THE TRADITIONAL HOUSE AND ITS ENEMIES

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The familiar narrative of American domestic architecture is a history of progress from the freestanding vernacular farm houses of the European colonists to the freestanding single-family houses of the twentieth-century suburb.1 It takes only a little thought to recall some of the vast number of American houses this misses. They include not only the houses of the rural poor and the non-European, but the housing of most urbanites from the Astors to the Kramdens. The top, the bottom, and the edges have all been cut off: the Biltmores, the Bilt-likes, and the Bilt-differently do not fit the standard story comfortably. Many other people live in places not considered houses at all, such as places of business, institutions (from jails to hospitals to college dormitories), or the streets. None of these make it into the received history of American domestic architecture either. In short, we might say that the architectural historian's "the American house" is an exceptional experience in the United States.

There are a variety of reasons for this peculiar historiographical skewing, some having to do with architectural history, some with architectural historians, and others with
widely shared American socio-political mythology. In this paper, I am interested in one aspect of the story of how the middle-class house, relying for its visual imagery on popular culture, came to be presented as the quintessential American house.

Mine is a tale in two parts. One has to do with the creation in the early nineteenth century of a national folk architecture that was peculiarly suited to emerging patterns of middle-class domesticity. The second involves the fledgling architectural profession’s attempt to make a place for itself in a building industry that had always done nicely without it. The two intersect in a consideration of the profusion of architectural advice literature — pattern books, design guides, architectural handbooks, and periodical articles — that was published in nineteenth-century America. While this normative literature promoted progress and change, much of the domestic landscape was unchanging. Most rural and urban Americans, middle class as well as lower class, lived in traditional ways in traditional buildings constructed using traditional structural systems. Moreover, nineteenth-century architectural advisors noticed these traditional patterns, and most gave some space to describing, criticizing, analyzing, and sometimes endorsing them. In this sense, the architectural literature constitutes an extended, usually implicit, but sometimes explicit, comment on the traditional domestic architecture of nineteenth-century America. By reading it as an extended effort by popular writers to come to grips with traditional architecture in the course of formulating theoretical positions and professional objectives, it is possible to understand an important portion of the process of transformation from traditional to popular culture in American domestic architecture.

TRADITIONAL STRUCTURES

Although there were pockets of ethnic building spotted throughout the North American landscape at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it is accurate to say that, in the beginning of the century, a national folk architecture was created in the United States. By national folk architecture, I mean house-forms that were traditional in the sense that they were derived from folk building-types and learned from one’s neighbors rather than from publications. The national folk architecture incorporated folk architectural ideas about structure, planning, and visual composition that had been developed since the sixteenth century. Yet while archaeologists apply the term tradition to practices with great temporal depth but restricted geographical distribution, these forms appeared all over the country very quickly. National folk architecture was the product of popular culture. It was evidence that even the most remote areas of the United States had been drawn into the post-revolutionary commercial economy and its transportation and information systems.

Over the course of 300 years in North America, Euro-, Afro- and Native American builders evolved a variety of traditional structural systems with which the majority of nineteenth-century American houses were constructed. To antebellum architectural writers, as to twentieth-century ones, the most conspicuous of these was horizontal-log building. Even before the presidential campaign of 1840, in which log-cabin birth came to be associated with republican origins, the log house provoked comment. Some early architectural writers were wary of its use, but most described it with “profound affection and regard, as the shelter from which we have achieved the most of our prodigious and rapid agricultural conquests.”

The fondness for the log house was based in Arcadian imagery and in Vitruvian and primitivist myths about the origins of architecture in the satisfaction of fundamental needs for shelter that early nineteenth-century American architectural writers still accepted. Thus, Alexander Jackson Davis could present a log “‘American house,” since “The Log House is peculiar to America.” Davis’ log house, however, took the form of a classical temple; its logs stood upright as columns rather than being laid horizontally. Although he described this as a concession to economy in its shape and to utility in its use of a sheltering portico, Davis’ reference point was clearly the primitive hut as presented by eighteenth-century theorists like Marc-Antoine Laugier, and particularly as illustrated by William Chambers, a favorite authority of early nineteenth-century American architectural writers.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the metaphor of the primitive hut had been abandoned. Architectural writers asserted that architecture grew out of the “needs” and “natural wants” of the people in a more historical way. C. P. Dwyer, one of the most astute observers of vernacular building, pointed out that these needs and wants varied from place to place. Consequently, there never had been a
primitive hut, but rather distinct localized forms of traditional architecture growing out of local societies, and particularly out of local climates and materials.\textsuperscript{12}

It was in this light that traditional architecture first came to the attention of architectural writers: as an example of specialized adaptation to the specific functional needs of a region. This common interpretation of the vernacular reinforced the publicists’ claim that good architecture required fine tuning to its situation, not just the application of universal or generic solutions. They went on to argue that architects did this better than vernacular builders.

Two aspects of their agenda led them to pay particular attention to vernacular building. The first was their quest for cheap building methods for the mass of people — for poor people, farmers, immigrants, laborers. Vernacular structural systems were recommended because, it was said, the labor required was simpler and because they relied on indigenous materials.

Charles P. Dwyer (c. 1815 - c. 1880), an emigrant from Ireland to Canada in the 1840s who later settled in Buffalo, New York, published two important books in this vein.\textsuperscript{13} The first, \textit{The economic cottage builder}, endorsed a whole range of vernacular building methods including, of course, log, but also \textit{pisé} or rammed earth, sun-dried brick, and gravel-wall or mud-concrete construction, a mid-nineteenth-century innovation that its proponents described as an extension and refinement of vernacular earth-building techniques.\textsuperscript{14}

Like his colleagues, Dwyer probably derived most of the knowledge imparted in \textit{The economic cottage builder} from books. His second work, \textit{The immigrant builder}, was different. It was a virtual catalog of nineteenth-century American vernacular building technology, omitting only sod building, which had just begun to be used on the Great Plains.\textsuperscript{15} Dwyer claimed that he had tried all the techniques he prescribed, and the precision of his descriptions (for the most part), as well as his knowledge where each technique was typically used, suggest that during the years 1856-1870, for which we have no record of him, he lived on the frontier. In his new book, Dwyer once again promoted earth- and concrete building (including a form of concrete-block construction that he called \textit{béton}). He considered log building at great length (FIG. 1). He offered detailed instructions for building slab, shingle, and thatch roofs, and traditional wooden chimneys. Dwyer was also acquainted with now-obscure technologies such as vertical-log and slab building, the former similar to the “tilt” structures of Newfoundland and to colonial French \textit{poteaux en terre} and \textit{poteaux sur sole} construction (FIGS. 2,3).\textsuperscript{16} He discussed nailed horizontal planking, which Orson Fowler had recommended in the first edition of his book, and which is called by vernacular builders “false timbering” (FIG. 4).\textsuperscript{17} And of course he described ordinary timber framing. These technologies accounted for a large proportion of nineteenth-century American vernacular houses, and are still common among survivors, but Dwyer was one of the few architectural writers who took note of them.

Dwyer’s intended readers were builders far from the city who might not have access to a carpenter or a sawmill, much less to an architect. But he was in the minority among architectural pundits. Most aimed their work at the urban and suburban middle classes and those who designed and built for them. Vernacular technologies attracted the attention of these writers whose interest in labor-saving was not to make it possible for the pioneer, but attractive to the consumer: to those who would pay, rather than to those who would do the work themselves; to those who would purchase manufactured building products, rather than those who would use what was available locally.\textsuperscript{18}

These writers for the middle class focused on the timber-frame tradition that dominated the national folk architecture. After an initial flirtation with prefabrication, they turned to building systems -- ways of organizing construction -- epitomized by the balloon frame (FIG. 5).\textsuperscript{19} Overtly invented in Chicago in 1832, the balloon frame was technically a relatively small step forward in a long, unbroken search for labor-saving practices in Euro-American carpentry. It synthesized a variety of vernacular framing techniques into a kind of frame that was novel in detail more than in conception.\textsuperscript{20} Even the name balloon framing was derived from an older structural system -- called plank, box, or single-wall framing -- in which stiff vertical-board sheathing was substituted for studding.\textsuperscript{21}

Pattern-book writers recognized in this labor-conservative, slowly developed vernacular form the possibilities for a commoditized building that could incorporate standardized, mass-manufactured parts rather than the mixture of manufactured and hand-crafted parts that the predecessors of balloon framing displayed. They published rationalized
forms of the balloon frame in books intended for the middle-class, suburban consumer (see FIG. 5).22

In short, aside from a romantic fascination with the picturesque possibilities of log buildings, popular architectural writers in the nineteenth century chose to study those aspects of vernacular building that offered cheap construction for the marginal person and a rationalized and reorganized building system for the middle-class consumer. They aimed to take architecture out of the hands of traditional craft workers and, placing it under the control of architectural entrepreneurs, to subject it to the demands of a commodity economy. These writers helped to codify traditional building technologies, and perhaps give some techniques currency where they had not been used before, but for domestic architecture, vernacular building systems remained unchallenged.

TRADITIONAL PLANNING AND DOMESTIC LIFE

If architectural writers were largely satisfied with traditional building technologies, it is curious, but enormously significant, that they were equally accepting of traditional planning.

By the early nineteenth century, Anglo-American vernacular builders had developed a small repertory of planning ideas that were deeply rooted in customary divisions of everyday life and that, despite regional variations, can be seen as structuring the national folk architecture known to nineteenth-century architectural writers. The nucleus of the building tradition was the single room, the entire residence of many Americans in every region, of every ethnic-
This was not simply a matter of poverty. The single room was the traditional conceptual whole to which other spaces might be added as subordinate refinements or comments. As built on the eve of North American colonization, for example, the post-medieval Anglo-Welsh vernacular house was a rectangular, one-story, single-pile building with a large central room, or hall, that sheltered much of the social life and many of the domestic and agricultural tasks of the farm family. The house had a conceptual spatial axis, an “up-down” hierarchy that stretched the length of the building. At the lower or service end, separated by a structural passage, or simply an implied passage created by the opposed front and rear doors, one might find additional storage and heavy-duty work rooms. At the upper end might be a more secluded sleeping or light storage room, often called the parlor.

This is an idealized description, incorporating features that might be disposed variably according to the builders’ means and regional origins. It represents a way of conceiving domestic space rather than a specific building-type. The polarized spatial hierarchy it incorporates belongs to the more widespread hall tradition of northwestern Europe that, as modified in the seventeenth century, underlies American national folk architecture. From the seventeenth century on, the wealthy farmers and gentry of every eastern North American region built spatially polarized, two-room, hall-parlor (or hall-chamber, or hall-kitchen) houses (FIG. 7). The tension between better and worse, more and less public, more and less active use around a core room became embedded in Euro-American tradition.
This spatial pattern accommodated a household in which activities throwing the family (those residents related by blood or marriage) together were increasingly separated from those used by farm laborers, slaves, or other servants, in which spaces were increasingly expected to be used for only one or a few things, and in which the spaces where a family met its neighbors were increasingly formalized by removing certain “private,” ungenteel, or workaday things from the main space. These refinements are familiar to most twentieth-century observers, but they were new to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Euro-Americans.

Another kind of spatial reworking transformed the American house in the eighteenth century. By grouping rooms around a circulation passage or hallway, articulating the plan in a way that filtered access, each room was given the possibility of functioning separately (FIG. 8). In the crudest terms, privacy, as well as other kinds of specialized social interaction, was made possible. It was the culmination of a long process that began by separating the family from its workers and dependents, and ended by separating them from one another.

If domestic life was redefined inside, so was the family’s relationship to its neighbors. Architecturally, this was apparent in choices made about the arrangement of the spatial building blocks. Increasingly, these were arranged to pull away from the point of contact with the outside. Builders might move the most active and informal, or sometimes the most private and inactive, spaces back away from the front. They might lift spaces, typically the most passive, formal, or private elements above the point of contact, giving a looming, impressive house (FIGS. 9, 10).

Without cataloguing regional variations, we can say that by the beginning of the nineteenth century, American single-family houses were characterized by a one- or two-room core and this social structure of space. The basic house might be expanded by the addition of subordinated “commenting” spaces or filtering passages, augmented in height or depth as economic resources permitted. But within a wide variety of specific forms, one could recognize these elementary concepts of composition and planning. In short, the national folk architecture – the spatial and visual organizing principles I have just outlined – dominated bourgeois housing in the nineteenth century. It offered particularly flexible models for housing, because it was so adaptable to the new family and social life that was coming to characterize the emerging middle class.

Many popular writers took a slap at one traditional plan or another, usually on the basis of “convenience.” Orson Squire Fowler’s comparison of the relative efficiency of what he called a double mansion, the central-passage, double-pile house that modern geographers call the Georgian plan, with his own octagon plan was one of the most ambitious attempts to criticize traditional standards, but it was as unconvincing to his readers then as it seems to us now (FIGS. 11, 12).

In short, nineteenth-century architectural writers had little to add to national folk architectural planning principles.

While they might suggest refinements for climatic or other utilitarian purposes, they were quick to take over traditional plans. Straightforward vernacular plans made up at least
half, and usually nearly all, of the plans in antebellum publications. Most writers chose widely distributed national folk forms, such as Charles Dwyer's one-room log house or John Hall's two-story, one-room-deep, central-passage "I" house (FIG. 13). The mainstay of pattern-book writers, however, was the central-passage, two-room deep house that scholars have labeled the Georgian house (FIG. 14; see FIG. 11).

It is important to recognize this as a middle-class phenomenon. The notion of the family as the central social atom of society went largely unchallenged in the nineteenth century. Most people who left any record of their thoughts accepted it. At the same time, the exact nature of the family implied in the national folk house was challenged.

Republicanism, the dominant political ideology of the post-revolutionary era, depicted a healthy society as one based on politically independent male freeholders organized into financially independent households. This was challenged implicitly by groups marginalized or excluded by commercial society, such as slaves, Asians, and many of the rural and urban poor who do not seem to have adopted middle-class mores or domestic organization. At the same time, there were also people, confronted and stimulated by the commercial society, who rethought or discarded middle-class domestic structures. These included communal groups like the Shakers, who abolished marriage and sexual relations in favor of large "families" organized economically and living in great, sexually segregated communal houses, the Oneidans, who believed in communal living and multiple sexual relationships, the Harmonists or Rappites of Pennsylvania and Indiana, who spontaneously renounced conjugal relations during an enthusiastic period in their history, and the Mormons, who initiated polygamy when they moved to Utah. All these groups rethought the living arrangements and organization of work that shaped the house.

Although some, particularly the Mormons, maintained households close to the middle-class model, the key difference was that all tended to one degree or another to play down the consumption of consumer goods and individual participation in the larger society in favor of family (however defined) self-reliance, relative equality of material culture, and a family-based, rather than individual, articulation with the larger society. The national folk architecture, on the other hand, not only incorporated the middle-class family relationships we have seen, but it was thor-
oughly immersed in the new consumer economy of the nineteenth century; this is how it came into being, and how it could be national.

The middle class itself was also a product of the commercial society. The emerging bourgeoisie learned not only to think of themselves as separate individuals, however unequal, but to think of the middle-class family as a group defined by acquired manners and up-to-date, constantly renewed possessions. It was imagined as a private, consuming unit, rather than a public, producing one. For this new family, the house came to be a collective, public declaration of manner and possession. And the architectural advice literature was important in making it so. This is where the enemies of my title enters.

Advice literature of many sorts, which taught readers how to cook, to dress, to keep house, and to act politely, how to live and what to live in, was a striking element of middle-class self-creation in the nineteenth century. These books argued that middle-class identity was attached to possessions and to the ability to select and use them knowingly. Thus, they tied class to consumption. These books were themselves consumer goods and, in addition, advertised other consumer goods and services. For example, not only did Andrew Jackson Downing illustrate acceptably tasteful furniture in his *The architecture of country houses*, but he also told readers where they could purchase it in Boston and New York.

This genre of literature became an important tool for the fledgling architectural profession. Architects, who relied for their livings on acquired mental skills rather than capital or physical labor power, were quintessentially middle-class people. The first architectural publications addressed the incipient architects of the early nineteenth-century, who were skilled craftsmen refashioning themselves in a professional mold. Their task was to make a salable commodity of an invisible skill, to "give every man an opportunity of buying for a few dollars, all the brains I've got," as Thomas U. Walter wrote. It was to their advantage to encourage the growth of consumerist family life. They encouraged people to want the up-to-date as an expression of individuality and social standing. Thus, about 1840 their publications turned from addressing each other to soliciting the layperson. The books served as explicit advertising for the profession, and less often for individual architects as well. In either case, their line favored progress and change or, rather, argued that change was progress.

It was in this context that they confronted the vernacular environment directly. Architectural writers were rarely interested in the architecture of ethnics, the poor, or the marginal, because their audience was the potential consumer of architectural design. Architectural books were aimed at members of the middle class who were already in the mainstream of the nineteenth-century consumer economy, and were intended to redirect middle-class patterns of consumption.

The spatial patterns of the national folk architecture accommodated the living patterns of the new middle classes in ways that architects could not challenge on any fundamental
FIG. 13. Central-passage house (1 house). Plans and elevation. Source: J. Hall, A series of select and original modern designs for dwelling houses (Baltimore: John Murphy, 1840), pl. 3. (Courtesy of Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.)
level, since they accepted their underlying premises. Yet they declared themselves the enemies of national folk houses, loudly condemning old and vernacular buildings and violently attacking the traditional craftworkers who erected them.

TRADITIONAL AESTHETICS

While nineteenth-century architectural writers took over large portions of vernacular building technology and planning unchallenged, their attacks were directed at the appearance of the traditional house. Aesthetic criticism was central to arguments for the consumerist ethos in architecture. Consequently, the advisors' complaints were directed not at log structures or other more conspicuous vernacular buildings, but at relatively large houses whose appearance was based on eighteenth-century principles of symmetry, control, and artificiality (FIGS. 15, 16).37

The architects had two objections. First, these houses were not fashionable. Fashion in the sense I am using it is an eighteenth-century idea. It implied more than consuming acceptably. The fashionable consumer kept pace with rapidly and arbitrarily changing forms created by designers and manufacturers. Status accrued to those who could grasp and acquire the newest forms most speedily. Fashion was thus entwined with the need to create demand for the consumer goods then being produced in such great numbers and with the new selling mechanisms created in that century to generate fashionable demand.38 In the realm of consumer fashion, good taste was right choice. This implies context: one must know under which circumstances to display fashionable forms.

Fashion thus intersects with a second idea running strongly through critiques of traditional houses: that they lacked decorum in form and decoration. Nineteenth-century writers argued that a house must express its [male] owner's individuality, fitting decoration to his circumstances and character.39 The skillful designer knew certainly what was too little and what too much.

This combination of knowledge of fashion and judgment in its decorous use was labeled taste by mid-nineteenth-century writers.40 Although taste was difficult to define, all agreed that in a client, taste consisted of right consumption, of the passive ability to recognize the disciplined, trained, and experienced active taste of the architect.

Such arguments served a very specific purpose for architectural writers, nearly all of whom after 1840 styled themselves professional architects. The professional -- defined as someone trained to design, estimate, and supervise, but not actually get his hands dirty -- was an interloper on a scene that was traditionally dominated by highly skilled and powerful craft workers.41

Architects' claims were not easy to establish. Most would-be professionals, as James Gallier noted in his Autobiography, were at the beck and call of builders, and not the other way around.42 Clients and builders came to architects for stock products, drawn up quickly in traditional forms.

A quick study of the meticulous accounts kept by Philadelphia architect Thomas U. Walter is revealing of the customary role of architects in mid-nineteenth-century domestic building.43 Walter is best known as the architect of the
United States Capitol dome and of Girard College in Philadelphia, but most of his time was spent knocking out drawings for speculative builders. Of 373 commissions recorded from 1831 to 1851, roughly 61 percent were jobs in which Walter produced a plan or two and an elevation for a row of houses, an individual house, or a commercial building. Of 112 private houses, two-thirds were done on this basis, as were three-quarters of the speculative rows Walter designed: a morning at the drafting table, and the drawings left the office, and with them Walter’s involvement with the project. At five to ten dollars a sheet, these commissions brought him ten to twenty-five dollars apiece. There were two paths one could take to improve this financial situation. The first was the financially risky course of doubling as a contractor, competing with builders at their own business. Like most other architects of his era, Walter did this, usually unsuccessfully. The second course was to expand one’s architectural business by taking a greater role in the design and oversight of individual buildings rather than simply handing over elementary drawings. In the early nineteenth century, this path was most readily available to architects of public buildings. Through many years of ten-dollar jobs, Walter was sustained by his on-going salaries as designer and supervisor of the Philadelphia County prison and Girard College. Such jobs were relatively few, and subject to intense competition.

Consequently, if design business were to expand for most architects, it would have to be in the realm of domestic architecture. When Walter was asked for “full” drawings, including sheets of details, and consultation with the workmen (short of day-to-day supervision), his fees rose from around 25 dollars to 100 or 150 dollars. For clients to want this level of service, however, required a degree of fashion consciousness.

Architects hitched their fortunes to the economics of fashion early in the nineteenth century, relying on it to generate business. While ordinary fashionable behavior -- the rapid and repeated consumption of new forms -- is theoretically possible in architecture, it is not practicable for most clients. Instead, nineteenth-century architects argued that fashion progressed so rapidly that no client could keep up with it. The architect, who built houses year in and year out for all sorts of people, offered himself as a surrogate
consumer for the client. The architect would take it on himself to keep abreast of fashion, so that the client, acting on his advice, could plunge confidently into the tide of fashion.44

The campaign against the traditional house was part of this professional project (to use Magali Sarfati Larson’s phrase) to instill a sense of fashion in the potential client.45 But the intersection of fashion and decorum has another connotation. Fashion is paradoxical: it is based economically on the mass consumption of widely available goods, but its rhetoric is built on the old aristocratic language of exclusivity and rigid class distinction. Thus, Alexander Jackson Davis’ Rural residences claims the approbation of the “taste of several gentlemen.”46 William H. Ranlett, while denouncing open class pretension and declaring himself to be as interested in working for “the million as for the wealthy few,” nevertheless assumed that the million ought to meet the standards of the wealthy few, and not vice versa.47 Class permeated the language of architectural decorum.

As a materialistic people, in the sense that they held an abiding belief in the power of things to transform us, antebellum designers and their middle-class clients believed that architectural form and social life were closely connected. Andrew Jackson Downing’s theory of beauty, which assigned an appropriate size, massing, and degree of visual elaboration to the houses of each social class, is only the most famous and the most extended of these statements.48 But similar assumptions guided every architectural writer and permeated nineteenth-century middle-class building nationwide. Ordinary materials such as adobe bricks were dignified by coats of plaster, making them appear to be ashlar stone.49 Even the eminently practical Charles Dwyer recognized that respectable pioneers might be put off from slab construction by its association with Irish laborers, and demanded that log, adobe, and balloon houses be finished as carefully and decorated as tastefully as means allowed. He even recommended certain vernacular structural systems for their inherently picturesque qualities.50

Thus, architectural writers aimed to educate their readers not only to appreciate the currents of fashion, but also to appreciate the social distinction conveyed by fashionable forms judiciously applied. Architects strove to create a sense of class solidarity between themselves and their middle-class potential customers and a concomitant sense of class alienation, even fear, between clients and builders, whom they depicted as illiterate, ignorant, often dishonest, and slightly sinister.

THE IMAGINED AMERICAN HOUSE

Some curious conclusions arise from this story. For one thing, the architects’ appeal to architectural fashion and social decorum did little for their business. They remained relatively unsuccessful in attracting the middle-class clients they addressed in their publications. The province of the architect was then, as now, the public body, the business enterprise, and the wealthy individual.

Nevertheless, the attack on the traditional house helped to establish the claim that architecture is whatever architects do and the corollary that vernacular building is “undesigned,” “unselfconscious,” utilitarian, artless, or unworthy. In addition, it helped to popularize the idea that architecture consists of visual images grafted onto a standard body. Thus, architects’ forms were sometimes abstracted and absorbed back into vernacular practice.

More important, the architectural writers recognized the spatial and technological appropriateness of the national folk architecture to the new bourgeois lifeways, and turned to appeals to visual fashion and decorum as the vehicle of their professional hopes. By equating architecture with fashion, decorum, and visual qualities, and thus commodifying design, reducing it to that which could be purchased, architectural writers helped to draw the middle-class American house into the nineteenth-century commercial economy. They did this not only by advocating the commercialized production of its components, but by casting the house as one of the defining possessions of the self-construction of the middle-class family, which imagined itself through its manner and its possessions.51 In this way, domestic architecture reinforced a growing Victorian sense of middle-class identity and of separation from the lower orders of society. In celebrating themselves in their suburban houses and neighborhoods, Victorians and their successors created a wishful landscape that they defined as quintessentially American. In important ways, then, the notion of the middle-class house as the American house is a product of the encounter of commercial capitalism with the vernacular landscape.
REFERENCE NOTES


8. See, for example, A. Benjamin, The American builder’s companion; or, a new system of architecture particularly adapted to the present style of building in the United States of America (2d ed.; Charlestown, MA: Samuel Etheridge, Jr., 1811), pp. 24-26.

9. A.J. Davis, Rural residences, etc., consisting of designs, original and selected, for cottages, farmhouses, villas, and village churches (New York: for the architect, 1837), n.p.


14. C.P. Dwyer, The economic cottage builder; or, cottages for men of small means. Adapted to every locality, with instructions for choosing the most economical materials afforded by the neighborhood (Buffalo: Wanker, McKim and Co., 1855). Although pise and adobe were widely known throughout the world, building with earth was first promoted among Anglo-American builders by the New Jersey agricultural reformer Stephen W. Johnson who, like Dwyer, was looking for an easy, low-labor building method. Johnson had learned of pise from English governmental publications, which had in turn adapted it from late eighteenth-century French publications (Johnson, Rural economy: containing a treatise on pise buildings, as recommended by the board of agriculture in Great Britain, with improvements by the author [New York: I. Riley and Co., 1806]). On the gravel wall, see O.S. Fowler, A home for all, or the gravel wall and octagon mode of building (2d ed.; New York: Fowler and Wells, 1853), pp. 18-49.


18. Even Dwyer urged the use of some manufactured products such as building paper.

22. It is thus by way of the advice literature that we acknowledge the balloon frame, while the plank-framed balloon house mentioned by Dwyer and those addressing the pioneer has disappeared from sight.  
27. Fowler, Home for all, pp. 94-99.  
28. The I house, named by the geographer Fred Kniffen, is one of the most widely distributed national folk house-forms recorded by several scholars (F. Kniffen, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion," in Upton and Vlach, eds., Common Places, pp. 7-10).  
33. For a keenly observed demonstration of the role of advice books, see the incident of Silas Lapham's gloves in William Dean Howells's The Rise of Silas Lapham (1885).  
35. Much of this paragraph follows the lengthy argument in Upton, "Pattern Books and Professionalism."  
37. Glassie, Folk Housing, pp. 91, 134-160.  
43. The following is based on a study of the account books preserved in the Walter papers at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.  
44. For a lengthier discussion of this issue, see Upton, "Form and User."  
50. Dwyer, Immigrant builder, pp. 61-64.  