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MOULDINGS

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Mouldings are decorative architectural elements which are generally used as transitions between floor and wall, floor and ceiling, or one material and another. They help to create the scale and quality which distinguish architectural styles.

Mouldings were designed with the distance and position from which they were to be viewed in mind. Interior mouldings are different from exterior mouldings because the light hits them from below rather than above. Mouldings also vary according to the materials from which they are cut or run. A form appropriate for one material (i.e. plaster, wood or stone) may not be appropriate in one of the other materials. Ease of working determines the degree of undercutting and the fineness of the details.

Early mouldings in Alabama, as in other states, were generally run from wood with hand planes. Individual craftsmen designed and built the mouldings from combinations that could be created with their own planes. These combinations were designed in such a way as to shed water and protect the joints, an extremely important consideration with exterior mouldings of any material.

Power planing mills were operating in Alabama by the 1840s. These mills were able to produce larger quantities of mouldings, but the manufacturing process limited the variety of mould shapes.

One excellent resource on moulding forms is "Architectural Mouldings" by Carl F. Schmidt, from which much of the above material was edited. This book contains numerous measured drawings of mouldings from the New England area.

Mouldings and their use in 19th century Alabama can be classified into three main groups: the Federal, the Greek Revival, and the Victorian.

Moulding styles changed with changing architectural styles. However, because as with any stylistic changes these changes were gradual, it is not uncommon to find moulding forms that are holdovers from earlier styles. The country carpenters continued to use their planes rather than to discard them because the style had changed. It is not uncommon to find that the older house may have been "brought up to current fashion" by replacing part of the building. This is particularly true of mantels.

Federal style mouldings are the earliest and the most delicate forms. These mouldings and their uses were American derivatives of the Adamesque decorative impact of the Adam Brothers in England. Extremely fine and delicate mouldings are found on early 19th century houses, particularly on their doorways, mantels, stairways, chairrails and wainscots.

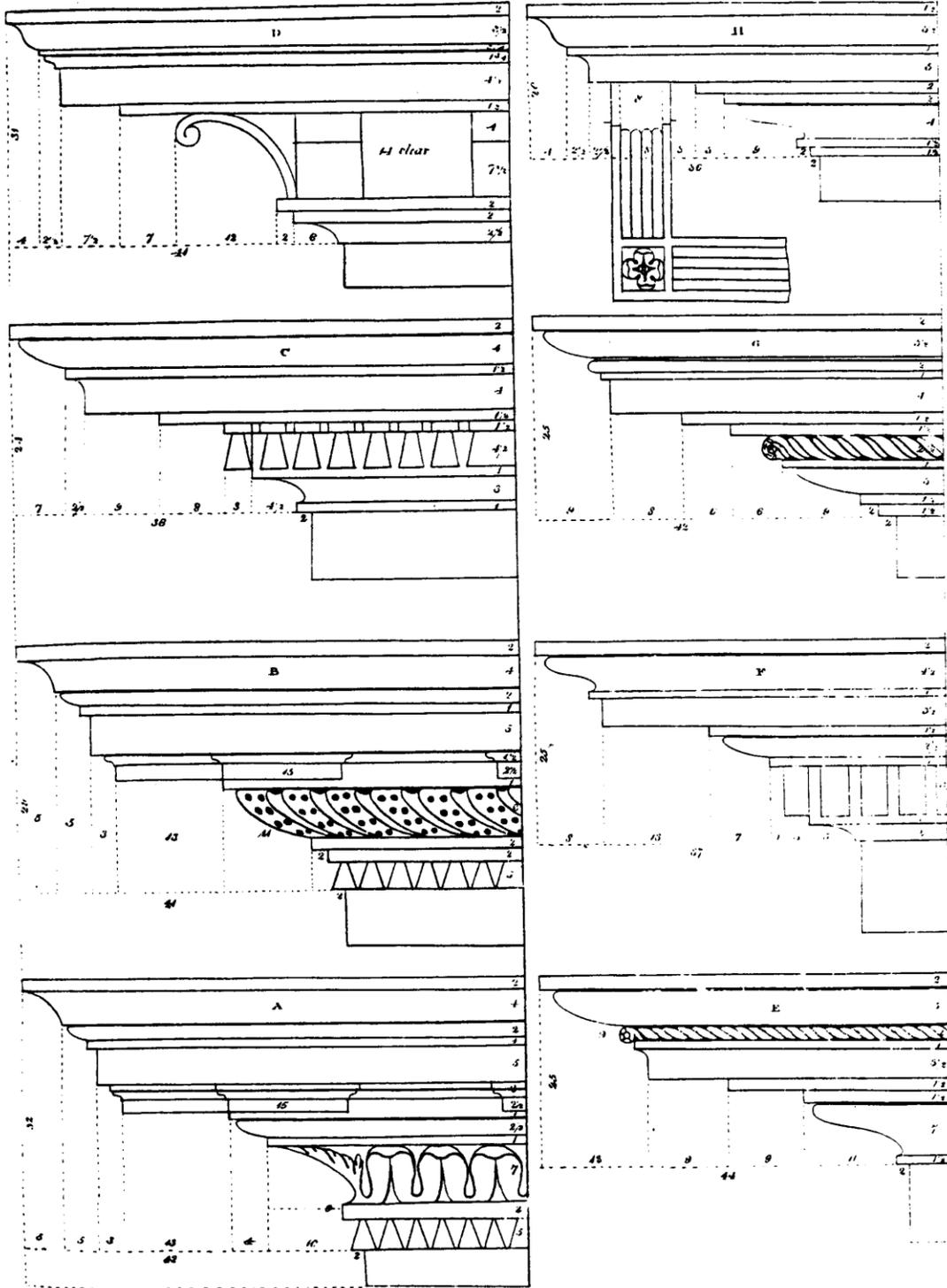
Some typical Federal treatments include: bases - a 1 1/8" x 5 1/2" board with a bead on the top, and door jambs often have bull's-eye corner blocks either with or without moulded jambs. Mantels and their forms were particularly delicate and finely detailed. The moulding at the wall ceiling junction was normally made of plaster.

The Greek Revival mouldings vary from the Federal in that they are heavier, stronger, more masculine forms. This simpler, sturdier treatment was more in line with the entire Greek Revival movement. The “eared” or “shouldered” door and window trim with or without finely detailed work is a typical detail. During this period marble mantels became much more common, often even in earlier homes where they replaced the more delicate wooden Federal mantels. As in the Federal style, the wall-ceiling junction moulding was normally made of plaster. Victorian mouldings combine influences of these other styles in that they are heavy like the Greek, but take the complexity of the Federal. These mouldings can be ornate and massive to the point of being overpowering to some.

The ideas of each stylistic period were distributed through various pattern books in which examples of both architecture and the details were shown. Federal moulding patterns were distributed through Asher Benjamin’s *The Country Builders Assistant* (1797), among other texts.

Greek Revival details and buildings were strongly developed and distributed through Minard Lafever’s *The Modern Builders Guide* (1833), and *The Beauties of Modern Architecture* (1835), and Asher Benjamin’s *The American Builders Companion* (1827). Knox Hall in Montgomery has carved wooden details that are almost exact copies of examples in *The Beauties of Modern Architecture*.

Victorian pattern books include *Victorian Architectural Details*. Two pattern books from 1865 and 1873 by M. F. Cummings & C. C. Miller are good sources for Victorian moulding patterns. Another interesting resource is an 1880 catalogue and price list of Gable & Beacham, a Baltimore Building Supply Co., reprinted in 1980.

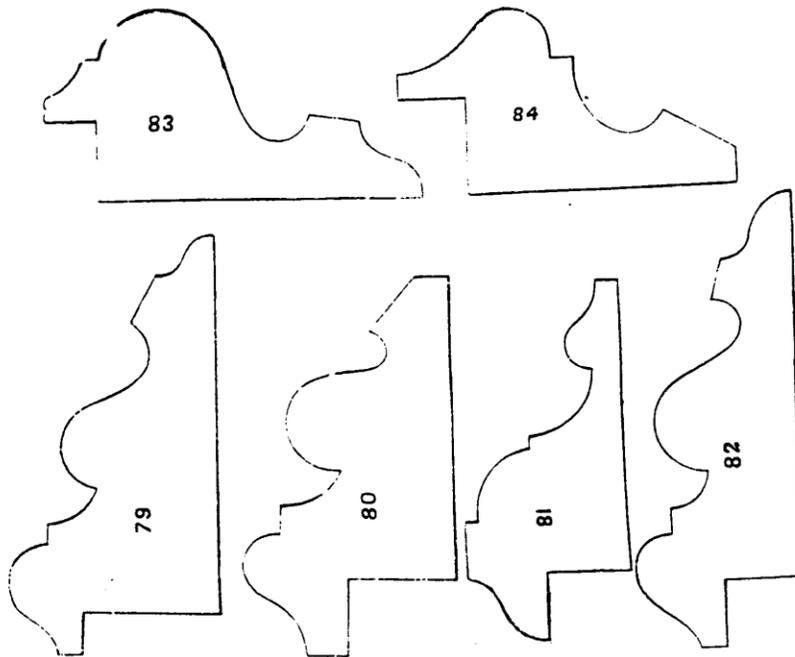


A. Reynolds, D. D.

W. H. H. H. H.

64 GABLE & BEACHAM, 385 W. Baltimore St., Baltimore.

Door and Panel Mouldings.



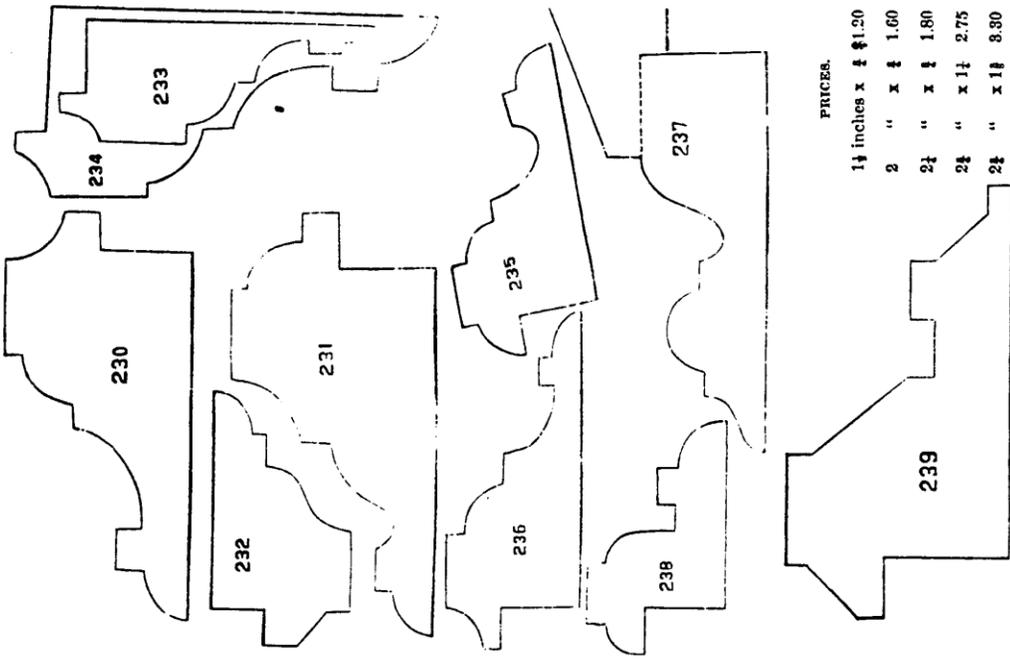
PRICES PER 100 FEET.

2 1/2 inches x 1 1/2	\$2.35
2 1/2 " x 1 1/4	2.50
2 1/2 " x 1 1/2	3.00
3 " x 1 1/2	3.00
3 " x 1 1/4	3.60

All Mouldings at rate of 80 cents per hundred lineal feet—inch measure.

GABLE & BEACHAM, 385 W. Baltimore St., Baltimore. 65

DOOR AND PANEL MOULDINGS.



PRICES.

1 1/2 inches x 1 1/2	\$1.20
2 " x 1 1/2	1.60
2 1/2 " x 1 1/2	1.80
2 1/2 " x 1 1/4	2.75
2 1/2 " x 1 1/2	3.80

All Mouldings at rate of 80 cents per hundred lineal feet—inch measure.