



Steve and Susan Lowenberg, seated, and their son, Scott, on the spacious sun porch. The elaborate iron grillwork in the — imported from Italy — is familiar to many who travel Maine Street. RIGHT: Floor length drapes between the parlor and room of the home are done in a Victorian hue that matches the restored walls.

Traveling through time

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Steve and Susan Lowenberg didn't become time travelers when they considered buying the house at 100 Maine Street.

Years later, however, they are able to describe a successful journey to the past to restore a home that serves them well in the years ahead.

Thanks to a trusty roadmap, strolling guides and their own sense of adventure, Steve and Susan Lowenberg made a century-wide leap in their lives and brought an elegant stone home back to the future.

In 1996, the Lowenberg family moved into a 1980 ranch-style home in Bangor, giving Susan a long commute to her job at Quincy Junior High School. She had always been inspired by the neighboring older home, so when a "For Sale" sign

"just taking a look."

That look convinced them to move from a tidy single-story dwelling to three sprawling floors plus basement built in 1882.

Their new home came complete with a mystery — a stained glass window visible from outside, but nowhere to be found within. The exquisite panel was finally located behind a large mirror over the foyer fireplace, its disappearance caused by significant renovations by owners in the 1920s.

Today the tranquil scene of a girl working in the fields once again casts its golden light on the rich woods of the restored entryway. "Everything in here has been redone," Steve says with pride.

Thanks to the team from River City Restorations, a striking coffered ceiling was discovered under white

appeared when white paint was stripped from the mantel of the marble fireplace.

Taking their cue from shades on the walls, restorers replaced wainscoting, and they used old photos to construct a staircase that is true to the original design.

The photos were provided by a descendent of the home's second owners, the William Distin family, and they proved to be the key to taking the home back to its roots.

The owners of the 1920s "traveled abroad and brought back ideas to upgrade the home," Susan says. The result was abundant use of white paint and a general streamlining as well as the addition of a sleeping porch and a sunroom, complete with floral grillwork imported from Italy.

Formerly in strong contrast to the room's modernist décor, the elaborate iron grillwork complemented by stenciled

ciled spring green vines created by Jean Meyer.

Strategic use of stenciling helps create a strong sense of continuity and flow within the home. "Flow" was one of Scott Meyer's watchwords as his firm, River City Restorations, carried out the renovation process.

Meyer also emphasized maintaining the home's natural warmth and using materials appropriate to its period and character. Bradbury and Bradbury Art Wallpapers and St. Louis Antique Lighting were important resources, and Mary Miller of Mr. K's "was very patient" in matching drapery colors to the Victorian hues restored to the walls.

In the kitchen, Susan chose harmonizing shades and parquet flooring that allowed the room to blend in with its setting. "I wanted my modern conveniences," she admits, "but I didn't want it to look too different

from the rest."

Steve also is pleased to report that "this is an all new home with all new wiring, plumbing and HVAC."

The family has accented the home's style with a number of period furnishings, some passed down through the family and others discovered by good fortune. One favorite find, an antique pool table, graces the third floor "Friar's Ballroom" in the company of a fireplace with tiles depicting tales of King Arthur.

Although Susan agrees that a home "never really is completely done," the Lowenbergs have created a beautiful blend of modern convenience and gracious Victorian refinement.

Now Susan's commute is a five-minute stroll, but it carries her back to another time and way of life.