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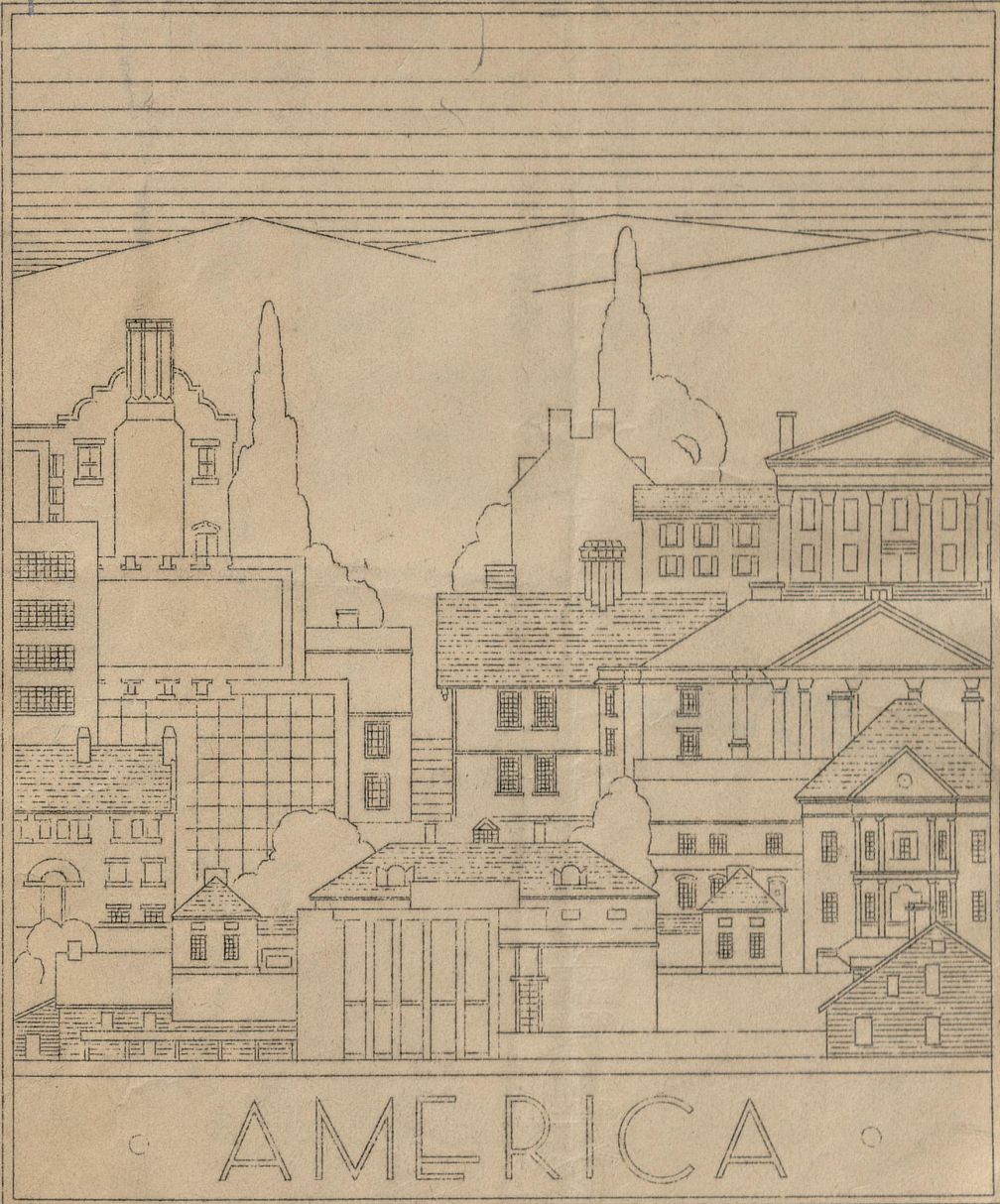
HISTORY OF THE HOME IN COLONIAL AMERICA

Museum Extension Project



# HISTORY OF THE HOME

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THE HISTORY OF THE HOME  
in Colonial America  
and in the  
UNITED STATES

Museum Extension Project.

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a. Primitive Housing in America

Domestic architecture in America is a long record of various influences from many sources, mostly European. America, it is almost unnecessary to say, lay completely outside the main historical development of European architecture. As it had no building tradition of its own what did result in the way of architecture was simply a mingling of the various traditions brought to this country by colonists. Until at least the end of the 19th century, when a genius like Sullivan or Wright appeared on the scene, it would be well to keep in mind that there was no particular style developed in America, but merely an adaptation of current European practice. The vague promise of a definitely American "style" has haunted the architectural theorist as the vision of the "great American novel" troubled the literary prophets. An American style, if there ever be any such, certainly lies within the future.

The first American colonists, when they landed in the new world, did not by any means shake off all vestiges of European life. In fact the colonist of any time wishes to carry on in the new environment to which he has come, the traditions, the ways of living and thinking that he knew in his native land. In a vast new country, the first colonists were not anxious to give up the manner of existence they had known in Europe, nor were they able or willing to change their manner of building. They had to adapt themselves to new situations and new climatic conditions in a raw, savage and untried country which was, however, rich in natural resources.

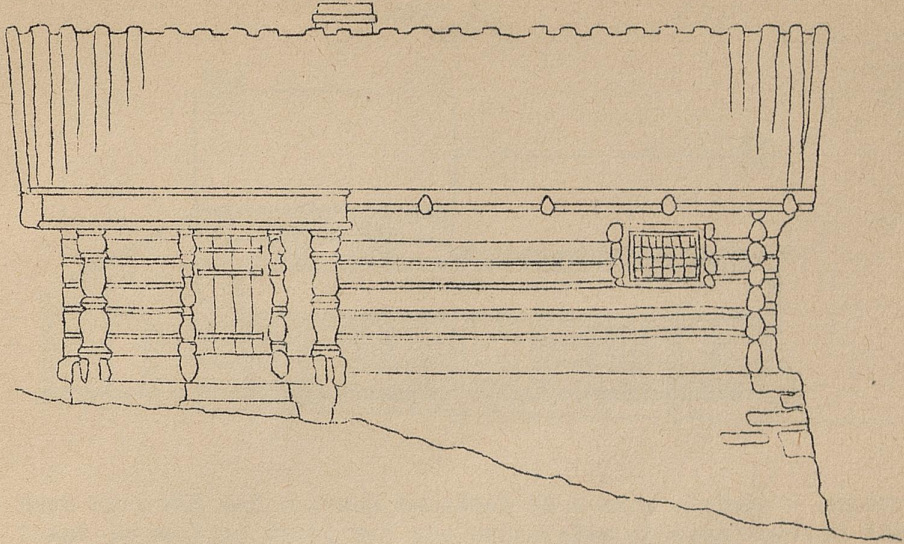
It was not easy at first to carry on the old building traditions, but even the first rude shelters contrived by the early settlers bear resemblances to the primitive peasant construction of the north European countries. At Plymouth and Jamestown the poorer colonists built huts with low walls of stakes and wattle plastered with clay and roofed with slanting poles covered with brush, reeds, and clay. These "English wigwams," as they were called, bear only a slight resemblance in form to the wigwams of the Indians which were made of skins stretched over cut boughs, but there is a marked similarity in construction to English thatched shelters and to the charcoal burners' huts of Sheffield. Another type of dwelling was that known as the "palisaded" house formed of sawn planks driven into the ground. The early settlers at Philadelphia dug out their shelters in the banks of the Delaware, forming the necessary walls and roofs of sods and brush.

Even the familiar log house built of horizontal logs notched at the corners and chinked with clay was not American in origin. This sort of house was unknown both to the Indians and the English settlers. The



idea of building in this fashion was probably brought to America by the Swedes of the Delaware from the Scandinavian countries where a strong tradition of timber construction had prevailed for centuries. (See Fig. 1)

Figure 1.



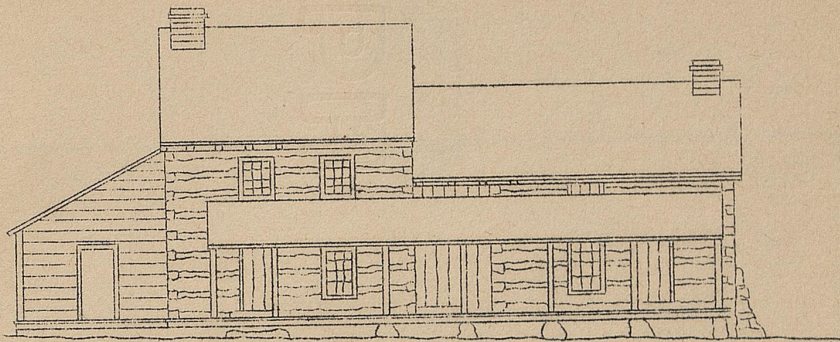
Northern Europe was rich in timber, a fact which fostered building in wood. The same conditions obtained in America where forests were even more abundant so that the log type of construction rapidly came into favor in the expanding country not only for domestic, but also for defensive purposes. Used at first by the English for forts and stockades, it gradually recommended itself to the pioneer, not only because it made use of the most readily procurable building material, but also because it provided a means of defense against the Indians. Then, too, the pioneer could use, for the construction of his house, the trees that he had to cut down in order to till his land. It is easy to see how the log house became a part of frontier life.

Later in the history of the country the log type of construction was used in rural districts even after the necessity for defense was no longer important and after other building materials had become available. There are, for instance, in western Pennsylvania, a large number of log farm houses still standing which carry on the old pioneer tradition.



Included in this category belongs the Nixon Tavern constructed at Fairchance, Pennsylvania about 1810. (See Figure 2.) In this example the

Figure 2.



logs have been cut and notched together in a more elaborate manner than that found in earlier work, but the principles of construction remain the same. The windows, of course, are glazed, an advance over the early log house which had only small windows with shutters. The log type of construction lingered in western Pennsylvania well into the 19th century.

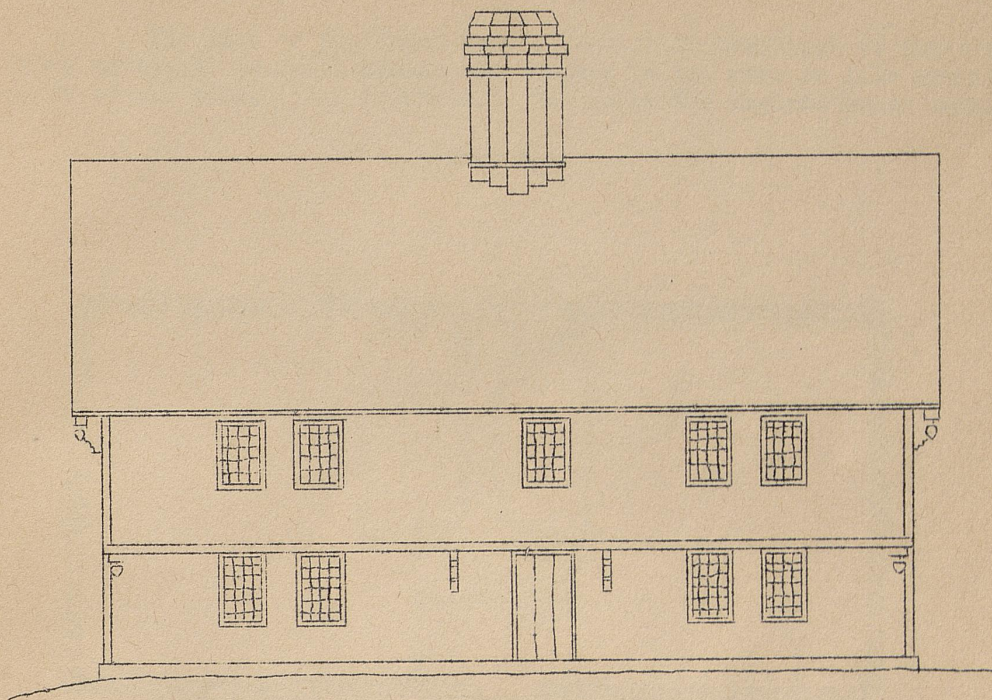
b. The 17th Century Survival of the Medieval Tradition

For almost a century after the first settlers landed in New England there was evident in that section a distinct survival of medieval communal life. In the small villages and communities that were settled in the colony there is a suggestion of the self-sustaining qualities and the interdependence of the various elements contained in the village that was so characteristic of the medieval town. When a New England town was laid out, lands were assigned to each member of the community from which land he was required to support himself and his family. The group as a whole produced everything that was needed, either within the family or within the community. There was little dependence on the home country. The settlers helped build each other's houses and helped harvest each other's crops. The village was almost completely independent and, as such, reminiscent of a state of existence in England that was already passing with the confiscation of the common lands for the benefit of the aristocracy and the first appearance of industrial civilization. Naturally the building traditions of this period in New England, in keeping with the general social scheme, were very simple, strong, and vigorous, making use of native material and the labor that the settlers provided for themselves, but still retaining many features of medieval English tradition.



One of these typical New England houses of the early 17th century is the Capen House at Topsfield, Massachusetts which was built for the Rev. Mr. Joseph Capen, minister, of that town. (See Figure 3.)

Figure 3.



The date of the "raising" is cut in the summer beams of the parlor, "June ye 8th, 1683." It has never received any additions or alterations, but it was thoroughly restored at the time of its acquisition by the Topsfield Historical Society.

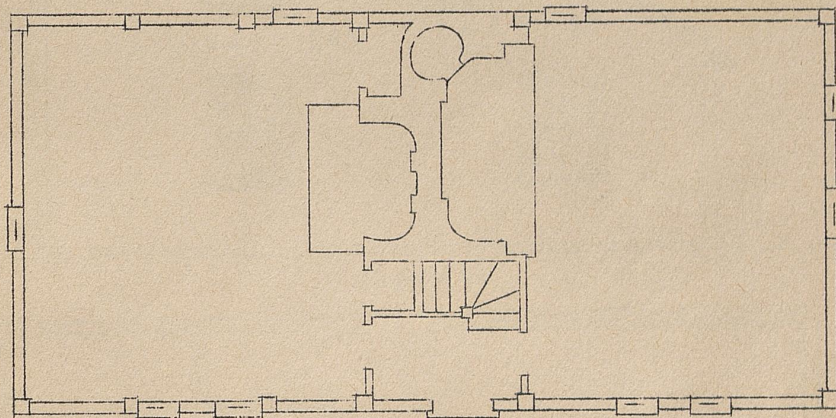
This is a frame house and representative of a type in New England which followed the precedent of English half timber architecture. The framing of these early houses is filled with various materials-- brick, stone, hay, or daubed wattle, just as in England, but the much colder climate of the new colony necessitated some sort of exterior covering, hence the use of clapboards. The Capen House has also a lining of clay mixed with chopped straw under the parlor floor, again for warmth, as there is a large cellar underneath. Although it is definitely a feature of this type of house, the large central chimney, reminiscent in its elaborate form of English examples of the period, is not original, but



a copy from that of the Hunt house in Salem. The overhanging upper story is also a characteristic medieval detail, copied again from English houses, as were also the heavy carved pendants found so often in Elizabethan architecture. The first colonists used glazed paper or shutters in the windows, but later leaded casements, similar to those of England, were used in the better houses. Sash windows did not come into general use until the middle of the 18th century.

The plan of the Capen house, similar in many ways to those of Essex cottages, is quite simple and adapted to the more or less primitive needs of the time. (See Figure 4.) The early New England house usually

Figure 4.



consisted of one room on the first floor and one on the second, but later the house was often lengthened beyond the chimney, thus providing two rooms on each floor. It is this latter stage that we see in the Capen house. In some cases, the house was still somewhat small, however, and another enlargement sometimes took place in the form of a lean-to at the rear, roofed by an extension of the rear slope of the main roof which gave rise to a type of house known as the "salt box." If the dwelling consisted of but one main floor, a large attic was sometimes added above, forming the "story and a half" or "half" type of house. From the period when all family activity centered in one room, to the era of a more developed plan with a parlor, dining room, and kitchen, the great chimney still remained the real center of the house.

The John Adams house at Quincy, Massachusetts is a good example of the "salt box" type, and also of a type of house that is found in great numbers on Cape Cod, to the extent that it is often referred to as the



Figure 5.

Cape Cod cottage, although it is by no means limited to that section. (See Figure 5.) It was built in 1681 and the lean-to was added in 1712-1715. The plan is of a more developed type than that of the Capen house, containing as it does, a parlor, dining room, kitchen and bed chamber on the first floor. (See Figure 6.)

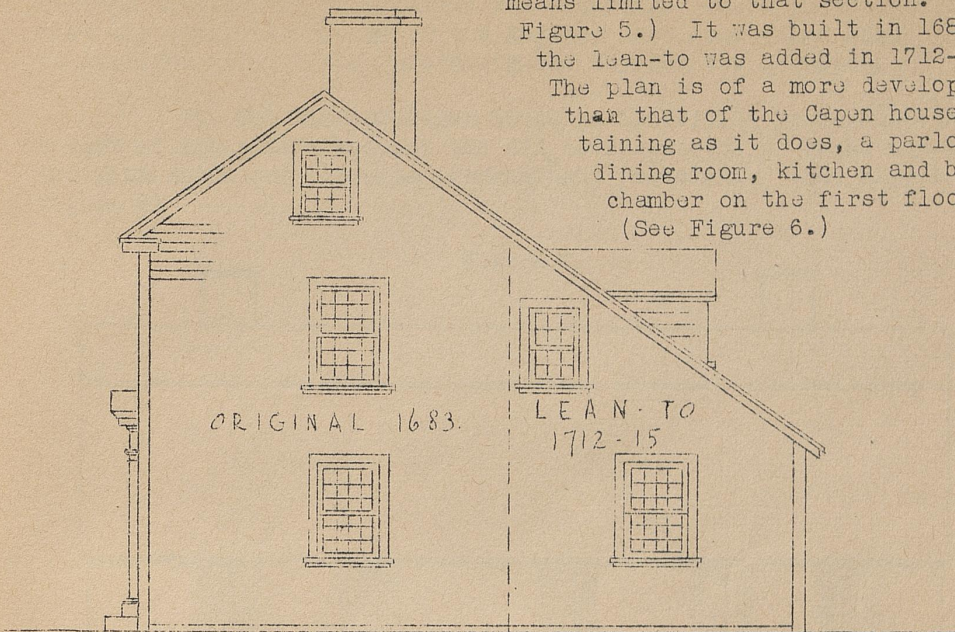
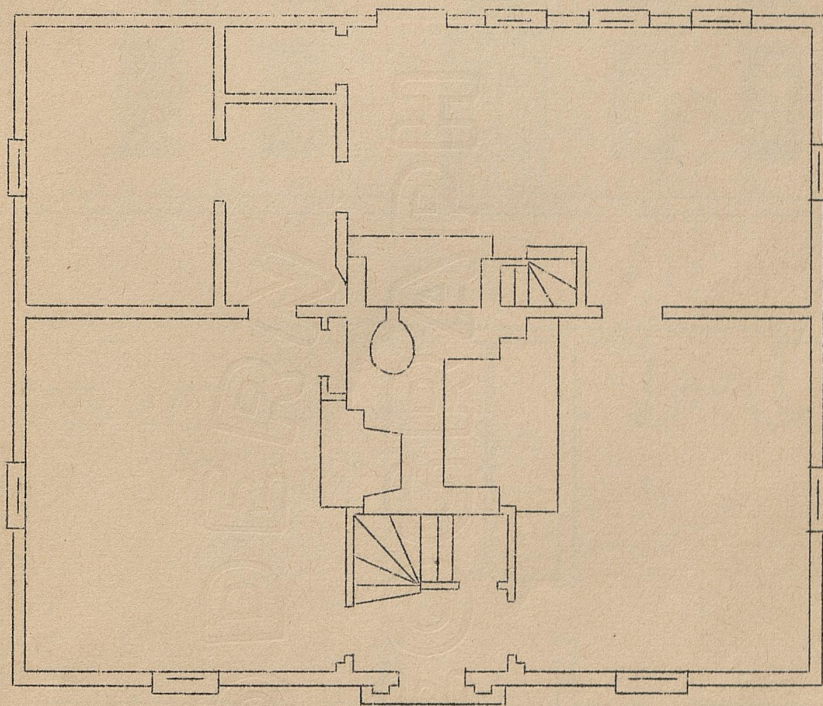


Figure 6.





The exterior shows that more interest had been taken in the doorway than had hitherto been apparent in the New England house - a sign that the old Puritan disapproval of ornament was relaxing. There is also evidence here that the classical design of the English Renaissance had begun to creep into American architecture preparing the way for the Georgian.

The Townsend-Sweetser house at Lynnfield, Massachusetts, forms a sort of transition between the old medieval type of house and the Georgian which was becoming increasingly prevalent. (See Figure 7 and Figure 8)

Figure 7.

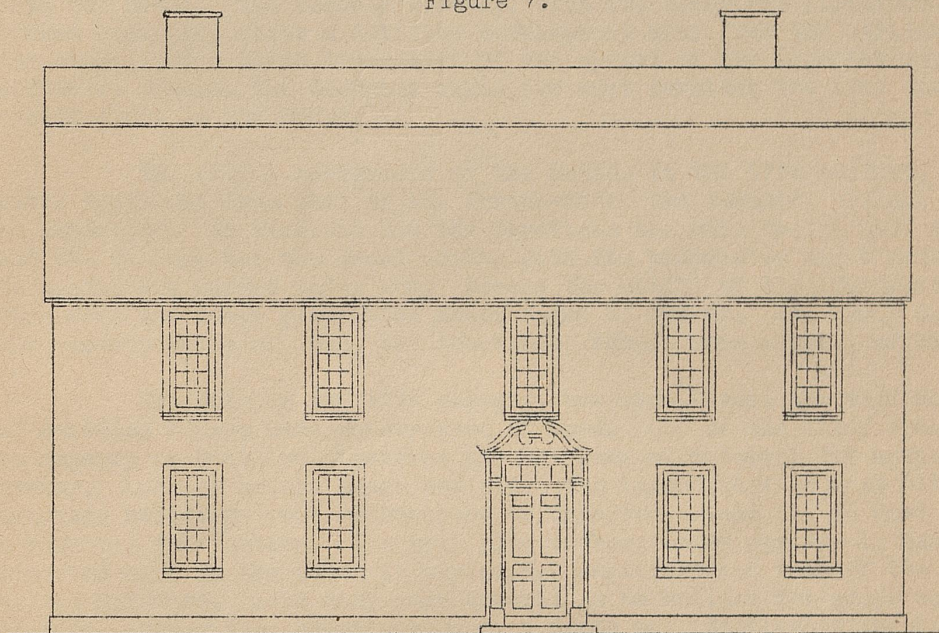
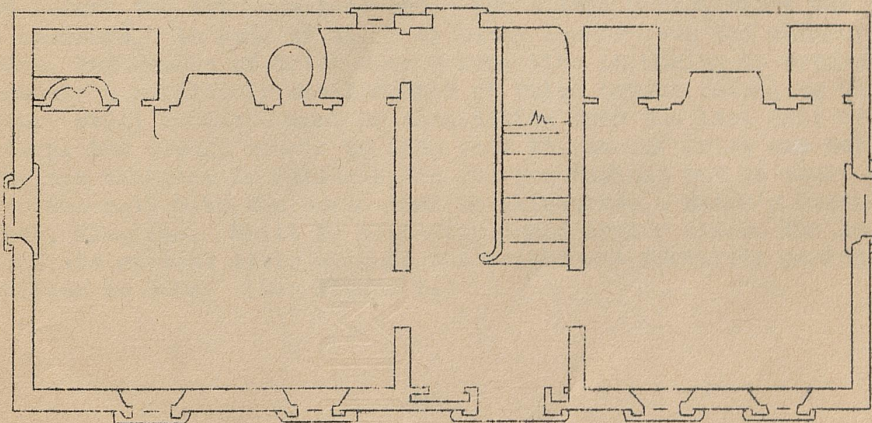


Figure 8.





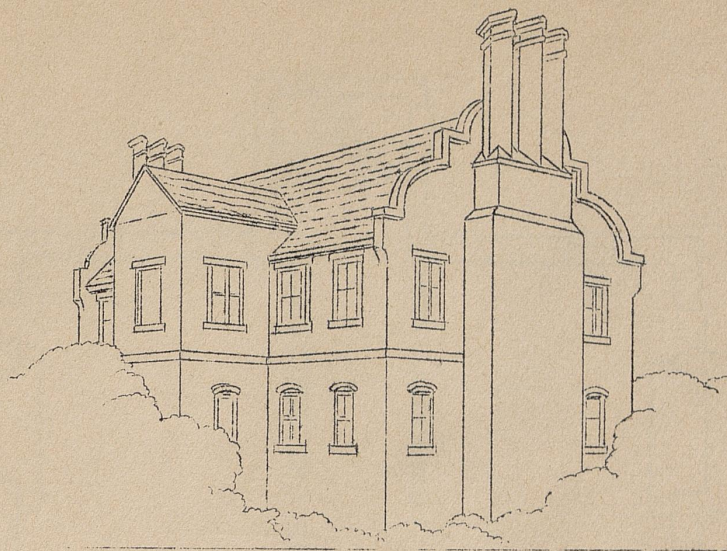
This house as it now stands is an enlargement of an older dwelling; the present work dating from about 1725. There is a well developed hipped or gambrel roof which was used rather widely in domestic architecture during the 18th century. It has been said that the hipped roof was used in New England as a result of influence from the Dutch Colony of New York, but this statement is unfounded. Indeed the earliest American example of the gambrel roof is to be found in New England on the Tufts house at Medford, Massachusetts. The form originated in Europe in the desire to reduce the height of the medieval roof, and it was much used in England during the late 17th century, from whence it was probably brought to America. The plan of the Townsend-Sweetser house is not so well developed as in the Cape Cod house. The doorway however, with its classical pilasters and broken pediment, shows a definite development away from the earlier exterior simplicity - again indicative of the spread of the Georgian style. Before we discuss the Georgian style, we must consider the 17th century architecture in the South.

The social background of the South, in the 17th century, was quite different from that of the North--there the communal village was not so important. In Virginia and the Carolinas the main social unit became not the village but the great estate with its proprietor and a great number of people who worked under him. Around the middle of the 17th century, therefore the large plantation house began to appear. The early houses were mostly built of wood, but sometimes, though more rarely, of brick.

Not only in the 17th century, but even later, the vast majority of American houses were constructed of wood. One of the chief drawbacks to masonry or brick construction was the lack of material for making mortar. Lack of bricks there was not. The legend that so many old American buildings were constructed of imported bricks is, in most cases, a romantic fabrication. The only places where brick appears to have been imported were in the Dutch Colony of New Amsterdam and that of the Swedes on the Delaware, where they were brought in as ballast for ships as early as 1633. Otherwise, brick making as a trade was established fairly early in the history of the colonies. Brickmakers were among the first colonists at Jamestown in 1611, and from that time the making of bricks increased continually in Virginia. At Philadelphia, a brickmaker was in the neighborhood before the city was laid out. For a long period brick was used only for chimneys. In some of the very early houses even the chimneys were wooden, and houses of brick were a long time in making an appearance. There are a relatively small number of brick houses belonging to the 17th century still extant - most of them dating from the last half of the century, but enough remain to show that the use of brick was not uncommon. There are examples in Philadelphia and New England but we shall concern ourselves only with the house that we illustrate - Bacon's Castle in Surrey County, Virginia. Built by a planter named Arthur Allen, the house received its present title when it was seized and fortified during Bacon's Rebellion in 1676. (See Figure 9.)



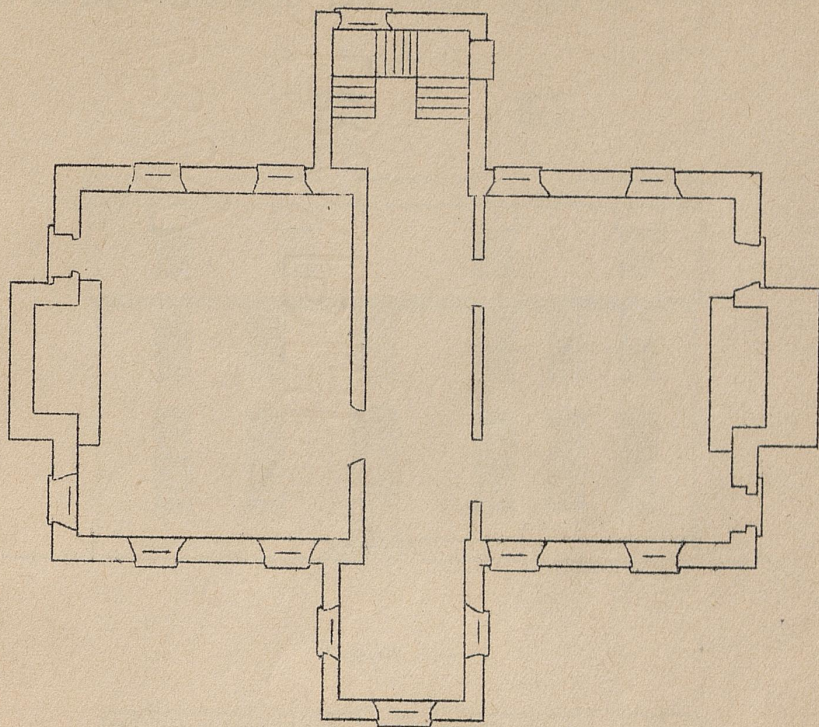
Figure 9.



This house is an example of the large country house (typical of those to which the social system of Virginia gave rise) whose walls are constructed entirely of brick. It is dated by Millar about 1655 and by Kimball before 1676. Here again we have a survival of medieval tradition in early American architecture, because this building is really a manor house of the Jacobean period in England. The clustered chimney stacks and stepped gables exhibit characteristics of East Anglian brick work. The use of the enclosed porch and the transomed casement windows, glazed with leaded panes, are also features showing the influence of English precedent. The projecting porch and stair tower make the plan roughly cruciform - a rather complex plan for such an early house. It was not until the Georgian period, however, that domestic planning in general took on much elaboration of character. (See Figure 10.)



Figure 10.



While the early colonists built their houses of brick when they did not build in wood, there are a few examples of stone dwellings of this period, the best of which is the house at Graeme Park, near Philadelphia. Although it was built in 1721-22, it is not a Georgian house, having none of the refinements of that style. Built for Sir William Keith, colonial governor of Pennsylvania, it was later sold to Dr. Thomas Graeme for whom it was named. It was constructed of a reddish stone, the rear and sides being of rubble and the front of ashlar laid on in irregular courses. Possibly the dwelling was first used as a malt house, which may explain visible changes in the masonry. The kitchen and house-hold offices were detached buildings. Nothing but the house now remains, although the lines of a courtyard wall before the north front may be traced. The gambrel roof is contemporary with its use in New England, and owes nothing to Dutch influence. Again, there is a survival of medieval tradition in the elaborate



outline of the chimney. Sashes, hung with weights and cords, replace the casement windows of earlier houses. The plan is interesting - the house is three rooms in length, but care was taken to make them all accessible from the main stairhall. (See Figure 11 and 12.)

Figure 11.

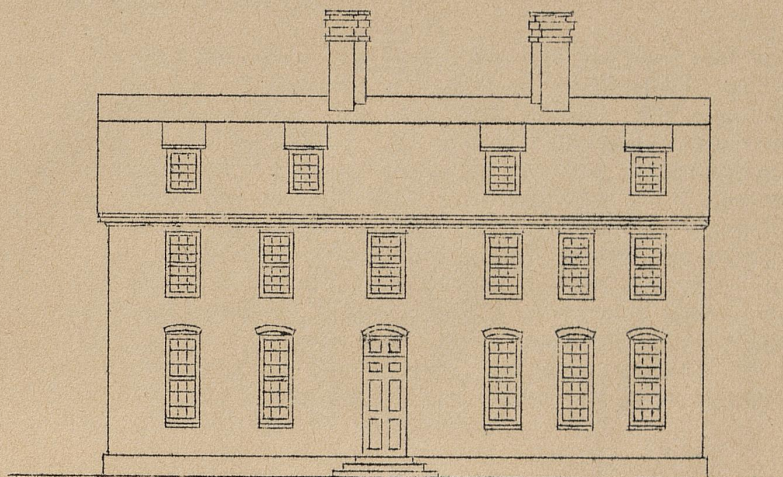
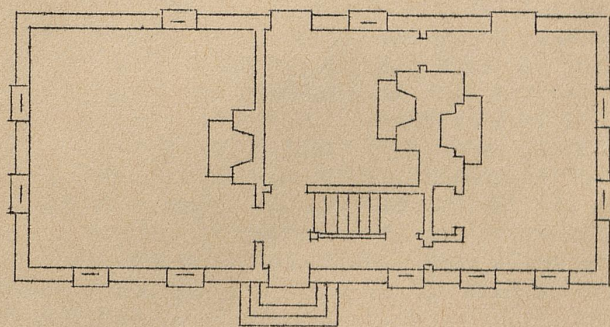


Figure 12.



c. The 18th Century - The Georgian Style

As the 18th century progressed, the colonies increased in population, became more settled. Trade with Europe and with other parts of the world became more and more important. The natural products which America possessed in such great abundance were exchanged for the



finished products which the colonies could not, with their more limited facilities for manufacture, produce. The cities along the coast began to expand and flourish as they developed into important seaports. With these new conditions, the manner of living of a large number of the colonists began to change.

In New England, for instance, agriculture had lost the importance that it had in the early days of colonial settlement, and the New Englander did not get his living from the land alone. The sea, as a pathway for commerce began to attract the younger men away from the land to an occupation which gave more opportunity for the acquisition of wealth and power. Thus, we see not only the beginning of a maritime tradition (for which New England was so long famous,) but also the rise of a seafaring and commercial class as opposed to the old rural agricultural community. Those who made their living by the sea, who dealt in ships and commerce, very often became wealthy merchants owning ships and counting houses in the seaports. Urban concentration began as more people were attracted to the cities, and soon, instead of the small inter-dependent rural community, one finds the approximation of the modern city with its social problems.

In Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston, the merchant, as the chief mainstay of the community, took a leading position. Provincial aristocracies of trade began to ape the older aristocracy of England. The wealthy class were now demanding a higher standard of existence and a more elegant mode of life. The members of this group wanted the luxuries of life and were willing and able to pay for them. From abroad, their ships, which had gone out laden with the raw stuffs of the new continent, brought back all the latest fashions, in costume, furniture, and building, as well as most of the luxurious objects of the fashionable world. The "best people" of Philadelphia tried to live as nearly as possible like those of London. These same ideas filtered down through the middle classes in the north bringing with them at least a desire for greater comfort and convenience. England was, of course, the great model for imitation, as far as the amenities of existence were concerned. Only a few national groups, such as the Dutch and Germans, kept in the English colonies some of their own traditions.

It is not surprising, therefore, that American architecture of the 18th century should reflect the social ideals of the period. The merchant princes desired to build themselves fine houses where they could live in a manner befitting their newly acquired wealth. The town houses in the great seaports became more commodious and more elaborate during the course of the century. Thomas Hancock in Boston, Miles Brewton in Charleston, the Penns in Philadelphia, built themselves large houses. Not only did these men carry on the traditions of English



urban life, but also they began to live in the country for part of the year in imitation of English country life. The country surrounding Philadelphia was dotted with country seats of wealthy ship owners. In the south, the agricultural aristocracy built themselves great houses on their plantations. It was only in the dwellings of members of the middle class, in the northern colonies, that a certain American ruggedness lingered on.

It was the Georgian style imported from England that became the established fashion in home-building. As a style it is that phase of the English Renaissance which came to its full development during the reigns of Anne and the first two Georges. The first introduction of the Renaissance into English architecture had been in the nature of a rather haphazard adoption of classical motives which were used mostly as ornament without much understanding of their real significance. When the first great English Renaissance architect, Inigo Jones, journeyed to Italy in the first half of the 17th century, he came into contact not only with the Baroque but also with the more academic style of Palladio - a mannered, correct and formal style which appealed to this Englishman and which has continued to appeal to the English ever since. Jones introduced it into England where it was taken up by his great successor, Sir Christopher Wren, and transformed into a great national style. The cold Palladian manner was humanized, and, at least in the case of minor architecture, modified considerably in the direction of simplicity and homeliness. The Baroque was never popular in England, but there are some faint traces of it to be noticed here and there in the work of Wren and that of the later Georgian style which was only a logical continuation of the Wren manner. Its restrained classicality, its studied, but not cold, correctness, its simplicity and charm (characteristic of the best Georgian work) make it one of the most pleasing of architectural styles ever evolved.

The Georgian style was not long in making its appearance in America where the wealthy classes took it up and used it in their new houses. There were no professional architects in America at that time and architectural information was imported into America in the published work of designs by classical and Renaissance architects. These designs were used by the carpenters and master-masons, often very skillful men, who took the place of the architect. Then, too, the average cultivated gentleman of the period was expected to know something about classical architecture - it was part of his education. Cultivated Americans of this type often traveled abroad and brought back ideas for the erection of their houses. In America, Thomas Jefferson was the perfect type of the cultivated amateur.

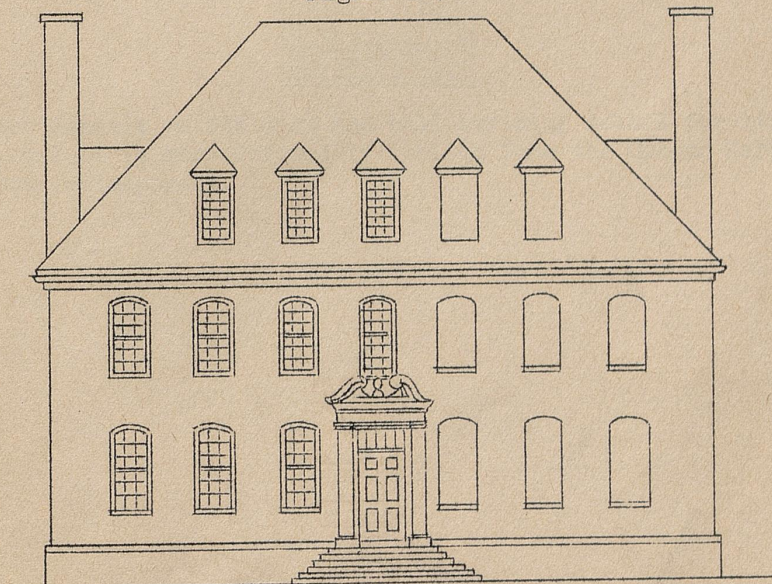
When the Georgian style was transmitted to America it necessarily underwent some modification to suit different conditions. There is in America nothing to compare with the great English houses such as those designed by Chambers and Kent. Even the most pretentious American dwellings are more easily compared with the minor architecture of the period in England. For instance, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish a small country house of the time in England from the same sort of



thing in America. The term Georgian as applied to domestic architecture indicates a certain type of house, usually constructed of brick with white wooden trim, classical cornices and doorways, and sash windows with small panes. There was little variation in the general type, but sometimes the walls were constructed of wood or stone. In America, the style may be divided into an early, a middle and a late period, each of which has certain characteristics. The first phase, extending from about 1700 to 1740 is the most robust and rugged of the three, and shows the influence of Christopher Wren's manner in the bold outline of the buildings and the use of correct heavy detail. The chief monuments of this period are in Virginia--the newly restored Governor's Palace at Williamsburg (1707) and the Byrd house at Westover (c. 1725.) To the second phase (c. 1740-1780) belongs the fully developed Georgian which has lost some of the early ruggedness and boldness but which is still direct and vigorous. There is an increased emphasis on classical correctness and lighter treatment of detail and ornament. The Mount Pleasant mansion (after 1761) near Philadelphia and the Miles Brewton house (after 1765) at Charleston are good examples. After the Revolution, the style, under the influence of Robert Adam in England, and the Louis XVI and Empire periods in France, underwent another transformation. This phase (c. 1780- c. 1820) is called variously the Adam, the Traditional, the Post-Colonial, the Federal, and the Early-Republican. In this late work all the early robustness has gone and in its place appears a delicacy and refinement of mass and outline as well as ornament. The professional architect makes his first appearance in America at this time. Houses such as the Woodlands (c. 1788) near Philadelphia with its elaborate Adam plan and Homewood (1800) near Baltimore are characteristic.

One of the finest examples of domestic architecture in the first period of the Georgian style and one of the most representative of the great Virginia country seats is Westover on the James River. (See Fig. 13)

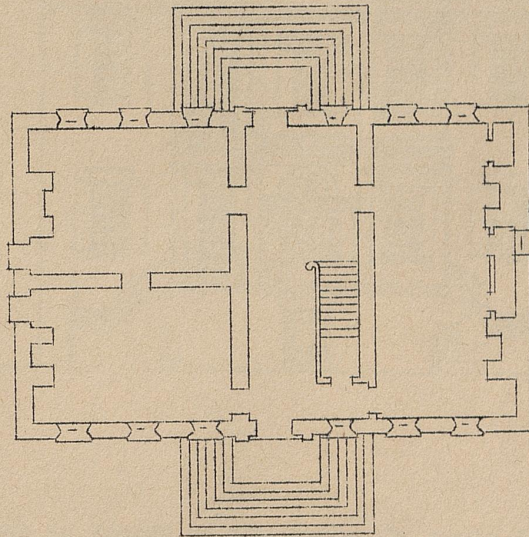
Figure 13.





Kimball fixes the date of construction as shortly after 1726. It was built by William Byrd, a member of the famous Virginia family. Here we see the main elements of the Georgian type of house already established--the red brick and the white trim, the row of dormers in the roof, the small paned windows with their blinds or shutters. The tall chimneys, the regularity of the fenestration, and the general boldness of outline remind one of the work of Jones and Wren from which this sort of architecture logically stems. As we have already seen in the New England houses, the portals alone have received ornamental treatment. The broken pediment is a Baroque feature found in the work of Wren and his contemporaries and often appears in American buildings. The plan, although rectangular and two rooms deep, is still irregular, because the transverse hall is off-center. (See Figure 14.)

Figure 14.

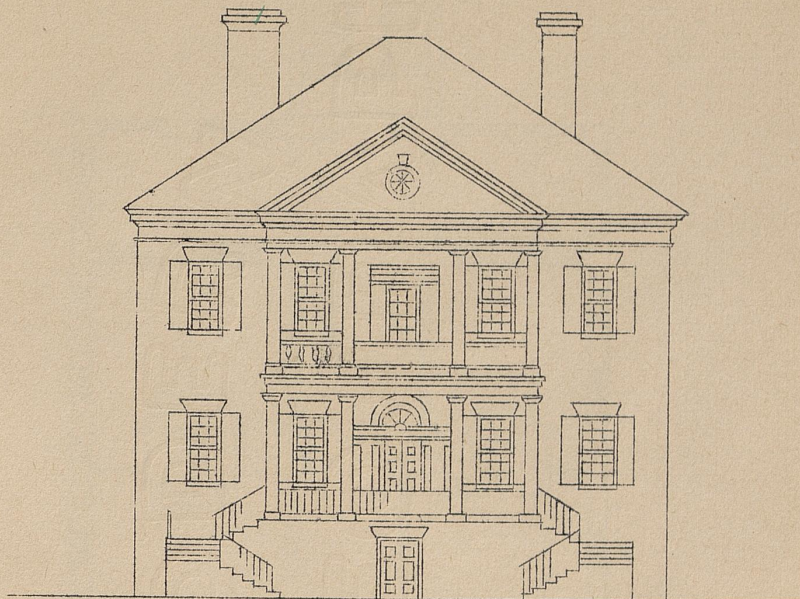


The house depends on its mass and bold striking detail for its aesthetic effect, but it is more refined in feeling than the Graeme Park house which is almost contemporary.



From the middle period of the Georgian style we illustrate first the Miles Brewton house (sometimes called the Pringle house) at Charleston, South Carolina, which was begun soon after 1765. (See Figure 15.) A builder of some ability, but not a professional

Figure 15.

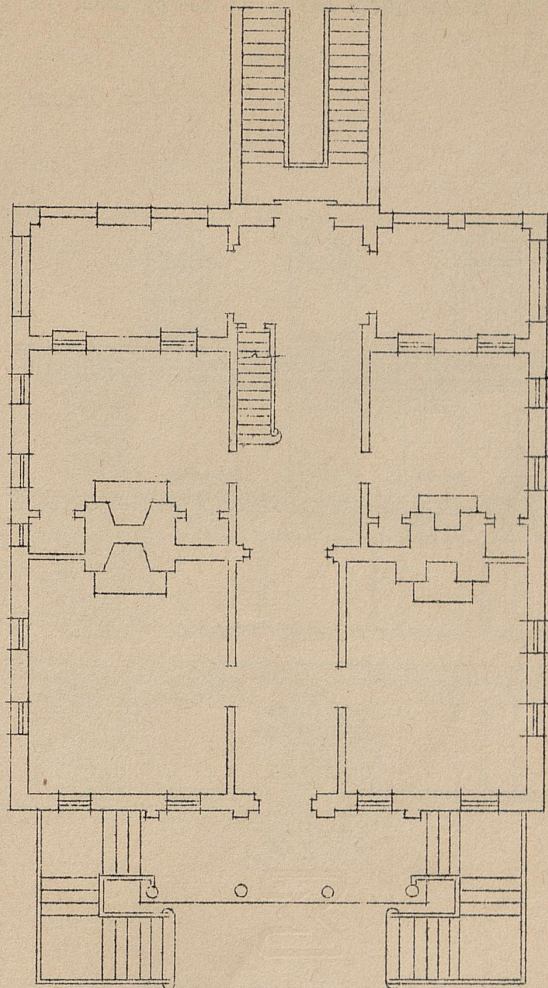


architect, was in charge of the work. To quote Kimball, "An advertisement of Ezra Waite, Civil Architect, Housebuilder in general and Carver, from London, published in the South Carolina Gazette for August 22, 1769, makes clear the substantial completeness of the house at that time, and the extent of the Waite's connection with it." The house is typical of those erected by the wealthy ship owners of the Atlantic seaboard up to the period of the Revolution. Again we have a house of red brick and stone, trimmed with wood painted white, but the architecture, although still robust and solid, has become more elaborate. The out-standing feature of the facade is the portico of two stories constructed with stone columns on a marble platform. The portico, contrary to a widely accepted popular theory, was rarely used in American domestic work before the Revolution although there are some exceptions. Of all these



porticos, that of the Browton house is by far the most refined and elegant in effect. The house is rectangular in shape with a transverse hall running lengthwise. (See Figure 16.) All the important

Figure 16.

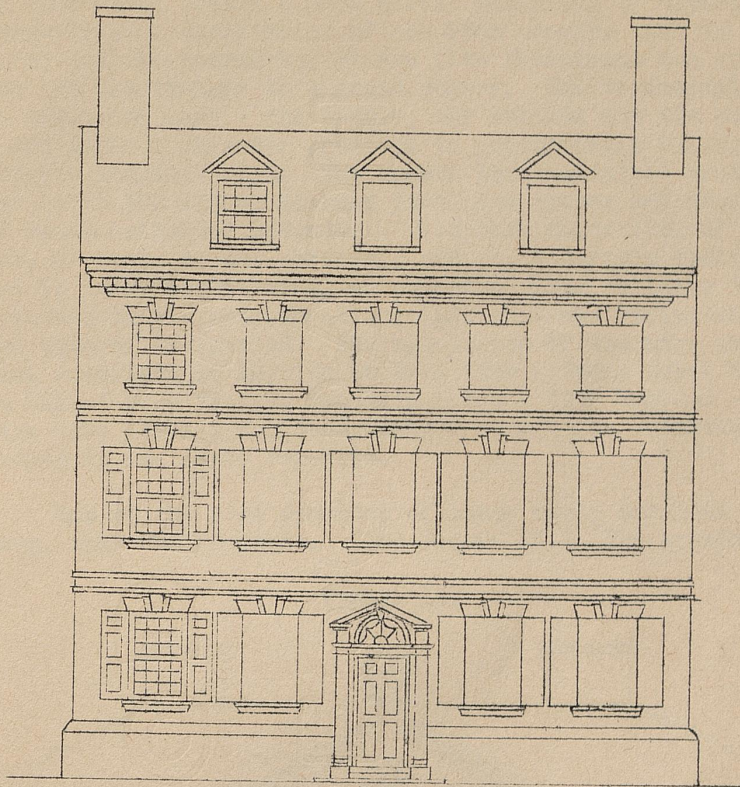


rooms are on the second floor, a characteristic of other southern town houses. The interiors are especially fine, with their paneled walls and elaborately carved woodwork. In the drawing room is a coved or moulded ceiling--quite a rarity in the colonies. On the whole, the house shows that the best work of this period, although it is still as solid and robust as that of the earlier type, is much more refined and elegant.



Another house of this second period exhibits much the same characteristics of the fully developed Georgian style, although it is rather late in date, having been built in 1787. It is the Reynolds-Morris house in Philadelphia and was built by a certain John Reynolds. (See Figure 17.) It came later into the possession of Luke W. Morris, and

Figure 17.



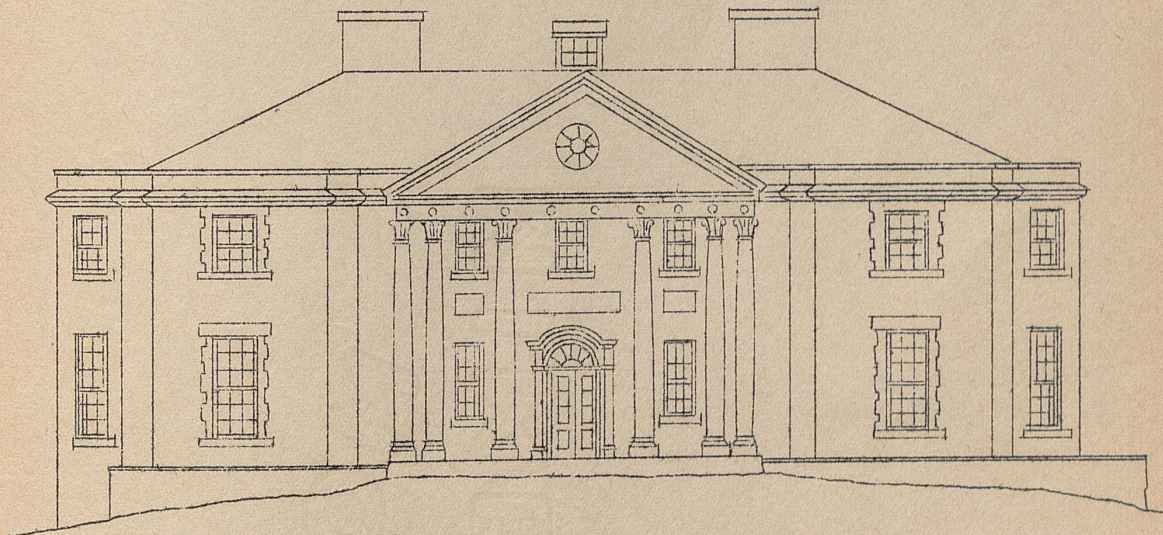
still remains (1920) in the possession of the Morris family. Like many Philadelphia houses of the time, the facade is built flush with the street, but it is unusual in that it has a double front with two windows on each side of the central doorway. The brickwork is laid in Flemish bond with alternating red stretcher and black header bricks - a type of brick-laying much favored in the neighborhood of Philadelphia. This house is not so elaborate as the Brewton house, but it has a certain sober and quiet elegance which is quite as impressive.



After the Revolution a change becomes apparent in American architecture. To be sure, most of the builders still worked in the older style, but new influences began to creep into the established Georgian style. America was now no longer so dependent on England as she had been: various architectural ideas began to be adopted from the current practice of the Continent, particularly France. Architecture in Europe had been tending constantly toward a more strict emulation of classical ideals. The archaeological discoveries of the 18th century such as the discovery of Pompeii and the researches of men like Winkelmann had influenced European art and thought to a great degree. The monumental architecture of this classical past - the temple, the rotunda and the basilica - were copied and applied whenever possible to contemporary building. These forms even invaded domestic work. The chaste and restrained ornament of the Adam and Louis XVI styles adorned porticoed houses and rooms reminiscent in plan of Roman halls and rotundas. With this conception of the monumental interior, we begin to see strangely enough, a certain feeling for convenience in domestic planning, an aspect of home building that heretofore received little consideration. All this was reflected in the American home of the period. The appearance of the more or less professional architect in America at this time - James Hoban from Ireland, Stephen Hallet from France, Benjamin Latrobe from England - and native Americans like Charles Bulfinch, helped to give an entirely new character to building in the early republic.

One of the best examples of those early American houses is the Woodlands, near Philadelphia. (See Figure 18.) The present structure

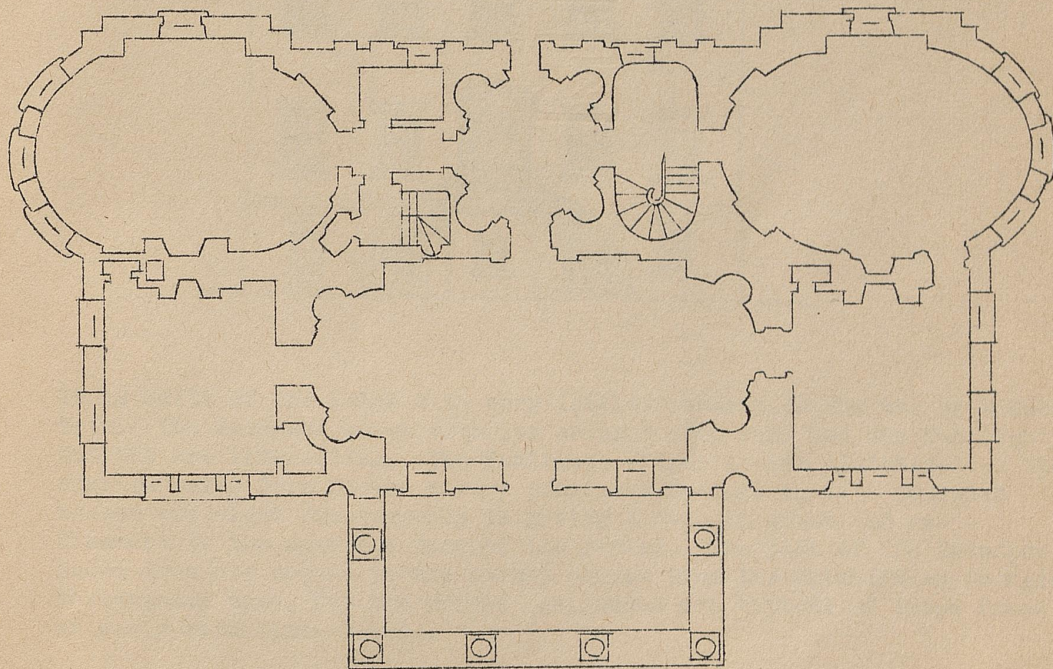
Figure 18.





is a remodelling by William Hamilton of an older house built about 1735. It is constructed of stone with white wooden trim. The classical portico, the delicate treatment of the circular-headed windows, the restrained ornament of the pilasters, all mark the house as a product of the last period of the Georgian style. The Georgian forms are still there, but the whole effect is more delicate and more classical in plan; the house is remarkable even for this period: the rooms are no longer square, but assume an oval or octagonal shape, the rooms themselves having indentations in the form of niches regularly placed. (See Figure 19.)

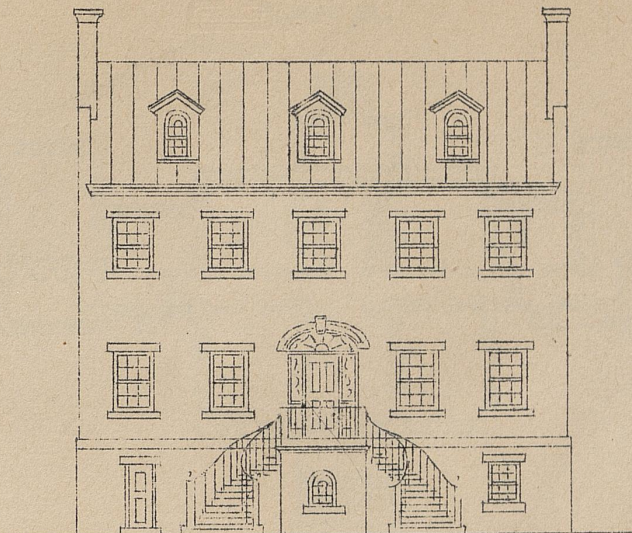
Figure 19.



The Davenport house at Savannah, Georgia, (built 1800-1810) is a southern town house of this period. (See Figure 20 on following page.)



Figure 20.

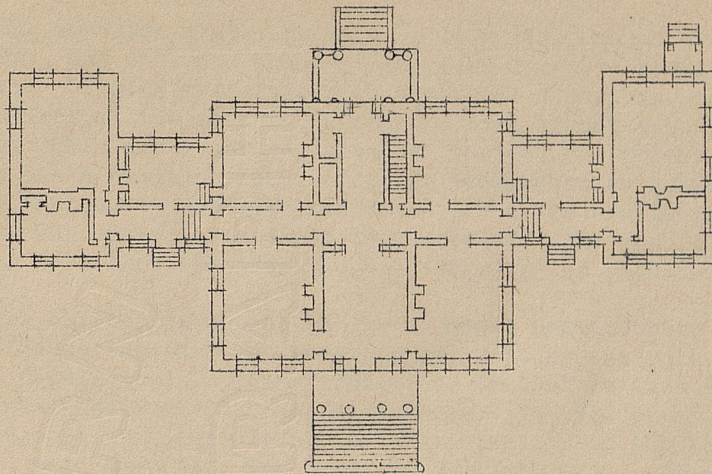


It is built of red brick with very little ornament in the way of wooden trim. The entrance porch with its wrought iron rail and the fan light doorway are interesting. The fanlight, either in its elliptical or its semi-circular form became a very prominent feature in late Georgian houses and aided considerably in giving a certain grace and refinement to the entrance door of the period. The plan of the Davenport house does not depart in any marked degree from the established Georgian rectangular type, but the curved staircases are typical of those found in early republican houses.



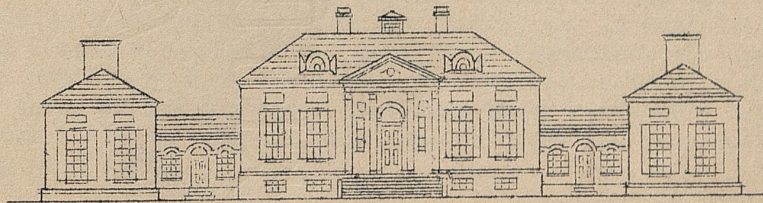
Homewood, near Baltimore, is another fine example of the country house of the period. (See Figure 21.) It was built in 1800 by Charles Carroll of Carrollton as a wedding present for his son. At

Figure 21.



the present time it belongs to Johns Hopkins University. In proportion, line, detail, and mass this is one of the most beautiful of the early republican houses. It seems to have been most strongly influenced by the Adam style - the ensemble and the character of the ornament have a definitely Adam feeling. The plan is interesting, being a late variation of the southern rectangular plan with lateral wings, but it does not have the elaborate character of that of the Woodlands. (See Figure 22.)

Figure 22.





The style of the early republican period, although it produces some of the most beautiful and graceful work of the entire Georgian period, gradually began to lose, after 1800, most of its Georgian character. Before we discuss the Greek Revival period, however, we must consider some types of provincial domestic architecture of the eighteenth century which do not belong within the stylistic boundaries of the Georgian period.

Provincial types in the Colonies in the 18th Century.

The Georgian style, in more or less close touch with England and the Continent, was only one phase of American domestic architecture in the 18th century. Outside the cities, in the rural districts and more sparsely settled sections of the country, a simple, more sturdy type of work is to be found. This architecture, although founded on various native European traditions, has a certain flavor of being indigenous to America. The builders had, of course, to consider the climate and the available building materials of the district in which they settled. The result was bound to be something more American than the buildings in the imported Georgian style.

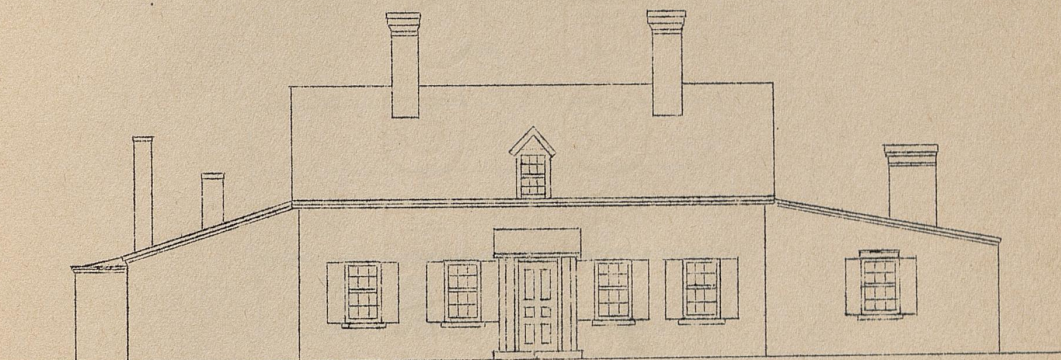
The English influence was by no means paramount in the 18th century, although the colonies were nominally under the rule of England. Some of the Continental building traditions brought to this country have been mentioned previously in this discussion. The Swedes of the Delaware, for instance, were responsible for the introduction of the idea of log construction into America. The Dutch in New York also left a number of contributions to American domestic architecture. The Germans in eastern Pennsylvania evolved a type of building which has definite characteristics of its own. The development of the New England farmhouse has already been discussed so we shall not concern ourselves with it, although it might be included under this heading.

In New York, either state or city, there is no building extant which was built under Dutch rule. The old houses of New Amsterdam were built as much as possible like those of Holland with their high brick stepped gables fronting on the street. This type of house seems not to have survived in later construction in the same district. It is true, however, that with the English occupation, the Dutch traditions lingered on, to some extent, but they became much modified until a style, which we know today as Dutch Colonial, came into being. Houses of this type are to be found in New York state, in eastern New Jersey, and in Long Island. They are usually long and low, with walls of stone (sometimes whitewashed) or of shingles applied on a wooden frame, and gambrel roofs of much lower slope than those of New England. Sometimes these roofs were extended in front to form a sort of porch. This type of house has been much used by present day architects.



The Dutch colonial house in this series is illustrated by the Van Cortlandt manor house at Croton-on-Hudson in New York state. (See Figure 23.)

Figure 23.



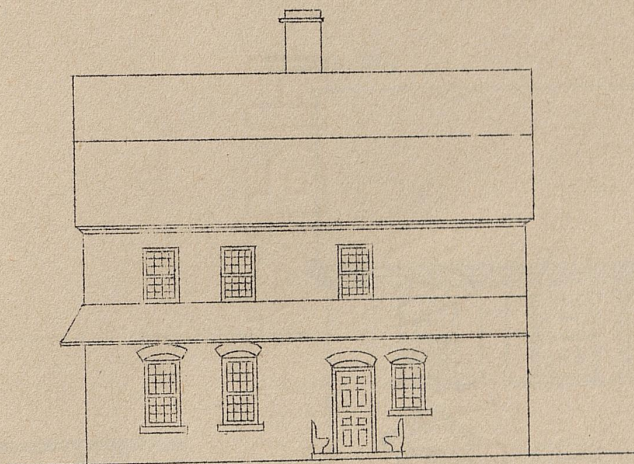
It was built about 1681 as a fort for protection against the Indians (the original portholes are still to be seen in the walls) but it has been considerably modified since then. The veranda around the house is very old, certainly ante-dating the revolution by many years. The wings were added in 1810 and 1847 and the attic was made over in 1835. The walls are of red free-stone rubble, the door and window openings being faced with "Dutch brick." In the old records, the term "Dutch brick" does not mean brick brought from Holland, but brick of Dutch size which is smaller than the English size. The house is built on the side of a hill which makes it taller on one side than on the other. With all the later alterations and modifications of the original fabric and the consequent difficulty in recognizing old work, there are still many characteristics of Dutch tradition in the wood work, doors, and roof, although the house does not conform rigidly to what we know as the Dutch Colonial type.

The German immigrants in Pennsylvania (commonly known as the Pennsylvania Dutch) also developed an interesting type of house. Beginning in 1727 a great number of Germans began to settle in the north-eastern part of the state. The houses built by them show definite characteristics of German 16th and 17th century peasant architecture which, for the most part, was strongly medieval in feeling. Koehler in an excellent article on Pennsylvania German work says that "the well defined and separate architecture of German derivation is clearly stamped by racial attributes. The distinguishing features include the use of heavy stone



and timber construction, the steep roof with rows of sloping dormers, small windows, the pent roof, and wooden hardware. There is a prevailing air of the medieval in the construction, the planning, and the design." Houses were built of wood (some of them being of half timber work) and very often of Pennsylvania ledge stone. Our example is the house of Jerg Muller built in 1752 on the banks of a creek at Millbach, with a mill house adjoining. (See Figure 24.) The present stone mill

Figure 24.



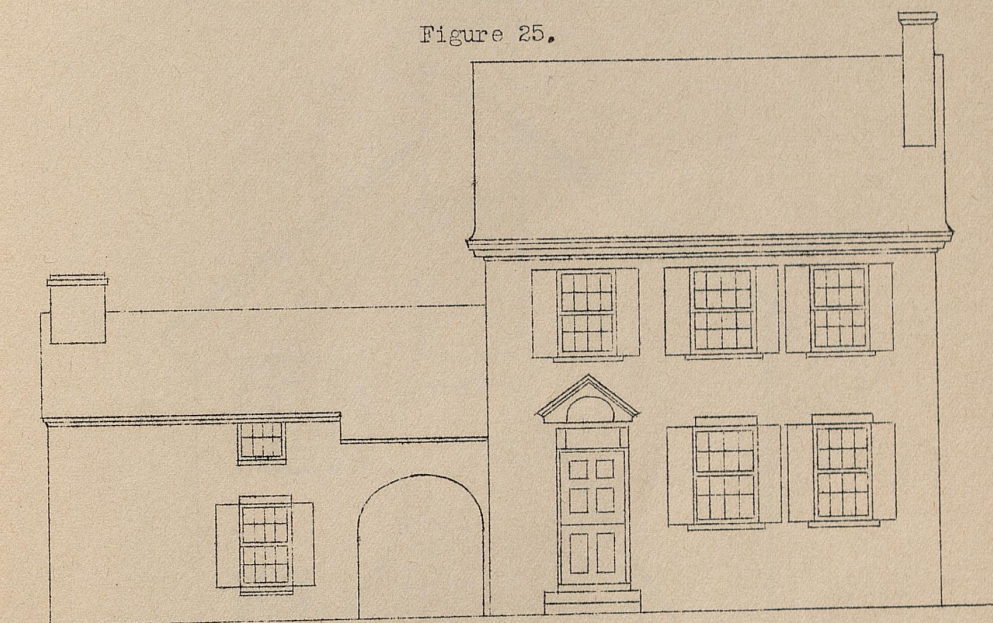
is of later date than the house, so the original mill must have been of wood. The house itself is constructed of local rubble stone, the quoins being of dressed stone. The slightly splayed slopes of the gambrel roof give the house a curiously medieval air. A pent-roof hood (known as a Germantown hood because it was used a great deal in that town) formerly extended around the house between the first and second stories. There has been an extension made at one side of the house where the mill was



changed. All the interior woodwork has been taken to the Pennsylvania Museum at Philadelphia. This type of German construction has had some influence on the minor domestic architecture of eastern Pennsylvania even to the present day.

More in the English tradition and showing traces of Georgian influence is the Potts house at Valley Forge, which may be taken as representative of the smaller farmhouses of southeastern Pennsylvania. (See Figure 25.)

Figure 25.

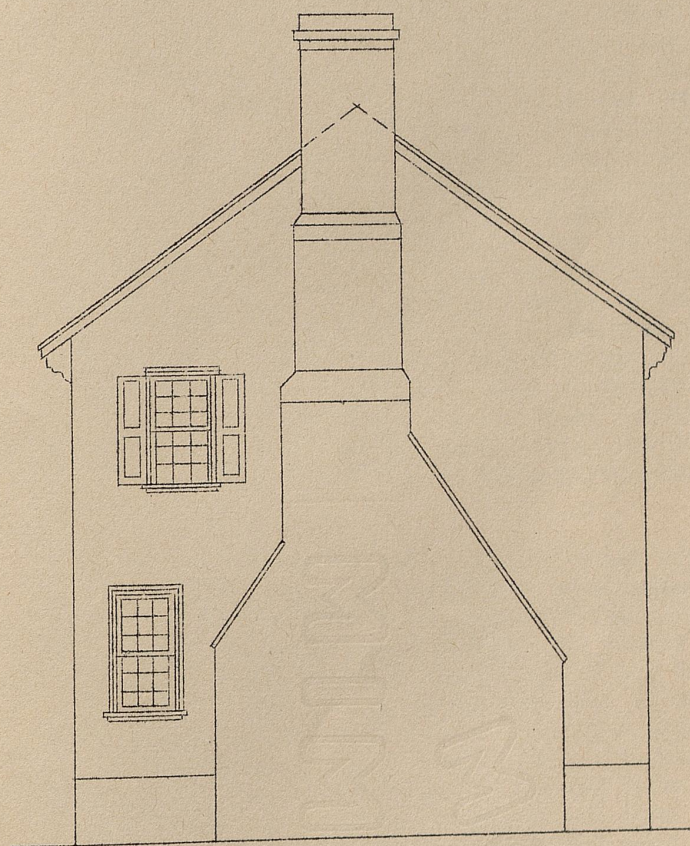


It is simply and sturdily built of Pennsylvania ledge stone with very little architectural adornment. It is dated by Miller about 1760 and by Kocher 1742-1752. Owing to the smallness of the house the main rooms are only thirteen feet square, while the kitchen, as in the south, is detached and connected with the main building by a covered passage. The covered hood above the main door is the most charming feature of the exterior. During the winter that the Revolutionary army was at Valley Forge, the house served as Washington's headquarters.



The absence of a middle class in the southern colonies is responsible for the lack of examples of minor domestic architecture. Between the great houses of the planters and the cabins of the slaves there were not, as a rule, any intermediate steps. There are, however, some farm-houses of the 18th century in Maryland and Virginia that have a provincial charm of their own. Of this group is the house known as Viewmont at Carter's Bridge, Virginia, built prior to 1740. (See Figure 26.) It is

Figure 26.



very simply constructed of wood, having little claim to any architectural pretension. The chief features of the exterior are the great brick chimneys at the sides - a marked characteristic of many small southern houses of this time any period.



### The Greek Revival

We have already seen how the classical influence had become more and more marked in American architecture until the Greek ideal became of paramount importance. There were a number of social causes for the great interest in Greece and Rome. One of these reasons was the Revolution which had recently been fought and won. It was not so very difficult for the contemporary historians to draw analogies from the young American republic to that of early Rome and the tendency was, all too often, to consider the contemporary heroes, such as Washington and Jefferson, in the guise of triumphant Roman heroes dressed in togas or as the great sages of the Periclean Age of Greece. This attitude at least helped to found in America what Lewis Mumford calls the classical myth--the clothing of the American of the day in the habiliments of ancient Greece and Rome. Another event in modern Europe which directed the American attention to Greece more specifically was the Greek War of Independence which powerfully stirred the minds and emotions of early Americans as it had stirred the imaginations of the Romantic poets of England. One of those unaccountable waves of sentimentality which sometimes sweep the country came into evidence. Greece was attempting to throw off a tyrannous foreign yoke as America had done. Classical Greece became the height of everything desirable. A mania for Greek things and Greek ideas took the new country by storm. The cultured gentlemen of the northern or southern colonies whose early education included familiarity with classic Greek literature, wished to conform to the ideals of the Periclean Age and built themselves houses in the form of temples. The pioneers who settled in Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan took with them a great consciousness of this new enthusiasm as well as handbooks of Greek architectural plates. They built houses in the Greek temple style in Michigan--a fact which seems strangely incongruous today. The towns they founded bear Greek names, as do other towns of contemporary foundations in the old colonies.

In the new country it was a time of great expansion and, though the citizens felt that things of importance were happening, it was not enough that they should happen. The events of the period must be made glamorous, they must be given an air of drama. The remote glories of Greece and Rome became the shell in which the doings of the new democratic age were clothed. It has not been properly stressed, by the writers on architectural history of the period at least, that this approach to the classical past was essentially a romantic one. This statement may sound paradoxical, but it is true--classical in this sense refers, of course, to the actual aspects of the civilization of Greece and Rome and the word romantic denotes a certain emotional attitude toward that past. It was an emotional and not a reasonable approach. The early American citizen probably did not see that there was something sophomoric about this posturing. It is improbable that the merchant living in a Doric temple or the statesman who imagined himself in a toga and laurel wreath declaiming a speech in a marble hall, saw anything incongruous in all these dead trappings of a remote age.



It has been argued by some critics that the Greek Revival is the only real style evolved by America and that this is definitely the American style. Howard Major in his book on the Greek Revival adopts this thesis, but his reasoning is insecure and his conclusion untenable. The Greek Revival style was eminently impractical and hardly usable today except in modified forms.

The real beginning of an interest in Greek architecture dates back to the publication in 1762 of the "Antiquities of Athens" by Stuart and Revett, two English architects who made a journey to Greece. As the 18th century drew to its close the interest in Greece became more marked. After the beginning of the 19th century buildings in the Greek style became the fashion. The Greek Revival did not originate in America but was imported, as every other architectural style used in America had been. The importer was the English architect Benjamin Latrobe, who had been trained under Cockerell, who had used the Greek style to some extent in England.

The genesis of the Greek Revival in America is to be found not in the work of Jefferson, but in the folios of Stuart and Revett as they were interpreted by Latrobe. There is no doubt, then, that the style was definitely an importation. It is true that the Greek style was more consistently and more widely used in this country than it was in Europe, and that the American house in the Greek style was rather unique; but it remains, in the last analysis, a distinctly foreign style.

The first building to be designed in the United States in the Greek manner was the Bank of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia (1799-1801.) Latrobe, the architect who had previously been employed on the Virginia Capitol, may have received the idea for the temple form of the bank from the earlier building. From that time the Greek Temple became the great ideal in American architecture. Not only was it applied to public buildings but also to churches and houses. Porticos had been used during the Georgian period chiefly for churches; during the Adam phase they had been used for houses, but during the Greek Revival they were used everywhere. One of the marked characteristics of the style, the free-standing portico with its four, six, or eight columns and its entablature and pediment, gives rise to the term "portico-style." Sometimes the peristyle or colonnade runs completely around the building as in Girard College, by Walter (1833-1837.) The Greek orders, the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian were extensively used--the first of these probably a little more than the others because it was the most simple of the three. By 1820, the Adam phase of the Georgian (with all its Roman and Adam ornament and refinement of detail) had disappeared from the architectural scene and Greek ornament became the order of the day. The detail of the Greek Revival style is, as a rule, heavier and lacking in the grace and refinement of that of the preceding style.

During this period there were a number of professional architects working in America, most of whom worked in the Greek Revival style. Latrobe, the founder of the style, has already been mentioned. Mills, Strickland, and Walter were men who also used the Greek style almost exclusively. The supply of trained architects in America was not, however, equal to the great demand and many clients had to rely on the carpenter-architects

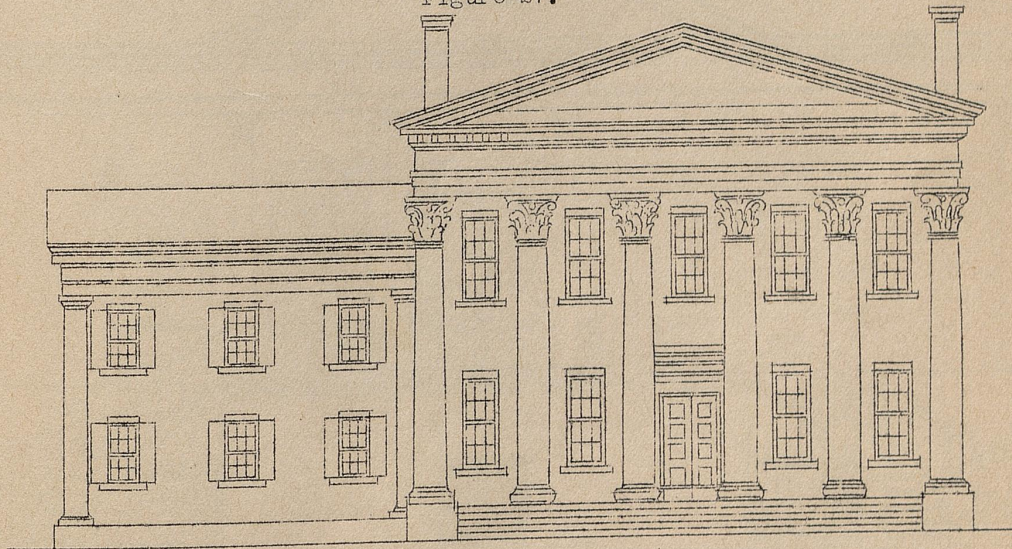


who used architectural handbooks which were again as popular as they had been in Colonial days. Owen Biddle published a handbook of Greek detail in 1805 and further publications were brought out from time to time, notably that of Minard Lafever, published in 1833 and called the "Modern Builder's Guide." The cultivated amateur of the type of Thomas Jefferson also survived into this era in the person of Nicholas Biddle, a banker of Philadelphia, who was an ardent Greek enthusiast and who had even made a journey to Greece.

The use of the Greek style for homes is probably the most interesting aspect of the revival in America. Howard Major has made a classification of the various types of houses found in various sections of the country which one cannot do better than quote--"In the northern seaboard the temple type with or without subsidiary wings predominated almost to the exclusion of any other type. In the southern seaboard the temple and later southern colonial form swathed in Greek or Roman detail went hand in hand, both being equally popular. In the old Southwest, cubical box-like structures, often without roofs, preceded by a colossal colonnade or completely surrounded by colonnades predominated almost to the exclusion of other forms. The great number of large manor houses with high studded rooms were in direct contrast to the more modest dwellings of the Old Northwest. The Old Northwest is distinguished by its great variety of types, Greek buildings contemporaneous with Colonial. The Greek phase was marked by great variations with no marked type predominating. The necessity for colonnaded fronts was not felt and the general scale of the houses was most modest. These characteristics of the Northwest were a natural out-growth of social conditions and a heterogeneous population."

The Samuel Russel house at Middletown, Connecticut, dated variously 1828 and 1830, is a good example of the temple type of house found in the Northern States. (See Figure 27.) It is presumed to have been

Figure 27.

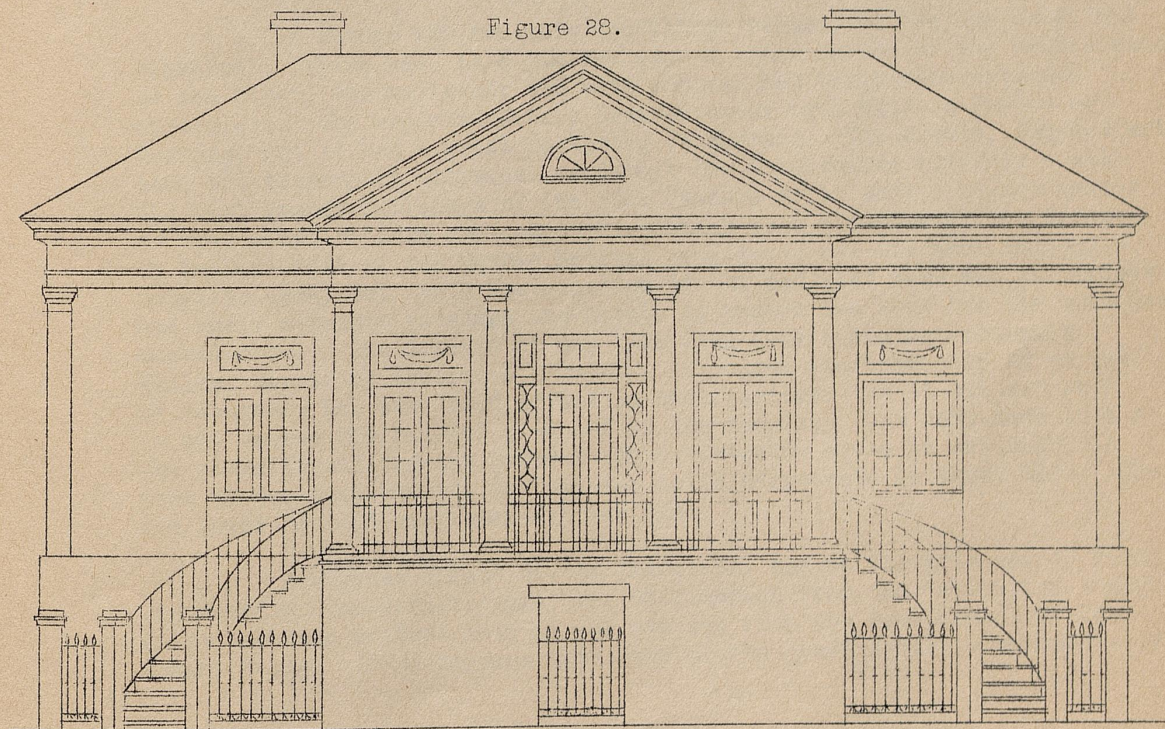




designed by a David Hoadley. The wing was added in 1855. It has a portico of six Corinthian columns and, from the evidence of the original design, was supposed to have another portico in the back which was never carried out. The heavy wooden entablature is carried completely around the house, giving it, with the columned portico, the appearance of a Greek temple. The house is built of brick covered with stucco, a favorite material of this period (sometimes the stucco was marked to look like stone.) If plain brick was used in Greek Revival houses it was painted grey, again to simulate stone. Multi-paned windows were still used, as in the Georgian period, but the panes were as a rule larger. Doors surrounded by lights above and at the sides and crowned with a heavy entablature are the usual type. Such is the entrance door of the Russel house. As can be seen in this house the Greek Revival is mainly an architecture of artificiality and illusion--this brick and wooden temple, which encloses a modern house and had to have the necessary complement of doors and windows in order to be habitable, displays an almost complete divorce between form and function which is highly unreasonable.

The Beauregard house at New Orleans, Louisiana, built about 1820,--although it is not a typical house of the Greek Revival in the south--nevertheless has some characteristics of the style in its portico, the use of stucco, and the Greek detail in its ornamental wrought iron work. There is, in the general ease of handling to be found in it, more than a suggestion of French 18th century work which makes it seem curiously similar in feeling to buildings of the late Georgian phase in the north. (See Fig. 28.)

Figure 28.





The Greek Revival period lasted until about 1860 when the Civil War put an end to it. Work in other styles had been produced in America before this date, but the detail had become heavy and more unwieldy even before American architecture descended into the maelstrom of the early Eclectic Period.

#### The Romantic Period.

The Romantic Period in the arts, which had begun about the beginning of the 19th century, not only reduced architecture to a position of minor importance but destroyed the old Renaissance tradition and ushered in a period of eclecticism. The Renaissance and the Baroque styles had a definite tradition of their own. The rise of an industrial civilization caused a strange confusion in the arts - the artist and the architect faced with the decay of the old traditions did not know where to turn and, with the way prepared for them by the archaeologists and the romantic literature, fled to the past. They did not attach themselves to one single aspect of the past, however, as the artists of the Renaissance had done. In the Renaissance there was a single inclination toward the classical past - the civilization of Greece and Rome, but in the Romantic Period the architect could pick and choose. Eclecticism implies a choice, and in the 19th century one sees the architect choosing the Gothic, the Greek (it has already been mentioned that the Greek Revival was only one aspect of the Romantic attitude), the styles of the Renaissance - anything that might suit his fancy or the fashion of the moment.

In Europe the two main traditions became, on the one hand, the classical, (which was, in a limited way, a continuation of the Renaissance), on the other, the medieval; and both schools had their adherents and apologists. The medieval Gothic Revival never took hold in France or Germany, but it had a great following in England. The French, particularly, were too thoroughly classical to desert the Renaissance entirely - all the best French buildings of the 18th century still show a consciousness of that sense of form and composition which were elements of the Baroque. In England most of the Gothic Revival architects saw the past through a Romantic haze, but their assimilation of the medieval past was incomplete and their attempts to adapt the Gothic to modern use were for the most part unsuccessful. The attempt of men like John Ruskin and particularly William Morris to institute a revival of honest craftsmanship in an age of machinery had some good effect on architecture, but it did not stop in any degree the baleful products of the machine. One only need look at the gingerbread, jig-saw ornament of a Victorian house in any American town to see what horrors the machine could perpetrate in those days. The old ideal of hand-craftsmanship was dead.

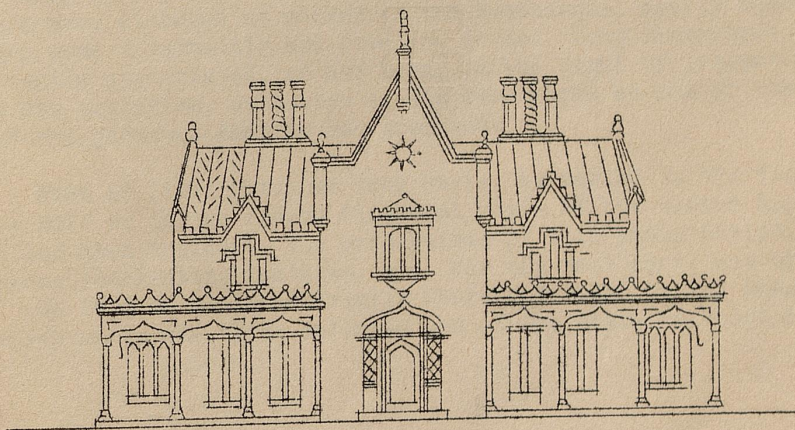
A curious effect of the industrial age on the arts was to divorce engineering from architecture, the utilitarian from the "artistic" - a gulf which has been bridged only in our own day with the development of the Modern Style. It so happens that some of the great artistic monuments of



the 19th century, the works of the greatest importance in pointing the way to the rational style of the 20th century, were precisely those erections of metal, the exhibition halls, the bridges, the Eiffel towers which critics of the day did not consider as having aesthetic significance. The houses, the libraries, the churches, and the public buildings, although they are often beautiful in themselves and considered as fine examples of the style in which they were built have for the most part no great historical importance.

In America there had been examples of strictly romantic building in evidence long before the Greek Revival came to an end. As we approach the middle of the century we see handbooks, not only of the Greek style but also albums of designs for Gothic cottages, Italian villas, and Swiss chalets. The final breakdown of the old Classical-Renaissance tradition was at hand. One sees in these curious houses a desire for the quaint and the picturesque, so characteristic of the Romantic attitude. The Gothic cottage which we illustrate is a good example of the Romantic domestic construction. It is "quaint" and "picturesque" but as architecture it is not very satisfactory. Today it seems nothing more than a stage setting for the over-blown emotions of the time, and emotion in that period was of the greatest importance. In these flimsy, thin adaptations of dead styles, these cardboard houses, the good American housewife who fancied herself as a medieval heroine read the works of Walter Scott or gazed sadly from her casement at the lushly romantic landscape. As Hitchcock suggests, these houses are best appreciated today by looking at some of the engravings or lithographs of the time; only there can we recapture some of the romantic charm so admired by critics of the day. In these houses, all the dignity and grace of the Georgian, the simplicity and repose of the Greek Revival, have disappeared. Honest craftsmanship is no longer in evidence, and machine-made gingerbread ornament has put in its appearance. (See Figure 29.)

Figure 29.





This naive architecture, often amusing if it was nothing else, pales into insignificance, however, in comparison with the horrors that were to succeed it. The new country which was becoming increasingly prosperous was ready for anything new in the way of architecture. All the various styles of the Eclectic Period, the Gothic in England, and the Renaissance and Classical in France, which had been handled with some taste in Europe, were imported into America. In the still young country, without any great cultural traditions, this new architectural banquet resulted in a sort of artistic indigestion. Huge caricatures of the Louvre appeared as post offices and city halls all over America; churches were contorted into what their architects fondly hoped was Gothic; houses were apt to be designed in a contorted version of one style or be a mixture of all the styles. Most of the architects of the time displayed an amazing facility in pure ugliness. The houses had a tendency to be high and narrow with mansard roofs ornamented here and there with bulbs, turrets, and spikes. The mass of these buildings was bad enough but the detail was, almost without exception, dreadful. The lathe and the jig-saw did their worst to make the house even more horrible than it had been. Design in America if not quite dead, was certainly in a moribund state.

#### Richardson and the Romanesque.

In this age of architectural darkness there were two architects who lightened the gloom a little--Richard M. Hunt and Henry Hobson Richardson, both of whom had been trained in Paris. Hunt, noted for his domestic work, remained a safely eclectic architect, whose productions were characterized by a certain amount of taste but very little originality. His most famous monument, the Vanderbilt house, formerly on Fifth Avenue in New York, was constructed in the Francis I style of the French Renaissance, a style which was to have some influence on later work in America. Hunt, however, is not nearly so important in the history of American architecture as Richardson who, although he worked in the Romanesque, really handled the style with some originality and creative force. Long misunderstood and insufficiently appreciated, he has been, in the light of present-day research and criticism, estimated at his true worth as one of the few architectural geniuses America has produced.

When he first returned from Paris, he worked in the Victorian Gothic as well as in the French Classical style of the second Empire in which he had been trained. The productions of this early period, although they possess interesting features, are, for the most part, not of very high quality. In 1872 he designed Trinity Church, Boston, in the Romanesque manner which marks the first definite use of the style to which his name



is attached. This building, although not altogether satisfactory, has often been considered his masterpiece and it was considerably copied by the so-called "Richardsonian" exponents. It is certainly not to be considered his best achievement, although it did serve to establish Richardson as one of the foremost architects in America. Commissions began to pour into his Boston office and from 1872 until his death in 1886 he had more work than he could handle personally, a fact which often accounts for some of the defects to be found in his later projects. Even these later buildings which were not altogether successful, were, however, more often than not, much better than those of any of his contemporaries. The monuments which are, perhaps, his best are the Courthouse and Jail of Pittsburgh and the Marshall Field wholesale store--both of which show his originality and creativeness.

Among homes designed by Richardson, the Glessner house in Chicago, which was commissioned in 1885, is outstanding, although it is not so important historically as the Field Store. As Hitchcock says in his study of Richardson, "The plan is very ingeniously arranged in an L around a court with many of the rooms opening on the court. Thus the exterior is justifiably very solid to shut out the surrounding city, with a few large windows only on the front. There is no polychromy on the exterior and almost no carved ornament. The whole effect.....is in the simple solid mass of grey granite. The tower...barely appears on the exterior at all. Richardson had never, even in the Pittsburgh jail, used granite so magnificently.....Like most of the new work started in 1885, the house was not finished until some time after Richardson's death." Montgomery Schuyler writing in 1892, felt that the massive treatment of the house was unsuited to domestic architecture, but the noise and bustle of modern city life would give some point to attempting to shut it away as much as possible, largely negating the above criticism. We can see, now-a-days, that this house owes almost nothing to the Romanesque style and everything to the personal genius of Richardson. (See Figures 30 and 31.)

Figure 30.

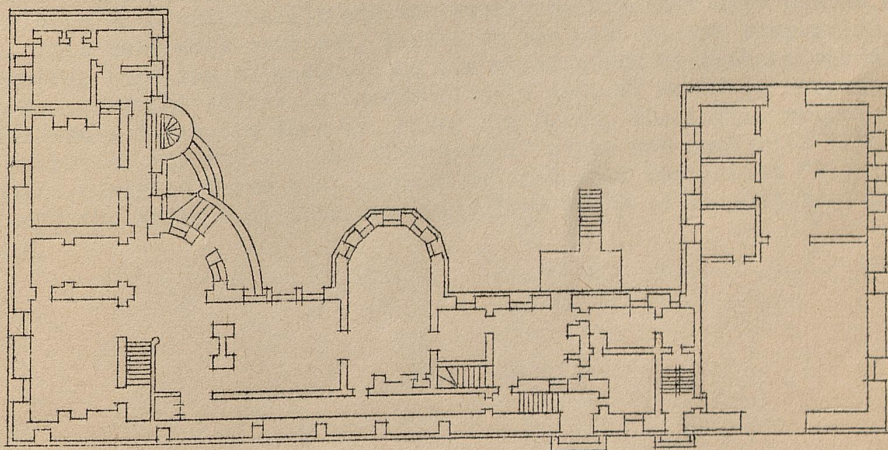
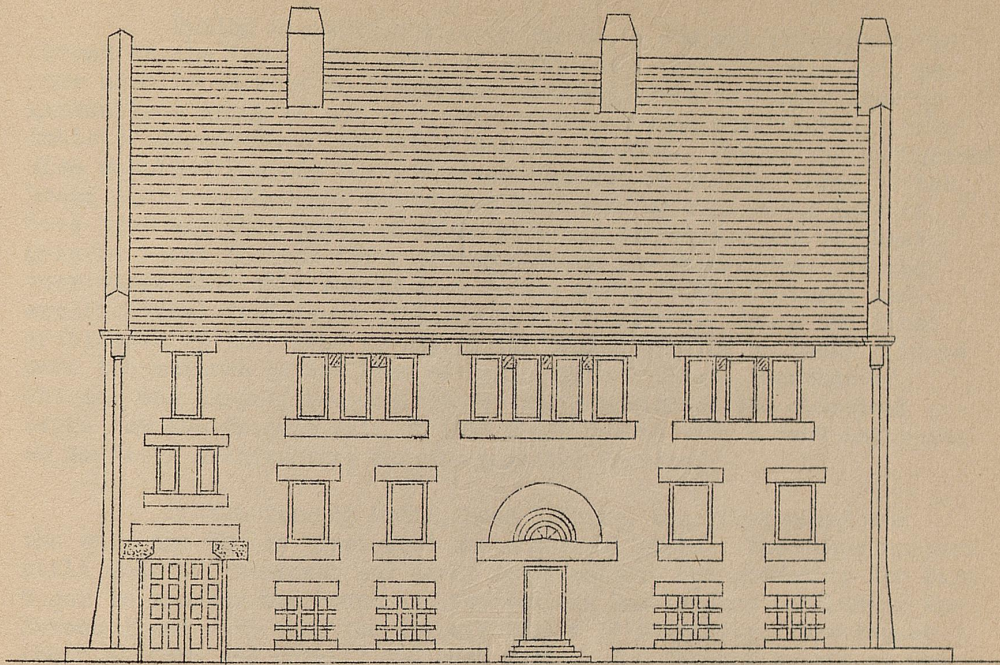




Figure 31.



Today, when more is known about actual Romanesque architecture, Richardson's work does not seem to follow that style with any great exactitude. To be sure, he used the Romanesque of southern France and Spain, but always with originality and the subtle spirit that only genius can give. His best work owes very little to the past in its simplicity, its thoughtful handling of masses, and its elimination of archaeological ornament. Personal genius is uncommunicable and, as so often happens, Richardson's followers took up, after his death, the letter rather than the spirit of his style. The "Romanesque" style was contorted into a thousand horrible forms and, as much of this work was labeled "Richardsonian", the style fell into disrepute from which it is just beginning to emerge.



### Later Eclecticism

During Richardson's later career, a new spirit began to be abroad in the land. The level of taste was rising steadily and, as more architects went to France for adequate training, there grew up gradually a group of men with more discrimination and knowledge than their predecessors of the early Eclectic Period. The social background also supplied reasons for a renewed interest in design. Some of the great American fortunes had either been made or were being made at this time and this group of newly rich industrialists and merchant princes began to look for a proper setting for themselves. It was inevitable that they should look to the past, to the cultural and architectural traditions of European civilization. Among the first architects in the field to supply the demand created by these clients were the members of the firm of McKim, Mead & White. Burnham of Chicago was largely responsible for the adoption of the classical style for the Chicago Fair of 1893 which was to have a vast influence on American architecture for the next two decades.

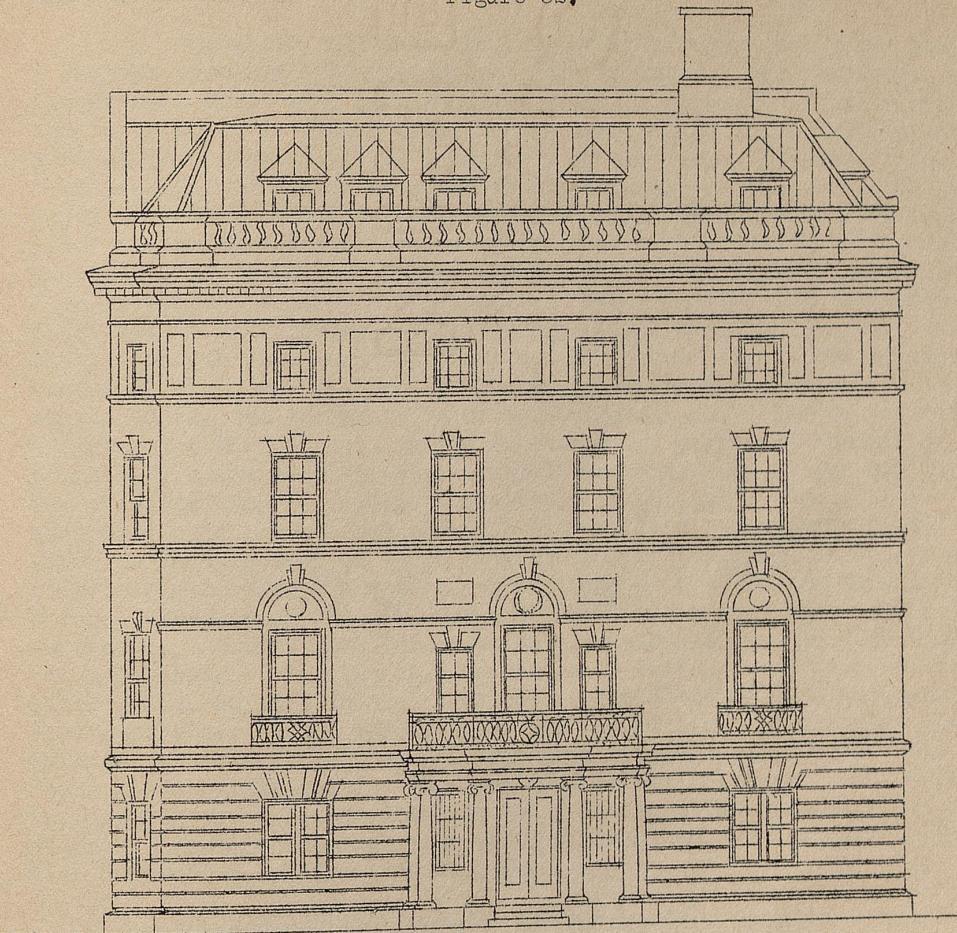
Of the firm of McKim, Mead & White, the first named was the only one who at first used the classical style. The other members still used the Medieval and early Renaissance. But gradually the firm began to sponsor the Roman and the Italian Renaissance (excluding the Baroque) and with them the classic ideals of formality, correctness (both of form and detail) and good taste. The Villard houses in New York, built in 1885 in the Italian Renaissance style of the 16th century, are models of taste and correctness, but they display very little originality or any of the creative spirit that belonged to Richardson. The Boston Public Library, completed in 1895, is comparable in form to Labrouste's Library of St. Genevieve in Paris, one of the best monuments of the 19th century eclecticism. The Boston Library does show some originality in the handling of the Renaissance forms and is perhaps the finest thing the firm ever did.

In domestic architecture, at any rate, the main influence in the decades 1890-1910 were the Italian and the later French Renaissance. At the time, however, with a revival in the Georgian Period, the so-called "Colonial" architecture of America came into evidence. Even in the eighties we see the beginning of their renewed interest, and during the next decade the movement advanced rapidly. The first efforts of the architects influenced by the 18th century were rather fumbling--the period was insufficiently understood and imperfectly assimilated into late 19th century practice but, as time went on, very interesting work was done by the Colonial revivalists. The movement was due to no one architect but, more properly, to archaeologists and historians and it was



taken up by most of the architects of the period. The Rollins house in New York, built in the first decade of this century, is a good example of the style. (See Figure 32.) It was designed by the firm of

Figure 32.



McKim, Mead & White which accounts for the correctness and good taste of the design. Again, we have in America the red brick Georgian house trimmed with grey stone and white woodwork. The Colonial Revival is still alive and the residential districts of our cities are dotted with Georgian homes.



### Sullivan and Wright.

Among the late 19th and early 20th century architects were a few who cast off eclecticism and tried to found a new tradition, a theory that would deal more strictly with the problems of their own day and to approach it with a creative and imaginative spirit rather than attempt to clothe it in the dead forms of the past. Richardson has already been considered; but another architect, equally original, deserves mention - Louis Sullivan. Sullivan, who was born in Boston, went to work in Chicago after the great fire of 1872, where a great deal of new building was, of necessity, going on. He formed a partnership with Dankmar Adler and the firm was known as Adler & Sullivan. It was this firm that designed the great Auditorium Theater and Office Building, completed in 1889, including the largest theater constructed up to that time. Adler, the engineering genius of the firm, met most of the technical problems which had to be solved during the construction of the building, but Sullivan was the designer and the artist. In the Auditorium he displayed himself as the prophet of a new architectural ornament which was not to owe anything to any previous type of adornment developed in the past. He developed an ornament, half geometrical and half naturalistic - certainly highly original - which he used on most of the buildings that he designed later. He was responsible for the Transportation Building at the World's Fair in 1893 and several skyscrapers where he tried to develop his idea that form follows function - a theory that later was to become one of the main doctrines of the modernists. Sullivan did comparatively little domestic work in his later years, so that this part of his artistic output does not seem to be very important. Then, too, when we see a work like the Charnley house in Chicago, it is difficult to tell how much of the designing was done by Frank Lloyd Wright who was then employed in the office of Adler & Sullivan. The simplicity of the handling of the masses and the character of the ornament are certainly Sullivanesque, although there is usually a great deal more ornament in the work of Sullivan.

After the dissolution of the partnership of Adler & Sullivan in 1895, the commissions that came to Sullivan were few. He was not a good business man and his high standards made him very haughty in dealing with clients. Also, the exposition of 1893 had turned the architectural taste of the whole country toward the past. A new era of eclecticism had set in, an eclecticism archaeologically more pure than any previous attempts but attaching architecture even more slavishly to the past. Sullivan was literally a prophet without honor in his own country. When he died in 1924 he was almost forgotten. It is only recently that he has been estimated at his proper worth.



Probably the greatest architect of the early 20th century in America is Frank Lloyd Wright, who really continued and amplified the work and theories of Sullivan, under whom he worked in the early part of his career. Unlike that of the older architect, a great deal of his important work was done in the domestic field. Even his very early work is highly interesting. Hitchcock says in his book on modern architecture: "Already in his first house built in 1893 there are visible certain elements of his own style as independent from that of his master. The blocklike forms, the horizontality are already conspicuous and the young architect is from then on clearly a greater innovator and a greater architect than his master, who became more and more preoccupied with ornament and its perfect finish." Most of this early group of houses were built in and around Chicago, in Buffalo, in Rochester, or in various middle western cities. Wright designed houses which have a peculiar kinship with the landscape in which they are placed. The early Chicago houses, known as prairie houses, were designed to fit into the flat scenery of the Middle West; the long low horizontal masses, the loose planning, the quiet repose of line and color, the overhanging roofs, the suppressed chimneys give a strong sense of being at one with the land on which they are built. All the Chicago houses show his skill in handling materials; brick, stucco, wood and concrete are all used with much feeling for form and texture. Wright was not so skillful a designer of ornament as Sullivan, but he used it a great deal less. The interiors of these houses are not nearly so good as the exteriors - they are apt to be dark and monotonous. The plans were, as a rule, studied with thoroughness, both as to a certain architectural effect and also to domestic convenience, a matter which had received not a great deal of consideration previously. In some of his larger works such as the Imperial Hotel of Tokyo (1916) he has created admirable buildings but they are no finer and, in some few cases, not so fine as his domestic work.

In his later years he has done interesting work in California, particularly the Barnsdall and Millard houses, constructed respectively in 1919 and 1923. In these houses he shows considerable facility in dealing with both poured and pre-cast concrete. The Millard house, constructed according to a new method which he evolved, has double walls made of pre-cast concrete blocks with steel reinforcements in the cement mortar joints - the exterior blocks having an ornamental pattern stamped into them. In these later houses he shows the influence of the Far Eastern and Mayan architecture. The house we illustrate is one designed after the manner of his later work. The loose but carefully considered plan is a feature that survives his earlier work. The composition and treatment of the mass follow, in some degree, Wright's experiments in pure form, but there is not so much ornament as we usually find in the work of Wright.



Wright is not and never was a modernist of the most advanced group, although, in many respects, he not only anticipated but also used some of their theories in his simple treatment of form and his more modern planning. Like Sullivan, he too is little honored in America. His influence has been felt chiefly in Europe. (See Figures 33 and 34.)

Figure 33.

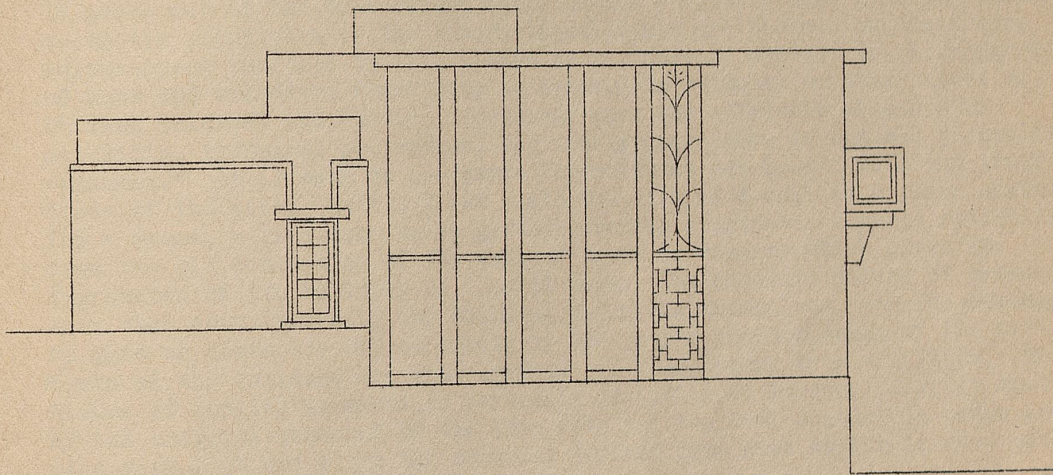
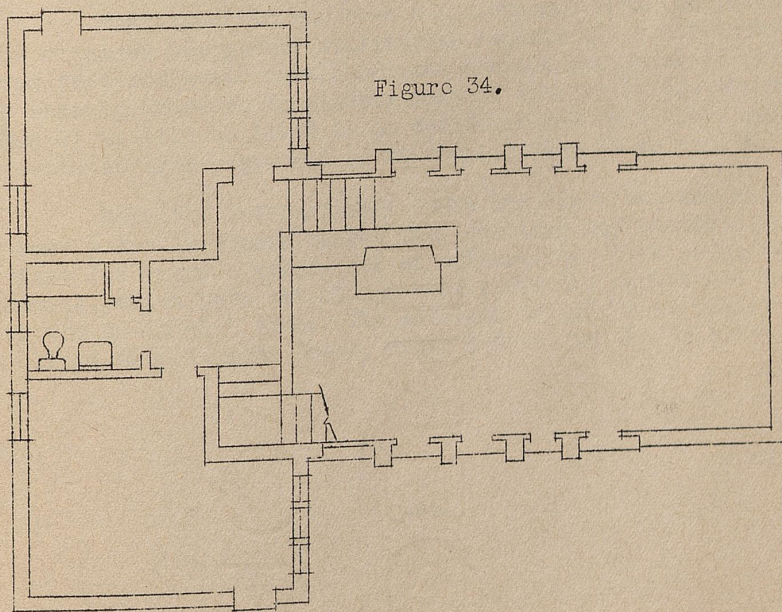


Figure 34.





## Modernism

In the work of such men as Wright and a small group in Europe, we see the germs of the definitely modernist type of architecture: but although these were often highly original they did not break entirely with the past. A new style began to appear in Europe, in the years just after the World War. This movement, which has since grown, has come to be known as the International Style because it is supposed to be concerned with pure architecture without consideration of national traditions or styles. To quote one of the most recent books on the subject - "The distinguishing aesthetic principles of the International Style are three: emphasis upon volume-space enclosed by thin planes or surfaces as opposed to the suggestion of mass and solidity; regularity as opposed to symmetry or other kinds of obvious balance; and lastly, dependence upon the intrinsic elegance of materials, technical perfection, and fine proportions, as opposed to applied ornament." It is easy to see where the movement has broken with the traditions of the past. In the first place the idea of a wall as a plane enclosing a space, a procedure which gives increased lightness, departs radically from the old conception of the wall of brick or masonry which gives the impression of the building as a solid mass. The complete disuse of ornament, save that contributed by the building materials themselves, and the attempt to gain an aesthetic effect solely by the proper proportioning of the elements of the building are also evidence of a departure from tradition. The disuse of applied ornament is partially justified in theory. A great deal of the original ornament of the late 19th and the 20th century is often not of a very high order and the ornament derived from past styles is very often only a kind of copying.

Functionalism has been a development from the International Style which stresses the purely utilitarian aspects of architecture and which believes that aesthetic considerations are not essential to good building. This school, however, completely forgets that buildings are meant to be looked at as well as lived in or worked in and that there must be some sort of aesthetic theory present if an architecture is to evolve.

Both the International Style and Functionalism had been accepted for some years in Europe before they obtained any foothold in America. In the last few years a great deal of interest has been shown in the two new movements, which have not always been perfectly understood by the architects who dealt with them. The American architect is highly conscious of his client who, in most cases, wants a house in the Colonial or Tudor manner.



Eclecticism is still a strong force in this country. Again, America is still too conscious of itself as a young country to travel very far from the arms of the past. In no case is this more true than in the home of America. One has only to go into the suburbs or the modern residential sections of any of our cities to see what has been produced by the modern eclectic architect: travesties of Norman farm houses or English manors of pock-marked brick work, their ridge poles sagging and their half-timber work "antiqued" with chemicals to make them look old; or Spanish villas streaked with grime and planted starkly in the dreary shrubbery of a northern industrial suburb. The average American client wants a house that looks like a house, and, by extension of the same idea, a "home". To his rather limited ideology, only a house which is constructed in one of the styles of the past resembles a house or home. The modern house (if it conforms very strictly to the tenets of the International Style or the Functionalist theory) is too bare and barren to be considered as a home. In all justice, it must be said that the extreme bareness and coldness seen in the work of the Functionalists is an argument against its use in domestic practice, but there are certain features of the style which should strongly recommend themselves to modern life. The simple, compact planning, if it is well thought out in relation to present day needs, is surely an advance on the school which contrives to place a modern bathroom or kitchen in a Tudor gable. The plain surfaces and lack of ornament should not only cut down the costs of construction but also relieve the house of that tortured look which is, all too often, seen in our suburbs. The simple, uncluttered interiors which can be kept clean and in order with a minimum of effort are certainly desired today. The house as a "machine to be lived in" very definitely has its points in present day life where the pace seems to become ever more hectic and where the house has to be extremely efficient if it is to survive.

The influence of the modern style in America has not been altogether beneficial. Architects of little taste have designed stupid box-like arrangements which they have labeled modern, or they have used some of the most obvious features of the modern style, such as the ribbon and the corner windows, not because they were structurally necessary but simply to trick out an otherwise commonplace building. Dreadful "modern" interiors (particularly for shops) are turned out in paste-board and tin. In such cases it can be seen that the architect is poorly grounded in the style and he is merely using some of the more striking elements of modernism without considering the theory in back of them, just as he, very often, uses tags from the past without understanding. As time goes on, however, and the modern style is used more and more by American architects, better work is being done. Modern design today is definitely more than a fad or a fashion of the moment.



If one looks at the houses that we illustrate one can see many of the distinguishing characteristics of the International Style. The materials used are highly typical of those used in most modern houses. In modern work stucco is much used to cover wall surfaces because the heavy appearance of masonry can thus be avoided and the wall made to look like a plane enclosing a space and not like the exterior surface of a solid. In the town house, brick has been used, but it will be noticed that there is no insistence on pattern and no strong contrast between the brick itself and the color of the mortar joints. Roofs, as in both these houses, are generally flat and sometimes terraced. Window frames are very often made of metal and the windows are grouped together in long bands in the more typical houses of the International Style. Sheets of plate glass can be used as windows in country houses where privacy is not so needful, while glass bricks are coming into use more and more. The glass brick windows of the town house illustrated, not only let in an abundance of light but shut out the bustle of the city. The possibilities for the use of color in modernist architecture are extremely wide, but they have not yet been fully exploited in domestic work. (See Figures 35 and 36.)

Figure 35.

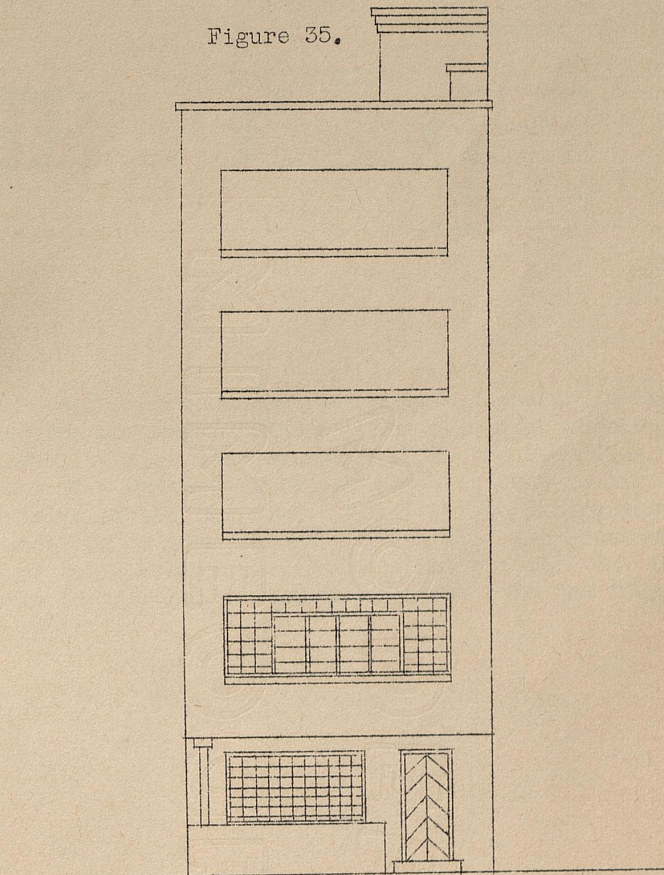
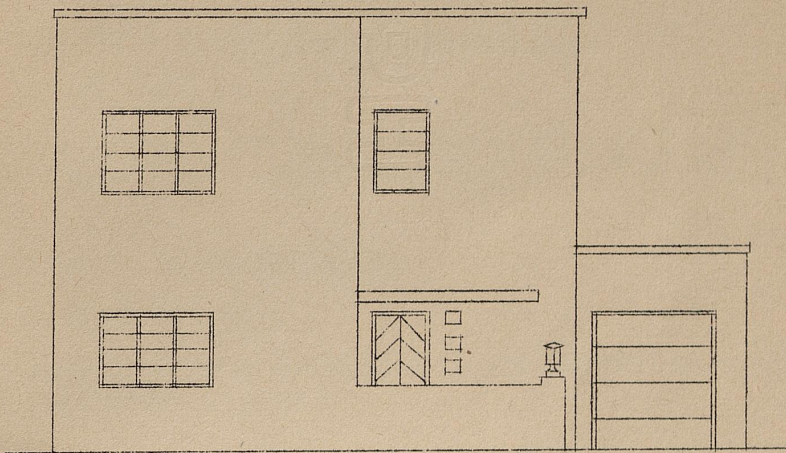




Figure 36.



There are signs already that the American public is taking more interest in the modern movement. Probably the time will soon be here when the business man who lives in the suburbs will desert his "Olde Tudor Manor" or his ghost of a Spanish villa and actually want to live in a house more nearly expressive of his own time. Possibly the International Style will have to be modified to some extent - after all, the house-as-machine demands a nature of considerable austerity to inhabit it. But if a true architectural style is to result, then it must not take the form of imitating the past.



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