

New York State Historical Association

Cooperstown, N. Y. 13326

Fenimore House

The Farmers' Museum

Some suggestions which may be helpful in re: the buildings of the Cobblestone Society

The benches and grained panels can be cleaned down with either: soon.
3% solution of tri-sodium phosphate in warm water, or Ivory soap
in water(warm), with 2 tblespns of turpentine per qt. solution.

After, cleaning with either of above, they can be kept clean and polished
with a solution of: 1 pint each of turpentine, boiled linseed oil, vinegar
and 1/3 cup of denatured alcohol. Shake before using, and apply sparingly
with a rag. Blue kalsomined walls to be brushed clean of dust with soft
brush, and re-plastered areas to be toned in with harmonizing colour. The
toning colours could be made out of the same presumable formula as the
original paint, which was usually pigments dissolved in a glue-water size.

Another possibility is to mix the tinting colours in a stronger size
of polyvinylacetate emulsion (Elmer's Glue is a good example of this mater-
ial). If this mixture is thinned way down to the consistency of skimmed
milk (with cold water), it will give probably a better bond than glue water.
A colleague of mine has suggested that if you wanted to stabilize all of
the blue areas, you might wish to experiment with this material in some
obscure corner first. It would have to be put on with a soft brush, and of
course if you wished to do all the walls this way it would be necessary to
write to a company like Borden's which manufactures this material and find
out what the wholesale price of a drum of Polyvinyl acetate emulsion is.
Of course this would be a time-consuming job, and a bit expensive; but I
mention it as about the only practical material which might work, if there
aren't too many layers of paint on the surface. Incidentally the wet
colour of the emulsion-tinting colour mix will probably be different from
the dry tone; so be sure to experiment before you paint in the patched
areas.

The brown lower panels seem to be oil paint. The loose paint here will
have to be brushed off and the blank areas sized before new paint is
applied.

The altar mural should have only losses patched and in-painted. Do not
anyone over-paint what is there, in order to make it look "better than new".

The rugs could be cleaned by a professional establishment which will pro-
bably prolong their life, and even rejuvenate some of the colour. But be
sure to first take a sample from them and check their reaction to water,
soap, detergent, and dry-cleaning solvents, to be sure they don't fade or
bleed. On the more worn rugs, some sewn on edging tape might help keep
them from unraveling more. Also a moth-proofing treatment wouldn't hurt.

Do you need both organs on display?

Some of the wood areas around the windows may need a coating of "Pentide", "Woodlife", or "Decaysnot", and some paint to preserve them.

The basement area (proposed museum) is fine so far. Walls and ceilings, when painted white, will (plus windows) give good natural illumination. The vertical timbers and windows can be cleaned and painted a uniform neutral wood-tone or grey-green colour. The timbers by the way are too good to be boxed in.

The preliminary wiring arrangements and the floor are very good. This is potentially a good flexible exhibitions area. Try to resist any permanent or static installations which cannot be changed if desired. Any exhibit props, such as cases, lights, standards, etc. should avoid as much as practical the "genuine plastic, chrome-plated look, and be in harmony with the surroundings.

The school has not enough early 1800's to do a whole unit. I would suggest doing a cross-section of the generations who attended the school, into possibly three segments across the room, with appropriate materials grouped with them. The walls need a bit of cleaning, but the paint scheme looks fine. Couldn't the overhead non-functioning lamps be eliminated? They distract from the story. The library with its fine collection could be utilized as an exhibit area. Just be sure to separate research and documentary books from "exhibit" books. Don't put books, papers, or wood objects in the basement in its present state. It's too damp.

Gaine's school: Clean up both toilet areas, and repair roofs and sills where necessary, and put protective wire screens over west windows. When the basic structural maintenance on this building has been done is plenty of time to worry about future function of building. If you are planning to eventually heat it, chimney will need fixing.

Per E. Guldbeck

PEG/abt