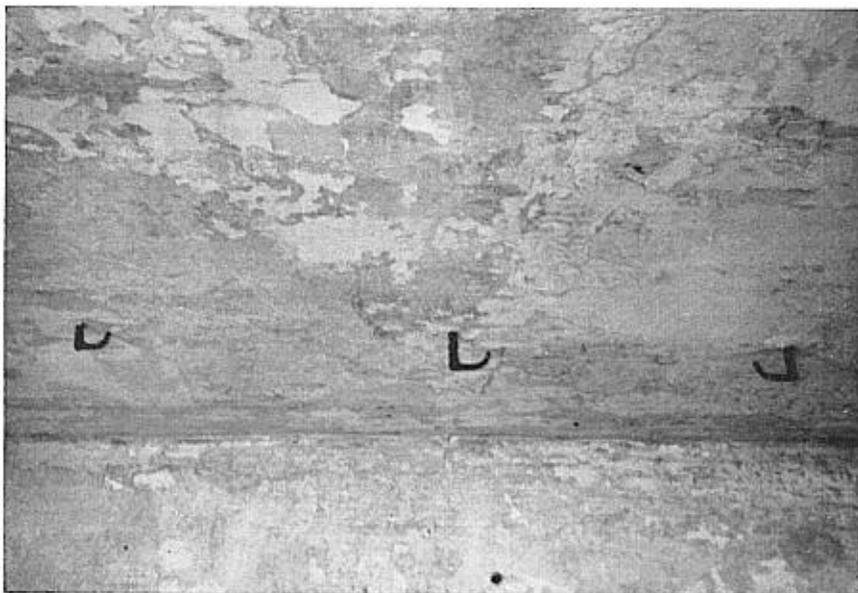


Notes and Gleanings

THE Society has received queries from time to time concerning the original use for the wrought-iron hooks (usually in pairs) which are not infrequently found in the plaster ceilings of early houses—both upstairs and down. Almost invariably L-shaped with the

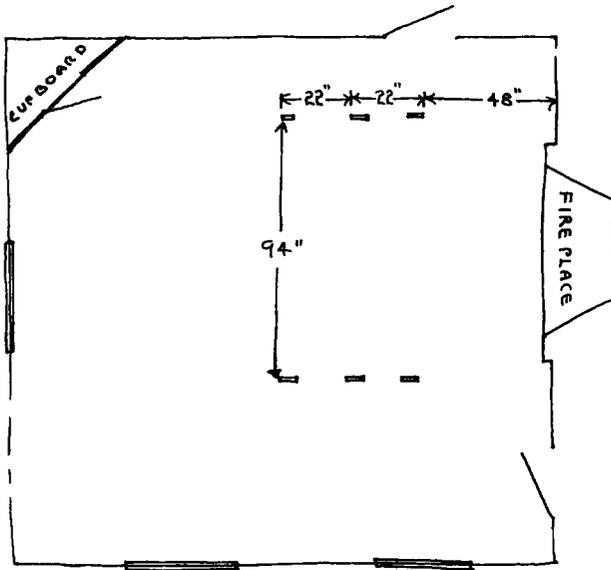
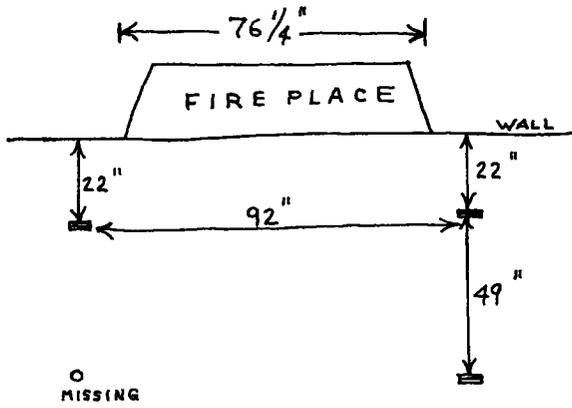
such a pair of hooks can be found in the eastern downstairs room of the Josiah Keith House, Old Bay Road, Easton, Massachusetts, a room which had been added presumably in the mid-eighteenth century to an existing house of about 1717. Mrs. William Newell who with



WROUGHT-IRON HOOKS, PARLOR CEILING, PHILO BEARDSLEY HOUSE,
NEW PRESTON, CONNECTICUT

shorter length turned up at the end, these pairs of hooks are generally so spaced in width and distance from the walls of the room as to suggest the proportions of a double bedstead. So often, in fact, are these conditions fulfilled that we have had little hesitation in assuming that the hooks were indeed associated with bedsteads and their hangings, perhaps utilized in some way to help support the tester. We have at least one instance of confirmation: just

her husband purchased the property in the 1920's has informed the editor that in the early years of their ownership they had a visit from a very old lady who recalled having slept in that room as a child, in a bed whose tester was supported from the hooks which remain to this day. As an amusing side light on earlier customs it should be added that these hooks show plainly by their placement that the longer, far side of the bed was only four



SKETCH-PLANS SHOWING LOCATION OF CEILING HOOKS IN THE KITCHEN OF HOUSE IN SHERMAN, CONNECTICUT (*above*), AND PARLOR, PHILO BEARDSLEY HOUSE, NEW PRESTON, CONNECTICUT (*below*)

or five inches from the wall. There was plenty of room on the adjoining wall which received the head to have placed the bedstead in such a way that the housewife could have had access to the far side for ease in "making up," but such apparently was not the case. The bedstead here must have occupied the entire corner, even to the extent of blocking a few inches of a window on one of the two walls. Normally, however, one is apt to find a spacing of hooks which would imply a free-standing placement for the bedstead.

Among the queries we have received is one which describes a much different situation. Mr. John Tee-Van of Sherman, Connecticut, the owner of an early house there, writes as follows:

In the ceiling of our old living room (19' x 14' 6"), which originally was the kitchen, are three iron hooks (a fourth hole that undoubtedly held a hook was filled up when the house was painted by us in 1928). The hooks are in

front of a large fireplace, as indicated in the accompanying sketch which also gives the dimensions of the hooks. The hooks are about $\frac{3}{4}$ " square at the top where they come through the ceiling; they taper from this point to their end.

The unusually large size of these hooks, nine and one half inches long, is no more puzzling than their placement, directly in front of a fireplace, as shown in the sketch to which Mr. Tee-Van refers. And as if this were not enough, a similar arrangement can be found in the parlor ceiling of the Philo Beardsley House on Kent Hollow Road in nearby New Preston, Connecticut. The hooks in this case, more conventional in size, are arranged in two groups of three, spaced ninety-four inches apart and some forty-eight inches in front of the fireplace (see sketch and illustration). Can any of our members furnish some proof beyond mere conjecture for the original use of these oddly spaced hooks?

IN answer to an earlier query it is gratifying to report that the cover illustration which appeared on the Winter 1965 issue of *OLD-TIME NEW ENGLAND* has been identified beyond any doubt. Mrs. Robert Selkirk of South Hadley, Massachusetts, has recognized this as a known view of the second church building in South Hadley, built in 1761 and torn down in 1844. "To the right of the church (with two chimneys)," she writes,

"is the old Dwight homestead which was moved to the east of this site & our College Art Bldg. built in 1901. Again—(with four chimneys) the old college Seminary building which burned Sept. '96. . . . In far right of picture was a hotel & small stores (perhaps a livery stable) as my parents spoke about same." The college to which she refers is, of course, Mount Holyoke.