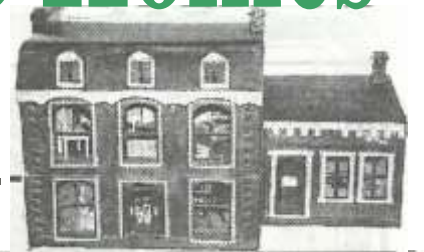




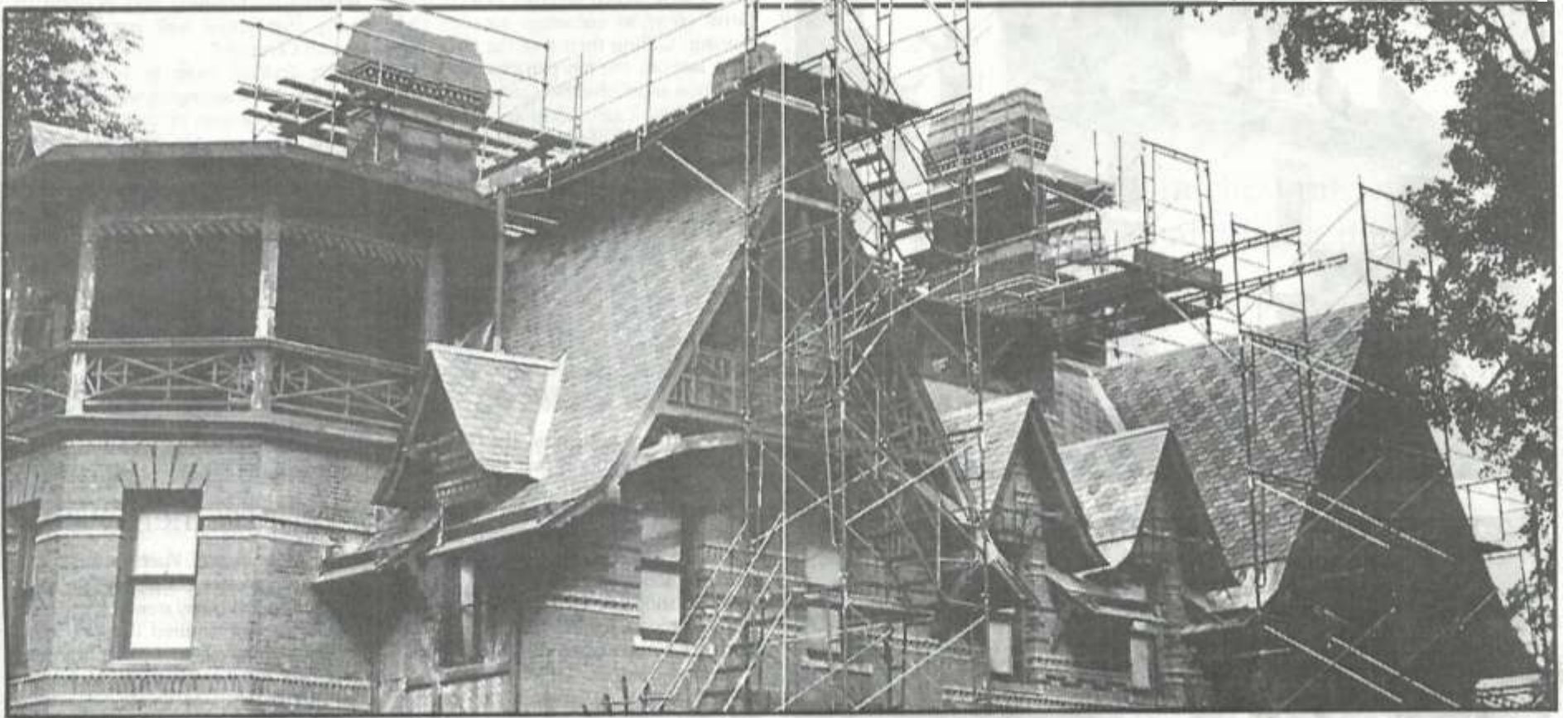
ANTIQUE
And The Arts Weekly

Historic Homes & Properties



November 1998

The Bee Publishing Co. Inc., Newington, Connecticut



One old, one new...the restoration team tackles rehabilitation of the altered chimney corbels using computer enhanced photo images.

Restoration Of Mark Twain Home

Accurate Restoration Of Mark Twain Home Helped By Computer Scanning Technology

HARTFORD, CONN. — "Here's what we had to work with," Tom Kronenberger told me; we were standing in the driveway of the multi-hued brick structure that Samuel L. Clemens built for his family in 1874.

The difference between the original photos of the house, taken at various times during its history, and the computer enhancements was dramatic. The originals were but postage-stamp size, yet the enhanced views were nearly eight by ten inches.

Utilizing this modern graphics tech-

nique, Kronenberger and his team have been able to compare the brickwork of such architectural elements as the chimneys and caps, as originally created by Clemens' masons, then as repaired in 1905. The two versions differed significantly from each other.

Kronenberger Restorations is working on behalf of, and in cooperation with, the independent Mark Twain Memorial and Library Organization. But that work has been funded by a \$1 million restoration grant from the State of Connecticut.

Not one to waste time talking with journalists when there's work to be done, Kronenberger was soon off and supervising in an effort to complete the restoration while fall weather held.

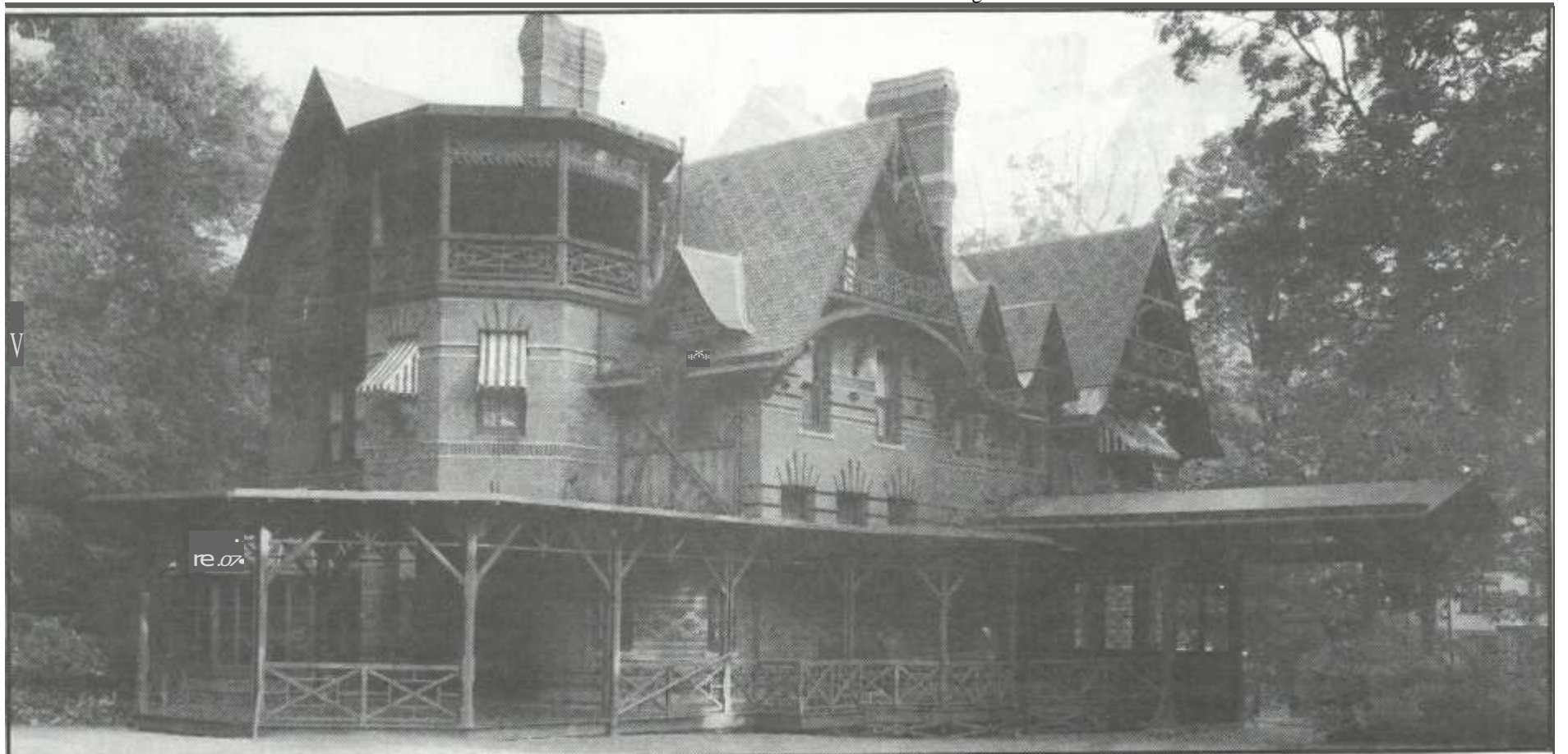
The program will take the century-and-a-quarter-old structure back to the most accurate representation possible. It will reflect the appearance of the dwelling in the days when Sam and Livy Clemens, with their daughters Susy, Clara and Jean — even the dog, Hash! — lived there.

Sam Clemens bought land for his new

home in 1871, largely to be closer to his Hartford-based publisher, the American Publishing Company. His book, *The Innocents Abroad*, had become popular, and as a business move the purchase seemed wise. At first, Sam and Olivia Clemens rented a home in the Nook Farm neighborhood, then three years later moved into their own home just across the lawn from neighbor Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Clemens had commissioned New York

(continued on page 12)



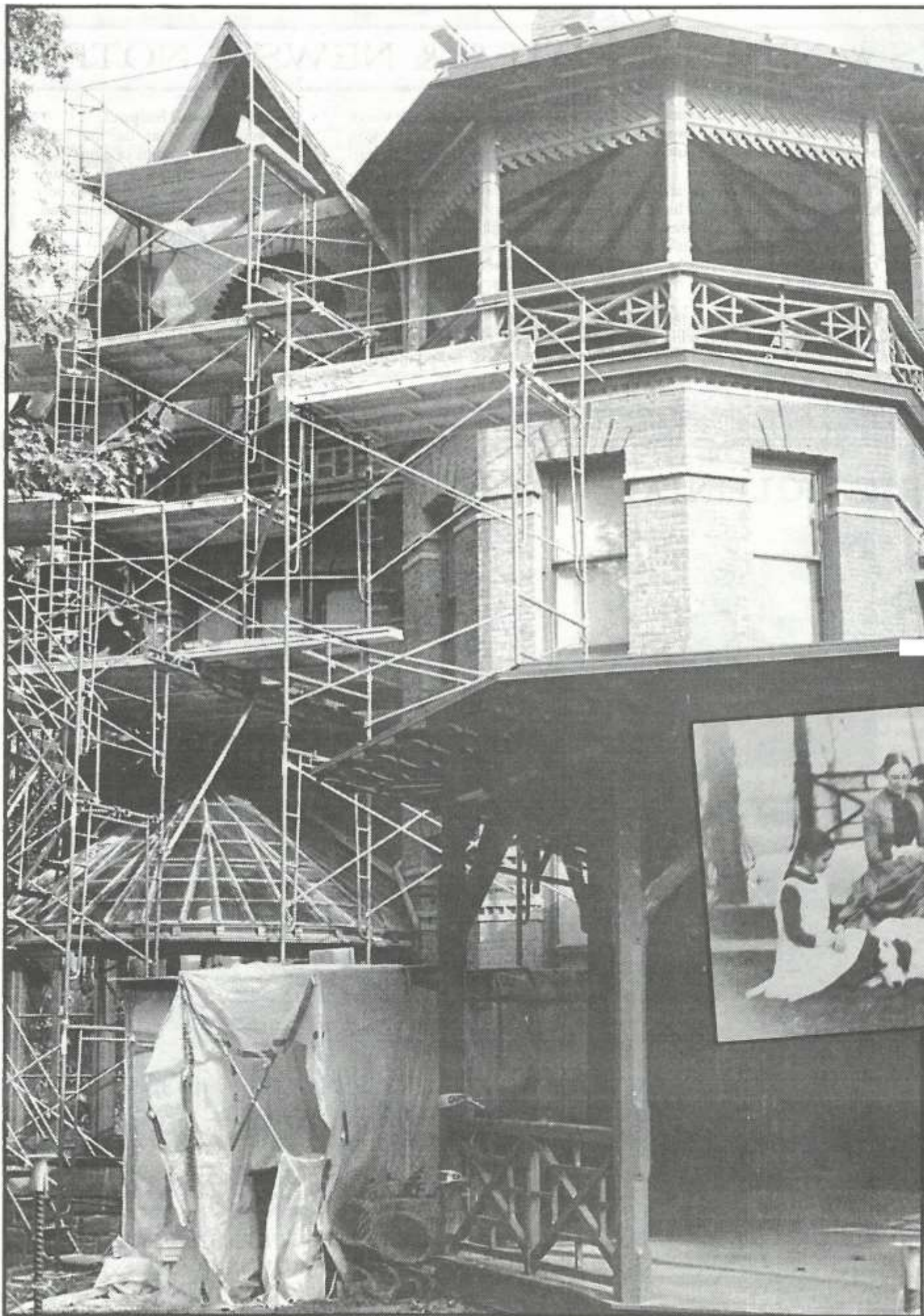
From this angle, it's easy to see where story that Twain designed house to look like a steamboat originated. The "Texas" third-floor porch looks like wheelhouse, the "ombra" first-floor porch looks like the bow, and the gable left of the porte-cochere might be the top of the paddle-wheel box. Story is apocryphal, however.

Restoration Of Mark Twain Home



The house in the era of the Clemens family; note the "tattoo" pattern of painted bricks used to relieve monotonal red-brown effect

Story and Photos by David Kendall



State-funded restoration of the exterior even includes repointing bricks with a red-brown mortar to match the original.

(continued from page 1)

architects Potter and Thorpe to do the initial design work for what is today considered a landmark Gothic style house in brick. Curator Marianne Curling and I later stood by the porte cochere, detailing the steps by which Sam and Livy must have determined the most effective decorative theme for the house.

Initially, Marianne pointed out, the Mark Twain House was a large, brick-colored block on the landscape. "You can see," she pointed out, "they used dark red brick, dark red mortar, and dark red painted wooden trim."

To relieve the monotonal effect, and enliven the total, Curling pointed out, they tried a robin's egg blue color accent stripe between two decorative brick courses. "It must not have worked," she laughed, "because they almost immediately tried something else — a tri-colored accent pattern based on earth tones and green. That didn't work either." What did work, and that extremely well, was a "tattoo" pattern in which a design of vermilion red and gloss black was applied over the decorative brick work itself.

"Sometimes," Curling noted, "the spacing of the brick wasn't appropriate for the pattern, so it was applied across portions of adjacent bricks." Today, though it appears the house is accented by glazed bricks, this paint scheme has been restored as the most appropriate to the Clemens' period of ownership.

The Kronenberger restoration, however, goes far beyond the decorative application of paint. The chimney caps, for instance, were profoundly altered about 30 years after the original construction. "We believe the masons who worked in 1905 must have encountered some failure," Tom asserted. A deeply sculptured brick pattern in the corbeling was eliminated during that repair effort, but was visually replicated by alternately painting brick-ends black and white. It is in this area that the computer enhancement made such a profound contribution, enabling the chimneys to be reconstructed to their original design.

In addition, several doors were added in the 1930s when the Hartford Public Library leased the house, using the first floor for a branch operation, while renting apartments on the second and third floors, and in the servants' wing and carriage house.

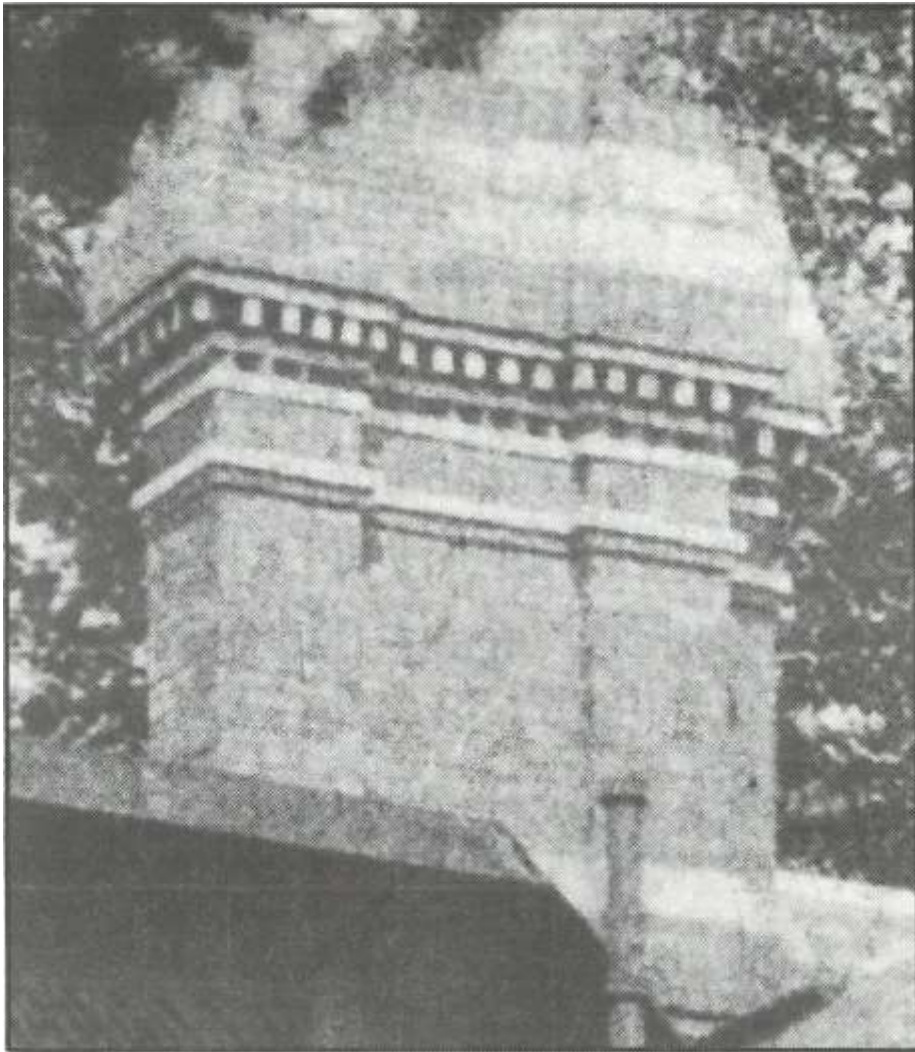
These will be removed, again taking the house back to its Clemens period. Also, the carriage house is being re-



The Clemens family, (l-r) Susy, Olivia, Jean, Sam and Clara, with the dog, Hash, on the ombra porch at turn-of-the-century.

stored. It is an effort involving re-mortaring all the brick, the relocation of the carriage doors, replacement of some brownstone sills, and the introduction of a new slate roof. Tom Kronenberger has caused the old Portland (Conn.) quarry to be reopened for the purpose of cutting the brownstone sills from the same stone used originally. The purple roof slates will be the last ever to be quarried on a unique site in Nova Scotia, he pointed out.

Though Sam and Livy Clemens deeply



Above, as the chimneys originally looked with alternating courses of brick; below, after the 1905 repair work with painted details.

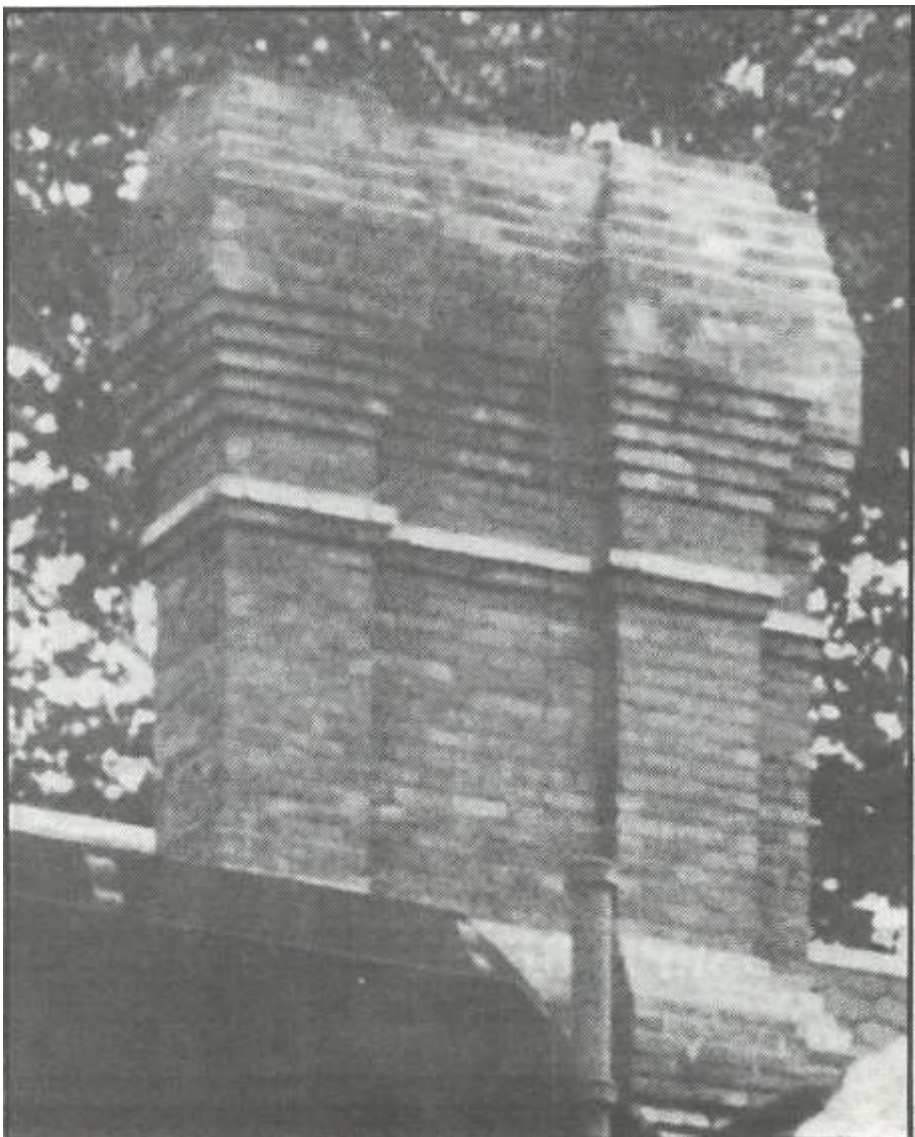
loved the Farmington Avenue house, considering it "had a heart, and a soul, and eyes to see us with," and feeling that they "never came home from an absence that its face did not light up and speak out its eloquent welcome..." the family lived together there less than 20 years. Suffering a series of financial reversals, Clemens moved his family to Europe in 1891, the publishing house suffered bankruptcy in 1893, and in 1896 Susy Clemens died of meningitis there. They never occupied the house again, and sold it in 1903.

Quite in addition to the present exterior restoration project, the Mark Twain Memorial reports that the ongoing upkeep and additional interior work on the house, the development and presentation of programs, and the maintenance of a full-time professional staff requires an annual budget of more than \$1 million.

But visitors and staff agree that Mark Twain's legacy and works continue to have a universal appeal that cuts across cultural, generational and geographic boundaries. "Twain's observations about so many things around him," says the Memorial's executive director, John Boyer, "remain relevant today. They are universal and timeless in their appeal and in their understanding of human nature."

"The mission of the Mark Twain House," Boyer adds, "is to ensure, through continued restoration and preservation of the site, that Mark Twain's challenging legacy lives on for future generations."

For information on the Mark Twain House, its hours and tours, as well as the Memorial's principal funds-development effort, Mark Twain Days in Hartford, write 351 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, Conn. 06105, or call 203/247-0998.



Below, after the 1905 repair work with painted details.

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