
The Discovery of America's Architectural Past, 1874-1914

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The Discovery of America's Architectural Past, 1874–1914

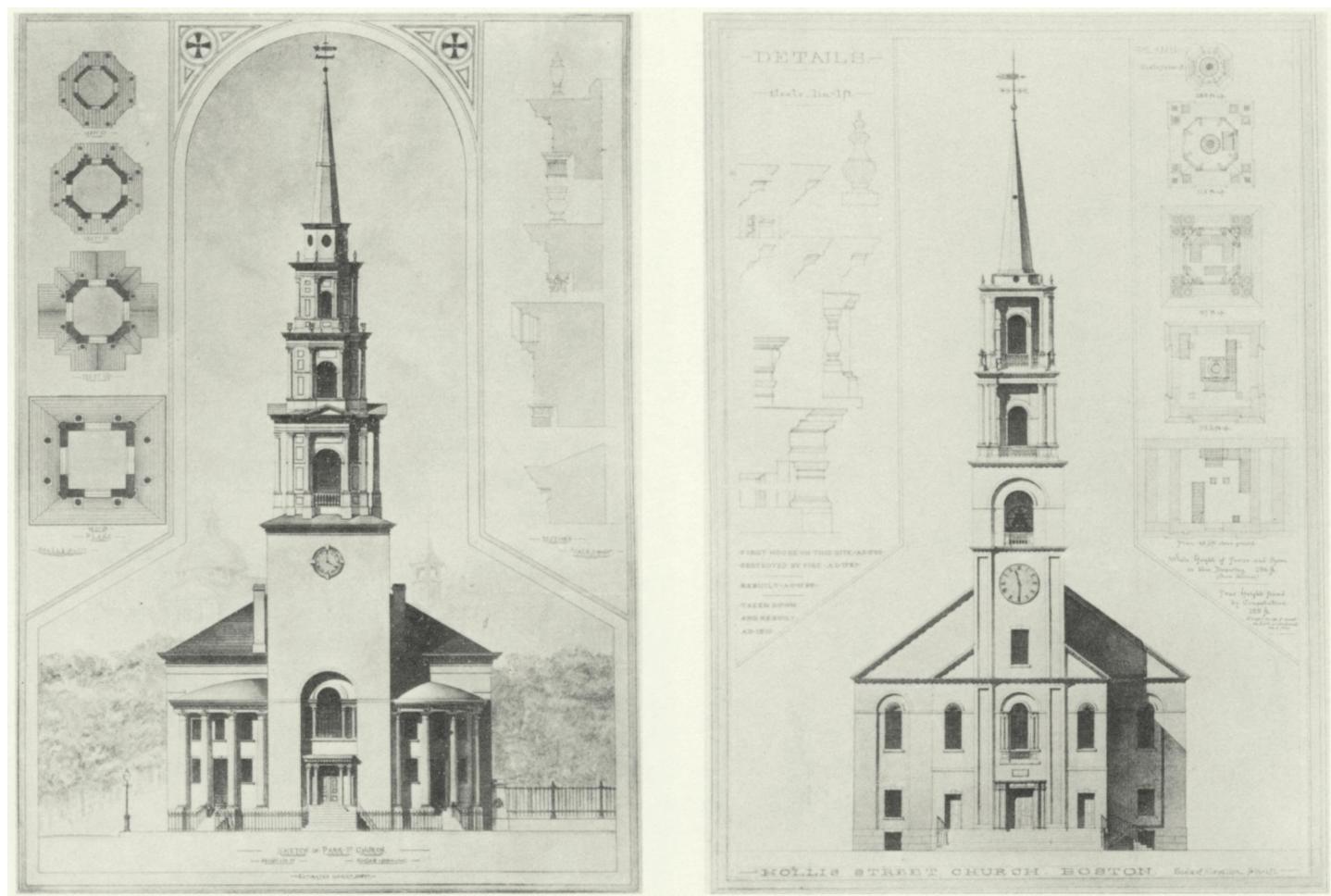
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he discovery and celebration of America's architectural past began well before 1874. True, Thomas Jefferson in 1781 and Louisa Tuthill in 1848 had uncomplimentary things to say about the country's old buildings, and from London in 1873 came James Fergusson's widely read opinion that before 1814 "there was hardly one single building erected in North America . . . worthy of being mentioned as an example of Architectural Art."¹ Yet as early as the 1790s the Reverend William Bentley, an antiquarian cited by Abbott Lowell Cummings as "New England's first architectural historian," described seventeenth-century buildings in diary entries.² Washington Irving wrote amusingly about the quaint architecture of the Hudson Valley Dutch, but took it seriously enough to rebuild one of their old stone houses for his own use in 1835.³ Architects Benjamin Latrobe, William Strickland, and John Hubbard Sturgis recorded the appearance of vanishing landmarks,⁴ while Arthur Gilman, Thomas Tefft, and Richard Upjohn in the mid-nineteenth century wrote admiringly of designs from a century earlier.⁵

The 1870s were marked by celebrations of the centennial of independence and a new zeal for recording old buildings, especially as sources for the rising colonial revival. In 1874 students of Professor William Robert Ware at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology measured and drew late

Georgian church towers in Boston. Two were published in the *Architectural Sketch Book* (1875; fig. 1). By 1874 William Edward Barry, a draftsman in the Boston office of Peabody and Stearns, had published *Pen Sketches of Old Houses* (fig. 2).⁶ Also in 1874 a photo of Bishop Berkeley's house (1728) near Newport, Rhode Island, appeared in the *New-York Sketch Book*, edited by Charles McKim. It showed the picturesque rear roof of the Berkeley house, but McKim's taste was broad enough so that he later published the Georgian entrance of the Ford house (Washington's headquarters; fig. 3) in Morristown, New Jersey, drawn by Bassett Jones, and the formal classicism of New York City Hall, "the most admirable public building in the city." McKim argued for the "architectural merit" of these buildings in the face of those who considered them "ugly." McKim himself was then a colonial revivalist (e.g., in his Blake house of 1875), but he did not believe it was enough to gather graphic documentation of colonial buildings. He insisted it was time that architects "write about them as Architecture," in contrast to popular magazines such as *Harper's* where colonial buildings were illustrated simply as a quaint background for "some story or other."⁷

In 1876 architects and architectural students were invited to submit "careful drawings" for publication in a new journal,



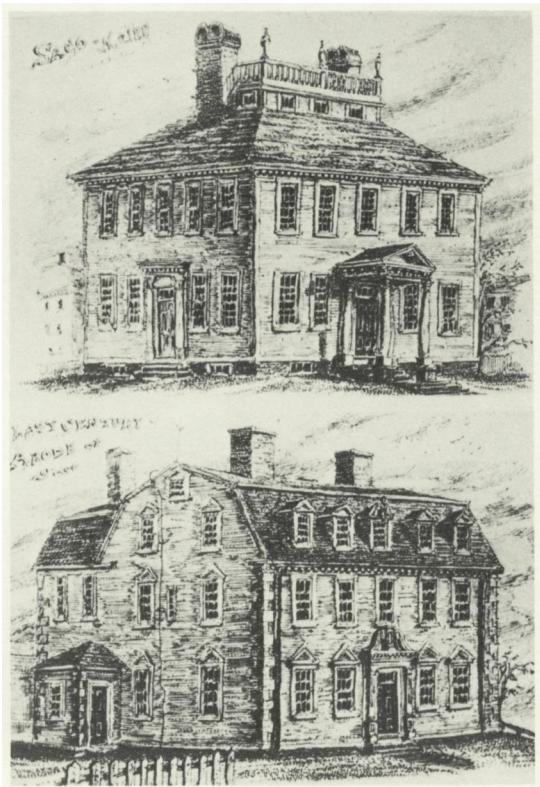
the *American Architect and Building News*. These drawings, including plans and details, would surpass in value the "picturesque views published in books and magazines." It was observed that "the architecture of the Colonies" stemmed from England and the "narrow formalities of the Georgian period." The writer on the one hand condemned this colonial work as "feeble, lifeless, monotonous," while on the other proposing that its "ancestry was good. . . . the precepts of Vignola and Palladio had been translated, illustrated, and codified, by Wren and Chambers" and applied by "skilful mechanics" to American buildings.⁸

Boston architect Robert S. Peabody was impressed by the English revival of the "Queen Anne" on an 1876 visit⁹ and soon

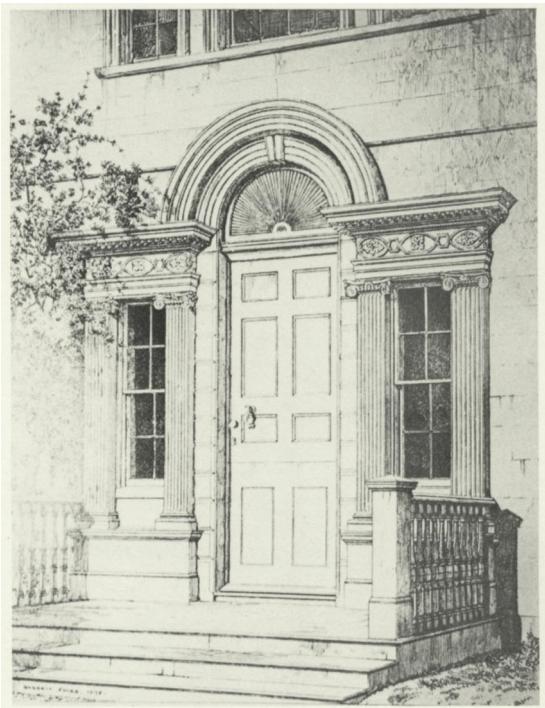
came to advocate that Americans revive the colonial, which he thought equivalent to the Queen Anne, as "our legitimate field for imitation" and "our only native source of . . . inspiration." His taste ran to the "picturesque pile" of the Fairbanks house in Dedham, but more to "Georgian houses" like the Vassall-Longfellow house in Cambridge, which provided "the richest and finest models." He thought classical details had been "the common language of every carpenter, and treated freely . . . with no superstitious reverence for Palladio or Scamozzi, those bugbears of later years." Peabody's sketches of "old houses at Lenox and Little Harbor" (fig. 4), which accompanied his essay, confirmed his dual enthusiasms for picturesque compositions and Georgian details, as did Peabody and

1. Park Street and Hollis Street Churches, Boston, drawn by H. G. King and R. S. Atkinson From *Architectural Sketch Book 2* (January 1875), pl. 31. Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University

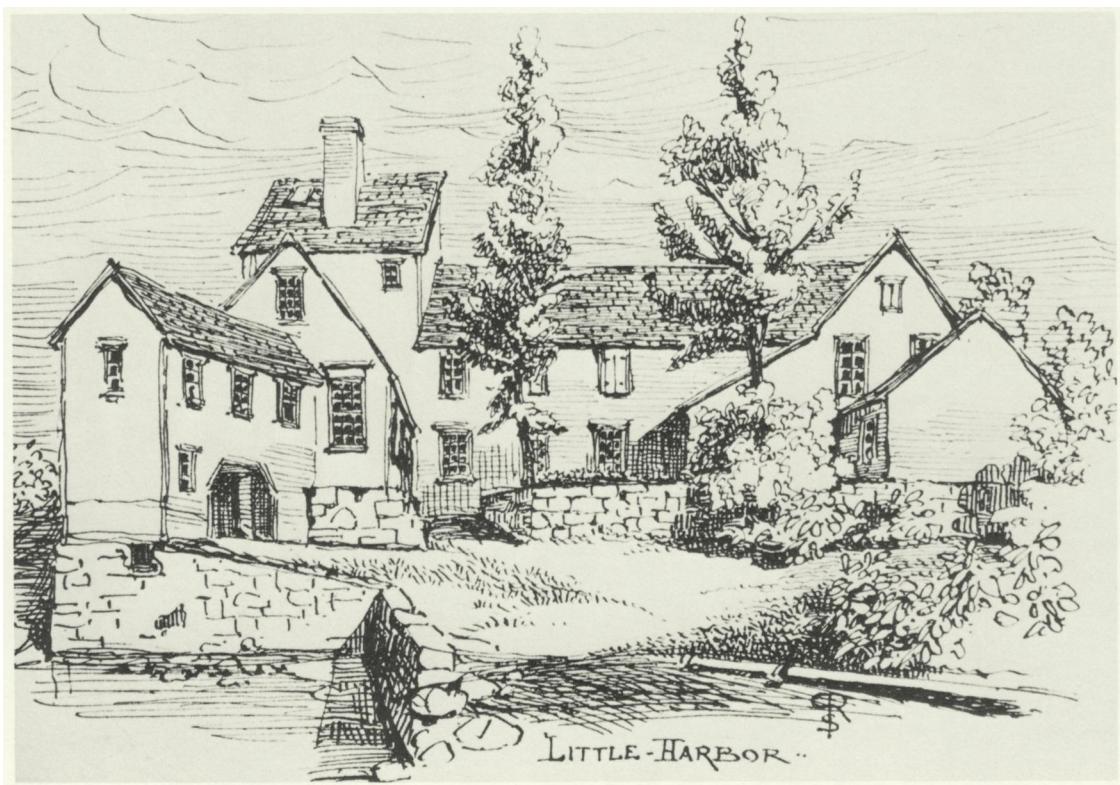
2. Houses in Saco, Maine,
drawn by William E. Barry
From *Pen Sketches of Old Houses*
(Boston, n.d.). Avery Architectural
and Fine Arts Library, Columbia
University



3. Washington's Headquarters,
Morristown, New Jersey,
drawn by Bassett Jones
From *New-York Sketch-Book of
Architecture* 2 (August 1875). Avery
Architectural and Fine Arts Library,
Columbia University



4. Wentworth House, Little
Harbor, New Hampshire,
drawn by Robert S. Peabody
From *American Architect and
Building News* 2 (October 1877).
Vassar College Library

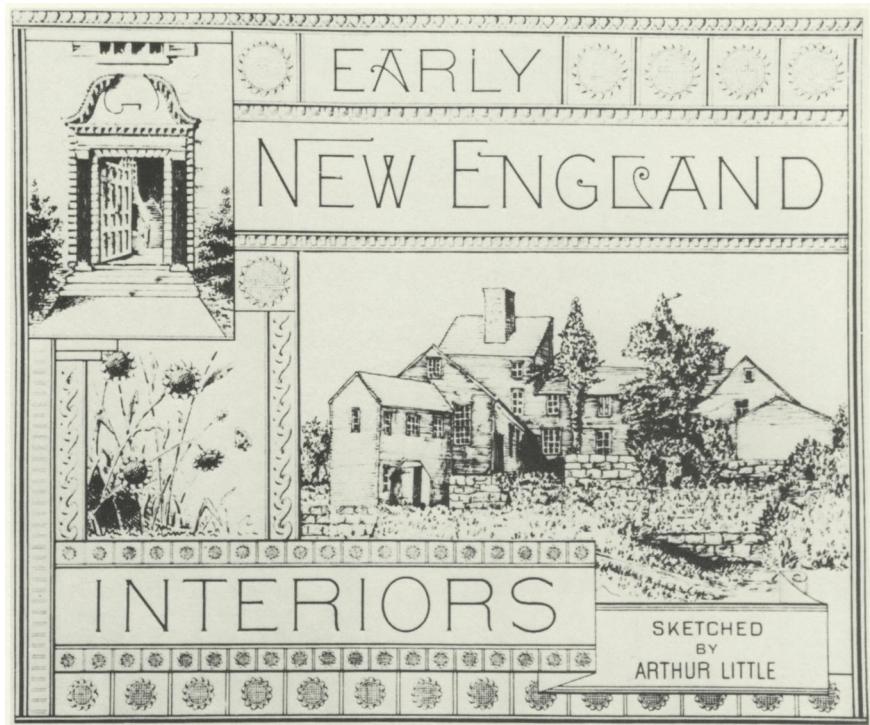


Stearns' design for a house on Brush Hill, Milton, Massachusetts (1877–1878).¹⁰

By 1878 Peabody's research led him to downplay the freedom of Georgian classicism. "The use of classical detail was universally agreed to, and the orders were naturally used by every carpenter." He discovered "a large copy of Batty Langley's classical work in an old loft in New Hampshire," which he took as firm evidence that colonial builders habitually referred to English handbooks for classical details. Further, he concluded that Asher Benjamin's *American Builder's Companion* had been influential in the detailing of early nineteenth-century houses east of the Connecticut River. Therefore he advised his fellow colonial revivalists to study these books as well as make their own sketches of old work.¹¹ Peabody's assumption that the colonial era in American architecture continued into the early nineteenth century was widely accepted at least through 1914.¹²

In July 1877 Peabody and Arthur Little, a draftsman in Peabody's office, studied colonial houses in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Little's New England sketches of that summer were published in 1878 as *Early New England Interiors* (fig. 5), probably the first in the long line of books illustrating colonial buildings explicitly intended as a reference for designers and with a minimum of text. Little's career as designer of colonial revival houses began in 1879 with Cliffs, a house in Manchester, Massachusetts.¹³ A reviewer found Little's drawings heavy-handed and lacking detail, but acknowledged the patriotic appeal of native models and suggested that the study of colonial architecture through measured drawings become a required part of architectural training.¹⁴

More than twenty years earlier, in 1854, George Champlin Mason, Sr., an artist and journalist in Newport, had published a tourist guide to the area where his family had long been prominent. Buildings were of interest for the historical events and personages connected with them, but the designs of some eighteenth-century buildings also met with his approval. In 1858 he began practicing architecture in Newport (his 1874 addition to Peter Harrison's Red-



wood Library has been called "sensitively conceived") while continuing to write local history with an architectural emphasis. Proclaiming himself "fond of antiquarian research," Mason discovered documents to help establish a chronology of eighteenth-century Newport houses. He also compared design elements such as wainscoting details as an aid to dating these houses. Peter Harrison was praised for his "fidelity to the rules of classic architecture," and his work represented "a noble protest against the shams and affectations too prevalent in modern work."¹⁵

George Champlin Mason, Jr., followed his father into an architectural career joined with the study of Newport's architectural history. According to David Chase, the younger Mason became a specialist in colonial restorations in the early 1870s, while at the same time referring to the colonial tradition in new work. In 1879 he published the "definitive analysis" of the controversial Old Stone Mill in Newport, which led to his appointment as chairman of an American Institute of Architects committee to study the "Practice of American Architects and Builders during the

5. Title page showing Wentworth House, drawn by Arthur Little

From *Early New England Interiors* (Boston, 1878). Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University

Colonial Period and First Fifty Years of Independence."

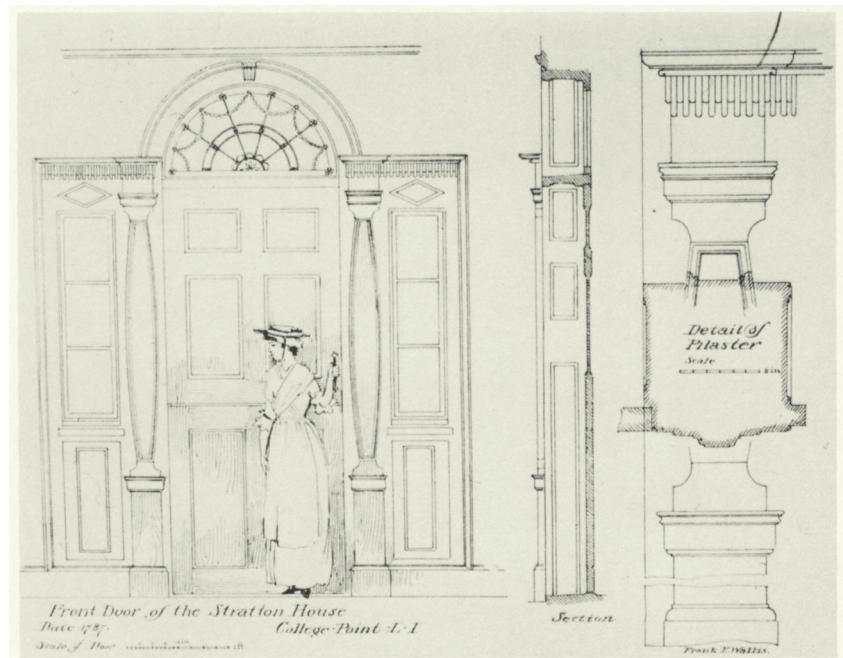
His report, published in 1881 in the *American Architect*, admitted that the impetus for the study was the attempt to find American sources equivalent to the English Queen Anne. But he was emphatic that his architectural history was not to be "merely . . . find[ing] quaint details to copy in modern work and then unblushingly christen those works Queen Anne or Georgian." His illustrations were too small and rough to be useful to the copyist. Instead, he hoped to find "the principles that shaped and guided" early architecture by uncovering ancient documents and probing the old buildings themselves. He analyzed building contracts and bills, construction techniques, even mortar ingredients. The roles of particular builders and architects, the origins of the gambrel roof, and the general question of stylistic development were all explored. Seventeenth-century houses belonged to the first period of American colonial architecture and were "ruder erections" than their eighteenth-century successors, whose classicism he favored. Eighteenth-century houses were categorized as second (c. 1700–

1725) or third (c. 1730–?) period—differentiated by materials, construction methods, roof types, and elegance of classical ornament. Like Peabody and Little, Mason admired early nineteenth-century architecture, and he concluded his report with a description of Benjamin's *American Builder's Companion* (advertised in Newport in 1807).¹⁶ As A. J. Bloor pointed out, Mason's report was narrowly focused on Newport, but Mason considered his essay only preliminary and suggestive for further work by others.¹⁷

Mason's quest for documents and principles had no appeal for Frank E. Wallis, who, as a young Boston draftsman, about 1875 followed Little as a sketcher and wanderer "in the pleasant land of Colonial architecture." While acknowledging Little's influence, Wallis was more thorough in spending seven or eight years measuring and drawing old New England buildings after office hours and on holidays. William Rotch Ware, editor of the *American Architect*, at first refused to publish Wallis' measured drawings; he had been accustomed to printing picturesque sketches. But after William Robert Ware (then at Columbia) admired them and apparently used them as models for his students' summer work, William Rotch Ware bowed to his uncle's opinion and published them in the *American Architect* in 1886. Subsequently Wallis made two trips to the South to gather additional material. These efforts resulted in his *Old Colonial Architecture and Furniture* (1887; fig. 6), sixty plates reproducing Wallis' drawings, interior and exterior details (some drawn to scale), as well as perspective sketches. The subjects ranged from Massachusetts to Virginia; most were eighteenth-century houses. Following Peabody, Wallis' short introduction assured "the student of Architecture" that American architecture from 1750 to 1800 was founded in "the classic of Palladio and Vignola."¹⁸

Wallis' book has been called "the first collection of measured drawings to appear in book form in this country, and as such it attracted much attention."¹⁹ It was valued as a source for colonial revivalists (of which Wallis was one). He claimed that when he "measured, sketched, and studied

6. Stratton House, College Point, Long Island, measured drawings by Frank E. Wallis. From *Old Colonial Architecture and Furniture* (Boston, 1887). Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University



the old houses," he was not calculating the profit from wide distribution of his plates, but experiencing "a strong stirring of emotion, being one generation removed from this type" of house. "I have lived in a home with a sanded floor laid out in patterns . . . and with a grandmother and her daughter who cooked in a Dutch oven."²⁰

In the 1890s several variants on Wallis' publications appeared.²¹ James M. Corner and Eric Ellis Soderholtz, photographers, pioneered the publication of "photographic documentation of colonial architecture in book form." In compiling *Examples of Domestic Colonial Architecture in New England* (1891) they frankly admitted their "primary object . . . was not to accumulate historical data." Instead their plates were meant to be useful to architects "in stimulating closer study [of colonial houses] in their adaptation to modern domestic work." Since seventeenth-century houses of the "Colonial Period" lacked "refinement in the way of elaborate detail," and those from the "Provincial Period" (c. 1700–1776) were only modestly enriched, the compilers emphasized "the better class of domestic edifices" from the later eighteenth century or "Federal Period" (c. 1776–1800).²²

Charles McKim commended the compilers for the choice of material and its presentation. "It is in constant daily use in our office, and . . . we consider no Architectural Library complete without it."²³ (Another fan of photographs as design sources was Joy Wheeler Dow, who recommended photographic study as easier than traveling to see the originals, and "pictures are often more productive of inspiration than . . . actual acquaintance with the subjects."²⁴) Corner and Soderholtz were criticized in the *American Architect* for omitting color plates, but such rarely appeared in architectural publications. Lithographically tinted illustrations of "Colonial Building in New Jersey," appearing in the *Architectural Record* in 1894, were the exceptions.²⁵

Like Corner and Soderholtz's volume, Joseph Everett Chandler's *Colonial Architecture of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia* (1892) was scarcely "history." Chandler, a young Boston architect later known as the restorer of the Paul Revere

house and the House of Seven Gables, presented fifty photographic plates, but no text, and the captions included no dates. The plates reflected Chandler's preference as a colonial revivalist for eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century houses: the seventeenth century was unrepresented and only two public buildings were recorded.²⁶

Where Chandler ventured south as an outsider, T. Henry Randall wrote "Colonial Annapolis" for the *Architectural Record* (1892) as a member of the Annapolis aristocracy who went on to practice architecture in New York. Randall noted regional distinctions that carried over from the character of individuals to their architecture: New England was marked by puritanical "simplicity and frugality," while the South of the "Cavalier" had "the stamp of refinement [and] elegance . . . borrowed from the old homes of England." Later in the *Architectural Record*, G. A. T. Middleton took up these prototypes in his "English 'Georgian' Architecture: The Source of the American 'Colonial' Style."²⁷

A broader historical overview was attempted by Montgomery Schuyler, credited by Frank Roos with writing "the first history of Colonial architecture."²⁸ It appeared in 1895 in the *Architectural Record*. By "colonial" Schuyler meant only English-influenced eighteenth- and nineteenth-century architecture before the Greek revival. Seventeenth-century structures, as well as Dutch and Swedish houses in New York and Pennsylvania, were "building," not architecture. Nevertheless, perhaps because of his Dutch ancestry, Schuyler did treat Dutch building in the Hudson Valley. Generally, he was concerned with chronology (the dates of the first brick kilns and sawmills; could St. Luke's, Newport Parish, be so early as 1632?), authorship (St. Michael's, Charleston, was attributed to James Gibbs), the quality of workmanship (high in the case of Independence Hall) and materials (wood should not be employed externally), the correct use of the orders (the fragmented entablatures inside Christ Church, Philadelphia, were criticized), the quality of compositions (high in the case of the University of Virginia), the rise of the architectural profession (Bulfinch was "the first

educated American" to become a professional architect), and the claims of Philadelphia and Boston for "superiority in the polite arts" (Philadelphia won). Schuyler's bibliography included local histories, eighteenth-century regional descriptions, Jefferson's *Writings*, and Chandler's *Colonial Architecture*.²⁹

Soon after the appearance of Schuyler's essay, a jejune survey by O. Z. Cervin, "The So-Called Colonial Architecture of the United States," originally a post-graduate thesis for the Architectural Department at Columbia College, was published in the *American Architect*. Cervin announced that colonial Philadelphia had no notable architecture because it had been ruled by "world-eschewing zealots," and "Williamsburg . . . never became important—it stands today, with a church and a court-house, almost the identical country town it was a hundred years ago." Thomas Jefferson "did many queer things."³⁰

The editors of the *American Architect* did not demand much substance in the historical essays they printed. Claude Bragdon forthrightly announced that his article on colonial Salem was the fruit of one evening's "cramming at the Boston Public Library" and his drawings were based on six hours spent in Salem with his "note-books, rules, and pencils, and a kodak camera." Bragdon's essay on the Genesee Valley rambled on about fox hunting, he acknowledged, because there was "so little to be said" about its architecture that could not be found in his drawings.³¹

Between 1898 and 1902 William Rotch Ware, editor of the *American Architect*, published *The Georgian Period*, a haphazard compilation of material extending into the Greek revival, much of which had already appeared in the *American Architect*. *The Georgian Period* was composed of twelve parts with some 450 plates including measured drawings, perspective sketches (fig. 7), and Heliotype photos, along with more than 500 smaller illustrations scattered amid the short articles by authors such as Cervin and Bragdon. Ware attributed the undertaking to "the formidable attempt to bring about the destruction of the 'Bulfinch Front' of the Massachusetts State House . . . and the constant

appearance in the daily papers of accounts of the destruction by fire of this or that ancient building endowed with historic or architectural interest."

The Georgian Period served mainly as a bundle of sources for designers. Ware supposed that if his "comprehensive work" had existed twenty years earlier, architects would not have produced, out of ignorance, so many "caricatures" of "'Old Colonial' work." Yet twenty years earlier the camera and "ever-wandering amateur photographer," so necessary for the project, were scarcely in evidence.³²

Reviews of *The Georgian Period* were generally favorable. A laudatory review of the first three parts in the *Nation* suggested the inclusion of an appendix documenting the "less academic . . . simple clapboarded houses, with overhanging second-story pendants." Ware later added such seventeenth-century New England examples, noting their inferiority in "architectural character" to houses of "the Georgian period," but finding them still "vastly interesting and picturesque."³³ In 1915 Richard Franz Bach surveyed the bibliography on colonial architecture and concluded that *The Georgian Period* was "the best general work . . . for the detailed study of Colonial architecture," and as late as 1923 it was said that "no book of its character . . . has exercised a more profound, a more enduring or more wholesome influence."³⁴

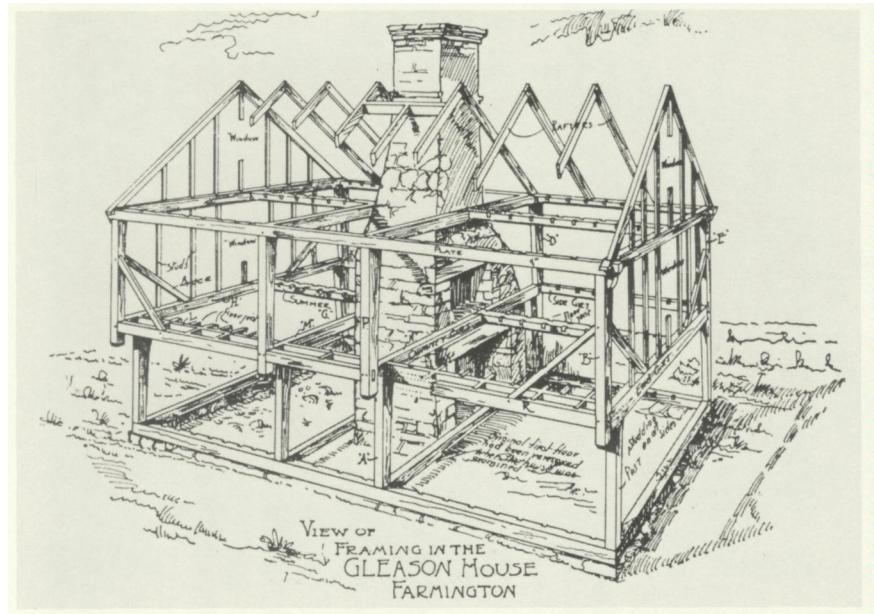
Superficiality did not mark the work of Norman Isham, an architect who approached the history of early Rhode Island and Connecticut houses as a problem to be probed "scientifically." His *Early Rhode Island Houses* (1895) and *Early Connecticut Houses* (1900; fig. 8),³⁵ both coauthored by Albert F. Brown, presented a collection of "scientific data" with a thoroughness previously unknown in American architectural studies. They examined the houses described, prepared measured plans, sections, and elevations, searched probate inventories to discover room names and uses. Consequently their work, they believed, would surpass in usefulness "the vague descriptions of too many of our town histories."³⁶ By surveying the oldest houses, they went against the tendency to concen-

The old : ROYALL MANSION : Medford : Mass :



7. Royall Mansion, Medford,
Massachusetts, drawn by E.
Eldon Deane

From *The Georgian Period . . . ,* vol. 1
(Boston, 1898-1902). Avery
Architectural and Fine Arts Library,
Columbia University



8. Gleason House, Farmington, Connecticut
From Norman M. Isham and Albert F. Brown, *Early Connecticut Houses . . .* (Providence, 1900). Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University

trate on Georgian examples. In fact their work seems to have been less inspired by a desire to fulfill the needs of the colonial revivalist (although Isham designed colonial revival houses³⁷) than to produce disinterested scholarly documentation of "help to the future historians of New England." Russell Sturgis lauded Isham and Brown for concentrating on buildings "handed down from father to son and for which no architect made plans," considering their Rhode Island volume "the most important contribution so far made to the history of American art."³⁸

Another architect whose painstaking historical scholarship remains impressive is Glenn Brown, whose measured drawings of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century buildings in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington were published in the *American Architect* in 1887–1888. He not only sketched and measured, but also attempted "researches or inquiries," including interviews of the oldest inhabitants. He turned up, in a Virginia warehouse, copies of Langley (1739) and William Pain (1794), which he recognized as the guides for carpenters and builders whose "free" but "refined treatment of Classical details" Brown so much admired as a designer of colonial revival houses.³⁹ The Oc-

tagon House in Washington by William Thornton was among the buildings Brown published in the *American Architect*, and William Bushong proposes that Brown was thereby stimulated to study other works by Thornton, notably the United States Capitol.⁴⁰

In 1896 Brown began a series of articles on "The History of the United States Capitol," which resulted in his monumental two-volume opus with 322 folio plates, based on ten years of gathering written and drawn documentation from public and private sources. Brown's lifelong concern to document, preserve, and restore old Washington may be traced partly to ancestral piety. While most writers on colonial architecture could claim colonial ancestors, Brown took pride in the fact that his grandfather, Bedford Brown, had represented North Carolina in the Senate and his great-grandfather, Peter Lenox, had been a construction superintendent at the Capitol between 1817 and 1829. Still, in his first volume (covering the Capitol's history to 1850), Brown was not primarily concerned with glorifying his ancestors, but rather, as Bushong demonstrates, with instructing his contemporaries in government that L'Enfant's plan for the city was to be respected and that they should follow Washington's and Jefferson's example in seeking expert advice on the planning of government buildings. "Brown's *History* was a polemical study," Bushong asserts, "calculated to be the cornerstone of an AIA campaign to acquire a City Beautiful plan for Washington."⁴¹

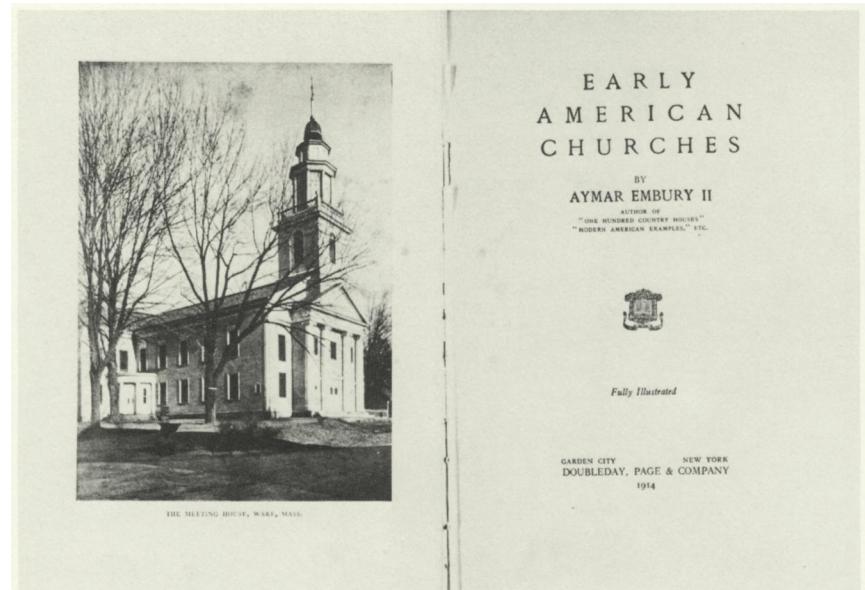
The New York architect Aymar Embury II, finding New England and Virginia well studied for revival purposes, turned to the old Dutch houses near New York, which had the advantage of being "little known" yet "beautiful, and full of suggestion to both the architect and the home-builder." To Embury they seemed full of "family feeling, sturdy and virile, like the Dutchmen who occupied them," but Irving's influence still dictated that Embury should also detect "the quaintness and sly humor that we instinctively associate with the nephews of Father Knickerbocker."⁴²

As a tourist-architect in search of the relatively unfamiliar in early American ar-

chitecture, Embury published his impressions of "Old New Orleans"—the "exquisite faded tints" of the stuccoed walls and "delightful ironwork of the balconies"—while also writing appreciatively of Pennsylvania's old stone farmhouses with classical details "modified . . . by ignorant (although tasteful) builders." Dates and even names of buildings were of little consequence. What was important was for architects around the country to avoid the "stereotyped" colonial and to study forms that heretofore had had only a local influence on the colonial revival.⁴³

Embury's *Early American Churches* (1914) was recognized as the standard reference on the topic. He traveled to old churches, perused Benjamin's handbooks, and tried to use the art historical concept of attributing authorship on the basis of style, but much of his text was drawn from a reading of *The Georgian Period* and Schuyler. He preferred the early nineteenth-century New England churches of Bulfinch, Benjamin, and Isaac Damon: the latter's church at Ware, Massachusetts (fig. 9), was "simple, extremely dignified, ecclesiastical . . . , filled with the truest architectural feeling for proportion and detail." On the other hand, Quaker meeting houses were too plain to be of architectural interest and, politically, Quakers had been "objectionable nuisances," so their buildings failed as landmarks of American patriotism.⁴⁴

The study of American architectural history was still unsystematic in 1914. Terms such as "colonial" and "Georgian" were used with the utmost freedom.⁴⁵ The need for monographs on architects such as Samuel McIntire was recognized but not met.⁴⁶ As Fiske Kimball complained that year: "There has been too much inconsequent fantasy-spinning, in writings on the history of American architecture. The 'Georgian Period' itself feebly points to wide disagreements in its own pages as to the dates of important buildings—a confession of our historical incompetence unthinkable in any other country. Mr. Brown's painstaking and scholarly history of the Capitol . . . [is] almost the only worthy monument of our architectural history." Subsequently Kimball also hailed Isham for relating "in-



ternal and documentary evidences" in tracing the development of early houses in New England.⁴⁷

In 1969 John Maass criticized American architectural historians for adhering to a "bourgeois standard" and "genteel tradition," which prevented them from studying buildings for the lower class and works of engineering. Earlier writers of American architectural history rarely ventured into these areas. T. Henry Randall focused on the Cavalier's grand house, while noting in passing that slaves "had to be provided for in quarters conveniently near, and yet not under his own roof." A grist mill and its construction details were not likely to interest colonial revival architects of 1889, so an article on the topic (based on an examination of the mill at Philips Manor on the Hudson) logically appeared in *Carpentry and Building*.⁴⁸

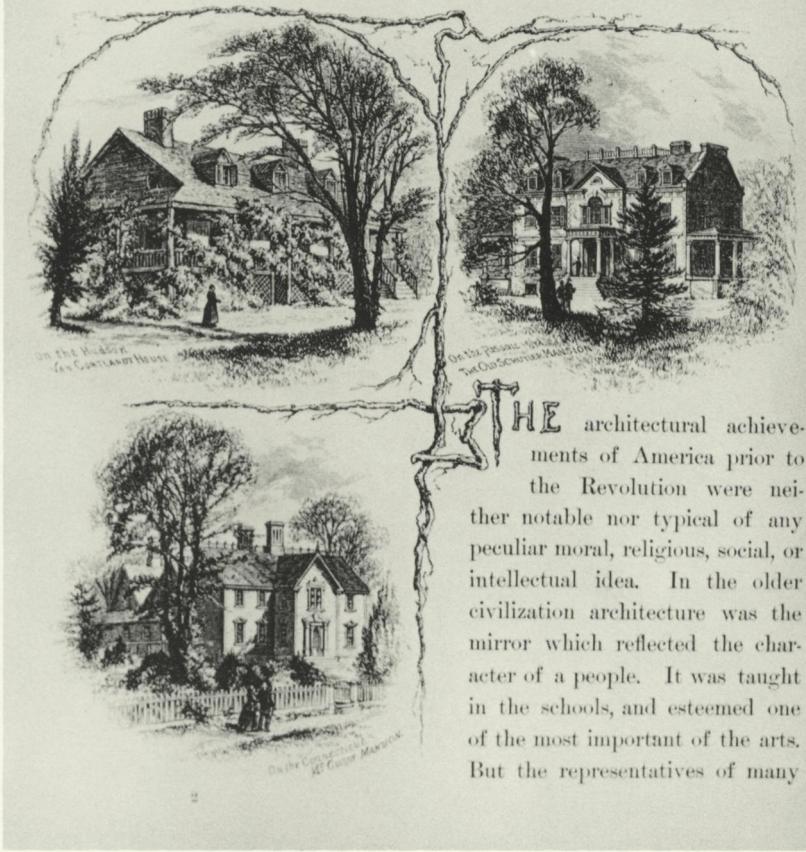
By 1914 the American public had been bombarded with publications bringing its architectural heritage to light. In addition to those by architects and architectural critics, which have been the focus of this paper, countless local histories and magazines such as *Harper's* and *Scribner's* pre-

9. Frontispiece and title page, Aymar Embury II, *Early American Churches* (Garden City, N.Y., 1914)

THE HOMES OF AMERICA.

I.

COLONIAL PERIOD.



THE architectural achievements of America prior to the Revolution were neither notable nor typical of any peculiar moral, religious, social, or intellectual idea. In the older civilization architecture was the mirror which reflected the character of a people. It was taught in the schools, and esteemed one of the most important of the arts. But the representatives of many

10. Martha Lamb, ed., *The Homes of America* (New York, 1879)
Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University

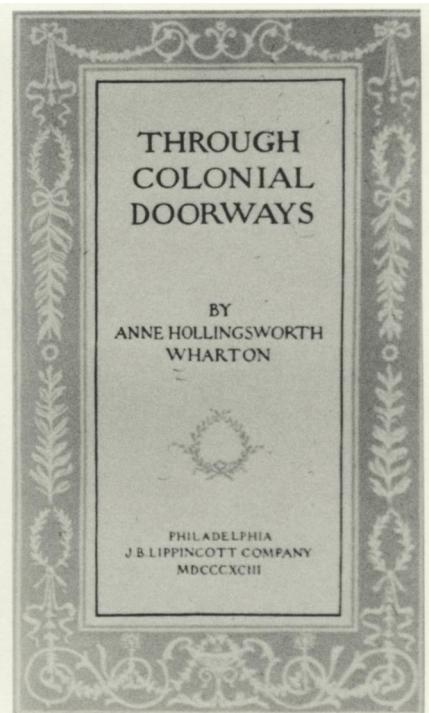
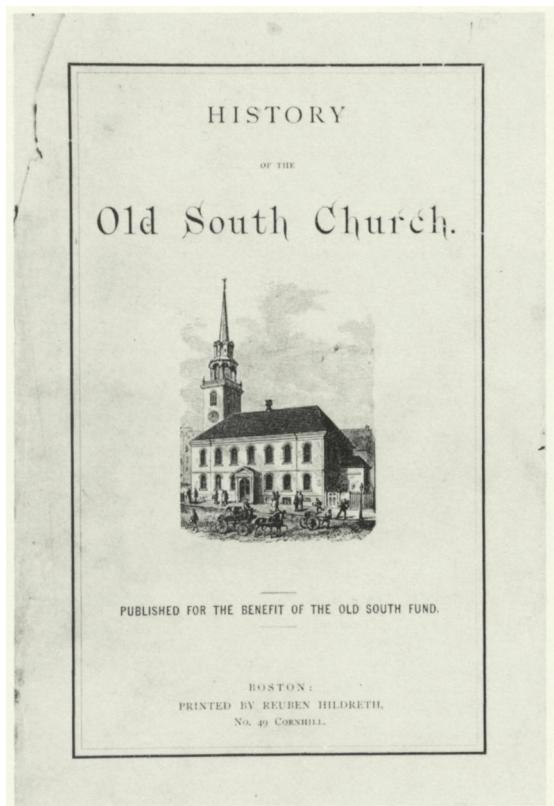
sented illustrations of old landmarks.⁴⁹ Some local historians such as Thompson Westcott used colonial buildings as starting points for chapters on family histories.⁵⁰ Martha J. Lamb wove biography and architectural history together in *The Homes of America* (1879; fig. 10), more than a third of which covered the "Colonial Period" and such great houses as Stratford that "reveal more truthfully than any other

existing relics the life and history of the times."⁵¹

Preservationists used history to bolster their cause, as in the case of the *History of the Old South Church* (1876; fig. 11), where the building's history was subordinated to events in the Revolution.⁵² Women were apparently the main audience for popular accounts of "social and domestic life" in colonial homes such as Anne Hollingsworth Wharton's *Through Colonial Doorways* (1893; fig. 12). Mary H. Northend found the "greatest charm" in "ancestral homes that have descended from generation to generation in the same family."⁵³ Genealogy was mixed with a little architectural history in Thomas Allen Glenn's *Some Colonial Mansions and Those Who Lived in Them* (1899).⁵⁴ New Americans, immigrants, might become fully Americanized by being exposed to pictures of patriotic landmarks, thought New York's blueblood-run City History Club. On the other hand, Samuel Adams Drake, the antiquarian author of *Our Colonial Homes* (1894), was angered that Paul Revere's house (fig. 13) in Boston's North End was surrounded by "dirty tenements swarm[ing] with greasy, voluble Italians."⁵⁵ Children found engravings of colonial sites and patriotic shrines in their texts, and adolescent girls could read in Kate Douglas Wiggin's *Mother Carey's Chickens* (1911), a description of the "impressive" facade of the "Colonial" Yellow House pictured on the cover (fig. 14).⁵⁶

Guidebooks catered to the patriotic and antiquarian sentiments of their touring readers. Thus a Pennsylvania Railroad guide in 1875 featured both Independence Hall and an old mill on the Conemaugh; a 1903 trolley guide pointed out Washington's headquarters in New Jersey, while a guide for "automobile parties" in 1907 (fig. 15) directed them to "quaint inns and hostgeries." Postcards of these inns and other historic sites were not only souvenirs for pilgrims, but also made a wider public aware of colonial architecture.⁵⁷

Discoverers of colonial architecture were mobile. John Martin Hammond, a self-described "collector of old houses" with his camera, advised other would-be collectors that they must also possess "a fine power



of walking." The railroad and trolley made distant sites accessible, but some found them disturbers of colonial tranquility: E. Eldon Deane sought refuge from New York in Charleston, South Carolina, where he sketched, measured, and imagined himself an eighteenth-century worshiper in St. Michael's Church (fig. 16) until his reverie was broken by the "harsh metallic grinding of the trolley-car." Yet the benefits of

rapid travel by rail were recognized by the writer Richard Le Gallienne, who compared the railway to Kingston, New York, to "Mr. H. G. Wells's 'time machine,'" as it had set him down in what appeared to be a seventeenth-century town where "history . . . gazes at us dreamily from the old stone houses."

The English-born Le Gallienne supposed that "the sense of the past as a still living presence can be more fully experienced, on occasion, here in America than in Europe."⁵⁸ Many (probably most) architects and laymen who drew and described colonial architecture were attracted to it as America's own tradition, or, as Peabody wrote, "our only native source of . . . inspiration."⁵⁹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in the late eighteenth century had proclaimed the German roots and character of Gothic architecture, and David Watkin has shown that in early nineteenth-century Europe, "nationalism . . . was . . . often part of this new historical preoccupation" with the Gothic.⁶⁰ Americans in search of a home-grown, national mode of building would find it in the colonial.

ii. Title page, *History of the Old South Church* (Boston, 1876)

12. Frontispiece and title page, Anne Hollingsworth Wharton, *Through Colonial Doorways* (Philadelphia, 1893).
Sojourner Truth Library, State University College at New Paltz

13. Paul Revere House, Boston
From Samuel Adams Drake, *Our Colonial Homes* (Boston, 1894)



14. Cover, Kate Douglas Wiggin, *Mother Carey's Chickens* (Boston, 1911)

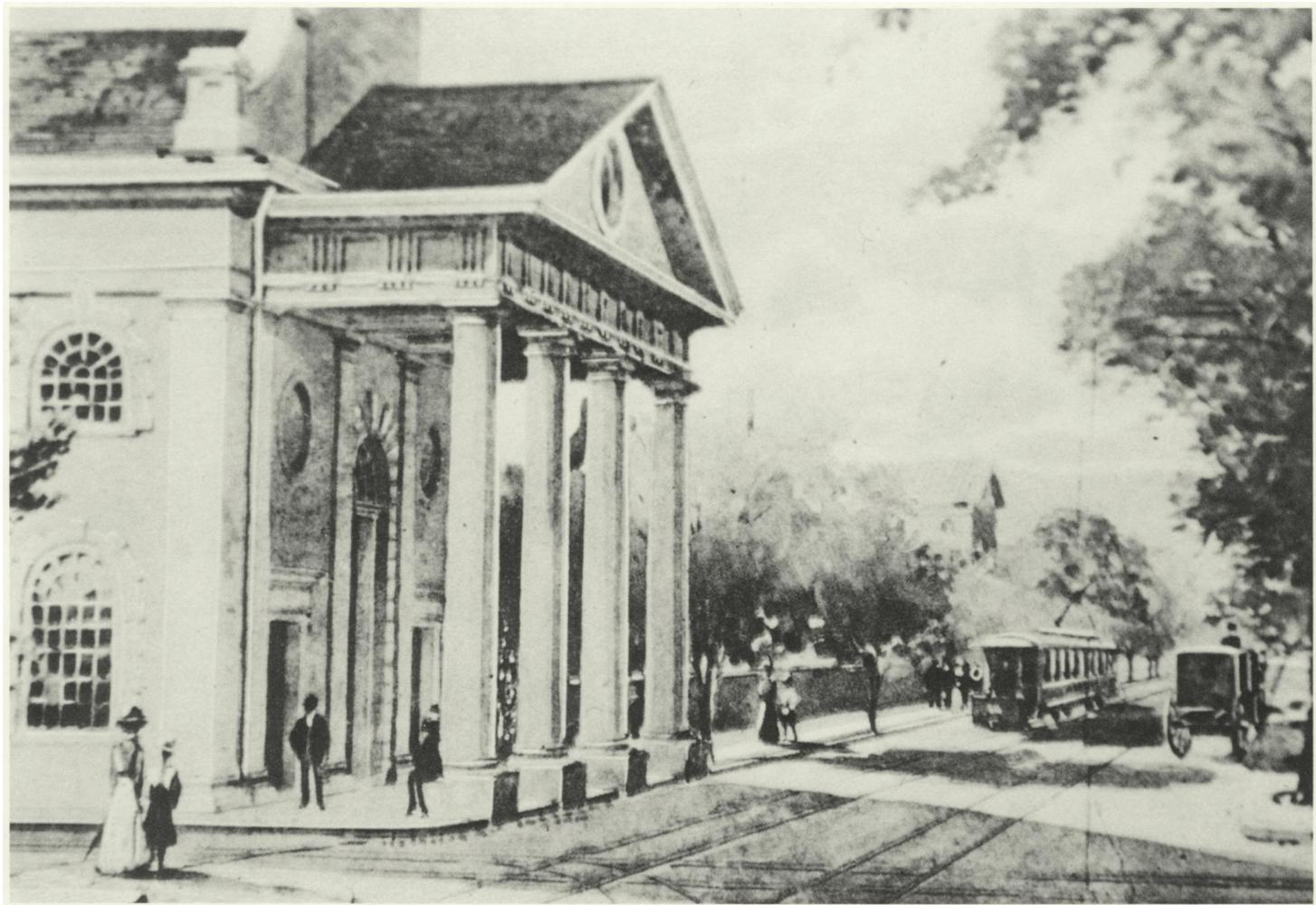
15. Cover, Mary Caroline Crawford, *Little Pilgrimages Among Old New England Inns* (Boston, 1907)

Colonial Americans, according to Martha Lamb, had transformed foreign building forms to suit "the climate, necessities of pioneer life, and social conditions of an unformed community." Bragdon acknowledged the English Georgian origins of the colonial but insisted American eighteenth-century builders had come "as near as we have ever approached to achieving an American style of architecture." For Embury, eighteenth-century American churches represented the flowering of "our first national style," no more like English architecture than English architecture resembled Italian. Moreover, the colonial, with its modest ornament, was free of the "vulgarity and ostentation" of the European baroque.⁶¹

Not only was colonial architecture American, but it also embodied the virtues of the great men and women who had created the nation. Thomas Jefferson himself as an old man in 1825 advised that sites associated with the Revolution, such as the house where he lived when writing the

Declaration of Independence, might well be kept "like the relics of saints." When Bulfinch's Massachusetts State House was threatened with demolition, Boston architect Charles A. Cummings preached that its destruction "would be a lamentable concession to the modern American spirit which carries us every year farther away from the 'nobler modes of life, with sweeter manners, purer laws,' which our fathers knew."⁶²

As A. W. N. Pugin decried the corruption of contemporary English society and would turn back to the Middle Ages for a model social system, so Cummings idealized America's colonial past. So did Bragdon when he proposed that "architecture . . . images at all times a nation's character . . . , is the mirror of the national consciousness. . . . The difference between Independence Hall . . . and a modern skyscraper is the measure of the difference between the men and manners of the Colonial days, and the men and manners of today."⁶³



Gentility was a quality of colonial architecture identified by authors such as Stanford White's father, Richard Grant White, who saw in the houses of "Old New York" built in the early 1800s an "air of . . . large and elegant domesticity." They were the "homes of people of sense, and taste, and character," of "gentle breeding." By contrast, the "brownstone fronts" of midcentury aptly represented the vulgar mob housed within.⁶⁴ The southern plantation house was widely believed to express a "social elegance" and "aristocratic atmosphere" comparable to the houses of the English landed gentry.⁶⁵ On the other hand, a designer of middle-class houses like Embury paid tribute to the gambrel-roofed

Dutch colonial house as "never formal . . . [or] stately, yet . . . [with] a certain homely dignity eminently fitting to the homes of the courageous and determined pioneers who built them."⁶⁶

In 1940 members of the newly organized American Society of Architectural Historians determined that their first three tours, by car, would focus on colonial houses in Massachusetts. The society has long been identified with the study of early American architecture, agreeing with an 1882 assessment in the *American Architect* that "we do have an architectural history, . . . one in which Americans may take pride."⁶⁷

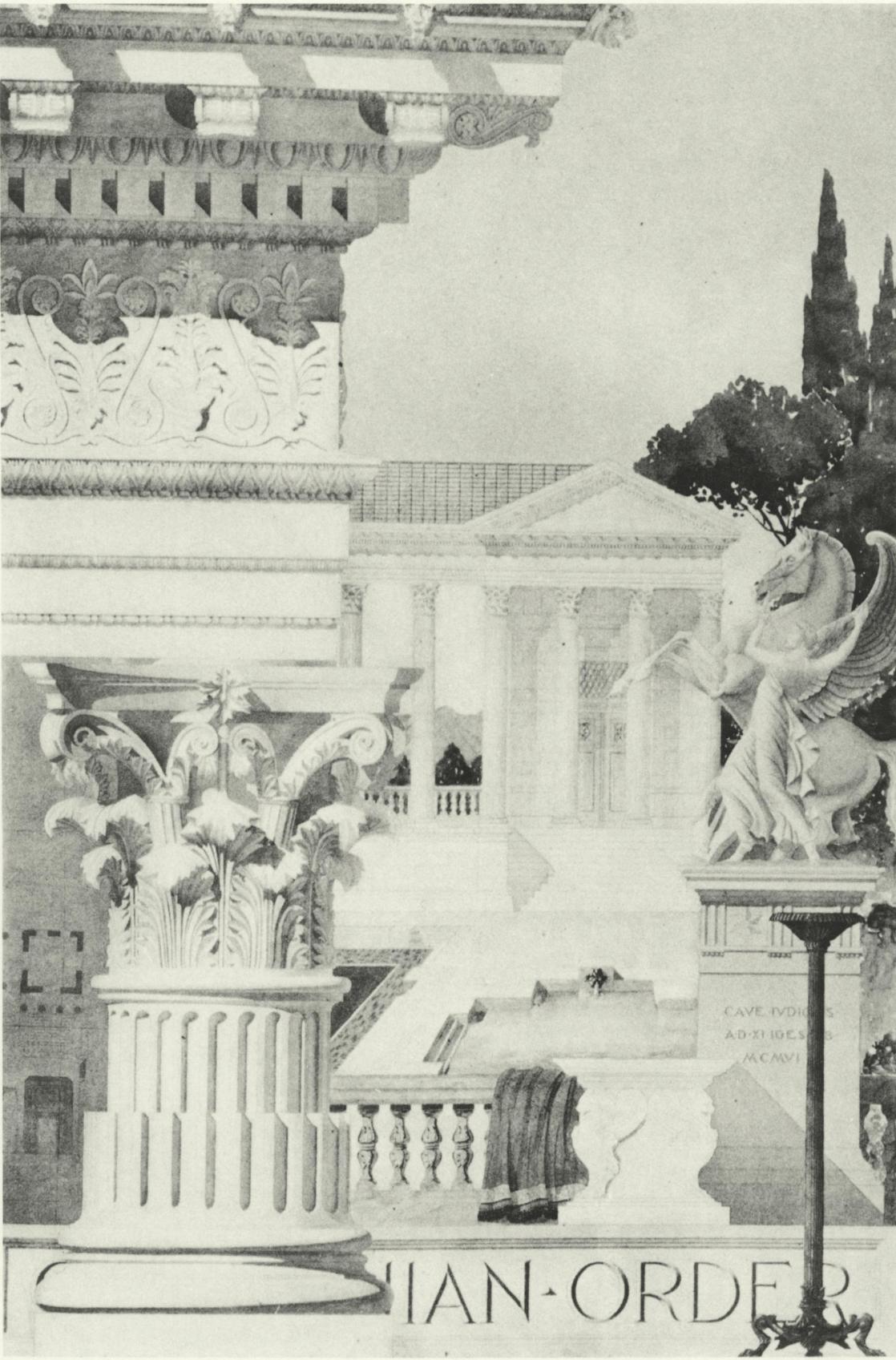
16. St. Michael's Church, Charleston, South Carolina (detail)
From E. Eldon Deane, "An Autumn Trip to South Carolina," in *The Georgian Period . . .*, vol. 3. Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University

NOTES

1. Andrew A. Lipscomb, ed., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 20 vols. (Washington, 1905), 2:212; Louisa Caroline Tuthill, *History of Architecture from the Earliest Times* (Philadelphia, 1848), 242, 258, 260; James Fergusson, *History of the Modern Styles of Architecture*, 2d ed. (London, 1873), 498. Americans should not have felt Fergusson was singling out their architecture for criticism, as his writing was often vitriolic. David B. Brownlee, *The Law Courts: The Architecture of George Edmund Street* (New York and Cambridge, Mass., 1984), 249.
2. William Bentley, *The Diary of William Bentley, D.D., Pastor of the East Church, Salem, Massachusetts*, 4 vols. (Gloucester, Mass., 1962), 1:171; Abbott Lowell Cummings, *The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 1.
3. Joseph T. Butler, *Washington Irving's Sunnyside* (Tarrytown, 1974).
4. Thomas Tileston Waterman and John A. Barrows, *Domestic Colonial Architecture of Tidewater Virginia* (New York, 1932), 12; Charles E. Peterson, "'Preservationism,'" *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (hereafter *JSAH*) 10 (May 1951), 24; Margaret Henderson Floyd, "Measured Drawings of the Hancock House by John Hubbard Sturgis: A Legacy to the Colonial Revival," in *Architecture in Colonial Massachusetts: A Conference Held by the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, September 19 and 20, 1974* (Boston, 1979), 88-104.
5. Arthur Gilman, "Architecture in the United States," *North American Review* 58 (April 1844), 457-463; David Chase, "Notes on the Colonial Revival in Newport," *Newport History* 55 (Spring 1982), 40; Richard Upjohn, "The Colonial Architecture of New York and the New England States," *Architectural Review and American Builders' Journal* 2 (March 1870), 547-550.
6. *Architectural Sketch Book* 2 (January 1875), plate 31; William E. Barry, *Pen Sketches of Old Houses* (Boston, n.d.); for information on Barry, see Walter Knight Sturges, "Arthur Little and the Colonial Revival," *JSAH* 32 (May 1973), 151, and Margaret Henderson Floyd, "William E. Barry of Kennebunk: The Boston Years," *Maine History News* 19 (July 1983 and December 1983), 10-II, 13-14.
7. *New-York Sketch-Book of Architecture* 1 (December 1874), 1-2; 2 (July 1875); 2 (August 1875); 3 (July 1876); see Leland M. Roth, *McKim, Mead & White, Architects* (New York, 1983), 38, 44, for McKim's study and use of colonial architecture. See also Mary N. Woods, "History in the Early American Architectural Journals," in this volume.
8. *American Architect and Building News* (hereafter *AABN*) 1 (18 March 1876), 90; "American Architecture—Past," *AABN* 1 (29 July 1876), 242-244.
9. Wheaton A. Holden, "Robert Swain Peabody of Peabody and Stearns in Boston," (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1969), 77.
10. Robert S. Peabody, "A Talk about 'Queen Anne,'" *AABN* 2 (28 April 1877), 133-134; Peabody, "Georgian Houses of New England," *AABN* 2 (20 October 1877), 338-339; Peabody, "The Georgian Houses of New England II," *AABN* 3 (16 February 1878), 54-55. For a discussion of Peabody's writings, see Vincent J. Scully, Jr., *The Shingle Style* (New Haven, 1955), 42-45.
11. Peabody 1878, 54-55.
12. See, for example, the definition of "Colonial Architecture" in Russell Sturgis, ed., *A Dictionary of Architecture and Building, Biographical, Historical, and Descriptive*, 3 vols. (New York and London, 1902), 1:639. English architectural writers came to admire early nineteenth-century classicism only after 1914, according to David Watkin, *The Rise of Architectural History* (London and Westfield, N.J., 1980), 120.
13. Arthur Little, *Early New England Interiors: Sketches in Salem, Marblehead, Portsmouth, and Kittery* (Boston, 1878); see also Sturges 1973, 147-163, and Bainbridge Bunting, *Houses of Boston's Back Bay: An Architectural History, 1840-1917* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 357. In the same year, 1877, Charles McKim, William Mead, William Bigelow, and Stanford White made sketches and measured drawings of colonial houses in Marblehead, Salem, Newburyport, and Portsmouth which long remained in the office scrapbook. Charles Moore, *The Life and Times of Charles Follen McKim* (Boston, 1929), 41.
14. "Colonial Houses, and Their Uses to Art," *AABN* 3 (12 January 1878), 12-13.
15. George Champlin Mason, *Newport Illustrated, in a Series of Pen & Pencil Sketches* (New York, 1854); Mason, *Reminiscences of Newport* (Newport, 1884); David Chase, "George Champlin Mason, Sr.," in William H. Jordy and Christopher P. Monkhouse, *Buildings on Paper: Rhode Island Architectural Drawings, 1825-1945* [exh. cat., Bell Gallery, Brown University] (Providence, 1982), 222-223.
16. David Chase, "George Champlin Mason, Jr.," in Jordy and Monkhouse, *Buildings on Paper*, 223-224; Chase, "Notes," 46-52; George C. Mason, Jr., "Colonial Architecture," *AABN* 10 (13 and 20 August 1881), 71-74, 83-85.
17. A. J. Bloor in *AABN* 10 (27 August 1881), 102-103. As architect for a restoration of the Seventh-Day Baptist Church (1729) in Newport, Mason published measured drawings, a description of his work, and an analysis of the original design. Since interior details resembled those of Trinity Church, Newport, he attributed both to the same builder. *AABN* 17 (2 May 1885), 210. Such exacting studies have led Chase to describe Mason as "the most accomplished architectural historian active during the early days of the Colonial Revival." "Notes," 52.
18. Frank E. Wallis, "The Colonial Renaissance: Houses of the Middle and Southern Colonies," *White Pine Series* 2 (February 1916), 3-6; Frank E. Wallis, *Old Colonial Architecture and Furniture* (Boston, 1887).
19. Harold F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Bio-

- graphical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles, 1970), 627.
20. Frank E. Wallis, *How to Know Architecture: The Human Elements in the Evolution of Styles* (New York, 1910), 281.
 21. E.g., W. Davenport Goforth and William J. McAuley, *Old Colonial Architectural Details in and around Philadelphia* (New York, 1890).
 22. James M. Corner and Eric Ellis Soderholtz, *Examples of Domestic Colonial Architecture in New England* (Boston, 1891); Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *American Architectural Books* (Minneapolis, 1946, repr. 1962), 27.
 23. Charles McKim to James Corner and Eric Soderholtz, 17 December 1891, McKim Papers, Library of Congress.
 24. Joy Wheeler Dow, "How to Make a Successful House," in *The Book of a Hundred Houses: A Collection of Pictures, Plans and Suggestions for Householders* (New York, 1906), 6.
 25. AABN 34 (10 October 1891), 30; William Nelson Black, "Colonial Building in New Jersey," *Architectural Record* (hereafter *Record*) 3 (January–March 1894), 245–262.
 26. Joseph Everett Chandler, *The Colonial Architecture of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia* (Boston, 1892). For Chandler as a colonial revivalist, see his *The Colonial House* (New York, 1916).
 27. T. Henry Randall, "Colonial Annapolis," *Record* 1 (January–March 1892), 31; G. A. T. Middleton, "English 'Georgian' Architecture. The Source of the American 'Colonial' Style," *Record* 9 (October 1899), 97–108.
 28. Frank J. Roos, Jr., *Bibliography of Early American Architecture: Writings on Architecture Constructed before 1860 in Eastern and Central United States* (Urbana, Ill., 1968), 5.
 29. Montgomery Schuyler, "A History of Old Colonial Architecture," *Record* 4 (January–March 1895), 312–366. For Schuyler's ancestry, see Alice P. Kenney, *Stubborn for Liberty—The Dutch in New York* (Syracuse, 1975), 227. Schuyler also surveyed colonial architecture in his "United States, Architecture of," in Sturgis 1902, 3:895–921.
 30. O. Z. Cervin, "The So-Called Colonial Architecture of the United States," *AABN* 48 (8, 22, 29 June 1895), 99, 115, 130.
 31. Claude Fayette Bragdon, "Six Hours in Salem," *AABN* 39 (21 January 1893), 41; Bragdon, "Colonial Work in the Genesee Valley," *AABN* 43 (24 March 1894), 141.
 32. William Rotch Ware, ed., *The Georgian Period: A Collection of Papers Dealing with "Colonial" or XVIII-Century Architecture in the United States, Together with References to Earlier Provincial and True Colonial Work*, 12 parts (Boston, 1898–1902), 1: unpaginated preface and 12: 124.
 33. Nation 68 (9 March 1899), reprinted *AABN* 63 (18 March 1899), 86; Ware 1902, 9–12: II.
 34. Richard Franz Bach, "Books on Colonial Archi-
ecture," *Record* 38 (August 1915), 284; "The Georgian Period," *Record* 54 (August 1923), 197. A revised edition appeared in New York in 1923, edited by Charles S. Keefe.
 35. Norman M. Isham and Albert F. Brown, *Early Rhode Island Houses: An Historical and Architectural Study* (Providence, 1895) and Norman M. Isham and Albert F. Brown, *Early Connecticut Houses: An Historical and Architectural Study* (Providence, 1900).
 36. Isham and Brown 1895, 5–6.
 37. Jordy and Monkhouse 1982, 218–219.
 38. Russell Sturgis, review in *Record* 6 (July–September 1896), 91–92. Isham and Brown's books were in fact used by colonial revivalists: see *Record* 11 (October 1901), 732. Isham called Edwin Whitefield "the real pioneer in the study of New England's ancient buildings" (*In Praise of Antiquaries* [Boston, 1931], 9) even though Whitefield's lithographic illustrations were "not wonderful" and the first book in his series, *Homes of Our Forefathers . . .*, appeared in Boston in 1879, after Little's volume. Hitchcock 1962, 115.
 39. Glenn Brown, "Old Colonial Work in Virginia and Maryland," *AABN* 22 (22 October 1887), 198–199. Charles B. Wood III recognizes George Clarence Gardner's "Colonial Architecture in Western Massachusetts," *AABN* 45 (15 September 1894), 99–100, as the "first serious attempt" to list colonial builders' guides. "A Survey and Bibliography of Writings on English and American Architectural Books Published before 1895," *Winterthur Portfolio* 2 (1965), 127. A c. 1895 reprint of Batty Langley's *Examples from Ancient Masonry* (London, 1733) "selected by John A. Fox, architect, Boston," has been cited as "probably the first example of the reprinting of eighteenth-century sources as models for the Colonial Revival!" Hitchcock 1962, 60.
 40. William B. Bushong, "Glenn Brown and the United States Capitol" [fellowship research report, U.S. Capitol Historical Society] (Washington, D.C., 1988), 12.
 41. Glenn Brown, "History of the United States Capitol," *AABN* 52 (9 May 1896), 51–54; Brown, *History of the United States Capitol*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1899–1904), I:iv; Bushong 1988, 19–24.
 42. Aymar Embury II, "Three Old Dutch Roads and the Houses along Them," *Country Life in America* 16 (October 1909), 592. Embury's *The Dutch Colonial House* (New York, 1913) was a layman's guide to building new Dutch colonials.
 43. Aymar Embury II, "Old New Orleans," *Record* 30 (July 1911), 85–98; Embury, "Pennsylvania Farm-houses," *Record* 30 (November 1911), 475–485.
 44. Bach 1915, 379–382; Aymar Embury II, *Early American Churches* (Garden City, N.Y., 1914), xiii–xvi, 20, 48–52, 88, 109, 119–124, 133, 142.
 45. For example, Bach 1915, 281, allowed colonial and Georgian to be used interchangeably for buildings into the 1820s, while Harold Donaldson Eberlein re-

- stricted colonial to the "Pre-Georgian," before 1720. "Three Types of Georgian Architecture," *Record* 34 (July 1913), 60.
46. Joy Wheeler Dow, *American Renaissance: A Review of Domestic Architecture* (New York, 1904), 43.
47. Sidney Fiske Kimball to the editor, *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 2 (July 1914), 330; Kimball, *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic* (New York, 1922), xviii. Watkin credits Kimball with beginning "to apply detailed scholarship to the history of the American tradition in architecture." Watkin 1980, 37.
48. John Maass, "Where Architectural Historians Fear to Tread," *JSAH* 28 (March 1969), 3-8; Randall 1892, 311; Owen B. Maginnis, "An Old Dutch Mill," *Carpentry and Building* II (November 1889), 219.
49. For a discussion of the treatment of colonial architecture in popular publications, see Scully 1955, 24-30.
50. Thompson Westcott, *Historic Mansions and Buildings of Philadelphia, with Some Notice of Their Owners and Occupants* (Philadelphia, 1877).
51. Martha J. Lamb, ed., *The Homes of America* (New York, 1879), 9, 67.
52. *History of the Old South Church* (Boston, 1876).
53. Anne Hollingsworth Wharton, *Through Colonial Doorways* (Philadelphia, 1893); Mary H. Northend, *Historic Homes of New England* (Boston, 1914), vii.
54. Thomas Allen Glenn, *Some Colonial Mansions and Those Who Lived in Them, with Genealogies of the Various Families Mentioned*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1899-1900).
55. Frank Bergen Kelley, compiler, *Historical Guide to the City of New York* (New York, 1909); William B. Rhoads, "The Colonial Revival and the Americanization of Immigrants," in *The Colonial Revival in America*, ed. Alan Axelrod (New York and London, 1985), 342; Samuel Adams Drake, *Our Colonial Homes* (Boston, 1894), 19.
56. Benson J. Lossing, *A Common-School History of the United States from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (New York, 1873), 94, 128; Kate Douglas Wiggin, *Mother Carey's Chickens* (Boston, 1911), 172.
57. William B. Sipes, *The Pennsylvania Railroad . . . (Philadelphia, 1875)*; Cromwell Childe, *Trolley Exploring . . . (Brooklyn, 1903)*, 15; Mary Caroline Crawford, *Little Pilgrimages among Old New England Inns . . . (Boston, 1907)*, 158; see also William B. Rhoads, "Roadside Colonial: Early American Design for the Automobile Age," *Winterthur Portfolio* 21 (Autumn 1986), 133-135.
58. John Martin Hammond, *Colonial Mansions of Maryland and Delaware* (Philadelphia, and London 1914), v-vi; A. B. Bibb, "Old Colonial Works of Virginia and Maryland: Williamsburg—The Town," *AABN* 25 (15 June 1889); E. Eldon Deane, "An Autumn Trip to South Carolina," *Georgian Period*, 9-12: 43-44; Richard Le Gallienne, "Old Kingston," *Harper's Magazine* 123 (November 1911), 917, 920.
59. Peabody, "Queen Anne," 134.
60. Watkin 1980, 4, 25.
61. Lamb 1879, 10; Claude Bragdon, "Architecture in the United States," *Record* 25 (June 1909), 426; Embury 1914, 175-177.
62. Lipscomb 1905, 16:123; Charles A. Cummings, "The Crown of Beacon Hill," *Georgian Period*, 12:121. For Cummings, this ignoble modern spirit also gave birth to Frederick MacMonnies' *Bacchante*, which he succeeded in excluding from the Boston Public Library. *AABN* 88 (19 August 1905), 57.
63. Watkin 1980, 10; Bragdon 1909, 426.
64. Richard Grant White, "Old New York and Its Houses," *Century Magazine* 26 [n.s. 4] (October 1883), 851, 853, 859.
65. Harry W. Desmond and Herbert Croly, *Stately Homes in America from Colonial Times to the Present Day* (New York, 1903), 86; Russell F. Whitehead, "The Old and the New South: A Consideration of Architecture in the Southern States," *Record* 30 (July 1911), 1.
66. Embury 1909, 592. For more on the associations attached to colonial architecture that enhanced its popularity, see William B. Rhoads, *The Colonial Revival*, 2 vols. (New York, 1977), I:376-551.
67. "A.S.A.H. Beginnings: A Report," *Journal of the American Society of Architectural Historians* 1 (January 1941), 20-22; *AABN* 12 (12 August 1882), 73.



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