8404784

Jones, James Boyd, Jr.

DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE AS A MATERIAL CULTURE ARTIFACT: ITS USES IN THE INTERPRETATION AND TEACHING OF AMERICAN HISTORY

Middle Tennessee State University D.A. 1983

University
Microfilms
International 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106

PLEASE NOTE:

In all cases this material has been filmed in the best possible way from the available copy. Problems encountered with this document have been identified here with a check mark __√__.

1. Glossy photographs or pages _____
2. Colored illustrations, paper or print _____
3. Photographs with dark background __√__
4. Illustrations are poor copy _____
5. Pages with black marks, not original copy _____
6. Print shows through as there is text on both sides of page _____
7. Indistinct, broken or small print on several pages __√__
8. Print exceeds margin requirements _____
9. Tightly bound copy with print lost in spine _____
10. Computer printout pages with indistinct print _____
11. Page(s) _____ lacking when material received, and not available from school or author.
12. Page(s) _____ seem to be missing in numbering only as text follows.
13. Two pages numbered _____. Text follows.
14. Curling and wrinkled pages _____
15. Other _____

DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE AS A MATERIAL CULTURE ARTIFACT: ITS USES IN THE INTERPRETATION AND TEACHING OF AMERICAN HISTORY

James Boyd Jones, Jr.

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate Faculty of Middle Tennessee State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Arts

December, 1983

DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE AS A MATERIAL

CULTURE ARTIFACT: ITS USES IN THE

INTERPRETATION AND TEACHING

OF AMERICAN HISTORY

APPROVED:

Graduate Committee:

Major Professor

Committee Member

Committee Member

Committee Member

Head of the History Department

Dean of the Graduate School

ABSTRACT

DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE AS A MATERIAL CULTURE ARTIFACT: ITS USES IN THE INTERPRETATION AND TEACHING OF AMERICAN HISTORY

by James Boyd Jones, Jr.

This history dissertation explores the interpretive and teaching uses of domestic architecture as it relates to American history. Chapters one and two trace the use of artifacts by historians from Niebuhr to 1983. They show the historiography of the utilization of material culture artifacts by historians. They demonstrate that the use of artifacts is accepted by historians. To be properly employed, artifacts must be placed in context and studied with a multidisciplinary methodology.

Chapter three discusses architecture, values, and the development of an American vernacular aesthetic. Values are reflected in architecture, but it is simplistic to assume that any one architectural style reflects what are called core values. The architecture of the Romantic Revival, for example, expressed subordinate values.

Chapter four explores relationships between American culture, life styles, and architectural reform. It demonstrates that the values, life style, and reform of Andrew Jackson Downing were atypical. The domestic architectural reform Downing led was not accepted because it expressed alien values.

Chapter five focuses upon architecture, value conflict, and antebellum reform, relating the patterns of pre-Civil War reform and architecture to the culture and politics of the Jacksonian era. It shows that architectural reform, like most other antebellum reforms, was motivated by status-anxiety and social conservatism. This placed the reform in conflict with the American liberal tradition.

Chapter six discusses the process of value change, relating it to patterns of house form and the feminization of American culture. It shows that Catherine E. Beecher expressed American core values and strengthened the cult of domesticity by transforming architecture into a cultural tension management device. As American culture was feminized, so was domestic architecture.

Chapter seven explores the ways in which domestic architecture, some of its associated artifacts, and mail-order catalogs can be employed in the teaching of survey courses. Factual and interpretive material is presented to suggest how artifacts can be employed in a criterion-referenced teaching method.

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Cynthia Ann, and my son, Boyd Robert Jones. Ultimately, they were my one and only "without whoms."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is fitting and proper to acknowledge the help the author received in writing this dissertation. While it is impossible to thank adequately the community of scholars who aided in its preparation, special note is due to the faculty of the History Department at Middle Tennessee State University for the opportunity to teach and study while receiving scholarship aid in the form of a doctoral fellowship. The author would be remiss in not mentioning the committee chairperson, James K. Huhta, as well as committee members Robert L. Taylor, David Rowe, and Charles W. Babb, all of whom read this dissertation and offered advice and constructive criticism. While she shuns any mention, I wish also to thank Bernice Burns for her patience in typing this dissertation. I wish also to thank all my graduate peers in the Historical Preservation Program at Middle Tennessee State University for their general support and encouragement, especially Caneta Hankins, Hank Bass, and Spurgeon King. Finally, I wish to note the support given me in my endeavors by my mother and father, and my wife and son. Any errors within are entirely the responsibility of the author.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

As a professional discipline, the study of history is concerned with humankind and its adaptation to an ever-changing environment. Historians seek to understand and interpret the dynamics of this process by objectively weighing and considering historical data. Traditionally, however, their data sources are drawn from written records, and reliance upon the written word is nearly exclusive. Yet, the written word has within it a restrictive bias. In all of history, only a small minority has left written records, and thus the evidence offered as proof for various assumptions and interpretations may not, in fact, reflect any more than the cultural values, world views, belief systems, or life styles of those who left such verbal evidence. This has resulted, as Gerda Lerner stated in her Presidential Address to the Organization of American Historians in 1982, in a tendency among historians to order "the past within a frame of reference that supported the values of the ruling elite, of which they themselves were a part."[1]

Within the past two decades new thrusts in historical study have shifted attention to the mass of what may be

---

[1]Gerda Lerner, "The Necessity of History and the Professional Historian," Journal of American History 69, no. 1 (June 1982): 15.

termed the "documentarily inarticulate," as a new focus upon studying history "from the bottom up" has been made in what is called the "new social history." Instead of concentrating on the interpretation and description of isolated historical events or notable persons apart from their social environment, new social historians wish to broaden the scope of history. Their aim is to demonstrate that changes in the social structure are related to and inevitably involved changes in the relationship between social, cultural, economic, and political phenomena of the past.

The new social history is a result of many factors. Foremost is the influence of the French journal Annales d'histoire economique et sociale beginning in the 1930s. Given the sobriquet the Annales school, its purpose was to create alternatives to traditional historical disciplinary obstructions and provide a homogeneous approach to comprehending the sum total of past human activity in a given geographical region or society. Additionally, the proliferation of work in the social and behavioral sciences after World War II and the influence of the increased use of quantitative techniques and computers fragmented the new social history's approaches to examinations of the problems of social change and social structure. Included in this fragmentation are the new economic history, new political history, new urban history, while others established the

subfields of family and community history, as well as the study of previously neglected social groups.[2]

A major problem with these approaches has been a dearth of traditionally accepted and utilized source material, that is, the written word. How can the historian study the cultural part of history's neglected majority without evidence of a verbal nature? One promising avenue is found in material culture. Indeed, as one historian has recognized, a "concern for the masses and the inarticulate has led to a heightened interest on the part of historians in the evidence of material culture."[3] The evidence of material culture is embodied in the artifact, whether large or small, common or rare.

The use of artifacts as source material for the teaching and interpretation of American history stems from the new emphasis historians are placing on society as a working organism of individuals and groups who are naturally dependent upon one another and hold certain values in common. When utilized with a multidisciplinary methodology typical

---

[2]Gerald N. Grob and George Athan Billias, Interpretations of American History: Patterns and Perspectives, 4th ed., 2 vols. (New York: Free Press, 1982), vol. 1, To 1877, pp. 18-22.

[3]William H. Goetzmann, "Times American Adventures: American Historians and Their Writing Since 1776," American Studies International, 19, no. 2 (Winter 1981): 40.

of the new social history,[4] the use, functions, sale, and production of artifacts can be studied in an effort to analyze and understand human behavior patterns, belief systems, cultural values, or trace continuity or conflict.

The artifacts of material culture include many things, but perhaps the most important is domestic architecture. As an artifact, architecture includes consideration not only of aesthetics but of other artifacts, such as tools, furnishings, space, materials, and methods of construction but of more importance, the people who made, valued, and used them to adapt to their historic environmental time and place. Architecture may be viewed as a physical vehicle for the gradual social and cultural adaptation to the forces of technology, commerce, and social reform as well as the analysis, interpretation, and teaching of the American past within the broad context of the cultural values, attitudes, ideas, and assumptions of society, or a segment of society, as documented by the written record and an analysis of the historic evolution of domestic housing as it relates to cultural development. Architecture is not only the subject of this study, but central to its purpose, the understanding of American and cultural development.

At the Annual Meeting of the American Historial Association held in Washington, D. C., in December 1982, a

---

[4]Grob and Billias, 1:40.

session was held that was entitled: "Nearby History, Backyard History, and Historic Preservation: Case Studies for Classroom Enrichment Opportunities for the American History Teacher." The session was chaired by Prof. James K. Huhta, Director of the Middle Tennessee State University History Department's Historic Preservation Program. The session dealt with material culture resources--that is, artifacts--and their utilization in the study and teaching of American history. That the session was held connotes professional recognition of the idea that physical objects such as tools, clothing, or housing may be utilized in the teaching and research of history. It also documents the culmination of a long struggle calling for the implementation of artificial evidence as a source for historical study. It is an idea whose time has come.

CHAPTER I

ARTIFACTS AND THE HISTORIAN: FROM NIEBUHR TO 1945

> The task of an author is, either to teach what is known, or to recommend known truths by his manner of adorning them; either to let new light in upon the mind, and open new scenes to the prospect, or to vary the dress and situation of common objects, so as to give them fresh grace and more powerful attractions, to spread such flowers over the regions through which the intellect has already made its progress, as may tempt it to return, and take a second view of things hastily passed over or negligently regarded.
>
> --Samuel Johnson (An Allegory on Criticism, March 27, 1950; reprinted in The Rambler, vol. 1 [1800], p. 14.)

Within the past decade there has been much renewed interest among some historians concerning the use of material culture artifacts as sources of information. "Renewed" is quite correct because from the beginnings of objective or scientific historical methodology, objects--artifacts--were considered worthy of attention. Barthold George Niebuhr was the first to advocate the use of primary sources in his Römische Geschichte (1811-1812) and provided the inspiration for many later historians. He studied Roman

history and attempted to reconstruct it through analogy with the history of other histories, an intuitive grasp of the outlook of lost writers, and the exercise of internal criticism on his sources. He did not establish a school of Roman history, "partly because the nascent discipline of archaeology gave rise to hopes that diggings would provide evidence where the written sources had failed."[1] Indeed, Niebuhr was interested in artifacts and helped with archeological explorations in Rome.[2]

One of Niebuhr's students, Theodor Mommsen, said of him that "all historians, so far as they are worthy of the name, are his pupils."[3] However, Mommsen was critical of his mentor's use of intuition[4] and strongly de-emphasized the value of literary remains as documentary sources. Mommsen used artifacts--in this case, coinage--to write history. His The History of Coinage (1860) utilized numismatistic methodology, yet Mommsen never forgot that he was a historian. Starting with coinage of the Greco-Asiatic

---

[1]Renate Rubin Bridenthal, "Barthold Georg Niehbur, Historian of Rome: A Study in Methodology" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1970), in Dissertation Abstracts International 32, no. 1 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1971): 350.

[2]G. P. Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century, rev. ed. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1954), p. 21.

[3]Gooch, p. 23.

[4]Bridenthal, p. 350.

civilizations, Mommsen traced coin development "from Rome to Italy, from Italy to the World, discussing the circulation and duration of types . . . the problems of trade and finance."[5] Mommsen also urged the exhibition and study of artifacts by historians; for example, he encouraged the study of the Limes, a Roman wall stretching from the Rhine to the Danube, as well as a museum and journal to record the progress of the work and to interpret artifacts discovered.[6] His major work, the three volume History of Rome (1854-1856), relied on a variety of sources, including inscriptions and coins.[7] The precedent for employing artifacts or documents had therefore been early established.

The 1860 publication of Jacob Burckhardt's The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy is another landmark in historiography that demonstrates the use of artifacts in writing and studying history. In his discussion of the Florentine Republic, Burckhardt claimed that works of art, sculpture, wax portraits, arabesque portraits in sandstone, silver and gold embroidery and jewelry gave "a complete view of the commerce and trade of the city" in 1478.[8] He

---

[5]Gooch, p. 23.

[6]Ibid., p. 467.

[7]Fritz Stern, The Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present (New York: World Publishing Co., 1956), p. 191.

[8]Jacob Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy (1860; reprint ed., New York: Random House, 1954), p. 65.

also interpreted the artifact embodied in firearms as having had a major influence "making war a democratic pursuit."[9] He showed that the Baths of Diocletian were inspirational to Giovana Colonna and Giovanni, the Italian chroniclers who both "spoke, not of business or political affairs, but of the history which the ruins beneath their feet suggested. . . . How often since that time, down to the days of Gibbon and Niebuhr, have the same ruins stirred men's minds."[10]

The artifacts of Rome also stimulated Boccaccio, Paggio, and Ciriaco of Ancona. The latter, when asked why he collected inscriptions from the ancient world, replied: "To wake the dead."[11] It is important to note that artifacts gleaned from early archaeological excavations of Rome, combined with written documents, increased knowledge of Roman culture and its history. An era of multidisciplinary historical methodology had begun. Historic preservation, long considered a phenomenon with roots in the nineteenth century, may have also been said to have begun much earlier. Pope Leo X commissioned Raphael with the herculean task of restoring all of ancient Rome in the sixteenth century. Raphael complained to Leo's predessor, Pope Julius II, that his work was impeded by nobles who filled their houses with

---

[9]Burckhardt, p. 78.

[10]Ibid., p. 133.

[11]Ibid., pp. 134, 136.

relics; these early manifestations of antiquarianism had to be stopped because Raphael was convinced that missing artifacts would be better used to "lay the foundations of a comparative history of art."[12] Also significant is the fact that Raphael defined an architectural survey of historic buildings as necessarily including ground plans, separate sections, and elevations, a practice still followed today.[13] According to Burckhardt, Raphael's restoration and architectural survey work--it is not going too far to call it historic preservation--wakened patriotic enthusiasm, archaeological zeal, and "an elegiac of sentimental melancholy."[14]

Burckhardt also employed "the dwellings of the upper classes" as evidence not only of art history but also as the basis for comparative interpretations of "comfort, order, and harmony of the dwellings of the northern noble." He did not, however, employ the more common dwellings of artisans or peasants, and one assumes then that these either had no comfort, order, and harmony, or that Burckhardt had no interest in any but noble virtues. Burckhardt also

---

[12]Ibid., p. 138.

[13]Ibid., p. 139. See also Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Handbook (Atlanta, Ga.: Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1976), pp. 31-33.

[14]Burckhardt, p. 140.

employed false hair and a "countless number of small things" that combined to make up the comfort of nobles as documentation to interpret cultural life in Italy during the Renaissance.[15]

However, while Burckhardt used artifacts of a wide variety in his work, he does state that "the literary bequest of antiquity . . . [is] of far more importance than the architectural, and indeed than all artistic remains it had left." This became so, in his opinion, because literary remains were "in the most absolute sense . . . the springs of all knowledge."[16] Burckhardt's opinion may be viewed as one that has held sway in the historic profession until recent years.

Yet the use of artifacts as documentary evidence did not die, regardless of its moribund status. One study by Karl Lamprecht, Deutsches Wirtschaftsleben im Mittelalter (1894), an inspection of tenth-century German church history, supplemented information drawn from written sources with a study of the art of the same century, and by comparing the two he confirmed written evidence. Lamprecht not only determined that it was necessary to follow changes from century to century in order to make differences intelligible, but also "followed the same time development of

---

[15]Ibid., pp. 273-77.

[16]Ibid., p. 140.

civilization on the material side of life."[17] Lamprecht wished to explain what he conceived as the "uniform foundations for, and the steps of progress in, the united development of the material and spirit factors in civilization."[18] It is interesting to note that his work by 1898 was considered to be part of an ill-defined "new history," which in general held that the task of describing the human past was best done through the point of view of inductive reasoning as well as national evolution, and that the "fundamental elements of history . . . consist . . . of those factors which, taken all together, and in their varied and natural relations and transformations, form the Kultur of the time."[19] (Emphasis added.) Of most importance was Lamprecht's use of material culture artifacts--in this case, art, or evidence. According to one reviewer: "Men will never quit looking for the different bearings of known facts, among others their historical bearings; and so trials will always be made to discern by what roads and through what experiences the world of men and of nations has come to be what it now is."[20]

---

[17]Earl Wilbur Dow, "Features of the New History: Apropos of Lamprecht's 'Deutsche Geschichte,'" American Historical Review 3, no. 3 (April 1898): 433.

[18]Ibid., pp. 434-35.

[19]Ibid., p. 448.

[20]Ibid., p. 441.

According to Thomas J. Schlereth, the first people in America to understand the potential of material culture artifacts were "an eclectic melange of museum founders, curators, and benefactors as well as early antique collectors, historic preservationists, antiquarians, and local history enthusiasts."[21] The interests of these dilettanti were personified in Charles Wilson Peale, "the founder of . . . the first great collection of material culture in America."[22] Peale's variegated collection of wax effigies, Indian artifacts, and prehistoric animal skeletons in his Philadelphia American Museum (1784 to 1827) illustrated two functions of artifacts in teaching history. That is, material culture can "promote visual and tactile responses to the past,"[23] and "historical museums [can serve] as history books for the general populace."[24] Peale, "with a sophistication practically unknown among his peers, also recognized that a history museum's exhibition . . . [if] collected asystematically or without any particular

---

[21]Thomas J. Schlereth, "Pioneers of Material Culture: Using American Things to Teach American History," History News 39, no. 9 (September 1982), p. 28.

[22]Schlereth, "Pioneers," p. 28.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid., p. 30. See also Thomas J. Schlereth, "Material Culture Studies in America, 1876-1976," Material Culture Studies in America, ed. Thomas J. Schlereth (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), p. 9.

intellectual framework would provide little insight into the past."[25]

Peale was the first serious student collector of American artifacts in United States history.[26] He provided the inspiration for many amateur collectors in America, particularly for "Joseph Henry, the first executive secretary (1846-1878) of the Smithsonian Institution."[27] The Smithsonian took the early lead in America as the "major depository of the material, documentary, and graphic record of the nation's history, culture, and technology." Its publications, beginning in 1846, are "classic in American archaeology and an early benchmark in the literature of material culture studies."[28] Other examples of pre-1876 monographs dealing with material culture include William Dunlap, History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States (1834), Robert Dale Owen, Hints on Public Architecture (1849), and Horace Bushnell's essays,

---

[25]Schlereth, "Pioneers," p. 30.

[26]Charles Coheriun Sellers, Mr. Peale's Museum: Charles Wilson Peale and the First Popular Reviewer of Material Science and Art (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1980); and Harold K. Skranstad, Jr., "Interpreting Material Culture: A View from the Other Side of the Glass," in Ian M. G. Quimby, ed., Material Culture and the Study of American Life (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978), p. 176.

[27]Schlereth, "Material Culture," p. 9.

[28]Ibid., p. 10.

"The Day of Roads" (1846) and "The Age of Homespun" (1851), to name a few.[29]

The approach taken by most of these early nineteenth-century material culture studies followed what Kenneth Auer has called "centripetal patterns" of inquiry. That is, their research started with an artisan or an object and spiraled "inward, comprising smaller, lighter, and more specific questions" about the maker or the artifact.[30] Moreover, this centripetal pattern predominated in American material culture studies in America prior to 1945.[31] That is, from 1876 to 1945, the main task of American material culture enthusiasts was to "find and save," while their main objectives were "the collecting and preserving of historical materials."[32] With the rare exception of a small number of studies having a strong anthropological perspective, their artifacts were seldom placed within any human context, and material culture was of little interest to American historians, save those interested in American decorative arts and architecture.[33]

---

[29]Ibid.

[30]As cited in Schlereth, "Material Culture," p. 10.

[31]Schlereth, "Material Culture," p. 10.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid., pp. 10-11.

The Centennial Exposition (1876) led to a surge of publications reflecting a vogue for what has been properly termed the "Colonial Revival." It was reflected in architecture and interior decoration, for example, in William M. Woolett's Old Homes Made New (1878), Arthur Little's Early New England Interiors (1878), Frank E. Wallis' Old Colonial Architecture and Furniture (1887), and Irving Whitehall Lyon's The Colonial Furniture of New England (1891).[34] As a result of the work of the Harvard art historian Charles Eliot Norton, material culture artifacts were translated to mean art objects, not necessarily of American origin, that were worth collecting and a "desirable accoutrement of a cultivated person but not something on which one would do original research."[35]

At the same time, however, scholars in fields other than history explored the material culture of the American Indian. According to Schlereth, "Indian technology and its artifacts and inventions comprised much of these early anthropological studies using material culture evidence."[36] The nine American world fairs (Chicago, St. Louis, Buffalo, Nashville, San Francisco, San Diego, Seattle, Omaha, and Portland) held between 1893 and World War I instigated a

---

[34]Ibid., p. 11.

[35]Ibid., p. 11.

[36]Ibid., p. 12.

second wave of enthusiasm for material culture and the local history they represented. Yet the emphasis was upon filio-pietistic collection, not original historical study. While artifacts had become the collector's delight, they had also become the academic historian's disdain.[37]

While material culture had become popular in America, the professionalization and institutionalization of professional historians resulted, largely through the efforts of Henry Adams and George Baxter Adams, in the use of the scientific method of historical research, and its exclusive use of exhaustive literary documentary sources.[38] The American professional historian, then, agreed with Burckhardt that "the literary bequests of antiquity . . . are . . . in the most absolute sense . . . the springs of all knowledge."[39] Internal criticism of sources, scholarly precision increased objectivity, and increased regard for correct documentation in historical writing all became characteristics of professional history and historians, but the "long-range ramifications for historical material culture studies were disastrous."[40] Most historians in the

---

[37]Ibid., p. 13.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Burckhardt, p. 140.

[40]Schlereth, "Material Culture," p. 33.

United States, in relying totally upon written documentary sources, ignored the artifactual evidence of the American past. That is, most did, but not all.

Perhaps the most important among the changes in American historiography that had a bearing on material culture was the "New History" espoused by James Harvey Robinson in 1912. John Higham states that, according to Robinson, the New History consisted of three parts: 1) the subordination of the past to the present; 2) a widened scope that was inclusive of all aspects of human affairs; and 3) the alliance of history to the social sciences, because the progress of knowledge depended upon a multidisciplinary, not a myopic, methodology.[41] The New History "sought explanation of historical change in the 'social forces' . . . surging behind and beyond the visible form of the body politic."[42] It was to be utilitarian, a "restatement of the scientific position,"[43] an attempt to seek a means of widening the perspective of the past. A characteristic of the New History was also the expansion of sources--for

---

[41]John Higham, History: Professional Scholarship in America, Harper Torchbooks (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 111-14.

[42]Ibid., p. 113. See also Pardon E. Tillinghast, The Specious Past: Historians and Others (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 31-33.

[43]Clarence Walworth Alvord, "The New History," The Nation 94, no. 2445 (May 9, 1912): 457.

example, newspapers and pamphlets, which were not employed by earlier historians, were under consideration by the American Historical Association (AHA) as early as 1908.[44] In general, New History was an attempt to make historical study more objective;[45] but, according to E. McClung Fleming of the Winterthur Museum, Robinson's New History means historians should "'not only study the written records, but the remains of buildings, pictures, clothing, tools, and ornaments.'"[46]

By the 1930s, popularized concepts of culture began to take hold as evidence of a multidisciplinary approach to history. "Culture, as the anthropologists conceived it, was an all embracing pattern which would satisfy the New Historian's desire to comprehend society as a whole; yet it might also reveal a unifying structure and provide a basis for reelection." Such an approach would also make history relevant to contemporary social issues and thought.[47] Robinson, for example, claimed that: "Whatever history may or may not be, it always concerns itself with man." And since man is a social being, it would be folly for historians

---

[44]Alvord, p. 450.

[45]Higham, p. 116.

[46]Marshall Fishwick, "Icons of America," in Ray Browne and Marshall Fishwick, eds., Icons of America (Bowling Green, Ohio: Popular Press, Bowling Green University, 1978), p. 9, as cited from an interview between Fishwick and Fleming.

[47]Higham, p. 119.

to ignore the discoveries and methods of the social sciences, the "new allies" of history.[48]

Robinson also focused attention on "the overwhelming importance of the inconspicuous, the common, and often obscure elements of the past; the homely, everyday, and normal as over against the rare, spectacular, and romantic, which had engaged the attention of most earlier writers."[49] While he did not spell it out, Robinson may well have meant to include material culture artifacts, things, as documentation, as Fleming suggested.

Blinded by outdated notions, methods, and outlooks, historians were prevented from making new discoveries and asking new questions. By employing the methods and theories of anthropology, archaeology, social and animal psychology and comparative studies of religion, for example, the meanings of the terms used by historians would change, and fresh insights would develop.[50] Echoing Neibuhr, Robinson believed that history textbooks for too long had been the result of guidance "by earlier manuals which have established what teachers and the public at large are wont to expect under the caption 'history.'"[51] The tradition of

---

[48]James Harvey Robinson, The New History: Essays Illustrating the Modern Historical Outlook (New York: Macmillan Co., 1927), p. 74.

[49]Ibid., p. 75.

[50]Ibid., pp. 80, 83.

[51]Ibid., p. 136.

political history dealt only with events, not conditions, and omitted "in large measure those things that are best worth telling."[52] The narrative of history therefore needed threads other than politics and events. Both the historian and the general public would find history more enlightening if they studied, among other topics, what the people of the past "made with their hands, or the nature and style of their buildings, whether private or public" because such things are "more suggestive to us than . . . rulers . . . or the wars that they waged."[53] Robinson then cited recent artifactual evidence from ancient Egypt as an example. Not only did ancient Egyptians write, but they left copper tools--artifacts--which indicated "an ever industrious and practical person, to whom business made a strong appeal." Hieroglyphic evidence showed that book-keepers were common, while the art of ancient Egypt told graphically of their environment and industries.[54] Thus, artifacts, the things of material culture, were valuable documents to be used in explaining history; they indicated conceptions and conditions of life in the past just as surely as written sources did. Greek temples, furniture, mirrors, cups, earrings, and bracelets could also yield similar knowledge.

---

[52]Ibid., p. 137.

[53]Ibid., p. 139.

[54]Ibid., pp. 145-46.

Yet, as Robinson explained, because of the intellectual's prejudice against working with one's hands, an idea promoted by Aristotle and Seneca, common things were considered degrading and therefore unworthy of attention, to say little of historical study.[55] Robinson also stated history can be seen in the artifact embodied in the steam engine "which has shown itself far more potent to alter men's ways than all the edicts . . . of kings and parliaments that have ever existed." Its invention in 1704 led to a geometric expansion of products, techniques of production, as well as changes in ways of life and cultural systems. This tool, the artifact, is seen "as the agent and symbol of man's progress."[56] The steam engine then can be viewed as a cause for "an expansion of . . . activities, interests, and social and moral problems, the end of which is not yet."[57] Although Robinson was writing within the context of Progressive reform and education, he argued that "History for the Common Man" can be taught and written through the use of artifacts--in this particular case, the steam engine. Artifacts then can provide "the means of cultivating that breadth of view, moral and intellectual perspective, and enthusiasm which must always come

---

[55]Ibid., p. 147.

[56]Ibid., p. 150.

[57]Ibid., p. 151.

with a perception of the relation of the present with the past."[58]

Progressive rhetoric aside, Robinson's New History held that "a more careful examination of the sources for . . . discovering the truth" would produce "less prejudiced views . . . of the whole past of the people."[59] Regardless of his arguments, however, History was emasculated by intellectual debates concerning relativism in history. It was probably this issue that obscured the use of artifacts by historians more than any real objection to their utilization.

By the 1920s the science and present-mindedness of the New History were no longer regarded as complementary. Historians began to rely upon changing and relative values in an effort to absorb scientific uniformities and to find some reliable generalizations. Thus, the New History's concern for objectivity led by the 1930s and 1940s to a greater concern with relativity. Nascent concerns about artifacts were nearly lost in the intellectual shuffle. By 1946, after the publication of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Bulletin 54, Theory and Practice in Historical Study, Robinson's New History "had reached a dead end."[60]

---

[58]Ibid., p. 153.

[59]Alvord, p. 459.

[60]Higham, p. 131.

Yet interest in material culture study both within and outside the historian's profession continued to be manifested in varying degrees of success. From the early 1900s to the 1930s the institutionalization of material culture studies assumed new forms. In 1906 the Federal government, for example, enacted the Antiquities Act which launched a national policy of preservation. In 1935 the Historic Sites and Buildings Act established a broader policy of preserving many historic sites of national significance for the use of the public. The agencies established to carry out the work of the 1935 Act were the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER).[61] In the 1920s, besides a "rash of historic preservation projects" in cities such as San Antonio, Philadelphia, Charleston, and New Orleans, "two major historical museums were launched by multi-millionaires."[62] In 1926 Henry Ford "embarked upon an elaborate physical re-creation of small town rural America,"[63] and in 1927 John D. Rockefeller, Jr., "initiated his financial support of the

---

[61]James K. Huhta, et al., Historic Preservation: A Guide for Departments of History, a Professional Service Publication of the Committee on Public History (Bloomington, Ind.: Organization of American Historians, 1982), p. 3.

[62]Schlereth, "Material Culture," p. 15.

[63]Thomas J. Schlereth, Artifacts and the American Past (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), p. 121.

organization that would evolve into Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia."[64] Both approaches to material culture captured the public's imagination. Anthropological work utilizing artifacts waned in the 1920s, while studies in archtectural history, art history, and the history of the decorative arts "enjoyed a revival."[65] The "gentleman scholars" and collectors John Hill Morgan, Henry Mercer, Wallace Nutting, Fiske Kimball, and Luke Vincent Lockwood produced exhibition catalogs and monographs on tools, painting, architecture, and furniture and contributed to newly established journals such as Antiques and The Antiquarian.[66] Yet, by and large, this work tended to regard artifacts as collectible objects of art, and seldom was an attempt made to place artifacts within their societal context. That is, material culture study remained ahistorical.[67] Aside from Arthur M. Schlesinger and Dixon Ryan Fox's thirteen-volume series History of American Life (1927-1948), which called occasional attention to "nonliterary remains" through the use of illustrations, and James Truslow Adams' Provincial Society (1927),

---

[64]Schlereth, "Material Culture," p. 15. See also Schlereth, Artifacts, pp. 121, 122.

[65]Schlereth, "Material Culture," p. 16.

[66]Ibid., pp. 16-18.

[67]Ibid., p. 17.

there was no "significant response . . . forthcoming from professional historians to James Harvey Robinson's 1912 call for a 'New History.'"[68]

During the administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the Federal government became actively involved in the interpretation and documentation of American material culture. The Historic Sites and Buildings Act of 1935, already mentioned, was but one of a plethora of such governmental activities. The Federal Arts Project Index of American Design, the Historic Sites Survey of the National Park Service, the Federal Writers Project, and Works Progress Administration all "prepared state and city guides containing valuable geographical, historical, and often artifactual data for communities across the United States."[69]

Nevertheless, while the interest in artifacts expanded, academic historians remained aloof. Schlereth concludes that the only professional organizational interest taken in artifacts in the 1930s are found in "the proceedings of the American Historical Association for 1939, later edited by Caroline F. Ware in a book, The Cultural Approach to History" which had "hardly a word . . . describing the new tools of the cultural historian as applied to extant physical remains. The single exception was one pioneering essay,

---

[68]Ibid., p. 18.

[69]Ibid., pp. 18-19.

'Documentary Photographs' by Roy Staykes and Paul Johnstone."[70] Schlereth, however, is not entirely correct.

As early as 1934, at the fiftieth anniversary meeting of AHA, a conference was held entitled "Rehabilitation of Historic Sites," which was hosted by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior (NPS). Thomas J. Wertenbaker, who during his long career at Princeton University "preached a brand of material culture history in his classroom and practiced it in his numerous books on colonial, urban, cultural and social history,"[71] opened the conference. His remarks dealt with "the urgent necessity of action to preserve historic houses." Principles of restoration were explained by B. Floyd Flickinger, then superintendent of the Colonial National Monument, who also discussed work done at Yorktown and Jamestown Island.[72]

Four years later, at the fifty-fourth annual meeting of the AHA, the Committee on Historical Source Materials received a report entitled "Historic Sites." The report recounted the work of the Division of Historic Sites of the NPS, in locating and identifying a restoration of such places, and the assembling of accurate information about

---

[70]Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[71]Schlereth, "Pioneers," p. 31.

[72]American Historical Association, "The Fiftieth Anniversary Meeting," American Historical Review 40, no. 3 (April 1935): 433.

them. It was more than likely a recapitulation of the work done by the NPS as a result of the passage of the 1935 Historic Sites and Buildings Act. According to the report, 1939 was a year in which seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sites had been given special attention by the NPS. Moreover, all restoration work was "carried out with high standards by trained historians" and promised "greatly to enrich our national heritage in the future."[73] Ronald Lee, NPS chief historian[74] and chief of the Division of Historic Sites, was named chairman of an ad hoc subcommittee of the larger Committee on Historical Source Materials that would come to be called the Special Committee on Preservation and Restoration of Historical Objects.[75]

Professional interest in material culture also manifested itself in 1940, when the report of the Conference of Historical Societies, formed as a semi-autonomous body by the AHA in 1904,[76] was recorded at the AHA annual meeting.

---

[73]American Historical Association, Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1939 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1940), pp. 80-81. (Hereafter cited as AHA Annual Report and year.)

[74]Charles B. Hosmer, "The Broadening View of the Historical Preservation Movement," in Quimby, Material Culture, p. 34.

[75]AHA Annual Report 1939, p. 81; and AHA Annual Report 1941 1:xxiv.

[76]George Rollie Adams, "Planning for the Future: AASLH Looks at Its Past," History News 37, no. 9 (September 1982): 13.

The report traced the growth of local historical societies and the Conference's efforts in cataloging over nine hundred such groups nationwide. Additionally, the report of the Policy Committee of the Conference of State and Local Historical Societies was recorded. It stated that strong organization of state and local history societies would render many valuable services to the historic profession, such as publicity; cooperation with the NPS, Federal relief agencies and patriotic societies; promotion of adult historical programs; the encouragement of local historical courses in schools; closer coordination between state and local historical agencies; and publications opportunities and conferences. It was believed that a national organization would serve as a clearing house helping to establish local societies, historical reviews, the working of historical spots, the promotion of historical tours, celebrations, plays and pageants, as well as the writing of high standard local histories.[77] While not specifically calling for the use of artifacts as documents in writing or teaching history, the report did demonstrate "that there was a natural desire to communicate with people who had a common interest in the study and interpretation of historic sites."[78]

---

[77]AHA Annual Report 1940, pp. 102-109.

[78]Hosmer, in Quimby, Material Culture, p. 133.

By late December 1940, the AHA Conference of State and Local Historical Societies was disbanded and emerged as the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). In early January 1941, the AASLH announced its program of publishing technical information, issuing a monthly newsletter, and serving as a clearing house for information for historical agencies and their activities.[79] By the 1970s the AASLH not only claimed 7,700 institutional members but acted as a lobby for Federal support of historical agency activities. By 1982 the AASLH demonstrated its early and continuing leadership in the fields of historic site interpretation, museum education, historical agency work, and had become "the leading national voice for state and local history and all those who 'do' it."[80]

From 1941 to 1943, however, the reports of the Special Committee on Preservation and Restoration of Historical Objects demonstrated a concerned effort on the part of some historians to implement artifacts as documents. The Special Committee was first headed by Ronald Lee and later by Herbert A. Kahler, both of the NPS.[81] In 1943 Chairman Kahler presented four memoranda to the AHA Committee on Historical

---

[79] Adams, p. 13.

[80] Ibid., pp. 14-18.

[81] AHA Annual Report 1941 1:xxiv, 27, 28; AHA Annual Report 1942 1:xxi; AHA Annual Report 1943 1:xxiv, 8.

Source Material. Of most importance was the memorandum which called for the publication of "a handbook for the study of historical objects." The Special Committee urged the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) to secure funds for the publication of such a book; the NPS volunteered office space and indicated that personnel were available to begin the work. After discussion, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., moved that the Committee on Historical Source Materials "report its approval for the committee to go ahead and endeavor to secure funds. The motion was seconded and carried."[82]

The project would find little support, no doubt due to the exigencies of World War II. Indeed, the Special Committee on Preservation and Restoration of Historical Objects issued no report in 1944.[83] Yet the notion that material culture artifacts were worthy of consideration as historic documents was not dead. In 1944, B. Floyd Flickinger, a member of the Special Committee, called for "a closer liaison between the American Historical Association and the historical work of the National Park Service. . . . Members of the profession should have intimate contact with historical sites and areas, which are prime source materials in themselves." (Emphasis added.) Recalling the 1934 session on "Rehabilitation of Historic Sites" and the

---

[82]AHA Annual Report 1943 1:8.

[83]AHA Annual Report 1944 1:xxiv.

positive response he received from his presentation then, Flickinger suggested that a similar session be held at the AHA annual meeting in 1945,[84] but no such session was held.

In 1945 the Special Committee did make a report to its parent Committee on Historical Source Materials. The Special Committee, as a result of meetings held in 1943, had prepared a prospectus for a manual to be entitled "Museum and Restoration Techniques," which placed "emphasis on the value of historical objects or source materials for the study and writing of history." (Emphasis added.) After approval was registered by both the SSRC and the American Council of Learned Societies in 1943, funding was held back due to the war effort. Hans Hoth, "an international authority on resource techniques" had agreed to start the project if it could be funded.[85] By 1946 it was reported that funding would not be forthcoming. Moreover, the Committee on Historical Source Materials, and all of its subcommittees, was disbanded.[86] The issue of utilizing material culture artifacts as historical source materials remained dormant in the AHA's considerations for sixteen years.

While academic historians were reluctant to deal with artifacts, others were not. The Federal government had already established a policy of historic preservation. In

---

[84] AHA Annual Report 1944 1:56-57.

[85] AHA Annual Report 1945 1:42-43.

1949, three years after the AHA had turned a deaf ear to proposals for studying artifacts, Congress chartered the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP). Its role was, and is, that of a nonprofit organization to administer nationally significant historic properties and to serve as a national coordinating agency promoting a public-private partnership in historic preservation.[87] The AASLH was formed in 1940, while the American Society of Architectural Historians (ASAH) was formed in 1941.[88] A further splintering of direction in material culture study was led by NPS historian Ronald Lee, resulting in the organization of the National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings (NCHSB) in 1947, soon after the AHA had disbanded its Special Committee on Preservation and Restoration of Historic Sites and Objects. Lee realized a new effort was needed to justify the saving of historic buildings in post-World War II economy. The NCHSB also aided in the formation of the NTHP two years later, and the two organizations merged in 1953.[89]

Historic preservation in itself is a historic movement, as the historian and chronicler of the national preservation

---

[87]Allen Weinstein, "The Sixty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians," Journal of American History 40, no. 2 (September 1973): 377-78.

[88]Adams, p. 13; Hosmer, in Quimby, Material Culture, p. 132; and "ASAH Beginnings," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 1, no. 1 (January 1941): 20-22.

[89]Hosmer, in Quimby, Material Culture, p. 132.

phenomena Charles B. Hosmer demonstrates. According to him, there were, up to 1966, three generations of preservationists. The first, in the nineteenth century, "considered themselves to be in the business of creating and perpetuating shrines."[90] The second generation focused its efforts on preserving buildings that displayed unique structural features or a high concentration of original material extant. The third generation, beginning in 1926, elevated preservation, and hence popular interest in historic architecture, to a national movement. They remained in the forefront until 1966 when the National Historic Preservation Act was passed. However, even the post-1966 generation of preservationists, according to Hosmer, has "no particular emphasis on . . . future interpretation."[91]

The landmark 1966 National Historic Preservation Act established the National Register of Historic Places within the Department of the Interior, and widened the criteria to include the local and state material culture resources. Federal-matching grants-in-aid were provided to carry out the work of preservation, and in 1971 Executive Order No. 11593 required Federal agencies to comply with the 1966 legislation when Federal properties were involved. The Tax Reform Act of 1976 and Economic Recovery Act of 1981

---

[90] Ibid., p. 122.

[91] Ibid., pp. 121-25.

provided tax incentives for historic preservation, and the 1980 amendments to the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act strengthened the Federal government's commitment to the movement. Additionally, activity in the public sector has been paralleled by substantial effort in historic preservation in the nonprofit and for profit private sector.[92] Yet historians have by and large neglected the movement to a considerable extent, although presently the public history movement is "making headway in establishing curriculum guides for beginning professional training programs in the fields of historic preservation, archival and record management, cultural resource management, historical editing, and public policy formation."[93] For example, the Organization of American Historians Committee on Public History published its first brochure, Historic Preservation: A Guide for Departments of History, in 1982.[94] Similarly, the organization of the National Council for Public History in the 1970s, and the publication of The Public Historian demonstrate another noteworthy development in the field of history. Further, the early leadership of the history field in the

---

[92]Huhta et al., pp. 4-6.

[93]Ibid., p. 3.

[94]Ibid., p. 1.

the professional preparation of historic preservationists is likewise notable.[95]

The late response of most historians to the potential of material culture as evidence stemmed from the fact that most material culture advocates and historic house museums failed to place the objects in their purview in any historic-cultural context. This criticism was made as early as 1932 by Laurence Vail Coleman, who surveyed the status of historic house museums.[96] A review of Coleman's book, Historic House Museum, perhaps best emphasized the historian's general attitude toward artifacts:

> Snuff-boxes, shoe buckles, cups and saucers, are meager source material for the historian, but provide human interest that "sells" history to the public. . . . The American people seem peculiarly given to this emotional form of historical interest. . . . It is certain . . . we have a passionate craving for historic "shrines" not to be equaled elsewhere in the world. Authentic history seems to matter little so long as the semi-religious thrill is had.[97]

This criticism was also made of the Advisory Committee of Architects at Colonial Williamsburg. Although they established guidelines for the retention of original

---

[95]Interview with James K. Huhta, Director, Historic Preservation Program, Department of History, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, June 10, 1981.

[96]Laurence Vail Coleman, Historic House Museums (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1933), pp. 87-95.

[97]Leicester B. Holland, review of Historic House Museums, by Laurence Vail Coleman, American Historical Review 40, no. 1 (October 1934), pp. 133-34.

building materials, they seldom entertained any thoughts concerning historical-cultural significance. In effect, they had ignored W. A. R. Goodwin's belief that, once restored, Williamsburg "would provide the American people [with] an important object lesson."[98]

If architects had little interest in historic significance and interpretation, some early professional, although not academic, historians did, particularly those in the NPS. In the 1930s, planning sessions at the NPS were clearly dominated by these historians, resulting from the first in a program to transform national historic sites into interpretive public teaching stations. Emphasis was not placed upon total physical restoration of each site, but on sample restoration, demanding more of the visitor's imagination. The most important legacy of these NPS historians, however, was their policy of undertaking exhaustive historical research prior to any restoration, as well as a meticulous and accurate depiction of the past cultural context of each site.[99] Yet, as explained above, NPS historians made valiant and unsuccessful attempts within the AHA for professional recognition of both their work and the idea of utilizing objects as sites or documents in American history.

---

[98]Hosmer, in Quimby, Material Culture, pp. 125-26.

[99]Ibid., p. 127.

Clearly the majority of professional historians were not yet interested in the study of material culture artifacts.

Still, a few historians of the 1930s were interested. Examples are found in Roger Burlingame's The March of the Iron Men (1938), Lewis Mumford's Technics and Civilization (1934), and Walter Prescott Webb's The Great Plains (1931).[100]

Webb's The Great Plains is perhaps one of the more famous and controversial works that made use of artifacts. Its significance historiographically is seen in the fact that a conference was held in 1939 to debate its merits and demerits.[101] Webb's book pointed to such material culture artifacts as the six-shooter, the windmill, barbed wire, or things that shaped the civilization of the American Plains.[102] Yet, as his most noted critic, Fred A. Shannon, pointed out, Webb erred, for example, by concluding that the "six-shooter . . . stands as the first mechanical adaptation made by the American people when they emerged from the timber and met a set of new needs in the open

---

[100] Schlereth, "Material Culture," p. 20.

[101] Fred A. Shannon, An Appraisal of Walter Prescott Webb's The Great Plains: A Study in Institutions and Environment (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1940; reprint ed., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979), p. viii.

[102] Walter Prescott Webb, The Great Plains (New York: Ginn & Co., 1931), pp. 280-310.

country of the Plains."[103] Webb had concluded that the environment of the plains led to the development of the Colt .45 revolver, and in turn it tamed the Indians. But, as Shannon pointed out, the steel mold board plow was of at least equal, if not more, importance in settling the Plains.[104] Additionally, Webb claimed it was the need for water that led to the development of the windmill, which was true enough; but the windmill did not result, as Webb contended, in cattlemen fencing in the range. Shannon asserted that windmills appeared long after homesteaders had fenced in the land.[105] Thus Webb used, and possibly misused, material culture artifacts as evidence. Yet, the attempt was made. In retrospect Webb believed his book "seems to suggest the application of the principles of cultural anthropology to fairly recent history."[106]

Webb had spoken of "things in common" as a possible means to better explain the historic development of cultural continuity on the Plains. For example, he explained:

> An East Texan is more out of place on the High Plains of the Panhandle than a citizen of the Panhandle would be anywhere in New Mexico or Arizona or perhaps in the farming districts of Illinois. That is what I meant

---

[103]Shannon, p. 62.

[104]Ibid.

[105]Ibid., p. 88.

[106]Ibid., p. 152.

> by that reference to "things in common"--that there is more in common between . . . west Texas and Illinois--than between west Texas and east Texas." [107]

The "things in common" were plows and windmills.

Continuing in this vein, Clark Wissler, an American anthropologist[108] and participant at the conference, commented that while traveling through the Plains in 1900 he was struck by the fact that "nearly every man from Texas to Montana had a six-shooter on a belt, even though they were rusty and not loaded." Could it be possible that such "external things are indices of a culture complex"? These indices--artifacts--aided in identifying a culture complex as well as its boundaries. That is, the use of artifacts "as indices of a new type of culture is the same process as taking a particular bump on an insect's leg as an index of the species." Wissler believed Webb had used windmills, six-shooters, and the like, in a similar way, "as indices of a peculiar type of white culture that had evolved in the Plains area."[109] As the historian of the American Indian West, Edward Everett Dale commented: "Mr. Webb is . . . interested . . . in institutional developments and

---

[107]Ibid., p. 156.

[108]Schlereth, "Material Culture," p. 12; and Frances J. Bowman, A Handbook of Historians and History Writing (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Co., 1951), pp. 75, 110.

[109]Shannon, p. 169.

[110]Jaques Cattell, ed., Directory of American Scholars: A Biographical Directory, 3rd ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1957), p. 168.

similarities in culture."[111] Despite prodding from the conference chairman, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., criticism of Webb's Great Plains did not focus on material culture artifacts. This, according to a commentary by Read Bain, a prominent sociologist,[112] demonstrated "the preoccupation of historians with the political, military, biographic, and religious aspects of culture, often in highly dramatic and literary modes of expression, [which] was an important factor in producing the special social sciences and the 'new' history [of James Harvey Robinson] against such a culturally limited concept of history."[113] That is, the view of historians was myopic, and the utilization of artifacts or historical documents would necessitate a method of internal criticism that could be used with objects, and a cross-disciplinary methodology that would broaden a cultural concept of history to include all of humankind's experiences --including artifacts--for consideration. Such developments would wait for more recent times, as material culture studies in America left what Schlereth terms the age of collection (1876-1948) and evolved through the age of

---

[111]Shannon, p. 173.

[112]Robert C. Cooke, ed., Who's Who in American Education: An Illustrated Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Living Educators in the United States, 9th ed. (Nashville, Tenn.: Who's Who in American Education, 1940), p. 43.

[113]Shannon, p. 227.

description (1948-1965) to the age of analysis (1965 to the present).[114]

---

[114]Schlereth, "Material Culture," pp. 6-7.

CHAPTER II

MATERIAL CULTURE AND THE HISTORIAN, 1945-1983

While the age of collection had as its primary emphasis a focus upon the aesthetic qualities and connoisseurship of objects, the age of description (1948-1965) saw material culture artifacts employed in folklife studies and in the history of technology. Moreover, the same period witnessed the proliferation and institutionalization of material culture studies, as seen in the rise of the American Studies Movement and the establishment of museum education training programs.

The year 1948, according to Thomas J. Schlereth, "looms as something of an unprecedented milestone to later scholars" primarily because of George Tremain McDowell. That year, McDowell, an English professor in the American Studies Program at the University of Minnesota, "argued for a multidisciplinary approach to American culture and recognized the role that material culture evidence should play in such study." Three years later, along with other Americanists (John A. Kouwenhoven, F. O. Matthiesson, Robert Spiller, Roy Nichols, and Ralph Gabriel), he formed the

American Studies Association. Its official journal, the American Quarterly, early on established the lead in material culture study.

Throughout the mid-1940s, however, despite the extensive research and collection that had been done, there existed "no established bibliographical canon and few truly interdisciplinary models of material culture scholarship."[1] Yet, it was in 1948 that John A. Kouwenhoven, "an ardent proponent of the academic study of material culture,"[2] published his book Made in America. In it, Kouwenhoven dealt with an enormous array of material culture artifacts ranging from skyscrapers, jazz, and balloon-frame houses to clipper ships, and "argued for a distinctive American vernacular aesthetic in the nation's material culture."[3] Briefly, Kouwenhoven believed that American-made artifacts were folk or vernacular creations that owed their identity to both a stylistic tradition and to a cultural context peculiar to America. These objects were not examples of elite high art or complex aesthetic theory, but illustrated instead native American vernacular culture. Edgar Richardson's biography,

---

[1]Thomas J. Schlereth, "Material Culture Studies in America, 1876-1976," in Thomas J. Schlereth, ed., Material Culture Studies in America (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), p. 20.

[2] Ibid., p. 20.

[3] Ibid., p. 21.

Washington Allston (1948), followed in tandem as a study of the artist in America within the context of his individual and intellectual era.[4] Yet both works, and others that would follow, were of a descriptive orientation. Architectural history followed a similar methodology in, for example, Anthony N. B. Garvan's Architecture and Town Planning in Colonial Connecticut (1951) and Henry Chandler Forman's The Architecture of the Old South (1948).[5]

As Schlereth states, the frenzied pace with which such publications appeared "suggests the possible political ramifications of American material culture studies" within the context of the Cold War.[6] In any event, material culture studies bifurcated into the twin realms of folklife studies and the history of technology.

Folklorists in America emphasized the study of such objects as Afro-American coil basketry, Indiana barn types, and "had an almost century-long fight on their hands simply to win recognition of their research from their fellow folklorists."[7] Material folk culture research, however, became institutionalized in 1949 with the organization of

---

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

the Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center in Pennsylvania's Franklin and Marshall College. It is in no small measure to the credit of folklife studies that cultural anthropology became an intrinsic part of material culture research, teaching, and interpretation.[8]

Yet cultural anthropology "had almost no discernible impact at all upon the history of technology, a second new area of material culture studies to emerge within the post-World War II era."[9] Few, if any, early studies of the history of technology attempted to employ artifacts as historical evidence. Instead, they were largely cataloguing and collecting enterprises and often tended to be recitals "of the increasing technical success of the material culture being investigated."[10] In general, according to Schlereth, these studies were of three kinds, namely, an economic interpretation; a "mildly behavioral approach to technology"; and those attempting to prove or disprove the national characteristics of American technological development, which was "a methodological and ideological preoccupation of many researchers in the subfield since its institutionalization

---

[8]Ibid., pp. 22-23.

[9]Ibid., p. 23.

[10]Ibid., p. 24.

in the Cold War decade of the 1950's."[11] In essence, however, these works remained descriptive.

The year 1948 is important also because of the establishment of the Cooperstown Graduate Program and because of the appointment of C. Malcolm Watkins as head of the Division of Cultural History of the National Museum of the Smithsonian Institution. Watkins was an anthropologist, and he, like Louis C. Jones at the Cooperstown Farmers' Museum, introduced a cultural history perspective "that lay behind such Smithsonian exhibits as the 'Hall of Everyday Life' galleries." The work of these men and their programs resulted also in the 1952 establishment of the Winterthur Program at the University of Delaware, which served "as the prototype for many of the other museum-university related programs that followed."[13] These programs, all imbued with a multidisciplinary perspective, provided the growing material culture studies movement with a body of scholarly literature, but they remained, still, largely descriptive. Moreover, training programs and material culture studies were seldom found in history departments.[14] That is, the

---

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid., p. 25.

[13]Ibid., pp. 26-27.

[14]Ibid., p. 32. See pp. 20-32 for a comprehensive discussion of the age of description.

study of material culture artifacts, while undergoing institutionalization and proliferation, was ignored by historians. In fact, Schlereth contends that not "before the 1960s did any serious discussion surface as to the evidential potential of the artifact for historical research, and not until 1974 did the movement see an attempt at using a systematic procedure whereby a single artifact might be comprehensively analyzed."[15] Once again, however, Schlereth is not entirely correct, for in 1957 there surfaced one serious discussion concerning the use of the artifact by historians.

The problem of the use of the artifact as evidence by the historian was discussed at the 1957 annual meeting of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) at Columbus, Ohio, particularly at the fourth session entitled "The Artifact in History." The panel consisted of Holman J. Swinney, director of the Idaho State Historical Society, who served as chairman, William B. Hesseltine from the University of Wisconsin, J. C. Harrington, regional chief of interpretation for Region One of the National Park Service, Anthony N. B. Garvan, then head curator for the department of Civil War History at the Smithsonian Institution, and Roy F. Nichols, of the University of Pennsylvania.

---

[15]Ibid., p. 33.

Hesseltine presented a paper entitled "The Challenge of the Artifact," and Harrington's presentation was called "Some Lessons from Archaeology." These papers and discussions that followed reveal that historians, if not on the verge of accepting artifacts as documents, were at least seriously considering the notion. But many questions remained unresolved.

Hesseltine believed that artifacts were neglected by historians because, as had been stated by L. V. Coleman in 1932, they were seldom placed in the human setting which provided the essential historical, social, and cultural contexts that would make them intelligible. A major part of the problem of not accepting objects, according to Hesseltine, derived from the dilemma of how internal and external criticism could be employed on artifacts. Historians ask questions of the document's external information; they thus identify its nature, age, and authenticity. Once these properties are determined, the historian employs internal criticism and asks things of the information within the document. In this way he collects data about places, people, and the time of a certain event. A series of documents, after external and internal criticism, provides information about causes and effects, leading ultimately to the construction of a narrative account of some historical process. The problem with the artifact, complained

Hesseltine, lay within the issue that it, unlike the literary remains, "gives no answers to the historian's queries. It gives no information which the historian may extract by the process of internal criticism."[16] But it was more than extracting information from artifacts, it was also a matter of developing questions to ask artifacts.

Hesseltine admitted that artifacts are also historical facts and "should be as meaningful to historians as facts derived by the internal criticism of literary remains."[17] Unlike antiquarians who collect artifacts for themselves alone, the historian accumulates facts for meaning, for utilization in producing a workable option for interpreting humankind's past. Facts--and artifacts--present cause-and-effect relationships and should not be considered "sterile items displayed in showcases, but useful tools [to] recapture some meaningful portion of human life on earth."[18] Nevertheless, without a system of internal criticism, artifacts would remain nondocumentary sources for historians.

J. C. Harrington likewise echoed Hesseltine and Coleman in asserting that artifacts must be placed within a

---

[16]William B. Hesseltine, "The Challenge of the Artifact," in James H. Rodabaugh, comp. and ed., The Present World of History: A Conference on Certain Problems in Historical Agency Work in the United States (Madison, Wisc.: American Association for State and Local History, 1959), pp. 66-67.

[17] Ibid., p. 70.

[18] Ibid., pp. 70, 86.

cultural context before they had meaning. Historians could fill the gaps by using artifacts. But, above all, the value of the artifact for the historian was to be found "in proportion to how much is known of [its] cultural context in a given historical situation."[19]

Anthony N. B. Garvan held that artifacts were "important records of actions. Their design and patterns [were] seldom so critical as to have determined the exact course of the event with which they [were] related."[20] But the historian could use artifacts as documents to determine and index those historical ideas and cultural values seldom expressed in literary remains. The sale of an artifact, for example, measured "minutia of popular opinion and the design [gave] . . . an insight which only an exhaustive survey could present."[31] Garvan concluded that the metamorphosis of the artifact embodied in the New England porringer "suggests that . . . its design evolved as a consequence of Puritan idealism and homogeniety and that with the decline of the Puritan theocracy, the . . . silver porringer" lost its individuality and eventually disappeared

---

[19]J. C. Harrington, "Some Lessons from Archaeology," in Rodabaugh, p. 74.

[20]Anthony N. B. Garvan, "The New England Porringer: A Customary Artifact," in Rodabaugh, p. 75.

[21]Ibid., p. 76.

from use.[22] Garvan also believed that the "development of the iconography of the Puritan handle likewise seems to follow closely the decline of Puritan prestige."[23] His use of words such as "seems" or "suggests" hardly have the clarion ring of proof. Nevertheless, as Edward P. Alexander, then director of interpretation at Colonial Williamsburg, stated, artifacts "are not simply illustrations of what is found out in the records. Sometimes the object itself leads to new records that hadn't been thought of before as having any connection."[24]

Hesseltine responded to a question by Holman J. Swinney pertaining to the legitimacy of the use of artifacts in Walter Prescott Webb's The Great Plains. Hesseltine approved insofar as artifacts were good for illustrations only because they provided no information and therefore could not be considered documents. It was a matter of being able to understand "certain types of representational symbols which substitute for words," he claimed.[25]

Artifacts, stated Garvan, do tell the historian about particular social or cultural practices associated with

---

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid., p. 77.

[24]Rodabaugh, pp. 87-88.

[25]Ibid., p. 85.

them, but not about specific events as literary documents do.[26] Herein lies the main value of artifacts as documents in history. That is, it is a matter of heeding Thomas C. Cochran's advice that historians "should discard the 'presidential synthesis' in writing and teaching history."[27] Social and cultural practices transcend neat periods of chronological development, and artifacts reflect this. Artifacts are some of the documents of social and cultural history.

As Roy F. Nichols, then vice provost and dean of the University of Pennsylvania, succinctly put it at the conference: "History must have synthesis to have meaning. . . . The principal need is a connection upon the significant interests in any society which awakens the greatest response and have the most influence on the behavior which conditions culture."[28] Overspecialization in history, Nichols believed, had resulted in a popular reaction against "the wooden, highly formalized, non-perceptive constitutional and political history" that had seized American universities and was not a major preoccupation of the

---

[26]Ibid., p. 86.

[27]As cited in Edward Pessen, Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics, The Dorsey Series in American History, rev. ed. (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1978), p. 2.

[28]Roy F. Nichols, "Alice in Wonderland After Eighteen Years," in Rodabaugh, p. 31.

American public. American cultural history could reverse this trend, and "should be written in terms of this principal interest of its people and thus be given real meaning."[29]

The remarks made at this little-heralded conference a quarter of a century ago have begun to result in a synthesis and meaning for which Nichols called. Synthesis also meant a multidisciplinary methodology and approach to history called for by James Harvey Robinson, one that would include artifacts as documents. Hesseltine's call for a method or system of internal criticism that could be applied to artifacts would bear fruit later.

As material culture studies entered the analytical phase (1965 to the present) historians began, but only slowly, to respond. For example, at the 1962 annual meeting of the American Historical Association (AHA), an attempt to establish a new committee on historical sites was tabled,[30] certainly demonstrating professional reluctance to recognize the importance of material culture evidence. In his presidential address to the AHA in 1962,

---

[29]Ibid., p. 29.

[30]American Historical Association, Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1962, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1963), 1:23. (Hereafter cited as AHA Annual Report and year.)

Carl Bridenbaugh expressed what would become a reality--that is, that history was losing its usefulness. History was in danger of becoming "The Great Mutation."[31]

Perhaps in response to Bridenbaugh's warnings, the AHA held a session at its annual meeting in 1964 entitled "Words Versus Things in American Studies." The session was held to discuss John A. Kouwenhoven's suggestion that "scholars have relied too heavily on the written and spoken word and not enough upon things." Papers presented insisted that historians were, for example, "more concerned with the scientists than the things of science." Criticism from the floor was hostile and overwhelmingly denoted traditional reliance upon words. Commentators Marshall W. Fishwick (University of Delaware) and Anthony N. B. Garvan (University of Pennsylvania) "urged a less casual and more disciplined study of artifacts and physical evidence than historians have hereto favored. Spirited discussion from the floor enlivened the closing minutes . . . but did not bridge the gap between the positions maintained by the speakers . . . and the commentators."[32] Reminiscent of

---

[31]Carl Bridenbaugh, "The Great Mutation," American Historical Review 68, no. 2 (January 1963): 315-16.

[32]AHA Annual Report 1964, 2 vols., 1:8-9.

Bridenbaugh's fears, Fishwick would lament fourteen years later that: "Historians, for better or worse, have decided to put all their blue chips on words. One measurable result is declining enrollments, mounting unemployment, and a major effort to plead the historian's case: in words."[33]

History was losing its usefulness, according to Roy F. Nichols in 1964, because of five limitations of historians. Essentially they were: 1) over-specialization that led to a fear to generalize beyond the circumscribed restrictions of the historians' total expertise of available evidence; 2) a failure to effectively or sufficiently generalize and use secondary sources literature from other cognate social science fields in a synthesized interdisciplinary approach to history; 3) a tendency to focus exclusively on the singular and unique that led historians to fail in promoting knowledge of the nature of constant change, and therefore, an under-emphasis on continuity; 4) Ph.D. training programs emphasized over-specialization; and 5) the ultimate forfeiture of a perception of directions as affected by concepts ranging from scholasticism and Darwinism to progress and finally relativism.[34]

---

[33]Marshall Fishwick, "Icons of America," in Ray B. Browne and Marshall Fishwick, eds., Icons of America (Bowling Green, Ohio: Free Press, Bowling Green University, 1978), p. 9.

[34]Roy F. Nichols, "Why So Much Pessimism?," in Marshall W. Fishwick, ed., American Studies in Transition (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), pp. 315-18.

Echoing sentiments expressed in 1912,[35] Nichols called for a reevaluation of Ph.D. training that would place less emphasis on memory and more upon reasoning and interpretive abilities. "Experience in generalization should be emphasized," he stated.[36] He also urged that historians study "the history of democratic culture."[37] In so doing, history and historians could overcome their five limitations and regain their usefulness by providing American society with a

> . . . comprehensive synthesis of past behavior which illuminates the present and future. Thus, synthesis should vie with specialization for . . . attention. This synthesis will concentrate on a cultural conceptualization to make possible the recording of the evolution of the image of our society . . . which is the joint responsibility of the historian and the cultural analyst. For this we need new training.[38]

Nichols' views may be seen as evidence indicating the rise of the "new history" that developed in the 1960s and 1970s. Challenging the traditionally based assumption that the historical discipline was self-contained and separate, some historians began to utilize other social sciences--sociology, anthropology, archaeology, geography, demography, political science, and psychology--in just the interdisciplinary synthesis Nichols advocated. It is ironic that few

---

[35]Clarence Walworth Alvord, "The New History," The Nation 94, no. 2445 (May 9, 1912): 458.

[36]Nichols, in Fishwick, pp. 318-19.

[37]Ibid., p. 327.

[38]Ibid., p. 328.

have recognized that this approach is hardly new at all. James H. Robinson suggested the same convergence of social science and history in a paper called "The New Alliances of History"[39] he presented to the AHA annual meeting in 1910. What is new about the "new history" is a "stronger tendency among scholars to apply social science techniques during these two decades."[40]

The "new history" stemmed from the growth of the New Left school of American historiography. While members of this school are characterized as critical of American society and view its history in terms of confrontation, Marxist-dialectic, and are value oriented, they are also responsible for a significant development in recent American historiography, namely, as Jessie Lemisch advocated in 1968, that history should be studied and written "from the bottom up."[41] Such a perspective, they argued, would "reflect the

---

[39]James Harvey Robinson, The New History: Essays Illustrating the Modern Historical Outlook (New York: Macmillan Co., 1927), pp. 70-100. Interestingly enough, this paper was not published in any historical journal, but in the Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Method, March 16, 1911.

[40]Gerald N. Grob and George Athan Billias, eds., Interpretations of American History: Patterns and Perspectives, 2 vols., 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, A Division of Macmillan Co., 1982), vol. 1, To 1877, p. 17.

[41]William H. Goetzmann, "Time's American Adventures: American Historians and Their Writing Since 1776," American Studies International 19, no. 2 (Winter 1981): 39. See also Pardon E. Tillinghast, The Specious Past: Historians and Others (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1972), p. 128.

concerns of the common people, the inarticulate masses, and non-elites."[42] Other nonradical historians assimilated this view in an effort to "break out of the mold and limitations of the neoconservative approach of the 1950s."[43] These "new social historians" of the 1960s and 1970s wished to widen the scope of history by showing that changes in social structure and culture were related to social, economic, and political events.

The "new social history" resulted primarily from the influence of the French journal Annales d'histoire economique et sociale beginning in the 1930s. Given the sobriquet the Annales school, its purpose was to create alternatives to traditional historical disciplinary obstructions and provide a homogeneous approach to comprehending the sum total of past human behavior. The Annales, under the leadership of the two French scholars Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, "became the acknowledged leader in creating the new field of social history."[44] After World War II the Annales increasingly heralded the new multidisciplinary approach to history espoused by Robinson, as well as the use of quantification and demographic

---

[42]Grob and Billias, 1:18. See also Gerda Lerner, "The Necessity of History and the Professional Historian," Journal of American History 69, no. 1 (June 1982): 19.

[43]Grob and Billias, 1:19.

[44]Ibid., 1:20.

techniques.[45] Starting with novel assumptions about what historians should study, the Annales posed new questions, employed new or previously neglected sources, created new methodologies, and employed new tools--notably the computer --to discover the answers it sought. Yet the difference is not found so much in computers as in ideas. These ideas served students of material culture well because they have resulted in the "'New Historians' . . . raising questions that bring the manmade world inside the circle of ideas that interest them the most . . . at least some historians are beginning to look at artifacts as a source of ideas about a whole range of topics that are just now coming into prominence."[46]

It is here that the artifact converges with calls for synthesis, generalization, and the "new social history." By focusing investigations of the past that elevate the history of the non-elite to equity with great men, the "new history" is not a mere Luddite response to tradition as some have mistakenly called it.[47] "Recognition for history's neglected majority follows inevitably from the new emphasis historians are giving to society as a working

---

[45]Ibid.

[46]Cary Carson, "Doing History With Material Culture," in Ian M. G. Quimby, ed., Material Culture and the Study of American Life (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978), p. 43.

[47]Ibid., p. 47.

organism, a community of individuals and groups who are naturally dependent on one another--from top to bottom, or bottom to top, it doesn't matter."[48]

To a very large and nearly inclusive degree literary remains cannot be used to examine such questions. This is because such documentary evidence does not usually speak to or of the documentarily inarticulate, but, as James Deetz has asserted, only the top five percent.[49] One productive approach is certainly to be found in the use of historical demographic techniques, as demonstrated by George M. Blackburn and Sherman Ricards in their 1972 article, "A Demographic History of the West: Nueces County, Texas, 1850."[50] Using census records, they demonstrated, for example, that about "two-thirds of the free civilian population of Nueces County in 1850 were . . . Mexican born" and that because "every male over fifteen listed an occupation . . . there was no period of adolescence."[51] Another promising, new, and increasingly recognized approach is to be found in the study of artifacts. Indeed, as William H. Goetzmann has

---

[48]Ibid., p. 48.

[49]Fay D. Metcalf and Matthew T. Downey, Using Local History in the Classroom (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), pp. 85-86.

[50]As cited in Richard E. Beringer, ed., Historical Analysis: Contemporary Approaches to Clio's Craft (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978), pp. 243-53.

[51]As cited in Beringer, pp. 250-51.

acknowledged, a "concern for the masses and the inarticulate has led to a heightened interest on the part of historians in the evidence of material culture."[52]

In the 1970s and 1980s the historic profession began, as Goetzmann suggests, to take interest in the evidence of material culture. One example is found in the sixty-fifth annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians (OAH) in 1972. Some sixteen of a total of forty-three sessions dealt with the ramifications of the impact of other social science disciplines upon history. Among the several areas of concern chosen by the OAH program committee were those of interdisciplinary study and American social and cultural history.[53] Two sessions are worthy of notice, as they demonstrate that material culture and artifacts were gaining attention by historians.

One session was called "Comparative Aspects of Historical Preservation." Nikolaus Pevsner from the University of London spoke on preservation's relationship to restoration in a paper called "Scrape and Anti-Scrape." Yale University's Robin Wink in "Visible Symbols of an Invisible Past: The United States, Canada, and Australia," presented the idea that characteristics of nationalism were revealed by

---

[52] Goetzman, p. 40.

[53] Allen Weinstein, "The Sixty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians," Journal of American History 60, no. 2 (September 1973): 373.

historic preservation activity. National Trust for Historic Preservation President James Biddle "explained that in most cases preservation of historical buildings is not feasible unless there is an economic solution."[54] David D. Van Tassel from Case Western Reserve University commented, giving his support for Pevsner's "anti-scrape" position, and concluded also that Wink's ideas needed further study.[55]

But of even more importance was the OAH session entitled "History and Material Culture," presided over by Anthony N. B. Garvan,[56] who had witnessed much dissent at a similar session of the 1964 AHA annual meeting.[57] Three advocates and practitioners of historical archaeology,[58] a specialized discipline dating from 1967, the year that the Society for Historical Archaeology was founded,[59] were present. Henry H. Glassie of Indiana University, in his paper entitled "Cognitive Structures from Colonial Artifacts," defended the "grouping of artifacts and their analysis in order to analyze aspects of traditional

---

[54]Weinstein, p. 376.

[55]Ibid., p. 377.

[56]Ibid.

[57]AHA Annual Report 1964 1:9.

[58]Weinstein, p. 377.

[59]Schlereth, "Material Culture, pp. 26, 47.

characteristics."[60] Moreover, Glassie purported "that architecture gave evidence of life unrecorded by documents and indicated currents of change which have previously been overlooked."[61] Cary Carson of the Smithsonian Institution "promptly challenged the archeologists and folklore historians to answer the sorts of questions historians felt needed to be asked, and to answer them with the kind of precision historians demanded."[62] He played devil's advocate in his paper "Material Culture: Overlooked or Overrated?" Carson demonstrated that "without the written document the relevance of many of the hypotheses developed from material culture were questionable."[63] Developing a rationale for historical archaeologists, Brown University's James Deetz, in his paper entitled "Problems in Historical Archaeology," believed that methods of prehistorical archaeology should not be abandoned when the archaeologist was concerned with the more recent past. Evidence of social life completely omitted from written records, he said, could be uncovered by archaeologists. For example, information quite literally unearthed at various sites gave not theoretical information, but factual data on methods of

---

[60]Weinstein, p. 377.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Ibid.

butchery, husbandry, and even diet.[64] It was the consensus among the nearly one hundred people attending the session that "further sessions could be profitably devoted to discussion of the implications of the factual data derived from archeological excavations, the analysis of the use of material culture as a source for theory and model building, and the use of material culture as a laboratory for the testing of hypotheses developed elsewhere."[65]

Interest in material culture artifacts also manifested itself at the 1981 annual meeting of the OAH. In a session entitled "Let's Put History (and Historians) Back in Historic Preservation," James K. Huhta presented a paper, "The Training of Historians for Historical Preservation."[66] Professor Huhta's presence was significant because in 1973 he had developted not only the first undergraduate historic preservation program in the United States, augmented in 1974 at Middle Tennessee State University, but the first master's program in historic preservation in a department of history, as well as the first doctoral program, initiated

---

[64]Ibid., pp. 377-78.

[65]Ibid., p. 378.

[66]Organization of American Historians, Program of the Seventy-Fourth Annual Meeting, 1981 (Bloomington, Ind.: Organization of American Historians, 1982), p. 36. (Hereafter cited as OAH Program and year.)

in 1981.[67] Additionally, the OAH formed its Committee on Public History in 1981 and published its first brochure, Historic Preservation: A Guide for Departments of History, in 1982.[68]

Interest was also evident at the 1981 annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association, when Huhta addressed a large and responsive audience on the subject of material culture resources and the work of the Mid-South Humanities Project, which he directs. Sessions at the 1982 OAH annual meeting also addressed the topic of material culture,[70] while Huhta delivered a paper, "Nearby History, Backyard History and Historic Preservation: Case Studies on Classroom Enrichment Opportunities for the American History Teacher," at the 1982 AHA annual meeting.[71]

More evidence has been manifested quite recently which shows that professional historians are accepting material

---

[67]Interview with James K. Huhta, director, Historic Preservation Program, Department of History, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, April 30, 1981.

[68]James K. Huhta et al., Historic Preservation: A Guide for Departments of History, a professional service publication of the Committee of Public History (Bloomington, Ind.: Organization of American Historians, 1982).

[69]Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., "The Forty-seventh Annual Meeting," Journal of Southern History 48, no. 1 (February 1982): 84.

[70]OAH Program of the Seventy-Fifth Annual Meeting, 1982, pp. 36, 37, 39, 43.

[71]Huhta interview, September 3, 1982.

culture artifacts as evidence for study. At the 1983 annual meeting of the OAH in Cincinnati, Ohio, sessions were held entitled "Perspectives on American Housing" and "Historic Preservation: The Cincinnati Experience."[72] Moreover, the meeting of the OAH Committee on Public History was so heavily attended that only standing room was available.[73] At the session "Cultural History as an Organizing Theme in American Historiography," Michael Kammen made remarks in his paper "Extending the Reach of American Cultural History: Retrospect and Prospects" that cultural historians ought to begin an interdisciplinary study, among other areas, of icons, the decorative arts, artifacts, and architecture.[74] Thus the gap that existed between advocates of material culture study and historians is being bridged.

While material culture has gained more and more recognition from the historical profession, it is not difficult to find examples of works by historians who used artifacts as evidence during the age of analysis. Perhaps one of the most famous and early examples is found in Daniel J. Boorstin's trilogy, The Americans, particularly in the last

---

[72]OAH Program of the Seventy-Sixth Annual Meeting, 1983, pp. 51, 58.

[73]Huhta interview, April 14, 1983.

[74]OAH Program 1983, p. 38; and Michael Kammen, "Extending the Reach of American Cultural History: Retrospect and Prospects," paper delivered at the OAH 1983 annual meeting, Cincinnati, Ohio, April 7, 1983.

volume entitled The Democratic Experience (1973). In it Boorstin draws from an enormous "array of research in the history of technology, architectural history, and popular culture." His work demonstrates what he calls "the 'democratization of democracy in America.'" Boorstin offers as proof a plethora of material culture evidence ranging from consumer goods, ready-made clothing, photography, department stores, plate glass windows, as well as television and telephones.[75] John Demos' A Little Commonwealth (1970) also uses artifacts to advantage.[76] Very recently a number of books about and employing artifacts have appeared, most prominently: George McDaniel, Hearth and Home (1982); Thomas J. Schlereth, Artifacts and the American Past (1980), and his compilation, Material Culture Studies in America (1982); Brooke Hindle, Material Culture of the Wooden Age (1981); Fay D. Metcalf and Matthew T. Downey, Using Local History in the Classroom (1982); David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, Nearby History (1982); Gwendolyn Wright, Moralism and the Model Home (1980); Dolores Hayden, Seven American Utopias (1976); and Susan Strasser, Never Done (1982).[77]

---

[75]Schlereth, "Material Culture," pp. 66-67.

[76]John Demos, A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

[77]George McDaniel, Hearth and Home: Preserving a People's Culture (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); Thomas J. Schlereth, Artifacts and the American Past (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local

Thomas J. Schlereth, the dean of material culture study in American historiography, has noted in his landmark book, Artifacts and the American Past, that some historians, following an interdisciplinary approach typical of the "new history" have used the anthropological and archaeological term "material culture to describe the entire man-made environment with which researchers can interpret the past."[78] While some may argue that material culture is not culture but its by-products, one anthropological definition holds that culture is "that complex whole which includes artifacts, beliefs, art, and other habits acquired by man as a member of society, and all products of human activity as determined by these habits."[79] Sociologically, culture can be "thought of as all the learned and expected ways of

---

History, 1980), and Schlereth, Material Culture; Brooke Hindle, ed., Material Culture of the Wooden Age (Tarrytown, N.Y.: Sleepy Hollow Press, 1981); Metcalf and Downey; David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1982); Gwendolyn Wright, Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Dolores Hayden, Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975 (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976); and Susan Strasser, Never Done: A History of American Housework (New York: Pantheon Press, 1982).

[78]Schlereth, Artifacts, p. 2.

[79]As cited in Schlereth, Artifacts, p. 2, from Clyde Kluckholn and W. H. Kelly, "The Concept of Culture," in Ralph Linton, ed., The Science of Man in the World Crisis (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), pp. 78-106.

life which are shared by the members of a society. Culture includes all buildings, tools, and other physical things as well as techniques, social institutions, social attitudes, beliefs, motivations and systems of value known to the group."[80] Material culture again, in a sociological definition, "includes those things which men have created and use which have tangible form. . . . Our houses, clothing . . . buildings . . . all provide good examples of this part of . . . culture."[81] In 1949 the noted anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits defined culture as "the man-made part of the environment. . . . That is . . . in the final analysis it comprises the things people have, the things they do, and what they think."[82] He later defined material culture as "the totality of artifacts in a culture . . . the vast universe of objects used to cope with the physical world, to facilitate social intercourse, to delight our fancy, and to create symbols of meaning."[83] Concentrating specifically

---

[80]Alvin L. Bertrand, Basic Sociology: An Introduction to Theory and Method, Sociology Series, ed. John F. Cruber and Alfred C. Clarke (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), p. 88.

[81]Ibid., p. 89.

[82]Melville J. Herskovits, Man and His Works (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p. 625.

[83]Melville J. Herskovits, Cultural Anthropology (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), p. 119.

upon artifacts, the historical archaeologist James Deetz contends that their study gives one an understanding of the "overall scheme that examines the whole sweep of change in material culture."[84] Material culture study, then, is not limited only to things but attempts to understand why things were made, the reasons things took the form that they did, what aesthetic, functional, symbolic, and sociocultural needs they served, as well as the relationship between the artifact and the culture that produced it. Artifacts are therefore declarations of culture. "The historian's primary purpose in using artifacts," Schlereth contends, "is always to interpret them in their cultural history context."[85]

Artifacts not only are a part of all recorded history[86] but may also be viewed as cultural ciphers.[87] Their ubiquitousness or scarcity is a clue to their use and therefore to the cultural behavior and values of the people who made and used them in the past. Artifacts may be viewed by the historian as evidence documenting religious beliefs,

---

[84]Metcalf and Downey, pp. 85-86, as cited from James Deetz, "Material Culture," in Stephen Boiten et al., eds., Experiments in History Teaching (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Danforth Center for Teaching and Learning, 1977), p. 17.

[85]Schlereth, Artifacts, p. 3.

[86]Ibid., p. ix.

[87]Richard S. Latham, "The Artifact as Cultural Cipher," in Laurence B. Holland, ed., Who Designs America? The American Civilization Conference at Princeton (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1966), pp. 257-80.

artistic abilities, literacy or the lack of it, the values, dreams, and frustrations of members of past cultures. The ordinary penny, for example, in and of itself tells historians that our culture had knowledge of agriculture and metallurgy; of tailoring, cloth, and barbering; of two languages, English and Latin; of the decimal system and arithmetic; of geography and chronology, and therefore of history; of political union, God, and concepts of liberty;[88] and, after 1959 when the back of the penny was changed, of architecture and statuary, and therefore of aesthetics. Archaeological concepts can provide "the historian with information derived from artifacts such as statues, mausoleums, pottery, buildings and building materials."[89]

According to anthropologist Leslie A. White, culture is an organized and integrated system composed of technological, social, and philosophical components. The basis for the social and philosophical parts is technology. It is, White holds, the determining factor in any culture.[90] E. McClung Fleming of the Winterthur Museum translates this

---

[88]Louis Gottschalk, Understanding History: A Primer on Historical Method (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), p. 88.

[89]Ibid., pp. 127-28.

[90]Leslie A. White, The Science of Culture: A Study of Man and Culture (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1969), pp. 364-65.

to mean material, social, and mental components.[91] Included in culture are artifacts,[92] defined by Ivor Nöel Hume as, in essence, anything made by humankind at any given time.[93] Artifacts can serve as documents for the historian because they were used and made by people and therefore are expressions of cultural behavior, values, and beliefs. But artifacts, like any collection of facts, "do not become historical evidence until someone thinks up something for them to prove or disprove."[94] Moreover, artifacts face competition as documentary source material and may be useful to the historian at least insofar as they "may bear on a problem a historian is trying to solve."[95] The problem the "new historians" are trying to solve are those of explaining and interpreting life, social systems, and the resolution of the problems of the common man in history.

The shape and machinations of social systems are governed by technological or material systems. The

---

[91]E. McClung Fleming, "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model," in Ian M. G. Quimby, ed., Winterthur Portfolio 9 (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1974), p. 153.

[92]Ibid.

[93]Ivor Nöel Hume, A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), p. 4.

[94]Carson, in Quimby, Material Culture, p. 44.

[95]Ibid.

difference between a stone ax and one of bronze is not solely one of material but also one of a different cultural, economic, and social structure.[96] A very important anthropological generalization that must be recalled when studying material culture artifacts is, according to White, that there is a social consequence with every change in technology, or the things of technology, artifacts.[97] This may be illustrated in American history, for example, in the social and political changes resulting from the introduction of steam-powered fire engines in Memphis and Nashville, Tennessee, during the nineteenth century. Before steam-powered fire engines were employed in those cities, volunteer fire companies evolved, based upon the technology of hand-pump-operated fire engines. These machines--today artifacts--required muscle power to be operated, which in turn required many men. As men organized into volunteer fire companies, their organizations took on certain important social functions and also developed into political clubs. This was the social and political consequence of the hand-pump fire engine's use. Yet, after steam-powered engines were introduced, despite varying degrees of resistance by the volunteer firemen, these organizations

---

[96]White, pp. 365-66.

[97]Ibid., p. 378. See also Brooke Hindle, ed., Technology in Early America: Needs and Opportunities for Study (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), p. 24.

disappeared, because steam-powered fire engines required but a handful of men to be operated.[98] As the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga noted: "The improvement of the machine is followed, logically, and inescapably, by the adaptation of man to the machine."[99] That is, the thing--the artifact--determined man's social, political, and economic life, or the traditions of his culture. Things serve as catalytic agents for and in culture, and in this regard are worthy of consideration by the historian. It is not so much the thing itself as the use and consequences of its use.

Another view is also interesting. Henry Bamford Parkes, in his discussion of the growth of sectional conflict in the 1850s in American history, places responsibility squarely upon Stephen A. Douglas for initiating the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, and therefore the heightened tensions that resulted from "Bleeding Kansas." Certainly the popular sovereignty provisions of the law resulted in

---

[98]James Boyd Jones, Jr., "A History of the Memphis Volunteer Fire Department, 1848-1860" (M.A. thesis, University of Mississippi, 1978), pp. 29-114; James Boyd Jones, Jr., "The Memphis Firefighters' Strikes, 1858 and 1860," East Tennessee Historical Society Publications, no. 49 (1977), pp. 37-60; and James Boyd Jones, Jr., "Mose the Bowery B'hoy and the Nashville Volunteer Fire Department, 1849-1860," Tennessee Historical Quarterly 40, no. 2 (Summer 1981): 129-43.

[99]Johan Huizinga, America: A Dutch Historian's Vision from Afar and Near, trans., intro., and notes by Herbert H. Rowen (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 93.

the guerrilla warfare in the territory,[100] but the point that Parkes misses is that there would have been no necessity for the Kansas-Nebraska Act had there been nothing called a steam locomotive. The thing--the artifact--was therefore central in motivating Douglas, and the effects of the Kansas-Nebraska Act stand as another example of the political and social consequences of the use of the material culture artifact. In both cases above, cultural change was initiated and "effected by the mechanical means with which energy is harnessed and put to work as well as increasing the amounts of energy employed."[101]

It is accepted that all social systems are divided into what has been termed an exploited and ruling class, the former far outweighing the latter in sheer number.[102] Traditional history has concentrated upon the rules, and in so doing considers the aspects of life, social systems and culture of a tiny minority. It fails to try to teach "the goal of recreating life as it was lived."[103] This has resulted, as Gerda Lerner stated in her presidential address to the OAH in 1982, in a tendency among historians to order "the past within a frame of reference that supported the

---

[100]Henry Bamford Parkes, The United States of America: A History (New York: Harper & Row, 1953), pp. 338-39.

[101]White, p. 375.

[102]Ibid., pp. 382-83.

[103]Carson, in Quimby, Material Culture, p. 45.

values of the ruling elite, of which they themselves were a part."[104] This may be logically explained, or excused, in that historians cannot be so totally inclusive that they can recreate life as it was lived, and as a result of employing sources that speak of and to the ruling elite. Historians try "to explain certain aspects of past human behavior, aspects [they] and the historical fraternity have chosen over and above others."[105] The new social historian asks: "How were historic societies structured? How did their parts work together? What underlying forces eventually altered both structure and function?"[106] They wish to explain the social structure's function, its machinations, the process by which cultural values are consciously or unconsciously transmitted to each succeeding generation. Cultural historians who employ material culture as evidence are, according to Schlereth, called "process reconstructionists." They are "especially anxious to decipher the complex dimensions of cultural change and to sort out the intricate dynamics of cultural transformations of the past . . . they view their research as . . . a mode of inquiry seeking to establish general laws of behavior based upon

---

[104]Gerda Lerner, "The Necessity of History and the Professional Historian," Journal of American History 69, no. 1 (June 1982): 15.

[105]Carson, in Quimby, Material Culture, p. 35.

[106]Ibid., p. 48.

the evidence of documented events and extant objects."[107] In essence, such an approach begins by asking how, and then, secondarily, who, what, where, why, and when. Historians can make a place in their ideas for the study of artifacts by investigating the most intimate and smallest groups of society, such as the family and their associated artifacts. "Most artifacts, after all, were used in homes," states Cary Carson, "or where people gathered in small groups."[108] Thus, a natural social and cultural context of artifacts is found in families, neighborhoods, and communities, the vehicles or means employed for the transmission of cultural values, and not in the lives of history's documentarily articulate minority. And, as Carson explains, "it is surely here, in further understanding family matters and the affairs of communities, that artifacts must finally show their stuff or concede defeat."[109]

In a compelling example of how material culture evidence exhumed from archaeological excavations can be used to demonstrate past social and cultural norms and values, Carson discusses what he terms "the architecture of segregation" at colonial St. Mary's, Maryland. The earliest

---

[107] Schlereth, "Material Culture," p. 46.

[108] Carson, in Quimby, Material Culture, p. 51.

[109] Ibid.

examples of house types in St. Mary's were, according to archaeological findings, precisely the typical lowlands English type with a large hall and parlor divided by a large central chimney. Settlers of the early colony came from the English lowlands and brought this architectural type with them. Yet, as the colony developed, domestic architecture of a kind common to the English West Country predominated. This was not due to any increase in immigration from the West Country, as historical written evidence proves. It may well have been, however, due to the influx of indentured servants needed to work on the tobacco plantations of the Chesapeake Bay. The West Country architecture gave planters (the ruling class, as White would call them) a greater degree of privacy from their servants (the exploited class) who were attached to their households. Thus, domestic architecture "became the instrument of segregation . . . the arrangement of architectural space gave pattern to . . . relationships."[110]

This idea of privacy is also treated by David Flaherty in his Privacy in Colonial New England (1972). According to Flaherty, the main reason for the plastered interior walls, the hallway, and the expansion of rooms in Colonial New England was the desire for privacy, particularly in

---

[110]Ibid., pp. 54-56.

regard to sexual matters.[111] Moreover, because in 1764 some thirty-seven percent of all families in Massachusetts Bay Colony shared a dwelling, and because former end chimneys were made central with the addition of rooms, "families living together did not have to share the place around which a great deal of family life revolved."[112] By the eighteenth century, he contends, the "size and partitioning of homes had generally increased, so that both the servant and other family members had some opportunity to be alone."[113] It may be, then, that because the "Puritan concept of family encouraged mutual surveillance and the imposition of strict discipline in the interests of good behavior,"[114] the desire for privacy as evidenced in and provided by domestic architectural arrangements may have played a part in the ultimate end of the Puritan theocracy. Kenneth Ames, employing an interdisciplinary approach to material culture study, shows how the hallway and its furnishings (hallstands, umbrella stands, chairs) not only were emblems of Victorian upper middle-class respectability and gross materialism but also made the hallway "a sheltered testing

---

[111]David H. Flaherty, Privacy in Colonial New England (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1972), pp. 33-48.

[112]Ibid., pp. 51-82.

[113]Ibid., p. 64.

[114]Ibid., p. 83.

zone which some passed through with ease and others never got beyond."[115] Again, domestic architectural arrangements and artifacts shaped human social relationships and extended cultural values.

This idea is likewise seen in Richard C. Wade's Slavery in the Cities (1964), when he shows that the basic objective of urban slave housing was segregation. Not only did slave housing physically prevent outside human contacts, but the inward pitch of the master's house was a symbolic "architectural expression of the human relationship involved."[116] Moreover, the charming walled-in gardens of Old Charleston and Savannah were more "forbidding reminders of . . . servile confinement"[117] than expressions of the aesthetic values of Southern white elite culture. Today considered fashionable apartments in New Orleans and Charleston, extant urban slave quarters were separate from the master's house, built of solid brick, usually but ten by fifteen feet in dimension, had no windows, little if any furniture, and but a single door. It was, as Wade states, "not much of a home."[118] George McDaniel, in his Hearth and Home (1982),

---

[115]Kenneth L. Ames, "Meanings in Artifacts: Hall Furnishings in Victorian America," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 9, no. 1 (Summer 1978): 19-46.

[116]Richard C. Wade, Slavery in the Cities: The South 1820-1860 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 59.

[117]Ibid., p. 60.

[118]Ibid., p. 57.

paints a similar picture of slaveholding on antebellum Maryland plantations.[119] Thus, the artifact embodied in domestic architecture can be employed effectively by the historian, as Carson, Flaherty, Ames, and Wade have shown, in attempting to understand human relationships by placing the artifact in its proper cultural and historical context.

Artifacts may also be employed by the cultural historian in that they also have a symbolic function. According to White, a symbol is "a thing the value of which is bestowed upon it by those who use it . . . 'thing' because a symbol may have the form of a physical object."[120] Because people place value and meaning upon physical things, they become symbols. Additionally, "all symbols must have a physical form otherwise they could not enter our experience."[121] In this regard, artifacts may be employed as evidence documenting part of the Zeitgeist of the time they were produced, used, and valued.[122]

Unlike lower animals, man bestows and creates values and meanings. He transmits and receives values and meanings to symbols as a process of culture. "All human existence

---

[119] McDaniel, pp. 84-93.

[120] White, p. 25.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Schlereth, "Material Culture," p. 25.

depends upon it and it alone."[123] That is, the "use of symbols . . . makes the perpetuation of a culture possible. Without the symbol there would be no culture, and man would be merely an animal, not a human being."[124] As John Dewey, considered by Schlereth to be a pioneer in material culture artifact study,[125] stated: "Man . . . preserves his past experiences . . . man lives in a world where each occurrence is charged with echoes and reminiscences of what has gone before, where each event is a reminder of other things . . . he lives not . . . in a world merely of physical things, but in a world of symbols."[126] Humankind's means of cultural preservation and perpetuation is dependent upon the symbolic faculty. Since man makes things as part of his culture, the artifacts he leaves behind may be studied in order to understand culture and its value-rid characteristics better. As E. McClung Fleming states, "The artifacts made and used by a people are . . . a basic expression of that people . . . a necessary means of man's self-fulfillment."[127] Artifacts are not only the results of

---

[123]White, p. 29.

[124]Ibid.

[125]Thomas J. Schlereth, "Pioneers of Material Culture: Using American Things to Teach American History," History News 39, no. 9 (September 1982): 30-31.

[126]As cited in White, p. 46, from John Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy (New York: n.p., 1920), p. 1.

[127]Fleming, in Quimby, Winterthur Portfolio 9, p. 153.

ideas but, in their symbolic meaning, ideas themselves.[128] This symbolist perspective to artifact study is based, according to Schlereth, on the "conviction that forms of material culture reflect an age's climate of opinion."[129]

A new conceptual framework or paradigm for the study of artifacts by historians might be found in what can be called the "artifactual context." Intellectual history has been described as consisting of two approaches, the internal and external views. The internal view (idea to idea) deals more with individual imagination and is quite subjective; the external view (idea to action) is a multidisciplinary attempt, according to Richard Beringer, "to approximate the behaviorism of the social scientist, who is . . . concerned . . . with groups, and . . . attempts to generalize his findings into rules."[130] It would be helpful to borrow and modify these two approaches to intellectual history and look at material culture in an artificial context, consisting of internal and external views. Internally (in the internal artifactual context) this would mean considering the relation of the cultural value and its symbolism to the artifact; externally (in the external artifactual context) one would consider the relation of the artifact to its symbolic

---

[128]White, p. 47.

[129]Schlereth, "Material Culture," p. 44.

[130]Beringer, p. 9.

nature and cultural value. The internal artifactual context may be highly subjective, but it would not be an inquiry into pure abstraction because it deals with not only the thing itself but the value behind the artifact's creation and use. The external artifactual context (artifact to cultural value) is a consideration of the artifact's (or group of artifacts') role in shaping cultural values, human behavior, and relationships. An interesting example might be to ascertain the value behind and expressed in the barbecue grill. In the internal artifactual context it would be a matter of discovering why, with an abundance of electric and gas ranges in the twentieth century, would there be this modern adaptation of such a primitive cooking device? Externally, one might explore a resulting social consequence of the barbecue grill, that is, the family outdoor cookout. How is it that father, not mother, cooks outside, while the reverse is also true? Could this phenomenon show historians that cultural values are perpetuated by the use of the grill? That is, does the thing serve a symbolic function of perpetuating the domestic role in American culture, as home manager, as defined by Catherine Beecher in the nineteenth century?[131] Do women still rule the internal domestic environment, while the

---

[131]Dolores Hayden, The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), p. 55.

man's domain is the external? Or, is it a consequence of culture? That is, is the barbecue grill an artifact whose creation is determined by cultural values? These are genuine historical questions that may be explored by historians through the use of artifacts; it takes, as Carson succinctly put it, only an idea to prove or disprove.

To employ artifacts as documents, it is necessary to return to William B. Hesseltine's 1957 stricture that there exists no method of internal criticism for use by historians. That is, how can artifacts be looked at by historians? What questions can be asked of artifacts to provide meaning, data, and reliable information for understanding the past? Two paradigms have been created, derived from museum methodology. One model, provided by E. McClung Fleming, is quite complex and requires extensive firsthand experiential knowledge of artifact development.[132] The second, developed by Fred Schroeder,[133] professor of American Studies at the University of Minnesota, is much more perspicacious and lends itself well to the external and internal criticism of artifacts. While Schroeder's method will be discussed later, the reader will do well to consult Fleming's model also.

---

[132]Fleming, in Quimby, Winterthur Portfolio 9, pp. 153-57.

[133]Fred Schroeder, "Designing Your Exhibits: Seven Ways to Look at an Artifact," AASLH Technical Leaflet 91, History News 31, no. 11 (November 1976).

To begin with, historians should "read the object" with their hands; that is, discover to the extent possible how it was made. It does not mean, according to Schroeder, that the historian is prevented from making conclusions without an extended knowledge of the manufacturing process. It is based upon "some involvement with materials, to get a feel of the artifact." For example, attempting to "flake a flint, and failing; trying to spin wool into yarn and failing . . . these are . . . humanizing experiences in history and are worth quite as much as a dozen accurate footnotes."[134]

The next step in extracting information about an artifact involves more than the "purely mechanical concern with materials and manufacturing processes" and seeks to answer the question: "How was it used?" That is, what was the practical function of the artifact in its historical sociocultural context? Emphasis is placed upon ascertaining how it was used, after one discerns how it was made. It is known, for example, that flint arrowheads were fastened to shafts, and arrows were employed as hunting tools to provide food, feathers, and furs. Fishing buoys were used to float nets; churns were employed to produce butter or cheese. While these questions are all in the past tense, arrowheads, flat irons, etc., obviously still work; but are these

---

[134] Ibid., p. 2.

artifacts still in use today, especially for the same purposes? If not, one must try to understand why. That is, has the society changed, or has the function of the artifact changed? Has the environment or the material changed?[135]

This second way of criticizing an artifact "demands first that we ask 'How is/was it used?' and second, 'Why this artifact and this use at this time and in this place?'" For example, when one is confronted with the artifact embodied in the sad iron, it may not be possible to heat the device on a coal-fueled kitchen stove, but one can press fabric with it; "and while it may be possible to fix an arrowhead to an arrow and shoot it, it may not be possible (or legal) to use it to shoot an edible animal."

The actual physical act of using an artifact, even if only partially carried out, makes historians "more sensitive to the artifact and to other things like it." If the historian, for example, uses a butter churn, or a muzzle-loading percussion cap rifle, or any artifact, he can better judge its purposes, refinement, and variations in its development. He can also better understand the behavior involved in employing the device, whatever it may be. Did the use of the artifact, for example, a coal-fueled kitchen stove, because of its use, determine a certain set of common

---

[135]Ibid., pp. 2-3.

behaviors and values associated with it? The obvious limitations confronted by the historian in attempting to employ the artifact will, according to Schroeder's paradigm, "lead . . . to real historical investigation, and true cultural understanding." This is because artifacts did not exist in a vacuum, separate from culture, but within a cultural environment, "and the interrelationships within any environment are dynamic, not static." Thus, an artifact takes on meanings not previously associated with it. "A flat iron means a stove, and a stove means fuel,"[136] while fuel means the work involved in procuring it, which in turn leads to a geometric expansion of meanings and relationships concerning the production, distribution, and sale of fuel. As Schroeder admits, these first two ways of looking at an artifact are tactile and physical. While they may be deemed more suitable for those people with a low degree of literacy, such as children, they should not be considered as beneath the dignity of historians, for these two methods are also analytical and "can lead to highly sophisticated chemical, metallurgical, and industrial study."[137]

The third step in Schroeder's methodology revolves around the question: "What was the artifact's environment?" It is similar to the first two steps in that it is concerned

---

[136]Ibid., p. 3.

[137]Ibid.

with the artifact's physical reality. However, unlike the previous two analytical techniques, the third step is also synthetic. "That is, it is a way of looking at an artifact in which the artifact is placed into an environment of related artifacts." It is necessary, then, to have some knowledge of the object's function within its total cultural environment. Not only must one have an idea of how it was used, but one must ask, "What was the total environment in which it existed, and how can I recreate this?"[138]

As an example, Schroeder points out that hay forks and sickles existed and were used in fields, not museums; political campaign buttons were found on the lapels of coats "worn by living human beings, surrounded by songs and shouts and smoke and sweat."[139] While Schroeder specifically addresses museum personnel, his method is still of value to historians. Historians, like museum staff, can go to extreme lengths to recreate a total environment, but such recreated environments cannot be complete unless historians care about the news from, for example, a national nominating convention. What did such news mean to those in the past? The artifact must be related to its historic sociocultural milieu.

---

[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid.

These three methods of criticizing an artifact are largely tactile, but the four remaing ways are intellectual. This does not mean, however, that tactile responses are of no value, for they must be experienced before one may carry through with the paradigm. Thus, the fourth way of looking at an artifact "is to relate it to its relatives in the developmental history of the object." This is a matter of comparison, for example, of a sad iron to an electric iron, a gattling gun to a contemporary .50-caliber machine gun, or a Model-T Ford to a Ford automobile built in 1983. This adds a time dimension; it puts the artifact in a chronological framework. It is analytical because one must pay attention to different details and synthetics because one must "work it into a pattern."

Detail and comparison are the keys to the fourth way of looking at an artifact. This makes sense not only of museum displays but also of history. Knowing the details of fenders, bumpers, dashboards, or gearshifts allows the historian to make comparisons in relation to the development of an automobile through time. Developmental studies require knowledge of the artifact and "therefore depend upon some prior experience" on the part of the historian.[140]

Comparison is also important in the fifth way of looking at an artifact, in making cultural comparisons. It

---

[140] Ibid.

is not placed in a chronological framework but in what Schroeder terms the "cross-cultural context." A developmental study involves a single culture (a collection of political campaign buttons), but the fifth way "of looking at an artifact asks that . . . comparisons be made with similar artifacts from other cultures."[141] While it may not always be possible to do this, some artifacts do have "analogs in different cultures; others, in this day of mass production and mass distribution may be the same everywhere." Electric food processors, for example, are not native to all cultures; and, even when taken to the middle of the Saharah Desert, they are clearly identical to others of their kind, regardless of whether they are used in Chicago or Amsterdam or Peking.

Nevertheless, if one is to generalize about the particular class to which any artifact belongs, cross-cultural comparisons can be a very revealing way to look at artifacts. Comparing electric food processors may not be productive, but comparing food processors may be. When food processors are considered in their developmental form and are placed in the context of historical culture characteristics, the same cross-cultural comparisons can be made. Even when one's experience is too limited, it is possible to "know how to look at an artifact . . . [and] see it in

---

[141] Ibid.

its place of development." One can learn, for example, much about cultural values through toys, which are nearly universal. One might consider the values implied by a toy steam engine of the nineteenth century as opposed to a toy machine gun of the twentieth century. "Similar general classes are cooking utensils, woodworking tools, religious artifacts, weapons, light sources, footwear, musical instruments, cosmetics, [and] agricultural implements." Human and cultural differences do not exist in generalities, but generalities can be found in specifics. As Schroeder believes, "comparisons that are made can be gross or simple, or they can be subtle and sophisticated depending upon the depth and detail of your experience." For example, if a skilled banjo player is being watched, the way in which one looks at a Japanese koto, an Indian sitar, or a Russian balalaika is more sophisticated than it would be if the observer does not play a stringed instrument. "If you collect American coins, your way of looking at foreign coins will be better informed."[142]

By combining development through time and cross-cultural comparisons, one reaches the sixth method of looking at an artifact. Like the fourth and fifth methods of criticizing artifacts, the sixth way, that of "noting the influences," is based upon the general technique of theme and variations.

---

[142] Ibid.

However, it is also significantly different "in that one examines the influences that can be discerned in the design and decoration of the artifact." This may at first appear difficult to understand; but, as Schroeder demonstrates, architectural examples may help make this clear.

A building, while it may be judged as an oversized artifact, is one of the best examples with which to study artistic influences. This is because, "since the Renaissance, there have been 'revivals' in building designs and styles . . . particularly in the Americas."[143] Almost any village or city in America has examples of Roman, Greek, or Gothic Revival architecture; an Ionic, Doric, or Corinthian column on a house that is otherwise of a Gothic Revival style indicates a lasting influence of Greek Revival architecture in America.

Nearly every artifact has design features that may be examined for influences, yet some objects are more appropriate. "Decorative elements are obvious choices, but even overall design, such as in hammers or pancake turners, can be discerned and compared." It is necessary to consider changes in, for example, hammer design as they relate to practical use, historic development, changing environments,

---

[143] Ibid.

and traditions of culture. Schroeder explains:

> Consider all these things about hammers: claw-hammers were rarely needed until nails were available; lighter hammers when "balloon-frame" . . . construction developed; light weight metal handles had to wait for improved steel processing. And then, the different needs of shoemakers, upholsterers, wire fencers, dry wall installers, masons, autobody specialists have affected hammer design.[144]

Even so, in spite of such functional and practical influences on hammer design, there will still be decorative elements indicated, either in handle color or in trademarks. Similarly, one might study such artifacts as buttons, sewing machines, stoves, guns, saddles, religious icons, chair backs, lamps, door hinges and knobs for design influences.[145]

According to Schroeder, the final method of looking at an artifact is also the most abstract. It is an effort to ascertain what he terms "functional meanings or values." While abstract, it is also "the most creative." The functional meaning of an artifact is not the same thing as its practical function, as discussed in step two above. Functional meaning does not focus upon the question of "how does a thing work" but attempts to establish the cultural value placed upon the artifact by certain societal groups. Values are therefore functional meanings. Schroeder uses

---

[144] Ibid., p. 6.

[145] Ibid.

as an example the ubiquitous hubcap:

> Hubcaps are the wampum of the urban ghetto. They are stolen because they have value, and it is a sure thing that their values extend beyond what "the fence" will give for them. Eventually they will fall into patterns of beauty: this hubcap is cool, that hubcap is not.[146]

Thus, functional meanings involve well-established, or traditional, value systems and beliefs of an iconological, aesthetic, and mythical nature. While there is no absolute formula for establishing means and values, they can be recognized whenever people express their feelings about an artifact. While a practical function is not expressed, a subjective value is. When people give an artifact a sobriquet (the American flag being nicknamed "Old Glory," or the Colt .44 the "peacemaker"), or when people speak nostalgically about an artifact ("they don't make brooms as good as they used to"), or when a certain kind of apparently useless artifact is collected or keeps manifesting itself (a collection of matchbooks or empty beer cans), one may safely assume they have some value. According to Schroeder:

> If you think of the Statue of Liberty, the Model-T, the "wish-book" mail order catalog, the valentine, the cereal bowl with Shirley Temple's picture painted on it, the "Mother" pillow, the "No Third Term" campaign button, you will realize how complicated--and how real--the meanings of artifacts can be.[147]

---

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid., p. 7.

However, every artifact does not have a lasting functional meaning or value. Meanings and values change; and it would be, according to Schroeder, "a dangerous oversimplification to think that we can understanding the meaning of a kitchen coal-range to an Iowa farm woman of 1890, because regardless of how much we try to recreate the environment of that old range and the old time, we are forced always to view that environment from the outside, rather than from within."[148]

This seventh way to look at an artifact, then, necessarily means that values extending far beyond form, structure, manufacture, practical use, and detailed comparisons of styles or influences must be made. It is highly subjective but valuable nonetheless.[149]

Values in culture are thus an intrinsic, although invisible, element associated with artifacts. As such, they may be used by the historian to help elucidate the values prevalent in popular culture. In popular culture studies, a synonym for icon is the word artifact. The artifacts of any given era are reflective of the spirit of the time or of its Zeitgeist. As icons, artifacts "are associated with age and class groups. They demand a cult, a lore, a spot of

---

[148]Ibid.

[149]Ibid.

veneration. . . . Wherever they are placed [they objectify] something near man's essence."[150]

Artifacts might thus be employed by historians in determining part of the spirit of an era, in that their relative ubiquitousness or rarity in past cultures indicates not only their function and uses, popularity and sale but also the behavior of those people who used them, their values and notions about life in general. But, as Cary Carson suggested at the 1972 OAH annual meeting, written documents are necessary to make hypotheses derived from material culture relevant.[151] And artifacts make history relevant because, as stated by Carol B. Stapp of George Washington University, the "artifact has an authentic claim of its own . . . it is inescapably a 'reality.'"[152] Moreover, history provides information about what is in artifacts, while artifacts provide information for what is not often in history.

A handy combination of historical and artifactual evidence is embodied in the Sears and Roebuck catalogs for 1897 and 1908. These and other sources may possibly show

---

[150]Fishwick, p. 6.

[151]Weinstein, pp. 377-78.

[152]Carol B. Stapp, "Social Historians/Artifacts/Museum Educators," in Susan K. Nichols, ed., Working Papers: Historians/Artifacts/Learners (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, Museum Reference Center, 1982), p. 64.

how the artifact embodied in the shoulder brace can be made relevant to the Zeitgeist of the Progressive Era. History can provide information about what is in the artifact, while the artifact can provide information that reinforces historical interpretations derived from other sources. Functionally, these devices, with steel springs, created "a leverage that pushes in the protruding shoulder blades. They do the work and do not hurt."[153] For women, wearing a shoulder brace drew "the shoulders back so as to expand the chest and throw back the body into an erect and graceful position." For men, it put "the body into a graceful correct position, expanding the chest and correcting all tendency to stooping or round shoulders."[154] Their use, according to the advertising copy, was not for the treatment of back ailments but for cosmetic reasons. The use of the shoulder brace resulted in an erect, correct, graceful posture for women, children, and men who employed it. If such devices were fairly common--and it would appear that they were from their inclusion in the 1897 and 1908 catalogs--it suggests a certain formal cultural value continuity extending from the late Victorian Era, as part of the spirit of the Progressive Era. Men of the time were "self-reliant,

---

[153]Joseph J. Schroeder, ed., Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1908 (Northfield, Ill.: DBI Books, 1971), p. 804.

[154]Fred L. Israel, ed., Sears Roebuck Catalogue, 1897 (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1968), p. 46.

strong, resolute, courageous, honest, traits that people summed up simply as character."[155] These cultural characteristics of manliness were achieved "only by earnest, often desperate suppression of natural urges."[156] Certainly such a commonplace, unspoken, and natural urge to stand in a position other than attention was prohibited by the use of the shoulder brace, and helped to reinforce the outward appearance of manliness. The shoulder brace is relevant to the Zeitgeist of the Progressive Era in that it demonstrates and reflects the cultural value placed on a stiff, honest, resolute bearing. The disappearance of the shoulder brace may also indicate a change in cultural values to one connoting less formality. The artifact in question does not explain the entire spirit of the age, but it does help explain part of it. Admittedly, this is but a small and relatively obscure example and may be criticized by some as a glittering generality. However, to interpret this, or any, artifact's significance, it is necessary to ask if stiff posture is of any great cultural concern today.[157] Are shoulder braces commonly sold today? Are they commonly used today? The answer must certainly be no, and since

---

[155]Peter Gabriel Filene, Him Herself: Sex Roles in Modern America (New York: New American Library, 1975), p. 69.

[156]Ibid., p. 70.

[157]Fleming, in Quimby, Winterthur Portfolio 9, p. 161.

this is true, the shoulder brace as artifact gives an insight not only into the past but also of the cultural values both of the past and of the present. It helps interpret and gauge cultural change.

This is not a gross generalization, for it is probable that not all Americans used shoulder braces and that some may have employed them for the correction of physical problems. So, because the braces were not advertised in 1897 and 1908 as medical devices, their use was obviously intended to be cosmetic. Additionally, the advertisement in the 1908 catalog states that "they do the work." Does this indicate that while desirable, erect posture was largely unobtainable because of the increase and nature of clerical work associated with the rise of the middle class during the first two decades of the twentieth century?[158] Or does it mean that physical labor created objectionable stooped shoulders, a sign of weakness, gracelessness, that were easily avoided by the brace? Whatever it may mean, the artifact in question is more than a thing with no other significance than it once existed. It is an expression of cultural value; it is also an illustration of the internal artifactual context, or the relationship between cultural values and the artifact.

---

[158]Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order, 1877 to 1920, The Making of America Series, gen. ed., David Donald (New York: Hill & Wang, 1967), pp. 111-132.

A further test, following Carson's admonition, would be a study of etiquette books of the period. Using a literary content analysis approach, references to posture might be tabulated in an effort to establish it as a cultural value. One study of manners in America advises, "Don't walk with a slouching, slovenly gait. Walk erectly and firmly, but not stiffly."[159] It might be further worth while to determine if erect posture was of greater concern to a particular class or cultural segment of American society. In any event, the artifact can be employed in determining and understanding part of any era's Zeitgeist.

One sterling example of Carson's advice in establishing the relevancy of hypotheses derived from material culture evidence with the written word is John Demos' A Little Commonwealth. As Demos admitted, "physical remains are quite literally dumb; one . . . cannot automatically know all that its owner did with it or understand for certain the importance that he attached to it."[160] However, by using written documents such as wills, household inventories, and court records, Demos demonstrates, with the use of certain psychological concepts, family interaction and community opinion as they pertained to artifacts of colonial New England.

---

[159]Eric Sloane, Don't: A Little Book of Early American Gentility (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1968), pp. 27-28.

[160]Demos, pp. 27-28.

Demos was also quite aware that his book might be criticized as being too speculative and hypothetical. He states:

> . . . the demand for certainty--or at least for "proof"--while reasonable and laudable as a long range goal, need not be rigidly maintained at every stage of historical inquiry. Proof is relative in any case--and scholars should never . . . dismiss an important problem because of "insufficient data." . . . We must be ready to ponder what is likely to have happened--when more certain knowledge is lacking.[161]

For example, it would appear likely that furnishings in a typical New England house were placed against the walls so that the center of the home could be used for working space. But, as Demos freely admits, "this is only speculation; it is the kind of thing that cannot be finally verified."[162] Living conditions in Plymouth Colony were cramped. This would most likely mean that psychological aggression or "basic disruptions and discontinuities must be avoided at all costs."[163] In this way family life would remain on an even keel. Probably, then, early New England colonial families, and the culture they comprised, felt a pressure not to argue, to bottle up aggressive behavior. Thus, the behavior of people was affected by their housing, and, within the external artifactual context, more than

---

[161]Ibid., p. xiii.

[162]Ibid., p. 39.

[163]Ibid., pp. 49-50.

likely helped to perpetuate, if not cause, the cultural value of politeness, deference, or simply "getting along."

Historians are concerned with the study of humankind, and, as Cary Carson stated, so long as this is true, their "objective is to explain changing patterns of . . . behavior."[164] Recent trends in historical interpretation have resulted in a concern for the inarticulate masses of the past; and since they left little in the way of written records, the primary sources the historian can utilize to better understand their past culture and values may be found in the artifacts they left behind. This may be done by using a multidisciplinary approach to material culture study, an approach that is currently quite typical. According to Schlereth, "almost all of the truly innovative thinkers . . . [have] frequently borrowed methods and concepts from any number of other perspectives." Moreover, while individual material culture scholars "frequently exhibit inconsistencies . . . [they] are willing to experiment in their work as they try one assumptive framework or methodological perspective and then another, perhaps combining various elements of several approaches."[165] That is, the study of material culture artifacts by the historian is not only experimental, current, but also interdisciplinary.

---

[164]Carson, in Quimby, Winterthur Portfolio 9, p. 42.

[165]Schlereth, "Material Culture," p. 39.

Artifacts include many things, but perhaps most important is domestic architecture. As an artifact, domestic architecture--or common housing--not only serves as cultural expression but includes other artifacts, from tools to furnishings, materials and methods of construction, space, and most importantly, the people who used the artifacts. As such it may be the most important of all artifacts that the general historian may employ in the interdisciplinary new history and material culture study. Architecture is an artifact that allows the historian to study humankind and its cultural relationships to those things made and used to cope with an ever-changing environment. Architectural study, employing the written word and visual evidence, can aid not just in the classification, identification, and discovery of material culture evidence "but also . . . [in] analysis and interpretation . . . in the broad context of cultural history."[166] Domestic architecture and its development, as an artifact, may be employed as evidence, as Schlereth recently suggests, by the general historian in an interdisciplinary effort to test interpretations that are already established and based upon traditional sources.[167]

---

[166]Schlereth, Artifacts, p. 6. See also Mary Johnson, "What's in a Butterchurn or Sadiron? Some Thoughts on Using Artifacts in Social History," The Public Historian 5, no. 1 (Winter 1983), pp. 61-81.

[167]Schlereth, "Material Culture," p. 79.

CHAPTER III

ARCHITECTURE, VALUES, AND THE AMERICAN VERNACULAR AESTHETIC

A cliché that has come to be regarded as axiomatic holds that architecture reflects society's cultural values. This expression has become part of the lore of architectural history and historic preservation; and, while it contains an undeniable element of truth, it is seldom qualified, and leads to some questionable assumptions about societal values. It is too general a statement; it assumes that any given kind or style of architecture is a total embodiment of cultural values. This problem has occurred primarily because of this assumption and because frequently historians have not considered that the values expressed in architecture, as evidenced by the writings of architects, may not at all express the values of the documentarily inarticulate in history. What were their values? Once their values are ascertained, it becomes a matter of determining if indeed the writings of various architects relate to these values or to the values of the numerical minority, or to the documentarily articulate of history. The problem, then, has much to do with the nature of the evidence employed; that

is, it may be incorrect to assume that certain values associated with an architectural style reflect the values of society. This is because the writers on architecture may not, in fact, have shared common values inasmuch as their life styles, status, economic position and perceived prestige put them among the elite, not the great mass of the documentarily inarticulate. This is not to say that values, per se, are not reflected in architecture, but it is important to ask: what values? whose values? As Daniel J. Boorstin has suggested, "the bibliophile, the curator of museums of fine arts, and the historian of the most impressive architectural monuments is often polishing the relics of a small aristocracy."[1] Thus, the historic architecture that is studied is often that of a wealthy elite; architecture that was built to last. The architecture of the documentarily inarticulate, however, was not built to last; in fact, it was built not to last. Again, as Boorstin suggests, the migratory patterns and social mobility characteristic of a "democracy of haste" in the United States led Americans to tear down their first (and even second or third) homesteads in order to give their children a better life, a process that led them "to bury their humble ancestry."[2] Yet, while the majority of

---

[1]Daniel J. Boorstin, America and the Image of Europe: Reflections on American Thought (New York: World Publishing Co., 1964), p. 84.

[2]Ibid.

Americans moved constantly, a minority did not and built houses to last. To assume that the values associated with extant architecture, i.e. the architecture of the statistical minority, reflect majority values is to assume too much and ignores the historian's methodology of internal criticism. Indeed, as Alexis de Tocqueville noted: "A few scattered specimens of enormous buildings can . . . teach us nothing of the social conditions and the institutions of a people by whom they were raised . . . they do not make us better acquainted with . . . [the] greatness [of] its civilization, and its real prosperity."[3] Since most of the members of early and antebellum American civilization did not leave architectural remains, nor much in the way of written evidence concerning architecture, it has been assumed that that which remains is reflective of all social and cultural values. The built-in bias of the documentarily articulate elite has been accepted as expressive of all values. It will be necessary, then, to study value articulation as expressed in writings about architecture and compare them with core values to gain an understanding of the cultural significance of architecture in American history. Yet, before this can be done, it will be necessary to look briefly at a number of ways in which architecture has been interpreted and to define certain terms.

---

[3]Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, 2 vols. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 2:53-54.

Most interpretations of architecture deal with external appearances, with aesthetic treatments of architectural elements. This is not to say that such an approach has no merit, but that the "importance of this contribution . . . would . . . be our greatest chapter in the history of exterior space."[4] The history of architectural criticism has been based largely upon insights sprinkled in books on aesthetics and philosophy, architects' notebooks, poetry, novels, and short stories.[5] The bias here is immediately apparent. Most of the people of the past were neither architects, poets, philosophers nor professional writers. Therefore, the sources used for interpreting architecture are biased in favor of the documentarily articulate. For any interpretation of architecture to make sense, however, it must relate to the whole of culture, not merely a part, not merely the thoughts of the specialist. "Only in this way shall we be able to distinguish interpretations of architecture from critical fallacies and make clear that these fallacies derive from generalizations of poetic particulars, from illegitimate expansions upon elements characterizing a single figurative world."[6]

---

[4]Bruno Zevi, Architecture As Space: How to Look at Architecture, trans. Milton Gendel (New York: Horizon Press, 1957), p. 139.

[5]Ibid., p. 160.

[6]Ibid., p. 161.

It is doubtless legitimate and useful to make psychological, technical, political, social, or scientific studies of architecture, but it is a grave mistake to assume that such fragmentary historical accounts and contexts are complete histories, especially without providing any limiting or qualifying adjectives. Architecture needs to be related to the whole of culture, not just to one of its elements. The architectural historian Bruno Zevi has provided a discussion of three broad kinds of interpretations of architecture that are most typical. They are: 1) interpretations of content, 2) psychological and physiological interpretations, and 3) formalistic interpretations.[7]

Interpretations of content are further subdivided into political, religious-philosophical, economic-social, technical, materialist, and scientific approaches. Political interpretations, for example, attempt to place architectural development within the context of the political life of a period and its architecture. Political interpretations concern the origins of architectural currents as the symbolic representation of values in styles;[8] for example, Henry Hobson Richardson's Marshall Field warehouse was a symbol of utilitarian capitalistic democracy in the United

---

[7]Ibid., p. 163.

[8]Ibid., pp. 163-64.

States.[9] Religious-philosophical interpretations contend that architecture "is the visual aspect of history; that is, the way in which history appears."[10] An example would be that medieval Gothic architecture reflects the values and spirit of monasticism.[11] The scientific interpretation holds there are parallels between geometric and mathematical concepts and architecture, while the economic-social interpretation holds that architecture is an autobiographical account of the social institutions and economic systems of a given culture.[12] Lewis Mumford, for example, holds that neoclassical architecture reflects United States imperialism.[13]

A materialist interpretation holds that building materials and climate determine the form of architecture. According to Zevi, ancient Greek architecture derived its forms from the initial use of wood and a mild climate. In the arid climate of Egypt, roofs are flat, yet in Scandinavia and England, where climates are colder, roofs

---

[9]Alan Gowans, Images of American Living: Four Centures of Architectural and Furniture as Cultural Expression (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), pp. 360-62.

[10]Zevi, p. 165.

[11]Ibid., pp. 165-66. See also Erwin Panofsky, Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), p. 2.

[12]Zevi, p. 169.

[13]Lewis Mumford, Sticks and Stones: A Study of American Architecture and Civilization (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924), pp. 147-51.

are steeply pitched to shed rain and snow. Because Greek forms originated in wood, and because wood was abundant in America, Greek Revival architecture predominated in the antebellum United States.[14] A kind of non-Marxist material determinism is seen as working; that is, the kinds of materials used in building construction, in this case wood, determine the shape and form of architecture.

Physio-psychological interpretations are, in general, "generic literacy evocations of 'states of the soul' produced by architectural styles."[15] Architecture becomes a machine that produces predetermined human reactions. For example, Greek architecture is symbolic of an age of grace, Roman styles of an age of power, Gothic architecture symbolizes an age of aspiration, Renaissance architecture is the physical metaphor of an age of elegance, and all Revival styles represent an age of memory.[16] All such interpretations are based upon a theory of empathy that maintains that, of all modes of artistic expression, architecture offers the best indication of emotions. It remains in the area of aesthetics, not architectural history.[17]

---

[14]Zevi, pp. 169-72, 215-16.

[15]Ibid., p. 187.

[16]Ibid., p. 188.

[17]Ibid., pp. 192-93. See also Geoffrey Scott, The Architecture of Humanism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), pp. 168-71.

The formalist school of architectural interpretation holds that architecture must correspond to principles of unity, contrast, symmetry, balance, proportion, character, scale, style, truth, expression, urbanity, emphasis, variety, sincerity, and propriety.[18] As Zevi has pointed out, however, such terms are merely jargon "which various authors use as classifications without specifying what they refer to."[19] That is, if architecture is judged to be symmetrical or balanced, it is never asked: "For whom is it symmetrical or balanced?"[20]

Zevi concludes that: "All histories adopt one of these three interpretations as their principal method, but each adds some observations that derive from the other two methods. It is difficult to find a history of architecture that deals entirely with content or one that is exclusively formalistic."[21] Additionally, although he does not say so, Zevi is concerned with monumental, not domestic or common, architecture.

Traditionally, architectural theory and history have been concerned only with monuments, those unusual and artistic works of genius that most likely represent "a small,

---

[18]Zevi, pp. 193-200, 213.

[19]Ibid., p. 21.

[20]Ibid., p. 216.

[21]Ibid., p. 214.

often insignificant portion of the building activity in any given period."[22] Recently, however, emphasis has shifted from the monumental to what has been termed vernacular, or popular, architecture. This sharpened focus represents a recognition that the "buildings one lives in, works in, and plays in, reveal personal and cultural values."[23]

Common domestic houses are constructed of common, inexpensive materials. Architectural monuments are, in all cultures, constructed of scarce, expensive, and durable materials. As such, particularly if they are homes, monuments are expressions of permanent values, ways of life, images and perceptions. Vernacular housing, according to Amos Rapoport, is on the other hand a direct expression of changes in values, ways of life, and belief systems.[24] The possibility of conflict in cultural values--permanent versus impermanent values--then begins to surface when the different nature of the two kinds of architecture is considered. Because finer and more expensive houses are built with durable materials and are therefore scarce, they are seen as value statements for an entire culture. Yet, ironically,

---

[22]Amos Rapoport, House Form and Culture, Foundations in Cultural Geography Series (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 1.

[23]Richard Guy Wilson, "Popular Architecture," in M. Thomas Inge, ed., Handbook of American Popular Culture, 2 vols. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 1:265.

[24]Rapoport, pp. 10-12.

common domestic architecture, not built of durable materials, does not last, and these houses are therefore not seen as value expressions. In fact, their scarcity really makes them all the more valuable. According to Richard Guy Wilson,

> While to some eyes architecture is only the very rarefied "high art" of the top 5 percent of the built environment, if properly constructed, architecture is concerned with all forms of design. . . . The vast array of the mass environment . . . constitutes at least 95 percent of our surroundings.[25]

It is true that public and semipublic buildings may be seen as concrete expressions of a world view of culture; but it is likewise true that common buildings, from houses to barns to gas stations, reflect values in the same way.[26] It is necessary to differentiate between what is common and atypical as well as the values associated with each. Architecture, then, as high art, represents the values of the top five percent of any given society, while common architecture reflects the values of the other ninety-five percent, or the mass of history's documentarily inarticulate. It becomes a matter of relating differences in values and ways of life to architectural forms.

---

[25]Wilson, in Inge, 1:265.

[26]Ibid. See also Thomas J. Schlereth, "Material Culture Studies in America, 1876-1976," in Thomas J. Schlereth, ed., Material Culture Studies in America (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), p. 40.

A major problem with this approach reverts back to Boorstin's comment. Historically speaking, there remain few examples of historically common domestic architecture in the United States, primarily because permanent homes were not valued by Americans. They were not built to last because of the cultural values characteristic of the "democracy of haste." What does remain, while certainly worthy of protection and preservation, is atypical and reflects what were most likely values that were not held in common by most Americans. While examples of historic and common domestic architecture do exist (such as log cabins and shotgun cottages), there are relatively few. It is therefore difficult to make interpretive generalizations based on so small a known sample. After a comprehensive survey of such cultural resources is completed, accurate generalizations will be made, perhaps by computer quantification methods. In the meantime, since it is not really known that the majority of the documentarily inarticulate in history left numerous examples of either written or visual architectural evidence of their values, it is necessary to compare the values held by the majority as well as by the elite to try to ascertain why American domestic architecture developed the way it did. In other words, do the values articulated by various writings on domestic architecture, the evidence of the documentarily articulate,

reflect the values of the ninety-five percent, or of only the top five percent?

It has been effectively argued by Amos Rapoport that "house form . . . is the consequence of a whole range of socio-cultural factors in their broadest terms . . . the socio-cultural sources primary, and the others secondary or modifying. . . . Buildings . . . are the visible expression of the relative importance attached to different aspects of life and the varying ways of perceiving reality."[27] Architecture is indeed an expression of values. But whose values?

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to define certain terms critical to this study. What are values? How do they function in culture? Values are defined as the social principles, goals, or standards held or accepted by individuals, classes, and society. They represent, speak of, and define preferences, and are derived from beliefs.[28] A social value has been defined as "a relatively enduring awareness plus emotion regarding an object, idea,

---

[27]Rapoport, p. 47. See also Henry Glassie, Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), pp. 10, 12-14.

[28]Alvin L. Bertrand, Basic Sociology: An Introduction to Theory and Method, Sociology Series, ed. John F. Cruber and Alfred C. Clarke (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), pp. 75-76.

or person."[29] (Emphasis added.) Moreover, 1) values are abstract sentiments that are learned from one's experiences; 2) they necessarily involve some kind of understanding that has an emotional aspect; 3) they serve as criteria for the selection of behavioral goals (people strive for those things they place value upon); and 4) because they relate to choices that precede action, they are not trivial.[30]

Norms, on the other hand, are defined as "required or acceptable behavior in given situations. . . . They provide standards for judging behavior and for behaving."[31] While norms take precedent over abstract sentiments--values --they are justified by reference to values.[32] Additionally, "the norms of one group can be recognized as in conflict with the norms of the greater society."[33] Since norms are justified by values, values can also be in conflict.

Values are not only learned but internalized and become part of the personality, serving as a basis for

---

[29]Arnold W. Green, Sociology: An Analysis of Life in Modern Society, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 143.

[30]Robin M. Williams, American Society: A Sociological Interpretation, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), p. 400.

[31]Bertrand, Basic Sociology, p. 28.

[32]Ibid., p. 77.

[33]Ibid.

automatic reactions to given stimuli. Values do differ, but more in degree--from positive to negative--than in kind.[34]

Dominant values are those which take precedence over others, while ones of lesser significance are subordinate values. Dominant values "make up the value system of a given society. . . . In essence, dominant values serve as a background or frame of reference for everyday behavior."[35]

Sociologist Robin Williams gives a four-part test for determining dominant values. Within any given social system or social group, value dominance can be ranked and determined according to: 1) a measure of the value's extensiveness in terms of the ratio of the population and in terms of the activities of the population which indicates the value; 2) a determination of the value's duration--how long in time it has persisted; 3) a determination of the intensity with which the value is sought or maintained, measured in terms of verbal affirmation, effort, crucial choices, and reactions to threats of the value itself; and 4) a determination of the prestige of organizations, persons, or--more importantly for this argument--objects considered as value bearers, measured in such terms as reputation and high or low status.[36]

---

[34]Ibid., pp. 79-80.

[35]Ibid., pp. 80-81.

[36]Williams, A Sociological Interpretation, pp. 409-10.

As stated, values vary, and differences in values relate to normative themes. This "provides a foundation for the value system approach to the study of societal values"--values in their general sense, or "core values."[37] When sociologists refer to a value system of a culture, they speak of a society's "core values." While a given core value (or set of core values) is not comprehensively held by all persons or groups in a society, "a sufficient number of its members subscribe to the value to make it one of the important determinants of behavior."[38] Making choices is a part of behavior patterned by core values. "The researcher who sets out to describe the value system of a given society looks for overriding relationships and interconnections which help explain order in society."[39] If such connections are not evident, then there exists either an insignificant or no relationship to the society's core values.

Before a description of American core values is given, with the suggestion that there exist "core architectural values," the study of values in a scientific, or objective, manner needs to be justified. Because values are internalized, it is difficult to give them credence as existing

---

[37]Bertrand, Basic Sociology, p. 81.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid., pp. 81-82.

at all. However, they can be and should be, studied scientifically.

The functions of values must be described. Value function may be expressed "as the provision of substantial clues for the prediction of behavior."[40] Sociological studies of values have shown that a specific set of values --core values--may be the key factor in the rejection or acceptance of more efficient or new practices.[41] Knowing the core values of any given society or group in that society can be a useful tool in the prediction of group behavior when responding to specific stimuli.[42] While such studies are the product of twentieth-century scholarship and scientific inquiry, it is possible to apply their findings to the past. Examples of this kind of work are found in Joseph Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade (1963), John Demos, A Little Commonwealth (1970), Kathryn K. Sklar, Catherine Beecher (1973), and William Rorabaugh, The Alcoholic Republic (1979).[43] These works neither smack of reductionism

---

[40]Ibid., p. 85.

[41]Harold L. Pederson, "Cultural Differences in the Acceptance of Recommended Practices," Rural Sociology 16, no. 1 (March 1951): 37-49.

[42]Olen E. Leonard, "Rural Social Values and Norms," in Alvin L. Bertrand, ed., Rural Sociology (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1958), pp. 39-40.

[43]Joseph R. Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1963); John Demos, A Little

nor represent a presentist approach. According to a contemporary behavioral psychology, the fact that people behave in certain automatic ways does not mean they were subject to different behavioral mechanisms in the past. Certainly circumstances in the past were different and provided different stimuli to provoke behavior, but the basic mechanisms of behavior remain the same. If it is accepted as true that values play a role in behavior, that they can be utilized to predict behavior in response to given stimuli in the twentieth century, then certainly people reacted the same way in the past. It has been only in the twentieth century that these axioms have been discovered and generalized by such psychologists as Ivan P. Pavlov, William T. James, John B. Watson, Charles L. Hull, and B. F. Skinner.[44]

Values can be studied scientifically. "Whenever a cultural fact has significance or historical reference, it

---

Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catherine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1973); William Rorabaugh, The Alcoholic Republic (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

[44]Laurence Frederic Shaffer and Edward Joseph Shoben, Jr., The Psychology of Adjustment: A Dynamic and Experimental Approach to Personality and Mental Hygiene (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1956), pp. 3-32, 104-23; and Robert C. Boles, Theory of Motivation (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), pp. 21-50, 186-87, 194-97, 213-14, 388-89.

also contains a value."[45] Significance, however, does not connote cause; it does not mean organic needs. Shelter for a family is a need, but how the need for shelter is satisfied is the question to be answered. By referring to the values adhered to by a given culture, one can better understand the how of the question. Anthropologists maintain that the large segments of culture--religion, science, art--begin to come into operation only after "primal needs have been satisfied, have had their tensions reduced or alleviated."[46] The reverse is also true. If a large segment of culture, such as art, is not perceived as included in the core values of a society, it may be said that primal needs have not been satisfied, that tensions arising from the behavior of satisfying primal needs have not been reduced. In American history the appearance of large segments of culture has, in a Turnerian sense, surfaced after a geographical area was settled. The American Art Union was begun in New York City, not on the frontier. As Americans moved west, they had to satisfy primal needs, and as one area became settled and primal needs were satisfied, large segments of culture successively sprang into operation. This would mean that by 1890 the satisfaction of primal needs, and not large segments of culture, may have been the

---

[45]Alfred L. Kroeber, "The Scientific Study of Values," in Walter Goldschmidt, ed., Exploring the Ways of Mankind (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 426.

[46]Ibid., pp. 426-27.

primary concern of most Americans. If this is so, then large segments of culture would not be reflected in core values. Large segments of culture cannot be explained as a function of physiological needs.

A culture is defined "as a way of habitual acting, feeling, and thinking channeled by a society out of an infinite number and variety of potential ways of living."[47] The particular direction employed is ponderously shaped by the past, by "antecedent ways and organizations or systems of culture . . . within certain limits."[48] To continue in a Turnerian vein, therefore, if the historical fact of westward movement was responsible for shaping and molding American civilization and values, the ways and organizations or systems of culture were directed by the frontier experience. Until that experience ended in 1890, then, large segments of the population were, by virtue of the frontier experience, more concerned with satisfying primal needs than with large segments of culture, for example, art. The limits may be seen as the Pacific Ocean and time--in this case, 1890.

Every system of culture has within it a system of varied and persistent affects.

> Interconnected with these affects is a system of ideas and ideals, explicit and implicit. The combined affect-idea system of a culture . . . reflects

---

[47]Ibid., p. 427.

[48]Ibid.

> the habitual ways of action of members of a society, validates these ways . . . and controls and modifies these ways. It is in the affect-laden idea system that . . . the core of a culture is usually considered to reside: in it lodges its values, norms, and standards--its ethos and eidos.[49]

The significance of a cultural trait is the degree to which it has been integrated into culture.[50] A house may be viewed as a cultural trait--a material cultural trait--"because it represents a material product of learned behavior." Additionally, a trait of material culture is more easily recognizable than a nonmaterial trait. Nonmaterial cultural traits, such as values, relate to the house and would include, broadly speaking, values associated with exterior and interior decoration, form, comfort, and convenience. It is accepted, moreover, that cultural traits do not exist in a vacuum, sequestered from other traits in any given culture.[51] Cultural traits are the smallest subdivisions that have a categorical significance for understanding the culture complex they compose.[52] A high degree of integration of a trait in a culture would indicate it has major significance for the culture as a functional unit. The reverse also holds true. Yet, if a trait is seen as

---

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Bertrand, Basic Sociology, p. 91.

[52]Ibid., pp. 91-92.

having a low level of integration, it may yet have significance "as an index of historical relationship with other cultures."[53] As an example to be pursued later, the relatively low level of integration of Gothic Revival architecture in America[54] could indicate 1) it was not significant in American culture and 2) it was significant as an indication of a certain historical relationship with European, more specifically English, culture.

But still it can be asked if the study of values is justified. By refusing to deal with values, people refuse "to deal with what has the most meaning in particular cultures as well as in human culture seen as a whole. . . . It is possible to attempt to explain the value-rid phenomena of the culture and their charges with some causality--or possibly by a teleology."[55] Moreover, it would be difficult to deny that it is a traditionally accepted "practice in the description of . . . civilizational phases by historians to formulate the values of . . . cultures.[56]

It is necessary to remain objective in the study of values and to recognize that "they do exist in human

---

[53]Kroeber, in Goldschmidt, p. 427.

[54]Gowans, p. 307.

[55]Kroeber, in Goldschmidt, p. 427.

[56]Ibid., pp. 427-28. See, for example, Edward Pessen, Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics, The Dorsey Series in American History, rev. ed. (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1978, pp. 4-32.)

societies at given times and places." It is a matter of referring "to values as they make their appearance in the history of our species . . . to values as natural phenomena occurring in nature--much like the characteristic forms, qualities, and abilities of animals are defined in comparative zoology." People should objectively recognize them as existing, whether in the past or present, ascertain those values, and make no judgements concerning their superiority or inferiority.[57] Restriction to values and their characteristics as well as functions is imperative.

Robin Williams has provided a list of fifteen American core values. They include: 1) achievement and success, 2) activity and work, 3) humanitarian mores, 4) efficiency and practicality, 5) moralism, 6) progress or an emphasis on the future, 7) material comfort, 8) equality, 9) freedom, 10) science and secular rationality, 11) external conformity, 12) nationalism and patriotism, 13) a belief in democracy, 14) notions of group superiority, and 15) individualism.[58]

---

[57] Ibid., p. 428.

[58] Williams, A Sociological Interpretation, pp. 415-68. See also John F. Cruber, William F. Kenkel, Robert A. Harper, Problems of American Society: Values in Conflict, 4th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1964), p. 396; Lee Coleman, "What is American? A Study of Alleged American Traits," Social Forces 19, no. 2 (May 1949): 492-99; and Cora Du Bois, "The Dominant Value Profile of American Culture," American Anthropologist 57, no. 4 (December 1955): 1232-39.

Can these core values be related to the domestic architecture of the documentarily inarticulate? The task would be much easier if there existed a body of literature that evidenced value articulation concerning the subject, but no such literature exists. Nowhere can there be found verbal evidence concerning what values the inarticulate placed upon their housing; their houses do not exist, and if they thought about it in any great depth, they left no blatant indication that they did. Moreover, why should it be expected that they would? Housing was a primal need, and the majority of Americans, it may be assumed until 1890, viewed it just that way. Additionally, they had as a core value on orientation to the future, not the past. Yet, according to some secondary literature, some values associated with architecture are uniquely American, and for the purposes of this argument, can be termed "core architectural values."

For instance, formal parity, the correctness in accordance with certain orthodox architectural principles (such as entasis in Greek architecture), especially for their own sake, are not American core architectural values, although they were for "a tiny minority of the American people."[59]

---

[59] J. Meredith Neil, Toward a National Taste: America's Quest for Aesthetic Independence (Honolulu, Hawaii: University Press of Hawaii, 1975), p. 144.

Comfort and convenience, however, are two core architectural values. While external concerns were early quite important in the classical revival, the strict use of architectural principles (e.g., entasis) were, as Benjamin Latrobe stated, "in general inapplicable to the objects and uses of our public buildings." Good arrangement, in accordance with rational thought, became the foremost architectural core value, placed before durability or a wish for "a magnificent piece of scenery."[60] Latrobe's domestic work, as seen in the Markoe house in Washington, D. C., "had no external merit at all, in the eyes of its architect being entirely 'created by interior needs.'"[61] American homes, Latrobe recognized, had as their most important design criterion "the greatest possible compactness, and convenience for the family, expressed in the very word, comfort and modern means of entertaining company."[62] Latrobe therefore recognized function as an important value associated with housing in America. Architecture had to function in a practical manner to facilitate comfort and convenience. He suggested avoiding outbuildings, having easy access to the kitchen and/or office--never place kitchens in a cellar, reserving the best rooms for the façade or the main entry, placing those rooms

---

[60]As cited in Neil, p. 152.

[61]Neil, p. 153.

[62]Ibid.

in which women were to work all on one floor,[63] and fitting such a house on a 102'x175' lot.[64] Simplicity was therefore a must; and, while he was partly responsible for introducing the ornate Gothic Revival in America, he wrote in 1816, "I have several Mortal Architectural sins to answer for. . . . One of them is poisoning the taste of towns by a morbid tendency toward Gothic Architecture."[65] Latrobe, then, understood and related core American values to architecture. Common American domestic architecture, in general, is and was characterized by an emphasis on functional simplicity. Certainly the formerly ubiquitous log cabin represented this value. Beauty, as an American core architectural value, meant abandoning applied ornaments and the use of essentially instrumental forms and parts.[66] Convenience and comfort, then, became essential in the American aesthetic regarding architecture. While Europeans, like Charles Dickens, might assert that America had no examples of architectural taste, Americans would counter with assertions that utility proved the existence of architectural

---

[63]Ibid., p. 154.

[64]Ibid., pp. 154-55.

[65]Ibid., p. 160.

[66]John A. Kouwenhoven, Made in America: The Arts in Modern Civilization, 2nd ed. (Newton Centre 59, Mass.: Charles T. Bradford Co., 1957), pp. 13-42, 78.

taste. Utility, practicality, comfort and convenience became the core architectural values in America, or the American vernacular aesthetic.[67]

As early as 1800, in an article entitled "On American Mansions," is found the comment that only those "who inherit power, and may probably be dolts or changelings, need these artificial decorations to preserve them from contempt."[68] The populistic, egalitarian, democratic, practical core values expressed in this statement "typified the ideological significance of architectural theory and criticism in the first generation of the United States' existence."[69] It may not be insignificant that in 1800 are seen the beginnings of the rise of Jeffersonian Republicanism and the nadir of the Hamiltonian Federalists. In any event, by 1815 America had developed its own vernacular aesthetic as it applied to architecture,[70] specifically, core architectural values.

---

[67]Neil, pp. 164-70, 282. See also Charles Dickens, American Notes and Pictures from Italy (1842; reprint ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 26, 65.

[68]Neil, p. 169, as cited from L. M., "On American Mansions," The Monthly Magazine and American Review, October 1800, pp. 241-42.

[69]Ibid.

[70]Ibid.

These values are reflected as well in the antebellum writings of Mrs. L. C. Tuthill, Lewis F. Allen, to a lesser extent by Andrew Jackson Downing, and to an extraordinary degree by Catherine E. Beecher.[71] Thus, comfort, convenience, practicality, and functional design remained core architectural values in America. This is not to deny that beauty and elegance were also valued in domestic architecture, but only to relegate such aesthetic values to a subordinate, not dominant, category in American culture.

These core architectural values were expressed, then, by utility, "simplicity, lightness, strength of construction,

---

[71]Mrs. L. C. Tuthill, History of Architecture from the Earliest Times: Its Present Condition in Europe and the United States, With a Biography of Eminent Architects and Glossary of Architectural Terms (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1848), pp. 210-11; Lewis F. Allen, Rural Architecture: Being a Complete Description of Farm Houses, Cottages and Out Buildings, Comprising Wood Houses, Workshops, Tool Houses, Carriage and Wagon Houses, Smoke and Ash Houses, Ice Houses, Apiary or Bee House, Poultry Houses, Rabbitry, Dovecote, Piggery, Barns, and Sheds for Cattle, &c., &c., &c., Together With Lawns, Pleasure Grounds, and Parks; the Flower, Fruit and Vegetable Gardens. Also Useful and Ornamental Domestic Animals for the Country Resident, &c., &c., &c. Also the Best Method of Conducting Water into Cattle Yards and Houses (New York: C. M. Saxton, 1852), pp. ix-xi, xiii-xiv, 13-14, 16-17, 21, 23-24, 28-29, 65-68, 101-113; Andrew Jackson Downing, Rural Essays, ed. George William Curtis (New York: Leavitt and Allen, 1856), pp. 166, 208; and Andrew Jackson Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, Including Designs for Cottages and Farm-Houses and Villas, With Remarks on Interiors, Furniture, and the Best Modes of Warming and Ventilating (New York: n.p., 1850; reprint ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1969), pp. 3-9; and Catherine E. Beecher, A Treatise on Domestic Economy: For the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School (Boston: Marsh, Capen, Lyon, and Webb, 1841), pp. 271-74.

and wide availability."[72] One uniquely American construction development, the balloon frame, facilitated the realization of these values in architectural form. Indeed, balloon framing allowed houses to be "constructed without reference to any requirements other than those of utility, and they were often appallingly unattractive."[73] Unattractive or not, they nonetheless expressed core values. Balloon framing was so practical and required so few technical skills that by 1855 the influential writer Solon Robinson bluntly stated: "To erect a balloon-building requires about as much mechanical skill as it does to build a board fence."[74] The very fact that this method of housing construction was so widely used in America served not only to perpetuate core architectural values but to set "a pattern for decades to come."[75] While Americans did borrow

---

[74]As cited in Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans: The National Experience (New York: Viking Press, 1974), p. 152. See also Herbert Anthony Kellar, ed., Solon Robinson, Pioneer and Agriculturist, 2 vols. (Indianapolis, Ind.: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1936; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1968), vol. 1, 1825-1845, pp. 553-557; and Gervase Wheeler, Homes for the People, in Suburb and Country: The Villa, the Mansion, and the Cottage (New York: Charles Scribner, 1855), pp. 408-14; and George W. Woodward, Country Homes (New York: George E. Woodward, No. 119 Broadway, 1865), pp. 151-66.

[75]Boorstin, National Experience, p. 148. See also Carl Condit, American Building Art: The Nineteenth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 22-25; Sigfried Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition, 5th ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 346-54; and Turpin C. Bannister, "Architectural Development of the Northeastern States," Architectural Record 89: no. 6 (June 1941): 61-80.

various architectural styles from Europe, the "essential point . . . is that . . . certain characteristics recur which distinguish the American examples from their European contemporaries; and these characteristics clearly reflect the recurring influence of the vernacular tradition."[76] These characteristics are a flexible floor plan, plain surfaces, and an unembellished interior.[77] Thus, the American vernacular aesthetic, as it relates to architecture, in fact reflected those core values of practicality, utility, external conformity, rationalism, equality, activity, and work, as well as material confort.

Yet there was conflict as well as continuity in values, expressed in the writings of Andrew Jackson Downing, Lewis F. Allen, and Catherine E. Beecher, during the antebellum period of American history. The articulation of these and other values at times fit core values and at other times conflicted with them. An assessment of such values and the impact of these writers upon the development of American domestic architecture will therefore be made, within the context of American antebellum reform and American core values.

---

[76]Kouwenhoven, p. 68.

[77]Ibid., pp. 75, 123.

CHAPTER IV

AMERICAN ANTEBELLUM CULTURE: LIFE STYLES AND ARCHITECTURAL REFORM

Ralph Waldo Emerson confided in his journal in 1840 that "In the history of the world the doctrine of Reform had never such scope as at the present hour. . . ." He noted that, in the past, respect and deference had been paid to many institutions.

> But now all these & all else hear the trumpet & are rushing to judgement. Christianity must quickly take a niche that waits for it in the past, and figure as Mythology henceforth and not kingdom, town, statute, rite, calling, man, woman, or child, but is threatened by the new spirit.[1]

Emerson's words are interesting in that they speak of the cacophony of a variegated array of reforms in the antebellum era of American history and because of his use of the word "threatened." He saw "the new spirit" as a threat to nearly everything. Clearly he felt menaced because of reform. It is puzzling in that Emerson, a transcendentalist

---

[1]As cited in Gerald N. Grob and George Athan Billias, eds., Interpretations of American History: Patterns and Perspectives, 4th ed., 2 vols. (New York: Free Press, 1982), vol. 1, To 1877, p. 262, from The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 14 vols. (Cambridge: n.p., 1960-1978), 7:403.

reformer himself,[2] was threatened by the very thing in which he was engaged. Was his anxiety a stimulus for his reform? Why was he threatened?

The question of anxiety reaction as a motive for reform is not new in the historiography of nineteenth-century American reform. George E. Mowry and Richard Hofstadter both saw psychological status anxiety on the part of displaced elite groups as a prime motive for reform in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[3] David Donald interpreted abolitionist reform as a result of anxiety manifested by "old socially dominant Northeastern families" who had become "an elite without function, a displaced class in American society." They engaged in reform in order to regain lost prestige.[4] Robert A. Skotheim questioned the validity of Donald's argument on the grounds that other groups in society who did not engage in abolitionism were of the same general social background. Donald

---

[2]Paul F. Boller, Jr., American Transcendentalism, 1830-1860: An Intellectual Inquiry (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1974), pp. 101-107.

[3]George E. Mowry, "The California Progressive and His Rationale: A Study in Middle Class Politics," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 36, no. 2 (September 1949): 239-50; and Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F. D. R. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959), pp. 135, 140, 174-75.

[4]David Donald, Lincoln Reconsidered: Essays on the Civil War Era (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), pp. 33-34.

then found that status anxiety was a cause for the Southern proslavery argument, that anxiety was interpreted as a stimulus which made people "act in some way."[5] It is plausible then that status anxiety can be interpreted as a motive for many behaviors, social and moral reform being one of them. Clifford S. Griffin and Michael B. Katz also interpreted the formation of benevolent societies and educational reform as stemming from desires on the part of reformers to maintain and gain status threatened by social changes.[6]

One of the more interdisciplinary interpretations, seeing anxiety as the primary motive for reform, is that of sociologist Joseph R. Gusfield. In his Symbolic Crusade (1963), Gusfield suggests that all moral reforms represent the way in "which a cultural group acts to preserve, defend, or enhance the dominance of its style of living within the

---

[5]Richard E. Beringer, ed., Historical Analysis, Contemporary Approaches to Clio's Craft (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978), pp. 169-70, as cited from Robert Allen Skotheim, "A Note on Historical Method: David Donald's 'Toward a Reconsideration of Abolitionists,'" Journal of Southern History 25 (August 1959): 356-65, and David Donald, "The Proslavery Argument Reconsidered," Journal of Southern History 37 (February 1971): 3-18.

[6]Clifford S. Griffin, Their Brother's Keepers: Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1855 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1960), pp. x-xiii; and Michael B. Katz, The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 218.

total reform."[7] David J. Rothman also contends that anxieties resulting from social disorder in the antebellum era led certain elite groups to promote institutional reforms.[8] Kathryn Kish Sklar, in her biography of Catherine Beecher (1973), believes that Beecher directed the "explosive potential of nineteenth-century social change [in order to] bring it at least partially under the control of a national elite."[9] William Rorabaugh interprets alcoholism in America as a result of anxieties caused by social change.[10] Ronald Walters, while seeing no commonalities in regard to the social backgrounds of antebellum reformers, recognizes that reformist activities provided men with moral authority and gave women greater public influence. Antebellum reformers, according to Walters, "mingled old and new solutions to problems. They were often driven by a desire to adopt traditional values to new situations, to restore an old

---

[7]Joseph R. Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1963), p. 3, also pp. 5, 17-18, 65-66.

[8]David J. Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1971).

[9]Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catherine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1973), p. xii.

[10]William Rorabaugh, The Alcoholic Republic (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 146, also pp. 174-75.

order by building new structures."[11] This last comment may be taken literally when considering the reform of domestic architecture in antebellum America.

The fundamental force that caused these anxieties was social change and the tensions it produced. As Kathryn Sklar states: "The greater the social, political, and economic expansiveness in the country at large, the greater the tensions, and the keener the need to discover ways to reduce conflict."[12] Both expansiveness and change were characteristic of America in the antebellum era.

What was the nature of the change taking place in antebellum America? It may be summed up by Hezekiah Niles, editor of Niles' Weekly Register, who in 1815 remarked that the most distinguishing feature of the typical American was "the almost universal ambition to get forward."[13] This desire and the conditions that promoted economic expansion "generated an undertone of anxiety in Jacksonian America, a fear that the simple virtues of an ideal republic were endangered by the gospel of the big chance, the ambition

---

[11]Ronald G. Walters, American Reformers, 1815-1860, American Century Series (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), pp. xii-xiv, also pp. xi-xii, 12-13.

[12]Sklar, p. 156.

[13]John William Ward, "The Politics of Design," in Laurence B. Holland, ed., Who Designs America? (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1966), pp. 53-54.

to get ahead."[14] Americans were on the move, constantly, and America at that time has been characterized as the "democracy of haste."[15] Rapid economic expansion and flux were both characteristic of antebellum America,[16] and are recognized as a destabilizing force in the social relations, economics, and politics of newly emerging nations in the twentieth century.[17] Edward Pessen, perhaps the foremost historian of the antebellum era, has remarked that social trends in Jacksonian America, from increased social and class consciousness to the urban explosion, population increases, and reform,"all rested upon the new ways of producing and moving goods that marked the period."[18] Thus, Jacksonian America was characterized by rapid change that caused anxiety. Anxiety becomes, and is, a motive for behavior,[19] and reform is a kind of behavior that is

---

[14]Ibid., p. 54.

[15]Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans: The National Experience (New York: Viking Press, 1974), pp. 107-12.

[16]Edward Pessen, Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics, The Dorsey Series in American History, rev. ed. (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1978), pp. 78, 101-104.

[17]Mancur Olson, Jr., "Rapid Growth as a Destabilizing Force," Journal of Economic History 23, no. 4 (December 1963): 529-52.

[18]Pessen, Jacksonian America, p. 101.

[19]Laurence Frederic Shaffer and Edward Joseph Shoben, Jr., The Psychology of Adjustment: A Dynamic and Experimental Approach to Personality and Mental Hygiene (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1956), pp. 122-23.

designed to reduce anxieties and tensions. And, as Emerson ironically noted, nearly everything in antebellum America was threatened by the spirit of reform, or more broadly, change.

While the topic of antebellum reform has traditionally been concerned with abolition, temperance, politics, evangelism, and utopian communitarianism to name a few, within the last decade historical work has been produced concerning the changes in the material culture artifact embodied in domestic architecture, or the reform of domestic architecture in the antebellum era of American history. These works have placed the patterns of domestic architectural development in the context of reform, relating the manifestations of each to one another.[20] The interpretations are concerned with answering questions such as: How does domestic architectural development document the nature of reform? Can reform be illustrated by domestic architecture? Did architectural reformers and theorists

---

[20]Clifford E. Clark, Jr., "Domestic Architecture as an Index to Social History: The Romantic Revival and the Cult of Domesticity in America, 1840-1870," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 8, no. 1 (Summer 1976): 35-36; Norma Pendergast, "The Sense of Home: Nineteenth-Century Domestic Architectural Reform" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, May 1981); Gwendolyn Wright, Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Dolores Hayden, Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976); David P. Handlin, The American Home: Architecture and Society, 1815-1915 (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1979).

achieve their goals? Were the American people prepared to organize their homes, and families, along reformist lines? If so, how did this happen? To a lesser extent, however, these works are directed to such questions as: Does architectural reform and theory reflect psychological and group anxiety? Can domestic architectural reform be viewed as an attempt to impose values on society at large? If so, how? Why?

To answer such questions it will be necessary to reiterate American core values, which may be called the values of the documentarily inarticulate, and to compare them with the values of domestic architectural reformers as well as with the respective life styles of reformers and Americans in general. This comparison will enable a better understanding of the historic development of American domestic architecture, and the nature and motive for its reform, within the context of value articulation and the values that architecture is held to reflect.

According to sociologists, the American core values that exist are: 1) achievement and success; 2) activity and work, 3) a moralistic orientation, 4) humanitarianism; 5) efficiency and practicality; 6) progress; 7) material comfort; 8) equality; 9) freedom; 10) rationalism; 11) patriotism and nationalism; 12) external conformity; 13) democracy; 14) individualism; and 15) notions of group

superiority or racism.[21] Few of these core values need much in the way of explanation. One component of the core value of patriotism and nationalism, however, as it relates to antebellum American culture does require some elaboration--the topics of xenophobia and anglophobia.

That Americans value nationalism and patriotism is hardly a startling notion. Nationalism in America "involves the idea that the American way of life is so obviously morally superior that it should be widely copied elsewhere."[22] In antebellum America, one of the most striking characteristics displayed by Americans was their "constant habit of praising themselves."[23] Americans were boasters. Yet one aspect of this gasconading peculiarity seldom recognized by historians is the phenomenon of xenophobia, which is usually treated as a manifestation of nativism.[24] John William Ward goes to incredible detail to show that

---

[21]Robin M. Williams, Jr., "Generic American Values," in Walter Goldschmidt, ed., Exploring the Ways of Mankind (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), pp. 459-69; Robin M. Williams, American Society: A Sociological Interpretation, 3rd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), pp. 438-504; Alvin L. Bertrand, Basic Sociology: An Introduction to Theory and Method, Sociology Series, ed. John F. Cruber and Alfred C. Clarke (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), pp. 82-85.

[22]Williams, in Goldschmidt, p. 469.

[23]As cited in Pessen, Jacksonian America, p. 14.

[24]Ira M. Leonard and Robert D. Parmet, American Nativism, 1830-1860 (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1971).

Americans of the antebellum era rejected what they perceived as the decadence of Europe, yet he does not acknowledge the existence of xenophobia per se,[25] although hatred of Europe in general and England in particular did widely exist.

Foreign travellers in the United States, such as Captain Hall and Alexis de Tocqueville, noted the existence of anglophobia. According to the diplomatic historian Thomas A. Bailey, this feeling stemmed in part from the profitable investments Englishmen made and loans they extended in America during the antebellum period. The "phrase 'bloated British bondholder' rolled from many an American tongue."[26] This hatred was returned in kind by the British.[27]

---

[25]John William Ward, Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 33, 47-48, 67, 69, 71, 141, 143, 146, 149. See also David Lowenthal, "The Place of the Past in American Life," in Martyn J. Bowden and David Lowenthal, eds., Geographies of the Mind: Essays in Historical Geography in Honor of John Kirkland (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 89-105.

[26]Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People, 10th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980), pp. 204-205.

[27]Bailey, pp. 205-206. Another manifestation of popular anglophobia can be seen in the Astor Place Riot of May 10, 1849. It involved the partisans of the American actor William Macready, and those of the British thespian Edwin Forest; thirty-six people were injured, while twenty-two were killed. See Richard B. Morris, ed., Enclyclopedia of American History, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), 2:591.

Michel Chevalier, who travelled in America in 1833-1835, noted that Americans were "intolerant toward foreign nations. The American democracy in particular, bred in the belief that the nations of Europe groan ignobly under the yoke of absolute despots, looks upon them with a mixture of pity and contempt. . . . Its pride kindles at the idea of humbling monarchical principle in the person of tyrants who tread Europe underfoot."[28]

Ole Munch Raeder, a Norwegian who visited the United States in 1847 to study the American jury system, wrote back to newspapers in his homeland the following:

> That which annoys me most in my association with Americans is their prejudice against Europe. . . . Three-fourths of the people in the East and ninety-nine hundredths of the people in the West are fully convinced that the other side of the Atlantic is nothing but a heap of medieval feudal estates . . . and have not the vitality to rise from the abyss of misery and corruption into which they have fallen as a result of centuries of . . . despotism. . . .
>
> They have a special grudge against England to be sure. . . . The strong resemblance between these two nations and the common origins of their institutions only tends to irritate them the more. The Englishmen . . . consider the development which has taken place in America a . . . perversion. The Yankees . . . consider the English institutions to be antiquated and impractical because they have not kept pace with the improvements and progress made in America.[29]

---

[28]Michel Chevalier, Society, Manners, and Politics in the United States, ed. and intro. John William Ward (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1961), p. 184.

[29]Oscar Handlin, ed., This Was America: True Accounts of People and Places, Manners, and Customs: As Recorded by European Travellers to the Western Shore in the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Centuries (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), pp. 218-19.

In effect, the British, by mid-century, "were the Russians" for antebellum Americans.[30] As a component of the American core values of nationalism and patriotism, xenophobia and anglophobia were not only widely and commonly felt but justified, as Raeder noted, by reference to the American values of progress, rejection of the past, haste, equality, and practicality.

At least for the purposes of this argument, these core values will be considered to be those of the documentarily inarticulate in American history. As dominant values, they would be widely, although not absolutely, held in common. Because values serve the function of justifying acceptable behavior and because a desire for reform and making material choices are behavior, they would be reflected in life styles from which they are learned. What were the representative life styles of the documentarily inarticulate in the antebellum United States? What was their standard of living? Were there representative life styles and characteristics manifested by some architectural reformers in the same period? Did domestic architectural reform reflect and/or derive from typical or atypical life styles?

Perhaps the first manifestation of domestic architectural reform in American antebellum history can be found

---

[30]Interview with Norman C. Ferris, Department of History, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, March 7, 1983.

in what has been variously termed the "Gothic Revival," the "Romantic Revival," or the "Anticlassical Revolt," occurring in the antebellum period. It was a time when architecture was subject to the so-called "Battle of the Styles."[31]

It has been purported that classical, or broadly, Greek Revival architectural styles "long associated with the virtuous republicanism of the American Revolution, were replaced by picturesque gothic revival cottages and Italianate villas." Moreover this change was the result of "an intense crusade that, in terms of its social significance, deserves to rank with temperance and abolitionism as a major reform movement of the time."[32] It deserves attention not because it was anywhere near as well organized as abolition or temperance, but because, in the words of Clifford E. Clark, Jr., the Romantic Revival "shared similar values and priorities, particularly the vision of a middle-class suburban society." This Romantic Revival indirectly affected human behavior as it encouraged the building of a different kind of housing, and because it changed behavior, it had goals similar to other reform movements.[33] Clark

---

[31]Clifford E. Clark, Jr., "Domestic Architecture as an Index to Social History: The Romantic Revival and the Cult of Domesticity in America, 1840-1870," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 8, no. 1 (Summer 1976): 35-36; and Alan Gowans, Images of American Living: Four Centuries of Architecture and Furniture as Cultural Expression (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), pp. 303-315.

[32]Clark, p. 35.

[33]Ibid.

also maintains that the Gothic Revival, based upon changing attitudes toward the family, technology, religion, and nature, "transformed the housing standards of the nation."[34] While such assertions have a kernel of truth, they are based on blatantly simplistic notions about alleged suburban middle-class domination of the era, and the assumption that art is an accurate barometer with which to determine common life styles and values. That is, if Classical Revival styles were associated with republican virtue and life styles, what values, virtues, and life styles were associated with the Gothic Revival? To state that the Gothic Revival transformed American housing standards, in and of itself, also leads to some questionable assumptions about both the American middle class and American core values.

As Alan Gowans has noted, while many designs for Gothic Revival housing were drawn on paper "most of them were represented by relatively few executed samples."[35] Moreover, the Gothic style never really caught on, or was not very popular in America, for a variety of reasons. Succinctly, this was because of the deep republican symbolism associated with Classical styles, the medieval and exotic nature of Gothic Revival designs, and the vague associations Gothic designs had with European and English

---

[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid.

history. In essence, Gothic or Romantic Revival architecture was "socially pretentious, culturally nonconformist, undemocratically eccentic, [and] an intellectual conceit--no wonder the Gothic revival never spread as widely as classical styles in its own time."[36] Additionally, Gowans contends that the advocates--they might be called reformers --of Gothic architecture were apolitical.[37]

Clark is correct in asserting that the Gothic Revival had significant impact in the long run, but he does not adequately explain how it was that Gothic came to be accepted in the United States. He deals more with the identification of architectural reform and not with the process of the change or its values. As Gowans clearly indicates, there was initially something un-American about the Gothic Revival, something that conflicted with American core values. Unfortunately, neither Clark nor Gowans is interested in value conflict, nor do they spend much time in discussing life styles or the nature of the antebellum middle class.

One problem with Clark's interpreting the success of the Gothic Revival to middle-class suburban values and priorities can be found in the comment that "much is said

---

[36]Ibid., pp. 303-307.

[37]Ibid., p. 310.

but little is known about the antebellum 'middle class,' whether about its size or its standard of living."[38] What can be said of these concerns? Was the antebellum middle class suburban, urban, or rural? What kinds of occupations and life styles were characteristic of it? How wealthy was the middle class? What was the antebellum middle-class standard of living? Such questions are seldom addressed, and while it may be the legitimate complaint that there is little evidence from which to discover answers to such questions, it is seldom admitted that historians simply do not know. Yet the life style of the antebellum middle class, apparently the mass of the documentarily inarticulate, has had some light shed upon it.

To begin with, it is necessary to state the obvious: most antebellum Americans were farmers. It is undeniably true that throughout the nineteenth century there was a movement of the population to the cities and a corresponding growth of the urban population. In 1830, 8.8 percent of the American population lived in cities; in 1840, 10.8 percent; in 1850, 15.3 percent; and by 1860, 19.8 percent.[39] The other side of the coin shows that by 1860 fully 80.2

---

[38]Pessen, Jacksonian America, p. 83.

[39]Howard P. Chudacoff, The Evolution of American Urban Society, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1981), p. 63. It is also worthy to note that it was not until 1920 that 51.4 percent of the American population lived in cities (p. 199).

percent of the American population lived in rural areas. Certainly this was a clear and absolute majority. The implications these figures have concerning the life styles of the middle class are obvious. They followed the occupations of farmers or at least made their livings from agriculture. If the majority can be considered the middle class, then the middle class was neither urban nor suburban, but rural, in antebellum America.

Much work has been done within the last fourteen years concerning the distribution of wealth in American history. All of it tends to indicate that wealth was unevenly distributed from the colonial era throughout the nineteenth century.[40] The existence of a numerically large middle class, however, presupposes that wealth would have been evenly distributed. There seems little to contradict the notion that wealth was not evenly distributed, so it appears that the middle class may not have been numerically large or dominant in antebellum society. In the era of the "common man," widely assumed to mean the typical middle class, inequality, not equality, was the rule, at least in terms of wealth. Also, as Edward Pessen has demonstrated, society in antebellum America was marked by inequality in

---

[40]Alice Hanson Jones, Wealth of a Nation To Be: The American Colonies on the Eve of Revolution (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp. 172, 182-83, 272-73.

opportunity and material condition, de Tocqueville's assertions to the contrary notwithstanding.[41]

One study in particular indicates that average wealth in 1860 was about $2,500, and that average income was about $500.[42] Scientific estimates based upon computer data from the census of 1850 show that, of the total white male population, both farmers and nonfarmers, only about one-half owned houses or land.[43] This being correct would mean, obviously, that "the other half" owned no homes or land. One wonders if this other half aspired to follow the solutions to domestic architectural reform. Certainly many lived in houses and made their living off the land, but at least half did not own their homes or farms. For white farmers in 1850, fully sixty-one percent owned land and homes, but for nonfarmers (broadly the urban and suburban middle class) only twenty-six percent owned a house or land.[44] These figures, taken in conjunction with census statistics concerning urban population, tend to demonstrate clearly that the antebellum middle class was, regardless of its relative wealth, rural.

---

[41]Pessen, Jacksonian America, pp. 77-100.

[42]Lee Soltow, Man and Wealth in the United States, 1850-1870 (New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 3, 24.

[43]Ibid., p. 50.

[44]Ibid., p. 35.

What can be said to give a better impression of the life style of this rural middle class? By employing admittedly impressionistic evidence in the form of journals and letters of "moderately successful farm families," Edward Pessen indicates that the standard of living and life style of the antebellum rural middle class was characterized by hard, if not difficult and monotonous work, little if any leisure, low income, and "a generally poor quality of life."[45] Moreover, "American farmers appear to have believed that their status in society was low. The 'agrarian myth' that romanticized rural life was either unknown to most farmers or disbelieved by them."[46] Such evidence indicates that the antebellum middle class had a rather hard and bleak life and life style, one that was not characterized by leisure, contemplative, or intellectual pursuits or values, or by gentility, such as might have been manifested in suburban or urban communities. It is true that suburbs existed in America ever since the colonial era, and, along with increases in urban population in the nineteenth century, they also grew. But in the antebellum era few suburbs "served as residential areas for large numbers of commuters who left in the morning and returned at

---

[45]Pessen, Jacksonian America, pp. 83-84.

[46]Ibid., p. 84.

night."[47] It was not until the 1880s, after the development of mass transit facilities, improvements in housing construction and cost effectiveness, and increased availability of land, that there was a truly significant growth of suburbs. Any suburban population in the antebellum period, middle class or otherwise, did not live in "places of detached houses, private yards, and tree-lined streets."[48]

The domestic architecture of the rural middle class also reflected their life styles. The first dwellings of pioneers, for example, were generally lean-to structures, not log cabins.[49] Once a log cabin was constructed, with outbuildings, work was still a notable characteristic of life. The only non-homemade articles were generally the plow, an iron kettle that served a variety of functions, and weapons. Shoes were virtually unknown in warmer seasons. The interior accommodations of a log cabin consisted "chiefly of a single room with a good fireplace, log walls whitewashed inside, pegs to hang garments on, two large beds each with a trundle bed underneath, a few splint-bottom chairs and a chest of drawers. The pride of the house is

---

[47] Chudacoff, pp. 75-76.

[48] Ibid., p. 88.

[49] J. C. Furnas, The Americans: A Social History of the United States, 1587-1914 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1969), p. 259.

the coverlets with fine traditional woven-wool patterns."[50] One history of architecture in America states, "The frontier was one big rural slum saved only by the fact that the open spaces were not far away."[51] It is unnecessary to continue with recitations of numerous examples of frontier housing;[52] suffice it to say that domestic housing on the frontier was not characterized by beauty, but by utility.

While frontier farmers' housing might not be considered the housing of the middle class, a different kind of housing existed in the East. One European traveller described

---

[50]Caroline Matilda Stansbury, A New Home: Or, Life in the Clearings, ed. John Nerber (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1953), pp. 42-43.

[51]John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, The Architecture of America: A Social and Cultural History (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1961), p. 102.

[52]Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, 1748-1846: A Series of Reprints of Some of the Best and Rarest Contemporary Volumes of Travel, Descriptive of the Aborigines and Social and Economic Conditions in the Middle and Far West, During the Period of Early American Settlement, 33 vols. (New York: AMS Press, 1966), 3:300, 325; 11:81, 106, 199, 225-26, 231, 248-53, 254, 261, 269, 286, 300; 12:162, 176-77, 184-85, 189, 191, 193, 209, 236-37, 264, 277; 24:125, 133-34, 158, 179; 26: 209-10; Frederick Law Olmsted, The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveller's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), pp. 68, 160-61, 280-81, 291, 296, 300, 304, 322-23, 345-46, 376, 519-20, 539, 540. See also David J. Rothman and Sheila M. Rothman, eds., Sources of the American Social Tradition (New York: Basic Books, 1975), pp. 136-40.

what he considered typical New England farm housing in the 1830s as:

> . . . slightly built, boarded and roofed with shingles; often grey, of the natural color of the wood--but many of those belonging to the richer classes are neatly painted and variously ornamented. The walls, even of the large buildings of this kind, are extremely thin, and one would think they must be too slight for the cold winters.[53]

The use of the phrase "the richer classes" is also important here. When considered within the context of the unequal distribution of wealth in antebellum America, it tends to show that ornamental and painted houses were more atypical than common.

The fact that domestic housing was characterized as a "solid square block"[54] by one noted architectural reformer of the period gives us an indication not only of what he felt was commonly incorrect about it, but what was typical of it. The kitchen was the center of life; indeed the

> . . . kitchen is the kitchen, the dining-room, the sitting room, the room of all work. Here father sits with his hat on and in his shirt-sleeves. Around him are his boys and his hired men, some with hats and some with coats, and some with neither. The boys are busy shelling corn for samp; the hired men are scraping whip-stocks and whittling bow-pins, throwing every now and then a sheep's eye and a jest at the girls, who, with their mother, are <u>doing-up</u> the house-work. The younger fry are building cob-houses, parching corn, and burning their fingers. Not a book

---

[53]Thwaites, 22:50.

[54]Andrew Jackson Downing, <u>Rural Essays</u>, ed. George William Curtis, new introd. George B. Tatum (New York: n.p., 1853; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1974), p. 214.

> is to be seen, though the winter school has commenced, and the master is going to board there. Privacy is a word of unknown meaning in that family. . . . These are . . . honest . . . worthy, and kind-hearted people. . . .[55]

While architectural reformers protested that there was no family room or parlor,[56] the fact that they did protest is indicative that there was no such room typically found in domestic architecture; otherwise, there would be no need to object to its absence.

In any event, this is not to deny that there existed in antebellum America some notable and finely built domestic architecture, complete with parlors, libraries, sitting rooms, hallways, and facilities for leisure, but to emphasize once again that such examples were neither typical of the so-called middle class nor typical at all.

Middle-class housing in the antebellum era thus may be characterized as solidly symmetrical, with few rooms, built of logs or in the balloon frame style, with regular plain surfaces. It may also be possible to interpret these characteristics as the material culture indication that in the "so-called era of the common man, the mass of the nation's inhabitants, white Protestants, as well as blacks and recently-arrived Irish Catholics, owned practically none of

---

[55]Downing, Rural Essays, p. 400.

[56]Ibid., p. 401.

its wealth."[57] The central point is that domestic housing, regardless of its unartistic appearance, utility, and extreme functionalism and practicality, reflected American core values and common life styles.

The next question to be answered deals with whether or not it can be demonstrated, by comparison of life styles and the material preferences seen in domestic architecture, that the Gothic Revival reform in domestic architecture reflected the antebellum life style of the middle class.

The chief advocate and guiding force in the Gothic Revival was Andrew Jackson Downing. In many ways his life and life style were atypical of the antebellum middle class, as he was wealthy and lived all his life in Newburgh, New York. At the same time, however, his origins were middle class, and the relative wealth he attained is indicative of the "rags to riches" myth that is commonly associated with the antebellum era. The addressing of his elite life style is not meant to condemn him out of hand nor to condemn him at all, but is an attempt to establish that his values and behavior as a moral and domestic architectural reformer were motivated by status anxiety. Joseph Gusfield presents this as an example of the way in "which a cultural group acts to preserve, defend, or enhance the dominance and prestige of

---

[57]Pessen, Jacksonian America, p. 82.

its style of living in the total reform."[58] While the criticism can be made that to compare the life style of one man with the life style of the mass of the documentarily inarticulate smacks of reductionism, it can also be said that since Downing is acknowledged as the foremost proponent and guiding light in the American Gothic Revival Reform, his life style does indicate something of the nature of his values and the values of the entire reform itself.

Andrew Jackson Downing was born in Newburgh, New York, on October 31, 1815. No doubt he was named for Gen. Andrew Jackson after Jackson's incredible victory over the British in New Orleans earlier that year. This is ironic in that Downing was not at all like his namesake insofar as his dealings with England are concerned nor did he lead a life style or manifest an attitude that can be characterized as "egalitarian."

Andrew's father, Samuel Downing, was at first a wheelwright by occupation and lived in Lexington, Massachusetts, until he took his family to the Newburgh, New York, area to settle in 1806-1807.[59] Samuel established a successful nursery business there and served as an elected trustee for

---

[58]Gusfield, p. 3.

[59]Dictionary of American Biography, 1959 ed., s.v. "Downing, Andrew Jackson," by Herbert Anthony Kellar.

the village of Newburgh.[60] He died in 1822 when his youngest son, Andrew, was seven years old. Andrew's mother and two eldest brothers, Charles and George, continued the nursery's operation.[61]

At this time in his life, Andrew is described by his most important contemporary biographer, George William Curtis, as "sickly, left much alone, with nothing around him . . . that strictly sympathized with him."[62] As he grew older, Andrew attended the nearby Montgomery Academy until he was sixteen (1831). His mother attempted to apprentice him as a clerk in a dry goods store after he finished school, but "Andrew was a delicate child, and could not lift very much," so he joined his brother Charles in running the nursery.[63] While Curtis describes Andrew's early life as one of poverty,[64] it hardly seems likely when one considers that the nursery business was nationally

---

[60]George B. Tatum, introduction, in Downing, Rural Essays, pp. vii, xxi.

[61]Dictionary of American Biography, "Downing."

[62]George William Curtis, "Memoir," in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xi. See also David Maldwyn Ellis, Landlords and Farmers in the Hudson-Mohawk Region (New York: Octagon Books, 1967), p. 194.

[63]Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xv.

[64]Ibid., p. xiv.

known[65] and that one of his older brothers, George, became a medical doctor with a practice in New York City.[66] More than likely the Downings had middle-class status and origins. It was also in 1831 that Pres. Andrew Jackson split with his Vice President, John C. Calhoun, over the Eaton Affair; William Lloyd Garrison began publication of the Liberator; the Anti-Masonic Party held its first nominating convention; and Nat Turner's revolt occurred. This was a time for dramatic changes in Downing's life, for it was in that year when "the boy, delicately organized,"[67] began his association with the elite of the Hudson River Valley that would lead to his nearly meteoric rise to national recognition and entry into the gentry.

After refusing to work as a clerk, Downing began the study of minerology and botany. Although it was not known under what circumstances, he met the Baron de Liderer, the Austrian Consul General in New York City, who had a summer retreat in Newburgh.[68] The much senior De Liderer shared Downing's interests in botany and minerology, and the two

---

[65]Ellis, p. 194; and Herbert Anthony Kellar, ed., Solon Robinson: Pioneer and Agriculturist, vol. 1, 1825-1845, vol. 2, 1846-1851, 2 vols. (Indianapolis, Ind.: Indiana Historical Society, 1936; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1968), 1:304.

[66]Tatum, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. vii.

[67]Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xiv.

[68]Ibid., p. xvi.

unlikely people became "hearty friends . . . [who] explored together the hills and lowlands till it had no more vegetable nor mineral secrets from the enthusiasts."[69]

Through his close association with De Liderer, Andrew met the Baron's wealthy neighbor, Edward Armstrong. It was then Downing "discovered how subtly cultivation refines men as well as plants, and there first met polished society whose elegance and grace could not fail to charm as essential to the most satisfactory intercourse."[70] Probably, differences in his own childhood origins and status were dramatically impressed upon his mind.

Frequent visits to the Armstrong residence allowed Downing to make the acquaintance of Charles Augustus Murray,[71] the English travel writer.[72] Indeed, it was here "for the first time, he saw one of the class . . . he never ceased to honor . . . the English gentleman."[73] He also met there and became fast friends with Raphael Hoyle, the English landscape painter. The two young men "rambled together over the country near Newburgh," Hoyle painting and Downing teaching the painter about the area's history,

---

[69]Ibid., pp. xvi-xvii.

[70]Ibid., p. xvii.

[71]Ibid.

[72]Pessen, Jacksonian America, pp. 9, 19, 21-22, 27, 92.

[73]Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xvii.

habits, and flowers, "until they wandered . . . into discussions dear to both, of art, and life, and beauty." Downing learned much from Hoyle concerning Italian vineyards, English parks, the cloud-capped Alps, and "the untravelled youth looked across the river . . . and imagined Switzerland."[74] Hoyle, however, died suddenly, and Downing's "romantic experience . . . was closed forever."[75]

Downing continued his studies in botany, and also began reading classical literature and novels. Sometime between 1831 and 1838, "despite glowing hopes and restless ambition for other things," he wrote two descriptions of local scenery that were published in the New York Mirror as well as a discussion of botanical papers and novel reading that were published in a "Boston journal." His first literary efforts, however, proved unsuccessful, and perhaps for this reason he stopped writing. However, he was not idle, and he "worked unyieldingly, studying, proving, succeeding; finding time . . . to read the poets and . . . philosophers, and to gain that familiarity with elegant literature which always graced his own composition."[76] It is said of his character at this time that he "seemed always too much a critical observer not to challenge wonder . . . to excite

---

[74]Ibid.

[75]Ibid., p. xviii.

[76]Ibid.

distrust." He was a serious young man whose "eyes . . . held you as in a grasp, looking from under their cover of dark brows."[77]

At about age twenty, Downing began expanding his knowledge and theories about art in landscape gardening. From his family's "red cottage," he visited "the noble estates upon the banks of the Hudson" and became aware "that in a new . . . unworked, and boundless country . . . where fortunes arose in a night, an opportunity was afforded to Art, of achieving a new and characteristic triumph."[78] He apparently began dreaming big dreams of transforming American gardens and houses into "genuine works of art."[79]

His visits to the great estates on the Hudson increased in frequency. "His pleasure trips from point to point upon the river were the excursions of the honeybee into the flower." He remained dependent upon his own exertions, however, and continued to live alone, in a gentle, affable, and reserved manner. "He was wisely getting ready."[80] While he made his visits and increased both his own reputation and nursery business, he met his future wife, sometime between 1837 and 1838.

---

[77]Ibid., p. xix.

[78]Ibid.

[79]Ibid., p. xx.

[80]Ibid.

Directly across from the red cottage in Newburgh, on the opposite bank of the Hudson, was "the estate and old family mansion of John Peter De Wint, Esq.," at Fishkill Landing. The De Wints were "one of the best-established families in the Hudson Valley."[81] Mrs. De Wint was the niece of Pres. John Quincy Adams, and a grandniece of Pres. John Adams,[82] while Mr. De Wint owned property throughout the state and was at least a casual acquaintance of James Fenimore Cooper.[83] The De Wint family place, "indolently lying in luxuriant decay, was the seat of boundless hospitality and social festivity . . . which . . . rang all summer long with happy laughter." Regardless of his studies of Lindley, Loudon, Repton, Prive, or Parmentier, or his artistic endeavors "with knife, clay, and grafts," Downing found himself "dreaming of the grange beyond the river, and of the Marianne he had found there."[84]

On the seventh of June, 1838, at age twenty-two, Andrew Jackson Downing married the "birdlike" first daughter of John P. De Wint, Caroline Elizabeth.[85] The couple apparently

---

[81]Tatum, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. vii.

[82]Ibid., p. xxii.

[83]James Franklin Beard, ed., The Letters and Journals of James Fenimore Cooper, 6 vols. (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1960-1968), vol. 1, 1800-1830 (1960), pp. 48-49. See also New York Times, August 2, 1852, p. 1.

[84]Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xxi.

[85]Carl Carmer, The Hudson (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1939), p. 233.

had no children. Downing's life changed rapidly and dramatically following his marriage, and it hardly seems unfair to surmise that it changed as a result of his marriage. In effect, he had "arrived."

Immediately after his marriage he purchased a six-acre lot and built his home. By the late fall or early winter of 1839, within one and a half years, it was complete.[86] It was also at about the same time that his mother died (1839). He lived with the De Wints, not in his family's red cottage where his mother spent her last year, while the new home was being built.[87]

Downing's house was described as "simple . . . in an Elizabethan style. . . . His house . . . was externally simple, but extremely elegant; indeed its chief impression was that of elegance."[88] Elegant is closer to the truth, for simple it was not. (See fig. 1.)

It was a six-bay, two-and-a-half-story, symmetrically balanced mansion in the Elizabethan style, with a porch, projecting gabled entranceway flanked by two thinly attenuated towers, with three symmetrically spaced facade gables. Tudor, or Gothic, windows and doors were exclusive

---

[86]Arthur Channing Downs, Jr., "Downing's Newburgh Villa," Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology 6, nos. 3-4 (1972): 33.

[87]Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, pp. xxii-xxiii.

[88]Ibid.

Fig. 1. Residence of the late A. J. Downing, Newburgh, on the Hudson.[89]

throughout. The grounds were landscaped in the English tradition of the picturesque.[90] Curtis describes the mansion upon completion as a "graceful and beautiful building . . . higher and handsomer than the little red cottage --a very pregnant symbol to any poet who should chance that

---

[89]Ibid., illustration between pp. xxxii and xxxiii.

[90]Ibid., p. xxiii. According to one reviewer, Downing's ideas on expression of purpose in architecture were timely, "but in the example of his own house at Newburgh, we observe two octagonal . . . towers which have puzzled us exceedingly to guess their uses. Perhaps they may be cases for depositing fishing rods--we can conceive of no other use for such appendages" (cited in Russell Lynes, The Tastemakers [New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1954], p. 25.).

way and hear the history of the architect."[91] It may well have served as a symbol for a stray poet, but also it may be seen as a symbol of Downing's newly acquired status in life. It is interesting to ponder the symbolism in the new house, higher and handsomer than the red cottage of his youth and in which his mother died. Was Downing rejecting, either consciously or otherwise, a past of which he was ashamed? Was his new house symbolic of any anxiety in this regard?

In any event, Downing's home rapidly became a focal point for "the most gracious hospitality." More importantly, it became the type of house "upon whose influence Downing counted so largely for the education and intelligent patriotism of his countrymen."[92] The house, its style, the values, and the life style expressed in it, all represent Downing's first material culture manifestation of a reformist impulse. It also seems probable that he questioned the educational level and patriotism of his fellow Americans. It is important to note that it was in 1839 that the Anti-Rent Movement exploded along the Hudson River Valley.

This movement was a revolt by agricultural tenants against their landlords, who held land as a heritage from

---

[91]Ibid. See also Nathaniel Parker Willis, The Rag-Bag: A Collection of Ephemera (New York: Charles Scribner, 1855), pp. 121-24.

[92]Ibid.

the old colonial Dutch and feudal patroonship system.[93] Orange County, where Downing resided, was barely touched by the violence and turmoil of the movement, principally because the older land patents had been sold in the late eighteenth century, so the area was largely free of landlords and was an area noted for its small dairy farms.[94] Nevertheless, the movement did represent a clash between common men and those wealthy people Downing now associated with and of whom he approved. Certainly it could not have escaped his attention, even though there is no direct mention of it either in Downing's writings or in Curtis' biographical memoir. It seems probable that it would have threatened him and thus created in him anxieties that stimulated his reformist impulse to defend, protect, and enhance his recently acquired genteel life style.

As Stow Persons has noted, the gentry of the nineteenth century had "the burden of sustaining cultural life," and they "subscribed to a distinct code of values, and . . . molded their lives in accordance with the traditions of gentility." Yet, their elite position was not always due to birth. Nearly anyone "could assume gentry status by

---

[93]Ellis, pp. 11-23, 225-67; and Henry Christman, Tin Horns and Calico: A Decisive Episode in the Emergence of Democracy, intro. Carl Carmer (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1945), pp. 1-15, 92-98, 134-75.

[94]Ellis, pp. 29-30, 204-205.

conforming to the standards of gentility; newcomers were constantly being recruited. It was commonly acknowledged, however, that membership in a gentry family conveyed great advantage." Doctors, lawyers, artists, editors, writers, the educated clergy as well as businessmen, bankers, and merchants made up the ranks of the gentry.[95] While the genteel gentry agreed that democracy should do away with privilege, they feared "democracy was jeopardizing the very notion of superiority as well."[96] As a general rule, their attitudes and social life "revealed a defensiveness resulting from the hostility and suspicion of the democratic man."[97] They were an aristocracy who lived, as Francis Grund put it, "in houses a little larger than those inhabited by respectable mechanics, cover the floors of their parlors with Brussels carpets instead of Kidderminster . . . and keep a man servant."[98] Mrs. Martineau encountered among the gentry not only an approval for monarchy but also a corresponding prejudice and resentment against universal

---

[95]Stow Persons, The Decline of American Gentility (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), p. 2.

[96]Persons, p. 7.

[97]Ibid., p. 9.

[98]Francis Grund, Aristocracy in America (London: Richard Bentley, 1837; first reprint ed., New York: Harper & Row, 1959; second reprint ed., Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1968), p. 301.

suffrage.[99] Certainly Downing was by 1839 a member of this gentry, and the Anti-Rent Movement surely must not have impressed him as expressive of any continuity with his life style or architectural preferences.

The tenant system had resulted in primitive farming methods, soil depletion, crop failures, and ramshackle housing which "made tenant farms eyesores."[100] Orange County soil in particular had been exhausted by 1850, while a failure of the potato crop there in 1843 was indicative of economic dislocation. Along with the Anti-Rent Movement in New York State was the urban development of Locofocoism, the rural "barnburner" and "hunker" split in the Democratic party,[101] as well as the radically democratic Dorr Rebellion in Rhode Island.[102] Thus, by the 1840s, when Downing was growing accustomed to his new status as an aristocrat of the genteel tradition, there were conditions of change, poor housing, and economic dislocation. The democratic rebellions, one of them very close to home, were at least

---

[99]As cited in Persons, p. 10, from Harriet Martineau, Society in America, 3 vols. in 2, 2nd ed. (London: Saunders, 1837), 1:19-21; 3:14-15, 28-32.

[100]Ellis, pp. 174-85, 186-87, 199-223, 231.

[101]Ibid., pp. 268-69, 281-82, 284-85.

[102]Marvin E. Gettleman, The Dorr Rebellion: A Study in American Radicalism: 1833-1849 (Melbourne, Fla.: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co., 1980); George M. Dennison, The Dorr War: Republicanism on Trial, 1831-1861 (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1976); and Pessen, Jacksonian America, pp. 186, 194, 276-79.

symbolically directed toward and against the very life style he came to assume and cherish. These conditions may have been perceived by him as a threat and caused him some degree of anxiety that in turn stimulated him to become involved in reform. Downing may have been stimulated by such anxieties when he wrote, "One does not need to be much of a philosopher to remark that one of the most striking of our national traits is the SPIRIT OF UNREST. . . . The spirit of unrest . . . makes man a feverish being, in whose Tantalus' cup repose is the unattainable drop."[103]

With these radical democratic movements in the background, Downing began to write and publish extensively, particularly on the subjects of landscape gardening and rural architecture. In 1841 he completed and published his A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America, With a View to the Improvement of Country Residences With Remarks on Rural Architecture. Thus Downing began his theoretical indulgence into improving both rural landscapes and housing. The use of the word "improvement" is telling of his reformist tendencies, for certainly reform implies an expressed desire to make something better. His new relationship to the old Federalist Adams family did not go unheralded, for the book was dedicated "respectfully

---

[103]Downing, Rural Essays, pp. 13-14.

and affectionately" to John Quincy Adams.[104] Clearly Downing was exhibiting the defensive behavior psychologists refer to as "identificaion."

His constant use of the word "we" in his writings indicates the nature of the satisfactions he gained from group identification. This normal, and constructive, defensive behavior is also manifested by individuals who "take pride in their homes . . . and gain tension reduction from exhibiting . . . material objects or merely contemplating their excellence."[105] It must be recognized, however, that as a defensive and adjustive behavior genre, identification is considered "a superior adjustment" and "may in some instances be associated with personal difficulties." Moreover, when "a person is too fawningly imitative of acquaintances who have prestige, and is too eager to join societies and support causes, you may suspect that he is using identification as an anxiety-reducing mechanism in the same way that he might use compensation or attention-getting." Identification, while constructive, may also lead to maladjustments. If a boy's father dies early in the child's life, as is the case with Downing, "the boy may form a strong identification with his mother and adopt many

---

[104]Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, pp. xxiii-xxiv; and Tatum, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xxii.

[105]Shaffer and Shoben, pp. 174-75; and Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xli.

feminine characteristics."[106] It is in this regard that Downing's feminine personality characteristics deserve attention.

Curtis relates the following about Downing: "Under the mark of the finished man of the world he concealed the most feminine feelings, which often expressed themselves with pathetic intensity to the only one in whom he unreservedly confided."[107] Downing apparently made or had few male friends. Curtis states,

> His warmest and most confiding friendships were with women. In his intercourse with them, he revealed a rare and beautiful sense of the uses of friendship, which united him very closely to them. To men he was much more inaccessible. It cannot be denied that the feeling of mystery in his character affected the impression he made on various persons. . . . It repelled many who were otherwise most strongly attracted to him by his books. In others . . . it begot a slight distrust, a suspicion of self-seeking on his part.[108]

Additionally, "often when his wife read to him any particularly beautiful or touching passage from a book, he was quite unable to speak, so much was he mastered by his

---

[106]Ibid., p. 175.

[107]Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xxxvii. Curtis does not identify "the only one in whom he unreservedly confided," although it may well have been a reference to Mrs. Downing.

[108]Ibid., p. xxxviii. That Downing may have been self-serving in his efforts at architectural reform was nothing at all atypical of reformers. Ralph Waldo Emerson, for example, was aware of such self-seeking elements in antebellum reform in general, and was critical of it. See Boller, American Transcendentalism, pp. 101-102.

emotion."[109] Curtis also states that, while he visited the Newburgh estate, Downing gave him magnolia blossoms, "and every day . . . the breakfast room was perfumed by the magnolia . . . placed beside my plate . . . and in his notes to me he often wrote, 'the magnolias are waiting for you,' as an irresistible allurement--which it was apt to prove."[110]

Aside from this effeminancy, Downing was also characterized as having an aristocratic attitude. He admired the English country gentleman and the life style associated with him.[111] As he wrote in April 1849, in an essay "On Feminine Taste in Rural Affairs," the "English are, perhaps, the most distinct of civilized nations, in their nationality."[112] His manner was typified by a certain aristocratic hauteur," and

> . . . there was negative flattery in his address and attention. . . . He spoke . . . with the simplicity of a child talking of his toys. The workman, the author, the artist, were entirely subjugated in him to the gentleman. This was his favorite idea. The gentleman was the full flower, of which all others were suggestions and parts.[113]

---

[109]Ibid., p. xxxi.

[110]Ibid., p. xxxvi.

[111]Ibid., pp. xvii, xxx.

[112]Downing, Rural Essays, p. 45.

[113]Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xxix.

According to Curtis, this aristocratic hauteur, itself indicative of identification, was the result of Downing's "exquisite mental organization which instinctively shrunk from whatever was coarse or crude" and his "social tendency . . . toward whom great wealth had given opportunity of that ameliorating culture--of surrounding beautiful homes with beautiful grounds, and filling them with refined and beautiful persons, which is the happy fortune of the few." His disdainful pride was "always evident."[114] In his dealings with publishers, men of affairs, or workmen, "the same feeling which they called 'stiffness,' 'coldness,' 'pride,' or 'reserve,' revealed itself."[115] Thus, Downing considered himself a member of the "gentry . . . a self-constituted aristocracy of the best, monopolizing virtue, beauty, and power." Yet, while Downing strived for social recognition from the elite, his middle-class origins were still the object of derision by some of the gentry. For example, Sidney George Fisher, a member of Philadelphia's wealthy antebellum elite, confided in his diary after meeting Downing at a party at the fashionable Wakefield residence: "Like his books better than himself. He is a Yankee & not thoroughbread [sic]. Landscape gardening with him is a profession & not a liberal taste, and he talks with a

---

[114]Ibid., p. xxx.

[115]Ibid., p. xxxii.

professional air. I dislike 'bread-studies' & artizanship [sic], and the smell of the shop destroys my pleasure in any subject however interesting in itself." Yet, the fact that his cousin, Joshua Francis Fisher, had hired Downing to design his house and grounds at Alverthorpe was considered "an indication of some advancement in refinement [in] that a 'landscape gardener' can find employment & constant, profitable employment, in this country."[116]

Downing's anglophiliac and aristocratic personality was not a dominant characteristic of his society, of its core values. When Downing visited England in 1850, Curtis imagines him "moving with courtly grace through the . . . palaces, gentle, respectful, low in tone, never exaggerating, welcome to lord and lady for his good sense, his practical detail; pleasing the English . . . by his English sympathies, and interesting them by his . . . genuine, not boasting, assertions of American genius. . . . No American ever visited England with a mind more in tune with all that is nobly characteristic of her."[117] Upon his return to America that winter, Downing held a Christmas party. Curtis attended the fête, and describes the Downing residence as

---

[116]Persons, p. 3; and Nicholas B. Wainwright, ed., A Philadelphia Perspective: The Diary of Sidney George Fisher, Covering the Years 1834-1871 (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Historical Society, 1967), entries for June 8, 1849, and November 1, 1847.

[117]Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xlv.

"wreathed in Christmas green, and under the antlers, the pikes, the helmets, and breast plates, and plumed hats of cavaliers . . . the very genius of English Christmas ruled the revel."[118] No doubt but that the antlers, pikes, helmets, and plumed cavalier hats were cherished by Downing and his guests, but one wonders about the feudal symbolism manifested in these material preferences. Downing was an anglophile in a nation of anglophobes, an aristocrat in a country imbued with notions of equality and democracy. Downing looked to the past, not the future.

While Downing was indeed productive, if not prolific, he affected a life style characterized by leisure. Even in the midst of his last two busy years of life, when he published his The Architecture of Country Houses (1850) and was involved in landscaping the grounds in the nation's capital, visitors to his home "found still the same quiet host, leisurely disengaged; picking his favorite flowers . . . writing, studying, as if for amusement."[119] Fredericka Bremer, the Swedish traveller in the United States and close friend of Downing, claimed he "never spoke of business--of having much to do . . . he . . . had plenty of leisure and pleasantness for his friends."[120] Downing's library "was the retreat of an elegantly cultivated gentleman. There

---

[118]Ibid., p. xlvi.

[119]Ibid., pp. xlvi-xlvii.

[120]Downing, Rural Essays, p. lxv.

were no signs of work except a writing table, with pens, and portfolios, and piles of letters."[121] He may not have talked much about his business because he was not an able entrepreneur. In 1846 his nursery business failed because it was "not the genius of men like Downing to manage finances very skilfully." For awhile it appeared as though he would lose all he had gained, but his friends "rallied to his rescue," assuring him his grounds and home.[122] He sold his nursery to one Andrew Saul that year,[123] and the "Priest of Beauty"[124] continued in his beloved life style.

It was after disassociating himself from his family business that Downing began adding to his publications. Already having produced A Treatise on . . . Landscape Gardening (1841), Cottage Residences (1842), The Fruits and Fruit Trees of America (1845), as well as editing Mrs. John Loudon's Gardening for Ladies (1846), Downing in 1846 became editor of The Horticulturist,[125] a new journal emphasizing architecture and rural art.[126] His already considerable

---

[121]Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xxix.

[122]Ibid., p. xlii.

[123]Tatum, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xxiii.

[124]Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xl.

[125]Ibid.

[126]Albert Lowther Demaree, The American Agricultural Press, 1819-1860 (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1974), pp. 70, 72.

knowledge and interest in architecture expanded in 1849 when he published, in conjunction with the architect George Wightwick, Hints to Young Architects. In this work it was Downing's purpose "in building a house . . . to adapt it to the site, and to the means and character of its owner."[127] His activities also extended into the foundation of a state agricultural school, a national agricultural bureau in Washington, D. C., and the designing of gardens and homes for the wealthy. For example, in 1849 he designed the grounds and Elizabethan-style dwelling of Henry Ingersoll, a successful Philadelphia real estate developer, at the estate that would be known as "Brookwood." He also carried on his horticultural studies and the preparation of his major work, The Architecture of Country Houses (1850).[128] In addition, he was an honorary member of many American and foreign horticultural societies as well as a founding member of the American Pomological Society (1848) and chairman of its "all-important General Fruit Committee."[129]

---

[127]Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xliii.

[128]Dictionary of American Biography, "Downing"; Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xliv; and Wainwright, entries for October 28, November 5, and December 23, 1849.

[129]Tatum, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. viii; Dictionary of American Biography, "Downing"; and Andrew Jackson Downing, Cottage Residences: Rural Architecture & Landscape Gardening, new introd. Michael Hugo-Brunt, Library of Victorian Culture (New York: n.p., 1842; reprint ed., Watkins Glen, N.Y.: American Life Foundation, 1967), p. xiii.

In April 1851 Downing was commissioned to landscape the Capitol grounds in Washington, D. C. He received a salary of $2,500 yearly for his efforts, but the work went slowly. In fact, he was so busy with other pursuits that he could spend but a few days a month on the project. This led to some Congressional scrutiny. On March 24, 1852, Congressman George Washington Jones of Tennessee objected to the public expenditure of the $2,500 as Downing's salary; after all, he spent but a few days a month on the project. Jones stipulated that some $41,000 had been spent on the project since it had begun and suggested that Downing was abusing his contract. Congressman Richard Henry Stanton of Kentucky, however, stoutly defended Downing.[130] The debate so upset Downing that a meeting of President Fillmore's cabinet was held in which the artist sought its support. He promised to complete the work "upon the express condition that he was to be relieved from the annoyances of the quarrel." He had his way.[131] It may not

---

[130] The Congressional Globe; New Series, Containing the Debates, Proceedings and Laws of the First Session of the Thirty-Second Congress, vol. 24, part 2 (Washington, D.C.: John C. Rives, 1852), pp. 853-855. During the debate a voice shouted to ask if Downing was "a member of the Major Downing clan." Laughter rang from the floor (p. 853). See also Biographical Dictionary of the American Congress, 1774-1971 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971), pp. 1203-1204, 1743. Both Jones and Stanton were Democrats.

[131] Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, pp. xlvii-xlix.

merely coincidental that the following month Downing wrote in an essay entitled "Improvement of Vegetable Races" in The Horticulturist that: "We are not going to be led into a physiological digression on the subject of the inextinguishable rights of a superior organization in certain men, and races of men, which Nature everyday reaffirms, notwithstanding the socialistic and democratic theories of our politicians."[132]

In the last year of his life, Downing designed a summer residence for a Daniel Parish, in Newport, Rhode Island. "Mr. Downing knew that Newport was the great social exchange of the country, that men of wealth and taste yearly assembled there, and that a fine house of his designing erected there would be of the greatest service to his art"--to say little of his pocketbook, for by 1849 he was charging twenty dollars a day for his professional services.[133]

In late June 1852, Downing held his "annual feast of roses," gathering as many friends as he could at his Newburgh residence. Curtis attended the event, and on a moonlit night he and Downing crossed the Hudson River "to a quaint old country house, in whose library the Society of the Cincinnati was formed" to attend a party. [134] The two

---

[132]Downing, Rural Essays, p. 472.

[133]Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xlix; and Wainwright, entry for November 5, 1849.

[134]Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. lii.

agreed to meet later that year in Newport, Rhode Island, after Downing would have returned from Washington, D. C.[135]

In late July 1852, Downing boarded, along with his wife, niece, and mother-in-law, the steamboat Henry Clay. En route to New York City, the Henry Clay became involved in a race with the Armenia, and a boiler explosion resulted. Downing and his mother-in-law were drowned.[136] It is ironic that the steamboat, the very symbol of the democracy of haste,[137] of the life style and values Downing did not appreciate, should be the cause for his death. It is also ironic that his values concerning architecture and his reformist ideas were not only objected to and opposed by others but that his importance in the development of American domestic architecture is attributed to the wrong causes. For assertions that Downing's reform was aimed primarily at Americans of modest means[138] are clearly incorrect. He wrote for those he identified with, and they were not common

---

[135]Ibid., p. liii.

[136]Ibid., pp. liii-lvii. See also New York Times, July 30, 1852, p. 2; August 2, 1852, p. 1; and August 4, 1852, p. 1.

[137]Boorstin, National Experience, pp. 98-102.

[138]George Bishop Tatum, "Andrew Jackson Downing, Arbiter of American Taste, 1815-1852 (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, September 1949), p. 70.

men of modest means. The aristocracy in America were, according to Nathaniel Parker Willis, "THE MANY . . . not THE FEW."[139]

---

[139]Willis, p. 143.

CHAPTER V

ARCHITECTURE, VALUE CONFLICT, AND REFORM IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

There were numerous Utopian communitarian reform projects in antebellum America, some of which flourished and today exist in an attenuated form, while others failed. One that did not take root in America was the Fourierist Phalanx Movement. It failed primarily because of a conflict in values held by the Phalanx's patrons and those of the community members themselves.

The American Fourierist Movement was led chiefly by a wealthy young resident of upstate New York, Albert Brisbane. Together with Horace Greeley, owner and editor of the New York Tribune, the two established some twenty-eight Fourierist communities in five states. The one Phalanx that was to last the longest was established at Red Bank, New Jersey, in 1843; it failed in 1856.[1]

The architect hired by Brisbane for the New Jersey Phalanx was the Frenchman, Victor Considérant. In 1830 Considérant had become the architect of Charles Fourier,

---

[1]Ronald G. Walters, American Reformers, 1815-1860, American Century Series (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), pp. 68, 70-71.

the founder of Fourierism in France. Considérant believed architecture to be "the pivotal art . . . which summarizes all the others, and . . . gives a summary of society itself. Architecture writes history."[2] Considérant shared a belief with many of Fourier's followers that landscapes and buildings should and could instantly create the feeling of community. He was not concerned with the notion that people might wish to shape their own surroundings. Architecture, in Considérant's view, was to shape both the community and people's attitudes.[3] Yet his designs were the "architectural antithesis of Fourier's desire for an environment that would stimulate all kinds of personal exploration, growth, and change."[4]

As early as 1842 the promoters of the New Jersey Phalanx at Red Bank, called the North American Phalanx, wished to have built a "Grand Unitary Edifice," complete with decorative iron balconies and three tiers of galleries.[5] Indeed, the North American Phalanx began with detailed and complete plans for its physical design.[6]

---

[2]Dolores Hayden, Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976), p. 151.

[3]Ibid., p. 155.

[4]Ibid., p. 151.

[5]Ibid., p. 164.

[6]Ibid., p. 159.

The North American Phalanx was to have a central hall with two dwelling-wings that enclosed a courtyard (it was in a "U" shape). Considérant's design was supposed to stimulate Fourierist concepts of passional attractions, social equality, and elegant work places.[7] But the plan tended to obscure the "community's tangible environmental achievements."[8] The main problem was that the Phalanx's promoters, who did not live in the community, desired an instant grand edifice, a monument symbolizing their benevolence, while the community members had other ideas. Instead of one instant community in one large and instant communal dwelling, Phalanx members valued the idea of slower growth, built upon participation in both the construction and planning of smaller and numerous communal dwellings.[9] The North American Phalanx's membership "believed that their community had to develop slowly and cohesively, that they needed to 'dispossess ourselves from old forms, and build within ourselves first, new institutions before we give them outward expression.'"[10] The members thus made material choices based not upon models of European civic architecture as designed by Considérant but upon local--American--models

---

[7]Ibid., pp. 150-51.

[8]Ibid., p. 159.

[9]Ibid., pp. 161-64.

[10]Ibid., p. 164.

of dwelling construction.[11] However, the benevolent promoters continually rejected the suggestions of the members, and at one time demonstrated their anxiety when the Phalanx Executive Council unanimously voted to reject the membership's ideas. As the membership proved more and more resistant to the Executive Council's desire for a grand edifice, coercion was resorted to, and "the proffered benefaction shrank."[12]

By 1856 the North American Phalanx was dissolved.[13] It did not end because of a fire that occurred there, nor did it end because it was an economic failure. As Ronald Walters states, the "probable explanation is that bickering and loss of enthusiasms took their toll: members seem to have gotten tired of the North American, and the fire was their excuse to quit."[14] Yet, at the root of the bickering was the value conflict between the reformist motives of benevolent promoters and the membership over the form of the Phalanx's domestic architecture. While Dolores Hayden interprets the end of the North American Phalanx as a lesson

---

[11]Ibid., p. 172.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., pp. 174-75. See also Arthur E. Bestor, Jr., "Patent-Office Models of the Good Society: Some Relationships Between Social Reform and Westward Expansion," American Historical Review 55, no. 3 (April 1953): 524-25.

[14]Walters, p. 71.

proving "that the creation of a more humane environment depends more on economic and social practice than architectural theory,"[15] it is also probable that it is a lesson epitomizing the role that values play in domestic architectural development in American antebellum history. The values reflected in the promoters' reformist designs were not compatible with those of the membership, and this conflict in values concerning domestic housing led eventually to the dissolution of the North American Phalanx.

Reform is generally thought of as a liberal political phenomenon. Yet, in antebellum America, reform was romantic and based upon political and social conservatism. Religiously, the rising demands for church disestablishment and egalitarianism threatened "an inherited Christian order and along with it the preferred status of the clergy." The answer to such threats was a "drastic moral therapy," designed to prevent the destruction of the old order.[16] Resorting to the defensive behavior psychologists term reaction formation,[17] "the moral reformers relied upon the

---

[15]Hayden, Seven American Utopias, p. 182.

[16]John L. Thomas, "Romantic Reform in America, 1815-1865," American Quarterly 17, no. 3 (Fall 1965): 657.

[17]Laurence Frederic Shaffer and Edward Joseph Shoben, Jr., The Psychology of Adjustment: A Dynamic and Experimental Approach to Personality and Mental Hygiene (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1956), pp. 175-77.

homeopathic strategy of fighting democratic excesses with democratic remedies."[18] They sought to effect, to maintain their threatened status, not through political means, but through a rejuvenation of the individual's morals and piety. In time this translated into perfectionism, based upon the assumption that America's social problems would be automatically solved when a sufficient number of citizens had been reeducated to realize that social evils were the result of individual acts of selfishness.[19] "In the opinion of the romantic reformers the regeneration of American society began . . . in a calculated appeal to the American urge for individual self-improvement."[20]

Reform in antebellum America was biased against cities and in favor of nature. Therefore, there was a "high nostalgic content in the plans of humanitarians who emphasized pastoral virtues and the perfectionist values inherent in country living."[21] Not only did the belief in this agrarian myth predominate, but the individual family itself was viewed as the fundamental unit with which to reform all of society.[22] If individual consciousnesses could be

---

[18]Thomas, p. 658.

[19]Ibid., pp. 658-59.

[20]Ibid., p. 660.

[21]Ibid., p. 667.

[22]Ibid.

altered through the family and country life, then all of society could be reformed. This strain of thought predominated in both transcendental and perfectionist moral reform, and both "were marked by an individualist fervor that was disruptive of American institutions."[23] This led increasingly, after 1840, to a growth of the communitarian movement that promised extreme social and moral reform without violence.[24] At the core of this communitarianism was the doctrine of associationism; by associating oneself with what was considered by some as a morally sound environment, a better individual and a better society would result.[25] This socially conservative associationist tint of romantic reform is also evident in the Gothic or Romantic Revival reform in domestic architecture.

Associationism, called a "devastating movement" by psychologists,[26] was essentially founded on the premise that, like Newtonian physics, there were certain laws that describe what men would think, do, and know. John Locke is credited with being the founder of British associationism (1690). Locke developed this motivational theory to mean that "the innate mind is a tabula rasa [cleared slate] and

---

[23]Ibid., p. 674.

[24]Ibid., pp. 674-75. See also Bestor, p. 523.

[25]Thomas, pp. 677-78.

[26]Robert C. Boles, Theory of Motivation (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 29.

that all knowledge is attributable to experience."[27] That is, man's surroundings caused him to learn, and thereby, to become virtuous. Additionally, "the virtuous man was characterized by his ability to deliberate on the consequences of alternative actions so that he might choose that which offered the greatest pleasure in the long run. The man without virtue lacks this ability to deliberate." The virtuous man, therefore, deliberates on the consequences of his actions.[28]

In England, Archibald Alison connected associationism to aesthetics in his Essay on the Nature and Principles of Taste (1790). Alison's work was influential in England and the United States, and aside from its direct influence on aesthetics, represented a romantic attitude towards art that was characteristic of the Gothic Revival architectural reform. Essentially, Alison maintained that physical forms in general were sublime or beautiful for no other reason than because of the emotions and thoughts they might stimulate in the spectator's mind. Alison attributed beauty to Gothic Revival forms on the basis that they led "to ideas of Gothic manners and adventure."[29]

---

[27]Ibid., p. 30.

[28]Ibid., p. 31.

[29]James T. Early, Romanticism and American Architecture (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1965), pp. 34-35, as cited from Archibald Alison, Essay on the Nature and Principles of Taste, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh, 1811), 1:359; 2:139, 155-57, 195.

The forces manifested in Alison's theories, English landscape paintings and garden designs, caused an architectural rebellion against the formal symmetry in classical art. Preference was now for natural things, for the "picturesque." The three most influential writers on rural picturesque architecture, Sir Uvedale Price, Richard Payne Knight, and Humphrey Repton, all advocated a reverence for natural beauty, for irregularity of forms in both landscape gardening and rural architecture.[30] Andrew Jackson Downing praised Repton's ideas as "cultured and elegant."[31]

John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843), another English architectural theorist, was also instrumental in promoting associationism and the Gothic Revival. Loudon's 1838 work, The Suburban Gardener & Villa Companion, stressed the morality of good architecture, holding that "the physical design of the house would influence its inhabitants for the better" and was "a clear example of the complex interplay between design and ideology."[32] The home was to function

---

[30]Ibid., pp. 53-55.

[31]Andrew Jackson Downing, A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America with a View to the Improvement of Country Residences (New York: n.p., 1841; 1st reprint ed., New York: Orange Judd Co., 1875; second reprint ed., New York: Theophratus Publishers, 1977), p. 21.

[32]Norma Pendergast, "The Sense of Home: Nineteenth-Century Domestic Architectural Reform" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, May 1981), pp. 25, 43.

as a utopian retreat from the work-a-day world; architecture was a practical art, and if architecture was good, that is, beautiful, through associationism "the influence of a good house was through its effect on the well-being of the inhabitants."[33] While Downing believed Loudon was "somewhat deficient, as an artist," he praised his works for their "sound artistical principles in Landscape Gardening and Rural Architecture."[34] No doubt Downing's criticism stemmed from his own aesthetic values that conflicted with Loudon's emphasis upon utility as the prime criterion for good architecture.[35]

In any event, the explicit implication in such intellectual theories was that domestic architecture was important to stable social order. In America, the chief proponent of the Gothic Revival reform, Andrew Jackson Downing, believed that beautiful architecture "influenced society . . . through . . . aesthetic qualities . . . through some vague uplifting quality found in a perfectly proportioned window or entablature."[36] Like religious romantic reformers of the antebellum period, Downing and his followers stressed self-help and individual education as a means through which

---

[33]Ibid., p. 40.

[34]Downing, Treatise, p. 21; also p. 60.

[35]Pendergast, p. 44.

[36]Ibid., p. 104.

a stable society could be achieved through domestic architecture.[37]

The Gothic Revival reform in domestic architecture was thus based upon a notable and long tradition in the history of taste in Western thought. It was also largely an intellectual and English tradition that by the 1840s in America became the accepted norm on matters of taste and aesthetics.[38] It was, however, a matter of asking whose tastes and aesthetics. Accepted or not, the fact remains that concerns of art and taste were not expressed in dominant core values, but in the subordinate values of a tiny, anglophilic, socially conservative elite who feared their position in society was being undermined by social and political unrest. The Gothic Revival was also symbolic of pastoral settings and a belief in the agrarian myth. Its values were not core values and would conflict with core values, causing an initial opposition to Gothic architecture.

Opposition to Gothic architecture existed before Andrew Jackson Downing became its chief proponent in America. In 1834, when Downing was nineteen years old, Theodore Dwight,

---

[37] Ibid., p. 6; Thomas, p. 680; and Joseph E. Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1963), p. 4. See also Nathan Parker Willis, The Rag-Bag: A Collection of Ephemera (New York: Charles Scribner, 1855), p. 36.

[38] John William Ward, "The Politics of Design," in Laurence B. Holland, ed., Who Designs America? (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1966), p. 60.

Jr., a conservative Calvinist, wrote in his The Northern Traveller, speaking of the Gothic style, "Why should it be introduced into America? There is not a feature in society here which bears the slightest affinity with it . . . nothing makes it at all tolerable in Europe, except its known connexion [sic] with the days of semi-barbarism in which it flourished." American culture and society was based upon the "foundation of universal knowledge; there is no mystery, no secrecy, no ignorance. Nothing is concealed, nothing is done through systematic imposture." He rejected associationism by stating that Americans did not "admit of any principle by which the feelings are influenced independently of the judgement." It made no sense to Dwight to "meddle with other architecture, in which vastness and gloom work their effects . . . in which the eyes are shown dark recesses which they cannot penetrate. . . . Simplicity and use, two of the great features of nature's work, are banished hence; the light for which our eyes were formed is obscured; and the objects and ends of our creation mystified, as far as architectural objects can produce such an effect." Dwight believed Greek forms were not only superior to Gothic, but fitting "to our own history, character, and

condition!"[39] Dwight was expressing the American core values of nationalism, xenophobia, and future orientation.

On the other hand, as far as church architecture went, it was less than coincidental that the American Episcopal Church "led the battle for the use of Gothic architecture."[40] The finical and light style of Greek forms was not fit for religious solemnity, as an article in an 1807 issue of the Episcopalian Churchman's Magazine purported.[41] Indeed, Episcopalian churches in the Gothic style sprang up in eastern seaboard cities, for example, St. Stephens in Philadelphia (1822-23), Trinity in Boston (1828-29), and Christ Church in Hartford (1827-29). In America, as in England, "the high churchmen took the lead in urging the Gothic style for church buildings."[42] Nevertheless, it can hardly be suggested that the material preferences of Episcopalian priests and bishops were representative of their countrymen's dislike for England nor that their church was in any way significant in antebellum America as having a mass following. Episcopalians, for better or worse, were heavily representative of the conservative business and

---

[39]Warren S. Tyron, ed., A Mirror for Americans: Life and Manners in the United States 1790-1870, as Recorded by American Travelers, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 1:125, as cited from Theodore Dwight, Jr., The Northern Traveller (1834).

[40]Early, p. 118.

[41]Ibid., as cited from Churchman's Magazine 4, no. 6, p. 220.

refined gentry class.[43] A typical transcendentalist argumeng against Gothic church architecture was expressed in the Boston Dial in 1841, in an article entitled "Thoughts on Art." It held that the "Gothic cathedrals were built when the builder and the priest and the people were overpowered in their faith. Love and fear laid every stone."[44] As Frederick Jackson Turner would later put it:

> When we think of the countless masses who wore the fetters of oppression, how dark a shadow their anguish casts about these miracles of stone and marble that their sorrows help to build. Gloriously rise the spires and minarets of many a mediaeval cathedral, but even by its side was built the hovel of the serf, and as the solemn wail of the miserere steals along the stately aisles, it seems to bear a burden from the men "worn out with toil and slavery!" How heavy, gloomy, and how awful. . . .[45]

---

[43]Kit Konolige and Frederica Konolige, The Power of Their Glory: America's Ruling Class, the Episcopalians (New York: Wyden Books, 1978), pp. 79-113.

[44]As cited in Talbot Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America: Being an Account of Important Trends in American Architecture and American Life Prior to the War Between the States, intro. Dean Leopold Arnaud (New York: Dover Publications, 1944), p. 363, from Boston Dial 1 (January 1841): 367.

[45]Frederick Jackson Turner, "Architecture Through Oppression," University Press 15, no. 39 (June 21, 1884): 13. Gothic architecture had, at least in the opinion of William W. Sanger, certain licentious associations. "It is a fact well known to antiquarians . . . that most of the great works of Gothic architecture . . . were profusely adorned with lewd sculptures . . . a monk . . . in carnal connection with a female devotee . . . an abbot engaged with nuns, a naked nun worried by monkeys, youthful penitents undergoing flagellation at the hands of their confessor, lady abesses offering hospitality to well proportioned strangers. . . . These obscene works of art formerly encumbered the doors, windows, arches, and niches of many of

In 1838, a letter from a Detroit, Michigan, architect protested the hiring of New York architects Town and Davis to design the new buildings at the University of Michigan. Not only was it indicative of hurt feelings because of the loss of a commission by "the Mechanics of Michigan [who] do not assume that dignified name called Architect! or any of those lofty titles as Esq'rs., &c." but because the design

> . . . is of the Gothic style of architecture, painted up to the eyes, splendid in appearance, but . . . paltry in . . . execution. . . . I don't know what there is that is so very attractive about this Gothic elevation. . . . Pray, why does Michigan want to imitate the folleries and splendid extravagances of Europe? . . . Why are those four mammoth windows necessary, and the huge chapel which will require a fortune to provide fuel to keep it comfortably warm in winter[?][46]

Clearly the reaction to Gothic architecture was based upon the core values of practicality, xenophobia, future orientation, equality, and efficiency.

That the Gothic Revival reform in domestic architecture had an initial fashionable and snob appeal is evident in

---

the finest Gothic cathedrals in France. . . . When such was the condition of the clergy . . . it would be unjustifiable to expect purity of morals among the people." See William W. Sanger, The History of Prostitution: Its Extent, Causes, and Effects Throughout the World (New York: Harper & Bros., 1859), p. 95.

[46]As cited in Hamlin, pp. 290-91, from a clipping in the Davis Collection at the Avery Library, Columbia University.

Andrew Jackson Downing's first work, his Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening (1841). In the first chapter, entitled "Essay on Landscape Gardening," Downing not only provides a history of the picturesque landscape gardening and Gothic Revival movement but also clearly demonstrates his defensive behavior of identification. In a total of forty-two pages he drops the names of some thirty-two members of the antebellum elite, in what reads much like a social register. Downing did not write for the middle class at all, but only for the wealthy. As an innovator, then, he aimed his reform at the wrong social group in America. His examples are noteworthy. He mentions the "picturesque cottage, in the rural gothic style" of Mrs. Camac of Philadelphia.[47] The Camac family was one of the wealthiest in Philadelphia, with an assessed property value of between $100,000 and $250,000 in 1846.[48] The estate called "Stenton" near Germantown, the exclusive neighborhood four miles from Philadelphia, was described as a "fine old place . . . built in 1731 . . . preserved in its original condition.[49] It was owned by Albanus Logan, a

---

[47]Downing, Treatise, p. 42.

[48]Edward Pessen, Riches, Class, and Power Before the Civil War (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath & Co., 1973), pp. 329, 62, 126, 214, 223, 231.

[49]Downing, Treatise, pp. 42-43.

member of another of Philadelphia's wealthiest families.[50] The "'Manor of Livingston' . . . lately the seat of Mrs. Mary Livingston (but now of Jacob Le Roy, Esq.), is . . . the most remarkable in America, for the noble simplicity of its character, and the perfect order in which it is kept."[51] Le Roy was a wealthy New York banker and a patron of the arts.[52] John Bard's Hudson River estate Blithewood, which Downing considered the "most charming villa residence in the Union"[53] was the residence of yet another wealthy elite family.[54] "Montgomery Place," on the Hudson, was Mrs. Edward Livingston's place, and Edward Livingston was a statesman, author, and one-time mayor of New York City, while the estate itself was an original Saratoga patent.[56] Henry W. Sargent's Hudson River estate, "a bijou full of interest for the lover of rural beauty" was also the residence of a wealthy family[57] and was described by Sidney

---

[51]Downing, Treatise, p. 30.

[52]Pessen, Riches, pp. 106, 234, 258.

[53]Downing, Treatise, pp. 30-31.

[54]Pessen, Riches, pp. 108, 212-13.

[55]Downing, Treatise, p. 31.

[56]Pessen, Riches, pp. 99, 126, 239, 274.

[57]Downing, Treatise, p. 34.

George Fisher as costly and handsome with "many rooms, rich furniture, luxury."[58]

William P. Van Rensselaer's estate "Beaverwych" was another mentioned by Downing, as is the estate of the "old 'Patroon'" Stephen Van Rensselaer;[59] both were fantastically wealthy, while Stephen's wealth was assessed at over $250,000 in 1828.[60] Downing also made a direct appeal to American class-conscious xenophiles by mentioning the residence of the Count de Survilliers, at Bordentown, New Jersey.[61] The Count was none other than Napoleon Bonaparte's older brother, Joseph, once King of Naples (1806-1808), and King of Spain (1808-1813).[62] The residence of Theodore Lyman and John Lowell in Boston as well were mentioned by Downing.[63] Both men's assessed wealth was placed at no less than $250,000 in 1833, putting them in the ranks of Boston's wealthiest one hundred.[64] The conservatory and

---

[58]Nicholas B. Wainwright, ed., A Philadelphia Perspective: The Diary of Sidney George Fisher, Covering the Years 1834-1871 (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1967), pp. 254-55.

[59]Downing, Treatise, pp. 34-35.

[60]Pessen, Riches, pp. 55, 70, 83, 102, 142, 207, 211-13.

[61]Downing, Treatise, p. 41.

[62]Wainwright, p. 62, note number 36.

[63]Downing, Treatise, pp. 38-39.

[64]Pessen, Riches, pp. 331-33.

residence known as "Belmont" was, according to Downing, a "residence of more note than any other near Boston."[65] And no wonder, as its owner, John R. Cushing, had a total wealth of over $250,000 in 1833.[66] The "cottage of Thomas Lee, Esq.," while an estate of a mere twenty acres, had, according to Downing, "a polished, and graceful air."[67] Lee was among Boston's one hundred wealthiest individuals.[68] "The Cottage Residence of Thomas W. Ludlow, near Yonkers, N.Y."[69] was, Downing stated, a model that "may be adopted for country residences . . . with a quaint and happy effect."[70] Perhaps it might, if one had Ludlow's wealth; for example, in 1845, he "threw a party in his upstate villa that cost several thousand dollars more than his assessed wealth for that year!"[71]

The twelve-hundred-acre estate near Albany, New York, called Kenwood, with a mansion built in the Tudor style by John Rathbone, was considered as "one of the best villas"

---

[65]Downing, Treatise, p. 38.

[66]Pessen, Riches, p. 331.

[67]Downing, Treatise, p. 40.

[68]Pessen, Riches, p. 332.

[69]Downing, Treatise, illustration caption, between pp. 346, 347.

[70]Ibid., p. 347.

[71]Pessen, Riches, p. 18; also pp. 24, 233.

in the United States.[72] Rathbone was a wealthy manufacturer of stoves and ranges.[73] While visiting in this general Hudson River neighborhood in 1847, Sidney George Fisher remarked in his diary that the "influence of Downing's books is seen everywhere. . . . He has done a great deal of good in reforming the style of country residences and suggesting new & beautiful embellishments."[74] Indeed, Fisher was correct; but the essential point here is that the country residences that were so reformed were not those of "common men," but of the extremely wealthy elite. (Otherwise, Fisher would not have visited them!) This being the case, it is doubtful that Downing's reform was at all initially aimed at either the common man or the middle class, nor did it in any way express core values. On the contrary, it expressed subordinate values, which may be considered significant as an historical relationship with European--more specifically, English, not American--culture.[75] Gothic architecture was the architecture of the documentarily articulate, of the elite, not of the average antebellum American. As Fisher

---

[72]Downing, Treatise, p. 34.

[73]Wainwright, p. 201.

[74]Ibid.

[75]Alfred A. Kroeber, "The Scientific Study of Values," in Walter Goldschmidt, ed., Exploring the Ways of Mankind (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1960), p. 427.

concluded after reading "some chapters" of Downing's Treatise in 1846: "This book has had immense influence throughout the North in introducing a superior style of adorning country residences & particularly in banishing the odious habit of building houses of Grecian architecture . . . the Gothic & Elizabethan cottage style . . . harmonizes so admirably with the surrounding natural objects & is so much more easily adapted to the purposes of a dwelling."[76] This endorsement might lead one to conclude that Downing's influence was widely felt, but it should be recalled that Fisher was not a common man, but a member of Philadelphia's antebellum elite. His values were not core values, but elite, or subordinate values. Fisher was not a farmer, not of the middle class, not a common man, not a democrat.

George B. Tatum presumes that Downing's influence was widely felt in antebellum America. As evidence he cites a letter to the Horticulturist that appeared in 1847. A subscriber from Peoria County, Illinois, wrote concerning the first eight numbers of the journal that:

> While perusing the pages of this beautiful work, I no longer feel myself an isolated being, far out upon the borders of the cultivated portions of our land, but in the midst of highly gifted and refined

---

[76]Wainwright, p. 189.

> minds, sensibly alive to the best interests of our common country.[77]

Such evidence is biased, at best, for Andrew Jackson Downing not only shared similar values and beliefs but was the editor of the journal in which the letter appeared. Could one reasonably expect him to print a letter that would express contrary values or sentiments? It seems improbable.

Another curious story indicates that while Downing's work had influence in the West, his domestic architecture was objectionable. A Capt. Thomas Jordan was the Army quartermaster at Fort Dalles, Oregon. Between 1856 and 1858 he was responsible for erecting in the fort some three buildings directly from designs in Downing's Country Houses (1852). One official army officer believed such architecture was not at all in keeping with a military post, and the opinion was shared by Jordan's superiors in the military chain of command. They were suspicious of the buildings. Captain Jordan was recalled, and the architecture seems to have been chiefly responsible for his deactivation from duty at Fort Dalles.[78] There was something somehow feminine

---

[77]Andrew Jackson Downing, Rural Essays, ed. George William Curtis, new intro. George B. Tatum (New York: n.p., 1853; reprinted ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1974); Tatum, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xix, as cited from The Horticulturist 2 (August 1847): 96.

[78]Priscilla Knuth, "'Picturesque' Frontier: The Army's Fort Dalles," Oregon Historical Quarterly 67, no. 4 (1966): 292-346; and 68, no. 1 (1967): 4-52.

about Gothic architecture, at least insofar as masculine military order was concerned.

And, indeed, there was not only something feminine about Gothic architecture and Downing's personality in particular, but something feminine about artistic and aesthetic concerns in general throughout the entire American experience in the nineteenth century. Aesthetic creativity for a long time was "viewed as unmanly in large sectors of the American culture," which caused artists to migrate to Europe, or read European works on art.[79] As a member of the gentry, Downing felt obliged to carry on "the burden of sustaining cultural life."[80] Moreover, since cultural life includes, to a large degree, art and architecture, it is necessary to recall that in "the rambunctuous days of the nineteenth century, when America was growing and fighting its way across the continent, toil was man's business; culture was left to women. So were most other refinements of life, and the arts were thought of as sissy and men who showed any interest in them as something less than virile. . . . Except in a few Eastern seaboard cities, the arts were women's work."[81] Could it be that Downing,

---

[79]Goldschmidt, p. 583.

[80]Stow Persons, ed., The Decline of American Gentility (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), pp. 2, 86-88.

[81]Russell Lynes, "Time on Our Hands," in Edgar A. Schuler et al., eds., Readings in Sociology, 3d ed. (New York: Thomas T. Crowell, 1967), p. 502.

who, according to Frederika Bremer, took great interest "in the elevation of woman's culture and social influence,"[82] was altogether so far removed from his own culture's values that his work appealed to only a tiny minority in antebellum America? For, if nothing else, antebellum American society was dominated by the masculine, not the feminine, and called for women's subordination to men.[83] Yet, regardless of feminine values, the Gothic Revival in domestic architectural reform did not address the majority of Americans.

Such was the opinion of Solon Robinson, an architectural press writer and agricultural editor for the New York Tribune.[84] In 1842, after visiting Newburgh, New York, and seeing Downing's "excellent nursery, and tasteful mansion, I was satisfied that he was such a man of taste as would confer lasting benefits to the country, if he and those like him would write more for the gratification and information of their fellow citizens."[85] Downing's articles were too

---

[82]Downing, Rural Essays, p. lxix.

[83]Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catherine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 158-59.

[84]Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans: The National Experience (New York: Viking Press, 1974), p. 151; and Albert Luther Demaree, The American Agricultural Press, 1819-1860 (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1974), p. 104.

[85]Herbert Anthony Kellar, ed., Solon Robinson, Pioneer and Agriculturist, vol. 1: 1825-1845; vol. 2: 1846-1851; 2 vols. (Indianapolis, Ind.: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1936; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1968), 1:304.

arcane, requiring the reader to "wade along" deeply.[86] Additionally, according to Robinson, "Notwithstanding the high character and the adaptability of Mr. Downing's works to the 'upper ten thousand,' the wants of the lower ten hundred thousand are not satisfied."[87] He was right. As an innovator, a reformer, Downing was not addressing the rural middle-class audience in America. As another of Downing's contemporaries, Lewis Falley Allen, complained in his book Rural Architecture (1852), all architectural books unhappily pertained "to luxury and taste, instead of the every-day wants of a strictly agricultural population." They did not apply to farmers or represent their life styles and needs.[88] Utility should be the chief object of domestic housing.[89] Allen stated, "Tinsel ornament, or gewgaw decoration should never be permitted on any building where the

---

[86]Kellar, 2:46.

[87]Ibid., 1:533.

[88]Lewis F. Allen, Rural Architecture: Being a Complete Description of Farm Houses, Cottages, and Out Buildings, Comprising Wood Houses, Workshops, Tool Houses, Carriage and Wagon Houses, Smoke and Ash Houses, Ice Houses, Apiary or Bee House, Poultry Houses, Rabbitry, Dovecote, Piggery, Barns, and Sheds for Cattle, &c., &c., &c., Together With Lawns, Pleasure Grounds and Parks; the Flower, Fruit and Vegetable Gardens. Also Useful and Ornamental Domestic Animals for the Country Resident, &c., &c., &c. Also the Best Method of Conducting Water into Cattle Yards and Houses (New York: C. M. Saxton, 1852), p. x.

[89]Ibid., p. 21.

sober enjoyment of agricultural life is designed. It can never add consideration or dignity to the retired gentleman even, and least of all should it be indulged in by the farmer."[90] He advised the American farmer to avoid the "stiff, pinched, and tucked-up look . . . which . . . the haberdasher-built houses of the present day exult."[91] It was, moreover, incorrect to "build to gratify the eyes of some of the public more [than] our own, and fit up our dwellings to accommodate 'company' or visitors, rather than our own families; and in the indulgence of this false notion, subject ourselves to perpetual inconvenience for the gratification of occasional hospitality or ostentation. This is all wrong."[92] Allen was then in direct opposition to Downing, who believed that it was important that a house should please the eyes of the viewer above all else.[93] "Magnificence, or the attempt at magnificence," contended Allen, "is the great fault with Americans who aim to build out of the common line; and the consequence of such attempt is too often a failure, apparent always at a glance, and

---

[90]Ibid., p. 53.

[91]Ibid., p. 41.

[92]Ibid., p. 35.

[93]Pendergast, p. 88.

of course a perfect condemnation in itself of the judgement as well as taste of him who undertakes it."[94]

Downing was at heart a social conservative; he "was no mere democrat, seeking to extend the powers of the millionaire to the laborer; his interest in the diffusion of his values centered on their use as pacifiers and social controls. Time after time he and his followers stressed the political morality of good architecture, in accents often resembling those of Ruskin but with particular applicability to the United States."[95]

Downing and his followers believed Americans needed good houses because they were vehicles of civilization that stimulated a desire for refinement, a typical associationist tact. As Downing wrote: "So long as men are forced to dwell in log huts and follow a hunter's life, we must not be surprised at lynch law and the use of the bowie knife. But when smiling lawns and tasteful cottages begin to embellish a country, we know that order and culture are established." The progress of refined civilization had much to do with the promotion of rural architecture.[96] A home in the country

---

[94]Allen, p. 24.

[95]Neil Harris, The Artist in American Society: The Formative Years, 1790-1860 (New York: George Braziller, 1966), p. 208.

[96]Andrew Jackson Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, Including Designs for Cottages and Farm-Houses and Villas, With Remarks on Interiors, Furniture, and the Best

had pervasive moral influence; "among an educated and truthful and refined people," a country home was "an echo of virtue and morality."[97] Good country homes would have the effect of breaking "that feverish unrest and want of balance" characteristic of life in antebellum America and would through "the pursuit of tastes . . . result in making a little world of the family home, where truthfulness, beauty, and order have the largest dominion."[98] The salubrious moral influence of beautiful country architecture "should be . . . strengthened by every external sign of beauty that awakens love. . . . All to which the heart can attach itself in youth . . . contributes largely to our stock of happiness, and to the elevation of moral character." Therefore, the general condition of rural domestic housing "should be raised, till it shall symbolize the best character and pursuits, and the dearest affections and enjoyments of social life."[99] Downing hoped to "be of some little assistance to the popular taste" and reach "all classes of readers."[100] In fact, he was of very little

---

Modes of Warming and Ventilating, new intro. J. Stewart Johnson (New York: n.p., 1850; reprint ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1969), p. xix.

[97]Downing, Country Houses, pp. xix-xx.

[98]Ibid., p. xx.

[99]Ibid.

[100]Ibid.

assistance and reached only a small class of the American people. He aimed not so much at changing architecture as at reforming morals through architecture and at imposing his values on American culture.

For example, Downing believed that while there was "nothing mean in the expression of this house, neither is there anything tasteful, or above the character of common place. It belongs to the large class of dwellings whose presiding architectural genius is that of the 'bare and bald.'"[101] (See fig. 2.) Downing would transform this apparently typical home into one with projecting cornices, verge boards, a veranda, latticed window sashes and fluted chimneys to demonstrate "the spirit of . . . the gothic villa."[102] (See fig. 3.)

Beautiful gardens and homes were "an unfailing barrier against vice, immorality and bad habits."[103] According to one supporter of Downing's program, beautification would help balance American restlessness and passions for luxury.[104] Gothic architecture and landscape gardening

---

[101]As cited in Donald J. Berg, ed., Country Patterns, 1841-1883: A Sampler of Nineteenth Century Rural Homes and Gardens (Rockville Centre, New York: Antiquity Reprints, 1982), p. 16, from "A. J. Downing, The Horticulturist, 1846."

[102]Ibid., p. 17.

[103]As cited in Harris, p. 209.

[104]Harris, p. 209.

Fig. 2. "Bare and bald" domestic architecture.[105]

would, Downing claimed, prevent the dissipation of American youth. "If you would keep pure the heart of your child, and make his youth innocent and happy, surround him with objects of interest and beauty at home."[106]

While it required relatively little labor or money for making efforts at beautifying country dwellings, the effort would not be made in America unless the proper "distribution

---

[105]Berg, p. 16.

[106]Downing, Rural Essays, pp. 234-35.

Fig. 3. "Bare and bald" domestic architecture transformed.[107]

be found to exist in the mind of the tenant." In America land was "generally in the hands of an independent class of citizens, who own them free of incumbrance, but who own not much else." Typically, a few rows of overgrown currant bushes and a "half-dozen wild apple trees . . . and . . . perhaps a single cherry tree" were all the horticultural embellishments found in American homes, towns, and villages. Americans would rather argue politics at the local tavern

---

[107]Berg, p. 17.

fireplace than spend the same amount of time embellishing their grounds or houses. While it might be a fine thing to have beautiful domestic architecture, most Americans "have never realized the possibility of such a conception, and . . . think all the use of the earth to be, that it yields corn and wheat and potatoes, all the beauty of a house that it is a shelter from the weather!"[108] Indeed, it was true, for they valued productivity, efficiency, progress, and practicality, not leisure, aesthetic contemplation of landscapes or the stars. Most Americans, according to Francis J. Grund, realized that the "riches of the soil can only be explored by active labor and a series of harassing details, connected with the sacrifice of every convenience of life."[109]

If only "there was in America, a more decided taste for country life among the younger portion of those classes, favored by fortune with the possession of property" then there would be "a tendency in some degree to counteract the restlessness and disposition to change, which is a characteristic of our people, and to check the passion for luxuries of all kinds, which is rapidly extending itself

---

[108]"Downing on Landscape Gardening," North American Review 53, no. 112 (July 1841): 259.

[109]Francis J. Grund, The Americans in Their Moral, Social, and Political Relations, 2 vols. in 1 (New York: n.p., 1837; reprint ed., New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1971), 2:6-7.

with the increase of our public hotels, and the facilities of transportation from place to place."[110] But this was not the case in antebellum America. Downing, moreover, approved of these passions for luxuries, of "floating palaces and . . . monster hotels, with their purple and fine linen." Without these, he believed, Americans would not have the benefits of "velvet couches . . . splendid mirrors . . . luxurious carpets."[111]

America was different from England, principally because here there was "no class of proprietors who live upon their estates, and sympathize with all their neighbours, poor or rich, and to whom the idea of removal from the place they call home is in the nature of a calamity."[112] That class of proprietors in America felt no sorrow in leaving home, nor did they sympathize with their neighbors, particularly the poor; they craved artificial distinctions.[113] As Francis Grund explained, the "fact is, the soi-disant higher classes of Americans, in quitting the simple, manly, moral, industrious habits of the great mass of the people--habits

---

[110]"Downing on Landscape Gardening," North American Review 53, no. 112 (July 1841): 259.

[111]Downing, Rural Essays, p. 152.

[112]"Downing on Landscape Gardening," p. 260.

[113]Francis J. Grund, Aristocracy in America (London: Richard Bentley, 1839; first reprint ed., New York: Harper & Row, 1959; second reprint ed., Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1968), pp. 18, 22.

which alone have won them the respect of the world--have no fixed standard by which to govern their actions . . . except their contempt for the lower classes, and their dislike for their own country."[114] Yet Grund was convinced that the American aristocracy--"a considerable portion of all people worth from fifty to an hundred thousand dollars--are, owing to the growing power of the West, a most harmless . . . part of the population."[115]

Country houses for wealthy Americans of the antebellum era were considered a necessity because they were "commonly regarded as an appendage to the condition of the men of fortune, and for no other reason." A country house was not regarded as a permanent possession but as "no more than a place to spend three or four months in the summer. No rural tastes are formed, no sympathies with neighbours are created." Upon the owner's death the summer retreat was sold and passed out of his family's hands, lost forever to his descendants. Moreover, the "great majority of persons who make country seats do so either because they desire to make a display of their fortune, or else because they have a romantic idea in their mind of the delight of a beautiful retreat from the bustle of the world. Neither motive will answer for any length of time to keep them living there.

---

[114]Ibid., p. 87.

[115]Ibid., p. 301.

The desire for display rapidly palls with the possession of all that is necessary to indulge in it, and the fancy for retirement gives way before the dreariness of solitude."[116] The fad for country houses, regardless of its relative beauty or power of moral association, was futile in America unless the "man of property . . . is inclined to attach himself to the soil, to make his children feel that it is theirs as well as his, and to cultivate a common interest with all his neighbours."[117]

While Greek Revival architecture was considered "absurd" and Downing advocated the Gothic, both seemed to one reviewer equally inappropriate but for different reasons. Greek forms were not right for America because they represented an attempt to convert domestic architecture into a religious monument. Gothic was incorrect because it was "a transferring to a new country of a peculiar style of building, without transferring the only association of ideas which can make it pleasing. The Gothic in America strikes us as being gothic indeed."[118]

Although English and "modern Italian" architecture were worthy of imitation in the United States, "there is great room left open for the genius of native architects, to

---

[116]"Downing on Landscape Gardening," p. 260.

[117]Ibid.

[118]Ibid.

devise and to combine new forms particularly adapted to manners in America, which will unite external beauty . . . with internal convenience and economy." Downing's Treatise was also considered "an ornament to any drawing room."[119] It is more probable that Downing's works then did more immediately to transform the nature of architectural manuals[120] than to transform antebellum American domestic architecture.

Downing's architecture was not aimed at the unsettled, inorganic, and mobile society in which he lived. He divided rural houses into three categories--farm houses, cottages, and villas. Each designation was for a different class. There were three truths in domestic architecture: a general truth, that domestic architecture should look like a dwelling; a local truth, that a dwelling should look like a country or town house; and thirdly, that a house should look like a "certain kind of country house--or a cottage, farm-house, or villa."[121]

A villa, he specifically noted, was to be the "country-house of a person of competence or wealth sufficient to build and maintain it with some taste and elegance."[122]

---

[119]Ibid., p. 261.

[120]Early, pp. 55-60.

[121]Downing, Country Houses, pp. 31-32.

[122]Ibid., p. 257.

It was the kind of home, therefore, that either unwealthy or incompetent people should not build, the kind of domestic architecture that was "the most refined home in America--the home of its most leisurely and educated class of citizens."[123] Yet, in antebellum America, the "position of a man of leisure . . . is far from being enviable" because Americans "discountenance idleness."[124] Not only were villas restricted to this class of Americans--certainly not the average American--but they were to express a certain moral culture, taste, and beauty, with libraries filled with "sacred books."[125] It was, according to Downing, "in our villas that we must hope in this country to give the best and most complete manifestation of domestic architecture."[126] The "cottage is too limited in size, the farm-house too simply useful in its character, to admit the indulgence of beauty and form and decoration, which belongs properly to the villa."[127]

Farm houses, obviously, were for farmers. Downing believed such domestic architecture should have solid proportions and express domestic feeling but never elegance.

---

[123]Ibid., pp. 257-58.

[124]Grund, Americans, 2:5.

[125]Downing, Country Houses, p. 259.

[126]Ibid.

[127]Ibid., p. 262.

Subdued rustic ornaments and simple details should be dominant. By adding a bay window or a piazza, the farmer could show the world some real beauty and refined taste.[128] Nowhere does he suggest that farm houses should look like villas or cottages; in other words, the farm house should designate both a man's occupation and position in society.

Cottages, however, should be simple, and not at all ornate. If one wished, he admitted, a cottage could be made into "a perfect bijou of a house."[129] But, if so, it "must be a cottage or plaything for wealthy people, not for them to live in, or it might be a villa disguised in cottage form, and not a true cottage, that is to say, a small house for a simple manner of living."[130] Cottages were for workingmen,[131] and English cottages were "the finest in the world," and Downing advocated copying them.[132]

A man's house was therefore to express his character traits and class. Downing believed the cottage, the farm house, and larger villas were "all marked by a somewhat distinctive character of their own . . . and believing as we do, that . . . every man's life or occupation depends

---

[128]Ibid., pp. 140-42.

[129]Ibid., p. 43.

[130]Ibid., p. 44.

[131]Ibid., pp. 35, 73-75.

[132]Ibid., p. 48.

largely on his pursuing it frankly, honestly, and openly . . . we would have his house give significance to . . . that daily life and occupation by harmonizing with them."[133] He felt that a workman's cottage should harmonize with his life style, occupation, and position in society, a farm house with that of the farmer, and the villa with the wealthy and educated man. Villas belonged to men of wealth only. A man's house, therefore, was to function as a badge designating his place in the social hierarchy. Downing's belief in a fixed and static social order, however, was contrary to American democratic values concerning equality.

Country homes produced individuality and protected all of society. Yet, Downing was ideologically inconsistent. At one point he states:

> Yes, the love of home is one of the deepest feelings in our nature, and we believe the happiness and virtue of a vast rural population to be centered in it; but it must be a home built and loved, upon new world ideas and principles; a home in which humanity and republicanism are stronger than family pride and aristocratic feeling; a home of the virtuous citizen, rather than the mighty owner of houses and lands.[134]

In appealing to core values such as these, Downing was really manifesting the behavior resorted to by many reformers, that of reaction formation, or fighting the evil one wishes to reform with its own characteristics--fighting fire

---

[133]Downing, Rural Essays, p. 208.

[134]Downing, Country Houses, p. 270.

with fire. Another example of reaction formation in Downing's work can be seen in a possible reference to the Anti-Rent difficulties of 1839-1846, when he stated "the creation of large establishments is . . . a mistake . . . it is impossible, except for a day . . . our laws render the attempt folly; and our institutions finally grind it into powder."[135]

Yet another example may be found in Downing's recognition that Americans "disclaim every thing foreign. They will have no Gothic mansions, Italian villas, or Swiss cottages . . . they berate all architectural writers . . . for presenting certain . . . modifications of such foreign styles."[136] P. T. Barnum's oriental castle was singled out by Downing as particularly ludicrous, while Gothic churches were, he held, "useless as places to hear sermons in." Additionally, Downing criticized the then new Smithsonian building in Washington, D. C.; it was in the Norman tower style, "with a relish of the dark ages in it, the better to contrast with its avowed purpose of diffusing light."[137] But he showed his true stripes when he presented a design in the Norman style, complete with tower. He stated that to "a person uneducated in domestic architecture . . . it

---

[135]Ibid., p. 268.

[136]Downing, Rural Essays, pp. 214-15.

[137]Ibid., pp. 268-69.

looks un-domestic, and belongs to something else than a dwelling; but this is only ignorance of that prominent feature, the tower." Towers were justified as being domestic because they were excellent for "affording a fine opportunity for views of the surrounding landscape by day, and the starry heavens at night. . . They . . . sufficiently . . . satisfy those who prefer a little relish of antiquity to the last result of modern convenience."[138] It is probable that most Americans of the antebellum era valued gazing neither at the landscapes nor at the stars, to say little of having a preference for antiquity.

Downing sadly acknowledged that there was a

> . . . wealth of affections kept alive in those manor houses and country halls of England, where, age after age, the descendants of one family have lived, and loved, and suffered, and died, perhaps nobly too, sheltered by the same trees and guarded by the same walls. It is quite natural that we, largely descended from this Anglo-Saxon stock, when we have fortunes to spend, should fondly delude ourselves with the idea of realizing this old and pleasing idyl of beautiful country life. But it is an idyl, or only a delusion to us. . . . It could be re-animated at the sacrifice of the happiness of millions of free citizens.[139]

This was not only a manifestation of reaction formation, but it is possible that Downing was at last recognizing the inherent conflict between his values and American core values. Still, his use of words like "we" and "us" is indicative of his defensive behavior of identification.

---

[138] Downing, Country Houses, p. 281.

[139] Ibid., pp. 268-69.

Reaction formation or not, Downing was not ideologically consistent. While he was against the verbatim imitation of foreign architecture, he was not opposed to its adaptation in America.[140] He could bitterly complain that the average country town had no picturesque trees or parks like those in Boston, but only "rude, uncouth streets. . . . There must be at least one right-feeling man in every Sodom."[141] Antebellum Americans did not care for trees;[142] they were in the way of progress, and it is no accident that in the American political lexicon candidates seeking office are said to "go stumping." Downing could also disdainfully and sarcastically state that: "No one pretends that we have, as yet, either a national architecture or national music in America; unless our Yankee clapboard house be taken as a specimen of the first, and 'Old Susannah' of the second fine art."[143] Again he was correct, and his attack against clapboarded houses, regardless of their lack of his values and aesthetic qualities was an attack not only upon typical housing and the people who lived in them but upon the core values such domestic architecture reflected.

---

[140]Ibid., pp. 263-65.

[141]Downing, Rural Essays, p. 305.

[142]Grund, Aristocracy, p. 11; and "Downing on Landscape Gardening," p. 261.

[143]Downing, Rural Essays, p. 205.

While he would pay lip service to American nationalism, Downing also indicated his dislike for the flux characteristic in antebellum society when justifying the building of villas based upon foreign architectural styles. He emphatically stated:

> Placing a national feeling and national taste above all others, we will not, however, shut our eyes to the fact which no observer of men will dispute, that in every age and country are born some persons who belong rather to the past than the present--men to whom memory is dearer than hope--the bygone ages fuller of meaning than those of the future. These are the natural conservatives whom Providence has wisely distributed, even in the most democratic governments, to steady the otherwise too impetuous and unsteady, onward movements of those who, in their love of progress, would obliterate the past, even its hold on the feelings and imaginations of our race.[144]

Downing, therefore, "was no ordinary popularizer, but one whose heart lay in the great villas, and whose allegiance rested with their owners."[145]

While the Gothic Revival and Downing sought to improve American morals through architectural and landscaping reform, its thrust was checked by the lack of practical guides, and "of means of which there shall be some security afforded to individuals with moderate resources, against the misapplication of their money and labor." Moreover, the "English works" upon which Downing's reform was based

---

[144]Downing, Country Houses, p. 265.

[145]Harris, pp. 213-14.

were considered, like English architecture,

> . . . worse than useless in many respects upon this side of the Atlantic; for they are predicated upon a state of society and manners, a climate, an extent of private fortunes and a scale of prices of labor and materials so wholly different from what is known here, that any luckless wight who ever commenced operations upon the faith of what he read in them, must have had occasion before he ended, to repent in more ways than one of his misplaced confidence.[146]

What a moderate fortune in England could produce in the way of beautiful grounds and rural architecture required a large one in America. The wealthy American citizen would lose confidence in cost estimates if he undertook to build and landscape according to Downing's dictum, and in order to save himself from financial ruin would do only half the job. Consequently, he would lose "the advantage of much of his preceding outlay . . . he gets disgusted with country life; finally sells what he has done for a quarter part of the amount it has cost him, and returns to a city determined never to leave it; or if he does, only for a jaunt to some watering place during the hot weeks of the season."[147]

The chief concern of all Gothic Revivalists was "does it make a good picture?"[148] Architecture should be made to fuse with its natural surroundings in a picturesque manner

---

[146]"Downing on Landscape Gardening," p. 258.

[147]Ibid., p. 259.

[148]Early, pp. 55-60.

as well as the "painted architecture of Claude, Poussin, and Puget did."[149]

According to Downing, the picturesque meant "ideas of beauty manifested with something of rudeness, violence, or difficulty. The effect of the whole is spirited and pleasing, but parts are not balanced, proportions are not perfect, and details are rude." The picturesque conveyed "the ideas of power exerted, rather than the beauty which it involves."[150] Picturesqueness was dependent upon "opposite conditions of matter--irregularity, and a partial want of symmetry." Because picturesqueness denoted power, it followed, Downing held, that "all Architecture in which beauty of expression predominates . . . must be more or less picturesque." Beauty signified "the perfect balance between a beautiful idea and the material form in which it is conveyed to the eye, a truly beautiful form, so rarely seen and involving of course harmonious expression, whether it be in man, nature, or art, is more perfect and satisfactory than a picturesque one; as . . . in Architecture, a villa of the most exquisite symmetry is more permanently pleasing than one of great irregularity."[151] Yet, the explanation of such aesthetic theory, as Downing admitted,

---

[149] Ibid., p. 60.

[150] Downing, Country Houses, pp. 28-29.

[151] Ibid., p. 29.

was "pursuing the matter further than our readers require."[152] Indeed it was, and only reinforced Robinson's criticism that Downing wrote for the elite, not the common man.[153]

Herman Melville also had some criticism of the picturesque. In his novel Pierre he stated that the "interpretation of a scene, or a building, as picturesque, numbs the viewer to the realities of poverty."[154] It was well enough for "the grown man of taste" to be able to detect the picturesque in the natural landscape and in rural architecture, if he also had "a keen perception of what may not unfitly be . . . styled, the povertiresque in the social landscape." To such a person

> . . . not much more picturesquely conspicuous is the dismantled thatch in a painted cottage . . . than the time-tangled and want-thinned looks of a beggar, povertiresquely diversifying those snug little cabinet pictures of the world, which, exquisitely varnished and framed, are hung up in the drawing rooms of humane men of taste, and amiable philosophers of either the "Compensation" or "Optimist" school. They deny that there is any misery in the world, except for the purpose of throwing the fine povertiresque element into the general picture.[155]

---

[152]Ibid.

[153]Kellar, 1:553.

[154]Vicki Harper Litman, "The Cottage and the Temple: Melville's Symbolic Use of Architecture," American Quarterly 21, no. 3 (Fall 1969): 634.

[155]Ibid., p. 634.

Men like Downing "with drawing-room minds place in their unrealistic picturesque cottage the unrealistic povertir-esque peasant. However neatly it fits their aesthetic theories about the equivalence of a man with his house, such an idyllic picture is actually false."[156] Thus, the pastoral ideal and Gothic architecture became symbolic of the harshness of aristocracy.[157] This was the problem with the Gothic Revival reform in domestic architecture; it was aristocratic, too aesthetically theoretical, too deep and intellectual and European, for the antebellum American to appreciate or accept. It did not reflect core values. Log cabins and hard cider, however, did; and it is not just coincidental that the Presidential election race of 1840 was not called the "Gothic Cottage and Ohio Wine" campaign.

Architecture's highest power was not found, according to Downing, in mere facsimile reproduction, but was found in the "subtle essence" that was at the heart of nature. Every "outward material form is a symbol or expression of something that is not matter, and which, rightly understood, gives us the key to the power which that form immediately and without reflection, acts upon the sense of beauty."[158] In this way a wreathed or twisted column symbolized

---

[156] Ibid., p. 635.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Downing, Country Houses, p. 346.

affection. Yet one wonders just how many Americans could or would appreciate such subtleties. A Gothic or Italian mansion costing $14,000[159] symbolized intellectuality, culture, and conservatism by its exterior alone. "We see refined culture symbolized in the round arch, with its continually recurring curves of beauty, in the spacious and elegant arcades, inviting to leisurely conversations, in all those outlines and details, suggestive of restrained and orderly action" while Gothic symbolized "the upward, aspiring, imaginative feeling."[160]

Vices could also be reflected as well as virtues. "A house built only with a view to animal wants, eating and drinking, will express sensuality. . . . A residence marked by gaudy and garish apartments . . . will express pride and vanity."[161] Only when it expressed the beauty and truth of the builder's or owner's life and status did domestic architecture approach perfection.

Downing and his followers, however, did not want to express all truths; they were selective. Evidence of work was to be kept out of sight; walkways were to be swept and mowed by "invisible hands" when the family was out or at

---

[159]Ibid., p. 363.

[160]Ibid., p. 24.

[161]Ibid., p. 24.

night.[162] Even Downing's own home was situated just above Newburgh and near a well-travelled road. "But so skillfully were the trees arranged, that all suspicion of town or road were removed. . . . You fancied the estate extended to the river."[163] Downing, for all his rhetoric about truthfulness, did not object to the use of wallpaper that imitated grained-oak wainscot. In other words, the principle of honesty should be used only when appropriate.[165] Beauty "of expression in architecture, as in other arts," Downing held, "requires educated feeling--it is as obscure and imperceptible to the majority . . . as the beauty of clouds or aerial perspective in landscape is to the most ignorant ploughman in the fields."[166] It is probable, again, that he was right; for the uneducated majority of antebellum Americans, the "ignorant ploughman in the fields" he referred to can hardly be thought of as placing much value in contemplating clouds or aerial perspectives, much less "educated feeling."

But it went deeper than mere educated feeling. Downing and his followers, such as Sidney George Fisher, who was

---

[162]Carl Carmer, The Hudson (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1939), p. 241.

[163]Curtis, in Downing, Rural Essays, p. xxxii.

[164]Downing, Country Houses, pp. 8-38.

[165]Ibid., p. 369.

[166]Ibid., p. 24.

related to the great families of Philadelphia and was at home with the Powells, Ingersolls, Dickinsons, Camacs, and Logans, were contemptuous of democracy and the ambitious money-grubbing parvenues they associated with it. Like Downing, Fisher respected only breeding and birth.[167] It was only natural for men like Downing and Fisher to nearly worship landed estates such as Stenton,[168] the home of Pennsylvania's Dickinsons and Logans. A house of this kind, according to Fisher, with its "gigantic forest trees grouped around it, the antique furniture, and associations connected with the spot always affected my imagination strongly."[169] Consciously and instinctively Downing and Fisher knew that the order and stability they craved could be protected, enhanced, and preserved only by the perpetuation of their life styles and values and by strengthening permanent rural ideals through architecture.

> Reformers like Jefferson, or Nathaniel Hawthorne's Holgrave, were convinced that only movement, change and equality could assure the primacy of the present. "If each generation built its own houses," said Holgrave, "that single change, comparatively unimportant in itself, would imply almost every reform which society is now suffering for."[170]

---

[167]Wainwright, p. 244.

[168]Ibid., pp. 71-72; and Downing, Treatise, p. 43.

[169]Wainwright, p. 71.

[170]As cited in Harris, p. 214, from R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam, Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago, 1955), p. 19.

It was better by far for churches, capitols, and court houses to crumble every twenty years than to remain standing, because it would remind people to reform and examine the very institutions they symbolized. "Downing and his followers hoped to cut off just this sort of radicalism by their beauty campaigns and by focusing attention on the hearth as the center of all . . . conservatism, they were only following an ancient formula."[171] They were thus atavistic reformers.

The natural conservatives provided by God that Downing referred to were bent upon checking "onward movements of those who . . . would obliterate the past, even its hold on the feelings and imaginations of our race."[172] It was also no accident that conservative writers like Washington Irving, "the arch-Federalist of American literature,"[173] and James Fenimore Cooper used architectural metaphors as their "cardinal images of value."[174] Houses in their writings were "visible symbol[s] of tradition, of permanence, of man's mastery of the primary environment of civilization."[175]

---

[171]Harris, p. 214.

[172]Downing, Country Houses, p. 265.

[173]Allen Guttmann, The Conservative Tradition in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 47.

[174]Ibid., p. 49.

[175]Ibid., p. 50; also pp. 47-77.

Moreover, it was hardly accidental that Cooper, with advice from Samuel F. B. Morse, remodeled his ancestral home in Cooperstown, New York, in a Gothic style. He raised ceilings and added Gothic battlements and windows. While the effect may have been splendid, it "was likely to seem aristocratic pretension in Jacksonian America."[176] Cooper showed his pride in his newly Gothicized home by providing a rough sketch of it in a letter to his friend in 1834.[177]

Consequently, Gothic Revival architectural reform was an example of what Joseph Gusfield refers to as an issue of moral reform, in which a cultural group--in this case the conservative and wealthy elite of antebellum America--acted "to preserve, defend, or enhance the dominance and prestige of its own style of living within the total reform."[178]

Gothic Revival architecture was not for the common man of the antebellum era. It was something the average uncultured, uneducated, and unrefined American transient farmer and his family did not appreciate or understand. It did not reflect their values. It was art, refinement. Gothic architecture was symbolic of mythical and romantic notions of country life. In response to the growth of the commercial

---

[176]James Franklin Beard, ed., The Letters and Journals of James Fenimore Cooper, 6 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1960-1968), 1, 1800-1830 (1960): 9.

[177]Ibid., 3, 1833-1839 (1964): 56-59.

[178]Gusfield, p. 3.

class, egalitarian ideology, and the threats to their elite prestige and status, certain educated groups in American culture advocated architectural reform based upon European, and especially English, notions founded on a nostalgic and romantic desire for the stability and order of feudalism and feudal values. One had to be well educated at least in the classics, aesthetics, and history to be able to appreciate Gothic symbolism, and only a tiny minority had the wherewithall or leisure time for this kind of training. The average American not only could not afford this training but did not value it. He did not have the money, the leisure, nor any value of art. If he had, there would have been no need for the establishment of the American Art Union.

Louis Hartz has done a convincing job of demonstrating that America has no feudal past. So its people and cultural values did not have to struggle against a well-established feudal structure, a national church, national army, or titled aristocracy. America was "born free" and required no radical social revolution in becoming a liberal society because it was one already. The absence of any feudal heritage created a liberal tradition in America, one of onward movements that frightened people like Downing and his followers. "The ironic flaw in American liberalism," wrote Hartz, "lies in the fact that we have never had a conservative

tradition."[179] But there was a conservative tradition in America, borrowed lock, stock, and barrel from Europe and manifested in the Gothic Revival; it was, however, of little overriding influence. Architecture based upon conservative, anachronistic, and xenophilic concepts could not, and did not, find widespread initial acceptance in America. The very use of the word "gothic" explicitly and implicitly shows that Gothic Revival architecture drew its inspiration from a feudal age and tradition, which had its own values and social order. If de Tocqueville was right, the established order in America was one of constant change and general condition of equality, the exact antithesis of feudalism. With this in mind, how could it be said that Gothic Revival architecture would be accepted in a culture whose dominant values expressed the opposite of feudalism?[180]

There was, in antebellum America, no respect for a sense of the past nor any respect for Europe or England.

---

[179]Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Javonovich, 1955), p. 57; and John Huizinga, America: A Dutch Historian's Vision from Afar and Near, trans., intro., notes, Herbert H. Rowen (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 192.

[180]Howard Mumford Jones, O' Strange New World: American Culture, The Formative Years (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 76; Alvin L. Bertrand, Basic Sociology: An Introduction to Theory and Method, Sociology Series, ed. John F. Cruber and Alfred C. Clarke (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), pp. 75-81, 123, 125-26, 127, 128-29, 130-32, 136; and Everett M. Rogers, Diffusion of Inventions (New York: Free Press, 1967), pp. 12-20, 76.

The symbolism of Gothic Revival architecture with its feudal associations of a well-ordered and fixed social structure--the very thing Downing and his followers craved--was a blatant denial of American core values or progress, future orientation, anti-intellectualism, practicality, anglophobia, nationalism, and the equal opportunity to advance in society through hard work.

The initial failure of the Gothic Revival architectural reform is also a lesson in the failure of cultural diffusion. Gothic architecture had no relative advantage for the majority of Americans but only for a minority. It was not compatible with core values, and it was too complex to be readily understood. It was absolute and therefore not divisible; associationism demanded adherence to an absolute standard of beauty and truthfulness. Moreover, it was not only too complex, too deep, but it was not easily and widely communicated to the American people.

Andrew Jackson Downing was an innovator and a change or reform agent. As an innovator and early adapter, Downing was younger than later adapters, had a higher social status due to his marriage, had a more favorable financial position that most Americans, made extensive use of impersonal information sources (books and journals on architecture and aesthetics that originated in England), and had a higher educational level than most Americans. He was therefore

atypical. As an innovator, Downing established a communications link with those whose morals and architecture he wished to reform, but he failed to express core values. Even when it appears that he did, it was no more than reaction formation behavior.

As a social movement, Gothic Revival reform initially failed because there was not much collective action generated by it. Additionally, there was no commonly felt dissatisfaction with domestic architecture in America, and the movement never developed a formal bureaucratic structure. Moreover, it never reached the institutional stage in antebellum America. It failed also because of the deep-seated feeling of anglophobia in the United States. It was too individualistic, as was all of romantic reform, and therefore posed a threat to American institutions.[181] Gothic Revival architecture was art--a large segment of culture--and could not find wide acceptance in the young United States until primal housing and other needs had been widely satisfied.

This, however, is not to deny that Gothic architecture was in time accepted in America but to suggest that its eventual acceptance can be explained as a function of comprehensive social and cultural value change in the United States.

---

[181]Thomas, p. 674.

[182]Kroeber, in Goldschmidt, p. 427.

CHAPTER VI

VALUE CHANGE, DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE, AND THE CULT OF DOMESTICITY

When a major shift in value orientations and patterns occurs, a comprehensive sociocultural change is said to have taken place. In a sense this is true by definition. That is, since values are a generalized and learned criteria for behavior, a different set of values necessarily means a comprehensive reordering of social behavior. The dominant, or core value system, will have been altered but not obliterated; once a new value pattern is accepted as legitimate by a society, by virtue of its integration into the existing core value system, the dominant "pattern continues to attract additional adherents and to extend its coverage into more and more activities across all institutional sectors."[1] This will be demonstrated later in this chapter.

There are several ways in which values change. Those that are most important here are the processes of creation, attenuation, extension, and elaboration. Creation refers to the process by which new values develop out of new

---

[1]Robin M. Williams, American Society: A Sociological Interpretation, 3rd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), pp. 632-38.

experiences and become effective at some level in cultural behavior regulation. Attenuation of values is said to have occurred as fewer persons defend, teach, support, or promote a value. Extension refers to the application of a new value to events and objects, including those in the original core value system. After a value is progressively dramatized, symbolized, or made embedded in its sociocultural context, the process of elaboration has occurred.[2]

There are also three critical questions that must be addressed in describing value changes. The first is how much do Americans value the changes they seem to claim? What is their commitment to a value, new or old? The answers are impressionistic.[3] The second question asks in what ways and to what extent is the basis of social consensus changing? Where is consensus being weakened, and where is it being fortified? This involves the integration of new values into the core value system and leads to the third question: "How far and how solidly can the value orientations . . . be extended <u>and</u> modified in a larger commonality?"[4] This last question is concerned with the capacity of the American people to work collectively to

---

[2]Ibid., p. 633.

[3]Ibid., p. 637.

[4]Ibid.

create a "manageable common core of . . . values that seem a prerequisite to common survival."[5]

Value changes may also be explained as a function of what sociologists refer to as cultural drifts, defined as "the process whereby minor alterations in culture eventually change the whole way of life of a society."[6] Since culture has a material dimension, one may argue that value changes may be gauged by changes in artifacts, as in domestic housing. Thus, value change may be interpreted as a function of what can be called "material culture drifts."

The relation of these concepts to architectural change can be demonstrated by the writings of architectural reformers and popular literature within the contexts of what have been called the search for order and the feminization of American culture.

While architectural reform in nineteenth-century America was based heavily in foreign aesthetic theories, it did address other more mundane areas of housing concern such as room or interior space arrangement, building methods and materials, architectural style, interior embellishments, furniture, ventilation, drainage, and family life. References to these concerns associated with domestic

---

[5]Ibid.

[6]Alvin L. Bertrand, Basic Sociology: An Introduction to Theory and Method, Sociology Series, Ed. John F. Cruber and Alfred C. Clarke (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), p. 133.

architectural reform were also highly value laden and helped establish housing norms and values in American culture.

One of the major developments in domestic architecture in the United States in the nineteenth century was the balloon frame method of construction. It made cheap housing available and was also expressive of both the hustle of American civilization and its core values. Before the Civil War, such advocates of the Gothic Revival as Downing never mention the balloon frame; and Lewis F. Allen, a noted critic of the Romantic Revival, also fails to mention it.[7]

Solon Robinson, however, did. In 1846 he presented a plan for "A Cheap Farm-House" in a "baloon [sic] plan." He claimed that it was "so arranged that the new beginner can build it in parts, having each part complete in itself." The plan could be "useful to many . . . who . . . never read 'Cottage Residences;' and if they did, could not adopt a single plan in the book, for want of means."[8] His plan was an innovation that was extremely divisible, a characteristic

---

[7]John A. Kouwenhoven, Made in America: The Arts in Modern Civilization (Newton Centre 59, Mass.: Charles T. Bradford Co., 1957), pp. 69-73.

[8]Herbert Anthony Kellar, ed., Solon Robinson, Pioneer and Agriculturist, 2 vols. (Indianapolis, Ind.: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1936; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1968), vol. 1, 1825-1845, p. 553. This article first appeared in the Albany American Agriculturist 5 (February 1846): 57-58.

of successful innovations,[9] and was addressed to the "Lower ten hundred thousand" not to the "upper ten thousand."[10] That is, this architectural reform was tailored to fit American core values, and as such it was far more likely to be accepted than other designs offered by Downing, because Downing did not address core values. Additionally, the plan was easily understood and recognized the ability and competence of Americans to evaluate this innovation. In this regard, Robinson's plan would be far more likely to be adopted as an innovation or reform in American culture.[11]

Robinson's plan was also practical in that it allowed for a time element; it could be built in divisible parts. He suggested that the first room to be built might be the washroom with a lean-to roof. After its construction, a kitchen (16'x24') could be divided into two rooms, resulting in "a house with two rooms, the washroom answering well for a summer cooking room."[12] By further dividing the main kitchen chamber into two rooms (8'x14') and one other room (10'x16'), and building sleeping quarters in a second story, a house resulted. Thereafter, one or two wings could be built with interior walls either plastered or papered,

---

[9]Bertrand, Basic Sociology, p. 130.

[10]Kellar, 1:553.

[11]Bertrand, Basic Sociology, p. 132.

[12]Kellar, 1:553.

resulting in "a house, complete in itself."[13] In subsequent years the front rooms, with or without wings, could be added. By "making your calculations as you go along, building one room after another as you are able . . . you finally get a very comfortable house, completed like the plan."[14] Only after all concerns for comfort and convenience "and occupancy of all the rooms for some useful purpose" had been made should the homeowner "add a little cheap ornamental work on the front."[15] Yet, by ornamental work Robinson meant a porch (6'x24') with five columns or support rails, porch railing, as well as a large parlor window "of a half-hexagonal shape, with two narrow windows on each side, opening by hinges down to the floor." In this way ornament would serve the useful purpose of allowing access to the porch, while those in the parlor would "still enjoy the company of those who might choose to remain in the room."[16] The wings could serve as bedrooms. However, in the event an individual found that "the sovereigns should elect you justice of the peace, or you happen to be a doctor, or somebody else, that wants a room for an office, just see how

---

[13]Ibid., 1:555-56.

[14]Ibid., 1:556.

[15]Ibid.; and Alfred L. Kroeber, "The Scientific Study of Values," in Walter Goldschmidt, ed., Exploring the Ways of Mankind (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), pp. 426-27.

[16]Kellar, 1:556-57.

conveniently you can open the blind door through a passage like that on the other side, into one of the front bedrooms . . . where you could keep your official dignity very snug, without disturbing the family."[17]

Of overriding importance in his plan was the kitchen. It was not only the first room to be constructed after the washroom but practical and economical, as it was "so situated that it has only nine feet of surface exposed to the weather, which will save many a load of wood, and . . . by opening room doors . . . can be well ventilated in summer." The washroom could serve well for a wood room until one was built. His plan was not absolute because the house could be constructed in sections, any section first, according to the wants of the individual. Indeed, Robinson's balloon frame plan was designed to accommodate the needs of the common man, "the new settler and poor man" who could "get a home without building himself out of a house, or getting a great shell of an outside show, full of unfinished emptiness."[18]

Robinson also recognized that most Americans could neither understand nor afford the romantic associationism of the Gothic Revival reform. He offered advice on log housing for Western immigrants, showing that a "comfortable

---

[17]Ibid., 1:557.

[18]Ibid.

log cabin with two rooms can be built for $50. A frame house 1-1/2 stories high, 20x30 feet, from $250 to $300. A log barn, 18x40, $40."[19] Aside from log or frame homes, Robinson also claimed that comfortable houses could be built on the Prarie with unburnt bricks, resulting in the saving of expenses associated with "hauling timber for roofs and inside work."[20]

Robinson also warned, as early as 1839, against building ambitious houses "so big that the whole farm . . . [is] swallowed up in the house, before it is completed."[21] As an object lesson, he pointed out that Thomas Jefferson's Monticello had cost some seventy thousand dollars to build, and had recently been sold, grounds and all, for a mere two thousand five hundred dollars. It stood, claimed Robinson, as a monument testifying to "the lack of any proper design in the builder." Robinson pointed out that Jefferson died "lacking that independence that he declared all ought to enjoy. This great misshapen mass of materials was the great cause of his pecuniary embarrassments." The lesson was clear: Americans should not build a house so big that

---

[19]Ibid., 1:356; also, 1:262, 327, 346.

[20]Ibid., 1:289; see also vol. 2, 1846-1851, p. 293, for suggestions for building a house with "soft clay and molds" which could be dry and finished in two to three days.

[21]Ibid, 1:113.

it could not be lived in, "nor so good that when done they cannot use it."[22] A house should be designed from the inside out, and the American farmer should build houses that were convenient, "without a foot of waste room." A one-story house was preferred because it was "much easier for the good woman, and . . . the extra cost of roofing is fully saved. . . . The frame need not be near as strong for a single story, particularly in a windy situation; and comfort and convenience never should be dispensed with by a farmer for show."[23]

It would be wiser for those contemplating a move to the frontier to "dispose of all articles of luxury" and to invest money and time in improved livestock and farm machinery. Such investments would "add more to your wealth and comfort than mahogany side-boards, tables and chairs, and gilt looking glasses."[24] Such amenities, while acceptable in their proper place, were useless in a snug log cabin and would be quickly ruined. It was far better to live happily, contented and comfortably in a log cabin without such luxuries "while earning the means to build a better one."[25] Certainly this was a reference to the core values of

---

[22]Ibid., 1:113-14.

[23]Ibid., 1:115.

[24]Ibid., 1:141.

[25]Ibid.

progress and practicality. Too many farmers, Robinson complained, initially wanted large farms and therefore neglected the house. "This is all wrong; it is much better to have a little land 'well tilled,' and a house, if not 'well filled' inside, at least have all the cracks on the outside well filled, if you expect to keep the wife, 'well willed.'" It was the "first duty" of the emigrant to provide a dwelling "as comfortable as the circumstances will possibly admit."[26] Thus, a comfortable home would serve to reduce tensions that might arise between husband and wife from the neglect of a man's cultural duty to provide for his family's health and well-being. For, even though "the new settler's log cabin is necessarily a rough uncouth looking dwelling, it can . . . be made tight, warm, comfortable and pleasant."[27]

While Robinson specifically addressed an audience composed of mobile "middle-class" Americans, others also had suggestions concerning rural domestic architecture. Some suggestions were decidedly elitist, but one was definitely aimed at agrarian values and life styles. These suggestions dealt with the use of gadgets to improve household efficiency, furniture, room placement, and work.

---

[26]Ibid., 1:159.

[27]Ibid.

Andrew Jackson Downing, for example, did indeed refer to building materials, yet never provided "how to" information. While beauty "intelligently considered" was the prime concern in architectural design, it could be achieved only after beginning with such considerations as comfort and convenience.[28] He believed also that houses should be constructed, as far as possible, from materials native to the region.[29] He claimed there was "more merit in . . . using wood as to give it the utmost expression of which the substance is capable, than in endeavoring to make it look like some other material."[30] Since the "farmer's life is not one devoted to aesthetics," it was wrong for the farmer to display the "evidences of carefully elaborated taste and culture in his house, as in the dwelling of a scholar and man of letters."[31] Farm houses should, Downing urged in agreement with Robinson, "show an absence of all pretension."[32]

---

[28]Andrew Jackson Downing, Rural Essays, ed. George William Curtis, new intro. by George B. Tatum (New York: n. p., 1853; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1974), p. 166.

[29]Andrew Jackson Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, Including Designs for Cottages and Farm-Houses and Villas, With Remarks on Interiors, Furniture, and the Best Modes for Warming and Ventilating, new intro. by J. Stewart Johnson (New York: n.p., 1850; reprint ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1969), p. 142.

[30]Ibid., p. 142.

[31]Ibid., p. 139.

[32]Ibid., p. 138.

They should be constructed "of solid materials--quarry stone, small stones, and rough cast or cement, brick, or brick and stucco." Wood did not last long enough, and its maintenance would lead to its being "pulled down at the end of fifty or sixty years by its successors."[33] On the other hand, circumstances often required the use of wood, and then the farmer "should avoid all fanciful and highly finished workmanship, and all slender and frail construction."[34] No doubt Downing was referring to the balloon frame and advocated "using strong timber of all kinds."[35] Yet, nowhere does Downing advocate or mention the balloon frame. Thus, while Downing did address some functional aspects of domestic housing, it was not his main intent, for no matter how much he insisted upon fitness or use, he at no time went so far as to suggest that the useful was synonymous with the beautiful.[36]

Yet the balloon frame was worthy of governmental promotion, as the Patent Office Report of 1858 indicates. While mortise and tenon construction was certainly a long-established tradition, the "weakness of such frames results from their apparent strength, the very weight of the timbers

---

[33]Ibid., p. 144.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid., pp. 70-134.

[36]Ibid., p. 8; and Downing, Rural Essays, p. 88.

employed breaking them down." Also, because floor timbers in this kind of construction were often wider than their vertical thickness, floors themselves tended to sag under their own weight "and vibrate with every step. Houses thus made are sometimes blown out of the perpendicular and lean in a . . . threatening manner, the weight tending to increase their inclination."[37] Such methods of housing construction were cheap only where lumber was plentiful.[38]

The balloon frame was practical for a number of reasons. It avoided cross strains upon wooden members and was strong because vertical braces allowed studs to bear any weight remarkably well. Moreover, it was cheap, easily and quickly built, and did not require the services of "a mechanic to put it up." Yet there were drawbacks; for example, the balloon frame's "most prominent fault is the dependence upon nails--the most unreliable material of all that are used, even when new--and its liability to get out of place, and constantly grow weaker, by the corrosion of the nails and the wearing of the nail-holes." Nevertheless, balloon framing was recommended for small houses as "a very suitable and valuable means of construction."[39] The heir apparent to

---

[37]Samuel D. Backus, "Some Hints Upon Farm Houses," Patent Office Report of 1858, in U. S. Congress, Senate, Report on Agriculture, S. Doc. 11, 36th Cong., 1st sess., vol. 1, 1860, p. 419.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid.

Downing, the Englishman Calvert Vaux, however, never mentions the balloon frame,[40] and categorically stated that wood was "undoubtedly an unsatisfactory material . . . because it fails in expressing permanent durability; but it may be used for . . . out buildings or small cottages."[41] Gervase Wheeler, in his Homes for the People (1855), however, did mention balloon frames and cited at length a lecture on the subject given by Solon Robinson to the New York-based American Institute Farmer's Club in 1855.[42] In any event, the point is that housing reform had also much to do with methods of construction, and the balloon frame was in harmony with American needs and values. As an innovative reform it was quickly adopted, regardless of the artistic sensibilities and values of A. J. Downing or Calvert Vaux.

Another major area of domestic housing reform was found in the areas of ventilation and drainage, both necessary for good health. Downing believed the "national poison" of the United States was "the vitiated air of close stoves [sic],

---

[40]Calvert Vaux, Villas and Cottages: A Series of Designs Prepared for Execution in the United States, 2d ed. (New York: Harper & Bros., 1864), pp. 70-82.

[41]Ibid., p. 70.

[42]Gervase Wheeler, Homes for the People, in Suburb and Country: The Villa, the Mansion, and the Cottage (New York: Charles Scribner, 1855), pp. 408-14. See also George E. Woodward, Country Houses (New York: George E. Woodward, 1865), pp. 151-66.

and the unventilated apartments which accompany them!"[43] Air passing over the hot iron surfaces of stoves was polluted by arsenic and sulphur, and the result was poor health among Americans. The English and the French did not have this problem; "every other face that one meets in America has a ghostly paleness about it, that would make a European stare." The answer to this problem was simply to "ventilate your houses."[44] The federal government also urged consideration of proper ventilation of farmhouses. It was possible to enjoy the convenience of stoves "and still have wholesome and pure air to breathe."[45] The problem was one of balancing the need for warm temperature with salubrious air. While varieties of traditional and innovative means were available to provide good ventilation, they were practically useless unless combined. "In building," the report contended, "as much as in any other enterprise, there is profit in the possession of ready money and plenty of it."[46]

Lewis F. Allen explained the popularity of airtight stoves as resulting from the desire by fathers to provide

---

[43]Downing, Rural Essays, p. 279.

[44]Ibid., p. 286. See also Downing, Country Houses, pp. 190-95, 461-84.

[45]Backus, in U. S. Congress, Report on Agriculture, p. 423.

[46]Ibid., pp. 425-26; and Vaux, pp. 57-58.

warmth for their family. Although the house was also made airtight to retain warmth, the sad result was "galloping consumption."[47] Allen further held that the use of airtight stoves was motivated by those who wished to project an image of cosmopolitan urban life while living in the country; it was not proper and ought to be avoided.[48] Adequate ventilation could easily be provided by openings in the floor; by rolling, or retractable, blinds on the bottom of doors; and by the provision of a sixty-four-inch square hole in all room walls, near the ceiling, that led to an air flue.[49]

Adequate drainage not only relieved the homeowner from deadly miasmas but helped decrease the amount of mud, ice, water, and offal that might be tracked into the house, thereby adding to the housewives' unending cleaning duties.[50] Additionally, water supply involved proper drainage

---

[47]Lewis F. Allen, Rural Architecture: Being A Complete Description of Farm Houses, Cottages, and Out Buildings, Comprising Wood Houses, Workshops, Tool Houses, Carriage and Wagon Houses, Smoke and Ash Houses, Ice Houses, Apiary or Bee House, Poultry Houses, Rabbitry, Dovecoate, Piggery, Barns, and Sheds for Cattle, &c., &c., &c., Together With Lawns, Pleasure Grounds and Parks; The Flower, Fruit and Vegetable Gardens. Also Useful and Ornamental Domestic Animals for the Country Resident, &c., &c., &c. Also the Best Method of Conducting Water into Cattle Yards and Houses (New York: C. M. Saxton, 1852), pp. 56-59.

[48]Ibid., pp. 59-63.

[49]Ibid., pp. 63-65.

[50]Backus, in U. S. Congress, Report on Agriculture, p. 404.

considerations. Instead of waste water being thrown out of kitchen doors and windows, an underground drain leading to a cesspool could be cheaply constructed. A pipe leading from the kitchen sink, or other location, protected by "stench traps" would properly drain off waste water and prevent the passage of foul air. Eave gutters were also considered indispensable, either to convey rainwater to cisterns or to avoid the formation of standing pools of water or the creation of gullies near the house itself.[51]

Considerations of drainage led logically to the inclusion of water closets in homes. "No dwelling," held Downing, "can be considered complete which has not a water-closet under its roof." He recognized, however, that their inclusion was too expensive, and for this reason would "prevent their general introduction into small cottages."[52] He included a water closet in a six-thousand-dollar design for "A Cottage Villa in the Bracketed Mode," complete with instructions concerning its construction, placement, and proper drainage. It was "a very great desideratum in every house."[53] Calvert Vaux also considered water closets a

---

[51]Ibid., p. 406. See also Vaux, p. 58, and Wheeler, p. 118.

[52]Andrew Jackson Downing, Cottage Residences: Rural Architecture and Landscape Gardening, new intro. by Michael Hugo-Brunt, Library of Victorian Culture (Watkins Glenn, N.Y.: American Life Foundation, 1967), p. 5.

[53]Ibid., pp. 96-97.

necessity to be included in a bathroom.[54] While considered a necessity by men like Downing and Vaux, however, water closets were, as Downing admitted, a convenience for the rich only. Moreover, there was nothing said about them in the Patent Office Report of 1858. There was some opposition expressed, however, in domestic architectural reform literature about water closets.

Lewis F. Allen objected to the inclusion of bathrooms as well as water closets in the home for a number of reasons. His house designs were noted for connecting everything, including outbuildings, to the main house.[55] While this might be dangerous from the point of view of spreading fires, he believed it was proper for the sake of convenience.[56] Allen also held that the separation of outbuildings had resulted in the inclusion of "some things, which in a country establishment, particularly, ought never to be there, such as privies, or water-closets, as they are more genteelly called."[57] Water closets had "no business in a farmer's house. They are an effeminancy only, and introduced by city life."[58] While he agreed water closets were a necessary appendage, they should be separated "to some

---

[54]Vaux, pp. 59, 99, 154.

[55]Kouwenhoven, pp. 69-73.

[56]Lewis F. Allen, p. 111.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid., pp. 93, 111. (The emphasis is Allen's.)

distance from the living rooms, and accessible by sheltered passages."[59] They should be placed in the connected wood house, near the pigsty, where swine functioned as latter day garbage disposal units.[60] There was no need to worry about foul odors because "nothing is more congenial to sound physical condition than the occasional smell of a stable . . . not within the immediate contiguity of the occupied rooms of the dwelling."[61] The inclusion of bathrooms and water closets in the house proper only invited leaks and costly maintenance. While their inclusion might afford privacy to the value stereotype of a "most fastidious, shrinking female," they pandered to effeminancy and filled the house with foul odors. It was better, then, to place them in a connected wood house adjoining the kitchen. "Out of the house they belong. . . ."[62]

Furniture, too, was a component of domestic architecture addressed by reformers. Like architecture, furniture had to be chosen with proper taste, claimed Downing. It should not be chosen, he claimed, according to its fashionableness, but in accordance with the room for which it was

---

[59] Ibid., pp. 111-12.

[60] Ibid., p. 112.

[61] Ibid., p. 113.

[62] Ibid., pp. 123-24.

intended, such as the parlor, drawing room, or library.[63] Moreover, it should be comfortable, convenient, and substantial.[64] In the cities, by 1850, there existed "almost a mania . . . for expensive French furniture and decorations," a phenomenon that Downing considered in bad taste, and "out of keeping with the . . . simplicity which ought to characterize rural life."[65] Downing, however, despite his comments on such bad taste, provided not only suggestions and information advocating the use of such fancy furniture but the names as well of manufacturers who produced furniture in styles ranging from the French, Grecian, Gothic, Norman, Romanesque, and Elizabethan.[66] Clearly, despite his manifestation of reaction formation, he advocated the use of "tasteful" furniture of foreign design. French furniture was, moreover, "especially the favorite of the ladies. For the country house we would confine its use . . . to the drawing room or budoir [sic], using more . . . massive classical forms for the library . . . and other apartments."[67]

---

[63]Downing, Country Houses, pp. 407-410.

[64]Ibid., p. 410.

[65]Ibid., p. 411. See also Nathan Parker Willis, The Rag-Bag: A Collection of Ephemera (New York: Charles Scribner, 1855), pp. 32-36.

[66]Downing, Country Houses, pp. 412-60.

[67]Ibid., p. 432.

Lewis Allen, on the other hand, believed such furniture was indicative of "modern degeneracy." Fashions in furniture changed as quickly as styles of feminine apparel and originated "pretty much from the same source, too--the fancy shops of Paré [sic] . . . the capitol of France."[68] Like Downing, Allen felt such furniture was not proper in the farmer's house. French furniture was "useless . . . standing on legs like pipe-stems, garrote-ing [sic] your back like a rheumatism, and frail as the legs of a spider beneath you." They detracted from comfort; bedsteads of such designs were either "so high that you must have a ladder to climb into [them], or so low as to scarcely keep you above the level of the floor."[69] Certainly Allen was expressing such core American values as xenophobia, efficiency, and practicality. Fancy French furniture was a "kind of frippery [which] smacks of the boarding school pirouette, and the dancing master, and is out of character for the farm, or the sensible retirement of the country."[70] Allen preferred old, well-preserved furniture of native manufacture, because it provided an air of comfort, quietude, and hospitality, and because "children cling to such objects in after life, as

---

[68]Lewis F. Allen, p. 235.

[69]Ibid., p. 237.

[70]Ibid., pp. 238-39.

heir-looms of affection and parental regard."[71] Furniture "should, in all cases, be strong, plain, and durable--no sham or ostentation about it--and such as is made for use; mere trinkets stuck about the room, on center tables, in corners, or on the mantel-piece are the foolishest [sic] things imaginable."[72]

Downing advocated the use of a parlor in all homes, because it would serve as both a stimulus for family togetherness, refined living, and especially the cultivation of gentility. No work should be done in the parlor, and it should "be consecrated to Neatness, Purity, and Truth." Hats should never appear in a parlor, while coats should always be worn. (However, if "father's head is bald . . . his daughter will be proud to see his temples covered by the neat and graceful silken cap that her own hands have fashioned for him.") Men should wear slippers, not boots that would damage the parlor carpet. Additionally, the table, "which has always stood under the looking-glass, against the wall," should be placed in the center of the parlor, with "plenty of useful . . . books and periodicals . . . laid upon it." In the evenings, then, the parlor would function as a family gathering place, for learning and cultural activities, as well as quiet contemplation. Moreover, "such a work as Downing's Landscape Gardening (or the

---

[71]Ibid., p. 238.

[72]Ibid.

Horticulturist), laid one year on the centre-table, will show its effects to every passer-by."[73]

Calvert Vaux, while he certainly favored a parlor, satirized them as being all together too pretentious and uncomfortable. Center tables with a "thin layer of books, in smart bindings," gilt mirrors, stiff and ornamental French furniture, sofas, horsehair chairs, pianos, stands for "knicknacks," closed Venetian blinds, were all the artifacts of the uncomfortable American parlor. It was a room that was typically and unfortunately used for company only[74] and became "a sort of quarantine in which to put each plaque of a visitor that calls; and one almost expects to see the lady of the house walk in with a bottle of camphor in her hand, to prevent infection. . . . All this is absurd." The parlor should, however, be enjoyed daily, and primarily by the family.[75]

Allen agreed. "No room, in any house, should be too good for occupation by the family--not every-day, and common place--but occupation at any and all times, when convenience or pleasure demand it."[76] While the parlor should indeed be better furnished than any other room, its carpet should not

---

[73]Downing, Rural Essays, p. 401.

[74]Ibid., p. 96.

[75]Ibid., p. 97.

[76]Lewis F. Allen, p. 239.

be "too good to tread, or stand upon, or for the children to roll and tumble upon."[77] A parlor with wide folding doors, used only "for display half a dozen times in the year" was "nothing but a bastard taste, of the most worthless kind, introduced from the city." It was "fatal to everything like domestic enjoyment, and is always followed by great expense and inconvenience."[78] As Allen rhetorically asked: "Why, then, should the farmer ape the fashion, and the frivolity of the butterflies of town life, or permit his family to do it? It is the sheerest folly for him to do so."[79] It was not so much the parlor that he objected to but its close associations with genteel and effeminate city life, its foolish pretensions to undemocratic and perhaps aristocratic inequality, as well as impracticality and intellectuality.

One other prominent area of domestic architectural reform centered about the kitchen, quite obviously a major, if not overriding, consideration in any house. Kitchens should, according to Downing, be conveniently located on the same level as the first floor.[80] In this he would find no disagreement among other domestic architectural reformers.

---

[77]Ibid., p. 240.

[78]Ibid., p. 239.

[79]Ibid., p. 242.

[80]Downing, Rural Essays, p. 167.

However, Downing believed that kitchens should be hidden, that every country place should have "a kitchen side (or '<u>blind side</u>'), complete in itself, and more or less shut out from all observation from the remaining portions of the place."[81] By conformance with this advice, all work associated with the kitchen could be hidden.[82] Not only did he wish to hide the kitchen and the work associated with it, but he also objected to the fact that kitchens were the center of family life among America's agricultural middle-class population. The work that the family pursued together in the kitchen was abominable to Downing. Family life would be better served by a parlor, where no work of any kind would be done.[83] Downing was merely attempting to impose his subordinate values concerning gentility and leisure. He did not understand the needs and life styles and values of the average and typical American farm family. Kitchens, moreover, were objectionable because they were "offensive in the matter of sound, sight, and smells; unless, in the case of large houses, where these may be excluded by long passages and double doors."[84]

---

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid., pp. 167-68.

[83] Ibid., pp. 399-403.

[84] Downing, <u>Cottage Residences</u>, p. 4.

Downing clearly did not grasp or appreciate that "the kitchen is to be considered the most important apartment of a farm house, as on the perfection of its arrangements depends much of the comfort of the family." Whether or not the mechanic's or farmer's wife supervised servants or did her own cooking, it was essential that kitchens be centrally located with convenient access to the dining room, pantry, and wood house, allowing the housewife to more easily accomplish her work.[85] It was extremely important that "every room in the house [be] accessible at once from the kitchen . . . giving the greatest possible convenience in both living and housework."[86] There was always work to be done in the farmer's family;[87] the kitchen was the grand room of all farm houses.[88] Because there "is no poetry about common housekeeping," all "mouldings, architraves, chisel-work, and gewgawgery in the interior finish should be let alone" in order to "teach the active mistress and her daughters what a world of scrubbing and elbow work they have saved themselves in the enjoyment of a plainly-finished house, instead of one full of gingerbread work and finery."[89] While

---

[85]Backus, in U. S. Congress, Report on Agriculture, pp. 409-410.

[86]Lewis F. Allen, p. 78.

[87]Ibid., p. 82.

[88]Ibid., p. 90.

[89]Ibid., p. 96.

romantic reformers like Downing objected to the farm family and hired hands gathering in the kitchen in shirt sleeves to shuck corn, play, flirt, and do housework,[90] others such as Solon Robinson considered the use of the kitchen as a room for fixing rakes, making and repairing wagon harnesses as quite typically domestic, morally advantageous, good for family life, and instrumental in building sound moral character.[91] Additionally, Robinson provided a plan for a seven-room house that had a "common family room, eating room in summer, and cooking room in winter . . . in the center of the house, so as to [be] easily kept warm."[92] Other architectural reformers, however, made but glancing references to the kitchen and offered little in the way of suggestions concerning them.[93]

While these architectural reformers might agree or disagree on various matters concerning domestic housing, they shared one striking similarity in that they were all men. They all concerned themselves with the morality of domestic architecture, the family, and to a lesser degree

---

[90]Downing, Rural Essays, p. 400.

[91]Kellar, 2:499-502.

[92]Ibid., 1:114.

[93]Vaux, in Villas and Cottages, makes no reference to kitchens, while Wheeler's Homes for the People treats kitchens as mere ancillary appendages hardly worthy of mention. See Wheeler, pp. 28-29, 83, 99, 148-49, 159, 179, 296, 317, 323, 347, 371, 372.

the position of women in the home and family. However, none addressed the specific concerns of women, or woman's cultural and domestic role in American society, as did Catherine Elizabeth Beecher (1800-1878).

As an architectural reformer she provided designs and ideas that were of far greater impact than either Alexander Jackson Downing, Solon Robinson, Gervase Wheeler, Lewis Falley Allen, or Calvert Vaux. This is because she concentrated not upon abstract architectural aesthetics but upon the practical and cultural concerns of women within the house itself.

Traditional values concerning woman's cultural and domestic roles were being attenuated by the totally new experience of the rise of industrialism, egalitarian ideology, and the growth of cities. Through the vehicle of domestic architecture, Catherine Beecher created, elaborated, and extended new values in regard to domestic architecture and American culture at large. Her work, combined with the forces of what Robert Wiebe sees as the search for order, and what Ann Douglas terms the "feminization of American culture," helped transform the nature of American domestic architecture during the nineteenth century.

Catherine Beecher, sensitive to the charges occurring in American life, believed "new domestic environments were necessary to support women's new roles in an industrial

society. . . . She became the ultimate domestic feminist demanding women's control over all aspects of domestic life."[94] Beecher's A Treatise on Domestic Economy (1841) and The American Woman's Home (1869) transcend the antebellum period and were written at a time in American history when the expectations and values associated with family life characteristic of middle-class life today first became fixed in American culture. That is, home became a utopian retreat from the outside world; it was no longer a center of family-oriented production, as expressed in the dichotomy that existed between the outside and family worlds. Nineteenth-century literature dealing with the family stressed the triple themes of retreat, conscious design, and perfectionism. Middle-class Americans came to regard "the most important feature of the ideal home as its location in ordered natural surroundings."[95] Indeed, the Victorian-era American was preoccupied with order, which "reflected a need for psychological stability amidst the rapid changes occurring

---

[94]Dolores Hayden, The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), p. 55. See also Susana Torre, ed., Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective, Whitney Library of Design (New York: Watson-Cuptill Publications, 1977), pp. 40, 43-46.

[95]Kirk Jeffrey, "The Family as Utopian Retreat from the City: The Nineteenth Century Contribution," in Sallie Te Selle, ed., The Family, Communes, and Utopian Societies (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), pp. 21-23; and Gerda R. Wekerle, Rebecca Peterson, David Morely, eds., New Space for Women (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980), p. 9.

during the nineteenth century."[96] This psychological instability was in part caused by social tensions arising from the division of the outside and family worlds necessitated by the growth of egalitarian ideology and industrialism and was accompanied by a cultural dichotomy calling for a sharp division and distinction in gender roles.

As Barbara Welter has perspicaciously pointed out, a "cult of true womanhood" developed in American culture between 1820 and 1860, in which middle-class women were ideally conceived of as pious, emotional, chaste, submissive to men, and above all, domestic.[97] These were considered positive female characteristics which balanced the image of men as aggressive, sexual, dominant, rational, and strong in mind and body. Together this division of cultural value characteristics composed the "cult of domesticity," where women's influence was most and best felt in the home, the paradise for children, retreat for men, and sanctuary from the troubles of the everyday workaday world outside the home.[98] This was to become a nineteenth-century norm.

---

[96]David Walker Howe, "American Victorianism as a Culture," American Quarterly 27, no. 5 (December 1975): 523.

[97]Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," American Quarterly 27, no. 2, pt. 1 (Summer 1966): 151-54.

[98]Ronald G. Walters, American Reformers, 1815-1860, ed. Eric Foner, American Century Series (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), p. 103; Hayden, Grand Domestic Revolution, p. 55; William E. Bridges, "Warm Hearth, Cold World: Social Perspectives on the Household Poets," American Quarterly 21,

Industrialism had the effect of radically changing the conditions as well as the very community in which the family, women, and domestic architecture existed, both externally and internally.[99] Catherine Beecher, more than any other reformer concerned with domestic architecture, was most responsible for creating, elaborating, extending, and modifying attenuated and older eighteenth-century values into new values by making woman's role in the new situation one of great prominence. She provided women with a way to be more powerful within the family, to have and exert influence tantamount to their new prominence, and to have influence and power over both the family and culture. In large measure she accomplished this through the vehicle of domestic architectural reform.

Her 1841 Treatise on Domestic Economy not only catapulted Beecher into prominence but "simplified and made understandable the mysterious arts of household maintenance, child rearing, gardening, cooking, cleaning, doctoring, and a dozen other responsibilities middle-class women assumed to keep their children and husbands alive and well."[100]

---

no. 4 (Winter 1969): 777-79; and Norma Pendergast, "The Sense of Home: Nineteenth Century Domestic Architectural Reform" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1981), pp. 104-105.

[99]James Marston Fitch, Architecture and the Esthetics of Plenty (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p.71.

[100]Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catherine Beecher, A Study in American Domesticity (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 152.

Because of the mobility of American society and culture in antebellum times, women were cut off from traditional sources of domestic education, and Beecher's Treatise filled the gap. Moreover, according to Kathryn Kish Sklar, the fact that it sold for a mere fifty cents made it widely accessible.[101]

A contradiction developed in American antebellum culture that was to extend into the twentieth century. This was between the rise of egalitarian ideology and the submission of women to men. Beecher's work not only provided a rationale and justification for this contradiction but made it a value in American culture by establishing woman's role as home manager. Moreover, she reduced tensions that arose from this contradiction, helping, therefore, to provide order and stability in American culture. She restricted women to the domestic sphere and, conversely, reinforced the notion that men were restricted to the outside world. Through her writings and work in architectural reform, Beecher reconciled "the inequality of women with an egalitarian democracy by emphasizing the importance of woman's sphere of domesticity."[102]

Catherine Elizabeth Beecher was born the eldest daughter of Lyman Beecher and was a sister of Harriet

---

[101]Ibid., p. 102.

[102]Ibid., pp. 155-56.

Beecher Stowe and Henry Ward Beecher. From a strong New England Calvinist and reformist background and as the eldest daughter, she was involved early in her life in child rearing and household management. Her early life and background therefore helped shape her attitudes toward the value of domesticity, and it was no accident that she opposed radical antebellum feminism.[103] She favored a social and family hierarchy. The rapid changes she perceived as threatening to such a hierarchical social organization produced in her status-anxiety, which motivated her reformist impulses.[104] By isolating women in the home, she "decreased the tensions and anxieties that characterized American life."[105] Because her work helped relieve tensions and because, as Dolores Hayden contends, her work "exaggerated and heightened gender differences and thereby altered and romanticized the emphasis given to women's domestic role,"[106] her behavior can be defined as that of compensation. Compensation is defined as the "overemphasis of a type of behavior, which serves to reduce tensions resulting from frustration or conflict."[107]

---

[103]Catherine E. Beecher, A Treatise on Domestic Economy: For the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School (Boston: Marsh, Capen, Lyon, and Webb, 1841), pp. 142-43.

[104]Pendergast, pp. 106-110.

[105]Sklar, p. 163.

[106]Hayden, Grand Domestic Revolution, p. 55.

[107]Laurence Frederic Shaffer and Edward Joseph Shoben, Jr., The Psychology of Adjustment: A Dynamic and

Her work was socially constructive,[108] and therefore provided for a more integrative adjustment to basic contradictions in American culture. Beecher made domestic architecture a material culture facility that effectively sequestered women as individuals and as a group, in such a way as to minimize any opportunity for conflict. She transformed domestic architecture into a device that served the functional purpose of helping to establish and maintain social order.[109] Influence and power are necessary to maintain order,[110] and since Beecher provided women with these qualities in order to maintain social order and create new values,[111] she effectively made domestic architecture a physical facility that reduced and managed broad social tensions. Thus, Beecher's influence may be interpreted as an example of the internal artifactual context, in that it demonstrates the cause (the need for maintaining social order, or psychological instability) and effect (tension reduction and management) relationship between cultural values and the artifact, in this case, domestic architecture.

Experimental Approach to Personality and Mental Hygiene (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1956), p. 172.

[108]Ibid., p. 173.

[109]Bertrand, Basic Sociology, p. 284.

[110]Ibid., p. 281.

[111]Pendergast, pp. 105-106, 136; Sklar, pp. xii, 156, 157-58, 158-59, 160, 161, 163-64, 165.

Additionally, because her work created new values and through architecture perpetuated them, her influence may be seen as an example of the external artifactual context, or the cause and effect relationship between the artifact and value change.

Since Beecher maintained that women were to function as home managers, it followed that the home must facilitate their gender role. Her Treatise on Domestic Economy (1841) held that in constructing a house there were "five particulars to which attention should be given . . . namely, economy of labor, economy of money, economy of health, economy of comfort, and good taste."[112] While she recognized that beauty, or good taste, was a consideration in housing construction, she placed it last in her list of priorities and was therefore in direct conflict with Downing, who emphasized it to extremes.[113]

By economy of labor, money, health, and comfort, Beecher was expressing American core values of practicality, rationality, efficiency, material convenience, and comfort as well as activity and work. She realized that every room that was added to a house "increases the amount of sweeping, dusting, cleaning . . . and the expense and care of the furniture pertaining to it." A house "half the size

---

[112]Beecher, p. 268.

[113]Downing, Country Houses, pp. 8-48.

requires only . . . half the labor to take care of it; and so vice versa." Rooms should be conveniently arranged, not on some artistic basis but so "as to avoid walking and carrying."[114]

Economy of labor could also be facilitated by avoiding architectural ornamentation and elaborate furniture, "brasses demanding labor . . . filigree ornaments to the casings and mantelpieces; kitchen floors without paint or oil cloth, which double the labor of keeping them in order; and many other items of this sort."[115] The consideration of economy of money also impacted the very shape of the house. It was best that a house be a "perfect square," as it enclosed more rooms than any other shape and cost less. The more a house departed from the symmetry of a square, "the more is the expense increased both as to construction and methods of warming it in cold weather."[116] Downing, of course, condemned a square shape as not conducive to the expression of absolute beauty.[117] While Downing considered piazzas and porticoes as essential for domestic housing,[118]

---

[114]Beecher, p. 269.

[115]Ibid., p. 271.

[116]Ibid.

[117]Downing, Country Houses, pp. 13, 16; Downing, Rural Essays, p. 215.

[118]Downing, Cottage Residences, p. 13; Downing, Country Houses, pp. 47, 140, 260.

Beecher was more in tune with core values of practicality and efficiency when she wrote:

> Much money is often worse than wasted in finical ornaments about porticoes, doors, windows and fireplaces, which, to the eye of taste, really diminish, rather than increase, the beauty of appearance. Ornaments are not suitable for any but large and expensive houses, and it is every year become more fashionable to have simple mouldings and carvings, and but little ornamental filigree work.[119]

Economy of health dealt with such practical concerns as the arrangement of rooms. "Every arrangement . . . which tends to injure the health, is a serious violation of economy. It sacrifices not only health, but also comfort, time, and money."[120] Wells and privies should be closely positioned to the house so that "persons in the perspiration of labor" or in poor health would not have to be exposed to inclement weather. In agreement with Allen, Beecher placed such necessities near the kitchen.[121] Outside doors should not open into sitting rooms because "children and persons in delicate health are very liable to suffer from sudden chills,"[122] while sleeping rooms should be well ventilated.[123]

---

[119] Beecher, p. 271.

[120] Ibid., p. 272.

[121] Ibid., p. 273.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid.

Economy of comfort, itself a core value, meant that a house should be as comfortable and convenient for a housewife's domestic servants "as well as to herself and her company."[124] It was unwise from this consideration to select the most pleasant and large rooms in a house for common use and also to use those "designed for occasional occupancy, though genteel and comfortable" from the least desirable rooms. In other words, it was unwise to "cramp . . . bedrooms, kitchens, and closets, to secure a large parlor and spare chamber, to be shut-up most of the time, and opened only for transient visitors. This is poor economy of comfort."[125]

While a consideration in building a house, "taste is . . . the least important item." It was not understood, Beecher held, by people who had not studied the subject, that beauty in domestic architecture depended upon proportion, not ornament or architectural style. Ornaments and color would have a pleasing effect only when adapted to the house's style, situation, and use.[126]

Above all, Beecher recognized that "the present changing state of society in America makes it peculiarly important that dwelling-houses be constructed with reference to

---

[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid., pp. 273-74.

[126] Ibid., p. 274.

economy of labor."[127] The housewife had the responsibility for supervising domestic work, and the house should facilitate this duty, or, provide for economy of labor.[128] Houses should be designed for women because "so large a portion of them have delicate health and suffer so much from the discouragement and depression consequent on disease and the accumulation of harrowing cares."[129] She, then, recognized that a poorly designed house would impact not only a woman's physical health but her mental well-being as well. This psychological dimension was not addressed by her other contemporaries involved in domestic architectural reform.

To accomplish and demonstrate economy of labor and other factors, Beecher presented five plans "chiefly designed for persons of moderate circumstances, especially for young housekeepers . . . making their first essays in domestic affairs."[130]

The first plan was for a cottage that would accommodate six adults and one or two children. It was a one-story, three-bay house, with three major rooms, the kitchen, parlor, and dining room. A central door was encased in a projecting entrance, or enclosed porch, which opened to two doors

---

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid., p. 275.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid.

leading to the parlor and dining room, respectively. From these rooms access was gained to and from the kitchen, closets, and small bedrooms. A fireplace was situated in each of the three major rooms. In the parlor (15'x16') was a closet and a bedpress. A triptic door arrangement in the parlor allowed the bed to be hidden during the day and used at night, providing a practical and multiple use of that room.[131] (See fig. 4.[132])

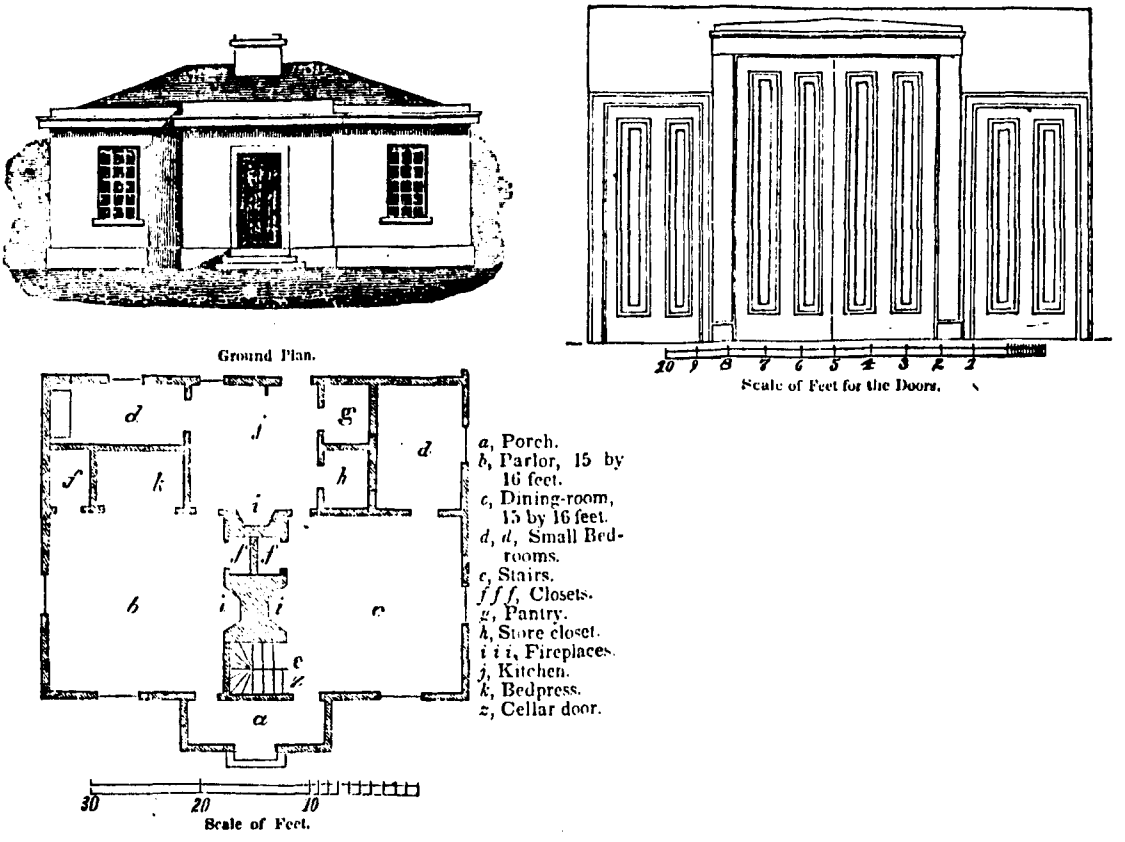


Fig. 4. Cottage and ground plan with triptic door arrangement.

---

[131]Ibid., pp. 276-77.

[132]Ibid., Fig. 11.

A trundlebed for children could be placed under the bedpress. The mother can thus have her parlor, nursery, and kitchen "all under one eye at once."[133] This last comment was of critical importance because it shows how Beecher aimed at making domestic architecture facilitate women's work in the domestic sphere. While the other designs she presented became progressively larger, all were characterized by the same multi-purpose idea.[134] Beecher testified that when the kitchen, parlor, and nursery were all on the same floor, regardless of the size of the house, "it saves nearly one-half the fatigue that housekeeping demands."[135] She also made suggestions on privy location, lattice work, the placement of dumbwaiters, fireplace arrangement, and water-pump location, again, all aimed at saving the housewife work.[136]

It is also interesting to note Beecher's ambivalence in regard to architectural styles in 1841. Six elevations were presented in her Treatise, of which four were variations of Greek Revival, while two were Gothic Revival.[137] (See figs. 5 and 6.)

---

[133]Ibid., p. 278.

[134]Ibid., pp. 280-89.

[135]Ibid., p. 289.

[136]Ibid., pp. 289-296.

[137]Ibid., pp. 276, 280, 286-87, 290.

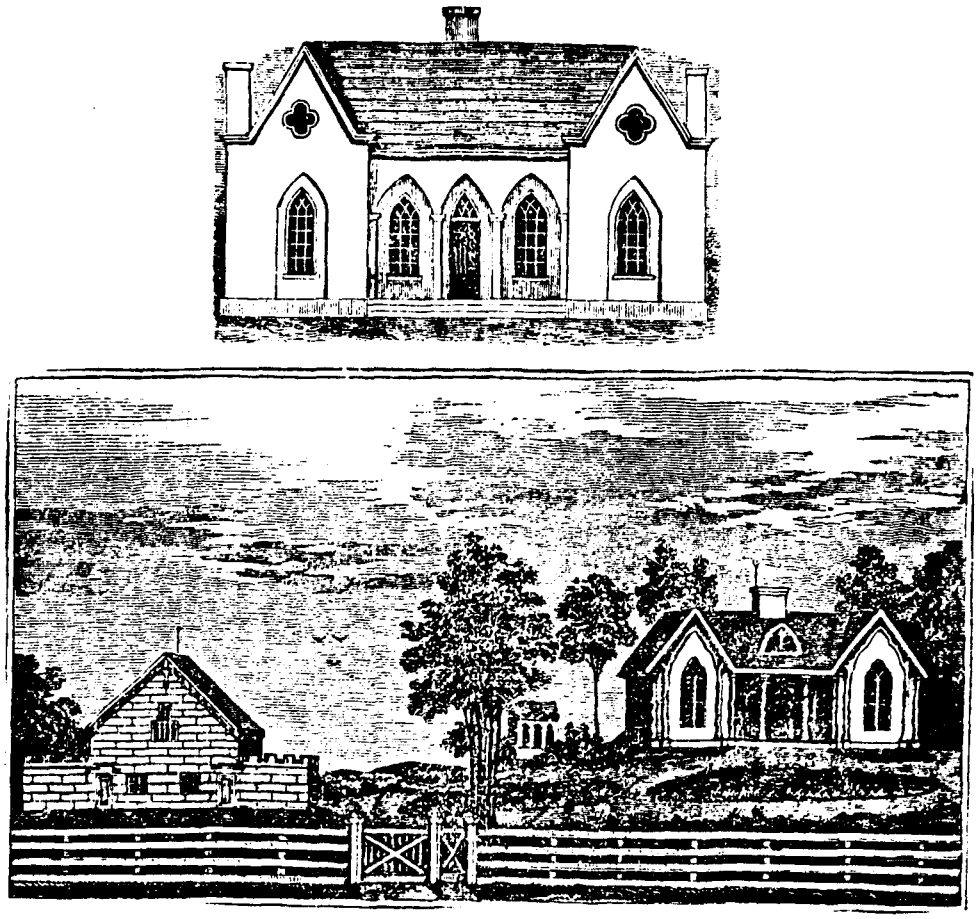


Fig. 5. Gothic Revival architectural styles.

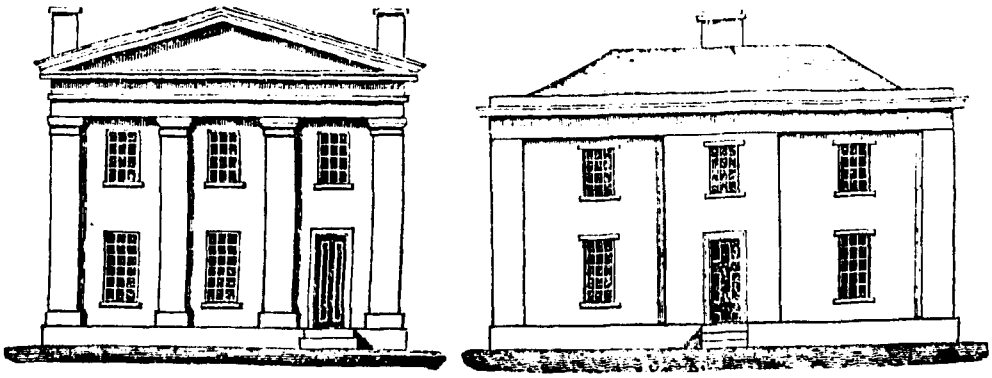


Fig. 6. Greek Revival architectural styles.

Style was not as important, however, as saving work, although the Gothic plan "for a large and genteel house secures the most conveniences at the smallest expense of labor in housekeeping of any the Writer has ever seen."[138] Her use of the words "large and genteel" in endorsing the Gothic plan also indicates that such a house could not be for everyone, particularly for people of moderate means, and tends to sustain the notion that Gothic architecture was associated with wealth. While Beecher may have favored one particular Gothic design, it was not a blanket endorsement. She favored it not because of its style but because of its practical interior arrangement. The fact that only two of the elevations presented were in the Gothic style also shows that she meant what she said about "good taste" being the last of all considerations in domestic architecture. Moreover, she offered practical advice on matters ranging from construction and placement of fireplaces, wood stoves, wood and coal fires, the care of lamps, lighting fuel, washing, to a plethora of other household duties.[139] Beecher's Treatise, then, helped in large measure to make women professional household managers and placed them in a separate sphere where they would rule supremely. Her concerns in this regard did not end with her Treatise.

---

[138]Ibid., p. 286.

[139]Ibid., pp. 297-377.

In 1869, for example, in the book coauthored by her sister Harriet Beecher Stowe, The American Woman's Home, Beecher extended and elaborated upon this theme. In it she presented a plan for a house full of mechanical devices to help the professional housewife perform her duties. Nearly all household tasks were minutely described, and architectural arrangements were to facilitate the completion of these tasks. It is also interesting to note that the architectural style for this design was clearly Gothic Revival. Dolores Hayden interprets this 1869 plan as evidence of "the growing correspondence between the woman's role of caring for the family and the home environment."[140] While she is no doubt correct, it may also be interpreted as the growing correspondence between women and architectural style preferences, or what may plausibly be called "the feminization of American domestic architecture." Beecher combined convenience for women and the cult of domesticity with architectural style; and while creating, elaborating, and extending new cultural values and functions to women, in one stroke she created also the nineteenth-century architectural and iconographic symbolism of domesticity--the Gothic style, or more appropriately, the Romantic Revival style.

In the second chapter of the book, entitled "A Christian House," women were admonished that it "has been shown that

---

[140]Hayden, Grand Domestic Revolution, p. 57.

the best end for a woman to seek is the training of God's children for their eternal home, by guiding them to intelligence, virtue and true happiness."[141] To accomplish this task it was necessary for women to "secure a house so planned that it will provide in the best manner for health, industry, and economy, those cardinal requisites of domestic enjoyment and success."[142]

While the bulk of the chapter was the familiar recitation of expressions of the core values of work, economy, efficiency, the visual or iconographic symbolism of the ideal domestic dwelling was Gothic. In fact, at the head of the chapter was an engraving of a Gothic cottage in a bucolic setting. The cottage itself was depicted as a three-bay, two-story dwelling, with a central chimney and projecting entranceway, flanked on both sides by a porch. At the peak of the entrance gable and end gables, full of Gothic or gingerbread carvings, were Christian crosses. A bay window was found on the first floor gable ends of the house.

The father in this picture is presented as engaged in planting a tree with one of his daughters, while another daughter is busy cutting flowers. Mother is seen with her

---

[141]Catherine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, The American Woman's Home (New York: J. B. Ford & Co., 1869), p. 23.

[142]Ibid., p. 24.

son in hand, pointing to the fields where the boy, who is carrying a hoe on his shoulder, is apparently to begin some garden work under her supervision. In a stream near the house, someone is fishing in a small skiff.[143] (Fig. 7.[144])

Fig. 7. Catherine Beecher's "Christian House."

The iconographic symbolism is obvious, but to insure that it would be studied carefully Beecher pointed out: "At the head of this chapter is a sketch of what may properly be called a Christian house; that is, a house contrived for the

[143]Ibid., p. 23.

[144]Ibid.

express purpose of enabling every member of a family to labor with the hands for the common good, and by modes at once healthful, economical, and tasteful."[145] The picture of this Gothic elevation was accompanied by plans for either a one- or two-story house.[146] Beecher, unlike Downing and other Romantic Revivalists, expressed the American core values of success, activity and work, humanitarian mores, efficiency and practicality, material comfort, progress, and external conformity, and combined them with the cult of domesticity as well as artistic treatment. Gothic was her obvious and only choice in architectural style because it could be easily transformed into a house that was not just healthful but, more significantly, convenient for women to work in. Gothic, while never mentioned per se, was justified on the primary basis of its facilitating woman's work of rearing children as well as managing all aspects of the home, and only in a secondary sense that it may have been in good taste. For, above all, the primary objective Beecher had in mind when presenting the plan was "to show how time, labor, and expense are saved . . . in the building . . . furniture and its arrangement."[147] Nevertheless, her provision of some obvious artistic and Gothic amenities in the

---

[145]Ibid., p. 24.

[146]Ibid., pp. 25, 26, 33, 37.

[147]Ibid., p. 25.

interior of this "Christian house" is also evidence of women's material preferences and their power, as rulers of the domestic sphere, to determine what domestic architecture should look like. Beecher was thus instrumental in initiating the process of the feminization of American domestic architecture.

The floor plan for this design called for two arched recesses in the hall behind the front doors; it was to be furnished with boxes for overshoes, an umbrella stand, and hooks for overcoats. Yet there was also room for art in these and another recess in a wall between a closet and door leading to the stairway to the second floor, which would contain flowers, busts, or statuettes. Flanking this recess to the left and right were the two doors that led to the stair landing and hall closet. Both doors were Gothic in style, and a "bracket over the first board stair, with flowers or statuettes, is visible from the entrance."[148] Entry into the two first-floor rooms was also provided by two doors to the left or right of the hallway (fig. 8).[149]

The "large room to the left" was otherwise unnamed because it could "be made to serve the purpose of several rooms by means of a moveable screen." That is, by shifting the device in the room "two separate apartments are always

---

[148]Ibid., p. 27.

[149]Ibid., pp. 26, 27.

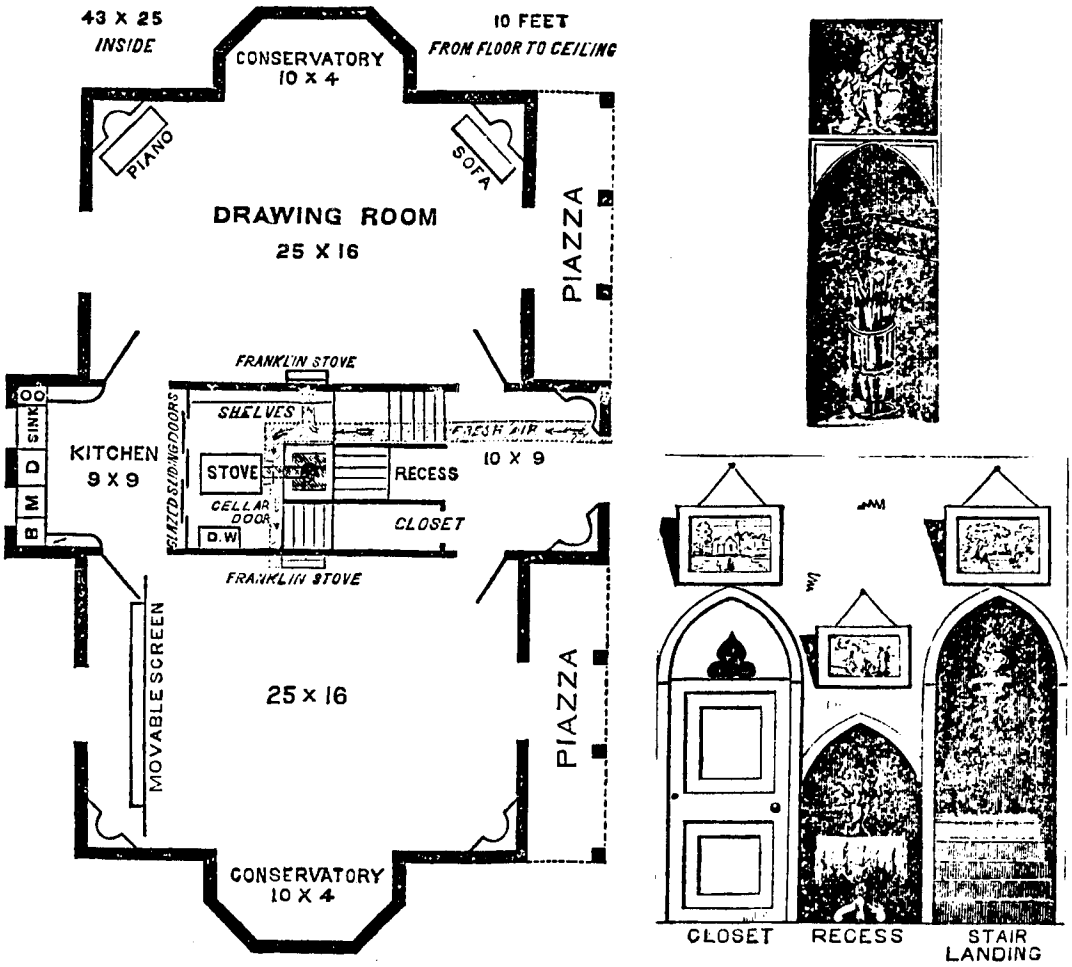


Fig. 8. Floor plan, hall plan, and recesses for Beecher's "Christian house."

available, of any desired size, within the limits of the large room." The movable screen had two sides. The inside, or back, of the device was to face that part of the room that was to be employed as a bedroom and was complete with a wardrobe, eighteen drawers, a side closet, and four cubby holes for storing pitchers, wash basins, and other toilet articles. The front side of the screen was covered with canvas. A paper panel was to be pasted on top to

"resemble an ornamental cornice by fresco paper." Pictures could either be painted or hung on this front, or parlor side. Beecher also gave explicit directions concerning the screen's dimensions as well as those of the "shelf-boxes" or drawers in the back side of the device along with advice for lubricating the rollers with hard soap, and assembling of the woodwork.[150] (See figs. 9 and 10.[151])

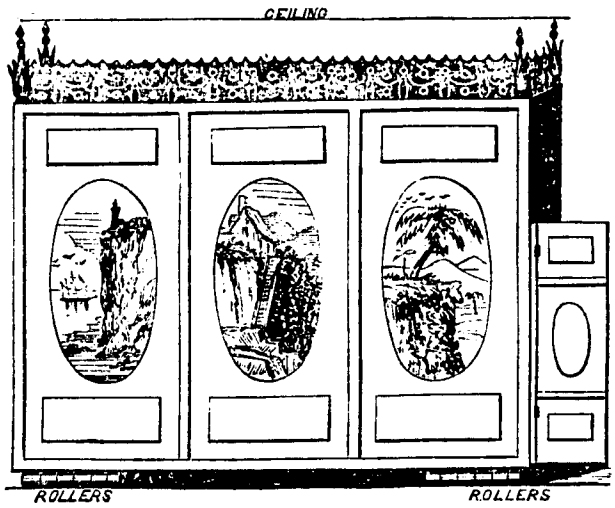


Fig. 9. Parlor side of screen.

At one end of this multi-purpose "large room," behind the screen, were two bedframes, one to be placed under the other, much like an old colonial trundle bed. Oat straw was recommended for mattresses as it was softer than rye or wheat. The total cost for the screen and beds was reckoned

---

[150]Ibid., pp. 27-30.

[151]Ibid., pp. 28, 29.

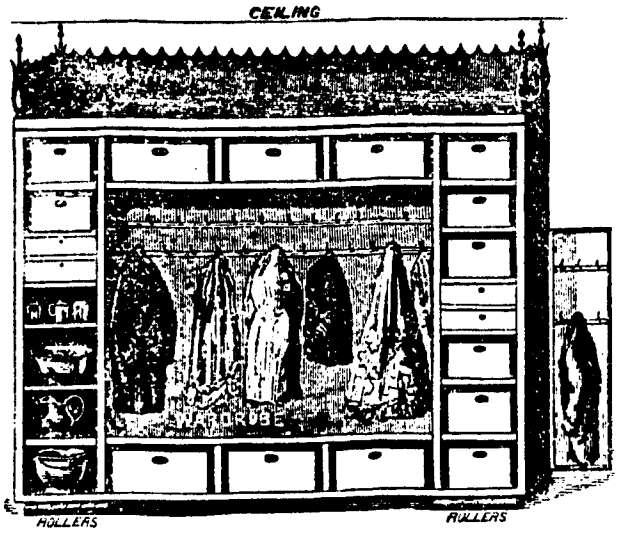


Fig. 10. Bedroom side of screen.

at a total of thirty-six dollars. Moreover, husband and son could do the job and save sixteen dollars.[152]

The kitchen was composed of two distinct areas, the kitchen proper and the stove room, immediately adjacent and connected by two "glazed sliding doors," which would serve to "shut out heat and smells from the kitchen." The stove room contained the stove (connected to the central chimney), cooking utensils, and all housework articles, shelves, a box for pots, a cellar door, "and yet much spare room will be left."[153] (See figs. 11 and 12.[154])

Just as a steamship's small galley could prepare food for two hundred passengers, so this stove room would

---

[152] Ibid., pp. 30-32.

[153] Ibid., p. 32.

[154] Ibid., pp. 33, 34.

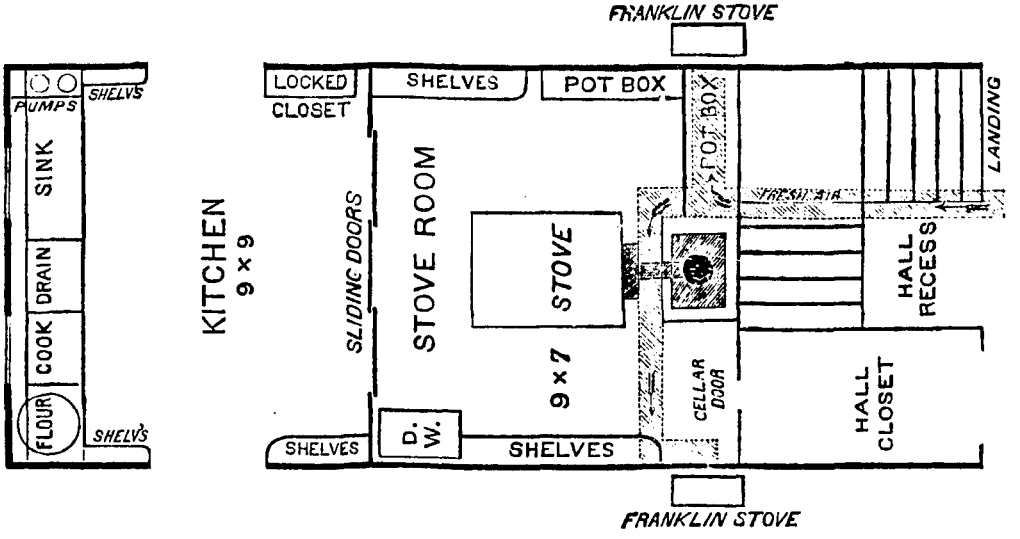


Fig. 11. Kitchen arrangement.

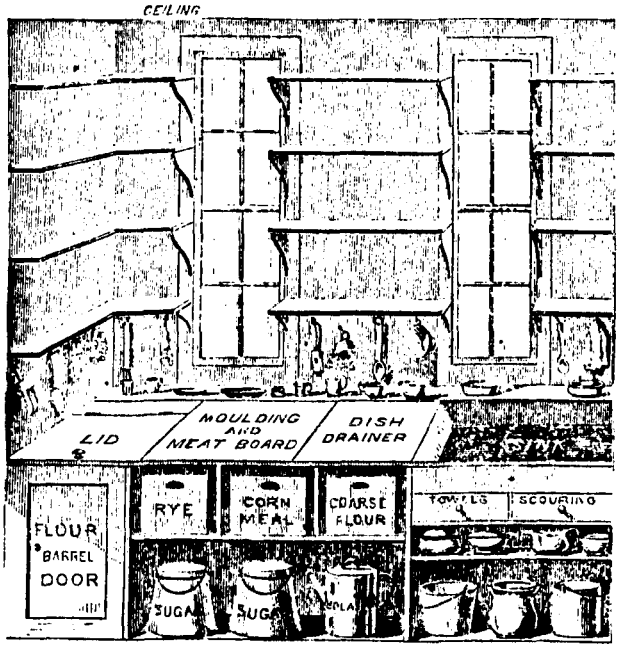


Fig. 12. Kitchen work area.

adequately suffice for a family and was, as always, so arranged as to save steps.[155] The kitchen proper was compact and had access to both the drawing and multi-purpose rooms. It contained a flour barrel closet; space for rye, corn meal, and coarse flour; a sink; drawers for towels and cooking utensils; twelve shelves; hooks for various cooking utensils; and two thin four-over-four windows. Beside the lid to the flour barrel closet was a molding board, one side for preparing bread, the other for meat and vegetables. The sink had two water pumps, one for cistern water, the other for well water. The entire kitchen was one complete, practical labor-saving device,[156] meant to facilitate the American woman's cultural role and thereby extend new domestic values.

Beecher's plan was also divisible in that if it were desired or economically possible, a second story could be added to house two bedrooms and balconies. The bedroom closets were unusually large, but this only provided more storage space and relieved the heat of summer. Two corner tables were to be in each bedroom. A water closet was to be placed near the landing and was considered safe with the "latest improvements for discharge," but "earth-closets" were predicted to supersede the latter. All rooms were well

---

[155]Ibid., p. 33.

[156]Ibid., pp. 34-36.

ventilated. Shoe bags were to be hung in the closets. The basement was to include spaces for ice storage, linens, an ironing table, laundry, a well and a cistern, vegetable and fruit pantries, a dumbwaiter, a furnace and a wood and coal bin.[157] The entire two-story-with-cellar "Christian house" could be built for an estimated sixteen hundred dollars.[158] In fact, two families could divide this house "and yet have room enough."[159] (See figs. 13 and 14.[160])

Beecher then presented an imaginary picture of "a colony of cultivated and Christian people, having abundant health . . . living as the wealthy usually do" in the "Southern uplands" where mild climate and fertile soil predominated. With a central church, common schoolroom, library, gymnasium, and common laundry, its inhabitants would train its children "to labor with the hands as a healthful and honorable activity." They would thus lay up treasures in heaven, economize wealth, and diffuse "culture among the poor, ignorant, and neglected ones in the desolate sections where many are now perishing for want of such Christian examples and influences."[161] Here Beecher, or

---

[157]Ibid., pp. 36-38, 59-65.

[158]Ibid., pp. 38-41.

[159]Ibid., p. 41.

[160]Ibid., pp. 37, 40.

[161]Ibid., p. 42.

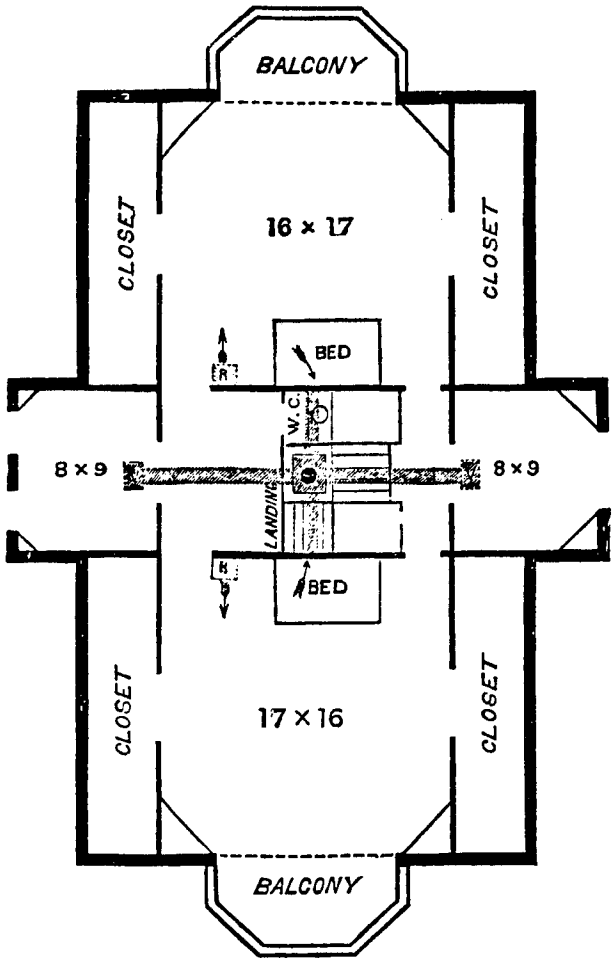


Fig. 13. Second floor plan.

more than likely her sister Harriet Beecher Stowe, is probably referring to the South during the early period of Reconstruction and is clearly relating domestic architecture to the American core value of humanitarianism.

Catherine Beecher believed that the aesthetic decoration of the home was, in an associationist sense, a means of promoting morality, refinement, and intellectual development among children, and eventually through them, to

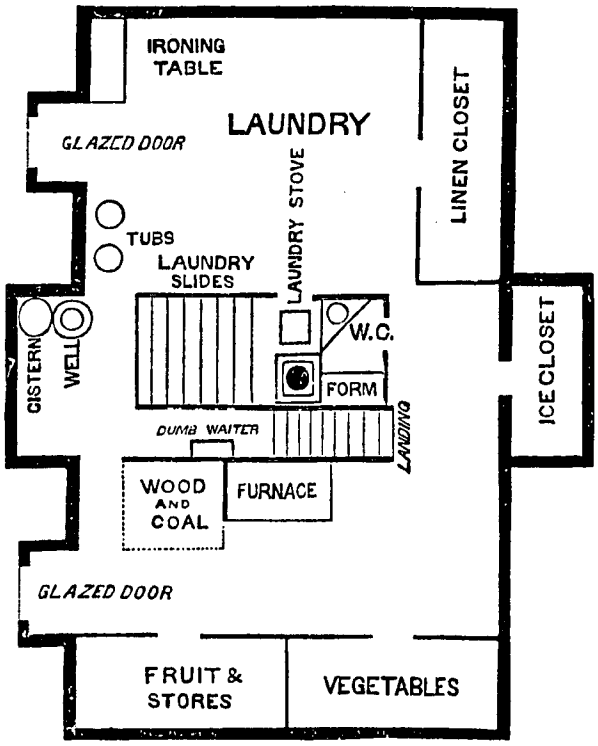


Fig. 14. Basement plan.

American culture and society. However, "the aesthetic element must be subordinate to the requirements of physical existence, and as a matter of expense, should be held . . . inferior."[162] She was opposed to exterior "'curlywurlies' and 'whigmaliries,' which make the house neither prettier nor more comfortable, and which take up a good deal of money."[163] Rooms should not emphasize an expensive Brussels carpet with the result being an otherwise bare interior. The expense of such faddish carpets made it nearly impossible

---

[162]Ibid., p. 84.

[163]Ibid., p. 85.

to paper the walls. For the same amount of money that a Brussels carpet cost, all walls could be papered and another carpet could be manufactured at home by the housewife.

Parlor embellishments such as couches, pillows, lambrequins, curtains, and center tables could also be made at home.[164] In fact, wallpaper, matting for a carpet, a center table with a cloth, muslin for curtains for three windows, thirty yards of chintz, and six chairs would cost a total of $61.75, resulting in a savings of nearly twenty dollars over the cost of the Brussels carpet.[165] This savings could then be used to purchase pictures such as Eastman Johnson's "Barefoot Boy," or Bierstadt's "Sunset in the Yo Semite [sic] Valley." Moreover, it was wise for the housewife to make her own rustic picture frames as a "cheaper . . . means of educating . . . ingenuity and the taste."[166]

The value of such art works was educational. In a typical associationist argument, Beecher held that they served to stimulate a child's artistic imagination, taste, and refined thought. While a woman might complain that she had no money to spare for materials with which to manufacture such art objects, Beecher admonished that the country wife was surrounded by woods "full of beautiful ferns and

---

[164] Ibid., pp. 85-90.

[165] Ibid., p. 90.

[166] Ibid., pp. 91-92.

mosses, while every swamp shakes and nods with tremendous grasses." These things could easily be employed to manufacture art objects.[167] Not only could hanging plant baskets be made, ivy introduced on interior walls, and flower stands be manufactured at home by the housewife, but even a small interior green house could also be easily made.[168] (See fig. 15.[169])

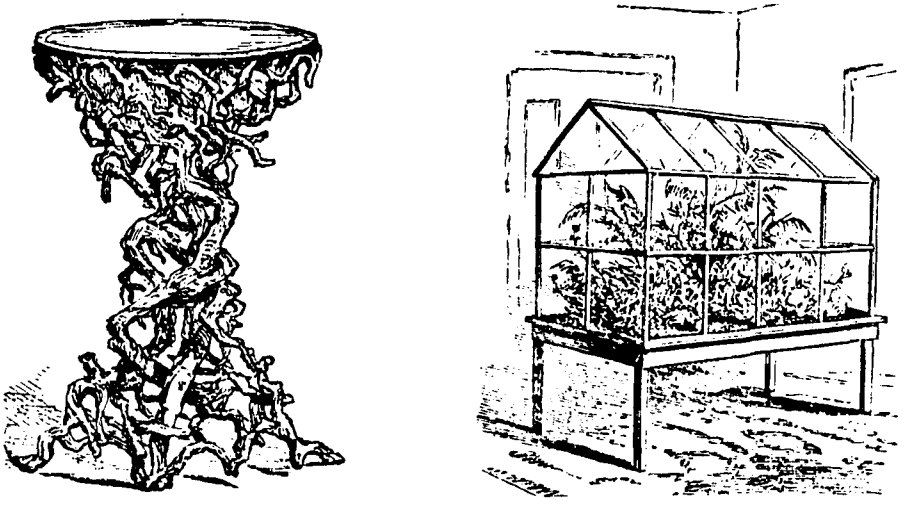


Fig. 15. Homemade art objects for the "Christian house."

By following Beecher's suggestions, any woman could easily fulfill her role as a culture and art transmitter and thereby not only enhance the secondary concern of decorating the house but improve the morals of the entire family.

---

[167]Ibid., p. 94.

[168]Ibid., pp. 95-102.

[169]Ibid., pp. 99, 100.

Because she advanced the idea that women should promote religion, industry, art, and virtue through household economy, Beecher helped shape women's role in American culture, as a professional consumer.[170] Household duties were the woman's primary responsibility, and a woman was to be the "presiding genius, or rather the guardian angel, of the home." Women functioned, therefore, in the realms of domestic economics, ethics, aesthetics, health care, pediatrics, and education. Beecher's work was instrumental in bringing about this change.[171] It was not by accident that in 1882 a book on household management and etiquette could truthfully proclaim:

> Home is the woman's kingdom, and there she rules supreme. To establish that home, to make happy the lives of her husband and the dear ones committed to her trust is the honored task with which it is the wife's province to perform. All praise to her who so rules and governs in that kingdom, that those reared beneath her roof "shall rise up and call her blessed."[172]

There is another way in which Beecher's architectural reform might be viewed, and that is as a material culture tension management device. There are, according to

---

[170]Hayden, Grand Domestic Revolution, p. 57.

[171]Stow Persons, The Decline of American Gentility (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), pp. 84-85.

[172]John H. Young, Our Deportment; or, the Manners, Conduct and Dress of the Most Refined Society, Including Forms for Letters, Invitations, etc., etc., Also Valuable Suggestions on Home Culture and Training, rev. ed. (Springfield, Mass.: W. C. King & Co., 1882), p. 208.

sociologists, a number of elements that compose social systems, and among them are facilities and a stress-strain component. A facility is broadly defined as "any means which may be used to attain ends within a system." A building, for example, is a facility. The use of a facility determines its significance in culture, and the utilization of a facility is a process sociologists recognize as being closely related to value systems.[173] Any facility, or device, that "effectively segregates individuals in such a way as to minimize . . . conflict serves a purpose of maintaining order. When people are segregated from individuals and groups with which they are incompatible, there is less chance for deviant behavior."[174] It has been demonstrated that management of the stress-strain component of social systems can be obtained through a material facility. For example, tension was managed and reduced among men and women workers in a restaurant by utilizing certain insulating devices such as a warming counter placed between counter men and waitresses. This device allowed written orders to be placed on a spindle and thereby eliminated the necessity of men having to take verbal orders from women, a practice that violated cultural values and created tensions.[175]

---

[173]Bertrand, Basic Sociology, pp. 31, 35.

[174]Ibid., pp. 284, 27-28.

[175]William Foote Whyte, "The Social Structure of the Restaurant," American Journal of Sociology 54, no. 4

Beecher's work made domestic architecture a facility not only to ease the work of women but, as she recognized, to manage family tensions. "So complicated are the pursuits and so diverse the habits of various members of a family," she held, "that it is almost impossible for everyone to avoid interfering with the plans and taste of a housekeeper. . . . It is, therefore, most wise for a woman to keep the loins of her mind ever girt, to meet such collisions with a cheerful and quiet spirit." This need could be best facilitated by forming "all plans and arrangements in consistency with the means at command."[176] The house, through its arrangement, became a facility for reducing tensions and increasing the efficiency of the work women had to do, and would help in what she termed the "preservation of good temper in the housekeeper."[177]

On a much broader cultural scale this may also be true. For, above all, Catherine Beecher believed women should remain in the home. She believed that the "question of the equality of the sexes" was "frivolous and useless" in America, because it could never be decided and because there

---

(January 1949), pp. 302-310. See also William Foote Whyte, Human Relations in the Restaurant Industry (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1948); and Alvin L. Bertrand, Social Organization: A General Systems and Role Theory Perspective (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Co., 1972), pp. 90-91, 168-69.

[176]Beecher and Stowe, pp. 215, 216-17.

[177]Ibid., p. 212.

could "be no possible advantage" in equality.[178] Thus, by placing women in the home, they were segregated from the rest of American society, particularly from the business and political spheres where men were to exercise power. Instead of becoming actively involved in radical feminism, women were to function in the domestic sphere and leave the outside world to men. The fact that Beecher's designs made it easier for women to work in the home would mean also that there would be less reason for them to leave it for other fields of endeavor. Sequestered and eternally busy in the home, women would have no opportunity to leave the domestic sphere and thus would not become involved in business, politics, or raise the question of the equality of the sexes.

Certainly such feminist advocates as Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony created tensions in nineteenth-century American culture; and this tension was effectively reduced and managed when women, as individuals and as a group, were placed in the "Christian house." With gadgets, room arrangements, child rearing, and associated artistic endeavors, women were effectively segregated from the "outside" world; and therefore general tensions that might have arisen from wide adoption of feminist programs demanding equality of the sexes were avoided. Cultural tensions would probably have been created

---

[178]Beecher, p. 142.

had feminist arguments gained wide following during the nineteenth century, as the contemporary women's liberation movement demonstrates. In this manner, then, Beecher helped not only to define women's cultural role, feminize domestic architecture, but also to manage or to practically eliminate potential social tensions through the vehicle of domestic architecture and its reform.

Jessie Bernard points out that feminists such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton "loom large in our image of the female world of the nineteenth century because we are interested in the movement they led. They are important to us." Yet very few "women in the nineteenth century knew of . . . Stanton or . . . Anthony. . . . Most of their contemporaries may never have heard of them. Or, if they had, probably dismissed their ideas as irrelevant." This was because women were "accustomed to the status quo, probably too busy to think of changing it, surely not by way of the ballot with which they had no experience."[179] The status quo for nineteenth-century American women was the domestic sphere; and domestic architecture as an integral part of that status quo became a barrier, "a convenient substitute for justice, and tended to perpetuate women's inferior status."[180] As Persons contends, the "traditional

---

[179]Jessie Bernard, The Female World (New York: Free Press, 1981), p. 316.

[180]Persons, p. 87.

subordination of the lady to the domestic functions assigned to her was certainly a handicap to emancipation, but it was not to be denied."[181] Women's sphere became "a prison or a gilded cage or a doll's house." So did domestic architecture. It served to deprive women of independence, and the "frivolity, triviality, and irresponsibility attributed to women were to a large extent a result of restrictions imposed by women's sphere."[182] It thus seems perspicacious that nineteenth-century domestic architecture, as the material component of the cult of domesticity, functioned as a tension management facility. It might be tentatively viewed as an instrument of political oppression in that it perpetuated domestic feminine values and kept women out of politics. Such an argument, however, must await further research. Nevertheless, it appears probable that the creation, elaboration, and extension of domestic values as core American feminine cultural traits were in large measure the result of Catherine Beecher's influence and were perpetuated and integrated into the national core value consensus by her architectural reform. The "necessary . . . <u>habit of system and order</u>" that Beecher called for in the domestic sphere[183] was characteristic of the search for domestic order but was

---

[181]Ibid., p. 92.

[182]Bernard, p. 90.

[183]Beecher, p. 144.

translated to mean on a national level that women's place in the new order was not only domestic but apolitical as well. As domestic architecture became feminized, this order was strengthened to the point where it became the norm, or cultural status quo. While contemporary feminists complain that "many women . . . view their confinement to the domestic environment as oppressive,"[184] they also recognize that "houses are designed to support traditional concepts of gender roles and domesticity."[185] Today these concepts of domesticity and gender roles are traditional, but in the nineteenth century they were new and have become the fundamental issues that present day feminists are struggling to overcome. It is interesting to note that the reform of domestic architecture is viewed by some contemporary feminists as a means to provide women with "equal access to opportunities in the public sphere."[186] In any event, the point here is that domestic architecture aided in the search for domestic order and helped in no small measure to establish it.

Ann Douglas has pointed out that by 1850 American culture had become "feminized," by which she means it became anti-intellectual and sentimental. This resulted in a

---

[184]Werkele, Peterson, and Morely, pp. 10-11.

[185]Ibid., p. 11.

[186]Ibid.

nation, not of culture producers, but of culture consumers. By 1850 women had lost many legal rights, were excluded from a number of occupations, and took an increasingly unproductive role in society. This phenomenon was the result of an unconscious alliance between similarly disposed liberal ministers and middle-class women. Both groups tried to make up for their losses by directing appeals to a newly growing mass market of women readers. Douglas sees this feminization of American culture primarily in literature,[187] but there seems to be evidence to support the contention that there also occurred a feminization of domestic architecture.

Catherine Beecher, as already pointed out, placed women in the domestic sphere, where they were to have power and influence. Among many other functions women were to perform were those associated with art, or "culture." Women were thought to be more refined, of a higher, purer moral character, and much more delicate than men. Women were to function as refined cultural and artistic teachers, and aesthetic concerns were their bailiwick.[188] By 1886, for

---

[187]Russell E. Durning, review of The Feminization of American Culture, by Ann Douglas, in American Historical Review 83, no. 2 (April 1978). See also Sklar, p. 161; Fred Louis Patey, "Working Class Women in Britain, 1890-1914," in Martha Vincus, ed., Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1972), pp. 100-120.

[188]Persons, pp. 88-91. See also Kouwenhoven, p. 208.

example, Henry James recognized in his novel The Bostonians that:

> . . . the whole generation is womanized; the masculine tone is passing out of the world; it is a feminine . . . canting age . . . of hollow phrases and false delicacy and exaggerated solicitudes and coddled sensibilities, which if we do not look out, will usher in the reign of mediocrity, of the . . . most pretentious that has ever been seen.[189]

This may be interpreted as evidence that women had done precisely what Beecher told them to do: they had gained power and influence through the domestic sphere and associated gender roles. Early evidence of feminization of architecture may be seen in Mrs. L. C. Tuthill's 1848 History of Architecture, which was dedicated: "To the ladies of the United States of America. The Acknowledged Arbiters of Taste."[190] It was Mrs. Tuthill's contention that "the ladies should cultivate a taste of architecture," because it would add "to the innocent pleasures of life as much as a taste for flowers, or furniture."[191] Andrew Jackson Downing likewise concurred:

> Our readers very well know that . . . whenever anything especially tasteful is to be done. . .

---

[189] As cited in Persons, p. 275, from Henry James, The Bostonians (1886; reprint ed., New York: Modern Library, n.d.), p. 343. See also Russell Lynes, The Domesticated Americans (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 343.

[190] (Mrs.) L. C. Tuthill, History of Architecture from the Earliest Times: Its Present Condition in Europe and the United States, With a Biography of Eminent Architects and Glossary of Architectural Terms (Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston, 1848), p. iv.

[191] Ibid., p. viii.

> we have to entreat the assistance of the fairer half of humanity. All that is most graceful and charming . . . owes its existence to female hands. Over the heavy exterior of man's handiwork, they weave a fairy-like web of enchantment, which . . . spiritualizes and makes poetical, whatever rude form or rough outlines may lie beneath.[192]

Downing was well aware, by 1852, "of the powerful influence of woman, in any question touching upon the improvement of our social and home education." He had not "the least desire that American wives and daughters should have anything to do with . . . rough toil . . . beyond their household sphere."[193] Gervase Wheeler also contended that "after the heart has become worn by the business experiences of the struggling life of a . . . man . . . the lamp of taste is lighted at the mother's knee, and if unlit then, the light of afteryears will but dimly supply its place."[194] Architecture was a matter of beauty and refined taste, and these matters were properly within the sphere of women. As woman's role in the home increased, so did her influence in matters of art and cultural pursuits. A pattern emerged in which women, from Catherine Beecher to M. Carey Thomas in the 1930s, were "constantly exhorting each other to foster and perpetuate high culture."[195] As Richard Hofstadter

---

[192]Downing, Rural Essays, p. 398.

[193]Ibid., pp. 398 and 51.

[194]Wheeler, pp. 361-62.

[195]Barbara Cross, ed., The Educated Women in America (New York: Teacher's College Press, 1965), pp. 1-2. See

succinctly stated in reference to the second half of the nineteenth century: "Culture suggested femininity."[196]

That women had such pervasive power over this sphere in the nineteenth century can also be seen in the successful American tour of Oscar Wilde in the 1880s. When he suggested that buffaloes and wild deer were "'the animals for you' . . . the buffalo and deer appeared at last on satin and leather sofa cushions." When Wilde advised the use of native flowers in interior decoration, "purple lilies and crimson sunflowers adorned 'esthetic' draperies and 'Japanese' screens, and Whistler's peacock . . . became the national bird." Life in America, Wilde said, "is 'real and improbable.'"[197] It is also interesting to note that one of the most popular domestic architectural styles of the latter half of the nineteenth century was called "Queen Anne," an appellation that seldom brings forth masculine associations. While Mark Twain might satirize this tendency toward

---

also Anthony N. B. Garven, "Effects of Technology on Domestic Life, 1830-1880," in Melvin Kranzberg and Carroll W. Pursell, Jr., eds., Technology in Western Civilization, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), vol. 1, The Emergence of Modern Industrial Society: Earliest Times to 1900, pp. 548, 552, 559.

[196]Richard Hofstadter, Anti-intellectualism in American Life (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), pp. 188-89. See also Rita Wellman, Victoria Royal: The Flowering of a Style (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939), pp. 240-43, 254-56.

[197]Wellman, p. 295. According to Wellman, p. 289, Wilde's success in the American West was due to the fact that Westerners "were accustomed to queer strangers."

feminization,[198] it was an undeniable fact in American culture.

Women, as consumers, were to make the choices that would shape the form of domestic architecture, choices based upon the belief and value that women, in their refined and genteel capacities, in their separate domestic sphere, were supposed to be concerned with. Women, as mothers, were essential to a home; and, as David Handlin suggests, they were "commonly portrayed as blending in with the house itself."[199]

That women were making these kinds of choices, expressing a certain material preference, is illustrated, for example, by a Mrs. Ruth Fay. As a client of Alexander Jackson Davis, an architect closely associated with the Gothic Revival, Mrs. Fay made certain that Davis understood her wants concerning the building of her house. She wrote to Davis that:

> I have a decided objection to the present ambitious or pretentious style of house architecture. It does not comport with our means. Nor is it adopted to houses of the dimensions we usually build. . . . What I want is a house with no waste spaces, the rooms all living rooms, substantially well finished and comfortably furnished, <u>with an exterior of perfect simplicity</u>. . . . We can then put on finials,

---

[198]Samuel Langhorne Clemens, <u>Life on the Mississippi</u> (New York: Collier & Son Co., 1917), pp. 317-22.

[199]David P. Handlin, <u>The American Home: Architecture and Society, 1815-1915</u> (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1979), p. 17.

towers, etc., which are frequently used to hide defects than for any other purpose.[200]

The impact of Catherine Beecher is readily apparent, as are the expressions of American core values. Additionally, Mrs. Fay was articulating the fact that women ruled or managed the home, including its physical appearance. While artistic women might be satirized by Mark Twain, G. W. Peck, or Bill Nye, they were no laughing matter. "Because the home was the barometer of social status and the woman was in charge of its appearance, her . . . judgement helped determine her husband's position."[201] Beyond that, however, and, more importantly, her judgement helped determine the shape and form and style of domestic architecture. This tendency was made all the more pervasive because men had to defer to women in the home, or so women's popular literature held. Indeed, "men were always perceived in middle-class writing about the home as extreme threats to the peace and unity of the family."[202]

Women's ability to make these crucial choices was enhanced by the means of magazines. As early as 1839, for example, when Downing was finishing his Elizabethan mansion and Beecher was still thinking about household economy,

---

[200]As cited in Russell Lynes, The Tastemakers (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1954), pp. 29-30.

[201]George Talbot, At Home: Domestic Life in the Post-Centennial Era, 1876-1920 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976), p. 45.

[202]Jeffrey, in Te Selle, p. 33.

Solon Robinson criticized "the thousands of piles of brick and mortar, and lumber, called dwelling-houses." Moreover, good house plans were not found in the agricultural press, while all those found in architectural books were "inconvenient and uncomfortable." He suggested that the Albany Cultivator begin presenting plans, and it would be logical to solicit suggestions from farmers' wives who believed they had a "very convenient house."[203]

Robinson's specific call for domestic architectural plans from and with women in mind is significant in that he early recognized the power women had in concerns of domestic architecture. Yet, a more important source for information regarding housing came not from the agricultural press but from popular women's literature aimed at middle-class feminine readers.

By 1850, according to Stow Persons, four-fifths of the American reading public was composed of women. Nineteenth-century popular magazine literature, therefore, would tend to appeal to women as well as reinforce the notion that they were purveyors and teachers of culture and art.[204] Women's magazines helped inculcate in their readership the

---

[203]Kellar, 1:113-15.

[204]Persons, pp. 89-90. See also George L. Hersey, "Godey's Choice," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 18, no. 3 (October 1959), p. 104.

growing perception that ladies did figure prominently in matters concerning domestic architecture.

Perhaps most instrumental both in educating women about domestic architecture and in reflecting their role in these matters was Godey's Lady's Book. When Sarah Josepha Hale became its editor in December 1836, publisher Louis Godey proclaimed that it "will . . . be perceived that a new era . . . has been commenced."[205] Hale had already been editor of The Ladies' Magazine from 1828 to 1836; and, during her entire career that stretched from 1828 to 1877, her creed was "the progress of female improvement."[206] The magazine enjoyed immense popularity during her editorship. In 1851 Godey's Lady's Book had a circulation of 63,000, double that of any of its rivals,[207] and by 1869 the magazine itself proclaimed a circulation of half a million.[208] Godey was aware that his "subscribers were ever 'the fair ladies.'" The magazine was popularly called "The Book," or "Godey's Bible," and even "God-ey's Bible."[209] Like Mary's little

---

[205]Ruth E. Finley, The Lady of Godey's: Sarah Josepha Hale, Women in America, From Colonial Times to the 20th Century Series, ed. Leon Stein, Annette K. Baxter (New York: Lippincott Co., 1931; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1974), p. 63.

[206]Ibid., p. 40.

[207]Ibid., p. 47.

[208]As cited in Hersey, p. 104, from Godey's Lady's Book, vol. 77 (1869), p. 99.

[209]Finley, p. 50.

lamb (which Hale wrote),[210] wherever "women went, there the Lady's Book went also."[211]

In 1846 Godey's began America's first "own-your-own-home" campaign with the development of a new section under the title "Godey's Model Cottages."[212] The innovation, while widely copied by the magazine's competitors,[213] would remain for thirty years;[214] and between 1846 and 1892 Godey's published about four hundred and fifty designs for domestic housing,[215] or an average of nearly ten designs a year. What is important to recall here is that the magazine was aimed at women, and that women far and away composed the majority of America's nineteenth-century reading public. The designs then would both appeal to women and reflect their values, material preferences, and power as consumers, otherwise the magazine would not have become so widely circulated or popular. As an innovation, this housing campaign was tailored to fit the cultural values of those it hoped to

---

[210]Ibid., p. 18.

[211]Ibid., p. 144.

[212]Ibid., p. 138.

[213]Hersey, p. 104.

[214]Finley, p. 138.

[215]Hersey, p. 104. See also Gwendolyn Wright, Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 11.

reach and convince,[216] and thus it had to be compatible with feminine domestic values.[217]

The stylistic representations in Godey's are of some interest. The first design was called a "Swiss-German Model" complete with a romantic thatched roof.[218] From 1846 to 1851 fully sixty percent of the fifty-eight designs were Gothic Revival; between 1851 and 1856 fifty percent were Gothic; between 1856 and 1861 forty-five percent were Gothic; between 1861 and 1866, forty percent; between 1866 and 1871, thirty-five percent; between 1871 and 1876, about twenty-two percent were Gothic, while the Mansard or Third Empire style peaked at fifty percent. By 1876 Gothic designs ceased to appear, and Queen Anne styles predominated, representing a full one hundred percent of all designs presented by 1891.[219] These figures serve not only as a gauge with which to measure the popularity of various domestic architectural styles among women, and changes in floor plans, but as the interest and power women had in shaping domestic architecture.

The change in material preferences in regard to domestic architectural styles after 1876 is also related to a

---

[216]Bertrand, Basic Sociology, p. 132.

[217]Ibid., p. 129.

[218]Finley, p. 138.

[219]Hersey, pp. 110-11. See also Finley, pp. 138-42.

change in values. For example, anglophobia began to change, if not to anglophilia, at least to a growing respect for England. "The monarchy," according to Howard Mumford Jones, "became a wise institution; the aristocracy a proper mode for maintaining social distinctions." Great Britain was now "the home of poets, and history." Britain's literature, political institutions, and "'Anglo Saxon' inheritance" were assumed to be joint possessions of the two countries."[220]

There was a change not only in regard to England but toward English domestic architecture. The British exhibit at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876 was in the Queen Anne style, and inside the buildings were displayed English art, furniture, and ceramics. The impact of the British exhibit was manifested in "conscience-smitten women . . . who went in for 'art' wallpaper, 'art' furniture, and 'art' textiles."[221] Starting in 1876, as illustrated by the designs in Godey's, Queen Anne architecture increased in popularity. The American Builder "heartily recommended this sort of thing for American use."[222]

---

[220]Howard Mumford Jones, The Age of Energy: Varieties of American Experience, 1865-1915 (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 265.

[221]Kouwenhoven, p. 127. See also Robert Post, ed., A Centennial Exhibition (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1976), pp. 11-23, 189-206; and Edith Louise Allen, American Housing: As Affected by Social and Economic Conditions (Peoria, Ill.: Manual Arts Press, 1930), p. 119.

[222]Vincent J. Scully, Jr., The Shingle Style: Architectural Theory and Design from Richardson to the Origins

Moreover, because the Queen Anne style "purportedly revived vernacular English domestic architecture of several centuries past, it began to be related in the minds of Americans to their own colonial building."[222] Indeed, Queen Anne architecture "rode into America on a wave of nostalgia, and that nostalgia was a new and suddenly poignant American longing to recall its 17th- and 18th-century past."[224] The hoopla and excitement generated by the architecture at the British pavilion at the 1876 Exposition led to a wider acceptance of Queen Anne style, and Americans began to look more and more toward the past.[225] Thus architecture may be seen as evidence of a change in two core American values, those of anglophobia and a future orientation.

What is of importance here is that women, who were consumers of art and culture in America, were important in helping determine a change in domestic architectural styles after 1876, as well as in the process of value change, as reflected in their material preferences for Queen Anne architecture and English "art."

Yet another interesting problem in the process of feminization of domestic architecture is to ascertain who

---

of Wright (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 19-21.

[223]Ibid., p. 22.

[224]Ibid., pp. 26-33.

[225]David Lowenthal, "The Place of the Past in American Life," in Martyn J. Bowden and David Lowenthal, eds., Geographies of the Mind: Essays in Historical Geosophy. In Honor of John Kirkland (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 110.

provided the choices for women to make. Certainly, until leaving her post as editor of Godey's in 1876, Sarah Hale must have exercised considerable influence. (See fig. 16.[226]) Her own background was that of the genteel

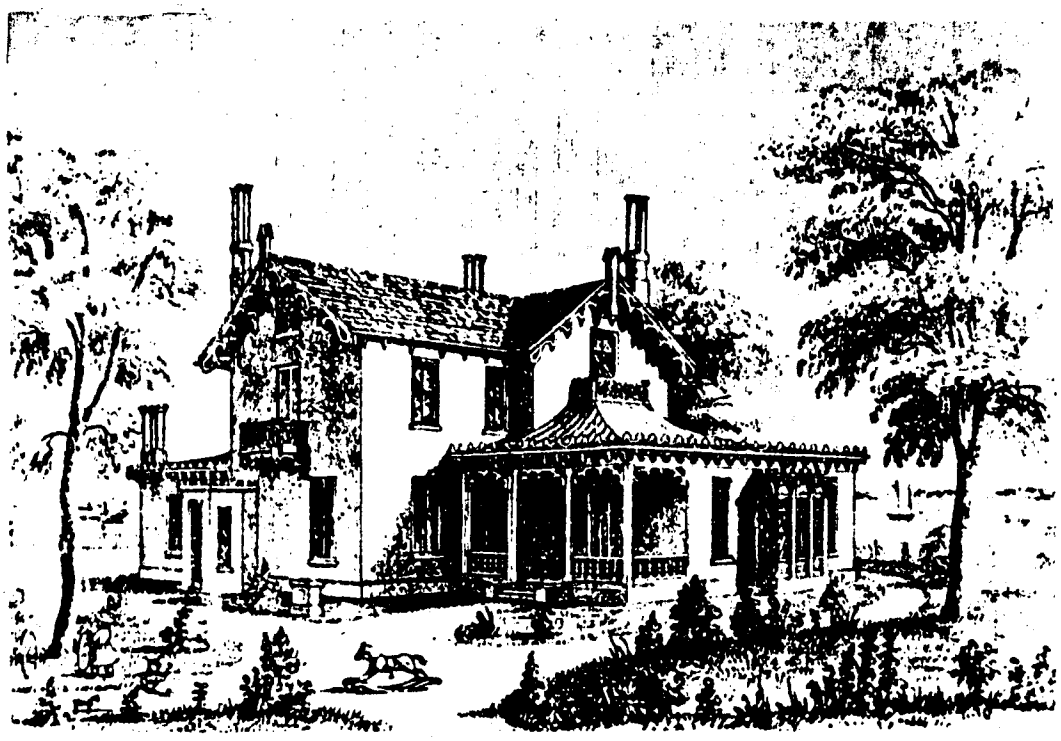


Fig. 16. The type of residence which came to be known in later years as a "Lady's Book House." (From Godey's Lady's Book, July 1849.)

New England tradition, and she was undoubtedly an ambitious moral reformer,[227] and had at least a literary interest in domestic architecture as her first novel, Northwood (1827),

---

[226]Finley, facing p. 140.

[227]Ibid., pp. 18-19. See also Bernard, p. 89.

demonstrated with its detailed descriptions of interiors and furniture.[228] Hale, moreover, was annoyed by domestic disorder,[229] and more than likely her influence over the magazine's architectural plans reflected her tidy feminine domestic values and served to promote the ideal of domestic order. Additionally, her interest in art was expressed in her editorial comments.[230] Thus, along with Catherine Beecher, Sarah Hale helped foster the feminization of domestic architecture and promote the cult of domesticity. For better or worse, women ruled the home and made choices determining what homes should look like and how arranged. It was, succinctly, woman's job, her cultural role; and Godey's Lady's Book "provided norms which helped . . . ladies understand the possibilities of their new interest and to become articulate in the matter of domestic architecture."[231]

It is necessary to ask two other questions. If Godey's provided architectural norms for women, were professional architects also affected by these norms? Who provided or created the architectural designs in the first place? Apparently Catherine Beecher provided her own renderings,[232]

---

[228]Ibid., pp. 34-35.

[229]Ibid., p. 91.

[230]Ibid., pp. 168- 9.

[231]Hersey, p. 104.

[232]There is nothing to indicate she did not.

and an extensive search of the nineteenth-century agricultural press for designs submitted by farmers' wives remains to be accomplished. However, it is known that Godey's Lady's Book obtained its designs from architects, all of whom were men. From 1846 to 1854 domestic architectural designs were taken from English sources such as J. B. Papworth's Rural Residences (1816), John C. Loudon's Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture (1833), and B. Brown's Domestic Architecture (1842). In the five years between 1854 and 1859, designs from Americans were presented, reflecting native concerns about utility,[233] and perhaps xenophobia, from Samuel Backus's Villa and Farm Cottages (1856) and C. M. Saxton's Rural Architecture (1852).[234] A practical emphasis, reflecting Beecher's influence, was perpetuated also in designs submitted by the Haddonfield Ready Villa Association. "A note of elegance was struck with the inclusion, now and then, of drawings and descriptions from Downing's Country Houses."[235] By 1859

---

[233]Hersey, p. 105.

[234]Ibid.

[235]Ibid. According to Hersey, n. 9, p. 105, C. M. Saxton's Rural Architecture is "apparently rare." Hersey, for example, found no evidence of the book at either the Avery Library or in Hitchcock's Bibliography. Yet, illustrations attributed to Saxton were found in Godey's 48 (1854): 349-51, 444-46, and 49 (1854): 62-63. It may be, however, that Hersey has confused Saxton's book, if it ever existed, with Lewis F. Allen's Rural Architecture, published by C. M. Saxton in New York in 1852. Certainly Allen's book stressed a utilitarian theme.

Godey's announced it would present only original designs, and most of these were provided by the architect Samuel Sloan, who had contributed as early as 1852. But the majority of designs in Godey's from 1863 to 1877 are attributed to Isaac H. Hobbs, Jr. Hobbs enjoyed a virtual monopoly in those fourteen years. When Louis Godey resigned in 1877, Hobbs also left and was replaced by Theophilus P. Chandler and A. W. Dilks. Hobbs returned to contribute designs from 1880 to 1885 and was replaced briefly by Edward Jennings, Samuel Milligan, Arthur Truscott, and David Woodbury King. The entire series of domestic architectural designs came to an end in 1892 with plans drawn up by E. G. W. Dietrich. In 1898 Godey's Lady's Book folded and was merged with The Puritan.[236]

Of the nine architects who provided designs for Godey's, only three, Samuel Sloan (1815-1884), Theophilus J. Chandler (1845-1928), and Ernest G. W. Dietrich (1857-1924), are known to have been members or fellows of the American Institute of Architects (AIA).[237] Nothing, however, is said about their work for Godey's in Withey and Withey's Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased).[238] In any event, the fact is that Sloan, Chandler, and Dietrich

---

[236]Ibid., pp. 105-106.

[237]Henry E. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970), pp. 117-18, 173, 558.

[238]Ibid.

were AIA members, and the formation of the AIA was part of the general phenomenon called the search for order.[239] Professionalization and feminization of domestic architecture occurred almost simultaneously. The fact that male architects provided the plans might at first glance be taken as proof that domestic architecture was designed by men who, simply on the basis of their gender, had no real understanding of women's needs and the cultural roles they played. But to assert this is to say that nineteenth-century men, whether or not they happened to be architects, did not recognize or approve of the cult of domesticity, that their designs were created in a cultural vacuum. That their designs appeared in Godey's, however, as well as other similar magazines, indicates that male architects were cognizant of woman's domestic sphere and that they designed houses, as contemporary feminists assert, "to support traditional concepts of gender roles and domesticity."[240]

The fact professional male architects provided all designs is significant of what Jessie Bernard refers to as women in America having "been not only the supporters of

---

[239]Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order, 1877-1920, The Making of America Series, ed. David Donald (New York: Hill & Wang, 1967), pp. 121, 128, 174; and John William Ward, "The Politics of Design," in Laurence B. Holland, ed., Who Designs America? The American Civilization Conference at Princeton (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1966), p. 71.

[240]Werkele, Peterson, and Morely, p. 11.

male culture but also its major consumers as well."[241] Male dominated culture subjugated women politically and also, with the aid of women like Catherine Beecher and Sarah Hale, both defined woman's domestic sphere and perpetuated her cultural role as housewife. Domestic architecture was one means of perpetuating this social order. It was one of the things women consumed. Male architects may well have been involved in the quest for order in a professional sense during the latter part of the nineteenth century, but in terms of domestic architecture they already had an order, the order of domesticity. With but a few notable exceptions, women were not architects in the nineteenth century, and those who were did not design domestic architecture.[242] This shows just how strong the domestic order was. Architectural designs, as presented in women's magazines, maintained this order, this cult of domesticity.

In 1889, for example, the editor of The Ladies' Home Journal, Edward Bok, "saw the reorganization of the American home and the preservation of the family as his crusades." He wanted not only to simplify and reform the American home but "to keep women in it."[243] Gwendolyn Wright interprets this as evidence of "the emergence of an aesthetic and

---

[241]Bernard, p. 415. See also Garvan, in Kranzberg and Pursell, p. 548.

[242]Torre, pp. 18-31, 54-79

[243]Wright, p. 136; and Werkele, Peterson, and Mosely, p. 84.

ideological shift in attitudes toward the American middle-class home."[244] Bok commissioned professional architects to provide designs of "model Journal houses" based upon middle-class values and concerns for efficiency "and the long-standing American reverence for self-sufficiency."[245] Yet, few architects responded to Bok's offer until the depression of 1893 when economic realities "altered the standards of professionalism, making any job opportunity seem attractive."[246] By 1895, then, designs began appearing from male architects such as William L. Price, Ralph Adams Cram, Edward Hapgood, Bruce Price, Joy Wheeler Dow, Arthur Little, and later Frank Lloyd Wright. Save for Wright's work, all these designs were "quite traditional. They followed established historical styles."[247] No doubt they also expressed what were by then traditional values as well, those associated with the cult of domesticity. It is interesting to note that Wright's first design expressing the Prarie style of domestic architecture was published in the July number of the 1901 Ladies' Home Journal. Not only was it the first year of the twentieth century, but his design was totally different from any preceding designs in the

---

[244]Wright, p. 136.

[245]Ibid.

[246]Ibid.

[247]Ibid.

Journal. Frank Lloyd Wright's design was a reaction against what Gwendolyn Wright interprets as the typical homeowner's "self-imposed conservatism."[248] While she is certainly referring to design conservatism, it is necessary to take note of what John William Ward terms "the politics of design." Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture "was, as he liked to say, 'prophetic,' because it put in architectural terms a problem American culture has yet to solve in terms of politics and social organization."[249] Wright called his architecture an "architecture of democracy."[250] The social and political problems faced by American culture most certainly include the quest for equality by women, their breaking away from the restrictive sphere of domesticity. Thus, Wright's modernistic and twentieth-century domestic architectural designs seem to parallel the developments in American society, values, and politics in relation to the suffragette movement and the passage of the Twentieth Amendment providing women with fundamental political rights. His designs did not reflect the values of the cult of domesticity, and "one of the principal reasons for the acceptance of the Prarie House . . . was the exposure given the Ladies'

---

[248]Ibid., p. 137.

[249]Ward, in Holland, p. 78.

[250]As cited by Ward, in Holland, p. 79.

Home Journal model-house designs, for that magazine reached a hitherto unheard-of circulation of one million readers when the designs appeared."[251] It is probably less than moot to say that the wide majority of these million readers were women. His designs and executed architecture may be seen as an example of the external artifactual context, or the cause and effect relationship between the material thing to changing values. If nothing else, Frank Lloyd Wright's designs emphasized simple straight lines and smooth surfaces.

It is interesting also, in this connection, to consider the development of the home economic movement in the late nineteenth century, particularly as it relates to domestic architecture. Briefly, the Home Economics Association was formed by women in the early 1880s, with the goal of making domestic work scientific. "These women were not feminists. They . . . had an honored and respected female world of their own. It was theirs."[252] Their world included the home, domestic architecture, and "all home economists wanted smooth surfaces and simple lines."[253] The sudden discovery of germs in 1883 had an impact upon this desire. Since homes were to be kept clean by women and since the elaborate and eclectic ornamentation of Victorian housing collected

---

[251]Wright, p. 138.

[252]Bernard, pp. 401-402.

[253]Wright, p. 165.

germ-laden dust, domestic architecture began slowly to take on simple lines and smooth surfaces."[254] Although Gwendolyn Wright does not mention the feminization of domestic architecture, she clearly shows that housewives and architects merged together in reaction against nineteenth-century eclecticism because they "were afraid that their culture might retreat into an unscientific and dangerously populistic way of life." Both the professional architect and home economist, therefore, strove to rid domestic architecture of historical fashions and excessive individualism "in order to usher in a new stage in American life."[255] Domestic architectural design, then, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was clearly to serve as a tension management facility for changes in American life, particularly that of the beginnings of the emancipation of women. This change in values marks the beginning of the attenuation of the culture of domesticity and is reflected in domestic architecture. Thus, as Amos Rapoport contends, culture is the dominant factor in determining domestic house form, which itself is a direct expression of changes in values.[256]

---

[254]Ibid., pp. 117-20.

[255]Ibid., p. 169.

[256]Amos Rapoport, House Form and Culture, Foundations in Cultural Geography Series (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), pp. 10-14.

CHAPTER VII

OPPORTUNITIES FOR UTILIZING MAIL-ORDER CATALOGS IN TEACHING COLLEGE LEVEL AMERICAN HISTORY SURVEY COURSES

This chapter will attempt to show that domestic architecture, some of its associated artifacts, and mail-order catalogs can be employed in teaching college level American history survey courses. It will not attempt to provide a curriculum for architectural history or material culture studies. The use of these material culture resources, when combined into existing and generally similar lecture and textual formats, can help in the teaching of American history and in the acquisition of advanced skills.

College level American history texts and survey courses can be said to be generally similar because the course content remarkably the same. It is basic to the acquisition by the student of all kinds of advanced skills. The teaching and learning of advanced skills must be recognized as the fundamental reason for higher education. Moreover, according to the 1980 Rockefeller Commission on the Humanities Report, The Humanities in American Life, humanities-based courses such as history "should not divorce skills and

methods from knowledge of content and cultural context."[1] History courses then should help students not only to learn course content, academic skills, and methods but also provide a cultural context to course criteria.

History survey courses should also help students acquire advanced skills. One way to help assure this outcome is to help students develop their abilities in critical thinking, which, according to The Humanities in American Life, is "one of the basic skills that provides the foundation for advanced skills of all kinds [sic]."[2] Additionally, the report recommends that in order to improve public understanding and use of our past, its verbal and material records, every effort must be made to connect history courses with interpretation.[3] Local resources, very often artifactual in nature, should be employed in the teaching of history because they "can stimulate informal learning as well as professional research and academic curricula."[4] History teachers would do well to "place our material heritage into the cultural and historical context that gives it meaning."[5]

---

[1]Commission on the Humanities, The Humanities in American Life, by Richard W. Lyman, Chairman (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1980), p. 44.

[2]Ibid., p. 37.

[3]Ibid., p. 137.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 140.

"Interpretation," according to William T. Alderson and Shirley Payne Low, "is an attempt to create understanding."[6] It is, therefore, the provision of meaning. Meaning, interpretation, and understanding of history and our material culture heritage are based upon questioning facts--and artifacts. Utilization of domestic architecture through the vehicle of mail-order catalogs can help stimulate critical thinking and lead to interpretation. As Richard H. Brown perspicaciously put it:

> To ask questions of history is to learn a mode of inquiry which can be taken out of the classroom and which will be serviceable for a lifetime. . . . It is to learn what a fact is, how one comes by it, and most importantly, how to use it.[7]

Students, while often facetiously considered beyond the pale of intellectual and critical thinking, do "ponder over what and how to think, believe, and behave."[8] And it is commonly acknowledged--to the point of becoming an academic cliché--that oftentimes what goes on in the classroom "is irrelevant and remote from the real things that are going on

---

[6]William T. Alderson and Shirley Payne Low, Interpretation of Historic Sites (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1976), p. 4.

[7]Richard H. Brown, "A Note to Teachers," in Allan A. Krownslar and Donald D. Frizzle, eds., Discovering American History (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. xvi.

[8]Sidney B. Simon, Leland W. Howe, and Howard Kirschenbaum, Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students, new and rev. ed. (New York: A&W Visual Library, 1978), p. 13.

in the students' lives."[9] They, like all people, experience conflict and confusion in a myriad of concerns, ranging from politics, war and peace, culture, and material possessions.[10] Happily these concerns are the meat of history and can be applied as well to material culture. By including artifacts in the teaching of college level American survey courses, teachers can help students acquire not only a greater degree of course content but critical thinking skills as well. It is essential, however, to place artifacts in a context that will relate them to course content and into patterns of interpretation is arrived at by stimulating critical thinking.

Moreover, because students more readily recognize things than complex ideas--that is, they know "an old building" when they see one--the inclusion of artifacts into teaching college level American history survey courses can visually and immediately place them in an historical context that raises awareness of our material heritage and can bring the manmade world of things into the circle of ideas. Additionally, regardless of the individual instructor's special interests and emphases, the material culture artifacts embodied in domestic architecture, some of its associated artifacts, and mail-order catalogs can be employed to convey information and understanding on a number of topics.

---

[9]Ibid., p. 13.

[10]Ibid., p. 15.

For the purposes of discusson, a dichotomy of objectives will be addressed. The first may be called academic skills and course objectives. These will be considered to be within the province of the individual History Department and instructor, and therefore, will vary. The second may be called "compatible material culture objectives." Each set of objectives has with it vehicles and resources the instructor employs in teaching. The first, most commonly utilized, is textbooks and lectures. The second is also as universal, although not commonly utilized--material resources. Lecture notes and texts are utilized to teach course content, interpretation, and academic skills. Material resources can be similarly utilized and can help enhance the relevancy of course content, student self-awareness, visual literacy, and increase student knowledge and appreciation for our material heritage.

The possible outcomes to such an approach are varied and may be considered supplementary or as part of the course criteria. Their value to the student may be entirely subjective and therefore difficult to evaluate. Yet, since there are no commonalities to evaluation,[11] the only way to measure the acquisition or attainment of the compatible material culture objectives may rest in the instructor's

---

[11]Charles W. Babb, Professor of Education, lecture for Education 752, Problems of Evaluation and Measurement in Higher Education, delivered at Middle Tennessee State University, September 14, 1981.

wisdom and subjective judgement. However, if made a part of course criteria, testing for knowledge of material culture can also be carried out in the same manner that is commonly done, by asking questions based upon course criteria.

The student-oriented outcomes that may result from using artifacts in the teaching of college level American history survey courses can include:

1) development of the ability to make comparisons between the past and present and thus sharpen abilities to understand history and make interpretations of course content;

2) gaining insights into the lives of the documentarily inarticulate in American history;

3) gaining visual and tangible insight into the past that words and ideas alone sometimes fail to convey;

4) connection of local and state historical development with national trends;

5) transfer of knowledge from course content to artifacts and American core values;

6) widening the perspective with which to view the national past;

7) learning what is behind appearances, to know how things really work;

8) stimulation of critical thinking that can lead to informal and incidental learning outside the classroom;

9) stimulation of the desire to make independent inquiries into the past, and in so doing bring the man-made world of things into the circle of ideas; and

10) acquiring more factual information about American culture, its material heritage, and the core values that support it.

The utilization of artifacts in the teaching of college level American survey history courses can be of value to instructors as well in that teachers:

1) have available to them a new and important instructional means for teaching social, industrial, and economic history;

2) can reinforce existing textual and lecture material and make American history more than the story of wars, politics, legislation, and great men;

3) can help stimulate critical thinking because artifactual evidence is at once novel and easily recognized by students;

4) can illustrate difficult concepts such as the consensus theory of cultural standardization or the search for order; and

5) can broaden the scope of the past so that the study of history becomes more than a frenetic last-minute exercise in memorization before an examination.

It should be evident that these outcomes are general in nature. They are intended to be so. They can be universally

attainable in the teaching of American history survey courses in colleges across the nation. It is hoped that they will point out a general direction for instruction, much the same way as Horace Greeley advised young men to go West. It is not presumed here, however, that American history should become material culture study, but only that the teaching of college level American history survey courses may be enhanced by the inclusion of artifactual evidence by the instructor. They are not meant to represent the Alpha-Omega of such an approach, but merely the Alpha.

This chapter will utilize artifactual evidence gleaned from various mail-order and domestic architectural catalogs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Specifically, it will employ the Sears catalogs for 1897, 1902, and 1908, the Montgomery Ward catalog for 1895, and the architectural catalogs of George Palliser, William E. Woolett, and George F. Barber. The basis for justifying the use of these kinds of resources, which are keys to other artifacts, can be found in Thomas J. Schlereth's Artifacts and the American Past (1980), particularly the second chapter.[12] Schlereth epitomizes by stating that catalogs can be considered "two-dimensional paperback museums";[13] their use

---

[12]Thomas J. Schlereth, Artifacts and the American Past (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1980), pp. 48-65.

[13]Ibid., p. 61.

thus precludes any necessity on the part of the instructor to utilize an unwieldy and valuable artifact collection, or the expenditure of valuable time by taking students on field trips to museums. Moreover, one current and excellent American history survey text, that of Mary Beth Norton et al., A People & A Nation, volume II, recognizes mail-order catalogs as significant in national economic and social history.[14] Additionally, catalogs are primary historical sources in themselves. They visually and verbally depict the artifacts of our national past and material heritage. They are, in short, virtual texts that can be used to teach various topics in American history. By presenting students with examples of material culture, the teacher can help illustrate, reinforce, and expand course content, increase visual literacy, stimulate critical thinking, incidental learning, and, hopefully, save history courses from the unfortunate connotation of being "required."

The following text consists of factual and interpretive information that the teacher of college level American history survey courses may wish to consider for use in lecture. The visual information accompanying it can easily be

---

[14]Mary Beth Norton et al., A People & A Nation: A History of The United States, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), vol. II, Since 1865, pp. 454, 475.

reproduced into slides, and the opportunity for using the catalogs themselves is clear.[15] A diagram illustrating a general method for teaching history with artifacts and suggestions concerning testing will conclude this chapter.

A major theme addressed in American history survey courses is the development of industrialism and the attendant topics of mass production, mass consumption, and the standardization of products and mass culture. Statistics concerning steel or oil production and narratives on the lives of great entrepreneurs such as Andrew Carnegie or John D. Rockefeller are often prime examples employed in lectures and texts when treating the topic of industrialism. Another example that could be employed in lecture is that of mail-order catalogs and their relation to industrial growth and impact upon American life and culture.

For example, Sears, starting in 1908, sold complete houses by mail order through its catalog. This in itself appears startling; and it is, but it does not represent a purely twentieth-century historical phenomenon. In large measure it was made possible by the American invention of

---

[15]To obtain pricing and ordering information on Sears catalog reproductions, write to Book Digest, Inc., 540 Patronage Road, Northfield, Illinois 60093, for the 1897, 1900, 1908, and 1923 editions; Castle Books, 110 Enterprise Avenue, Syracuse, New Jersey 07094, for the 1906 edition; and Crown Publishers, 34 Engelhard Avenue, Avenel, New Jersey 07001, for the 1902 and 1907 editions and the anthology, Sears Catalogs of the 1930s.

the balloon-frame method of housing construction in the 1830s. The story concerning this development in our historic and material heritage is related to the general topic of industrialism, and when placed in this context, can help students be more aware of the built environment and also help with their retention of course content.

As early as 1860, a number of firms in Chicago, New York, and Boston were able to ship prefabricated sections of house frames, partitions, roofs, porches, walls, and floors to any town with a railroad terminal. After arriving at their destinations, these prefabricated units were assembled into barns, houses, and small stores. Pieces were numbered and were joined by bolts or nails, which in themselves are material culture evidence, showing the progress of steel production. The New York firm of Skillings and Flint manufactured prefabricated barracks and hospitals for the Union Army during the Civil War. An American prefabricated house was exhibited at the Paris Exposition in 1867. Beginning in 1872, the Chicago firm of Richards, Norris and Clemens manufactured and sold houses as well as stores by mail. According to the company's brochure: "Any man of intelligence can put up a house, by simply following printed directions. . . . No more ingenuity need be called into requisition than that which is used in putting together a wagon." Certainly this is a clear reference to the American core values of simplicity and practicality.

The sale and manufacture of pre-assembled houses had become a major building trade industry by 1880 and included farm houses, fruit stands, barns, summer kitchens, railroad stations, and bathing houses. In 1897 one New York-based firm was ready to sell prefabricated units in Alaska during the Klondike Gold Rush. By 1900, then, the manufacture and sale of mail-order houses was common.[16] This is an example of information concerning domestic architecture that instructors can use to demonstrate the growth of American industrialism, mass production, and efficiency; and the point should be made that industrial growth was not limited to steel production or the growth of oil monopolies.

Among the mail-order firms of the late nineteenth century was that of George Palliser, of Bridgeport, Connecticut. After Palliser designed a number of developments for P. T. Barnum, he began to offer houses by mail.[17] In 1878, in the preface to his Palliser's Model Homes, he wrote:

> In consequence of our increasing business, supplying parties in all parts with designs . . . we found it necessary to adopt a system for conducting this class of business, and with which to supply a want long felt, especially in the country, where Architects

---

[16]Carl W. Condit, American Building Art: The Nineteenth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 24. See also Carl W. Condit, American Building Materials and Techniques from the First Colonial Settlements to the Present (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 45.

[17]Michael A. Tomlan, "The Palliser Brothers and Their Publications," intro. to The Pallisers' Late Victorian Architecture (Watkins Glen, N.Y.: American Life Foundations, 1978), pp. iii-vii.

> had done but little business, and the people had been obliged to plan their own homes or copy from their neighbors.[18]

Once a prospective client chose a design he was to answer a series of questions concerning cost, materials, desired exterior finish, and use of rooms. With this information, the firm would be able to custom design a house.[19] (See fig. 17.[20]) Palliser also had an 1887 edition, or catalog, entitled New Cottage Homes.[21] (See fig. 18.[22])

Palliser hoped to reform domestic architecture, and in 1887 credited his firm, through its "Palliser's Useful Details," with causing "almost an entire absence of the vulgar, meaningless, square box like or barnesque style of

---

[18]George F. Palliser, Palliser's Model Homes: Showing a Variety of Designs for Model Dwellings; also, Farm Barns, and Hennery, Stable and Carriage House, School House, Masonic Association, Bank and Library, Town Hall and Three Churches (Bridgeport, Conn.: Palliser & Co., 1878), reprint ed., Felton, Calif.: Greenwood Publishers, 1978), p. 4.

[19]Ibid., pp. 82-83.

[20]Ibid., p. 27.

[21]George F. Palliser, New Cottage Homes and Details: Containing Nearly Two Hundred & Fifty New & Original Designs in all the Modern Popular Styles, Showing Plans, Elevations, Perspective Views, and Details of low-priced, medium, and first-class Cottages, Villas, Farm Houses, Town and Country Places, Houses for the Sea Shore, the South, and for Summer and Winter Resorts, etc., etc., City Block Houses, Farm Barn, Stables and Carriage Houses, and 1500 Detailed Drawings Descriptive and Instructive Letter Press, also Specifications and Form of Contract (New York: Palliser, Palliser & Co., 1887; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1975). This edition has no numbered pages.

[22]Ibid., plates 3 and 7.

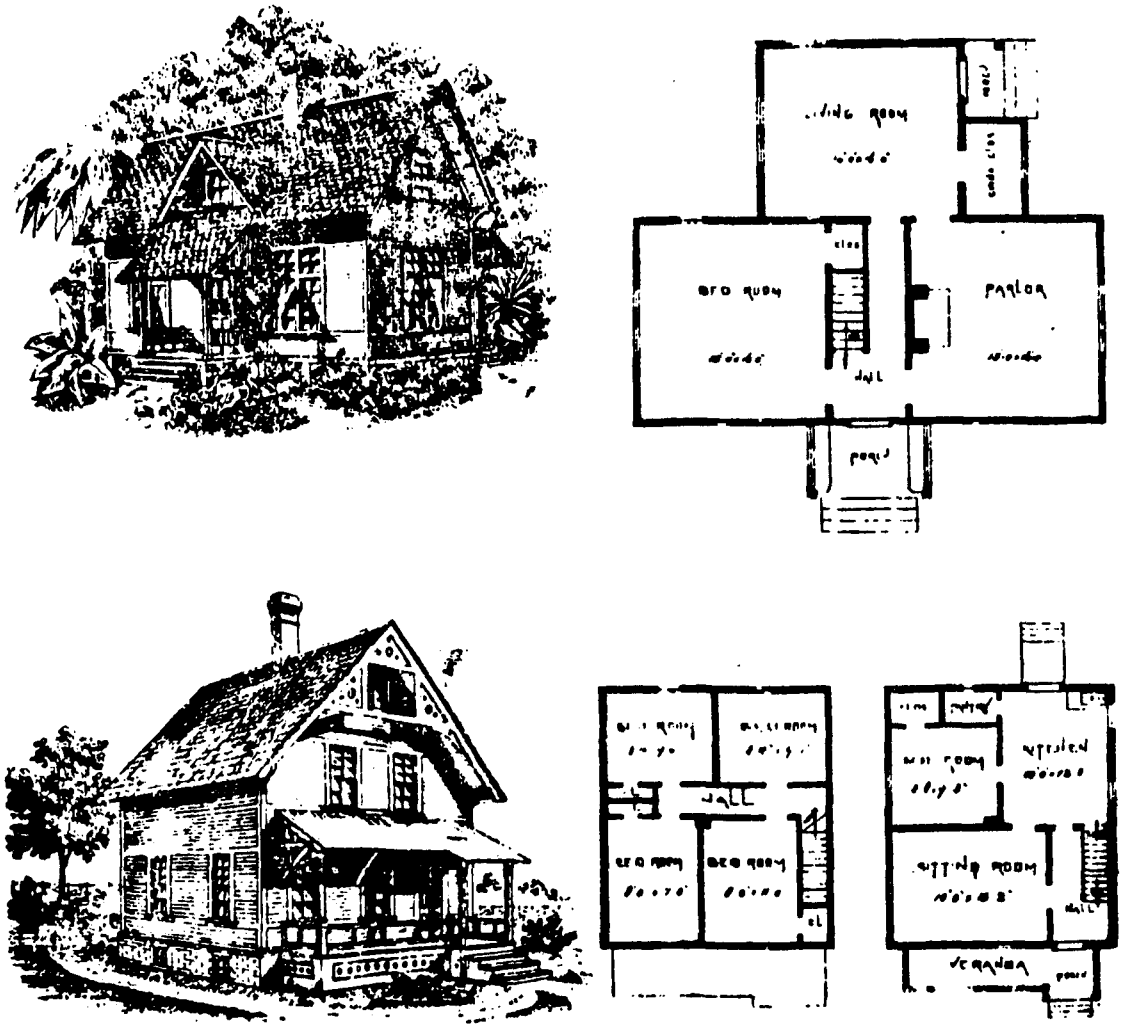


Fig. 17. Two of Palliser's "Model Homes" 1878

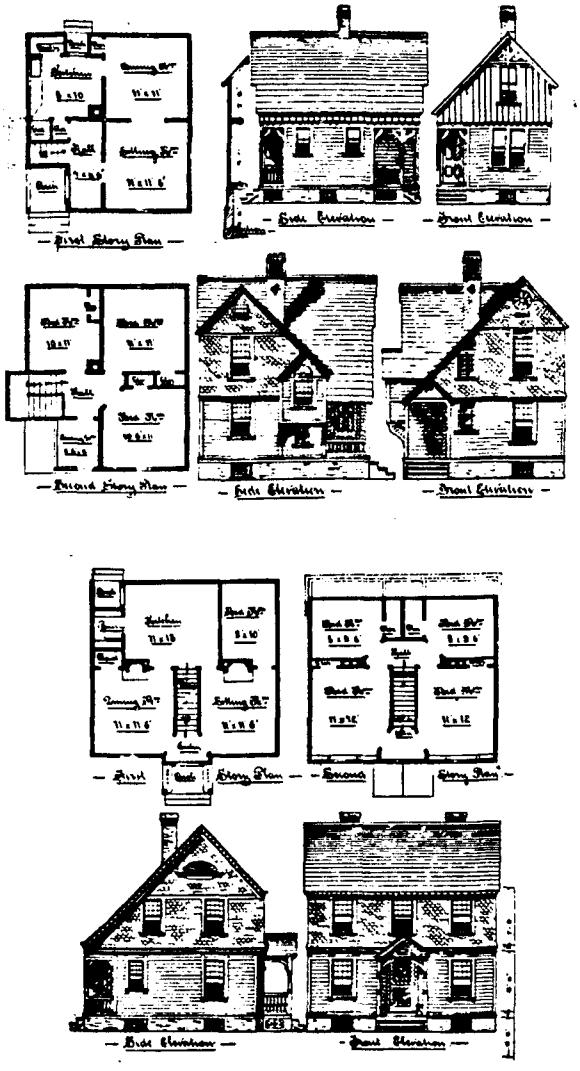


Fig. 18. Three of Palliser's "New Cottage Homes," 1887

architecture . . . which some years ago was the rule rather than the exception with white lead for interior painting and regulation green blinds." "Good taste in architecture," he maintained in the catalog, should not "be exercised only in regard . . . to the more costly structures built for people of means." Palliser wanted to democratize domestic architectural design by presenting "a mass of practical . . . designs and details, easy of construction, pleasing in form, and generally of an inexpensive though artistic and tasteful character."[23] The 1878 Palliser's catalog included advertisements from various firms offering terra-cotta, paints, metal shingles, closet bowls, locks, books on architecture, stair work, doors, and floor tiles.[24] In 1887 a set of specifications for cellar depth, ceiling height, masonry and carpentry work, and advertisements for plumbing, water closets, furnaces, bath tubs, verandas, lumber, paint, stained glass, tile, window blinds, sinks, and manually powered woodworking machinery, as well as a standard contract were included.[25]

Interestingly, some Americans could and did alter their homes in the nineteenth century. In 1878 architect William

---

[23]Ibid.

[24]Palliser's Model Homes, pp. 87-96.

[25]Palliser's New Cottage Homes.

E. Woolett published his Old Homes Made New.[26] Woolett admitted that the plans in his catalog were "all for about one class of suburban dwellings," and stated his examples "of course may be applied with equal facility to any other class of work."[27] The designs and plans made "no claim of originality" but served "as simple examples of what may be done in the way of putting a new face and form on old work, [and] to show what can be done de novo."[28]

Woolett also offered some interesting advice and comments that present-day students might do well to consider. A building should, Woolett claimed, be remodeled both inside and outside only under two circumstances. First, "in which the . . . construction . . . is of such a solid and substantial character as to render its destruction unadvisable; and . . . when, although in a dilapidated condition, its preservation is in the highest degree desirable, owing to associations of the family, its peculiar phase or style of architecture, or the historical interest that may attach itself to it."[29] However:

> American houses of any date are not very likely to possess to any great extent those features which we deem desirable to preserve, and it is only in the homes of colonial times that we find such to interest

---

[26]William E. Woolett, Old Homes Made New: Being a Collection of Plans, Exterior and Interior Views, Illustrating the Alterations and Remodelling of Several Suburban Residences (New York: A. J. Bicknell & Co., 1878).

[27]Ibid., p. 3.

[28]Ibid., p. 5.

[29]Ibid.

> or is in itself meritorious. . . . For the various and motley crowd of dwellings that in the last thirty years have been called into existence by the wants of our people and climate, and the taste of our architects and builders, are not such as we desire to preserve, or such as are apt to awaken feelings of admiration or pleasure.[30]

This is an interesting comment on changing values, and the instructor should point it out. It is interesting first of all because Woolett is "looking backward," contrary to the American core value of future orientation, and secondly because he apparently felt that the "motley crowd" of domestic architecture produced in antebellum America was not worthy of preservation because it was ugly. And he may well have been right, for as Frederick Jackson Turner noted in his essay, "Architecture Through Oppression" in 1884, "in America . . . we build our buildings common, angular and plain. The palaces and cathedrals of the old world belong to a different age from ours. Our times are plebian; it is visible in our architecture."[31]

The "one class of suburban dwellings" Woolett referred to as examples of remodeling "de novo" were, while quite substantial, those ubiquitous common, angular and plain houses that Turner mentioned. Woolett, then, advocated preserving only exceptional examples of colonial domestic

---

[30]Ibid., p. 6.

[31]Frederick Jackson Turner, "Architecture Through Oppression," University Press 15, no. 39 (1884), p. 12.

architecture. Nothing after that period in American history was apparently worth saving. Additionally, the student and instructor might do well to note that some of the homes that Woolett shows as illustrations for remodeling were built as early as 1812 and in the 1830s. That is, when confronted with the task of recognizing a historic house, students might consider that what appears to be a substantial late Victorian dwelling may in fact have been originally quite different, of another era, and reflective of other values. Such changes serve to demonstrate that changing cultural values are the predominant factor in determining the evolution of house form.[32] For example, Woolett shows examples for remodeling obviously plain, common, angular houses into more fashionable dwellings.[33] (See fig. 19.)

Although not found in domestic architectural catalogs, another important visual example of change in public architecture is found in Henry Howe's Historical Collections of Ohio (1898). Howe presented "before and after pictures of numerous Ohio towns that dramatically demonstrate changes in architecture that took place between 1846 and 1886. In compiling the work, he "made arrangements with local photographers and took them to the standpoints . . . selected for

---

[32]Amos Rapoport, House Form and Culture, Foundations in Cultural Geography Series (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), pp. 10-14.

[33]Woolett, pp. 8-9, 21-22, 24-25, 26-27, 29-30.

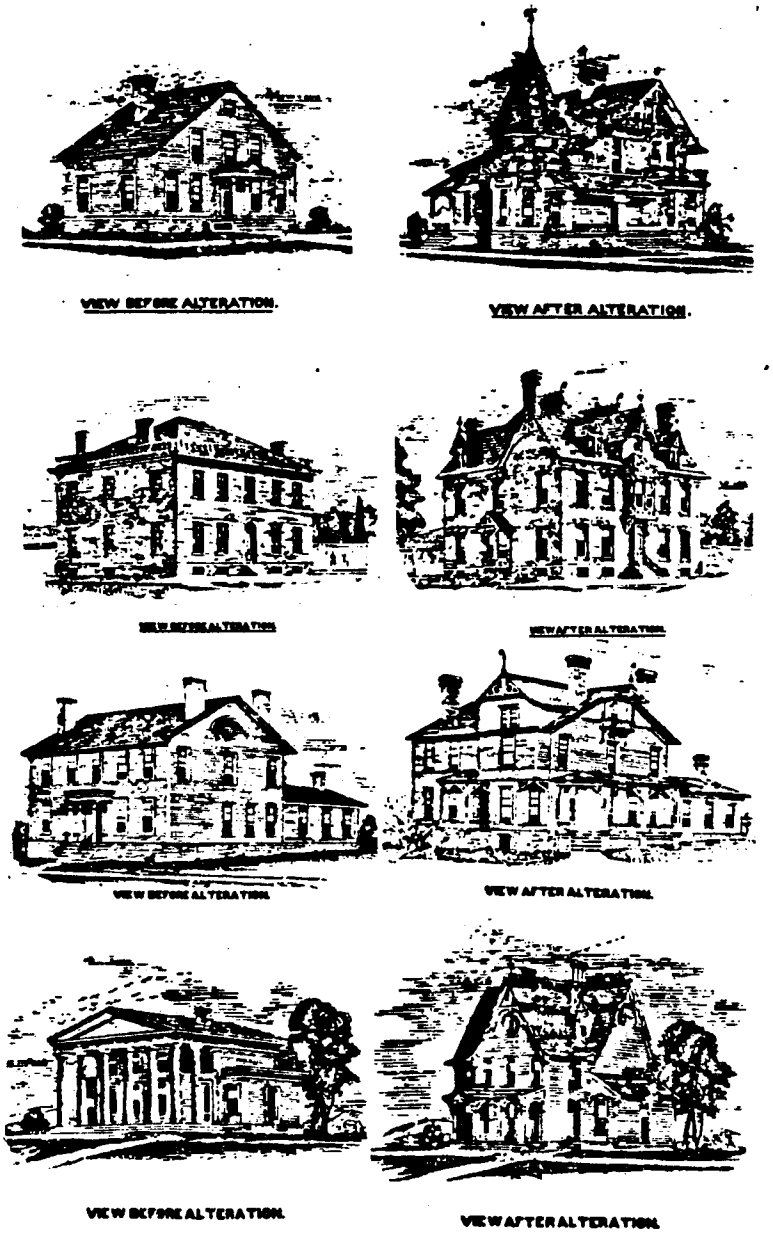


Fig. 19. Examples of house alteration "de novo" by Woolett, 1878.

views to be taken. They were for new engravings to make a pictoral contrast of the Ohio in 1846 and that of 1886."[34] (See figs. 20 and 21.[35])

Howe's Historical Collections abound with similar examples, and slides or transparencies could easily be made with which to illustrate the changes that occurred in the built environment in a forty-year period in the nineteenth century. This visual evidence can likewise be employed in American history survey courses, particularly when discussing in conjunction with the topics of urbanization and urban life.[36]

Another opportunity for utilizing domestic architecture in American history survey courses and connecting state history with national development is found in another mail-order housing firm that was based in Knoxville, Tennessee. While Palliser's in Connecticut was an important mail-order domestic housing concern, that of George F. Barber was at least equally significant.

---

[34]Henry Howe, Historical Collections of Ohio in Two Volumes, An Encyclopedia of the State: History Both General and Local, Geography With Descriptions of Its Counties, Cities and Villages, Its Agricultural, Manufacturing, Mining, and Business Development, Sketches of Eminent and Interesting Characters, Etc., With Notes of a Tour Over It in 1886, The Ohio Centennial Edition, 2 vols. (Norwalk, Ohio: Lansing Printing Co., 1898), 1:17.

[35]Ibid., 1:375, 2:332.

[36]Norton et al., 2:494-520.

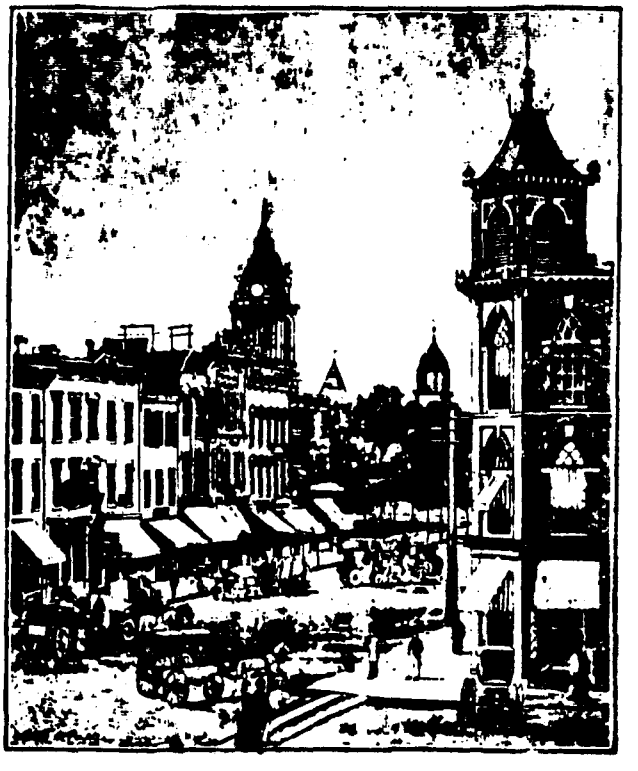


Fig. 20. Two views of the public square, Urbana, Ohio, 1846 and 1886. Both views were taken from the same point.

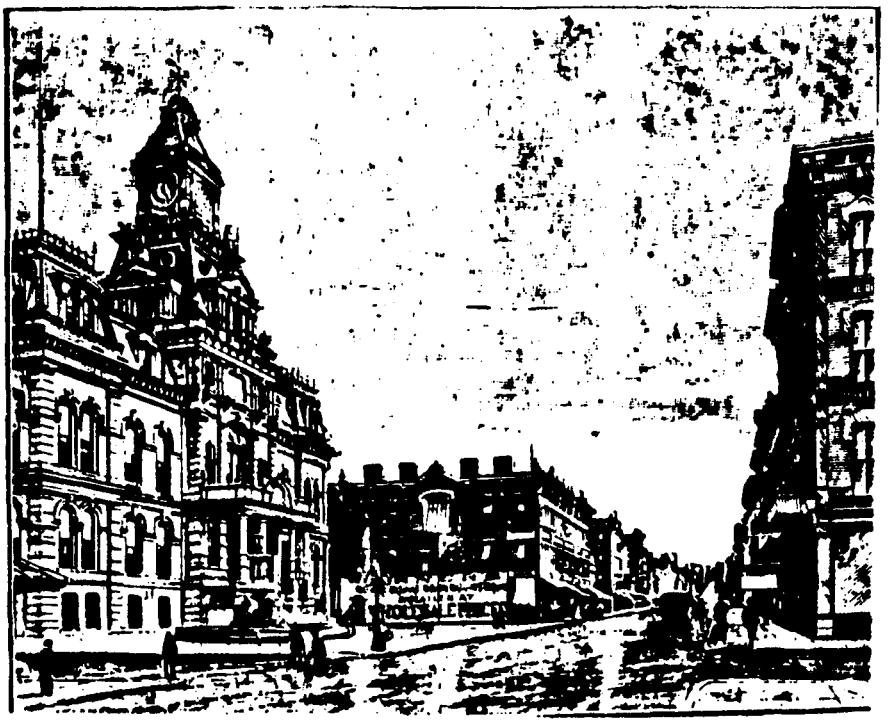


Fig. 21. Two views of Main Street, Zanesville, Ohio, 1846 and 1890.

George F. Barber (1854-1915) moved to Knoxville from DeKalb, Illinois, in 1888 for reasons of health. In DeKalb he designed churches but could not obtain commissions. As a result he began a mail-order house business in Knoxville in about 1890. It lasted until his death in 1915.[37] (See fig. 22.[38])

Fig. 22. Advertisement for George F. Barber's mail-order housing business in Knoxville, Tennessee, ca. 1890.

---

[37] Marylou Terral Jeans, "Restoring a Mail-Order Landmark," Americana 9, no. 2 (May/June 1981): 47. See also Michael A. Tomlan, "George Franklin Barber (1854-1915), Carpenter, Architect, and Publisher," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 35, no. 4 (December 1976): 261-62; and James Patrick, Architecture in Tennessee (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), pp. 37, 183, 201.

[38] Ibid., p. 40.

Along with Palliser, Barber was "one of the chief practitioners of domestic pattern-book architecture in the late 19th century."[39] Some 175 of Barber's mail-order houses are known to exist throughout the United States.[40] At least one was built in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, about 1891 or 1892, the residence of J. H. Nelson.[41] (See fig. 23.[42]) Another of Barber's mail-order houses was built in Jacksonville, Oregon, and is "the first pre-fabricated house in America to receive landmark status."[43] In all, Barber produced seven catalog books and one serial catalog called American Homes.[44]

At least fifteen of Barber's houses were erected in Knoxville,[45] and at least one each in Tate Springs, Jackson,

---

[39] Preservation News, May 1982, p. 8.

[40] Jeans, p. 47.

[41] George F. Barber, The Cottage Souvenir, Revised and Enlarged, Containing Over Two Hundred Original Designs and Plans of Artistic Dwellings (Knoxville, Tenn.: S. B. Newman, 1892), p. 109.

[42] Ibid., p. 109. This book was available only on microfilm, which accounts for the poor quality of the graphic.

[43] Jeans, p. 40.

[44] National Union Catalog of Pre-1956 Imprints, 754 vols. (Chicago: Mansell Information/Publishing, 1968), 34:54. Vols. 2 (1896) through 16 (1902) save for vol. 7, are on deposit in the Library of Congress, in the non-circulating file. Barber's The Cottage Souvenir No. 2: A Repository of Artistic Cottage Architecture, new intro. by Michael A. Tomlan, has been reprinted by The American Life Foundation in Watkins Glen, N.Y., in 1982.

[45] George F. Barber, New Model Dwellings and How Best to Build Them: Containing a Great Variety of Designs, Plans,

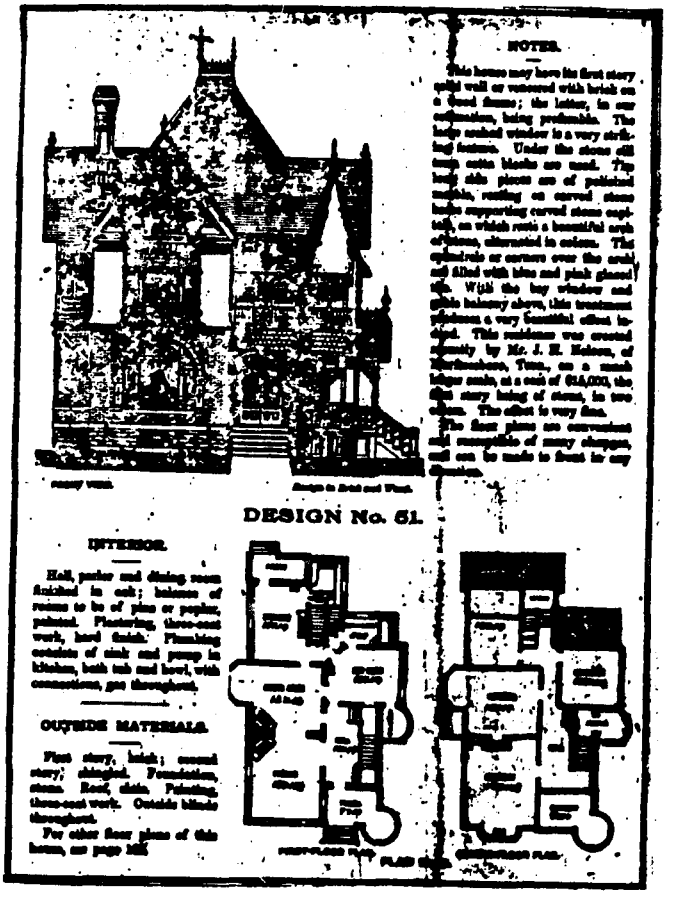


Fig. 23. Plan and elevations for the J. H. Nelson home, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, designed by Barber.

and Bristol, Tennessee.[46] Other examples are found in Indiana, Illinois, Texas, Iowa, Missisippi, North Carolina,

---

and Interior Views of Modern Dwellings, Together With a Large Amount of VAluable Information Indispensable to Those Contemplating Building (Knoxville, Tenn.: G. F. Barber & Co., 1895-1869), pp. 74, 79, 85; Barber, Cottage Souvenir, pp. 14, 16, 30, 86-87, 92, 100-101, 114-15, 118-19, 124-25; and George F. Barber, Art in Architecture: The Modern Architectural Designer (Knoxville, Tenn.: S. B. Newman & Co., 1902-1903), pp. 142, 161, 186.

[46]Ibid., pp. 26, 115, 175.

Kentucky, Massachusetts, Washington, D. C., New Jersey, New York, California, Missouri, Virginia, Nebraska, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Oregon, and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.[47]

This information also presents an opportunity for the instructor to connect state history with that of the national level. The wide range of distribution of Barber's houses, for example, illustrates the impact of Tennessee's industrial development upon the nation. When taken in conjunction with Robert E. Corlew's Tennessee: A Short History, it is possible to further illustrate that industrial growth in Tennessee impacted upon the state, national, and even international levels. According to Corlew, "Memphis was the largest inland hardwood lumber market in the world at the turn of the century; Nashville led in flooring and other hardwood products."[48] It could be added that Knoxville, in addition to ranking as the second most prominent flour-milling center in East Tennessee,[49] was also a state, national, and even international center for the mail-order housing industry. More than likely some of Memphis' hardwood and Nashville's flooring and hardwood products were circulated throughout the nation via Barber's mail-order

---

[47]Ibid., pp. 2, 29, 66, 71, 75, 77, 81, 82, 87, 93, 95, 112-13, 121, 123.

[48]Robert E. Corlew, Tennessee: A Short History, 2d ed. (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), p. 516.

[49]Ibid.

concern. In may also demonstrate a developing line of trade, from West and Middle Tennessee to East Tennessee, to the nation, and world. Barber's business might also be utilized in conjunction with lecture when discussing the gilded age in Tennessee, as well as the national trend towards mass production and distribution of goods.

Barber's designs were hardly masterpieces of originality, and the influence of the Beaux Arts is evident in his use of paired columns, while the towers so frequently seen are indications of the Queen Anne style, and the presence of arches demonstrate Richardson's influence. It was typically eclectic late Victorian domestic architecture.

Not only was the architectural style not atypical, but similarly to Palliser's, Barber provided standard specifications. Included in the cost of each house was:

> . . . sheating and paper for outside walls . . . shingled roof; three coats of paint and plaster; a good quality of glass and hardware; two rooms and a hall in hardwood, except for houses of low cost. In fact, everything is figured for a complete job well finished.[51]

But heating apparatuses, mantels, grates, hearths, wallpaper and attic finishing were not included. All that was necessary to order was to choose a design, enclose a down payment of one-third the cost, and the entire house-kit, plans and specifications would be sent C.O.D. Changes in design plans could be made for a minimal fee, and special

---

[51]Barber, New Model Dwellings, p. 5.

work could be done upon order.[52] Barber's catalogs also gave advertisements, listing firms providing various household embellishments, including furnaces, terra cotta, and window screens.[53]

Sears, then, entered the mail-order housing business relatively late and slowly. Sears began its "Modern Homes" campaign between 1895 and 1900 "when a department was established to merchandise building materials, although the same 'Modern Homes' department apparently was not adopted until 1911."[54] In 1897, for example, Sears presented ten pages of "Builder's Hardware & Material," with goods ranging from doors, door hinges, doorknobs, door butts, doorbells, bird cages, shelf and flower pot brackets, windows, porch trimmings, adjustable gable ornaments, moldings, stair posts and rails, and roofing materials.[55] By 1902 the "Builder's Hardware" department included much the same sort of goods,[56]

---

[52]Ibid., p. 6.

[53]Barber, Art in Architecture, pp. 46-48.

[54]Boris Emmet and John E. Jeuck, Catalogues and Counters: A History of Sears, Roebuck and Company (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), p. 226.

[55]Fred L. Israel, ed., Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1897 intro. by S. J. Perelman and Richard Rovere (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1968), p. 775.

[56]Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902 (New York: Bounty Books, 1969), pp. 535-47.

while Montgomery Ward offered similar merchandise in 1895.[57] Ward's also offered eight books on domestic architecture.[58] In 1908 Sears initiated its entry into the mail-order house business.

"Let us be your architect without cost to you" read an advertisement. Sears could save the consumer fully one-third to one-fourth of the cost of a new home and offered for free its Book of Modern Homes and Building Plans. It was an "Elegant Book, The Finest Book of Its Kind Ever Published," depicting "a vast number of beautiful and complete houses." Sears was candid about why it was offering this book so freely:

> . . . we want to supply you with all the material which will enter your new home with the single exception of rough lumber. . . . We do the largest mill work business in the world, we own our own plumbing goods factory, we manufacture hot air furnaces, steam and hot water boilers, radiators, and all . . . materials which enter into plumbing, steam, hot water and gas fitting. . . . We are the only concern in the world which can furnish you all the articles you need in construction of a house or barn in the finest quality of goods at such wonderfully low prices. . . . We decided to employ the most skilful architects in this country to prepare a large variety of plans . . . covering a range of buildings from the modest cottage to the more pretentious mansion.[59]

---

[57]Boris Emmet, ed. and intro., Montgomery Ward & Co. Catalogue and Buyers' Guide, No. 57, Spring and Summer 1895 (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), pp. 374-86.

[58]Ibid., pp. 374-86.

[59]Joseph J. Schroeder, ed., Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1908 (Northfield, Ill.: DBI Books, 1971), p. 594. The architectural designs may have originated from the Chicago-based

Each plan specified "in a plain, concise manner every item of material which will be required in the new building" from windows, mill work, flooring, lumber, lathing, plaster, foundation material, chimney material, hardware, glass, piping--"in fact, every item which goes to make up a complete home with every modern convenience."[60]

Three designs and plans were presented in the 1908 Sears catalog, ranging from six to eight rooms, and from $725.00 to $1,995.00.[61] For the most part, there was nothing singularly unique about the styles, as they were common, angular, and plain houses.[62] (See figs. 24-26.)

In 1909 the first sale of a complete mail-order house kit was made by the corporation, and in 1911 Sears adopted the name "Modern Homes" and significantly made its first mortgage loan. In 1912 Sears realized a net profit of $176,000 from its "Modern Homes" sales and had written $649,000 in mortgages.[63] Mortgage loans were discontinued

---

firm of Nimmons and Fellows. This firm designed a number of large commercial buildings for Sears between 1897 and 1910. See John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, The Architecture of America: A Social and Cultural History (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1961), pp. 328, 344; and Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970), pp. 206, 442.

[60]Ibid., p. 45.

[61]Ibid., pp. 595-97.

[62]Ibid., pp. 595-97.

[63]Emmet and Jeuck, pp. 226-27.

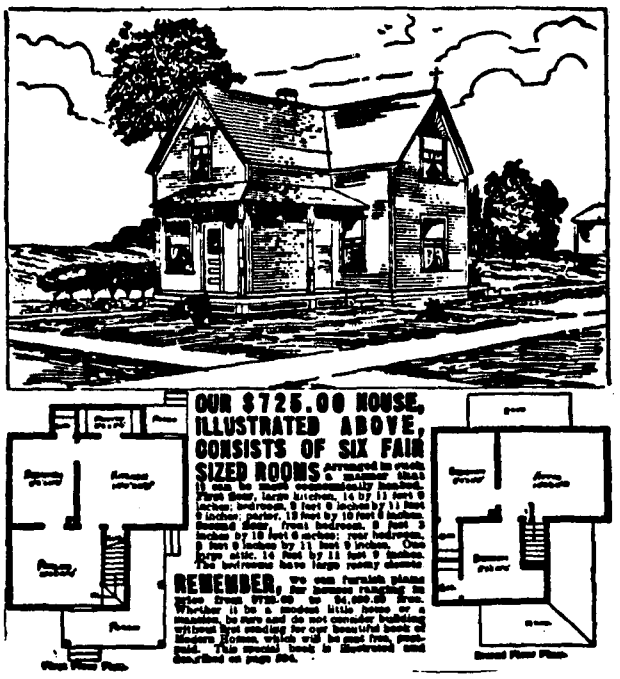


Fig. 24. Sears' "$725.00 House," 1908.

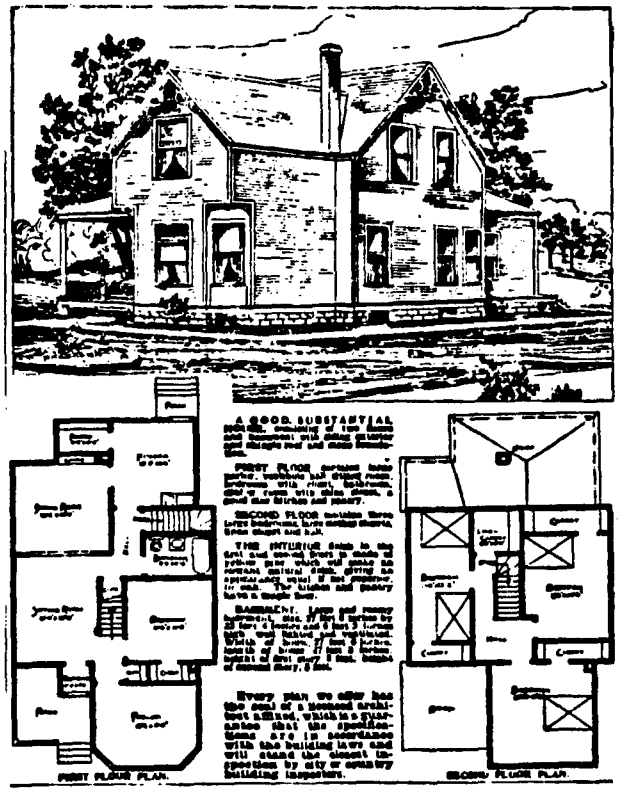


Fig. 25. "A Good, Substantial House," sold by Sears in 1908.

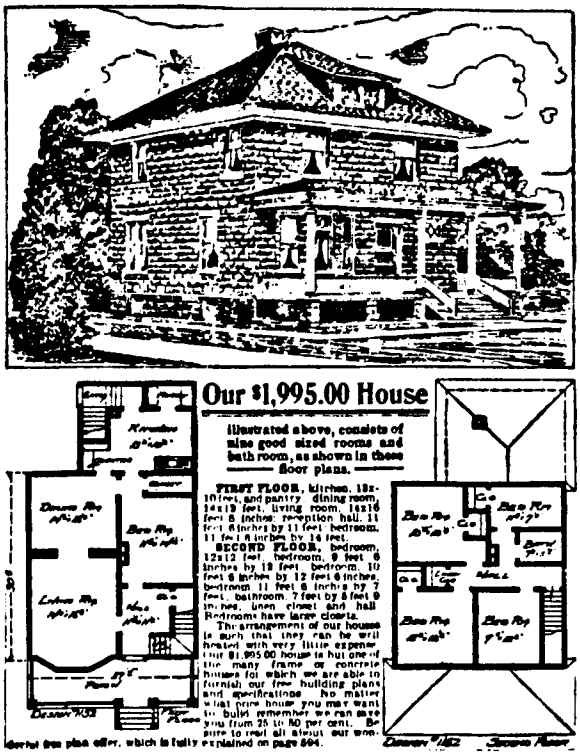


Fig. 26. Sears' "$1,995.00 House," 1908.

from 1913 to 1916 when they were revived and expanded rapidly thereafter. From 1921 to 1926 mortgage loans became the largest single factor in mail-order house sale for the corporation.[64] The Great Depression, however, put Sears in the uneasy position of having to foreclose mortgages and resell many of its houses.[65] By 1935 Sears' "Modern Home" sales stopped altogether.[66]

---

[64]Ibid., p. 527.

[65]Ibid., p. 523.

[66]Ibid., p. 530, as cited from The Wall Street Journal, August 26, 1935. Montgomery Ward's sold "Wardway Homes" by mail, pp. 523-24.

In its span from 1908 to 1935, some "100,000 people gambled on Richard Sears' pledge that his . . . mail-order firm could make them homeowners."[67] Teachers could utilize this information when discussing life in the early twentieth century, as well as the growth of installment buying.[68] This phenomenon of mail-order housing may also be seen as a manifestation of standardization, helping to create what one historian terms "everywhere communities," or "consumption communities."[69] That is, Palliser's, Barber's, and Sears' housing became one of the ways in which American civilization held people together, "by common effort and common experience, by the apparatus of daily life." It was less ideals and more "what they made and what they bought" that served as a cohesive force in American life.[70]

Aside from offering everything needed for a complete house, Sears also sold "Concrete Building Block Machines."

---

[67]Associated Press, "Search for Old Sears mail-order homes is launched," The Lorain (Ohio) Journal, February 21, 1982, p. 31. See also Dolores Fleming, "One Order Brought It All: A Morgantown Mail-Order House," Goldenseal, A Quarterly Journal for Documenting West Virginia's Traditional Life 8, no. 2 (Summer 1982), p. 37.

[68]Norton et al., 2:671; Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920s (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 139.

[69]Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans: The Democratic Experience (New York: Viking Press, 1974), pp. 1, 118-19.

[70]Ibid., pp. 1, 336-59.

Apparently these devices were fairly common by 1908, as the advertising copy noted that: "This remarkably profitable business has been wonderfully developed in the past few years until now it is one of the leading industries in the country." With such machines, "Anyone, Anywhere, Can Make Money."[71] (See fig. 27.[72]) The devices produced bricks used in housing construction, and fifteen different brick facings could be manufactured.[73] (See fig. 28.[74])

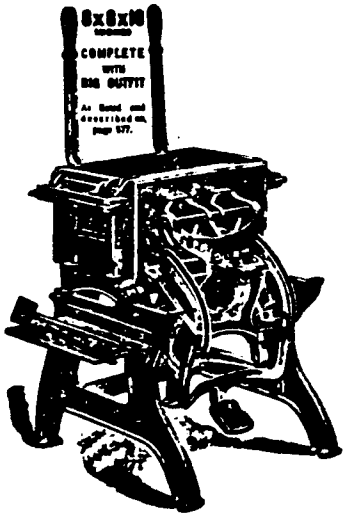


Fig. 27. Concrete block machine sold by Sears, 1908.

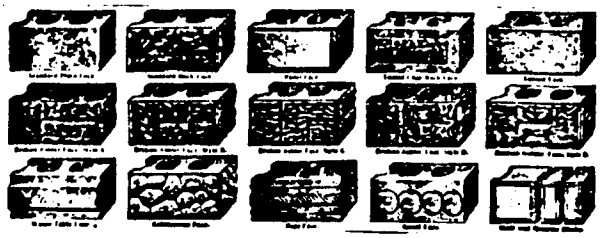


Fig. 28. Concrete blocks produced by the Sears concrete block machine, 1908.

---

[71]Schroeder, p. 574.

[72]Ibid.

[73]Ibid.

[74]Ibid., p. 576.

The machine was "a boon to the village lumber and building material dealer," while small landowners and farmers with "gravel pits or sand banks on their property . . . can . . . make the most money in the use of concrete building block machines."[75] Sears also sold "unique Porch Column, Pier, Rail and Baluster Moulds."[76] (See fig. 29.[77])

Fig. 29. Sears' concrete architectural element moulds, 1908.

---

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

The purchaser would "have no trouble in disposing of the products of this outfit at enormously high profits, because of the artistic designs and the complete form in which they are made, and their . . . small cost will attract the attention of every builder."[78]

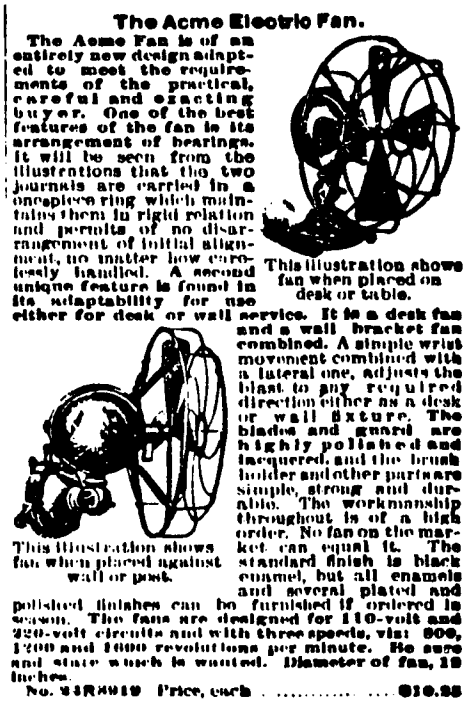
The Sears catalog thus gives the student and teacher material and verbal evidence that artistic embellishments were becoming bowdlerized and so made more widely available to homeowners. Art had become a concern in domestic architecture by the early twentieth century, one that was not valued by most Americans during the nineteenth century. Moreover, students can be led to draw parallels concerning changes in house building material from an almost exclusive reliance on wood to the introduction of concrete, to the spirit of free enterprise in American history and the development of new industries and the increase in the standard of living. The illustration of the fifteen different brick facings produced by the concrete building block machine can also provide students with visual clues that indicate the general date of construction of some existing houses that were built of such bricks, and perhaps an indication of a Sears mail-order house.[79]

---

[78]Ibid.

[79]For example, in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, the presently vacant building at 1150 East Main Street and the building now used as the office of Roy William Thompson, D.D.S., at 220 West Burton Street, are built of concrete bricks quite similar to those labeled as "Standard Rock Face." Schroeder, p. 576.

Mail-order catalogs also allow students to gauge the gradual introduction of electricity into the American homes and life styles as well. There are no electric fans found in the 1897 Sears catalog, yet by 1902 Sears offered one "designed for 110-volt and 220-volt circuits and with three speeds, viz: 800 and 1200 and 1600 revolutions per minute. Be sure to state which is wanted. Diameter of fan 12 inches."[80] (See fig. 30.[81])



The Acme Electric Fan.

The Acme Fan is of an entirely new design adapted to meet the requirements of the practical, careful and exacting buyer. One of the best features of the fan is its arrangement of bearings. It will be seen from the illustrations that the two journals are carried in a onepiece ring which maintains them in rigid relation and permits of no disarrangement of initial alignment, no matter how carelessly handled. A second unique feature is found in its adaptability for use either for desk or wall service. It is a desk fan and a wall bracket fan combined. A simple wrist movement combined with a lateral one, adjusts the blast to any required direction either as a desk or wall fixture. The blades and guard are highly polished and lacquered, and the brush holder and other parts are simple, strong and durable. The workmanship throughout is of a high order. No fan on the market can equal it. The standard finish is black enamel, but all enamels and several plated and polished finishes can be furnished if ordered in season. The fans are designed for 110-volt and 220-volt circuits and with three speeds, viz: 800, 1200 and 1600 revolutions per minute. Be sure and state which is wanted. Diameter of fan, 12 inches.

No. 33R8919 Price, each $10.85

This illustration shows fan when placed on desk or table.

This illustration shows fan when placed against wall or post.

Fig. 30. Electric fans sold by Sears, 1902

---

[80] Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902, p. 663.

[81] Ibid.

In 1902 Sears also offered electric doorbells,[82] and by 1908 there were a host of electric items ranging from toy engines, fans, bells,[83] but curiously no electric lamps. Yet in 1902 Sears offered thirteen different electric lamps, and five "combination gas and electric fixtures."[84] This artifactual, verbal, and iconographic evidence suggests that while electric lighting was available by 1902, in just six years electricity was still not widely available enough for Sears to profit from the sale of electric lamps. Or, it may suggest that Americans may have viewed electric lighting with suspicion, or that it was too expensive. In any event, the demand must have been slight, or Sears would have continued selling them. One other ironic and perhaps telling item is that in 1908 Sears sold toilet paper holders.[85] Perhaps, then, the pages of old Sears catalogs were no longer relegated to outhouses. It is certainly evident that indoor plumbing and toilet fixtures were widely available, and the increase in the American standard of living is thus witnessed.

In 1897, for example, Sears offered crude bathtubs, for plunge baths, infants, and for hip and foot baths.

---

[82]Schroeder, p. 208.

[83]Ibid., pp. 204-205.

[84]Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902, p. 663.

[85]Schroeder, p. 610.

Indoor plumbing may thus have been largely unknown, as Sears also sold in 1897 the "Challenge Odorless Commode and Slop Bucket Combined." This device "beats everything of the kind on the market. It is impossible for the foul air to escape, even when the lid is removed, as there is inside the lid a receptacle that holds a deodorizer. . . . Does not have to be emptied until filled, no matter how long it stands."[86] (See fig. 31.[87])


Challenge Odorless Commode and Slop Bucket Combined.

No. 18195½. Beats everything of the kind on the market. It is impossible for the foul air to escape, even when the lid is removed, as there is inside the lid a receptacle that holds a deodorizer and which neutralizes all gases inside the commode. The disinfectant (2 tablespoonfuls of chloride of lime) needs only to be renewed once in two weeks at a small cost.

It is indispensable in the sick room, especially in cases of contagious diseases and fevers. Does not have to be emptied until filled, no matter how long it stands.

Made of heavy galvanized iron, and has no paint to hold stench or disease germs. Has removable seat, etc. It needs only to be seen to convince you of its wonderful merit.

Price, each.....$2.25

Try one.

Fig. 31. Late nineteenth century portable toilet fixture, 1897 Sears.

Copper lined urinals, not of the flush variety, were also offered in 1897.[88] While bathroom fixtures were available, in 1897 it did not mean the enameled fixtures known today, but cabinets for holding soap, medicines, combs,

---

[86] Israel, p. 134.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid., p. 56.

and the like.[89] Apparently, then, indoor plumbing and the inclusion of bathrooms in the house were probably atypical in 1897.

Five years later, however, Sears offered an entire section of plumbing goods and supplies, from enameled iron hopper closets (see fig. 32)[90] and enameled steel bathtubs, sanitary house commodes (see fig. 33),[91] sinks for bathrooms,

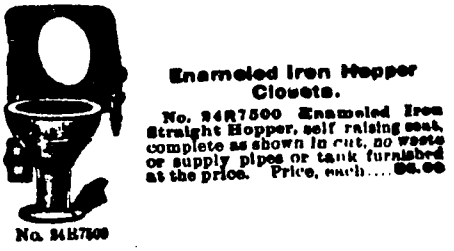


Fig. 32. Hopper closet, 1902 Sears.

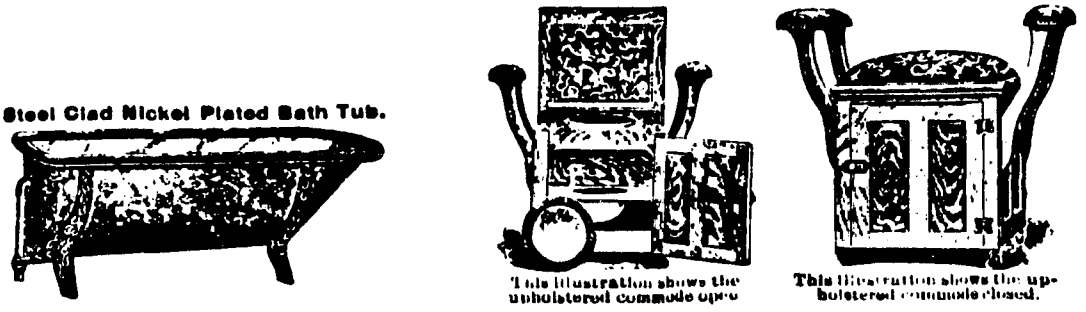


Fig. 33. Tub and commode offered by Sears, 1897.

---

[89]Ibid., p. 671.

[90]Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902, p. 652.

[91]Israel, p. 653.

kitchen and laundry work,[92] urinals, pipes, a variety of toilet paper holders, toilet seats, faucets, and the ubiquitous plumber's friend.[93] Montgomery Ward offered in 1895 many of the same kinds of goods, as well as a "Shower Bath Ring," for use by women who did not wish to get their hair wet.[94] (See fig. 34.[95])

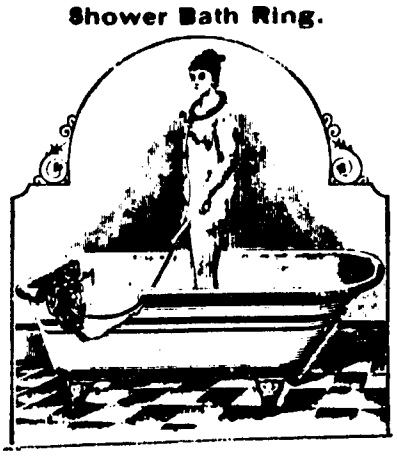


Fig. 34. Shower bath ring. Montgomery Ward, 1895.

In 1908 the variety of such goods expanded. Not only were there bathtubs, sinks, toilets, water heaters, faucets, tub seats, toilet paper holders, as well as an array of

---

[92] Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902, pp. 652-60.

[93] Ibid., p. 660.

[94] Emmet, p. 411.

[95] Ibid.

"bathroom trimming outfits," available but they now came in sets, including lavatory, bathtub, and water closet.[96] (See fig. 35.[97])

Fig. 35. Complete bathroom sold by Sears, 1908.

Not only is this evidence that Sears sold such articles but also is an indication they were in demand, and that the standard of living in America was changing. Industrial growth, then, was responsible for an improvement in the American standard of living because it made such material goods widely available, and so directly impacted the lives of the documentarily inarticulate. Additionally, such evidence may speak to changing values concerning cleanliness.

As defined by Catherine Beecher and the cult of domesticity, household cleanliness was the responsibility and

---

[96]Schroeder, pp. 604-610.

[97]Ibid., p. 604.

cultural duty of women. One current American history survey text presents a photograph, itself a piece of material culture evidence, showing a woman engaged in the task of washing clothes. The caption reads in part: "Women performed heavy domestic chores with little assistance. This woman is using a commercial tub and washboard--possibly bought from a Sears or Ward's catalogue--to do family wash."[98] This particular picture and caption can serve the teacher and student as a springboard to make inquiries and discoveries in women's history, especially concerning the pervasive strength of the cult of domesticity as well as the nature of housework. An excellent and recent book on this topic, which might well be employed as required outside reading, is Susan Strasser's Never Done: A History of American Housework (1982).[99]

A careful and minute study of the photograph in question will provide teachers and students with new and important insights about domestic work. For example, the muscles in the arms of the anonymous woman are more than dainty. Her posture indicates that she was engaged in some rather difficult work that required the expenditure of much physical energy. The washtub is large and so would have been heavy, even when empty. Surrounding her are other

---

[98]Norton et al., p. 455.

[99]Susan Strasser, Never Done: A History of American Housework (New York: Pantheon Press, 1982).

common household work implements, two buckets, and a mop. The sidewalk is made of wood, and this woman is apparently doing the wash in the back yard of a common clapboard house. In the back yard, wash is seen haning out to dry, as well as an empty basin, assorted outbuildings, and what appears to be a hedge. The picture suggests that this task was hard work. It would serve the teacher well to ask rehtorically and humorously: "How hard was it?"

According to Strasser, washing was commonly done on Monday, or what came to be known as "Blue Monday."[100] It would do well to ask why the adjective "blue" is used here, particularly insofar as it both implies sadness and the use of blueing in doing laundry. One might also imagine the sight of countless American women and daughters, each Monday, each week, in most homes throughout the nation, engaged in this task. Such a sight suggests that the work was both difficult and ritualized and that women were bound to domestic work. In any event, doing the wash was difficult and required no less than twelve separate operations.

The common mode of washing included sorting dirty clothes by color, degree of soil, and fabric, then soaking each batch on Sunday night in separate tubs of warmed water. On Monday morning, after stove fires were lit and breakfast was prepared and served, hot sudsy water, heated either on

---

[100]Ibid., pp. 104-105.

an outside fire or kitchen stove, was poured on the finest garments. After each piece of clothing was washed by hand on a washboard, all the items were wrung out, often by hand, and more soap was rubbed on the more soiled spots. These clothes were then boiled on a wood or coal fueled stove. After being boiled, the clothes were removed, dirty spots were rubbed with soap again, all garments were rinsed in clean water, wrung out, rinsed again in water containing blueing, wrung out very dry, dipped in starch, and wrung out once more. Then they were hung out to dry. While one wash load was drying, the entire process was repeated on "progressively coarser and dirtier loads of clothes." The process took all day.[101]

While this description tends to explain the meaning of the phrase "Blue Monday," it is not yet complete. Indoor plumbing, for example, was not yet commonly available, so water had to be carried from outside to inside, and thrown out once used, to be replaced with more fresh water. Fires in stoves had to be constantly watched and maintained. While a normal, everyday occurrence, most "other household chores suffered on washday . . . meals consisted of whatever was easiest, and a good husband would 'eat a cold dinner on washday without grumbling.'"[102]

---

[101]Ibid., pp. 105-106.

[102]Ibid., p. 108.

After washing came the task of ironing. Dried clothes were dampened. Anywhere from three to six irons, heated on the stove, were used. Each iron had bee's wax applied, and wiped off, before each use; moreover, each iron had to be tested on a spare cloth or piece of paper to make certain it would not scorch clothing. Wool ironing blankets covered tables where large articles were ironed first, while smaller items were ironed on the ubiquitous ironing table.[103]

What tools--what artifacts--were available to the American housewife to accomplish these tasks? Both the Sears and Montgomery Ward's catalogs offer insights. The Sears catalog for 1897, for example, shows sad irons, sad iron stands, polishing irons, charcoal irons, and fluting irons were available. Of the set of three sad irons offered for sale, one weighed four pounds and the other two five and one-eighth and five and three-eights pounds. Other irons weighed from five to nine pounds. Charcoal irons, which were heated by hot coals deposited in them, not only weighed six-and-a-half pounds,[104] but required a constant supply of hot coals, which would only complicate the task of ironing. (See fig. 36.[105])

---

[103]Ibid. It was called a sad iron because it was heavy. See William Morris and Mary Morris, eds., Morris Dictionary of Word and Phrase Origins, foreword by Edwin Newman (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 497.

[104]Israel, p. 100.

[105]Ibid.

Fig. 36. Common ironing artifacts of the late nineteenth century.

Eleven years later, by 1908, little has changed except that Sears offered a "complete set of Nickel Plated Polished Sensible Sad Irons" for ninety-six cents; additionally, other sad irons are found, and an "Umbrella Clothes Bar with 16 Hardwood Arms. Convenient for drying clothes in the house in bad weather," as well as clothes pins, clothes line, wash boilers, and a brass washboard.[106] (See fig. 37.[107])

---

[106]Schroeder, p. 467.

[107]Ibid. Detachable handles were a relatively new innovation by 1908. See Morris and Morris, p. 497.

Fig. 37. Laundry tools sold by Sears, 1908.

Both student and teacher would do well to consider that it "was a difficult task to manipulate an old-fashioned sad iron weighing four or five pounds; pushing it a mile or two in the course of a day; testing its heat with a bit of spittle, and keeping it hot over a charcoal stove which had to be constantly watched."[108] Electricity was not, by 1908, commonly available to ease the physical drudgery of this domestic task. In this regard the teacher may also use the sad iron as an artifact with which to measure the growth of public electric utilities.[109] Teachers and students might also consider the social manifestations of advertising graphics in Sears catalogs. For example, in 1897 a

---

[108]David L. Cohn, The Good Old Days: A History of American Morals and Manners as Seen Through the Sears, Roebuck Catalogs, 1905 to the Present, intro. by Sinclair Lewis (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940), p. 229.

[109]Norton et al., p. 471.

a relatively obscure advertisement for a self-writing mop shows a well-dressed woman in the process of utilizing the device.

The first and most obvious conclusion that can be drawn is that the advertisement shows some of the domestic work women engaged in. Secondly, the device could "be wrung at arms length," eliminating "stooping or straining of the back or shoulders." As an added benefit, a woman's hands would not be "soiled or disfigured by the wringing of a filthy, greasy cloth." No special clothing was required and a "silk dress can be worn with impunity." Floors could be quickly washed and "other duties resumed as though no interruption had taken place." Moreover, scalding water could be used, impossible with ordinary hand-wrung mops. "The grease and dirt being cut out by scalding water, it saves soaps and alkalies."[110] Or, a woman could order "Schmuck's Mop Wringer." It provided benefits similar to the self-wringing mop, but gloves were not needed while mopping, because hands did not touch hot water.[111] (See fig. 38.[112])

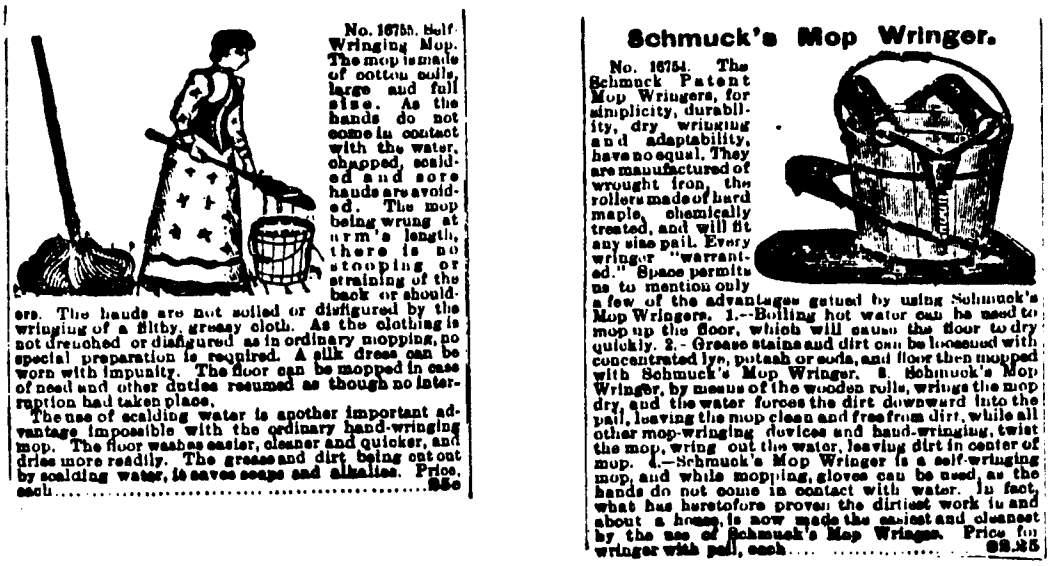
It is also interesting to note that the graphic used in the advertisement for the self-wringing mop is repeated in

---

[110] Israel, p. 140.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid.



No. 16755. Self-Wringing Mop. The mop is made of cotton rolls, large and full size. As the hands do not come in contact with the water, chapped, scalded and sore hands are avoided. The mop being wrung at arm's length, there is no stooping or straining of the back or shoulders. The hands are not soiled or disfigured by the wringing of a filthy, greasy cloth. As the clothing is not drenched or disfigured as in ordinary mopping, no special preparation is required. A silk dress can be worn with impunity. The floor can be mopped in case of need and other duties resumed as though no interruption had taken place.

The use of scalding water is another important advantage impossible with the ordinary hand-wringing mop. The floor washes easier, cleaner and quicker, and dries more readily. The grease and dirt being cut out by scalding water, it saves soaps and alkalies. Price, each.....85c

Schmuck's Mop Wringer.

No. 16754. The Schmuck Patent Mop Wringers, for simplicity, durability, dry wringing and adaptability, have no equal. They are manufactured of wrought iron, the rollers made of hard maple, chemically treated, and will fit any size pail. Every wringer "warranted." Space permits us to mention only a few of the advantages gained by using Schmuck's Mop Wringers. 1.--Boiling hot water can be used to mop up the floor, which will cause the floor to dry quickly. 2.- Grease stains and dirt can be loosened with concentrated lye, potash or soda, and floor then mopped with Schmuck's Mop Wringer. 3. Schmuck's Mop Wringer, by means of the wooden rolls, wrings the mop dry, and the water forces the dirt downward into the pail, leaving the mop clean and free from dirt, while all other mop-wringing devices and hand-wringing, twist the mop, wring out the water, leaving dirt in center of mop. 4.—Schmuck's Mop Wringer is a self-wringing mop, and while mopping, gloves can be used, as the hands do not come in contact with water. In fact, what has heretofore proven the dirtiest work in and about a house, is now made the easiest and cleanest by the use of Schmuck's Mop Wringer. Price for wringer with pail, each.....$2.25

Fig. 38. Self-wringing mop and Schmuck's Mop Wringer sold at Sears in 1897.

1902 and 1908,[113] and thus indicates that the nature of woman's work changed very little over eleven years. In 1908, an advertising graphic for the Superba Ball Bearing Washing Machine" demonstrates that mothers taught their daughters domestic tasks at an early age, as well as the shape and method of operating this "easy running wonder."[114] (See fig. 39.[115])

This machine made it easy to wash "heavy blankets, rugs, comforters, carpets, mechanics' blouses and overalls, [while] men's working clothes of all kinds pass through the machine with ease . . . the most delicate fabrics even rare

---

[113] Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902, p. 467.

[114] Schroeder, p. 583.

[115] Ibid.

Fig. 39. Sears' "Superba Ball Bearing Washing Machine," 1908.

laces and delicate curtains are thoroughly cleaned without the slightest injury to the materials."[116] The graphic also indicates that running water was available, at least ending the task of having to haul water inside from outdoors, if not the necessity of having to heat it on the stove. The machine was advertised as allowing women to "Get Away From The Washday Slavery." In this regard it might appear that it was a labor- and time-saving device for women. "Do your

[116]Ibid., p. 582.

washing in an hour or so in the morning and have the rest of the day to devote to other things."[117] However, as Ruth Schwartz Cowan has observed of electrically powered washing machines, while a major part of the drudgery associated with doing the laundry was removed, now there was no reason to limit the task to Mondays.[118] That is, the time spent on washing was expanded, or at least stretched throughout the entire week. While Cowan refers specifically to the 1920s, the 1908 advertisement for the "Superba" suggested that women could "use it once or twice a week, or everyday if you wish."[119]

The graphic also reinforced the notion that the role of housewife was the most desirable for young girls, while an adult woman is portrayed as a "full time, apron-wearing" housewife.[120] The sex-stereotyped nature of housework was reflected and reinforced, and the cult of domesticity perpetuated[121] in the Sears catalog. While such machines

---

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ruth Schwartz Cowan, "'The Industrial Revolution' in the Home: Household Technology and Social Change in the Twentieth Century," in Thomas J. Schlereth, ed., Material Culture Studies in America (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), p. 227.

[119] Schroeder, p. 582.

[120] Susan Saegert and Gary Winkel, "The Home: A Critical Problem for Changing Sex Roles," in Gerda R. Werkele, Rebecca Peterson, and David Morley, eds., New Space for Women (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980), p. 42.

[121] Ibid., p. 49.

helped increase the standard of American life, for example, by making more clean clothes available more often,[122] they also resulted, as Jessie Bernard points out, in "a version of Parkinson's Law. . . . Whatever the level of household technology, the work expanded to fill the time available to it. Or, the standard of living rose."[123] By using the washing machine "everyday if you wish," women made clean clothes available more often, which meant that clothes were changed more often, and they therefore had to be kept clean more often.[124] "Changes of clothes, formerly scheduled weekly, came to be scheduled daily when laundering was so easy and ironing not required."[125] With a device known as an iron mangle, laundry could be pressed much more efficiently and quickly. Certain an improvement in the standard of living is noted, but there was a price to pay. Women did the work, and while these devices may have made the chore easier, they likewise expanded the amount of work that women had to do. For example, one woman warned her neighbors not to purchase an iron mangle; prior to having the device, "her family had been satisfied to sleep on unpressed sheets;

---

[122]Strasser, p. 120.

[123]Jessie Bernard, The Female World (New York: Free Press, 1981), p. 395.

[124]Strasser, pp. 106, 120.

[125]Bernard, p. 395.

now they wanted their sheets to be ironed."[126] (See fig. 40.[127])

Fig. 40. Iron Mangles sold by Sears, 1897.

According to one advertisement, "Fully two thirds of the week's washing can be put through one of these mangles. . . . These mangles will save 20 percent of . . . household labor." Ordinary ironing could be eliminated with such a device, and accomplished "in one-sixth of the time required by flat irons and without heat or fuel."[128] Certainly the American core values of efficiency and practicality are reflected in this device, yet there may be a deeper, more significant meaning to these artifacts. That is, while they eased drudgery and increased efficiency, they also functioned

---

[128]Ibid.

to keep women perpetually busy, and such behavior reinforced the idea that "a woman's place is in the home." Cultural values and gender roles associated with the cult of domesticity were strengthened by these artifacts, and demonstrates clearly that "every tool . . . is burdened with its own activity, which compels man to work with the tool."[129] Such tools harnessed women to the home and limited their activities in the public sphere. Technology, then, "stimulated the new perception of homes as the moral center and the woman as its divinely appointed ruler."[130]

Another example is found in the common stove. In 1869, in her The American Woman's Home, Catherine Beecher advocated the use of a large coal-fueled stove. "With proper management of dampers, one ordinary-sized coal-hod of anthracite coal will, for twenty-four hours, keep the stove running, keep seventeen gallons of water hot at all hours, bake pies . . . heat flat irons . . . boil tea-kettle . . . bake bread in the oven, and cook a turkey in the tin roaster in front."[131] It was a sturdy device that had been

---

[129]Johan Huizinga, America: A Dutch Historian's Vision from Afar and Near, translation, introduction, and notes by Herbert H. Rowen (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 117.

[130]As cited in Bernard, p. 395, from William D. Andrews and Deborah C. Andrews, "Technology and the Housewife in Nineteenth Century America," Women's Studies 3 (1974): 313.

[131]Catherine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, The American Woman's Home (New York: J. B. Ford & Co., 1869), p. 74.

in use in some families at least since 1849, and Beecher claimed it would not crack and "may pass from one generation to another as do ordinary chimneys."[132] (See fig. 41.[133])

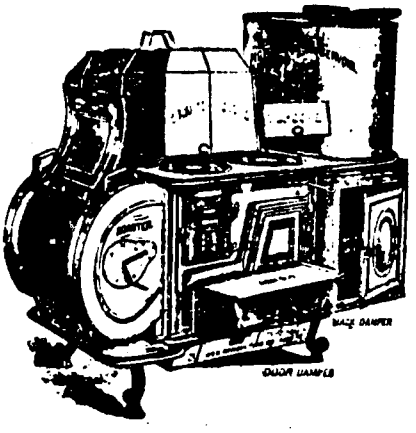


Fig. 41. Stove for Catherine Beecher's "Christian House."

Beecher praised the stove as "convenient, reliable, and economically efficient."[134]

Aside from the stove's convenience and efficiency, it and Beecher's glowing description give insights into the work associated with the stove. That is, it served a multi-functional purpose in that it heated water, flat irons, cooked, and because it used coal as fuel it could be kept burning all day and night, even if it did require

---

[132]Ibid., p. 75.

[133]Ibid.

[134]Ibid., p. 76.

"intelligent management in order to secure all its advantages."[135]

It is fruitful to make comparisons with stoves commonly available in the 1897 Sears catalog, twenty-eight years after Beecher advocated its use. The first thing to be pointed out is the difference in ornamentation. (See fig. 42.[136]) In 1869 the stove is not gaudy; by 1897 it is.

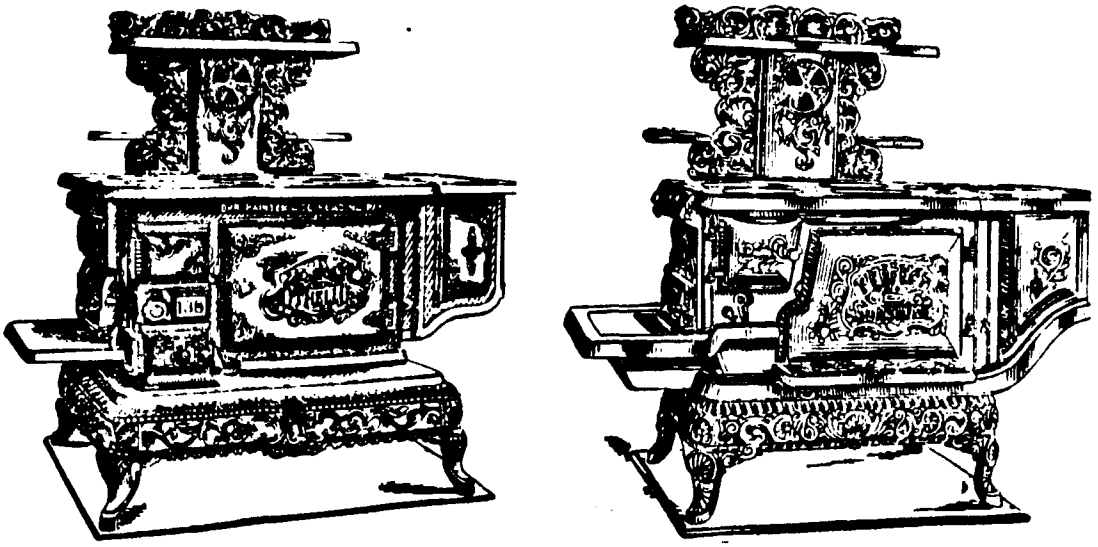


Fig. 42. The "Othello" and "Perfect Sunshine" stoves sold by Sears in 1897.

This may be interpreted as what can be called the feminization of household artifacts. That is, women not only did the cooking but determined what the stove should look like. The function of the stove has not changed, but its design has. The "Merit Sunshine" model was not just to facilitate

---

[135] Ibid., p. 75.

[136] Israel, p. 122.

domestic chores, but also "intended to meet the demand for a well-made and attractive stove."[137] The "Star Sunshine Cook" model was "a beautiful cook stove,"[138] while the "Home Sunshine Range" likewise was characterized by "ornamentation" and the "Perfect Sunshine Range" had "beautiful design and finish, which would alone give the Perfect Sunshine the lead over many of its competitors."[139] The "Acme Blue Flame Oil Cook Stove (Something New)" was the embodiment of art and utility."[140] (See fig. 43.[141])

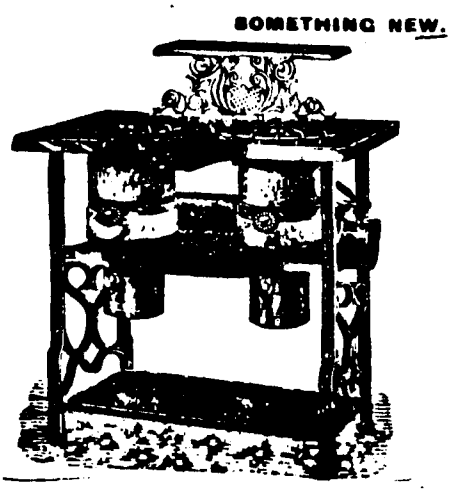


Fig. 43. The "Acme Blue Flame Oil Cook Stove" sold by Sears in 1897.

---

[137] Ibid., p. 120.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid., p. 122.

[140] Ibid., p. 118.

[141] Ibid.

Certainly this evidence is reflective of women's power as consumer as well as their cultural roles concerning art. Yet students and teachers might ask if these beautiful and artistic household artifacts functioned to hamper, not facilitate, women's work. How were these stove surfaces kept clean? Today it is largely a matter of employing a damp sponge; with a quick wipe or two the stove's exterior is clean. In 1897, however a housewife required stove polish, and Sears offered "Enameline Stove Polish."[142] (See fig. 44.[143])

Fig. 44. Stove Polish sold by Sears, 1897.

This substance gave a stove "a full lasting lustre"; but women were also admonished that a "poor polish is worse than useless, for your work will count for nothing."[144] That is, while such stoves may have in one respect made

---

[142] Ibid., p. 19.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid.

housework easier, they also made it harder by thus introducing the task of cleaning them. One can imagine not only the extreme difficulty and tedium of polishing the crevices of such ornately filigreed stove surfaces but the constant attention needed to keep stoves clean. For example, the grease spattered by frying the morning's bacon was one consideration. But Sears also sold special stove brushes.[145] (See fig. 45.[146])

Fig. 45. Stove brushes sold by Sears, 1897.

This brush enabled women to keep the stove shining, and the filigree design of the stove was also easily kept clean. The brush and ornate stoves are also evidence of what Cowan interprets as proof that twentieth-century kitchens "had to be prettied up."[147] Thus, despite innovations in technology and design, "housework remained nonmodern."[148]

---

[145] Ibid., p. 114.

[146] Ibid.

[147] As cited in Bernard, p. 398, from Ruth Schwartz Cowan, "Two Washes in the Morning and a Bridge Party at Night: The American Housewife between the Wars," Women's Studies 3 (1976), p. 150.

[148] As cited in Bernard, p. 404, from Tamara K. Hareven, "Modernization and Family History: Perspectives on Social Change," Signs 2 (1976): 201.

Graphics depicting stoves in the 1908 Sears catalog not only show a slight decrease in ornamentation but illustrate as well the inner-works of the "Acme Charm Six Hole Steel Range." (See fig. 46.[149]) Should a stove crack, it could be quickly and easily repaired with "Asbestos Plastic Stove Lining."[150] One wonders about the possible health hazards that may have arisen as a result of using this compound so close to cooking food.

Teachers and students should understand that cooking required fire. While experienced housekeepers constantly watched stove fires, these fires had to be rekindled every morning. This was not just a task requiring the strike of a match. According to Strasser, this process required that the remains of the previous day's fire be disposed of; and this was accomplished by removing stove lids, gathering ashes into a grate, replacing the lids, closing the drafts and stove doors, dumping cinders and ashes into a pan located below the grate, and then sifting them. A fire was then set with kindling and a few pieces of wood or coal; drafts were reopened, the fire was lit, and dampers closed. "A good fire in a good stove . . . would last four hours; rekindling meant raking ashes, adding more fuel, and readjusting dampers."[151]

---

[149]Schroeder, pp. 637, 638.

[150]Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902, p. 582.

[151]Strasser, p. 41.

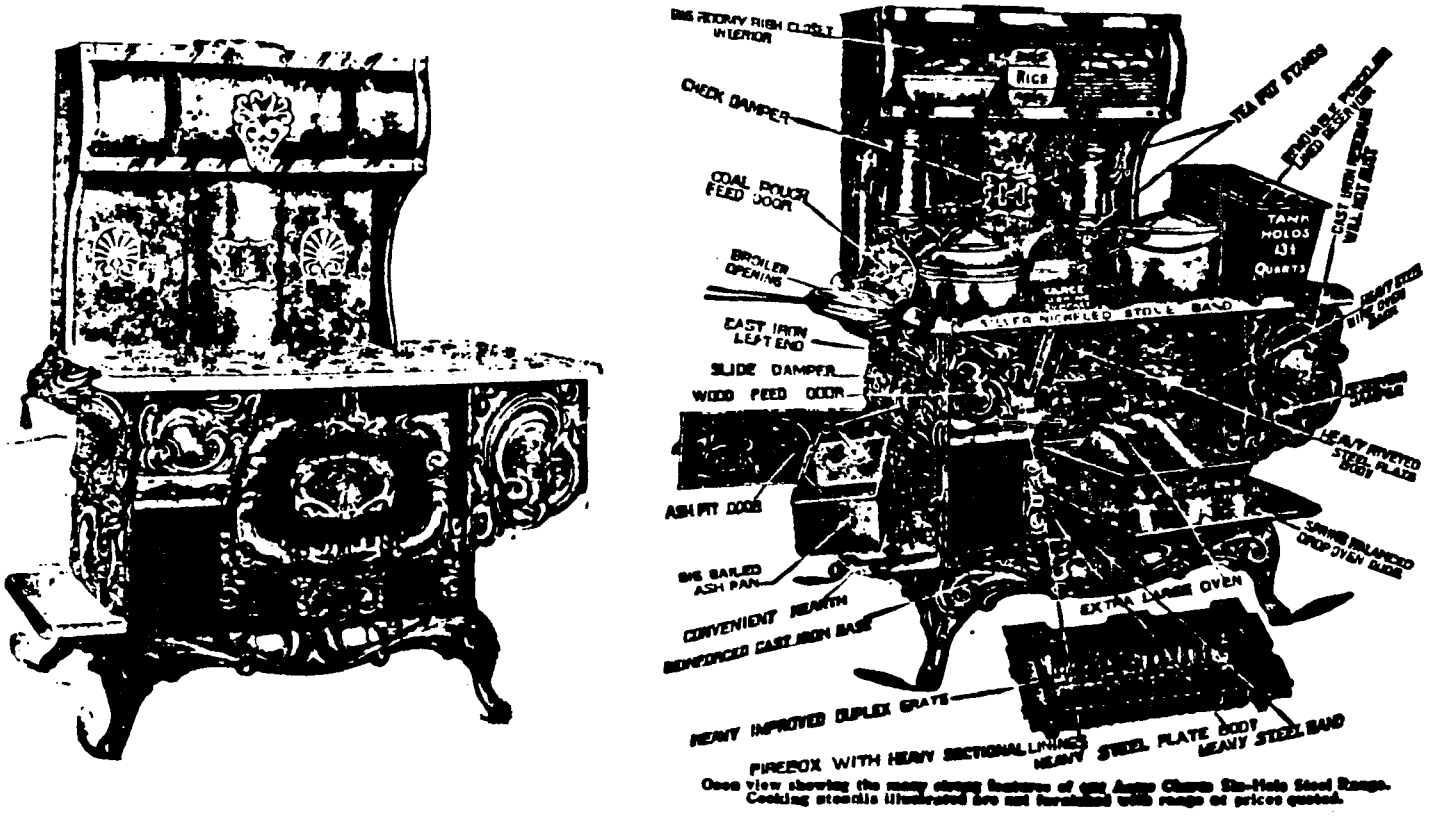


Fig. 46. The Sears' "Acme Charm Six Hole Steel Range" of 1908.

A study conducted by the Boston School of Housekeeping in 1899 determined that it took nearly an hour each day to maintain the fire in a coal-fueled stove:

> In a six day period, twenty minutes were spent in sifting ashes, twenty-four minutes in laying fires, one hour and forty-eight minutes in tending fires, thirty minutes in emptying ashes, fifteen minutes in carrying coal, and two hours and nine minutes on blacking the stove to keep it from rusting. It was heavy work; 292 pounds of new coal were put in the stove in those six days, 27 pounds sifted out of the ashes, and more than 14 pounds of kindling.[152]

To help with the task, Sears also offered "The Indestructible Fire Kindler and oil can."[153] (See fig. 47.[154])

Fig. 47. Fire Kindler sold by Sears, 1897.

Housework, of course, meant keeping the home clean. What kinds of devices were available to women for this purpose? Electric vacuum cleaners were not patented until 1907 and do not appear in the 1908 Sears catalog. This indicates, again, that electricity was not widely available

---

[152] Ibid.

[153] Israel, p. 98.

[154] Ibid.

by 1908 and that housework was a matter of muscle power. By the 1880s non-electric carpet sweepers manufactured by Bissell became popular.[155] The 1897 Sears catalog offered six carpet sweepers, four of which were made by Bissell.[156] In 1902 four models were available,[157] and in 1908, three; Montgomery Ward offered two models in 1895.[158] Obviously these household artifacts required muscle power to operate and only added to the plethora of work done by women in their domestic sphere.

A major improvement in nineteenth-century lighting was ushered in with the invention of kerosene in 1854. The earliest kerosene lamps provided from six to twenty candle-power, while most ordinary lamps of this kind by the end of the nineteenth century put out a brighter sixty to eighty.[159] Yet there were dangers associated with kerosene lamps, the most obvious being that of fire should one be overturned. However, on a less dramatic but nevertheless ubiquitous scale, kerosene lamps added to housework. Tasks associated with lamps included "daily chimney wiping and wick trimming,

---

[155]Strasser, p. 78.

[156]Israel, p. 101.

[157]Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902, p. 468.

[158]Schroeder, p. 468; and Boris Emmet, ed. and intro., Montgomery War & Co. Catalogue and Buyers' Guide, No. 57, Spring and Summer 1895 (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), p. 398.

[159]Strasser, pp. 60-61.

weekly washing of chimneys and shades, and periodic rewicking and dismantling for thorough cleaning with soda, inside and out." These jobs were unpleasant, smelly, and sooty, but had to be done to provide light, otherwise dirty chimneys and shades dimmed brightness, and untrimmed wicks flickered.[160]

Lamp soot did not conveniently remain in the lamp chimney but "found its way onto every surface in every house."[161] The Sears and the Montgomery Ward catalogs provide evidence that supports this fact, as not only were fuel and kerosene lamps sold[162] but so were tools for maintaining lamps. Special lamp trimmers,[163] lamp chimney flue brushes,[164] for example, were tools commonly employed, yet today they are of as much use as a buggy whip. (See. fig. 48.[165])

An analysis of numerous patents filed by American women in the nineteenth century shows that most were closely associated with housework. These patents included "everything from home heating devices, kitchen supplies and bathroom

---

[160] Ibid., p. 61.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Israel, pp. 20, 22, 92, 687-89; Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902, pp. 470, 801-813; Emmet, pp. 622, 547; Schroeder, pp. 83, 363-366, 789.

[163] Emmet, p. 599.

[164] Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902, p. 649; Emmet, p. 544; and Israel, p. 98.

[165] Emmet, pp. 54, 599; Israel, p. 98.

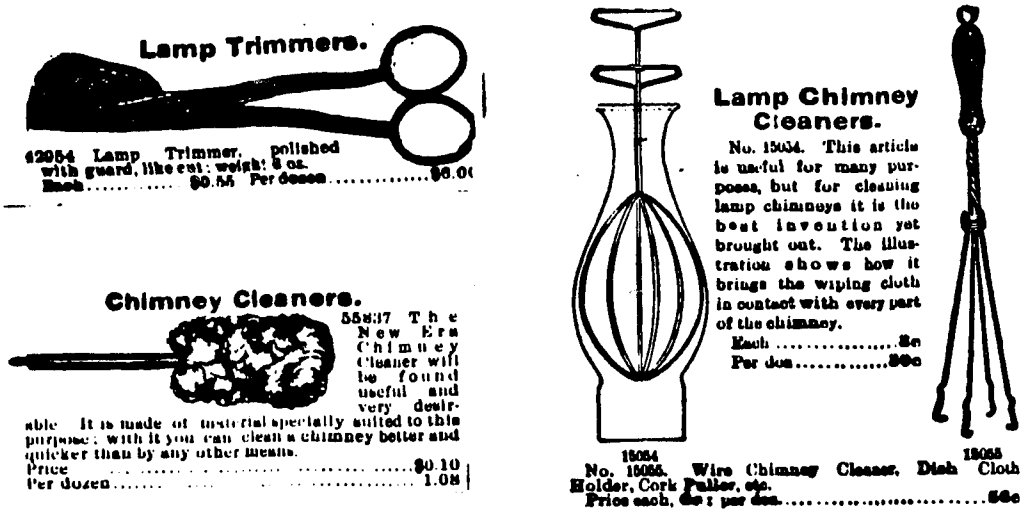


Fig. 48. Kerosene lamp cleaning tools offered in the Montgomery Ward catalog of 1895 and in the Sears catalog of 1897.

fixtures to appliances for washing, drying and ironing clothes."[166] Among these were Nancy Johnson's ice-cream freezer, 1843; Mary Ann Cook's sad iron, 1848; Lettie Smith's butter worker, 1853; Ellen Boyce's washing machine, 1862; Clarissa Britain's floor warmer, and dishwasher, 1863, 1864; Sarah McGill's vegetable grater, 1866; Mary Carpenter's mop wringer, 1866; Sarah Clark's reservoir cook stove, 1868; Margaret White's ironing table bureau, 1870; Karoline Freis's silk-cleaning compound, 1870; Catherine Woodruff's dishwashing machine, 1872; Elizabeth Bradley's window or wall washer, 1873; Sarah Stern's carpet cleaner, 1876; Annie Evans's invalid bedstead, 1882; Bertha Schmitt's

---

[166]As cited in Bernard, Female World, p. 409.

window guard, 1883; Annie Rhoads's washing compound, 1884; Mary Margerum's and Fanny Marsh's dust pan, 1886; Eliza Ann Terry's wire dust whip, 1887; Susan Henning's bedclothes holder, 1887; and Julia Downey's toaster, 1887.[167]

These inventions, like all household artifacts, had an immediate and long-lasting impact upon women. As Cowan states: "The change from laundry tub to washing machine is no less profound than the change from the hand loom to the power loom; the change from pumping water to turning on a faucet is no less destructive of traditional habits than the change from manual to electric calculating."[168] Yet it may be true that while such devices were destructive of old traditional habits, they likewise created and perpetuated new habits--new, that is, in the nineteenth century, in the form of the cult of domesticity.

In any event, by employing the common household artifact embodied in the mail-order catalog, teachers will find that students can better understand the impact of the industrial revolution upon women, and the instructor is provided with a new and important instructional means for teaching social history, women's history, and also mass production, as they relate to the existence of culture and belief systems of the nineteenth century documentarily inarticulate.

---

[167] Ibid.

[168] Cowan, in Schlereth, Material Culture Studies, p. 229.

Moreover, the notion that the cult of domesticity was a powerful force in American culture, as well as in the American economy, is also driven home and provides the students with graphic and verbal evidence that their everyday surroundings, while different today, are important in shaping their culture values and lives, as they were in shaping the past.

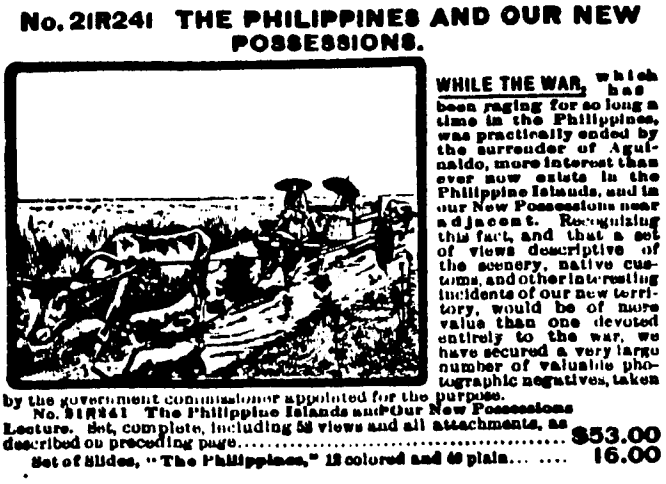
Other examples could be similarly employed. It could be fruitful to see how people amused themselves and what kinds of toys were available for children. The relative dearth of toys in the Sears 1897 catalog, as compared with the 1908 edition, may speak of a change in children's lives or a change in values about leisure time. In 1897 Sears sold "Magic Lanters," or slide projectors. Among the slide sets one could purchase were pictures of foreign nations, Civil War battle depictions, "Views of Yellowstone Park," "Views of Philadelphia," "Life of Christ," "Secret Society Views," and "The Aquarium."[169]

By 1902 these slide sets included "Assassination of President McKinley," "Around the World in Eighty Minutes," "The Chicago Stock Yard, Or From Hoof to Market," as well as a set entitled "The Philippines And Our New Possessions." The latter set shows popular interest in American expansion and imperialism. According to the advertising copy:

---

[169]Israel, pp. 483-85.

While The War, which has been raging for so long . . . in the Philippines was practically ended by the surrender of Aguinaldo, more interest than ever now exists in the Philippine Islands, and in our New Possessions. . . . Recognizing this fact, and that a set of views descriptive of the scenery, native customs, and other interesting incidents of our new territory would be of more value than one devoted entirely to the war, we have secured a very large number of valuable photographic negatives, taken by the government commissioner appointed for the purpose.[170] (See fig. 49.[171])


No. 21R241 THE PHILIPPINES AND OUR NEW POSSESSIONS.

WHILE THE WAR, which has been raging for so long a time in the Philippines, was practically ended by the surrender of Aguinaldo, more interest than ever now exists in the Philippine Islands, and in our New Possessions near adjacent. Recognizing this fact, and that a set of views descriptive of the scenery, native customs, and other interesting incidents of our new territory, would be of more value than one devoted entirely to the war, we have secured a very large number of valuable photographic negatives, taken by the government commissioner appointed for the purpose.

No. 21R241 The Philippine Islands and Our New Possessions Lecture. Set, complete, including 58 views and all attachments, as described on preceding page..... $53.00

Set of Slides, "The Philippines," 12 colored and 46 plain... .... 16.00

Fig. 49. Glass slides on the Philippine Islands, sold by Sears, 1902.

A teacher then might use this advertising copy and iconographic evidence to ask students why Sears believed it best to show pictures of native customs and not devote the collection to the war in the Philippines itself. Was the war that resulted in the subjugation of the Filipinos

---

[170] Schroeder, p. 167.

[171] Ibid.

led by Aguinaldo so contrary to American humanitarian values that it was best downplayed? Norton's text, for example, states in relation to the Philippine insurrection:

> Racial slurs like gugu and nigger infuriated the Filipinos, and the Treaty of Paris of course angered them. Americans' paternalistic attitude toward their new charges grated on Filipino nationalist feelings. . . . Before the Philippine insurrection was suppressed in 1901, over 5,000 Americans and 200,000 Filipinos were dead. The atrocities . . . were abominable. Villages were burned, people were tortured, and the American variant of the reconcentration policy was instituted.[172]

Did these slides obscure the brutality of the insurrectionist war and help ease the American conscience in regard to the "Philippines And Our New Possessions"? Moreover, what might the government commissioner appointed for the purpose of taking the photographs have had? Certainly, because the slides were not "devoted entirely to the war," it is plausible that they only reinforced imperalist notions. Additionally, the text states that President Roosevelt remarked that:

> "We haven't had a single incident in the Philippines as bad as the massacre at Wounded Knee." This reference to the massacre of American Indians . . . was appropriate, since Americans stationed at the Philippine front often drew on their experience with Native Americans and spoke of the "savage" Filipino insurgents who might "injun up" on them.[173]

---

[172]Norton et al., 2:627.

[173]Ibid.

But it was not only Americans stationed at the Philippine front who drew parallels to the American Indian experience. As Walter L. Williams has shown, many of the foremost pro-annexation Senators were not only strong supporters of the United States government's Indian policy, but often drew illusions to the Indian policy when making arguments in favor of annexation of the Philippines.[174] In this regard it is interesting to point out that in 1902 Sears also offered a set of slides entitled "The Passing of the Indian." The advertisement copy read in part: "The Extinction of this once powerful race is a subject worthy of most careful consideration, and excellent food for wholesome thought."[175] (See fig. 50.[176]) It may not be just coincidental that the slides dealing with the Indians were pictured directly below those dealing with the Philippines. In any event, at least the teacher can demonstrate that the annexation of the Philippines entered into the daily lives of Americans, that it was not only a subject that concerned Presidents, Senators, Secretaries of State, and soldiers. By 1908 Sears offered "stereoscopic views" depicting "The Siege of Port

---

[174]Walter L. Williams, "United States Indian Policy and the Debate Over Philippine Annexation: Implications for the Origins of American Imperialism," Journal of American History 66, no. 4 (March 1980): 810-31.

[175]Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902, p. 167.

[176]Ibid.

No. 21R242 THE PASSING OF THE INDIAN.

THIS IS ONE OF THE LATEST and best of stereopticon view sets. Something entirely out of the ordinary, something which you can be sure has not been shown throughout the country and worked to death by other exhibitors, something which will be recognized wherever you go as entirely new, and therefore of interest to everyone.

THE EXTINCTION of this once powerful race is a subject worthy of most careful consideration, and excellent food for wholesome thought.

No. 21R242 The Passing of the Indian. Stereopticon outfit, including 50 views, 40 plain and 12 colored..... $53.00
Price of 50 slides, including view box and lecture..... 16.00

Fig. 50. Glass slides on the American Indian, sold by Sears, 1902.

Arthur," telling the reader that "War Is Awful." In fact, the entire advertisement serves as a lesson in popular military history. Along with these, Sears also offered one hundred stereoscopic colored pictures of "Fair Japan." According to the advertisement: "There Is No Nation which is more interesting than that of the little brown people . . . these people are today observing the spirit of progress that bids fair to outrival many a larger nation in its accomplishments."[177] Not only is this an indication of the American core value of progress but this information can be employed in lectures when discussing the Russo-Japanese War, the rapid growth of Japan, as well as the Treaty of Portsmouth, and Pres. Theodore Roosevelt's "gentleman's

[177]Schroeder, p. 181.

agreement" with Japan, as noted in the text.[178] That is, Japanese-American relations were subjects of interest to the documentarily inarticulate. The reference to "the little brown people" is also indicative of the American core value concerning notions of group superiority, or racism.

Mail-order catalogs show many formerly common household items, and catalog data then provides, as Schlereth states,

> . . . abundant source for gaining historical insight into the lives of those who left no other records. . . . Material evidence . . . offers some clue as to the cultural identify of the common American. We can know their history through artifacts.[179]

As an example for instructors, the Sears catalogs for 1897 and 1908 can be employed to teach a lesson on the combined topics of women's history, patent-medicine abuse, muckraking literature, and Progressive reform. By placing artifactual evidence in a historical context, the teacher can expand course content, stimulate critical thinking, and show that history is more than the story of politics, legislation, and great men.

According to most studies on nineteenth-century femininity, there existed a cult of domesticity which taught that women were, among many other things, to function as

---

[178]Norton et al., 2:627-28.

[179]Schlereth, Artifacts, p. 4.

health experts, maintaining the family's vim, vigor, and vitality. According to Gwendolyn Wright, women "had their say about matters of upkeep and health."[180] If this were true, it would mean that women would have had to be able to provide medicines for their family and themselves. Both the Sears and Montgomery Ward catalogs offer visual evidence that medicines were available, and support this interpretation. However, the evidence found is sometimes surprising. For example, the Sears catalogs for 1897, 1902, and 1905 offered "Injection No. 7."[181] (See fig. 51.[182]) This

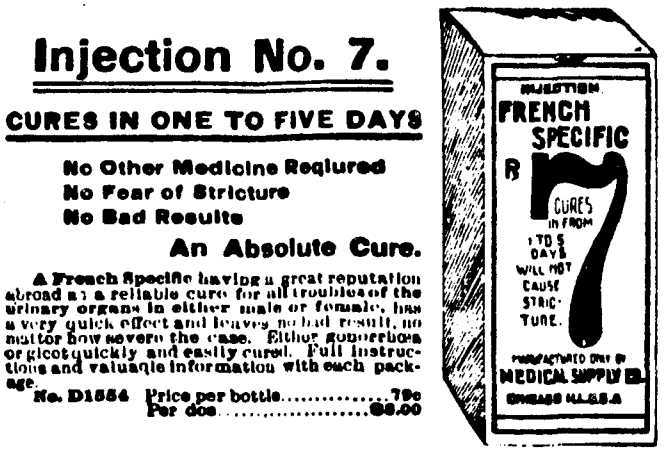


Fig. 51. "Injection No. 7," sold by Sears in 1897.

---

[180]Gwendolyn Wright, Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 131.

[181]Israel, pp. 27, 39; Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902, p. 449; and Cohn, p. 229.

[182]Israel, p. 39.

medicine required knowledge of injection syringes and was billed as a cure for "troubles of Urinary Organs in either male or female, [and] has a very quick effect and leaves no bad results from its use." This is curious in itself, that there would be a demand for such a medicine in the first place. However, the advertising copy also states: "Will cure Gonorrhea . . . in from 1 to 5 days."[183] Does the evidence embodied in the presence of "Injection No. 7" indicate, then, that gonorrhea was altogether so common in the late nineteenth century that at least from 1897 to 1905 Sears could profit from the sale of this patent medicine? Was the product in demand? Was venereal disease a common problem? If so, then the "good old days" were a bit different than is sometimes commonly assumed. Is there, moreover, any continuity expressed? That is, are venereal diseases a problem today? If so, and certainly they are, then there seems to be little difference between the past and the present in this specific regard. In the words of Otto L. Bettmann, such evidence leads one to "redeem our times from aspersions cast upon them by nostalgic comparisons."[184]

Sears also offered for sale, at least in 1897, "Dr. Beaumont's Pennyroyal Pills." These pills were a

---

[183]Ibid., pp. 39, 26.

[184]Otto L. Bettmann, The Good Old Days--They Were Terrible! (New York: Random House, 1974), p. xiii.

"concentrated form" of pennyroyal, tansy, and cotton-root bark. They were "very powerful and require to be used cautiously."[185] (See fig. 52.[186])

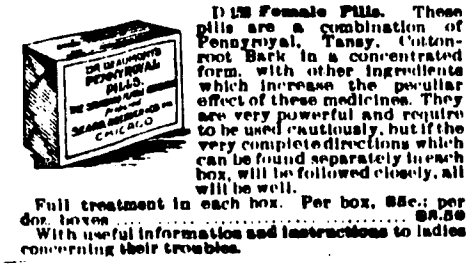


Fig. 52. Abortifacients sold by Sears, 1897.

In 1902, the Sears catalog offered for sale "Dr. Worden's Female Pills for All Female Diseases." It was a panacea that cured, among many other problems, "tardy or irregular periods."[187] These pills, because of their ingredients, served a rather interesting function in the nineteenth century, that is, as abortifacients, or herbs that led to abortion. It does not matter that their effectiveness may have been minimal, but that they were used for this purpose.[188] The evidence embodied in this visual artifactual data implies, at least, that Sears provided

---

[185]Israel, p. 27.

[186]Ibid.

[187]Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902, p. 443.

[188]James Mohr, Abortion in America: The Origins and Evolution of National Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 6-11, 53-59.

American women with a means of birth control through the use of abortifacients. Since Sears supplied the goods people demanded, it follows that such pills were in demand, and that women purchased them. Figures concerning the birthrate in America tend to suggest that such pills may have been partially responsible for the decline in the nineteenth century. In 1810 "there were 1358 children under age 5 for every 1000 white women. . . . By 1890 the figure had fallen to a moderate 685 children per 1000 women. Put differently, the average American woman bore 7.04 children in 1800; 3.56 by 1900."[189] Stated in yet another way, the birthrate in 1875 was thirty-seven children per one thousand women; by 1912 twenty-six per thousand women.[190] It may well be going too far to state that such commonly available abortifacients were the sole cause for the decline in the birthrate; it is not going too far to suggest that nineteenth-century American women had available to them a means of terminating pregnancies, and such medicines did contribute to the decline in the birthrate. It also raises some interesting questions for students to ponder. For example, is the contemporary

---

[189]James Mohr, "The Great Upsurge of Abortion, 1840-1880," in Mel Albin and Dominick Cavallo, eds., Family Life in America, 1620-2000 (St. James, N.Y.: Revisionist Press, 1981), p. 126.

[190]Cohn, p. 262, as cited from Regina K. Stix and Frank W. Notestein, "Effectiveness of Birth Control: A Study of Contraceptive Practices in a Selected Group of New York Women," Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly Bulletin 12 (1934): 57-68.

"right-to-life" and "pro-family" or "antifeminist" movement that stands opposed to "abortion on demand"[191] merely a result of contemporary radical feminism, or is it a problem with historical roots in the "good old days"? Or, is it a problem at all? When and why did abortion become a moral issue? Were some nineteenty-century American women, because they employed abortifacients such as "Dr. Beaumont's Pennyroyal Pills," what we might today consider "anti-family"? Did they have "anti-right-to-life" views? Questions such as these may stimulate students to think critically and make further inquiries on their own, as historians do.

Another medicine offered by Sears in 1897, "Nerve and Brain Pills," was a cure for "Impotence, Spermatorrhea and all other diseases arising from excesses and abuses of any kind."[192] Headache cures, cod live oil, dyspepsia powders, laxatives, complexion wavers made of arsenic, worm pills, microbe killer, drinking cures, smoking cures, lung restorers, obesidy powders, heart cures, opium and morphine addition cures, solutions to remove warts, as well as consumption cures, opium, paragoric and laudanum were

---

[191]Norton et al., 2:968.

[192]Israel, p. 27. Spermatorrhea is defined by The Webster's New World Dictionary, 2d college ed., as "the too frequent involuntary discharge of semen without an orgasm."

available.[193] Sears also sold, at least in 1897 and 1902, "Peruvian Wine of Coca."

This patent medicine aided digestion, never caused constipation, and removed fatigue. According to the advertisement copy: "If you wish to accomplish double the amount of work or have to undergo an unusual amount of hardship always keep a bottle of our Peruvian Wine of Coca near you. Its sustaining powers are wonderful.[194] Moreover, Sears expected "a large demand for this wine" and had "made arrangements for an extra large shipment, which enables us to let our customers in at the very lowest price."[195] It is most probable that this wine was laced with cocaine, a derivative of coca;[196] it was advertised as being "effective and rapid in its action." Doctors and European hospitals endorsed its use. It was a stimulent, and according to the advertisement: "After many severe tests it has been . . . proven that in the same space of time more than double the amount of hardship and work could be undergone when Peruvian

---

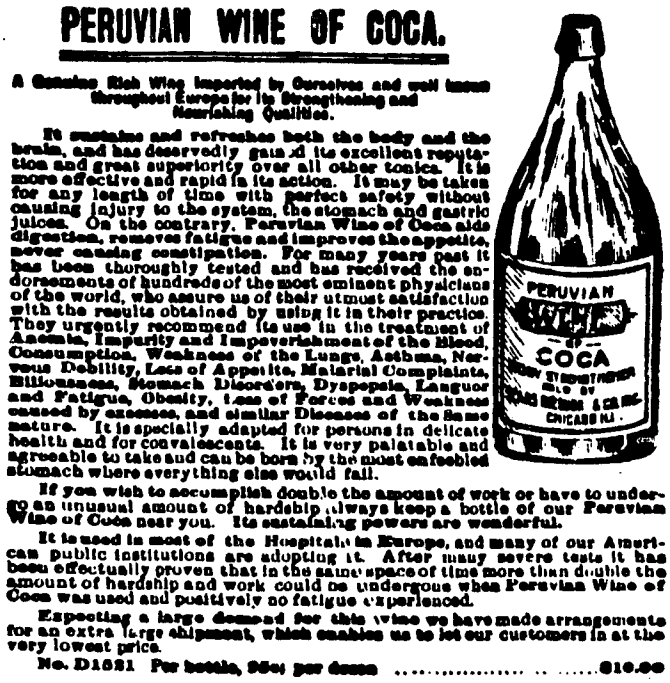
[193] Ibid., pp. 26-42; Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902, pp. 440-51.

[194] Israel, p. 39; Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902, p. 446. (Page 446 is missing, yet it is listed in the index as on page 446.)

[195] Israel, p. 39.

[196] Arthur J. Cramp, comp. and ed., Nostrums and Quackery: Articles on Nostrum Evil Quackery, and Allied Matters Affecting the Public Health, 3 vols. (Chicago: Press of the American Medical Association, 1921), 1:487, 551, 587. See also a dictionary definition of coca.

Wine of Coca was used and positively no fatigue experienced."[197] (See fig. 53.[198])



PERUVIAN WINE OF COCA.

A Genuine Rich Wine imported by Ourselves and well known throughout Europe for its Strengthening and Nourishing Qualities.

It sustains and refreshes both the body and the brain, and has deservedly gained its excellent reputation and great superiority over all other tonics. It is more effective and rapid in its action. It may be taken for any length of time with perfect safety without causing injury to the system, the stomach and gastric juices. On the contrary, Peruvian Wine of Coca aids digestion, removes fatigue and improves the appetite, never causing constipation. For many years past it has been thoroughly tested and has received the endorsements of hundreds of the most eminent physicians of the world, who assure us of their utmost satisfaction with the results obtained by using it in their practice. They urgently recommend its use in the treatment of Anæmia, Impurity and Impoverishment of the Blood, Consumption, Weakness of the Lungs, Asthma, Nervous Debility, Loss of Appetite, Malarial Complaints, Biliousness, Stomach Disorders, Dyspepsia, Languor and Fatigue, Obesity, Loss of Forces and Weakness caused by excesses, and similar Diseases of the Same nature. It is specially adapted for persons in delicate health and for convalescents. It is very palatable and agreeable to take and can be born by the most enfeebled stomach where everything else would fail.

If you wish to accomplish double the amount of work or have to undergo an unusual amount of hardship always keep a bottle of our Peruvian Wine of Coca near you. Its sustaining powers are wonderful.

It is used in most of the Hospitals in Europe, and many of our American public institutions are adopting it. After many severe tests it has been effectually proven that in the same space of time more than double the amount of hardship and work could be undergone when Peruvian Wine of Coca was used and positively no fatigue experienced.

Expecting a large demand for this wine we have made arrangements for an extra large shipment, which enables us to let our customers in at the very lowest price.

No. D1521 Per bottle, 95c; per dozen $10.00

Fig. 53. Peruvian Wine of Coca, sold by Sears in 1897.

The fact that such dangerous patent medicines are absent from the 1908 Sears catalog is indicative of national reform, and in this respect the teacher can relate the Progressive era to artifactual evidence. During the Progressive era, muckrakers "fed the public taste for scandal and sensation by investigating and attacking social, economic,

---

[197] Israel, p. 39.

[198] Ibid.

and political wrongs.[199] Among these social wrongs was the evil of patent medicines. The Ladies' Home Journal (1904-1906) and Collier's Weekly (1905-1906) crusaded against such concoctions, and such articles can be considered as examples of muckraking literature, characteristic of the Progressive era's Zeitgeist. This crusade resulted in the passage of the Pure Drug Act of 1906 and the subsequent elimination of patent medicines from Sears catalogs.[200] A cursory glance at the Reader's Guide to Periodic Literature for 1904-1906 reveals a plethora of such articles. Such information can be used to stimulate students to individual inquiries in the form of oral or written reports on muckraking, reform, women's history, and health. The visual clue of the artifact then serves as a springboard for further study as well as critical thinking and brings the common man-made world of artifacts into the circle of ideas.

While it is well and good to include artifacts in the teaching of history survey courses, a completely legitimate question that can be raised is, succinctly, "how?" Figure 54 offers a flow chart depicting how instructors might integrate domestic architecture, some of its related artifacts, and mail-order catalogs into the teaching of

---

[199] Norton et al., 2:575.

[200] Cohn, pp. 230-31; and Boris Emmet and John E. Jeuck, Catalogues and Counters: A History of Sears, Roebuck and Company (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), pp. 103-104.

college level American history survey courses. It is meant to be general in nature and to provide a parallel model for the development of a systematized inclusion of a logistically sound transitional contingency strategy for the teaching of history with artifactual evidence. It does not preclude or omit traditional academic objectives, but is in sympathy with them. It is meant to be general so that individual instructors may have wide latitude in determining what specific compatible material culture objectives they wish to include in their teaching goals. As can be seen, it takes into consideration objectives, vehicles for teaching, testing, and reteaching. (See fig. 54.)

A concern faced by all instructors is that of evaluation. Testing for compatible material culture objectives is a matter for the determination of the individual instructor. However, certain general guidelines will be suggested below in an effort to provide a solid basis for evaluation based upon criterion-referencing.

Criterion-referencing, according to W. James Popham, is defined as relating "an individual's performance to a criterion."[201] A criterion-referenced test is, again according to Popham, "used to ascertain an individual's status with

---

[201]W. James Popham, "Measurement Advances for Educational Evaluators," a presentation in the Symposium, The Expanding Technology of Educational Evaluation, Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Illinois, April 15-19, 1974, p. 4.

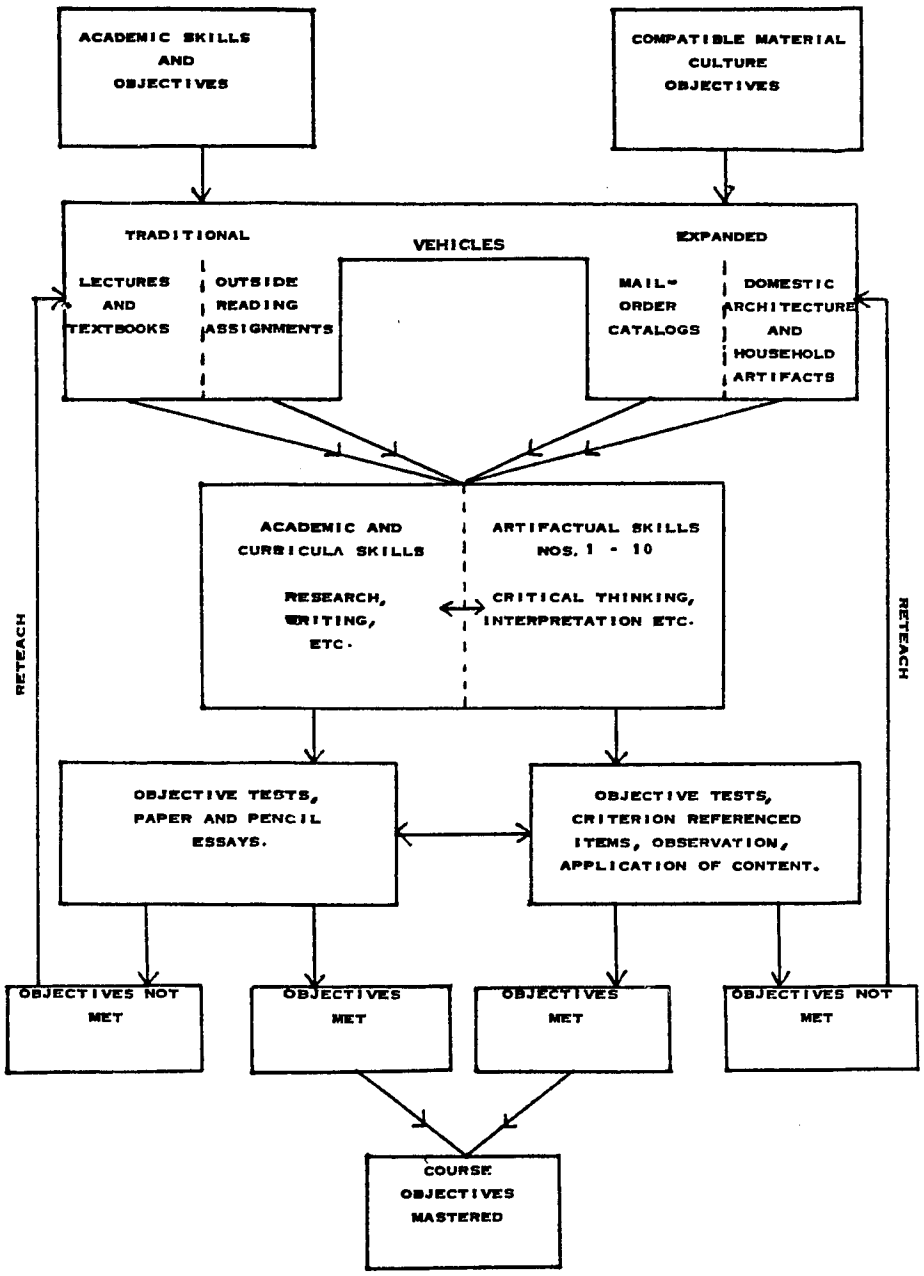


Fig. 54. Flow chart showing how material culture artifacts can be systematically integrated in the teaching of college level American history survey courses.

respect to a well defined behavior domain." It is critically important, moreover, that broad behavior domains be employed rather than "specific behaviors in constructing criterion referenced tests." This is because "students respond to particular test questions which are based on particular content." Response variance is of little concern because criterion-referenced tests are meant "to be as descriptive as possible."[202]

Criteria not only improve learning, but instruction as well.[203] This would hold true, of course, with all course objectives. It is proposed here that compatible material culture objectives can be tested in a criterion-referenced manner, and furthermore, that all course objectives should be a matter of criterion-referencing. By so doing, the instructor will not, according to Benjamin S. Bloom, base evaluation on the selection of talent, but rather upon its development.[204]

A criterion-referenced test "must unequivocally describe the domain(s) of examinee behavior it assesses."[205]

---

[202]Popham, "Measurement Advances," p. 5.

[203]W. James Popham and Eva L. Baker, Establishing Instructional Goals (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 59-78. See also W. James Popham and Eva L. Baker, Classroom Instructional Tactics (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973).

[204]Benjamin S. Bloom, "Learning for Mastery," Evaluation Comment 1, no. 2 (May 1968): 45.

[205]W. James Popham, "Customized Criterion-Referenced Tests," Educational Leadership 34, no. 4 (January 1977): 250.

That is, students should not be held responsible for knowing about, for example, the development of mail-order housing in a testing situation unless it is made a course criteria. This is not just common sense, but eminently fair to the student.

The following suggestions are designed to serve as examples of how compatible material culture objectives can be tested if they are made a part of course criteria. They are based upon the content of this chapter.

A common method for testing for course content is found in the construction of selected-response test items. These include multiple-choice questions as well as binary-choice items.[206] An example of a binary-choice question would be:

> In 1908 Sears and Roebuck became the first American firm to sell complete houses by mail. True or false?

While it is true that Sears first sold houses by mail in 1908, it is not true that Sears was the first firm to do so. Therefore, the correct response is "false." This kind of selected-response binary-choice test item tests not just the knowledge of course criterion, but requires the examinee to exercise critical thinking. Just as long as such material is made a part of the course criteria can the instructor reasonably and fairly expect students to master course content and develop abilities in reasoning.

---

[206] W. James Popham, Criterion-Referenced Measurement (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978), pp. 47-51.

Another common selected-response type of test item that can be constructed is the multiple-choice question. An example that can be used to test for student mastery of compatible material culture objectives would be:

> Drug abuse in American history is:
>
> (a) a purely twentieth-century phenomenon;
> (b) a problem not occasionally noted in bohemian subculture groups;
> (c) a problem that has long been the subject of reform;
> (d) associated only with deviant behavior.

Another example could be:

> The idea that the standardization of American culture was stimulated more by what Americans made and bought, rather than by common ideals, can be evidenced in:
>
> (a) installment buying;
> (b) the growth of industrialism in the United States;
> (c) the phenomenon of mail-order housing·
> (d) all the above.

Yet another category of test questions is constructed-response test items, further delineated as restricted-response questions, and extended-response questions.[207] Both types of questions measure not only the acquisition of course content, but the examinee's abilities to write, synthesize, and be creative. An example of restricted-response questions would be:

> Describe, in a paragraph of no more than fifty (50) words, the relationship between nineteenth-century cooking stoves and the cult of domesticity.

---

[207] Popham, Criterion-Referenced Measurement, pp. 43-47, 63-71.

> Critically evaluate the impact of industrialism upon American life, particularly with respect to the influence of industrial growth on the cultural values and belief systems of Americans.

While extended-response questions "provide an opportunity for students to improve their writing skills," their major drawback, according to Popham, is their unreliability in being scored. This weakness, however, can be positively met by employing criterion-referencing in course content and in testing.[208]

Oral questions posed in class can be evaluated subjectively by the instructor. For example, if the cult of domesticity and domestic artifacts of the nineteenth century are made a part of course content, oral answers to questions about them can be judged as to their merit in terms of content and student interpretation. An instructor might ask: "What evidence can you point out that helps explain the existence and strength of the cult of domesticity in American history?" Answers would most surely include mention of Catherine Beecher, the feminization of domestic architecture and some of its associated artifacts, the effect of artifacts upon cultural behavior, and references to early feminists such as Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. When leading discussions of American imperialism, the instructor could listen for mention of glass slides

---

[208] Ibid., p. 67.

depicting U. S. involvement in the Philippines or stereographic views of "the little brown people" of Japan, in addition to knowledge of the Spanish American War, Aguinaldo and the insurrectos, yellow journalism, the Taft-Katsura Agreement, the Treaty of Portsmouth, or Theodore Roosevelt's "gentleman's agreement" with Japan. If the history of the American Indian is a course criteria, then certainly mention of glass slides on the "extinction of this once powerful race" is in order.

The possibilities are nearly endless. However, while students should not be required to make responses on subject matter that is not a part of course criteria, their ability to respond over and above course content should not go unnoticed. That is, should a student offer an interpretation based upon course criteria, transfer of knowledge and critical thinking are noted. While a matter of subjective judgement, it should not go unrewarded. Because it is a matter of subjective judgement, then, the exact degree of weight such skills can contribute to a student's grade is, in the final analysis, entirely up to the individual instructor.

By use of the common household artifact embodied in mail-order catalogs, a wealth of material culture evidence is made available to teachers and students that can and should be utilized in college level American history survey

courses. Evidence is made available that enhances course content, stimulates both critical thinking and transfer of knowledge. The perspective of the past is broadened to include the documentarily inarticulate and American values, while the acquisition of artifactual knowledge can help sharpen interpretive skills. The placing of artifactual evidence in its proper historical and cultural contexts makes available to the instructor a novel and important means to expand course content, increase student visual literacy, illustrate difficult concepts, and, among other outcomes, make history courses interesting.

As Clifford L. Lord stated, while history was

> . . . once largely a matter of politics and wars, it now covers the gamut of man's activities, his hopes, aspirations, his successes and failures. . . . Every nation, every race, every continent has its history; every "age" has a history. So does every building, farm, road, school, church, store, partnership, company, corporation. . . . Only one thing fascinates man more than does nature . . . that is man himself.[209]

Through the use of mail-order catalogs, the fascination with humankind is better explained. Students can only benefit from an increased awareness of their material heritage gained through the instructional use of such material culture resources as mail-order catalogs, domestic architecture, and some of its associated artifacts.

---

[209]Clifford L. Lord, Teaching History with Community Resources, 2d ed. (New York: Teacher's College, Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 2.

EPILOGUE

Material culture artifacts can be fruitfully employed in the interpretation and study of American history. Artifacts are more than things but must be placed in contexts to give them meaning. From Niebuhr to 1983 the issue of employing artifactual evidence was one of constant debate within the historical profession.

To be given meaning, artifacts must be studied by use of a multidisciplinary methodology that goes beyond antiquarianism and aesthetics. It must include a myriad of other disciplines, including, but not limited to, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and history. Just as artifacts had meaning in the past, so do they today. It is a matter of finding and developing conceptual frameworks with which to provide meaning to artifacts. In this regard, it is a creative task for the historian.

Cultural values determine house form. Architectural reform, evolution, and use are of great importance. At no time should domestic architecture, and its associated artifacts, be thought of as merely things, but as a functional and cultural tool that expresses values and helps shape cultural behavior and belief systems. Each artifact has not

only a history but an historic cultural effect that alters or changes culture and the values that shape it.

Material culture artifacts can also be employed in teaching American history survey courses at the college level. They are aids in teaching and interpretation. They provide stimuli that are potent and quickly grasped by students. To ignore material culture artifacts in the teaching of survey courses is to continue to allow them to plummet inexorably into disuse and eventual oblivion. To forget the past and its material heritage is essentially irresponsible and culturally destructive. Historians dare not fail to consider artifacts or history will become a thing of legend and propaganda. Control of the past is control of the future, while control of the present is control of the past. When historians use material culture artifacts with accepted and traditional teaching methods, that control is broadened to include the public, which, after all, is the product of its past and material heritage.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Reports

American Historical Association. Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year [below]. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office [year of publication below].

1939.	Published 1940.		
1940.	Published 1941.		
1941.	3 vols.	Published 1942.	Vol. 1.
1942.	3 vols.	Published 1943.	Vol. 1.
1943.	2 vols.	Published 1944.	Vol. 1.
1944.	3 vols.	Published 1945.	Vol. 1.
1945.	2 vols.	Published 1946.	Vol. 1.
1946.	2 vols.	Published 1947.	Vol. 1.
1962.	2 vols.	Published 1963.	Vol. 1.
1964.	2 vols.	Published 1965.	Vol. 1.

Books

Allen, Lewis F. Rural Architecture: Being a Complete Description of Farm Houses, Cottages and Out Buildings, Comprising Wood Houses, Workshops, Tool Houses, Carriage and Wagon Houses, Smoke and Ash Houses, Ice Houses, Apiary or Bee House, Poultry Houses, Rabbitry, Dovecote, Piggery, Barns, and Sheds for Cattle, &c., &c., &c., Together With Lawns, Pleasure Grounds, and Parks; The Flower, Fruit and Vegetable Gardens. Also Useful and Ornamental Domestic Animals for the Country Resident, &c., &c., &c. Also the Best Method of Conducting Water into Cattle Yards and Houses. New York: C. M. Saxton, 1852.

Barber, George F. Art in Architecture: The Modern Architectural Designer. Knoxville, Tenn.: S. B. Newman & Co., 1902-1903.

_____. The Cottage Souvenir, Revised and Enlarged, Containing Over Two Hundred Original Designs and Plans of Artistic Dwellings. Knoxville, Tenn.: S. B. Newman, 1892.

_____. New Model Dwellings and How Best to Build Them: Containing a Great Variety of Designs, Plans, and Interior Views of Modern Dwellings, Together With a Large Amount of Valuable Information Indispensable to Those Contemplating Building. Knoxville, Tenn.: G. F. Barber & Co., 1895-1896.

Beard, James Franklin, ed. The Letters and Journals of James Fenimore Cooper. 6 vols. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1960-1968. Vol. 1: 1800-1830 (1960); Vol. 3: 1833-1839 (1964).

Beecher, Catherine E. A Treatise on Domestic Economy: For the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School. Boston: Marsh, Capen, Lyon, and Webb, 1841.

_____, and Stowe, Harriet Beecher. The American Woman's Home. New York: J. B. Ford & Co., 1869.

Burckhardt, Jacob. The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy. 1860; reprint ed., New York: Random House, 1954.

Chevalier, Michel. Society, Manners, and Politics in the United States: Letters on North America. Ed. and intro. by John William Ward. Paris: G. Gosselin, 1836; reprint ed., Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1961.

Coleman, Laurence Vail. Historic House Museums. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1933.

Cramp, Arthur J., comp. and ed. Nostrums and Quackery: Articles on Nostrum Evil Quackery, and Allied Matters Affecting the Public Health. 3 vols. Chicago: Press of the American Medical Association, 1921. Vol. 1.

De Tocqueville, Alexis. Democracy in America. 2 vols. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960.

Dickens, Charles. American Notes and Pictures from Italy. 1842; reprint ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Downing, Andrew Jackson. The Architecture of Country Houses: Including Designs for Cottages and Farm-Houses and Villas, With Remarks on Interiors, Furniture, and the Best Modes for Warming and Ventilating. New intro. by J. Stewart Johnson. New York: n.p., 1850; reprint ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1969.

_____. Cottage Residences: Rural Architecture & Landscape Gardening. New intro. by Michael Hugo-Brunt. Library of Victorian Culture. New York: n.p., 1842; reprint ed., Watkins Glen, N.Y.: American Life Foundation, 1967.

_____. Rural Essays. Edited by George William Curtis. New intro. by George B. Tatum. New York: n.p., 1953; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1974.

_____. A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America; With a View to the Improvement of Country Residences. New York: n.p., 1841; first reprint ed., New York: Orange Judd Co., 1875; second reprint ed., New York: Theophratus Publishers, 1977.

Grund, Francis J. The Americans in Their Moral, Social, and Political Relations. 2 vols. in one. New York: n.p., 1837; reprint ed., New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1971.

_____. Aristocracy in America. London: Richard Bentley, 1839; first reprint ed., New York: Harper & Row, 1959; second reprint ed., Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1968.

Howe, Henry. Historical Collections of Ohio in Two Volumes, An Encyclopedia of the State: History Both General and Local, Geography With Descriptions of Its Counties, Cities and Villages, Its Agricultural, Manufacturing, Mining, and Business Development, Sketches of Eminent and Interesting Characters, Etc., With Notes of a Tour Over It in 1886. The Ohio Centennial Edition, 2 vols. Norwalk, Ohio: Lansing Printing Co., 1898.

Kellar, Herbert Anthony, ed. Solon Robinson, Pioneer and Agriculturist. 2 vols. Indianapolis, Ind.: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1936; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1968. Vol. 1: 1825-1845; Vol. 2: 1846-1851.

Olmsted, Frederick Law. The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveller's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States. Edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953.

Palliser, George F. Palliser's New Cottage Homes and Details: Containing Nearly Two Hundred & Fifty New & Original Designs in all the Modern Popular Styles, Showing Plans, Elevations, Perspective Views, and Details of low-priced, medium, and first-class Cottages, Villas, Farm Houses, Town and Country Places, Houses for the Sea Shore, the South, and for Summer and Winter Resorts, etc., etc., City Block Houses, Farm Barn, Stables and Carriage Houses, and 1500

Detailed Drawings Descriptive and Instructive Letter Press, also Specifications and Form of Contract. New York: Palliser, Palliser & Co., 1887; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1975.

_____. Palliser's Model Homes: Showing a Variety of Designs for Model Dwellings; also, Farm Barns, and Hennery, Stable and Carriage House, School House, Masonic Association, Bank and Library, Town Hall and Three Churches. Bridgeport, Conn.: Palliser & Co., 1878; reprint ed., Felton, Calif.: Greenwood Publishers, 1978.

Robinson, James Harvey. The New History: Essays Illustrating the New Historical Outlook. New York: Macmillan Co., 1927.

Sanger, William W. The History of Prostitution: Its Extent, Causes, and Effects Throughout the World. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859.

Thwaites, Reuben Gold, ed. Early Western Travels, 1748-1846: A Series of Reprints of Some of the Best and Rarest Contemporary Volumes of Travel, Descriptive of the Aborigines and Social and Economic Conditions in the Middle and Far West, During the Period of Early American Settlement. 33 vols. New York: AMS Press, 1966. Vols. 3, 11, 12, 24, 26.

Tuthill, (Mrs.) L. C. History of Architecture from the Earliest Times: Its Present Condition in Europe and the United States, With a Biography of Eminent Architects and a Glossary of Architectural Terms. Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1848.

Vaux, Calvert. Villas and Cottages: A Series of Designs Prepared for Execution in the United States. 2d ed. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1864.

Wainwright, Nicholas B., ed. A Philadelphia Perspective: The Diary of Sidney George Fisher, Covering the Years 1834-1871. Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1967.

Ward, Matthew F. English Items: Or, Microscopic Views of England and Englishmen. New York: Appleton, 1853.

Wheeler, Gervase. Homes for the People, in Suburb and Country: The Villa, the Mansion, and the Cottage. New York: Charles Scribner, 1853.

Newspaper

New York Times, July-August 1852.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Books

Albin, Mel, and Cavallo, Dominick, eds. Family Life in America, 1620-2000. St. James, N.Y.: Revisionary Press, 1981.

Alderson, William T., and Low, Shirley Payne. Interpretation of Historic Sites. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1976.

Allen, Edith Louise. American Housing: As Affected by Social and Economic Conditions. Peoria, Ill.: Manual Arts Press, 1930.

Allen, Frederick Lewis. Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920s. New York: Harper & Row, 1964.

Bailey, Thomas A. A Diplomatic History of the American People. 10th ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980.

Berg, Donald J. Country Patterns, 1841-1883: A Sampler of Nineteenth Century Rural Homes and Gardens. Rockville Centre, N.Y.: Antiquity Reprints, 1982.

Beringer, Richard E., ed. Historical Analysis. Contemporary Approaches to Clio's Craft. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978.

Bernard, Jessie. The Female World. New York: Free Press, 1981.

Bertrand, Alvin L. Basic Sociology: An Introduction to Theory and Method. Sociology Series. Edited by John F. Cruber and Alfred C. Clarke. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967.

_____. Social Organization: A General Systems and Role Theory Perspective. Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Co., 1972.

_____, ed. Rural Sociology. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1958.

Bettmann, Otto L. The Good Old Days--They Were Terrible! New York: Random House, 1974.

Boles, Robert C. Theory of Motivation. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.

Boller, Paul F., Jr. American Transcendentalism, 1830-1860: An Intellectual Inquiry. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1974.

Boorstin, Daniel J. American and the Image of Europe: Reflections on American Thought. New York: World Publishing Co., 1964.

_____. The Americans: The Democratic Experience. New York: Viking Press, 1974.

_____. The Americans: The National Experience. New York: Viking Press, 1974.

Bowden, Martyn J., and Lowenthal, David, eds. Geographies of the Mind: Essays in Historical Geosophy. In Honor of John Kirkland. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Bowman, Francis J. A Handbook of Historians and History Writing. Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Co., 1951.

Browne, Ray B., and Fishwick, Marshall, eds. Icons of America. Bowling Green, Ohio: Popular Press, Bowling Green University, 1978.

Browne, Ray B., and Fishwick, Marshall, eds. Icons of Popular Culture. Bowling Green, Ohio: Popular Press, Bowling Green University, 1970.

Burchard, John, and Bush-Brown, Albert. The Architecture of America: A Social and Cultural History. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1961.

Carmer, Carl. The Hudson. New York: Rinehart and Co., 1939.

Christman, Henry. Tin Horns and Calico: A Decisive Episode in the Emergence of Democracy. Intro. by Carl Carmer. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1945.

Chudacoff, Howard P. The Evolution of American Urban Society. 2d ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1981.

Turner, Frederick Jackson. "Architecture Through Oppression." University Press 15, no. 39 (June 1921, 1884): 12-13.

Book Review

Holland, Leicester B. Review of Historic House Museums, by Laurence Vail Coleman. American Historical Review 40, no. 1 (October 1934): 133-34.

Government Documents

U.S., Congress. Senate. Report on Agriculture. S. Doc. 11, 36th Cong., 1st sess., vol. 1, 1860. "Operations of the Agricultural Department in 1859: Governmental experimental and propagating guides; Patents for Agricultural Inventions," pp. 397-441. As cited from Patent Office Report, 1858; Samuel D. Backus, "Some Hints Upon Farm Houses."

The Congressional Globe: New Series, Containing the Debates, Proceedings and Laws of the First Session of the Thirty-Second Congress. Vol. 24, part 2, pp. 853-55. Washington, D.C.: John C. Rives, 1852.

U.S. Government. Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1971. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971.

Mail-Order Catalogs

Emmet, Boris, ed. Montgomery Ward & Co.: Catalogue and Buyer's Guide, No. 57, Spring and Summer 1895. New York: Dover Publications, 1969.

Israel, Fred L., ed. Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1897. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1968.

Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1902. New York: Bounty Books, 1969.

Schroeder, Joseph J., ed. Sears, Roebuck Catalogue, 1908. Northfield, Ill.: DBI Books, 1971.

Willis, Nathan Parker. The Rag-Bag: A Collection of Ephemera. New York: Charles Scribner, 1855.

Woodward, George E. Country Homes. New York: George E. Woodward, 1865.

Woolett, William E. Old Homes Made New: Being a Collection of Plans, Exterior and Interior Views, Illustrating the Alterations and Remodeling of Several Suburban Residences. New York: A. J. Bicknell & Co., 1878.

Young, John H. Our Deportment: Or, the Manners, Conduct and Dress of the Most Refined Society, Including Forms for Letters, Invitations, etc., etc.; Also Valuable Suggestions on Home Culture and Training. Revised ed. Springfield, Mass.: King & Co., 1882.

Articles

Magazines

Alvord, Clarence Walworth. "The New History." The Nation 94, no. 2445 (May 9, 1912): 457-59.

Downing, Andrew Jackson. "The Danskamer." New York Mirror 13 (October 10, 1835): 117-18.

_____. "On the Employment of Ornamental Trees and Shrubs in North America." The American Gardener's Magazine 1 (1835): 444-52.

_____. "Remarks on the Different Styles of Architecture and the Employment of Vases." The American Gardener's Magazine 2 (August 1836): 281-86.

"Downing on Landscape Gardening." North American Review 53, no. 112 (July 1841): 258-61.

Journals

American Historical Association. "The Fiftieth Anniversary Meeting." American Historical Review 40, no. 3 (April 1935): 423-38.

Dow, Earl Wilbur. "Features of the New History: Apropos Lamprecht's 'Deutsch Geschichte.'" American Historical Review 3, no. 3 (April 1898): 431-48.

Clemens, Samuel Langhorne. Life on the Mississippi. New York: Collier & Son Co., 1917.

Cohn, David L. The Good Old Days: A History of American Manners and Morals As Seen through the Sears, Roebuck Catalogs, 1905 to the Present. Intro. by Sinclair Lewis. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940.

Commission on the Humanities. The Humanities in American Life. By Richard W. Lyman, Chairman. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1980.

Condit, Carl W. American Building Art: The Nineteenth Century. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960.

_____. American Building Materials and Techniques from the First Colonial Settlements to the Present. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Corlew, Robert E. Tennessee: A Short History. 2d ed. Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1981.

Cross, Barbara, ed. The Educated Woman in America. New York: Teacher's College Press, 1965.

Cruber, John F.; Kenkel, William F.; Harper, Robert A., eds. Problems in American Society: Values in Conflict. 4th ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1964.

Curti, Merle; Shyrock, Richard H.; Cochran, Thomas C.; and Harrington, Fred Harvey. A History of American Civilization. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1969.

Demaree, Albert Lowther. The American Agricultural Press, 1819-1860. Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1974.

Demos, John. A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Dennison, George M. The Dorr War: Republicanism on Trial, 1831-1861. Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1976.

Donald, David. Lincoln Reconsidered: Essays on the Civil War. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956.

Early, James T. Romanticism and American Architecture. New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1965.

Ellis, David Maldwyn. Landlords and Farmers in the Hudson-Mohawk Region. New York: Octagon Books, 1967.

Emmet, Boris, and Jeuck, John E. Catalogues and Counters: A History of Sears, Roebuck and Company. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950.

Filene, Peter Gabriel. Him Herself: Sex Roles in Modern America. New York: New American Library, 1975.

Finley, Ruth E. The Lady of Godey's: Sarah Josepha Hale. Women in America, From Colonial Times to the 20th Century Series. Edited by Leon Stein and Annette K. Baxter. New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1931; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1974.

Fishwick, Marshall W., ed. American Studies in Transition. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964.

Fitch, James Marston. Architecture and the Esthetics of Plenty. New York: Columbia University Press, 1961.

Flaherty, David H. Privacy in Colonial New England. Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1972.

Furnas, J. C. The Americans: A Social History of the United States, 1587-1914. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1969.

Gettleman, Marvin E. The Dorr Rebellion: A Study in American Radicalism, 1833-1849. Melbourne Fla.: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co., 1980.

Giedion, Sigfried. Space, Time, and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition. 5th ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

Glassie, Henry. Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975.

Goldschmidt, Walter, ed. Exploring the Ways of Mankind. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960.

Gooch, G. P. History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century. Rev. ed. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1954.

Gottschalk, Louis. Understanding History: A Primer of Historical Method. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958.

Gowans, Alan. Images of American Living: Four Centuries of Architecture and Furniture as Cultural Expression. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.

Green, Arnold W. Sociology: An Analysis of Life in Modern Society. 4th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

Griffin, Clifford S. Their Brother's Keeper: Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1855. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1960.

Grob, Gerald N., and Billias, George Athan, eds. Interpretations of American History: Patterns and Perspectives. 4th ed. 2 vols. New York: Free Press, 1982. Vol. 1: To 1877.

Gusfield, Joseph R. Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1963.

Guttmann, Allen. The Conservative Tradition in America. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Hamlin, Talbot. Greek Revival Architecture in America: Being an Account of Important Trends in American Architecture and American Life Prior to the War Between the States. Intro. by Leopold Arnaud. New York: Dover Publications, 1944.

Handlin, David P. The American Home: Architecture and Society, 1815-1915. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1979.

Handlin, Oscar, ed. This Was America: True Accounts of People, Places, Manners, and Customs, As Recorded by European Travelers to the Western Shore in the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Centuries. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949.

Harris, Neil. The Artist in American Society: The Formative Years, 1790-1860. New York: George Braziller, 1966.

Hartz, Louis. The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Javonovich, 1955.

Hayden, Dolores. The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities. Cambridge: M. I. T. Press, 1981.

_____. Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975. M. I. T. Press, 1976.

Herskovits, Melville J. Man and His Works. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949.

_____. Cultural Anthropology. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963.

Higham, John. History: Professional Scholarship in America. Harper Torchbooks. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

Hindle, Brooke, ed. America's Wooden Age: Aspects of Its Early Technology. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Sleepy Hollow

_____, ed. Material Culture of the Wooden Age. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Sleepy Hollow Press, 1981.

_____, ed. Technology in Early America: Needs and Opportunities for Study; With a Directory of Artifact Collections by Lucius F. Ellsworth. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1966.

Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Historic Preservation Handbook. Atlanta, Ga.: Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1976.

Hofstadter, Richard. The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F. D. R. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959.

_____. Anti-intellectualism in American Life. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963.

Holland, Laurence B., ed. Who Designs America? The American Civilization Conference at Princeton. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1966.

Huizinga, Johan. America: A Dutch Historian's Vision from Afar and Near. Translation, introduction, and notes by Herbert H. Rowen. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

Hume, Ivor Nöel. A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970.

Inge, M. Thomas, ed. Handbook of American Popular Culture. 2 vols. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980. Vol. 1.

Jeffrey, Julie Roy. Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1880. Edited by Eric Foner. American Century Series. New York: Hill and Wang, 1979.

Jones, Alice Hanson. Wealth of a Nation To Be: The American Colonies on the Eve of Revolution. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.

Jones, Howard Mumford. The Age of Energy: Varieties of American Experience, 1865-1915. New York: Viking Press, 1964.

_____. O' Strange New World: American Culture--The Formative Years. New York: Viking Press, 1971.

Katz, Michael B. The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.

Konolige, Kit, and Konolige, Frederica. The Power of Their Glory: America's Ruling Class, The Episcopalians. New York: Wyden Books, 1978.

Kouwenhoven, John A. Made In America: The Arts in Modern Civilization. 2d ed. Newton Centre 59, Mass.: Charles T. Bradford Co., 1957.

Krownslar, Allan A., and Frizzle, eds. Discovering American History. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970.

Kyvig, David E., and Marty, Myron A. Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You. Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1982.

Kranzberg, Melvin, and Pursell, Carroll W., Jr., eds. Technology in Western Civilization. 2 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967. Vol. 1: The Emergence of Modern Industrial Society, Earliest Times to 1900.

Lockwood, Allison. Passionate Pilgrims: The American Traveler in Great Britain, 1800-1914. New York: Cornell Books, 1981.

Lord, Clifford L. Teaching History With Community Resources. 2d ed. New York: Teacher's College, Columbia University Press, 1967.

Lynes, Russell. The Domesticated Americans. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.

_____. The Tastemakers. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1954.

McDaniel, George. Hearth and Home: Preserving a People's Culture. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982.

Metcalf, Fay D., and Downey, Matthew T. Using Local History in the Classroom. Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1982.

Mohr, James. Abortion in America: The Origins and Evolution of National Policy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Mumford, Lewis. Roots of Contemporary American Architecture. New York: Grove Press, 1959.

_____. Sticks and Stones: A Study of American Architecture and Civilization. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924.

Neil, Meredith J. Toward a National Taste: America's Quest for Aesthetic Independence. Honolulu, Hawaii: University Press of Hawaii, 1975.

Nevins, Allan, ed. America Through British Eyes. New York: Oxford University Press, 1948.

Nichols, Susan K., ed. Working Papers: Historians/Artifacts/Learners. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, Museum Reference Center, 1982.

Norton, Mary Beth; Katzman, David M.; Escott, Paul D.; Chudacoff, Howard P.; Paterson, Thomas G.; Tuttle, William M., Jr. A People & A Nation: A History of The United States. 2 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1982. Vol. 2: Since 1865.

The Pallisers' Late Victorian Architecture. Intro. by Michael A. Tomlan. Watkins Glen, N.Y.: American Life Foundation, 1978.

Panofsky, Erwin. Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism. New York: Meridian Books, 1957.

Parkes, Henry Bamford. The United States of America: A History. New York: Harper & Row, 1953.

Patrick, James. Architecture in Tennessee. Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1981.

Persons, Stow. The Decline of American Gentility. New York: Columbia University Press, 1973.

Pessen, Edward. Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics. Dorsey Series in American History. Revised ed. Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1978.

_____. Riches, Class, and Power Before the Civil War. Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath & Co., 1973.

Popham, W. James. Criterion-Referenced Measurement. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978.

_____, and Baker, Eva L. Classroom Instructional Tactics. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973.

_____, and Baker, Eva L. Establishing Instructional Goals. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970.

Post, Robert, ed. A Centennial Exhibition. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1976.

Quimby, Ian M. G., ed. Ceramics in America. Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1973.

_____, ed. Material Culture and the Study of American Life. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978.

_____, ed. Winterthur Portfolio 9. Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1974.

Rapoport, Amos. House Form and Culture. Foundations in Cultural Geography Series. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1969.

Rodabaugh, James H., comp. and ed. The Present World of History: A Conference on Certain Problems in Historical Agency Work in the United States. Madison, Wisc.: American Association for State and Local History, 1959.

Rogers, Everett M. Diffusion of Inventions. New York: Free Press, 1967.

Rorabaugh, William. The Alcoholic Republic. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Rothman, David J. The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971.

_____, and Rothman, Sheila M., eds. Sources of the American Social Tradition. New York: Basic Books, 1975.

Schlereth, Thomas J. Artifacts and the American Past. Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1980.

_____, ed. Material Culture Studies in America. Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1982.

Scott, Geoffry. The Architecture of Humanism. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925.

Schuler, Edgar A.; Hoult, Thomas F.; Gibson, Duane L.; Brookover, Wilbur B., eds. Readings in Sociology. 3rd ed. New York: Thomas T. Crowell, 1967.

Scully, Vincent J., Jr. The Shingle Style: Architectural Theory and Design from Richardson to the Origins of Wright. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1957.

Shaffer, Laurence Frederic, and Shoben, Edward Joseph, Jr. The Psychology of Adjustment: A Dynamic Approach to Personality and Mental Hygiene. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1956.

Shannon, Fred A. An Appraisal of Walter Prescott Webb's The Great Plains: A Study in Institutions and Environment, With Comments by Walter Prescott Webb, a panel discussion and commentary by Read Bain. New York: Social Science Research Council, 1940; reprint ed., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979.

Simon, Sidney B.; Howe, Leland W.; and Kirschenbaum, Howard. Values Classification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students. New and revised ed. New York: A&W Visual Library, 1978.

Sklar, Kathryn Kish. Catherine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1973.

Sloane, Eric. Don't: A Little Book of Early American Gentility. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1968.

Soltow, Lee. Men and Wealth in the United States, 1850-1870. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1975.

_____, ed. Six Papers on the Size Distribution of Wealth and Income. Studies in Income and Wealth. Volume 33, by the Conference on Research in Income and Wealth, National Bureau of Economic Research. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

Stansbury, Caroline Matilda. A New Home: Or, Life in the Clearings. Edited by John Nerber. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1953.

Stern, Fritz. The Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present. New York: World Publishing Co., 1956.

Strasser, Susan. Never Done: A History of American Housework. New York: Pantheon Press, 1982.

Talbot, George. At Home: Domestic Life in the Post-Centennial Era, 1876-1920. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976.

Te Selle, Sallie, ed. The Family, Communes, and Utopian Societies. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

Tillinghast, Pardon E. The Specious Past: Historians and Others. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1972.

Torre, Susana, ed. Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective. Whitney Library of Design. New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1977.

Tyron, Warren S., ed. A Mirror for Americans: Life and Manners in the United States, 1790-1870, as Recorded by American Travelers. 3 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952. Vol. 1.

Vincus, Martha, ed. Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1972.

Wade, Richard C. Slavery in the Cities: The South 1830-1860. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Walters, Ronald G. American Reformers, 1815-1860. American Century Series. New York: Hill and Wang, 1978.

Ward, John William. Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age. New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Webb, Walter Prescott. The Great Plains. New York: Ginn & Co., 1931.

Wellman, Rita. Victoria Royal: The Flowering of a Style. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939.

Werkele, Gerda R.; Peterson, Rebecca; and Morely, David, eds. New Space for Women. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980.

White, Leslie A. The Science of Culture: A Study of Man and Civilization. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969.

Whyte, William Foote. Human Relations in the Restaurant Industry. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1948.

Wiebe, Robert. The Search for Order, 1877-1920. The Making of America Series. Gen. ed., David Donald. New York: Hill & Wang, 1967.

Williams, Robin M. American Society: A Sociological Interpretation. 2d ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960. 3rd ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970.

Wright, Gwendolyn. Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Zevi, Bruno. Architecture As Space: How to Look at Architecture. Translated by Milton Gendel. New York:

Directories and Encyclopedias

Cattell, Jacques, ed. Directory of American Scholars: A Biographical Directory. 3rd ed. New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1957.

Cooke, Robert C., ed. Who's Who in American Education: An Illustrated Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Living Educators of the United States. 9th ed. Nashville, Tenn.: Who's Who in American Education, 1940.

Dictionary of American Biography, 1959 ed. S. v. "Downing, Andrew Jackson," by Herbert Anthony Kellar.

Morris, Richard B., ed. Encyclopedia of American History. 2 vols. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953. Vol. 2.

Morris, William, and Morris, Mary, eds. Morris Dictionary of Word Phrases and Origins. Foreword by Edwin Newman. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.

National Union Catalog of Pre-1956 Imprints. 754 vols. Chicago: Mansell Information/Publishing, 1968. Vol. 34.

Withey, Henry F., and Withey, Elsie Rathburn. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970.

Newspapers

Associated Press, "Search for Old Sears mail-order homes is launched." The Lorrain (Ohio) Journal, February 21, 1982, p. 31.

Preservation News, May 1982, p. 8.

Journal and Magazine Articles

Adams, George Rollie. "Planning for the Future: AASLH Looks at Its Past." History News 37, no. 9 (September 1982): 12-18.

Ames, Kenneth L. "Meaning in Artifacts: Hall Furnishings in Victorian America." Journal of Interdisciplinary History 9, no. 1 (Summer 1978): 19-46.

"ASAH Beginnings." Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 1, no. 1 (January 1941): 20-22.

Bannister, Turpin C. "Architectural Development of the Northeastern States." Architectural Record 89, no. 6 (June 1941): 61-80.

Bestor, Arthur R., Jr. "Patent-Office Models of the Good Society: Some Relationships Between Social Reform and Westward Expansion." American Historical Review 55, no. 3 (April 1953): 505-26.

Bloom, Benjamin S. "Learning for Mastery." Evaluation Comment 1, no. 2 (May 1968): 45-48.

Bridenbaugh, Carl. "The Great Mutation." American Historical Review 68, no. 2 (January 1963): 315-31.

Bridges, William E. "Warm Hearth, Cold World: Social Perspectives on the Household Poets." American Quarterly 21, no. 4 (Winter 1969): 764-79.

Clark, Clifford E., Jr. "Domestic Architecture as an Index to Social History: The Romantic Revival and the Cult of Domesticity in America, 1840-1870." Journal of Interdisciplinary History 8, no. 1 (Summer 1976): 33-56.

Coleman, Lee. "What Is American? A Study of Alleged American Traits." Social Forces 19, no. 2 (May 1949): 492-99.

Downs, Arthur Channing, Jr. "Downing's Newburgh Villa." Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology 2, nos. 3-4 (1972): 1-113.

Du Bois, Cora. "The Dominant Value Profile of American Culture." American Anthropologist 57, no. 4 (December 1955): 1232-39.

Fleming, Dolores. "One Order Brought It All: A Morgantown Mail-Order House." Goldenseal: A Quarterly Journal for Documenting West Virginia's Traditional Life 8, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 36-42.

Gatewood, Willard B., Jr. "The Forty-seventh Annual Meeting." Journal of Southern History 48, no. 1 (February 1982): 71-92.

Goetzmann, William H. "Time's American Adventures: American Historians and Their Writing Since 1776." American Studies International 19, no. 2 (Winter 1981): 5-47.

Gombrich, E. H. "The Visual Image." Scientific American 227, no. 3 (September 1972): 82-96.

Hersey, George L. "Godey's Choice." Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 18, no. 3 (October 1959): 104-111.

Howe, David Walker. "American Victorianism as a Culture." American Quarterly 27, no. 5 (December 1975): 507-532.

Jeans, Marylou Terral. "Restoring a Mail-Order Landmark." Americana 9, no. 2 (May/June 1981): 40-47.

Johnson, Mary. "What's in a Butterchurn or Sadiron? Some Thoughts on Using Artifacts in Social History." The Public Historian 5, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 61-81.

Jones, James Boyd, Jr. "The Memphis Firefighters' Strikes, 1858, 1860." East Tennessee Historical Society Publications, no. 49 (1977), pp. 37-60.

_____. "Mose the Bowery B'hoy and the Nashville Volunteer Fire Department, 1849-1860." Tennessee Historical Quarterly 40, no. 2 (Summer 1981): 129-43.

Knuth, Priscilla. "'Picturesque' Frontier: The Army's Fort Dulles." Oregon Historical Quarterly 67, no. 4 (1966): 292-346; and 68, no. 1 (1967): 4-52.

Lerner, Gerda. "The Necessity of History and the Professional Historian." Journal of American History 69, no. 1 (June 1982): 7-20.

Litman, Vicki Harper. "The Cottage and the Temple: Melville's Symbolic Use of Architecture." American Quarterly 21, no. 3 (Fall 1969): 630-38.

Mowry, George E. "The California Progressive and His Rationale: A Study in Middle Class Politics." Mississippi Valley Historical Review 36, no. 2 (September 1949): 239-250.

Olson, Mancur, Jr. "Rapid Growth as a Destabilizing Force." Journal of Economic History 23, no. 4 (December 1963): 529-52.

Pederson, Harold L. "Cultural Differences in the Acceptance of Recommended Practices." Rural Sociology 16, no. 1 (March 1951): 37-49.

Popham, W. James. "Customized Criterion-Referenced Tests," Educational Leadership 34, no. 4 (January 1977): 250-53.

Schlereth, Thomas J. "Pioneers in Material Culture: Using American Things to Teach American History." History News 39, no. 9 (September 1982): 28-32.

Schroeder, Fred. "Designing Your Exhibits: Seven Ways to Look at an Artifact." American Association for State and Local History Technical Leaflet 91. History News 31, no. 11 (November 1976).

Thomas, John L. "Romantic Reform in America, 1815-1865." American Quarterly 17, no. 3 (Fall 1965): 657-81.

Tomlan, Michael A. "George Franklin Barker (1854-1915), Carpenter, Architect, and Publisher." Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 35, no. 4 (December 1976): 261-62.

Trottenberg, A. D. "College Graduate Illiterates." Saturday Review 49 (February 1966): 73-75, 103-108.

Weinstein, Allen. "The Sixty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians." Journal of American History 60, no. 2 (September 1973): 373-408.

Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860." American Quarterly 18, no. 2, pt. 1 (Summer 1966): 151-74.

Whyte, William Foote. "The Social Structure of the Restaurant." American Journal of Sociology 54, no. 4 (January 1949): 302-310.

Williams, Walter L. "United States Indian Policy and the Debate Over Philippine Annexation: Implications for the Origins of American Imperialism." Journal of American History 66, no. 4 (March 1980): 810-31.

Wright, Gavin. "Economic Democracy and the Concentration of Agricultural Wealth in the Cotton South, 1850-1860." Agricultural History 44, no. 1 (January 1970): 63-94.

Book Review

Durning, Russell E. Review of The Feminization of American Culture, by Ann Douglas. American Historical Review 83, no. 2 (April 1978): 519-20.

Brochure

Huhta, James K.; Hoy, Suellen M.; Kelly, Lawrence C.; Kesselman, Steven A.; Tise, Larry E.; Bass, W. H.; Hankins, Caneta S.; Jones, James Boyd, Jr. Historic Preservation: A Guide for Departments of History. A Professional Service Publication of the Committee on Public History. Bloomington, Ind.: Organization of American Historians, 1982.

Theses

Bridenthal, Renate Rubin. "Barthold Georg Niebuhr, Historian of Rome: A Study in Methodology." Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1970. In Dissertation Abstracts International. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1971. Vol. 32, no. 1 (July 1971): 350.

Jones, James Boyd, Jr. "A History of the Memphis Volunteer Fire Department, 1848-1860." M.A. thesis, University of Mississippi, 1978.

Pendergast, Norma. "The Sense of Home: Nineteenth Century Domestic Architectural Reform." Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, May 1981.

Tatum, George Bishop. "Andrew Jackson Downing, Arbiter of American Taste, 1815-1852." Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, September 1949.

Programs

Organization of American Historians. Program of the Seventy-Fifth Annual Meeting, 1982. Bloomington, Ind.: Organization of American Historians, 1982.

_____. Program of the Seventy-Sixth Annual Meeting, 1983. Bloomington, Ind.: Organization of American Historians, 1983.

Paper Presentations

Babb, Charles W. Professor of Education. Lecture for Education 752, Problems of Evaluation and Measurement in Higher Education, delivered at Middle Tennessee State University, September 14, 1981.

Kammen, Michael. "Extending the Reach of American Cultural History: Retrospect and Prospects." Paper presented at 1983 Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians, Cincinnati, Ohio, April 7, 1983.

Popham, W. James. "Measurement Advances for Educational Evaluators." Paper presented in the symposium, The Expanding Technology of Educational Research, Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Illinois, April 15-19, 1974.

Interviews

Ferris, Norman C. Department of History, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Interview, March 7, 1983.

Huhta, James K. Director, Historic Preservation Program, Department of History, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Interviews, November 7, 1981; April 30, 1982; September 3, 1982; and June 10, 1983.