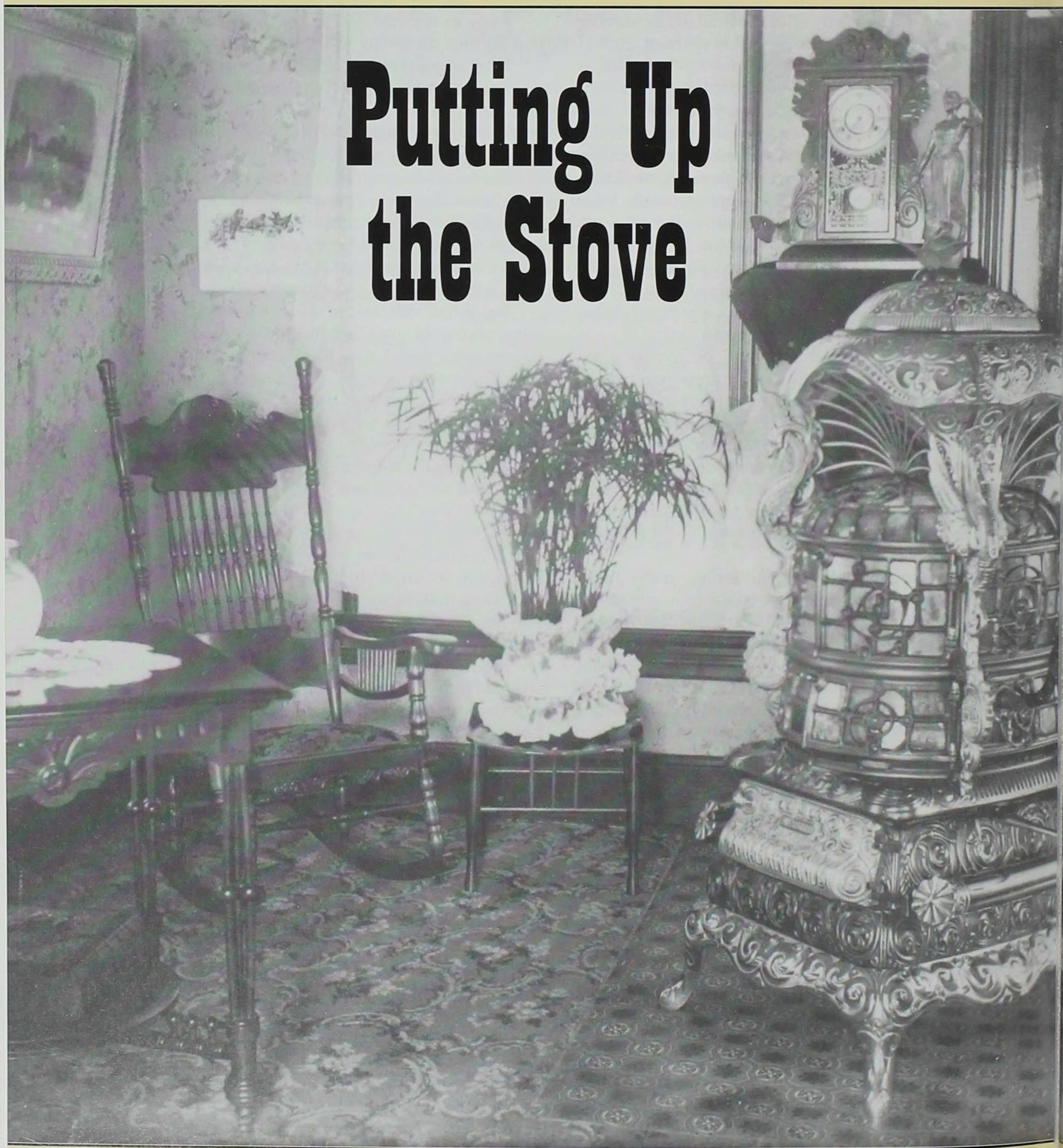


# Putting Up the Stove



TEXT REPRINTED FROM MITCHELL COUNTY PRESS (OSAGE), 11-4-1889. PHOTO FROM SHSI (IOWA CITY)



*Readers of the Mitchell County Press  
surely related to this rant, which appeared  
in their newspaper in November 1869.*



**I**n consequence of the arrival of cold weather once more, about these days there is a universal putting up of stoves preparatory for the winter campaign, and undoubtedly, a great deal of profanity is indulged in.

One who has had considerable experience in the work of putting up stoves says the first step to be taken is to put on a very old and ragged coat, under the impression that when he gets his mouth full of plaster it will keep his shirt bosom clean. Next he gets his hands inside the place where the pipe ought to go, and blacks his fingers, and then he carefully makes a black mark down one side of his nose. It is impossible to make any headway in doing this work, until his mark is made down the side of the nose. Having got his face properly marked the victim is ready to begin the ceremony.

The head of the family—who is the big goose of the sacrifice—grasps one side of the bottom of the stove, and his wife and hired girl take hold of the other side. In this way the load is started from the woodshed toward the parlor. Going through the door the head of the family will carefully swing his side of the stove around and jam his thumb nail against the door post. This part of the ceremony is never omitted.

Having got the stove comfortably in place the next thing is to find the legs. Two of these are left inside the stove since the spring before. The other two must be hunted after for twenty-five minutes. They are usually found under the coal. Then the head of the family holds up one side of the stove while his wife puts two of the legs in place, and next he holds up the other side while the other two are fixed, and one of the first two falls out. By the time the stove is on its legs he gets reckless of his linen.

Then he goes off for the [stove]pipe and gets a cinder in his eye. It don't make any difference how

well the pipe was put up last year, it will be found a little too short or a little too long. The head of the family jams his hat over his eyes and taking a pipe under each arm goes to the tin shop to have it fixed.

When he gets back he steps upon one of the best parlor chairs to see if the pipe fits, and his wife makes him get down for fear he will scratch the varnish off from the chair with the nails in his boot heel. In getting down he will surely step on the cat, and may thank his stars if not [on] the baby. Then he gets an old chair and climbs up to the chimney again to find that in cutting the pipe off, the end has been left too big for the hole in the chimney. So he goes to the woodshed and splits one side of the end of the pipe with an old axe, and squeezes it in his hands to make it smaller.

Finally he gets the pipe in shape and finds that the stove does not stand true. Then himself and wife and the hired girl move the stove to the left, and the legs fall out again. Next it is to move to the right. More difficulty with legs. Moved to the front a little. [The stovepipe] elbow [is] not even with the hole in the chimney, and he goes to the woodshed after some little blocks.

While putting the blocks under the legs the pipe comes out of the chimney. Then remedied, the elbow keeps tipping over to the great alarm of the wife. Head of the family gets the dinner table out, puts the old chair on it, gets his wife to hold the chair, and balances himself on it to drive some nails in the ceiling. Drops the hammer on his wife's head. At last gets the nails driven, makes a wire swing to hold the pipe, hammers a little here, pulls out a little there, takes a long breath, and announces the ceremony completed.

Job never put up any stoves. It would have ruined his reputation if he had. ❖



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