

village view

by Andrea Leonard



Chesterwood, the latest historic site selected for the Building Restoration Program sponsored nationally by Certain Teed Corporation, among 19 sites to receive free roofing materials. Chesterwood, home of noted sculptor Daniel Chester French, is a National Historic Landmark.

Currently (from February 11 to April 17) an exhibition of Daniel Chester French's work is being featured at the National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian, in Washington.

This exhibit concentrates on actual sculptures ranging from small plaster models to larger-than-life bronzes. Material from some of French's best-known commissions is included; among them are the **Minute Man** in Concord, Mass., **The Continents**, done for the U. S. Custom House in New York City, and the working model of the heroic statue in the Lincoln Memorial.

Maintaining properties belonging to the National Historic Trust is an expensive necessity. Private industry, recognizing the cultural and historic value of buildings such as Chesterwood, makes an important contribution to meeting these expenses by assuming some of the costs; by so doing, ongoing generations may know first hand the heritage this nation's artists have left for them, and may experience, personally, the world in which these talented gifted people lived and produced.

CertainTeed Corporation, sponsor of a Building Restoration Program for properties such as this, has added Chesterwood to its list of historic sites to receive free roofing materials.

To be eligible for the on-going program sponsored by CertainTeed, historic sites must be owned by a non-profit organization and reflect the social, economic, and/or political development of the United States.

Properties are reviewed every four months; entries may be directed to the Building Restoration Program, CertainTeed Corporation, P. O. Box 860, Valley Forge, PA 19482.

No visit to Stockbridge would be complete without a drive out to Chesterwood, nor without a few hours inside the Old Corner House browsing among the Norman Rockwell paintings decorating this handsome house. Each room, hall and stairway is hung with a pictorial history of New England's first seventy years of the 20th century.

This short vacation will be a long-remembered one; you'll return to Cape Cod with fresh appreciation for the wealth of art, music and culture New England offers us.

All we need do is take a few days and seek it out. It's waiting for us -- just down the road a piece.

Sometime when you feel the time has come to take a short vacation from the beauties and attractions of Cape Cod, but you're still not anxious to spend a small fortune on a voyage to foreign lands, consider spending a long weekend away-but not too far away.

You might choose a trip to Boston or New York to take in some theatre, a concert at Symphony Hall or at the Met, a ride in the Swan Boats in the Public Gardens, or a cruise around Manhattan and through Hell Gate, a visit to the Museum of Fine Arts or the Museum of Modern Art.

You could settle for a long weekend on Nantucket, the Vineyard, Cuttyhunk, or even Block Island. Islands most certainly do provide a special isolation seldom found, in these days of modern transportation, on Cape Cod.

You might opt for a trip to western Massachusetts, to Berkshire County, to the New England town of Stockbridge, a town remarkably rich in things to do and see.

Since its incorporation as a town in 1739, Stockbridge and its surrounding countryside has become a cultural center and well-worth the half-day's drive for a long weekend of exploration.

Stockbridge, a quiet residential community with a population of about 2,000, lies in the heart of the Berkshire Hills. It comprises a scenic 23.7 square miles of meadows, lakes, woods and mountains.

Open to the public during summer months is "Naumkeag," the former residence of the Honorable Joseph Hodges Choate, once our ambassador to the Court of St. James. "Naumkeag" is famous for its elaborate gardens and plants imported from the Far East.

The Berkshire Playhouse, near Tanglewood, provides outside summer theatre entertainment.

The Old Corner House, a fine example of 18th century Georgian architecture, now houses exhibits of memorabilia from the time of the Indian Mission at Stockbridge to the present. A remarkable collection of Norman Rockwell's work is on permanent display.

You may visit the Nathaniel Hawthorne Cottage, a replica of the home once occupied by the noted author, at Tanglewood in Lenox. Here, too, the world-famous Boston Symphony Orchestra delights and inspires thousands at the 6,000-seat Music Shed each summer.

There's the historic Indian Mission House, built in 1739, and the Children's Chime Tower, built of native stone in 1878 on the spot where stood the first Indian Mission Church. Given by David Dudley Field, Jr., it rings daily at sunset "from apple blossom time 'til frost" in memory of Field's grandchildren.

Not to be missed is Chesterwood, the gracious home and busy studio of the late Daniel Chester French. Most famous for the statue of Abraham Lincoln commissioned for the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., Daniel Chester French was one of America's most celebrated sculptors.

Chesterwood, now a National Historic Landmark, was designed by Henry Bacon, the architect who designed our nation's capitol's Lincoln Memorial where French's statue of Lincoln is known to millions.

Open to the public, the two-story main house was completed in 1901; in an adjoining building, French's studio contains a scale model of Lincoln's seated figure from which the final work was created. There's also an astonishing atmosphere about the studio, as though Mr. French had just stepped out for a few moments and would be back any moment to take up his chisel.

On display is a fascinating collection of other works by the noted artist, including sketches, models, tools, and examples of his work in various stages of completion.

The house itself is completely and tastefully furnished; many of the rooms may be viewed. The vistas of the rolling hills and gently folding landscape are lovely to watch from the broad terrace; French must have been inspired by the peaceful scenery surrounding the place in which he lived and worked.