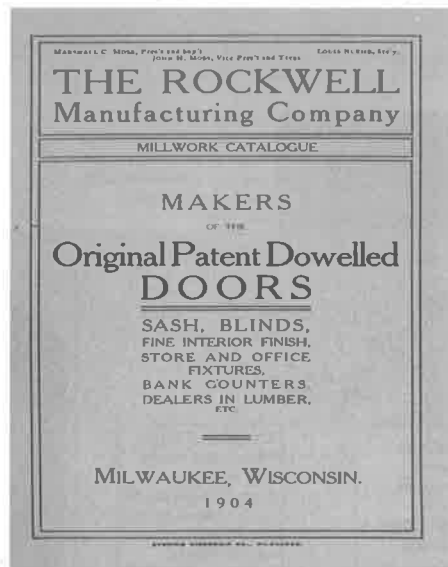
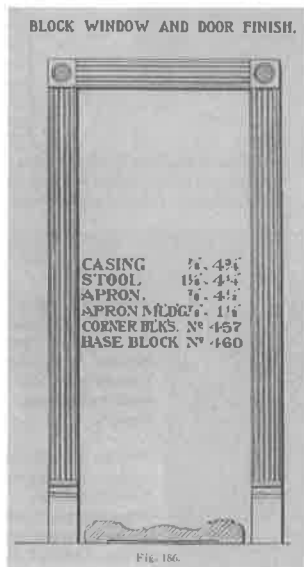
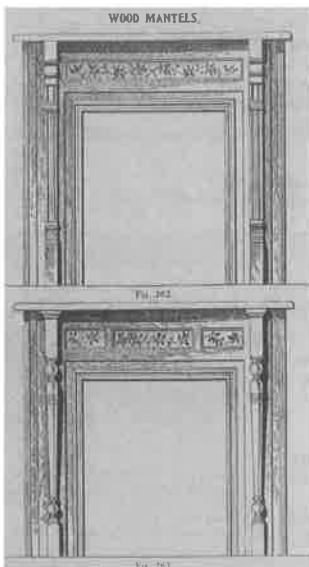
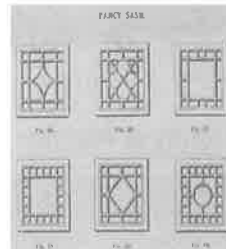
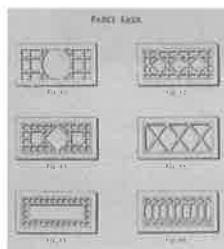
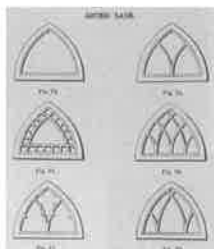
Are you the proud owner of a house passed down generation after generation in your family?

If you'd like to have your houstory featured, contact Lois at 717.291.4688 or lgrshong@historic-restorations.com

We can't wait to hear all your houstories!

A Peek Into the Past

THE ROCKWELL MILLWORK CATALOGUE



Penelope's Preservation Pointers

Hi everybody! Penelope here... this is the second time my Mommy told me I needed to write about something for the newsletter and I'm still pretty nervous. (But I'm going to try not to pee on anything while I'm writing.)

Mommy said this time I should write about porches. Apparently porches are a pretty big deal. (I mean, I guess they are, because Daddy has been working awfully hard to teach me to stay on the porch, so obviously they are important.)

So I started doing some research and man... there's a lot to learn about porches! I'm still a puppy and the words were kinda confusing. Like "frieze" - I thought that meant "Don't you dare!" because that's what Daddy says whenever I try to steal his food.

But it turns out it means something entirely different when you talk about a "frieze" on a porch. And I thought some of you might be confused by porch terms too. So I wrote down some porch terms and what they mean. (Mommy was impressed, she thought my penmanship was very neat and hung my work up on the refrigerator.)

I learned so much that it was too hard to write it all in just my column, so I made a timeline instead. I worked very hard on it (and needed Daddy to help me get glue out of my hair several times), so I hope you like it.



Learn the Language ANATOMY OF PORCH TERMS

FASCIA: The flat trim board running along the front edge of the porch roof, just below the singles. It hides the ends of the porch roof rafters, giving the front of the porch a finished look.

ENTABLATURE: The layers of trim between the tops of the porch posts and bottom of the porch roof - including the architrave, frieze, and cornice layers.

FRIEZE BEAM AND BOARD: The frieze beam is the structural beam that supports the porch roof and transfers its weight to the porch posts or columns. The frieze board is the decorative trim board that hides the frieze beam.

CAPITAL: The decorative, uppermost part of a post or column.

BALUSTRADE: Railing system on a porch, including balusters (the vertical spindles between the handrail and the bottom railings), rails, and posts.

STRINGERS: The angled, saw-toothed boards seen on the sides of staircases that support the individual stairs. They are typically spaced every 16 inches and are often covered by trim boards.

NEWEL POST: The post found on, or just beside the bottom step of the stairs. It anchors the balustrade at the bottom of the stairs where there is no column or post.

Preservation Education A History of Porches

Late 1700's
Porches were utilitarian, covered doorways or flanked "stooped" that protected the main entrances from the weather and served as transitions to and from the outdoors

1800's
Porches in the Northeast were called "Piazas", a word adapted from the Italian word for "open space"
Porches in the south were called "verandas", reflecting the British design influences from India. (This would become the dominant term along the East Coast.)
Porches in French Colonial areas wrapped around houses and were referred to as "galleries".
Porches in Spanish colonial architecture were called "arcades".

1920's and 50's
As autos hit the roads, porches move to the side of the house as we retreat from the noise and dirt and seek more privacy. Eventually they will end up at the back of the house where they will predominantly stay in new architecture for the next fifty or sixty years.



1830's and 40's
The classic columns of the Greek Revival make their way onto porches of public buildings, hotels, and mansions

1873
President Rutherford B. Hayes says, The best part of the present house is the veranda. But I would enlarge it. I want a veranda with a house attached.

1700's

1800's

1900's



1778
George Washington sets the porch building standard with his American classical porch at Mt. Vernon

Early 1800's
Longer porches that span the entire front of homes become more popular

MID 1800'S

Porches have fully evolved from transition spaces into gathering spaces for socializing

The growing middle class builds homes with elaborate porches dressed with fancy millwork in new suburban neighborhoods



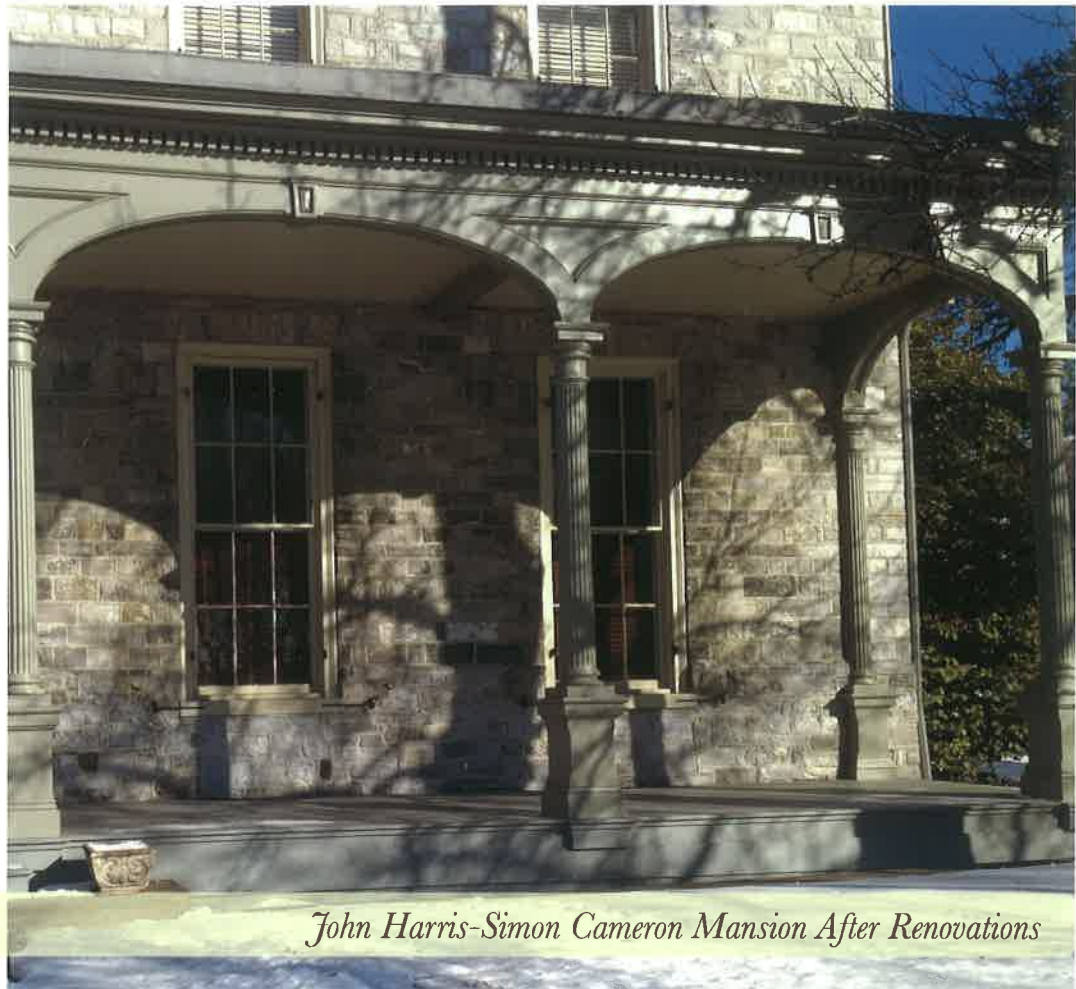
Late 1800's
Highly decorated wrap-around Queen Anne style porches become wildly popular and are even added to small and simple houses.

Porches are now used as outdoor living spaces and their shaded and landscaped privacy offers a discreet meeting spot in an age obsessed with propriety.

Early 1900's

Growing understanding and acceptance of germ theory bring medicinal value to porches as doctors tout benefits of fresh air.

Hipped roofs and exposed rafters hit the scene with bungalow architecture.
SLEEPING PORCHES BECOME POPULAR AS TUBERCULOSIS SOARS.



John Harris-Simon Cameron Mansion After Renovations

Upcoming Events

5th Annual Tavern Dinner for the Haldeman Mansion, *Saturday, September 13, 4:30-7:30 pm*

The \$40 dinner includes appetizers, drinks and dessert. Music will be provided by local musicians and there will be a tour of the mansion for those interested. All funds go to the roof fund. Space is limited so call now to reserve your space! The event will be held at 230 Locust Grove Road, Bainbridge.

For more information: contact Elaine Jackson at 717-426-3794

Back to Basics: DIY Wine and Cheese, *Thursday, September 18, 2014, 6:30-8 pm*

Wine and cheese go together like, well, wine and cheese! In this workshop, you'll learn how easy it is to make your own delicious wine and cheese at home. Using a mixture of presentation and demonstration (using grapes cultivated at Wheatland, no less) to teach you all that you'll need to get started making wine and cheese. Impress family and friends at the next party or special occasion when you serve wine and cheese that you made yourself!

For more information: contact LancasterHistory.org at 717-392-4633 or by www.lancasterhistory.org

Pointers from Preservationists, *Saturday, September 20, 7 pm*

Historic Restorations will present the basics of historic home maintenance and preservation to the Manchester Township Historical Society. The event will be held at the Manchester Township Building located at 3200 Farmtrail Road, York, PA 17406-5699

For more information: contact Mike Beshore at 717-668-9222 or sites.google.com/site/manchestertownshipprofiles

RiverTownes Driving Tour, *Saturday, September 27*

Organized by the Central Pennsylvania Preservation Society. Historic Sites in Marietta, Wrightsville and Columbia.

For more information: contact Moira at 717-291-4688 or mkarahaliscentralpennsylvaniapreservationsociety.org