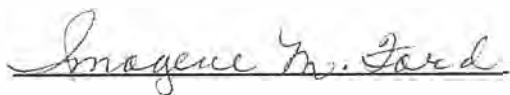


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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Lawrence Allen Ray entitled "Victorian Material Culture in Memphis, Tennessee: The Mallory-Neely House Interiors As Artifact." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Human Ecology.


Robbie G. Blakemore, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:







Accepted for the Council:


Vice Provost
and Dean of The Graduate School

VICTORIAN MATERIAL CULTURE IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE:
THE MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE INTERIORS AS ARTIFACT

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Lawrence Allen Ray
August 1988

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Dedicated
To The Memory
Of My Mother
MILDRED PEARCE TOGNETTI
1918-1983

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ABSTRACT

The interiors of the Mallory-Neely House are valuable surviving documents of nineteenth century American culture warranting careful research, preservation and interpretation. Victorian Village, where the mansion is located in Memphis, is a nationally recognized enclave of nineteenth-century domestic structures. Previous research has centered primarily on the genealogical background of the owners and to a much lesser degree on the architectural history of these houses; none had focused in a scholarly manner on the interiors and furnishings. This is especially true of the Mallory-Neely House, the only one containing its original interior decor. These represent stratification of occupation and renovation by five families. Major phases of Victorian interior architectural treatment, changing approaches to interior decoration, and myriad Victorian furniture styles are represented.

Due to an almost total lack of written documentation directly concerning the Mallory-Neely interiors, a material cultures methodological approach was used. Each of the interconnected ceremonial rooms was treated as an artifact. A system was developed in order to "read" and gather data about each component of these interiors as well as the room ensemble as a whole. This information was then coupled with written evidence from various archival sources to form a base for interpretation.

The artifacts comprising the Mallory-Neely interiors were found to be reflective of a society evolving towards modernization

and representative of technological change. Dynamic change brought disruption of the social order and created a desire among Victorians for stabilizing symbols. The Mallory-Neely ceremonial interiors were created as a stage of status where symbolic social ritual was enacted. The interiors and their contents along with their closely related architectural and landscape surround visually communicated the owners' elite status in the hierarchial class structure of the time.

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VOLUME I

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The simplest manmade object is more than a chunk of material of known size and weight. It is also a record of human effort, a repository of meaning, and a key capable of releasing not only visual pleasure but also varying degrees of intense human feeling.¹

Background and Need for the Study

The Mallory-Neely House, as a valuable surviving historic material culture document for the Mid-South, the state of Tennessee, and the nation, warrants careful, thoughtful preservation, conservation, restoration, and especially interpretation. In the archeological layering of its architectural, interior, and furnishing styles both national and local nineteenth century history are crystalized.

The mansion located in Memphis, Tennessee, is for the Mid-Southern region of the United States a remarkably preserved nineteenth century home, especially its interior decor and furnishings. As an historic house museum, it can be classified as a representative site which since 1969 has been used to illustrate the life style of an elite Southern family during the nineteenth century.²

¹Douglas C. McGill, "The Zestful Curator of India," New York Times, 12 September 1985, 21(C).

²William T. Alderson and Shirley Payne Low, Interpretation of Historic Sites (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), 12-14.

Several rooms are of recognized national importance; the Mallory-Neely House is also of value as a local and regional survivor. Its significance is magnified by the fact that historic Memphis architecture has suffered greatly for a variety of reasons including: a series of devastating yellow fever epidemics in the late nineteenth century which all but destroyed the city and caused resultant poverty; turn-of-the-century population shifts to newly fashionable areas causing disinterest, neglect, and urban blight in the old neighborhoods; the great depression of the 1930s during which the South suffered severe economic decline. In addition, extensive urban renewal during the 1950s and 1960s almost obliterated the old inner city. Historic Memphis is consequently much more elusive than other Southern cities like Charleston, Richmond or sister river towns like Louisville and New Orleans. Like citizens of many American cities, Memphians seem to have only recently awakened to the importance of historic preservation. Joseph L. Herndon, Tennessee's best known preservation expert, in an interview recorded in the Tennessee humanities newsletter, Touchstone, bemoaned the fact that local citizens are active in national preservation movements and causes, many literally "revering restorations like Williamsburg and Savannah, yet they seem totally oblivious to local preservation efforts."³

Transcending regional history the Mallory-Neely House also survives as an important document which incorporates information

³"The Challenge of Retrieving the Neighborhood: An Interview with Joseph L. Herndon," Touchstone 1, No. 2 (Fall 1984): 3-4.

about an America in transition moving towards modernization, with rapid technological and communications advancement, developing consumerism, and a dramatically changing cultural and value structure. The interiors especially exemplify the foregoing and, in addition, reveal emerging nineteenth century awareness of the social importance of domestic life and ways to create a wholesome and functional environment for it. As a house museum and a material culture artifact it has the potential to become what has been described as a "learning laboratory for the study of American history."⁴ (Figure 1)

The Mallory-Neely Mansion is located in "Victorian Village," a designated National Park Service Historic district including nine homes, numerous outbuildings, and several churches, most listed on the National Register of Historic Places.⁵

Here, towered urban mansions which once may have politely vied with each other but now, together, depict a cultural landscape representative of the sumptuous residential life of late nineteenth century elite in a major river-port city of the South.⁶

Built circa 1852, the Mallory-Neely House remained a private home until 1969 when its occupant, Mrs. Frances Blocker Mallory,

⁴Thomas J. Schlereth, Historic Houses as Learning Laboratories: Seven Teaching Strategies, Technical Leaflet 105 (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1978), 1.

⁵"U.S. Park Service Designates Victorian Village As Historic District," Memphis Press Scimitar, 5 January 1983, 1(B).

⁶John D. Milner, Norman D. Askins, John T. Parks, David Hollenburg, Alice Kent Schooler, Nicholas Solovioff, Sherrill L. Toole, and David Hanks, "Master Plan for the Mallory-Neely House, Memphis, Tennessee" (West Chester, Pennsylvania: National Heritage, 1976), 1, photocopy.



Figure 1. Parlor of the Mallory-Neely House. Courtesy The Magazine Antiques.

affectionately known to Memphians as "Miss Daisy," died there at age ninety-eight.⁷ (Figure 2) She had lived in the mansion, home of her parents, the James Columbus Neelys, most of her long life. Mrs. Mallory spent part of her childhood and, after marriage, raised her own family in the house. Widowed in the 1930s, she presided there for decades as the reigning dowager of Memphis society.⁸ It came to be known locally as "Miss Daisy's fabulous house." Until her death, she maintained her family home as it had been in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries without extensive alteration. It was her hope that the house would continue to be preserved for posterity.

On 21 December 1972, as a memorial to their mother and grandmother, her heirs deeded the mansion to the twenty-seven West Tennessee Chickasaw District Chapters of the Daughters, Sons, and Children of the American Revolution, as a central regional headquarters, meeting place, and house museum.⁹ It was then chartered as the DAR-SAR-CAR House, Inc. The following goals were immediately set: the house would be opened, preserved, and restored as a

⁷Mrs. Frances Mallory was nicknamed "Daisy" by her family. Throughout this dissertation she will be referred to as either Miss Daisy Neely or Mrs. Daisy Mallory.

⁸In The Days Of Miss Daisy (Memphis: DAR-SAR-CAR Chapter House, Inc., 1975), 6; Pat Leeker, "Miss Daisy and Her Remarkable Home," The Delta Review 4, No. 2 (March-April 1967): 35.

⁹Paul R. Coppock, "The Mallorys-Neelys and Their Fine Victorian Mansion," Commercial Appeal, 10 June 1977, 1 (C); "Mallory House to be Home of DAR, SAR," Commercial Appeal, 3 August 1971, 1(B).

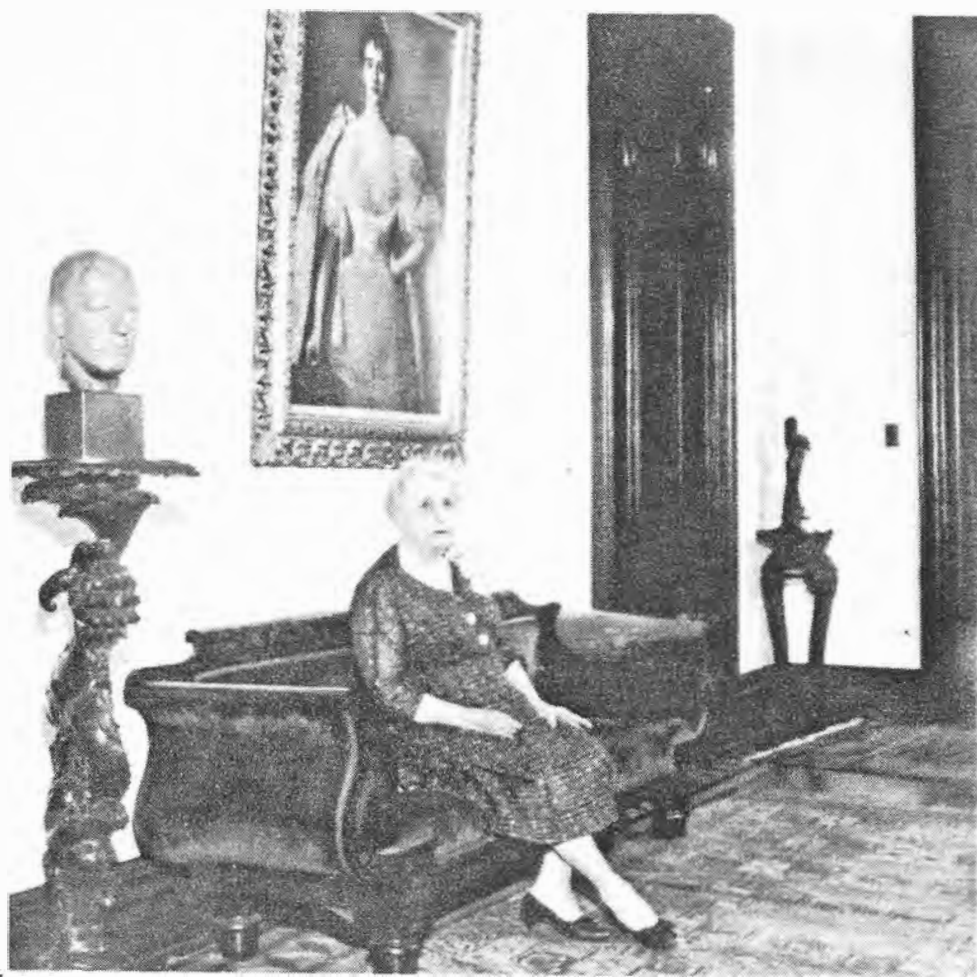


Figure 2. Mrs. Daisy Mallory at age 90 beneath her debut portrait in the entrance hall of the Mallory-Neely House.
Courtesy Barton Lee Mallory, Jr.

memorial to Mrs. Daisy Mallory and a program for the education of touring visitors would be developed.¹⁰ Since that time the members of these organizations have made a concerted effort to raise monies locally for necessary structural repair.¹¹ Through volunteer assistance from their own membership and that of a support group, The Friends of the Mallory-Neely House, they have been able for the last fourteen years to open the mansion to the public on an almost daily basis.¹²

Coupled with local fund raising, a matching grant-in-aid was acquired in 1976 through the Department of Interior's National Park Service to hire a nationally recognized preservation group, National Heritage of West Chester, Pennsylvania, and a noted local firm, Yeates & Gaskill Restoration Architects, Inc., to work together to prepare a master plan for total restoration of the house, grounds, and furnishings.¹³ The authors of the report suggested a comprehensive plan to: improve visitor reception and internal visitor traffic; strengthen structural systems; reconstruct and renovate landscape; develop sound conservation and rehabilitation practices for interiors and furnishings; replace water, electrical, gas and sewage systems;

¹⁰Audrey Strohl, "Life and Leisure," Memphis Press Scimitar, 15 January 1979, 2(B).

¹¹Matching federal funds were obtained for several of these projects.

¹²Alice Fulbright, "New Volunteer 'Arm' Lends Support to DAR's Mallory-Neely," Commercial Appeal, 30 June 1981, 1(B).

¹³Mrs. Jane Hanks, Interview by author, Memphis, Tennessee, 14 October 1984.

provide fire and security detection systems; and make provisions for climate control.

Increased difficulty in raising funds to undertake the Heritage restoration plan and to correct structural damage prompted representatives of the DAR-SAR-CAR to propose to the Memphis city government in 1983 that it assume ownership and control of the mansion.¹⁴ Thus, in February 1985 the Mallory-Neely House was officially deeded by the DAR-SAR-CAR Chapter House, Inc. to the City of Memphis.¹⁵

Upon taking control, city officials began immediate restoration by procuring the services of the firm Yeates, Gaskill, and Rhodes, Restoration Architects.¹⁶ Mr. John Vincent Robinson, an independent historic interior restoration architect, was engaged by this firm to execute the first phase of the interior work. In January 1986,

¹⁴Mrs. Jane Hanks, Interview by author, Memphis, Tennessee, 8 February 1985.

¹⁵Consult the following for official long range plans for the Victorian Village District and its historic homes: Memphis Convention and Visitors Bureau, Tourism Marketing Analysis for Memphis: Part I, Study Among Visitors and Potential Visitors to Memphis, and Part II, Study Among Planners of Conventions, Exhibits, and Trade Shows, Memphis, January 1985; Memphis and Shelby County Office of Planning and Development, Victorian Village Special District Plan (Memphis, September 1985), 34-38; "Victorian Village to Play Important Role in Planned Bio-Medical Research Zone," Victorian Village Arts and Pops Festival '84, Second Annual Commemorative Program (Memphis: Victorian Village Incorporated, 2 September 1984), 22.

¹⁶Mayor Richard C. Hackett to Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., 9 September 1985, Private papers of Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., Memphis.

the exterior restoration and the renovation of the dining room were completed. The Mallory-Neely House then became the official entertainment center for the mayor of Memphis. When the house became a part of the Memphis museums system (effective 1 July 1987), plans were announced for managerial reorganization, artifactual conservation, educational programming, and historical research.¹⁷

Victorian Village and the Mallory-Neely House, since becoming a historic house museum, have received nationwide and regional exposure through various architectural subject books such as The Architecture of the United States.¹⁸ Examples of feature articles that have appeared in nationally distributed periodicals include "Victorian Mansions in Memphis" in The Magazine Antiques; "Grand Survivors on Adams Avenue" in Southern Living; "Memphis, Victorian Village Offers Look at the Past" in Preservation News; "A House Tour of Old Memphis" in Redbook and many local and regional articles such as "Victorian Village Blends Past Into Present," The Tennessee Conservationist.¹⁹

¹⁷Jill Hohnson Piper, "Mallory-Neely House Joins Memphis Family of Museums," Commercial Appeal, 2 August 1987, 1-2(J).

¹⁸G. E. Kidder Smith, The Architecture of the United States: The South & Midwest II (New York: Doubleday and Museum of Modern Art), 1981.

¹⁹Terry B. Morton, "Victorian Mansions in Memphis," The Magazine Antiques 100, No. 3 (September 1971), 408-412; "Grand Survivors on Adams Avenue," Southern Living 14 (December 1979), 44; "Memphis' Victorian Village Offers Look at the Past," Preservation News 14, No. 7 (September 1974), 7; "A House Tour of Old Memphis," Redbook 67, No. 4 (August 1986), 98-103; and Debbie Kelly Henderson, "Victorian Village Blends Past Into Present," The Tennessee Conservationist 62, No. 8 (September 1976), n.p.

As leaders in the field of historic preservation, architecture, and decorative arts have visited the Mallory-Neely House, they have observed that it is uniquely preserved and therefore has importance as a document of American Victorian material culture.²⁰ Quotations from the following are illustrative of this wide recognition. G. E. Kidder Smith states in The Architecture of the United States: The South & Midwest, published by the Museum of Modern Art:

The Victorian Village Historic District of Memphis [represents] . . . one of the nation's finest collections of mid- and late-nineteenth century dwellings. . . . The interior [of the Mallory-Neely House] almost untouched for a hundred years, is one of the Victorian prides of America. The drawing room in particular is sumptuous almost beyond belief. The colored Tiffany glass in the front door is possibly unsurpassed, while the French window on the stair-landing facing it is almost as fine. Moreover the house has been continuously lived in until the present [It is] one of the finest of its period to be seen.²¹

The authors of the master plan for the restoration of the Mallory-Neely House state:

An important historical enclave . . . in Memphis, Tennessee, is Victorian Village [and] within that neighborhood there is one particular mansion which, by virtue of its unquestioned integrity throughout, both in structure and in the surviving collections within, has few rivals . . . the double parlor, arranged en suite with music room behind, unquestionably ranks as one of the most splendid late Victorian rooms in this country. Such status results not only because of the richness of its decorative

²⁰Mrs. Thomas P. Hughes, Jr., "Home of the Late Mrs. Barton Lee Mallory, 652 Adams Avenue" [unpublished hostess guide], n.d., Special Collections DAR-SAR-CAR Chapter House, Inc., Memphis.

²¹Kidder Smith, 12.

scheme, but also because of its extraordinary state of preservation.²²

Lastly, Ellen Beasley, editor of The Magazine Antiques special edition of Antiques in Tennessee wrote in a letter to the Memphis Chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution:

Without a doubt, the parlor of the Mallory-Neely Home alone merits preservation of the structure. It is the best period room in Tennessee, perhaps one of the best in the country. . . . Most restorations are an attempt to recreate a period; at the Mallory-Neely House, it is all there. It is a true expression of the period, not a present day interpretation of what we thought it looked like at a certain time.²³

Extensive nationwide computerized inter-library and systems data-bank search by The University of Tennessee reference library staff and subsequent extensive independent research on the part of the author revealed no area-oriented material culture research or publication of any scholarly depth, or significance, that focuses specifically on local interior architecture or decorative arts history in the entire West Tennessee and Mid-South regions. Yet, in comparison, biographical, social, economic, and political history books and articles about Memphis and Memphians abound.

Three recent publications have focused on the artifact. In conjunction with the opening of a permanent exhibition of nineteenth century Mid-Southern history, Memphis 1800-1900 was published in a three volume set by the Memphis Pink Palace Museum. While it is

²²Milner et al., "Master Plan," 15.

²³Mrs. Ellen Beasley to the Memphis Chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution, 9 October 1971, Special Collections, DAR-SAR-CAR Chapter House, Inc., Memphis.

a broad general overview of nineteenth century Memphis cultural history, it is profusely illustrated with artifacts, including decorative arts from its collection. Furniture and other decorative arts used by Memphians are shown.²⁴ Architecture in Tennessee 1768-1897 by James Patrick is a survey history of Tennessee architecture in which Memphis architecture is cited when necessary to illustrate statewide stylistic trends. Some of the Victorian Village homes are briefly mentioned, the Mallory-Neely House in one sentence.²⁵ Good Abode: Nineteenth Century Architecture in Memphis and Shelby County, Tennessee is mainly a photographic collection of Memphis area architecture, primarily exterior, including commercial and ecclesiastical examples.²⁶ Short descriptive essays accompany the photographs. Though all three of these books deal with material artifacts as the subject, or utilize objects for illustration, none is based on a material culture methodological approach, nor do they use interiors or furnishings as a primary focus.

To date most research has focused on family history or architecture. Very little serious comprehensive research seems to have been devoted to the interior design and decorative arts of the

²⁴Carole M. Ornelas-Struve, Frederick Lee Coulter, and Joan Hassell, Memphis 1800-1900 I, II, III (New York: Nancy Powers & Co. Publishers, Inc., 1982).

²⁵James Patrick, Architecture in Tennessee (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981).

²⁶Perre Magness, Good Abode: Nineteenth Century Architecture in Memphis and Shelby County (Memphis: Junior League of Memphis, Inc., 1983).

houses in Victorian Village, especially the only one with authentically preserved interiors and furnishings, the Mallory-Neely House. Therefore, it seems that surprisingly little is accurately known about the decorative arts collections, designers, artisans, styles, and influences. Nor have scholarly efforts been undertaken to place these Victorian house interiors and their contents into a broad national context. Apparently this is an international problem; Peter Thornton in Authentic Decor stated:

The fifty years from 1820 to 1870 embraced the detested Victorian phase and have therefore hardly been studied at all--relatively speaking. Moreover, those architectural historians who have been courageous enough to make forays into this territory have looked mainly at town halls, railway stations, theatres and other public buildings which are intriguing because of their monumental scale or because they were constructed in a novel manner. Residential buildings have so far received very little attention, and virtually nothing has been said about their interiors.²⁷

Purpose and Methodology

Embodied in this residence is a record of how several families responded to changing stylistic trends of the nineteenth century. Therefore, it is the purpose of this research to document historically the Mallory-Neely House and its contents--architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, and decorative arts--by using the material culture methodology. As an investigative tool, this approach is particularly significant in view of the dearth of written evidence

²⁷Peter Thornton, Authentic Decor: The Domestic Interior 1620-1920 (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1984), 210.

specific to the Mallory-Neely House; it focuses on the artifact as a primary source which is "read" in conjunction with written documents to interpret cultural meanings.

Dr. Kenneth L. Ames stated in a lecture entitled "Attitudes Toward the Home: Changing Research Strategies" that "houses are key documents in the study of American life past and present."²⁸ He also stated that because of their scale and value as material objects, Americans project onto houses exceptionally weighty meanings, associations, and powers."²⁹ Ames feels that, because of this, American scholars have become active of late in exploring homes in terms of form, style, ethnicity, regional variation, room use, furnishings, ideology, technology and a host of other topics and issues.

This particular scholarly project has been based on the use of traditional research methods and a variety of material culture studies concepts, theories, and methods. Utilizing as an artifact the Mallory-Neely House, the primary focus is on the architectural features, interior design and furnishings with emphasis on the inter-related four major rooms and entrance hall of the main "ceremonial" floor of the house, which are also the best preserved.

One can find a variety of definitions of material culture studies, a research tool basically designed for sharpening historic

²⁸Kenneth L. Ames, "Attitudes Toward the Home: Changing Research Strategies," Paper presented at the McFaddin-Ward House Museum Conference: "American Homes in Transition, 1890-1930," Beaumont, Texas, 30 October 1987.

²⁹Ibid.

inquiry.³⁰ Thomas Schlereth defines both material culture and material culture studies:

Material culture can be considered to be the totality of artifacts in a culture, the vast universe of objects used by human kind to cope with the physical world, to facilitate social intercourse, to delight our fancy, and to create symbols of meaning. . . . Increasingly, the rubric material culture studies is being used as the most generic name to describe the research, writing, teaching, and publication done by individuals who interpret past human activity largely through extant physical evidence.³¹

Jules Prown in "Mind in Matter," an essay published in the Winterthur Portfolio, defines material culture as "the study through artifacts of beliefs, values, ideas, and assumptions, of a society at a given time."³² Prown believes that material culture studies view the object (our mute heritage) not as a craft but seek the mind behind it--human intelligence operating.³³ "It is a quest for the human mind reflective of the individual, community, and society which produced it."³⁴

³⁰Phillip Zimmerman, "Workmanship as Evidence a Model for Object Study," Paper presented at the Winterthur Winter Institute, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware, 24 January 1985.

³¹Thomas J. Schlereth, "Material Culture Studies in America 1876-1976," Material Culture Studies in America, ed. Thomas J. Schlereth (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), 2.

³²Jules Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," The Winterthur Portfolio 17, No. 1 (Spring 1982): 6.

³³Jules Prown, "An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method: Mind in Matter," Paper presented at the Winterthur Winter Institute, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware, 24 January 1985.

³⁴Ibid.

Material culture studies are often associated with the new history movement (history from the bottom up) within the study of American history.³⁵ In an essay, "How Much is a Piece of the True Cross Worth?" Brooke Hindle states:

The new history which highlights a complex of needs felt by the present generation, and the modernization concept, which has been brought over from the social sciences, both require new questions be put to history and both need the hard reality of material culture as a touchstone.³⁶

Material culture studies are interdisciplinary in nature, including anthropologists, sociologists, archeologists, historians, and others. "Material culture is an umbrella under which many disciplines co-exist for the common purpose of identifying and interpreting man-made objects."³⁷

Wilcomb E. Washburn calls the material culture artifact a manufact. In his essay entitled, "Manuscripts and Manufacts," he states:

The specific fact may be either in the form of a written document--a manuscript--or a material artifact or "manufact". . . . Manufacts have continued to be

³⁵Cary Carson, "Doing History with Material Culture," Material Culture and the Study of American Life, ed. Ian M. G. Quimby (Winterthur, Delaware: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1978), 43.

³⁶Brooke Hindle, "How Much is a Piece of the True Cross Worth?" Material Culture and the Study of American Life, ed. Ian M. G. Quimby (Winterthur, Delaware: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1978), 11.

³⁷John A. H. Sweeny, "Introduction," Material Culture and the Study of American Life, ed. Ian M. G. Quimby (Winterthur, Delaware: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1978), 1.

produced since the invention of writing and can be "read" in the absence of, or in conjunction with, manuscripts.³⁸

In his essay, "Words or Things," John Kouwenhoven suggests that in order to do material culture analysis satisfactorily (reading of the object), a different form of thought is necessary, the use of sensory thinking or "sight thought."³⁹ The use of two types of thought, verbal and sensory, would then create a balance and a system of checks one against the other.⁴⁰

Material culture studies as an evolving interdisciplinary mode of inquiry is in an exciting state of flux as practitioners formulate and construct various methodological, philosophical, and structural frameworks. The introduction and the many essays included within the anthology Material Culture Studies in America illustrate the wide range of practitioners and evolving interpretations.⁴¹ Within the decorative arts field, these vary from the macroscopic, the material life studies' theorists who are truly interdisciplinary and who seek totality and broad cultural interpretation in their approach, to the microscopic whose approach is exemplified by the

³⁸Wilcomb E. Washburn, "Manuscripts and Manufacts," Material Culture Studies in America, ed. Thomas J. Schlereth (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), 103.

³⁹John A. Konwenhoven, "American Studies: Words or Things?" Material Culture Studies in America, ed. Thomas J. Schlereth (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), 92.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 91-92.

⁴¹Thomas J. Schlereth, ed., Material Culture Studies in America 1876-1976 (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1982).

structuralists who through quantitative data examine form and establish pattern.⁴² Regardless of approach, the material culture researcher is trying to read the artifact in order to obtain information for interpretation.

Due to the fact that there is almost no written documentation having to do with the construction and furnishing of the Mallory-Neely House, the artifact becomes the major source of historic evidence. The Mallory-Neely House, its interiors and individual contents, were therefore used as "manufacts" and read to find answers employing material culture studies' methodology.

Two artifactual analysis methodologies have been developed by historians of the decorative arts for use in "reading" artifacts. These are E. McClung Fleming's "Artifact Study" and Jules Prown's "Yale Model."

Fleming's more traditional approach to object analysis begins with a description of factual attributes of an artifact including history, material, construction, design, and function. Each of these properties is subjected to four operations in the following sequence:

These operations are identification (including classification, authentication, and description), which results in a body of distinctive facts about the artifact; evaluation, which results in a set of judgments about the artifact, usually based on comparisons with other examples of its kind; cultural analysis, which examines the various interrelationships

⁴²Cary Carson, "Themes for the Research of Early American Life," Paper presented at the Winterthur Winter Institute, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware, 24 January 1985; and, Zimmerman, "Workmanship."

of an artifact and its contemporary culture; and interpretation, which suggests the meaning and significance of the artifact in relation to aspects of our own culture. . . . Identification is the foundation for everything that follows; interpretation is the crown.⁴³

Jules Prown's freer and more inventive artifactual interpretive method was developed for use in his classes at Yale. Prown's methodological approach also begins with descriptive analysis of the object and resultant information gathering. He then suggests that the human researcher, in order to analyze and interpret the object fully, become a participant through creative intellectual deduction, sensory experience of the object, and emotional response to the object. The final speculative phase of Prown's methodology is achieved through imaginative exploratory questioning, and the resultant development of attitudes and theories about the object.⁴⁴

Because Fleming and Prown are pioneers in developing a general material culture studies methodological approach, they tend for instructional purposes to concentrate on a single object. The methodology used in this research paper differs in that a series of inter-related rooms, each full of individual objects are the subject. The features of the room combine to create the whole, which is what the viewer perceives. The entire room and all its parts, collectively, communicate a stylistic and symbolic message. Therefore, in this paper each ceremonial room was investigated and interpreted as an artifact.

⁴³E. McClung Fleming, "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model," Winterthur Portfolio 9 (1974): 156.

⁴⁴Prown, "An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method: Mind in Matter."

Though a wealth of publications and research exists devoted to furniture and decorative arts, efforts to study historic interior design are comparatively meager. In recent years there have been much research and publication about the historic period room within a museum setting. These focus on methods for investigation, recreation, and interpretation.⁴⁵ Of late, scholars like Peter Thornton, Mario Praz, Gail Winkler, Roger Moss, Edgar de N. Mayhew and Minor Myers, Jr. have begun to explore historic interior design in a broader sense as an independent art form.⁴⁶ But no material cultures model or methodology has been developed specifically for investigation, analysis and interpretation of historic interiors.

For interpretation of the Mallory-Neely House interiors, therefore, analytical approaches from Fleming's and Prown's methodological systems as well as the historic period room literature were adapted and used. The methodological system developed by the author to investigate the Mallory-Neely interiors is illustrated in Figure 3.

Two forms were developed from this methodological approach in order to gather the needed information about the individual rooms and their contents in the Mallory-Neely House. Form A: INDIVIDUAL

⁴⁵See, for example, William Seale, Recreating the Historic House Interior (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1979).

⁴⁶See, for example, Edgar de N. Mayhew and Minor Myers, Jr., A Documentary History of American Interiors from the Colonial Era to 1915 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980); and Mario Praz, Illustrated History of Interior Decoration from Pompeii to Art Nouveau (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 1983).

A Room Interior As An Artifact

I. IDENTIFICATION

Visual Analysis and Physical Description of Room

- A. Each of the individual components of the room including architectural features, fixed interior decor, and furnishings analyzed as follows:
 - 1. Measurement
 - 2. Construction, technological processes used to create
 - 3. Finish/ornamentation
 - 4. Design and composition
 - 5. Use of iconography/symbolism
- B. Analysis of proxemics, spatial organization and arrangement of room.
- C. Analysis of original usage of room (ceremonial, private, utilitarian)

II. EVALUATION

Evaluation of information gleaned from physical and visual analysis coupled with external evidence, documentation.

- A. Known information
 - 1. Recorded oral documentation
 - 2. Written documentation
- B. Researcher's findings
 - 1. Comparative visual analysis and evaluation of houses, interiors, and decorative arts contemporary in time with the Mallory-Neely House and collection.
 - 2. Written documentation for published national and local sources
 - 3. Oral documentation

III. INTERPRETATION

- A. Stylistic analysis and classification of room interior
 - B. Cultural analysis of room interior
 - C. Summary: Final speculation and interpretation of room interior.
-

Figure 3. Methodological system developed for investigation of the Mallory-Neely interiors.

OBJECT ANALYSIS was initially used to collect data pertaining to each of the individual artifactual documents within a room (Appendix A). Form B: ROOM ANALYSIS was then used to develop an overall synthesis of information gathered from Form A (Appendix A). From these data ideas and concepts were conceived and a particular interpretation developed.

Another way that the approach used in this dissertation differs from McClung and Prown is in the degree of reliance placed on the object. This is an example of how artifacts can be used as research documents along with standard written evidence. Among written documentary sources utilized in this research were family papers, census and tax records, probate records, oral interviews, contemporary periodicals and trade catalogs. Especially helpful were the Robertson Topp Papers at Rhodes College, Memphis, and the Henry Montgomery Papers at the Memphis-Shelby County Public Library which contain detailed records documenting the building of an addition to Topp's home and the construction of Montgomery's mansion. These papers parallel remarkably the two major phases of the construction and remodeling of the Mallory-Neely House at mid- and late-nineteenth century. They give valuable insight into the practices and practitioners of the time in Memphis, Tennessee. It is ironic that the Topp and Montgomery Houses are destroyed but their building and furnishing records survive to help interpret the Mallory-Neely House, which still stands, but with comparatively little written documentation.

Dr. Kenneth L. Ames states that houses are major artifacts of a society. He feels that each house has an "agenda" or purpose for which it was created. This can be stylistic, social, or political. Houses like other material objects are "things." They provide a key to understanding the life of the times in which they were created and especially to the people who created them.⁴⁷ This dissertation represents the coupling of traditional research methods with artifactual analysis in order to interpret the "agenda" of a single historic American home and especially as related to the humans who lived in and created it.

Significance

The dearth of scholarly research about nineteenth century interior design and the decorative arts related to this area make this research significant for a number of reasons. As a body of information it can not only serve as a resource to develop the interpretive program by the management and staff of the Mallory-Neely House but also serve as a model for scholarship of geographic levels from local to national. Further, the accumulation of studies such as this is essential to rectify the frequent condemnation and denigration and to provide more objective assessments for the arts of the Victorian Era.

William T. Alderson and Shirley Payne Low explain in Interpretation of Historic Sites that due to the lack of scholarly

⁴⁷Ames, "Attitudes Toward the Home, Changing Research Strategies."

research, most historic buildings are surrounded by myths.⁴⁸ Consequently inaccurate information, misinformation, romantic legends, and "tall tales" often abound. INTERPRETATION based on sound research is the key to a truly successful and professional historic house museum.

How the historic site visitor is enabled more clearly to understand the truths of the past depends upon the interpretive program of the site. That program includes not only the spoken, written, and audiovisual communications he received from the interpretive staff, but also a variety of sensory and intellectual perceptions he gets because of the quality of the restoration, the authenticity of its furnishings, and the effectiveness of its exhibits. He may come to the site for a great variety of reasons, but the goal is to have him leave with an understanding of why that historic site is important to the community, state, nation or even world--and most of all to himself.⁴⁹

In many house museums, planned and well organized interpretive programs are often lacking; this situation is unfortunate since interpretation of the historic site is the major means of communication with the visitor. This research project will serve as a source for correct professional interpretation and also as an aid in the long-term restoration of the Mallory-Neely House so that the museum personnel can offer visitors an opportunity to understand the mansion within the context of the cultural, economic, social, and artistic development of Memphis and the region with reference to national trends of the nineteenth century.

⁴⁸Alderson and Low, 10.

⁴⁹Ibid., 3.

This research project will be an addition to local history literature. Along with the general area histories, biographies, and architectural surveys, this dissertation will, from a different perspective, give a more complete overall picture of Memphis history. It can provide both a stimulus and a model for other historic houses in Victorian Village, elsewhere in Memphis, and in the surrounding region in places like Bolivar, Tennessee, and Holly Springs, Mississippi, both rich as nineteenth century survivors.

Continued reassessment of the Victorian period in the United States is important on both national and local levels since the foundations of the present century were laid at that time and therefore in so doing better understand the present era. "To look into the Victorian mind is to see some primary sources of the modern mind."⁵⁰

VICTORIANISM is a timely topic for research. There is much national interest in the Victorian Era. This is almost phenomenal in that for most of the twentieth century, and still by many even today, this period has been and is viewed with disdain. The underlying values and ethos of the era, in large measure retained into this century, have been under repeated attack, sometimes violently.⁵¹ "Victorian" as a descriptive adjective has more often than not been

⁵⁰Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), xiv.

⁵¹Stanley Coben, "The Assault on Victorianism in the Twentieth Century," American Victorianism, ed. Daniel Walker Howe (Scranton: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 160-161.

used in a derogatory manner, implying to many pompousness, stuffiness, prudishness, hypocrisy and bigotry.⁵²

The material culture of the era has likewise been subject to constant condemnation and denigration. As a part of the research for this particular dissertation, it has been both informative and instructive to document the shifting attitudes towards Victorian visual taste in the United States. In order to do this the following written sources have been utilized: architectural surveys, furniture style books, and antique collecting guides, and one representative influential periodical, The Magazine Antiques, devoted since 1922 to American material culture.

In this literature a host of reasons have been suggested through the years in an attempt to explain why Victorian material culture has been subject to such derision. Some authors have expressed the opinion that the twentieth century's aversion to Victorianism is the typical rebellion of a generation against the culture of a previous one.⁵³ Russell Lynes, in The Tastemakers, suggests an alternative explanation, that being the influence of fast changing trends and fashions among ever increasing consumer-oriented Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵⁴ A footnote in The Colonial Revival in America suggests yet another reason:

⁵²John Maass, The Gingerbread Age: A View of America (New York: Rinehart, 1957), 8.

⁵³Fiske Kimball, "Victorian Art and Victorian Taste," The Magazine Antiques 23, No. 3 (March 1933), 103-105.

⁵⁴Russell Lynes, The Tastemakers (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954).

Kenneth L. Ames has contended in courses on Victorian material culture given at the Winterthur Museum, elites of the 1920s rejected Victorian artifacts and architecture because they were products of a time that significantly altered and more important, threatened their society. Elites favored the colonial style because it suggested to them a more stable and refined era.⁵⁵

Regardless of the reasons, both Victorian architecture and decorative arts have been treated as the epitome of poor design and vulgar taste throughout most of the century as illustrated by the statement that "all too much of the artistic effort of that period is just plain bad taste"⁵⁶ or by the statement from a popular interior design textbook:

The Victorian period witnessed a rapid succession of confused revivals, all of which overlapped, were non-reflective of their times and were improperly and inconsistently applied.⁵⁷

Until recent years most architectural surveys written in this century ignored or condemned the "Victorian monstrosities" of the last century as the very nadir of architectural design. Countless books about "lost" New York, Washington, Chicago, and numberless other places attest, sadly, to the wholesale destruction of nineteenth century American architecture. It soon becomes apparent that even the rare researcher who argues for a fair evaluation of Victorian visual arts eventually apologizes for what is often

⁵⁵Alan Axelrod, ed., The Colonial Revival in America (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1985), 51.

⁵⁶"Editorial," The Magazine Antiques 54, No. 3 (September 1948), 161.

⁵⁷Sherrill Whiton, Interior Design and Decoration, 4th ed. (New York: J. P. Lippincott Co., 1974), 264.

called the era's lack of design standards. It is common to find sweeping generalizations (now being refuted) attributing this lack of standards to nouveau taste, aspiring classes, new industrial wealth, and the destructive forces of mechanization. The following is characteristic:

The Victorian's liking for profuse decoration was largely due to his uncertainty as to what constituted good taste. Lacking other standards, he considered it logical that the most elaborate object should be the best. And so he was pleased with furniture lavishly decorated with machine carving, fretwork, veneers, marbelizing, graining, gilding, inlay, and painted ornament and upholstery set off with fringes, tassels, and drapery festoons. It made little difference to him if construction were poor and throughout the period the quality of cabinet work declined.⁵⁸

Consequently, entire myths about Victorian material products based on information like that above came to be and remain commonplace in the American popular psyche together with generalizations about Victorian mass production, bad taste, and poor construction.

Memphis and Memphians have enthusiastically followed the national norm in both the physical destruction of the city's nineteenth century architecture and also in the verbal abuse given in almost all of the histories of the city written in this century, especially to late Victorian domestic architecture, the subject of this dissertation. For example, Gerald M. Capers, Jr. in his 1939 Biography of a River Town while verbalizing about late Victorian Memphis describes what he calls the nouveau riche and their homes:

⁵⁸Felice Davis, "The Victorians and Their Furniture," The Magazine Antiques 63, No. 6 (June 1943), 256-259.

They made money and they proceeded to spend it in gaudy fashion. "Those princely mansions!" exulted a contemporary in describing the monstrosities which the elite had recently built as residences.⁵⁹

William D. Miller in Memphis During the Progressive Era (1957) described these same houses "as garishly ornate structures."⁶⁰ And most recently Dr. John Harkins in Metropolis of the American Nile (1982) stated:

The mansions of the newly rich were not generally aesthetic gems spanning the architectural spectrum from Byzantine to Renaissance. Some of these buildings were showy expensive monstrosities, commodious though they might be Memphians of this Gilded Age . . . sought sometimes gauchly to acquire the cultural baggage of aristocracy.⁶¹

As time has lapsed, the Victorian Era has become "history," so that it is natural that re-evaluation would begin. As early as the 1930s one can find the beginnings of a more just, accurate, and impartial reassessment of Victorian material culture as exemplified by Lewis Mumford's statement in his now classic Brown Decades in which he laments that because of prejudice the "creative manifestations of the era are overlooked."⁶² In a 1948 article in The

⁵⁹Gerald M. Capers, Jr., Biography of a River Town (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1939), 228.

⁶⁰William D. Miller, Memphis During the Progressive Era (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1957), 228.

⁶¹John E. Harkins, Metropolis of the American Nile: Memphis and Shelby County (Memphis: West Tennessee Historical Society, 1982), p. 271.

⁶²Lewis Mumford, The Brown Decades: A Study of the Arts in America 1865-1895 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1931), 31.

Magazine Antiques, "Is a New 'Period' Emerging?" the author says, "We are ready to study it with unbiased curiosity instead of discussing it all with a sweeping gesture of disdain."⁶³ In the same issue devoted to Victorian the editor "kindly" asks for understanding:

We have spent a generation or two casting out the products of the Victorians . . . [but] as we approach the mid point of our own century, we finally arrive at the stage where we are trying to strip both the intolerance and the nostalgia from our attitudes toward the long Victorian era and look at it with real objectivity.⁶⁴

It took an Austrian, John Maass, who in the process of resettlement in the United States to find American Victorian architecture unique and visually exciting. When his book, The Gingerbread Age, was first published, it was mildly controversial; in it he daringly stated that:

This was no mean age--in every field of human endeavor . . . [it was] a time of frenetic activity and massive achievement. Is it reasonable to believe that during this entire period only incompetents and charlatans chose the ancient and honorable profession of architecture? It is true that the generation which constructed the trans-Atlantic railroad was unable to build a decent house? The truth is that an enormously creative and progressive era produced an enormously creative and progressive architecture.⁶⁵

He went on to say blasphemously:

Taste and prejudice, fads and fashions come and go.
There is superior and inferior work within each

⁶³Robert M. Vetter, "Is a New 'Period' Emerging? Ruminations of an Austrian Collector," The Magazine Antiques 54, No. 3 (September 1948), 162.

⁶⁴"Editorial," The Magazine Antiques, 161.

⁶⁵Maass, 8.

generation but there are of course no "good" and "bad" periods of design.⁶⁶

Reporters for Time magazine reviewed this new publication with absolute amazement at the novelty of anyone, "defending of all things American Victorian architecture."⁶⁷

During the 1970s and 1980s American Victorian has at last come fully into its own. The Victorian Society in America, using the English Victorian Society as a model, was founded in 1966 to promote an appreciation of the Victorian Era throughout the United States. Both nationwide and local chapters and its journal, Nineteenth Century, have aided in this goal. Major museum exhibitions and installations devoted to Victorian material culture have been widely influential. This is exemplified by the Brooklyn Museum's Victoriana exhibit (1960), the Metropolitan Museum of Art's noted centennial exhibition (1970), and, more recently, the opening of the nineteenth century period rooms and galleries in the expanded American wing. Museums throughout the country such as the Newark Museum; the High Museum, Atlanta; the Grand Rapids Public Museum; and the Brooklyn Museum have built collections of nineteenth century decorative arts; they also have staged special exhibitions focusing on aspects of Victorian material culture such as the Newark Museum's, "Century of Revivals: Nineteenth Century American Furniture" (1982); "Eastlake Influenced American Furniture 1870-1880" at the Hudson

⁶⁶Ibid., 14.

⁶⁷"That Wonderful Victorian," Time 70, No. 1 (1 July 1957), 45.

River Museum (1973); the Grand Rapids Public Museum's "Renaissance Revival Furniture" (1976); and the Metropolitan Museum of Art's "In Pursuit of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement" (1986).

The preservation movement in America has also come of age after a long struggle, stimulating widespread preservation of nineteenth century inner city commercial and residential areas. Spectacular examples of restored nineteenth century buildings, and often of their adaptive re-use, now abound throughout the country. Victorian historic house museums have been opened across the nation. A few examples include the Culbertson Mansion in New Albany, Indiana; the Ballantine House, as part of the Newark Museum; the Voigt House, Grand Rapids; the Gallier House in New Orleans; the Campbell House in St. Louis; and the Brennan House in Louisville, Kentucky. Many of these have become centers for local history and preservation groups.

Recently published surveys of American architecture, decorative arts, and interiors have begun to give as much space and attention to the Victorian Era as to the long-favored eighteenth century.⁶⁸ These Victorian essays are even presented without sly condescending editorial commentary!

Serious scholars have become interested in the nineteenth century, especially material culturalists, who are asking new

⁶⁸See for example: Robert Charles Bishop and Patricia Coblentz, American Decorative Arts (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1983); Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York: Alfred L. Knopf, 1984); and Carole Rifkind, A Field Guide to American Architecture (New York: New American Library, 1980).

questions and gaining new insights. Once-damned "mechanization" and "industrialization," particularly, are undergoing close scrutiny and radical reassessment.

Educational institutions with material culture studies and decorative arts oriented programs, especially the University of Delaware and the Winterthur Museum's joint program in American Culture, have led the way in the innovative re-thinking of this once ignored visual period. The latter institution's scholarly publications, such as the Winterthur Portfolio: A Journal of American Material Culture, have assisted in generating new ideas.

Dr. Kenneth Ames, director of advanced studies for the Winterthur Program, has consistently provided leadership in the positive re-assessment of the era, mainly through his numerous articles. He served as editor of Victorian Furniture, a collection of essays which exemplify new approaches and interpretation. In the introductory essay Ames stated:

There is no doubt about it; Victorian furniture has become a reasonably respectable subject. It wasn't too many years ago that even those who were positively disposed toward the material felt obliged to make a few disparaging comments about it, if only to demonstrate that they were still in possession of their senses and their taste. Some people apparently still feel a need to do this but many others find no reason to be apologetic or defensive about their interest in Victorian furniture.⁶⁹

The Winterthur Museum program, under Dr. Ames's direction, has also sponsored pioneering seminars devoted to unexplored areas of

⁶⁹Kenneth L. Ames, "Furniture Studies: Moving into the Mainstream," Victorian Furniture, ed. Kenneth L. Ames (Philadelphia: Victorian Society in America, 1982), 3-4.

Victorian material culture such as the April 1984 conference "Ritual in Nineteenth Century America, An Interdisciplinary View" and two seminars in 1981 and 1982 which focused on "The Colonial Revival in America."

The Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum in Rochester, New York, devoted exclusively to nineteenth century life and material culture, is an example of a dynamic new museum with a creative approach to exhibition and publication. Material objects of all types, not just so called "fine art" or collector's "antique" pieces, are exhibited and utilized in order to interpret varying aspects of nineteenth century life. This new approach is exemplified by the museum's innovative exhibition-related publications, such as The Light of the Home: An Intimate View of the Lives of Women in Victorian America, and Savory Suppers and Fashionable Feasts: Dining in Victorian America.⁷⁰

The rediscovery of the Victorian Era has a counterpart on the popular level. Victoriana has become almost a cult among many in recent years. This is exemplified by the general interest in Victorian costume, jewelry, Christmas traditions and decorations, crafts, and antiques which have become very collectible. Victorian houses have come into their own once again as young married couples and others have rediscovered the warmth and charm of reawakening inner city neighborhoods. Handsomely illustrated popular books

⁷⁰Harvey Green, The Light of the Home: An Intimate View of the Lives of Women in Victorian America (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983); and Susan Williams, Savory Suppers and Fashionable Feasts: Dining in Victorian America (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985).

such as American Victorian: A Style and Source Book and periodicals such as Victorian House and the Old House Journal and its many publications, give technical and aesthetic advice to the Victorian home owner.⁷¹ To meet popular demand companies like Schumacher, Sherwin-Williams, and others have reproduced lines of Victorian wall papers, textiles, fixtures, carpets, and paints.

The editors of House Beautiful devoted the July 1986 issue to the new fashion for Victorian. In the introductory article entitled "New-Verve Victorians" the author stated:

While the Victorian era is long past, its heritage of style is being rediscovered: designers, collectors, and homeowners are creating interiors that recall the ambience that flourished during America's nineteenth century. Called Victorian Revival, the style is attracting a new and fervent following.⁷²

Attesting to this are two popular design books, Victorian Revival and Victorian Splendor: Recreating America's Nineteenth Century Interiors, both profusely illustrated with photographs of contemporary interiors decorated in the Victorian Revival taste.⁷³

Victorian style houses have also begun to reappear in America's suburbs! In the final chapter of Field Guide to American Houses describing the latest American suburban-architectural fads the

⁷¹Lawrence Grow and Dina von Zweck, American Victorian: A Style and Source Book (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1984).

⁷²"New Verve Victorians," House Beautiful 128, No. 7 (July 1986), 33.

⁷³Jim Kemp, Victorian Revival (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1985); and Allison K. Leopold, Victorian Splendour: Recreating America's Nineteenth Century Interiors (New York: Tabori and Chang, Inc., 1986).

authors illustrate several of these homes and identify them as NEO-VICTORIAN in style.⁷⁴

During the summer of 1985, the Victorian Society and the New York Historical Association joined forces to co-sponsor the 38th Annual Cooperstown Seminar on American Culture entitled, "Life with a Flourish: Victorian America 1830-1900." Roger Moss, director of the Philadelphia Athenaeum and a major leader in the re-discovery of the Victorian Era, stated in his opening address at the seminar, "A conference like this would have been unthinkable a decade ago."⁷⁵ He continued by telling a humorous incident which had occurred several years previously. In it, an elderly lady, after hearing in the opening remarks of a meeting that she was attending that the Victorian Era was to be the subject of the discussion, came forward and said, "It can't be true; it isn't a fit subject for study!"

In a 1933 Antique's article reviewing a pioneering exhibition of Victorian decorative arts at the Philadelphia Museum of Art the historian, Fiske Kimball, was truly prophetic. He stated, "When the future scans its achievements in long perspective the Victorian Period will receive its due."⁷⁶

⁷⁴McAlester and McAlester, 495.

⁷⁵Roger Moss, "Conference Keynote Address," Paper presented at the 38th Annual Seminar on American Culture, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York, 1 July 1985.

⁷⁶Kimball, 103.

CHAPTER II

THE VICTORIAN ERA

Every epoch, everywhere, creates the objects it needs in its own spirit, its individual character unmistakably stamped on them.¹

The Name

In order to understand fully and interpret the Mallory-Neely House interiors and contents, it is first important to examine briefly the era in which they were created. Both methods and nomenclature for classification and sub-division of the nineteenth century for general and art historical study purposes have been much discussed and debated in print throughout the present century. Traditionally the term "Victorian," following the British practice of calling much of the century after their venerated Queen (who reigned from 1837 to 1901), has been used in the United States. Victoria's name has apparently provided a popular and convenient title to identify this long epoch in Anglo-American history.²

¹Edgar Kaufman, An Exhibition for Modern Living (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Art, 1940), 40, quoted in E. McClung Fleming, "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model," Material-Culture Studies in America (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), 171.

²Bernard D. Grebanier, Samuel Middlebrooks, Stith Thompson, and William Watt, English Literature and Its Background II (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960), 418.

The reason for this includes such elements as England's power and prestige a hundred years ago, the redoubtable personality of Victoria herself, and perhaps when we borrowed the word a streak of colonial deference still existed in the American psyche. But the most compelling reason of all lies, I think in the fact that the British monarchy provided the entourage of a Royal Court which set values and codified social institutions. Democracy offered no such guides.³

In the United States "Victorian" is sometimes used to describe the entire time span from the late 1830s to 1914, the beginning of World War I, unlike the British practice where EDWARDIAN is used to describe the years 1901 to 1914. American scholars do sometimes set the later years of the nineteenth and the first fourteen years of the twentieth century apart by labeling them TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY, or LATE VICTORIAN.

Some British and American scholars have suggested and used the following sub-divisions of the period:

Early Victorianlate 1830s-1850s

Mid or High Victorianlate 1850s-1860s

Late Victorian.1870s-1914

"Victorian" is not by any means the only name used. The researcher while gathering data for this dissertation has collected many other titles used internationally to describe both the entire Victorian Era and parts or sub-divisions of the period, including:

The Era of Modernization
The Age of Tassels
The Red Plush Era
The Era of Conspicuous Consumption

³Gerald Carson, "The Victorians Revisited," Mankind 2, No. 3 (1969), 53.

The Pompous Era
 The Age of Excess
 The Gilded Era
 The Eclectic Era
 The Age of Historicism
 The Age of Transition
 The Brown Decades
 The Mauve Decades
 The Age of Pomp

Some American decorative art and fine art historians have begun to use the term "American Renaissance" to describe the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Others are beginning to use "Post-Victorian" to label the early decades of the twentieth century.

In addition to its blanket usage as title of the overall historic period, the word "Victorian" has also come to have many levels of meaning; it has been used to label varying aspects of the era's social and cultural history.

"Victorian" is usually applied to . . . the sensibilities and moral outlook of a vigorous, new middle class, and the artistic and decorative motifs which it responded to . . . and most particularly "Victorian" was a synonym for a strict code of sexual behavior.⁴

Characteristics

The purpose here is to attempt to give a general summary of some of the most important characteristics of the Victorian Age gleaned from various essays, articles, and books. Too often in the past, sweeping generalities have been used to summarize this age, as if it could be described as a neat, easily understood package.

⁴Ibid.

Modern scholarship has shown that this approach is incorrect and that it is not at all easy to give any kind of accurate, all-encompassing, packaged summary of the period. The Victorian Era is now seen as an age of rapid change and flux, a complex, multi-dimensional and faceted epoch, characterized by "endless contradictions, multiplicity, and diversity."⁵ Despite outwardly static conservative modes of thought and action, which have most often been subject to the spotlight of attention and criticism, it was actually a dynamic age with a free-wheeling society.⁶ "The whole Victorian Age . . . was not, as we sometimes like to think, an age of placidity; it was one of enthusiastic gesture."⁷

The Victorian Era was an age of transition between the world of medieval and modern thought; between the perspectives of the old agrarian world and our present modern technological world.⁸

By definition an age of transition in which change is revolutionary has a dual aspect--destruction and reconstruction . . . as the old order of doctrines and institutions is being attacked, modified or discarded, at one point and then another, a new order is being proposed or inaugurated.⁹

⁵Daniel Walker Howe, "Victorian Culture in America," American Victorianism, ed. Daniel Walker Howe (Scranton: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 14.

⁶Richard D. Brown, "Modernization A Victorian Climax," American Victorianism, ed. Daniel Walker Howe (Scranton: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 31.

⁷Robert Furneaux Jordan, Victorian Architecture (Hammondsmith, England: Penguin Books, 1966), 51.

⁸D. H. Meyer, "American Intellectuals and The Victorian Crisis in Faith," American Victorianism, ed. Daniel Walker Howe (Scranton: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 61.

⁹Houghton, 3.

From a vantage point more than three-fourths of the way into the twentieth century, the Victorian Epoch is now seen by students of developing nations in our own time as an early example of an era of modernization. It has all the characteristics accompanying a society with a cultural system that is being transformed while undergoing modernization.¹⁰

Modernization is understood as a process in which people turn to new, more productive methods in virtually all economic spheres. Sustaining these changes in economic activity is a value structure emphasizing rationality, efficiency, cosmopolitanism, and an interest in a future that can be better than the present in material and social terms . . . politics, the family, the community, indeed society in general, become modern as components of this value structure are internalized by a population.¹¹

Following are highlighted some of the more important characteristics of the period, all obviously resulting from changes wrought by modernization.

Rapid Development of Science and Industrialization

The Victorian Age was a product of the Industrial Revolution. It witnessed a continual rush of revolutionary scientific and technological development, all of which had started as early as the seventeenth century and has continued to the present day; and, "like the proverbial falling dominoes, industrialization as a cooperative process affected all other factors of Victorian culture."¹²

¹⁰Howe, 7.

¹¹Brown, 29.

¹²Jordan, 25.

Siegfried Giedion in Mechanization Takes Command documents the rise and ultimate domination of technology.¹³ These developments (including standardization, increased productivity, new marketing, advertising, distribution, transportation, communications approaches and networks) ultimately revolutionized and "modernized" society, bringing change in all aspects of human life.

Speed, a result of the locomotion of industrialization, became increasingly characteristic of the Victorian Period in contrast to all previous eras of human history. At first seen as novel, the startling increase in the speed of living, in the tempo of life and work has since become an accepted part of modern life.

"Gospel of Progress" and Optimism

An important spin-off of the dynamic development of science and technology was "the gospel of progress" and Victorian optimism. The Victorians were by and large optimistic and enthusiastic about life. Their "zest for life" and ability to "live life with a flourish" has been increasingly realized. This atmosphere of supreme optimism was in large part based on their great faith in what they saw as a universal law, the "gospel of progress" in which the creed of progress was raised into a dogma. The Victorians viewed history in terms of linear progression as a "great struggle and march of mankind up from barbarism to civilization."¹⁴ They believed that

¹³Siegfried Giedion, Mechanization Takes Command (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1969).

¹⁴Houghton, 240.

their own era would witness the flowering of this evolution and that it would be achieved through material progress developed through the applied sciences; some have labeled this "the creed of scientific materialism."¹⁵

Rise and Dominance of the Middle Class

The era witnessed political and social control taken from an hereditary aristocracy and transferred to a newly formed commercial middle class. This group was primarily Evangelical Protestant in their outlook. A major middle class goal became an all-out drive for money which in turn brought power, which then helped them to achieve their highest aspirations of social advancement and respectability.

The rise of the middle class brought about the creation of a new, more democratic society in which advancement was based on work and business achievement resulting in increased competition. Yet one of the great contradictions of the period was that even though the Victorian middle class was a product of industrialization, business competition, and increased urbanization, it clung nostalgically to rural values and ideals.

Re-examination and Re-thinking of Traditional Values

The rapid development of science during the nineteenth century created cataclysmic changes in thought. The earlier Romantic foundations of Victorian thought had already begun the rebellion

¹⁵Ibid., 40.

against traditional establishment values. As the century progressed, this rebellion resulted in the on-rush of scientific inquiry and an outpouring of highly controversial and revolutionary concepts like Darwinism. There was an explosion of knowledge which resulted in changing values, widespread among all classes. This was mainly due to the influence of a torrent of popular journalism available because of the technological advances in printing and distribution. Magazines, journals, books, newspapers--all helped to spread these new ideas. Parallel developments in education led both to increased democratization in thought and fragmentation of knowledge through specialization. The controversies caused by conservative reaction to these changes in traditional thought and values have led in the twentieth century to some of the major criticisms of the Victorians.

Pessimism, Anxiety, and Need for Stability

The rapid changes in science, technology, thought, communication, and especially values created not only positive optimism but a negative reaction as well. To many these negative reactions have come to symbolize what "Victorian" implies, sometimes called "a crisis in faith"; there was a clash of science and long-cherished traditional values.¹⁶

There was widespread stress, anxiety, and pessimism caused by crisis and other factors. Industrialization and its by-products, the commercial spirit and economic materialism, created a faster

¹⁶Meyer, 70.

pace of life with increased competition and pressure for monetary achievement. The upwardly mobile struggle for social success and position created further stress and strain. Vastly increased urbanization resulted in greater population density with resultant feelings of alienation and isolation. Hordes of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants, slums, squalor, cruelty, and death raised ever more the fear of social instability.¹⁷

There was a strong desire on the part of the newly risen commercial middle class for stability and social order. In its desire for respectability an evolving mass society began to demand conformity and set standards of conduct. "This preoccupation with order probably reflected a need for psychological stability amidst the rapid changes occurring during the century."¹⁸ Despite advances in thought and knowledge, there was surprisingly increased reliance on set moral laws and unquestionable truths. Dogmatism became a typical characteristic of the age with a strong reliance on external authority. Didacticism was an all-encompassing part of Victorian life.¹⁹

The Protestant Evangelical strain in Victorianism is of great importance in understanding the era. There was great stress placed

¹⁷Jordan, 32-33.

¹⁸Daniel Walker Howe, "American Victorianism as a Culture," American Quarterly 27, No. 5 (December 1979), 523.

¹⁹Houghton, 145.

on Christian morality, self control, self improvement, and exaltation of the work ethic. Work became a duty, a therapy, and a religion.

Rigid social conventions and ritual became characteristic aspects of Victorian middle class life. "In any society which is ambitious and at the same time unsure of itself because it is new, conventions assume enormous force."²⁰ Resulting moral pretension, evasion, sanctimonious prudery, pious sentiments, and rigid censorship are all today seen as less attractive aspects of Victorian culture.

Romantic escapism, nostalgia for the peace, calm, and values of the rural past, and sentimentalization were influential Victorian characteristics. The central focus of Victorian life was the family. "The Home" became the moral center of life; it became the symbol of security, an island in the surrounding world, and "a place of peace and shelter from the anxieties of modern life . . . a shelter for moral and spiritual values."²¹ Family ritual such as church attendance, family dining, evening gatherings, holidays, and special events such as weddings and funerals became major cohesive factors of Victorian life.

The role of women underwent change with the development of the "cult of domesticity." In the new industrial urban society the home ceased to be a center of production and became a center for socialization. The home became the woman's major sphere of influence.

²⁰Ibid., 395.

²¹Ibid., 343.

Motherhood was exalted, and woman became the guardian of moral, religious, and other values.²²

Triumph of Scientific Materialism

By the Late Victorian Era scientific technology had triumphed, resulting in an ever-increasing mass society and culture. Thorsten Veblen encapsulates this in his Theory of the Leisure Class with his now famous "conspicuous consumption" characterized by conspicuous expenditure on the consumption of unnecessary luxuries.²³ Ever increasing mass production, the assembly line, transportation, scientific management, manipulative advertising strategy, and mass communication--all laid the foundations of modern mass consumer society. Consumerism increasingly became and remains the major characteristic of modern technological society. "Consumption became a cultural ideal . . . a way of life."²⁴ Mass communication began the process of selling society on the pursuit of the good life, the leisure ethic, and fulfillment through consumption.²⁵

American Victorianism

Though Victorianism was an English-speaking trans-Atlantic sub-culture of Western culture, some have stressed that there was

²²Howe, "Victorian Culture in America," 26.

²³Thorsten Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class (New York: Macmillan Company, 1912), 72.

²⁴Richard Wightman Fox, and T. J. Jackson, eds., The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History 1880-1980 (Winterthur, Delaware: Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum, 1983), x.

²⁵Ibid.

a peculiar American Victorianism. American society was closely related to and influenced by British Victorian culture but the United States developed its own separate brand of Victorianism.

The nineteenth century was one of crucial transformation for the United States. All developing industrial nations during the 1800s shared an increased emphasis on nationalism and attempts at cultural self definition. The following factors seem to have been special "American" traits during this period:

1. dynamic geographic expansion
2. huge population explosion via immigration bringing a wide ethnic population and a great cultural diversity
3. dynamic economic growth
4. increasingly widespread industrialization and phenomenal urban growth in a nation previously almost rural
5. American ingenuity applied to invention
6. racial problems including intersectional differences, one of the factors in the largest armed conflict on American soil
7. domination and control of the economic, social and political institutions (more so than in Britain) by the Protestant Evangelical middle class.²⁶

The Victorian Era was an age of fabulous contradiction, a society in dynamic transition, the beginning of our own modern culture, all of which are reflected in the great body of material culture

²⁶Howe, "American Victorianism as a Culture," 507.

artifacts extant from this period. The Mallory-Neely House and its contents survive as Victorian material artifacts or manufactures replete with information that exemplify the characteristics and values of the era.

CHAPTER III

MEMPHIS CITY HISTORY

Many terms have been used in recent years to describe those parts of our surroundings that have been conceived and created by people--the built, the manmade, the cultural, the architectural environment--but they all encompass the same part of our world. They signify townscape in contrast to landscape, people's impact in contrast to nature's. It is the buildings, the structures and places that we have made, that can remind us continually of the great human capacity to have an impact on our surroundings and to adapt them to our needs. Just as each successive occupant leaves an imprint on a house, people, responding to their personal needs and to society's demands, apply layer upon layer to the fabric of the built environment.¹

From the many general histories of Memphis,² it is important to provide a brief summary of the social and economic climate as a basis for understanding the main building periods of the Mallory-Neely House. Two peak economic periods are mirrored in the architecture and interiors of the mansion. First, the peak in the 1850s was a cotton-based plantation economy and, second, the "gilded era"

¹Tony P. Wrenn and Elizabeth D. Mulloy, America's Forgotten Architecture (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), 35.

²The reader who is interested in more in-depth information might consult the following Memphis histories: Gerald M. Capers, Jr., The Biography of a River Town (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1939); John E. Harkins, Metropolis of the American Nile: Memphis and Shelby County (Memphis: West Tennessee Historical Society, 1982); J. M. Keating, The History of the City of Memphis and Shelby County, Tennessee (Syracuse, New York: D. Mason and Company, 1888).

of the 1870s and 1880s was characterized by a diversification of the economic base.

The geographic location of Memphis has primarily made the city what it is today. Its strategic site on an eastern bluff of the central Mississippi River at the corner of three states, surrounded by a vast region of rich agricultural land and forests, insured the economic destiny of the city.³ (Figure 4) The authors of the 1897 Memphis and Shelby County Centennial Souvenir exalted the city as the commercial epicenter of a region of incalculable natural resources.

The Mississippi River Delta, the Uplands of Arkansas and South Missouri, the plateaus of West Tennessee, the prairies and rolling uplands of Mississippi, pour their wealth of varied products into the lap of Memphis.⁴

The history of Memphis is closely linked to the development of the plantation economy of its hinterland and to the related technical evolution of agriculture and transportation.⁵

All of Tennessee was originally the extended overmountain western region of the colony and later state of North Carolina. Eastern and Middle Tennessee were settled first; and though West Tennessee was legally Indian territory, grants were prematurely

³Russell Stephen Kirby, "Urban Growth and Economic Change in the Nineteenth Century South: The Hinterland of Memphis, Tennessee" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1981), 130.

⁴Memphis and Shelby County Centennial Souvenir (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Shelby County Centennial Committee, 1867), n.p., Special Collections, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

⁵Kirby, 249.

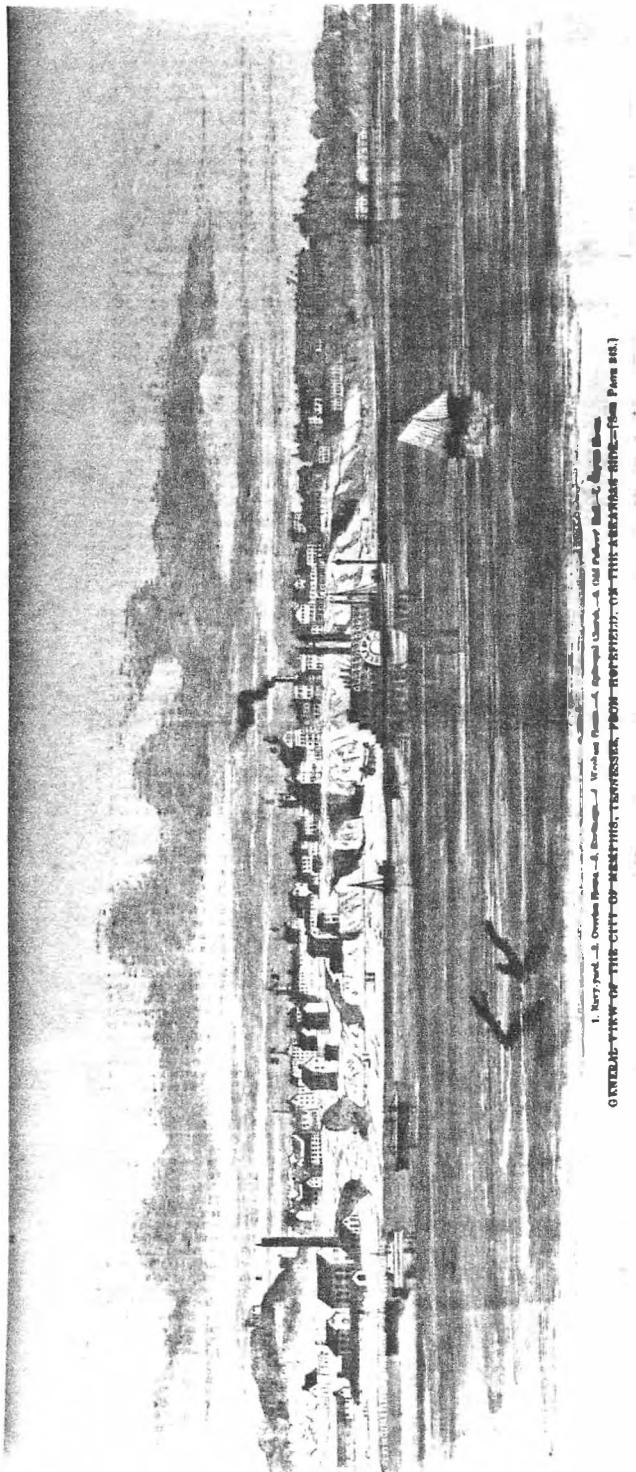


Figure 4. Riverfront view of Memphis as it appeared in the May 1862 issue of Harper's Weekly magazine.

issued by North Carolina authorities for large portions of these lands. In 1783 Nashville land speculator John Rice and North Carolinian James Ramsey each claimed 5,000 adjoining acres of choice land including that atop the bluff and fronting on the Mississippi River.⁶ This land would become the site of Memphis.

All the territory now comprising West Tennessee was in 1818 purchased for the Federal government from the Chickasaw Indians by Andrew Jackson and Kentucky's first governor, Isaac Shelby.⁷ This last territorial portion of the young state of Tennessee was then opened for settlement. Between 1820 and 1840 there was an enormous flow of settlers; according to the 1830 census Tennessee was the nation's ninth most populous state.⁸ The State officials recognized Shelby by naming in his honor the first of the West Tennessee counties. This county contained the future location of Memphis.⁹ Bolivar, Jackson, and other West Tennessee towns were founded in the 1820s. A group of politically powerful entrepreneurial land speculators, including John Overton, James Winchester, and Andrew Jackson, purchased much of the original Rice and Ramsey land grants. They did so with the intention of founding a strategically important

⁶Samuel Cole Williams, The Beginnings of West Tennessee 1541-1841 (Johnson City, Tennessee: Watauga Press, 1930), 45.

⁷Ibid., 86.

⁸Ibid., 122-123.

⁹Ibid., 92.

commercial city ideally situated 420 miles below St. Louis, and 800 miles above New Orleans.¹⁰

The project wasn't a chance occurrence nor the inspiration of a moment--each of these men had experience in town promotion and as speculators in land. . . . Thus, each of these three men brought to the enterprise qualities essential to successful town promotion--long experience in land dealings, both as public officials and as speculators, and the skillful manipulation of public policy to serve their business interests.¹¹

In 1819, the proprietors had the site of Memphis surveyed and laid out.¹² (Figure 5) Probably because of the anticipated importance of the river to the city, the name "Memphis" was chosen by General Winchester "from the corrupted Greek name meaning 'good abode,' of the city on the Nile in Egypt."¹³ In 1826 the city received its charter from the State of Tennessee.¹⁴

¹⁰J. H. Beale, Picturesque Sketches of American Progress Comprising Official Descriptions of Great American Cities, (New York: Empire Co-operative Association, 1889), 135, Special Collections, Newberry Library, Chicago.

¹¹Arthur H. Shaffer and Lyle W. Dorsett, "Town Promotion in the Antebellum South: The Founding of Memphis, Tennessee," Intellect 104, No. 2371 (January 1976), 336.

¹²The founding proprietors of Memphis had the city proper laid out in a rectangular grid plan atop the bluffs adjacent to the Mississippi River with streets running due north-south, and east-west. The Wolf River flowing westward into the Mississippi River formed the rectangle's northern boundary; Union Avenue, the southern boundary. Beyond this was the rival town of South Memphis, which in 1850 merged to become part of Memphis. The western boundary was formed by the Mississippi River and the eastern one by the Bayou Gayoso which flowed due north and westward into the Wolf River.

¹³Magness, 9.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 14.



Figure 5. An 1819 map of Memphis. The plan shows "city lots" laid out in a grid pattern, and surrounded by irregularly shaped "country lots." The Mallory-Neely House would later be constructed on country lot 501. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

From the time of its foundation into the early twentieth century, Memphis has had a checkered history, a series of ups and downs reflecting economic boom and growth contrasted with periods of economic depression, failure, war, and disease. Mark Twain's sometimes partner, Charles Dudley Warner, when visiting the city felt that the fact that Memphis "has survived so many vicissitudes and calamities and entered upon an extraordinary career of prosperity is sufficient evidence of the territorial necessity of a large city just at this point on the river."¹⁵

After an initial period of struggle as to which local Mississippi River landing would triumph, Memphis emerged as the dominant city of the Mid-Southern region becoming a major agricultural commodities trade center. The city also developed into an important distribution hub for its large surrounding agrarian hinterland, especially as a supplier of dry goods and groceries to the regional family farms and plantations.¹⁶ (Figure 6)

"As a child of the Mississippi," Memphis with its early commerce was originally almost entirely dependent on river trade.¹⁷

The total economic contribution made to Memphis in its early history by the Mississippi River was enormous. No estimates have been made which have quantified its

¹⁵Charles Dudley Warner, Studies in the South and West, etc. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1889), 294, Special Collections, Newberry Library, Chicago.

¹⁶Robert H. Sigafos, Cotton Row to Beale Street: A Business History of Memphis (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1979), 31.

¹⁷Warner, 293.



A



B

Figure 6. Characteristic scenes of commercial activity on the Memphis riverfront during the nineteenth century. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

A. The steamboat landing.

B. Cotton and other agricultural commodities.

direct influence on the city's growth and wealth prior to 1880. What is known, however, is the strong dependence Memphis had on the river for its commercial ties to the outside world.¹⁸

From 1835 the city joined with the rest of the nation in "the age of railroads," becoming an important railroad hub with linkages eventually to all parts of the United States.¹⁹

American historians have sometimes labeled the 1850s "The Era of Southern Nationalism," for during this time the Southern economy, based on cotton, reached an unprecedented peak which gave the South economic and political clout. This era of rampant prosperity is reflected today in the surviving palatial homes found throughout the South, such as those in Natchez and along the Mississippi.

Memphis, as a major Southern cotton market, also prospered and boomed at this time.²⁰ Its wealth was precariously based on the one staple crop, cotton, "where fortunes were quickly made and lost."²¹ Cotton grown around and marketed through Memphis was internationally recognized for its unusually high quality and particularly its long staple which was much in demand by spinners. But of greater importance economically than the quality of the

¹⁸Robert H. Sigafos, "Memphis' Economic Emergence," First Annual Victorian Village Festival Commemorative Program (Memphis: Victorian Village Incorporated, 8 September 1983), n.p.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Harkins, 78.

²¹Warner, 294.

product was the technological improvement in transportation, including both steamboat and railroad, which aided in the distribution of the crop.²²

The population of Memphis grew from 8,841 in 1850 to 3,364 in 1860; this made the city the third great metropolis of the Mississippi after New Orleans and St. Louis.²³ (Figure 7) During this time Memphis witnessed a surge in total business growth, the establishment of cultural institutions, and a phenomenal building boom.

Memphis by 1860 had six newspapers, nine new banks, 21 churches, three female seminaries or colleges, two medical schools, two orphanages, a city hospital, public horsecar transit, and gas light in some streets and in some homes. The city could boast of its 1,000 seat new Memphis Theatre . . .; [in addition] there were also the Hightower and Odd Fellows Hall for lectures, concerts, and minstrel shows, along with a philharmonic society and jockey club.²⁴

The exterior and interior parts of the Mallory-Neely House constructed circa 1852 stand as an important material culture record of this first economically prosperous era in Memphis history.

This initial period of economic flourish in Memphis was abruptly brought to a close by the Civil War and Reconstruction. Though the city was not damaged physically by the war, it suffered economic disruption and stagnation. Political, economic, and social problems were the result of railroad damage, destruction of the

²²Ornelas-Struve, Coulter, and Hassell, I, 78.

²³Harkins, 54.

²⁴Ornelas-Struve, Coulter, and Hassell, II, 23.

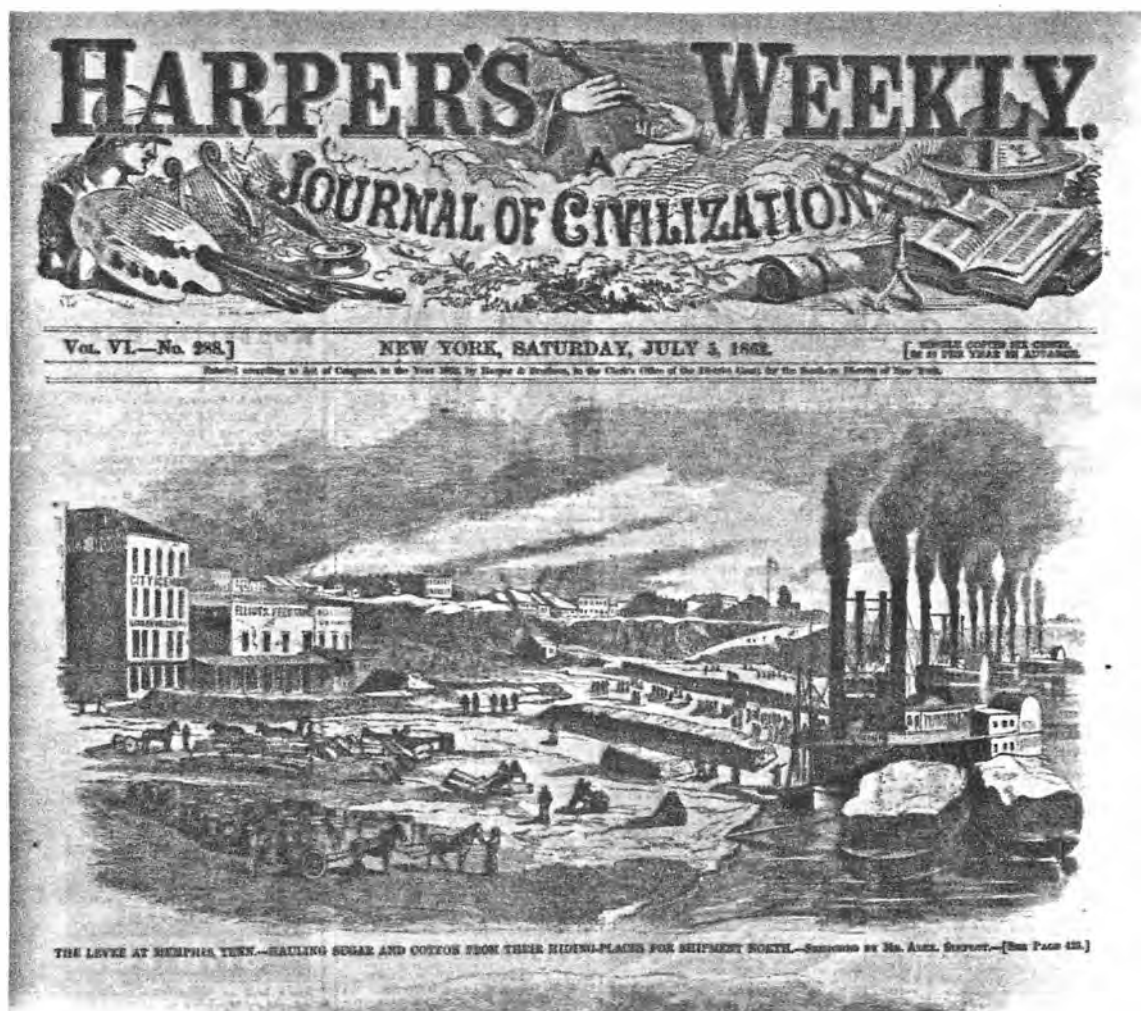


Figure 7. Riverfront, Memphis, in 1862 as shown on the cover of Harper's Weekly.

slavery system and consequently of the plantation economy, political corruption and mismanagement, and other factors.²⁵

The decades following the Civil War were to bring far worse social, political, and racial problems, including graft and inefficiency in state and local reconstruction government, race rioting, and economic depression causing bank and business failures. But the nadir of the city's history, its devastation and depopulation, resulted from a series of yellow fever epidemics. These were made worse by a lax and unconcerned city government, poor water supply and sanitation, and by the polluted Bayou Gayoso which bordered the town.

The cloud of impending pestilence always hung over it, the yellow fever was always a possibility, and a devastating epidemic of it must inevitably be reckoned with every few years. It seems to be a law of social life that an epidemic, or the probability of it, engenders a recklessness of life and a low condition of morals and public order. Memphis existed, so to speak, on an edge of a volcano, and it can not be denied that it had a reputation for violence and disorder while little or nothing was done to make the city clean and habitable, or to beautify it. Law was weak in its mobile, excitable population, and differences of opinion were settled by the revolver.²⁶

The worst epidemic occurred in 1878 when 5,150 citizens died of yellow fever.²⁷ "The city suffered what many medical historians

²⁵Magness, 12.

²⁶Warner, 294.

²⁷Memphis and Shelby County Centennial Souvenir, n.p.

consider to be, relatively, the most severe epidemic in the history of American cities."²⁸

Memphis, forced into near bankruptcy, surrendered its charter in an unorthodox maneuver concocted by its members in the state legislature in order to save the city. Memphis ceased to exist as an incorporated city and became a taxing district of the state from 1879 until 1893.²⁹

Reflective of the post-Civil-War emergence of the so-called "New South," another Memphis economic boom, described as the city's "gilded age," occurred during the late 1870s and the 1880s. This economic renaissance was for the most part based on the resurgence of the regional cotton industry. During these decades Memphis became the largest inland cotton market in the world, primarily due to the influence of the newly created Cotton Exchange, which brought the regional cotton industry under sound regulatory control.³⁰

In the fifteen years after the Civil War, a significant structural change in the marketing of cotton occurred. These changes . . . included rationalization of the market through the creation of cotton exchanges, standardized grades and bale weights, and the emergence of spots and futures markets. Other changes resulted from the expansion of the railnet routes, improvements in transportation services. A major difference between the geography of cotton movements in the ante-bellum and post-bellum periods involved the shift from

²⁸Peggy Robbins, "Alas Memphis! The Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1878," American History Illustrated 6, No. 9 (January 1982), 40.

²⁹Ornelas-Struve, Coulter, and Hassell, III, 88.

³⁰"Memphis as a Cotton Market," Art Supplement to the Memphis Edition of the Evening Scimitar, April 1899, 2(4).

multi-modal shipments over circuitous routes to direct overload shipments of cotton by rail from the South to manufacturers and trans-Atlantic shippers on the coast.³¹

But there was also an important diversification of the city's economic base similar to changes taking place throughout the "New South" at this time.

During the last third of the nineteenth century, Southerners engaged in an epic struggle to achieve economic independence and commercial empire. . . . Desiring to curb the outpouring of currency from their region, Southerners made repeated appeals for agricultural diversification and industrial expansion. These advocates of a new order intended to establish a self-sufficient economy and thereby overcome their colonial status.³²

In the Memphis area the development of the hardwood lumber industry gave cotton stiff competition as the town's central economic focus.³³ It drew on lumber in plentiful supply from the vast regional forests; this filled a national need since the forests of Illinois, Michigan, Indiana and other Northern states were becoming depleted.³⁴

During this time industrialization also increased, and the city eventually became an important industrial center. Captain

³¹Kirby, 167-168.

³²Patrick J. Hearnden, "Agricultural Businessmen in the New South," Louisiana Studies 14, No. 2 (1975), 145.

³³F. D. Bodman, "The Lumber Interests of Memphis," Memphis Shelby County Centennial Souvenir (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Shelby County Centennial Committee, 1867), n.p., Special Collections, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

³⁴Shields McIlwaine, Memphis Down in Dixie (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1948), 257.

William Glazier described Memphis industry during his visit in 1889: "Foundries and machine shops are among the principal manufacturies. There are also extensive wood-works, a large tobacco factory, furniture factories, and three of the largest oil-mills in the United States."³⁵ By the turn of the century Memphis' industries had grown to include beer, iron and steel fabrication, and paint. The city had the largest snuff market in the world, the largest shoe and boot market in the South, and one of the largest wholesale grocery markets in the United States.³⁶

Economic diversification broke the control of the city by the regional planter class and brought a new economic elite to power in Memphis, sometimes described as an "industrial or commercial" aristocracy. "This commercial hierarchy which brought vigorous and progressive leadership to Memphis ushered in a new era, a gilded age that flourished in the waning days of the century."³⁷ This new ruling plutocracy included families like the Hills, Fontaines, Mallorys and Neelys.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries governmental reform and city-wide improvement influenced by the Progressive Movement occurred on many levels. In 1893 the city was

³⁵William Glazier, Down the Great River (Philadelphia: Hubbard Brothers Publishers, 1889), 356, Special Collections, Newberry Library, Chicago.

³⁶Harkins, 98.

³⁷McIlwain, 257.

rechartered. It witnessed phenomenal population growth from around 33,000 in 1860 to 102,320 in 1900.³⁸ This growth was reflected in the physical expansion of the city. In 1898 twelve square miles of surrounding area were annexed, "quadrupling the city's size and changing its confrontation from a rough rectangle hugging the banks of the river to a nearly square shape . . . this constituted a major directional change for Memphis."³⁹ (Figure 8)

Much of the city's renaissance was based on improved sanitation and disease control. Central to this was: first, the construction of the Waring Sewerage System, an innovative flush system incorporating manhole covers, overflow systems, and periodic inspection; and second, a safe public water supply via the discovery and then drilling of artesian wells in 1887.⁴⁰ This health and sanitation modernization also included garbage service, house to house sanitation inspection, plumbing regulation, meat and milk inspection, birth registration, compulsory vaccination against smallpox, the cleanup of the Bayou Gayoso, and the destruction of breeding places for mosquitoes.⁴¹ This health reform movement culminated in the

³⁸Harkins, 103.

³⁹John E. Harkins, "Social, Geographical and Cultural Changes in Memphis in the Nineteenth Century," Victorian Village Arts and Pops Festival '84, Second Annual Commemorative Program (Memphis: Victorian Village Incorporated, 2 September 1984), n.p.

⁴⁰George E. Waring, "The Memphis Sewers After Four Years Use with Remarks on the Similar System at Keen, New Hampshire" [Pamphlet with reprint of article from, Representative American Architecture], 19 July 1884, Special Collections, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

⁴¹Capers, 211.

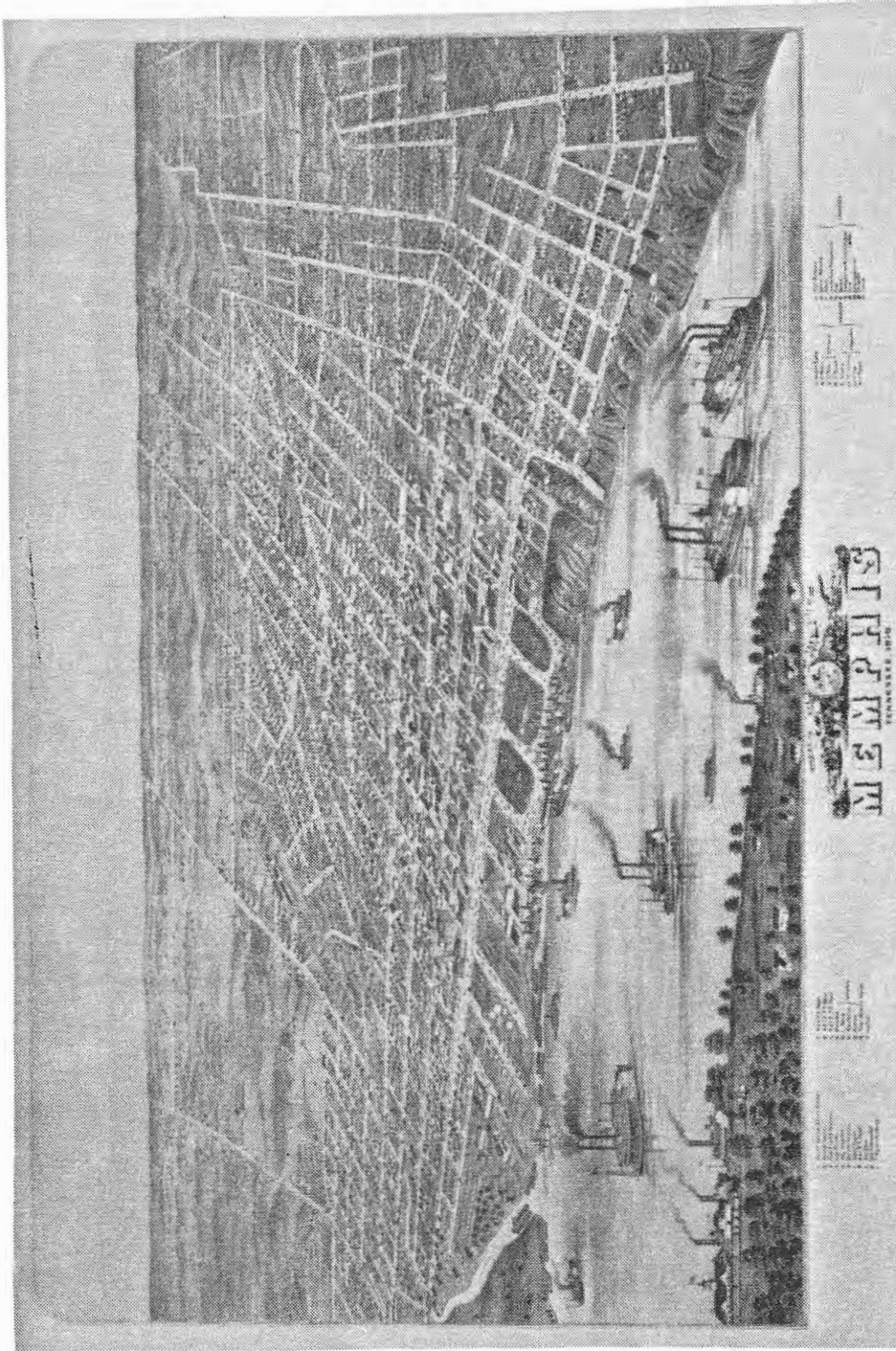


Figure 8. Memphis in 1870. Courtesy Library of Congress and Historic Urban Plans.

early twentieth century with the creation of a municipal parks system and a city beautification commission.

The second major economic peak in Memphis' nineteenth century history, like the first, triggered a building boom including the first Memphis skyscraper, the eleven-story Continental Bank Building, constructed in 1895; the Richardsonian Romanesque style Cossitt Library; the expanded Gayoso House Hotel; the Moorish Style Tennessee Club; the Lyceum Theatre and Grand Opera House; and several downtown churches like the Romanesque style First Presbyterian and the Gothic First Methodist Church.⁴² A host of mansions in a mixture of styles was constructed for the "merchant princes" of the city's ruling plutocracy. (Figure 9) Most of these have long since been demolished; but the Mallory-Neely House (particularly its post-1883 additions and remodeled interiors) along with several neighboring houses on Adams Street survive as material documents of Memphis' late Victorian gilded age.⁴³

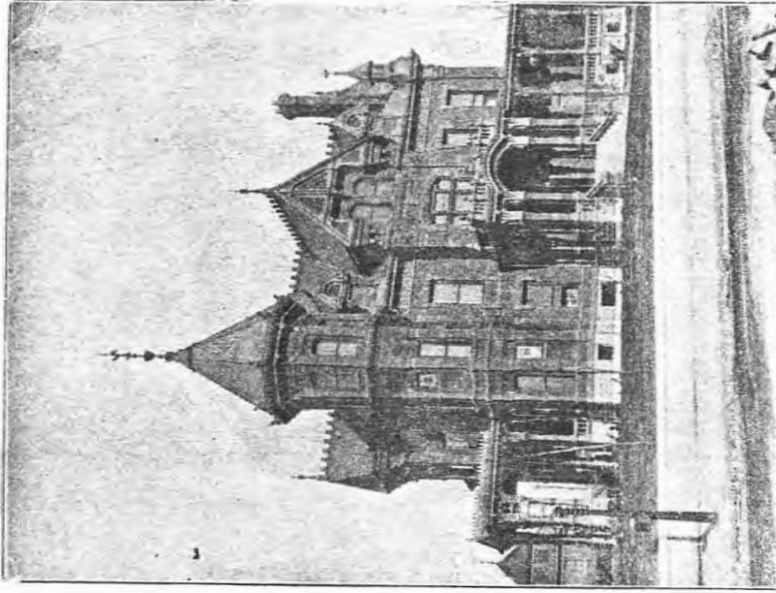
Despite a century of vicissitudes Memphis had survived to flourish into the twentieth century. "At the close of the century, and the Victorian Era, the city's population had passed the

⁴²Miller, 17.

⁴³Extant examples surviving on Adams Street from this era are the Fontaine House, built by Amos Woodruff in 1870; the Goyer-Lee House, enlarged by Charles Wesley Goyer in 1871; and the Mollie Lee Fontaine-Taylor house, built by Noland Fontaine, Sr. in 1886. These along with the Mallory-Neely House constitute the core of Memphis' Victorian Village.



A



RESIDENCE OF H. M. NEELY.

B

Figure 9. Gilded era Memphis mansions. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

- A. Home of business entrepreneur, Henry A. Montgomery (destroyed).
- B. Adams Street mansion of J. C. Neely's brother, Hugh (destroyed).

100,000 mark, and Memphis' growth to a major metropolis was assured."⁴⁴

⁴⁴Charles Crawford, "Memphis in the Victorian Era," First Annual Victorian Village Festival Commemorative Program (Memphis: Victorian Village Incorporated, 8 September 1983), n.p.

CHAPTER IV

MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: SEQUENCE OF OWNERSHIP

Our houses and furnishings express feelings and values that may not be explicit in other aspects of family life. . . . We stamp our personalities and values on our living spaces.¹

The Mallory-Neely house during its 120 year history as a private home was owned and occupied by only five families; each of these has left its mark in some way on either its architecture, interiors, or landscape. These families and the dates of their ownership are: the Isaac B. Kirtland family (c. 1852-1864), the Benjamin Babb family (1864-1883), the James Columbus Neely family (1883-1901), and the Daniel Grant and Barton Lee Mallory families (1901-1972).

All of the owners were prominent Memphis businessmen with sufficient fortune to maintain this large home. Since they were the ones who sponsored and paid for the building and furnishing of the Mallory-Neely House, and who lived in and used it as a home, it is the purpose here to explore the history of each of these families including their origins and business connections.

¹Peter S. O'Connell, "Putting the Historic House into the Course of History," Journal of Family History, 6, No. 1 (Spring 1981), 28.

Isaac Kirtland Family

Most of the Mallory-Neely House as it stands today was constructed as a home by Isaac B. Kirtland. Despite extensive research by many, Kirtland remains an elusive figure.

The American Kirtlands, Kirklands, or Kyrtilands are of Scottish descent; they came to this country at an early date.² Isaac Kirtland and his relatives, the Jared T. Kirtland family, at some point settled in the area of New York City. The city directories list them as having their business in New York City and their residences in the Oranges area of northern New Jersey near Newark, where the Kirtland family remained longtime, active residents.³

Jared T. Kirtland was a broker and a banker. From 1852 he is listed in the New York City directory at 43 Wall Street as J.T. Kirtland, broker, and later as banker and director of J.T. Kirtland & Co., Bankers. The elder Kirtland was joined at varying times by his sons John, Charles, and George, all listed as brokers and bankers. The Kirtland family moved to New York and entered its

²Victor Channing Sanborn, The Kirkland or Kirtland Family (Boston: Press of David Clapp and Son, 1894), 2, Special Collections, New York Historical Society, New York.

³New York City directories, 1852-1867, and Henry Whittemore, Founders and Builders of the Oranges Comprising a History of the Outlying District of Newark, 1660-1896 (n.pub., Newark, N.J., 1896), 152, 166, 229, and 237, Special Collections, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark.

frenetic financial scene at a time in pre-Civil War American history when there was unparalleled capitalistic development and during which "the speculative world of banking and especially stock brokering was big business."⁴

Exactly where and when Jared's relative, Isaac, was born remains unknown. He moved to the South in the 1840s when his name and that of a newly born daughter first appeared in Mississippi census records.⁵ Evidence of his move to Memphis appeared first in the 1846 records of the Second Presbyterian Church. He is listed in the 1849-50 Memphis city directory as I.B. Kirtland, broker, 47 Front Street, and then in the 1850 Shelby County Census records.⁶

Isaac Kirtland probably moved South to seek his own independent fortune and to represent his family's Wall Street brokerage and banking interest at a time when Southern pre-war prosperity was rising to its peak and the booming agricultural-based economy of the region played a major role in the "frenzied" world of Wall Street, much of which was based on speculative goods and credits, warehouse

⁴New York Directory for 1852 (New York, 1852), 343; and William Armstrong, Stock and Stock Jobbing with Sketches of the Brokers and Fancy-Stocks (New York: New York Publishing Co., 1848), 7, Special Collections, New York Historical Society, New York.

⁵Mrs. Clarence Smith, "Isaac B. Kirtland," n.d. [photocopy, unpublished genealogical data packet], DAR-SAR-CAR Chapter House, Inc. scrapbook, Memphis, n.p.

⁶Albert B. Curry, History of the Second Presbyterian Church of Memphis, Tennessee (Memphis: Second Presbyterian Church, 1937), 118; and Smith, "Isaac B. Kirtland," n.p.

certificates, and promissory notes, all backed by agricultural commodities such as cotton, pork, grain, sugar, and tobacco.⁷ Memphis at this time was flourishing economically because of its being both a center for agricultural exchange and a fast developing regional banking hub with linkages to the American financial center, New York City.⁸ The 1940 Centennial Edition of the Commercial Appeal referred to pre-Civil War Main Street in Memphis as "Dixie's Wall Street."⁹

With Kirtland in Memphis were his wife, Lucy; four daughters, Laura, Blandina, Anna, Henrietta; and four sons, Isaac, Charles, John, and Edward.¹⁰ In 1852 Kirtland purchased the land on Adams Street where a home for this large family was to be constructed.¹¹

⁷William Worthington Fowler, Twenty Years Inside Life in Wall Street or Recollections of the Personal Experiences of a Speculator (New York: Orange Judd & Co., 1880), 25-33, Special Collections, New York Historical Society, New York.

⁸Kirby, 222.

⁹"Pioneer Bankers," Commercial Appeal, Centennial Edition, 1 January 1940, 10(G).

¹⁰Smith, "Isaac B. Kirtland," n.p.

¹¹The land Kirtland purchased was originally part of county lot 501 located outside the grid layout of Memphis proper (see Figure 5, page 55). Marcus Winchester, first Mayor of the city and son of one of the original proprietors, testified in a court proceeding about the origins of the out-of-town lots: "When the division of 1829 was determined on, it was thought that a sufficient number of lots of small size suitable for town purposes had already been laid off; and that it was doubtful whether a greater number would ever be required. But it had been foreseen that lots of a larger size, carying from three to thirty acres, would be needed for private residences, and hence it was that the whole of the land adjoining the town which had been reserved heretofore, and which it was

The James Jones' deed to Isaac Kirtland mentions, "A fraction over three acres, more or less, on which stands a FRAME RESIDENCE, formerly occupied by Gardner Frierson, and now occupied by said Kirtland."¹² To date nothing has been discovered that gives a clue to the exact date for the building of the house on this property. The 1864 deed in which Kirtland sold the house to Benjamin Babb states, "A lot 163 by about 331 feet between Adams and Washington Street on which stands a LARGE BRICK HOUSE known as the late residence of the said Isaac B. Kirtland."¹³ Therefore, all that

intended to divide, was laid off in 1829 into larger lots called 'fractional lots' and 'country lots' . . . as they all lay without the limits of the town to distinguish them from the town lots" (Mayor and Aldermen of South Memphis Versus Deposition of M. B. Winchester, Wardlow Howard, Josephah Kent, Jr, 13 September 1851 [photocopy], p. 9, Special Collections, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library.) Winchester also explained that the irregularity in place of these outlying lots in contrast to the neat square lots within the city was caused by the following: "In making the divisions east, north, and south of the town, the exact line of the principal roads as they were then laid off and known was adopted . . ., and in laying off the 'country lots,' the courses and meanders of the same were adopted and hence their irregular shape" (Mayor and Aldermen of South Memphis, 8). Adams Street, one of a series of the east-west streets within the original grid later renamed chronologically after the first five Presidents of the United States, was eventually extended over the Bayou Gayoso and into the county. The western end of Adams terminated at the public landing stage of the Mississippi River causing the street to be a busy thoroughfare. The "country lots" were eventually subdivided along this extended route, and as Memphis passed through its pre-Civil War economic boom, Adams increasingly became a street of imposing churches and townhouses; beyond the Bayou Gayoso it was lined with the suburban homes and estates of many of the city's financial and social elite.

¹²"James Jones Deed to Isaac B. Kirtland," The State of Tennessee, Shelby County, Memphis, Book 10 (1 May 1852), p. 348.

¹³"Isaac B. Kirtland Deed to Benjamin Babb," The State of Tennessee, Shelby County, Memphis, Book 52 (12 December 1864), p. 211.

can presently be stated with certitude is that sometime between 1852 and 1864 Isaac Kirtland had a large home constructed on the eastern outskirts of Memphis.

This substantial mansion was very much symbolic of Kirtland's position in Memphis as an important financial and civic leader. From 1855, Kirtland was listed in the Memphis city directory as a banker. In the 1940 Centennial Edition of the Commercial Appeal, he is cited as a pioneer Memphis banker.¹⁴ From 1858 he is also listed in the city directories and in Memphis newspaper advertisements as president of the Jackson Insurance Company, which acted as the local representative of the Liverpool and London Fire and Life Insurance Company. During his entire Memphis residency Kirtland served as a ruling elder of the Second Presbyterian Church.¹⁵

The Civil War destroyed Isaac Kirtland's position as a major Memphis financial leader even though his business continued to function throughout the disruptive war years.¹⁶ He sold his home in 1864, the last year of the war, to Mr. Benjamin Babb and returned to his native New York. He is listed in the 1865-66 New York City directory as Isaac B. Kirtland, banker and head of the

¹⁴W. H. Rainey & Co.'s Memphis City Directory and General Business Advertiser (Memphis: E. R. Martlett, M.D., W. D. & W. H. Rainey, 1855), 137 and 171; and "Pioneer Bankers," Commercial Appeal, 10.

¹⁵Curry, 118.

¹⁶O. F. Vedder, History of the City of Memphis and Shelby County, Tennessee, Vol. II (Syracuse, N.Y.: D. Mason and Company, 1888), 247.

firm I. B. Kirtland, Hill, & Co., Bankers, which is cited in the 1866-67 New York city directory as Isaac B. Kirtland, Hill, Talmadge, & Co.¹⁷ Henry Talmadge and Ira M. Hill were partners in Kirtland's Memphis business interests. As a native Northerner with family in the Wall Street banking and brokerage business, Kirtland may have returned to New York in an attempt to salvage his business interests in the aftermath of the Civil War when the region's plantation system and therefore its agricultural and banking economy lay in ruins.

Benjamin Babb Family

The second owner of the Mallory-Neely House resided there with his family from 1864 to 1883. Benjamin Babb was born on 18 October 1818, in Isle of Wight, Virginia. His parents were John and Elizabeth Babb, both Quakers. Benjamin was one of eleven children, all reared on the family farm. In 1837, at twenty-one years of age, he migrated by stagecoach with his sister Elizabeth and her husband James Lenow to Fayette County, Tennessee. In 1844 he moved to Memphis.¹⁸

¹⁷Trow's New York City Directory (New York: Trow & Co., 1865), 166 and Trow's New York City Directory (New York: Trow & Co., 1866), 152.

¹⁸Mrs. Clarence Smith and Miss Jessica Taylor Webb, "Benjamin Babb," n.d. [photocopy, unpublished genealogical data packet], DAR-SAR-CAR Chapter House, Inc. scrapbook, Memphis, n.p.; and Benjamin Babb: From Virginia to Tennessee, eds. Mrs. Robert D. Tice and Miss Jessica Taylor Webb (Memphis: Daughters, Sons, and Children of the American Revolution, 1986), 4.

In 1859 Benjamin Babb married Mary M. Kennedy, widow of Martin Kennedy.¹⁹ Mrs. Kennedy was the niece of Mrs. Mary Magevney, wife of Eugene Magevney, one of the most important and influential early Memphis personages. Their home, the charming Magevney frame cottage, survives as a historic house museum many blocks west on Adams Street from the Mallory-Neely Mansion.

Eugene Magevney personally paid to bring a number of his wife's relatives from Ireland, including Mary, the future Mrs. Babb.²⁰ Mary Babb had two children from her first marriage, Joseph and Lizzie, both of whom were adopted and lovingly reared by Benjamin Babb. The Babbs had one child of their own, a daughter, Emma, who died in infancy.²¹

Babb was first mentioned in the 1855 Memphis city directory as a cotton clerk; by 1860 he was listed as a junior partner with Harris, Hunt & Co. For years following Babb is cited in both city directories and census records as either cotton factor, merchant, or broker. By 1881 he had established Benjamin Babb and Co., Cotton Brokers, with his wife's brother Dennis Smith, also from Ireland, as his junior partner.²² They advertised in the various Memphis newspapers of the time as cotton brokers and commission merchants. Babb was an active director of the Union Planters Bank

¹⁹Vedder, 27.

²⁰Benjamin Babb: From Virginia to Tennessee, 5.

²¹"Necrological," Memphis Daily Appeal, 10 January 1859, 2.

²²Smith and Webb, "Benjamin Babb," n.p.

until his death and was also a member of the influential Memphis Cotton Exchange.²³ He maintained a lifelong interest in community affairs, especially those connected with Catholic causes. Benjamin Babb was a devoted member of St. Peter's Catholic Church, a surviving Gothic revival building built between 1852-1854 and located downtown on the corner of Third and Adams Streets, several miles from his former home.²⁴ Babb was also a founding trustee of the Catholic Cemetery Corporation that established Memphis' historic Calvary Cemetery.²⁵

On 12 December 1864, Babb purchased the Adams Street home of Isaac Kirtland for \$40,000.²⁶ Excepting a single material object, a glass globe with the name BABB etched into it, there is virtually nothing to date known of Babb's tenure in the house and whether there were any improvements to the house and grounds. (Figure 10) Some oral tradition survives that Benjamin Babb completed Kirtland's house, enriching the interiors and adding either the second or third story. Most articles about and early guides to the house repeat much of this as fact, as does the application to the U.S. Department of Interior's National Park Service for placement of the

²³"Benjamin Babb, Old and Highly Esteemed Citizen Has Gone the Way of All Flesh," Daily Avalanche, 15 December 1889, 2.

²⁴Benjamin Priddy, Jr., "Old Churches of Memphis," West Tennessee Historical Society Papers 29 (October 1975), 136-138.

²⁵Goodspeeds' History of Hamilton, Knox, and Shelby County (Nashville: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1887; reprint, Nashville: Charles and Randy Elder, Booksellers, 1974), 923.

²⁶"Isaac Kirtland Deed to Benjamin Babb," 211.



A



B

Figure 10. Babb related artifacts.

- A. Photograph of Benjamin Babb. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.
- B. Etched glass globe in the Mallory-Neely House collection.

Mallory-Neely House on the National Register of Historic Places. To date these stories are absolutely unsubstantiated in any documented form; in fact, the years of Babb ownership were by and large a period of depressed economy for Memphis and the region, as well as a time of national depression in 1873 and the years following. In Memphis it was, for the most part, a time span of reconstruction and devastating epidemic disease wedged between the two major economic boom periods when the Kirtland's originally built the house and later when the Neely's enlarged and remodeled it. An almost stagnant lack of improvement might possibly reflect and speak very loudly of the region's economic condition during much of this chaotic time. The former Kirtland home could also have been more than large enough for Babb's small family of four. If one studies carefully all that survives in print about Benjamin Babb, he seems to have been noted for his frugality and almost reclusively simple lifestyle which possibly reflected his Quaker upbringing. He certainly is not portrayed as one interested in either current fashion or in competitive outward show. Apparently because of his economic conservatism, he died a very wealthy man according to city papers report.²⁷ He may well have been content with Kirtland's villa as it was when he purchased it.

Babb died at age seventy-one on 15 December 1889 and was interred in Calvary Cemetery. A year previously O. F. Vedder in

²⁷Benjamin Babb, "Old and Highly Respected Citizen Has Gone the Way of All Flesh," 2.

The History of Memphis and Shelby County had complimented Babb in the biographical section when he stated, "Kindness and benevolence characterize him in his social relations. He is highly esteemed by all who know him."²⁸ Numerous articles in the Memphis papers that appeared after his death extolled his virtues but none more eloquently than this:

By his death Memphis loses a citizen of highest character. Quiet, unassuming and reluctant to come before the public view, Mr. Babb was nevertheless a potentiality in this community. His probity was proverbial. He was easily interested in all good works. His word was his bond. He was deeply interested in the welfare of Memphis, and in the long period of his residence has given many proofs of his devotion in this regard. His business methods were exemplary, his integrity never questioned, his sincerity never disputed. He brought into his business life virtues that won for him the immediate and abiding respect of all those with whom he came into contact. In every walk of life he bore himself honorably, and he died with praise upon the lips of his fellow men.²⁹

Descendants of Benjamin Babb's sister still reside in Memphis and have been active in assisting the DAR-SAR-CAR Chapter House, Inc., with the Mallory-Neely House since it became a museum.

James Columbus Neely Family

The third family to occupy the house was James Columbus Neely. The early ancestry of the Neely family is deeply intertwined with national and southern regional history. During the later years

²⁸Vedder, 27.

²⁹"Benjamin Babb Dead, A Respected Citizen and Prominent Merchant Gone," Memphis Appeal, 15 December 1889, 1.

of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, J. C. Neely's young daughters, Pearl and Daisy, became interested for a variety of reasons, in family genealogy, the major one being procurement of the required data for their acceptance into the Daughters of the American Revolution. Their extensive national correspondence and research materials survive in the Neely and the Mallory Family Papers in the private possession of Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr. James Columbus Neely's younger brother, Hugh, in a letter written to his niece Pearl christened her "the family historian." He jokingly chided her by saying, "you need not take the pains to trace the family back in time before it was in the course of development only a vertebrate, or even an anthropoid; great grandfather and mother will suffice."³⁰

Pearl and Daisy's research uncovered a remarkably rich American ancestry from the families of both their parents which includes direct descent from at least five soldiers of the Revolutionary War, among them John McDowell, Robert Irwin, William Wilson, John Nickolson, and Jim Neely, many of whom provided leadership in the early state governments of both North and South Carolina.³¹ One descendant, John Nickolson, was probably a son of the last royal governor of South Carolina.³² Another direct ancestor, Jane Parks

³⁰Hugh McDowell Neely to Pearl Neely Grant, 19 February 1898, Neely Family Papers, Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., Memphis.

³¹Neely Family Papers [unpublished Neely genealogical data sheets], n.d., n.p., Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., Memphis.

³²*Ibid.*

McDowell, is regarded as America's female Paul Revere because "she rode miles from Sugar Creek, North Carolina to warn American soldiers of the British evacuation of Charlotte, North Carolina."³³ In the genealogical search the most important discovery was that the family descended from three or more of the signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence including, through their mother's family, the McDowells, Abraham Alexander of Charlotte, North Carolina, president of the Mecklenburg Convention. This historic back country assembly issued on 20 May 1775 what is regarded as America's first declaration of independence when the convention members in their declaration of freedom "withdrew from all duty and allegiance to the old country."³⁴ Much of Tennessee's early history and settlement has to do with pioneering Scotch-Irish Presbyterians from the North and South Carolina backcountry, many connected with the Mecklenburg Declaration. These include families like the Alexanders, Jacksons, Polks, Ramseys, and Neelys.

James Columbus Neely was born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, on 19 April 1826.³⁵ (Figure 11) His father Moses Neely,

³³"Tribute Paid to Honor of Mecklenburg Woman" [clipping from an unspecified Charlotte, North Carolina newspaper], n.d., n.p., Neely Family Papers, Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., Memphis.

³⁴"Monument to the Signers, Unveiling of the Monument to the Signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence at Charlotte, North Carolina, 20 May 1898" (Charlotte: Public Memorial Association, June 1898), 19, Neely Family Papers, Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., Memphis.

³⁵Vedder, 162.



J. C. Neely

Figure 11. James Columbus Neely. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

and mother, Alice Jane McDowell, migrated by wagon to West Tennessee in 1833, originally settling in Madison County near Jackson; however, they moved in 1837 to the Lincolntown Creek area near Germantown outside of Memphis.³⁶ Here they raised their seven daughters, Mary, Sarah Roxana, Feletia, Hannah, Eliza Jane, Francis, Margaret, and two sons, James and Hugh McDowell.³⁷ As an industrious planter, Moses Neely eventually accumulated large land holdings in the area which later served as the base capital for his son's business ventures and eventual wealth.

On 25 February 1860, J. C. Neely married Mary Francis Blocker, daughter of Milton and Francis Wilson Blocker of Olive Branch, Mississippi, both of whom were from the Edgefield, South Carolina area.³⁸ (Figure 12) The Blockers, or Bluchers, were of Prussian descent who were granted land by the King of England in North Carolina. Milton's father was General Jesse Blocker, who served for many years as a South Carolina state representative.³⁹

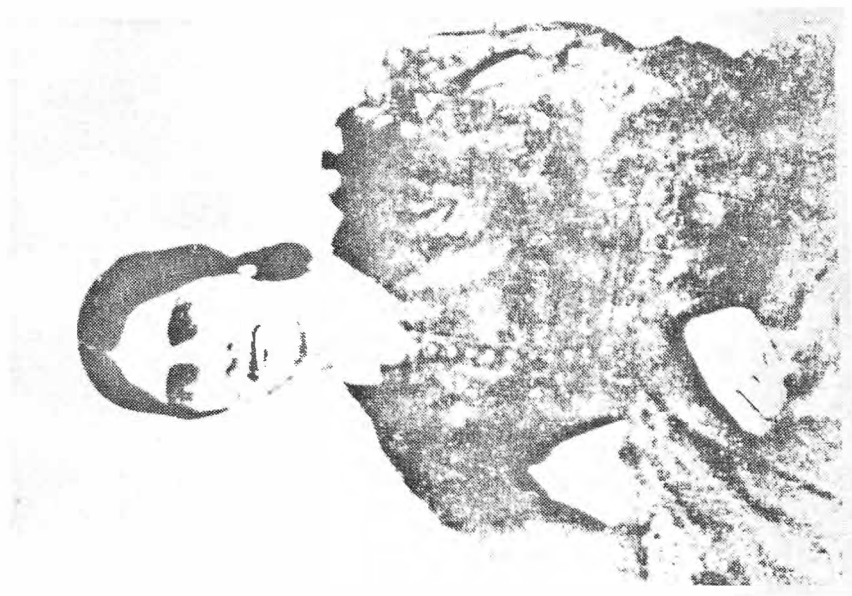
Following Jesse Blocker's death, his widow, Eliza Malone Blocker, moved with her children to become pioneer settlers of DeSota County, Mississippi after the purchase from the Indians and

³⁶Mrs. Clarence Smith, "The Neely Family," n.d. [photocopy, unpublished genealogical data packet], DAR-SAR-CAR Chapter House, Inc. scrapbook, Memphis, n.p.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Neely Family Papers, n.p.

³⁹Ibid.



A

Figure 12. Mrs. James Columbus Neely.

A. Photograph of Mrs. Neely. Courtesy Barton Lee Mallory, Jr.

B. Oil portrait of Mrs. Neely. This painting hangs in the dining room of the Mallory-Neely House.



B

opening of this territory by Andrew Jackson in 1836.⁴⁰ Milton, Jesse and Eliza's son, later bought lands of his own from the Chickasaw Chief Lush PumTubby; and in time he extended this property so that he became a large landholder and cotton planter.⁴¹ Milton Blocker died a premature and tragic death caused by injuries suffered aboard the Mississippi steamer Medora when it exploded and burned on 28 February 1847. Fortunately, due to his industriousness he left his family in a sound financial situation. Vedder in The History of Memphis and Shelby County states that the Blockers were one of the finest families of North Mississippi and noted for their wealth and refinement.⁴²

After their marriage the young Neely couple built a new home in Memphis at the northwest corner of Jefferson and Orleans streets. The carriage house alone survives converted into a private dwelling in today's Victorian Village. In this home the Neely's seven children, two of whom died in infancy, were born. Those that grew to adulthood were the two daughters, Pearl and Daisy, and the three sons, James Columbus, Jr., Sidney Milton, and Hugh McDowell Neely, Jr.⁴³

⁴⁰"Olive Branch History and Pioneers" [leaflet], Olive Branch, Mississippi, Chamber of Commerce, n.d., n.p., Neely Family Papers, Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., Memphis.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Vedder, II, 163.

⁴³Smith, "The Neely Family," n.p.

James Columbus Neely was destined to become one of the outstanding business leaders of late nineteenth century Memphis. He epitomizes the typical entrepreneurial "merchant prince" of the time who provided the innovative leadership which led towards the modernization of Memphis' financial and business life resulting in its late nineteenth century "gilded age." Neely's contribution was recognized in his Commercial Appeal obituary:

His Name is indelibly written on the Book of Progress of Memphis. Since the war he was always heartily into everything that made towards the industrious advancement and commercial upbuilding of this city.⁴⁴

His wide-ranging business and civic activities exemplify his energetic and competitive approach to life as a prototypic modern business man. J. C. Neely first entered into partnership in 1854 with William Goyer as Goyer and Neely Grocery and Provision Merchants.⁴⁵ They were forced to close this business in 1862 with the

⁴⁴"Death of J. C. Neely," Commercial Appeal, 23 January 1901, 1.

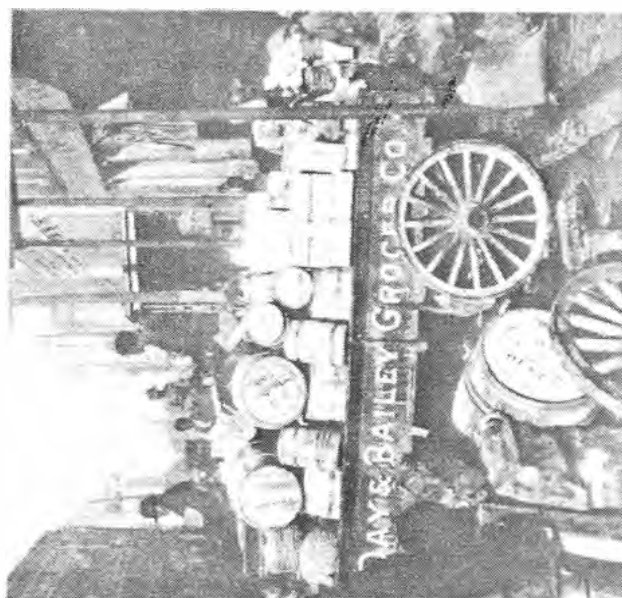
⁴⁵The wholesale grocery business, during the nineteenth century, became a major source of Memphis' wealth, even at times equalling the income from cotton. By 1891, Memphis was ranked as the fifth largest wholesale grocery market in the United States (Capers, 223). "In 1886 and 1887 the total value of the wholesale and jobbing trade of Memphis was approximately \$160,000,000" ("Memphis Busy Mart a Half Century Ago," Commercial Appeal, Centennial Edition, 1 January 1940), 9(G). The following explains how the wholesale provision system worked in the Mid-South: "[the wholesale merchants] have plenty of money with which to carry their customers from the planting contingent, who by the way make settlements only once a year, depending as they do for their cash with which to meet their obligations upon receipts from the cotton fields. These crops are never marketed before the first of September but in the meanwhile the wholesale men of Memphis are able to furnish the supplies necessary not only for the planter's families but for all the families of their hands as well" (Commercial Appeal, 31 October 1900, 5).

entry of Federal forces into Memphis and the disruption of Mississippi River trade.⁴⁶ In 1865, J. C. Neely, his brother Hugh, and Samuel H. Brooks founded Brooks, Neely & Co., Wholesale Grocers, Cotton Factors, and Commission Merchants.⁴⁷ J. C. Neely served through the years as financial director of this firm, which became one of the largest and most successful business houses in the South and Southwest. (Figures 13 and 14). An 1886 account described the accommodations of Brooks, Neely & Co. as follows:

The business premises located at No. 367 Front Street is a spacious four-story brick building with a commodious cellar, measuring 35 feet front by 234 feet deep, and is filled from top to bottom with a huge stock of staple and fancy groceries, provisions, plantation and contractor supplies, etc. In addition to their large business in groceries and provisions, the firm does an immense cotton business, employing a large force of employees. In this department of their business Messrs. Brooks, Neely & Co. have a large brick warehouse on Main Street 300 feet square, for the reception and storage of their cotton consignments, thus giving their consignors full protection from damage to their cotton

⁴⁶"Death of J. C. Neely," 1.

⁴⁷Cotton factor and commission merchant explained: "The cotton factor became a vital part of the process of getting the commodity planted, harvested and sold. The factor was a financial intermediary. He rendered a form of banking service, by providing working capital through seed and other provisions including food to the plantation operator to sustain him until the crop was harvested. . . . The terms 'cotton factor' and 'commission merchant' were used interchangeably to describe this special type of service. . . . Memphis became a center for cotton factors. Following the Civil War cotton factors were to become a dominant part of the commercial life of the city. Fees earned for their factoring services, and the profits from the allied wholesale grocery and provisions businesses, made fortunes for many families associated with these enterprises" (Sigafoos, Cotton Row to Beale Street, A Business History of Memphis, 36).



Exterior View of

DAY & BAILEY

GROCER COMPANY'S STORE

360-362 Front St.



A

B

Figure 13. Premises of typical Memphis wholesale grocery and cotton factoring businesses in the late nineteenth century similar to that of the Brooks-Neely firm. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

A. Day & Bailey Grocery Company.

B. Duffin Brothers and McGehee Cotton Factors and Grocers.

J. C. NEELY. S. H. BROOKS. E. M. NEELY.

Brooks, Neely & Co.

WHOLESALE

GROCERS, COTTON FACTORS

AND COMMISSION MERCHANTS,

No. 367 Front street, : : Memphis, Tenn.

A

J. C. NEELY S. H. BROOKS. E. M. NEELY.

BROOKS, NEELY & CO.

WHOLESALE

Grocers, Cotton Factors

—AND—

COMMISSION MERCHANTS,

367 Front Street, MEMPHIS, TENN.

Agents for "STAR COTTON GIN."

B

Figure 14. Newspaper advertisements for Brooks, Neely & Co.
 A. 3 November 1890, Memphis Appeal [advertisement].
 B. 6 September 1872, Memphis Appeal [advertisement].

by bad weather, and materially lessening the chance of fire.⁴⁸

Brooks, Neely & Co. remained in business until September 1899 when at the end of very successful careers all the partners voluntarily liquidated the firm.

In addition to the wholesale grocery and cotton business, James Columbus Neely had an unbelievably diverse business life including land, banking and industrial interests.⁴⁹ Neely was president of the Bluff City Insurance Company, of the Continental Bank, of the Memphis Package and Grain Elevator Company, and vice-president of the German National Bank. He served at varying times as a director of several railroad companies, including the famous Memphis and Charleston Railroad, and also of other banks, insurance companies, and one of the early Memphis electricity companies. Some of J. C. Neely's important investments were iron and coal holdings in Alabama,

⁴⁸Andrew A. Hensley, Memphis: An Illustrated Review of Its Commercial Progress and Importance (Enterprise Publishing Co., 1886), n.p., Special Collections, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

⁴⁹"Although the factor usually collected only a 2.5 percent commission on crop sales, most factors also derived substantial profits from the wholesale and retail grocery business and from banking operations for the farmers. These operations often led factors into other aspects of banking and wholesale business less directly relating to farming, giving them even greater control over local capital. Many successful factors then moved into real-estate speculation and development, highly profitable during this period of growth, thereby gaining still greater control over local capital" (Harkins, Metropolis of the American Nile, 96).

large-scale lumber plantations in the Mississippi River bottoms, and personal ownership of several general land businesses, including service as a director of the Memphis Land and Timber Co. Neely was also a partner in the ownership of Neely and Reid Manufacturers of the Southern Star Cotton Gin Co., located in Germantown, Tennessee.⁵⁰ The Neely brothers were, with several other leading businessmen of the time, founders in 1873 of the Memphis Railway Company, an inner city transportation company which was an ancestor of the present city transit system.⁵¹ Both Neely brothers provided active leadership in the Memphis Cotton Exchange, an agency of great importance in the modernization of the Memphis cotton industry.⁵²

J. C. Neely somehow also found time to be active in community affairs. He and his family were loyal members of the First

⁵⁰"Memphis Land and Timber Company" [advertisement], Memphis Daily Appeal, 1 July 1885, 2; and "Neely and Reid, manufacturers of the Southern Star Cotton Gin" [advertisement], Memphis Daily Appeal, 18 July 1855, 4.

⁵¹Arthur Zellman, "Memphis' Street Railway," Memphis Industries, Southern Industrial Review (Memphis: Memphis Industrial League, 1905), p. 13.

⁵²"The cotton business of Memphis is controlled by the Memphis Cotton Exchange, which is made up of all the prominent cotton factors and buyers of the city and of lines interested in the handling of cotton. The standard set by the Exchange for its grade is high and is rigidly enforced. The rules in regard to sampling of cotton and the handling of it are also very strict and are always demanded by the officials. As a result the Memphis stamp is now accepted as a guarantee of good standard" ("Memphis as a Cotton Market," Art Supplement to the Greater Memphis Edition of the Evening Scimitar, 2).

Presbyterian Church.⁵³ Neely served on the original board of directors of the city's Cossitt Library and on those of the Higbee Academy and the Clara Conway Institute where both his daughters attended school.⁵⁴ He was a financial backer of the Grand Opera House and of several theatres.⁵⁵ As his inscribed name attests, J. C. Neely was also one of the public spirited citizens who made a sizeable contribution to erect what remains to this day a familiar landmark of downtown Memphis, the large multi-tiered fountain topped by a copy of Antonio Canova's Neo Classical sculpture, "Hebe," in the middle of Court Square.

Described in Vedder's History of Memphis and Shelby County, Tennessee as "noted in Memphis for the elegance of her appearance, her great worth, and intelligence, and hospitality,"⁵⁶ Mrs. J. C. Neely was an important leader in late nineteenth century Memphis society. She was active as a member of the First Presbyterian Church, of the Leith Orphan Asylum Board, and of the Old Woman's Board.⁵⁷

⁵³Neely Family Papers, n.p.

⁵⁴Paul R. Coppock, Memphis Sketches (Memphis: Friends of Memphis and Shelby County Libraries, 1976), 185.

⁵⁵"The Grand Opera-House, It Was Opened Last Night and Is Magnificent," Memphis Appeal, 23 September 1890, 10.

⁵⁶Vedder, Vol. II, 163.

⁵⁷"Necrological: Mrs. Francis Blocker Neely," Commercial Appeal, 28 February 1905, 3.

In July of 1883 James Columbus Neely purchased Benjamin Babb's home on Adams Street for \$45,000.⁵⁸ Though no written documentation seems to have survived, physical evidence together with early photographs and family oral history testify to the changes wrought by the Neelys during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The following is illustrative of how contemporaries viewed the Neelys and their newly renovated home:

J. C. Neely's operations have been large and extensive and the result of his great energy and activity have been the accumulation of a large fortune. His family and friends are now enjoying the fruits of his great success. He lives in one of the most elegant homes in the city of Memphis, and surrounded by all the pleasure and comforts of a refined taste his family are liberal in their hospitality.⁵⁹

J. C. Neely died in January 1901. His importance to the era in which he lived and made such an energetic contribution was recognized in the following statement from this obituary, an excellent example of both Victorian optimism and the belief in the "gospel of progress":

Mr. Neely was born on the 19th day of April 1826 in the dawn of the nineteenth century. He passes away just on the dawning of the twentieth and goes down to the grave as one of those who helped make the most brilliant epoch in all the world's history.⁶⁰

⁵⁸"Benjamin Babb Deed to James C. Neely," The State of Tennessee, Shelby County, Memphis, Book 147 (27 July 1883), pp. 529-531.

⁵⁹Vedder, Vol. II, 163.

⁶⁰"Death of J. C. Neely," 1.

The Daniel Grant and Barton Lee Mallory Families

The families of James Columbus Neely's two daughters lived in and preserved their historic family home until it became a public museum in the 1970s. The Neely's oldest daughter, Pearl, married Daniel Grant of Atlanta. They had two sons, James Neely Grant and Daniel Brook Grant.⁶¹ During the early years of the twentieth century the Grant family occupied one half of the second and third floors of her parent's home, while the other half was inhabited by the family of her sister, the Mallorys.⁶² The Grants sold their share of the house to the Mallorys in 1933.

On 7 November 1900, Daisy Neely married Barton Lee Mallory (born 1865 in Charlottesville, Va.) of an affluent and distinguished Memphis family. For the next seventy years of the twentieth century the history of the Adams Street house was closely linked to this family, therefore the appropriateness of the present name, the Mallory-Neely House.

Barton Lee Mallory's father was Captain William Barton Mallory who was born 11 August 1835, in Hanover City, Virginia. (Figure 15) Later his family moved to Charlottesville. As a Captain in the Monticello Guards, he oversaw the execution on 1 December 1859 of

⁶¹Mrs. Clarence Smith, "The Grant Family," n.d. [photocopy, unpublished genealogical data packet], DAR-SAR-CAR Chapter House, Inc. scrapbook, Memphis, n.p.

⁶²Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., Interview by author, Memphis, Tennessee, 21 October 1985.



CAPT. W. B. MALLORY.

Figure 15. Captain William Barton Mallory. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Library and Information Center.

John Brown at Harper's Ferry. During the Civil War Captain Mallory served with distinction in the Confederate army.⁶³

After the war Captain Mallory migrated with his wife Martha Harris Mallory of Christian County, Kentucky and their four children, Lizzie, Mary, Barton Lee, and Joseph H., first to Clarksville, Tennessee and then to Memphis.⁶⁴ During the late nineteenth century he became one of the city's wealthiest business leaders. (Figure 16) The Mallory family fortune, like that of the Neelys, was based on the wholesale grocery trade and cotton. Captain Mallory began business in Memphis in 1872 with his brother-in-law Albert L. Harris in the firm of Harris, Mallory & Co., Wholesale Grocers and Cotton Factors. In 1880 Mallory entered partnership with W. J. Crawford in Mallory, Crawford & Co. After Crawford's retirement in 1899 Mallory's sons joined him in W. B. Mallory and Sons Wholesale Grocers, Cotton Factors, Commission Merchants, a firm which remained in business well into the twentieth century.⁶⁵ (Figure 17)

Like J. C. Neely, Captain Mallory was also involved in a wide assortment of additional business interests including service as a director of the Hernando Insurance Co. and the Bank of

⁶³Mallory Family Papers [unpublished Mallory genealogical data], n.d., n.p., Private Collection of Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., Memphis.

⁶⁴Mrs. Clarence Smith, "The Mallory Family" [photocopy, unpublished genealogical data packet], DAR-SAR-CAR Chapter House, Inc. scrapbook, Memphis, n.p.

⁶⁵Ibid.

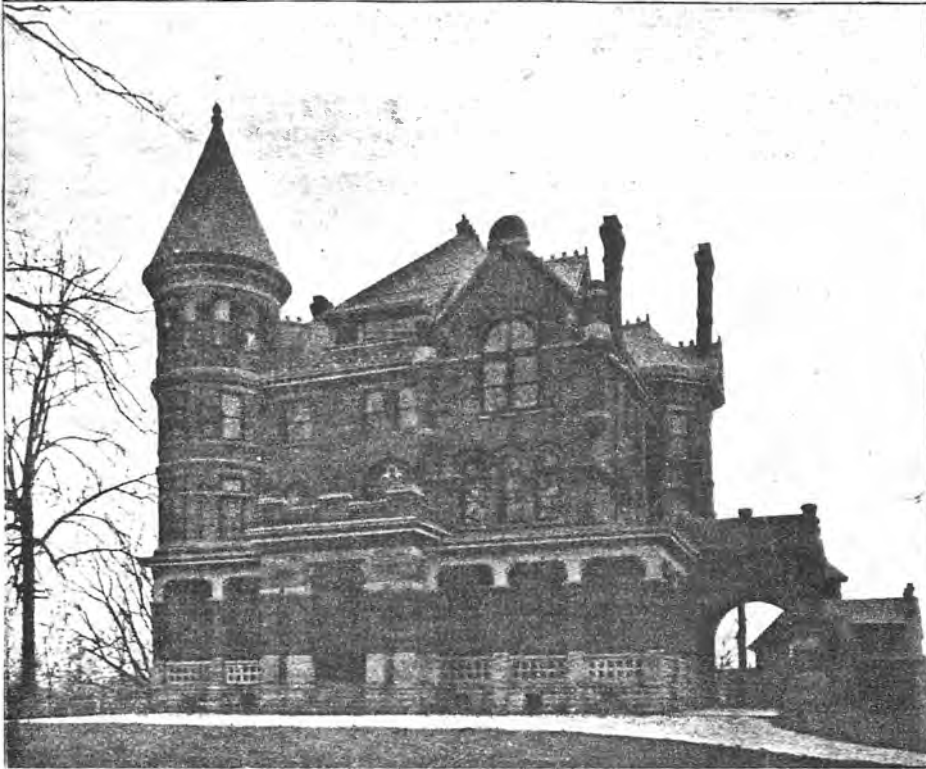


Figure 16. Mallory House. This now demolished mansion built by Captain William Mallory was one of the grandest homes constructed by the gilded-era merchant princes of Memphis. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

W. B. MALLORY. W. J. CRAWFORD.

MALLORY, CRAWFORD & CO.

WHOLESALE

Grocers, Cotton Factors

AND COMMISSION MERCHANTS,

254 Front Street, MEMPHIS, TENN.

A



B

Figure 17. Mallory related artifacts. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

- A. Mallory, Crawford & Company city directory advertisement.
- B. Photograph of the interior of the Mallory Company cotton and grocery provision warehouse at the turn-of-the-century.

Commerce.⁶⁶ In 1889 he with three others, including his partner W. J. Crawford, formed the Democrat Publishing Co., which first published The Memphis Daily Commercial. The Memphis Appeal, The Avalanche, and The Memphis Daily Commercial consolidated in 1894 to form The Commercial Appeal.⁶⁷

The marriage of Barton Lee Mallory and Daisy Neely was one of the many made between members of the elite "ruling" families of the city which helped to consolidate and perpetuate their power and influence.⁶⁸ (Figure 18) Excepting a short time period the Mallorys lived almost all of their married life in the home of her parents. In this home they raised their three children, William Neely born in 1901, and the twins, Frances ("Franny") and Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., born in 1903.⁶⁹ (Figure 19)

Continuing in the path of both his father and father-in-law, Barton Lee Mallory became one of the outstanding leaders of early twentieth century Memphis.⁷⁰ His numerous achievements include service as vice-president and president of the family business, W. B. Mallory and Sons, Co.; vice-president of both the Memphis Bank & Loan Association and the Conley Frog & Switch Company; and

⁶⁶"Capt. W. D. Mallory Answers Last Call," Commercial Appeal, 9 June 1919, 1.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Sigafoos, "Memphis Economic Emergence," n.p.

⁶⁹Mallory Family Papers, n.p.

⁷⁰"Barton Lee Mallory, Whose Initiative Helped Make Memphis the Industrial Center of the Mid South Dead at 72," Press Scimitar, 4 April 1938, 1.



B. L. MALLORY.

Figure 18. Mr. Barton Lee Mallory. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.



Figure 19. Mrs. Daisy Mallory and her three children: Francis, Barton Lee, Jr., and William Neely.

president of the South Memphis Land Company from 1900 to 1905, which was a precursor to the Chamber of Commerce.⁷¹ The latter was described at the time as "a civic group of business men after industrial plants for Memphis and new payrolls."⁷² This group bought and developed broad acreages of land for industrial usage in the southern area of the city.⁷³ Barton Lee Mallory was also involved with the Eastmoreland Land Development Company. He organized the Municipal Terminal Corporation later renamed the Federal Compress (sold in 1924) and the Memphis Compress and Storage Company, which became a primary business in the annual handling of Mid-Southern cotton. Mallory also had wide-ranging farming interests, especially in Arkansas. He served as president of the Merchant's Exchange and as vice-president and member of the board of directors of The Commercial Appeal.⁷⁴

In addition to Barton Lee Mallory's business interests, he had an active life as a civic, social and cultural leader. Mr. Mallory was a lifelong member of the First Presbyterian Church. He served for twenty years on the board of the city's Cossitt Library, as chairman of the board of the James Lee Memorial Art Academy,

⁷¹Mallory Family Papers, n.p.

⁷²"South Memphis Land Company," Art Supplement to the House-Warming Edition of the Evening Scimitar, 1903, 82.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴"Barton Lee Mallory, Whose Initiative Helped Make Memphis," 1.

and was one of the first to be appointed to the City Art Commission. Mr. Mallory also acted as chairman of the Chamber of Commerce's Inland Waterways Commission. He was a member of numerous social organizations, including the prestigious Chickasaw Guard Militia Group, the Memphis Country Club, and the Hatchie Coon Hunting and Fishing Club.⁷⁵

At the time of Mr. Mallory's death in 1938, an editorial in the evening paper summarized his importance in Memphis:

The "B" in his name stood for Barton but it could have more appropriately stood for builder. Probably no man in Memphis brought so many industries to Memphis as Mr. Mallory.⁷⁶

Mrs. Daisy Mallory, besides being a devoted mother, was a cultural force in Memphis throughout her long life. She was a charter member of the Vanity Fair Club and belonged to the Memphis Garden Club, the Memphis Country Club, the First Presbyterian Church, and served on the board of the Home for Incurables and as a director of the YWCA.⁷⁷

Members of the Mallory family remain to this day prominent in Memphis business, cultural and social life. Descendants of the Neely, Mallory, and Grant families who now live in Memphis, across the nation, and in Europe have taken a most active interest in the Mallory-Neely House since it was donated by them as a historic house

⁷⁵Mallory Family Papers, n.p.

⁷⁶"Editorial," Memphis Press Scimitar, 5 May 1938, 5.

⁷⁷"Miss Mallory Dies in Sleep," Commercial Appeal, 10 July 1969, 7(C).

museum. They have supported it in many ways such as by providing oral history, by financial donations, and especially by the return of original artifacts to the house. Richard C. Hackett, Mayor of Memphis, expressed it well when he stated in a recent letter to Barton Lee Mallory, Jr.:

May I express sincere thanks from a grateful city for the generosity of the Mallory family toward the restoration of this mansion for the enjoyment of this and future generations.⁷⁸

⁷⁸Hackett to Mallory.

CHAPTER V

MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: ARCHITECTURAL EVOLUTION

A man's dwelling at the present day is not only an index of his wealth but also of his character. The moment he begins to build, his taste for arrangement, his private feelings, the refinement of his tastes, and the peculiarities of his judgement are all laid bare for public inspection and criticism.¹

Architectural Background

A study of the architecture of the Mallory-Neely House is like a microscopic or condensed lesson in nineteenth-century architectural styles, theory, practice, and techniques. Investigative study of the architecture of the Mallory-Neely Mansion is hampered, despite extensive research, since little substantive written documentation has been located concerning the construction or architects-builders of the house. Thus reliance must be placed on visual evidence of the building itself and on several original photographs of the house which document its architectural development.

The information gleaned from "reading" these material artifactual sources was coupled with data found in primary and secondary documents, including both published and unpublished research from local, national, and international sources. These reveal significant

¹Samual Sloan, The Model Architect I (Philadelphia: E. C. Jones and Co., 1852), 10, Special Collections, Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

details about the architecture of the mansion. Most of the construction of the Mallory-Neely House seems to have taken place during two phases. First, the building of a suburban Italianate villa was undertaken sometime between 1852 and 1864 by Isaac Kirtland; and, second, this villa was transformed into a Late Victorian Norman-style urban mansion around 1890 by James Columbus Neely. Each of these two phases will be analyzed and discussed in terms of contemporary architectural style and fashion, theory, symbolism, practice and technology.²

The original appearance of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) survives only in a stereoptican view, a photograph from The Evening Scimitar, and a blurred enlargement of a tiny detail from a "bird's eye" topographical map of Memphis. (Figures 20-22) Kirtland's choice of the romantically picturesque Italianate style from amongst a melange of revived historic architectural styles was a highly fashionable one in mid-nineteenth century America. It was also an appropriate selection in terms of both design and symbolism for a successful businessman's home on the semi-rural outskirts of a city.

Nineteenth century architecture in Western Europe and the United States has been described as an "architecture of choice" or

²For sake of clarity the following nomenclature for the Mallory-Neely House will be used in the remainder of this dissertation: Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) to describe Isaac Kirtland's original Italianate villa and Mallory-Neely House (c. 1890) to describe the same house after purchase and stylistic alteration by James Columbus Neely.

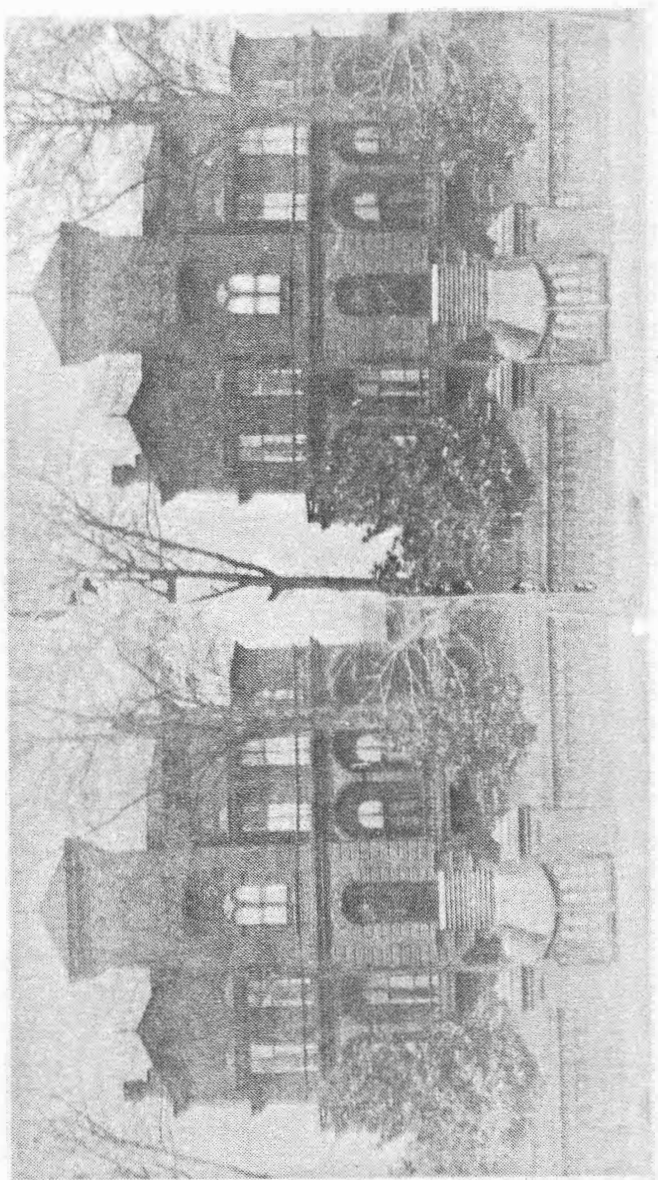
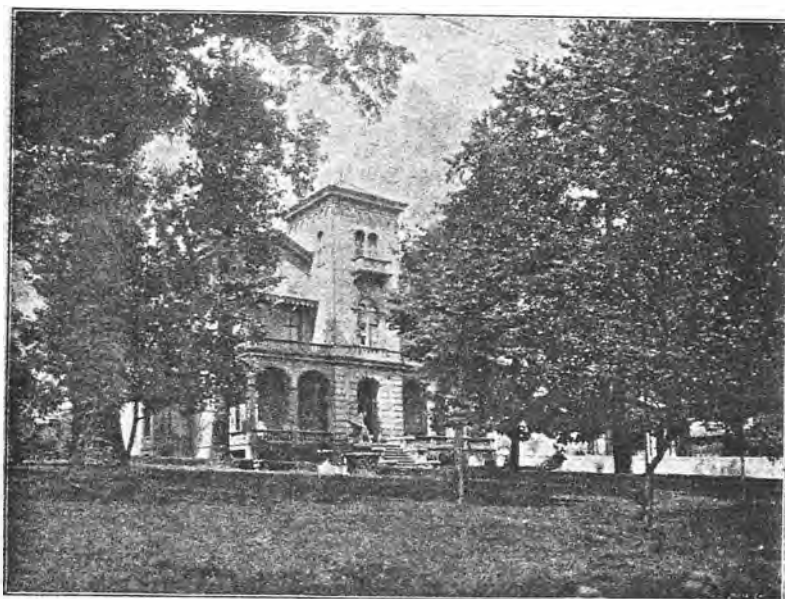


Figure 20. Stereoptican view of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852). The photograph was taken prior to the post-1890 alterations by J. C. Neely. Courtesy Barton Lee Mallory, Jr.



RESIDENCE OF J. C. NEELY.

Figure 21. Photograph of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852), as it appeared when the Neelys purchased it from Benjamin Babb in 1883.



Figure 22. Enlargement of a section of Figure 8 (page 66), the "bird's eye" view of Memphis in 1870. This shows the Mallory-Neely House (1852) in its original state prior to the post-1890 alterations. The tower with its low roof and the gable to its left accord with the photographs shown in Figures 20 (page 109) and 21 (page 110). Courtesy Library of Congress and Historic Urban Plans.

as "the battle of the styles." It is considered by some to be one of the first eras in architectural history where there was a wide selection of concurrent competing styles from which to choose.³ Historicism, or the revival of an assortment of past styles, dominated architectural practice in determining the stylistic appearance of buildings.

Throughout the nineteenth century both architects and those in the building trade, such as contractors and carpenters, made widespread use of visual ideas published in an unprecedented outpouring of printed forms ranging from builders' guides and pattern books to periodicals and journals.⁴ The Victorian Era witnessed the beginning of a "shrinking world" and a mass society informed through mass communication. The industrial revolution and its rapid technological advances created dramatic changes in both transportation and communication. The innovative technological modernization of the printing industry, especially in lithography and photography late in the century, brought about a revolution in graphic communication. The development of mechanized modes of transportation and related innovations in media promotion and mass distribution played a major role in this modernization process. Printed materials

³James C. Massey, "Nineteenth Century American Architecture," Paper presented at the 38th Annual Seminar on American Culture, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York, 4 July 1985.

⁴See Dale Upton, "Pattern Books and Professionalism: Aspects of the Transformation of Domestic Architecture in America, 1800-1860," Winterthur Portfolio 19, Nos. 2 and 3 (Summer/Autumn 1984): 107-150.

illustrating current and historic international architectural styles became increasingly available to the architect, builder, and client alike, making architectural history "the common property of all western nations."⁵ As never before architects and visual designers in general could at random, through printed materials, shop, pick and choose from a supermarket of contemporary and historic examples, styles, ideas, and ornamental details.

Many of the visual arts, including the revival architecture of the nineteenth century, have been traditionally classified as products or creations of the Romantic Movement. Most definitions of romanticism focus on the use of personal, emotional, and sensual response over that of detached reason. Revolution, individualism, freedom of thought, expressiveness, imagination, or creativity are usually key words or phrases used in a description of romanticism.⁶ William H. Pierson, Jr. in the introduction to American Buildings and Their Architects: Technology and the Picturesque states that the Romantic Movement was perfectly timed for the United States, a new nation, tired of the old, breaking colonial shackles, and witnessing phenomenal territorial and technological growth. The individualistic, free, and expressive qualities of romanticism found fertile ground for root in this new country and would in turn be

⁵John Maass, The Victorian Home in America (New York: Hawthorne Books, Inc., 1972), 13.

⁶Jordan, 42-57.

reflected in the highly experimental, imaginative, and often unorthodox architecture produced by Americans.⁷

In recent years nineteenth century architecture has been subject to increased scholarly study and re-evaluation; as a result, attempts have been made to more correctly define and name this architecture. William Pierson, Jr. uses the term ROMANTIC ECLECTIC, while in a series of articles Carroll L. V. Meeks has suggested the appropriateness of the name PICTURESQUE ECLECTICISM; "eclecticism" here denotes the random mixed borrowing of styles from the past while "picturesque" implies the romantic, irregular, and imaginative quality of nineteenth century architecture.⁸

Romantically Eclectic architectural styles were based, as William Pierson suggests, on ideas gleaned primarily from architectural source books:

As a method of design, eclecticism depends entirely upon readily available sources of stylistic data, and for the first eclectic architects these sources were books. Indeed, the eclectic movement owes its very existence to the remarkable developments in architectural literature. . . . Books were of critical importance in the development of American architecture.⁹

During much of the present century this eclectic borrowing has been used as the basis of criticism of Victorian architecture which has

⁷William H. Pierson, Jr., American Buildings and Their Architects: Technology and the Picturesque (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1980), 126.

⁸See Carroll L. V. Meeks, "Creative Eclecticism," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, 12 (December 1953): 15-18, and "Picturesque Eclecticism," The Art Bulletin, 32 (September 1950), 226-235.

⁹Pierson, 5.

been interpreted solely as uninventive, sterile copying and is often described as derivative architecture. At times nineteenth century architectural eclecticism has been viewed as exemplifying Victorian pessimism. Despite the use of new technological processes by the Victorians, their preference for an outer historic veneer has been interpreted by some as an anti-industrial, anti-progressive, nostalgic look backward to earlier and simpler times.

Increasingly it seems that nineteenth century Picturesque Eclectic architecture is being viewed not as just tasteless, uninspired architectural copying but as a reflection of a modernizing era in flux. Typified by inventive experimentation, the Victorian Era created a dynamic architecture that in many ways heralded contemporary twentieth century architectural practice. Emphasis is increasingly focused on the flexible, practical, and innovative planning of Picturesque Eclectic architecture and the imaginative use in an original, expressive way of elements from past styles.

The wide choice of Picturesque Eclectic styles that came and went with the dictates of consumer fashion through most of the century included medieval styles such as the Norman or Romanesque, and the Gothic in a variety of confusing substyles such as the Elizabethan, rural Gothic, and English Gothic; classical styles such as the Greek Revival, and the Italianate; and exotic revivals like the Egyptian and the Saracenic or Moorish. At the time Isaac Kirtland built his new Memphis home, the Italianate was, with the Gothic, among the

most fashionable Picturesque Eclectic styles being used nationwide for domestic architecture.

Italianate Style--Theoretical Meaning and Stylistic Features

Because of its informal qualities, the Italianate, a picturesque variant of the classical style, was seen by the Victorians as highly appropriate for domestic architecture as opposed to the more rigidly formal and classically purer temple form which was thought better suited for public architecture. The Italianate variant of the classical, though domestic and informal, still carried the associative symbolism of classical culture. The Italianate style was used throughout America from the 1840s into the 1880s for both commercial and residential buildings.¹⁰ It was a perfect romantic architectural type because its inherent flexibility lent itself to endless interpretations. Residential variants included inner-city connected row houses, individual detached town houses, and rural country houses. These ranged in style from those that were more truly classical and symmetrical with formal Renaissance-inspired detailing to those based on rural types that were more imaginatively picturesque and irregular.¹¹ As the century progressed the Italianate became less "rural" in its detailing and more correctly classical.¹²

¹⁰McAlester and McAlester, 211.

¹¹Ibid., 212.

¹²See Carole Rifkind, A Field Guide to American Architecture (New York: New American Library, 1980), 63, 64 & 66, and Elizabeth Fitzpatrick Jones, "Henry Whitestone, Nineteenth Century Louisville Architect" (Thesis, University of Louisville, 1974), 32.

Virginia and Lee McAlester in A Field Guide to American Houses discuss six variants of the Italianate in the United States: the simple hipped roof type, the centered gable type, the asymmetrical type, the towered type, the front gabled roof type, and the town-house type.¹³ The Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) was a symmetrical version of the towered variety. The McAlesters point out that though the towered form has usually been thought of as the most characteristic Italianate type, according to their research it actually represents only about 15 percent of extant Italianate houses.¹⁴

Because the Italianate lent itself to such free interpretation, houses in this style were constructed in a variety of materials including wood, stone, brick, and stucco covering over brick or stone. Some of the more typical characteristics of the style include: the use of irregularity in elevation and plan; the exterior elevation reflecting the interior plan; picturesqueness of massing and outline achieved by asymmetry and the use of a tower or cupola, tall chimneys, oriel or bay windows, low pitched roofs, wide overhanging eaves with decorative support brackets, round arched windows and doors, and multi-layered classical mouldings used on the window and door surrounds, cornices, and verandah arcades.¹⁵ But unquestionably the most generally recognized and important aspect of the Italianate

¹³McAlester and McAlester, 212-213.

¹⁴Ibid., 211.

¹⁵Carl F. Schmidt, The Victorian Era in the U.S.A. (Scottsville, New York: By the author, 1971), 29-31.

style was the free, functional planning of the interior for domestic life, often called "design from the inside out," which is seen today as a beginning of modern practice but then was a revolutionary break from earlier rigid and symmetrical plans.

The Picturesque Eclectic Italianate style was a concocted Anglo-American creation based on a mix of ideas taken from formal academic Italian Renaissance architecture, Palladian-inspired forms in particular, and those gleaned from the traditional Italian farm house. These were noted for their picturesque irregular massing created by the helter-skelter additions built by succeeding generations of inhabitants as the need for more room arose, and, therefore the houses reflected long family or domestic usage.¹⁶ The picturesque freedom and irregularity of plan and elevation appealed to the romantic mind. The functional comfort and appearance of long domestic use attracted those Victorian moral reformers who stressed "home life" and the development of the cult of domesticity as a refuge from an increasingly industrial urban society.

The origins of the Italianate in the English-speaking world are thought to have begun with the eighteenth century English gentlemen's Grand Tour of the European continent with classical Italy and its wealth of artistic and architectural treasures as a focal point.¹⁷ Serving as further visual inspiration were the pictures collected along the way and brought back to England, especially the paintings

¹⁶Maass, The Victorian Home in America, 62.

¹⁷Ibid.

of classical Italian landscapes by Claude Lorrain, Salvator Rosa, and Nicholas Poussin in which classical ruins, castles, and romanticized Italian farm houses were featured.

The earliest examples of English architecture that can be identified as Italianate appeared in the very early years of the nineteenth century. During the next several decades English architects of note created impressive and influential buildings using Renaissance and Italianate styles.¹⁸ Indeed the Italian Renaissance became a favorite historic era for English Victorians as reflected in the literature and painting of the time.¹⁹ The choice of the Italianate by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert for their privately owned estate and rural retreat, Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, as much as anything probably helped to make the Italianate a prestigious and popular architectural style.²⁰ (Figure 23) Wayne Andrews suggests in Architecture, Ambition and Americans that "the Italian manner . . . naturally became more and more fashionable as more and more businessmen's wives heard of Osborne."²¹

¹⁸Charles Lockwood, "The Italianate Dwelling House in New York City," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 31 (May 1972), 145.

¹⁹See John Steegman, Victorian Taste (Norwich, England: Nelson University, 1970).

²⁰Osborne House, an Italianate seaside villa, was built between 1845 and 1848. It was designed by the noted contractor Thomas Cubitt under the supervision of Prince Albert. John Carlton, Osborne House (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1977), n.p.

²¹Wayne Andrews, Architecture, Ambition and Americans: A Social History of American Architecture (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1978), 112.

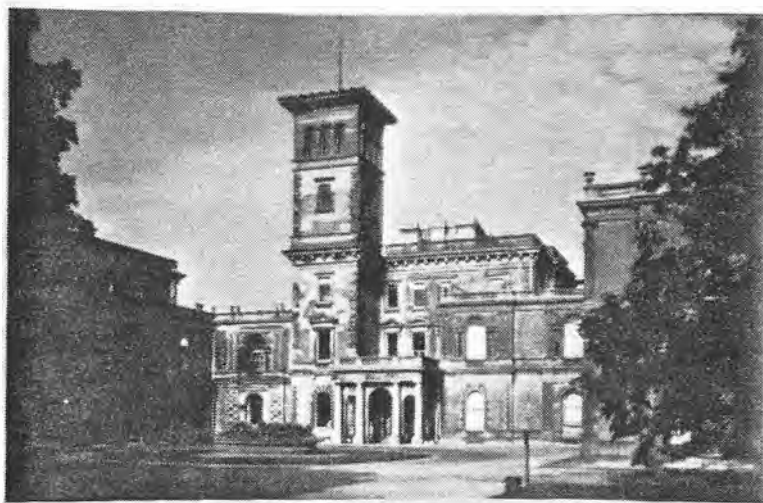


Figure 23. Osborne House (1845), Queen Victoria's stylistically influential Italianate style villa on the Isle of Wight, England.

The trans-Atlantic use of the Italianate mode or Anglo-Italian style was greatly aided by its widespread inclusion in builders' guides and popular magazines throughout most of the century. One of the earliest publisher-writers of these and probably the most influential on publication and practice of American architectural and landscape theorists was John Claudius Loudon. His literary output included the London-based periodical, The Architectural Magazine (1834-1839), and An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture.²² Published in 1833, this architectural guide was a "huge compilation of over 1,150 pages crowded with designs of buildings of every description in every style, which became an indispensable copy-book for speculative builders for over fifty years."²³ One of the new styles which he particularly recommended for use in the United States was the Italianate: "From the irregularity by its masses, which admit of a house receiving additions from every direction, it is suited to a prosperous and improving people, such as the Americans."²⁴

Loudon was especially an influence on the career of Andrew Jackson Downing, America's foremost advocate of both the picturesque in architecture and the Italianate style. Downing, a horticulturalist

²²John Claudius Loudon, An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture (London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1833), Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

²³John Gloag, Victorian Comfort (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), 34.

²⁴Loudon, 963.

turned architectural theorist, through his numerous books, became the major arbiter of American taste during a large portion of the nineteenth century; his influence continued long after his early accidental death.²⁵ The Englishman John Ruskin and his American counterpart, Andrew Jackson Downing, in their careers as widely followed arbiters of taste, epitomize the Victorian belief in authority.

More than anyone Downing, through his numerous publications, helped to spread the Italianate as a fashionable architectural style across America.²⁶ He was responsible for creating a new kind of house-pattern book, different from the former builders' guides. Downing's books were based on the writings of English theorists like Loudon and Ruskin, the advice of professionals like the famous architect, Alexander Jackson Davis, and his own practice and experiences. Downing's original approach was to address these publications to the owner-builder and not to those in the construction trade as the older builders' guides had previously done. Picturesque illustrations of the houses shown in romantic landscape settings were combined with Downing's equally picturesque prose descriptions in which "he discussed the philosophy behind the selection of a suitable design."²⁷ Downing has been called "the apostle of the

²⁵Lynes, 21.

²⁶George A. Tatum, "Andrew Jackson Downing," Paper presented at the 38th Annual Seminar on American Culture, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York, 5 July 1985.

²⁷George A. Tatum, Foreword to The Architecture of Country Houses by Andrew Jackson Downing (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1850; reprint, New York: DeCapo Press, 1968), ix.

common man" because he made the complex English architectural theory of the time somewhat more comprehensible to the average American homeowner.²⁸

Among Downing's extremely popular publications were Cottage Residences and Rural Aesthetics and Landscape Gardening: The Architecture of Country Houses.²⁹ These along with his horticultural writings were republished throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century; many have been reprinted in recent years. Downing's original approach to architectural publication was widely copied and indeed often pirated by numerous imitators.³⁰

These books included, in Downingsque fashion, plates showing romanticized houses in their landscape settings, with plans and

²⁸Tatum, "Andrew Jackson Downing."

²⁹Andrew Jackson Downing, Cottage Residences: Or a Series of Designs for Rural Cottages and Cottage Villas and the Gardens and Grounds Adapted to North America (New York: John Wiley & Son Publisher, 1868), and Rural Aesthetics and Landscape Gardening: The Architecture of Country Houses (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1850).

³⁰James Early, Romanticism and American Architecture: The Romantic Revival, History and Associationism (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1965), 55. Characteristic examples are Henry Cleaveland, William Cleaveland, William Backus, and Samuel Backus, Villas and Farm Cottages: The Requirements of American Cottage Homes (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1856); Samuel Sloan, The Model Architect (Philadelphia: E. S. Jones & Co., 1852); Calvert Vaux, Villas & Cottages: A Series of Designs Prepared for Execution in the United States (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1857); Gervase Wheeler, Homes for the People (New York: Charles Scribner, 1858); and Rural Homes, or Sketches of Houses Suited to American Country Life with Original Plans and Designs (New York: Charles Scribner, 1851); and George E. Woodward, Woodward's Architecture & Rural Art (New York: George E. Woodward, 1867).

descriptions of the various picturesque eclectic styles then fashionable. Of the many illustrated, the Italianate villa was amongst those most often represented. (Figures 24 and 25). An American nineteenth-century villa has been defined as "a detached suburban or country house of some pretension."³¹ Downing and his imitators popularized the villa as "the country house or seat of a cultivated gentleman or a person of competence, or wealth sufficient to build and maintain it with some taste and elegance."³² Gervase Wheeler defined the modern villa as:

a home partaking in its form and arrangements both of the town house and the country residence. It has the compactness of and arrangement of the former and the liberal accommodation of the latter.³³

The villa made the ideal home both symbolically and in terms of design and location for a rising new breed, the American industrial-business executive, whom Gervase Wheeler described as "men who have been the architects of their own fortunes, and who have been successful in business life."³⁴

Architectural symbolism. There was much more to the popularity of the Italianate for domestic housing than outward style,

³¹Cyril M. Harris, Historical Architectural Sourcebook (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1977), 565.

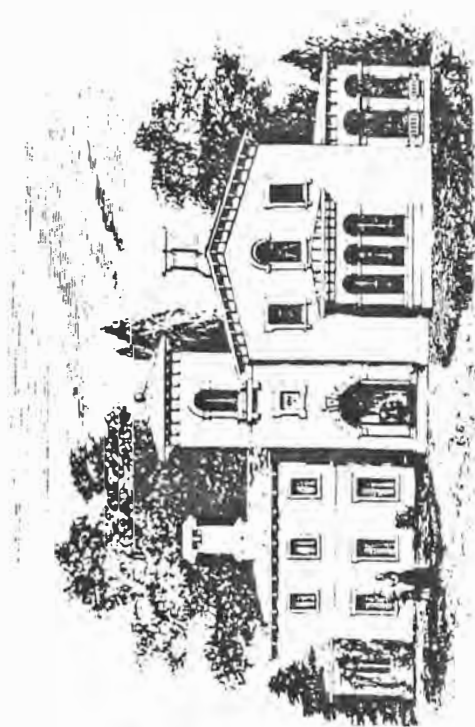
³²Pierson, 352.

³³Gervase Wheeler, Homes for the People (New York: Charles Scribner, 1858), 3, Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

³⁴Ibid., 184.

DESIGN XXII

VILLA IN THE ITALIAN STYLE



DESIGN XXVIII

VILLA IN THE ITALIAN STYLE

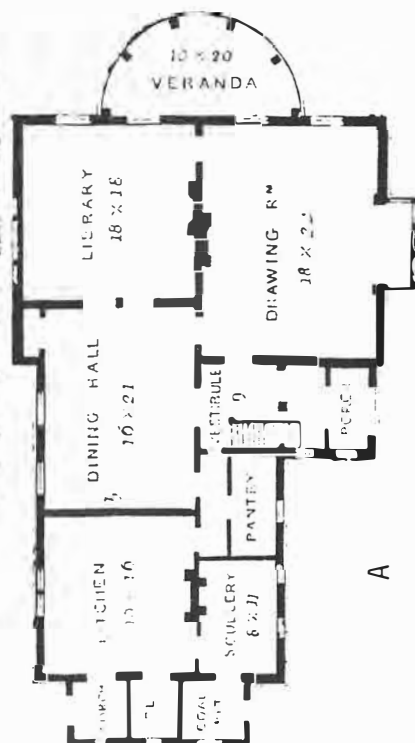
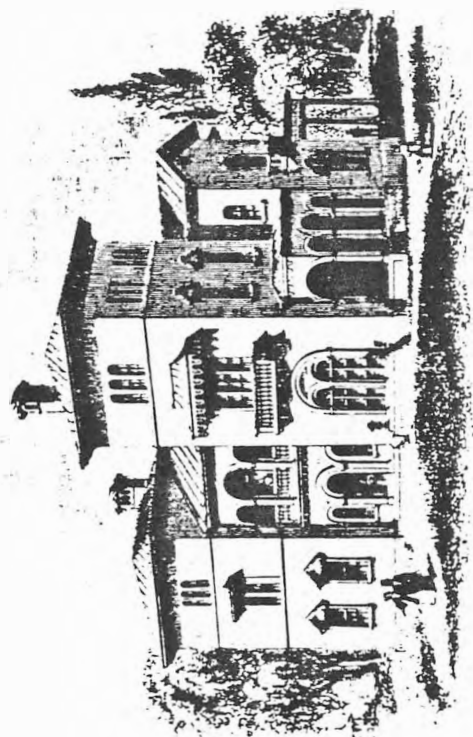


Figure 24. Characteristic Italianate elevations and plan from Andrew Jackson Downing Residences (1850). Courtesy Dover Publications, Inc.

A. Plate Twenty-Two.

B. Plate Twenty-Eight.



A



B

Figure 25. Italianate villa from The Model Architect (1852) by Samuel Sloan, one of Downing's many imitators. Courtesy Special Collections, Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
 A. Side elevation.
 B. Front elevation.

communicative symbolism played a great role. In the twentieth century the formal aspects and functional planning of architecture are of overriding importance; therefore, it is surprising to find that philosophical content was of greater importance to the many architectural critics and theorists who were producing the popular architectural guides in the nineteenth century. To what degree the general public who actually built and lived in these homes were influenced by these philosophical theories is a source of debate. To the theorist the Italianate was loaded with the following complex layerings of philosophical meaning: (1) the outward aesthetic meaning, which has to do with picturesque beauty in terms of form and placement of the house within nature; (2) the associative or communicative meaning, which has to do with the message the architecture gives to the viewer in terms of symbolism, or association with a great culture of the past and the ideals and values of that civilization; and (3) the ethical or philosophical meaning, which has to do with morality and truth in domestic architecture reflective of fitness of purpose for the home as the center of wholesome, moral regeneration within the greater industrial society.

Aesthetic meaning. Picturesqueness within the visual arts was a conceptual aesthetic ideal that developed in the late eighteenth century and became what is now increasingly realized as an over-riding aspect of most Victorian visual design, including architecture, painting, and the decorative arts. It became that era's "mode of

vision."³⁵ Christopher Hussey in The Picturesque traced the origins and evolution of the picturesque to a visually romantic concept beginning with the aesthetic theories of Edmund Burke, expressed in his A Philosophic Inquiry into the Origins of the Sublime and Beautiful (1756); the influence of the Grand Tour and of the landscape painters Claude, Poussin and others; the theories of William Gilpin; and Uvedale Price's 1794 Essays on the Picturesque. As a result of these varied publications filled with the philosophical theories of these influential men, feeling and sensation became extremely important aspects of human emotion used in the creation and aesthetic enjoyment especially of things visual; consequently, the romantic imagination triumphed over the use of reason. Important also to the development of the picturesque vision and romanticism was the "poetic idealization of nature."³⁶

In the eighteenth century, through written sources, the concept of the picturesque came to America, where it found fertile ground and receptive minds in a land filled with expansive, untouched, raw natural beauty.³⁷ The literary productions of the transcendental writers and poets and the paintings of the Hudson River School illustrate the influence of the picturesque upon the creative arts in America.

³⁵Christopher Hussey, The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View (London: Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., 1967), 2.

³⁶Jordan, 55.

³⁷For a full discussion, see Pierson's American Buildings and Their Architects, Part II, Origins of the Picturesque in England and the United States, "9-21.

As both naturalists and horticulturalists, Loudon and Downing were advocates of the picturesque. Their writings and those of their imitators are filled with references to the picturesque. The Italianate was seen by them as an ideal picturesque type of architecture because of its irregular massing and contour. "Irregularity" was regarded as a major characteristic of picturesqueness.³⁸ Downing felt that irregularity produced "a more lively and varied kind of beauty."³⁹ The "elegant variety" of the Italianate produced by asymmetry, towers, cupolas, tall chimneys, and wide eaves all aided in the picturesque "painterly" quality of the style originally suggested by the paintings of Italian classical landscape.⁴⁰ These painterly, picturesque Italianate villas, "were an experiment in light, shadow, atmosphere . . . filled with contrast and surprise."⁴¹ The movement created by their projection and recession of surface planes, and the textural effect of applied ornament, such as the layered moldings and decorative brackets, created what Downing called "articulated irregularity."⁴² (Figure 26)

³⁸Hussey, 218.

³⁹Andrew Jackson Downing, Cottage Residences (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Publishers, 1868), 18, Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia, 18.

⁴⁰Andrew Jackson Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1850; reprint, New York: DaCapo Press, 1968), 140; and Loudon, 916 and 960.

⁴¹Pierson, 332.

⁴²Downing, Cottage Residences, 18.

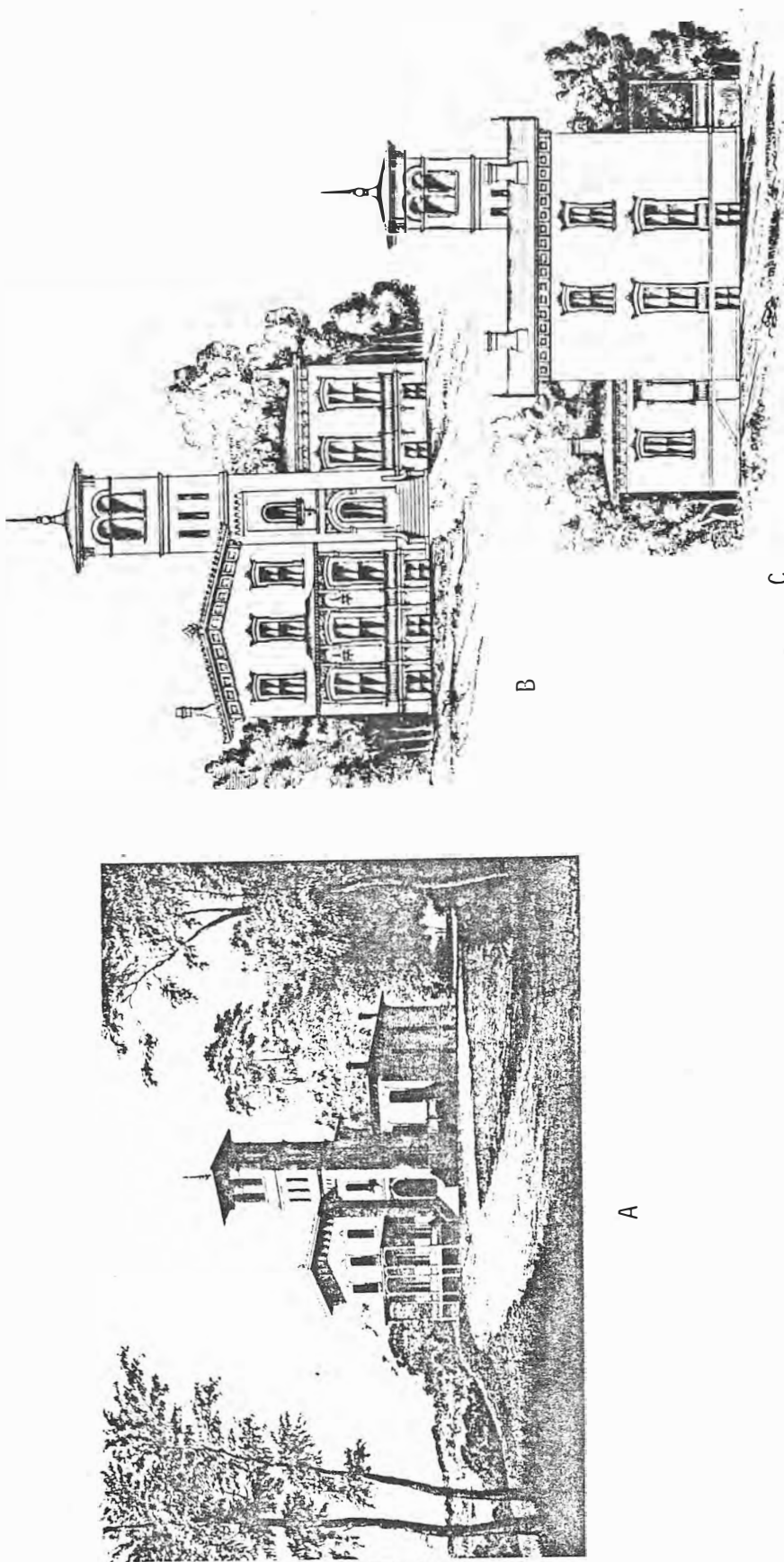


Figure 26. Views of a "painterly" Italianate villa from Samuel Sloan, The Model Architect (1852).
 Courtesy Special Collections, Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

A. The villa in its landscape setting.
 B. Front elevation.
 C. Side elevation.

The contrasting effect of light and dark which irregularity created was subject of much favorable comment in the varied architectural guides because "those features helped to break down the geometric qualities of country houses and helped make them harmonize with the irregular natural forms around them."⁴³ The sensitive design of the structure for and its placement within its natural landscape setting was of major importance in the creation of true picturesqueness. Building and site must harmonize. "Undoubtedly, the excellence and charm of a home consist in the perfect keeping of the artificial construction with the natural objects and the scenery around."⁴⁴ This harmony was achieved by the builder through the use of organic or natural colors and shapes including sprawling, earth-hugging masses such as the projecting wings or verandahs of the house. It was felt that the picturesque, harmonious marriage of man's home with its natural and beautiful surrounding helped it to transcend the everyday and lifted the home into a visual embodiment of morality.⁴⁵ Ruskin pronounced that beauty and nature are reflections of divinity and are imbued with moral quality.⁴⁶

⁴³Early, 64.

⁴⁴Gervase Wheeler, Rural Homes (New York: Charles Scribner, 1857), 56, Special Collections, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.

⁴⁵Roger B. Stein, John Ruskin and Aesthetic Thought in America 1840-1910 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), 55.

⁴⁶Ibid., 37-39.

Associative meaning.

So, too, an Italian villa may recall, to one familiar with Italy and art, by its bold roof lines, its campaniles, and its shady balconies, the classic beauty of that fair and smiling land, where pictures, sculpted figures, vases and urns, in all exquisite form, make part of the decoration surrounding of domestic and public edifices.⁴⁷

Associationism in architecture is a concept especially connected with the nineteenth century. Associationism simply defined has to do with the viewer gleaning symbolic meaning from the historic style of the building, "historical mindedness" being characteristic of the Romantic Movement.⁴⁸ Thus, Victorian architecture was meant to tell a story just like the characteristic Victorian picture.⁴⁹ Various historic styles became symbolic of the ideals and values of past civilizations. Medieval, for example, was often associated with Christianity; the classical Greek or Roman temple with government and/or democracy. The writings of Downing and others are filled with such associative references.

There is indeed both history and poetry in the use of such foreign styles of architecture as may be adopted to our life when these are lovingly and fittingly used by those to whom they are fraught with beautiful memories and associations.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 24.

⁴⁸Early, 30 and 35.

⁴⁹Maass, The Victorian Home in America, 3.

⁵⁰Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 260.

As a result of the widespread influence of associationist theory during the nineteenth century, "the architecture of America would become rich in remembrances of past civilizations."⁵¹

The Italianate was strongly recommended as an ideal style for the home because of its association since antiquity with domestic life. At the same time its rural origins as a style conjured up visions of the healthfulness, simplicity, and the moral industriousness associated with country life. Because of its Italian origins it was also laden with symbolism as a domestic architectural variant of both the ancient classical and Renaissance styles. Therefore even though informal, it communicated the message of its being a home where historic traditions of western civilization, culture, and learning were alive and treasured. Samuel Sloan stated in The Model Architect:

It speaks of the inhabitant as a man of wealth who wishes in a quiet way to enjoy his wealth. It speaks of him as a person of education, of refined tastes, who can appreciate the beautiful both in art and nature, who is accustomed to all the ease and luxury of city life and is now enjoying the more pure and elevating pleasure of the country.⁵²

The later association of the Italianate with the birth of capitalism and mercantilism during the Italian Renaissance made it appealing to the modern "merchant princes" of emerging industrial America who used it across the country for homes, banks, store facades, and factories.

⁵¹Andrews, 98.

⁵²Sloan, 13.

Ethical meaning. Though numerous attempts have been made throughout history to give architecture an ideological purpose, the ethical and moral role of architecture was an especially important aspect of nineteenth century architectural theory.⁵³ The writings of John Ruskin, the English philosopher and influential arbiter of taste, played a powerful role in spreading this concept in both England and America.⁵⁴ Ruskin, Downing, and most of the other architectural theorists influenced by them discoursed endlessly on the importance of truth and morality in architecture.⁵⁵ In reaction to ever-increasing urbanization, industrialization, and resultant social problems, family life was increasingly seen as the bedrock of public morality and consequently of the health of a nation and its entire civilization. Therefore, the architecture of the home where domestic life was centered was viewed with great concern.

The pattern, the foundation, the beginning of all society, is the Family. In this institution, to which, more than to governments or to great men, the progress of humanity may be traced, centre these ties which connect the individual with the community at large. Here we first learn that we are mutually dependent and reciprocally responsible. This connection which begins and ends only with life, and which its members by bonds so strong and yet so delicate, most powerfully affect, for good or ill all who are within its influence. Hence the importance of those means and instruments by which its power is modified. Prominent among these stands the home. . . . Every

⁵³David Watkins, Morality and Architecture (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 4.

⁵⁴See Stein, John Ruskin and Aesthetic Thought in America.

⁵⁵Tatum, Foreword to The Architecture of Country Houses, xiv.

enlightened plan for the advancement of family influence and society in general, will include, among its earliest efforts the improvement of dwellings; and this not only in respect of physical comfort but of that aid which they can be made to render in the suggestion of salutatory associations and the formation of desirable habits. When architecture contributes to such an object, she may justly claim the highest praise. . . . He who improves the dwelling-house of a people in relation to their comforts, habits, and morals, makes a benignant and lasting reform at the very foundation of society.⁵⁶

Downing and others advocated the physically and emotionally healthy and morally regenerative country or rural setting for the ideal home. (Figure 27) Downing stated in his preface to The Architecture of Country Houses that "it is the solitude and the freedom of the family home in the country which constantly preserves the purity of the nation and invigorates its intellectual powers."⁵⁷ Statements and theories like these by respected "authorities" aided in the immense popularity of both the villa and cottage types. They definitely represent an anti-urban and anti-industrial bias on the part of Downing and other theorists.

The Italianate was one of the styles favored for domestic purposes because of its "expressive truthfulness." Fitness for purpose and expression of that purpose were major criteria for truly moral architecture. The Italianate, based on an informal domestic style which had grown organically as the need had arisen, was seen

⁵⁶Henry Cleaveland, William Cleaveland, William Backus, and Samuel O. Backus, Villages and Farm Cottages (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1856), 3-4, Special Collections, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.

⁵⁷Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 15.



Figure 27. "American Country Life--May Morning." Lithograph by Currier and Ives showing a suburban retreat, the American ideal during much of the nineteenth century. An Italianate style home serves as a focal point of the print. Courtesy Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum.

in its irregularity and flexibility as the ideal expression of domesticity. Its "natural" design and plan were to most of the theorists "indicative of inner domestic life."⁵⁸

Downing felt that the particular external features of the Italianate which were symbolic of domestic life within included its comfortable, informal picturesque look; its harmonious blending with its natural surroundings; its earth-hugging horizontality with spreading wings and porches; and its architectural features such as the chimneys, balconies, and canopied windows. He felt that these were features that were expressive of the purpose for which it was built.⁵⁹

Downing elaborated on specific reasons why some of these features denoted domestic life. Chimneys, for example, symbolized "the warmth of the social circle around the family fireplace."⁶⁰ Despite his abstract philosophical ramblings, Downing believed that the practical should be the basis for good domestic architecture. To him the practical in domestic planning was both truthful and moral. He argued that domestic architecture should be less rigid and scientific and should exhibit more of the freedom, play, and feeling of everyday life.⁶¹ Downing's influence broke the long tradition of formal classical planning that had existed for almost two centuries in

⁵⁸Ibid., 259.

⁵⁹Ibid., 10.

⁶⁰Downing, Cottage Residences, 12.

⁶¹Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 24-27.

America.⁶² He felt strongly that the fitness, and therefore the moral truthfulness, of irregular planning of the house created a practical and healthy environment for domestic life.

Italianate in the Mid-South

At some point in the 1850s Isaac Kirtland decided to build an appropriate home for his large family commensurate with his stature as a newly-successful Memphis business and civic leader. His choice of style for this house to be located outside the city's business and financial center was appropriately that of the Italianate villa. It would be interesting to know if he or his wife made the choice because it was popular or if the style appealed to them aesthetically or if they were at all familiar with the symbolic-associative meanings of the Italianate. Most Americans were probably attracted more by the novelty and fashionableness of these varying eclectic styles.⁶³ James Patrick in Architecture in Tennessee states: "People willingly welcomed the new romantic styles to their streets and countrysides, often without paying much attention to the theoretical foundations of these new styles."⁶⁴

During the 1850s the Italianate eclectic architectural style was among those at the peak of fashion across the entire United States. Though it had far greater popularity in the Northeast than

⁶²Early, 41.

⁶³Upton, 149.

⁶⁴Patrick, 141.

in the South, where the Greek revival remained the preferred style among the area's elite up until the Civil War, the Italianate along with the varied Gothic forms ranked as a favorite secondary choice in the region.

Surviving examples of domestic and commercial Italianate style buildings are found today throughout the Mississippi Valley in large cities like St. Louis, Cincinnati, Louisville and in countless smaller towns.⁶⁵ Shipping and rail linkages between these riverport cities helped to spread architectural as well as other fashions. Across the state of Tennessee there are numerous extant examples and many others survive only in photographs.⁶⁶ Harvey M. Akeroyd, an architect who emigrated from England to settle in Nashville, became famous for his Italianate-style buildings and helped to make the style a regionally popular one.⁶⁷ Nashville's noted architect, Adolphus Heiman, also created buildings in the Italianate manner.⁶⁸

In Memphis and the surrounding region the Italianate was used more for commercial architecture, but there were outstanding domestic examples. Evidence of both the townhouse and private detached villa

⁶⁵See for example: Lawrence Lowie, The Architectural Heritage of St. Louis from the Louisiana Purchase to the Wainwright Building 1803-1891 [Exhibition Catalog], St. Louis, Missouri: Washington University Gallery of Art, January 20-March 14, 1982.

⁶⁶See James Patrick, Architecture in Tennessee, Chapter IX, and Architecture of Middle Tennessee, eds. Thomas B. Brumbaugh, Martha J. Strayhorn, and Gary G. Gore (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1974).

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 157.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*

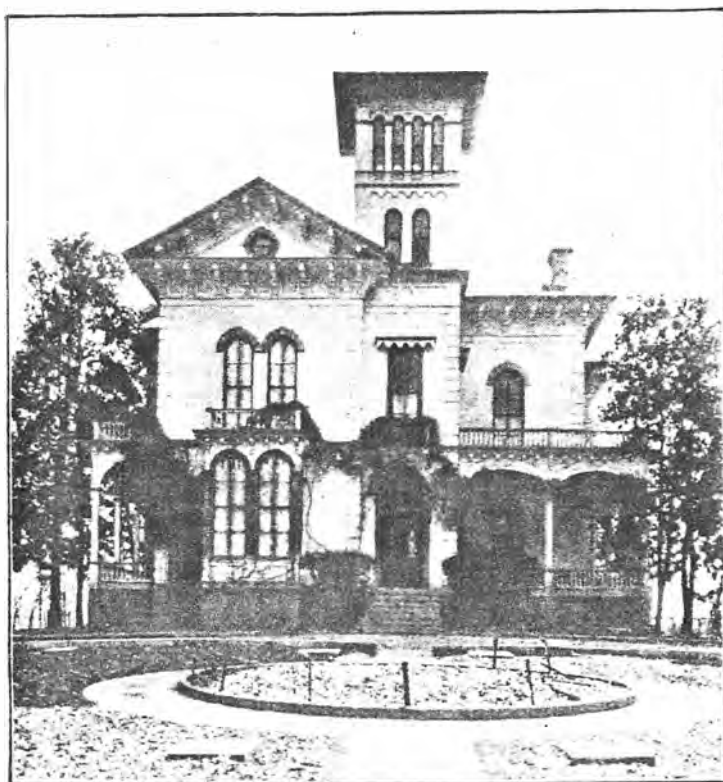
varieties survive, all being contemporary in time to the building of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852). The compilers of the historic American Buildings Survey recorded the now-demolished Titus block, a series of five Italianate (stucco over brick) row houses in downtown Memphis adjacent to Court Square.⁶⁹ Annesdale, a prime example of the L-shaped, towered Italianate villa, still survives in Memphis. It was built in the 1850s on the outskirts of the city by Samuel Mansfield, a successful wholesale druggist from Baltimore, Maryland.⁷⁰ (Figure 28) Little altered since it was built, Annesdale provides an example in a general way of what the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) was like both inside and out. Surviving photographs in local archival collections record other Italianate style villas that stood in Memphis. (Figure 29) An old photograph of Col. William F. Taylor's Italianate house (c. 1860), illustrated in Memphis: A Pictorial History, shows some similarities to the original appearance of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852).⁷¹ Located in Bolivar, Tennessee, not far from Memphis, is the McNeil House, a good example of the square hipped roof variety of the Italianate with cupola.⁷² There are yet other examples to be found in nearby North Mississippi towns such as "Grey Gables"

⁶⁹"Titus Block-1850," Historic American Buildings Survey, 18 April 1934 (HABS No. 19-4), 3.

⁷⁰Magness, 91.

⁷¹Kitty Plunkett, Memphis: A Pictorial History (Norfolk, Virginia: Donning Company Publishers, 1976), 29.

⁷²Patrick, 165.



R. B. SNOWDEN.

Figure 28. Annesdale (c. 1850). This photograph shows the original appearance of the best surviving Italianate style villa in Memphis prior to slight alteration in the early twentieth century. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

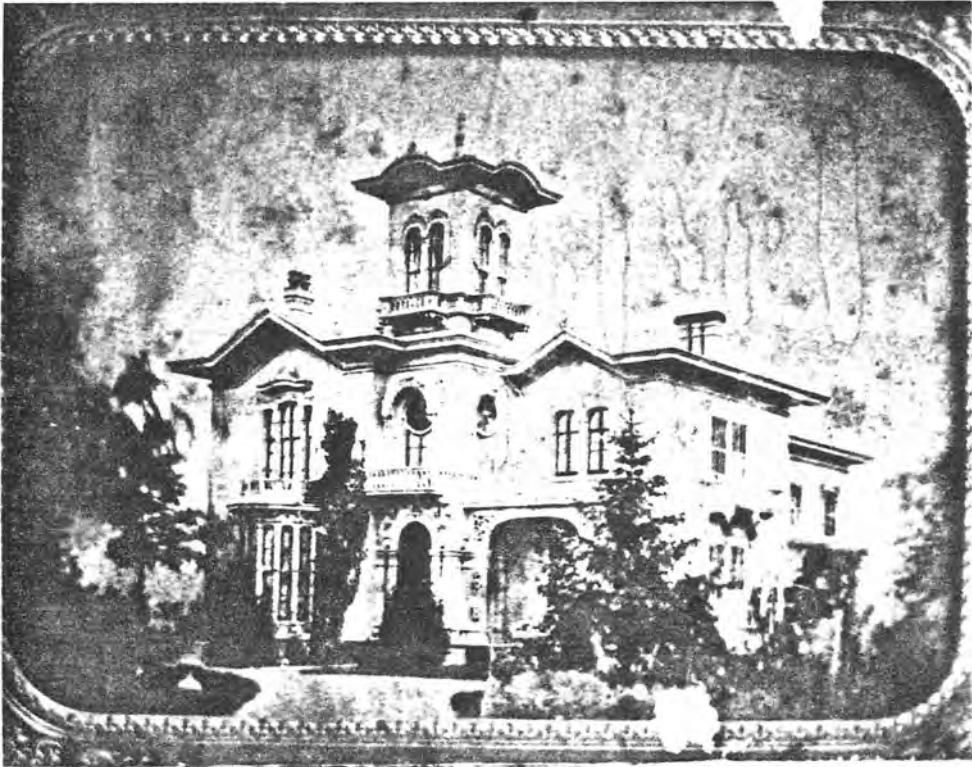


Figure 29. Photograph of an unidentified and no longer standing Memphis suburban villa in the Italianate style. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

in Holly Springs, Mississippi and "Ammadelle" in Oxford, Mississippi.⁷³ The Italianate design of the latter was based on plates illustrated in an article by Downing's partner, Calvert Vaux, entitled "Hints for Country House Builders" published in Harper's New Monthly Magazine (November 1855) and in his architectural pattern book Villas and Cottages.⁷⁴ This example provides concrete evidence that regional builders were aware of the popular architectural pattern-book literature.

Isaac Kirtland was therefore not alone in the Mid-South in his preference for and use of the Italianate. Surely he must have been quite familiar with the style before ever coming to the South. His native New York City and Northern New Jersey was for a forty-year period an area "where the style was the overwhelming favorite for mansion and row houses."⁷⁵ Alexander Jackson Davis, Downing's collaborator and architectural mentor, had his practice in New York City and Downing himself resided and wrote his numerous publications in Newburgh on the Hudson, north of the city. The first picturesquely planned and accordingly landscaped suburb in the United States, Llewellyn Park (mid 1850s), situated in the Oranges area of northern New Jersey where Kirtland's family lived, has been described thus:

A remarkable early experiment in suburban planning, the park was designed in the natural style of landscape gardening, on a site of great scenic beauty, and its early villas and cottages were built in picturesque

⁷³See Mary Wallace Crocker, Historic Architecture in Mississippi (Jackson, MI: University of Mississippi Press, 1982).

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 151-152.

⁷⁵Lockwood, 145.

styles to harmonize with their romantic setting. Park and houses formed a rare unity of landscape and rural architecture.⁷⁶

Several of the villas were designed by Downing's collaborator, Alexander Jackson Davis, in the Italianate style.⁷⁷

The public and those in the building trades in Memphis and across Tennessee had access to the many architectural guides with illustrations of Italianate examples. Downing's books were available in the state from the mid-1840s.⁷⁸ The importance and the value of the varied types of building guides to architectural practice in Tennessee at large is well documented in Chapter III of Patrick's Architecture in Tennessee. At mid-century when Kirtland built his villa, the architectural pattern-books of Downing, Wheeler, Vaux, Davis and others were advertised in the Memphis newspapers. Cleaves' Book Store at No. 12 Front Street, for example, advertised ELEGANTLY ILLUSTRATED NEW BOOKS, among which were Downing's Country Houses and Gervase Wheeler's Rural Homes, Sketches of Houses Suited to an American Life with Sketches and Designs.⁷⁹ Other publications by Downing and Davis appeared in later Cleaves' advertisements. Lamb's Book Store at #2 Madison also advertised similar books, especially those

⁷⁶Jane B. Davis, "Llewellyn Park in West Orange, New Jersey," The Magazine Antiques, 107, No. 1 (January 1975), 142.

⁷⁷Ibid., 145.

⁷⁸Patrick, 41.

⁷⁹Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 3 May 1852, 2.

by Downing. Published plans and elevations by leading national architects like Vaux and Sloan were available to Memphians and Mid-Southerners; these appeared in popular national periodicals such as Harpers and Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine.⁸⁰

Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852)

Architectural Services

The builder-architect and construction date of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) remain unknown. Until a documentary clue of some type is found, speculation must suffice. Research into Tennessee and Memphis regional architectural practice and methods at mid-century, advertisements, and other related records suggest that Kirtland may have (1) acted as architect and used the services of a contractor or dealt directly with the carpenters and others in the building trade; (2) used the services of a local professional architect or contractor-architect; or (3) procured the services of an out-of-town or itinerant architect.

In his discussion of the evolution of architectural practice in Tennessee prior to the Civil War, James Patrick suggests that the term "architect" was used loosely.⁸¹ In fact, the practice was to use the term architect for the person who determined the design and drew

⁸⁰Gail Winkler, "Life According to Godey," Paper presented at the 38th Annual Seminar on American Culture, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York, 4 July 1985.

⁸¹See Patrick, Chapter III, 31-40.

the plan regardless of whether this was the owner, carpenter, or builder.

Owner as architect and/or builder. Isaac Kirtland might have been the architect of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) since it was common practice early in the century for homeowners to act as their own architect. They chose plans from the various guide books, drew their own plans and made their own arrangements by working with a superintendent or by working directly with the skilled craftsmen or carpenters.⁸² Documenting local Memphis practice, the compilers of the Historic American Buildings Survey cite Colonel Fraser Titus as owner, architect, and builder in the 1850s of the Italianate Titus Block adjacent to Court Square.⁸³ The extensive building records surviving in the Robertson Topp Papers provide further examples. They show that during the 1850s Topp employed several local architects in the building of the Gayoso House Hotel and of his own home, but he seems to have acted as architect and personally overseen all aspects of the construction. In fact voluminous correspondence exists in which he ordered everything from shutters to shingles. Endless sub-contracts between himself and local craftsmen for installation or construction work survive.⁸⁴

⁸²Ibid., 35-37.

⁸³"Titus Block-1850," 3.

⁸⁴Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts Folder, Special Collections, Burrow Library, Rhodes College, Memphis.

Professional architect. By the time Kirtland built his home in the 1850s, professional architectural practice, organized in the modern sense of the word with the architect as the planner and idea man, had begun to develop across the state of Tennessee. Memphis, basking in its pre-Civil War economic prosperity, witnessed phenomenal physical growth, and the resultant building boom attracted professional architects. These men began to offer professional services like those advertised by P. H. Hammerkold in the city directory in which he agreed to "furnish designs . . . with all kinds of details and specifications," and by John Morgan in the Memphis Daily Appeal who stated that he was prepared "to execute plans of the first order, together with specifications, detailed drawings, and to superintend their erection."⁸⁵

The architects whose names most frequently appear in the mid-1850 city directories and newspaper advertisements are John L. Morgan, Robert Fletcher, and Thomas Crider. John L. Morgan's advertisement in the 1855 Memphis city directory reveals that he was not only an accomplished professional in his practice but knowledgeable about current styles.

Plans for houses in detail together with specifications, front elevations, perspective and otherwise. Particular attention to COTTAGE PLANS, of the latest Northern & Southern Style neatly executed with all necessary Drawings, in detail, done with neatness and dispatch. Superintending the execution of the Same, if desired. Estimates, value to work done. Measuring, Brickwork,

⁸⁵Patrick, 32; and "Architect: J. L. Morgan," Memphis Appeal [advertisement], 4 July 1855, 3.

Plastering, Painting, and everything in my line will receive prompt attention.⁸⁶

The following advertisement in the 4 March 1885 Memphis Daily Appeal announced the return to Memphis of Colonel Robert Fletcher, architect:

At the earnest solicitation of many of the old residents of Memphis, I propose to resume my profession as an Architect. I look back with pride to a large majority of the buildings in Memphis and vicinity created by me previous to the war. . . . I refer to the following citizens as to my ability and standing:

W. L. Vance
J. M. Hill
Amos Woodruff
Henry A. Montgomery
Hugh M. Neely⁸⁷

In a later issue of the same paper in the PERSONALS column appears the following:

Col. Robert Fletcher is the oldest architect in the State, before the war he was the pioneer architect of this city. Many of the finest buildings here were built by him in old times, namely the Greenlaw Opera House, Overton Hotel, Gayoso House, Ayers Block, Irving Block, New Memphis Theatre and a number of others, including a large number of private residences.⁸⁸

Fletcher served as the principal architect for Robertson Topp, prominent Memphis businessman and owner of the city's noted Gayoso Hotel, for which he designed a new wing. The Robertson Topp Papers document the services Fletcher performed for Topp among which

⁸⁶W. H. Rainey & Co.'s Memphis City Directory [advertisement], Memphis: E. R. Martlett, and M.D., W.D., W. H. Rainey Publishers, 1855, 206.

⁸⁷"B. Fletcher, Architect," Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 4 March 1885, 3.

⁸⁸"Personals," Memphis Daily Appeal, 8 March 1885, 7.

included building designs, plans, and specifications; traveling to procure materials; paying bills; overseeing construction and sub-contractors; and verifying incoming shipments.⁸⁹

Besides Morgan, Fletcher, and Crider there were also other architects like Walter Crane, the city engineer, who stated in advertisements that he could do all kinds of architectural work. He designed the Second Presbyterian Church where Kirtland was a member and ruling elder.

Out-of-town and itinerant architects.

In an era when urban concentration was rare and wealth derived from the land, architects often traveled leaving behind a landscape dotted with examples of their skills.⁹⁰

By mid-nineteenth century itinerant architects plied their skills across the country. The use by Mid-Southerners of the services of an architect from another town or region was not an uncommon practice. Architects from other cities advertised in the Memphis city papers as illustrated by the following:

Cincinnati Architects Anderson and Hannaford . . . communications from a distance will receive prompt attention.⁹¹

There are many recorded instances of architects from St. Louis, Chicago and other cities being used by Memphians and those in other regional towns. There are examples through the century of their

⁸⁹Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts Folder.

⁹⁰Patrick, 129.

⁹¹Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 21 January 1860, 17.

employment to plan theatres, churches, and other buildings. The following are illustrative examples. In 1835 architect Martin E. Thompson of New York was brought in to design and superintend the building of the Commercial and Railroad Bank of Vicksburg, Mississippi. His account book records traveling expenses to and from that city.⁹² In 1842 Robertson Topp hired the New Orleans architect James Darkin, one of the founders of the A.I.A., to design the Hotel Gayoso. In 1858 he hired Isaiah Rogers of the firm Rogers, Whitestone and Co. of Cincinnati and Louisville to provide plans for enlarging the hotel.⁹³ As late as 1884 the author of a letter to the editor of The Memphis Daily Appeal complained that despite the fact that the city had its own architects, Memphians still persisted in procuring the services of out-of-town architects.⁹⁴ A tally of architects listed in Memphis city directories from mid-century to the later years of the nineteenth century show a constantly changing list of names.

Contractor as architect and/or builder. Self-made, independent contractors were also active in Memphis during this period.⁹⁵ These

⁹²Robertson Topp to Rogers, Whitestone and Company, 19 August 1856, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 8, Folder 5.

⁹³Lawrence E. Romaine, "Martin E. Thompson, "A Reconstruction of His Architectural Career from His Account Book," Bulletin of the New York Public Library, 66, No. 5 (May 1962), 286.

⁹⁴Memphis Daily Appeal, 4 July 1884, 11.

⁹⁵Patrick in Architecture in Tennessee (p. 129) explains that the term "undertaker" was originally used to designate the person

builders often served as "architects." The best known contractual firms in mid-nineteenth century Memphis were William Bickford & Co., William M. Greenlaw & Co., and John L. Saffarans & Co. All of these firms provided architectural design, contracting, and subcontracting services. A John L. Saffaran's Company advertisement in the 1855 Memphis city directory, for example, stated that they could build everything, "from a cottage to a palace."⁹⁶ Isaac Kirtland may have engaged one of these Memphis contracting firms to provide the design and build the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852).

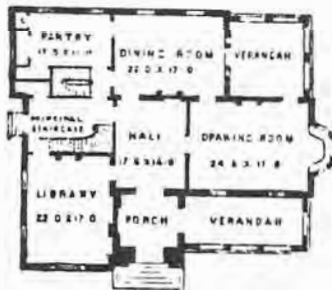
Pattern Book Sources

One questions whether the owner, professional architect or contractor responsible for designing and building the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) used a particular plan for the house taken from one of the popular architectural pattern books. Despite extensive research, no exact elevation or plan has been discovered. However, the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) is similar to numerous examples in the large guidebook literature, such as the elevations shown in Design 19 of Calvert Vaux's Villas and Cottages and in plates 21 and 22 in Samuel Sloan's The Model Architect. (Figure 30) The c. 1852 Mallory-Neely plan is close to many of those illustrated

responsible for completion of the building from the agreed-upon plans, but that by 1880 the term contractor had replaced undertaker in common usage.

⁹⁶W. H. Rainey & Co.'s Memphis City Directory & General Business Advertiser (Memphis: E. R. Martlett, M.D. & W. H. Rainey, 1855), 166.

DESIGN No. 19.—(D. & V.)



PLAN OF PRINCIPAL FLOOR



PLAN OF PRINCIPAL FLOOR



Figure 30. Variations in plan and elevation of an Italianate villa as illustrated in Calvert Vaux, Villas and Cottages (1857). Courtesy Dover Publications, Inc.

in the pattern books by Sloan, a Philadelphia architect who published many of these guides and whose brother, Fletcher, practiced architecture in nearby Bolivar, Tennessee. A plan somewhat near to the existing one (with some wall and room alteration) and an elevation (in reverse and more ornate) similar to a surviving stereoptican view of the unaltered facade of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) are from Modern American Architecture: Designs and Plans for Villas, Farm Houses, Cottages, and City Residences.⁹⁷ (Figure 31)

This quest for an exact source is probably futile. Dell Upton in her essay, "Pattern Books and Professionalism," states that direct borrowing from these pattern books was not common and has been overly exaggerated. "Standing structures that were copied directly from Downing or his imitators are rare, and it is more common to find examples of both sorts that diverge widely in their fidelity to published plans."⁹⁸ She explains that local architects, contractors, and carpenters using "a selective process" made adaptive use of these pattern books, "freely extracting what they found interesting" and then merged these borrowed ideas with local vernacular traditions.⁹⁹

Italianate Features

Visual analysis of the lower two stories of the surviving house and of two early photographs of the Mallory-Neely House

⁹⁷M. F. Cummings and C. C. Miller, Modern American Architecture: Designs and Plans for Villas, Farm Houses, Cottages, and City Residences. (New York: A. J. Bicknell Company, 1867).

⁹⁸Upton, 136.

⁹⁹Ibid., 149.



FRONT ELEVATION.



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

Figure 31. Elevation and plan from Modern American Architecture by M. F. Cummings and C. C. Miller (1867). These show some similarities to the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852), though here the facade is reversed and the floor plan is subdivided into more rooms.

(c. 1852) before alteration shows that many of the characteristic features of the Italianate style were used. These include the central campanile or "Italian tower," as Downing called it; full-arched, canopied or hooded, two paned glazed, bracketed, and paired windows; a balcony; projecting bays; double doors; quoins; a rusticated door surround; verandahs with balustrades and arcades supported by square box columns; and (before alteration) projecting eaves with bracket supports and a low pitched roof. (Figure 32).

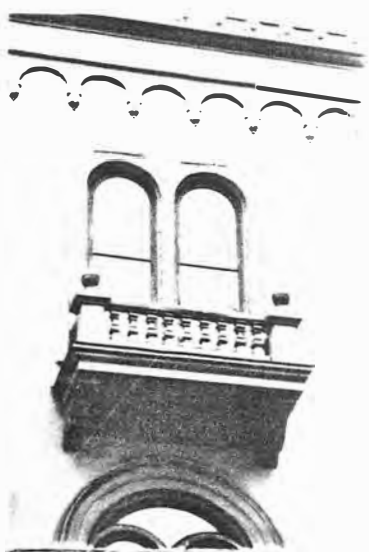
Characteristic also of the Italianate, especially in the South, is the exterior stucco finish over brick. Stucco intended to imitate stone at realistic prices.¹⁰⁰ Downing discoursed at great length about the use of stucco, even though its imitation of stone caused him to have some reservation because of its violation of architectural "truth." He felt that it was practical for use in areas where stone was scarce and expensive to import.¹⁰¹ He recommended the use of stucco because it was cheaper, warmer, and dryer.¹⁰² For the Mallory-Neely House the exterior stucco surface, as was commonly done, is scored to resemble the pointing of ashlar blocks. This practice bothered Downing who felt that if stucco had to be pointed it should "truthfully" reflect the building material used beneath, such as stone or brick. But he admitted with frustration that this was never done as he wished.¹⁰³ These scored lines in the stucco "were

¹⁰⁰Jordan, 112.

¹⁰¹Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 37.

¹⁰²Ibid., 37.

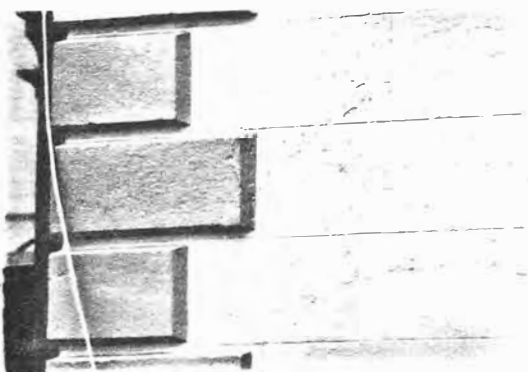
¹⁰³Ibid., 63.



A



B



C

Figure 32. Details of some of the characteristic Italianate features of the original two floors and tower of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852).

- A. Balcony and double window.
- B. Hood over arched window.
- C. Quoins.

sometimes marked with graphite or other coloring to make them show up better."¹⁰⁴

The original and characteristic Italianate coloring of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) was possibly representative of the the influence of Andrew Jackson Downing; he was very much concerned about appropriate color selection for domestic architecture. He felt that it was important to select colors for houses that softened their architectural features and "blended" or "harmonized" them with their natural surround.¹⁰⁵ This organic unity was achieved by selecting colors suggested by nature. Downing advised his readers to copy the colors of soils, rocks, woods, bark of trees because they were the materials of which houses are made.¹⁰⁶ He also suggested taking the soil into one's hand from the foundation excavations and studying it for color choices. Neutral tints drawn from nature and favored by Downing because of their "softness and quietness" were shades of faun, drab, grey, and brown. In order to express "fitness and truth" Downing also felt the color chosen should express "the style and character of the house itself." A cottage should be painted a cheerful and lively tint. A large mansion should reflect dignity and stability, therefore, a sombre

¹⁰⁴Harley J. McKee, Introduction to Early American Masonry: Stone, Brick, Mortar, and Plaster (National Trust for Historic Preservation and Columbia University's Series on the Technology of Early American Building, No. 1, 1980), 86.

¹⁰⁵Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 199.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 201.

hue was recommended.¹⁰⁷ During the course of painting, the wooden parts of the house were usually "sanded," giving them a stone-like finish so as "to agree with the walls of the house, or to appear to harmonize with the stone."¹⁰⁸

The painted treatment of the characteristic window canopies called "hoods" by Calvert Vaux added a further touch of color to the Italianate building. Especially in Southern states these were used "to cut the heat." The canopies were made as canvas awnings stretched over light iron frames or were sawn from wood and then painted to resemble fabric awnings.¹⁰⁹ Original photographs of the Kirtland villa show that the second-story windows had wooden awnings and two still survive on the west side. Roger Moss in his extensive research into nineteenth century exterior color usage has found that these Italianate awnings were often painted with wide green and white stripes to imitate canvas.¹¹⁰

Regional Characteristics

"Regionalism" was important to Downing and his architectural pattern book imitators in their discussion of the Italianate and

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 202.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 310.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 116.

¹¹⁰Roger Moss, "The Colorful Victorians," Paper presented at the 38th Annual Seminar on American Culture, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York, 4 July 1985.

other Picturesque Eclectic styles. The original parts of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) provide a prime example of a Southern regional type. One of the major arguments made for use of the Italianate by Downing and others in the pattern books was its flexibility and versatility, characteristics making it ideal for regional use because the style could be altered to suit the peculiar needs and habits of an area. Downing stressed that our nation was an expansive one with diversity of climate and that architects must consider fitness of style to region.¹¹¹ Downing as well as others agreed that in building domestic architecture, locale and climate, along with practicality and usage, were all important factors to consider. This concept is reflective of what has been called "Romantic Functionalism."¹¹² Samuel Sloan stated in The Model Architect that nearly one half of the suburban houses built in the United States in the last ten years were in the Italianate style, "modified to suit tastes and climate."¹¹³ All of these architectural theorists felt that the Italianate was an ideal choice climatically for the South. "The Italianate style by its verandah, and balconies, its projecting roofs, and the capacity and variety of its forms is especially suited to a warm climate."¹¹⁴ Downing and others featured Southern Italianate villas shown in elevation and accompanied by descriptions citing

¹¹¹Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 7.

¹¹²Early, 98.

¹¹³Sloan, 114.

¹¹⁴Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 21.

specific Southern regional needs and characteristics. Some of these regional features can be seen in the Mallory-Neely House today and in pre-1883 alteration photographs.

Shade and ventilation. Architectural shade was created by bold overhanging cornices and wide-spreading roof giving "greater coolness to the walls or sides of a building; protected by shade from the direct rays of the sun, all the hottest part of the day."¹¹⁵ The awning-shaded windows provided the same function. (Figure 33)

In warmer regions of the country thickly constructed walls were suggested as a method of retaining coolness. Sloan, for example, recommended that walls be made nineteen inches thick.¹¹⁶ The c. 1852 walls in the Mallory-Neely House are eighteen inches thick. Vertical ventilation flues built into these walls to aid in circulation were also suggested. This advice was followed by the builder of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852).

For Southern architecture, interior verticality and high ceilings to aid in the flow of air were recommended.¹¹⁷ Downing stated that twelve to fourteen foot ceilings were typical for the height of the principle rooms of a villa.¹¹⁸ The circa 1852 Mallory-Neely ceilings ranged in height from fourteen and one half to fifteen feet

¹¹⁵Ibid., 313.

¹¹⁶Sloan, 81.

¹¹⁷Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 396.

¹¹⁸Wheeler, Rural Homes, 138.

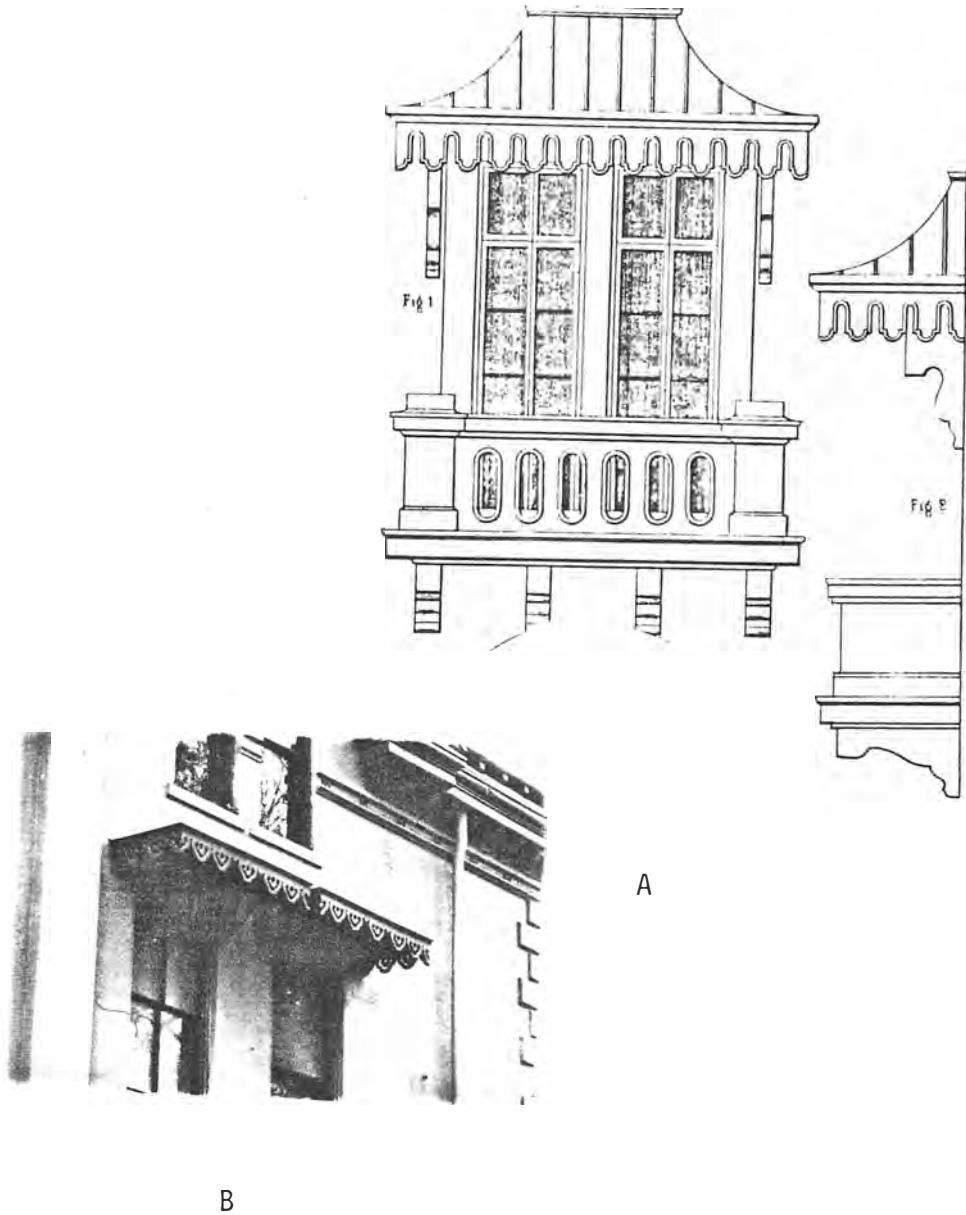


Figure 33. Italianate window awnings.

- A. Front and profile drawings of a window canopy for an Italianate dwelling from Samuel Sloan, The Model Architect (1852). Special Collections, Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
- B. Detail of the two window canopies (c. 1852) still in place on the Mallory-Neely House.

high. Downing and Wheeler both stressed the importance of airy rooms in hot climates; therefore, the continued use of the traditional Southern central hall as seen in the Mallory-Neely Mansion today was considered important for cross ventilation through the house.¹¹⁹

Large tall windows, especially those that could open into the verandahs, were suggested. Windows which continue to the floor also functioned as doorways and when opened created a "union of rooms and verandahs."¹²⁰ Many of the rooms in the Mallory-Neely House that open onto the verandahs have this type of window including the second floor master bedroom.

Inside or out louvered shutters, or "shutter blinds" as Downing called them, were recommended as an easily adjustable aid in controlling "coolness and airiness."¹²¹ Among the surviving millwork features of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) are the inside shutters, many of which conveniently fold when not in use into well insets in the window frames.

Separate kitchen building. Probably the single most common Southern domestic architectural feature cited in most of the pattern-books was the detached kitchen building. This practice separated the heat and odor generating kitchen and other task areas from the genteel parts of the home. Samuel Sloan stated that "the kitchen, which is their dwelling for the house servants, is rarely under the

¹¹⁹Wheeler, Homes for the People, 119.

¹²⁰Sloan, 55.

¹²¹Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 373.

roof of the mansion, but is made a separate tenement."¹²² Downing called this a peculiar feature of the Southern country. Calvert Vaux labeled these "summer kitchens."¹²³ The Southern kitchen building was a separate unit often used for kitchen, storage, and servant's quarters but, as Gervase Wheeler stressed, near enough "to allow the machinery of living to be fully attended to."¹²⁴

The Mallory-Neely house service wing was originally a separate building containing three floors with kitchen and servants quarters. (Figure 34) In the early twentieth century this building was connected with the main house by wood-covered passageways.¹²⁵ Obviously whoever designed the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) was much attuned to regional architectural needs and practice.

Technological Modernization and Building Materials

Regardless of who designed the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852), they took advantage of the dawning modernization of the building industry. Much of the surviving architectural millwork including the verandah arcades, columns, balustrades, and cornices and the two surviving scalloped window awnings are all made from wood and

¹²²Sloan, 123.

¹²³Calvert Vaux, Villas and Cottages, A Series of Designs Prepared for Execution in the United States (New York: Harpers & Brothers, 1857), 57, Special Collections, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.

¹²⁴Wheeler, Homes for the People, 133.

¹²⁵Mrs. William Morgan and Mrs. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., Interview by author, Memphis, Tennessee, 4 October 1985.

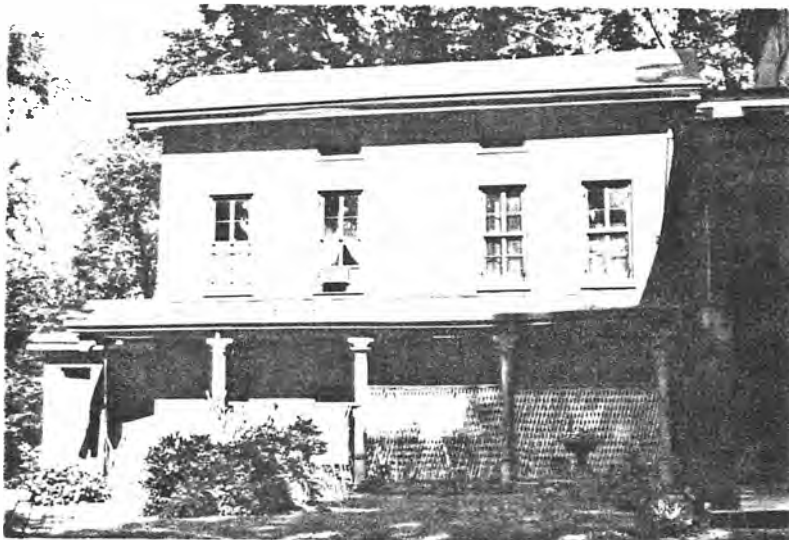


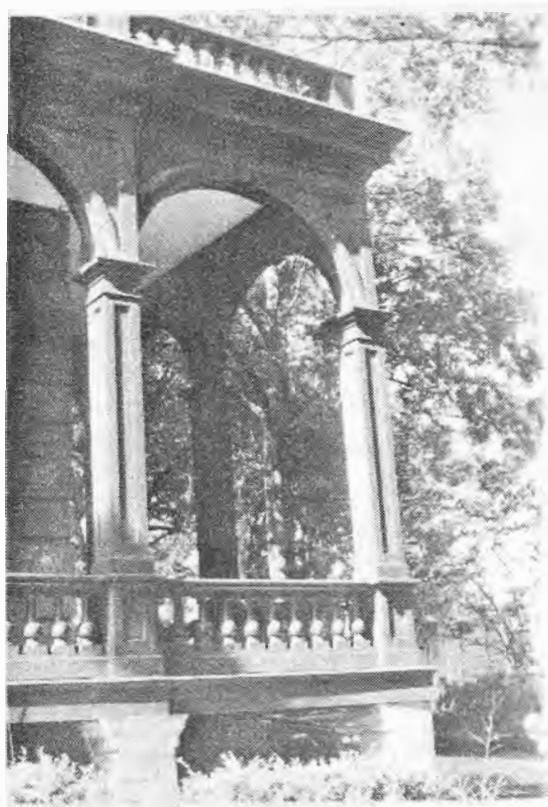
Figure 34. Service-kitchen wing of the Mallory-Neely House. This building, containing three floors, six rooms, and a privy, was originally detached and connected only to the main house by a porch and covered walkways.

are illustrative of early technological advances and inventions in the milling industry such as steam powered lathes and a variety of specialized saws. It is likely that the Mallory-Neely millwork was ordered prefabricated from manufacturing distribution centers like Cincinnati and sent by river packet to Memphis. (Figures 35 and 36).

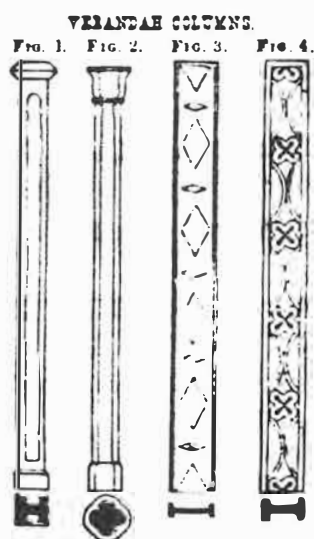
At mid-century a home or most all of the parts of a house could be "mail ordered," shipped in, and erected by local builders. The archives of the Cincinnati Historical Society contain an illustrated catalog entitled Hinkle, Guild & Co.'s Plans of Buildings, Moldings, Architraves, Base, Brackets, Stairs, Newels, Balusters, Rails, Cornice, Mantels, Window Frames, Sash Door, Columns, Etc. for the Use of Carpenters & Builders Adapted to the Styles of the U.S.; the preface states:

In presenting our book of plans, moldings, etc. to the public, we call attention . . . to the plans of a few of the private residences which we have furnished to different localities in different sections of the country . . . and show that our manufactured work is used in private residences of the first class. We are now, and have been for the last thirty years, extensively engaged in the business of building houses and manufacturing all kinds of carpenter work for the inside and outside finish of brick, frame, and stone buildings of every description. Our factory is the largest of its kind in the United States, and its location is convenient for shipping our goods. It is situated on the banks of the Ohio River It is near the depots of the Ohio and Mississippi Railways. We have been furnishing our manufactured work to master-builders in our own and other cities, and to fifteen different states and territories.¹²⁶

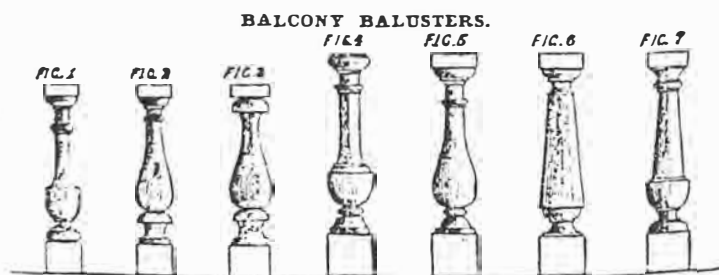
¹²⁶Hinkle, Guild & Co. Plans of Buildings, Moldings, Architraves, Bases, Brackets, Newels, Balusters, Rails, etc., Cincinnati, 1869, n.p. [trade catalog]; Special Collections, Cincinnati Historical Society, Cincinnati, Ohio.



A



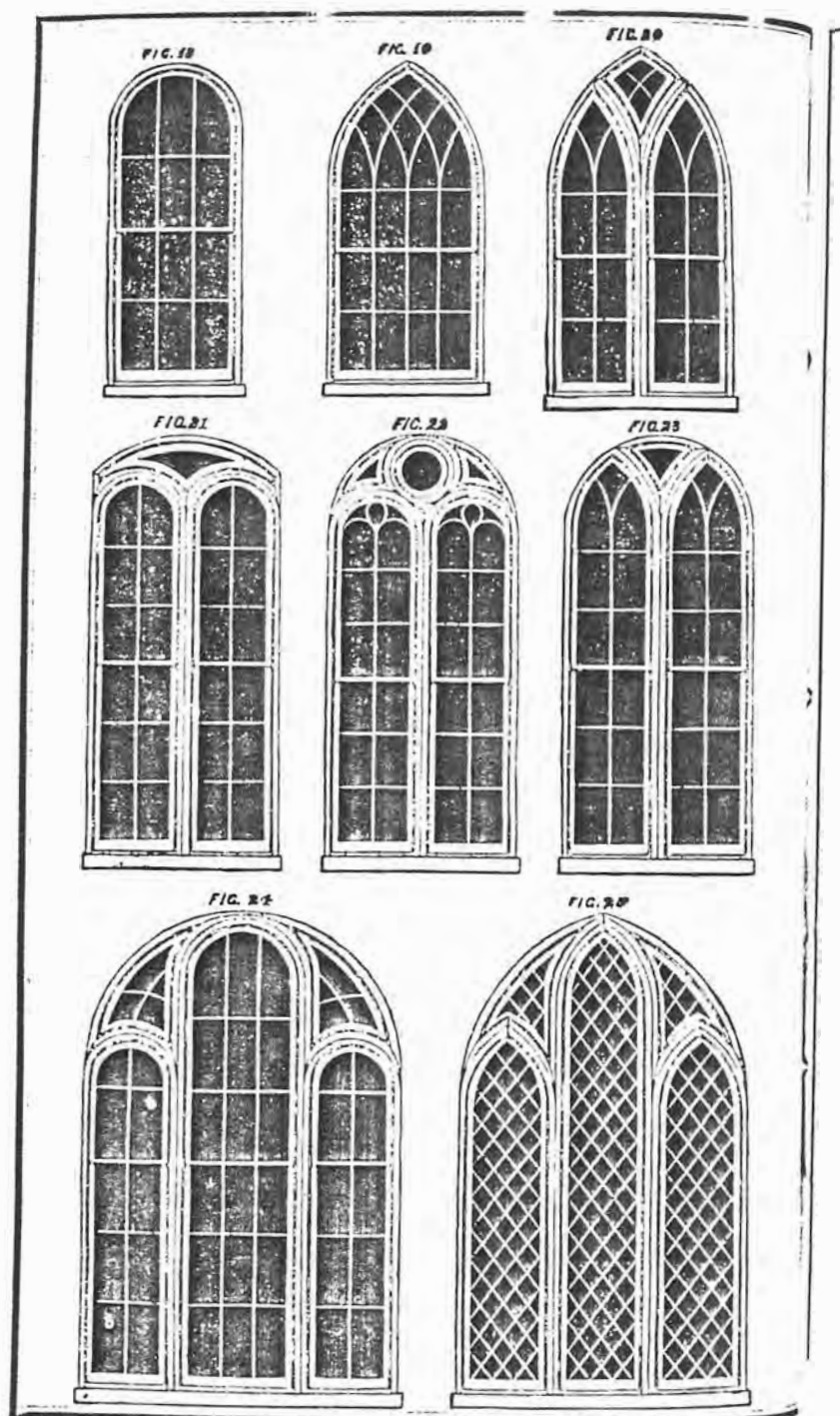
B



C

Figure 35. Pre-fabricated millwork.

- A. Detail of a c. 1852 section of the Mallory-Neely House showing some of the original wooden millwork including turned balusters, square paneled columns supporting arches, and cornice moldings.
- B. Detail from the 1869 catalog of Hinkle, Guild & Company showing mail-order verandah columns.
- C. Detail from the 1869 catalog of Hinkle, Guild & Company showing mail-order balusters. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.



A



B

Figure 36. Prefabricated windows.

- A. Typical page from the 1869 Hinkle, Guild & Company catalog illustrating pre-fabricated millwork such as these Gothic Revival and Italianate style windows available for shipment anywhere. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.
- B. Detail of the Mallory-Neely House tower showing similar windows.

There are eleven pages illustrating facade elevations of houses built throughout the nation, especially in the South, which were made with Hinkle, Guild & Co. building materials. (Figure 37) Examples are shown in Memphis and other southern towns including Jackson and Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Livingston, Lexington, and Natchez, Mississippi; Little Rock and Helena, Arkansas; and Princeton, Kentucky. Many of these are Italianate derivatives. All illustrations list the local architect and contractors who constructed the dwellings. The Princeton, Kentucky example lists M. L. Caldwell of Memphis as architect.

Documenting nineteenth century mail-order practice in Memphis, the Robertson Topp Papers contain extensive personal correspondence, written to supply houses in large manufacturing distribution centers like New York, Philadelphia, and especially Cincinnati, concerning materials needed for the construction of additions to both his home and hotel. In this correspondence survive orders for the interior and exterior millwork for his home, most ordered from James Griffith and Co. of Cincinnati. Similar orders for the Gayoso Hotel include those for verandahs, mantels, balusters, and newels, and window shutters. Individual letters refer to the dates and methods of shipping these materials. Receipts and bills survive showing that most were shipped on Cincinnati-to-Memphis river packets.¹²⁷

¹²⁷Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts Folder; and Box 8, Folder 4.

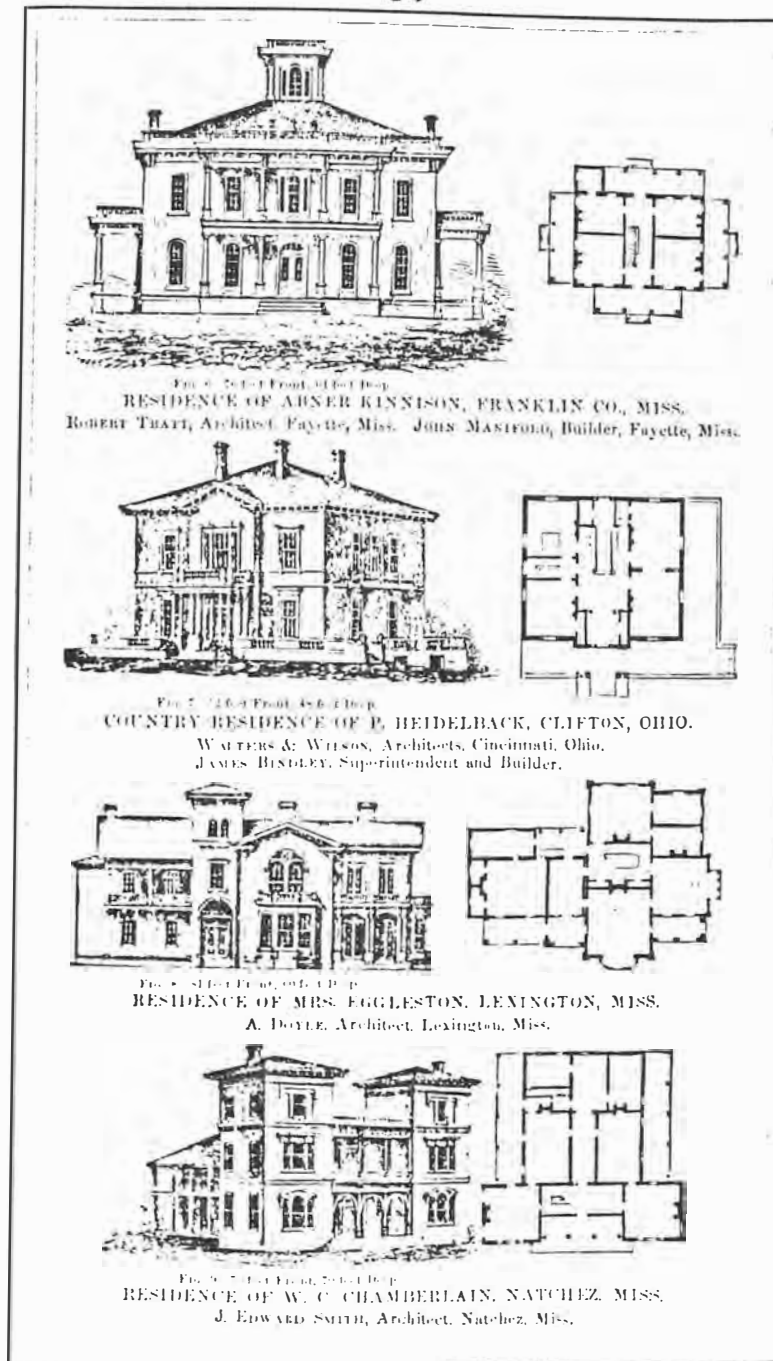


Figure 37. One of several pages from the 1869 Hinkle, Guild & Company catalog illustrating Italianate style houses constructed throughout the Mississippi Valley using its prefabricated millwork. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.

Mallory-Neely House (c. 1890)

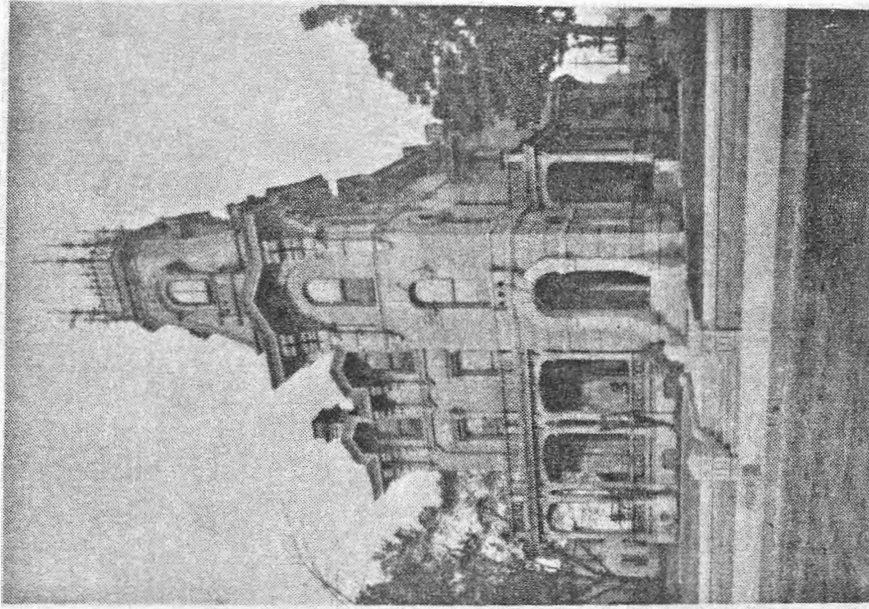
After his purchase of the house in 1883, James Columbus Neely began architectural alterations to the former Kirtland-Babb home which had survived thirty-three years in its original form through changing ownership, war, pestilence, and economic upheaval. The Neely home would undergo a stylistic metamorphosis, changing from a suburban Italianate villa into a medieval castle-like urban mansion. Visual perusal by the Neelys of homes lining Adams and other elite residential streets in Memphis must have made their new home appear stylistically out-of-date. The now old-fashioned Italianate villa looked insignificant compared to the many new palatial and fashionable mansions of relatives, friends, business associates and competitors. The Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) must have suffered most in comparison with the showy splendor of its neighboring Woodruff-Fontaine House built between 1870 and 1871 and the frontal addition to the Goyer-Lee House erected in 1873. (Figure 38) Both of these are veritable textbook examples of the Second Empire style at its most ornate with mansard roofs, elaborate all-over ornamentation and ironwork embellishment. Both were built by men who, like Neely, had diverse business interests, including banking, cotton, and industry, and needed homes symbolic of their positions in the ruling plutocracy of gilded era Memphis.

Stylistic Updating (c. 1890)

J. C. Neely's decision to alter stylistically an already existing house instead of constructing a totally new one was not an unusual choice.



A



B

Figure 38. Second Empire style Memphis mansions. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.
A. Woodruff-Fontaine House.
B. Goyer-Lee House.

Such alterations seem to have been commonplace in the nineteenth century, as innumerable surviving examples attest. The practice was sufficiently widespread, in fact, that William M. Woollett could write Old Homes Made New (New York, 1878) specifically to meet the needs of home owners who wished to bring the style of their own home up to date.¹²⁸

Homes other than the Mallory-Neely survive that illustrate this practice in nineteenth-century Memphis. The neighboring Goyer-Lee House originally built in 1848 was enlarged and stylistically updated in 1865, and again in 1871 in the "Modern French Style."¹²⁹ The nearby Bradford-Maydwell Home on Poplar Street was initially a Federal-style house which was "modernized" by the addition of an Italianate facade.¹³⁰

Norman style. In surviving descriptions of late nineteenth-century Memphis homes, J. C. Neely's altered house is described as "Norman." Some of the architectural alterations which stylistically transformed the c. 1852 house into a Norman one included the raising of the third attic floor into a full story, a change which significantly heightened the pitch of the roof, front gable, and chimneys. An additional story was added to the central tower which was then crowned with a steep pyramidal roof, a radical change from the

¹²⁸Jack Quinan, "The Transformation of an Asher Benjamin House," The Magazine Antiques, 122, No. 2 (August 1982), 288-292.

¹²⁹Magness, 66.

¹³⁰"Crump Home and Others Placed on National Register," Memphis Press Scimitar, 16 January 1980, 1(2).

original very low one. The large two-storied bay extension on the east side of the house was also raised a full floor and then topped with a conical roof, transforming it from a bay into a tower. (Figure 39) All of these changes gave the restyled Norman house a new look of attenuated verticality which created a dramatic departure in symbolic communication from that of the earlier Italianate villa. Andrew Jackson Downing had stressed that a domestic house should be more horizontal in orientation with vertical accents like a tower added only for design contrast. He stated that a house "hugging the earth," with low parts spreading in several directions, suggested a rooted and settled home life and domesticity. Neely's alterations created a towering, castle-like house more symbolic of substantial wealth and power than domestic life. Samuel Sloan in The Model Architect suggested the use of the Norman as a style expressive of "very bold great strength and vast ponderous magnificence."¹³¹

The Norman or English Romanesque is one of the variants of Romanesque architecture, itself one of the many medieval sub-types of the Romantic Picturesque styles used throughout the nineteenth century in America. It was never as popular as other styles and seems not to have evolved in any logical or sequential manner but was used erratically during the century. The most celebrated early use of the style was James Renwick's Smithsonian Institution

¹³¹Sloan, 48.



Figure 39. Mallory-Neely House as it appears today with J. C. Neely's post-1890 additions grafted on top of Kirtland's c. 1852 Italianate villa.

building (1847).¹³² Downing and some of his imitators illustrated and discussed Norman style homes in their architectural pattern-books. These were often similar to the Italianate but with Romanesque-Medieval details. (Figure 40) Sloan for example, discussed at length the Norman style which "because of its lofty and impressive grandeur" he felt was almost without rival for public buildings such as capitols, court-houses, prisons, and libraries; it was second only to the Gothic style for churches.¹³³ For domestic architecture though he suggested that:

this style is only adapted to those on a large scale. Its heavy bold, and rich expression would be lost in a building of small size, but for an extensive villa it presents admirable features.¹³⁴

Late in the century an original up-dated version of the Romanesque was introduced by the famous architect Henry Hobson Richardson, whose name was given to the style Richardsonian Romanesque. After Richardson's early death there were many architects and builders who created, from 1879 into the 1890s, far less inventive Romanesque-style buildings across the country, many using Richardsonian features.¹³⁵ The new sandstone Memphis Cossitt Library, on whose board J. C. Neely served, was one of these. New churches being built in Memphis at this time were also constructed in the Romanesque style. These included the Beale Street Baptist

¹³²Massey, n.p.

¹³³Sloan, 48.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵McAlester and McAlester, 302.

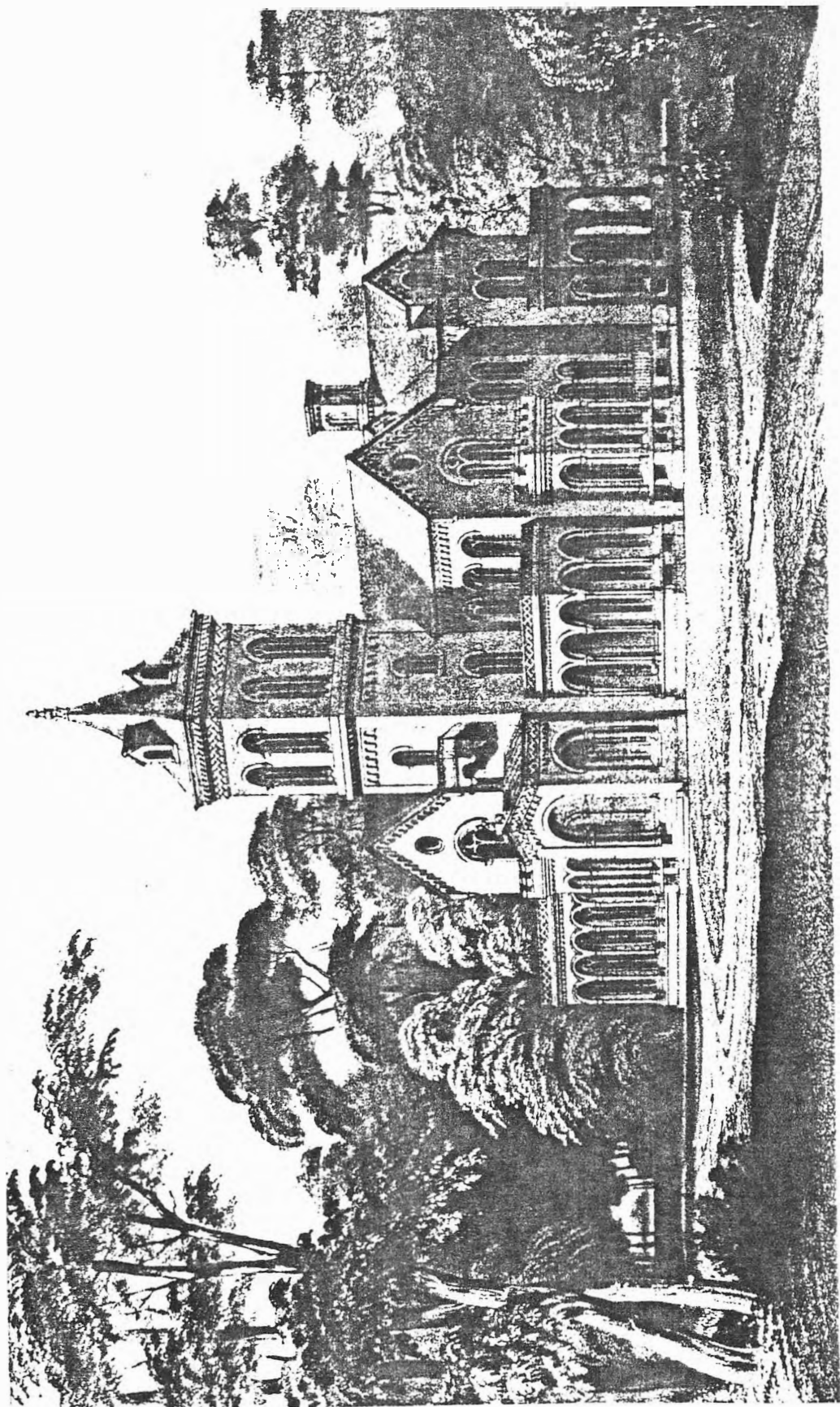


Figure 40. Villa in the Norman style from Samuel Sloan, The Model Architect (1852).
Courtesy Special Collections, Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Church, Central Baptist Church and the Neely's family church, First Presbyterian, which was reconstructed in 1883, at which time contemporary accounts described it as Norman.¹³⁶ In Victorian Village extant houses such as the Lowenstein and the Mollie Fontaine Taylor Houses built in the 1890s show Romanesque and Richardsonian touches.¹³⁷

It seems that someone in Memphis was knowledgeable about architectural literature and styles, and was astute enough to realize that the Norman, as illustrated by Downing and others, was similar enough to graft onto the early Italianate villa without having to change the external architecture of the lower floors. Some of the particular features found in Neely's additions that are associated with the Romanesque style are pyramidal and conical roofed towers, arcaded corbel tables used as ornament, round arched windows, solid wall surfaces, controlled ornamentation, and a cruciform attic window. (Figure 41)

Visual analysis of J. C. Neely's architectural additions and study of contemporary architectural trends reveal that the remodeled home cannot be solely described as Norman. By the 1880s there was even less stylistic purity than there had been before! Homes built during this time were stylistically eclectic amalgams of many historic styles used in an innovative, modern way and incorporating recent

¹³⁶Priddy, 142-145.

¹³⁷Mary Wallace Crocker, "Architectural Styles in Victorian Village," Victorian Village Arts and Pops Festival '84 Second Annual Commemorative Program (Memphis: Victorian Village Incorporated, 2 September 1984), n.p.



Figure 41. Mallory-Neely House showing Neely's circa 1890 additions.
A. View from the West showing high pitched roof and complex gables.
B. View from the East showing the original two-story Italianate bay elevated into a cone-topped tower.

technological advances.¹³⁸ Overall picturesqueness of effect remained and in fact became an even higher priority.¹³⁹ Some of the stylistic combinations which were in vogue along with the Romanesque in the 1880s and 90s, influences of which are found in the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1890) additions, are the Queen Anne, and the Chateausque.

Queen Anne style. Late Victorian Queen Anne architecture has been described as "an Aesthetic mix."¹⁴⁰ The development of Queen Anne architecture began in the United States after the 1876 Centennial Fair in Philadelphia, during which the American people were introduced to Aesthetic architecture and decorative arts by the British Exhibition. The Aesthetic Movement was in part a British design-reform movement influenced by such men as John Ruskin, William Morris, and Charles Eastlake. It represented at times an anti-industrial, anti-urban search for simplicity and purity in design, with a return to the hand-crafted honesty and directness of earlier ages. This Aesthetic "search for old ways and old values"¹⁴¹ led to an interest in earlier national styles of architecture, such as the Elizabethan and Jacobean in England and the Colonial in

¹³⁸Massey.

¹³⁹See James Early, Romanticism and American Architecture.

¹⁴⁰Walden Kidney, The Architecture of Choice: Eclecticism in America (New York: George Braziller, 1974), 31.

¹⁴¹Mark Girourd, Sweetness & Light: The Queen Anne Movement 1860-1900 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 208.

America.¹⁴² The Queen Anne is very much what Renee Kahn in The Old House Journal described as "a tossed salad style" since it was a mix of historic vernacular and high style national influences.¹⁴³ Characteristics of the Queen Anne style are a strong emphasis on picturesqueness, irregular massing, verticality, asymmetrical composition, and a juxtaposition of textural effects. Typical of this style is a rejection of unity in design in favor of contrasts such as in/out, smooth versus rough, or light against dark. The architecture of the Queen Anne style used tall corbelled chimneys, towers, turrets, stained glass, pitched roofs, gables, assorted dormers, and ornaments inspired by historic English and classical architecture.¹⁴⁴ "The Sunflower," a favorite ornament, often appeared as a recognized symbol of the Aesthetic Movement.¹⁴⁵

Chateauesque. The Chateauesque Style was created by American architects trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, especially the famed Richard Morris Hunt. These architects, true to their training, favored archeologically correct re-interpretations of historic European styles such as the French Renaissance.

¹⁴²Vincent J. Sculley, The Shingle Style and the Stick Style (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1979), 30-31.

¹⁴³Renee Kahn, "The Queen Anne Style in America," Old House Journal, 5, No. 1 (January 1977), 2.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., and Maass, Victorian Architecture in America, 140.

¹⁴⁵Girourd, 28-29.

Characteristic of the Chateausque style are busily ornamented and steeply pitched roofs. These have hipped ridges with ornamental metal crestings, single or grouped wall dormers extending through the cornice line, and polygonal or cylindrical towers.¹⁴⁶

The Chateausque style in the United States from 1880 to 1910 was used primarily among the rich and was never as widespread as other eclectic styles.¹⁴⁷ Fifth Avenue in New York was lined in part with fabulous Chateausque houses. America's largest Chateausque mansion, Biltmore, was designed by Richard Morris Hunt and constructed for George Vanderbilt in Asheville, North Carolina, not far from the Tennessee border. Excellent examples of the Chateausque on a smaller scale survive in regional cities such as Louisville, St. Louis, and Atlanta.

Exposure to this style by the Neelys may have occurred in a variety of ways. The social section of Memphis newspapers records Mrs. Neely's trips to New York to deliver or bring both her daughters to and from school. The fabled lives of the "Gilded" rich and information about their homes were reported in Memphis newspapers.

Along with the Chateausque, extant examples of Romanesque and especially Queen Anne abound in the Mississippi Valley. Contemporary books and periodicals with black and white photographs, such as Art Works of Memphis, Art Works of Nashville, Art Works of

¹⁴⁶McAlester and McAlester, 373-375; and Rifkind, 64-65.

¹⁴⁷McAlester and McAlester, 373.

Louisville, and Art Works of St. Louis illustrate late nineteenth-century elite and middle class residential streets in these cities all of which are literally lined with homes in the Romanesque, Queen Anne, and Chateausque styles, attesting to their popularity in an increasingly urbanized America.¹⁴⁸ (Figures 42 and 43)

It is not suggested here that Neely's addition to his new home is Queen Anne or Chateausque in style but that, along with the Romanesque, it shows the influence of all of these then-fashionable architectural styles. Features of these which can be found in a visual study of the circa 1890 addition to the Mallory-Neely House include verticality, picturesque massing, pitched roof, tall corbelled chimneys, towers with pyramidal and spire like roofs, gables, wall dormers, bracketed canopies over windows, hood molded gable dormers, and the sunflower motif used to decorate the dormer columns. Neely's additions grafted onto Kirtland's villa make the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1890) like so many late Victorian homes, "an architectural cocktail."¹⁴⁹

Influences of Architectural Literature and Building Technology

Illustrative of rapidly evolving technological developments that were taking place in the building trade during the late nineteenth century are ornamental and functional constructional components of

¹⁴⁸Art Works of Memphis (Chicago: Gravure Illustration Company, 1900); Art Works of Nashville (Chicago: W. H. Parish Publishing Co., 1894); Art Works of Louisville (Chicago: Charles Madison Company, 1897); Art Works of St. Louis (Chicago: W. H. Parish Publishing Co., 1895).

¹⁴⁹Girourd, 25.



RESIDENCE OF H. C. WARINNER.

A



RESIDENCE OF HENRY WETTER.

B

Figure 42. Memphis mansions (now destroyed) built during the late nineteenth century contemporary with Neely's alteration of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1890). Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Library and Information Center.

A. Residence of H. C. Warinner.

B. Residence of Henry Wetter.



A



B

Figure 43. Memphis mansions (now destroyed) showing influences of the Queen Anne, Chateausque, and Romanesque styles. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

A. Toof residence.

B. Dillard residence.

J. C. Neely's addition. By late century builders and architects were increasingly alert to periodical and trade literature which included a profusion of up-to-date information about new technology and supply sources for these products.¹⁵⁰

In contrast to the prefabricated wooden embellishments used on the Mallory-Neely House in 1852 are such elements as the bracket cornices, entire dormer surrounds, hooded gable cornices, the ornamental ridge cresting and tower ornaments used in Neely's post-1890 addition. All of these are made from galvanized sheet metal either pre-molded, pressed, or sheathed over wooden forms. (Figure 44)

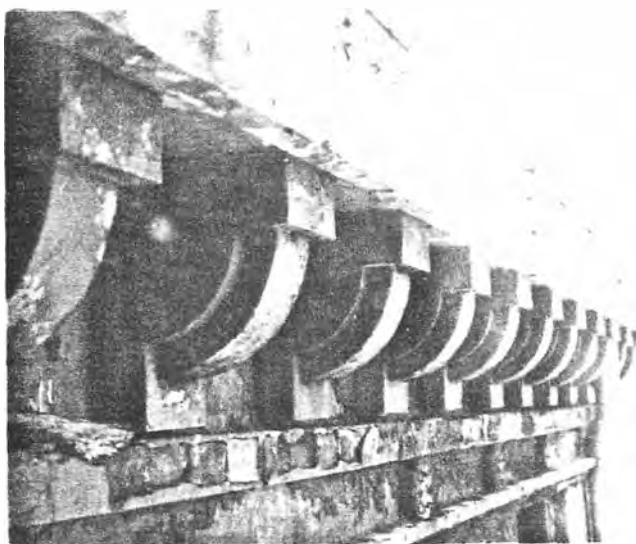
Reflective of increasing industrial mass production and distribution at this time are these prefabricated galvanized metal architectural "parts," especially the pressed metal forms imitating wooden ones which were produced in vast quantities using new technological processes. Catalogs surviving in archival collections attest to the widespread use and large variety of prefabricated architectural metal that was available. The 1882 catalog of a Salem, Ohio firm, Bakewell and Mullins Architectural Sheet Metal Ornaments and Statuary, promoted a large variety of products in sheet zinc, brass, or copper; they stated that their stamping and spinning department produced brackets, consoles, a large selection of capitals, as well as pressed zinc finials and crestings for rooftops and towers.¹⁵¹ The Mesker

¹⁵⁰Schmidt, 25.

¹⁵¹Architectural Sheet Metal Ornaments and Statuary Manufactured by Bakewell & Mullins (Salem, Ohio: 1887) [trade catalog], Special Collections, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.



A



B

Figure 44. Details of Neely's post-1890 additions to the Mallory-Neely House.
A. Galvanized metal gable window, support consoles, cornices.
B. Metal sheathing used over cornice brackets.

Brothers' Iron Works Catalogue illustrate galvanized iron windows, door caps, pediments, and gables.¹⁵² Distribution of prefabricated parts at this time was by an elaborate railroad network throughout the United States.

In the 1880s there were several companies in Memphis that both supplied and installed galvanized ornamental and functional architectural components. T. W. Picket & Company Sheet Iron Works advertised that they could do all kinds of sheet metal work, including ornamental iron work.¹⁵³ In the 1884 Memphis city directory, George Rubsch is listed as a galvanized iron cornice and ornamental metal contractor.¹⁵⁴ On the letterhead for his firm, George Rubsch & Co. at 47-48 Charleston Avenue, was printed the statement that they could provide galvanized iron, cornice work, window caps, tin roofing, and guttering.¹⁵⁵ The Henry Montgomery Papers contain records of payment to Rubsch for leading cornice brackets and for supplying of galvanized iron cornices for his new Poplar Street mansion.¹⁵⁶ In these same papers numerous railroad receipts survive

¹⁵²Mesker Brothers' Iron Works Catalogue, 9th ed., St. Louis, 1892 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.

¹⁵³Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 1 July 1883, p. 7.

¹⁵⁴Shole's Memphis Directory for 1884 and Guide to the Taxing District, Vol. 11 (Shelby County, Tennessee: A. E. Sholes Publisher, 1884), 274.

¹⁵⁵"George Rubsch & Company," 1877 [letterhead], Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 110, Special Collections, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library, Memphis.

¹⁵⁶Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 10.

showing that other prefabricated metal parts were sent by train.

Architectural literature, which by this time had become a huge industry in its own right, was readily available at lower costs with more and better quality illustrations. This literature, available to the trade and public alike, included periodicals, trade journals, specialized architectural books, and catalogs of house plans. Unlike the earlier pattern books by Downing and others which had a few romanticized illustrations with text devoted largely to theory and philosophy, these late Victorian plan books often had as complete a presentation of each design as possible, including elevations, plan, specifications, and many details.¹⁵⁷ Mail order plans became a big business. An important outgrowth of this literature which spread new architectural trends, plans, and technological developments was the provision of building components. These were promoted and sold mainly through advertisements in the various publications. "The same railroad network that permitted the distribution of the plan books also enabled distribution potential for distribution of architectural elements."¹⁵⁸

Examples of late-nineteenth-century architectural literature include the Architectural and Builder's Edition published by one of the nation's most popular periodicals, Scientific American. These

¹⁵⁷James L. Garvin, "Mail-Order House Plans and American Victorian Architecture," Winterthur Portfolio, 16, No. 4 (Winter 1981), 334.

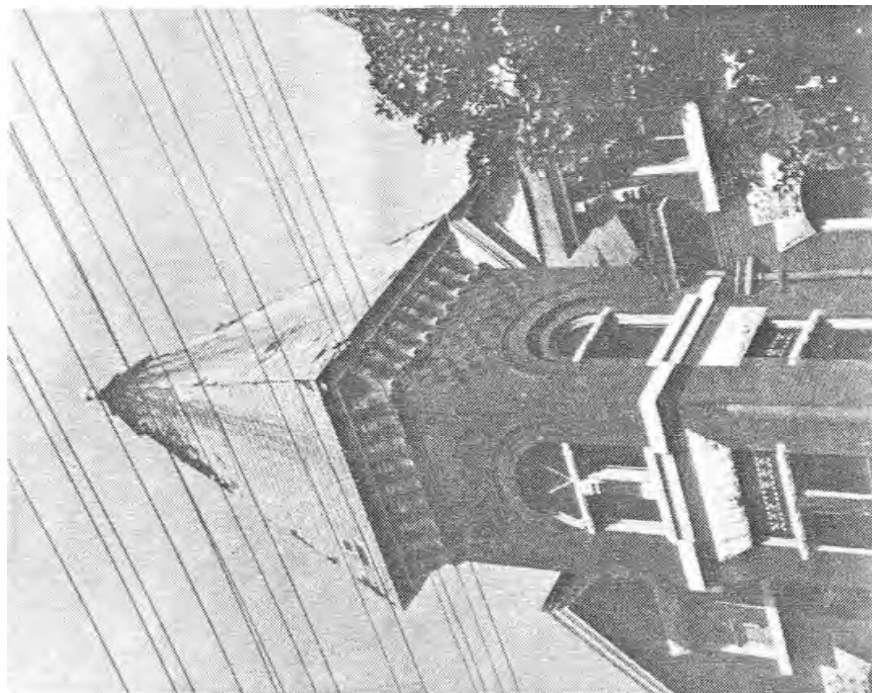
¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 310-312.

issues included house plans, elevations, numerous articles about architecture, the latest technological developments, interior decor, and advertisements of new products associated with the foregoing.¹⁵⁹ In addition, William T. Comstock's Modern Architecture Designs and Details Containing Eight Finely Lithographed Plates Showing New and Original Plates in the Queen Anne, Eastlake, Elizabethan and Other Modern Styles illustrated chimneys, cornices, brackets, dormer windows, and other features similar to those seen in Neely's altered home.¹⁶⁰

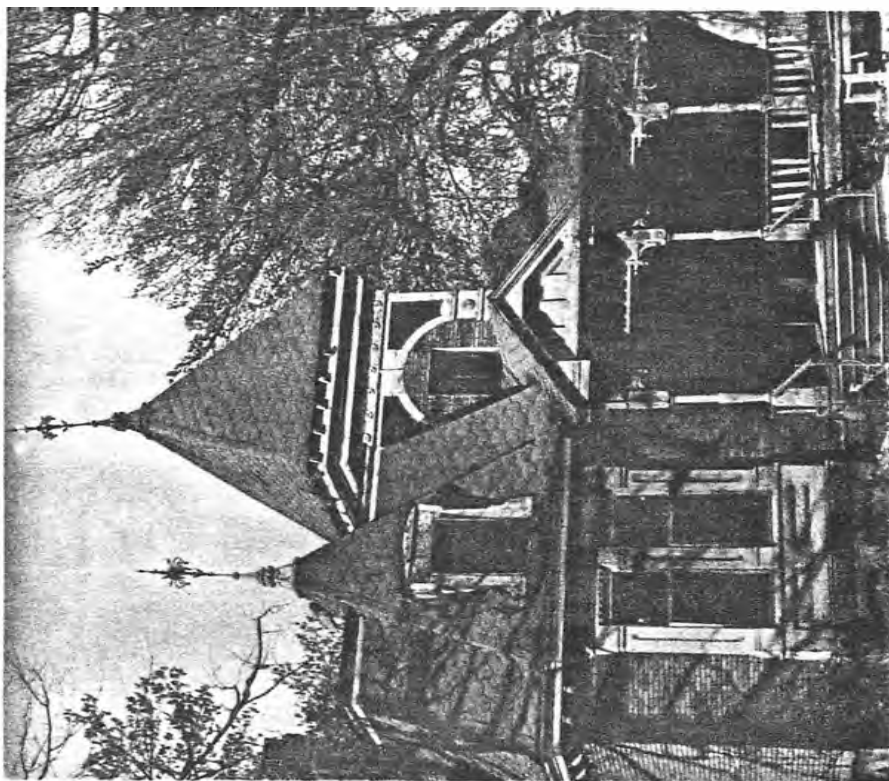
An interesting group of late Victorian Memphis houses have strikingly similar architectural details; these include the Mallory-Neely and Elias Lowenstein Houses in Victorian Village; a badly deteriorated, smaller and unnamed home on Pontotoc Street; and the S. C. Toof mansion formerly located on Lauderdale Street and documented only in photographs. Common features include the same pyramidally topped tower, rounded bracket cornices, hooded gables, and distinctive disc friezes. (Figures 45 and 46) Perhaps the same architect-builder planned and constructed these, using designs taken from current architectural literature and possibly even mail order prefabricated parts. Apparently post-Civil-War regional builders had become even more dependent on book sources for ideas and

¹⁵⁹See selected reprints from Scientific American in American Victoriana: Floor Plans and Renderings from the Gilded Age, ed. Judith Lynch Walker (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1979).

¹⁶⁰William T. Comstock, Modern Architecture Designs and Details (New York: William T. Comstock, Publisher, 1881), Special Collections Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.



A



B

Figure 45. Houses with similar architectural features. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

A. Detail of the Toof House (destroyed) on Lauderdale Street.

B. House on Pontotoc Street in Memphis.



Figure 46. Lowenstein House. This building shares with the houses shown in Figure 45 (page 190) architectural features similar to those found in the additions to the Mallory-Neely House. Perhaps the same architectural firm built these three houses and oversaw the Neely additions. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

inspiration. In its first issue the editor of The Southern Builder and Decorator defended the need for a regional paper for architects and builders; he stated that "Southern architects are now copyists to a large extent. They borrow particularly from the North or East directly."¹⁶¹

The new colors chosen by J. C. Neely for his renovated home also represented changing tastes and developing technology. After the additions to the house were complete, the original subtle Downingsque colors of the house were changed to deeper, richer, almost muddy colors fashionable in the late nineteenth century, yet another influence of the Aesthetic Movement.¹⁶² By this time ready-mixed colors were available from paint companies such as Devoe and Sherwin-Williams. The compiler of an F. E. Devoe & Company color chart, for example, states that the firm carries inside and outside paint in different shades made from pigments mixed with oil and dryers and then sealed in liquid condition ready for use.¹⁶³ Paint companies utilized a variety of advertisement approaches and customer aids such as color cards and books containing lithoplates of houses in

¹⁶¹The Southern Builder and Decorator, 1, No. 1 (Nashville, Tennessee: June 1891), 1, Special Collections, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

¹⁶²Roger Moss, "You Can't Paint'em White Anymore," Historic Preservation, 34, No. 1 (January-February 1982), 50.

¹⁶³F. W. Devoe & Co. White Lead, Zinc, White Colors, Ready-Mixed Paints, Varnishes & Artists' Materials, n.d. [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.

color, all illustrative of new promotional methods that accompanied both technological and distributional modernization.¹⁶⁴

By late century Memphis firms like Degnan & Company were advertising that they carried ready-mixed paints.¹⁶⁵ But apparently all were not satisfied with local paint choices. Over a three year period, Henry Montgomery placed orders for as much as forty gallons of stone colored ready-mixed paint from the H. W. Johns Manufacturing Company of New York for use on his home. In these he cited the specific schedule number of his color choice from the paint chart and stipulated that his order be shipped by railroad.¹⁶⁶ In August of 1885 he wrote again to the same company requesting an updated catalog of colors for inside work.¹⁶⁷

To Victorians in the 1880s and 1890s the placement of color on the house was very important. To achieve textural effect, contrasting body and trim colors were used with the architectural outline of the house being "picked out."¹⁶⁸ Window sashes were usually painted a very deep shade, such as black or brown.

¹⁶⁴Roger Moss, Century of Color, Exterior Decoration for American Buildings 1820-1920 (Watkins Glen, New York: American Life Foundation, 1981), 11.

¹⁶⁵Dow's City Directory of Memphis, Vol. II [advertisement] (Memphis: Harlow Dow Publisher, 1986), 211.

¹⁶⁶Henry Montgomery Papers, Letter Copy Book, Box I.

¹⁶⁷Henry Montgomery to H. W. Johns Manufacturing Company, 5 August 1885, Henry Montgomery Papers, Letter Copy Book, Box I, n.p.

¹⁶⁸Moss, "The Colorful Victorians."

The architect and/or builder responsible for J. C. Neely's additions to the house remains a mystery. Mass production and widespread availability of architectural plans at this time make individual attribution even harder. Professional architectural practice in the United States had progressed greatly by the later part of the century, yet architects still had many problems. Dale Upton in her essay, "Pattern Books and Professionals," suggests that architects had struggled but failed to attain professional recognition through the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁹ The author of a letter to the editor published in the Memphis Daily Appeal on 4 July 1884 contained a defense of the much-abused profession of architecture, and bemoaned the fact that in Memphis "every man is his own architect." The writer continued by saying:

An architect is looked upon as a mere craftsman, whose business it is to carry out someone else's ideas, without ever getting to use their own imagination. . . . Do away with the feeling that an architect is an artist whose business it is to draw upon paper the picture of a building existing in the imagination of the client Only imagine how galling it must be to be an architect and to have for his client some ignorant know-it-all who persists in dictating to him how the work shall be done, and I do not exaggerate when I say that the majority are just such men, and who can blame the architects if the building is not what it should be.¹⁷⁰

The writer further noted that the fashion in Memphis to retain the services of architects from other cities related to their presumed

¹⁶⁹Upton, 107-150.

¹⁷⁰"Architects and Architecture: To the Editors of the Appeal," Memphis Daily Appeal, 4 July 1884, 1.

superiority over local ones. The author observed further that architects away from Memphis are free to use their own imagination without being hampered by know-it-all clients and therefore can produce superior designs.

The Henry Montgomery Papers, as did the earlier Robertson Topp Papers, seem to reinforce the concerns expressed in this letter. Even though Montgomery used a local architectural firm to design and construct his new home, surviving papers show that he was very much the overseer for the entire project. Earlier Topp had done the same with both his commercial and private architectural projects. At one point he became entangled in a complex lawsuit fought by regional architects taking a firm stand in their struggle to establish themselves as professionals.

Despite problems, architectural practice had become far more sophisticated in Memphis by the 1880s. There were several firms of note including that of James Cook and the partnership of E. C. Jones and Mathias Baldwin. Cook and Jones and Baldwin were responsible for most important public buildings, churches, and private residences built in Memphis during this time. James Cook came from England where he was an architectural graduate of King and Putney Colleges. Following his responsibilities as supervising architect for the famous Crystal Palace, he moved to Memphis and started practice in 1857.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹"J. B. Cook," Art Supplement to the Greater Memphis Edition of the Evening Scimitar, April 1899, 41.

Edward Culliat Jones distinguished himself as a Charleston architect before coming to Memphis in 1866. (Figure 47) In 1858, New York born Mathias Harvey Baldwin came to Memphis where he joined the firm of John Morgan, and later formed a partnership with Jones.¹⁷² (Figure 48)

Regional architectural historian Mary Wallace Crocker states without explanation in her essay "Architectural Styles in Victorian Village" that she personally suspects that E. C. Jones was the architect of the Neely additions to the house.¹⁷³ Basing this assumption solely on their long association with the Neely family, Jones and/or Baldwin seem very likely candidates. They were partners until 1879 but continued in private practices long afterwards. Both are listed as active Memphis architects in the 1890 nationwide Directory of Architects.¹⁷⁴ Baldwin died in 1891 while E. C. Jones continued to practice until 1902. Jones designed the original Neely home on Jefferson Street in 1860, and the Neely family church, First Presbyterian, in 1883. Baldwin was the architect of the home of Neely's business partner, Samuel Hamilton Brooks, as well as of the Brooks, Neely and Company building. Jones and Baldwin designed the

¹⁷²Mrs. Thomas P. Hughes, Jr., "Two Master Architects of Early Memphis" [unpublished essay], 1971, Special Collections, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library, Memphis.

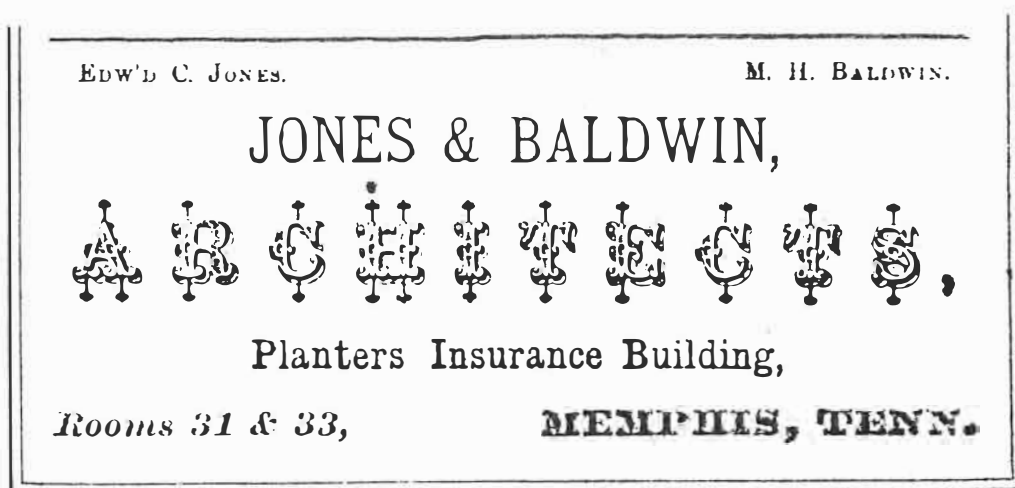
¹⁷³Crocker, "Architectural Styles in Victorian Village," n.p.

¹⁷⁴Directory of Architects (Springfield, Mass.: Clark W. Bryan & Co. Publishers, 1890), 42, Special Collections, New York Historical Society, New York.

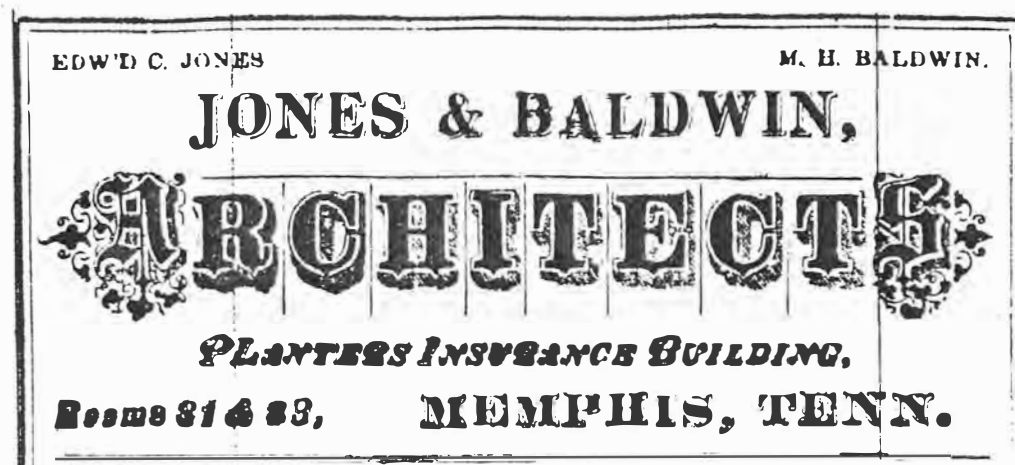


E. C. JONES.

Figure 47. Edward Culliat Jones, noted nineteenth century Memphis architect. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.



A



B

Figure 48. Advertisements for the Jones and Baldwin architectural firm.

- A. 1876 city directory advertisement.
- B. 1878 city directory advertisement.

impressive Fontaine and Lee Houses adjacent to the Neely residence. Mathias Baldwin was the Neelys' close neighbor on Jefferson Street for eleven years.¹⁷⁵ Both Jones and Baldwin were active in Memphis social circles through the years and surely knew the Neelys as friends.

Even though to date nothing conclusive can be stated as to the designers or the original date for the building of the Mallory-Neely House, research does show that Memphis did not exist in an architectural vacuum in the nineteenth century. There were many national, Mississippi Valley, and regional linkages which reflect industrial, communication, and transportation modernization. Most of the century Memphis owner-builders and architects were obviously aware of national trends; they took advantage not only of the architectural literature but also of developing building technology.

¹⁷⁵Hughes, n.p.

CHAPTER VI

MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Can there be a home without a garden? A home with all the pleasant, cheerful, comfortable, endearing associations connected, not merely with the word, but with the idea; a home that is a delight in childhood, a satisfaction in manhood, a refuge and solace in declining years; . . . a home that is the shrine of all that is dearest, the abode of all happiness, the treasure-house for whose dear sake all thoughts are busy, all our labors undertaken? Isn't the garden the appropriate setting of such a jewel? . . . It is the garden more than any other surroundings that gives comfort and happiness to the home.¹

Landscape Architecture

Gardens were seen as a "natural" extension of the house. Therefore treatment of the garden is essential, since the Victorian home exterior, interiors, and grounds were part of a philosophical unity of design concept. House and garden were to be integrated into a harmonious whole.

Andrew Jackson Downing and his followers put much emphasis on the harmonious placement of the domestic house into its landscape surround. (Figure 49) An appropriate picturesque style plan, and the design of the house with its low spreading masses, porches, and color selection were suggested as architectural aids in creating

¹"The Home Garden," The American Garden, 12 (9 September 1891), 515, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

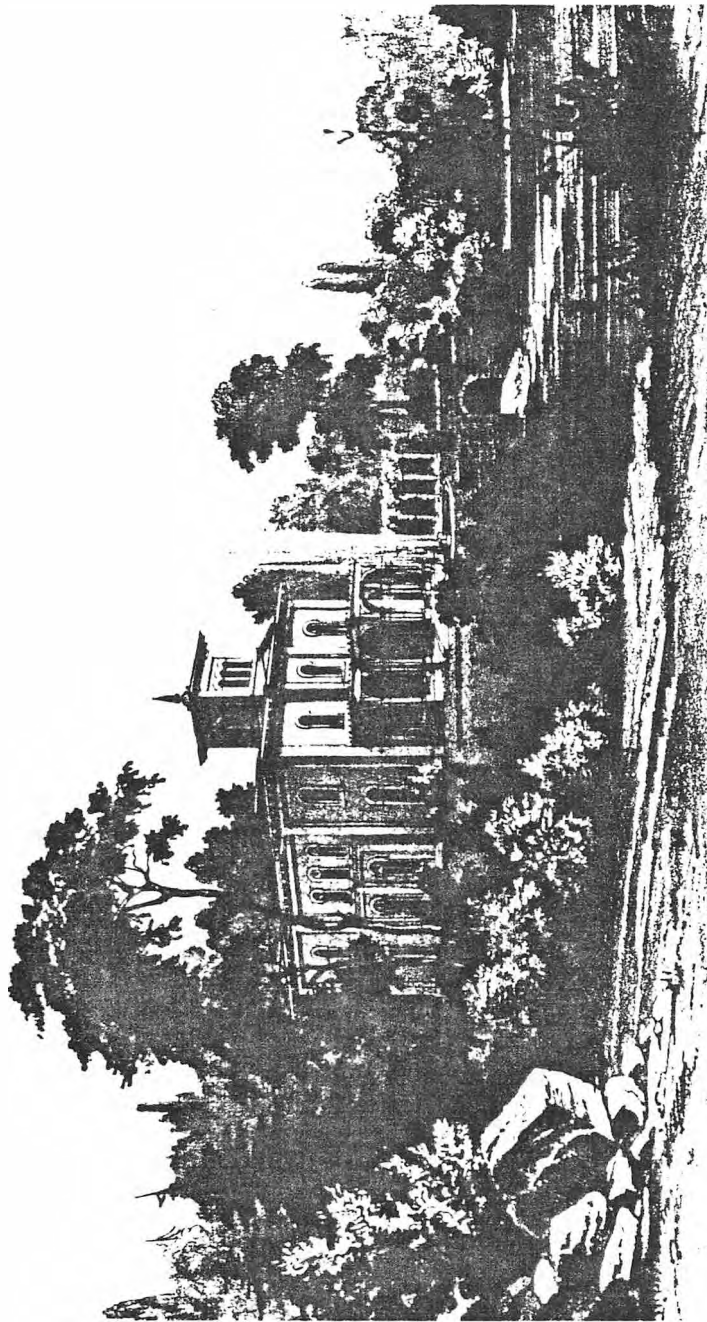


Figure 49. Illustration from Samuel Sloan, The Model Architect (1852) showing an Italianate villa harmoniously situated in its landscape surround. Courtesy Special Collections, Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

this organic union. Downing and others advised that the flow of interior to exterior could be achieved through the use of floor length windows, double doors, verandahs, and balconies. Contemporary garden guides recommended the importance of carefully thought out features of the garden, such as planned vistas and formal flower beds, which could be viewed from the interior of the house.

The late Victorian garden was described as a "new living space" or as an "out-of-door living room" to Americans who were for the first time discovering the aesthetic and recreational pleasures of the garden. All types of garden furnishings were created to go in these natural rooms, with statuary, urns, sundials and other garden ornaments utilized as accessories.² Plants were also often thought of as furnishings of these new outside rooms; Frank J. Scott, for example, in The Art of Beautifying Suburban Home Grounds discussed at length the "tree furniture of the garden."³

Mallory-Neely Landscape, c. 1852

Andrew Jackson Downing, originally a nurseryman and landscape architect, elaborated on the importance of the garden setting of a house. He published many books concerning horticulture

²Patricia M. Tice, "The Well-Kept Garden: Garden Furniture and Furnishings," Paper presented at the 38th Annual Seminar on American Culture, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York, 5 July 1985.

³Frank J. Scott, The Art of Beautifying Suburban Home Grounds (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1870); reprint, Victorian Gardens (Watkins Glen, New York: American Life Foundation and Study Institute, 1982), 32.

along with those about architecture.⁴ As with the architectural literature, Downing began what was a vast outpouring of gardening literature during the century.

Loudon, Downing, Sloan, and others often advocated the use of the English naturalistic garden, which they stressed was not a direct copy of the natural world but a defined imitation that attempted to capture the spirit or essence of nature.⁵ Downing described two historic approaches to gardening: first, the old fashioned formal style and second, the natural garden. The latter he felt could be designed either as "picturesque" or "beautiful."⁶ He described the picturesque variety of the naturalistic landscape as rugged and natural, yet contrived and controlled. Downing suggested it as the most suitable setting for the varied Gothic styles of architecture because of their rough crenellated and pinnacled appearance and the uncivilized instability associated historically with the medieval period. Since beauty was synonymous with grace and harmony, the beautiful landscape, in contrast to the picturesque, was smoother, softer, and more civilized. Since the Italianate conjured up mental associations of stable civilization and refined artistic culture, he advised that the beautiful landscape

⁴Mid-century Memphis bookstores not only advertised in the city newspapers that they stocked Downing's architectural pattern books but also frequently listed his horticultural publications.

⁵Sloan, 91.

⁶Charles Van Ravensway, A Nineteenth Century Garden (New York: Universe Books, 1977), 15.

with its softly flowing grassy lawns studded with stately, shaded trees made an ideal setting for this style of architecture.⁷

(Figure 50)

Little survives to tell us about the original landscape of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) except several photographs of the house taken before its alteration by J. C. Neely. Perhaps Downing would have been pleased to see this Southern Italianate villa sited in a "beautiful" landscape with trees and rolling lawn.

Mallory-Neely Landscape, c. 1890

Fortunately, extant physical evidence tells us more about the Neely's late Victorian garden. The garden settings of Memphis homes at this time must have been impressive since visitors to the city mention them in particular. Captain William Glazier in Down the Great River stated that "many of the private residences are surrounded with beautiful lawns, ornamented with classic statuary and flowers in profuse variety."⁸ Charles Dudley Warner commented on the "many attractive new residences, and fine old places surrounded by great trees."⁹ J. H. Beale in Picturesque Sketches of American Progress observed that "there are numerous handsome residences, with fine lawns and gardens."¹⁰

⁷Donna Jeanloz, "Victorian Landscaping," Old-House Journal Compendium, eds. Clem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980), 375.

⁸Glazier, 354.

⁹Warner, 298.

¹⁰Beale, 135.

FIG. 42.

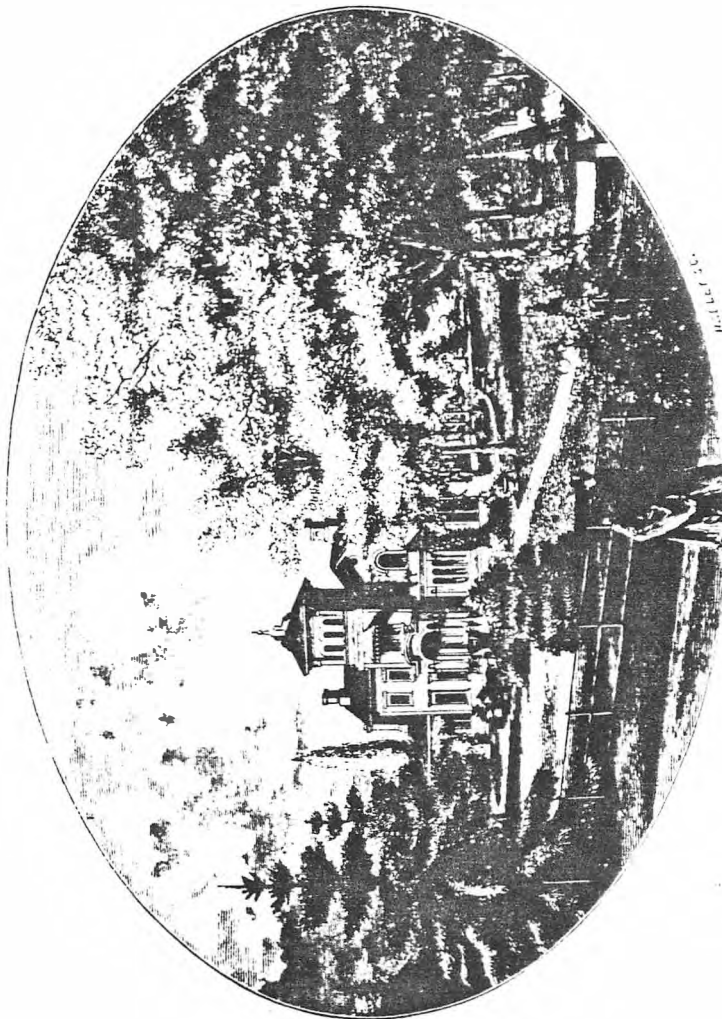


Figure 50. Illustration from Frank Scott, The Art of Beautifying Suburban Grounds (1870) showing an Italianate villa centered in a naturalistic landscape. Courtesy American Life Foundation and Study Institute.

The gardens which are seen today surrounding the Mallory-Neely House were added to, enriched, and refined by Mrs. Daisy Mallory in the early decades of this century. As a member of the Memphis Garden Club, she opened her grounds and house to the public when this group sponsored garden-floral tours. Her home was included in the Garden Study Club of Nashville's 1936 history of Homes and Gardens of Tennessee.¹¹ An April 1941 Commercial Appeal article described Mrs. Mallory's enriched garden:

The old home's magnificent grounds extend from Adams to Washington, shaded by tall lombardy Poplars and fragrant magnolias. The garden with its boxwood hedges and winding paths, where the rosebuds wear their jeweled pendant of dew at this time of year, is an explosion of floral beauty.¹²

Mrs. Mallory's additions were grafted onto her parent's late Victorian garden, much of which survives. The garden along with the home and its furnishings are a valuable material culture document of the time. It, too, deserves careful study, authentic restoration, and interpretation. The design of the original Neely garden when compared to landscape plans illustrated in books like Scott's The Art of Beautifying Suburban Home Grounds and J. Weidenmann's Beautifying Country Houses, A Handbook of Landscape Gardening and in contemporary periodicals such as The American Garden, An Illustrated Journal of Horticulture shows that the Neely garden is typical

¹¹Roberta Seawell Brandau, ed., History of Homes and Gardens of Tennessee (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1936), n.p.

¹²"Mallory Home," Commercial Appeal, 27 April 1941, 4.

of the fashionable suburban garden of late Victorian America.¹³
(Figure 51)

Gardening practice and design in the late nineteenth century were the result of landscape theory and writing created by Humphrey Repton, John Claudius Loudon, and Andrew Jackson Downing. It all began when the early nineteenth century English landscape architect, Sir Humphrey Repton, promoted his own variant of eighteenth century English gardening. In these Repton gardens the natural landscape remained a dominant feature but some sixteenth and seventeenth century formality was allowed back into the garden through the use of statuary, urns, and formally designed flower beds near the house.¹⁴ In true romantic fashion, John Claudius Loudon further developed Repton's approach to the naturalistic garden into one made more "picturesque" by the addition of lush overgrown greenery surrounding and climbing onto the house. To Loudon and his followers this aided in harmonizing the architecture with its natural setting. Loudon's picturesque approach to gardening has been labeled the "Gardenesque."¹⁵ As an updated variant of the English landscape style, this approach was also adopted and advocated by Downing. Because of his influence the "Gardenesque" mode was often used in America throughout the

¹³Jacob Weidenmann, Beautifying Country Homes (New York: Orange Judd & Co., 1870); reprint, Victorian Landscape Gardening (Watkins Glen, New York: American Life Foundation and Study Institute, 1978).

¹⁴Rudy and Joy Favretti, For Every House A Garden: A Guide for Reproducing Period Gardens (Chester, Connecticut: Pequot Press, 1977), 33.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 33.

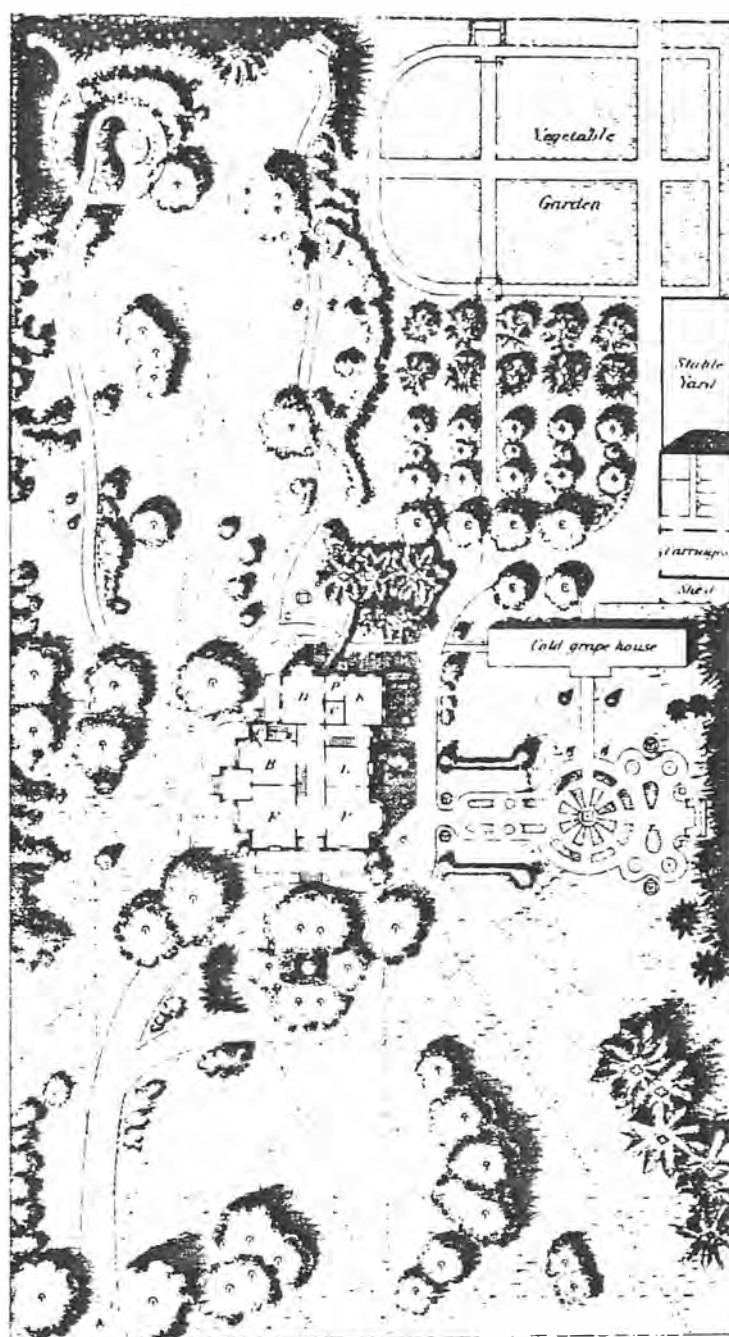


Figure 51. Typical landscape plan from Frank Scott, The Art of Beautifying Suburban Grounds (1870). This plan shows similar features to the Mallory-Neely late-Victorian garden including ornamental area with formal flower beds and utilitarian area with carriage house and stable yard. Courtesy American Life Foundation and Study Institute.

second half of nineteenth century. Its widespread use in suburban America represented a revolutionary change from the earlier eighteenth century Georgian landscape tradition in which the man-made house stood isolated and totally dominant over its natural surround.

Victorian gardens are not only reflective of changing Romantic attitudes towards man and his relationship to nature, but, as the Strong Museum demonstrates in its American garden exhibition galleries and in the accompanying catalog Gardening in America 1830-1910 by Patricia Tice, they are also very much illustrative of modernization.¹⁶ Gardening too was affected by the Industrial Revolution and its resultant technological development, including new forms of communication and advertising, new modes of transportation and distribution, and rapidly developing mass society consumerism. The readily available popular garden literature kept the American consumer abreast of new styles, developments and materials which mail order catalogs enabled him to purchase. The seed and bulb industry; advanced greenhouse technology; the discovery and importation of new plant materials, such as the exotics so loved by the Victorians; new fertilizers; and new tools, such as specialized lawn mowers and watering implements, revolutionized the American garden.¹⁷

It is an interesting dichotomy of the times that both the technological developments of and reaction to modernization created,

¹⁶Patricia M. Tice, Gardening in America, 1830-1910 (Rochester, New York: Strong Museum, 1984).

¹⁷Ibid., 27-47.

philosophically, a whole new approach to the garden. An industrially based society shifted from practical agrarian gardening to suburban oriented, leisure time, and recreational gardening. The growing popularity of gardening by Americans in the nineteenth century has been interpreted as a reaction to ever increasing urbanization.

Suburban gardens located near the city, yet partially rural, contained the best of two worlds.¹⁸ To the Victorians gardens became a buffer zone, a haven of repose, health, and a sanctuary especially for the modern businessman. "A velvety lawn and the shadows of common trees provided very elegant refreshment for the businessman's wearied eye."¹⁹ The editor of The American Garden magazine in describing a garden stated, "the whole place is wholesome; a place in which a man may find rest for body and mind, and in which good work may be done."²⁰

In the Victorian mind the communication symbolism of the garden was related to that of the home. One's garden was loaded with symbolic messages. To Downing and others the garden symbolized civilization and order.²¹ The garden was thought to be reflective of a person's

¹⁸Gerald Allan Doell and M. Christine Klime Doell, "Gardens of the Gilded Age, New York State Victorian Gardens" [exhibition leaflet guide] (Hamilton, New York: Gallery Association of New York, 1985).

¹⁹Scott, 22.

²⁰The American Garden 12 (12 August, 1891), 199, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

²¹Tice, 68.

individual character or of a family's position in society. A well maintained and neat garden reflected industriousness and moral stability. An ornamental garden communicated messages of wealth and the leisure it provided.

Gardens were very much a part of the development of the cult of domesticity. They were seen as a family refuge in a natural setting.²² Gardens were associated with rural values and morality. Exponents of the American family as the bulwark of social order, such as the Beecher sisters in their American Woman's Home or the authors of articles in the popular ladies' periodicals, stressed the importance of the garden and gardening to a wholesome, moral, and healthy family life.²³ "Gardening in its broad sense is making home beautiful and healthy."²⁴ The garden increasingly became a place for Victorian family recreation and social entertainment.

Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr. provided both a sketch and oral memories of the grounds of the Mallory-Neely House as they were when he was growing up prior to his mother's embellishments. (Figure 52) These, along with a study of existing features, show that, like the typical late-Victorian gardens, the Neely gardens were both decorative

²²David P. Handlin, The American Home, Architecture and Society 1815-1915 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 188.

²³Catherine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, American Woman's Home (New York: J. B. Ford & Co., 1869); reprint, Hartford, Connecticut: Stowe-Day Foundation, 1985.

²⁴"The Greatest Prosperity," The American Garden 12 (8 August 1891), 451, Special Collections, New York State Historical Society, Cooperstown, New York.

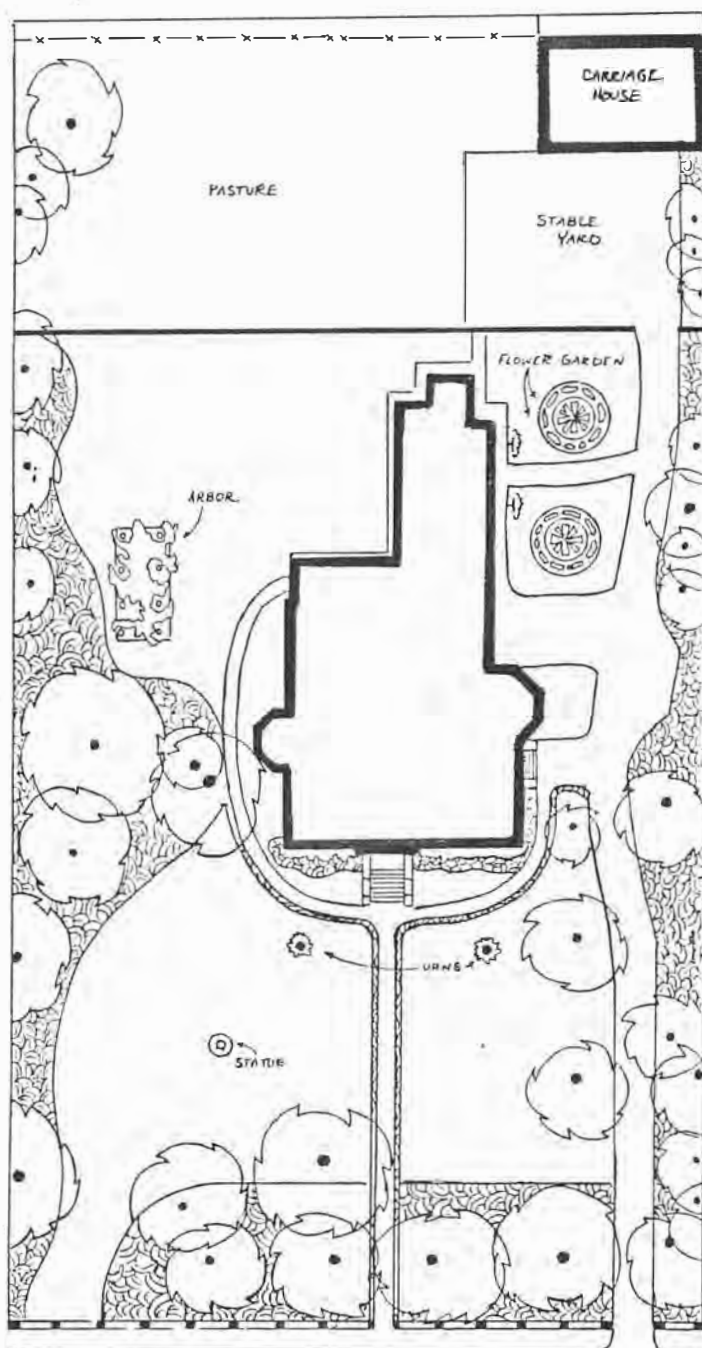


Figure 52. Plan of the Mallory-Neely House grounds in the early twentieth century based on a sketch drawn in 1985 by Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr.

and functional. Victorian interiors were divided into very distinct ceremonial, private, and service areas. The surrounding gardens were likewise separated into public ornamental areas and utilitarian service areas.²⁵ The public front and side areas of the Mallory-Neely grounds were treated as an ornamental garden. The grounds to the rear of the house adjacent to the kitchen-servant quarters and fronting onto the less fashionable Washington Street were given over to the practical. Fencing divided these two areas. Located in the service area were a carriage house, vegetable garden, and a small pasture which ran across the entire back part of the lot. Later Mrs. Mallory re-landscaped this area into an ornamental garden with a formal rose garden. In the pasture the Neelys and Mallorys kept a dairy cow and chickens.²⁶ The gardens of both rich and poor in this pre-refrigeration and pre-supermarket era usually had an area set aside for the cultivation of vegetables. The characteristic American suburban kitchen garden was also made possible by the modernization of the horticultural industry. All kinds of new vegetable and fruit varieties were introduced to the American consumer at this time, radically altering attitudes toward the healthfulness of vegetables and, consequently, the national diet.²⁷

²⁵Favretti, 57.

²⁶Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., Interview by author, Memphis, Tennessee, 21 October 1985.

²⁷See Roger A. Kline, Robert F. Becker, and Lynne Belluscio, The Heirloom Vegetable Garden, Gardening in the Nineteenth Century (Ithaca, New York: New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, 1984).

The ornamental sections of the garden were the subject of much discussion. Gardening authorities advised homeowners that an ornamental garden was a harmonious marriage of the arts of nature and man made arts. It was, therefore, important to do careful pre-planning in which varying aspects of design such as shape, line, color, texture, and variety were considered.²⁸ The American Garden magazine stated that it was the gardener's "problem to make selections and then arrange them into a harmonious composition."²⁹ It was also suggested that the ornamental areas of the suburban garden be treated in picturesque fashion. Each home along a suburban street was to present itself as one in a sequence of pictures.³⁰ The owner was encouraged to create further pictures with plants and accessories within each of these individual suburban gardens.³¹ The gardens of the estates of the well-to-do and those of the middle class living on Adams Street in the late nineteenth century must have given this impression. (Figure 53)

Components of the Mallory-Neely garden. The authors of most late Victorian garden guides suggested that the ornamental garden should include the following features: turf, trees, shrubbery,

²⁸Scott, 72-73.

²⁹The American Garden 12 (12 August 1891), 385, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

³⁰Hamlin, 175.

³¹Scott, 19.



Figure 53. An avenue of homes each in a landscape setting: Adams Street, Memphis, at the height of the gilded era. The Fontaine House is in the foreground with the tower of the Mallory-Neely House showing above the trees in the background. Courtesy Tennessee State Library and Archives.

flowers, beds, creepers, walkways, drives, architectural features, and garden furnishings. All of these still exist in the Mallory-Neely garden.

Turf. Large unbroken expanses of neatly mowed grass were considered an important component of the "Gardenesque" style. This type of turf became practical only after 1870 when lawn mowers became readily available to the public.³² The Neely's landscape was designed with open expanses of grassy lawn surrounding the house.

Trees and shrubbery. Downing and others advised that the "luxuriant verdure" surrounding the domestic home helped more than any feature to harmonize house and nature. Trees and shrubbery were grouped near the house and also as a screen around the perimeter of the lawn creating "a picturesque, natural looking boundary."³³ They also served as a shadowy background which helped to emphasize the house as the picturesque centerpiece.³⁴ As with flowers and vegetables, whole new varieties of trees and ornamental shrubbery were introduced. Garden authorities suggested that these be planted in naturalistic groupings with size, texture, shape, and color as important considerations. Shrubby and trees were highly recommended as aids in creating vistas into and out of the garden. Scott in The Art of Beautifying Suburban Grounds recommended these as "verdant

³²Tice, 64.

³³Downing, Cottage Residences, 129.

³⁴Scott, 65.

frames" which help create "leading ranges of view."³⁵ Towering clusters of poplar, magnolia, and other trees as well as naturalistic groupings of azaleas help to screen and frame the Mallory-Neely House and at the same time gently delineate the property's boundaries.

Flower beds. After having been banished from gardens for half a century, flowers made a comeback in the nineteenth century. Flower beds were thought of as embellishment like jewelry was to a lady's attire. Advocates of the "Gardenesque" style suggested the controlled use of formal flower beds which they felt should be adjacent to the house since their geometrically planned designs related more to architecture than to the surrounding natural features of the garden. Downing labeled them "architectural flower gardens."³⁶ So that one could best observe their complex patterns, it was recommended that "they should be near the house and in view of the windows of the most frequented rooms."³⁷ Garden periodicals and guidebooks published line drawings of all types of designs and plans for floral borders and for circular, semi-circular, star, square, crescent, and organically shaped flower beds.³⁸ The most effective

³⁵Ibid., 215.

³⁶Downing, Cottage Residences, 147.

³⁷Lewis F. Allen, Rural Architecture (New York: C. M. Saxton, 1852), 205, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

³⁸See for example: Elias A. Long, Ornamental Gardening for Americans (New York: Orange Judd & Co. 1893), 212-213, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

way to go about filling these ornamental beds was subject of much discussion. Most Victorians favored a massing system which is out of style today except in some of our city parks. Characteristic of carpet bedding was the use of repeated rows of plants often in vivid colors. It was recommended that the choice of ornamental plants to be used in these elaborate designs be pre-planned with great care and "great artistic feeling" since the creation of these beds was considered a high horticultural art.³⁹

Two circular formal flower beds, ringed with brick, survive in very battered condition close to the east side of the Mallory-Neely House. (Figure 54) Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr. remembers that these were planted with roses and some flowers for cutting. Possibly this area was treated as a "rosarium," a highly romantic and popular feature of late Victorian gardens.⁴⁰ These two formal beds could be observed from the Mallory-Neely dining room and master bedroom. Mr. Mallory also remembers informal beds of calla lilies planted near the foundation across the front of the house.⁴¹ Perhaps these served to screen the unattractive open areas beneath the elevated front porch.

³⁹Doell and Doell, n.p.

⁴⁰Favretti, 71-72.

⁴¹Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., Interview by the author, Memphis, Tennessee, 21 October 1985.

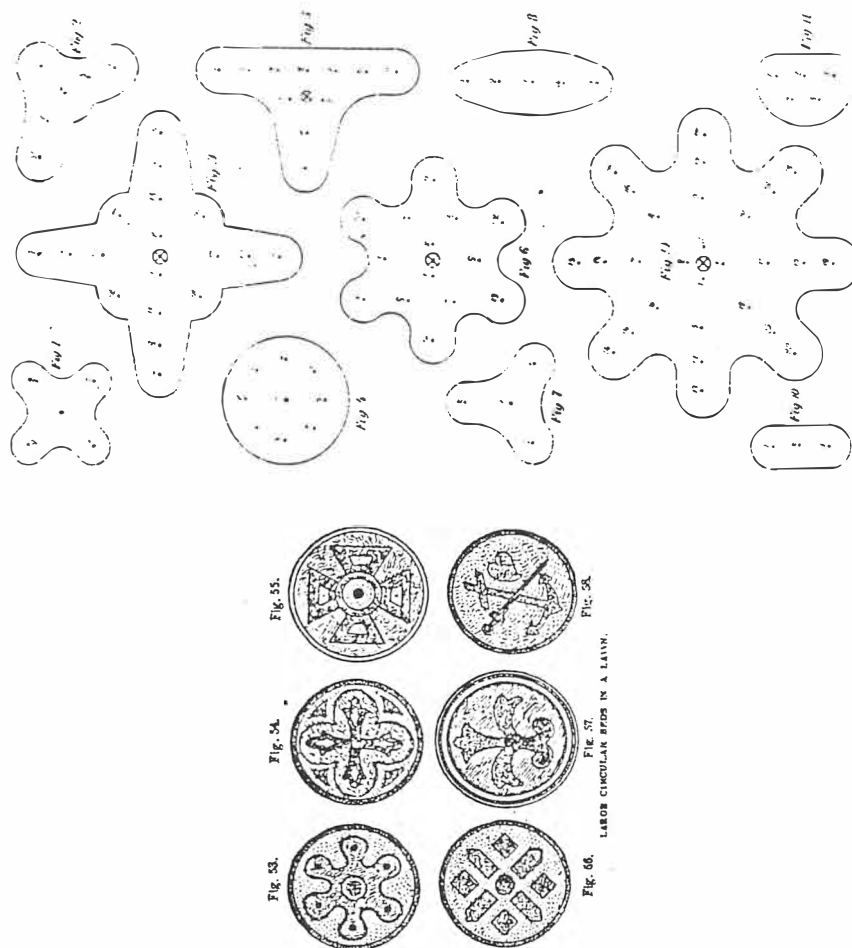


A

Figure 54. Late Victorian flower beds. Courtesy American Life Foundation and Study Institute.
A. Remains of a formal garden as viewed from the master bedroom of the Mallory-Neely House.

B. Designs for circular flower beds from Ornamental Gardening for Americans (1893) by Elias Long.
C. Designs for rose beds from The Art of Beautifying Suburban Grounds (1870).

Plate XIII Forms for Rose Beds



B

C

Creepers. Vines and flowering creepers climbing the house were the most characteristic features of the "Gardenesque" approach. Downing especially favored their luxuriant beauty because he felt that they softened geometric edges and gave character to the architecture. They were thought to add greatly in harmonizing the house with nature. He cautioned, though, that they should be used in moderation on a house with notable architectural features and used abundantly on lesser architectural types such as cottages.⁴² Creepers "weaving their pliant beauty" up and around the verandahs also created natural screens or "foliage drapery," semi-shielding these private areas from public view.⁴³ Many old photographs exist showing the Mallory-Neely House virtually nestled in lush greenery, especially the front verandahs which were covered with Jackson Vine creepers that have been removed in recent years. (Figure 55)

Walkways. Late-Victorian landscape authorities divided garden walkways into two categories, the useful and the pleasurable.⁴⁴ Useful walkways like the main one leading from the street to the front door or those leading to service areas were to be straight, practical, and functional.⁴⁵ Pleasurable walkways used for leisure

⁴²Downing, Architecture of Country Houses, 212.

⁴³Wheeler, Homes for the People, 61.

⁴⁴Weidenmann, 8.

⁴⁵Jeanloz, 376.



A



Fig. 42.—SHRUBS, FLOWERS, AND CLIMBERS ABOUT A BAY WINDOW.

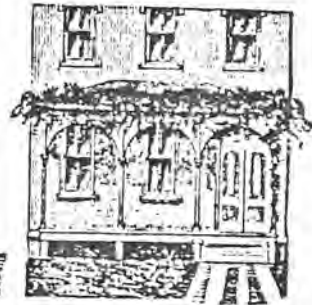


Fig. 43.—VERANDA COVERED WITH CELASTRUS.

B

- Figure 55. Victorian creepers.
- A. Mallory-Neely House.
 - B. Suggestions for vine treatment from Ornamental Gardening for Americans (1893).
 Courtesy New York State Historical Society, Cooperstown.

time were to be meandering and natural, following the curving contour of the landscape. Brick and gravel were preferred materials for these walkways. Examples of both practical and pleasurable walkways such as these survive as part of the Mallory-Neely Victorian landscape design.

Garden furnishings. Furnishings such as statuary and urns usually associated with formal gardening were allowed back into the "Gardenesque" landscape. Because these had "qualities of architecture" such as regularity and symmetry, Downing and others felt that they should be placed near the house.⁴⁶ By late nineteenth century manufactured garden furnishings were available in great quantities and varieties, and Victorian gardeners used them like they did their interior bric-a-brac.⁴⁷ These mass-produced Victorian garden furnishings are examples of early modern technological processes.

Characteristic Victorian cast iron urns survive in the Mallory-Neely garden. These urns were available in a variety of forms made to match the fashionable eclectic architectural styles. (Figure 56) The Mallory-Neely urns are all classic types thought suitable for the Italianate. Downing felt that these urns should be left empty with their outline standing clear in the garden since they were an architectural feature. He felt that they should be "sanded" and painted soft grey or a neutral color (similar to the house) to

⁴⁶Downing, Cottage Residences, 148.

⁴⁷Doell and Doell, n.p.

TERRA COTTA ORNAMENTS
for Cottages, Villas, Pleasure Grounds &c.

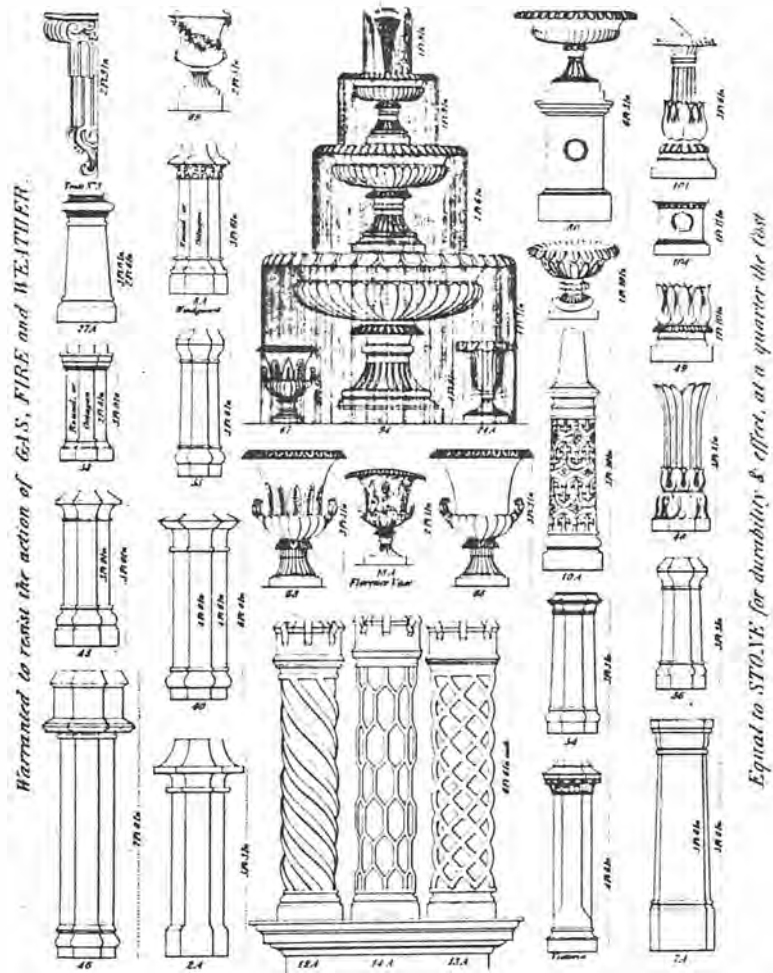


Figure 56. Advertisement from Samuel Sloan, The Model Architect (1852). Garden urns such as those shown here were based on classical prototypes and were therefore recommended for use with the Italianate. Courtesy Special Collections, Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

represent stone or marble in order to further harmonize them with the architecture of the house.⁴⁸ Late Victorian authorities, though, recommended that these garden vases be "lushly overflowing" with cascading vines and a variety of graceful and brilliant plants.⁴⁹

One old photograph of the Mallory-Neely House shows a statue, the large fountain base of which remains in the front lawn. (Figure 57) At least one other base used for an ornamental birdbath remains elsewhere in the garden.

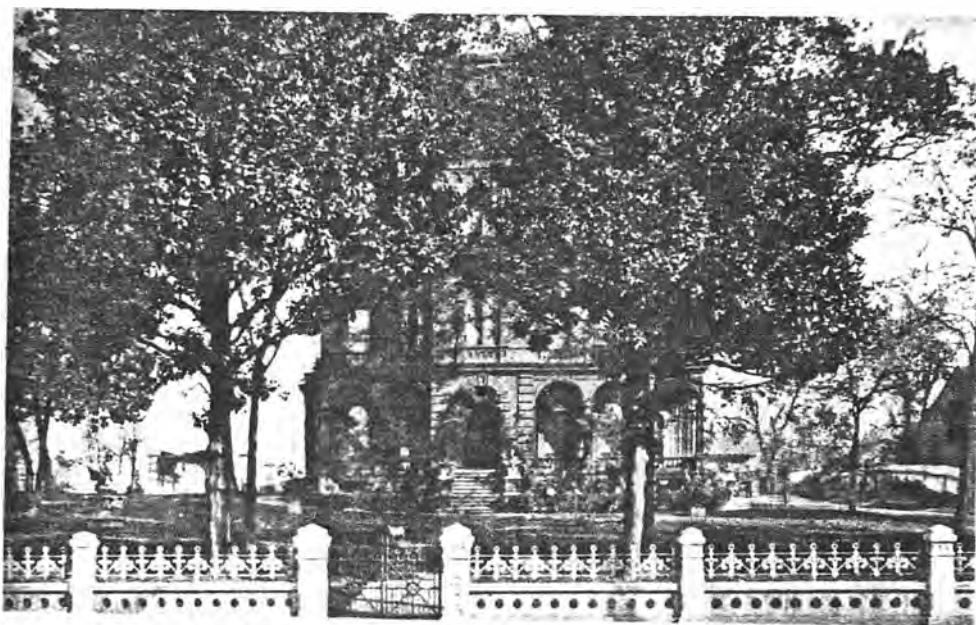
Mr. Mallory remembered that architectural features in the Mallory-Neely garden included a wood-frame arbor to the west of the house which served as a screen to hide the back pasture from Adams Street. Although the arbor no longer exists, corroborating evidence can be seen in an early photograph of the house. (Figure 57)

An impressive architectural feature of the garden today is the ornate granite and wrought-iron fence stretching across the front of the property. This fence was one of the post-1883 changes to the property made by James Columbus Neely. His monogram adorns the granite gate posts and the letter "N" centers the wrought-iron entrance gate. The surviving stereopticon view of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) shows an earlier less elaborate fence.

Cast-iron fences such as this became increasingly popular in America by the end of the century. They were available in a

⁴⁸Tice, "The Well Kept Garden," 79.

⁴⁹Scott, 63.



RESIDENCE OF J. C. NEELY.

A



Fig. 44.—PLAN FOR ARBOR OVER A GARDEN SEAT.

B

Figure 57. Victorian garden arbors.

- A. Photograph (c. 1900) of the Mallory-Neely House. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.
- B. Engraving of an arbor from Ornamental Gardening for Americans (1893). Courtesy New York Historical Association, Cooperstown. The photograph of the Mallory-Neely lawn shows many characteristic late-Victorian garden features including a sculpture, lushly overflowing urns, vines growing on the facade, and an arbor similar to the one illustrated from Ornamental Gardening.

variety of revival and "modern" styles.⁵⁰ Their open design created a psychological sense of boundary rather than a barrier.⁵¹ These fences are also illustrative of developing modern industrial production. They could be ordered from catalogs and shipped anywhere by railroad. They could also be purchased locally. Two late nineteenth century Memphis firms specializing in metal fencing were the Memphis Wire & Iron Works located at 387 Second Street and the Charles Goebels & Company, Tennessee Wire & Iron Works at 415 Second Street who advertised that they could provide wrought iron, metal, and wire fences.⁵²

Written documentation records how the gardens of the elite homes on Adams Street were used for grand affairs and lavish entertainments with verandahs open and decorated for parties and receptions. They were also most certainly used for informal daily life. A photograph in the personal collection of Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr. shows his grandmother, Mrs. James Columbus Neely, seated on her furnished front porch, shielded from public view by a "foliage drapery." (Figure 58) The openness of house to grounds provided for the Mallory-Neely interiors an elegant, pleasurable and natural extension which

⁵⁰Elaine Freed, "Cast Iron Fences," Old-House Journal Compendium, eds. Clem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980), 379-380.

⁵¹Jeanloz, 376.

⁵²Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisements], 5 January 1890, 5.

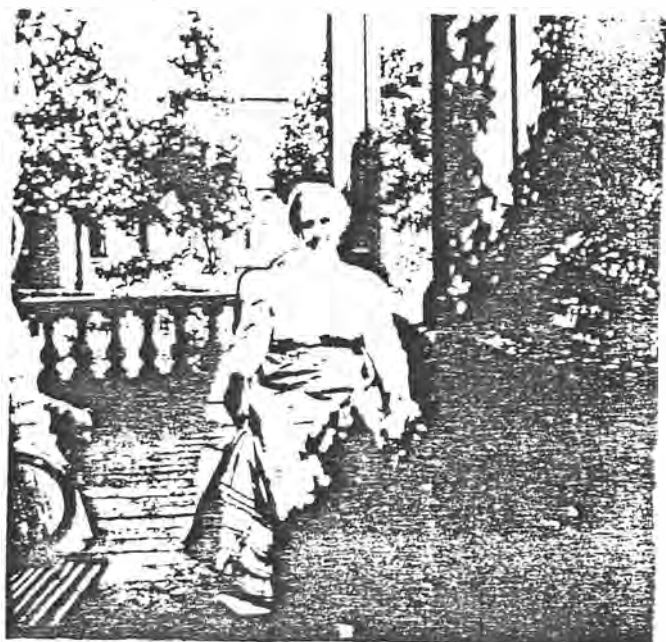


Figure 58. Mrs. J. C. Neely (c. 1900). Shaded by "foliage drapery" Mrs. Neely relaxes on the front verandah of the Mallory-Neely House. Courtesy Barton Lee Mallory, Jr.

must have been especially refreshing and practical in the typically hot (then unairconditioned), humid spring, summer and early fall months in the Mid-South.

CHAPTER VII

MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: INTERIORS AS ARTIFACT

The interior is not only the Universe, but the sheath of the private man. To inhabit means to leave traces. In the interior these traces are accentuated.¹

The layered features of the interior decor and accumulated furnishings of the Mallory-Neely House represent a fascinating stratification of nineteenth and early twentieth century styles, trends, and fashions reflective of advancing modernization and technology. These are illustrative not only of a transition from traditional hand craftsmanship to that of the machine, but also of developing consumerism, mass distribution, merchandising, and sales promotion.

It was necessary to "archeologically" separate these "strata" and then to organize them into some type of logical structural system and chronological sequence for analytical and descriptive purposes. Consequently, the following organizational structure has been used: first, an analysis of the interior architecture and decoration; second, analysis of the furnishings including furniture, accessories and textiles; and last, analysis of the use of space and arrangement of the interiors. (Figure 59)

¹Praz, 22.

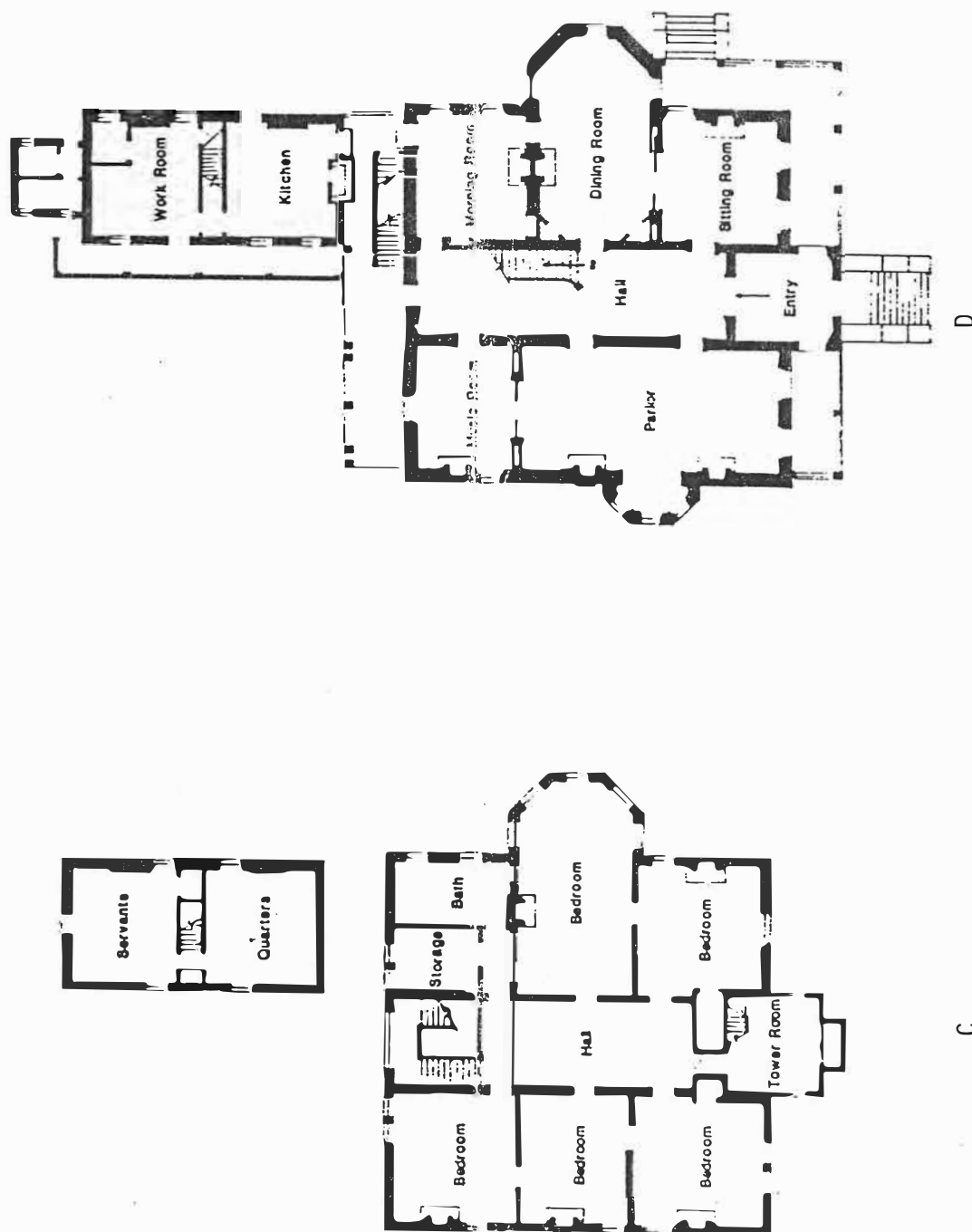
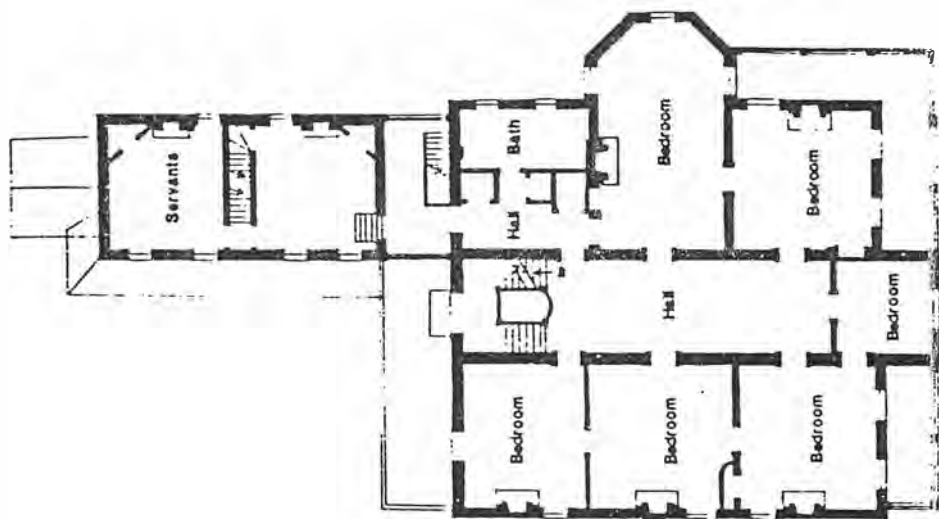
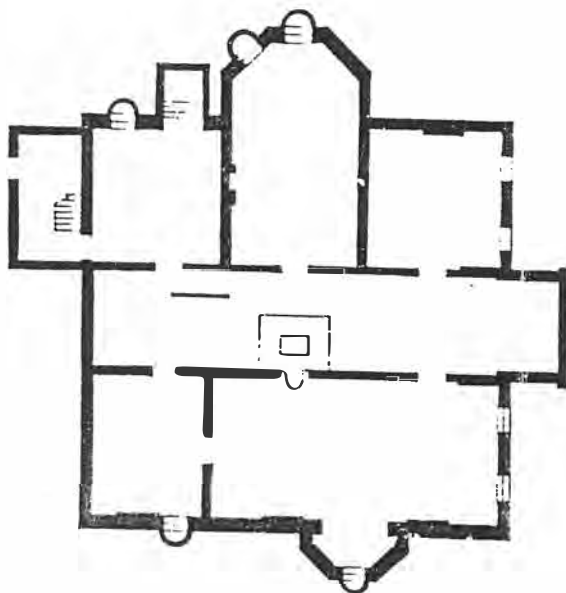


Figure 59. Mallory-Neely House floor plans.
 A. Basement floor.
 B. Third floor.
 C. Second floor.
 D. First floor.



B



A

It is expedient to identify first several themes which are interwoven through the next several chapters and are of value in an interpretation of the Mallory-Neely interiors. In an article entitled "Early American Decorative Arts as Social Documents," E. McClung Fleming describes the many levels of value that a study of the decorative arts can provide to the historian and others.² He begins by stating that they are an important part of a society's autobiography. Fleming then discusses varying types of evidence that this study can provide from the standpoint of their historic, cultural, aesthetic, and social roles; he suggests that decorative arts provide documentation for interpretation of the trade of a society, the technology of the time, the standard of living, everyday life, manners, customs, social patterns and usage.³

Though in his article the focus is on colonial decorative arts, most of what Fleming says can also be applied to those of the Victorian period and may provide suggestions of additional ways that the Mallory-Neely House contents, along with the present sweeping look at them as the furnishings of a wealthy family, can be interpreted so as to be of increased educational value.

Following are some of what might be termed "sub-themes" of the next two chapters including questions asked and discussed; all

²E. McClung Fleming, "Early American Decorative Arts as Social Documents," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 65, No. 1 (June 1958), 278-283.

³Ibid.

of these are reflective of an evolving modern American culture and the commercialization of the American home.

Changing Visual Styles - Fashions. What were these styles and fashions? Who created them? What were the sources of these in America at large, and particularly in Memphis? How did Memphians find out about them?

Mechanization - Production. How and where were these artifacts made? How are they reflective of technological modernization? Were any of these Memphis-made products?

Distribution - Marketing. How did they get to Memphis? How were they marketed? What were Memphis' trade sources and linkages nationally and regionally, especially through the Mississippi Valley, during the Victorian era?

Consumerism - Lifestyle. How are the Mallory-Neely contents reflective of modern consumerism and changing approaches to lifestyle? Do the contents and their arrangement reflect modern attitudes of comfort, leisure and domesticity?

Influences on Victorian Interior Design

In addition to the foregoing it is also important to cite and discuss briefly some related yet additional influences that specifically affected American Victorian interior design. These include (a) advertising, (b) printed materials such as interior decorating guides, books of ornament, and magazines; (c) World's Fairs and regional industrial expositions; (d) modernization of the distribution and

marketing of products for the home including specialty stores, department stores, and mail order merchandise; and (e) the developing role of the interior decorator as an authority and guide.

Advertisement

CONSUMERISM is one of the major characteristics of late Victorian and modern society. The editors of The Culture of Consumption in their introduction cite the following general reasons for the development of consumerism in nineteenth-century America: materialism created by the establishment of a national marketplace and mass advertising; emergence of new structures of business and corporate professionals and managers; and a new gospel of therapeutic release through consumption.⁴

Described by Thorsten Veblen in The Theory of the Leisure Class as a modern manipulative method of communication, mass advertisement as a pervasive language played a major role in the development of American consumerism.⁵ The late Victorian period witnessed the evolution of a traditional protestant hard working anti-materialistic society into a consumer-oriented culture that is characterized by compulsive spending and conspicuous consumption.⁶

⁴See Introduction, Fox and Jackson Lears, The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980.

⁵Veblen, 86 and 92.

⁶T. J. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930," The Culture of Consumption, eds. Richard Wrightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 4.

T. J. Jackson Lears in his essay, "From Salvation to Self Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930," states that by 1880 national advertising in the United States, "as an all pervading new visual environment," had become very much a part of the American scene with the use of brand names, trademarks, slogans, sensational tactics for attracting attention, psychological studies, and manipulative strategies.⁷

Printed Materials

The importance that printed materials had on American visual design throughout the nineteenth century was profound.⁸ In this period of transition and instability the Victorians placed great faith in authority and dogma. This was equally at work in matters concerning architecture and landscape where the influence of such authority-tastemakers as Ruskin, Loudon, Downing, Wheeler, Sloan, and Scott, were paramount. As vehicles of authority and dogma, printed materials with improved visual illustration likewise had a major influence on interior decoration.

Through the second half of the nineteenth century, Victorian design and designers were especially influenced by an outpouring of publications; articles, profusely illustrated, ranged from the entire history of ornament, traditional and modern, to the processes

⁷Ibid., 18.

⁸Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., "Nineteenth Century Design," Perspecta 6, Yale Architectural Journal, 6 (1960), 57.

for creating new forms of decorative design. The most famous and surely one of the most popular of these guides was published in 1856 by Owen Jones, English author and designer, entitled The Grammar of Ornament.⁹ It was illustrated with large color plates showing international examples of both historic and modern ornamental design. Others illustrative of this type of publication include F. Edward Hulme, Principles of Ornamental Art, George and Maurice Audsley, Outlines of Ornaments in the Leading Styles, and Lewis F. Day, The Anatomy of Pattern, The Application of Ornament, and Nature in Ornament.¹⁰

By means of these handsomely illustrated books, ornament from all over the world and every historic period, as well as the most current, became available to designers and manufacturers. Designs taken from these books are found throughout the Victorian interior in ornamental plaster, fresco, stenciling, furniture, wallpaper, carpets, silver, glass, and porcelain.

In addition to these publications which were of primary value to the design professional, there were abundant popular interior decorating guides. These were published for the general public by so-called experts who offered their advice to those many who were

⁹Owen Jones, The Grammar of Ornament (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1856).

¹⁰F. Edward Hulme, Principles of Ornamental Art (New York: Cassell Potter & Galpin, 1875); George and Maurice Audsley, Outlines of Ornaments in the Leading Styles (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1881); and Lewis F. Day, The Anatomy of Pattern (London: B. T. Batsford, 1887), The Application of Ornament (London: B. T. Batsford, 1888), and Nature in Ornament (London: B. T. Batsford, 1892).

eager to learn what was the right or most fashionable thing to do to their homes. (Figure 60) Illustrative examples include Mrs. C. S. Jones and Henry T. Williams, Household Elegancies: Suggestions in Household Art & Tasteful Home Decorating and Beautiful Homes, Mrs. H. R. Haweis, The Art of Decoration and Beautiful Houses, Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, Suggestions for House Decoration, and Interior Decoration by Arnold W. Brunner and Thomas Tryon.¹¹

But the popular magazines, which became increasingly available to all classes and in all places in the United States as the century progressed, were by far the most important form of printed communication used for the spread of the concept of the good life achieved by consumerism.¹² This proliferation of magazines was made possible by the rise of advertising, and by improvement in printing, reproduction of illustrations, and methods of distribution. Magazines became both a social and an economic force, changing the tastes and habits of Americans; inventing and "arousing new desires and new consumer demands"; and at the same time creating a mass market and new forms of marketing research and commodity distribution.¹³

¹¹Mrs. C. S. Jones and Henry T. Williams, Household Elegancies: Suggestions in Household Art & Tasteful Home Decorating (New York: Henry T. Williams, 1875), and Beautiful Homes (New York: Henry T. Williams, 1878); Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting, Woodwork & Furniture (London: Porter & Coates, 1877); and Arnold W. Brunner and Thomas Tryon, Interior Decoration (New York: T. Comstock, 1887).

¹²See Christopher P. Wilson, "The Rhetoric of Consumption, Mass Market Magazines and the Demise of the Gentle Reader 1880-1920," The Culture of Consumption, eds. Richard Wrightsman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983).

¹³James Playsted Wood, Magazines in the United States (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1949), 230.

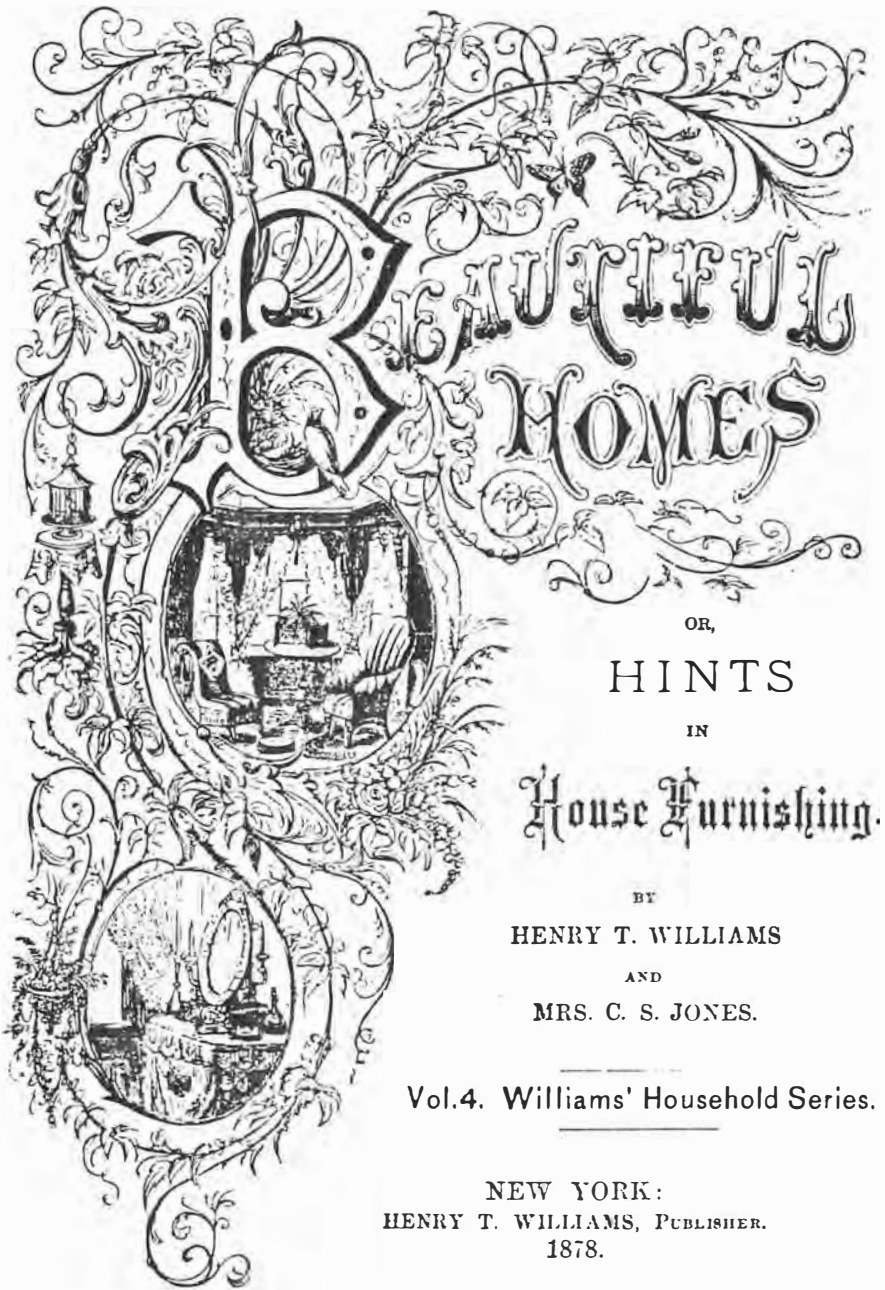


Figure 60. Frontispiece to Beautiful Homes (1878). It is symbolic of the multitude of decorating guidebooks published during the late nineteenth century. Courtesy Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum.

Interior design and taste in general in the United States were especially influenced by magazines, which played a crucial role in homogenizing the American home along with the nation's lifestyle. From 1830 into the 1880s Godey's Lady's Book actually set the pattern as a guide for American women in creating and maintaining a home.¹⁴ It became a national institution, "affecting manners, morals, tastes, fashions in clothes, homes, and diet of generations of American readers."¹⁵

The passage on 3 March 1879 of a bill allowing second class mailing privileges for magazines opened the door for an onrush of periodicals which climbed from 1,800 monthly in 1860 to 3,300 in 1885. Ladies Home Journal (1885), McCall's Magazine (1870), Good Housekeeping (1885), and many others like them were aimed at female readers, giving them advice on the arts, social graces, cooking, and interior decorating. Ladies Home Journal, which by late century had over one million readers, "ran pictures of home interiors in every issue."¹⁶ There were also specialized interior design magazines like The Decorator and Furnisher and Interior Decorator.

World's Fairs/Industrial Expositions. The great World's Fairs held during the nineteenth and the early-twentieth century epitomized

¹⁴Winkler.

¹⁵Wood, 54.

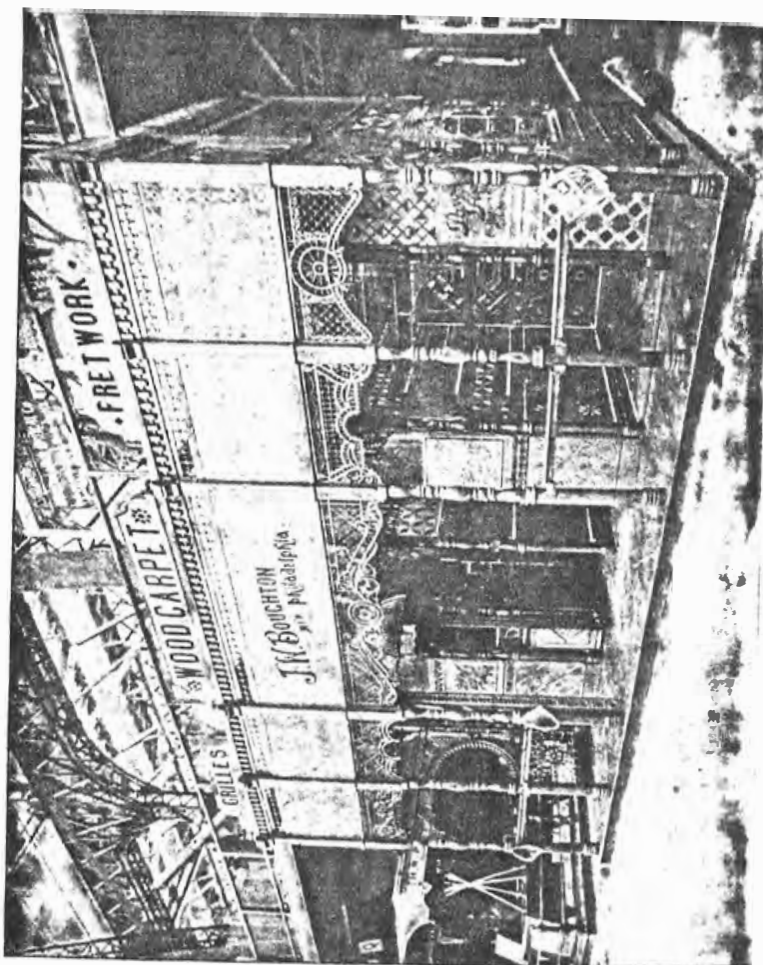
¹⁶Ibid., 99 and 105.

the Victorian belief in the "gospel of progress" achieved through scientific materialism. They are also illustrative of rising nationalism and regional boosterism. At these fairs were represented "the products of modern machinery and man's skillful handiwork in every form and design."¹⁷ International, national, and regional expositions of industrial and manufactured goods were of great importance during the Victorian Period in introducing technological modernization and consumerism to the American people and in spreading the latest design concepts and fashions. (Figures 61 and 62) Beginning with the Great Exposition held in London in 1851 there was a seemingly endless chain of these events staged throughout Europe and America.

The most important ones held in the United States were the Centennial Exposition, Philadelphia (1876); the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago (1893); and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis (1904). Besides these blockbuster World's Fairs there were also many smaller regional versions including these that were near to Memphis: the Great Southern Exposition, Louisville, Kentucky (began 1883); the Cotton States and International Exposition, Atlanta, Georgia (1895); and others held in New Orleans and Nashville. The influence that these expositions and the resultant publicity and publication had on American taste and fashion is incalculable.

¹⁷Columbian Exposition, Chicago U.S.A., Classification and Rules, Department of Manufactures (1893), 3, Special Collections, Newberry Library, Chicago.

ESTABLISHED IN NEW YORK
J.C.
J. W. BOUGHTON, MANUFACTURER
ESTABLISHED IN PHILADELPHIA
IN 1876
The Highest Premium awarded at the Centennial Exhibition over all
European and American Exhibitors to
J. W. Boughton, Philadelphia, Pa.



The above cut shows our **Exhibit** at the Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Illinois.
And we invite comparison with any goods made
at home or abroad

It is in Section Q of the Manufacturers' Building, on the wide aisle, under the edge of the north
gallery towards the lake, and the third exhibit from the middle main north and south aisles.

As we go to press we have received notice that we have been awarded the Prize
at Chicago

Figure 61. Display at the World's Columbian Exposition (1893). Exhibits like that of the J. W. Boughton Company at the Chicago World's Fair exposed Americans to the latest in technology and design for the home interior. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

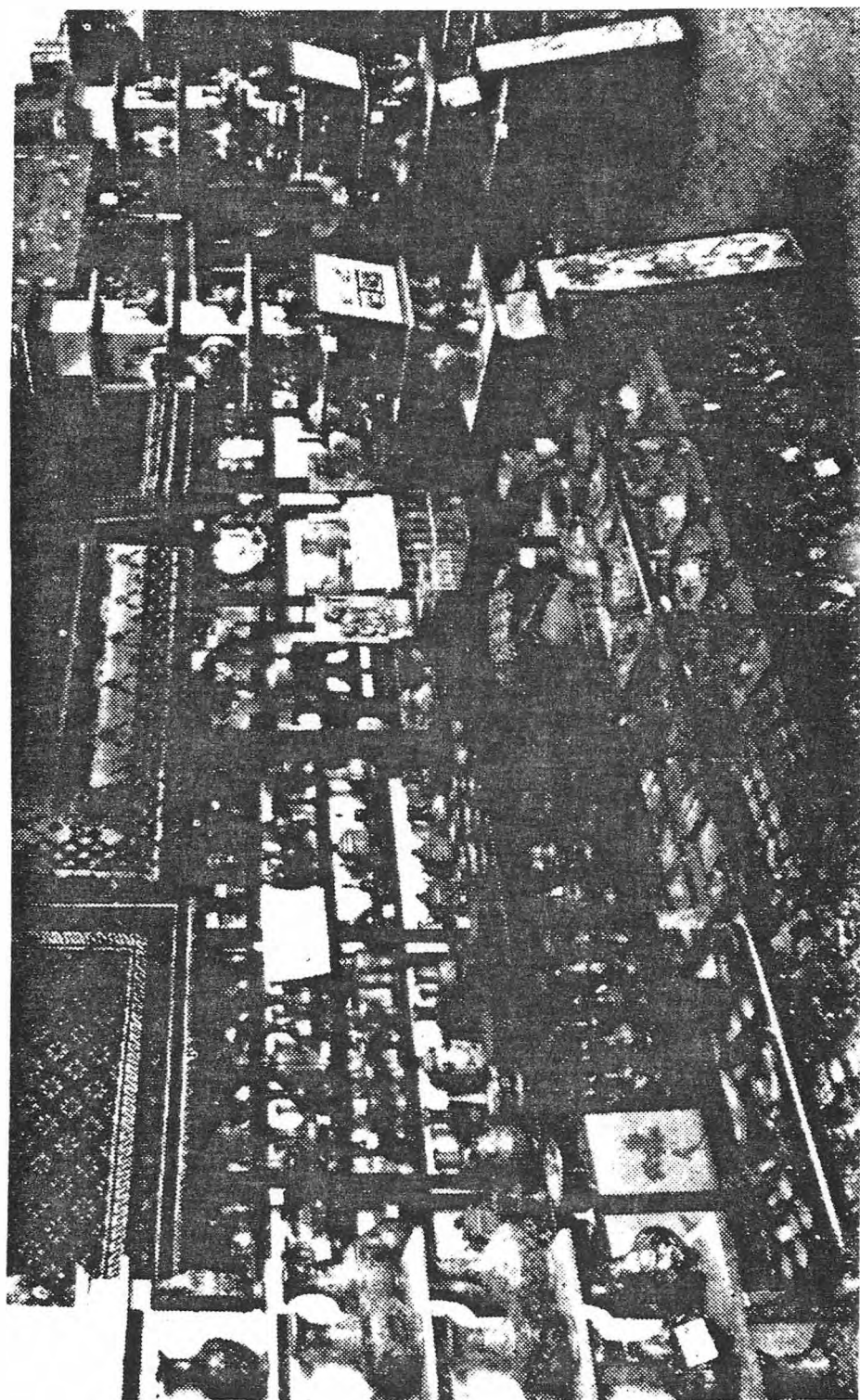


Figure 62. Display at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904). International exhibits like that shown above at the St. Louis World's Fair filled with an array of exotic crafts including carpets, embroidery, porcelain, and cloisonné broadened American taste. Courtesy Missouri Historical Society.

The James Columbus Neelys and the Barton Lee Mallorys attended the Chicago and St. Louis World's Fairs, purchasing important items for their home. Surviving correspondence in the Neely Papers shows that family members also traveled to the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition.

Retail and Department Stores and Mail Order

Advertising and promotion alone were not enough to change a nation's purchasing habits; the easy availability of products was also a factor. Especially important was the rapid development of the American railnet system which enabled products to be shipped anywhere and available at a phenomenally reduced cost.

Early in the nineteenth century in communities like Memphis, situated far from major centers of manufacture, products, especially those for the interior, which were not an absolute necessity, were not easily accessible. Some things were made locally, but most were brought to Memphis by river steamer. Dry goods stores were the standard source for almost everything. Several advertised in the Memphis newspapers that they carried wallpapers, fabrics, even furniture. Obviously there was not a great deal of choice, and written evidence shows that anyone wanting anything luxurious or truly fashionable had to travel personally or write the manufacturer in order to purchase such an item.

By the second half of the century and primarily as a result of the railnet system, this isolated condition had changed. Though

the river shipping industry remained vital to Memphis, the city had become a major railnet hub with linkages literally throughout the nation. Retail specialty shops made their appearance as towns like Memphis grew in size and in turn became distribution centers for their own hinterland. (Figure 63) Goods to supply wallpaper, furniture, carpet, light fixture, fabric, and upholstery specialty shops were purchased wholesale from jobbers in distribution centers or directly from manufacturers in cities like Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, St. Louis, and Cincinnati. The Memphis customer could at last either purchase the latest in his own hometown or order through the specialist.

The latter half of the century also saw the full flowering of the department store which became a major source for home furnishings products. The department store concept revolutionized retailing by combining many specialty stores under one roof, and literally ushered in the concept of mass marketing.¹⁸ In so doing the department stores aided in homogenizing American consumer products. These large stores brought a change from the early dry goods store; passive retailing was replaced with innovative merchandising, new sales promotion, lavish architectural and interior surroundings, and even entertainment. Far from being passive, the department store, "by means of skillful advertising, special exhibitions, and tempting bargains," actually influenced behavior.¹⁹

¹⁸John William Ferry, A History of the Department Store (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1960).

¹⁹Robert Hendrickson, The Grand Emporium, The Illustrated History of America's Great Department Store (New York: Stein & Day, 1979), 25.

AMES, BEATTIE & CO.
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL
FURNITURE. CARPETS
OIL CLOTHS.
Window Shades, Mattresses, Etc.
At Lowest Prices, and Guarantee Satisfaction,
862 & 865 Main Street, MEMPHIS.

Figure 63. An 1881 city directory advertisement for a Memphis specialty store.

A few early examples of these new consumer-social centers include: Macy's, New York (1842); John Wanamaker, Philadelphia (1861); Jordan Marsh Company, Boston (1841); John Shillito, Cincinnati (1830); Rich's Inc., Atlanta (1867); Thalheimer's, Richmond (1842); and Carson Pirie Scott & Company, Chicago (1854).²⁰

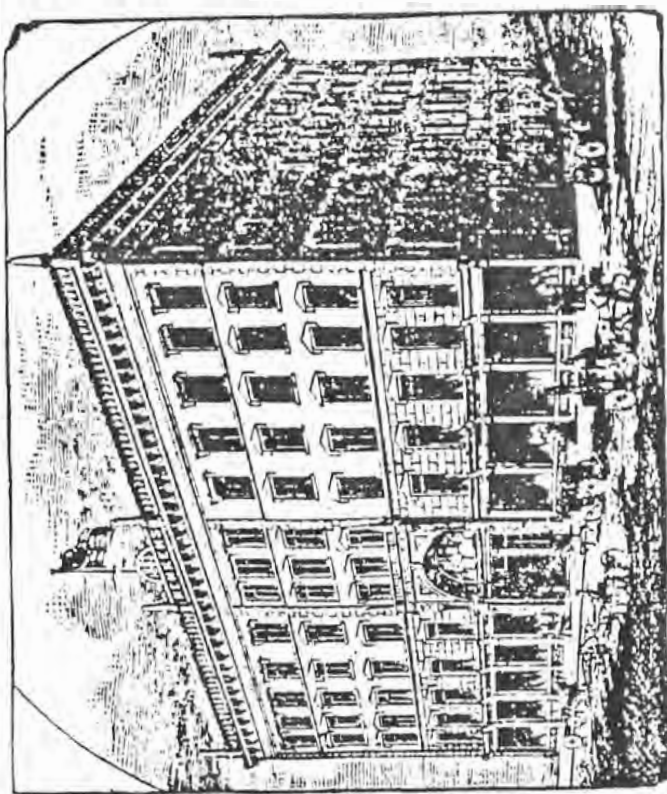
An offshoot of the department store was the mailorder business with its concept of consumer goods for all whereby products were shipped throughout the nation. The Sears-Roebuck and Montgomery-Ward catalogs offered all kinds of home decorating products to anyone who could afford them.

Memphis along with other American cities had its own department stores whose advertisements in the city's newspapers included the latest interior fashions such as carpets, curtains, and furniture. In 1888 the new building which housed Menken's Department Store, founded in 1862 by J. S. Menken of Dutch descent, was described as one of the largest and most complete in the state: "five stories high and divided into twenty-eight departments with two hundred assistants and doing an annual business transaction of \$1,500,000."²¹ (Figure 64) At the grand opening, the newspaper reporter noted that

The display of goods was so great, varied and beautiful. . . . The general line of dry goods, ladies' suits, children's clothes, boots and shoes, carpets and curtains, china and glassware, each department represented by superb specimens, was certainly one of the grandest

²⁰Ferry, 104-105.

²¹Vedder, 155-156.



A

RESIDENCES FURNISHED!

We are now prepared to furnish Residences with the following useful and ornamental articles

at extraordinary low prices :

China and Glassware,

Carpets and Rugs,

Cutlery and Plated Ware

Curtains and Shades,

Statuary and Vases,

Portiers and Cornices,

Ceramics and Bric-a-brac

Furniture Damasks,

Table Damasks, Napkins, Towels and Sheetings.

MENKEN BROTHERS.

B

Figure 64. Menken's Department Store.

A. The Menken's building in 1888.

B. Menken's advertisement from the 30 September 1884 Memphis Daily Appeal.

displays ever seen in this country. The house was filled with visitors examining the magnificent articles on exhibition, many of them being imported goods of the very finest quality and most attractive features. The quantity of goods and extent of the house are entirely too great to be written up.²²

Described as a Palatial Dry-Goods Emporium, the Menken's building had large windows and high ceilings throughout. Two hydraulic elevators connected the various floors. On the third of these was a ladies' parlor or reception room with a variety of comfortable easy chairs and sofas, a grand piano, and all the latest magazines.²³

Lowenstein's Department Store was founded in 1855 by Benedict Lowenstein from Darmstadt, Germany. He was joined by his three brothers in 1869.²⁴ Late-century newspaper accounts describe it as a mammoth retail establishment with palatial showrooms.

(Figure 65)

Goldsmith's Department Store was founded in 1870 by Jacob Goldsmith of Baden, Germany.²⁵ Like Lowenstein's, it grew from a small dry goods store into a major department store and is the only one of the three mentioned which is still in existence. (Figure 66)

²²"Menken's Celebration of the Opening of Their Palatial Store a Most Gratifying Success," Memphis Daily Appeal, 10 October 1884, 12.

²³Hensley, 88.

²⁴Emmett Maum, "Memphis Great Growth Reflected by Lowenstein's Soon Starting 103rd Year," Commercial Appeal, 29 December 1957, 1.

²⁵Paul R. Coppock, "Bridging the Generation of Business Growth," Commercial Appeal, 11 November 1976, 1(B).



A

DAILY APPEAL.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 1885.

VOL. XLV-NO. 8

B. LOWENSTEIN & BROS.

GREAT REDUCTION SALE.

To Reduce Our WINTER STOCK as Much as Possible We have Reduced Prices in Every Department Throughout the House. Don't Miss Our Great Clearing Sale of

FUR-LINED GARMENTS AND PLUSH WRAPS!

At the prices we have put upon them you can well afford to buy if you don't use them until Next Winter.

Special Bargains in Black and Colored Silks, Velvets, Plushes, Satins

AND DRESS GOODS. Such bargains will not be offered again.

VERY DECIDED BARGAINS IN LACES AND MADE-UP LACE GOODS.

OUR CARPET and UPHOLSTERY DEPARTMENTS

Are full of Choice new Goods at Prices Lower than any other House.

All our Novelties and Fancy Goods leftover from the Holidays we have marked to sell for one-half former price

All of these goods are yet on exhibition on Second Floor. Look at the Assortment and if they please you we will name the right price.

B. LOWENSTEIN & BROS.

B

Figure 65. Lowenstein's Department Store. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

A. The Lowenstein's building in 1886.

B. Lowenstein's advertisement from the 3 January 1885 Daily Appeal.



A



B

Figure 66. Goldsmith's Department Store.
 A. The Goldsmith's building c. 1900. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.
 B. Goldsmith's advertisement from the 17 October 1900 Commercial Appeal.

Developing Role of the Interior Decorator

During the nineteenth century the foundations were laid for the modern interior design profession. Earlier in the century and before, the architect or the upholstery and cabinetmaking firms provided these services. From mid-century in large Eastern cities the specialist interior decorator made his appearance.

With the incredible proliferation of ready-made goods came the rise of a new breed of professional whose sole job it was to complete the interiors of a house after the architect and builder had left. Neither architects nor cabinetmakers, these men were quick to realize the potential of dispensing advice on household decorations.²⁶

During the 1870s the Aesthetic Movement with its emphasis on artistic interiors fostered an even greater need for interior decorating authorities as well as the large outpouring of their interior decorating guide books. Rhoda and Agnes Garrett explained the role of the modern decorator as follows:

Until lately a house-decorator has meant simply a man who hangs paper and knows mechanically how to paint wood. In his proper place he would fulfill the part which a dispenser does to a doctor; he should be able faithfully to follow directions and honestly to carry out instructions and as a rule this role he is able to fulfill. But a decorator should mean someone who can do more than this; he should be able to design and arrange all the internal fittings of a house, the chimney pieces, grates, and door heads, as well as the mantel hangings, curtains, carpets, and furniture.²⁷

²⁶H. Ward Jandl, "George Platt, Interior Decorator (1812-1873)," The Magazine Antiques (June 1975), 1154.

²⁷Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting, Woodwork, and Furniture (London: Porter & Coates, 1877), 5, Special Collections, Strong Museum, Rochester, New York.

By late century interior decorating specialists could be found in large cities across America. Fresco artists, wallpaper dealers, and upholsterers also advertised as interior decorators. Decorators did not make their appearance in Memphis until after the turn of the century and even then they were usually dealers in paper, drapery, or upholstery who advertised as decorators. The 1902 Memphis city directory lists "Price & Boyer, Interior Decorators," and the 1906 directory lists "DuVal, Barnum & Gottlieb, Interior Decorators--Correct Period Decorations."²⁸ Both were primarily wallpaper dealers.

No written or oral evidence survives as to whether or not the Neelys or Mallorys received any assistance in their decorating. Oral tradition suggests that Mr. Neely made most of the decisions and selections himself. The Neelys and Mallorys very likely received advice from local decorator/dealers or those in other cities in the selection of specific items for their home such as wallpaper, paint colors, or upholstery.

²⁸R. L. Polk & Co.'s Classified Business Directory of Memphis, Tennessee (Memphis: R. L. Polk & Co., 1902), 1215, and R. L. Polk & Co.'s Memphis City Directory (Memphis: R. L. Polk & Co., 1906), 1748.

VOLUME II

VICTORIAN MATERIAL CULTURE IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE:
THE MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE INTERIORS AS ARTIFACT

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Lawrence Allen Ray
August 1988

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CHAPTER VIII

MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE AND DECORATION

Interior decoration is a comparatively new term and implies all that may be applied to the embellishing of the interior of a building including frescoing, paper hanging, wood working, brass working, furnishing, stained glass, etc.¹

Gail Winkler and Roger Moss point out in the preface to Victorian Interior Decoration that there was never a single uniform Victorian style of interior decoration. Instead there was, characteristically, in most American Victorian interiors a layering and overlapping of many different styles.² This is true of the Mallory-Neely House. To bring order to the complex overlaying of decorative features for purposes of analysis and study, the following renovation stages were established by the researcher:

1. Surviving Interior Features of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852). Original interior features of the Mallory-Neely House reflective of early Victorian fashion.
2. Neely Redecoration and Additions--Phase One of Neely Redecoration: The Second Empire Style. Remodeled interior features

¹Chicago Commerce, Manufacturers, Banking and Transportation Facilities (Chicago: S. Ferd, Howe & Co., 1884), 192, Special Collections, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago.

²Gail Caskey Winkler and Roger W. Moss, Victorian Interior Decoration, American Interiors 1830-1900 (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1986), ix.

of the house carried out by the Neelys shortly after 1883 in the opulent High Victorian style fashionable after the Civil War in Europe and America. Phase Two of Neely Redecoration: The Aesthetic Style. Additional remodeling of and alteration to the entire interior after 1890 primarily in the late Victorian reform taste, as a "cleanup" reaction to High Victorian taste.

3. Mallory Redecoration. Mallory remodeling from 1900 reflecting yet further "cleanup" and modern reaction to Victorianism.

The primary focus of this chapter is on those fittings which provide the embellishment of the interior architectural shell, sometimes structural, but more often cosmetic. These are usually fixed features as opposed to more easily moveable furniture and accessories and include the following: architectural millwork such as doors and windows and their surrounds, baseboard, rails, paneling, shutters, built-in shelving, ornamental grills and stairs; plain and ornamental plaster; hardware; light fixtures; fireplaces and their equipment; floor treatment and covering; wall treatment and covering, including papers, fresco and stenciling; window treatment, including both drapery and hardware; and paint color selections including graining.

Surviving Interior Features of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852)

Though the exterior of Kirtland's Italianate villa has been altered, much of the interior architectural finish survives, albeit overshadowed by later additions and alterations. Interior features

which are almost certainly survivors from the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) were determined through careful stylistic comparison to dwellings with similar fittings in national, Southern, and Mississippi Valley homes of the same time frame.

The Anglo-American arbiters of nineteenth century architectural taste (such as Loudon, Downing, Wheeler, Vaux and Sloan) were concerned not only with the exterior architecture and the interior plans of domestic dwellings but also with the design and decoration of interiors. But Downing more than any of the other American architectural theorists discoursed at length about interior styles, finishes, and furnishings for both the country cottage and villa with the philosophical reasons for the appropriateness of his suggestions. As with the external architecture, he felt that in designing an interior, harmony of design, fitness for purpose, and cultural associationism reflective of certain "modes of thought and life" were important factors to consider.³ Downing stressed most strongly that the interior style of the domestic dwelling should be one and the same with the exterior "architectural character," in what he described as a unity of design or spirit.⁴ He also advocated a harmony between interiors, exteriors, and the surrounding garden landscape with "an intelligent unity reigning over the whole."⁵

³Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 376-377.

⁴Ibid., 304.

⁵Ibid., 365.

Downing felt that to decorate one's interiors in a jumble of two or three varieties of superficial trendy styles, without consideration of the architectural character of the building, was a violation of architectural truth and fitness. In The Architecture of Country Houses Downing devoted one chapter to interior finish and another to appropriate furnishings. He provided illustrations and then discussed appropriate ways to create interiors in the various Picturesque Eclectic styles that he advocated for use by Americans, including Grecian interior features for the Greek Revival style; Italian variants for the Italianate; and Gothic, Bracketed, Elizabethan, and Norman for the varied medieval types. For each he cited specific features as moldings, windows and door forms, ceiling and wall treatment. Italianate interiors were especially favored by Downing for domestic usage because of their associative symbolism, communicating the message of "refined culture and accomplishment."⁶

Downing discoursed at length on two approaches to classical interior design: the Grecian and Italian or Roman. He further categorized the French Court styles of Louis XIV, Louis XV, and Louis XVI as variants of the classical Italian.⁷ Downing labeled the mix of these historic French court styles as the "Modern French Style" and stated that they were very popular. Speaking of the Rococo/Louis XV style in particular he stated:

⁶Ibid., 381.

⁷Ibid., 380.

It is a modification of the Italian distinguished by curved and flowing lines and a profusion of delicate ornaments in relief, producing a very ornate and elegant effect.⁸

Downing as the major arbiter of nineteenth century American taste gave his blessing to the use of rococo interiors within the Italianate because it was a variant of the classical. In America, therefore, the characteristic Italianate house across the land often had rococo style interior features and furnishings.⁹

Although Italian traditions supplied the exteriors, French models inspired the interiors. . . . The Rococo decor was widely popular with manifestations in every form.¹⁰

Despite advocacy of these more ornate French forms, Downing did plead for control and restraint in their use in interior decoration. He was very much against extravagance. Interior decor, he felt, should reflect the status and size of a dwelling: a cottage's interiors, for example, should be more humble, a town mansion's interior, more elaborate. Downing felt that any interior decoration, which he considered embellishment, should be kept clear and simple,

⁸Ibid.

⁹For examples see Edgar de N. Mayhew and Minor Myers, Jr., A Documentary History of American Interiors from the Colonial Era to 1915 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980), 181-192; Robert Charles Bishop and Patricia Goblentz, American Decorative Arts (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1983), 168-177; and Tim O'Brien, "The Victorian Mansion in Portland, Maine," Victorian Houses, 3, No. 3 (Summer 1984), 33-37.

¹⁰Mayhew and Myers, 182.

so as to emphasize and not conceal the architectural structure.¹¹ Apparently most followed Downing's advice. Edgar de N. Mayhew and Minor Myers, Jr. in A Documentary History of American Interiors state that the rococo as used inside the Italianate home was utilized primarily for architectural enrichment in a restrained manner and usually for the decoration of mantels, cornices, and door frames.¹²

The surviving interior features of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) are a textbook example of all that Downing advocated. It is Italianate inside and out, with rococo interior touches, all under control, with emphasis on the architectural features which dominate the design. The following interior architectural finish survives from the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852).

Millwork (c. 1852)

From this period, the most visually dominating and distinctive surviving architectural feature of the first floor of the Mallory-Neely House is the millwork, especially the fifteen tall paneled doorways for which the typical height of door with facing is eleven and one-half feet; these include double, single, and pocket as well as exterior, interior, and closet doors. All of these are alike in design and size with the exception of the two sets of sliding doors which separate the sitting room from the dining room, and the parlor from the music

¹¹Carolyn Flaherty, "Downing on Interior Decoration," Old House Journal Compendium, eds. Clem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980), 253.

¹²Mayhew and Myers, 191.

room. All of these doors are round arched with Italianate archivolt surrounds made up of heavily layered moldings. In his Architecture of Country Homes, Downing discussed the appropriate type of moldings for Grecian, Italianate, and Gothic houses. He described Italianate moldings as being bolder than the Grecian and made up of layered moldings, all of which were based on sections of the circle reflecting the Italian round headed arch.¹³ He described these as "simple and massive dressings."¹⁴

These round arched doorways, deep and elaborate window surrounds, and baseboards in each first floor room and the hallway are all encrusted with these moldings and create what Downing described as the architectural lines of the interiors which carry the Italianate exterior "character" of the architecture inside; this was in keeping with Downing's admonition to have complete expression of the architectural style in all parts of the building.¹⁵ The tall size, heavy moldings, and the fact that most of the door openings are eighteen inches thick give these numerous doors a monumental and dominating quality. Sloan in describing Italianate interiors in The Model Architect stated: "All window and door dressings are made very heavy and indeed throughout there is a tendency rather to boldness than minute decoration."¹⁶

¹³Downing, The Architecture of Country Homes, 366.

¹⁴Ibid., 206.

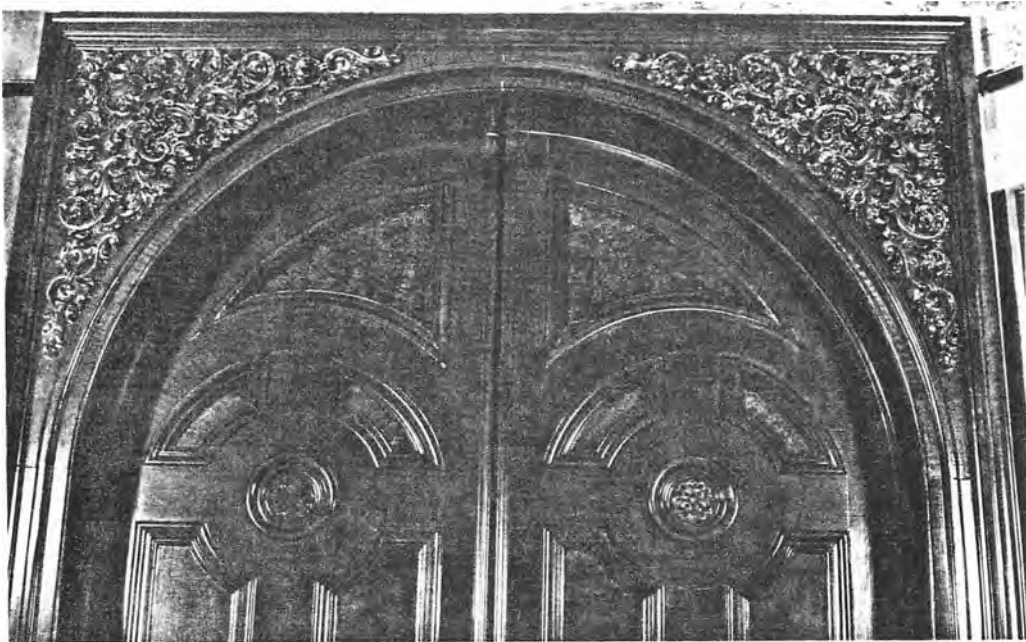
¹⁵Ibid., 365.

¹⁶Sloan, 31.

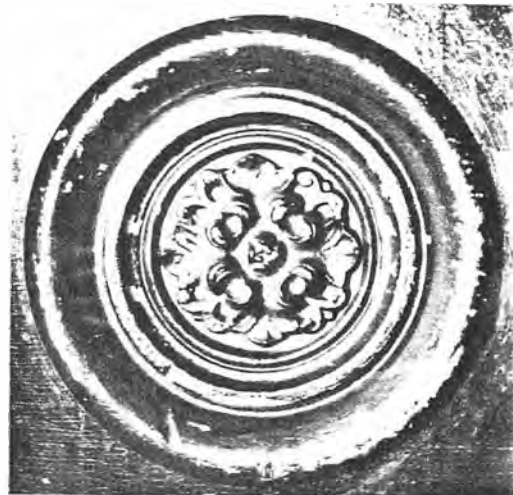
A lighter ornamental touch is added to all these doorways by the use of organic rococo foliage made of plaster composition in the spandrel of each door facing. It was a medieval custom to embellish doors in this manner, and this treatment was revived as part of the Gothic Revival style. Many Victorian designers and design books illustrated ways to ornament these spandrels. John Ruskin was interested in this as a design problem and suggested natural foliate designs that might be appropriate. Rosette medallions of plaster composition are attached to some doors for further enrichment. (Figure 67)

One of the most important architectural millwork features of the Mallory-Neely circa 1852 interior no longer exists: it was the spiral staircase in the entrance hall. This was replaced with a more up-to-date set of stairs in the Neely's post-1883 remodeling. Investigative structural study of the house by the National Heritage group while in the process of preparing their report uncovered structural vestiges of this original staircase and discovered that the stairwell above was capped by an octagonal skylight made up of concentric circles of amber, burgundy, and midnight-blue stained glass.¹⁷ Much of this structure remains in situ in the attic. What must be a very similar winding staircase, its well also topped by a colored glass skylight, survives in the Mallory-Neely Mansion's sister Italianate villa, Annesdale (c. 1855); illustrated in

¹⁷Miller et al. [blueprints of plans, elevations and descriptive data that accompany the Master Plan].



A



B

Figure 67. Mallory-Neely (c. 1852) doors.

A. Pocket doors.

B. Circular medallion.

Except for their larger scale, the pocket doors separating the dining room from the sitting room are typical of the monumental doorways (c. 1852) found throughout the first floor of the Mallory-Neely House. All of these are made up of and adorned with heavy wooden Italianate moldings and panels in keeping with the exterior architectural style. Their monumentality is lightened by the addition of rococo vegetal ornament (made of a plaster-like composition) used in the spandrels and in decorative circular medallions.

American Victorian: A Style and Source Book, this stairway gives a good idea of what the original Mallory-Neely entrance hall was like.¹⁸

Based on similarities with illustrations in the Hinkle, Guild & Company catalog and on the practice of ordering millwork from J. Griffith & Son by a local builder, it is probable that the interior millwork of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) along with that on the exterior was shipped into Memphis via river steamer. Manufacturing firms in larger cities produced all types of millwork which they then sent to either retailers, architects, or owners. The Cincinnati firm of Hinkle, Guild & Company stated in their catalog: "We have already been supplying a number of merchants in the interior of Southern and Western states with our manufactured articles."¹⁹ They also stated that if builder, owner, or architect would send a scaled plan of the projected house they would provide cost estimates for all the interior millwork. Pages of their catalog then illustrate sections of moldings, doors, architrave/archivolt surrounds and window frames, many of which are very similar to those used by Kirtland. (Figures 68-71)

Providing corroborative evidence, extensive correspondence survives in the Robertson Topp Papers having to do with the interior millwork of Topp's new 1857 Italianate style addition to his Greek

¹⁸Lawrence Grow and Dina von Zweck, American Victorian: A Style and Source Book (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984), 29.

¹⁹Hinkle, Guild & Co. Plans of Buildings, 2.

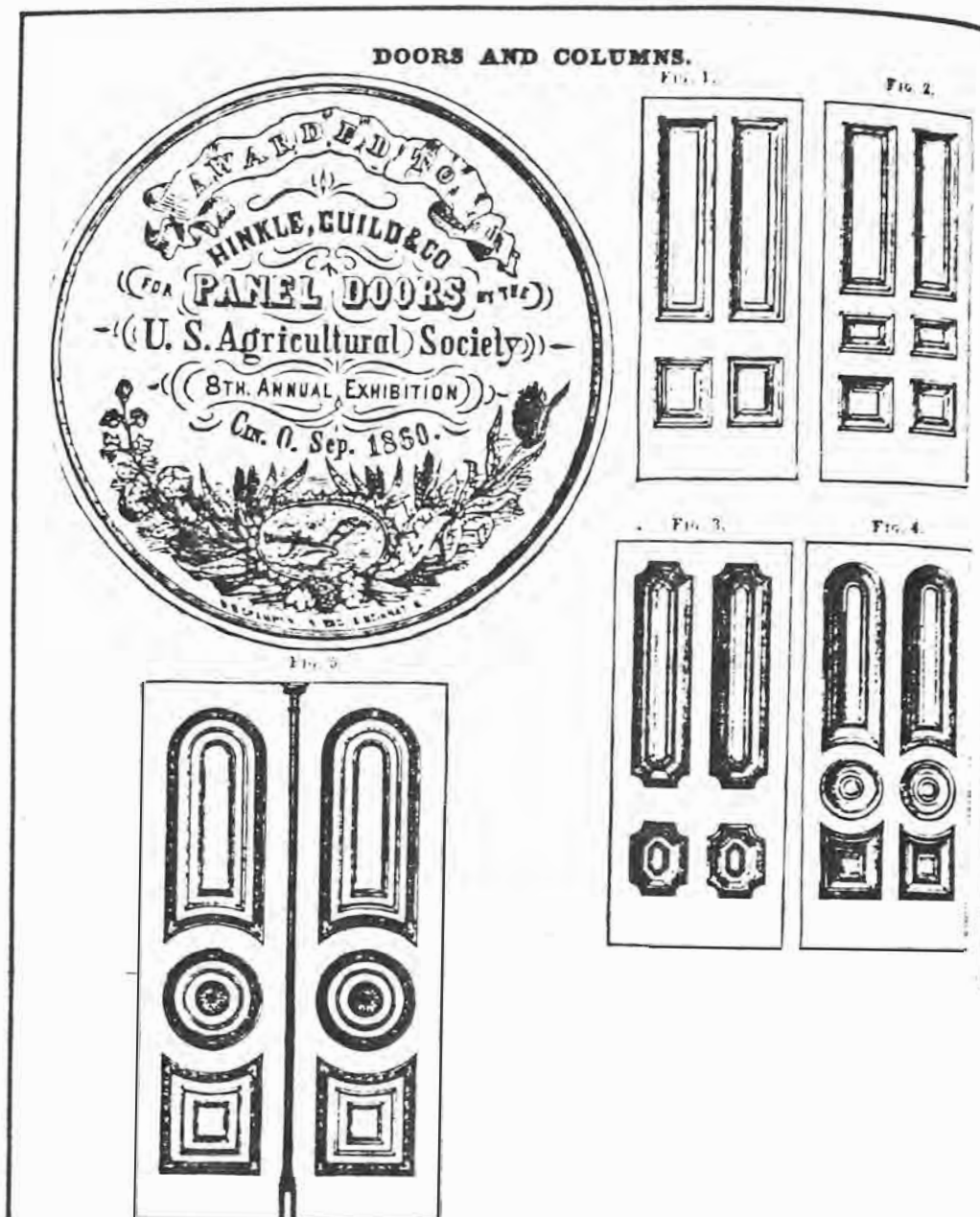
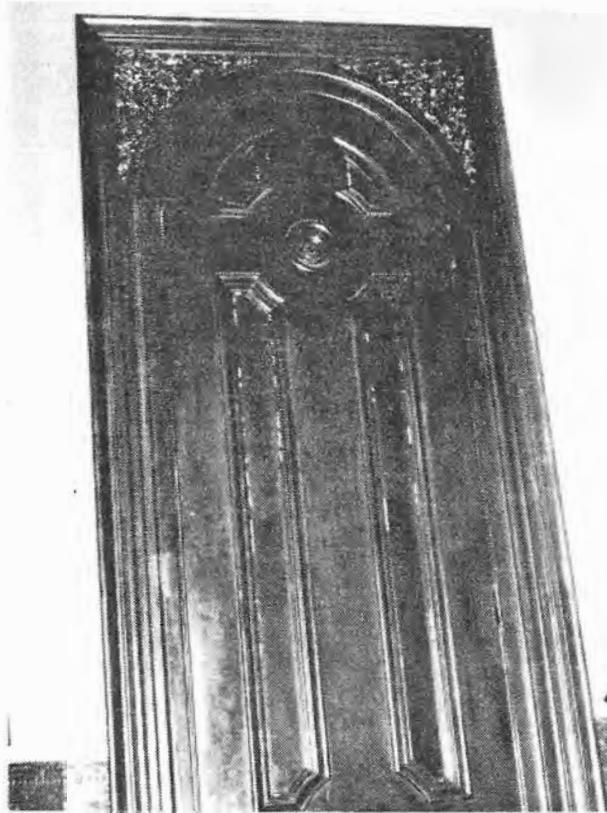
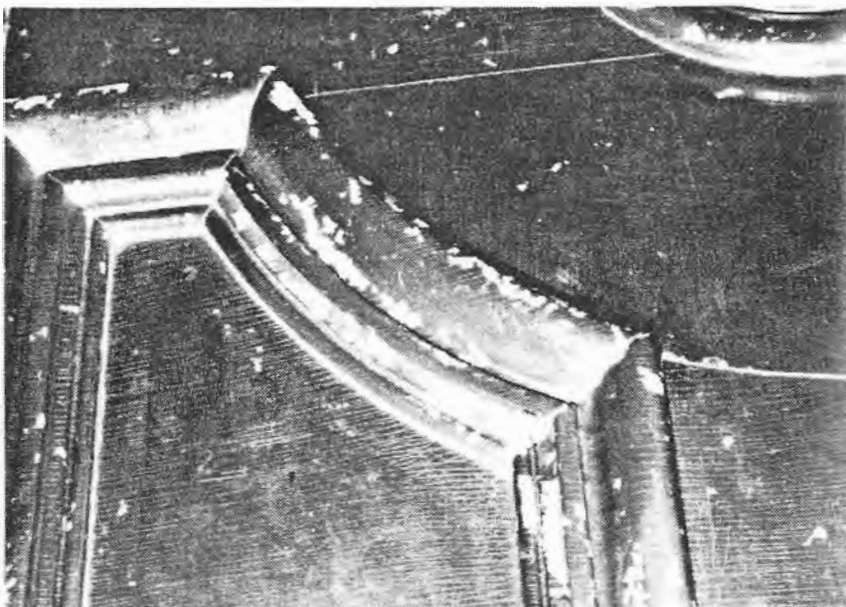


Figure 68. Part of a page from the 1869 Hinkle, Guild & Co. catalog showing mail-order Italianate style doors. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.



A



B

Figure 69. Details of some of the Mallory-Neely millwork (c. 1852).
A. Entrance hall door.
B. Detail of molding.

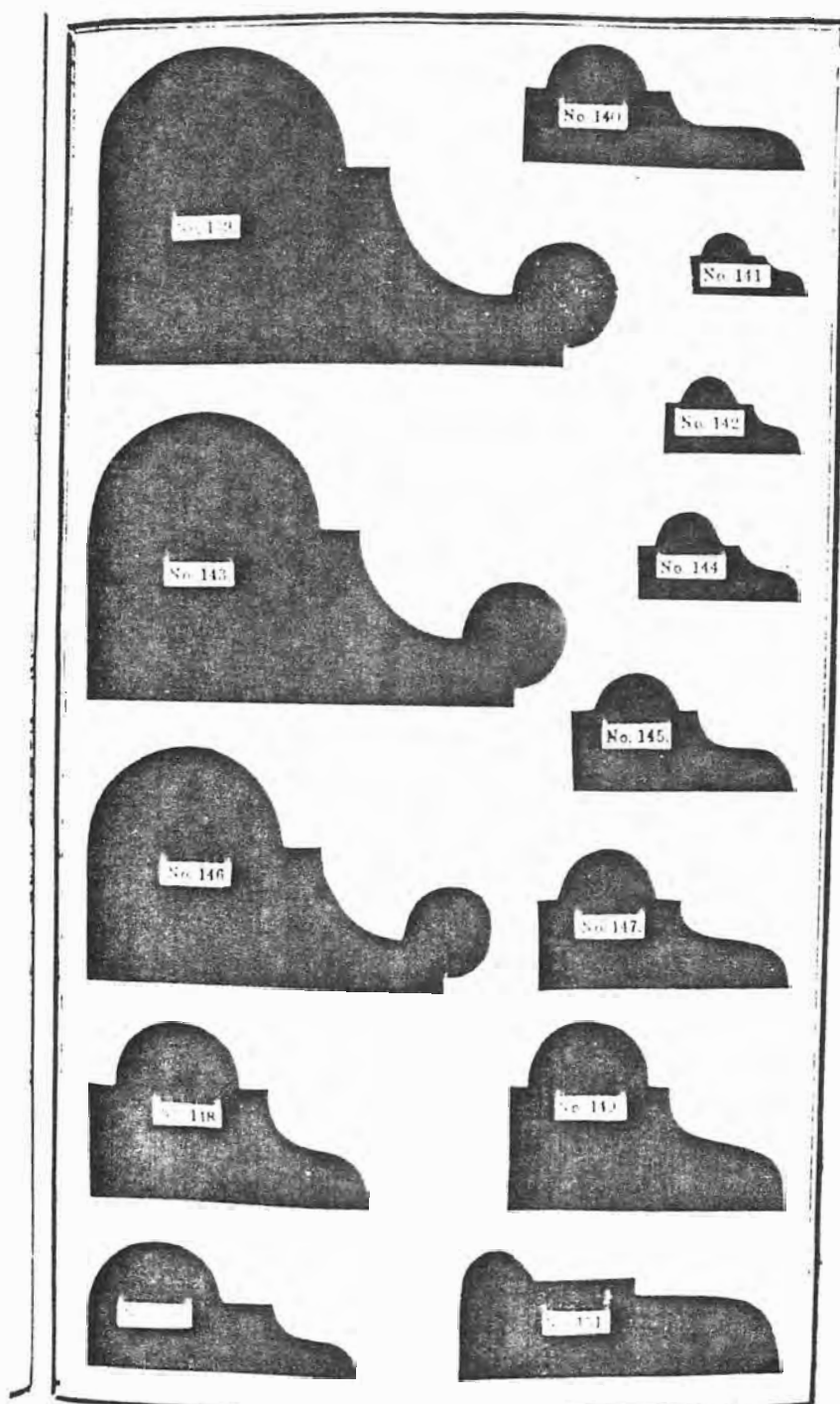
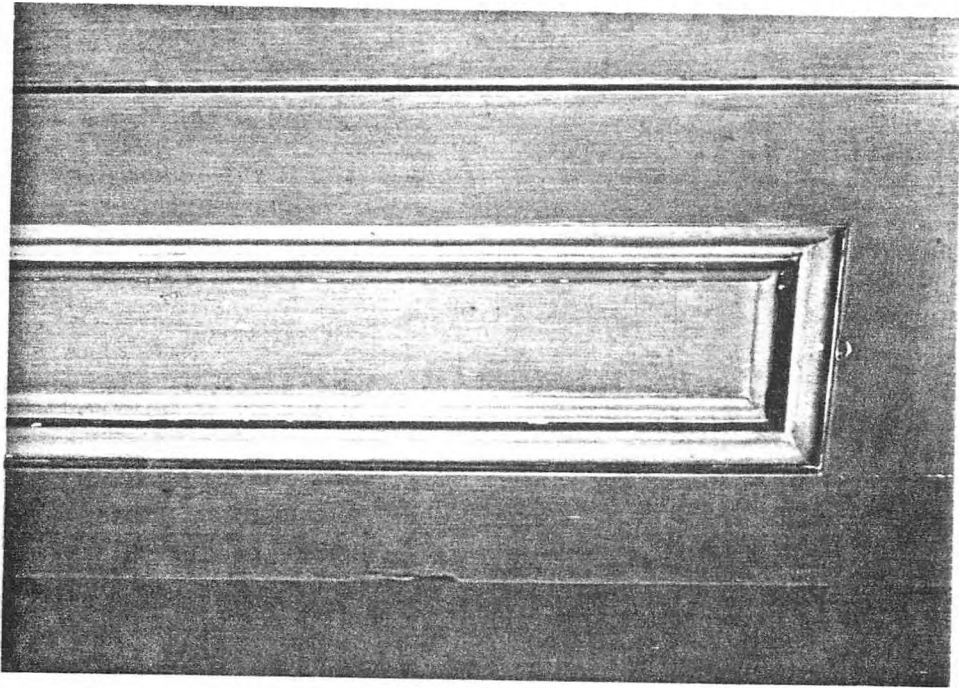
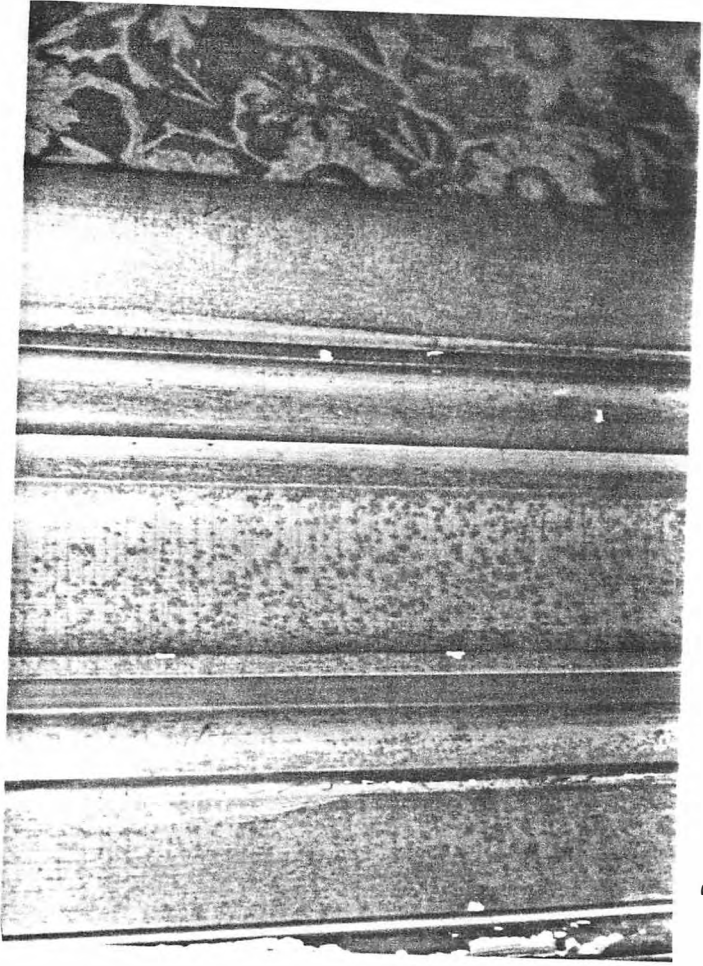


Figure 70. One of many pages from the 1869 Hinkle, Guild & Co. catalog showing profile sections of available mail-order moldings. Many of these are similar to the Italianate moldings used throughout the original two floors of the Mallory-Neely house. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.



A



B

Figure 71. Other examples of the Mallory-Neely c. 1852 millwork. These were built up out of moldings similar to those illustrated in the 1869 Hinkle, Guild & Co. catalog.
 A. Panel moldings.
 B. Archivolt moldings.

Revival home corresponding in time to the building of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852).²⁰ Correspondence over an eight year period with James Griffith & Son, Manufacturers and Builders, located at the corner of Hurt and Abigail Streets in Cincinnati, includes bills and letters in which cost estimates are stated, and a contract of 18 April 1860 for providing interior millwork as specified by the architect, Robert Fletcher. This contract includes baseboards (pencil drawn in profile), doors, window frames, blinds, and closet doors. The contract specifies that for most rooms the millwork is to be of seasoned white walnut and cherry except for that in the dining room which is to be of seasoned mahogany. The total estimated cost was \$3841.30. It was all to be sent to Memphis via river steamer.²¹ A letter of 3 June 1861 from Griffith states that he is sending the stain for the interior finish of the dining room on the steamer, Silver Moon.²² On 23 August 1862, Griffith notified Topp that he was sending sliding doors, shutters, parlor doors, frames, transoms, and carving.²³

A contract between Topp and Memphis carpenter, James G. Peterson survives in which he is to install this millwork when it arrives from Cincinnati and is to furnish or construct any missing

²⁰Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts folder.

²¹Robertson Topp to James Griffith & Co. [Letter of Contract], 18 April 1860, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts folder.

²²James Griffith to Robertson Topp, 3 July 1861, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts folder.

²³James Griffith to Robertson Topp, 23 August 1862, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts folder.

"links."²⁴ Correspondence also survives between Topp and George McGregor & Company of Cincinnati arranging for the necessary hardware for use with this millwork and mentions that McGregor is to work with Griffith. Locks, keys, sash fastenings, shutter bolts, and the sheaves and metal rails for the sliding doors were all ordered and sent via river steamer.²⁵ One letter dated 20 July 1857 from the Lewis Thompson & Co. Steam Saw Mill and Turning Shop and Albany Lumber Yards of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, acknowledges Topp's order for almost all the millwork for his stairway.²⁶

Mantels (c. 1852)

Throughout the Mallory-Neely House today marble mantels original to the circa 1852 construction of the house survive. All six fireplaces on the first floor of the main house and those in the second floor bedrooms originally had similar mantels; all were later replaced by J. C. Neely except for one in the music room and one in the morning room. However, in recent years one was returned to the master bedroom according to wishes expressed by Mrs. Daisy Mallory in her lifetime; it was one of four which was moved by Neely to the third floor bedrooms when he remodeled after 1890; another, broken and buried, was recently

²⁴George M. McGregor to Robertson Topp, 16 April 1861, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts folder.

²⁵Robertson Topp to James G. Peterson [Letter of Contract], 15 October 1862, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts folder.

²⁶Lewis Thompson and Co. to Robertson Topp, 20 July 1857, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts folder.

uncovered by workmen excavating in the cellar.²⁷ All of these mantels are typical of those used in mid-century homes throughout the United States, and similar ones can be seen today in countless surviving houses.

Improved transportation methods and the availability of coal transformed the traditional wood burning fireplace with its large fire box opening.²⁸ The new form had two jambs supporting a mantel and a mantel shelf, with a small firebox opening filled with a cast iron coal grate.

Marble became the most fashionable material for these new coal burning fireplaces. Trade catalogs in archival collections show that there was a large business nationally in both domestic and imported marble for this purpose. Italian marble, especially Carrara, was common since it was replete with Renaissance associations. Michelangelo and other Italian Renaissance sculptors had favored this as stone for carving.

The choice of marble mantels available to the public ranged from those plain in design to extremely ornate varieties, "filled to overflowing with fruits and flowers and vines all carved with amazing skill and delicacy."²⁹ These mantels were produced in a wide variety of styles to match the then-current architectural modes, including Italianate, Gothic, Tudor, Norman and Romanesque.

²⁷Mrs. Jane Hanks, Interview by author, Memphis, Tennessee, 14 October 1984.

²⁸Henry J. Kauffman, The American Fireplace (New York: Gallahad Books, 1972), 172-173.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 173.

Italianate varieties designed to go in the popular Italianate style buildings were made with the appropriate round arched opening and characteristic layered moldings. Yet to match the interiors they were often decorated with rococo touches, including the curving contour of the mantel shelf and the carved embellishment in the spandrels above the chamber opening with an ornate console centered above.

Andrew Jackson Downing discussed the importance of the correct stylistic choice of these marble coal burning mantels. Mantels, he felt, should relate to its general architectural "character"; since they were among "the essentially architectural features of a room," they should strictly correspond in style with the rest of the house. He also mentioned that it was not hard to follow his advice since mantels were now available in most principle cities, in a variety of styles, and at low prices. Equally important to Downing was a warning about fitness, stating that plain mantels were more appropriate in a cottage and the ornate in the town mansion.³⁰

Isaac Kirtland's choice of Italianate mantels for his home was stylistically appropriate. Those surviving in the Mallory-Neely House range from the more ornate to plain, seemingly reflective of the purpose of the room in which they appear. The music room mantel is much richer visually than others in the house since it has carved foliage in the spandrels. (Figure 72) Most in the private areas of the house are relatively austere with subtle rococo touches such as organically curving mantel shelves and rococo-ized classical brackets centered above the chamber opening. (Figure 73) The

³⁰Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 397.

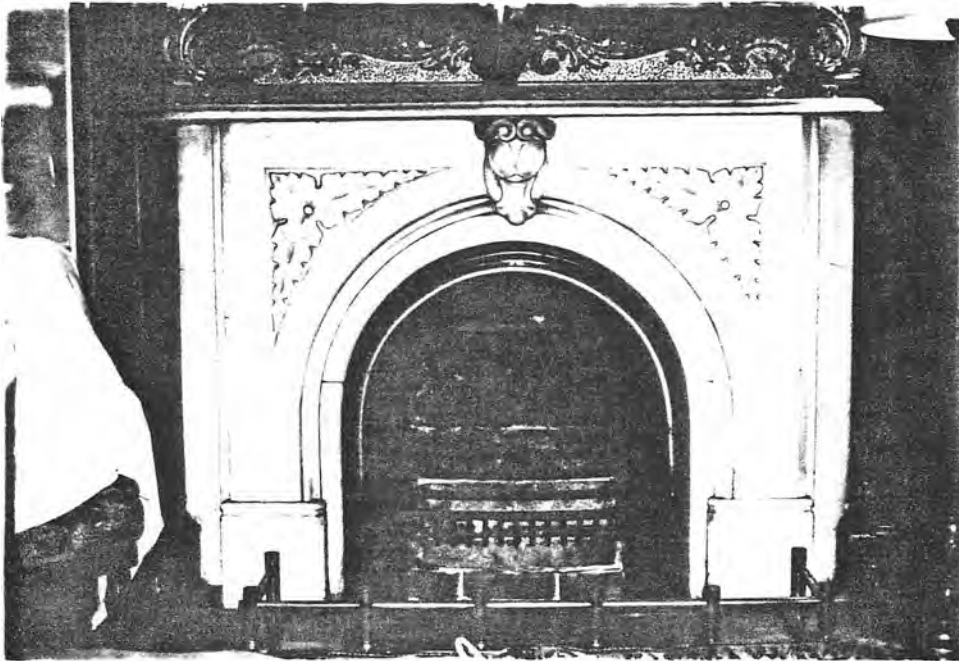


Figure 72. Music-room fireplace. It is one of two circa 1852 marble mantels that remain in place on the first floor of the Mallory-Neely House. The Italianate round arch and molding of the mantel is embellished with foliate in the spandrels. A rococo console serves as a key-stone.

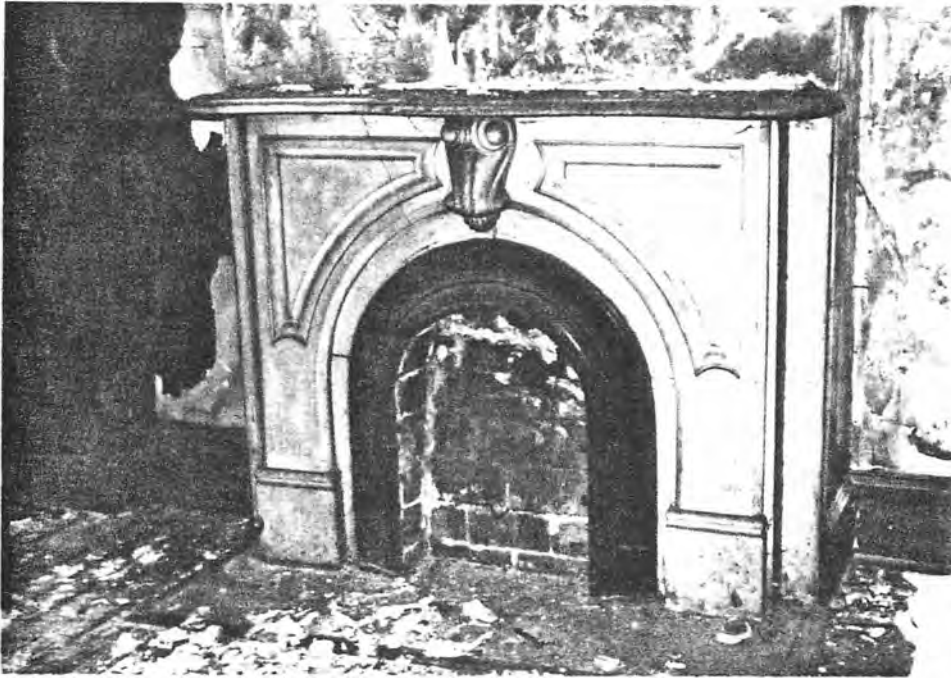


Figure 73. Italianate mantel. One of the original marble mantels moved to the third floor of the Mallory-Neely House after the post-1883 alterations by J. C. Neely.

classically simple morning room mantel retains its complete cast iron reflecting grate. Its surround, open work center, and fender are very elaborately embellished with all over rococo relief. (Figure 74)

Documentation of local practice at mid-century for procuring and installing coal burning mantels survives in the Robertson Topp Papers. (Figure 75) These contain correspondence from John Meighan & Sons, Marble Works, 1133 Broadway, New York, whose letterhead states that they sell Italian, French, Lisbon and Statuary Mantels.³¹ Several letters record that Robertson Topp ordered nine statuary marble mantels, both carved and plain, from this firm for the new addition to his house and that these were to be shipped by river vessel. An itemized 1857 bill survives in which local Memphian James Maydwell charged Topp to haul, uncrate, and set these mantels and hearths.³² Correspondence also exists in which Topp's architect, Robert Fletcher, arranged for the purchase of grates for these mantels from the firm of Horton & Macy of Cincinnati. (Figure 76) They were also to be shipped by river steamer.³³

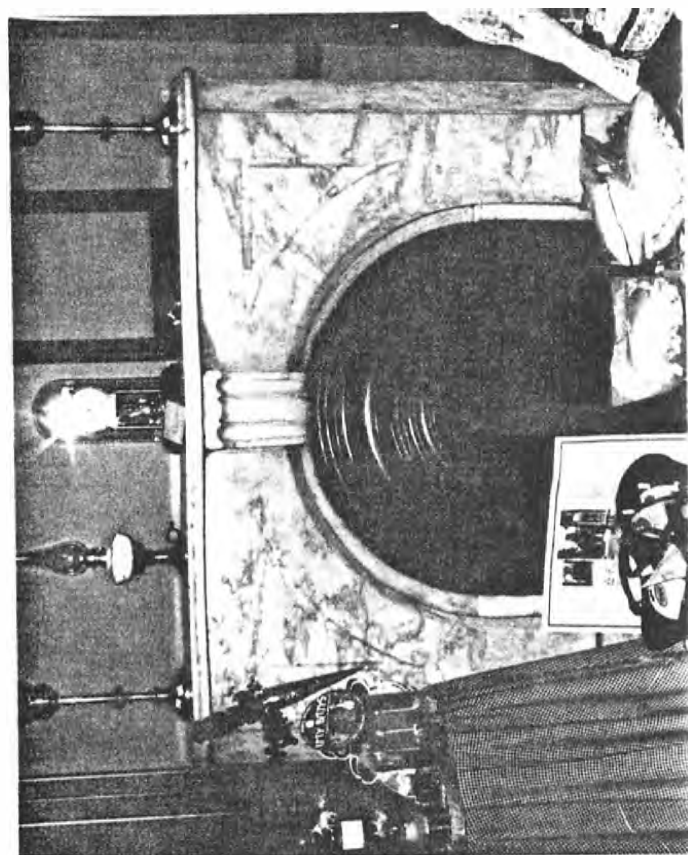
Plasterwork (c. 1852)

Plaster, both plain and decorative, was a subject of interest to Downing, Sloan and others. They suggested that the general

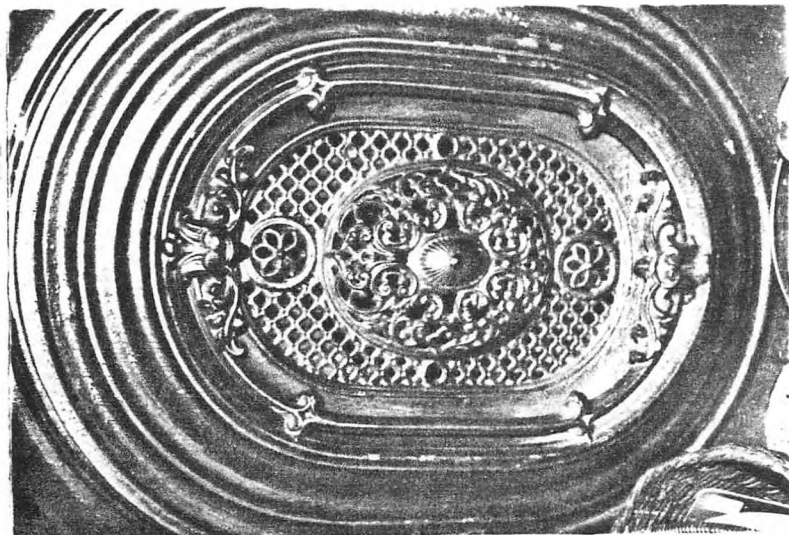
³¹John Meighan & Sons, Marble Works [letterhead], 20 July 1857, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Account folder.

³²James Maydwell [invoice], 1 July 1858, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Account folder.

³³Horton & Macy to Robertson Topp, 10 July 1857, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 8, Folder 3.



A



B

Figure 74. Morning room fireplace.

A. Circa 1852 Italianate mantel still in place in the morning room of the Mallory-Neely House.

B. Detail of its cast-iron grate cover richly embellished with rococo foliage.

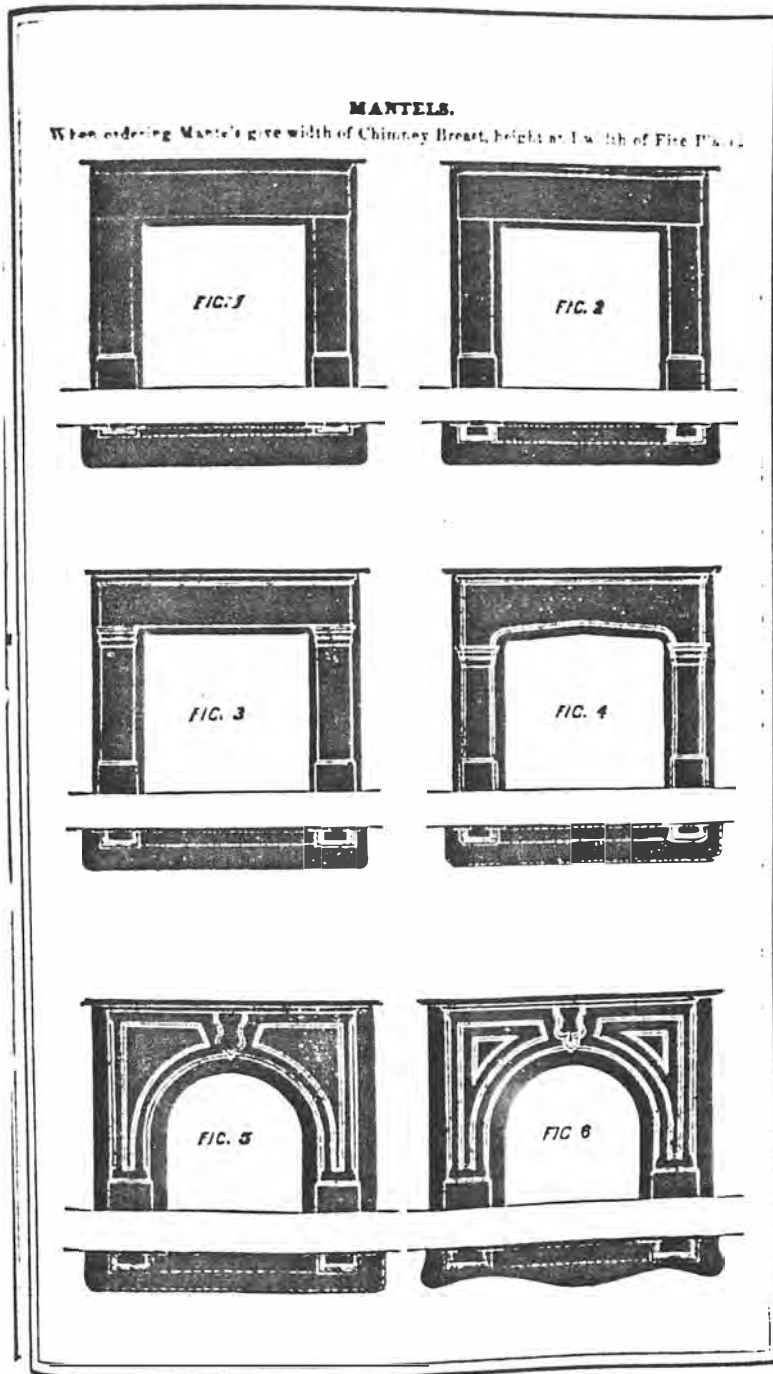
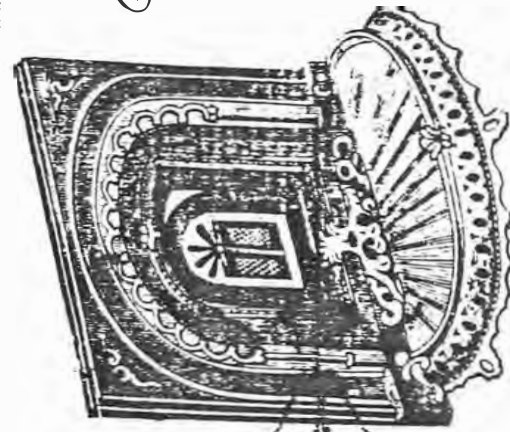


Figure 75. Hinkle, Guild & Company catalog (1869). Perhaps Topp and Kirtland utilized a source like this page of mail-order mantels. The bottom two are in the Italianate style and are similar to ones in the Mallory-Neely House. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.

HORTON.

JNO. C. MACY.



Cincinnati, Sept. 12th 1857

Mr. Robert M. Topp

HORTON & MACY,

SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF ELM AND PEARL STREETS,

MANUFACTURERS OF

Marbleized Iron
Mantels,
Pancy Grates,
Iron Railings,
Verandahs,
Bank Vauls,
Doors & Shutters,
Sash Weights,
Dog Irons,
Columns & Finials,
Door & Window Caps,
Spart Guards,
Coal Shutes,
Hitching Posts,
Clatern Tops,
Flat Racks,
Iron Chairs & Sellses,
Iron Bedsteads,
Brackets, all sizes,
Cornishian Capitals,
All descriptions of
Fine Castings,
Patent Illuminated
Slide-walk Plates,
Plate Glass of all sizes
for Sky-lights.

28 No 10 B Grates ordered from J. C. MacY
28 " 21 " 5

196.00
100.00

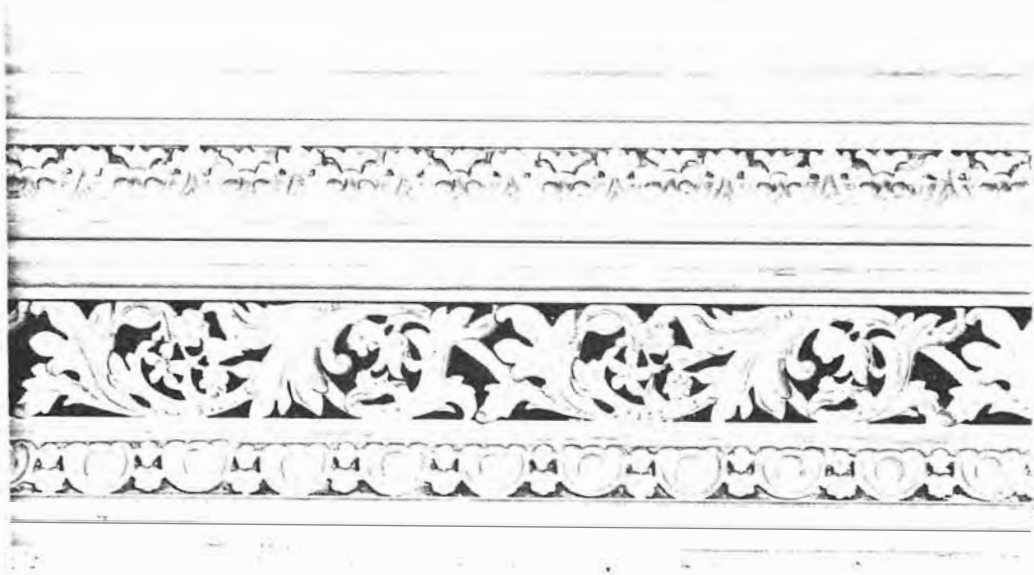
Figure 76. An 1857 Horton & Macy Company invoice. Parallel in time to the building and furnishing of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852), this invoice head from the Robertson Topp Papers illustrates a rococo revival cast-iron mantel grate similar in spirit to that used by Kirtland in the morning room. Courtesy Burrow Library, Rhodes College.

interior wall surface of the domestic house should have perfectly smooth plaster of paris surface with a "hard finish."³⁴ Plaster walls of this type, though most are covered, survive throughout the Mallory-Neely House.

Ornamental plasterwork for cornices and center medallions in the adjoining sitting, dining, and morning rooms are either Italianate or exuberantly floral rococo styles. The sitting and dining rooms have the same ornate crown molding embellished with scrolling rococo foliage but differ as to accompanying moldings above and below and in the manner in which they are set. That in the dining room has delicate open work with a contrasting color in the concave cove behind. The identical sitting room crown cornice is applied blind with no space behind. Similar crown cornices which were typical of the mid-century rococo interior style can be found in countless surviving homes and photographs. For example, the Historic American Buildings Survey's photographs of the interior of the Littleton-Pettit Home built in Memphis in 1858 on Beale Street by H. A. Littleton record a very similar cornice.³⁵ (Figure 77) In contrast, the morning room has a deep and more purely Italianate cornice made up of a large number of superimposed moldings. (Figure 78)

³⁴See Sloan, The Model Architect, 74-77.

³⁵"Littleton-Pettit Home" [historic homes folder], Special Collections, Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Library.



A



B

Figure 77. Rococo style cornices.

- A. Rococo revival cornice molding from the dining room and a similar one in the adjoining sitting room are original to the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852).
- B. Similar mid-nineteenth century rococo revival cornice molding from the now destroyed Littleton-Petit House, Memphis. This was photographed in the nineteen thirties by the Historic American Building Survey. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

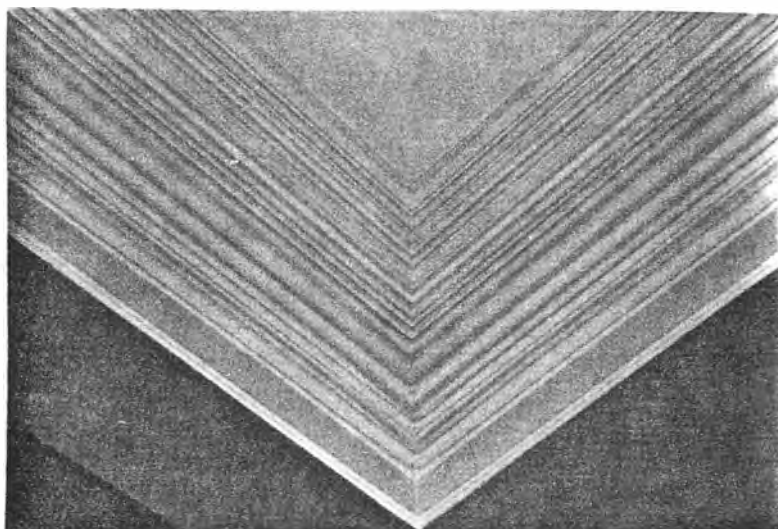


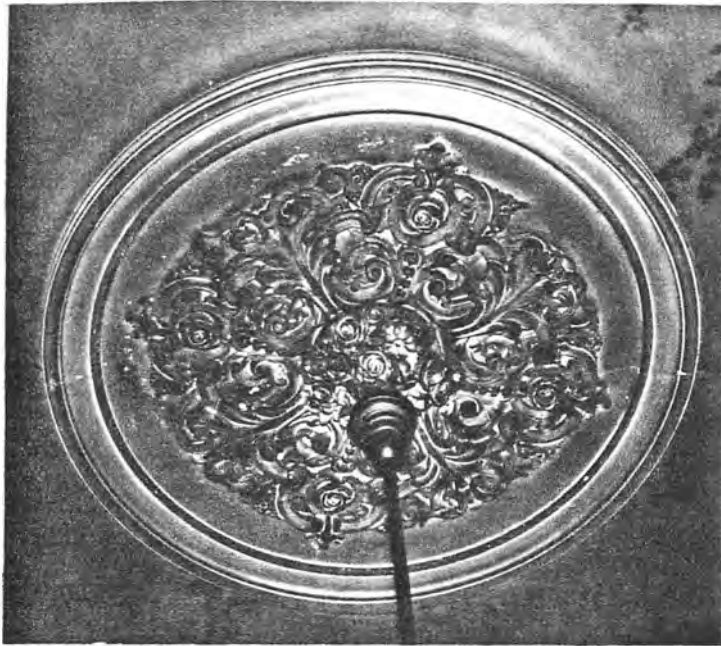
Figure 78. Morning room crown molding survives from Kirtland's original decor (c. 1852).

It is almost identical to the one in the dining room of Memphis' best surviving Italianate villa, Annesdale.³⁶

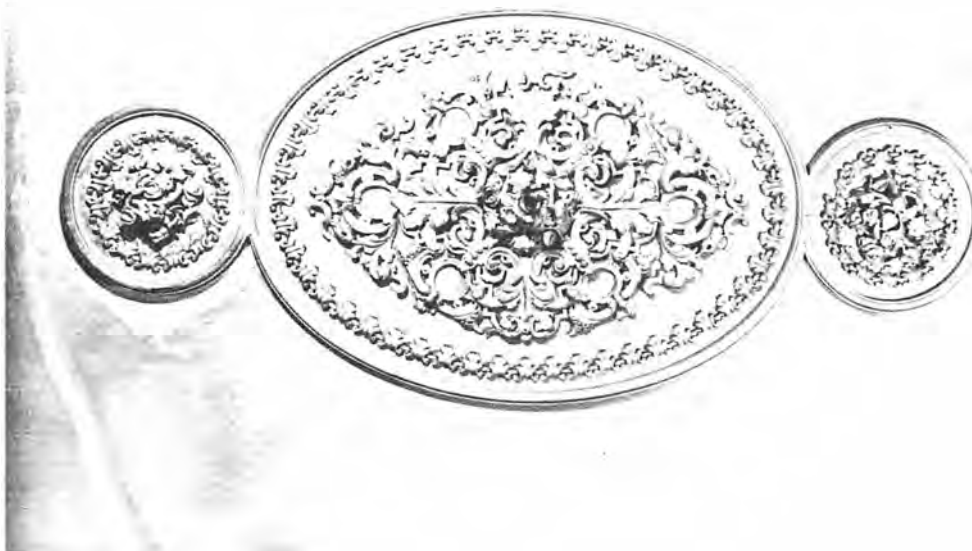
The most elaborate ornamental plasterwork in the house at that time was reserved for the central medallions or roses. Guy Rothery in Ceilings and Their Decorations discussed the symbolism of these ceiling roses and stated that, in addition to the many historic associations with Christian symbolism, in the nineteenth century they were a symbol of the "sanctity of domestication."³⁷ The sitting and morning rooms have single elaborate center medallions. The dining room has a more elaborate three-part design made up of a large oval center rose flanked by two smaller circular ones. All of the medallions in these three rooms are identical in compositional details. They are centered with a bouquet of flowers and have a complex circular surround made up of strapwork, rings, scrolling rococo foliage and pearls. (Figure 79) These are in the reigning rococo taste of mid-century and similar in design and ornamentation to Belter furniture, floral carpets, repousse silver and other rococo influenced decorative arts of the time. These centers are also very similar to those surviving in Annesdale and other homes throughout the country built at mid-century.

³⁶Renata Novarese, "Annesdale, A Case Study" [unpublished Memphis State University Home Economics report], 29 April 1980, 25, Special Collections, Mississippi Valley Collection, Blister Library, Memphis State University.

³⁷Guy Cadogan Rothery, Ceilings and Their Decoration (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1911), 249, Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.



A



B

Figure 79. Centers in sitting and dining rooms. The single center ornament of the Mallory-Neely sitting room ceiling and the three part center of the dining room ceiling are made up of identical elements. Both are survivals from Kirtland's original decor (c. 1852).
A. Sitting room center.
B. Dining room center.

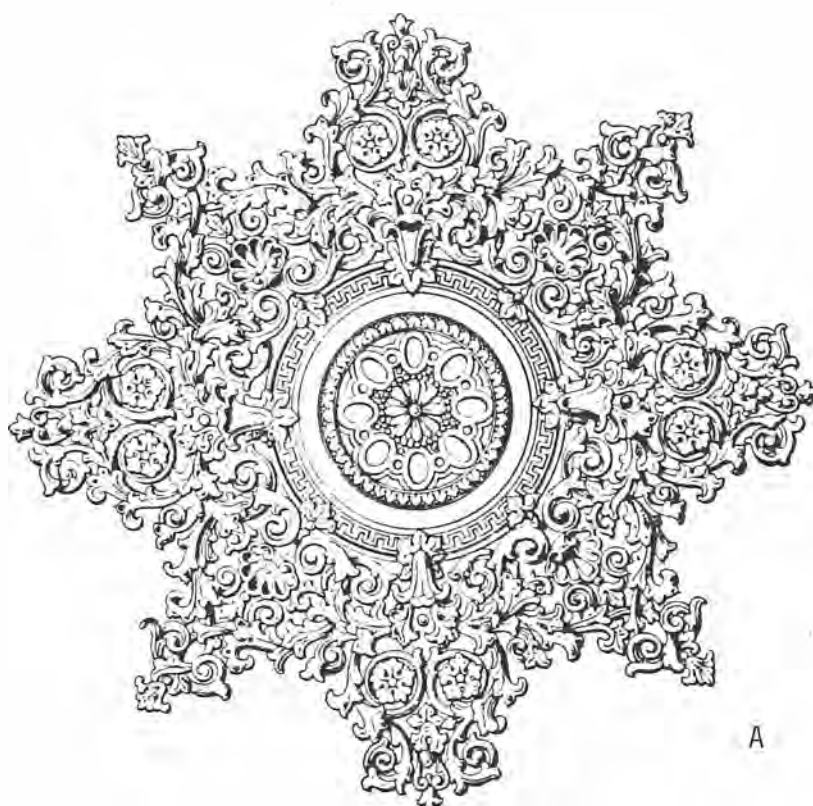
Sloan in Model Architecture stated that "nothing added more to the elegance of an apartment" than what he called these architectural and sculptural ornaments made up of fruits, flowers, garlands and festoons.³⁸ He devoted an entire section in Model Architecture to plaster, stating that simple cornices and centerpieces could be cast by local artisans using molds and a composition made of plaster of paris as the major ingredient. But Sloan stressed that elaborate cornices and centers were best made by "artists skilled in the craft." (Figure 80) Documentary evidence shows that at mid-century this was the practice in Memphis. Simple cornices and centers could apparently be produced by local Memphis craftsmen; the more elaborate types, though, were imported.

Robertson Topp received a bill dated 15 October 1861 from James G. Peterson for making and installing simple centers for the new addition to his home.³⁹ A 9 November 1857 letter survives in which Topp ordered \$418.75 worth of more elaborate plaster ornaments from William H. French and Charles S. French of Philadelphia, owners of a firm famous for ornamental plaster throughout the century.⁴⁰ The 1855 Memphis city directory lists, "J. and M. Jones, Plasterers, between Linden and Brown Avenue, Plain and Ornamental Plastering."

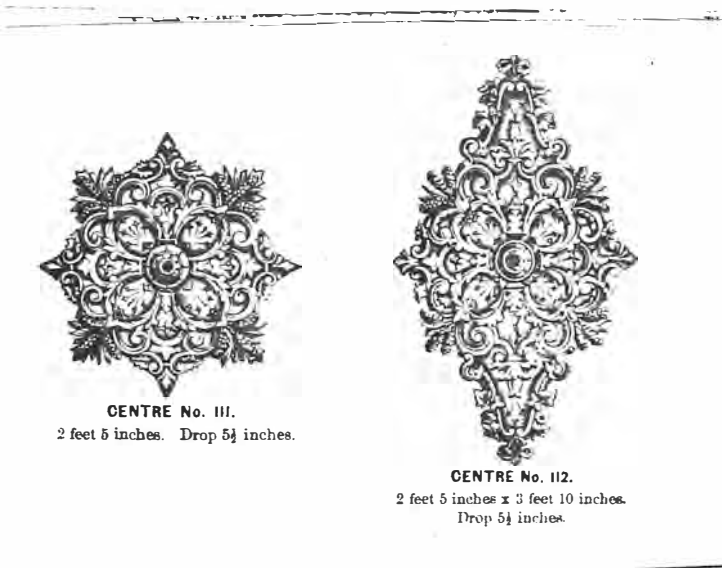
³⁸Sloan, 75.

³⁹James G. Peterson, 15 October 1861 [invoice] Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Account folder.

⁴⁰William H. and Charles S. French to Robertson Topp, 9 November 1857, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Account folder.



A



B

Figure 80. Commercially produced centers.

- A. A rococo style center ornament as illustrated in Samuel Sloan, *The Model Architect* (Courtesy Special Collections, Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville).
- B. A page from the W. A. French & Company catalog (1882) showing similar, professionally made mail-order centers (courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books).

Their advertisement in the same directory states: "We are constantly receiving every variety of new center pieces."⁴¹

In real contrast to the elaborate rococo plaster work in the connecting sitting and dining rooms is the large yet very simple classical cornice in the morning room. (Figure 81) It brings to mind Downing's statement that a cornice in the Grecian or Italian form adds very considerably to the architectural character of a room.⁴² This molding is very likely an example of plaster created on the spot and "run in place" with the use of a profile template-horse, pulled on a tract from left to right.⁴³

The morning or breakfast room alone survives almost intact from the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) and seems to strictly adhere to the writings of Downing and his collaborator, Calvert Vaux. Without later additions, it remains the most Downingsque room in the house. Here the architectural features show a clarity of design without the later Victorian elaboration found elsewhere in the house. (Figure 82). The original Italianate millwork, mantels, plasterwork, and rococo grill all survive along with one other circa 1852 feature, that being a built-in

⁴¹W. H. Rainey & Co.'s Memphis City Directory and General Business Advertiser (Memphis: E. R. Martlett, M.D. & W. H. Rainey, 1855), 872-873.

⁴²Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 370.

⁴³Charles Granquist, "Ornamental Plastering," Historic Preservation, 22, No. 2 (April-June 1970), 11-16.

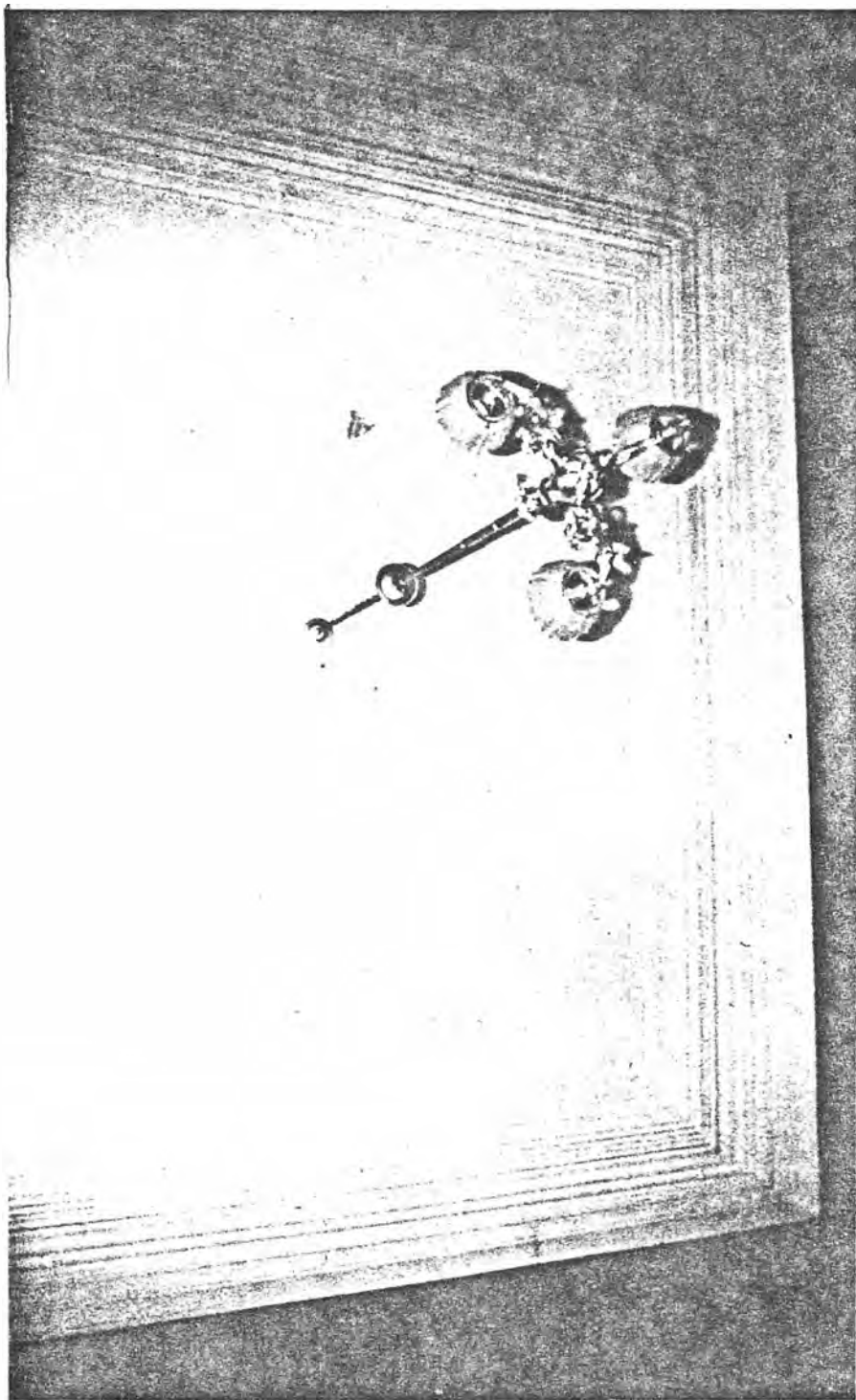


Figure 81. Ceiling of the Mallory-Neely House morning room.

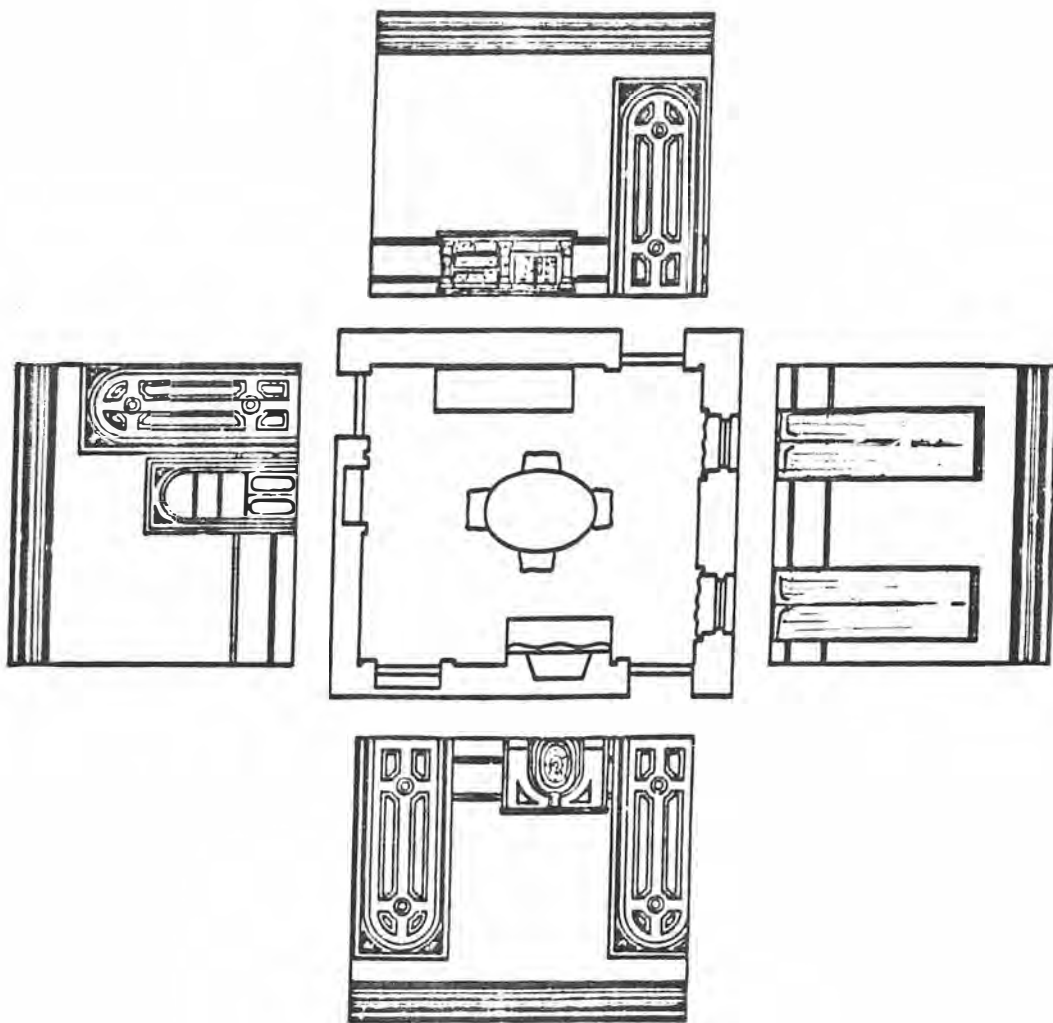


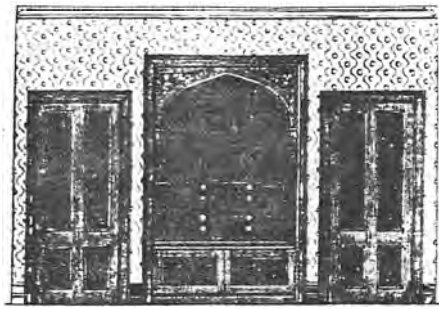
Figure 82. Furnished plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely morning room.

cabinet somewhat similar to one illustrated in Calvert's Vaux's Villa and Cottages and labeled by him as a "recessed sideboard" which he described as "a useful feature architecturally managed."⁴⁴ (Figure 83) Here the more elaborate dining room example is scaled down to an appropriate size for a breakfast room. It provides a good example of early built-in cabinetry and of Romantic functionalism. It has the same millwork, Italianate moldings, and rococo composition in the spandrels found throughout the first floor.

Phase One of Neely Redecoration: The Second Empire Style

After purchase of the house in 1883 the Neelys apparently decided to first up-date and enrich those areas of the house which were the centers of social life. The Neelys' move to a larger home and the remodeling and enlargement of it into a near palatial mansion were reflective of his increased wealth and business success. In so doing James Columbus Neely established a symbolic setting for his family's role as members of the social elite of the city of Memphis which was undergoing an economic and cultural renaissance. Mrs. Neely especially needed a visually symbolic base in which to exercise her role as a social leader to reinforce the prestige of her husband. Also J. C. Neely's family of sons and daughters were fast approaching the age in which social ritual, including graduations, courtships, debuts, and marriages would be of great importance in launching them

⁴⁴Vaux, 93.



A



B

Figure 83. Romantic functionalism.

- A. Recessed built-in sideboard illustrated in Calvert Vaux, Villas and Cottages (1857). Courtesy Dover Publications, Inc.
- B. Built-in cupboards in the Mallory-Neely morning room survives from Kirtland's original decor.

into society. What was required was a home that could provide a setting for gilded era social life and the extravagant entertainment expected of the elite during that period.

Accordingly at this time most of the public areas of the main ceremonial floor of the house were redecorated. The suite of entertainment rooms (parlor and music room) was extensively remodeled.⁴⁵ Across the hall the sitting room, and the connected dining room received only limited cosmetic decoration leaving many of the original circa 1852 architectural features undisturbed.

These interior alterations were for the most part executed in the ornate Second Empire taste. Today the parlor and music room of the Mallory-Neely House and the exterior Second Empire architecture of the neighboring Fontaine and Lee Houses are among the best surviving examples of this once-popular High Victorian style in the United States. "Second Empire" is a convenient but confusing name for the French equivalent of High Victorian. The style actually predates and long outlasted the phase of French history entitled the Second Empire (1852-1870). It had its beginning during the reign of the last French King, Louis Philippe (1830-1848), who ruled during the height of the Romantic Movement in France. Though at this time all types of historic styles were revived, the Bourbon court nostalgically favored resurrections of Pre-Revolutionary styles associated with the glorious days of France and the French monarchy, especially those

⁴⁵Today called the parlor, or drawing room, the name used in contemporary late century newspaper accounts of social functions held there was the long parlor.

styles associated with the noted Bourbon Kings, Louis XIV, Louis XV, and Louis XVI.⁴⁶

After the exile of Louis Philippe, historic revivalism and eclecticism continued to be popular and, in fact, bloomed and fully flowered during the Second Empire. Napoleon III, nephew of the more famous Napoleon--hence the name Second Empire--and his Spanish wife, Eugenie, ruled as Emperor and Empress of France during an era of dynamic territorial, economic, and industrial expansion. One of the many things initiated by the administration of Napoleon III in order to recapture the former international renown and glory of France as a leading world power was the remodeling of Paris into a modern cosmopolitan capital. The celebrated Baron Georges--Eugene Haussman, Prefect of the Seine, undertook the herculean task of the urban renewal of Paris, which he achieved particularly by the creation of the modern grand avenue arterial system.⁴⁷ A major architectural endeavor associated with this was the completion in the heart of Paris of the historic Palace of the Louvre. The New Louvre, designed by the architects L.T.J. Visconti and H. M. Lefeul, was constructed to link the Old Louvre with the Palace of the Tuilleries, the official home of Napoleon III and Eugenie. This new wing built in a so-called Neo-Renaissance style, represents stylistically a melange of historic architectural styles, mainly French Renaissance and Baroque used

⁴⁶Denise LeBoux-LeBard, Meubles Et Ensembles Second Empire (Paris: Editions Charles Massin, 1960), 56.

⁴⁷Siegfried Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), 646-679.

in a heavy, ornately embellished, new architectural style called the Second Empire style.⁴⁸ Henry-Russell Hitchcock in Nineteenth Century Architecture described the energetic surface treatment of this new style as "bombastically plastic."⁴⁹ Others have described it as "splendidly floral architecture."⁵⁰ The French likewise believed in the "gospel of progress" and in their ability to improve and better the past; therefore, Second Empire architectural design, though historically eclectic, was an attempt to invent something new using the old. There was a "reawakening of old forms and traditions for a lively present."⁵¹

The surviving interiors of the New Louvre, especially the grand Salon Blanc et Or, today part of the Finance Ministry of France, provide a lavish example of Second Empire interior design.⁵² (Figure 84) Plush and gilt are everywhere. There is an eclectic layering of historic styles and the same heavy muscular plastic modeling characterizes wall surfaces for both the interior and the exterior. All of this opulent richness illustrates why some have labeled the Second Empire style the art of a materialistic society.

⁴⁸Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Nineteenth Century Architecture (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1958), 134-135.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰The Second Empire, Art in France Under Napoleon III [exhibition catalog], (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1978), 15.

⁵¹Hans Jurgen Hansen, ed., Nineteenth Century Art (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1972), 69.

⁵²Anne Charlis, ed., The History of Furniture (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1976), 250.

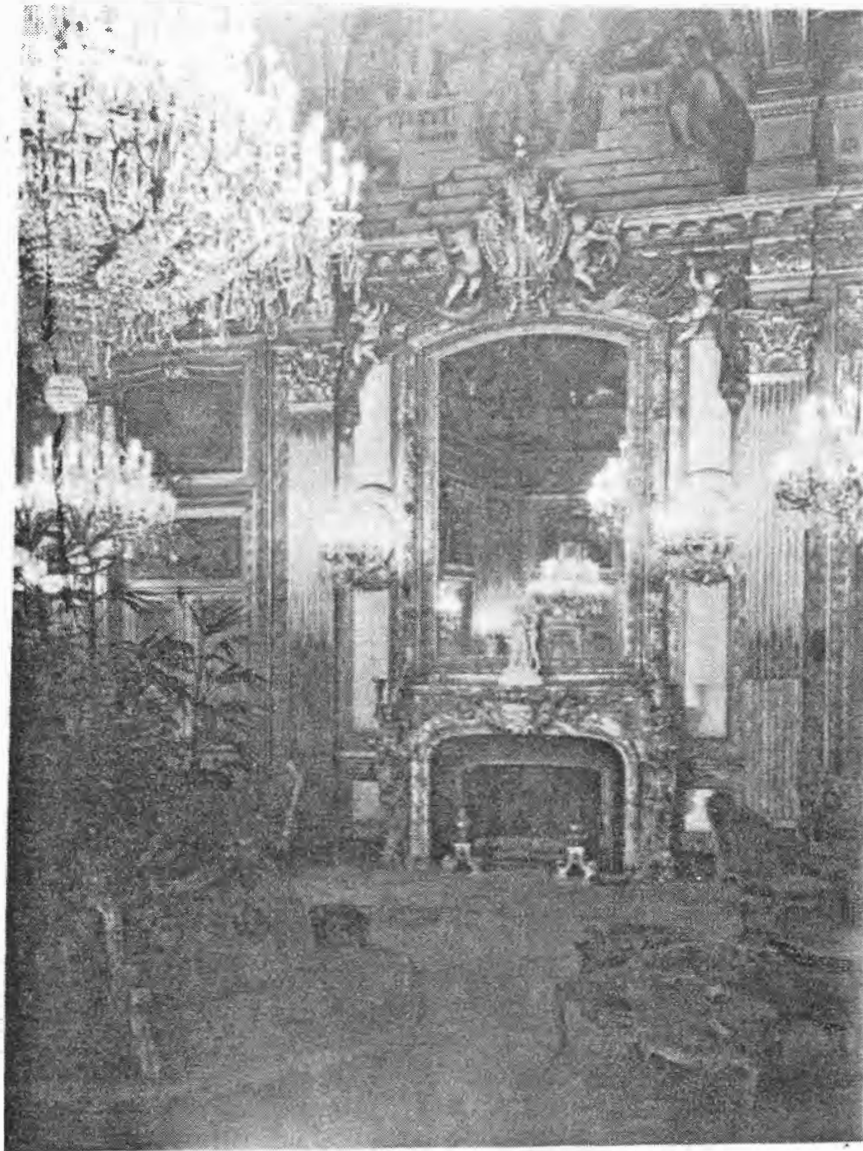


Figure 84. Gold and white salon of the Finance Ministry in the New Palace of the Louvre in Paris, France. It epitomizes the lavish Second Empire approach to interior decoration.

The completion of the Louvre appealed to the historically-minded Romantic and sparked an international architectural fashion labeled the Second Empire or Mansard style, as it is sometimes called in America. In this country large public buildings such as the former War Building and the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C., the Philadelphia and Boston City Halls, and countless mansard houses across America, like the Fontaine and Lee Homes in Memphis' Victorian Village, attest to the widespread popularity of this style.

Equally influential was the new Paris Opera which served as a focal point for a series of Haussmann's grand boulevards. Siegfried Giedion in Space, Time and Architecture described it as the "purest expression of the transitory glory of the Second Empire."⁵³ The Opera, sometimes labeled Neo-Baroque in style, was designed by the Second Empire's most famous architect, Charles Garnier, in what many see as a brilliant, very original, and modern interpretation. As a highly imaginative and individualistic building, it had led many to attempt to label its style and that influenced by it as "Le Style Opera" or "Le Style Garnier."⁵⁴ Inside and out there is a layering of historic styles including Renaissance and Baroque as well as "Neo-Grec," an updated French interpretation of ancient Grecian design. Though the Second Empire ended in 1870 and the Opera was not completed until 1875, it epitomizes both inside and out Second Empire Taste.

⁵³Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture, 657.

⁵⁴Philippe Julian, Le Style Second Empire (Paris: B. Aschet & Co., n.d.), 29.

(Figure 85) Despite its historically eclectic appearance, Garnier created a building that was extremely modern in function as a theatre. Some have described this as the old order used for new functions of modern life. In this building Garnier "celebrated opera as a social event," very much reflective of the Second Empire's pivotal emphasis on society and its celebrations. Enveloping the functional theatre core of the building, Garnier created a lavish environment for social and ceremonial ritual.⁵⁵ These areas which occupy the greater portion of the building's space were primarily reception areas in which one was to be seen.

The opera's interiors represent internal architectural decor at its most opulent, with polychromic coloration, gilt, variegated marbles, mirrors, ceiling frescoes, immense chandeliers, and ornamental stucco made of fibrous plaster.⁵⁶ (Figure 86) Hitchcock described these as interiors of "unprecedented lushness and bombastic luxury."⁵⁷

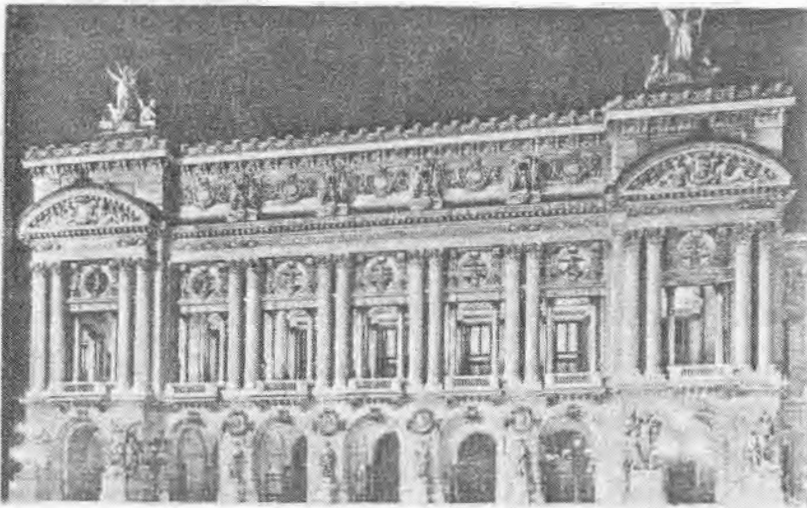
The so-called Second Empire style continued after the fall of Napoleon III in 1870 until World War I. Later variants have been labeled "La Style Third Republic" and "La Style Rothschild," the latter designation comes from its use by this famous banking family for the decor and architecture of their homes.⁵⁸ This style of

⁵⁵Hansen, 16.

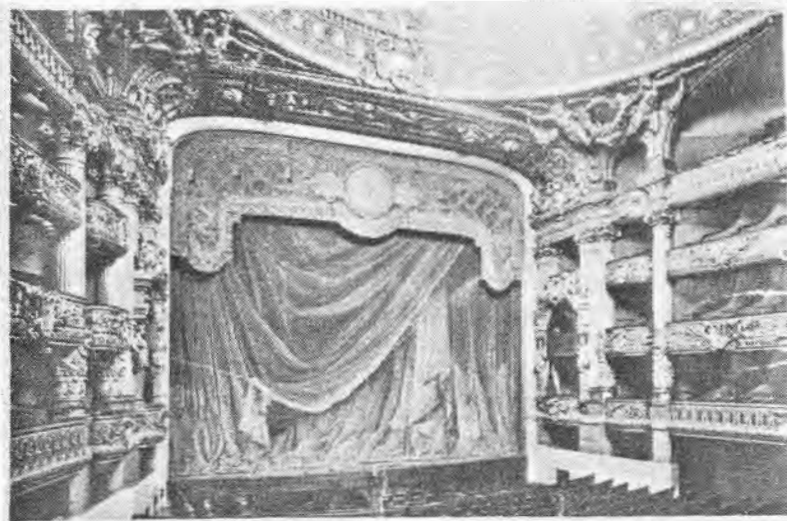
⁵⁶Rothery, 255.

⁵⁷Hitchcock, 138.

⁵⁸Julian, 33-44.



A

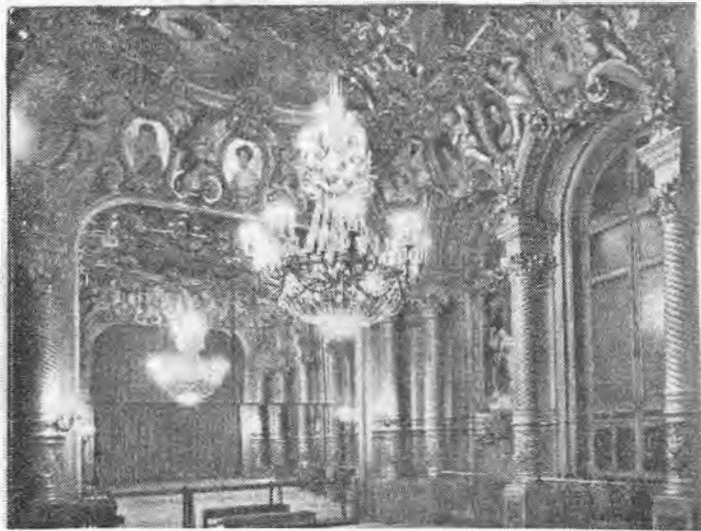


B

Figure 85. Views of Charles Garnier's Second Empire style Paris Opera (1861-1875).
A. Facade.
B. Auditorium.



A



B

Figure 86. Characteristic Second Empire interiors in the Paris Opera.

A. Le Grand Foyer.

B. Le Foyer de la danse.

interior decoration using white and gold walls, gilt mirrors, frescoed ceilings, ornamental stucco, and crystal chandeliers remains synonymous with wealth to this day.

Because of the prestige of the Second Empire, Paris once again became the major center for cultural, architectural, and design inspiration and training. All of Europe followed the French mode so that Second Empire-inspired interiors can be found in operas, public buildings, and palatial homes throughout the world. During the early part of the nineteenth century, as in the case of J. C. Loudon, Americans looked to England for architectural and design guidance; by mid-century this had changed.⁵⁹ "The glittering Paris of Napoleon and Eugenie was the world's center of progress and elegance."⁶⁰ The highly publicized ceremonial life of the Imperial Court and Second Empire society, the spectacular new Paris which epitomized grandeur, rational planning, and cosmopolitan modernity, and a series of international expositions through the century, highlighting French-made industrial products, decorative arts, and luxury goods, caught the imagination of Americans.⁶¹ In the post-war period citizens of the United States, enjoying unprecedented economic prosperity and becoming increasingly materialistic and consumer-oriented, looked to France for all that was modern, elegant, and fashionable. This was especially so in the 1870s during the Grant administration;

⁵⁹Hitchcock, 170.

⁶⁰Maass, The Gingerbread Age, 17.

⁶¹Hitchcock, 135.

hence the name the General Grant style is sometimes given to American mansard Victorian architecture.⁶²

When James Columbus Neely chose this style which was created and used by an imperial court, the world's foremost banking family, and leading elites throughout the Western world, it epitomized cosmopolitan urbanity, modernization, luxury, and wealth. It was the perfect style to serve symbolically as the backdrop for the enactment of late nineteenth century elite social ritual in Memphis. Neely's redecoration of the parlor, music and sitting rooms in the Second Empire taste included lavishly ornamented plaster and fresco ceiling decoration, ornate gasoliers, wall-to-wall carpet, white and gold wall paper and architectural trim.

Decorative Ceilings

Unquestionably the most visually spectacular interior feature of the Mallory-Neely House is its decorated ceilings. They are among the best of their type surviving in the United States today. Enriched ceilings ranging from the very simple to the ornate became a characteristic feature in the homes of the American elite and upper middle class during the late Victorian period as attested to by photographs which appear in such books as Artistic Houses (1883) and William Seale's Tasteful Interlude (1975). Today some of the more elaborate examples which have been preserved or restored can be seen in historic house museums such as the Honolulu House in Marshall,

⁶²Ibid., 168.

Michigan; the Morse-Libby House in Portland, Maine; and the Culbertson Mansion in New Albany, Indiana. As creations by different artisans, each is unique as the Mallory-Neely ceilings are.

When William Milar stated in Plastering Plain and Ornamental that "the [typical] ceiling spreads its broad blank waste of white above us, expressionless and inartistic to a great degree [when] it should be the crowning glory of a room," he summarized Victorian attitudes toward ceiling design during the second half of the nineteenth century.⁶³ A result of the Victorian revival of architectural and decorative styles of the past was the related interest in historic ceiling treatment. Roman, Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, NeoClassical ceilings and national variants of many of these became sources of inspiration for Victorian designers. The revival of mural decoration and ornamental stucco received widespread notoriety through publicity generated by competitions sponsored by varied governmental agencies for the building and interior embellishment of important public buildings such as the English Houses of Parliament and Paris Opera.⁶⁴

Fresco, decorative canvas painting, dry mural decoration, and stenciling were all revived as ceiling decoration and became

⁶³William Milar, Plastering Plain and Decorative (New York: John Lane, 1899), 121, Special Collections, Burnham Library of Architecture, Art Institute of Chicago.

⁶⁴See James Ward, Color Decoration in Architecture (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1913), Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

fashionable. New technological processes and media, communication of ideas and styles, transportation and distribution--all played a role in spreading the vogue for ceiling enrichment. Specialized trade journals, catalog periodicals, design-pattern books, and technical guides promoted the latest available art media, supplies, stencils and plaster casts. Color guides and illustrated histories of ornament and period ceiling treatment were also available.

Perusal of city directories and newspaper advertisements in representative Eastern seaboard cities, Mid-Western, and Southern towns shows that there were many professional practitioners of fresco, stenciling, and ornamental plaster work during the last quarter of the nineteenth century in the United States. Though there were highly skilled artisans who executed interior fresco and stucco, the majority were not so much original artists as skilled technicians who made extensive use of available mechanical aids such as stencils and patterns.

Visual analysis of the Mallory-Neely decorative ceilings will show that they are the work of two or more different artists or groups of artisans and differ both stylistically and technically in terms of quality. The parlor and music room ceilings were totally remodeled sometime after 1883 and represent the first group. Probably done at a later date, the ceiling of the sitting room and those of several second floor bedrooms form a second group.

The ceilings in the parlor and music room represent the influence of Charles Garnier's Paris Opera in Memphis. (Figure 87)



Figure 87. Mallory-Neely parlor ceiling.

Descriptions such as "rich plastic form," "ponderous heavy modeling," and "lushness of decoration," used by Henry Russell Hitchcock in an attempt to capture the stylistic qualities of Second Empire architecture and interior decoration could also apply to these particular Mallory-Neely ceilings.⁶⁵ Both the parlor and music room ceilings have the same lavish ornamental plaster cornices, rich polychromic coloration, and stencil-painting used for decoration.

Histories of ornament and ceilings as well as architectural and fresco pattern books published in the nineteenth century illustrated various ways to treat and subdivide a ceiling based on historic prototype. An example is Franz Sales Meyer's Handbook of Ornament, in which he devoted several pages to divisional systems; these designs, ranging from simple to extremely complex, were developed from a basic grid for square or rectangular ceilings.⁶⁶ (Figure 88)

The Mallory-Neely parlor ceiling is an example of what the ceiling literature classified as an older form, originating in Greco-Roman architecture and revived during the Renaissance. It is subdivided into panels expressive of the supposed architectural beams of the ceiling with infill panels.

The parlor ceiling (18' x 36') has a basic tripartite division, the center panel of which is further subdivided into five panels

⁶⁵See Hitchcock, Nineteenth Century Architecture, Chapters 9-10.

⁶⁶Franz Sales Meyer, Handbook of Ornament (New York: Hessling and Speilmeyer, 1894), Special Collections, Newberry Library, Chicago.

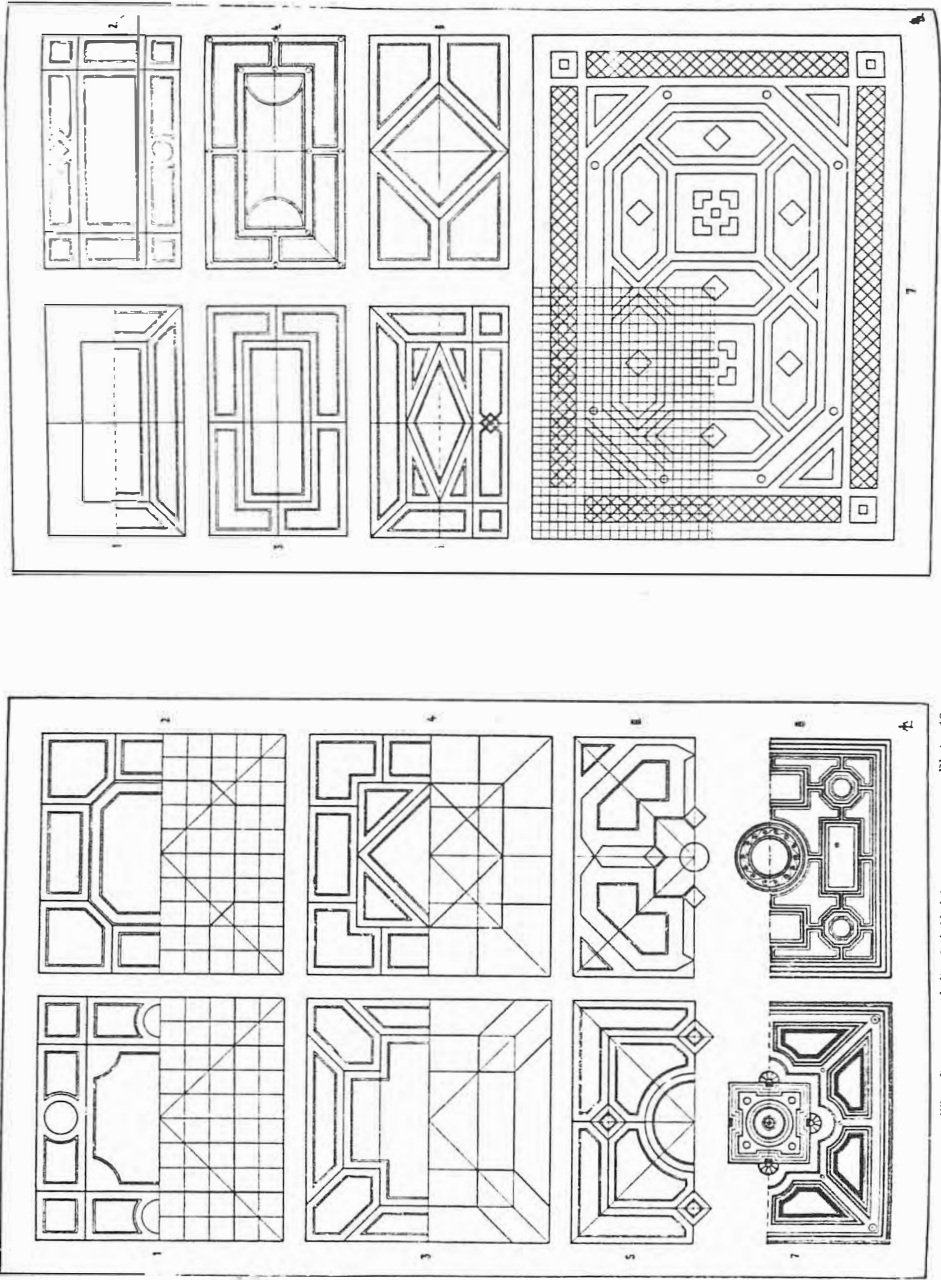


Figure 88. Plates from Franz Meyer Handbook of Ornament (1894) illustrating suggested divisional systems for ceiling design and decoration. Courtesy Newberry Library.

A. Square divisional systems.
B. Rectangular divisional systems.

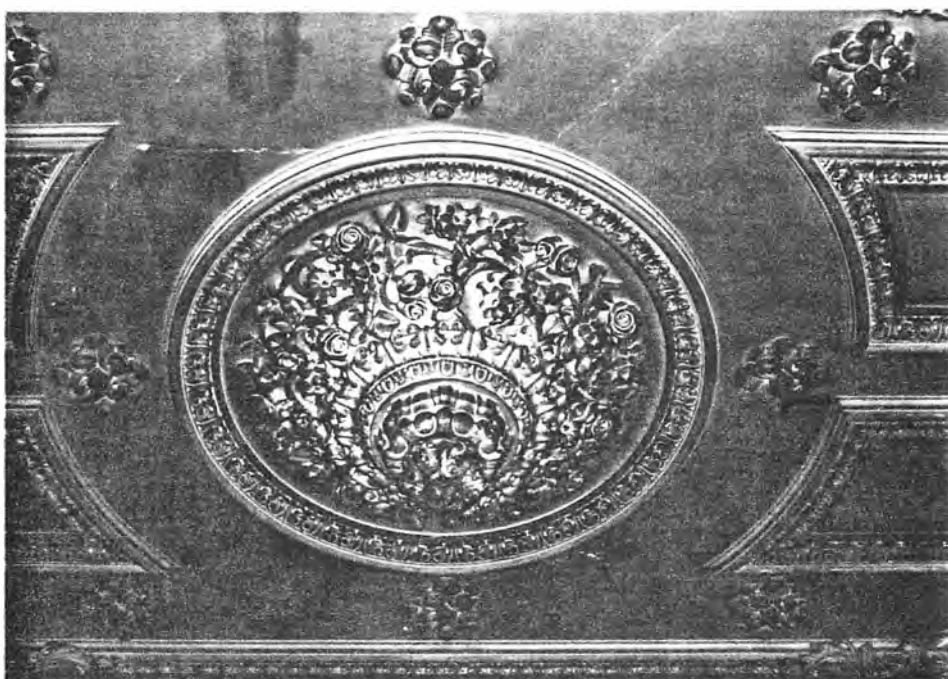
all delineated with heavy moldings made up of plain half round (torus) and cyma moldings ornamented with enriched water leaf. The two largest rectangular panels flanking the center area have heavily modeled, scrolling rococo foliate corner pieces; these are centered with large eight pointed stars which are in turn centered with elaborate foliate medallions from which are suspended ornate glass chandeliers. In the very middle of the ceiling is a round central panel with a large ornamental pendant in the manner of the French and English Renaissance yet totally Victorianized with its florid ornamentation. (Figure 89) Twenty-eight small rosettes are placed around each of the paneled areas as they were done historically to represent intersections of the ceiling beams.⁶⁷

The much smaller music room ceiling (14' x 18') is treated as a single field without panels. Contemporary literature defined this elimination of simulated architectural structure as a later development in the evolution of historic ceiling treatment.⁶⁸ It is centered by an undulating oval medallion, the largest and most ornate in the house, made up of scrolling rococo foliage; from the pendant center is suspended another elaborate gasolier. (Figure 89)

The heavily modeled ornamental plasterwork in the parlor and music room is stylistically a true eclectic mix, including classical, Renaissance, and Rococo motifs. It is reminiscent of Garnier's

⁶⁷Alfred Dwight Hamlin, A History of Ornament, Renaissance and Modern, Vol. II (New York: The Century Co., 1916); reprint (New York: Cooper Square Publications, 1971), 85-87.

⁶⁸Ibid., 130.



A



B

Figure 89. Plaster ceiling centers.
A. Pendant center medallion of the Mallory-Neely parlor ceiling.
B. Ceiling center of the music room, the most elaborate in the house.

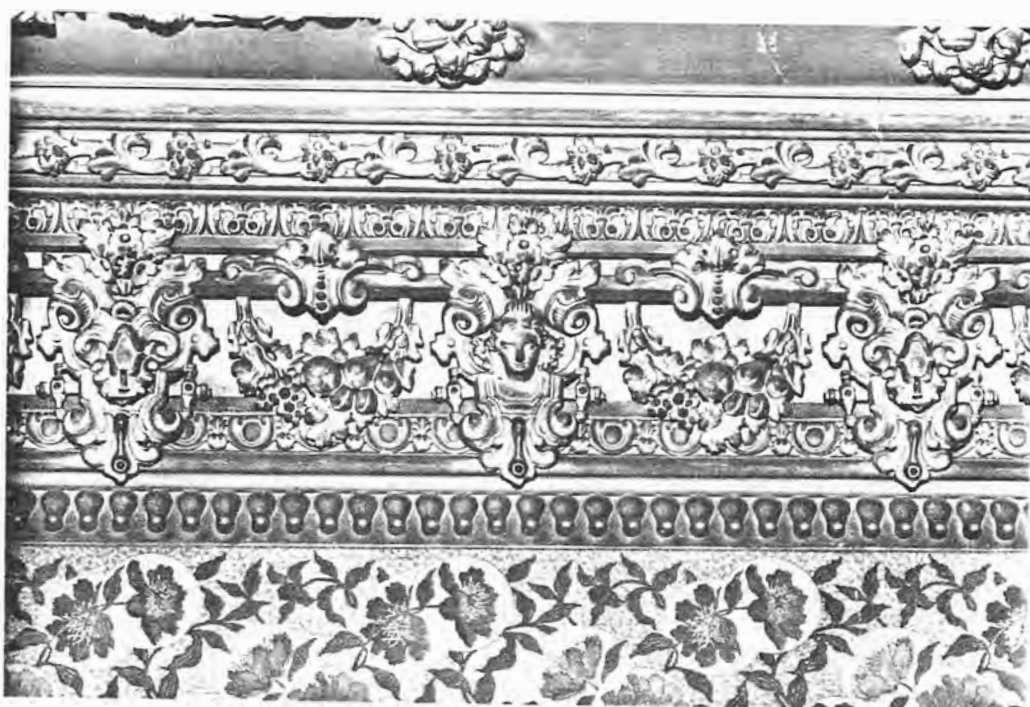
similar treatment for the Paris Opera in which all historic styles were mixed without regard to stylistic purity.

The identical cornice running (height 2', projection 1 1/2') around both the parlor and music room is made up of superimposed concave bands and moldings (mostly cyma); some of these are left plain while others are ornamented with egg and dart and waterleaf variants or scrolling rococo foliage. The frieze (height 1 1/2') is embellished with a running design of late Renaissance style cartouches made of strapwork or what Hamlin called "curl over" or "curlique" ornament.⁶⁹ Every fourth one of these is centered with a grotesque female head further embellished with rococo foliage and topped by a small floral nosegay.⁷⁰ (Figure 90) Spotted amidst the foliage in the center medallions and elsewhere these heads are used throughout these two rooms and constitute a unifying decorative feature of all the plaster work. Masks such as these were a prominent part of Garnier's interior treatment of the Paris Opera. Alternating with the cartouches, with or without heads, are classical swags of fruit and flowers.

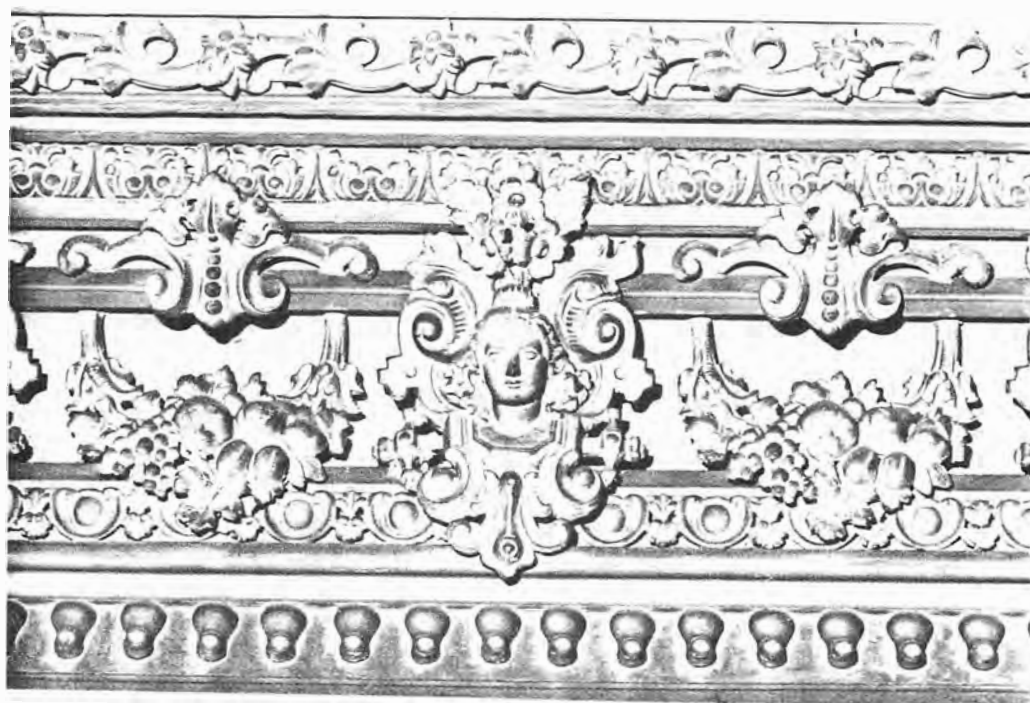
The crescendo of the plasterers' work in this area was reserved for the polygonal bay alcove centered in the long outside

⁶⁹Ibid., 166.

⁷⁰Cartouches, shields, grotesque and other mask/heads such as these were plentifully available in ornament books of the period. (Figure 91) They were illustrated not only as ceiling ornament but as part of other decorative art forms from which designers could borrow them. For example, grotesque heads and strapwork cartouches similar to the Mallory-Neely ones can be found in many illustrations of German Renaissance metal work.



A



B

Figure 90. Details of the complex crown moldings of the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room.
A. Parlor.
B. Music room.

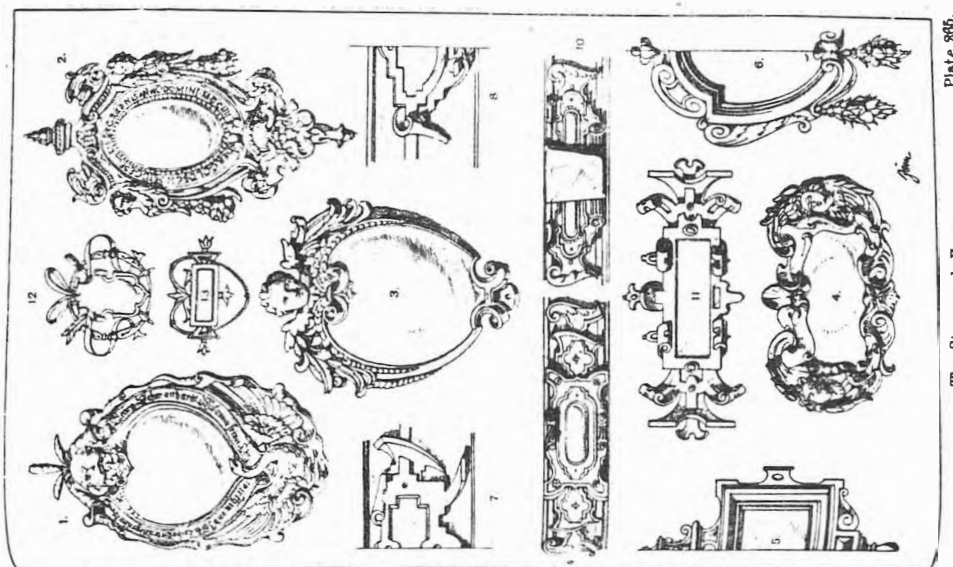


Plate 386.

The Strapwork Frame.

A

Figure 91. Strapwork cartouches and grotesque masks from Franz Meyer Handbook of Ornament (1894). Courtesy Newberry Library.

A. The strapwork frame.

B. The grotesque mask.

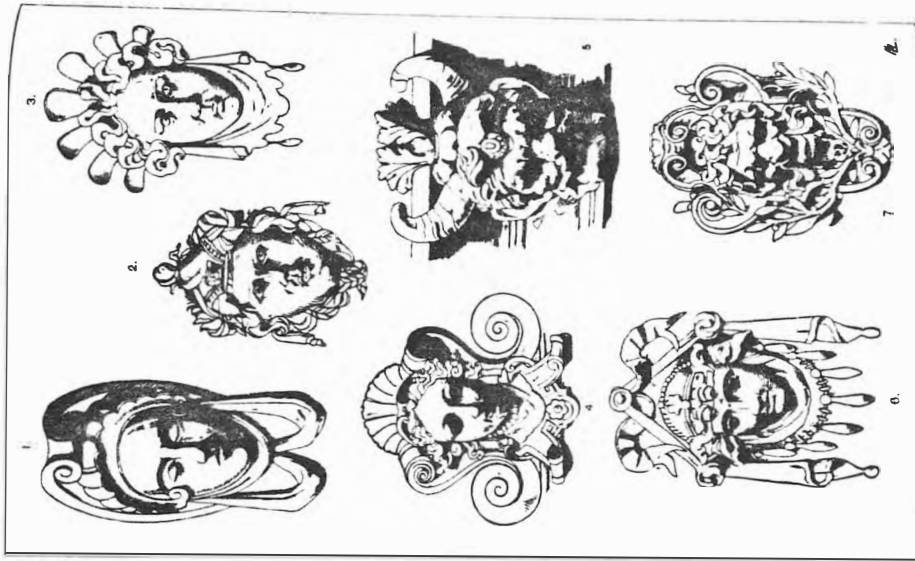


Plate 63.

The Grotesque Mask.

B

Figure 91. Strapwork cartouches and grotesque masks from Franz Meyer Handbook of Ornament (1894). Courtesy Newberry Library.

wall of the parlor; apparently this was seen as the focal point of this room since it was used during such social ceremonies as weddings and receptions as revealed in newspaper descriptions. The arch leading into this alcove is embellished in several ways. It is supported by two consoles made up of scrolling rococo leafage centered by a female head.

The most extravagant plasterwork of the room was reserved for the inside ceiling of this alcove; it is divided into elongated triangular panels separated by spiraling foliage moldings. The field of each panel is filled with lavish rococo foliage; a grotesque head centers each panel. (Figure 92)

The general effect of opulent richness of this ornamental plaster is reminiscent of the descriptive phrase about Victorian decoration, "Too Much Is Not Enough." It epitomizes what modern design reformers in the early twentieth century were revolting against when they formulated their own esthetic, "Less Is More."

Chemical analysis of the Mallory-Neely plaster shows that it is made up of a compound of plaster of paris, horsehair, and alcoa clay. Hair or some fibrous material was commonly used for strengthening plaster.⁷¹ Described as "coarse stuff," hair was used as a binding medium in making fibrous plaster. All kinds of hair were used, but horse and goat were most commonly used in America.⁷²

⁷¹Milar, 330.

⁷²McKee, 51.

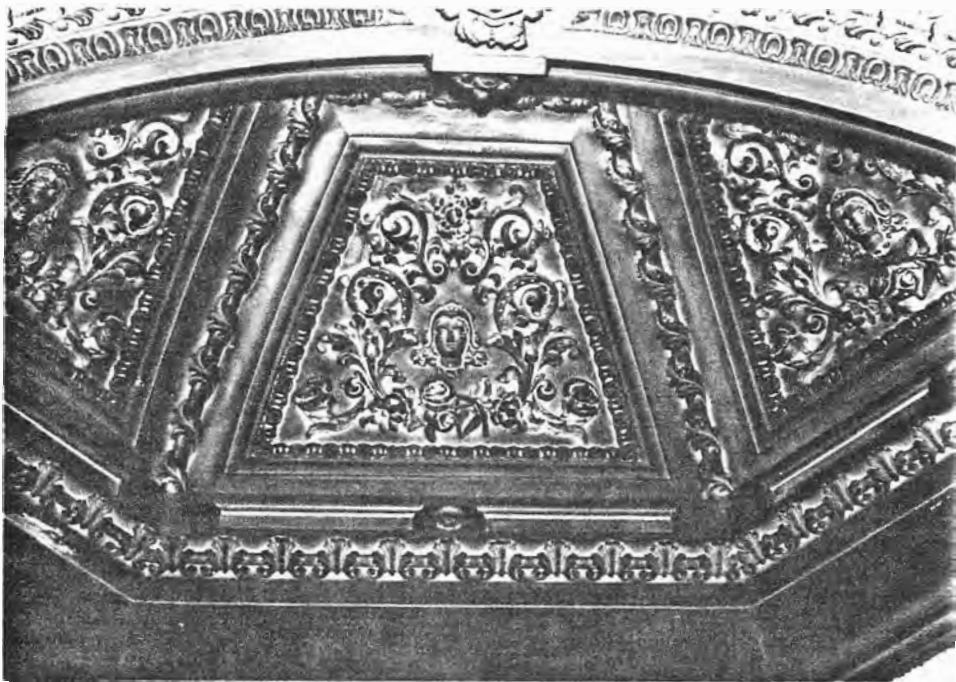


Figure 92. Detail of the ornamental plasterwork of the Mallory-Neely parlor bay window ceiling.

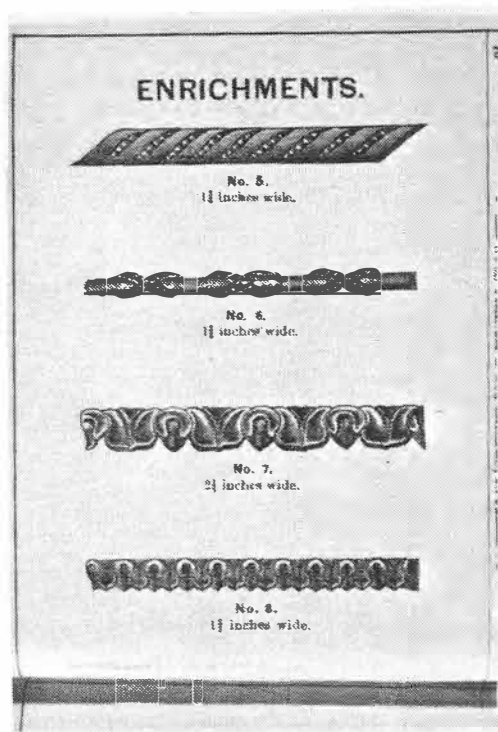
Ornamental plaster was popular throughout the century but reached a peak of ornateness in the 1870s and 1880s. Large supply houses developed distribution systems through the use of catalogs and mail order services. Pre-fabricated ornamental plaster was therefore sent all over the country from most major cities.

Trade catalogs of the period in archival collections illustrate the availability of a wide variety of ornamental plaster type and style. The firm S. H. French & Company, manufacturers of architectural plaster work, advertised in their catalog that they could supply "A World of Plaster Ornament" ranging from the plainest to the most richly decorated, including roses, key stones, corbels, brackets, hoods, niche ornaments, pendants, cornices, and a large selection of moldings; Robertson Topp had ordered plaster ornament earlier in the century from the firm.⁷³ (Figure 93)

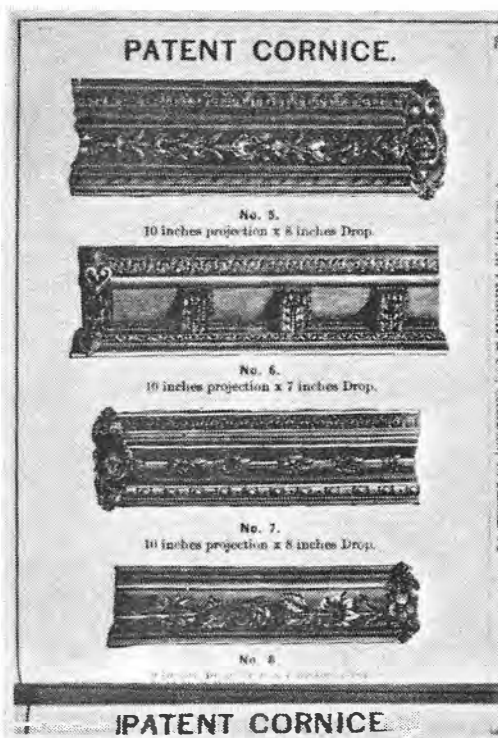
The catalog of the Decorators Supply Company stated that a large variety of plaster ornament was available in every period style, including Baronial, Gothic, Greek, Louis XV, Empire, German Renaissance, and Italian Renaissance.⁷⁴ Many ornaments similar to the Mallory-Neely moldings, cartouches, heads, shields, and brackets can be found in mail order catalogs. (Figures 94 and 95)

⁷³Catalogue Samuel H. French & Co. Architectural Plaster Work [trade catalog], Philadelphia, 1888, Special Collections, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.

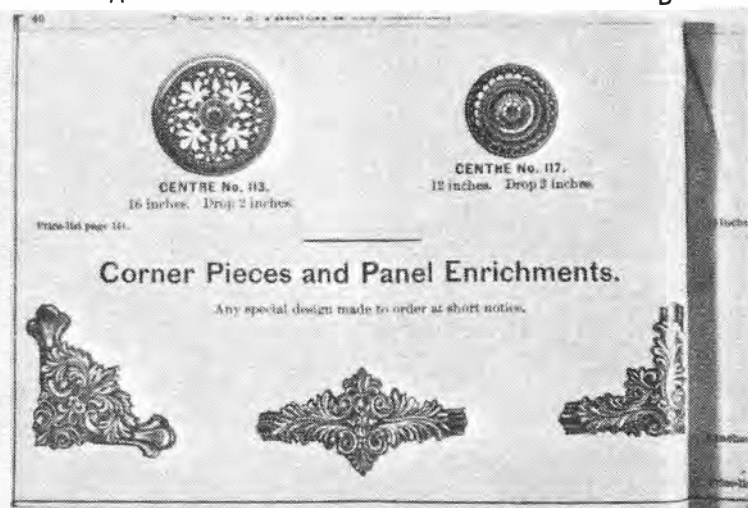
⁷⁴Decorators Supply Company: Decoration and Ornament, c. 1900 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.



A



B



C

Figure 93. Prefabricated mail-order plaster ornaments from the 1882 catalog of the W. A. French & Company. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

- A. Strip moldings.
- B. Cornice pieces.
- C. Corner pieces.

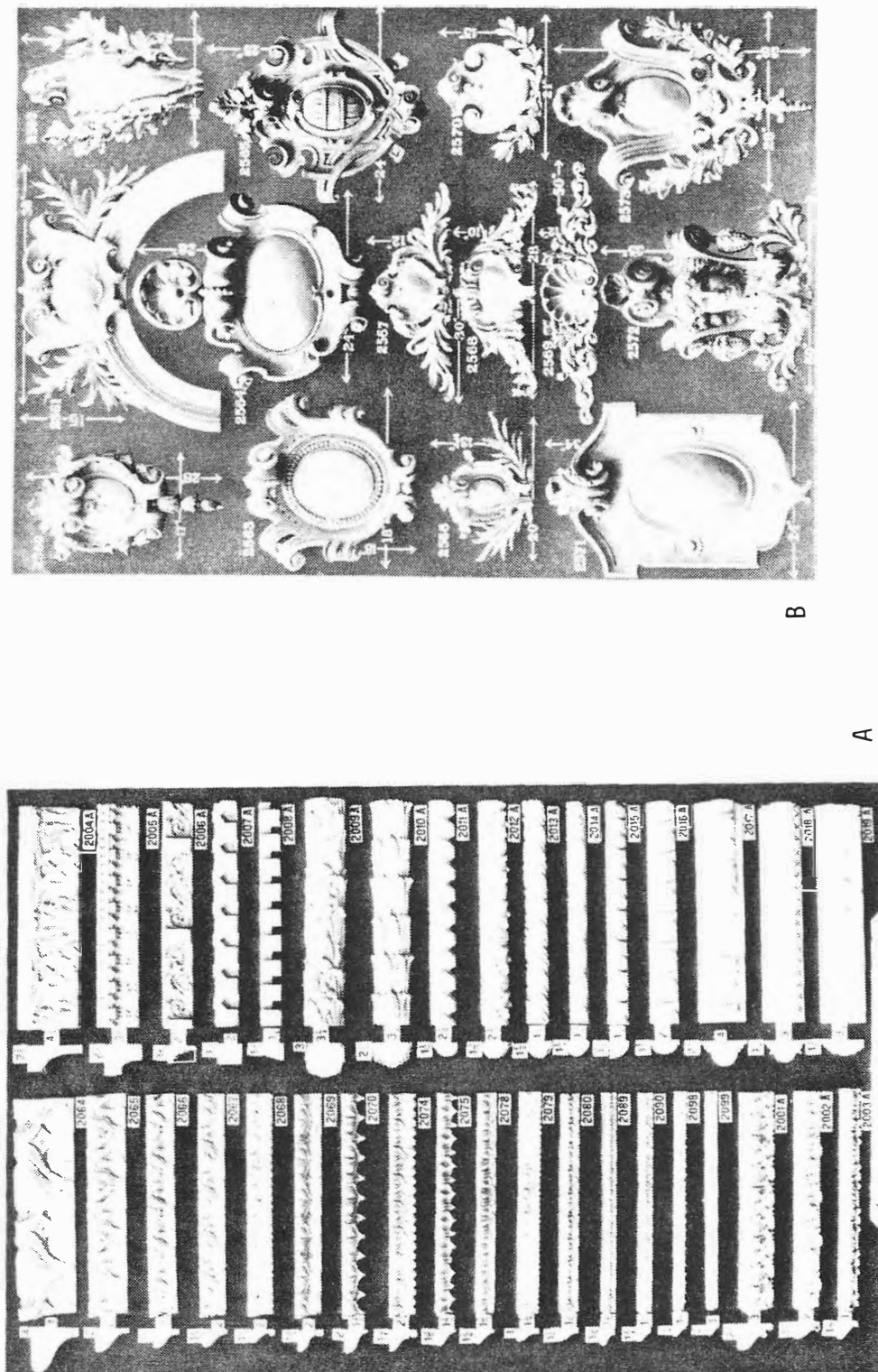
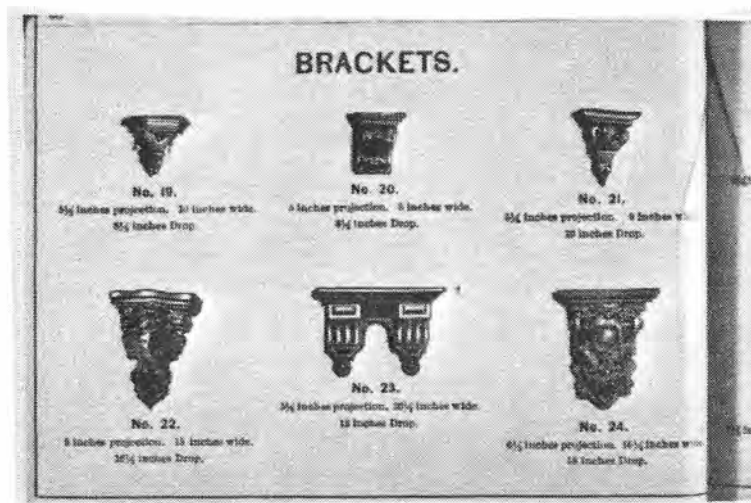


Figure 94. Prefabricated mail order plaster ornaments from the catalog of the Architectural Decorating Company (n.d.). Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.

- A. Variety of strip moldings.
- B. Strapwork shields and a grotesque mask.



A



B

Figure 95. Ornamental plaster brackets. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

- A. Bracket ornament with a grotesque face from the arch of the Mallory-Neely parlor bay.
- B. Page from the W. A. French Company catalog (1882). A similar one is shown in the lower left corner along with other pre-fabricated mail-order ornamental plaster brackets.

Items in the Topp and Montgomery Papers confirm that Memphians did mail order decorative plaster ornament using catalogs such as these. For example, Henry Montgomery corresponded with the firm of Bradley and Currier of New York City; their letterhead is imprinted with the information that in addition to millwork such as moldings, brackets, stair rails, they sell plaster brackets, cornices, moldings, and centers.⁷⁵ In a letter dated 22 December 1877, Montgomery ordered from this firm four different designs for plaster centers and decorative borders totaling \$32.00 for his new home.⁷⁶ P. G. Marsch, a local plasterer, billed Robertson Topp for putting up these four centers for \$20.00 and a later one for \$5.00 for installing a center in the vestibule.⁷⁷

By the late nineteenth century though it was no longer necessary to order elaborate plasterwork from distant suppliers as it had been earlier in the century; improved technology now allowed skilled local or itinerant artisans to cast on the spot the most ornate of designs, even those with complex undercuts. Earlier, molds had been made of clay, sand, plaster, or wax. Because the materials are inflexible, complex designs required a multi-piece mold. Hand modeling and

⁷⁵Bradley & Currier to Henry Montgomery, 22 December 1877 [invoice], Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 110.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷P. G. Marsch to Henry Montgomery, 14 January 1877, Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 10.

finishing, especially of undercuts, was often necessary; this made the casting of complex plaster ornament the province of highly skilled artisans.⁷⁸ A major breakthrough was the invention in 1856 by Frenchman, L. A. Desachy of the flexible gelatin or "jelly" mold; because of their elasticity these molds were ideal for ornate and undercut work.⁷⁹ Gelatin molds were made from glue obtained from bones, hoofs, hides, cartilage, fish skins; extracted by means of acids, boiling, or washing in lime water, the glue was then strained and allowed to congeal.⁸⁰ This liquid glue-jelly mix was dissolved and poured in the required plaster molds. After cooling and congealing, the molds were, by means of a chemical formula, rendered insoluble and waterproof. They were then coated with shellac, linseed oil, or French polish to make them more durable or "seasoned."⁸¹ Initial stages of the process were more costly than the traditional method; however, it was cheaper in the long run.

Plaster strengthened by such materials as hair or cloth was poured in molds, dried, and the hardened cast was then removed. One could then continue to use and reuse these flexible gelatin molds. Gelatin molds were ideal for itinerant artisans who could easily

⁷⁸McKee, 87.

⁷⁹Milar, 138.

⁸⁰K. Cameron, Cameron's Plasterer's Manual (New York: Bicknell & Comstock Publishers, 1879), 43-45, Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.

⁸¹Milar, 320.

pack and carry these or make them on the spot. The ornate plaster ornaments in the Mallory-Neely House were almost certainly produced in this manner.

Directions for attaching this ornamental plaster to the wall or ceiling was included on an instructional sheet that accompanied the Frank A. Seifert Relief Ornaments Catalogue.

Stucco or plaster ornaments are applied to plaster walls and ceilings by thoroughly soaking the ornaments and walls or ceilings and using plaster of paris to stick it with, then filling up the joints with plaster of paris.⁸²

Directions for applying unusually heavy moldings or ornament were given in Cameron's Plaster Manual; they recommended that they be screwed into the joists and that the screws be countersunk and covered with plaster.⁸³

Plasterwork alone does not provide all the enrichment of the Mallory-Neely ceilings. The paneled areas of the parlor and music room ceilings are further ornamented with decorative stenciling or what was called at the time stencil-painting. Stenciling is an ancient form of mural decoration revived in the nineteenth century. Because of its use in the Middle Ages it was resurrected by the Gothic Revivalists.⁸⁴ It became an increasingly popular form of Victorian

⁸²Frank A. Seifert Relief Ornaments Catalogue (St. Louis, Missouri, 1898), [trade catalog], Special Collections, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁸³Cameron, 45.

⁸⁴Hamlin, 85-86.

wall and ceiling decoration, reaching its peak of popularity with both professional and amateur designers during the last decades of the century.⁸⁵ Surrounding the stars in the two largest panels of the parlor ceiling and around the central medallion of the music room are painted tightly stretched awnings looking much like typical Victorian lace or crochet. These are "laced" to large eye hooks in the corners and along the ceiling edges, giving the appearance of a romanticized Victorian interpretation of the "velarius," the tautly stretched awning sheltering the seats in an ancient Roman theatre or amphitheatre.⁸⁶ (Figure 96)

In each of the eight corners of the two largest parlor ceiling panels are stenciled stylized classical urns containing meandering vines and flowers. The four irregularly shaped panels flanking the circular center are stenciled with single stylized vases filled with abstracted foliage and palmettes. (Figure 97)

The single field ceiling of the music room has a frieze or band surrounding the central oval medallion and lace awning. (Figure 98) This room was originally the library and is referred to as such in late nineteenth century newspaper accounts describing social functions held in the house. Appropriately, therefore, the thematic scheme of this stenciled decorative band is literary. It

⁸⁵Carolyn Flaherty, "Victorian Stenciling," The Old House Journal Compendium, ed. Clem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980), 348.

⁸⁶Harris, 563.



Figure 96. Detail of the Mallory-Neely parlor ceiling.

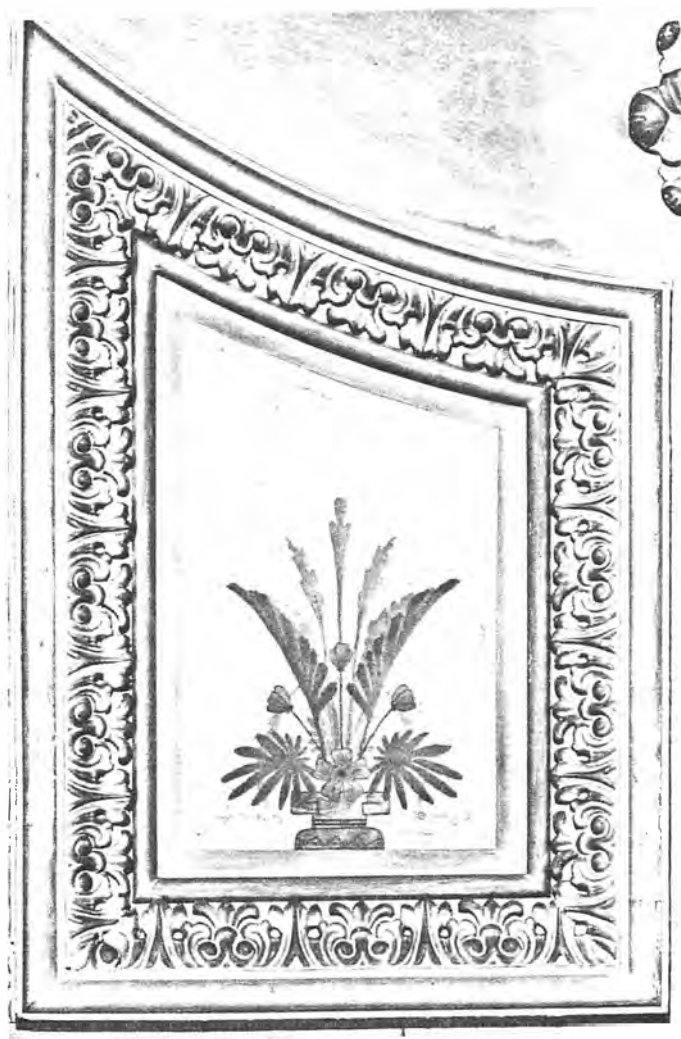


Figure 97. Detail of the parlor ceiling.



Figure 98. Detail of the music room ceiling. In the center is an elongated rectangular tablet inscribed BYRON and crowned with laurel branches.

has the appearance of a flattened lambrequin-like frieze which contains tablets inscribed with the names of noted authors (all Teutonic), including Lytton, Dickens, Goethe, Shakespeare, Scott, Longfellow, Milton, and Byron. (Figure 99) Each is crowned with interlaced laurel branches. Alternating with these are stylized plants, flowers, and classical lyres which were ancient symbols of poetry; these motifs were used extensively by Charles Garnier both inside and out in the new Paris Opera.

The abstract stenciled designs in the parlor and music room are in the "Neo-Grec" style. Garnier in the Paris Opera made use of the "Neo-Grec" design along with an eclectic mix of many historic styles. The "Neo-Grec" was one of the many substyles fashionable during the nineteenth century used for decorative ornamentation in architecture, furniture, lighting fixtures, hardware, silver, and many other decorative arts. Throughout the nineteenth century there were repeated attempts on the part of various "reformers" to create a style that did not just coldly imitate those of the past but used them as a source of inspiration or a point of departure in order to develop an original nineteenth century style. The "Neo-Grec" was one of the first of these and inspired reform designers and manufacturers throughout most of the century. (Figure 100)

During the first half of the century the Greek Revival style was in fashion in most Western countries. German, English, and American designers were content just to revive ancient Grecian architectural and ornamental motifs. But at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts

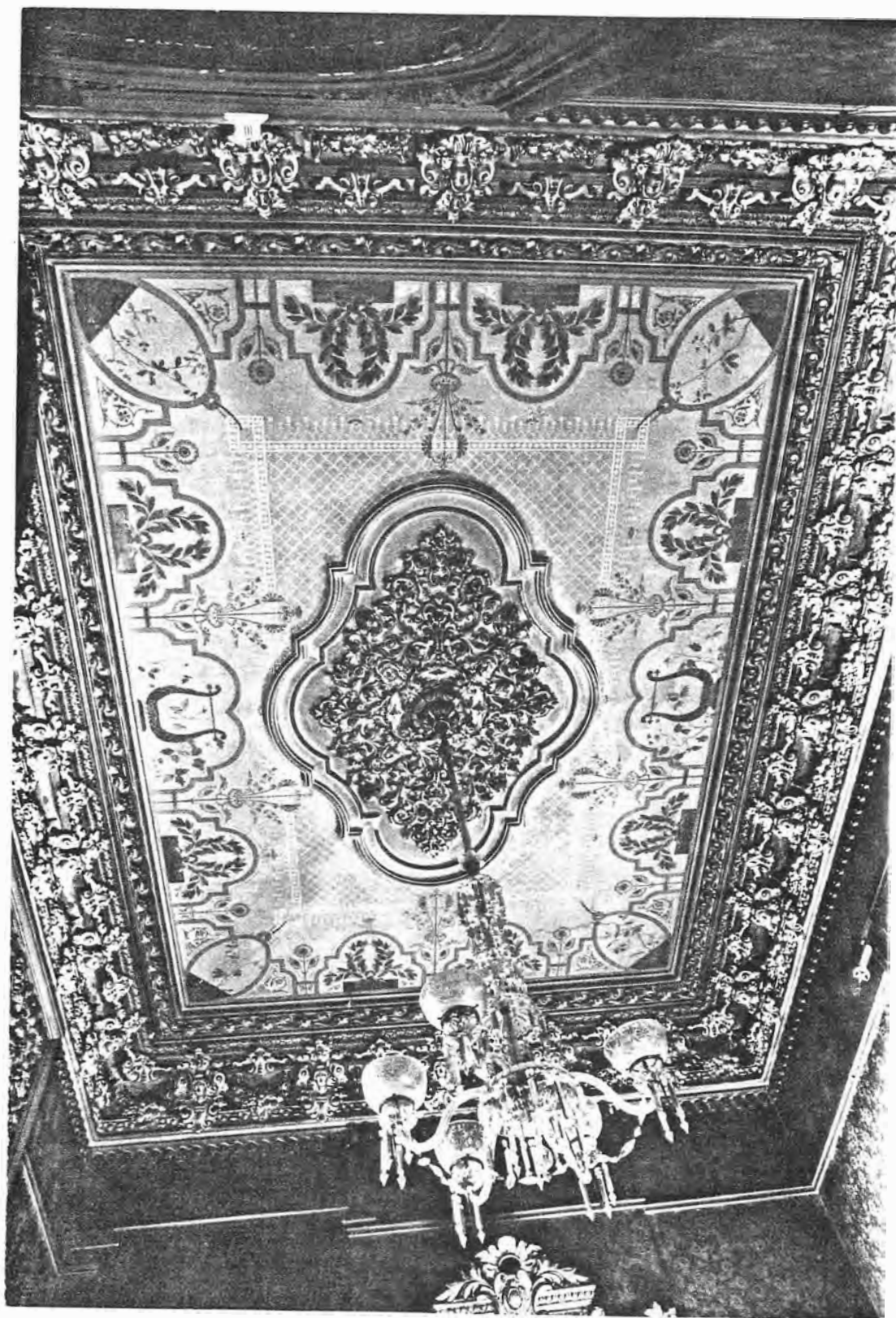
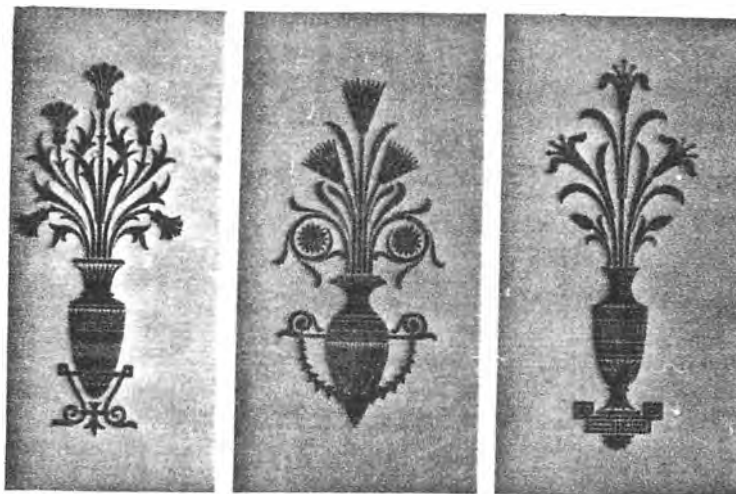


Figure 99. Mallory-Neely music room ceiling.



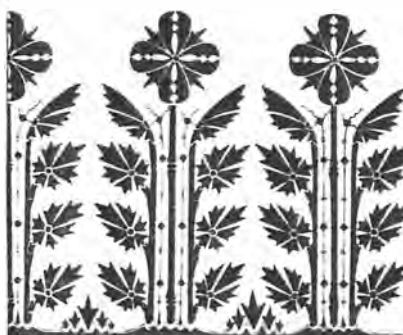
A

REPETITION.

93

rubbed so that it is blotted and yet repeated, gives

FIG. 79.



rise to a blotch which is more or less agreeable. The kaleidoscope furnishes an excellent illustration

FIG. 80.

FIG. 81.



of the value of repetition. Here a few broken, irregular-shaped, variously-coloured fragments of glass

B

- Figure 100. Stylized decorative motifs. Influenced by the Neo-Grec, these conventionalized flower patterns are similar in spirit to those used in the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room ceilings. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.
- A. George and Maurice Audesley, The Practical Decorator and Ornamentalist (1890).
- B. Dr. Christopher Dresser, Principles of Decorative Design (1873).

in Paris "the Greek movement never took the form of an architectural revival."⁸⁷ H.P.F. Labrousse and L. J. Duc attempted to develop a modern version of the Grecian style.

[They] sought to introduce into their work something of the crispness and delicacy of Greek art, and developed what came near to being a new style, to which some writers have given the name of Neo-Grec. These men broke away from the stereotyped rules of the prevailing academic style, invented new profiles, and combinations of moldings, pilaster-caps, consoles, and balusters, and developed new forms of window-treatment and a somewhat dry and flat style of incised ornament.⁸⁸

Using "an abstract language of line and form" Beaux-Arts architects attempted to create new ornamental motifs. Severely stylized Grecian motifs including akroteria, vases, palmettes, heads, and masks are characteristic of "Neo-Grec" decoration.⁸⁹ (Figure 101) The "Neo-Grec" mode of design was spread internationally by books on ornamental design. George Ashdown Audsley and Maurice Ashdown Audsley in The Practical Decorator and Ornamentalist advocated the use of the "Neo-Grec" because of "its free and modernized character." They illustrated many examples for use in ceiling decoration, stenciling, textiles and other forms of decoration.⁹⁰ (Figure 102)

⁸⁷Hamlin, 927.

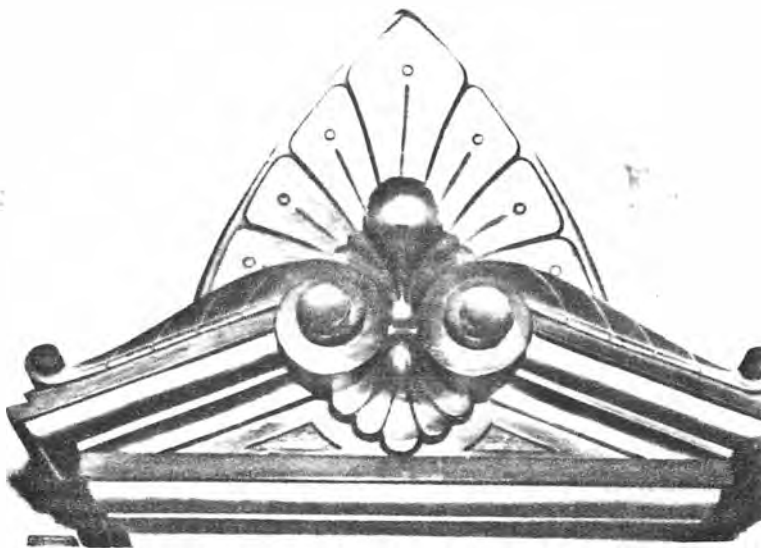
⁸⁸Ibid., 427.

⁸⁹The Second Empire, Art in France Under Napoleon III, 44.

⁹⁰George Ashdown Audsley and Maurice Ashdown Audsley, The Practical Decorator and Ornamentalist for the Use of Architects, Painters, Decorators and Designers (Glasgow: Blackie & Son, Limited, c. 1890), Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.



A



B

Figure 101. Neo-Grec ornaments. Modernized versions of ancient Grecian motifs were characteristic of Neo-Grec design as is typified by these stylized palmettes and akroteria from furniture in the Mallory-Neely House.
A. Detail from Renaissance Revival bureau.
B. Detail from Renaissance Revival bedstead.

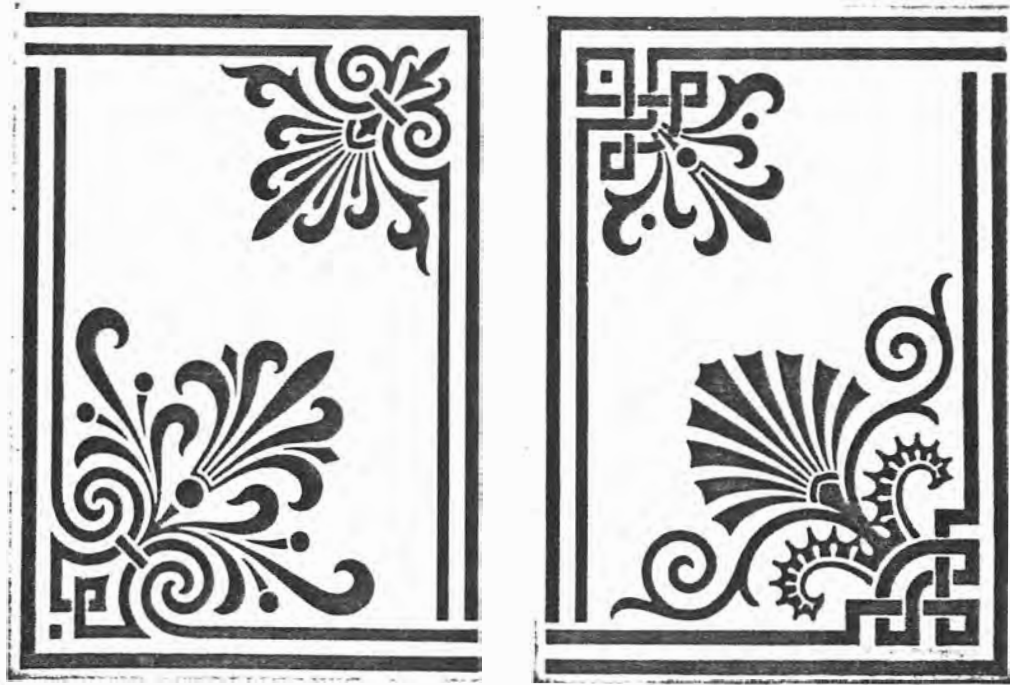


Figure 102. Plate from George and Maurice Audsley, The Practical Decorator and Ornamentalist (1890) showing characteristic conventionalized Neo-Grec ornament. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

Boyce's Fresco and Decorative Designs illustrated designs of ceiling fresco in which the "Neo-Grec" style predominates.⁹¹ (Figure 103) "Neo-Grec" abstract ornament lent itself perfectly to stencil design. The highly stylized urns, lyres, floral bouquets, and palmettes in the ceiling of the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room are all excellent examples of the use of the "Neo-Grec" for this purpose. Here as elsewhere they were probably used because they were fashionable rather than because the owners or artisans executing the designs truly understood the reform principles of the creators of "Neo-Grec" design, namely, "that decorative embellishment should derive from and articulate the structural facts of the object ornamented and should communicate its function by an abstract language of form and line."⁹² In the Mallory-Neely House as elsewhere it was used solely as ornamental surface decoration.

Polychromatic color usage characterized the ceiling and ornamental plaster work of the parlor and music room. Under photographic flood light the colors are unbelievably rich. Garnier and others revived the sumptuousness of Grecian, imperial Roman, and Baroque color usage for Second Empire decoration. The fascination with architectural coloration was stimulated by the discovery of the use of polychromy by the ancient Greeks, a revelation which destroyed

⁹¹A. P. Boyce, Boyce's Fresco and Decorative Designs (Boston: Cupples, Upham & Co., 1883), Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

⁹²The Second Empire, Art in France Under Napoleon III, 44.

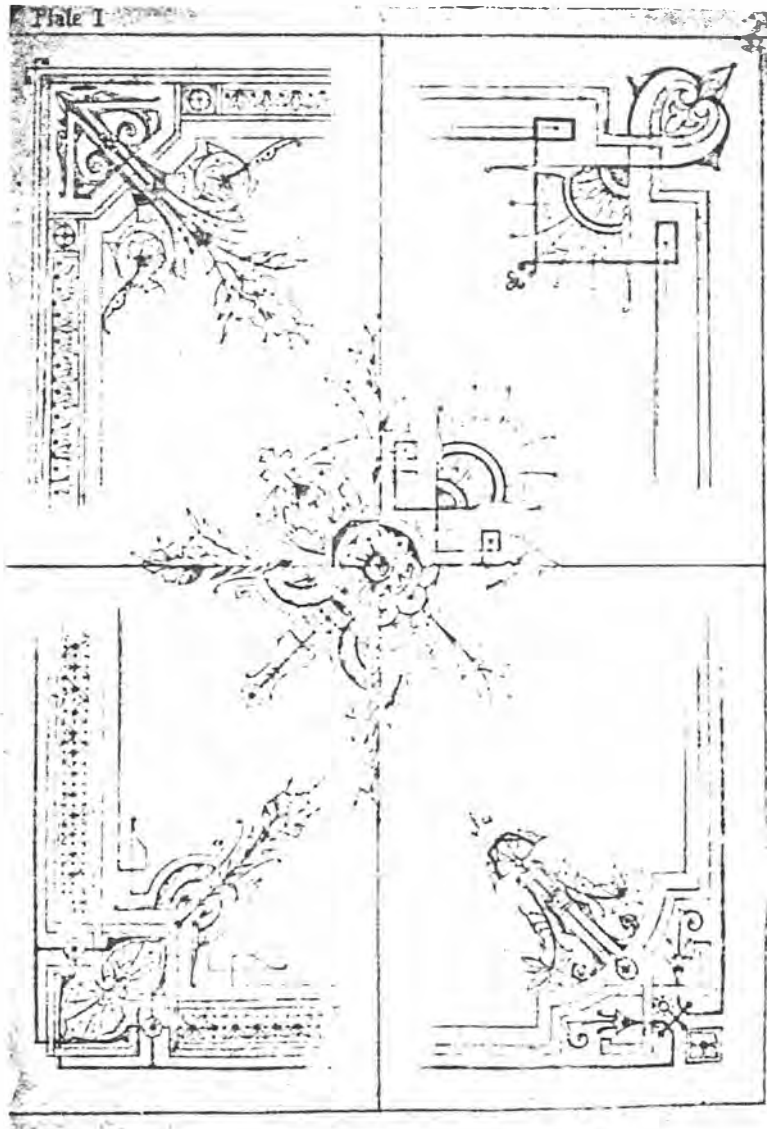


Figure 103. One of many suggested decorative ceiling treatments made up of Neo-Grec ornament from Boyce's Fresco and Decoration (1883). Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

the long held belief that classical art and architecture had the appearance of pure bleached white. Publications like the 1851 L'Architecture Polychrome chez les Grecs by J. J. Hittorff and M. A. Racinet's Polychromic Ornament (1877) stimulated interest in the use of polychromy in modern architecture and interiors.⁹³

In addition to suggestions given in the trade literature about designs, patterns, and stencils, color guidance for the fresco/stencil artist was also available. Much of this information was the result of extensive investigation into the phenomenon of color by nineteenth century chemists, physicists, manufacturers, and color theorists. The Principles of Harmony and Contrast of Colors and Their Applications to the Arts by the French chemist, M. E. Chevreul, in particular, was especially influential.⁹⁴

A. P. Boyce, for example, gave detailed suggestions in Boyce's Fresco and Decorative Designs for appropriate color usage to those designers not conversant with color. The fashionable shades of color he suggested are the same as those found in the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room fresco and ornamental plaster; these include cream, greygreen, varieties of rose, robin's egg blue, turquoise, gold, and bronze.⁹⁵

⁹³Hamlin, 430; and M. A. Racinet, Polychromic Ornament (London: Harry Sotheran & Co., 1877), Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

⁹⁴M. E. Chevreul, The Principles of Harmony and Contrast of Colors and Their Applications to the Arts, 3rd ed. (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1860), Special Collections, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, England.

⁹⁵Boyce, 32-40.

Whoever planned and painted the ornamental plaster cornice and moldings of the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room must have been somewhat familiar with the theories of Owen Jones, the influential English author, designer and color theorist. In his House Decoration, a guide for correct wall treatment, Paul N. Hasluck states that Jones' color theories were issued as a dogma in 1852.⁹⁶ Hasluck discussed and fully illustrated with linear diagrams those particular theories of Jones which concern the color treatment of interior cornices. (Figure 104) Basic to this theory was that "color is used to assist in the development of form and to distinguish an object or parts of an object one from another."⁹⁷ Following Owen Jones' theories, George and Maurice Audsley in The Practical Decorator and Ornamentalist stated that "all polychromic decoration should be devised and disposed with the view of accentuating and enriching the architecture."⁹⁸ It was important to Jones that moldings be accentuated, especially their concavity and convexity, so that they would not be lost visually. Alternation, variation or contrast of color, or value of color, from band to band of molding or cove was also important. In doing all of this the designer first had to decide if he wanted overall harmony or contrast of color. The concept of warm and cool colors was also

⁹⁶Paul N. Hasluck, House Decoration Comprising Whitewashing, Paper Hanging, Painting, etc. (New York: Cassell & Company, Ltd., 1910), 137, Special Collections, Strong Museum, Rochester, New York.

⁹⁷Ibid., 16.

⁹⁸Audsley and Audsley, 27.

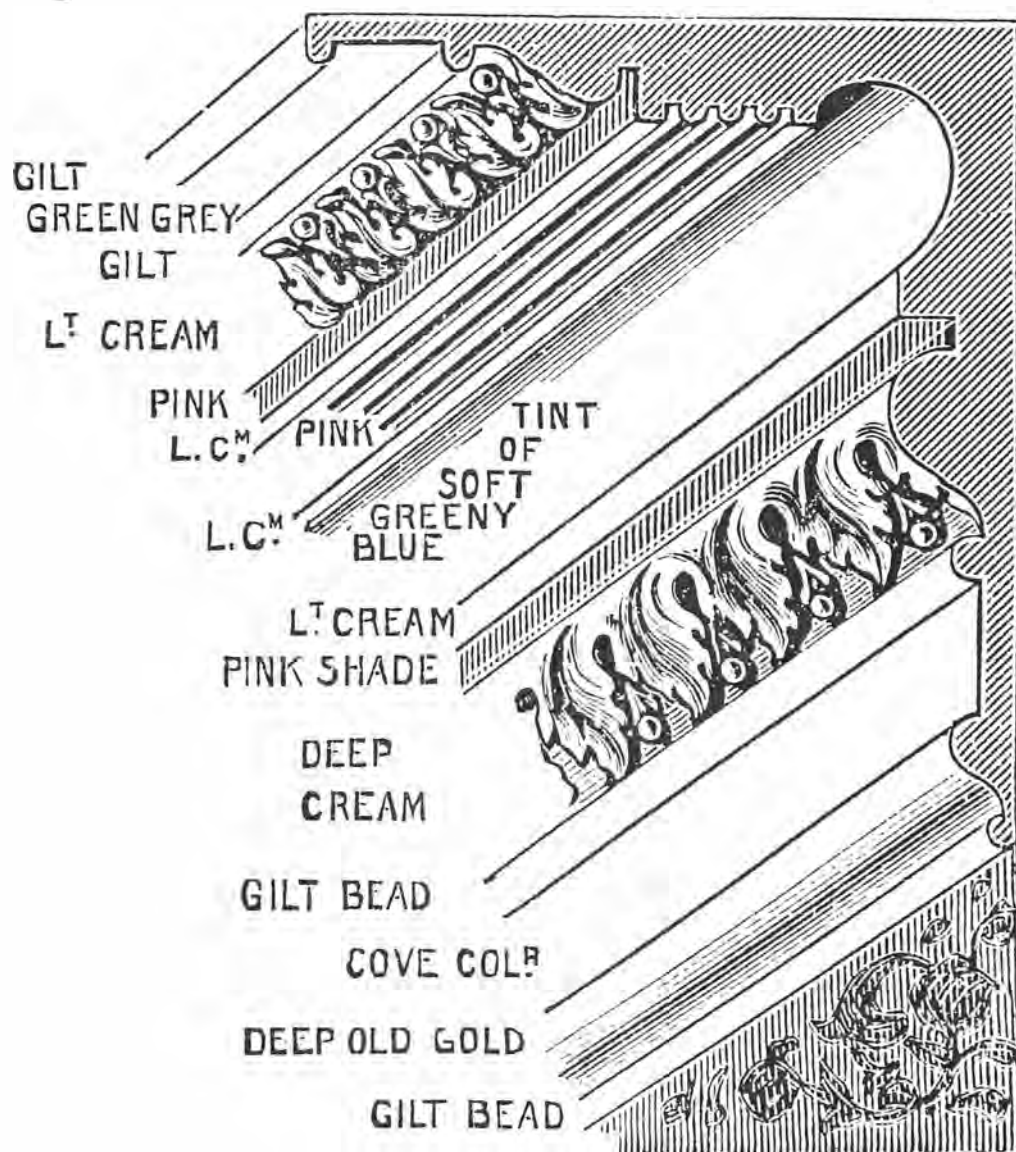


Figure 104. Suggested method for painting a cornice suitable for a drawing room from Paul Hasluck House Decoration (1910). Courtesy Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum.

an important factor to Jones in painting cornices.⁹⁹ Cool colors recede so were best used as on the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room cornices where robin's egg blue was painted in the concave cove frieze behind the grotesque heads and fruit swags; advancing warm colors such as pinks, gold, and bronzes were used on the convex moldings of these cornices.

The second group of stylistically related ceilings in the Mallory-Neely House is located across the hall from the parlor in the sitting room and in a second floor room. The sitting room contains the only unrestored ceiling. The sitting room ceiling is entirely different from those in the parlor and music room; this example is a type which is more commonly found in late Victorian interiors. Here there is one field, covered by a single illusionary painting. (Figure 105)

Careful study of the sitting room ceiling shows that it is a combination of stenciling and painting probably executed in distemper color which was the typical paint used at this time for fresco. Bordering the entire ceiling is a band of bamboo fretwork surrounding an illusionist cloud filled sky, one corner of which is filled with a cascading group of brilliantly colorful flowering branches. In the opposite corner are two more flowering branches on which sit two conversing cupids both modeled in an illusionist manner. (Figure 106) The execution in the ceiling is freer, more fluid, graceful, and

⁹⁹Hasluck, 16.

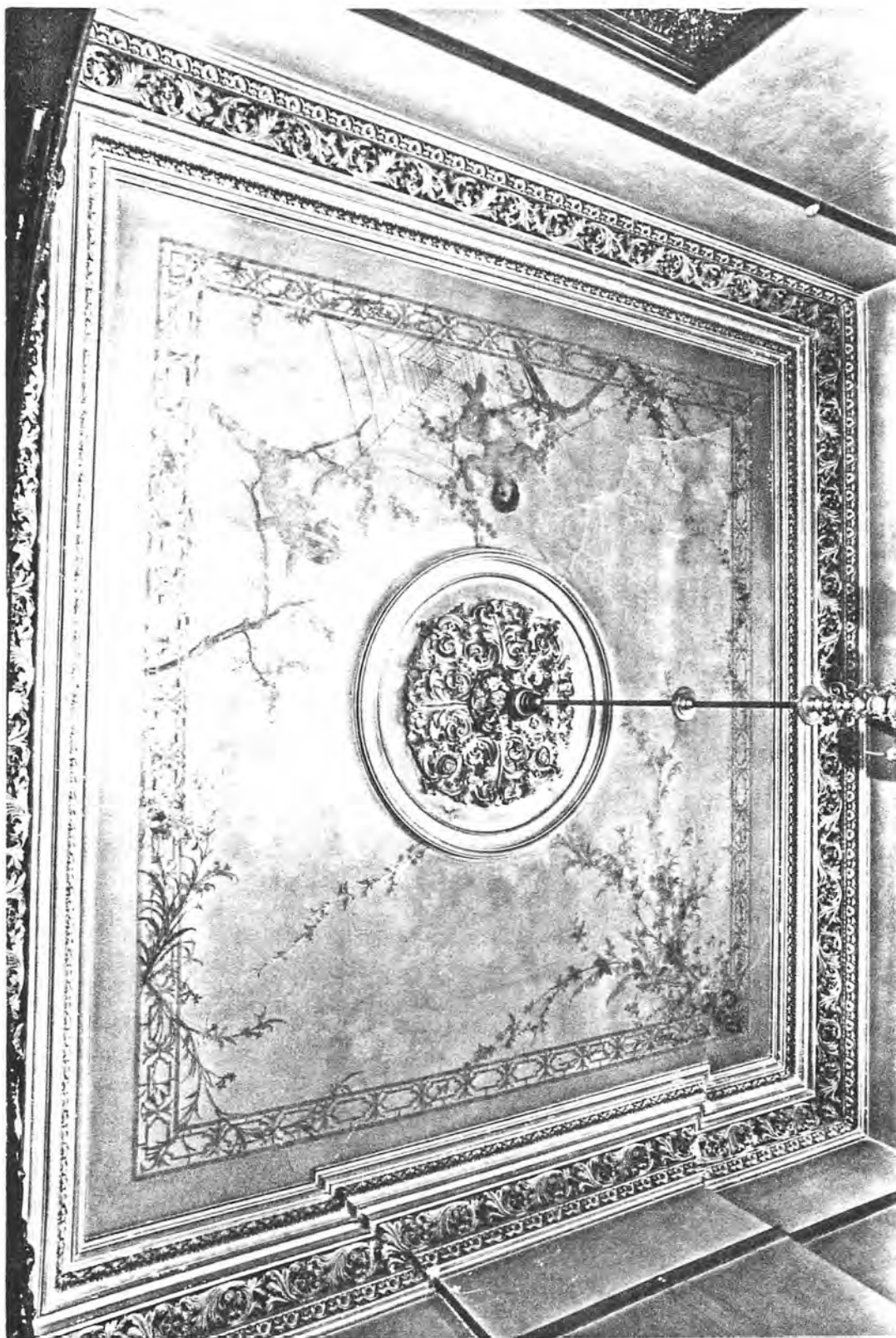


Figure 105. Mallory-Neely sitting room ceiling.



A



B

Figure 106. Details of the Mallory-Neely sitting room ceiling.
 A. Cross-legged cupid.
 B. Dangling cupid.

whimsical in comparison to the rigid formal "Neo-Grec" style of execution across the hallway.

The J. C. Neelys' home was not the only one in Memphis with an illusionary type of ceiling fresco decoration. On the occasion of the grand opening ball at the home of Hugh Neely a reporter for the Memphis Appeal stated that "The salon ceiling is frescoed in blues with a lot of cherubic youngsters riding on a fleecy cloud."¹⁰⁰ Still surviving in the front parlor of Annesdale is a ceiling fresco filled with cupids and decorative vines and flowers.¹⁰¹

By the century's end there were all types of aids available to do this type of work. For example, the author of The Stencil Treasury itemized a variety of tools and paints for decorative ceiling fresco and listed stucco stencils available by mail order such as:

Allegorical and decorative figures by Viennese artists	\$1.50 ea.
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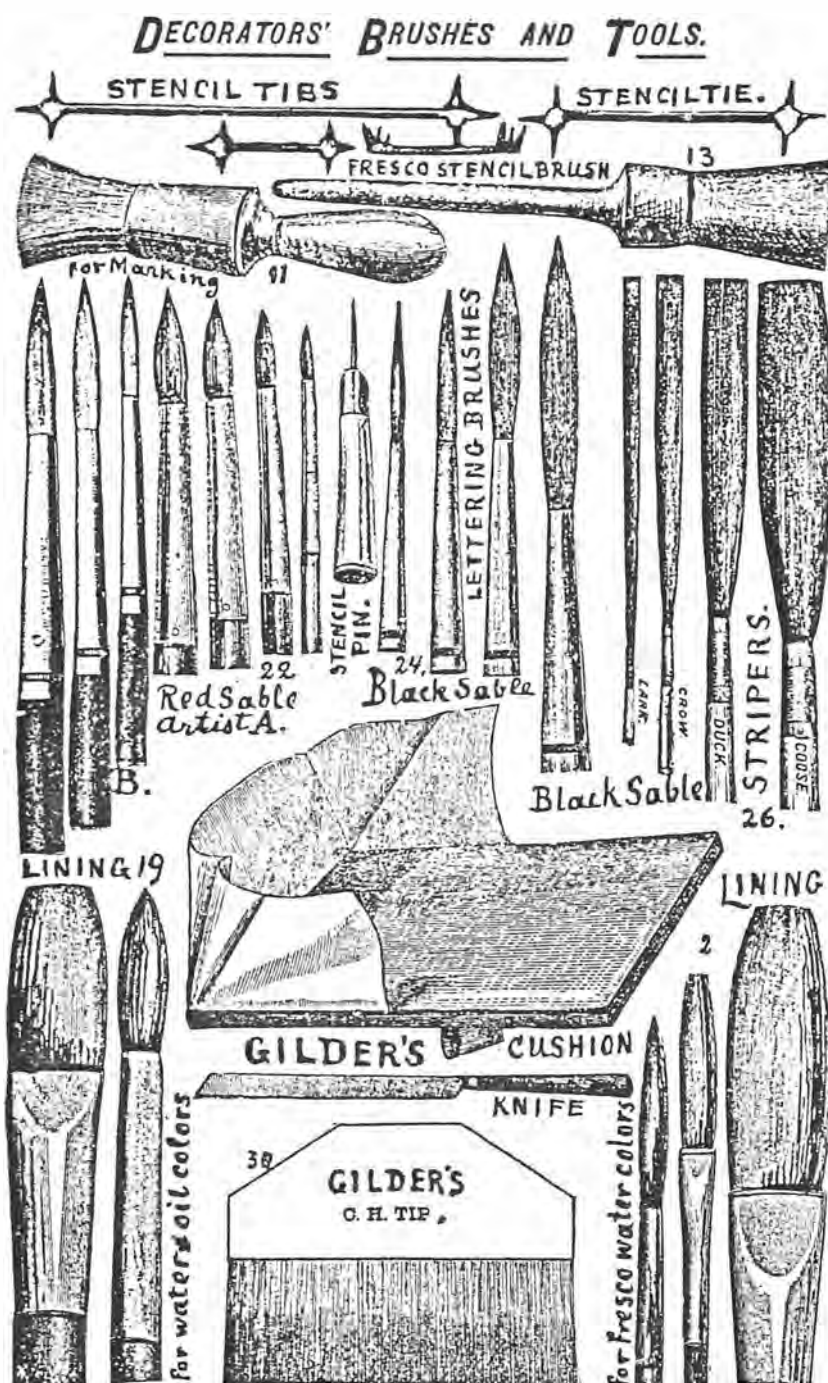
Boucher cupids, Seasons, Cupids Playing in Twigs, and Three Cupids, Representing Dance, Serenade, Music. ¹⁰² (Figures 107-108)	\$8.00 ea.
--	------------

Various borders are also illustrated, such as ribbon, rosette, and lyre wreath stencils costing 45¢ for 12-inch lengths and 80¢ for 18-inch ones. (Figure 109) A variety of period motifs such as Empire or Renaissance could be ordered. Also listed in The Stencil Treasury

¹⁰⁰"Under the Neely Roof," Memphis Appeal, 18 April 1870, 2.

¹⁰¹Novarese, 33.

¹⁰²The 5th Illustrated Catalog and Price List Stencil Treasury, A. Wiggins, Proprieter, 215 E. 59th Street, New York, 1895 [trade catalog], 23-27, Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.



Stencil Pins $1\frac{1}{2}$ " long to fasten stencils when working, per doz. 25c.

Stencil Ties to eliminate all holders, strengthen the stencil, very practical.

No. 2 for $\frac{3}{4}$ ", or less space, per gross \$1.00; No 3, $1\frac{1}{4}$ " long \$1.25; No. 4, $2\frac{1}{2}$ " \$1.50

Manufactured only by the **STENCIL TREASURY, 215 E. 59th St., N.Y.**

Figure 107. Illustration from the Stencil Treasury (1895) showing various stencil tools and brushes. Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

FINE DECORATIVE PANELS FOR CEILINGS ETC.



Groups of Cupids after
Boucher excellent
for studies.
Shaded red, brown tint
Pounces of these
87c. each.

450, Cupid Friezes (8) 15" x 43" like above, each.....\$2.50

Figure 108. Cupid frieze pattern. Cupids were popular components of nineteenth century ceiling decoration. Catalogs like the 1895 Stencil Treasury, therefore, offered a wide variety of ready-to-use patterns and stencils such as the pattern shown above. Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

24
STENCIL TREASURY. [Sample Plate XIV. 2d Catalog.] Clothfaced $\frac{1}{2}$ more.

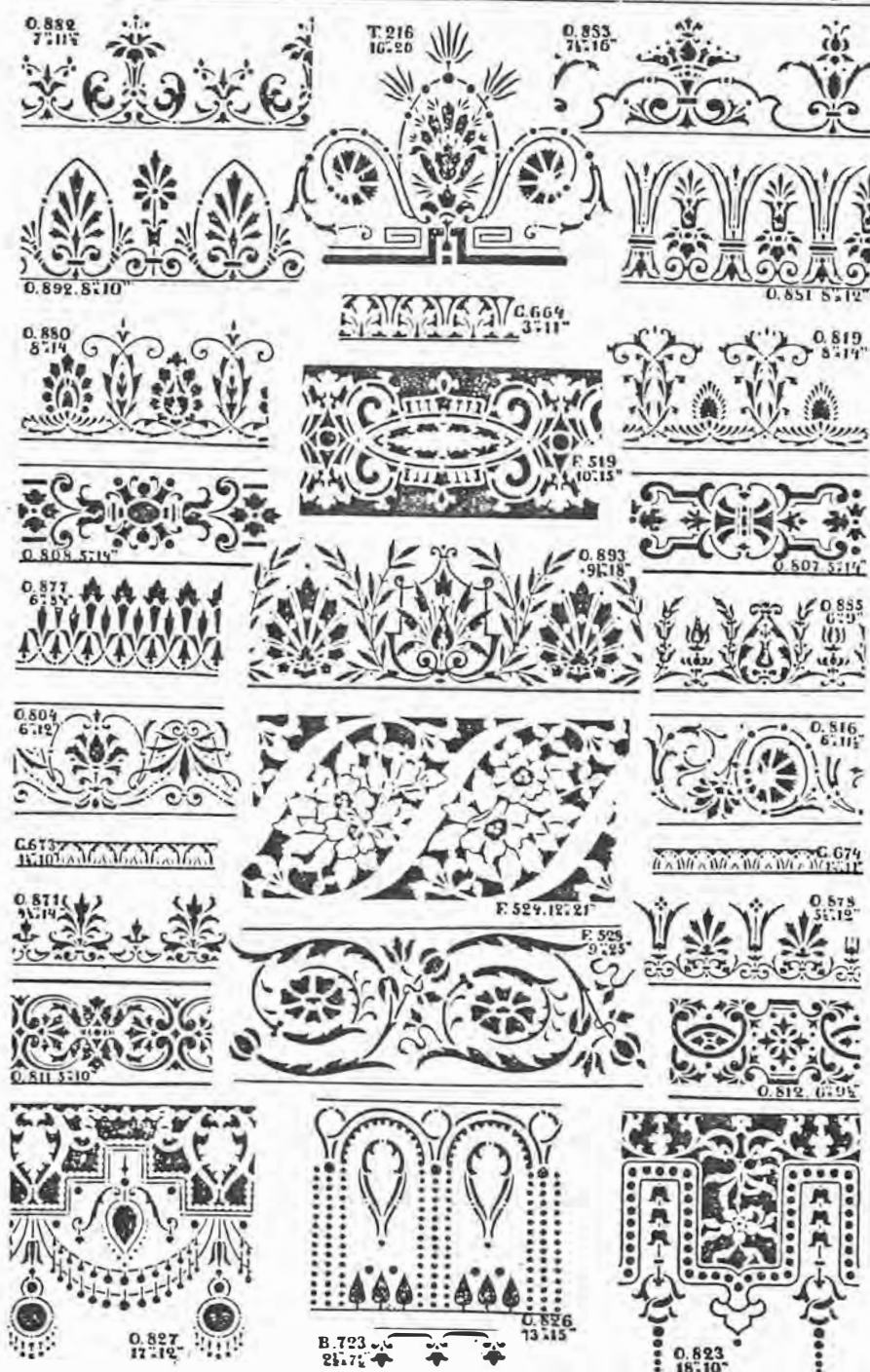


Figure 109. Characteristic page from the 1895 Stencil Treasury showing varieties of border stencils available for order. Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

were available books, booklets, and periodicals of value to the fresco artists, including:

Books

Eyth and Myer's, The Painter's Book, containing 100's of designs, figures, ceilings, descriptions, how to do, \$7.85.

F. V. Feldegg, Modern Profane Decorative Art, best ornamental decoration executed in private houses of Vienna, \$4.70.

G. Harden, Baroque and Rococo Ceilings, easy to enlarge for pouncing, \$3.40.

E. Wichmann, Useful Sketches, elegant ceilings, friezes, figures, \$20.00.

Periodicals

Decorative Ceilings, 5 plates, diverse original designs mostly colored for decorators and artists, 35¢ monthly.¹⁰³

Evidence of the use of these aids by fresco artists working in America is found in the Beck Collection of Architectural Art Work in the Philadelphia Athenaeum. It contains an assortment of pencil and water color sketches for ceiling and wall decoration by William and Louis Beck, fresco artists of Akron, Ohio (active 1870-1930).¹⁰⁴ Among their papers is a stencil pattern catalog containing one hundred designs published by the Deutsches Maler-Journal. (Figures 110 and 111) William Beck (originally from Germany) advertised in an unidentified Akron, Ohio newspaper on 15 March 1878:

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Beck Collection of Architectural Art Work, Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

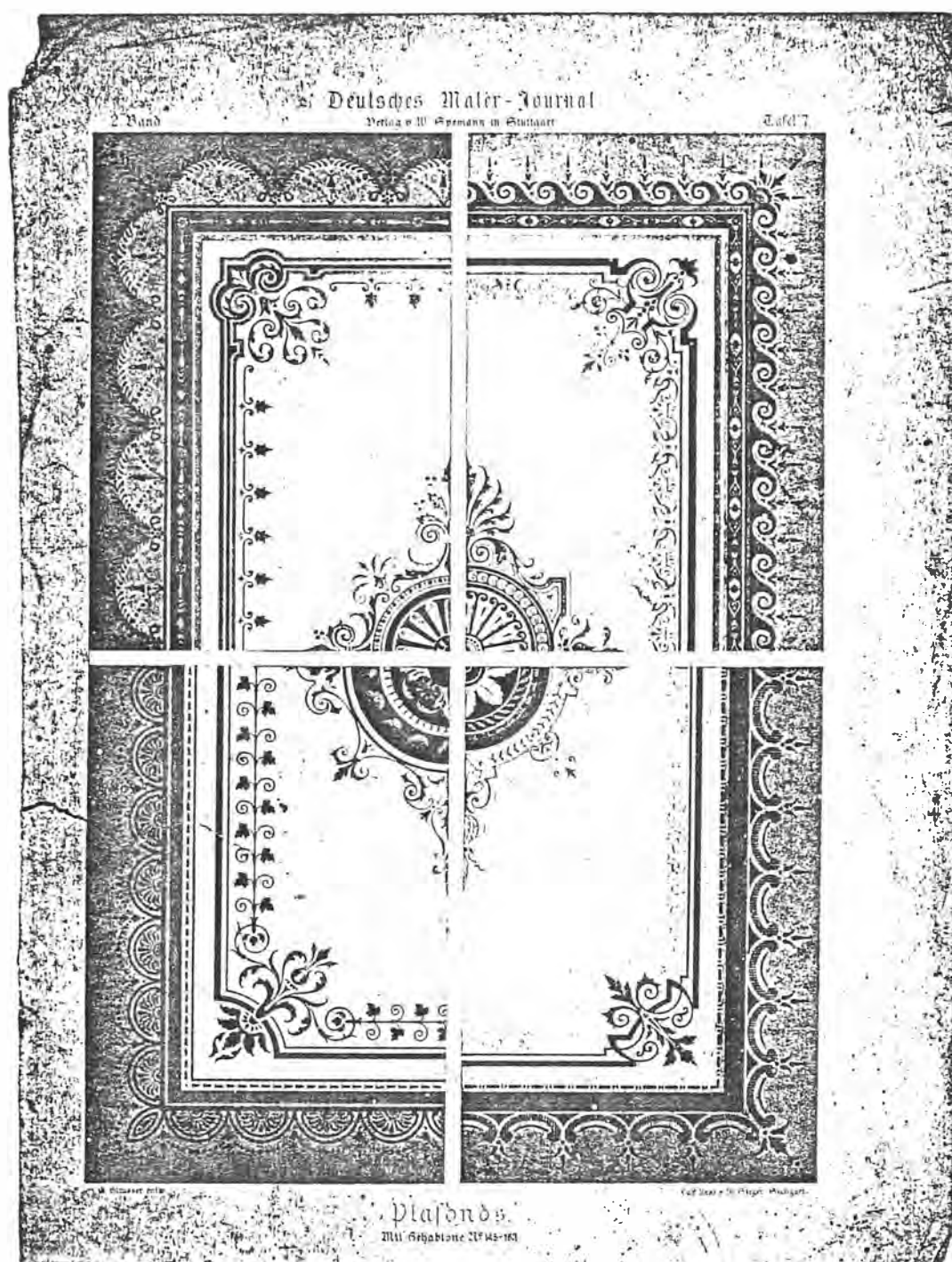


Figure 110. Plates like this one from the Deutsches Maler-Journal served as inspiration for decorative ceiling artists. This particular copy was among the sketches and papers of William and Louis Beck. Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

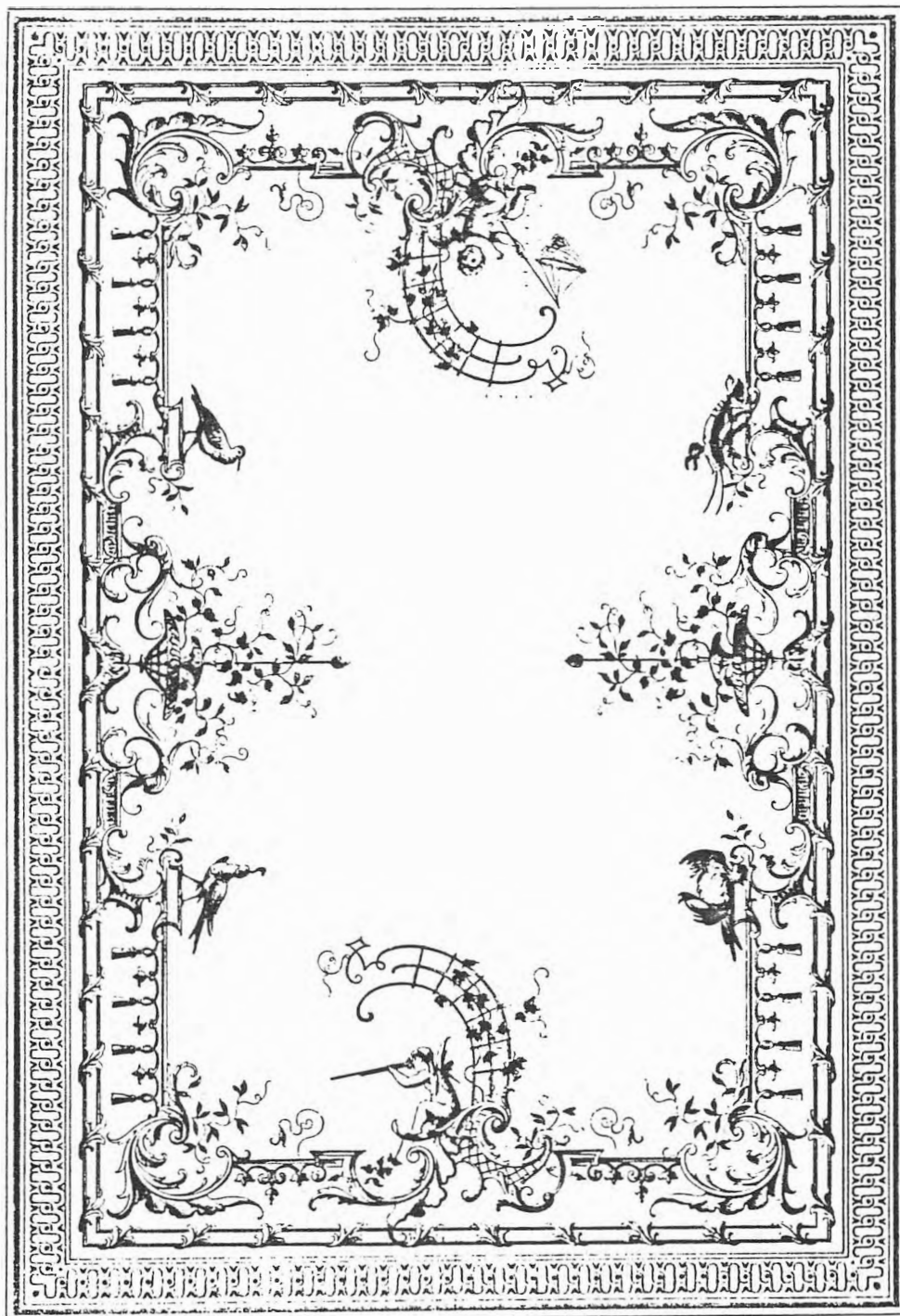


Figure 111. A plate from the Deutsches Maler-Journal in the Beck Collection showing a ceiling design with cupids, trellises and vines. Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

Artistical Fresco Painter . . . kept up to date by the designers and pattern makers of the art of fresco painting in Germany, France, and Italy . . . [and] am receiving monthly all novelties and I believe my patrons will appreciate the desire on my part to keep step with the progressive spirit of the time.¹⁰⁵

No preparatory sketches survive for the Mallory-Neely ceilings. It seems likely that these were created in order to show the proposed design to Mr. J. C. Neely for his approval. Many fresco artists stated in their advertisements that they would provide specimen designs for customers. The fresco and ornamental sign painter, Henry Jaeger, for example, stated in a Memphis city directory advertisement that he would "furnish colored sketches with estimates."¹⁰⁶ The Beck and Moeller Collections at the Philadelphia Athenaeum and the Keller Collection at the Missouri Historical Society each contain examples of proposed ceiling designs. The Beck Collection includes many preparatory pencil sketches and finished water-colored pieces. (Figure 112) The Moeller Collection is comprised of a hundred pencil, oil and watercolor sample cards used by the New York firm of H. D. and J. Moeller. (Figure 113) Jacob Keller (1847-1915), an immigrant from Baden, Germany, lived and worked most of his life in St. Louis.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵"William Beck, Fresco Artist" [partially documented newspaper clipping], 15 March, 1878, Beck Collection of Architectural Art Work, Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

¹⁰⁶Shole's Memphis Directory: Guide in the Taxing District Shelby County, Tennessee (Memphis: A. E. Sholes Publisher, 1884), 795.

¹⁰⁷Dana O. Jensen, ed., "The Decorative Art of Jacob Keller," Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society, 23, No. 3 (April, 1967), 225.

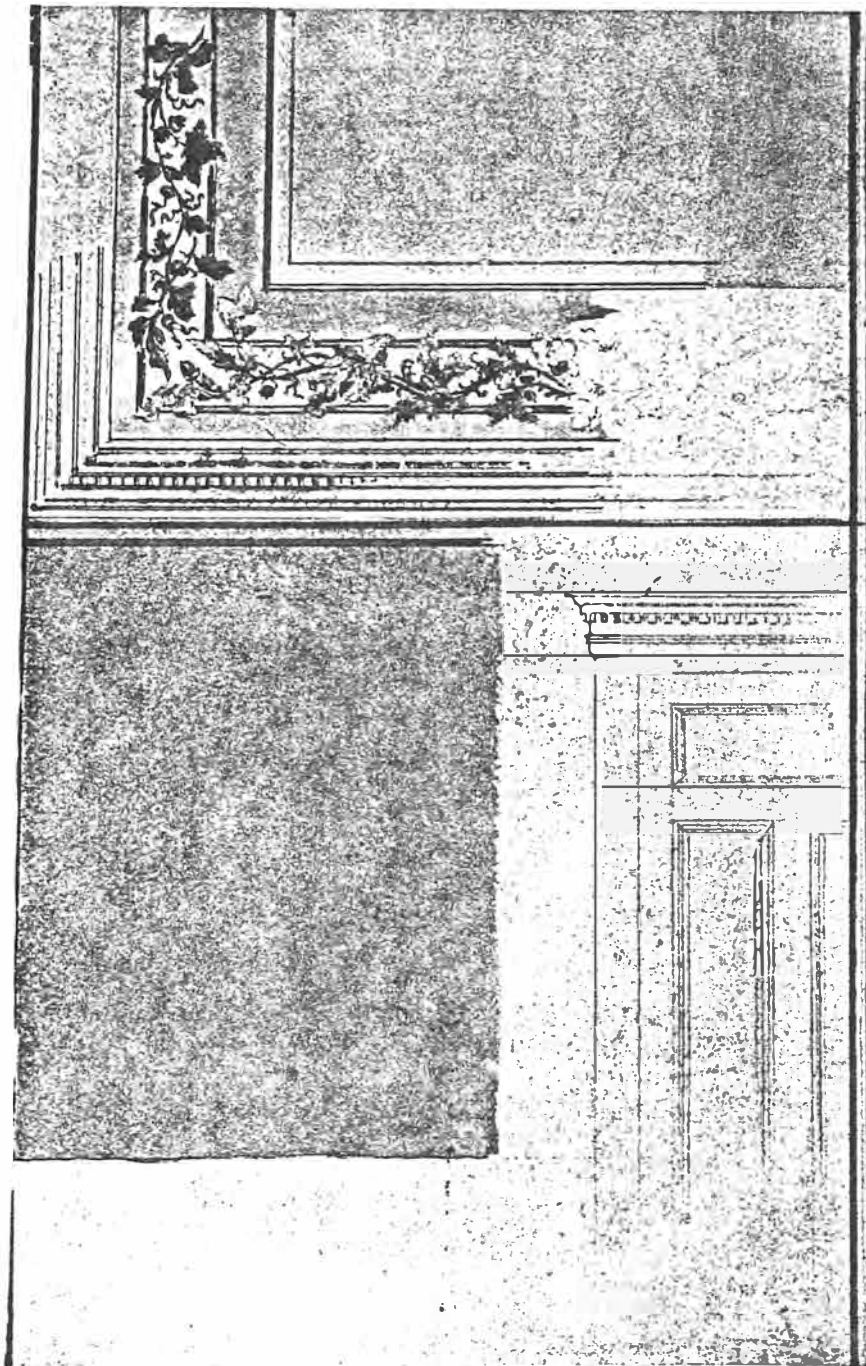


Figure 112. A preparatory watercolor rendering for a decorative ceiling border from the Beck Collection. Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

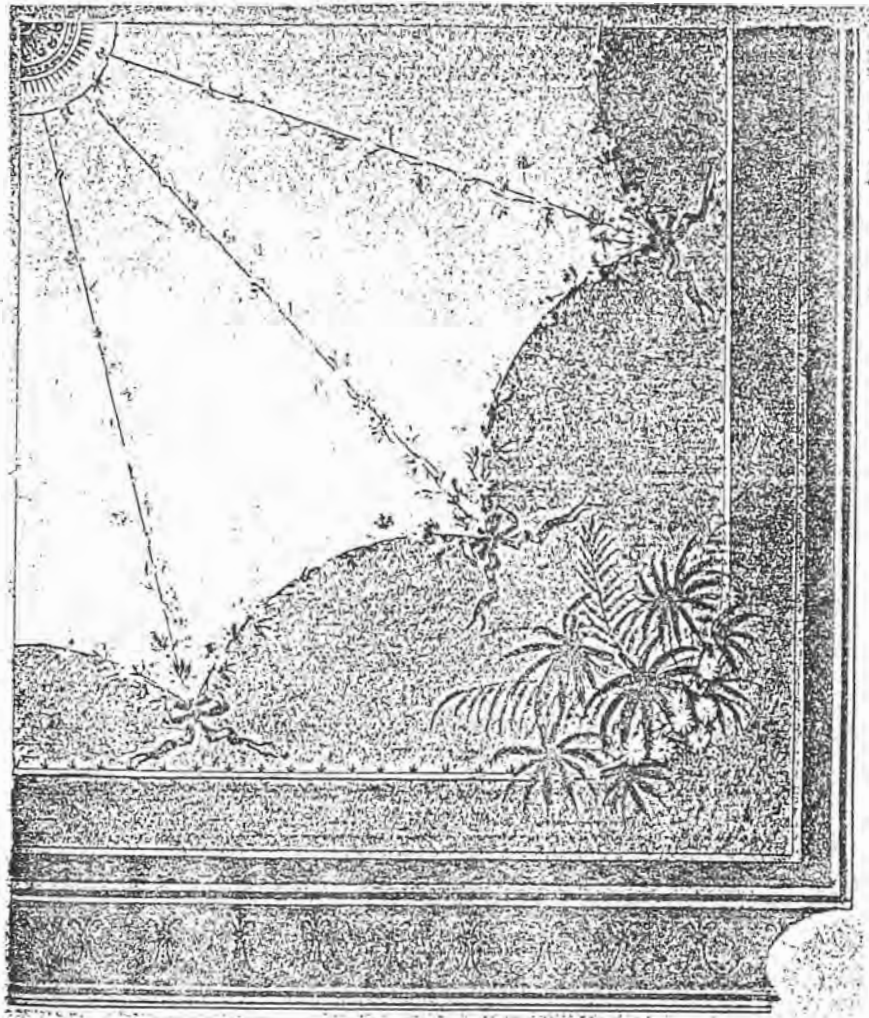


Figure 113. Preparatory rendering from the Moeller Collection. It features a ceiling treatment with an awning stretched over the room as in the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room. Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

The large Keller Collection contains numerous specimen designs in pencil and water color of ceilings filled with cupids, flowers, and fruit, in a rococo manner.¹⁰⁸

The craftsmen/artisans that were responsible for the creation of the Mallory-Neely ceilings are unknown. However, oral tradition survives that itinerant artisans from Cincinnati produced them. Research has revealed that most American Victorian ceiling painting and ornamental plasterwork was created primarily by Europeans who either permanently immigrated to this country or who came with the intention of making money and then returning to their homeland and families.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸A. Keller [watercolors], Box L, Art Department Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹⁰⁹Many of these artisans were trained in schools that taught decorative painting or apprenticed under graduates of these courses. Much of their training was influenced by Second Empire taste. Hamlin in A History of Ornament states that the Second Empire French mode spread to Italy, Germany, and elsewhere in Europe where "it was tastelessly and boringly applied, losing its vitality and retaining only the motifs and feeling of grandeur." (Hamlin, 447) In Germany, especially, there was what he called "a wave" of this taste stimulated by the Second Empire work of Garnier and others. Hamlin felt that the result in interior decoration was an exceedingly dry and hard version of these forms and though they were beautifully executed, the result was one of "wholly uninspired mechanized production." (Hamlin, 447).

Fresco and plaster artisans from Europe further carried this internationalized Second Empire style to the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century. The following statement by Hamlin expresses both his opinion of these artisans and High Victorian taste. "The general condition of taste during the period from 1850 to 1880 in the United States was lower than at any time before or since . . . [for example] interior decoration consisted mostly of ugly plaster work done by third-rate foreign workmen." (Hamlin, 445)

In the United States these European artisans, mainly Italian and German, often moved from place to place to execute their work. City directories in many American cities such as Chicago, New York, New Orleans, Philadelphia, St. Louis record the names of fresco artists and ornamental plasterers who were like shifting sands during the later decades of the nineteenth century. Others settled permanently in one place as a specific base of operation from which to travel widely to execute commissions as the need arose.

Ceilings created by these artisans survive across the land and in written and photographic documentation. The description of Mrs. Louis C. Tiffany's rooms in Artistic Houses states that the ceilings of the grand drawing room were frescoed by the artists Brigaldi who came from Italy to do them.¹¹⁰ The major rooms of the Morse-Libby Mansion in Portland, Maine were painted by Italian artisan Giuseppi Guidicini and his assistants.¹¹¹ The listings in city directories suggest that many specialists in fresco painting and ornamental plaster practiced in major cities. For example, the 1883 Chicago city directory lists twenty-four fresco artists and eleven ornamental plasterers, many of whom have Italian and Germanic names like Louis Napioni, J. Bartolomei, George Schuler, August Weidling.¹¹² Dominique Caproni and Henry Feuerback are among the twenty stucco artisans

¹¹⁰Artistic Houses: Interior Views of a Number of the Most Beautiful and Celebrated Rooms in America (New York: 1883-84; reprint, New York: Benjamin Bloom, Inc., 1971), 8-9.

¹¹¹Grow and Von Zweck, 99.

¹¹²Directory for the City of Chicago, Illinois, 1883, 877.

listed in the St. Louis city directory of the same year.¹¹³ The 1883 Cincinnati city directory lists sixteen fresco artists and six ornamental plasterers.¹¹⁴ This city with its cosmopolitan, mainly Germanic, citizenry had by the late nineteenth century become a major cultural center for both music and the visual arts. Following European academic tradition, the influential Art School of the Cincinnati Museum of Art offered decorative design as part of its extensive curriculum along with standard courses such as sculpture and painting. In 1886 the school directory, for example, listed Louis T. Rebisso as instructor of decorative art and water-color painting.¹¹⁵

Written documentary evidence supports the fact that fresco and plaster artisans worked in Memphis during the second half of the nineteenth century. Memphis, like other American cities, was enjoying increasing economic prosperity. This factor coupled with the popularity of mural and plaster decoration attracted artisans to execute both public and private commissions as the following examples illustrate.

The Robertson Topp Papers contain a series of letters (1857) between Topp and New York architect R. G. Hatfield arranging for fresco artists to come to Memphis to paint the dining room and

¹¹³Gould's St. Louis Directory (St. Louis: Gould & Co., 1883), 1291.

¹¹⁴William's Cincinnati Directory (Cincinnati: Williams & Co. Proprietors, June 1890), 1749.

¹¹⁵Cincinnati Art Museum Library, Art-Artists Folder, A 784.

ballroom of Topp's new Gayoso House Hotel.¹¹⁶ Mr. Hatfield was able to secure and contract for the services of Mr. Gugiari and Mr. Crescionini of Italy whom he felt were "talents of a high order" and the best of their type to be had in New York. He guaranteed Topp that their work "will rival anything on the Mississippi or in the USA for that matter." Hatfield explained to Topp how he was to have the plaster surface prepared to receive the fresco and stated that he was sending sketches prepared by the artisans for his approval. He elaborated in writing about some of these.¹¹⁷ A letter of agreement and receipt of payment show that Topp paid the two artists \$1500 for their work and \$100 for their travel expenses.¹¹⁸

In the Fontaine House (adjacent to the Mallory-Neely House), a sealed fake door was added to achieve symmetry of design with a functional door. The fake door was opened during restoration; on the inside were the signatures listed below of itinerant artisans who had worked on the house and "who had followed the opportunity to practice their craft."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶Robertson Topp Papers, Box 8, Folder 3.

¹¹⁷R. G. Hatfield to Robertson Topp, 15 September 1857, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 8, Folder 3.

¹¹⁸R. G. Hatfield to Robertson Topp, 2 October 1857, and Gugiari and Crescionini to Robertson Topp, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 8, Folder 3.

¹¹⁹Magness, 64.

M. Holland, carpenter - Baltimore, MD
 J. M. Garvey, boss plasterer
 Geo. B. Cary, grainer - Toronto
 E. S. Baudry - Montreal, Canada
 Jas. L. Lennox, painter - Toronto, Canada
 February 11, 1871.¹²⁰

Despite extensive search it is impossible for a number of reasons to pinpoint exactly who executed the Neely ceiling. There were many fresco-plaster artisans working in Memphis from the 1880s to the century's end, and most decorative art of this type was unsigned. Therefore, identifiable work of these different artisans is lacking, making comparison and attribution difficult. Several strong possibilities follow.

The career of the Leber brothers, Guy and Charles, provides a very characteristic model of American Victorian itinerant fresco artists. Their father, Pietro Lieber or Leber (1829-1892), was born in Lugano, Italy and later trained as a decorative fresco artist at the Academy of the famed Brera Museum in Milan. In 1867 he came to Louisville, Kentucky, to paint ceilings in the Louisville City Hall and Cathedral.¹²¹ Pietro's eldest son, Guy (1856-1928), was born in Italy and came with his father to Louisville. After Guy Leber returned to Milan to study at the Brera, he came back to Louisville to settle for the rest of his life and became a popular and versatile regional fresco artist, as his obituary attests:

¹²⁰Hughes, n.p.

¹²¹Thieme-Becker *Kunstler Lexikon, Allgemeines Lexikon Der Bildenden Kunstler*, 22 (Leipzig: E. A. Sieman, 1934), 502.

Mr. Leber was widely known throughout Kentucky and nearby states where he leaves work that mighty honors him in churches, theatres, residences, banks and public buildings Although his studies made him efficient in the painting of figures, landscapes, flowers, etc. he specialized in fresco or mural painting as it is now called.¹²²

Guy's younger brother, Charles, eventually joined him as a partner. The following typical advertisement appears consistently in Louisville city directories during the last two decades of the century:

Guy Leber & Brother
Artists
Fine Frescoing In All Styles

for Private Residences
and Public Buildings
On Reasonable Terms
Scenic Painting
A Specialty¹²³

In 1884 and 85 the Leber Brothers were active as fresco artists in Memphis, Tennessee. Beginning in September, 1884, and running for weeks thereafter, the following advertisement appeared in the Memphis Daily Appeal:

FRESCO PAINTING
Leber Bros.
Contractors and Executors
of the fresco painting in the
New Gayoso Hotel and
Peabody Dining room,
and Several private
residences in the city,

¹²²"Local Artist-Decorator Dies," Louisville Home Dispatch, 1 April 1928, 1.

¹²³City Directory, City of Louisville for 1885, 15 (Louisville, Kentucky: C. K. Caron, 1885), 370.

will furnish designs
on application
for all kinds of
frescoing in all
the modern
and ancient styles.¹²⁴

Appearing in the PERSONALS column of the Memphis Daily Appeal on 8 October 1884, was the following: "Guy Leber, fresco painter, has been doing some very pretty work lately. A piece of it, framed, may now be seen in one of Menken's show windows. If as good work is done in their housework, the Leber Bros. may be relied on for beautiful painting."¹²⁵ Both Leber brothers were separately listed in the 1885 Memphis city directory as fresco artists from Louisville, Kentucky.¹²⁶

Correspondence in the Henry Montgomery Papers between Montgomery and the Lebers reveals that he arranged for them to return to Memphis to fresco ceilings in Montgomery's new mansion. A letter dated 4 September 1885 from Montgomery to Guy Leber tells him of delay due to plastering problems and states that he will advise them when all is ready for them to come to Memphis.¹²⁷ In Montgomery's receipt book is an acknowledgement of payment signed by Guy Leber.¹²⁸

¹²⁴"Fresco Painting-Leber Bros.," Memphis Daily Appeal, 19 September 1884, 7.

¹²⁵"Personals," Memphis Daily Appeal, 8 October 1884, 11.

¹²⁶Dow's Memphis Directory (Memphis: Harlow Dow Publisher, 1885), 301.

¹²⁷Henry Montgomery to Guy Leber, 4 September 1885, Henry Montgomery Papers, Folder 30, Box 3.

¹²⁸Leber Brothers to Henry Montgomery, 6 November 1885 [receipt], Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 3, Receipt Book.

The Leber Brothers not only executed fresco work but also oversaw plaster decoration. Once associated with the Leber Brothers, Vincent Mattei¹²⁹ provided information to this researcher of his role in working with a team responsible for executing ornamental plaster while the Leber team executed fresco decoration. Mattei provided further information about the role of the itinerant artisan of Victorian America.

Mr. Mattei, owner of the Louisville Statuary Co., immigrated to America from his native Italy when he was fifteen. He came to Louisville as an apprentice to Pacifio Grisanti (1878-1955), a master ornamental plasterer who was from Mr. Mattei's native village in Italy.¹³⁰ Grisanti's obituary states that he was "responsible for those ornamental lines and curlicues on the ceilings and walls of stately halls."¹³¹ As an itinerant artisan with a base in Louisville, Mr. Mattei remembers traveling as Pacifio Grisanti's assistant to Long Island, Richmond, New Orleans, and many other places in order to execute plaster ornamentation.¹³² As itinerant artisans they

¹²⁹The staff of the Louisville Landmarks Commission referred this researcher to Vincent Mattei.

¹³⁰Mr. Vincent Mattei, Interview by author, Louisville, Kentucky, 9 March 1985.

¹³¹"Artistic Plasterer Pacifio Grisanti Dies," Louisville Courier Journal, 5 September 1955, 3(2). The building which was Mr. Grisanti's base of operation is today the Casa Grisanti, one of Louisville's premier restaurants. His descendants who own and run the restaurant still have tools and molds used by their ancestor.

¹³²Vincent Mattei.

were often gone from three to four months at a time. Mattei recalls working with the Lebers in both Nashville and Memphis.¹³³

As to the technical execution of the work while on these lengthy road trips, he recalled that "only real artists/modelers created the plaster patterns or models." These were usually purchased and ordered by mail from professional supply houses. He and his fellow team members carried one of each prototype, and on location they made gelatin molds from these which they then reproduced as often as possible. He stated, "We could make anything from an original."¹³⁴

At the Louisville Statuary Company, Mr. Mattei demonstrated and explained the entire technical process of making a gelatin mold. This account accorded exactly with William Milar's detailed description of the process in Plaster, Plain and Ornamental (1899). While too young at the time to have executed the ornamental plaster in the Mallory-Neely House, Mr. Mattei provided valuable insight into the process used, into the life of itinerant artisans, and especially into that of a group who may have earlier executed the work in the parlor and music room.

Based on additional oral tradition other itinerant artisans may have also worked in Memphis. Francis Pedretti (1829-1891), called by some "the pioneer artist of the West," was born in Chiavenna,² Italy, and later studied at the Academy of the Brera Gallery, where

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴Ibid.

he was a "pupil of Scruzatti and Marriani, then the leading Italian masters of decorative art."¹³⁵ The young Pedretti became a fervent and patriotic follower of Garibaldi "to the latter's defeat in his revolutionary movement for a republic in 1849 and fled to America to take up fresco painting in New York."¹³⁶ A. T. Stewart, founder of America's first department store, and the famous inventor-painter S.F.B. Morse were among his patrons. From 1854 Cincinnati became his lifelong home and base from which he traveled to execute commissions for fresco paintings. Francis Pedretti was eventually joined by his two sons, Raphael (b. 1860) and Charles A. (1864-1941), who also studied at the Brera.¹³⁷ (Figure 114)

Pedretti's fame became widespread. In 1894 the author of a history of Cincinnati stated, "specimens of his beautiful work may still be seen in the magnificent homes and halls of eighteen states."¹³⁸ Among the many commissions executed by him were frescoes painted in the Canadian Houses of Parliament (1855); the Kentucky State Capitol; in Cincinnati, the City Council Chamber, Pike's Opera House, and St. Paul's Episcopal Church, and in Dayton, Ohio the Music

¹³⁵Alvin F. Harlow, The Serene Cincinnatians (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1950), 309; and Cincinnati, The Queen City of the West (Cincinnati: S. J. Clarke Publisher, 1912), 711.

¹³⁶"Recollections of Early Fourth Street," Cincinnati Enquirer, 31 December 1922, 4.

¹³⁷Cincinnati, The Queen City of the West, 272, 957.

¹³⁸History of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (Cincinnati: B. Nelson & Co. Publishers, 1894), 880, Special Collections, Cincinnati Historical Society, Cincinnati.

FRE 1700 FRU

F. PEDRETTI & SONS.
FRESCO • ARTISTS
AND
DECORATORS

INTERIOR DESIGNERS AND STAINED GLASS

Southeast Corner Ninth and Main Streets,
TELEPHONE 806. CINCINNATI

Figure 114. Pedretti family advertisement from the Cincinnati city directory (1893). Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.

Hall.¹³⁹ In Louisville Pedretti was responsible for the frescoes in the famed Galt House Hotel. A description of the decorations in one room states that on the ceiling, Pedretti painted a large fresco "representing the celestial sphere with three cherubs soaring upward with the dazzling chandelier."¹⁴⁰

To date no written evidence has been found in city papers or directories that show that the Pedrettis worked in Memphis. However, in an interview with Mr. Maitland Pedretti, grandson of Francis Pedretti and son of Raphael Pedretti, he remembered "for sure" being told that his grandfather, father, and uncle executed work in Memphis. He also stated that cherubs were a specialty of theirs.¹⁴¹

While the Pedrettis were all fresco artists, the following furnishes information that they probably executed commissions in both fresco and plaster decoration.

The firm have painted many of the most beautiful frescoes, and executed much of the finest plaster work in original design, which are so admired in private residences and public buildings. . . . Their contracts in decoration for churches, public and private buildings, and residences have been almost endless during the years of the labor of the elder member of the firm embracing many of the principal cities of the United States and Canada.¹⁴²

¹³⁹"Frances Pedretti," Artist's File, Cincinnati Art Museum Library.

¹⁴⁰Jones, 41.

¹⁴¹Mr. Maitland Pedretti, Interview by author, 6 March 1985, Cincinnati.

¹⁴²Leading Manufacturers and Merchants of Cincinnati and Environs (Cincinnati: International Publishing Co., 1886), 207, Special Collections, Cincinnati Historical Society.

Their stuccowork, like the Leber brothers, probably was "sub-contracted" to a person or team who accompanied them on their road trips. A possibility is W. A. Marx, who consistently advertised in the Cincinnati papers and city directories during the 1880s and 1890s that he was an ornamental modeler for plaster.¹⁴³ An interesting item appears in a description of the opening night of the new Memphis Grand Opera House for which James Columbus Neely was a subscriber and patron. The article in describing the interior states that the plaster work was executed by W. A. Marx and others of Cincinnati.

The ceiling proper is laid off in one large panel with a handsome centerpiece connected with the walls by large covers elaborately decorated in tracery ornaments, and grotesque heads.¹⁴⁴

Since several styles are represented in the Mallory-Neely ceiling, more than one artist or group of artisans probably worked in the house. Even though the Pedrettis, Marx, and the Lebers seem likely candidates, many other itinerant artisans worked in Memphis during the last two decades of the century; newspaper articles, advertisements and city directory listings attest to this. From 1883 into the 1900s Andrew Ackeson, Frank Davis, James Degnan, Henry Jaeger, Louis Clericus and the partners Hook and LaGrill were all active in the city.

¹⁴³Williams' Cincinnati Directory (Cincinnati: Williams & Co., Proprietor, June 1890), 1749.

¹⁴⁴"The Grand Opera-house: It Was Opened Last Night and Is Magnificent," Memphis Daily Appeal, 24 September 1890, 7.

Many other names appear only once or twice. For example, the following small notice appeared in the 15 April 1885 Memphis Daily Appeal written by George Martin, a reporter. This is the only account uncovered to date of Freckman's work in Memphis: J. F. Franks, like Neely, was in the business of cotton factoring and whole-sale groceries.

I went out to see the new fresco painting in the parlors of Mr. J. F. Frank, 240 Beale Street, almost completed. The ceiling and walls are divided into different shaped panels, with center-pieces, cornices and stucco work. All panels on ceiling are filled in a very tasteful style with cupids, landscapes, medallions, etc. Each panel of the wall has a pendant flowerbasket. The selection of colors and the execution are perfect, and the tints are so delicate that the entire ceiling, with the heavy gilded centers, reminds one of the illustrations as described in the Arabian Nights. All this work, which reflects so much credit in the execution, is due to the artist, Prof. B. Freckman, of Munich, Germany, now a resident of this city.¹⁴⁵

Whoever the artisans were who executed the Mallory-Neely ceilings, they seemingly followed William Milar's earlier quoted admonition about the importance of ceiling decoration. These fresco artists-stencilers and stucco workers succeeded well in creating a dazzlingly bejeweled "crown" for each of the ceremonial rooms.

Gasoliers

The three large, elaborate, glass gasoliers which were purchased by the Neelys to hang in their redecorated parlor and music room also form an integral part of the overall decoration of the ceilings.

¹⁴⁵George D. Martin, "Fine Fresco Painting," Memphis Daily Appeal, 19 April 1885, 3.

The ceilings were planned to make them the focal point of design.

Gas lighting "as the most progressive mode of illumination" was used in the United States in most urban areas from the early decades of the nineteenth century but it reached its peak of usage from the post-Civil-War years until 1910.¹⁴⁶ It became a widely popular form of lighting because it was cheaper, saved time and labor, and provided stronger light than other available forms at the time. It was aesthetically attractive because of its "dancing flames" and the ambience its agreeable light produced.¹⁴⁷

A great variety of fixtures for gas illumination, ranging from plain to elaborate in all types of styles and materials, were produced by enterprising entrepreneurial manufacturers. (Figure 115) Following the Second Empire taste, glass fixtures were a particular favorite for ceremonial rooms from the 1870s. To embellish these fixtures, "Victorian glassmakers became masters of the art of designing and decorating chimneys, globes, and shades."¹⁴⁸ Because of the glare caused by gas these were made with frosted, etched, colored, faceted, and many other kinds of ornamental glass.¹⁴⁹ Glass beads as well as tear drop and faceted pendants added to the overall

¹⁴⁶Denys Peter Myers, "A Little Light on Gas," Nineteenth Century, 5, No. 2 (Summer 1979), 51.

¹⁴⁷Grow and Von Zweck, 75.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 89.

¹⁴⁹"Lighting in the Victorian Era, 1851-1901," Old House Journal Compendium, ed. Clem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980), 315-316.



Figure 115. Frontispiece of the 1879 Mitchell, Vance & Company Catalog showing their New York showroom and factory. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

richness in design. In 1876 wide based shades, which reduced flickering, were introduced and supplemented in use the earlier globe form.¹⁵⁰

Extant photographs show dazzling displays of these glass chandeliers exhibited at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876 by some of the most noted American light fixture manufacturers including Mitchell, Vance & Company, Cornelius & Sons, and the Boston and Sandwich Glass Company.¹⁵¹ Earlier in the century Robertson Topp ordered chandeliers from the Philadelphia based Cornelius firm.¹⁵² Henry Montgomery purchased his from Mrs. Julius Loeffler, Dealer in Gas Fixtures, New Orleans.¹⁵³ Mr. Neely may have personally mail ordered his from afar as these two men did for their new Memphis homes, or he may have gone through a local retailer such as J. A. Bailey & Company, who was listed in the 1885 Memphis city directory as:

Plumbers, Steam and Gas fittings
Fine Chandeliers
Second Street and Corner Union¹⁵⁴

The two identical glass chandeliers in the Mallory-Neely parlor are two tiered with twelve lights and have a frosted fancy crown globe, the bowl of which is decorated with a whimsical setting sun

¹⁵⁰Grow and Von Zweck, 77.

¹⁵¹Peter Denys Myers, Gaslighting in America, A Guide for Historic Preservation (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1978), 3, 153, 157.

¹⁵²Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts folder.

¹⁵³Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 110.

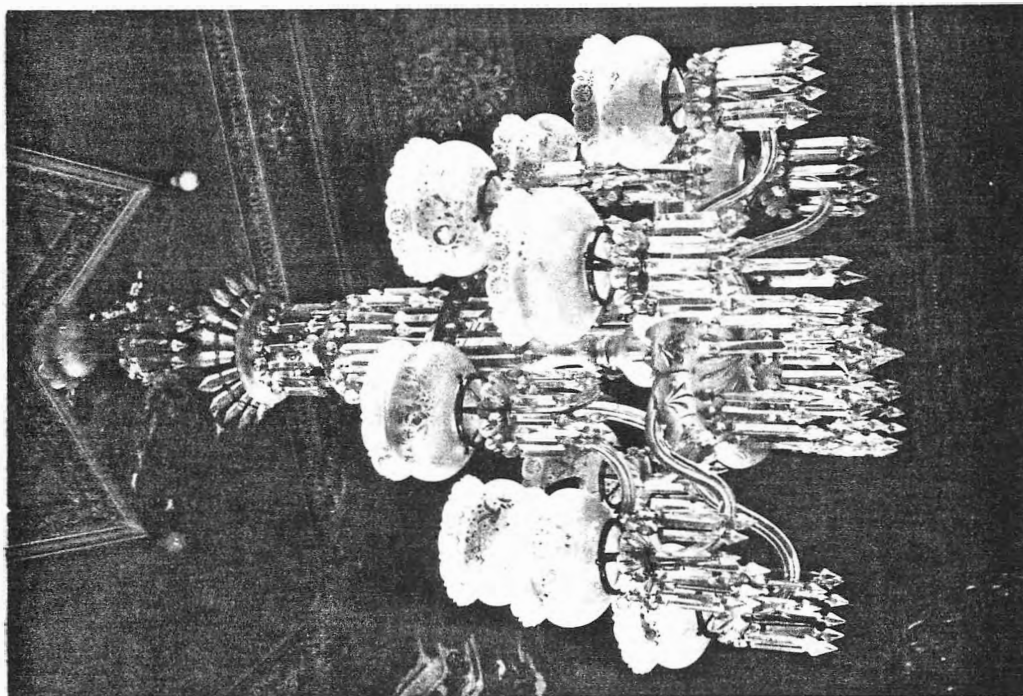
¹⁵⁴Dow's Memphis City Directory, 1855, 213.

and rising moon, both with faces. (Figure 116) They are shown against a starry evening sky. The scalloped upper section is decorated with stylized "Neo-Grec" flowers. These are identical to Globe No. 40 shown in the 1887 catalog of the E. P. Gleason Manufacturing Company of New York City.¹⁵⁵ (Figure 117) Both of these chandeliers are embellished with concentric rings of cut glass prisms. The music room gasolier is single-tiered with six fixtures, each crowned with a frosted plain pan globe having an allover foliate design. In addition to prisms, this chandelier is decorated with strings of glass beads. None of these three glass gasoliers has ever been altered for electricity. The flickering play of gaslight reflected in the gilded over-mantel mirrors and playing on the ornate plaster cornices in both of these rooms would have created a dramatic effect.

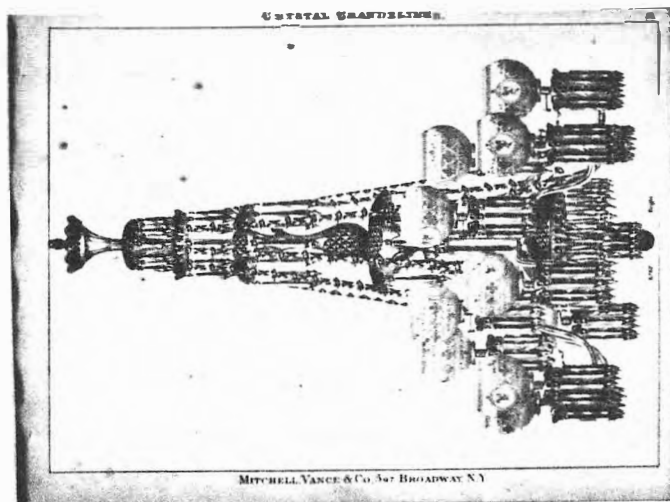
Color Scheme

The Neelys' redecoration in the Second Empire mode was not limited to enriched ceilings but also included new carpets, paint, and paper. Both physical and written evidence shows that most of the main floor of the Mallory-Neely House including the entrance hall was originally decorated in a white and gold color scheme with red as an accent. These colors were used in the paint, papers, carpet, and textiles. This was a very characteristic choice for the Second Empire style. During the reign of Louis Philippe (1830-48), gold

¹⁵⁵E. P. Gleason Manufacturing Co., New York, 1885 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.



A



B

Figure 116. Late Victorian gasoliers.

A. One of a pair of glass gasoliers from the Mallory-Neely parlor.

B. Illustration of a somewhat similar chandelier from the Mitchell, Vance & Company Catalog No. 17 of Gas Fixtures (1878). Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

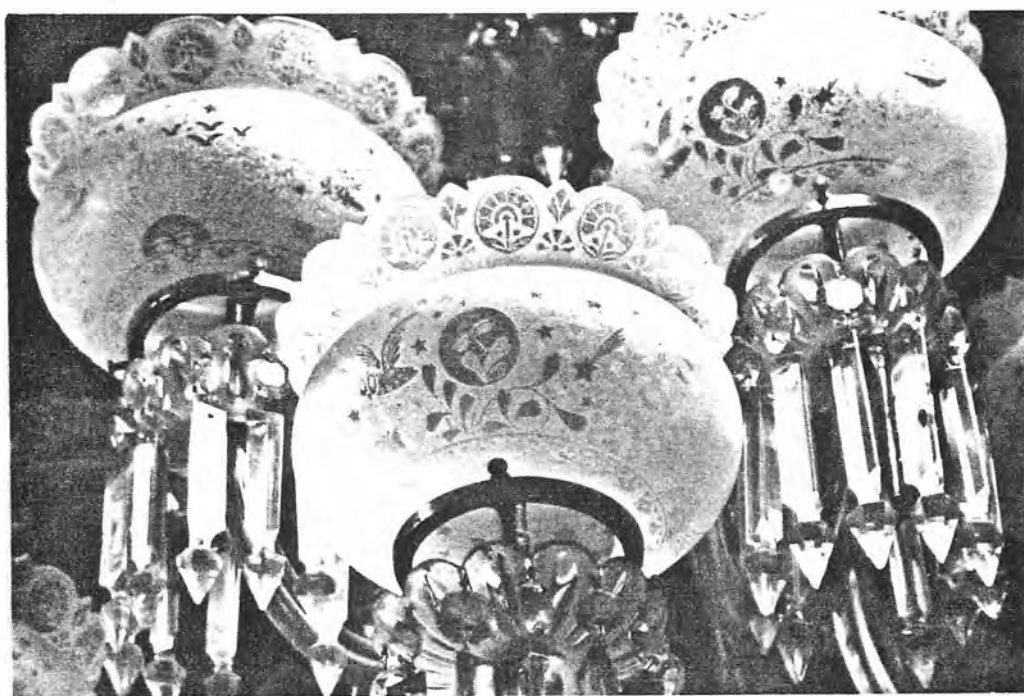


Figure 117. Decorative globes.

- A. Page from the 1887 catalog of the E. P. Gleason Manufacturing Company, number 40 of which is identical to those in the Mallory-Neely House. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.
- B. Detail of the etched globes from one of the two parlor gasoliers.

and white had become the favored color scheme for public social areas of a home. It created an ideal backdrop for the resurrected Louis styles originally used during the reigns of Louis XIV, XV, and XVI. It had monarchial and aristocratic association.¹⁵⁶

The Second Empire continued this fashion with the addition of crimson red as an accent color. The interiors of the Paris Opera and the New Louvre, especially the Salon of White and Gold, exemplify this usage.

The use of red tones in the salon, which add to the impression of warmth, were frequent during the Second Empire. White and gold walls and crimson damask were customary for drawing rooms.¹⁵⁷

This practice spread to the United States prior to the Civil War and remained in style through the century. In the 1883 publication of Artistic Houses in which the interiors of the homes of America's gilded rich are illustrated and described, frequent reference is made to salons and drawing rooms painted gold and white.¹⁵⁸ Ruth Ralston in the article, "Nineteenth-Century New York Interiors" states:

French designs were virtually "de rigueur" for formal reception rooms in well-appointed New York houses in all the middle years of the nineteenth century and through the 1870s. The woodwork, mirror frames, and window cornices, as well as the furniture were painted ivory white, with ornaments picked out in gold.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶Charlis, 250.

¹⁵⁷Second Empire Art in France Under Napoleon III, 80.

¹⁵⁸Artistic Houses.

¹⁵⁹Ruth Ralston, "Nineteenth-Century New York Interiors, Eclecticism Behind the Brick and Brownstone," The Magazine Antiques, 63, No. 6 (June 1943), 268.

Memphis elite apparently followed this fashion. For the grand ball on opening night the salon of Hugh Neely's new Memphis home was described as being gold and white.¹⁶⁰ The description in the Appeal Avalanche of Miss Daisy Neely's debut and of the Mallory-Neely interiors at that time states that ". . . in the handsome parlors [colors were] of gold and white."¹⁶¹

Today in the Mallory-Neely House physical evidence of the original enameled white finish on most all the millwork survives beneath peeling overpainting and in its original state on the outside surface of all the window shutters. In both the Topp and Montgomery Papers reference is made to this type of paint finish as "porcelain white."¹⁶²

Evidence of the use of gilt on moldings and plaster decoration can be detected in various places. There were plenty of men capable of gilding in Memphis; most commercial painters advertised this as a skill along with other forms of painting. A. F. Davis in the 1882 Memphis city directory stated that he was a "house, sign, ornamental and steamboat painter as well as a grainer, gilder, and glazer."¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰"Under the Neely roof," 2.

¹⁶¹"Society," Appeal Avalanche, 3 December 1890, 7.

¹⁶²See, for example, W. H. Papmore to Robertson Topp, 16 November 1857, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 8, Folder 3.

¹⁶³Shole's Memphis City Directory for 1882 and Guide to Taxing District, 1 (Memphis: A. E. Sholes and Co., Publishers, 1882), 117.

Among those listed with the same skills in the 1884 Memphis city directory were Andrew Ackeson and A. E. Rodwell.¹⁶⁴

Wallpaper

Surviving in the Mallory-Neely sitting room and exposed only in one area where a later painted canvas covering has been pulled off is gold and white "damask" patterned wall paper. (Figure 118) Similar wallpapers were possibly used by the Neelys throughout the first floor to accord with the general gold and white appearance of these ceremonial rooms. This type of wallpaper which replicated expensive silk damask wallcovering was very fashionable during the High Victorian Period; it was used especially in public rooms.¹⁶⁵ The effect of Old World tradition was attained. The Mallory-Neely sitting room paper, slightly embossed, with a white background covered with scrolling gold foliage replicates an elaborate Baroque Era damask fabric.

In lieu of the historic and extremely costly usage of actual fabrics on the wall, the French were the first to master the creation of wallpapers imitating these textiles. Especially during the Second Empire, French designers and wallpaper printers carried this imitation of textiles, including damasks, tapestry, and cut velvet to

¹⁶⁴Shole's Memphis City Directory for 1884 and Guide to Taxing District, 1 (Memphis: A. E. Sholes and Co., Publishers, 1884), 1081.

¹⁶⁵James Arrowsmith, The Paper-Hanger's Companion: A Treatise on Paper-Hanging (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird & Co., 1887), 97, Special Collections, Strong Museum, Rochester, New York.

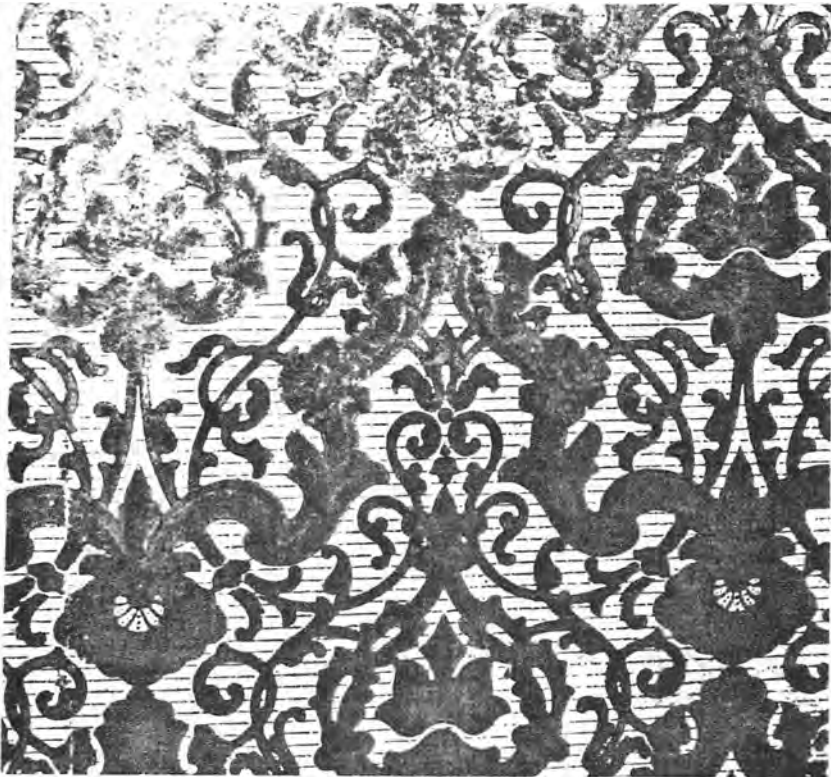


Figure 118. Detail of the wallcovering of the Mallory-Neely sitting room.

a high art.¹⁶⁶ These French products became very popular in the United States where the "American consumers were enchanted by gorgeous elaborate papers produced by Second Empire factories."¹⁶⁷ Consequently following the French lead American wallpaper manufacturers became masters in their own right in reproducing textiles designs for wall-papers. Velvet and satins were particular American favorites and specialties, while Renaissance, Baroque, and Rococo designs dominated most of the century.¹⁶⁸ The following advertisement is illustrative of the variety of textile and period reproduction papers that were then available to the American consumer.

Alfred Peats
 . . . Over 500 new Patterns
 Alfred Peats' Mammoth New York and Chicago Stores

Beautiful and High Class
 Tapestry, Damask, Colonial, Embossed Leather,
 Louis XIV, Empire, Moorish, Rococo, Byzantine,
 Marie Antoinette Stripes, Rich Floral and Satin
 Effects for Parlor, Dining Rooms, and Halls.¹⁶⁹

At the same time metallic finishes also became popular, with gilded, bronzed, silvered and other papers available.¹⁷⁰ Gold and

¹⁶⁶Katherine Lynn, Wallpaper in America (New York: Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 1980), 320.

¹⁶⁷Katherine Lynn, "Wallpaper: Influence of the Industrial Age and French Inspired Realism," Nineteenth Century, 7, No. 2 (Summer 1981), 36.

¹⁶⁸Lynn, Wallpaper in America, 316.

¹⁶⁹Katherine Lynn [photocopy unidentified clipping], K. Lynn Notes for Wallpaper in America, Special Collections, Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York.

¹⁷⁰Harriet Prescott Spofford, Art Decoration Applied to Furniture (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1877), 183, Special Collections, Strong Museum, Rochester.

white embossed papers were both an American and French specialty from mid-century on.¹⁷¹

During the century, wallpaper production and availability were aided by technological improvements in the industry and in transportation. Because of mechanization paper-hangings became available to almost everyone at reduced costs. (Figure 119) Though modes of production and printing were constantly being improved, luxury papers throughout the century continued to be in part hand crafted, usually in conjunction with machine processes.¹⁷² The Mallory-Neely paper is possibly an example of one of these part hand, part machine-made papers. The embossing of the paper was a machine process produced by running the paper through a cylinder press. Gilding was most often applied by hand.¹⁷³

Through the century imported French and English papers along with American produced papers were available to the American public.¹⁷⁴ It is common to find advertisements stating that both imported and domestic papers are in stock. In Memphis wallpapers were available through most of the century. In 1849 upholsterer A. P. Bardon

¹⁷¹Lynn, Wallpaper in America, 360-364.

¹⁷²Katherine Lynn Frangiamore, Wallpaper in Historic Preservation (Washington: U.S. Department of Interior National Park Service, 1977), 6.

¹⁷³Horace Warner, "How Wallpapers Are Printed," Art Journal, (1901), 334, Special Collections, Watson Library Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

¹⁷⁴Lynn, Wallpaper in America, 338.

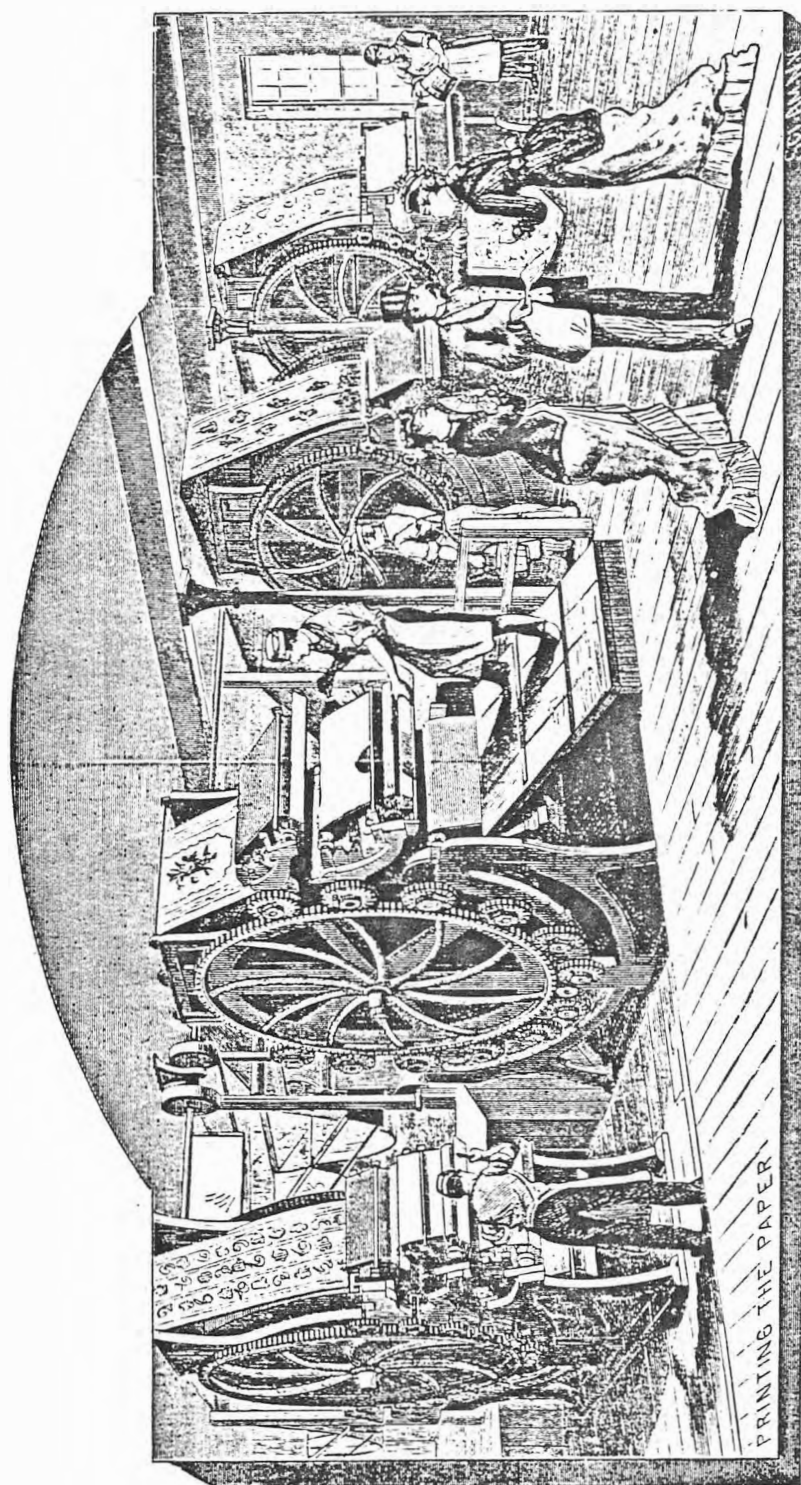


Figure 119. An 1880 engraving showing mechanized wall paper production. Courtesy Lambuth College Library.

advertised in the Memphis city directory that he had "a large and well assorted stock of paper hangings."¹⁷⁵ In 1851 druggists Mansfield and McIntosh advertised that they had available a "beautiful and rich assortment of papers."¹⁷⁶ Dry goods stores continually ran newspaper advertisements promoting their paper hangings. By the latter part of the century several specialty wallpaper stores had opened. Between 1869 and 1881 Marcus Jones advertised in both city newspapers and directories that he was a wholesale and retail dealer in paper hangings and that he carried French and American papers. (Figure 120)

Wall-to-Wall Carpet

Carpet added a final note of luxuriousness to the post-1883 Neely redecorations. "During the third quarter of the nineteenth century the use of carpeting spread very substantially throughout the length and breadth of the United States; the houses of the wealthy were fully carpeted."¹⁷⁷ Probably almost every room on all three floors of the Mallory-Neely House were wall-to-wall carpeted by Neely, but the carpet in the parlor and music room is the best surviving example in the house. It has a white background with all

¹⁷⁵Memphis City Directory for 1850 [advertisement], Memphis: R.B.J. Twyman Printer, 1849), 90.

¹⁷⁶Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 11 July 1851, 8.

¹⁷⁷Arthur H. Cole and Harold F. Williamson, The American Carpet Manufacturers, A History and An Analysis (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938), 81.

MARCUS JONES,

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL DEALER IN

PAPER HANGINGS

WINDOW SHADES,

Chromos, Oval and Square Frames, Etc.,

200½ SECOND STREET,

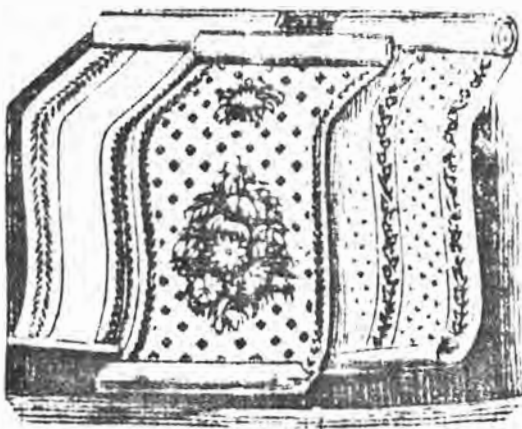
5 Doors South of Madison.

MEMPHIS, TENN.

A

Marcus Jones,

DEALER IN



FRENCH

AND

AMERICAN

WALL PAPERS,

Window Shades, Testers,

FIRE SCREENS, ETC.,

296½ Second St., bet. Madison & Monroe,

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE.

B

Figure 120. Advertisements for a Memphis wallpaper dealer.

A. 1881 city directory advertisement.

B. 1869 city directory advertisement.

over sprays of red and gold flowers. (Figure 121) These colors predominate in the more elaborate border.

The Mallory-Neely carpet provides yet another example of nineteenth century technological development and in this case specifically of American industrial leadership and ingenuity. Brussels carpet was first made in Belgium around 1710.¹⁷⁸ It was introduced to the English-speaking world around 1740.¹⁷⁹ Brussels is made with a linen warp and weft and a worsted pile. It is made on the same principle as velvet but generally the pile is uncut. "There are two descriptions of Brussels, one in which the pile threads have the pattern printed upon them previous to weaving, and the other in which the threads are used dyed in separate colors."¹⁸⁰ The Mallory-Neely Brussels is an example of the better quality second type.

Early in the nineteenth century England dominated carpet production, while in the United States it was mostly a handicraft.¹⁸¹ Since 1840 American carpet manufacturers have dominated the world

¹⁷⁸"Glossary of Carpet Terms," Victorian Homes, 2, No. 2 (Spring 1983), 37.

¹⁷⁹Samuel J. Dornsife, "Timetable of Carpet Technology," Nineteenth Century, 7, No. 3 (Autumn 1981), 38.

¹⁸⁰Alfred Spitzli, A Manual for Managers, Designers, Weavers and Others Connected with the Manufacture of Textile Fabrics (West Troy, New York: A. & A. F. Spitzli Publishers, 1881), 48, Special Collections, Strong Museum, Rochester, New York.

¹⁸¹Cole and Williamson, 53-54.



Figure 121. Detail of the panels that comprise the field of the Mallory-Neely parlor wall-to-wall Brussels carpet.

carpet industry.¹⁸² This is primarily due to one person, Erastus B. Bigelow, who applied his "initiative and inventive genius" to the mechanization of the carpet industry. Bigelow between 1839 and 1841 developed the power loom for ingrain carpet and in 1848 another for Brussels.¹⁸³ In this loom he combined several parts of his earlier ingrain loom, including the Jacquard attachment (which allowed for figural weaving) and a terry wire mechanism which he had previously developed in order to make carriage lace (this produced the characteristic loop in the Brussels).¹⁸⁴

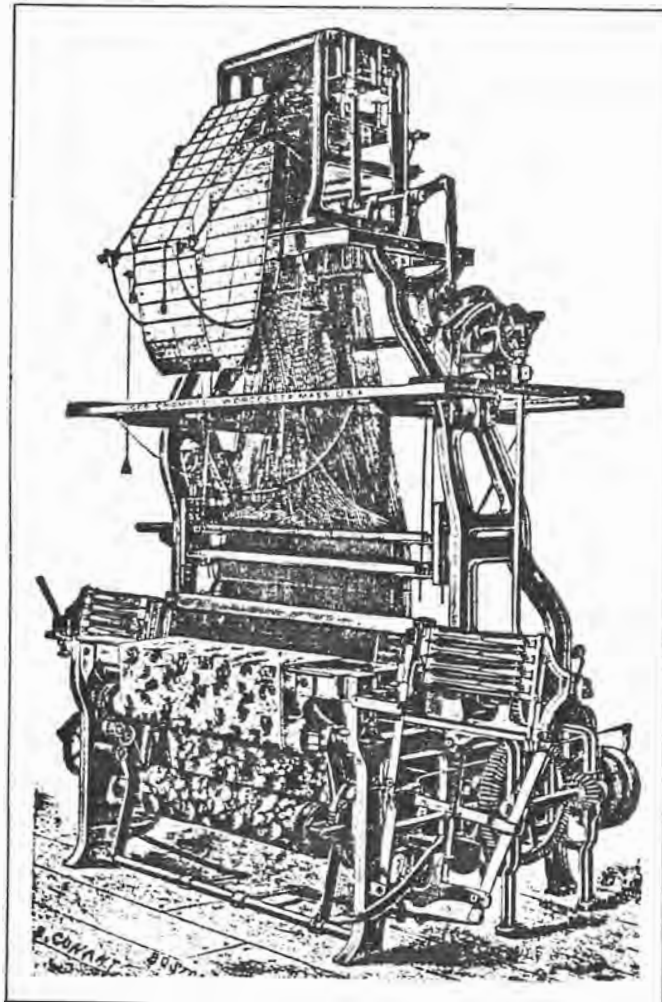
Bigelow's mechanized looms opened the way for the mass production of carpets. Carpet production jumped from the three yards a day produced on the hand loom prior to 1840 to seventy-two yards, woven in ten hours, by 1879.¹⁸⁵ (Figure 122) Positive results of the mechanization of carpet production were standardization in quality and finish; standard widths; long unbroken lengths; and flat, even selvages which aided in the strips being sewn together. In addition to the advances in weaving, there were other related developments in mass carpet production, including modernization of the spinning,

¹⁸²Anthony N. Landreau, American Underfoot: A History of Floor Coverings from Colonial Times to the Present (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services, 1976), 43.

¹⁸³Ibid., 43; and Cornelia Bateman Faraday, European and American Carpets and Rugs (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Dean Hicks Co. Decorative Arts Press, 1929), 311.

¹⁸⁴Cole and Williamson, 63.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., 65.



Crompton's New Ingrain Carpet Loom.

Figure 122. Engraving of a late nineteenth century mechanized carpet loom from an advertisement in E. A. Posselt, Technology of Textile Design (1889). Courtesy Library New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown.

dyeing and bleaching processes. From 1868 brilliant chemical dyes made from anilin and alizarun were introduced and thus changed the palette of carpets.¹⁸⁶

Mass production brought about a tremendous lowering of the cost of carpet, making it available in varying quality to all. By late century American customers had an unbelievably wide selection of patterns and colors from which to choose. (Figure 123)

Among the many choices Brussels was considered a higher quality carpet and was usually reserved, because of its strength and resistance to wear, for special rooms.¹⁸⁷ Mr. Neely, for example, used a less expensive ingrain for the third floor hall and bedrooms and Brussels for the ceremonial rooms. Written documentation shows that mass produced roll goods/carpet was plentifully available from many sources in Memphis during the second half of the nineteenth century. Almost all specialty furniture stores such as J.S.M. Flaherty, A. D. Gibson & Sons, and Mitchell, Hoffman & Company advertised that they were importers and dealers in carpet as well as furniture. A reporter in a newspaper description of McKinney & Company Furniture stated that "in their carpet rooms may be seen rich velvet tapestry Brussels, Axminster, Chenelle, and others."¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶Faraday, 324.

¹⁸⁷Barbara Schiller, "Carpets and Rugs," Victorian Homes, 2, No. 2 (Spring 1983), 32.

¹⁸⁸Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 2 June 1854, 3.

Cowperthwait Co., 408 to 416 Fulton Street, Brooklyn.



Cowperthwait Co., 408 to 416 Fulton Street, Brooklyn.

View of one of our Carpet Showrooms on Main Floor.

Figure 123. Interior of a late nineteenth century carpet store featuring a wide selection of machine produced roll carpet as illustrated in the Cowperthwait Company catalog (1886). Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

But even more than these individual firms, the large Memphis department stores seem to have sold carpet in vast quantities. Lowenstein's Department Store advertised in the Daily Avalanche on 25 September 1884:

The Largest Stock of the Best Makes
In The Country
1 Entire Floor 50 by 150 Feet
Is Given
To This Department Alone
Nowhere Else Can You Find Such
Choice Designs
And So Large A Range of Qualities¹⁸⁹

And on 23 November 1884, in the same paper their advertisement stated that "our stock of carpets and rugs is not equaled outside New York City."¹⁹⁰ Menken's Department Store called itself "The House for Carpets," and in an 8 March 1885 newspaper advertisement stated: "Several Memphis ladies, while in New York and Chicago, looked through the carpet houses there, came home and made their purchases from us, got better styles and lower prices."¹⁹¹

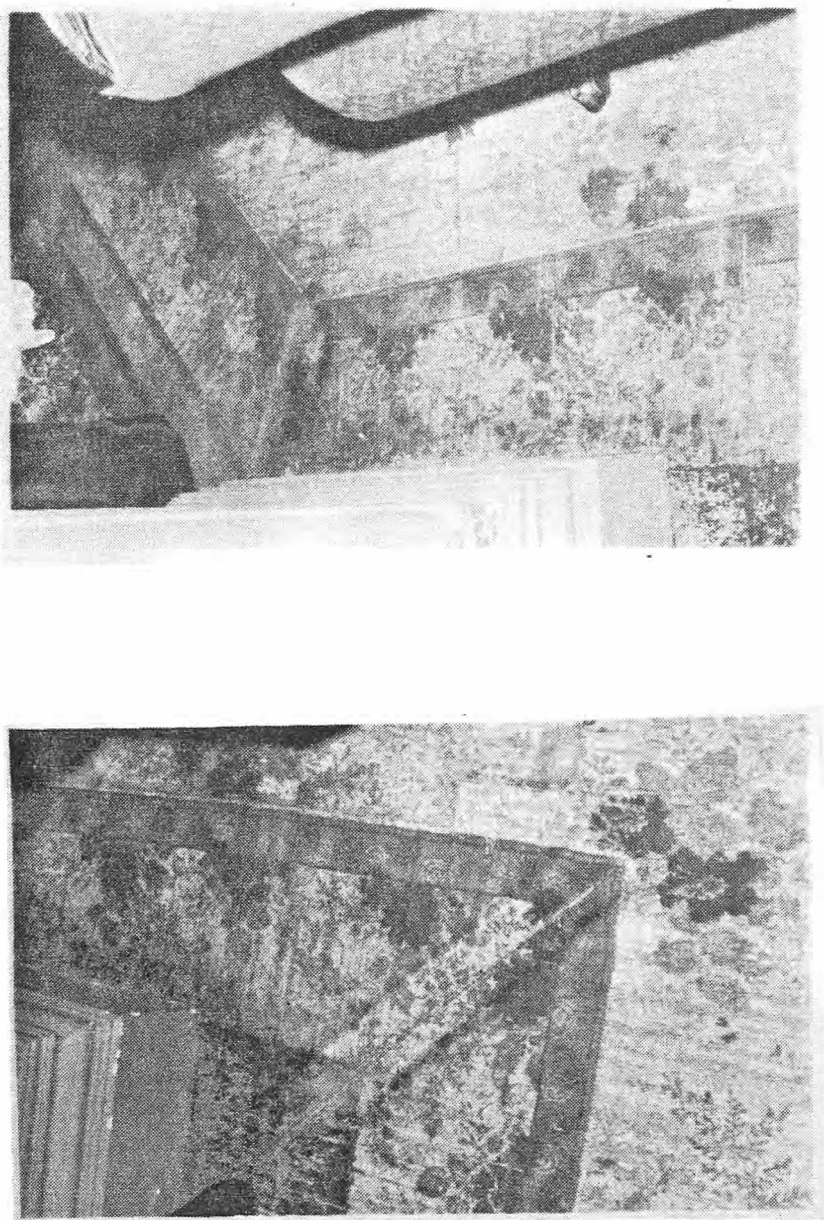
A. G. Morrison in Drapery, Interior Decoration and Architecture provided line drawings and detailed instruction about how to plan and install strip carpet. (Figure 124) The Mallory-Neely carpets were installed exactly as he illustrated.¹⁹² (Figure 125) Standard

¹⁸⁹Daily Avalanche [advertisement], 25 September 1884, 1.

¹⁹⁰Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 23 November 1884, 1.

¹⁹¹Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 8 March 1885, 2.

¹⁹²A. G. Morrison, Drapery, Interior Decoration and Architecture: A Practical Handbook for the Dealer and Workroom (New York: T. A. Cawthra & Co., 1906).



B

A

Figure 125. Details showing the contrasting yet coordinated border pattern and the complex mitering system used for installation of the Mallory-Neely parlor wall-to-wall carpet.

A. Mitered border in the parlor.

B. Mitered border in the parlor alcove.

twenty-seven inch wide carpet strips, called roll goods, were stitched together to form the center field surrounded by a border, which Morrison felt was important in creating a "frame as in a picture."¹⁹³ Morrison illustrated the complex system of mitering this border identical to that used to install the complex Mallory-Neely borders. He stated that in irregularly shaped rooms it was best to procure the services of "an expert measure man and cutter."¹⁹⁴

Mechanical aids were also developed to assist in carpet installation; in 1880, for example, the Singer Sewing Machine Company invented a carpet sewer.¹⁹⁵ Once the carpet had been stitched together and laid in place, the carpet was then stretched and tacked in place along the edges.¹⁹⁶ A leaflet in the archives of the Missouri Historical Society entitled "Brown's Patent Combined Carpet Stretcher and Tack Driver" illustrates and describes a device which combined a stretcher apparatus and a tack driver with adjustable jaws to handle all sizes of tacks.¹⁹⁷ The Mallory-Neely carpet is, therefore, from its creation to its installation, an example of the total mechanization of a former handicraft and of American inventiveness.

¹⁹³Ibid., 106.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., 108.

¹⁹⁵Cole and Williamson, 135.

¹⁹⁶Schiller, 33.

¹⁹⁷W. M. Evans & Co. Brown's Patent Combined Carpet Stretcher and Tack Driver [leaflet] (New York: 1867), Special Collections, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

The enriched ceilings, glass chandeliers, elaborate polychromic effects, carpets, wallpapers, gold and white trim along with gilded mirrors and picture frames, and gold and crimson damask upholstery of this first phase of Neely redecoration, all together, created an interior ambience of opulent "Old World" European aristocratic grandeur and richness.

Second Phase of Neely Redecoration: The Aesthetic Style

After the initial 1883 remodeling of the ceremonial areas of the house, the James Columbus Neelys continued to sporadically change and add to the fixed interior features throughout their new home until the end of the century. For the most part these circa 1890 to 1900 additions or changes by the Neelys to the interior decor of their home are examples of the late nineteenth century Aesthetic reform taste. Most were probably added when, as noted, the architecture of the house was dramatically altered in keeping with the fashionable Queen Anne fad. These changes to the Mallory-Neely House included new entrance doors, central staircase and a parquet floor, Oriental area carpets, stained glass windows, new etagere mantels, an altered color scheme, extensive stenciling and graining, new drapery treatment, door portieres and grills, gas and electric combination fixtures, and new hardware. Most of these are characteristic visual cliches of the Aesthetic or Art Reform Movement.

Even though mainstream Victorian design continued to be based on historic revivalism and eclecticism throughout the century, from

mid-century there were outspoken visual design theorists, critics, and idealists such as Viollet-Le-Duc in France and John Ruskin, William Morris, Charles Locke Eastlake and many others in England and elsewhere who advocated design reform. All were concerned with ever-increasing industrialization, misguided machine mass production, the lack of design standards, and all kinds of ethical problems related to these developments. These reformist prophets championed a concern for truth, fitness, function, and honesty. They attacked much of Victorian mainstream design as dishonest, vulgar, and shoddy. Most advocated a return to the standards of pre-industrial craftsmanship. They challenged contemporary designers, architects, artists, and others to create a unique nineteenth century design aesthetic.¹⁹⁸ By late century this concern had become so widespread that design reformers and related movements had multiplied in most industrialized western nations.

The Aesthetic Movement

Among some of the more notable of the often confusing and overlapping array of Anglo-American reform movements were the design education reform movement, the Aesthetic Movement, and the Arts and Crafts Movement. The most celebrated and influential of these movements on English and American Victorian interior design and decorative arts was the Aesthetic or Art Movement which "attempted to raise

¹⁹⁸See Henry Latimer Seaver, "American Victorian Taste," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 74 (January-December 1962), 22-32.

the standards of contemporary taste."¹⁹⁹ As a transatlantic design movement, it "ultimately embraced every art form from architecture to greeting card design."²⁰⁰

The Aesthetic Movement was first begun by a group of English intellectuals who called for reform in art, design, industrial manufacture, and in lifestyle in general. Some of the most important and influential English aesthetes were the philosophers Algernon Swinburne and Walter Pater, painter James McNeil Whistler, designers E. W. Godwin and Bruce Talbert, and author Oscar Wilde who was the self proclaimed "apostle of Aestheticism." Their motivation was "a sincere attempt to bring some beauty into an increasingly ugly world."²⁰¹

Devoted to the culture of beauty, the Aesthetic Movement, unlike most art historical movements, was basically educational and didactic. As a movement it had "a progressive and reformatory character."²⁰² The Aesthetics have been called "missionary minded" in their attempt to spread their belief in the elevating and ennobling

¹⁹⁹Carolyn Flaherty, "Eastlake," The Old House Journal Compendium, ed. Chem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980), 254.

²⁰⁰Wilson H. Faude, "Associated Artists and the American Renaissance in the Decorative Arts," Winterthur Portfolio, 10 (1975), 102.

²⁰¹Elizabeth Aslin, The Aesthetic Movement (New York: Excalibur Books, 1981), 15.

²⁰²Robin Spencer, The Aesthetic Movement: Theory and Practice (London: Studio Vista, 1972), 97.

power of beauty and the importance, therefore, of its application to all aspects of one's life and visual surroundings.²⁰³ Following the teachings of John Ruskin, Aesthetic reform taste was based on a concern for function, fitness, and truth in all aspects of visual design. Transcending purely formal qualities was the spiritual and morally didactic nature of art and design.²⁰⁴

It is a futile attempt to search for an easy answer to what visually constitutes the Aesthetic style. It is a confusing mix of a variety of influences. Aesthetic and Queen Anne titles meaning the same thing have been used as descriptive umbrella-like terms to cover the multitude of concurrent design approaches used by Aesthetic artist-designers.²⁰⁵ This eclectic approach includes a return for design inspiration and sources to "old fashioned" pre-industrial styles such as those of the Middle Ages and especially "Old English" styles like the Jacobean. All of these were eras viewed by the Aesthetic reformers as ideal periods of honest hand craftsmanship and design.

Another very important source of inspiration was Eastern or Oriental design.²⁰⁶ Pioneer English design educators had upheld the honesty, virtue, and fitness of conventionalized design in lieu

²⁰³Aslin, 33, 35.

²⁰⁴Stein, 87-89.

²⁰⁵Spencer, 114.

²⁰⁶Hamlin, 444.

of naturalism, or copying nature directly. They suggested the use of elements taken from nature as points of departure for original designs. In the process they discovered that the artisans in most Oriental cultures had been doing this for centuries. Islamic, Chinese, and Indian artifacts were heralded as ideal examples of ornamental design and hand craftsmanship. But due to the novelty, freshness, simplicity, and directness of Japanese design, it became a major inspiration for Aesthetic reform design during the later decades of the nineteenth century. During this time there was a veritable mania for everything Japanese.²⁰⁷ This particular strain within the Aesthetic Movement has been labeled the ANGLO-JAPANESE.

One can therefore expect Aesthetic/Queen Anne design to represent a melange of Medieval, Old English, and Oriental but especially Japanese stylistic influences. Despite the fact that the Aesthetic reformers sought a fresh approach to design, today it is viewed by many as being as derivative and eclectic as earlier Victorian design.

A unique characteristic of the Aesthetic Movement was that, unlike most other art historical movements which usually place primary focus on the fine arts, there was an important and equal concern for interior decoration and the decorative arts. (Figure 126) Basic to this was the Aesthetic belief that all the surrounding material objects in one's life had the power to uplift a person's

²⁰⁷Aslin, 33.

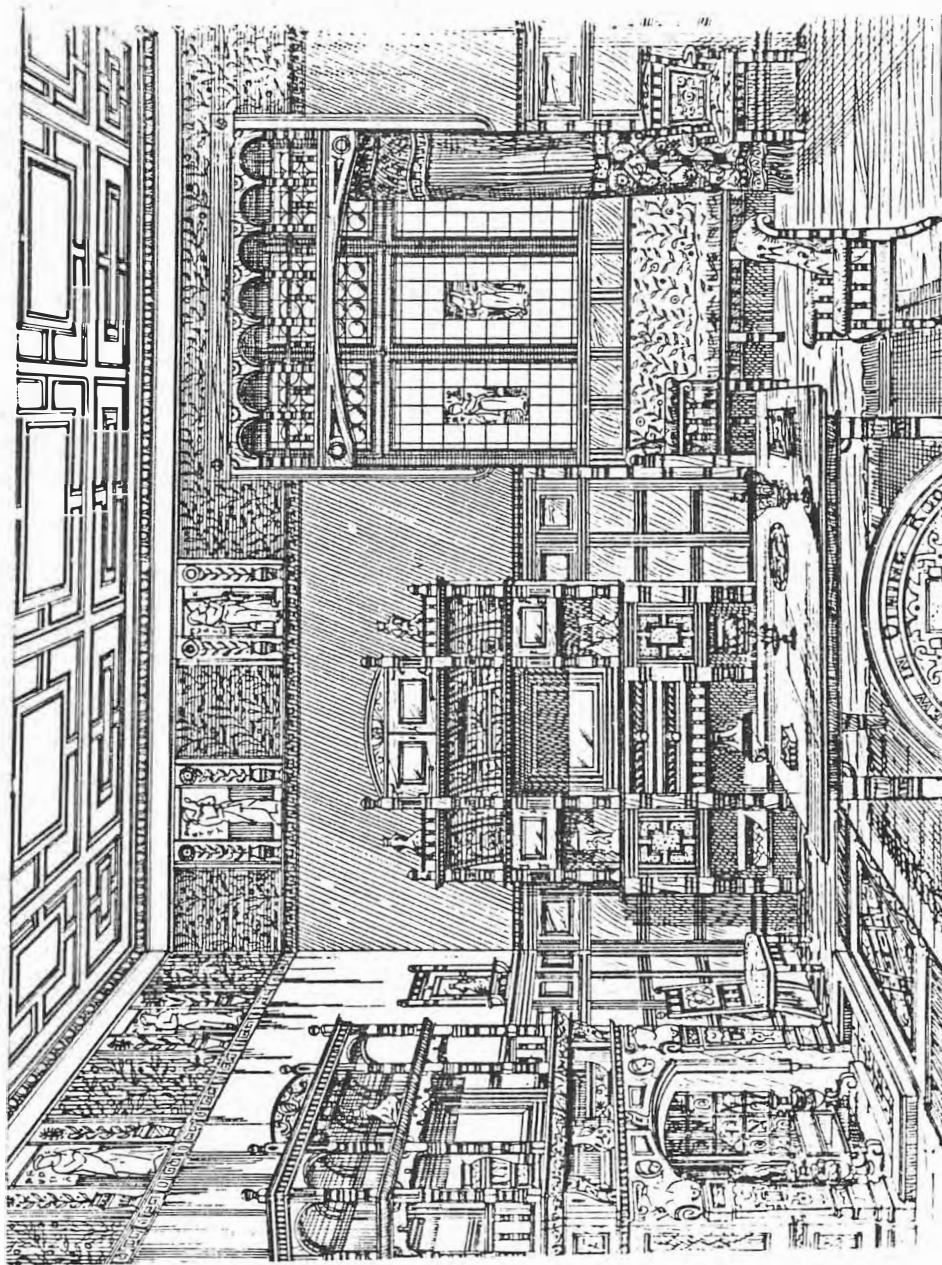


Figure 126. Ideal Aesthetic interior as illustrated in Bernard S. Smith, Designs and Sketches for Furniture in the Neo-Jacobean and Other Styles (1876). Note the tripartite division of the walls, the etagere mantel, stained glass panels in the windows, portiere curtain, and decorative grille above the alcove opening, area carpets, and furniture designed according to reform principles. Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.

morals, spirit and soul.²⁰⁸ To the aesthetes beauty and art were important bedrock components of civilization and culture. To the Aesthetic intelligentsia, cultural and art education must start in the home, the proper place to begin the cultivation of taste.

These beliefs sparked the missionary spirit of the Aesthetic reformers to spread "the science of the beautiful" to all classes.²⁰⁹ They also ultimately stimulated the proliferation of Aesthetic-influenced interior decoration guides and the related growth of the art manufacturing industry which produced the appropriate objects to use in the Aesthetic interior.²¹⁰ The artistic products created by these firms in England and America included all types of home furnishings. The designs of these were influenced by the teachings of the design reformers who advocated that the High Victorian ornament senselessly applied or grafted onto objects be abandoned and that the functional usage of the object be considered first in the design process.²¹¹

²⁰⁸Martha Crabill McClaugherty, "Household Art: Creating the Artistic Home 1868-1893," Winterthur Portfolio, 18, No. 1 (Spring 1983), 2-3.

²⁰⁹Aslin, 14.

²¹⁰Lynes, 112, 115.

²¹¹The Arts and Crafts Movement and the Cult of Japan [exhibition catalog] (London: Fine-Arts Society, Ltd., 3-27 October 1972), 9; and Christopher Dresser, The Principles of Decorative Design (Cassell: Potter & Galpin, 1873), 6, 116, Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

Aestheticism in America

Aestheticism and design reform, well established in England before it became popular in America, eventually came to the United States. These reform ideas were disseminated through lectures, interior decoration guide books, and art manufactured goods.²¹² English design reform concepts first reached this country in 1872 through Charles Locke Eastlake's Hints on Household Taste, a book which went through four English editions, beginning 1867, and six American editions.²¹³ Eastlake's popular book was filled with reformist ideas for the entire house interior including the design of furniture, drapery treatment, floor covering, and mantels.²¹⁴

The second important influence was the British exhibit at the Centennial Exposition held in 1876 in Philadelphia, where the general American public was first exposed to current British Aesthetic taste by displays of art manufactured goods. The authors of The National Wallpaper Company's Exhibition Catalog at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 cited the Philadelphia Exposition as responsible for awakening American consciousness to design reform:

The Centennial Exposition developed a new interest in the arts of applied design, aroused a strong protest

²¹²See McClaugherty, "Household Art: Creating the Artistic Home 1868-1893."

²¹³Aslin, 52.

²¹⁴Flaherty, "Eastlake," 256.

against ugliness in form and color, and instigated an earnest and intelligent search for truth.²¹⁵

Later World's Fairs continued to spread the vogue for the artistic. The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition "inspired people to return to their own homes and towns and make them beautiful."²¹⁶

Yet another factor in this spread of aesthetic ideals in America was the ten month tour of the United States by Oscar Wilde in 1882.²¹⁷ During this tour Wilde assumed the role as professor or missionary of aestheticism to America. His lectures across the country did not immediately revolutionize taste but did popularize the design reform movement and its concepts.²¹⁸

While traveling through the United States and Canada, Wilde presented three lectures: The Decorative Arts in America, The English Renaissance, and House Decoration: The Practice and Application

²¹⁵National Wallpaper Company's Exhibit, World's Columbian Exposition, 1893 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

²¹⁶R. Reid Badger, The Great American Fair: The World's Columbian Exposition and American Culture (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1979), 115.

²¹⁷There seems to be uncertainty among scholars as to who sponsored or underwrote this tour. Some argue that Wilde paid his own expenses; others that it was part of a promotional stunt by the D'Orly Carte Theatrical Company to promote its American tour of the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta "Patience," a satire on the Aesthetic Movement and especially on the most notorious Aesthetes--Wilde and Whistler (Aslin, 109-110).

²¹⁸See Mason Stuart, Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic Movement (New York: Haskell House Publishers, Ltd., 1972); Lloyd Downs, Oscar Wilde Discovers America (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1936); reprint New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1967.

of the Principles of the Aesthetic Theory to Exterior and Interior House Decoration. In these lectures Wilde heralded "the awakening artistic spirit" or modern renaissance taking place in England and his hope that the seeds of this rebirth could be successfully planted in America where they would grow and spread. Wilde extolled the virtues of Aestheticism in "its search for design for a more gracious and comely way of life, its passion for physical beauty, its exclusive attention to form, its seeking for new subjects for poetry, new forms of art, new intellectual and imaginative enjoyment."²¹⁹

In his House Beautiful lecture Wilde extolled the refining influence of art and called for a battle of the beautiful and good versus the ugly and the evil.²²⁰ He pleaded for an emphasis on function and utility, on honesty, on truth to materials, and railed against the vulgar use of ornament for its sake alone. Wilde summarized the credo of the Art Movement in this statement:

For there never was an age that so much needed the spiritual ministry of art as the present. Today more than ever the artist and a love of the beautiful are needed to temper and counteract the sordid materialism of the age.²²¹

The last and by far the most important way in which Aesthetic reform taste was spread through the United States to become a

²¹⁹Essays and Lectures by Oscar Wilde (London: Methuen Publishers, 1908; reprint, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1978), 112.

²²⁰Kevin H. F. O'Brien, "The House Beautiful, A Reconstruction of Oscar Wilde's American Lecture," Victorian Studies, 12, No. 4 (June 1974), 411.

²²¹Ibid., 417.

popular style was by interior decorating advice given to the American public via magazine articles and books like H. J. Cooper's The Art of Furnishing on Rational and Aesthetic Principles.²²² Coupled with these was the ever increasing availability to the general American public of both imported and domestic art manufactured goods as the following trade catalogs illustrate:

Fr. Beck & Co., Artistic Wallpapers, New York, 1881.

J. G. & J. F. Low, Illustrated Catalog of Art Tiles, Chelsea, Massachusetts, 1881.

Smith and Anthony Stove Company, Some Artistic Fireplaces, Boston, 1885.

Paine's Furniture Manufacturing Co., Artistic Furniture, Boston, Massachusetts, 1883.

J. W. Boughton, Interior Decoration & Artistic Wooden Floors, New York, 1893.²²³

Bentley's Catalogue of Novelties in Art Needlework, Stamping Patterns, and Lacework, New York, 1884-1885.²²⁴

The spread of Aestheticism in America can be easily documented in the popular literature of the later decades of the nineteenth century. Arnold Brunner and Thomas Tryon in Interior Decoration, stated that of late "the art idea" has spread amazingly and that it is fashionable to be artistic.²²⁵ "Artistic," "art feeling," and "art furnishing" became common descriptive terms or phrases of

²²²H. J. Cooper, The Art of Furnishing on Rational and Aesthetic Principles (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1881), Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

²²³[Trade catalogs], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

²²⁴[Trade catalog], Special Collections, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

²²⁵Arnold W. Brunner and Thomas Tryon, Interior Decoration (New York: William T. Comstock, 1887), 6, Special Collections, Strong Museum, Rochester, New York.

the era.²²⁶ The editor of the Home Decorative Art Souvenir published by the John Shillito Department Store of Cincinnati, noted that in the United States "there is a growing taste for decorative and more beautiful homes."²²⁷ The author of Our Homes and How to Beautify Them pointed out that in America the "taste for beautifying the home is steadily and rapidly developing."²²⁸

In the United States concurrent with the spread of the aesthetic and artistic was the spread of the cult of domesticity with an emphasis on the role of the mother and home as nurturer and, at the same time, a greater concern for health and sanitation. All came to be mixed together: the healthy and aesthetically designed home as the citadel of national moral values and principles.

Constance Harrison stated in Woman's Handiwork in Modern Homes:

"To be healthy and happy we must have beautiful and pleasant things about us. Domestic surroundings affect our health, spirit and character."²²⁹ The author of Artistic Houses or How to Furnish with Taste says:

²²⁶See for example: J. Moyr Smith, Ornamental Interiors, Ancient & Modern (London: Crosby, Lockwood & Co., 1887), Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware; and Constance Cary Harrison, Women's Handiwork in Modern Homes (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882), Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

²²⁷Home Decorative Art Souvenir (Cincinnati, Ohio: John Shillito Co., 1889), n.p., [trade catalog], Special Collections, Cincinnati Historical Society.

²²⁸Our Homes and How to Beautify Them (New York: Orange Judd & Co., 1888), 171, Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

²²⁹Harrison, 76.

There can be little doubt that the surroundings of our daily life are largely instrumental not only in affording pleasant sensations or inducing those of a contrary character, but in actually moulding our natures and characters in many important respects.²³⁰

The Aesthetic style caught on in America as an artistic vogue but in the process there was a loss of reformist steam; the principles which had initially stimulated the movement were forgotten. American designers were carried away with exotic motifs, rich surface effects, and especially Orientalism.²³¹ The major leaders in the creation of an opulently decorative American variant of the Aesthetic style were Louis Comfort Tiffany and his Associated Artists group, who led a revival of the decorative arts in the United States. Their approach to design received widespread publicity, especially through the redecoration of the White House in 1882.²³² Consequently, richly ornamented interiors, loosely based on Aesthetic precepts, appeared across America in the latter decades of the century. Today, eighty-eight years into the twentieth century, many look on late Victorian Aesthetic decor as being as ornate and eclectic as earlier Victorian styles and, in fact, rarely separate one from the other.

²³⁰Artistic Houses or How to Furnish with Taste (London: Ward, Lock & Co., 1883), 94, reprint, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1978.

²³¹Thornton, 311.

²³²Faude, 107-109.

Aestheticism in Memphis

As the vogue for the art or aesthetic look spread across America, it eventually reached Memphis, Tennessee. The most symbolic single event was Oscar Wilde's visit to the city on the 12th of June 1882. That evening at Lubrie's Theatre Wilde delivered his "Decorative Art" lecture, during which he spoke of beauty and art and encouraged the people of Memphis to pay more attention to art.²³³ Wilde was entertained afterwards at a reception given at the home of Henry Montgomery which was attended by 600 prominent Memphians.²³⁴ The following day The Memphis Daily Appeal reported that Wilde's lecture and the following reception were "attended by the ranks of culture and refinement of Memphis." The reporter observed that "the lecture was listened to with marked attention, which gave evidence of the interest manifested by the audience in his subject."²³⁵

A perusal of Memphis newspaper articles, advertisements, extant photographs, and other evidence confirms that during the last two decades of the nineteenth century there was indeed an awakened interest in the arts in Memphis in Aesthetic influenced architecture, and in the Aesthetic approach to interior decoration. The managers of the Mitchell & Bryson Furniture and Carpet Company of Memphis, for example, in an introduction to an advertisement in the city paper

²³³"Oscar Wilde," Memphis Daily Appeal, 14 June 1882, 1.

²³⁴Plunkett, 51.

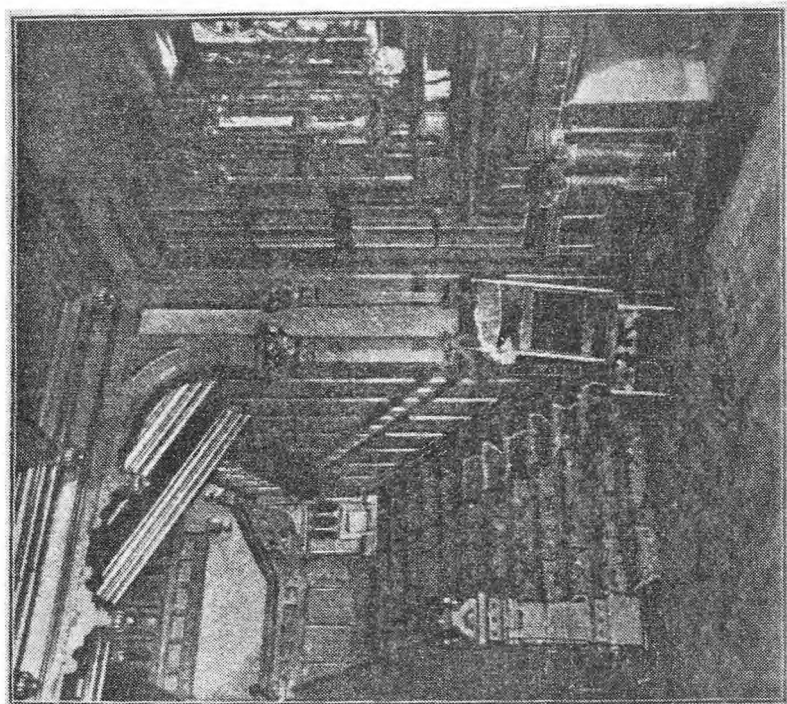
²³⁵"The Oscar Wilde Lecture," Memphis Daily Appeal, 15 June 1882, 1.

appealed "to those desirous of furnishing their homes in an artistic manner."²³⁶ The Art Supplement of The Memphis Evening Scimitar was profusely illustrated with photographs of newly constructed Queen Anne houses; the few interiors shown were very much in the Aesthetic taste.²³⁷ (Figure 127)

Detailed information survives in three newspaper accounts documenting reform interiors created for buildings frequented by the financial elite of Memphis. The reporter in an article in The Memphis Appeal on 7 September 1890 gave an unusually detailed description of the interior decoration of the new Tennessee Club building located downtown on Court Square. The interiors were designed by Mr. Anson S. Hopkins of Chicago. The reporter continually used the descriptive phrases "artistic design" and "artistic embellishment." He praised the "artists/artisans" who have wrought it all and specifically points out features of the decor which are today considered hallmarks of Aesthetic interior treatment. These decorative features include the harmonious colors, mosaics, tiles, stained and beveled glass, and dado and frieze divisions of the walls. In the article many objects used in the redecoration are described as "antique," "Old Colonial," "in the style of Old English or Old Dutch." And yet typically throughout there are also touches of Japanese decoration, including Japanese designed textiles, portieres, and

²³⁶Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 10 May 1885, 4.

²³⁷Art supplement to the Greater Memphis Edition of the Evening Scimitar, April 1899.



A

Figure 127. Late nineteenth century newspaper photographs showing formal and informal variations of "artful" interior decoration in Memphis. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

- A. The entrance foyer of the H. C. Williamson home in Memphis.
 B. Interior of the R. P. Lake home in Memphis.



INTERIOR RESIDENCE R. P. LAKE.

B

drapery. In summary the reporter stated that "the club will have the supreme satisfaction of setting a high example of home adornment."²³⁸ The renewal of interest in the performing arts prompted Memphians to raise funds to construct a new opera house and theatre. Descriptions of their interiors at the time of their opening survive in the daily papers. The new Lyceum theatre was designed and constructed very much in the Aesthetic mode by the Chicago architects Elbroake and Brunham.²³⁹ The Grand Opera House was designed by J. B. McElpatrick of New York, with Chicago and St. Louis artisans executing the interiors; the paper described its interiors as Oscar Wilde would have done in the "modern Renaissance taste."²⁴⁰ Mr. Neely had a financial interest in both these undertakings.

Today probably the best surviving example of the Aesthetic vogue in Memphis are the additions and remodeled interiors of the Mallory-Neely House carried out by the James Columbus Neelys during the 1890s. The redecoration of the Neely house creates a stylistic dichotomy with the combination of the earlier remodeling in the Second Empire mode and the later Aesthetic reform additions existing side by side. It is important to repeat that the Aesthetic Movement was

²³⁸"The Tennessee Club," Memphis Daily Appeal, 7 September 1890, 2.

²³⁹"The Lyceum A Brilliant Opening of the Theatre: A Description of the Beautiful Structure," Memphis Appeal, 30 September 1890, 1.

²⁴⁰"The Grand Opera House, It Opened Last Night and Is Magnificent," Memphis Appeal, 23 November 1890, 1.

dedicated to the reform of High Victorian/Second Empire taste.²⁴¹ In fact, item after item of the Neely's earlier phase of redecoration exemplifies much of what was virtual anathema to the Aesthetic reformers, including elaborate plaster ceiling centers and cornices; frescoed ceilings; gold, white and crimson color schemes; crystal chandeliers; naturalistically ornamented Brussels carpets, wall paper, and textiles. "What had been very much in vogue during the previous decades suddenly came to be considered "vulgar, tasteless, and materialistic."²⁴²

The following remarks made by the design reformers or quotations taken from typical Aesthetic-reform-oriented interior design guide books illustrate the changing attitudes towards all that the Neelys had originally used to decorate their new home. William Morris felt that domestic decoration and furniture had regretfully fallen under the influence of Second Empire taste most of which he labeled as "hideous monstrosities." He considered them as products "illustrative of design debauchery."²⁴³ Oscar Wilde, during his tour of America, continually attacked what he called, "horribly designed" High Victorian brightly colored and naturalistically ornamented wallpapers and carpets. He labeled these "the products of machine

²⁴¹David Hanks, "Herter Brothers; Art in Furniture Design," Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts, 1, No. 4 (Spring 1986), 34.

²⁴²Aslin, 64.

²⁴³E. P. Thompson, William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 95.

mediocracy."²⁴⁴ Harriet Prescott Spoffard in Art Decoration Applied to Furniture attacked the typical High Victorian wall-to-wall Brussels carpets as "atrocities and abominations to the eye."²⁴⁵ In speaking of the naturalistic designs and harsh color of these same carpets, the author of The House Beautiful stated that "no barbarian people ever made such crudities."²⁴⁶ J. Moyr Smith in Ornamental Interiors criticized modern-machine-produced carpet, with the ground "sprinkled with roses or garlands," as a design sham intended to deceive the eye and therefore morally wrong.²⁴⁷

Rhoda and Agnes Garrett in Suggestions for House Decoration vigorously attacked Second-Empire-influenced High Victorian interior decoration, especially the drawing room, which they described as a "chamber of horrors," containing "too often displays of tawdry and theatrical styles of decoration." They particularly disliked the elaborately decorated ceilings of these rooms, which they described as overly embellished with "ill designed and distorted arabesque ornaments, figures, nymphs, and cherubs."²⁴⁸ Plaster ceiling centers, hated by most reformers, were described by the

²⁴⁴Stuart, 5-6.

²⁴⁵Spoffard, 217.

²⁴⁶Clarence Cook, The House Beautiful (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881), 279, Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

²⁴⁷Smith, 77.

²⁴⁸Garrett and Garrett, 56-60.

Garrett sisters "as coarse and lumpy ornament." They also joined the chorus of those railing against the use of gold and white color schemes which they described as "cold and uninteresting."²⁴⁹ The author of The Art of Furnishing attacked the general upholstered and overdraped look of these High Victorian rooms as "abominable and excessive."²⁵⁰

The Neelys obviously added Aesthetic art manufactured products to their home without knowledge of or a real concern for the underlying philosophic beliefs of the reformist theorists. Today those objects representing conflicting philosophies sit side by side in time mellowed peaceful co-existence, creating an interesting admixture of High Victorian and later-century Aesthetic reform taste.

William Seale in the introduction to The Tasteful Interlude, a photographic collection of late Victorian interiors throughout the United States, concludes that generally nineteenth century Americans were not concerned about creating rooms with stylistic design unity, but that they accumulated fashionable items and created homes in typical American fashion that were highly individualistic and above all comfortable.²⁵¹ This seems to be true of the James Columbus Neely family in the choices made in the redecoration of their home. Without written documentation it is

²⁴⁹Ibid., 57.

²⁵⁰Cooper, 94.

²⁵¹William Seale, The Tasteful Interlude (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), 10-13.

impossible to sort out logically the later, mainly Aesthetic reform, additions made by the Neelys to the interior of the house. It is, therefore, necessary to view them one by one in an arbitrarily created sequence.

Aestheticism in the Mallory-Neely House

The continued redecoration of their residence in the nineties was most likely in part stimulated by the wedding and reception at home on 27 May 1890 of the Neely's elder daughter, Pearl. In December of that same year the Neely's hosted a party celebrating their younger daughter Daisy's debut. According to the newspaper accounts of the time, both of these events were major Memphis social functions. Soon after, J. C. Neely raised and remodeled the half attic floor into a full third floor in order to make room for his extended family. In one of the few recorded interviews with Mrs. Daisy Mallory (given at 91 years of age), she stated that her father "fixed up the third floor" after Pearl's marriage.²⁵²

Possibly in part for the wedding and debut and later more extensively as part of the third floor renovation scheme, the entire central stair-hallway core of the house on all three floors was extensively remodeled in the new Aesthetic taste. Most decorative effort, though, was naturally concentrated on the first floor entrance hall, the area in the Victorian home where callers were received;

²⁵²Mrs. Barton Lee Mallory, Interview by Mr. Neely Grant II and Mrs. Pat Leeker, 21 March 1962 [unpublished photocopy], DAR-SAR-CAR Chapter House, Inc. scrapbook, Memphis, 2.

therefore, its decorative scheme was charged with symbolism about the family, its taste, status and position in society.²⁵³

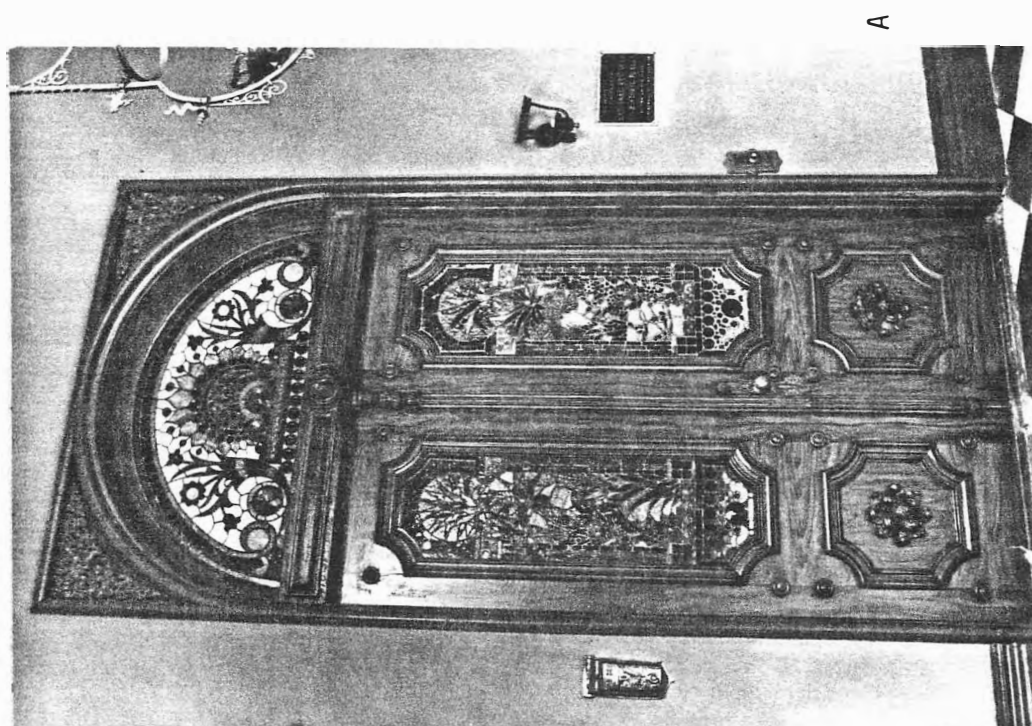
Stained glass windows. The editor of The Home Decorative Art Souvenir stated that the "prevalent use of stained glass is one of the most notable features of modern decoration" and that "one of its most appropriate places is the outerpanels of the front door."²⁵⁴ Fittingly, the frontispiece of the Mallory-Neely entrance hall through which the caller entered is a magnificent double set of front doors both featuring single panels of stained glass. Above these doors is a large lunette shaped transom of stained glass. (Figure 128)

Once in the entrance hall, the focal point in the opposite direction is yet another of these spectacular windows (5' x 7') located on the stair landing. (Figure 129) According to family tradition the entryway set of windows and the one on the stair landing were added to the house after their purchase by Mr. Neely in 1893 at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition.

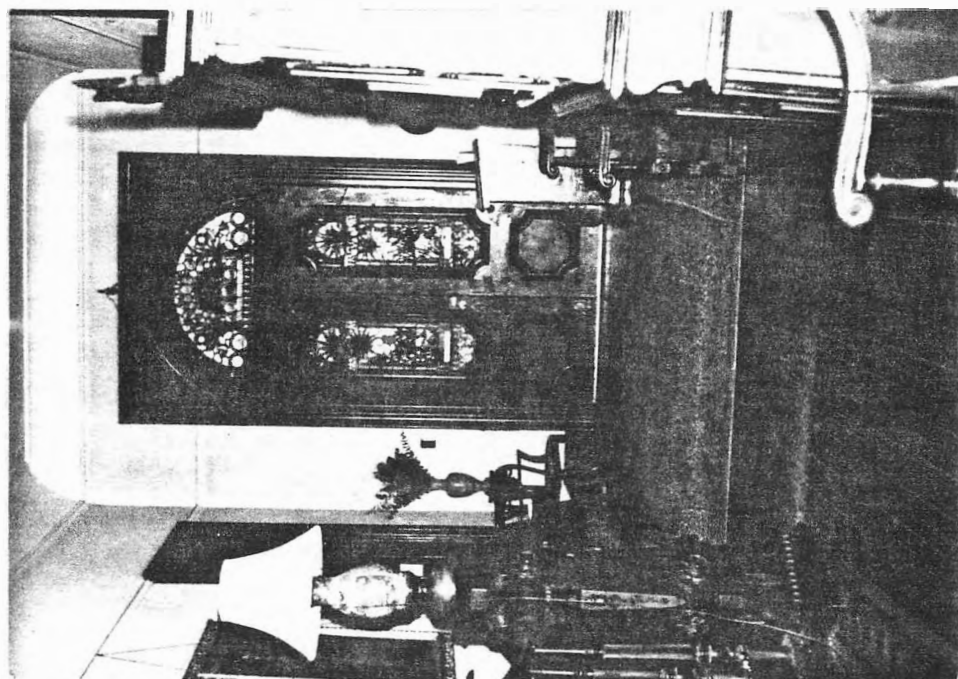
The popularity of stained or art glass as it was labeled at the time, was one of the fads stimulated by the Aesthetic Movement in its penchant for beautiful two-dimensional surface ornamentation. "One of the major achievements of the Aesthetic Movement was to release stained glass from its traditional religious milieu and bring

²⁵³See Kenneth Ames, "Meaning in Artifacts: Hall Furnishings in Victorian America," Material Culture Studies in America, ed. Thomas J. Schlereth (Nashville: Association for State and Local History, 1982), 206-221.

²⁵⁴Home Decorative Art Souvenir, n.p.



A



B

Figure 128. Views of the Mallory-Neely front doors.

A. Exterior.

B. Interior.

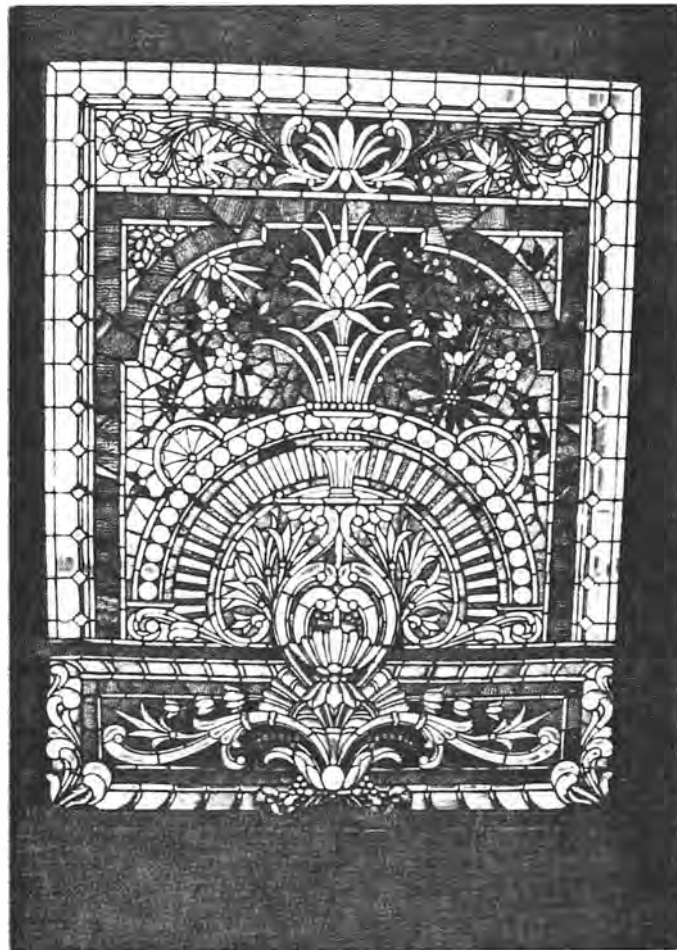


Figure 129. Large stained glass window on the entrance hall stair landing of the Mallory-Neely House.

it into the private residence."²⁵⁵ During the later years of the nineteenth century American glaziers and designers led the way for a renaissance of the art of stained glass. They introduced innovative new media and techniques, including opalescent, cathedral, rippled and crackled glass in every shade and color and a large variety of cut, pressed, molded and rounded, faceted and jeweled-accent pieces.²⁵⁶

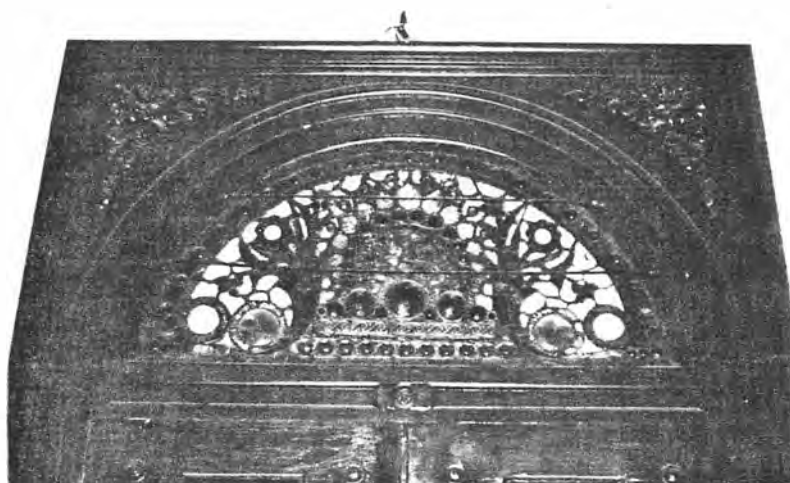
Experimental media were combined with Aesthetic reform and other design motifs, including non-objective, conventionalized natural patterns, and exotic Japanese and other Eastern ornament. The final result was "a pyrotechnic display of color, vitality, and texture."²⁵⁷

The Mallory-Neely windows are excellent examples of late nineteenth century art glass and are very much in the Aesthetic mode. The richly colored front door panels have an exotic Near Eastern theme with date palm and other foliage shown through Moorish arches. The lunette above the doors as well as the pastel-colored window on the stair landing are more abstract and decorative in their overall design. (Figure 130) In all of these windows extensive use is made of opalescent, beveled and other art glass accented with a host of

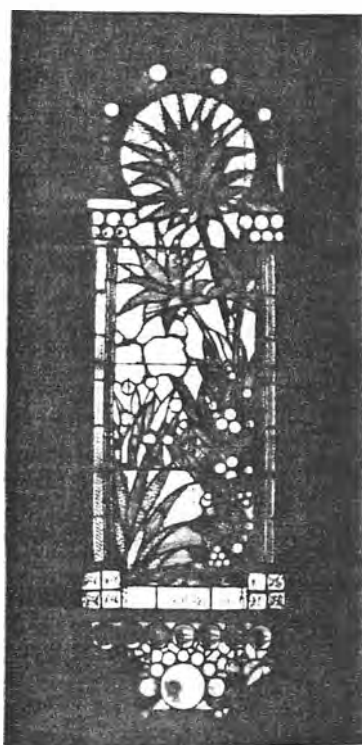
²⁵⁵Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, "A New Renaissance: Stained Glass in the Aesthetic Period," In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986), 184.

²⁵⁶Weber Wilson, "A Field Guide to American Residential Stained Glass" [leaflet] (Chambersburg, Pa.: Architectural Ecology and Old House Journal, 1979), 2-4.

²⁵⁷Frelinghuysen, 198.



A



B

Figure 130. Mallory-Neely stained glass.

- A. Jewel encrusted lunette above the Mallory-Neely front door.
- B. The two stained glass panels of the Mallory-Neely front doors are exotic in design.

decorative inserts, including bullseyes and a large variety of rounded and faceted jewels. (Figure 131) In viewing these one can understand the popular appellation of the time for these windows-- "transparent mosaic work."²⁵⁸

The Mallory-Neely stained glass windows are described in all printed materials and guides to the house as Tiffany windows. Research shows that Louis Comfort Tiffany did display his art glass within his father's Tiffany and Company Exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition. Some credit the origins of the late century enthusiasm for art glass among Americans to this innovative display.²⁵⁹

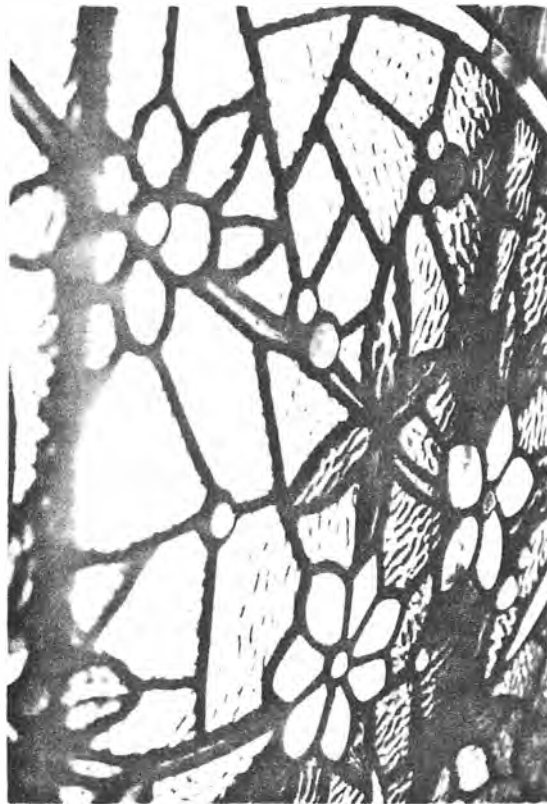
Research in the records of the World's Columbian Exposition show, though, that there were many other exhibitions of stained glass including an entire special section within the eleven acre Manufacturers Building entitled STAINED GLASS IN DECORATION, DOMESTIC STAINED GLASS WORK, PANELS AND WINDOWS.²⁶⁰ There were also large displays of foreign stained glass within many of the international exhibits, especially that of Belgium.²⁶¹ Purchase of display items by the public from any of these official exhibitors was allowed by the Fair

²⁵⁸Von Falke, 197.

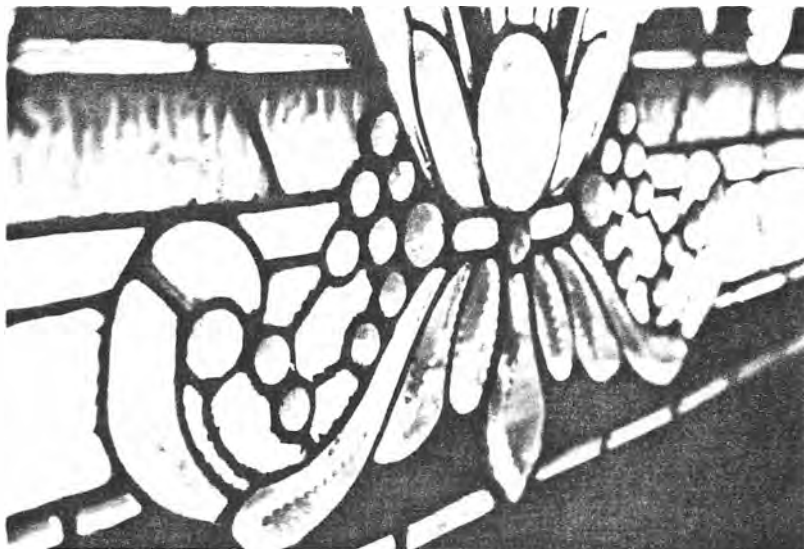
²⁵⁹Hugh F. McKean, The Lost Treasures of Louis Comfort Tiffany (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1980), 137-138.

²⁶⁰World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, USA, Classifications and Rules, Department of Manufacture (1883), 19, Special Collections, Newberry Library, Chicago.

²⁶¹Official Directory of the World's Columbian Exposition, Moses P. Handy, ed. (Chicago: W. P. Conley Co., 1893), 267, Special Collections, Newberry Library, Chicago.



A



B

Figure 131. Details of the Mallory-Neely stained glass windows showing the variety of jewels and textures used.
A. Textured glass.
B. Varied jewel insets.

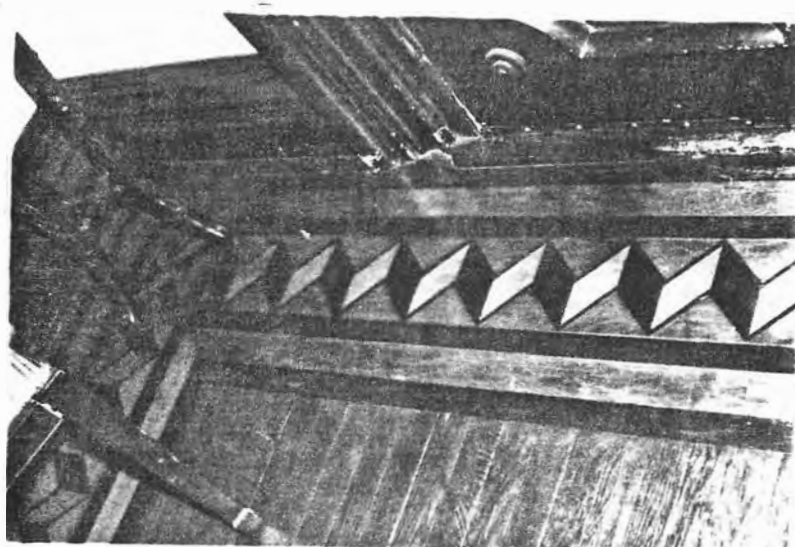
Committee on Ways and Means.²⁶² There is no stylistic evidence, signature, or documentary records that prove that the Mallory-Neely windows are by Tiffany. To many today TIFFANY applied to all late Victorian glass windows has become a generic name.²⁶³ Regardless of who made them, they are outstanding examples of stained glass in the late nineteenth century. Throughout the day and especially at dusk when all the jewels virtually pulsate with life, the rich play of colored light, seen through these windows at opposite ends of the entrance hall, creates a truly Aesthetic ambience.

Parquet flooring. After entering the front doors of the Mallory-Neely House, most visitors today immediately notice the entrance hall floor with its elaborate parquet border. (Figure 132) It is probable that this area was originally wall-to-wall carpeted along with most of the rest of the house, as had been the fashion in the seventies and eighties. The third floor hallway retains part of its original carpeting. When the Neelys remodeled in the nineties, they installed a highly fashionable wooden floor in the entrance hall with an ornamental parquet border and a plain field.

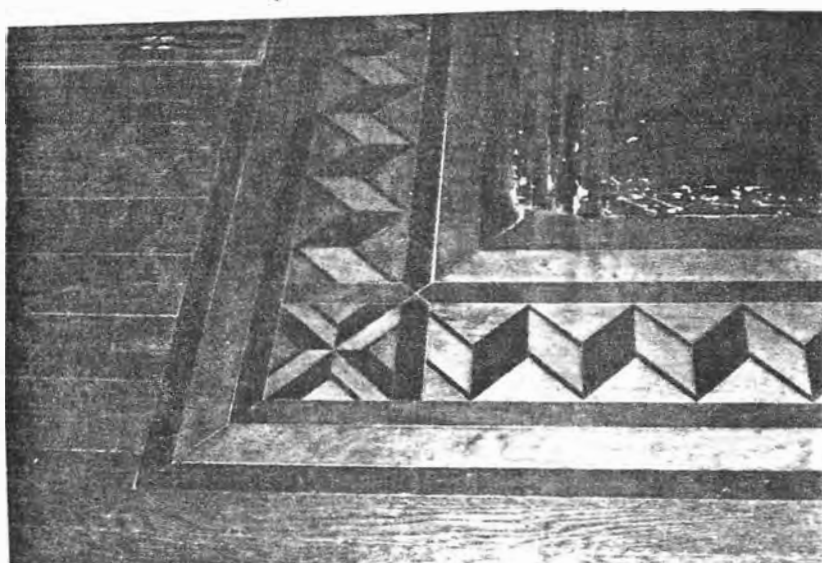
As previously seen, many design reformers denounced the ugliness of machine made carpet. With the growing concern for a healthy

²⁶²World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, USA, Classifications and Rules, Department of Manufacture, 14.

²⁶³Michelle Hinger, "Tiffany: The Original," Glass Art Magazine, 1, No. 2 (September 1986), 7.



A



B

Figure 132. Details of the parquet border of the Mallory-Neely entrance hall floor.
A. Illusionistic border design.
B. Detail corner design.

home environment, they had also begun an attack on the wall-to-wall carpet as unsanitary and unhealthy because it was stationary, difficult to thoroughly clean, and harbored insects. The author of Artistic Houses or How to Furnish with Taste stated that "Brussels and other wall-to-wall carpet is now out of fashion."²⁶⁴ The editor of Architect, Decorator, and Furnisher proclaimed that these once fashionable carpets are now "condemned by the law of hygiene."²⁶⁵ Mrs. H. B. Haweis in The Art of Decoration asked who was the first hero who had the courage "to pull up and burn his colorful patterned Brussels?"²⁶⁶ Charles Locke Eastlake in Hints on Household Taste was one of the first to recommend wooden floors "made more aesthetically pleasing by the use of ornamental parquet as a substitute for fixed carpet."²⁶⁷ By the late decades of the century, these ornamental wooden floors and borders, often referred to at the time as "wooden floor carpets," had become popular across America. Entrepreneurial manufacturers made available, via mail order, endless choices of patterns and designs. (Figures 133) They were promoted as the latest statement in design and healthfulness. J. W. Boughton in Interior

²⁶⁴Artistic Homes or How to Furnish with Taste, 26.

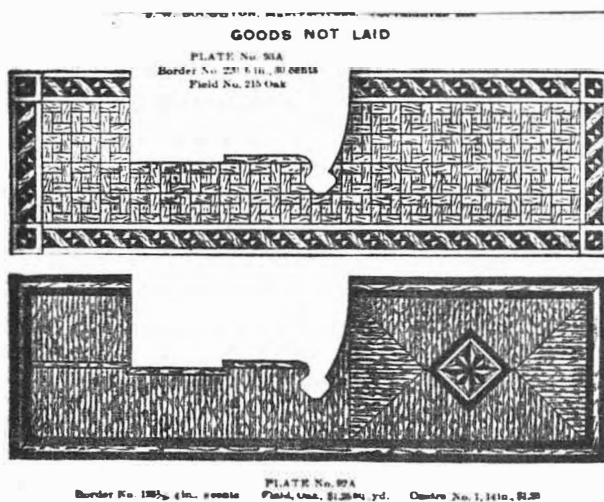
²⁶⁵Architect, Decorator and Furnisher, Season of 1884 (Chicago: Cowdrey, Clark & Co., 1884), n.p., Special Collections, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago.

²⁶⁶Mrs. H. R. Haweis, The Art of Decoration (London: Chatts and Windus, 1881; reprint, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977), 4.

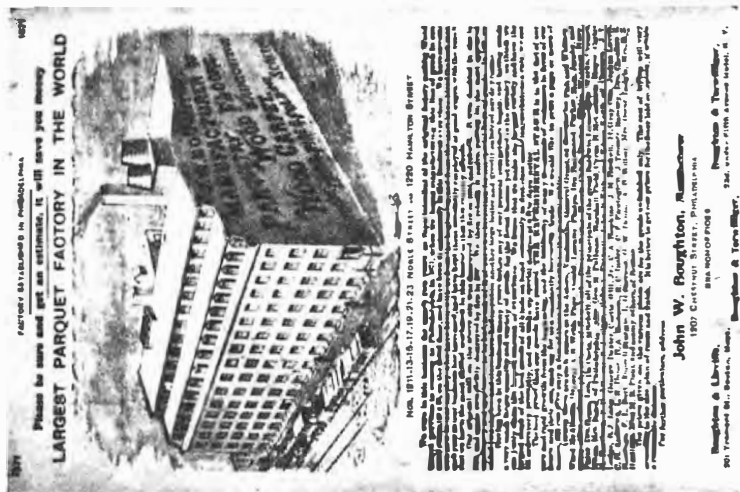
²⁶⁷Charles Locke Eastlake, Hints on Household Taste, 4th ed. (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1878; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 106-107.



A



B



C

Figure 133. Catalog of the J. W. Boughton Company of Philadelphia (1893). This firm was one of the many producing decorative wooden flooring. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

- A. 1893 catalog cover.
- B. Ready to install flooring for the entrance hall.
- C. View of the Boughton factory.

Decoration and Artistic Wooden Floors stated in the introduction that wooden floors had become very much a part of the modern hygienic home.²⁶⁸

Modern research and discovery have shown that some of the most fatal diseases are caused by the almost infinitesimal microbes and bacilli that float in the atmosphere and into carpets. We have a large number of leading physicians of the country, whose testimony without exception is in favor of the polished hard wood floor.²⁶⁹

The author of an article entitled "Ornamental Hardwood Floors" in Scientific America's Architects and Builders Edition gave the following reasons for use of these floors:

1. they are permanent, therefore economical;
2. a variety of patterns and designs are available;
3. they are designed for ease of installation;
4. they banish insects;
5. they are decidedly more healthful because they can be thoroughly cleaned, polished, and waxed;
6. they improve aesthetically with age.²⁷⁰

A characteristic trade catalog, The National Wood Manufacturing Company Designs of Parquet Flooring, is illustrated with pages

²⁶⁸W. Boughton, Interior Decoration and Artistic Wooden Floors [trade catalog], New York, 1893, 3, Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

²⁶⁹Ibid.

²⁷⁰"Ornamental Hardwood Floors" [reprint, article from Scientific America Architects and Builders Edition, June 1882], American Victoriana: Floor Plans & Renderings from the Gilded Age, 3.

of available borders and plain or decorative fields in a wide range of wood color choices such as yellow, brown, or red. Among the woods used for parquet floors included quarter oak, black walnut, mahogany, dark oak, and cherry. The typical thicknesses of their flooring ranged between $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{7}{8}$ of an inch. The varying parts and pieces were tongue and grooved together. The author of the catalog further states that any of their flooring can be easily put down by any good carpenter "with the aid of our complete directions and working plans which are always sent with the flooring."²⁷¹ (Figure 134) The writer of The S.C. Johnson & Son Catalog of Ornamental Hardwood Flooring stated that "the parquetry floor of your choice is already packed in crates ready for shipment and installation."²⁷² The catalog of the John A. Ganger Company of Chicago devoted pages to parquetry flooring and wooden carpeting, all illustrating varying combinations of borders, fields, and corners. No. G 71 on page 46 of this catalog is identical to the Mallory-Neely border. (Figures 135 and 136) The author of the catalog states that it is made up of oak, maple, and cherry. This particular ornamental border costs 46¢ per linear foot and the corners 56¢ each. The Ganger Company asked that the

²⁷¹National Wood Manufacturing Company, Designs of Parquet Flooring (New York: c. 1875), 2 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

²⁷²S.C. Johnson & Son Ornamental hardwood Flooring Catalogue (Racine, Wisconsin, 1901), 3 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.



Figure 134. Page from the 1875 trade catalog of the National Wood Manufacturing Company showing both the construction of their flooring and methods for its installation. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

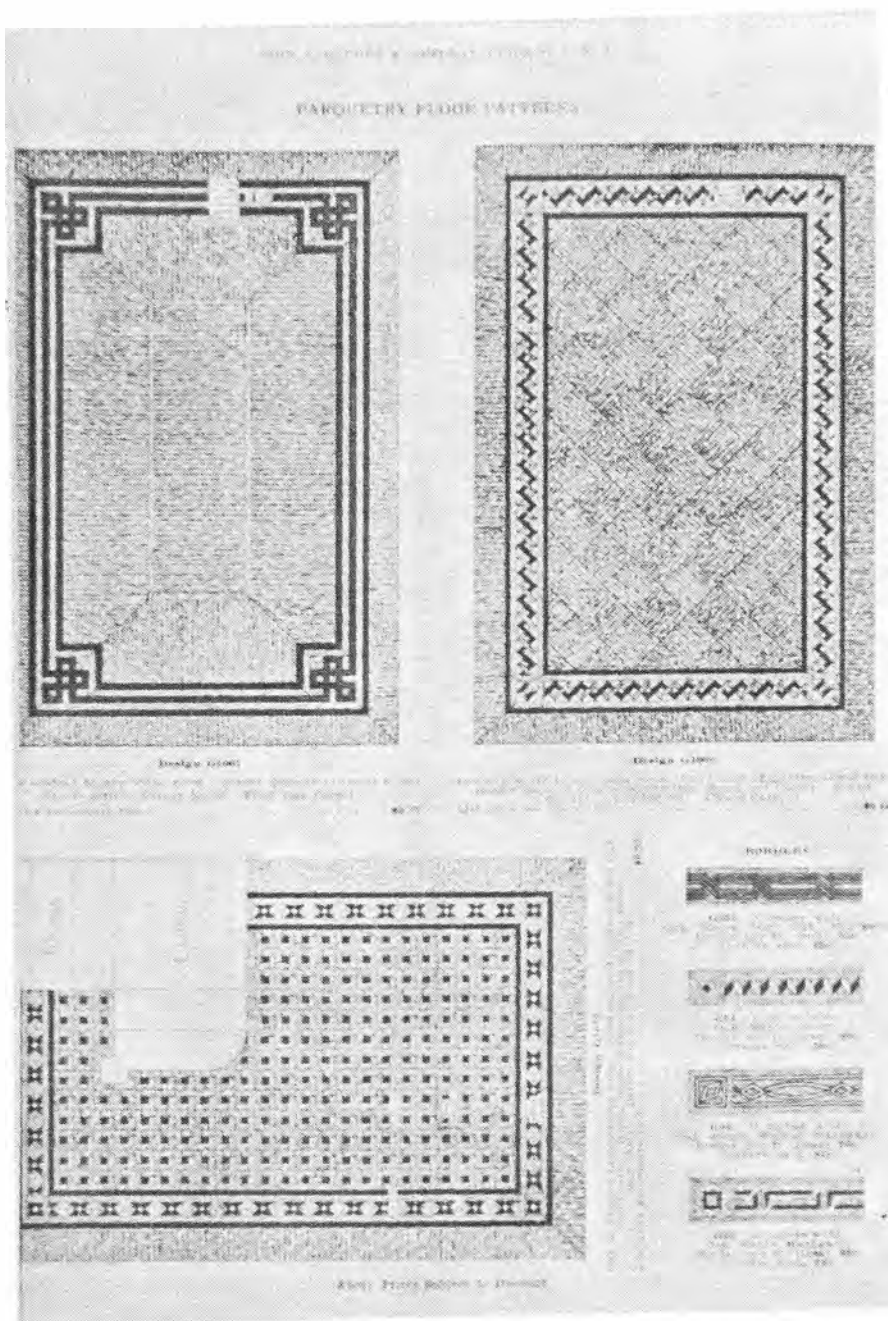
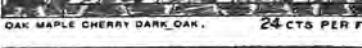


Figure 135. Border G 71 shown on this page from the 1909 John A. Ganger & Company catalog is similar to the one in the Mallory-Neely entrance hall. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

PARQUETRY BORDERS.

5-16 INCH THICK.

	NO.	WIDTH	NO.	
	2381	6" 8"	2394	
OAK MAPLE CHERRY 24 CTS. PER FT.				OAK MAPLE CHERRY 24 CTS. PER FT.
	2382	6" 8"	2395	
OAK MAHOGANY 24 CTS. PER FT.				OAK MAPLE MAHOGANY DARK OAK 26 CTS. PER FT.
	2383	6" 8"	2396	
OAK MAPLE CHERRY 20 CTS. PER FT.				OAK MAPLE CHERRY DARK OAK 24 CTS. PER FT.
	2384	6" 8"	2397	
OAK MAPLE MAHOGANY 24 CTS. PER FT.				OAK DARK OAK 20 CTS. PER FT.
	2385	6" 8"	2398	
OAK MAPLE DARK OAK 26 CTS. PER FT.				OAK MAPLE MAHOGANY 36 CTS. PER FT.
	2386	6" 8"	2399	
OAK MAPLE DARK OAK 20 CTS. PER FT.				OAK MAPLE CHERRY 28 CTS. PER FT.
	2387	8" 10"	2400	
OAK WALNUT MAHOGANY 24 CTS. PER FT.				OAK MAPLE CHERRY 44 CTS. PER FT.
	2388	8" 10"	2401	
OAK MAPLE CHERRY 24 CTS. PER FT.				OAK MAPLE MAHOGANY 32 CTS. PER FT.
	2389	8" 10"	2402	
OAK MAPLE DARK OAK 28 CTS. PER FT.				OAK MAPLE CHERRY DARK OAK 32 CTS. PER FT.
	2390	8" 10"	2403	
OAK MAPLE CHERRY 28 CTS. PER FT.				OAK MAPLE CHERRY 38 CTS. PER FT.
	2391	8" 10"	2404	
OAK MAPLE CHERRY 28 CTS. PER FT.				OAK MAPLE DARK OAK 32 CTS. PER FT.
	2392	8" 10"		
OAK MAPLE CHERRY DARK OAK 24 CTS. PER FT.				
	2393	8" 10"		
OAK MAPLE CHERRY 26 CTS. PER FT.				

Above prices are per lineal foot.

Can be used with 3-5 inch tongued and grooved flooring, as on pages 332 and 333, or with any parquetry design on following pages.

ABOVE PRICES SUBJECT TO DISCOUNT.

Figure 136. Huttig, Moss Manufacturing Company catalog (1903). The Mallory-Neely border appears in many other trade catalogs of parquet flooring from the late nineteenth century. It can be seen, for example, in the lower left corner of this page.

customer send them detailed measurements if interested in purchasing their flooring.²⁷³

Oriental rugs. Coupled with the fashion for wooden floors came also the vogue for Oriental area rugs. The authors of The National Wood Manufactory Company Designs for Parquet Flooring stated that "it is generally conceded that no room is artistically complete without a polished floor of inlaid wood partially covered by rugs which give an air of elegance and refinement."²⁷⁴ The Oriental rug made a big comeback in the western world as an integral part of domestic interior decoration in the Late Victorian Era. Almost every interior decorating guidebook published in late century recommends them especially for use in entrance halls along with parquetry bordered floors.²⁷⁵

In keeping with current fashion, the Neelys used a variety of Orientals both in style and size in their entrance hall and throughout the house in the dining room, sitting room, second floor bedrooms, and even on top of the Brussels wall-to-wall carpeting in the parlor. This layering of carpets was often done in late Victorian homes, giving an air of Eastern exoticism with the mixing of different

²⁷³John A. Gander Company Catalogue No. 50, Chicago, 1909, 46 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

²⁷⁴National Wood Manufacturing Company Designs of Parquet Floors, 2.

²⁷⁵See, for example, John H. Pray & Sons: A Few Facts About Carpets, Boston, 1885 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

patterns.²⁷⁶ Mallory-Neely Oriental carpets range from large scale ones like the Tabriz in the master bedroom to a variety of smaller area carpets--including Shirvan, Bokhara, Kerman, and Mahal used in the various first floor rooms and entrance hall. (Figures 137 and 138).

Oriental rugs like these were a favorite of the Aesthetic and other design reformers for many reasons, the first of these being their beauty. They were considered ideal examples of honest, flat, two-dimensional design totally fit for its functional purpose.²⁷⁷ They are also reflective of the Aesthetic love of Eastern design and the general end-of-the-century fashion for Orientalism. The author in Artistic Houses or How to Furnish with Taste stated that "Oriental carpets are held in highest esteem for the harmonious blending of their colors and the effective use made of geometrical patterns."²⁷⁸ The fad for Orientals is also characteristic of the Aesthetic Movement's veneration for the antique and old. Arnold Brunner and Thomas Tryon in Interior Decoration especially recommended their use because the "colors are all mellowed" and therefore they "assume a beauty old and toned down."²⁷⁹

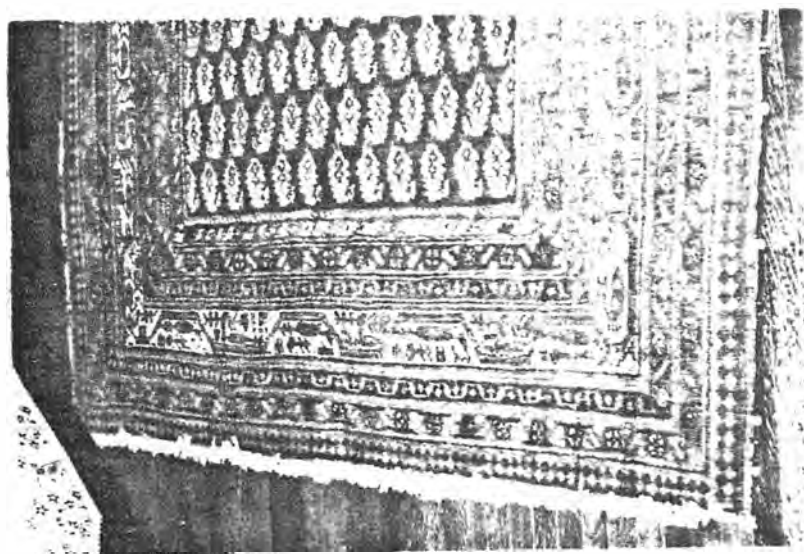
Reformers also favored these rugs because of their being outstanding examples of honest handcraftsmanship with their solid

²⁷⁶Schiller, 33.

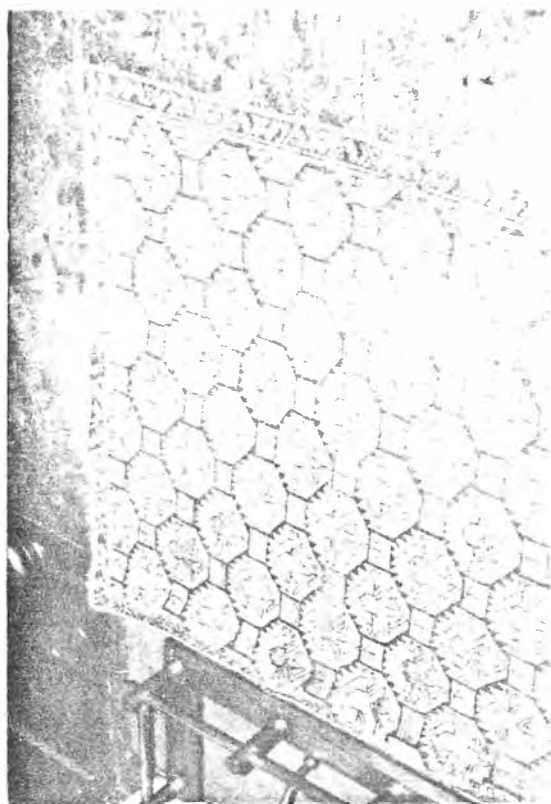
²⁷⁷Von Falke, 34.

²⁷⁸Artistic Homes or How to Furnish with Taste, 30.

²⁷⁹Brunner and Tryon, 48.



A



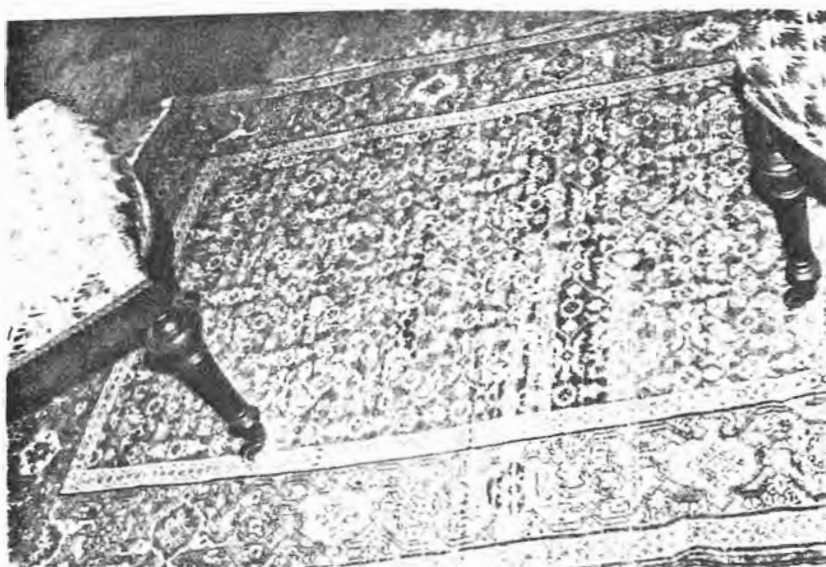
B

Figure 137. Examples of Mallory-Neely area Oriental rugs.

- A. Hamnada.
- B. Shirvan Caucasian.



A



B

Figure 138. More examples of Mallory-Neely area Oriental rugs.
A. Kirman-Laver
B. Mahal

construction and durability predating mass machine-made products.

Mrs. Haweis in The Art of Decoration extolled Orientals because of their handwoven irregularities which made them more interesting than "the mechanical monotony" of machine made goods."²⁸⁰ "A certain imperfection seems necessary to the existence of beauty . . . all old work shows us the impress of human minds and hands."²⁸¹

In addition they were advocated because they were considered healthier than fixed wall-to-wall carpets. A. A. Vantine in Oriental Rugs and Carpets highly recommended them because "they are healthier in every way."²⁸² The author of The Passing of the Carpet recommended them for their healthfulness because they could be "easily taken up and quickly put down" for cleaning purposes, unlike the unsanitary attached wall-to-wall varieties.²⁸³

The late nineteenth century vogue for Orientals stimulated a renaissance of the rug trade with the Near East. "Orientals became so popular that barely a household of standing did not boast of a Sarouk, Tabriz, Kerman, or Ferahan."²⁸⁴ Increased demand sparked an outpouring of carpets of all grades, creating modernization of

²⁸⁰Haweis, 295.

²⁸¹Ibid.

²⁸²A. A. Vantine, Oriental Rugs and Carpets, New York, n.d., 2 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

²⁸³Sanitary Manufactory Co., Inc., The Passing of the Carpet, Philadelphia, 1902, 7 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

²⁸⁴Parviz Nemati and Jai Allison Imbrey, "Victorian Orientals," Nineteenth Century, 7, No. 2 (Summer 1981), 22.

production methods and the use of commercially produced dyes.²⁸⁵

By the turn-of-the-century many European and American manufacturers were creating large quantities of machine-made variants of the traditional Oriental rug.

Department store carpet departments were responsible for helping to spread the vogue for Orientals. Stores like Marshall Fields in Chicago were responsible for the importation of large quantities.²⁸⁶ (Figure 139) By late century Memphis department stores were promoting Oriental rugs as exemplified by the Menken's Department Store advertisement of 15 March 1885 which stated that "our variety of Turkish, Smyrna, and Brussels rugs is alone worthy of a visit."²⁸⁷

New staircase. The entrance hall ornamental parquet floor with its Oriental area carpets was installed apparently when Mr. Neely replaced Kirtland's original smaller winding staircase, capped by a colored glass skylight, with a monumental and impressive new angular one leading from the first floor entrance hall all the way up to the remodeled third floor. (Figure 140) By late century staircases of this type had become fashionable in both England and America and were considered revivals of "Old English" Jacobean forms.

²⁸⁵Ibid., 19.

²⁸⁶Ibid., 22.

²⁸⁷Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 15 March 1885, 3.

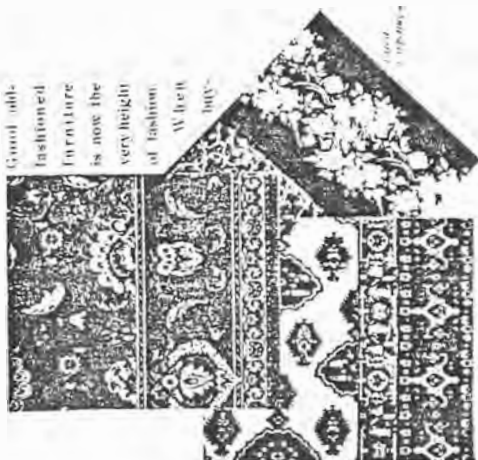
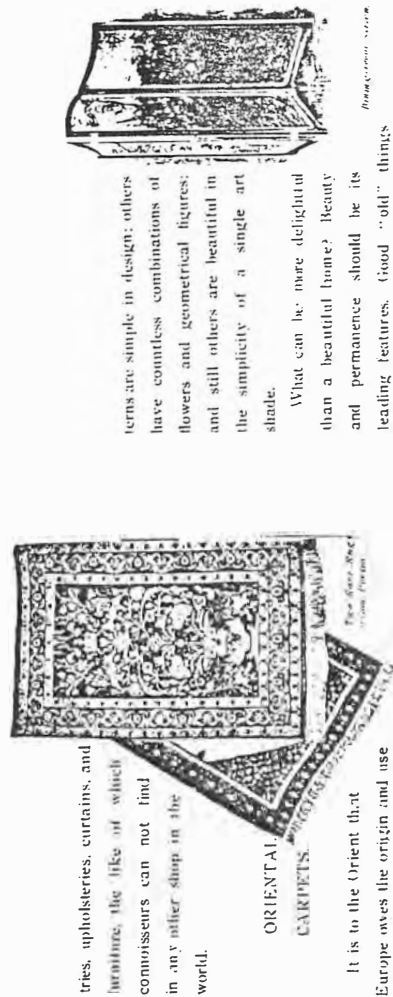
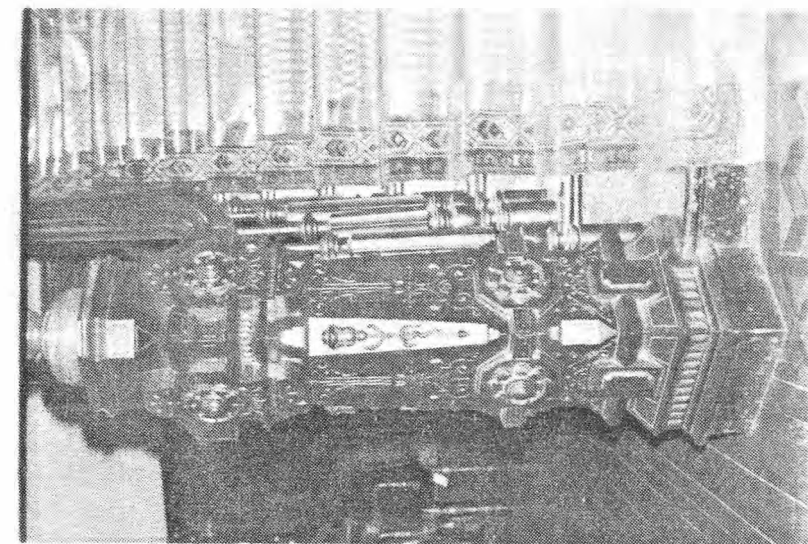
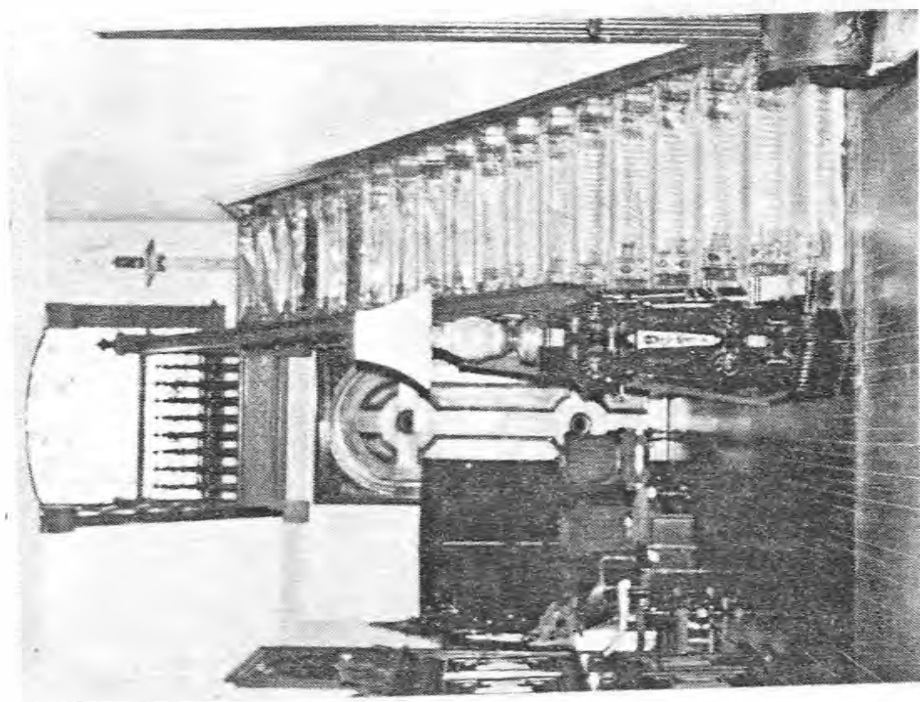


Figure 139. Oriental rug catalog pages.
 A. Pages from the 1901 catalog of the Mandel Brothers' Department of Interior Design in which the use of Oriental area carpets is promoted. Courtesy Chicago Historical Society.
 B. Page from the 1902 Sanitary Manufacturing Company catalog illustrating machine-made Orientals recommended for use with their parquet flooring. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.



B



A

Figure 140. Staircase and newel post replacements.
 A. New angular staircase installed by the Neelys (c. 1890) in place of Kirtland's earlier spiral one.
 B. "Artistic" newel post of the Neely's replacement staircase.

Contemporary descriptions label these particular staircases ANGLE NEWEL STAIRS. A. F. Oakley in Building a House described this type as a "non-curving stairway" which provided the safest and most economical use of space.²⁸⁸ Miss Beeton in Beeton's Everyday Handbook and Housekeeping Guide recommended these angular monumental stairs as "handsome and imposing features of the entrance hall."²⁸⁹

Architectural pattern books of the period were copiously illustrated with details of the interior and exterior millwork of Queen Anne style houses. The Neelys' staircase millwork and indeed all of that was used throughout the redecorated third floor to which the staircase leads is typical of that Aesthetic architectural style.

The visual accent with which the stairway begins its three story ascent is an elaborate squarish newel post ornamented all over with sharply angled decorations, chamfered edges and incised carving; it was topped by a newel-post gas light in the Anglo-Japanese style, the remains of which are still visible. The decorative detailing typical of this newel post is what Harriet Prescott Spofford in Art Decoration Applied to Furniture described as Queen Anne with a characteristic feature being "severely square with sharp corners."²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸A. F. Oakley, Building a House (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1883), 71, Special Collections, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

²⁸⁹Mrs. Isabella Mary Beeton, Beeton's Everyday Handbook and Housekeeping Guide (London: Ward, Locke & Co., 1890), 78, Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

²⁹⁰Spofford, 155.

Charles Locke Eastlake is credited with the origin of this angular approach with his advocacy of a "return to strong and honest styles of woodwork."²⁹¹ Straight and square forms with right angles and incised decoration became characteristic of Eastlake and much Aesthetic design. The Neelys' new newel post and the door and window casings of the third floor with their reeded vertical and horizontal members and corner blocks are exemplary of this.

Mr. Neely may have procured this imposing staircase when he or his architect ordered it from a major distribution center such as New York or Cincinnati. (Figures 141 and 142) This could have been done through a local business or perhaps directly from the distribution center as Henry Montgomery did for his new mansion; it was then installed by local carpenters. Extensive correspondence survives in the Montgomery Papers from the early eighties in which Montgomery is attempting to find a source for a central staircase for his new mansion. Copies of letters to at least four companies survive which acknowledge receipt of their illustrated catalogs. He cited by number the particular models in which he was interested; he stipulated that he or his architect would be sending drawings, measurements, and other specifications in order to get a cost estimate. One copy of a letter survives in which Montgomery actually sketched out the stairwell and noted measurements in appropriate places.²⁹²

²⁹¹Artistic Homes or How to Furnish with Taste, 57.

²⁹²Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 3, Folder 30 and Henry Montgomery to Bradley & Currier, 28 September 1875, Box 9, Folder 110.

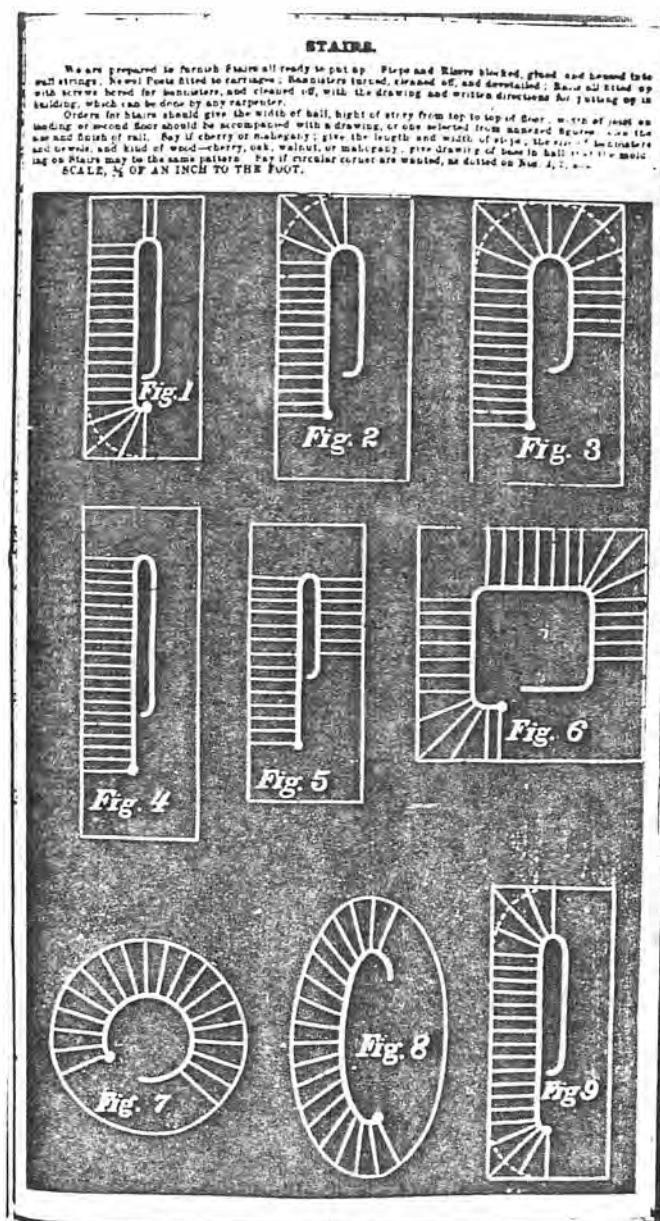
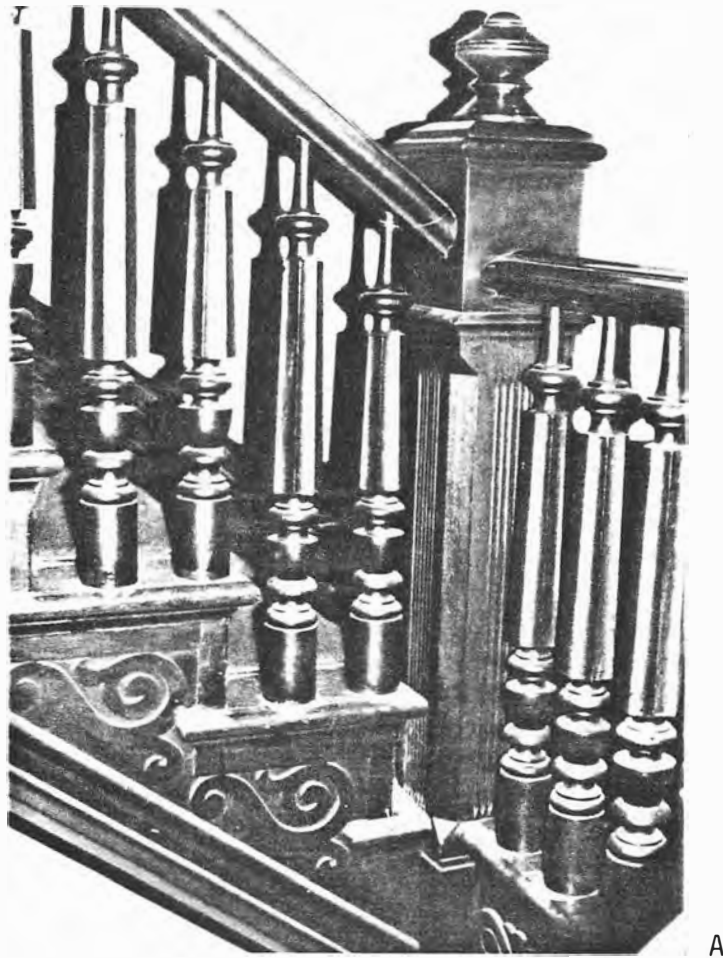
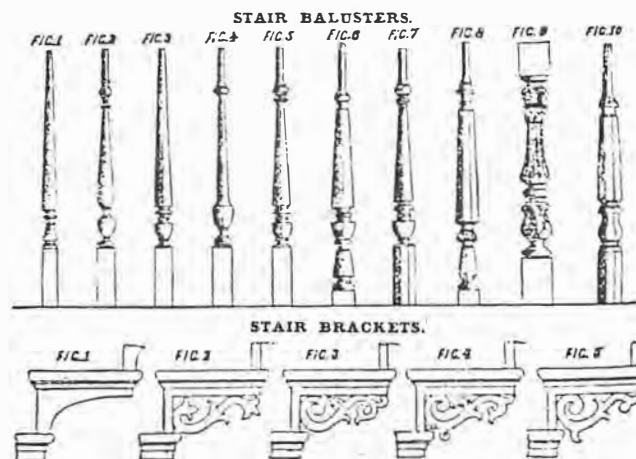


Figure 141. Page from the Hinkle, Guild and Company catalog (1869). It shows a selection of staircase plans which could be constructed according to the client's size requirements and then shipped ready to assemble by local carpenters. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.



A



B

Figure 142. Mallory-Neely angular staircase and catalog page.
 A. Detail of the Mallory-Neely angular staircase.
 B. Illustration from the 1869 Hinkle, Guild & Company catalog showing similar prefabricated mail order stair balusters and brackets.

He stated in a later note to the firm of Bradley and Currier of New York that he has chosen one from their catalog and had instructed his architect to order it.²⁹³ A receipt from the Memphis and Charleston Railroad acknowledged payment by Montgomery for shipment of a crate of balusters and other stair parts from this firm.²⁹⁴

Stenciling and combing. New floors, windows, and staircase were not the only alterations made to the central hall core by the Neelys. Nothing in the house better reflects the Aesthetic Movement's preoccupation with surface decoration than the late century wall and ceiling treatment of the main hallways of all three floors. Today the first and second floors have been overpainted; however, peeling paint revealed that they were decorated like the third floor hallway where much of the original treatment remains intact. (Figures 143 and 144) Evidence also survives on the remaining parts of a stairway once leading to the basement from the entrance hall and closed when the new stairs and floor were installed. (Figure 145).

The major area of each wall surface from the baseboard up to a frieze was first textured and painted prior to being stenciled. Microscopic analysis of a fragment of this wall shows that first a thick layer of crude plaster heavily laced with sand and hair was

²⁹³Henry Montgomery to Bradley & Currier, 27 January 1883, Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 3, Folder 30.

²⁹⁴Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 110, Receipt Book.



Figure 143. Peeling paint on the ceiling of the Mallory-Neely entrance hall reveals the original stencil decoration.

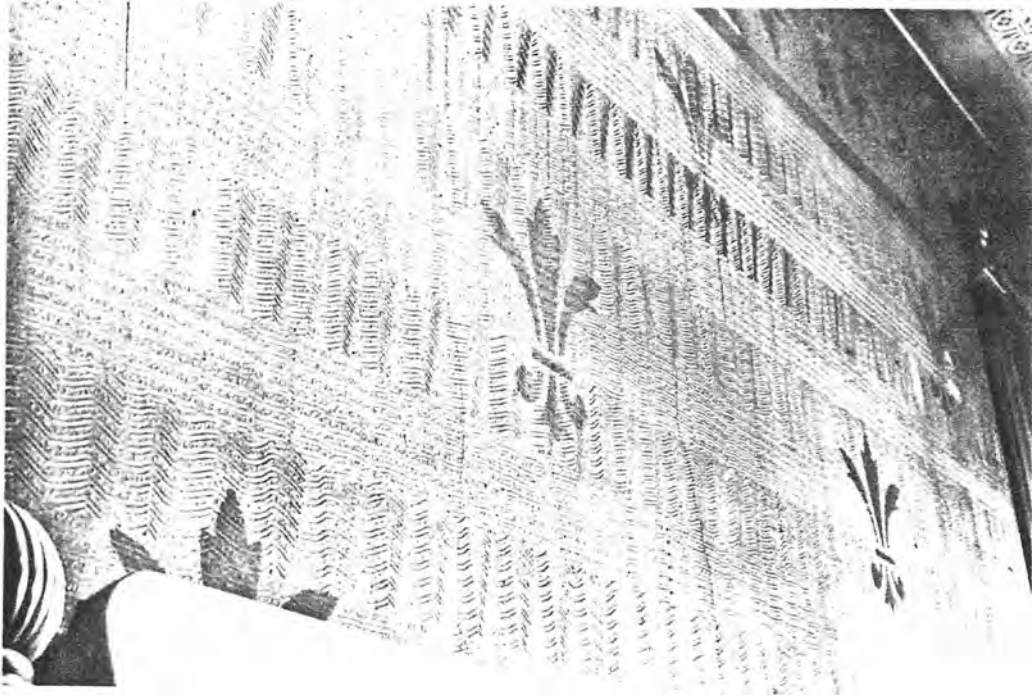


Figure 144. The original combing finish, colors, and stencil design, though blackened, remain intact on the walls of the third floor hallway of the Mallory-Neely House. The walls are painted an opalescent sage green stenciled with gold fleurs-de-lis.



Figure 145. Similar combing patterns, colors, and gold fleurs-de-lis survive in damaged condition on walls that once flanked steps that led from the entrance hall into the basement. They attest to the fact that the central stairway core of the entire Mallory-Neely House was once treated in a like manner.

applied to the wall; over this a smooth one-eighth inch layer of refined plaster was spread. On top of this a thick coat of paint was applied and then COMBED in a variety of patterns. A description of the process to achieve this effect was included in The Home Decorative Art Souvenir published by the John Shillito Department Store of Cincinnati.

There is a style of treatment of walls well suited to our hall-ways, and receiving the designation of "roughing" which admits of considerable artistic development, although the only instrument used is a metallic comb, the teeth being guided over a plastic surface composed of white lead, Japan dryers, and oil, with which is mixed some pigment. All kinds of linear-formed designs may be thus produced, concentric rings in hollow ridges alternate with hatching, etc., in diamonds, ovals, or square, or the wall treated in flowing ringlets of color.²⁹⁵

There are a variety of combed patterns used in the Mallory-Neely House. That on the walls of the main entrance hall has a repeated design of 10 by 10 inch squares in the center of which is a circle made up of concentric rings and in the corners are quartered segments of a circle. Each of these squares is separated by striated vertical and horizontal bands. Combed areas having a stripe-like effect give an overall rich textural appearance to the walls of the second and third floor hall and stair wells. Three-inch bands of straight lines alternate with bands of wavy lines. Two rooms on the second floor have walls decorated completely with an overlapping wavy shell motif applied in a scale pattern. (Figure 146)

²⁹⁵Home Decorative Art Souvenir, n.p.

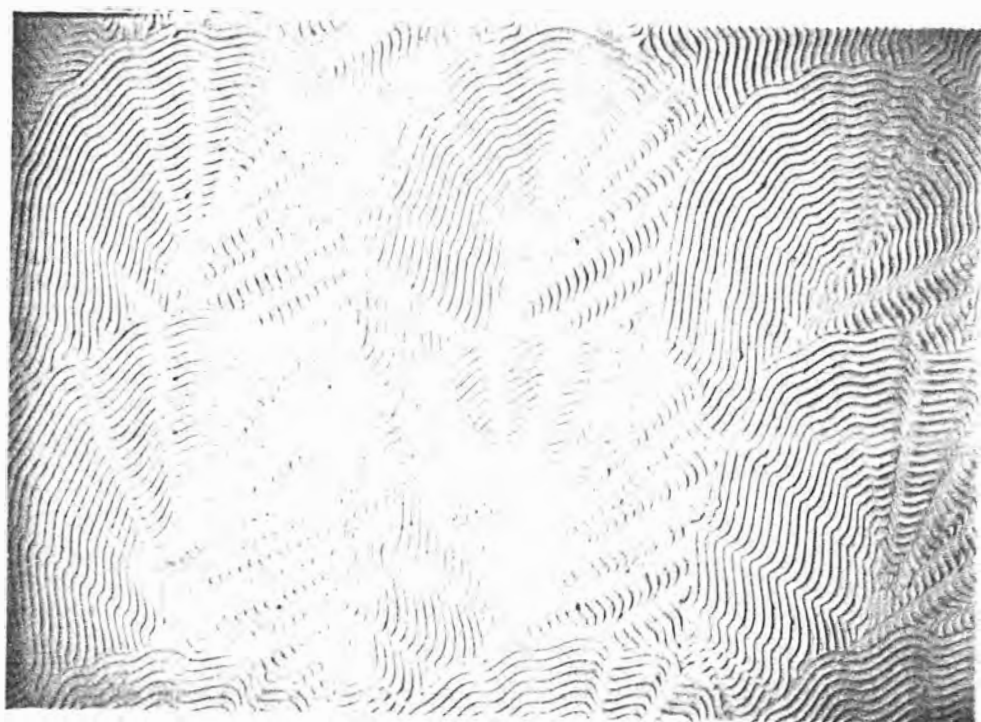


Figure 146. Details of several of the combing patterns used on walls in the Mallory-Neely House.

A. Patterns on the entrance hall wall.

B. Shell patterns on an upstairs bedroom wall.

The general wall surface of the halls and stairwells which had been combed was painted all over an iridescent sage green. Today most of that which survives has badly discolored and darkened but there are some protected areas which retain the original coloring especially in a small entrance space leading to the tower room on the third floor.

Large golden fleur-de-lis were then stenciled all over this sage green field in a half drop pattern. Many of the late century design guidebooks recommended the fleur-de-lis as an ideal motif for stenciled hallways.²⁹⁶

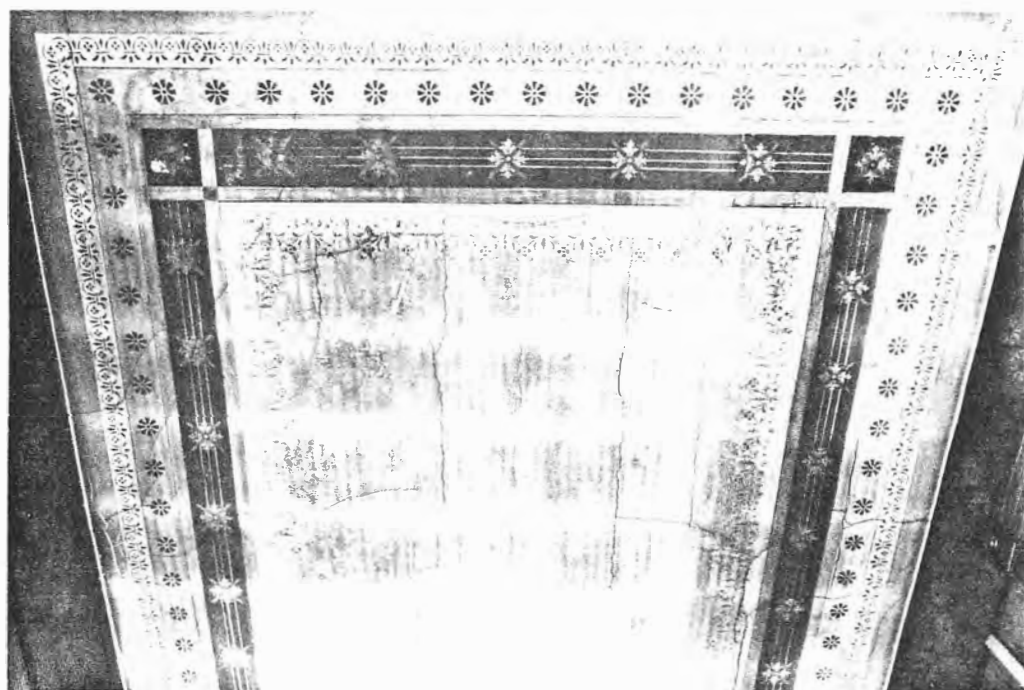
The area above the roughened, stenciled area was left untextured and treated as a frieze. Its background was painted gold and onto this was stenciled a repeated scrolling vine embellished with highly stylized leaves and conventionalized pink and white flowers.

The hall ceilings were decorated with a clear cream-colored center field surrounded by a large and elaborate border made up of varying sized bands, each with different decoration. (Figures 147 and 148) The first of these bordering the wall is a cream-colored band decorated with a running design of interconnected fleur-de-lis. The middle band has a robin's egg blue background decorated with repeated golden rosettes. Separated by a border in gold, the innermost band has a rust-colored background ornamented with elaborately stylized flower blossoms. Lastly, a filigree design of interlaced

²⁹⁶See, for example, Artistic Homes or How to Furnish with Taste, 23.



A

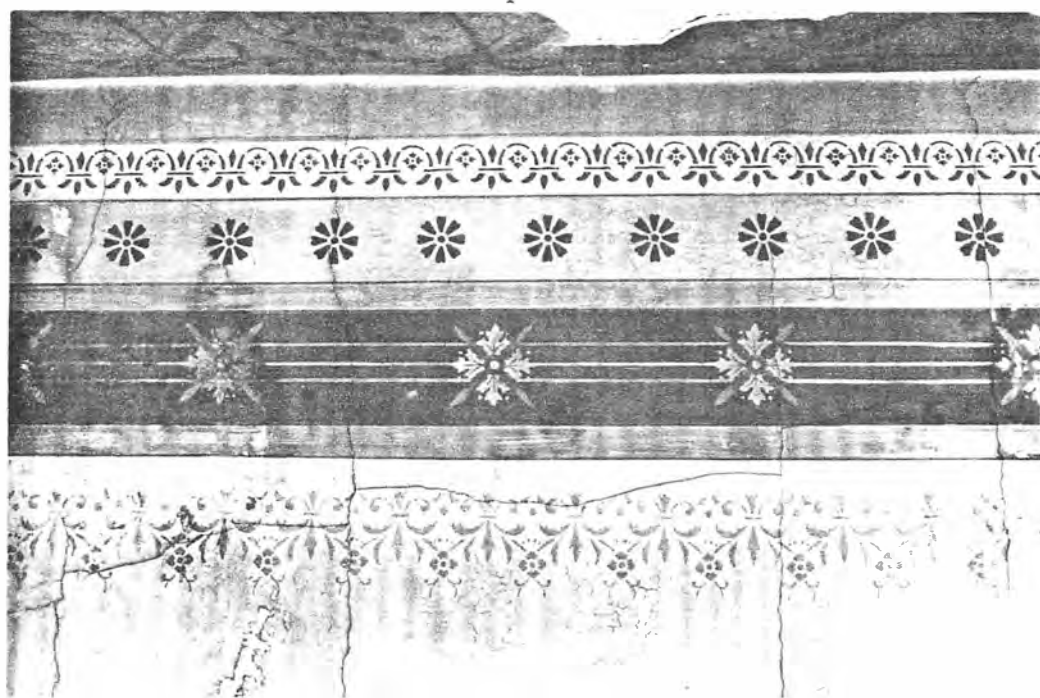


B

Figure 147. The original stenciled frieze and ceiling survives in the Mallory-Neely third floor hallway. Evidence from peeling walls and ceilings on the first and third floors show that they were treated in a similar manner.

A. Full view of ceiling.

B. Detail.

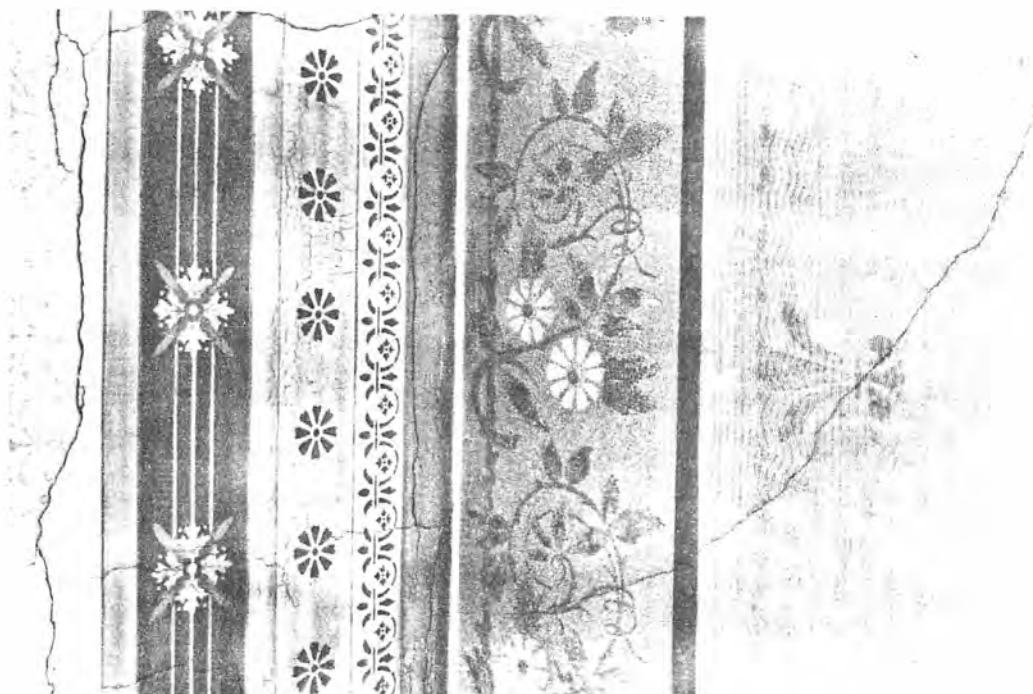


A

Figure 148. Details of the stenciling of the Mallory-Neely third floor hallway frieze and ceiling.

A. Ceiling.

B. Frieze and ceiling.



B

fleur-de-lis created a transition from the banded border into the unadorned open field of the ceiling. In order to execute the ceiling decoration, frieze area and the wall field, the craftsman, either a resident Memphis painter-stenciler or an itinerant artisan, used a large variety of stencils.

The designs used for the Mallory-Neely decorative stenciling in the hallways are typical of those advocated by design reform-educators like Dr. Christopher Dresser or Lewis F. Day. In Dresser's The Art of Decorative Design and Day's The Application of Ornament, pages of similar conventionalized floral forms are illustrated.²⁹⁷ (Figure 149) Both discuss the importance and fitness of maintaining a flatness of design for use on two dimensional wall surfaces. Dresser discoursed at length on the need, in designing wall decoration, to develop a carefully thought out divisional system. He suggested primary and secondary divisions achieved through the use of contrasting bands, empty spaces, and the interlacing of lines.²⁹⁸ (Figures 150 and 151)

By late century most Aesthetic or reform-oriented interior design guidebooks recommended stenciling for hallways and other areas for a variety of reasons including aesthetics, economy, and sanitation. The authors of Beautiful Houses recommended stenciling because it is "a charming and rapid method of applying designs to

²⁹⁷Dresser, The Art of Decorative Design and Lewis F. Day, The Application of Ornament (London: B. T. Batsford, 1888; reprint, New York: Garland Publishers, 1977).

²⁹⁸Dresser, 178.

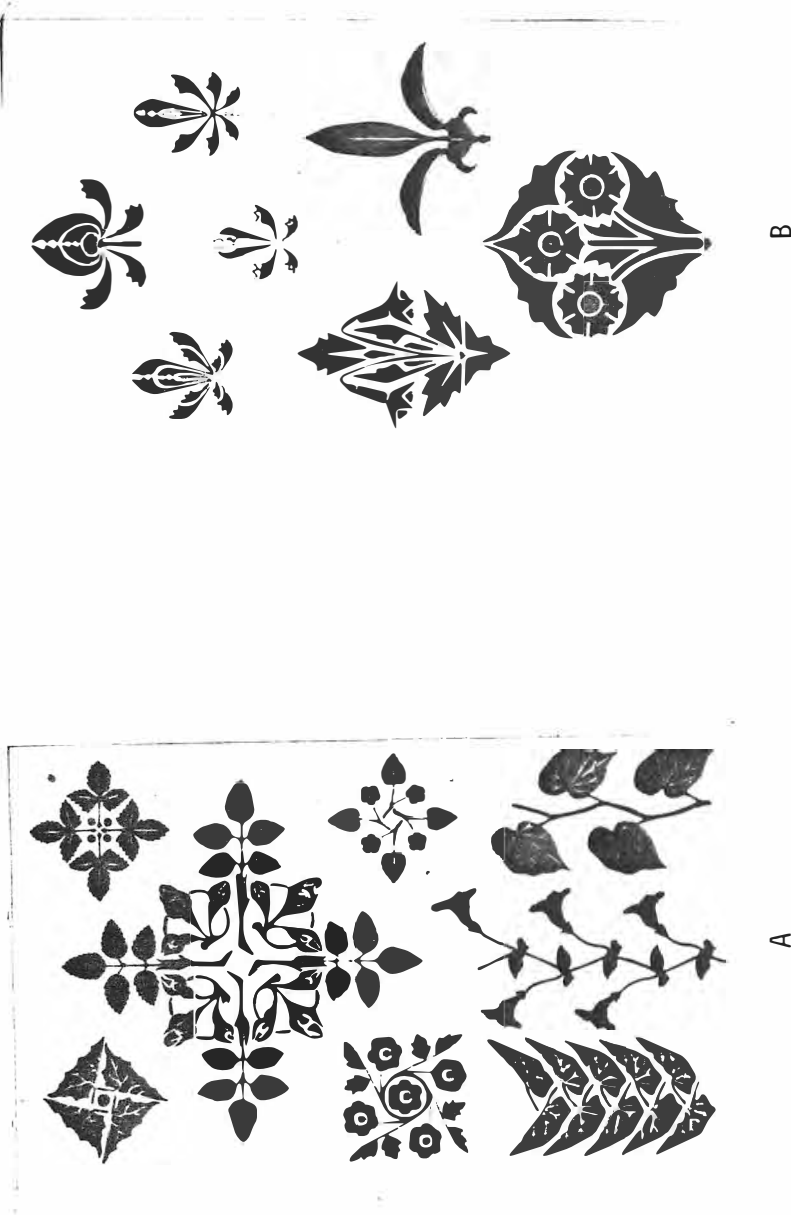


Figure 149. Plates from The Art of Decorative Design (1888) by Dr. Christopher Dresser, English educator and design reformer, showing his recommended evolutionary design process. This begins with a natural plant or flower that is then conventionalized into an appropriate flat design for use in textiles, stenciling, or any type of two dimensional design. The influence of books such as this and those illustrating the history of ornament are found in many places throughout the Mallory-Neely House. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.
 A. Plate VI.
 B. Plate XI.

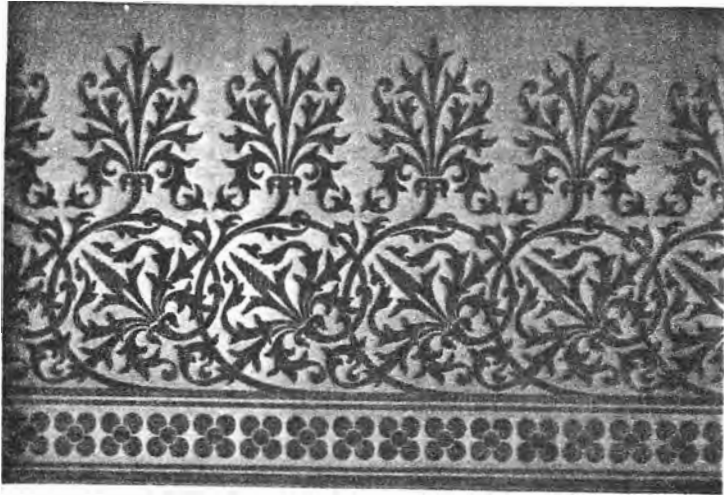


Figure 150. One of many plates from George and Maurice Audesley, The Practical Decorator and Ornamentalist (1890), showing suggested border designs incorporating scrolling leafage, stylized foliage, and flowers all organized in varying sized bands. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

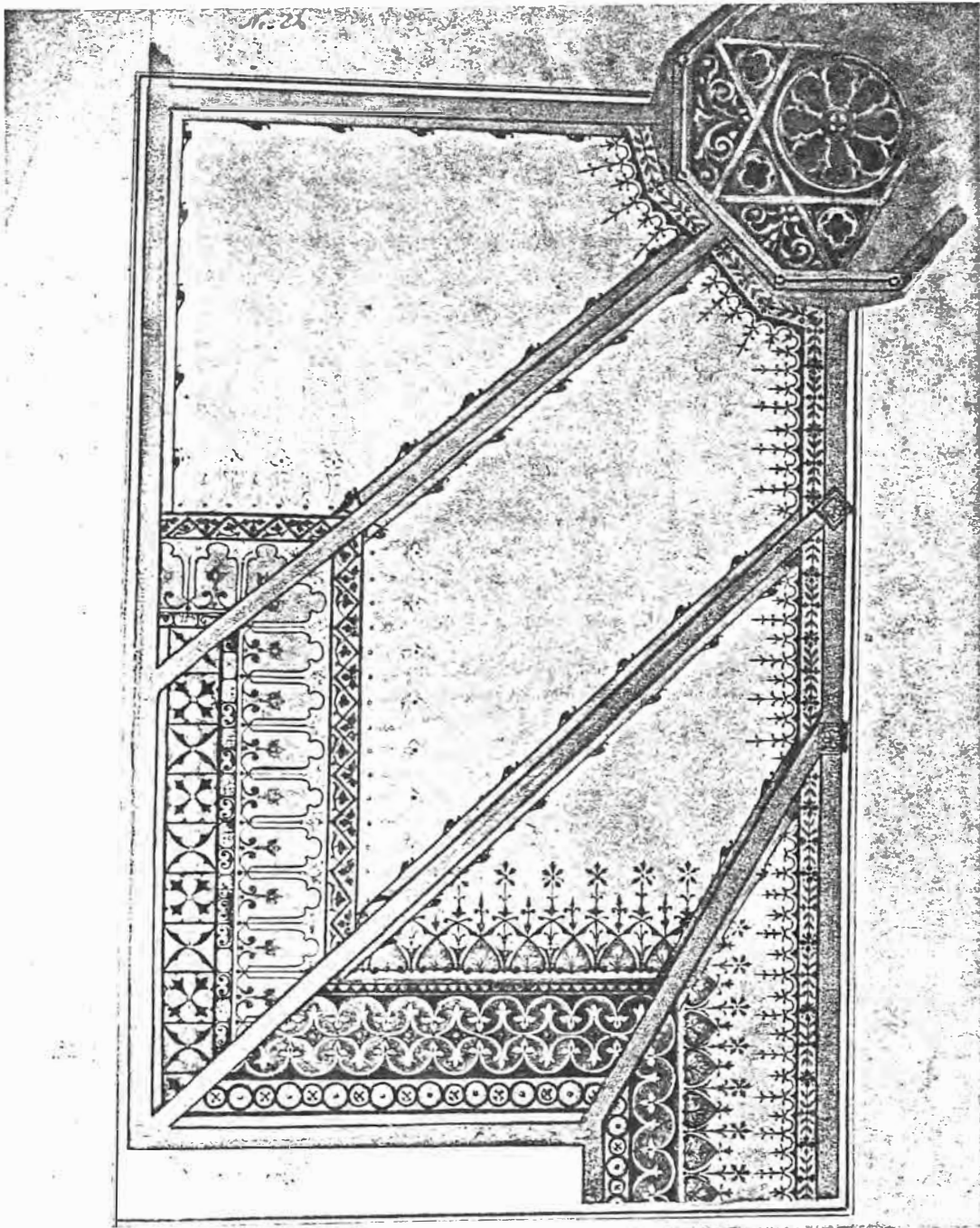


Figure 151. Preparatory watercolor from the Beck Collection. It shows a suggested ceiling treatment with an elaborate border made up of bands filled with stylized vines and flowers. Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

walls and ceilings."²⁹⁹ The editor of The Architect, Decorator, and Furnisher not only advocated the use of stenciling because it was cheaper, but also for reasons of health, stating that "washable stenciled walls are preferable to paper covered walls which are condemned by sanitarians."³⁰⁰ But most of all stenciled ornament appealed to Aesthetic taste as the ideal mural decoration because, like the beloved Oriental rugs it utilized flat, all over, two-dimensional design. Consistently design guidebooks repeated the cardinal dictum that wall designs should not be treated naturalistically in an attempt to deceive the eye but should accentuate and reconfirm the flatness of a wall surface.

Graining. While in the process of remodeling the stair well and hallway areas, the Neelys decided to change the now unfashionable white finish of the millwork and doors by having them grained. This was done also to the doors and millwork within many of the adjacent rooms. Throughout the nineteenth century graining had remained popular as a decorative finish. Due to its "untruthfulness" it was not favored by many design reformers; Downing, Eastlake and others considered it dishonest. J. Mohr Smith, for example, in Ornamental Interiors labeled imitation finishes "a glaring immorality" and pronounced it "wicked to grain a door."³⁰¹

²⁹⁹Henry T. Williams and Mrs. C. S. Jones, Beautiful Homes, Vol. 4, Williams Household Series (New York: Henry T. Williams, 1878), 43, Special Collections, Strong Museum, Rochester, New York.

³⁰⁰Architect, Decorator, and Furnisher, Season of 1884, n.p.

³⁰¹Smith, 78.

Despite their opposition, graining continued to be used to such an extent that today it is considered a characteristic feature of Victorian interior decoration. As part of the mania for enriched two dimensional surfaces, graining reached a peak of popularity among all classes by the end of the century, especially for hall doorways and woodwork.³⁰²

The art of imitating the grain of the more expensive woods is now brought to so great a degree of perfection that it is often impossible to determine, without feeling the surface, whether we are looking upon the wood or an imitation of it. Mahogany, satinwood, rosewood, maple, and some others, are frequently imitated; and it is but seldom that a good house is finished without.³⁰³

Today most of the graining in the Mallory-Neely House is generally in bad condition, being either painted over, darkened, or terribly chipped. In places where it has been painted over, peeling paint betrays the original graining. The many paneled Italianate doors and layered moldings of the house provided the ideal ground for the grainer's art, allowing for the contrast of varying imitation woods. The interior doors and trim were treated in a variety of faux finishes. The richly fielded and paneled doors of the first floor hallway and in the surrounding rooms were given a polychromic effect with dark trim and imitation mahogany and burl walnut infills.

³⁰²"Graining is a Traditional Technique," The Old House Journal Compendium, eds. Clem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980), 342.

³⁰³A. C. Smeaton, The Builder's Pocket Companion (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird & Co., 1867), 13, Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

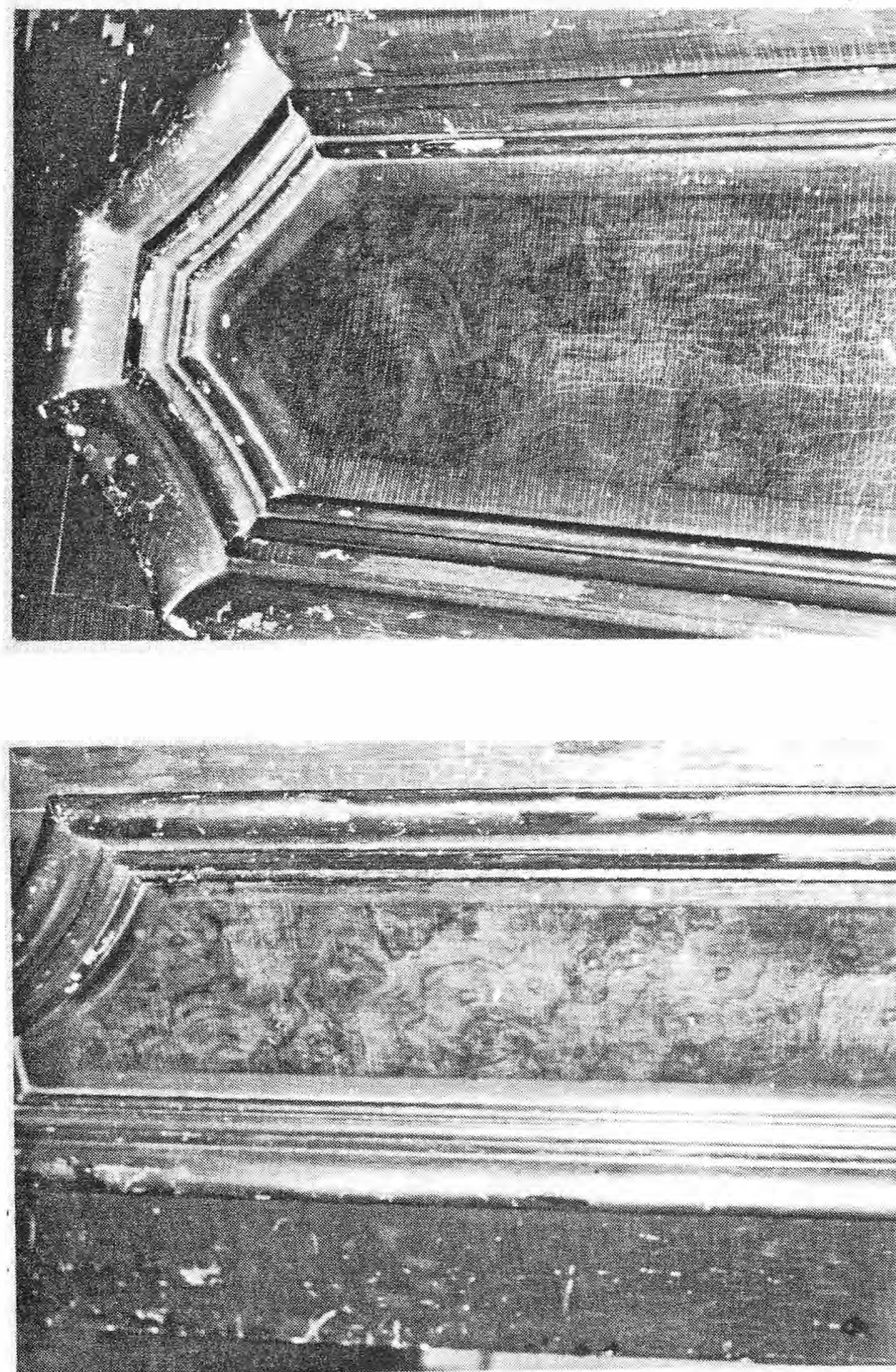
(Figure 152) The dining room doors, shutters and trim were grained with a cherry finish. The inner side of the doors of the two corner closets in this room retain their beautiful cherry graining in almost perfect condition. (Figure 153) All of the graining on the second floor has been painted over, but the third floor retains much of its grained woodwork in a variety of finishes including oak and walnut. But as one would expect, the quality is not as fine as that of the main floor. (Figure 154)

The grainer first applied a ground color as a foundation. Over this was spread a graining or glazing wash. Steel and bone combs, a variety of brushes, even feathers, and sponges were then used to give the proper figuring or graining according to the particular type of wood being emulated.³⁰⁴ (Figure 155)

Through most of the century the graining process remained unchanged, but it too was eventually affected by technology. By the century's end new varieties of tools including mechanical rollers and steel combs, new paint media, and printed guides like The Painter, Gilder and Varnishers Companion (1889) were available to all.³⁰⁵ (Figure 156) Newspaper advertisements and city directory listings

³⁰⁴William Wall, Graining: Ancient and Modern (Somerville, Massachusetts: by the author, 1905), 121, Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

³⁰⁵The Painter, Gilder & Varnisher's Companion, 16th ed. (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird & Co., 1889), Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York; and "Graining is a Traditional Technique," 342.



B

A

Figure 152. Details of original graining. It survives in battered condition on doorways throughout the first floor of the Mallory-Neely House.

A. Sitting room door.

B. Music room door.

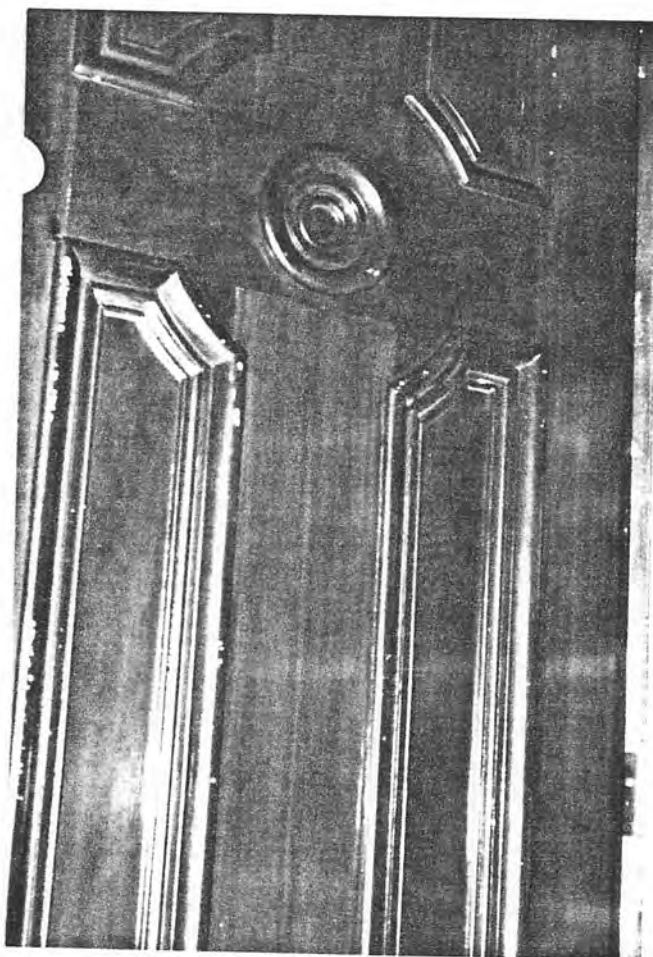
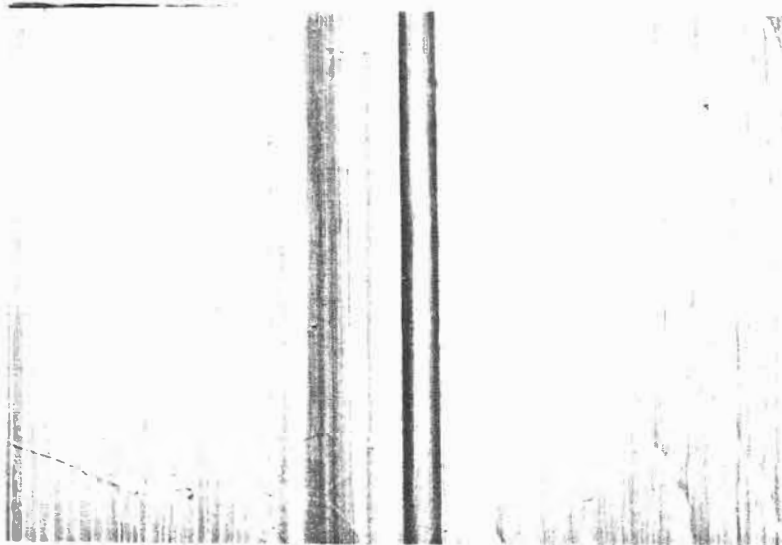
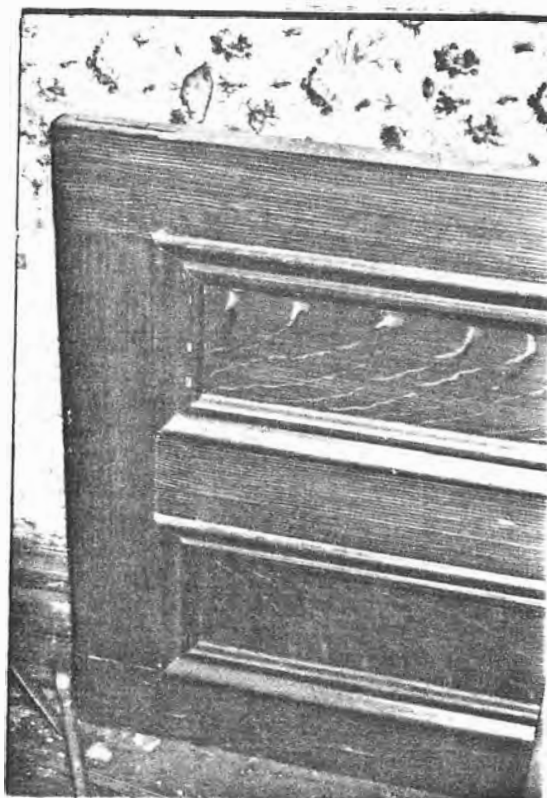


Figure 153. Original cherry graining on the inside of the Mallory-Neely dining room closet doors.



A



B

Figure 154. Details of the oak graining on third floor bedroom doors.

A. Graining on bedroom architrave

B. Bedroom door, on its side, in storage.

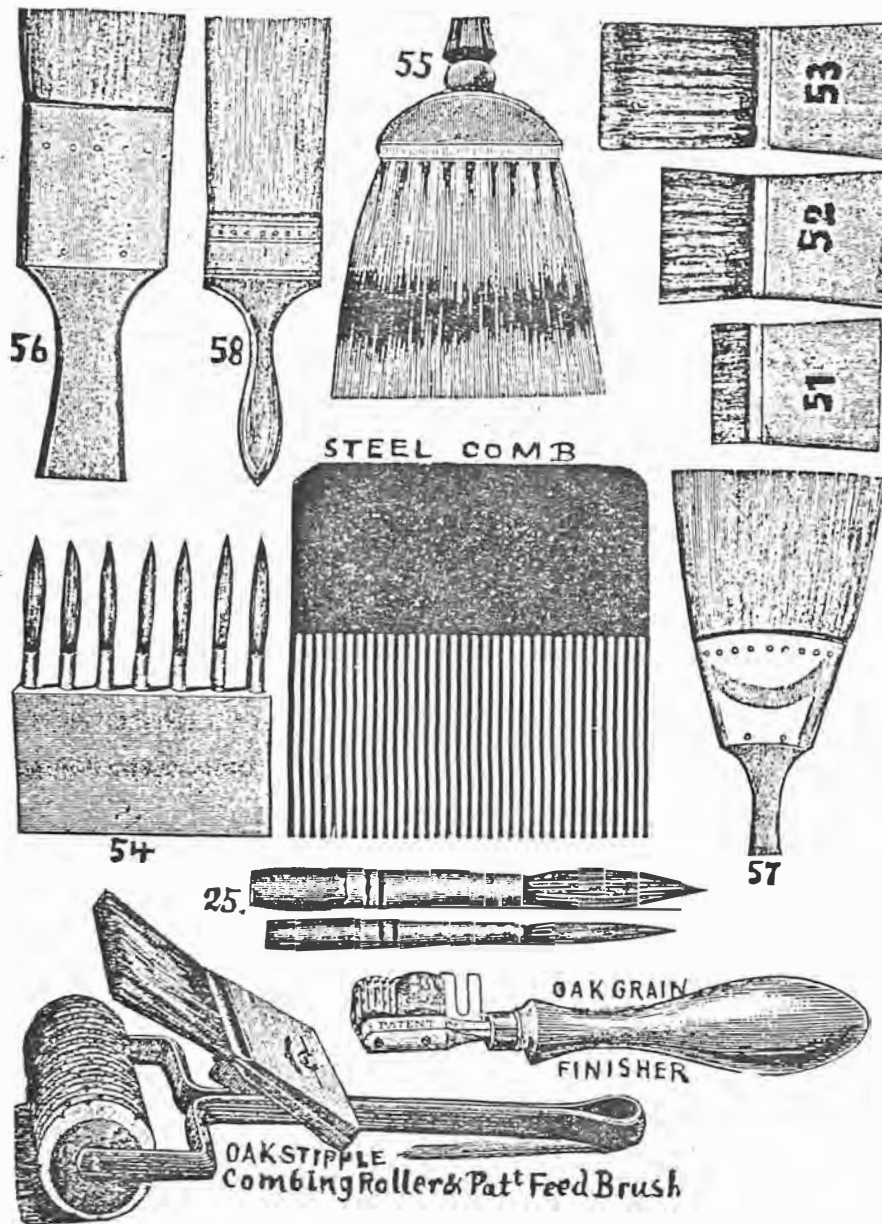
GRAINING BRUSHES AND TOOLS.

Figure 155. Assorted graining tools and brushes as illustrated in the Stencil Treasury (1895). Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

BELLAMY'S GRAINING ROLLERS.

Graining Patterns, cut in thick leather, on a roller, length 3 times width, Oak growth, Oak lights, Hungarian ash, maple, mahogany, satinwood. 4" wide pattern, 12" long \$7.50; 5" \$9.00; larger to order. Comb the graining color, oil or distemper, wet the roller and roll over. Full directions with every roller.

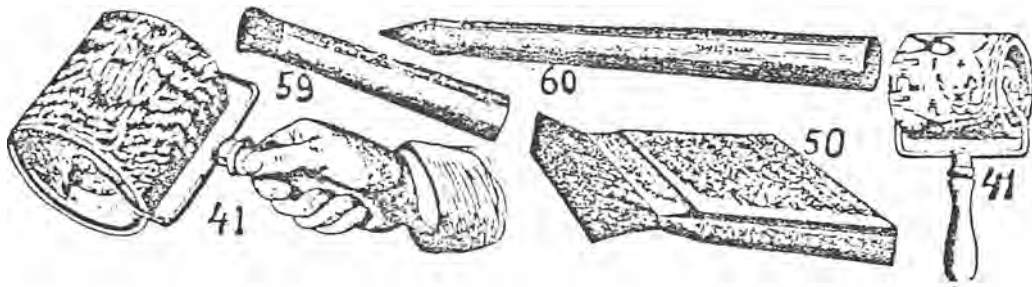


Figure 156. Advertisement from the Stencil Treasury (1895). Like many traditional crafts, graining was effected by modernization. Shown are graining rollers for use in lieu of the old hand methods. Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

show that graining was practiced in Memphis through most of the nineteenth century. Local painters often listed themselves as such but also as gilders and grainers. Itinerant grainers also traveled through Memphis. One of the artisans who signed the aforementioned Fontaine House secret door identified himself as a grainer from Canada.

The overall impression given by Mr. Neely's remodeled new entrance hall with parquet flooring, stenciled walls, grained doorways, and stained glass must have impressed the visitor as sombre and dignified. This was very much in keeping with the Aesthetic taste for deep, dark, rich tertiary color.³⁰⁶

Sage green paint. The remaining areas of the Neely home did not receive extensive redecoration in the Aesthetic reform taste as did the hall and stairway core. But Aesthetic touches were grafted onto the earlier decorations in many of the rooms. The parlor and music room redecorated in the Second Empire taste eight to ten years previously received the most of these. The now unfashionable gold and white color scheme, including trim, doors, and shutters in this room, were painted over with the favorite color of the Aesthetic Movement--sage green accented with mellowed golden sauterne. Elizabeth Aslin in her book The Aesthetic Movement stated that "the keynote of Aesthetic interior decoration was the use of subdued, even dull

³⁰⁶Kahn, 4.

colors, particularly a range of dark greens."³⁰⁷ In The Practical Decorator and Ornamentalist for the Use of Architects, Painters, Decorators, and Designers George and Maurice Audsley note that the Aesthetic approach to color usage was borrowed from the Japanese, "who use harmonious and low toned colors."³⁰⁸ They further point out that the use of green reflected "a love of and direct reference to nature."³⁰⁹ Interior design guide books of the late nineteenth century are filled with suggestions about the use of greens, ranging from sage to pea, willow, bronze green and countless others. Agnes and Rhoda Garrett in Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting Woodwork and Furniture suggest sage green as the ideal color because it is restful to the eye.³¹⁰ Mrs. Haweiss in The Art of Decoration recommended greens in general because they were not garishly synthetic like much modern color but had a non-harsh gentleness of character and were laden with moral significance.³¹¹

Close study of isolated, well preserved areas of Neely's sage green in the parlor and music room show that it had an iridescent or opalescent golden sheen. J. Mohr Smith in Ornamental Interiors recommended "wooden trim dusted in Japanese fashion with gold bronze

³⁰⁷Aslin, 63.

³⁰⁸Audsley and Audsley, 10.

³⁰⁹Ibid., 1.

³¹⁰Garrett and Garrett, 69.

³¹¹Haweiss, 296.

and protected by varnish."³¹² Neely's finish is reflective of the influence of James McNeil Whistler's celebrated Peacock Room in which similar effects were used and of Tiffany and the Associated Artists Group who created an American fashion for these exotic finishes.

Wallcoverings. The general wall treatment of the parlor and music room and the dining room across the hall were also altered at this time in keeping with Aesthetic fashion. Because of the Aesthetic love of ornamental, flat, two-dimensional surfaces, the movement ushered in a renaissance of wall covering design.³¹³ The Aesthetic Movement introduced the fashion for breaking up wall surfaces into a three part division with a frieze at the top, separated by a picture molding from the central field, and at the bottom a dado area beneath a chair rail.³¹⁴ Late century interior design guides usually illustrated and explained proportional systems for the proper division of the walls. (Figure 157) First English and later American designer-manufacturers began the production of co-ordinated wall covering sets to fill these spaces.³¹⁵ The catalog of S. A. Maxwell & Company illustrated many examples of coordinated field, dado, and

³¹²Smith, 97.

³¹³National Wallpaper Co.'s Exhibit, World's Columbian Exposition, n.p.

³¹⁴Aslin, 63; often, as in the Mallory-Neely parlor, only a two part division was used minus the dado.

³¹⁵Ibid.

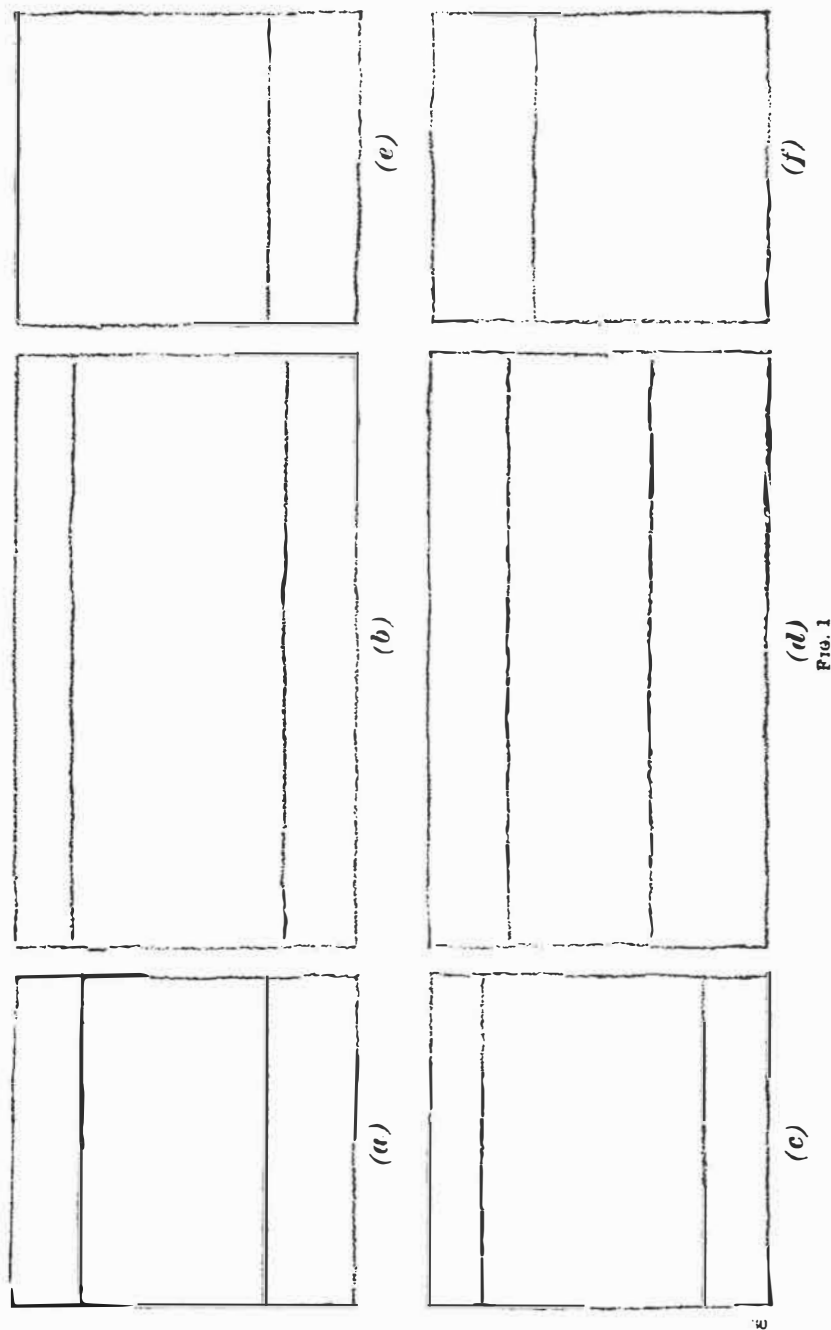


FIG. 1

Figure 157. Two or three part wall divisional systems, based on wall proportion, from Louis Osborne, Painting and Interior Decoration (1925). Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

frieze papers. Its author stated that "they have been designed with the same characteristic of design so as to harmonize perfectly."³¹⁶ The division of the wall provided opportunity for late Victorians "to achieve a rich mural effect by contrasting colors and patterns."³¹⁷

As noted, correct wall treatment and covering were subject of much design reform debate and exploration. The reformer William Morris, for example, devoted much attention during his life to the design of suitable wall coverings. Reformers were adamant that the flatness of the wall surface should be respected and that wallpaper should provide a flat two dimensional background and not attempt to be untruthful and deceive by being naturalistic or illusionary.³¹⁸ (Figure 158) Williams and Jones in Beautiful Homes stated that paper hangings were there to serve the purpose of exhibiting the furniture and wall ornaments, not to be an attraction in themselves. To do otherwise they pronounced "vulgar and in poor taste."³¹⁹ Two dimensional Japanese and Near Eastern patterns and designs were

³¹⁶Season of 1891, Illustrations of Paper Hangings in the Collection of S. A. Maxwell and Company (Chicago: S. A. Maxwell & Co. Paper Hangings, 1891), n.p. [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

³¹⁷Carolyn Flaherty, "Late Nineteenth Century Interior Decoration," Old House Journal Compendium, ed. Clem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980), 279.

³¹⁸See, for example, Audsley, The Practical Decorator, 27 or E. A. Entwisle, Wallpaper of the Victorian Era (Leigh-on-Sea, England: F. Lewis Publishers Ltd., 1964), 18.

³¹⁹Williams and Jones, 34-35.



Figure 158. Gold and green English made wallpaper with all over conventionalized flowers from the Cooper-Hewitt Collection. Courtesy Cooper-Hewitt Museum.

touted as ideal models for wallpaper designs. J. Mohr Smith, for example, in Ornamental Interiors stated that Japanese designs were perfect models because of their two dimensional, conventionalized "all over patterns."³²⁰

For the field and frieze of the Mallory-Neely House parlor and music room, the Neelys chose coordinated gilded and flocked wall papers, the designs of which are very much in the fashionable Japanese manner. (Figures 159 and 160) The two contrast yet co-ordinate perfectly.

The field paper is made up of an all over pattern of stylized chrysanthemum flowers similar to Japanese brocade textiles. The flowers are flocked in gold on gold tones. (Figure 161) The background of the paper is green. The frieze which is not flocked provides a textural contrast with the field paper. It is made up of very large conventionalized spiraling flowers, possibly peonies, all in shades of green on a gold background. (Figure 162) These papers are similar to many English designed papers contained in the collection of the Wall Paper Department of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York. J. Mohr Smith in Ornamental Interiors singled out English designed papers for use because their designer-manufacturers were producing "an array of papers in which gold, flock, and refined color gives a splendour of effect."³²¹

³²⁰Smith, 59.

³²¹Ibid.

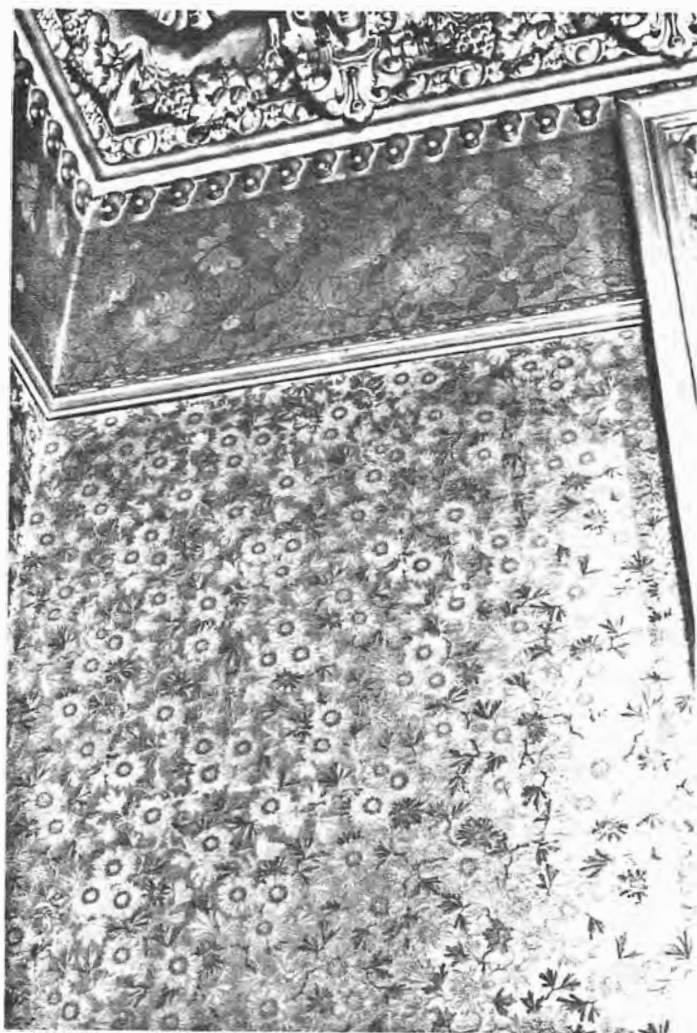
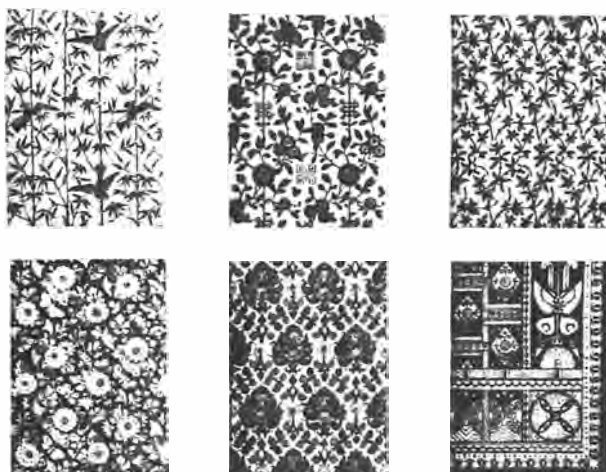


Figure 159. Detail showing frieze and field of the two part wall divisional system used in the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room.



A



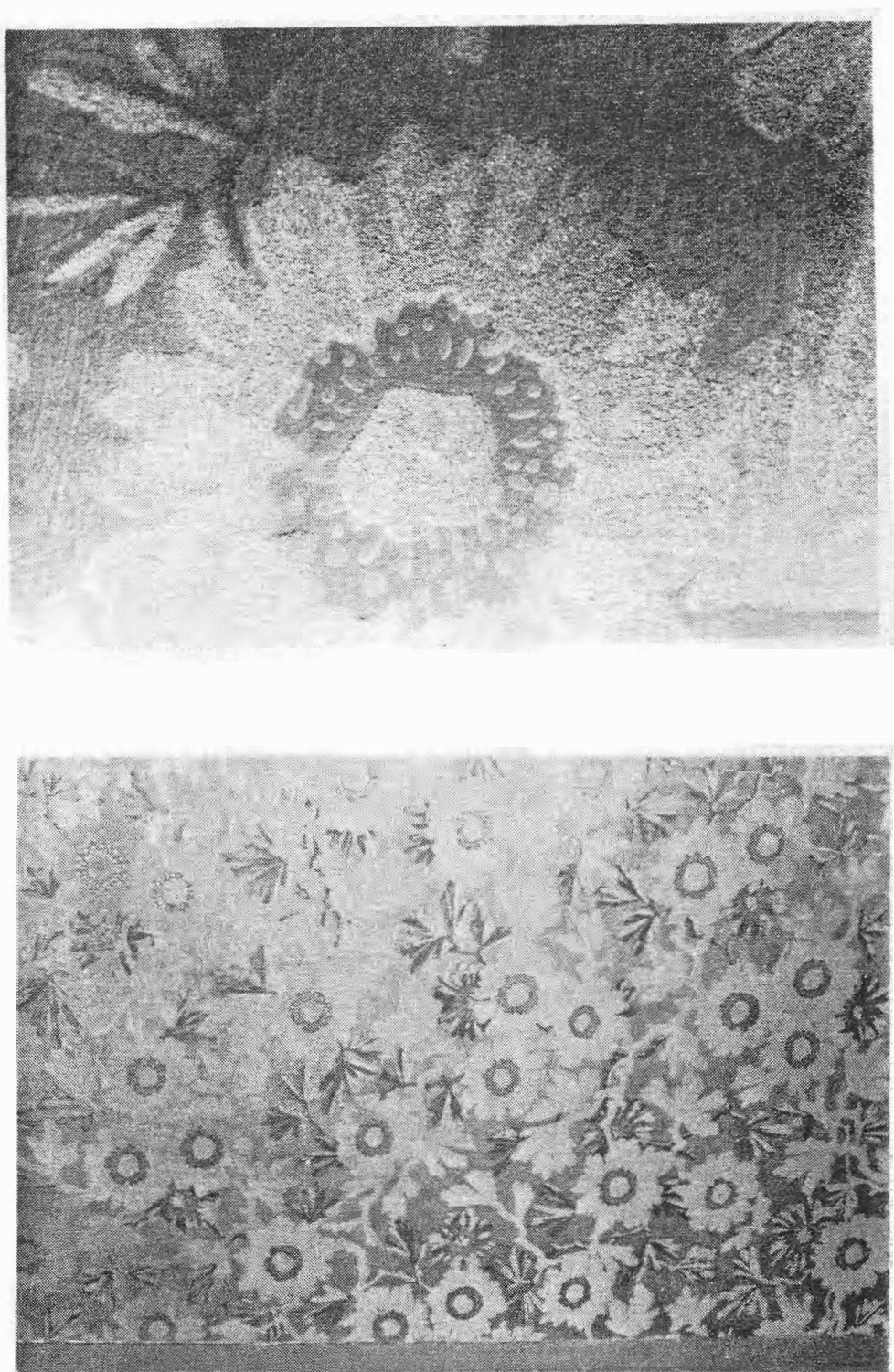
B

Figure 160. Conventionalized floral designs in the Anglo-Japanese manner similar to the design used for the Mallory-Neely parlor field paper.

A. A plate from Bruce J. Talbert, Examples of Ancient and Modern Furniture, Metalwork, Tapestries, and Decorations (1876).

B. A plate from George and Maurice Audesley, The Practical Decorator and Ornamentalist (1890).

Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.



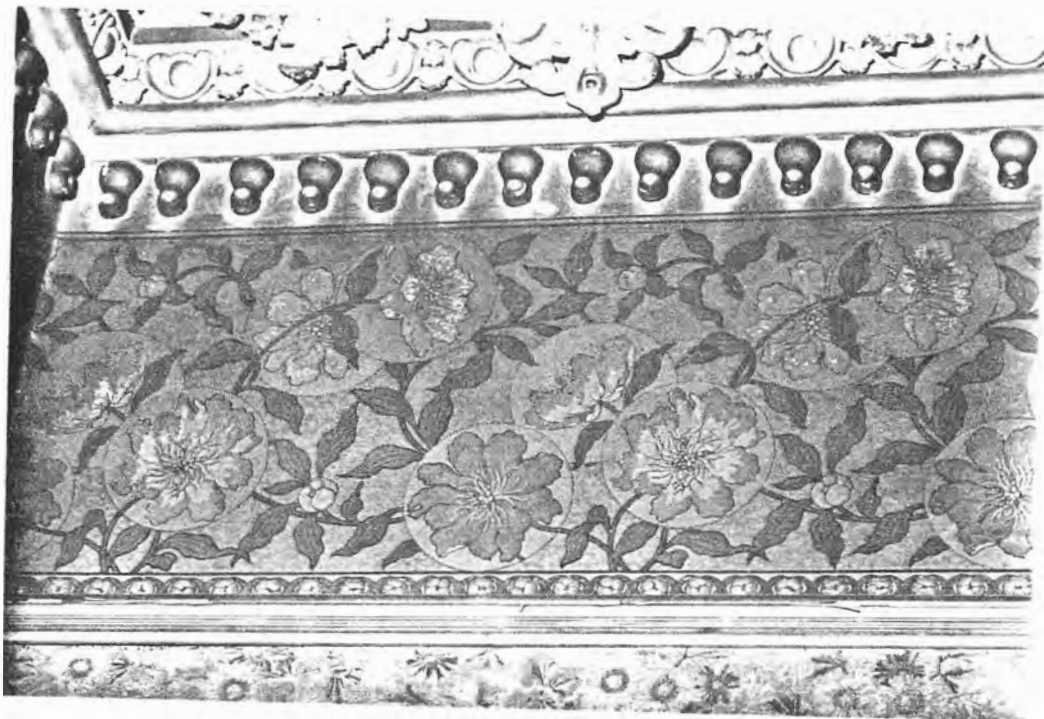
A

B

Figure 161. The Mallory-Neely parlor and music room gold and sage green flocked wall-field paper.

A. Flocked wall-field paper.

B. Detail of the tonally varied flocking used on the conventionalized flowers and some of the foliage.



A



B

Figure 162. Mallory-Neely frieze paper and advertisement.
 A. Detail of the contrasting yet coordinated Mallory-Neely frieze paper.
 B. Advertisement showing a similar frieze paper.
 Courtesy Cooper-Hewitt Museum.

Competitive American manufacturers followed the British lead and produced many papers of similar design. The Fr. Beck & Company of New York advertised French, Japanese and American patterns that were embossed, stamped, flocked and gilded. But they particularly stressed that flocked papers were highly popular among their clients. They stated also that "our artists are at work getting their hints from foreign patterns. . . . They can produce any pattern made abroad."³²²

By late century the Neelys apparently had a wide selection from Memphis specialty wallpaper shops of both domestic and imported papers from which to choose. Andrew Hensley in Memphis, An Illustrated Review of Its Commerce, Progress, and Importance gave a detailed description of the firm Degnan & Company, Art Decorators and Dealers in Wallpaper, which states that in addition to doing "all kinds of paper hanging in the most artistic manner," they "carry as fine a stock of wallpaper of the newest and most unique designs as any similar establishment in the country."³²³ A photograph in the Art Supplement of the Memphis Evening Scimitar shows the interior and the well-stocked inventory of another firm, the Dixie Paint and Wall Paper Company.³²⁴ (Figure 163)

³²²Fr. Breck & Co. Artistic Wallpapers, New York, 1881, 2 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

³²³Hensley, 74.

³²⁴Art Supplement to the Greater Memphis Edition of the Evening Scimitar, 79.



THE DIXIE PAINT & WALL PAPER CO.

Figure 163. Interior view of a well stocked turn-of-the-century Memphis wallpaper store. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Library and Information Center.

The Neelys' new wall treatment for the dining room followed the Aesthetic recommendation for mural division more closely by including a frieze, field, and dado. The dado alone remains in good condition, but small fragments and a photograph have recently helped restorers replicate the lost field paper. The exact appearance of the frieze is unknown. The Neelys created the dado or wainscot in their dining room with the fashionable new wall covering Linacrusta Walton, a product patented in 1877 by the Englishman Frederick Walton, the inventor of linoleum. It was first manufactured in America in 1883 by the firm of Fr. Beck & Company.³²⁵

The manufacturing process used to create Linacrusta was similar to linoleum but without cork. A composition using linseed oil and other ingredients was applied to a cloth or paper backing; while this was still in a semi-liquid state it was run through a cylindrical press and stamped with a design.³²⁶

By late century Linacrusta had become a popular wall covering in America because it was reputed to be an aesthetically attractive yet economical substitute for most costly tooled hangings; as easy to install as wallpaper and similarly hung; durable and sanitary. For these reasons it was often recommended for hallway and dining

³²⁵Bruce Bradbury, "Linacrusta Walton: Can the Democratic Wallcovering Be Revived," The Old House Journal Compendium, ed. Clem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980), 250.

³²⁶*Ibid.*, 252.

room use. J. Mohr Smith in Ornamental Interior stated that "it is waterproof, impermeable to moisture or dampness and can be washed with soap and water. It will not absorb infections and is therefore highly sanitary."³²⁷

There was also much versatility in patterns and designs from which to choose. The sponsor of a wallcoverings advertisement in Designs for Modern Buildings 1887 stated:

There are several hundred designs in Linacrusta, all in the leading styles which allow anyone fitting up a sumptuous Mansion to have a Linacrusta room in any particular style, including Renaissance, Arabian, Moresque, Japanese, Venetian, Louis XVI, Byzantine, Eastlake, Celtic, Egyptian, Greek, Medieval or Modern.³²⁸

Appropriately for a dining room, the pattern chosen by the Neelys is made up of an all-over design of fruit with pomegranates and grapes in relief, all burnished with gold against a leather brown background. (Figure 164) This is bordered above by a band of Near Eastern interlaced design the relief of which is highlighted in red. In writing about suitable subject matter for wall covering, Luther Hooper in his article on "The Decorative Arts" in The Cabinet Maker and Art Furnisher suggests that:

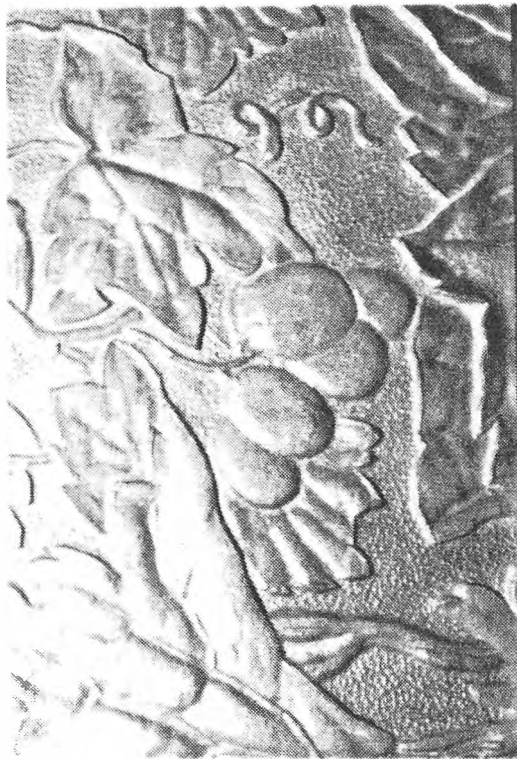
a suitable decoration for the dining room as a whole might be made by taking the season Autumn as a guiding motif. The beautiful and varied colors of the fading

³²⁷Smith, 110.

³²⁸Designs for Modern Buildings (New York: The New York Building Plan Company, 1887), 97, Special Collections, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.



A



B

Figure 164. Section and detail of the Lincrusta Walton covering the dado area in the Mallory-Neely dining room.

A. The upper band of interlaced lines was stained red. The center field is covered all over with fruit, vines, and foliage, the background of which was stained a dark green with the raised fruit and foliage burnished with gold. At the bottom is a wide band with framed strapwork panels which was also stained red.

B. Close-up of center field.

leaves are in harmony with the warmth and richness of tone required in the dining room. Most appropriate, too, would be the idea of plenty conveyed by representations of the various fruits of the earth gathered at this season.³²⁹

The field area above the Linacrusta dado was covered with a thin, embossed wallpaper also emulating tooled leather. Katherine Lynn in Wallpaper in America discourses at length about imported Japanese leather papers that became popular in America in the late nineteenth century. She states that this fake leather effect on paper was created by putting dampened paper through cylinders to impress the designs which were then later painted and varnished to simulate the appearance of leather.³³⁰ An advertisement in the Memphis city directory for DuVal, Barnum, and Gottlieb, Importers of Fine Wallpapers, states, "We are offering the greatest line ever shown in the South of imported Domestic Wallpapers, Wall Fabrics, Japanese Leather, and Decorative Novelties."³³¹ Both the Linacrusta and the field paper chosen by the Neelys for use in their dining room gave the impression of Renaissance-Baroque era tooled leather yet were products of modern ingenuity and technology. In appearance both follow the Aesthetic vogue for the "old" and the handmade.

³²⁹Luther Hooper, "The Decorative Arts," The Cabinet Maker and Furnisher (London: 1 May 1882), 207, Special Collections, Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York.

³³⁰Lynn, Wallpaper in America, 441.

³³¹R. L. Polk's Memphis City Directory for 1902 (Memphis: R. L. Polk and Co., 1902), 273.

Drapery-lace curtains. The Neelys not only altered the wall treatment of these main floor rooms but also changed the window treatment in accordance with Aesthetic taste.³³² There is no evidence as to how these windows were originally treated prior to their late century alteration, but it was probably similar to the elaborately swagged, overwrought, fringed, and tasseled High Victorian drapery treatment used across the country from the 1850s.³³³

Charles Locke Eastlake in Hints on Household Taste was the first of the reformers who encouraged homeowners to return to simple window treatment. He reminded his reading public that curtains had been created originally for practical purposes such as warmth and privacy and not for ornamental embellishment to an interior. He recommended and illustrated straight panels of plain or slightly embroidered fabric hanging by rings from poles, the decorative ends of which alone provided ornamentation for the entire window ensemble.³³⁴ (Figure 165)

³³²These drapery panels survived until recent years when they disintegrated. As soon as funds are available these will be replicated and restored. Mrs. Daisy Mallory remarked about these draperies in an interview, "They've been in the house since I was a little girl as long as I can remember" (Ruth Jacquemine, "Trends in Living: Elegance Recalled from Earlier Era," Commercial Appeal, 28 April 1961, 1(2)).

³³³A Commercial Appeal photograph with caption (28 December 1941, 2(5)) documents typical examples with heavy fabrics, embellished with fringes and topped by large ornate cornices. These survived into the mid-twentieth century adorning the parlor bay window of Annesdale.

³³⁴Eastlake, 95.

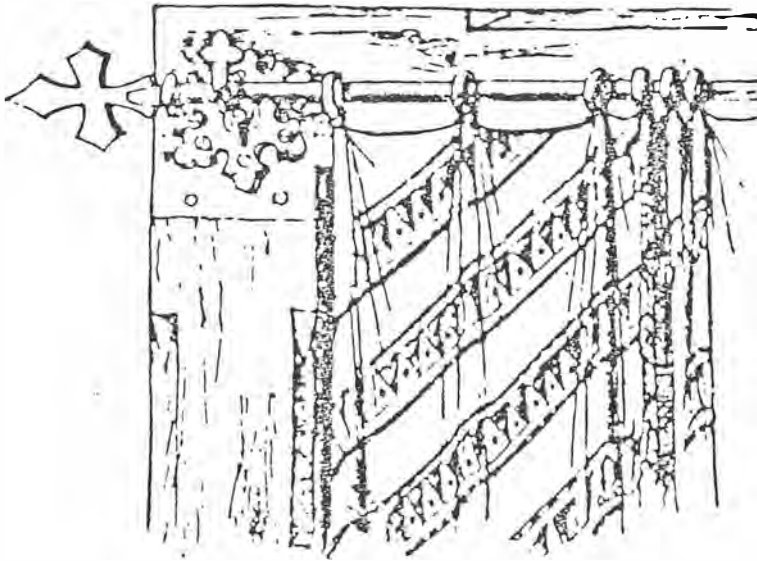


Figure 165. Engraving from Charles Locke Eastlake, Hints on Household Taste (1878). It illustrates the author's suggested reform drapery treatment (based on medieval proto-type) in which an exposed rod with ornamental ends and drapery hanging in natural folds from drapery rings are used. Courtesy Dover Publications, Inc.

Other Aesthetic reformers agreed with and followed Eastlake's advice in advocating a return to simplicity in drapery treatment. (Figure 166) In Artistic Houses or How to Furnish with Taste Rhoda and Agnes Garrett attacked the High Victorian use of "too much garniture" at the window with "the employment of masses of heavy material, with deep lambrequins and valances edged perhaps with heavy fringes."³³⁵ They suggested that the beauty of a window treatment was not in elaborately embellished and richly patterned textiles but "the chief beauty of any drapery should be looked for in the folds into which it naturally falls."³³⁶ They labeled these "soft and artistic folds."³³⁷ The author of The Art of Furnishing concurred by stating that to create a truly artistic effect in drapery treatment depended on color, texture and the aptitude for the chosen fabric to fall into soft and graceful folds.³³⁸

For the parlor and music room curtains the Neelys chose a brilliant crimson silk plush fabric. (Figure 167) The color was possibly chosen to coordinate with the predominately red Brussels carpet and upholstery in the room. The Garrett sisters, for example, stressed that the color of the drapery should harmonize with other

³³⁵Garrett and Garrett, 36.

³³⁶Ibid., 75.

³³⁷Ibid.

³³⁸Cooper, 67, 93.

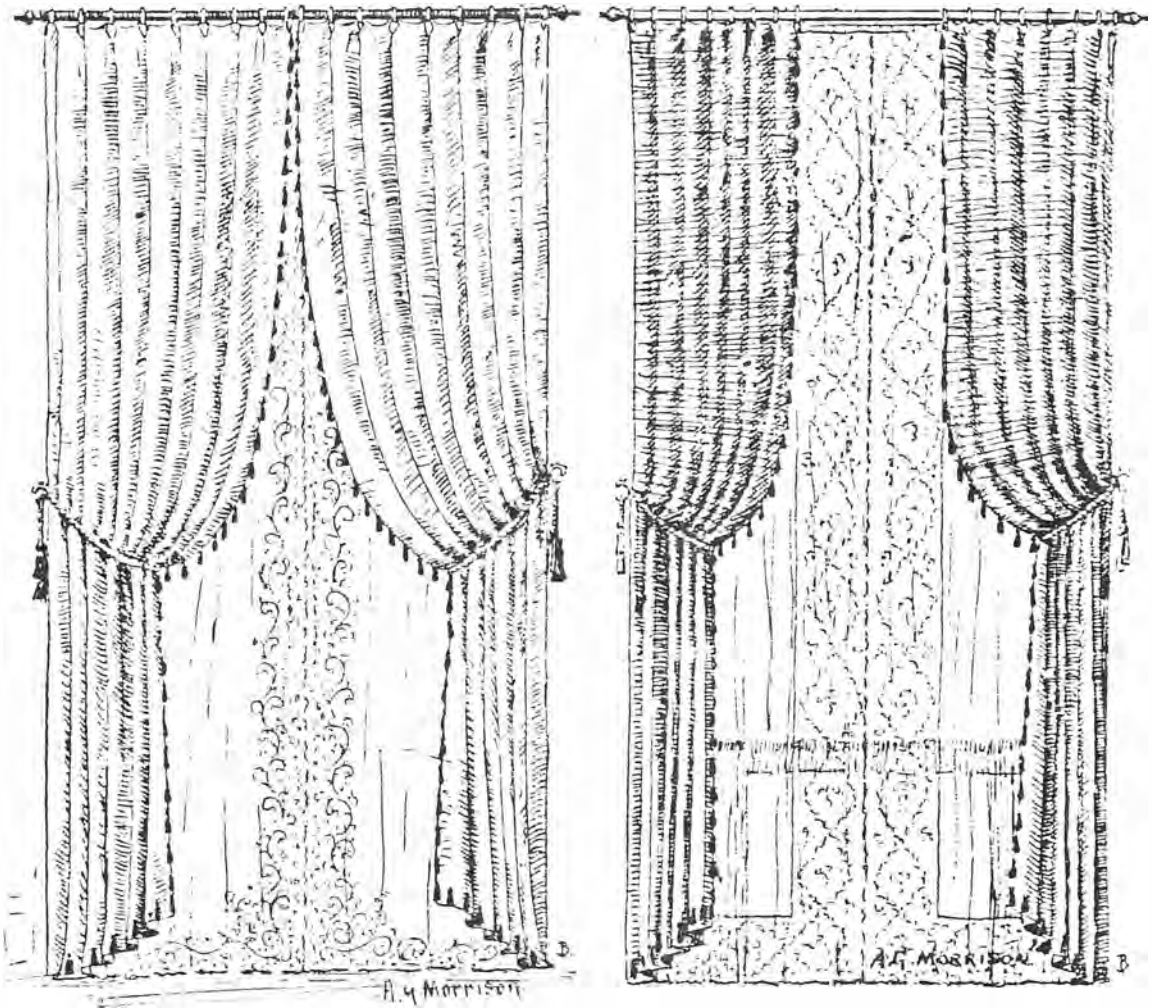


Figure 166. The Mallory-Neely parlor and music room draperies accord with these late century line drawings of suggested drapery treatment in the reform mode from A. G. Morrison, Drapery, Decoration and Architecture (1906). These include drapery panels minimally ornamented with fringes. These panels hang in straight folds from a simple rod and are tied back in the center. An inner glass curtain of sheer lace panels completes the ensemble.



Figure 167. Document of the original c. 1890 crimson plush drapery of the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room. Also shown are several of the original drapery rings.

colors in the room.³³⁹ F. A. Moreland's The Curtain Maker's Handbook suggested red as a choice for drapery because it was "a positive color, advancing, and asserting itself and producing the effects of warmth."³⁴⁰

Because of its beauty, softness, and ability to fall into folds, silk velour plush was especially recommended by the various Aesthetic-oriented decorating guides. Mrs. Block Putnam reported "In This Season's Drapery" that flat velour in plain colors is very much the fashion."³⁴¹ In The Art of Decoration Mrs. H. R. Haweis recommended curtain panels made of plush because these curtains "hang in soft, long folds, are pleasant to the touch, and are in every way attractive."³⁴²

The Neelys' parlor and music room draperies were edged with a simple crimson fringe as their only decoration. Eastlake and other reformers in their opposition to elaborate High Victorian drapery fringes and embellishments advocated the use of simple fringes. They argued that these were historically honest because the self

³³⁹Garrett and Garrett, 75.

³⁴⁰F. A. Moreland, The Curtain Maker's Handbook (New York: Lee & Shepherd Publisher, 1889; reprint, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1979), 10.

³⁴¹Mrs. Block Putnam, "In This Season's Draperies," Decorator and Furnisher, 22, No. 1 (April 1893), 17, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

³⁴²Haweiss, 301.

edges of fabrics had originally been plaited and tied into knots and fringes as they were taken off the loom.³⁴³

The parlor and music room draperies hang in straight folds from brass rings on wooden poles sheathed with decoratively hammered metal. Each end of these is embellished with a brass Turkish crescent and star which provided yet a further touch of the Near Eastern and the exotic. (Figure 168) Following Eastlake's advice, the author of The Curtain Maker's Handbook suggested that "drapery poles should have very bold ornamental ends."³⁴⁴

To coordinate harmoniously with the other metal drapery hardware, the tie-back for each curtain panel is made up of brass rings, balls, and metallic roping composed of plaited interlaced brass wires. (Figures 169 and 170) The author of a Lowenstein's Department Store newspaper advertisement stated that they now had the following items available for their customers: "cornice poles, brass and silk cord drapery loops, extensive brackets, bay window brass joints, curtain supports, [and] ornamental nails."³⁴⁵

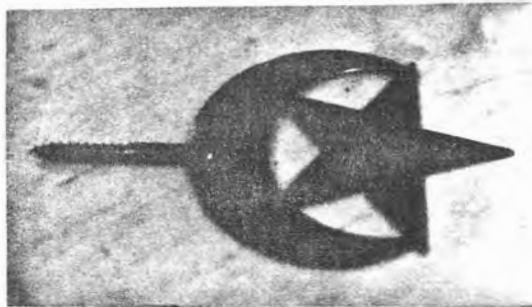
In all of the main floor windows the Neelys used lace curtains as secondary drapery hanging on a rod back of the heavier long curtains, as was late nineteenth century custom.³⁴⁶ H. J. Cooper

³⁴³Garrett and Garrett, 36.

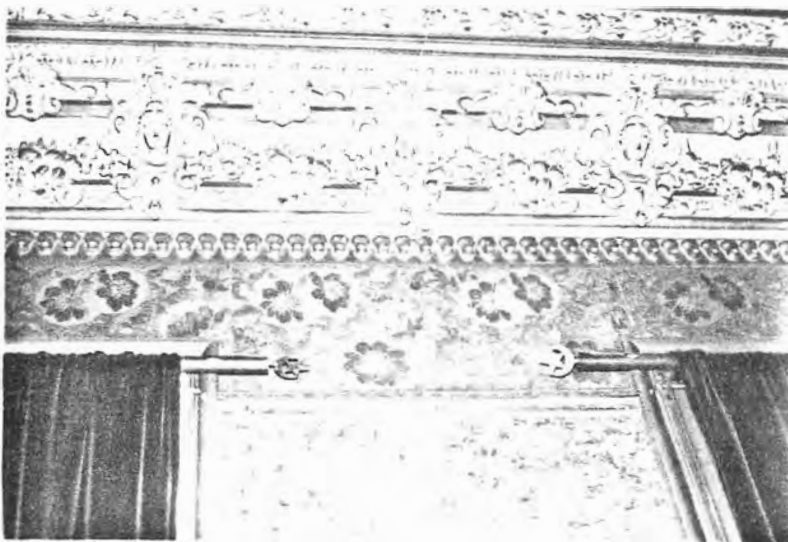
³⁴⁴Moreland, 273.

³⁴⁵Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 23 November 1884, 1.

³⁴⁶Almost all of the originals have been replaced but some panels of curtain lace do survive.



A



B

Figure 168. Drapery hardware.

- A. Brass Turkish star and crescent used to ornament the drapery poles.
- B. The textured metal-sheathed wooden drapery poles used in the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room.

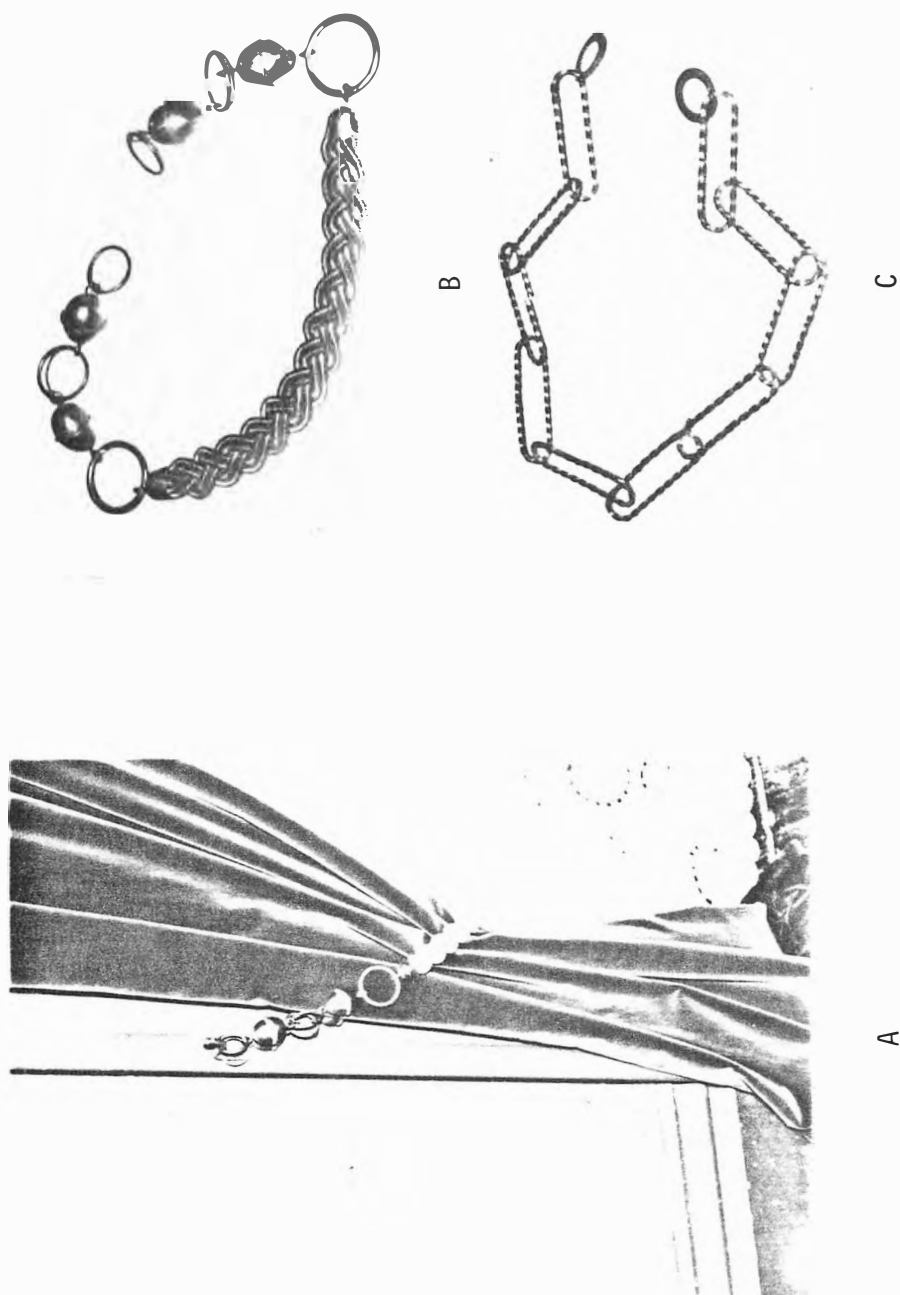
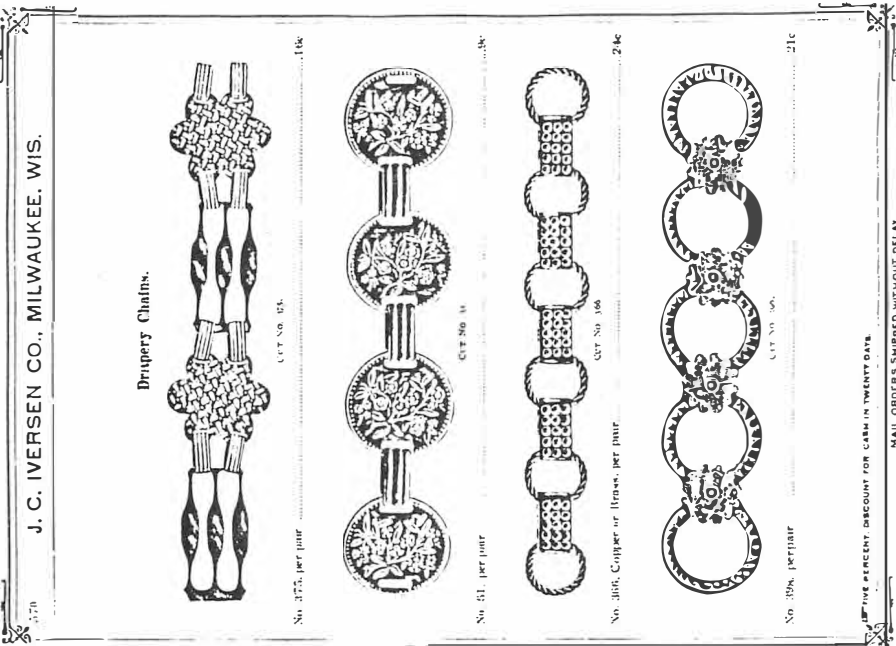
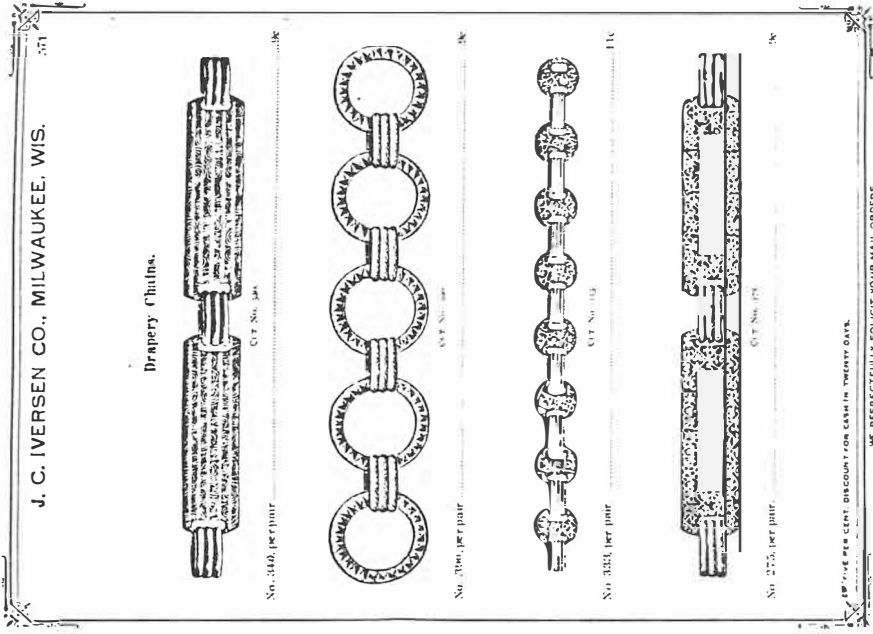


Figure 169. Two types of brass drapery tie backs used as part of the Mallory-Neely window treatments.

A. Mallory-Neely parlor window.

B. Ornamental brass drapery tie-back.

C. Brass drapery chain.



B

A

Figure 170. Two pages from the 1891 J. C. Iverson Company catalog showing various metallic drapery chains. Courtesy Chicago Historical Society.

A. Page 370.

B. Page 371.

in The Art of Furnishing recommended the use of "lace curtains behind the heavier stuff curtains" because they give "a certain dress and finish to a room."³⁴⁷ Another author suggested their use because they gave "a coziness, brightness, and cheer" to an interior and because of "the individual artistic effect their handmade qualities produced."³⁴⁸

Lace, an ancient craft, was very much affected by the industrial Revolution via the mechanization of lace production from 1809.³⁴⁹ The author of an article entitled "The Manufacture of Lace" in the Furniture Gazette described one of the new lace-making machines.

The total length of the machine is 30 feet, and the height is 9 feet. It contains 2,907 shuttles, or as they are technically called "bobbins and carriages," and upwards of 100 warp beams. The speed it is worked at varies from 110 to 120 picks per minute, which means that the shuttles are passed through the machine that number of times in each minute. From its great size and the multiplicity of parts it forms one of the finest examples of mechanical skill ever concentrated in one machine.³⁵⁰

Though the quality was lowered from that of handmade lace, mechanization made lace available to a larger public at a much lower cost.

³⁴⁷Cooper, 94.

³⁴⁸Sanitary Manufacturing Co., 32.

³⁴⁹C. Lewis Hind, "The Progress of the Industrial Arts, No. 2--Lace," Art Journal (1891), 88, Special Collections, Watkins Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

³⁵⁰"The Manufacture of Lace," The Furniture Gazette (3 October 1874), 1056; Special Collections, Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The machine also made possible for the first time large panels of lace for products such as drapery.³⁵¹ Because of its increased availability and lowered cost, by the second half of the nineteenth century lace had become a characteristic feature of Victorian interior design. (Figures 171 and 172) Patricia Wardle in Victorian Lace states that in no other century was lace so admired and because of this mania its use became habitual among Victorians.³⁵²

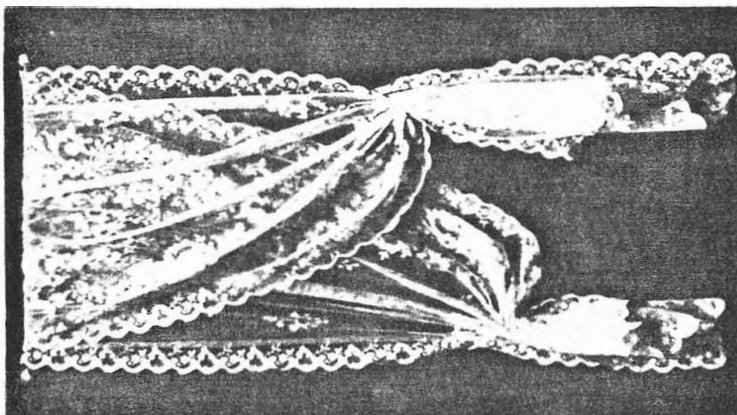
Probably the most beautiful panels surviving in the Mallory-Neely House are examples of Battenburg lace. (Figure 173) Battenburg was one of the more expensive types as opposed to the more common machine-made laces such as Nottingham. Called Battenburg or Renaissance Lace, it is a modern lace fashioned of tape motifs joined by lace stitches. It fulfilled the late Victorian love for heavy laces. Battenburg was usually handmade for costume and machine made for drapery panels.

Without any surviving documentation, the source of the Neely draperies is unknown. Through most of the nineteenth century, advertisements for dry goods and general furniture stores in Memphis newspapers featured drapery goods as part of their inventory. The owners of the George Mitchell Furniture Store at 308 Main Street, for example, stated that they sold furniture, carpets and

³⁵¹George C. Cole, A Complete Dictionary of Dry Goods (Chicago: W. B. Conkey, 1892), 229, Special Collections, Strong Museum, Rochester, New York.

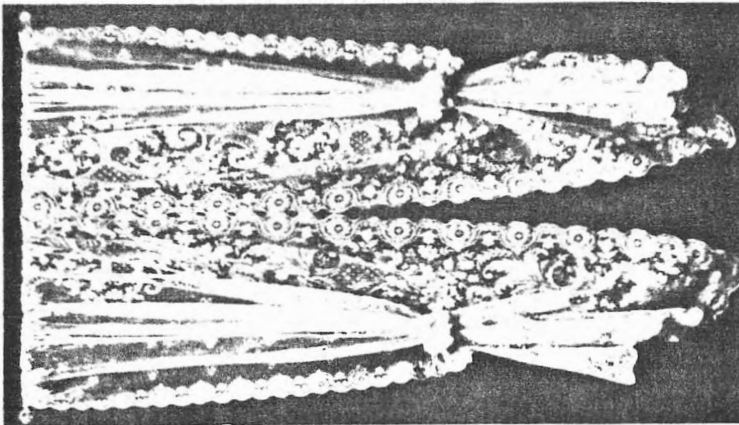
³⁵²Patricia Wardle, Victorian Lace (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), 17.

All
Curtains
Sold
Only
in
Pairs



Point De Bruxelles

3 1/2 yards long, 52 inches wide. \$2.50 a pair.



Point De Bruxelles

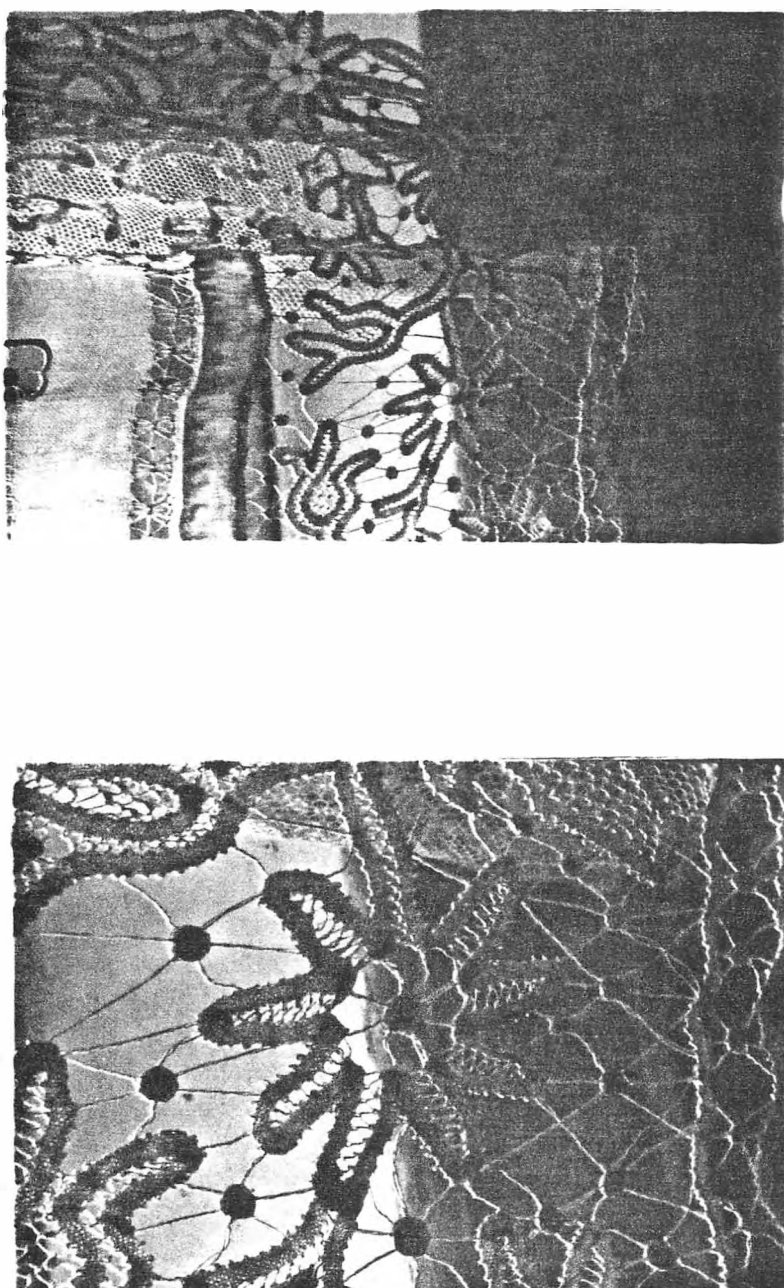
3 1/2 yards long, 52 inches wide. \$2.50 a pair.

Figure 171. Advertisement for sets of lace drapery panels from the 1902 catalog of The Sanitary Manufacturing Company. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

Everyone feels the influence of walls that have a harmonious blending of color, but it is not everyone who can produce the desired effect. Much depends upon the way a room is lighted. The position of the windows will frequently make a great difference in the effectiveness of the colors

*Pointe d'Arabe
Lace Curtain.*

Figure 172. Mandel Brothers' 1901 catalog. Because of its hand-crafted beauty lace drapery, like the panel illustrated above, was recommended for home use by the Interior Design Department of the Mandel Brothers' Store of Chicago. Courtesy Chicago Historical Society.



A

B

Figure 173. Details of Battenburg lace drapery panels that survive in the Mallory-Neely House.

A. Characteristic tape designs of Battenburg lace.

B. Tape designs over machine made netting.

drapery.³⁵³ Advertisements for specialist drapery businesses do not appear until after the early twentieth century. The 1902 Memphis directory lists DeLamotte and Gilbert, Draperies and Drapery Hangers.³⁵⁴ During the later decades of the nineteenth century it appears that the various Memphis department stores were actually the major supply source for curtains and drapery goods. According to newspaper advertisements during this time these department stores ran a brisk business in curtain and drapery sales. Both Lowenstein's and Menkin's often ran large advertisements promoting a wide variety of drapery goods including hardware.

All major Memphis department stores sold lace curtains in their drapery departments. Menkin's, Goldsmith's and Lowenstein's all promoted frequently the sale of lace curtains. But Lowenstein's claimed to have the largest selection in the city.³⁵⁵ Their advertisement on 23 November 1884 in the Memphis Daily Appeal stated:

We will show the most elegant line of Real Lace Curtains, Guipure D'Art Lace Curtains, Nottingham Lace Curtains, Florentine Curtains, and Vestibule Laces in Madras. Real Lace, French Guipure and Nottingham Lace never shown in this City and at prices below all competition outside of New York.³⁵⁶

³⁵³Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 17 December 1872, 7.

³⁵⁴R. L. Polk's Memphis City Directory for 1902 (Memphis: R. L. Polk & Son, 1902), 234.

³⁵⁵Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 27 March 1887, 1.

³⁵⁶Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 23 November 1884, 1.

Portieres. Not only did the Neelys' windows receive new treatment, but also fashionable door curtains or portieres were installed in the two great arched pocket doorways between the parlor and music room and the sitting and dining rooms.³⁵⁷ By late century portieres had become an ubiquitous part of the Victorian interior for all classes.³⁵⁸ The author in Our Homes and How to Beautify Them stated that "the substitution of drapery for doors is part of the Aesthetic craze."³⁵⁹ Constance Harrison in Woman's Handiwork in Modern Homes declared that the use of fabric portieres is preferable to the "blank inartistic monotony of our ordinary paneled doors."³⁶⁰ F. A. Moreland in The Curtain Maker's Handbook, while directing homeowners to hang portieres on poles mounted on sockets between the jams of doors, stated:

The idea of decorating the doorway is coming more into general favor, many discarding their doors as useless incumbrances; of course the outside doors and others separating rooms requiring special seclusion must be retained. All other doors might as well be removed and their places filled with curtains which might add an elegant feature to the room, and also allow a freer circulation of air and temperature, throughout the house.³⁶¹

³⁵⁷All of the original portiere fabrics were replaced with new ones in this century.

³⁵⁸See, for example, "Portieres," The Old House Journal (September 1977), 103-104.

³⁵⁹Our Homes and How to Beautify Them, 43.

³⁶⁰Harrison, 161.

³⁶¹Moreland, 179.

The author of Woman's Handiwork in Modern Homes attributed the origins of the modern use of portieres to the Aesthetic reformers' interest in the exotic and Eastern, stating that they give an interior "an Arabian Night's air."³⁶²

The writer of a Lowenstein's Department Store advertisement in the Memphis Daily Appeal stated that:

We will show Monday morning full lines of new Turkoman Portiers, Velour Portiers, Raw Silk Portiers, Shelia Portiers, Vienna Chenille Portiers. These goods are the handsomest ever shown in Memphis and the designs are exclusively our own. The prices range from \$5.00 to \$100 a pair, and all are marked to sell for little more than they cost to import.³⁶³

Grilles. Following fashion the Neelys also added ornamental grilles above these two sets of portieres. The author of the various late-century interior decorating guides called these by many names other than grilles. The Decorator and Furnisher labeled them "overdoor lattice or wooden lattice transoms."³⁶⁴ Brunner and Tryson in Interior Decoration called them a "transom of spindles" or "open fretwork."³⁶⁵ The design guides also pointed out that along with portieres these spandrel spindle screens represented yet another

³⁶²Harrison, 160.

³⁶³Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 23 November 1884, 1.

³⁶⁴Decorator and Furnisher, 19, No. 4 (January 1891), 126, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Coopers-town, New York.

³⁶⁵Brunner and Tryon, 23.

influence of Oriental exoticism. (Figure 174) J. Mohr Smith in Ornamental Interiors said that they were an influence of imported mushrebiyeh lattice work screens from Egypt made up of turned camphor and sandal wood spindles.³⁶⁶

In the Mallory-Neely House the elaborate grille filling the arch above the portieres between the parlor and music room is made up of many tiny gilded wooden spindles which appear to be metal. (Figure 175A) The one used between the sitting and dining room is quite different in appearance being made up of heavier spindles and curving members, all with a natural wood finish. (Figure 175B)

The catalog of John A. Ganger and Company of Chicago is filled with examples of "fancy grilles or fretwork" ranging from very elaborate and costly to simple versions. The author of the catalog states that almost any size and variation can be constructed. He also states that they come in red oak, birch, ash and many other woods and in various finishes like enameled white; even unfinished grilles were available which had the advantage of allowing coordination with home decor.³⁶⁷ Due to their widespread availability and use, by the late nineteenth century grilles had joined portieres and lace curtains as a characteristic component of the American Victorian interior. (Figures 176 and 177)

³⁶⁶Smith, 117.

³⁶⁷John A. Ganger Company Catalog No. 50, 38.

J. W. BOUGHTON

MANUFACTURER OF

Moorish and Egyptian Fret Work and Grilles

No
Modern Home
is complete in its
ornamentation
without the use of
Grille and Fret
Work in connec-
tion with its

Interior Decorations and Hangings

This work is used
in arches, door-
ways, windows,
alcoves, hallways,
transoms, stair-
cases, double par-
lors, and to divide
a long parlor, or
other rooms.

We make
a large line
of them, and shall
be glad to furnish
special

Original Designs
by our own artist
for any style de-
sired, with an esti-
mate of the cost.
They are made in
natural woods to
match any style of
finish.

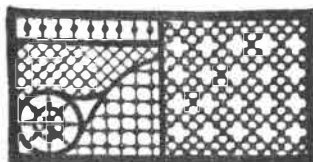
Send for book of
designs and prices.



101½ Mahogany 101



100



We manufacture Folding Screens in
great variety, and are constantly adding
new styles to our stock.

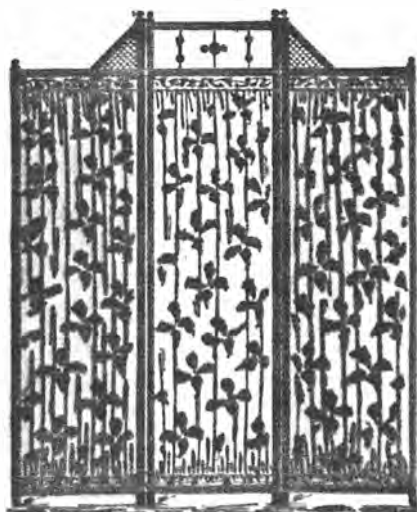
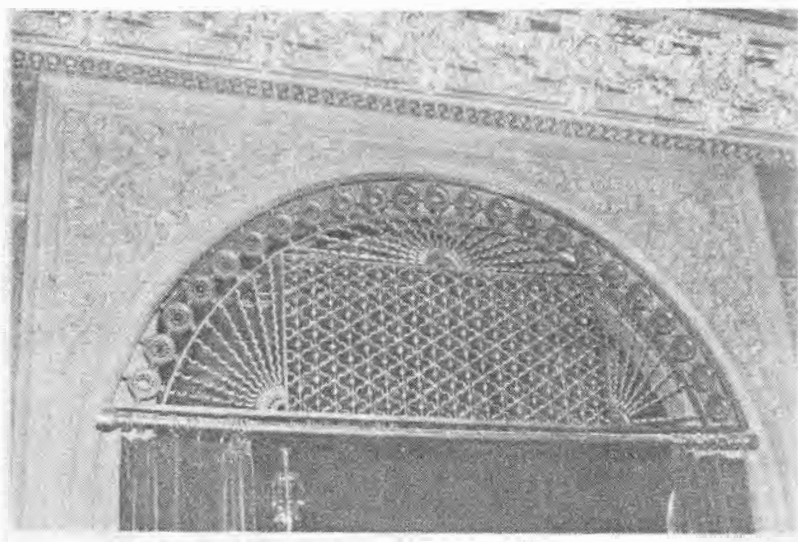


Figure 174. A page from the catalog of the 1893 J. W. Boughton Company emphasizes the Eastern and exotic nature of transom grilles. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.



A



B

Figure 175. Transom grilles in the Mallory-Neely House.
A. Between the parlor and music room.
B. Between the sitting and dining rooms.

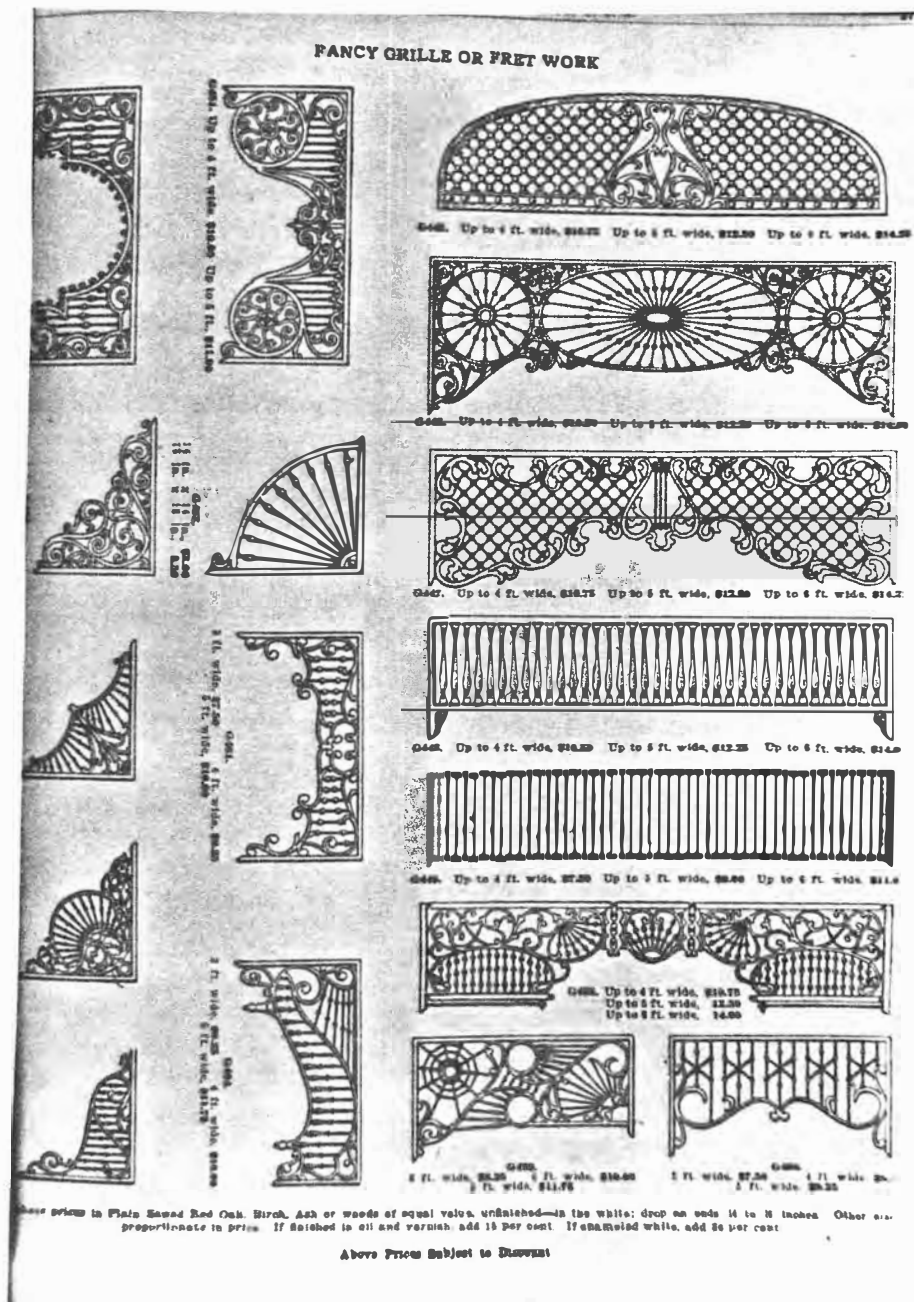
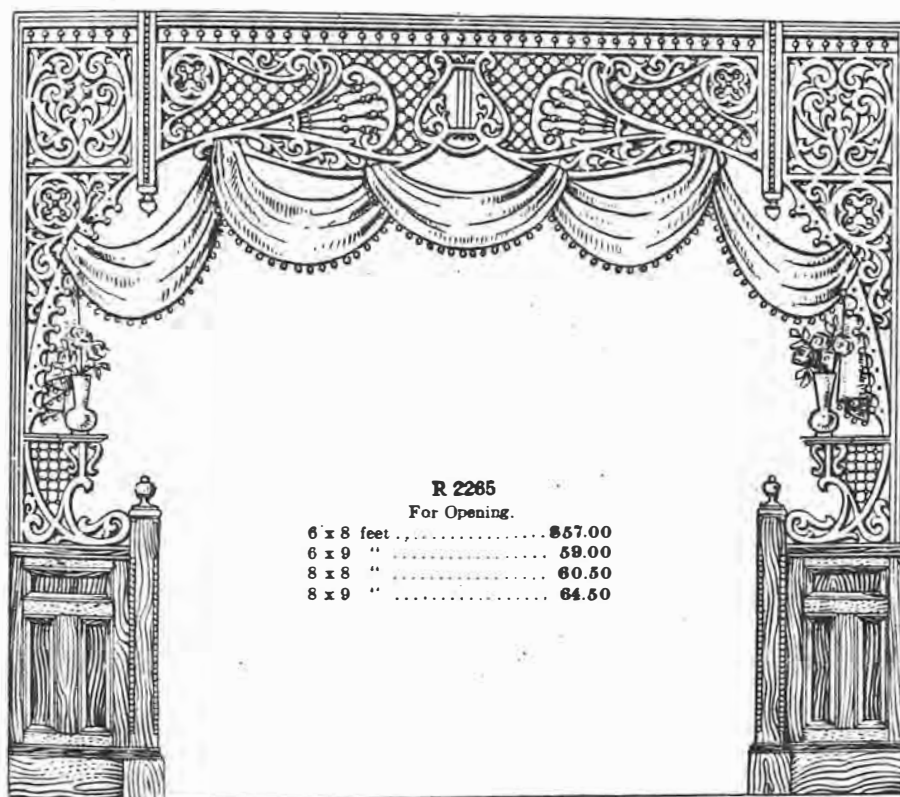
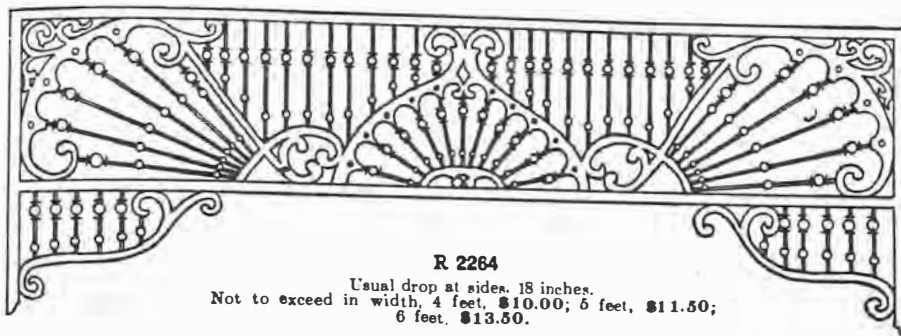


Figure 176. Characteristic page from the 1893 Boughton Company catalog showing a wide assortment of decorative transom grilles. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

HUTTIG, MOSS MFG. CO., ST. JOSEPH, MO.

283

GRILLES.



Above prices for woodwork only, unvarnished (in the white).
 For filling and varnishing (ordinary gloss finish), add 20 per cent to above prices.
 For cabinet rubbed varnish finish, or in white and gold, add 30 per cent to above prices.
 Prices are for plain sawed oak or woods of equal value.

ABOVE PRICES SUBJECT TO DISCOUNT.

Figure 177. Page from the 1903 catalog of the Huttig, Moss Manufacturing Company showing transom grilles and listing prices and choices of wood and finish. Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.

Etagere mantelpieces. Probably the most "artistic" Aesthetic additions to the interiors of the Neely home were new mantels that replaced many of the original circa 1852 Italianate/Rococo style marble ones. The two in the parlor and those in the dining, sitting, and several second floor bedrooms were replaced with more fashionable wooden etagere mantels. Almost all of these new mantels on the first and second floors are virtual "monuments" of Aesthetic taste and design. These are made up of elaborate wooden mantel and overmantel frames, colorful art tile facings surrounding the firebox and covering the hearth, and all sorts of artistic metal fittings such as grates, firebacks and sides, fenders, and fire tools. (Figure 178) Each part of the whole fireplace ensemble is profusely embellished with Aesthetic-favored surface ornament. Never before or since had the humble fireplace received so much "artistic" attention. The writer of the J. L. Mott Iron Works Catalog stated: "The fireplace in these days of our Modern Renaissance is one of the most important if not the most important features in the decoration of our homes."³⁶⁸

With the development of mechanized forms of heating the fireplace had begun to lose its importance as the focal point of a room. The late-century emphasis on the fireplace is reflective of the renewed emphasis by reformers on the hearth as a nostalgic symbol

³⁶⁸J. L. Mott Iron Works Illustrated Catalogue, New York, 1882, n.p. [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.



Figure 178. The Mallory-Neely sitting room mantel is a monument of Aesthetic design. It is made up of "artistic" parts including an elaborately carved wooden mantel, tilework, and a variety of metal crafts inside and around the firebox.

of an earlier, healthier, and simpler, non-industrial, rural-oriented life and of the family circle, domesticity, and the moral home.

By restoring the framework of the fireplace as a major form of ornamental and decorative design, the Aesthetic reformers helped "to bring it back" as an important symbolic factor in interior decoration.³⁶⁹ (Figure 179) Charles Locke Eastlake is usually given credit for introducing this new type of artistic mantel, replacing the long popular marble and cast iron types.³⁷⁰ Both tastemakers and manufacturers followed Eastlake's example so that by the later decades of the century the restored centrality of the fireplace as a focal point and the use of elaborate wooden mantelpieces for these had become commonplace.

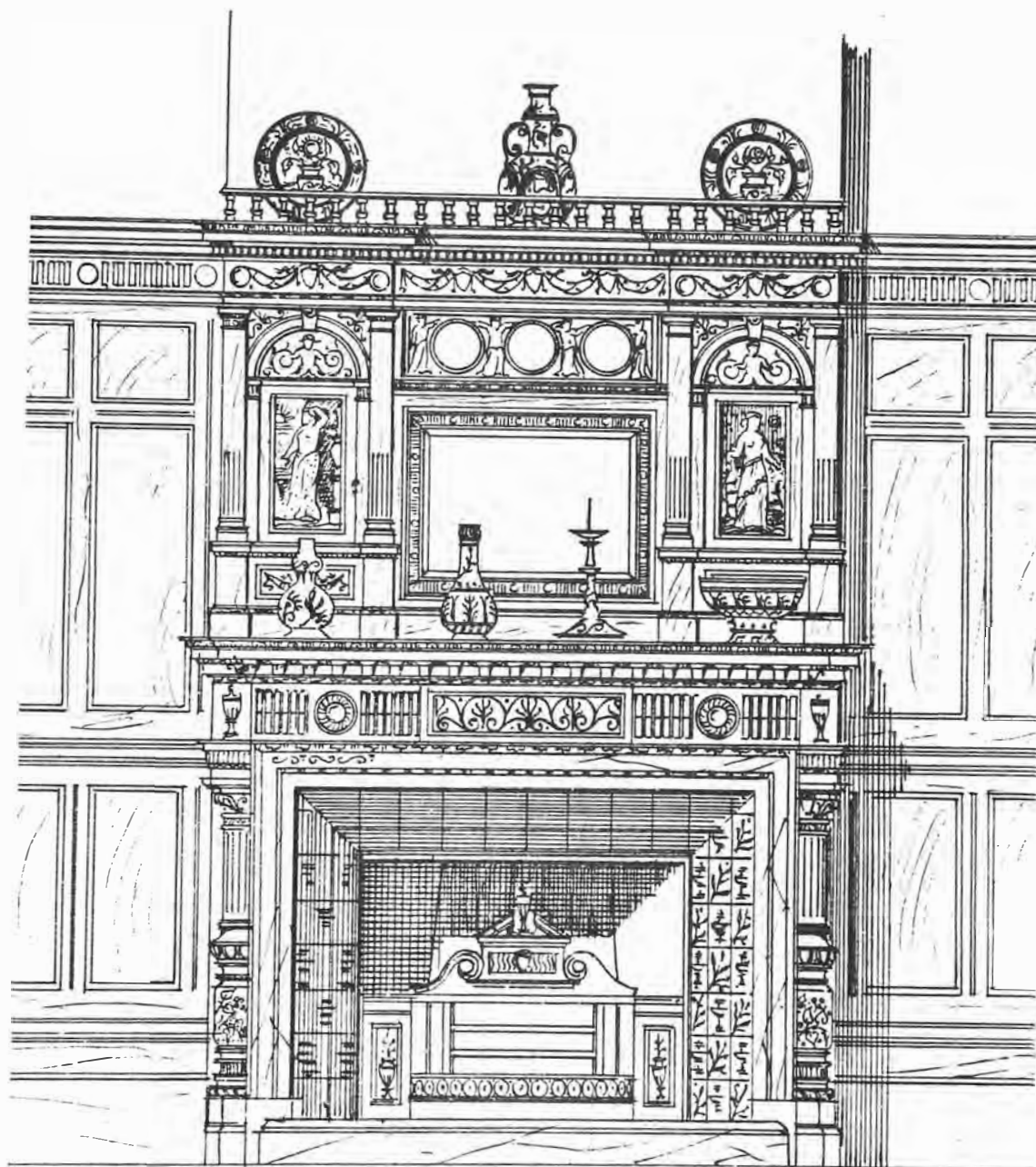
Modern household taste has firmly accepted the open Fire-Place as an indispensable adjunct of the home and our architects have turned this taste in the right direction by designing Fire-Places which shall sustain the artistic effect of the entire house. Under these conditions the Fire-Place has rapidly become the center of social and decorative interest, being the one spot in the room towards which all eyes are naturally drawn, and around which the amenities of home find their best expression.³⁷¹

Aesthetic reformers favored the wooden etagere mantelpiece for a variety of reasons. The wood had a visual warmth unlike

³⁶⁹Flaherty, "Eastlake," 267.

³⁷⁰Ibid.

³⁷¹Some Artistic Fire-Places and Their Surroundings, Smith and Anthony Stove Company, Boston 1885, n.p. [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.



Design for Fireplace

Figure 179. Characteristic English Aesthetic fireplace with carved wooden mantel, art tiles, and artistic metal work as illustrated in Bernard Smith, Designs and Sketches for Furniture in the Neo-Jacobean and Other Styles (1876). Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.

marble or iron. The turned parts and simple lines gave an outward appearance of "honest" handcrafted construction. (Figure 180) All parts of the mantel seemed functional yet Aesthetic. The turned parts, general design and ornamentation were a very free revival of Old English types, mainly Jacobean, thought suitable for Queen Anne interiors. The added use of tile provided not only visual contrast with the wood but was also sanitary. It represented too the revival of another old handicraft evocative of antique forms such as Dutch Delftware tiles. The considerable "artistic" metal embellishment of these fireplaces was part of the Aesthetic Movement's revival of interest in metal arts especially brass, as an old medieval handicraft.³⁷²

Yet despite all the emphasis on handcrafted objects, the entire Aesthetic fireplace is very much reflective of industrialization and mechanization. Entrepreneurial tile, metal, and mantelpiece manufacturers ingeniously used every up-to-date technological process available to produce their product. (Figures 181 and 182) Numerous surviving trade catalogs illustrate the wide choices of style and quality they made available to the consumer.

Mr. Neely chose mantels of the highest quality for his home. Many of these are made up of costly woods. Rosettes, scrolling foliage, ribbons, fluting, urns, garlands, fruit and flowers, incised patterns, and fanciful masks represent some of the elaborate carved

³⁷²Decorator and Furnisher, 8, No. 2 (May 1886), 187, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

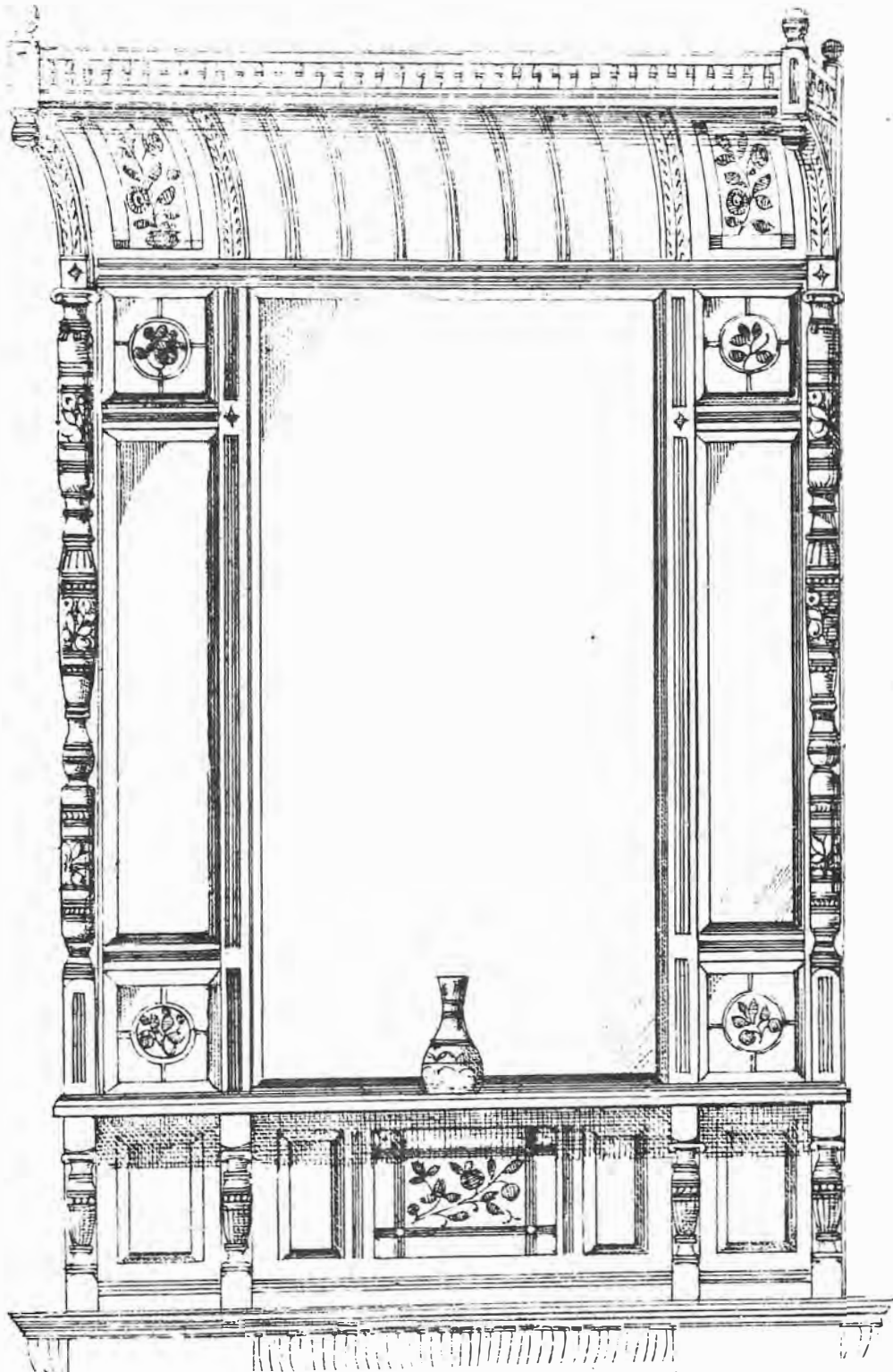
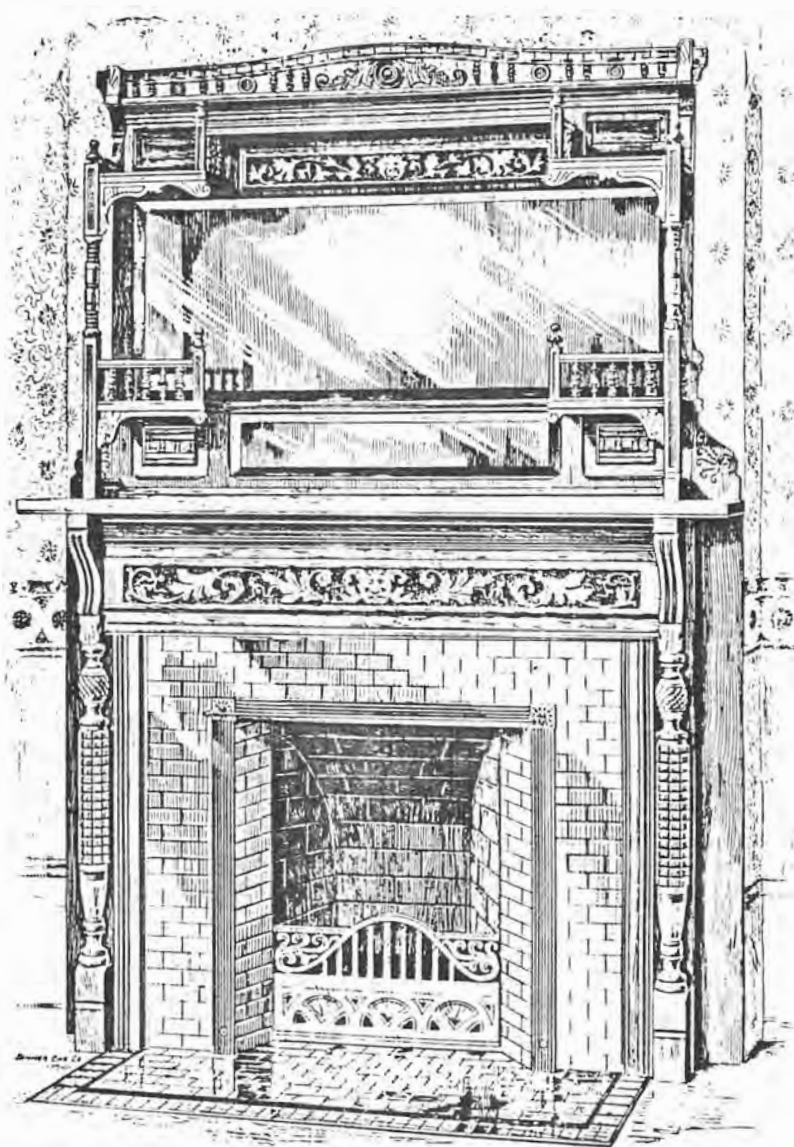


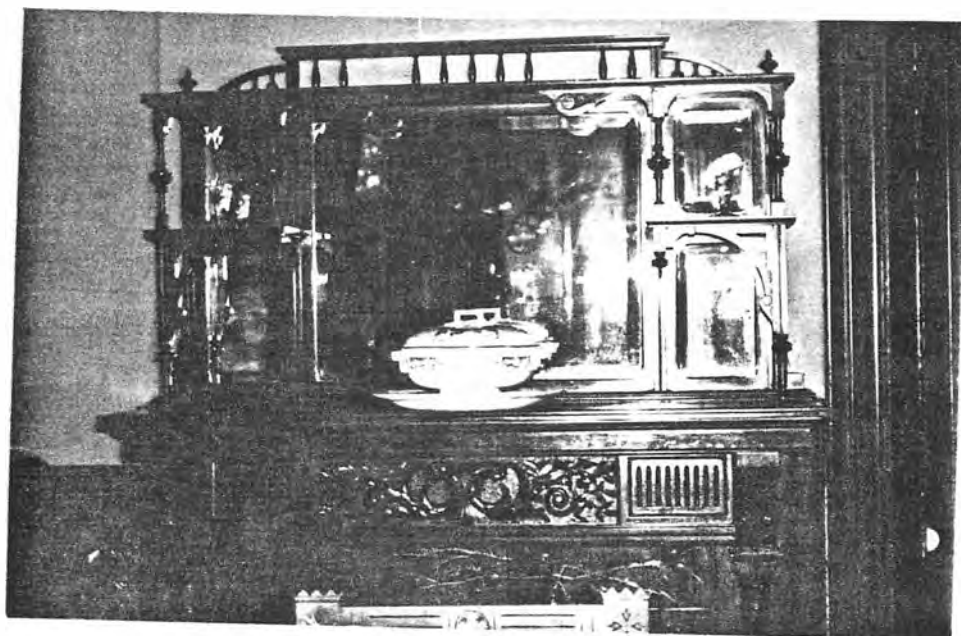
Figure 180. Sketch for an English etagere overmantel by A. Jonquet from Original Sketches for Art Furniture (1879). Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.



MANTEL, No. 0.	Height, 7 ft. 2 in.	1 French Bevel Plate, 18 x 48 in.
As shown..... \$93.50.	Width, 5 ft.	1 " " " 6 x 30 in.
With Club House Grate, 90.00.	Shell, 12 in.	

SEE PAGE 289 FOR MATERIAL BELONGING TO MANTELS

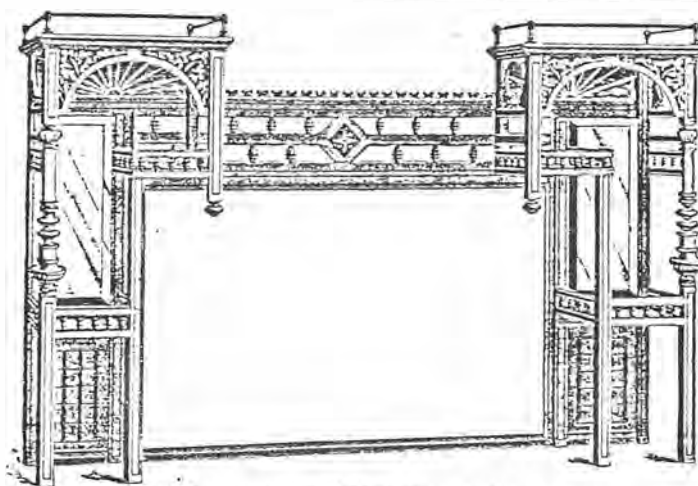
Figure 181. A later (1891) mass produced American version of the Aesthetic fireplace from the trade catalog of the J. C. Iverson Company. Wooden etagere mantels such as this were substituted by Mr. J. C. Neely for the original marble Italianate mantels throughout the first and second floors of the Mallory-Neely House. Courtesy Chicago Historical Society.



A

10

PAPE BROS. & KÜGEMANN, CINCINNATI.



No. 181.—MANTEL TOP.

Walnut, or Imitation Ebony, or Imitation Mahogany. Hand Carved and Engraved, with one Plate 24x40 inches, and two Plates 64x18 inches.

Dimensions: . . . Width, 60 inches; Height, 42 inches..

B

Figure 182. Etagere overmantel in the Mallory-Neely House and overmantel from a catalog.
 A. Mallory-Neely dining room etagere overmantel.
 B. A similar mass produced American overmantel in the Aesthetic mode from the catalog of the Pape Brothers and Kugemann Company (n.d.). Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.

decoration. (Figure 183) To ornament a superstructure of bracketed shelves above the mantel, turned spindles of all sizes are used to create quarter circle fans and tiny balustrades. (Figure 184) Characteristically, many of these shelves are backed with beveled mirrors.

In a reforming attempt to bring some organizational control to the Victorian's excessive love of clutter, Eastlake suggested these overmantel bracketed shelves as a place to concentrate quality objects as in a small museum.³⁷³ (Figure 185) This idea was also in keeping with the Aesthetic Movement's emphasis on the collection and display of artistically designed objects, the viewing of which would uplift one's soul and spirit. The author of Artistic Homes or How to Furnish with Taste recommended such mantelpieces because they were "furnished with stages of shelves," which formed "an etagere for the display of bric-a-brac, especially porcelain."³⁷⁴

The two Neely parlor etagere mantels are somewhat similar to one shown in vivid color in the Illustrated Catalog of the Bradley & Currier Company Limited (1885).³⁷⁵ (Figure 186) Surviving documents reveal that during the same time period Memphian Henry Montgomery personally ordered doors, millwork for his staircase, and mantels

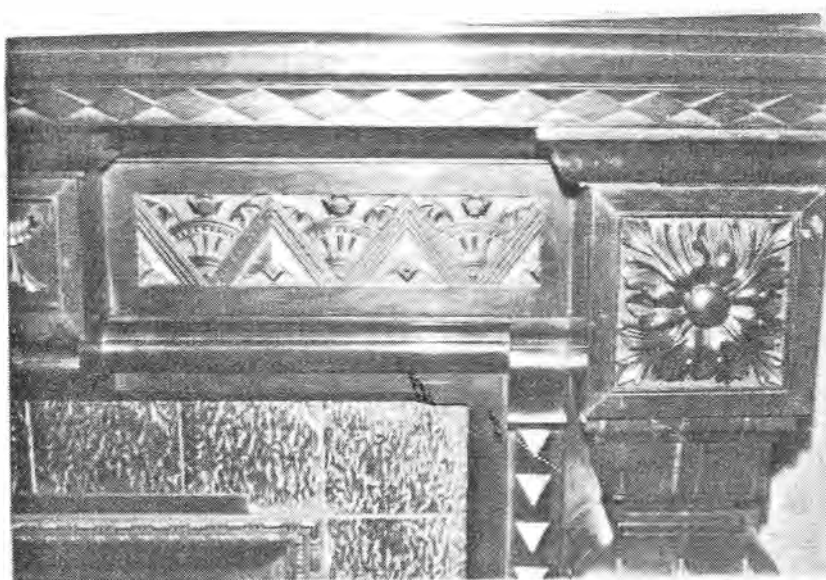
³⁷³Flaherty, "Eastlake," 257.

³⁷⁴Artistic Homes or How to Furnish with Taste, 61.

³⁷⁵Bradley & Currier, New York, Illustrated Catalogue of Doors, Windows, etc., New York: 1877, 17 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.



A

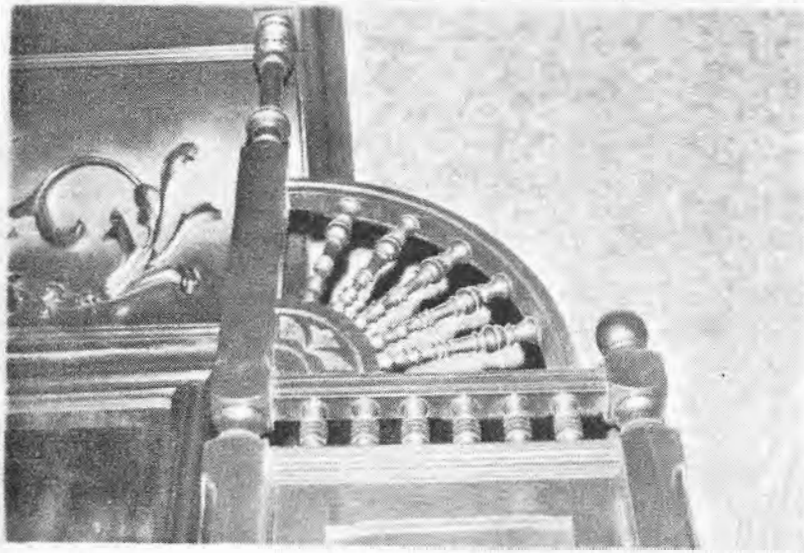


B

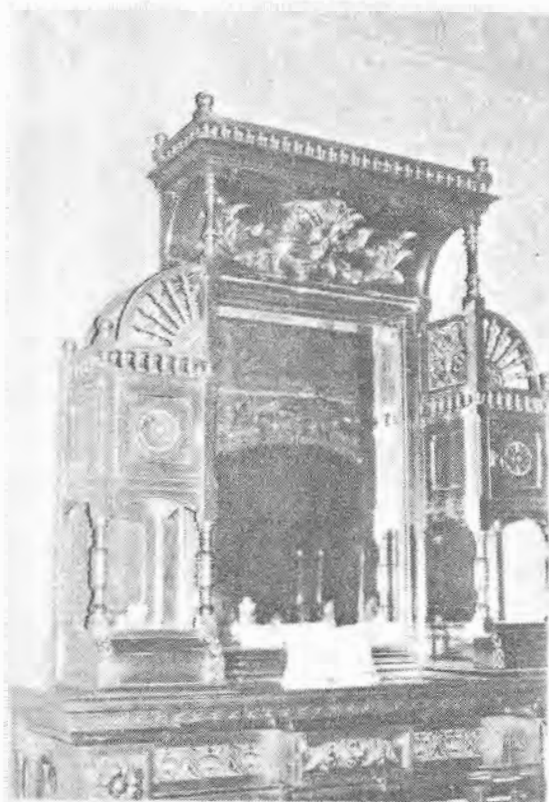
Figure 183. Details of some of the characteristic carving found on the set of etagere mantels in the Mallory-Neely parlor.

A. A mask.

B. Scrolling foliage, rosettes, and a variety of abstract designs ranging from flowers and zig zags to diamond patterns.



A



B

Figure 184. Details of one of the matching pair of elaborate etagere mantels installed in the parlor of the Mallory-Neely House by J. C. Neely.
A. Detail of spindle decoration.
B. The mantel piece is enriched with mirrors, bulbous finials, chamfered edges, carving and incised lines.

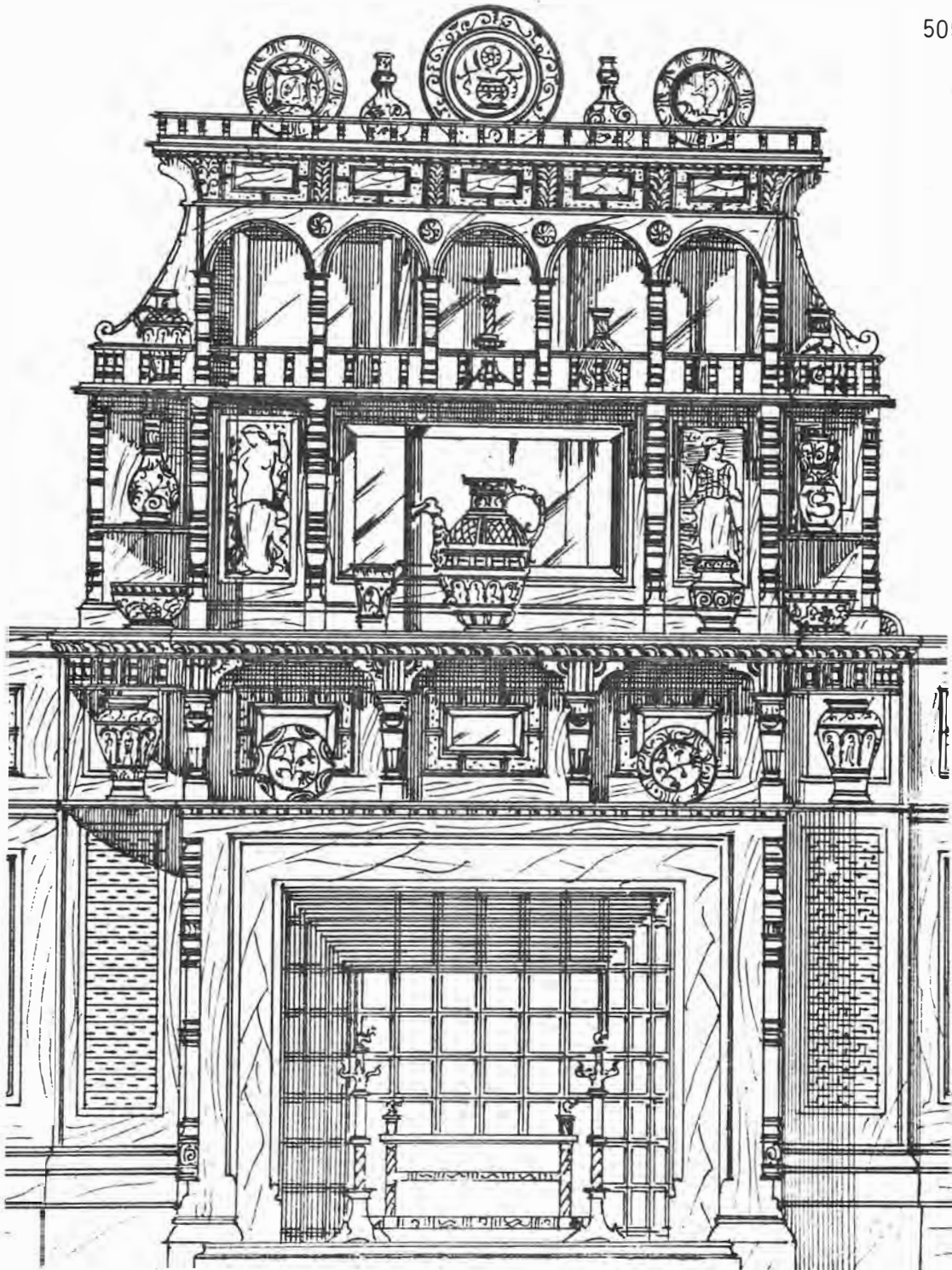


Figure 185. The Aesthetic mantel pieces as an interior focal point and miniature museum of quality designed objects as shown in Smith, Designs and Sketches for Furniture in the Neo-Jacobean and Other Styles (1876). Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.



Figure 186. Page from the 1888 catalog of the Bradley and Currier Company of New York. Mantels such as the one illustrated above come closest to being like the Mallory-Neely parlor etagere mantels in quality, similarity of design, construction, and carving. Courtesy Avery Library, Columbia University.

for his new home from this very company.³⁷⁶ (Figure 187) E. C. Hussey in Home Building states that mantels are now manufactured in great varieties by many dealers and suggests that they are best provided by the home owner, "more satisfactory to himself" than if he depended on the architect or contractor to do so.³⁷⁷ As seen previously, Montgomery ordered catalogs from various companies from which to make a choice. Perhaps Neely did this with his new mantels.

Tiles. Colorful art tiles provide an enlivened contrast to the surrounding darkly stained mantelpieces in the Mallory-Neely House. Use of decorative tiles was advocated by the Aesthetic reformers for many reasons including beauty, handicraft connotations, sanitation and practicality. A. F. Oakley in Building a Home stated that before beauty there was a "fitness to their use" in that they provided a fireproof barrier between the fire and the wooden mantel.³⁷⁸ Others pointed out that they served as heat reflectors; the Garrett sisters, for example, in Suggestions for House Decoration, stated that:

The use of tiles in fire-places and for lazy hearths serves as a useful as well as an ornamental purpose; for the polished surface of the tiles reflects a

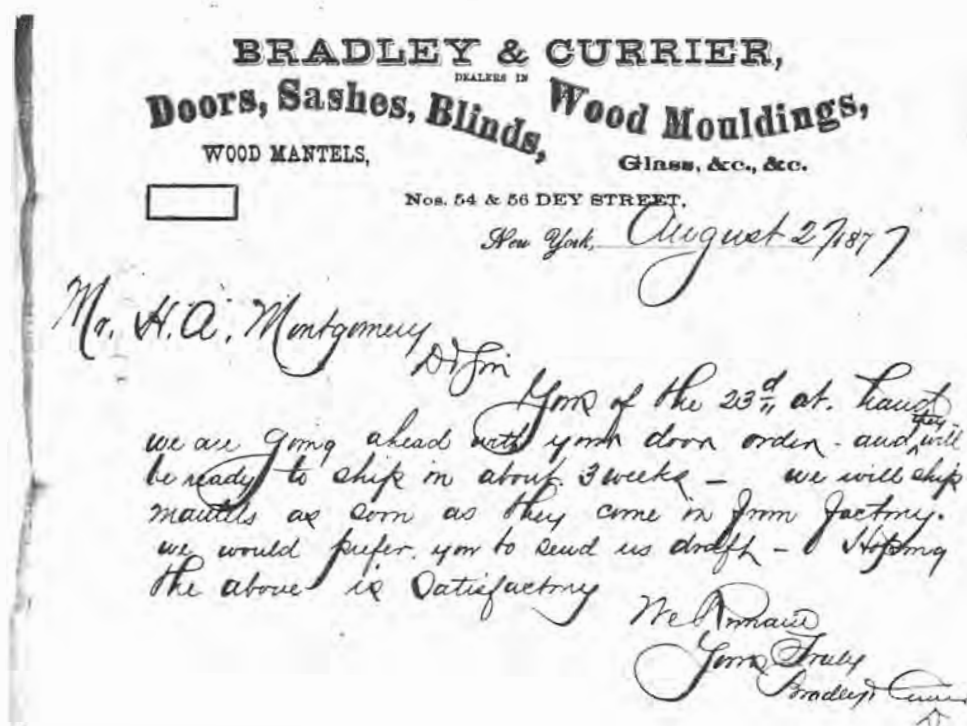
³⁷⁶Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 110.

³⁷⁷E. C. Hussey, Home Building (1876; reprint, Victorian Home Building, A Transcontinental View, Watkins Glen, New York: The American Life Foundation, 1976), 87.

³⁷⁸Oakley, 99.



A



B

Figure 187. Company stationery and note.

- A. Bradley and Currier Company invoice head.
- B. A note from the Bradley and Currier company to Henry Montgomery. These items are among several in the Montgomery Papers concerning the order of mantels and other millwork for his Memphis home. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

considerable amount of heat into the room and makes a cheerful glow which looks and feels warm.³⁷⁹

Though the use of tile had definite functional purposes, aesthetic considerations were of course very important. Because of the Aesthetic Movement's penchant for flat decorative surfaces coupled with the revival of old handicrafts, the Late Victorian Era witnessed a veritable tile renaissance. The artists sought out Medieval, Islamic, Japanese and other historic and international style sources for design inspiration. The English potteries naturally led the way. Only after the 1880s did American art tile manufacturers begin to compete.

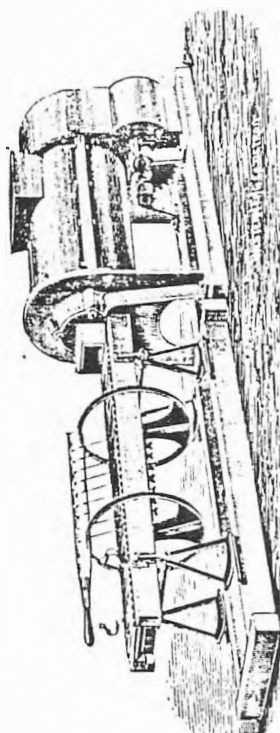
Though many old production methods were resurrected at this time, eventually technology transformed the tile industry like all others. Simple handcrafted production gave way to large commercial potteries which placed emphasis on mass production. Mechanical methods of all types were developed to replicate tiles and their design quickly.³⁸⁰ Mr. Charles Thomas Davis' A Practical Treatise on the Manufacture of Brick, Tiles, Terracotta, etc. (1884) is illustrated with engravings of various new machines developed to mass produce and decorate tiles. (Figure 188) One of these machines, for example, could impress relief patterns into the tiles.³⁸¹

³⁷⁹Garrett and Garrett, 45.

³⁸⁰Julian Barnard, Victorian Ceramic Tiles (London Studio Vista, 1972), 11.

³⁸¹Charles Thomas Davis, A Practical Treatise on the Manufacture of Brick, Tiles, Terracotta, Etc. (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird, 1884), 81, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

FREY, SHECKLER AND HOOVER,
 PROPRIETORS OF THE EAGLE MACHINE WORKS, BUCYRUS, OHIO, U. S. A.
Manufacturers of CLAY MACHINERY, ENGINES, Etc.



THE CENTENNIAL TIFFANY TILE AND BRICK MACHINE
 makes Tiles and Bricks of various descriptions. It received the highest awards wherever exhibited. **THE CENTENNIAL MEDAL, the JEFFERSON MEDAL, the MEDAL OF SUPERIORITY** at the Mechanics' Institute, New York, and the **AUSTRIAN MEDAL.**
CLAY CRUSHERS.—Of these we make six different styles, and they are all of the best quality, and are adapted for the crushing of all kinds of clays, and are also adapted for the crushing of the rollers, which are of hard-drawn metal and separate the stone. Unexcelled for the purpose and cheapness.
THE FOUR-ROLLER CRUSHER will break up rock, fire clay, and all kinds of hard materials, and is adapted for the crushing of all kinds of clays, and is also adapted for the crushing of the rollers, which are of hard-drawn metal and separate the stone. Unexcelled for the purpose and cheapness.
THE CENTENNIAL MEDAL was awarded for the Centennial Machine.

FREY, SHECKLER AND HOOVER, BUCYRUS, OHIO, U. S. A.

A

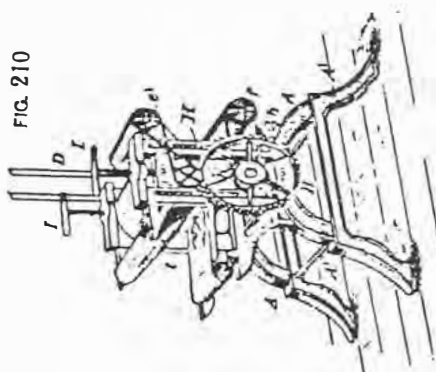
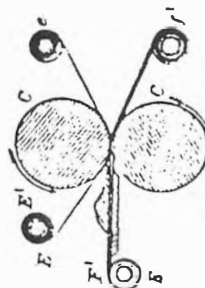


FIG. 211



B

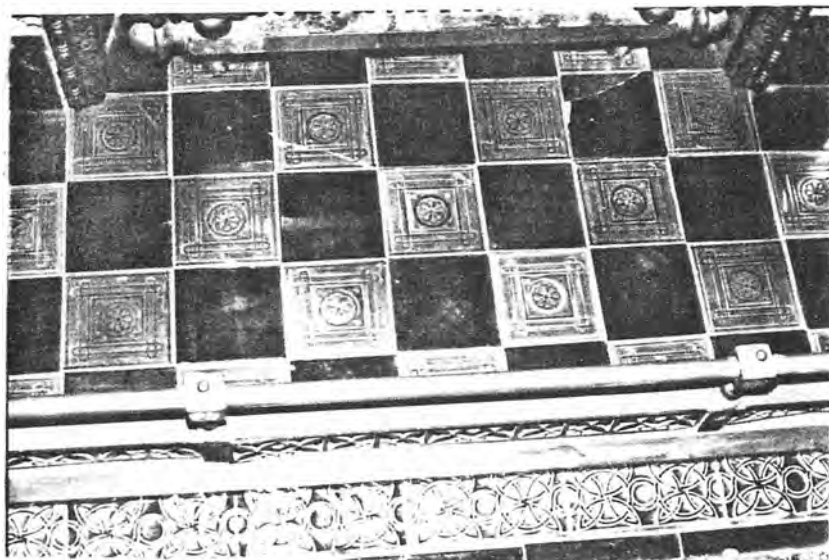
Figure 188. Mechanized tile production machinery. Courtesy Library of New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown.
 A. An advertisement from Charles Davis, A Practical Treatise on the Manufacture of Bricks, Tiles, Terracotta (1884).
 B. Engraving from the text of the same book.

The variety of art tiles used to embellish Neely's new etagere mantels is typical of those popular late in the century. Neely's two parlor mantel facings are covered with tiles that have a mottled or stippled green-on-yellow decoration. The more complex hearth pattern is set with a checkerboard effect of solid dark crimson tiles alternating with yellow ones, each of which is incised with lines bordering a circle. (Figure 189) The hearths are outlined with yellow-green tiles decorated in pressed relief with crisscrossed and complex interlaced patterns.

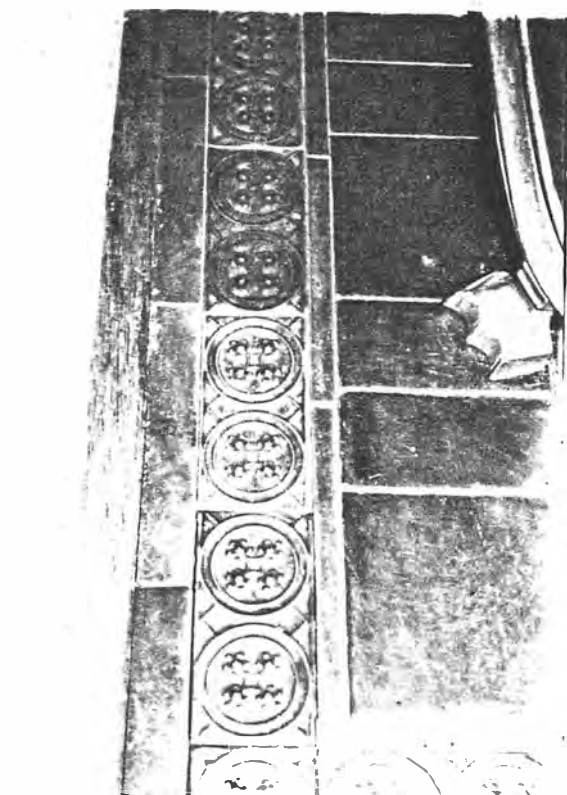
The facing of the sitting room mantel is covered with brilliant yellow tiles ornamented with all-over patterns of tiny leaves. (Figure 190) The hearth is set with yellow tiles decorated with fanciful shells arranged in a scale pattern. These are outlined with a brownish-yellow tile border with a running design of larger shell motifs. (Figure 191)

The dining room tiles are surely the most "artistic." Here the facing tiles are decorated in the then-popular Anglo-Japanese taste. The butterscotch or caramel-colored tiles are decorated in relief and painted with flowering prunus branches and grasses enlivened with an occasional bird or insect. (Figure 192)

Investigation of the reverse side of two loose fireplace tiles in the parlor revealed the labels MINTON-HOLLINS & CO. and AET (The American Encaustic Tile Co.). The Minton Company of Stoke-On-Trent, Staffordshire, England was one of the more famous Victorian



A



B

Figure 189. Hearth tiles.

- A. Details of both plain and relief decorative tiles from the Mallory-Neely parlor hearths (labeled on the reverse Minton & Company and American Encaustic Tile Company).
- B. Similar tiles from the dining room hearth. These are glazed in shades of maroon, greens and ocre gold. In keeping with the "artistic" fashion of the time they are laid so to form contrasts of color and texture.

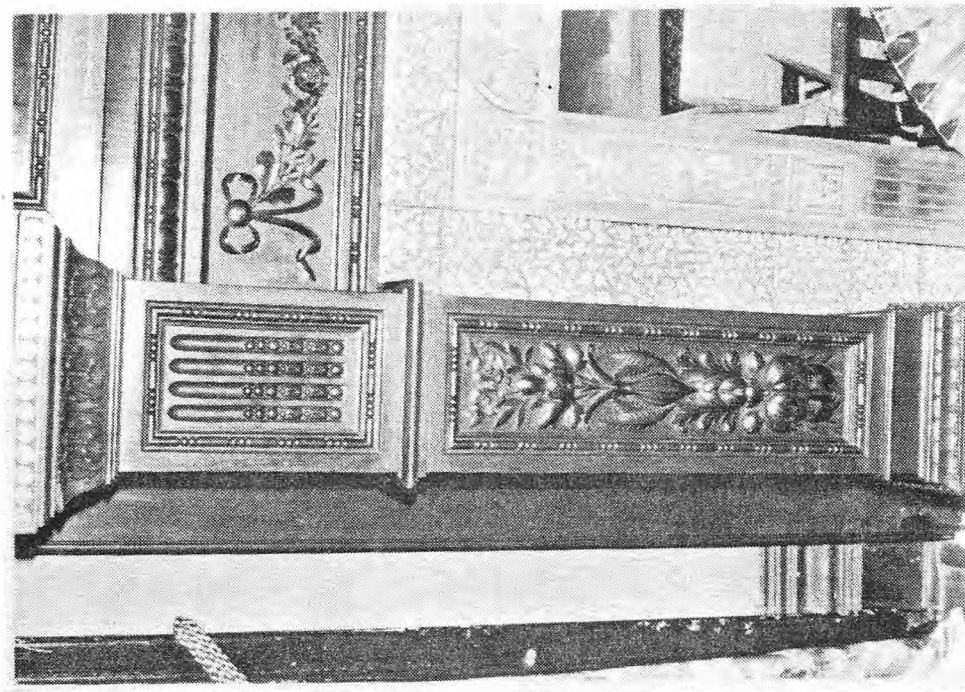
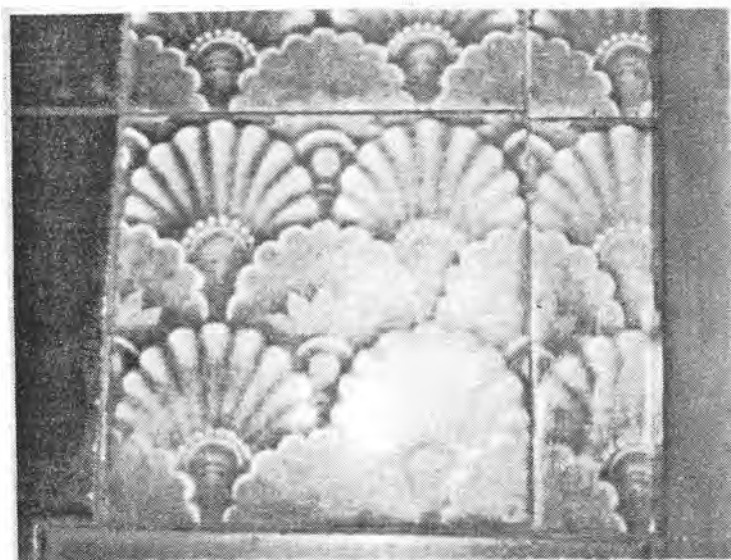


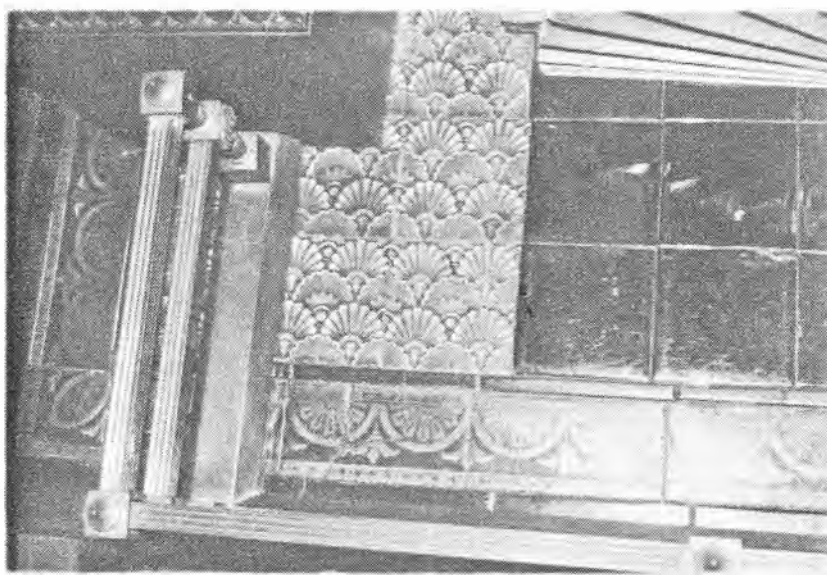
Figure 190. Sitting room tiles.

A. Detail of the yellow ocre tiles surrounding the fire box opening of the Mallory-Neely sitting room fireplace.

B. Detail of the leafy designs. These accord with reform theory of the time which advocated design based on nature and conventionalized into appropriate flat all over decorative ornament for two dimensional surfaces such as this.



A



B

Figure 191. Sitting room hearth.
A. Shell patterned tiles.
B. Detail of the brownish yellow tiles of the Mallory-Neely sitting room hearth.

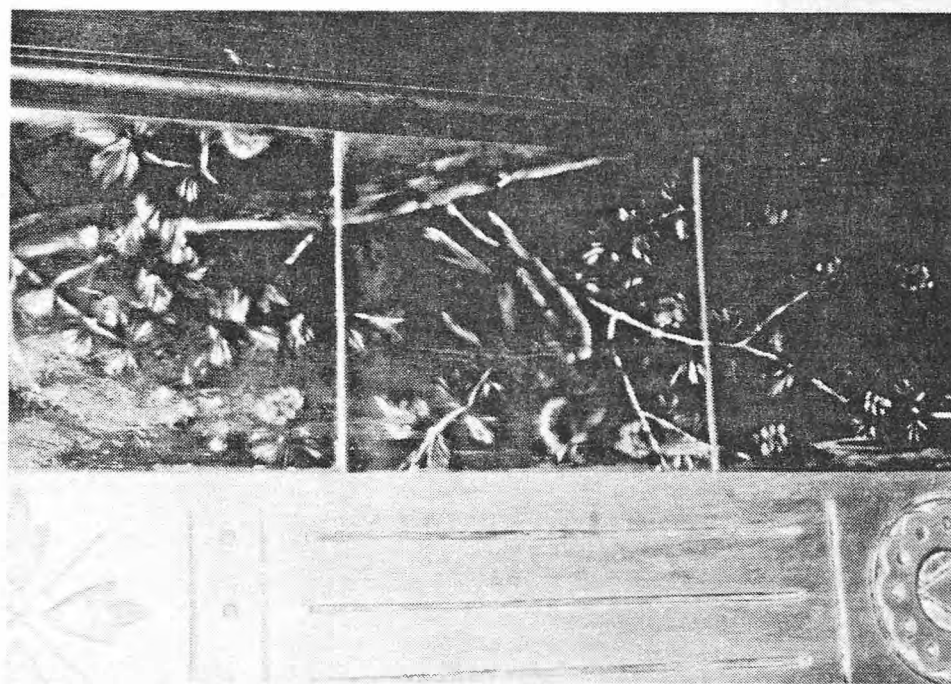
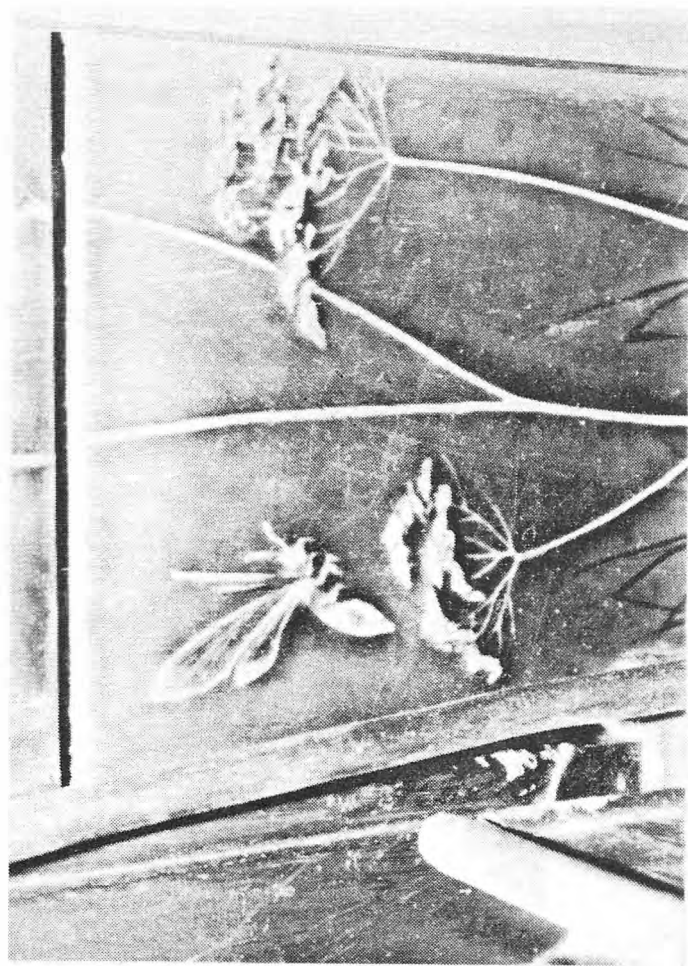


Figure 192. Dining room tiles.

A. Detail of the butterscotch colored facing tiles designed in the Anglo-Japanese manner from the fireplace in the Mallory-Neely dining room.

B. Close-up of relief design.



A

B

potteries. The company played a major role in the revival of art tiles and in developing innovative new methods of production.³⁸²

The Minton Company carried on a large import business to America, with representatives in all major U.S. cities.³⁸³ It also advertised widely in American periodicals and in interior design and architecture literature. (Figure 193) A typical example stated that Minton produced: "GLAZED WALL TILES, IN BRILLIANT COLORS, FOR GRATES AND FIRE-PLACES. Among These Are Very Fine Hand Painted Art Tiles."³⁸⁴

The American Encaustic Tile Company founded in 1875 in Zanesville, Ohio became one of the most noted and successful American potteries.³⁸⁵ It produced large numbers of glazed wall tiles and encaustic floor tiles.³⁸⁶

Mr. Neely either purchased these tiles with his new mantels, or from another out-of-town source, or locally, later having the tiles inserted in the proper places. One local company provided this type of service. It was listed in the Memphis city directory

³⁸²Davis, 406.

³⁸³Frelinghuysen, 231.

³⁸⁴G. B. Croff, Progressive American Architecture (New York: Orange Judd & Co., 1875), n.p., Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

³⁸⁵Edward Atlee Barber, Pottery and Porcelain of the United States of America, 2d ed. (New York: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1901), 375.

³⁸⁶Barnard, 111-112.

MINTON'S **ENCAUSTIC TILES FOR FLOORS,** **MINTON'S** **ENCAUSTIC AND PAVING TILES,** For Vestibules, Halls, Hearths, Conservatories, etc., in Dwellings, and for CHURCHES, BANKS, STORES, ETC.

AS LAID BY 1/4 IN THICK.

CAPITOL AT WASHINGTON.

GLAZED WALL TILES,
 In Brilliant Colors for Grates and Fire-Places,

AND FOR INSERTION IN

WAINSCOTING, MANTELS, DOOR-FRAMES, FURNITURE, ETC.

Both kinds of Tiles are made in Packs of Brick and Stone

FOR EXTERIOR DECORATION.

Garn Kirk Chimney Tops. Glazed Stone Ware Drain Pipes,
 VASES for LAWNS and GARDENS,

PLUMBERS' MATERIALS,

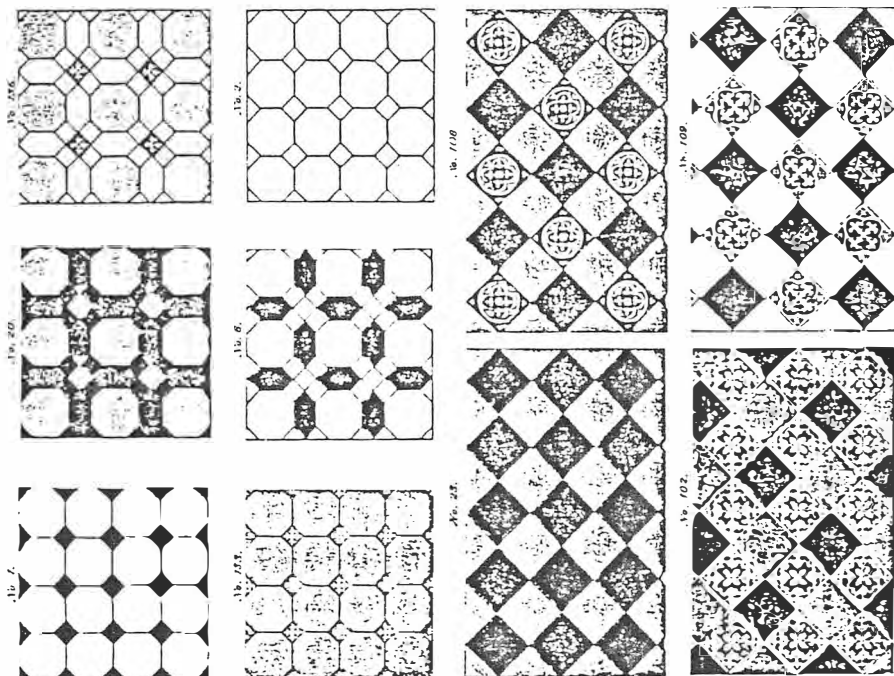
AND FIXTURES OF EVERY DESCRIPTION, READY FOR USE.

FOR SALE BY

MILLER & COATES,
 279 PEARL STREET,

New York.

Patterns of Minton's Tiles for Floors,
 FOUR EIGHT BY
 MILLER & COATES, 279 PEARL ST., NEW YORK.
 SCALE ONE INCH TO A FOOT.



OTHER PATTERNS AND PRICES WILL BE SENT ON APPLICATION

Figure 193. Typical Minton advertisement.

as "Carpenter and Flaherty, General Plasterers and Stuccoworkers, Mantel and Tile Setting A Specialty."³⁸⁷

Charles Davis in A Practical Treatise on the Manufacture of Brick, Tile, etc. effectively summarized the Aesthetic influenced attitude towards visual beauty and what its proponents felt was its power to uplift and edify the human spirit.

There are peculiar attractions in decorative tiles; pave a hearth, face a chimney piece or jambs with them, then light a fire in the grate, and in the winter evenings enjoy the magical effects; the changing play of lights and shadows, and the various positions of the designs relieve monotony, and exert a soothing influence upon all, and the chimney corner becomes a home school for refinement in thought, feeling, and in expression.³⁸⁸

Metal fireplace fittings. The extensive brass metal fittings of each of the Neely art mantels constitute yet another whole series of Aesthetic-influenced decorative arts. (Figure 194) Metal arts of all types were revived during this period and constitute an important part of the Aesthetic interior.³⁸⁹ The Garrett sisters in Suggestions for House Decoration remarked on the improved quality and increased choices of metal art available to the homeowner. They stated, "much has been done by the architects and designers of the

³⁸⁷R. L. Polk's Memphis City Directory for 1892 (Memphis: R. L. Polk Co., 1892), 213.

³⁸⁸Davis, 428.

³⁸⁹David A. Hanks and Jennifer Toher, "Metalwork An Eclectic Aesthetic," In Pursuit of Beauty (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1986), 228.



Figure 194. The contrasting and rich use of various metal fittings play an important part in the overall aesthetic effect of the Mallory-Neely dining room fireplace.

Queen Anne school to improve the public taste in this direction and to encourage manufacturers to introduce better designs into this branch of household arts."³⁹⁰ Surviving trade catalogs attest to the fact that enterprising manufacturers made available to the public an extensive range of metal fittings with which to adorn their mantelpieces. (Figure 195) Compiler of the catalog of the Smith and Anthony Stove Company stated that there is a wide assortment of styles available to fit any "interior finish that the architect or decorator may call for." Their catalog illustrated sets in almost every historic style, such as the Elizabethan, Moorish, Florentine, Japanese, Medieval, Old Dutch, Fleur-de-Lis, and many other patterns.³⁹¹ Some of the most representative "artistic," metalwork examples from the various Neely mantels include brass frames, fenders, firetools, and fire box linings.

Brass frames or fronts were designed to overlap onto the tiles and to outline the firebox. The one used in the Neelys' dining room has simple parallel incised lines decorating its horizontal and vertical members. Providing a visual contrast, the upper two corners and center medallions are decorated with single stylized flowers. (Figure 196) The Murdock Parlor Grate Company in its catalog labeled this type as having an "Eastlake Border."³⁹² The brass frame

³⁹⁰Garrett and Garrett, 54.

³⁹¹Some Artistic Fireplaces and Their Surroundings, 4.

³⁹²Murdock Parlor Grate Company, Series 10 Catalogue of Brass Goods, Boston: 1890, 37 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

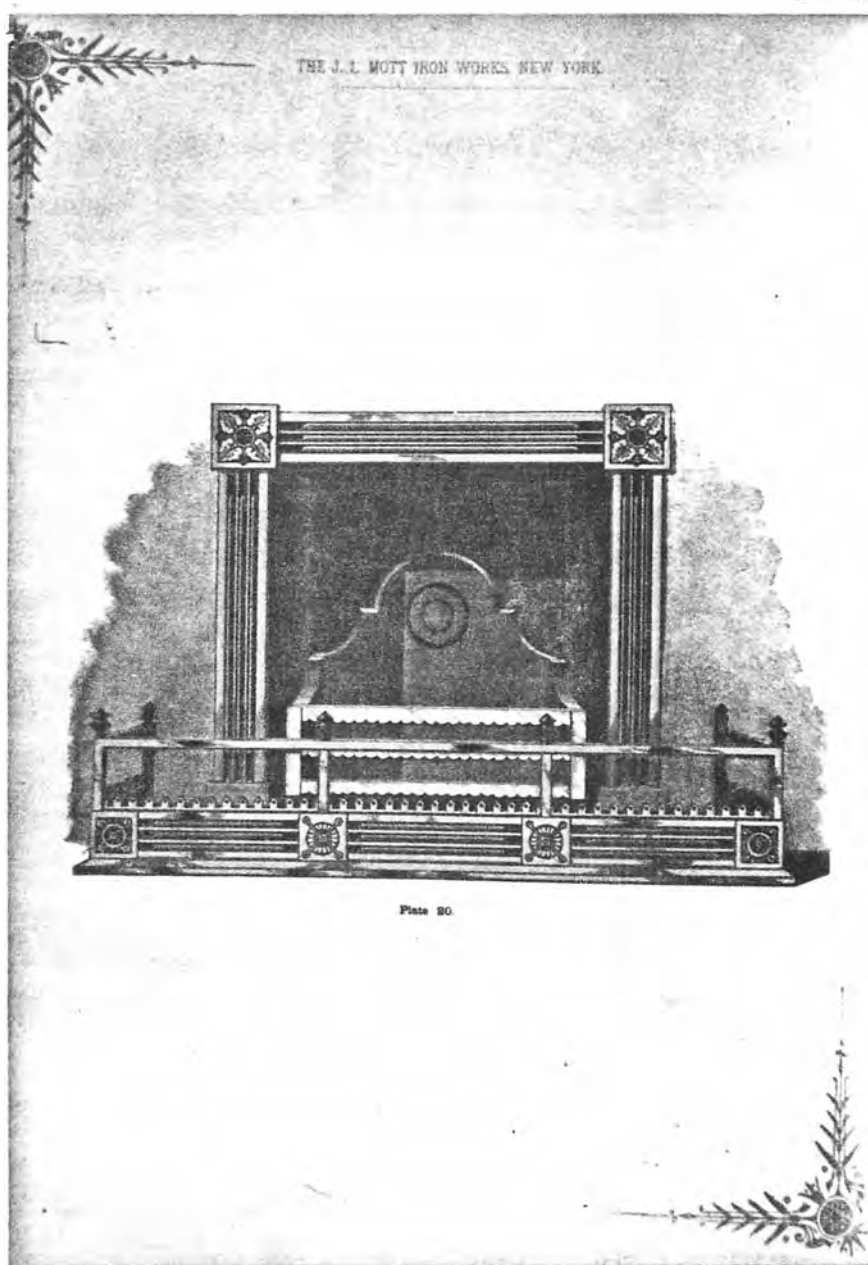


Plate 20.

Figure 195. Page from the 1882 catalog of the J. L. Mott Ironworks Company of New York showing a coordinated set of brass fireplace fittings. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

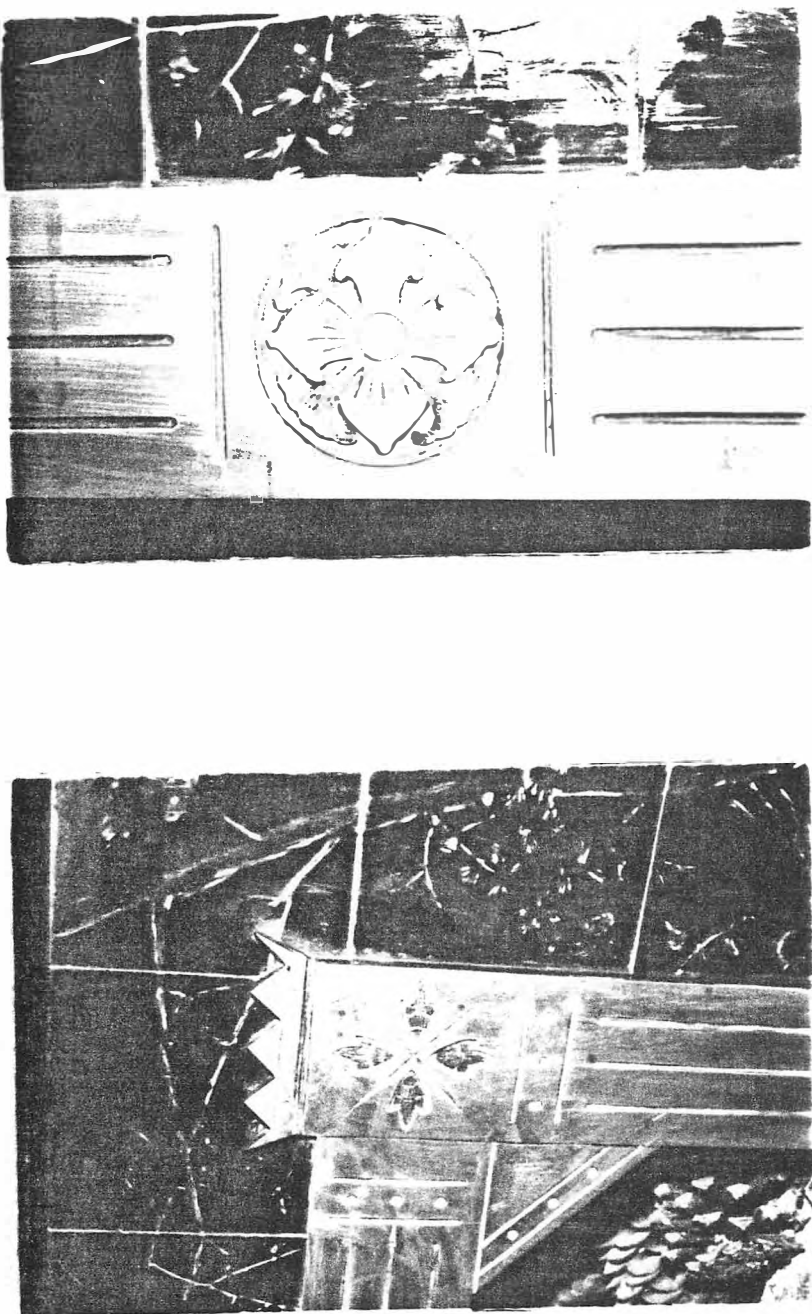


Figure 196. Details of the "artistic" brass firebox frame in the Mallory-Neely dining room.
A. Corner design.
B. One of two floral medallions flanking the firebox opening.

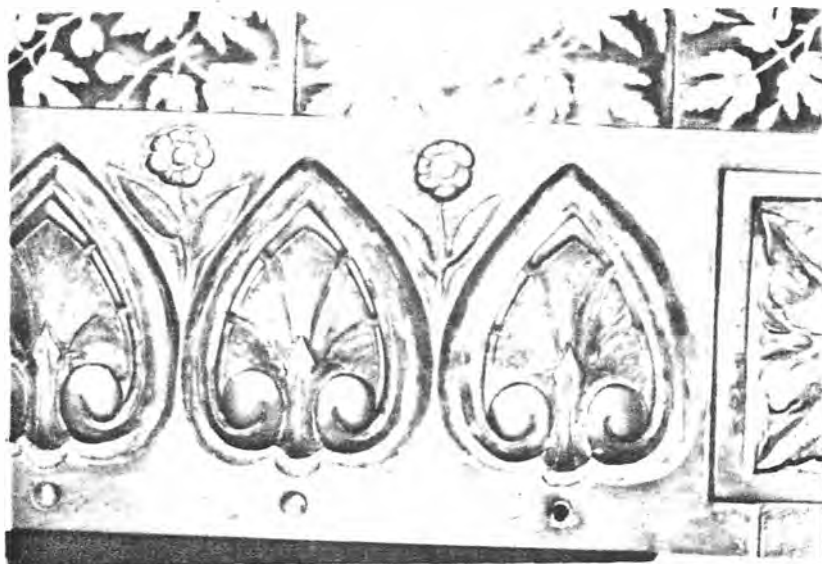
used in the sitting room is far more elaborate in design. The two vertical members are decorated with a floral spray in relief; the two upper corners, with rosettes. Across the top a running band of stylized Grecian palmettes in relief alternates with single flowers atop their leafy stems. (Figure 197)

A variety of fenders and andirons was used by the Neely family to embellish their new "artistic" fireplaces. Most replicate "Old English," "Old Dutch," Colonial, and Georgian designs.³⁹³ On the basis of "studies of ancient metal art," the Garrett sisters recommended to their readers the use of fenders and andirons, especially those they labeled "Queen Anne" brass fenders.³⁹⁴ It appears that both andirons and fenders come nearer to being actual copies of historic forms than most Aesthetic-inspired design, which was more often a free and fresh re-interpretation. The Neelys' large and elaborate examples are almost all loose copies of Georgian originals. (Figures 198, 199, 200, and 201)

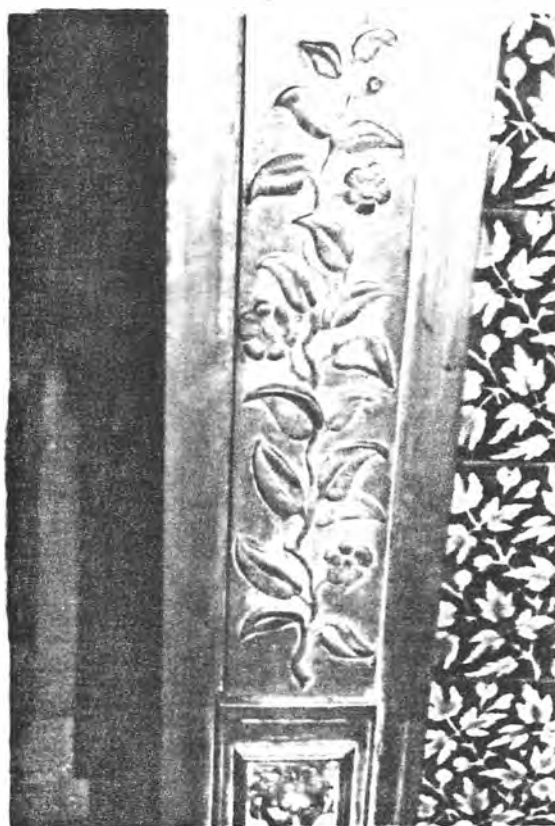
Almost all of the Neelys' fire tools have disappeared excepting one poker which today survives in the dining room. It has a rectangular brass handle decorated on all four sides in the Anglo-Japanese taste with stylized vases of flowering branches. (Figures 202 and 203). It is a perfect example of this Oriental-inspired design approach and of the Aesthetic attention to the design of even

³⁹³Gordon F. Roe, "Old Brass Fenders," The Magazine Antiques, 35, No. 4 (April 1939), 178-181.

³⁹⁴Garrett and Garrett, 54.



A



B

Figure 197. Details of the "artistic" brass firebox frame in the sitting room.

A. Ornament of the vertical member.

B. Ornament of the horizontal member.

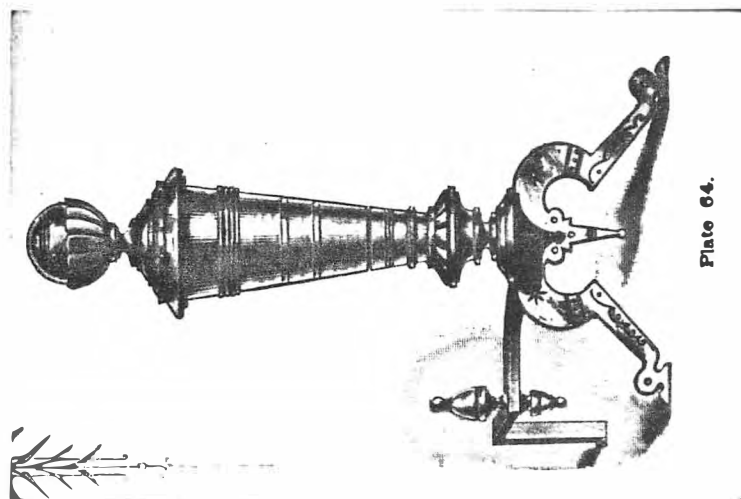


Plate 64.

A

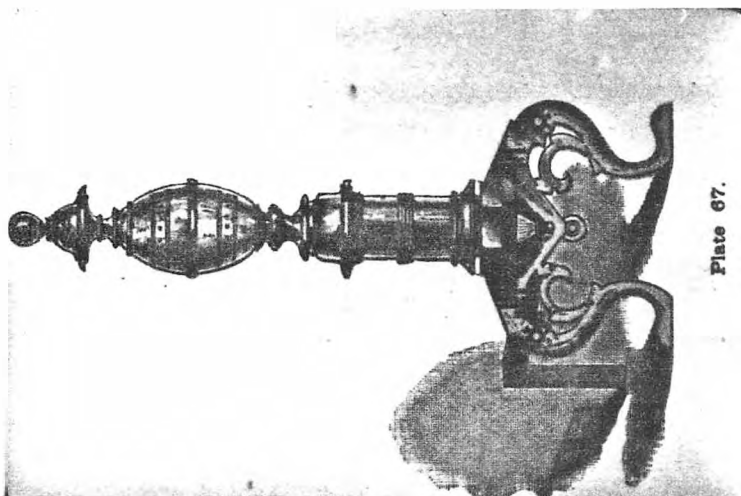


Plate 67.

B

Figure 198. Illustrations from the 1882 catalog of the Mott Iron Works of New York showing late nineteenth century brass fireirons. The design of these is based on eighteenth century Georgian originals as advocated by design reformers of the time. These are similar in spirit to several sets in the Mallory-Neely House. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum: Collection of Printed Books.
 A. Plate 64.
 B. Plate 67.

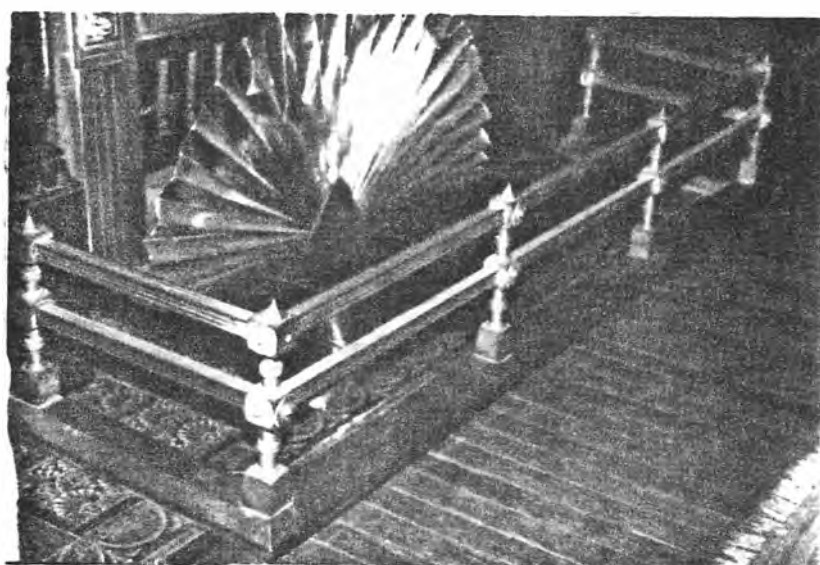
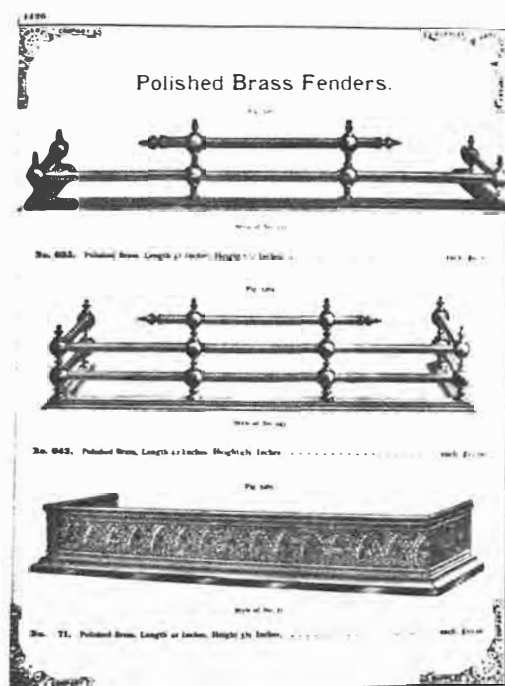


Figure 199. Characteristic late nineteenth century brass fender in the reform style from the Mallory-Neely sitting room fireplace.



A

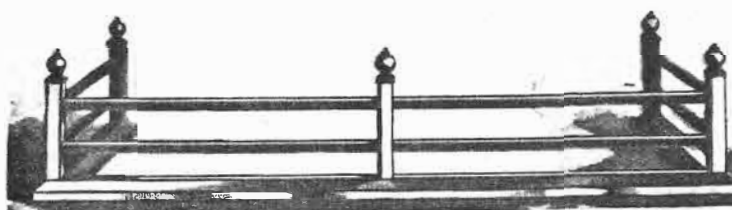


Plate 97

B

Figure 200. Late century fireplace fenders similar to those used throughout the first floor of the Mallory-Neely House. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

A. Fireplace fenders from the Mott Iron Works (1882) catalog.

B. Fireplace fenders from the Supplee Hardware Company (1873) catalog.

J. C. IVERSEN CO., MILWAUKEE, WIS. 311

Brass Fender, No. 1.
36 inches long



Price, each.....\$5 00

Brass Fender, No. 2.
36 inches long



Price, each.....\$6 75

Brass Fender, No. 3.
36 inches long

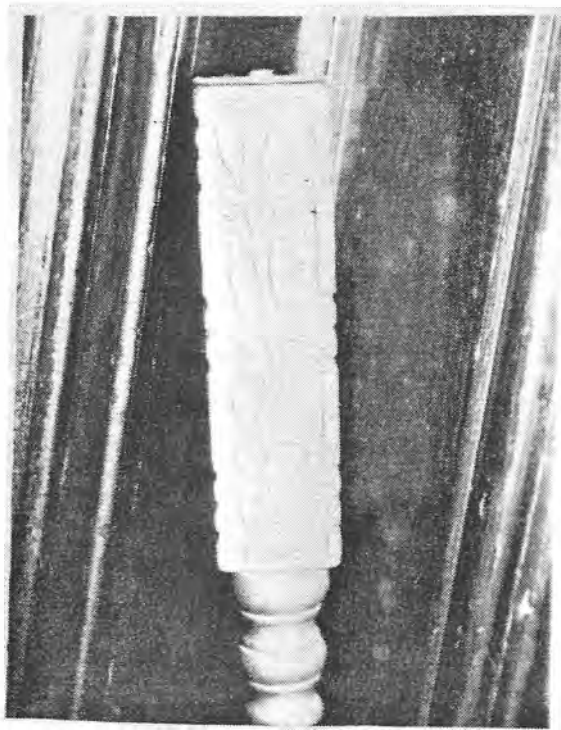


Price, each.....\$9 25

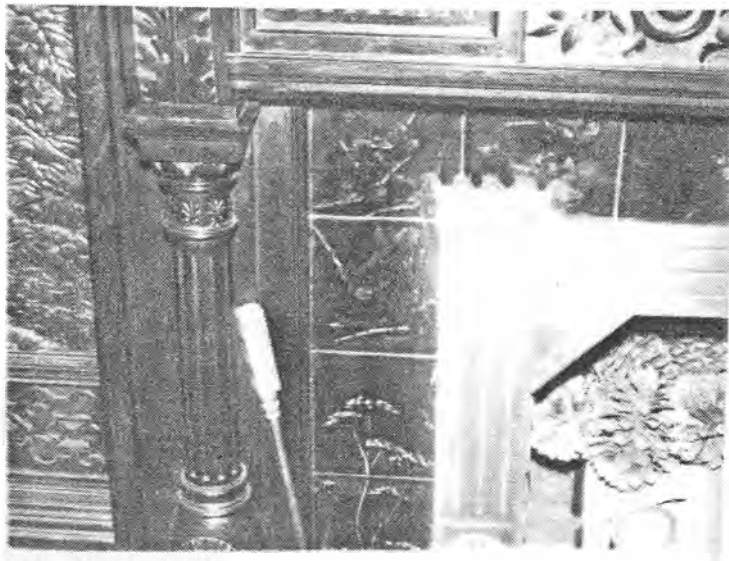
FIVE PER CENT. DISCOUNT FOR CASH IN TWENTY DAYS.

WE RESPECTFULLY SOLICIT YOUR MAIL ORDERS.

Figure 201. Brass fenders similar to those used in the Mallory-Neely parlor and sitting room from the 1891 catalog of the J. C. Iverson Company. Courtesy Chicago Historical Society.



A



B

Figure 202. Fire tool.

- A. The dining room firepoker is "artistically" decorated as advocated by the era's design reformers to aesthetically coordinate with the entire fireplace ensemble.
- B. Brass handled firepoker, the only original fire tool remaining in the Mallory-Neely House.

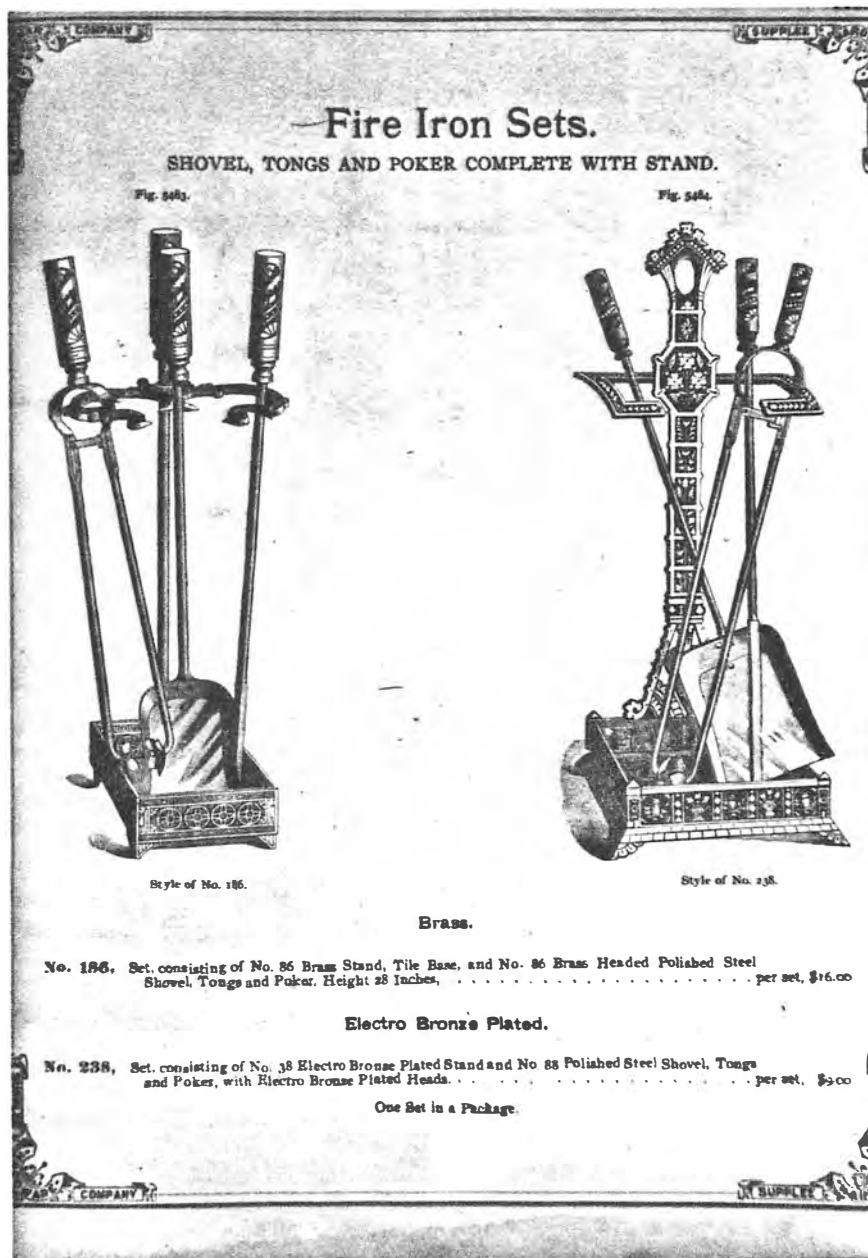


Figure 203. An 1873 catalog of the Supplee Hardware Company. The Mallory-Neely poker was once part of a coordinated "artistic" set of fire tools like the one illustrated above. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

ordinary objects. The Garrett sisters had the following to say about the design of fireplace equipment:

Fenders and fire-irons, although they are comparatively humble articles of domestic use, ought by no means to be neglected in the re-organization of the drawing-room. The form of modern fenders and fire-irons are as much in need of reform as any other article of domestic furniture, and the reform may generally be in the direction of simplicity of design and reduction of ornament.³⁹⁵

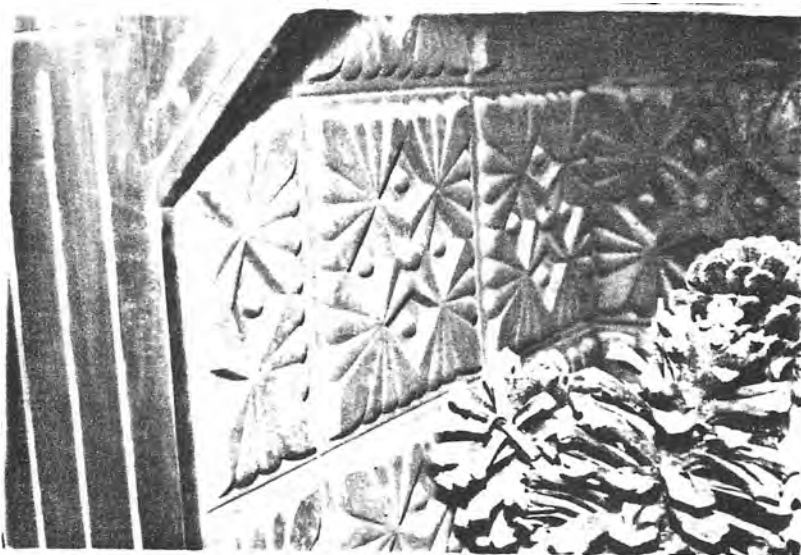
Finally, the lowly interior of the firebox even received "artistic" attention. In each of the dining and sitting room fireplaces Mr. Neely had "artistic" iron firebacks and sides installed. Trade catalogues of the time reveal that a large variety of decoratively embossed sets of these, in practically every historic style, were available. The writer of Some Artistic Fireplaces and Their Surroundings stated that:

To harmonize with the decorative effect of the tiles a new artistic element was called for. This was suggested by making the back and sides of the fireplace of cast iron plates bearing rich relief design which harmonized admirably with the warm color of the tiles.³⁹⁶

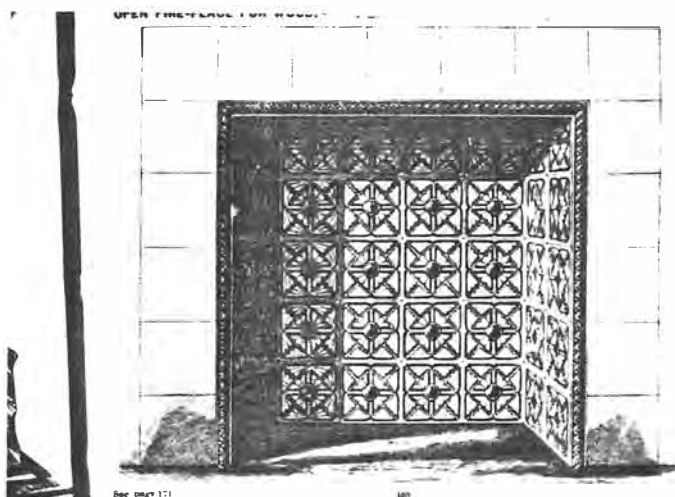
The sides and back of the Mallory-Neely dining room firebox are embellished with embossed non-objective designs suggestive of tile work. (Figure 204) Each tile-like square is filled with geometric star, fan, and diamond patterns. The most elaborate example in the house is that in the sitting room fireplace; here the back and matching side set is decorated in relief in the Anglo-Japanese

³⁹⁵Ibid., 64.

³⁹⁶Smith and Anthony Stove Company, 2.



A



B

Figure 204. Firebox sets.

- A. Detail of the cast iron fireback and side set from the Mallory-Neely dining room fireplace.
- B. Plate from the 1892 catalog of the W. A. French Company of Camden, New Jersey showing a similar firebox set. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

manner. Through an exotic arch, one can view birds playing among stylized flowers. (Figure 205)

A likely local supplier for these (unless Neely ordered them along with his mantels) would be the Northcross Mantel and Grate Company of Memphis. The reporter in a small article about this company in the Art supplement to the Evening Scimitar stated that:

Mr. W. J. Northcross enjoys a monopoly in his speciality of trade hereabouts. His warerooms at 392 Main Street are replete with a most attractive line of goods both useful and ornamental, all from St. Louis. His Jobbing Trade covers all the Mid-South.³⁹⁷

Combination gas-electric fixtures. The fireplace fittings are not the only examples of Aesthetic-influenced metal furnishings purchased by the Neelys. New light fixtures and an assortment of "artistic" hardware were also added to the decor of their home. H. J. Cooper in The Art of Furnishing stated that "your fenders, fire irons, gasoliers, chandeliers, wall sconces, and ornamental hardware should all have the same careful and discriminate selection."³⁹⁸ Around the turn of the century, elegant new brass combination electric/gas fixtures were substituted by the Neelys for the original fixtures in the dining and sitting rooms.

The first filament bulb, making electricity practical as a light source in the American home, was invented by Thomas Edison

³⁹⁷The Art Supplement to the Greater Memphis Edition of the Evening Scimitar, 42.

³⁹⁸Cooper, 107.



Figure 205. Detail of the side panel of the more elaborate Mallory-Neely sitting room firebox set decorated in relief with an exotic theme.

in 1879. In the years following, electricity as a light source was refined and improved.³⁹⁹ From 1880 until the First World War there was competition between gas, kerosene, and electricity in the American household. But electricity eventually triumphed because of its advantages as a cheap, clear, adjustable and safe light source.⁴⁰⁰

Electricity was first used in Memphis around 1882.⁴⁰¹ Mr. Neely was a director of one of the first electric companies, The Brush Electric Light and Power Company. (Figure 206) An advertisement for this firm dated 12 February 1884, Memphis Daily Appeal, reads: "Apply at our office for lights in person, or by postcard."⁴⁰² By the end of the century electricity became a common and important light source for Memphians. The 1899 and 1900 Memphis city directories list several businesses under the heading Electric Supply Companies. The firm of J. A. Bailey & Company, for example, billed itself as suppliers of electrical equipment and fixtures.⁴⁰³

³⁹⁹See Henry Bartholomew Cox, "Plain and Fancy: Incandescence Becomes a Household Word!" Nineteenth Century, 6, No. 3 (Autumn 1980), 49-51; and "Hot Hairpin in a Bottle: The Beginnings of Incandescence," Nineteenth Century, 5, No. 3 (Autumn 1979), 45-49.

⁴⁰⁰Roger Moss, "Victorian Lighting," Paper presented to the 38th Annual Seminar on American Culture, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York, 2 July 1985.

⁴⁰¹Mrs. Thomas P. Hughes, Jr., "Home of the Late Mrs. Barton Lee Mallory, 652 Adams Avenue," n.p.

⁴⁰²Memphis Daily appeal [advertisement], 12 February 1884, 2.

⁴⁰³R. L. Polk's Memphis City Directory (Memphis: R. L. Polk & Co., 1900), 127.

Brush Electric Light & Power Co

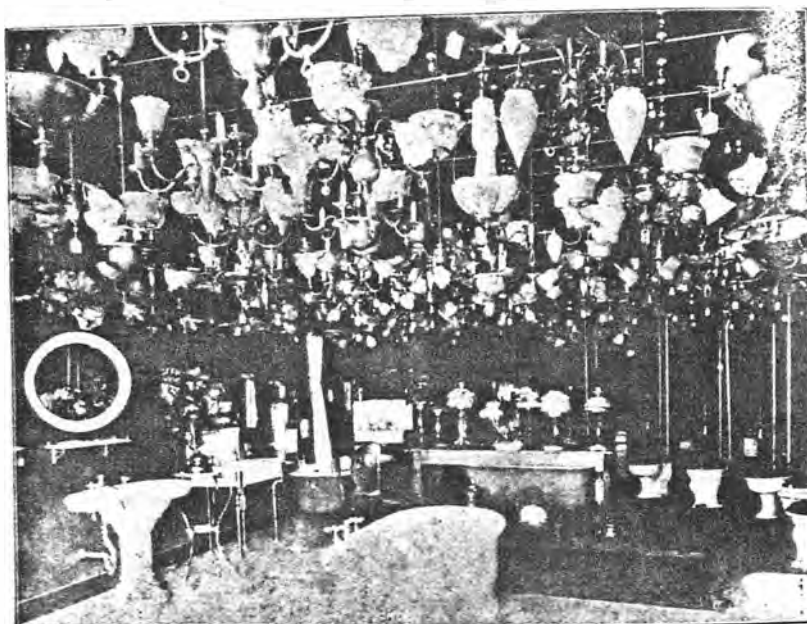
Office---No. 5 Promenade Street.

DIRECTORS.

J. C. NEELY, LOUIS HANAUER, J. D. MURPHY, S. W. HICKELL,
S. T. CARNEY, W. W. SCHOLFIELD, J. C. PORTER, J. R. LOWIN, T. H. MILES, JR.
HUGH A. HAMILTON, President, G. C. WOODRUFF, Secretary.

Apply at Office for Lights in Person, or by Postal Card.

A



ELECTRICAL ROOM—LEW TISDALE & CO.

B

- Figure 206. Artifacts of early Memphis electricity.
- A. An 1884 newspaper advertisement for one of the early Memphis electric companies of which Mr. Neely was a director.
 - B. An interior view of a turn-of-the-century Memphis light fixture company. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

Despite the growing use of electricity during the last decade of the century, uncertainty as to which power source would prevail led to the popularity of combination fixtures, "with the gas burners turned upward and the electric sockets nodding down."⁴⁰⁴ Ever enterprising manufacturers made available to the American consumer a large variety of these combination fixtures in all kinds of styles, designs, and finishes. Brass was by far the most popular for these fixtures.

Brass chandeliers in a variety of styles were invariably found in artistic houses. The reform mode of the Anglo-Japanese was often employed for these objects, even as the Renaissance revival style continued to be popular.⁴⁰⁵

The design of the brass chandeliers selected by the Neelys for their dining and sitting room was based on older forms updated and freely interpreted to create modern fixtures. Though some today might label them Colonial, Dutch, or Georgian in derivation, most articles or books concerning late Victorian lighting identify this type fixture as "Renaissance" since this was the designation used in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁰⁶ Relief and open work ornament combined with etched glass globes give these two fixtures their artistic and antique appearance. (Figures 207 and 208)

The central combination fixture in the master bedroom is a good example of one designed in the Anglo-Japanese taste.

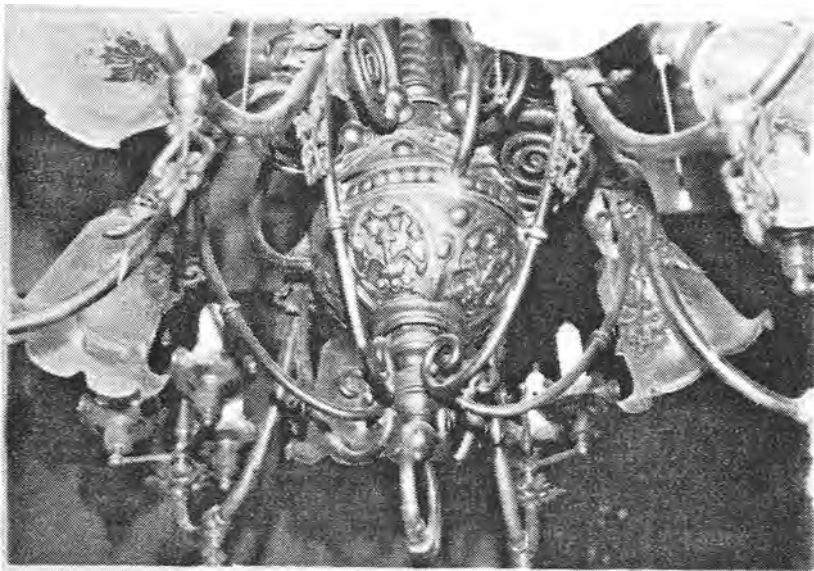
⁴⁰⁴Myers, 51.

⁴⁰⁵Hanks and Toher, 280.

⁴⁰⁶See Hanks and Toher, 280 or Myers, 227.



A



B

Figure 207. Combination fixture.

- A. "Renaissance style brass combination gas-electric fixture centered above the Mallory-Neely dining table.
- B. A detail of the relief used for decorative embellishment. Modern fixtures such as this were loosely based on historic seventeenth and eighteenth century chandeliers. This one is missing the glass globes over the upright gas jets.

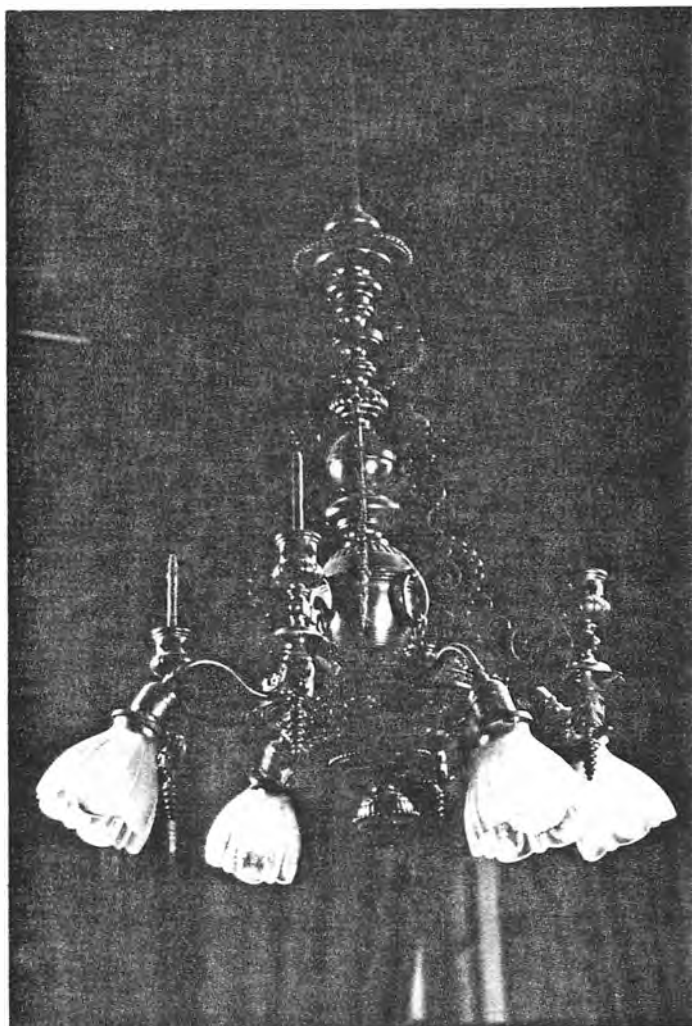


Figure 208. "Renaissance" style brass combination gas-electric fixture located in the Mallory-Neely sitting room. This one is also missing the upper gas fixture globes.

(Figures 209 and 210) It is simpler in silhouette in contrast to the busier Renaissance types downstairs. Elongated semi-circular open work inserts decorating the main stem of the fixture as well as the various knobs are engraved with stylized Japonesque flowers and designs.

"Artistic" interior hardware. "Artistic" interior hardware constitutes the final artful touch to the Neelys' remodeled interiors. During the era of Aesthetic influence "lavish brass or bronze hardware was incorporated into doors in the form of hinges, escutcheon plates, and locks."⁴⁰⁷ The Aesthetic inspired objects displayed in the British Exhibit at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition gave stimulus to American lock companies and their designers. The years between 1876 and 1898 saw a full flowering of American building hardware.⁴⁰⁸ This is yet another example of an ancient handicraft becoming a fully mechanized industry. Surviving trade catalogs attest to the vast array of hardware choices given to the American consumer during that time. Hardware was available in a variety of metals such as bronze, brass, or iron, and also of techniques including forged, stamped, pressed and turned. The Yale Company, for example, offered forty different finishes.⁴⁰⁹ All types of hardware

⁴⁰⁷Hanks and Toher, 178.

⁴⁰⁸Maudie Eastwood, The Antique Doorknob (Forest Grove, Oregon: by the author, 1976), 67.

⁴⁰⁹Ibid., 93.

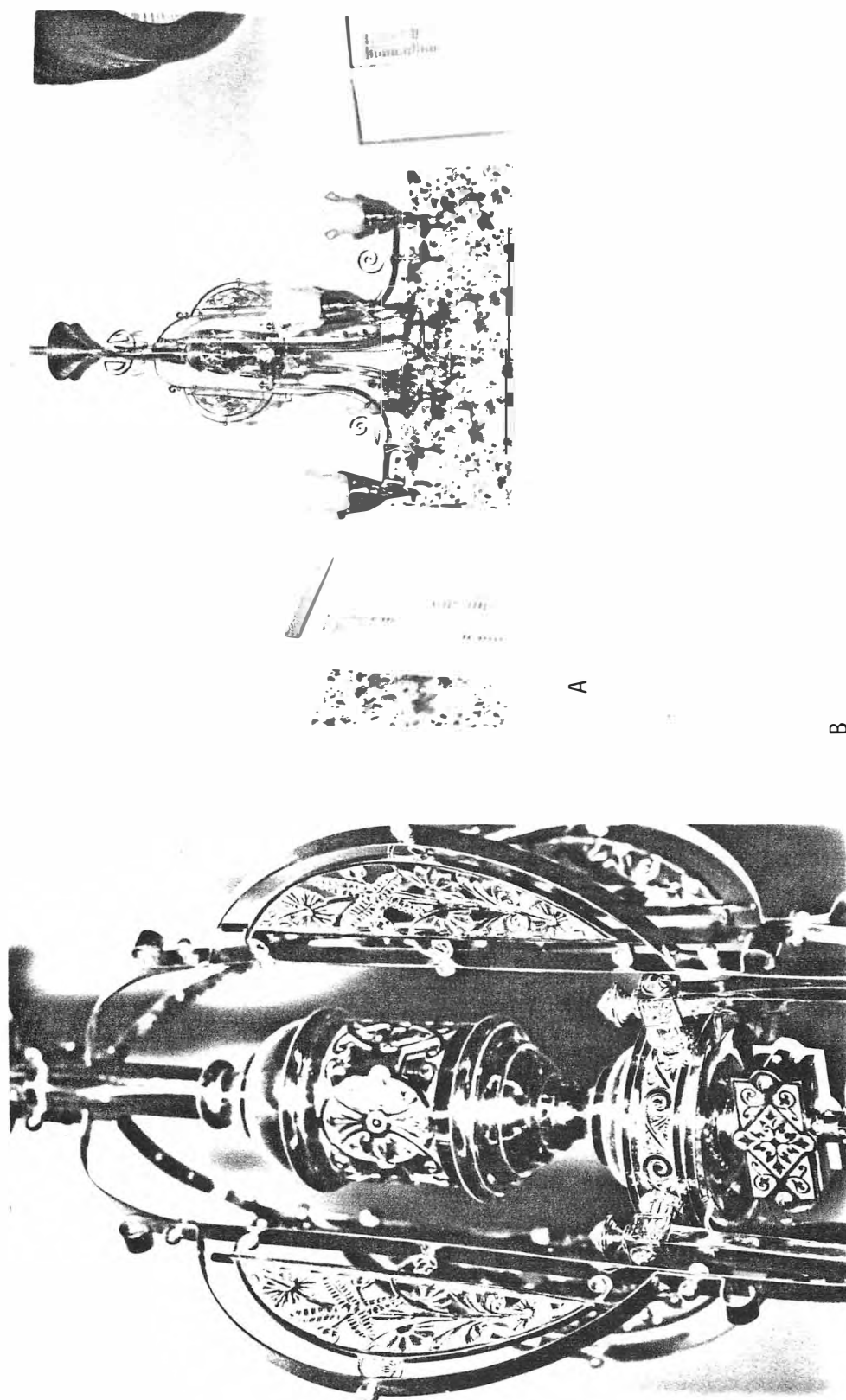


Figure 209. Brass fixture.

A. Hanging from the center ceiling of the Mallory-Neely master bedroom, this brass gas fixture (now converted to electricity) was designed in the Anglo-Japanese taste.

B. Detail of ornamental embellishment.

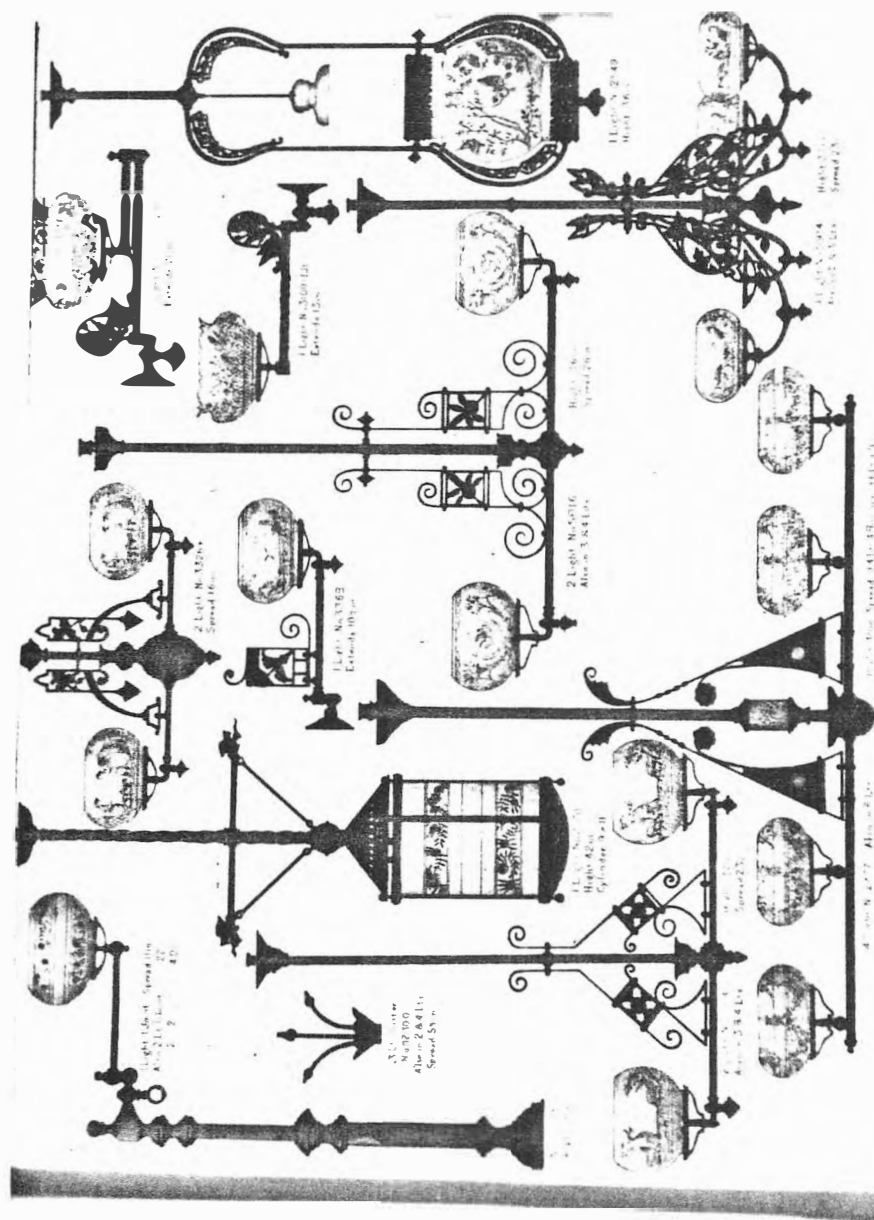


Figure 210. Page from the 1878 Mitchell, Vance and Company catalog is illustrated with a variety of gas fixtures all in the Anglo-Japanese manner. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

loosely based on historic styles were created to match the interior or furnishings, including Japanese, Indian, Moorish, Gothic, Spanish Renaissance, Italian Renaissance, and English Renaissance.⁴¹⁰

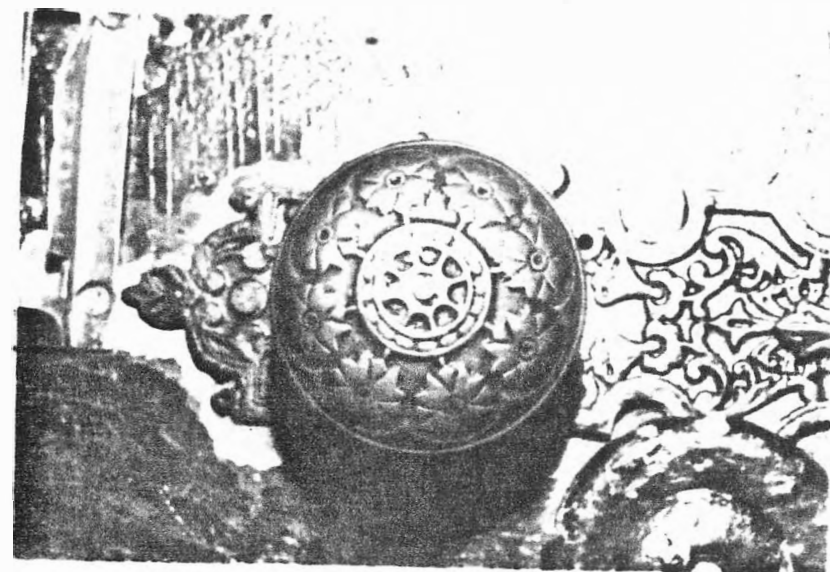
Elaborate "Artistic" knobs, plates, and drop escutcheons were installed throughout the first floor of the Neely home. (Figures 211, 212, 213, and 214) Most of these are embellished with floral relief in an historic European style and probably would have also been labeled "Renaissance." Some are also examples of the Anglo-Japanese style. The front door hardware is especially rich in design and ornamentation and probably came with the doors when purchased by Neely. On the second and third floor many of the shutter bars as well as shutter and door hinges are in the Eastlake/Anglo-Japanese taste. Many of these are quite similar to those illustrated in the Supplee Hardware Company Catalogue of Shelf and Heavy Hardware and other similar trade catalog sources of the period.⁴¹¹ (Figures 215, 216, and 217)

Marilyn Johnson in an essay entitled "The Artful Interior" states, "A unified artistic interior depended upon the intricate balancing of all components so that no one element would be visually dominating."⁴¹² Visual study of the various additions that the Neelys

⁴¹⁰Ibid., 67-68.

⁴¹¹Supplee Hardware Company Catalogue of Shelf and Heavy Hardware, Philadelphia, 1873 [trade catalog], Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

⁴¹²Marilyn Johnson, "The Artful Interior," In Pursuit of Beauty (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986), 129.



B



A

Figure 211. Late Victorian "artistic" doorknobs in the Aesthetic taste characteristic of those found throughout the first floor of the Mallory-Neely House.

A. Dining room knob.

B. Entrance hall knob.

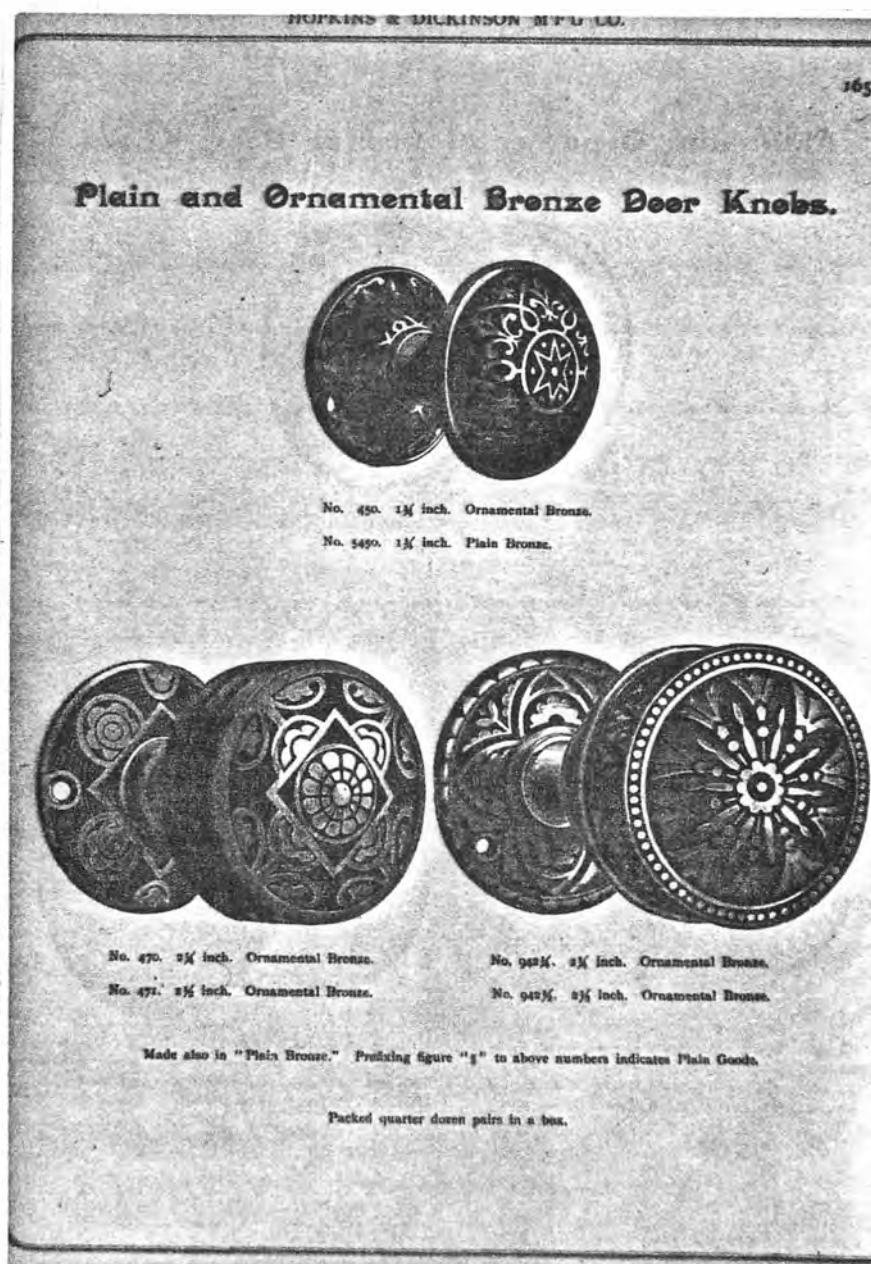


Figure 212. Bronze door knobs similar to those in the Mallory-Neely House as illustrated in the 1890 catalog of the Hopkins and Dickinson Manufacturing Company of Brooklyn. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

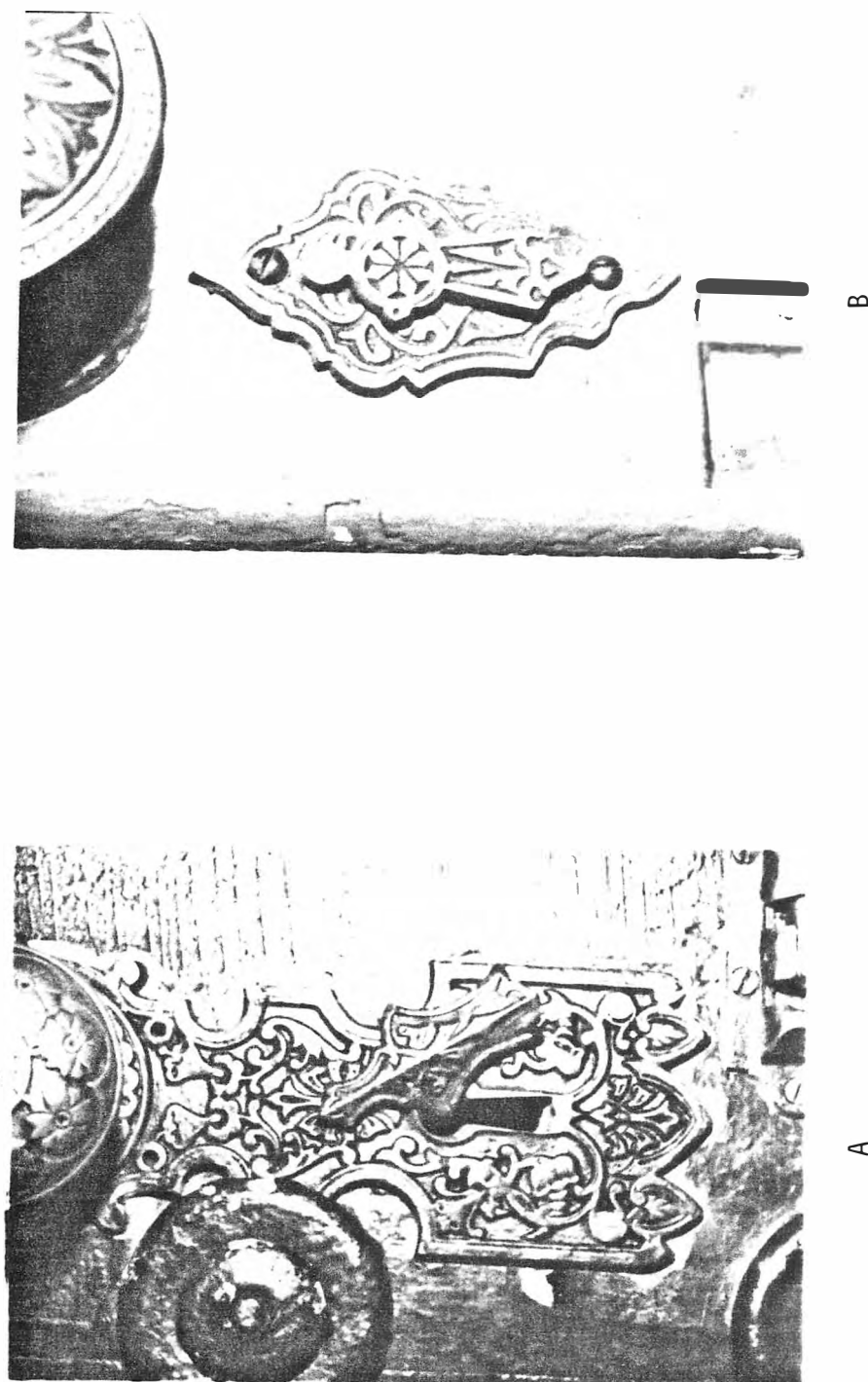


Figure 213. Elaborate drop escutcheons from doors on the first floor of the Mallory-Neely House.
A. Escutcheon in entrance hall.
B. Escutcheon in dining room.

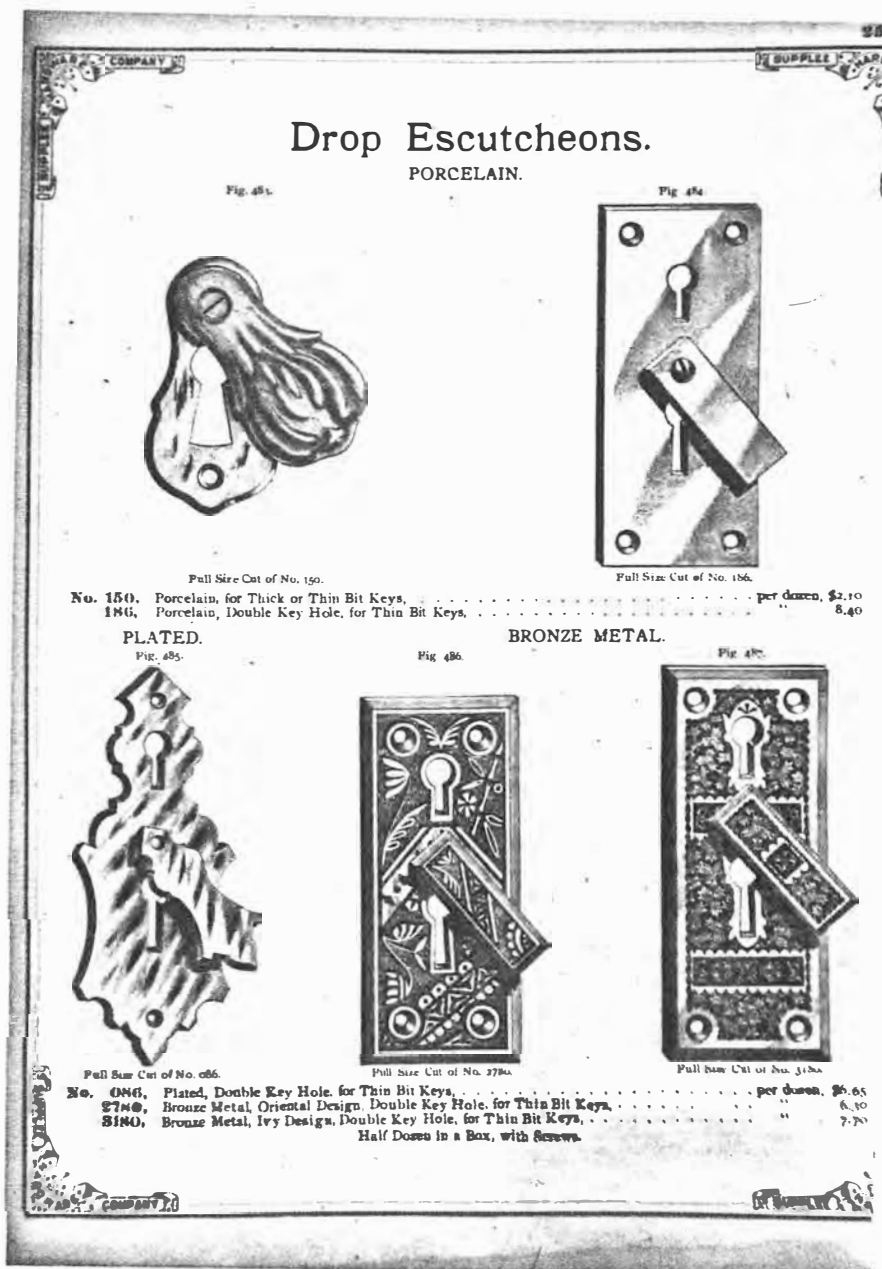
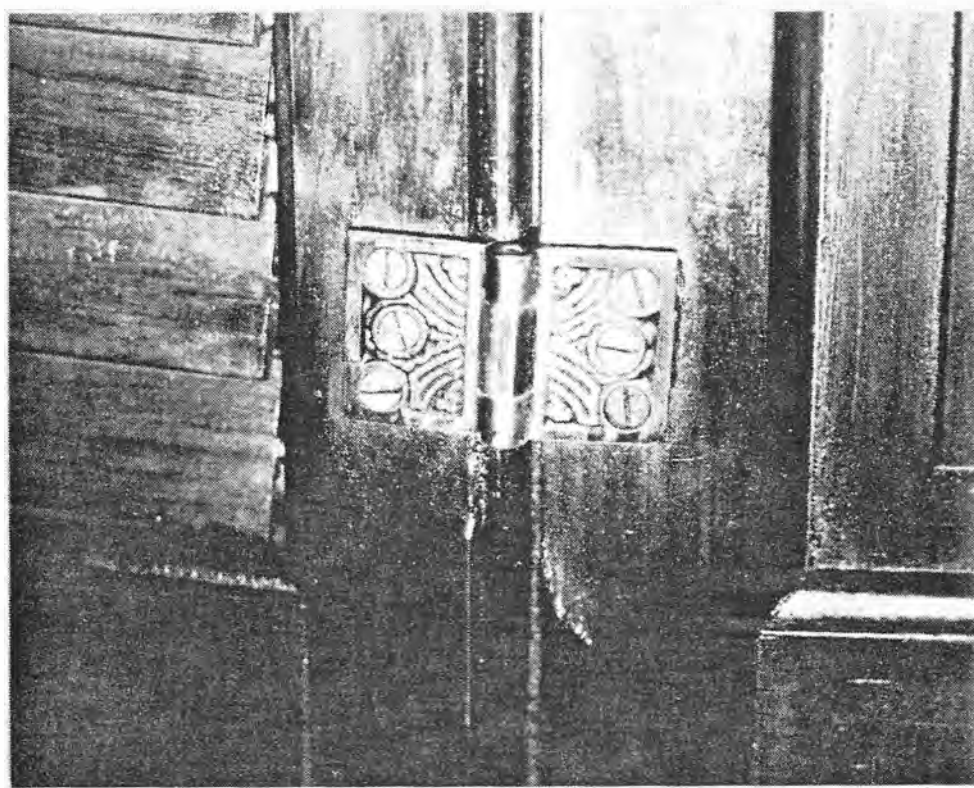


Figure 214. Page from the 1873 catalog of the Supplee Hardware Company showing a selection of drop escutcheons. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.



A



B

Figure 215. Reform style hardware in the Mallory-Neely House.
A. Shutter latch.
B. Hinge.

Shutter Bars.
ENAMELED AND BRONZED.

Fig. 1347.



Full Size Cut of $2\frac{1}{2}$ Inch, No. 3020.

Fig. 1348.



Full Size Cut of $2\frac{1}{2}$ Inch, No. 20.

No. 3020,	$2\frac{1}{2}$ Inch, Ornamental Iron, Copper Plated,	per dozen, \$1.10
20,	2 Inch, Ornamental Iron, Enameled,	.30
20,	$2\frac{1}{2}$ Inch, Ornamental Iron, Enameled,	.35
20,	3 Inch, Ornamental Iron, Enameled,	.40

Two Dozen in a Box, with Screws.

Fig. 1349.

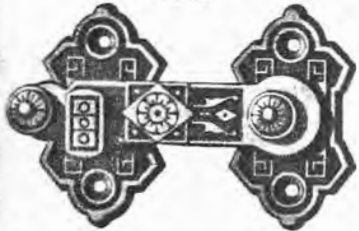


Full Size Cut of $2\frac{1}{2}$ Inch, No. 30.

No. 30,	2 Inch, Ornamental Iron, Enameled,	per dozen, \$0.54
30,	$2\frac{1}{2}$ Inch, Ornamental Iron, Enameled,	.60

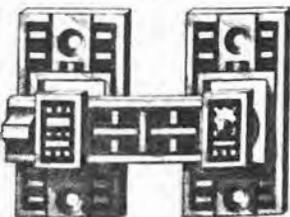
Two Dozen in a Box, with Screws.

Fig. 1350.



Full Size Cut of $2\frac{1}{2}$ Inch, No. 41.

Fig. 1351.

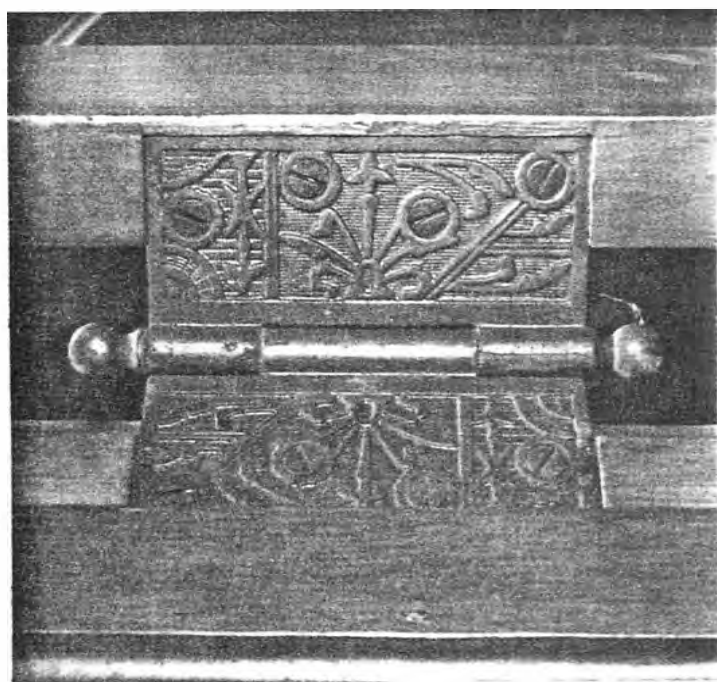


Full Size Cut of $2\frac{1}{2}$ Inch, No. 113 and 115.

No. 31,	2 Inch, Ornamental Iron, Enameled,	per dozen, \$0.75
41,	$2\frac{1}{2}$ Inch, Ornamental Iron, Enameled,	.80
113,	$2\frac{1}{2}$ Inch, Basket Pattern, Adamantine Bronzed,	1.25
115,	$2\frac{1}{2}$ Inch, Basket Pattern, Electro Bronze Plated,	1.90

Two Dozen in a Box, with Screws.

Figure 216. Page showing a variety of shutter bars similar to those in the Mallory-Neely House from the 1873 Supplee Hardware Company Catalogue of Shelf and Heavy Hardware. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.



A



B

Figure 217. Reform style hinges.

- A. Hinge butt from the third floor of the Mallory-Neely House.
 B. A similar one shown in the 1873 catalog of the Supplee Hardware Company.
 Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

made to their home between 1883 and 1900 shows that though it was far from the Aesthetic ideal of total harmony, they had indeed succeeded in creating an "artful" interior in Memphis, Tennessee.

Mallory Redecoration

The latest strata of "fixed" interior decor in the Mallory-Neely House are the alterations carried out by the Barton Lee Mallory family from the early 1900s to 1972 when the house was turned over to the Daughters, Sons, and Children of the American Revolution. These last additions will be treated briefly since they go well beyond the time frame of the Victorian Era. Mrs. Daisy Mallory left the seldom used ceremonial areas of the house fairly much unchanged but in the areas of the house used by her and her family for their daily life, much was altered in keeping with current fashions of the time or to replace damaged or worn out items.

Mrs. Mallory's daughter, Mrs. Walter Morgan, during an interview and tour of the house stated to the amazement of all present: "Mother absolutely hated Victorian!"⁴¹³ This statement should not seem surprising inasmuch as this reaction against Victorianism was typical of her generation at the turn-of-the-century. She and her contemporaries continued to vigorously pursue the "cleanup" of the Victorian interior; this included overall simplification, eliminating typical Victorian bric-a-brac and clutter, and brightening with lighter

⁴¹³Mrs. Francis Mallory Morgan, Interview by author, Memphis, Tennessee, 4 October 1985.

colors.⁴¹⁴ Family and newspaper photographs taken of various rooms from early in the century through the 1960s reveal these alterations. A 1961 album of color photographs taken by a Commercial Appeal photographer documents the gradual changes wrought by Mrs. Mallory and her family over a sixty-nine year period.⁴¹⁵

At some point the first and second floor hallways with their dark stenciled walls and ceilings were painted over with a light cream color. The embossed "damask" sitting room and "leather" dining room papers were either removed or covered over with canvas and then painted with solid colors. Throughout the house many of the grained doors and their frames were painted over with white or cream-colored paint. The second floor bedrooms were almost all totally altered. Most of the rooms were painted light colors and their stenciled or frescoed ceilings were painted over in solid white. The sitting, dining, second floor hallway, and the second floor bedroom wall-to-wall carpets were all removed and their floors were covered over with modern narrow width hardwood flooring in the late 1940s. In the dining and sitting rooms drapery and portieres, as well as much of the upholstery throughout the entire first floor, were replaced with new fabrics. In general, the areas used for day-to-day life were somewhat modernized and brightened up. Though the house is

⁴¹⁴See Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman, Jr., The Decoration of Houses (New York: Scribner, 1902); reprint, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978.

⁴¹⁵[Photographic album], 1961, Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., private papers, Memphis, Tennessee.

thought of by many solely as an outstanding Victorian survival, in reality large portions of it today actually represent interior trends from the 1910s through the late 1960s. It is important to remember that like most homes the Mallory-Neely House was never a static one style house, inside or out. The stratification of these varying interior architectural features represents the accumulation of years of family living and the on-going and changing taste of the varied people who occupied this home.

CHAPTER IX

MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: FURNISHINGS

In the historic house museum, objects will carry a greater part of the burden of interpretation than words. They will reveal the relative degree of comfort and convenience in which the inhabitants lived. In their materials and means of construction, objects will speak of the technological capabilities of those who made them, whether the user himself, a local craftsman, or a distant manufacturer; their presence will explain what was available to people in a given time and place. The form of the object will express ideas of appropriateness and beauty held by people long dead. An object, the symbol of its own function, thus symbolizes aspects of living.¹

Furniture

The furnishings (including furniture, accessories and textiles) of the Mallory-Neely House, like the surrounding fixed interior decor, represent a complex layering of nineteenth century styles and fashions. But because of their easy movability, coupled with the lack of written documentation, they pose an even greater problem to organize logically, classify, and investigate for research purposes.

The furnishings in the Mallory-Neely House, today, were assembled there in the following manner. The present collection, more than likely, began when the Neelys in 1883 moved furnishings into their

¹William Seale, Recreating the Historic House Interior (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1979), 5.

new home from their former one on nearby Jefferson and Orleans streets. In order to furnish this much larger home, these were then added to by the Neelys probably along with the extensive remodeling schemes carried out by them until the century's end. After Mrs. James Columbus Neely's death on 27 January 1905, in keeping with the stipulations of her husband's will, the estate was divided equally among their five children.² After that time many of the contents (possibly as much as four-fifths) of the house were probably removed. Today, for example, descendants of Pearl Neely Grant possess individual pieces and at least one known suite of bedroom furniture originally in the house.

The present collection of furnishings in the Mallory-Neely House is therefore made up by those pieces inherited by Mrs. Daisy Mallory from her parents in addition to those pieces added by her and Mr. Mallory. These items include pieces that are known to have been purchased by them, gifts given to them, and pieces inherited from other members of Mrs. Mallory's own family and that of her husband. Some pieces in the house, for example, are known to have come from Mr. Barton Lee Mallory's palatial family home. (Figure 16, page 99)

At Mrs. Mallory's death on 9 July 1969 her will specified that her descendants equally share all of the furniture and furnishings excepting certain items described in detail, which were to go to

²Last Will and Testament of James Columbus Neely, 1 February 1901, Shelby County Will Book 16, pp. 56-66, Records of the Shelby County Probate Court, Memphis, Tennessee.

specific persons.³ When her heirs presented the house to the Daughters, Sons, and Children of the American Revolution, they also gave most of the furnishings, excepting some paintings, furniture, and accessories, many of which, since that time, have generously been returned to the Museum. In summary, it is therefore safest to say that the furniture presently in the Mallory-Neely House is that assembled by Mrs. Mallory between 1905 and 1969, some of which is the original Neely furniture.

Regardless of the origins of the collection, the Mallory-Neely House is a veritable museum of nineteenth century American and foreign furniture styles and techniques. Since nineteenth century furniture has been subjected to extensive research and writing, the focus here will be on nineteenth century technology, sources and styles related to the Mallory-Neely collection. Particular examples will be singled out which best exemplify the various Victorian styles and technological innovations.

Furniture and Technology

The story of nineteenth century furniture is in many ways quite similar to that of the architecture of the era. Both were increasingly affected by technological development as the century progressed. Like the architects, the creators of nineteenth century

³Last Will and Testament of Frances Neely Mallory, 18 July 1969, No. 92268 Series Legal Papers, Records of the Shelby County Probate Court, Memphis, Tennessee.

furniture accepted new technological processes for production but often nostalgically clothed them in adoptive revivals of historic styles. As with architecture, there was also a battle between those who favored this derivative approach to design and those who advocated design reform.

For years it was commonly believed, without substantiated documentary proof, that nineteenth century furniture represented a rapid changeover from handicraft to mechanized mass production in which quality was lost to quantity. New and innovative research has brought about a re-evaluation of Victorian furniture and especially its production.⁴ Research has shown that the changeover was much slower, amounting to an evolutionary process instead of a revolutionary one. Hand methods of furniture production lingered much longer than had been previously realized. Through most of the century the hand powered machine was more commonly utilized than machines using other power sources. The use of costly machinery occurred more as a process of slow infiltration. Only in the later decades of the century did mechanized factory production of furniture become dominant.⁵

Despite the more realistic appraisal today of the speed of the impact of technology on nineteenth century furniture, the fact

⁴See, for example, Victorian Furniture, Kenneth Ames, ed.

⁵See Polly Ann Earl, "Craftsmen and Machines: The Nineteenth Century Furniture Industry," Technological Innovation and the Decorative Arts, eds. Ian M. G. Quimby and Polly Ann Earl (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1973), 307-330, and Michael J. Ettema, "Technological Innovation and Design Economics in Furniture Manufacture," Winterthur Portfolio 16, No.s 2-3 (Summer/Autumn, 1982), 197-223.

remains that it is the use of the machine more than any other factor that distinguishes Victorian furniture from that of earlier periods. Furniture produced all or in part with machinery has a different visual impact from that produced entirely by hand.⁶ But it is recognized today that the use of the machine by no means implies an automatic lessening of quality; much Victorian furniture is very well made.

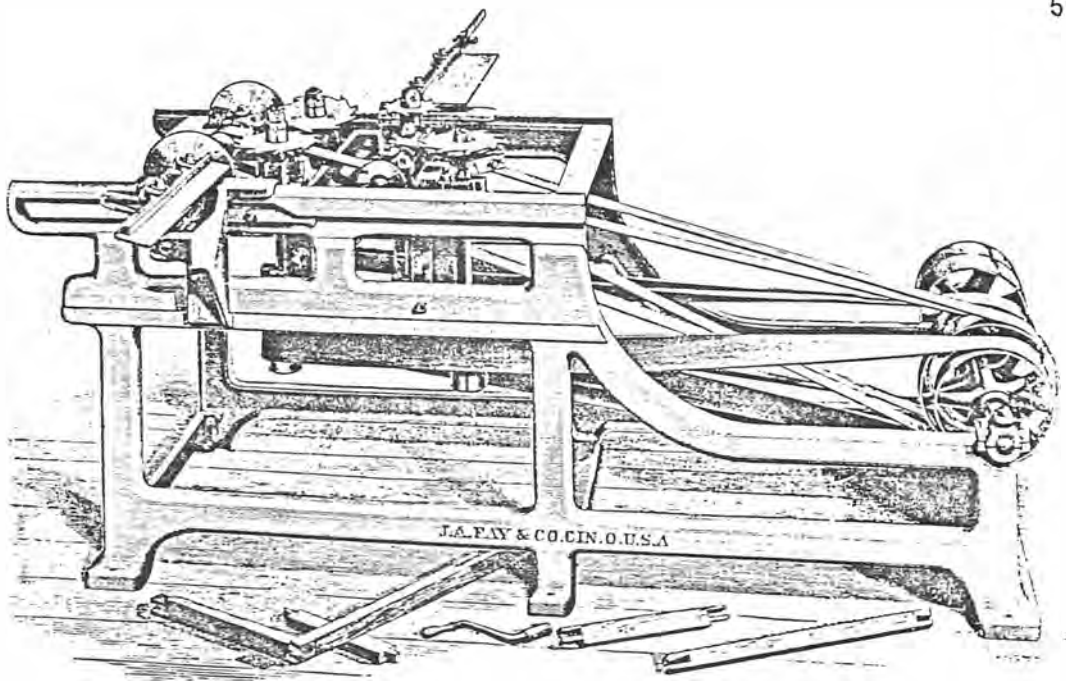
Woodworking machines of all kinds were invented and then continually improved upon during the century. Americans led the way in the development of ingenious machines which quickly replicated hand processes and sped up the output resulting in increased profits.⁷ (Figure 218). Michael J. Ettema in an essay, "Technical Innovation and Design Economics in Furniture Manufacture," argues that in lieu of viewing Victorian furniture solely as a decorative art, it is better understood as a product of the economic and business outlook of the era.⁸

The varied woodworking inventions were only possible because of parallel developments in both metallurgy and power sources. Nineteenth century woodworking machinery was first powered by hand, then

⁶See Cyril Stanley Smith, "Reflections on Technology and the Decorative Arts in the Nineteenth Century," Technological Innovation and the Decorative Arts, eds. Ian M. G. Quimby and Polly Anne Earl (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1973), 1-64.

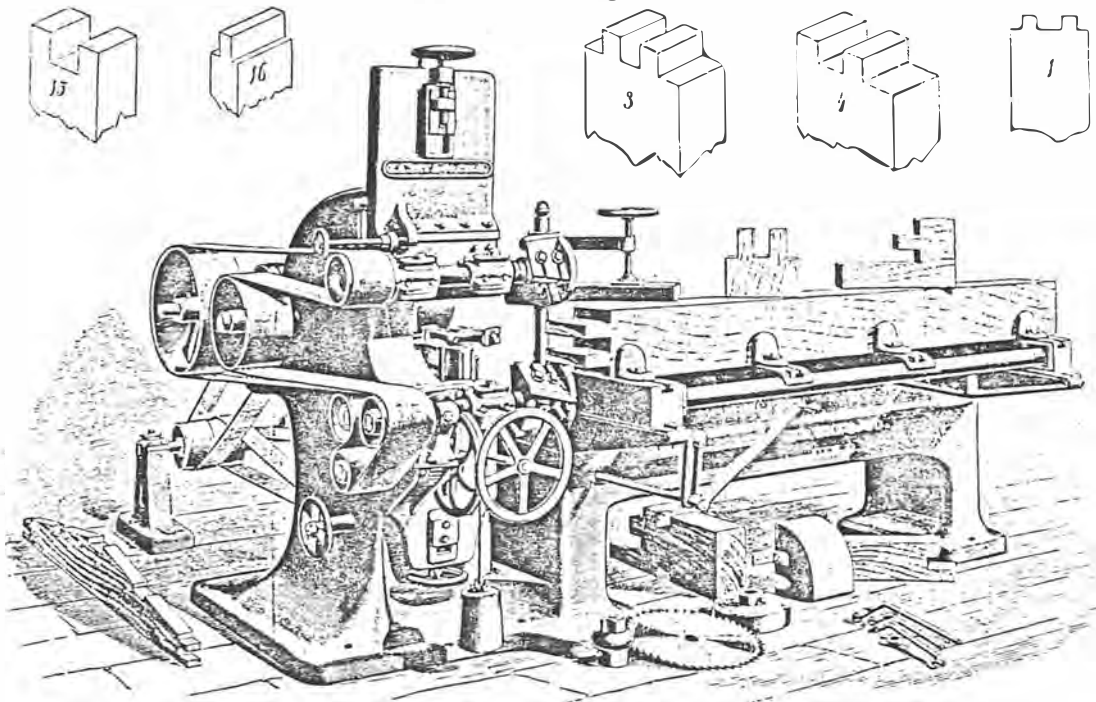
⁷Nathan Rosenberg, Perspectives on Technology (London: Cambridge University press, 1976), 35.

⁸Ettema, 40.



Sash-Dovetailing Machine.

A



No. 5 Patent

Automatic Universal Car Tenoning Machine.

B

For Single, Double, and Triple Tenons, Gullnots, etc.

Figure 218. Engravings from the 1900 catalog of J. A. Fay & Company showing machinery used to manufacture furniture in late nineteenth century America. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.

A. Sash-dovetailing machine.

B. Automatic universal car tenoning machine, No. 5 Patent.

by water and steam, and at the end of the century by electricity.⁹ Much high quality furniture continued to be hand crafted while middle and low range furniture was mass produced.¹⁰

The Hall and Brown Woodworking Machine Company's catalogue (c. 1870) is profusely illustrated with engravings, accompanied by lengthy descriptions, of many of the various labor-saving machines available by late century. These include a large variety of power saws, ranging from general all-uprpose to specialized tools including: varieties of saws; drill and boring machines; machines for cutting a large variety of moldings; all types of planing machines; sanding machines; a large selection of joining machines, including those that created dovetailing, tenoning, and general jointing; automatic gluing machines; and a variety of hand carving machines.¹¹ The author of a similar catalog published by J. A. Fay & Company stated that their products were ideal for "the rapid and economic conversion of wood into many diversified uses, purposes, and shapes."¹² He

⁹D. F. Galloway, "Machine Tools," A History of Technology: The Late Nineteenth Century 1850 to 1900, Vol. 5 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 641.

¹⁰See, for example, David Hanks, "Isaac E. Scott, Craftsman and Designer," The Magazine Antiques, 55, No. 6 (June 1974), 1307-1313; and John H. Hill, "Furniture Designs of Henry W. Jenkins & Sons, Co.," Winterthur Portfolio 5 (1969), 153-183.

¹¹No. 6 Illustrated and Descriptive Catalogue, Patented Approved Wood-Working Machinery (St. Louis: Hall & Brown Woodworking Machine Co., c. 1890), [trade catalog], Special Collections, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.

¹²Illustrated Descriptive Catalogue of Labor-Saving Patent Wood-Working Machinery (Cincinnati, Ohio: J. A. Fay & Co., c. 1900), 1 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Cincinnati Historical Society, Cincinnati, Ohio.

recommended their machinery for its "strength, speed, durability, and convenience of operation."¹³ In her essay, "The Knapp Dove-tailing Machine," Patricia Tice traces the development and use of one of these machines, illustrating in the process how an old hand-crafted method of joinery was converted into a mechanical one.¹⁴ The compiler of the catalog of the Burley's Dove-Tailing Machine Company stated that with their machine furniture can be "dovetailed in a much neater, more substantial, and satisfactory manner than can be done by hand."¹⁵ He also boasted that with the machine 900 to 1000 drawers could be made "in a superior manner" in a day as opposed to thirty a day produced by workmen using traditional hand methods.¹⁶

Much of the furniture in the Mallory-Neely collection is typically Victorian in that it is richly embellished with carved, incised, or applied ornament. Designers of Victorian furniture ornament used the same printed sources as other designers mentioned elsewhere in this paper, all copying or adapting historic originals. This profuse ornamentation was cause for attack at the time by design reformers and has continued to receive criticism during the present century. Most reformers expressed opinions that it was senseless

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Patricia M. Tice, "The Knapp Dovetailing Machine," The Magazine Antiques, 73, No. 5 (May 1983), 1070-1072.

¹⁵Burley's Dove-Tailing Machine Company: A Full Description of the Machine (New York: 1855), 8 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

¹⁶Ibid., 11.

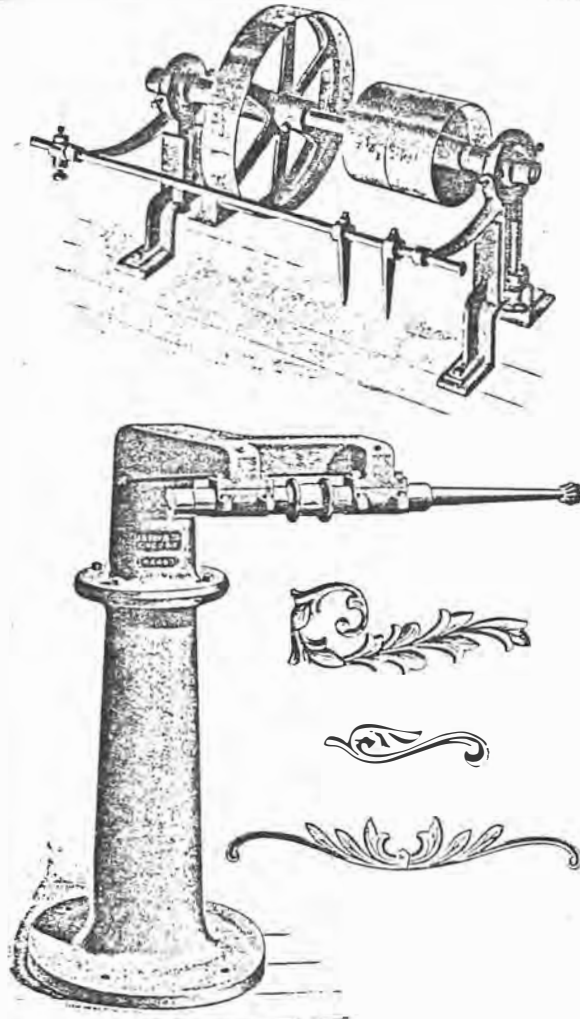
ornament applied on the surface solely to make the object look richer without regard to the overall design.

In previous centuries furniture ornamented with carving had been affordable only to the very rich. In the nineteenth century the machine made ornamentation practical, more economical and therefore available to all classes. To many Victorians elaborate ornamentation became symbolic of prosperity.

Machines that could create ornamental carving for furniture were developed and in use by late nineteenth century. Most of these which used a single template pattern could carve multiple carvings at one time. The catalog of the Hall and Brown Woodworking Machine Company, for example, illustrated several like their Rohlman Carving Machine which could carve five objects at the same time. The writer of the catalog described it as capable of producing the "highest order of ornament, superior in beauty and effect to hand carving."¹⁷ The owners of J. A. Fay & Company illustrated the firm's New Style Handcarving Machine in their 1800 catalog. (Figure 219) They claimed that with various adjustments and attachments it could be used to do any ornamental carving necessary, including "fine veining, rosette making, relief or recessed carvings and artistic figures."¹⁸ The same company manufactured the Patent Carving and Edge Molding Machine

¹⁷No. 6 Illustrated and Descriptive Catalogue, Patented Approved Woodworking Machinery, 227.

¹⁸Illustrated Descriptive Catalogue of Labor Saving Patent Wood-Working Machinery, 135.



No. 2 New Style Hand Carving Machine.

Figure 219. Illustration of a machine for carving decorative ornament for furniture from the 1900 catalog of J. A. Fay & Company. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.

which could create all types of ornamental moldings on furniture and also carve recessed or relief panels into the furniture surfaces in a variety of ornamental designs.¹⁹

Machine-produced ornament was not only carved but also was embossed. The Hall and Brown Company sold a wood embossing machine which was capable of pressing a large variety of designs into wooden surfaces.²⁰ This machine, for example, was capable of stamping a motif like the Grecian egg-and-dart into a running molding and of doing so at eighteen inches to three feet per minute.²¹

As mechanization affected the furniture industry specialization became common. Both small shops and larger industries purchased pre-made parts from specialty businesses and then applied them to their products.²² Examples are included in the 1877 Illustrated Price List of Patented Artificial Wood Ornaments for Furniture Manufacturers and the 1877 Nathusius Illustrated Catalog of Patented Wood Ornament. They are both profusely illustrated with examples of ornamental carvings for application to furniture.²³ (Figure 220) The furniture

¹⁹Ibid., 135-136.

²⁰No. 6 Illustrated and Descriptive Catalogue, Patented Approved Wood-Working Machinery, 273.

²¹Ibid., 272.

²²Tice, "The Knapp Dove-Tailing Machine," 1070.

²³The Illustrated Price List of Patented Artificial Wood Ornaments for Furniture Manufacturers (Chicago: J. Liebenstein, 1877), [trade catalog], Special Collections, Chicago Historical Society,

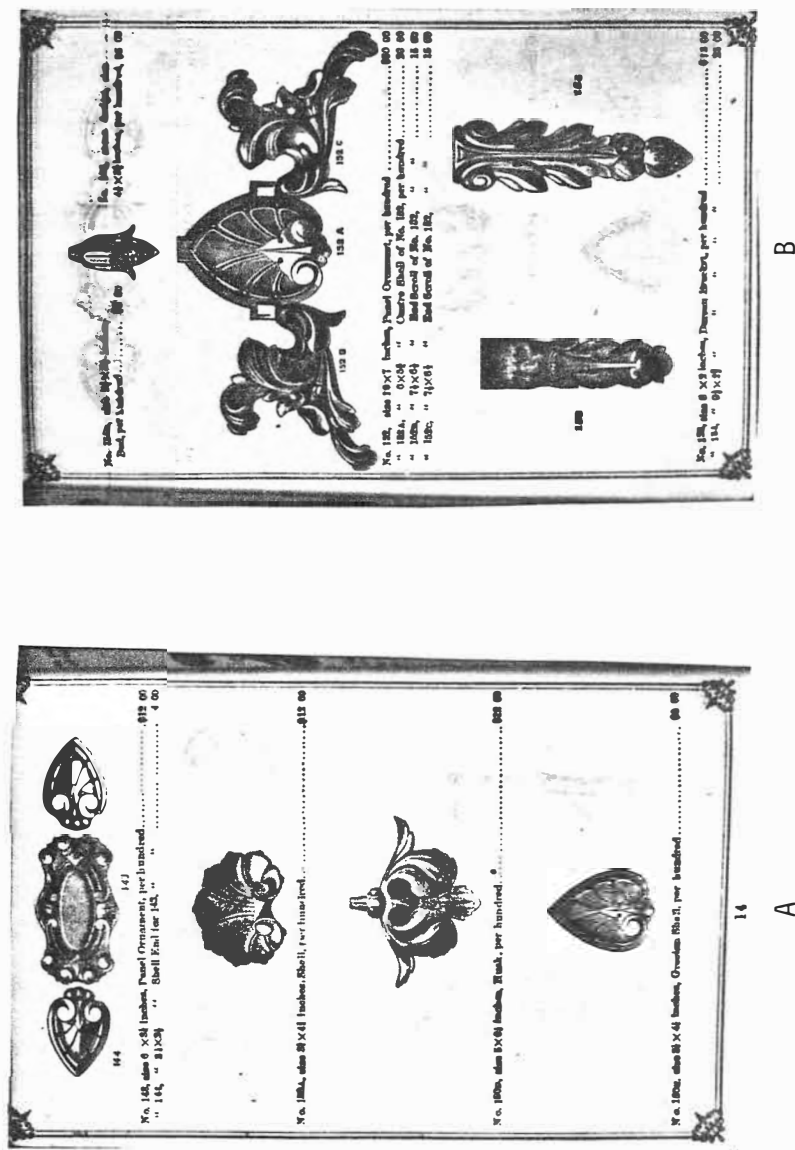


Figure 220. Illustrations from the 1877 Nathusius Illustrated Catalog of Patented Wood Ornament showing carvings available for order by furniture manufacturers for use on their products. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.
A. Plate 14.
B. Plate 15.

in the Mallory-Neely House is decorated with a wealth of examples using characteristic Victorian ornamental motifs, some of which are hand carved, but many of which are products of varied machine processes. (Figures 221 and 222).

Nineteenth century furniture innovation was not confined to woodworking alone but can be seen in other areas, especially upholstery, which was transformed by the introduction of the inner spring.²⁴ By the 1890s machines of all sorts were invented that mechanized the upholstery trade: machines to clean and sort stuffings; others that used mechanical methods of tufting, sewing, banding; and also high-powered looms for the production of upholstery fabrics.²⁵ Overstuffed upholstered furniture became a hallmark of the late century Victorian interior. An entire change in the concept of comfort seems to have become a Victorian obsession.²⁶ Examples of upholstered sofas, chairs, stools and a sofa bed with inner springs can be found throughout the Mallory-Neely House. Though many have been reupholstered,

Chicago; and O. A. Nathusius, Illustrated Price List of Patented Artificial Wood Ornaments (New York: 1877) [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

²⁴Giedion, Mechanization Takes Command, 379-394.

²⁵Sharon Darling, Chicago Furniture: Art, Craft, and Industry 1833-1983 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), 50.

²⁶See, for example, Page Talbot, "Recliners and Sofa Beds: A Search for Comfort," Nineteenth Century, 7, No. 2 (Summer 1981), 51-55; and John Gloag, Victorian Comfort (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), Chapter Three.

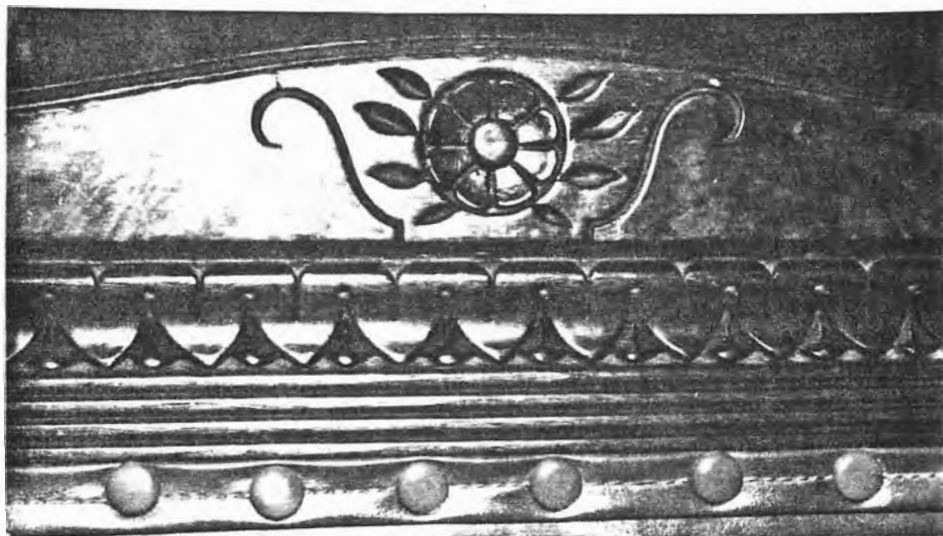


A



B

Figure 221. Details of ornamental carving used to embellish Victorian furniture in the Mallory-Neely collection.
A. Rococo scrolling foliage decoration of a bed.
B. Stylized palmette motifs from a dresser.



A



B

Figure 222. Details of ornamental carving used to embellish furniture in the Mallory-Neely collection.
A. Ornamented crestring of a dining room chair.
B. Carved dining room table leg.

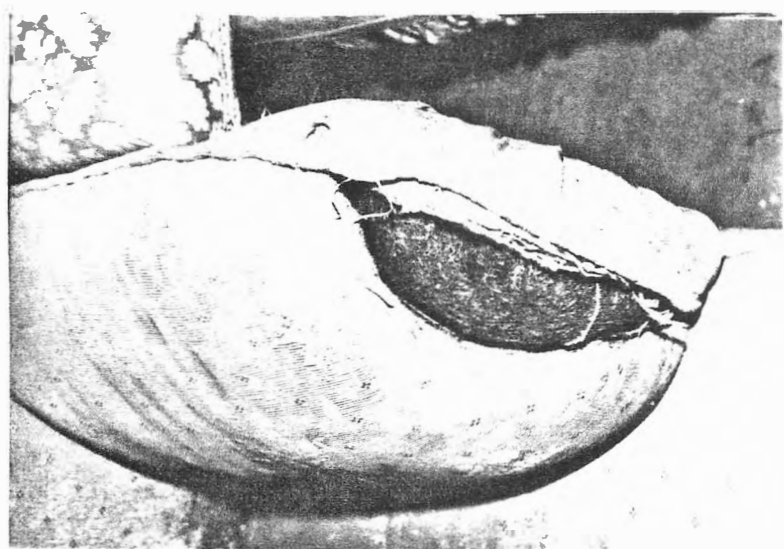
some of these retain their original coverings. One large chair in storage is damaged, revealing the plentiful horsehair filling used to achieve the overstuffed appearance. (Figure 223) Frederick Hodgson in The Practical Upholsterer (1891) recommended a variety of materials that could be used for stuffing, including down, flocks, cocoa fibers, alva, and a variety of grasses; but horsehair, he stated, was the principal filling used at the time for the cheapest to the best grade of upholstery work.²⁷

Other chairs in storage are illustrative of the rich look achieved by upholsterers of the period, an approach which Hodgson called "French work." He stated "there has been a decided revolution in upholstery work during the past few years in which artistic forms, combined with French luxuriousness are much sought after."²⁸ (Figures 224 and 225) Artistic garnishing of upholstery, such as decorative corded edges, deep buttoning or tufting, and gathered pleated edges, can be seen in the Mallory-Neely chairs. (Figures 226 and 227) Sadly tassels, fringes and other ornamental embellishments used as the finishing touch on upholstered pieces of this time have all vanished.

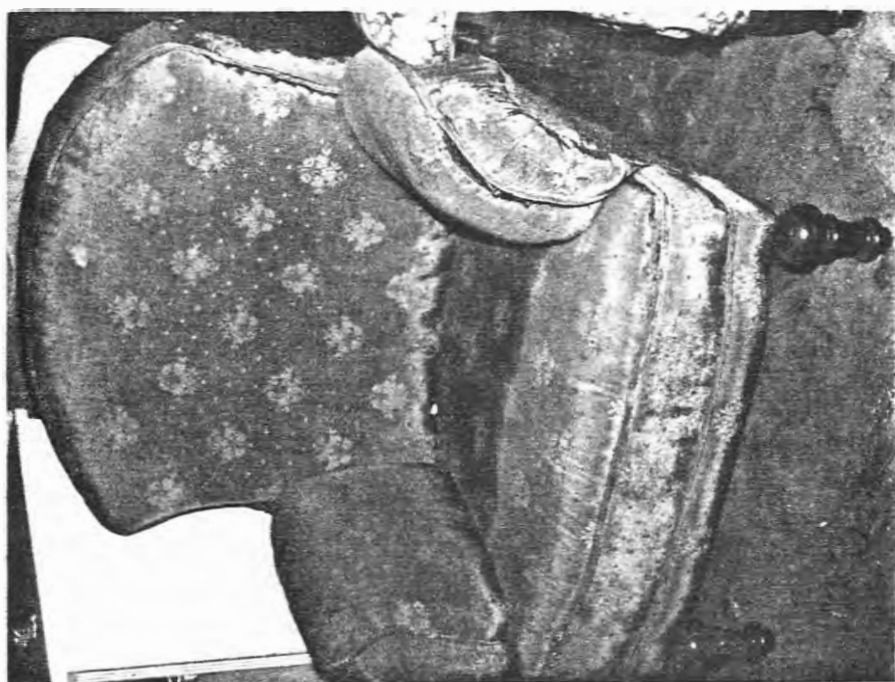
In lieu of denigrating, as has been the custom, Victorian furniture as overworked, poorly constructed and designed, modern material culture-oriented scholars are de-emphasizing its visual

²⁷Frederick Thomas Hodgson, The Practical Upholsterer (New York: The Industrial Publishing Co., 1891), 12, Special Collections, Strong Museum, Rochester, New York.

²⁸Ibid., 41.



B



A

Figure 223. Late Victorian upholstered furniture.
A. Overstuffed chair in the Mallory-Neely collection.
B. Detail showing horse hair stuffing.

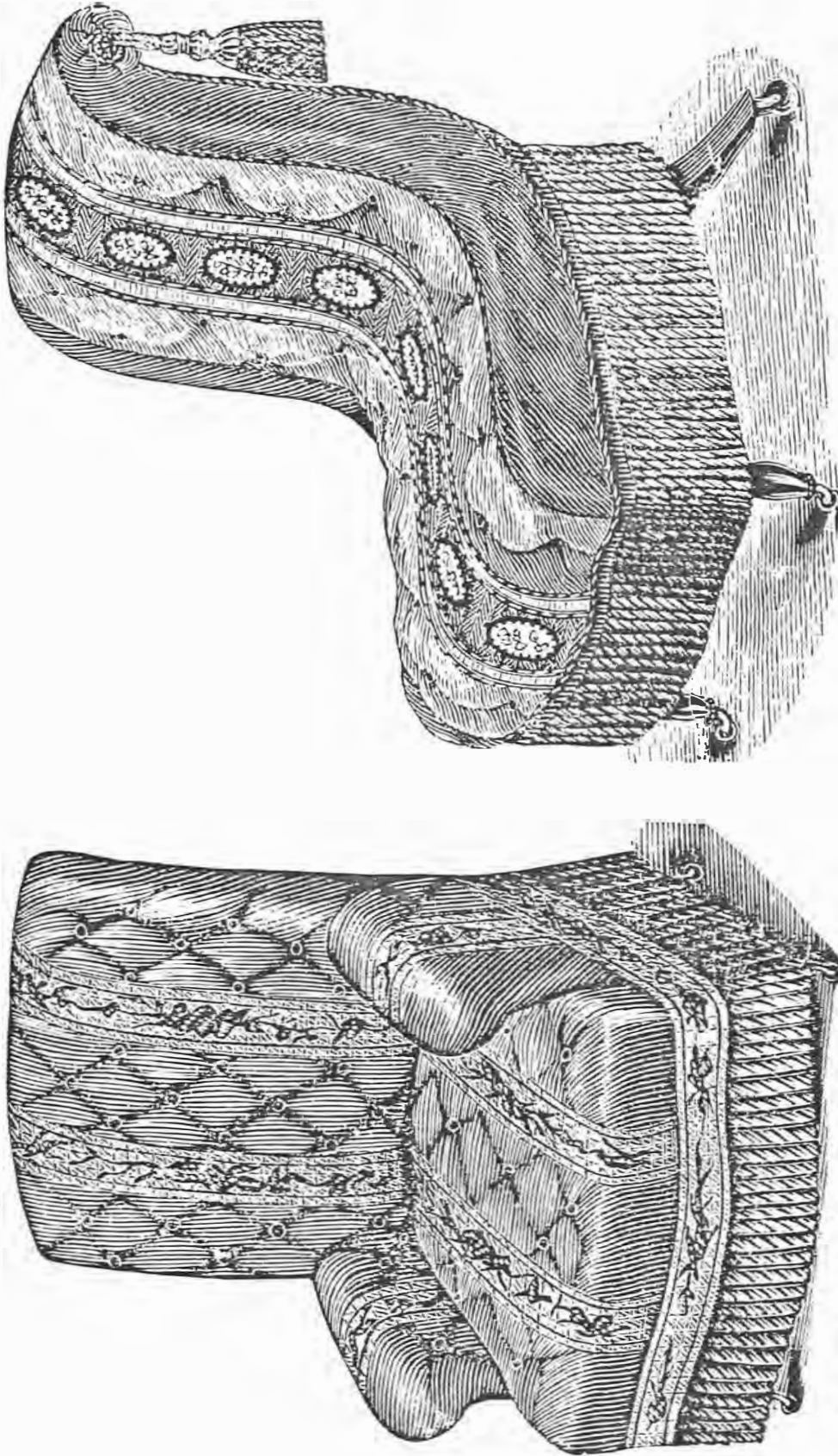


Figure 224. Engraving from Henry Williams and Mrs. C. S. Jones, *Beautiful Homes* (1878), illustrating characteristic overly embellished late Victorian upholstery treatment. Courtesy Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum.

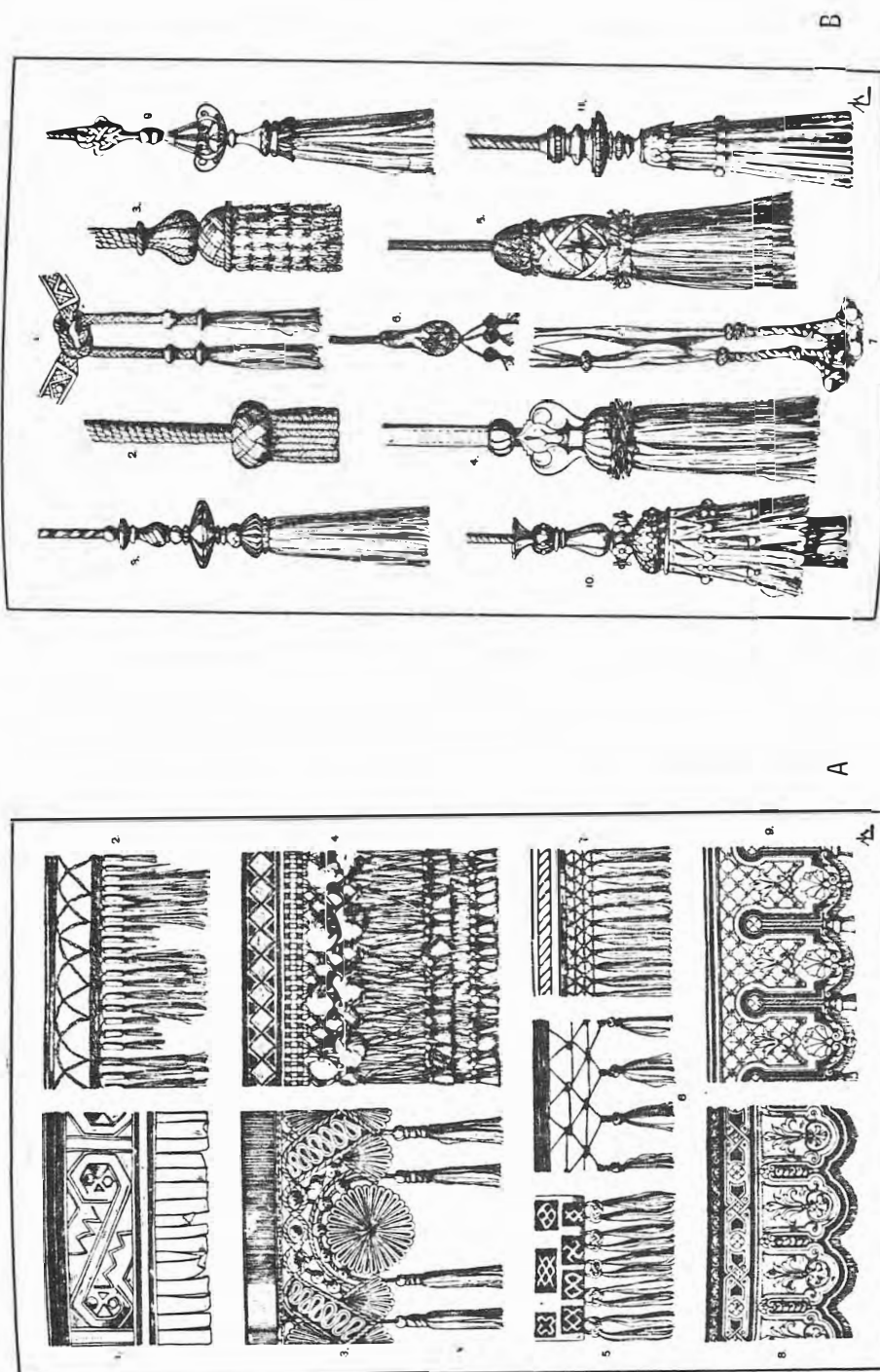


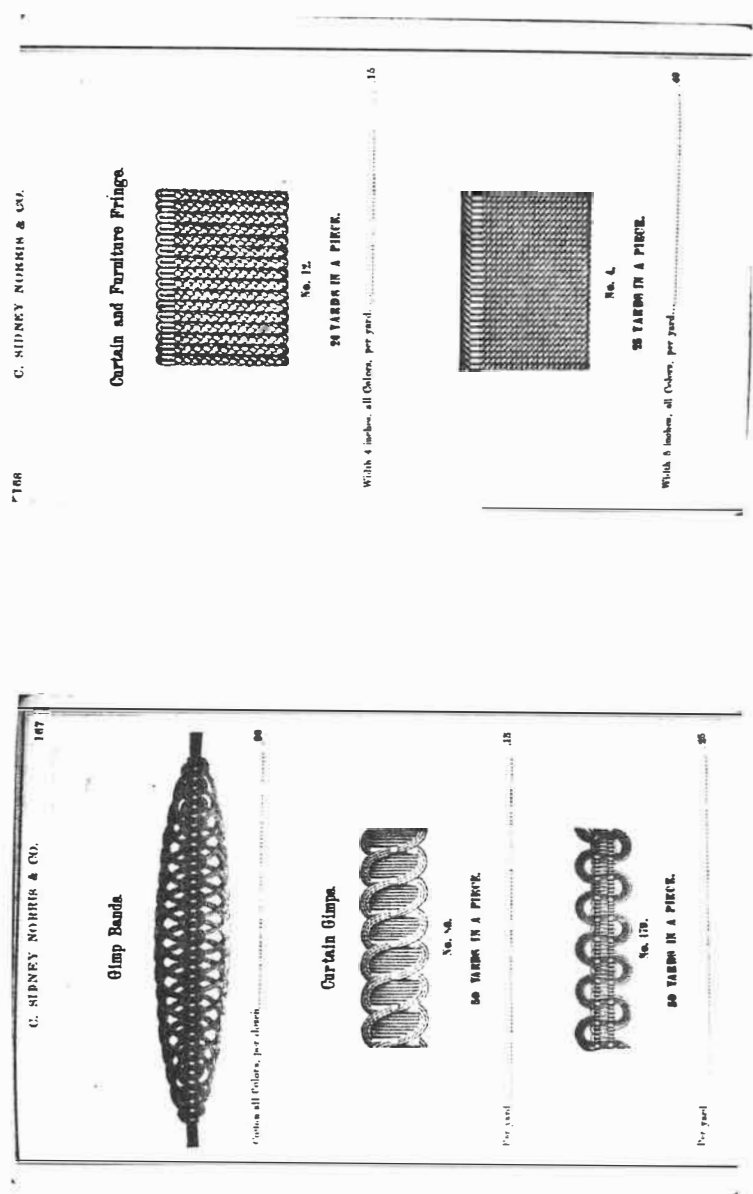
Figure 225. Plates from Franz Meyer, *Handbook of Ornament* (1894). In resurrecting elaborate drapery and upholstery embellishments based on historic examples such as these illustrated above, Victorian upholsterers catered to the general fashion for historic revivalism. Courtesy Newberry Library.

A. Fringes.

B. Tassels.



Figure 226. Detail of a chair in the Mallory-Neely collection showing characteristic upholstery flourishes of the era including fancy gimp banding and gathered pleated edges.



A

B

Figure 227. Illustrations from the C. Sidney Norris & Company, Illustrated Catalogue of Cabinet and Upholstery Goods (1880). Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.
A. Gimp bands.
B. Fringes.

aesthetics and are instead stressing the fact that it is loaded with information about a modernizing society going through social, economic, and technological change. For example, the Mallory-Neely House furniture includes both high quality pieces, mainly European, that continued to be created almost entirely using handcrafted methods, but the majority are pieces of American manufacture that were made by machine processes and are therefore illustrative of changing technology. The large and varied collection of Mallory-Neely furniture provides an extensive amount of interpretive information.

Furniture Sources

The development of specialized machinery alone did not transform the furniture industry in nineteenth century America. An additional factor was new and improved modes of transportation which enabled furniture factories to distribute their wares widely. Consequently, a whole new approach to furniture marketing developed.²⁹ Replacing the old one-to-one relationship of cabinetmaker and client, a new middleman, the furniture dealer, appeared on the scene.³⁰ The dealer carried an assortment of stock purchased from the furniture manufacturer. Primarily a business man, he had nothing to do with the design and creation of the furniture.

²⁹Robert and Harriet Swedburg, Victorian Furniture Styles I (Des Moines, Iowa: Wallace-Homestead Book Company, 1981), 18.

³⁰Jonathan L. Fairbanks and Elizabeth Bidwell Bates, American Furniture 1620 to the Present (New York: Richard Marek Publishers, 1981), 368.

The furniture wareroom was the center for the dealer's operation. (Figure 228) The following description of one of these stores, The Heron & Company, Furniture Dealers of Cincinnati, is typical.

The display of furniture is a credit to the house, comprehending a splendid variety of parlor and chamber sets, dressing cases, wardrobe sideboards, folding beds of the most approved patterns--in fact every article of use or ornament going to beautify or complete a household.³¹

The furniture dealers used every form of advertisement possible to attract the public into these warerooms, especially discount-sales promotions.³²

As the century progressed furniture manufacturers developed all types of new methods to promote their particular "lines" with the local dealers, including traveling sales representatives; product catalogues illustrated at first with engravings, then lithographs and finally photography; and national furniture markets.³³ (Figures 229 and 230).

The modern American furniture industry originated in eastern cities like Philadelphia, Boston, and New York. By mid-century, due to population spread and an even greater acceptance of mechanization, the industry in mid-western towns began to compete. Cincinnati

³¹Leading Manufacturers and Merchants of Cincinnati and Environs, 139.

³²See, for example, Page Talbot, "John Henry Gould: A New Breed of Furniture Dealer," The Magazine Antiques, 70, No. 6 (December 1981), 1418-1421.

³³See, for example, Kenneth Ames, "Grand Rapids Furniture at the time of the Centennial," Winterthur Portfolio, 10, No. 4 (1975), 23-50 and Darling, 59-61.

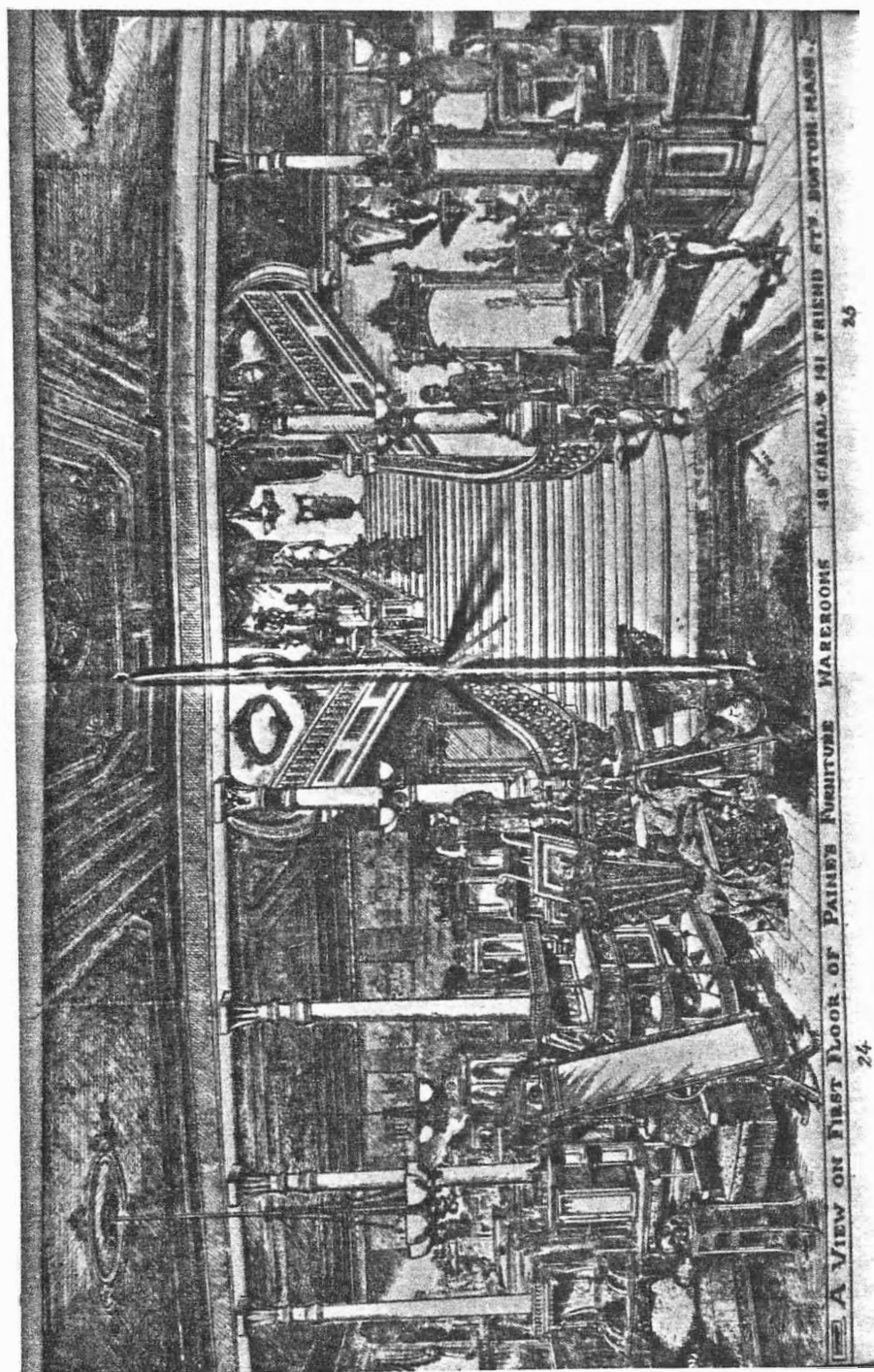


Figure 228. Crowded interior of a late nineteenth century furniture store as shown in the 1883 catalog of Paine's Furniture Manufacturing Company of Boston. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

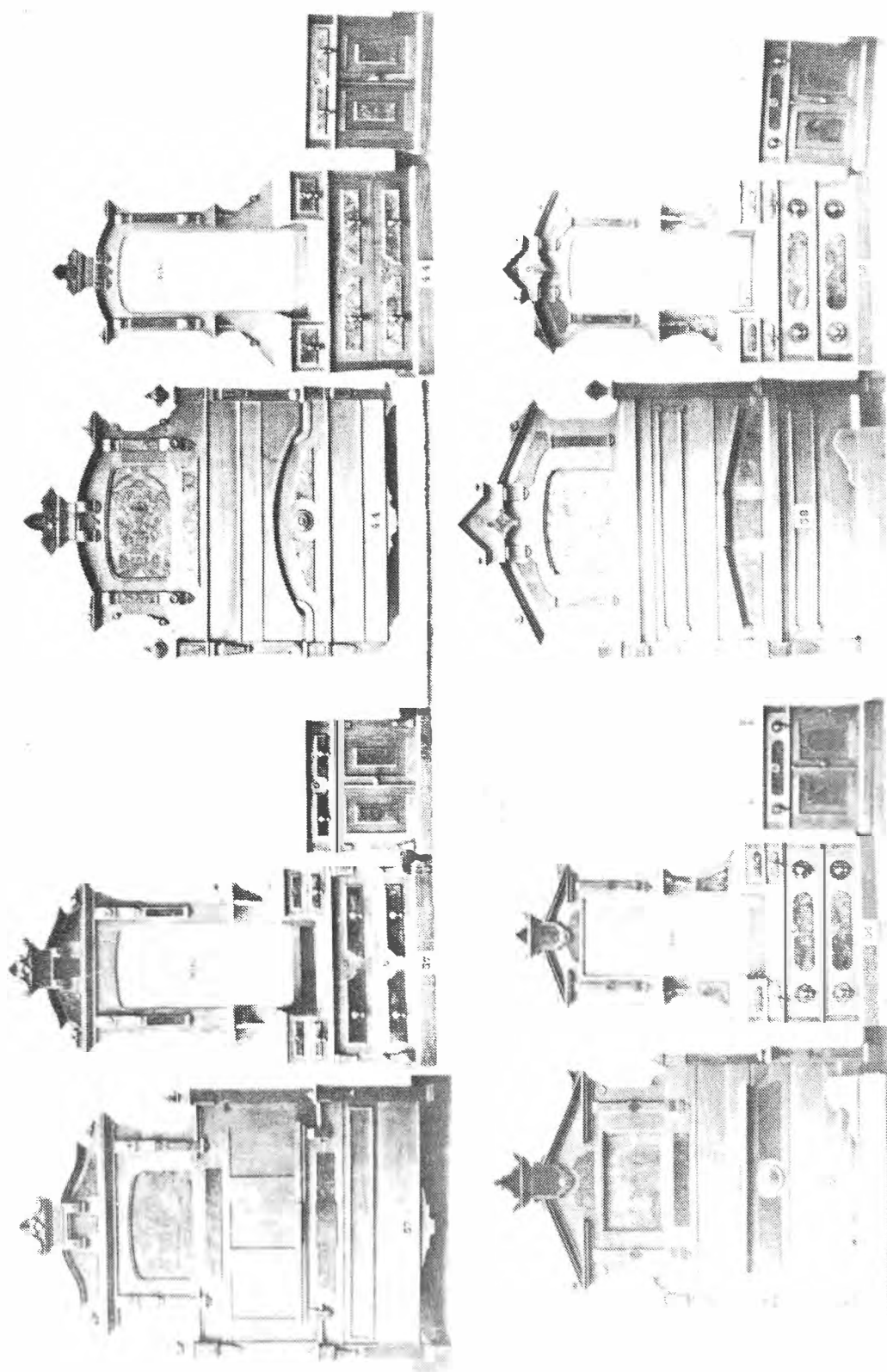


Figure 229. Page from the 1876 catalog of Nelson-Matter & Company of Grand Rapids, one of the first to use photography to illustrate their merchandise. Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.

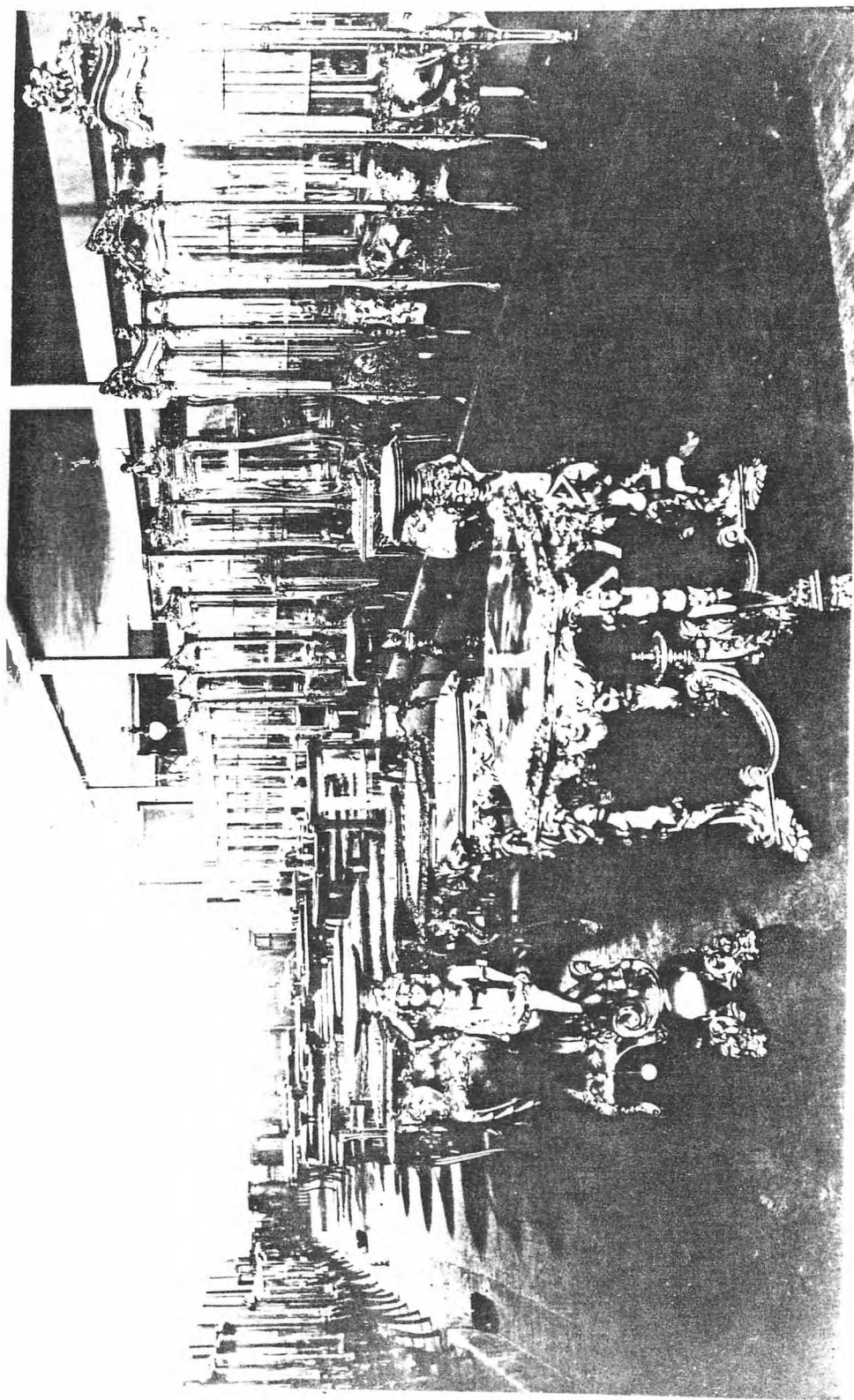


Figure 230. One of the display rooms of the Grand Rapids Furniture Exposition (Summer 1905).
Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.

but also its rival river cities, St. Louis and Louisville, became furniture manufacturing centers.³⁴ As the country spread further westward, other cities like Chicago joined these as manufacturing and distribution centers for the Southern and Western furniture trade.³⁵ By the century's end Grand Rapids, Michigan had become the dominant center for American furniture production and marketing.³⁶ For most of the century, Cincinnati, St. Louis and Louisville, because of their river and rail transportation networks, were the major suppliers of furniture throughout the Mississippi valley and its tributaries. Various nineteenth century manufacturing guides of these cities, time and again, while describing particular furniture manufacturers, state that they supply a large amount of the furniture for the South and Southwest.³⁷ Through the use of superior marketing techniques, the Grand Rapids manufacturers eventually took over this territory.

³⁴See, for example, Wyatt Winton Belcher, The Economic Rivalry Between St. Louis and Chicago 1850-1880 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947).

³⁵See Darling, Chicago Furniture.

³⁶Frank Edward Ransom, The City Built on Wood: A History of the Furniture Industry in Grand Rapids, Michigan (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1955).

³⁷See, for example, The Industries of Cincinnati (Cincinnati: A. N. Marquis & Co., 1883), Special Collections, Cincinnati Historical Society, Cincinnati; John E. Land, St. Louis, Her Trade, Commerce, and Industries 1882-83 (St. Louis: John Land, 1883), Special Collections, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis; and The Industries of Louisville, Kentucky (Louisville: J. M. Elstner & Co., 1886), Special Collections, Louisville Free Library, Louisville.

A history of Memphis furniture has yet to be written, but advertisements and other data found in Memphis newspapers and city directories are very informative. These provide evidence as to where Memphians, like the Neelys, bought their furniture and also information about the manufacturing and distribution sources for these furnishings.

Five pieces of furniture in the Mallory-Neely House have either markings, stamps, or labels. These help relate furnishings in the house to the marketing evolution taking place in the American furniture industry.

Newspapers and city directories show that cabinetmakers and furniture dealers co-existed in the city throughout the century. Oftentimes firms like the J & M Flaherty Company provided locally-made cabinetware and also dealt in factory-made furniture. (Figure 231) There were local furniture factories, but little is known about them to date. Though some furniture was made in Memphis, imported pieces carried by local dealers seem to have dominated. For a short time the Flaherty firm sought to fight this situation. In a series of newspaper advertisements the Flahertys plead for Memphians to buy locally and to help build Memphis manufacture.³⁸

Research shows that through the nineteenth century there were many furniture stores in Memphis. The names of these change constantly, few stayed in business more than a year or two, but others at least a decade or more. Partnerships, the dissolving of these, and new mergers seem to have been commonplace in the Memphis furniture trade.

³⁸See, for example, Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisements], 12 January 1852, 3 and 6 May 1855, 6.



J. FLAHERTY, A^{ts},
 ——— DEALER IN ———
FURNITURE

Nos. 326 and 328 Second Street,

Near Union Street, **MEMPHIS, TENN.**

Keeps constantly on hand Bedsteads, Book Cases, Bureaus, Chamber Sets, Card Tables, Center Tables, Dining Tables, Desks, Extension Tables, Etageres, Hat Racks, Mattresses, Parlor Sets, Side Boards, Sofas, Sociables, Safes, Wash Stands, Wardrobes, Window Curtains, What-Nots, and all kinds of Chairs.

Figure 231. An 1867 city directory advertisement for the Flaherty Furniture Company.

The Memphis furniture dealerships of H. M. Grosvener and McKinney & Company were two early competitors. Both, according to their newspaper advertisements, had attractive and well-stocked warerooms. For example, one of McKinney & Company's advertisements in the Memphis Daily Appeal stated that its furniture rooms were built expressly for the purpose and that "they are commodious and well arranged, and filled with every article in the house furnishing line."³⁹ (Figure 232) Most of the advertisements of these twin firms itemized long lists of available furniture. The Grosvener firm, for example, stated that it had for sale "French mahogany bedsteads, large high post Bedsteads with heavy cornices, Marble top Centre and Sofa Tables, Card Tables, a new and rich article of Sofas, Sofa Bedsteads, Marble-top Dressing Bureaus, and much else."⁴⁰

As an enticement to the public, many of their advertisements are headlined, "New Shipment Has Arrived" or "The Latest Has Arrived." Often the names of the river packets delivering the furniture were given:

SPLENDID FURNITURE
By Steamers Memphis, Pitzer Miller and St. Cloud⁴¹

McKinney's advertisements sometimes stated that his furniture was imported from all over the Union. In many of the McKinney and Grosvener advertisements they explain that their furniture has come specifically from Cincinnati or New York.

³⁹Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 11 July 1851, 2.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 7 July 1851, 3.

MCKINNEY & CO.'S
PIANO FORTE, FASHIONABLE FURNITURE,
CARPETS, CARPETS,
AND
UPHOLSTERY WARE ROOMS,
MAIN STREET, BETWEEN ADAMS AND JEFFERSON,
MEMPHIS, TENN.

MCKINNEY & Co. respectfully solicit the attention of their friends and the public to their very extensive stock of
Furniture, Pianos, Carpets, Curtain Goods, &c.,
to be seen at their Ware-rooms, on Main street, near the United States Hotel.
As they flatter themselves cannot be equalled by any establishment in the Southern country.
The Piano Fortes manufactured here, has induced them to have manufactured expressly for the market a new set of fine and elegantly carved Rosewood and Mahogany Parlor, Chamber, and
DRAWING-ROOM FURNITURE,
such as formerly could only be had by ordering from the East.
PIANOS.
Their Engines are made in the manufactories of J. Chickering, Halsted Davis & Co. and T. H. Hill & Co. New York, which are procured by professors of the Piano Forte to be the very best manufactured in the United States.
—FURNITURE.—
In their Furniture Rooms may be seen the greatest variety of Wardrobes, Bureaus, Wash Stands, Bookcases, Dressing Cases, Trunks, What-Nots, Hair-Not Desks, S. Trunks, Seagrass cases, etc. etc. also Parlor Chairs, Sofa Beds, Bedsteads, Sofa Tables, Pier Tables and Tables, Writing Desks, etc. etc. of the most superior materials, such as Rosewood and covered with beautiful leather and cloth. The furniture is sold in sets, Drawing Chairs, mahogany and walnut Parlor Chairs, Sofas, Table-lamps, Lamps, Cotton and Hat Racks, Chairs, etc.
PARLOR FURNITURE.
Large French plates, oval Mantel and Pier Mirrors, with elaborately carved frames, with and without marble and brackets.
Looking Glasses in frames of various sizes and prices, Looking Glass Plates, etc. etc.
MATRESSES.
Spring, hair, moss, cotton and shuck Mattresses, always on hand and made-to-order.
CARPETS.
Both in Carpet Rooms may be seen rich velvet Tapestry, Tapestry Brussels, Imperial Three Ply, single and two ply, etc. etc. carpet, stair lining, stair rods, etc. Gray's attrage, plush and checkeds, Green mattings, Axminster, Turkey and other kinds of Brussels and Door Mats of all kinds.
FLOOR OIL CLOTHS.
For dining rooms, halls and stairs, from 2 to 18 inch wide, suitable for walls, floors, large stone ker
CURTAIN GOODS.
Curtain goods of French and German brocade, satin DeLaine, striped and figured, weighted and cotton, etc. etc. also of the finest quality of Brussels, Topeps, Gimp Bands, Gimp Fringes, Window Shades, Window Curtains, blinds, etc. etc. etc. At great variety of
PAPER HANGINGS.
From the cheapest to the finest quality In a word, they are prepared and will furnish the various articles of
FURNITURE, PIANOS, CARPETING, OIL CLOTHS, CURTAIN GOODS, ETC. ETC.,
Ten per cent cheaper than they can be bought separately at any other house in the South.
All goods carefully boxed and shipped, free of charge. noids-m-

Figure 232. An 1852 newspaper advertisement for McKinney and Company, Memphis furniture dealership.

Cincinnati apparently monopolized the furniture supply for much of Tennessee, transporting it by the Mississippi, Tennessee, and Cumberland Rivers.⁴² Moreover, Memphis served as the southern terminus of the Nashville and Louisville Railroad line, linking it directly with the northernmost terminus, Cincinnati.⁴³ In vain the Flaherty brothers exhorted their fellow townsmen to "keep your money at home, buy furniture made in Memphis. Build up your own city. Ours is equal to the best Cincinnati work."⁴⁴

Affluent Memphians apparently purchased furniture locally or directly from other cities. Surviving bills in the Robertson Topp Papers show that in 1860 Topp purchased extensive furnishings for his new mansion locally from the J & M Flaherty Company including six dining chairs, an oak extension table, a marble top table, a large variety of other chairs and tables, a rocker, a suite of bedroom furniture with a bedstead, bureau, and wardrobe.⁴⁵ Similar bills, but also receipts, and copies of letters in the Henry Montgomery Papers record transactions by Montgomery dating from 1865 to 1885 for the purchase of furniture for his new mansion. These reveal that though some pieces were bought locally,

⁴²Made in Ohio Furniture 1788-1888 [exhibition catalog], Columbus, Ohio: Columbus Museum of Art, 12 February - 25 March 1984, 12.

⁴³The Industries of Cincinnati, 53.

⁴⁴Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 12 January 1852, 2.

⁴⁵Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts folder.

most were purchased directly from Cincinnati furniture sources.

In a 27 October 1885 letter to the Meador Furniture Company of that city he referred to an article of furniture that, "I selected at your house while in Cincinnati."⁴⁶ His purchases ranged from a single rocking chair to large orders such as a 9 October 1882 one in which he stated that he wanted "one sofa and one chair sent with the parlor suite" that he had previously ordered. In addition to these he requested two large sofas and chairs for his hallway.⁴⁷ In these various letters Montgomery often stated the exact catalog number of the piece of furniture in which he was interested.

The underside of a Rococo Revival card table in the sitting room of the Mallory-Neely House is inscribed in florid script "McK." (Figures 233 and 234) In the dining room the two Renaissance Revival sideboards, identical in design but differing in size, are inscribed on the back "McK & B Co. Memphis." (Figure 235) Mr. McKinney very often stated in his advertisements that he had personally selected his merchandise. These handwritten inscriptions were very likely done at the manufacturers in Cincinnati or elsewhere at the time they were selected, purchased, and therefore hallmarked for shipment to Memphis.

⁴⁶Henry Montgomery to Meador Furniture Company, 27 October 1885, Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 110.

⁴⁷Henry Montgomery to Meador Furniture Company, 9 October 1882, Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 110.

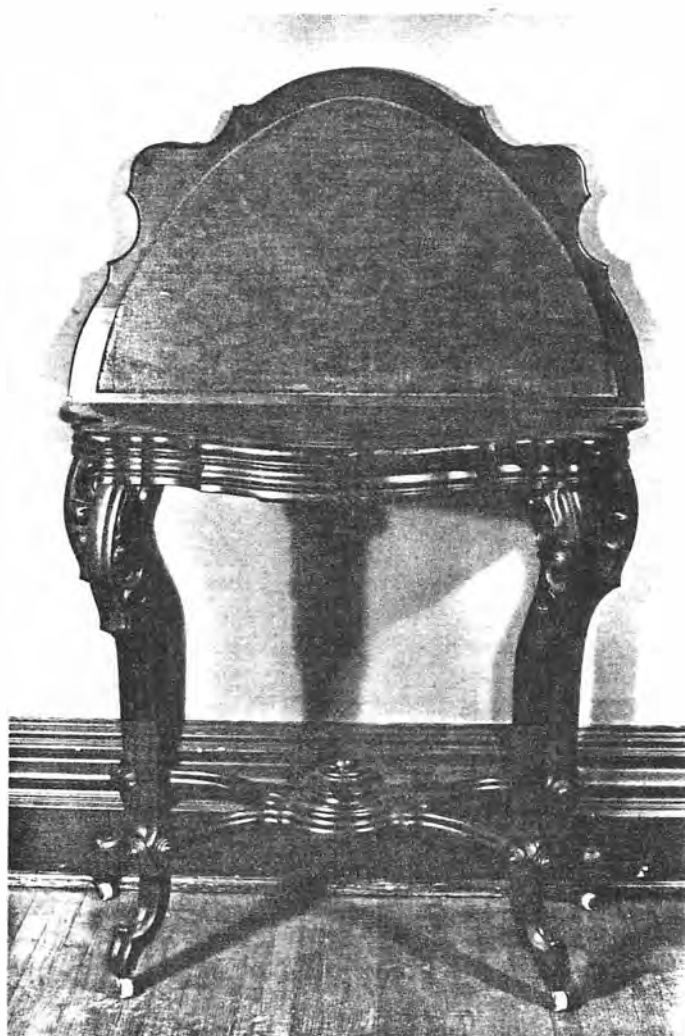


Figure 233. Rococo revival card table located in the Mallory-Neely sitting room.



Figure 234. Underside of the same table with the painted initials McK (McKinney).



A



B

Figure 235. McKinney and Bryson Company furniture.
 A. One of the two similar sideboards in the Mallory-Neely dining room.
 B. McK. B. & Co. Memphis (McKinney, Bryson & Company) inscription on back of sideboard.

McKinney & Company was in business in Memphis from approximately 1851 until 1865. It was later merged into a new partnership entitled McKinney, Bryson & Company, carrying this name from 1869-1874. Bryson continued in business, merging his name with several others through the eighties and nineties.

The owners in a 2 January 1854 advertisement for the McKinney & Company's "Mammoth Establishment" Warerooms on Main Street between Adams and Jefferson streets asked the public to visit their premises, "which they flatter themselves cannot be equalled by any establishment in the Southern country." They further stated: ". . . in our furniture rooms may be seen the greatest variety of . . . sideboards . . . card tables."⁴⁸ (Figure 236)

Two other marked pieces in the Mallory-Neely House have Cincinnati connections. A Rococo Revival "wishbone" bureau in the master bedroom has stenciled on the inside bottom of one of the drawers the manufacturer's name which is all but worn away, but its location--Cincinnati, Ohio--can be plainly read. (Figure 237) A Renaissance Revival bureau located in a neighboring second floor bedroom is labeled "M. H. & Co. Memphis." This could only stand for Mitchell, Hoffman and Company which was in business in Memphis from 1863 to 1879. (Figure 238) This company was owned by one of the most famous nineteenth century American furniture manufacturing firms, Mitchell and Rammelsburg

⁴⁸Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 2 January 1854, 2.

MAMMOTH ESTABLISHMENT.

No 992

M'KINNEY & CO.

Main-Street.

EXTENSIVE DEALERS IN Piano Fortes, Fashionable Furniture, Chairs, Carpets, Curtain Materials and Trimmings, Corbels, Shades, Mattresses, &c., &c.

PIANO FORTES—From the best manufacturers in the world. Their stock is at present comprised of about thirty instruments from the factories of Messrs. Bacon & Boven, New York; Halliwell, Davis & Co. I. Gilbert & Co., Geo. Haw's, and W. P. Emerson, Boston; Burdman & Gray, Albany.

FURNITURE—Rosewood Parlor Furniture in sets, upholstered in Brocatelle, Mahogany and Walnut. Parlor Chairs in Hair, Cloth and Plush; Sofas, Tete-a-Tetes, London Sofas, (new style) Ottomans, Divans, Marble and Mahogany Top Centre, Sofa, and Pier Tables, Card Tables, What Nots, What-Not-Desks, and What-Not Sideboards; Bureaus, Wardrobes, Square, Octagon, Round, Cluster and Fluted Pier Bedsteads; Barrell, Gothic, and beautifully carved French Bedsteads; Book-Cases, Secretaries, Counting House Desks and Stools; Painted Cottage (chamber) Furniture in sets; Large Cottage Bedsteads; Rocking and Spring Cribs; Iron and Wood Hat-Racks; Towel Racks; Fancy Gothic Chairs; Elm-stained Chairs on Rockers and Rollers; Large Arm Bookish Sewing Chairs, and a thousand other articles in our line too numerous to insert in a newspaper.

VELVET, TAPESTRY, BRUSSELS, IMPERIAL, THREE-PLY, AND INGRAIN CARPETS,

STAIR CARPETS, RUGS, &c., MORRIS, CHUMBLE AND TUFTED RUGS,

UPHOLSTERY DEPARTMENT—Curtains, the latest and richest styles; French, Brocatelle, Striped and Figured Satin, Delaines, Worsted and cotton, Damask Lace, Curtains; Muslin Curtains, Window Shades, Window cornices, from 60 cents to \$12 each; Curtain Bands, Gimp Bands, Loops, entire Tassels, Groups, and every thing pertaining to this branch of business. Curtains made and put up in the city or country on short notice.

Floor Oil Cloths, from 27 inches to 14 feet wide, for Halls, Halls, Dining Rooms, Rooms, etc.

Spring, Hair, Moss, Cotton, and Stuck Mattresses, always on hand and made to order.

All goods carefully boxed and shipped free of charge.

Information in regard to prices, &c., by correspondence, will be promptly attended to.

No. 992 Main Street, Memphis, Tenn.—apr 5 '84.

M'KINNEY & CO

Figure 236. An 1854 McKinney and Company newspaper advertisement listing a variety of tables.

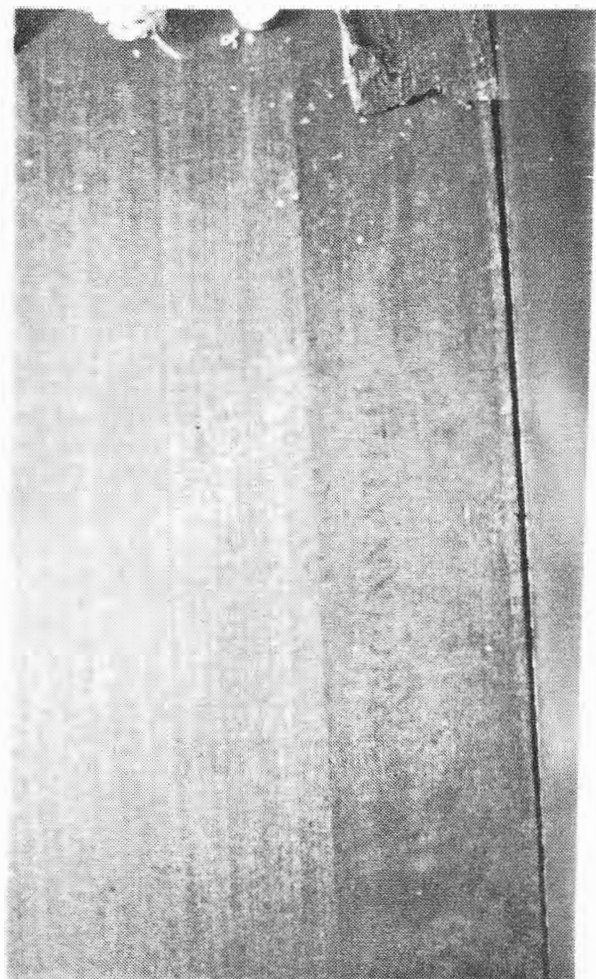
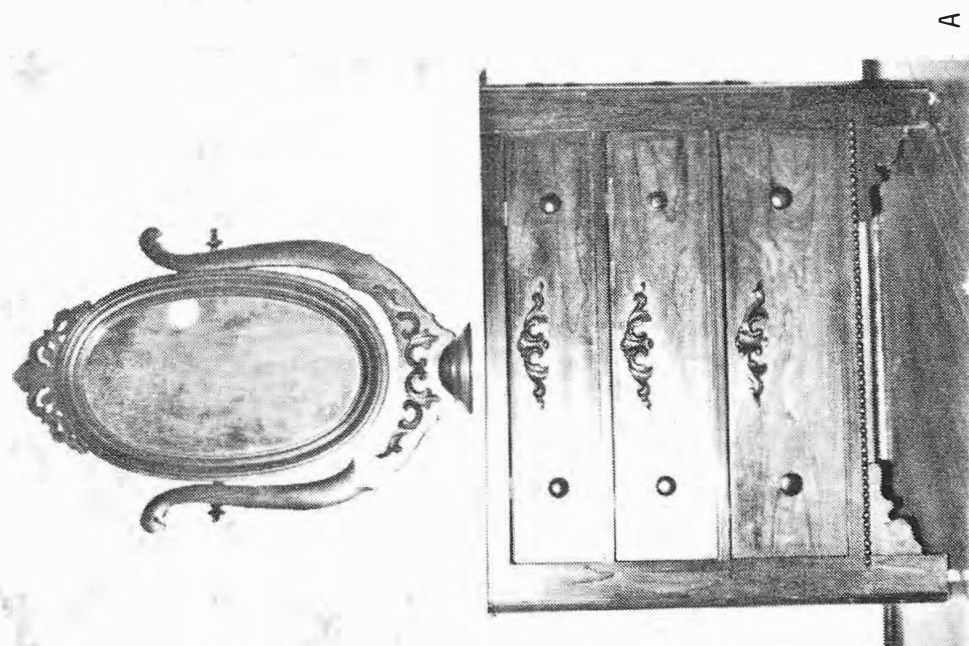


Figure 237. "Wishbone" dresser in the Mallory-Neely master bedroom and inside the top drawer the badly faded label of the Cincinnati manufacturer.

A. "Wishbone" dresser.

B. Faded label.

Mitchell, Hoffman & Co.

MANUFACTURERS OF ALL KINDS OF

FURNITURE & LOOKING-GLASSES

IMPORTERS AND DEALERS IN

CARPETS,

OIL-CLOTHS, CURTAIN MATERIALS, SHADES, ETC.

WITH OVER THIRTY YEARS EXPERIENCE IN THE BUSINESS, and having ample capital to pay cash for all goods we are enabled to offer to the public at WHOLESALE OR RETAIL, and at the best and most complete stocks in the South or West, which we will sell at as low a price as any other establishment in the United States.

We respectfully invite inspection of our stock and prices.

Nos. 308 and 310 MAIN AND 31 MONROE STS.

MEMPHIS. : : : TENN.

Figure 238. An 1863 newspaper advertisement for Mitchell, Hoffman and Company, the Memphis outlet for the Mitchell and Rammelsburg Company of Cincinnati.

of Cincinnati, Ohio. Robert Mitchell and Frederick Rammelsburg as partners established a furniture manufacturing business which grew into one of the largest in the United States. In order to better service the Mississippi Valley, which was a major sales territory for the firm, Mitchell and Rammelsburg opened furniture outlets in New Orleans (1866), St. Louis (1855) and Memphis.

The Memphis outlet store founded on 22 October 1863 was known as Mitchell, Hoffman & Company, with the two brothers, George and Robert Mitchell and John P. Hoffman, a former salesman with the Flaherty Furniture Company, as partners. Robert Mitchell and John Hoffman actually ran the business in Memphis for the Cincinnati firm.⁴⁹

Much is known about the Memphis store because in 1868 Rammelsburg's heirs sued the Mitchells. Each partner's exact share in the ownership of the Memphis store played a major role in the suit. Detailed testimony by the owning partners and others and an inventory of the store survive in the extensive court records.

The inventory of the stock in the Memphis store covers twenty-three pages and includes furniture, carpets, fabrics, shades, and caskets. It included all types of household furniture and a variety of the fashionable revival styles including Grecian, Elizabethan, Gothic, and French.⁵⁰

⁴⁹See Donald C. Pierce, "Mitchell and Rammelsburg, Cincinnati Furniture Manufacturers 1847-1881," Winterthur Portfolio, 13 (1979), 209-229.

⁵⁰Superior Court of Cincinnati, No. 23416, Exhibit XXVI, October 1863, 816-839. [Inventory of Memphis Outlet], Special Collections, Cincinnati Historical Society, Cincinnati.

Mass production and modern distribution methods enabled Mitchell and Rammelsburg "to manufacture and sell great quantities and enormous varieties of furniture."⁵¹ Most of the new developments in woodworking technology were put to use by the firm. Furniture ranging from low to high in quality, and from the plainest to highly ornamental was produced by their factory.⁵²

An Empire Revival card table in the Mallory-Neely House is reflective of the dominance by Grand Rapids Manufacturers of the American furniture market by the turn-of-the-century. This piece in the sitting room has a tiny label showing a crest topped by a crown and marked "Imperial-Grand Rapids-Michigan." (Figure 239) The Imperial Furniture Company of Grand Rapids was founded in 1903.⁵³ The factory, specializing in table manufacture, billed itself as "The World's greatest table makers." In various catalogs the firm stated that it produced decorative tables in heritage styles.⁵⁴

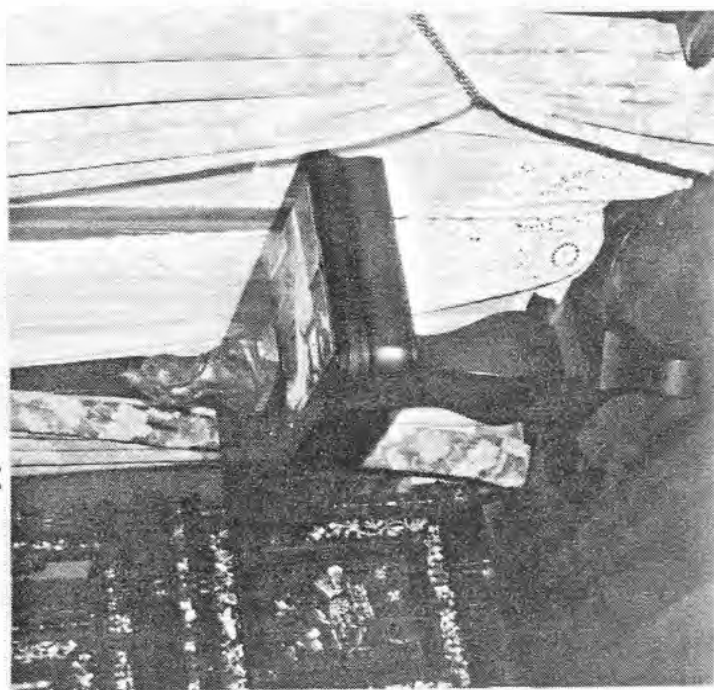
By the late nineteenth century Memphis furniture dealers, like those all over the country, were doing brisk business with Grand Rapids manufacturers. The records of the Widdicomb Furniture Company (one of the more famous Grand Rapids firms) include cash books,

⁵¹Pierce, 213.

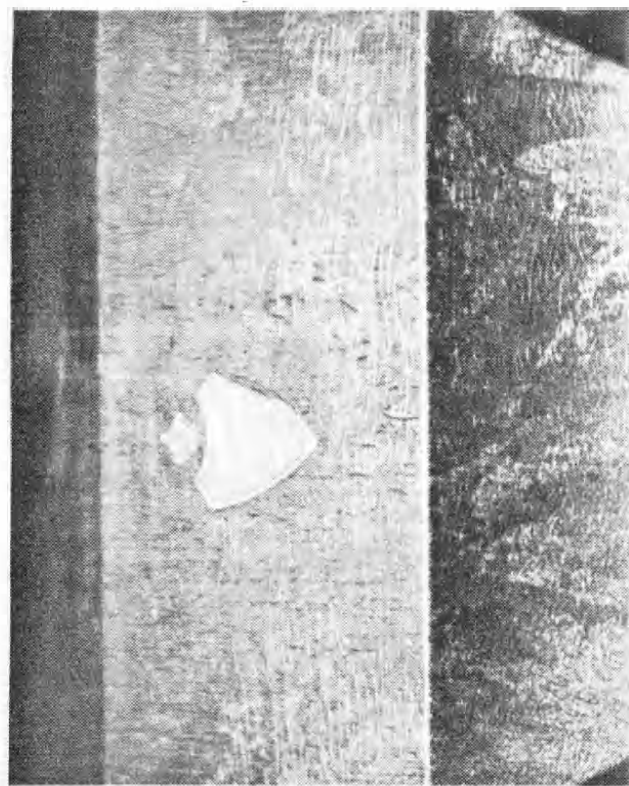
⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Dwight Goss, History of Grand Rapids and Its Industries I (Chicago: C. F. Cooper & Co. Publishers, 1906), 1072.

⁵⁴Imperial Furniture Company File, Grand Rapids Furniture Companies Archives, Grand Rapids Public Museum, Grand Rapids, Michigan.



A



B

Figure 239. Early twentieth century Empire Revival console card table in the Mallory-Neely sitting room.
A. Card table.
B. Pasted on the underside is the tiny label of the Imperial Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

account ledgers, and letters which record furniture purchased by Memphis firms such as the Armstrong furniture Company, Bryson & Company, A. W. Gibson and Sons. Many Nashville, Knoxville, and Chattanooga, Tennessee firms are also listed.⁵⁵ Other sources, such as The Michigan Artisan's List of Buyers of Furniture for the Fall Season of 1899 list many of the same Memphis businesses but include others, such as the Rosenbaum and Mendal Furniture Store.⁵⁶ The compiler of a promotional folio from the Nelson, Matter & Company of Grand Rapids states that in recent years they had furnished the Peabody and Gayoso Hotels in Memphis.⁵⁷

By the end of the century Memphis could boast of many furniture dealerships and at least two low grade furniture factories. (Figure 240) It seems that with the easy availability of fashionable furniture brought to Memphis from major manufacturing centers during the second half of the nineteenth century, little if any furniture of quality was locally made.

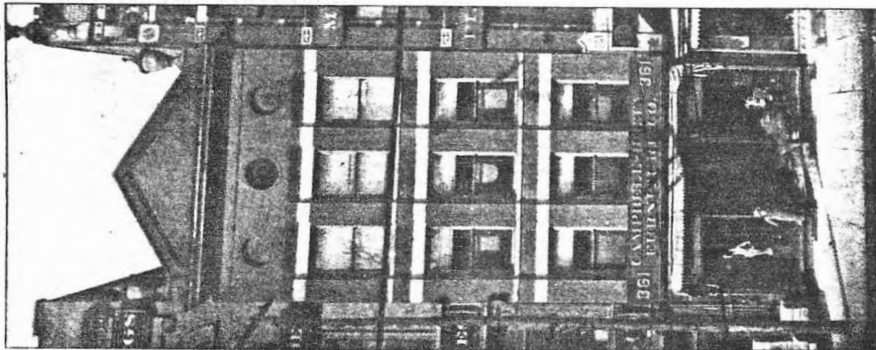
Furniture Styles and Fads

There is no one style of furniture that is "Victorian." Attempts to understand nineteenth century furniture are often confusing

⁵⁵Records of the Widdicomb Furniture Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Special Collections, Grand Rapids Public Library.

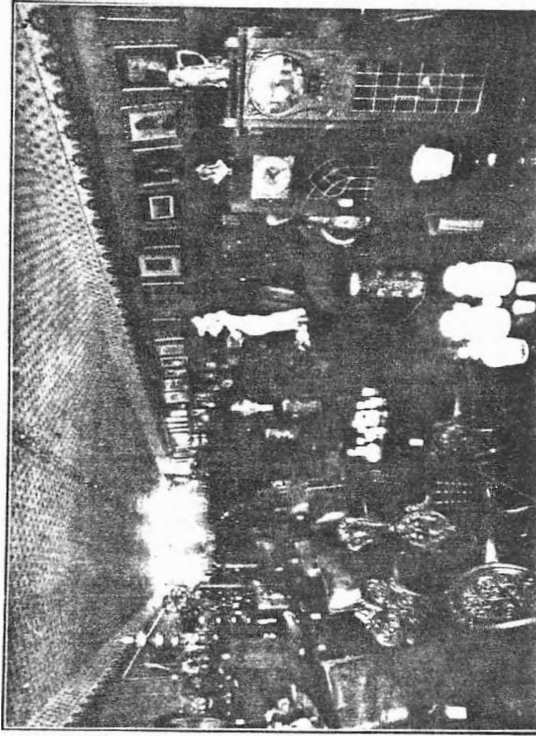
⁵⁶The Michigan Artisan's List of Buyers of Furniture for the Fall Seasons of 1899 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: White Printing Company, 1899), 79, Special Collections, Grand Rapids Public Library.

⁵⁷Nelson, Matter & Co. Furniture Manufacturers (Grand Rapids, Michigan, c. 1909), n.p. [trade catalog], Special Collections, Grand Rapids Public Library.



WAREHOUSES OF THE
CAMPBELL-HOFFA FURNITURE COMPANY

Established (3) One-Third of a Century



A. D. ARMSTRONG, Pres't.

J. C. ARMSTRONG, Vice Pres't.

Armstrong Furniture Co.

DOING BUSINESS IN MEMPHIS 34 YEARS

One of the largest jobbers south of the Ohio river. Retail salesrooms, No. 304, No. 308, No. 310 Main Street. Wholesale warehouses, corner Vance and T. C. R. R. trucks. Write for wholesale catalogue.

1869

BUY OF THE MAKER.

1903

A

B

Figure 240. Newspaper photographs of exterior and interior views of turn-of-the-century Memphis furniture stores. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis/Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

A. Exterior view of the Campbell-Hoffa Furniture Company, c. 1900.

B. Interior view of the Armstrong Furniture Company, 1903.

because it is actually a study of many nebulous sub-styles or fads, all going under the popular umbrella title "Victorian."⁵⁸ To add to the confusion many of these were popular concurrently and many were often stylistically intermixed in a single piece. The eclectic mixture of pieces of furniture in the Mallory-Neely House are excellent examples of the labyrinthine complexity of Victorian furniture styles and fads.

The underlying reasons for this complex melange of styles has been debated extensively by furniture historians and others.⁵⁹ Two of those often suggested are Romanticism and commercialism. Romantic historicism is one of the two counter trends that can be discerned in the furniture design of the nineteenth century. This approach, constituting the mainstream of Victorian design, was based on a changing variety of styles adapted from historical prototypes.⁶⁰

An important aspect of Romanticism was an interest in the historical past as well as the anti-urban and industrial nostalgic longing for "the good old days" that were believed to have existed in past cultures and eras. Associationism, as noted, was also an important factor, the style of architecture or of an article of

⁵⁸See Kenneth Ames, "What is the Neo-Grec?" Nineteenth Century, 2, No. 2 (Summer 1976), 13.

⁵⁹See, for example, Harvey Green, "The Ironies of Style: Complexities and Contradictions in American Decoration Arts, 1850-1900," Victorian Furniture, ed. Kenneth Ames (Philadelphia: The Victorian Society in America, 1982), 17-34.

⁶⁰See Kaufmann, 56-57.

furniture was thought to be symbolic of a past civilization. Downing believed that various historic styles had a civilizing influence and could create an environment for the cultivation of the mind.

While some scholars have pointed to Romanticism as the underlying reason for the various Victorian styles, others have suggested that there was actually a more pragmatic base having to do with the modernization of nineteenth century society. They argue that commercialism, not aesthetics, was the basis for these varied Victorian styles.⁶¹ Industrialization and new forms of advertising and marketing all helped in creating a consumer-oriented society. Novelty and ever-updated styles were important in the continued selling to the public of new and fashionable merchandise such as furniture.

Even though most of the more noted Victorian revival styles are based on eclectic historicism, the era's furniture designers did not just coldly copy older models until late in the century. Most of the revivals were, instead, a Victorian interpretation of historic models in a free and experimental fashion. A flood of knowledge in many forms gave these designers an unprecedented body of visual source material to use. Many scholars today see the end result as expressive of the dynamic changes taking place during the period.⁶²

⁶¹See, for example, Wilson Faude, "They Don't Make It Anymore," Victorian Furniture, ed. Kenneth Ames (Philadelphia: The Victorian Society in America, 1982), 37-42.

⁶²Kaufmann, 56.

One of the two hall-trees located in the Mallory-Neely entrance hall best exemplifies this. It is a new type of furniture unlike any created previously. It is made up of an admixture of several historic styles including Gothic and Rococo. (Figure 241) Its expressive form and active expansive contour produced in part with newly available machinery exude novel experimentation and creativity, anything but derivative copying. (Figures 242 and 243) It is definitely not a product of a static, sluggish society.

The second stylistic trend in Victorian furniture styles was the result of the reform movement. Design reformers sought to break the dependence of designers on historic prototypes, encouraging them, instead, to create practical furniture designed for the era in which they lived.

Following in chronologic order are synopses of the various Victorian furniture styles and fads. Characteristic examples from the Mallory-Neely collection are used to illustrate these.

Empire style. The earliest nineteenth century furniture style represented in the Mallory-Neely collection is the Empire (circa 1815-1845). The American Empire variant of this style was based on the French Empire and English Regency.⁶³ The Empire was originally created as a Neo-Classical style for the male dominated, military oriented Napoleonic Court. Consequently, it is generally dark, massive and austere in appearance. In America its use paralleled

⁶³Fairbanks and Bates, 252-253.

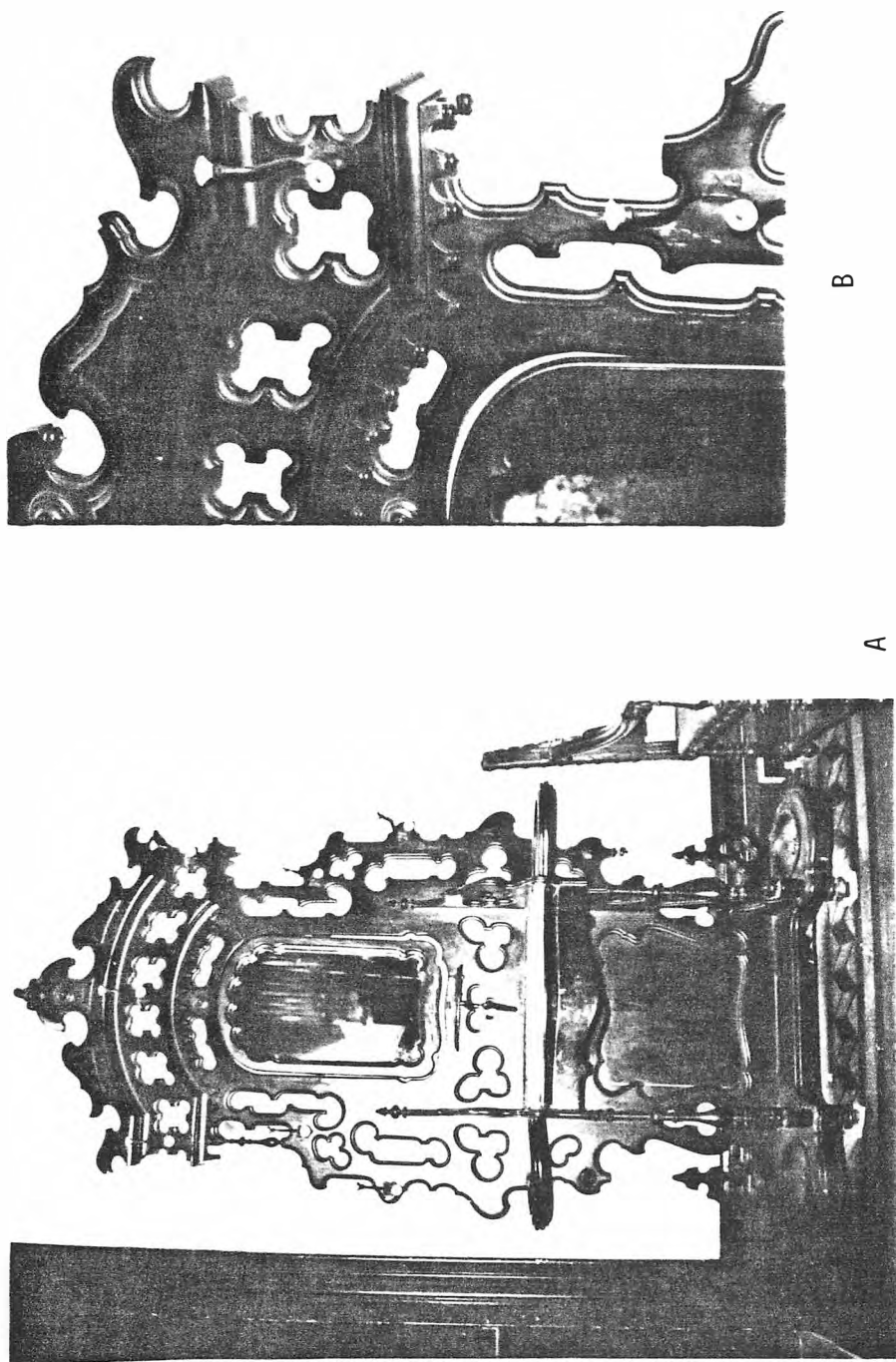
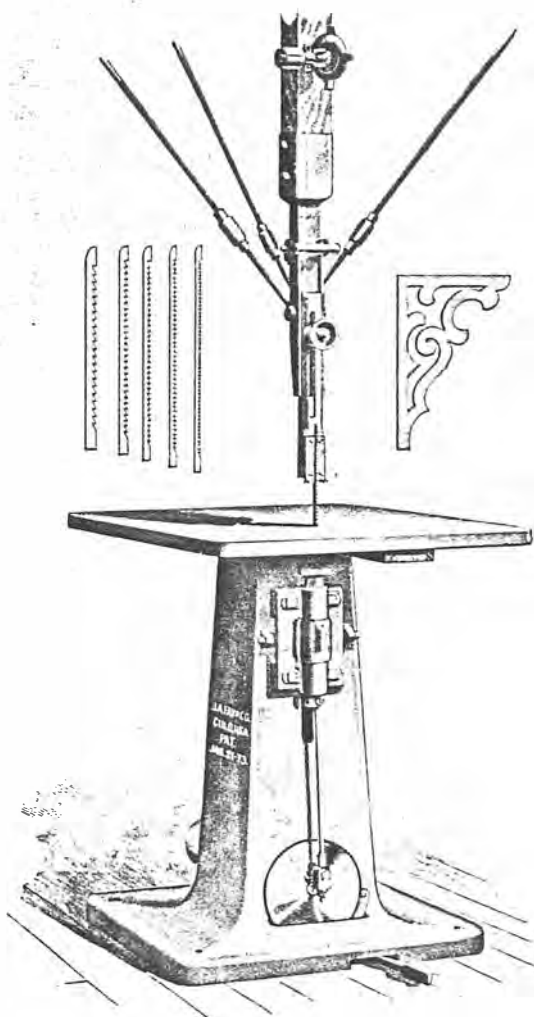


Figure 241. Exuberantly designed hall tree located in the Mallory-Neely entrance hall.
A. Hall tree.
B. Close-up view of hall tree.

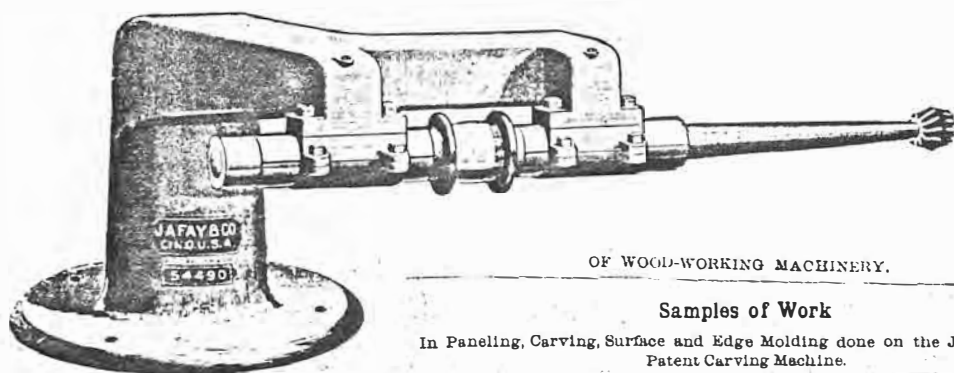


No 5

Patent Unstrained Scroll Saw.

With Adjustable Top Guide, and Automatic Brake and Stopper.

Figure 242. A mechanized scroll saw like the one illustrated above from the 1900 catalog of J. A. Fay & Company would have been used to create the Mallory-Neely hall tree. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.



AS ARRANGED FOR A BENCH.

A

OF WOOD-WORKING MACHINERY.

137

Samples of Work

In Paneling, Carving, Surface and Edge Molding done on the J. A. Fay & Co. Patent Carving Machine.



DIRECTIONS FOR OPERATING.

For paneling or cutting designs in the solid wood (Fig. C), prepare a template (Fig. B) of the form desired. Place this template over the piece to be carved with openings between (Fig. A) for the escape of chips, and to allow a view of the work as it progresses. The template must be as much smaller than the panel to be cut as the outside cutting edge of cutter extends beyond the line of directrix.



B

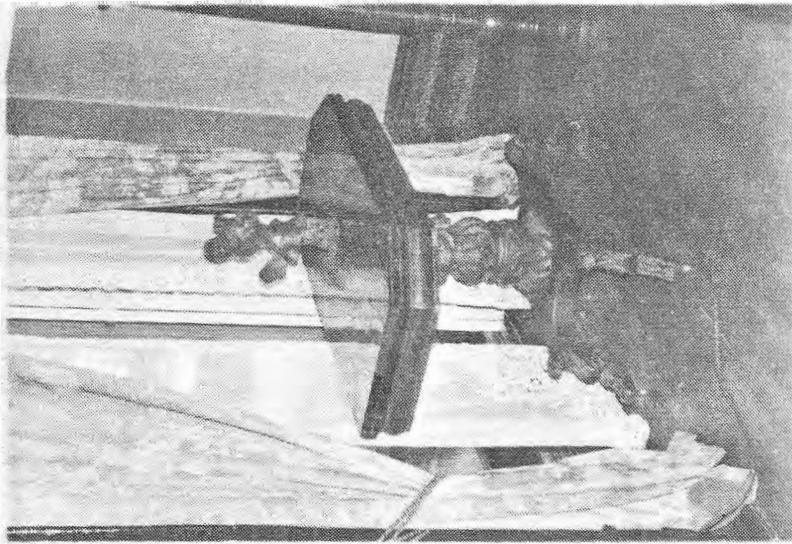
Figure 243. An edge molding machine like the one illustrated above from the 1900 catalog of J. A. Fay & Company would have been used to further embellish the Mallory-Neely hall tree. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.

- A. Carving mechanism.
- B. Samples of work.

that of the Greek Revival style of architecture, many ancient Grecian and Roman examples serving as inspiration for the furniture forms and their ornamentation. Mahogany and rosewood were some of the more popular woods used. American Empire pieces vary in ornamentation from rare high style pieces (much like their European prototypes) with bronze mounts, carving, marble tops, and other forms of decoration to those with a clean classical look with restrained or no decoration. The latter, being more common, was used all over the United States and especially in the South. Very much still a handicrafted product, American Empire furniture was produced widely but especially in Eastern Seaboard cities like New York and Philadelphia, from where it was sent to cities around the country and even to South America.

There is at least one example in the Mallory-Neely House that may be an authentic early Empire piece. Possibly having a Philadelphia origin, this is a mahogany console card table in the sitting room. (Figure 244A) The attribution is based on stylistic appearance only. Its abundantly carved foliated pedestal support, upturned leafy "ears" adorning the top of each leg, and animal paw feet are general regional characteristics of that city's Empire cabinetmakers.⁶⁴ (Figure 244B) Philadelphia-made furniture is known to have been brought by river and overland to Tennessee. A notable example is

⁶⁴Joyce Longworth, "Empire Furniture," Paper presented at the Winterthur Winter Institute, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware, 21 January 1985; and Kathleen M. Cataleno, "The Empire Style Philadelphia," Nineteenth Century Furniture: Innovation, Revival and Reform, ed. Mary Jean Madigan (New York: Art and Antiques, 1979), 10-17.



A



B

Figure 244. Empire console card table located in the Mallory-Neely sitting room.
A. Card table.
B. Close-up of card table.

the Philadelphia Empire furniture purchased by Andrew Jackson and still at the Hermitage in Nashville.⁶⁵

Exemplifying the availability of Empire furniture in Memphis is a directory for the H. M. Grosvener Company. It is illustrated with an engraving of fashionable Empire furniture including a piano, a Grecian sofa, and a klismos chair. Among the many furniture items listed are centre and card tables.⁶⁶

Gothic Revival style and variations. One of the most notable aspects of the Romantic Movement was the avid interest in the Middle Ages. In America this was fueled by the medieval novels of Sir Walter Scott and others.⁶⁷ Andrew Jackson Downing and his architectural collaborator, Alexander Jackson Davis, designed and promoted various medieval forms of domestic architecture. This romantic interest in the Middle Ages is also reflected in American artifacts of the nineteenth century in which medieval motifs were used to embellish such decorative arts as textiles, silver, glass and clocks.⁶⁸

Gothic Revival furniture was also produced during this time in America. Created before there was correct archeological knowledge

⁶⁵Catalano, 17.

⁶⁶Memphis City Directory for 1850 (Memphis: R.B.J. Twyman, 1849), 91.

⁶⁷Nineteenth Century Furniture and Other Decorative Arts (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970), xviii.

⁶⁸Ibid., 96-104.

of the style, for the most part it is medieval only in the surface decoration, the general form of the furniture being unaffected.⁶⁹ Downing and others in their books discussed confusing variations of the medieval style, labeling them Tudor, Country English, and Norman. A distinct variant of the Gothic Revival is the Elizabethan (circa 1840-1850). It was in actuality based more on seventeenth century English prototypes than on medieval or Elizabethan.⁷⁰ Gothicized contours, finials, and pointed arches were combined with characteristic seventeenth century carving and especially lathe turnery including spool, bobbin, spiral and knob turnings. In discussing the Elizabeth style Downing stated:

To the present age, the charm of this antique furniture is in its "romance"--in its long association with times, events, and names that have a historical interest, and that move our feelings deeply by means of such powerful associations.⁷¹

More than other Victorian historic styles, medieval derivative furniture in America was rare. Possibly one or more examples might have been used in elite households. Because of its monumental appearance and literary association, it was most often used in the hallway and library. Appropriately, one Elizabeth chair survives in the Mallory-Neely collection, today located in the parlor.

⁶⁹See Katherine S. Howe and David B. Warren, The Gothic Revival Style in America, 1830-1870 [exhibition catalog] (Houston: Fine Arts Museum, 1 April - 6 June 1976).

⁷⁰Robert C. Smith, "Gothic and Elizabethan Revival Furniture, 1800-1850," The Magazine Antiques, 75, No. 3 (March 1959), 275.

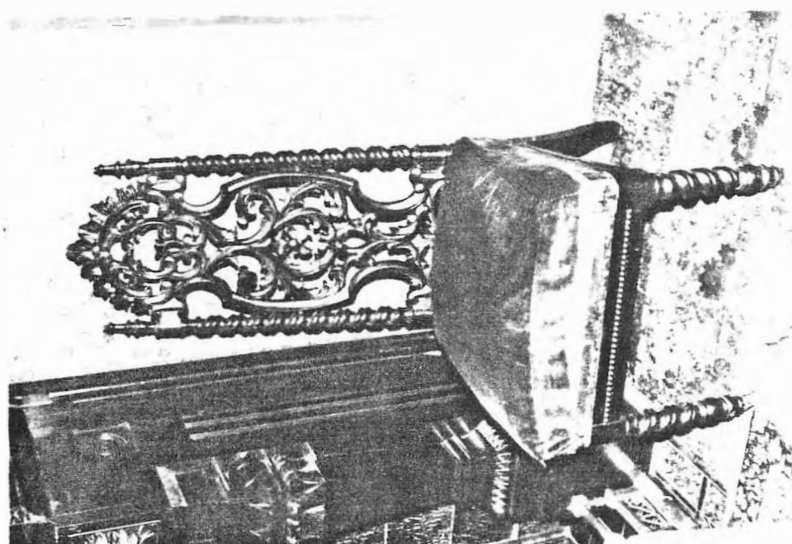
⁷¹Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 450.

(Figure 245) It is a typical example in which spiral turnings are used on the two front legs and back posts which are topped by turned finials. Between these, forming the backrest of the chair, is an elaborate carved open work panel. The whole chair is characteristically more in the style of an English Restoration chair than a true Medieval or Elizabethan one.

Both the Memphis furniture firms of H. M. Grovesner and McKinney & Company more than once listed in their newspaper advertisements that among the many items of available furniture in stock were ELIZABETH CHAIRS. Scattered about in the 1863 inventory of the Mitchell, Hoffman and Company of Memphis are listed twelve Gothic back and cushion seat chairs, fourteen Elizabethan rocking chairs, one Gothic end work table, and twelve walnut Gothic office chairs.⁷² Although the foregoing documentary evidence exists regarding the availability of these substyles in Memphis, no information is available to suggest the source of the Mallory-Neely pieces. Thus one speculation is that the Elizabeth chair and the Empire console table were inherited by the James Columbus Neelys from the Blocker or Neely families and used in their Jefferson Street home.

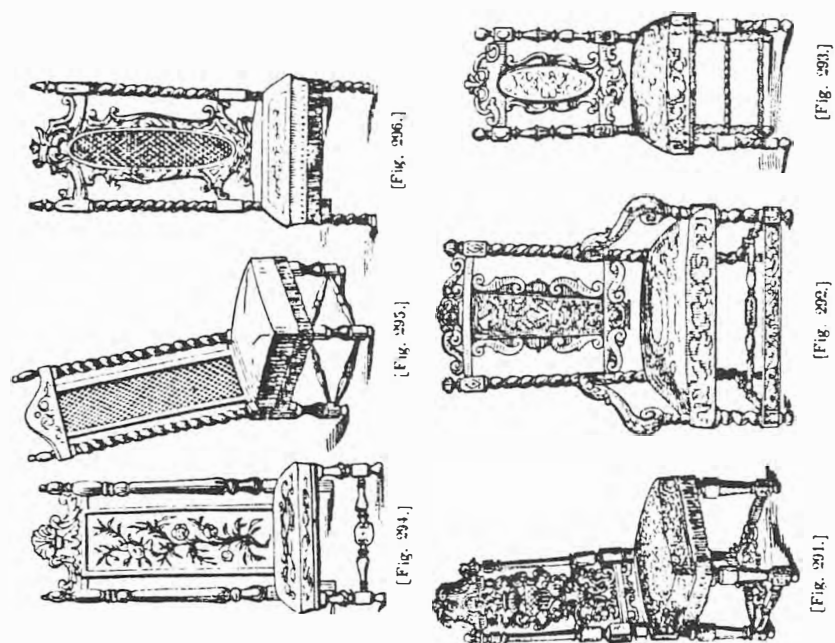
Rococo Revival style. The Rococo was among the most popular and widely used of the Victorian revival styles. Based on historic French court period styles, its use began in that country during the 1830s and reached its peak of popularity in America during the

⁷²Superior Court of Cincinnati [Inventory of Memphis Outlet], 817-820.



A

Figure 245. Elizabeth chair in the Mallory-Neely collection and illustration of similar chairs.
 A. Elizabeth chair in the Mallory-Neely collection.
 B. Illustrations of similar chairs from Andrew Jackson Downing's Architecture of Country House (1850). Courtesy Dover Publications, Inc.



B

two decades prior to the Civil War.⁷³ It continued to be made in one form or another in America until the end of the century.

The style is loosely based on that of Louis XV but is actually a free admixture of the various Louis styles.⁷⁴ Its creators utilized the sinuous organic forms, curves, and the cabriole leg of the Rococo Louis XV mode. It was often highly ornamented with flowers, fruit, and much other naturalistic growth. The style differs from the historic original in that it is much bolder in scale, "the ornament is carved in higher relief, and the detail is much more naturalistic."⁷⁵

It was among the first of the nineteenth century furniture styles to show the influence of the machine. The Rococo Revival was one of the first modern styles to be made in sets, parlor suites being particularly popular. Cabinetmakers in the East created magnificent masterpieces; others produced simpler versions. John Henry Belter is the most famous cabinetmaker associated with the style. His inventive application of modern technological processes and machinery to create Rococo Revival furniture is well known.

⁷³See Celia Jackson Otto, "The Rococo Style in Nineteenth Century American Furniture," The Magazine Antiques, 88, No. 3 (September 1965), 325-329; and Robert C. Smith, "Rococo Revival Furniture," The Magazine Antiques, 75, No. 5 (May 1959), 471-475.

⁷⁴Nineteenth Century Furniture and Other Decorative Arts, xviii.

⁷⁵William C. Ketchum, Jr., The Knopf Collector's Guide to American Antiques: Furniture II (New York: Alfred S. Knopf, 1982), 18.

Because of its formality the Rococo Revival was favored for reception rooms or those used most often by ladies. Downing labeled it the "Modern French Style." Using engravings he illustrated pages of examples of this furniture in The Architecture of Country Houses. (Figure 246) In the chapter devoted to furniture for these houses, he recommended the French style for use in the drawing room or boudoir because of "its greater elegance, superior workmanship, and luxurious ease."⁷⁶

If advertisements can be counted on to provide a record of public taste, the Rococo Revival was a popular one in Memphis. (Figures 247 and 248) Engravings of two fashionable Rococo Revival chairs were used in an 1866 advertisement for Ames & Woodsbury, Dealers in furniture.⁷⁷ An 1868 advertisement for the J. Flaherty Company is illustrated with a parlor suite in the Rococo Revival.⁷⁸ A year later J. D. Stiles & Company used engravings of a Rococo sofa, stool, and chairs.⁷⁹ Seven years later Bryson & Company, Dealers in Furniture, featured a drawing of assembled Rococo Revival pieces including a sofa, center table and chairs.⁸⁰

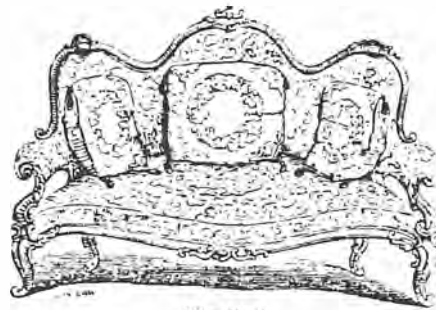
⁷⁶Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 432.

⁷⁷Long's Memphis Directory [advertisement] (Memphis: Blalock & Co. Publishers, 1865), 717.

⁷⁸Halpin's Memphis City Directory 1867-68 [advertisement] (Memphis: Bulletin Publishing Co., 1867), 22.

⁷⁹Edward's Annual Director to the Inhabitants, Institutions, Incorporated Companies, Manufacturing Establishments, Business Firms in the City of Memphis for 1869 (Memphis: Southern Publishing Co., 1869), 942.

⁸⁰Boyle & Chapman's City of Memphis for 1876 (Memphis: Boyle & Chapman, 1876), 213.



[Fig. 235.]



[Fig. 235.]



[Fig. 236.]



[Fig. 237.]



[Fig. 244.]

Figure 246. Rococo Revival furniture as illustrated in Andrew Jackson Downing, Architecture of Country Houses (1850). Courtesy Dover Publications, Inc.

P. H. BRYSON. S. J. CAMP.

BRYSON & CAMP,

DEALERS IN



FURNITURE, CARPETS
OIL CLOTHS,
SHADES, &c.

UPHOLSTERERS AND DECORATORS.
231 MAIN STREET.

A

DANIEL AMES SETH D. WOODBURY.

AMES & WOODBURY,

SUCCESSORS TO



McKINNEY & CO.

MANUFACTURERS AND DEALERS IN



FURNITURE,
CARPETS, OIL-CLOTH,
PIANO FORTES, UPHOLSTERY GOODS, ETC.

No. 228 Main St., opposite Washburn House, Memphis, Tenn.

B

Figure 247. Memphis furniture company advertisements showing Rococo Revival furniture.

- A. An 1876 city directory advertisement for Bryson & Camp.
- B. An 1865 city directory advertisement for Ames & Woodbury.

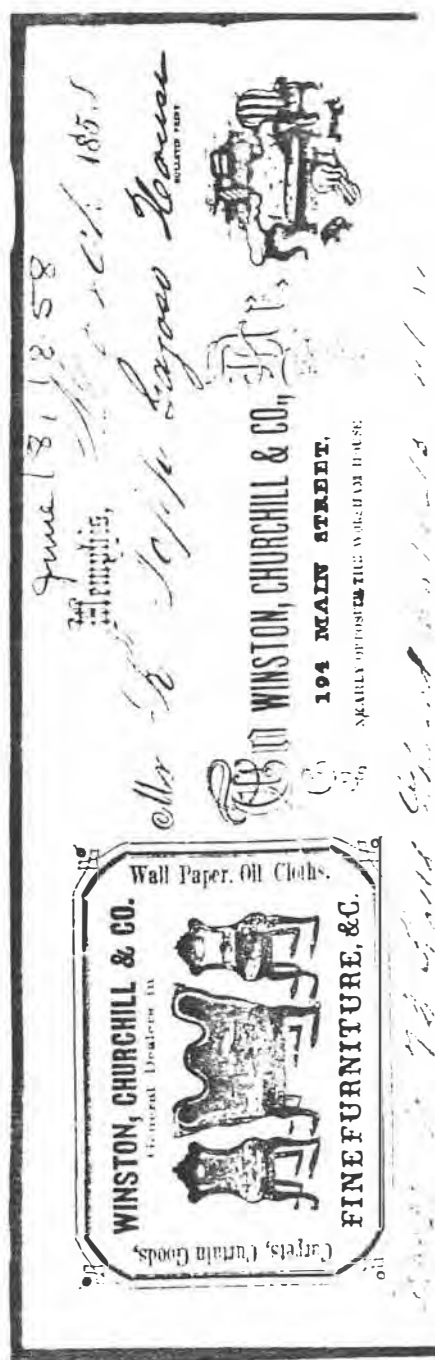


Figure 248. An 1858 invoice head of a Memphis furniture company, from the Robertson Topp Papers, showing Rococo Revival furniture. Courtesy Burrow Library, Rhodes College.

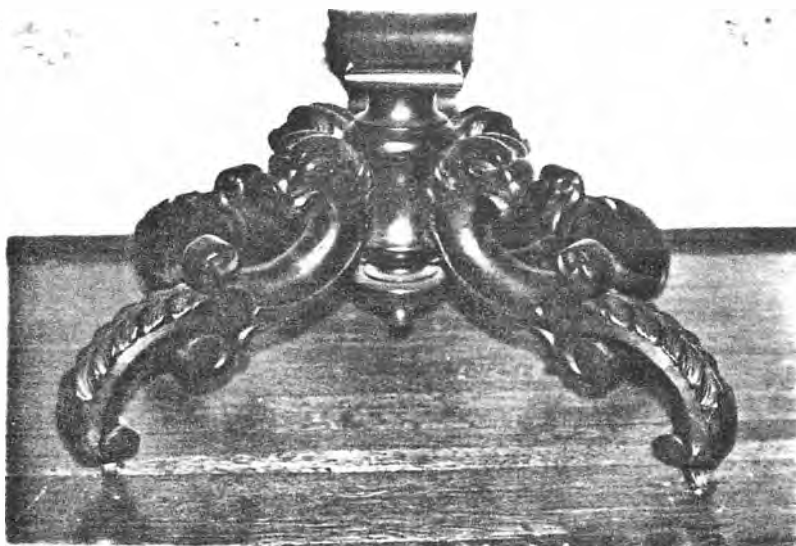
As might be expected because of its popularity, more Rococo furniture survives in the Mallory-Neely House than that of the other historic revivals. The pieces in the house range from ornate to simple. Two somewhat similar center tables, one located in the bedroom and the other in the hallway, exemplify the characteristics of the more ornate variations of the Rococo Revival style. (Figure 249) From the convoluted outline of their "turtle" or elliptical shaped marble-covered tops and the whiplash line of each leg, to the ornamental foliate carving, all parts of both are made up of a profusion of organically curved lines. Providing a contrast to these two tables is the simpler Rococo Revival console card table, inscribed with the label of McKinney & Company. (Figure 233, page 587) More controlled curves are used in this piece and ornamentation is kept to a minimum.

The most magnificent pieces of Rococo Revival furniture in the Mallory-Neely House are the large rosewood half-tester bed and wardrobe in the master bedroom. (Figures 250 and 251) Though similar, they are not part of a set. Both pieces, but especially the bed and its headboard, are ornamented with exuberant rococo carving.

These pieces have been attributed in the Mallory-Neely docent guides as having been made by Prudent Mallard (1809-1879) of New Orleans, and oral tradition has suggested that these pieces were purchased by the family in New Orleans. This half-tester type is traditionally associated in the South with Mallard who, legend says, gave it the name--a "Victoria" bed. There is, in fact, actually no way to substantiate the attribution of these pieces to Mallard.



A

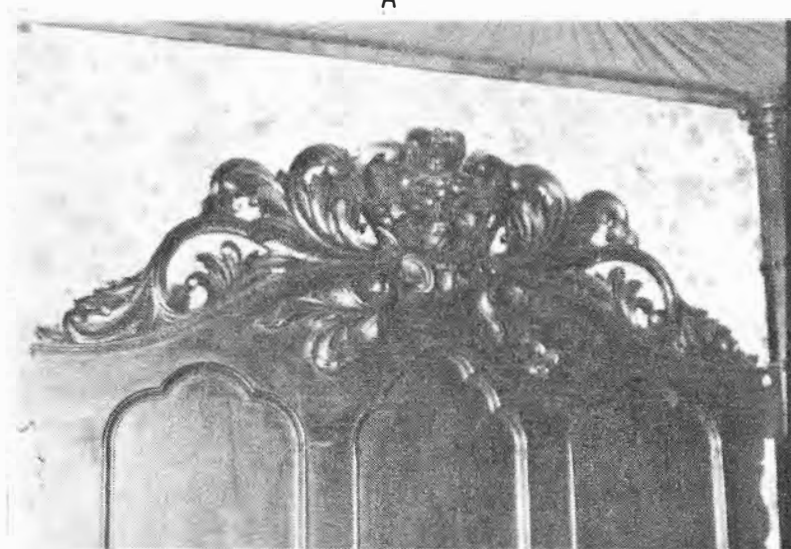


B

Figure 249. Marble top Rococo Revival center table located in the Mallory-Neely master bedroom.
A. The table.
B. Detail showing the typical curvilinear and scrolled ornament of the rococo.



A

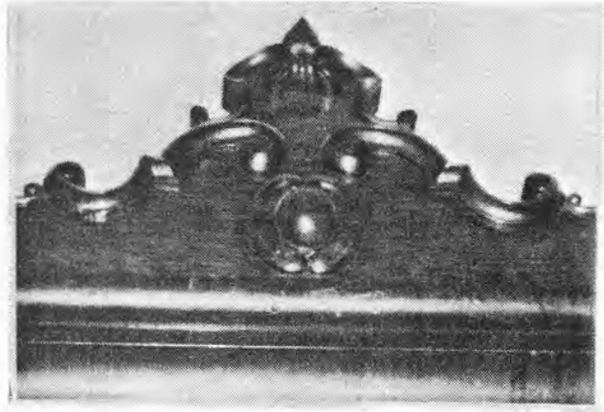


B

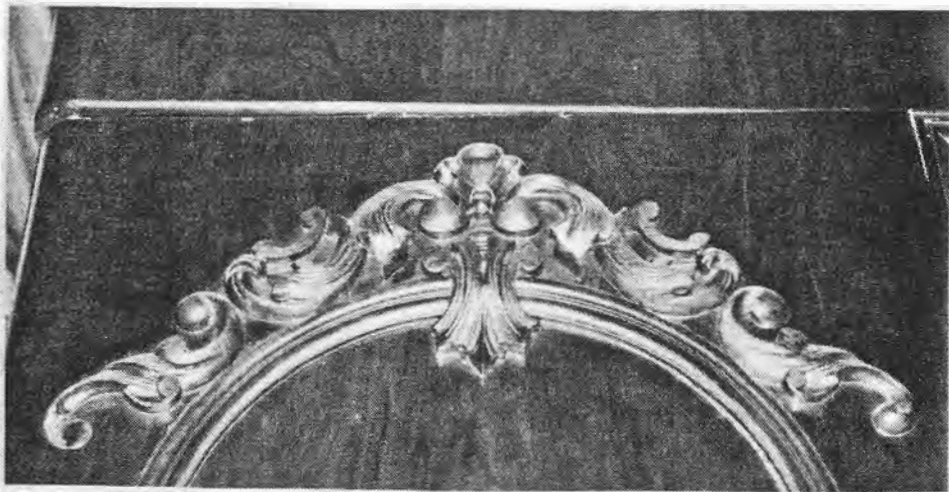
Figure 250. Rococo Revival half-tester bed located in the Mallory-Neely master bedroom.
A. Half-tester bed.
B. Detail of the elaborately carved headboard.



A



B



C

Figure 251. Large Rococo Revival style wardrobe in the Mallory-Neely master bedroom and details of the florid carving used by the cabinetmaker to decorate the piece.

A. Large wardrobe.

B. Detail from top center of wardrobe.

C. Detail of door panel.

For most of this century general histories of American furniture have acknowledged Mallard as being perhaps the greatest Southern Rococo Revival cabinetmaker.⁸¹ However, recent scholarship having to do with New Orleans furniture has revealed that the entire story of Mallard as a cabinetmaker is probably a myth. No verifiable piece of furniture produced by him has surfaced. The use of the Mallard egg by him as signature is part of this myth. All evidence seems to show that Mallard was actually an entrepreneurial furniture dealer and interior decorator. His firm handled furniture produced all over the country but especially Cincinnati-made furniture.⁸²

Photographs in the Master's thesis of Donald Pierce entitled "Mitchell and Rammelsburg, Cincinnati Furniture Makers 1847-1881" show very similar half-tester beds and wardrobes produced by that company.⁸³ They are known to have been made by many other manufacturers as well. The 1863 inventory of the Memphis branch of Mitchell and Rammelsburg, Mitchell, Hoffman and Company, lists all types of furniture labeled "French." In addition to many parlor sets, French cushion seats, and French dining sets, the following are listed:

⁸¹See Maud O'Bryan Ronstrom, "Seignouret and Mallard, Cabinet-makers," The Magazine Antiques, 66, No. 2 (August 1944), 79-81.

⁸²Timothy J. Chester, associate director for collections, Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans, Interview by the author, 14 August 1985. Microscopic analysis by the National Heritage firm of the secondary wood used in the Mallory-Neely wardrobe "suggested it was not of Southern origin," Master Plan for Mallory-Neely House, 43.

⁸³Donald C. Pierce, "Mitchell and Rammelsberg: Cincinnati Furniture Makers 1847-1881," M.A. Thesis, University of Delaware, June 1976.

one suite of French bedroom furniture made up of one mahogany French bedstead, one bureau, one washstand; and fourteen No. 1 French bedsteads; three No. 6 French bedsteads; and one No. 8 French bedstead.⁸⁴

Renaissance Revival style. Following the American Civil War a new style, the Renaissance Revival, was introduced and became popular during the 1870s and 80s.⁸⁵ The style originated in France during the Second Empire of Napoleon III. Labeled "Renaissance," it was actually an original eclectic style in which designers used an "imaginative selecting and combining of elements from historic styles."⁸⁶ Both Italian and French Renaissance elements can be found, but more often sixteenth century Mannerist and seventeenth century Baroque sources seem to have been used.⁸⁷

The Renaissance was the first of the Revivals to be broadly affected by mechanization. High quality pieces continued to be hand crafted, but large quantities were machine made. The style lent itself well to factory mass production.⁸⁸ Its massive forms, which

⁸⁴Superior Court of Cincinnati [Inventory of Memphis Outlet], 816-827.

⁸⁵Renaissance Revival Victorian Furniture [exhibition catalog] (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Grand Rapids Art Museum, 6 November - 6 December 1976).

⁸⁶Ames, "Grand Rapids furniture at the time of the centennial," 34.

⁸⁷Renaissance Revival Victorian Furniture, 4.

⁸⁸Ibid.

have at times been seen as symbolic of American territorial and economic expansion during this period, were enlivened with "agitated outlines, rich and lively surfaces, and generally aggressive design."⁸⁹ It was a style well suited to the large, high ceilinged rooms of the period.

During the last third of the century, mass produced suites of furniture became the most important product of the emerging American furniture industry.⁹⁰ Bedroom or chamber suites and parlor suites of all qualities and ranging from elaborate to plain were manufactured in the Renaissance Revival style. (Figure 252)

Very typical examples of these chamber and parlor suites survive in the Mallory-Neely House. A Renaissance Revival parlor suite located in the parlor is comprised of a walnut sofa and four shield-back chairs. (Figures 253 and 254) These are ornamented with characteristic raised panels of walnut burl veneer, carving, and incised decoration. (Figure 255) A bedroom suite in one of the second floor rooms includes a bed and matching bureau. (Figure 256) Both have the characteristic top-heavy appearance of Renaissance Revival bedroom furniture created by the use of pediments as a cresting device. (Figure 257) These two pieces are also ornamented with burlled panels, incised lines, and carving. Volutes, palmettes, and columnettes are among the many classically inspired motifs used. The muscular buildup of motifs reflects the influence of Second Empire design and architecture.

⁸⁹Ames, "Grand Rapids furniture at the time of the centennial," 34.

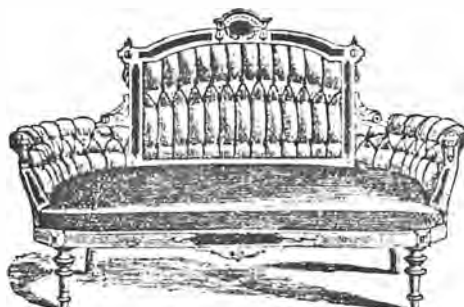
⁹⁰Ransom, 25.

PARLOR FURNITURE.

41

PARLOR SUIT, No. 18.

A VERY FINE SUIT.



TETE, No. 18.

FRENCH VENEERED, POLISHED PANELS.



Large Easy Chair, No. 18. Ladies' Easy Chair, No. 18. Parlor Chair, No. 18.

Round Seat, Polished Panels. Round Seat, Polished Panels. Round Seat, Polished Panels

	All Wool Terry.	English Terry.	Silk Striped Terry.	Hair Cloth.	French Silk Striped Ty.
Tete, No 18.....	\$37 00	\$37 00	\$38 00	\$37 00	\$42 00
Large Easy Chair, No. 18.....	21 00	21 00	22 00	22 00	27 00
Ladies' Easy Chair, No. 18.....	18 00	18 00	19 00	18 50	22 00
4 Parlor Chairs, No. 18.....	48 00	49 00	52 00	50 00	56 00

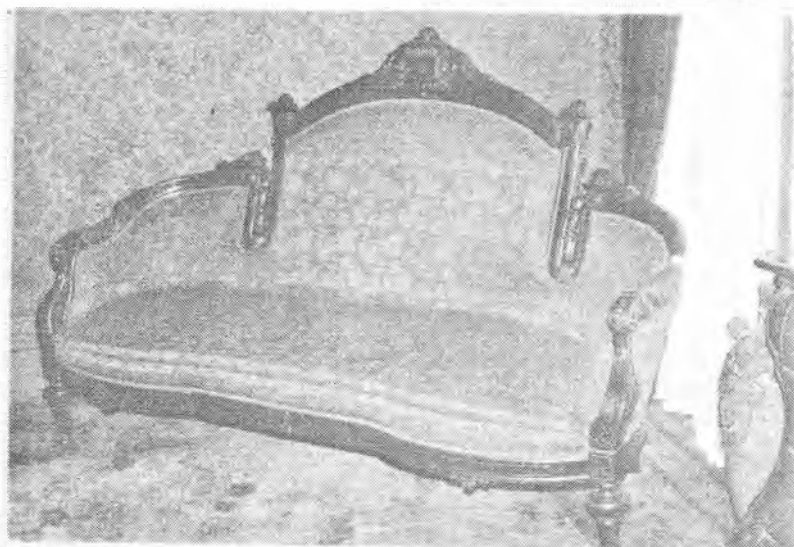
SUIT OF 7 PIECES.....\$124 00 \$125 00 \$131 00 \$127 50 \$147 00

This Suit, with Ruffled Fronts.....\$ 5 00 Extra.

Full Ruffled Seats.....\$ 8 00 to 10 00 "

Full Ruffled Seats and Backs.....15 00 " 20 00 "

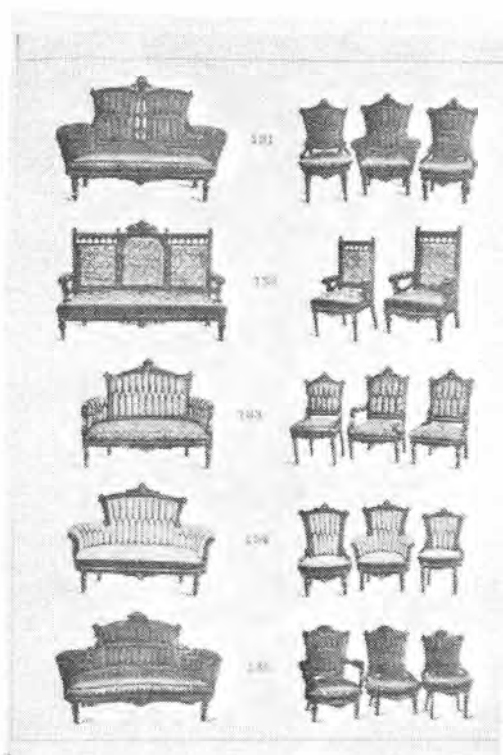
Figure 252. Renaissance Revival parlor suite from the 1874 catalog of McDonough Price & Company. Courtesy Chicago Historical Society.



A



B



C

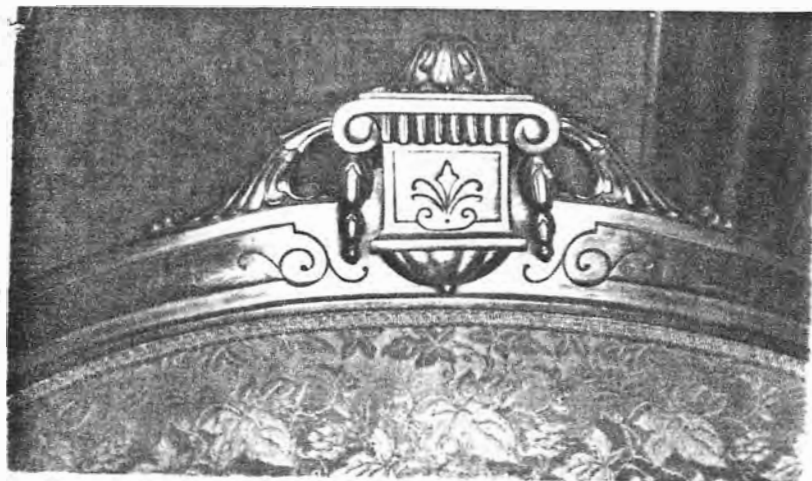
Figure 253. Renaissance Revival sofa in the Mallory-Neely House and similar illustrations from trade catalogs.

- A. Sofa located in the Mallory-Neely parlor.
- B. Similar suite illustrated in the trade catalog of the C. & F. Vogel Company, n.d.
- C. Another similar suite illustrated in the 1883 trade catalog of the Jordan & Moriarty Company.

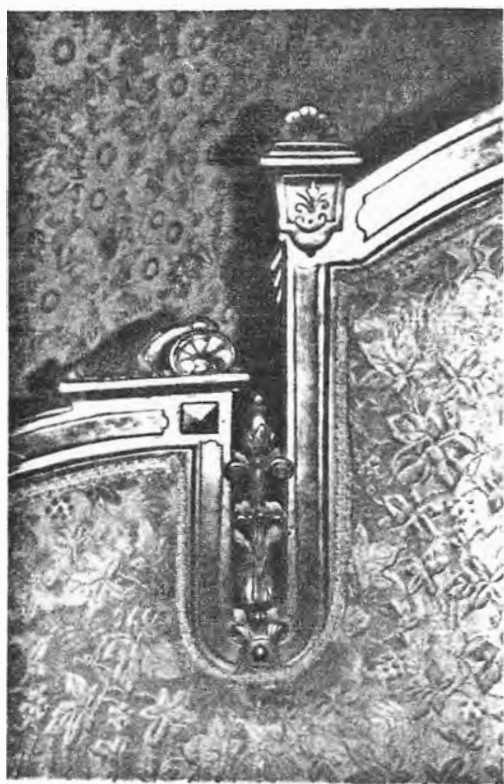
Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.



Figure 254. One of the chairs in the Mallory-Neely parlor from a Renaissance Revival suite.



A



B



C

Figure 255. Details of the Mallory-Neely sofa showing characteristic Renaissance Revival ornament.
 A. Central cartouche of conventionalized leafage scrolls.
 B. Raised and shaped small incidental panels.
 C. Incised linear decoration.



A



B



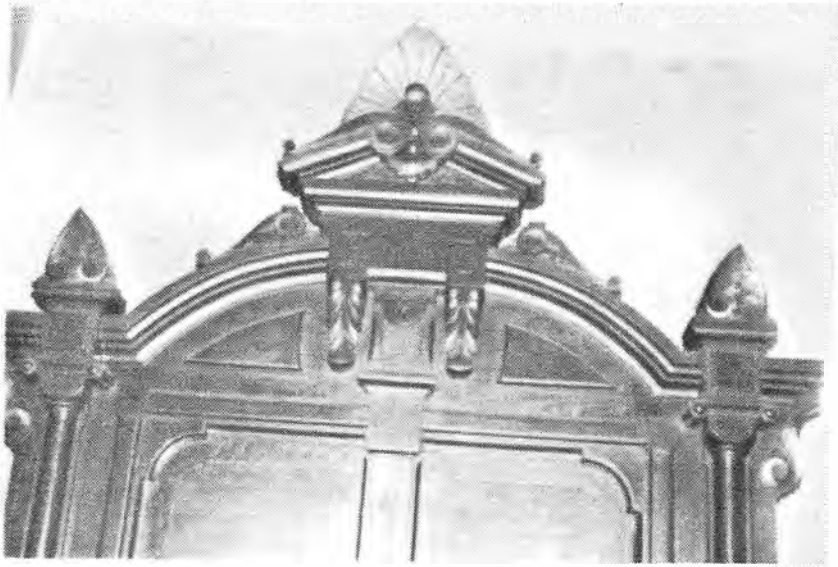
C

Figure 256. Renaissance Revival bedroom suite in the Mallory-Neely collection. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

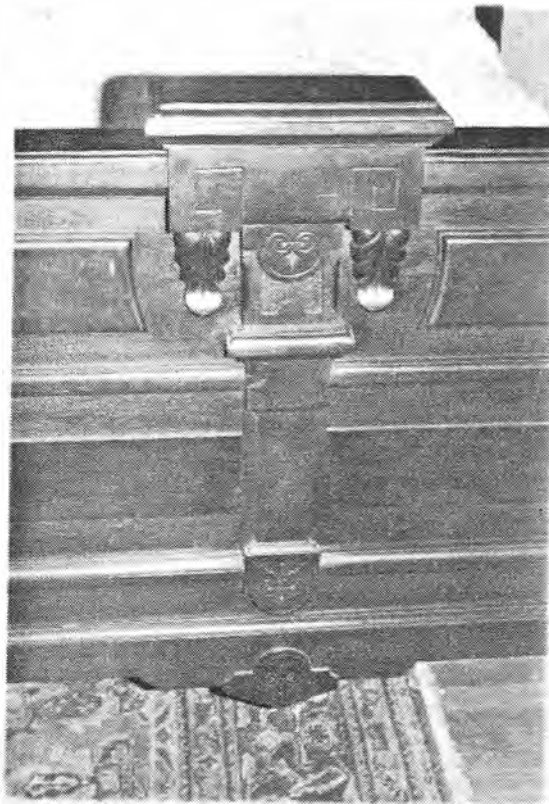
A. Detail of bed.

B. Bureau.

C. Similar suite shown in the catalog of the Jordan & Moriarty Company, 1883.



A



B

Figure 257. Details of the Mallory-Neely bed showing characteristic Renaissance Revival ornament.
A. Headboard with elaborate pedimented cresting.
B. Baseboard with raised burl veneer panels.

Found elsewhere in the Mallory-Neely House are other Renaissance Revival pieces, such as the two dining room sideboards inscribed with the McKinney and Bryson initials. They are richly embellished with foliated fruit medallions appropriate for the dining area. (Figure 258)

Neo-Grec style. The Neo-Grec was an outcome of French design reform in which there was an attempt to develop a modern style using updated versions of ancient Greek motifs.⁹¹ Furniture designed in this mode is called Neo-Grec and is characterized by the use of angular geometric forms, flat incised decoration and highly conventionalized versions of Grecian ornament such as the palmette.⁹² Called the "Modern or New Greek" style in America, it was in vogue during the 1860s and 70s.⁹³ During this time the Neo-Grec co-existed with the Renaissance Revival; the two being very often intermixed.⁹⁴

Two pieces of furniture in the Mallory-Neely House are illustrative of the Neo-Grec style. An elegant tall pier mirror situated between two windows in the Mallory-Neely sitting room and a center table in the master bedroom are both in the Neo-Grec style and are built up of and embellished with geometric forms. (Figures 259, 260, and 261). The table especially looks "modern" compared to its

⁹¹Art in France Under Napoleon III, 44; and Hamlin, 428.

⁹²See Kenneth Ames, "What is the Neo-Grec?" 13-21; and "Sitting in (Neo-Grec) Style," Nineteenth Century, 2, Nos. 3-4 (Autumn 1976), 51-58.

⁹³Ames, "What is the Neo-Grec?" 13, 16.

⁹⁴Renaissance Revival Victorian Furniture, 5.

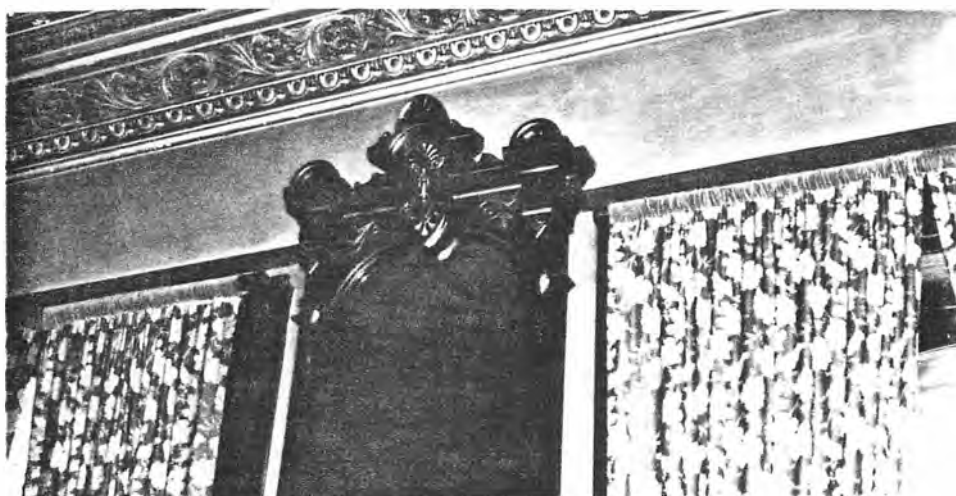


A



B

Figure 258. Renaissance Revival sideboard in the Mallory-Neely dining room.
A. The sideboard.
B. Detail of the fruit carving.

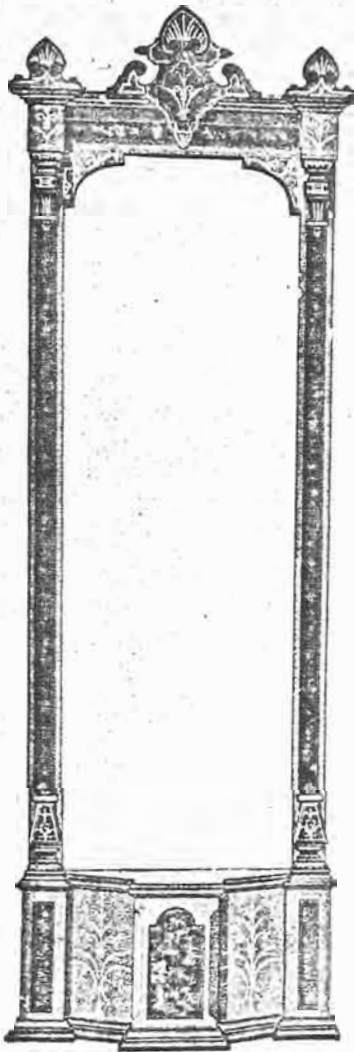


A



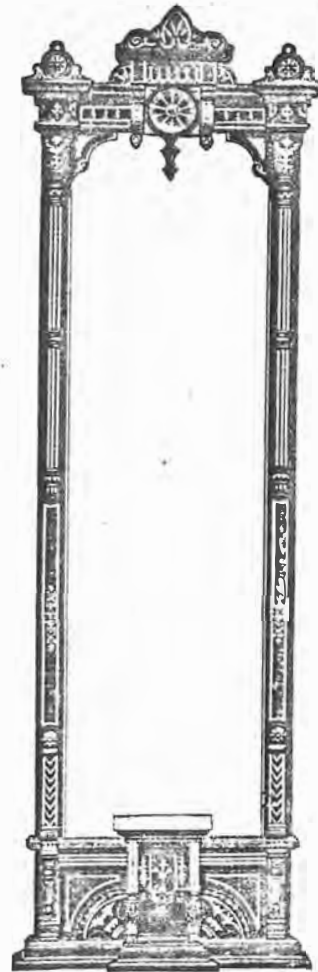
B

Figure 259. Cresting and base of the Neo-Grec style pier mirror in the Mallory-Neely sitting room.
A. Cresting.
B. Base



NO. 78.—PIER MIRROR.

Finished in Walnut, and Paneled with Veneer.
Engraved and Gilt Lined.
For outside dimensions add to plate size 10 inches
in the width and 31 inches in the height.



NO. 80.—PIER MIRROR.

Finished in Walnut. Profusely Engraved
and Gilt Lined.
For outside dimensions add to plate size 11 inches
in the width and 19 inches in the height.

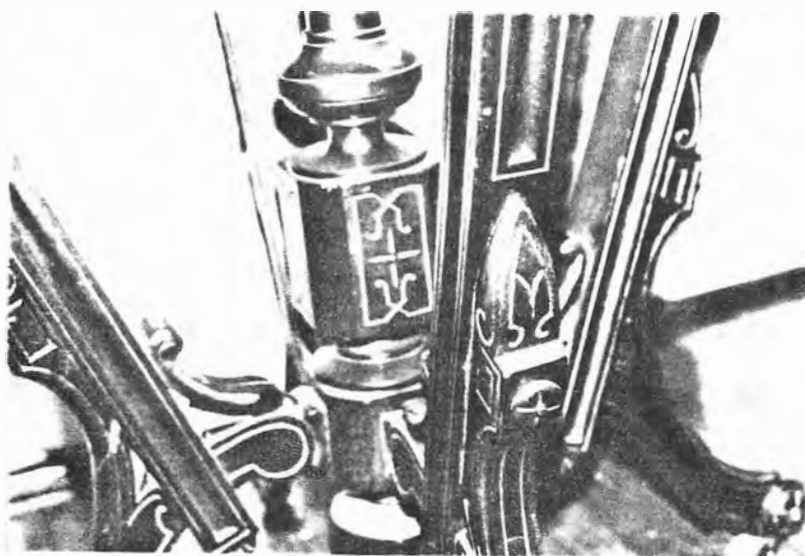
Figure 260. Pier mirrors similar to the one in the Mallory-Neely House from the catalog of Pape Brothers & Kugemann of Cincinnati, n.d. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.



A



B



C

Figure 261. Neo-Grec marble top table located in the Mallory-Neely master bedroom.

A. The table.

B. Detail of leg.

C. Characteristic incised decoration.

neighboring Rococo Revival table. The mirror is crested with highly stylized palmettes. Characteristically, both pieces are ornamented with all-over incised lines highlighted with gilding. (Figure 262)

Reform or art furniture. Art furniture was designed and created by those influenced by the late century English design reform movement.⁹⁵ They were reacting against the historically derivative revival styles of the High Victorian Era. Reformers attacked these as vulgar because of their useless and wasteful overabundant ornament.⁹⁶ They were also highly critical of revival furniture because it was designed with a lack of concern for function.

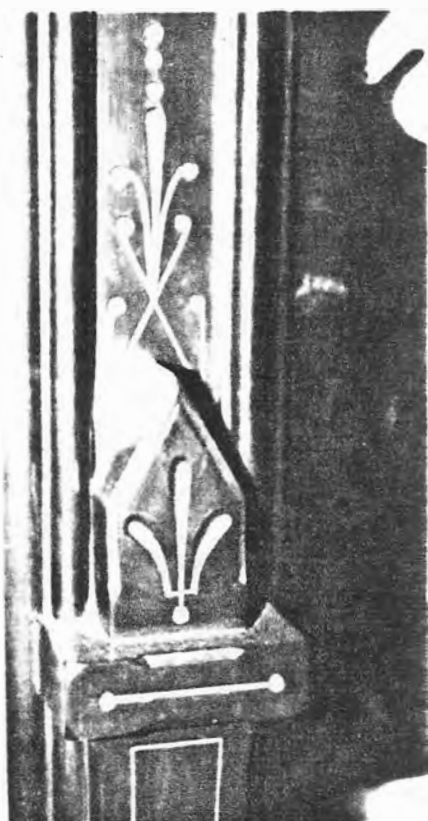
Reformers like Charles Locke Eastlake called for a return to the honest and simple craftsmanship of earlier eras.⁹⁷ Though many reformers were anti-machine in their outlook, most were realistic in their appeal for proper design training for those working in industry. English reformist furniture designers like Bruce J. Talbert and E. W. Godwin used Medieval, Old English, and Japanese models to create what was at that time very modern-looking furniture. In most of these pieces form followed function and there was an overall simplification of constructive design and the use of ornament.⁹⁸

⁹⁵See Marilyn Johnson, "Art Furniture: Wedding of the Useful to the Beautiful," In Pursuit of Beauty (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986), 143-175.

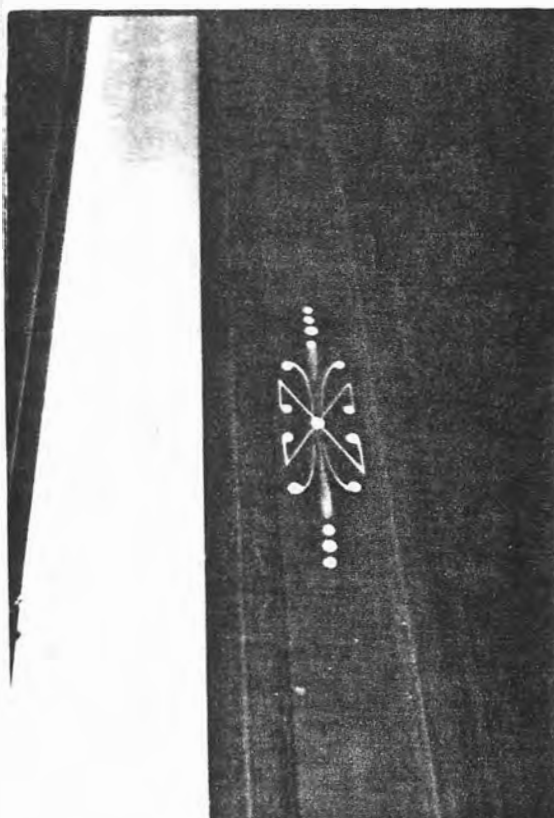
⁹⁶See, for example, Haweis, 4.

⁹⁷See Mary Jean Madigan, Eastlake Influenced American Furniture, 1870-1890 [exhibition catalog] (Yonkers, New York: Hudson River Museum, 18 November 1973 - 6 January 1974).

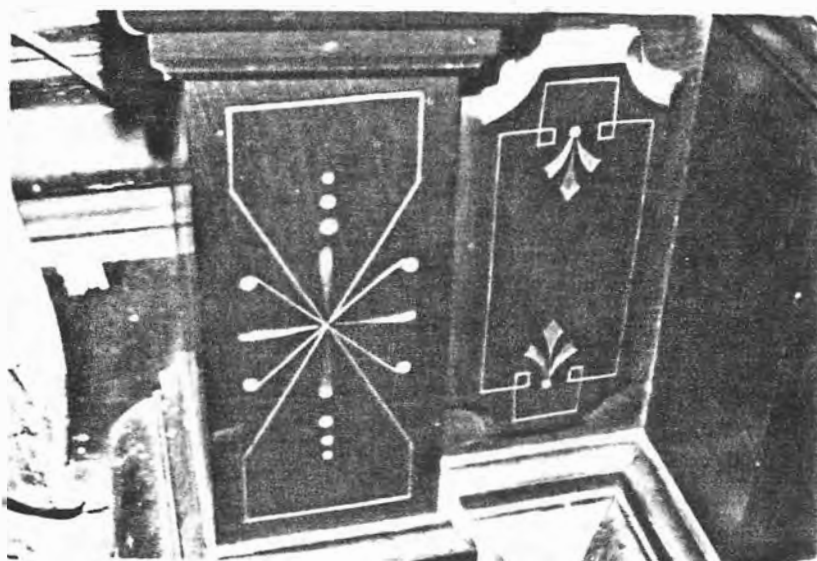
⁹⁸See Johnson, 144-152.



A



B



C

Figure 262. Details of the Mallory-Neely pier mirror showing characteristic Neo-Grec incised and gilt ornament, most of which are modernized versions of ancient Greek motifs.

- A. Stylized palmette design.
- B. Incised design.
- C. Incised linear patterns.

(Figure 263) "The very notion that simplicity of design and sincerity of construction should be identified with good taste was an astonishing reversal of Victorian notions of luxury and comfort."⁹⁹

Once English reform in the guise of Aestheticism had spread to America, where design reform ideas were widely advocated in the popular decorating guides and magazines, ever-entrepreneurial American furniture manufacturers picked up on reform furniture as novel and, therefore, a new style to sell. As a result of mass production, these design approaches and products were for the most part a travesty of the purity of reformist concepts.¹⁰⁰ As with other nineteenth century styles, exquisite high-quality Art Furniture pieces were produced primarily by hand; good examples of this are the products of the Herter Brothers Company of New York.¹⁰¹

The James Columbus Neely family, as noted, carried out extensive remodeling of their new Memphis home in the Aesthetic taste. Changes included new floor, window and wall treatment. As one might expect, along with this they also purchased Aesthetic-influenced furniture. Some of the more representative of these pieces in the house are a library table located in the second floor hallway, a daybed in the master bedroom, and the dining room chairs.

⁹⁹See Lynes, 96.

¹⁰⁰See Mary Jean Madigan, "The Influence of Charles Locke Eastlake on American Furniture Manufacture, 1870-90," Winterthur Portfolio, 10 (1975), 2-22.

¹⁰¹See Hanks, "Herter Brothers: Art in Furniture Design."

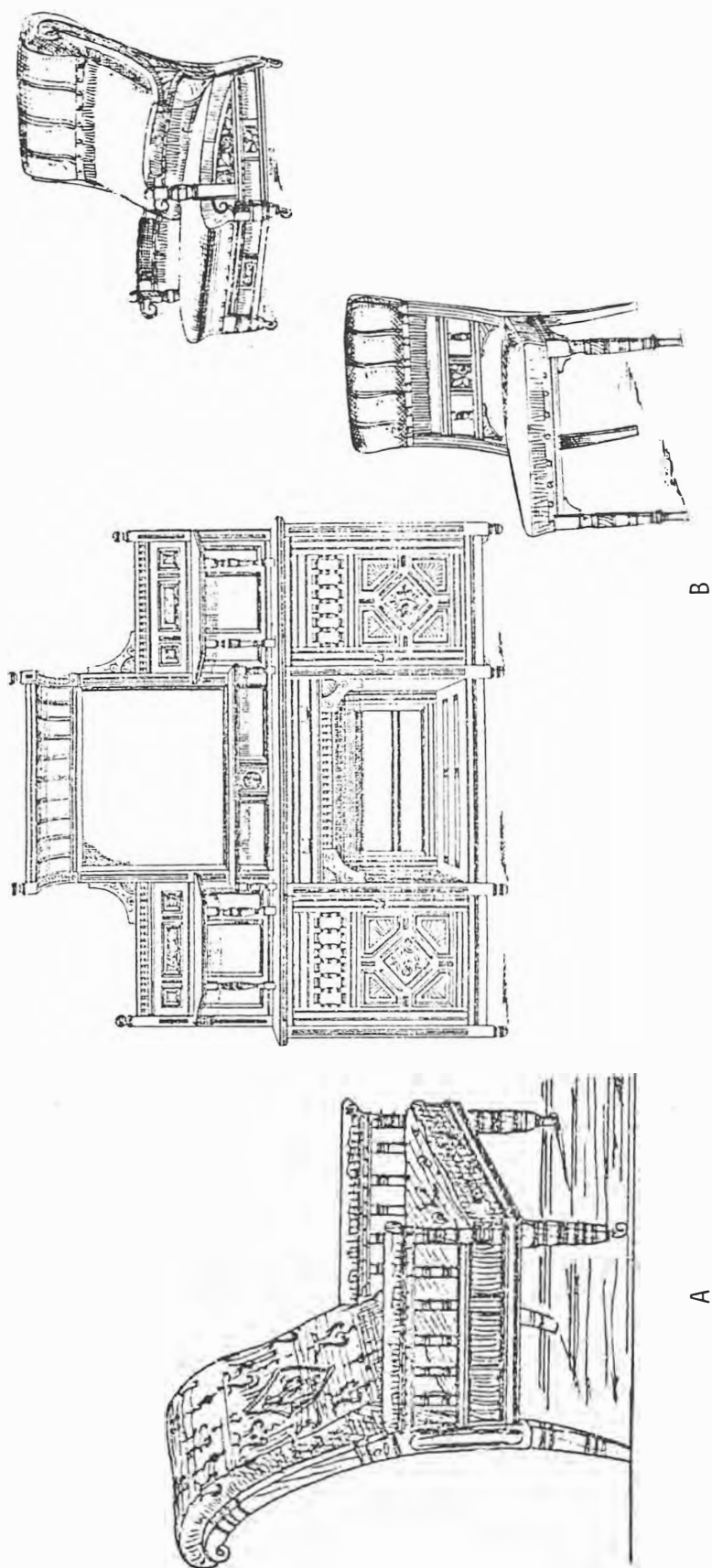


Figure 263. Line drawings of characteristic English furniture in the reform mode. Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.
 A. Bernard Smith, Designs & Sketches for Furniture, 1876.
 B. Jonquet, Original Sketches for Furniture, 1879.

They are all characteristic pieces of factory-produced furniture loosely based on reform prototypes. Their angular and seemingly simple construction, the use of turned parts, flat carving and incised linear decoration are typical of reform furniture and especially of the so-called "Eastlake" style.

The Mallory-Neely library table has a large openwork carving of a stylized flower, perhaps the sunflower--symbol of Aestheticism--prominently placed in a panel support between each pair of legs.

(Figure 264) These library tables were a very popular type by late century as they appear continually in the trade catalogs.¹⁰²

(Figure 265) Most are identical in form, differing only in ornamentation. As the American furniture industry grew, specialization became common. Many companies like this produced only one or a limited number of pieces such as chairs, upholstered pieces, or desks and tables.

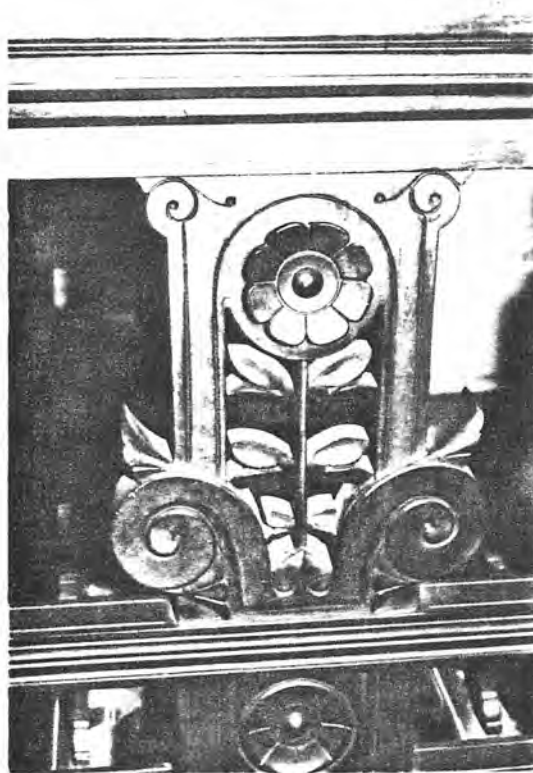
The Mallory-Neely day bed or "bed lounge," as it was then labeled, is reflective both of the Victorian love of comfort and the reformist attempt to create furniture types that were practical and useful.¹⁰³ The master bedroom day bed, like the desk, is embellished with flowers carved in low flat relief representative of the design reformers' interest in the use of natural forms as

¹⁰²See, for example, The Illustrated Catalogue, The F. W. Alms Manufacturing Company, Hat Racks, Library, and Center Tables (Cincinnati, Ohio: March 1887) [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

¹⁰³Talbot, 52.



A



B

Figure 264. Reform style library table in the Mallory-Neely collection.

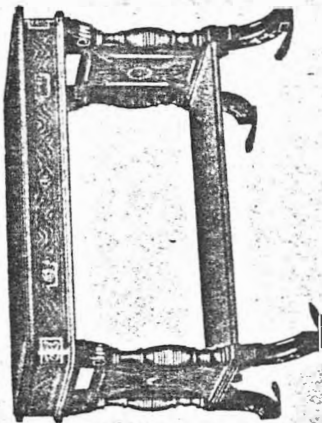
A. Library table.

B. Detail of floral ornament.

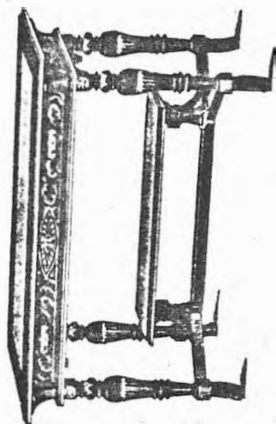
THE ROBERT MITCHELL FURNITURE COMPANY CINCINNATI



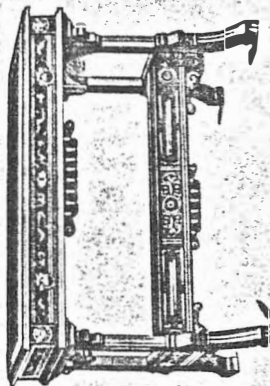
No. 231—Library Table.
Walnut, handsomely veneered and engraved.
Billiard Cloth Top, 1 Drawer.
Price..... \$30.00



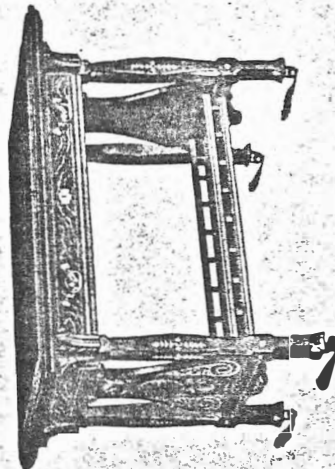
No. 232—Library Table.
Walnut, imitation Mahogany and Antique Oak.
Veneered. 44 x 42. Billiard Cloth Top, 1 Drawer.
Price..... \$34.00



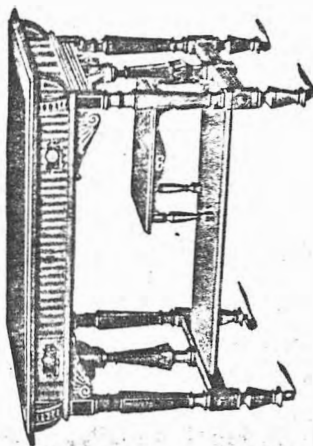
No. 233—Library Table.
Walnut, imitation Mahogany and Antique Oak.
Billiard Cloth Top, 24 x 48 inches.
Price..... \$40.00



No. 234—Library Table.
Walnut, handsomely veneered and engraved.
Billiard Cloth Top, 42 x 54 inches.
Price..... \$35.00



No. 235—Library Table.
Walnut or Mahogany Cherry, handsomely veneered and engraved.
Billiard Cloth Top, 28 x 42 inches.
Price..... \$38.00



No. 236—Library Table.
Walnut, finely carved and engraved, Wood Top, 28 x 40 inches.
Price..... \$46.00

SEND LIST FOR DISCOUNT. See Page 3.

Figure 265. Variety of library tables similar to the one in the Mallory-Neely collection from the catalog of the Robert Mitchell Company of Cincinnati, n.d. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.

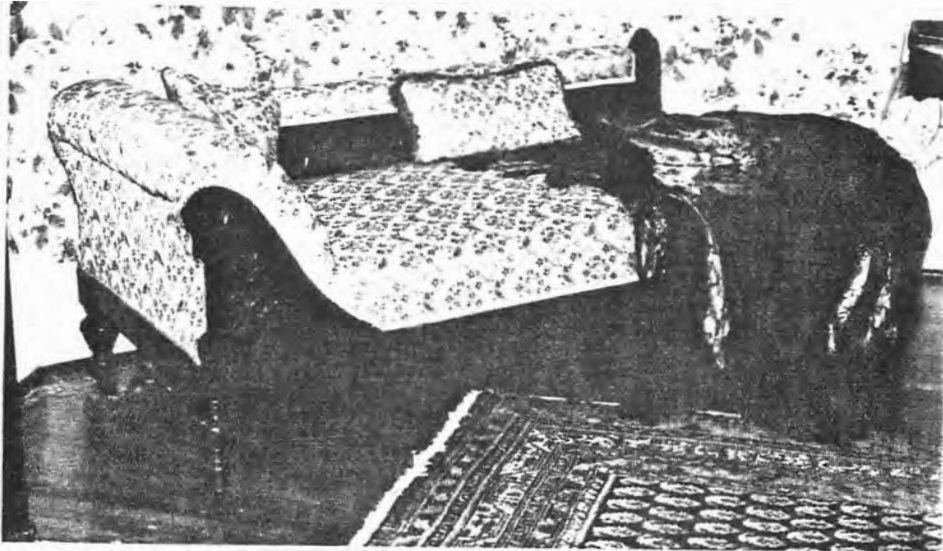
inspiration for design in lieu of copying historic sources. (Figures 266 and 267) Bed lounges, too, are shown in a great variety of style and quality in trade catalogs like that of the Buffalo Upholstery Company. In this the author stated that they were the "Leading house in the lounge business" producing "the largest line of couches, lounges, and lounge frames in the world."¹⁰⁴

In the Eastlake style, the leather covered Mallory-Neely dining room chairs are a set with the exception of two arm chairs. (Figure 268) Trade catalogs of the period show that this kind of dining chair was produced in a wide variety of configurations. (Figure 269) Varying upholstery choices including embossed leather and stamped mohair were also available for the consumer. Most of the reformist design guides of the period recommended leather for the dining room because it was easily cleaned and sanitary. The Neelys followed this advice.

As noted, an important strain within the Aesthetic Movement was the Anglo-Japanese fad. Because of the conventionalized beauty of Japanese design, it appealed greatly to nineteenth century reformers.¹⁰⁵ Though Japan had traditionally been a furniture-less culture, reform designers like E. W. Godwin applied

¹⁰⁴New Goods for 1884 Made by the Buffalo Upholstering Company (Buffalo, New York: 1884), 1 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

¹⁰⁵Elizabeth Aslin, "E. W. Godwin and the Japanese Taste," Apollo (December 1962), 779-784.



A



B

Figure 266. Reform style bed lounge located in the Mallory-Neely master bedroom.
A. Bed lounge.
B. Detail of floral carving.

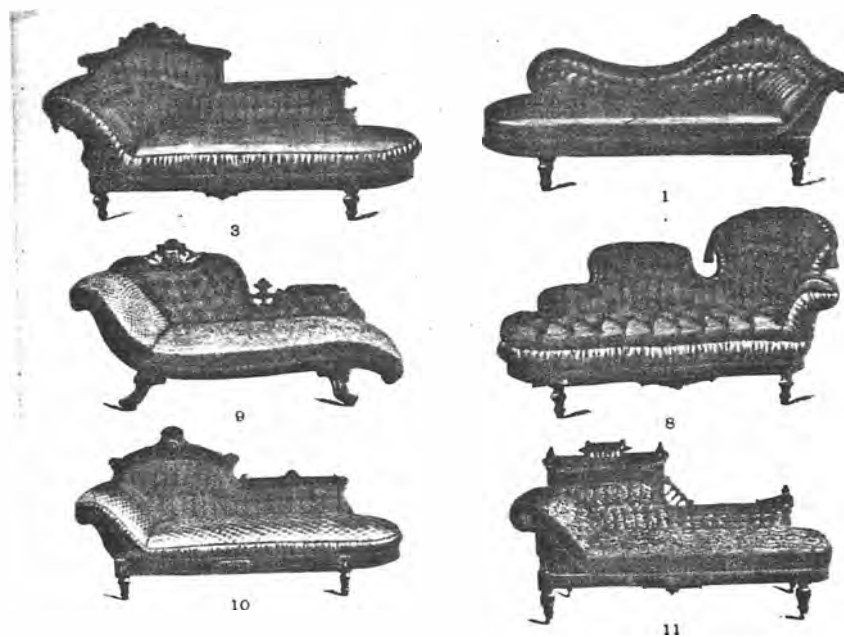
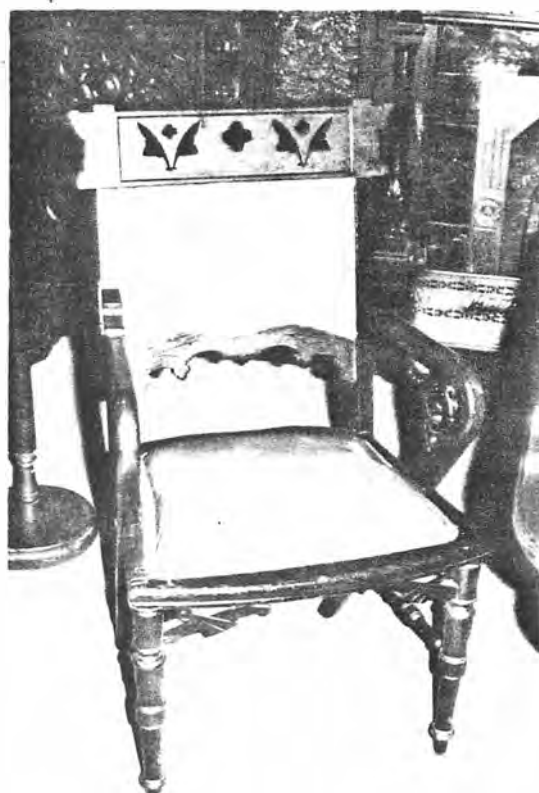


Figure 267. Bed lounges from the catalog of the C. & F. Vogel Company of New York, n.d. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.



A



B

Figure 268. These chairs in the Reform style are located in the Mallory-Neely dining room.

A. Side chair.

B. Arm chair.



No. 495—Chair.

Walnut, Imitation Mahogany or
Antique Oak. Cane Seat
and Back.

Per doz.....\$ 72 00
Leather Seat and Back..... 108 00

See Page 3.



No. 496—Arm Chair.

Walnut, Imitation Mahogany or
Antique Oak. Cane Seat
and Back.

Per doz \$144 00
Leather Seat and Back..... 230 00

Figure 269. Chairs similar to those in the Mallory-Neely House were illustrated in the catalog of the Robert Mitchell Company of Cincinnati, n.d. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.

Japanese design principles to the creation of modern Western furniture.¹⁰⁶

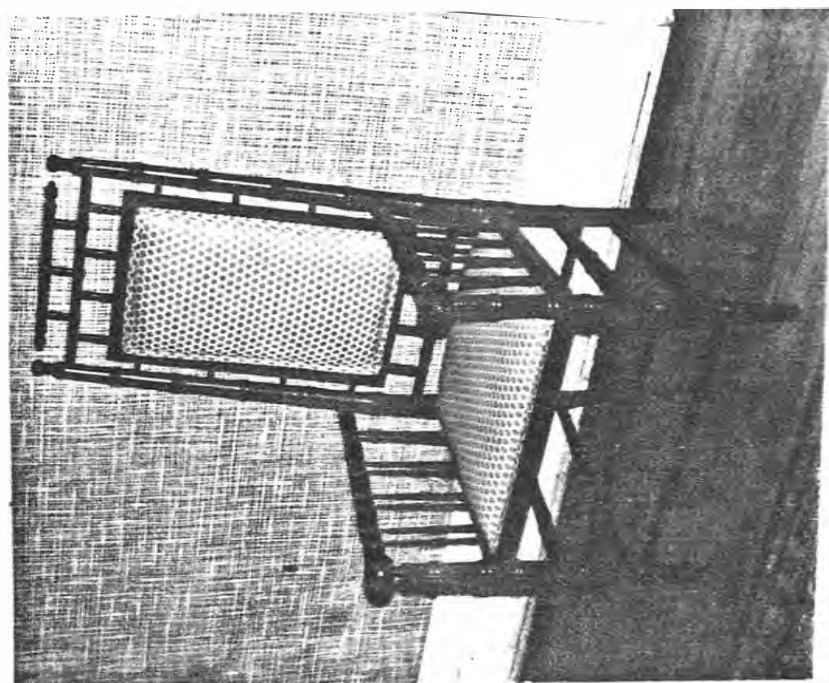
Ultimately, the Anglo-Japanese styles also filtered down to the popular manufacturer. A faux bamboo chair in one of the upstairs bedrooms of the Mallory-Neely House is an example of this. It is a simple orientalized version of the Eastlake dining chairs. The Spiegel and Co. catalog illustration No. 42 (c. 1890) shows a very similar Anglo-Japanese chair listed at \$5.00 wholesale. (Figure 270)

Late nineteenth century newspaper advertisements reveal that Memphis furniture dealers sold "artistic furniture" such as the Mallory-Neely pieces. An illustrative example in the Memphis Appeal for the A. D. Gibson & Son Furniture firm is headlined ARTISTIC FURNITURE and extends a cordial welcome to the ladies of Memphis and surrounding cities to visit their magnificent Art Wareroom with its display of Artistic Furniture which they claim "has never been equaled in the South." The owner further explained that Gibson & Sons is the sole representative in the Memphis area for the Phoenix Furniture Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan, "the pre-eminent leaders in the United States in the manufacture of artistic furniture."¹⁰⁷

Orientalism. Not a style but more a fad, Orientalism peaked during the later decades of the nineteenth century. During

¹⁰⁶Spiegel & Company Catalogue (Chicago: c. 1890), 62 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago.

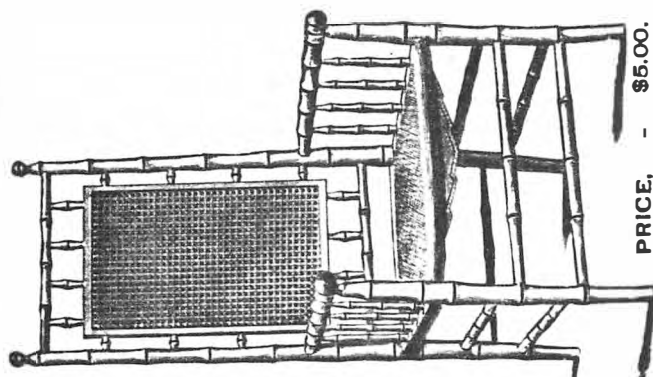
¹⁰⁷Memphis Appeal [advertisement], 2 November 1890, 1.



A

NO. 42. CHAIR.

APPLE, ANTIQUE OAK OR MAHOGANY FINISH.
Matches the No. 41 Rocker.



B

Figure 270. Reform style chair in the Anglo-Japanese mode from the Mallory-Neely collection and a similar one from catalog of Spiegel & Company of Chicago. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

A. Anglo-Japanese chair in Mallory-Neely House.

B. Similar chair from Spiegel & Company of Chicago, 1890.

the entire period, though, beginning with Napoleon's Egyptian campaign and continuing through the Romantic Movement's fascination with the East, there was an interest in exotic Near and Far Eastern cultures.¹⁰⁸ American architecture and decorative arts were at times imaginatively based on Oriental types. The Egyptian Revival, Moorish Revival, and others of these are sometimes grouped together under the label Exotic Revival.

By the end of the century improved transportation and communication, including World's Fairs with their international exhibitions, had made the American people more cosmopolitan in their outlook and had stimulated an Oriental craze. Probably few American homes were without some exotic Oriental touch.¹⁰⁹ For example, Oriental carpets and Arabic influenced portieres and decorative architectural grilles became a typical part of late American Victorian decor. Elite families like the Rockefellers could afford entire rooms decorated with an Oriental theme. The Aesthetic Movement's vigorous endorsement of Eastern design played an important role in its spreading popularity. Louis Comfort Tiffany's liberal use of Islamic tiles, brass, and Eastern textiles helped to further popularize the vogue in America for decoration and design inspiration.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸Lynes, 99.

¹⁰⁹Out of the East, Oriental Imports for the Victorian Home from 1860 to 1915 [exhibition catalog] (Rochester, New York: Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum, 2 December 1977 - 8 January 1978), 4.

¹¹⁰Ishbell Ross, Taste in America (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1967), 139.

Research through late nineteenth century newspapers shows that Memphians, like their fellow Americans, had become more international in their outlook. The Memphis papers began to feature lengthy articles which described foreign cities, countries, and their distinct cultures. Thomas Cook & Company, the agency which ushered in mass tourism, began to locally advertise travel tours. "Personal Notes" in the Memphis Appeal often related information about specific Memphians and their overseas travels. Illustrated articles like "A Memphian's Trip Around the World" describing in great length a visit to Karnak, Luxor and Cairo in Egypt, and Darjeeling, Calcutta, and Delhi in India surely fired an interest in things Oriental among Mid-Southern readers.¹¹¹

Members of the Neely and Mallory families traveled abroad to both Europe and the East. Like other American families, they began to collect an assortment of Oriental furnishings including Chinese, Arab, and Indian pieces.

Late nineteenth century Ch'ing Dynasty furniture in the house includes several stands, a stool, a screen and cabinet. The latter two, according to oral tradition, were purchased by Mrs. Mallory from the Chinese display at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair.

The screen is made up of elaborately carved panels surrounding large pieces of intricately worked Chinese embroidery depicting

¹¹¹Edward H. Voegele, "A Memphian's Trip Around the World," Commercial Appeal, 7 October 1900, 1(2).

various birds and flowers.¹¹² (Figures 271 and 272) The cabinet, too, has all-over carving and is lavishly inlaid with mother-of-pearl. (Figure 273)

Both of these showy pieces are characteristic of late nineteenth century Chinese furniture which was profoundly influenced by Western taste. In lieu of the sleek and sophisticated design of early Chinese furniture, the cabinetmakers at this time began to place importance solely on decorative skill.¹¹³ Typical of these pieces, therefore, is the dependency on sheer volume and intricacy of carving and the use of elaborate mother-of-pearl and bone inlay.¹¹⁴ (Figure 274)

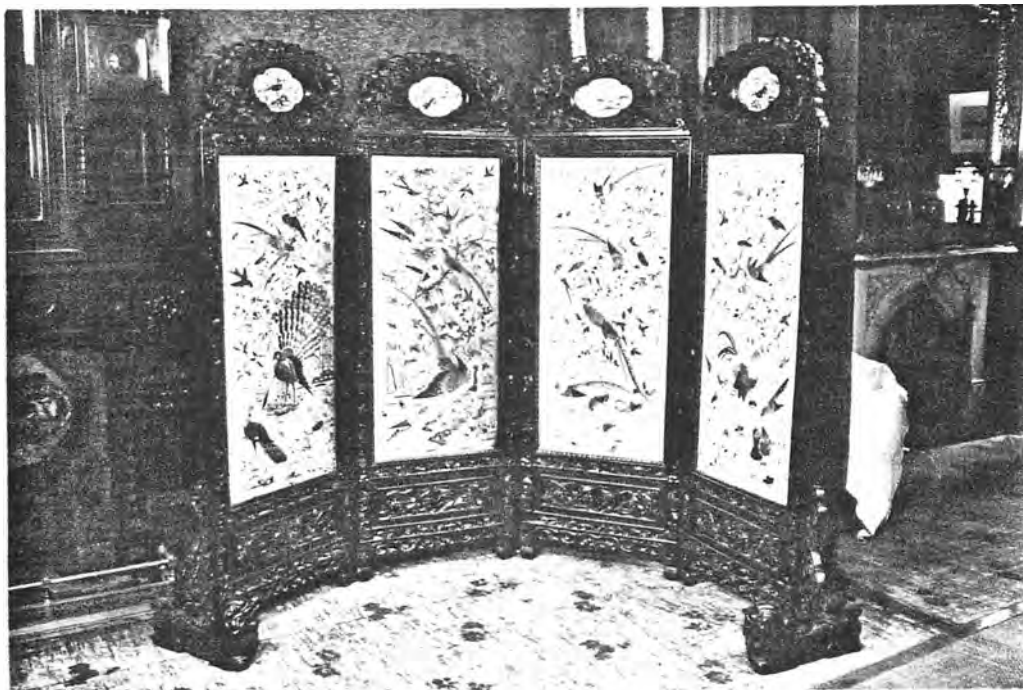
The Imperial Chinese Pavilion, a copy of a prince's palace, and the large display within the Palace of Liberal Arts at the St. Louis Exposition included 2000 tons of commercial exhibits brought from China for show and sale. Included were furniture, textiles, porcelain, and ivory.¹¹⁵ Photographs of these exhibition areas, the largest participation of the Chinese in any World's Fair up until that time, show crowded displays of furniture. (Figures 275-277)

¹¹²According to Aesthetic taste an Oriental screen, or any screen for that matter, was an essential component of interior decoration. See, for example, Harrison, 150.

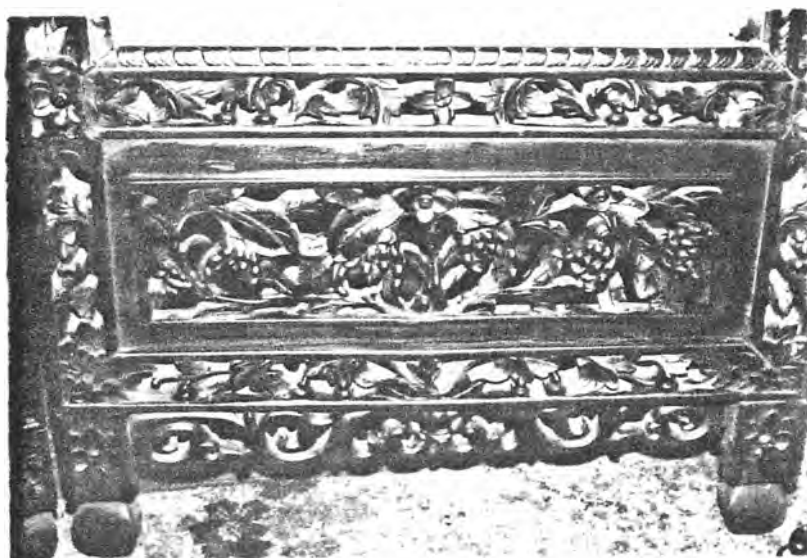
¹¹³"Furniture of the Ch'ing Dynasty," Arts of Asia, 3, No. 5 (September-October, 1973), 36.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 26.

¹¹⁵Louisiana Exposition Company Collection Addendum, Series IV, Subseries I, Box 27, Folder 8, Special Collections, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.



A

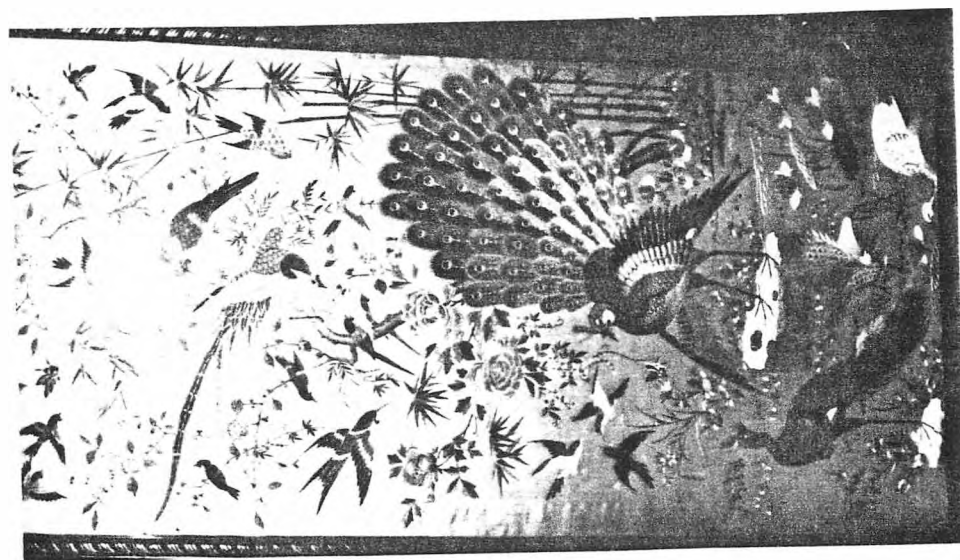


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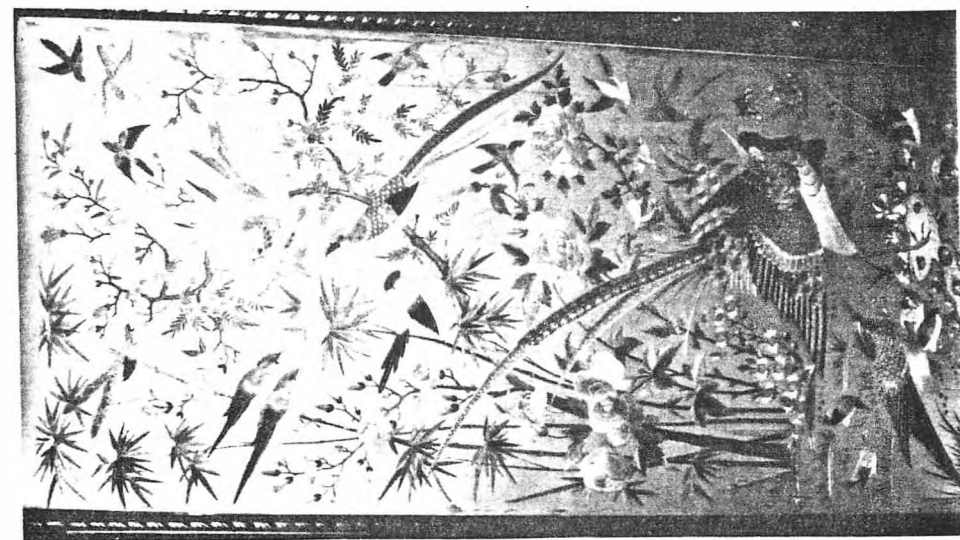
Figure 271. Intricately carved Ch'ing Dynasty screen located in the Mallory-Neely parlor.

A. Screen.

B. Detail of carving.



A



B



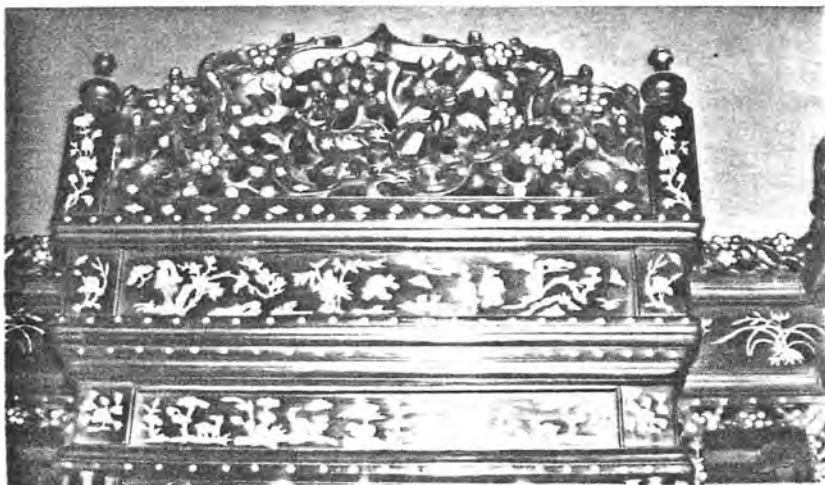
C

Figure 272. Details of the embroidered panels from the Mallory-Neely Ch'ing Dynasty screen.

A. Peacock panel.

B. Phoenix panel.

C. Pheasant panel.



A



B

Figure 273. Elaborately carved and inlaid Ch'ing Dynasty cabinet located in the Mallory-Neely sitting room.
A. Close-up of center cabinet cresting.
B. Ch'ing Dynasty cabinet.



Figure 274. Details of the Mallory-Neely Ch'ing Dynasty cabinet.
 A. Carving.
 B. Relief decoration.
 C. Mother-of-pearl inlay.

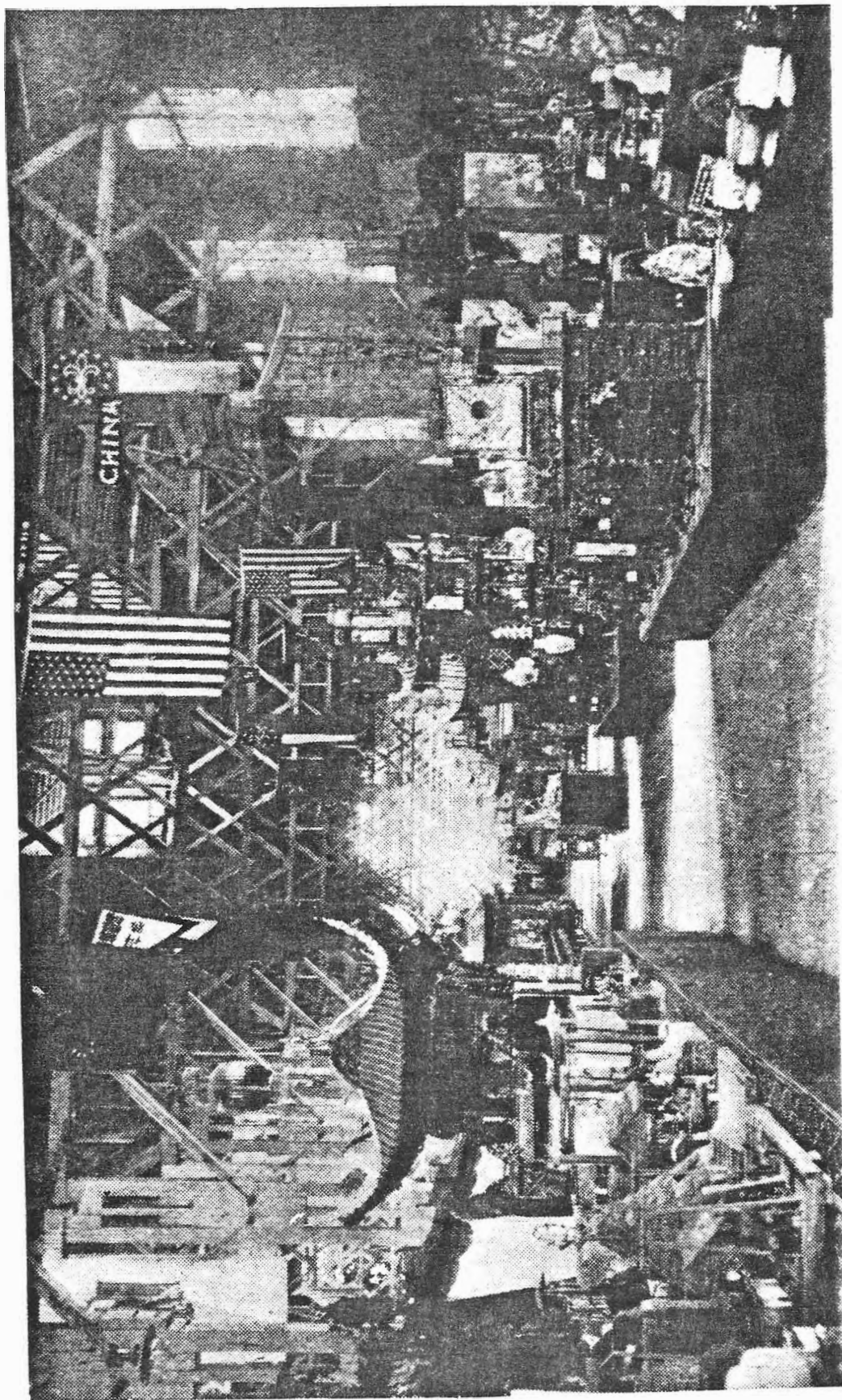


Figure 275. View showing the general arrangement of the Chinese Exhibits at the St. Louis World's Fair, 1904 from the History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Courtesy Missouri Historical Society.

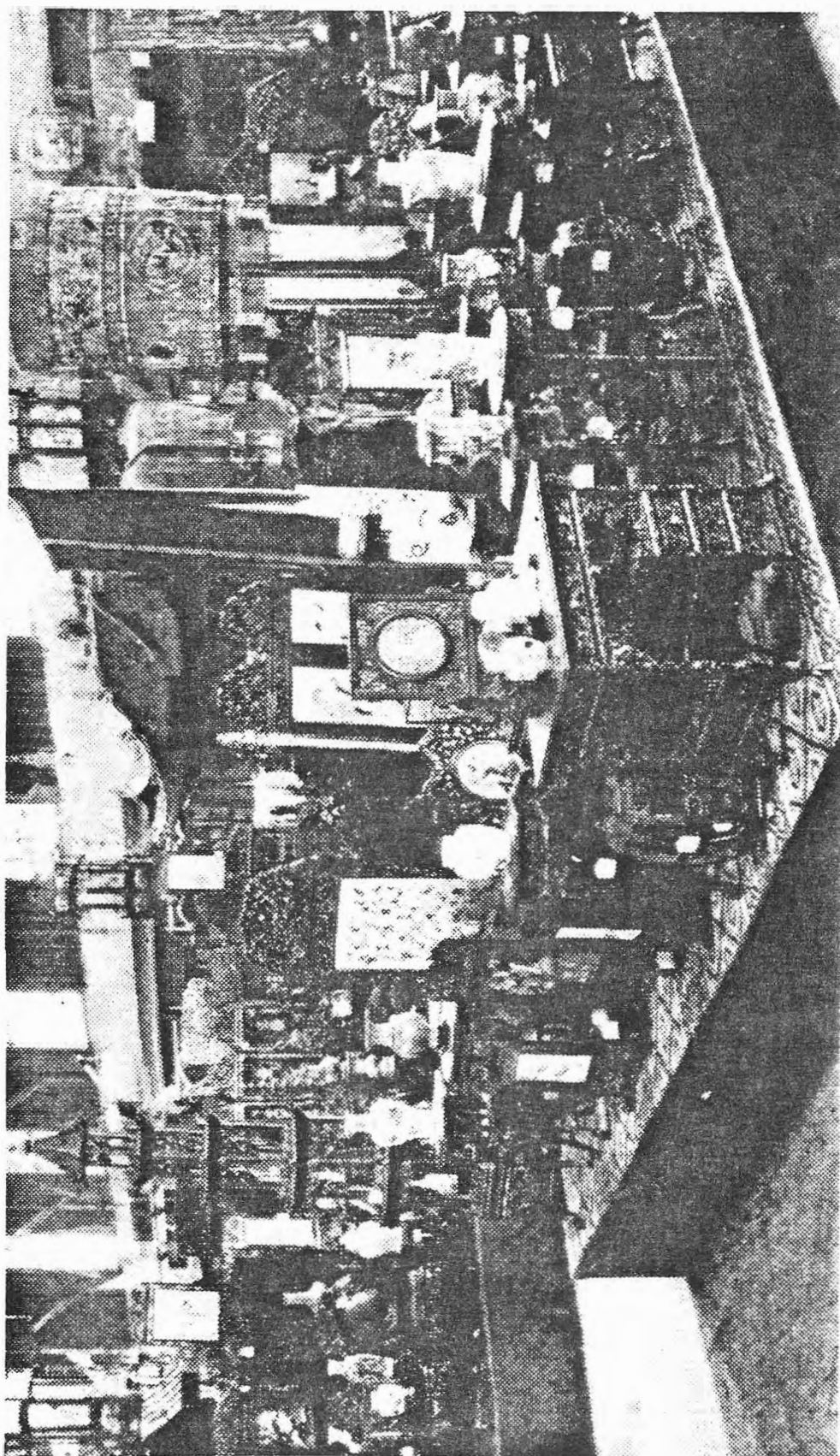


Figure 276. Display of carved blackwood furniture and screens in the Chinese Exhibition at the St. Louis World's Fair, 1904, from the History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Courtesy Missouri Historical Society.

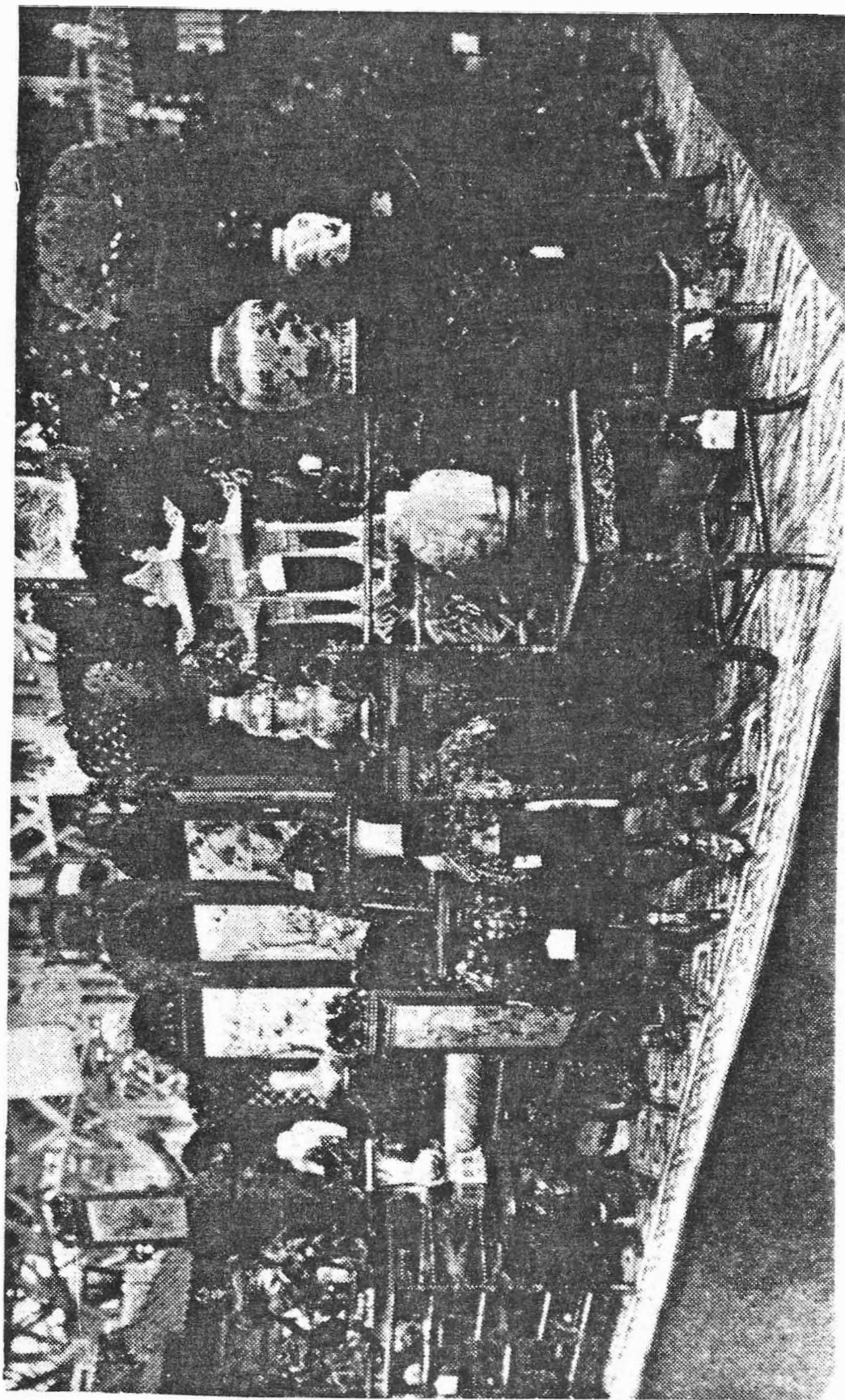


Figure 277. Exhibit of Chinese carved ebony furniture on display in the Liberal Arts Palace of the St. Louis World's Fair, 1904, from the History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Courtesy Missouri Historical Society.

Many of these pieces are very like the carved Chinese furniture in the Mallory-Neely House.¹¹⁶

Located in the music room is another Far Eastern piece, a large intricately carved Ceylonese table. (Figures 278 and 279) According to oral tradition it too was purchased at one of the World's Fairs, possibly from the display of India or Ceylon. Southern Indian furniture like this is often shown in photographs of late century American interiors. The ornateness of design apparently appealed to Victorian taste. A very similar table is illustrated in Ornamental Interiors, whose author recommended Indian furniture of this type for the following reasons.

Richness of detail, excellence of decorative form, and delivery of workmanship, render many specimens of Indian furniture valuable for the enrichment of ornamental interiors. The chief quality that distinguishes Indian from European work is that breadth of effect is obtained, not by plain surfaces, but by the equability of richness in the various parts. Thus though there is a lavish use of ornament, there are no strong contrasts to produce crudeness of effect.¹¹⁷

He further stated that their "dark and quiet" color rendered them very suitable for the display of colorful accessories.

Arabic furnishings are represented in the Mallory-Neely House by two octagonal-shaped tabouret tables. (Figure 280) Most Islamic countries were traditionally furnitureless cultures. This type of table was apparently one of the few furniture forms used. Called

¹¹⁶History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (St. Louis: Universal Exposition Publishing Company, 1905), 290-299.

¹¹⁷Smith, 198-199.



A



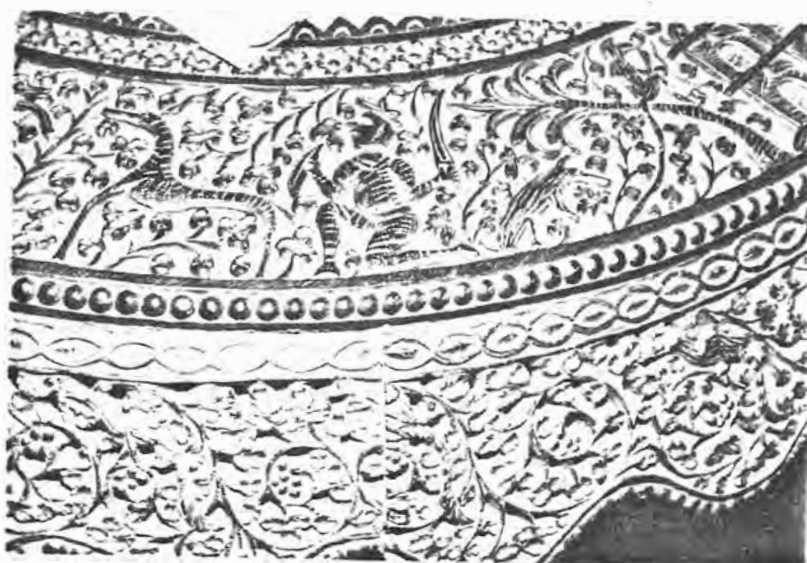
INDIAN CARVED FURNITURE.
(Procter & Co.)

B

Figure 278. Elaborately carved South Indian table located in the Mallory-Neely music room and similar table in illustration.

A. South Indian table.

B. Similar table illustrated in J. Mohr Smith, Ornamental Interiors, 1887.

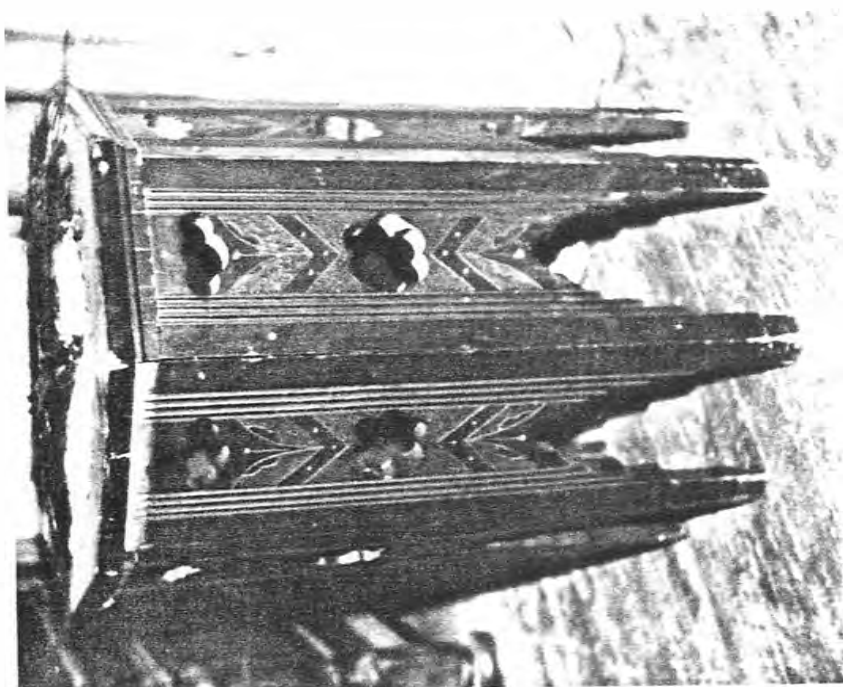


A

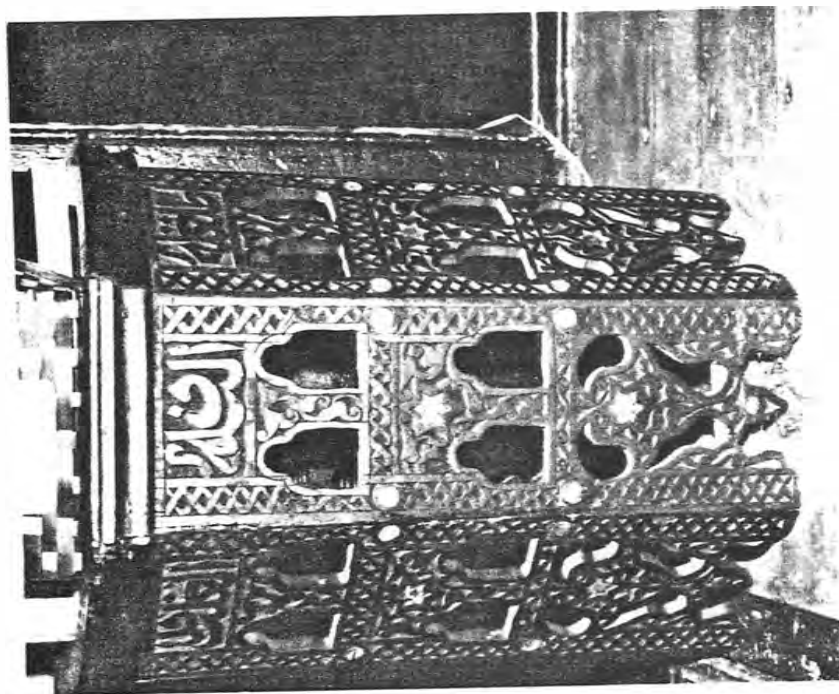


B

Figure 279. Details of the intricate carving of the Mallory-Neely South Indian table.
A. Table top.
B. Pedestal support.



B



A

Figure 280. Arab tabouret tables in the Mallory-Neely collection.

A. Table carved with Arabic inscriptions.

B. Table ornamented with incised decoration.

"kursy," they were produced in great numbers in metal and wood and ornamented with both carving and inlay. In Islamic lands they were used as tables by those sitting on carpet-covered floors.¹¹⁸ The Mallory-Neely examples are both carved with typical Islamic designs and calligraphy. The owners of the A. A. Vantine Company of New York which specialized in "products of the Orient" illustrated imported tables like this in their catalog, calling them "Turkish coffee tables." They recommended them for use in one's home because they were "ornamental and decorative."¹¹⁹ A photograph in the Neely Family Papers is labeled "James Columbus Neely, Jr., in Egypt." Perhaps he sent these tables back home as souvenirs.¹²⁰

Siegfried Giedion in Mechanization Takes Command discoursed at length on the "reign of the upholsterer" during the last century. He attributed the origins of this fad for comfort and upholstery to Near Eastern influence via Turkish overstuffed furniture such as the sofa, divan, and ottoman.¹²¹ The public apparently equated soft, overstuffed, upholstered furniture with the luxuriousness and opulence of the Orient. To meet the demand, American furniture

¹¹⁸Jehan S. Rajab, "Arab Furniture of the Nineteenth Century," Arts of Asia, 5, No. 1 (January-February 1985), 46.

¹¹⁹A. A. Vantine, Oriental Rugs and Carpets, 6.

¹²⁰[Photograph], n.d., Neely Family Papers. Mr. Faiez Alhashmi of Kuwait, who translated the inscriptions on the tables for the author says they are in an Egyptian dialect.

¹²¹Giedion, Mechanization Takes Command, 368-385.

manufacturers produced all types of upholstered chairs and sofas. Suites of these were often labeled "Moorish" or "Turkish." Single chairs were identified in trade catalogs as "Turkish Easy Chairs." (Figure 281) The owners of the Buffalo Upholstery Company used terms like "Cleopatra" and "Pasha" to entitle their furniture in order to implant the imagery of Oriental exoticism in the minds of their clients.¹²² A large "Moorish" suite of chairs and a sofa all without their original upholstery, survives in a variety of locations in the Mallory-Neely House. (Figure 282) One need only sit in one of these to realize how the Victorians, retreating at home from their fast-paced urban society, cherished comfort not provided by the more formal productions of earlier periods. They perhaps also enjoyed the escapist illusion of exotic places.

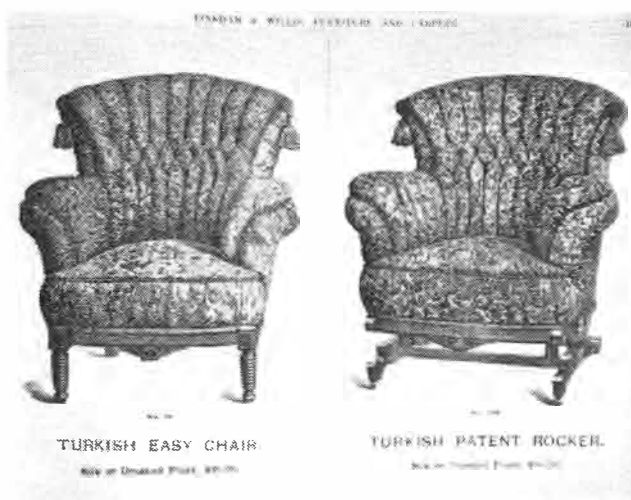
Antique reproductions: European. Americans, proud of their unique experiment in democracy, tended to be insular for most of the nineteenth century. This insularity was changed because of the late century emergence of the United States as an international power, the Spanish-American War, and two major World's Fairs featuring international exhibits. These events all helped to make Americans more cosmopolitan in their outlook.

The Aesthetic Movement's rediscovery of handicrafted objects and its love for the time mellowed patination of old things laid

¹²²New Goods for 1884 Made by the Buffalo Upholstery Company, 27.



A

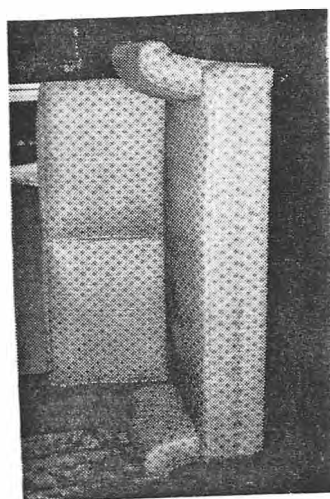
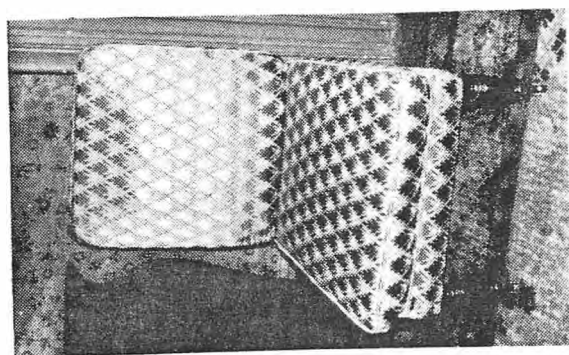
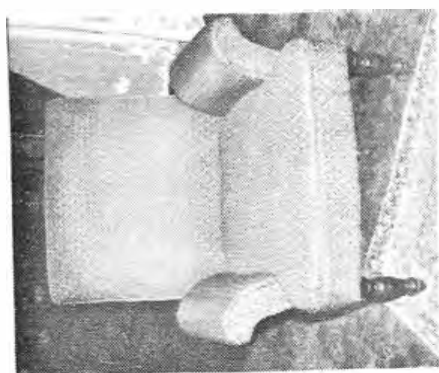


B



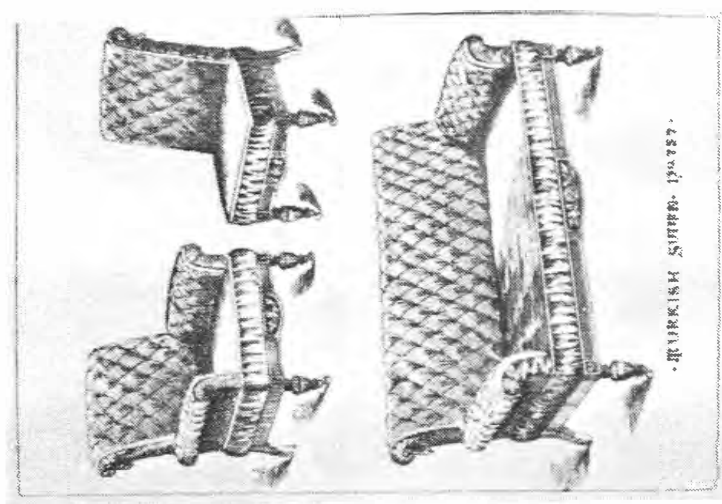
C

Figure 281. Turkish chairs.
 A. Overstuffed Turkish chair in the Mallory-Neely collection.
 B. Similar chairs were illustrated in the catalog of the Pinkham & Willis Company, 1889.
 C. Similar chair illustrated in the catalog of the John Wanamaker Department Store, 1887.
 Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.



A

Figure 282. Turkish suite in Mallory-Neely House and illustration from Paine's Furniture Manufacturing Company catalog (1883).
 A. Turkish suite now spread around the Mallory-Neely House.
 B. Similar suite from the catalog of Paine's Furniture Manufacturing Company. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.



B

the groundwork for an appreciation of "antiques."¹²³ Great wealth amassed by merchants, industrialists, and others, coupled with improvements in transportation, enabled them to travel widely. An interest in Europe and its aristocratic and cultural traditions was awakened.¹²⁴ The wealthiest families of America's Gilded Era, such as the Vanderbilts and Astors commissioned Parisian Ecole des Beaux Arts-trained architects to create for them copies of French Chateaux as well as Renaissance and Venetian Palaces which they then filled with treasures of European fine and decorative art. Other American elite who could not obtain or who could not afford the real thing brought back reproductions. This quest for European culture has often been interpreted as an attempt by these newly-rich families to create visually a symbolic aristocratic heritage which actually had no base. This interest in social class and hierarchy represented a major shift in traditional American egalitarian attitudes.

The photographs and accompanying text in Artistic Houses, Interior Views of a Number of the Most Beautiful and Celebrated Rooms in America (1883) best chronicles the newly-created "old world" appearance sought by what the author of the book called America's "aristocracy of wealth." Mrs. Bloomfield Moore's Philadelphia home is described as follows:

Certainly the abundance and costliness of the curious old chairs, chests, sideboards, tables, and cabinets,

¹²³Gordon F. Roe, Victorian Furniture (London: Phoenix House Limited, 1952), 118.

¹²⁴Green, "The Ironies of Style: Complexities and Contradictions in American Decorative Arts, 1850-1900," 29.

with the skillfully-chiseled designs that sometimes entirely cover their surfaces, are extremely remarkable features of this magnificent interior. Almost all of the pieces, richly toned by age, were bought by their owner in Europe, and imported expressly for the adornment of her home.¹²⁵

In describing Mr. C. H. Joy's house in Boston, mention is made of "the present fashion for antique furniture" and of the furnishings of his home which are a mix of family heirlooms and objects--such as baronial chests and French tapestries--that he had brought from France and England.¹²⁶ In fact, it was so richly packed with these objects that the author felt that the "things in Mr. Joy's house . . . would serve as excellent illustration for a book on the history of furniture."¹²⁷

The gilded rich created a fashion among Americans for antique furnishings and at the same time reproductions of these. It is known that antique reproductions were created in Europe from mid-century. Because of her mania for the Louis XVI Era and its furniture, Eugenie, Napoleon the Third's Empress, is often credited with starting the vogue for exact reproductions of French antique furnishings.¹²⁸ For the remainder of the century, Italian, Dutch, English and French cabinetmakers created masterful replicas of original period pieces.

¹²⁵Artistic Houses, 153.

¹²⁶Ibid., 25.

¹²⁷Ibid., 26.

¹²⁸The History of Furniture, 191.

In an article, "Antiques Made to Order," in the Upholstering and Decorating Record, the author states that in major European cities there are many shops where "antiques" are manufactured so skillfully and "with such marvelous exactness as to deceive any ordinary collector."¹²⁹ He further says that there "is hardly any characteristic of a real antique that the dealer cannot produce to order."¹³⁰

A major stimulus for the use of authentic antique or reproduction pieces in interior decoration was the 1897 publication of The Decoration of Houses by Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman, Jr.¹³¹ In this influential work they introduced to America a new concept of interior design which has been labeled "Scientific Eclecticism."¹³² In lieu of the unrestrained and imaginative use of historic sources that was characteristic of the various Victorian architectural and furniture revival styles, Wharton and Codman advocated a more controlled scientific approach to design. Central to this was the methodic classification of architectural and decorative art styles and periods. Original antique pieces or archeologically correct copies were recommended for use. Earlier

¹²⁹"Antiques Made to Order," The Upholstery and Decorating Record (New York: April 1901), 1, Special Collections, Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Wharton and Codman.

¹³²Richard Guy Wilson, "The Decoration of Houses and Scientific Eclecticism," Victorian Furniture, ed. Kenneth Ames (Philadelphia: Victorian Society in America, 1982), 195-204.

Victorian free form furniture adaptations were no longer considered "good taste."

The more spectacular visually-dominating pieces of furniture in the Mallory-Neely entrance hall and long-parlor most certainly reflect this new attitude towards antiques. They are all European period reproductions. Though two of these are known to be wedding presents to the young Mallory couple, they were purchased by members of the Neely and Mallory families while traveling abroad and from American companies that specialized in the sale of European antiques and reproductions.

One of the few written documents found to date having to do with the furnishings of the Mallory-Neely House provides corroborative evidence. This is a bill of lading dated 22 May 1896 from the International Navigation Company--Antwerp to New York--Red Star Line, for a small bouille writing desk purchased by a member of the family in Europe that was to be sent to the United States.¹³³ (Figure 283)

Further evidence is provided by a Louis XV style bouille center table located in the parlor. It has a label underneath which reads in part, "H. B. Herts & Sons, Antique Furniture and Reproductions, Importers of English, French, Dutch and Italian Furniture." (Figure 284) The author of New York's Great Industries, Merchants and Manufacturers stated that this business since its foundation in 1846 had "always commanded an influential and substantial

¹³³Neely Family Papers [bill of lading], 22 May 1896. Inherited by a family member, this piece is no longer part of the Mallory-Neely collection.

[illegible]

Figure 283. An 1896 shipping invoice for a small boulle writing desk no longer in the Mallory-Neely collection.
Courtesy Barton Lee Mallory, Jr.



A



B

Figure 284. Boulle center table located in the Mallory-Neely parlor and the label from its underside.
A. H. B. Herts & Sons' label.
B. Boulle center table.

patronage, derived from the most eminent and wealthy classes of America."¹³⁴ Herts' business, its history, and reputation were described:

To a stranger in New York the magnificent salesrooms, where antiques and objects of art are exposed to view, are matters of wonder and delight. In this section of the city numbers of art rooms, as they might aptly be termed, are devoted to the exposition of wares of foreign manufacture, and the attractiveness of the merchandise, and its artistic arrangement, bespeak the taste and systematic methods of the proprietors. The finest and undoubtedly one of the most expensive establishments in this line of trade in the United States is that of Messrs. H. B. Herts & Sons.¹³⁵

The author says that the Herts have "searched every land to obtain the thousands of magnificent articles, which eventually will adorn palatial buildings and humble cottages."¹³⁶ (Figure 285) It is further stated that the firm has its sources of supply in London, Amsterdam, Berlin, Vienna, Limoges and other European cities where from their branch offices agents "are continually purchasing antiques and objects of art," many of which were "once owned by the princes and nobles of Europe."¹³⁷

Some of the more impressive reproduction "antiques" in the Mallory-Neely collection include a larger marble-top French commode,

¹³⁴"H. B. Herts & Sons," New York's Great Industries, Merchants and Manufacturers (New York: Historical Publishing Company, 1884), 276, Special Collections, New York Historical Society, New York.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, 276.

¹³⁶*Ibid.*

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, 277.



A



B

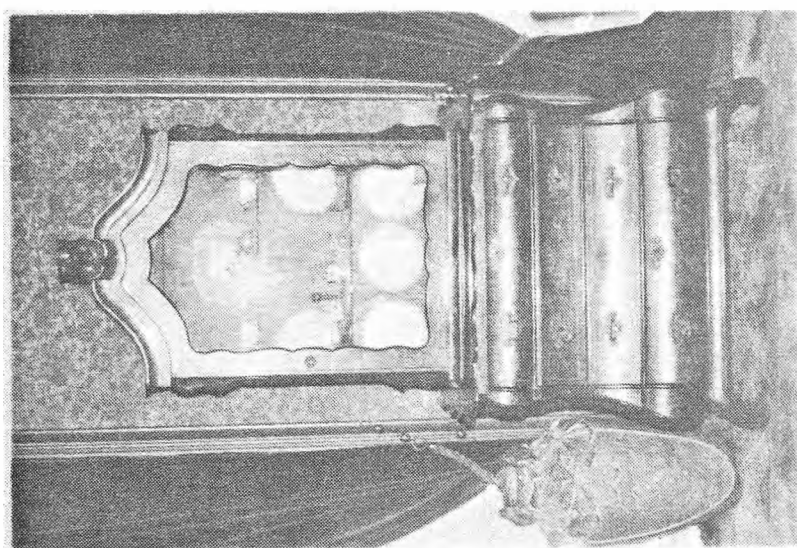
Figure 285. Mallory-Neely bouille table and a rendering of a similar one from a French furniture catalog,
 A. Illustration from Le Magasin De Meubles, c. 1870. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.
 B. Mallory-Neely bouille center table.

a Dutch bombé inlaid cabinet, a Dutch or Italian inlaid Empire sofa, a Jacobean style tooled leather suite including a settee and two chairs, a large seventeenth century style Dutch cabinet inscribed in the pediment "1602," and an Austrian gilt table with porcelain plaque inlays. (Figures 286, 287, 288, 289, and 290) Study of auction catalogs and visits to historic house museum collections and antique shops reveal that none of these are one-of-a-kind items; as a matter of fact, very similar pieces were abundantly imported into late nineteenth century America.¹³⁸

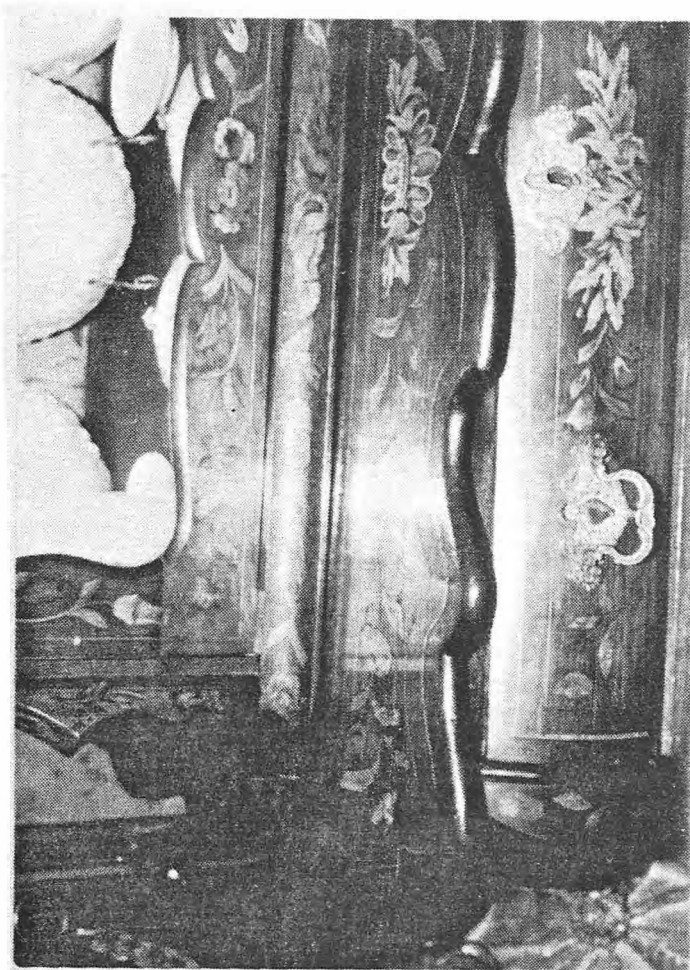
By the end of the century America's furniture manufacturers had also gotten into the making of antique reproductions and adaptations, which from that time to the present has monopolized the industry's output. The Mallory-Neely collection contains several of these early factory-made adaptations of European antiques. A vitrine in the music room and a table in the parlor are similar in style to Louis XV furniture but are not exact copies. They were modern adaptations. Both are completely painted with gilt. The editor of The Decorator and Furnisher stated that in current interior design practice "it is usual to add to the furniture of the room one or two pieces in gilt wood which serves as an agreeable contrast."¹³⁹

¹³⁸See Christopher Payne, Nineteenth Century European Furniture (Woodbridge, Suffolk, England: Antique Collectors' Club, 1981).

¹³⁹The Decorator and Furnisher, 19, No. 2 (November 1891), 48, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.



A



B

Figure 286. Nineteenth century reproduction of an eighteenth century Dutch marquetry cabinet. It is located at one end of the Mallory-Neely parlor.

A. Cabinet.

B. Detail of marquetry decoration.

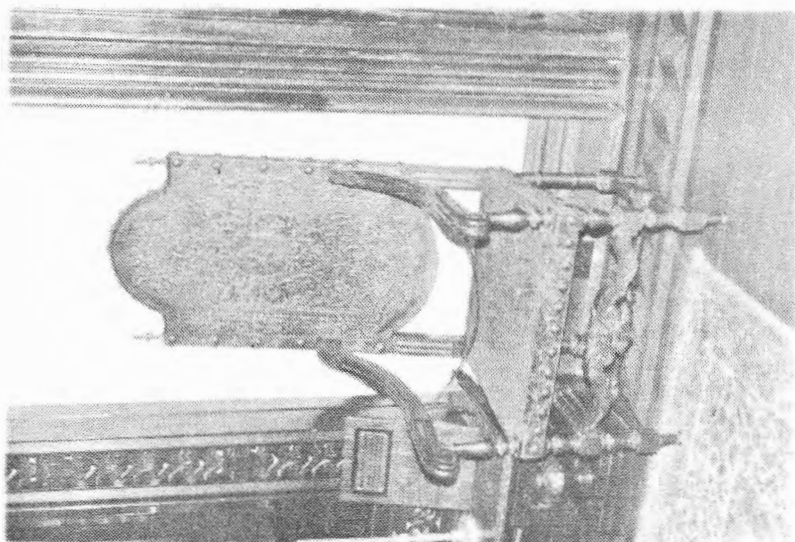


A

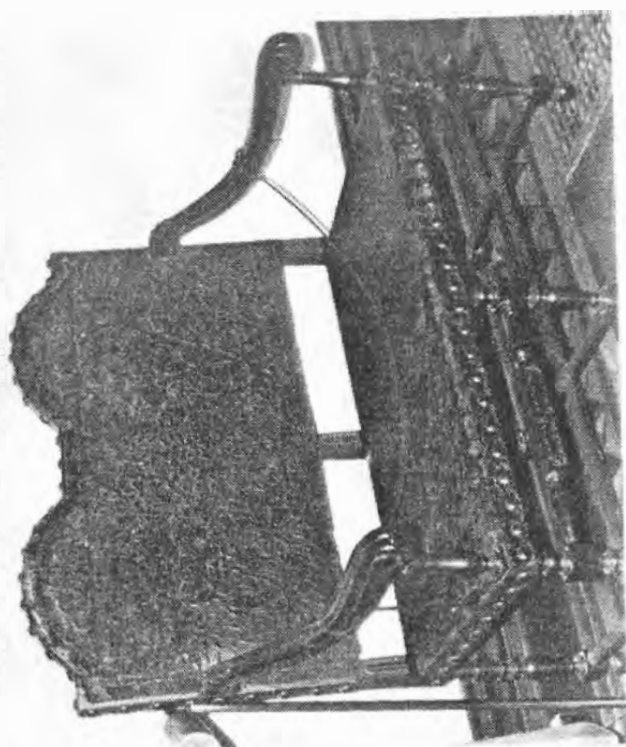


B

Figure 287. This late nineteenth century reproduction of an early nineteenth century Empire sofa is located in the Mallory-Neely entrance hall. It is decorated with complex floral marquetry.
A. Reproduction of Empire sofa.
B. Close-up of floral marquetry.



B

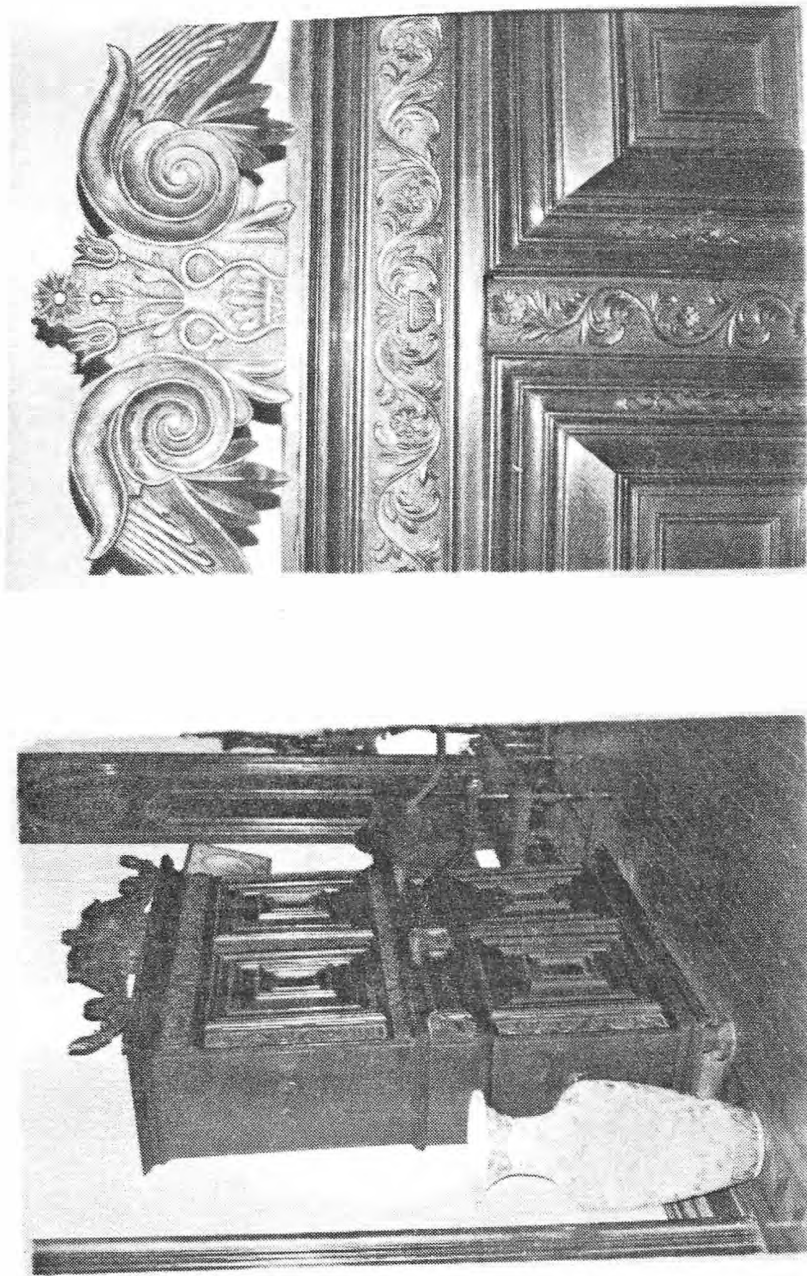


A

Figure 288. Shown in the Mallory-Neely entrance hall are two pieces from a nineteenth century suite of furniture which replicates seventeenth century originals. They are upholstered in tooled leather.

A. Settee.

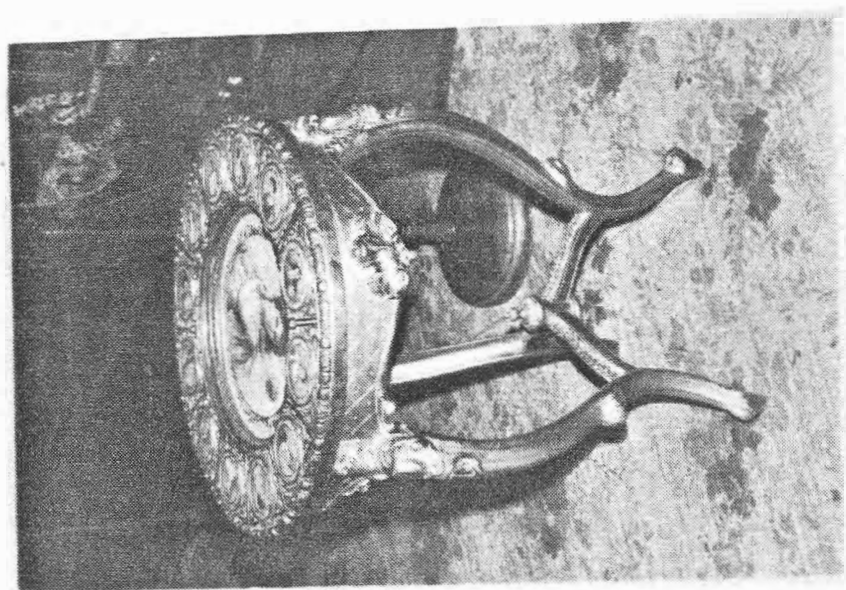
B. Arm chair.



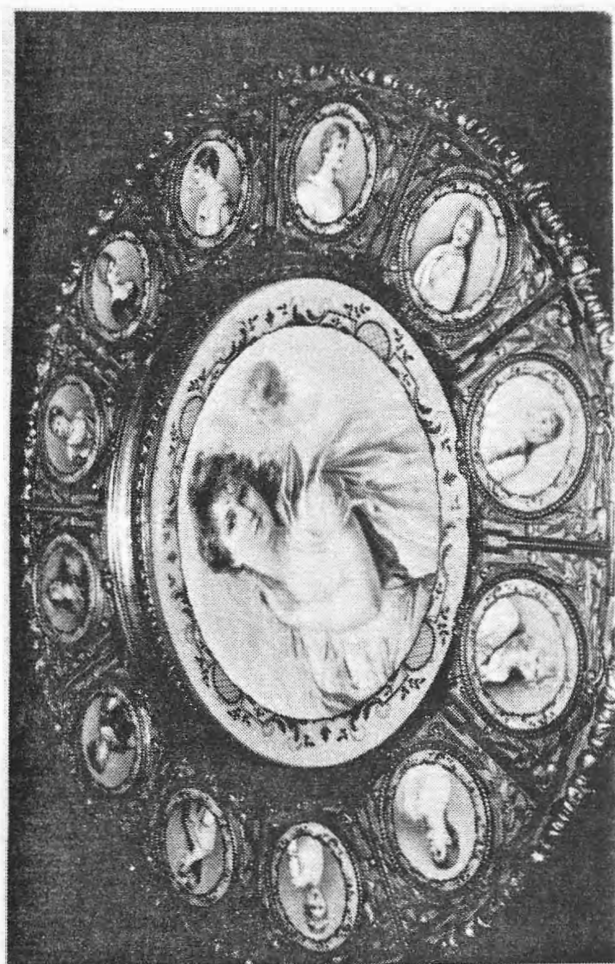
A

B

Figure 289. Nineteenth century reproduction of a seventeenth century cabinet located in the Mallory-Neely entrance hall.
 A. Cabinet in entrance hall.
 B. The date 1603 is carved at the bottom of a vase of flowers centering the crestring device.



A



B

Figure 290. Early twentieth century neo-rococo table (inscribed on the underside--Austria) is inset with hand painted porcelain plaques.

A. Neo-rococo table.

B. Hand painted porcelain plaque insets.

To suggest the traditional bronze mounts on antique French furniture, stamped metal ornament has been used. The lower front surface of the vitrine is decorated with a copy of the 1888 painting, "In Love," by the English artist Marcus Stone whose work "was among the most widely known in the latter part of the century."¹⁴⁰ (Figure 291)

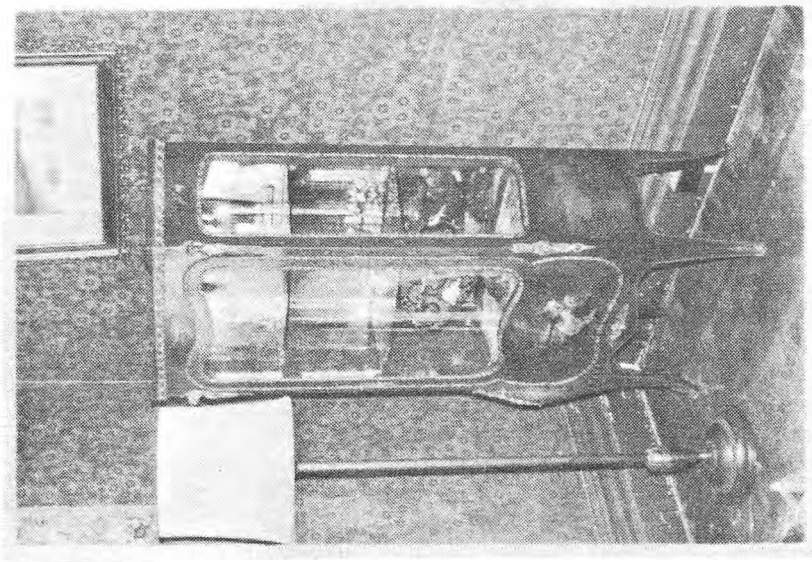
Not of the highest quality of workmanship, these French inspired pieces were mass produced especially in Grand Rapids at the turn of the century. (Figure 292) The Oriel Cabinet Company of that city specialized in this type work, billing themselves "Manufacturers of Fancy Furniture."¹⁴¹ In their advertisements they stated that they were the producers of "Vernis Martin goods and gold goods," and that parlor cabinets were a specialty. (Figure 293)

Antique reproduction: American. American antiques as well as those of European origin were subject to reproduction. The exposition held in Philadelphia in 1876 to celebrate the centennial of American independence is credited with awakening national interest in the country's colonial past.¹⁴² This was manifested in many ways

¹⁴⁰Great Victorian Pictures [exhibition catalog] (London: Royal Academy of Arts and Arts Council of Great Britain, 1978), 77-78.

¹⁴¹The Grand Rapids Furniture Record-Christmas Number (December 1900), n.p. [advertisement], Special Collections, Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids.

¹⁴²Ulysses G. Dietz, "Century of Revivals: Nineteenth Century Furniture in the Newark Museum," Newark Museum Quarterly, 31, Nos. 2-3 (Spring-Summer 1980), 1044.



A

Figure 291. Vernis Martin vitrine decorated with a copy of the painting "In Love."

A. The vitrine in the Mallory-Neely music room.

B. Detail showing the painting.



B

THE GRAND RAPIDS FURNITURE RECORD

ORIEL CABINET COMPANY,

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

MANUFACTURERS OF **Fancy Furniture** Vernis Martin Goods, Gold Goods, Tables, Desks, Pedestals, Music and Parlor Cabinets

Standing Hall Racks
Hanging Hall Racks—Settees
to match
China Closets
Buffets
Men's Chiffoniers
Shaving Stands
Ladies' Toilet Dressers
Cheval Glasses
Bookcases
Dining Room Suites—
complete
Parlor Cabinets plain
and Carved
Mahogany Music Cabinets
all Kinds
Piano Stools
Piano Benches
Writing Desks, Pedestals
Tea Tables, Sewing, Parlor
Library and Card Tables
Bed Room Suites

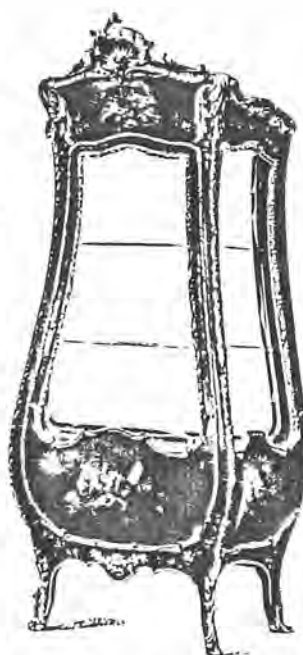


Figure 292. A 1900 Oriel Cabinet Company advertisement for their Vernis Martin goods. Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.



The advertisement is enclosed in a rectangular border. At the top is a large, ornate sofa with a curved back and decorative carvings on the legs. Below the sofa, the name "JOHN BARNUTZ" is printed in a large, bold, serif font. Underneath the name, the text "MANUFACTURER OF" is printed in a smaller font. To the left of the central text is a high-backed chair with a decorative splat and curved legs. To the right is another high-backed chair, similar in style but with a different splat design. Below these two chairs is a round table with a thick top and a base with four curved legs. The central text between the chairs reads "Fine Furniture" in a large, bold, serif font, followed by "260-268 GOLD STREET", "BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN", and "NEW YORK CITY". At the bottom of the central text block, a small line of text reads: "The Park Avenue, Vanderbilt Avenue and Ninth Avenue Trolleys take you within one half block of the Factory and Warerooms from the New York End of Bridge in TEN Minutes."

JOHN BARNUTZ

MANUFACTURER OF

Fine Furniture

260-268 GOLD STREET
BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN
NEW YORK CITY

The Park Avenue, Vanderbilt Avenue and Ninth Avenue Trolleys take you within one half block of the Factory and Warerooms from the New York End of Bridge in TEN Minutes.

Figure 293. An early twentieth century trade journal advertisement shows reproductions of both Empire and Chippendale pieces. Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.

such as the founding of patriotic organizations and historical societies, the preservation of historic sites and houses, the patriotic veneration of historic relics and of great Colonial personalities, and a national interest in genealogical research.

The visual arts also responded to this popular surge of nationalism. American architects, furniture manufacturers, and others turned to Colonial sources for inspiration in order to create styles that have collectively come to be called the Colonial Revival.¹⁴³ (Figures 293) These historically derivative American styles were popular from the 1890s through the 1920s and the interest in them has never really abated.

As noted, Daisy Neely and her sister Pearl, following this national interest, pursued their family genealogy back into Colonial times in North and South Carolina. Daisy maintained a lifelong interest in the Daughters of the American Revolution and eventually her home was deeded to that patriotic group. In her bedroom still hang two reverse glass paintings of George and Martha Washington which symbolize this interest and personify the Colonial Revival mania. (Figure 294)

During the early decades of this century many elite Memphians moved to newly-developed suburban areas and constructed Colonial Revival homes. The young Mallory couple continued to live in her family's Victorian home, but Mrs. Mallory apparently purchased a

¹⁴³The Colonial Revival in America, 27.



Figure 294. Reverse glass paintings of George and Martha Washington hang in the Mallory-Neely master bedroom.

lot of the highly fashionable Colonial Revival furniture (or more correctly Empire Revival) probably to replace pieces inherited and removed by her brothers and sister.¹⁴⁴ Most of these were made during the early decades of this century. Most are close copies of antique originals while others are loose adaptations.

The Colonial Revival is as confusing as most of the other Victorian revival styles. In an article interviewing many of the older designers who had worked with the Grand Rapids furniture manufacturers, where much of this Colonial-type furniture was produced, the designers stated that late in the nineteenth century historic American antiques began to be used by them for design sources. They also revealed that at the time there was total confusion about the correct stylistic classification of these and that Hepplewhite, Sheraton, Chippendale, Queen Anne, Empire were collectively labeled as "Colonial" and marketed as "heirlooms of tomorrow."¹⁴⁵ The post-revolutionary Empire style, which originally was not a Colonial style, actually dominated the American "Colonial" reproduction trade! (Figure 295) Realizing that the early Colonial Revival is as eclectic as earlier Victorian revivals, some have suggested calling it "Free Style Colonial."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴See Donald L. Fennimore, "Fine Points of Furniture, American Empire: Late, Later, Latest," Victorian Furniture, ed. Kenneth Ames (Philadelphia: The Victorian Society in America, 1982), 45-53.

¹⁴⁵"Factory Designers of Grand Rapids," The Furniture World, Grand Rapids-Special, 28, No. 717 (24 December 1908), 23-47, Special Collections, Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids.

¹⁴⁶Ulysses Dietz, "Free Style Colonial: Colonial Revival Furniture, 1876-1926," Paper presented at the McFaddin-Ward House Museum Conference: "American Homes in Transition, 1890-1930," Beaumont, Texas, 30 October 1987.

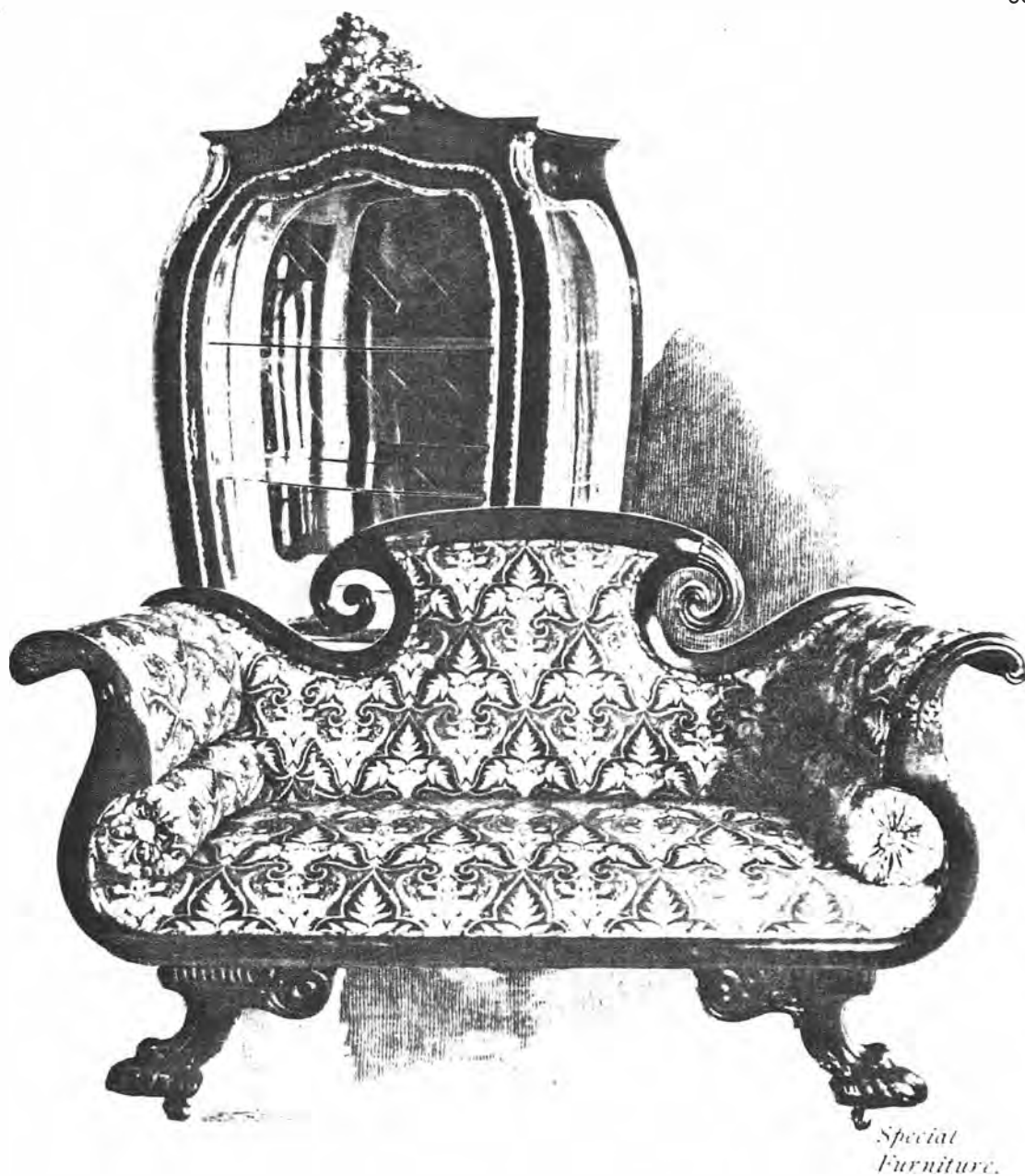


Figure 295. Empire Revival sofa. Illustration from the Mandel Brother's Department Store, Department of Interior Design's 1900 home decorating guide in the section describing the latest in fashionable home furnishings. Courtesy Chicago Historical Society.

Mallory-Neely Empire Revival pieces include two sofas, several console card tables, two stools, a rocking chair, pier mirror, and a desk-bookcase. These are used throughout the house. An Empire Revival sofa presently centered in front of the parlor bay is perhaps the most representative piece of this style. (Figures 295 and 296) Grand Rapids trade literature and catalogs of the period are replete with pictures of very similar sofas. For example, an advertisement for the Century Furniture Company of that city featured a large photograph of one. (Figure 297) The writer of the accompanying description stated that their company produced:

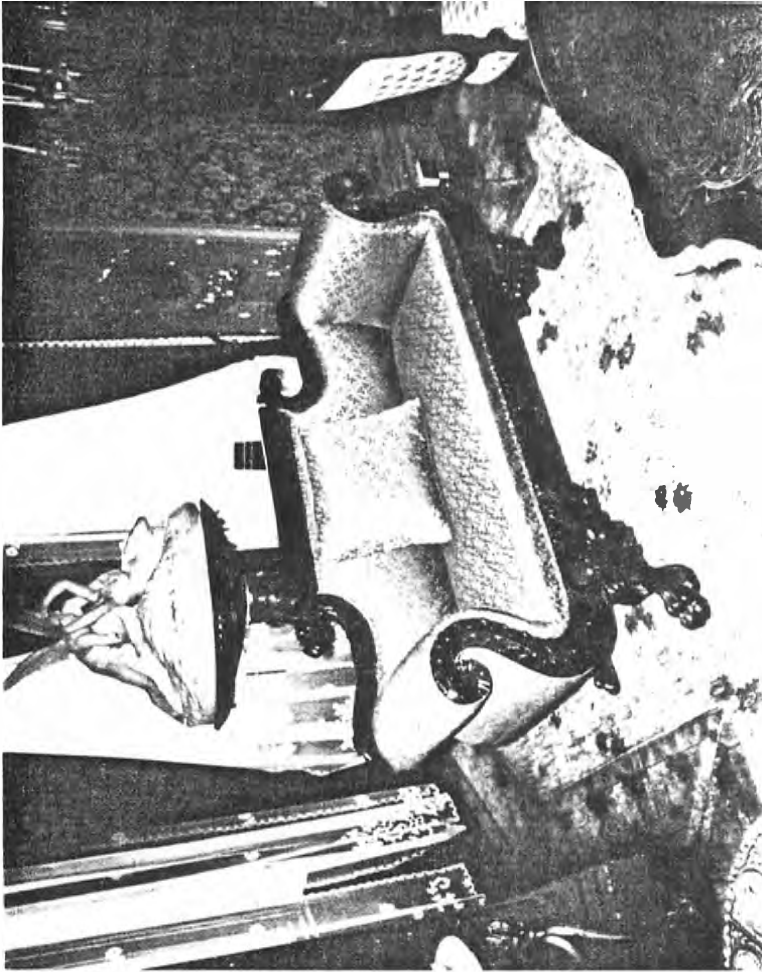
Many reproductions from imported models and pieces made by the colonial carpenters, selected from the finest and most exclusive collections of antiques in the country. We carefully reproduce from the original pieces, not from pictures, and faithfully preserve the quaint lines and proportions so much sought after and admired.¹⁴⁷

These revival Empire and other style pieces of furniture in the Mallory-Neely House were complemented with accessories and textiles often created in the manner of a similar historic mode.

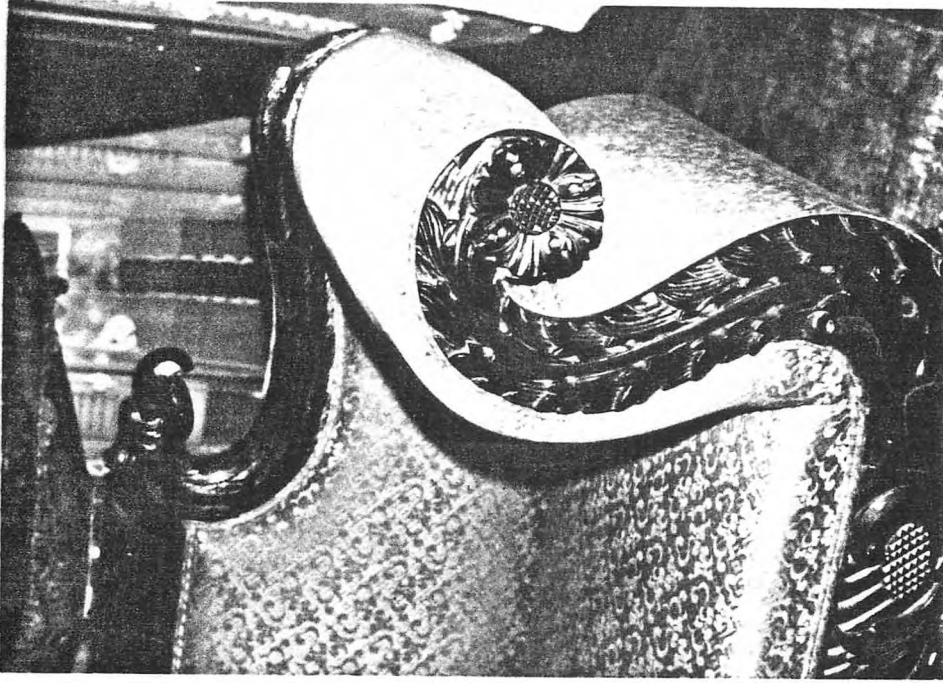
Accessories

Accessorization of an interior is often described today, in popular interior design literature as the finishing touch or the "icing" added to an interior. Accessories are usually described as decorative objects made of wood, glass, ceramic, metal, and other

¹⁴⁷The Furniture World, *Grand Rapids Special*, 28, No. 717 (December 1908), n.p. [advertisement], Special Collections, Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids.



A



B

Figure 296. Empire Revival sofa positioned in front of the bay window in the Mallory-Neely parlor.

A. Empire Revival sofa.

B. Detail of carving.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Century Furniture Co.

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

Our product as exhibited at our factory salesrooms, 153 and 159 Canal St., Grand Rapids, in January, 1909, will be more interesting than ever before. The additions to our line will include *original compositions*, pure in design and many *reproductions* from imported models and pieces made by the Colonial carpenters, selected from the *finest and most exclusive collections of antiques in the country*.

We carefully reproduce from the *original pieces*, not from pictures, and faithfully preserve the *quaint lines and proportions* so much sought after and admired. Our descriptions and histories are *authentic*, educational and add materially to the *selling value*.

Furniture Dealers visiting the market are cordially invited to call at our factory, and inspect our product.

ODD CHAIRS, ROCKERS, DAVENPORTS,
SOFAS, COUCHES, FIRE-SIDE CHAIRS,
RECEPTION CHAIRS, DINING CHAIRS,
CHAMBER CHAIRS, ENGLISH UPHOLSTERED
CHAIRS AND SOFAS.

MAHOGANY AND GOLD LEAF—IMPORTERS OF ENGLISH
MOROCCO LEATHER

REPRESENTATIVES:

L. D. BERRY
A. JENNINGS

ROBERT E. BAXTER

W. T. WELCH
A. T. KINGSBURY

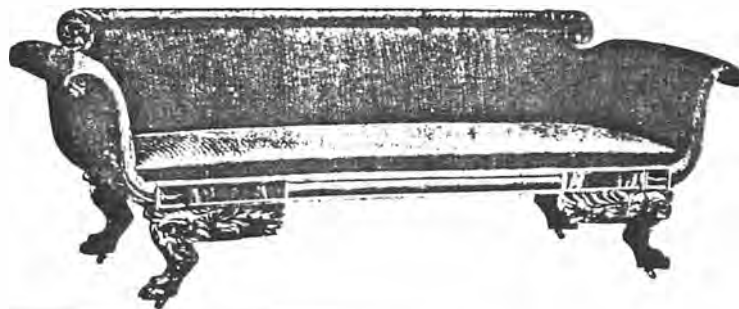


Figure 297. Illustrated with an Empire Revival sofa this 1909 advertisement focuses on the manufacture of period reproduction furniture. Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.

materials and include mirrors, lamps, floral arrangements, paintings, prints, and sculptures.

Accessories or bric-a-brac were an especially important part of the Victorian interior. Object-cluttered interiors today form part of the popular mental image of the era. Styles of accessories and the way an interior is accessorized are influenced by current fashion. During the nineteenth century several changes in attitude about accessorization occurred.

"Too much is not enough" aptly describes the love of excessive clutter during the High Victorian period. Many members of the middle and lower classes continued, right up until the end of the century and beyond, to fill their homes with collectables, handmade crafts, needlework, and sentimental mementoes, all synonymous today with "Victoriana."¹⁴⁸ The Mallory-Neely House was surely at one time filled like most American Victorian homes with the typical decorative clutter. Only a few higher quality accessories from that time survive in the House today. These include a needlework firescreen and stool, portraits, a large Rococo Revival style overmantel mirror, and three Argand lamps. The latter are labeled with the name J & L Cox of New York, a firm that specialized in the sale of imported candelabra

¹⁴⁸See, for example, Chapters 9, 10 and 13, Frances Lichten, Decorative Art of Victoria's Era (New York: Bonanza Books, 1950), Chapters 9, 10 and 13.

and chandeliers.¹⁴⁹ (Figure 298) They are excellent examples of nineteenth century light sources.¹⁵⁰

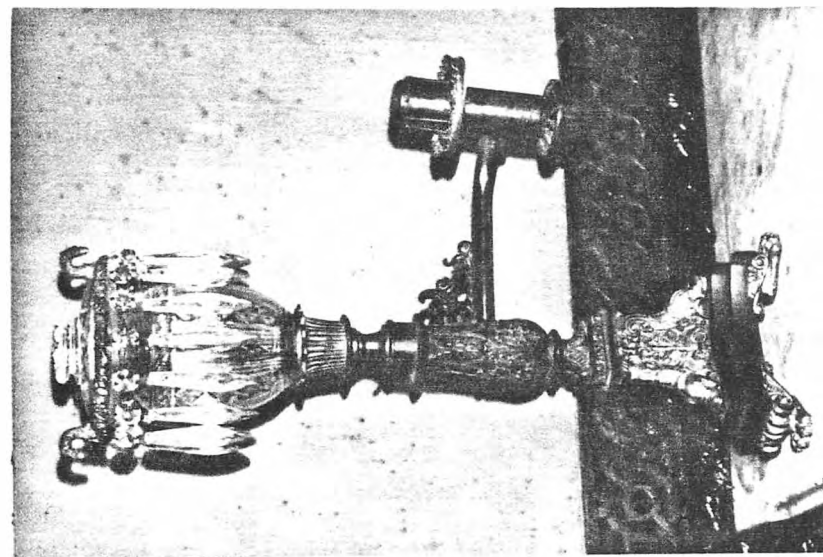
An ornate mirror hangs above the large French commode in the parlor. It is typical of those found in homes of the period. Its elaborate sculpted form and all-over gilding make it a prime example of the mid-century Rococo Revival.¹⁵¹ (Figure 299) This was originally an overmantel mirror perhaps moved by the Neelys when the two tall etagere mantels were installed in this room. Most Memphis furniture dealers commonly listed mirrors as part of their stock merchandise in newspaper advertisements.

The design-reformers' stand against High Victorian taste, including clutter, began what was a late-century "cleanup" of the Victorian interior. Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman in the Decoration of Houses devoted an entire chapter to the problem of bric-a-brac in which they called for the removal of the overcrowded accumulation of knick-knacks that had been in fashion. The authors, using the motto "the superior excellence of simplicity," stated that "decorators know how much simplicity and dignity of a good room are diminished

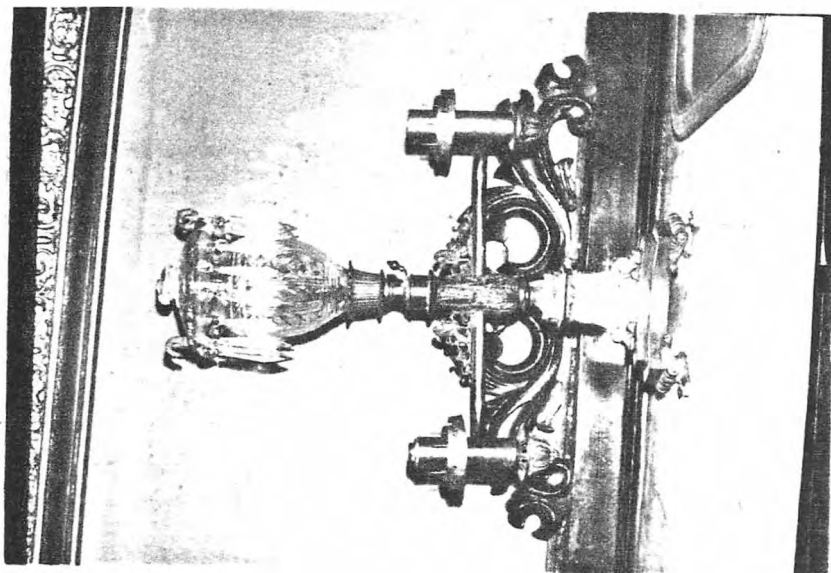
¹⁴⁹The Successful Business Houses of New York (New York: A. J. Clark Company, 1872), 32-33, Special Collections, New York Historical Society, New York.

¹⁵⁰See Robert Bishop and Patricia Koblentz, The World of Antiques, Art, and Architecture in Victorian America (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1979), 107.

¹⁵¹See Robert C. Smith, "Architecture and Sculpture in Nineteenth Century Mirror Frames," The Magazine Antiques, 109, No. 2 (February 1976), 352 and 354.

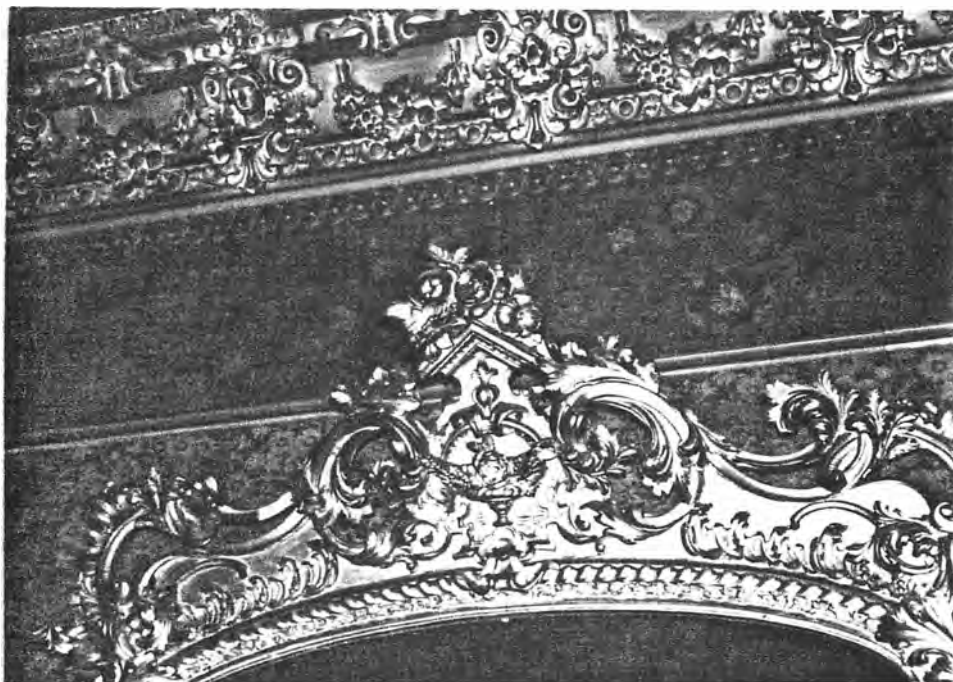


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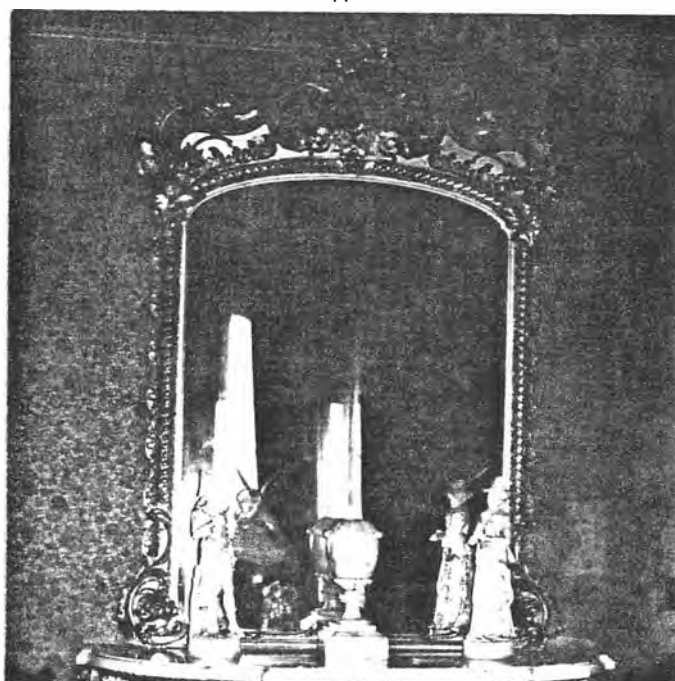


B

Figure 298. Argand lamps in the Mallory-Neely collection.
A. One of two single branch Argands.
B. Double branch Argand.



A



B

Figure 299. Elaborate gilded Rococo overmantel mirror.
A. Detail of carved cresting.
B. Overmantel mirror hangs above a marble top commode
in the Mallory-Neely parlor.

by crowding it with useless trifles."¹⁵² Discoursing at length on the qualitative difference between knick-knacks and objets d'art, they argued that a few well-chosen works of art were far superior and did greater justice to the overall decorative scheme and gave a room "its crowning touch of distinction."¹⁵³

By late century the Aesthetic Movement's belief in the spiritually uplifting power of art and their emphasis, therefore, on the importance of artful surroundings and the use of art in the home had taken root in the United States. Serving as a visual document of the time, Artistic Houses reflects by its name and contents the interest among Americans in creating an artful surrounding.

The author states that:

when an American gentleman introduces into his home the forms and colors that constitute the charm of art-treasures in the museums of the Old World, he walks on sure ground and allies himself with the elevating and reforming instrumentalities of the age.¹⁵⁴

Throughout Artistic Houses are detailed listings and descriptions of the many objets d'art that these leading families had accumulated. As cultural leaders and arbiters of taste, they would serve as examples for all other Americans to follow according to their means. In this book each essay-like description of a home is filled with references to original and reproduction paintings,

¹⁵²Wharton and Codman, 185.

¹⁵³Ibid., 187.

¹⁵⁴Artistic Houses, 32.

sculpture, and artistic accessories. In touring the mansion of Mr. Bradley Martin, for example, the author states that curiosities of "bric-a-brac," "bijouterie," and "vertu" abound. A partial listing of these follows:

The antique gold sconces came from an ancient French palace. The rare old English sugar bowl and the extremely light Worcester vase; the Lerolle clock on the mantel; the Italian candlesticks of solid silver; the antique toilet watch in a case of enameled silver; the mother-of-pearl fan, painted in watercolors by Depeine to represent huntsmen, horses, and dogs at a meet at Fontainebleau; the portraits of ivory of his two children, by an East Indian artist; the large Worcester vases on the piano; the Louis Phillippe clock.¹⁵⁵

Unlike the furniture, many of the late century accessories that originally adorned the Mallory-Neely House have been disseminated. An interesting and representative assortment, though, remains in place. These coupled with information from probate documents and photographs record what the accessorization of the house was like at the turn of the century and in the early decades of the present one. At that time it was reflective of late century practice as shown in Artistic Houses and recommended in The Decoration of Houses, that being an accumulation of beautiful art objects, kept to a minimum, and tastefully displayed.

Most of the accessories that survive in the house were probably purchased late in the nineteenth century or early twentieth century by the Neelys and Mallorys as they traveled in America or abroad. Others may have been purchased locally. Menken's, Lowenstein's and

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 5.

other Memphis stores stocked a variety of accessories which they frequently advertised in the city papers. The writer in an 1884 Menken's advertisement, for instance, stated, "We are now prepared to furnish residences with the following useful and ornamental articles at extraordinary low prices: statuary and vases, ceramics, and bric-a-brac."¹⁵⁶ In another of their advertisements it was stated that they carried clocks, vases, and porcelain made by Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and other Royal potteries of Europe.¹⁵⁷

An example of a Memphian buying accessory items elsewhere exists in the Henry Montgomery Papers. These show that Montgomery purchased both paintings and sculpture for his new Memphis home from New York firms. Letters, invoices, and receipts disclose that Thomas Mathews, who billed himself as auctioneer, commission merchant and appraiser, provided Montgomery in 1885 with two gold-framed copies, in oil of Rubens' paintings, one gold-framed marine view, and several others. Receipts from the Louisville and Nashville Railroad reveal that these and another consignment in 1892 from the same firm were delivered to Montgomery. Augusta Tabor of New York sold Montgomery several statues. The damaged base for one of these statues entitled "Morgan and the Lamb" was subject of much correspondence between the two.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 30 September 1884, 1.

¹⁵⁷Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 6 November 1887, 1.

¹⁵⁸Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 110.

The Neelys and Mallorys purchased an eclectic mix of European and Oriental objects to accessorize their home including clocks, silver, porcelain, cloisonné, mirrors, armor, lamps, statuary, prints, and paintings. Mrs. Mallory's will itemizes costly porcelains, glassware, and silver no longer in the house. Included are a green and gold Vienna bowl, a gold and white ornamental Italian blue vase, and a blue Bohemian glass bowl as well as other items labeled Limoges, Wedgwood, and Sheffield.¹⁵⁹ Some ceramic accessories do remain in the house and are also representative of the international scope of late nineteenth century objets d'art. These include two tall French-bisque figurines of a lady and a gentleman, details of their elaborate period costumes picked out in gold; an oversized blue and white Chinese porcelain vase; a pottery vase in the Islamic style covered with characteristic blue and white interlace patterns; and two framed porcelain plates hand painted with Dutch scenes. (Figures 300 and 301)

While a few were removed, most of the oil paintings, watercolors, and prints remain. Though there are a variety of portraits, most are typical romantic landscapes favored by the Victorians. Most are of European origin. Several are Dutch landscapes (one signed Hudson); another is a view of Venice; yet another a pastoral scene with sheep. (Figure 302) This is signed by George Reike (1817-1898), a Dutch artist who specialized in oil and watercolor landscapes.¹⁶⁰ (Figure 303) An oil painting in the hall outside the master bedroom

¹⁵⁹Last Will and Testament, Mrs. B. L. Mallory, Jr., 6.

¹⁶⁰Thieme-Becker Kunsler Lexicon, 28, 315.



A

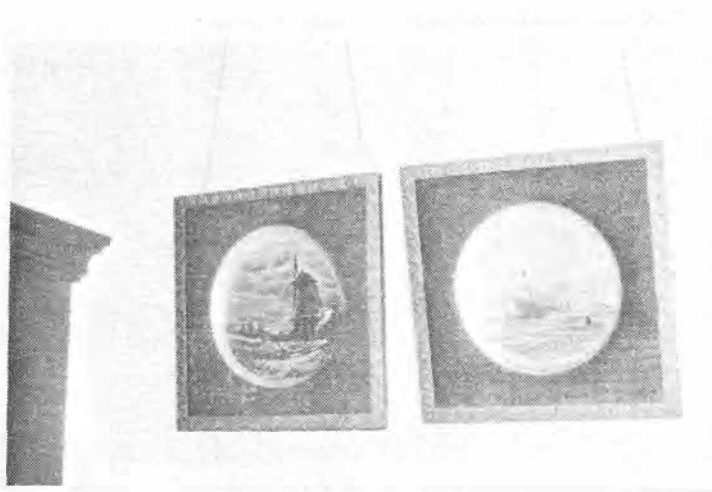


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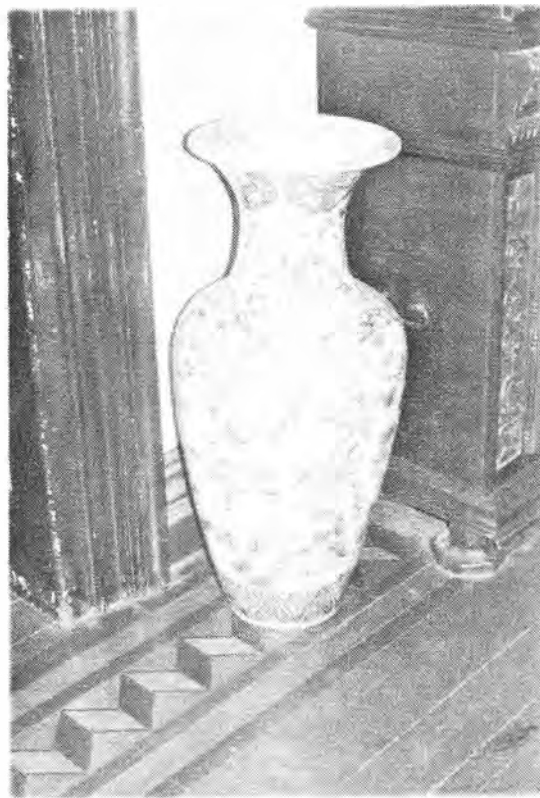
Figure 300. Pair of French bisque figurines highlighted with gilt decoration. They adorn a large marble top commode in the Mallory-Neely parlor.
A. Female figurine.
B. Male figurine.



A

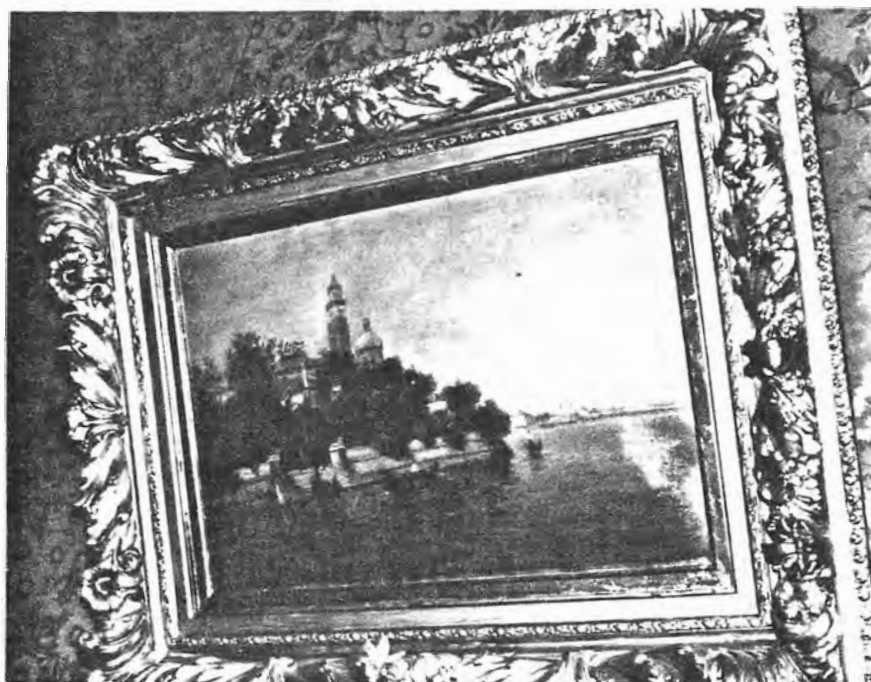


B



C

Figure 301. Representation of the international scope of the accessories in the Mallory-Neely House.
A. Islamic vase atop a carved Chinese pedestal.
B. Two framed plates handpainted with Dutch scenes.
C. Large Chinese blue and white porcelain vase.



A

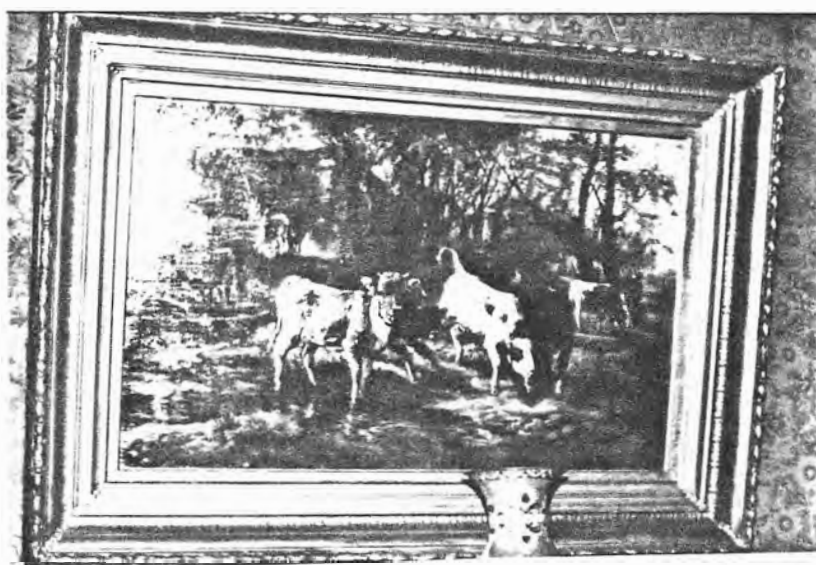


B

Figure 302. Oil painting of Venice and watercolor of landscape.
A. Oil painting of Venice hangs in the Mallory-Neely parlor.
B. Watercolor of a landscape signed I. Hudson hangs in the music room.



A



B

Figure 303. Two oil paintings that adorn the walls of the Mallory-Neely parlor.

- A. This painting of a flock of sheep is signed George Reike.
- B. Painting of a bucolic scene.

is a copy by R. Clemison of Sir Edwin Landseer's "Monarch of the Glen." (Figure 304) Engraved and painted copies of this very popular British painting hung in countless English and American Victorian homes, to the extent that it is considered by some a cliché of the period.¹⁶¹

All of these retain their original frames; most, like the surrounding furniture, are reproductions of historic originals.¹⁶² At least one of these, a watercolor, is suspended from the picture molding in a manner typical of the period as is fully explained and diagrammed in Artistic Houses or How to Furnish with Taste.¹⁶³ Long picture cord supports the picture at eye level, as recommended. (Figure 305)

The art of sculpture is represented in the house by examples ranging from a small Parian figure of a woman to a large marble reproduction entitled "The Kiss of Cupid and Psyche." (Figures 306 and 307). The latter is a copy by an Italian artisan named Lampini of Antonio Canova's original in the Louvre. Many sculptures of this type, one of which is described as being by the hand of Lampini, adorn the interiors pictured in Artistic Houses.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹See Joseph Rishel, "Landseer: Queen Victoria's Favorite Painter Copied in America," Nineteenth Century, 7, No. 3 (Autumn 1981), 42-45.

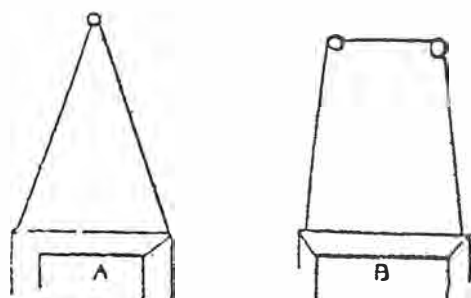
¹⁶²Katherine M. Morrison, Collecting American Victorian Antiques (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1966), 87.

¹⁶³Artistic House or How to Furnish with Taste, 76.

¹⁶⁴Artistic Houses, 174.

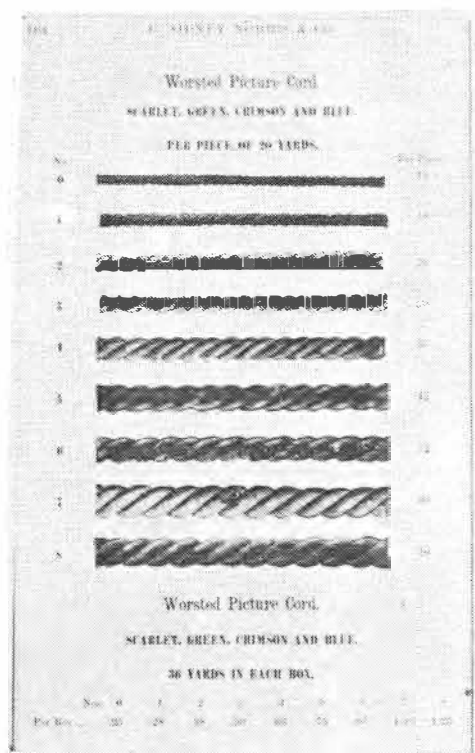


Figure 304. Copy by R. Clemison of Sir Edwin Landseer's "Monarch of the Glen." It hangs in the second floor hallway of the Mallory-Neely House.

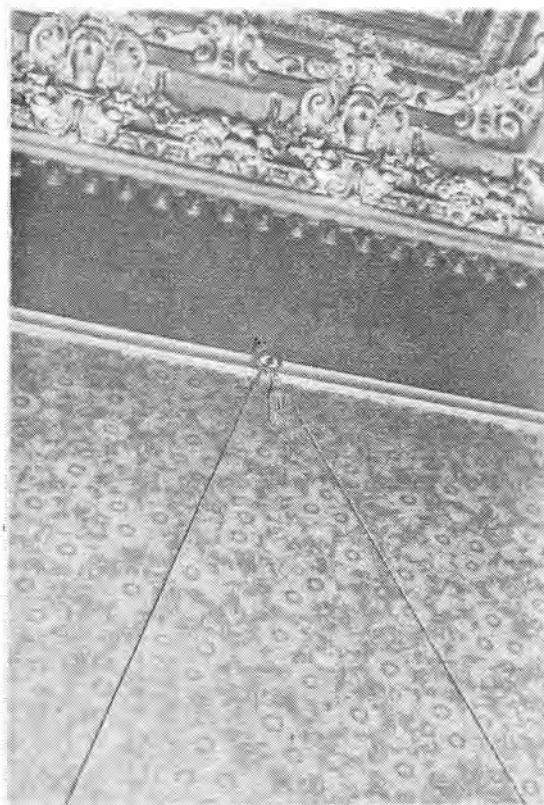


PICTURE HANGING.

A



B



C

Figure 305. Display of Victorian pictures.

- A. Line drawing from Artistic Homes (1883) showing suggested methods for hanging pictures from a picture molding.
- B. Page from the catalog of Sidney Norris & Company (1880) showing cord to use for this purpose. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.
- C. Cord of a picture in the Mallory-Neely House which is still hanging according to the practice of the period.



Figure 306. Classical Parian figurine from the Mallory-Neely collection.



A



B

Figure 307. Marble copy by Lampini of Canova's "Cupid and Psyche" (Louvre) and illustration of similar sculpture from C. Hennecke & Company catalog.

- A. Marble copy serves as the focal point of the Mallory-Neely parlor alcove.
- B. Page from the 1887 catalog of the C. Hennecke & Company showing a similar sculpture among their mail order Florentine sculptures. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

Oral tradition says that the Neelys purchased this sculpture while in Europe. Several scrapbooks of European travel survive in the house. One dated 1887 documents Pearl Neely's tour. Another undated one is filled with picture postcards depicting noted European monuments and works of art. An entire section is devoted to Neo-Classical sculpture and includes a postcard of Canova's "The Kiss."

The sculpture's central location in the bay of the parlor is reflective of the Victorian's love of Neo-Classical sculpture and also the prominence of art in the home at this time. Sculptures of this type, ranging from small to large, adorned the parlors of both the rich and poor in Victorian America. "The Kiss" was apparently a widely popular choice in that varying sized versions can be seen today not only in Memphis but in the Voigt House in Grand Rapids, the Wickham-Valentine House in Richmond, Virginia, and elsewhere. It is pictured adorning at least one parlor in The Tasteful Interlude.¹⁶⁵

The C. Hennecke Company of Chicago, importers of Florentine sculpture, featured "The Kiss" in their 1887 catalog. (Figure 307) It could be ordered in a choice of materials including alabaster, and in sizes ranging from 13 to 20 inches in height, and in cost from \$6.00 to \$16.00.¹⁶⁶ The author of a section of the catalog

¹⁶⁵William Seale, The Tasteful Interlude: American Interiors Through the Camera's Eye 1860-1917 (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), 153.

¹⁶⁶C. Hennecke & Company, Hennecke's Florentine Statuary (Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1887), n.p. [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

headlined "Art in the House" stated that "good pictures and good statuary are as necessary to our spiritual life as air, food, and water are to our physical well being."¹⁶⁷ He further pointed out that:

The silent influence which everything really beautiful exerts upon us cannot be estimated, but that it tends to elevate and refine our natures and lift us out of the dull sensual world in which we live is universally acknowledged.¹⁶⁸

Because of the Victorian's demand for classical statuary, Italy, especially the city of Florence, had become by the mid-nineteenth century the center for the mass production of Classical and Neo-Classical statuary. Reducing machines, pointing machines, and mechanical carving devices aided the artisans in their work.¹⁶⁹ The records and photographs of the Italian exhibits in the 1883 and 1904 World's Fairs show that they contained large displays of mechanical reproduction statuary.

A totally different type of decorative statuary in the Mallory-Neely House is a series of bronze female busts in the Art Nouveau style. This is chronologically the last nineteenth century European style represented in the collection. Art Nouveau has sometimes been

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

¹⁶⁹Frances Haskell, Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture 1500-1900 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 123.

called the first modern style.¹⁷⁰ Born in Europe, it was never as widely accepted or popular in the United States. Art Nouveau is characterized by its organic appearance. The tendrils of flowers, vines and other natural growth were often sources of inspiration.¹⁷¹ The handles of an Art Nouveau lamp in the Mallory-Neely parlor, an escutcheon plate on a door in the morning room, and the flower-bloom form of a fragmented Tiffany type vase are all excellent examples of this. (Figure 308)

The female heads in the Mallory-Neely House represent another favorite Art Nouveau theme--the feminine form. Their swirling hair, scarves, and other costume fabrics were treated in a manner to simulate that of natural plant material. Women are often represented as seductive "femme fatales."¹⁷² (Figure 309) These small sculptures were likely purchased by members of the family while abroad as souvenirs of their travels.

The late century interest in Orientalism survives in the Mallory-Neely accessory collection also. Several large Japanese cloisonné vases provide an added exotic touch to the parlor and music rooms. (Figure 310) According to tradition these were also purchased at one of the World's Fairs. Japanese cloisonné at this time was

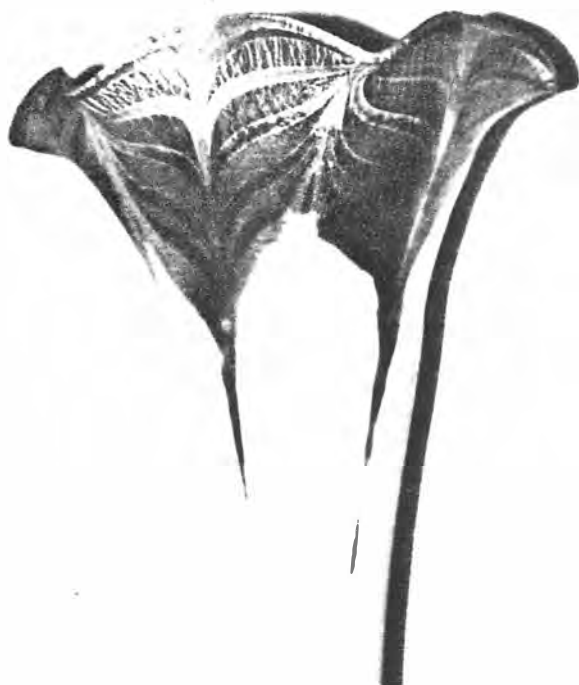
¹⁷⁰See Art Nouveau: Art and Design at the Turn of the Century, eds. Peter Selz and Mildred Constantine (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1959).

¹⁷¹Bernard Champigneulle, Art Nouveau (Woodbury, New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1976), 90.

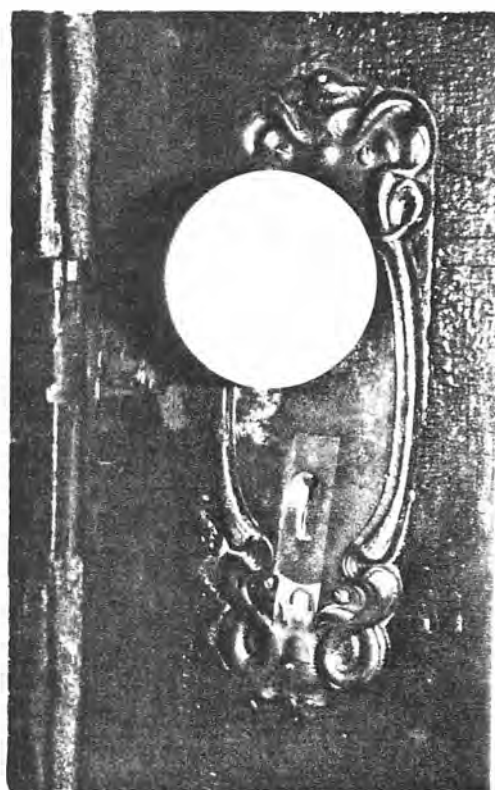
¹⁷²*Ibid.*, 90-91.



A



B



C

Figure 308. The organic nature of Art Nouveau design is illustrated by objects in the Mallory-Neely collection.

A. Gilded handle of a lamp.

B. Flower shaped Tiffany style vase.

C. Escutcheon plate.

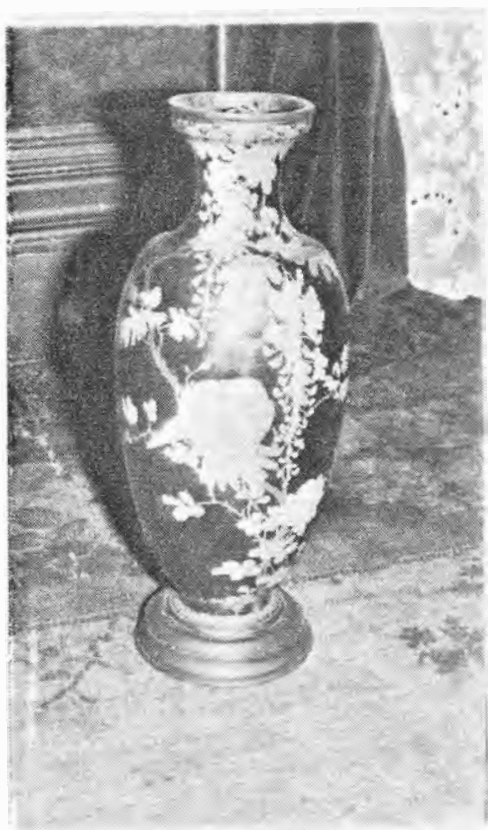


A



B

Figure 309. Two of the many Art Nouveau bronze busts in the Mallory-Neely collection.
A. "Violetta."
B. A femme fatale.



A



B

Figure 310. Two of the brilliantly colored and intricately executed Japanese cloisonné enamel vases in the Mallory-Neely collection. They were probably purchased at one of the World's Fairs.

A. Red hued vase in the music room.

B. Blue hued vase in the parlor.

noted for its naturalism, precision of workmanship, and rich use of color.¹⁷³ An art form that flowered late in Japan, it peaked in terms of craftsmanship at this time.¹⁷⁴ The editor of The Decorator & Furnisher devoted an entire article to the craft, stating that none could equal the Japanese in the enameler's art.¹⁷⁵ The Japanese exhibitions at the World's Fairs, and especially in St. Louis featured large displays of cloisonné; objects were all for sale. (Figure 311)

Another Japanese artifact which surely must have been one of the more interesting collectables in the house was a suit of samurai armor that once dramatically stood at the head of the stairs leading up from the entrance hall.¹⁷⁶ It is now part of the Memphis-Brooks Museum collection.

This wide range of artistic accessories chosen by the Neely and Mallory families accord well with the general overall eclectic mix of period styles found throughout the house. They also show

¹⁷³Harry Garner, Chinese and Japanese Cloisonné-Enamels (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), 104.

¹⁷⁴See Bonnie Barrett Stretch, "A Tale of Seven Treasures: How the Underdog of Chinese Cloisonné Became a Major Japanese Art Form," Art and Antiques (October 1984), 54-57.

¹⁷⁵"Japanese Art Enamels," The Decorator & Furnisher, 21, No. 5 (February 1893), 15, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

¹⁷⁶Mrs. Walter Morgan, Interview by the author, Memphis, Tennessee, 4 October 1985.

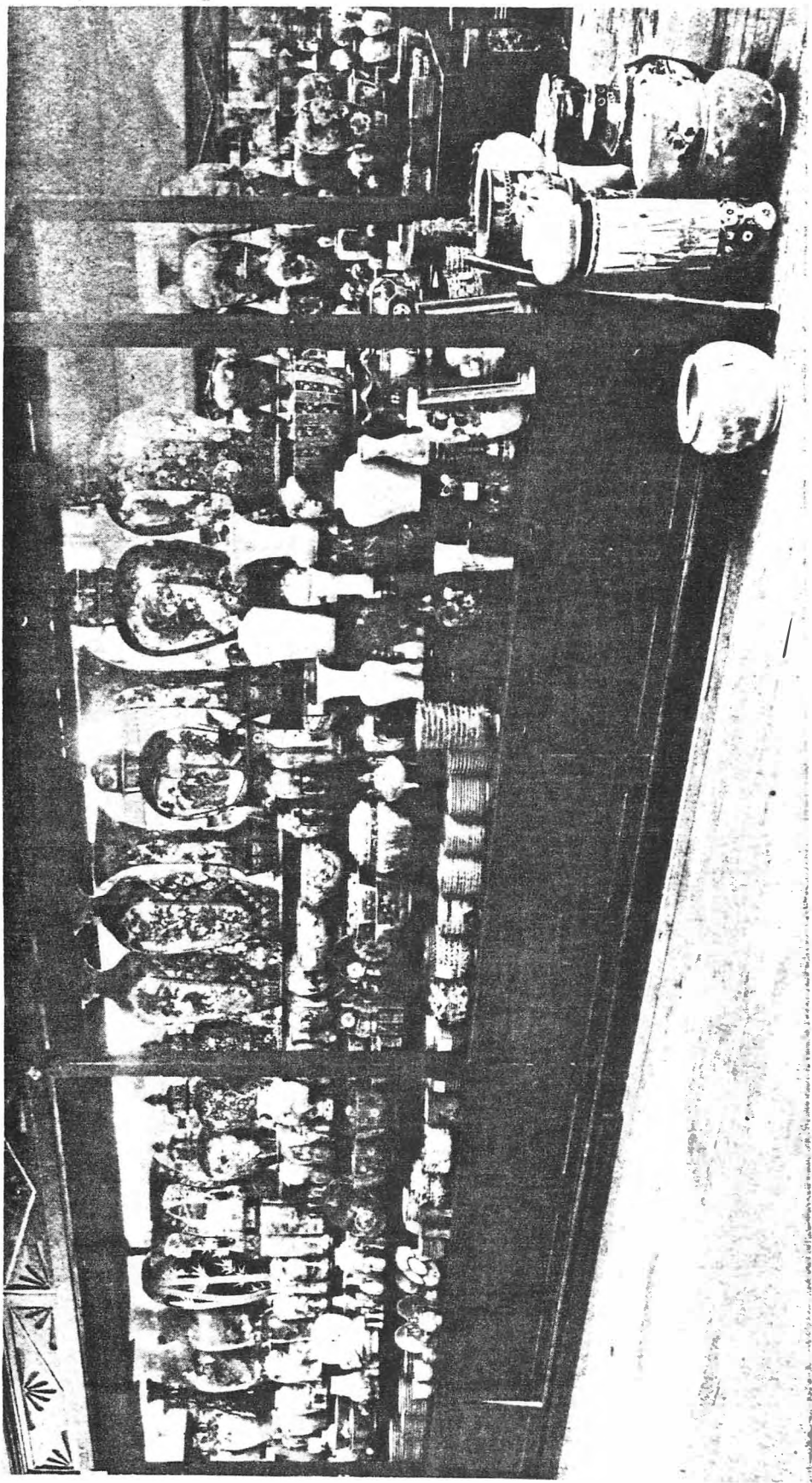


Figure 311. Part of the Japanese cloisonné exhibit in the Palace of Varied Industries at the St. Louis World's Fair (1904). From the History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Courtesy Missouri Historical Society.

that the elite of Memphis were well aware of what was considered fashionable at that time in home decoration--one filled with edifying works of art.

Textiles

Textiles provide yet another part of the decorative furnishings of an interior. Because of their perishable nature their survival is rarer. Those in the Mallory-Neely House were no exception. Most of the older textiles are gone. Some fabrics including plush drapery, lace curtain panels, Oriental rugs, Brussels and Ingrain carpeting (surviving all or in part and in deteriorated condition) have been treated elsewhere in this dissertation. Most of the draperies, portieres, and upholstery fabrics in the house were replaced during the present century. But some late nineteenth century decorative furnishing fabrics and two older pieces of ornamental needlework do survive in the house which represent the taste, technology, and even pastimes of the period.

In several locations in the house (most in storage on the third floor) are several chairs and one stool with their upholstery surviving in varying conditions. All of these textiles were produced at some time between 1880 and the early 1900s. They are machine woven, most of expensive quality, and were meant for formal usage. All but one of these, according to evidence in photographs, were originally located in the parlor. Their gold and red coloration was most likely chosen to coordinate with the gold and red Brussels

carpet and the plush crimson drapery in that room. Most late-century interior design guides stressed the importance of harmonious textile color coordination and also advised their readers on the use of varying quality textiles in rooms in keeping with their functional purpose. The best fabrics, of course, were to be used in the parlor or in the reception area.¹⁷⁷

In eras prior to the Victorian handwoven sumptuous furnishing textiles were very costly and therefore obtainable only by the wealthy.¹⁷⁸ The textile craft was the first to be transformed by the Industrial Revolution, beginning as early as the eighteenth century. The looms and eventually all the processes of textile preparation and production were mechanized.¹⁷⁹

By the late nineteenth century all types of technological refinements had occurred in the creation of furnishing fabrics making them available to all economic classes. E. A. Posselt's illustrated Technology of Textile Design (1889), for example, shows a variety of machines that could produce at most any type of furnishing textile including silk plushes, velvets, and others.¹⁸⁰ Textile machinery

¹⁷⁷Jane C. Nylander, Fabrics for Historic Buildings (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1983), 110.

¹⁷⁸See Florence M. Montgomery, Textiles in America 1650-1870 (New York: W. W. Horton & Company, 1984).

¹⁷⁹See D. H. Farnic, "The Textile Industry: Woven Fabrics," A History of Technology, V (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 569-592.

¹⁸⁰E. A. Posselt, Technology of Textile Design (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird & Company, 1889), Special Collections, Strong Museum, Rochester, New York.

manufacturers' advertisements in this book range from those that could do the basics of fabric production such as washing, drying, burring, and dying to mechanized variations of the Jacquard loom which could weave complex fabrics such as figured velvet.

(Figure 312)

Not all nineteenth century furnishing textiles were mass produced. Because of the costliness of machinery and the basic conservativeness of Italian, German, and French weavers, many, using centuries-old techniques and designs, continued to produce expensive handmade fabrics.¹⁸¹ These received recognition when the Aesthetic and later the Arts and Crafts Movement popularized the beauty of the handmade. British and American manufacturers exploited this appreciation for traditional textiles by creating machine made variations.

As noted previously, the late nineteenth century witnessed a fashion for archeologically correct reproductions of historic period furniture and accessories. Textile manufacturers and designers, realizing the need for textiles to harmonize in style with other furnishings, followed this fashion.¹⁸² Three different late-century upholstery fabrics in the Mallory-Neely collection document this. The first example is a seat cover of the Elizabeth chair in the parlor. Its cut-velvet design replicates a fabric of the Late Medieval and

¹⁸¹See, for example, Louis Brenni, The Manufacture of Italian Silk (Milan: Archetipografia di Milano, 1927).

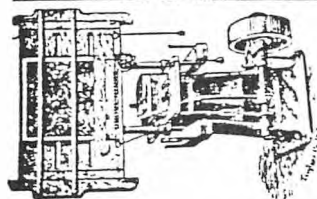
¹⁸²Bury Hester, A Choice of Design 1850-1980, Fabrics by Warner & Sons Limited (London: Warner & Sons Limited, 1981), 18-19.

N. P. UHLINGER WORKS

MANUFACTURERS OF

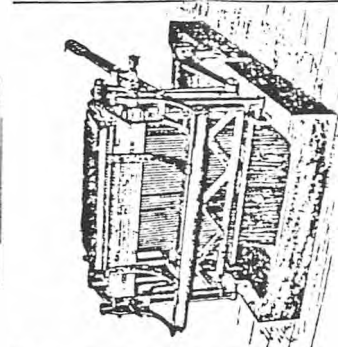
Single Lift Jacquard Machines,
Double Lift Jacquard Machines,
Raise and Drop Jacquard Machines,
Jacquard Card-Lacing Machines.

Witch Motions,
Dobby Machines,
Heddle Machines,



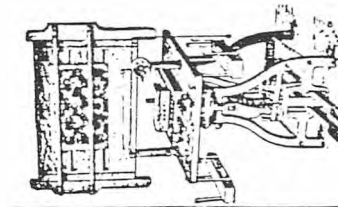
PIANO-STEAM-POWER CARD-STAMPING MACHINE.

For Jacquard Cards.
The speed is complete with the weight of the operator, and will punch as quickly as about double that of a hand power machine. Two cards can be stamped at once.



JACQUARD MACHINES.

Made for weaving figured goods of all kinds, from the lightest to the heaviest, either for silk, cotton or wool. Single lift, double lift or raise and drop machines. Harness tied up and made ready to act on looms of any make. Our raise and drop are especially adapted to weaving the finest silk and worsted goods.



PIANO FOOT-TREADING CARD-STAMPING MACHINE.

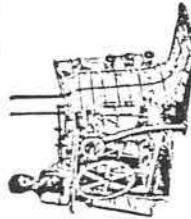
I have lately re-constructed this machine, making it more compact and more powerful than any of the kind.

The only successful machine ever introduced for this purpose.

Far superior to hand lacing for regularity and durability.

Light-running, simple and durable.

Can be operated by a small girl or boy.



JACQUARD CARD-LACING MACHINE.

Will lace 800 to 2000 cards per hour. Thoroughly and satisfactorily tested.

Weights about 500 pounds.

Machines now in operation and ready for the inspection of manufacturers.

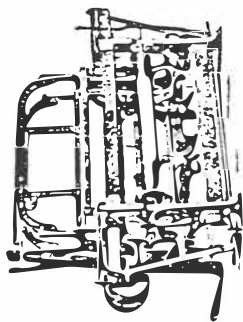
Machines placed on trial with responsible parties.

GILBERT LOOM CO.,

BUILDERS OF

LOOMS

For Woolens, Cotton, Carpets, Wire, Cane,



Velvet

Plush

Also, Patented Special Finishing Machinery for Measuring, Doubling and Folding, Perching and Burling.

WORKS: 186 UNION STREET AND 36 N. FOSTER STREET, WORCESTER, MASS.

A

B

Figure 312. Advertisements for mechanized textile looms from E. A. Posselt, Technology of Textile Design, 1889. Courtesy New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown.

A. Uhlinger looms.

B. Gilbert loom.

Early Renaissance Eras. (Figure 313) Today faded, it was probably cream and maroon in color. The design is made up of rows of affronted birds that alternate with bands of griffin-like animals. The second example covers an Empire Revival stool, today in one of the upstairs bedrooms. Badly faded, it was originally a bright crimson red. Replicating an eighteenth century damask fabric, it is patterned all over with ogival repeats made up of scrolling rococo foliage. (Figure 314) The last example is the brocade upholstery covering of an overstuffed chair in storage on the third floor. Woven in green and metallic gold, this elegant fabric reproduces an Empire textile. (Figure 315) A repeated Grecian palmette centers classical wreaths of victory, each connected by swags made up of small palmettes and victory palms.

The editor of the April 1901 Upholstering and Decorating Record relates that textile manufacturers were promoting the same period reproductions as the furniture, accessory, and wall covering manufacturers. The following period-style furnishing textiles were to be seen in the New York mill salesrooms that season.

Examples of the French School of Henry II, Louis XIII, Louis XIV, Louis XV, Louis XVI, Empire and Directoire; examples of English art epochs in Tudor, Elizabethan, Gothic, Jacobean, Georgian and Queen Anne styles; examples of Eighteenth Century English art in Chippendale, Hepplewhite, Sheraton, and Adam styles.¹⁸³

¹⁸³The Upholstering and Decorating Record (New York: April 1901), 326, Special Collections, Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids.



Figure 313. Covering the seat of an Elizabeth chair in the Mallory-Neely parlor this late nineteenth century cut velvet fabric, originally maroon in color, replicates a sixteenth century Renaissance original.

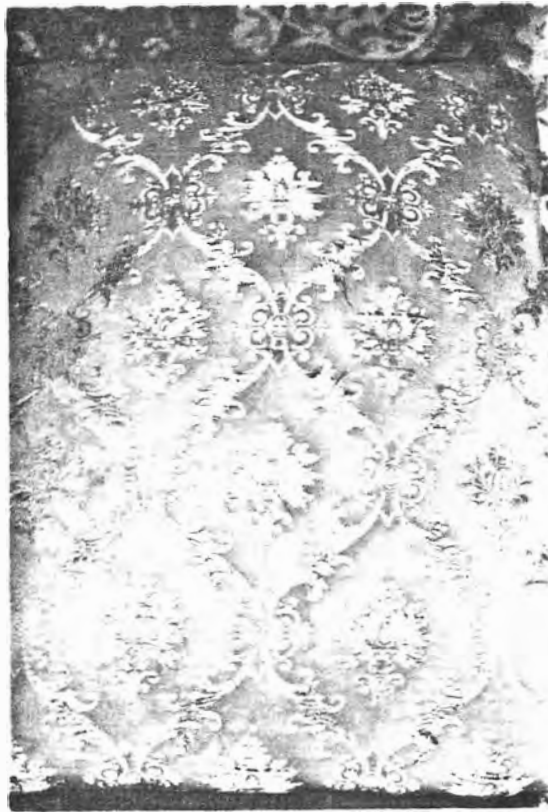


Figure 314. Cover of an Empire Revival stool in the Mallory-Neely House. This late nineteenth century damask fabric, originally crimson red, is a reproduction of an eighteenth century textile.



A



B

Figure 315. Chair upholstery.
A. Detail of design.
B. This late nineteenth century green and gold brocade fabric replicates an Empire textile.

The author of an article in the 1891 Art Journal reports how important historic sources are for textile designers stating that "all kinds of bits of faded silk are cherished for the sake of pattern."¹⁸⁴ The major output of one of Britain's leading manufacturers and exporters of furnishing textiles in the late nineteenth century, Warner & Sons Limited, was based primarily on designs copied directly from historic originals.¹⁸⁵ During the same time one of the more notable American manufacturers of elegant furnishing textiles, the Cheney Brothers Silk Manufacturing Company, acknowledged that their velvets, damasks, and brocades were based exclusively on historic documents.¹⁸⁶ F. Schumacher & Company likewise utilized "the multitude of patterns that have come down to us from the past."¹⁸⁷ George Hunter's Decorative Textiles (1918) is profusely illustrated with modern American furnishing textiles that he continually points out are based on historic textile documents in museum collections like those of the Metropolitan and Cooper Museums of New York City.¹⁸⁸ He also acknowledged the importance of illustrated

¹⁸⁴Lucie H. Armstrong, "The Progress of the Industrial Arts: Silks & Satins," Art Journal (1891), 21, Special Collections, Watson Library of the Metropolitan Museum, New York.

¹⁸⁵Hester, 19.

¹⁸⁶H. H. Manchester, The Story of Silk & Cheney Silks (New York: Cheney Bros., 1916), 49.

¹⁸⁷F. Schumacher & Company, The Development of Various Decorative and Upholstery Fabrics (New York: F. Schumacher & Company, 1924), 10.

¹⁸⁸See George Leland Hunter, Decorative Textiles (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1918).

books of historic ornament as sources. Photographs of textiles shown as part of this research are typically labeled like the following examples: "An American reproduction of a Louis XVI original," "A brocade made in America based on a document in the Brussels Museum," or "An American gold brocade based on an ancient Sicilian fabric."¹⁸⁹

Along with the documents of expensive reproduction furnishing textiles, a more common type of Victorian upholstery fabric also survives in the Mallory-Neely House. A dilapidated Eastlake-style student chair, in storage on the third floor, retains its original factory-produced, plain, golden-colored plush upholstery. (Figures 316 and 317)

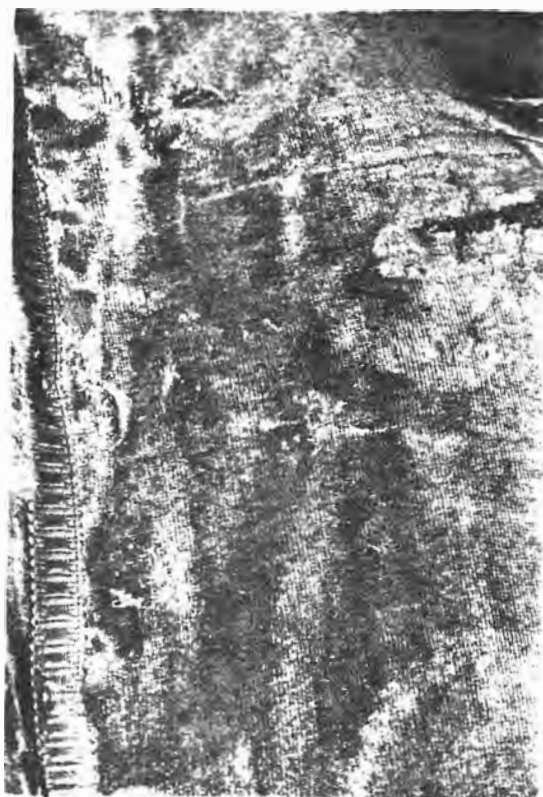
Plush is one of the upholstery fabrics most often associated with the Victorian Era. The editor of the Art Journal (1891) recommended it because of its strength and the beauty of its irridescent sheen.¹⁹⁰ Machine woven in factories, it was then sold in great quantities to Americans. Most upholstery goods trade catalogs of the period list a wide range of plush pattern and color choices for the consumer. (Figure 318) The catalog of the Stumps Company of Dayton, Ohio, for example, offered clients a choice of embossed mohair plush, plain mohair plush, embossed worsted plush or plain worsted

¹⁸⁹Ibid., 8-9.

¹⁹⁰Aymer Vallance, "The Progress of the Industrial Arts No. 6: Velvets, Velveteens, & Plushes," Art Journal (1891), 234, Special Collections, Watkins Library of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



A



B

Figure 316. Remains of a reform style chair in the Mallory-Neely attic.

A. Reform style chair.

B. Detail of its original gold colored plush upholstery.

KNOWLES LOOM WORKS, WORCESTER, MASS.

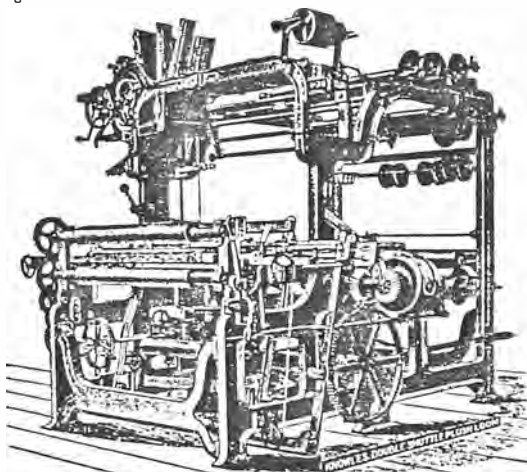
THIS ILLUSTRATION SHOWS OUR

VELVET AND PLUSH LOOM.

A Loom designed especially for this class of goods, and made with 12, 20 or 30 harness capacity and with Single Box at each end, or Double Stationary Boxes at each end designed to run two shuttles at each pick, or with two or three pairs of Drop Boxes at each end, arranged to use two shuttles at each pick and call either pair as required by the pattern.

THE HARNESS AND BOX MOTION ARE THE SAME AS ON THE FANCY
WORSTED OR CASSIMERE LOOM.

The goods are cut automatically in the loom. The Take-up Motion is positive and very accurate in its operation, and the Let-off for Pile Warp is operated positively from the head motion, and controls the length of the pile on the goods. Many of these looms are in successful operation on this class of goods.



We desire most respectfully to call the attention of Textile Manufacturers to the various Looms built by this Company for all kinds of fabrics, including

Worstedes, Woolens, Dress Goods, Flannels, Blankets, Jeans, Gingham, Upholstery, Draperies, Shawls, Ingrain Carpets, Silks, Satins, Ribbons, Suspenders, Bindings, Wickings, Webbing, etc.,

which have within the past years been introduced into most of the mills in the country, and where they have, by superior workmanship and perfect operation, won for themselves the reputation of being the best looms made, and established beyond question the claims made for them on their introduction to the public many years ago.

(Correspondence Solicited).

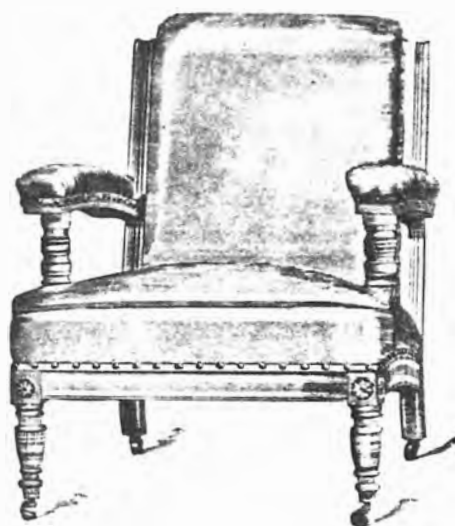
Figure 317. Advertisement for a mechanized plush loom from E. A. Posselt, Technology of Textile Design, 1889. Courtesy New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown.



No. 166—Easy Chair.

Walnut or Cherry. Handsomely Carved and Finished. Covered in Best Hand-Buffed Leather, \$46.00. Covered in Imported Mohair Plush, or \$6.00 per yard Tapestry, with Silk Plush Trimmings, \$60.00.

A



No. 167—Easy Arm Chair.

Walnut or Imitation Mahogany. Spring Seat and Back. Upholstered with Best Hand-Buffed Leather. Price\$60.00

B

Figure 318. Similar reform style chairs from the catalog of the Robert Mitchell Company of Cincinnati, n.d. The client was given the choice of several upholstery alternatives. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.
A. Easy chair.
B. Easy arm chair.

plush.¹⁹¹ The Shearman Brothers Company of Jamestown, New York, gave its customers the choice of royal or crushed plush in red, gold, olive blue, maroon, coral, orange or white or in a variety of Persian rug patterns.¹⁹²

Evidence of upholstery fabric sources and types available to Memphians during the late nineteenth century is found in newspaper advertisements. Both Lowenstein's and Menken's Department Stores in Memphis billed themselves as centers not only for carpets but also for upholstery goods. Lowenstein's claimed to have "The Largest Stock of the Best Makes in the Country."¹⁹³ They advertised embossed plushes, silk plushes, mohair plushes, and other popular upholstery.¹⁹⁴ Menken's listed "furniture damasks" along with the many other items of home furnishings they carried.¹⁹⁵

Two documents also survive in the Mallory-Neely House of the Victorian mania for needlework. They are as much as anything in

¹⁹¹Illustrated Catalogue of G. Stomps & Company Manufacturers of All Kinds of Chairs (Dayton, Ohio: 1887-88), 129 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

¹⁹²Shearman Brothers, Price List, Ironclad Upholstery Works (Jamestown, New York: 1889), n.p. [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

¹⁹³Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 25 December 1884, 1.

¹⁹⁴Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 25 December 1884, 1.

¹⁹⁵Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 30 September 1884, 1.

the house clichés of "Victoriana." They are also material symbols of the changing role of women in American society at that time.

The Industrial Revolution brought about a change in woman's role as a producer as she had been in Colonial times and before. Women were freed from many household chores, yet, living in a male-dominated society, their freedom was still limited. Less pressed to produce, women, in their new role, became cultivators and beautifiers of the home.¹⁹⁶

To do the beautifying and to fill leisure hours women turned to all types of crafts. The needle arts were among the most popular of these. Women of all classes, from the Queen of England and on down the social scale, created needle arts of some type for their homes. Our Homes and How to Beautify Them is typical of the literature of the time which gave endless tips on artistic crafts for the homemaker. Needlework cushion and stool covers, mantel lambrequins, table covers, chair tidies, ornamental chair backs, screens, shoe cases, wastebboxes, lamp shades, hat racks, banners, mottoes, and plaques were just a few of the needle crafts suggested.¹⁹⁷

The Mallory-Neely examples, both in the music room, might possibly have been worked by a family member or they may have been purchased from a bazaar or during travels. One of these is a needlework

¹⁹⁶See Harvey Green, The Light of the Home: An Intimate View of the Lives of Women in Victorian America (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983).

¹⁹⁷Our Homes and How to Beautify Them, 43, 104.

cover for small circular stool. (Figure 319) In the center is a tiny bouquet of flowers surrounded by a foliated circle, all on a maroon background. Hanging from a firescreen in front of the nearby fireplace is another piece of needlework featuring a bird perched in a bed of large flowers. (Figure 320) Both are examples of Berlin Work embellished with beadwork.

Today probably thought of as the most representative type of Victorian needlework, Berlin Work became a symbol to many design reformers of the era's visual lack of taste. Berlin Work had its beginning in the early nineteenth century in Berlin, hence the name. The design to be embroidered was painted either on a master pattern sheet to be followed or directly on the canvas to be worked. Heavy, brightly colored Berlin worsted wools were used on a square meshed canvas. Tent and cross stitches were primarily utilized but others were used also.¹⁹⁸ The garish colors of the new artificial dyes available were targets of much of the subsequent criticism.

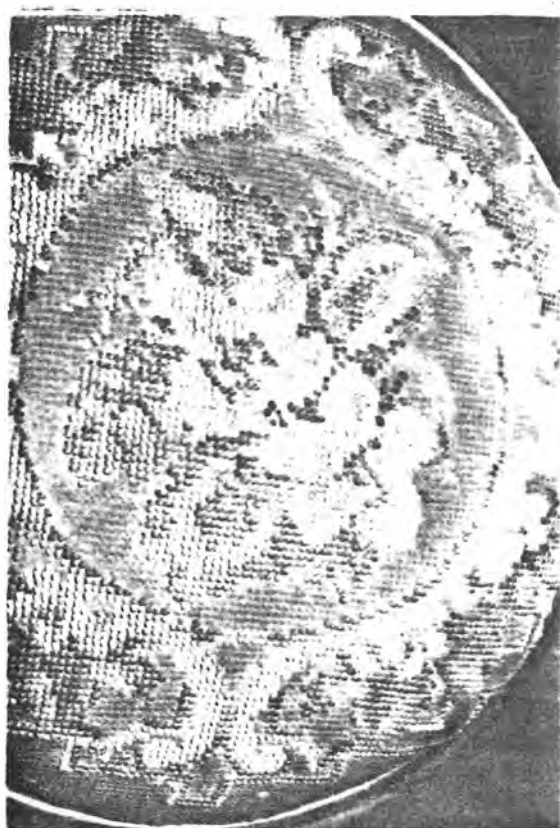
The most popular subject matter printed on the pattern sheets or canvas included copies of famous paintings, scenes from popular literature, religious scenes, and scenes from nature with birds and flowers.¹⁹⁹ Parrots and flowers were often favored for firescreens.

¹⁹⁸Sophia Caulfield and Blanche C. Seward, The Dictionary of Needlework: An Encyclopedia of Artistic, Plain, and Fancy Needlework (London: A. W. Cowan, 1882; reprint, Encyclopedia of Victorian Needlework II, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1972), 28.

¹⁹⁹Gabriel Juri, Victorian Furniture and Furnishings (New York: Grosset & Dunlop, 1971), 26.



A



B



C

Figure 319. Small stool in the Mallory-Neely collection. It is covered with beaded Berlin Work embroidery.

A. Small stool.

B. Closer view.

C. Detail showing bead work.

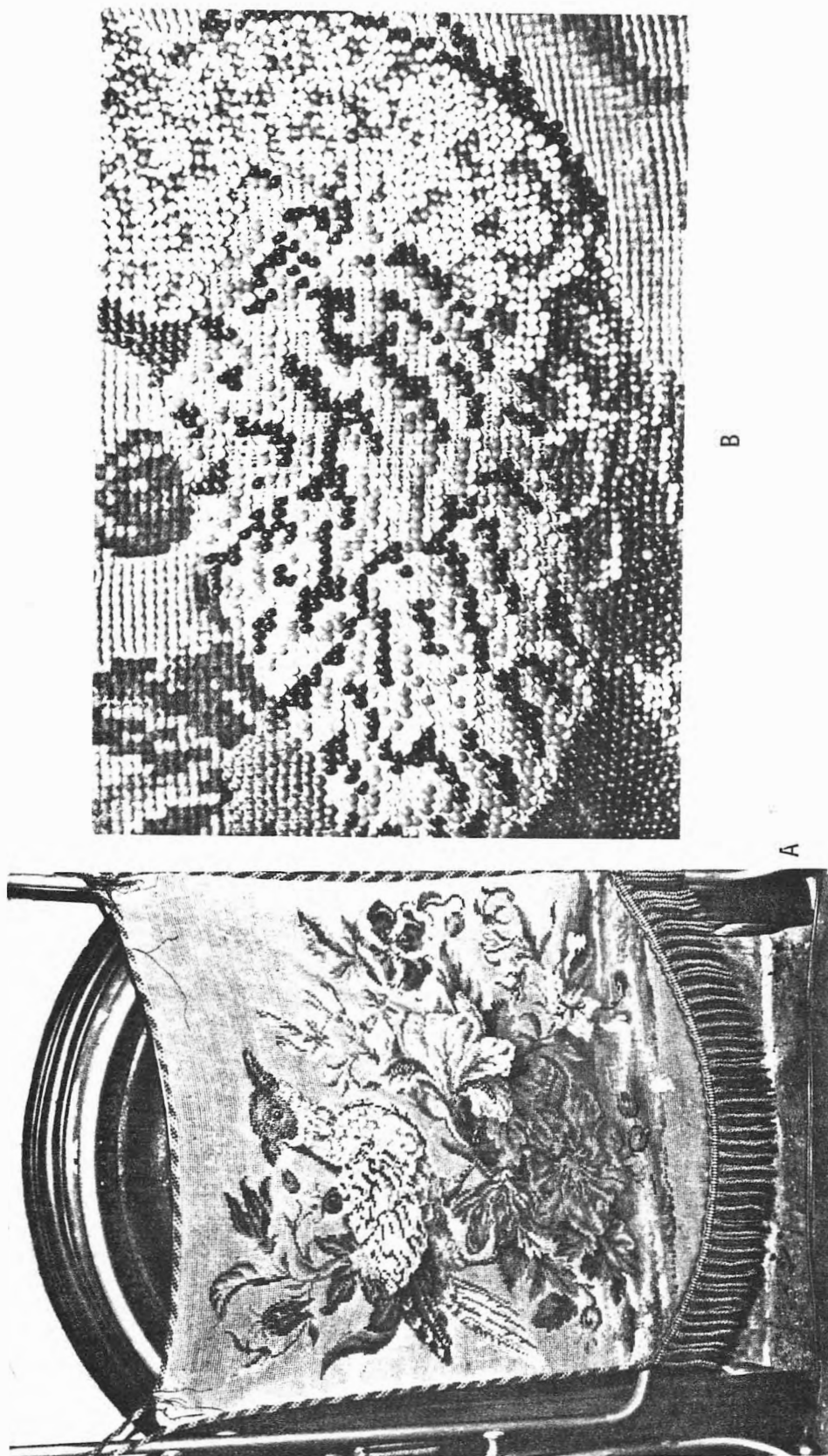


Figure 320. Colorful Berlin Work embroidered firescreen in the Mallory-Neely music room. It is richly encrusted with beads as is shown in the detail of the bird's body.
 A. Firescreen
 B. Close-up of bead work.

Berlin Work required little or no skill with the needle or imagination. One simply followed the directions. This lack of any need for originality was to also spark later censorship.

Beadwork as a further embellishment for the regular Berlin Work was introduced from 1850. Beads were made in all sizes, shapes, and colors for varying effects.²⁰⁰ Almost all the surfaces of the Mallory-Neely examples are worked with beads. These two original textile documents along with a few others fortunately survive to attest to the role that rich furnishing fabrics played in the overall decorative scheme of the house.

Room Arrangement

Objects in a room alone do not constitute interior design. How these are arranged within the space of a room is of major importance. As with the furnishings, the use of space and placement of furnishing is affected by social customs, culture, and changing fashion.

In recent decades the behavioral aspects (including human psychological factors) of interior design have gained in importance equal to that of visual aesthetics. The study of proxemics, the reaction of humans to their environmental spatial surroundings, has been subject of much research and study.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰Barbara M. Morris, Victorian Embroidery (New York: Universe Books, 1962), 28.

²⁰¹See, for example, Edward T. Hall, The Hidden Dimension (New York: Anchor Books, 1969).

As a consequence, historians of design and decorative arts, museum curators, and others in some way connected with historic house museums or museum period rooms have become increasingly interested in how people in the past used and reacted to the spaces in which they lived. This interest in proxemics has aided in the authenticity of their interpretations.

Studies have shown, for example, that eighteenth century and earlier Western societies tended to prefer interiors that were formally arranged because of the stiff etiquette of an aristocratically dominated society. A study of eighteenth century architecture, landscape design, furniture, costume, and other decorative arts reveals that formality and symmetry were the rule. Everything from floor plans to posture was affected.

Furniture was arranged symmetrically around the walls of a room, leaving the center open. Articles of furniture were brought out into the middle for specific purposes only and later returned to their original rigid position.²⁰²

Siegfried Giedion in Mechanization Takes Command states that during the eighteenth century, there was a unity to a room with a balance of architecture, space, and furnishings. Space was dominant and not the furnishings, which were subconsciously subordinated to the surrounding architectural environment.²⁰³

²⁰²Peter Thornton, "Room Arrangements in the Mid-Eighteenth Century," The Magazine Antiques (April 1971), 556-561.

²⁰³Giedion, Mechanization Takes Command, 304.

Social changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution resulted in a radical alteration to room arrangement. This new approach evolved slowly during the nineteenth century when an open system of arrangement dominated by formality, proportion, and symmetry gave way to one that was informal, casual, crowded, and irregular.²⁰⁴ (Figure 321) Giedion labeled this change "the devaluation of space," a system of spatial disintegration attributable to the influence of mechanization on human surroundings.²⁰⁵

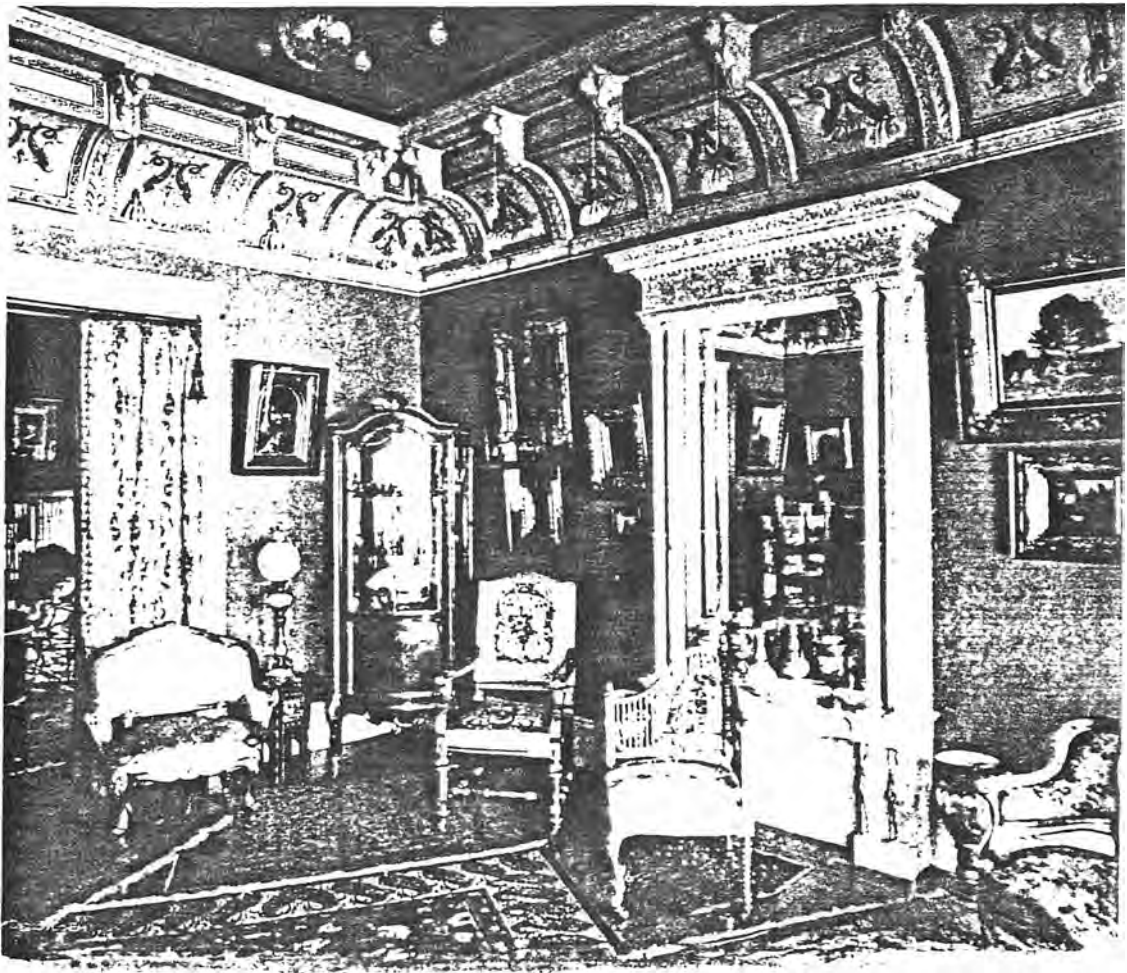
Many scholars credit the Second Empire court of Napoleon III with starting the fashion for interiors using assorted upholstered pieces gathered into informal groupings asymmetrically arranged in the center of the room. Cecilia Otto labeled this the look of "studied luxurious informality."²⁰⁶ Whatever the origins, the practice grew in all Western countries as the century progressed. The increasing crowded appearance of the nineteenth century interior is well documented by illustrations arranged chronologically in Peter Thornton's Authentic Decor. Thornton states that by the end of the century, this density of furnishings had become suffocating.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴"The Devaluation of Space," Encyclopedia Victoriana, eds. Harriet Bridgeman and Elizabeth Drury (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1975), 30.

²⁰⁵Giedion, Mechanization Takes Command, 279-343.

²⁰⁶Cecilia Otto, American Furniture of the Nineteenth Century (New York: Castle Books, 1965), 208.

²⁰⁷Thornton, 221.



*Drawing-room — Residence of Mr. Joseph Beifeld, Chicago.
Executed by MANDEL BROTHERS*

Figure 321. Photograph from the Mandel Brother's Department Store, Department of Interior Design's guide to home decorating (1900). It survives as a document of the then fashionable approach to design and arrangement. The room was designed by a member of their staff. Note the density of objects in the room and the cluttered, informal, and angular placement of the furnishings. Courtesy Chicago Historical Society.

Some of the underlying reasons suggested for this change include philosophic alteration brought about by the dominance of the middle class during the century and their attack on old aristocratic notions of formality and related codes of behavior; the Romantic Movement's emphasis on freedom, emotionalism, and individual expression; and technological developments such as the creation of comfortable furnishings available to all classes which brought about new concepts of posture and comfort. Others propose that because of the increased availability of new consumer items for the home, they were more densely packed than previously. Some have pointed out that the Victorians displayed their success through the accumulation of material possessions or conspicuous consumption.²⁰⁸ A final theory suggests that new types of lighting, which helped to more economically distribute illumination around the room instead of it being centered in a limited area, altered practices in room arrangement.²⁰⁹

By the late nineteenth century the authors of the various interior design guides were enumerating ways to help facilitate this more informal type of room arrangement in a successful and tasteful manner.²¹⁰ They advised that a room not just be filled with a

²⁰⁸"The Devaluation of Space," 29-30.

²⁰⁹Roger Moss, "Victorian Lighting," Paper presented at the 38th Annual Seminar on American Culture," New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York, 2 July 1985.

²¹⁰McClaugherty, 1-26.

haphazard hodgepodge of furnishings but that one should think of a room as a composition. A general artistic effect could be given to the room arrangement through application of various design elements and principles such as color, balance, and proportion.²¹¹

Recommendations were made on how to break up the room to avoid visual monotony, including the division of the room's furnishings into main groups and subordinate groups.²¹² Both groups were made up of furnishings such as sofas, lounges, chairs, tables, ottomans, and footstools. The design authorities pointed out that multiple focal points such as a bay window or a fireplace were important. The use of screens, area carpets, potted plants, and the novel angle placement of furniture were also suggested ways to break up space. Visual interest could be further created by an irregular treatment of objects hung on the walls. The consideration of contrasting verticals and horizontals was important in the placement of furniture, accessories and wall arrangement. It was further advocated that within a room various secondary areas of interest or art units could be created, giving the home owner a way of personalizing their interior.²¹³ Whatever the process and system used in arranging one's room, the end result was to be a unity or harmony of the various parts.²¹⁴

²¹¹Ibid., 13.

²¹²Cooper, 74-77.

²¹³William Seale, "The Victorian Domestic Interior," Paper presented at the 38th Annual Seminar on American Culture, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York, 6 July 1985.

²¹⁴Spofford, 217.

Various photographs of interiors in the Mallory-Neely House, but primarily those appearing in Memphis newspapers taken during the first half of this century, show that there was an occasional shifting about of individual pieces but that the basic approach to the arrangement of these rooms was frozen from the turn of the century. The density of objects surviving in many areas of the house is typical of the era. (Figures 322 and 323) The arrangement of furnishings in the parlor and sitting room is especially reflective of the fully developed Victorian fashion for more comfortable and informally arranged interiors. (Figures 324, 325, and 326)

In these two rooms this effect is achieved through the congregation of furniture out in the central space of the room; the use of casual conversational groupings of upholstered furniture and tables usually delineated by Oriental area carpets; angled placement of chairs, sofas and tables; and the use of assorted tables randomly scattered about in the center of the room. Statuary, accessorized etagere mantels, a screen, tall mirrors, plaques, and hanging plates assist in creating individual areas of interest within the whole. The arrangement of furnishings within the Mallory-Neely House, even though a mansion, illustrates the Victorian's attempt to create, in an ever increasing urbanized world, a home environment with an ambiance of informality and comfort, an approach that Americans have continued to develop and use to the present.

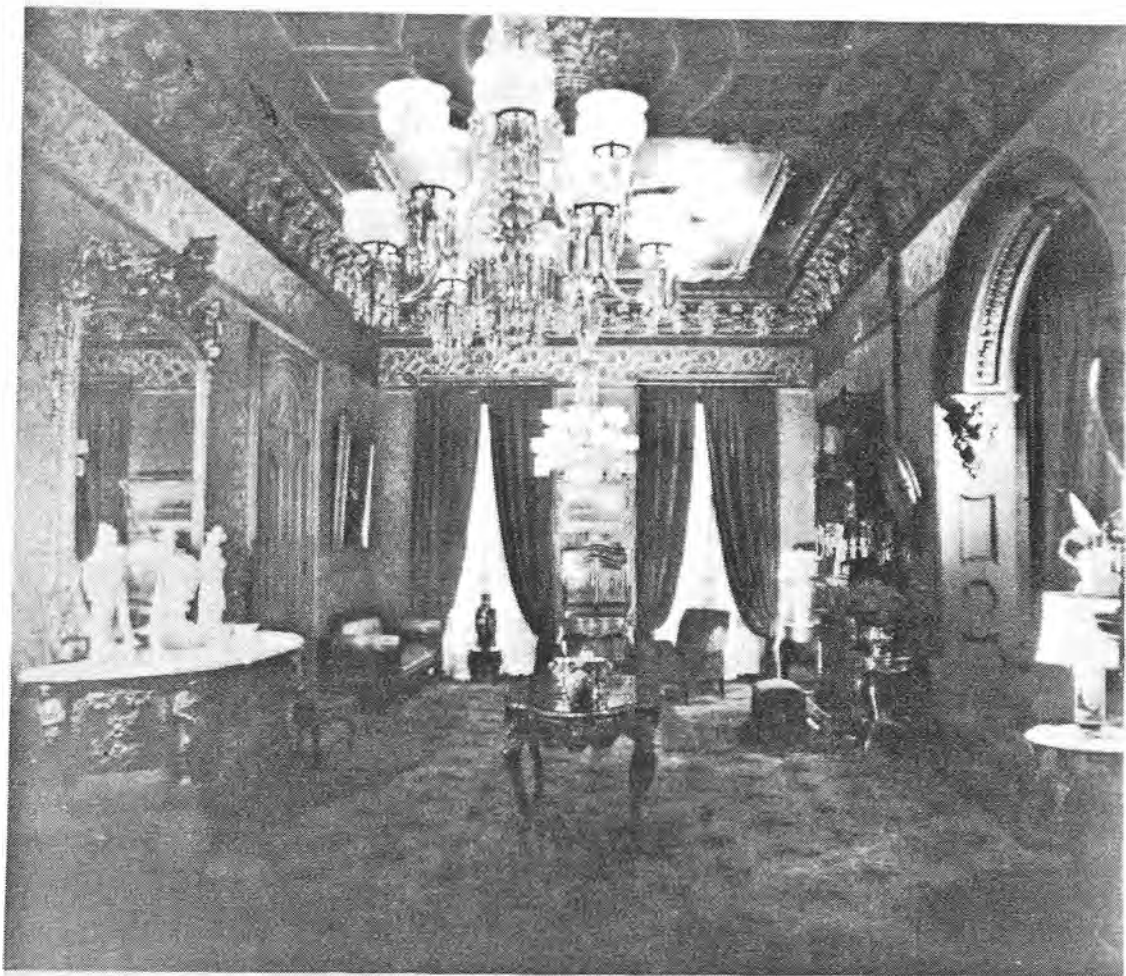


Figure 322. View of the Mallory-Neely parlor showing the density of objects crowded into the room.

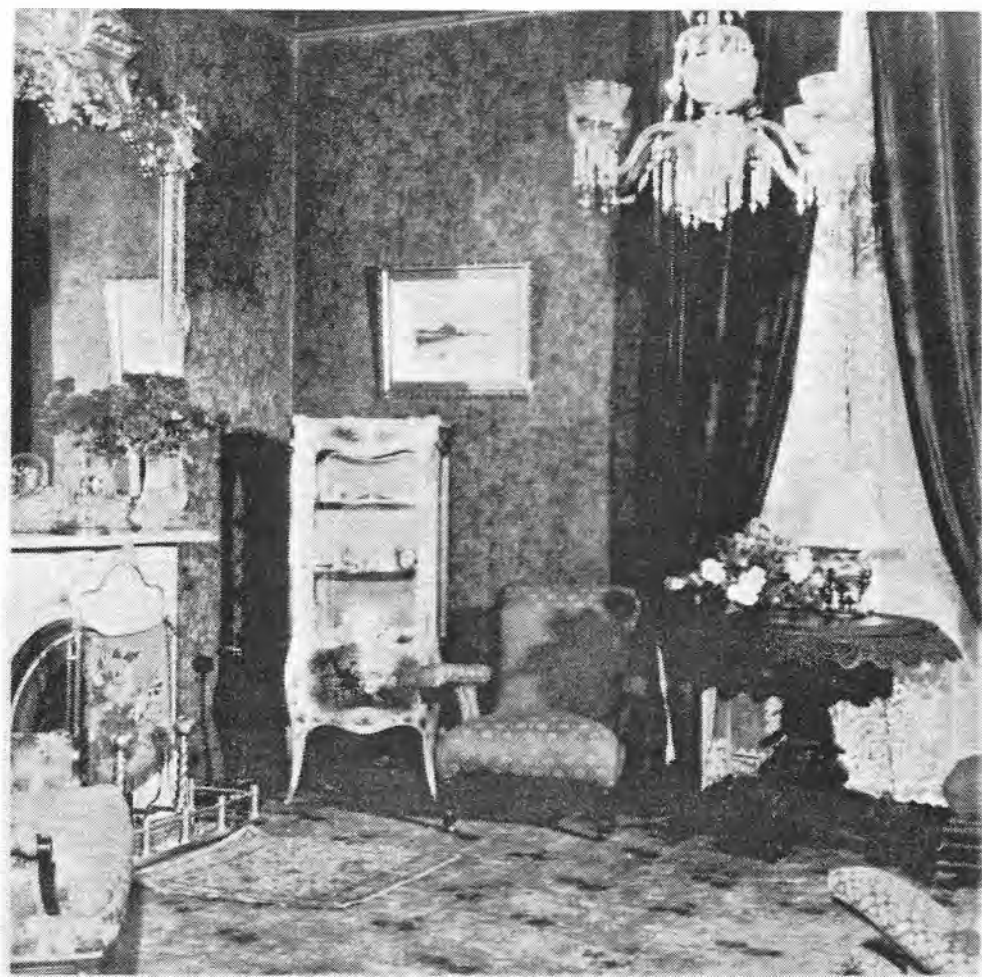
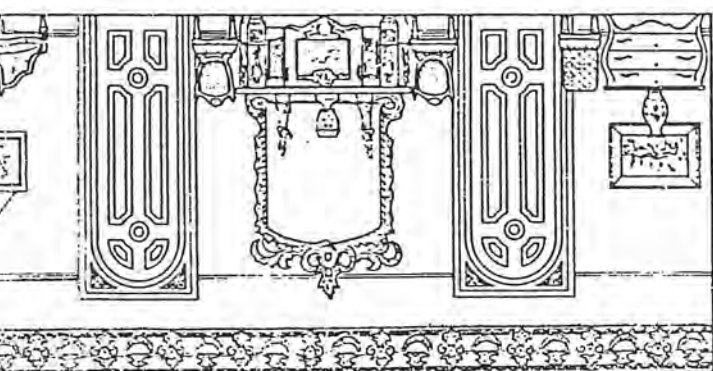
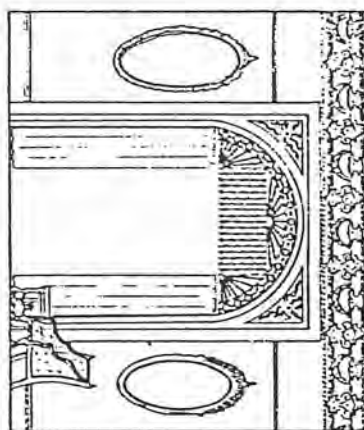
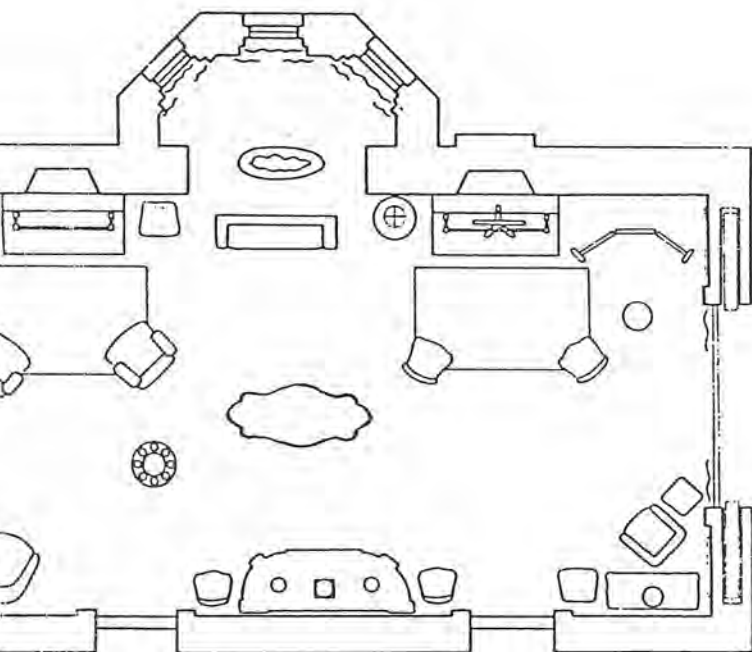
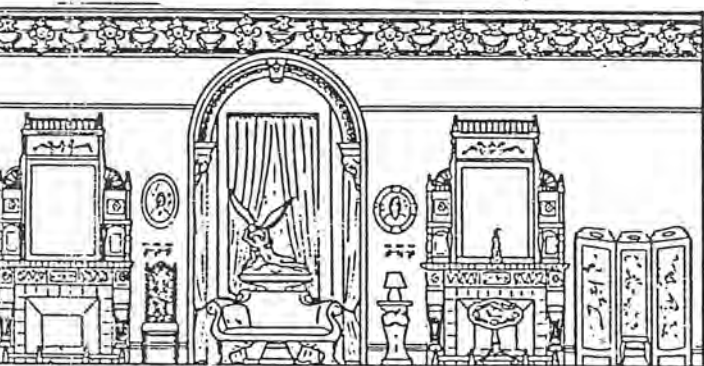


Figure 323. Object cluttered interior of the Mallory-Neely music room.



of the Mallory-Neely parlor showing the arrangement of the furnishings.

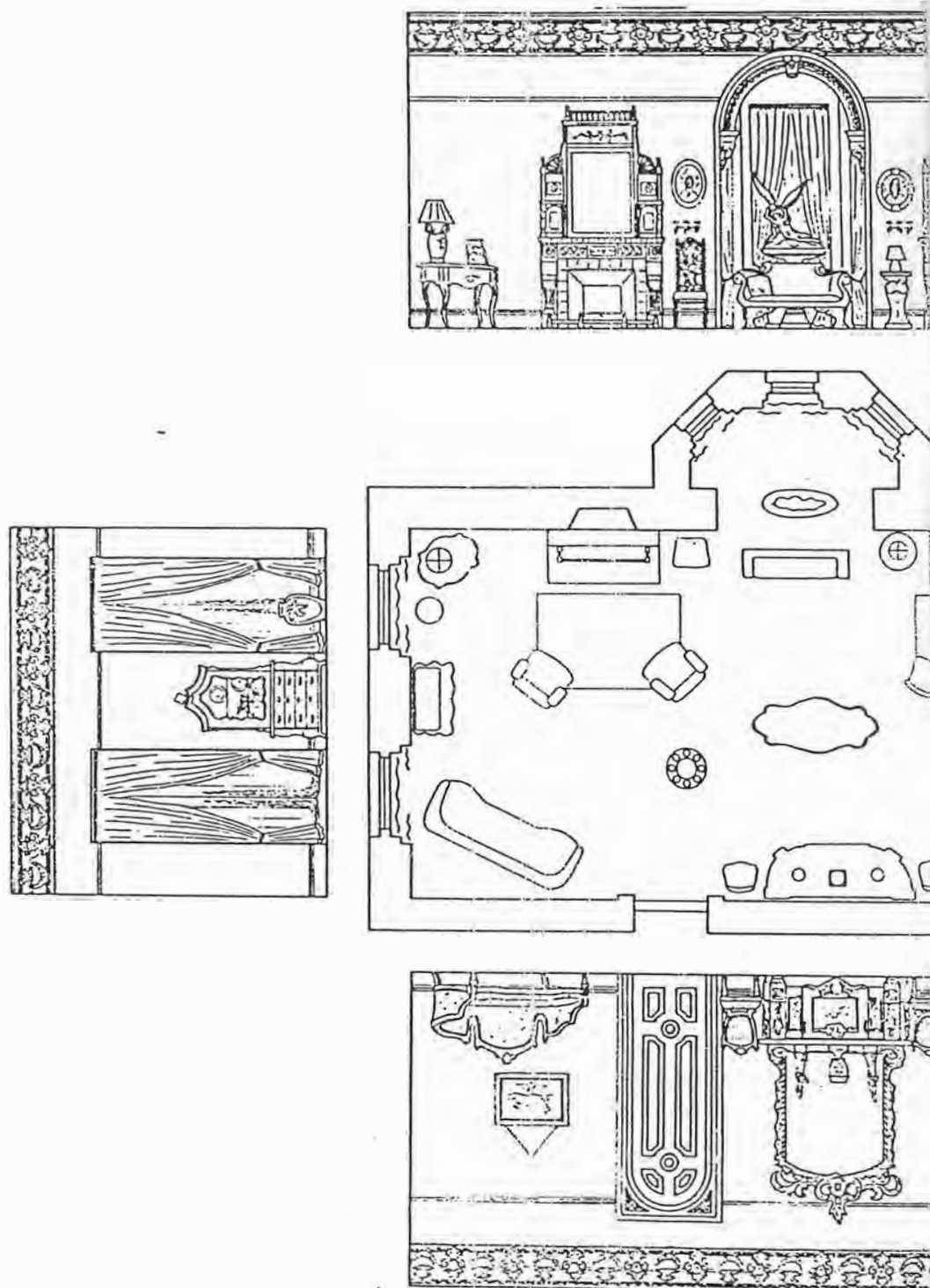


Figure 324. Plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely parlor

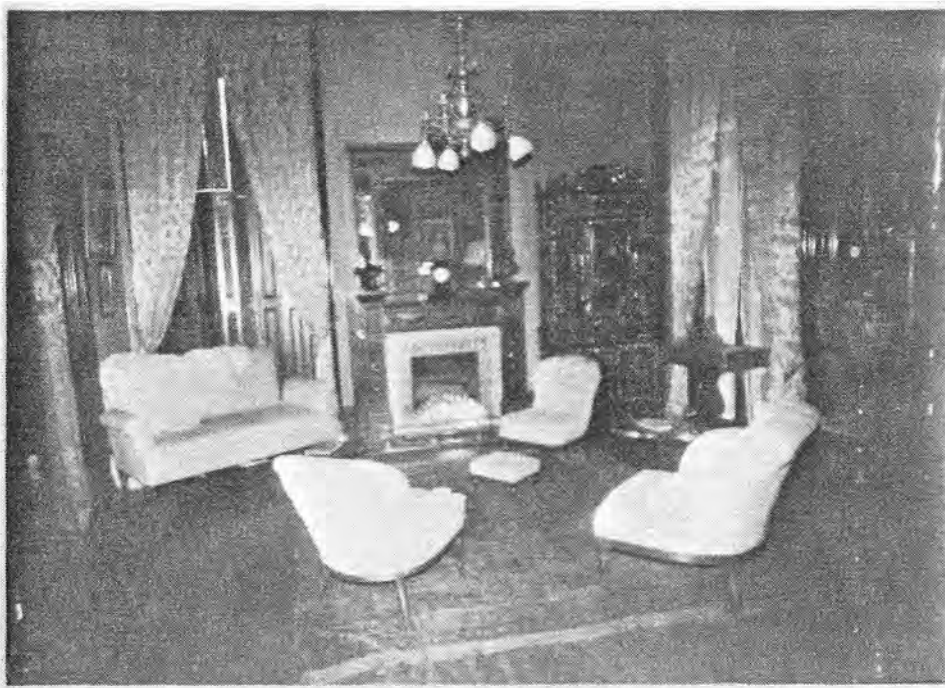


Figure 325. View of the Mallory-Neely sitting room showing the congregation of furniture out into the space of the room.

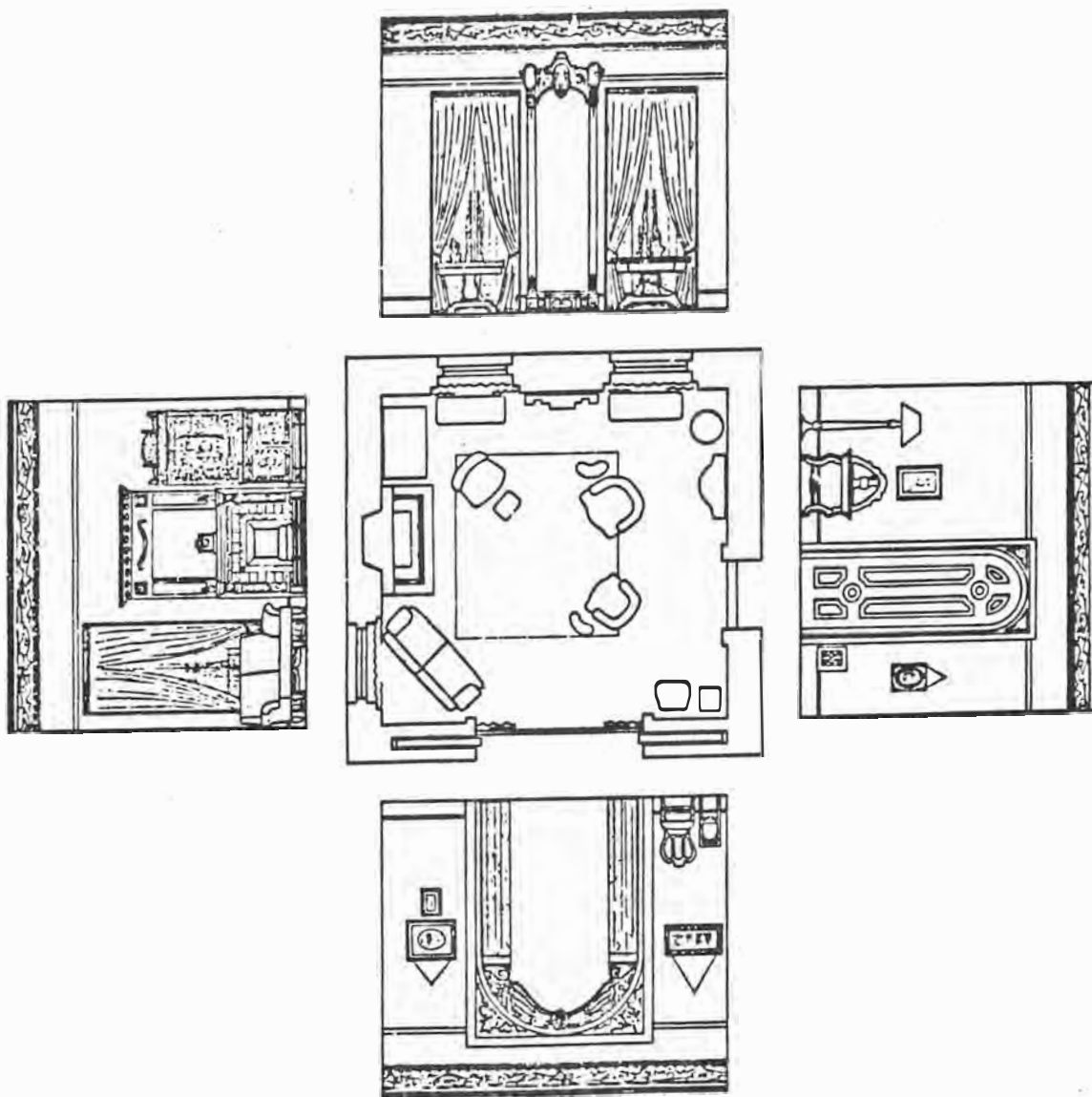


Figure 326. Plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely sitting room showing the arrangement of the furnishings.

VOLUME III

VICTORIAN MATERIAL CULTURE IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE:
THE MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE INTERIORS AS ARTIFACT

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Lawrence Allen Ray
August 1988

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CHAPTER X

THE MALLORY-NEELY INTERIORS: AN INTERPRETATION

Aesthetic material culture establishes boundaries, defines our particular situation, and separates us from others.¹

The Mallory-Neely House is much more than bricks, wood, ceramics, fibers, glass, and metal. The Kirtlands, Babbs, Neelys, and Mallorys built, decorated, and furnished a home, the architecture and contents of which are loaded with symbolism about their economic and cultural status in the Memphis community. Within this house a large percentage of the space was devoted to ceremonial areas as a setting for the symbolic rituals so important to nineteenth century elite society; further significant amounts of money and effort were expended toward this end. The visual symbols used in these areas are especially charged with meaning.

Victorian Ritual and Symbolism

Symbolism, ritual, and ceremony are key words in this particular interpretation of the Mallory-Neely house interiors. Because of their importance, these terms have been subject to a variety of definitions in a host of different academic disciplines ranging from

¹Simon J. Bronner, "Manner Books & Suburban Houses," Winterthur Portfolio, 18, No. 1 (January 1983), 68.

art history to sociology. Every culture is permeated with symbolism. It is an important universal form of human communication. A seemingly meaningless object or action can be used by an individual or a whole society to symbolize a perception. A symbolic object or event can recall or direct special attention. Ritual is a form of elaborated behavior while ceremony is one of social or cultural intercourse, both of these can range from simple ceremonies to those occasions that are ritualistically elaborated. Symbolism plays a major role in both ritual and ceremony.

Victorians were so drawn to ritual that it is now recognized as one of the period's most characteristic features.² This emphasis was the result of modernization. American society evolved from a predominantly rural-agrarian orientation to one that became increasingly urban, industrial, and sociologically complex. Because of these changes, American cultural and value systems were dramatically transformed. The Victorian emphasis on the home, family, and related rituals, ceremonies, and symbols is expressive of a need for psychological order or stability amidst the rapid changes occurring during the century.³ Symbolism and ritual especially aided in maintaining social control and order during the transition to modernization.⁴

Orrin E. Klapp in the introduction to Collective Search for Identity states that man is a symbolic animal, that he hungers for

²In order to explore the importance of ritual to the Victorians, the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, for example, hosted a seminar on April 21, 1984 entitled: "Ritual in Nineteenth Century America, an Interdisciplinary View."

³Howe, "Victorian Culture in America," 19.

⁴Ibid., 20.

symbolic balance, and that his very identity is a symbolic matter.⁵ He also says that cultural values and symbols, such as status and style symbols, become reliable reference points for humans.⁶ Klapp further states that the Industrial Revolution and its technological changes wiped away or disturbed the symbolic base of society, creating an imbalance.⁷ Thus, this break with the past coupled with excessive mobility created a feeling of traditionlessness and rootlessness. The resultant identity despair, with symbolic security in a flux, caused society to search for new symbols in order to restore symbolic balance and equilibrium.⁸

Symbolism of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852)

Because its architecture, interior decor, and contents are stylistically accumulative, the Mallory-Neely House represents a variety of changing symbolic attitudes in nineteenth century America. The first of these, chronologically, is revealed through an analysis of the symbolic architectural order of the house. In keeping with nineteenth century symbolism representing an ideology of spatial organization, as advocated by Downing and others, the visual divisions of the Mallory-Neely House, including its plan, facade and side

⁵Orrin E. Klapp, Collective Search for Identity (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1966), vii.

⁶Ibid., vii.

⁷Ibid., viii.

⁸Ibid., 21.

elevations, and garden setting, are separated into distinct public ceremonial, private, and service or productive areas.

In the houses promoted and illustrated by Downing and his followers, domestic spaces or apartments were created so that each was a separate sphere of activity having special characteristics according to their functions.⁹ This represented a radical change from the rigid formal plan of the eighteenth century house.¹⁰ Rooms in this new system were scaled and grouped by function such as social or domestic usage.¹¹ The author of The Cottage Builder's Manual stated that one of the most important steps in designing a house was "the division of the space enclosed into the various rooms or compartments so that each part can be allotted to its use and not conflict with that of another."¹²

To Downing this functional division of the house should also be expressed symbolically in the elevation. The entire domestic structure would therefore be expressive of the purpose for which it was intended.¹³ Pierson described this as the "elevated order and system of the whole plan."¹⁴ As late as 1883 Alexander Oakey

⁹Susan Williams, Savory Suppers and Fashionable Feasts: Dining in Victorian America (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 52.

¹⁰Early, 67.

¹¹Maass, The Victorian Home in America, 62.

¹²Baker, 211.

¹³Downing, Cottage Residences, 20.

¹⁴Pierson, 353.

in Building a Home was still following Downing's example when he stated that a home should be designed so that "from a distance one could recognize its use."¹⁵

At this time of increasing social instability when the home and family were evolving as symbols of moral order and stability, Downing and his followers felt that this easily read functional divisional system in the architectural elevation of a house was symbolic of the inner domestic life. It became even more so as the nineteenth century progressed due to the fact that emphasis was increasingly placed on the rigid hierarchial order within the Victorian home with father as the head of the household; in descending order ranked below him were mother, children, and servants.¹⁶ (Figure 327)

Visual perusal of the front facade of the Mallory-Neely House symbolically reveals the hierarchy within. The first floor containing the ceremonial public areas is much taller and visually more elaborate with its boldly projecting porch. Emphasis on this floor is aided by the elaborate front doors with stained glass framed by a large rusticated arch cut through the tower block. As the eye moves upward to the next two floors containing the private apartments of the family,

¹⁵Oakey, 72.

¹⁶Ames, "Sitting in (Neo-Grec) style," 53; visual hierarchial symbolism in one form or another has existed in Western cultures through most of the great historical eras. But the visual symbolism associated with family, home, and status became even more dramatically pronounced during the Victorian era in America. This is now generally recognized as a distinguishing characteristic of that period. See, for example: David P. Handlin, The American Home: Architecture and Society, 1815-1915 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), Chapter 1, pp. 3-88.

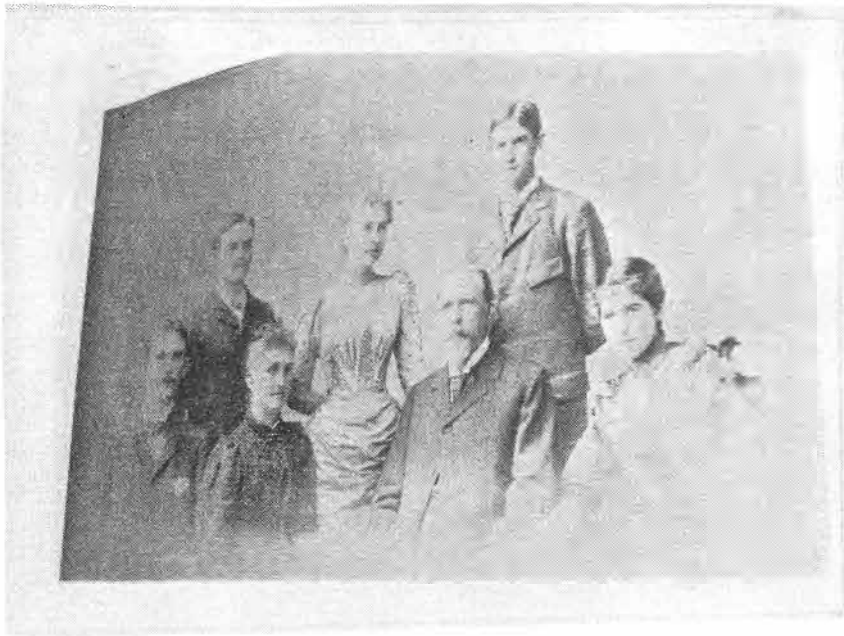


Figure 327. The large framed photograph of the Neely family displayed on the second floor hallway of the Mallory-Neely House symbolically reflects the hierarchial status in the Victorian family with James Columbus Neely as the central seated figure.

it is apparent that they diminish in scale and are less heavily ornamented.

The visual symbolism of the side elevation of the house reveals yet more significance. The main house is characterized by a monumentality of scale and an ornateness of decorative detail around windows, doors, on cornices, and elsewhere. This is in great contrast to the once separate kitchen-servants' wing. (Figure 328) This multi-storied block used for the practical aspects of the daily life of the household is visually plain and without ornamentation. Its function as the productive-service wing of the house would have been even more pronounced when it was totally separated from the main house.

A study of the interiors within reveal much the same symbolism. The main ceremonial floor of the house is grander in scale and no efforts were spared to give it a highly ornamented and rich appearance. On this floor, though, a strong visual difference exists between the public rooms and the one private family room, the morning room, which was kept relatively plain and understated in its decor. For the second and third floor private family apartments, the scale diminishes as does the richness of decorative finish. Within the private floor the size and decoration of the parents' chamber versus that of the children is also noticeable. (Figure 329)

The contrast between the main block of the house and the interior of the kitchen and servants' wing is even more pronounced. The interiors of this work area are bare and functional. Ceilings are low and the rooms are basically simple cubes or rectangles without architectural embellishment such as moldings or ornamental door-window



Figure 328. Rear view of the Mallory-Neely House.

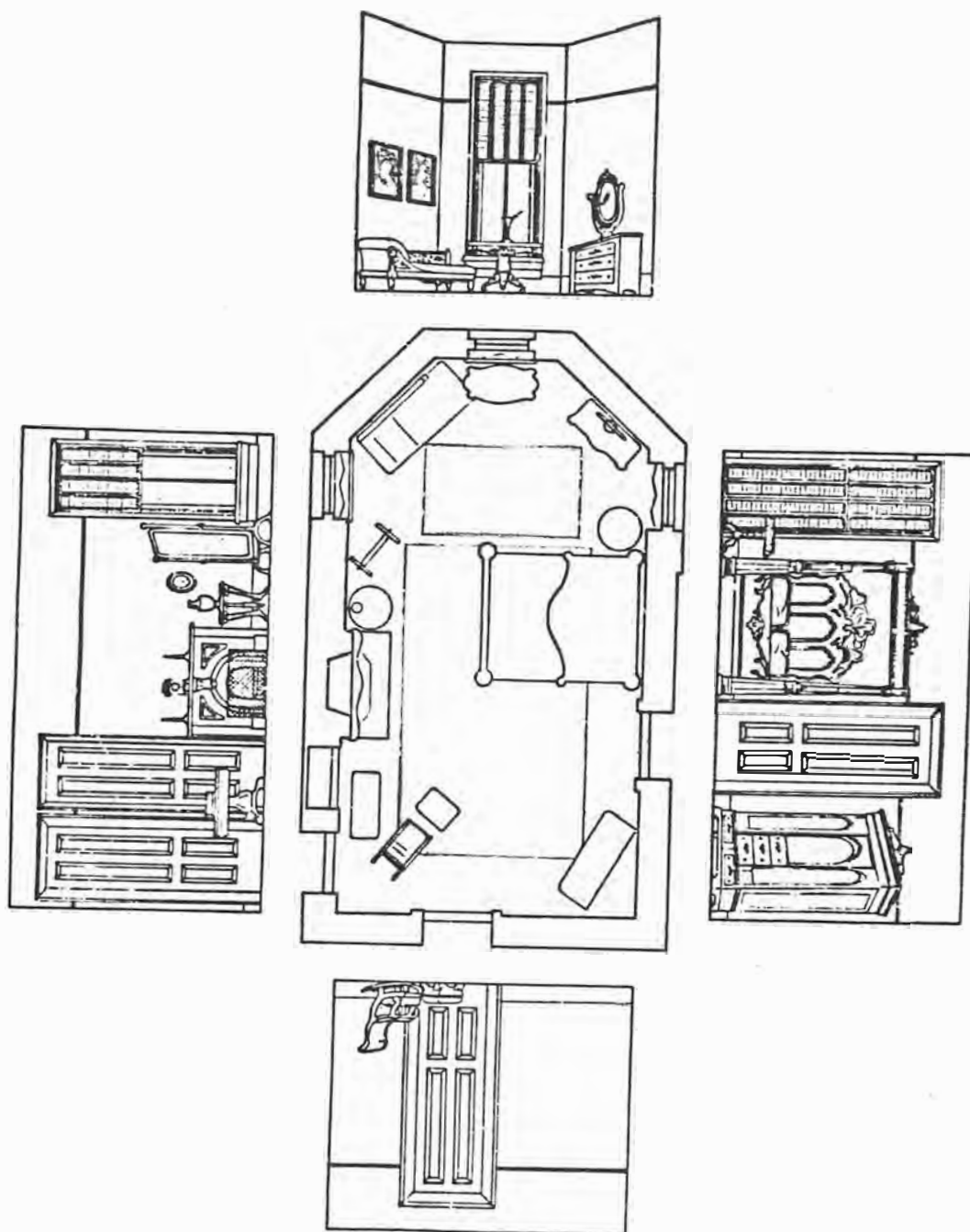


Figure 329. Plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely master bedroom. Hierarchical symbolism is expressed in the scale of this room and the richness of its furnishings which is in marked contrast to the other bedrooms in the house.

surrounds. Even the numerous fireplaces are just simple holes cut into the chimneys.

As noted, the grounds surrounding the house were also divided into a public ornamental front lawn adjoining the main house and a service area surrounding the servants' building with its kitchen garden, carriage house, and pasture. Fences and other screening elements separated the two.

The exterior architectural style was also encumbered with associative symbolic meaning. During much of the nineteenth century the Classical style of Greece and Rome was linked by Americans with democracy and related moral virtues. Though based on Italian farm architecture, the Italianate was seen as a domestic variant of the Classical. The Italianate style of Kirtland's suburban villa expressed not only the central importance of family life to society but also of the young egalitarian American democracy built through the hard toil of its citizenry and of the sound moral principles and virtues cherished by them.

Symbolism of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1890)

The post-1883 alterations to the house by J. C. Neely were totally in keeping with new symbols representing dramatic changes that were evolving by late century in the American social system. By this time the United States was experiencing flourishing economic growth as it developed into a major industrial power. Many of its citizens were enjoying unprecedented wealth and prosperity.

Solid republican virtues and a rigid, Evangelical Protestant work ethic gave way to the pursuit of money, ostentation, and

conspicuous consumption.¹⁷ Theological adjustment among many Americans ensued as revolutionary changes occurred in their attitude about success. Earlier generations equated material prosperity with morality, but after 1870 material progress came to be seen as a sign of God's grace.¹⁸

Though a transplanted European system existed during the Colonial era, American democratic egalitarianism had dominated since the revolution. The last three evolutionary decades of the nineteenth century witnessed what was probably the nearest that the United States has ever come to having a structured class system.¹⁹ Daniel W. Rossides pointed out in The American Class System that class consciousness and class struggle are associated with societies undergoing modernization but not with those having mature industrial systems.²⁰

Mark Twain's use of "The Gilded Era" as a title for this period aptly applies. Income from America's rapid industrialization and flourishing economy created an aristocracy of wealth. With no national precedent to follow, the new commercial elite took the European class structure as its role model.²¹ Early xenophobic insularity gave

¹⁷Lynes, The Domesticated Americans, 13; and Howe, "Victorian Culture in America," 19.

¹⁸Green, The Light of the Home, 7.

¹⁹See, for example, Joseph Alan Kahl, The American Class Structure (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1957).

²⁰Daniel W. Rossides, The American Class System (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Company, 1976), 447.

²¹This Fabulous Century: 1870-1900, Prelude, ed. Jerry Kern (New York: Time-Life Books, 1970), 180.

way to a greater cosmopolitanism among Americans as their nation took an active international role in world economic and political affairs. Earlier in the century Americans, proud of their democratic experiment, looked upon the European class structure and its culture as decadent.²² Suddenly symbols of a European hereditary leisured class, so long disdained, were "IN" among the nation's ruling elite.²³

New York at this time became the financial and social center of the nation. Its business aristocracy gave the social cues for similar elite in cities across the nation to follow. Almost all larger American cities developed a social elite molded in the manner of New York City. All, regardless of region, emulated the architecture, interior design, clothing fashion, and social ceremony.²⁴

Mass media periodicals, but especially the daily newspaper society section or column, aided in widely publicizing the concept of a leisured, aristocratic class following that of New York. The society column "spread tales of frivolity, social jockeying for position and the conspicuous waste of the social elite."²⁵ Photography was used by the various media to illustrate elite fashions, interiors,

²²Harvey Green, "The Victorian Way of Life," Paper presented at the 38th Annual Seminar on American Culture, 1 July 1985, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

²³Arthur M. Schlesinger, Learning How to Behave: A Study of American Etiquette Books (New York: Macmillan Company, 1941), 27-29.

²⁴Ross, 245-265.

²⁵Gerald Carson, The Polite Americans (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1966), 162.

and many other visual symbols of wealth and power. In a land without royalty, society became a substitute for many average Americans.

Charles Dudley Warner in Studies in the South and Southwest (1889) was keenly aware of the social homogenization that was taking place throughout the United States. As Warner traveled he observed that old sectional barriers were being destroyed through intercommunication and social assimilation. In the South he noted that the old civilization and traditions of the region were broken. Warner stated that the "social aristocracy of the planter class based on Colonial English prototypes was dead." Power was no longer held by the old families with inherited wealth, but, as elsewhere in the United States, money, now more than ever, equalled political and social clout.²⁶ E. Digby Baltzell in An American Business Aristocracy stated that after 1880 the local gentry throughout America in a nationalization of the upper classes gave way to a centralized business aristocracy.²⁷

Memphis, like other American cities, had its own local "gilded era" ruled over by a commercial aristocracy. Memphis papers of the time talk of "merchant princes" and their "palatial" homes located in the "aristocratic sections" of the city. Several decades earlier in Memphis these inflated appellations would have seemed pretentious and downright undemocratic. Now apparently opulent wealth and the power and prestige it brought were a source of admiration, envy, and emulation.

²⁶Warner, 34-38.

²⁷E. Digby Baltzell, An American Business Aristocracy (New York: Free Press, 1962), 157.

To feed the obvious public interest, numerous articles in late nineteenth century Memphis newspapers gave accounts of the social happenings and the daily life which included details about homes, interiors, and collections of New York based Gilded Era tycoons such as the Astors, Goulds, Vanderbilts, and Rockefellers. These newspapers, of course, gave even more graphic detail about their own local elite.

The Neely and Mallory families were very much members of this "gilded era" aristocracy. Both of these families had a distinguished heritage having been members of the pre-war landed planter class. They were certainly not nouveau riche; this refutes the impression often given that all Gilded Era aristocrats were newly rich and therefore tasteless. Both families' late century financial, political, and social power was due to the fact that they had the foresight to leave the land, move into the city, and enter the American business world just at the right time. They used their earlier land-based economic capital to build even greater fortunes.

Both the Neely and Mallory families were in close contact with fellow financial elites in New York City as well as those in other cities like Chicago and St. Louis. The two Neely daughters, for example, attended an exclusive girls' school in New York City during the height of the Gilded Era. Memphis newspapers record annual visits of family members to New York and other important social centers. Members of the Neely, Mallory, and Grant families intermarried with the elite of other cities like New York, Boston, and Knoxville.

The Mallory family had a direct linkage with major American Gilded Era personalities through Mary Mallory Harrahan, Mrs. Daisy Mallory's sister-in-law. In 1899 Mary married James T. Harrahan, son of Edward Harrahan, a director for twenty-six years and President of the Illinois Central Railroad at its peak of greatness. John Jacob Astor, William Waldorf Astor, Cornelius Vanderbilt, John Auchincloss, and Charles A. Peabody served on his board of directors. Edward Harrahan owned the major share of IC Railroad stock and large holdings in the Union Pacific and South Pacific Railroads, "giving him primary control of U.S. railroad affairs."²⁸ His son James served as president of the ICRR from 1906 to 1911 and was responsible for making Memphis a major hub of the Illinois Central Line.

The Neelys' post-1883 alterations were very much symbolic of the family's position on the top rung of Memphis' business and cultural strata. The stylistic symbolism of Kirtland's Italianate villa was now outdated. Dianne Pilgrim in a lecture entitled "Decorative Arts and the American Renaissance" stated that between 1876 and 1917 the house became the most obvious and visible sign of an individual's station and standing in the community. The type of house and its interior decoration very much reflected the personality and desires of the owner. She further stated that by this time the

²⁸H. S. Cheap and John F. Stover, History of the Illinois Central Railroad (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1975), 207-208, 226.

home had become, in a sense, a means of self-advertisement.²⁹
(Figure 330)

The Neelys enlargement of the house into a baronial castle was in keeping with what fellow members of the financial elite in New York and across the nation were doing. Influenced by or directly copied after castles, chateaux, and palaces, the newly fashionable styles of architecture communicated associative symbolic references to Old World Europe and its aristocratic traditions. The sheer mass and size of the Neelys' vertically enlarged home spoke of grandeur and power.

The Neelys' interior alterations and furnishings relayed the same symbolic messages in keeping with the Victorians' "social ideology of display and presentation."³⁰ The scale and size of the rooms; the richly ornamented surfaces; the splendid materials of crystal, marble, and costly woods; the excessive use of gilding; the grand and expensive furnishings; the sumptuous textiles and carpeting; and the sheer, density of the contents conveyed a collective message of prosperity and conspicuous consumption.

Throughout are symbols associated with hereditary European monarchy and aristocracy. These include plaster heraldic crests ornamenting the arch of the parlor alcove, royal fleur-de-lis used in the stair-hallway stenciling and as the main motif of the sitting

²⁹Dianne Pilgrim, "The Decorative Arts and the American Renaissance," Paper presented at the McFaddin-Ward House Museum Conference: "American Home in Transition, 1890-1930," Beaumont, Texas, 30 October 1987.

³⁰Green, The Light of the Home, 44.

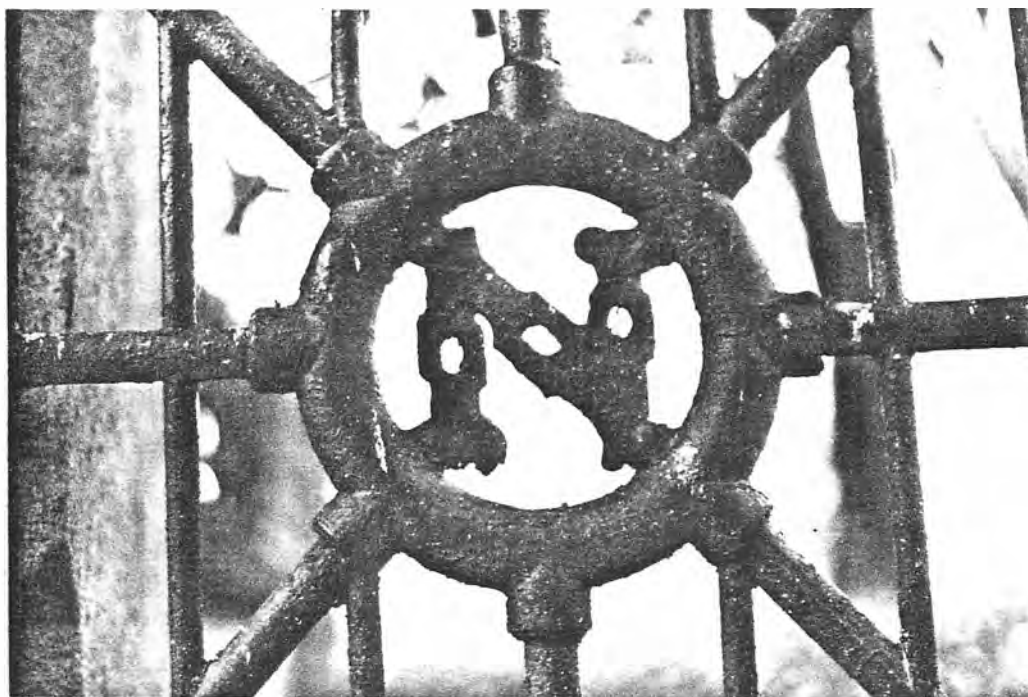


Figure 330. Neely initial on the front gate of the Mallory-Neely House.

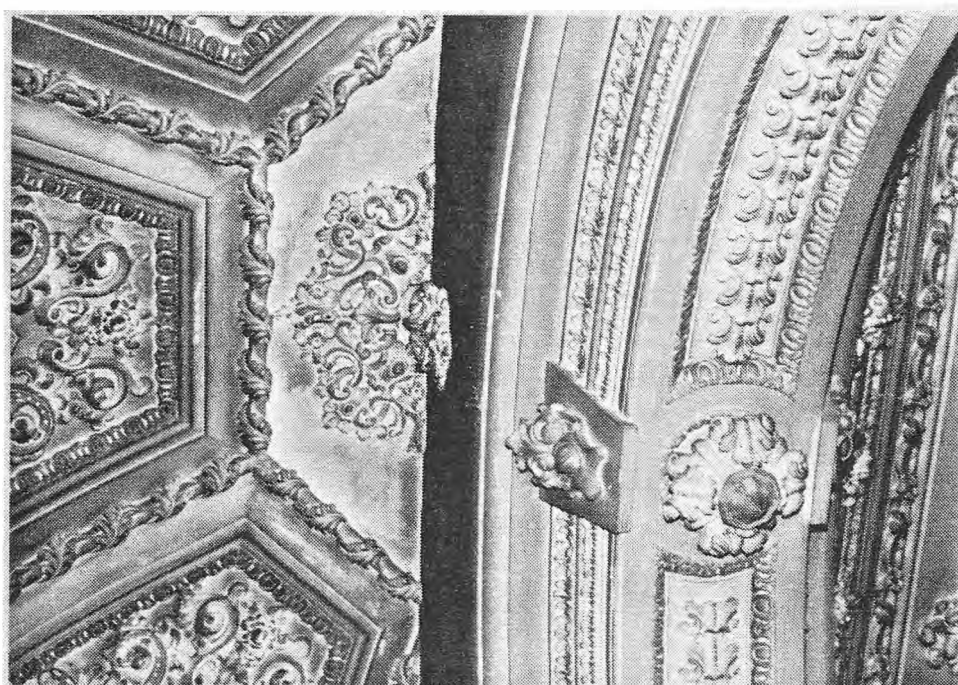
room wallpaper, and painted portraits of famous European royalty, each centering small plates. (Figures 331, 332, and 333) Because of their richness many of the individual pieces of furniture communicate regality and elitism, especially the reproduction French commode in the manner of Jean-Henri Riesener, favorite cabinetmaker of Marie Antoinette. (Figure 334) A gift from the super-wealthy Harrahans to the Mallorys, its scale and the materials used for its decoration, such as the elaborate marquetry and applied ormolu, exude opulence. (Figure 334 and 335)

Antiques and family portraits gave the image of "old family," while international collectables relaid that of a cosmopolitan, well-traveled family. Art works including oils, prints, watercolors, and sculptures suggested that a cultured family resided here. Constituting what Veblen labeled the recognized "standards of wealth," all these artifacts symbolically transmitted through nonverbal commentary the message that this was an aristocratic family in the grandest European tradition who had the power, money, education, taste, and leisure to travel, collect and enjoy the finest that life had to offer!³¹

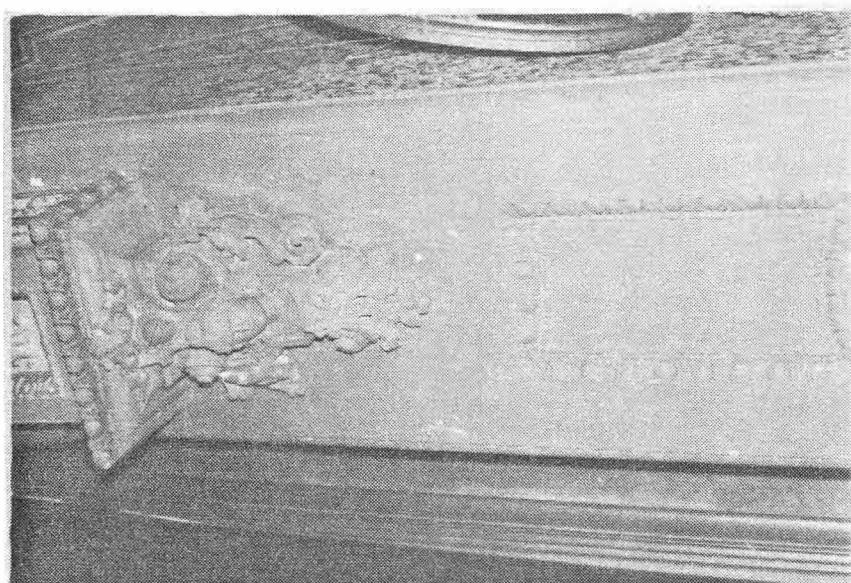
The aristocratic symbolism of the Neelys' grandly remodeled house is made more poignant when one compares it to the homes of the middle and poorer classes at that time who constituted by far the largest portion of the city's population.³² These houses or

³¹Veblen, 66.

³²Miller, 19.



A



B

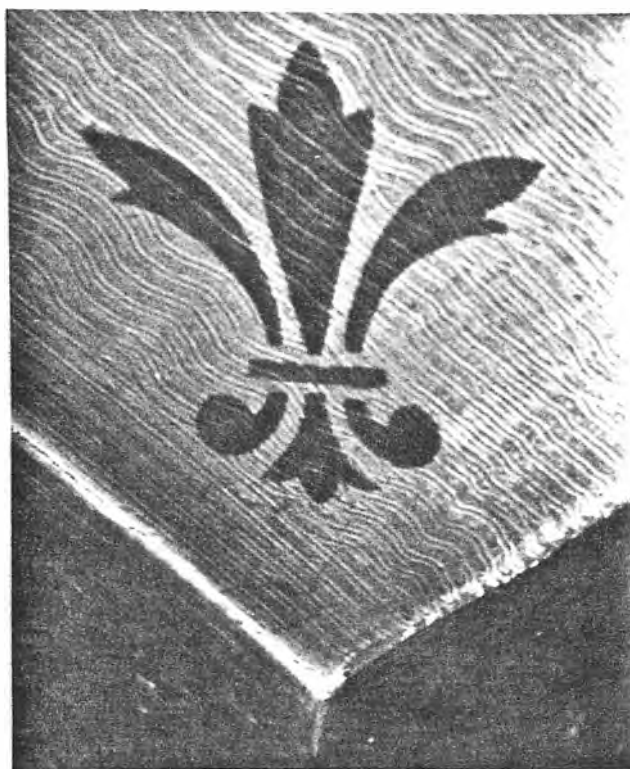
Figure 331. Stylized heraldic crests.

A. A stylized heraldic crest adorns the keystone of the Mallory-Neely parlor alcove arch.

B. Others are placed above the grotesque heads centering the consoles supporting the arch.



A



B

Figure 332. Royal fleur-de-lis patterns.

- A. The central motif of the Mallory-Neely sitting room paper.
- B. The central motif of the Mallory-Neely hallway stenciling.

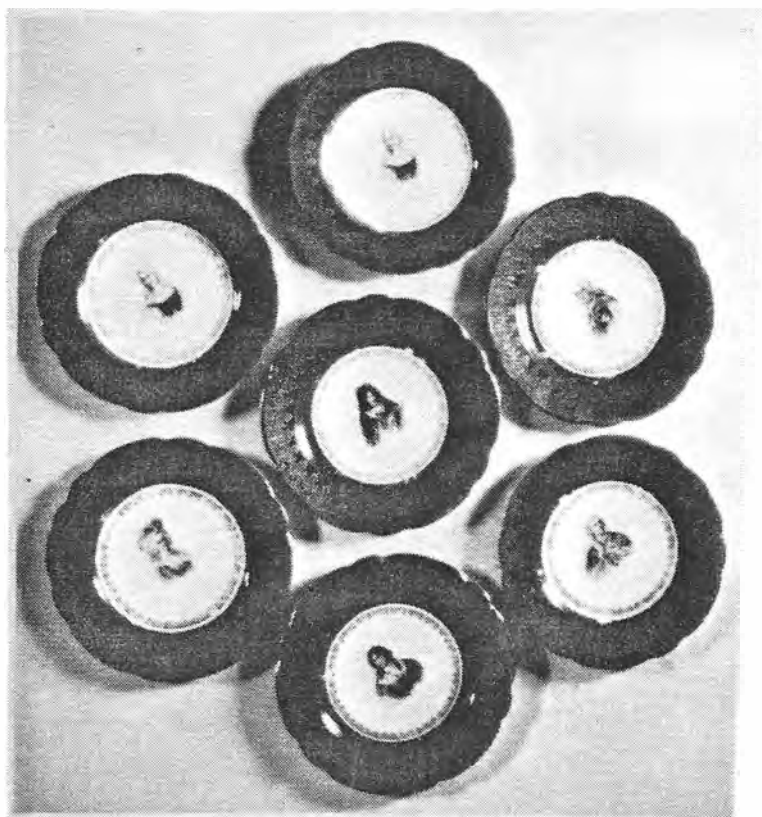


Figure 333. Part of the Mallory-Neely china collection. These porcelain plates have a wide maroon colored border overlaid with a gold filigree design. In the center of each is a handpainted portrait of a noted European monarch. Louis XIV, for example, is in the center.



A



B

Figure 334. Nineteenth century reproduction of an eighteenth century French commode located in the Mallory-Neely parlor. It was a wedding present to his brother-in-law from the railroad magnate, James T. Harrahan.
A. French commode.
B. Close-up showing detail.



A



B

Figure 335. Details of the bronze mounts of the Mallory-Neely French commode.
A. Cupid.
B. Hercules.

photographs of them remain as material culture documents of an increasingly stratified class system.

A lot of middle class housing from this time period survives in Memphis. Particularly good examples exist in the Greenlaw-Chelsea area, the city's earliest suburb, begun in 1856 and populated by mercantile and artisan families; in the same category is the Annesdale neighborhood.³³ In comparison to the Mallory-Neely House, they sit on much smaller lots and contrast dramatically in scale. All types of materials were used for their construction, but wood was especially common. Stylistically, most are simplified or vernacular versions of high style Victorian architecture.³⁴ (Figure 336)

The city's lowest class was made up of assorted immigrants, poor whites, and blacks who constituted 49% of the city's population by 1900.³⁵ Most of these blacks and whites moved into Memphis from the vast rural hinterland surrounding the city. They formed a laboring class that lived on the very fringe of society with no economic power whatsoever.³⁶ Little is known about the housing of the poor

³³See Peggy Boyce Jemison, Virginia Dunaway, and Ray Ann Kremer, Greenlaw Rediscovered, A History (Memphis: Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association, 1979).

³⁴See Alan Gowans, The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture, 1890-1930 (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1987).

³⁵Harkins, Metropolis of the American Nile, 105.

³⁶Ibid., 109-11.



Figure 336. George C. Love House (1889) in the Greenlaw suburb. It is probably the most noted example of a wooden, vernacular style, middle class Victorian dwelling in Memphis.

who, because of their poverty, left "few marks of cultural or material respectability."³⁷ The following description characterizes black housing in the entire South:

They lived in one or two room shacks . . . located alongside and near railroads, near dumpheaps, in back yards, in back alleys, always unsightly, often extremely dirty and unsanitary. Usually their streets were muddy and poorly lighted or not lighted at all. One water spigot outside in a yard would have to suffice for one or more houses. Sewerage systems had not yet been extended to them, drainage was poor, filth was everywhere . . . the worst type of landlordism was developed. . . . Houses were built in the flimsiest manner at the lowest possible cost and rented at the highest possible cost.³⁸

In Memphis the poorer classes crowded into slum areas north and south of the major business district of the city. These ghettos expanded at the turn of the century into blighted areas abandoned by the white elite as they moved into newer, more fashionable areas. The Memphis poor lived mainly, as many still do, in shanties of one room or more, in rental housing, and in dilapidated homes abandoned by the middle or upper classes.

Fortunately, a collection of turn-of-the-century photographs in the Memphis-Shelby County Public Library's Susan Coulan Scruggs' Papers survives as the material culture antithesis to the Mallory-Neely House.³⁹ Together they visually represent the extremes of the late Victorian class structure in Memphis. Mrs. Thomas Scruggs

³⁷Ibid., 19.

³⁸Culture in the South, ed. W. T. Couch (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), 454.

³⁹Susan Coulan Scruggs Papers, Special Collections, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library.

was a remarkable lady who moved from her native Boston in 1899 after her marriage to a prominent local judge. In the fullest spirit of the Progressive Movement, she devoted the remainder of her life to benevolent works on behalf of the children of the city's poor. Her numerous worthy causes ranged from children's health care to the creation of neighborhood playgrounds.

Her numerous papers well document these activities, but much rarer and far more valuable are the photographs that she made, visually recording the plight of the Memphis poor and indigent. Fortunately, she sometimes identified the subjects of these photographs with short notations on the reverse side. Collectively, these rare photographs give insight into the lives of a segment of the population who, because of the lack of written or visual documentation, have usually been forgotten by history. Material culturalists, especially, have emphasized the value of photographs as a primary research tool. The Scruggs' photographic collection provides a sobering view into the lives of both black and white poor during the Victorian Era. Her uncompromisingly candid portraits of crippled, deformed, diseased, and orphaned children are heart-rending. This is made even more so by an occasional clipping she saved from the Memphis papers and tucked among the photos. One relates the story of an entire family found dead from starvation; another tells of children left orphaned by the tubercular death of their only parent.⁴⁰ She also photographed

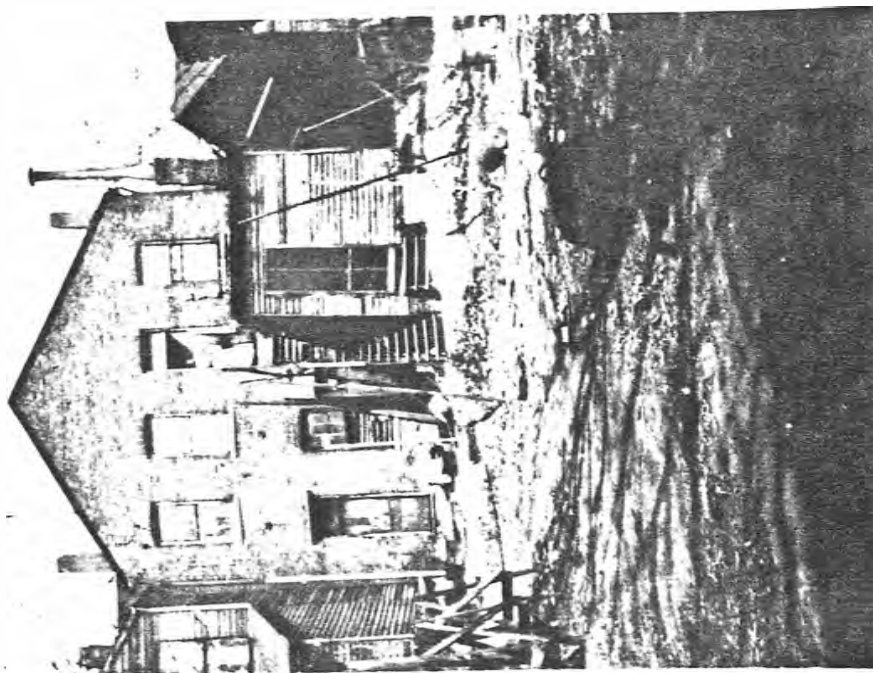
⁴⁰Susan Coulan Scruggs Papers [assorted newspaper clippings], n.d., Photography Folder.

the slum districts and slum housing in which these unfortunate children lived. (Figures 337 and 338)

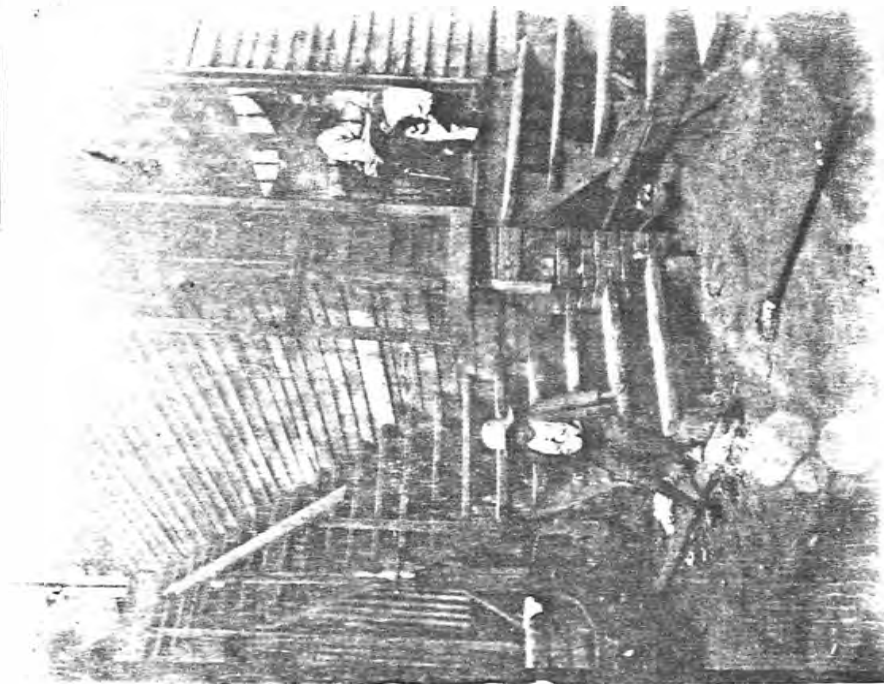
Visual comparison of the interiors and furnishings of the Mallory-Neely House with that of average to poor Memphians during the turn-of-the-century is more difficult, but what remains reveals an even greater gulf between classes. Furniture used by the middle class during this period still abounds in the city's antique and junk shops and in many family homes. Frequent furniture store advertisements in the daily newspapers also illustrate this inexpensive, middle-range furniture. (Figures 339 and 340) Most of it was mass produced at Grand Rapids and other manufacturing centers. (Figure 341) Not all, but much of it, is cheaply constructed. It is difficult to give this furniture a name since in order to make it more economical, it is characterized by stylistic ambiguity. Usually there is a slight reference to a historic style, most often the rococo. Much of this is today popularly labeled the "Golden Oak" style.⁴¹ (Figure 342) Suites of this furniture were popular: parlor, bedroom, and dining room sets abound. The Campbell Furniture Company of Memphis, for example, illustrated a complete bedroom suite in golden oak for \$13.50!⁴² The firm of Rosenbaum & Mendel announced in their 4 November 1900 advertisement that they had searched the furniture marts of the North and East and had purchased the best goods from these for

⁴¹See Oak Furniture: Styles and Prices (Des Moines, Iowa: Wallace Homestead Book Company, 1978).

⁴²Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 21 October 1900, 9.

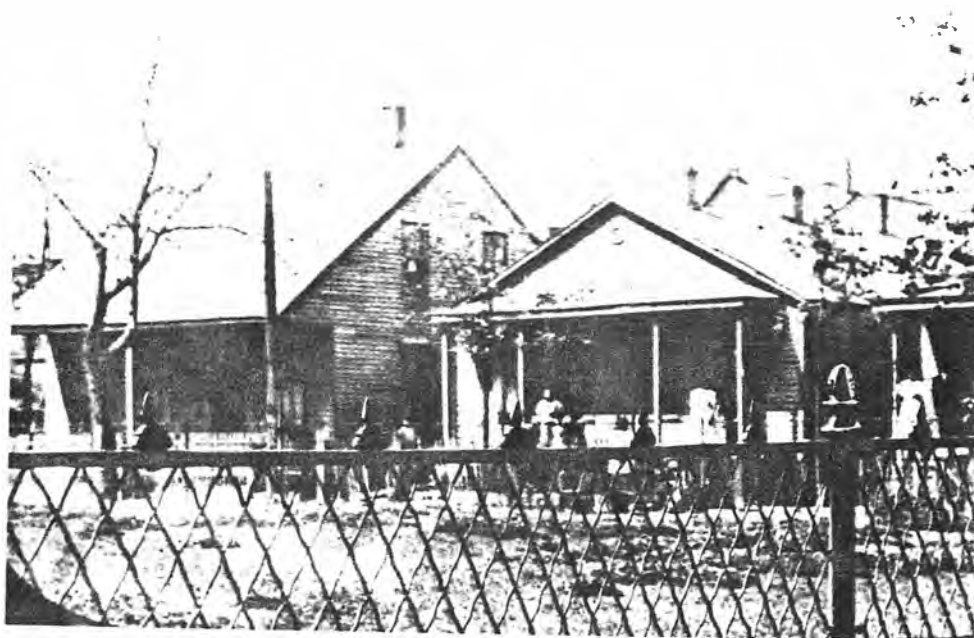


A

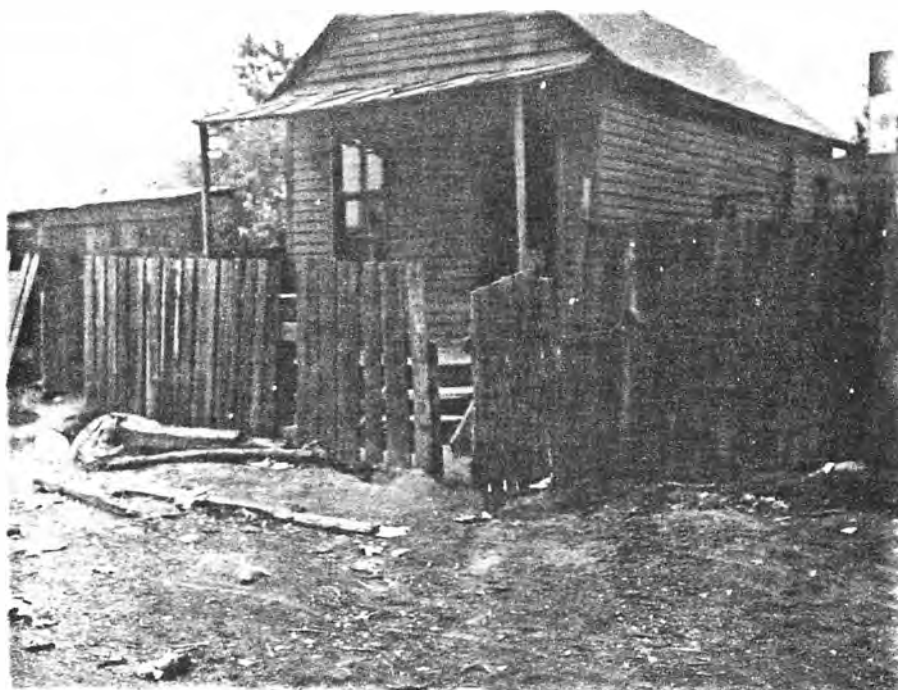


B

Figure 337. Photographs of turn-of-the-century slum housing in Memphis from the Susan Coulan Scruggs Papers. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.
 A. Blighted neighborhood dwelling.
 B. Slum tenement dwelling.



A



B

Figure 338. More photographs of Memphis turn-of-the-century slum housing from the Susan Coulan Scruggs Papers. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.
A. Wood framed rental housing.
B. Tenement dwelling.

DESIGN FINISH LOW PRICES

WINNERS IN THE FURNITURE RACE

Campbell's OF COURSE.

It was a master stroke of a clever
lover that enabled us to sell a

**Solid Oak,
Brace-
Armed
Dining
Chair,**
at

75c

Davenport

Neatly made up upholstered in
velours all colors, oak and mahog-
any. We don't blame a dealer to be
tempted to charge more than

\$25.00

Dealers not
selling as many
as we would
have to get more
for this

CHIFFONIER

Golden oak
new top draw-
er French Plate
glass mirror,
finely carved.

\$8.75

..351..
MAIN STREET
MEMPHIS

Campbell Furniture Co.

WHOLESALE
..AND..
..RETAIL..

Figure 339. A 7 October 1900 Memphis newspaper advertisement showing characteristic pieces of turn-of-the-century middle class furniture.

MAIL
ORDERS
SOLICITED

ROSENBAUM & MENDEL

70, 72, 72½ BEALE STREET.

YOUR
CREDIT IS
GOOD.

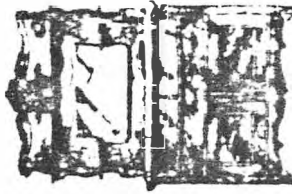
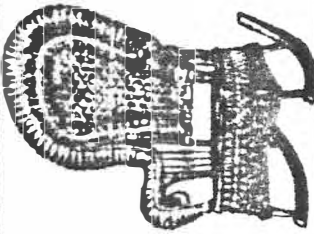
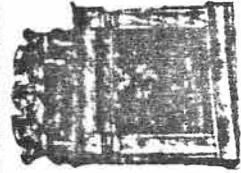
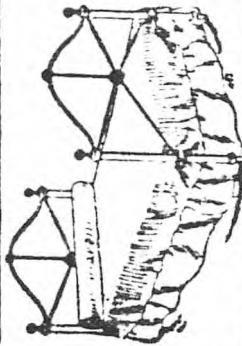
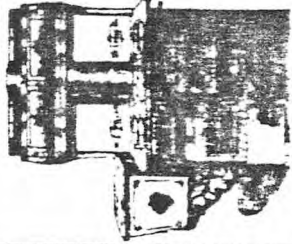
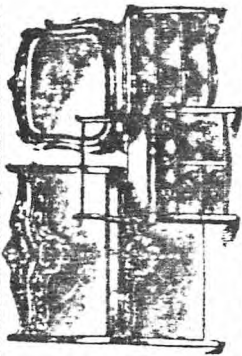
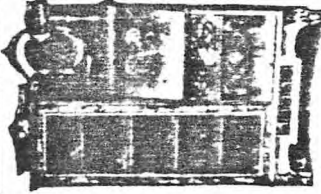
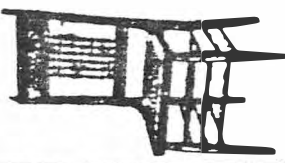
Solid Oak Side-board  \$10	All Kinds of Chiffoniers  \$6	Willow Rockers Like Out  \$3.50	Upright Mantel or Iron Folding Beds, All Sizes, Oak or Mahogany.  From \$12 up
China Closet  \$15.00	Double Strength Bedstead  \$7.50	This Range  \$18.50	SOLID OAK Three-Place BED ROOM SUIT, with French plate mirror.  \$12.35
Combination Book Case and Writing Desk Oak or Mahogany  \$8.00	High Back Oak Dining Chairs, Table or Saddle Seat  75c	with complete set of Cooking Vessels. \$25 A 5 year guarantee as complete as new range.	

Figure 340. A 7 October 1900 Memphis newspaper advertisement showing characteristic turn-of-the-century middle class furniture.



Figure 341. Page from the 1889 catalog of the Pinkham & Willis Company showing a characteristic parlor suite priced moderately for the middle class market. Compare this suite with the more costly Mallory-Neely Renaissance Revival suite shown in Figures 253-255, pages 624-626, respectively.

Weeks 8-12

Week 4: Festivals



7. Hot Here is a good
for little money
quarter-sized oak
and polished. It
lucres, with 2 h
The French mirror
large, size 12 1/2
gate large drawers
drop-leaf. Inside
titled with glass
drawers. Weight

We Lead The

automatic drawer
drawers are 14 1/2" in
are partitioned in
total are 17 inches
side assembly of
Price includes part
Weight about 225
back Price only

side. If desired, also
#120 Low Curtain
except it is 4 feet
and cheap. Weight
Price.
#127 Low Curtain
is 5 feet long. We
Price. only
We have desks with

work to meet your automatic drawer requirements. All drawers, two drawers are particularly rugged in construction, 11 1/2 inches deep. Features: This desk is labeled Satisfaction Guaranteed. Weight 100 lbs. Price only \$199.95. We can furnish blow-up sides, if desired at the

except is 4 feet d
We'll, about 25 p
Price only
1100. High curtain
is 5 feet long. This
you. The standard
Price is extremely
popular.
A bargain only
We can furnish all
slides, if desired, at a

**The World on 6
Desks.**

We show a much larger line of desks, by our

automatic drawer lock operated by turn drawers are 14 1/2 inches wide inside and are partitioned in each pedestal. Book rails are 17 inches high and 1 1/4 inches wide. Number of plexiglass holes in top 24. Price includes packing and a set of 14 keys. Weight about 225 pounds. This desk back Price only.

12100 High curtain desk same as 73120's
 is 5 foot long. This desk will more than
 fit you. The standard set very large and the
 price is extremely low. Weight, about
 pounds.
 A bargain only.
 We can furnish above with drawers on
 slides, if desired, at same price.

Ladies' or Parlor Desks.
We show a much larger line of Parlor Desks in our

new special furniture, which we mail for 8 cents to you
 postage.



Like ladder or pulley back, well made of solid oak, carved and highly polished. Height, 4 feet, width 2 feet 3 inches. Has drop

leaf and the drawer inside is nicely partitioned with pigeon holes and drawers. Weight, about 40 pounds. A bargain.




3101 Ladies' or Parlor Desk
Made of quartered oak
finely hand carved and highly

polished. Height 4 feet; width
2 feet 4 inches. Has large drip-
leaf and rose drawer. Inside is
painted traditional with pigment.

holes and drawers. Weight almost
50 pounds. A good design, and
extra well made. Price, only \$25.00

c pieces of golden o

the 1895 Montgomer
Publications, Inc.

Publications, Inc.

Figure 342. Characteristic pieces of golden oak furniture as illustrated in the 1895 Montgomery Ward catalog. Courtesy Dover Publications, Inc.

the Memphis market.⁴³ Golden oak furnishings of all kinds are illustrated along with metal beds and an assortment of inexpensive wicker pieces. Another company, Hunter's, illustrated in their various ads all kinds of furniture with vague reference to the Louis XV style including an oak lady's desk listed at \$3.98, a large hall seat mirror listed at \$12.50, and a fancy rocker at \$2.75.⁴⁴ (Figure 343) These provide a contrast in quality compared to the grand furnishings of the Mallory-Neely House.

The Sears Roebuck Company and Montgomery Ward Company catalogs of the later decades of the century are filled with illustrations of decorative furnishings for the middle class American home. Much of it is very similar to the stylish items in the Mallory-Neely House but of much cheaper quality and poorer design. (Figure 344) These illustrations include parquet flooring, lace and drapery panels, portieres, and Brussels roll carpeting.⁴⁵

As would be expected, very little is known about the interiors and furnishings of the laboring class and the poor.⁴⁶ One stunning

⁴³Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 4 November 1900, 7.

⁴⁴Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 4 November 1900, 12.

⁴⁵See Montgomery Ward & Co. Catalog & Buyers Guide--No. 57, Spring and Summer, 1895; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969, and The 1897 Sears-Roebuck Catalogue No. 104; reprint, New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1968.

⁴⁶See Lizabeth Cohen, "Respectability at \$50.00 Down, 25 Months to Pay! Furnishing a Working-Class Victorian Home," Victorian Furniture, ed. Kenneth Ames (Philadelphia: The Victorian Society in America, 1982), 233-242.

FURNITURE

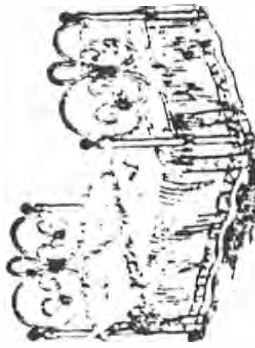
HUNTER'S

FURNITURE

New Shipment Enamel Beds

enables us to make special offering
in this attractive pattern at

\$3.98



Ladies' Desks,

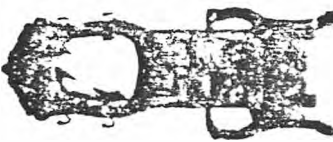


DESK AND
MIRROR

\$3.98

Dressing Tables **\$6.98,**
\$8.50, \$10.00

Hall Seat Mirrors



REGENT
CHAIR AND
STANDING
MIRROR

This
exceptional
value for
money
golden opportunity

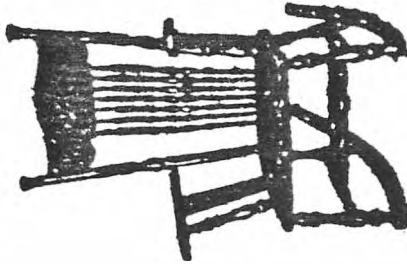
\$12.50

WE HAVE THEM FROM **\$4.98** UP

Fancy Rockers

large lot to select from. This pattern,
oak or mahogany, leather
seat, neat in design and finish, only

\$2.75



Dining Room Furniture is a special strong point with us, and for this week we offer real bargains in sideboards, tables, chairs and china cabinets. Come and see, for we can save you money.

Bamboo novelties in ladies seats, tables, window chairs, corner chairs, what not, etc.

Old pieces and full suits for the perfect leather pastiche and velvet couches.

Figure 343. A 4 November 1900 Memphis newspaper advertisement for Hunter's Furniture Company. It shows characteristic pieces of turn-of-the-century middle class furniture.

MONTGOMERY WARD & CO.'S CATALOGUE No. 57.

599

Parlor Furniture—Continued.



72042 Parlor Suit. Here is a beautiful recreation of parlor suit, made of solid oak, natural birch of imitation mahogany, and richly upholstered in brocade, velvety or plush, samples mailed free. Frame is nicely carved and well finished. This is just the thing for a small house. Weight, about 125 pounds. Suit consists of sofa, arm chair and parlor.

Grade	H.	K.	L.	F.	R.
Sofa	\$7.00	\$7.20	\$7.45	\$8.20	\$8.75
Arm chair	4.75	5.05	5.25	6.85	7.35
Parlor	3.15	3.35	3.60	3.85	4.25
	\$14.93	\$15.70	\$16.20	\$18.00	\$19.35



72043 Suit. This is a very monumental and pretty recreation suit. Made in natural birch, imitation mahogany or solid oak, hand carved and nicely finished. Samples of covering mailed free. The work in this suit is very clever and handsome, very comfortable and well made. Weight, about 150 pounds. Suit consists of sofa, arm chair, rocker and parlor.

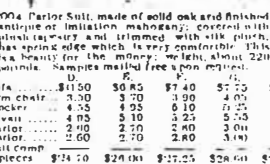
Grade	H.	K.	L.	F.	R.
Sofa	\$8.25	\$8.45	\$8.75	\$10.20	\$11.10
Arm chair	5.00	5.25	5.45	6.85	7.40
Rocking	3.85	4.05	4.25	5.25	5.65
Parlor	3.30	3.50	3.75	4.50	4.90
	\$20.25	\$20.65	\$21.25	\$24.80	\$27.05

Parlor Furniture—Continued.



72044 Parlor Suit, made of solid oak and finished antique of imitation mahogany, covered with plush (silk) or velvet, and trimmed with silk plush, has spring edge which is very comfortable. This is a beauty for the money. Weight, about 220 pounds. Samples mailed free upon request.

Grade	H.	K.	L.	F.	R.
Sofa	\$11.50	\$12.00	\$12.40	\$14.00	\$15.00
Arm chair	7.00	7.20	7.40	8.80	9.40
Rocking	4.55	4.75	4.95	5.75	6.15
Parlor	4.05	4.25	4.45	5.25	5.65
Suit comp.	2.00	2.10	2.20	2.80	3.00
6 pieces	\$24.10	\$24.05	\$24.25	\$28.60	\$30.60



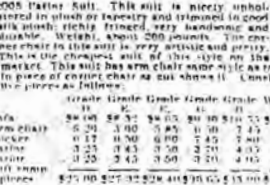
72045 Parlor Suit. This suit is nicely upholstered in plush or velvet and trimmed in good silk plush, richly fringed, very handsome and durable. Weight, about 260 pounds. The corner chair in this suit is very artistic and pretty. This is the cheapest suit of this style on the market. This suit has arm chair, sofa, and rocker in place of corner chair as suit shown. Consists of the pieces as follows:

Grade	H.	K.	L.	F.	R.
Sofa	\$9.00	\$9.20	\$9.40	\$10.80	\$11.60
Arm chair	5.50	5.70	5.90	7.00	7.50
Rocking	4.00	4.20	4.40	5.20	5.60
Parlor	3.25	3.45	3.65	4.25	4.65
Suit comp.	1.25	1.35	1.45	1.80	2.00
5 pieces	\$22.00	\$22.30	\$22.60	\$26.60	\$28.30



72046 Parlor Suit. This suit is nicely upholstered in plush or velvet and trimmed in good silk plush, richly fringed, very handsome and durable. Weight, about 260 pounds. The corner chair in this suit is very artistic and pretty. This is the cheapest suit of this style on the market. This suit has arm chair, sofa, and rocker in place of corner chair as suit shown. Consists of the pieces as follows:

Grade	H.	K.	L.	F.	R.
Sofa	\$9.00	\$9.20	\$9.40	\$10.80	\$11.60
Arm chair	5.50	5.70	5.90	7.00	7.50
Rocking	4.00	4.20	4.40	5.20	5.60
Parlor	3.25	3.45	3.65	4.25	4.65
Suit comp.	1.25	1.35	1.45	1.80	2.00
5 pieces	\$22.00	\$22.30	\$22.60	\$26.60	\$28.30



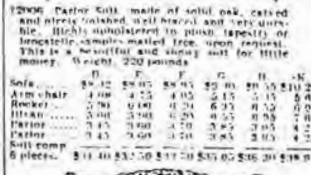
To the best of our knowledge and belief we sell more Baby Carriages than any other one firm in America, outside of wholesalers. We are able, therefore, to secure the latest styles and designs, the best workmanship and the lowest prices. We Give What We Get.

Parlor Furniture—Continued.



72046 Parlor Suit, made of solid oak, carved and nicely finished with velvet and silk plush. Highly upholstered in plush, velvety or longpile, samples mailed free upon request. This is a beautiful and sturdy suit for little money. Weight, 220 pounds.

Grade	H.	K.	L.	F.	R.
Sofa	\$9.12	\$9.32	\$9.52	\$10.80	\$11.60
Arm chair	4.80	5.00	5.20	6.20	6.60
Rocking	3.80	4.00	4.20	5.00	5.40
Parlor	3.45	3.65	3.85	4.50	4.90
Suit comp.	1.45	1.55	1.65	2.00	2.20
6 pieces	\$21.60	\$21.70	\$21.80	\$25.50	\$27.70



72047 Parlor Suit, extra large and heavy. Made of solid oak, finished with velvet and silk plush. Highly upholstered in plush, velvety or longpile, samples mailed free upon request. This suit has arm chair, sofa, and rocker in place of corner chair as suit shown. Consists of the pieces as follows:

Grade	H.	K.	L.	F.	R.
Sofa	\$11.50	\$11.70	\$11.90	\$13.50	\$14.50
Arm chair	6.50	6.70	6.90	8.00	8.50
Rocking	4.50	4.70	4.90	5.80	6.20
Parlor	3.80	4.00	4.20	5.00	5.40
Suit comp.	1.50	1.60	1.70	2.10	2.30
6 pieces	\$27.80	\$28.10	\$28.40	\$32.40	\$34.90

72048 Parlor Suit, extra large and heavy. Made of solid oak, finished with velvet and silk plush. Highly upholstered in plush, velvety or longpile, samples mailed free upon request. This suit has arm chair, sofa, and rocker in place of corner chair as suit shown. Consists of the pieces as follows:

Grade	H.	K.	L.	F.	R.
Sofa	\$11.50	\$11.70	\$11.90	\$13.50	\$14.50
Arm chair	6.50	6.70	6.90	8.00	8.50
Rocking	4.50	4.70	4.90	5.80	6.20
Parlor	3.80	4.00	4.20	5.00	5.40
Suit comp.	1.50	1.60	1.70	2.10	2.30
6 pieces	\$27.80	\$28.10	\$28.40	\$32.40	\$34.90

SEND FOR... SPECIAL CATALOGUE E, Showing Spring and Summer Styles as made up in our Dress Making Department. You'll agree that home sewing doesn't pay.

Figure 344. Typical pieces of American middle class furniture as illustrated in the 1895 Montgomery Ward catalog. Courtesy Dover Publications, Inc.

photograph, though, in the Scruggs' Collection taken of an immigrant family standing in the filthy rundown interior of their modest home suffices. (Figure 345) It is a priceless document. The full impact of the economic and social class differences that existed in Memphis during the Victorian Era are evident in the comparison of this interior with the Mallory-Neely parlor.

Apparently the poor purchased whatever they could afford; but, as they still do, they probably made do with homemade objects, thrown away refuse, and junk. It is an old Southern tradition to give worn out or outmoded household items and furnishings to poor blacks. The poor inherited the discarded neighborhoods, architecture, and furnishings of the more fortunate.

Late nineteenth century Memphis, like other typical American towns, experienced phenomenal industrial and economic growth and because of this a mushrooming population. Social order within this rapidly changing urban setting was established in part through the visual symbolism of neighborhood location, garden surroundings, home, and interior furnishings. But these were not the only class-oriented communicative symbols used at that time.

The Mallory-Neely Interiors: A Stage for Victorian Ritual

A major source of class power is for the ruling elite to convince the rest of society that they are "superior beings" who have

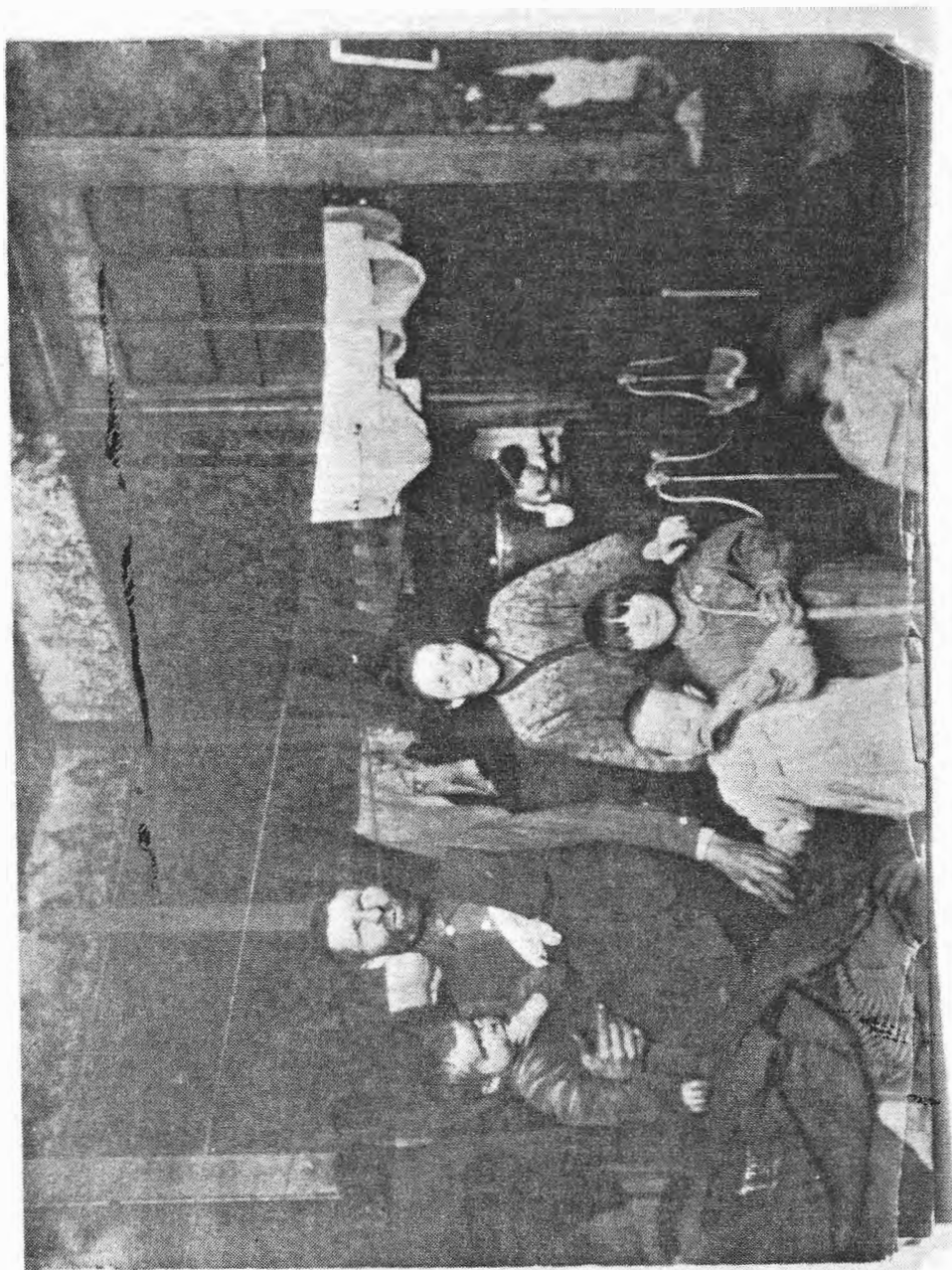


Figure 345. Photograph of a poor Memphis family taken inside their home from the Susan Coulan Scruggs Papers. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Library and Information Center.

the moral authority to rule without force.⁴⁷ To do this they resorted to the use of signals, communication, speech, and manners that set them apart from the other classes. In order for a class system to exist, there must also be defined boundaries and restricted membership.⁴⁸ Certain symbolic functions and actions constitute a social barometer and a visual demonstration of belonging.⁴⁹ America's new business nobility looked to the European aristocratic system not only for material visual symbols, but they also adopted and adapted its social rituals and modes of behavior. Accordingly, membership in America's new financial elite usually required the following (all based on European prototypes): mastery of social etiquette and deportment; education at exclusive private schools; membership in private clubs; fulfillment of social obligations, particularly charitable works; interest in and sponsorship of art and culture; conspicuous leisure activity such as travel, racing, and hunting; and especially participation in publicized social and ceremonial ritual, including the social season with its debut parties, balls, receptions, banquets, and weddings.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Richard L. Bushman, "The World of Gentility," Paper presented at the Winterthur Winter Institute, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware, 22 January 1985.

⁴⁸Williams, 22.

⁴⁹George Talbot, At Home: Domestic Life in the Post-Centennial Era, 1876-1920 [exhibition catalog], Madison, Wisconsin: State Historical Society of Wisconsin (Spring 1976-Fall 1977), vi.

⁵⁰See Jack L. Roach, Llewellyn Gross, and Orwell R. Gursslin, Social Stratification in the United States (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), 155-158; and Suzanne I. Keller, Beyond the Ruling Class (New York: Random House, 1963), 304-305.

Late-century Memphis elite, like their counterparts in similar towns across the nation followed suit. Private academies were founded for the education of their children. Etiquette and deportment were high on the curriculum of these finishing schools. J. C. Neely's daughters attended the city's exclusive Clara Conway Preparatory Institute. Later both attended Mrs. Sylvanus Reed's Finishing School at 5th Avenue and 53rd Street in New York, where children of that city's leading families, including those of W. H. Vanderbilt, were enrolled.

In the school's catalog Mrs. Reed described her academy as a "girls' school of rank." In the introduction she stated that its pupils are drawn "from American families of the highest social and intellectual culture."⁵¹ While there, along with deportment, the Neely girls studied history, elocution, French, and drawing. For additional enrichment they attended opera and the philharmonic, visited museums, and learned to dance at Dodworth's Dancing Academy and mastered equestrian skills at Dickel's Riding Academy. Mrs. Reed emphasized in the catalog that it was the school's purpose to prepare its students for their place in civilized society.⁵² (Figure 346)

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, clubs of all types, including social, charitable, and educational

⁵¹New York, Mrs. Sylvanus Reed's French and English Boarding and Day School for Young Ladies (New York: n.d.), 1, Folder 128, Special Collections, New York Historical Society, New York.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 2.



Figure 346. Miss Pearl Neely. Courtesy Barton Lee Mallory, Jr.

ones, proliferated in the city. There were so many in fact that a reporter in a 1905 Evening Scimitar article described Memphis as the "Queen of Clubs."⁵³ Those founded by the city's elite, such as the Tennessee Club, the Memphis Country Club, and the Chicasaw Guards, had an exclusive and restricted membership including the Mallorys and the Neelys.

Thorsten Veblen stated that an important characteristic of the leisured class is charitable activity which symbolically sets them above those they are helping.⁵⁴ Late in the century there was a national trend among women's clubs to do charitable works.⁵⁵ The first to do so in Memphis was the Vanity Fair Book Club (1892) of which Miss Daisy Neely was a founding member.⁵⁶ The Nineteenth Century Club, another elite women's club, still in existence, was founded in 1870 by Mrs. Clarence Seldon as a social, educational, civic, and philanthropic organization.⁵⁷ She received her inspiration for the club while visiting a similar one in New York City. The Nineteenth Century Club's motto, "Influence is Responsibility," reflects

⁵³"Women's Clubs of Memphis," Art Supplement to the House Warming Edition of the Memphis Evening Scimitar (1903), 28-29.

⁵⁴Veblen, 246.

⁵⁵See Sheila M. Rothman, Women's Proper Place, A History of Changing Ideas and Practices, 1870 to the Present (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1978).

⁵⁶"Death Marks End of Era When Charities Eclipsed Parties," The Commercial Appeal, 30 July 1970, 1(2).

⁵⁷Memphis Clubs Folder, Special Collections, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library.

the spirit of noblesse oblige" felt by these wealthy women. The various women's organizations did manage to do a lot of good for the Memphis community, raising funds to sponsor hospitals, orphanages, homes for the aged, a shelter for stranded and unemployed women and children, day nurseries, and free kindergarten.⁵⁸

Interest in the arts also mushroomed among the elite in late nineteenth century Memphis as it did across the nation. Conspicuous art activity often included membership by the wealthy in one or more of the city's numerous culture-oriented clubs such as the Memphis Art League, The Shakespeare Club, or the Mozart, Mendelson, Apollo, and Beethoven Societies.⁵⁹ Surviving letters in the Trezevant and Snowdon Family Papers and those of Mrs. Robertson Topp and Leila Nichol Griffing attest to the importance of cultural activities in the lives of elite Memphis families.⁶⁰ In these, occasional mention is made of the social season being enlivened by music festivals, parlor concerts, theatre box parties, orchestral concerts and recitals featuring visiting singers, pianists, and violinists.

⁵⁸"Women's Clubs of Memphis," 29.

⁵⁹Capers, 228-229.

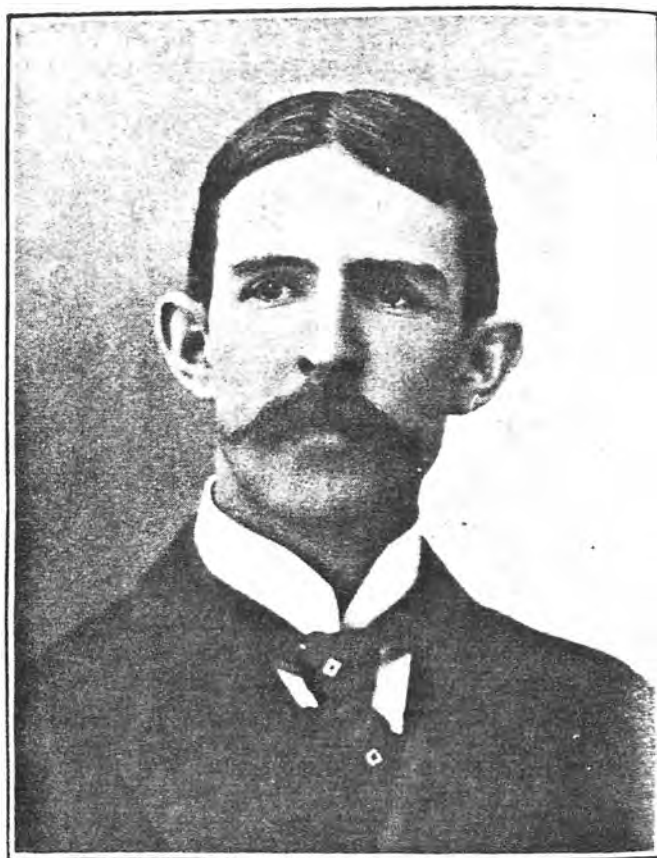
⁶⁰The Trezevant Family Papers are in the Memphis-Shelby County Public Library. The Snowdon Family Papers are in the Mississippi Valley Collection of the Memphis State University Library. Mrs. Topp's papers are in the Robertson Topp Papers at Rhodes College, Memphis. A photocopy of extracts from letters by Leila Nichol Griffing (c. 1876) is in the Memphis-Shelby County Public Library.

Reviews as well as advertisements of the wide variety of dramatic plays, musicals, and operettas performed in the city's theatres appeared in Memphis newspapers. They also recorded visits to the city of such theatrical luminaries as Sarah Bernhardt, Edwin Booth, Lilly Langtry, and Otis Skinner. The newspapers often listed the names of the city's elite who attended these various theatrical performances. A reporter in The Memphis Appeal, for example, stated at the beginning of his article describing the opening night of the new Lyceum Theatre that the whole assemblage of those in attendance "was splendidly representative of the wealth, fashion, and culture of the city."⁶¹ Listed among those "In the Boxes" were Miss Daisy Neely, Mr. J. C. Neely, Jr. and Miss Mary Mallory. (Figure 347)

Wagner's Lohengrin, Gounod's Faust, and Puccini's La Boheme were among the many classics offered in the Grand Opera House. The minutes of The Grand Opera House Company record the discussion relating to the drawing by its subscribers (J. C. Neely among them) for their elite box seating. Their documented statements stress the importance to them of the symbolism of civic and social rank represented in the hierarchical arrangement of the seats in the opera house and the importance they placed on their families being seen in the most exclusive of these by those in attendance.⁶²

⁶¹Memphis Appeal, 30 September 1870, 1.

⁶²Grand Opera House Company 1888-1892, Minute Book, Special Collections, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library, 52.



J. C. NEELY, JR.

Figure 347. Mr. James Columbus Neely, Jr. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

Aristocratic leisurely pastimes also came to play a prominent role in Memphis social life at this time. International travel by prominent Memphians was often reported in the society columns. The detailed description of prominent businessman John S. Toof's three-month European tour is illustrative. The reporter states that Toof traveled round-trip via the luxurious Cunard steamer Aurania. While on the continent he toured art museums and cultural attractions in seven countries. A newspaper reporter quoted Toof as saying: "The recollections of the countless works of art we saw will never fade from my mind."⁶³

Memphis business executive Henry Montgomery founded The Montgomery Park Race Track and served as president of the Memphis Jockey Club.⁶⁴ The club sponsored the Tennessee Derby and several seasons of racing annually. These became major status activities for the city's elite, as equestrian sports still are to this day for aristocrats in Europe and elsewhere.⁶⁵

A lengthy article in the 1890 Memphis Appeal entitled "Hunting and Fishing" describes the city's various elite outing clubs or lodges

⁶³"A Tour Through Europe," Memphis Daily Appeal, 17 July 1887, 3.

⁶⁴Henry Montgomery Papers, Box I, Folder I, Special Collections, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library.

⁶⁵For an illustrative season's schedule, see "New Memphis Jockey Club," Memphis Daily Appeal, 18 October 1883, 7.

whose rolls "represent the most prominent merchants and professional men of the city."⁶⁶ The Arkansas Prairie Club, The Memphis Outing Club, The Blackfish Gunning and Trolling Club, and The Beaver Dam Ducking Club were just a few of the many hunting clubs mentioned. The article cited by name the elite members of each of these lodges. W. B. Mallory, for example, was listed as vice-president of the Arkansas Prairie Club, the oldest hunting society in the city. The accompanying description of the club's activities communicated well to the average Memphis citizen the aristocratic nature of its approach to the hunt and the conspicuous leisure of its membership.

Prairie hunting is of all field sports the most luxurious. The huntsmen travel in spring wagons with Irish, Laverac, Lewellyn and native setters, and also pointers, ranging in front and on either side. When a staunch point is made the hunters slight and fire right and left at the coveys, which are then marked down. They then mount again, ride to the scattered bires and resume the sport. The meals to which they sit down at night are enough to make an epicure smack his lips by the bare mention. Besides the good things they carry over, they have eight or ten kinds of game at each meal--wild turkey, goose, prairie chicken, quail, snipe, duck, deer, possum, rabbit, and occasionally woodcock.⁶⁷

By late century social ritual and etiquette were yet other methods used to differentiate class in Memphis and elsewhere in the United States. Family ritual, ranging from formal weddings and funerals to the informal such as church attendance and dining, was important through most of the century to the Victorians. The emphasis

⁶⁶"Hunting and Fishing," Memphis Appeal, 28 September 1890, 10.

⁶⁷Ibid.

placed on these rites was a major method of reinforcing the primacy of family and home within the social structure.

Many of these family ceremonies as well as others were elaborated into symbolic social ritual with accompanying etiquette that became an important part of the late Victorian class structure. The etiquette of social calling, dinners, dances, weddings, and the debutante season were just some of the many. The public view of these society rituals through newspaper coverage was a major method of communicating elitism.

Filled with aesthetic material culture the ceremonial rooms of the Mallory-Neely House and others of its kind served as settings for these symbolic rituals. Harvey Green in The Light of the Home observed that the rooms which constituted the public sphere of the Victorian house were "devoted to the rituals of communication and show."⁶⁸ The network of ceremonial rooms in the Mallory-Neely House, including the entrance hallway, parlor, music room, sitting room and dining room, were created as the stage set of a social theatre in which symbolic aristocratic ritual was performed. (Figure 348) The carefully chosen symbol-laden artifacts used in these areas were the stage props. The conspicuous use of so much space reserved primarily for social functions was in itself a symbol of wealth.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Green, The Light of the Home, 31.

⁶⁹Nicholas Cooper, The Opulent Eye: Late Victorian and Edwardian Taste in Interior Design (New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1977), 7.

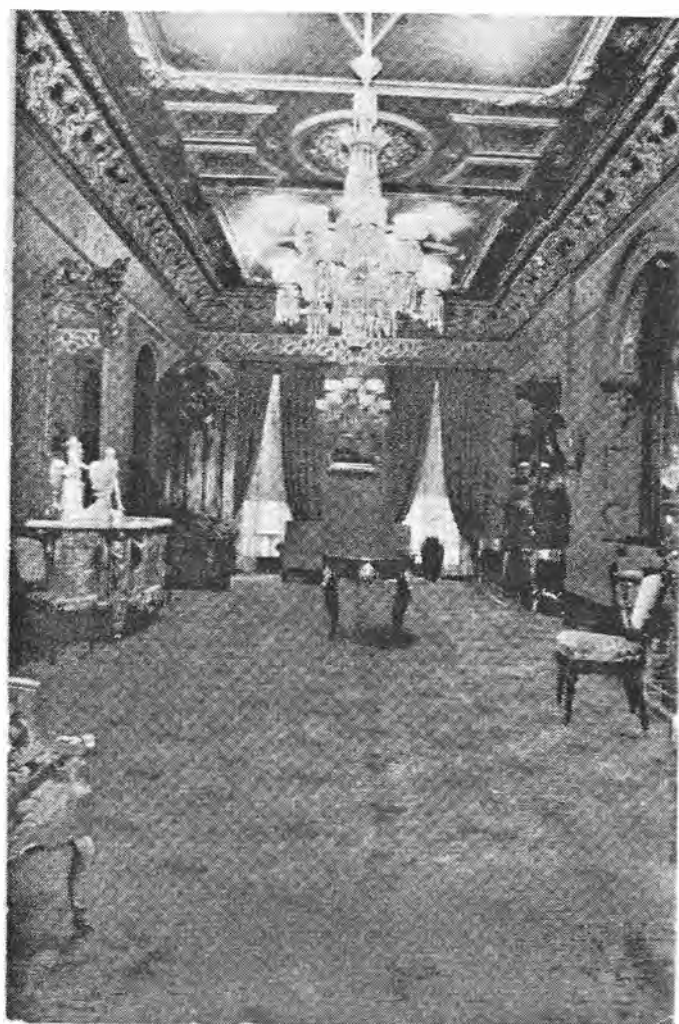


Figure 348. The Mallory-Neely parlor, sometimes called "the dancing room" in newspaper accounts, was the appropriately appointed scene for the staging of numerous social functions.

The middle class following the example of the elite set aside their parlors for similar functions on a much diminished scale.⁷⁰

The society columns in late century Memphis daily newspapers effectively chronicle the communicative symbolic social ritual staged and acted in by the city's ruling financial elite. Society events held in the Mallory-Neely House ceremonial rooms are among those so reported. Two of the more floridly detailed of these recount the 2 December 1890 debut party given for Daisy Neely and the 27 May 1890 wedding of her sister, Pearl. (See Appendix B, Figures B-1 and B-2). In this instance written documentation and material culture artifacts complement each other to such an extent that the reader could easily discern the ceremonial function of the space described.

The society reporters gave detailed accounts of these Memphis social functions, often listing the elite in attendance and describing their attire, the decoration used, the food served, the entertainment and activities that took place. They consequently set apart members of the well-to-do class from the average and poorer citizens of Memphis because of their ability to engage in conspicuous display.

The manner in which these columns were written also helped to communicate the idea of exclusiveness. Peppered throughout these descriptions of social functions are references to the interiors and furnishings of the homes of the elite hosts and/or hostesses in which adjectives like "palatial," "kingly," "princely," "aristocratic," and others are used.

⁷⁰Lynes, The Domesticated Americans, 149.

Also occasionally emphasized in these articles are "objects of prestige" embedded with communication class symbolism.⁷¹ These include costly props or accessories forming part of the setting or used as ritual implements in the social ceremony, such as silver tea services or presents given as part of the festivity.

The white luncheon given by Mrs. J. C. Neely II Friday afternoon was an affair of unsurpassed beauty and pleasure. . . . The table at which they sat glittered with cut glass and silver in the twinkling light of the white candles set in silver candelabra with white chrysanthemum shades. The centerpiece was a huge cluster of great froway white chrysanthemums set in a silver loving cup on a silver tray.⁷²

Exclusivity is also illustrated in the article describing Daisy Neely's marriage and enumerating her wedding gifts, displayed in the third floor hallway of the Neely home.

The presents were beautiful in the extreme, and show the popularity of the bride and groom. The bride's father and mother presented them with a handsome check, and the groom's parents a chest of massive silver. Three exquisite decanters of cut and Bohemian glass, covered with silver fret work, and five dozen glasses was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlain, a silver punch bowl of exquisite workmanship from Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Grant, a tea service of Russian silver and old ivory, and the ponderous cut glass punch bowl from the board of directors of the Merchant's Exchange were a few of the many beautiful presents.⁷³

The reporters also often engaged in "name dropping," using brand names associated in the public mind with luxury and aristocracy.

⁷¹Roger D. Abrahams, "The Language of Festivals," Celebration: Studies in Festivity and Ritual, ed. Victor Turner (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982), 257.

⁷²Commercial Appeal, 11 November 1900, 6.

⁷³Ibid.

For example, in the description of the debut party given for Daisy Neely by her parents reference is to the "exquisite vases of Royal Worcester, Dresden, Doulton, and Crown Derby were filled with rare American beauties."⁷⁴

Along with objects of prestige the society writers seemed to relish itemizing the "conspicuous creations" which decorated these ceremonial affairs.⁷⁵ Used to embellish already ornate interior surroundings, these garnishes helped to symbolize the special nature of a particular event. Also the lavish use of these perishable and often throw-away decorations was another conspicuous sign of wealth. Illustrative of this is the description of the decorations for the grand ball given by the Hugh Neely family in celebration of the opening of their new mansion.

The front door which is a marvel of carving opened into a hallway 14 x 60 in size. At the farther end is a massive mantel, above which is a stained glass window let into the chimney. . . . The mantel was half hidden by calla lilies, geraniums, and in every corner a stately palm reared its head and nodded with graceful familiarity to the guests. . . . The stairway was festooned with trailing arbutus, that seemed to have its root in the same earth that nourished a rose tree in full bloom that graced the floor of the railing. . . . The salon was partially draped in brocaded pink satin and lace, and decorated with palms and pink roses. . . . Suspended from the arch over the entrance to the bay windows was a bell of roses. . . . Immediately back of the salon is a nook finished in cherry and hung with garnet plush. It was tricked out with palms and plants, bearing dark red blossoms. Hanging from the arch between the salon and the little snugery was an umbrella of pink roses. It was a work of art.⁷⁶

⁷⁴Abrahams, 262.

⁷⁵Appeal Avalanche, 2 December 1890, 2.

⁷⁶"Under the Neely Roof," Memphis Appeal, 18 April 1890, 7.

Furnishing the decorations for these society functions was a lucrative business. Elite Memphians brought flowers and plants for this purpose up river by steamer from semi-tropical New Orleans.⁷⁷ City directories and industrial guides of cities such as Chicago and St. Louis list specialist florist decorators. For example, T. J. Corbrey, Florist and Decorator, stated that he furnished "bouquets, wreaths, and various emblematic designs for weddings, balls, parties, and also funerals in new and original conceptions and forms."⁷⁸ Paul Krohn's floral business rented tropical plants such as palms, flowering and decorative house plants. He specialized in the arrangement of these "in the most refined and cultured taste."⁷⁹ The elaborate floral decorations used at Memphis society functions and provided by firms such as these very possible equaled a sizeable portion of the annual income of a poor family.

The well documented events of the late Victorian annual Memphis social calendar can be categorized as follows: general social ritual and entertainment, rites of passage, seasonal ritual, political-civic celebrations, and special festivities.⁸⁰

⁷⁷Victorian Village Arts & Pop Festival '84, Second Annual Commemorative Program, 44.

⁷⁸Half-Century's Progress of the City of Chicago: The City's Leading Manufacturers and Merchants (Chicago: International Publishing Company, 1887), 257, Special Collections, Chicago Historical Society.

⁷⁹Ibid., 249.

⁸⁰See Celebration: Studies in Festivity and Ritual.

General Social Ritual and Entertainment

Social entertainments of all types were "de rigueur" for maintaining one's social standing. They provided periodic opportunity for the display of one's knowledge of social deportment, home, and possessions as symbols of status.

Basic to Victorian social etiquette was the ritualized social call, a topic that has been subject of several articles!⁸¹ At the time many etiquette books were published such as Our Deportment or the Manner, Conduct and Dress of the Most Refined Society (1881), or Decorum: A Treatise on Etiquette and Dress of the Best American Society (1890) which gave detailed instructions as to the design of calling cards; the various types of calls ranging from those of ceremony, friendship, congratulations, to those of condolence; the length of time appropriate for these various calls; and even modes of decorum and conversation suitable while making these calls.⁸²

One of Mrs. J. C. Neely's calling cards survives engraved with her name and those of her two daughters.⁸³ (Figure 349) An Anglo-Japanese style card receiver for her callers' cards sits today on the marble plinth of a large mirrored hall tree in the Mallory-Neely entrance hall as a material culture document of the time when

⁸¹See, for example, Ames, "Meaning in Artifacts: Hall Furnishings in Victorian America."

⁸²John H. Young, Our Deportment or The Manner, Conduct, and Dress of the Most Refined Society (Detroit, Michigan: F. B. Dickerson & Company, 1881); and S. L. Louis, Decorum: A Treatise on Etiquette and Dress of the Best American Society (Chicago: Acme Publishing House, 1881), Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

⁸³Neely Family Papers.

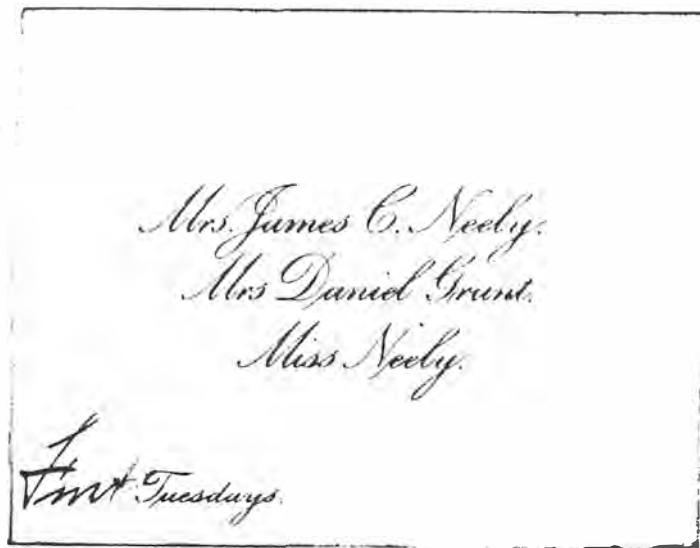


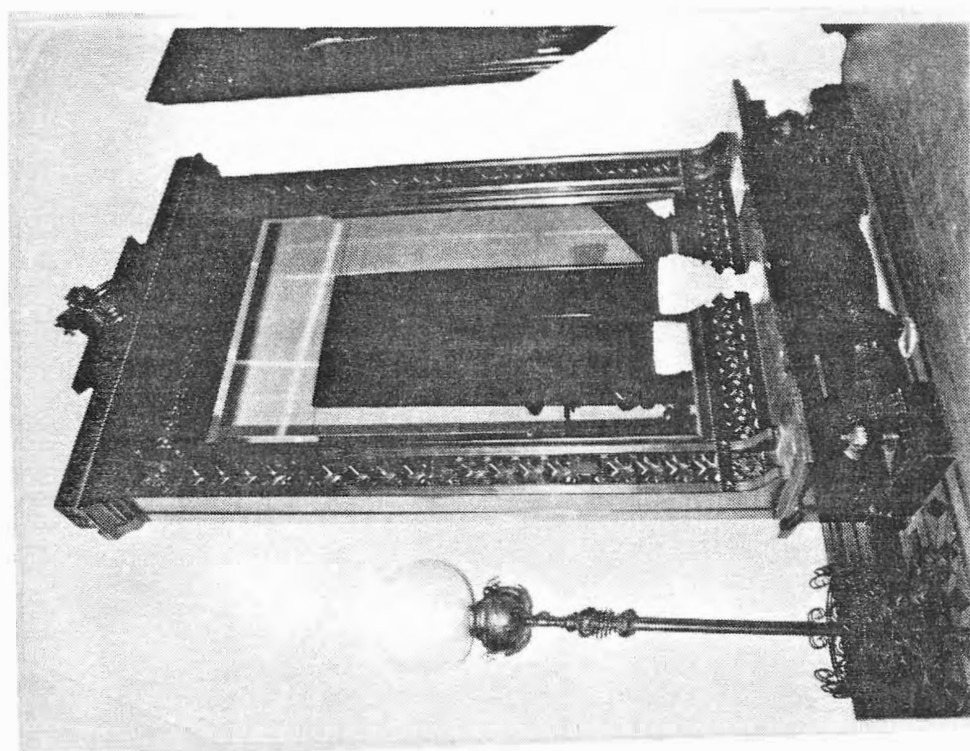
Figure 349. Neely calling card. Courtesy Barton Lee Mallory, Jr.

formalized calls ceremonializing the entering and leaving of a home were of such importance. (Figure 350) Very often the caller went no further than the foyer; therefore, the decor of this area was symbolically charged to communicate the owning family's status. The richly ornamented entrance hall decor, its collection of European and Oriental furniture and accessories, and two large oil portraits showing the Neely daughters in their Parisian debut gowns left no question in the mind of the caller as to this family's position in Memphis society. (Figure 351) Until her death in 1969, Mrs. Daisy Mallory continued something of this Victorian tradition by accepting callers at her locally famous "Mondays--At Home."⁸⁴

Card parties, luncheons and formal dinners, tea parties, receptions, and dances were among the many forms of social entertainment given throughout the year by elite Memphians in their homes. Etiquette books like The Social Mirror and articles in fashionable periodicals such as "The Doings of the Fashionable World" in Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine gave complete instructions on how to stage events such as these, including everything from the invitations to the decorations.⁸⁵

⁸⁴Leeker, "Miss Daisy and Her Remarkable Home," 35.

⁸⁵Cleveland Rose, The Social Mirror (St. Louis: Dan Linahan Publishing Company, 1888), 375, Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware; and "Comments Upon the Doings of the Fashionable World," Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine, 56, No. 634, April 1863, 183.

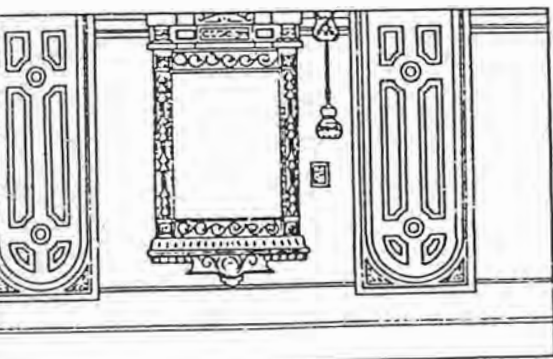
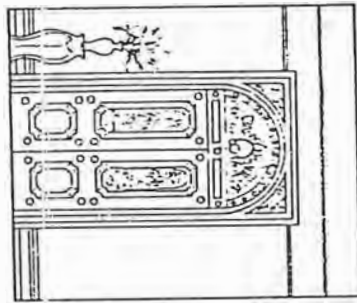
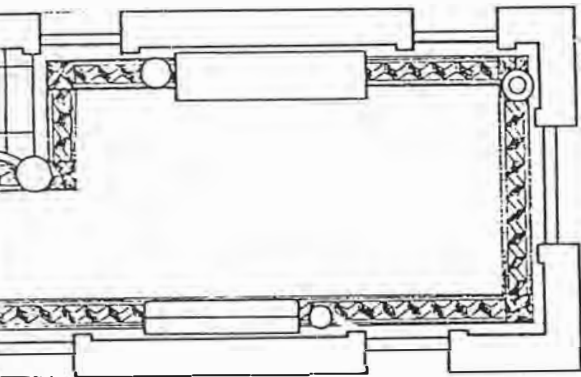
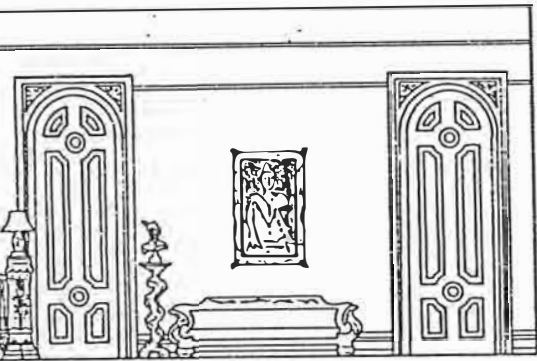


A



B

Figure 350. Neo-Tudor hall tree and Anglo-Japanese style calling card receiver.
 A. A large Neo-Tudor style hall tree dominates the Mallory-Neely entrance hall.
 B. On its marble topped plinth rests an Anglo-Japanese style calling card receiver.



of the Mallory-Neely entrance hall.

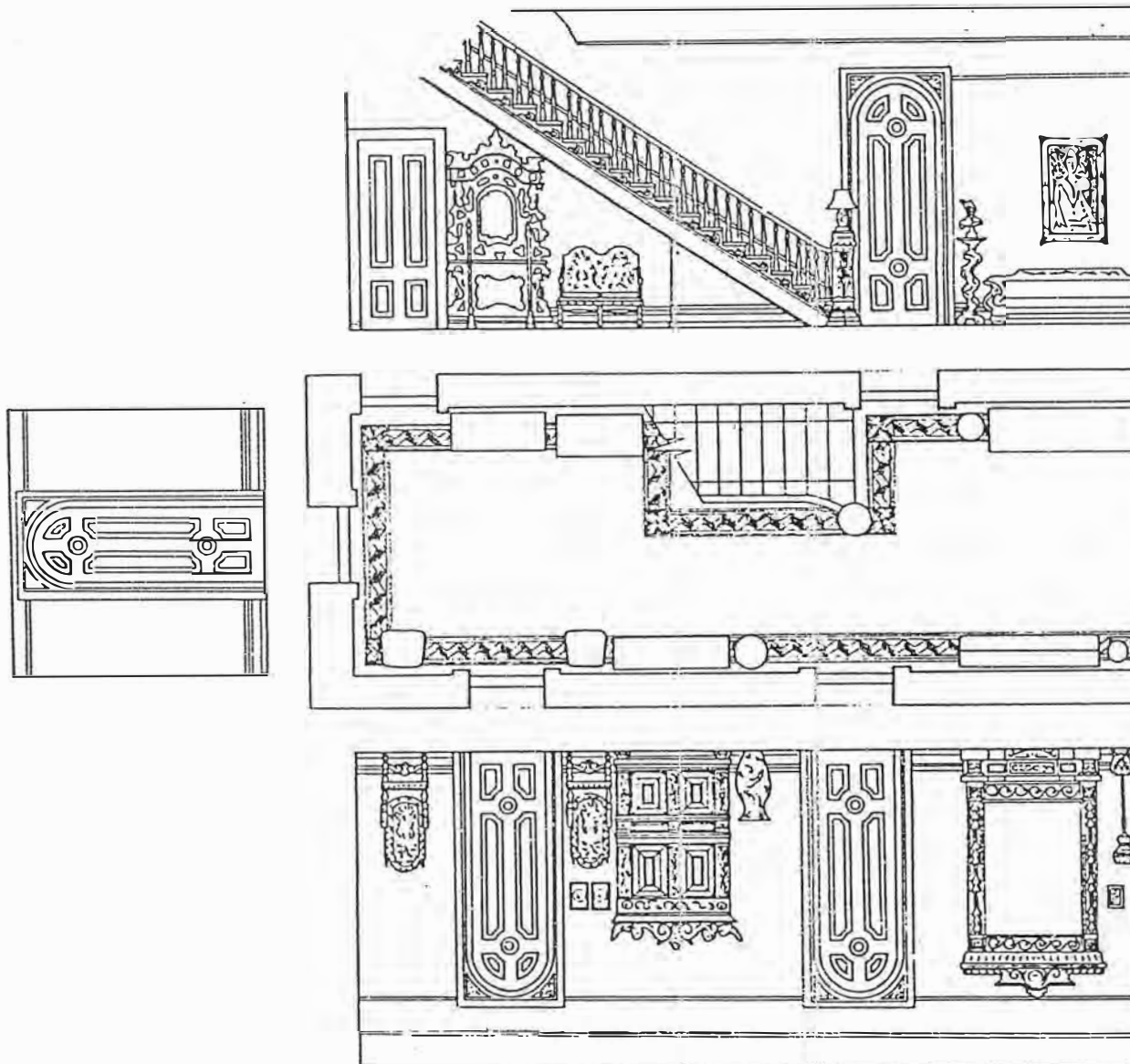


Figure 351. Plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely

For the elite, participation in a really grand and active social season required assistance from a staff such as the Neelys' five or more live-in servants. Household guides like The Book of Household Management and Good Form: Dinners, Ceremonious and Unceremonious gave detailed instructions for the mistress of the house in overseeing and itemizing the obligations and duties of the servants.⁸⁶ Vestiges of an elaborate bell system survive throughout the Mallory-Neely House that aided the family members in calling for assistance when necessary. The presence of servants in a household was also another recognized standard of wealth.⁸⁷

Dining has been the subject of much attention of late among scholars with an orientation to material cultural studies because of its importance as the central ritual of the Victorian home.⁸⁸ Dining was one of the most elegant of social entertainments. Dining socials such as breakfasts, buffets, luncheons, and dinner parties, were important status communicators. For this reason the Victorian dining room has been likened to a social arena.⁸⁹ Dining etiquette

⁸⁶Mrs. Isabella Beeton, The Book of Household Management (London: Ward Locke & Company, 1880); and Mrs. Abby Longstreet Buchanon, Good Form: Dinners, Ceremonious and Unceremonious, and The Modern Method of Serving Them (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company Publishers, 1890), Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

⁸⁷Veblen, 62-67.

⁸⁸See Williams, Savory Suppers and Fashionable Feasts: Dining in Victorian America.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 22.

guides like Good Form: Dinners, Ceremonious and Unceremonious and the Modern Method of Serving Them and articles like Harper's Bazaar "The Gentle Art of Dinner Giving" helped hostesses organize these dining socials and master the complex intricacies of Victorian dining etiquette.⁹⁰

The aesthetic artifacts present on the elite Victorian dining table must surely represent the pinnacle of conspicuous display for that era. The supporting array of utensils and furnishings created by enterprising manufacturers for the Victorian dining table including dinner services, stemware and other glassware, silverware, and linens, is almost staggering.⁹¹ The following partial list of items for the table advertised in the 1889 Sillito Department Store Home Decorative Art Souvenir is illustrative:

water sets	bone dishes
dinner sets	ice tubs
ice cream sets	dishes for scalloped oysters
sardine dishes	pudding dishes
table ornaments	cracker jars
roll trays	Venetian nut bowls
	cake baskets ⁹²

⁹⁰Longstreet, Good Form: Dinners, Ceremonious and Unceremonious and the Modern Method of Serving Them; and Caroline B. Burrell, "The Gentle Art of Dinner Giving I," Harper's Bazaar (27 October 1900), 1660-1662; and "The Gentle Art of Dinner Giving II: The Dinner Table" (10 November 1900), 1790-1791.

⁹¹See Gerald Bret, Dinner Is Served: A Study in Manners (Hampton, Connecticut: Anchor Books, 1969), 92-130; and Noel D. Turner, American Flatware 1837-1910 (San Diego: A. S. Barnes & Company, Inc., 1972).

⁹²Home Decorative Art Souvenir, n.p.

Conspicuous creations such as napkin art and artistic table decorations of every description completed the status-laden table ensemble.⁹³

The elegantly decorated Mallory-Neely dining room was an integral part of the inter-connected ceremonial area of the house. (Figure 352) The mellowed colors, faux leather, gilded surfaces, patinated brass, antique furnishings, and family portraits created the perfect ambiance for dining. The elaborately carved Neo-Elizabethan style extension table could seat as many as twenty-four for grand dining events. When set with the family's costly linens and table appointments, the table at which the Neelys' dinner guests sat could not have failed to be impressive. (Figure 353)

Dances were another popular form of social entertainment for the elite families of Memphis. In rooms like the Mallory-Neely parlor (sometimes called the dancing room in contemporary newspaper accounts) balls and other gala festivities, where dancing played a major roll, were staged. In order to accommodate this, temporary canvas flooring was put down over the carpets as was the custom of the time.⁹⁴ The Neelys also laid canvas over their plank verandah flooring so

⁹³See, for example, "Table Decorations," Art, Society, and Accomplishments, ed. R. Barry Blackburn (Chicago: Blackburn Company, 1891), 317-326, Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware and Louise Conway Relden, Table Decorations and Desserts in America 1650-1900 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983).

⁹⁴See Cleveland, 94.

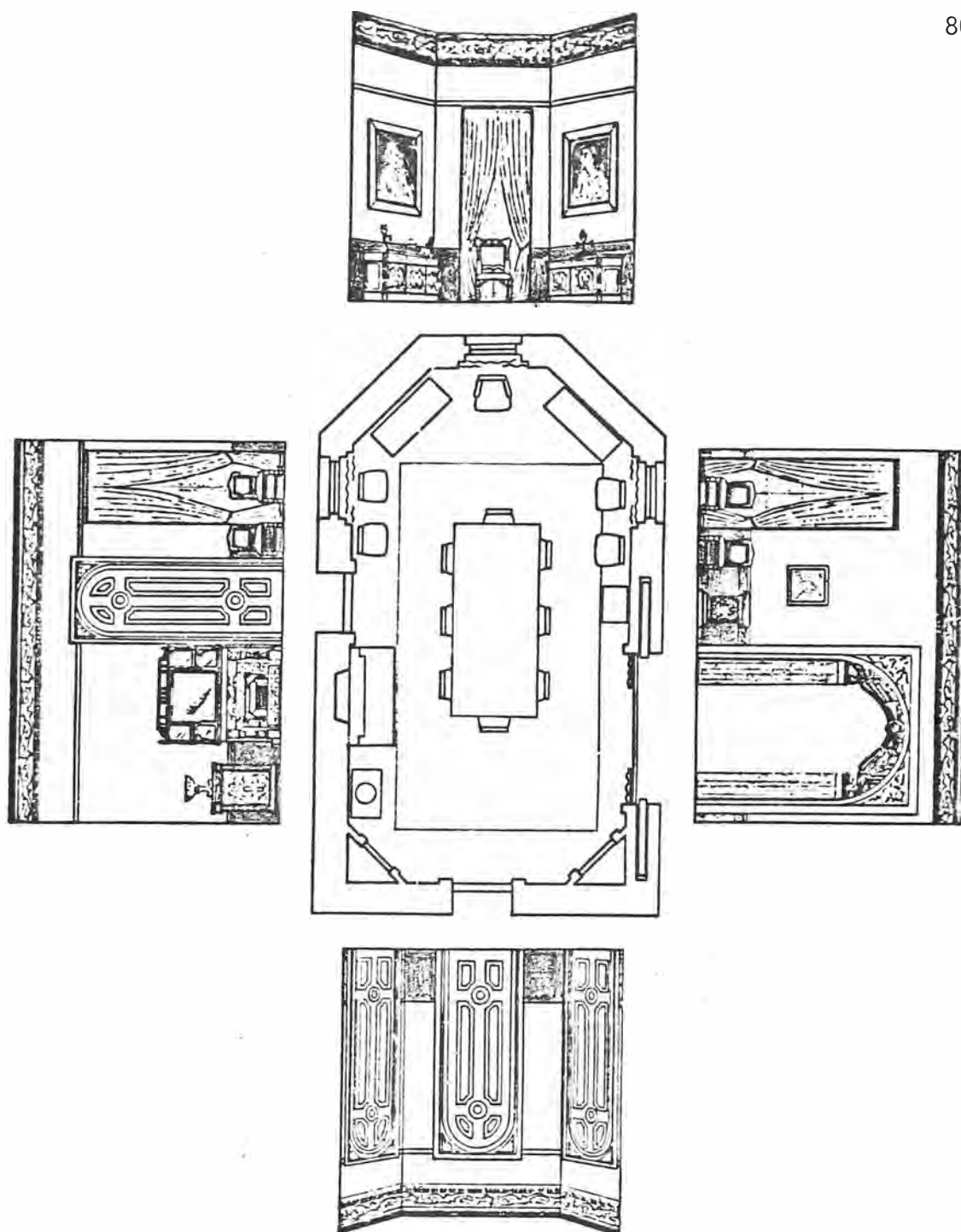


Figure 352. Plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely dining room.



Figure 353. Dining room of the Mallory-Neely House as set by Mrs. Daisy Mallory for a garden club tour in 1961. Courtesy Barton Lee Mallory, Jr.

that by opening the parlor and sitting room window-doors festivity was extended into the moonlit garden.

The orchestra or band was tucked in a corner or discreetly out of the way in a small adjoining room like the Mallory-Neely music room. (Figure 354) Originally the library, it received its present name because of this practice. A letter survives written by Mrs. Daisy Mallory from the famous W. C. Handy, composer of the St. Louis and Memphis Blues, in which he says that he often remembers his early career in Memphis when he played for the Mallorys and Neelys and other Memphis socialites in their palatial homes, and especially the many tips they had given him.⁹⁵

The turn-of-the-century was the great era of the waltz, but there were other dances. According to local newspaper accounts a form of group dancing, "The German or Cotillion," was also a popular dance performed in late-century Memphis. Often these dance socials were even entitled "A German." In doing these dances, a practiced master of the "German" led the ensemble in a series of "figures."⁹⁶ These were often complex and colorful, requiring frequent changes of partners.⁹⁷

Occasionally these Memphis dances were elegant costumed affairs. The 17 December 1889, social column reported that the palatial home

⁹⁵W. C. Handy to Mrs. Daisy Mallory, 8 July 1957, Special Collections, Mallory-Neely House Museum.

⁹⁶Cleveland, 95.

⁹⁷Schlesinger, 44.

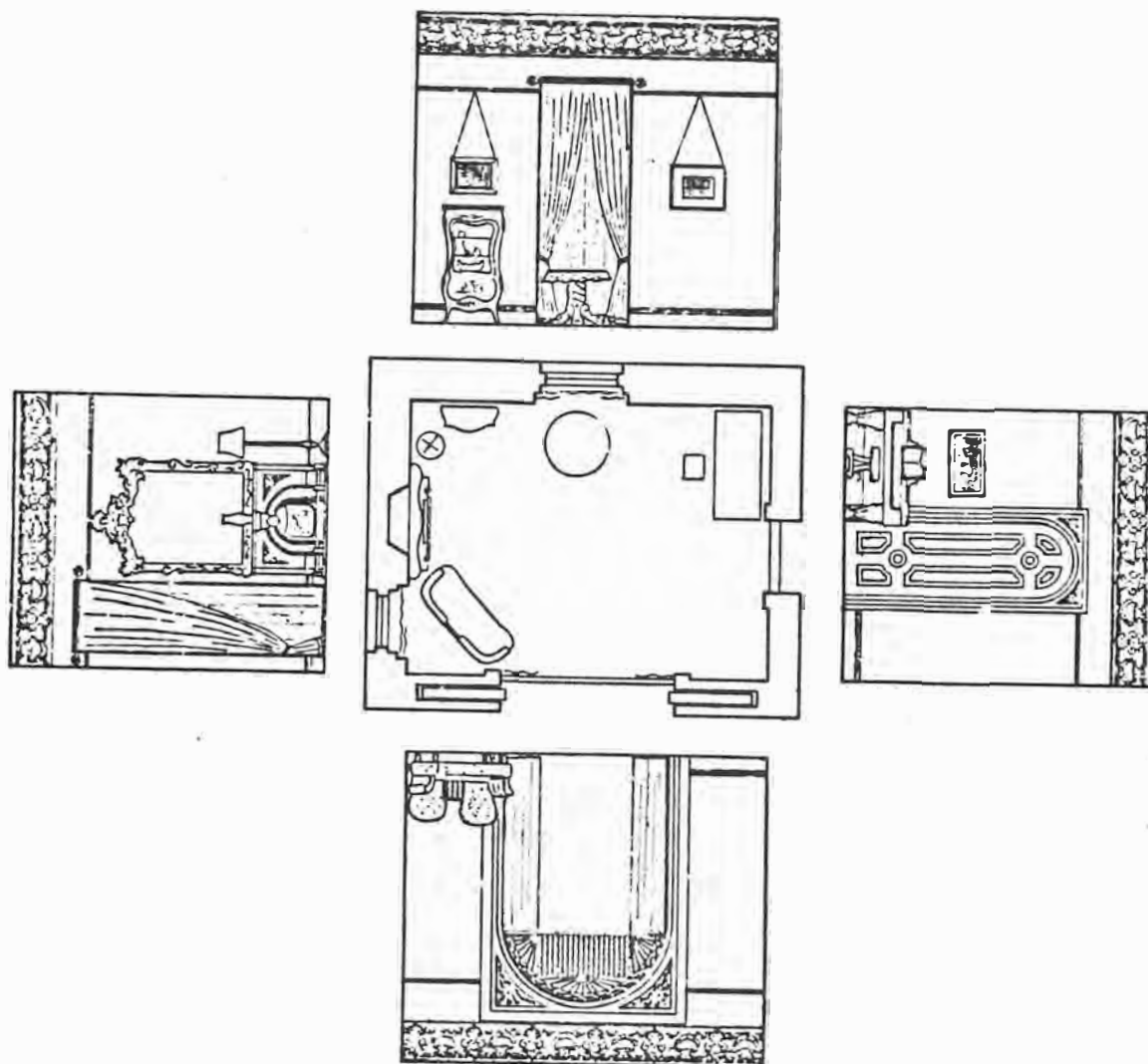


Figure 354. Plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely music room. It adjoined the parlor making it the ideal location to place a band or orchestra.

of Captain Dillard was the scene the night before of a "Select German" given by his daughter in honor of society friends from Virginia. All of the elite guests, including Pearl Neely, were costumed in the Louis XV mode.⁹⁸ Another article announced plans for a masked ball to which all were to wear black dominos and black masks.⁹⁹ To the average reader these romantically glamorous social happenings must have seemed a world apart from their sober lives.

Rites of Passage

The celebration of significant moments in the life of a family member, sometimes labeled "rites of passage or transition" were important to Victorians of all classes.¹⁰⁰ These were usually constructed performances of formalized ritual sometimes but not always connected with religious traditions.

The difference separating the celebrations of rites of passage between the upper and middle-to-lower classes was one of degree. Highly publicized elite celebrations of weddings and debuts, connected with a young lady's coming of age, were often lavish affairs, as illustrated by the following description of the wedding reception of Daisy Neely which took place in the ceremonial rooms of the Mallory-Neely House. (Figure 355)

⁹⁸Memphis Appeal, 17 December 1889, 2.

⁹⁹Memphis Daily Appeal, 10 February 1885, 12.

¹⁰⁰See, for example, Barbara Myerhoff, "Rites of Passage, Process, and Paradox," Celebration: Studies in Festivity and Ritual (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982), 109-135.

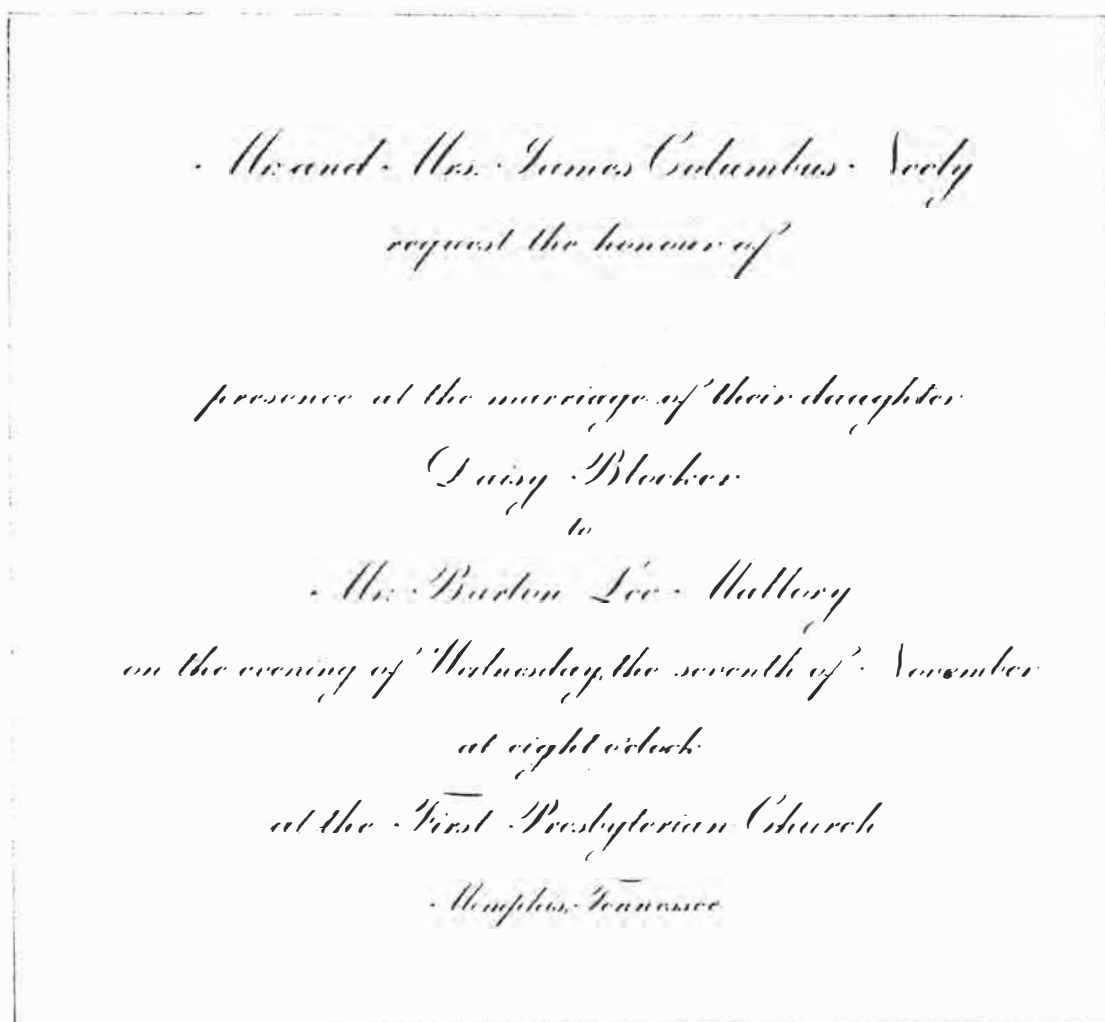


Figure 355. Daisy Neely and Barton Lee Mallory's wedding invitation. Courtesy Barton Lee Mallory, Jr.

After the ceremony the bridal party went to the home of the bride's parents, on Adams Street, where preparations for an elaborate reception had been made. The house was beautiful with palms and enormous ferns set in every possible nook and relieved by white chrysanthemums. In the long parlor to the left of the hallway the bride and groom received, standing under a marriage bell of Bride roses and lilies of the valley. Magnificent white chrysanthemums and ferns completed the decorations and at the farther end a bank of palms cut off an ante-room in which musicians sat. The reception room on the right of the hall was decorated in the same artistic fashion and from it could be seen the dining room, which was unique. The table, covered with Russian lace over satin, had for a centerpiece a huge jardiniere of ferns, in which were stuck willowy rods, bearing bows of white tulle, and at one corner was a basket of flowers formed of candy. Tulle was very much in evidence in all the decoration, being one of the newest ideas from the fashion capital.¹⁰¹

For months prior to an event like this or previous to the climax of a debutante season, the social columns would be constantly devoted to the round of parties, balls, receptions, and many other activities given by elite families in honor of a bride or debutante. Daisy Neely's debutante season included a dancing party given at their home by the S. H. Brooks; a German at the Peabody Hotel hosted by George Waddell; a "Ribbon Cotillion" at Miss Virginia Bethell's home; a theatre party at the Grand Opera House given by John C. Rogers; and a ball given by her parents at their Adams Street mansion.¹⁰²

(Figure 356)

¹⁰¹"Society," Commercial Appeal, 11 November 1900, 6.

¹⁰²Mrs. Clarence A. Smith, "A Few of the Many Parties Given by Friends of Miss Frances Neely During the Season of Her Debut--1890" [photocopy, unpublished mimeographed data], DAR-SAR-CAR House, Inc. scrapbook, Memphis, Tennessee.



Figure 356. Oil portrait by Memphis artist, Kate Karls, of Daisy Neely in her debut gown.

Funerals were another important Victorian rite of passage. Etiquette books of the period, testifying to the elaborate ritual surrounding Victorian funerary custom, include guidance in the length of mourning, mourning calls, mourning attire, and stationary.

Though less a home-based rite, by the late nineteenth century, when due to the general concern for health the services of the undertaker and his funeral parlor had become commonplace, many continued to keep deceased family members in the homes and to hold the funerals there. In the same manner as other elite functions, the funerals of prominent personages were widely publicized. The coverage was similar to that of other social functions with those in attendance listed, and conspicuous floral creations cited. James Curl in The Victorian Celebration of Death states that the "style of funeral helped to establish social position even more than a wedding since the wealth and power of a family could be publicly displayed."¹⁰³

The obituaries of J. C. and Frances Neely state that their funerals were conducted at their Adams Street mansion but give few details other than mentioning the floral tributes sent by friends. Fortunately, though, elaborate descriptions of an elite home-based funeral survive. (See Appendix C, Figure C-3) In these the reporters paint a mental picture of a home-based Victorian funeral. The entire funeral including the burial ceremony of Henry Montgomery was recounted in column after column of more than one of the city

¹⁰³James Stevens Curl, The Victorian Celebration of Death (London: David S. Charles Publishers, 1972), 20.

newspapers. Floral tributes sent by many of the city's most prominent civic and social leaders were itemized. The sitting room or the parlor of the Mallory-Neely House served as the setting for similar ritual functions.

Seasonal Rituals and Festivals

Memphis papers also record the various seasonal social functions or rituals sponsored by the city's elite, ranging from informal Halloween parties to formal New Year's events. Christmas was largely a private family holiday celebrated at mid-day with a feast. A Christmas tree, decorative greenery, and a profusion of flowering plants helped to lend an air of festivity.¹⁰⁴

In contrast to the privacy of a Christmas celebration, emphasis was placed on socially celebrating the opening of the New Year. In Memphis, society was expected to make a round of social calls at staggered hours at a select group of elite homes. At each of these the hostess of the house was assisted in receiving her prominent callers by a group of society ladies. The home of J. C. Neely was often open for this purpose.

At all the houses named below elaborate preparations had been made to entertain visitors, and in addition to graceful and artistic decorations, there was an abundance of good cheer. . . . Music was also provided at most of the houses. . . . The great number of open houses visited makes it impossible to do justice to the magnificent decorations and other accessories that everywhere abounded. We must content ourselves,

¹⁰⁴Eugene L. Tennant, American Christmases from the Puritans to the Victorians (Hicksville, New York: Exposition Press, 1973); and Harnett T. Kane, The Southern Christmas Book (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1958).

therefore with simply furnishing a list of ladies who received and what they wore.

At Mrs. J. C. Neely's
 Mrs. J. C. Neely, black silk en traine, with bugle trimming.
 Mrs. H. M. Neely, mauve brocaded silk en traine.
 Mrs. J. W. Falls, copper colored rep silk, blue trimming, pink lace.
 Miss Pearl Neely, green velvet and tan silk, en traine, amber trimmings. . . .¹⁰⁵

A newspaper reporter in a description of a similar open house stated that the brilliantly illuminated parlors were handsomely decorated with plants and flowers. These were arranged to represent the four seasons. He further related that the reception was followed by dancing "which continued until a late hour."¹⁰⁶

Special Festivals and Political-Civic Celebrations

City-wide festivals and celebrations are often encoded with all types of symbolic messages "which help distinguish leader from subject; and higher from lower."¹⁰⁷ In reading Memphis newspaper accounts of civic festive occasions, there is no doubt which families constituted the ruling elite.

Many American cities to this day at least once or twice a year play host to special festivals that are often connected in some

¹⁰⁵"New Year Receptions," Memphis Daily Appeal, 2 January 1887, 1.

¹⁰⁶"New Year's Day," Memphis Daily Appeal, 2 January 1885, 1.

¹⁰⁷John MacAloon, "Sociation and Sociability in Political Celebration," Celebration: Studies in Festivity and Ritual (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1982), 256-257.

way with a product or products which form the economic base of the community.¹⁰⁸ In the late 1870s an annual Memphis "Mardi Gras" was established. This was the forerunner of the city's noted Cotton Carnival. The "Mardi Gras" was wholeheartedly celebrated by the city, with seemingly no expense spared in its production. The association in charge staged spectacular street pageants enjoyed by citizens of all classes. The parade theme in 1876, for example, was "Poetry." The twenty-eight floats accompanied by bands of wandering minstrels were based on the titles "The Grecian Epoch," "The Roman Epoch," and on Italian (Dante), Spanish (Cervantes), French (Molière), German (Goethe), English (Shakespeare), and American (Longfellow) poetry. At the end of the parade was the "Muse and Memphi" float described as "a swan-like silver chariot richly carved and decorated with garlands and lotus leaves drawn by lions."¹⁰⁹

As part of the celebration an elite secret society, "The Mystic Memphi," was founded. Membership in this organization was another sign of belonging to the city's ruling class. Its activities were subject to the usual society coverage in the newspapers. Before and during the Mardi Gras season parties, dances, and other socials were given by the elite in their homes, with all culminating in a grand costumed "Memphi Ball." The focal entertainment of this was

¹⁰⁸Abrahams, 171.

¹⁰⁹Annual Spectacular Display Mystic Memphi Mardi-Gras Program, 29 February 1876, Folder II, E2, Green Collection, Special Collections, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library.

a series of elaborately staged tableaux. Members of the various elite families appeared in these. Floats, properties, sets, and costumes for the parade and ball were created by designers in New York, New Orleans and elsewhere but the most lavish were surely those furnished by The Maison Nonnon, costumers to the Paris Opera.¹¹⁰ In 1878 the tableaux theme of the Memphi Ball was "Mythology: Classical versus Nordic." Tableaux based on ancient Grecian and Roman themes like Olympia, the Gods and Titans, Aurora, Earth, and Castor and Pollux were contrasted with Scandinavian themes like Valhalla, Thunder, Frost, Fire, Elf-Land and Troleland.¹¹¹ These festivities staged by the Memphis elite were examples of conspicuous display and expenditure at its grandest.

The 2 February 1872 visit to Memphis by the Grand Duke Alexis Romanov, son of Czar Alexander II of Russia, and the 14-15 October 1887 visit by United States President Grover Cleveland and the First Lady gave Memphians ideal opportunities for civic and/or political celebration. In the lengthy newspaper reports of the functions staged by the city's social leaders in honor of these distinguished guests, one can read between the lines the jockeying for position and attention among the rich. Though all classes witnessed the public ceremonial

¹¹⁰[Assorted invoices and itemized bill from, handwritten notes and typewritten contract, with the Maison Nonnon], 5 August 1875, Folder II, E2, Green Collection, Special Collections, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library.

¹¹¹Libretto of the Annual Spectacular Display of the Mystic Memphi, Mardi-Gras, 5 March 1878, Folder II, Green Collection, Special Collections, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library.

activities of these visits and enjoyed the spectacle, there is no question that these civic festivities were used to the fullest by the city's elite to symbolically communicate their power and status.

The Grand Duke was met at the Memphis Charleston Railroad Terminal, from where a cortege, made up of the carriages of the city's well-to-do, then proceeded to a lavish banquet and ball at the Peabody Hotel. Decorations, food, and the gowns of elite Memphis ladies like that of Mrs. J. C. Neely were described by the society reporters in vivid detail.¹¹²

James Columbus Neely served on the reception committee for President Cleveland's visit to the city. After arrival by river steamer the Presidential party was escorted into the heart of the city, through crowds made up of thousands of citizens, by a parade of carriages carrying the city's elite, among whom were Mr. and Mrs. Neely.¹¹³ While in town the President and his wife were guests at an exclusive garden reception given in their honor by the Noland Fontaines on the grounds of their mansion two doors from the Neelys. This event must have been one of the high marks of the "gilded era" in Memphis. As their carriage traveled up the long drive towards their mansion, returning from social events such as this one, J. C. Neely and his wife, Frances, must surely have been pleased that they had created a home, a stage of status, which effectively succeeded

¹¹²Memphis Daily Appeal, 3 February 1872, 1.

¹¹³Memphis Daily Appeal, 15 October 1887, 1.

in symbolically communicating the message of their family's privileged membership in the financially elite class of America's Gilded Era. (Figure 357)

Due to the stratified layering of changes and additions made throughout the century both inside and out and its remarkable preservation into the late twentieth century, the Mallory-Neely House has even broader symbolism for us today. It survives as a document of an important transitional phase in the history of the United States as it evolved through the growing pains of modernization.

As an American patriot, the Neely's daughter, Daisy, would surely be pleased to know that her home, through scholarly interpretation, can serve as a prismatic material culture document of the nation's history and especially of the evolutionary changes that occurred during the nineteenth century, leading to and molding the twentieth century. The artifactual resources of the Mallory-Neely and other historic houses in the Mid-South region have only begun to be mined.

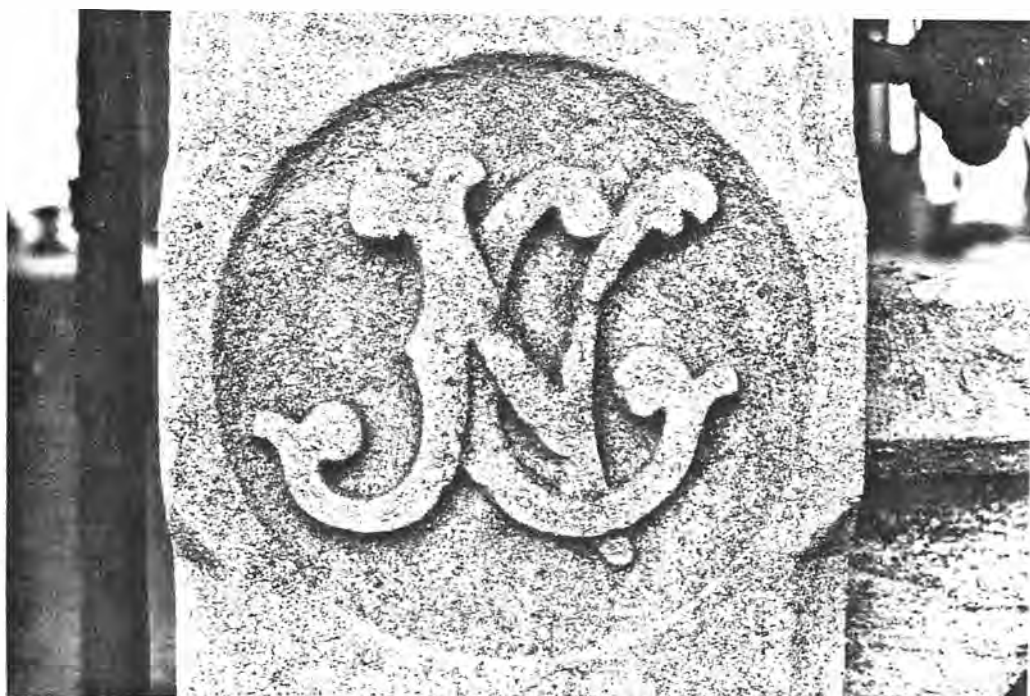


Figure 357. Proudly proclaiming ownership and residence, James Columbus Neely's initials, chiseled in granite, repeatedly adorn the ornamental front fence of the Mallory-Neely House.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH FORMS

FORM A: INDIVIDUAL OBJECT ANALYSIS

_____Room Code

_____Object code on elevation
- plan

Attach
photograph/s
of artifact/
documents
and/or
fragments
of document

I. Artifact/document: _____

II. Location: _____

III. Visual analysis and physical
description of artifact/document
A. Measurements:

Diagrams of measurements in plan
and elevation:

B. Materials made up of:

C. Technical construction/process
used to create:

Attach photographic
details of object/
document illus-
trative of
technical
process/es used
to create

D. Finish, surface embellishment,
ornament, iconography:

Attach photographic
details, drawing,
or rubbings of
ornament,
iconography,
etc.

E. Materials and process used to
create:

F. Design analysis (composition, color, shape, line, etc.):

G. Label, stamp, signature:

Location on or within object:

Attach photograph/s, drawings, rubbing/s of labels, signatures, etc.

IV. Original function/usage of artifact/document:

V. External evidence/documentation:

A. Known information

Oral tradition/history

Printed/written documentation
(Notes or photocopies attached when possible.)

B. Researcher's findings:

Notes or materials found in original documents/articles, books (photocopies attached when possible)

Researcher's comparison of artifact with like-objects found in other historical house or museum collections or in photographic illustrations (photocopies attached when possible).

VI. Stylistic analysis/classification/approximate dating:

VII. Cultural analysis (international, national, regional):

VIII. Speculation, interpretation of artifact/document by researcher:

FORM B: INDIVIDUAL ROOM ANALYSIS

_____ Room Code on Plan

I. Room: _____

Attach photographs
of room, including
varied walls, ceiling,
floor, etc.

II. Visual analysis and physical description of room:

A. Measurements of room:
(Diagram plan/elevation/doors/windows)

B. Architectural features of the room:
windows, doors, fireplaces,
stairway, etc.

C. Fixed interior decor of room:

1. Wall treatment

2. Paint colors

3. Ceiling treatment

4. Floor treatment

5. Window treatment

6. Hardware

7. Lighting fixtures

D. Furnishings of the room:

1. Furniture

2. Accessories

3. Textiles

E. Proxemics/analysis of spatial organization and arrangement:

III. Original usage of room: Ceremonial, utilitarian, private

IV. External evidence/documentation:

A. Known information

Oral tradition/history

Printed/written documentation
(notes or photocopies attached when possible)

B. Researcher's findings

Materials found in original documents/articles, books
(notes or photocopies attached when possible)

Researcher's comparison of room with like rooms in historic
houses, museums, photographs, watercolors, drawings, etchings
(photocopies attached when possible)

Evidence, if any, of regional characteristics/
differences:

V. Technological, design, and stylistic analysis:

VI. Final speculation and interpretation of room:

APPENDIX B

MEMPHIS NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

FIGURE 1

At the handsome residence of Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Neely, last evening a delightful entertainment was given in honor of the debut of their charming daughter, Miss Frances, and her guests, Misses Marguerite Taylor and Eleanor McGhee of New York City. The house was brilliantly illuminated and handsomely decorated for the occasion. The carriages of Memphis fashionable society deposited fair ladies and gallant gentlemen until the house was filled. The fair debutante was assisted in receiving by her mother, Mrs. J. C. Neely, Mrs. Daniel Grant, Mrs. S. H. Brooks, and Misses Taylor and McGhee of New York and Miss Edith Brooks. In the handsome white and gold drawing rooms a reception was held until 10:30 o'clock and then dancing was the order until an early hour this morning. The beautiful Neely mansion was illuminated throughout and the effect transformed it into a veritable place of light and beauty and thorough systematic and artistic completeness.

The reception room was in pink. From the mantels hung gracefully large clusters of LaFrance roses, fastened loosely with ribbons of the same tint. On handsome stands were vases of the rarest ware filled with the same, while from lamps of "ye olden times" burned the softest lights of the harmonizing tints, which completed a beautiful and artistic effect.

The handsome parlors of white and gold were decorated in red. From the cabinets on either side of an exquisitely dressed window were large clusters of passion flowers, while from the chandeliers gracefully twined the same beautiful effect. Exquisite vases of Royal Worcester, Dresden, Doulton and Crown Derby were filled with rare American beauties, that combined with the effect of graceful palms and brilliant lights from cut glass chandeliers, made a beautiful picture.

The dining room was in pure white and green. In the center of a table covered with white satin, embroidered, was a large cluster of ferns. Surrounding this was a double row of white Nephitis rosebuds, and a circle of ferns, and completing the artistic effect was a vase of Nephitis roses and carnations. Burning from white and gold candelabras were harmonizing colors of white and green lights.

The verandas were canvassed and filled with rare plants and beautiful blooming roses. The halls were full of ferns artistically arranged. The stairway was twined with roses and smilax, and the entire house a garden wealth of beauty. The menu was delicate and excellent in its arrangement, and the service perfection.

Mr. and Mrs. Neely should feel proud of the grand and brilliant success of last evening's entertainment. The ladies were attired in handsome and becoming gowns--Miss Taylor, a beautiful brunette and leading society queen in New York City, wore an imported gown

of yellow Mouseline de Chiffon and diamonds, holding in her hands a beautiful bouquet of yellow roses. Miss McGhee, another of New York's leading belles, a beautiful blonde, wore a costume of Worth's of white gauze, elaborately trimmed in violets. A necklace and bracelet of elegant diamonds were her jewels. She carried in her hand a beautiful bouquet of sweet violets. Miss Frances Neely wore a "Rau-Initz" gown of white gauze trimmed in apple blossoms, diamonds and pearls. Her flowers were rose-chatterne mermet. Miss Edith Brooks wore an exquisite gown of white and gold gauze; diamonds and pearls, and a beautiful bouquet of red rosebuds. (Appeal-Avalanche, 2 December 1890, 6).

FIGURE 2

At the bride's home and amid the assemblage of admiring and loving friends, Miss J. Pearl Neely and Mr. James Daniel Grant, of Atlanta, were married last night. The whole city was interested in the event. The bride, the daughter of the wealthiest and most respected citizen of Memphis, is recognized as one of the most beautiful of Southern women. Her winsome personality, in which were blent every grace of mind and heart, has gained for her the affection and high regard of all who have known her. In Memphis society, no star has ever shone with brighter luster. She has been queen over many hearts, and a welcome, brilliant presence wherever she has gone. The groom is the son of the late Mayor Grant, of Atlanta, and his family is among the wealthiest in the State of Georgia. He is a gentleman who enjoys the respect of all with whom he has come into contact, because of his sterling worth and his many engaging qualities. It is the happiest possible match, and the principals have been overwhelmed with felicitations.

At 8 o'clock the ceremony began, in one of the rooms of the luxurious Neely mansion, the Reverend Eugene Daniel of the First Presbyterian Church, officiating. The bride and groom stood under three bells of nuptial roses, while about them were gathered about 450 relatives and intimate friends. . . . The bride wore an elegant costume of white satin en train, point lace and diamonds, diamond butterfly pendants, a veil and orange blossoms. No bride ever looked more lovely, her blonde beauty and exquisite grace of bearing captivating all eyes and hearts. The bridesmaids wore costumes of white tulle, with bouquets of La France roses. The souvenirs were handsome two hearts of pearls linked by bands of gold.

The decorations of the home were surpassingly gorgeous. In the drawing room where the ceremony occurred there were masses of white flowers and clouds of drifting tulle, the effect being wondrously beautiful. In the hall were countless growing flowers, rare ferns and plants. The reception room was in red, and the dining room in pink carnations. In the center of the table immediately under the handsome cut glass chandelier hung a star of carnations enveloped in tulle, the same decorative idea being carried out on the sideboards and mantels. The entertainment of the guests was that which only great wealth could provide. . . . The supper room was in white; a large star surrounded with garlands of white carnations suspended from the chandelier occupied the center table; the whole covered by a veil of tulle. The mantel was banked with white carnations enveloped in a similar veil, the cloth on the table was of white satin damask with a border of antique lace; the large star of white carnations was in the center of the table. The sideboard was completely

covered with maidenhair ferns and stately lilies, the whole lighted by white wax tapers set in candelabra of crystal and silver. The hall was beautifully decorated in palms. To the right was a handsome stand of palms and ferns and a large Marchel Neil rose vine in full flowers. The railing of the stair was draped in smilax.

After the cotillion the bride changed her toilet to a handsome traveling dress and the happy couple left for an extended bridal tour. They will sail for Europe on Saturday, accompanied by the bride's young sister, Miss Daisy Neely, who will join them in New York. They will return to Memphis in the fall and make this city their future home. (Memphis Daily Appeal, 28 May 1890, 4).

FIGURE 3

Inside the house the undertakers had just finished their work. The servants, with tear-stained faces, silently passed through the handsomely furnished halls and apartments on some errand, while the bereaved members of the family awaited the call to look for the last time upon the face they loved so well.

The casket had been placed in the front parlor. It was made of cedar covered with black broadcloth, heavily mounted with solid silver. On the plaque was the inscription:

Died October 20th, 1887

Henry A. Montgomery

The flowers were very tastefully arranged about the casket, on the floor beside it, on the tables about the room and on the mantel. They seemed to be unlimited and many of the set pieces were beautiful. At the head of the casket on a table was the last tribute of esteem of the employees of the Merchants' Compress and Storage Company, who knew the goodness of their dead employer. It was a magnificent piece of floral workmanship, in the shape of a bale of cotton, suspended from a set of scales, resting on a bank of roses and smilax. The bale itself was of pure white roses, encircled with bands of forget-me-nots, while the scales were composed of white pinks, different colored roses, and ferns. On the bed of roses just beneath the bale were the letters "H.A.M.," in immortelles. This work of art was sent from New Orleans.

At the foot of the casket was a beautiful mass of flowers formed to represent "The Gates Ajar," from the members of the Cotton Exchange. It was made of tuberose, tea roses, pink roses, begonias, and ferns. Over the gates was perched a pure white dove, holding an olive branch in its bill. The gates were intertwined with smilax.

On the floor beneath the last described piece was an exquisite willow of roses from Gen. Peter Tracy. The flowers were roses of every kind appropriate to the sad occasion, beautifully arranged and surrounded by smilax. "Memphis Mourns Montgomery" was the inscription. An anchor of roses and white pinks from H. E. Avery lay at its side.

Most noticeable among the other floral pieces was a pillow of white and yellow roses, surmounted by a dove, from Mrs. Napoleon Hill. Mrs. J. W. Waynesburg sent a pillow of white, pink, and yellow roses. Mrs. W. A. Williams sent a harp of tuberose, smilax, and maiden-hair fern, with the words "Rest" in immortelles. A pillow of white rosebuds was sent from Mr. and Mrs. Mhoon. Mrs. R. McKay sent a sickle of white roses and smilax. A large harp, overhung with a star made of carnations, tuberose and pinks, stood by the window; it was sent by T. H. Phillips. Mrs. M. C. Pearce sent a

pillow of camellias and roses. There were numbers of other designs and a great quantity of cut flowers, which together almost hid the lower part of the casket from view.

As the hour for the ceremonies approached, the house began to fill with the friends and acquaintances of the deceased. The regular pall-bearers . . . assembled in the library, while the honorary pall-bearers . . . took their positions on either side of the hallway at the entrance.

. . . It was just 2 o'clock when the Rev. Dr. Harris of Mississippi, Rev. Dr. Paterson of Grace Church, and Rev. Dr. Kline of St. Mary's, issued from the reception-room and walked slowly into the parlor where the casket was. About the parlor and the room adjoining sat the relatives and old friends of the deceased. Near the window, opposite the door had been placed a small organ, and about it sat the choir. . . . (Memphis Daily Avalanche, 24 October 1887, 5).

VITA

Lawrence Allen Ray received a B.A. degree in May 1964 from Lambuth College where he served as Student Government President and the M.A. degree from the University of Mississippi in August 1966. Since September of that year he has been a faculty member at Lambuth, currently serving as chairman of the Department of Art, Fashion Merchandising, Home Economics, and Interior Design. Ray was chosen Lambuth's Outstanding Educator in 1977. In November 1982 he received the college's Outstanding Alumni Award, and in May 1983, the Student Government's Special Recognition Award. Extensive foreign study has included work at Oxford University, the Attingham Institute and Knole Historic Textile Institute, all in England; Parsons in Paris and Loire Valley Programs; and an Art-Architecture Travel Institute in the People's Republic of China. Ray has completed both the Winterthur Museum's Winter Institute and the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts Summer Institute. The author is a member of Delta Sigma Phi Fraternity, Omicron Nu and Phi Delta Phi national honor societies, and is or has been affiliated with the Decorative Arts Society of the Society of Architectural Historians and the Furniture History, Victorian, Tennessee Historical Society and West Tennessee Historical Society and with the American Society of Interior Designers. Ray is listed in Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities and Outstanding Young Americans.