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Source: *Winterthur Portfolio*, Summer - Autumn, 1987, Vol. 22, No. 2/3 (Summer - Autumn, 1987), pp. 109-148

Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Inc.

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The American Colonial Revival in the 1930s

David Gebhard

IN 1930 CLAUDE H. MILLER emphasized, “every community should have at least one example of a type of architecture [the colonial] that has survived for more than two hundred years and that has, today, a far greater appeal than any time in its history.” And indeed, the architects, builders, and clients of the depression years of the 1930s not only made sure that there was one example but also made the colonial the most prevalent and popular architectural image of the time. By the thirties the colonial had already enjoyed well over half a century of revival. As a continually transformed image, it had shown a remarkable ability to shift its ground and to absorb whatever happened to be the current fashion, whether visual or ideological.¹ In the 1880s and later, the colonial mingled with the English Queen Anne to produce the shingle style; in the 1890s and on into the 1900s, it brought forth its own version of the classical beaux-arts. In this century colonial elements were a continuous ingredient in craftsman architecture and design (finally usurping it), while in the twenties the colonial types became one of the contending, openly romantic, period-revival styles.

New York architect Chester Homes Aldrich remarked when commenting on his own work (Delano and Aldrich) in 1929, “Today we may design a so-called Georgian house, endeavoring to capture the vital old eighteenth century spirit and yet,

when we have done it, and provided we have handled the design with freedom and have answered the needs of our present day clients, it will really be an expression of our own time. Later on, years from now, that house may look like 1929. The result of whatever we do shows itself, willy-nilly, the seal of our own hand and time.”²

Thus, as Aldrich perceptively observed, the colonial always ended up commenting on both the past and the present. One of the principal arguments for using the colonial rather than another image was its enduring nature, for as a style it had remained, while other historic and modern images had come and gone with the winds of fashion. Writing in 1939, T. C. Hughes, secretary of the Detroit chapter of the American Institute of Architects, noted: “In the selection of style, obsolescence, the enemy of value, should be borne in mind. Jigsaw exteriors, overdone bungalows, and false gabled English were among many passing fads, while good colonial, early American, and Georgian have stood the test of time. If well done, they will always be good.” This perception was not limited to architects, but was almost universally believed in by the middle and upper-middle classes. The editors of *Popular Mechanics* presented the argument in a way that all could understand: “Styles in houses come and go like styles in cars. . . . It pays to build in a style as liquid in public approval as a Liberty bond at a bank. Colonial is such a style.”³

Why has the colonial endured so long as a safe stylistic investment for the American middle and upper-middle classes? In the same article in *Popular Mechanics*, three reasons were suggested for its popularity: “First, in plan and construction, Colo-

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The author is grateful to Richard Wills, AIA, of Boston, for his help in understanding and making it possible to see many of the houses designed by his father, Royal Barry Wills.

¹ Claude H. Miller, “Building an Early American Home,” *Country Life* (New York) 57, no. 4 (April 1930): 41; William B. Rhoads, *The Colonial Revival* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977); William B. Rhoads, “The Colonial Revival and American Nationalism,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 35, no. 4 (December 1976): 239–54; Alan Axelrod, ed., *The Colonial Revival in America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985).

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² Quoted in John Taylor Boyd, Jr., “The Classical Spirit in Our Country Houses,” *Arts and Decoration* 31, no. 4 (October 1929): 62.

³ “T. C. Hughes Scores ‘Modern’ Style Home,” *Architect and Engineer* 137, no. 1 (April 1939): 56–60; “A Style that Never Grows Old,” *Popular Mechanics* 52, no. 11 (November 1929): 879.

nial is the outgrowth of simple, honest housing requirements of our forefathers, requirements which in many ways have not changed greatly since the days when Thomas Jefferson built Monticello and Washington lived at Mt. Vernon. Second, Colonial is economical to build due to its simplicity, in plan and freedom from over ornamentation; third, it has good proportions."⁴ Here, then, were the essential rationales for the persistent use of this image: the injection of ethical considerations, such as "simple" and "honest"; its symbolism as the American national style, from Jefferson and Washington to the present; its down-to-earth, sensible economy of construction; and, finally, its adherence to "correct" classical principles of design. These explanations, advanced in 1929, became intensified in the 1930s. Nationalism, as an inward-looking affair, the house as a symbol of the family, and puritanical simplicity of proportions, coupled with a self-conscious modesty of assertion, were the hallmarks of the colonial from 1930 through 1941.

Our understanding of the twenties and thirties has been appreciably expanded beyond that of high-art modern. The richness of the popular art deco of the twenties and of the streamline moderne of the thirties now forms a part of our appreciation of the architecture and design of these two decades. Slowly we are beginning also to appreciate the contributions made by the exponents of traditional images.

Perhaps our first need is to rid ourselves of the moral absolutism that the modernists attached to their cause. The argument of ethicality may just as logically be attached to traditional architectural modes and especially to the colonial. Nor should we inevitably accept the often reported suggestion of the relationship between ethicality and design. Architect Wells Bennett, writing in 1931, observed: "The most fastidious of collectors of early Americana, however, will not hesitate to park his 1931 Buick in the replica of a Colonial stable. The average citizen does not feel that the fashion of the place where he works has anything to do with the style of the place where he sleeps, the church where he worships, or the monuments in which he enshrines his governments and his heroes."⁵

In discussing the colonial in the 1930s, there are several questions that should be explored and, one hopes, answered. What happened in the thir-

ties to establish the colonial as the decade's major building type? What sources did the architects and their clients look to in creating colonial images of the thirties? What were the varied colonial images (or types) preferred? Were there any appreciable changes in the colonial image between 1930 and 1941? Did these designs make any unique and significant contribution to this "time-honored" image? Who were the principal architectural practitioners of the colonial at this time? And finally, were there any major monuments created that spoke the colonial language?

Before looking into the varied interpretations of the colonial and the sources of these interpretations which came to the fore in the thirties, we should remind ourselves of several premises upon which the period revival of the twenties was based. Traditionalists insisted that the architect's task was not one (nor could it be one) of seeking to replicate historic images of the past; rather, the obligation was to use historic images as a point of departure for the creation of new variations on an existing theme. Out of this approach developed the view that what architects were dealing with (and this is especially the case with the colonial) were architectural "types," not styles.⁶

Thus, in the 1920s or 1930s, the functional needs of the time, of methods of construction, of suitable materials and parts, and above all of aesthetic sensibility would of necessity transform the traditional image into something fresh and modern. This new historic type would end up having more in common with other architectural forms then in use than it would with its specific historic source. By thinking in terms of type rather than style, both the architect and the client freed themselves from the illusion of archaeological/historical constraints.

The development of colonial revival imagery of the thirties was at least in part due to a broader knowledge and appreciation of the country's seventeenth- through early nineteenth-century architectural inheritance. Throughout the teens and into the thirties the principal professional American journals had published page upon page of measured drawings and general interior and exterior photographs of American colonial architecture. From the twenties on, the *Architectural Record* published its series, *Measured Drawings, Early American Architecture*; *Pencil Points* created its Monograph series, *Records of American Architec-*

⁴ "Style that Never Grows Old," p. 879.

⁵ Wells Bennett, "Modernism Is Still in the Making," *Pencil Points* 12, no. 2 (February 1931): 87.

⁶ Leslie W. Devereux, "The Condition of Modern Architecture," *Architecture* 45, no. 2 (February 1922): 42.

ture, edited by Russell F. Whitehead; the *Architectural Forum* presented the colonial in its Interior section and later in its Master Detail series; and the *American Architect* provided a view of the colonial through its Brick Precedent and Portfolio series.⁷ By the mid 1930s the scope of these colonial inserts in these major national journals had substantially increased; not only did they often tend to be the most substantial item in an individual issue, but the colonial subject matter eventually all but eliminated the non-American traditional insert that one finds throughout the 1920s.

It is apparent that these colonial inserts in the architectural journals were used directly as source material in the design process. The architect's characteristic approach was to clip and file the material separately, usually under the categories of doorways, windows, mantels, shutters, and so forth. These drawings and photographs were then consulted, particularly in the preparation of working drawings and of details. Such details, garnered from the architectural journals, were also used by manufacturers; two of the most popular associated with the colonial revival in the thirties were Curtis Woodwork and Morgan Millwork.⁸ These presentations in professional journals were matched by increased attention paid to the colonial tradition in middle- and upper-middle-class magazines—ranging from *Good Housekeeping*, *American Home*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *House and Garden*, *House Beautiful*, and *Ladies' Home Journal* to the more elite *Arts and Decoration*, *Town and Country*, and *Country Life*.

Supplementing this array of professional and popular literature was a steadily increasing number of picture books and historical studies devoted to colonial architecture. Wallace Nutting's 1920s series, from *Vermont Beautiful* to *Virginia Beautiful*, was reissued in the mid 1930s. While these were highly personal guides, they were, like his framed sepia photographs, his furniture, and his numerous books on furniture, exclusively devoted to ad-

⁷ See a discussion of Whitehead and the White Pine Monograph series, by Charles Magruder, in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 22, no. 1 (March 1963): 39–41.

⁸ In an advertisement of Curtis Woodwork, published in *Architectural Forum* 51, pt. 1, no. 3 (September 1929): 65, it was noted that the work was taken from specific colonial eighteenth-century buildings. Advertisements for Curtis Woodwork occurred both in the professional architectural journals and in the popular home magazines throughout the 1930s. For a typical example, see *Pencil Points* 19, no. 4 (April 1938): supp. p. 89. Curtis Woodwork also engaged major architects to design many of their products such as entrances and fireplace mantels. Several of these designs by Dwight James Baum were presented in an advertisement in *Pencil Points* 19, no. 1 (January 1938): 40.

vancing the imagery of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century colonial Americana.⁹ Then there was a growing number of books depicting America's regional colonial architecture. Characteristic of these were Helen Wilkinson Reynolds, *Dutch Houses in the Hudson Valley before 1776* (New York: Payson and Clarke, 1929), with an introduction by Franklin Delano Roosevelt; Eleanor Raymond, *Early Domestic Architecture of Pennsylvania* (New York: William Helburn, 1931); Mixer Knowlton, *Old Houses of New England* (New York: Macmillan, 1927); Thomas T. Waterman and John A. Barrows, *Domestic Architecture of Tidewater Virginia* (New York: Scribner's, 1932); and William Spratling and Natalie Scott, *Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana* (New York: William Helburn, 1927). For interior details architects consulted such specialized volumes as Edith Tunis Sale, *Colonial Interiors* (New York: William Helburn, 1930); for garden design, there was the two-volume set by Alice B. B. Lockwood, *Gardens of Colony and of States: Gardens and Gardeners of the American Colonies and the Republic before 1840* (New York: Scribner's, 1931).

By 1941 the number of popular and professional source books on colonial architecture had more than doubled, reflecting the deepening interest in and idolization of early America. These publications ranged from the impressive beaux-arts drawings contained in the two-volume *Great Georgian Houses of America* (New York: Kalkhoff Press, 1933–37), edited by William L. Bottomley, to numerous regional studies and monographs on individual "colonial" architects—Samuel McIntire, Robert Mills, and the firm of Town and Davis.¹⁰

⁹ Nutting's America the Beautiful series eventually consisted of eight volumes: *Vermont Beautiful* (1922); *Massachusetts Beautiful* (1923); *New Hampshire Beautiful* (1923); *Connecticut Beautiful* (1923); *Maine Beautiful* (1924); *Pennsylvania Beautiful* (1924); *New York Beautiful* (1927); *Virginia Beautiful* (1930). All these volumes were edited and reissued between 1935 and 1937. For a discussion of Nutting and his importance in the colonial revival of the 1910s and 1920s, see William L. Dulaney, "Wallace Nutting: Collector and Entrepreneur," in *American Furniture and Its Makers: Winterthur Portfolio* 13, ed. Ian M. G. Quimby (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 47–60; Wallace Nutting, *Wallace Nutting's Biography* (Framingham, Mass.: Old America Co., 1936); and Wallace Nutting, *Supreme Edition General Catalogue* (1930; reprint, Exton, Pa.: Schiffer, 1977).

¹⁰ Characteristic of numerous regional studies often mentioned in the magazines of the time were Herbert Wheaton Congdon, *Old Vermont Houses: The Architecture of a Resourceful People* (Brattleboro: Stephen Daye Press, 1940); Charles M. Stotz, *Early Architecture of Western Pennsylvania* (New York: William Helburn, 1936); Harold Donaldson Eberlein and Cortlandt Van Dyke Hubbard, *Portrait of a Colonial City: Philadelphia, 1670–1838* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1939); Rexford Newcomb, *Old Kentucky Architecture* (New York: William Helburn, 1939); J. Frazer Smith, *White Pillars: Early Life and Ar-*

Certainly for the public, and one suspects the architects as well, one of the most impressive advocates of the colonial was New England graphic-artist-turned-photographer Samuel Chamberlain.¹¹ During the twenties, Chamberlain's many books and numerous illustrations of European architecture published in the professional architectural journals were continually consulted by architects. His drawings of Italian, Spanish, French, and English domestic architecture represented in many ways the picturesque ideal that architects and clients of the period revivals were seeking to realize. In some of these presentations of Europe, Chamberlain had supplemented his etchings and lithographs with photographs, and by the mid 1930s the camera had become his principal pictorial tool. From 1936 on, he turned his attention to New England and its architecture. "I was attracted," he later wrote, "to old houses, particularly the small ones that could provide ideas for contemporary house builders."¹² The first of his series of photographic essays on New England architecture was *A Small House in the Sun* (New York: Hastings House, 1936), with, according to the dust jacket, "181 illustrations . . . rich in ideas for the prospective home builder, since no type of architecture has been developed in this country which so satisfactorily combines the beauty and utility of the Colonial House." This volume was followed the next year by *Cape Cod in the Sun* (New York: Hastings House, 1937) and the first edition of his guidebook, *Open House in New England* (Brattleboro, Vt.: Stephen Daye Press, 1937). Four editions of the guidebook were issued between 1937 and 1941.

chitecture of the Lower Mississippi Valley Country (New York: William Helburn, 1941); Fiske Kimball, *Mr. Samuel McIntire, Carver, the Architect of Salem* (Portland, Maine: Southworth-Anthoensen Press, 1940); H. M. Pierce Gallagher, *Robert Mills: Architect of the Washington Monument, 1781–1855* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935); and Roger Hale Newton, *Town and Davis, Architects: Pioneers in American Revivalistic Architecture, 1812–1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942).

¹¹ Charles D. Childs, *Samuel Chamberlain, Etcher and Lithographer* (Boston: Charles E. Goodspeed, 1927); Samuel Chamberlain, *Etched in Sunlight: Fifty Years of Graphic Art* (Boston: Boston Public Library, 1968).

¹² Samuel Chamberlain, "Italian Farm Houses," *American Architect* 132, no. 2529 (September 20, 1927): 351–56; Samuel Chamberlain, *Sketches of Northern Spanish Architecture* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1926); Samuel Chamberlain, *Domestic Architecture in Rural France* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1928); Samuel Chamberlain, *Tudor Homes of England* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1929); Samuel Chamberlain, "Broadway in the Cottswolds," *American Architect* 132, no. 2535 (December 20, 1927): 779–82; Chamberlain, *Etched in Sunlight*, p. 81.

Probably Chamberlain's most popular photographic essays were a group of ten small volumes devoted to historic New England cities and towns: Salem, Cambridge, Martha's Vineyard, Portsmouth, and others. These volumes, like his earlier ones, were inexpensive (\$1.25) and were beautifully printed in photogravure. At the same time, he issued a series of postcards entitled the American Scene. Chamberlain's shift to photography and to the nostalgic subject of New England and its architecture was a shift not only in modes but also in audience. These photographic essays were aimed more at the middle- and upper-middle-class lay audiences than to architects. The timing of these picture books and his New England guidebook was excellent (if not fortuitous), for with the gradual economic improvement of the late 1930s, an increased number of Americans visited New England, particularly those coming from afar to see the New York World's Fair of 1939.¹³

Equally impressive in promoting the colonial American image in the thirties was the Works Progress Administration's depression-inspired American Guide series, which by 1942 had produced guides to all the eastern states. These guides to the "Colonial East," through their texts, guide sections, and photographic illustrations, placed a major emphasis on seventeenth- through early nineteenth-century architecture.¹⁴

Another source for the colonial in the thirties

¹³ Chamberlain's series of books includes *Historic Salem in Four Seasons* (1938); *Gloucester and Cape Ann* (1938); *Longfellow's Wayside Inn* (1938); *Historic Boston* (1938); *Nantucket* (1938, 1939); *Lexington and Concord* (1938, 1939); *Historic Cambridge in Four Seasons* (1938, 1942); *Old Marblehead* (1938); *Portsmouth: A Camera Impression* (1940); *Martha's Vineyard* (1941). All of these were published by Hastings House, New York. Chamberlain also published several other small photographic volumes, including *New England Doorways* (New York: Hastings House, 1939); *Ever New England* (New York: Chanticleer Press, 1940); and *Behold Williamsburg: A Pictorial Tour of Virginia's Colonial Capital* (New York: Hastings House, 1947). In addition, in the 1930s he continued to publish articles in the professional journals and in middle- and upper-middle-class home magazines. See Samuel Chamberlain, "The Urge to Remodel," *American Architect and Architecture* 148, no. 2646 (June 1936): 34–42; Samuel Chamberlain, "Colonial Williamsburg," *Pencil Points* 20, no. 9 (September 1939): 589–94; and Samuel Chamberlain, "Our Fireplace Originals," *House Beautiful* 79, no. 1 (January 1937): 42–45, 59. "'The American Scene,' Post Card View of, by Samuel Chamberlain, Published by Yale University Press," *Architectural Record* 81, no. 5 (May 1937): 34. Other pictorial volumes similar to those of Chamberlain were Nola Nancy Oliver, *Natchez, Symbol of the Old South*, and Mary Eleanor Browning, *Our Nation's Capital*, both published by Hastings House, New York, 1940.

¹⁴ Arthur Scharf, "Selected Publications of the W.P.A. Federal Writer's Project and the Writers' Program," in Jerre Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal: The Federal Writers' Project, 1935–1943* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1972), pp. 376–403.

was house pattern books, published by many of the national home magazines, including *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, and *Good Housekeeping*; by building-products companies and associations; and by individual publishers and architects.¹⁵ With the movement from European to American precedent in the 1930s, Rexford Newcomb, who had been an enthusiast for things Hispanic, matched his *Spanish House for America* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1927) with his *Colonial and Federal House: How to Build an Authentic Colonial House* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1933).

Although the three principal expositions of the 1930s—the 1933/34 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition, the 1939 New York World's Fair, and the 1939 San Francisco Golden Gate International Exposition—were committed to one degree or another to the modernist cause, they all commented on the colonial tradition. At Chicago, Thomas E. Tallmadge designed an “American Colonial Village”: “Main Street as our great-grandfathers knew it” (fig. 1). These buildings, lining the tree-shaded street (with attendants and others in appropriate costume), included reproductions of Boston’s Old State House and of Old Wakefield, where George Washington was born. In the case of the 1939 New York and San Francisco fairs, the colonial was presented as a contemporary house type within their Town of Tomorrow. Of the fifteen houses at the New York fair, nine were variations of the colonial theme.¹⁶

Accompanying the San Francisco fair at Treasure Island were a number of exhibit houses. Royal Barry Wills was commissioned by the Western Pine Association to design a demonstration house “of New England heritage,” embodying “simplicity,

¹⁵ John Normile, ed., *New Ideas for Building Your Home* (Des Moines, Iowa: Merideth Publishing Co., 1938); United States Gypsum Co., *How to Have the Home You Want* (Chicago, 1939); Portland Cement Association, *Designed for Concrete Houses* (Chicago, 1936); Johns-Manville Building Materials, *The Home Idea Book* (New York, 1939); National Small Homes Demonstration, *The Best Way to Achieve Low-Cost Housing Is to Build Low-Cost Housing* (Washington, D.C.: National Lumber Manufacturing Assn., 1939); *The Book of 100 Homes* (St. Paul, Minn.: Brown-Blodgett Co., 1942); Henry Mins and Eugenia Mins, *Your House in the Country* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1939); *The Architectural Forum Book of Small Houses* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936); Henry T. Child, *Colonial Houses* (New York: By the author, 1932); Samuel Glaser, *Designs for 60 Small Homes* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1939).

¹⁶ “American Colonial Village,” *Architectural Forum* 61, no. 1 (July 1934): 12–13; “Colonial Village,” *Pencil Points* 16, no. 9 (September 1935): 495; “Modern Houses Top N.Y. Fair,” *Architectural Forum* 71, no. 1 (July 1939): 63–72. The Evans, Moore, and Woodbridge Exposition House was built at Harmon-on-Hudson, N.Y., in 1939. See *Architectural Forum* 72, no. 4 (April 1940): 251.

perfect scale and close relation to its surroundings” (fig. 2). William W. Wurster, Allen C. Collins, and Paul Hammarberg, who also designed exposition houses scattered throughout the San Francisco Bay area, took a similar colonial approach. Two industry-sponsored idea houses of the Treasure Island fair, one by the Gas Industry and the other by United States Steel, ran the gamut between a historically correct version of the California ranch house and a more modernized version.¹⁷

For the professionals (with the general lack of commissions during these years) and the lay public (with its funds severely limited), national and regional competitions and the building of demonstration houses were ways in which architecture, and especially the colonial tradition, could be experienced. While there were always a few streamlined moderne designs present in the entries to these competitions, the vast majority included references to the colonial image. With only a few exceptions, the winners and runners-up in these national competitions were out-and-out colonial designs. Wills, of Boston, one of the most popular as well as gifted exponents of the colonial image, entered and won numerous awards in these competitions of the 1930s, ranging from the 1932 gold medal in the Better Homes in America competition to the \$1,000 sweepstakes prize in the competition sponsored by *Better Homes and Gardens*.¹⁸

These national competitions and the construction of model homes in the thirties enjoyed a wide group of sponsors. In the twenties and on into the early thirties Herbert Hoover’s Better Homes in America dominated governmental sponsorship. By the midthirties Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Federal Housing Administration was both directly and indirectly involved in many of the national architectural competitions.¹⁹ As in the late teens and

¹⁷ Western Pine Association, *The Western Pine Home* (Portland, Oreg.: By the association, 1939), p. 6; “California Houses,” *Architectural Forum* 71, no. 3 (September 1939): 179–94; Treasure Island Exhibit Home sponsored by U.S. Steel, *Architect and Engineer* 138, no. 2 (August 1939): 13; Treasure Island’s “Sunshine House” sponsored by Gas Industry, *Architect and Engineer* 139, no. 1 (October 1939): 11.

¹⁸ “Royal Barry Wills, Gold Medal, 1932,” *Architectural Record* 73, no. 3 (March 1933): 196; “\$1,000 Sweepstakes Prizewinner,” *Better Homes and Gardens* 14, no. 4 (April 1936): 38–39.

¹⁹ Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Cabinet and the Presidency, 1920–1933* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1952), pp. 256–58; “Better Homes in America: Small House Competition,” *Architectural Forum* 60, no. 3 (March 1934): 169–70; *America’s Little House: An Educational Demonstration by the New York Committee of Better Homes in America, Inc.* (New York: Better Homes in America, 1934); James Ford, “The Better Homes in America Small House Competitions,” in *American Country Houses of Today*, ed. Lewis A. Coffin (New

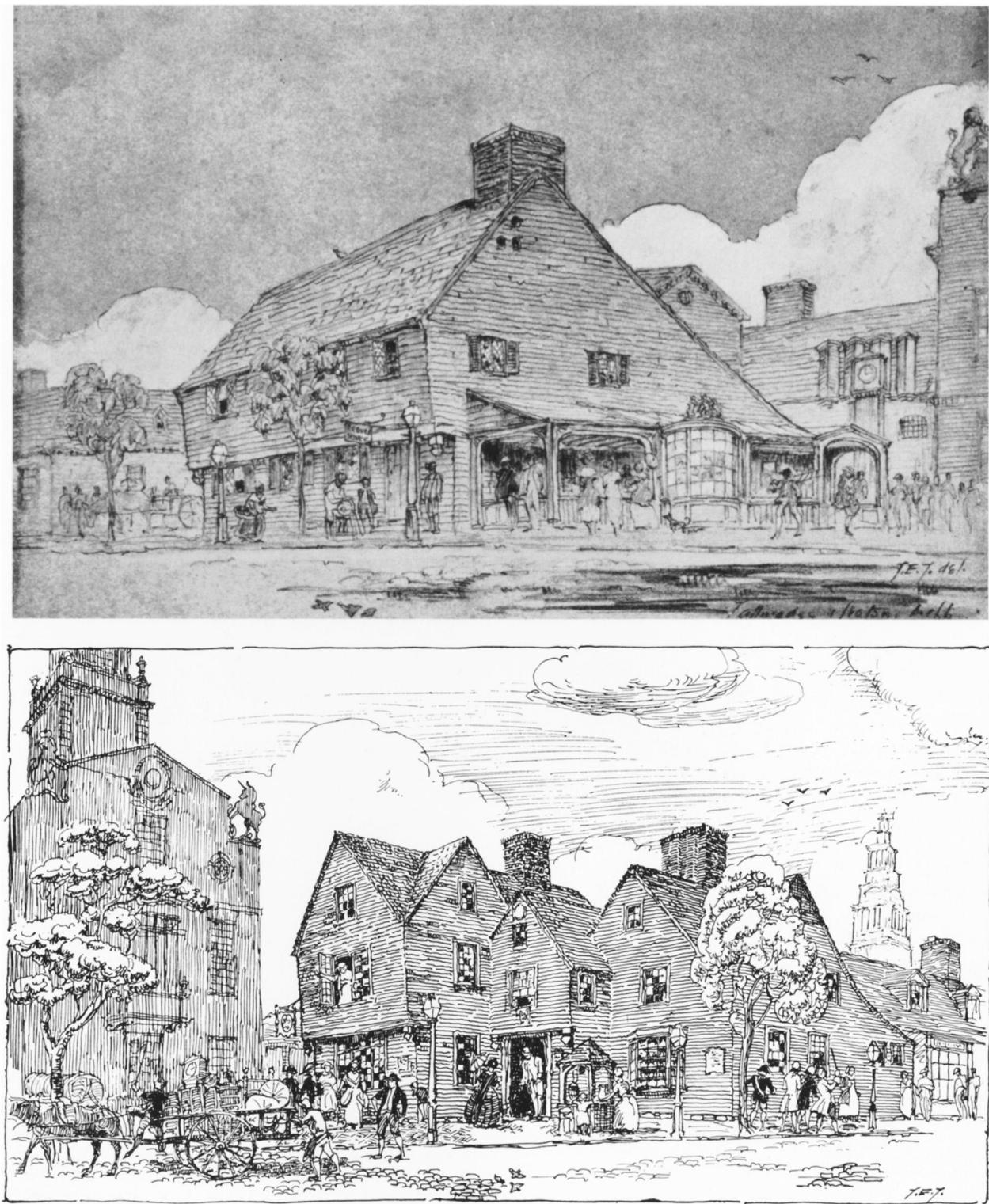


Fig. 1. Thomas E. Tallmadge, Colonial Village, Century of Progress Exposition, Chicago, 1934. From *Pencil Points* 16, no. 9 (September 1935): 495.

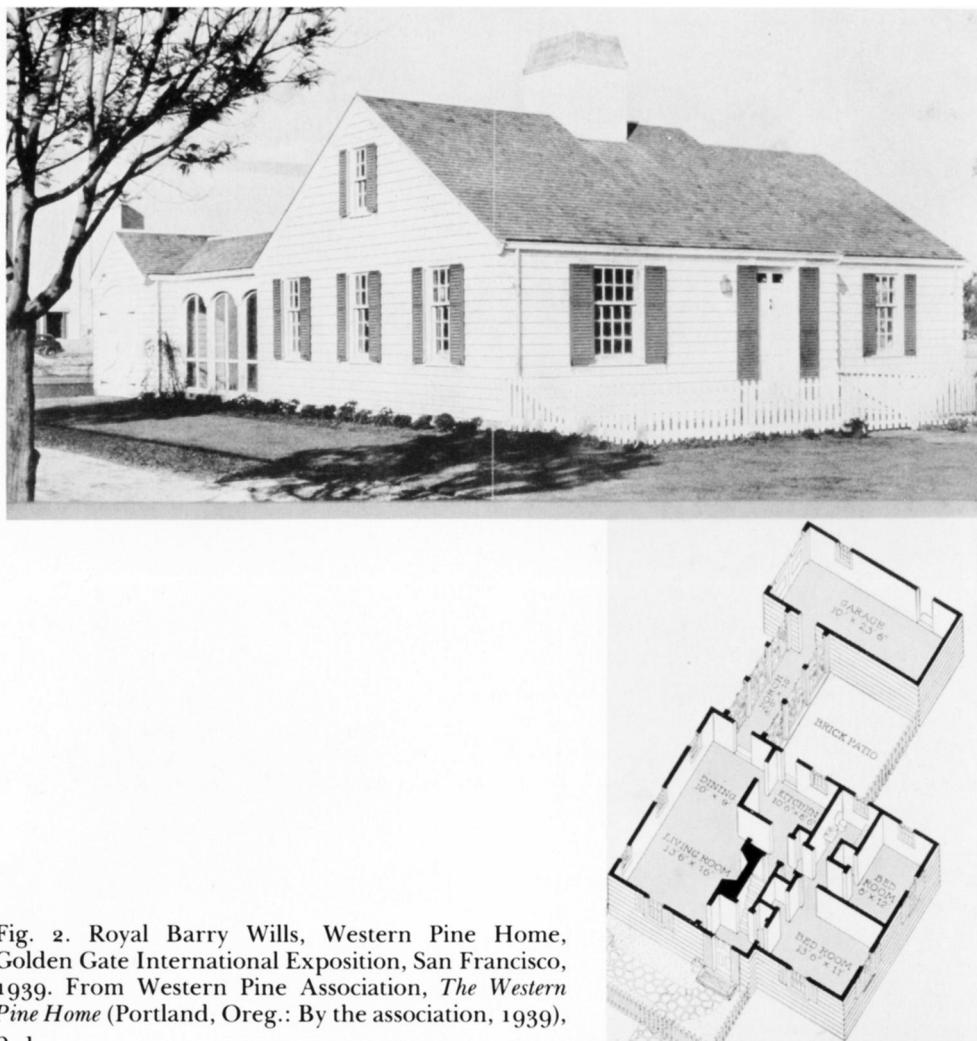


Fig. 2. Royal Barry Wills, Western Pine Home, Golden Gate International Exposition, San Francisco, 1939. From Western Pine Association, *The Western Pine Home* (Portland, Oreg.: By the association, 1939), p. 1.

twenties, various building industries and associations initiated competitions, and in the thirties they built numerous demonstration houses all over the country. Of these, the best advertised and the most popular were those sponsored by news, home, and professional architectural magazines.

As far as the middle- and upper-middle-class public was concerned, the most discussed of these competitions were the two sponsored by *Life* and *Architectural Forum* (both jointly owned by Henry R. Luce) in 1938 and 1940. By mid 1940, 121 versions of the 16 designs had been built across the country; as an added inducement, one

could purchase, for fifty cents to a dollar, knock-down scale models (with furniture) of the first 8 designs. Of the 16 designs, 6 were openly colonial. Examples of the *Life* colonial houses were constructed as far away from New England and the East as Portland, Oregon, and Edina, Minnesota, attesting to the widespread interest in these colonial images.²⁰

Historically the two most remembered of the

²⁰ "Eight Houses for Modern Living," *Life* 5, no. 13 (September 26, 1938): 45–65; "Life Builds Eight New Homes Planned and Built for U.S. 1940," *Life* 9, no. 1 (July 1, 1940): 76–90. "Life Houses," *Architectural Forum* 69, no. 5 (November 1938): 312–48; "Life . . . Presents Its Second Series of Eight Houses for Modern Living," *Architectural Forum* 73, no. 1 (July 1940): 1–20. In addition to Wills, colonial designs were provided by Richard Koch, H. Roy Kelley, Aymar Embury II, Cameron Clark, and Treanor and Fatio. Designs that had a tinge of the colonial were produced by Gardner Dailey, Shreve, Lamb and Harmon, and Shaw, Noess, and Murphy. The Portland, Oreg., *Life* house was based on Clark's design; that in Edina, Minn., on Wills's.

York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1935), pp. 117–18. Federal Housing Administration, *Principles of Planning Small Houses*, Technical Bulletin no. 4 (Washington, D.C., May 1, 1936). This and other publications contain designs that were used in competitions, especially those sponsored by the home magazines. All five designs (A–E) presented in the 1936 *Principles of Planning Small Houses* were colonial.

Life house designs were the prairie Usonian house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and the popular Cape Cod cottage by Wills. Although the client for the pair (Albert R. Blackbourn of Minneapolis) was quoted as leaning toward the former, he settled on the Wills scheme and eventually built it in 1939 in the suburban Minneapolis community of Edina (fig. 3).²¹

Another reminder of the colonial past was the decorative arts: furniture, wallpaper, fabrics, clocks, and dollhouses. Colonial furniture—reproductions and new variations on the originals—had fully come into their own in the 1920s. As was the case with architecture, colonial furniture emerged as the predominant traditional furniture of the 1930s. The tendency of colonial furniture of the thirties was either to approach the theme rather freely, as one finds in so much moderate-to-inexpensive informal maple and pine living-room, dining-room, recreation-room, and children's bedroom furniture, or to insist on its being authentic and "correct," as one finds in the far more expensive Williamsburg reproductions. The approach, though, in both cases, was to return to the simple, earlier period—for maple and pine furniture, to the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; for Georgian, to the early to mid eighteenth century.

By the end of the decade these two approaches to colonial furniture and decoration were joined by a third: that of the urbane sophistication of the federal/regency and the Greek revival. And it was this later furniture and decoration that was seen as the closest link between traditionalism and the modern. The ability to furnish and decorate a room in the colonial made it possible for the colonial environment (usually, of course, not as a whole, but as a fragment) to be realized by an appreciable segment of the middle class who were not in a financial position to purchase even a new "spec-built" house.

With the substantial drop-off of architectural commissions in the thirties, architects and their clients turned increasingly to remodeling older buildings, as a way to attain a current fashionable image inexpensively. In the commercial realm, res-

²¹ Wright's and Wills's houses for \$5,000–\$6,000 income, *Architectural Forum* 69, no. 5 (November 1938): 332–40; *Life* 5, no. 13 (September 26, 1938): 58–59; William W. Scott and Jeffrey A. Hess, *History and Architecture of Edina, Minnesota* (Edina: By the city, 1981), pp. 36–37. No specific example of Wright's *Life* house was built, but a variation on it, the Bernard Schwartz house, was built in 1938 at Two Rivers, Wis. See Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1942), illustrations 366, 367.

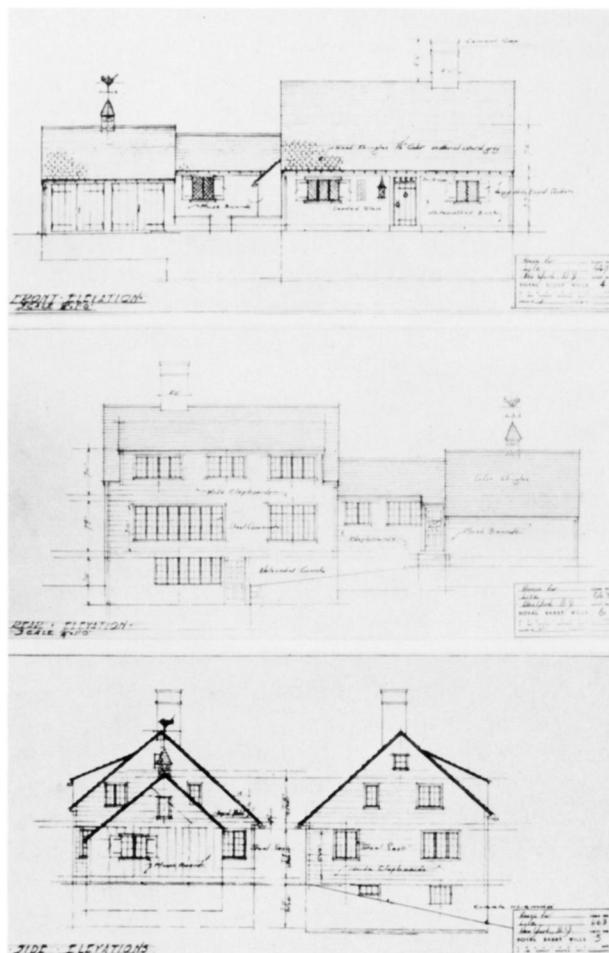


Fig. 3. Royal Barry Wills, *Life House* for \$5,000–\$6,000 Income, 1938. From *Architectural Forum* 69, no. 5 (November 1938): 338.

taurants and, above all, funeral homes clothed themselves in the colonial image. In domestic architecture, the urge was to colonialize older dwellings, especially those that represented the "misguided" taste of the late nineteenth-century Victorian episode and the "ungainly" craftsman period in the early twentieth century. If a family's budget was really limited, one could bring about some sort of colonial transformation by purchasing catalogue items—entrance doorways, bay windows, and fireplace mantels—from Curtis Woodwork and other national and regional companies.

The colonial, as the American ideal in the thirties, received its ultimate stamp of approval from Hollywood's motion picture industry. The characteristic Beverly Hills house of motion picture stars and directors was a colonial one, in many instances designed by one of Los Angeles's principal domestic architects: Paul R. Williams, Roland E. Coate,

John Byers and Edla Muir, and others.²² The colonial image provided the backdrop for almost every film that was set in a contemporary American suburban environment. Characteristic of this imagery was the setting for Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant's *Bringing Up Baby*. "Hollywood went traditional," noted an article in *Good Housekeeping*, "when it created this refreshing version of an old Connecticut house to serve as a background. . . . [Y]ou will find in this house numerous good ideas that you will like to use in your own house." Pasadena architect Elmer Grey wrote in 1936: "The buildings they [the movie sets] depict are not permanent to be sure, but they reach many more people with their message than do many permanent buildings, and often in a way that makes very lasting impressions. It must be gratifying to feel that one is composing pictures which, in their ultimate life-like realism, enthrall and instruct audiences of thousands the world over!"²³

While the sense of modernity and the futurist overtones of Rockefeller Center in New York helped to sustain America's view of progress and of itself during the early years of the Great Depression, it was equaled if not overshadowed by another Rockefeller project, the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s, reasons for financing this extensive project were varied: to seize upon an entire prerevolutionary community, in the fashion of France's nineteenth-century restorer Eugène Viollet-le-Duc and his res-

toration of the Cité de Carcassonne, and, as Rockefeller wrote, "to restore a complete area and free it entirely from alien or inharmonious surroundings as well as to preserve the beauty and charm of the old buildings and gardens of the city and its historical significance." Certainly patriotism (or nationalism) and an idealization of the past were crucial to Rockefeller's decision to support the project; but equally so was his response to it as architecture. As a symbol, the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg and the adjacent Colonial National Park was the principal event that helped to promote the colonial revival of the thirties. In 1936, when the American Institute of Architects held its annual convention there, Hiram J. Herbert wrote in *Better Homes and Gardens*: "Williamsburg isn't only attracting tourists this summer by its historical appeal; it also is stimulating the desire for better homes." In the November 1937 issue of *House and Garden*, devoted to Williamsburg, Richardson Wright, the magazine's editor, wrote: "[House and Garden] believes that the future can learn from the past. It believes that the spirit of ancient Williamsburg and the actuality of its splendid buildings and homes now restored have a definite, necessary and vital message for our times."²⁴

Although *House and Garden* commissioned the Boston firm of Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn, the architects for the Williamsburg restoration, to design three contemporary houses based on Williamsburg precedent, the impact of this restoration was essentially ideological, rather than that of inspiring a set colonial image which was widely emulated. In the realm of the specific, the effect of Colonial Williamsburg was far more pervasive in interior decoration. By the mid 1930s, the Craft House at Williamsburg was producing "approved reproductions and adaptations." Others quickly entered the scene. The enterprising Williamsburg Galleries of Chicago created a wide collection of moderately priced furniture which could be purchased at department and furniture stores across the country (fig. 4). Within a few years an upper-middle-class patron could purchase Williamsburg-inspired china, silver, paint colors, fabrics, wallpapers, lighting fixtures, and hardware.²⁵

²² Allen G. Siple, Jane Withers house, *Sunset* 78, no. 5 (May 1937): 32–33; Williams, Tyrone Power house, Brentwood, *Architect and Engineer* 141, no. 3 (June 1940): 34–35; Joe M. Estep, Richard Dix house, Beverly Hills, Calif., *California Arts and Architecture* 58, no. 5 (November 1940): 14; W. George Lutz, Fred MacMurray house, Brentwood Heights, Calif., *Architectural Digest* 10, no. 1 (1939): 31–38; "We Were Tired of Renting, Says Helen Gahagan, the Wife of Melvyn Douglas, Who Tells How They Built Their Ideal Home in Los Angeles," *House and Garden* 78, no. 3 (September 1940): 18–21, 57.

²³ "Hollywood Creates a Connecticut Farmhouse as a Background for a Movie," *Good Housekeeping* 106, no. 5 (June 1938): 52; Coate, David O. Selznick house, Beverly Hills, in Paul Robinson Hunter and Walter L. Reichardt, *Residential Architecture in Southern California* (Los Angeles: Southern California Chapter A.I.A., 1937), p. 54; "And Here Are George Burns and Gracie Allen!" *House and Garden* 71, no. 6 (June 1937): 61–63. In Michael Regan, *The Mansions of Beverly Hills* (Los Angeles: Regan Publishing Co., 1966), the 1930s colonial revival houses of Jay Paley (by Williams), Sam Goldwyn (by Honnold and Russell), David O. Selznick (by Coate), and William Powell (by J. E. Dolena) (although this house is perhaps much more English regency than American colonial in style) are illustrated. Charles Lockwood also illustrates a number of these colonial revival houses built for those associated with the Hollywood motion picture industry in *Dream Palaces: Hollywood at Home* (New York: Viking Press, 1981). Elmer Grey, "Breaking into the Movies," *Pencil Points* 16, no. 1 (January 1935): 33.

²⁴ John D. Rockefeller, Jr., "The Genesis of the Williamsburg Restoration," *National Geographic* 71, no. 4 (April 1937): 401; Hiram J. Herbert, "Williamsburg: The Ideal Home Town," *Better Homes and Gardens* 14, no. 7 (July 1936): 75; Richardson Wright et al., "Williamsburg," *House and Garden* 72, no. 5 (November 1937): 41.

²⁵ "Our Williamsburg Houses," *House and Garden* 72, no. 5 (November 1937): 69–79; Williamsburg Craftsman, *Colonial Williamsburg Approved Reproductions and Adaptations* (Williams-



Fig. 4. Advertisement for the Williamsburg Galleries (Chicago), 1937. From *House and Garden* 72, no. 5 (November 1937): 9.

The progress of the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg was closely followed in all the nation's principal newspapers, in the professional architectural journals, in home magazines for the middle and upper-middle classes, and through books published about Williamsburg.²⁶ One of the foremost

burg: Colonial Williamsburg, 1937); "Colonial Williamsburg Contributes Its Richness to Modern Living," *Arts and Decoration* 52, no. 5 (May 1940): 24–25, 41, 43, 50.

²⁶ Colonial Williamsburg published a number of books in the 1930s. These included *A Handbook for the Exhibition Buildings of Colonial Williamsburg Incorporated* (1937); Rutherford Goodwin, *Williamsburg in Virginia; or, A Brief and True Report for Travellers concerning Williamsburg in Virginia* (1937, 1940); and even *The Williamsburg Art of Cookery* (1938). Major publications on Williamsburg at the time were Rockefeller, "Genesis of the Restoration"; W. A. R. Goodwin, "The Restoration of Colonial Williamsburg," *National Geographic* 71, no. 4 (April 1937): 402–43; Fiske Kimball, "The Restoration of Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia," and William Graves Perry, "Notes on the Architecture," *Architectural Record* 78, no. 6 (December 1935): 359 and 363–82; "Restoration of Colonial Williamsburg," *American Architect* 147, no. 2638 (November 1935): 34–52; "The Restoration at Williamsburg, Perry, Shaw and Hepburn, Architects," *Pencil Points* 17, no. 5 (May 1936): 224–46; and Kenneth Chorley, "Progress in the Restoration of Colonial Williamsburg," *Architectural Record* 80, no. 5 (November 1936): 337–84. Jack Man-

exponents of the colonial, architect Dwight James Baum, portrayed its progress through a camera in the pages of *Architecture*, and Samuel Chamberlain presented the restoration through six etchings published in *Pencil Points*. And as one would expect, with the rise of the modern in this decade, it was a frequent subject of heated debate. When Frank Lloyd Wright held an exhibition of his work at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, he, being the publicist he was, could not refrain from decrying the restoration and its effect on current American architecture. Harold R. Shurtleff, who had worked on the restoration, replied to Wright: "it seems a pity that Mr. Wright's so ready to deprive the man in the small or middle income bracket of confidence in such authentic source of dignity and beautiful forms for the sort of houses that he can afford to live in as the Colonial Williamsburg restoration. . . . [I]t will be a long time before the materials and forms that were used in Colonial architecture cease to have a place in American building."²⁷

The restoration of Colonial Williamsburg was a catalyst for historic preservation efforts during the 1930s. In the final years of Hoover's administration, the federal government, through the National Park Service, became increasingly involved in both restoration and preservation. This federal and eventual state involvement was accentuated in the depression years of the thirties, especially with the inauguration in December 1933 of the Historic American Buildings Survey.²⁸ In his *Lost Examples of Colonial Architecture* (New York: William Helburn, 1931), John Mead Howells emphasized, as

ley Rosé and Grace Norton Rosé, *Williamsburg Today and Yesterday* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940); Wright et al., "Williamsburg," pp. 37–79. The two definitive studies on the architecture of Williamsburg were published by Colonial Williamsburg after World War II and were written by Marcus Whiffen: *The Eighteenth Century Houses of Williamsburg* (1970) and *The Public Buildings of Williamsburg, Colonial Capital of Virginia: An Architectural History* (1958).

²⁷ Dwight James Baum, "Architect Rambles about Williamsburg," *Architecture* 71, no. 6 (June 1935): 322–23; Chamberlain, "Colonial Williamsburg." In 1947 Chamberlain published an entire volume devoted to Williamsburg, *Behold Williamsburg*. Frank Lloyd Wright, "Williamsburg as a Museum Piece," *New York Herald*, November 6, 1938, sec. 2 p. 8; Frank Lloyd Wright, "Comment on Williamsburg," *Time* 32, no. 19 (November 7, 1938): 37; Harold R. Shurtleff, "Reply to Frank Lloyd Wright on Williamsburg," *Boston Transcript*, December 3, 1938, pt. 5 p. 5.

²⁸ Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926–1949*, vol. 1 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), pp. 548–52. Selections from the Historic American Buildings Survey drawings were published during the 1930s in the pages of the *Architectural Forum Master Detail* series.

Fiske Kimball pointed out in his introduction, "the depth of our artistic and historic loss." There were several ways of preventing these losses. Henry Ford started out in the twenties with preservation in situ of the historic Wayside Inn in Concord, Massachusetts. In a short time he took the Williamsburg approach one step further, and in his Greenfield Village (along with the adjacent Edison Institute) at Dearborn, Michigan, he created his own version of the ideal colonial village. Ford's village was composed of historic buildings moved to the site and new buildings designed in the colonial image. The Edison Institute was housed in replicas of Philadelphia's Independence Hall, Congress Hall, and old City Hall. And Ford's commitment to the colonial continued through the decade. Dearborn Inn, the hotel serving Greenfield Village, was designed in 1939 as a small colonial village, composed of replicas including the Edgar Allan Poe cottage, the Patrick Henry mansion, the Oliver Wolcott house, the Barbara Fritchie house, and the Walt Whitman farmhouse. In the same year, Ford, through the Ford Foundation, sponsored Springfield Park near Dearborn, and the imagery of the single-family houses and the groups of apartments in this development were appropriately colonial.²⁹

It is fascinating to see how historic preservation efforts throughout the country were almost exclusively concerned in the late twenties and the thirties with the colonial image (whether factual or created). While some Hispanic monuments were restored and rebuilt in Florida, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, the interest even in these regions, as far as domestic architecture was concerned, was directed to what was perceived as a continuation of the eastern colonial tradition in the early and mid nineteenth century. In New Mexico it was the Angloized adobe, the territorial style, with its Greek-revival/late-federal overtones; in California, it was the Anglo-Monterey style and the California ranch house. A perusal of the pages of Lewis Barrington's *Historic Restorations of the Daughters of the American Revolution* (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1941) gives the impression that

²⁹ Henry Ford, "Why I Bought the Wayside Inn and What I am Doing with It," *Garden and Home Builder* 43, no. 1 (July 1926): 430–34; Lucia Ames Mead, "How the Old Wayside Inn Came Back," *Old-Time New England* 22, no. 1 (July 1931): 41–45; Samuel Crowther, "Henry Ford's Village of Yesterday," *Ladies' Home Journal* 45, no. 9 (September 1928): 10–11, 116, 118; James S. Wamsley, *American Ingenuity: Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1985); Barbara L. Clark, "A Modern Hotel's Colonial Village," *American Home* 23, no. 5 (May 1940): 56–61; "Henry Ford Builds," *Architectural Forum* 71, no. 3 (September 1939): 209.

the colonial constituted America's only meaningful historic tradition worthy of preservation.

As had occurred in the past, the colonial images of the thirties emerged as something specific to that moment. And, as one would expect, what finally came about in 1940/41 was in many ways different from what existed in 1930. In this decade there was an intriguing set of seemingly opposite demands which were played off against one another. The serenity and suggestion of formality of the classical tradition were quite often contrasted with the picturesque and informal, both in the forms of the building and in the relationship between the building and its site. The puritanism of the primitive and the vernacular of the early colonial or of the Cape Cod cottage was quite the opposite to the urban sophistication of versions of the federal or Greek-revival types of the thirties. The atmosphere of "correct" and "accurate" scale and detailing was in many instances played off against the "free renderings" of the colonial types. Elements of the "modern" (high art and streamline moderne) were either gently absorbed into the colonial image or contrasted with it. The colonial types of the thirties found it easy to embrace the new and fashionable spatial ideals of the time: the open, informal plan, the tight vertical and horizontal circulation links, the opening up of the interior to the exterior through extensive glass windows and doors, and the connection of interior living areas to the exterior through porches and terraces. The kitchen and the bathroom of the colonial house were approached exactly as they were in any modern or moderne-image dwelling of the time: as highly workable "machines for living."

A pervasive quality in the thirties was to design objects and buildings in modest, small scale. The architects' or builders' version of the colonial cottage, or even the larger two-story early New England colonial house, represented a reduction in size from its equivalents in the 1920s. In architecture this reduction in size and apparent luxury of detail may be seen as a reaction to budget limitations caused by the depression; but this trend was, in essence, symbolic. By the end of the decade, when an upper-middle-class man felt that he could go ahead and build a new house, the cost of such a dwelling was some 40 percent less than it would have cost to build a similar dwelling at the end of the twenties.³⁰ Reduction in size and simplification

³⁰ "Six Small Houses and Their Costs," *Architectural Forum* 60, no. 4 (April 1934): 259–66; "Average Construction Costs for Dwellings in Principal Cities of the United States," *Monthly Labor Review* 27, no. 5 (November 1929): 1048–52; Herman B.

of detail were due to social factors, a more retiring life-style, changes in the size of families, and the way in which people wished to see themselves and to be seen. The romantic, idealized, rugged, and simple colonial past of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provided the perfect vehicle for this symbol of modesty and reticence. To realize this idealized past, the colonial image, even in free-rendered forms, must have an authentic ring. The building should rest closely on the ground; the pitch of the roof and its eave and cornice line should be correct in relation to the width and height of the wall surface; the windows (double-hung or, in seventeenth-century examples, casements) should be properly scaled with the appropriate divisions of lights; paneled doorways, fireplace mantels, and stair and other details should be based on historic precedent; and everything should contribute to a sense of delicate and intimate scale.

Colonial Types: The House

While authentic types (or as they were more often than not referred to by architects and the lay public, styles), such as the "New England colonial," the "Cape Cod cottage," and the "Pennsylvania colonial," were characteristic of the thirties, it is obvious that there were innumerable variations, and there never was, of course, any accord on what terms should be used to describe this or that type. In 1925, in a series devoted to architectural images of the time published in *Country Life*, Henry Humphrey, Jr., suggested that there were six colonial types then prevalent. These were the New England colonial, the Dutch colonial, the Philadelphia colonial, the southern colonial, the Georgian, and finally, a "Free rendering of the Colonial Style." The use of these terms to describe types continued into the thirties with occasional modifications and elaborations.³¹ The type that Humphrey had labeled the "Free rendering of the Colonial Style"

Byer, "Labor and Material Costs in Small House Construction," *Monthly Labor Review* 48, no. 5 (May 1939): 1058–61.

³¹ Henry Humphrey, Jr., "What Type of House Shall I Build? I: The Colonial House," *Country Life* 48, no. 4 (October 1925): 61–63. A characteristic presentation of colonial types of the 1930s can be seen in "Panorama of Little Houses Costing from \$2,500 to \$16,000," *House Beautiful* 78, no. 6 (June 1936): 21–25, 72–73. Another later panorama of colonial styles may be found in Normile, *New Ideas. The Architectural Forum Book of Small Houses* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1938), p. xxxiv, divided the colonial into five types: Dutch colonial, Cape Cod, Georgian, southern colonial, and American farmhouse.

emerged with some changes, and a new designation, the "Early American Farmhouse Style," came into vogue. Other shifts in the terminology of types, as well as visual and symbolic emphasis, included the substitution of "Pennsylvania farmhouse" for "Philadelphia colonial" and the increasingly close association of the designation "Georgian" with English Georgian prototypes, or with the eighteenth-century Georgian of Maryland, Virginia, and above all, of course, Williamsburg. "The Williamsburg Restoration," wrote William Cantor Halprin, of the Westchester County Society of Architects in 1938, "will doubtless accelerate the movement toward the Georgian style as the public becomes familiar with the enduring charm and dignity of that period."³²

Other colonial types more pervasive than the Georgian that dominated the thirties' scene were the Cape Cod cottage, the early New England (medieval) colonial, the classic New England colonial box, the Greek revival, and the federal style (often labeled regency). Added to these were regional versions of the colonial: the Caribbean (Bermudian) colonial, which became popular in Florida and along much of the gulf; the New Orleans style; the territorial Pueblo revival in New Mexico; the Monterey and ranch house in California; and the Pacific Northwest's own version of the colonial, a picturesque mixture of colonial, earlier craftsman, and medieval period-revival designs of the 1920s. All these colonial types, including the regional variations, had occurred in the 1920s, but they did not rise to prominence until the next decade.³³

At the opening of the thirties, Marcia Mead set down the varying colonial types then in vogue in an issue of the American Institute of Architects' *Small Home* magazine; at the end of the decade, Frederick M. Wells indicated how these earlier preferences had been expanded to include the Greek and regency modes.³⁴ If one were to chart the national preferences for the colonial house

³² In its presentation of house types, the *New York Times* consistently used the type term "Early America's Farmhouse Style" (*New York Times*, February 8, 1931, pts. xi, xii p. 2). William Cantor Halprin, "Colonial Styles of Architecture Still Enjoy Highest Favor in Westchester County, New York," *American Architect and Architecture* 152, no. 2666 (February 1938): 16.

³³ Henry Atherton Frost, "The Consistent Colonial House," *House Beautiful* 67, no. 1 (January 1930): 50–52, 93–95, no. 2 (February 1930): 170–72, 225–26, no. 3 (March 1930): 294–96, 342, 344, no. 4 (April 1930): 450–51, 490, 492; Marcia Mead, "Homes of Character: The Modern Home," *Small Home* 10, no. 10 (October 1930): 20–21.

³⁴ Mead, "Homes of Character," pp. 20–21; Frederick M. Wells, "Houses Inspired by American Colonial," *Arts and Decoration* 52, no. 5 (May 1940): 6–9.



Fig. 5. Cameron Clark, *Life House No. 1*, 1940. From *Architectural Forum* 73, no. 1 (July 1940): 4.

types of the thirties, they would, on the basis of popularity, be arranged as follows: (1) Cape Cod cottage, (2) early American farmhouse, (3) early New England colonial, (4) Pennsylvania colonial, (5) New England colonial box, (6) Georgian, (7) regency (federal), (8) Dutch colonial, (9) Williamsburg version of the Georgian (Wrenesque), and (10) Greek revival.

Chamberlain wrote: "A nice thing about the Cape Cod cottage is that its lines can be adapted perfectly to a new house, fitted with every modern comfort without any incongruity. The prefabricated 'machine-to-live-in' has a potent rival in the Cape Cottage." And when New York architect Alfred Easton Poor published *Colonial Architecture of Cape Cod, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard*, he indicated in his foreword two reasons behind his study: "First, to make a record of the houses of our ancestors before time and 'modernization' take too great a toll from existing examples. Second, to show the beauty that these houses achieved through simplicity and straightforward plan, in the hopes that it may be an inspiration to those who are now building our smaller houses, and to those who feel the unique value of the 'Cape Cod House' as a distinctively American contribution to Architecture."³⁵

By 1940 there was no question that "the overwhelmingly popular image in the country" was the Cape Cod cottage (fig. 5). In the *Ladies' Home Journal*, Richard Pratt reiterated what was common knowledge: "that prospective small house owners predominantly prefer the Cape Cod Colonial

style."³⁶ And World War II did not diminish its preeminence on the American scene. In 1949 the editors of the *Architectural Forum* devoted two long articles to the Cape Cod cottage and its influence on contemporary architecture. They reluctantly admitted, "twentieth century America's most popular house design, now scattered throughout the entire country, is the Cape Cod Cottage. . . . Seldom has one house design achieved such universal popularity with builders and homeowners alike."³⁷

If one can suggest a time when the Cape Cod colonial began its rapid ascendancy to popularity, it was probably in 1932 when the gold medal in the Better Homes of America's Small House Architectural Competition was won by Wills. His winning design, the 1931 cottage for Maurice A. Dunlavy in Brookline, Massachusetts, while not really traditional in plan, exhibited all the essential hallmarks of this colonial type—it was a one-and-one-half-story cottage, sheathed in various widths of white clapboard, with a central, high, massive chimney, "correctly" proportioned and broken-up double-

³⁵ Chamberlain, *Cape Cod in the Sun*, p. 64; Alfred Easton Poor, *Colonial Architecture of Cape Cod, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard* (New York: William Helburn, 1932).

³⁶ Richard Pratt, "Of Course We Want a Cape Cod Cottage," *Ladies' Home Journal* 57, no. 5 (May 1940): 78–79. The editors of *American Home* devoted an issue (20, no. 3 [September 1938:25–44]) to a "Portfolio of 16 Small Colonial Homes." These 16 designs provide a good cross section of the colonial types that were being built in the mid 1930s. In addition, various agencies of the federal government promoted the Cape Cod cottage as a solution to the low-cost, single-family house (Federal Housing Administration, Technical Bulletin no. 3 [Washington, D.C., June 15, 1936]). A similar position was taken in "The Low Cost House," *Architectural Forum* 72, no. 4 (April 1940): 211–22.

³⁷ "Design Analysis: The Cape Cod Cottage," *Architectural Forum* 90, no. 2 (February 1949): 89–94, no. 3 (March 1949): 100–106.



Fig. 6. Royal Barry Wills, Maurice A. Dunlavy house, Brookline, Mass., 1931. (Richard Wills: Photo, Haskell.)

hung windows, and even the essential white picket fence surrounded by hollyhocks (fig. 6).³⁸

Although the Cape Cod came to be synonymous with Wills's designs of the thirties, there were many other architects who employed the image with equal success. Among these were Charles S. Keefe, Jerome R. Cerny, Cameron Clark, Gordon Allen, James Gamble Rogers II, and Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn, all of whom fashioned highly convincing Cape Cod images.³⁹

In the thirties there were, in addition to the pure Cape Cod cottages, a variety of one- or one-and-one-half-story buildings at Williamsburg that provided the sources for many designs, including the Raleigh Tavern, the Pitt-Dixon dwelling, the Purdie dwelling, the Captain Orr dwelling, the Blair house, and others.⁴⁰ The form of this Tide-

³⁸ James Ford, "1932 Better Homes in America Small House Architectural Competition," *Architectural Record* 73, no. 3 (March 1933): 196–99; Wills, Dunlavy house, *American Architect* 141, no. 2608 (June 1932): 53.

³⁹ Guy H. Lee, "A Collaborative Problem," *House Beautiful* 70, no. 9 (September 1931): 199–204, 260; Jerome Robert Cerny, "The Picturesque Cape Cod Type of Cottage," *Arts and Decoration* 35, no. 5 (June 1931): 38; Cameron Clark, "Cape Cod Architecture in Connecticut," *Arts and Decoration* 36, no. 1 (January 1932): 56–57; James Gamble Rogers, "Colonial Clicks Wherever It Goes," *Better Homes and Gardens* 18, no. 4 (April 1940): 78–79; Gordon Allen, house, Canton, Mass., and Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn, house, Concord, Mass., *Architectural Forum* 74, no. 4 (April 1941): 303, 294.

⁴⁰ *Architectural Record* 78, no. 6 (December 1935): 376, 377, 419, 435, 443. Detailed studies of the domestic architecture of Williamsburg were not published until much later; see Whiffen, *Eighteenth Century Houses*.

water story-and-a-half house was used by Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn as a basis for their *House and Garden* Williamsburg House Number 2 of 1927 (fig. 7).

Another story-and-a-half type that had enjoyed great popularity in the twenties, the Dutch colonial, continued into the thirties. In 1938, when the *Architectural Forum* published its Five Star Questionnaire, 60 percent of those polled preferred the colonial image, and of these some 30 percent indicated their fondness for the Dutch colonial. What is surprising with this sort of enthusiastic response is how few of these colonial types were designed and built. There were a sprinkling of gambrel (which in some cases could possibly be read as Dutch) spec-built houses constructed and a few architect-designed houses, but the number of Dutch colonial houses constructed in the 1930s remained small.⁴¹ The Dutch colonial types built in the thirties were distinct from those of the previous de-

⁴¹ *Architectural Forum Book of Houses* (1938), p. xxxiv (it should be noted that the geographic area for this poll was limited to upstate New York). Architect R. T. Crane designed a house for the Reverend G. R. Hewlett at Sparta, N.J., ca. 1938, "The exterior of [which] . . . is an exact copy of the 18th century Dyckman house in New York City" (*House and Garden* 77, no. 2 [February 1940]: 13). Examples of the Dutch colonial image built in the 1930s are C. C. Wendebach, house, Nutley, N.J., *Pencil Points* 16, no. 9 (September 1935): 69; and McMurray and Schmidlin, house, Nutley, N.J., *Architectural Forum* 74, no. 4 (April 1941): 293. Details from many gambrel-roof houses (one and one-half and two stories), some dating back to the late 1920s, are illustrated in "The Pencil Points Series of Comparative Details: Group 21—Gambrel Gables," *Pencil Points* 16, no. 2 (February 1935): 81–88.

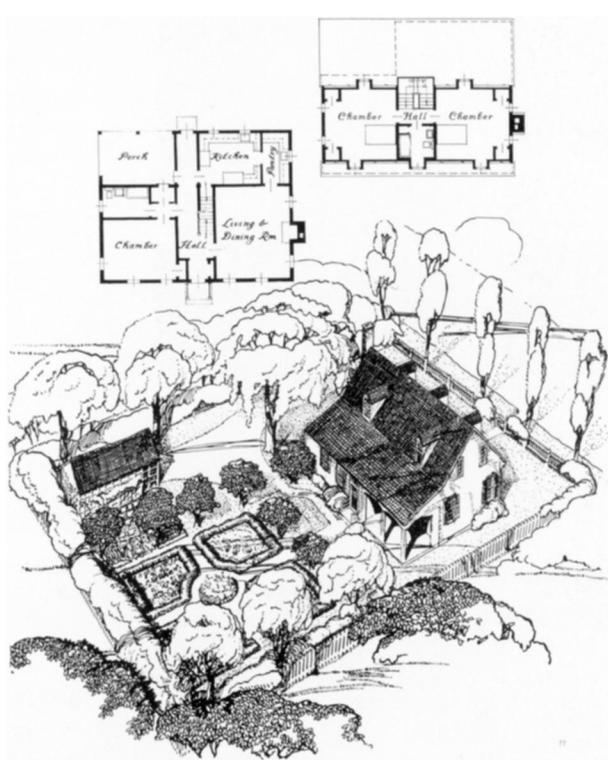


Fig. 7. Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn, Williamsburg House No. 2. From *House and Garden* 72, no. 5 (November 1937): 77.

cades (fig. 8). The Dutch colonial of the teens and the twenties was in most instances a two-story dwelling, which by a minor (sometimes actually false) maneuvering of the gambrel roof was made to pass as a one-and-one-half-story dwelling. In most cases the front and rear shed-roof dormers end up occupying almost the entire roof area of these houses. In the thirties the ideal Dutch colonial looked more closely to the original historic examples in New York and New Jersey. These designs were to be seen (at least from the street) as story-and-a-half cottages. Small, separate, gable-roof window dormers replaced the twenties' broad, single, shed-roof dormers, and the roof frequently exhibited its historically correct upward bend at the eaves. Other "correct" details entered: windows of proper proportion and broken into small lights, paneled shutters, occasional use of stone sheathing, and other features.⁴²

⁴² A principal source book for architects and clients was Aymar Embury II's often reissued volume, *The Dutch Colonial House* (New York: McBride, Nast, 1913). Aymar Embury II, "On the Horns of the Gambrel," *Country Life* 32, no. 2 (May 1917): 49–52. A Dutch colonial image was presented as the 1938 Five Star House by *Architectural Forum Book of Houses*, pp.

The theme of a colonial cottage composed of various parts loosely attached to one another, intimating that they might have been added at various moments in time, was a frequently employed image. As a design, such colonial cottages played a variety of visual games. Their essential cottagey form suggested charm and humbleness, although in fact they often contained square footage that beguiled their apparent small size. They often contrasted a general picturesqueness against segments of the design that were quite formal; in their interiors, for example, space and detailing were often treated in a formal fashion. That the ideal of the large house as a colonial cottage did not die out in the depression can be seen in an extensive country house designed by John W. Stedman, Jr. (figs. 9, 10). Needless to say, the normal 1930s colonial cottage seldom approached such upper-middle-class ideals. Much more typical of the time was Fenwick W. Wall's small house at West Islip, Long Island (fig. 11).

Akin to the informal, pieced-together Cape Cod cottage were numerous informal, two-story colonial dwellings which were referred to simply as colonial and at other times as the "American farmhouse type," or "modified colonial."⁴³ The design approach taken in this colonial type was strongly affected by the fashion in the twenties for rural English (the Cotswold cottage) and French (Norman farmhouse) medieval forms. The rambling quality of these American versions of the European vernacular satisfied both the desire for the picturesque, a suggestion of the classical, and the need to embrace the latest functional spatial needs of the period. In such designs garages could be

xxix–xxxv. For some historic New England examples of gambrel-roof cottages which were used as sources by architects, see Albert G. Robinson, *Old New England Houses* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920). The plates in this volume are not numbered. The author illustrates examples from New Bedford and Dedham, Mass. (the wing of the 1636 Fairbanks house), and from Windsor, South Lyme, East Lyme, Litchfield, and Hadlyme, Conn. Examples of eighteenth-century Virginia story-and-a-half cottages were published in the Measured Drawings of Early American Architecture series in *Architectural Record* 63, no. 1 (January 1928): 81–88; 63, no. 6 (June 1928): 585–92; and 67, no. 6 (June 1930): 587–90. Other photographs and measured drawings were published in *American Architect* 143, no. 2617 (May 1933): 69–70; and 147, no. 2637 (September 1935): 57–64.

⁴³ "Early American Farmhouse Style," *New York Times*, February 8, 1931, secs. 11, 12 p. 2. In J. Harold Hawkins, "Colonial Garden Homes Costing Less than \$7,500," *Ladies' Home Journal* 46, no. 6 (June 1929): 26–27, the designs were "all in modified Colonial Architecture." The term "American Farmhouse" was employed in the fivefold division of colonial types of the 1930s in *Architectural Forum Book of Houses* (1938), p. xxxiv.



WHITE AND WEBER, ARCHITECTS

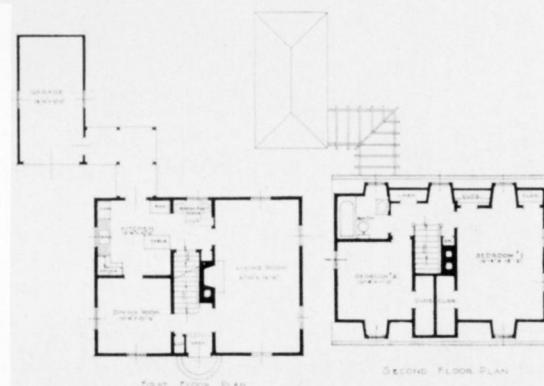


Fig. 8. White and Weber, house, Jewel Park, Barrington, Ill., ca. 1935. From *Architectural Record* 79, no. 2 (February 1936): 157.

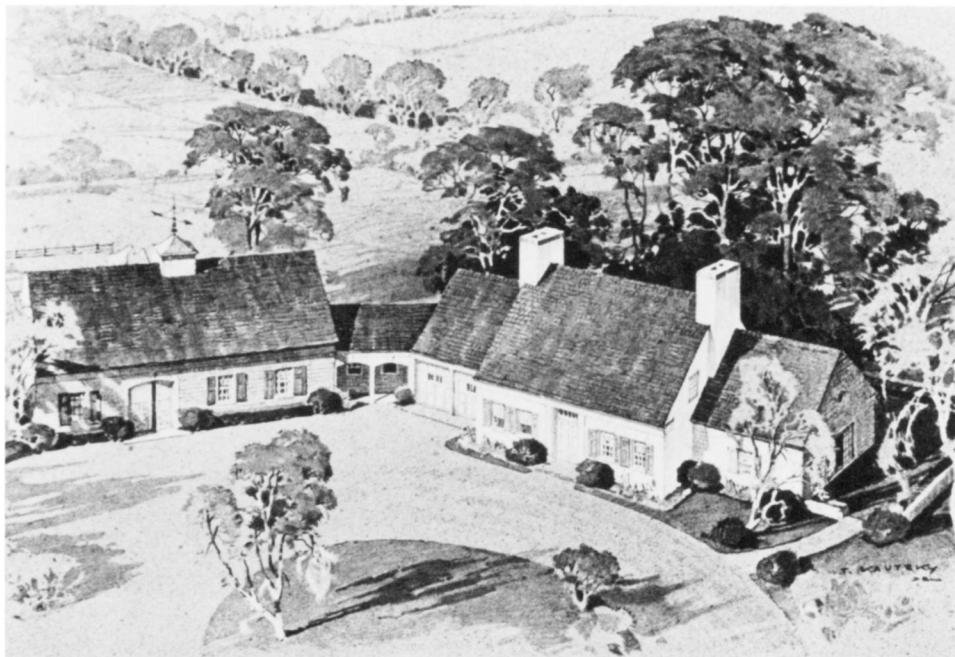


Fig. 9. John W. Stedman, Jr., house, 1939. From "Mrs. Jorrocks Plans a Place with a Purpose," *Country Life* 75, no. 4 (April 1939): 44.

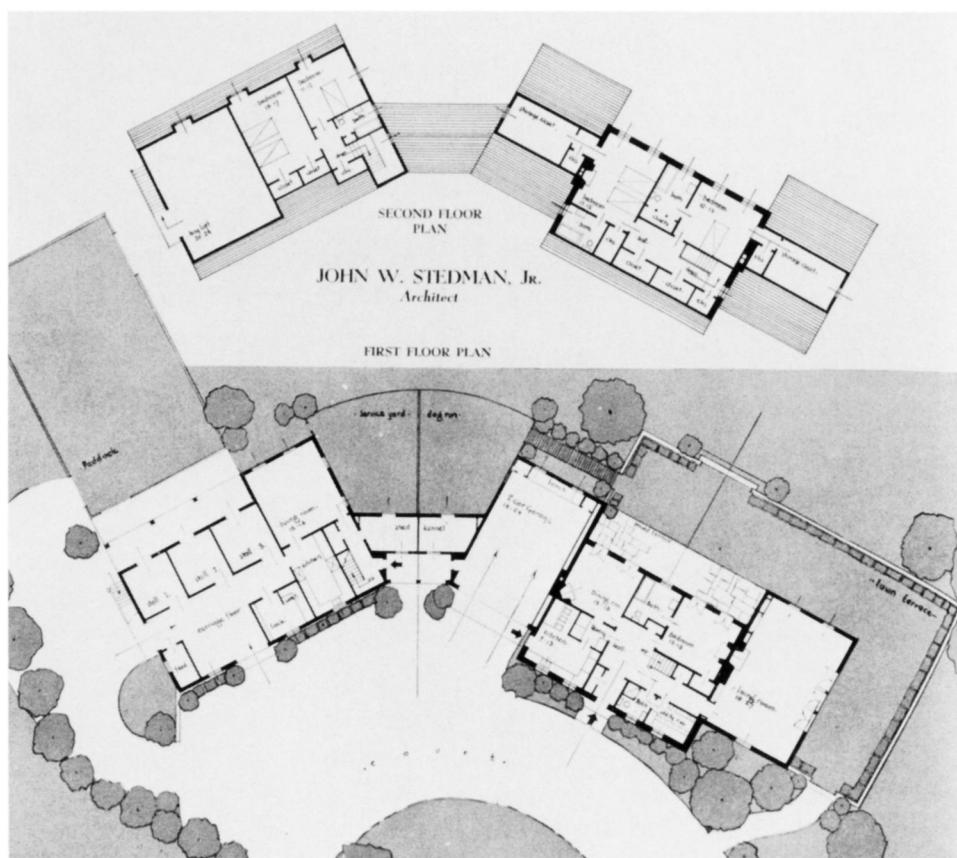


Fig. 10. Floor plans of house in figure 9. From "Mrs. Jorrocks Plans a Place with a Purpose," *Country Life* 75, no. 4 (April 1939): 45.

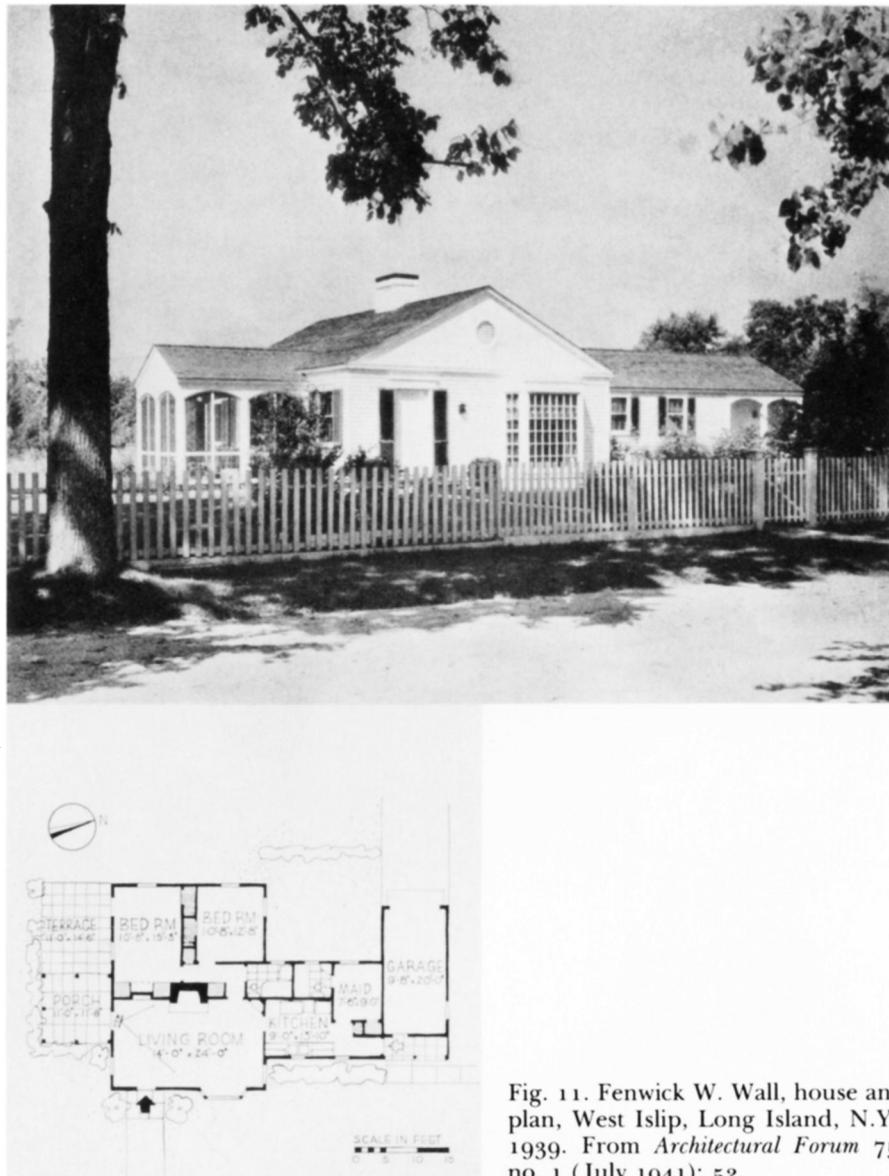


Fig. 11. Fenwick W. Wall, house and plan, West Islip, Long Island, N.Y., 1939. From *Architectural Forum* 75, no. 1 (July 1941): 52.

easily integrated into the houses; the kitchen, service area, stairs, and entry could be gathered together as a tight circulation/utility core; and indoor/outdoor living requirements could be fully realized. Many of the architects who employed the colonial image in the thirties essentially then colonialized the plan and picturesque disposition of these 1920s period revival medieval images, an excellent example being Roger H. Bullard's own house in Manhasset, Long Island (fig. 12).

A variant of the American farmhouse type was the Pennsylvania farmhouse; normally a stone-sheathed structure, one and one-half or two stories

in height, with a relatively high pitched roof, end-gable-wall chimneys, simple shed- or gable-roof entrance porches, a projecting "Germantown" hooded roof above the first-floor windows and doors, and white paneled shutters with accentuated wrought-iron hinges. In the 1930s the most widely publicized of the Pennsylvania farmhouse type were houses designed by Philadelphia architect Richard W. Mecaskey (fig. 13).⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Philip B. Wallace, *Colonial Houses, Philadelphia: Pre-Revolutionary Period* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1931), p. 221. For examples of the use of the wall-face dormer windows, see *American Architect and Architecture* 151,

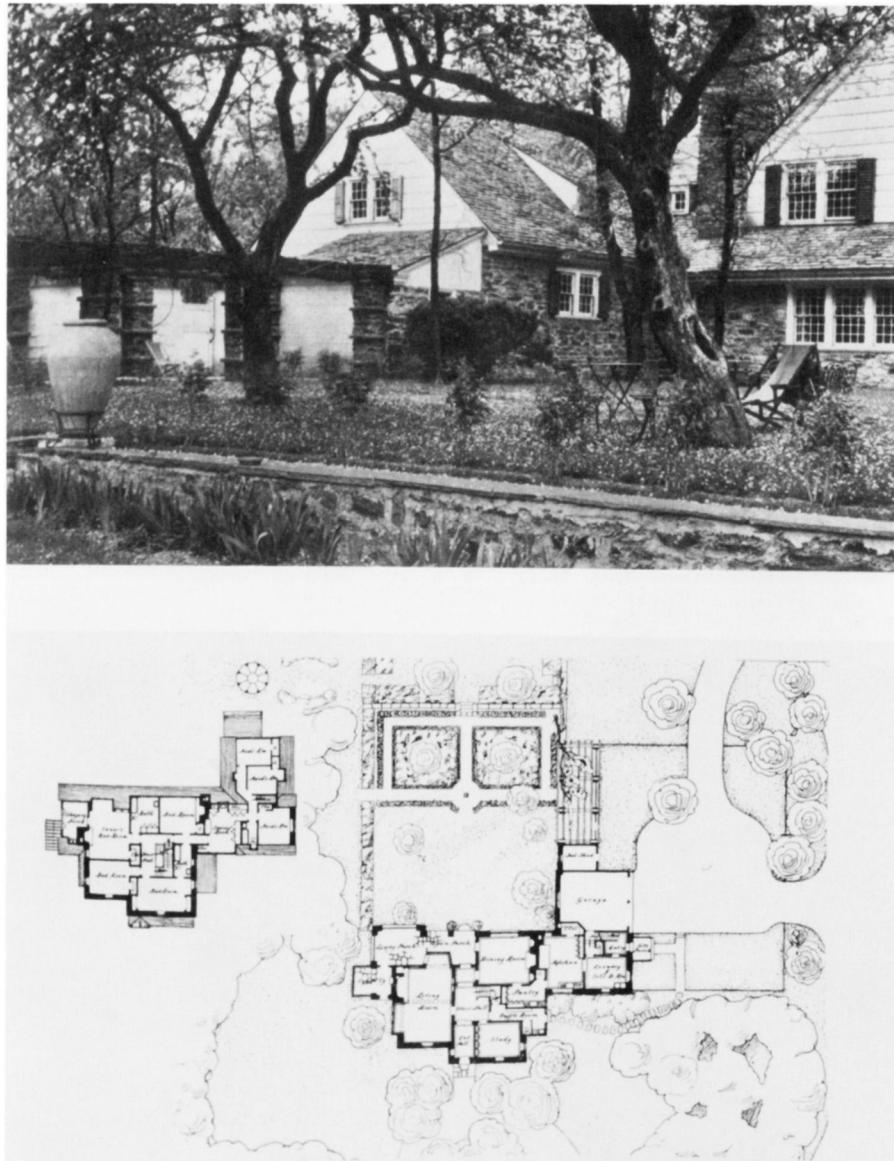


Fig. 12. Roger H. Bullard, Bullard house and plan, Manhasset, Long Island, N.Y., 1929–30. From *Architecture* 66, no. 2 (August 1932): 97.

When handled by Mecaskey and other Philadelphia architects, the image always had a strong ring of regional authenticity. When carried else-

no. 2661 (September 1937): 67–82. For Mecaskey's works, see also William T. I. Hall house, Wilmington, Del., *Architectural Forum* 58, no. 3 (March 1933): 188–89; controlled-climate house, *Architectural Forum* 60, no. 1 (January 1934): 33–36; Sumner B. Emerson house, St. Davids, Pa., *Architectural Forum* 66, no. 4 (April 1937): 326–27; and Normile, *New Ideas*, p. 66. One of the *Better Homes and Gardens* Bildcost Gardened-Home Plans (no. 704) was modeled after the Pennsylvania farmhouse designed by George B. Hall and Reynold E. Paufre (Normile, *New Ideas*, p. 143).

where the Pennsylvania farmhouse type became looser, although still successful as a colonial image. Next to Philadelphia and its environs, Los Angeles (notwithstanding the strange logic) emerged as the second home of this colonial type. Although a number of Los Angeles-area architects, including John Byers and Edla Muir, H. Roy Kelley, and Welton D. Becket, designed this colonial type, it was Beverly Hills architect Gerard Colcord who became its most effective spokesman. His houses had "the sturdy character of a fieldstone and clapboard Pennsylvania Farmhouse . . . even the



Fig. 13. Richard W. Mecaskey, Downs house, Bryn Mawr, Pa., 1933. From *The Architectural Forum Book of Small Houses* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936), p. 174.

thickly wooded setting looks Pennsylvanian" (figs. 14, 15).⁴⁵

Yet another colonial type which was looked upon with fondness in the 1930s was the seventeenth-century, two-story, early American house of New England, often referred to as a "garrison house." Like the Cape Cod cottage, the simplicity and suggestion of rugged puritanism evoked by this image had a great appeal during the depression. Henry H. Saylor, writing in 1935, asked, "What is there in this extremely primitive house of the seventeenth century that holds so strong an appeal to us of this sophisticated generation?" Saylor's answer lay in the symbolism of this colonial type: "Here are the enduring fruits of our forefather's efforts to build honestly, sturdily, without ostentation." Some fifteen years earlier Murray P. Corse had argued, "The present day offers an excellent occasion for such a revival . . . and where can we find a better inspiration for dignified simplicity than in these seventeenth cen-

⁴⁵ Joseph L. Copeland, "The Pennsylvania House," *House Beautiful* 69, no. 2 (February 1931): 126–34, 176; R. Brognard Okie, two country houses of the Pennsylvania farmhouse type, *Architectural Forum* 58, no. 6 (June 1933): 485–88; W. Pope Barney, house, Wallingford, Pa., *Architectural Forum* 74, no. 4 (April 1941): 302; G. Edwin Brumbaugh, Kenneth J. Rempp house, Gwynedd Valley, Pa., *Architectural Forum Book of Houses* (1938), pp. 120–21; Carl C. Tallman, Seth T. McCormick, Jr., house, Williamsport, Pa., *American Architect* 143, no. 2619 (September 1933): 89–92; Savery and Scheetz, house near Philadelphia, *Pencil Points* 18, no. 9 (September 1937): 611. Gerard Colcord, "Pennsylvania Influence on Stone Canyon," *Home Owner* (January 1938): 40; Colcord, Stanley O. Chambers house, Beverly Hills, *Architectural Digest* 9, no. 3 (1939): 67–69.

tury homes of our Puritan ancestors?" "Appreciating the widespread interest in Early American home life," wrote the editors of *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1932, "the *Journal* commissioned a Boston firm of architects to reproduce the American architecture of 1650 in such a manner that it can be enjoyed today, with our much changed mode of living" (fig. 16).⁴⁶

As was the case with the thirties' Cape Cod cottage, Wills was closely associated with this "authentic" early American type. In the 1933 Better Homes of America competition, he received an honorable mention for a saltbox version of the early American type, in the Ordway house at Newton Center, Massachusetts (fig. 17). Externally this house appears so authentic that most of us would

⁴⁶ Henry H. Saylor, "The Early American Style of New England," *House and Garden* 67, no. 4 (April 1935): 46–47, 78, 80, 81; Murray P. Corse, "Puritan Architecture," *Architecture* 45, no. 1 (January 1922): 1–5, no. 3 (March 1922): 43–46. Possibly the first house of the twentieth century to be clothed in this image was Joy Wheeler Dow's 1906 house at Marquette, Mich., and this was followed in the 1920s by additional examples. Dow, cottage, Marquette, Mich., *Architectural Record* 38, no. 4 (October 1915): 470; Joy Wheeler Dow, "Colonial Houses of the Earliest Type," *American Architect* 113, no. 2214 (May 29, 1918): 701–6. See also Joy Wheeler Dow, "The Bristol Renaissance," *White Pine Series* 3, no. 5 (October 1917). Earlier he had published *American Renaissance: A Review of Domestic Architecture* (New York: W. T. Comstock, 1904) and in 1926 issued *Old-Time Dwellings in Kennebunkport* (Kennebunk, Maine: Star Print, 1926). For examples of the late seventeenth-century garrison type of colonial revival houses of the 1920s, see Ethel B. Power, *The Smaller American House* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1927), pp. 4–5, 18–19. Smith and Walker, "A Revival of the Fittest," *Ladies' Home Journal* 49, no. 7 (July 1932): 76.



Fig. 14. Gerard Colcord, Chambers house, Beverly Hills, Calif., 1936. From *California Arts and Architecture* 52, no. 3 (September 1937): 19.

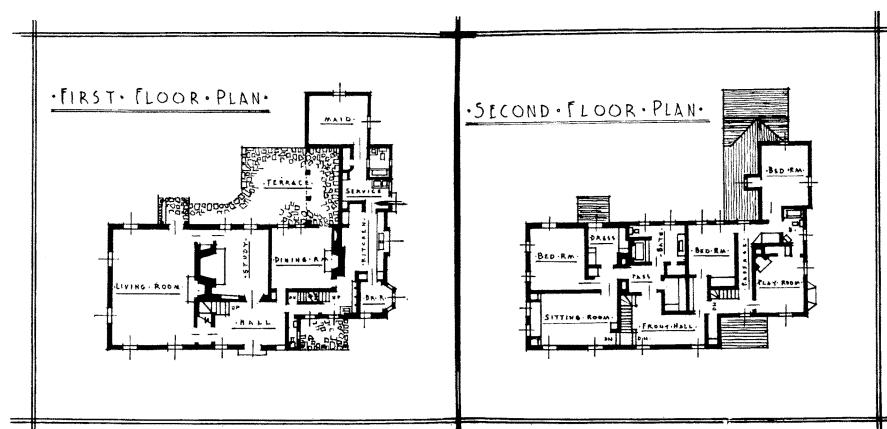


Fig. 15. Floor plans of house in figure 14. From *California Arts and Architecture* 52, no. 3 (September 1937): 19.



Fig. 16. Smith and Walker, project, 1932. From *Ladies' Home Journal* 49, no. 1 (July 1932): 76.



Fig. 17. Royal Barry Wills, Ordway house, Newton Center, Mass., 1929. (Photo, Maynard Workshop, Waban, Mass.)



Fig. 18. James Dwight Baum, Small Colonial House and Garden, 1931. From *Good Housekeeping* 93, no. 1 (July 1931): 69.

assume it was built in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.

Of all the colonial types, the two-story New England rectangular box, usually sheathed in white-painted clapboard (or painted shingles) with louvered, shuttered, double-hung windows and covered by a gabled roof, has been the most persistent in this century. Ethel B. Power was thinking of this New England type when she suggested, "a large degree of the popularity of the Colonial house is due to its economy of construction. . . . It is usually contained within a rectangle; it has a simple, often unbroken roofline; . . . in addition it has

a straight-forward and economical plan." Earlier, in 1921, Dwight James Baum carried the argument for this colonial type into the realms of aesthetics and folk architecture: "The interest in the earlier house lies in the splendid outline and careful studied proportioning of windows and door openings to the solid mass of plane wall surfaces. They (the carpenter/builders) achieved an unconscious relation of parts and proportion of opening to wall space and even glass divisions. . . . Some of the crudities of design add a certain quaintness that would be lost by a refinement of design." As one would expect, this New England colonial image was used on many occasions by Wills, Will Rice Amond, and Baum, as well as by other architects, particularly in the Northeast (figs. 18, 19).⁴⁷

With the depression, the number of large- to medium-size dwellings built in the more formal and often sumptuous colonial Georgian style decreased substantially, and when they were built the general inclination was to turn to the earlier, simpler phase of the Georgian, or to the styles that followed the Georgian. In truth, much of what was referred to as Georgian in the 1930s would, to be historically correct, be designated as English regency or American federal. But despite the economic effects of the depression, there was a scattering of large and impressive Georgian country houses built by the wealthy and the upper-middle

⁴⁷ Ethel B. Power, "Variation on the Colonial," *House Beautiful* 77, no. 7 (July 1935): 66; Dwight James Baum, "A Pilgrimage to Plymouth, Part I," *Architecture* 44, no. 3 (September 1921): 265. Royal Barry Wills, *Better Homes for Budgeteers* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1941), pp. 77, 81, 92; Amond, house for Alexander Houses, Inc., Darien, Conn., *Architectural Forum* 74, no. 1 (January 1941): 40–41; Leon Keach, "The Architect and the House: 1—Royal Barry Wills, Small Home Specialist," *Pencil Points* 18, no. 2 (February 1937): 76; Baum, Walter E. Cruttenden house, Longmeadow, Mass., *Architectural Forum* 66, no. 4 (April 1937): 288–89; Edwin M. Loya, Raymond A. McDonald house, Scarsdale, N.Y., *Architectural Record* 81, no. 5 (May 1937): 32; John C. Lyons, house, Marblehead, Mass., *Pencil Points* 20, no. 5 (May 1939): 328.

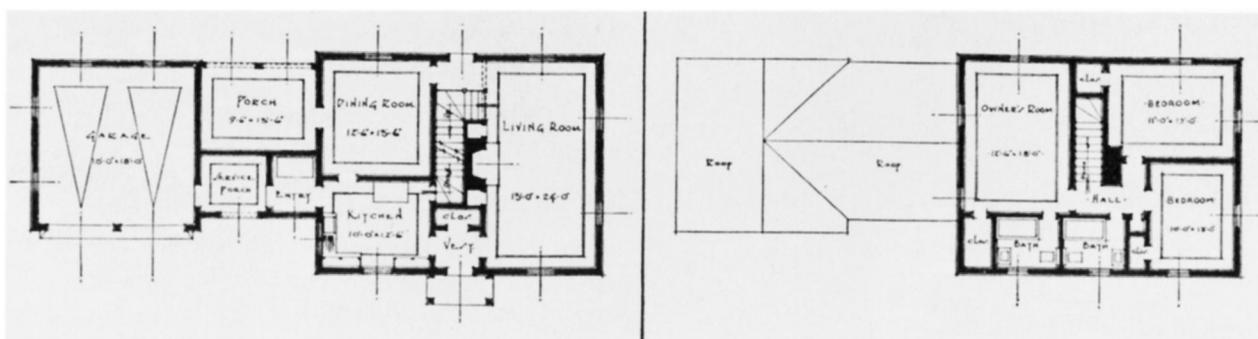


Fig. 19. Floor plan of house in figure 18. From *Good Housekeeping* 93, no. 1 (July 1931): 70.

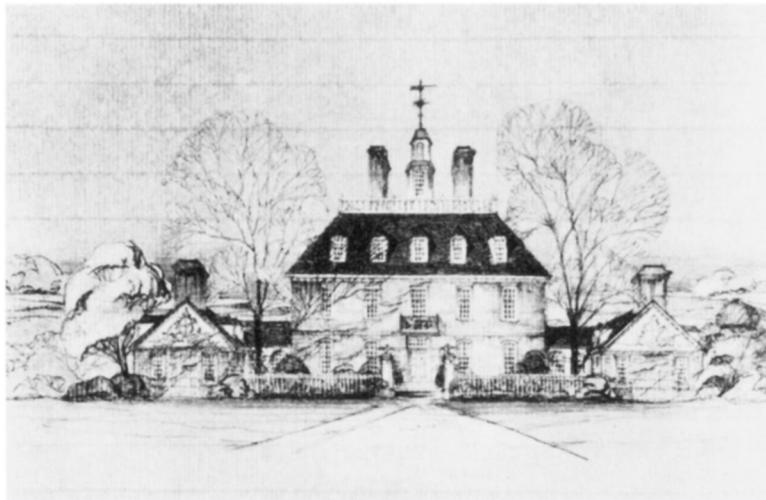


Fig. 20. Jerome Robert Cerny, project for a country house, 1940. From *Pencil Points* 21, no. 7 (July 1940): 430.

class between 1930 and 1941. The Georgian images most admired in the thirties were those associated with Williamsburg and Tidewater Virginia.⁴⁸ The largest of these Georgian, Williamsburg-inspired houses was Jerome Robert Cerny's 1940 design, based directly on the reconstructed Governor's Palace at Williamsburg (fig. 20).

In 1933 the fashionable New York store W. and J. Sloane sponsored a Fifth Avenue demonstration house in the regency style. "But why was the Regency Style chosen? Because it is a traditional type of architecture that lends itself to modern adjustments; because it is one of the two architectural styles—the other being its first cousin, Greek Revival—that are destined to enjoy great popularity." When in the same year Rexford Newcomb published his volume on how to build a colonial house, he designated the federal style as something quite distinct from the earlier phases of the colonial.⁴⁹ In glancing through the pages of America's middle- and upper-middle-class home magazines of the thirties, it is apparent that the regency as a colonial type was thought of as a nearly perfect combination of three ideals of the time: the sense of returning to the colonial past; the desire to be suave and sophisticated via a highly refined version of classicism; and the urge to have an image that could,

⁴⁸ "Master Detail Series No. 6: The Georgian Colonial House," *Architectural Forum* 60, no. 1 (January 1934): 49–64; Henry H. Saylor, "James River Colonial—Historic American Style," *House and Garden* 67, no. 1 (January 1935): 46–47, 58, 60; Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn, *Williamsburg House No. 3*, *House and Garden* 72, no. 5 (November 1937): 78–79.

⁴⁹ "A Fifth Avenue Country House Displays Regency Taste," *House and Garden* 64, no. 4 (October 1933): 27; Rexford Newcomb, *The Colonial and Federal House: How to Build an Authentic Colonial House* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1933).

through its plain surfaces, two-dimensional detailing, and simple volumetric forms, be responded to as modern (figs. 21, 22, 23).

As early as 1919 Baum had written "Bringing Colonial Architecture Up to Date," and in 1934 he noted that the "house of tomorrow . . . will recall in a fresh manner the architecture of our own Greek Revival, the English Regency or the French Direc-



Fig. 21. Verna Cook Salomonsky, house, Scarsdale, N.Y., ca. 1932. From *Architectural Forum* 60, no. 1 (January 1934): 59.



Fig. 22. John F. Straub, Winston house, Houston, 1938. (Houston Research Center, Houston Public Library.)

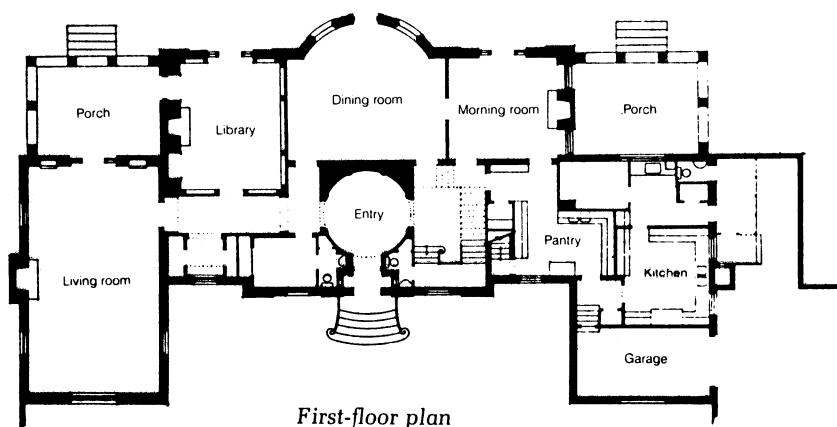


Fig. 23. First-floor plan of house in figure 19. From Howard Barnstone, *The Architecture of John F. Straub: Houston and the South* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), p. 249.

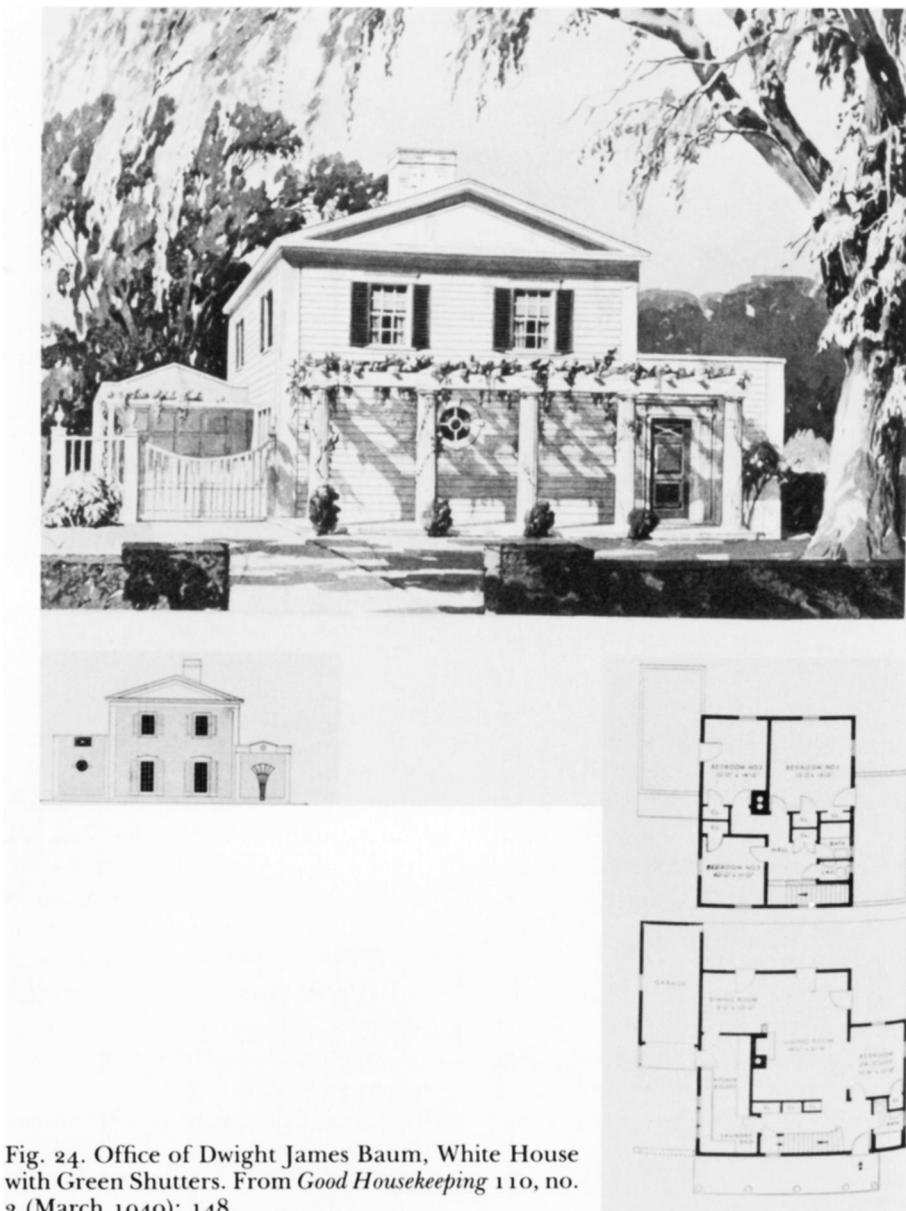


Fig. 24. Office of Dwight James Baum, White House with Green Shutters. From *Good Housekeeping* 110, no. 3 (March 1940): 148.

toire." Of these early nineteenth-century classical forms, it was the American Greek revival that came to intrigue Baum. In a scheme he published in 1940, the proportions of the house and the pitch of the roof are Greek, but the strongest Greek feature is the Doric-columned pergola which stretches across the face of the house (fig. 24).⁵⁰ This design illustrates how few the historic references need to

⁵⁰ Dwight James Baum, "Bringing Colonial Architecture Up to Date," *Touchstone* 5, no. 4 (April 1919): 10–16; "The House of Tomorrow," *Architecture* 69, no. 1 (January 1934): 19; Office of Dwight James Baum, "The Influence of New England on Our Plan," *Good Housekeeping* 110, no. 3 (March 1940): 148, 206.

be to make it readable as Greek, and it also indicates how inventive one could be with this colonial type.

Colonial Image and Regionalism

One of the intriguing aspects of the thirties' colonial revival that sets off this phase of the colonial revival from that of the past was its ability to establish a series of repeated national images found coast to coast but at the same time to encourage the development of regional types. In each instance the unspoken desire was to develop an image that

would be tied to the national colonial tradition but at the same time would be responded to as specific to the locale. The five geographic areas where this regionalism most strongly asserted itself were in Florida, along the Gulf Coast (closely associated with New Orleans and Louisiana), in New Mexico and the Southwest, in California, and in the Pacific Northwest.

Florida, like California, had been a center in the late teens and on through the twenties of the Spanish colonial revival and Mediterranean styles. But the Spanish/Mediterranean tradition which had been seized upon with lust by Addison Mizner and others fell out of favor at the end of the twenties, as rapidly as it had quickly ascended. In the midthirties the editors of *House and Garden* noted, "Florida is now undergoing a reaction from the florid houses of Latin ancestry toward more conservative design"; Louis Capron wrote in *House Beautiful* in 1935, "Tropical Colonial is supplanting the Spanish," and he entitled one of his articles "Revolt at Palm Beach."⁵¹ In the thirties the clients and architects of Florida did seek out a great deal more restrained sources, and these, as one would expect, led away from the open picturesque romanticism of the Hispanic/Mediterranean to the visual discipline of the classically inspired traditions. While there were a few "correct" Georgian houses built in Florida in the thirties, the "Georgian" most often used was inspired by that of Bermuda and the British West Indies (fig. 25).⁵²

On a national level, the regionalism of New Orleans was closely associated with the many-tiered iron balconies of buildings within the city's Vieux Carré district. But some of the most interesting interpretations of the Mississippi delta "colonial" architecture shared many points in common with

⁵¹ "Palm Beach Architecture Now Goes Conservative," *House and Garden* 68, no. 4 (October 1935): 40. While this assertion is true for traditional architectural imagery in Florida, one must remember that both Florida and California became by 1940 major strongholds of popular streamline moderne design. Louis Capron, "Revolt at Palm Beach," *House Beautiful* 77, no. 9 (September 1935): 30–33, 84–85.

⁵² Examples of the Georgian in Florida in the 1930s would be Maurice Fatio's 1937 house at 822 S. County Rd., Palm Beach, in Barbara D. Hoffstot, *Landmark Architecture of Palm Beach* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Ober Park Assn., 1974), p. 192; and Treaner and Fatio's Bereman house, Palm Beach (ca. 1939), *House and Garden* 78, no. 3 (September 1940): 48–49. Arthur Laidler-Jones, "Bermuda Style Home on Sunset Island, Miami Beach," *American Home* 24, no. 10 (October 1940): 56–57; Robert Law Weed, house, Miami Beach, Fla., *House and Garden* 73, no. 2 (February 1938): sec. 2 p. 120. The principal source book consulted by architects in the 1920s and 1930s for the British Caribbean tradition was John S. Humphreys, *Bermuda Houses* (Boston: Marshall Jones Co., 1923).

Florida's West Indies colonial. Richard Koch's Donald Markle house (1936) at Pass Christian, Mississippi, was, like the Alexander house in Palm Beach, oriented around a two-story living veranda; it bespoke New Orleans rather than Palm Beach by its general French colonial atmosphere conveyed by the high-pitch hipped roof and the detailing of the veranda (fig. 26).⁵³

One of the persistent twentieth-century strongholds of American regionalism has been New Mexico. In the early decades of the century, Anglo easterners, who had settled in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Taos, intermixed their efforts at historic preservation with a desire to create a style based on the historic amalgamation of the Pueblo Indians of the Rio Grande valley and the Spanish. The Pueblo revival was the result of this effort, and eventually this architectural image was employed for building types ranging from gasoline service stations, motels, and spec houses to public buildings. Notwithstanding the vigor of this regional style in the decades of the twenties and thirties, it, like the Spanish/Mediterranean revivals of Florida and California, was slowly nudged into the colonial. The regional colonial source was New Mexico's own territorial style of the mid nineteenth century: an amalgamation of Pueblo, Spanish, and Anglo.⁵⁴ The colonial elements of the territorial (loosely derived from a late provincial version of the federal and Greek revivals) usually consisted of a decorated brick coping for the parapeted adobe walls, occasionally gabled roofs, wooden double-hung windows with accompanying louvered shutters, and pedimented window frames and other exterior and interior detailing in milled lumber (fig. 27). Colonial-inspired territorial revival houses of the thirties were built throughout the Southwest from Texas to Arizona and on into California. As a regional colonial type, the territorial was presented in builders' pattern books, and it occurred as spec housing both before and after World War II.

In 1929 Martha B. Darbyshire wrote of the California scene: "Today, Spanish architecture is either dead or fast dying. The reason is plain enough. It was not as practical and suited to the American [Anglo] idea of everyday living as it was attractive to the eye." The implicit superiority of the Anglo tradition, expressed through colonial architecture, is revealed by one of those who initi-

⁵³ Koch, Donald Markle house, Pass Christian, Miss., *Architectural Forum* 71, no. 4 (October 1939): 225.

⁵⁴ Bainbridge Bunting, *John Gaw Meem: Southwest Architect* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), pp. 17, 39, 40.

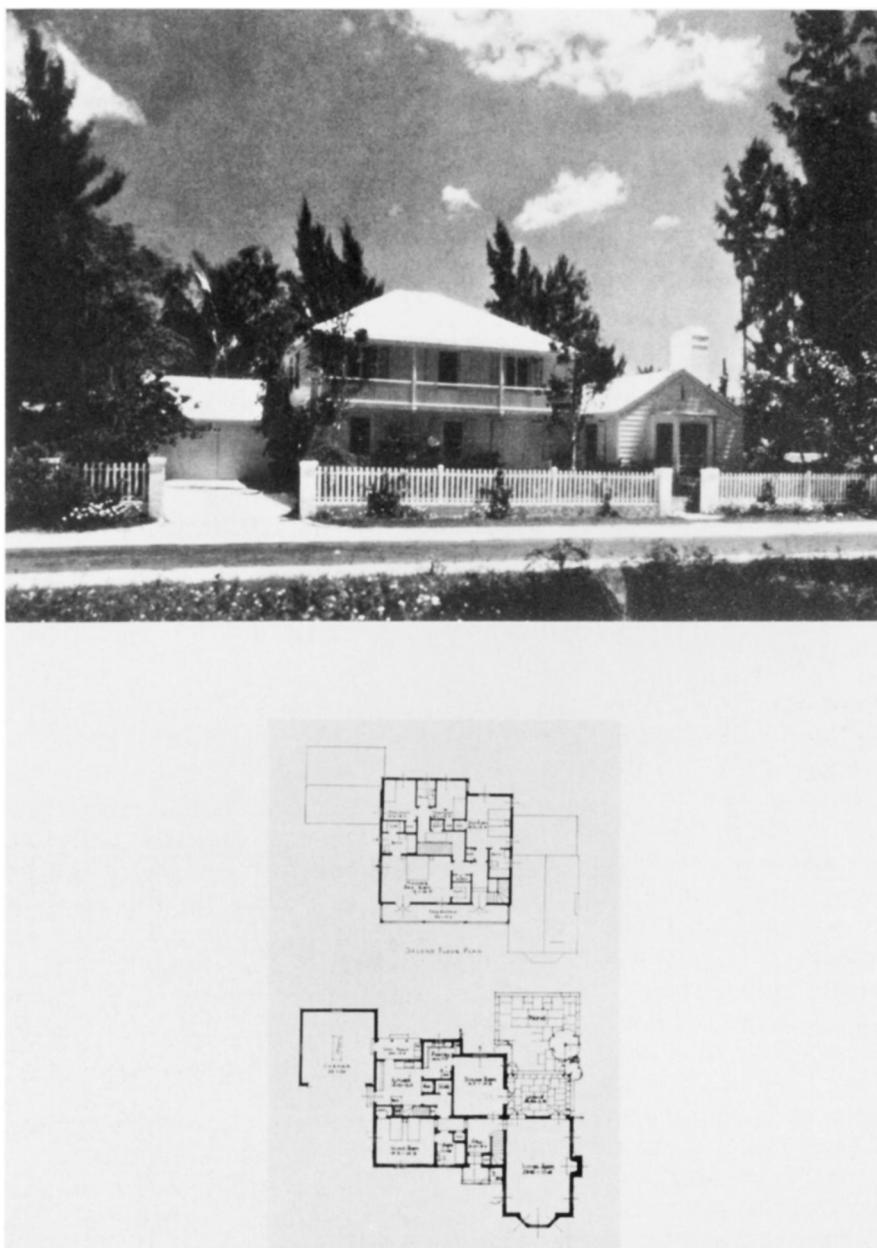


Fig. 25. Henry K. Harding, Harding house and plan, Palm Beach, Fla., 1936.
From *House and Garden* 72, no. 3 (September 1937): 31.



Fig. 26. Richard Koch, Donald Markle house, Pass Christian, Miss., 1936. (Photo, H. Von Breton.)

ated the Monterey revival, Pasadena architect Garvin Hodson. "Thus there was created," he wrote, "this delightful composite of New England and Spanish Colonial which seems to have combined so completely the advantages of solid comfort and good taste"—the "solid comfort" being the Hispanic ingredient, and "good taste" the Anglo. The colonializing of California's Hispanic/Mediterranean tradition of the teens and twenties produced two closely related regional types—the Monterey and the California ranch houses. Los Angeles architect Roland E. Coate observed of this adaptation in the late twenties: "A new kind of house has appeared in California, and in a few short years has succeeded in establishing itself. . . . It represents an attempt to apply familiar Colonial forms to modern conditions in California, [and] . . . blended with this there is a suggestion of the Spanish style which is inevitable in this country which is so rich in its tradition from Spain."⁵⁵

Supposedly the colonial Monterey style of the thirties was modeled after two-story balconied or porched houses built in California's coastal cities from the mid 1830s on through the 1850s.⁵⁶ But in



Fig. 27. John Gaw Meem, Los Poblanos ranch house and plan, Albuquerque, N.M., 1932. (Photo, Laura Gilpin Collection, Amon Carter Museum.)

⁵⁵ Martha B. Darbyshire, "Old Monterey Houses Influence Modern Homes," *Arts and Decoration* 51, no. 4 (October 1939): 9; Garvin Hodson, "The Monterey Adobe House," *California Arts and Architecture* 37, no. 4 (April 1930): 19; Roland E. Coate, "The Early California House: Blending Colonial and California Forms," *California Arts and Architecture* 35, no. 3 (March 1929): 21.

⁵⁶ David Gebhard, "The Monterey Tradition: History Reordered," *New Mexico Studies in the Fine Arts* 7 (1982): 14–19.

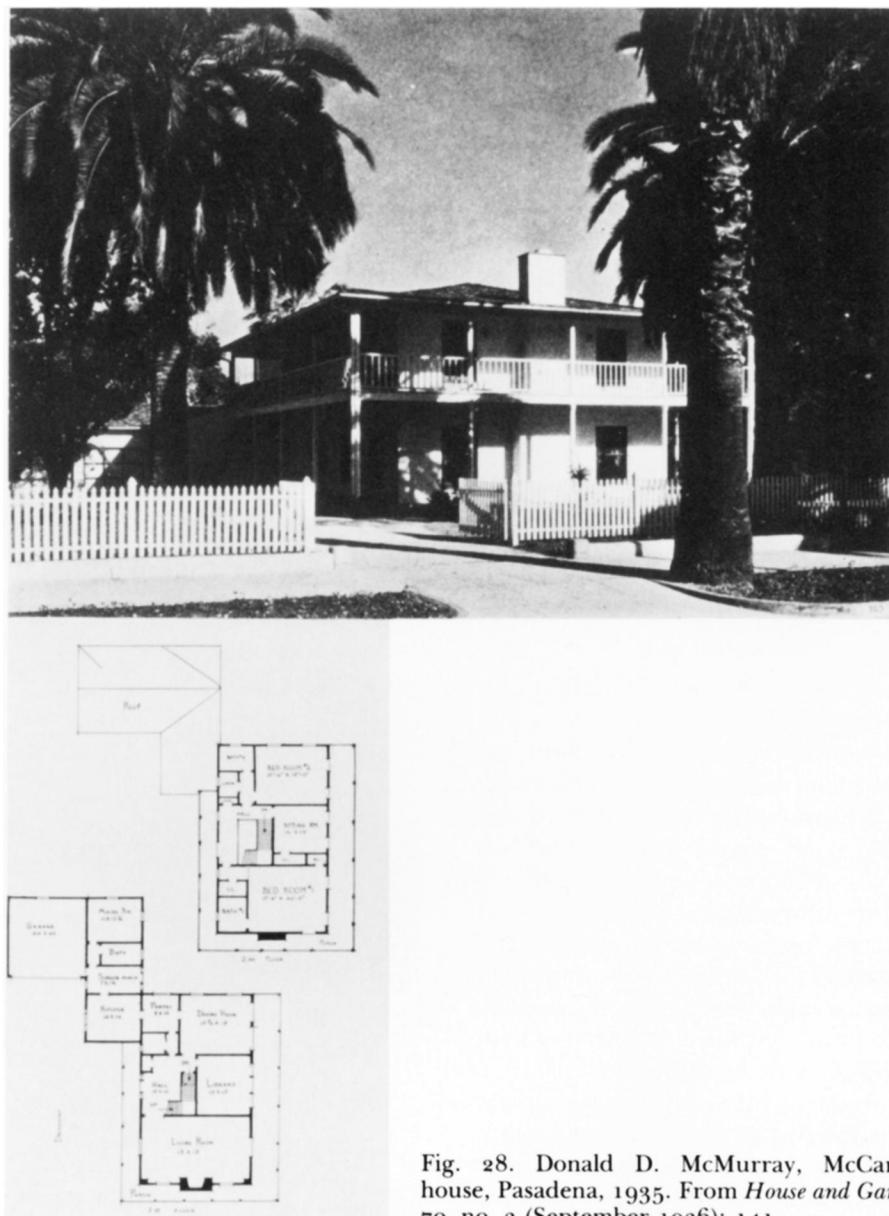


Fig. 28. Donald D. McMurray, McCarthy house, Pasadena, 1935. From *House and Garden* 70, no. 3 (September 1936): 141.



Fig. 29. Harold O. Sexsmith, Townley house, San Marino, Calif., 1936. From *Architectural Forum* 66, no. 4 (April 1937): 290.

truth the characteristic Monterey-style house as well as the California ranch house of the thirties exhibited a wealth of "correct" colonial details never found in the nineteenth-century originals (fig. 28).

Like most terms designating a fashion, a style, or an architectural type, "California ranch house" had been in use since the 1890s. By the early 1930s the term came to be narrowed and applied to informal, somewhat rambling, single-floor dwellings, which, like the Monterey revival house, seemed to be based on a nineteenth-century mixture of the Hispanic and the Anglo.⁵⁷ As with the Monterey, the trend in the thirties for the California ranch house was to reduce slowly the Hispanic aspect of it and to increase its colonial qualities. Harold O. Sexsmith's 1936 Townley house in San Marino illustrates the version of the California ranch house that was to enjoy nationwide popularity after World War II (figs. 29, 30).

From the teens of this century to the present, the Pacific Northwest has provided an unusual series of developments within the American architectural scene. The regionalism of the Pacific

⁵⁷ Archie T. Newsom, "Style: California Colonial," *Architect and Engineer* 123, no. 1 (October 1935): 11-27; "Some Sources in Western Living: The California Ranch House," *Sunset* 86, no. 1 (January 1941): 12-13. In the 1930s and on into the 1950s the acknowledged master of the California ranch house was Cliff May. See his *Sunset Western Ranch Houses* (San Francisco: Lane Publishers, 1946).

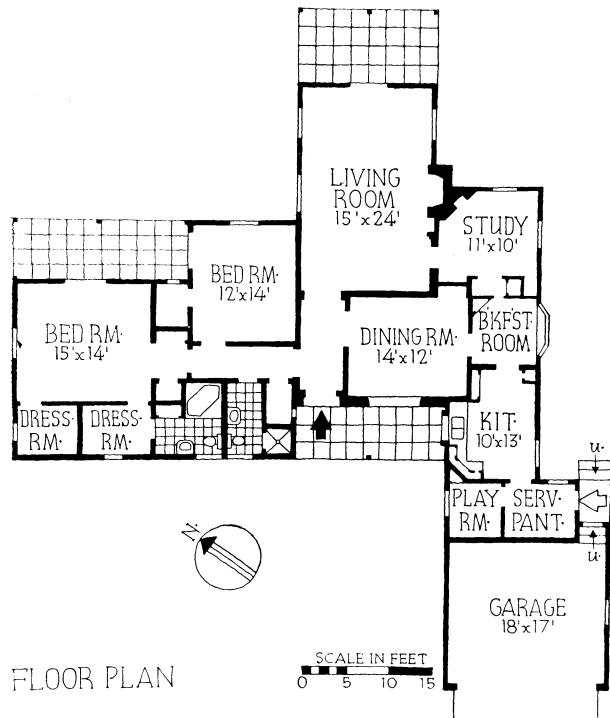


Fig. 30. Floor plan of house in figure 29. From *Architectural Forum* 66, no. 4 (April 1937): 291.



Fig. 31. George Wellington Stoddard, house, Seattle, Wash., 1938. From *Architectural Forum* 72, no. 4 (April 1940): 270.

Northwest was not on the whole based on the normal premise of regional—that of historic precedent; rather, it was a cultivated response to the mountainous, woody environment of the coastal areas of Oregon and Washington (figs. 31, 32). In the thirties, the Pacific Northwest architects and clients sought out some sort of an argument of history to substantiate their interest in the colonial. Portland architect Glenn Stanton, writing in 1938, referred back to "the simple Colonial style of the houses built [in the Willamette valley] from about 1865 to 1880. . . . [Q]uite a few show a feeling of the Greek Revival, others are finer in scale—a translation of style in the old home states. These early examples here influenced, in a limited way, the domestic designs of the architects, who have found in their simplicity and rugged character, a fair answer to the requirements of our climate."⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Dwight James Baum, "Architecture in the Northwest Shows a True Modern Spirit," *American Architect* 136, no. 2575 (September 1929): 211–16; Walter E. Church, Malcolm I. Gilbert house, Portland, Oreg., *Architecture* 58, no. 4 (October 1928): 243–44; Harold W. Doty, Paul M. Kuhn house, Portland, *Architect and Engineer* 109, no. 2 (May 1932): 41. Glenn Stanton, "What the Oregon Architects Have Been Doing," *Architect and Engineer* 134, no. 1 (July 1938): 13–14. "Oregon House Planned to Allow Street View," *Architectural Record* 88, no. 2 (August 1940): 56–57; Whitehouse and Church, Robert T. Catlin house, Portland, *Architectural Forum* 71, no. 4 (October 1939): 261; Arthur B. Loveless and Lester Fey, Fritz Miller house, Seattle, Wash., *Architect and Engineer* 138, no. 3 (September 1939): 34; George Wellington Stoddard, house in Seattle, Wash., *Architectural Forum* 72, no. 4 (April 1940): 270–71; Loveless and Fey, house on Puget Sound, Wash., *Architectural Forum* 72, no. 4 (April 1940): 272–73.

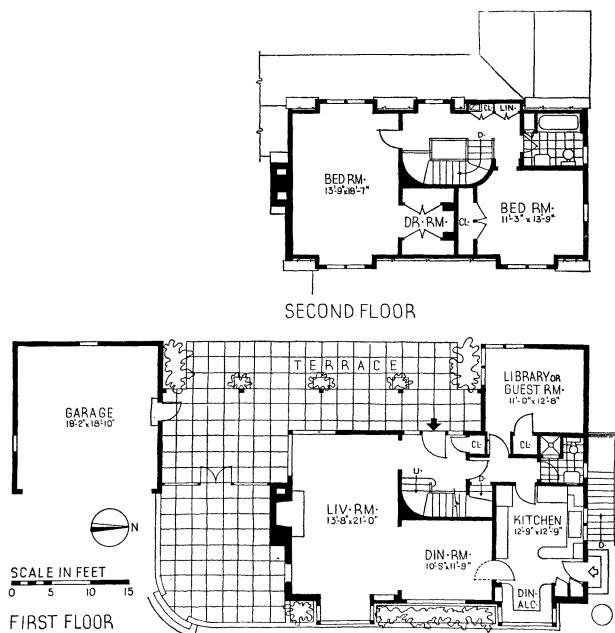


Fig. 32. Floor plan of house in figure 31. From *Architectural Forum* 72, no. 4 (April 1940): 271.

Colonial: Commercial and Public

Since the twenties, the colonial image, often as a version of the colonial house, had been used for commercial buildings from large office complexes to the smallest roadside restaurant. For larger buildings, the colonial precedent tended toward mid eighteenth-century Georgian. The smaller buildings ranged more broadly through colonial history, from the early eighteenth century up through the federal style after 1800. As in the design of the house, there was a movement in the thirties toward a preference for the later colonial—the regency or federal—and there was a general desire to modernize—that is, to incorporate moderne elements. Those who commissioned automobile-oriented drive-in architecture in the thirties—service stations, restaurants (fast food and otherwise), motels, and the like—sensed that the colonial provided an appealing advertisement.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ William B. Rhoads, "Roadside Colonial: Early American Design for the Automobile Age, 1900–1940," *Winterthur Portfolio* 21, nos. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 1986): 133–52. Competition for "A Gasoline Service Station Outside of a New England Town," *Architecture* 57, no. 3 (March 1928): 173–75. For other examples, see Daniel I. Vieyra, "Fill'er Up": *An Architectural History of America's Gas Stations* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1979). "Four Service Stations," *American Architect* 142, no. 2613 (November 1932): 57; "Filling Stations," *Pencil Points* 22, no. 1 (January 1941): 35–40; Vieyra, *Fill'er Up*, pp. 48–50; Eugene J. Long, service station, Scarsdale, N.Y., *American Architect* 142, no. 2613 (November 1932): 56–57.

From the late twenties on, the new parkway systems laid out in and around New York provided service station/restaurants and rest stops that were rural and colonial. National and regional oil companies designed prototype stations which, with their white walls, shuttered windows, and correctly detailed wooden trim, read as small colonial dwellings. Fast-food outlets, like Howard Johnson's and the Dutchland Farm Restaurants, played the usual late thirties' game of presenting themselves as both colonial and modern (fig. 33).⁶⁰

Colonial retail and office commercial buildings—some conveying an authentic feeling, others loose in image—occurred from Maine to California. These ranged from good-size developments such as Palmer Square (completed in 1941) in Princeton, New Jersey, "the largest collection of new buildings in the Colonial style outside of Williamsburg," to Paul R. Williams's elegant Music Corporation of America Building in Beverly Hills (1940), seemingly a Georgian country house set in its own colonial garden (figs. 34, 35).⁶¹

⁶⁰ Joseph Morgan, Howard Johnson's Restaurant, Cambridge, Mass., *Architectural Record* 91, no. 2 (February 1942): 66–67; Joseph Watterson and S. Tyson Haldeman, Dutchland Farms Restaurant, Rockville Center, N.Y., *Architectural Record* 91, no. 2 (February 1942): 68–69.

⁶¹ Thomas Stapleton, Palmer Square, Princeton, N.J., *Architectural Forum* 68, no. 4 (April 1938): 317–24; Anita Morris, "Recent Work of Paul R. Williams, Architect," *Architect and Engineer* 141, no. 3 (June 1940): 19–42.



Fig. 33. Joseph Morgan, Howard Johnson's Restaurant, Cambridge, Mass., 1941. From *Architectural Record* 91, no. 2 (February 1942): 66.

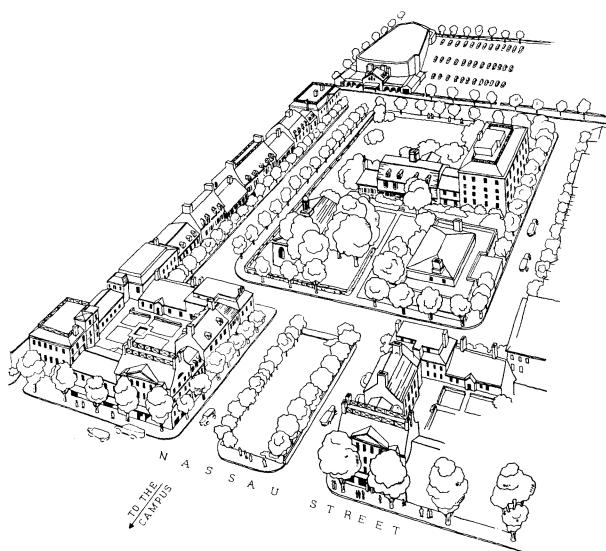


Fig. 34. Thomas Stapleton, Palmer Square, Princeton, N.J., 1938–41. From *Architectural Forum* 68, no. 4 (April 1938): 317.

Turning to public buildings, churches, and educational buildings, the preferred colonial types in the thirties continued to reflect the twenties' predilection for eighteenth-century American Georgian. Whether it was a small post office in a mid-western town (fig. 36), a school in New England (fig. 37), or a collegiate building in the Pacific Northwest (fig. 38), the characteristic design was a red brick structure whose facade presented a balanced composition, accentuated usually by small-pane windows, central ornamented entrances, and the roof surmounted by a cupola and spire. The prototype sources were often elements borrowed from eighteenth-century churches or from such historic monuments as Independence Hall in Philadelphia or the Colony House in Boston.⁶²

Both officially and unofficially the federal government was committed to the colonial. This was an image dear to the heart of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, both before and during his long presidency. Whether at Hyde Park or the White House, he liked to play the part of the gentleman-architect—being particularly fond of seeing himself associated with Thomas Jefferson. In the area around Hyde Park along the Hudson, he intervened on a number of occasions in the design for

⁶² John Maass, "Architecture and Americanism on Pastiches of Independence Hall," *Charette* 49, no. 5 (September/October 1969): 4–7.

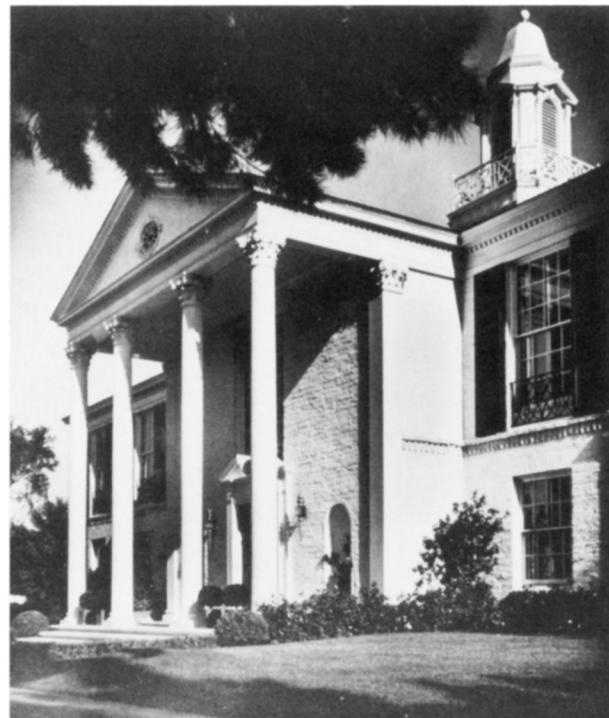


Fig. 35. Paul R. Williams, Music Corporation of America, Beverly Hills, Calif., 1940. From *Architect and Engineer* 141, no. 3 (June 1940): 18.

federal post office buildings—in each case to insure that they turned out to be colonial designs.⁶³

The general course of design for public buildings in the thirties is revealed in two Clark projects: his 1931 Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington, Connecticut, and his 1936/37 restoration and additions to the 1794 Town Hall, Fairfield, Connecticut. The Bryan Town Hall, with its sumptuous, two-story, columned and gabled portico, poses as a restrained but formal Georgian design (fig. 39). In contrast, the remodeled and added-to, wood-sheath Fairfield Town Hall stands, as Talbot Hamlin observed in 1938, "in perfect simplicity—a New England Town Hall" (fig. 40).⁶⁴

⁶³ "Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Architect, Turns Out His First Job," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 9, 1938, pt. 1 p. 33; house for Roosevelt at Hyde Park, N.Y., *Architectural Forum* 69, no. 4 (October 1938): 34; William Moore, presidential library, *Architectural Forum* 75, no. 2 (August 1941): 10; "F.D.R. as Architect: Hudson River Dutch Type Revived by the President," *New York Times Magazine* (December 8, 1940): 9; U.S. Post Office, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., *Architectural Forum* 63, no. 5 (November 1937): 76; Eric Gugler, White House addition, *Architectural Record* 76, no. 3 (September 1934): 18.

⁶⁴ Clark, Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington, Conn., *Architecture* 66, no. 4 (October 1932): 206; Talbot Faulkner Hamlin, "The Architectural League Exhibition: Reviewing Contemporary American Architecture," *Pencil Points* 19, no. 6 (June 1938): 350.



Fig. 36. Louis A. Simon and Neal A. Melick, U.S. Post Office, Anamosa, Iowa, 1940. (Photo, David Gebhard.)



Fig. 37. Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn, Eliot Elementary School, South Natick, Mass., 1938. From R. W. Sexton, *Schools* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1939), p. 72.

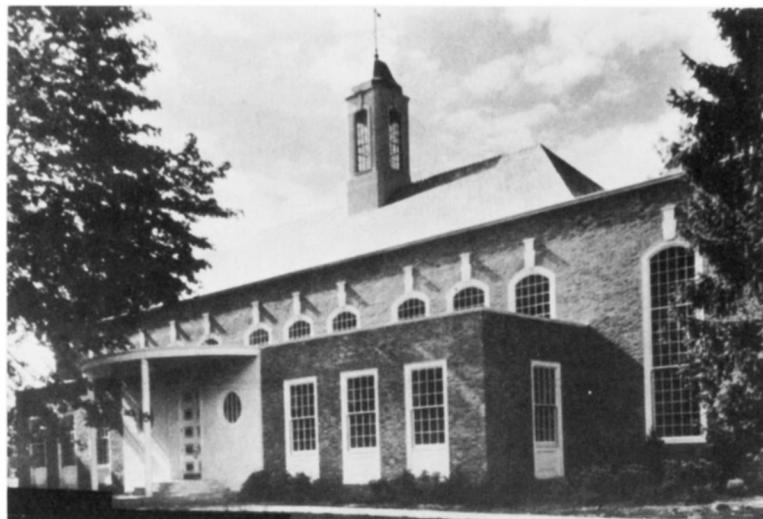


Fig. 38. A. E. Doyle and Associate, Library, Willamette University, Salem, Oreg., 1939. From *Architectural Record* 89, no. 2 (February 1941): 85.



Fig. 39. Cameron Clark, Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington, Conn., 1931. From *Architectural Forum* 59, no. 3 (September 1933): 185.



Fig. 40. Cameron Clark, Town Hall, Fairfield, Conn., 1935–37. (Fairfield Historical Society.)

Conclusion

"A few fortunate souls," wrote Samuel Chamberlain in 1937, "possess genuine Cape Cod cottages, authentic, unspoiled ones. . . . Most of us, however, must be content with a modern interpretation, and it is fortunate for us that the true flavor of Cape Cod, perhaps minus the salt atmosphere, can be captured by a sympathetic observation of a few peculiarities of its cottages." For the architect of the thirties to discover and maneuver these peculiarities, it was observed in the *Architect and Engineer*, "he must have a spirit of humility. He must instruct himself that certain elusive but enduring qualities in buildings of the past have caused them to have the same allure now as in the beginning. It is a part of his culture to search out these elusive and enduring qualities so that to the full extent of his ability such qualities may also be built into his architecture."⁶⁵

The colonial revival of the thirties, as was the case in the twenties, indicates how successful traditionalism could be in solving and expressing symbolic and functional needs of the day. The mod-

ernists claimed that they were the only ones who could properly symbolize and deal with the material, political, and social needs. Yet with the modernist roots in the world of the architect-as-artist and art for art's sake, they found it very difficult to compete effectively with traditionalism, which to a considerable degree was based on "a spirit of humility."

If we grant the essential premise of traditionalism—the need for continuity, the desirability of maintaining an image that could be read at various levels by a broad audience—then it is apparent that the colonial revival in the thirties was remarkably creative and vigorous. The "allure" of the original colonial buildings of the seventeenth through early nineteenth centuries was indeed captured in the work of the revival's principal exponents. If we look back to the work of Royal Barry Wills, Dwight James Baum, Cameron Clark, and others, it is apparent that they achieved the transformation of the historic colonial into an image highly expressive of the decade.

Answers have already been suggested to several of the questions posed in the early part of this discussion. Of these, certainly the key question revolves around the reasons for the prominence of the colonial in the thirties. It would be a mistake to attribute its popularity to one single cause. The

⁶⁵ Samuel Chamberlain, "The Real Cape Cod," *House Beautiful* 79, no. 8 (August 1937): 17; "Architecture Yesterday and Today," *Architect and Engineer* 136, no. 3 (March 1939): 43.

implication of inward-searching nationalism, while a highly significant ingredient, was only one of several reasons for the widespread fondness for the colonial. The suggestive powers of architecture to remind us of past values—in this case, of a simpler, puritanical, family-oriented world of manageable scale—was implicit in the thirties' view of the colonial past. To these explanations must be added three others: practicality, sentiment, and aesthetic predilection.

Since the original eighteenth-century colonial was itself realized through wood and masonry construction, it was a "natural" as far as everyday building technology of the thirties was concerned. Nor did the image have any problem in lending itself to the latest in modernist and constructional techniques—ranging from prefabricated metal structures and parts to reinforced concrete. For smaller buildings, particularly wood-frame and -sheath dwellings, the colonial almost always turned out to be one of the most economical building types of the time.

As previously discussed, not only were there specific historic types of the colonial that came into prominence in the 1930s, but there was a process of continual change in the interpretation of these types, and there was a continual absorption of the modernist image. By the end of the decade, there were commercial and public buildings and dwellings that could be responded to either as modernized colonial or as modern with a slight nod to the colonial. The unique and significant contributions to the "time-honored" tradition of the colonial in the thirties was then the game played between con-

veying a feeling of historic accuracy, and simultaneously of realizing the functional needs of the time, and finally the desire to have the image encompass the modern in a casual, easygoing fashion. This game can be observed in examples that came close to appearing as almost "pure" reproductions, as well as openly modernized colonial designs.

In 1946, shortly after the end of World War II, the editors of *Life* conceded with reticence that Wills was the American architect whose colonial houses "seem to be almost perfect fulfillment of the sentimental American ideal of what a home should be."⁶⁶ The editors of *Life* (with their association with *Architectural Forum*) were by this time out-and-out exponents of the modern, and their phrase "sentimental American ideal" was used in the negative, critical sense—for in serious modern buildings there was certainly no place for drippy sentimentality. Sentiment, and specifically middle-class sentiment, was (and has remained) one of the essential bases for the popularity of the colonial, past and present. In open contrast to the modernist, traditionalists had always argued that sentiment was an essential ingredient of architecture and that instead of attempting to ignore it, the architect was under obligation to understand it and expose it.

In the same 1946 article on Wills, *Life* noted that while his Cape Cod cottages and other colonial designs did not have the appearance of "machines

⁶⁶ "Royal Barry Wills, Boston Architect, Designs the Kind of Houses Most Americans Want," *Life* 21, no. 9 (August 26, 1946): 67.



Fig. 41. Alfred Easton Poor, Village Hall, Dering Harbor, N.Y., 1932. From *Architectural Record* 76, no. 5 (November 1934): 352.

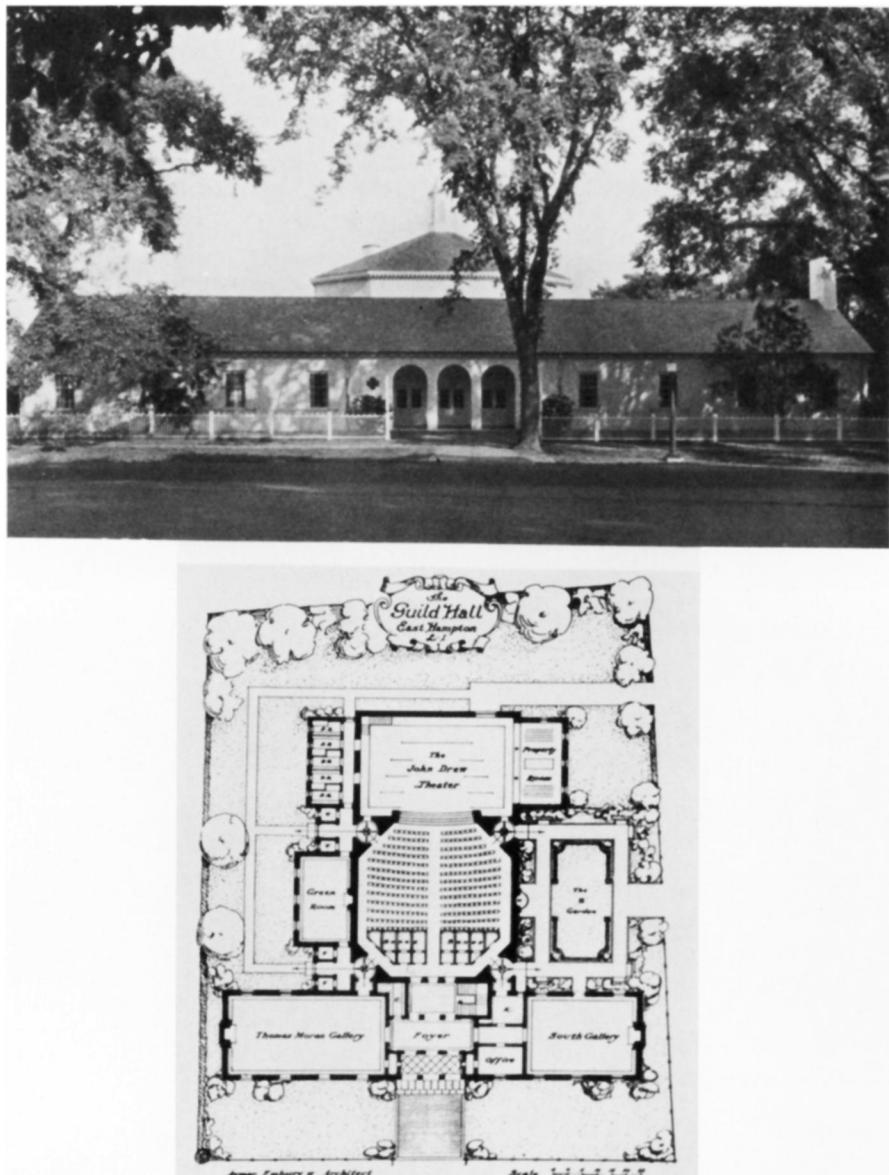


Fig. 42. Aymar Embury II, Guild Hall, East Hampton, Long Island, N.Y., 1931.
From *Architecture* 65, no. 3 (March 1932): 147.

for living," they were in fact excellent utilitarian objects. They correctly pointed out how well-conceived were his plans, how carefully he took into account current building technology and the life-style of the middle-class family. If we examine the siting and the plans of colonial revival buildings in the thirties, from small four-room cottages to large public buildings, it is clear that their architects were as objective and rational in their analysis of functional considerations as any modernist of the day.

What, then, were the principal colonial revival landmarks of the 1930s? In the public realm,

Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn's Williamsburg restoration has as much to do with design in the thirties as it has with the colonial past; so too Clark's restorations and additions to the Fairfield Town Hall. Continuing from the late twenties into the thirties were a remarkable number of impressive designs for city halls—among which are Clark's Bryan Memorial Town Hall and Alfred Easton Poor's 1932 Village Hall at Dering Harbor, Long Island (fig. 41). It would be difficult to equal in sensitivity to scale and to site planning Aymar Embury II's Guild Hall at East Hampton, Long Island (fig. 42), Milton H. Maguire's Julia Dyckman Andrus



Fig. 43. Milton H. Maguire, Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial, Yonkers, N.Y., 1931–35. (Photo, David Gebhard.)

Memorial at Yonkers, New York (fig. 43), or in a more formal vein, Williams's Music Corporation of America Building.

To mention the principal domestic landmarks of the colonial revival in the 1930s is not an easy task, for such a list would be extensive, and geographically the examples would span the country. While a number of these colonial domestic landmarks were good-size suburban or country houses, by far most were modest, middle- or upper-middle-class suburban dwellings. Because of the quality of design of so many of the colonial cottages and houses of the thirties, it is difficult to

draw a sharp line between the work of major figures and a good number of other architects.

In "Variation on the Colonial," Power, who wrote frequently on architecture and the decorative arts in the thirties, pinpointed the aesthetic reasons why the colonial was so popular in the thirties: "They possess a common denominator of simplicity, sturdiness, sincerity and later of dignity and directness." "At its best," she concluded, the colonial image "achieved a beauty of proportion and detail that has not been excelled."⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Power, "Variations on the Colonial," p. 66.