

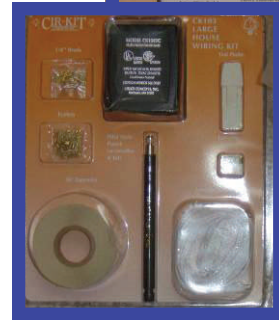
Victoria's Farmhouse



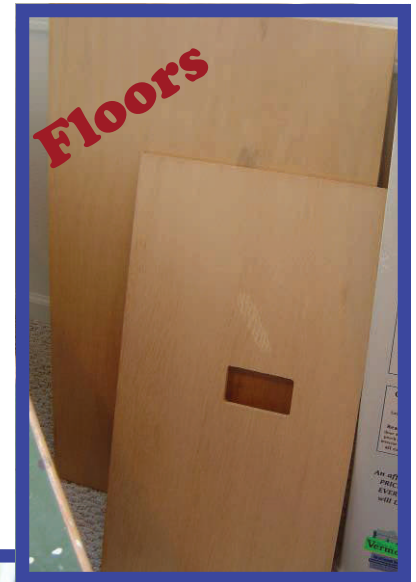
Building Log
2006—2007

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April 2006—The house and wiring kits arrived in the mail. (I took advantage of miniatures.com once a year, 1/2 off sale! I opened it and dug out the directions to see what I had gotten myself into. I decided to keep a photo log of the entire building process. I have also saved all receipts, product samples and anything else that looked remotely interesting. What I haven't done is added up the receipts, and I don't think I every will....



Step 1: What is inside the box?



Next up ... the foundation



**Part I:
Steps 1-4**

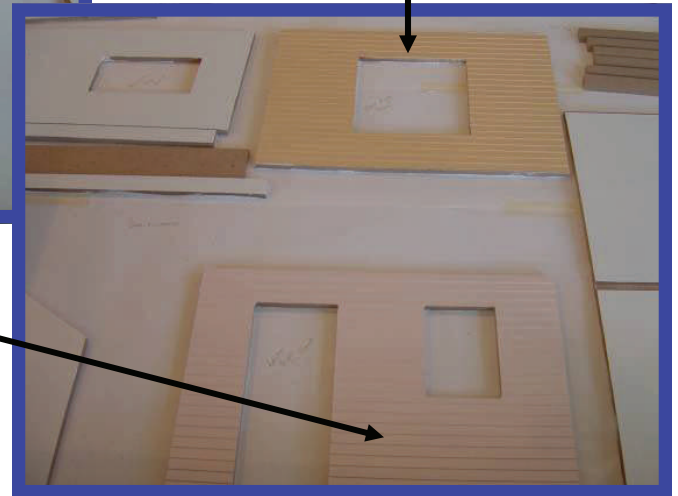


This step was difficult. It was very hard to keep the base square. The directions instruct to put the frame together and then add the two center 'ribs'. After this the floor is placed on top. It would have been easier to keep everything square if the base was installed directly onto the floor and the center ribs added last. I was wondering at this point, if I was having so many problems with the first step, how was the rest of the construction going to go? As can be seen from the picture, I used an amazing number of tools for this step alone.

Now for priming and painting ...



Too-dark peach



The final color



Every piece of the house (but not the trim at this point) received 2 coats of primer (Benjamin Moore All Purpose Primer). I found that the MDF really soaked in the first coat so I applied a second. I also found using a trim roller gave me a really smooth coat. Each coat was thin but evenly applied. Each piece was sanded after each coat of primer using a sponge sanding block. I was careful not to apply primer to surfaces that would be glued. I also picked my major house colors at this time. (I have to admit that it took a few tries to get the base color I wanted—many shades of peach came out too dark when I painted them onto the siding.) Again I applied the paint with a roller and used 2-3 coats of paint with sanding in-between. I used Benjamin Moore's Aqua Glo (semi-gloss) paint. I am really happy with the finish.



Paint Colors

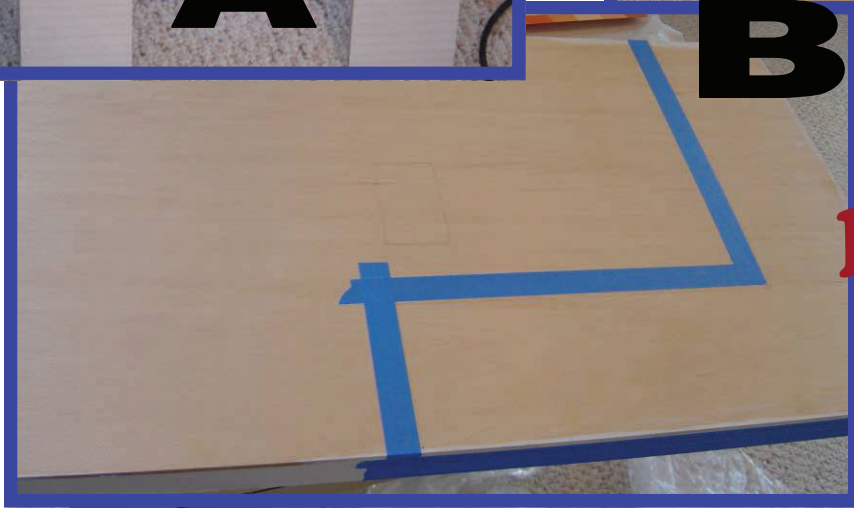
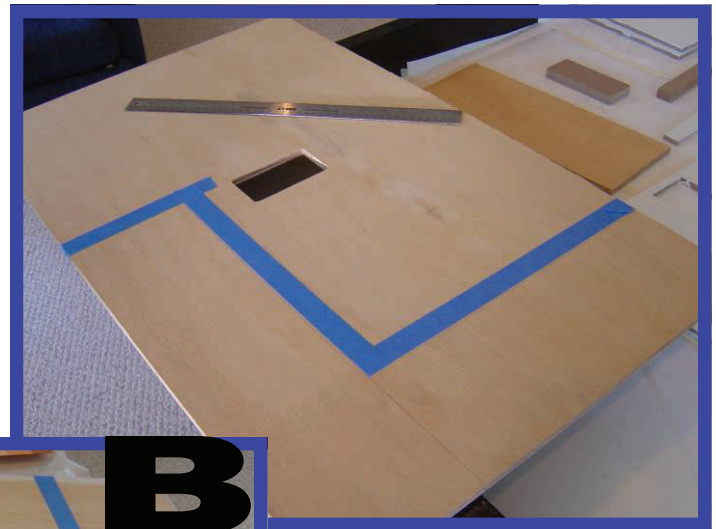
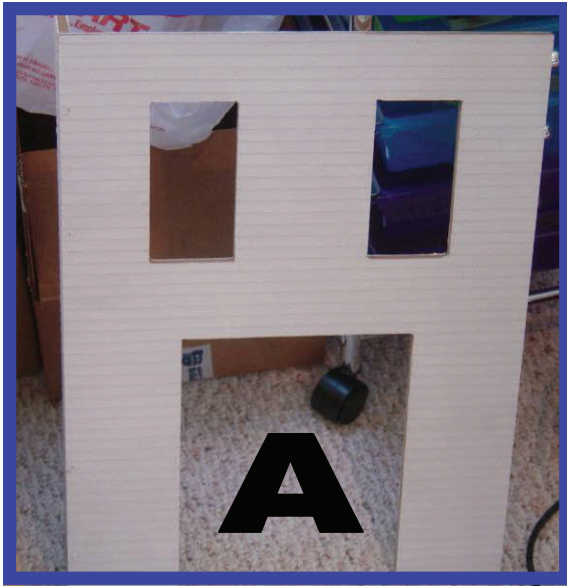
House body: #HC-54 Jumel Peachtone

Window trim: #061 Myrtle Beach

House trim: #333 Habanero Pepper

White: Benjamin Moore Aqua Glo Decorator White

The walls begin to rise ...

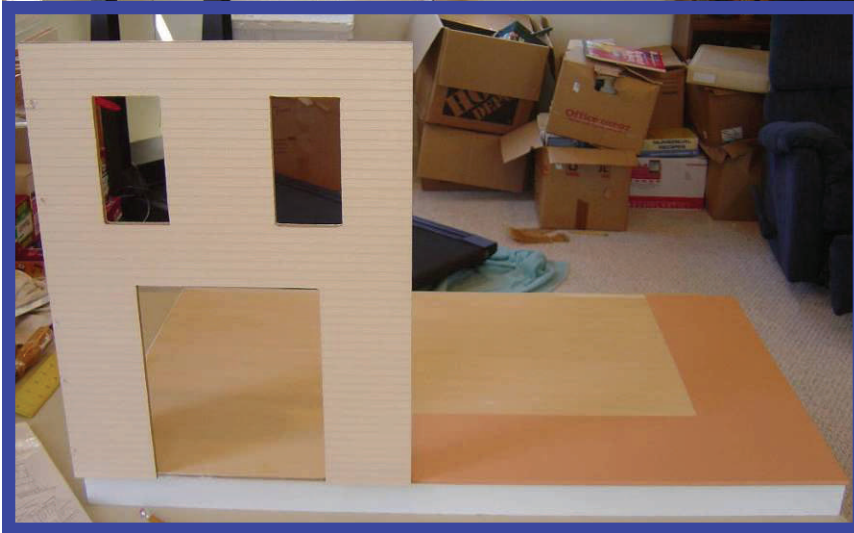


**Part I:
Steps 5-9**



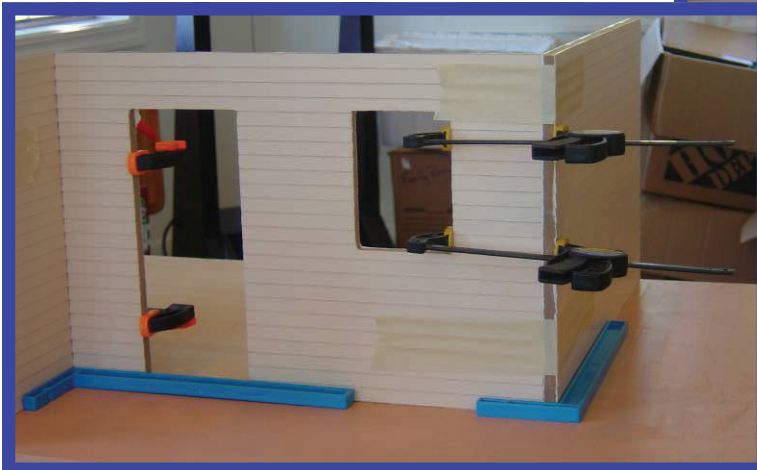
I finally felt that I was making progress. First two walls get glued together (A), and then the porches on the ground and first floor (B) get marked out for painting and painted (C).

Assembling the first floor ...

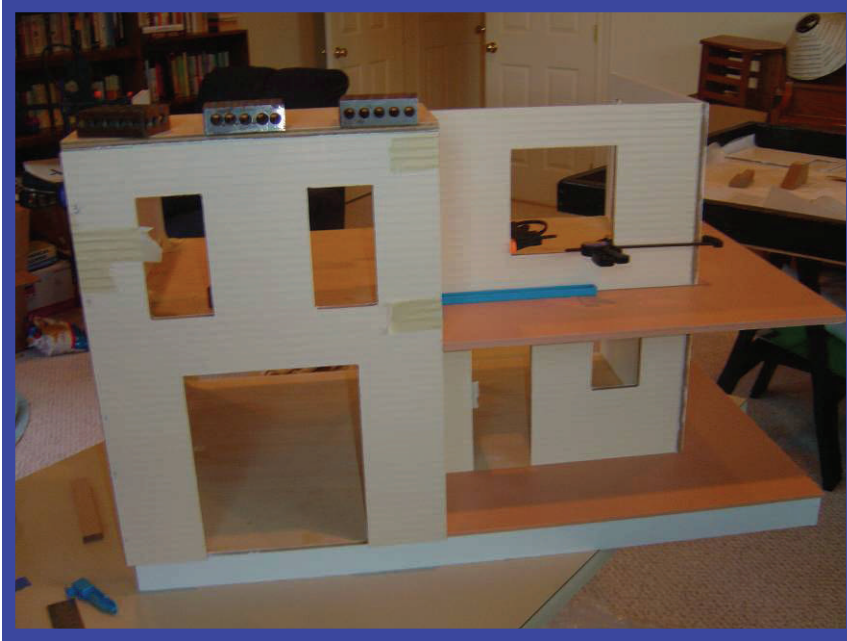


This part was fun. The only difficult part was taking it slow and letting the glue dry overnight before adding the next level. I used Titebond wood glue for this part for its strength. Extra care was taken to ensure square corners.

Part I: Steps 10-12



Going up, second floor ...



Again the keyword here is patience. Careful clamping with generous use of masking tape makes assembly pretty easy. I did steps 13-18 at one time so that I would be able to move any piece if necessary to keep the house square. This was especially important when installing the house's left-side walls.

Part I: Steps 13-18

The gable roof was hard to fit. I ended up putting in a nail to hold it. I had to do some creative clamping and taping to hold the access bay spacer in place while the glue dried. Notice that I have also primed and painted the interior walls with the decorator's white. This is to make the inside finish nicer.



It's starting to look like a house.

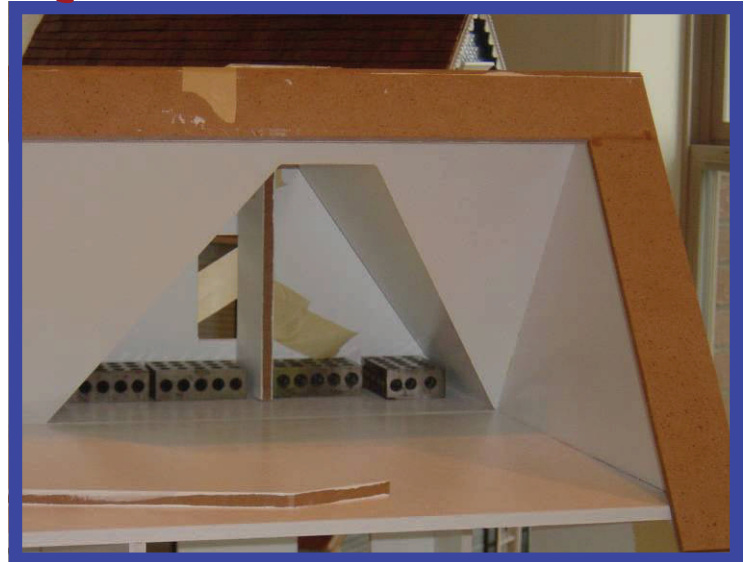
To the top—attic and roof



Shingle Guidelines



Part II: Steps 1- 7



While drying, starting windows ...



The windows in this kit come in an amazing number of pieces. The good news is, it makes them easier to paint. Each piece of the window frame had to be primed and then painted white on the interior side and the dark peach (Mrytle Beach) on the exterior side. I also painted the inside Mrytle Beach.



**Part V:
Prep**

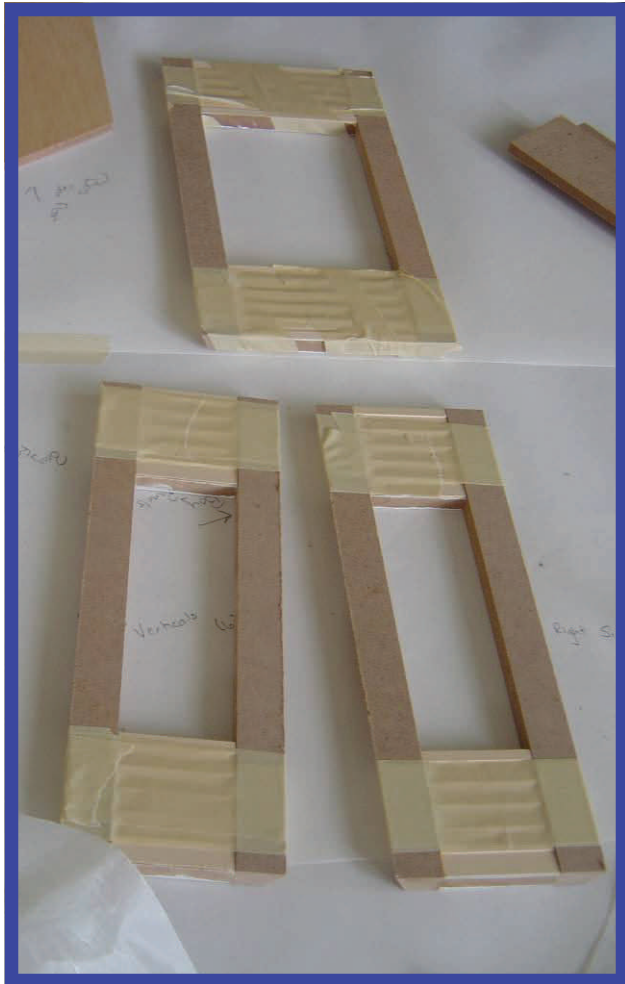
All dried ready for the roof ...

Preparing the Bay Walls & Windows

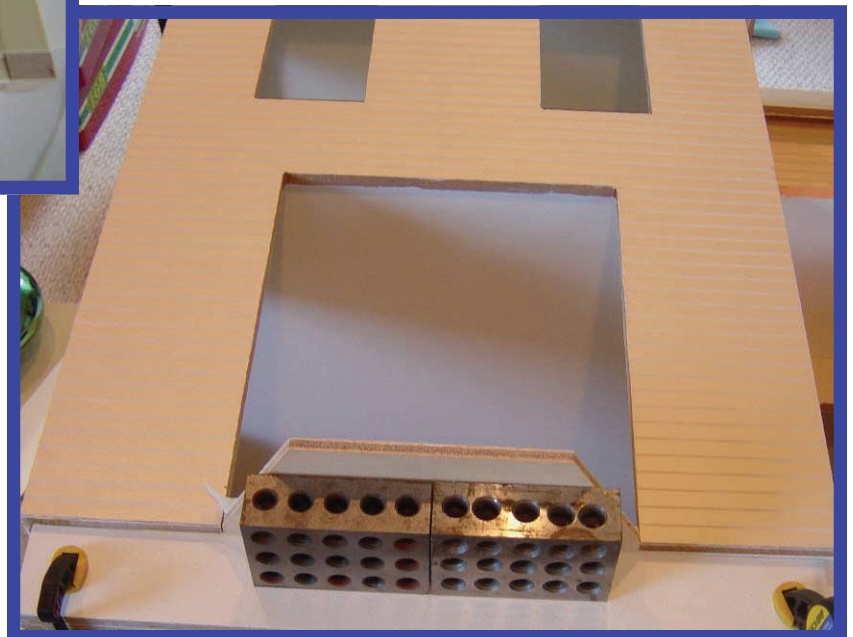
While the roof was drying, I started assembling the bay walls. The 3 walls come in sets of 4 pieces each that have to be glued together.



Part III: Steps 1 & 5

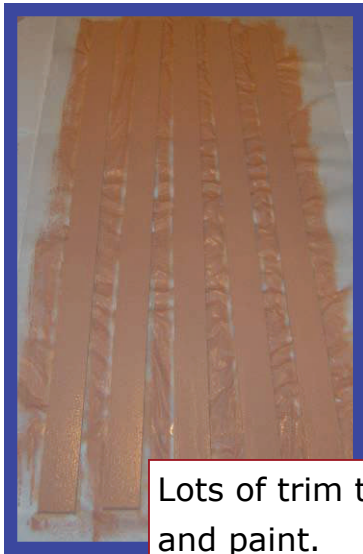


The house had to be placed on its back to install the gable foundation. Care was needed to ensure that the foundation was level with the rest of the floor.



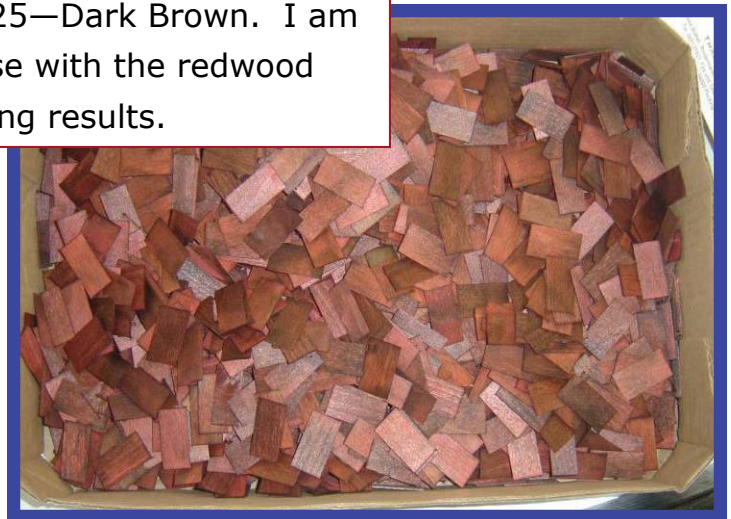
Back to prep work ...

The basic shell is together. Before the outside can be trimmed and finished, the trim, shingles and other moulding has to be finished.

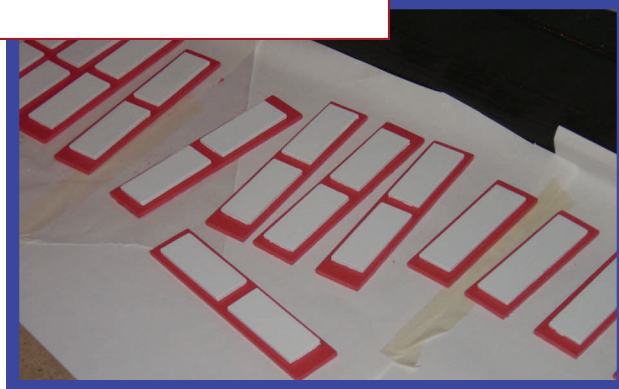
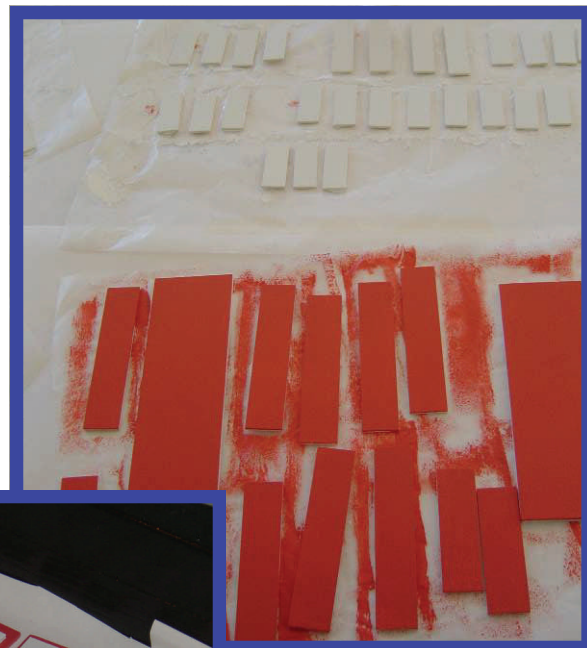


Lots of trim to sand and paint.

Shingles were dyed using Real Good Toys Shingle Dye #1125—Dark Brown. I am please with the redwood looking results.



The shutters also had to be primed and painted. Each required 2-3 coats with sanding in between. The shingle backs are painted Habanero Pepper (#061) and the inserts are painted white. The larger rectangles are parts of the door. I ended up substituting other doors for the ones that came with the kit. I didn't like how these looked.



And more prep work ...

Part V

The windows were assembled at this point. I didn't get any pictures but the following the instructions and using the rubber bands as suggested worked great. I was surprised at how easily they went together. I was a little worried that they would be hard to assemble. I did use the angles and 3-2 blocks to keep them square initially.

Back to house assembly ...

The access bay door was attached. This is definitely a 2 person job and required a drill.

Part IV



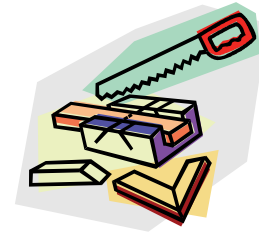
Where are we at now?

This is how the shell looks right now. Everything inside has been painted decorator's white. The walls are all in place except for the small "room dividers" that are supposed to be used in the large 1st and 2nd floor rooms. I don't like how they look and am trying to figure out what I want to do with those two rooms. I want the second floor to be the master bed/bath but I don't want the toilet sitting open in the room. (The trim is just sitting in the house— I was using it as a way of separating the pieces after sorting them.) It is also time to start thinking about the wiring plan.



Here I am doing a trial fit of the windows. They are not glued in at this time. I will do that after wallpapering.

On Goes the Trim



Now is the time for patience and careful mitering. I switched to Tacky glue at this point so that it would dry clear. I also went to the painters tape (blue) so that I would not damage the finish.



Add the shingles... one at a time



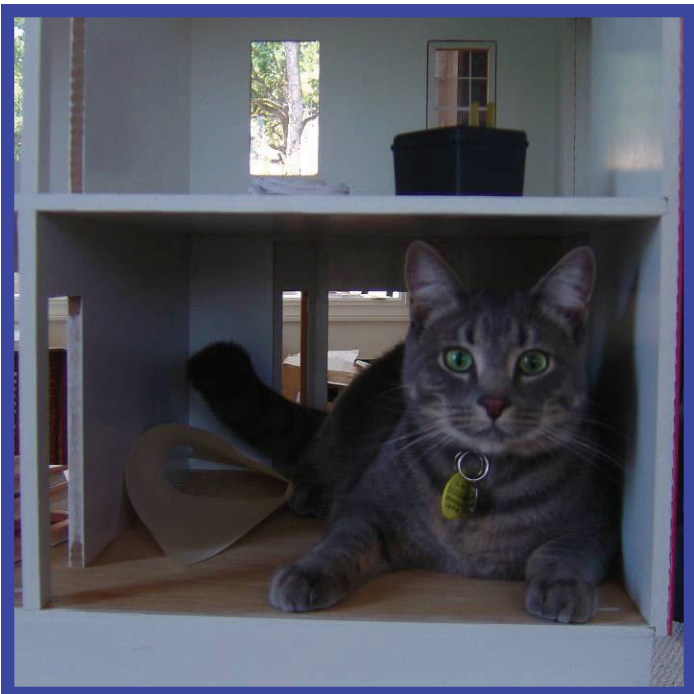
I used Quick Grab glue. The trickiest part was the angle where the two parts of the roof meet. I put down a strip of copper foil and then found that I needed to put a line of shingles up the alley junction so that the rows didn't look too flat in the corner.



But, I didn't work alone, I had "helpers"!



Everything checks out in here.



The shingling continues ...



... and will continue for a while

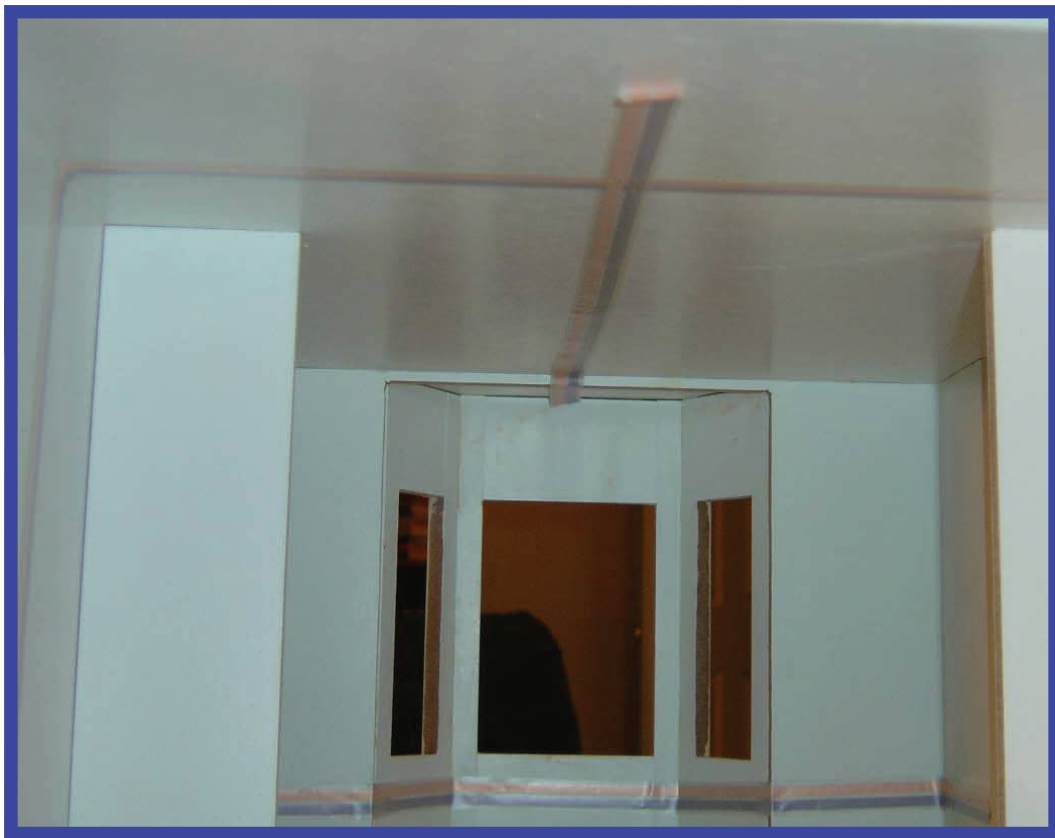
Wiring ...

I took breaks while applying the shingles to wire the house. I got a great hint from the owner of Country Store Miniatures in Vancouver, WA. It was impossible to push the brass pin into the MDF. I started using the eyelets as the directions that came with the wiring kit recommended. However, the suggestion was to drill a very small hole and then push the brass pin into that. It worked like a dream!

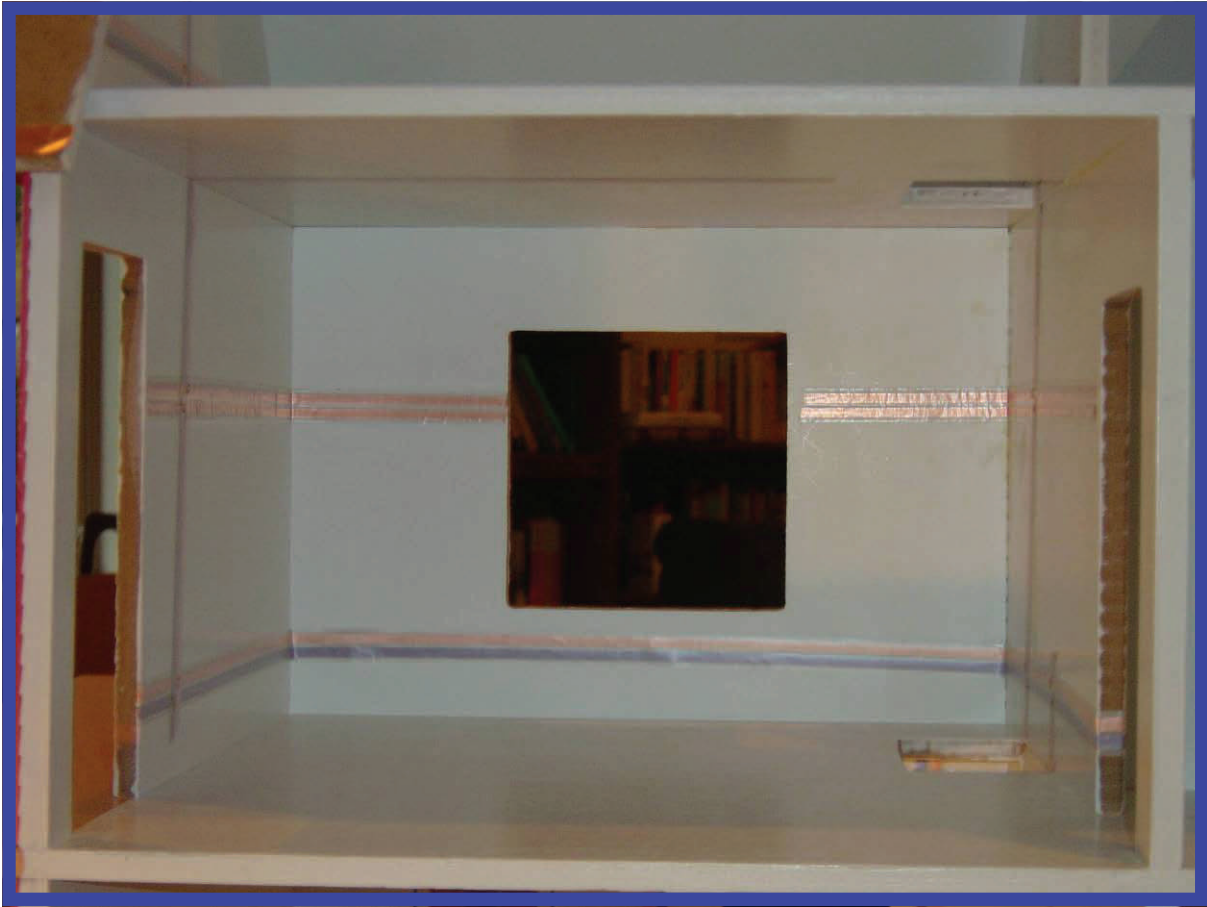




Wiring diagram for kitchen



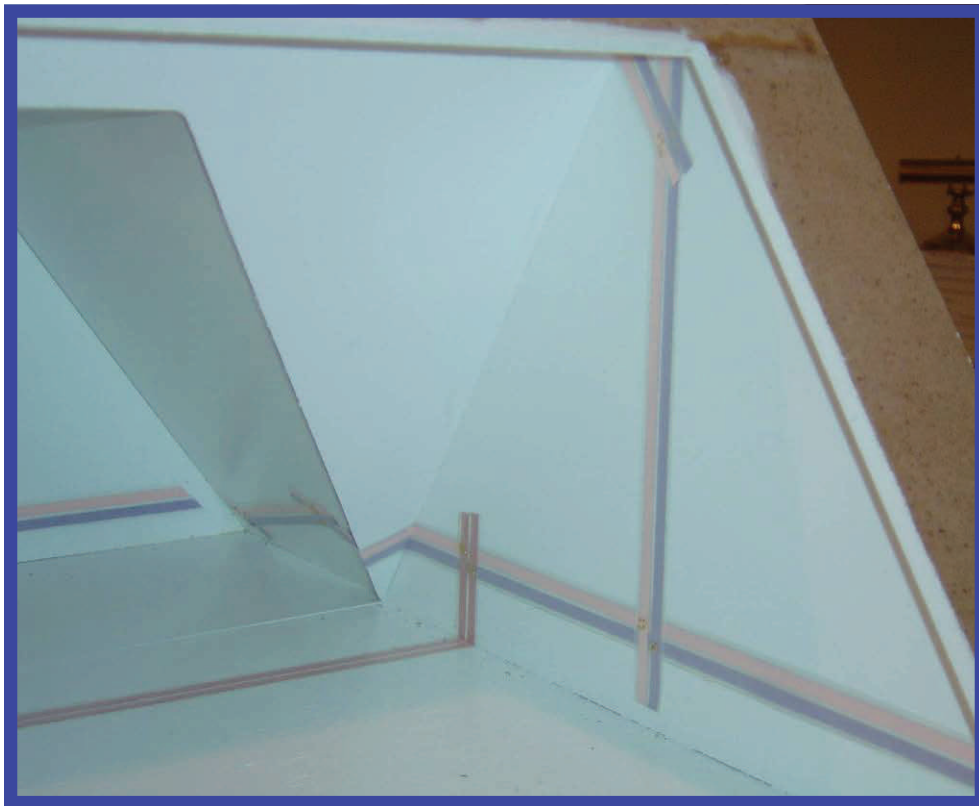
Wiring diagram for great room



Wiring diagrams for boy's room



Wiring diagram for master bed and bath



**Wiring diagram for girl's
'horse' room**



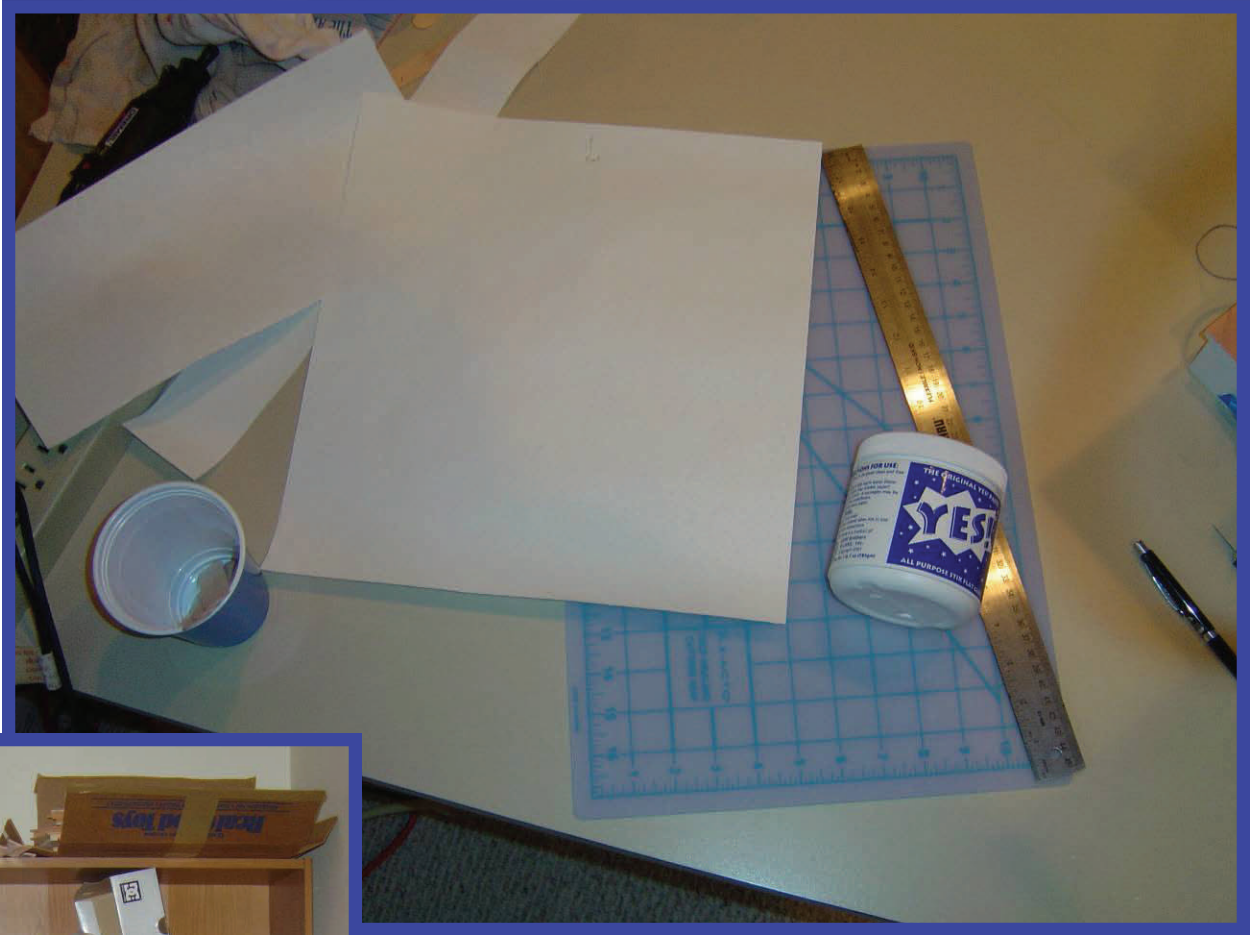
Wiring diagram for nursery

Shingling is getting closer ...



... check out the roof intersection

Wallpaper the ceiling first

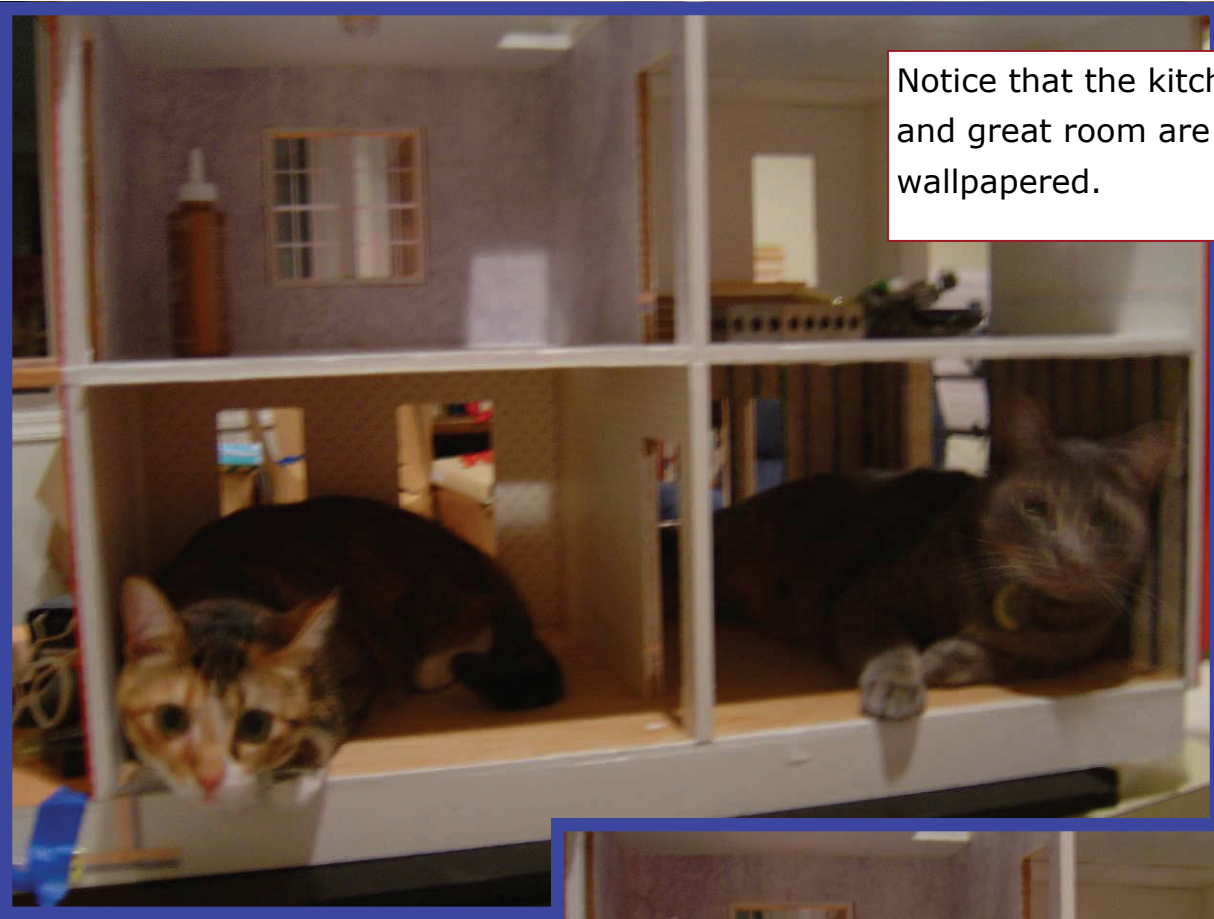


I am starting to get a lot of supplies, so I picked up this bookcase from Big Lots to organize things.

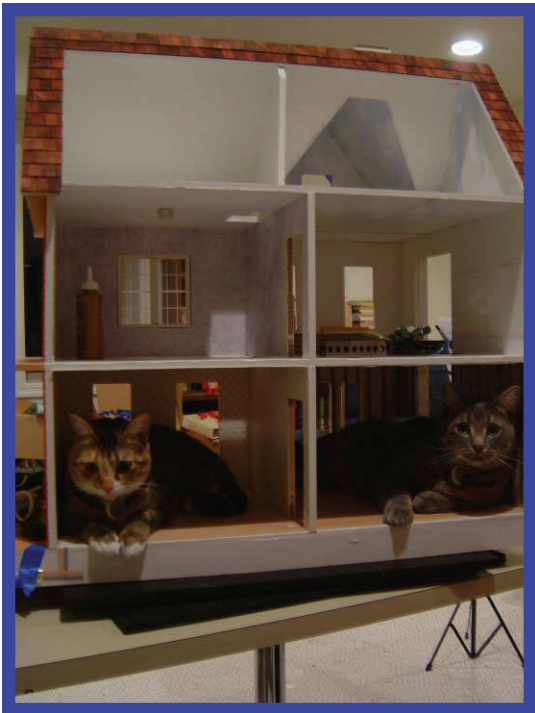
Boy's Room was done first



The Inspectors are back.



Notice that the kitchen and great room are now wallpapered.



More wallpapering and a light!



I decided to wallpaper the side door so that when looking inside, it would appear as an enclosed room.



Check it out—the first light installed. A ceiling light in the boy's room. It was a pain to install! Hopefully they will get easier as I get more practice.

Knock, Knock ...



Who's there?

Bond, James Bond



Is back

Shingles are coming along



Chimney is done.

The front of the house



I used a different door than the one that came with the kit. The leaf decorations are rub-ons. The Welcome Home sign is a button as is the flower on the top of the door.



Side Exterior Door



I also substituted the side door with a door made by houseworks. I think this is a real improvement on the doors provided with the kit.



Status of the Inside



***Master
Bed/Bath***

***Boy's
Room***



Kitchen

Exterior almost complete



The exterior of the house is almost complete. The shutters have all been attached, the windows and shingles are all installed. There is some final moulding that I want to install. The instructions do not say anything about it but I don't like the raw edges of the wood showing. I have purchased some thin 3/8 wood that I am going to paint and glue on to the edges. The porch railings have also not be done. I am going to do this after the inside is completed so that I don't accidentally knock them off while working on the inside of the house.

On to the inside ... the horse room



Christmas 2006. For Christmas I wanted to make Jessica Brawley and myself a horse bed. Jessica is getting a house kit for Christmas and she loves horses. I found a wall art on the internet for a horse looking out of a stable door. I thought it might make a cute headboard. I wasn't sure what to use as a foot board. I tried many things and finally found this fence piece at Michaels. I decoupled on some stickers and found this cute quilt on eBay just a few days before Christmas. I had a devil of a time making this bed from scratch but I could make one much easier now!

On to the inside ... the nursery



I found a scrapbook page kit at Wal-Mart that I thought would make a great nursery. I also found a package of scrap lumber at our local Habitat for Humanity resale shop that turned out to be all dollhouse moulding. In this set was a wonderful scalloped moulding that looked like lace and a really delicate chair rail. I used both of these in the nursery. The top of the nursery walls are painted and the bottom is wallpapered with the scrapbook pages. I decoupled cut-outs from the scrapbook kit onto the upper walls.

Painting the mouldings



Just one of many sessions of painting mouldings. There is only one word for this step—tedious.

Inside window mouldings

Master Bed/Bath



Boy's Room



***Living room
Bay windows***



Each window had to have interior moulding installed. The moulding was all primed and painted decorator's white. Lots of sanding between coats gave a smooth finish. The corners were all mitered 45°. Some of these windows were hard to reach to work on or photograph!

Crown and baseboard moulding



Master Bed/Bath Crown moulding

Notice that I have installed one of the bathroom walls. The kit came with four small pieces of wood that were supposed to be used to make partitions for the 2 large rooms. However, they were only about 3 inches wide so they really didn't divide the rooms well. Instead, I glued two of them together and made the wall that is show in the picture. The other two I also glued together and in a later photo you can see I used them to make a wall that is at a right angle to the one here. This will give a separate room for the bathroom. In the downstairs room, I did not use any dividers and will use furniture to divide it—as in a great room.



Boy's room Crown moulding

Crown moulding was installed in each room except the attic rooms since they had sloping ceilings. Fancier mouldings were used in the 'great' room and in the master bed and bath. Again the only hard part was the tedious painting and sanding that was required for all the moulding.

Flooring



***Kitchen -
Oak Floor***

***Great Room—
Dark Walnut Floor***



Wood floors were installed in the ground floor rooms. These are veneer floors made for dollhouses. I made paper patterns for each of the rooms. Each floor was varnished with 3 coats of satin varnish and lightly sanded between coats. Contact cement was used to glue the floors into the rooms.

Master Bath and Fireplace



Here is a photo showing how I used the room dividers in the kit to block off a bathroom in the master suite. Each of the partial walls is made up of 2 room dividers glued together. The change in flooring, simulated tile and carpeting, helps to separate the two rooms. Note that I have added interior doors to the house.



The fireplace is installed. My son picked out the fireplace and insisted that we get the logs that light up. This meant that I had to wire the fireplace into the tape wire. It was an easier job than installing the ceiling lights.

Stairs

This was the part I was dreading at first, but ended up pleasantly surprised with the results. I wanted to stain the treads of the stairs so I couldn't use the MDF stairs that came with the kit. The only staircase that would fit in this house was the simple staircase by Houseworks. I was a little worried since their railing posts are flat and it wasn't as nice looking as the other staircase kits. However, when finished it looked great.



I started by placing blue masking tape over the risers and sides that I wanted to paint white. I stained the treads with a cherry stain— Minwax. After it dried, I removed the blue tape and put new blue tape over the newly stained treads. I then painted the risers, stair sides (except the side that will be glued to the wall), and the stair backs decorator white. When it was all done, I wasn't happy. The treads looked too light and the white was overwhelming in the rooms. I decided to restain the treads using a dark walnut over the cherry stain. It darkened them up perfectly. On a lark, I decided to put the dark walnut stain over the white paint. It was great—it discolored it enough to give it a slightly aged look and brought out some of the grain.

Assembling banister and rails



Preparing to build the bannister

This is the railing for the landing. When assembling, I used this set up to ensure that each of the posts was the same length since I needed to glue this as a unit to the floor. I made all pieces of the rail in the same manner. This was really needed for the first segment since it was the only way to guarantee that you had the rail level.



Adding posts to stairs

Since this was an inexpensive (relatively) stair kit, no notches were given for installing the posts and railings. I took a 1/8 in piece of wood and cut it up into pieces to use as spacers to place the posts on each stair. I made sure they dried straight.



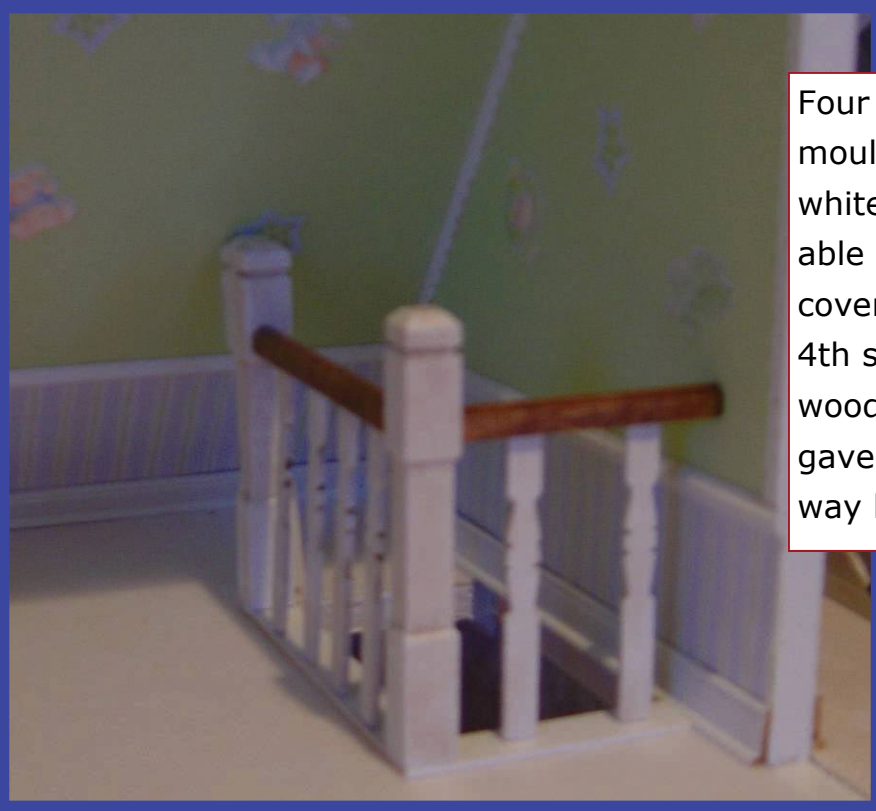
I let the glue dry by propping the stairs in the house. (They are not glued in yet.)

Notice how ragged the stairway openings in the floor look. I take a few days to think of a remedy for this. Stay tuned.



What to do with the hole?

Two problems—what to do with the hole in the floor so that it looks neat and the stair instructions require 5 posts per kit but they give you four!



For the hole, I found some 90° moulding in my stash. I painted it white and with a mitered corner, was able to clean 2 sides. The 3rd side is covered by the stairs and the for the 4th side, I put a thin piece of 3/8 inch wood over the exposed wood. This gave a really clean finish to the stairway holes.

For the post problem, I decided to just glue the railing directly to the wall instead of putting a post there. It looks great and gets around the issue of baseboard and wainscoting getting in the way of the post.



Completed Staircases



1st Floor

2nd Floor



***3rd Floor
Landing***



Moving Day (4/4/07)

Nursery



Almost exactly one year after purchasing the kit, the inside is finished and I can move in the furniture I have acquired while building the house. I don't have everything yet and am going to custom make some pieces but I couldn't help myself—I started putting in what I had. We don't have a miniature store in this state so I have had to be creative. The rugs you see in the nursery are fabric stickers meant for scrapbooks.



Note the picket fence baseboard and the appliqué rug.

Girl's room

Moving Day (4/4/07)

Boy's Room



Master Bed/Bath



Moving Day (4/4/07)

Kitchen



Great Room

Moving Day (4/4/07)

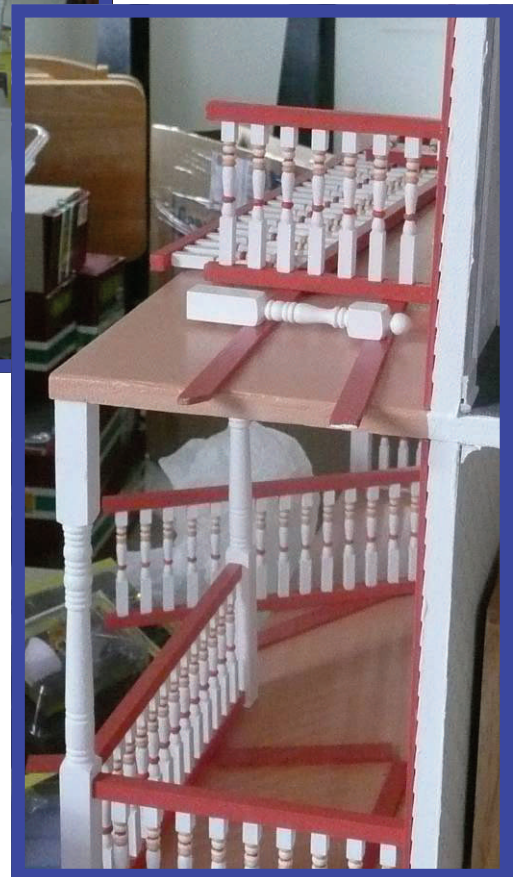


Finishing the Outside Trim

Now for the final touches. I didn't like the porch railing that came with the kit so I substituted an assembled railing manufactured by Real Good Toys (#3032). I painted it in detail to give some additional color to the front of the house. It was very time consuming to paint each of the spindles!

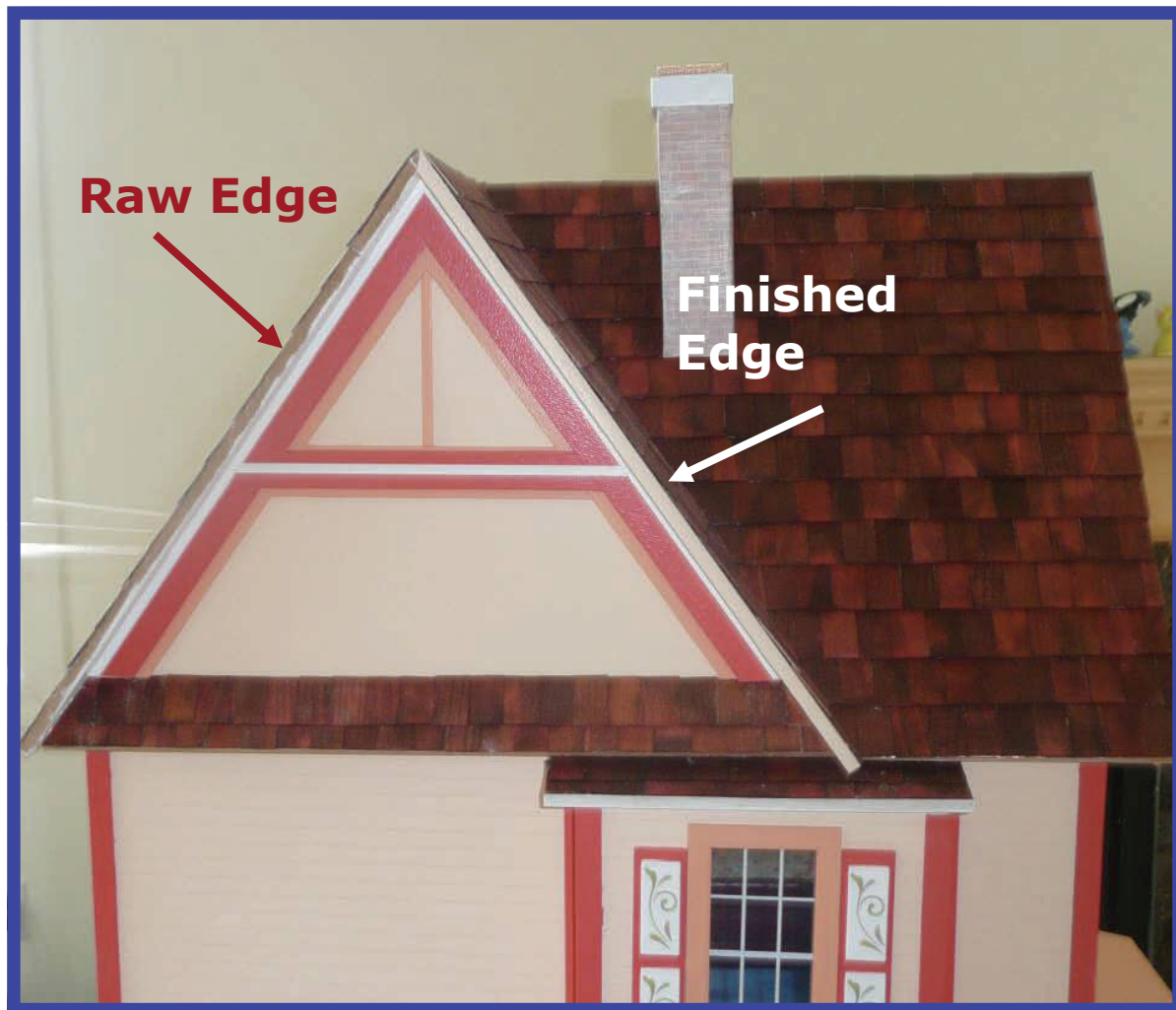


***Fitting the
painted railings***



Finishing the Outside Trim

I also cleaned up all wood edges by adding 1/32 x 3/8 trim painted the house body color to all exposed edges. This was not in the kit directions but gives a cleaner final appearance to the house.



The Completed House!

The outside of the house is done! The interior is largely done—I just need to add some electrical outlets, fix a small problem with a couple of the ceiling lights and then add the final touches to the rooms.



**September
2007**



Are you sure you don't need these pieces????

