

Rediscovering a lost space

New book traces rise and fall (and rise) of the pantry

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WHETHER it's a single closet tucked into a kitchen corner, or an elaborate room lined with sparkling stemware and rations enough to feed an army, the pantry is inarguably one of the most important spaces in a home.

Despite its lofty responsibilities, the pantry has been sadly ignored by modern house and home aficionados, but author Catherine Pond is happy to buck the trend by paying close attention to the lesser-known spaces in her new book, "The Pantry: Its History and Modern Uses."

Pond, who grew up on a farm in Ohio and now lives in Hancock in a beautiful antique Federal-style home passed down through her husband's family for generations, has always been fascinated by pantries.

"My grandparents had a serving pantry with glass cabinets filled with glittering glassware and china," she said, "and I guess I became intrigued with pantries."



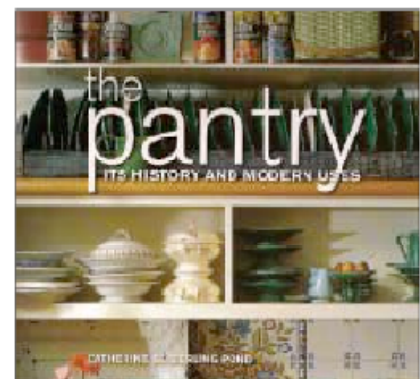
CATHERINE POND

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PHOTO BY SUDAN DRURY AND SILVE GROSS

An old Hoosier-style cabinet is revamped for use as a display cabinet for a beloved collection of LuRay



Pantries can give an otherwise chaotic home a sense of order by providing a place for storing everything from canned goods to precious heirlooms. But Pond said that having a fully-stocked food pantry can also provide a feeling of comfort.

"Growing up on the farm, there was a sense of security in having a full larder," Pond said. "We were like squirrels in the

winter."

The pantry has a fascinating, but largely unknown history, Pond said.

Though there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of books on kitchens or bathrooms or other areas of the home, Pond said there wasn't a single book on the market exclusively about pantries.

"They're a very important

place, but for some reason, pantries have been ignored by writers," she said.

Pond, who studied architectural and landscape history, was asked to write an article about pantries for a magazine called *Old House Interiors* and it dawned on her that she had amassed enough information about pantries to fill a book.

Pond traces the evolution of the pantry in American homes, from its glory days as a unique kitchen space, to its rapid decline in popularity as the refrigerator and modern cabinets took its place.

"From early America, throughout the broad stretch of 19th-century building styles, and well into the twentieth-century, the pantry evolved along with the many socioeconomic and design changes in the American home," she says in "The Pantry." "As well as storage and preparation space, a butler's pantry during the Victorian era was a buffer between the domestic service arena of the kitchen and the murmur of a full-course dinner party."

"The Pantry" also follows the growing trend of incorporating old-fashioned pantries in modern house design, something that's happening more and more often.

"After a long century of pantry decline," she wrote, "many American households are once again returning to the pantry to store their foodstuffs, dishes, unusual collections, and memories of their own making."

In her own home, built in

1813, Pond has two large Victorian style butler's pantries, with large cabinets and drawers on the bottom, and tall, glass-doored cabinets above. Tea sets and pottery, fine china, crystal, and glassware in green and red tower behind the glass doors.

Pond and her husband created the pantries to accommodate their vast collections of glassware and dishes – some purchased and others inherited.

Chalk it up to nostalgia, a desire for a taste of grandma's cooking, or a childhood memory that continues to linger, but the pantry, for many people, means "home."

"And," Pond said, "they're also practical."

"The Pantry" (\$16.95) is published by Gibbs Smith. For more information on "The Pantry," visit www.catherinepond.com or www.inthepantry.blogspot.com.



A pantry, like this one from the early 1900s, can be an ancillary space for the kitchen as well as a nostalgic place for a domestic memory.



This pantry dates back to 1786 and is likely the best example of an unaltered Early American pantry.