Ornate Victorian Screendoor Pattern & Plan Book

A comprehensive guide for constructing authentic-looking Victorian scrollwork or ball & spindle type screendoors—complete with detailed patterns & instructions.

PLUS

Sources of companies that make custom screen doors and spindles.

We own a modest Victorian home that had much of its original fancywork taken off at one time or another in the name of modernization. We had seen Victorian screen doors in old pictures and plan books and thought one would add a great deal to our house. We wanted the design and proportions to be as close to authentic as possible so we started looking for an original one to use as a pattern. Well, we found that task easier said than done. During the next year or so we happened onto two of them. One in an antique store too badly rotted to use but good enough to take the proportions from and another still in use. I bought the one in the antique store and thanks to the kindness of the owners of the second, was able to measure and trace brackets from theirs.

I feel that the original screen doors were taken down for one of two reasons. Either they fell apart or people wanted a combination storm and screen door instead of just a screen. With today's high cost of energy, the second down fall of old screen doors was a consideration for ourselves. After a lot of brainstorming, my wife and I came upon the idea of having inserts like more modern doors—one a screen and one a storm. In visiting a local glass dealership, I found they could make just want we needed out of aluminum. The aluminum frame available through our dealer is 5/8" x 5/16" so I simply routed out the inside edge of the door so the frame fits flush on the inside and isn't visible from the outside.

One problem that we ran into was that storm door windows for safety have to be either shatterproof glass or plexiglass. The shatterproof glass has to be specially ordered to size and is very expensive. The plexiglass is expensive but not nearly as bad as shatterproof so that's what we went with. You'll need to check out your local suppliers.

The storm window is completely optional so if your existing door has adequate weatherproofing you could forget about the storm window insert. You would save yourself some money and actually have a more authentic door.

Use the following actual size patterns in any combination you wish to create your own door. They are exact copies of actual spindles and brackets found in Northern Illinois. Where wooden spindles are required you can look for a craftsman in your area to custom turn them or check out every lumber yard near you for machine made spindles you can adapt for your use. There are a lot of them out there if you're patient. Other sources are antique stores and flea markets. Our front door has old, authentic spindles and our back door has new reproductions from the Michael-Regan company (their flier is attached).

Another option is taking a thin piece of flat wood, tracing the pattern on it and cutting it out with a sabre saw. You wouldn't be able to tell that it wasn't spindles unless up close to the door.

I made two screen doors for our house with a table saw, router, and sabre saw. I made actual mortise and tenon joints but doweling using a doweling jig would be simpler although not nearly as strong. If buying a custom door check to see if they use mortise and tenon joints.

The original doors were made of wood that 1 1/4" thick called 5/4 (five quarters) stock. The wood has to be clear white pine or a knot free hardwood as knots would obviously weaken the door.

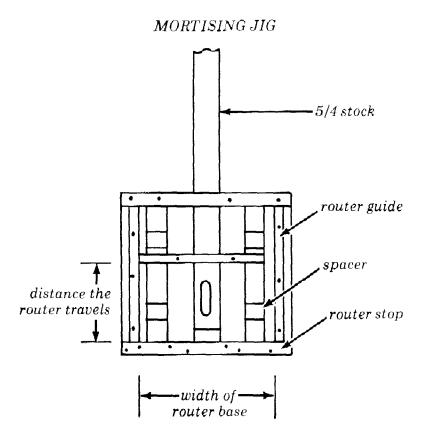
The mortises were cut using several successive passes with a router and homemade jig. The jig is a must to keep the router in the center of the board and to stop it from cutting too far forward or back. Tenons can be cut by hand or by standing the pieces of wood on end and using a table saw and tall push block to keep the board vertical. I rounded the edges of the tenon to fit in the rounded ends of the mortise. Squaring up the ends of the mortise would be more authentic but also more difficult.

If we can be of further help feel free to write or call us at:

Dan and Pat Miller 417 Algona Elgin, Illinois 60120 312-697-3370

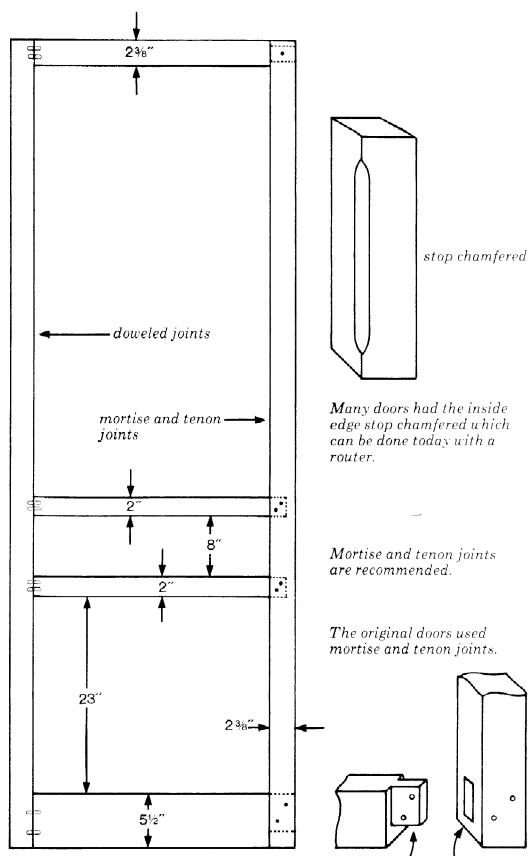
Your new door will bring enjoyment to you and beauty to your home.

Dan Miller





These are the proportions of an actual Victorian screen door. The length and width will be determined by your opening. Any variety of corner brackets and spindles can be used.

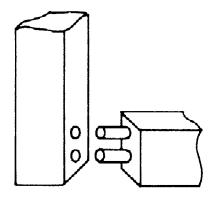


tenon

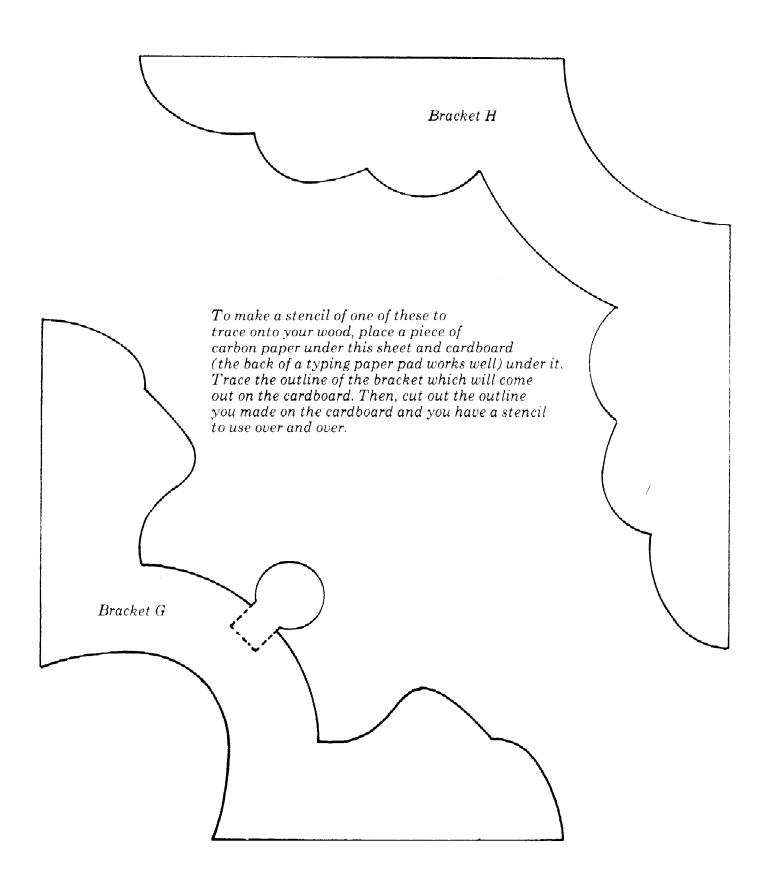
mortise

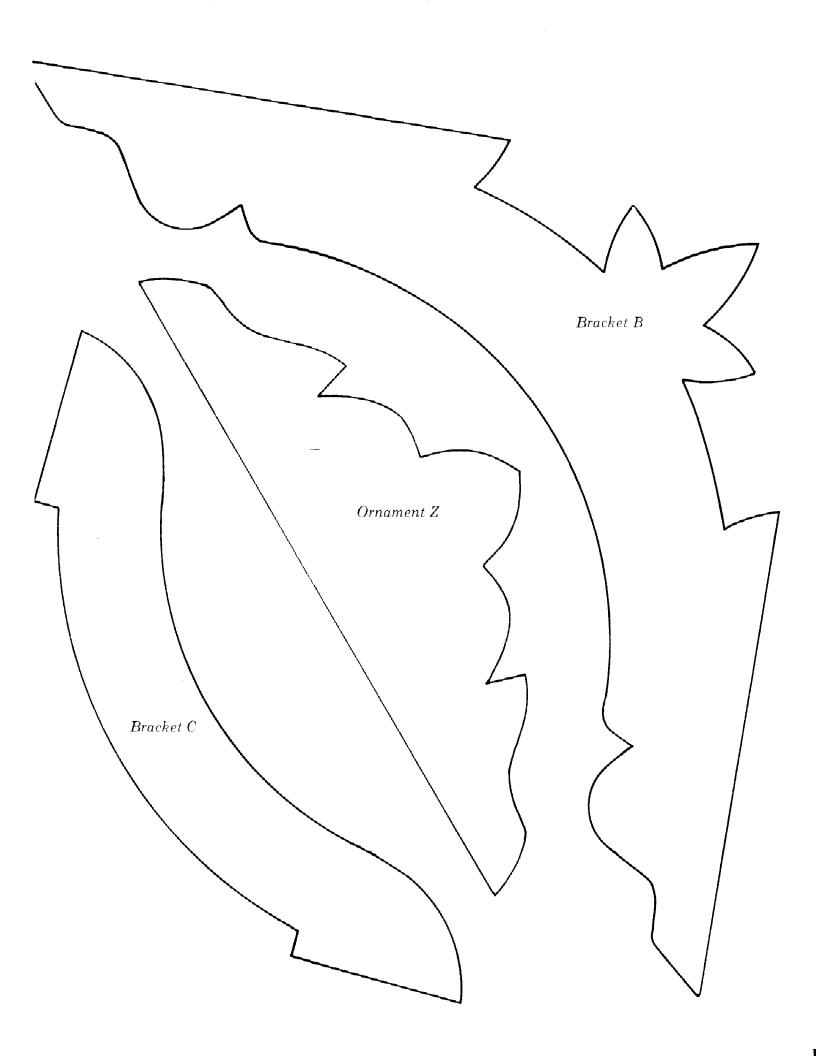
Be sure to use waterproof glue and prime <u>all</u> edges of the finished door with a good oil base primer

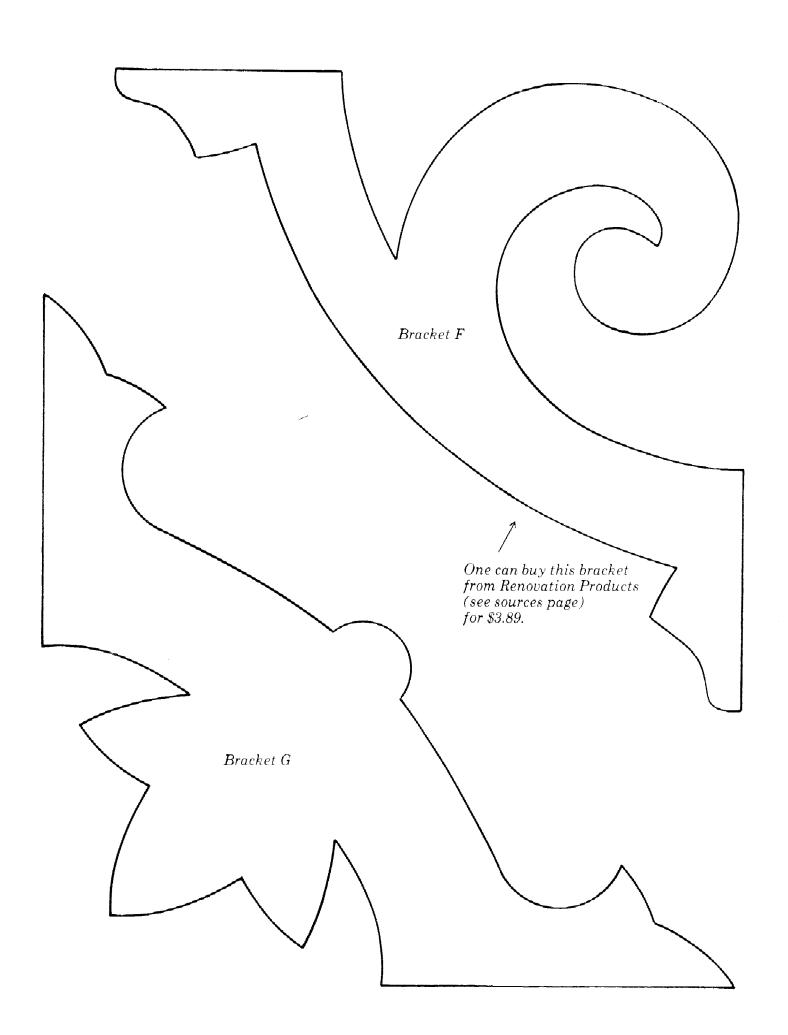
Doweling is made easy with a doweling jig and/or doweling centers. Check a good woodworking book for more information.

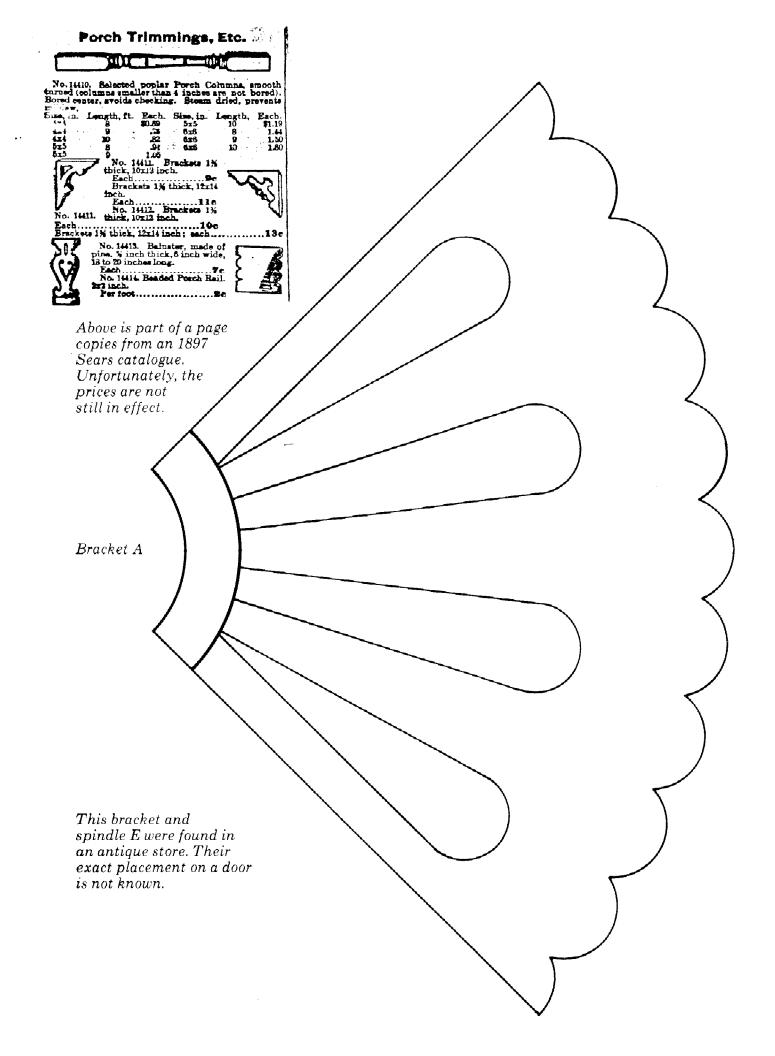


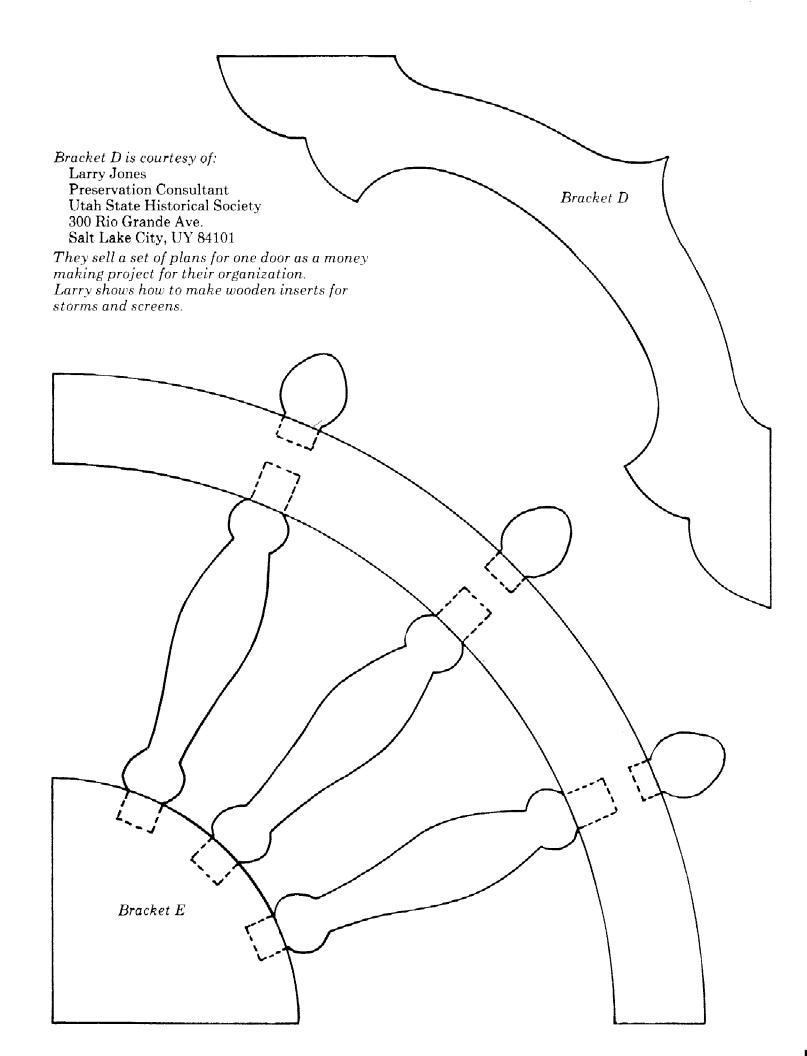
ACTUAL BRACKETS FOUND IN NORTHERN ILLINOIS FULL SIZE

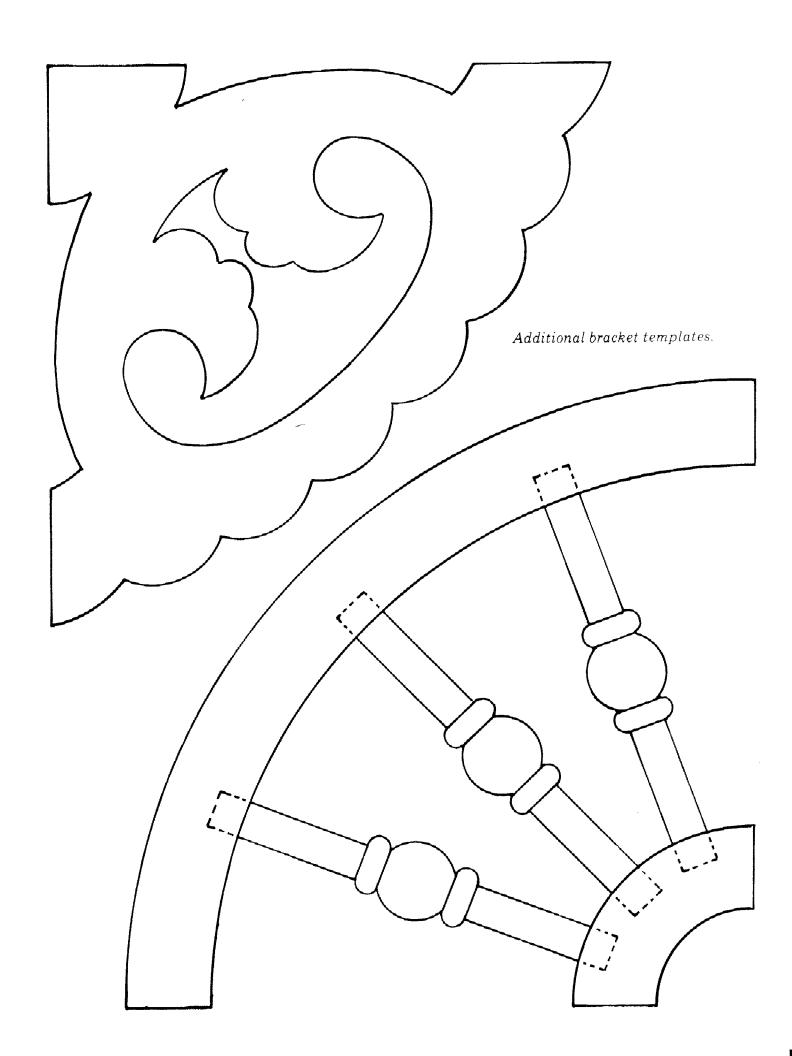


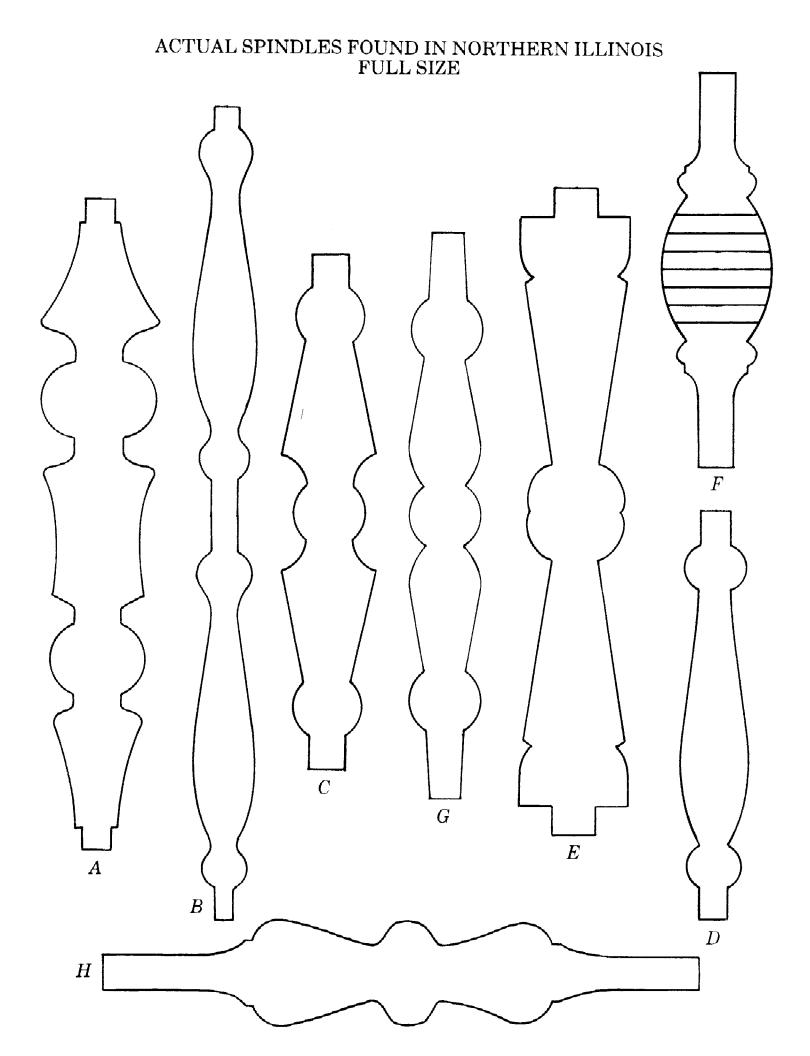




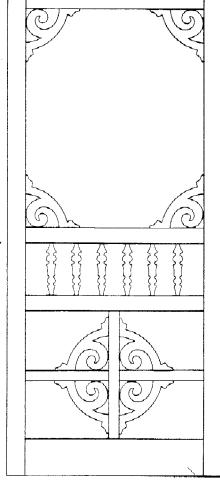


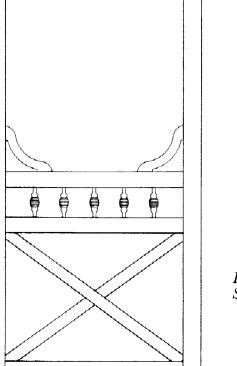






These sketches will give you an idea of the overall look of a given combination of brackets and spindles.





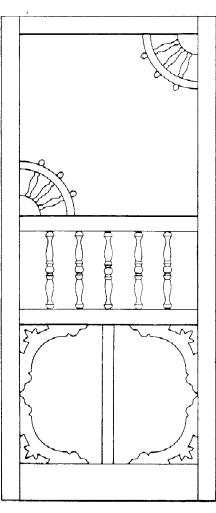
Bracket C Spindle F

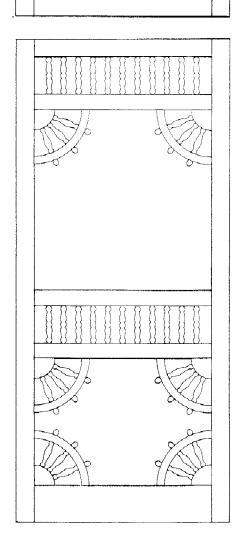
Bracket F SpindleA

This door uses authentic brackets and new spindles in a combination created by Patricia Miller.

> Bracket E Spindle #204 (Michael-Regan)







Bracket E Spindle G

Bracket G Spindle H Ornament Z

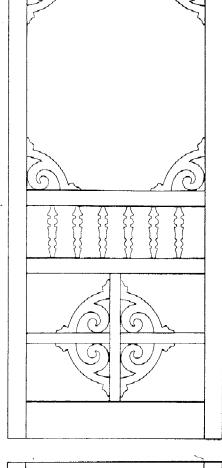
This door uses authentic brackets and spindles but in a combination created by Patricia Miller.

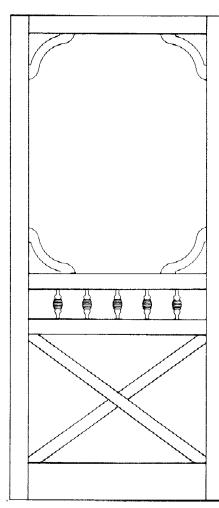
> Bracket H Spindle B

 $Use\ these\ blank$

brackets.

doors to sketch your own combination of spindles and These sketches will give you an idea of the overall look of a given combination of brackets and spindles.



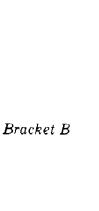


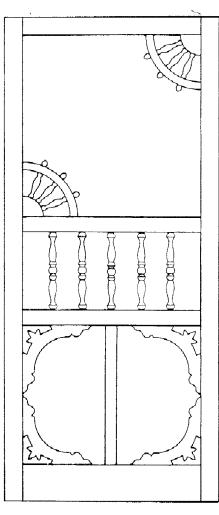
Bracket C Spindle F

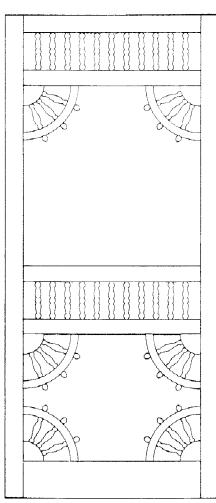
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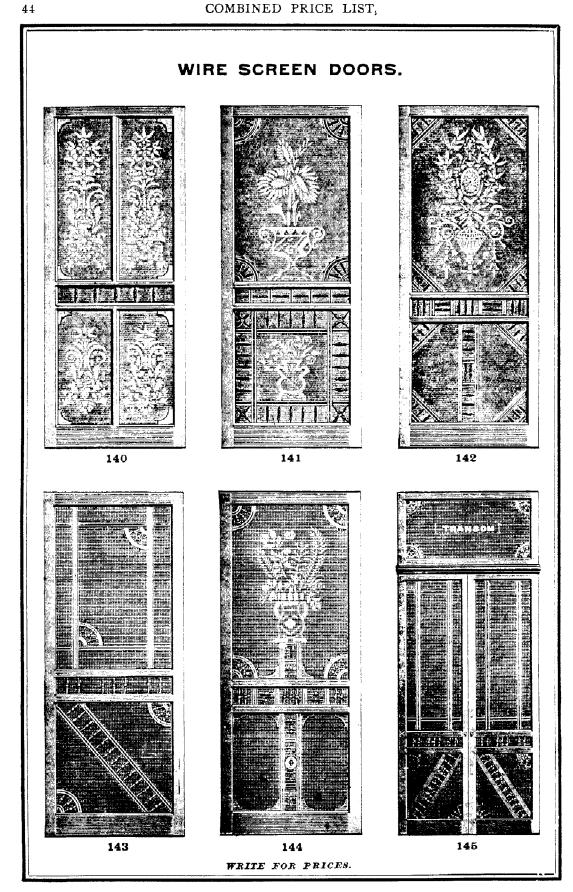




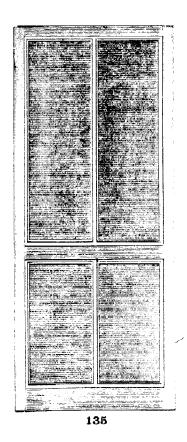


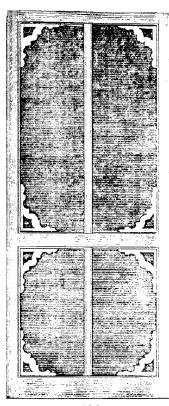
Bracket E Spindle G American Life Foundation and Study Institute Library of Victorian Culture Watkins Glen, New York 14891

COMBINED PRICE LIST,



WIRE SCREEN DOORS.





136

Painted in Two Coats of Best Green or Stained in Imitation of Walnut.

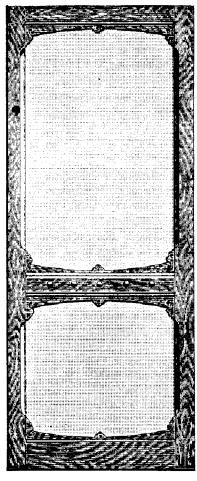
Covered with best Wire Cloth. Raised Moulding inside, O G Finish outside.

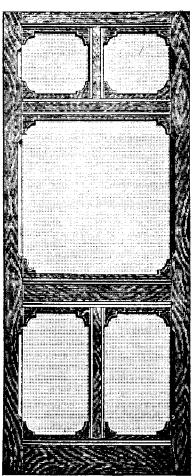
						Discount same as O G Doors.	
SIZE.					Thickness.	Price Plain.	Price with Brackets
Ft.	In. 6	×	Ft.	In. 6	Inches. 7·8	\$ cts. 2.15	\$ cts. 3.15
2	8	×	6	8	14	2.25	3.25
2	10	×	6	10	"	2.45	3.45
3	Q	×	7	0	16	2 70	3.70
2	6	×	6	6	1 1.8	2 30	3.30
2	8	×	6	8	**	2.40	3.40
2	10	×	ę	10	(1	2 60	3.60
3	0		7	0	21	2.90	3.90

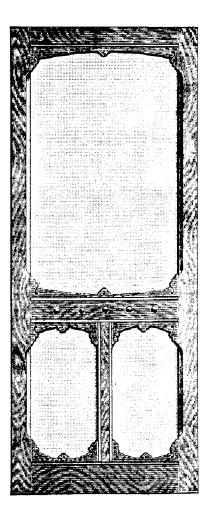
With Figured Cloth, add to list 40 cents.

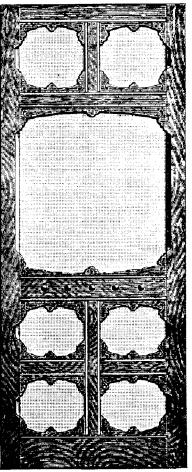
We make all our stock sizes one inch longer and half inch wider than list, to allow for fitting. Hardwood Screen Doors and Sash made to order.

This page is reprinted from Late Victorian Architectural Details

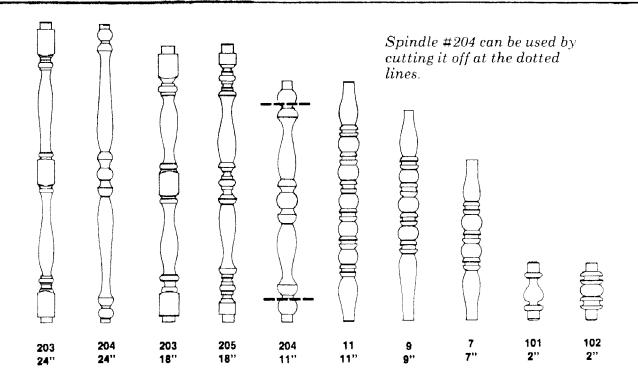








ALDER TURNED SPINDLES & RAILINGS



Check to see if your local lumber company stocks these spindles. If not, perhaps you can convince them to. If not, call or write the Michael-Regan company to find the nearest supplier.

Michael-Regan. division of Mi Mansion Industries, Inc. • 14711 Clark, E. Industry, CA 91745 213-968-9501

Other sources of spindles:

Cryder Creek Wood Shoppe, Inc. Box 19 Whitesville, N.Y. 14897

> Woodworks 4013-A Clay Avenue Fort Worth, Texas 76117

Recipe For Old-Fashioned Gingerbread

How to make new gingerbread... the kind of sawn-wood ornament that might have been stripped off your old house in the past. We'll have to leave it up to each individual to find a pattern appropriate in period and design. What's shown here is not pattern layout, but rather the best procedure for fabricating and installing the pieces. Even cooks who are new to the woodshop can handle this recipe.

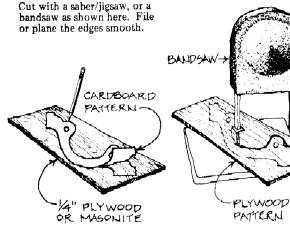
ingredients

- pattern or piece to copy
- oaktag or cardboard
- Masonite or ¼" plywood
- · dimensional lumber
- carpenter's wood glue or better
- polyurethane or butyl caulk
- exterior wood primer (same brand as finish paint)
- liquid wood preservative
- galvanized nails or screws
- exterior trim paint
- What about equipment? Whether this is an easy job or a hard one depends on the quality and versatility of your tool collection. If you intend to create multiple pieces, you may want to invest in a few good tools; a minimal number are required for this project. Here's a list: pencil; saber/jigsaw or bandsaw; clamps; various rasps, planes, or a spokeshave; sandpaper and sanding block; electric or hand drill; dipping tray; caulk gun; paintbrush.

the recipe

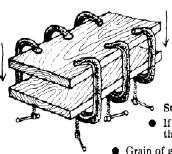
Step 1: MAKE THE TEMPLATE

- Draw the pattern actual size and cut it out of cardboard, oaktag, or other heavy paper.
- Trace this pattern onto Masonite or ¼-inch plywood. Plywood is better if you're making multiples and accuracy of the final pieces is important — it's more dimensionally stable than Masonite.
- This becomes your master template. Accuracy is important.



Step 2: CHOOSE THE LUMBER

- Poplar or clear pine are suitable. You must use clear pine because knots will weaken thin sections of sawn ornament.
- Oak is stronger and more durable than softwood. This is important if the designs have inherently weak, thin sections. However, oak is a bit more difficult to work than most other common woods.
- Redwood is most insect- and rot-proof. But it's soft, so it won't hold fasteners as well as oak. Keep this in mind during installation of redwood pieces.



Step 3: GLUE UP STOCK

- If necessary, glue up stock to the required thickness.
- Grain of glued pieces should run in approximately the same direction.
- Use carpenter's wood glue or better, such as a waterproof glue for exterior use. Clamp tightly and allow to set.

Step 4: TRANSFER THE PATTERN

• Trace the pattern carefully onto the wood. For maximum strength in the finished piece, be sure that the pattern follows

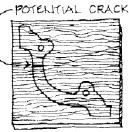
the long grain as much as possible. The drawing illustrates the inherent weakness of thin sections that cross the grain.



pattern with the long grain



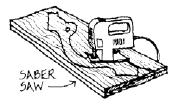
 Also, minimize waste by thinking ahead. Fit several patterns or pieces together on the wood like a jigsaw puzzle.



pattern across the grain

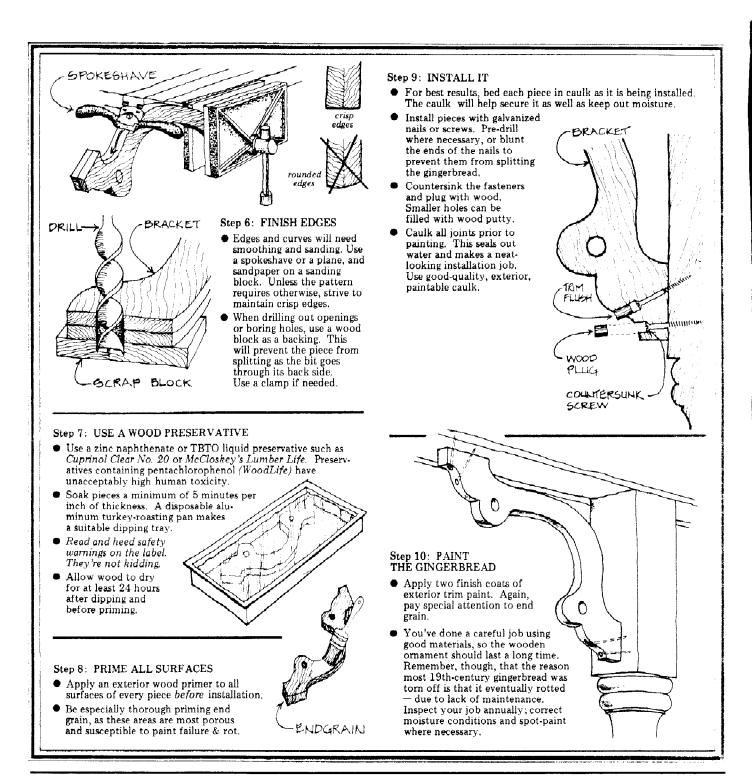
Step 5: CUT IT OUT

- Cut out the pattern with a saber/jigsaw or a bandsaw.
- Clean up the edges with cutting and smoothing tools such as rasps or planes.



By Patricia Poore Illustrations by Jonathan Poore

Restoration Design File #11



pattern sources

Where do ideas for patterns come from? Sawn-wood ornament was produced in as many shapes as there are imaginations . . . although each neighborhood, city, and region had its most popular patterns. Designs not only differed with the style of the house, but changed over time, too. The most popular patterns in 1870 are in some places quite unlike those common in 1900.

Your first sources for pattern designs should be local. Do any period photos of your house still exist? Are there similar houses in town with their gingerbread intact? If historical accuracy is paramount, a little investigation through the paint layers of your own building might reveal ghosts of the original ornament.

Next come pattern books of the period. Some are available in reprint editions; a few give details of the pieces besides showing them in place on the facade.

We've recently come across a source for *knee* or bracket patterns. This is a package of nine stencils from a turn-of-the-century woodworking mill in New England. They represent some of the most common designs from New England and elsewhere, and are suitable for porches, eaves, and gables. The nine paper stencils range in size from 6 in. \times 10 in. to 18 in. \times 30 in. All nine cost \$6.20 postpaid from Marsh Stream Enterprises, RFD 2, Box 490, Dept. OHJ, Brooks, Maine 04921.

Screen Doors

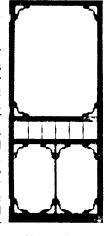
The bug season is upon us! Whatever type of flying critters you're trying to keep out, the screen doors made by the following companies will be a complement to your old house, as well as a bug barrier. Designs range from the very plain, some reminiscent of Craftsman woodwork, to ornate Queen Anne styles with abundant fretwork and turnings.

Four reasonably priced screen doors with minimal ornamentation can be mail-ordered from Remodelers & Renovators. Unfinished pine with aluminum screens, the doors are sold only in 32- or 36-inch widths. Prices begin at \$85 for a door with small sawn-ornament corner fans. Another, with turned spindles, costs \$125. Their complete catalog is \$2. Remodelers & Renovators, 611 E. 44th St., no. 5, Dept. OHJ, Boise, ID 83704. (208) 377-5465.

Solid oak screen doors with double-dowel joinery are made by Cascade. The doors are dipped in a wood sealer, and sold unfinished with an aluminum screen. Their six patterns, ranging from \$275 to \$425, are custom sized. A catalog showing all their doors is \$2. Cascade Mill & Glass Works, PO Box 316, Dept. OHJ, Ouray, CO 81427. (303) 325-4780.

The selection of 30 different designs from Old 'N Ornate starts with Beth's

Door - plain stiles and rails - and moves through more and more elaborate detailing. Made of Douglas fir, the doors are finished in your choice of stain and Spar varnish or paint (both in the color of your choice). Doors are custom sized and prices range from \$100 for Beth's to \$450 for a highly ornate door. All models are also sold as storm doors or burglar - resistant storm doors, (These



Nana's Door

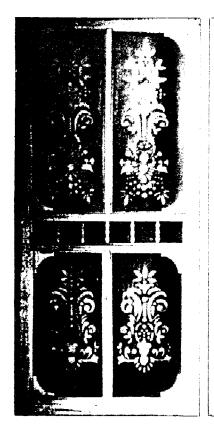
have Lenan acrylic glass and additional bolt locks.) Their catalog is free, Old 'N Ornate, 5175 Fox Hollow Rd., Dept. OHJ, Eugene, OR 97405, (503) 345-7636.

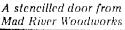
Heart-redwood screen doors in four detailed styles are manufactured by JMR. Glued and dowelled, these doors are sold unfinished (with no screen or hardware) for \$174.95 each. Stock widths are 32 in., 34 in., or 36 in., but custom sizes can be ordered. For a brochure, \$.50, write JMR Products, PO

Box 442, Dept. OHJ, St. Helena, CA 94574. (707) 942-4551.

If you'd rather not stencil your own screens (pictured in OHJ July 1980), Mad River Woodworks has a ready-made answer. Their SD-101 door, \$165, features Victorian stencilling in white paint on its gray aluminum screening. The screen alone, perfect for a replacement on an existing door, costs \$25 per panel. They offer four other screen doors, all based on original 1860s patterns. Made from a light-colored hardwood (usually adler or poplar), theen doors are sold unfinished. All doors are made to your size specifications. A cata' ig showing the screen doors and other Victorian-style millwork is \$2. Mad River Woodworks, PO Box 163, Dept. OHJ, Arcata, CA 95521. (707) 826-0629.

Need a screen door for your round-top or double-door entry? These are just two of the almost endless number of designs sold by Creative Openings. Other designs of special interest are a Craftsman style door, \$225, and their Queen Anne door, \$540. Made from solid white ash, white oak, or mahogany, these custom doors are mortised-and-tenoned, and sold with solid brass screens. Their catalog, \$3, gives you a good idea of their limitless design capabilities. Creative Openings, 1013 Holly St., Dept. OHJ, Bellingham, WA 98225. (206) 671-7435.







JMR's style B "The Sutter"

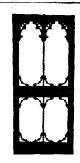




These two doors by Creative Openings show the range of screen door styles offered by the companies listed here.

The following ads were taken from:

Victorian Homes Magazine P.O. Box 61 Millers Falls, MA 01349



VICTORIAN Storm-Screen Door

handcrafted of Douglas Fir in all sizes. Mortise and tenon con-struction for maximum strength and durability. This handsome, sturdy door is just what you need for your Victorian home — summer and winter! Chippendale styles also available

For brochure send \$1.00 to:

OLD WAGON FACTORY

P. O. Box 1085, Dept. VH 1 Clarksville, Va. 23927 (804) 374-5717 VISA & M/Ç

VICTORIAN 63-MILLWORK

Victorian Gingerbread authentically recreated in the finest California redwood and selected hardwoods

- · Balustrades
- Wood Turnings
- Brackets and Corbeis
- Moulding
- Screen Doors
- Repeating Ornament -and more

Build, restore, remodel with true Victorian charm Catalog and Price List \$2



Mad River Woodworks

P.O. Box 163 Arcata, California 95521 (707) 826-0629

shipped nationwide

After all you've spent on your beautiful home and

all you can find is an aluminum screen door to keep the insects out this summer ...



Look no more.

JMR Products makes "The Open Door" from clear-heart redwood, in four Victorian styles, with hardwood decoration, one that will make you and your house smile with delight. Send 50° now for detailed brochure and get your order in early for fastest delivery.

JMR Products

P.O. Box 442 St. Helena, CA 94574

RENOVATION PRODUCTS

cupolas, weathervanes & fauna faucets

•cupboard & goor trim kits & moldings

eturnings, finials, posts & columns *decorative wood & fibre carvings

•steel ceiting & ceiling medallions *plain & fancy wood stair parts •gargoyles & cenotaphs

period screen doors, porch swings

& double facing gliger period gingerbread, fretwork

ewood, styrene & urethane moldings.

& brackets

cast table bases, park benches

& lamp posts Victoriari entry

doors

• mantels root cresting & finials

tancy newel posts

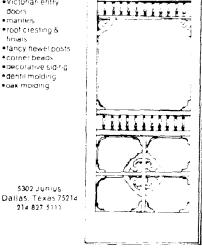
•corner beads ■decorative sid-r-g

•dentil molding

5302 Junius

214 827 5111

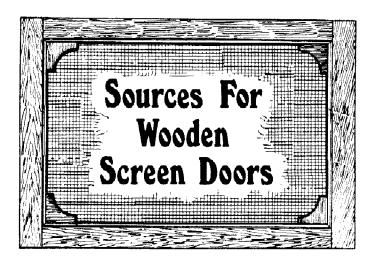
oak moiding



send \$2.00 for a complete data-ogue

This ad from:

The Renovator's Supply Renovators Old Mill Millers Falls, MA 01349



THE ARTICLE ON SCREEN DOOR PATTERNS in the July issue succeeded in bringing to light a number of commercial sources for wooden screen doors--both stock and custom-made. The upshot seems to be that you can get plain thin-frame wood screen doors through many lumber yards. These doors are factory made by the companies listed below, and are distributed through lumber yards and building supply centers.

BUT IF YOU WANT a screen door with a thick frame, or with old-fashioned scrollwork or spindles, you'll have to have it custom-made. The one exception is Renovation Products (see first listing), which is just introducing a standardized line of old-fashioned decorative screen doors.

PRICES FOR STOCK wooden screen doors seem to range from about \$30 to \$100, depending on material and quality of construction. A custom-made door will usually range from \$100 to \$300 and up.

Stock Screen Doors

- ◆ RENOVATION PRODUCTS, 5302 Jumis, Dallas, TX 75214. (214) 827-5111. This company is coming into production with a line of standard decorative old-fashioned screen doors, inspired in part by the article in the July OHJ. Doors come with ball & dowel brackets or scrollwork brackets. Doors are made in standard sizes, but can also be made to fit odd-size openings. Door frames are full 1 in. thick. No dealers; sells direct to homeowners. Catalog \$2.00--available after Oct. 31.
- IDEAL MILLWORK, P.O. Box 889, Waco, TX 76703. (817) 754-4631. Supplies a standard line of Ponderosa pine screen doors to jobbers throughout the country except the West Coast. Write or call company for name of nearest dealer. Free flyer.
- ◆ COMBINATION DOOR CO., P.O. Box 1076, Fond du Lac, WI 54935. (414) 922-2050. This company manufactures a line of standard pine screen doors. They also specialize in a combination screen and storm door in all-wood construction; the screen panel slips out and a glass panel is inserted for winter. All sales are through wholesalers who in turn supply local lumber yards. The company's doors are distributed as far west as Denver, through the Midwest states and the Northeast. To find distributor nearest you, call or write the company. Free brochure available.

- E. A. Nord Co., P.O. Box 1187, Everett, WA 98206. (206) 259-9292. This is the world's largest producer of stile and rail doors...and among their products is a line of standard screen doors made from Western hemlock. Sells nationally through dealers and distributors only. No literature on screen doors; call or write for name of nearest dealer.
- NATIONAL SCREEN CO., P.O. Box 1608, Suffolk, VA 23434. (804) 539-2378. In addition to a line of standard plain screen doors, the company also makes a line of decorative screen doors that have scrollwork and/or louvers. They also make a combination screen and storm door. Doors are made from fir and pine. Call or write for name of nearest dealer. No literature.
- ◆ DELTA MILLWORK, P.O. Box 8866, Jackson, MS 39204. (601) 922-2771. Makes standard Ponderosa pine screen doors in 3 designs. Doors use aluminum screening--but they put a charcoal grey finish on the wire to cut the glare of the aluminum. Doors are available through dealers in all the Eastern states. No literature.

Custom Made Doors

- ◆DRUMS SASH & DOOR CO., P.O. Box 207, Drums, PA 18222. (717) 788-1145. This architectural millwork company has available a couple of standard patterns for all-wood screen and combination screen/storm doors. Can be made up in any size; normal thickness is 1-1/8 in. All doors are made to order. No distributors, but will ship. Catalog & price list: \$1.
- MOSER BROTHERS, 3rd & Green Sts., Bridgeport, PA 19405. (215) 272-1052. Has made custom screen doors for many old-house restorations. Will work from architect's drawings or homeowner's sketch. No literature; stop by with plans.
- ◆ LU-NATIC DOORS, 522 Elizabeth St., Key West, FL 33040. (305) 296-3730. This company has been making quality custom screen doors in Key West. They use quality hardwoods and either glass or aluminum screens. Prices have ranged from \$100 to \$300, depending on pattern and woods used. The are willing to make up custom screen doors and ship to fellow OHJ subscribers who can't get them locally. No literature; call for more details.
- ◆ CREATIVE OPENINGS, 1013 Holly St., Bellingham, WA 98225. (206) 671-7435. Each screen door is individually designed and crafted to meet customer needs. They specialize in designs with a Victorian flair. Some are made with bentwood laminations and hand-turned spindles. Corners are of mortise-and-tenon construction, secured with pegs. They like to get photos of your home so that door can be specifically tailored to match the style. Prices differ depending on type of wood selected. Call Tom or Patricia Anderson for more details, or write for free literature.

Screen Door Plans

F YOU WANT TO MAKE a screen door yourself, you can get a blueprint for an attractive Victorian-style combination screen/storm door from Utah Historical Society. The plans were drawn up by preservation specialist Larry Jones to encourage homeowners to use appropriate wooden screen doors. You can get a set of the plans by sending \$5 to: Preservation Section, Utah Historical Society, 307 West 2nd South, Salt Lake City, UT 84101.