

December 15, 2002 Issue

Americana, Our Heritage



As I sat at my computer keyboard and considered what to write in this issue's column, I went to my e-mail and downloaded some of the Christmas greetings that had been sent electronically to my husband and I. I was amazed at the sophistication of the animation sequences, as well as the audio associated with them. I have been learning more and more about this marvel for only the past five years, and can now actually speak the jargon. Yes, the computer is becoming more sophisticated, and at the same time, a lot more user friendly, at least, it is being more kind to me, so,

Have a wonderful (electronic) Christmas, and a safe (computer) New Year.

Next Issue: They Live Among Us

As I travel around the great Northwest and fly over this indomitable United States, I am reminded of the wonderful strength and courage of the people who built this nation. I see it in the sturdy barns and out-buildings on small farms and large ranches. I marvel at towers that seem to scrape the clouds over our superb cities. There are miles upon miles of finely wrought railway lines, hosting chains of freight and passenger cars, fashioned by the hand of man. Steam rises from factories turning out goods for our own and the world's comfort.

"There are miles upon miles of finely wrought railway lines,..."

These are the modern-day wonders that greet one daily. However, there is another fascinating aspect to the history of America. The old, the forgotten, the only-fondly-remembered. Here is a rusting pick-up truck in a field, there is a barn, grayed and abandoned. Memories of laughter, hard work, loving families, accompany the old milk cans to the shed, to gather dust. Spiders spin their webs around a rusting metal chair where once Gramma rocked her dear ones.

I grew up on a farm in Wisconsin. Some of those things I have been describing were the building blocks of my character. Some, such as life in a big city, I can only imagine. I knew hardy folks who pitched in and helped

a neighbor build a barn, mend a roof, or slice trees into lumber for transport to town to sell. I have Uncles who spent their lives in factories assembling trucks or tools, appliances or automobiles to make life easier for us all.

"Victorian homes appeal to me"

Victorian homes appeal to me. Here in Washington, Oregon and California, I have researched numerous fine examples of this wondrous architecture. They speak of an age of elegance and frivolity. Of gracious living and a distinct culture. Cape cod style homes represent to me a solid, enduring manner. Of dedicated and determined stock. Farm homes stand sure and quietly amidst groves of sheltering trees, or crowning the rise of a hill (as if to keep its feet from getting soaked in the multitudinous winter, or spring rains). These are some of the things I have categorized as "Americana". These are part of the heritage of our great country.

Carol Thompson

Featured Artwork

Old Hudson



"An 'Old Hudson' car sets at the edge of a hay field, nearly obscured by tall grass. It seems as though it is just waiting for someone to slide in behind the wheel and take it for a spin."

Morning Coffee



"On the highway, through Eureka, California, in the thin daylight of dawn, you can get your 'morning coffee' at this espresso bar."

Blue Chair



"It has been a long time since anyone has felt the ease and comfort afforded by this old 'blue chair'. Rusting and cast away, it sets in the summer sunshine and gathers dust, straw and spider