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Canal Winchester house gets historical makeover

By JOHN SHERIDAN

The Times Reporter

When Carol Note decided the roof on her 170-year-old home needed to be replaced, she probably didn't expect to find a Belgian master craftsman who honed his skills in France and plies his trade in Columbus to perform the work.

Foreman Yves Theunis and his crew are replacing the existing roof on the home, 126 E. Columbus St., with a more historic material: terne metal. The metal squares are thin like tin, but, if installed correctly, can last for more than 100 years. To install the metal, the squares are hand-soldered using a method called "flat-lock," which creates a water tight seal and has a checker-board pattern.

Theunis also is replacing a seam metal roof on an addition to the home built in the 1930s.

Note's house was used to

collect tolls on Old Route 33, the main Columbus-to-Lancaster thoroughfare. The house was used in this capacity until the 1890s, Note said.

"I have had a longtime interest in things from the past," said Note, who volunteers at the Canal Winchester Area Historical Society. "Studying the past is so important to figuring out where we are going. I would rather read about the Civil War than surf the Internet."

So how does a master craftsman end up working for the Durable Slate Company in Ohio?

"It's a long story," said crew member Ryan Merckle with a grin.

The story is, Theunis is a member of a European craftsman guild called Compagnons du Devoir. He is one of handful of European master craftsmen working in

the United States.

Theunis said he came to the United States on a sort of construction student exchange

and stayed because of the great opportunity to work with historic materials – but historic materials that are newer than those found in Europe.

"There is such a need for skilled people and the demand is so high; things here are more bright than they are in the EU," he said.

In Europe, most the roofing materials on historic buildings are zinc and copper, he said. In the United States, he said, he has more of an opportunity to use his knowledge, because even the historic homes are much newer and use different materials, like the terne metal he is working with on Note's home.

"It is one of the best roofing systems you can have; it can last forever if it is installed properly," said Theunis, who at Note's urging literally is leaving his mark on the house.

Theunis taped an Ohio bicentennial quarter to the underside of a tin sheet and left an inscription that roughly reads: "We hope whomever restores this roof uses the same historically accurate methods and materials."

The restoration efforts could be Note's lasting contribution to the home that has seen a lot of history coming around the bend on Columbus Street. After 34 years as a sales manager for British Pe-



Carol Note's house at 126 E. Columbus St. in Canal Winchester receives roofwork from a Durable Slate Company crew.

troleum, Note's husband, Tony, retired Friday. Note said they have always wanted

to live on water and are considering moving to the shores of Lake Superior in Michigan.

