

HOW SHALL I **PAINT** MY HOUSE?

BY ROBERT SCHWEITZER

THE BORROWED TITLE OF THIS ARTICLE was the name of a popular 19th-century book, and the query still holds true for many late 20th-century homeowners. The question is even more complex today in that we have so many historic homes and such an array of colors to choose from. The task of selecting paint colors can seem mind-boggling, but there are ways to approach the decision that can diminish the frustration and ensure your results are everything you hope for.



What About White?

Why paint a color at all? A coat of white can work wonderfully well, although most historic homes were white for only a short period in their lives, if at all. Many people think their house was always white, but as any painter can tell you, that is almost always incorrect.

White was a common color choice around the turn of the century due to the massive popularity of the “White City”—the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Most of the large Beaux Arts-style exposition buildings were painted white and presented a pristine appearance. White also made an appearance in the 1930s. Due to the Great Depression, many people could only afford the least expensive of paints, and that was white. And during this same period, Colonial Revival-style homes were often shown in white as well.

However, what wonderful changes can come over a building when true historical painting techniques are applied. I can recall the case of a Queen Anne Victorian that was all white. When it was painted in the traditional five-color Victorian palette, though, people stopped and asked the owner if the house had recently been moved to that spot. It seemed that no one had noticed it before.

When deciding what color to paint your early-20th-century home, knowing its architectural style can really help. Gothic Revival homes have different style elements than do bungalows. When architectural elements such as windows, porches and entryways are painted correctly, they add greatly to the visual impact and enjoyment of the home. Just as clothing fashion evolved in the past, so too did the types of colors and their placement on the facades of buildings.

What Came Before

A brief history of colors will hopefully aid those seeking a jumping-off point for changing their house color. The earliest homes in my part of the country (the Midwest) were of the Greek- and Gothic-Revival styles. Built in the 1840s and 1850s, they tended to be a light color—off-white or other lightly tinted colors such as gray or yellow. Italianate and Second Empire homes from the

Longlife Ready Mixed Pure Paint

TRADE NAME	DESCRIPTION	TRADE NAME
30438A TINTED WHITE	For description see opposite page. Painted only in the following colors. When ordering indicate catalog number and name of color.	30438B OUTSIDE WHITE
30438B CREAM TINT		30438C PEARL
30438C CREAM		30438D LIGHT STONE
30438D STRAY		30438E YELLOW OAK
30438E HUFF		30438F LIGHT BARK
30438F CASSEY		30438G OAKEN TINT
30438G COLONIAL YELLOW		30438H APPLE GREEN
30438H DUFF		30438I PEA GREEN
30438I PINE		30438J MEDIUM GREEN
30438J FAWN		30438K HILL GREEN
30438K ENGLISH CRISTE OIL		30438L WILLOW GREEN
		30438M SLATE
		30438N AZURE BLUE
		30438O LIGHT BLUE
		30438P HEAVY
		30438Q SEAL BROWN
		30438R LEATHER BROWN

Concrete or Stucco Paint

For Cement Floors and Walls. See Opposite Page for Description.

TRADE NAME	DESCRIPTION	TRADE NAME
30438L WHITE	It outperforms on wall as paint.	30438M SLATE
30438M CONCRETE GRAY		30438N AZURE BLUE
		30438O LIGHT BLUE
		30438P HEAVY
		30438Q SEAL BROWN
		30438R LEATHER BROWN
		30438S BROWN STONE
		30438T BROWN TAN
		30438U BUFF STONE
		30438V MORE GREEN

next two decades were much darker colors—green, brown, maroon. These homes were enlivened with highlighted details in contrasting colors, often as many as four or five.

The 1880s and 1890s saw Queen Anne and Colonial Revival-style homes with an even wider choice of colors. The early 20th century witnessed the Craftsman homes, modest bungalows and English Revivals or Tudors of the Arts and Crafts era. These houses tended to be less ornately painted but used combinations of very dark and very light body colors, normally three to four colors in all.

New Colonial designs introduced in the 1920s and 1930s included Cape Cod, Williamsburg, Georgian and Dutch Colonial. This era of home was painted in simpler colors—yellows, blues and white—bringing the color wheel full circle from light to dark and back to light in 100 years.

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