

# An Attic Might Be Cluttered with History

By AL SANDNER  
Staff Writer

Ever stop to think that building a modern house, finishing off the attic or basement, or even just cleaning out these areas could have historical implications?

It can—I'm serious.

THE ATTICS and basements of private homes, musty old trunks and sentimental attachments have long been some of the chief sources of display material used in the Detroit historical museum.

And this holds all the way up the line—even the Smithsonian in titute, Washington, D. C., depends on attics, basements and "string saving" for much of its display material.

Storage space, however, is becoming less and less available, and people seem to be growing less and less sentimental as they face the practical problem of making the best use of the space they have.

THE PRACTICE of enclosing space with a minimum of material—exemplified in the attic-less ranch-type, sans cellar—will have its effect in the future. Neat, efficient homemakers today tend to throw away the very items historians and curators will be looking for tomorrow.

"We are constantly looking for anything that was in everyday use in an earlier period," said Mrs. Cynthia Young, 27, registrar of the Detroit historical museum.

"Cotton house dresses, or pots and pans from another era can have real value for us," she went on.

WEDDING and christening dresses are probably the most frequently offered relics.

"Due to their emotional value, these items are likely to be stored in a trunk until a younger generation finds them," she went on.

Age isn't always the criterion used in accepting or rejecting items for the museum's near 50,000-piece collection.

Literature—posters, pamphlets, pictures—from the most recent presidential campaign are already stored because of their eventual historical value—so are some 1959 automobile license plates.

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AND BE SURE to empty them frequently. Keep matches in safe containers and out of the reach of children.

Remember that every fourth fire in the United States is caused by matches-smoking.

P.S.—Never, never smoke in bed.

from a decade ago—or even a few years ago—are items we sometimes receive and store, both as comparison material, and for display in the distant future," she said.

But she re-emphasized a point—most of the material received is donated by private citizens.

"People who are moving out of a house that has been in the family for a generation or two; people who are moving out of the city, and estates that are being closed

are our most frequent benefactors," she said.

AN EXCEPTION that proves nothing, but makes an interesting story is the stateroom key that was dropped in a mailbox recently about 1937," Mrs. Young said.

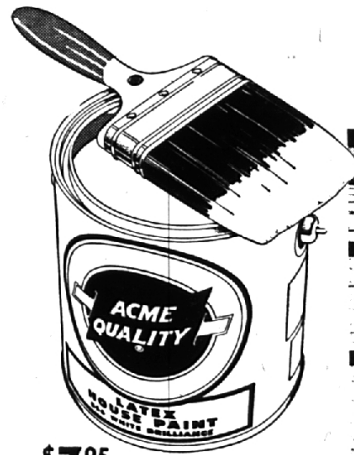
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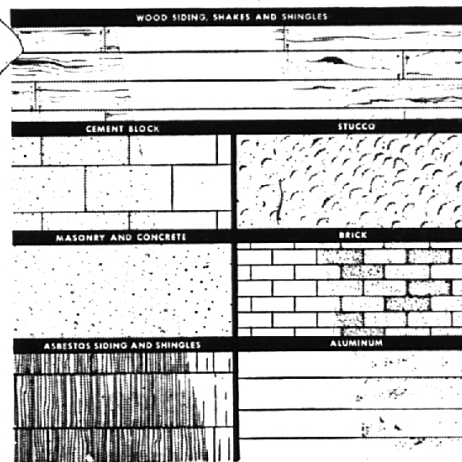
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