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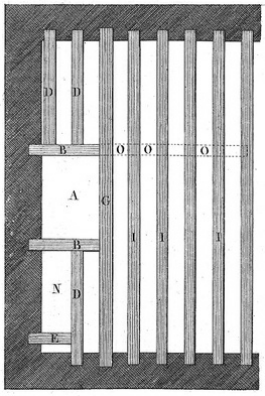
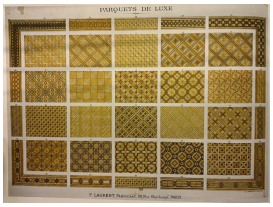
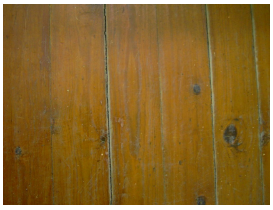


Floor with simple joists

Mosaic parquet flooring



Mosaic parquet flooring



Antique parquet flooring with appearing nails

English parquet flooring

The word « parquet » is used to indicate an assembly of wood planks from the Renaissance, which corresponds to the period where the first parquets where put in the houses.
Indeed, until the end of the 16th century, sparing the living space with the domestic animals was usual, for this reason the floors were made of stone to be washed more easily or of simple beaten earth. The wood flooring were reserved for the stages covered with fabrics to mark the social rank. Before the ground floors and because of a facility of adaption, it was the houses stories that were built first with wood flooring. This story was used on the beginnings for food safe before becoming the bedroom.
In the beginnings, the wood floors were only composed of juxtaposed planks and attached on joist thanks to appearing nails. This parquet flooring nailed pose called joist parquet is the only one used until the 17th century.

From this period, the floorings are more and more frequent in the houses for thermic reasons, as the wood on the contrary of the stone, insulates from the cold and humidity, requires less energy to warm up and keep the heat.
New sophisticated shapes appear and we start to distinguish the flooring from the parquet flooring. Indeed, the word flooring indicates a floor composed of wood planks very often made of oak or pine tree from the east, rustic and useful. The parquet flooring, is reserved to the aristocracy because of his decorative nature, the boards are finer and gathered by tenons and mortices or grooves and strips. With the industrial era, the parquet flooring knows a true rise, especially during the transformation of Paris in the 19the century by the Baron Haussmann, who largely used this type of floor in the buildings.The appearance of these living buildings replacing the private house lead to a new stories piling multiplying the floor surfaces. Thanks to the mechanisation of the wood working in the 1860’s, the fabrication’s price of the parquet drops. Nevertheless, the prosperous taste of the 18th century for the assembled parquets creating motifs is no longer trending, and simpler motif with a lighter arrangement are preferred.

Progressively, the parquet floorings have been very often covered with carpeting under the Second Empire. In parallel, rich houses have taken and adopted the luxurious habits of inlaid parquets.

Different types of parquet

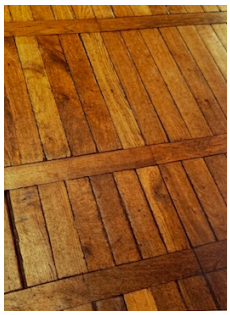
The English parquet flooring
The most common, especially in the bourgeois houses when it appears on the early 17th century and still today. It is composed of different length planks put randomly on the ground and assembled by grooves and strips. We also mostly find it on the 19th century corridors for obvious reasons facilitating the pose.

Hungary point parquet
This parquet motif appears during the 17th century and is called by different names: chevrons, capucine, cob, fern, fishbone. More restrictive than the English parquet as the planks are all of the same length, it has to respect a width and a precise cut comprised between 45° and 60°. It forms a parallel décor that we find in many museums especially in the Louvre. It’s the most practised way of pose in the important houses in the 18th century and the most asked in the 19th century. This pose also allows the creation of derived motifs such as the broken stick, or the ladder pose used without interruption between the 17th century and the 19th century.

Assembly parquet
The assembly parquet is a category of parquet composed of complex geometrical motifs fit by tenons and mortices in a square wood frame. This set up permits to have strip motif passing alternately on one and another like in a weaving. Original and comfortable, kings and nobility quickly adopt this type of parquet flooring. Each parquet’s name comes from the castle it was put for the first time, like the Versaille parquet, the Chantilly parquet or even the Arenberg parquet, these naming have been given during the 20th century.

From 1769, is established a standardization, the Versailles and Chantilly parquet outshine the others. The Chantilly model composed of 9 squares at its beginnings evolves quickly toward a 16 squares composition, more difficult to make and reserved to the healthiest people. During the 18th century, this motif declines to make room for the Versailles model created in 1684 and derived from the Chantilly model. Despite its assembly more complicated and its higher cost, the Versailles motif is more largely used, it covers the palaces and private mansions’s floors until the beginning of the 19th century when it is abandoned. After that, it is used only for decoration where the imitation of the Grand Siècle is asked.

Hungary point parquet flooring



Parquet set as a lader in the castel « la Petite Malmaison », Rueuil Malmaison, 19th century

Broken sticks parquet flooring

Hungary point parquet florring in the Musée du Louvre

Arenberg, Chantilly and Versailles parquet flooring

Chantilly parquet flooring the Chateau of Chantilly