



# TRADITIONAL

# Roofing

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRADITIONAL ROOFING TRADES

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## Roof *INSCRIPTIONS* and *DESIGNS*



It is always a memorable experience to drive down a country road on a beautiful fall day, suddenly round a corner, and come upon a landmark slate roof. The 1880 barn shown above sits by itself on a lonely rural road near Brandon, Vermont. It has silently impressed passers-by for 124 years and is still looking good—a mix of Vermont purple and unfading green slates.

One of the unique characteristics of slate roofs is that they can be installed in decorative styles using slates of various colors. These decorative roofs can be inscribed with installation dates or with words, names, or abstract designs. The "Harmony Barn" shown at right is on the campus of Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania at the "Harmony Homestead" (also known as the Macoskey Center), located on Harmony Road. The slates are Vermont recycled sea green slates with a Pennsylvania black design. The black slates were generously donated by Williams and Sons Slate and Tile of Wind Gap, PA (see ad this issue).

The easiest procedure to use when installing an inscription or design on a slate roof is to draw a schematic of the roof beforehand. Make sure the schematic shows every slate in its proper proportion. The dimensions of the roof as well as the size of the slates must be known beforehand in order to do this—a job made easier by the use of a computer (although a computer was

obviously not available in the 1800s when many dates were installed on slate roofs). Once the schematic has been created, the artist can play around with various designs until he or she has settled on one that looks good. Then it is only a matter of referring closely to the schematic during installation while using slates of contrasting colors in order to make the design appear on the roof. This doesn't add a lot of time to the job, but it does create a lifetime landmark roof that can live long after the craftsmen who installed it have quietly passed away. 

Photos by Joe Jenkins



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