

# *Stained Glass Windows*

## ***Use in Residential Buildings in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century:***

The history of stained glass dates back thousands of years. The use of stained glass windows in wealthy residences was popular in America in the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The 1890's marked the height of the stained glass popularity. But, by 1900, the movement against excesses in decoration and ornamentation fueled by a desire to return to simpler styles made the use of stained glass almost obsolete by the 1920's.

## ***Rarity:***

Stained glass windows from the 19<sup>th</sup> century that have survived to today are extremely significant and every effort should be made to document and preserve them.

## ***Documenting:***

Documenting and recording information on your precious stained glass window whether it is 8' tall or 18" square...it doesn't matter! If it is original to the house it is worth the effort as insurance against vandalism, fire and other accidents/disasters.

In documenting your window:

- 1.) Note what year your house was built...this will aid the restorer.
- 2.) Take pictures from inside the home during moderate daylight with interior lights dimmed. If the window faces east, take the picture in the afternoon; if the window faces west, take the photo in the morning; if it faces the north, take at mid-day and southern facing windows, take the photo anytime. Also, take photos from the outside as well.
- 3.) Describe in writing the colors of each panel.
- 4.) Keep the documentation of your stained glass window in a safe place like a safe or a bank safety deposit box.

## ***Caring for your Stained Glass Window:***

Check to see that the frames that hold the glass window sections in place are in good condition. Wood sash is common in our neighborhood. Left unprotected, wood and glazing compounds decay over time from moisture and exposure to sunlight allowing glass to potentially fall out. If glazing is missing or the wood sash is deteriorating, consult a stained glass professional.

## ***Cleaning:***

Water and a soft rag is the best cleaning solution for your antique stained glass window! Abrasive or acidic cleaners should never be used as they can damage the glass. Most household cleaners contain ammonia which can damage putty so likewise never use any of those products.

## ***Repair and Restoration:***

Repair and restoration is quite detailed and should be handled by a professional who specializes in stained glass. If a pane of stained glass breaks, SAVE IT! This will help the restorer to come as close as possible to the original.

Sources:

[www.historicnewengland.org](http://www.historicnewengland.org)

Stained Glass Association of America