A Comprehensive Assessment of the Architectural Hardware found at the William LeDuc Residence in Hastings, Minnesota

Documentation compiled and written by
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Spring 2005

Unless otherwise noted, all photography used throughout this book is by the author.

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Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the site manager, Joan Mathison, for allowing me unrestricted access to fully document each and every hardware item found in the house. Additional gratitude is extended to Andy Freeburg, who took the time to carefully look over this manuscript and contribute much needed editorial guidance to make my thoughts more comprehensible to the reader. Last, but certainly not least, the author greatly admires the knowledge and inspiration given to him by Robert Mac and the wonderfully observant skills he continues to demonstrate within this field of study.

Prologue

A Dramatic Contrast

The LeDuc house (Hastings, Minnesota) is now my second project and a unique one at that. To begin with, the house hardware is in direct, even dramatic contrast to the Ramsey Mansion (1st project). These two houses represent the far ends of the hardware spectrum; the former being plain porcelain and iron, while the latter was outfitted with unsurpassed hardware of that time period—which was only a decade after the available hardware during the construction of the LeDuc house. Exploring in detail the transition between plain and utilitarian hardware of the early 19th century versus the sudden emergence of ornamental bronze hardware in the 1870's however, is not my focus, and thus will be avoided (there is virtually no literature regarding that subject). Nor will I provide a comprehensive history of the house, or the people living there. Instead, my specific intention revolves around an in-depth, photographic exploration and documentation of the house hardware as I found it, with the above as only the backdrop as it were.

Unaltered

In the first report I mentioned the importance of an unaltered setting, whereby very little, if any changes were made to the house from the time it was built. The LeDuc house fits nicely into this category because (and similar to the Ramsey House), there have been only three occupants Aside from the LeDuc family, the only other owners included an eccentric antique dealer by the name of Carroll Simmons, who was a close friend to the LeDuc family, and the Minnesota Historical Society. During Carroll's time of ownership, he mainly used the LeDuc house for his antique business, which brought about only slight alterations or "enhancements" such as the replacement of three original pine mantles with fanciful Eastlake style marble mantles (thought to have been salvaged from razed homes) located on the 1st floor. In addition, he replaced nearly all of the light fixtures with outlandish, yet elegant chandeliers. Some other embellishments such as exterior wall sconces and ceiling medallions were added as well. Other than that, the house sat empty for a long period of time until the necessary funds were finally appropriated to rehabilitate the somewhat neglected house.

Battling Redundancy

Perhaps the last factor that propelled this project forward was the challenge of finding interesting and differentiating features of the otherwise, similar or redundant style that the hardware was recognized as. The casual observer when asked about the hardware, would likely remember a house with white knobs, and leave it at that. I of course, knew that would be far from the truth, and thus set out to prove otherwise in the form of this project.

Brief Historic Background of the William LeDuc House

Construction of the William LeDuc House began in the year 1862, under the supervision of the Hastings contractor Eri Cogshall. The majority of the house's characteristics (i.e., architectural elements) were pieced together from the house plan books of A.J. Downing, resulting in a rather extravagant Gothic Victorian mansion. Interestingly, Mr. LeDuc was serving in the Union Army during the entirety of house construction, thereby rendering the house unoccupied until the year 1865 when the LeDuc family finally moved in.

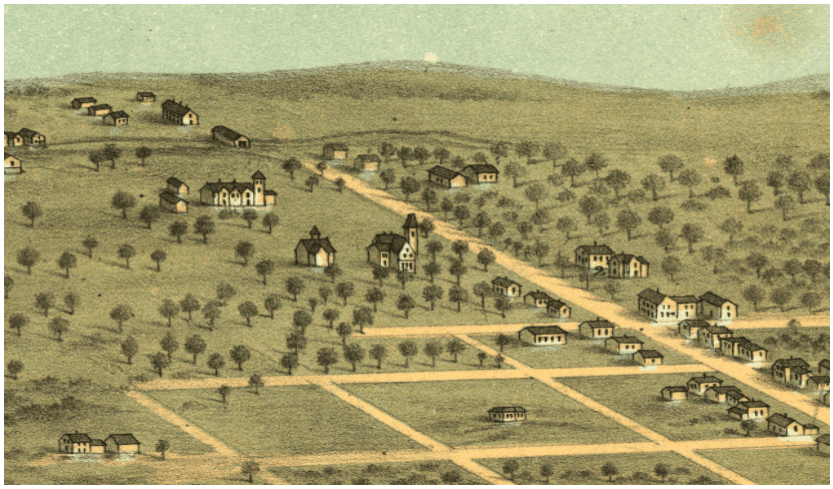
The family continued to occupy the house until 1917 when William LeDuc passes away, and the remainder of the LeDuc family moves to Minneapolis. However, members of the family continue to use the house almost exclusively throughout the summer seasons. In 1940, the LeDuc family sells the house to a family friend, Carroll Simmons, who then uses it in conjunction with his antique business for the next 18 years.

Ownership of the LeDuc house is passed on to the Minnesota Historical Society in 1958 with the stipulation that Carroll Simmons is allowed to continued access for his antique business. In 1970 the house is placed on the National Register of Historic Places; nevertheless, the house remains an antique store until 1986 when Carroll Simmons retires from the antique business and the house is left abandoned and ultimately, neglected.

Finally in 2002 the house receives funding for rehabilitation after sitting vacant and unused for the past 16 years. Three years later with restoration complete, the house is ultimately handed over to the city of Hastings and made available to the public for viewing.

House Plan from Cottage Residences by Andrew Jackson Downing, 1853 that was "reversed" by Mrs. LeDuc, in order to provide more natural light and heat in rooms the family would be using most.

It is worth mentioning that a number of experts in the historic architectural field proclaim the LeDuc house to be the most intact and unaltered representation from the Andrew Downing pattern book, which is quite a remarkable feat, considering the house's age



Bird's eye view of the city of Hastings, Dakota Co., Minnesota 1867. Drawn by A. Ruger. The LeDuc House is located in the middle of this depiction.

Photographic Plate Methodology and Documentation

The hardware depicted in these plates was documented with the use of a high resolution digital camera equipped with a telephoto lens. The reason for the use of this equipment was twofold; 1) unabridged access to a large variety of image manipulation parameters offered by computer software. 2) preferential use of a telephoto lens allowed me to capture and perhaps enhance the portrayal of condition, geometrical shape, and fine details found within each and every hardware item of interest.

In terms of overall image presentation, I chose to classify the items by the function they serve. Within each classification, I established an order that reflected the location of the item within the context of the house (i.e., 1st floor, 2nd floor and so on). Each plate is similarly displayed in a fine-tuned, antique finish as a result of subjective preference only, followed by a brief description of the item of concern. Generally, the commentary is comprised of either observations or opinions w/ the deliberate exclusion of recommendations being made to correct or perhaps better the item's appearance and/or function.

Lastly, and as one will see, the pictorial aspect of this project is of the greatest importance. It has been said time and time again that a picture is worth a million words, which is a saying I fully subscribe to. However, it is somewhat unfortunate that the images are a bit compromised when being transferred to paper--not in any major way, but some "bleeding" may be noticed every now and then. Perhaps an improved financial predicament would eradicate the limited photographic quality, but under the dogma of "DIY", one is bound to these issues.

SECTION 1
LEDUC HOUSE ARCHITECTURAL HARDWARE

DOORKNOBS, ROSETTES, KEY PLATES AND LOCKS

Plate 1
Front entrance hardware of the LeDuc House. The double doors are made of white pine and outfitted with white porcelain doorknobs. Each door is attached to the jamb with four inch, plain cast iron hinges. Although the doors were recently rehabilitated, the hardware is original and unaltered. This image portrays a detailed close up of the white porcelain knob, entrance cast iron key plate, and a small cast iron rosette once surrounding a small handle that controlled the latch and bolt of the mortise lock. Fortunately the key plate's swinging cover is intact—in many cases these covers were broken off or missing altogether.

Plate 2

Due to limitations in picture transference, the story here is partially obscured. Even so, the white porcelain knob exhibits the classic crazing in the glaze that happens over time. However, the large marking on the top of the knob is actually a section that was broken off and then reattached at some later point. Some accumulating grime has accentuated the cracked portion. This knob, like the remainder found throughout the house is white porcelain with straight cast brass shanks, and backed by a plain cast iron rosette. The only variation that deviates from this scheme is the key plate which comes in different shapes, sizes, and overall appearance. Additionally, the majority of door rosettes are white porcelain, and not cast iron. Nearly every passage door has the reversible latch mortise locks with a brass face plate, and complimentary cast brass strike plate. All of the doors are native white pine, and were recently refinished.

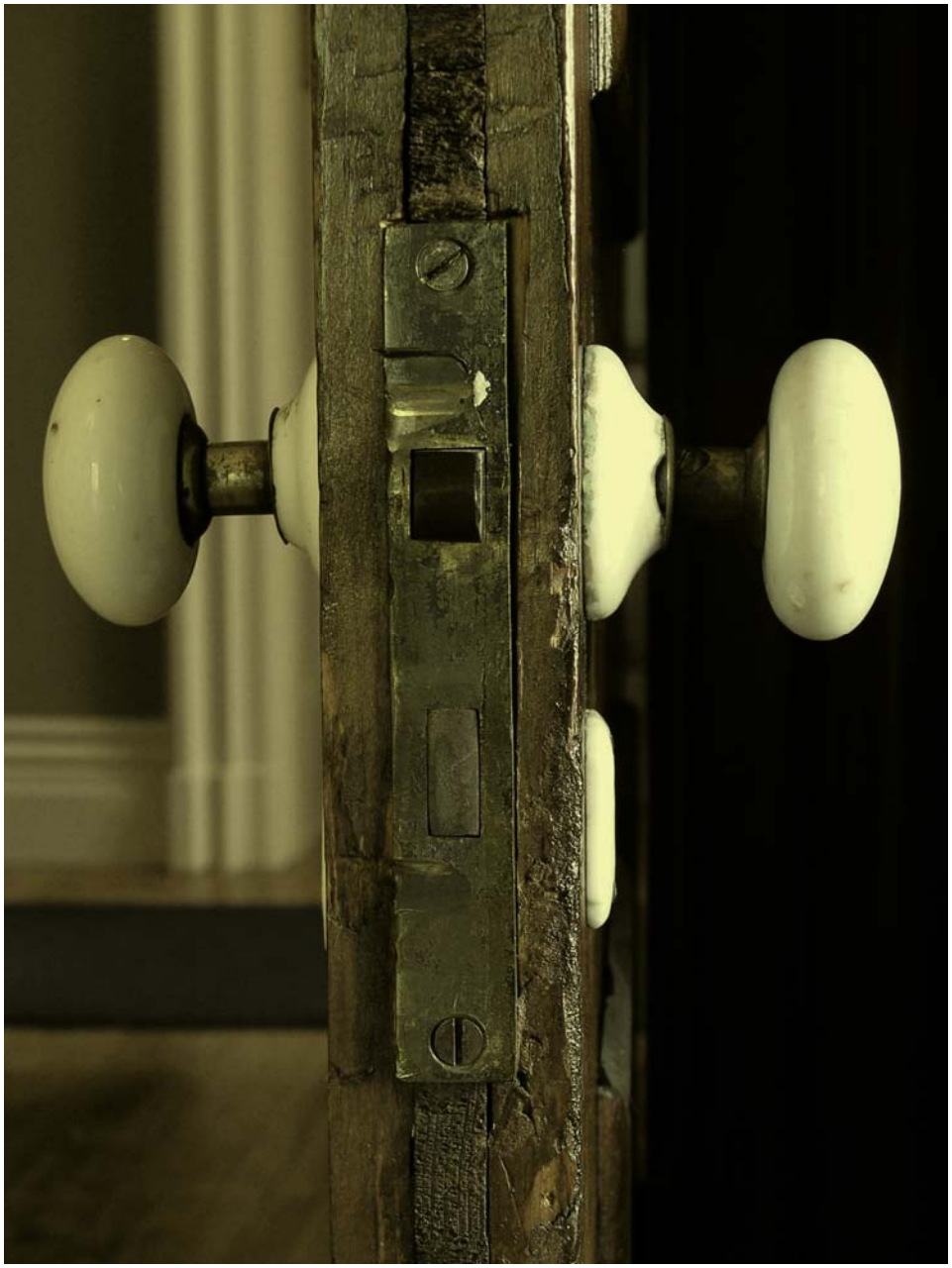


Plate 3
Cross sectional view of the hardware on a typical white pine passage door. Featured is the nicely aged cast brass mortise face plate, along with porcelain knobs and rosettes. Amazingly, there were no major chips or breaks among the vast majority of porcelain rosettes—which always seem to undergo major abuse. Every porcelain knob is mounted to brass shanks, and affixed to the spindle with brass set screws.

Plate 4
Another passage door only in this case, the key plate is actually the rotating cover only, nailed directly over the key hole. This is a rather unusual, if not crude alternative to the other porcelain key plates found on other passage doors.

Plate 5
Detailed close up of an atypical cast brass, tapered back door rosette. This type or design is located on the rear entrance door, and is the only one of its kind located throughout the remainder of the house. I did not inspect the backside for markings, though I presume it to be R & E. This door has received substantial abuse in the form of scratch marks, slight gouges, etc., which are thought to have been made by family pets.

Plate 6
Side view of yet another white porcelain passage knob. In this case, the porcelain rosette has sustained a slight crack on the right side. The knob happens to have a cast iron shank surrounded by the brass collar or "thimble" housed within the porcelain rosette. The brass collar is actually a part of the plate that attaches the porcelain rosette to the door. Said another way, this rosette is actually two pieces attached by wood screws hidden underneath the porcelain rosette. Notice the deep scratch marks running perpendicular to the hardware.

Plate 7
An upstairs passage door with the original brass key left in the lock. Again, more scratches found around the hardware, along with unique-to-each-knob markings evident on the rosette and knob. The key plate looks like it has been cleaned or replaced.

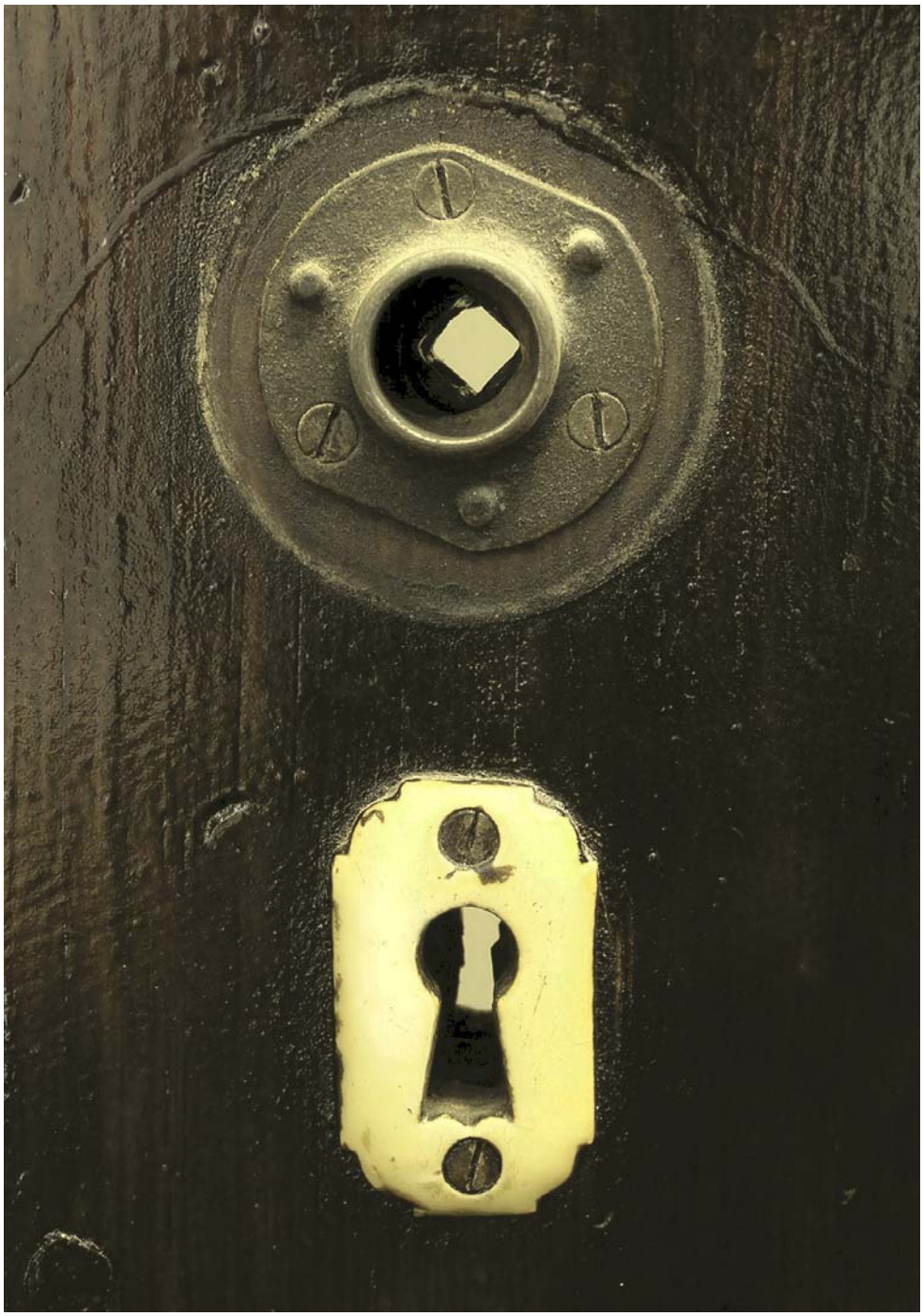


Plate 8
The porcelain rosette has been removed to expose the mounting plate that attaches it the door with three wood screws. The profile of the porcelain rosette is apparent. The porcelain key plate appears yellow because shellac was unintentionally swiped over the plate presumably, while the doors were being refinished.

Plate 9
Another view of the brass face plate revealing major wear (i.e., markings, bends, etc.) that is a common find on all of the locks—these doors have been in use since the early 1860's with little if any changes (upkeep or otherwise) made.

Plate 10
Although each and every door possesses the same type of hardware, there are nonetheless subtle changes or configuration differences that most be noted--and that was the primary challenge of this project; to reveal the understated differences (while at the same time make it interesting) among otherwise repetitive and identical hardware. In this case, the mortise lock (displaying no markings) is much smaller than all the other locks. There is nothing unique about this particular door (purpose or otherwise) so the choice behind this small lock remains a mystery. This door also includes a flush mount, sliding bolt made of brass which will be discussed further in a later section.

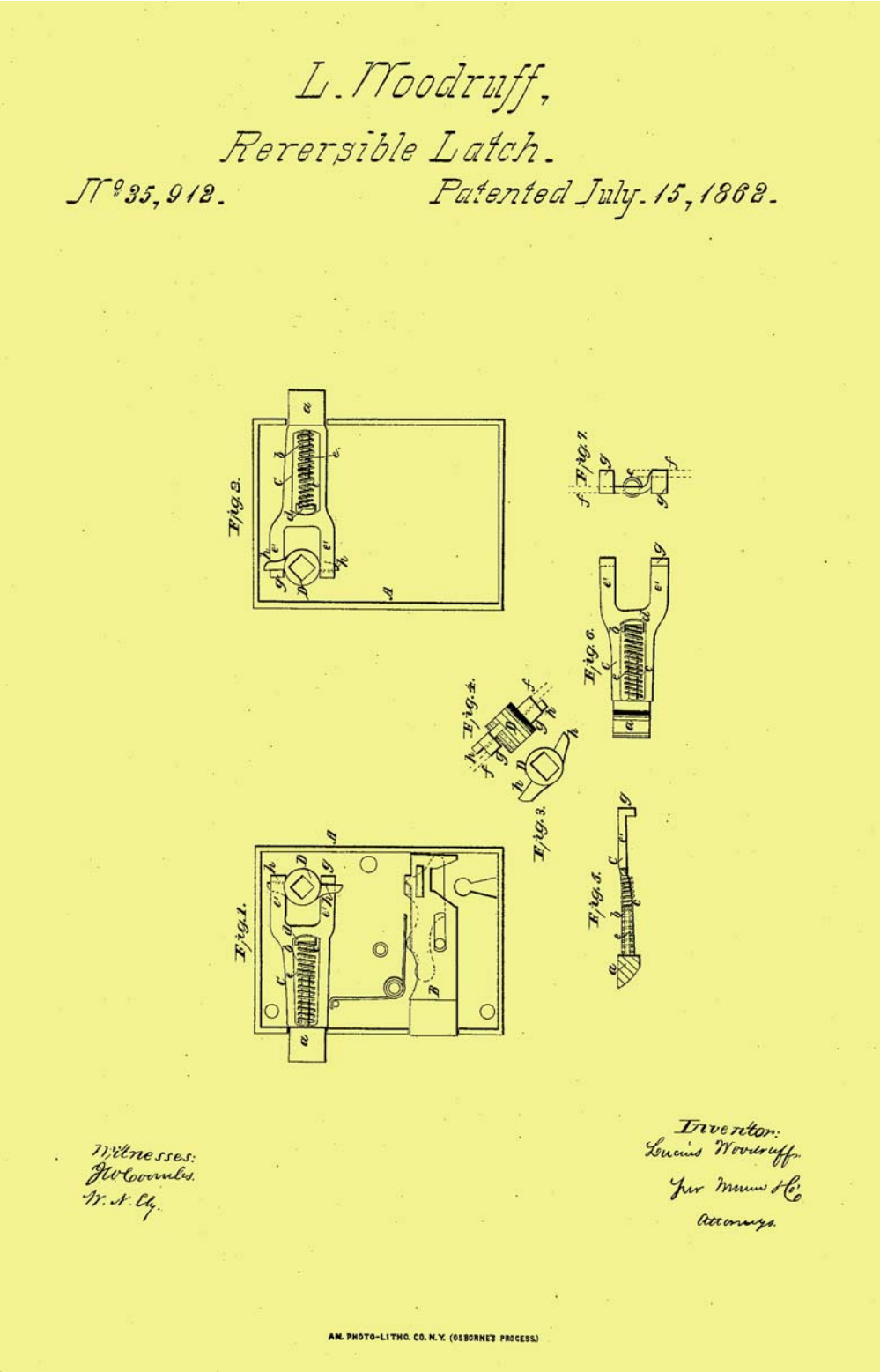
Plate 11
Another oddball hardware arrangement on a door located in the rear of the house within the summer kitchen. Over the years, knobs may be lost or broken resulting in mismatched replacements similar to the one shown here. In this illustration, there is a white porcelain knob and a "bennington-like" knob that may have been borrowed from the 3rd floor, which is where the mineral knobs and rimlocks are exclusively located. This is the only door that has japanned-finish (baked on black paint) cast iron door rosettes located on the 1st or 2nd floors.

SECTION 2
LEDUC HOUSE ARCHITECTURAL HARDWARE

FURTHER REVIEW OF MORTISE LOCKS AND MORTISE LOCK PATENTS

Plate 12
Virtually all mortise locks found within the passage doors possess the reversible latch bolt. Further information about this mechanism is provided in the next few plates in the form of patent description and illustration. Essentially, the purpose of this latch was twofold; to save time and especially money, one could install the mortise into either a left or right hand door by situating the bolt in the appropriate position—simply remove the plate of the lock box and flip the bolt in the opposite direction—quick and easy. The patent for this particular lock was secured by Lucius Woodruff, assignor to the Russell & Erwin Co. in 1862.

Plate 13
The patent plates found on the next few pages will provide much more depth on the internal workings of this particular mortise lock. Regardless, it seemed necessary to provide an actual photographic depiction of the "guts" to compliment the patent schematic. All the parts were cast in iron, with the exception of the brass face plate and the return spring. To reverse the direction of the bolt, one would have to remove the plate screwed onto the mortise box, followed by taking out the hub--this allows the reversible latch bolt to be pulled out, flipped over and reinserted.



Reversible Latch Schematic, Pat. July 15th, 1868 by L. Woodruff

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

LUCIUS WOODRUFF, OF NEW BRITAIN, CONNECTICUT, ASSIGNOR TO THE RUSSELL & ERWIN MANUFACTURING COMPANY, OF SAME PLACE.

IMPROVEMENT IN LOCKS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **35,912**, dated July 15, 1862.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, LUCIUS WOODRUFF, of New Britain, in the county of Hartford and State of Connecticut, have invented a new and useful Improvement in Locks; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description of the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, making a part of this specification, in which—

Figure 1 is an internal view of a lock with my improvement applied to it. Fig. 2 is also an internal view of the same, viewed at the side opposite to that shown in Fig. 1; Figs. 3 and 4, detached views of the hub of the catch or latch bolt; Fig. 5, a detached horizontal section of the catch or latch bolt. Fig. 6 is a side view of the same. Fig. 7 is an end view of the same.

Similar letters of reference indicate corresponding parts in the several figures.

This invention relates to an improved lock of that class which are provided with reversible latch or catch bolts to admit of the lock being applied to either a right or left hand door without the necessity of inverting the former.

The object of the invention is to obtain a reversible bolt which will not enhance the cost of construction above that of an ordinary lock, and at the same time not increase the thickness of the lock or render it necessary to vary the usual proportions of the same in any degree, and also admit of being readily adjusted to suit the door to which the lock is to be applied.

To this end the invention consists in having the back part of the latch or catch bolt provided with two arms, which are parallel with each other, but in different planes, and having the hub of the knob-arbor provided with two projections or lugs, which are also in different planes corresponding with the position of the arms on the latch or catch bolt, the ends of the arms of the latch or catch bolt being provided with projections for the lugs of the arbor-hub to act against, and all arranged as hereinafter fully shown and described, whereby the latch or catch bolt and also the hub may be reversed in position within the lock, so as to adjust the position of the bevel of the latch or catch bolt to suit the door and operate precisely the same in either of the two positions in which it may be placed.

To enable those skilled in the art to fully understand and construct my invention, I will proceed to describe it.

A represents the case of the lock, which is constructed with two finished sides, so that either may be placed outermost when the lock is adjusted to the door.

B is the key-bolt of the lock, which may be arranged in the usual or in any proper way.

C is the latch or catch bolt, which is provided, as usual, with an outer beveled end, *a*, as shown clearly in Fig. 5. The latch or catch bolt is provided with a longitudinal slot, *b*, in which a spiral spring, *c*, is fitted, the outer end of said spring bearing against the front edge of the slot *b*, and the inner end bearing against a stump, *d*, in the case A. The spring is fitted on a guide-rod, *e*, in the slot *b*, and has a tendency to keep the latch or catch bolt C forced out from the case A as far as it is designed to move. The back part of the latch or catch bolt C has two parallel arms, *e′ e′*, which are out of line with each other or in different planes, as will be seen by referring to Figs. 4 and 7, in which the planes are indicated by dotted lines *f f*. The ends of the arms *e′ e′* are each provided with a projection, *g*. These projections *g g* are at right angles with the arms *e′ e′*, the projections of one arm extending in an opposite direction to that of the other.

D is the hub in which the arbor of the knob is fitted. This knob is provided with two lugs, *h h*, which project from it at opposite points in two different planes, as shown in Figs. 1, 2, and 4, the dotted lines *f f* indicating said planes. The lugs *h h* are about at equal distances from the ends of the hub D—that is to say, one lug is just as far from the end of the hub which is nearest to it as the other lug is from the opposite end of the hub. The lugs *h* bear against the projections *g*, which are in line with them, and when the knob is turned the latch or catch bolt will be operated thereby.

From the above description it will be seen that by withdrawing the knob-arbor from the hub D the latch or catch bolt and hub may be turned and adjusted in the lock with either side facing the operator, for both sides are precisely alike and have the same bearing-surfaces, so that the latch or catch bolt will

move freely in either position. Hence the bevel *a* may be reversed in position and the lock made to suit either a right or left hand door without being inverted.

The invention, being so extremely simple, does not involve any additional expense in construction; nor does the relative size or projections of any parts of the lock require special alteration for the adaptation of the invention.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

The parallel arms *e′ e′* of the latch or catch bolt C, placed out of line with each other or in different planes, in combination with the lugs *h h* of the hub D, also placed out of line with each other or in different planes, and arranged relatively with the arms *e′ e′* and projections *g g* thereof, to admit of the reversing of the latch or catch bolt C in the case A, for the purpose specified.

LUCIUS WOODRUFF.

Witnesses:
A. M. WARD,
M. J. WOODRUFF.

Detailed description of the reversible latch patent.

Plate 14
The mammoth front entrance door mortise lock made by the Russell & Erwin Co. The semi-circle marking points to the company's origin of operation. The box retains its original japanned finish, with only a little rust around areas being somewhat exposed to external elements (a rather common event). The cast brass face plate is partially recessed--being designed for use with double door enclosures.

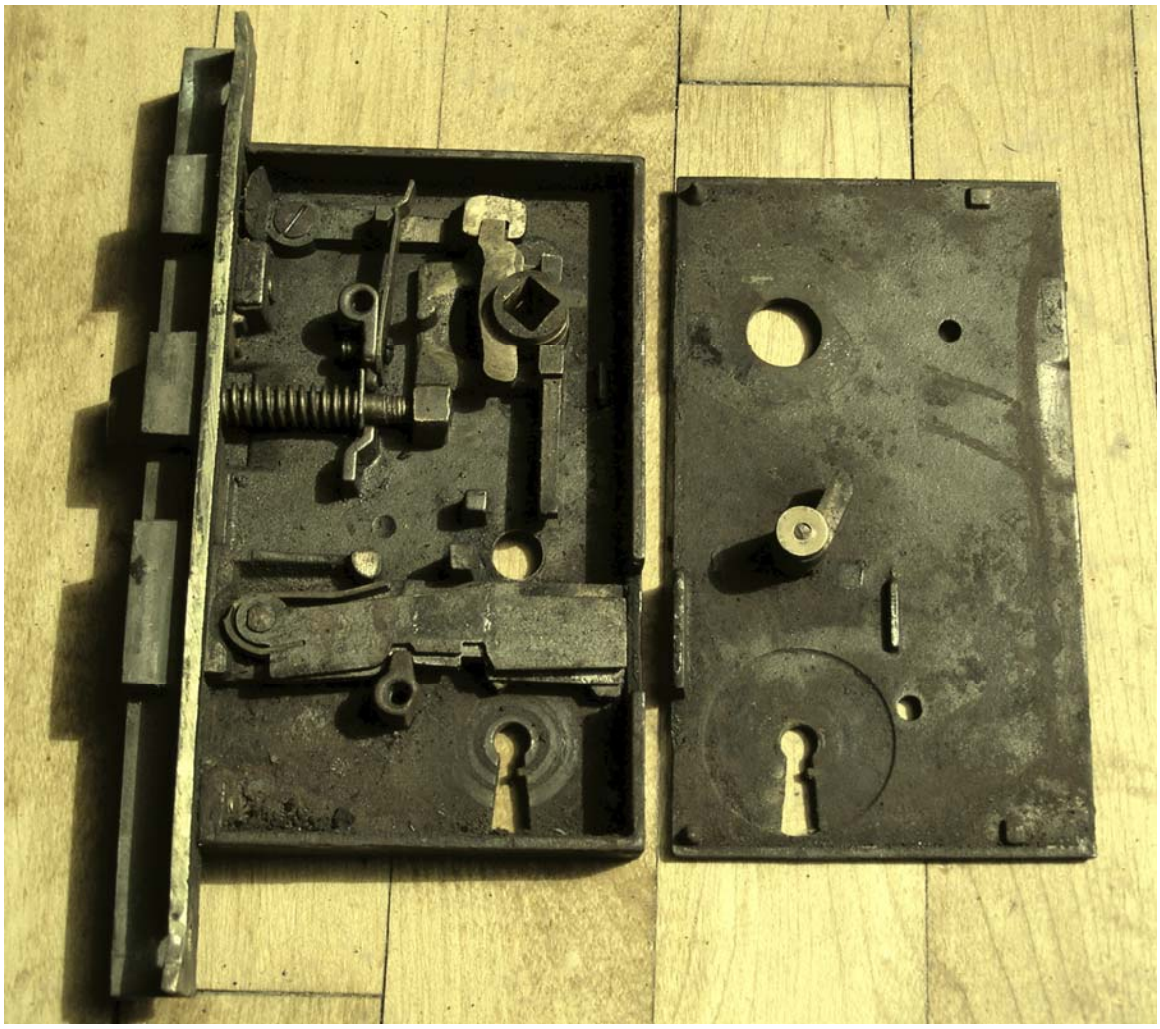


Plate 15

Removing the cover plate from the lock box reveals a rather complicated arrangement of parts involved in the operation of this lock. The major components include the dead bolt (above the key hole) which serves to lock the doors when used with the skeleton key. Above the dead bolt is the coil spring-loaded latch bolt which with the turn of the knob, opens and closes the door. Lastly, there is a small sliding vertical latch found within the face plate serving to bypass the function of the knob, thereby allowing for the latch bolt to remain in a fixed inward or outward position. Nearly all of the smaller components inside the box are cast in brass for the purpose of avoiding rust accumulation and thus, the prevention of any functional hindrance. On the flipside however, the continued use (friction) of the brass components will inevitably cause significant wear, leading to a similar fate that the use of cast iron shares.

SECTION 3
LEDUC HOUSE HARDWARE

WINDOW TREATMENTS

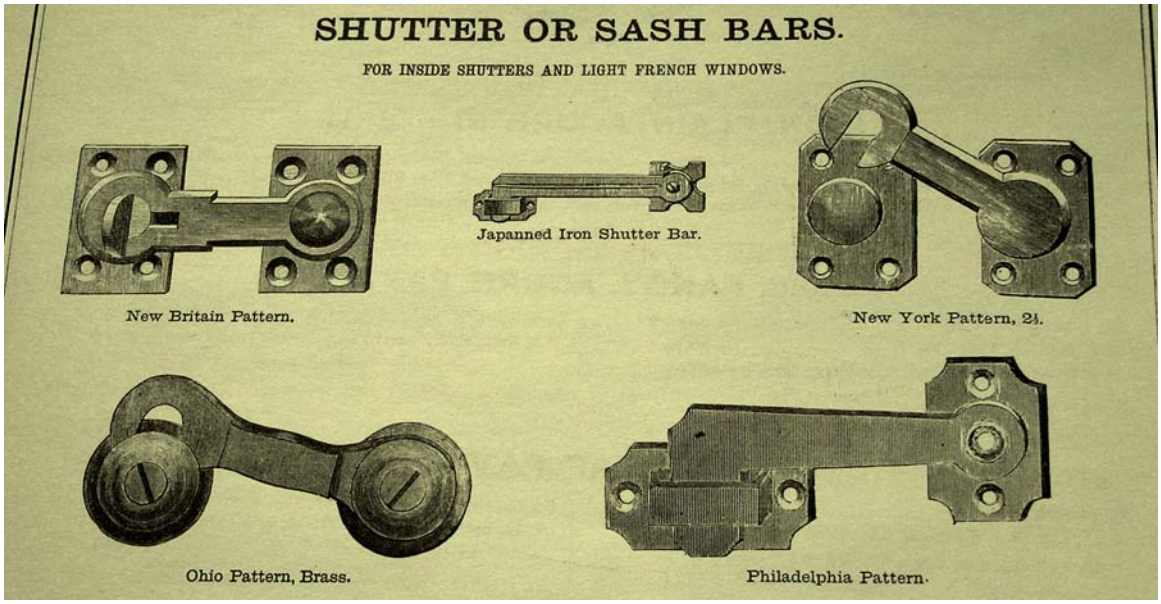
Plate 16

The sash lock depicted above, is found on every floor throughout the house—no variation whatsoever. In accordance with the utilitarian theme, these locks are plain cast bronze, with removable porcelain knobs that are affixed to the lock with a simplt flat head screw. During removal of this sash lock for further examination, a spring action was found under the rotating arm (wrapped around the stationary rivet)—a most unusual mechanism. Presumably, the purpose of the spring allows some flexibility when the sash frames were uneven—this way, one would avoid forcing the arm into the keeper, which inevitably leads to bending or breakage.

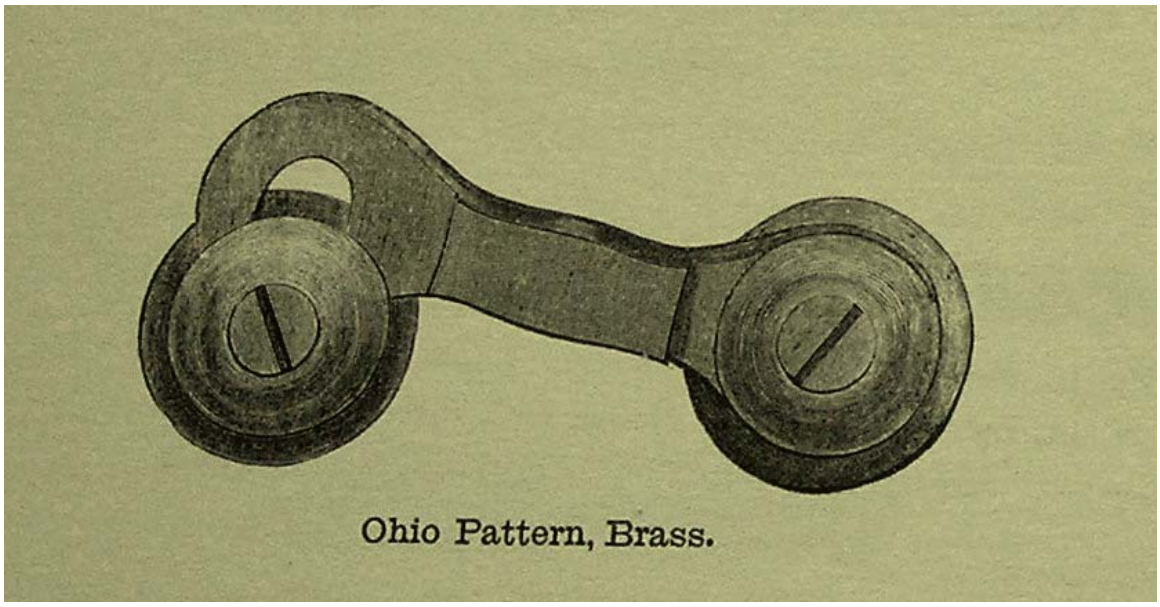
Plate 17
As of this writing, it is undetermined whether or not these sash locks were made available in the Russell & Erwin catalog of 1865. In other words, the manufacturer is unknown, although the aforementioned company is most likely the one. Security was certainly an issue because each sash lock required 6 wood screws. Nearly all sash locks within the house are functional (and surprisingly enough), retain their intact and unbroken porcelain knobs—which is a phenomenon seen often in locks of this age. Nevertheless, it appears that the locks were not removed during restoration, which meant that along with the sash frames, the locks themselves received an undeserved coat of vanish or shellac.

Plate 18
A passionately curious member of the LeDuc House Staff mentioned a date being located on the underside of the window sash locks, which had gone unnoticed after examination for this report (at least in the earlier stages). Although at least one sash lock was removed and examined, there was no markings found; as it turns out, some of the locks have the Aug, 1858 pat. date, while others do not. Unfortunately, because of time constraints, the author was unable to locate the actual patent (among 100's of online files for that month alone), but nonetheless, the sash lock was most likely made by the Russell & Erwin Co. and found in their 1865 hardware catalog.

Plate 19
The white pine shutters of the LeDuc house were crafted on site by a gifted local carpenter. These shutters are found on windows located on the 1st and 2nd floor. Each shutter set was treated with the "Ohio Pattern" cast brass shutter bars, and plain cast brass hinges (not shown). Most are intact and retain their original finish and/or condition.



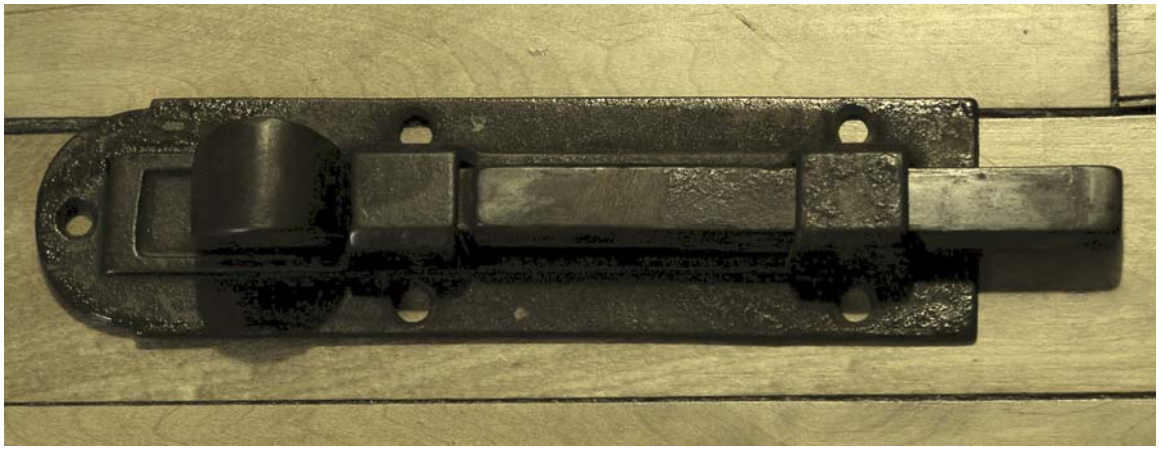
The shutter bars depicted here were available in the mammoth Russell & Erwin Catalog of 1865. As one can see, the LeDuc family (or perhaps their carpenter) chose the "Ohio Pattern." Among the patterns, there was only one size and 3 finishes to choose from. The LeDuc house went with the solid brass shutter bars. The different patterns identified and differentiated by locale is rather interesting.



SECTION 3
LEDUC HOUSE ARCHITECTURAL HARDWARE

Flush Mount Door Bolts

Plate 20
This wrought iron flush mount door bolt is similar to the "cottage bolt" variety as seen in the 1865 Russell & Erwin Catalog. Oddly, these bolts are found on quite a few doors within the house. They are presumed to be original to the house. This particular bolt is found on the door leading down to the basement.



Plates 21-22
This bolt being located on the 1st floor was removed for closer inspection to determine if there was any markings indicating a maker and whether or not the bolt casings were affixed to the base plate with rivets. As one can see, there are no markings, and only one rivet was hammered in to reinforce the casing. 5 screws were needed to securely anchor this bolt into a door.

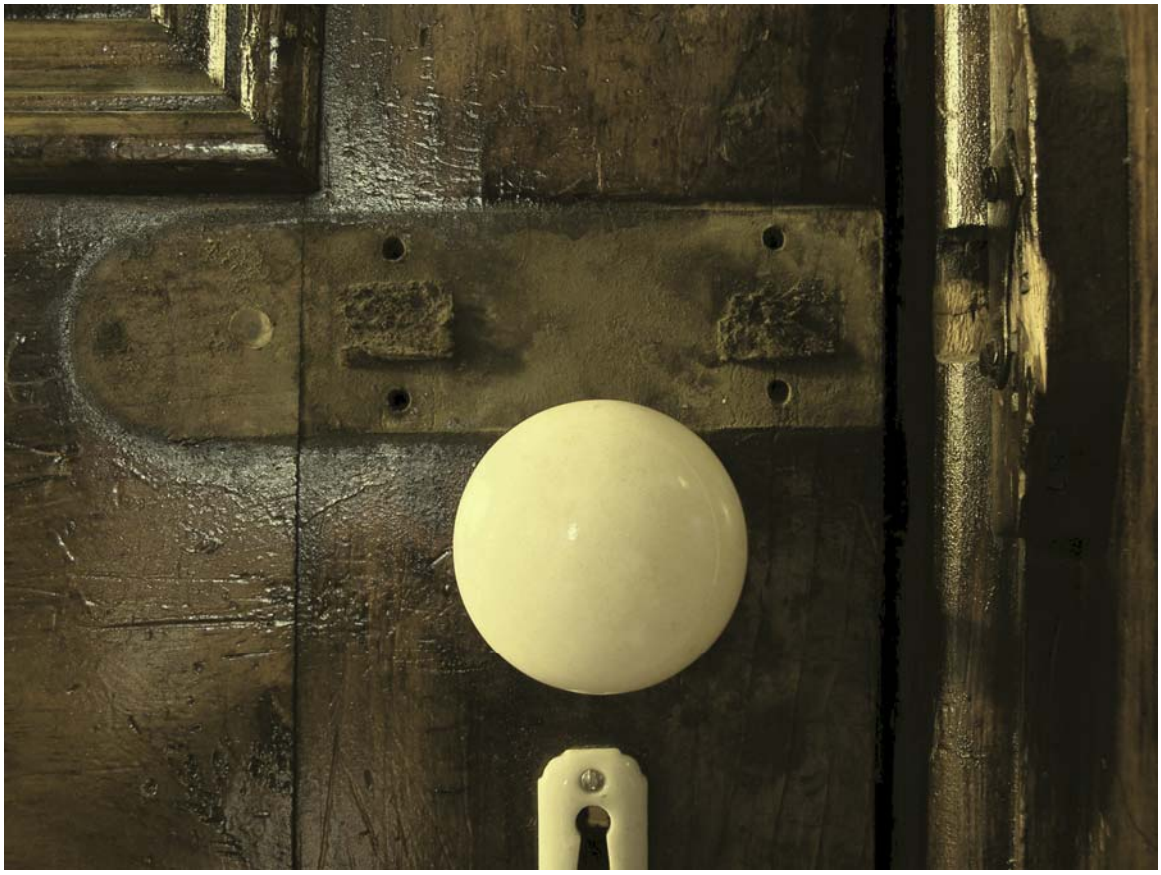


Plate 23
Door Bolt removed to reveal unfinished area of door. Accumulation of dirt, dust or insect debris was found in the recessed regions of the underside of the bolt. Keeper was missing during documentation. This door leads to the basement.

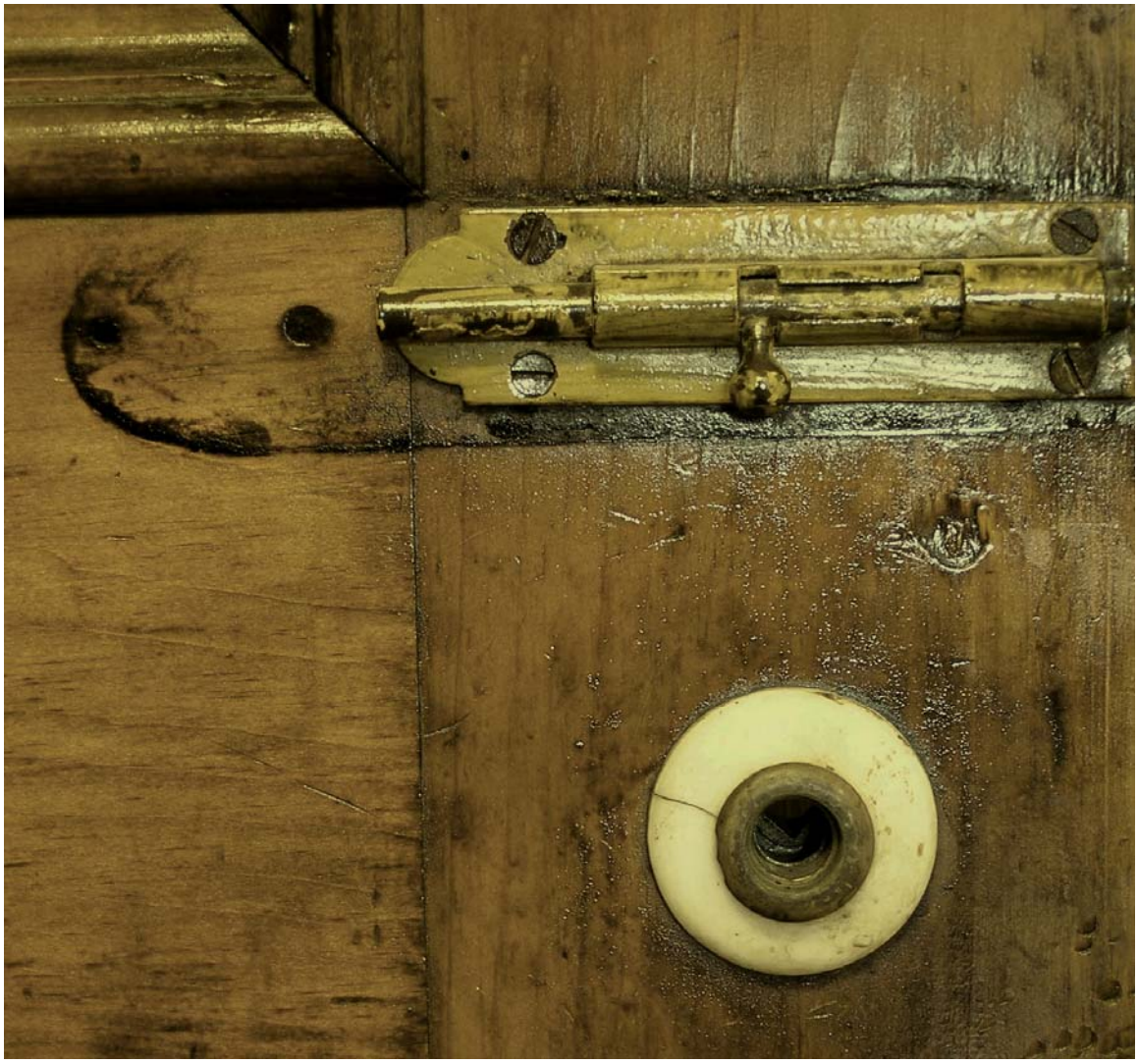
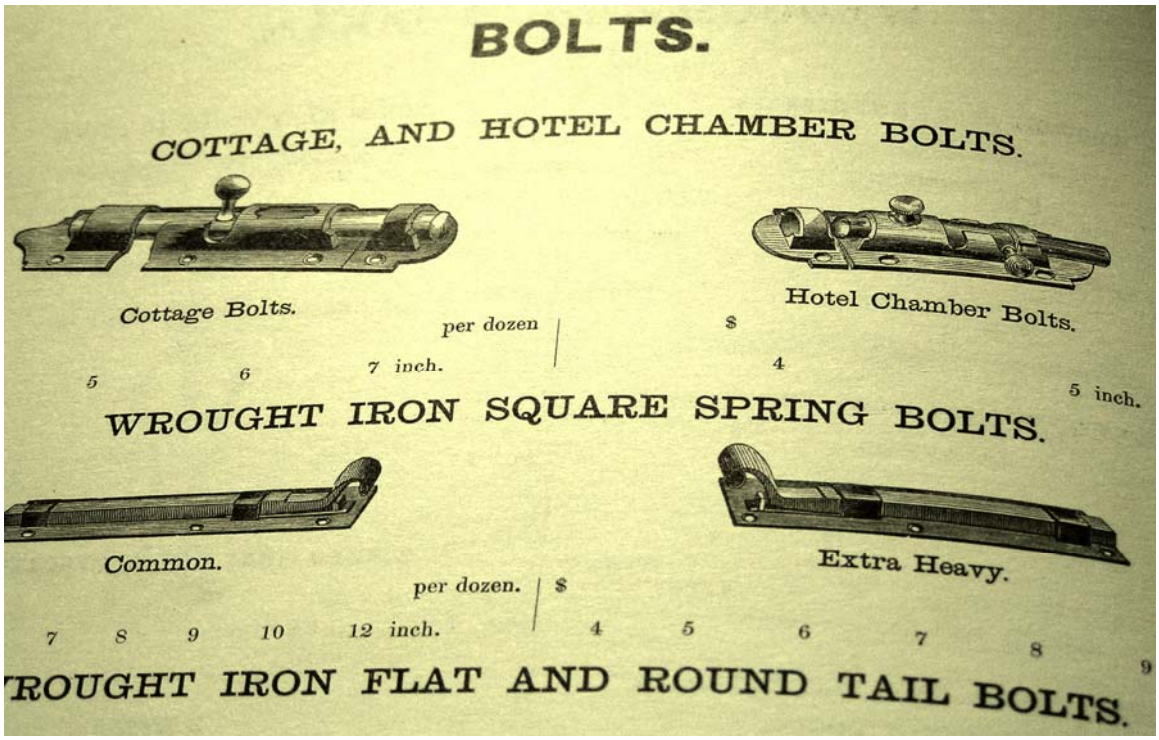


Plate 24
This bolt is undoubtedly a later replacement for the presumably original and obviously larger bolt seen only in the form of a shadow. The knob and rosette have undergone some abuse, which may lead one to believe that this particular door received frequent traffic or abuse. Fortunately, every other passage door retains their original door bolt (that is, if it had one at all).

Plate 25
Brass flush mount sliding door bolt found on a cabinet door resting upon a wall on the 3rd floor. Not exactly sure where this door was originally used, and a matching keeper was not found anywhere in the attic. Nonetheless, this bolt merits attention for being the only cast brass bolt found in the house



The bolts as seen above are only a small portion of the variety of bolts available in the 1865 Russell & Erwin Catalog. The LeDuc house most likely was outfitted with bolts supplied by this company—although with slight variations from the "cottage bolt" style seen in the upper left corner.

SECTION 4
LEDUC HOUSE ARCHITECTURAL HARDWARE

SLEUTHING THE SIDE ENTRANCE DOOR

Plate 26
This hardware is located on the side entrance door, and was obviously a later addition—most likely during the 1915 house upgrade, brought about by some additional money Mr. LeDuc received shortly before his death. The knob and plate are identified as the "Como" pattern, which was one of many patterns or styles offered by the Corbin Co.

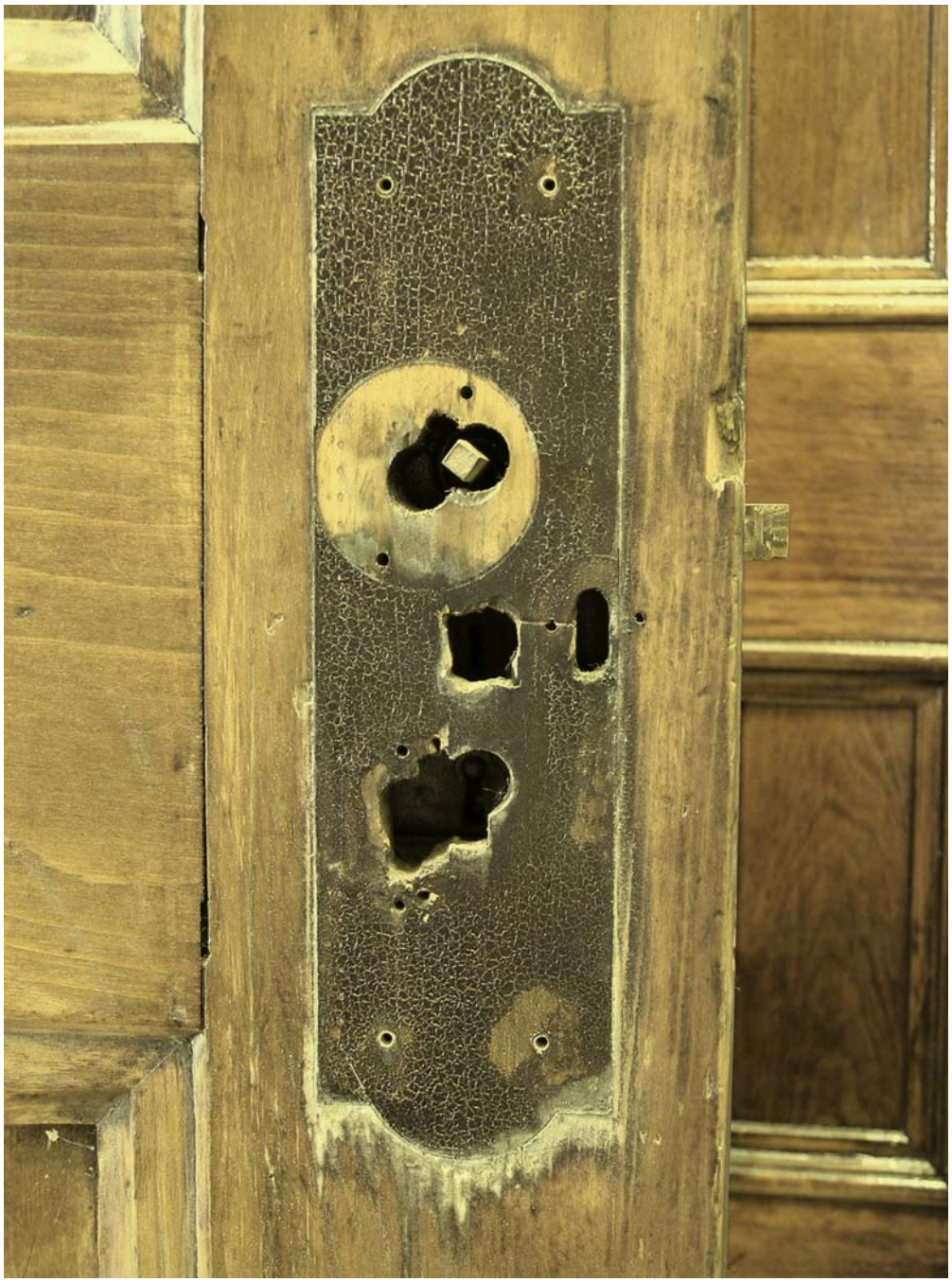
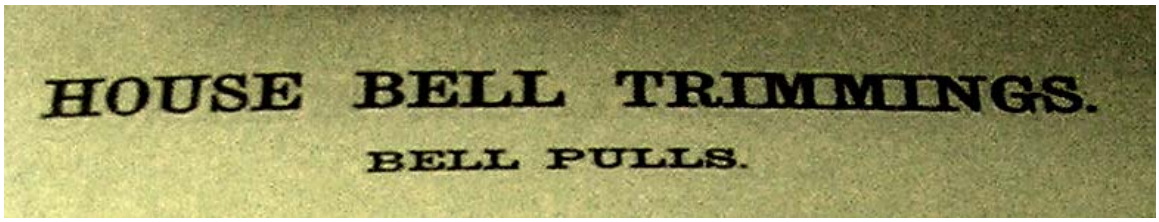
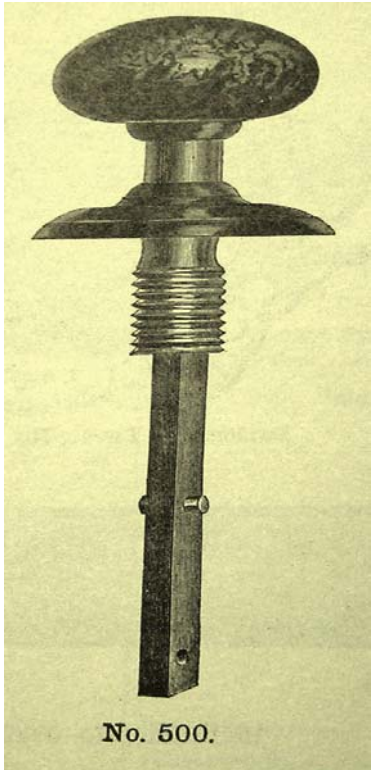


Plate 27
After removing the 1915 hardware upgrade, there was clear evidence indicating that the original hardware (most likely installed in the early 1860's) was identical to the hardware found on any of the passage doors—that being a circular porcelain rosette, porcelain key plate, porcelain doorknobs, and the interesting little cast iron rosette that manipulated the inner workings of the mortise lock. The whereabouts of that hardware is not known (though presumably it was discarded).

Plate 28

Plain cast bronze doorbell pull with a mushroom style base. The threaded portion would normally be hidden within the molding or wall. In fact, the pull was almost certainly screwed into place with the threaded region reinforcing the installation. The existence of this pull presents somewhat of a problem because the door itself shows evidence of a doorbell crank or knob (see other plates). If indeed there was a bell mechanism on the door, than it is uncertain as to which would be the original installation. Aside from that, it should be noted how the pull (as seen above) actually operates to ring the bell. Basically, one simply grasps and pulls the knob toward oneself, wherein a metal wire is attached running through the wall and along the door on the inside where the bell is located. The force exerted by pulling the knob results in a mechanism within the bell to trip the hammer, causing it to strike the bell.





Mineral knob door bell pull offered in the 1865 Russell & Erwin hardware catalog, which with the exception of the knob, is similar to the pull found near the side entrance door. Copper wiring attached through the end of the spindle or rod was feed through the wall and along the door (in the LeDuc house) where the bell was located.

Plate 29
Mysterious markings, indentations and holes are apparent on the stile and rail of the side entrance door. The circular grooves are suggestive of a decorative mounting plate that sits behind a bell crank handle, or something along those lines. Why there are *multiple* circular patterns is really anyone's best guess.

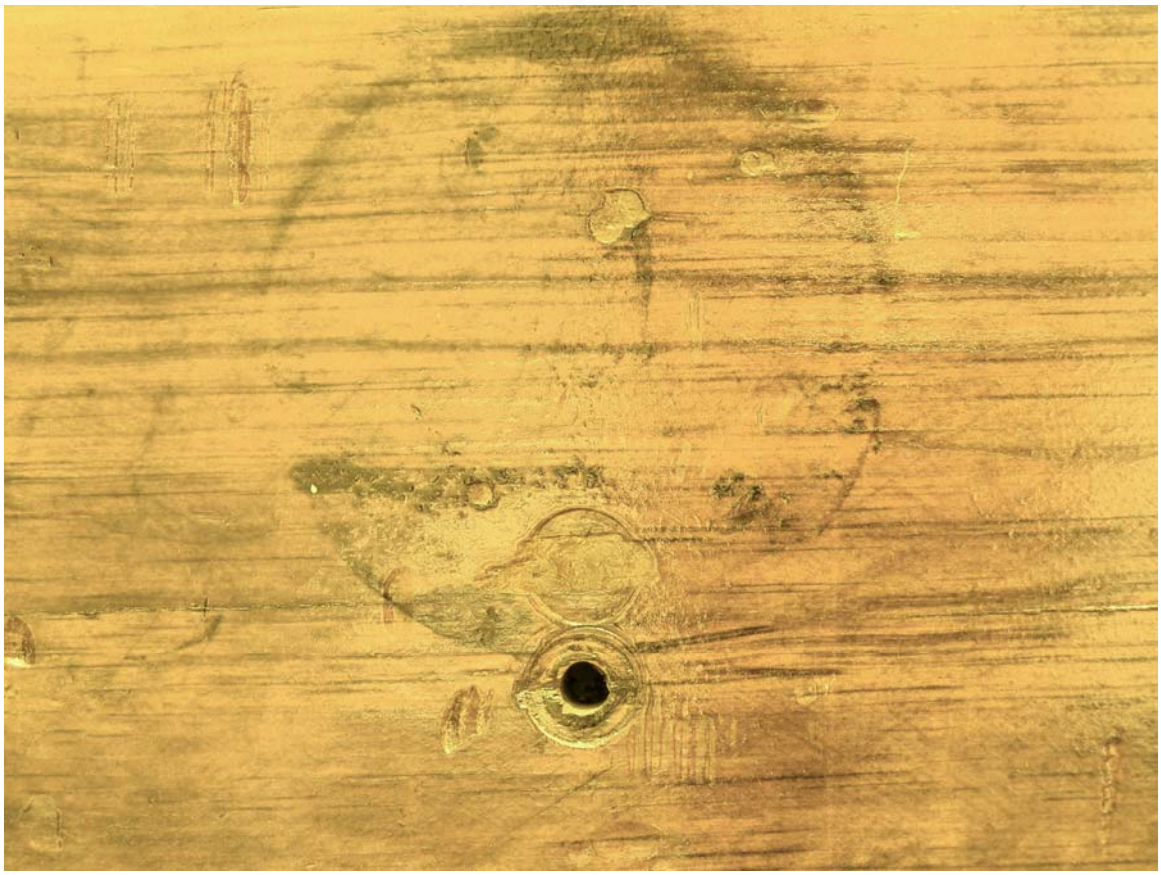
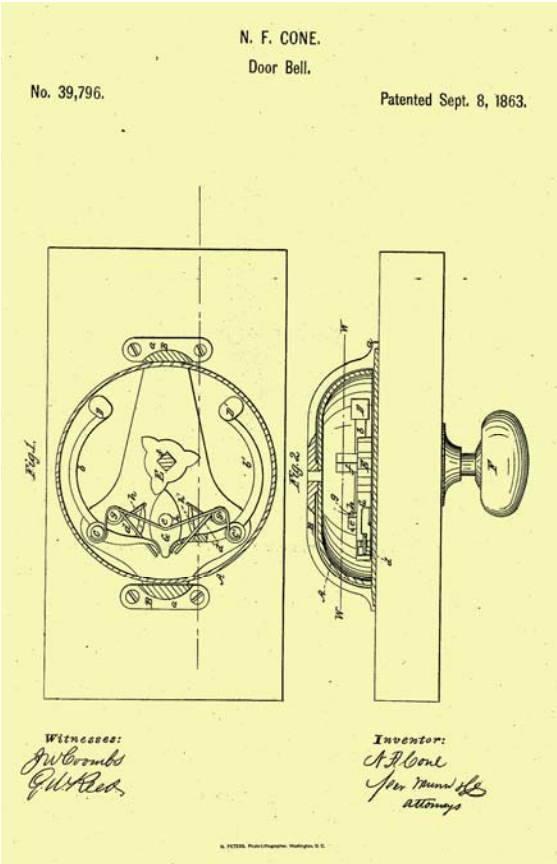


Plate 30
A silhouette of the doorbell mount, along with circular holes (some filled), are the only indicators of a once-functioning doorbell located on the side entrance door. The removal and/or whereabouts of the bell was never documented—at least to the knowledge of the author. The absent doorbell would most likely have been a Taylor's or Cone Patent (see next page), which consisted of a bronze bell with a cast iron mount. The patent date and/or patentee were depicted on the face of the bell.



Schematic of the 1863 Nathan Cone Patent. Rotating the knob releases spring-driven hammers causing the bell to ring, over and over, so long as you twist the knob.

A typical door bell similar to the one shown in Cone's Patent, and most likely used on the side entrance door of the LeDuc house. (Bell is a part of the author's collection).

SECTION 5
LEDUC HOUSE ARCHITECTURAL HARDWARE

HOOKS AND HINGES

Plate 31
Passage door hook with the letter "S" found on the base between the mounting screws. Presumably the "S" identifies the manufacturer, although it is unclear at the time of writing. This particular hook is primarily found only in the passage room/closet on the 2nd floor—a small area with oddly placed hooks found almost everywhere. The utilitarian hooks are complimented with acorn-shaped tips which aside from the "S", is the dominating trend throughout the remainder of the house.

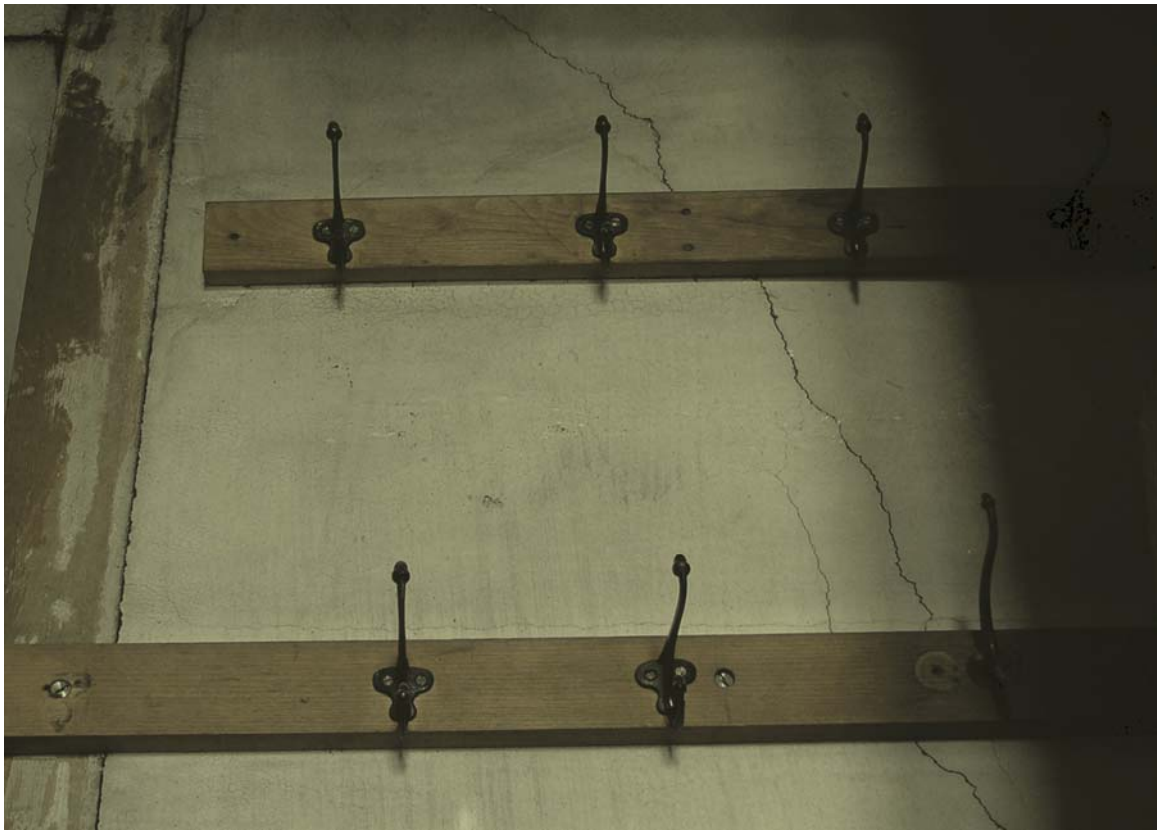


Plate 32
Most of the closets have japanned finish, cast iron hooks with acorn tips. Some are broken or missing altogether. Even so, the hooks are all mounted to a plain pine or fir board that was anchored directly into the plaster wall. It is certainly common for hooks to be broken or missing which was caused by the wear and tear over the years.

Plate 33
The hinges throughout the house (with the exception of the 3rd floor) are identical to the one depicted here—both in size, finish and style. Very simple and utilitarian…made of cast iron with original japanned finish. The hinge consists of 2 sections or leafs; whereby, one leaf has the fixed pin, while the other leaf has a hollow barrel or "knuckle" to receive the pin and link the hinge leafts into a single pivoting hinge.

SECTION 6
LEDUC HOUSE ARCHITECTURAL HARDWARE

THIRD FLOOR RIMLOCKS AND MINERAL KNOBS

Plate 34
The door to the right contains rectangular glass panes with original wavy glass. Some of the doors are painted, while others are missing key plates. Overall however, these attic doors are largely intact and in good condition. The cast iron hinges for these doors are plain 3 ½ inch with a japanned finish. All of the doors on the 3rd floor seem unusually small—as if they were meant for wandering children.

Plate 35
Detailed portrayal of a typical 3rd floor mineral knob. All of these knobs were backed by a japanned finish cast iron rosette and key plate. Along with the rimlocks, the knobs show very few signs of wear.

Plate 36
Japanned rimlock and mineral knob located on all the passage doors throughout the 3rd floor only. The lock has a patent date of Nov. 15, 1862. The keeper is somewhat hidden because it has been painted. All of the 3rd floor rimlocks are in surprisingly good working order.

SECTION 7
LEDUC HOUSE ARCHITECTURAL HARDWARE

MISC. HARDWARE PARTS

Plate 38
These hardware parts were found on a shelf in the 2nd floor passage room and/or closet between bedrooms. Presumably, the hardware was removed for repair because the mortise lock is missing springs and the dead bolt. The rosettes are in pieces. The knob has a fabulous crackle pattern. The lock box has no markings indicating a manufacturer.

Plate 39
Defunct hardware parts found in an old gallon milk container. An extra hook, broken rosette fragments, sash hardware, and so on. It was at first presumed that hardware items no longer serving a purpose were simply discarded. Thankfully, that presumption was wrong because of instances where items like the lot found above tend to surface, when sought after. Accordingly, these stashed away lots may invoke hardware placement conundrums (that are always exciting to solve), or at the very least, serve as replacements for broken or missing hardware items still found or used throughout the house.

Plate 40

This history (or lack thereof) of these name plates is rather interesting. The author was convinced of their authenticity—that is, being original pieces from the time of construction. Of all the hardware in and around the house, theses plate was the focal point; mainly, since nothing like this was ever seen before. In addition, the plates complimented the other porcelain hardware so nicely. More to the point, these plates never existed during construction—in fact, they never existed in Mr. LeDuc's lifetime. It turns out that these plates were made by the antique dealer (Carroll Simmons) who took the home over from LeDuc family descendants. In actuality, the plates are only 50 or so years old. After reviewing the picture, one may think it is obvious that these plates are not original—the dead give away being the plate with Simmons name on it. During the original assessment, the author failed to recall the existence of the Simmons plate because these plates were removed during restoration. Nonetheless, the possibility that the Simmons plate was made after the already existing LeDuc plates (as a means to be recognized with the history of the house) cannot be excluded entirely. The driving force behind the rationale is found in the stylistic differences and varying conditions among the three plates.

Sources of Information

Bird's eye view of the city of Hastings, Dakota Co., Minnesota 1867. Drawn by A. Ruger. Chicago, Chicago Lithographing Co. [1867]

Cottage Residences. Authored by A.J. Downing. New York, 1842

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About the Author

Eric J. Nordstrom is a molecular biology researcher by trade and a historic building materials enthusiast by passion. He currently holds a bachelor and masters degree from the University of Minnesota. His first hardware report documented the architectural hardware at the Alexander Ramsey Mansion in St. Paul, Minnesota. After completing his 2nd project on the William LeDuc House hardware, the author is committed to furthering this line of research applied to similar houses throughout the United States. For the time being, he resides in the Northeast neighborhood of Minneapolis, Minnesota.