VOLUME II

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

A Dissertation

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Degree

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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

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[1]Chicago Commerce, Manufacturers, Banking and Transportation Facilities (Chicago: S. Ferd, Howe & Co., 1884), 192, Special Collections, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago.

[2]Gail 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]

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[3]Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 376-377.

[4]Ibid., 304.

[5]Ibid., 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:

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[6]Ibid., 381.

[7]Ibid., 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,

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[8]Ibid.

[9]For 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.

[10]Mayhew 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

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[11]Carolyn Flaherty, "Downing on Interior Decoration," Old House Journal Compendium, eds. Clem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980), 253.

[12]Mayhew 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]

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[13]Downing, The Architecture of Country Homes, 366.

[14]Ibid., 206.

[15]Ibid., 365.

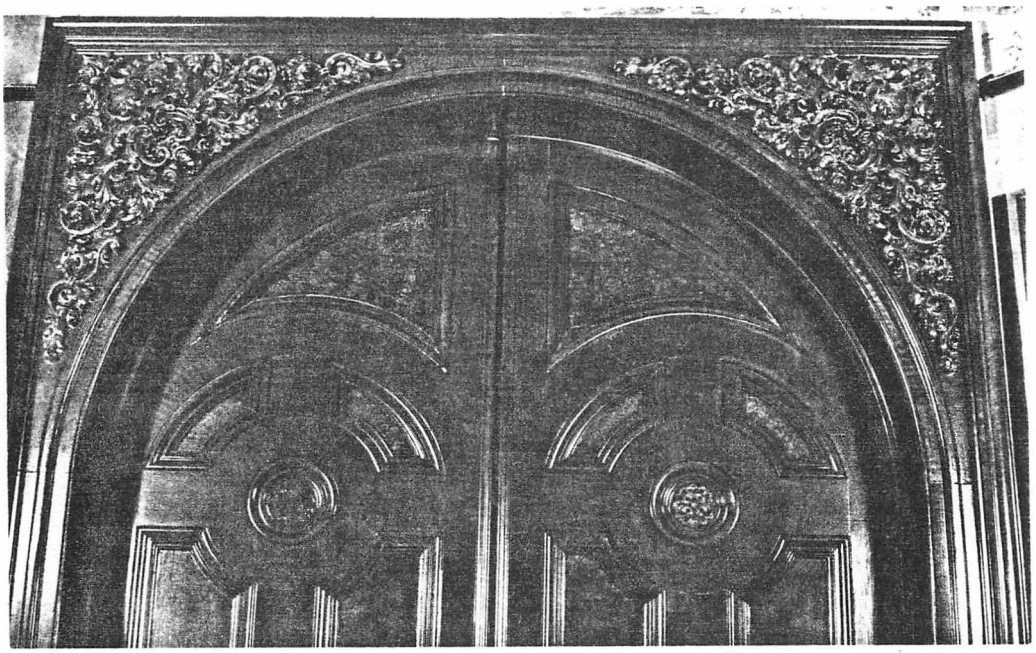
[16]Sloan, 31.

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)

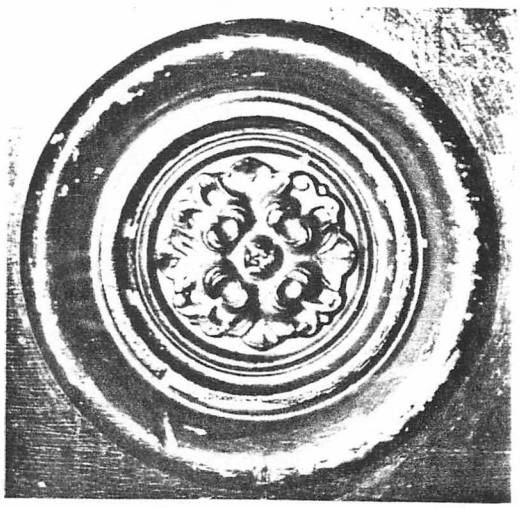
One of the most important architectural millwork features of the Mallory-Neely circa 1852 interior no longer exists: it was the spiral staircase in the entrance hall. This was replaced with a more up-to-date set of stairs in the Neely's post-1883 remodeling. Investigative structural study of the house 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

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[17]Miller 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

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[18]Lawrence Grow and Dina von Zweck, American Victorian: A Style and Source Book (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984), 29.

[19]Hinkle, Guild & Co. Plans of Buildings, 2.

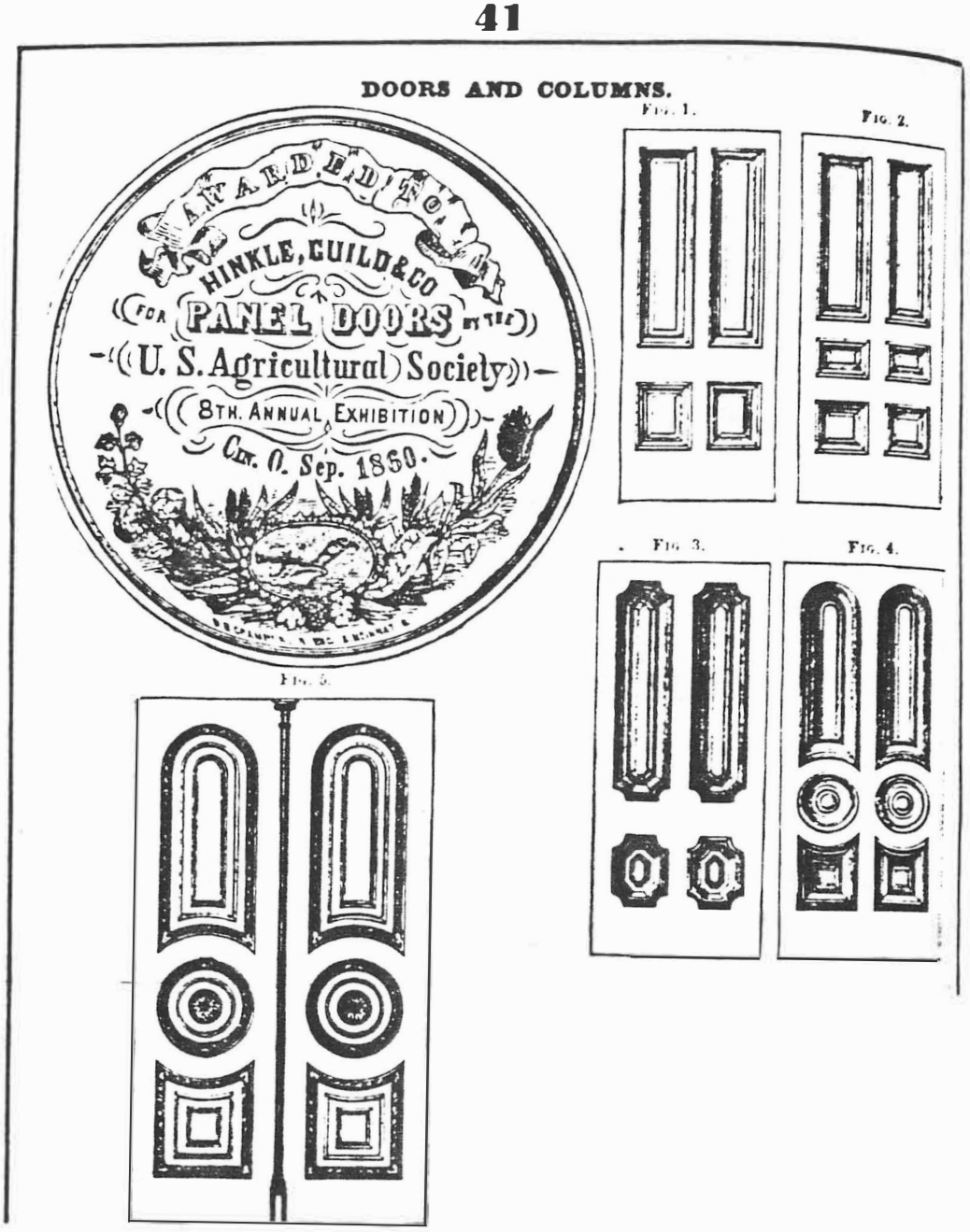
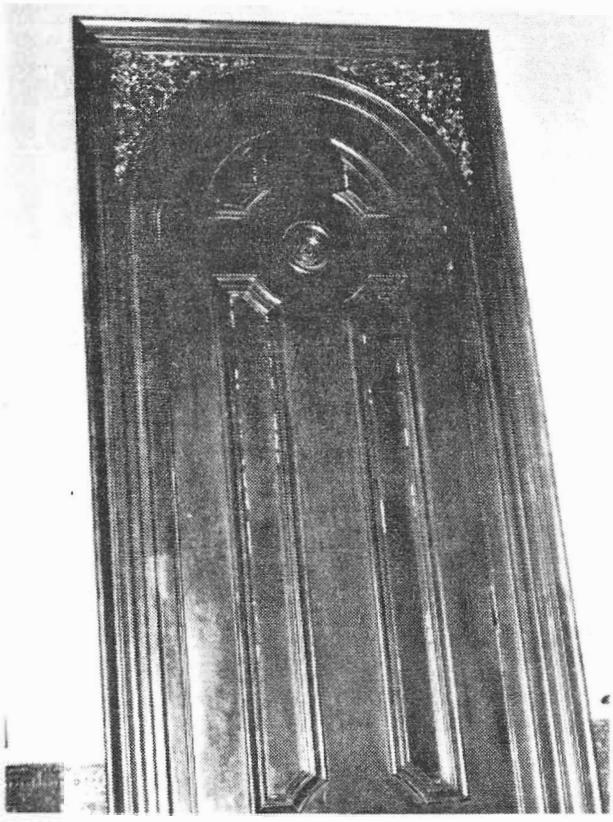
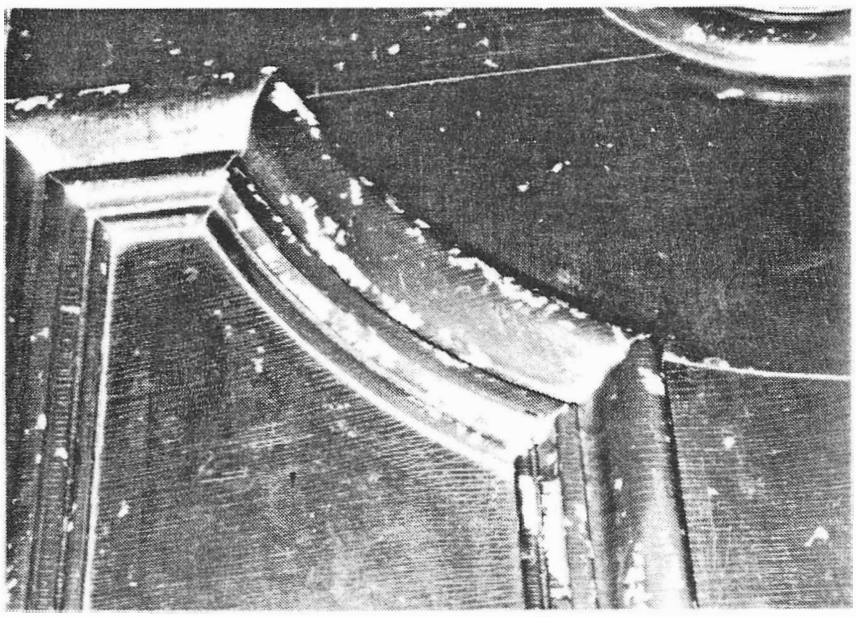


Figure 68. Part of a page from the 1869 Hinkle, Guild & Co. catalog showing mail-order Italianate style doors. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.



A



B

Figure 69. Details of some of the Mallory-Neely millwork (c. 1852).
A. Entrance hall door.
B. Detail of molding.

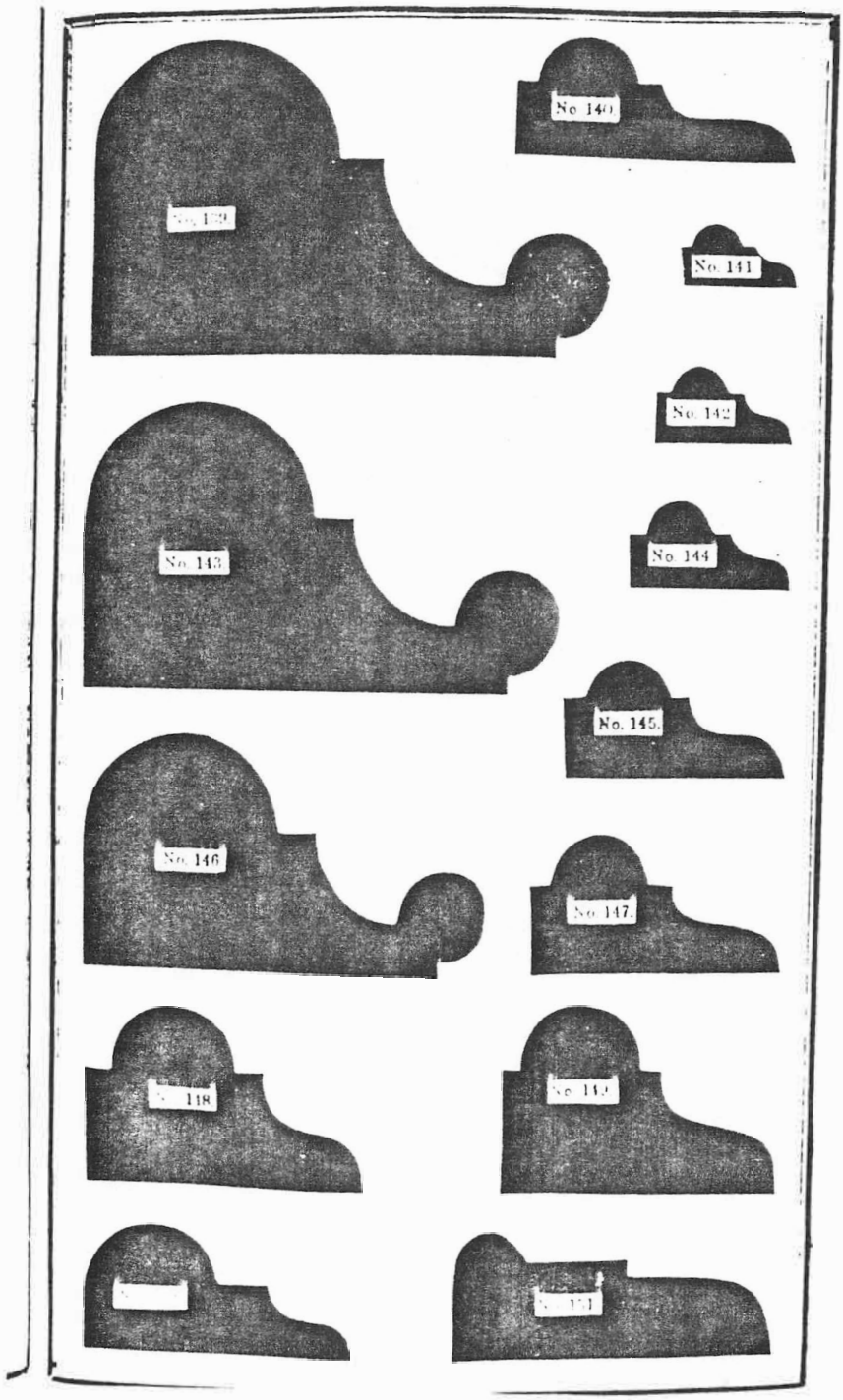
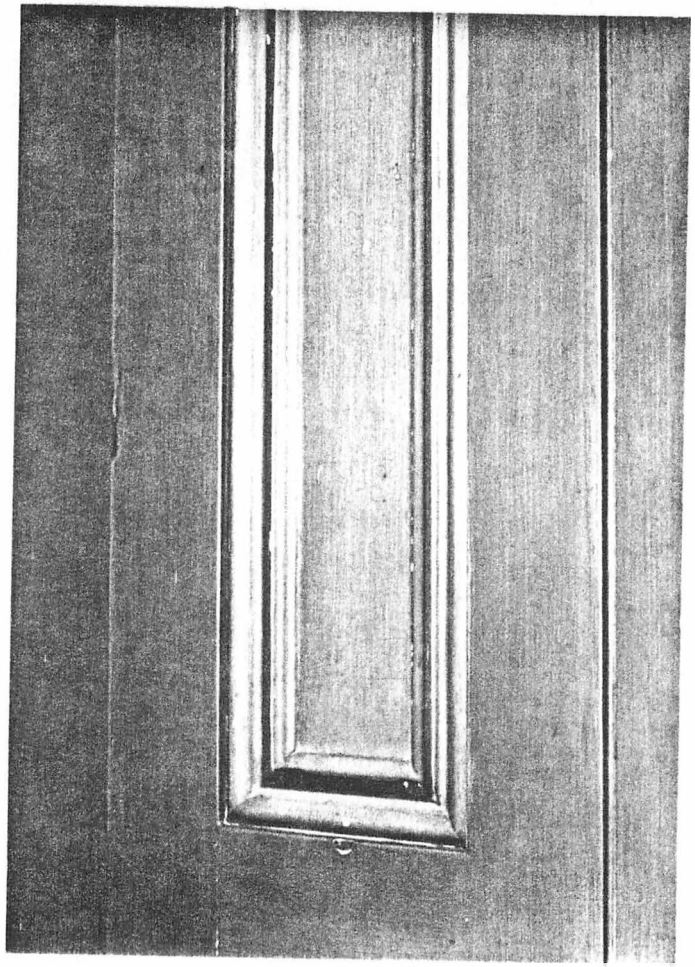
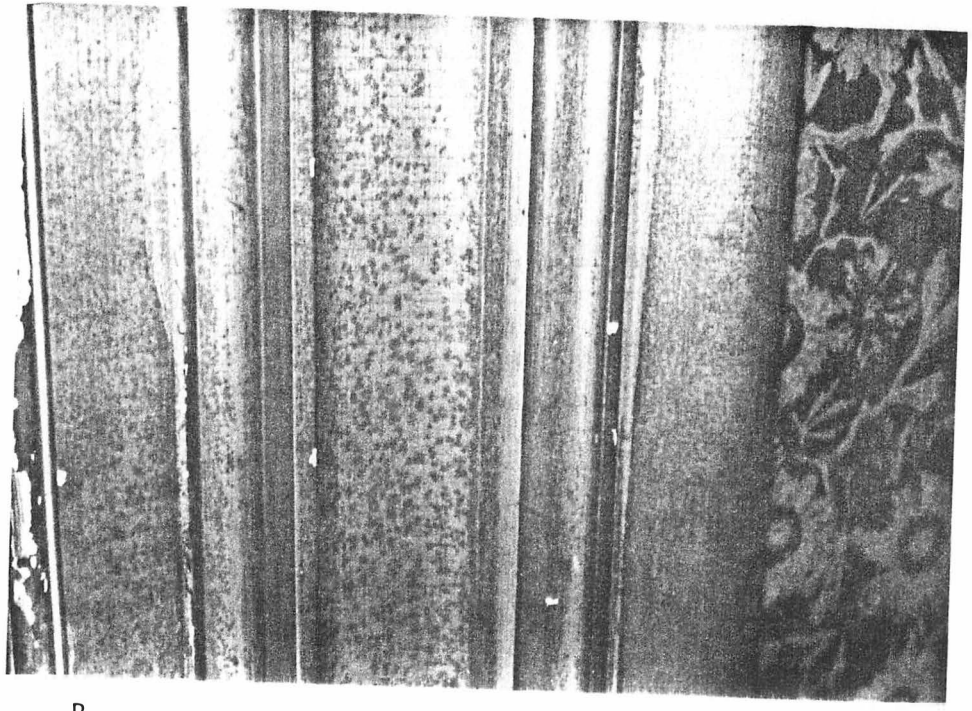


Figure 70. One of many pages from the 1869 Hinkle, Guild & Co. catalog showing profile sections of available mail-order moldings. Many of these are similar to the Italianate moldings used throughout the original two floors of the Mallory-Neely house. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.



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

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[20]Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts folder.

[21]Robertson Topp to James Griffith & Co. [Letter of Contract], 18 April 1860, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts folder.

[22]James Griffith to Robertson Topp, 3 July 1861, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts folder.

[23]James 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

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[24]George M. McGregor to Robertson Topp, 16 April 1861, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts folder.

[25]Robertson Topp to James G. Peterson [Letter of Contract], 15 October 1862, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts folder.

[26]Lewis 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 Cararra, 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.

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[27]Mrs. Jane Hanks, Interview by author, Memphis, Tennessee, 14 October 1984.

[28]Henry 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

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[30]Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 397.

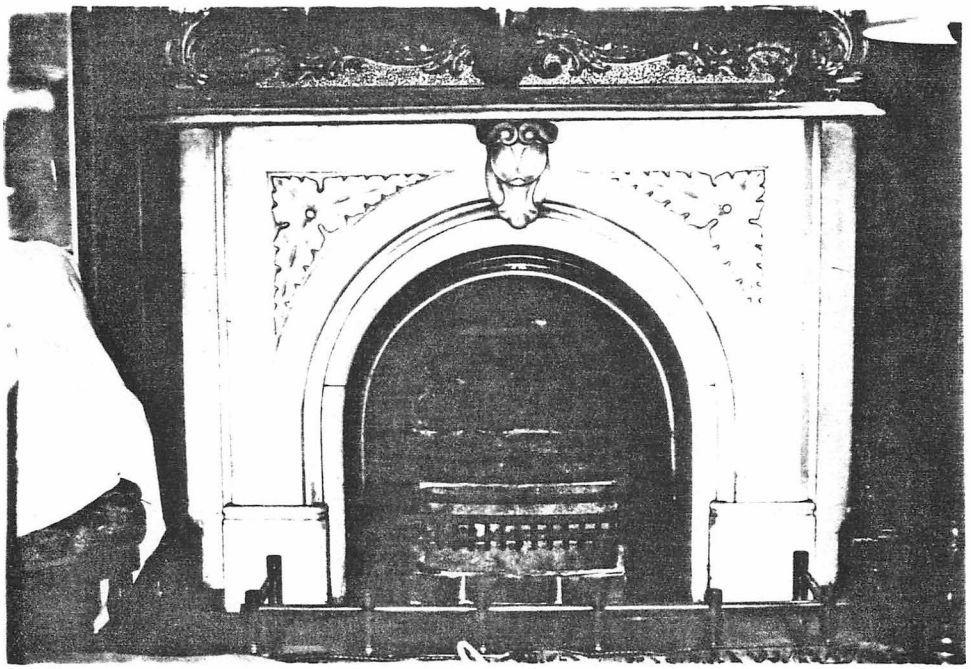


Figure 72. Music-room fireplace. It is one of two circa 1852 marble mantels that remain in place on the first floor of the Mallory-Neely House. The Italianate round arch and molding of the mantel is embellished with foliage in the spandrels. A rococo console serves as a keystone.

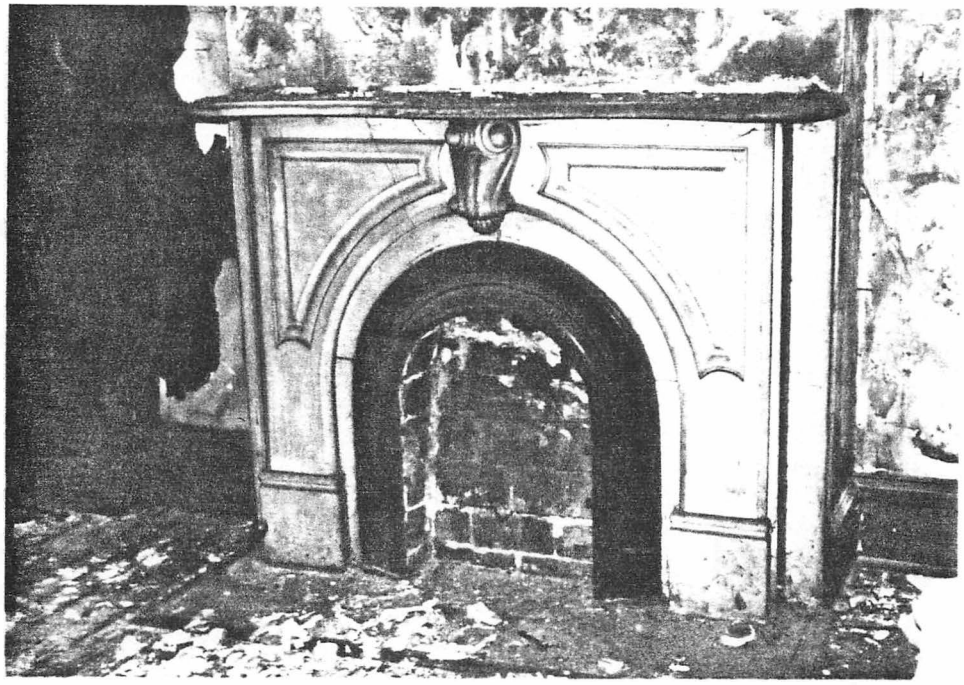


Figure 73. Italianate mantel. One of the original marble mantels moved to the third floor of the Mallory-Neely House after the post-1883 alterations by J. C. Neely.

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)

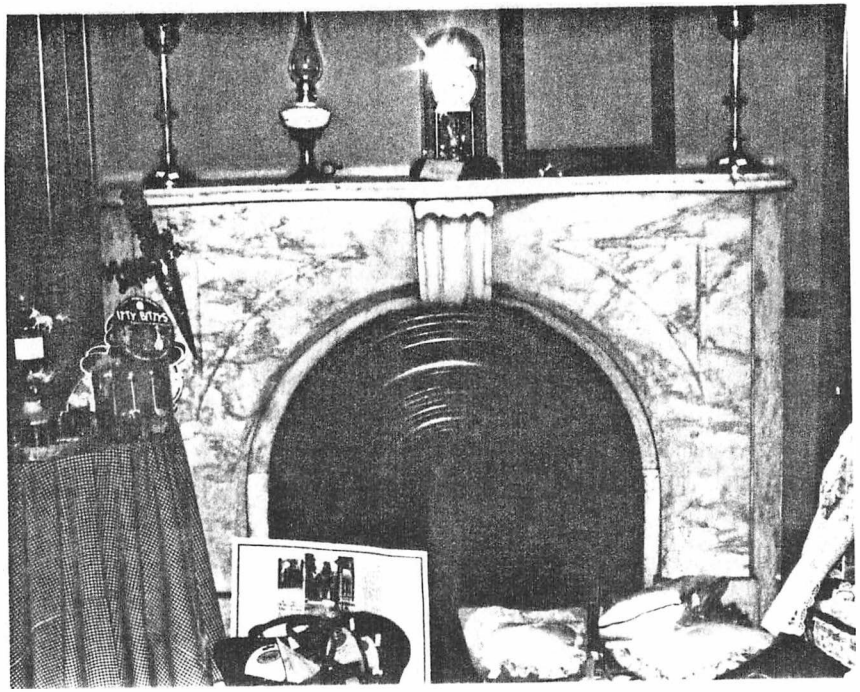
Plaster, both plain and decorative, was a subject of interest to Downing, Sloan and others. They suggested that the general

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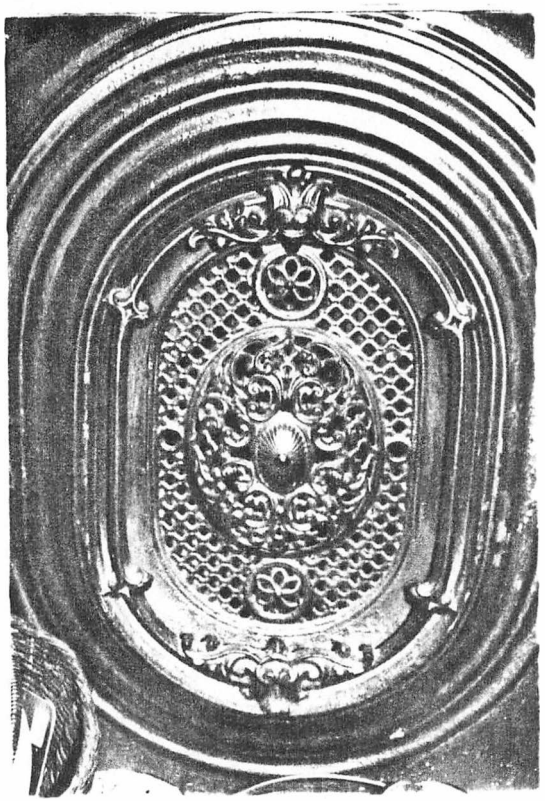
[31]John Meighan & Sons, Marble Works [letterhead], 20 July 1857, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Account folder.

[32]James Maydwell [invoice], 1 July 1858, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Account folder.

[33]Horton & 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.

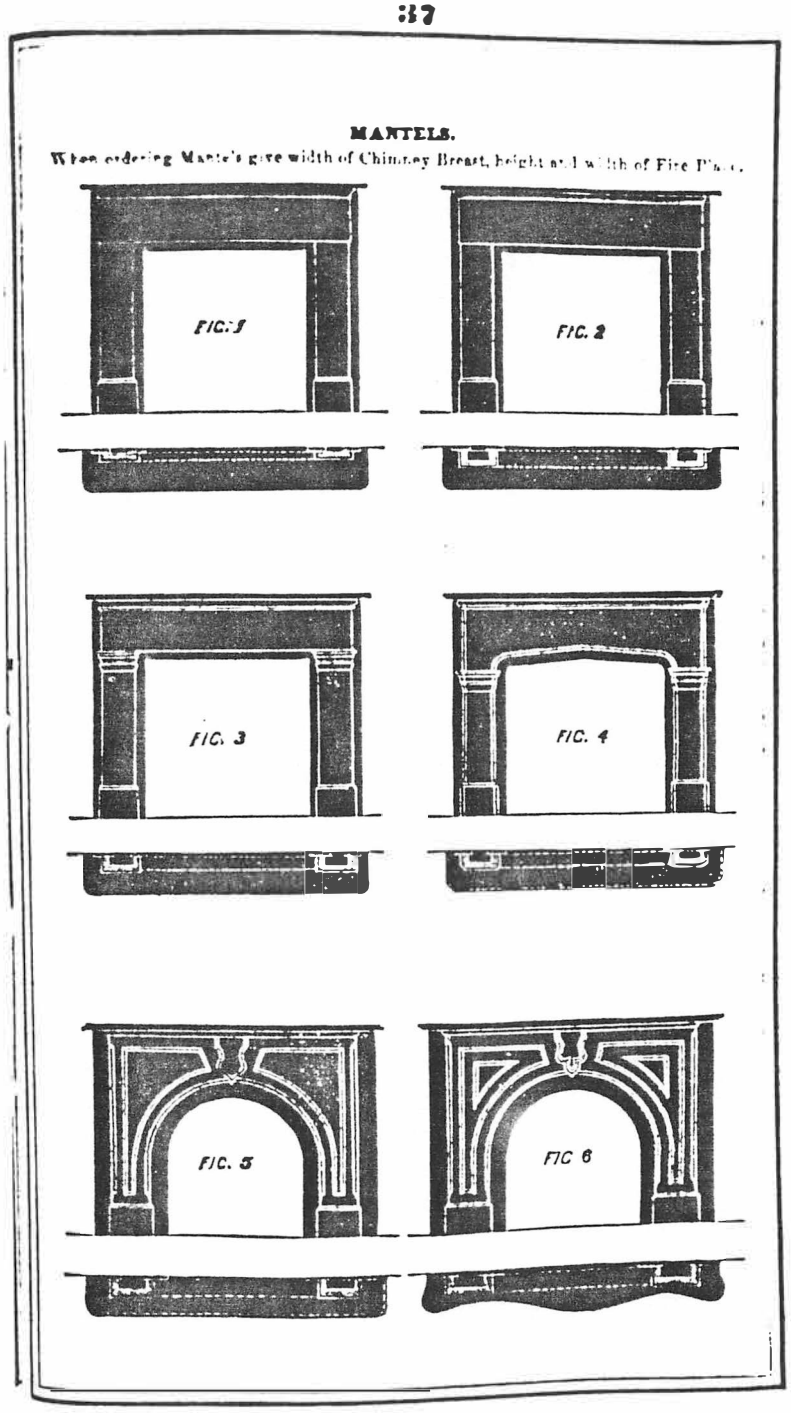


Figure 75. Hinkle, Guild & Company catalog (1869). Perhaps Topp and Kirtland utilized a source like this page of mail-order mantels. The bottom two are in the Italianate style and are similar to ones in the Mallory-Neely House. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.

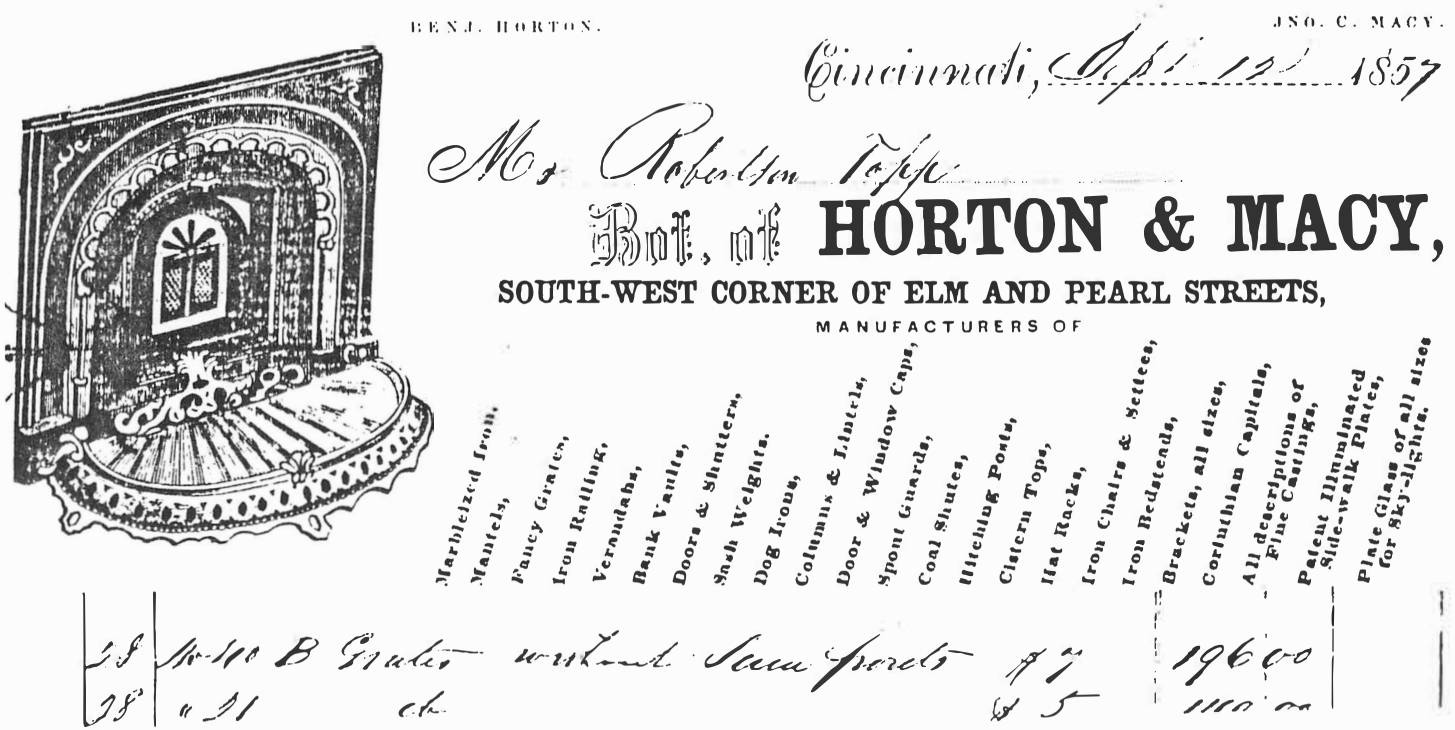


Figure 76. An 1857 Horton & Macy Company invoice. Parallel in time to the building and furnishing of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852), this invoice head from the Robertson Topp Papers illustrates a rococo revival cast-iron mantel grate similar in spirit to that used by Kirtland in the morning room. Courtesy Burrow Library, Rhodes College.

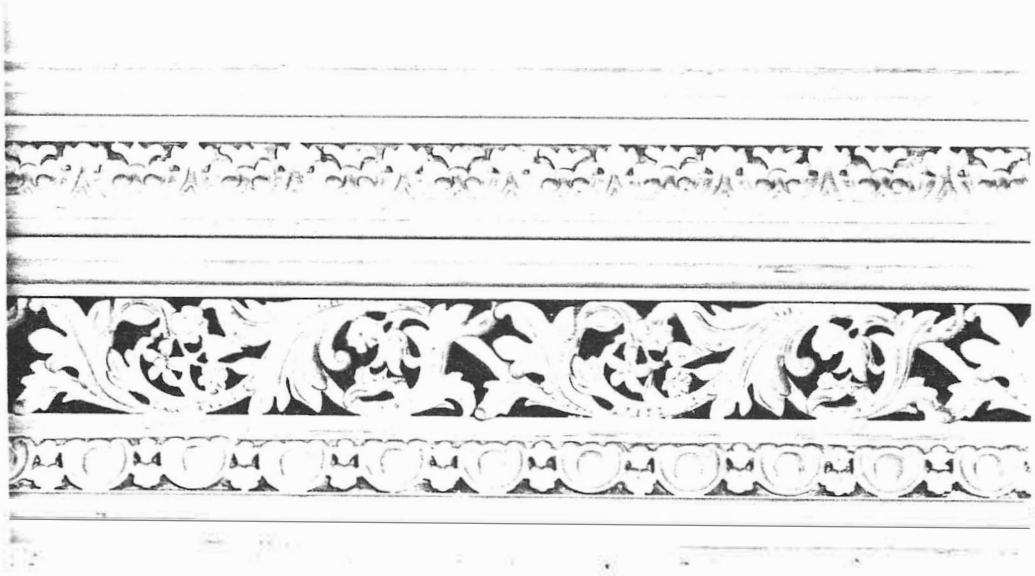
interior wall surface of the domestic house should have perfectly smooth plaster of paris surface with a "hard finish."[34] Plaster walls of this type, though most are covered, survive throughout the Mallory-Neely House.

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)

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[34]See 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.

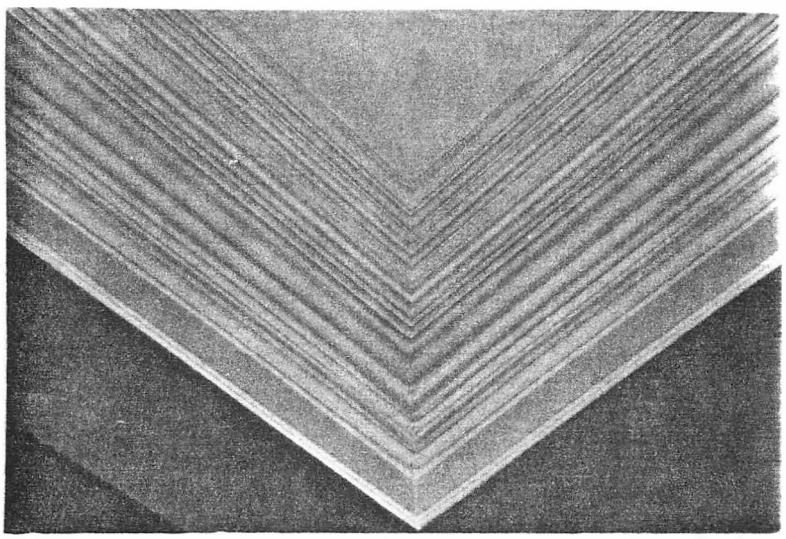


Figure 78. Morning room crown molding survives from Kirtland's original decor (c. 1852).

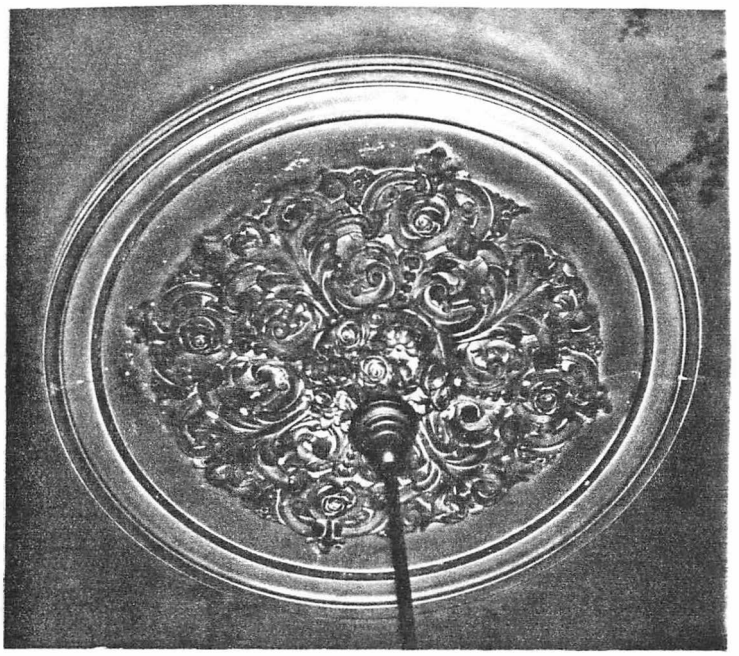
It is almost identical to the one in the dining room of Memphis' best surviving Italianate villa, Annesdale.[36]

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.

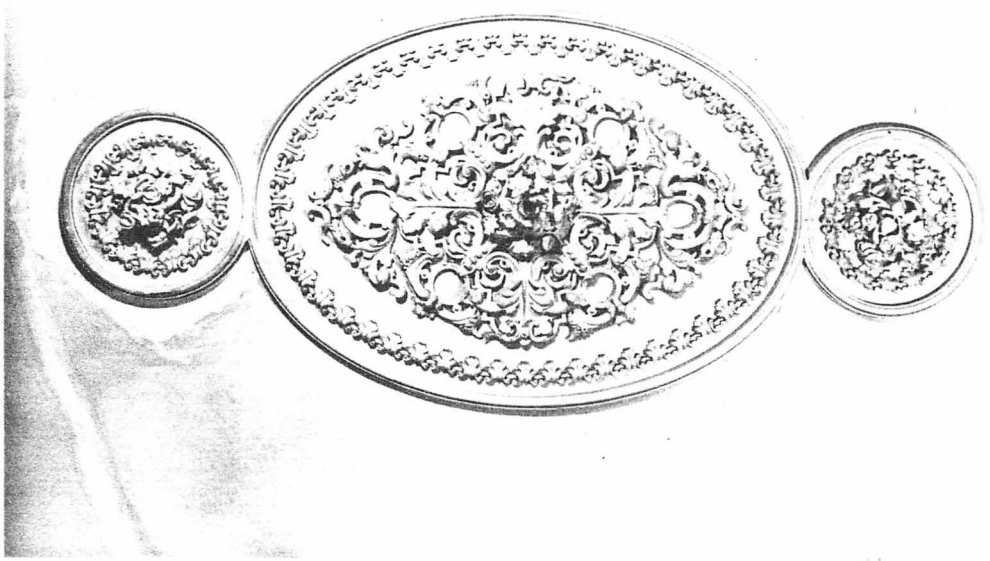
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[36]Renata Novarese, "Annesdale, A Case Study" [unpublished Memphis State University Home Economics report], 29 April 1980, 25, Special Collections, Mississippi Valley Collection, Blister Library, Memphis State University.

[37]Guy 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 midcentury 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.

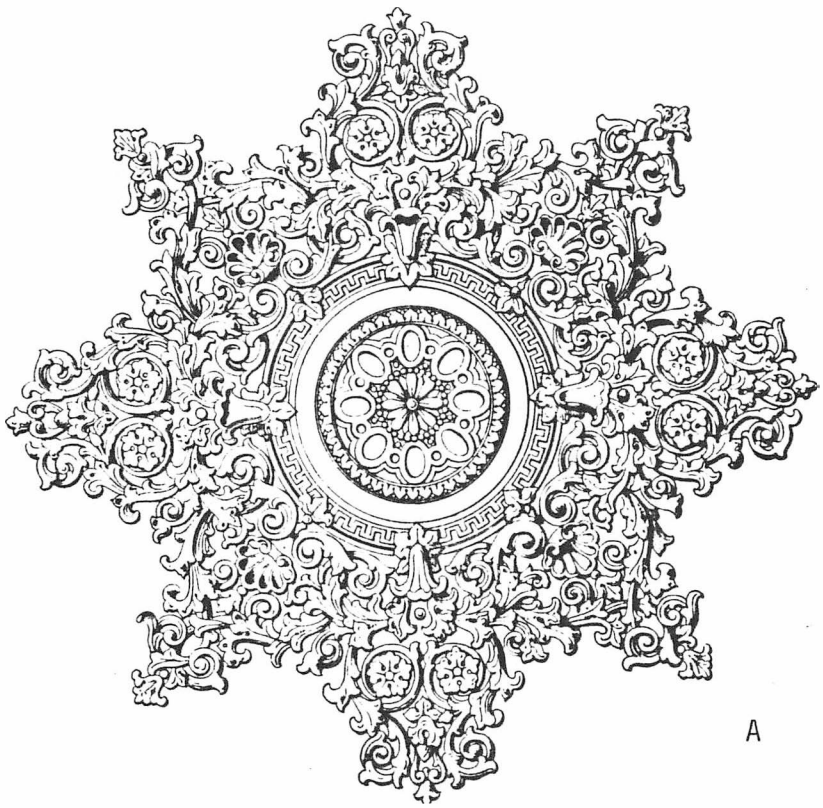
Robertson Topp received a bill dated 15 October 1861 from James G. Peterson for making and installing simple centers for the new addition to his home.[39] A 9 November 1857 letter survives in which Topp ordered $418.75 worth of more elaborate plaster ornaments from William H. French and Charles S. French 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."

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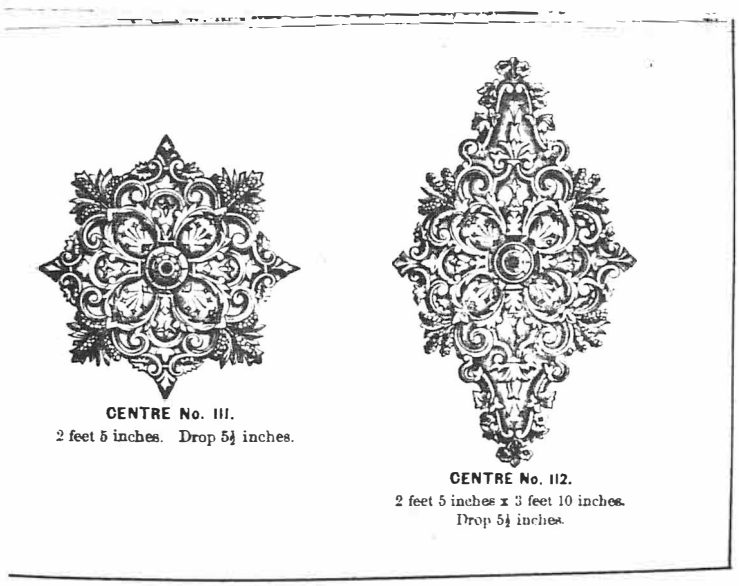
[38]Sloan, 75.

[39]James G. Peterson, 15 October 1861 [invoice] Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Account folder.

[40]William 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 Downingesque 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

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[41]W. H. Rainey & Co.'s Memphis City Directory and General Business Advertiser (Memphis: E. R. Martlett, M.D. & W. H. Rainey, 1855), 872-873.

[42]Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 370.

[43]Charles Granquist, "Ornamental Plastering," Historic Preservation, 22, No. 2 (April-June 1970), 11-16.

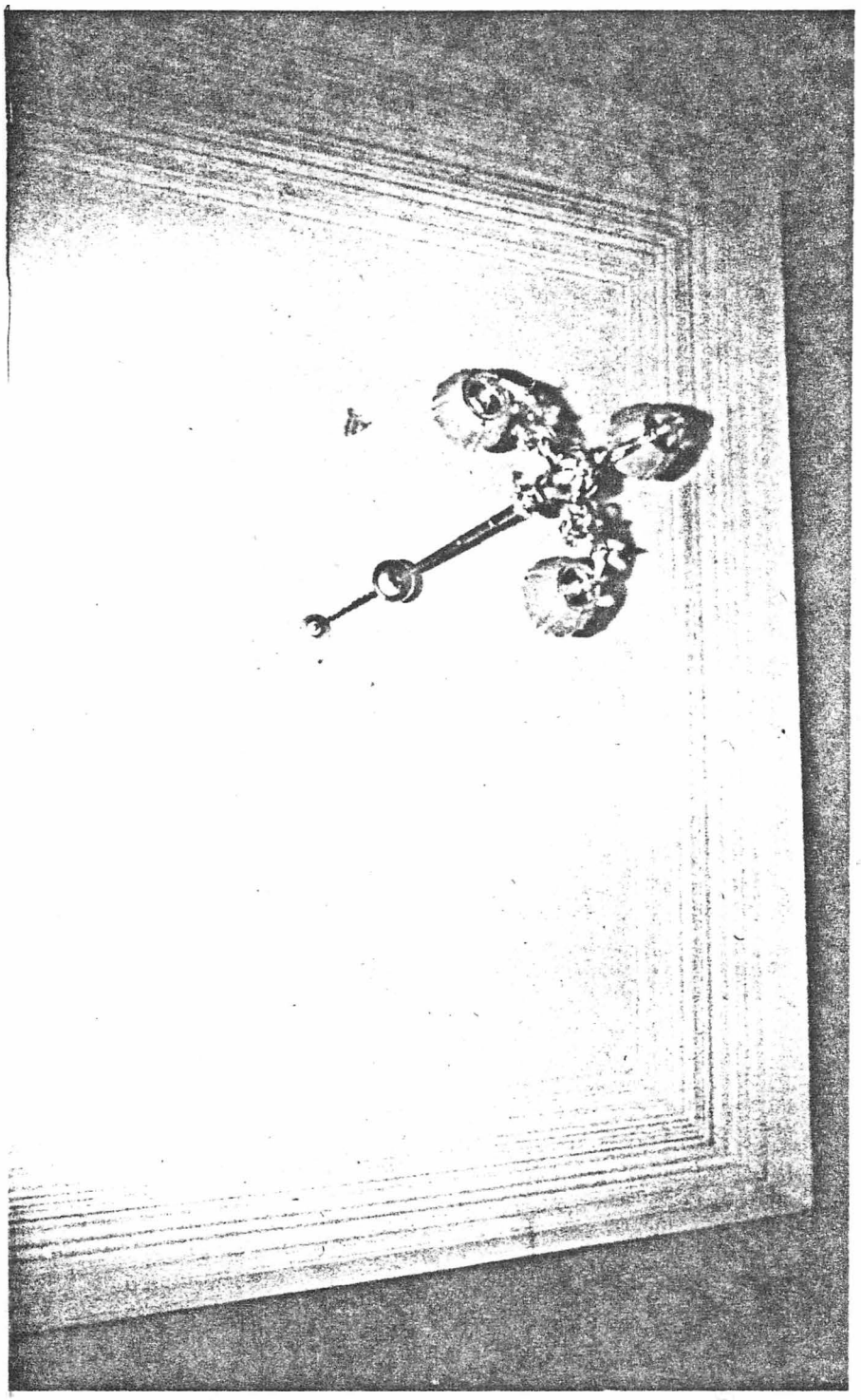


Figure 81. Ceiling of the Mallory-Neely House morning room.

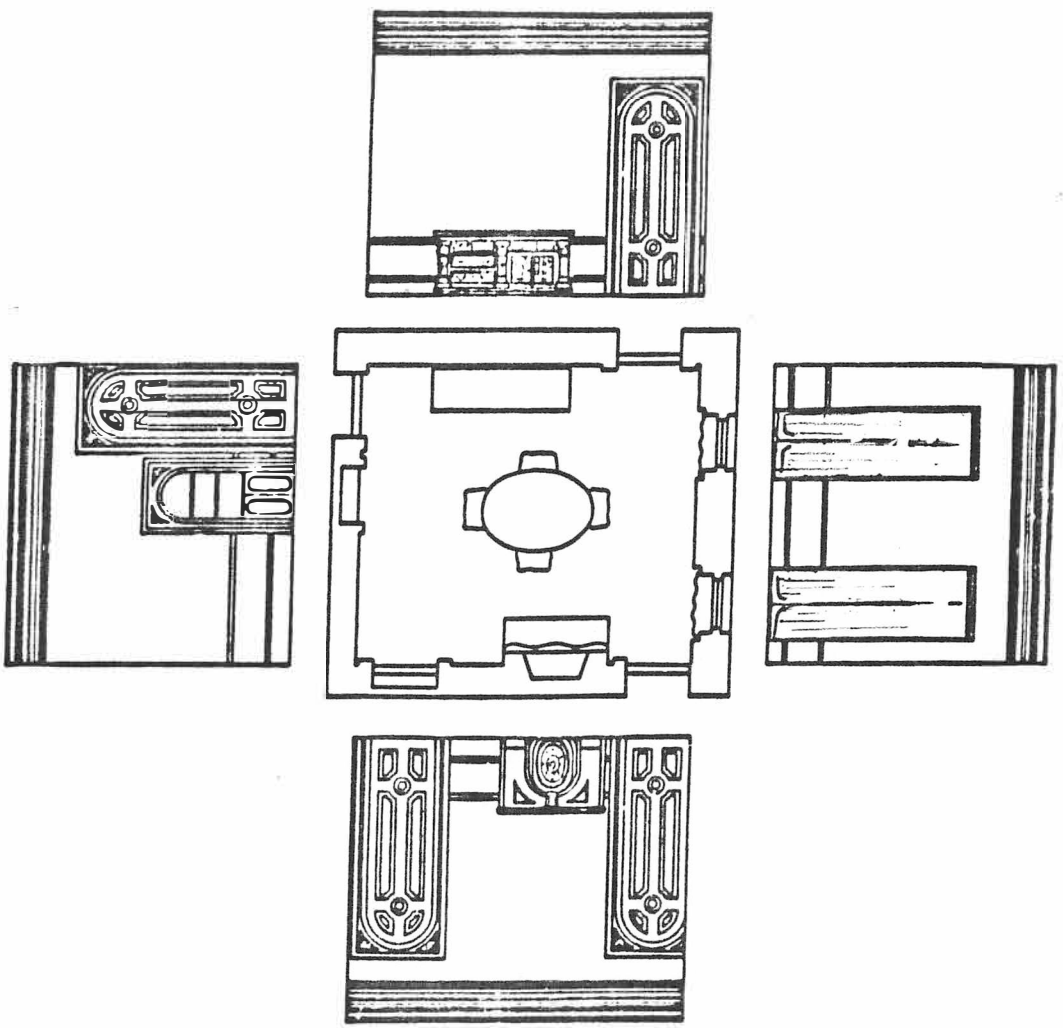


Figure 82. Furnished plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely morning room.

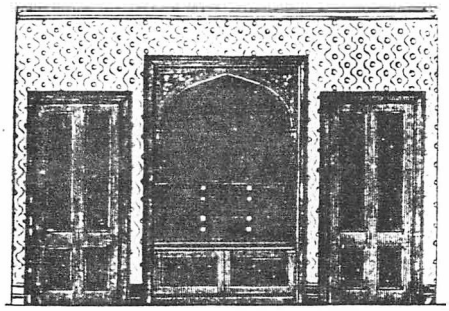
cabinet somewhat similar to one illustrated in Calvert's Vaux's Villa and Cottages and labeled by him as a "recessed sideboard" which he described as "a useful feature architecturally managed."[44] (Figure 83) Here the more elaborate dining room example is scaled down to an appropriate size for a breakfast 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

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[44]Vaux, 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 cupboard 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

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[45]Today 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

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[46]Denise LeBoux-LeBard, Meubles Et Ensembles Second Empire (Paris: Editions Charles Massin, 1960), 56.

[47]Siegfried 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.

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[48]Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Nineteenth Century Architecture (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1958), 134-135.

[49]Ibid.

[50]The Second Empire, Art in France Under Napoleon III [exhibition catalog], (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1978), 15.

[51]Hans Jurgen Hansen, ed., Nineteenth Century Art (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1972), 69.

[52]Anne Charlis, ed., The History of Furniture (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1976), 250.

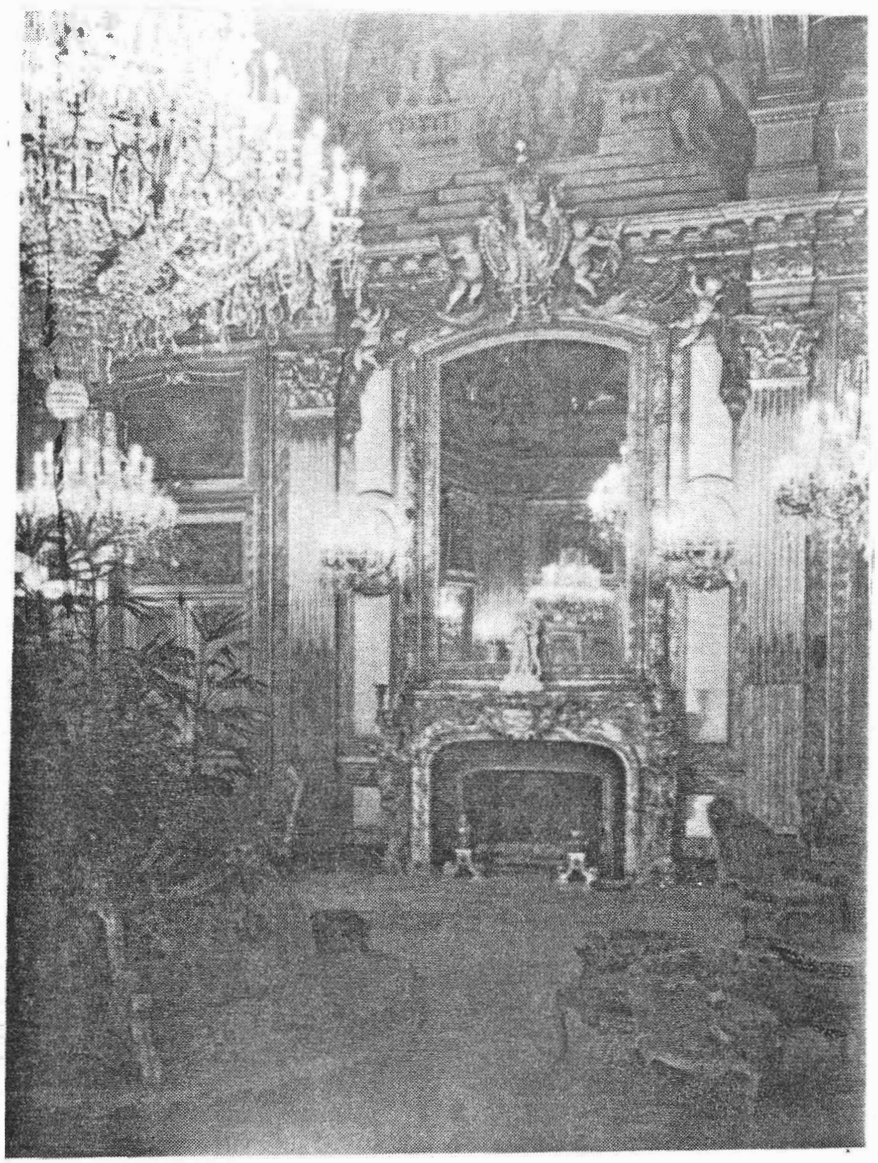


Figure 84. Gold and white salon of the Finance Ministry in the New Palace of the Louvre in Paris, France. It epitomizes the lavish Second Empire approach to interior decoration.

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.

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[53]Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture, 657.

[54]Philippe 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

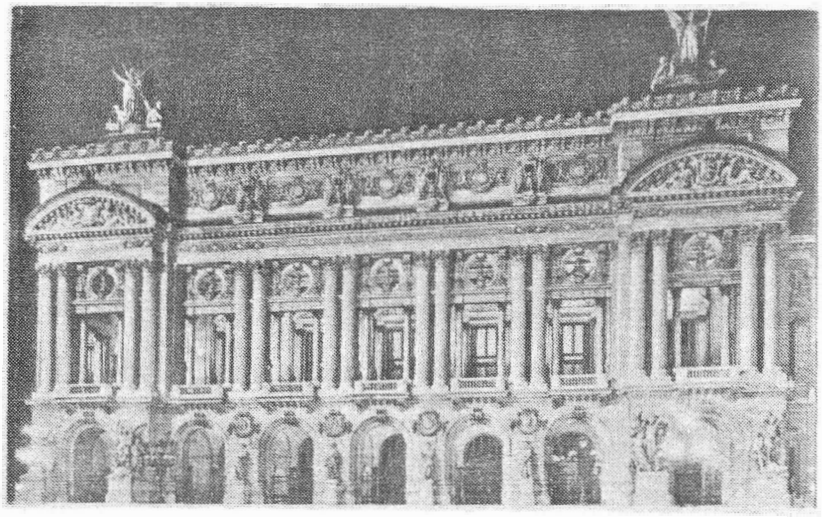
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[55]Hansen, 16.

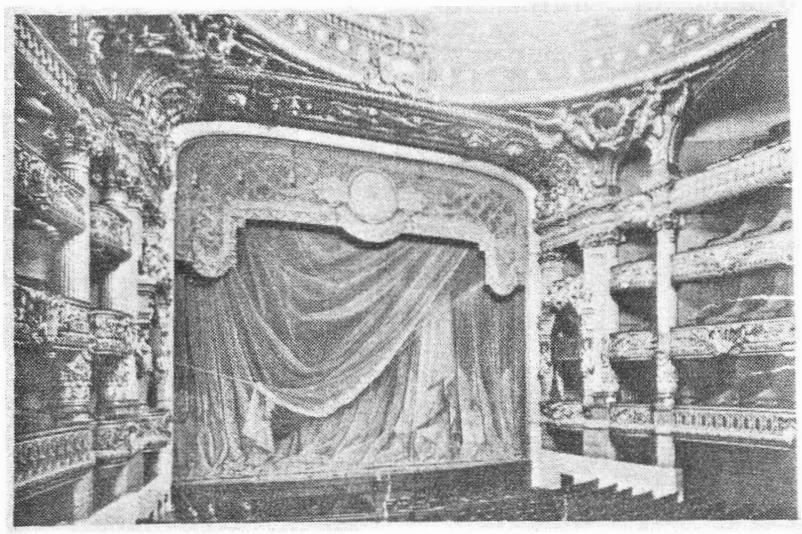
[56]Rothery, 255.

[57]Hitchcock, 138.

[58]Julian, 33-44.



A

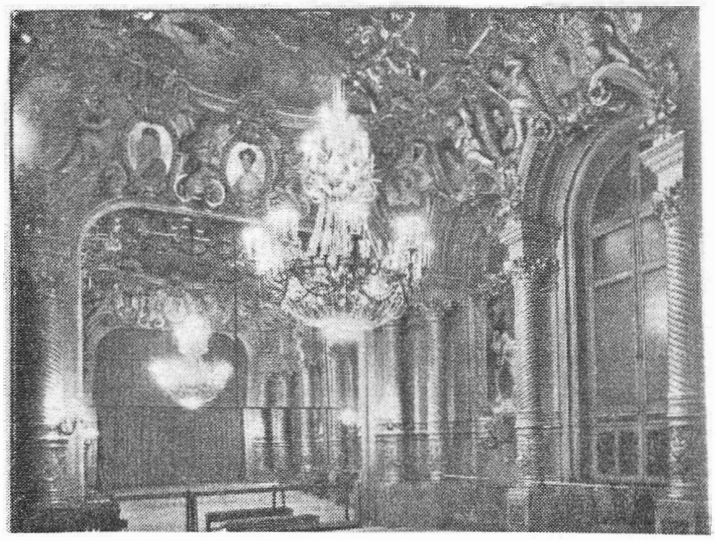


B

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;

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[59]Hitchcock, 170.

[60]Maass, The Gingerbread Age, 17.

[61]Hitchcock, 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,

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[62]Ibid., 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

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[63]William Milar, Plastering Plain and Decorative (New York: John Lane, 1899), 121, Special Collections, Burnham Library of Architecture, Art Institute of Chicago.

[64]See 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)

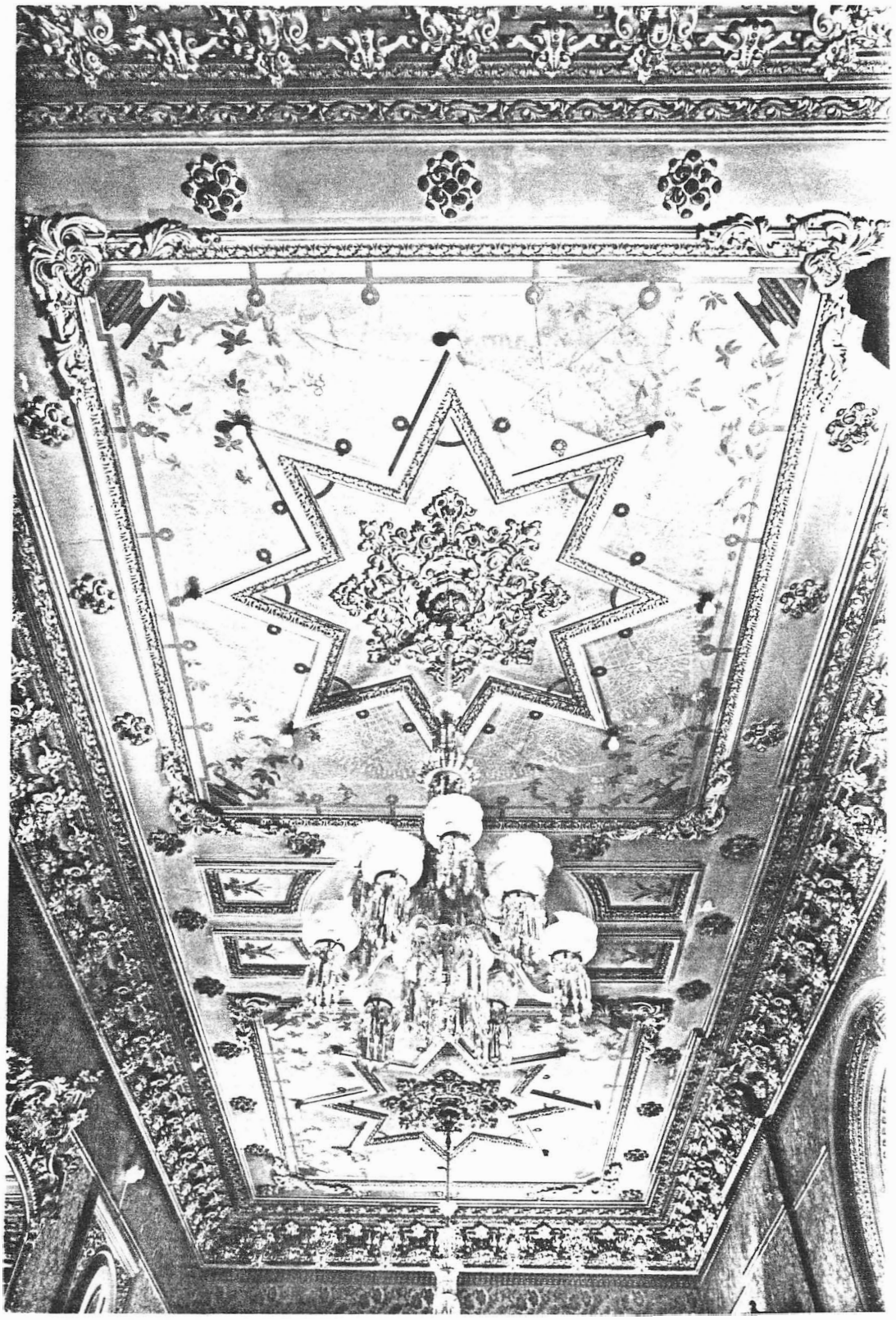


Figure 87. Mallory-Neely parlor ceiling.

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)

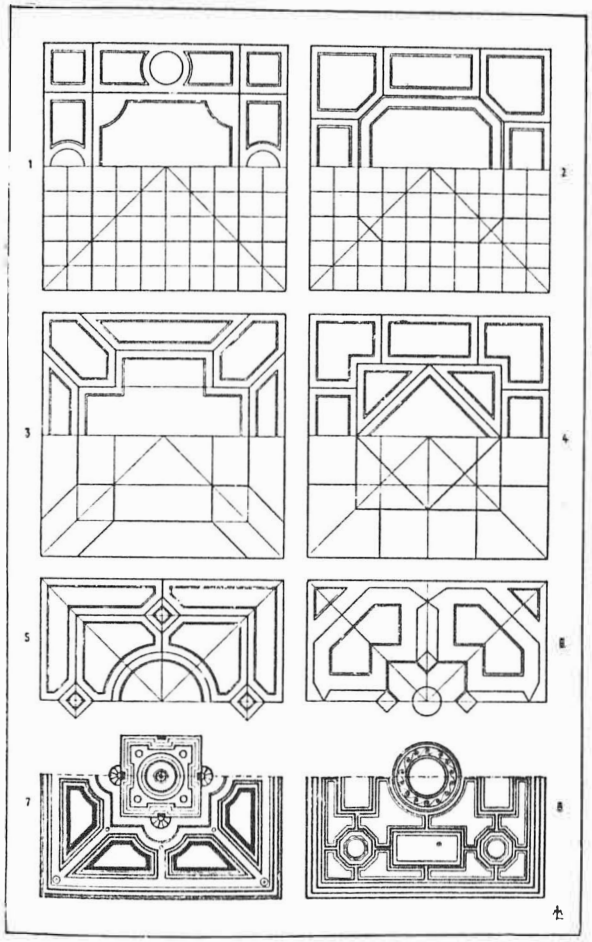
The Mallory-Neely parlor ceiling is an example of what the ceiling literature classified as an older form, originating in Greco-Roman architecture and revived during the Renaissance. It is subdivided into panels expressive of the supposed architectural beams of the ceiling with infill panels.

The parlor ceiling (18' x 36') has a basic tripartite division, the center panel of which is further subdivided into five panels

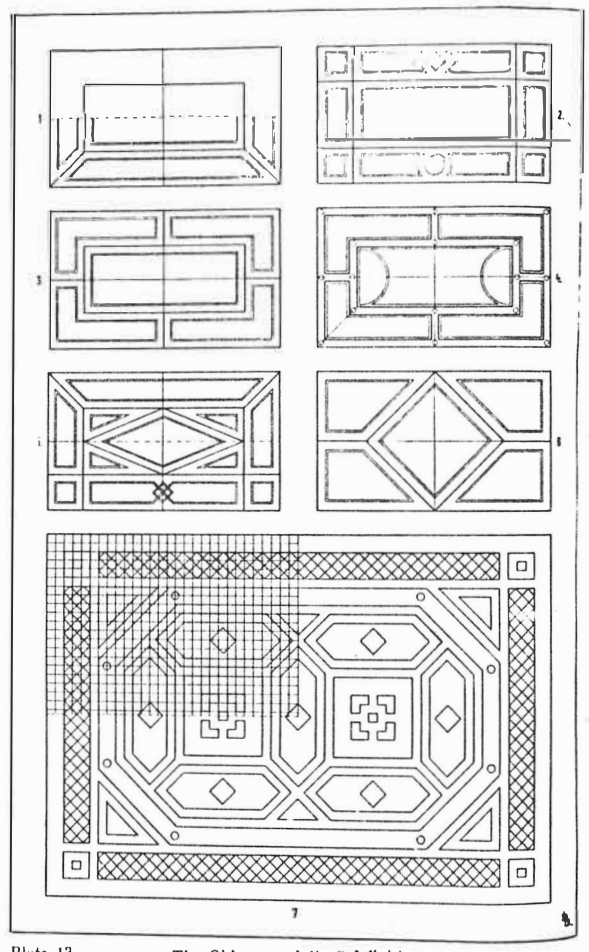
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[65]See Hitchcock, Nineteenth Century Architecture, Chapters 9-10.

[66]Franz Sales Meyer, Handbook of Ornament (New York: Hessling and Speilmeyer, 1894), Special Collections, Newberry Library, Chicago.



A



B

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]

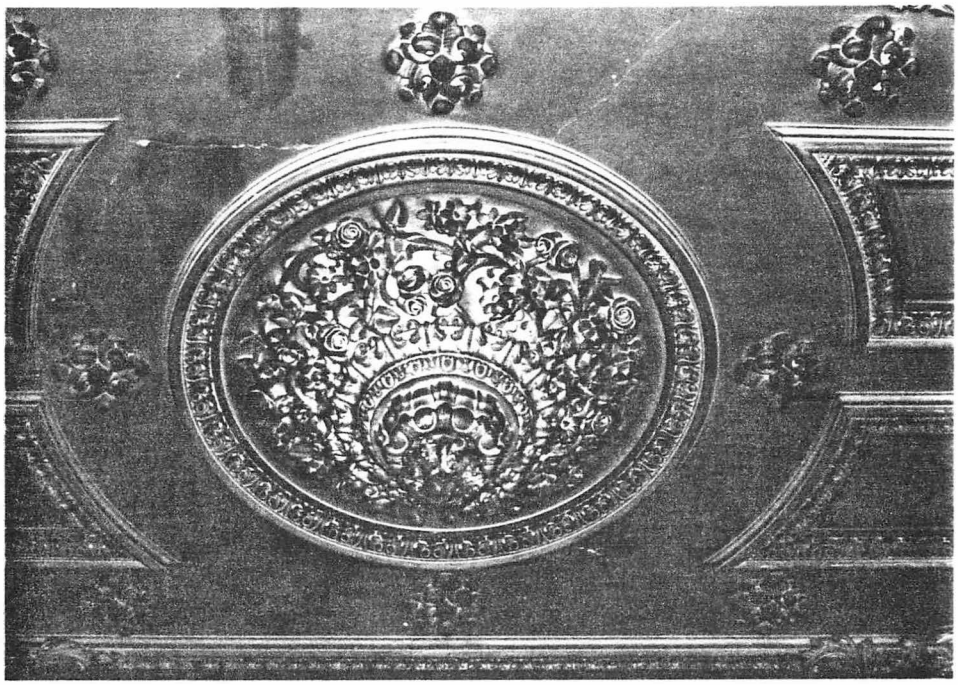
The much smaller music room ceiling (14' x 18') is treated as a single field without panels. Contemporary literature defined this elimination of simulated architectural structure as a later development in the evolution of historic ceiling treatment.[68] It is centered by an undulating oval medallion, 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

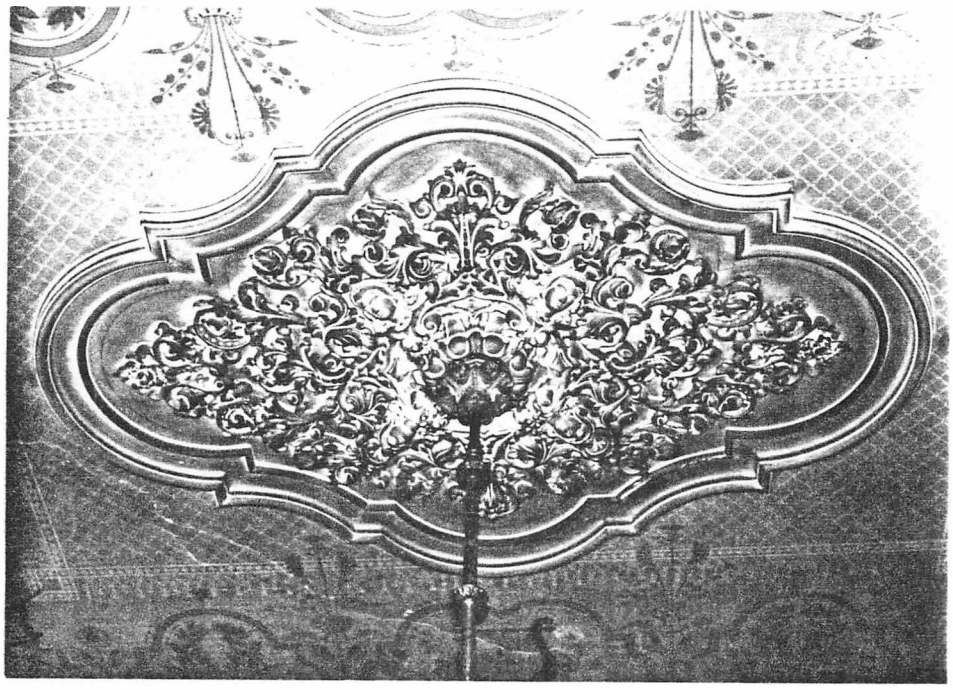
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[67]Alfred Dwight Hamlin, A History of Ornament, Renaissance and Modern, Vol. II (New York: The Century Co., 1916); reprint (New York: Cooper Square Publications, 1971), 85-87.

[68]Ibid., 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.

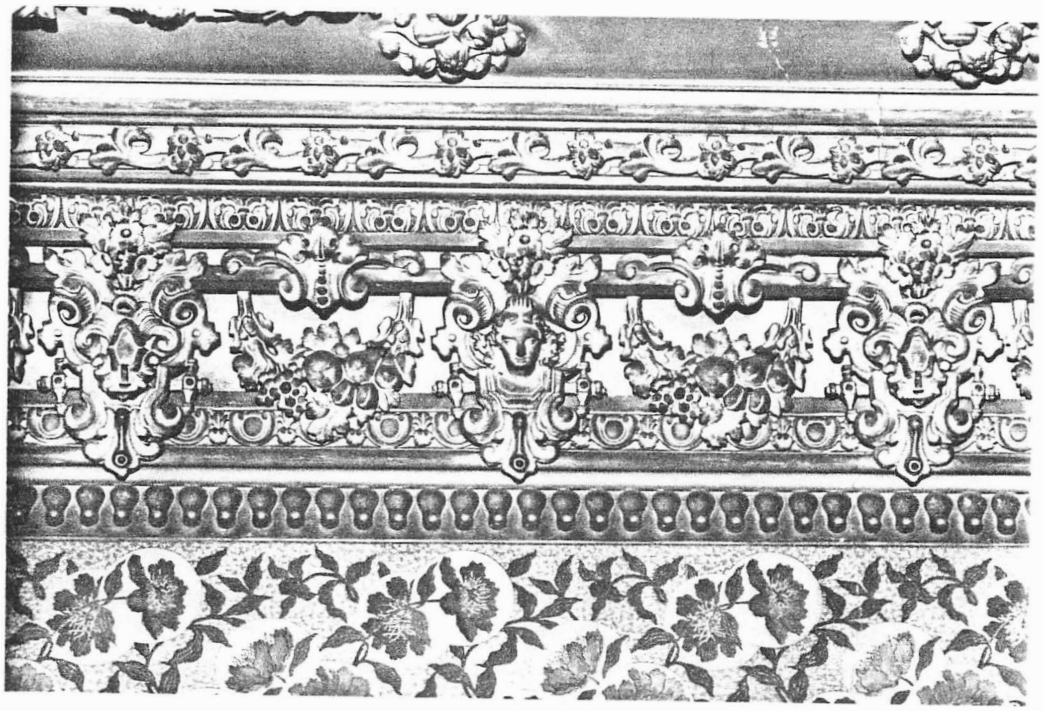
The identical cornice running (height 2', projection 1 1/2') around both the parlor and music room is made up of superimposed concave bands and moldings (mostly cyma); some of these are left plain while others are ornamented with egg and dart and waterleaf variants or scrolling rococo foliage. The frieze (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

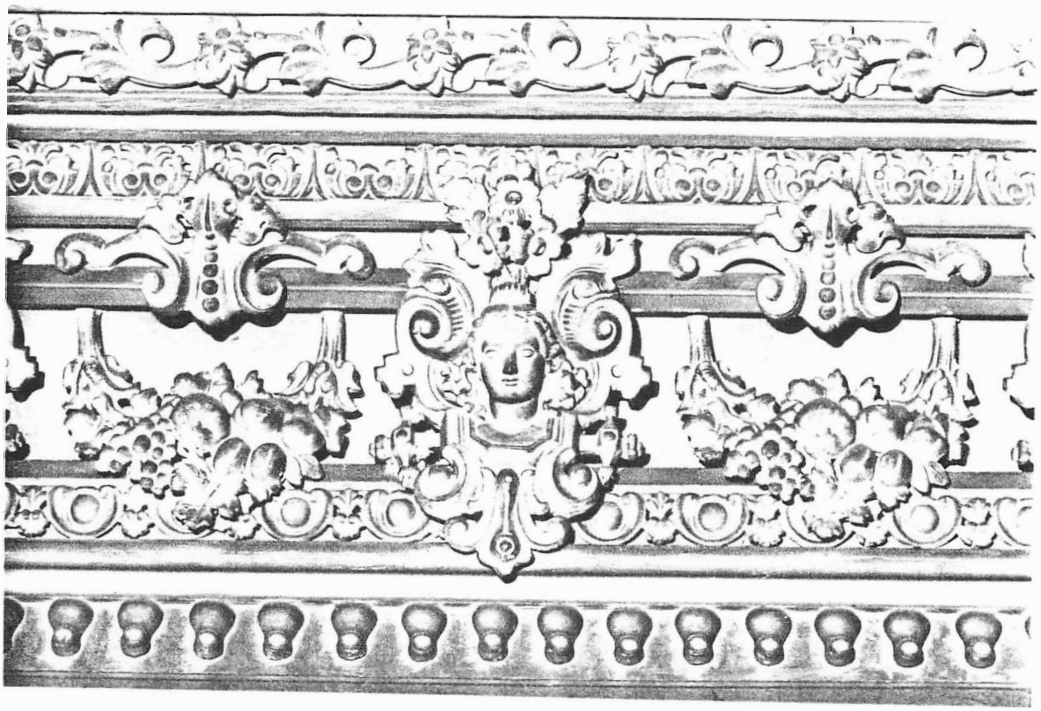
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[69]Ibid., 166.

[70]Cartouches, 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.

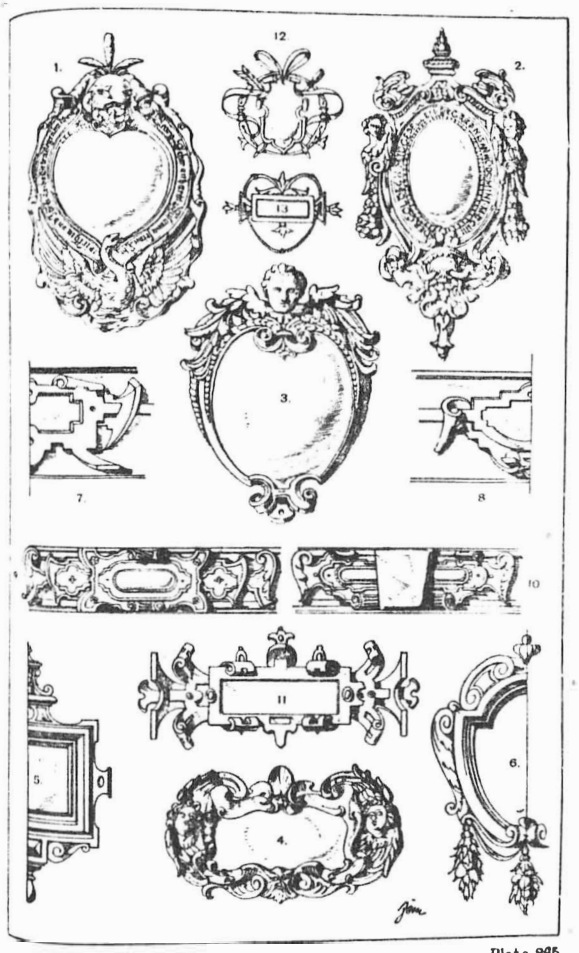


A

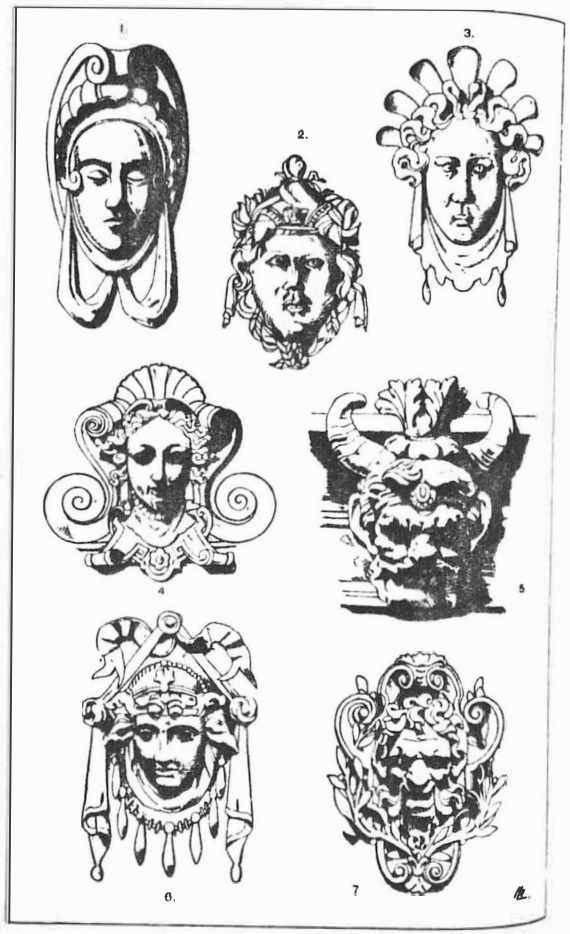


B

Figure 90. Details of the complex crown moldings of the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room.
A. Parlor.
B. Music room.



A



B

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.

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]

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[71]Milar, 330.

[72]McKee, 51.

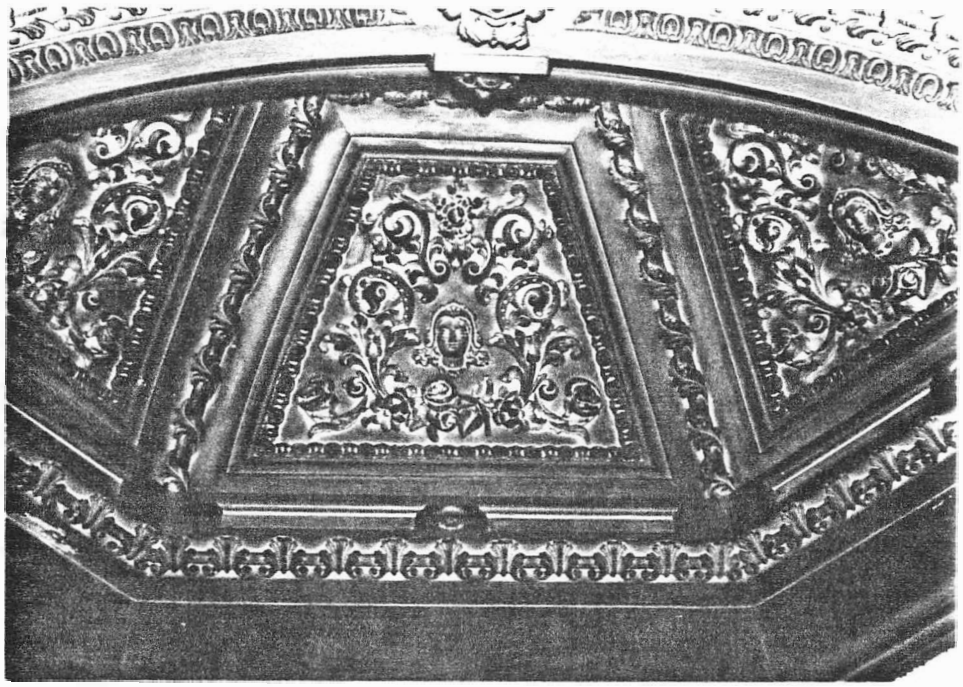


Figure 92. Detail of the ornamental plasterwork of the Mallory-Neely parlor bay window ceiling.

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)

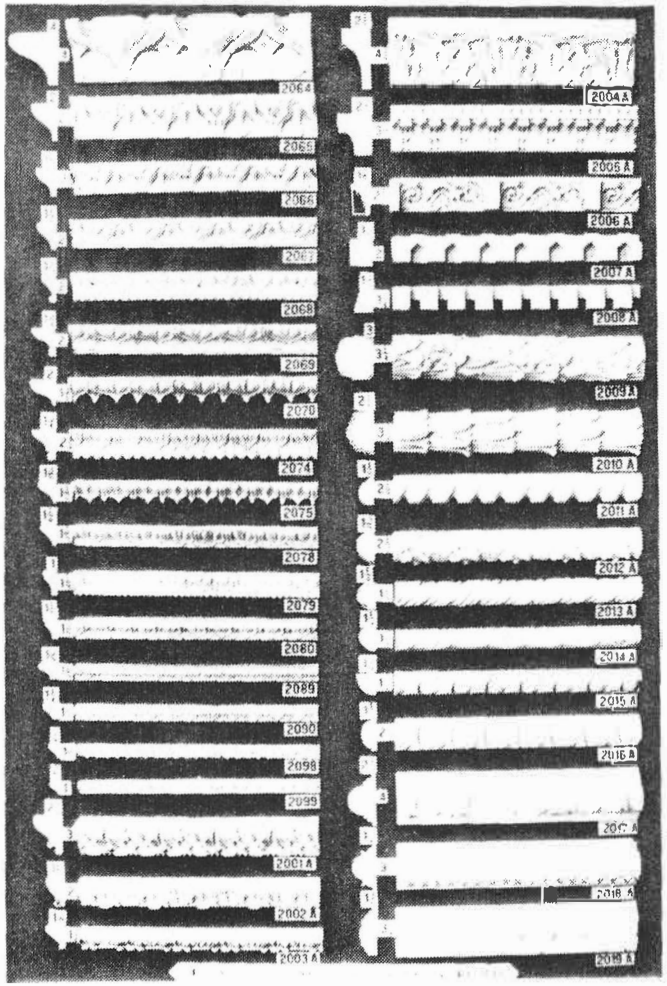
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[73]Catalogue Samuel H. French & Co. Architectural Plaster Work [trade catalog], Philadelphia, 1888, Special Collections, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.

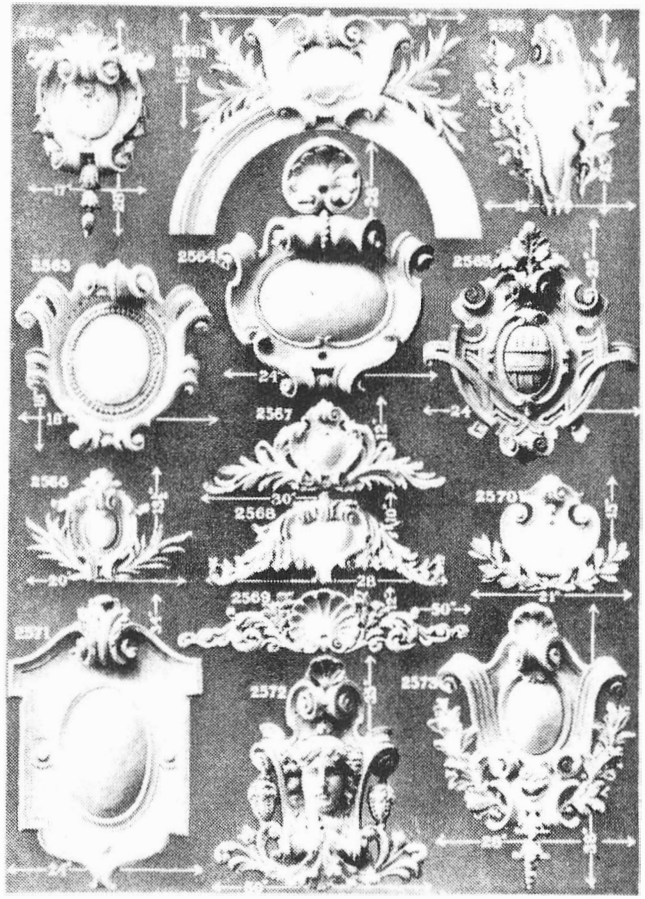
[74]Decorators Supply Company: Decoration and Ornament, c. 1900 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.



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.



A

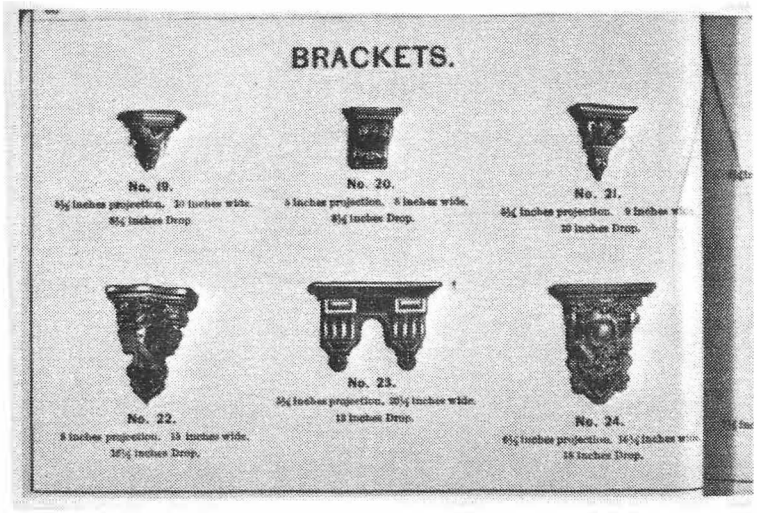


B

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

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[75]Bradley & Currier to Henry Montgomery, 22 December 1877 [invoice], Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 110.

[76]Ibid.

[77]P. 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 insoluable 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

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[78]McKee, 87.

[79]Milar, 138.

[80]K. Cameron, Cameron's Plasterer's Manual (New York: Bicknell & Comstock Publishers, 1879), 43-45, Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.

[81]Milar, 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

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[82]Frank A. Seifert Relief Ornaments Catalogue (St. Louis, Missouri, 1898), [trade catalog], Special Collections, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

[83]Cameron, 45.

[84]Hamlin, 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

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[85]Carolyn Flaherty, "Victorian Stenciling," The Old House Journal Compendium, ed. Clem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980), 348.

[86]Harris, 563.

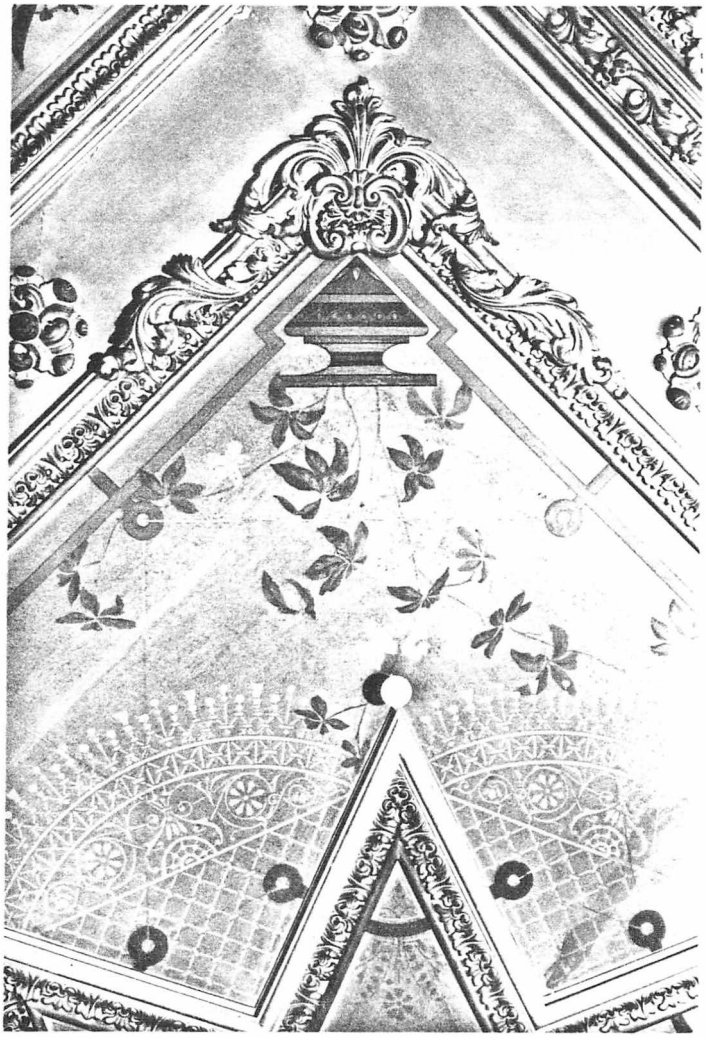


Figure 96. Detail of the Mallory-Neely parlor ceiling.

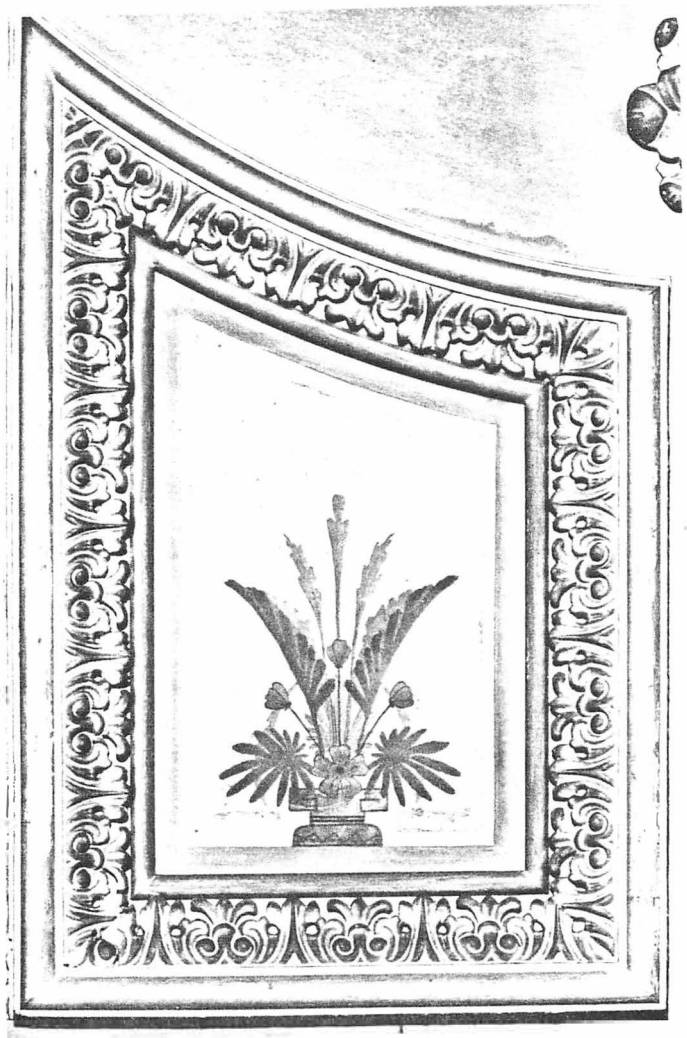


Figure 97. Detail of the parlor ceiling.

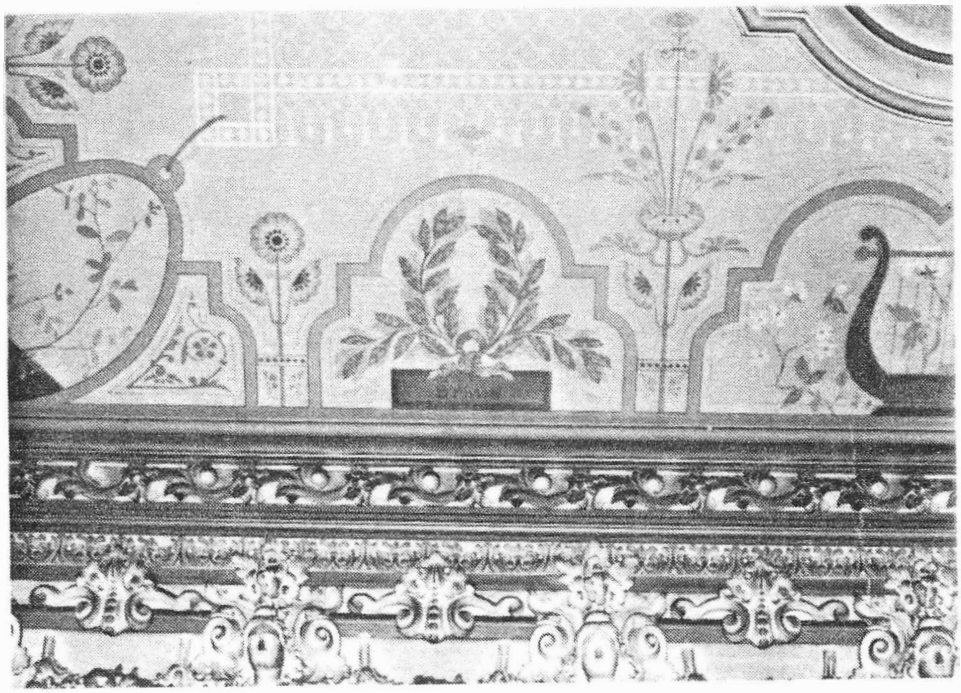


Figure 98. Detail of the music room ceiling. In the center is an elongated rectangular tablet inscribed BYRON and crowned with laurel branches.

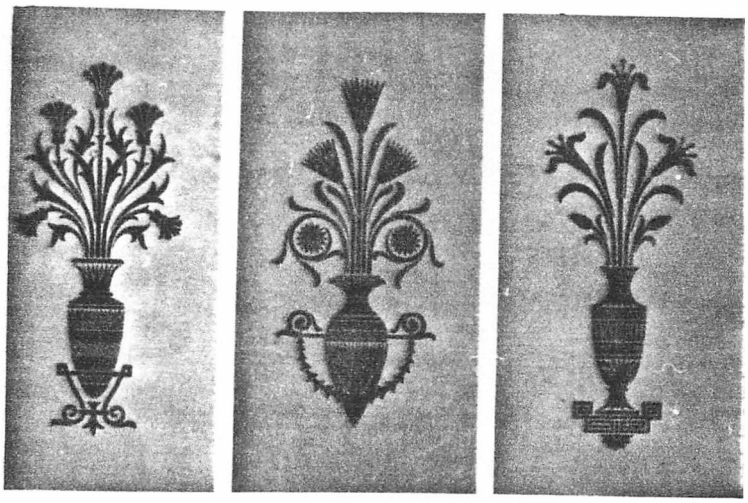
has the appearance of a flattened lambrequin-like frieze which contains tablets inscribed with the names of noted authors (all Teutonic), including Lytton, Dickens, Goethe, Shakespeare, Scott, Longfellow, Milton, and Byron. (Figure 99) Each is crowned with interlaced laurel branches. Alternating with 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)

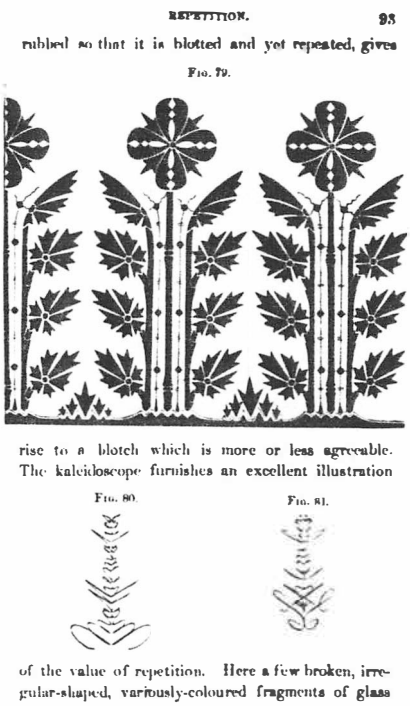
During the first half of the century the Greek Revival style was in fashion in most Western countries. German, English, and American designers were content just to revive ancient Grecian architectural and ornamental motifs. But at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts



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. Labrouste 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)

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[87]Hamlin, 927.

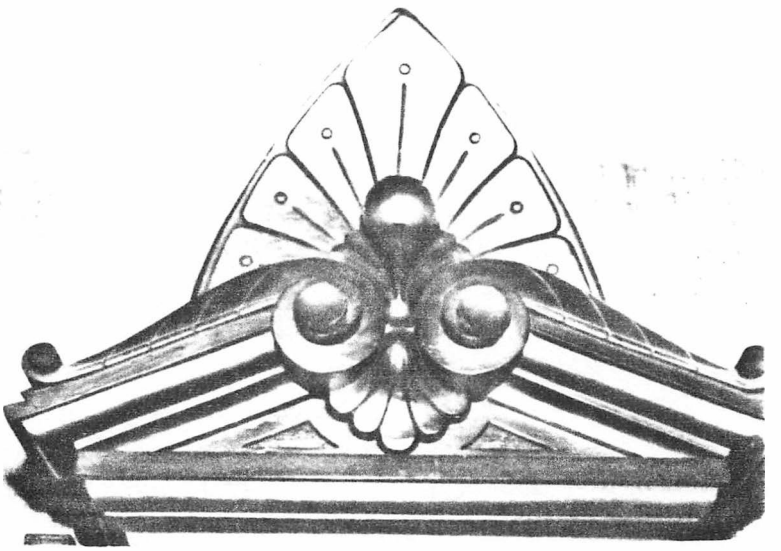
[88]Ibid., 427.

[89]The Second Empire, Art in France Under Napoleon III, 44.

[90]George 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.

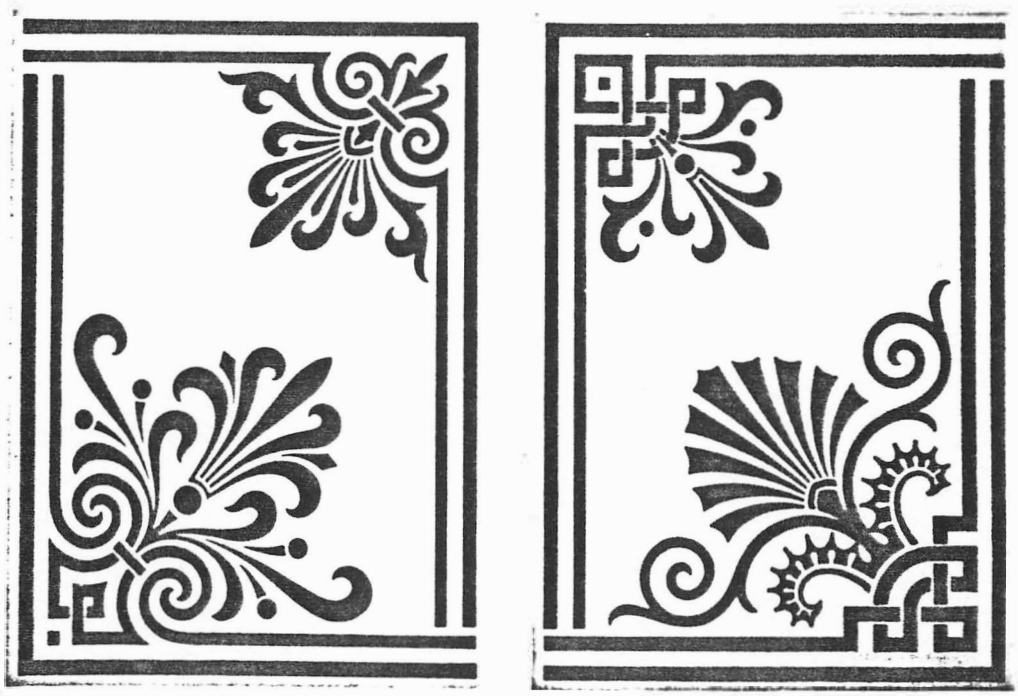


Figure 102. Plate from George and Maurice Audsley, The Practical Decorator and Ornamentalist (1890) showing characteristic conventionalized Neo-Grec ornament. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

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

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[91]A. P. Boyce, Boyce's Fresco and Decorative Designs (Boston: Cupples, Upham & Co., 1883), Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

[92]The Second Empire, Art in France Under Napoleon III, 44.

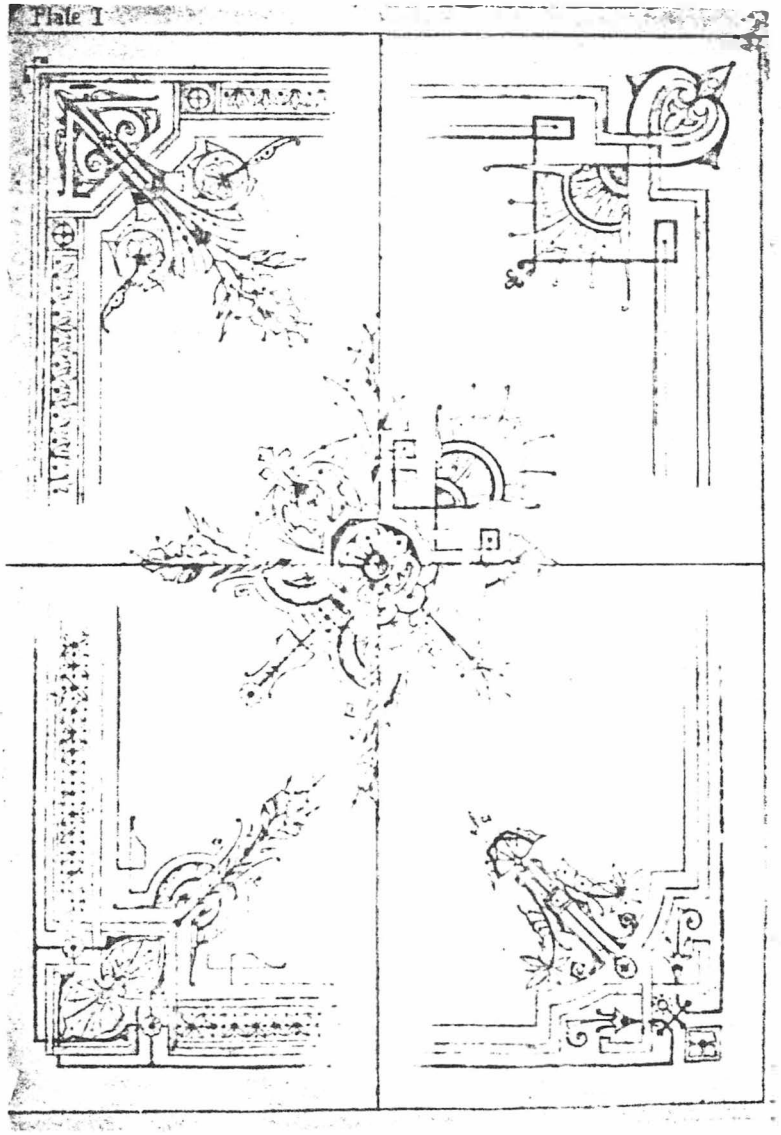


Figure 103. One of many suggested decorative ceiling treatments made up of Neo-Grec ornament from Boyce's Fresco and Decoration (1883). Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

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]

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[93]Hamlin, 430; and M. A. Racinet, Polychromic Ornament (London: Harry Sotheran & Co., 1877), Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

[94]M. 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.

[95]Boyce, 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

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[96]Paul N. Hasluck, House Decoration Comprising Whitewashing, Paper Hanging, Painting, etc. (New York: Cassell & Company, Ltd., 1910), 137, Special Collections, Strong Museum, Rochester, New York.

[97]Ibid., 16.

[98]Audsley and Audsley, 27.

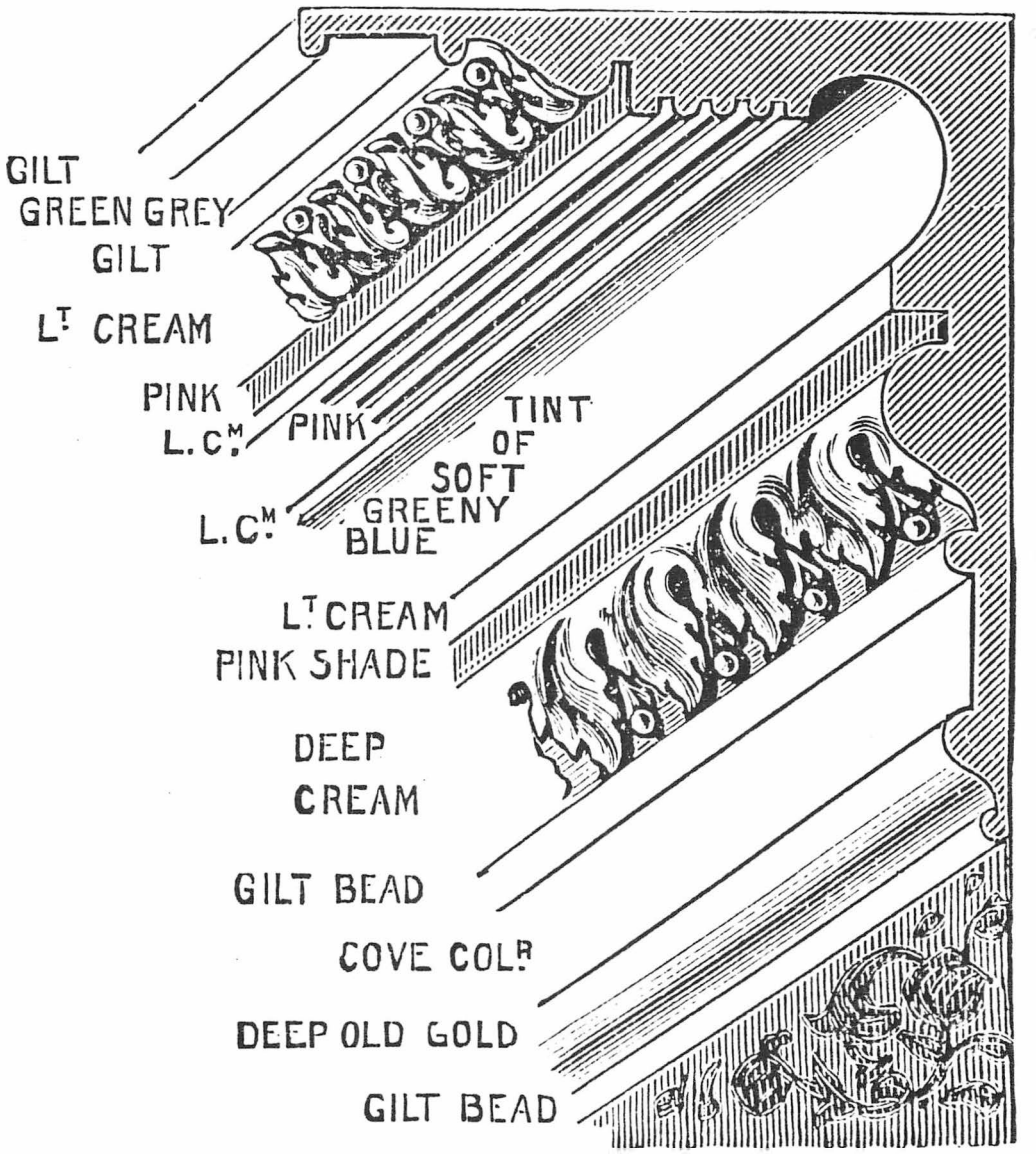


Figure 104. Suggested method for painting a cornice suitable for a drawing room from Paul Hasluck House Decoration (1910). Courtesy Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum.

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

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[99]Hasluck, 16.

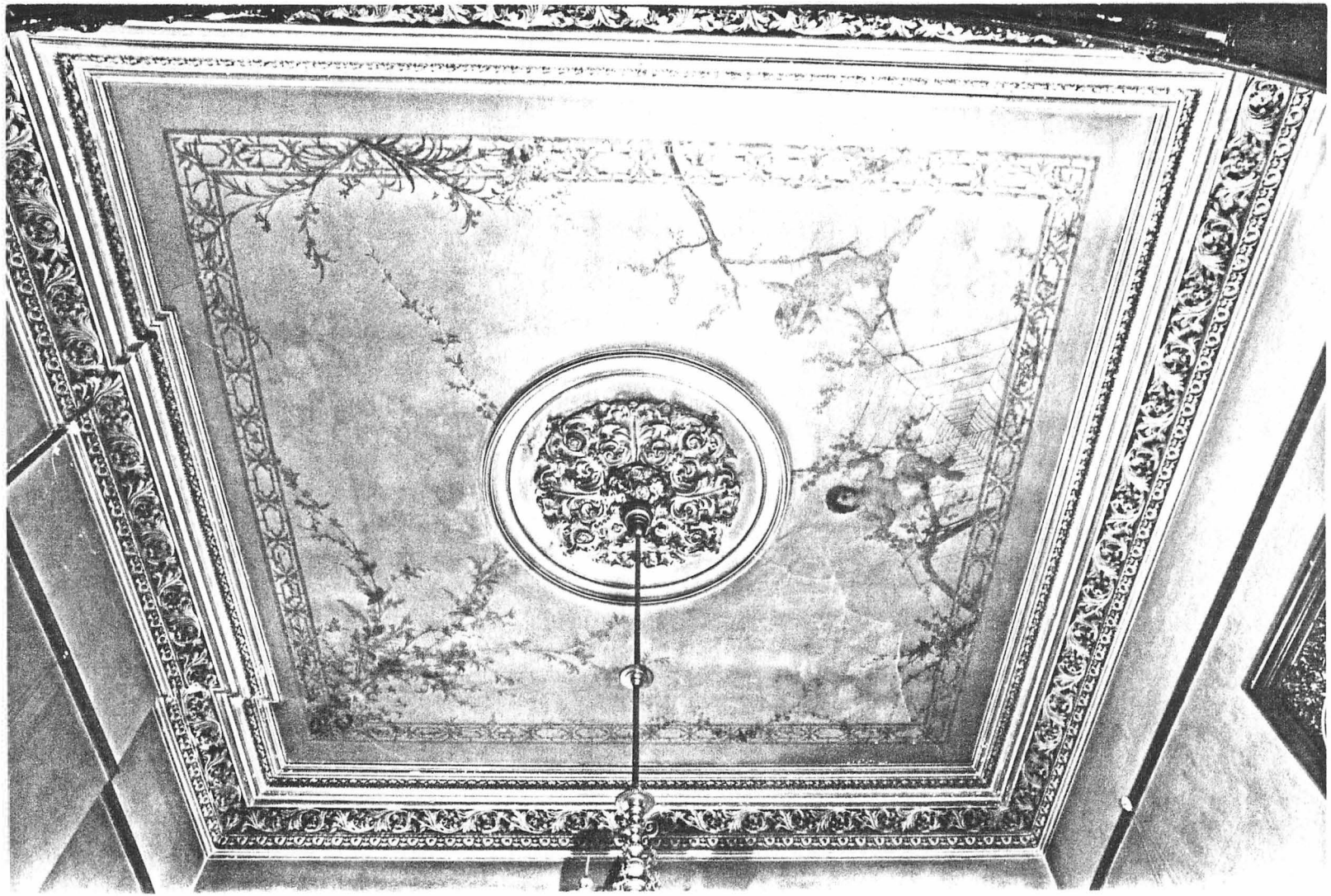
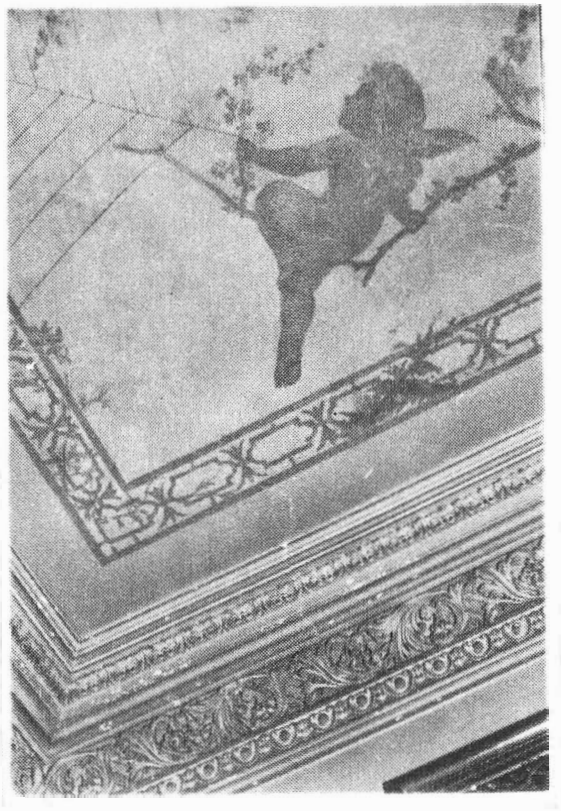


Figure 105. Mallory-Neely sitting room ceiling.



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.
Boucher cupids, Seasons, Cupids Playing in Twigs, and Three Cupids, Representing Dance, Serenade, Music.[102] (Figures 107-108)	$8.00 ea.

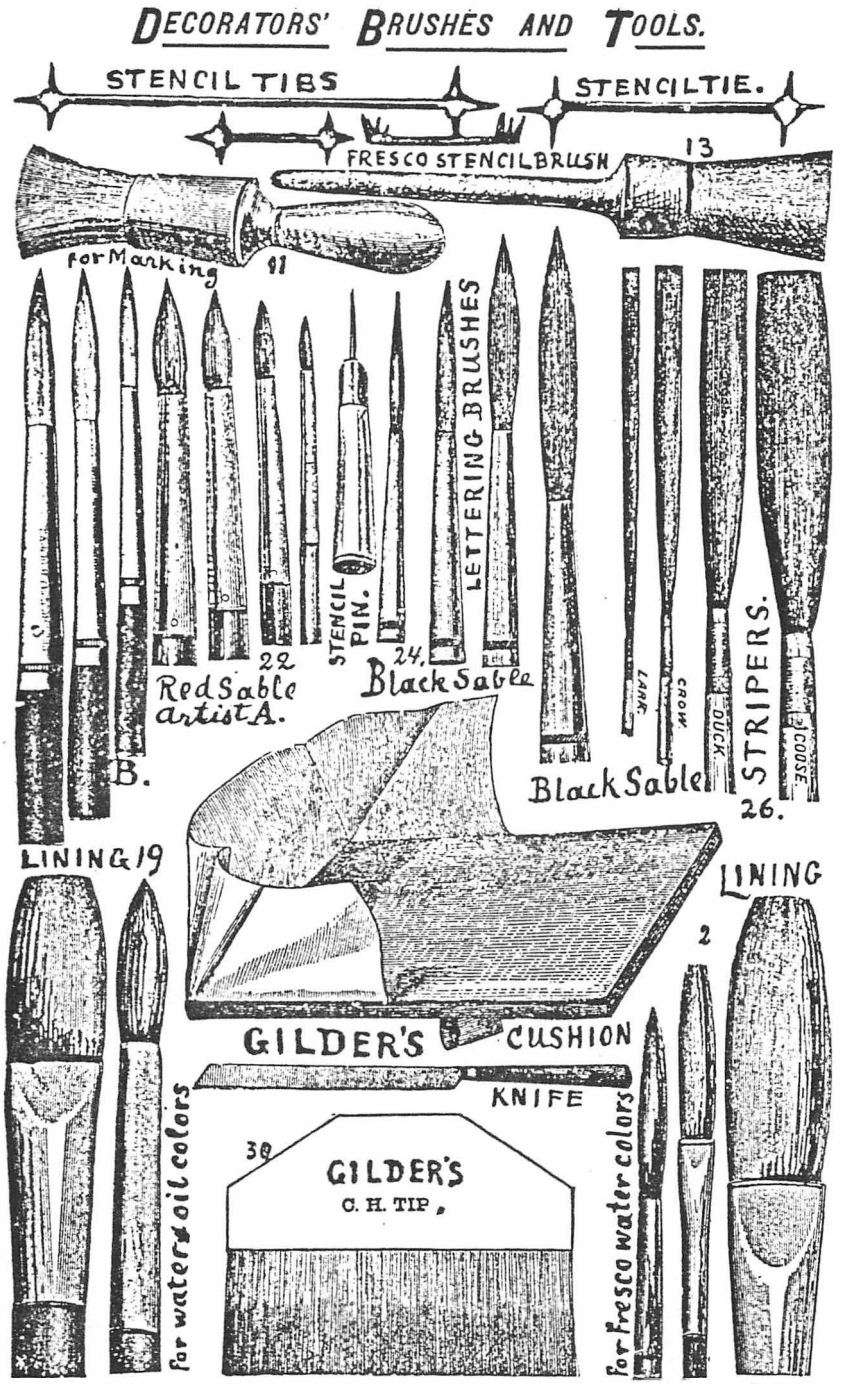
Various borders are also illustrated, such as ribbon, rosette, and lyre wreath stencils costing 45¢ for 12-inch lengths and 80¢ for 18-inch ones. (Figure 109) A variety of period motifs such as Empire or Renaissance could be ordered. Also listed in The Stencil Treasury

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[100]"Under the Neely Roof," Memphis Appeal, 18 April 1870, 2.

[101]Novarese, 33.

[102]The 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 1½" long to fasten stencils when working, per doz. 25c.
Stencil Ties to eliminate all holders, strengthen the stencil, very practical.
No. 2 for ¾", or less space, per gross $1.00; No 3, 1¼" long $1.25; No. 4, 2½" $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.

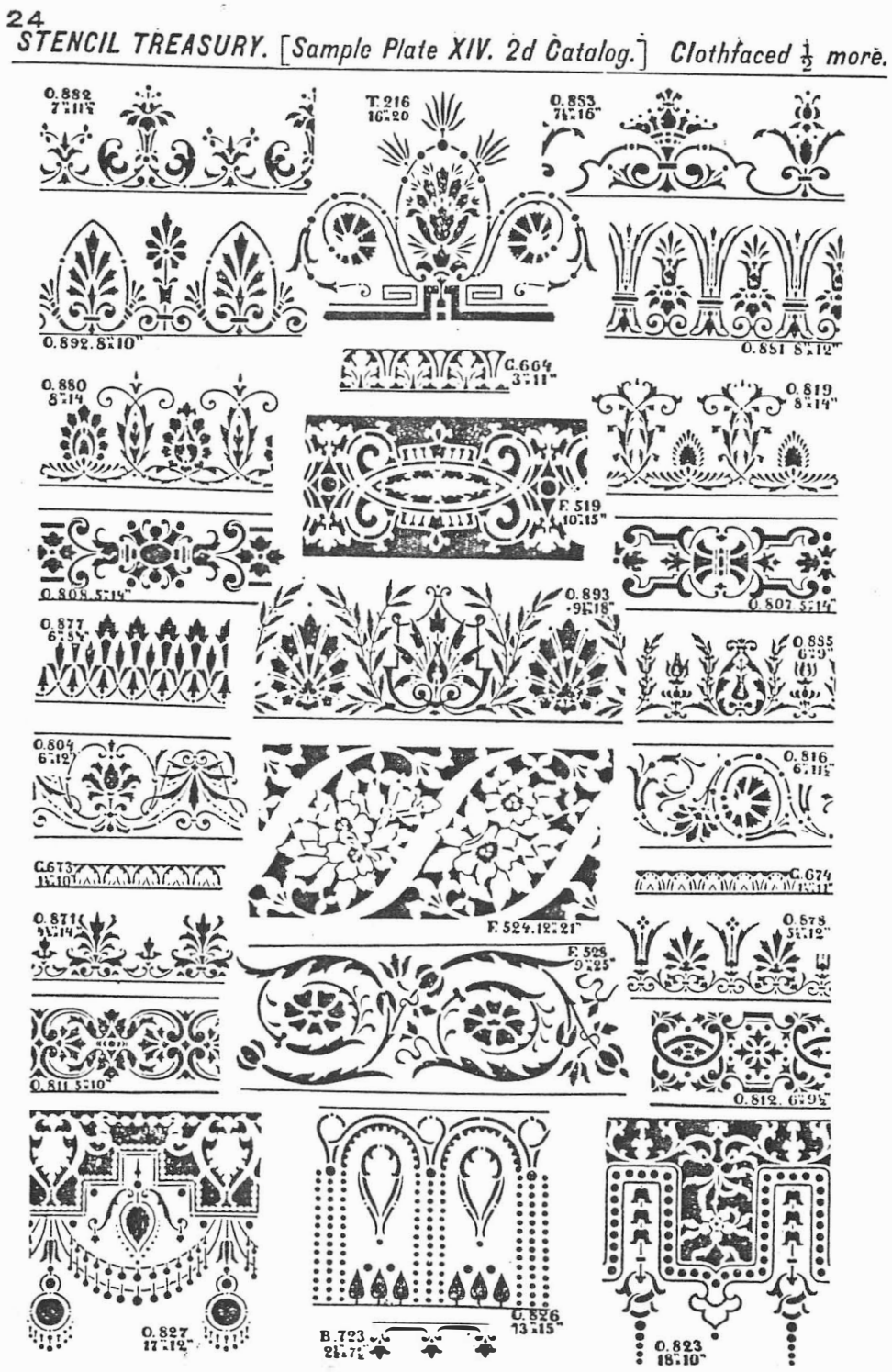


Figure 109. Characteristic page from the 1895 Stencil Treasury showing varieties of border stencils available for order. Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

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:

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[103]Ibid.

[104]Beck Collection of Architectural Art Work, Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

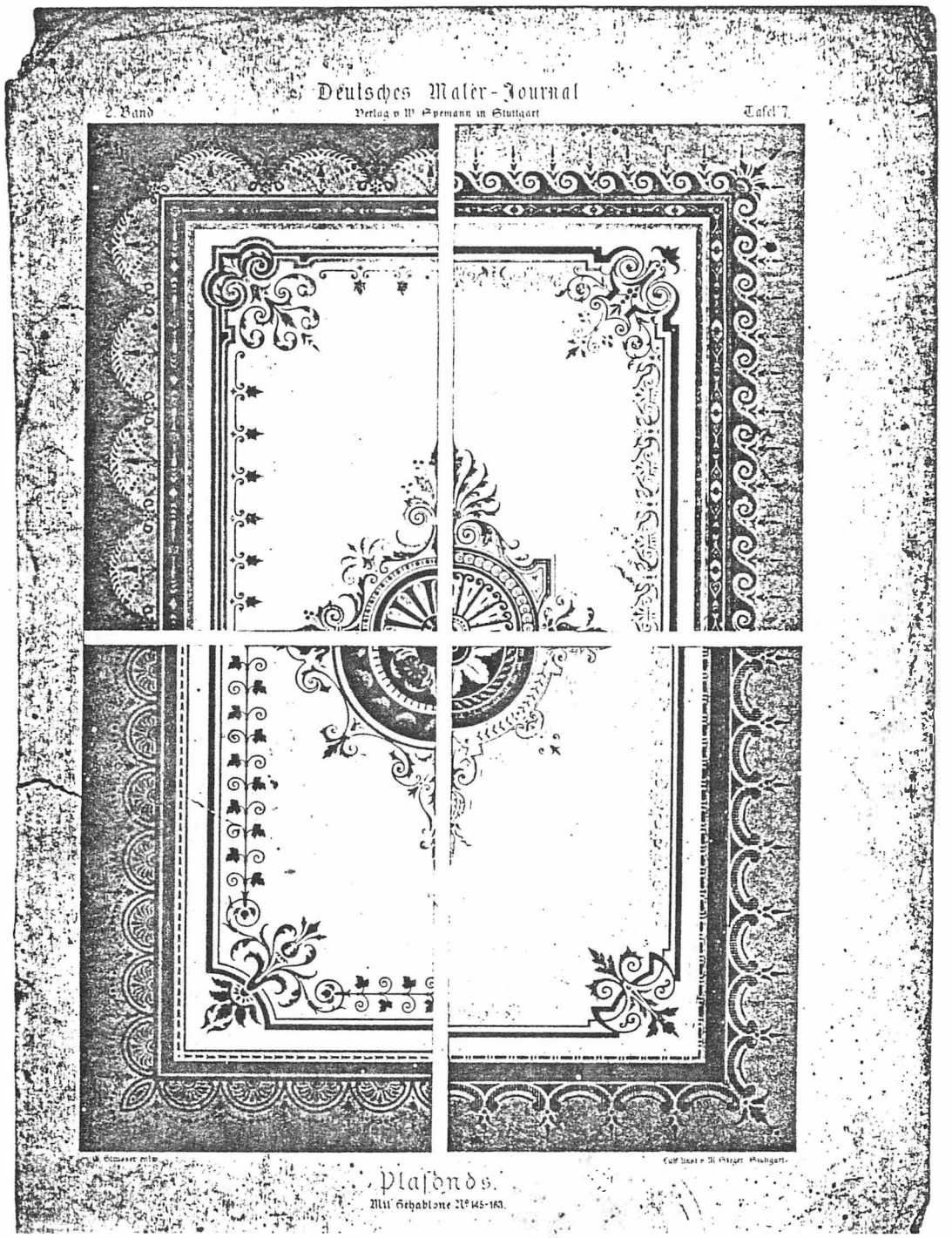


Figure 110. Plates like this one from the Deutsches Maler-Journal served as inspiration for decorative ceiling artists. This particular copy was among the sketches and papers of William and Louis Beck. Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

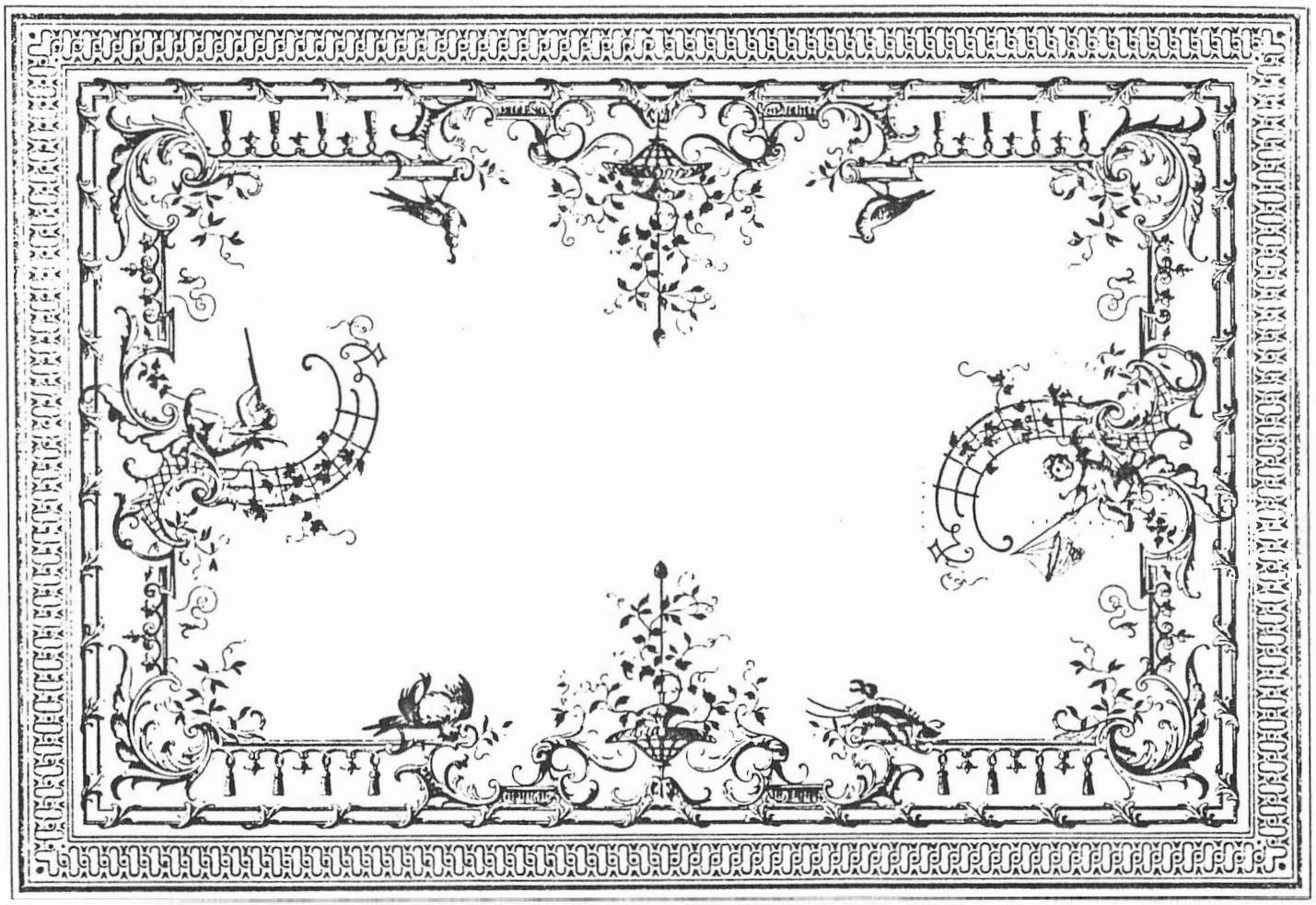


Figure 111. A plate from the Deutsches Maler-Journal in the Beck Collection showing a ceiling design with cupids, trellises and vines. Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

> 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]

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[105]"William Beck, Fresco Artist" [partially documented newspaper clipping], 15 March, 1878, Beck Collection of Architectural Art Work, Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

[106]Shole's Memphis Directory: Guide in the Taxing District Shelby County, Tennessee (Memphis: A. E. Sholes Publisher, 1884), 795.

[107]Dana O. Jensen, ed., "The Decorative Art of Jacob Keller," Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society, 23, No. 3 (April, 1967), 225.

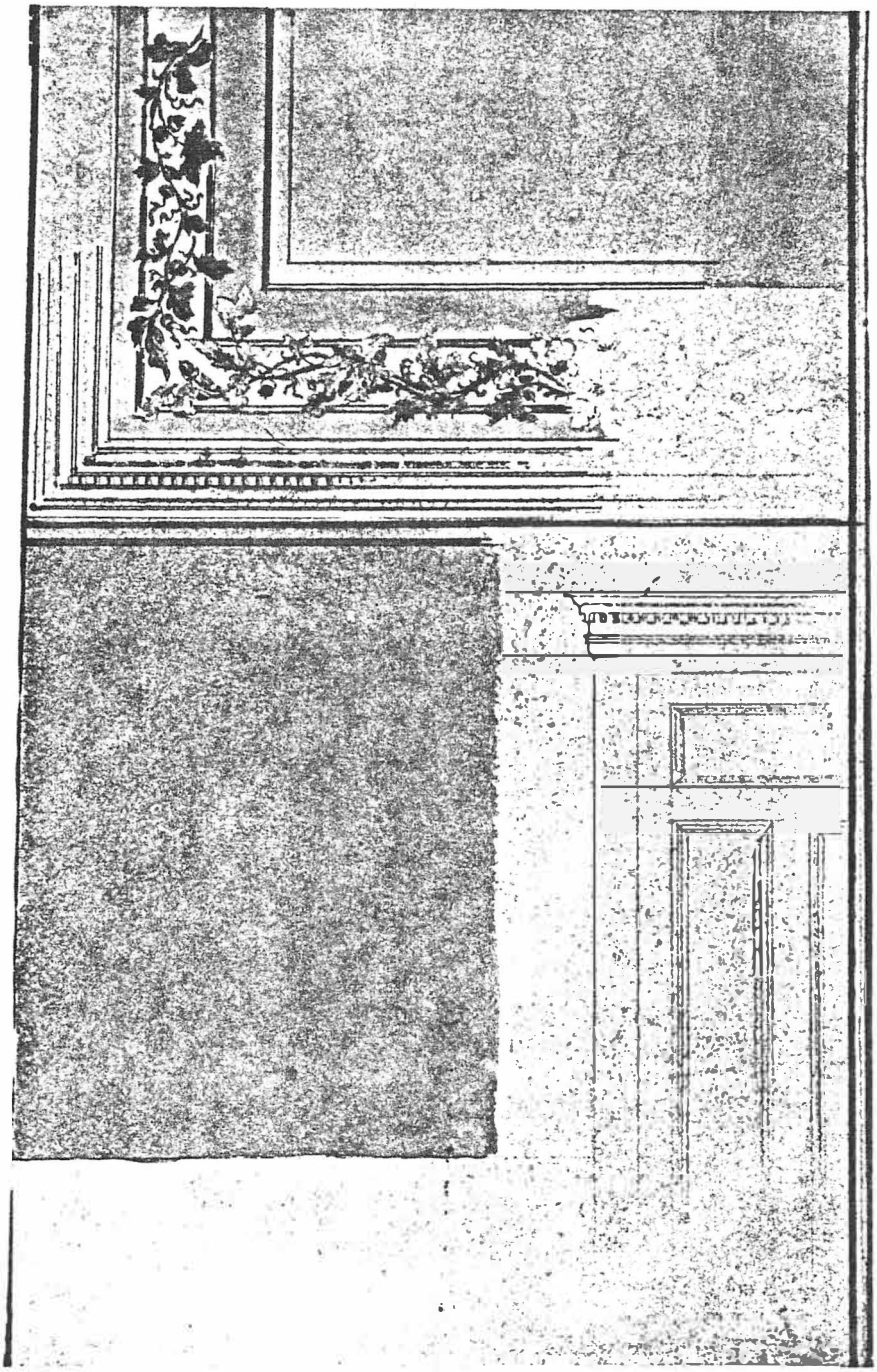


Figure 112. A preparatory watercolor rendering for a decorative ceiling border from the Beck Collection. Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

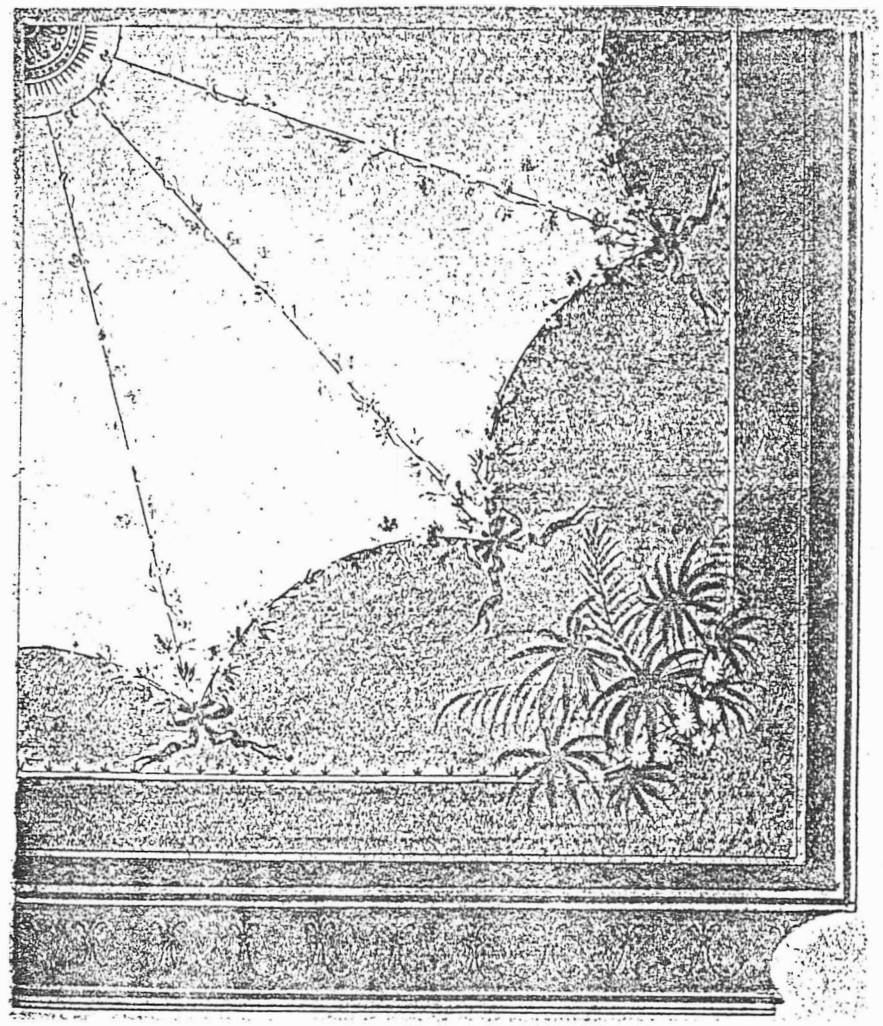


Figure 113. Preparatory rendering from the Moeller Collection. It features a ceiling treatment with an awning stretched over the room as in the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room. Courtesy Athenaeum, Phildelphia.

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]

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[108]A. Keller [watercolors], Box L, Art Department Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

[109]Many 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 "wholely 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] Domenique Caproni and Henry Feuerback are among the twenty stucco artisans

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[110]Artistic 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.

[111]Grow and Von Zweck, 99.

[112]Directory 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

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[113]Gould's St. Louis Directory (St. Louis: Gould & Co., 1883), 1291.

[114]William's Cincinnati Directory (Cincinnati: Williams & Co. Proprietors, June 1890), 1749.

[115]Cincinnati 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]

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[116]Robertson Topp Papers, Box 8, Folder 3.

[117]R. G. Hatfield to Robertson Topp, 15 September 1857, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 8, Folder 3.

[118]R. G. Hatfield to Robertson Topp, 2 October 1857, and Gugiari and Crescionini to Robertson Topp, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 8, Folder 3.

[119]Magness, 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:

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[120]Hughes, n.p.

[121]Thieme-Becker Kunsler Lexikon, Allgemeines Lexikon Der Bildenden Kunsler, 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 Specialty[123]

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,

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[122]"Local Artist-Decorator Dies," Louisville Home Dispatch, 1 April 1928, 1.

[123]City 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]

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[124]"Fresco Painting-Leber Bros.," Memphis Daily Appeal, 19 September 1884, 7.

[125]"Personals," Memphis Daily Appeal, 8 October 1884, 11.

[126]Dow's Memphis Directory (Memphis: Harlow Dow Publisher, 1885), 301.

[127]Henry Montgomery to Guy Leber, 4 September 1885, Henry Montgomery Papers, Folder 30, Box 3.

[128]Leber 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 Mattei[129] 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

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[129]The staff of the Louisville Landmarks Commission referred this researcher to Vincent Mattei.

[130]Mr. 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.

[132]Vincent 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, Italy, and later studied at the Academy of the Brera Gallery, where

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[133]Ibid.

[134]Ibid.

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

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[135]Alvin 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.

[137]Cincinnati, The Queen City of the West, 272, 957.

[138]History of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (Cincinnati: B. Nelson & Co. Publishers, 1894), 880, Special Collections, Cincinnati Historical Society, 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]

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[139]"Frances Pedretti," Artist's File, Cincinnati Art Museum Library.

[140]Jones, 41.

[141]Mr. Maitland Pedretti, Interview by author, 6 March 1985, Cincinnati.

[142]Leading 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.

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[143] Williams' 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 wholesale 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.

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[145]George 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

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[146]Denys Peter Myers, "A Little Light on Gas," Nineteenth Century, 5, No. 2 (Summer 1979), 51.

[147]Grow and Von Zweck, 75.

[148]Ibid., 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.

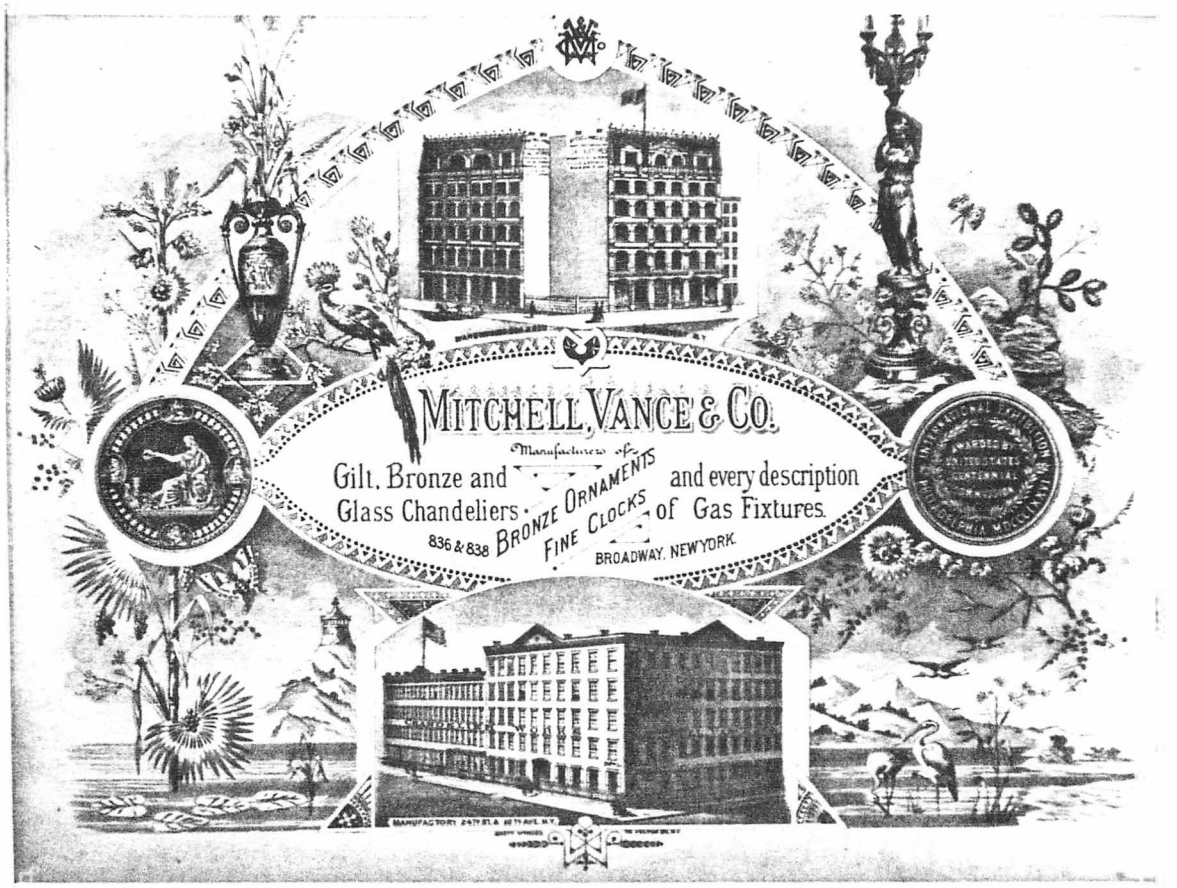


Figure 115. Frontispiece of the 1879 Mitchell, Vance & Company Catalog showing their New York showroom and factory. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

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 Union[154]

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

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[150]Grow and Von Zweck, 77.

[151]Peter Denys Myers, Gaslighting in America, A Guide for Historic Preservation (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1978), 3, 153, 157.

[152]Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts folder.

[153]Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 110.

[154]Dow'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

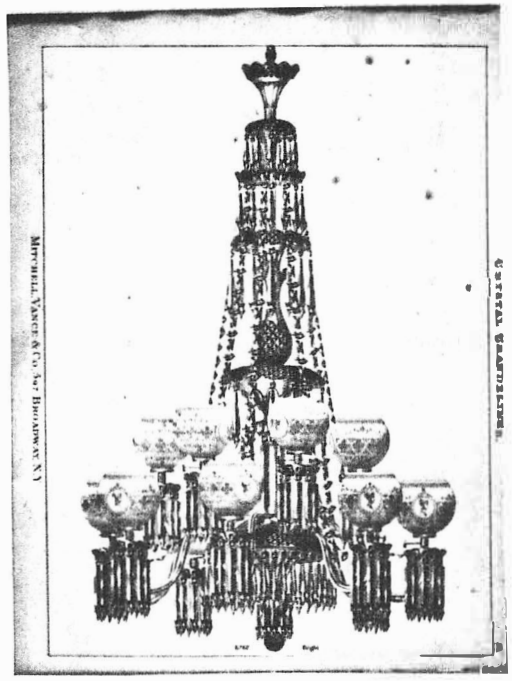
The Neelys' redecoration in the Second Empire mode was not limited to enriched ceilings but also included new carpets, paint, and paper. Both physical and written evidence shows that most of the main floor of the Mallory-Neely House including the entrance hall was originally decorated in a white and 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

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[155]E. P. Gleason Manufacturing Co., New York, 1885 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.

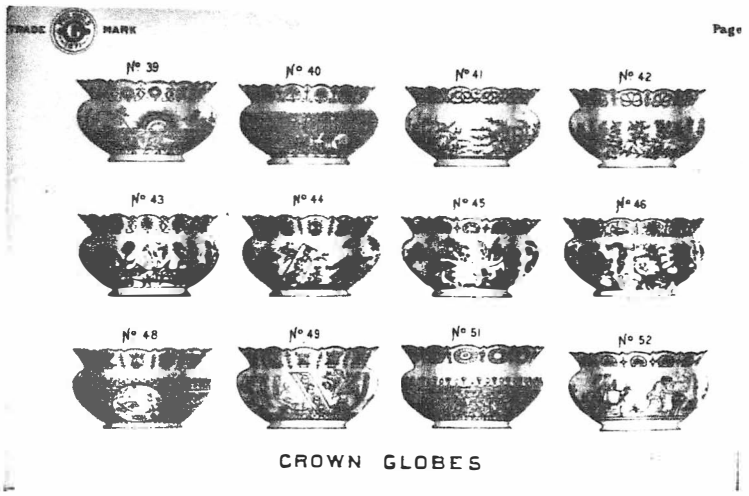


A

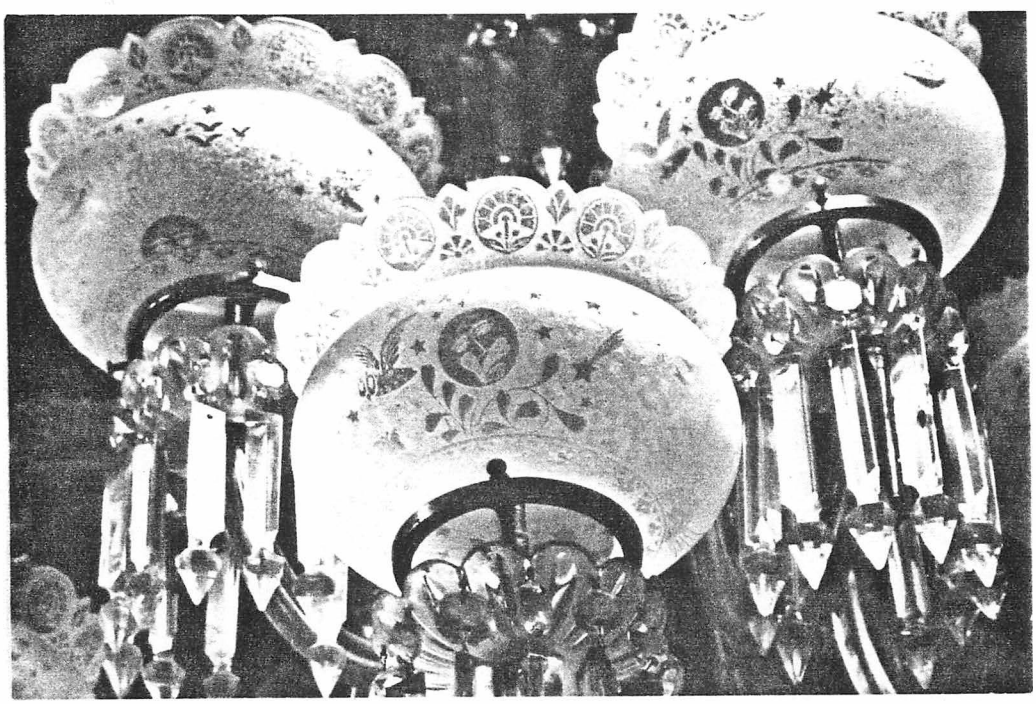


B

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.



A



B

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]

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[156]Charlis, 250.

[157]Second Empire Art in France Under Napoleon III, 80.

[158]Artistic Houses.

[159]Ruth 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]

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[160]"Under the Neely roof," 2.

[161]"Society," Appeal Avalanche, 3 December 1890, 7.

[162]See, for example, W. H. Papmore to Robertson Topp, 16 November 1857, Robertson Topp Papers, Box 8, Folder 3.

[163]Shole'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

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[164]Shole's Memphis City Directory for 1884 and Guide to Taxing District, 1 (Memphis: A. E. Sholes and Co., Publishers, 1884), 1081.

[165]James 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.

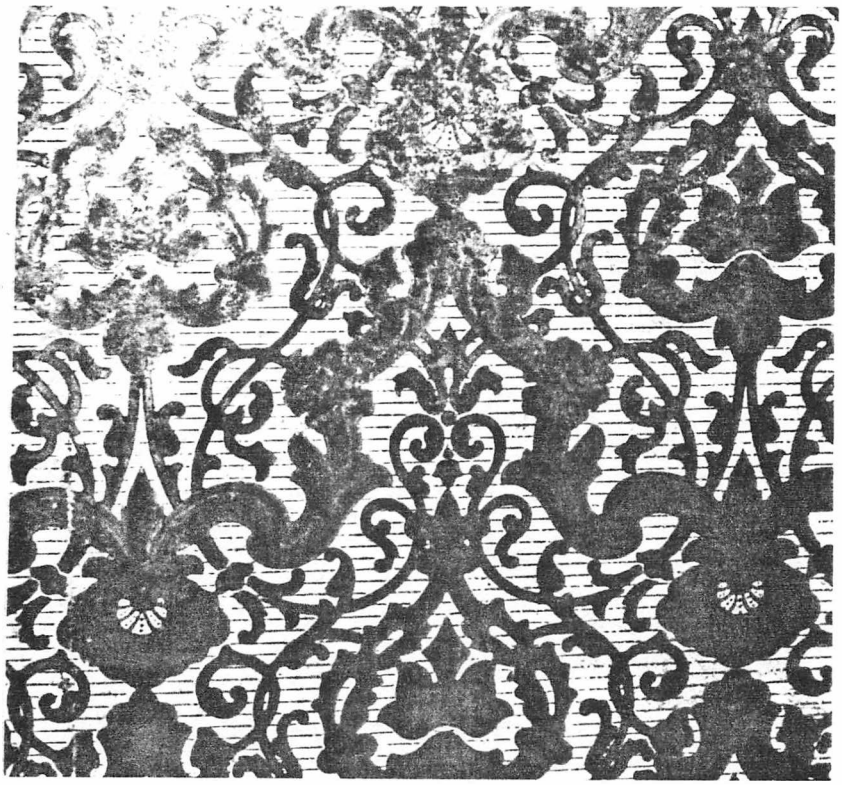


Figure 118. Detail of the wallcovering of the Mallory-Neely sitting room.

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 wallpapers. 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

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[166]Katherine Lynn, Wallpaper in America (New York: Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 1980), 320.

[167]Katherine Lynn, "Wallpaper: Influence of the Industrial Age and French Inspired Realism," Nineteenth Century, 7, No. 2 (Summer 1981), 36.

[168]Lynn, Wallpaper in America, 316.

[169]Katherine Lynn [photocopy unidentified clipping], K. Lynn Notes for Wallpaper in America, Special Collections, Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York.

[170]Harriet 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

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[171]Lynn, Wallpaper in America, 360-364.

[172]Katherine Lynn Frangiamore, Wallpaper in Historic Preservation (Washington: U.S. Department of Interior National Park Service, 1977), 6.

[173]Horace Warner, "How Wallpapers Are Printed," Art Journal, (1901), 334, Special Collections, Watson Library Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

[174]Lynn, Wallpaper in America, 338.

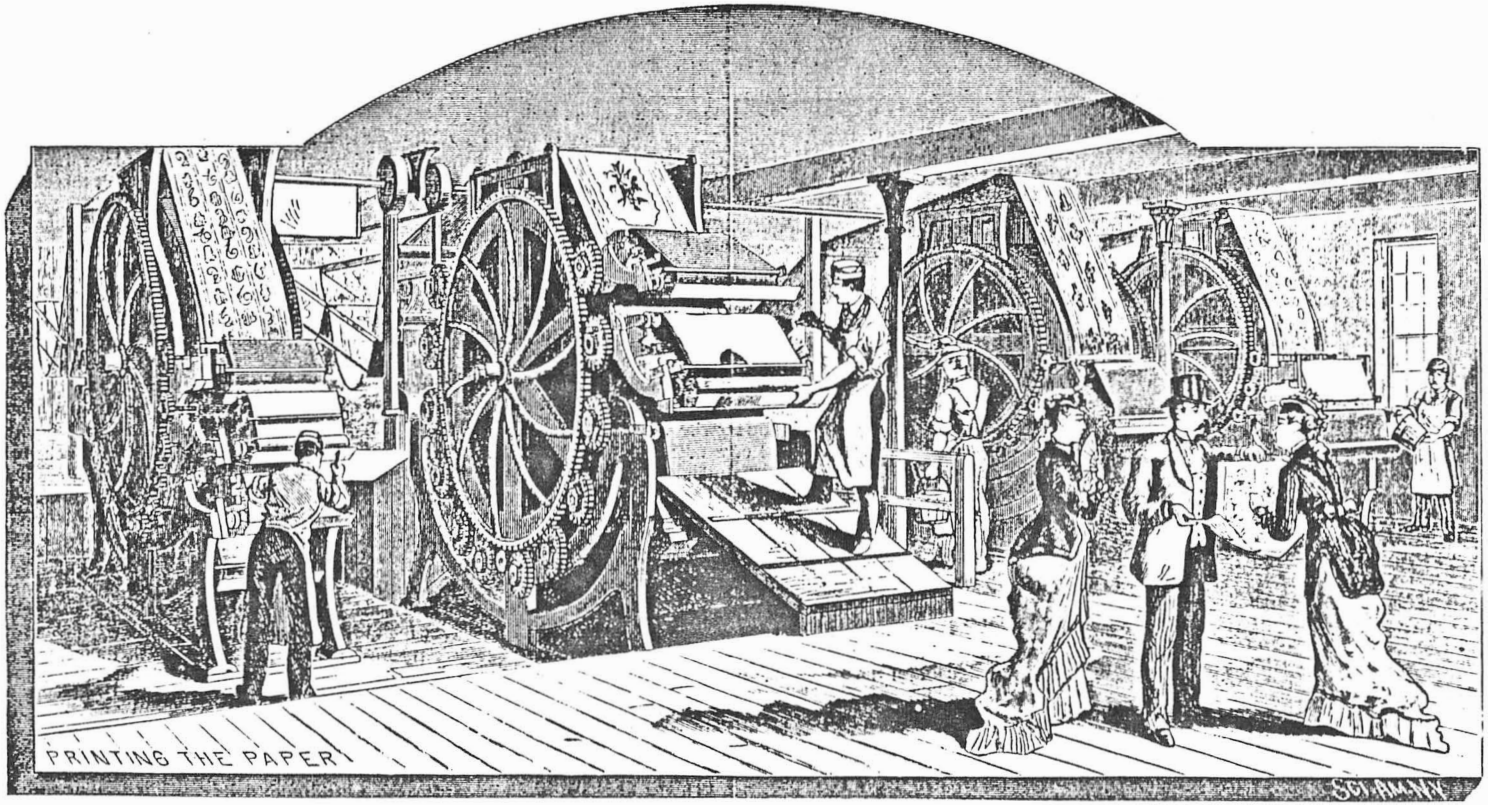


Figure 119. An 1880 engraving showing mechanized wall paper production. Courtesy Lambuth College Library.

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

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[175]Memphis City Directory for 1850 [advertisement], Memphis: R.B.J. Twyman Printer, 1849), 90.

[176]Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 11 July 1851, 8.

[177]Arthur 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.,

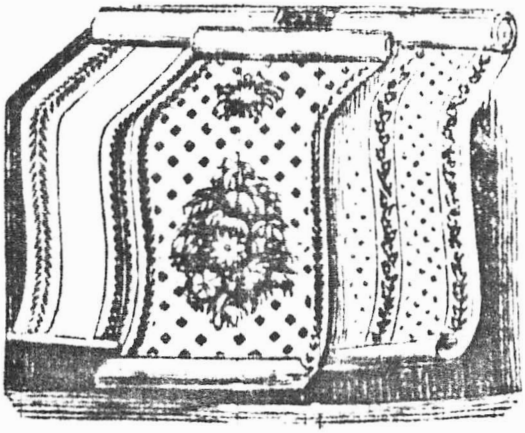
296½ SECOND STREET,

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

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[178]"Glossary of Carpet Terms," Victorian Homes, 2, No. 2 (Spring 1983), 37.

[179]Samuel J. Dornsife, "Timetable of Carpet Technology," Nineteenth Century, 7, No. 3 (Autumn 1981), 38.

[180]Alfred Spitzli, A Manual for Managers, Designers, Weavers and Others Connected with the Manufacture of Textile Fabrics (West Troy, New York: A. & A. F. Spitzi Publishers, 1881), 48, Special Collections, Strong Museum, Rochester, New York.

[181]Cole 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,

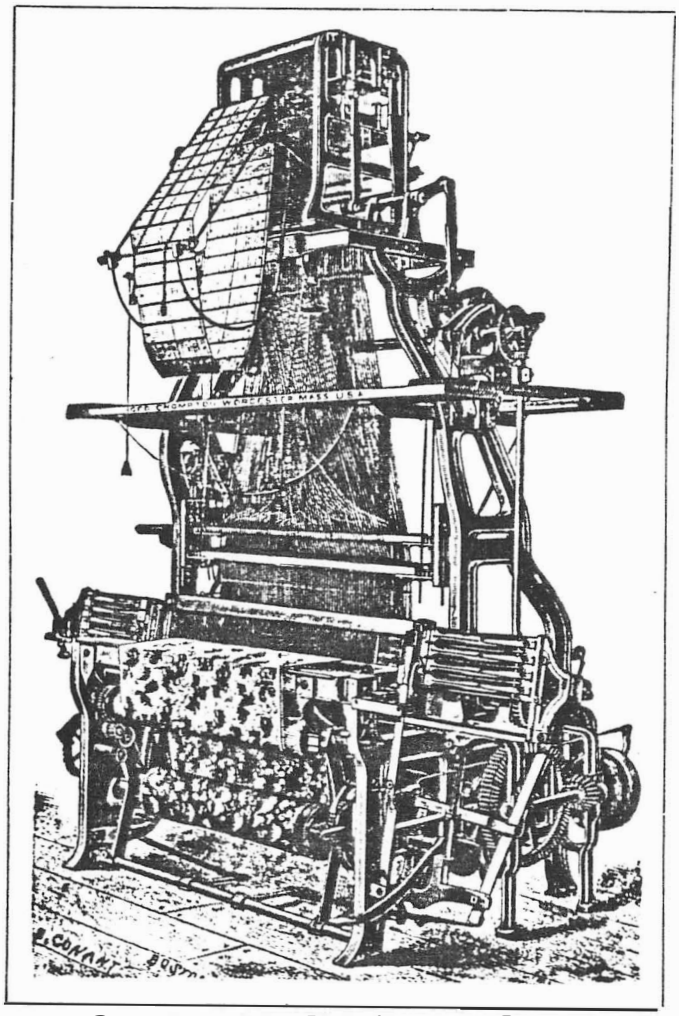
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[182]Anthony N. Landreau, American Underfoot: A History of Floor Coverings from Colonial Times to the Present (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services, 1976), 43.

[183]Ibid., 43; and Cornelia Bateman Faraday, European and American Carpets and Rugs (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Dean Hicks Co. Decorative Arts Press, 1929), 311.

[184]Cole and Williamson, 63.

[185]Ibid., 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]

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[186]Faraday, 324.

[187]Barbara Schiller, "Carpets and Rugs," Victorian Homes, 2, No. 2 (Spring 1983), 32.

[188]Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 2 June 1854, 3.



Figure 123. Interior of a late nineteenth century carpet store featuring a wide selection of machine produced roll carpet as illustrated in the Cowpertwait 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 Qualities[189]

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

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[189]Daily Avalanche [advertisement], 25 September 1884, 1.

[190]Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 23 November 1884, 1.

[191]Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 8 March 1885, 2.

[192]A. G. Morrison, Drapery, Interior Decoration and Architecture: A Practical Handbook for the Dealer and Workroom (New York: T. A. Cawthra & Co., 1906).

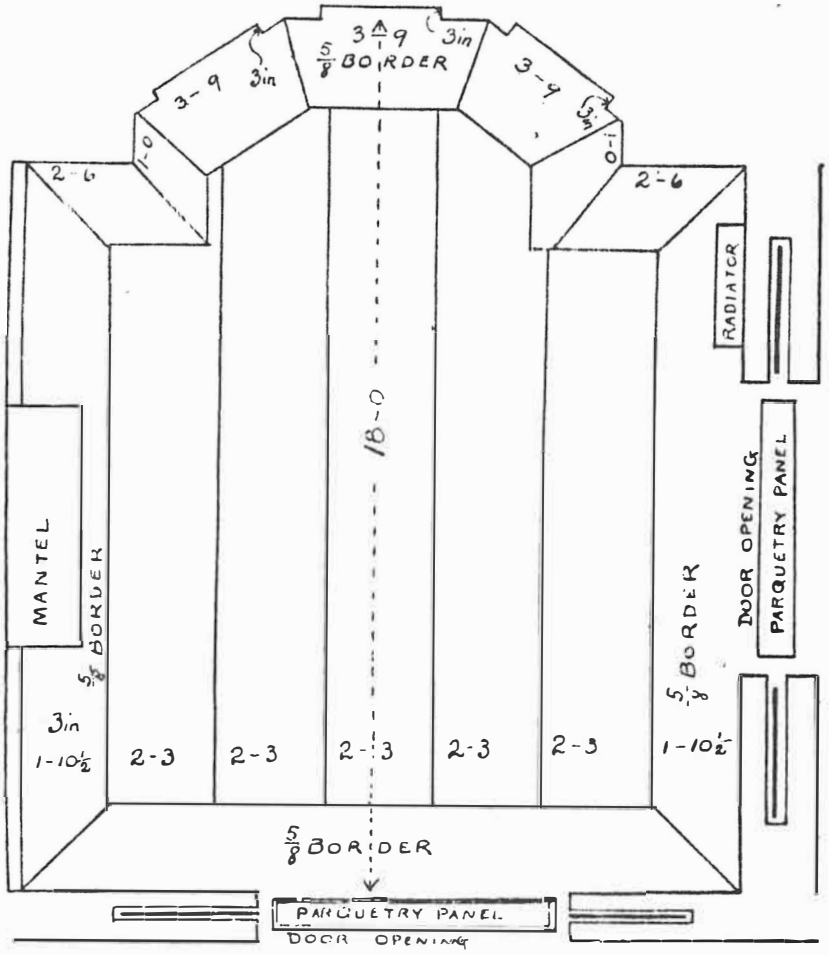
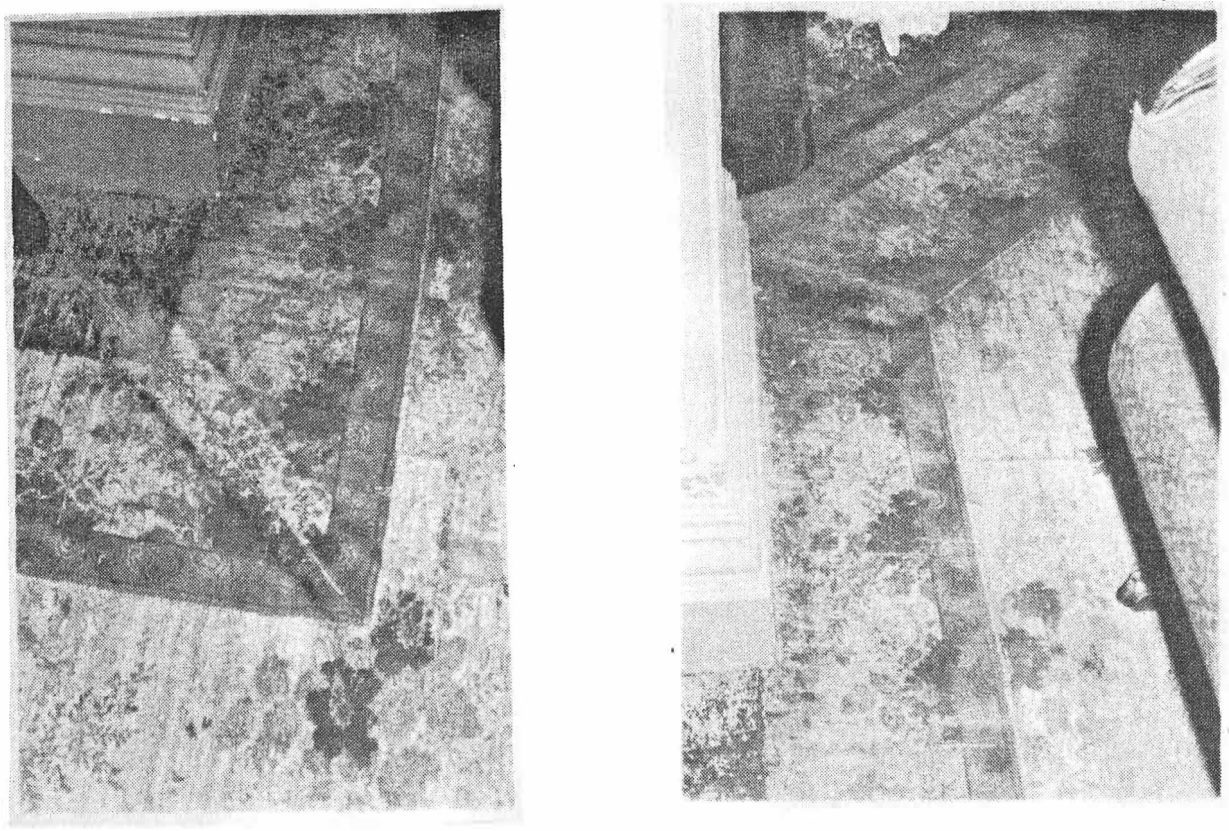


Figure 124. Line drawing of A. G. Morrison's suggested method for laying roll carpet and border from Drapery, Decoration, and Architecture (1906).



A B

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.

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[193]Ibid., 106.

[194]Ibid., 108.

[195]Cole and Williamson, 135.

[196]Schiller, 33.

[197]W. 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

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[198]See 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

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[199]Carolyn Flaherty, "Eastlake," The Old House Journal Compendium, ed. Chem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980), 254.

[200]Wilson H. Faude, "Associated Artists and the American Renaissance in the Decorative Arts," Winterthur Portfolio, 10 (1975), 102.

[201]Elizabeth Aslin, The Aesthetic Movement (New York: Excalibur Books, 1981), 15.

[202]Robin 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

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[203]Aslin, 33, 35.

[204]Stein, 87-89.

[205]Spencer, 114.

[206]Hamlin, 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

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[207]Aslin, 33.

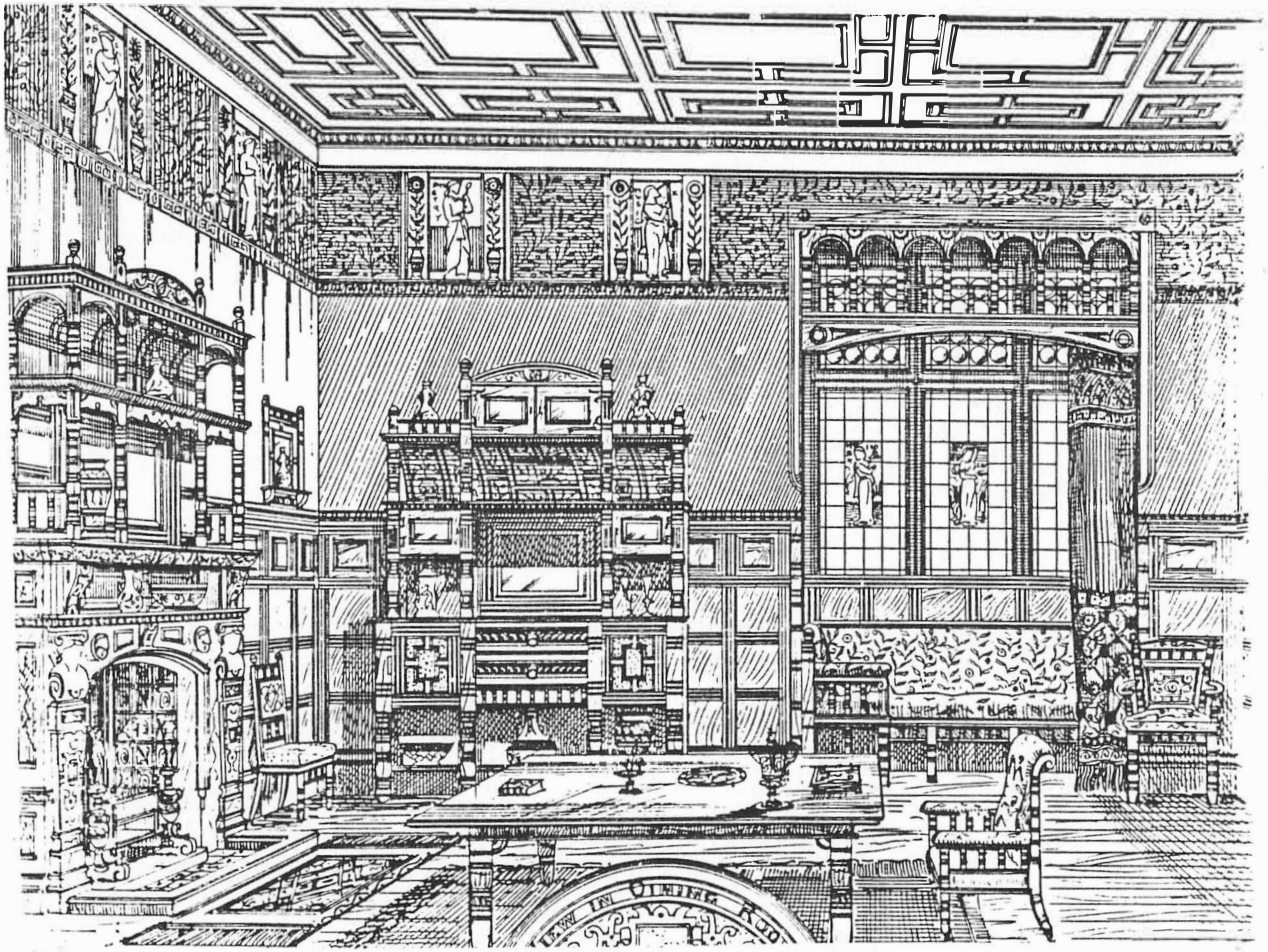


Figure 126. Ideal Aesthetic interior as illustrated in Bernard S. Smith, Designs and Sketches for Furniture in the Neo-Jacobean and Other Styles (1876). Note the tripartite division of the walls, the etagere mantel, stained glass panels in the windows, portiere curtain, and decorative grille above the 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]

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[208]Martha Crabill McClaugherty, "Household Art: Creating the Artistic Home 1868-1893," Winterthur Portfolio, 18, No. 1 (Spring 1983), 2-3.

[209]Aslin, 14.

[210]Lynes, 112, 115.

[211]The 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

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[212]See McClaugherty, "Household Art: Creating the Artistic Home 1868-1893."

[213]Aslin, 52.

[214]Flaherty, "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

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[215]National Wallpaper Company's Exhibit, World's Columbian Exposition, 1893 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

[216]R. Reid Badger, The Great American Fair: The World's Columbian Exposition and American Culture (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1979), 115.

[217]There 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).

[218]See 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

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[219]Essays and Lectures by Oscar Wilde (London: Methuen Publishers, 1908; reprint, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1978), 112.

[220]Kevin H. F. O'Brien, "The House Beautiful, A Reconstruction of Oscar Wilde's American Lecture," Victorian Studies, 12, No. 4 (June 1974), 411.

[221]Ibid., 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

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[222]H. 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.

[225]Arnold 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:

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[226]See 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.

[227]Home Decorative Art Souvenir (Cincinnati, Ohio: John Shillito Co., 1889), n.p., [trade catalog], Special Collections, Cincinnati Historical Society.

[228]Our Homes and How to Beautify Them (New York: Orange Judd & Co., 1888), 171, Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

[229]Harrison, 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.

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[230]Artistic Houses or How to Furnish with Taste (London: Ward, Lock & Co., 1883), 94, reprint, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1978.

[231]Thornton, 311.

[232]Faude, 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

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[233]"Oscar Wilde," Memphis Daily Appeal, 14 June 1882, 1.

[234]Plunkett, 51.

[235]"The Oscar Wilde Lecture," Memphis Daily Appeal, 15 June 1882, 1.

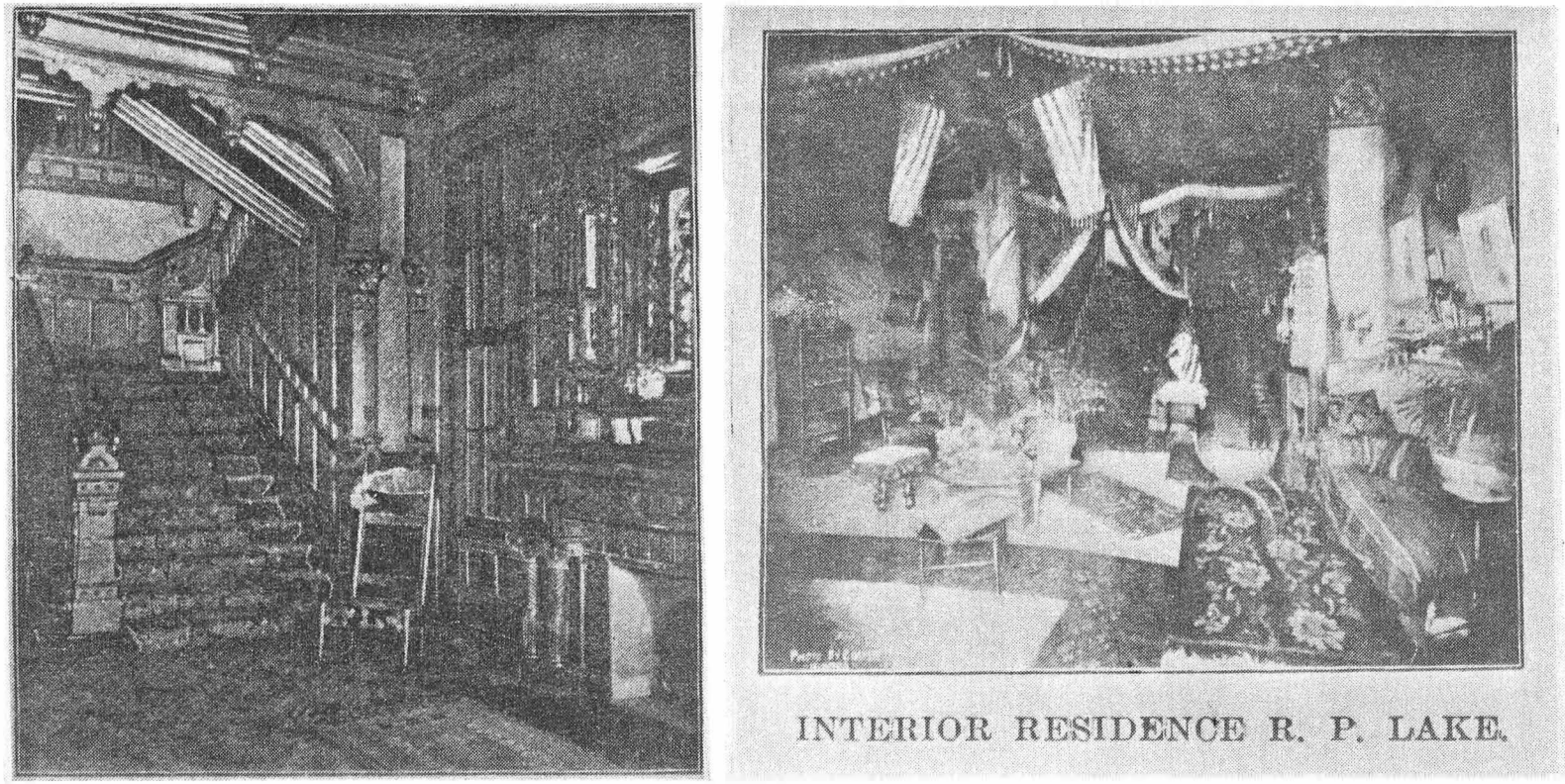
appealed "to those desirous of furnishing their homes in an artistic manner."[236] The Art Supplement of The Memphis Evening Scimitar was profusely illustrated with photographs of newly constructed Queen Anne houses; the few interiors shown were very much in the Aesthetic taste.[237] (Figure 127)

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

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[236]Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 10 May 1885, 4.

[237]Art supplement to the Greater Memphis Edition of the Evening Scimitar, April 1899.



A B

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.

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

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[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

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[241]David Hanks, "Herter Brothers; Art in Furniture Design," Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts, 1, No. 4 (Spring 1986), 34.

[242]Aslin, 64.

[243]E. 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

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[244]Stuart, 5-6.

[245]Spoffard, 217.

[246]Clarence Cook, The House Beautiful (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881), 279, Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

[247]Smith, 77.

[248]Garrett 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

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[249]Ibid., 57.

[250]Cooper, 94.

[251]William 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;

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[252]Mrs. 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

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[253]See 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.

[254]Home Decorative Art Souvenir, n.p.



A



B

Figure 128. Views of the Mallory-Neely front doors.
A. Exterior.
B. Interior.

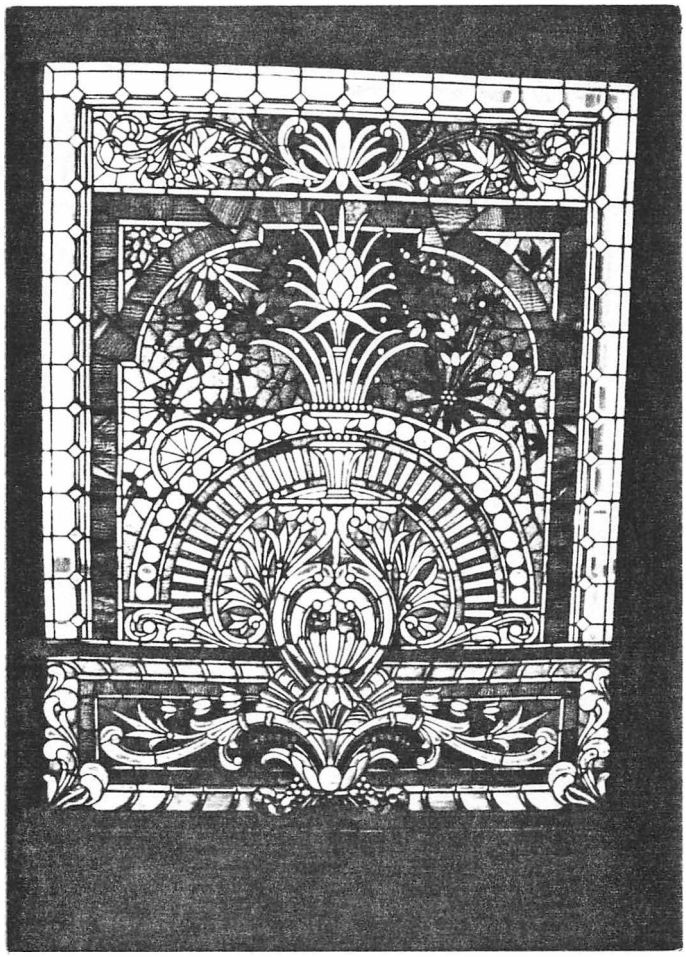


Figure 129. Large stained glass window on the entrance hall stair landing of the Mallory-Neely House.

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]

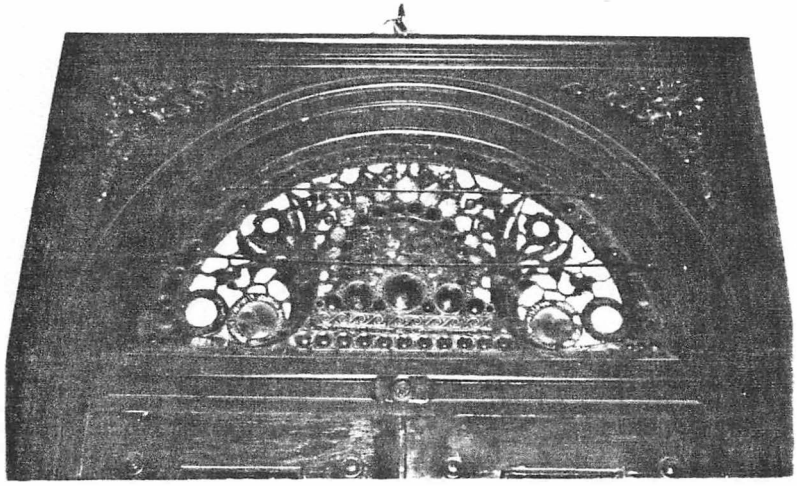
The Mallory-Neely windows are excellent examples of late nineteenth century art glass and are very much in the Aesthetic mode. The richly colored front door panels have an exotic Near Eastern theme with date palm and other foliage shown through Moorish arches. The lunette above the doors as well as the 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

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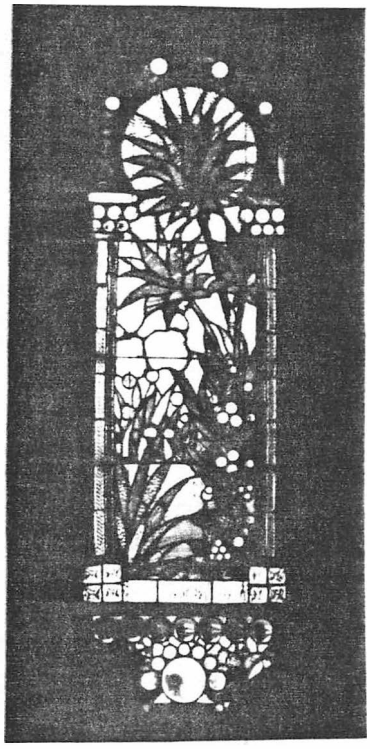
[255]Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, "A New Renaissance: Stained Glass in the Aesthetic Period," In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986), 184.

[256]Weber Wilson, "A Field Guide to American Residential Stained Glass" [leaflet] (Chambersburg, Pa.: Architectural Ecology and Old House Journal, 1979), 2-4.

[257]Frelinghuysen, 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

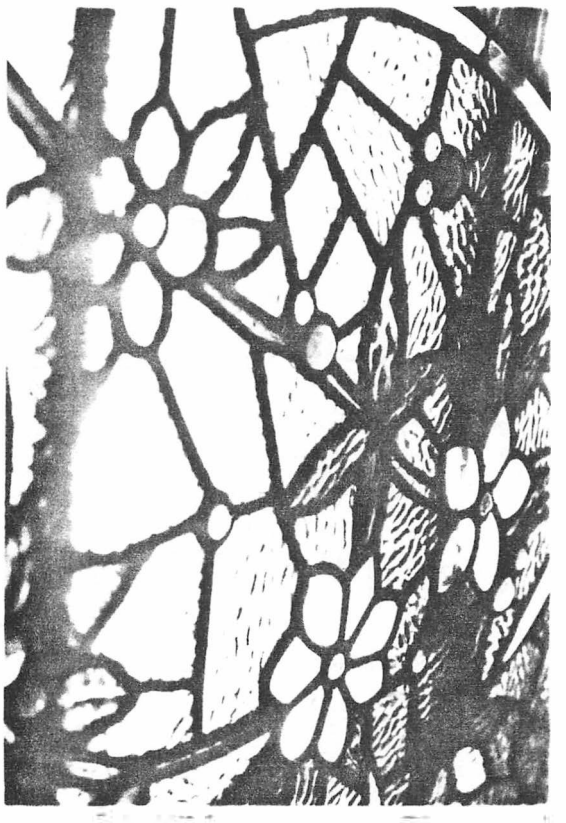
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[258]Von Falke, 197.

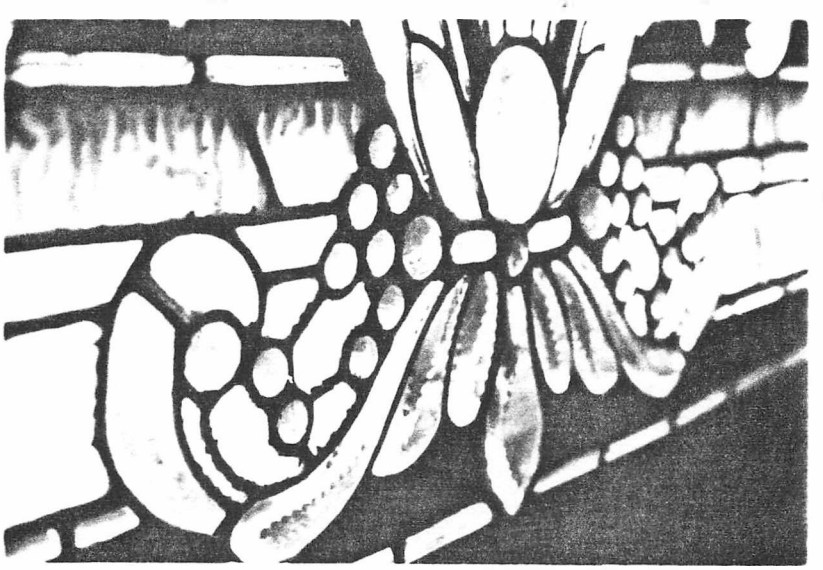
[259]Hugh F. McKean, The Lost Treasures of Louis Comfort Tiffany (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1980), 137-138.

[260]World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, USA, Classifications and Rules, Department of Manufacture (1883), 19, Special Collections, Newberry Library, Chicago.

[261]Official 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.

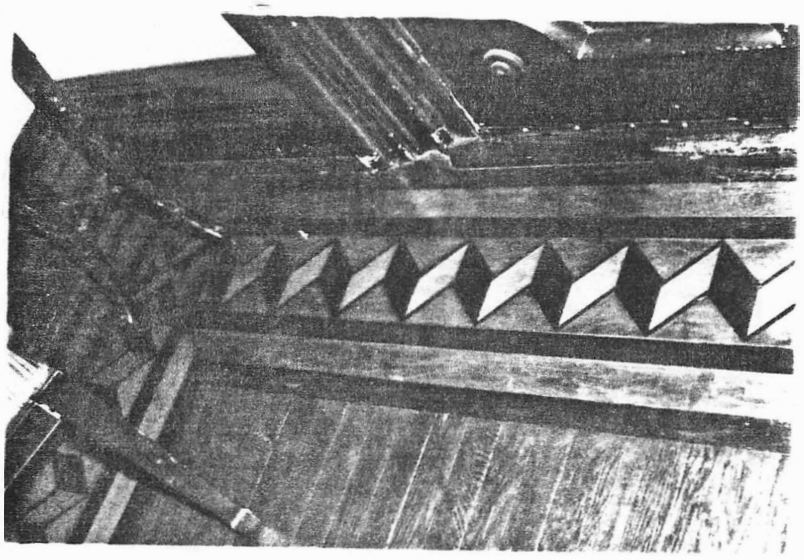
Parquet flooring. After entering the front doors of the Mallory-Neely House, most visitors today immediately notice the entrance hall floor with its elaborate parquet border. (Figure 132) It is probable that this area was originally wall-to-wall carpeted along with most of the rest of the house, as had 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

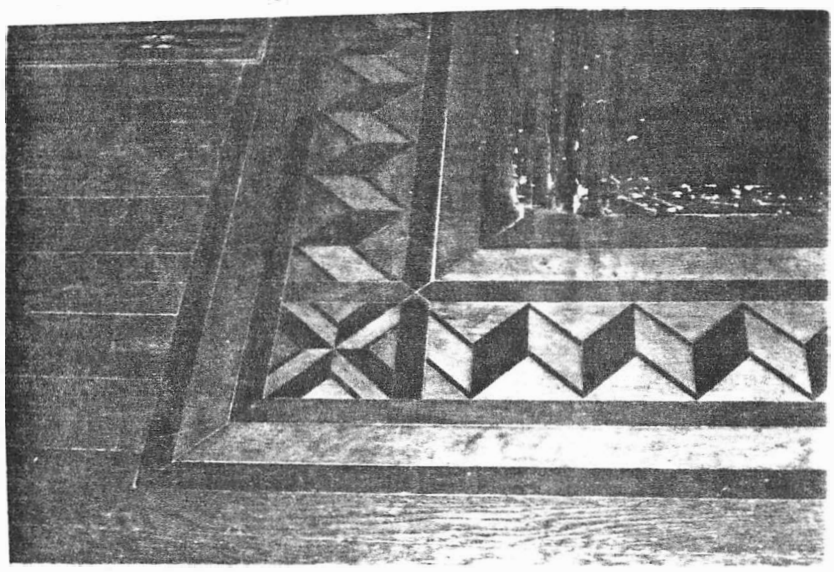
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[262]World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, USA, Classifications and Rules, Department of Manufacture, 14.

[263]Michelle 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

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[264]Artistic Homes or How to Furnish with Taste, 26.

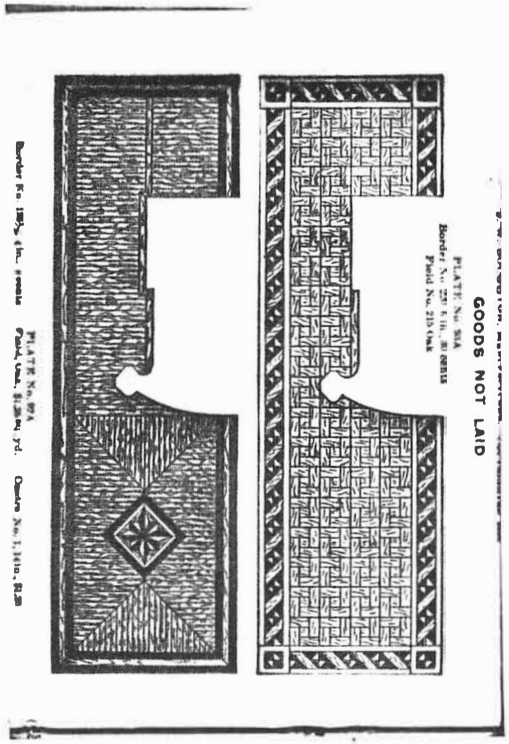
[265]Architect, Decorator and Furnisher, Season of 1884 (Chicago: Cowdrey, Clark & Co., 1884), n.p., Special Collections, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago.

[266]Mrs. H. R. Haweis, The Art of Decoration (London: Chatts and Windus, 1881; reprint, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977), 4.

[267]Charles 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 hygenic 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

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[268]W. Boughton, Interior Decoration and Artistic Wooden Floors [trade catalog], New York, 1893, 3, Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

[269]Ibid.

[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 3/8 and 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

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[271]National Wood Manufacturing Company, Designs of Parquet Flooring (New York: c. 1875), 2 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

[272]S.C. Johnson & Son Ornamental hardwood Flooring Catalogue (Racine, Wisconsin, 1901), 3 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

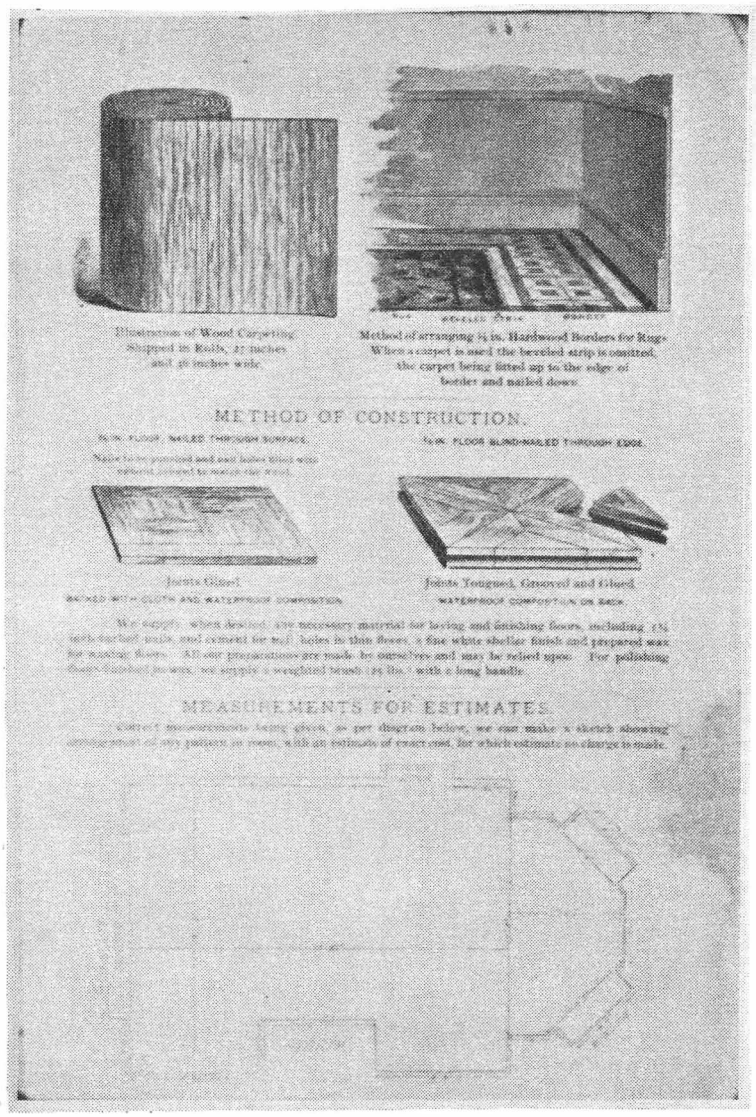


Figure 134. Page from the 1875 trade catalog of the National Wood Manufacturing Company showing both the construction of their flooring and methods for its installation. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

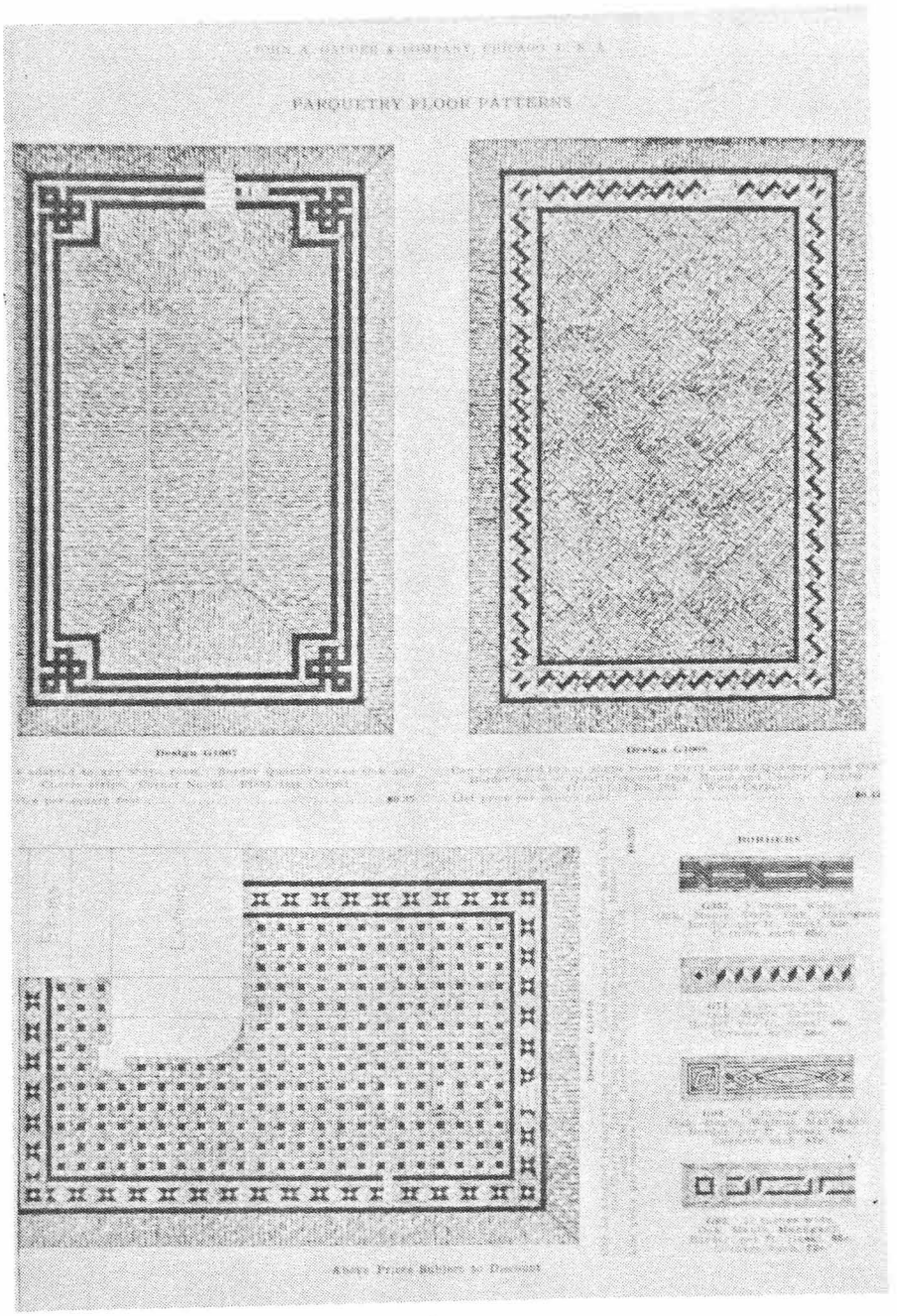
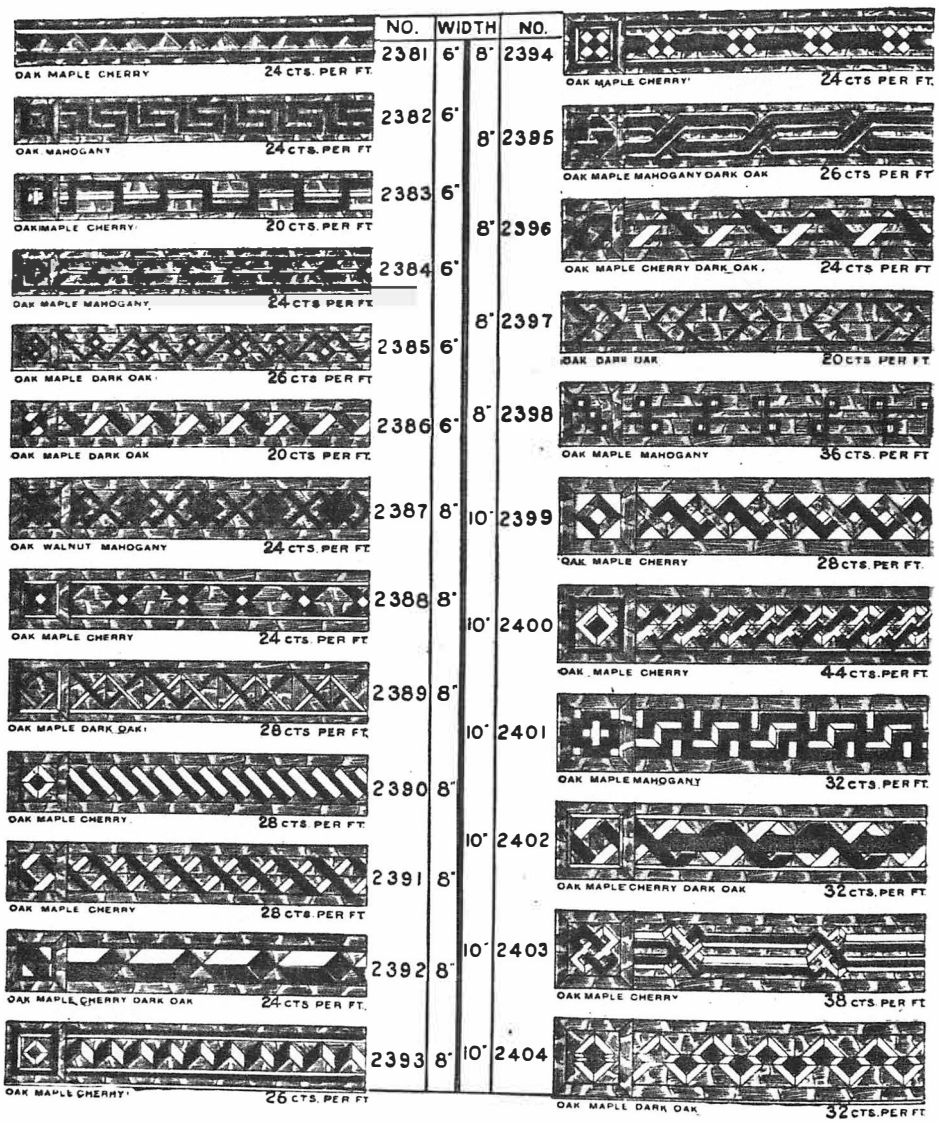


Figure 135. Border G 71 shown on this page from the 1909 John A. Ganger & Company catalog is similar to the one in the Mallory-Neely entrance hall. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

PARQUETRY BORDERS.

5-16 INCH THICK.



Above prices are per lineal foot.

Can be used with 3-8 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 Manufactury 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

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[273]John A. Ganaer Company Catalogue No. 50, Chicago, 1909, 46 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

[274]National Wood Manufacturing Company Designs of Parquet Floors, 2.

[275]See, 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

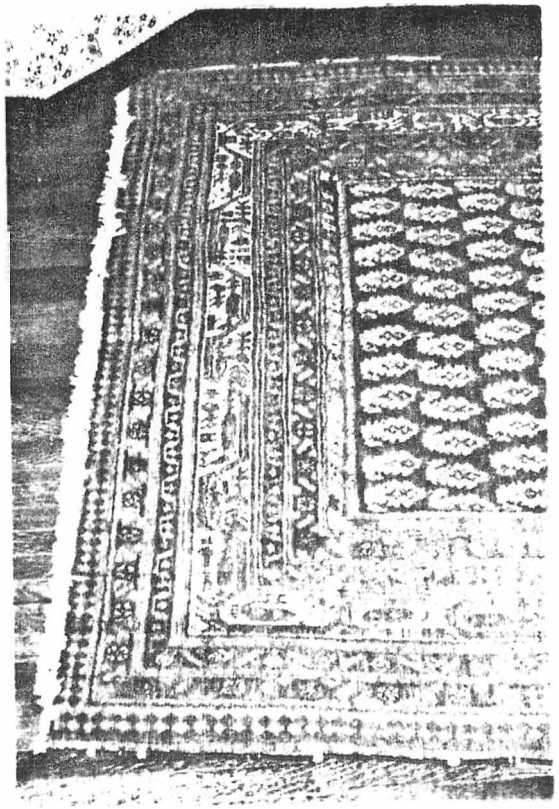
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[276]Schiller, 33.

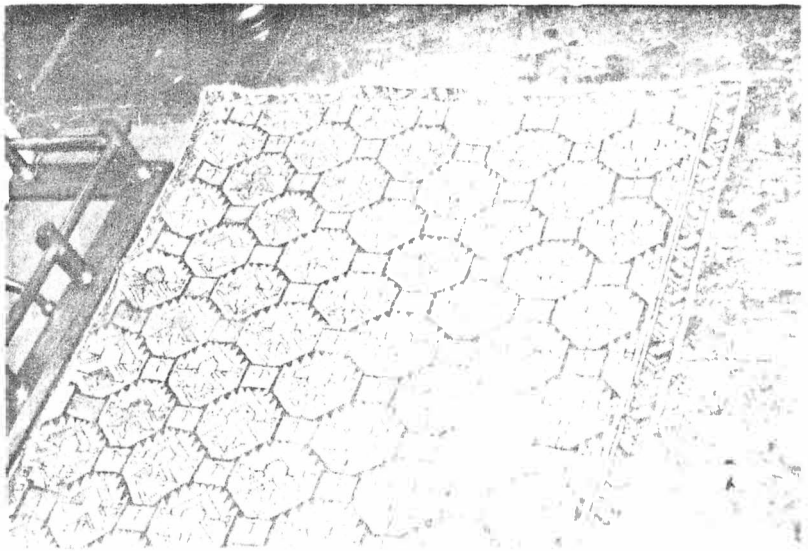
[277]Von Falke, 34.

[278]Artistic Homes or How to Furnish with Taste, 30.

[279]Brunner and Tryon, 48.

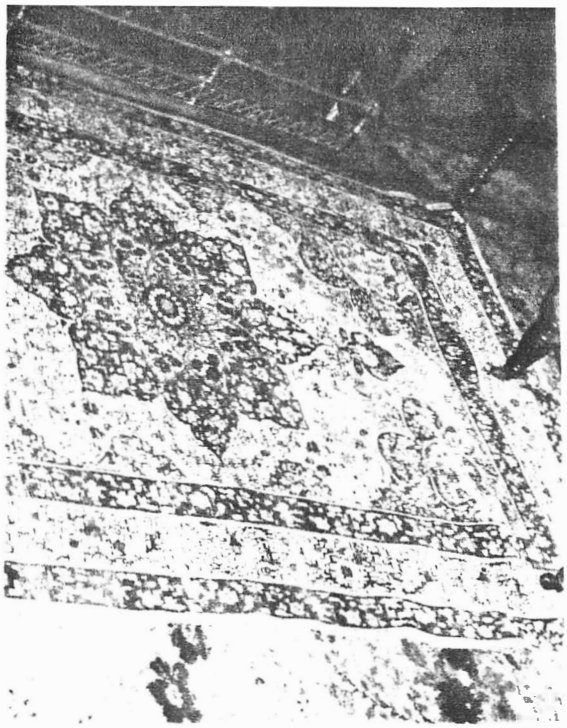


A

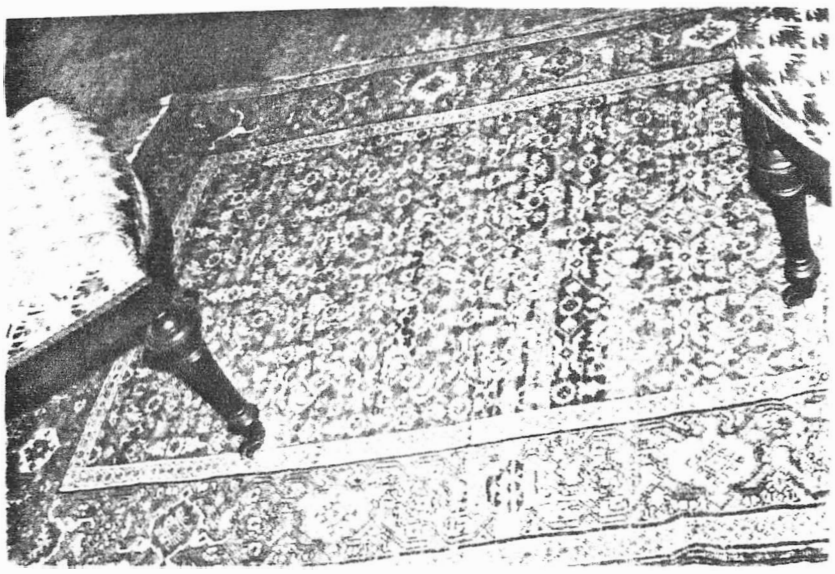


B

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

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[280]Haweis, 295.

[281]Ibid.

[282]A. A. Vantine, Oriental Rugs and Carpets, New York, n.d., 2 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

[283]Sanitary Manufactury Co., Inc., The Passing of the Carpet, Philadelphia, 1902, 7 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

[284]Parviz 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.

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[285] Ibid., 19.

[286] Ibid., 22.

[287] Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 15 March 1885, 3.

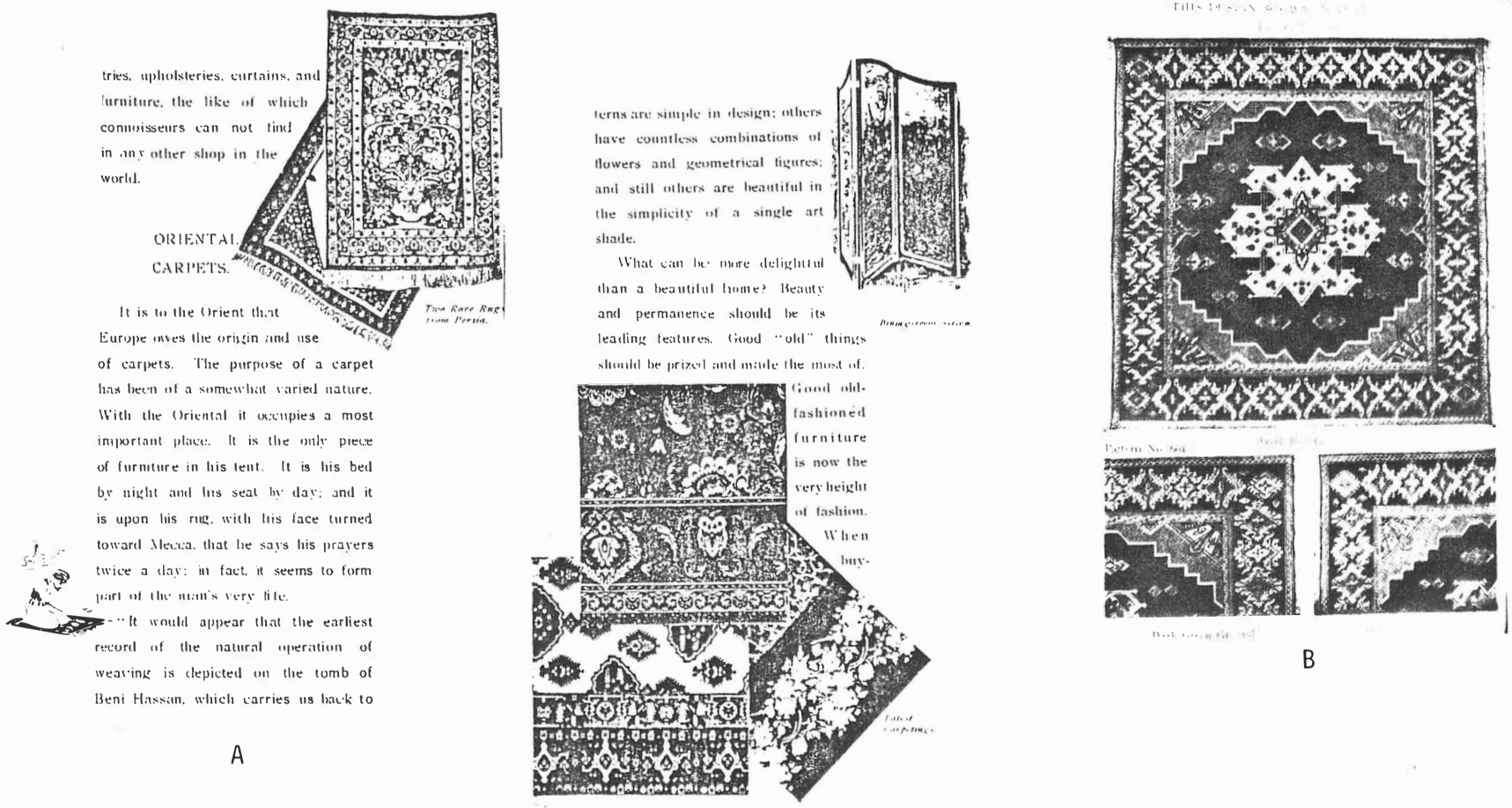
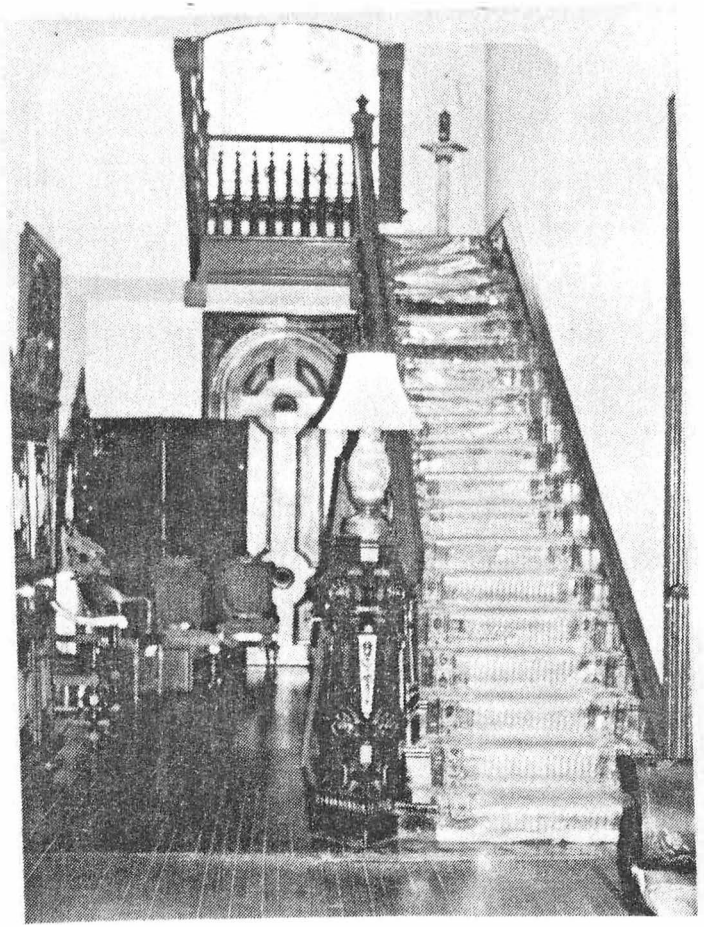
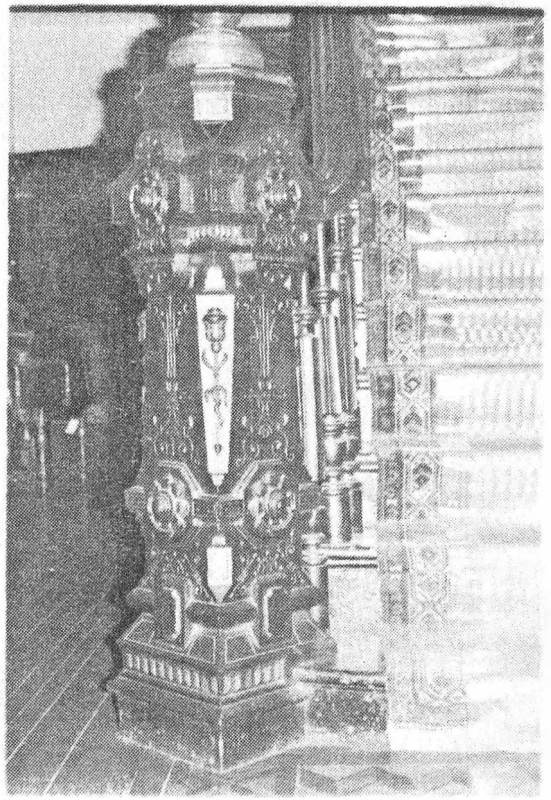


Figure 139. Oriental rug catalog pages.
A. Pages from the 1901 catalog of the Mandel Brothers' Department of Interior Design in which the use of Oriental area carpets is promoted. Courtesy Chicago Historical Society.
B. Page from the 1902 Sanitary Manufacturing Company catalog illustrating machine made Orientals recommended for use with their parquet flooring. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.



A



B

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]

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[288]A. F. Oakley, Building a House (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1883), 71, Special Collections, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

[289]Mrs. Isabella Mary Beeton, Beeton's Everyday Handbook and Housekeeping Guide (London: Ward, Locke & Co., 1890), 78, Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

[290]Spofford, 155.

Charles Locke Eastlake is credited with the origin of this angular approach with his advocation 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]

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[291] Artistic Homes or How to Furnish with Taste, 57.

[292] Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 3, Folder 30 and Henry Montgomery to Bradley & Currier, 28 September 1875, Box 9, Folder 110.

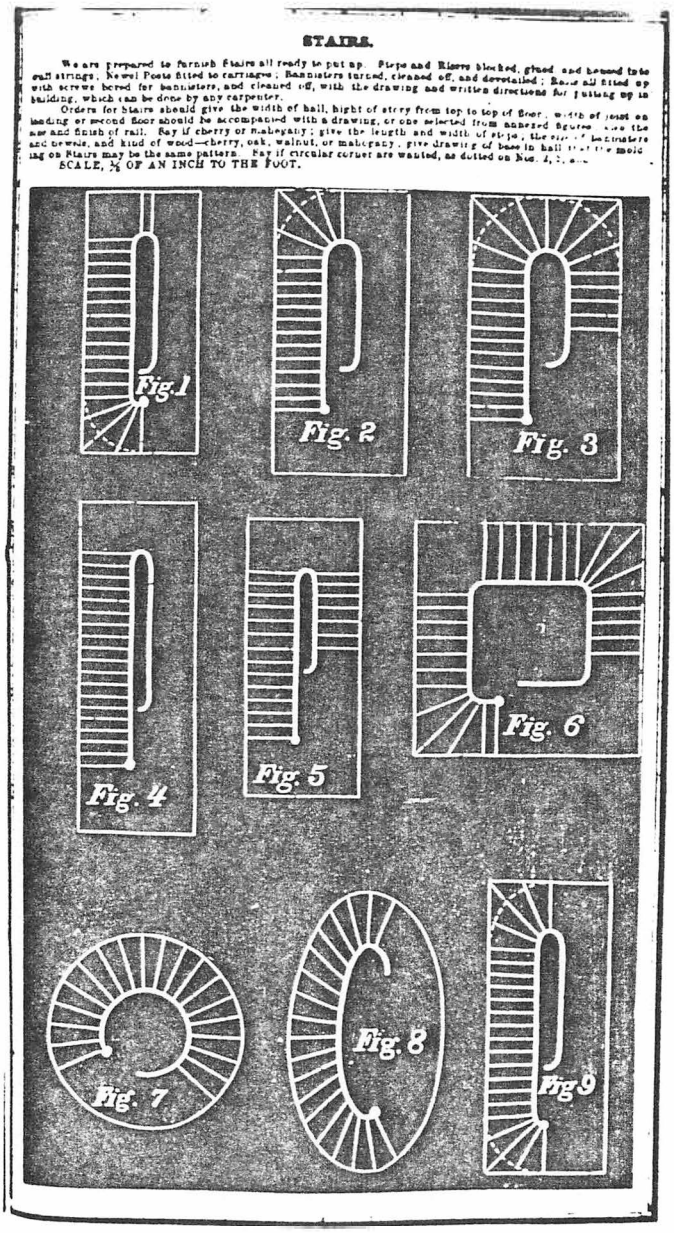
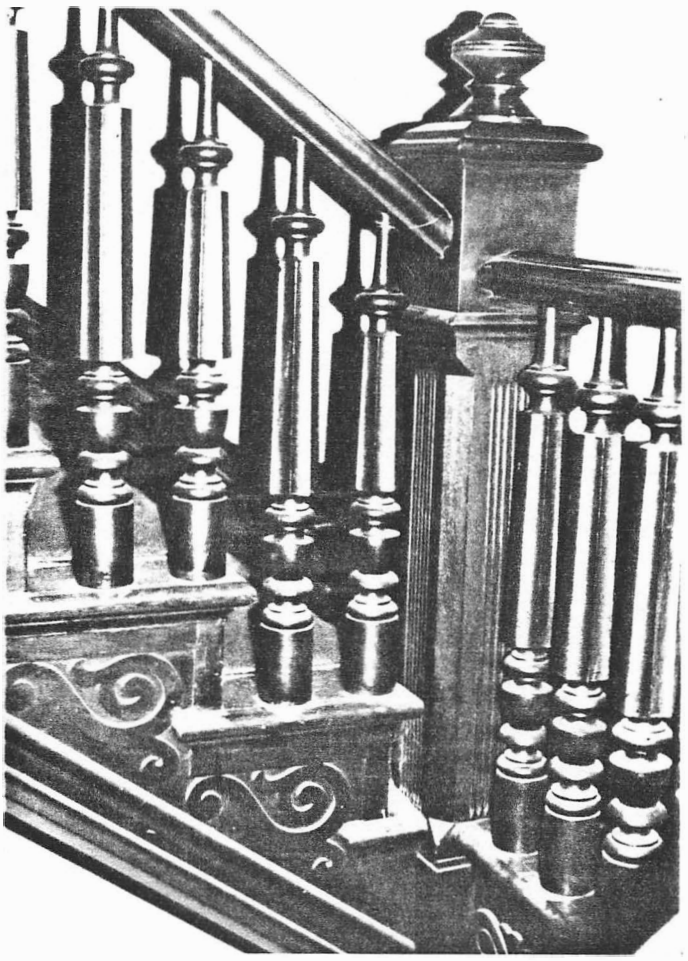
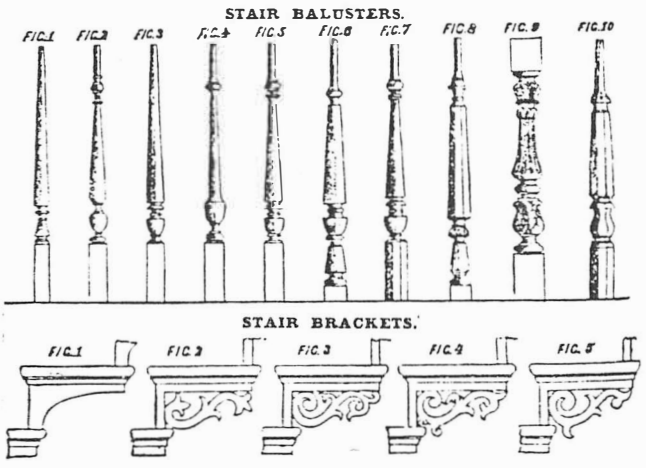


Figure 141. Page from the Hinkle, Guild and Company catalog (1869). It shows a selection of staircase plans which could be constructed according to the client's size requirements and then shipped ready to assemble by local carpenters. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.



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

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[293]Henry Montgomery to Bradley & Currier, 27 January 1883, Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 3, Folder 30.

[294]Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 110, Receipt Book.

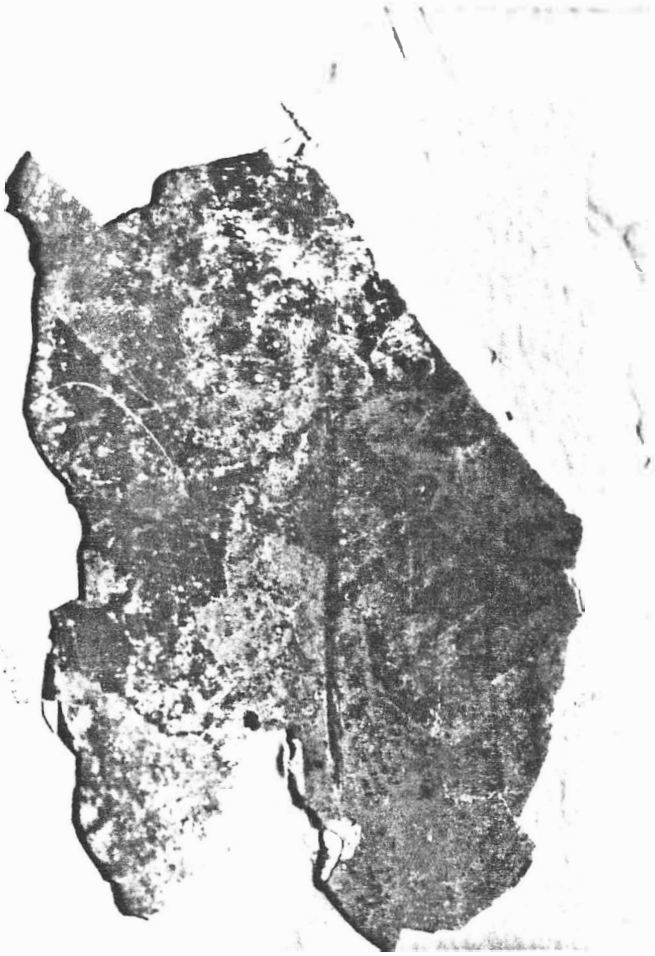


Figure 143. Peeling paint on the ceiling of the Mallory-Neely entrance hall reveals the original stencil decoration.

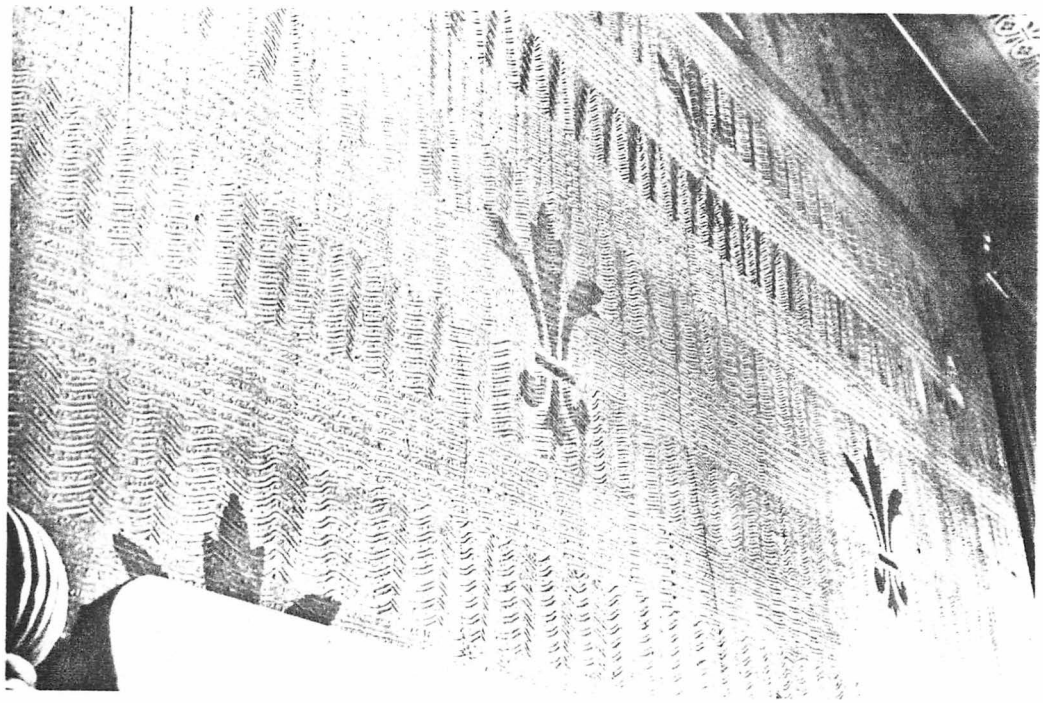


Figure 144. The original combing finish, colors, and stencil design, though blackened, remain intact on the walls of the third floor hallway of the Mallory-Neely House. The walls are painted an opalescent sage green stenciled with gold fleurs-de-lis.

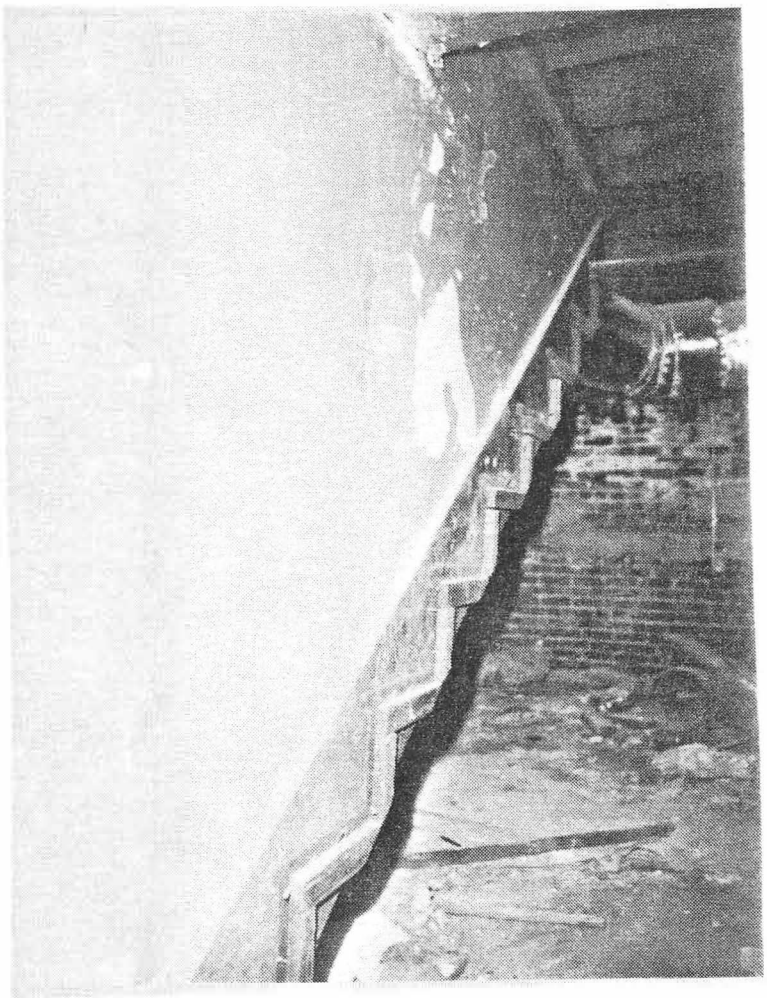


Figure 145. Similar combing patterns, colors, and gold fleurs-de-lis survive in damaged condition on walls that once flanked steps that led from the entrance hall into the basement. They attest to the fact that the central stairway core of the entire Mallory-Neely House was once treated in a like manner.

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]

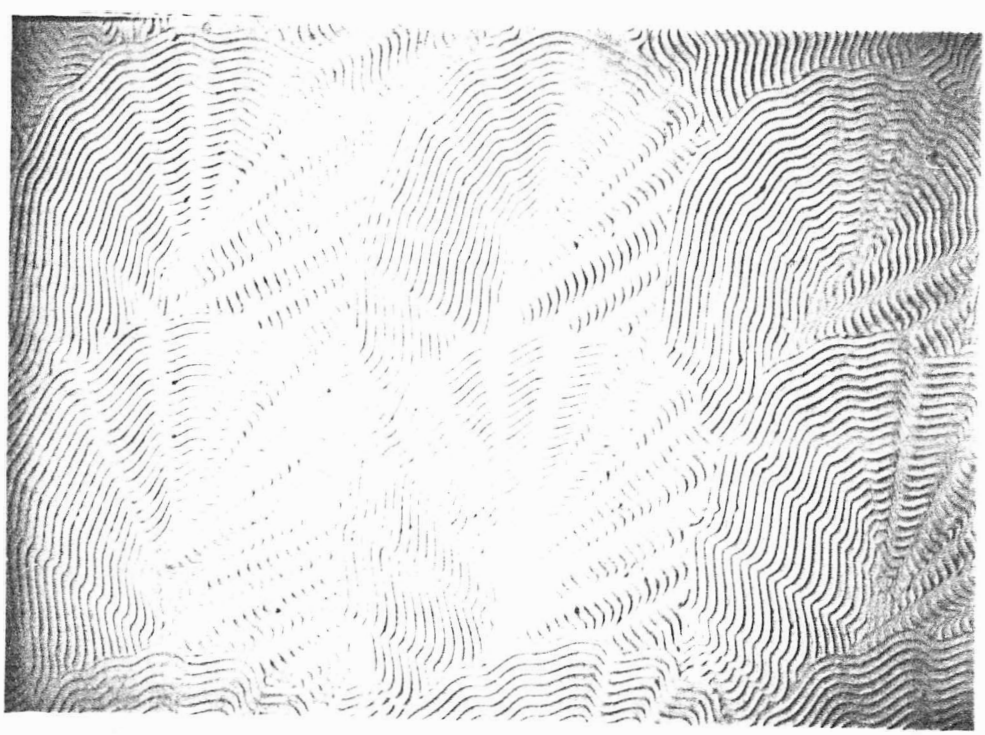
There are a variety of combed patterns used in the Mallory-Neely House. That on the walls of the main entrance hall has a repeated design of 10 by 10 inch squares in the center of which is a circle made up of concentric rings and in the corners are quartered segments of a circle. Each of these squares 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)

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[295]Home Decorative Art Souvenir, n.p.



A



B

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.

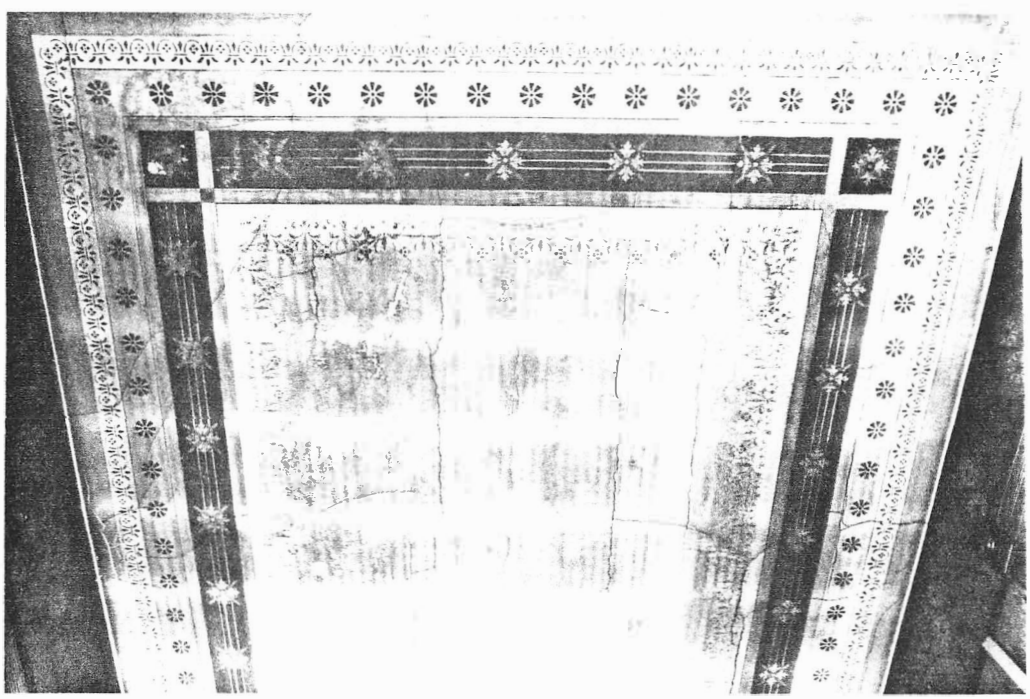
The hall ceilings were decorated with a clear cream-colored center field surrounded by a large and elaborate border made up of varying sized bands, each with different decoration. (Figures 147 and 148) The first of these bordering the wall is a cream-colored band decorated with a running design of interconnected 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

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[296]See, for example, Artistic Homes or How to Furnish with Taste, 23.

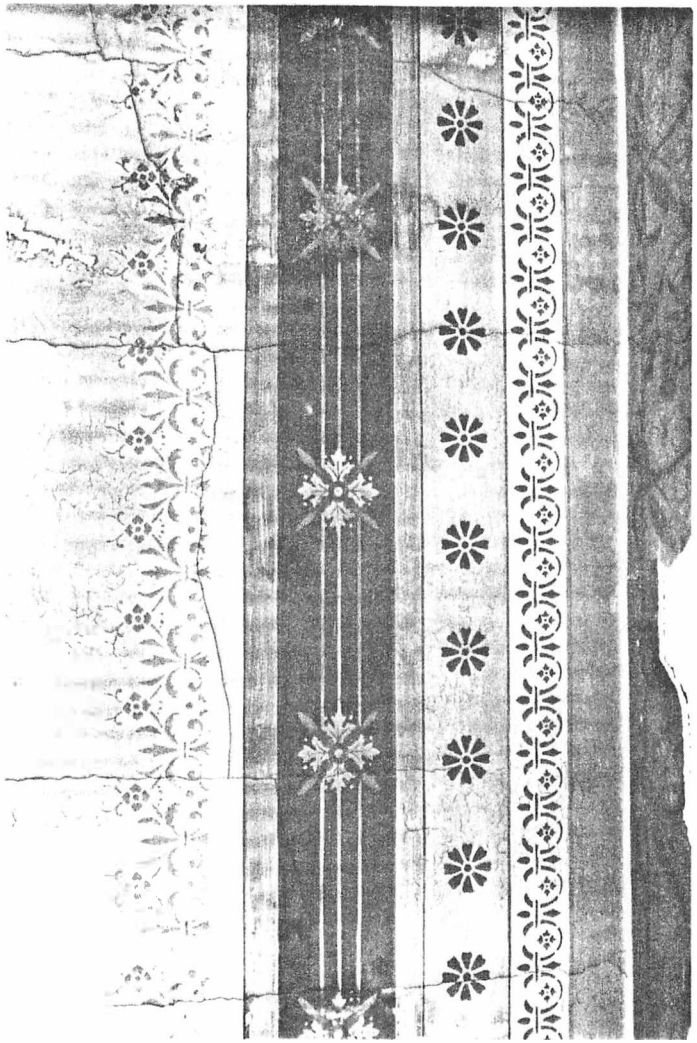


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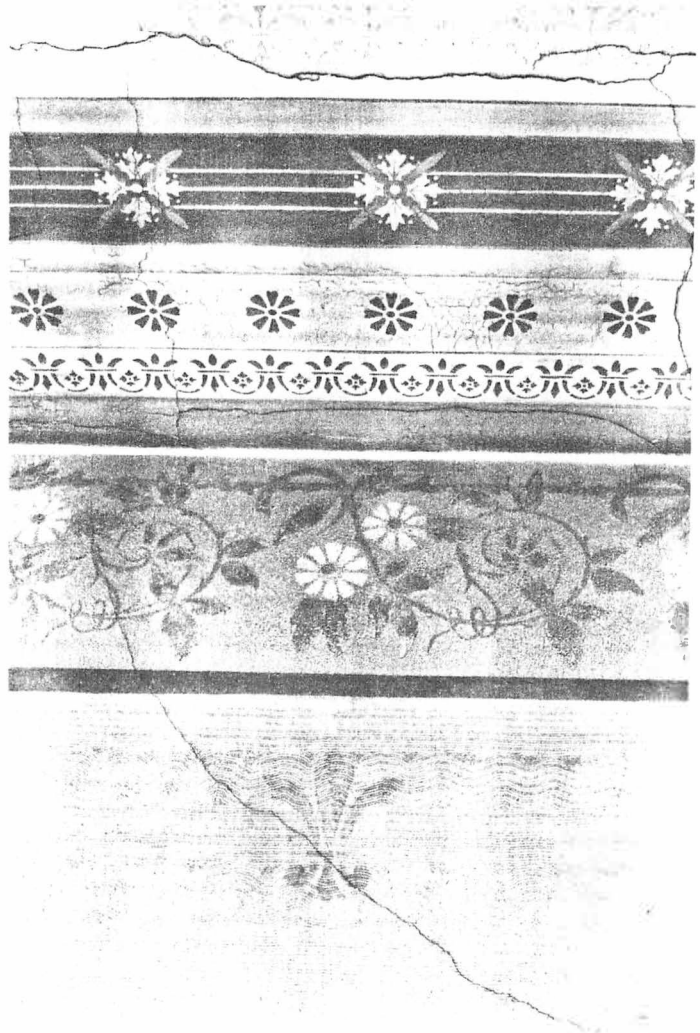


B

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



B

Figure 148. Details of the stenciling of the Mallory-Neely third floor hallway frieze and ceiling.
A. Ceiling.
B. Frieze and ceiling.

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.

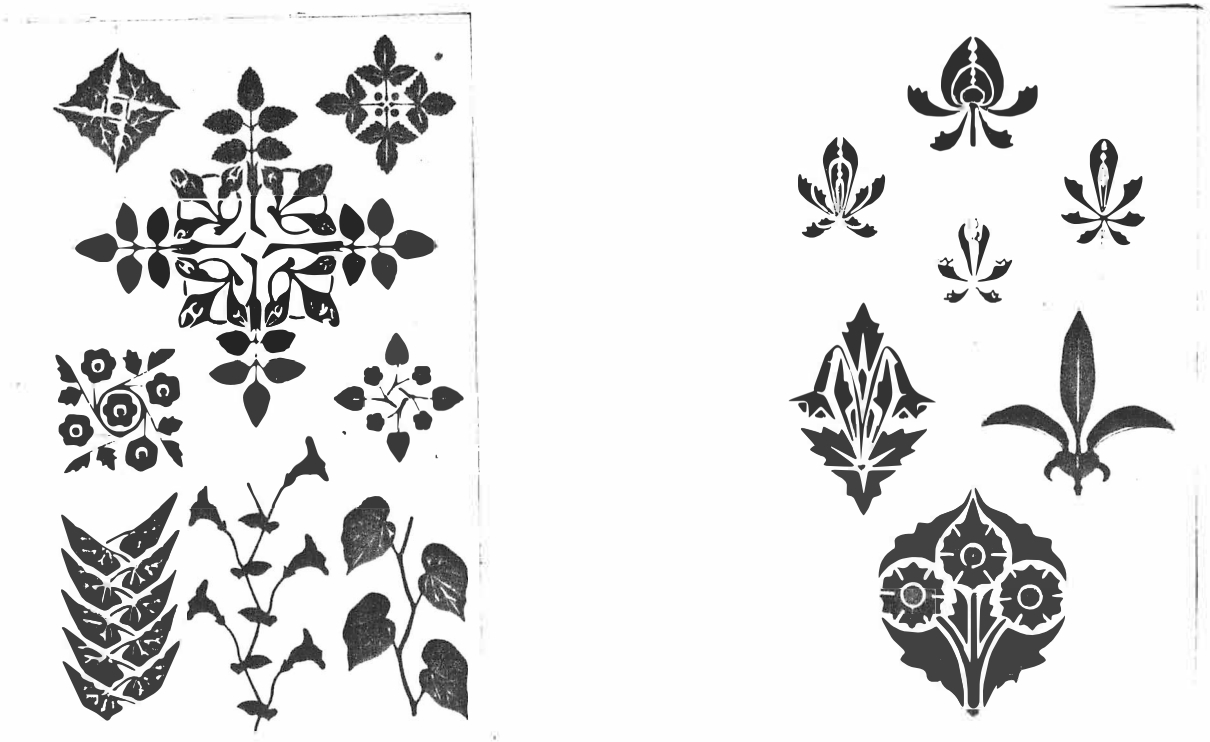
The designs used for the Mallory-Neely decorative stenciling in the hallways are typical of those advocated by design reform-educators like Dr. Christopher Dresser or Lewis F. Day. In Dresser's The Art of Decorative Design and Day's The Application of Ornament, pages of similar conventionalized floral 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

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[297]Dresser, The Art of Decorative Design and Lewis F. Day, The Application of Ornament (London: B. T. Batsford, 1888; reprint, New York: Garland Publishers, 1977).

[298]Dresser, 178.



A B

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.

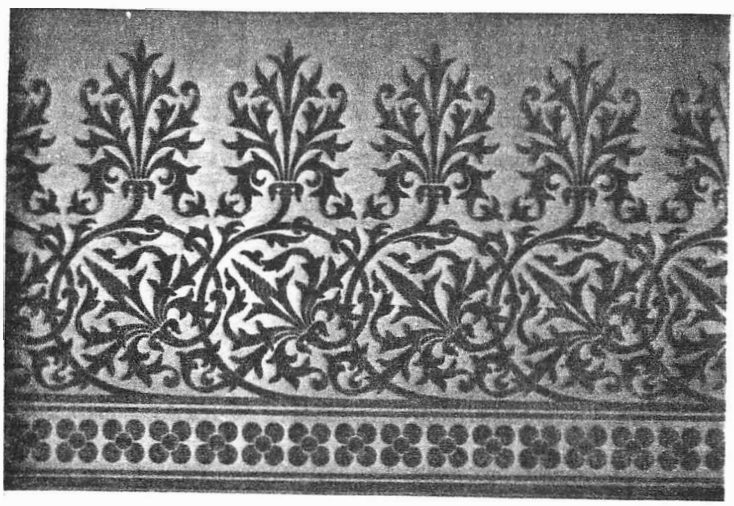


Figure 150. One of many plates from George and Maurice Audesley, The Practical Decorator and Ornamentalist (1890), showing suggested border designs incorporating scrolling leafage, stylized foliage, and flowers all organized in varying sized bands. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

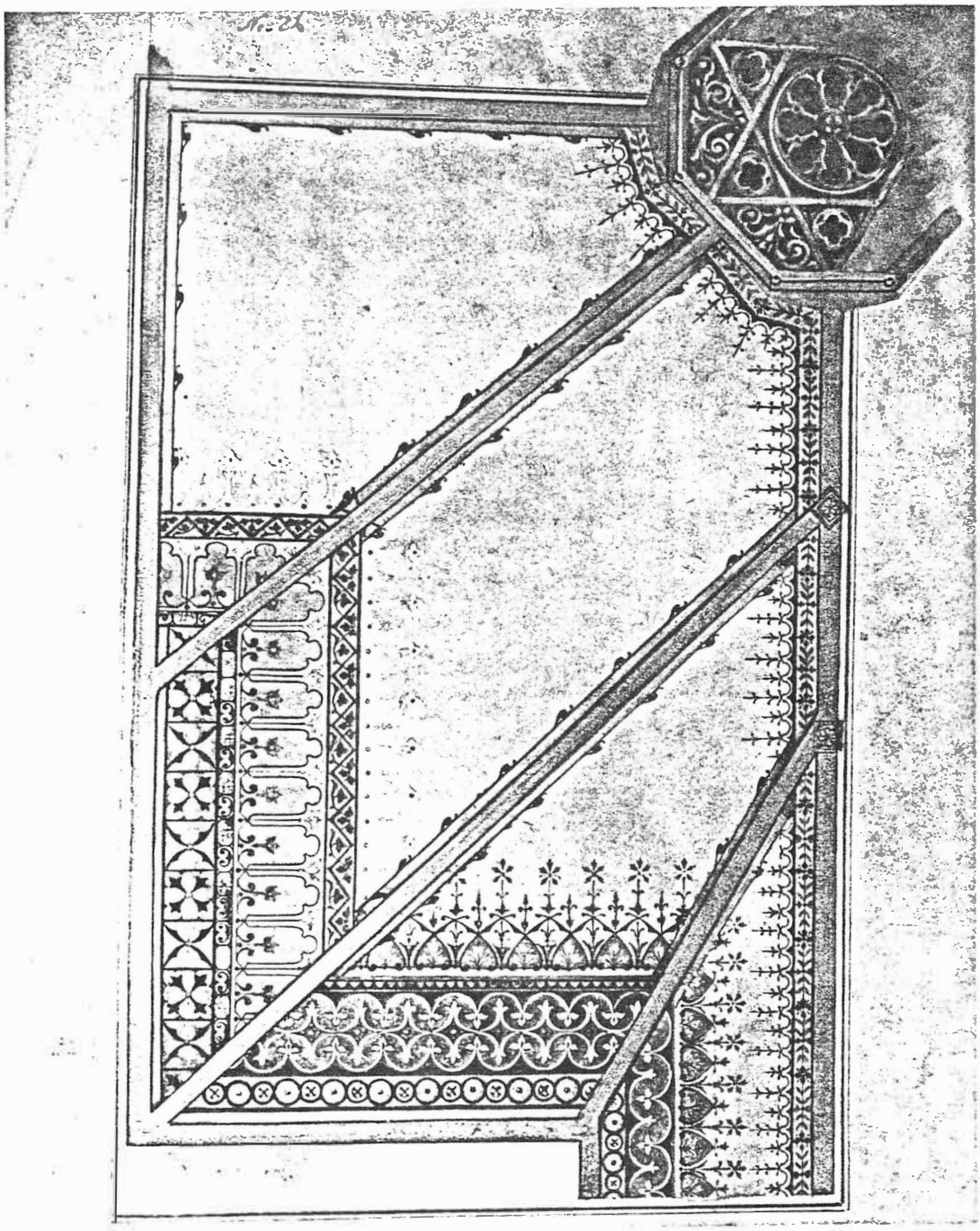


Figure 151. Preparatory watercolor from the Beck Collection. It shows a suggested ceiling treatment with an elaborate border made up of bands filled with stylized vines and flowers. Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

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]

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[299]Henry 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.

[300]Architect, Decorator, and Furnisher, Season of 1884, n.p.

[301]Smith, 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 burled walnut infills.

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[302]"Graining is a Traditional Technique," The Old House Journal Compendium, eds. Clem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980), 342.

[303]A. 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)

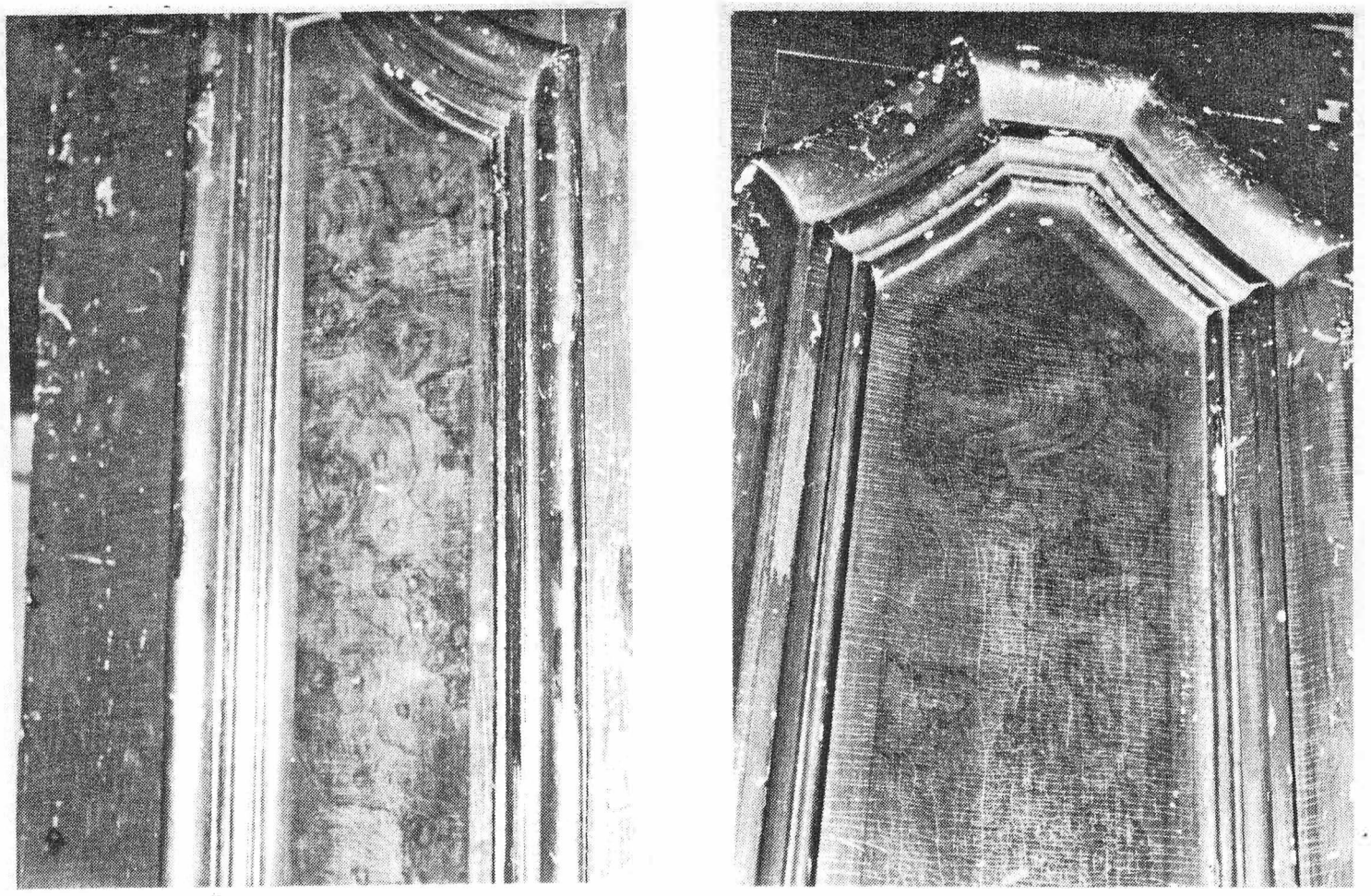
The grainer first applied a ground color as a foundation. Over this was spread a graining or glazing wash. Steel and bone combs, a variety of brushes, even feathers, and sponges were then used to give the proper figuring or graining according to the particular type of wood being emulated.[304] (Figure 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

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[304]William Wall, Graining: Ancient and Modern (Somerville, Massachusetts: by the author, 1905), 121, Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

[305]The 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.



A B

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.

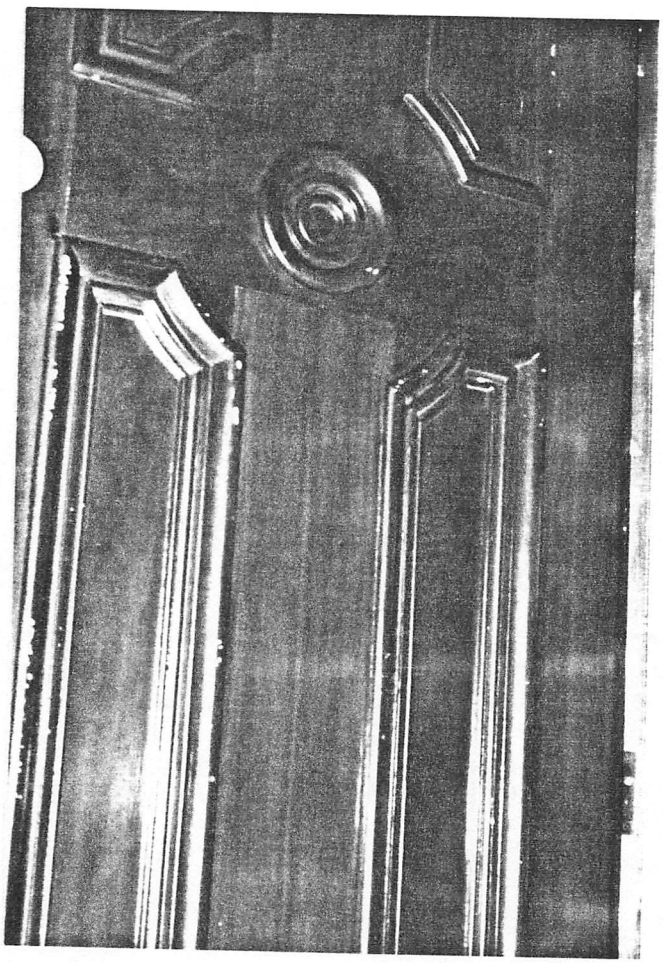
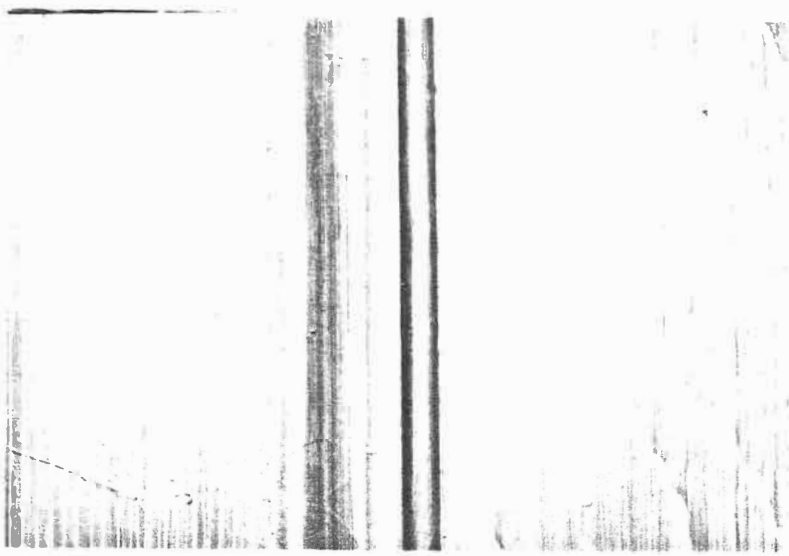
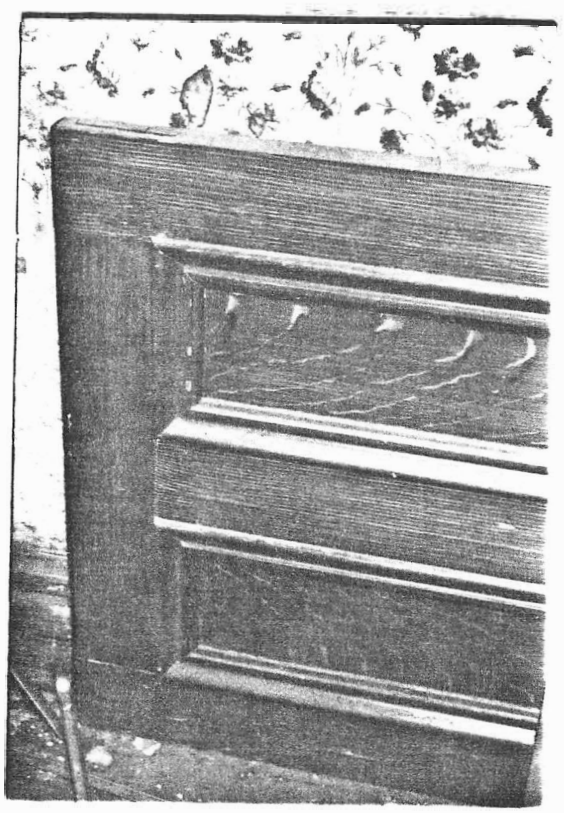


Figure 153. Original cherry graining on the inside of the Mallory-Neely dining room closet doors.



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.

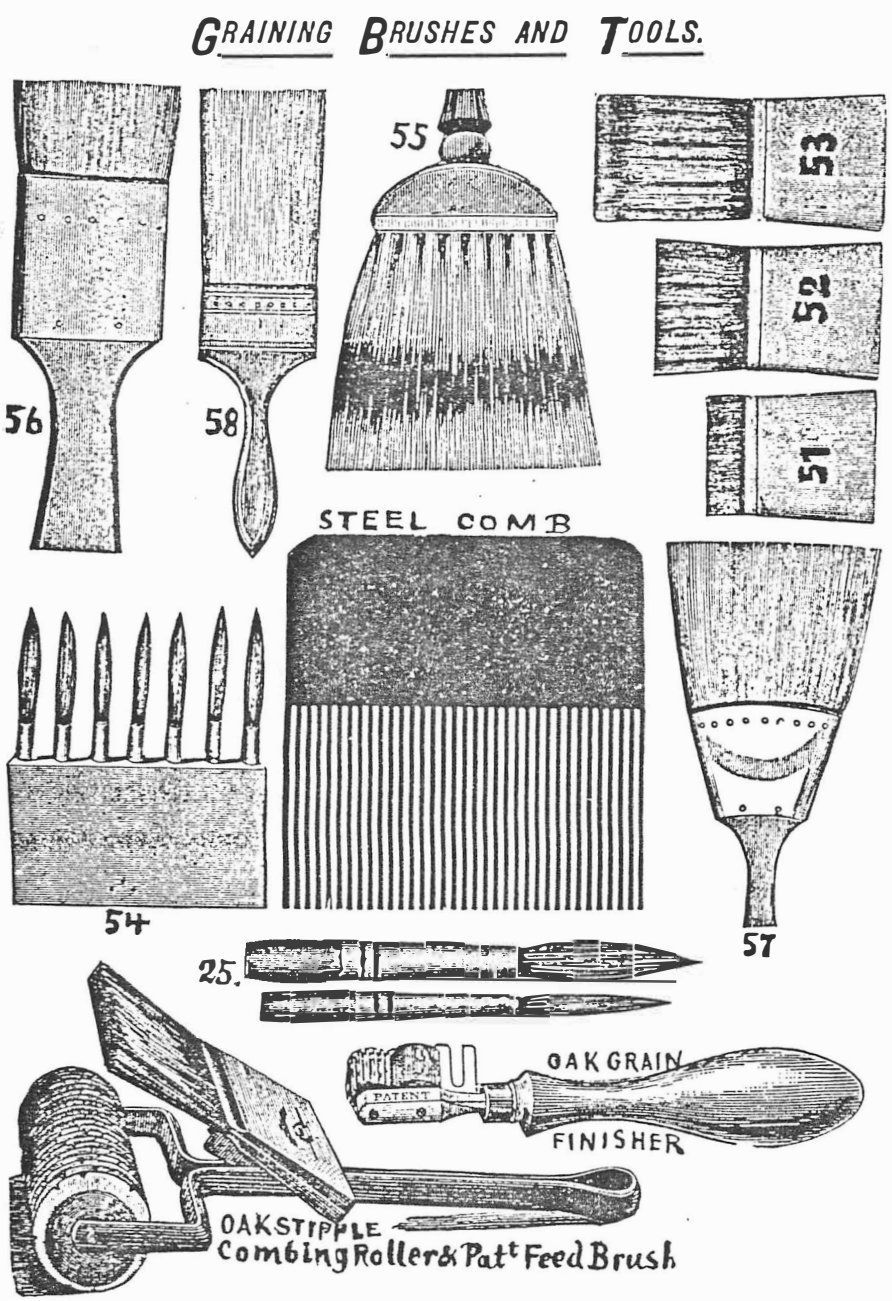


Figure 155. Assorted graining tools and brushes as illustrated in the Stencil Treasury (1895). Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

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.

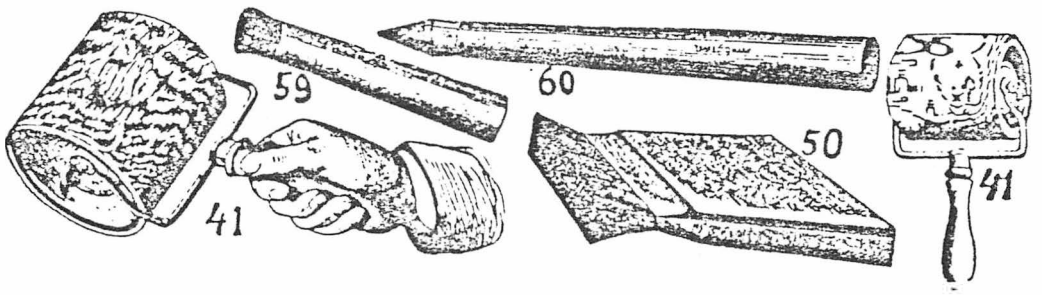


Figure 156. Advertisement from the Stencil Treasury (1895). Like many traditional crafts, graining was effected by modernization. Shown are graining rollers for use in lieu of the old hand methods. Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

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

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[306]Kahn, 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

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[307]Aslin, 63.

[308]Audsley and Audsley, 10.

[309]Ibid., 1.

[310]Garrett and Garrett, 69.

[311]Haweiss, 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

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[312]Smith, 97.

[313]National Wallpaper Co.'s Exhibit, World's Columbian Exposition, n.p.

[314]Aslin, 63; often, as in the Mallory-Neely parlor, only a two part division was used minus the dado.

[315]Ibid.

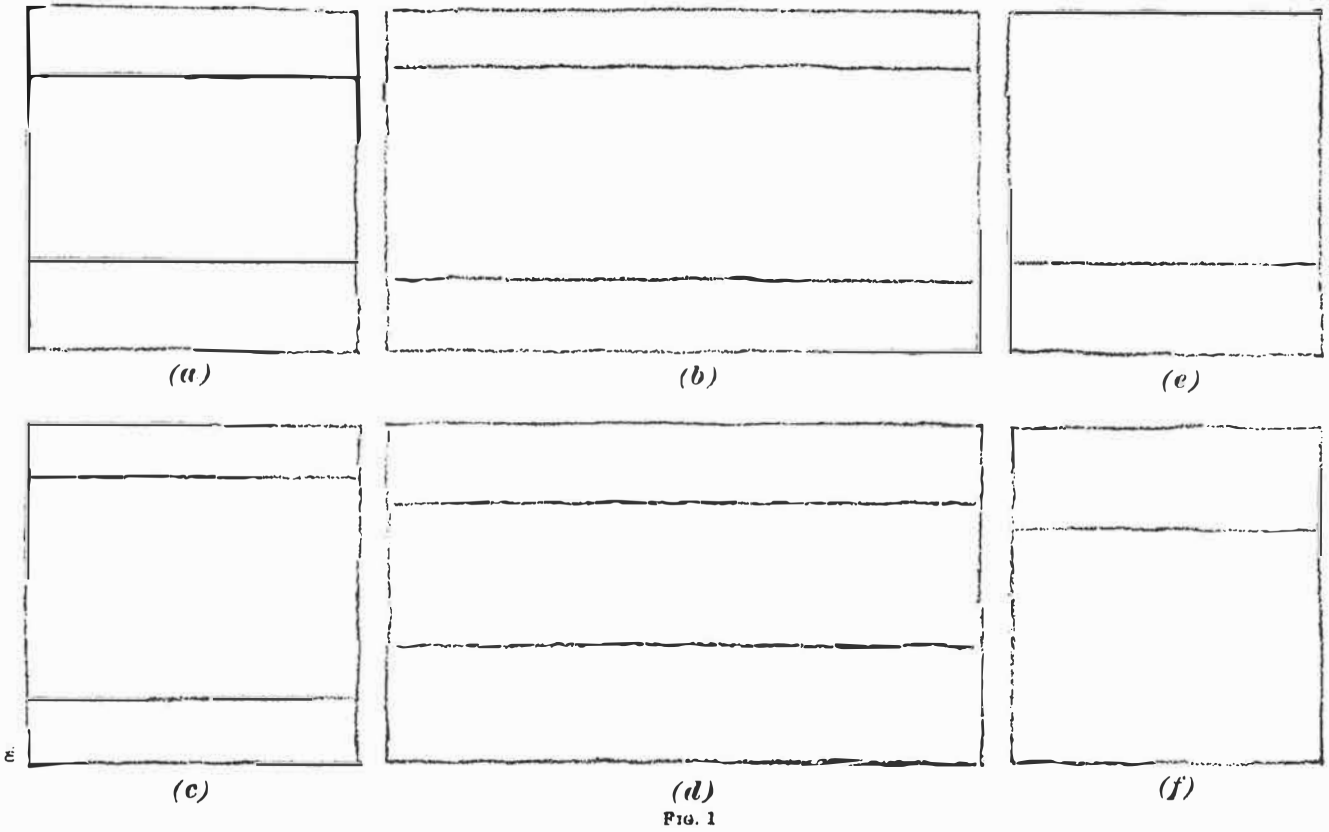


Figure 157. Two or three part wall divisional systems, based on wall proportion, from Louis Osborne, Painting and Interior Decoration (1925). Courtesy Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

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

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[316]Season 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.

[317]Carolyn Flaherty, "Late Nineteenth Century Interior Decoration," Old House Journal Compendium, ed. Clem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980), 279.

[318]See, 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.

[319]Williams 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]

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[320]Smith, 59.

[321]Ibid.

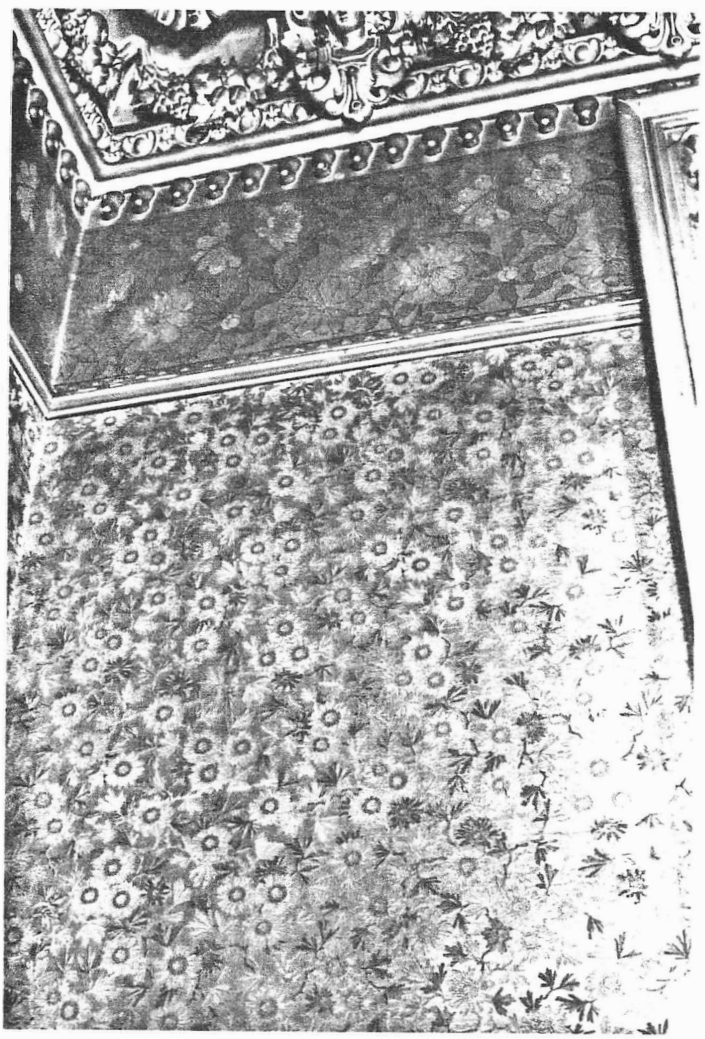
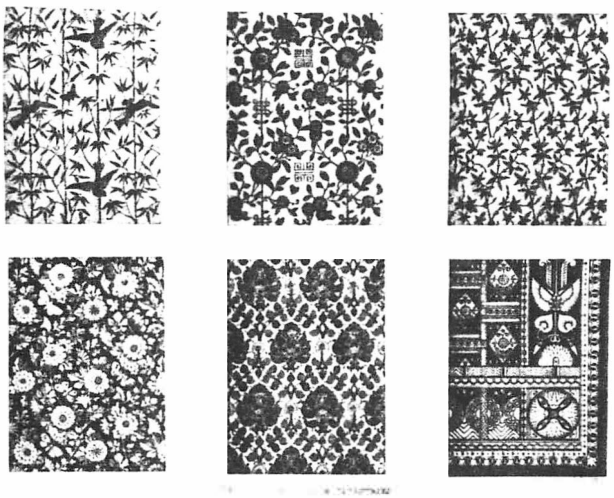
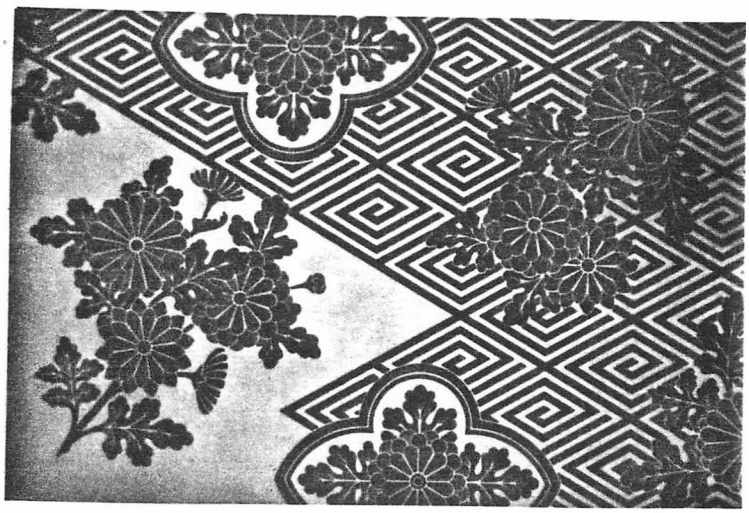


Figure 159. Detail showing frieze and field of the two part wall divisional system used in the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room.

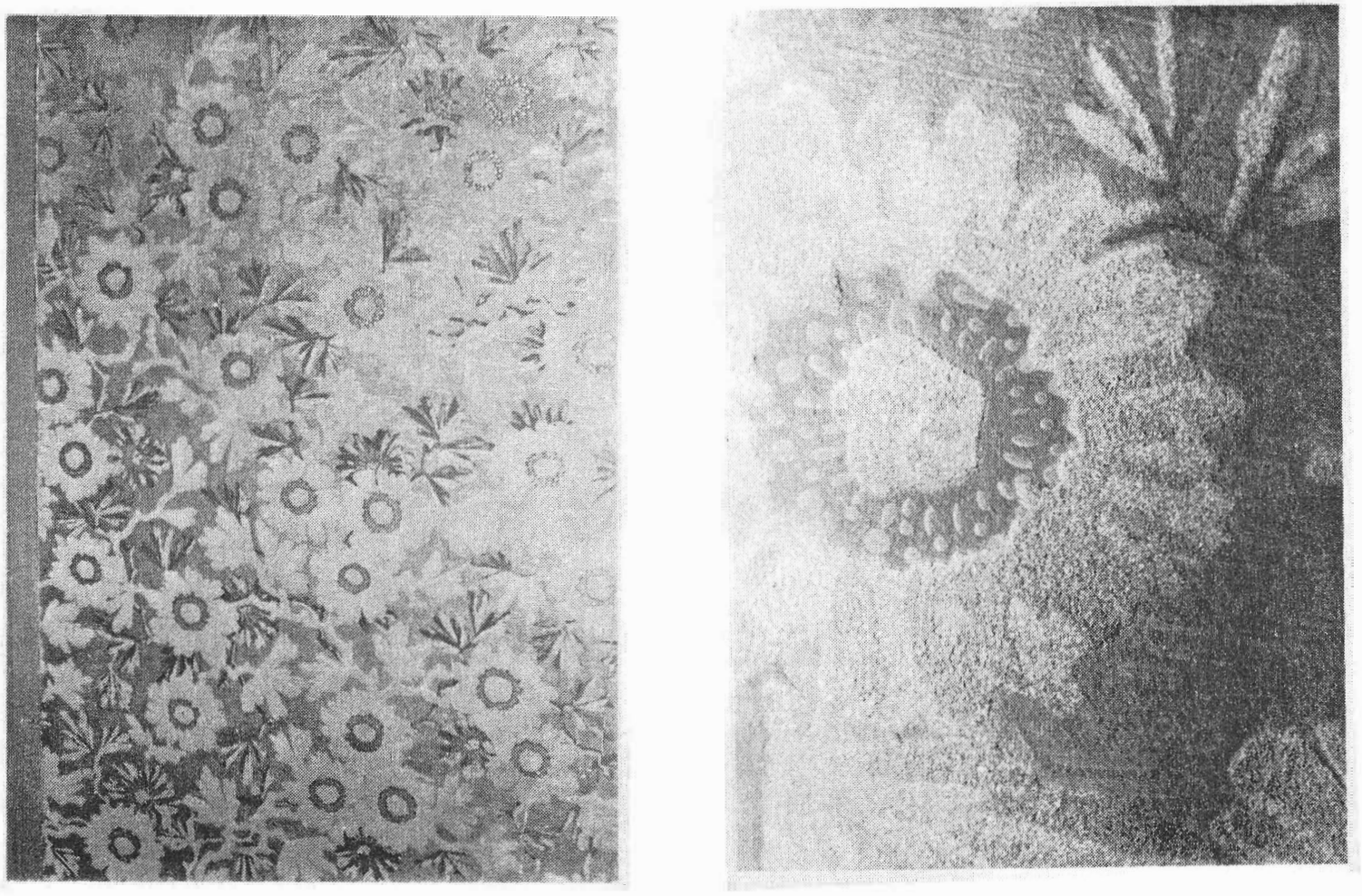


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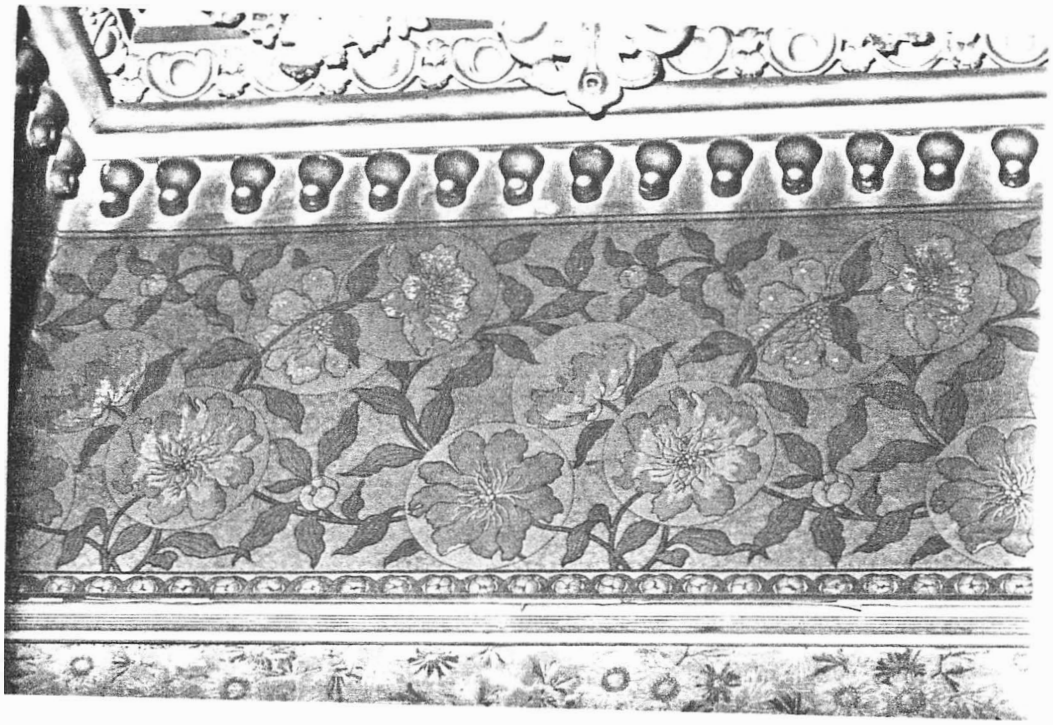
B

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)

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[322]Fr. Breck & Co. Artistic Wallpapers, New York, 1881, 2 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

[323]Hensley, 74.

[324]Art Supplement to the Greater Memphis Edition of the Evening Scimitar, 79.

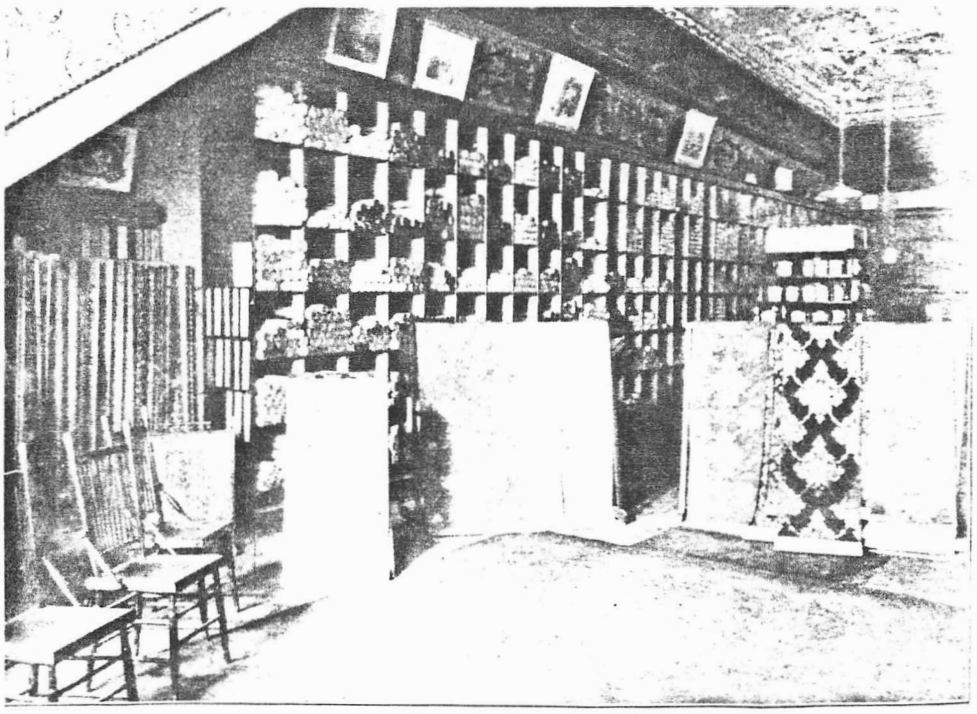


Figure 163. Interior view of a well stocked turn-of-the-century Memphis wallpaper store. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Library and Information Center.

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

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[325]Bruce 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]

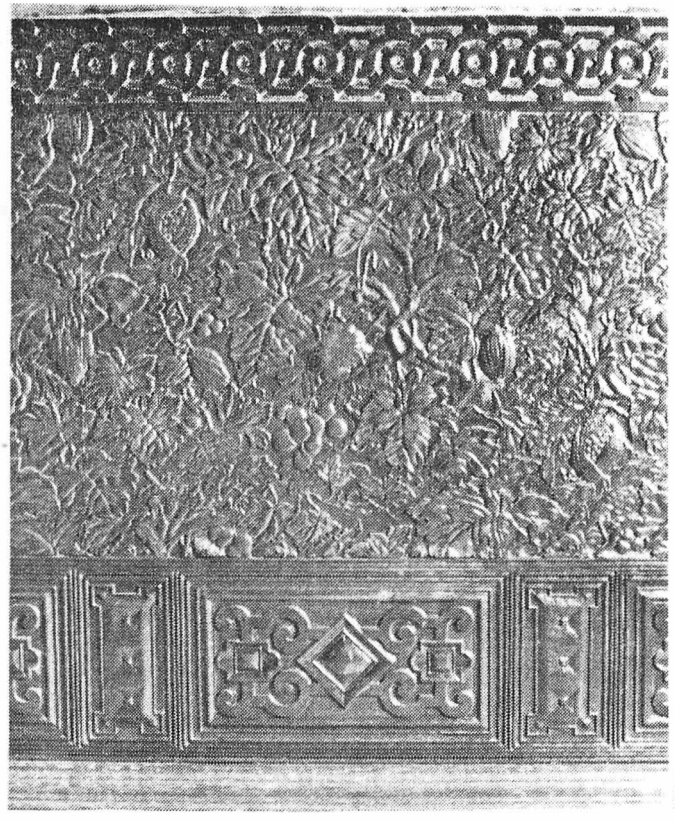
Appropriately for a dining room, the pattern chosen by the Neelys is made up of an all-over design of fruit with pomegranates and grapes in relief, all burnished with gold against a leather brown background. (Figure 164) This is bordered above by a band of Near Eastern interlaced design the relief of 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

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[327]Smith, 110.

[328]Designs 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 enframed 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.

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[329]Luther Hooper, "The Decorative Arts," The Cabinet Maker and Furnisher (London: 1 May 1882), 207, Special Collections, Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York.

[330]Lynn, Wallpaper in America, 441.

[331]R. 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)

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[332]These 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)).

[333]A 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.

[334]Eastlake, 95.

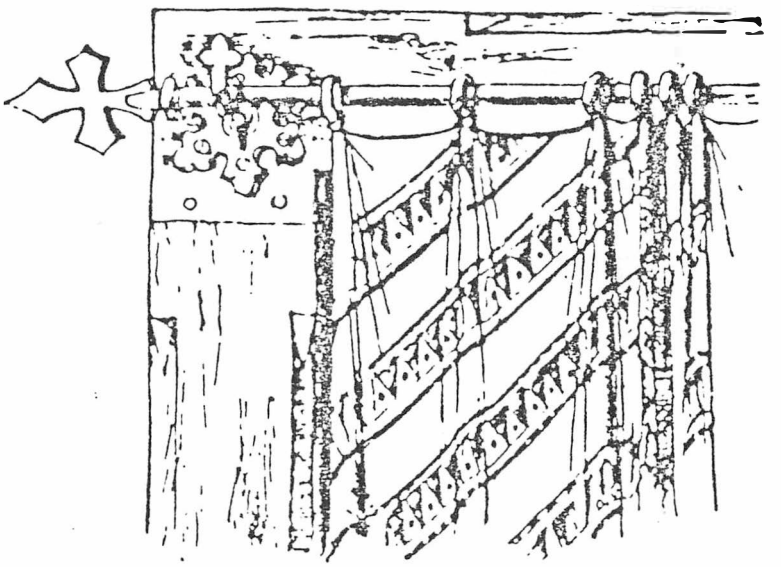


Figure 165. Engraving from Charles Locke Eastlake, Hints on Household Taste (1878). It illustrates the author's suggested reform drapery treatment (based on medieval proto-type) in which an exposed rod with ornamental ends and drapery hanging in natural folds from drapery rings are used. Courtesy Dover 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

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[335]Garrett and Garrett, 36.

[336]Ibid., 75.

[337]Ibid.

[338]Cooper, 67, 93.

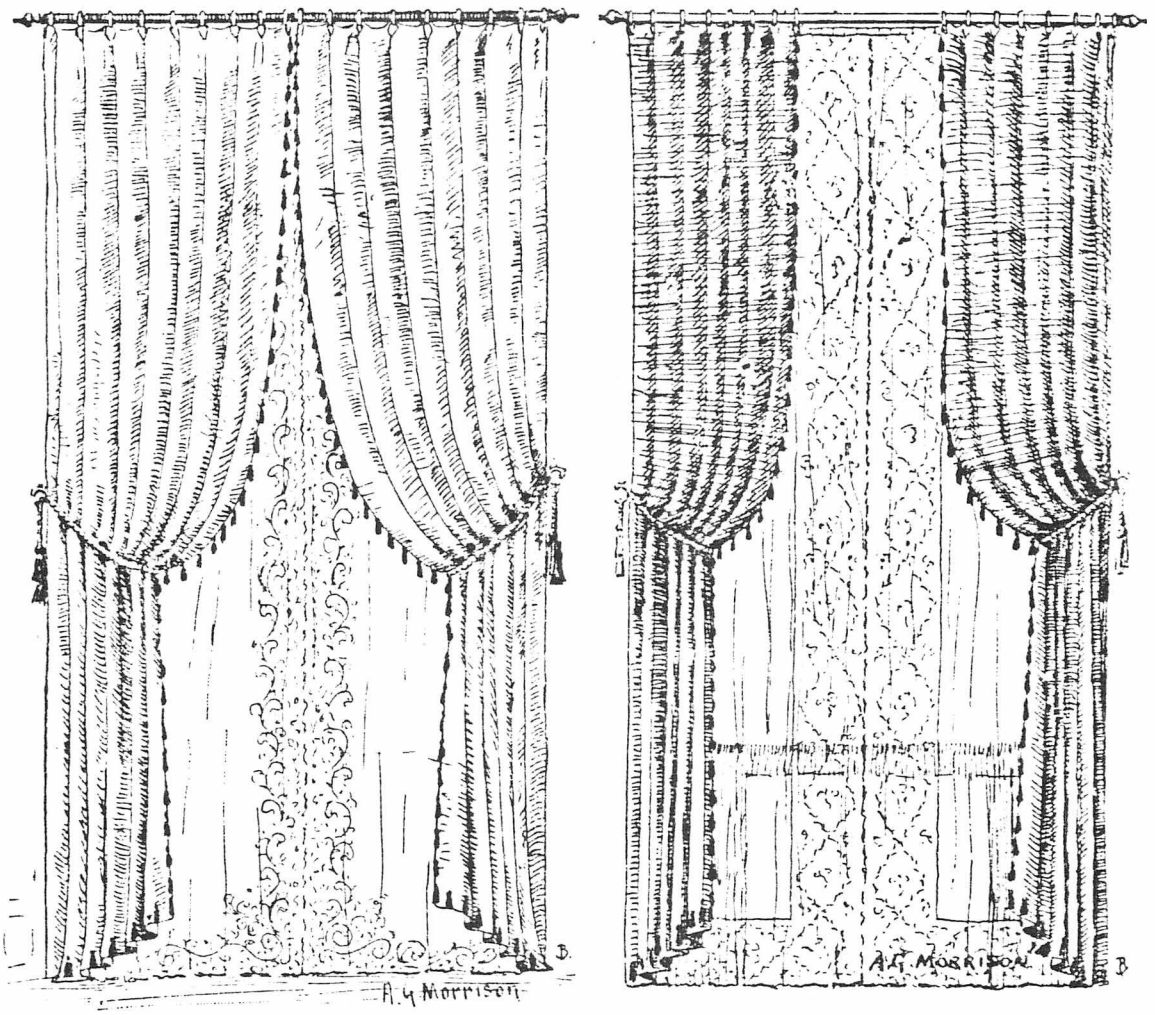


Figure 166. The Mallory-Neely parlor and music room draperies accord with these late century line drawings of suggested drapery treatment in the reform mode from A. G. Morrison, Drapery, Decoration and Architecture (1906). These include drapery panels minimally ornamented with fringes. These panels hang 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.

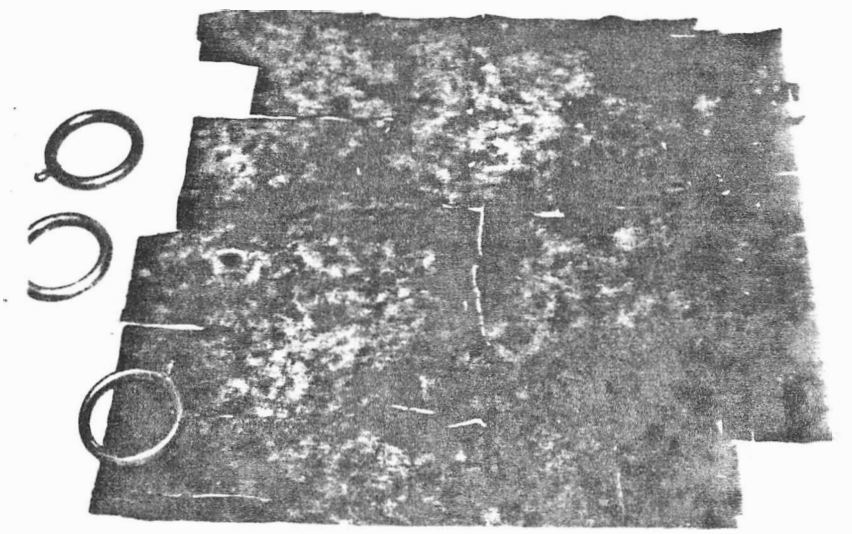


Figure 167. Document of the original c. 1890 crimson plush drapery of the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room. Also shown are several of the original drapery rings.

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

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[339]Garrett and Garrett, 75.

[340]F. A. Moreland, The Curtain Maker's Handbook (New York: Lee & Shepherd Publisher, 1889; reprint, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1979), 10.

[341]Mrs. 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.

[342]Haweiss, 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

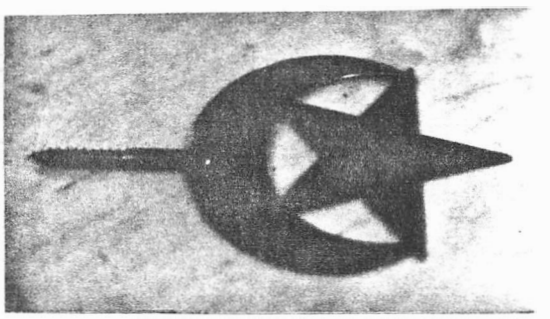
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[343]Garrett and Garrett, 36.

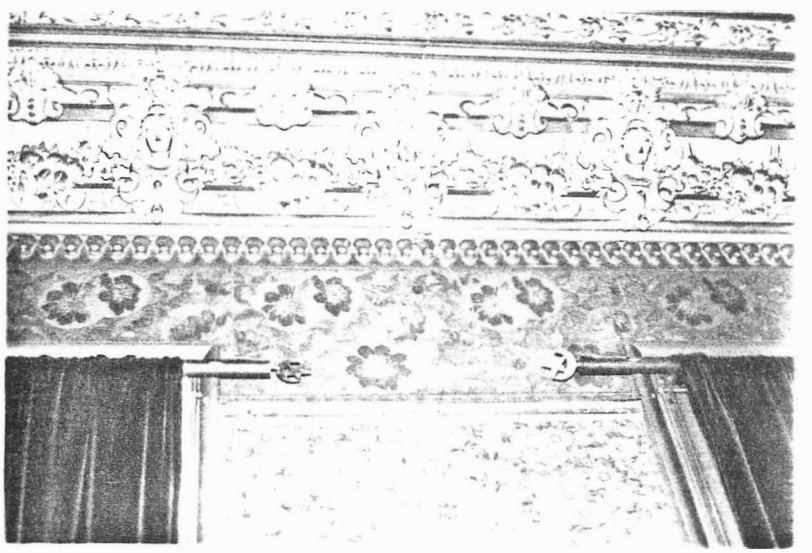
[344]Moreland, 273.

[345]Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 23 November 1884, 1.

[346]Almost all of the originals have been replaced but some panels of curtain lace do survive.

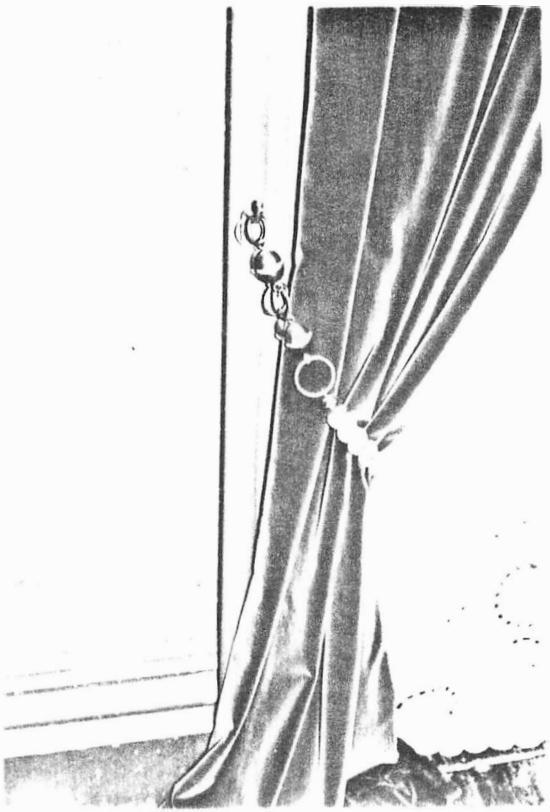


A



B

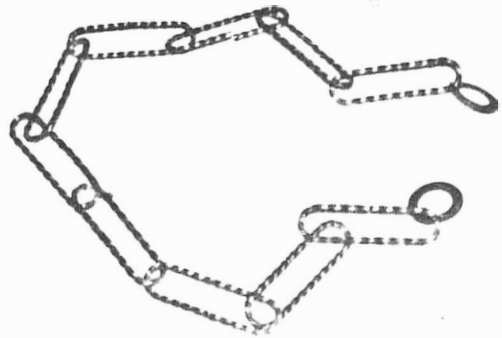
Figure 168. Drapery hardware.
A. Brass Turkish star and crescent used to ornament the drapery poles.
B. The textured metal-sheathed wooden drapery poles used in the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room.



A

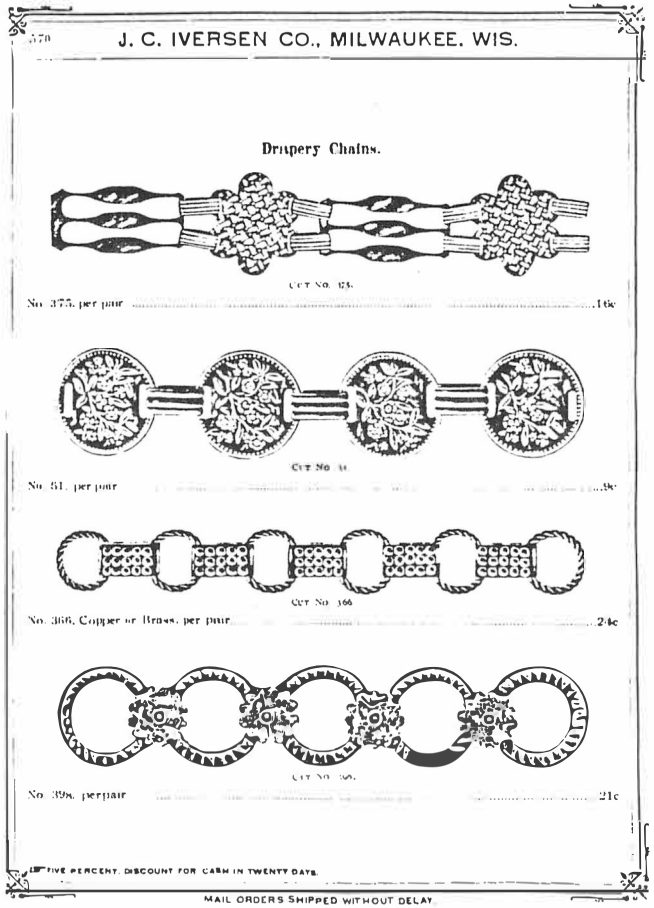


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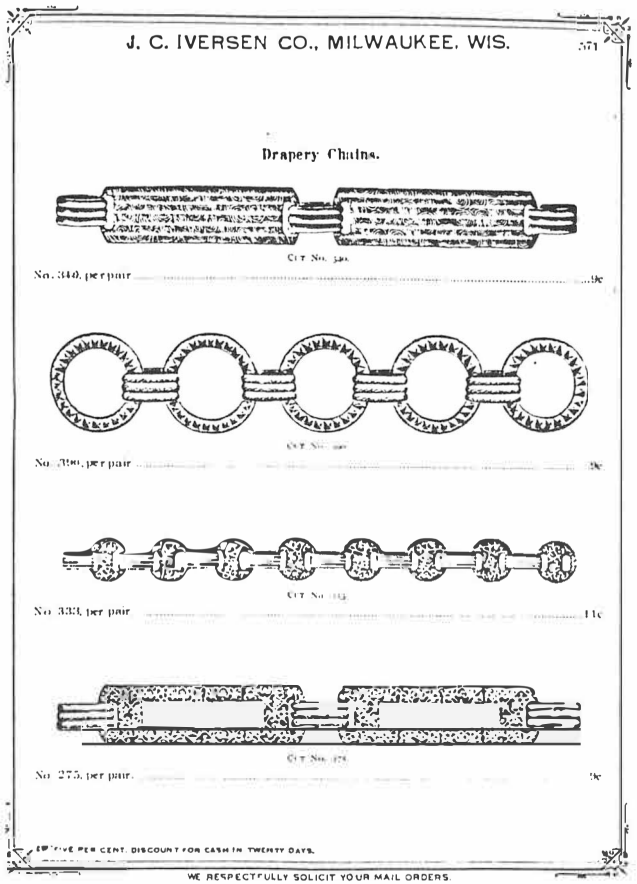


C

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.



A



B

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.

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[347]Cooper, 94.

[348]Sanitary Manufacturing Co., 32.

[349]C. 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

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[351]George C. Cole, A Complete Dictionary of Dry Goods (Chicago: W. B. Conkey, 1892), 229, Special Collections, Strong Museum, Rochester, New York.

[352]Patricia Wardle, Victorian Lace (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), 17.

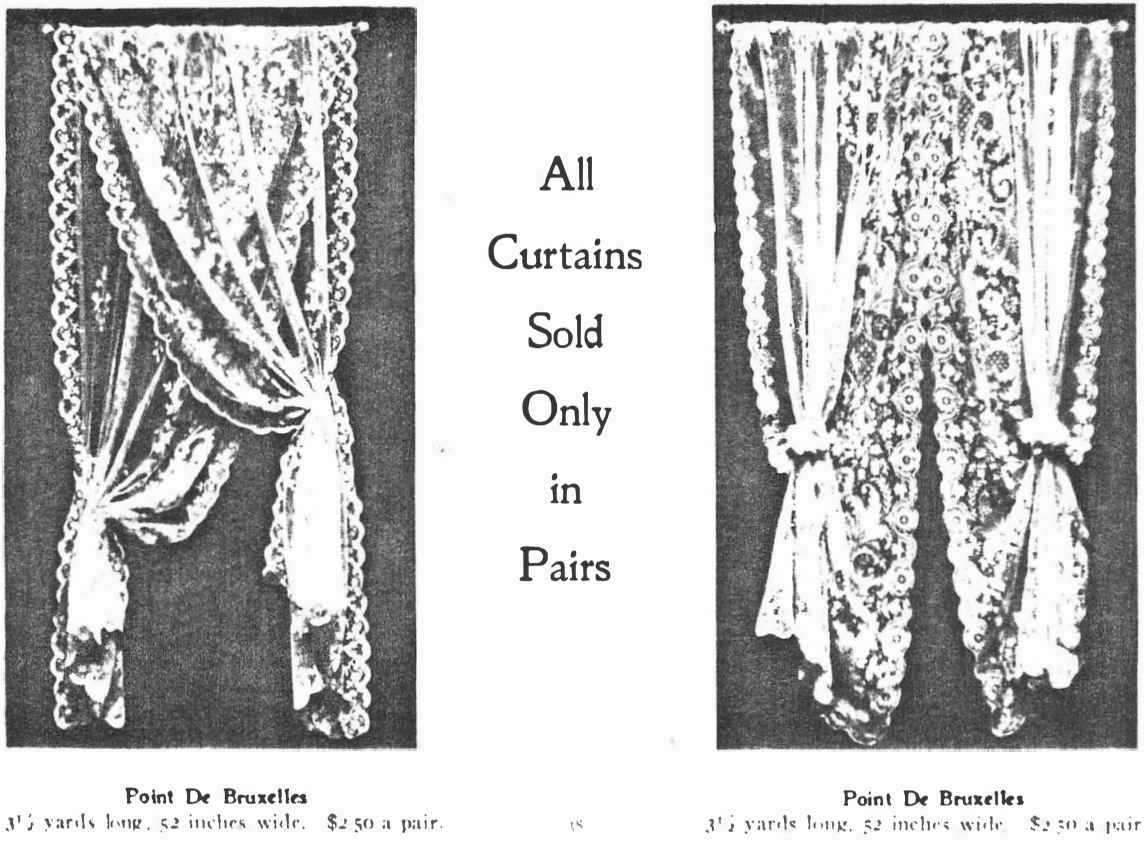


Figure 171. Advertisement for sets of lace drapery panels from the 1902 catalog of The Sanitary Manufacturing Company. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

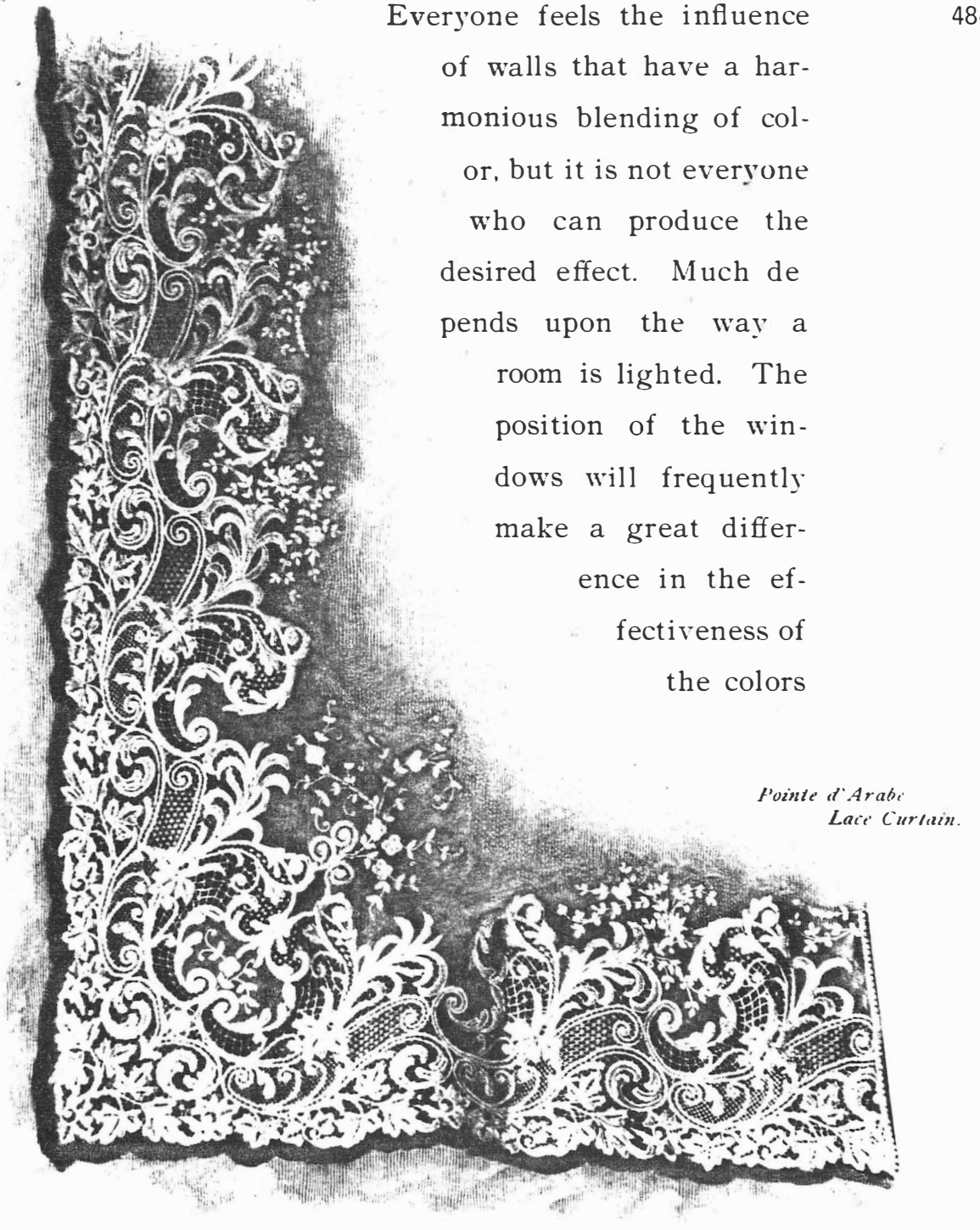
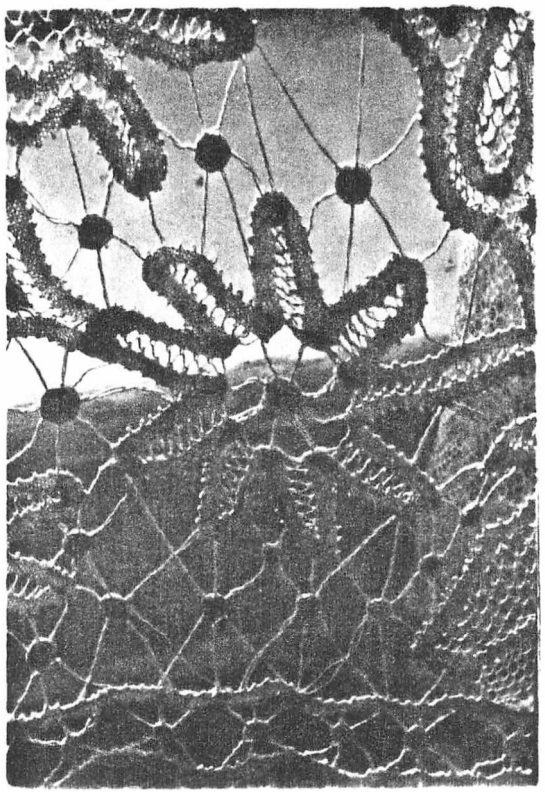
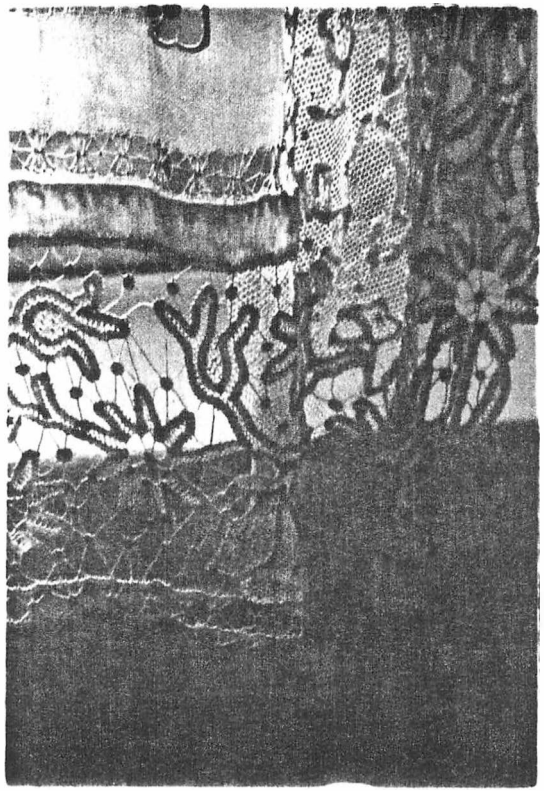


Figure 172. Mandel Brothers' 1901 catalog. Because of its handcrafted beauty lace drapery, like the panel illustrated above, was recommended for home use by the Interior Design Department of the Mandel Brothers' Store of Chicago. Courtesy Chicago Historical Society.



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]

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[353] Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 17 December 1872, 7.

[354] R. L. Polk's Memphis City Directory for 1902 (Memphis: R. L. Polk & Son, 1902), 234.

[355] Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 27 March 1887, 1.

[356] Memphis 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]

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[357]All of the original portiere fabrics were replaced with new ones in this century.

[358]See, for example, "Portieres," The Old House Journal September 1977), 103-104.

[359]Our Homes and How to Beautify Them, 43.

[360]Harrison, 161.

[361]Moreland, 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

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[362]Harrison, 160.

[363]Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 23 November 1884, 1.

[364]Decorator and Furnisher, 19, No. 4 (January 1891), 126, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

[365]Brunner 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 sandel 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)

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[366]Smith, 117.

[367]John A. Ganger Company Catalog No. 50, 38.

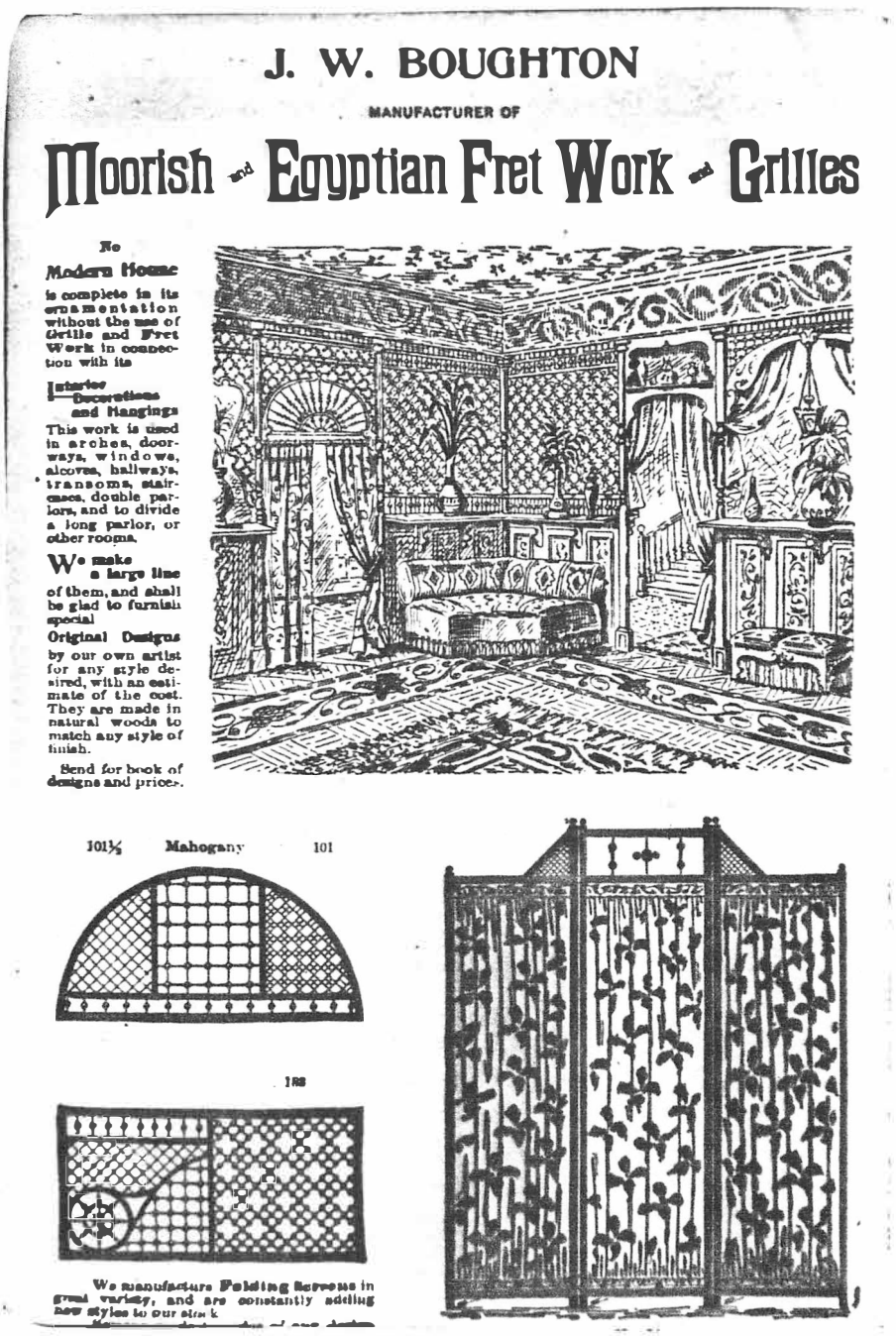
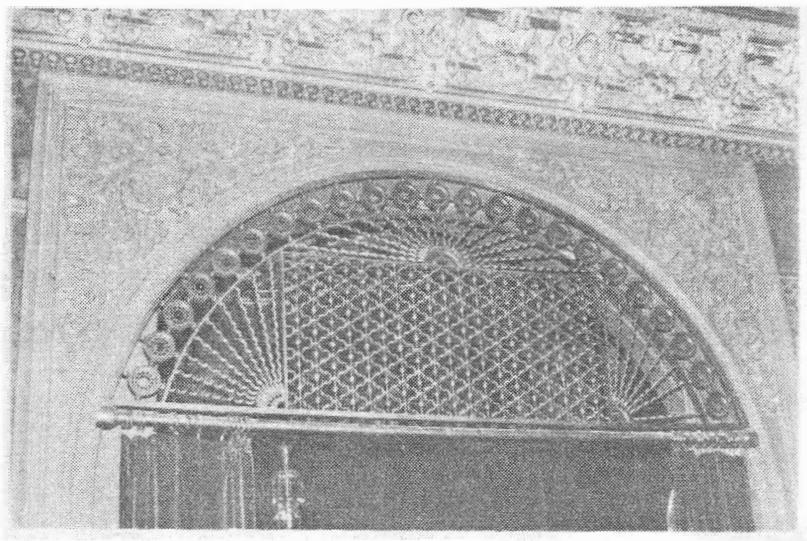
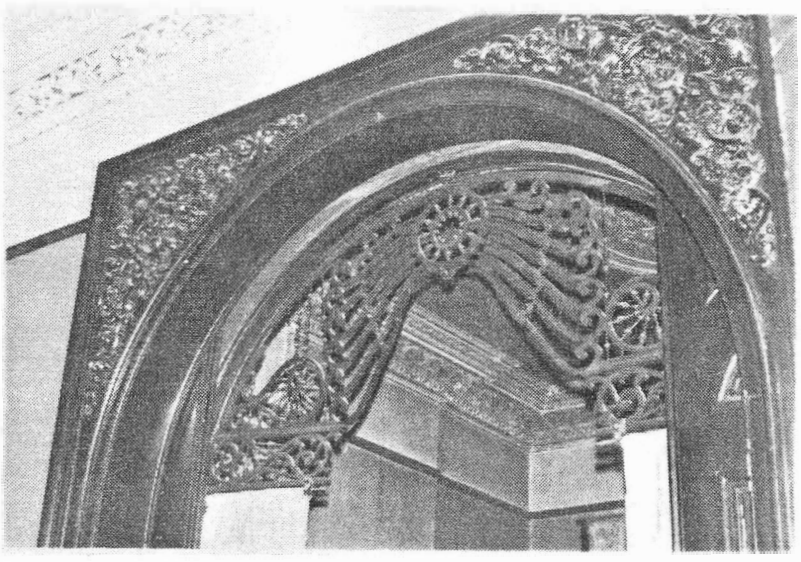


Figure 174. A page from the catalog of the 1893 J. W. Boughton Company emphasizes the Eastern and exotic nature of transom grilles. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.



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.

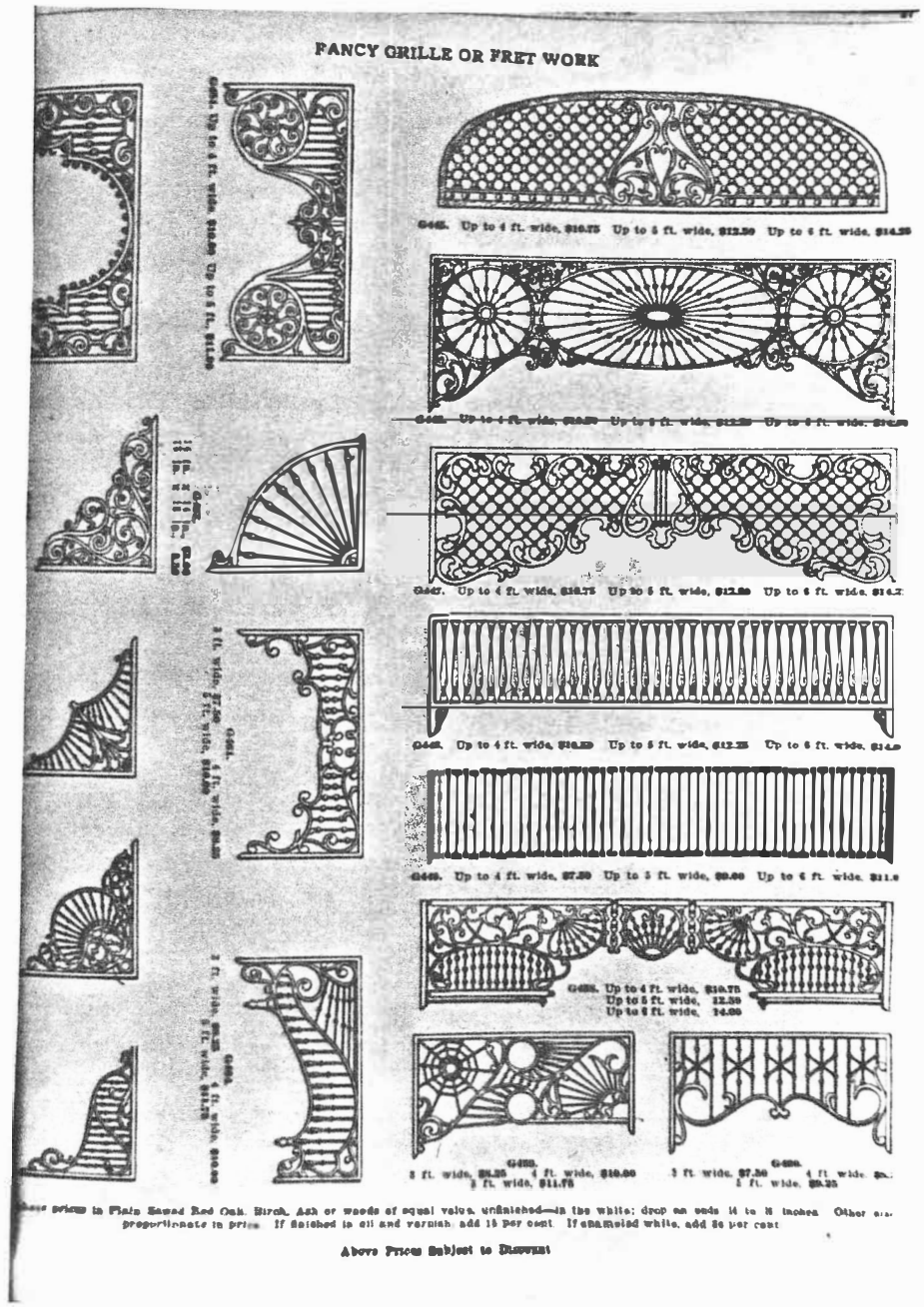
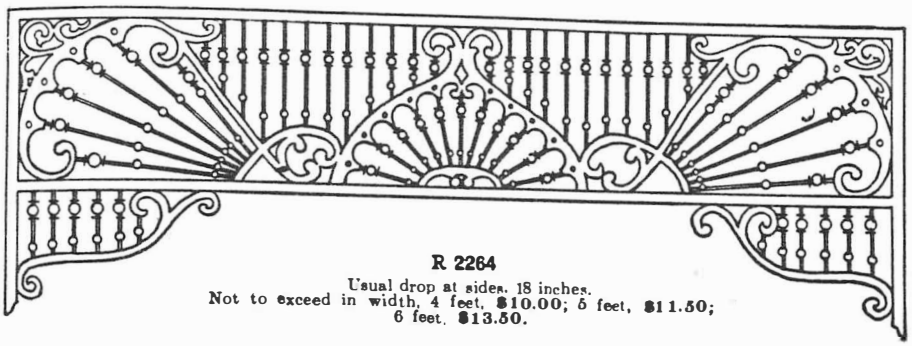


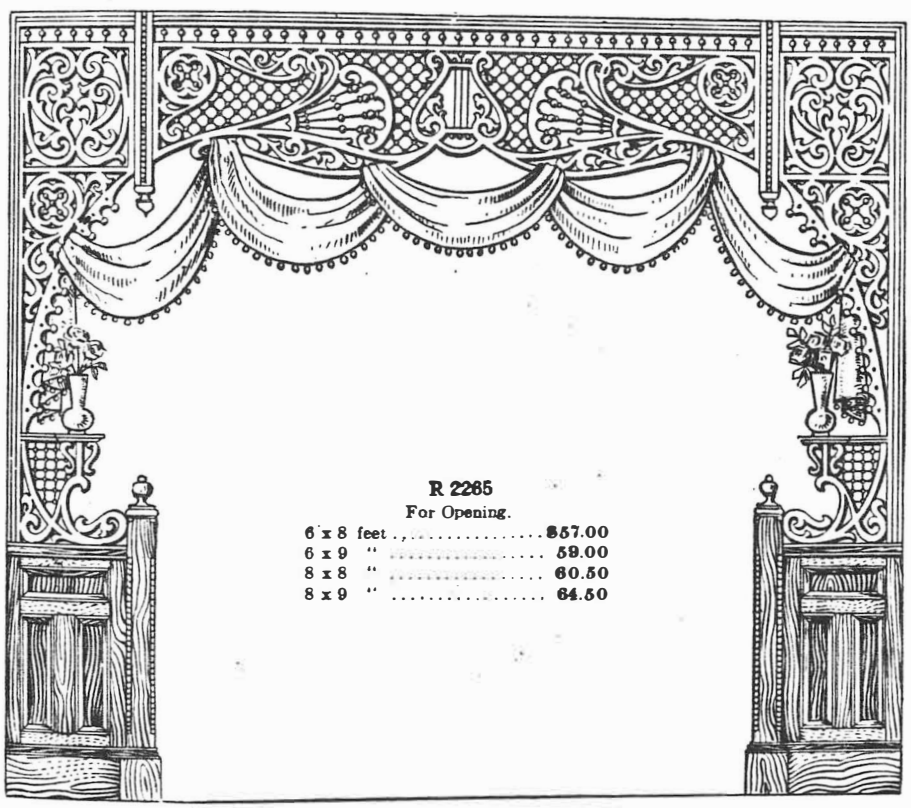
Figure 176. Characteristic page from the 1893 Boughton Company catalog showing a wide assortment of decorative transom grilles. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

GRILLES.



R 2264

Usual drop at sides, 18 inches.
Not to exceed in width, 4 feet, $10.00; 5 feet, $11.50; 6 feet, $13.50.



R 2265

For Opening.

6 x 8 feet	$57.00
6 x 9 "	59.00
8 x 8 "	60.50
8 x 9 "	64.50

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

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[368]J. 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

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[369]Flaherty, "Eastlake," 267.

[370]Ibid.

[371]Some Artistic Fire-Places and Their Surroundings, Smith and Anthony Stove Company, Boston 1885, n.p. [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

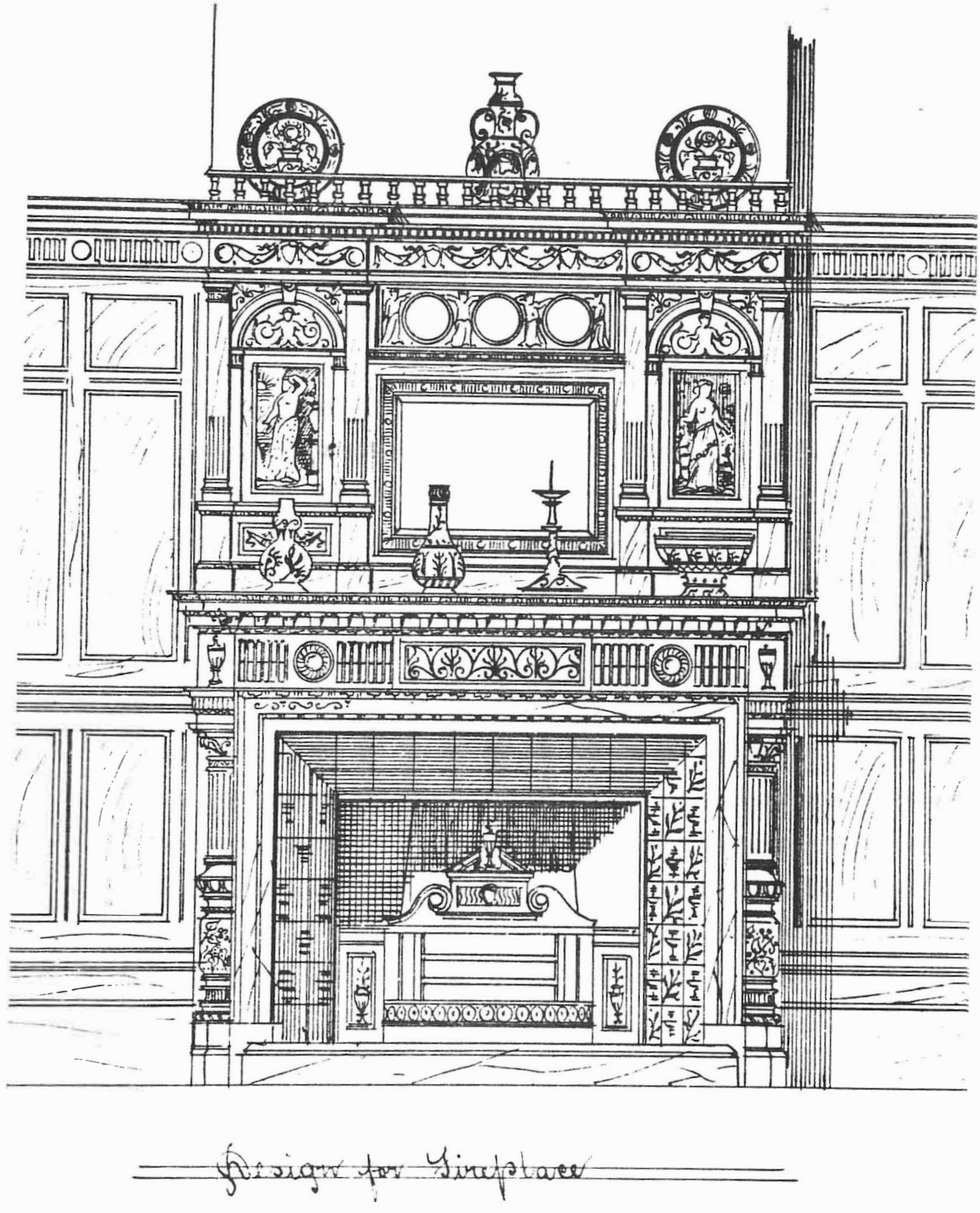


Figure 179. Characteristic English Aesthetic fireplace with carved wooden mantel, art tiles, and artistic metal work as illustrated in Bernard Smith, Designs and Sketches for Furniture in the Neo-Jacobean and Other Styles (1876). Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.

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

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[372]Decorator and Furnisher, 8, No. 2 (May 1886), 187, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

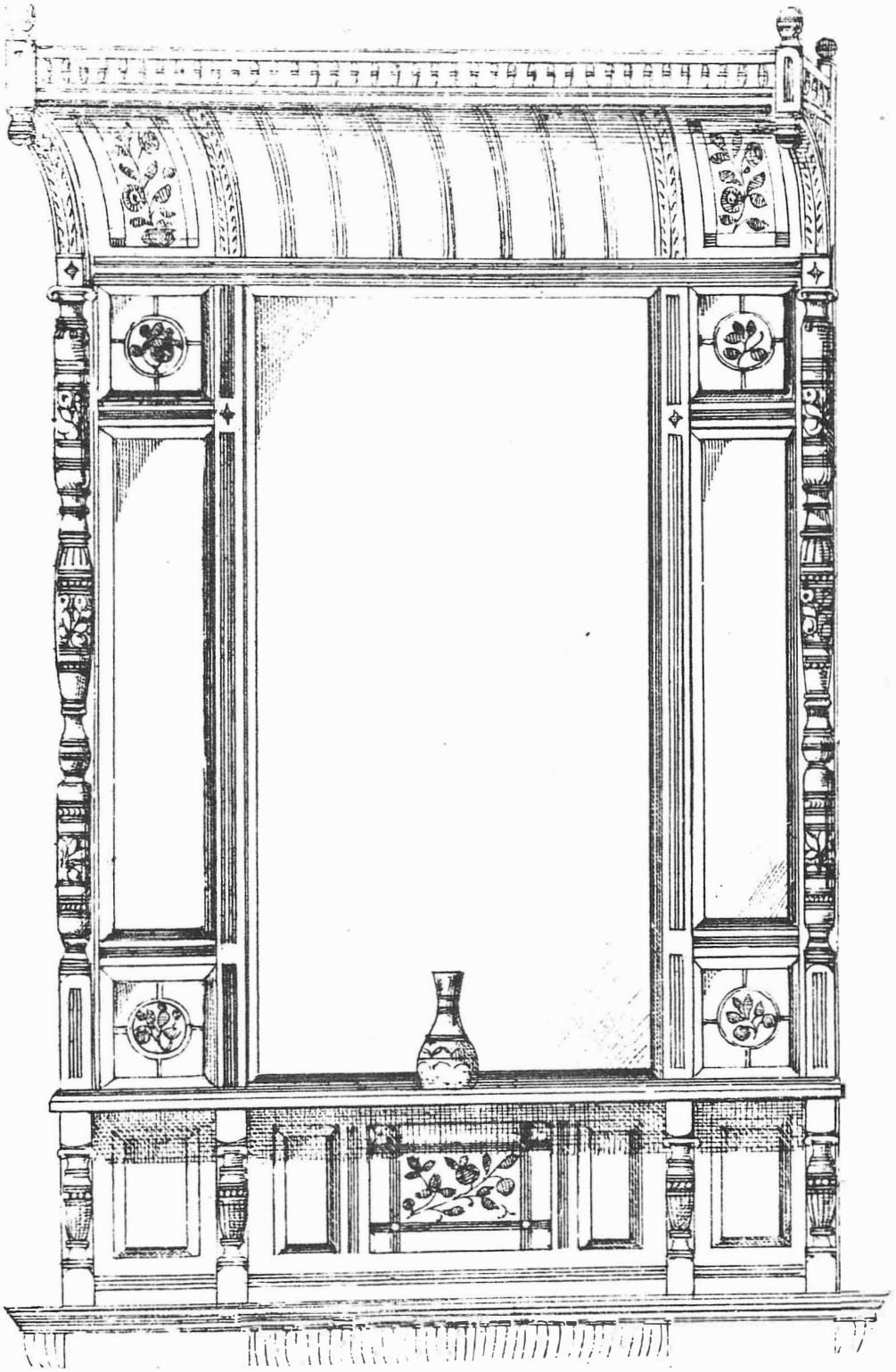
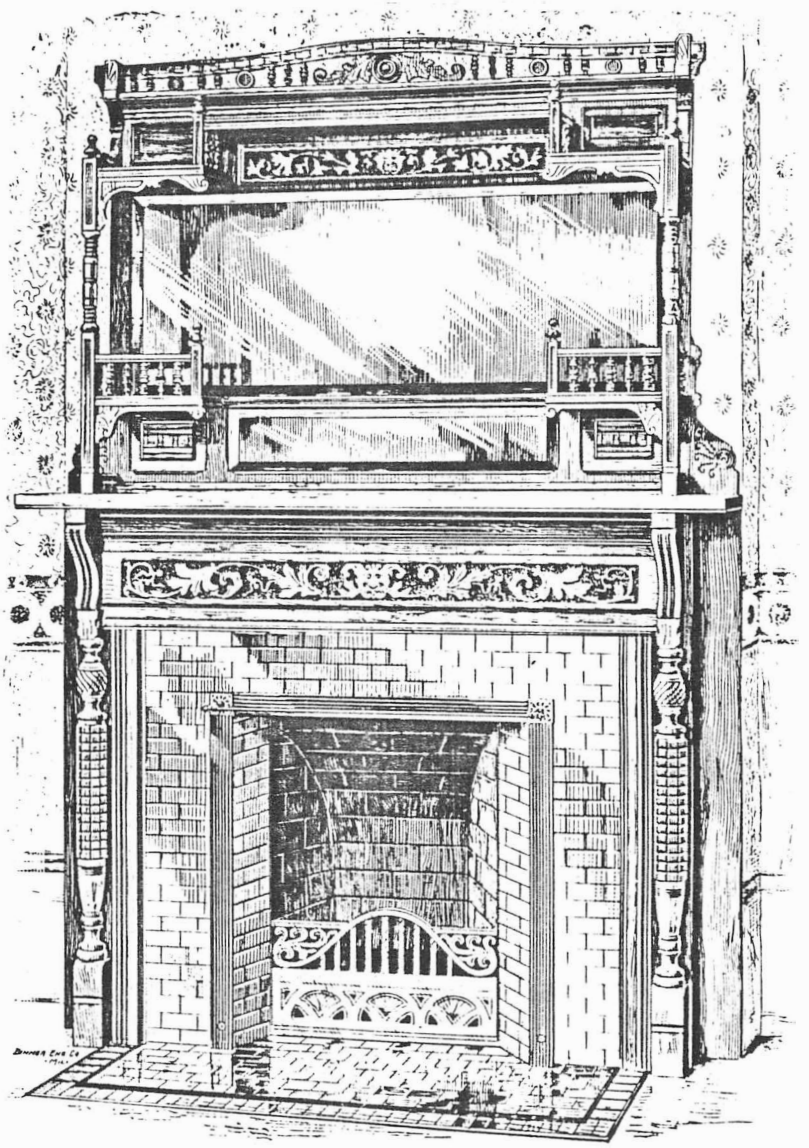


Figure 180. Sketch for an English etagere overmantel by A. Jonquet from Original Sketches for Art Furniture (1879). Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.



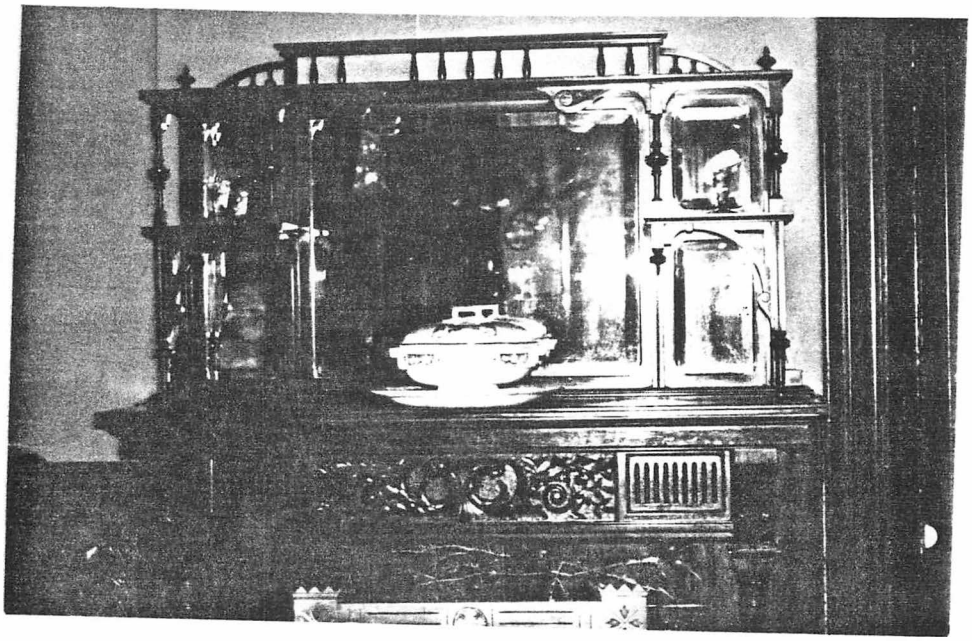
MANTEL No. 0.
As shown.....$93 50.
With Club House Grate, 90 00.

Height, 7 ft 2 in.
Width, 5 ft
Shelf, 12 in

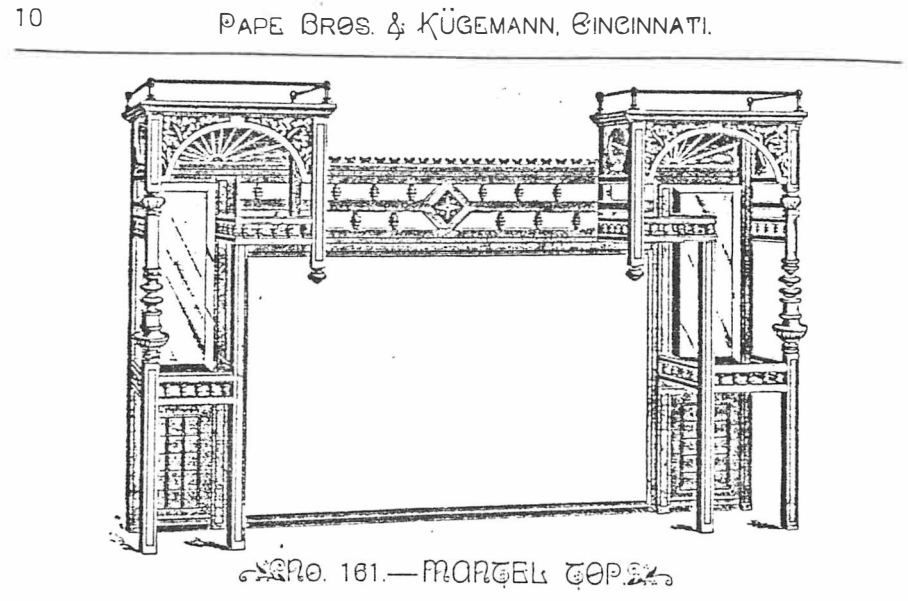
1 French Bevel Plate, 18 x 48 in.
1 " " " 6 x 30 in.

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



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]

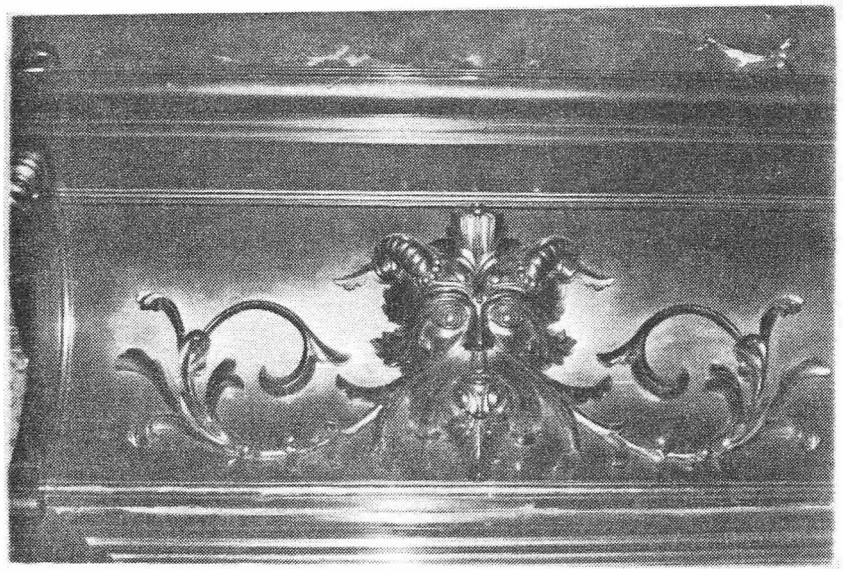
The two Neely parlor etagere mantels are somewhat similar to one shown in vivid color in the Illustrated Catalog of the Bradley & Currier Company Limited (1885).[375] (Figure 186) Surviving documents reveal that during the same time period Memphian Henry Montgomery personally ordered doors, millwork for his staircase, and mantels

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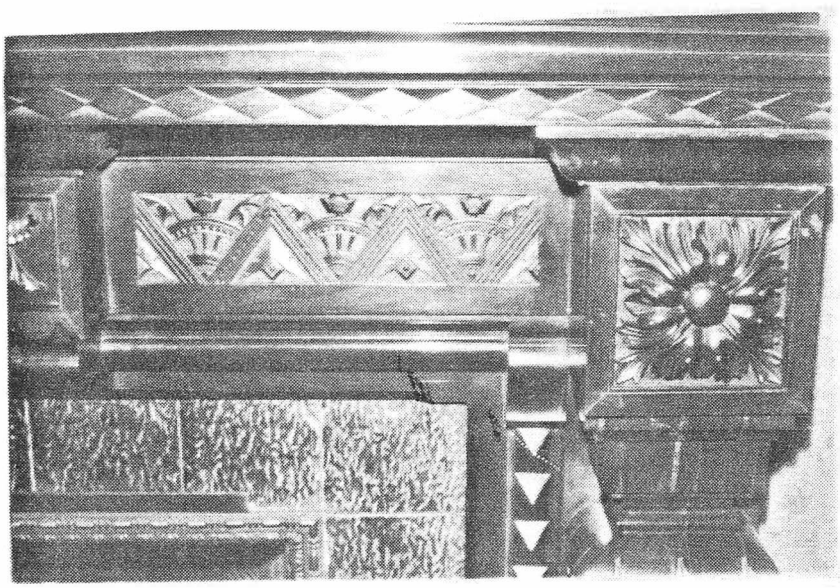
[373]Flaherty, "Eastlake," 257.

[374]Artistic Homes or How to Furnish with Taste, 61.

[375]Bradley & Currier, New York, Illustrated Catalogue of Doors, Windows, etc., New York: 1877, 17 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.

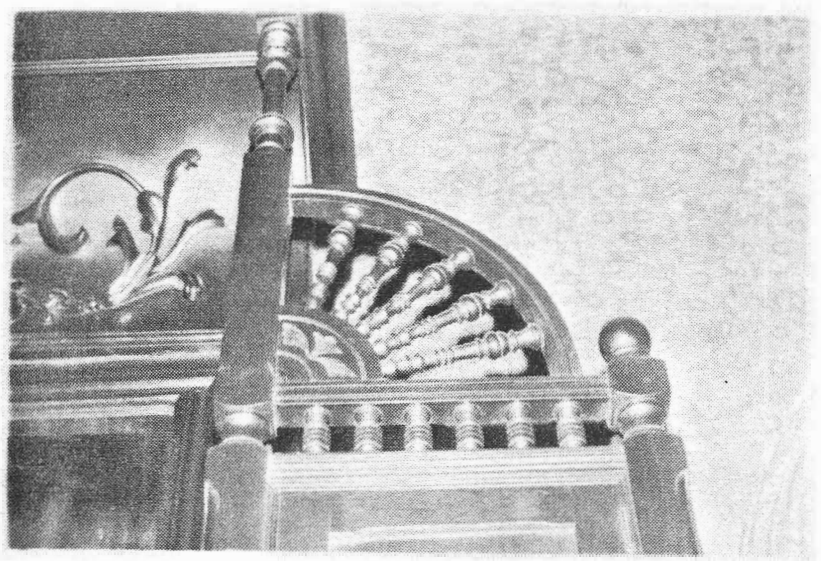


A

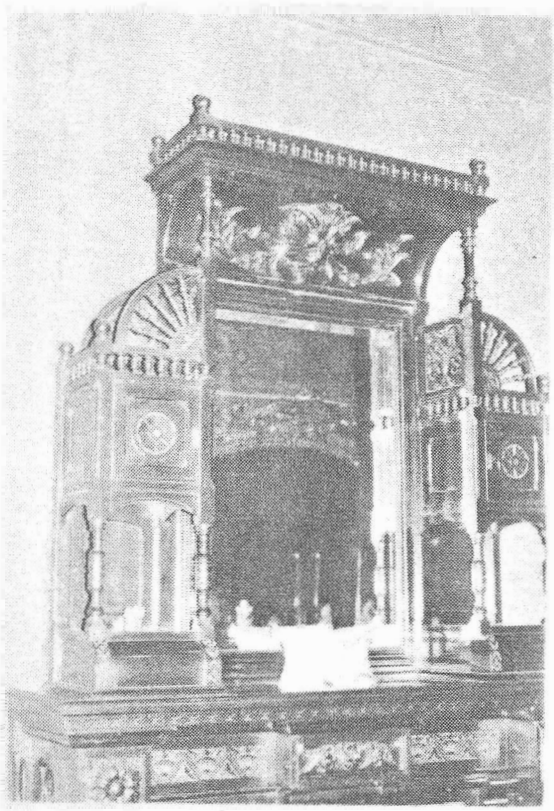


B

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.

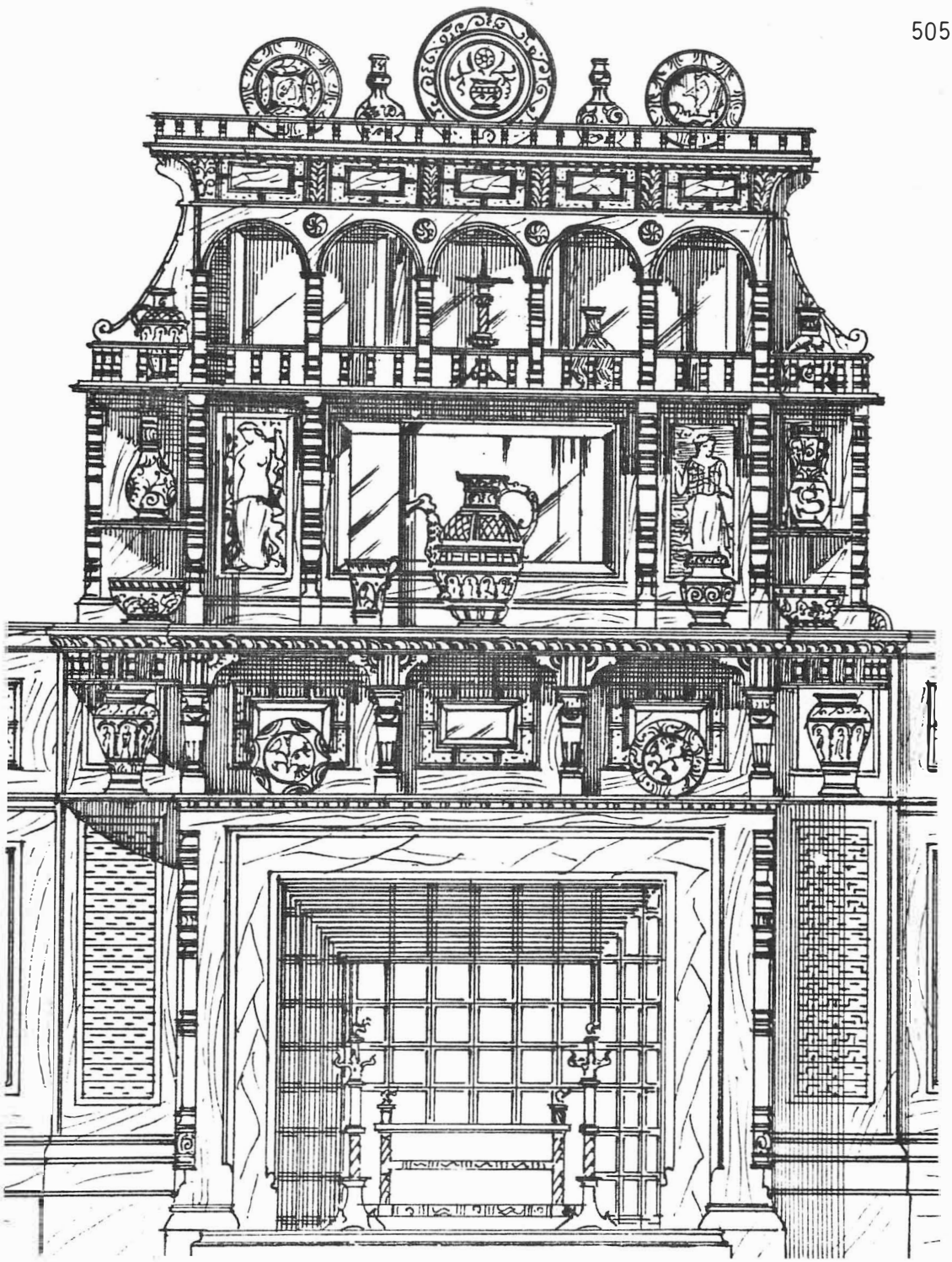


Figure 185. The Aesthetic mantel pieces as an interior focal point and miniature museum of quality designed objects as shown in Smith, Designs and Sketches for Furniture in the Neo-Jacobean and Other Styles (1876). Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.

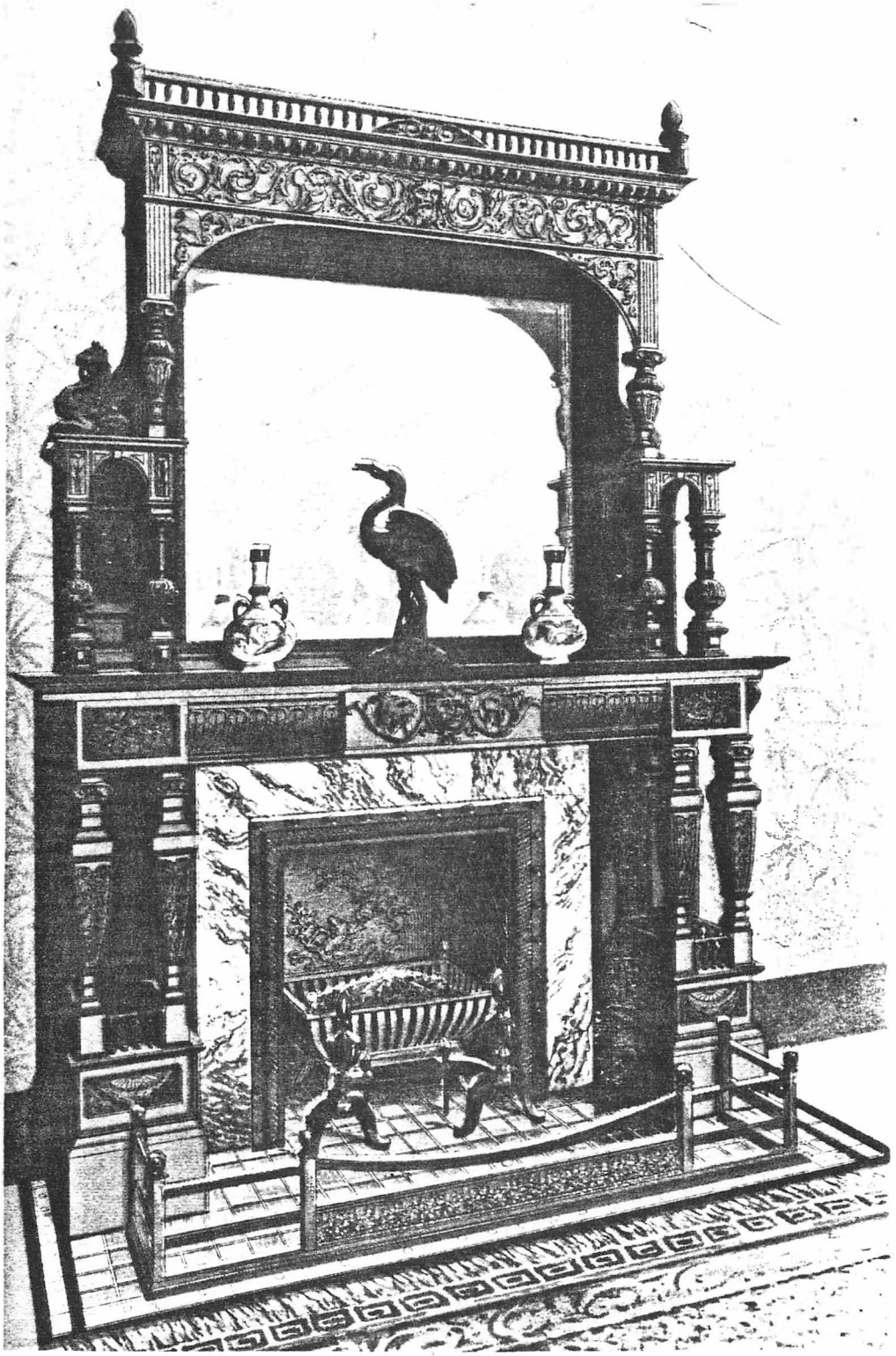


Figure 186. Page from the 1888 catalog of the Bradley and Currier Company of New York. Mantels such as the one illustrated above come closest to being like the Mallory-Neely parlor etagere mantels in quality, similarity of design, construction, and carving. Courtesy Avery Library, Columbia University.

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

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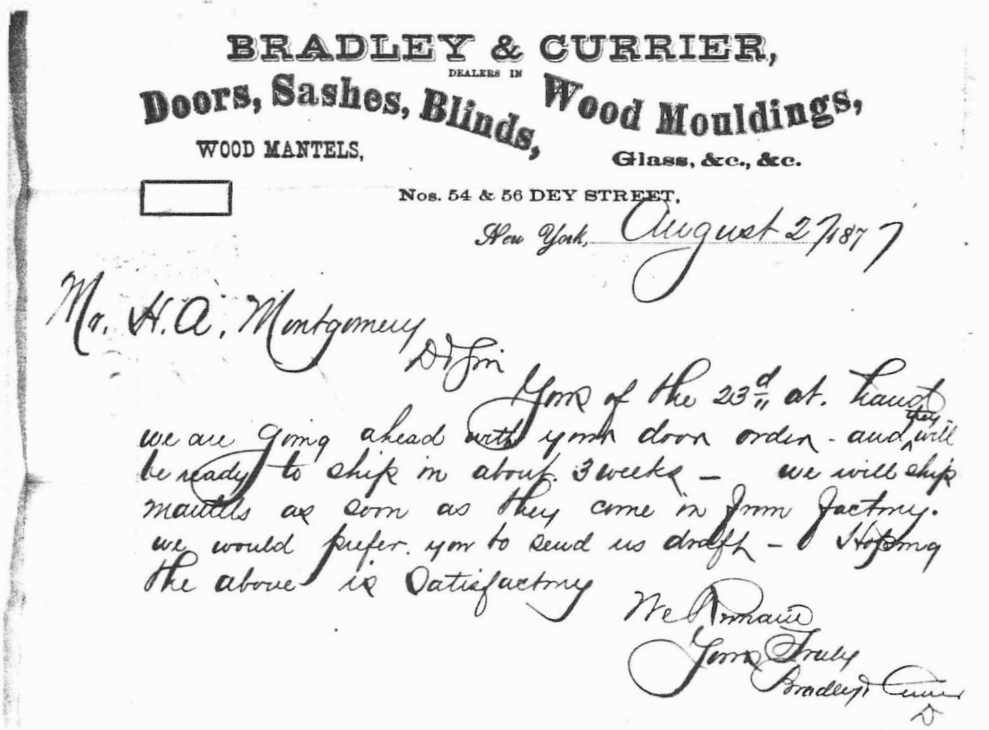
[376]Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 110.

[377]E. C. Hussey, Home Building (1876; reprint, Victorian Home Building, A Transcontinental View, Watkins Glen, New York: The American Life Foundation, 1976), 87.

[378]Oakley, 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.

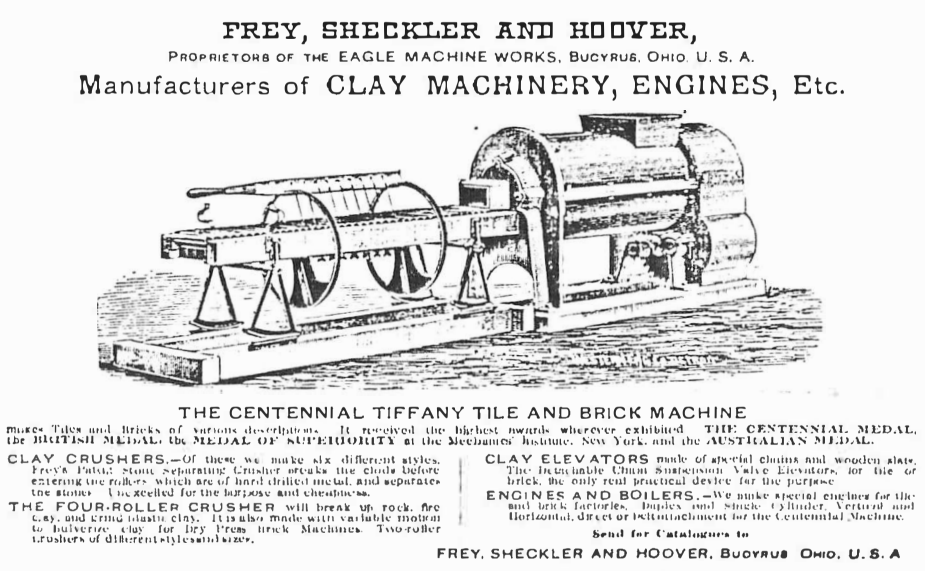
Though many old production methods were resurrected at this time, eventually technology transformed the tile industry like all others. Simple handicrafted production gave way to large commercial potteries which placed emphasis on mass production. Mechanical methods of all types were developed to replicate 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]

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[379]Garrett and Garrett, 45.

[380]Julian Barnard, Victorian Ceramic Tiles (London Studio Vista, 1972), 11.

[381]Charles 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.



A

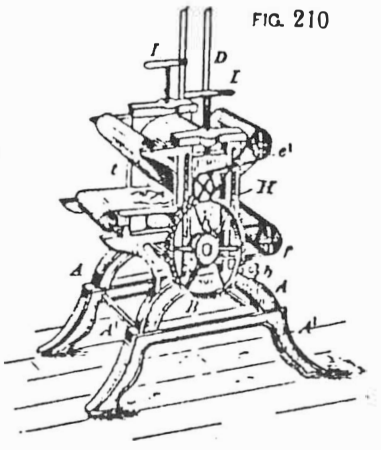
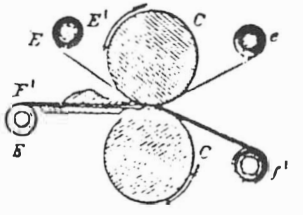


FIG. 211



B

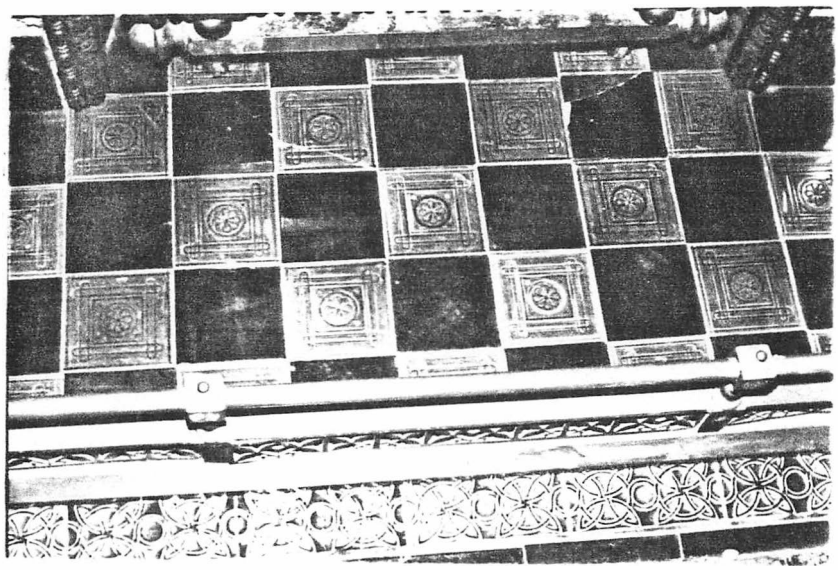
Figure 188. Mechanized tile production machinery. Courtesy Library of New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown.
A. An advertisement from Charles Davis, A Practical Treatise on the Manufacture of Bricks, Tiles, Terracotta (1884).
B. Engraving from the text of the same book.

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.

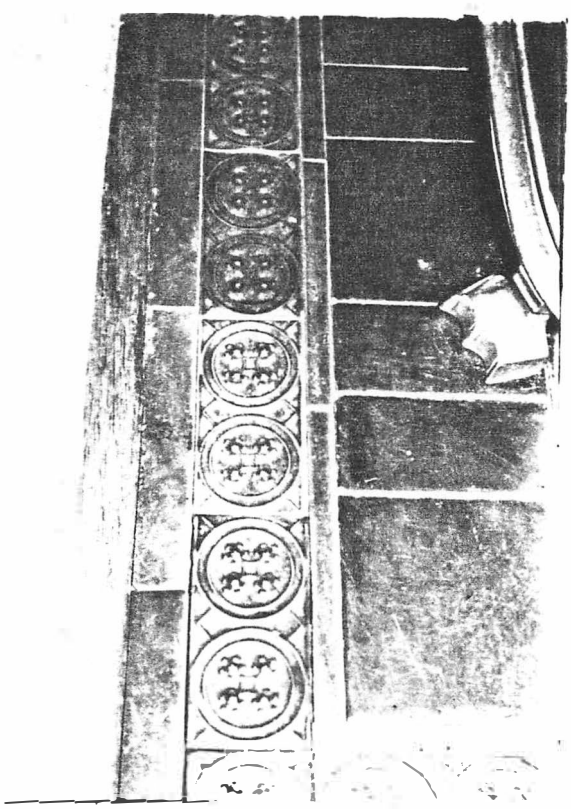
The facing of the sitting room mantel is covered with brilliant yellow tiles ornamented with all-over patterns of tiny leaves. (Figure 190) The hearth is set with yellow tiles decorated with fanciful shells arranged in a scale pattern. These are outlined with a brownish-yellow tile border with a running 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

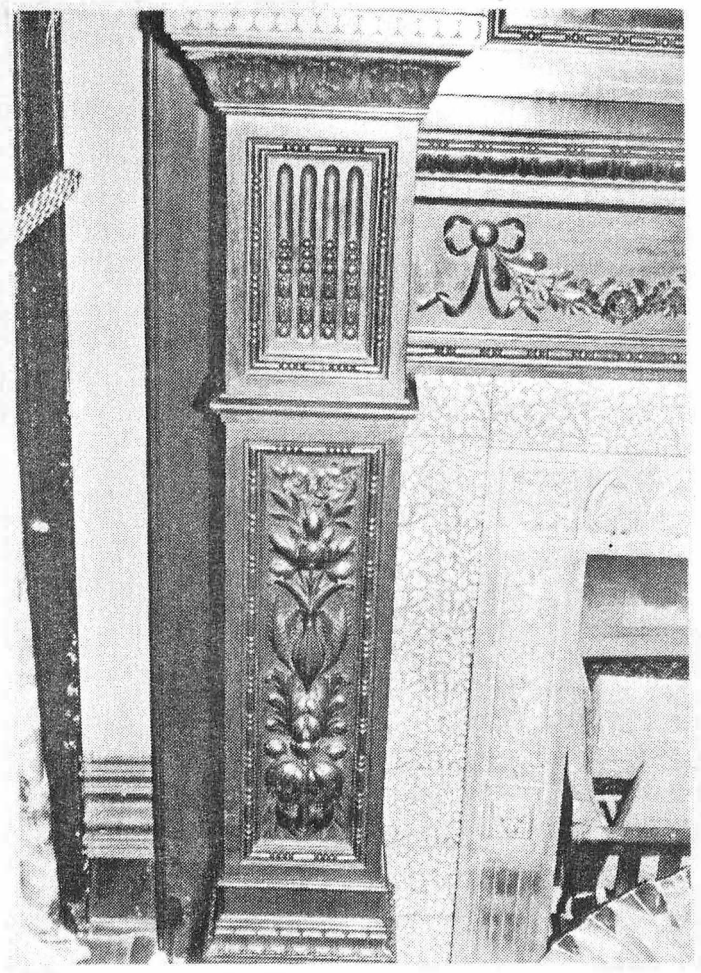


B

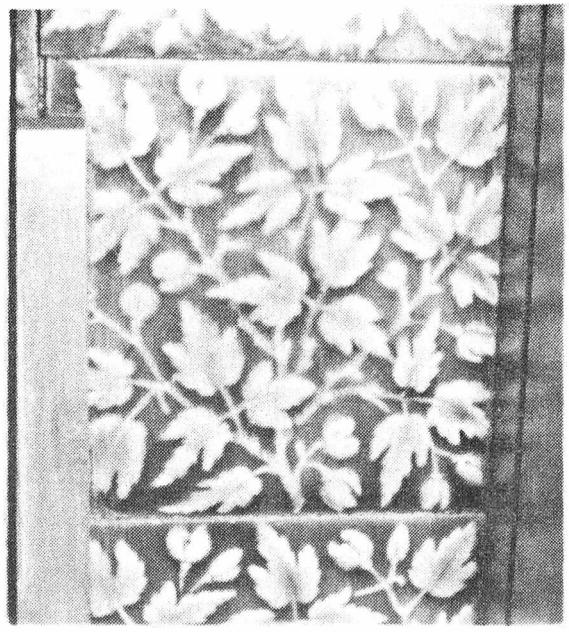
Figure 189. Hearth tiles.

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.

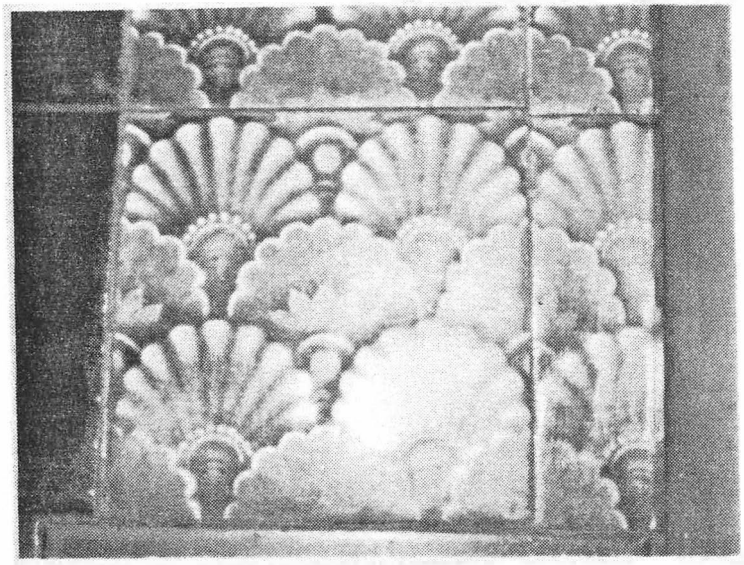


A

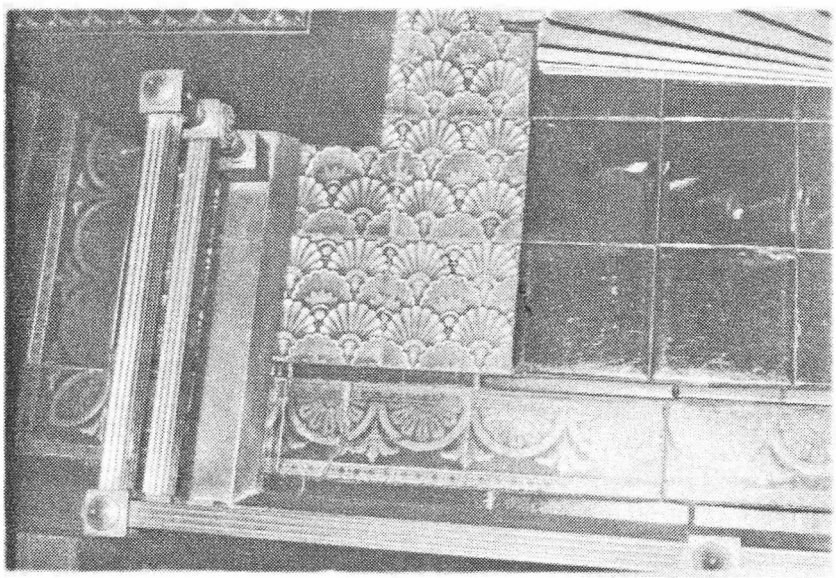


B

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.

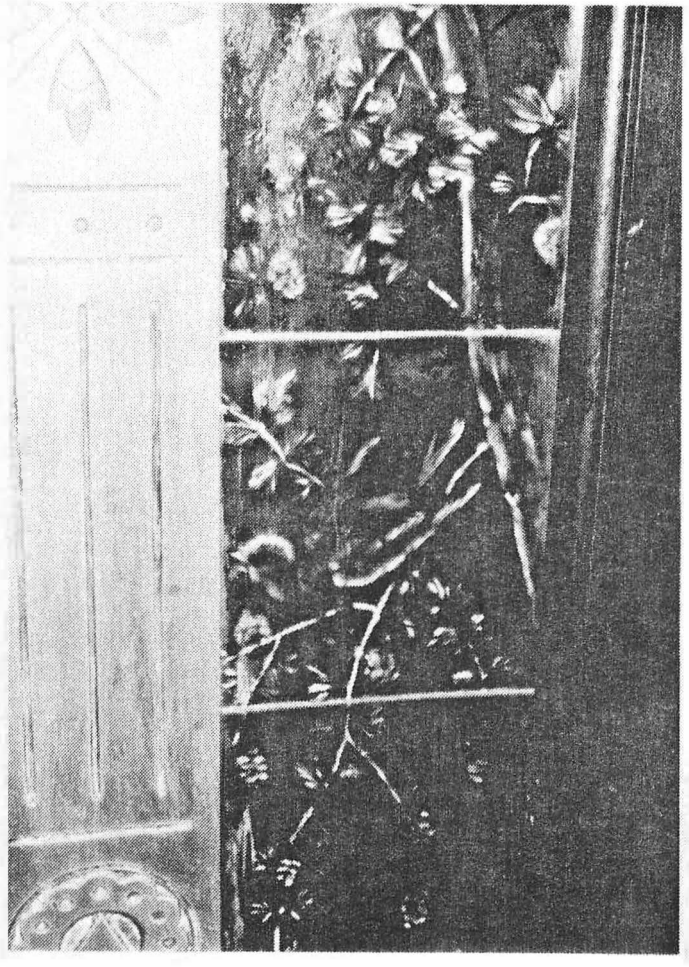


A



B

Figure 191. Sitting room hearth.
A. Shell patterned tiles.
B. Detail of the brownish yellow tiles of the Mallory-Neely sitting room hearth.





A

B

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.

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

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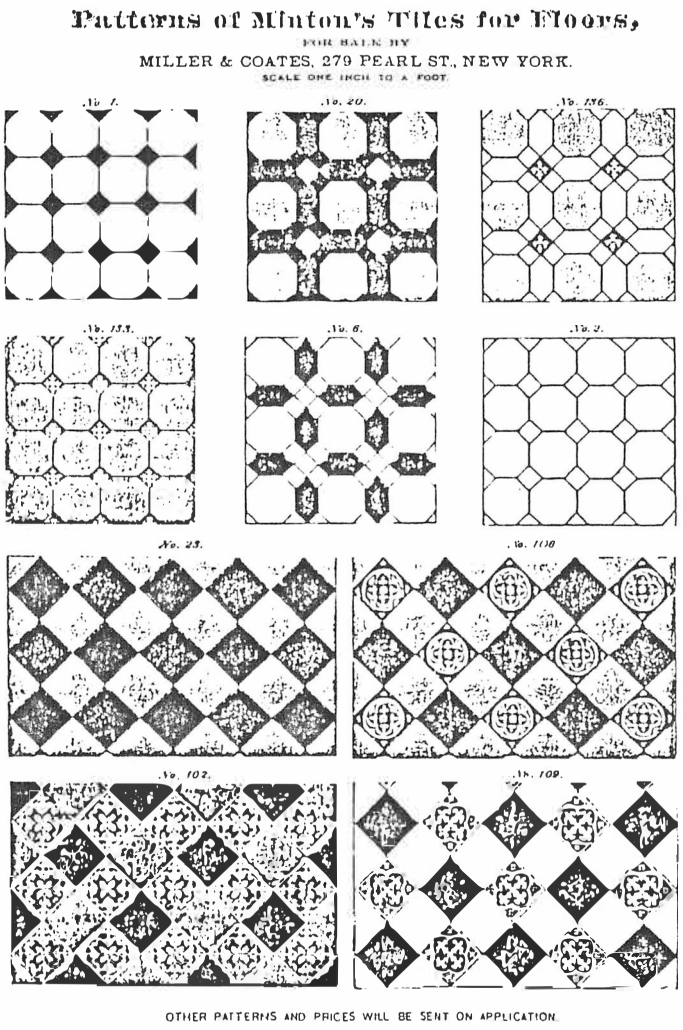
[382]Davis, 406.

[383]Frelinghuysen, 231.

[384]G. B. Croff, Progressive American Architecture (New York: Orange Judd & Co., 1875), n.p., Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia.

[385]Edward Atlee Barber, Pottery and Porcelain of the United States of America, 2d ed. (New York: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1901), 375.

[386]Barnard, 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 US IN THE

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 used in Panels of Brick and Stone

FOR EXTERIOR DECORATION.

Garnkirk 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.

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

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[387]R. L. Polk's Memphis City Directory for 1892 (Memphis: R. L. Polk Co., 1892), 213.

[388]Davis, 428.

[389]David 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

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[390]Garrett and Garrett, 54.

[391]Some Artistic Fireplaces and Their Surroundings, 4.

[392]Murdock Parlor Grate Company, Series 10 Catalogue of Brass Goods, Boston: 1890, 37 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

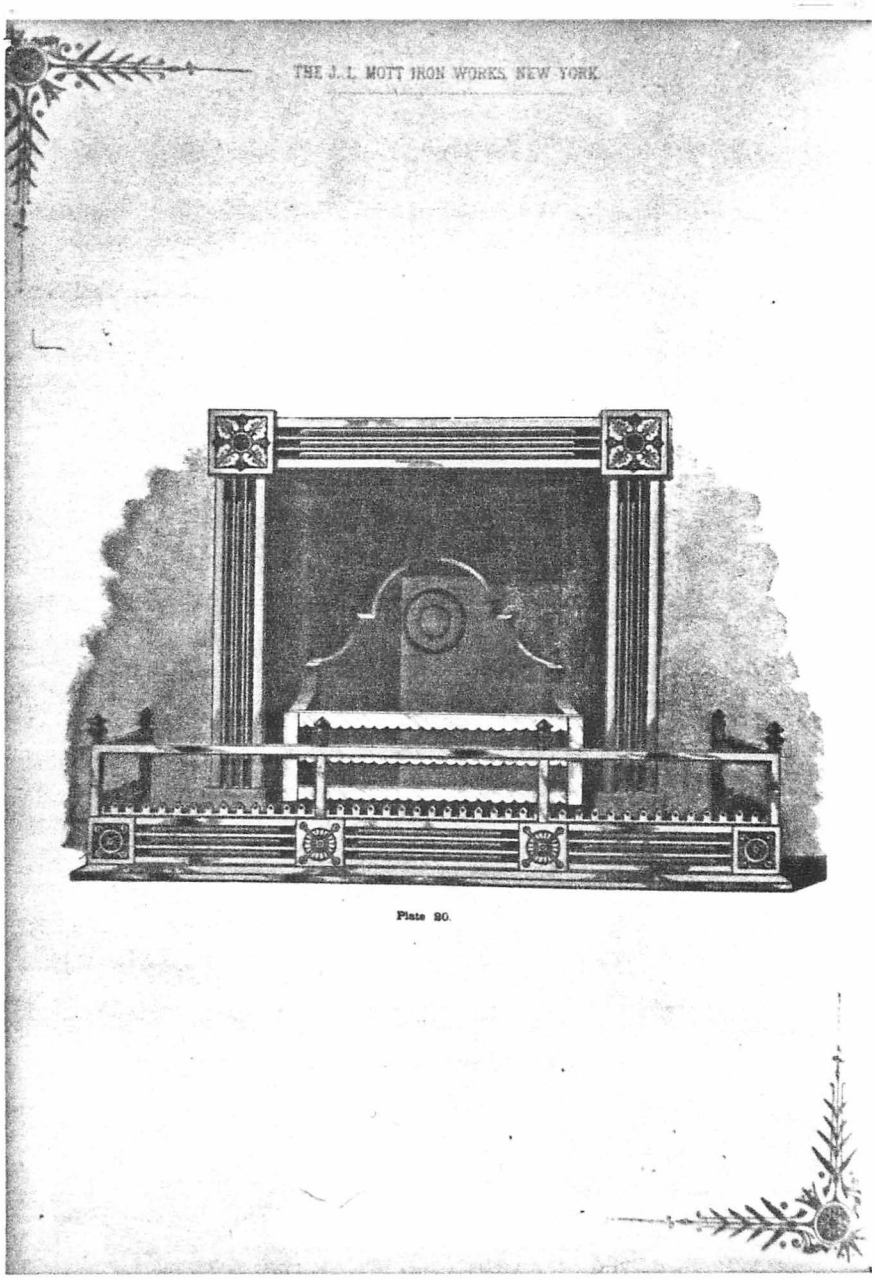
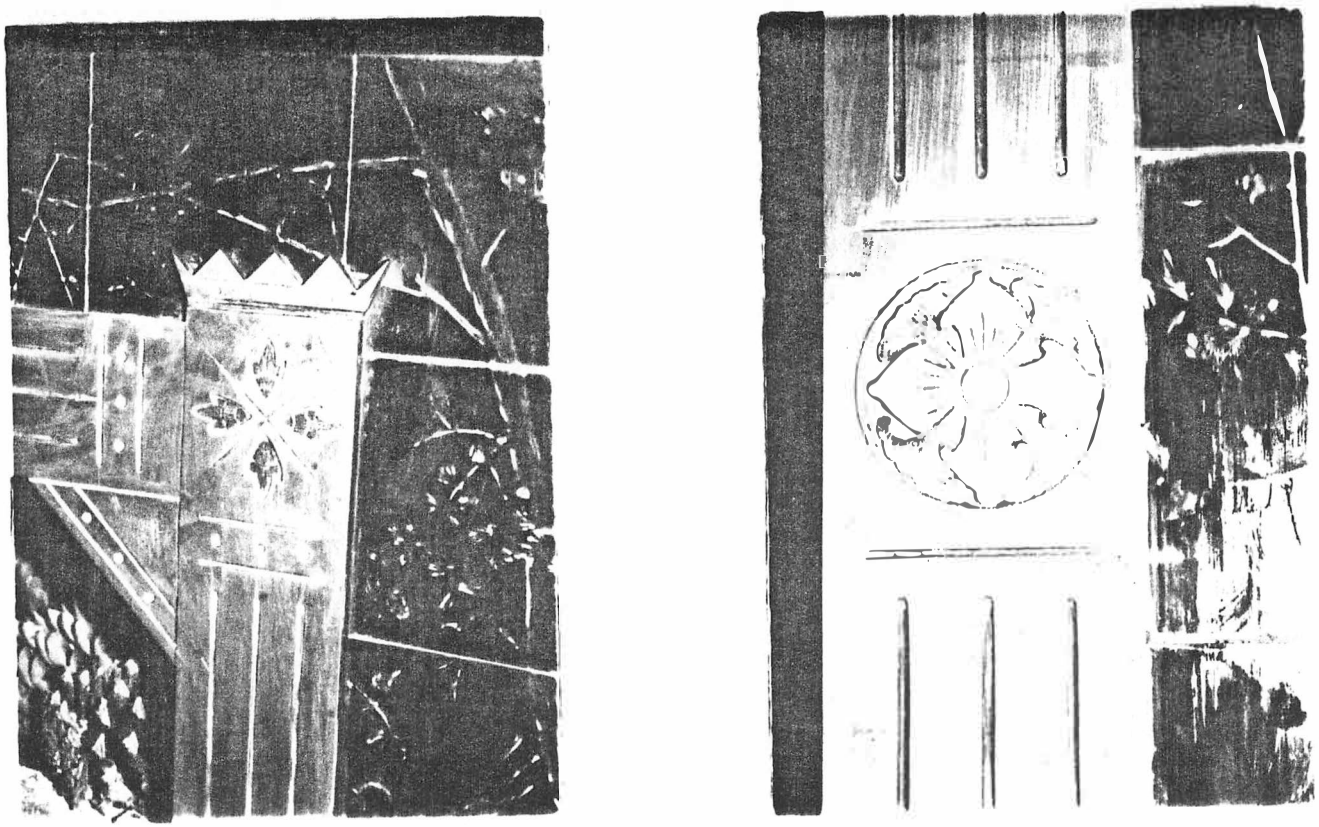


Figure 195. Page from the 1882 catalog of the J. L. Mott Ironworks Company of New York showing a coordinated set of brass fireplace fittings. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.



A B

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)

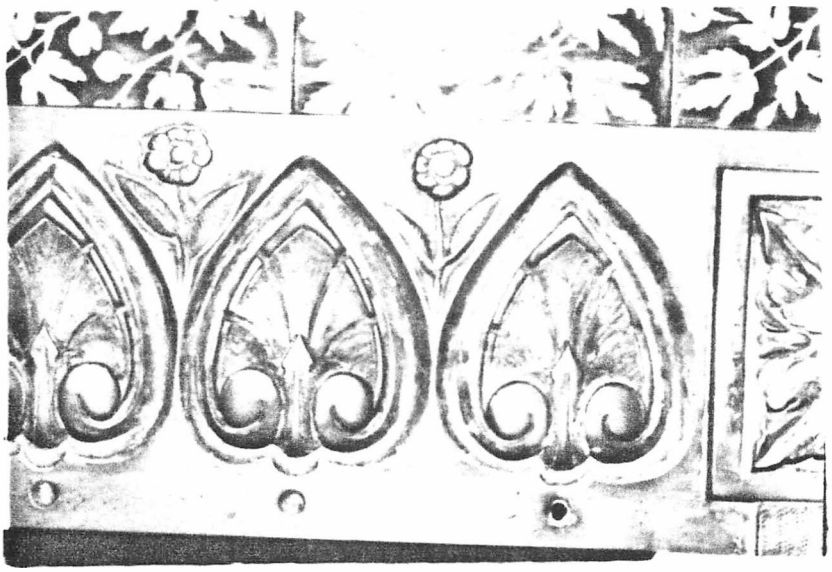
A variety of fenders and andirons was used by the Neely family to embellish their new "artistic" fireplaces. Most replicate "Old English," "Old Dutch," Colonial, and Georgian designs.[393] On the basis of "studies of ancient metal art," the Garrett sisters recommended to their readers the use of fenders 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

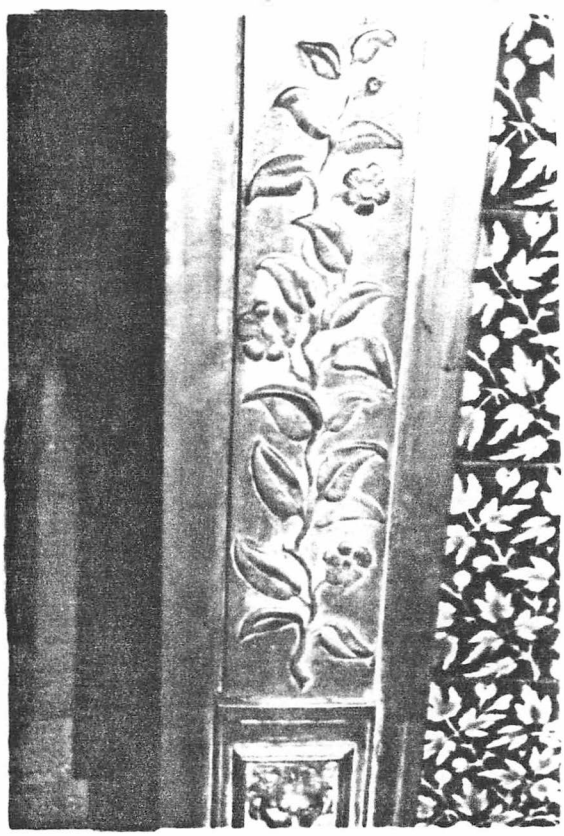
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[393]Gordon F. Roe, "Old Brass Fenders," The Magazine Antiques, 35, No. 4 (April 1939), 178-181.

[394]Garrett and Garrett, 54.

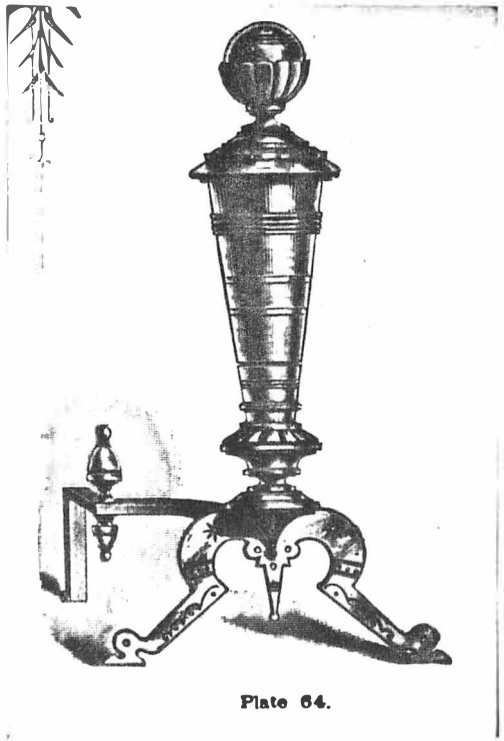


A

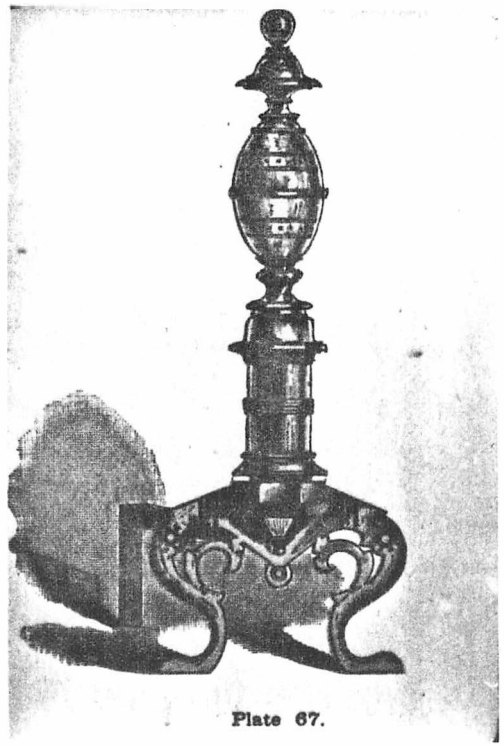


B

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.



A



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.

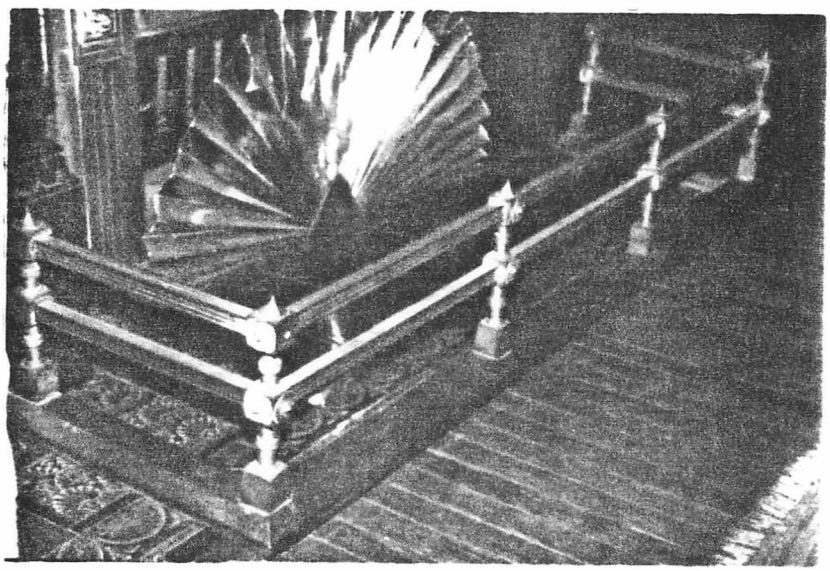
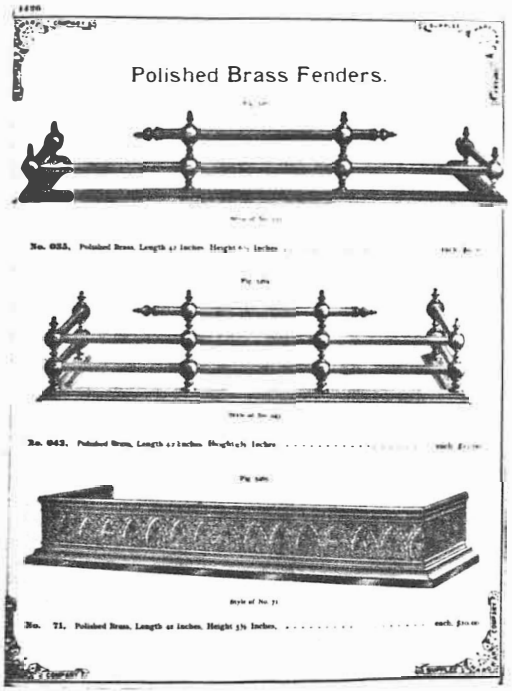


Figure 199. Characteristic late nineteenth century brass fender in the reform style from the Mallory-Neely sitting room fireplace.



A

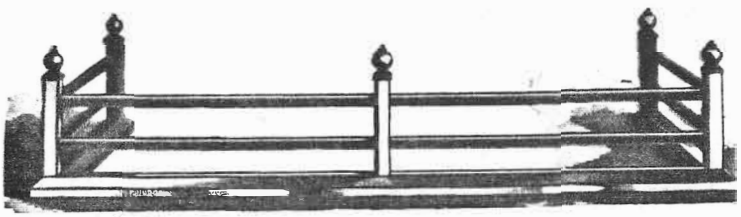
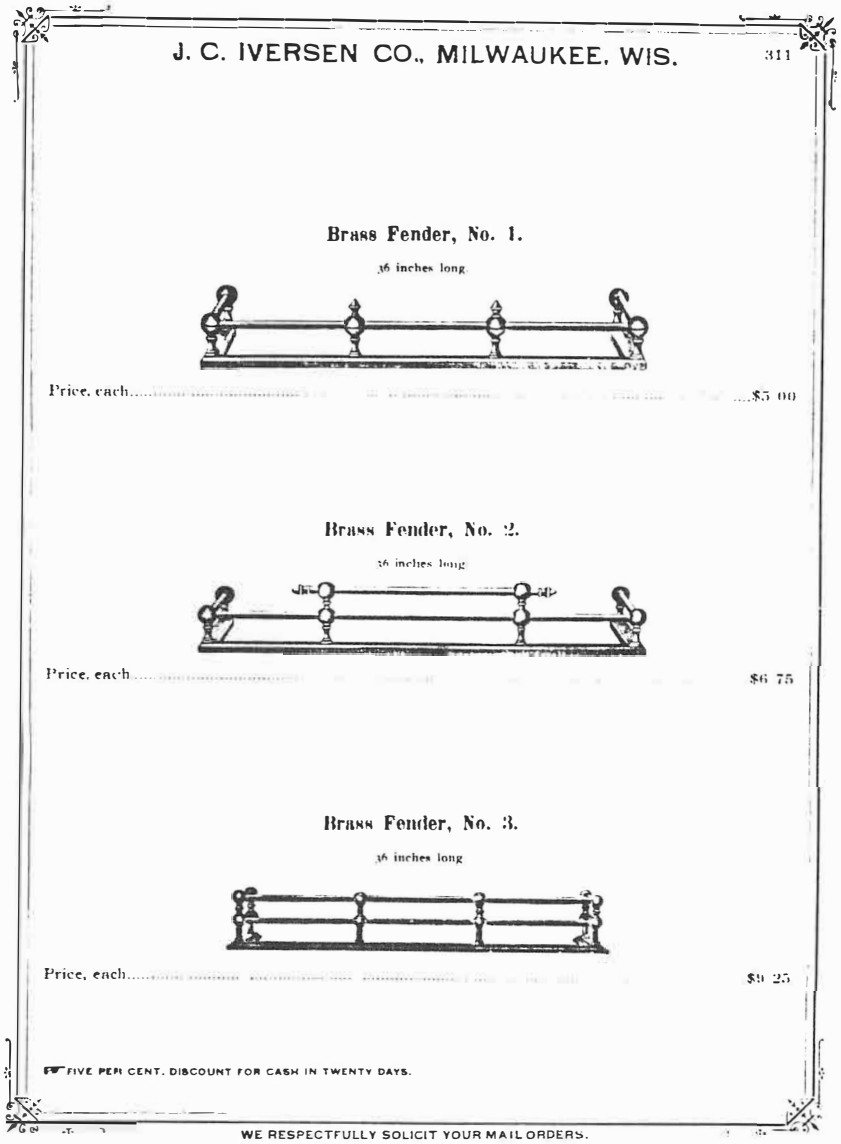


Plate 97

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.

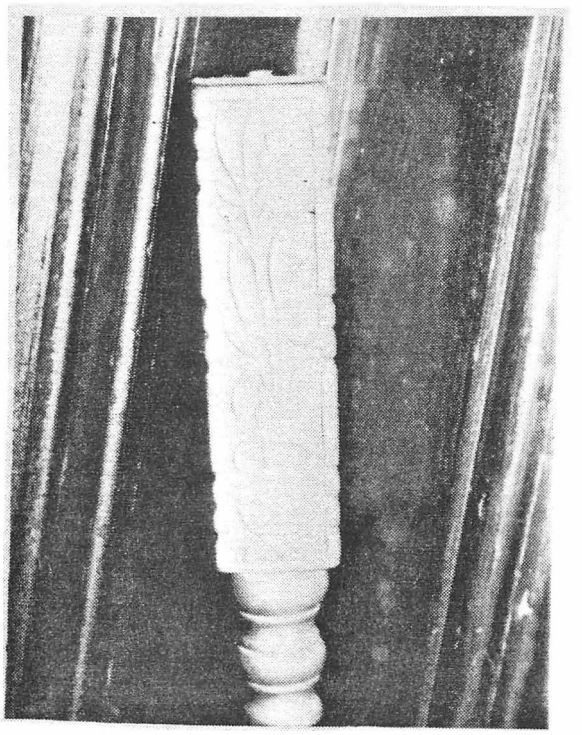
36 inches long

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.

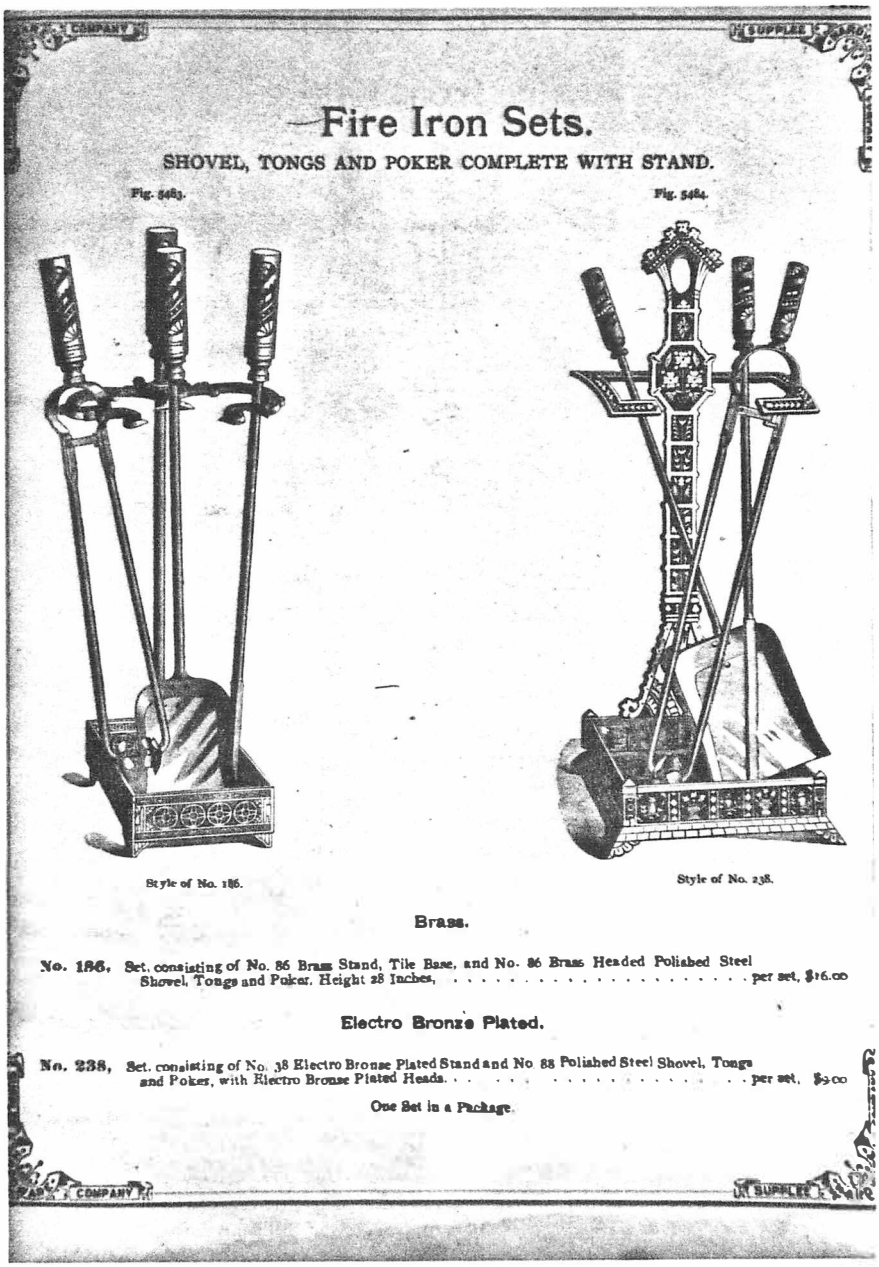


A



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.



Fire Iron Sets.

SHOVEL, TONGS AND POKER COMPLETE WITH STAND.

Fig. 5483.

Style of No. 186.

Fig. 5484.

Style of No. 238.

Brass.

No. 186, Set, consisting of No. 86 Brass Stand, Tile Base, and No. 86 Brass Headed Polished Steel Shovel, Tongs and Poker. Height 28 Inches, ... per set, $16.00

Electro Bronze Plated.

No. 238, Set, consisting of No. 38 Electro Bronze Plated Stand and No 88 Polished Steel Shovel, Tongs and Poker, with Electro Bronze Plated Heads. . . . . per set, $9.00

One Set in a Package.

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:

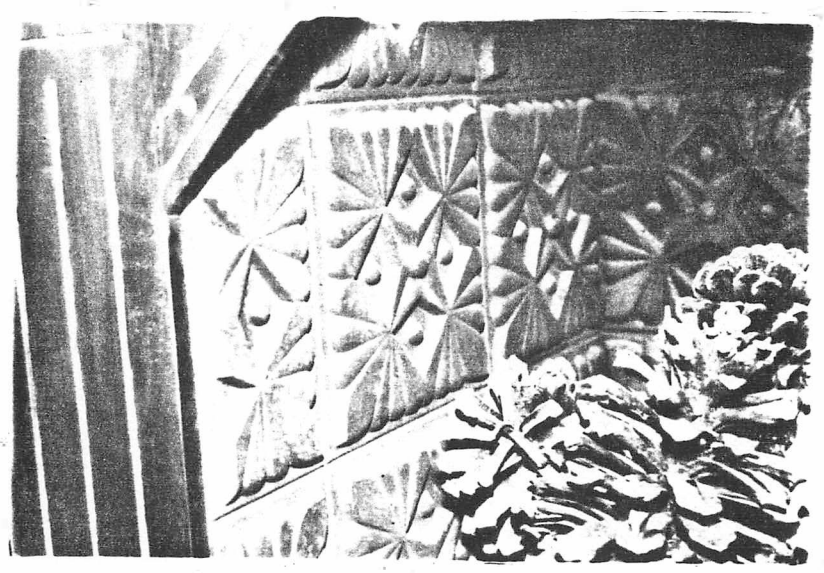
> To harmonize with the decorative effect of the tiles a new artistic element was called for. This was suggested by making the back and sides of the fireplace of cast iron plates bearing rich relief design which harmonized admirably with the warm color of the tiles.[396]

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

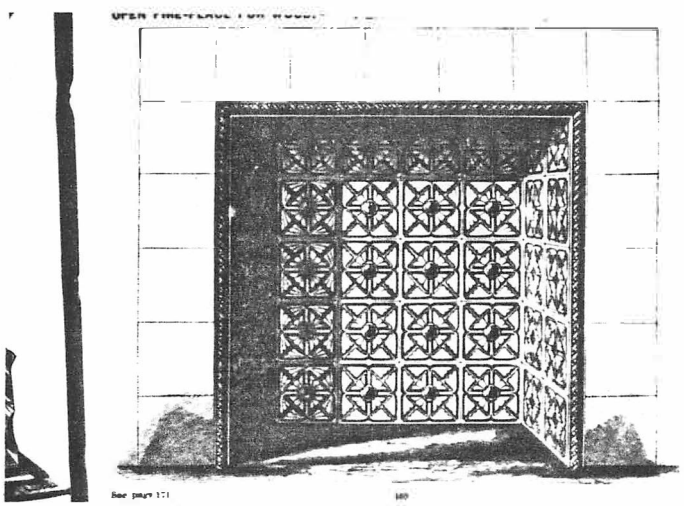
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[395]Ibid., 64.

[396]Smith 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

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[397]The Art Supplement to the Greater Memphis Edition of the Evening Scimitar, 42.

[398]Cooper, 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]

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[399]See 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.

[400]Roger Moss, "Victorian Lighting," Paper presented to the 38th Annual Seminar on American Culture, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York, 2 July 1985.

[401]Mrs. Thomas P. Hughes, Jr., "Home of the Late Mrs. Barton Lee Mallory, 652 Adams Avenue," n.p.

[402]Memphis Daily appeal [advertisement], 12 February 1884, 2.

[403]R. L. Polk's Memphis City Directory (Memphis: R. L. Polk & Co., 1900), 127.



Brush Electric Light & Pow'r Co

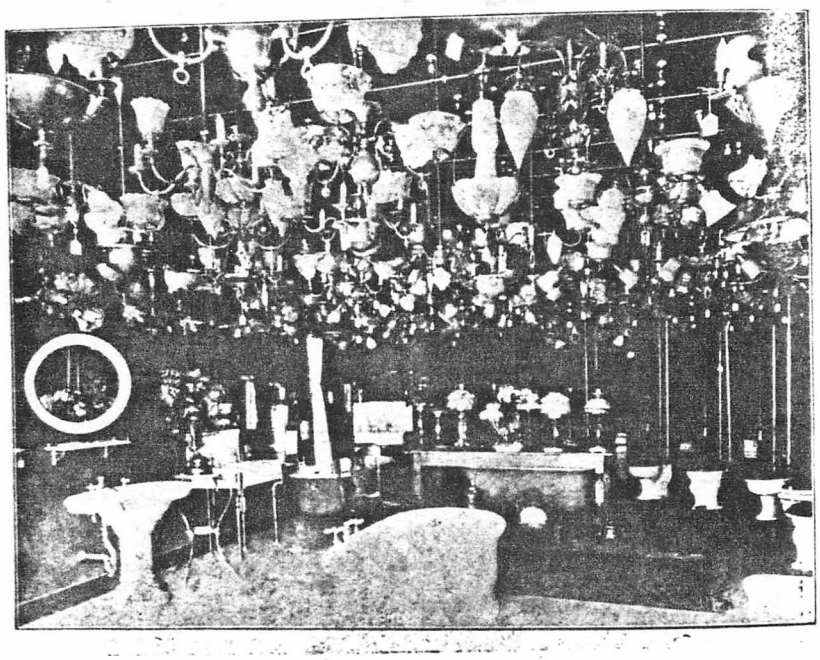
Office---No. 5 Promenade Street.

DIRECTORS.

J. C. NEELY, LOUIS HANAUER, J. D. MILBURN, [illegible] W. HEISKELL,
S. T. CARNES, W. W. SCHOOLFIELD, D. T. PORTER, J. R. [illegible]OWIN, T. B. MILLER,
HUGH A. HAMILTON.....President. G. C. WOODRUFF [illegible] 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.

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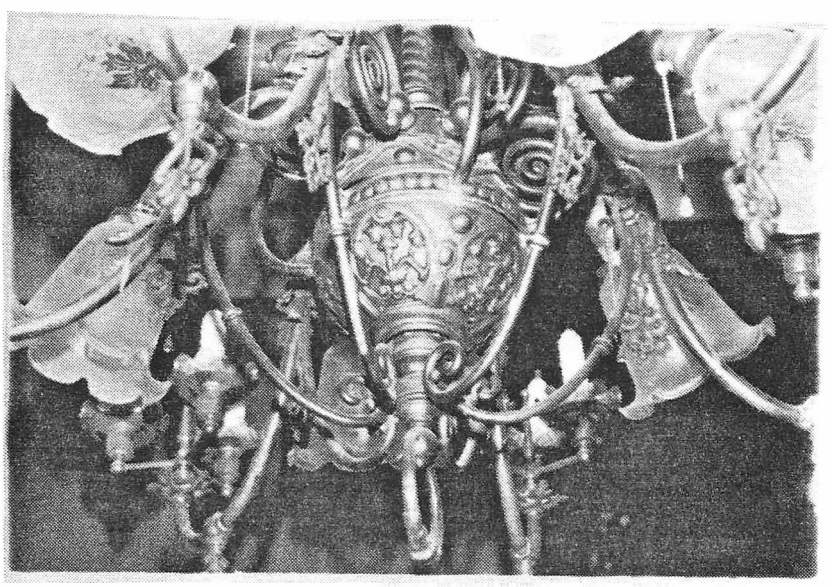
[404]Myers, 51.

[405]Hanks and Toher, 280.

[406]See 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.

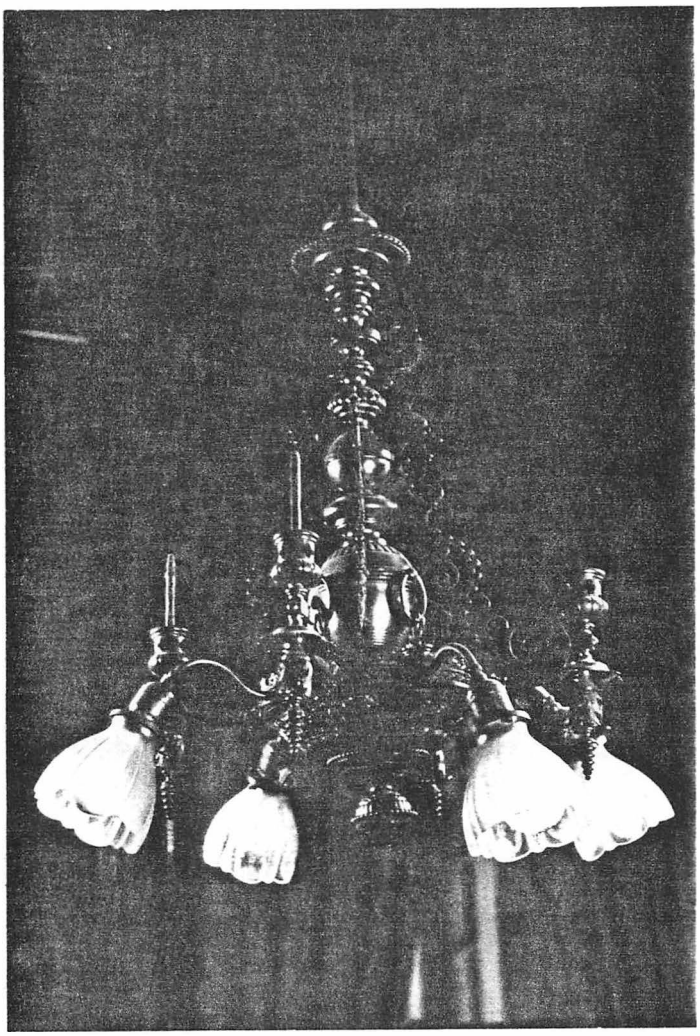


Figure 208. "Renaissance" style brass combination gas-electric fixture located in the Mallory-Neely sitting room. This one is also missing the upper gas fixture globes.

(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.

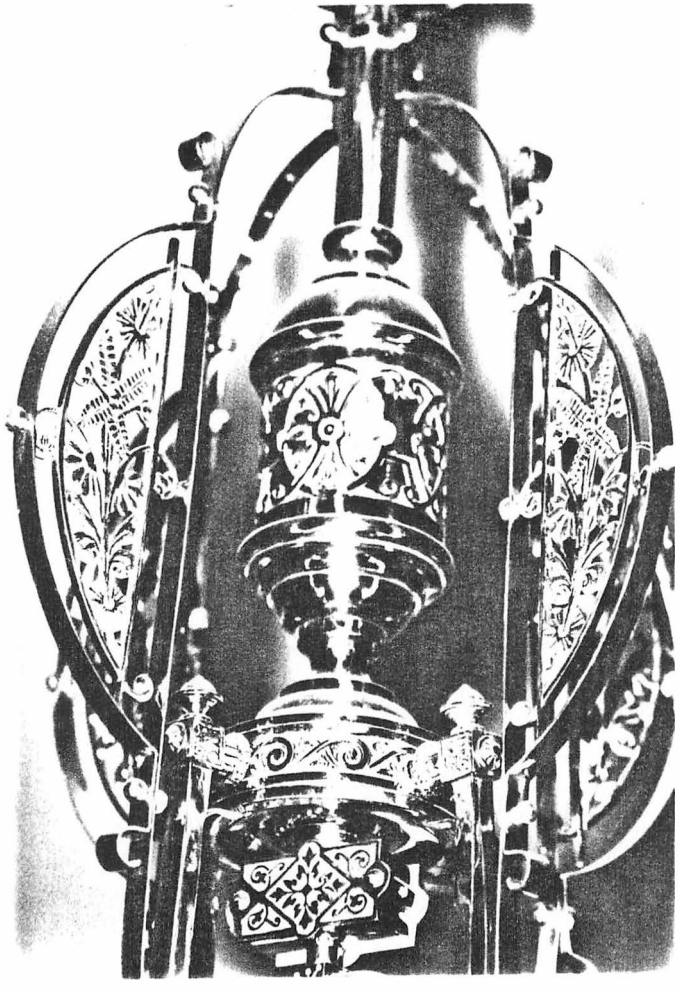
"Artistic" interior hardware. "Artistic" interior hardware constitutes the final artful touch to the Neelys' remodeled interiors. During the era of Aesthetic influence "lavish brass or bronze hardware was incorporated into doors in the form of hinges, escutheon plates, and locks."[407] The Aesthetic 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

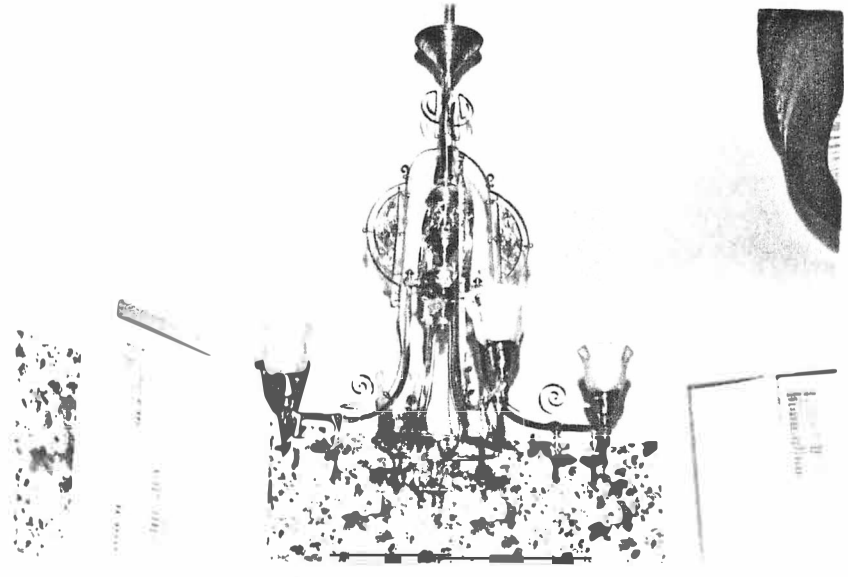
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[407]Hanks and Toher, 178.

[408]Maudie Eastwood, The Antique Doorknob (Forest Grove, Oregon: by the author, 1976), 67.

[409]Ibid., 93.





A

B

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.

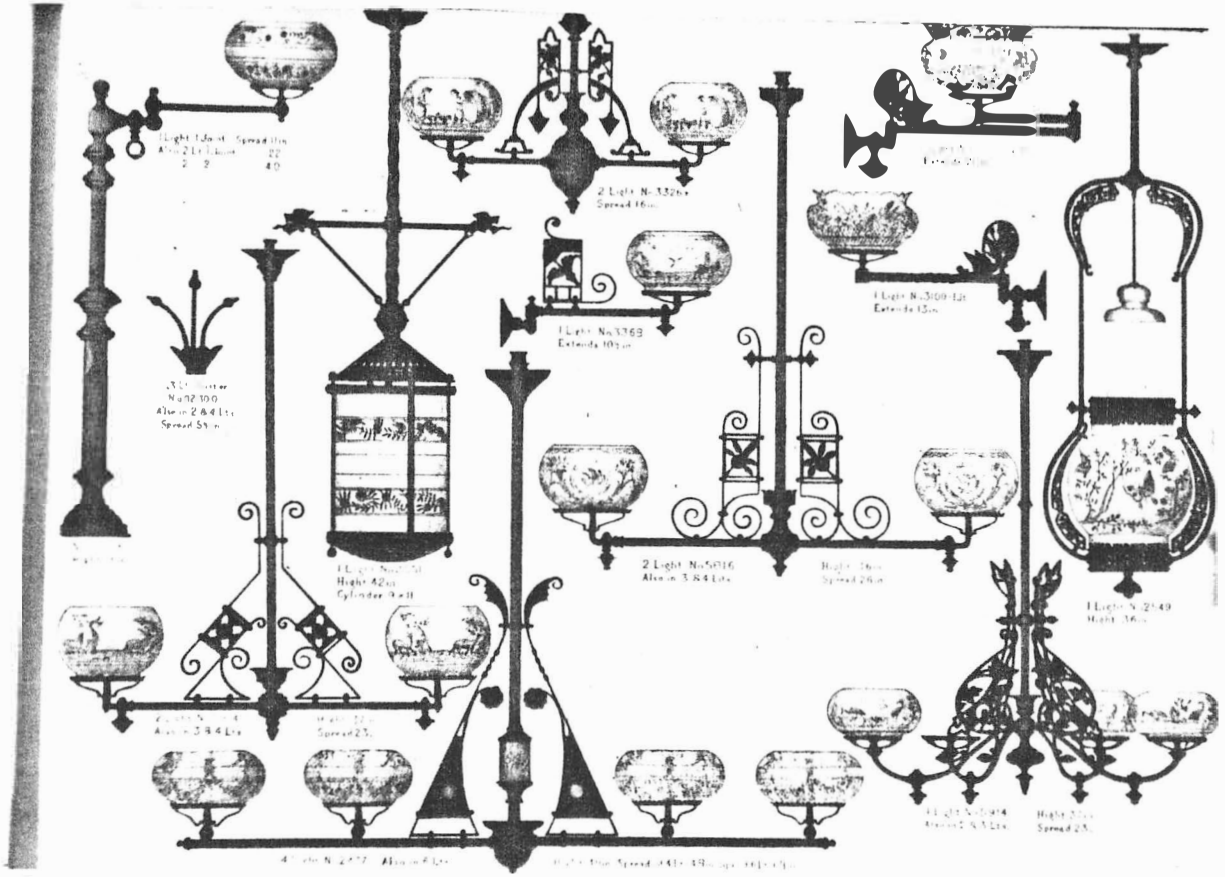


Figure 210. Page from the 1878 Mitchell, Vance and Company catalog is illustrated with a variety of gas fixtures all in the Anglo-Japanese manner. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

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)

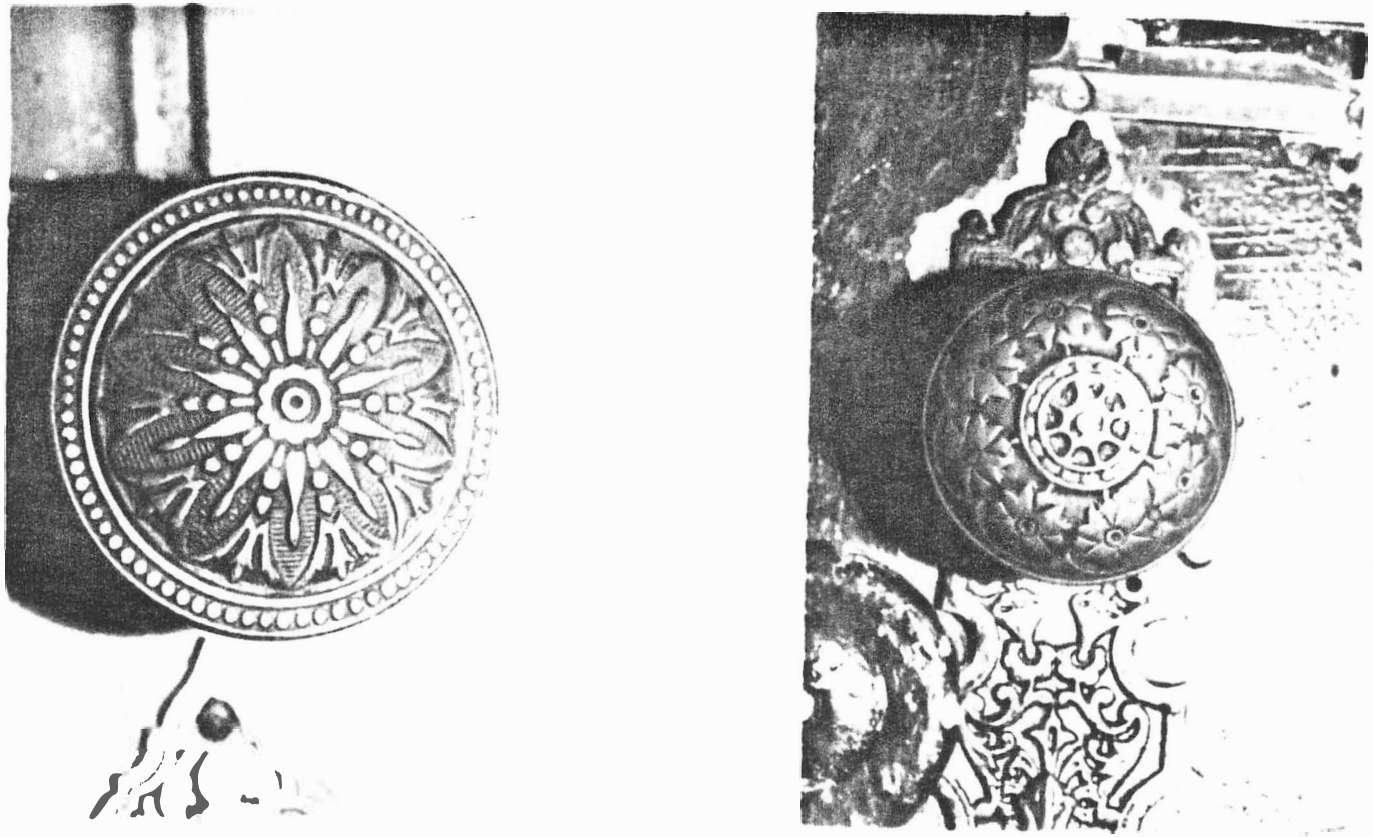
Marilyn Johnson in an essay entitled "The Artful Interior" states, "A unified artistic interior depended upon the intricate balancing of all components so that no one element would be visually dominating."[412] Visual study of the various additions that the Neelys

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[410]Ibid., 67-68.

[411]Supplee Hardware Company Catalogue of Shelf and Heavy Hardware, Philadelphia, 1873 [trade catalog], Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

[412]Marilyn Johnson, "The Artful Interior," In Pursuit of Beauty (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986), 129.



A B

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.

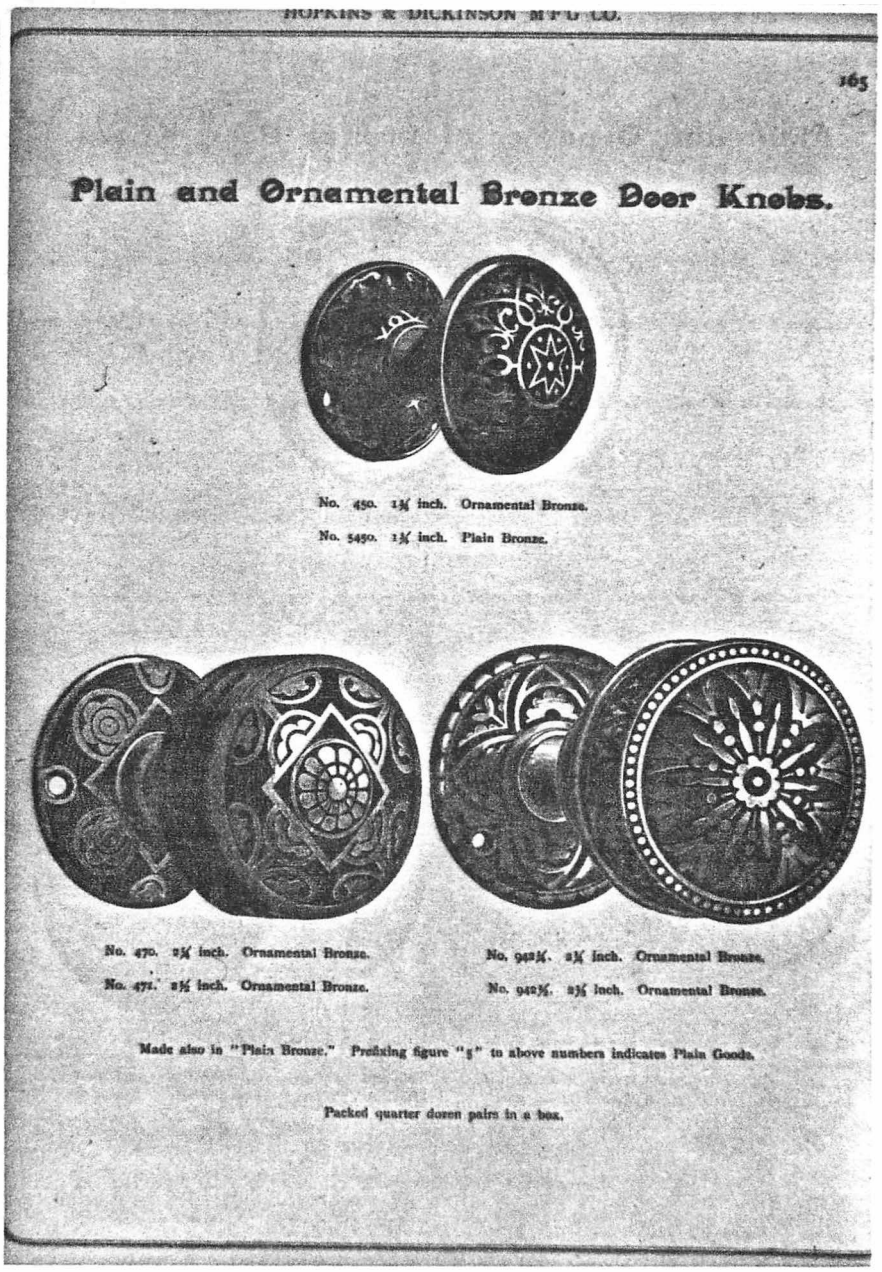
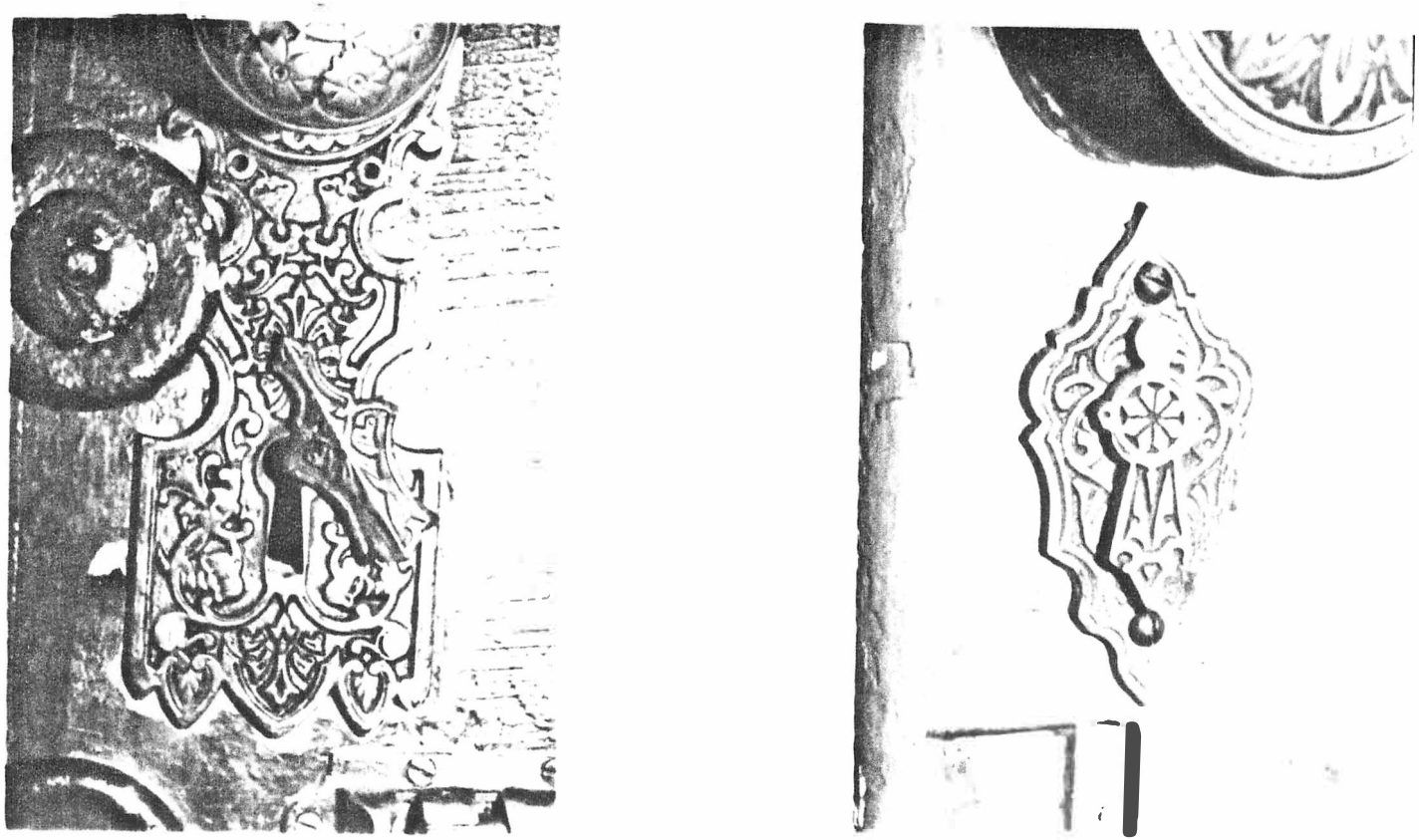
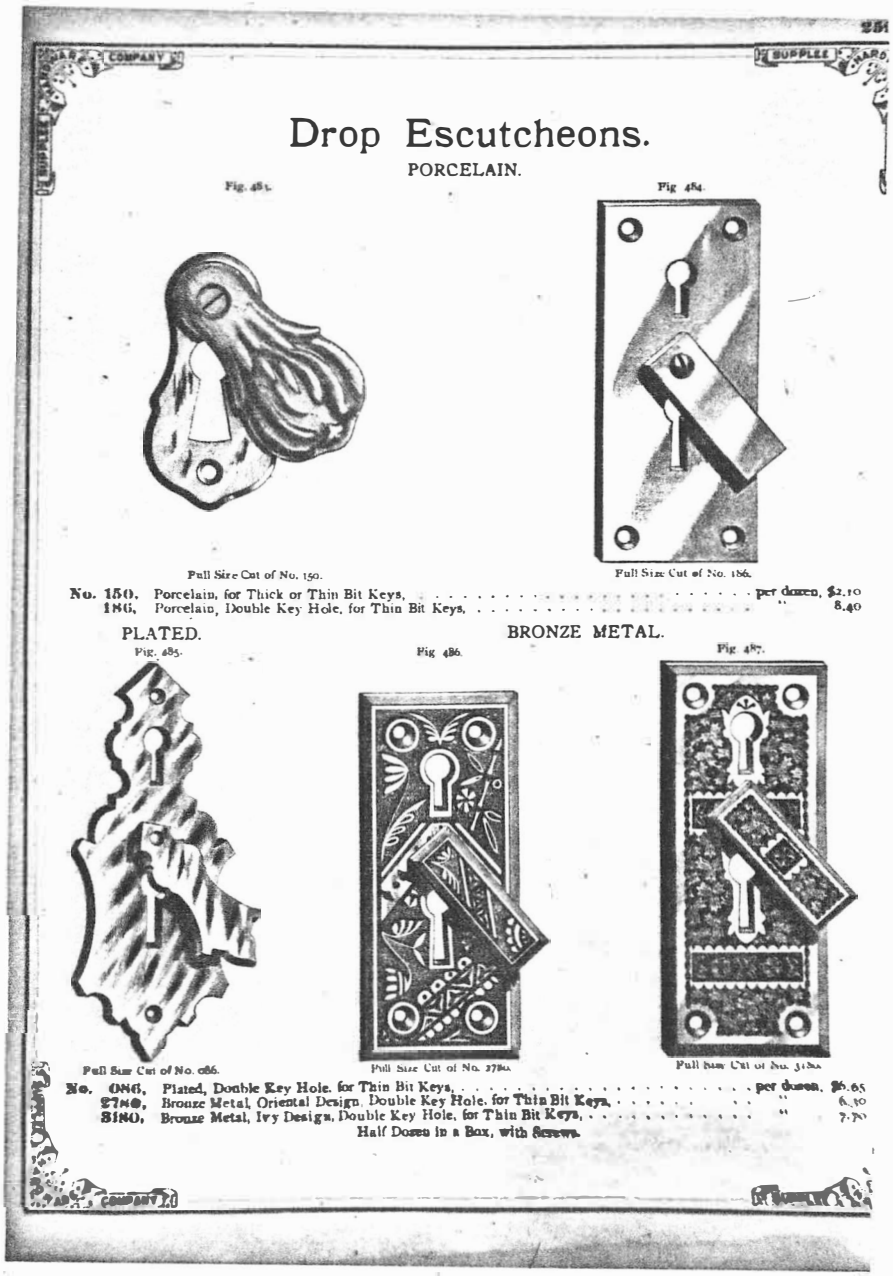


Figure 212. Bronze door knobs similar to those in the Mallory-Neely House as illustrated in the 1890 catalog of the Hopkins and Dickinson Manufacturing Company of Brooklyn. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.



A B

Figure 213. Elaborate drop escutcheons from doors on the first floor of the Mallory-Neely House.
A. Escutheon in entrance hall.
B. Escutheon in dining room.



Drop Escutcheons.

PORCELAIN.

Fig. 484.

Full Size Cut of No. 150.

Full Size Cut of No. 186.

No. 150, Porcelain, for Thick or Thin Bit Keys, ... per dozen, $2.10
186, Porcelain, Double Key Hole, for Thin Bit Keys, ... " 8.40

PLATED.

Fig. 485.

Full Size Cut of No. 086.

BRONZE METAL.

Fig. 486.

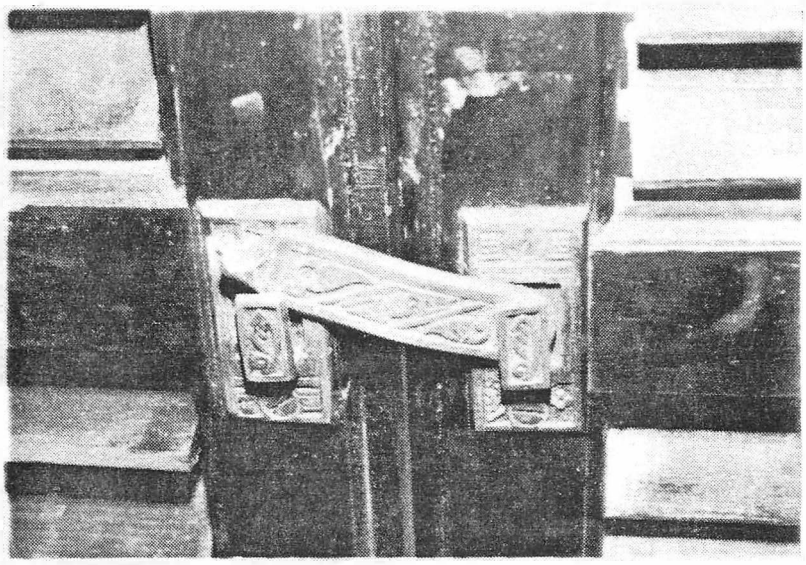
Full Size Cut of No. 2780.

Fig. 487.

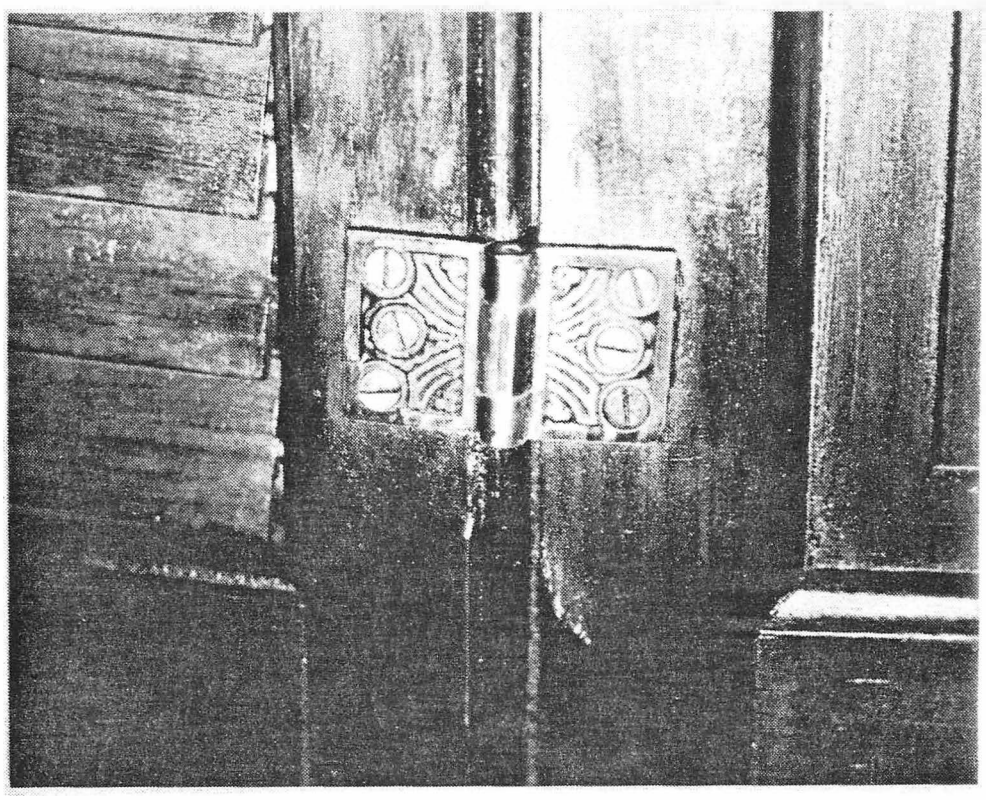
Full Size Cut of No. 3180.

No. 086, Plated, Double Key Hole, for Thin Bit Keys, ... per dozen, $6.65
2780, Bronze Metal, Oriental Design, Double Key Hole, for Thin Bit Keys, ... " 6.30
3180, Bronze Metal, Ivy Design, Double Key Hole, for Thin Bit Keys, ... " 7.70
Half Dozen in a Box, with Screws.

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.

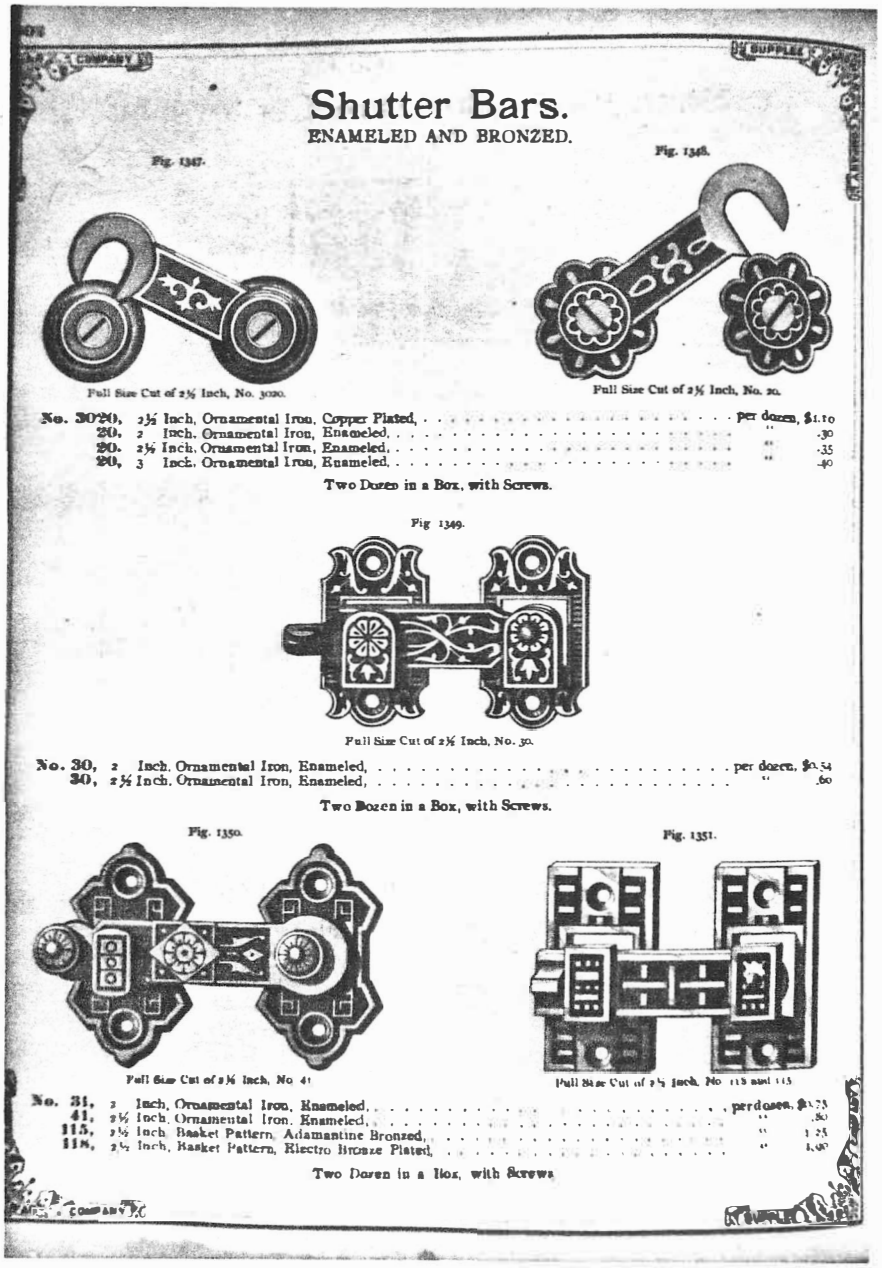


A



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 2½ Inch, No. 3020.

Fig. 1348.

Full Size Cut of 2½ Inch, No. 20.

No. 3020,	2½	Inch, Ornamental Iron, Copper Plated,	per dozen, $1.10
20,	2	Inch, Ornamental Iron, Enameled,	" .30
20,	2½	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 2½ Inch, No. 30.

No. 30,	2	Inch, Ornamental Iron, Enameled,	per dozen, $0.54
30,	2½	Inch, Ornamental Iron, Enameled,	" .60

Two Dozen in a Box, with Screws.

Fig. 1350.

Full Size Cut of 2½ Inch, No. 41

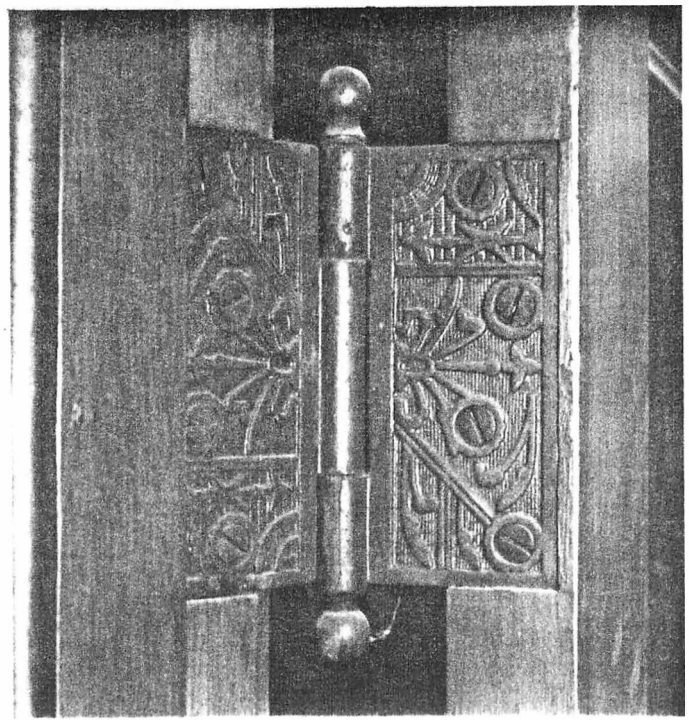
Fig. 1351.

Full Size Cut of 2½ Inch, No. 115 and 118

No. 31,	2	Inch, Ornamental Iron, Enameled,	per dozen, $0.75
41,	2½	Inch, Ornamental Iron, Enameled,	" .80
115,	2½	Inch, Basket Pattern, Adamantine Bronzed,	" 1.25
118,	2½	Inch, Basket Pattern, Electro Bronze Plated,	" 1.50

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

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[413]Mrs. 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

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[414]See 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

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[1]William 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

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[2]Last 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

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[3]Last 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

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[4]See, for example, Victorian Furniture, Kenneth Ames, ed.

[5]See 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]

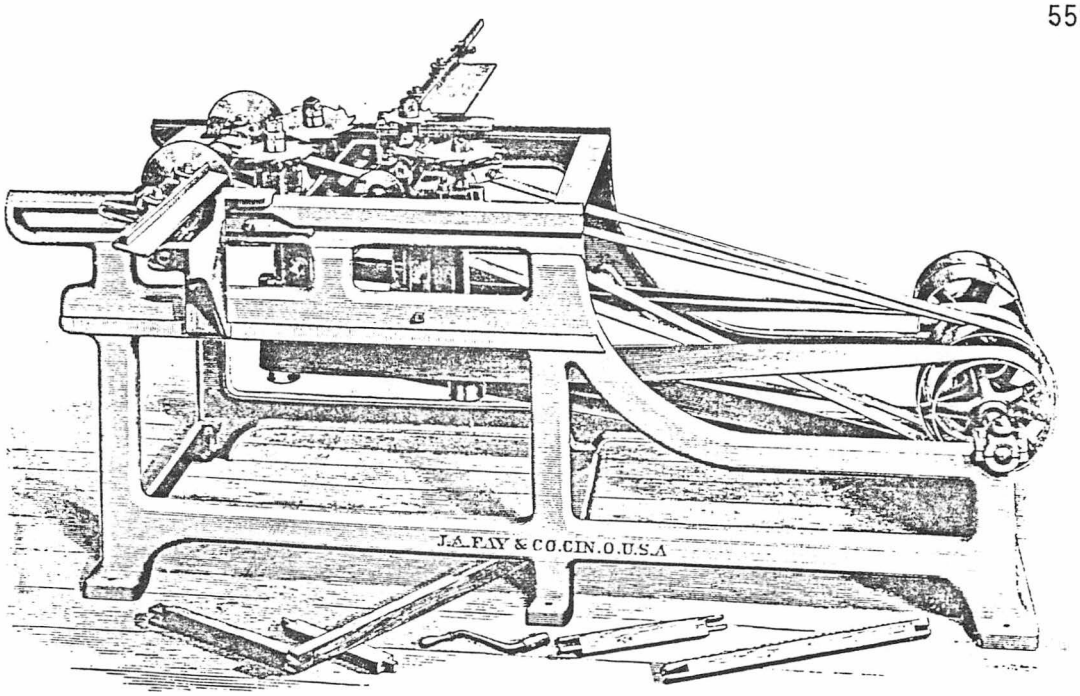
The varied woodworking inventions were only possible because of parallel developments in both metallurgy and power sources. Nineteenth century woodworking machinery was first powered by hand, then

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[6]See 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.

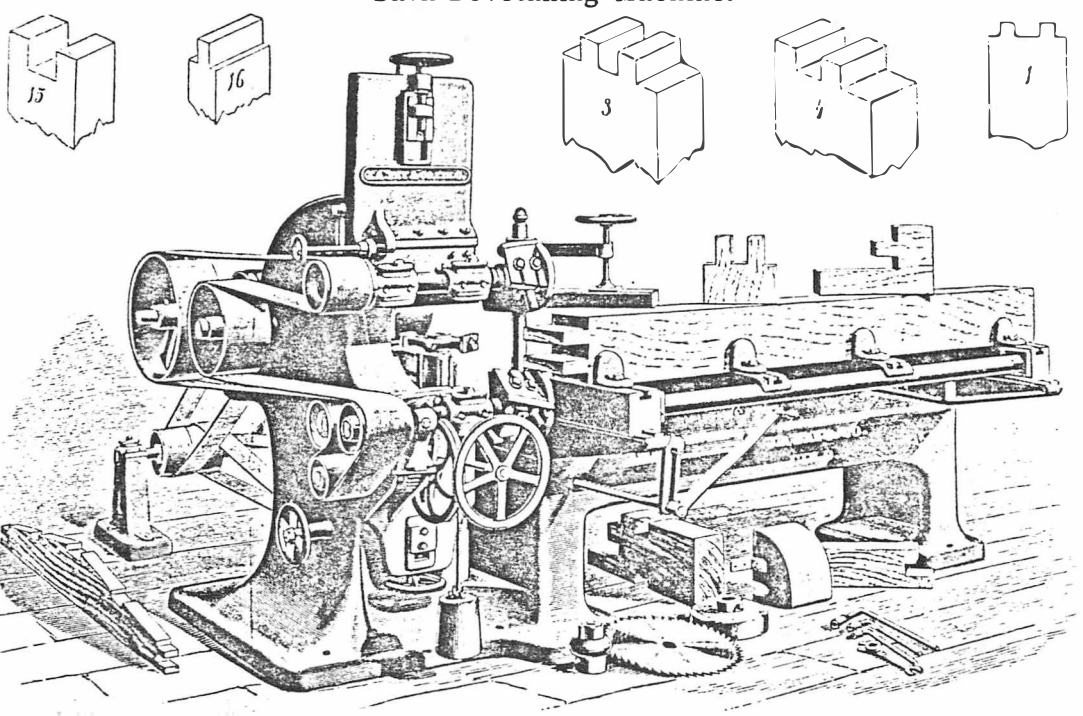
[7]Nathan Rosenberg, Perspectives on Technology (London: Cambridge University press, 1976), 35.

[8]Ettema, 40.



Sash-Dovetailing Machine.

A



No. 5 Patent

Automatic Universal Car Tenoning Machine.

For Single, Double, and Triple Tenons, Gaining, etc.

B

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

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[9]D. F. Galloway, "Machine Tools," A History of Technology: The Late Nineteenth Century 1850 to 1900, Vol. 5 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 641.

[10]See, for example, David Hanks, "Isaac E. Scott, Craftsmen 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.

[11]No. 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.

[12]Illustrated 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 Dovetailing Machine," Patricia Tice traces the development and use of one of these machines, illustrating in the process how an old handcrafted 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

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[13]Ibid.

[14]Patricia M. Tice, "The Knapp Dovetailing Machine," The Magazine Antiques, 73, No. 5 (May 1983), 1070-1072.

[15]Burley's Dove-Tailing Machine Company: A Full Description of the Machine (New York: 1855), 8 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

[16]Ibid., 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

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[17]No. 6 Illustrated and Descriptive Catalogue, Patented Approved Woodworking Machinery, 227.

[18]Illustrated Descriptive Catalogue of Labor Saving Patent Wood-Working Machinery, 135.

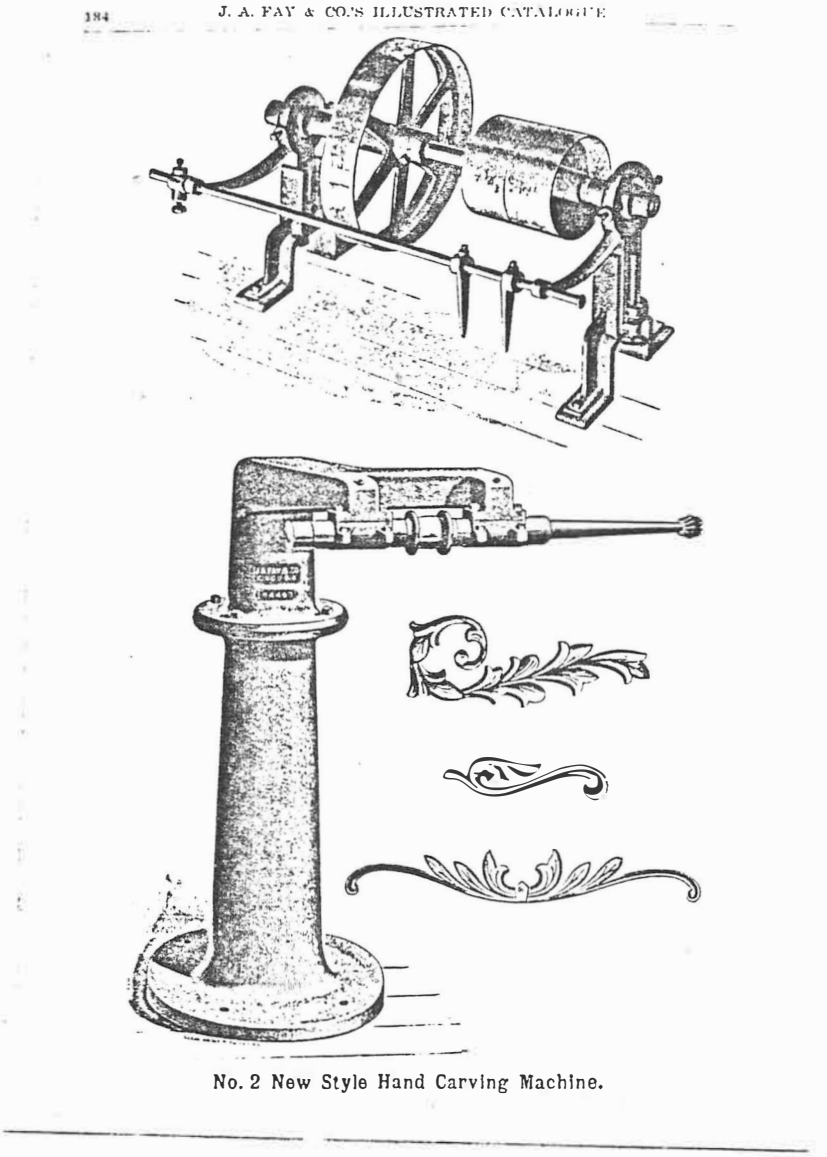


Figure 219. Illustration of a machine for carving decorative ornament for furniture from the 1900 catalog of J. A. Fay & Company. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.

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

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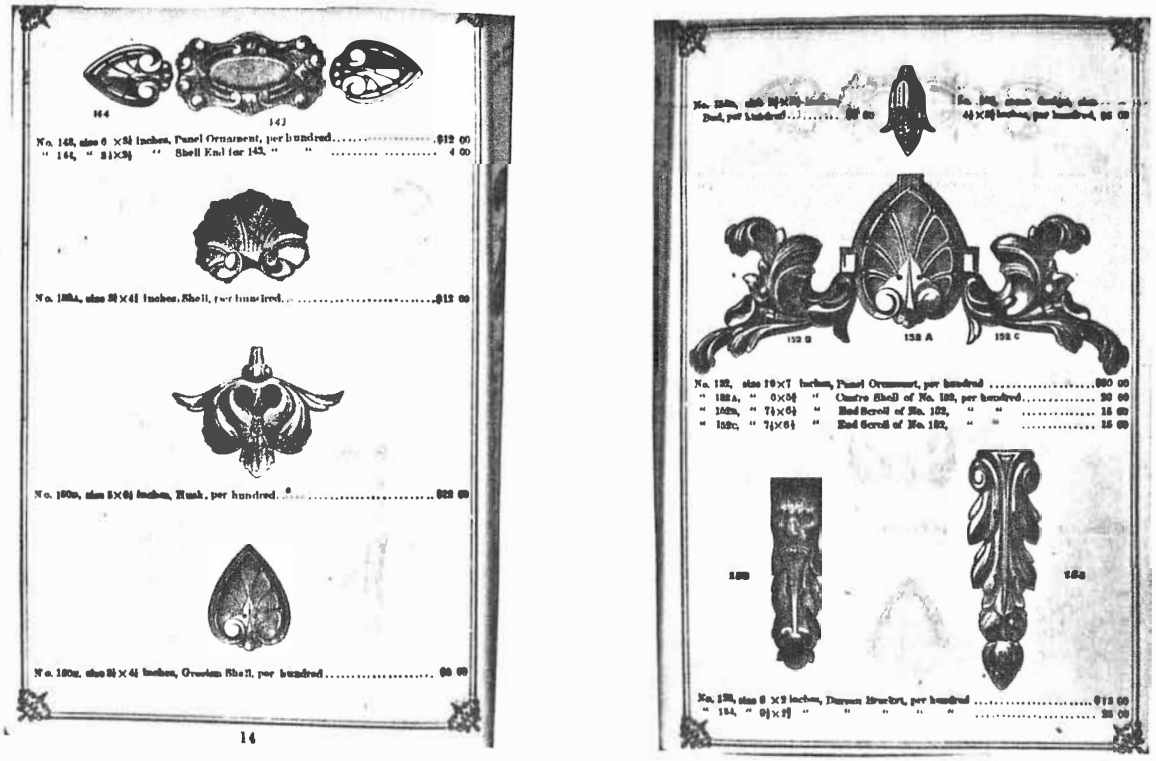
[19]Ibid., 135-136.

[20]No. 6 Illustrated and Descriptive Catalogue, Patented Approved Wood-Working Machinery, 273.

[21]Ibid., 272.

[22]Tice, "The Knapp Dove-Tailing Machine," 1070.

[23]The Illustrated Price List of Patented Artificial Wood Ornaments for Furniture Manufacturers (Chicago: J. Liebenstein, 1877), [trade catalog], Special Collections, Chicago Historical Society,



A B

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,

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Chicago; and O. A. Nathusius, Illustrated Price List of Patented Artificial Wood Ornaments (New York: 1877) [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

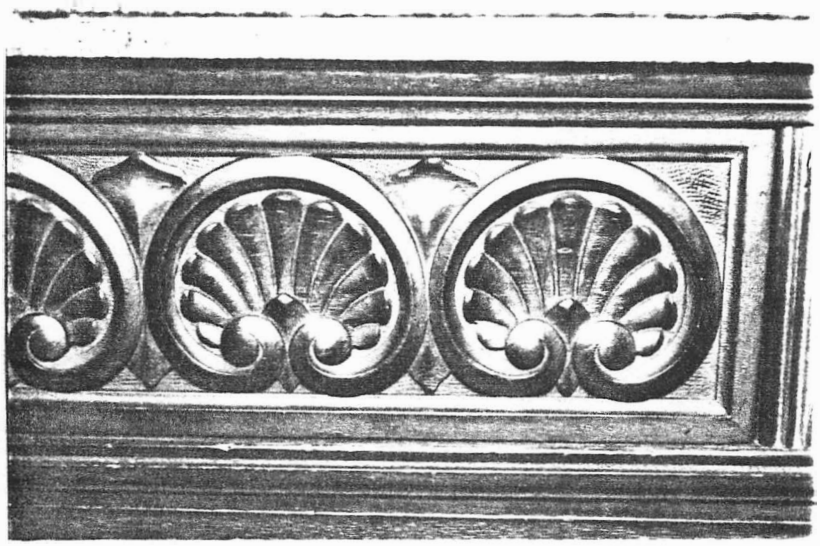
[24]Giedion, Mechanization Takes Command, 379-394.

[25]Sharon Darling, Chicago Furniture: Art, Craft, and Industry 1833-1983 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), 50.

[26]See, 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.

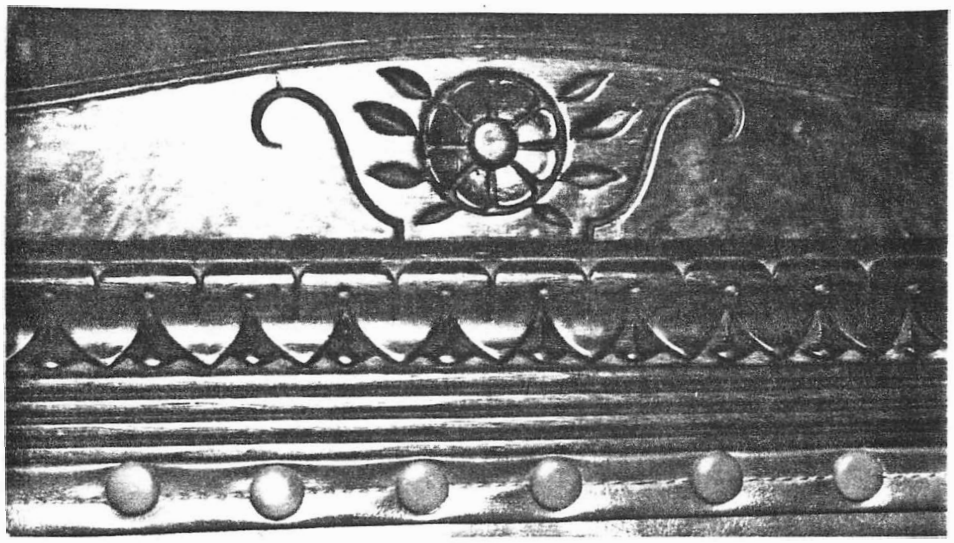


A



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 cresting 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]

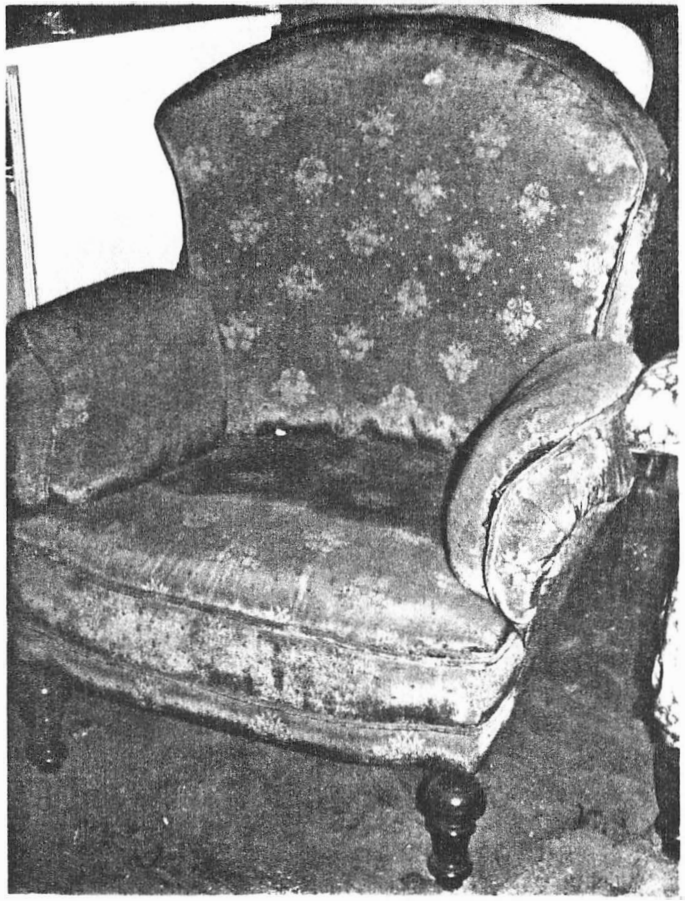
Other chairs in storage are illustrative of the rich look achieved by upholsterers of the period, an approach which Hodgson called "French work." He stated "there has been a decided revolution in upholstery work during the past few years in which artistic forms, combined with French luxuriousness are 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

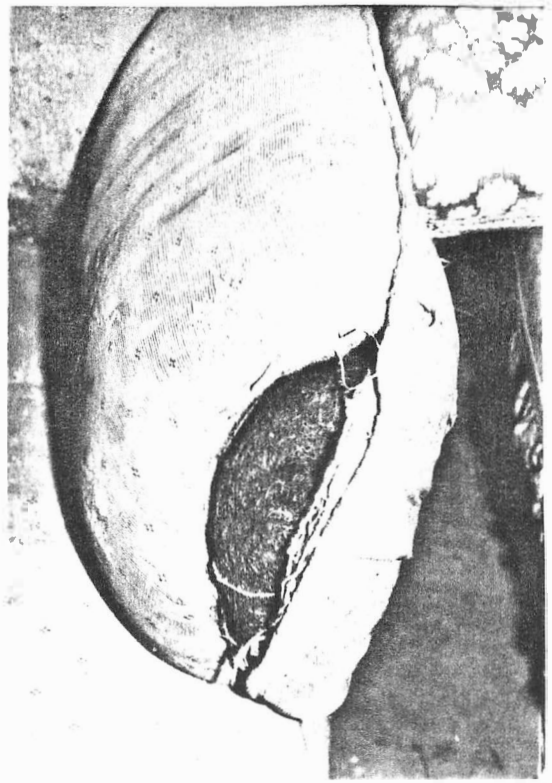
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[27]Frederick Thomas Hodgson, The Practical Upholsterer (New York: The Industrial Publishing Co., 1891), 12, Special Collections, Strong Museum, Rochester, New York.

[28]Ibid., 41.



A



B

Figure 223. Late Victorian upholstered furniture.
A. Overstuffed chair in the Mallory-Neely collection.
B. Detail showing horse hair stuffing.

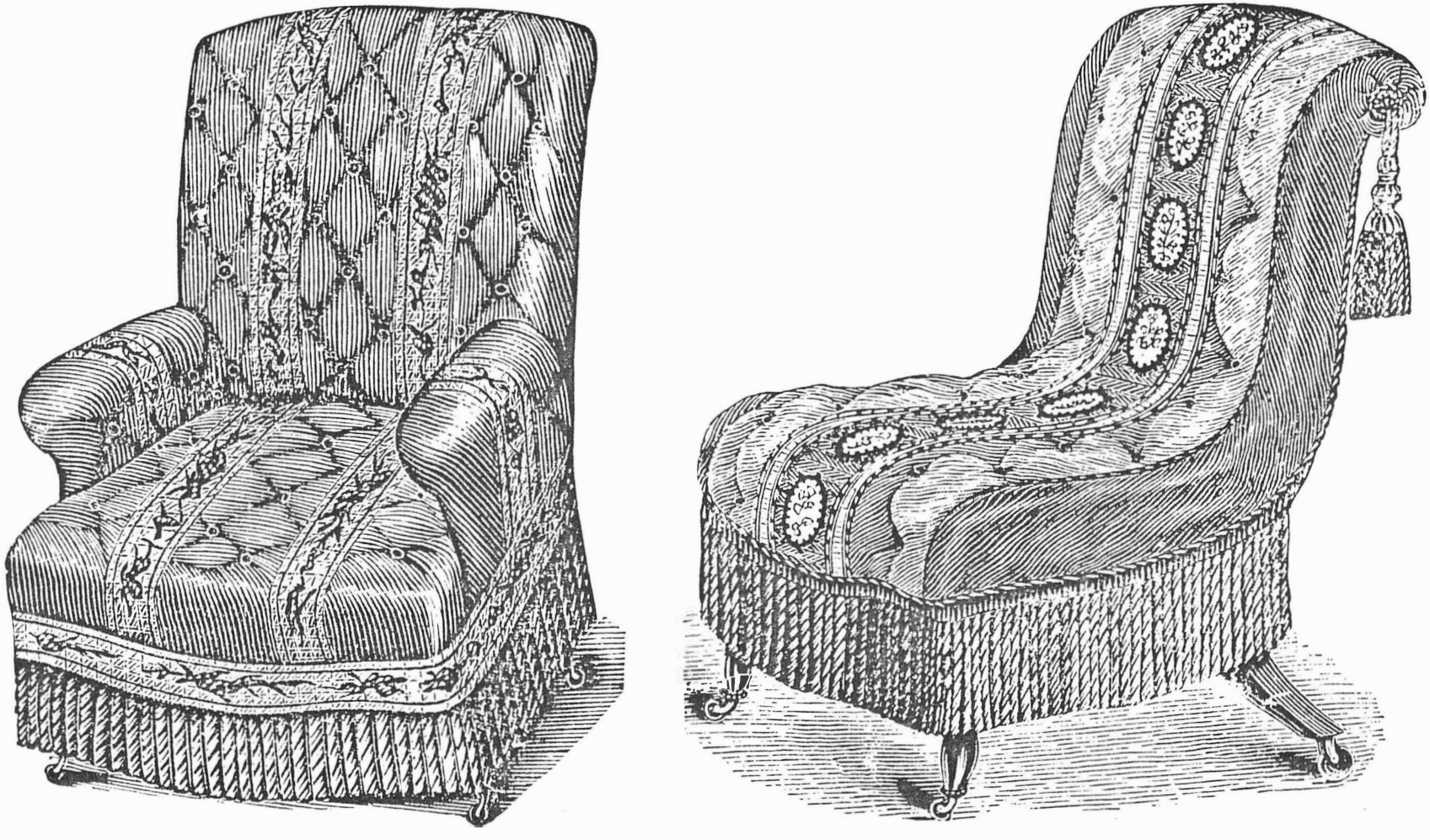
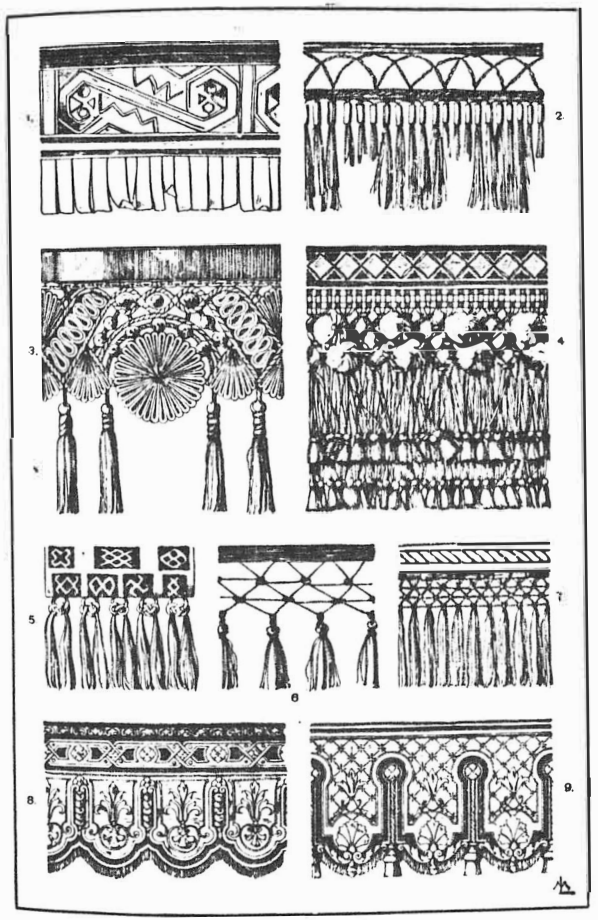
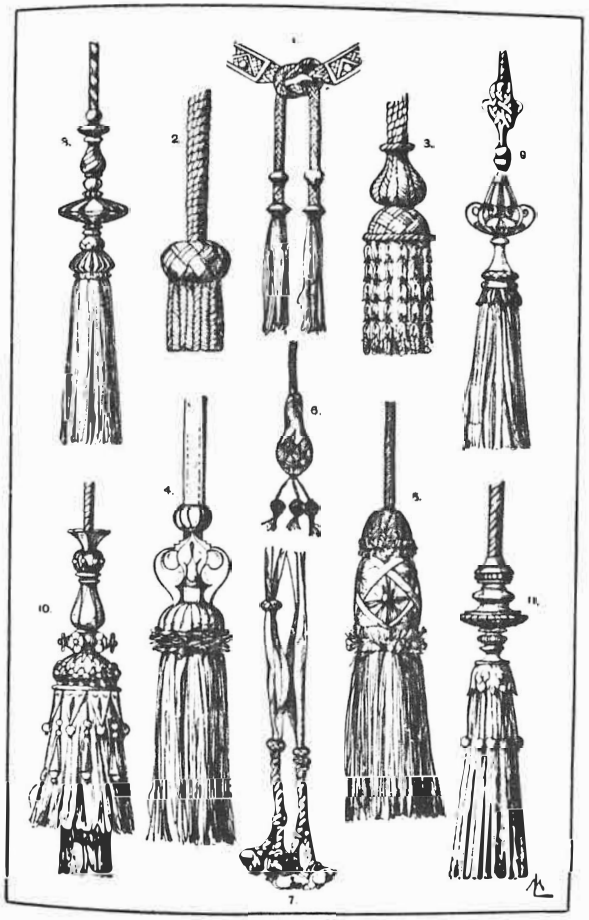


Figure 224. Engraving from Henry Williams and Mrs. C. S. Jones, Beautiful Homes (1878), illustrating characteristic overly embellished late Victorian upholstery treatment. Courtesy Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum.



A



B

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.

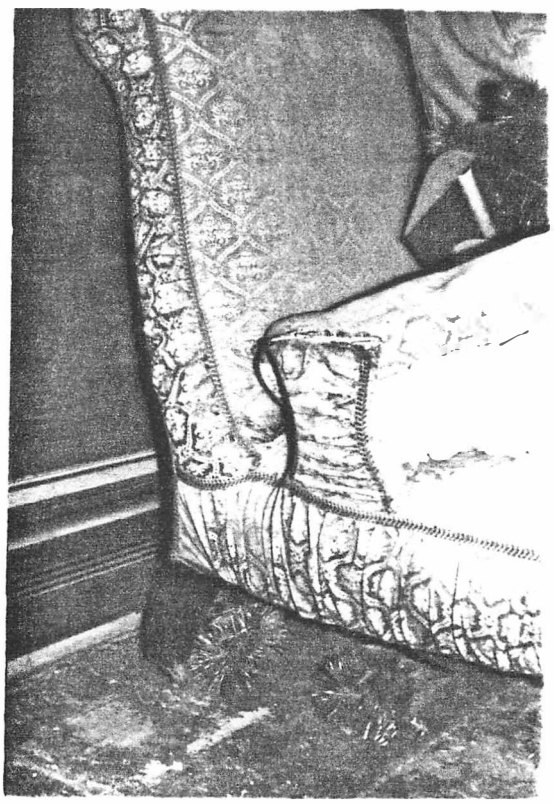
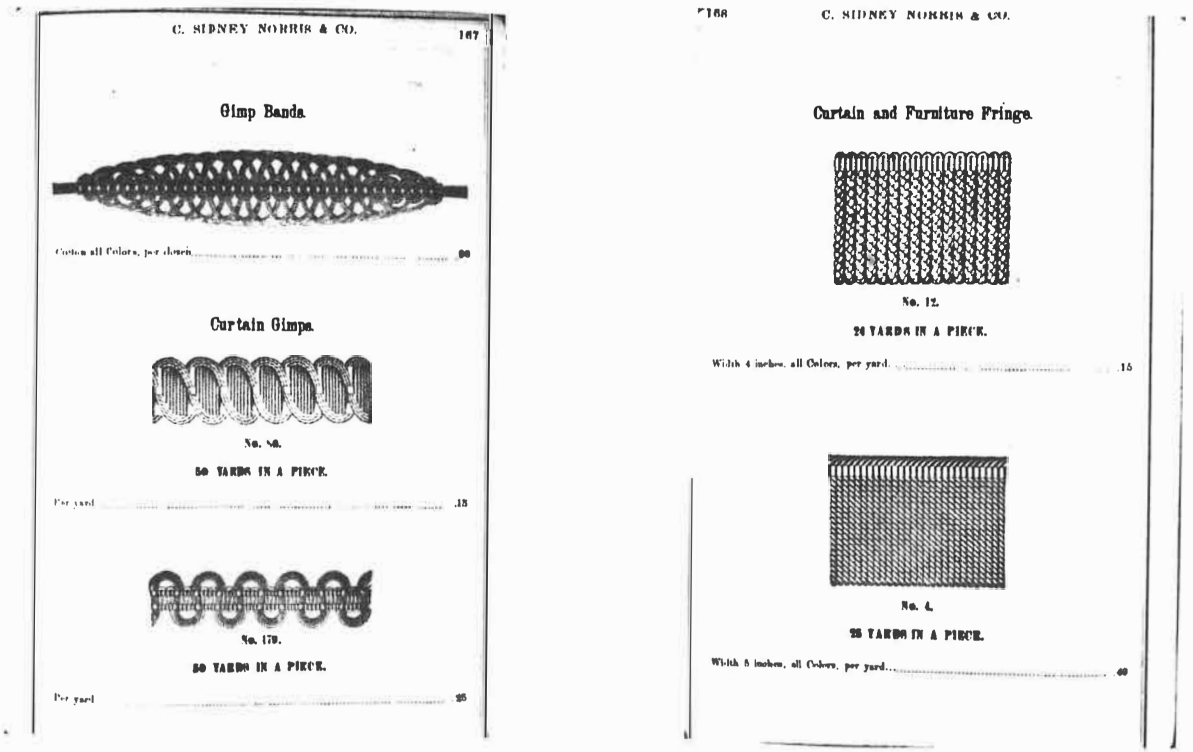


Figure 226. Detail of a chair in the Mallory-Neely collection showing characteristic upholstery flourishes of the era including fancy gimp banding and gathered pleated edges.



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.

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[29]Robert and Harriet Swedburg, Victorian Furniture Styles I (Des Moines, Iowa: Wallace-Homestead Book Company, 1981), 18.

[30]Jonathan 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

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[31]Leading Manufacturers and Merchants of Cincinnati and Environs, 139.

[32]See, for example, Page Talbot, "John Henry Gould: A New Breed of Furniture Dealer," The Magazine Antiques, 70, No. 6 (December 1981), 1418-1421.

[33]See, 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.

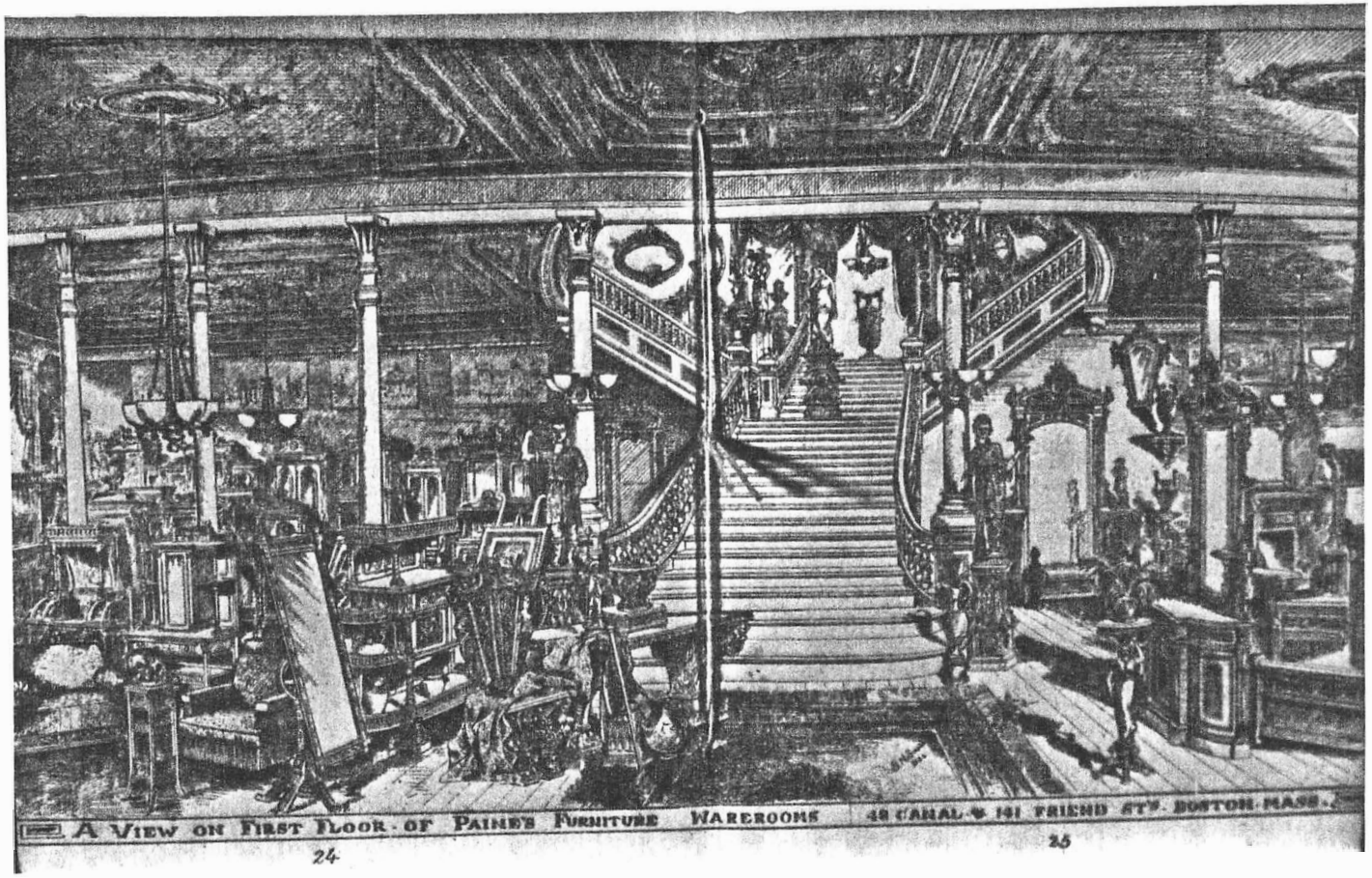


Figure 228. Crowded interior of a late nineteenth century furniture store as shown in the 1883 catalog of Paine's Furniture Manufacturing Company of Boston. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

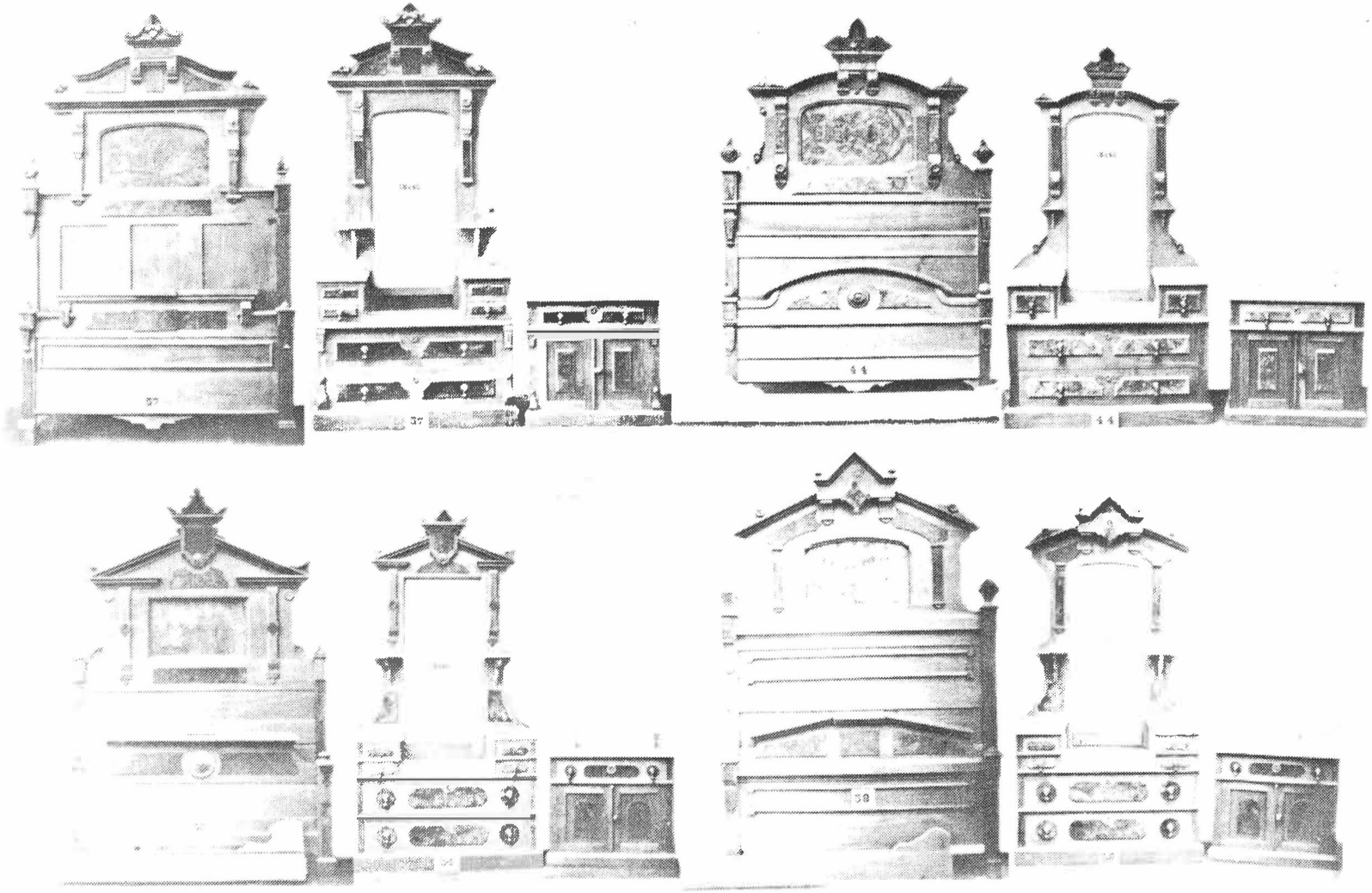


Figure 229. Page from the 1876 catalog of Nelson-Matter & Company of Grand Rapids, one of the first to use photography to illustrate their merchandise. Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.

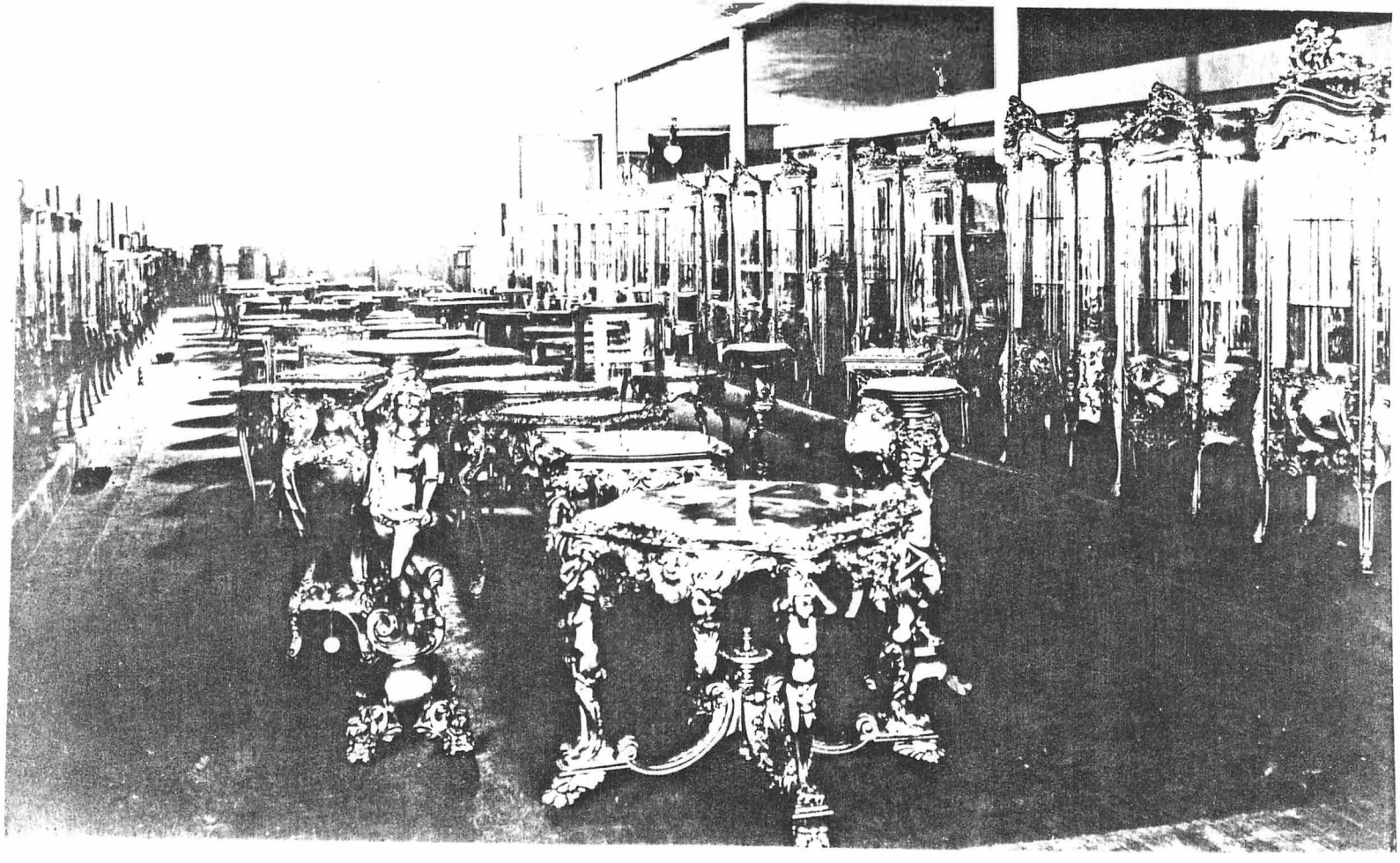


Figure 230. One of the display rooms of the Grand Rapids Furniture Exposition (Summer 1905). Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.

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.

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[34]See, for example, Wyatt Winton Belcher, The Economic Rivalry Between St. Louis and Chicago 1850-1880 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947).

[35]See Darling, Chicago Furniture.

[36]Frank Edward Ransom, The City Built on Wood: A History of the Furniture Industry in Grand Rapids, Michigan (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1955).

[37]See, 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.

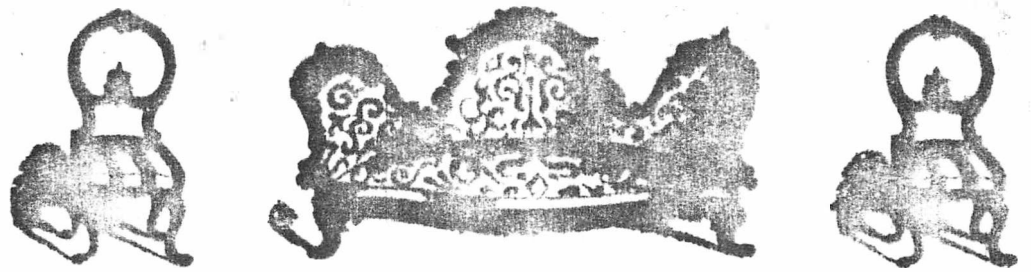
Five pieces of furniture in the Mallory-Neely House have either markings, stamps, or labels. These help relate furnishings in the house to the marketing evolution taking place in the American furniture industry.

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.

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[38]See, for example, Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisements], 12 January 1852, 3 and 6 May 1855, 6.



J. FLAHERTY, Ag't,

DEALER IN

FURNITURE

Nos. 326 and 328 Second Street,

Near Union Street, MEMPHIS, TENN.

Keeps constantly on hand Bedsteads, Book Cases, Bureaus, Chamber Setts, Card Tables, Center Tables, Dining Tables, Desks, Extension Tables, Etageres, Hat Racks, Mattresses, Parlor Setts, 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. Cloud[41]

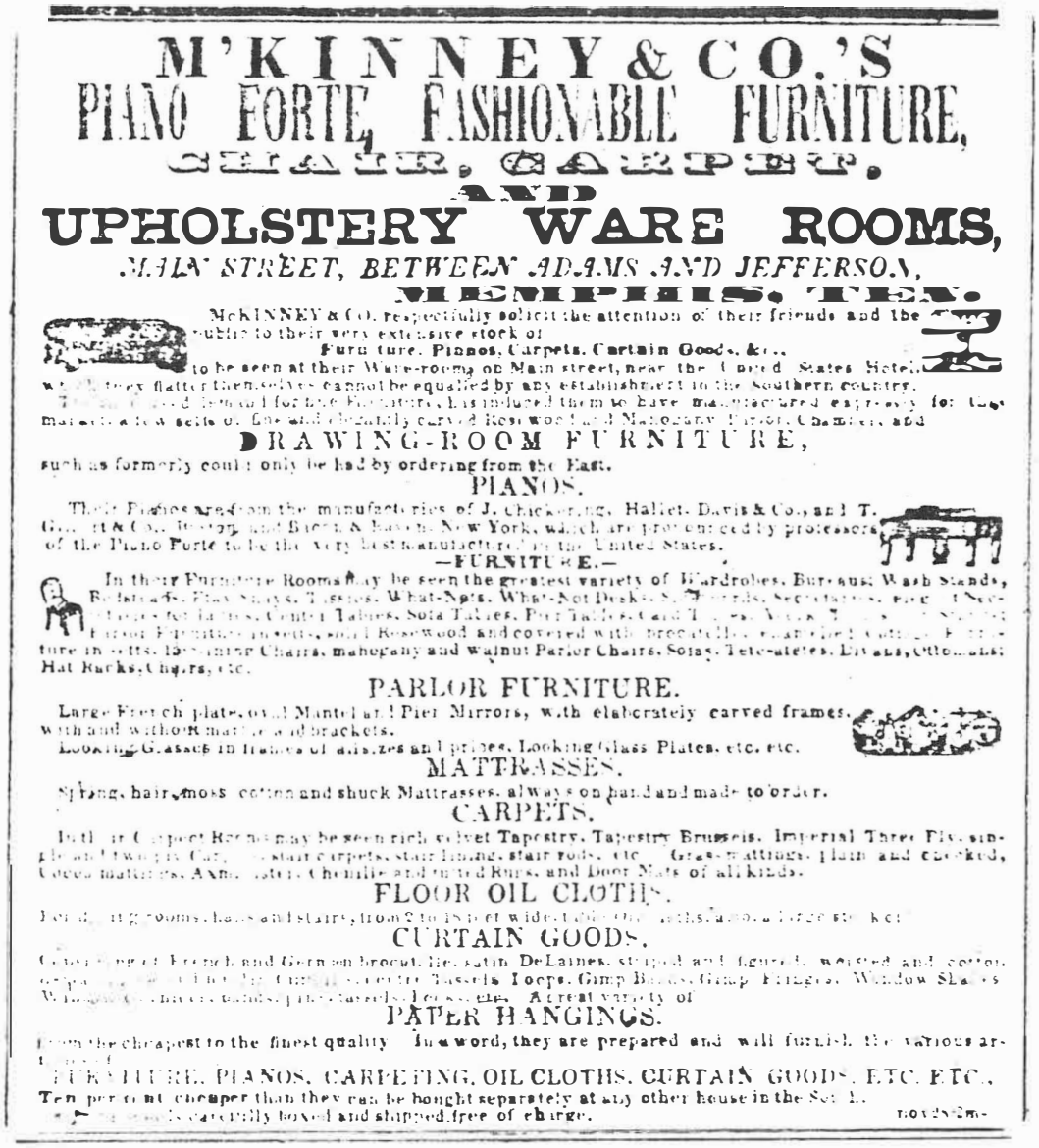
McKinney's advertisements sometimes stated that his furniture was imported from all over the Union. In many of the McKinney and Grosvener advertisements they explain that their furniture has come specifically from Cincinnati or New York.

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[39]Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 11 July 1851, 2.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 7 July 1851, 3.



M'KINNEY & CO.'S
PIANO FORTE, FASHIONABLE FURNITURE,
CHAIR, CARPET,
AND
UPHOLSTERY WARE ROOMS,
MAIN STREET, BETWEEN ADAMS AND JEFFERSON,
MEMPHIS, TEN.

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, which they flatter themselves cannot be equalled by any establishment in the Southern country.

Having visited for the Factories, has induced them to have manufactured expressly for their Ware-rooms a large assortment of the most elegantly carved Rosewood and Mahogany Parlor, Chamber, and

DRAWING-ROOM FURNITURE,

such as formerly could only be had by ordering from the East.

PIANOS.

These Pianos are from the manufactories of J. Chickering, Hallet, Davis & Co., and T. Gilbert & Co., Boston, and Bacon & Raven, New York, which are pronounced 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, Bedsteads, Fine Safes, Tassies, What-Nots, What-Not Desks, Secretaries, Secretaries, Work Tables, Centre Tables, Sofa Tables, Pier Tables and Tea Tables, Marble Top Furniture in suits, and Rosewood and covered with brocatelle, reps and hair cloth Furniture in suits. Fancy Chairs, mahogany and walnut Parlor Chairs, Sofas, Tete-a-tete's, Divans, Ottomans, Hat Racks, Chairs, etc.

PARLOR FURNITURE.

Large French plate, oval Mantel and Pier Mirrors, with elaborately carved frames, with and without Mantle and brackets.

Looking Glasses in frames of all sizes and prices, Looking Glass Plates, etc. etc.

MATTRASSES.

Spring, hair, moss cotton and shuck Mattrasses, always on hand and made to order.

CARPETS.

In the Carpet Rooms may be seen rich velvet Tapestry, Tapestry Brussels, Imperial Three Ply, single and Twilled Ingrain Carpets, stair carpets, stair linning, stair rods, etc. Grass mattings, plain and checked, Cocoa mattings, Anchor, Cheneille and rolled Rugs, and Door Mats of all kinds.

FLOOR OIL CLOTHS.

For dining rooms, halls and stairs, from 2 to 18 feet wide, table Oil Cloths, also a large stock of

CURTAIN GOODS.

Gilt cornices, French and German brocatelles, satin De Laines, striped and figured, worsted and cotton damasks, Lace Curtains, worsted Tassels, Loops, Gimp Bands, Gimp Fringes, Window Shades, Window cornice bandes, plain tassels, loops, etc. A 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.

Orders carefully boxed and shipped free of charge.

nov25-2m-

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,

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[42]Made in Ohio Furniture 1788-1888 [exhibition catalog], Columbus, Ohio: Columbus Museum of Art, 12 February - 25 March 1984, 12.

[43]The Industries of Cincinnati, 53.

[44]Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 12 January 1852, 2.

[45]Robertson 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.

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[46]Henry Montgomery to Meador Furniture Company, 27 October 1885, Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 110.

[47]Henry Montgomery to Meador Furniture Company, 9 October 1882, Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 110.

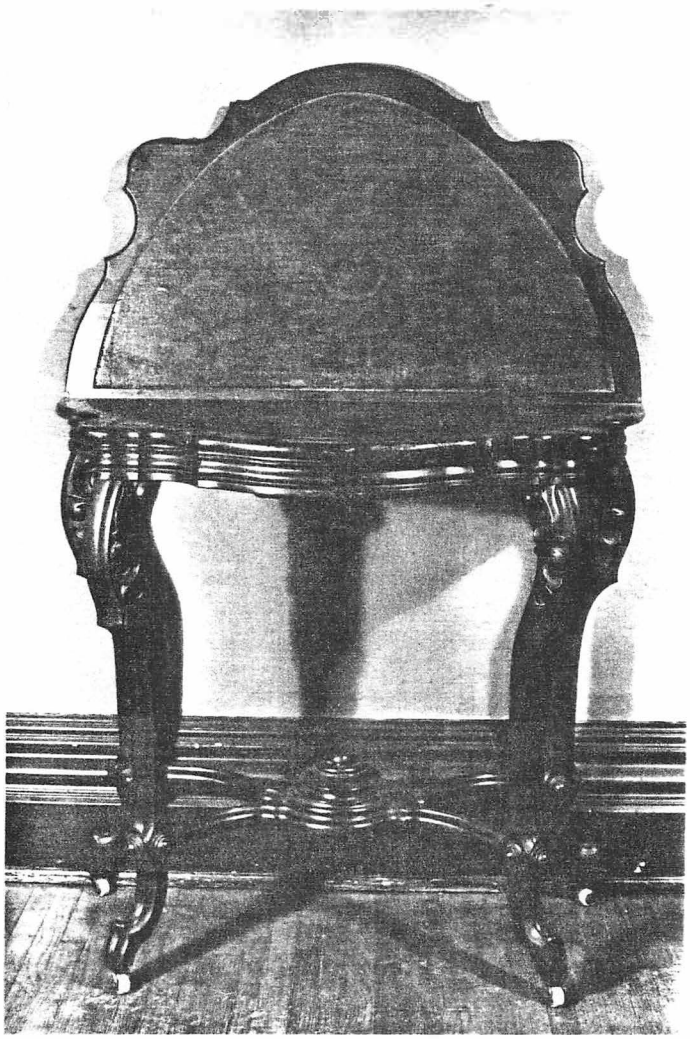


Figure 233. Rococo revival card table located in the Mallory-Neely sitting room.

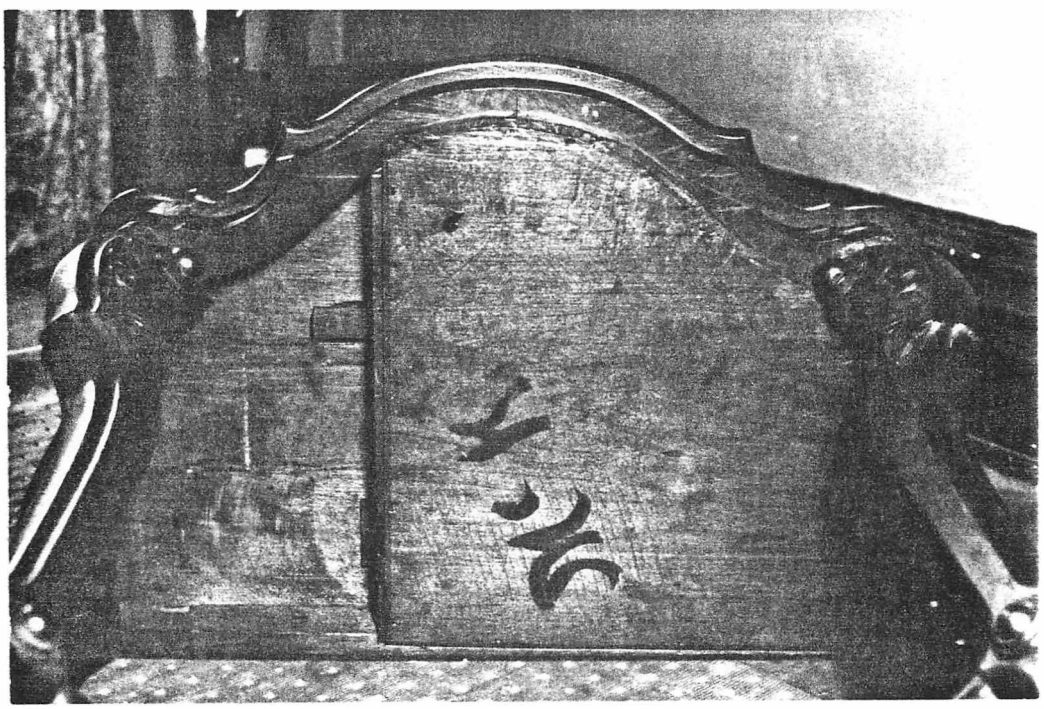
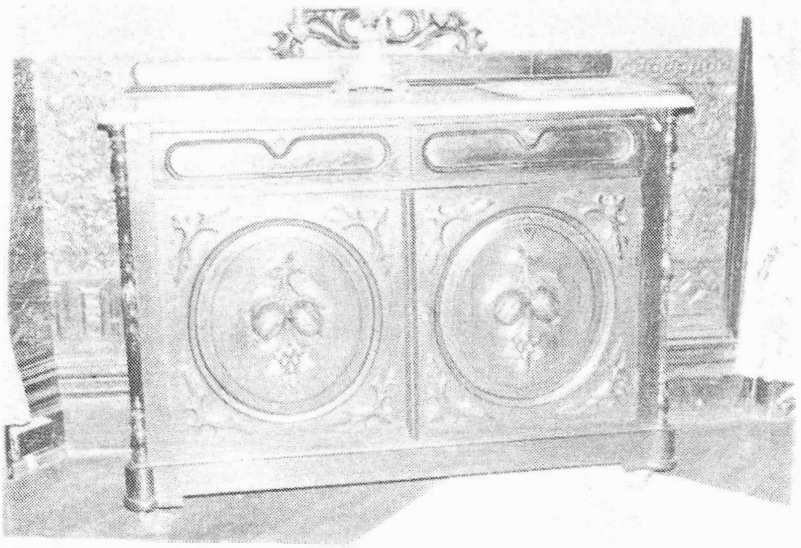
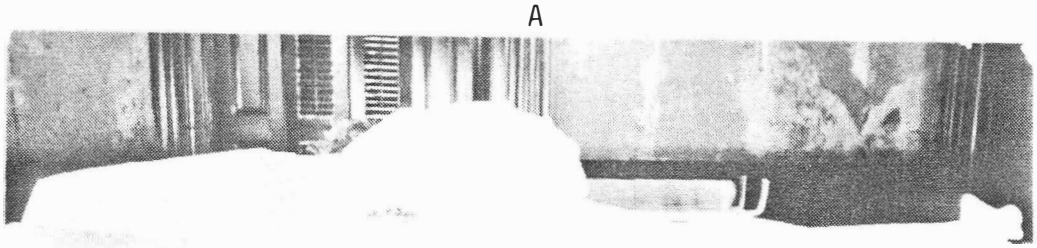


Figure 234. Underside of the same table with the painted initials McK (McKinney).



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

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[48]Memphis 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, Cornices, 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 & Raven, New York; Hallett, Davis & Co. J. Gilbert & Co., Geo. Hews, and W. P. Emerson, Boston; Bordman & 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 Post Bedsteads; Roroll, Gothic, and beautifully carved French Bedsteads; Book-Cases, Secretaries, Counting House Desks and Stools; Painted Cottage (chamber) Furniture in sets; Lounge Cottage Bedsteads. Rocking and Spring Cribs, Iron and Wood Hat-Racks; Towel Racks; Fancy Gothic Chairs; Elizabeth Chairs on Rockers and Rollers; Large Arm Rocking 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., MOSAIC, 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 50 cents to $18 each; Curtain Bands, Gimp Bands, Loops, entre Tassels, Gimps, and every thing pertaining to this branch of business. Curtains made and put up in the city or country on short notice.

Floor Oil Cloth, from 27 inches to 18 feet wide, for Stairs, Halls, Dining Rooms, Rooms, etc.

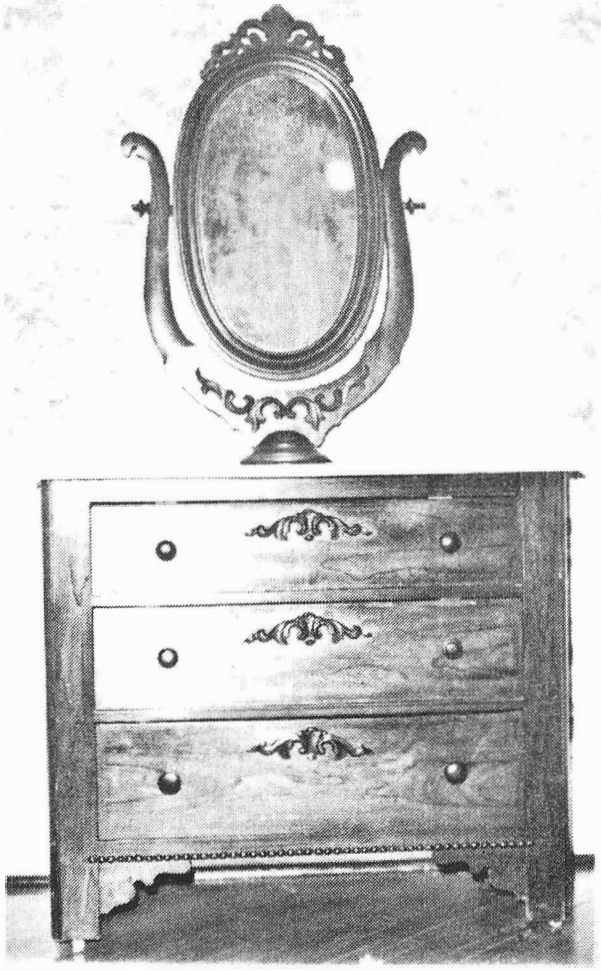
Spring, Hair, Moss, Cotton, and Shuck Mattresses, always on hand and made to order.

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 1m. M'KINNEY & CO

Figure 236. An 1854 McKinney and Company newspaper advertisement listing a variety of tables.



A



B

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.



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]

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[49]See Donald C. Pierce, "Mitchell and Rammelsburg, Cincinnati Furniture Manufacturers 1847-1881," Winterthur Portfolio, 13 (1979), 209-229.

[50]Superior 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,

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[51]Pierce, 213.

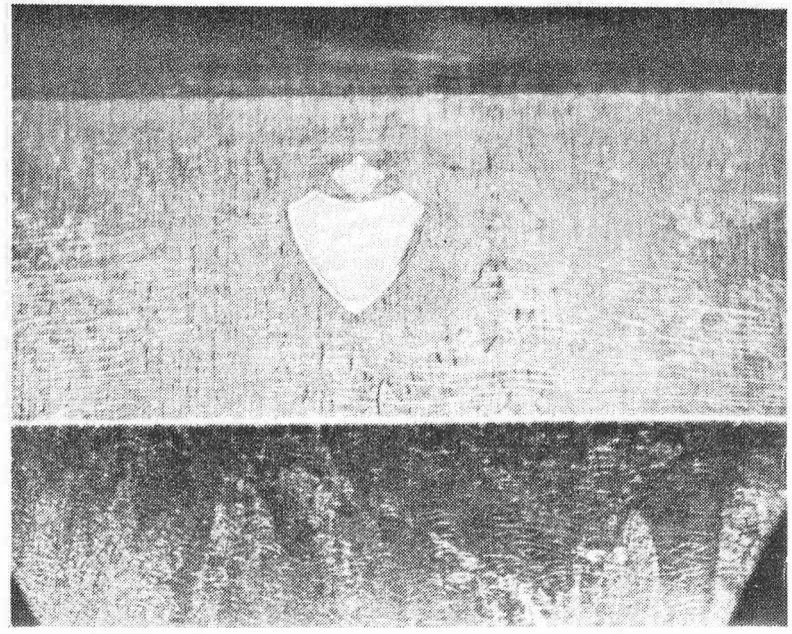
[52]Ibid.

[53]Dwight Goss, History of Grand Rapids and Its Industries I (Chicago: C. F. Cooper & Co. Publishers, 1906), 1072.

[54]Imperial 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

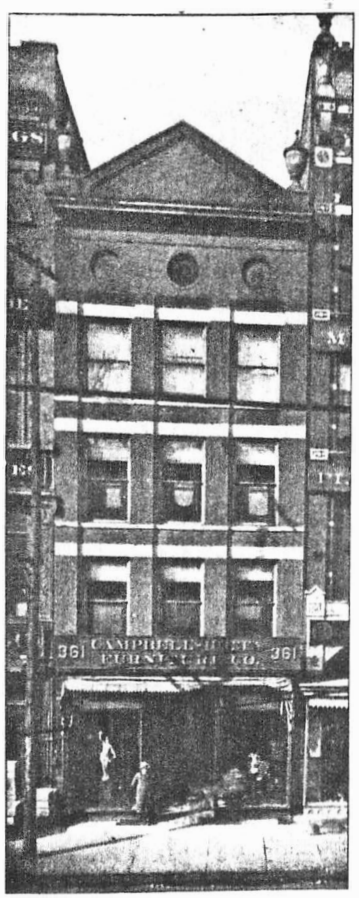
There is no one style of furniture that is "Victorian." Attempts to understand nineteenth century furniture are often confusing

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[55]Records of the Widdicomb Furniture Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Special Collections, Grand Rapids Public Library.

[56]The 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.

[57]Nelson, Matter & Co. Furniture Manufacturers (Grand Rapids, Michigan, c. 1909), n.p. [trade catalog], Special Collections, Grand Rapids Public Library.



WAREROOMS OF THE
CAMPBELL-HOFFA FURNITURE COMPANY

A



Established (1/3) 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. 306, No. 308, No. 310 Main street. Wholesale warehouses, corner Vance and I. C. R. R. tracks. Write for wholesale catalogue.

1869 *BUY OF THE MAKER.* *190.)*

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

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[58]See Kenneth Ames, "What is the Neo-Grec?" Nineteenth Century, 2, No. 2 (Summer 1976), 13.

[59]See, 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.

[60]See 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]

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[61]See, for example, Wilson Faude, "They Don't Make It Anymore," Victorian Furniture, ed. Kenneth Ames (Philadelphia: The Victorian Society in America, 1982), 37-42.

[62]Kaufmann, 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 hsitoric 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.

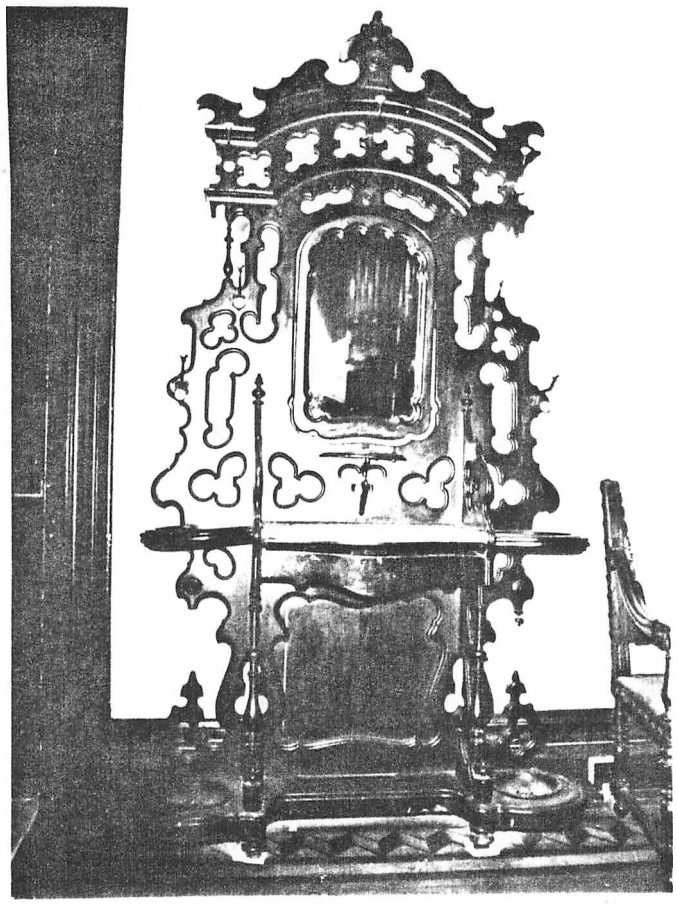
The second stylistic trend in Victorian furniture styles was the result of the reform movement. Design reformers sought to break the dependence of designers on historic prototypes, encouraging them, instead, to create practical furniture designed for the era in which they lived.

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.

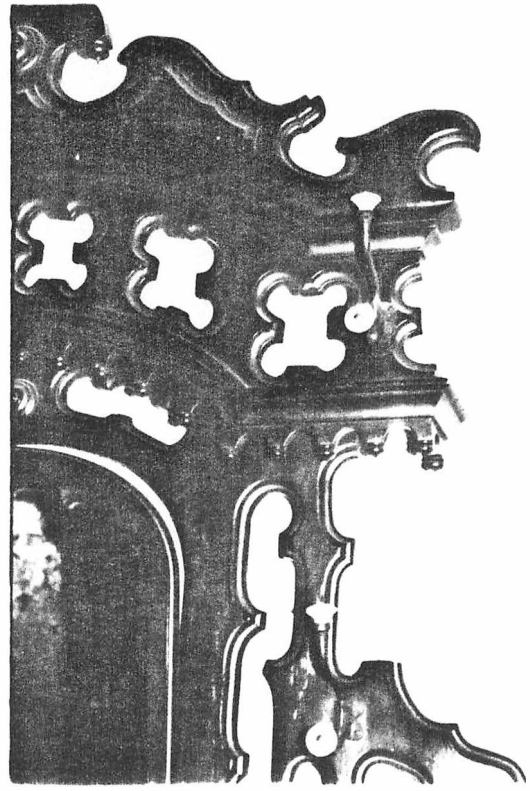
Empire style. The earliest nineteenth century furniture style represented in the Mallory-Neely collection is the Empire (circa 1815-1845). The American Empire variant of this style was based on the French Empire and English Regency.[63] The Empire was originally created as a Neo-Classical style for the male dominated, military oriented Napoleonic Court. Consequently, it is generally dark, massive and austere in appearance. In America its use paralleled

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[63]Fairbanks and Bates, 252-253.

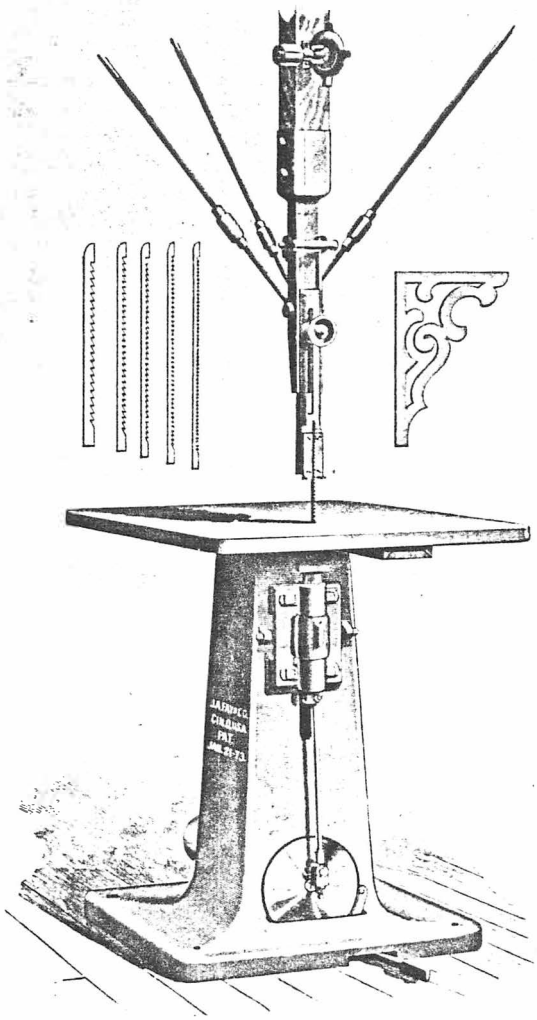


A



B

Figure 241. Exuberantly designed hall tree located in the Mallory-Neely entrance hall.
A. Hall tree.
B. Close-up view of hall tree.

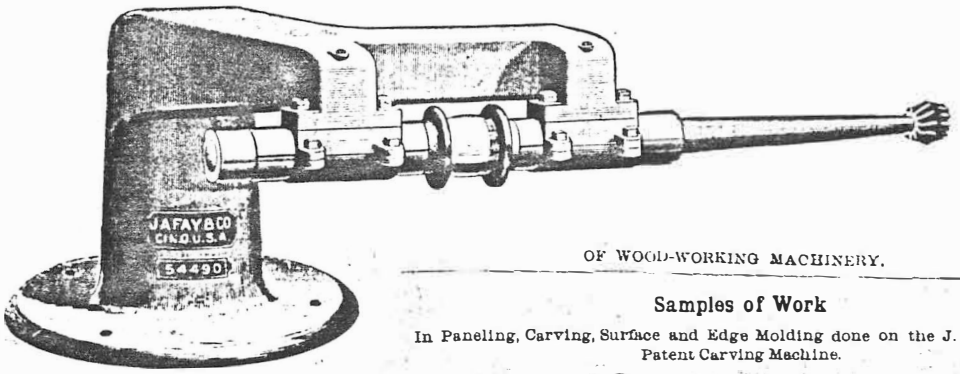


No 5

Patent Unstrained Scroll Saw.

With Adjustable Top Guide, and Automatic Brake and Stripper.

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.

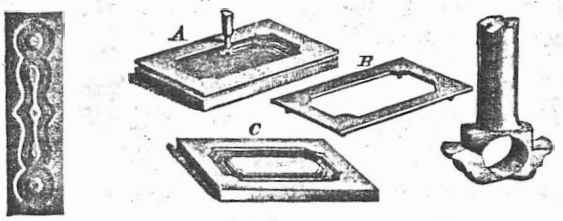


AS ARRANGED FOR A BENCH.

A

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

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[64]Joyce 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 variatons. 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

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[65]Catalano, 17.

[66]Memphis City Directory for 1850 (Memphis: R.B.J. Twyman, 1849), 91.

[67]Nineteenth Century Furniture and Other Decorative Arts (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970), xviii.

[68]Ibid., 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.

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[69]See 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).

[70]Robert C. Smith, "Gothic and Elizabethan Revival Furniture, 1800-1850," The Magazine Antiques, 75, No. 3 (March 1959), 275.

[71]Downing, 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.

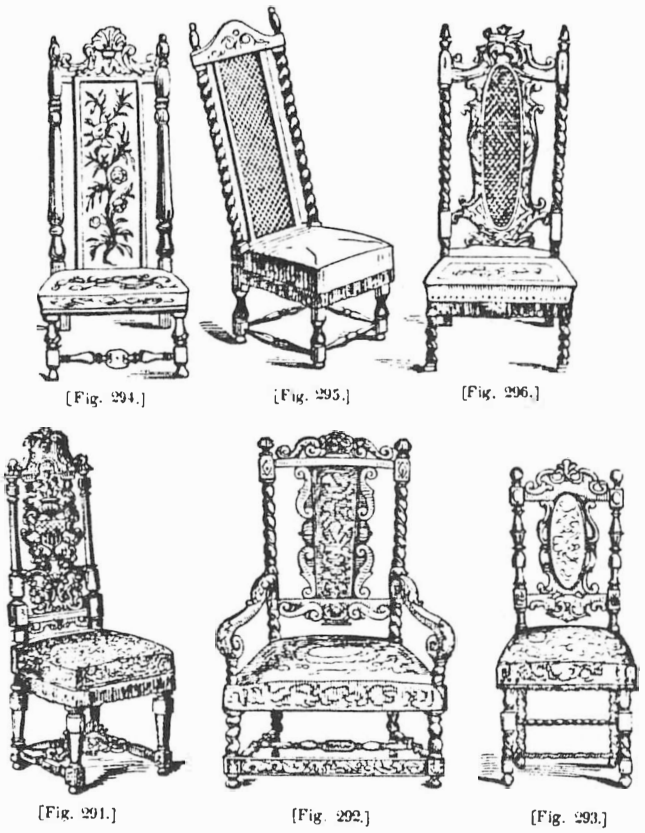
Both the Memphis furniture firms of H. M. Grovesner and McKinney & Company more than once listed in their newspaper advertisements that among the many items of available furniture in stock were ELIZABETH CHAIRS. Scattered about in the 1863 inventory of the Mitchell, Hoffman and Company of Memphis are 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

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[72]Superior Court of Cincinnati [Inventory of Memphis Outlet], 817-820.





A

B

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.

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.

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[73]See 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.

[74]Nineteenth Century Furniture and Other Decorative Arts, xviii.

[75]William 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]

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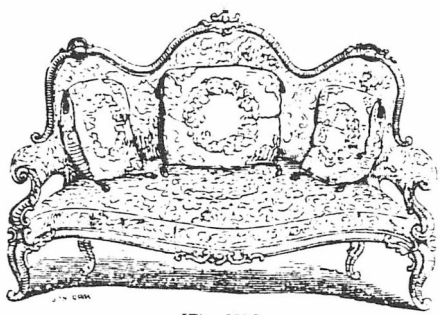
[76]Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 432.

[77]Long's Memphis Directory [advertisement] (Memphis: Blalock & Co. Publishers, 1865), 717.

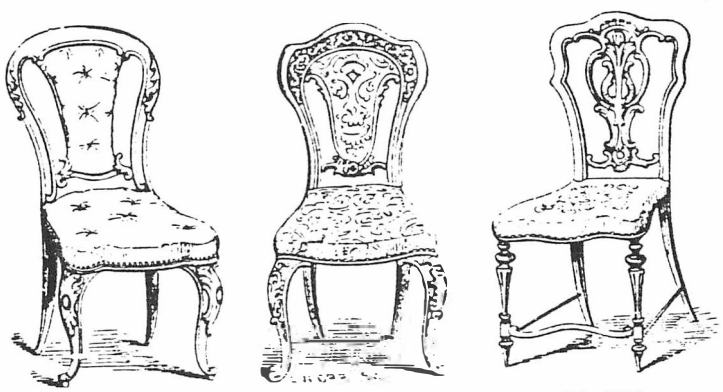
[78]Halpin's Memphis City Directory 1867-68 [advertisement] (Memphis: Bulletin Publishing Co., 1867), 22.

[79]Edward'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.

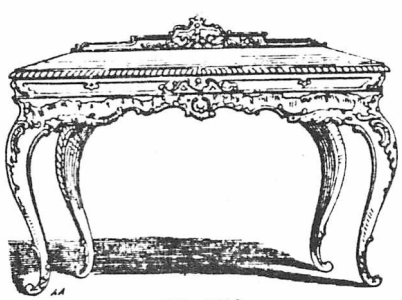
[80]Boyle & Chapman's City of Memphis for 1876 (Memphis: Boyle & Chapman, 1876), 213.



[Fig. 238.]



[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.



A



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.

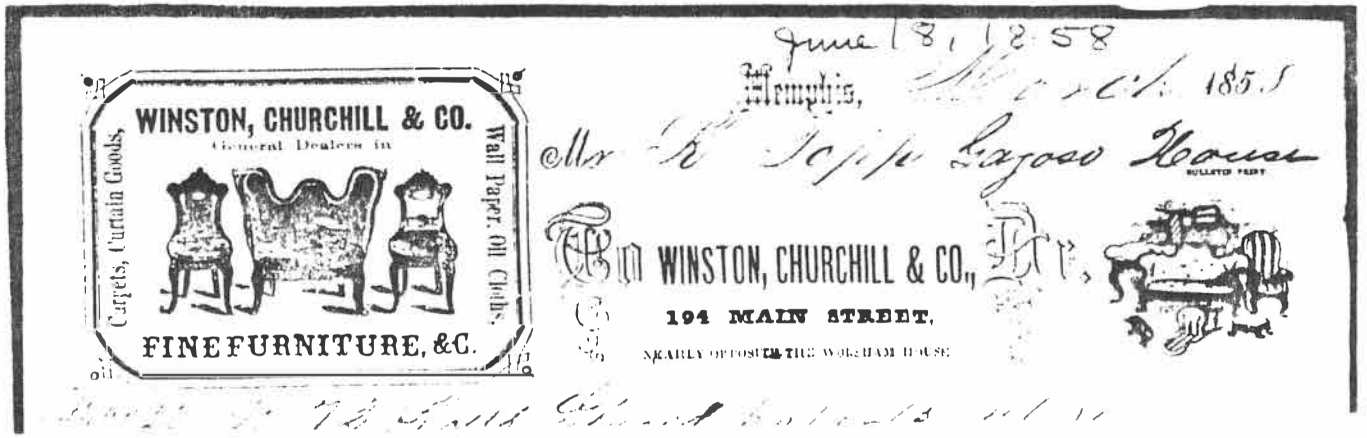


Figure 248. An 1858 invoice head of a Memphis furniture company, from the Robertson Topp Papers, showing Rococo Revival furniture. Courtesy Burrow Library, Rhodes College.

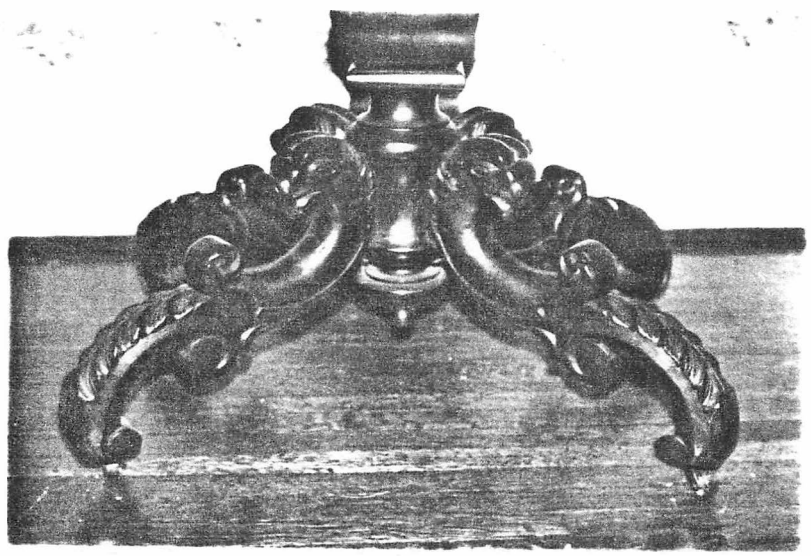
As might be expected because of its popularity, more Rococo furniture survives in the Mallory-Neely House than that of the other historic revivals. The pieces in the house range from ornate to simple. Two somewhat similar center tables, one located in the bedroom and the other in the hallway, exemplify 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

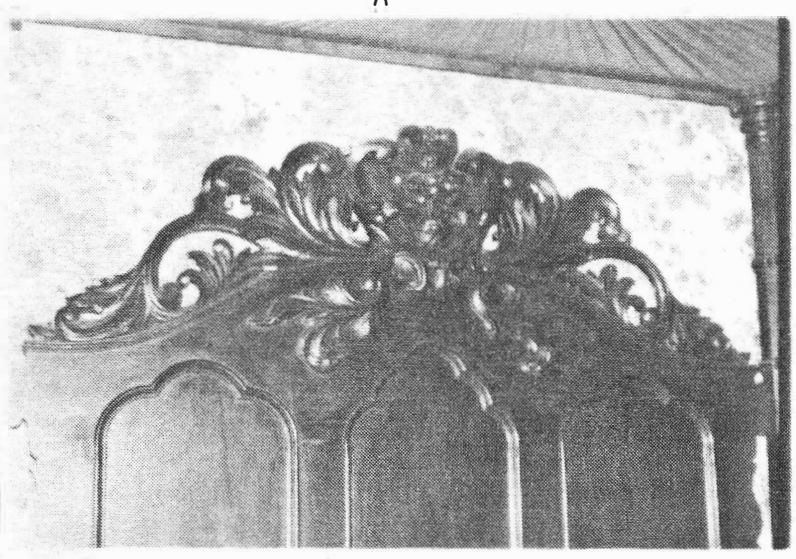


B

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

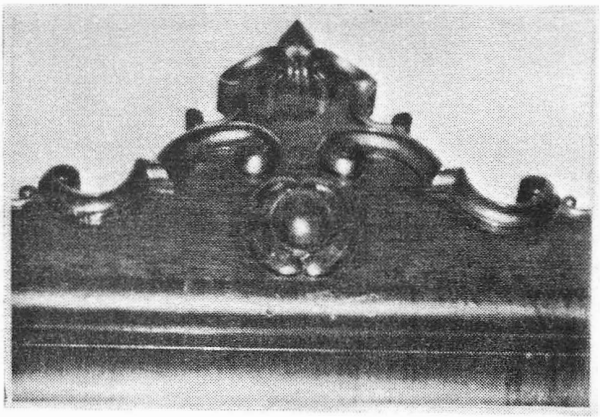


B

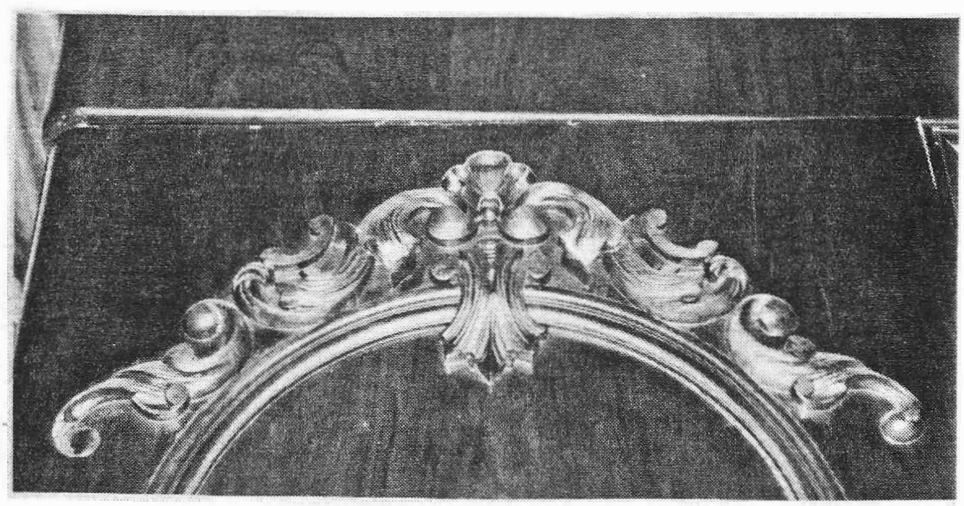
Figure 250. Rococo Revival half-tester bed located in the Mallory-Neely master bedroom.
A. Half-tester bed.
B. Detail of the elaborately carved headboard.



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 Piece 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:

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[81]See Maud O'Bryan Ronstrom, "Seignouret and Mallard, Cabinetmakers," The Magazine Antiques, 66, No. 2 (August 1944), 79-81.

[82]Timothy 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.

[83]Donald 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

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[84]Superior Court of Cincinnati [Inventory of Memphis Outlet], 816-827.

[85]Renaissance Revival Victorian Furniture [exhibition catalog] (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Grand Rapids Art Museum, 6 November - 6 December 1976).

[86]Ames, "Grand Rapids furniture at the time of the centennial," 34.

[87]Renaissance Revival Victorian Furniture, 4.

[88]Ibid.

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 burled 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.

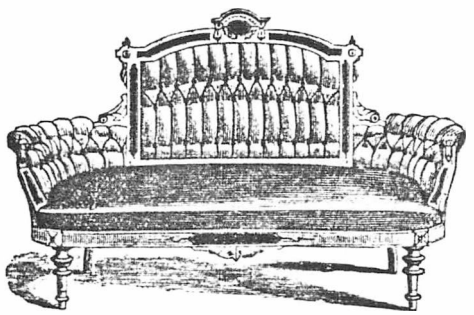
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[89]Ames, "Grand Rapids furniture at the time of the centennial," 34.

[90]Ransom, 25.

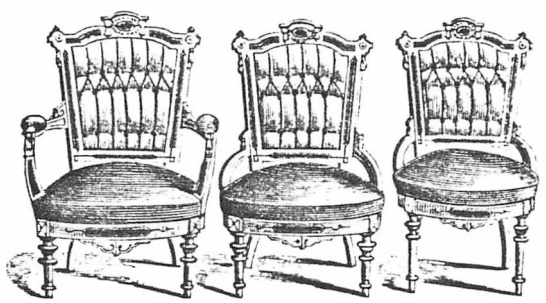
PARLOR SUIT, No. 18.

A VERY FINE SUIT.



TETE, No. 18.

FRENCH VENEERED, POLISHED PANELS.



Large Easy Chair, No. 18. Round Seat, Polished Panels.

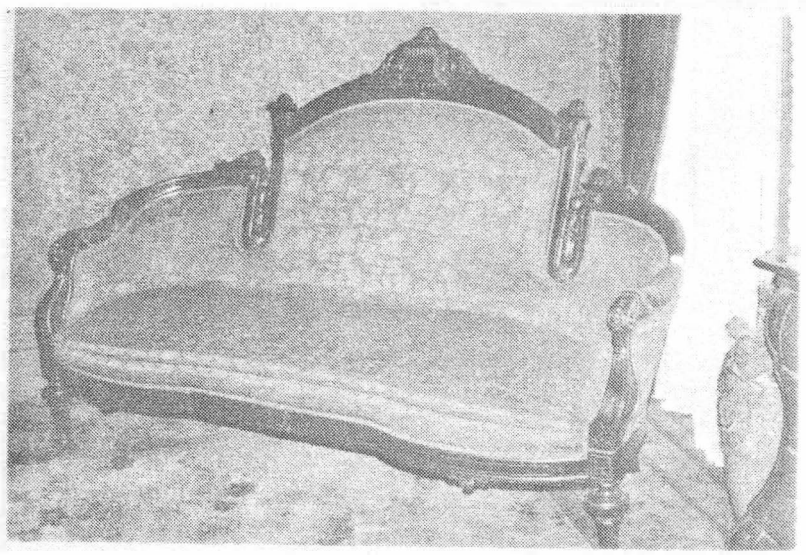
Ladies' Easy Chair, No. 18. Round Seat, Polished Panels.

Parlor Chair, No. 18. 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 "

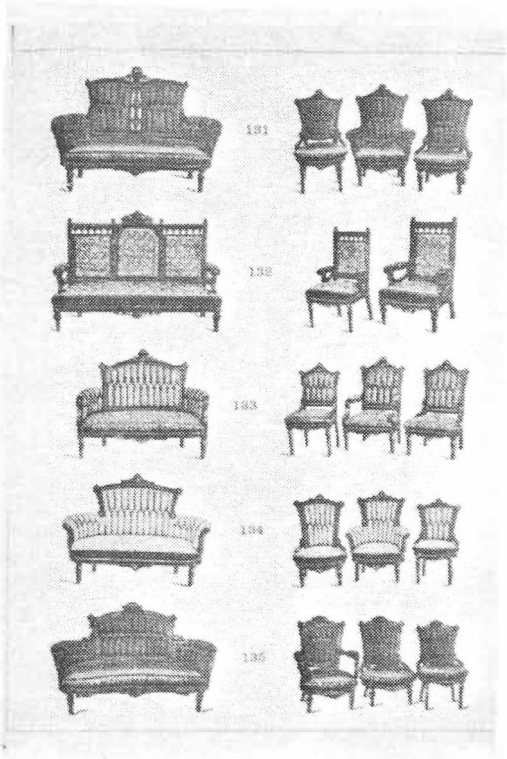
Figure 252. Renaissance Revival parlor suite from the 1874 catalog of McDonough Price & Company. Courtesy Chicago Historical Society.



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.

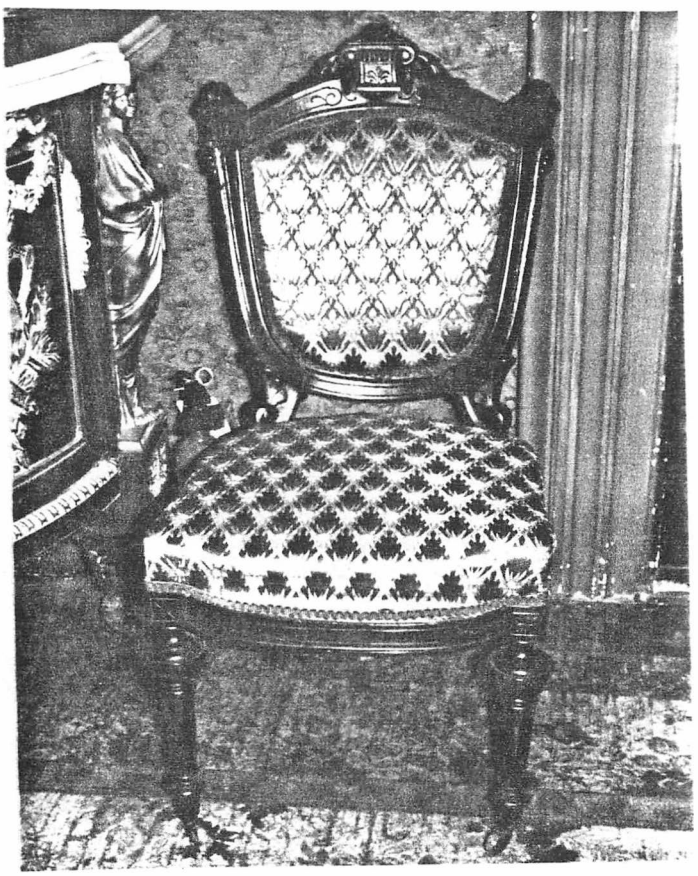
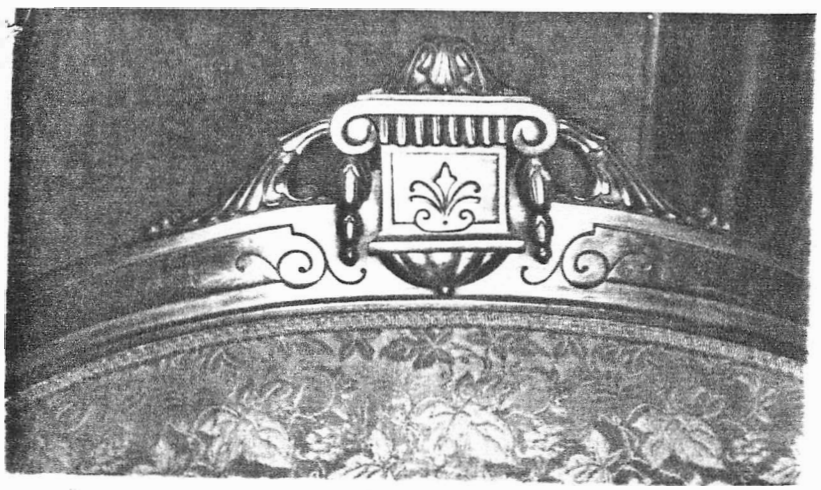
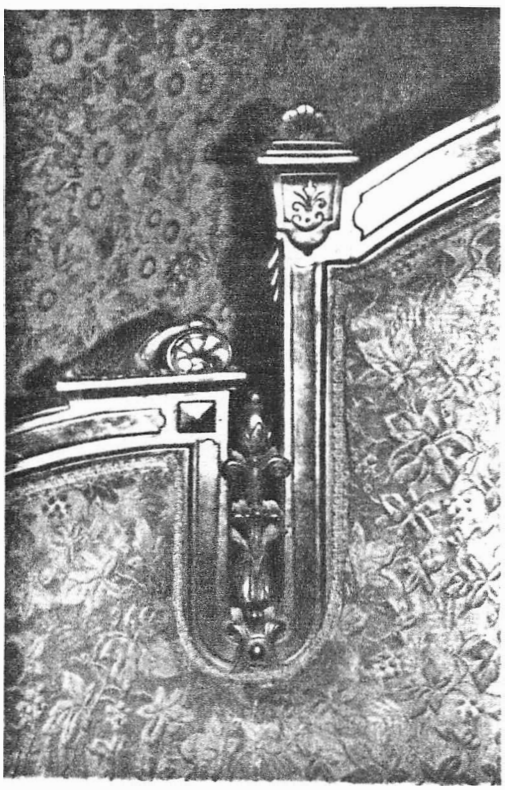


Figure 254. One of the chairs in the Mallory-Neely parlor from a Renaissance Revival suite.



A

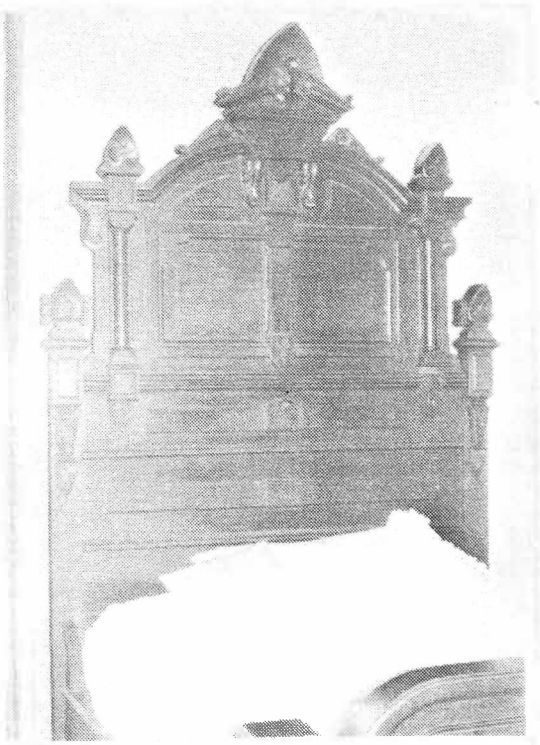


B



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

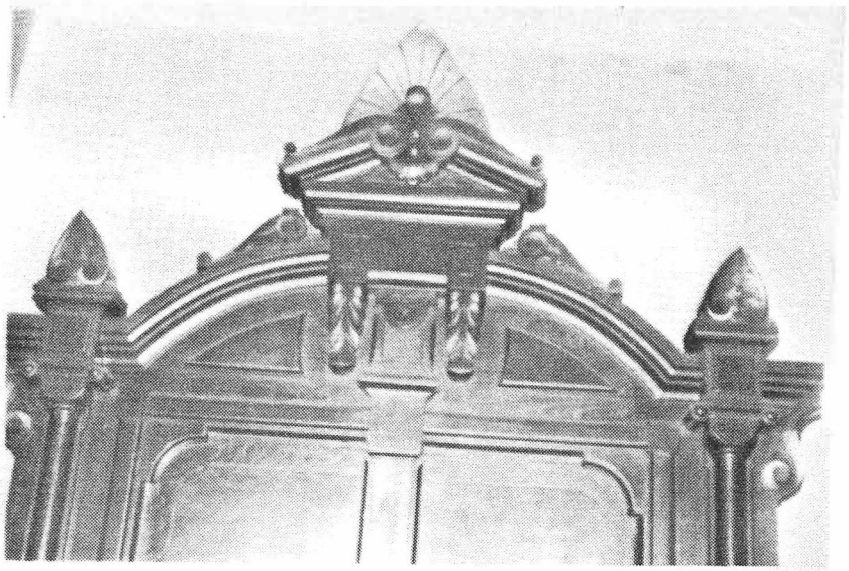


B

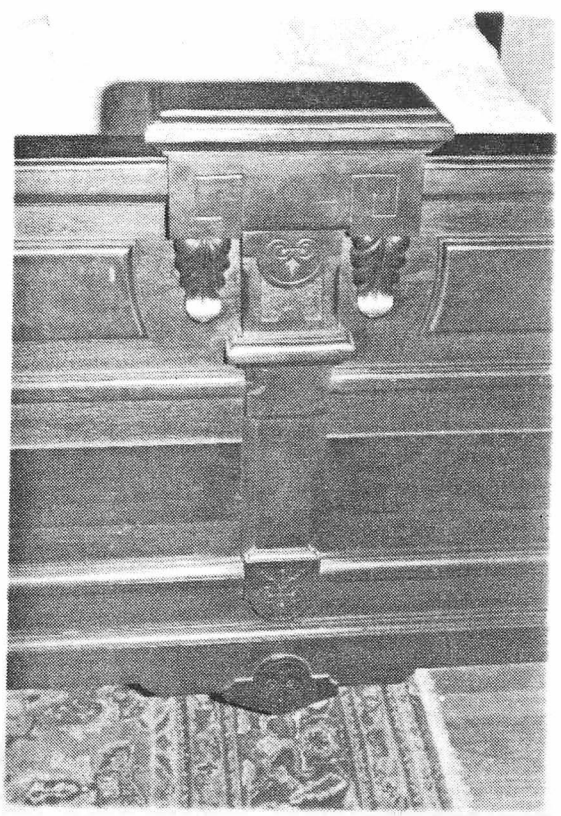


C

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

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[91]Art in France Under Napoleon III, 44; and Hamlin, 428.

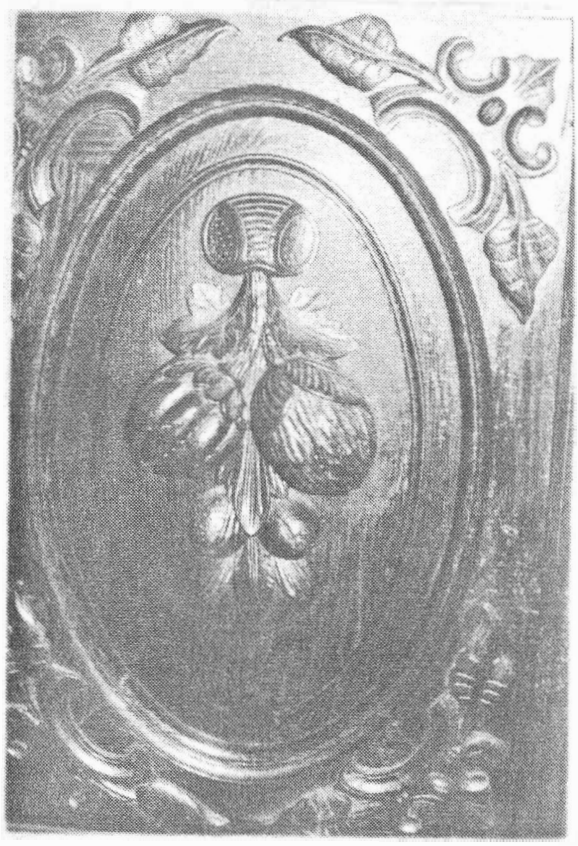
[92]See Kenneth Ames, "What is the Neo-Grec?" 13-21; and "Sitting in (Neo-Grec) Style," Nineteenth Century, 2, Nos. 3-4 (Autumn 1976), 51-58.

[93]Ames, "What is the Neo-Grec?" 13, 16.

[94]Renaissance Revival Victorian Furniture, 5.

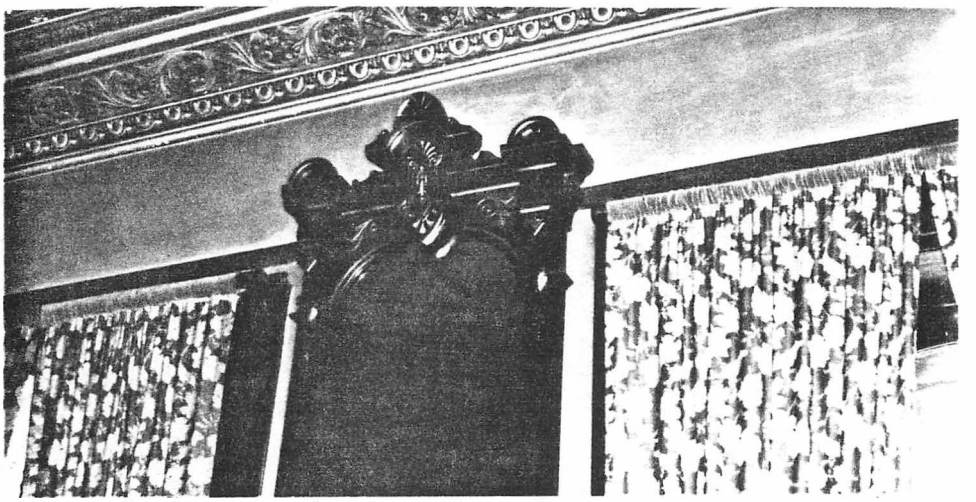


A



B

Figure 258. Renaissance Revival sideboard in the Mallory-Neely dining room.
A. The sideboard.
B. Detail of the fruit carving.

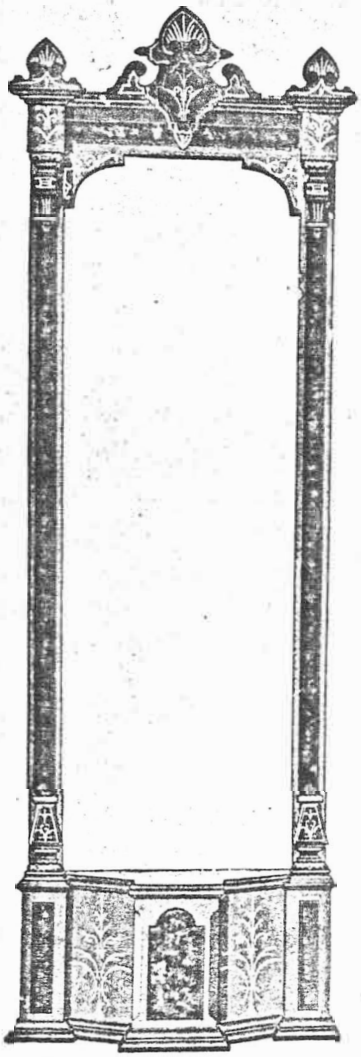


A



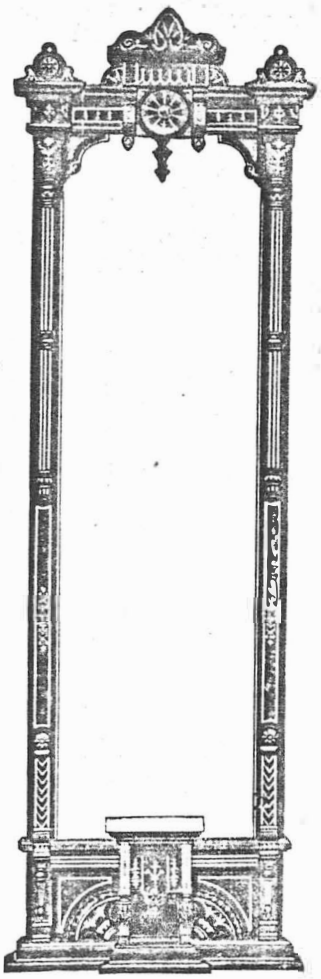
B

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.



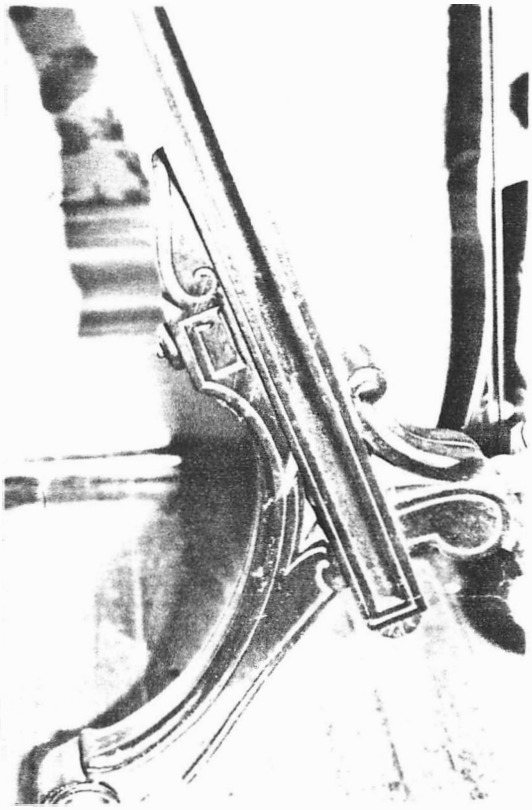
No. 80.—PIER MIRROR.

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.

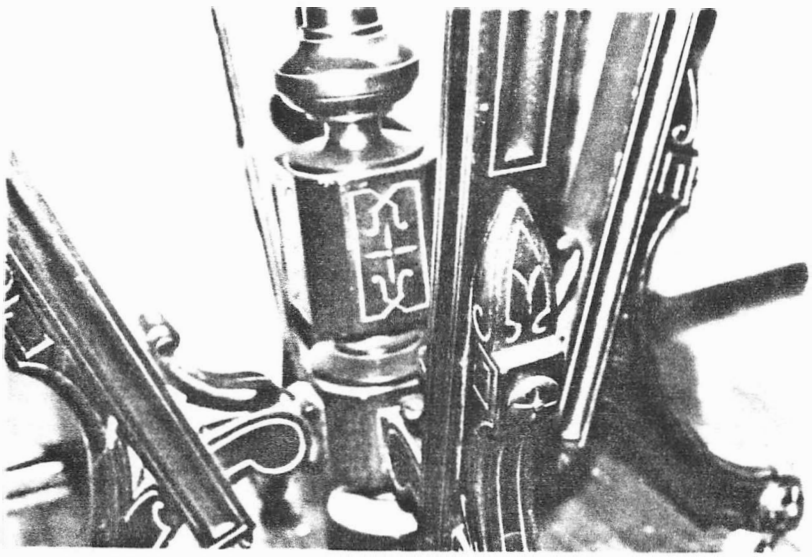
Figure 260. Pier mirrors similar to the one in the Mallory-Neely House from the catalog of Pape Brothers & Kugemann of Cincinnati, n.d. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.



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]

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[95]See Marilyn Johnson, "Art Furniture: Wedding of the Useful to the Beautiful," In Pursuit of Beauty (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986), 143-175.

[96]See, for example, Haweis, 4.

[97]See Mary Jean Madigan, Eastlake Influenced American Furniture, 1870-1890 [exhibition catalog] (Yonkers, New York: Hudson River Museum, 18 November 1973 - 6 January 1974).

[98]See Johnson, 144-152.

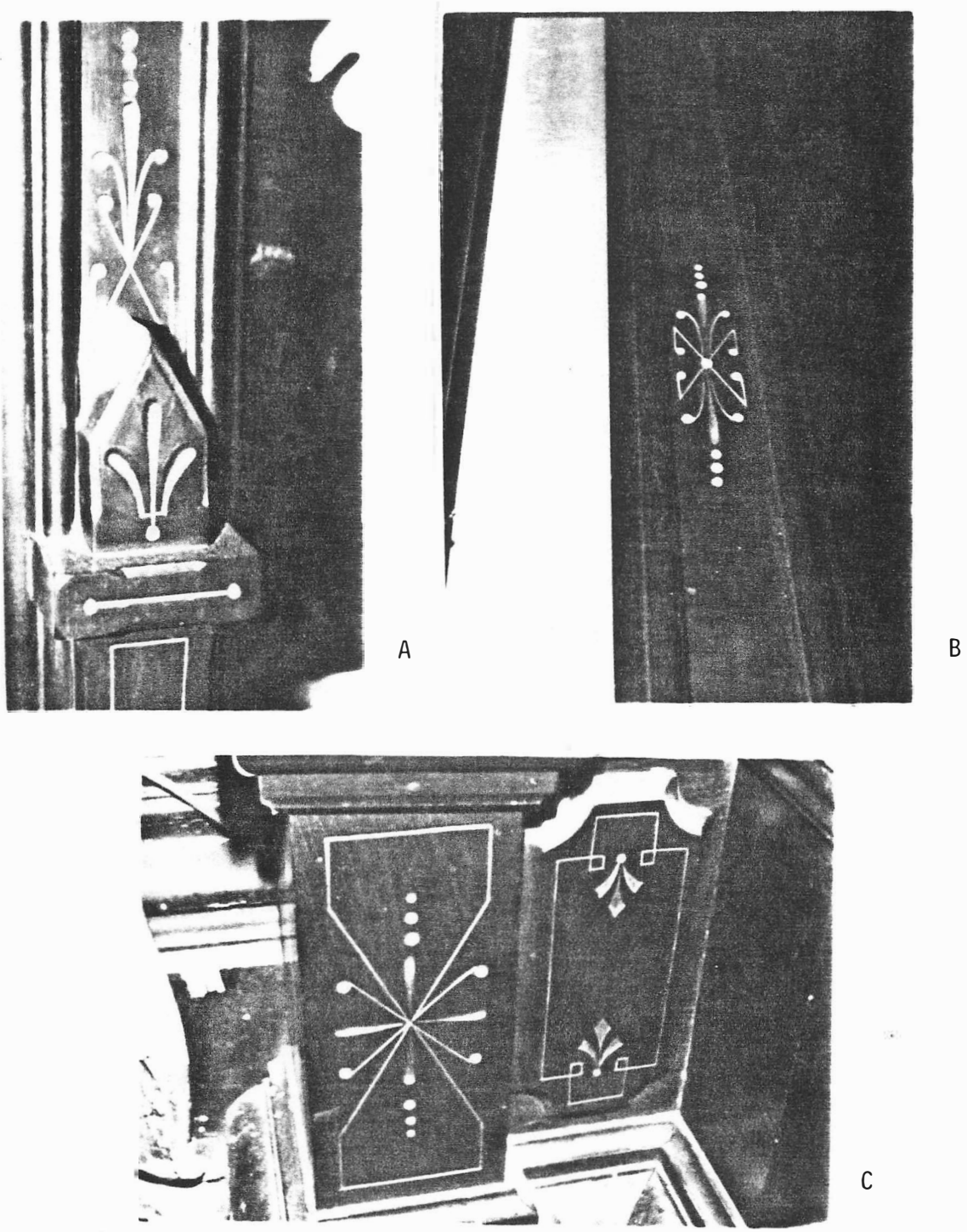


Figure 262. Details of the Mallory-Neely pier mirror showing characteristic Neo-Grec incised and gilt ornament, most of which are modernized versions of ancient Greek motifs.
A. Stylized palmette design.
B. Incised design.
C. Incised linear patterns.

(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]

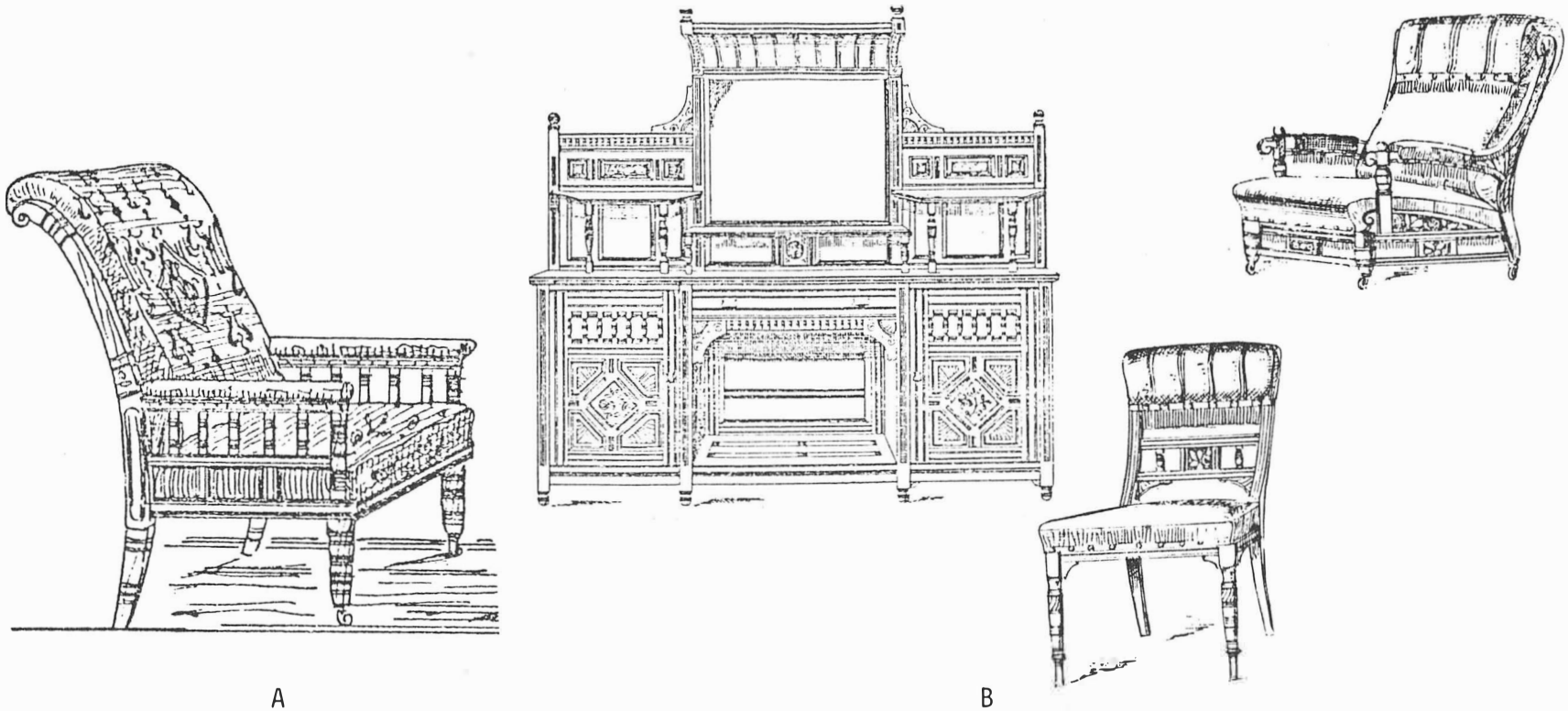
The James Columbus Neely family, as noted, carried out extensive remodeling of their new Memphis home in the Aesthetic taste. Changes included new floor, window and wall treatment. As one might expect, along with this they also purchased Aesthetic-influenced furniture. Some of the more representative 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.

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[99]See Lynes, 96.

[100]See Mary Jean Madigan, "The Influence of Charles Locke Eastlake on American Furniture Manufacture, 1870-90," Winterthur Portfolio, 10 (1975), 2-22.

[101]See Hanks, "Herter Brothers: Art in Furniture Design."



A B

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

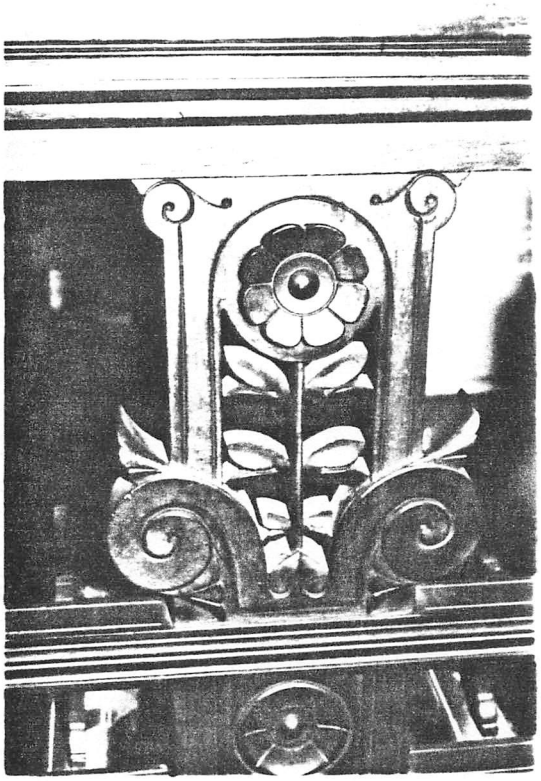
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[102]See, for example, The Illustrated Catalogue, The F. W. Alms Manufacturing Company, Hat Racks, Library, and Center Tables (Cincinnati, Ohio: March 1887) [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

[103]Talbot, 52.



A



B

Figure 264. Reform style library table in the Mallory-Neely collection.
A. Library table.
B. Detail of floral ornament.



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]

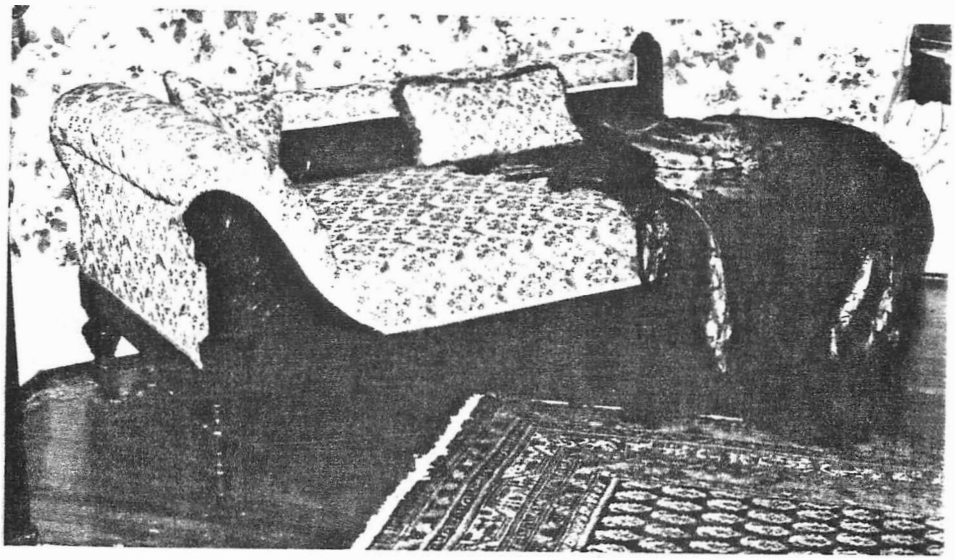
In the Eastlake style, the leather covered Mallory-Neely dining room chairs are a set with the exception of two arm chairs. (Figure 268) Trade catalogs of the period show that this kind of dining chair was produced in a wide variety of configurations. (Figure 269) Varying upholstery choices including 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

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[104]New Goods for 1884 Made by the Buffalo Upholstering Company (Buffalo, New York: 1884), 1 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

[105]Elizabeth 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.

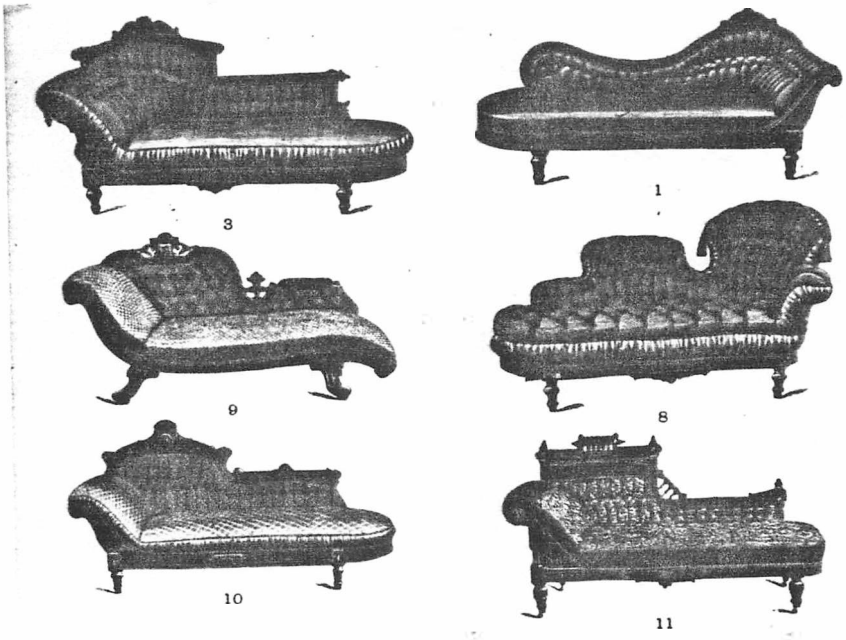
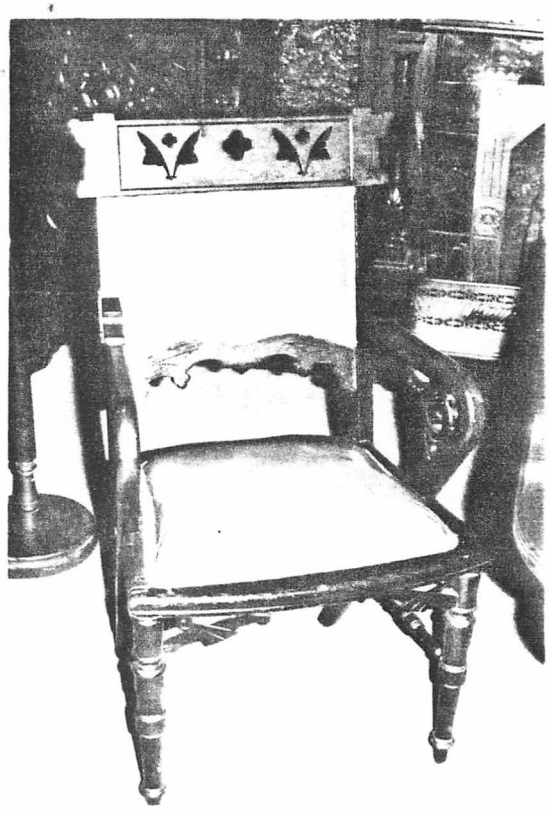


Figure 267. Bed lounges from the catalog of the C. & F. Vogel Company of New York, n.d. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.

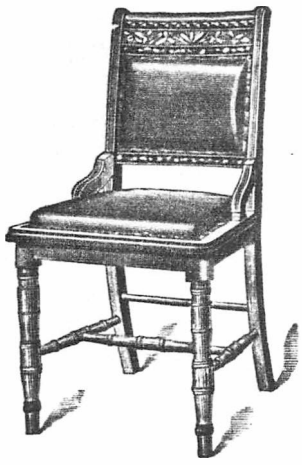


A



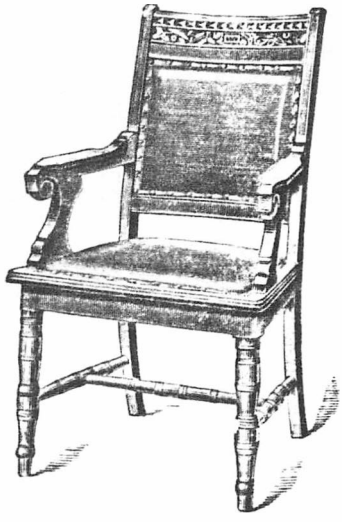
B

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]

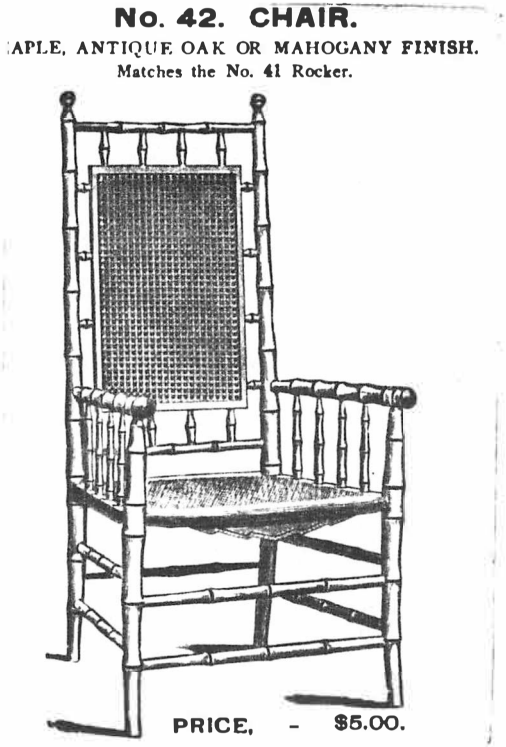
Orientalism. Not a style but more a fad, Orientalism peaked during the later decades of the nineteenth century. During

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[106]Spiegel & Company Catalogue (Chicago: c. 1890), 62 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago.

[107]Memphis Appeal [advertisement], 2 November 1890, 1.





A 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 Movements 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]

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[108]Lynes, 99.

[109]Out 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.

[110]Ishbell 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

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[111]Edward 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)

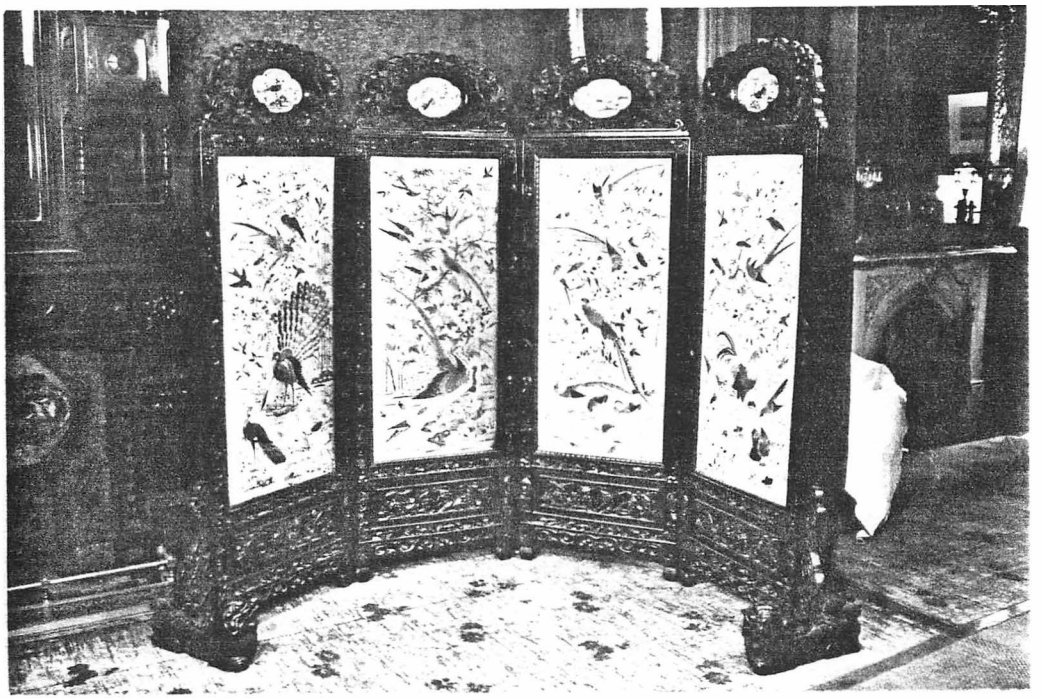
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[112]According to Aesthetic taste an Oriental screen, or any screen for that matter, was an essential component of interior decoration. See, for example, Harrison, 150.

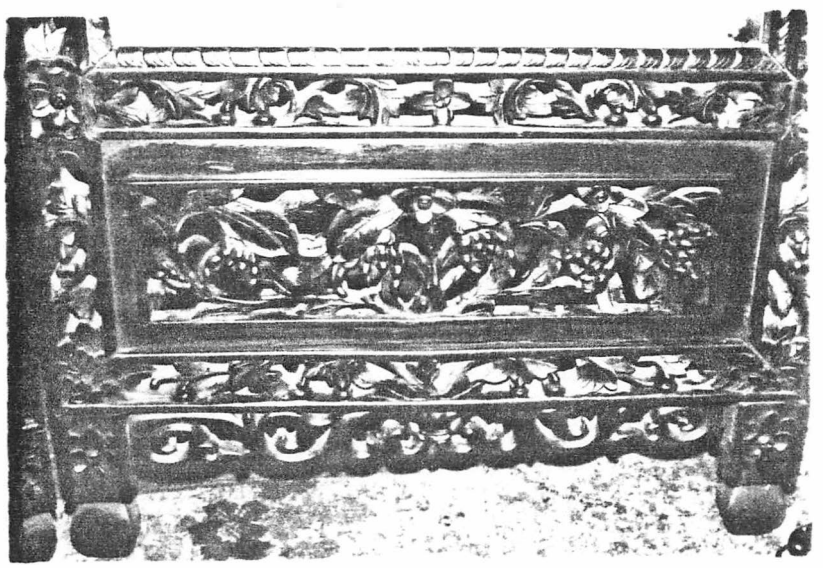
[113]"Furniture of the Ch'ing Dynasty," Arts of Asia, 3, No. 5 (September-October, 1973), 36.

[114]Ibid., 26.

[115]Louisiana Exposition Company Collection Addendum, Series IV, Subseries I, Box 27, Folder 8, Special Collections, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.



A



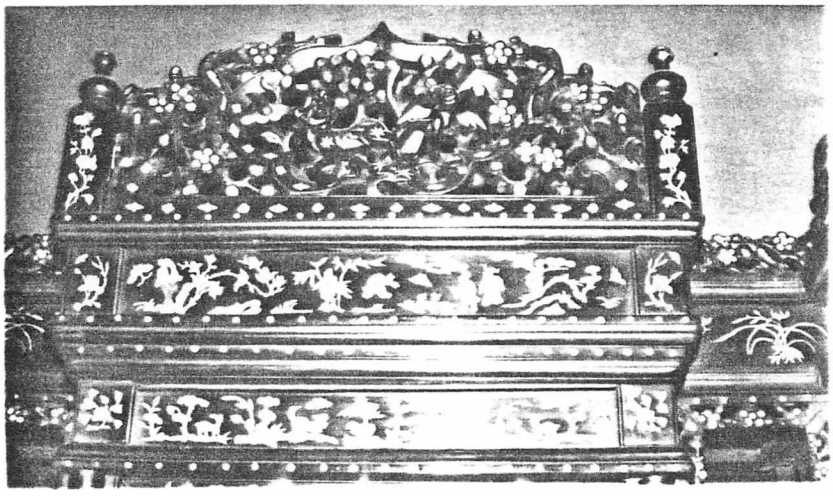
B

Figure 271. Intricately carved Ch'ing Dynasty screen located in the Mallory-Neely parlor.
A. Screen.
B. Detail of carving.

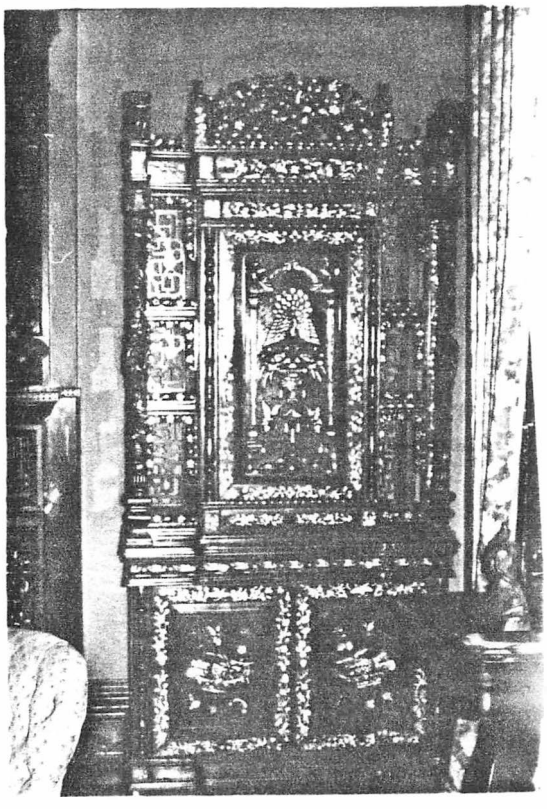


A B C

Figure 272. Details of the embroidered panels from the Mallory-Neely Ch'ing Dynasty screen.
A. Peacock panel.
B. Phoenix panel.
C. Pheasant panel.

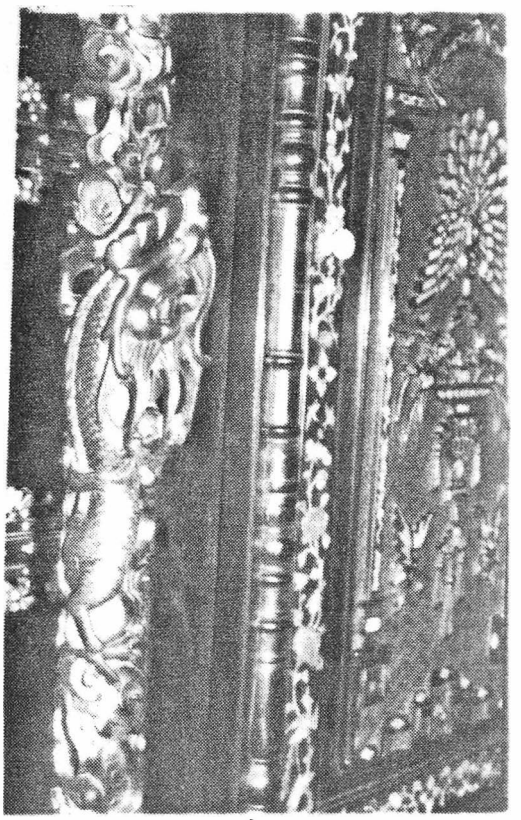


A



B

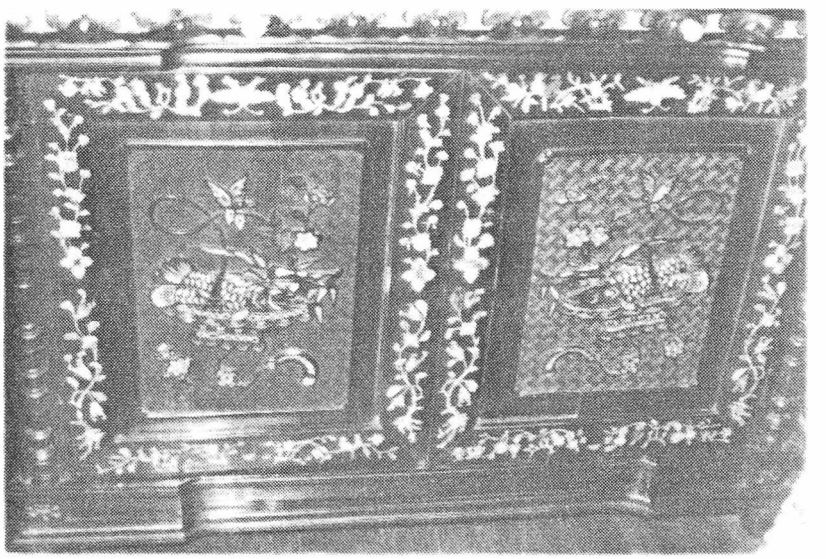
Figure 273. Elaborately carved and inlaid Ch'ing Dynasty cabinet located in the Mallory-Neely sitting room.
A. Close-up of center cabinet cresting.
B. Ch'ing Dynasty cabinet.



A



B



C

Figure 274. Details of the Mallory-Neely Ch'ing Dynasty cabinet.
A. Carving.
B. Relief decoration.
C. Mother-of-pearl inlay.

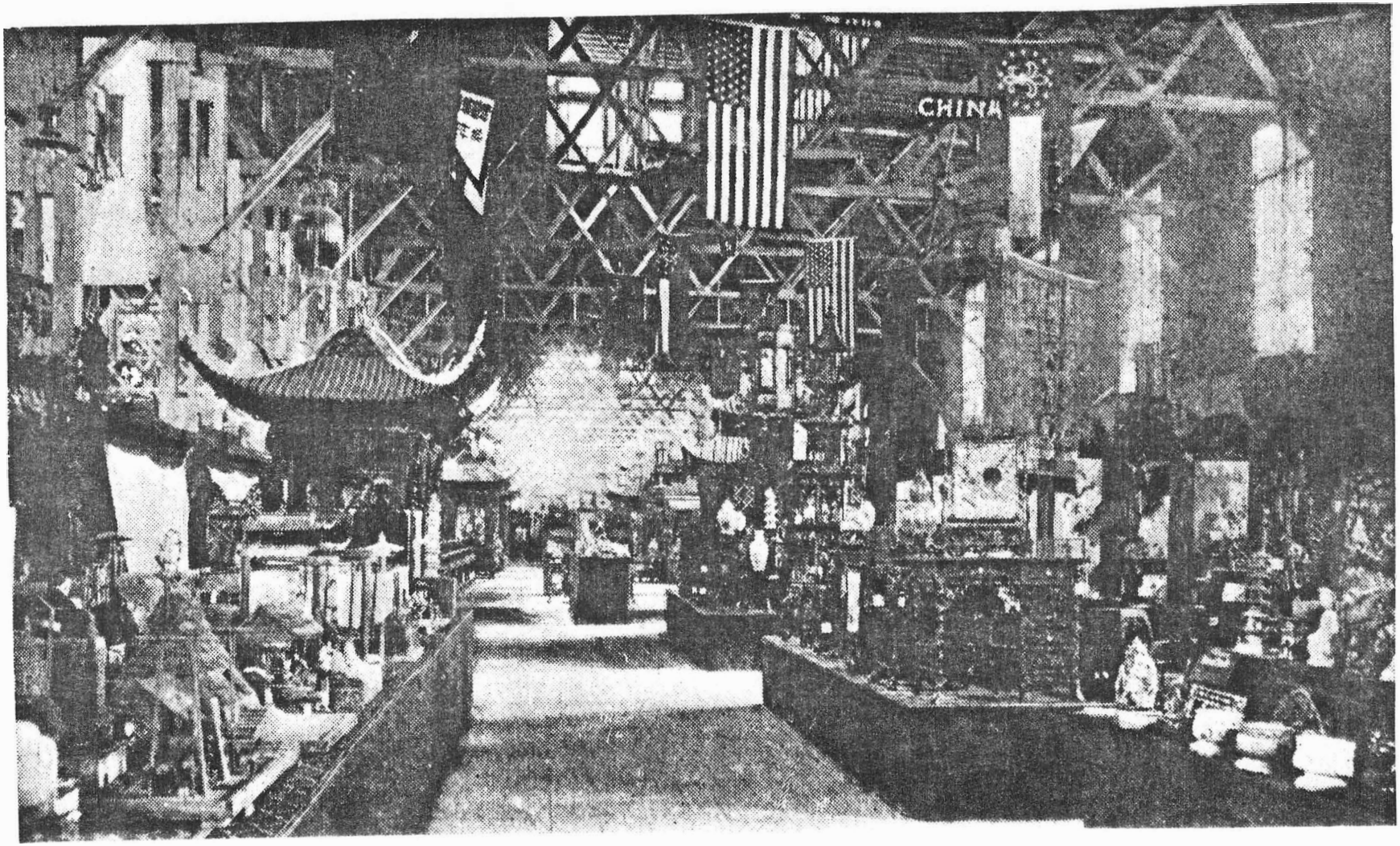


Figure 275. View showing the general arrangement of the Chinese Exhibits at the St. Louis World's Fair, 1904 from the History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Courtesy Missouri Historical Society.



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.

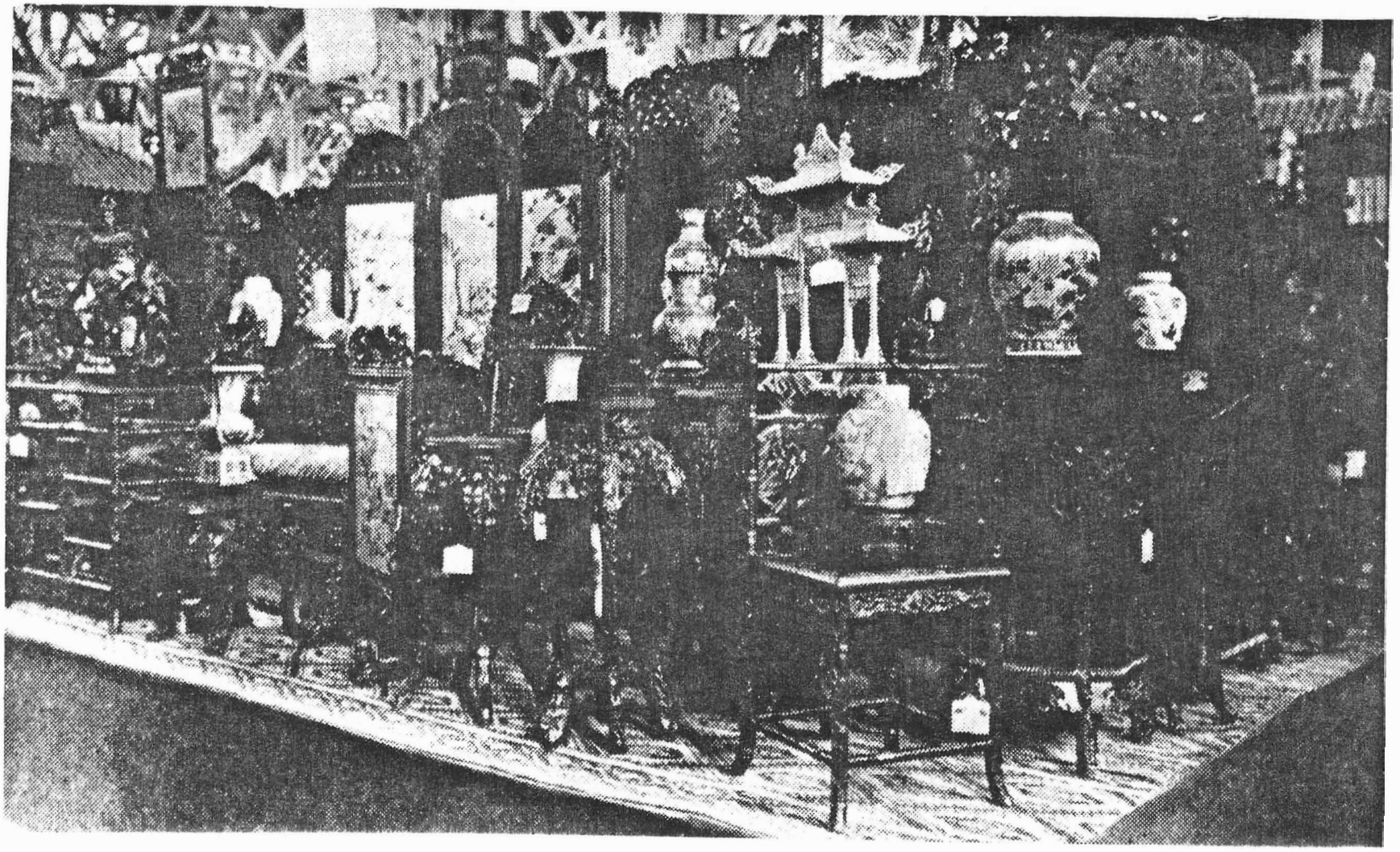


Figure 277. Exhibit of Chinese carved ebony furniture on display in the Liberal Arts Palace of the St. Louis World's Fair, 1904, from the History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Courtesy Missouri Historical Society.

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]

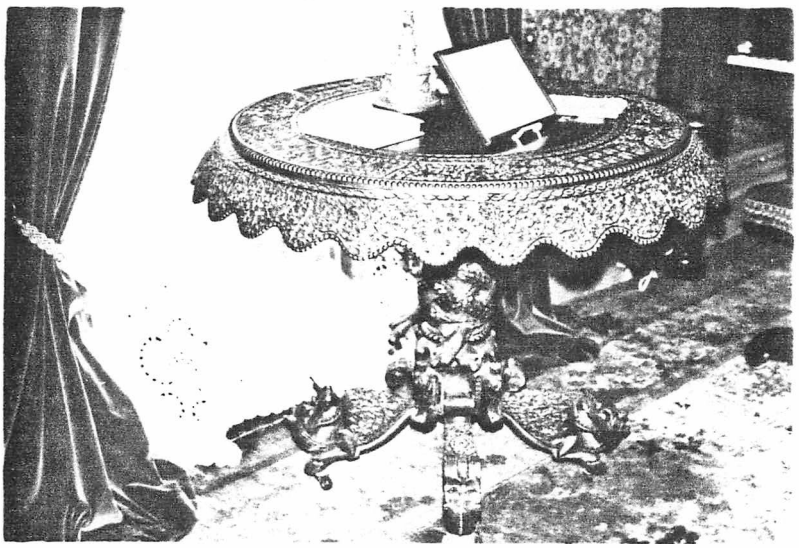
He further stated that their "dark and quiet" color rendered them very suitable for the display of colorful accessories.

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

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[116]History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (St. Louis: Universal Exposition Publishing Company, 1905), 290-299.

[117]Smith, 198-199.



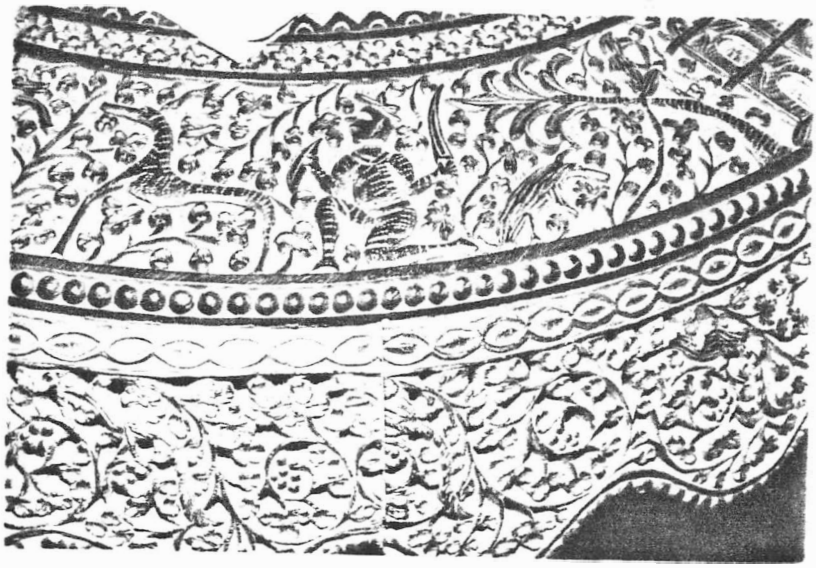
A



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.

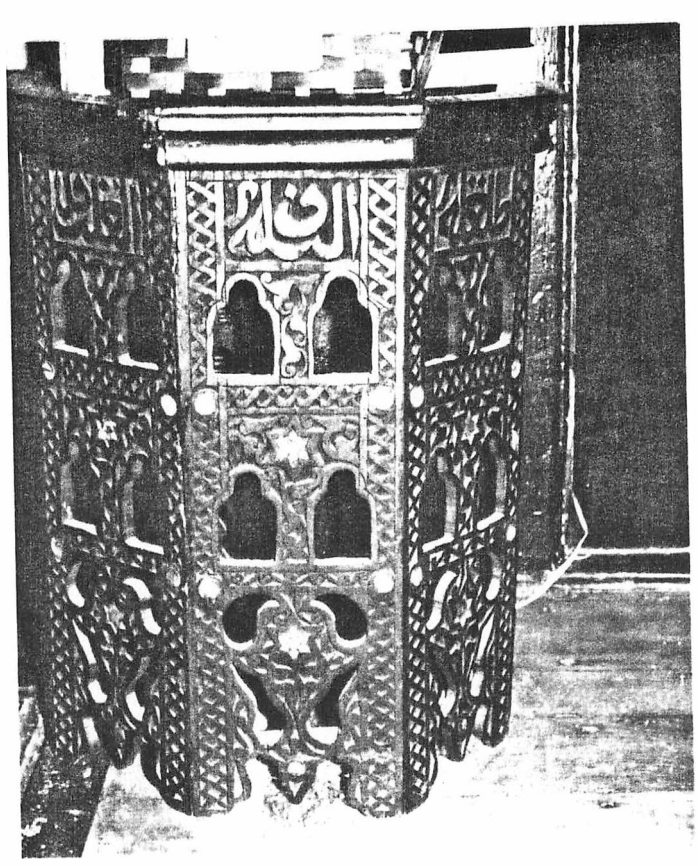


A

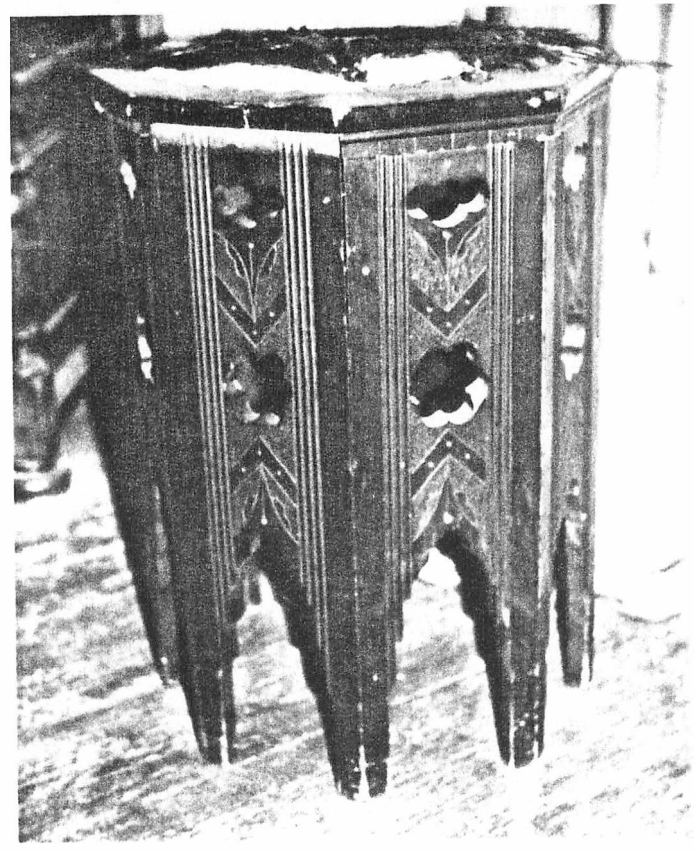


B

Figure 279. Details of the intricate carving of the Mallory-Neely South Indian table.
A. Table top.
B. Pedestal support.



A



B

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

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[118]Jehan S. Rajab, "Arab Furniture of the Nineteenth Century," Arts of Asia, 5, No. 1 (January-February 1985), 46.

[119]A. 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.

[121]Giedion, Mechanization Takes Command, 368-385.

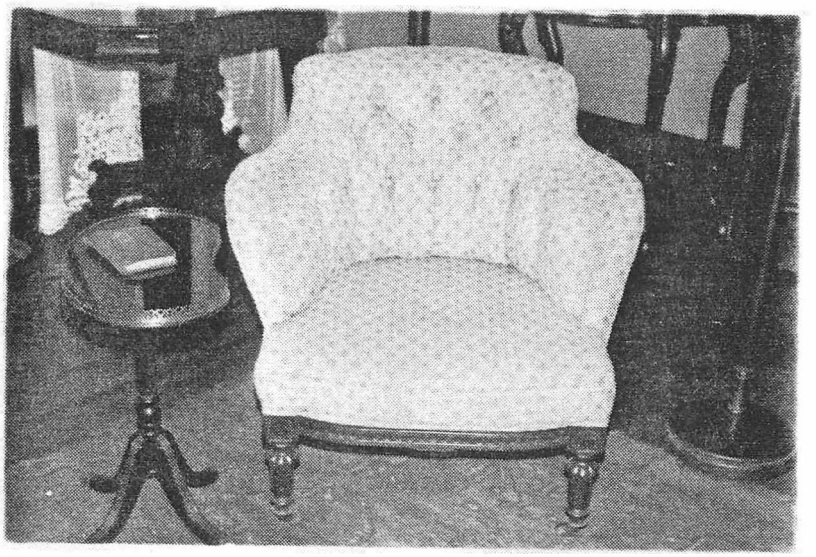
manufacturers produced all types of upholstered chairs and sofas. Suites of these were often labeled "Moorish" or "Turkish." Single chairs were identified in trade catalogs as "Turkish Easy Chairs." (Figure 281) The owners of the Buffalo Upholstery Company used terms like "Cleopatra" and "Pasha" to entitle 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.

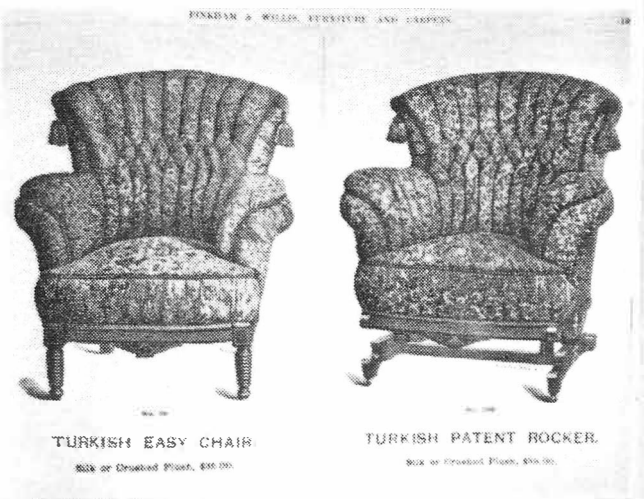
The Aesthetic Movement's rediscovery of handicrafted objects and its love for the time mellowed patination of old things laid

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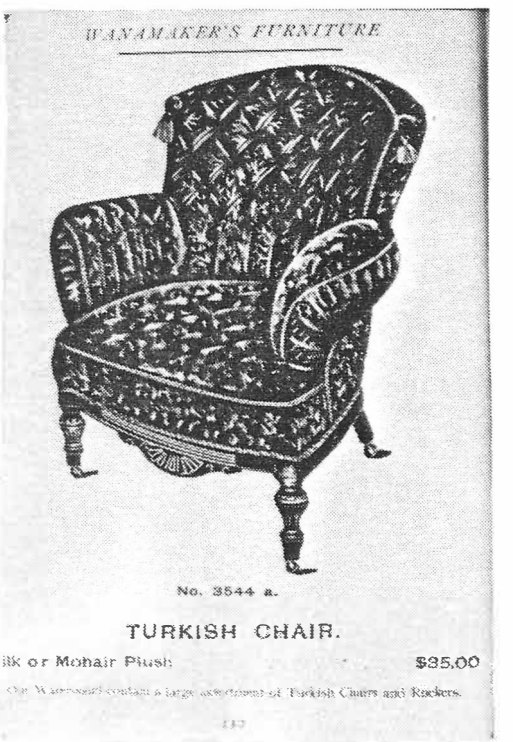
[122]New Goods for 1884 Made by the Buffalo Upholstery Company, 27.



A

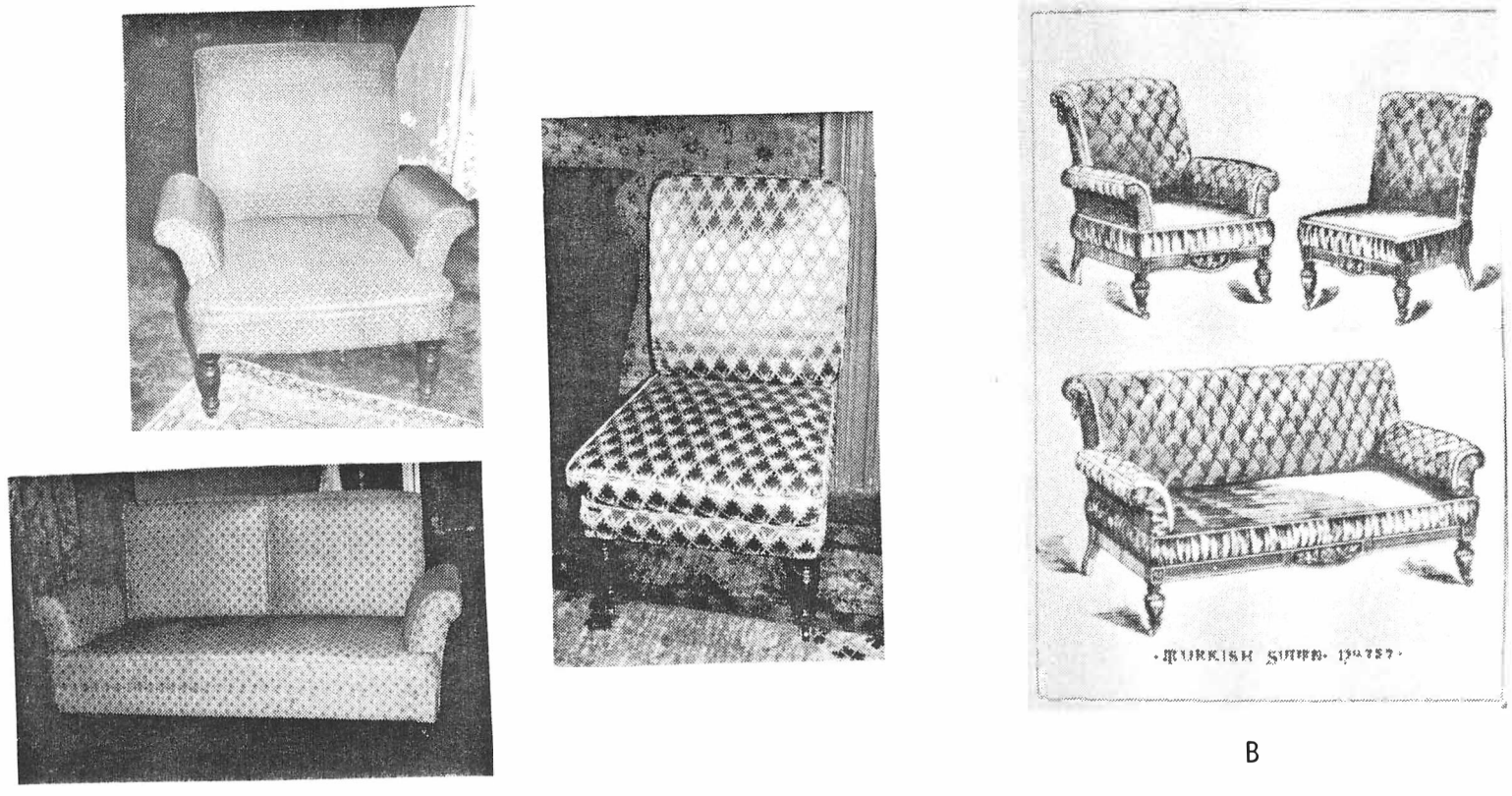


B



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

B

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.

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,

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[123]Gordon F. Roe, Victorian Furniture (London: Phoenix House Limited, 1952), 118.

[124]Green, "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.

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[125]Artistic Houses, 153.

[126]Ibid., 25.

[127]Ibid., 26.

[128]The 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

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[129]"Antiques Made to Order," The Upholstery and Decorating Record (New York: April 1901), 1, Special Collections, Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

[130]Ibid.

[131]Wharton and Codman.

[132]Richard 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."

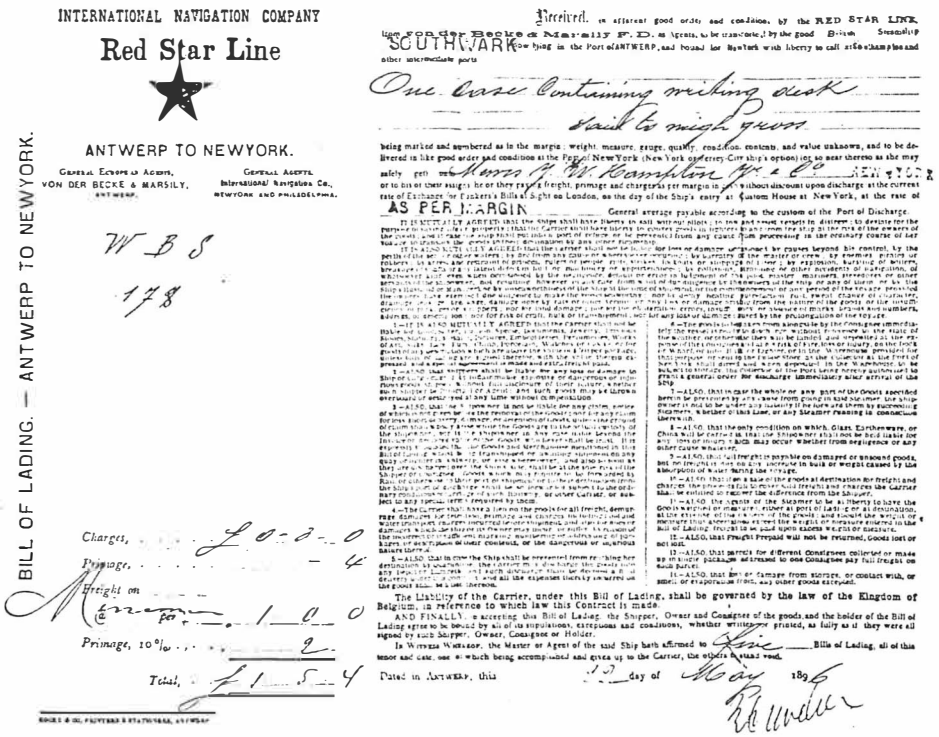
The more spectacular visually-dominating pieces of furniture in the Mallory-Neely entrance hall and long-parlor most certainly reflect this new attitude towards antiques. They are all European period reproductions. Though two of these are known to be wedding presents to the young Mallory couple, they 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 boulle 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 boulle 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

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[133]Neely Family Papers [bill of lading], 22 May 1896. Inherited by a family member, this piece is no longer part of the Mallory-Neely collection.



INTERNATIONAL NAVIGATION COMPANY

Red Star Line

ANTWERP TO NEWYORK.

BILL OF LADING. — ANTWERP TO NEWYORK.

Received. in apparent good order and condition, by the RED STAR LINE, for the Berke & Marsily F. D., as Agents, to be transported by the good British Steamship SOUTHWARK now lying in the Port of ANTWERP, and bound for Bankark with liberty to call at Southampton and other intermediate ports

One Case Containing writing desk

Sault to might gross

being marked and numbered as in the margin, weight, measure, gauge, quality, condition, contents, and value unknown, and to be delivered in like good order and condition at the Pier of NewYork (New York or Jersey City's option) or so near thereto as she may safely get

or to his or their assigns he or they paying freight, primage and charges as per margin in gold without discount upon discharge at the current rate of Exchange for Bankers's Bills at Sight on London, on the day of the Ship's entry at Custom House at New York, at the rate of

AS PER MARGIN

General average payable according to the custom of the Port of Discharge.

Charges, £ 0-2-0

Primage, - 4

Freight on

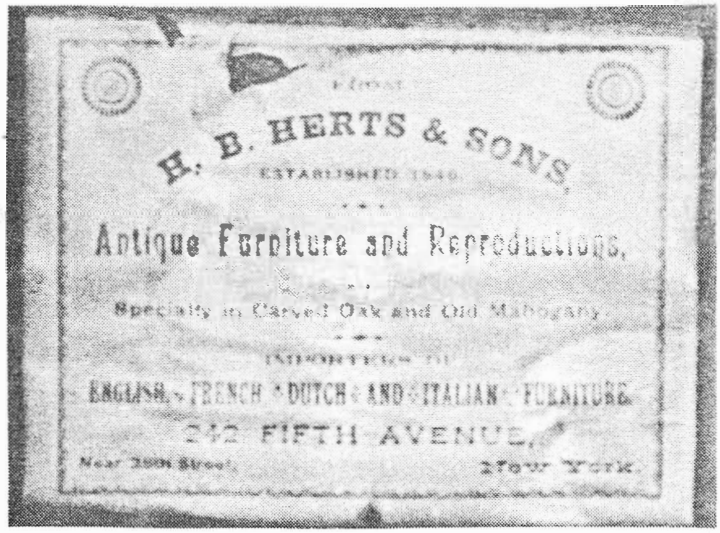
@ for 1 0 0

Primage, 10 % 2

Total, £ 1 5 4

Dated in ANTWERP, this 13 day of May 1896

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,

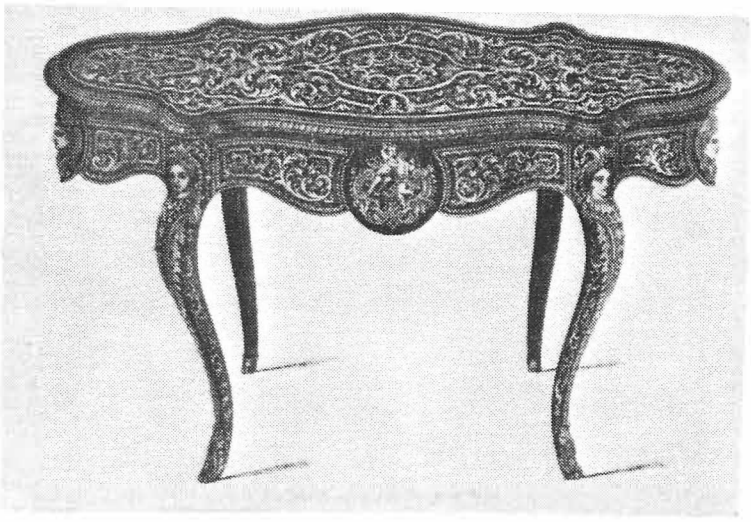
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[134]"H. B. Herts & Sons," New York's Great Industries, Merchants and Manufacturers (New York: Historical Publishing Company, 1884), 276, Special Collections, New York Historical Society, New York.

[135]Ibid., 276.

[136]Ibid.

[137]Ibid., 277.



A



B

Figure 285. Mallory-Neely boulle 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 boulle center table.

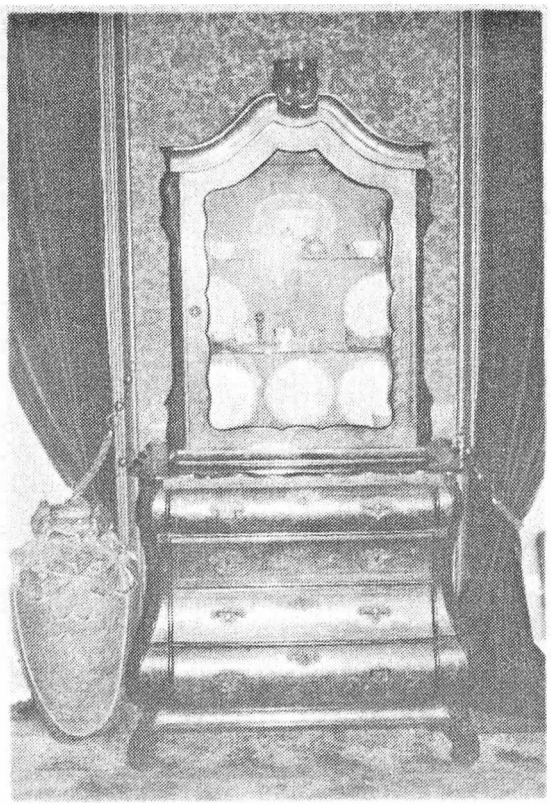
a Dutch bombé inlaid cabinet, a Dutch or Italian inlaid Empire sofa, a Jacobean style tooled leather suite including a settee and two chairs, a large seventeenth century style Dutch cabinet inscribed in the pediment "1602," and an Austrian gilt table with porcelain plaque inlays. (Figures 286, 287, 288, 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]

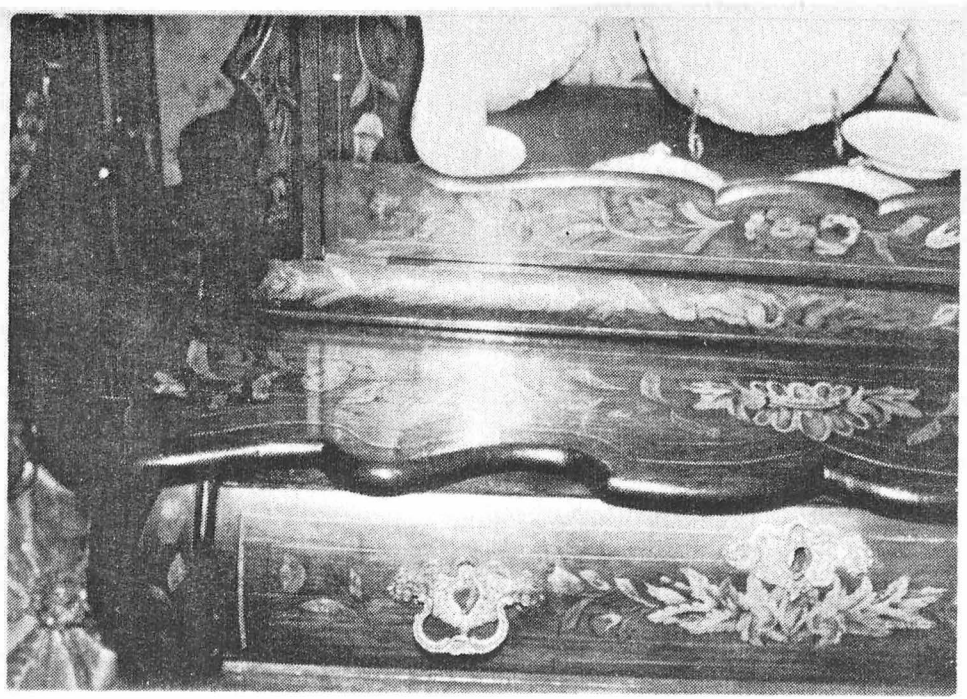
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[138]See Christopher Payne, Nineteenth Century European Furniture (Woodbridge, Suffolk, England: Antique Collectors' Club, 1981).

[139]The Decorator and Furnisher, 19, No. 2 (November 1891), 48, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

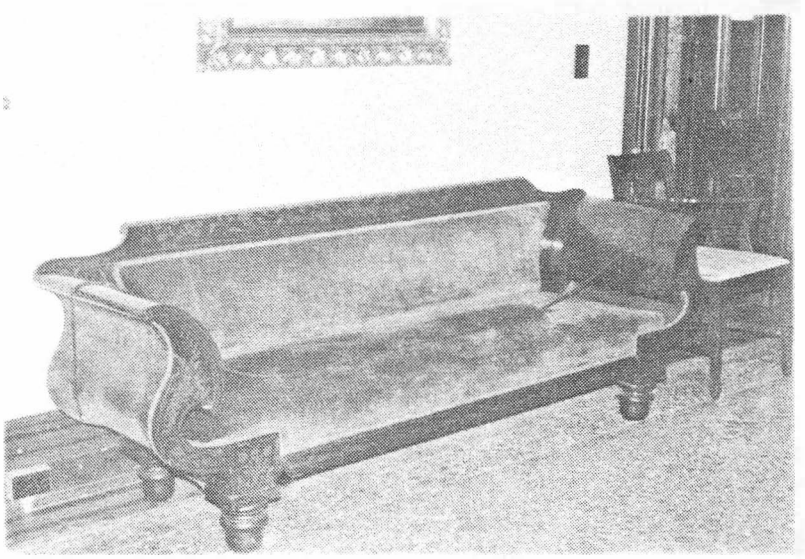


A

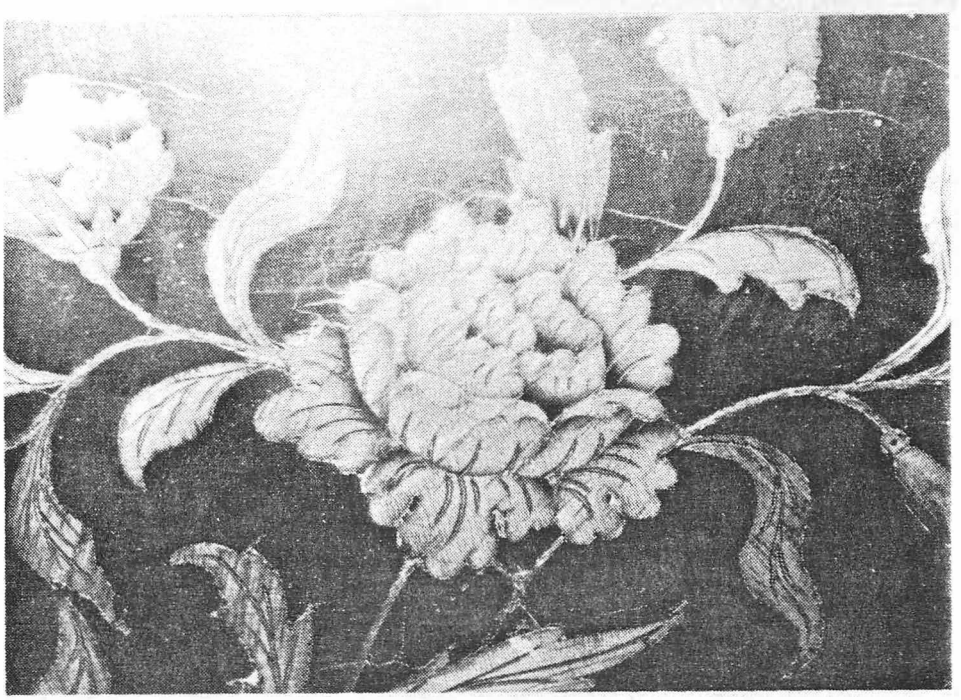


B

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.

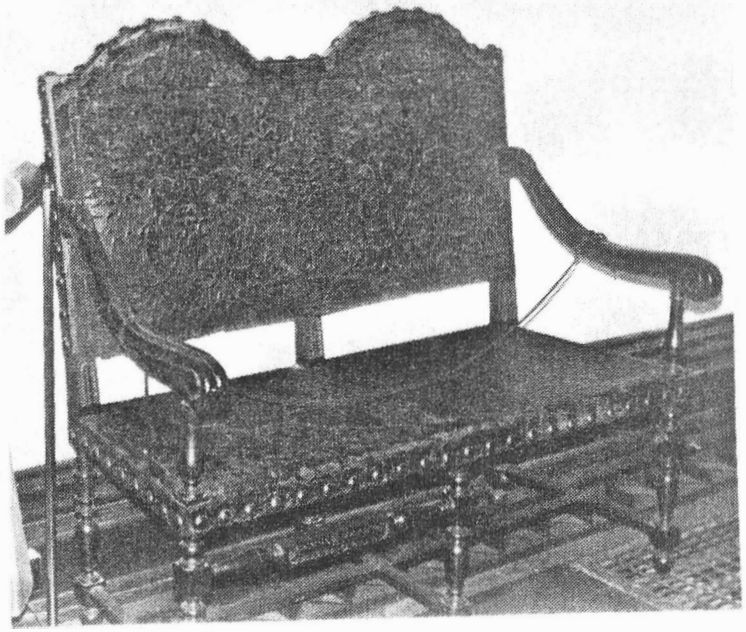


A

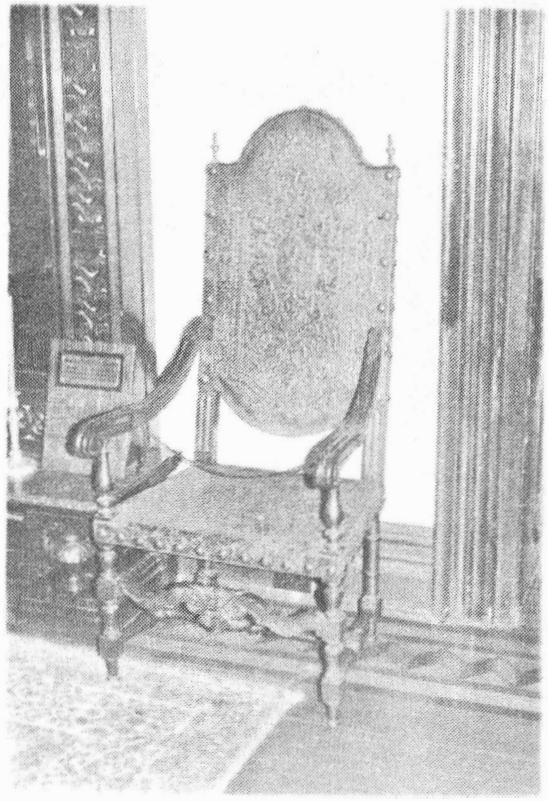


B

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.

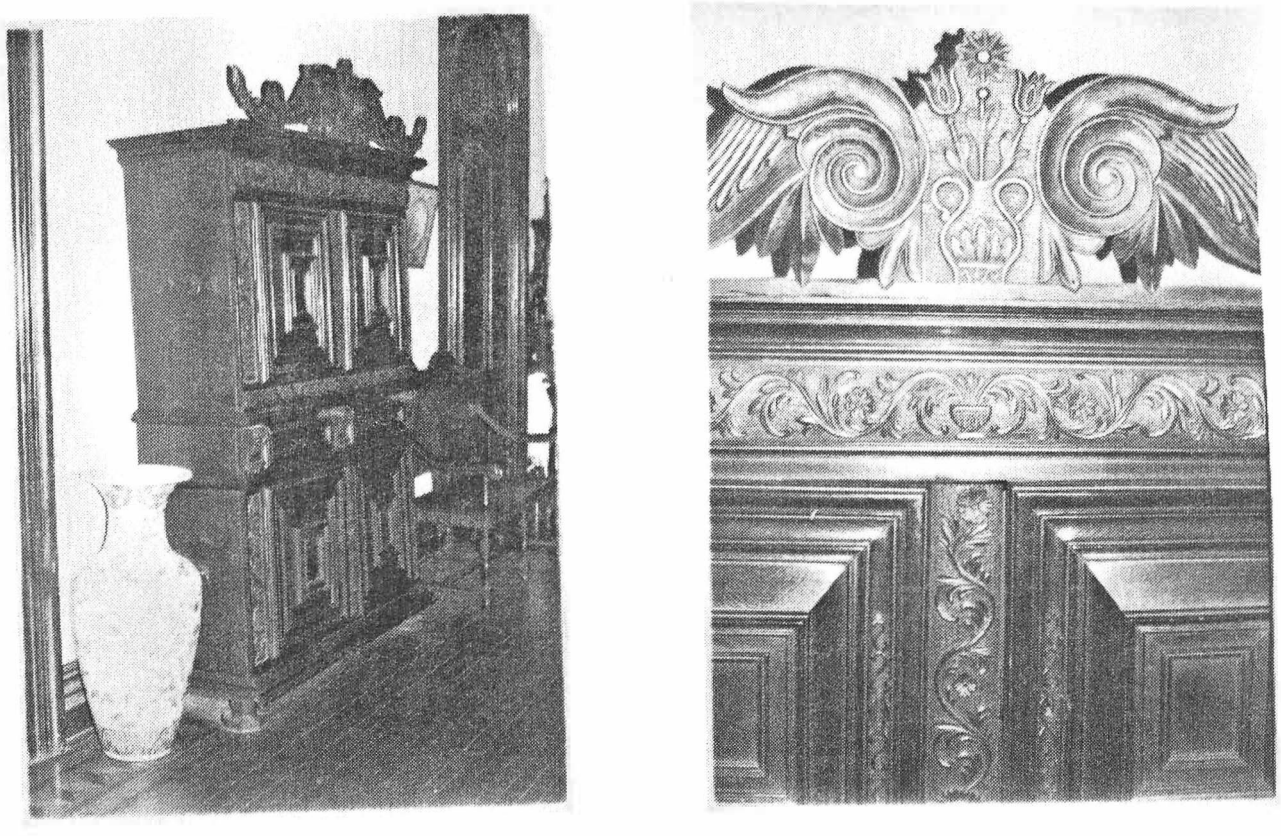


A



B

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.

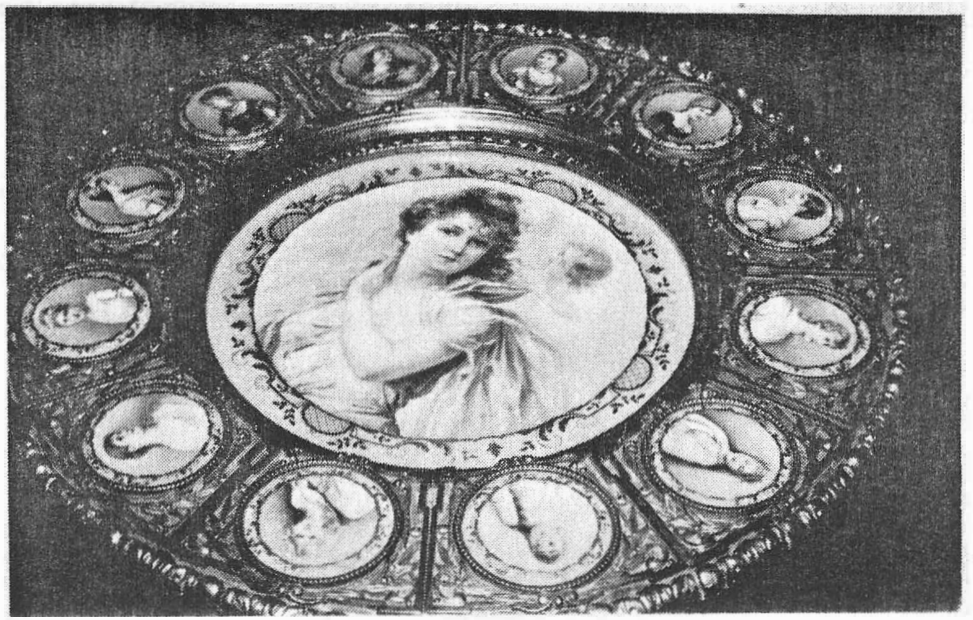


A B

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 cresting 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)

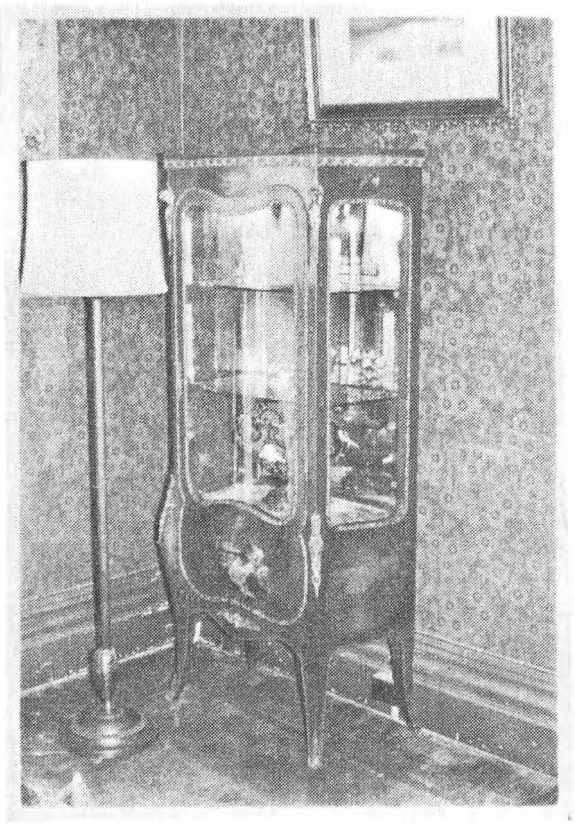
Antique reproduction: American. American antiques as well as those of European origin were subject to reproduction. The exposition held in Philadelphia in 1876 to celebrate the centennial of American independence is credited with awakening national interest in the country's colonial past.[142] This was manifested in many ways

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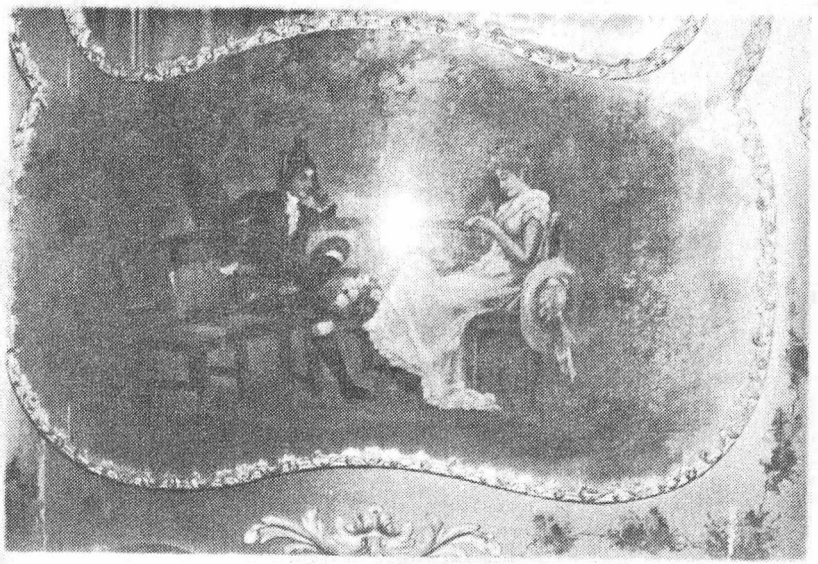
[140]Great Victorian Pictures [exhibition catalog] (London: Royal Academy of Arts and Arts Council of Great Britain, 1978), 77-78.

[141]The Grand Rapids Furniture Record-Christmas Number (December 1900), n.p. [advertisement], Special Collections, Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids.

[142]Ulysses G. Dietz, "Century of Revivals: Nineteenth Century Furniture in the Newark Museum," Newark Museum Quarterly, 31, Nos. 2-3 (Spring-Summer 1980), 1044.



A



B

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.



Figure 292. A 1900 Oriel Cabinet Company advertisement for their Vernis Martin goods. Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.

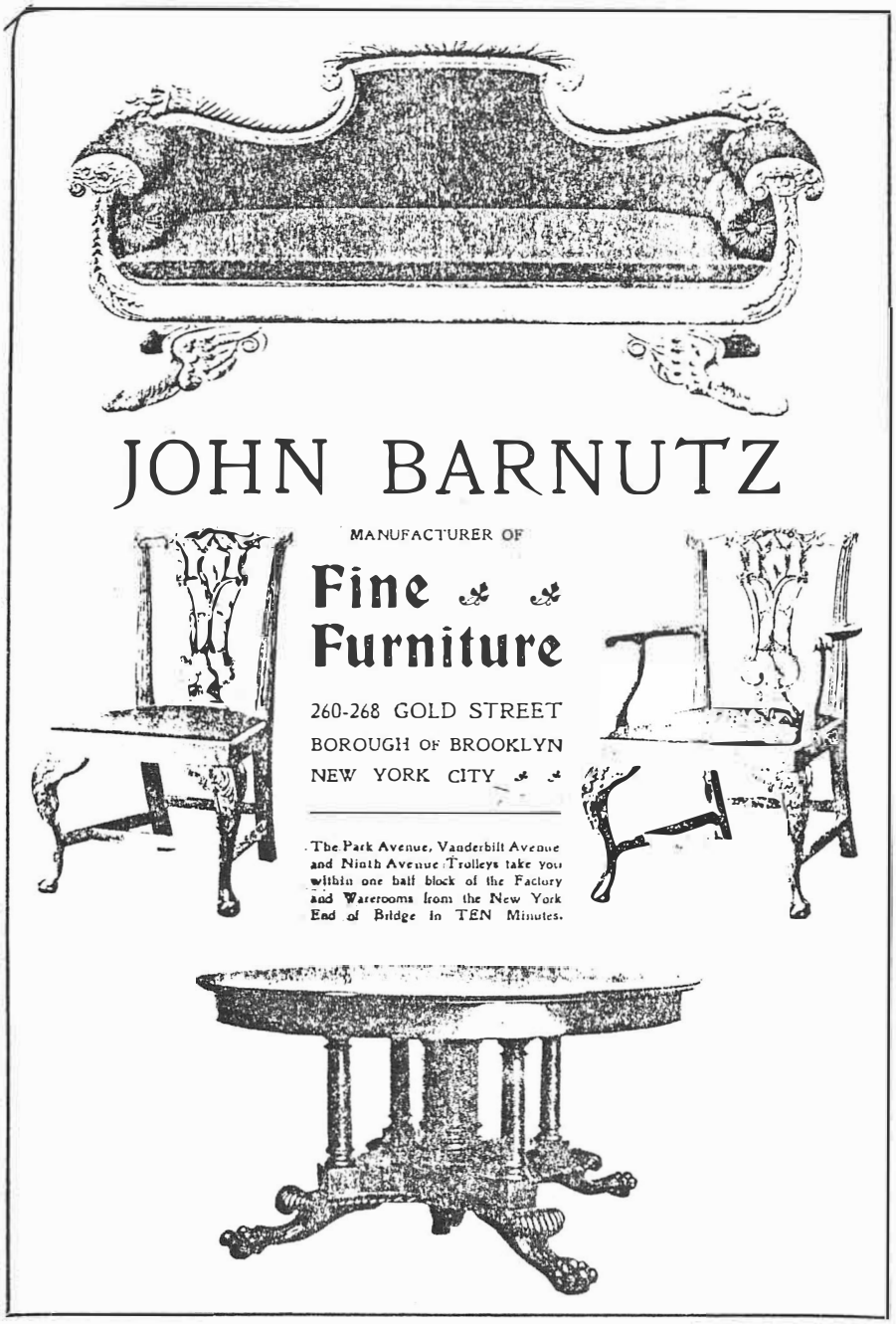


Figure 293. An early twentieth century trade journal advertisement shows reproductions of both Empire and Chippendale pieces. Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.

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

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[143]The 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]

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[144]See 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.

[146]Ulysses 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.

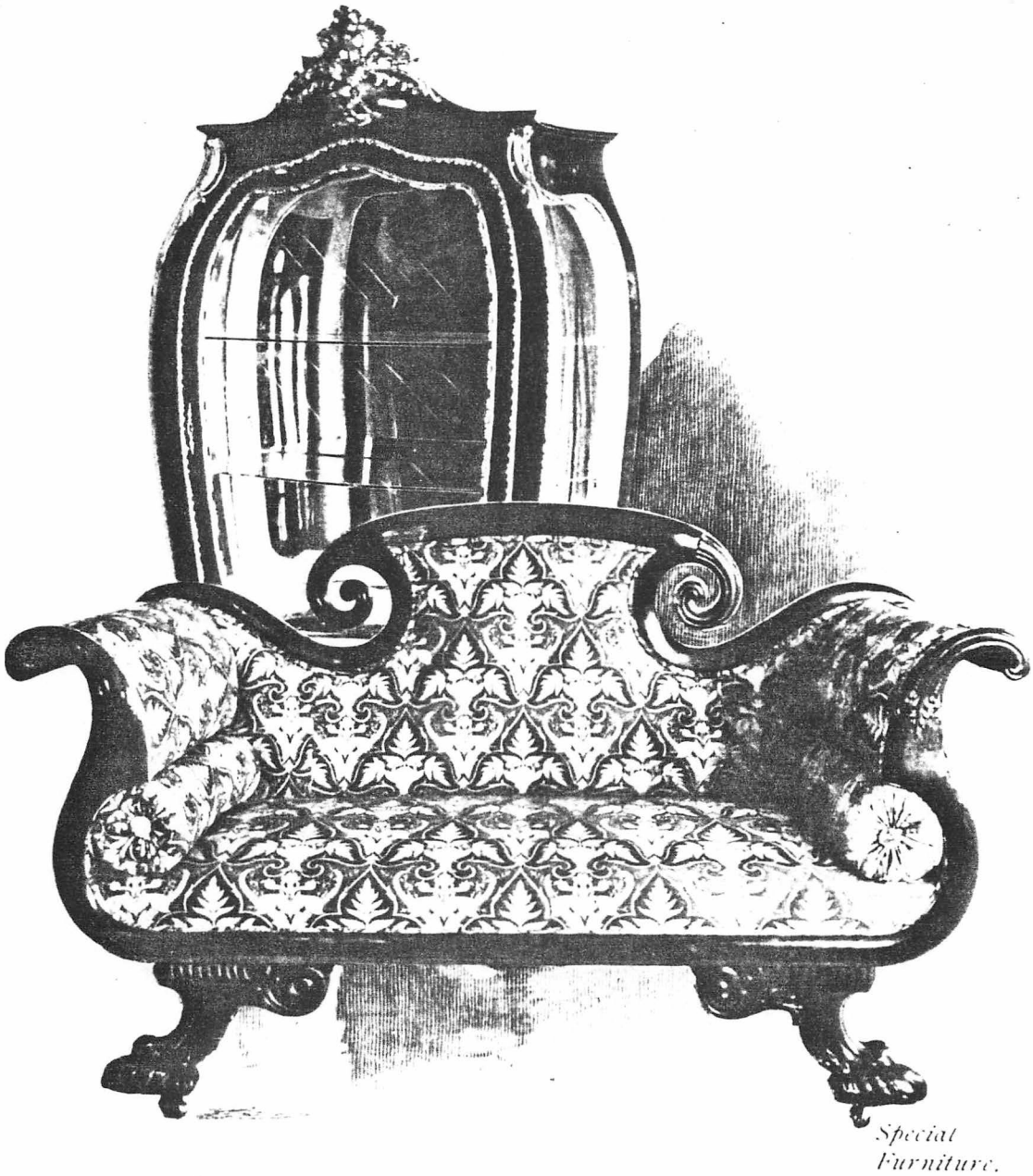


Figure 295. Empire Revival sofa. Illustration from the Mandel Brother's Department Store, Department of Interior Design's 1900 home decorating guide in the section describing the latest in fashionable home furnishings. Courtesy Chicago Historical Society.

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]

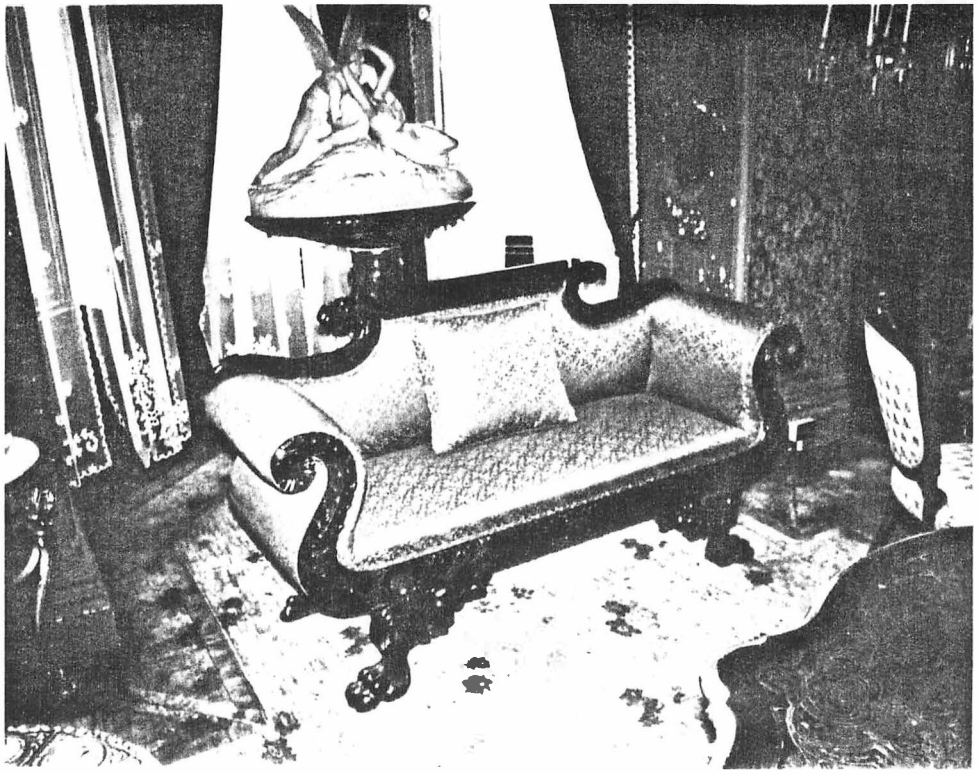
These revival Empire and other style pieces of furniture in the Mallory-Neely House were complemented with accessories and textiles often created in the manner of a similar historic mode.

Accessories

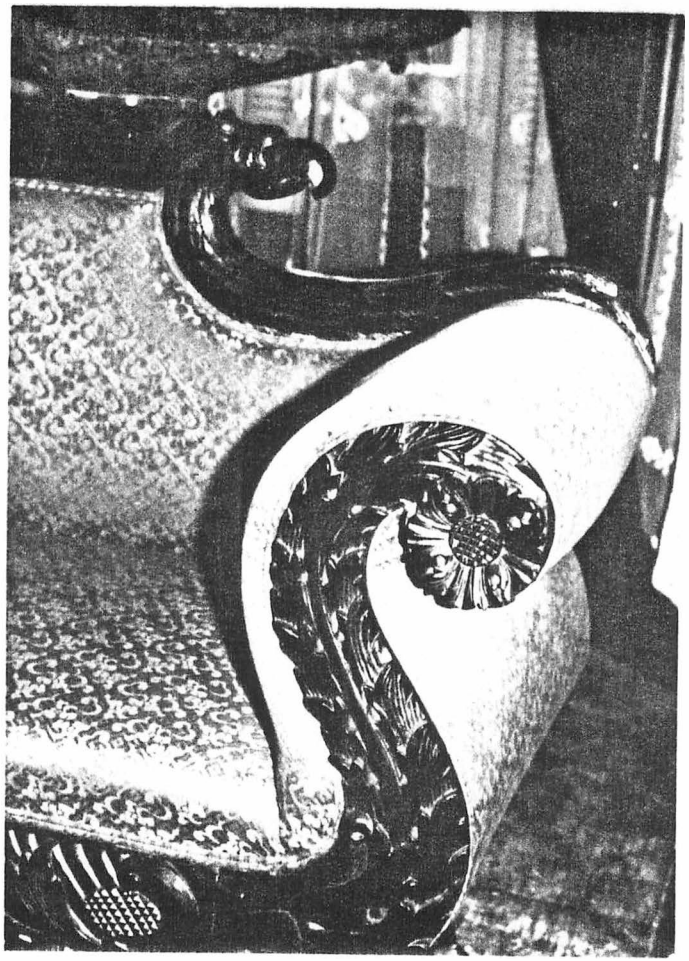
Accessorization of an interior is often described today, in popular interior design literature as the finishing touch or the "icing" added to an interior. Accessories are usually described as decorative objects made of wood, glass, ceramic, metal, and other

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[147] The 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

W. T. Welch
A. T. Kingsbury

Robert E. Baxter

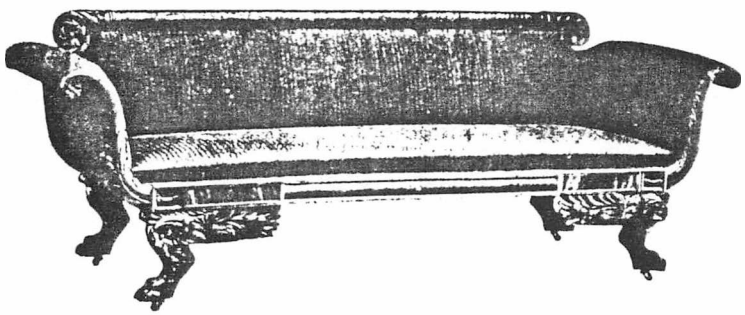


Figure 297. Illustrated with an Empire Revival sofa this 1909 advertisement focuses on the manufacture of period reproduction furniture. Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library.

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 momentoes, 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

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[148]See, 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

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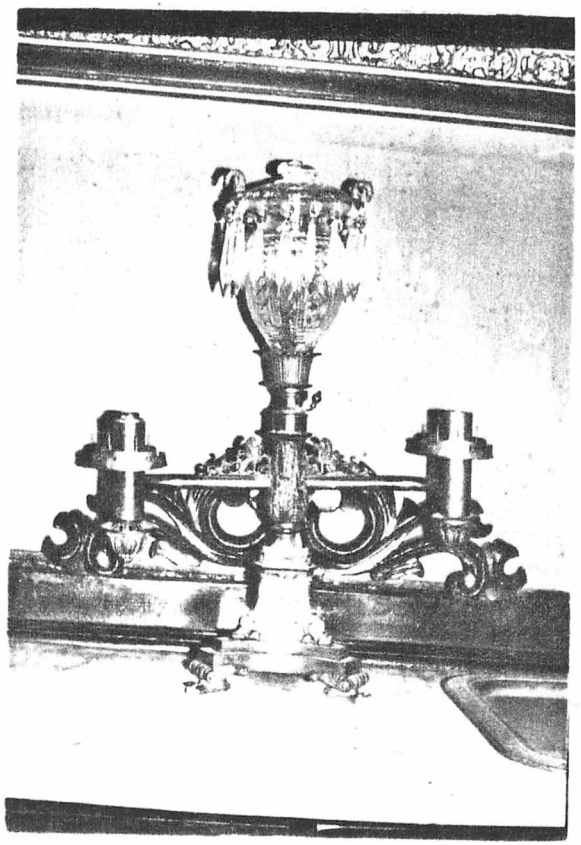
[149]The Successful Business Houses of New York (New York: A. J. Clark Company, 1872), 32-33, Special Collections, New York Historical Society, New York.

[150]See Robert Bishop and Patricia Kobtentz, The World of Antiques, Art, and Architecture in Victorian America (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1979), 107.

[151]See Robert C. Smith, "Architecture and Sculpture in Nineteenth Century Mirror Frames," The Magazine Antiques, 109, No. 2 (February 1976), 352 and 354.

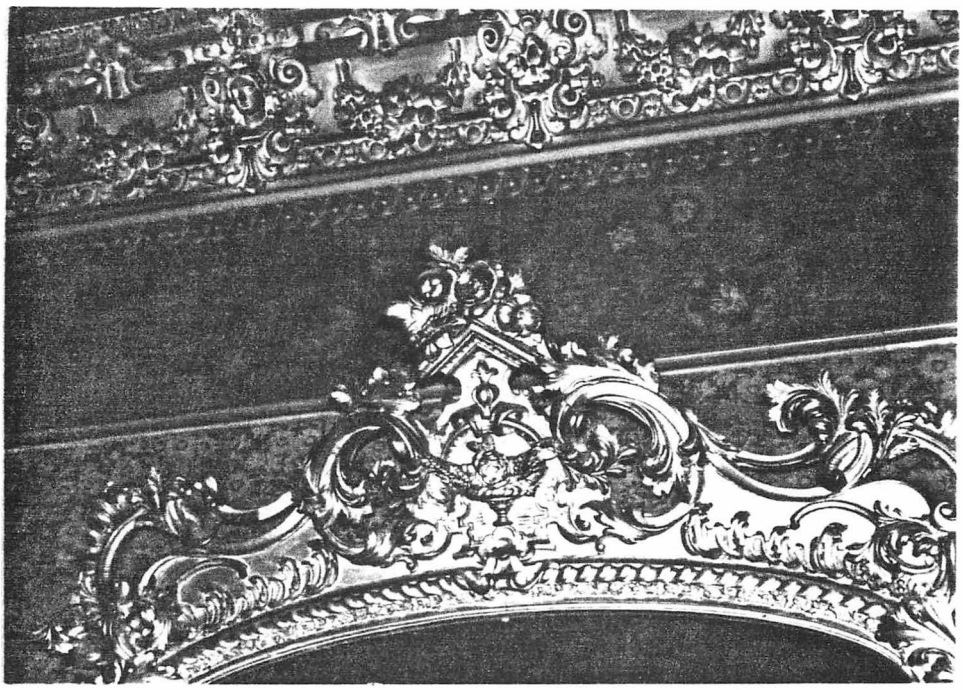


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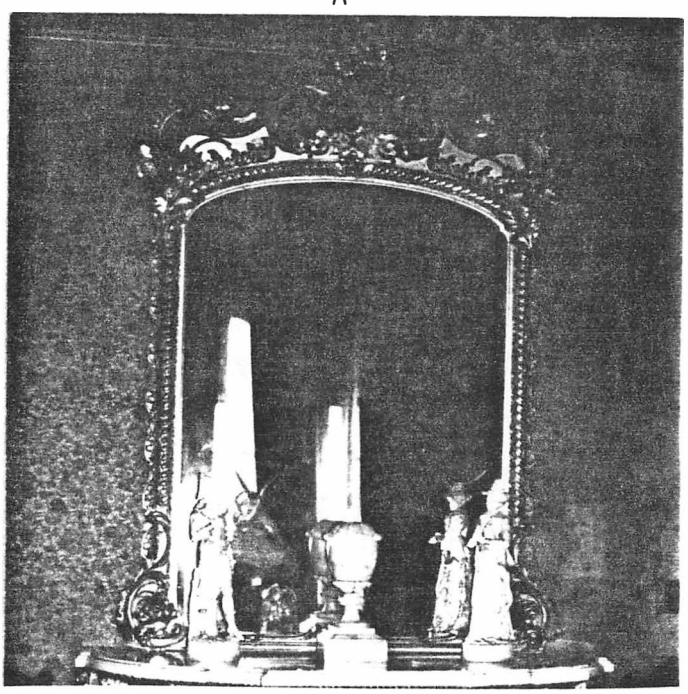


B

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,

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[152]Wharton and Codman, 185.

[153]Ibid., 187.

[154]Artistic 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 Worchester 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 Worchester 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

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[155]Ibid., 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]

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[156]Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 30 September 1884, 1.

[157]Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 6 November 1887, 1.

[158]Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 110.

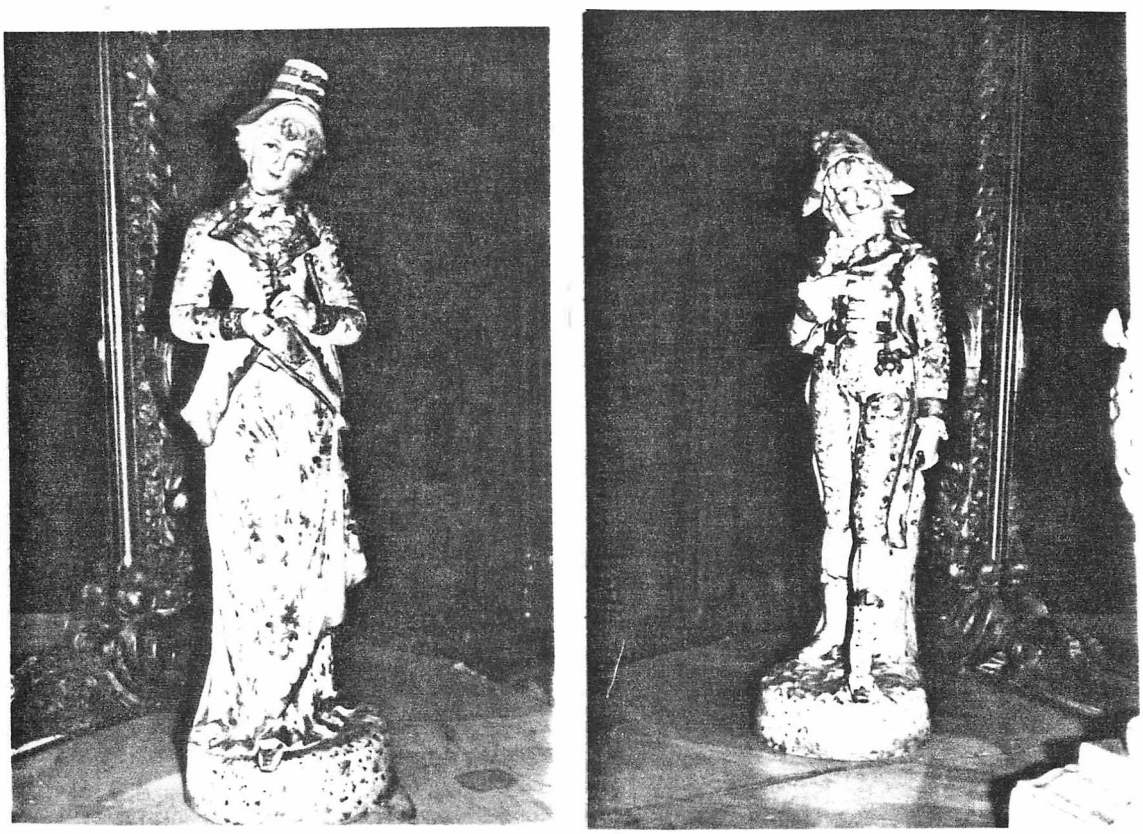
The Neelys and Mallorys purchased an eclectic mix of European and Oriental objects to accessorize their home including clocks, silver, porcelain, cloisonné, mirrors, armor, lamps, statuary, prints, and paintings. Mrs. Mallory's will itemizes costly porcelains, glassware, and silver no longer in the house. 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, Wedgewood, 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

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[159]Last Will and Testament, Mrs. B. L. Mallory, Jr., 6.

[160]Thieme-Becker Kunsler Lexicon, 28, 315.

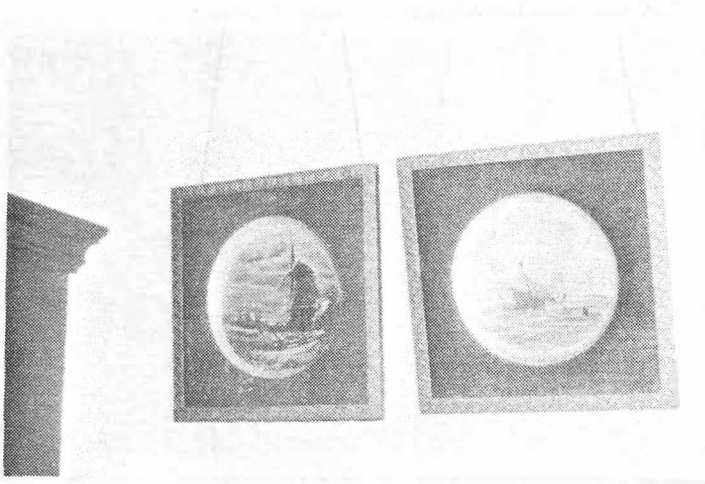


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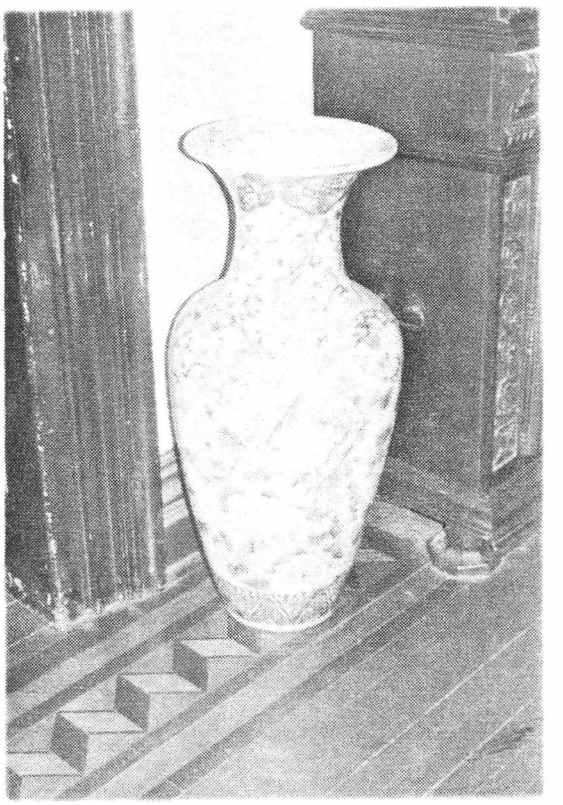
Figure 300. Pair of French bisque figurines highlighted with gilt decoration. They adorn a large marble top commode in the Mallory-Neely parlor.
A. Female figurine.
B. Male figurine.



A

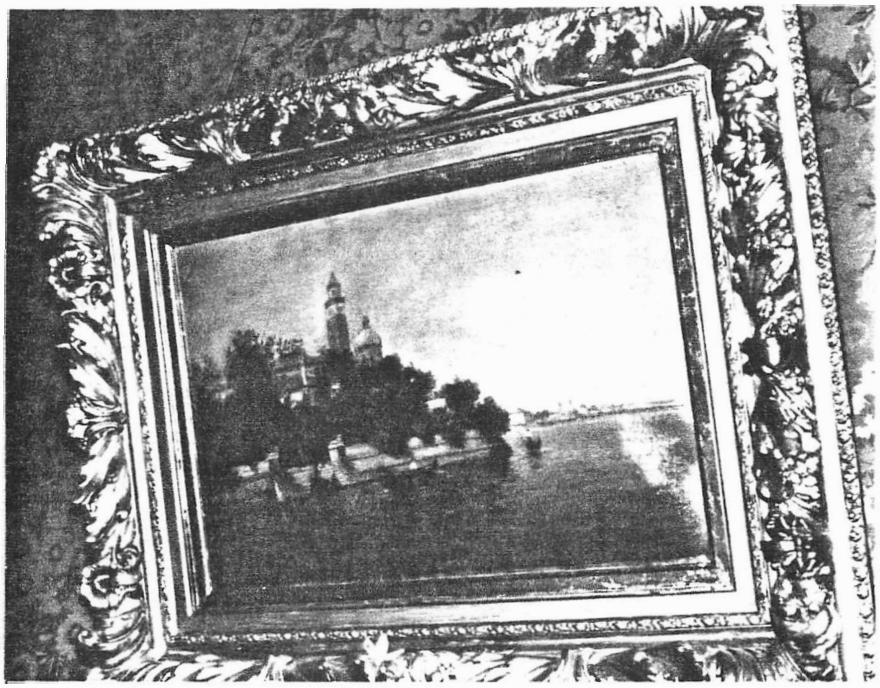


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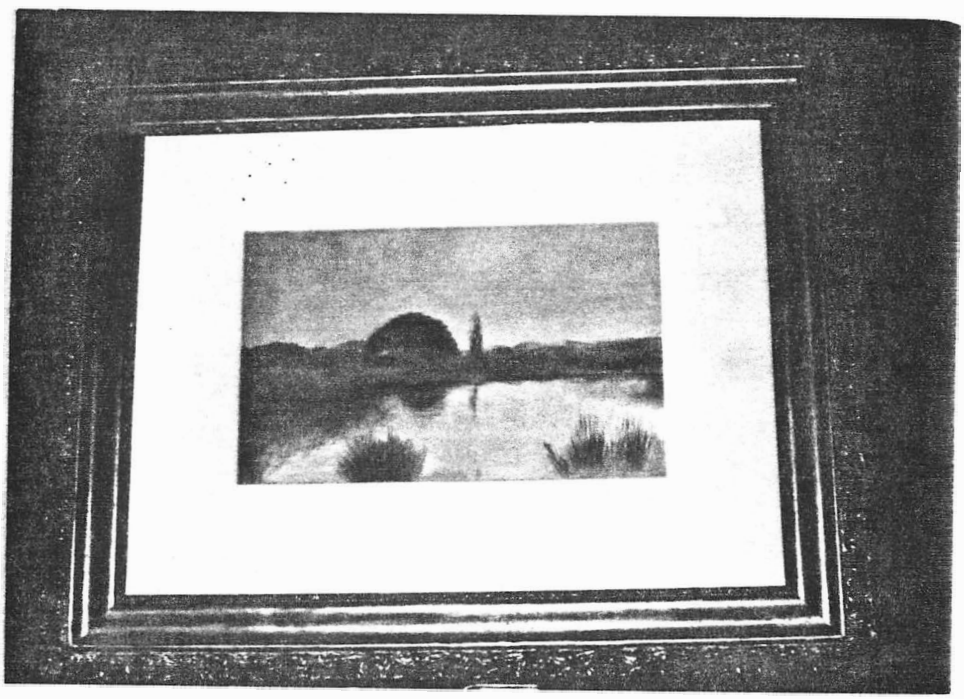


C

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.

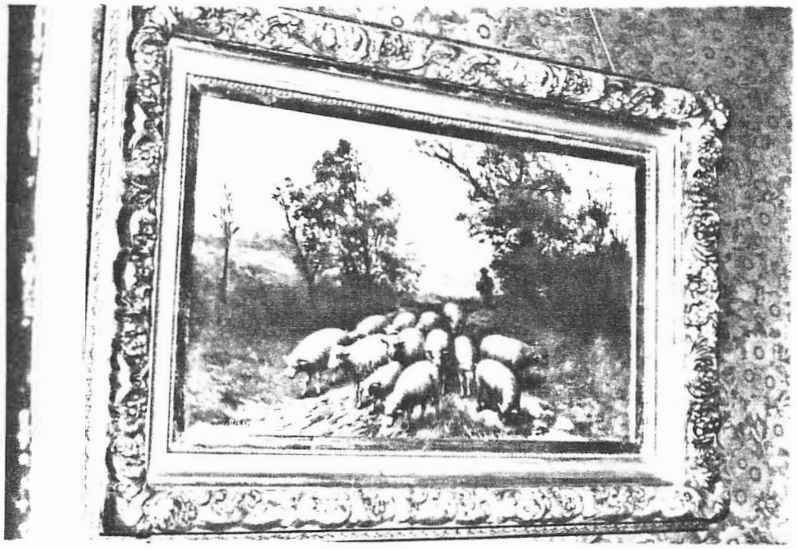


A

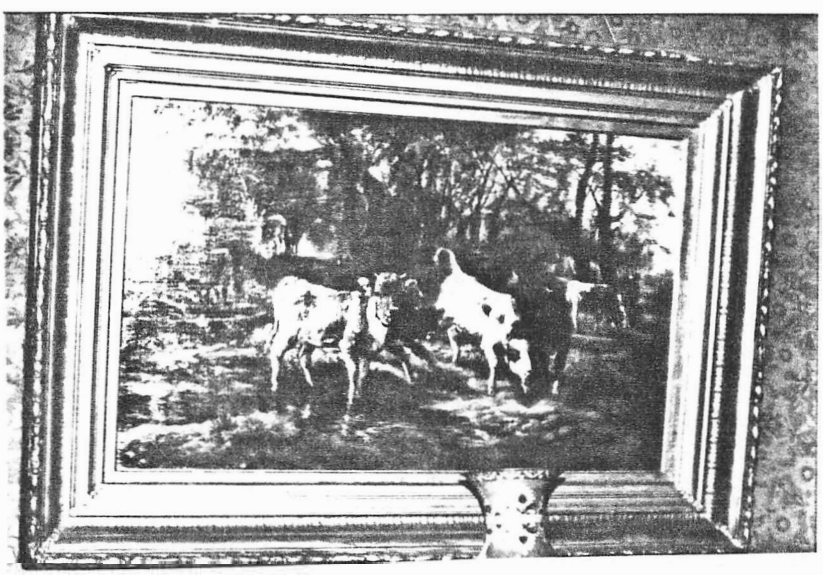


B

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]

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[161]See Joseph Rishel, "Landseer: Queen Victoria's Favorite Painter Copied in America," Nineteenth Century, 7, No. 3 (Autumn 1981), 42-45.

[162]Katherine M. Morrison, Collecting American Victorian Antiques (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1966), 87.

[163]Artistic House or How to Furnish with Taste, 76.

[164]Artistic Houses, 174.

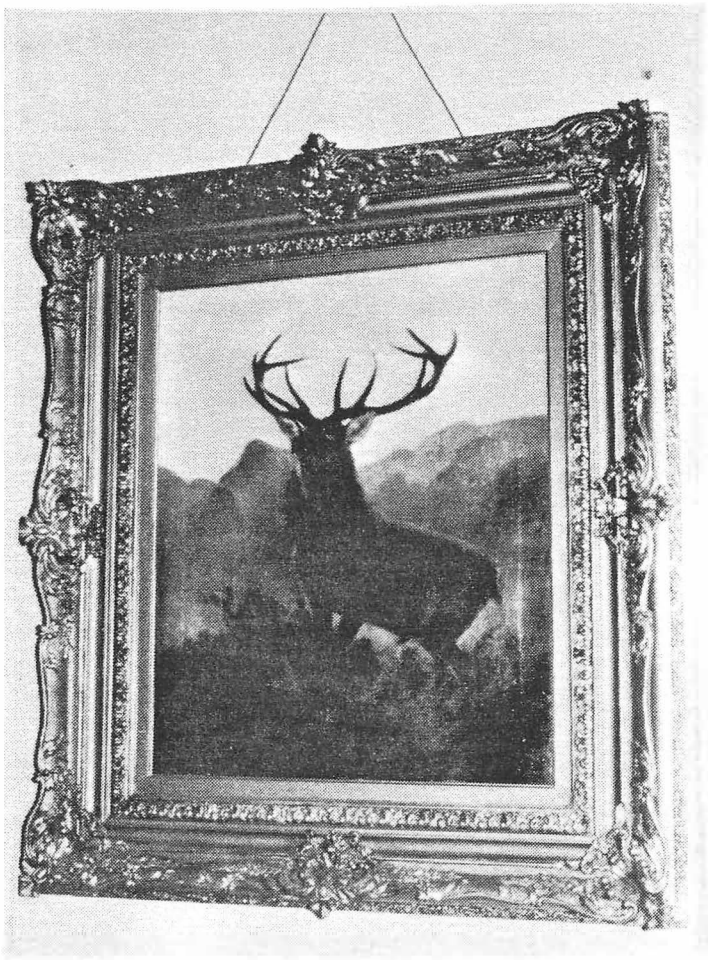
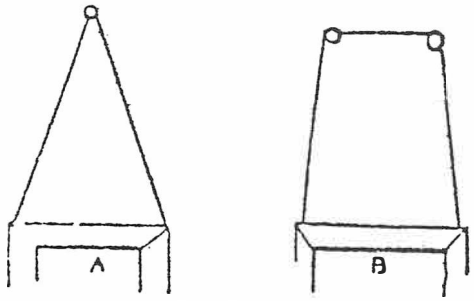
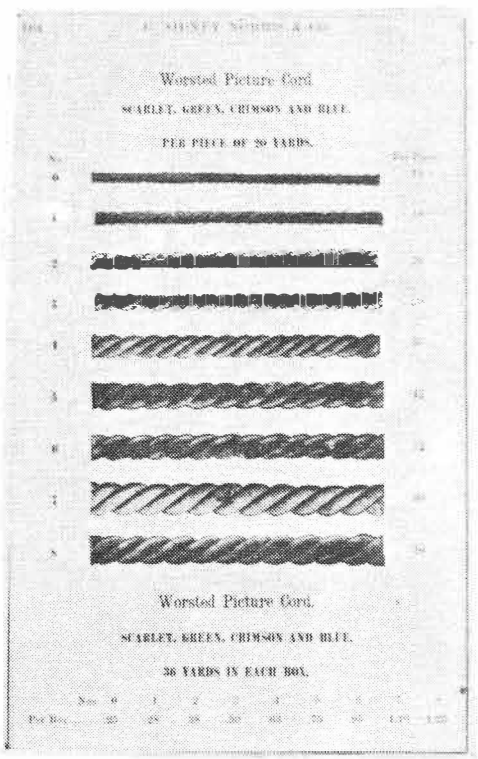


Figure 304. Copy by R. Clemison of Sir Edwin Landseer's "Monarch of the Glen." It hangs in the second floor hallway of the Mallory-Neely House.

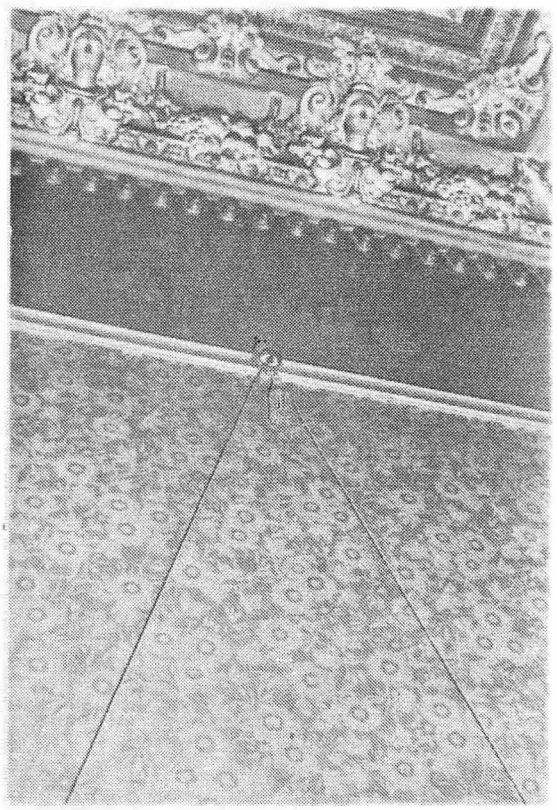


PICTURE HANGING.

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.

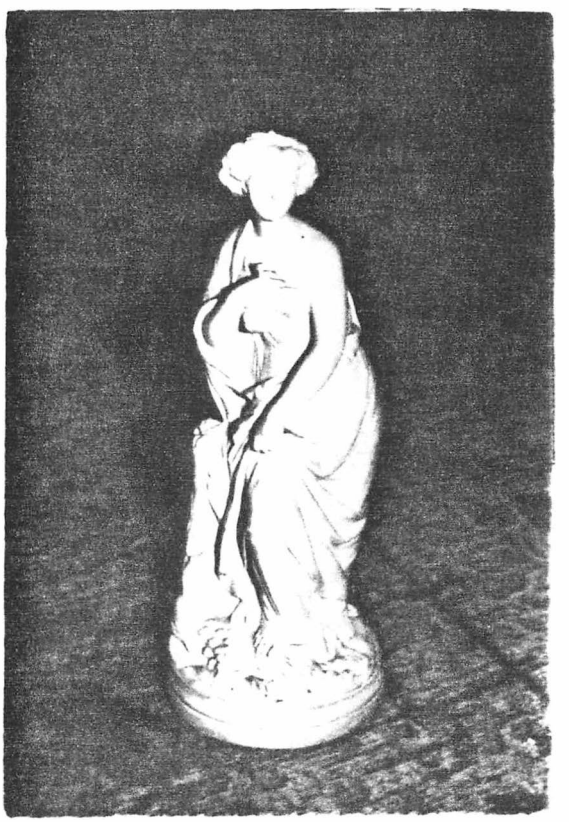
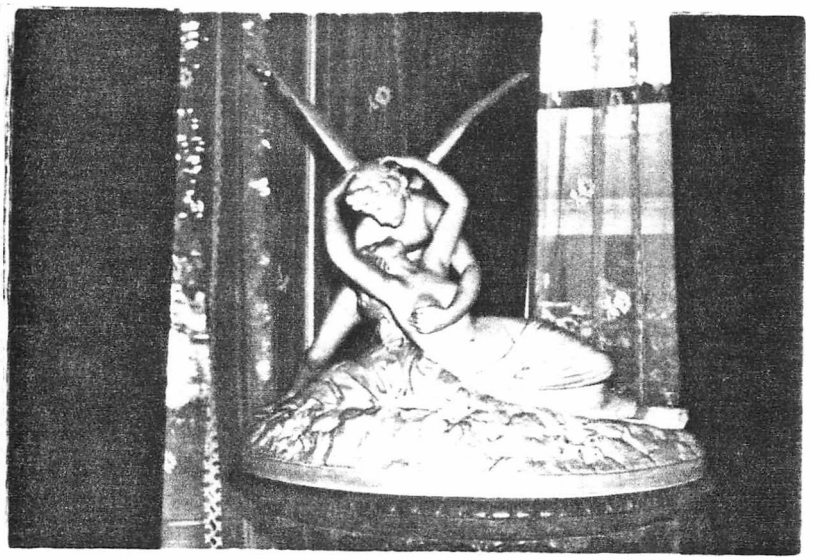


Figure 306. Classical Parian figurine from the Mallory-Neely collection.



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

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[165]William Seale, The Tasteful Interlude: American Interiors Through the Camera's Eye 1860-1917 (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), 153.

[166]C. 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

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[167]Ibid.

[168]Ibid.

[169]Frances 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 escutheon 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.

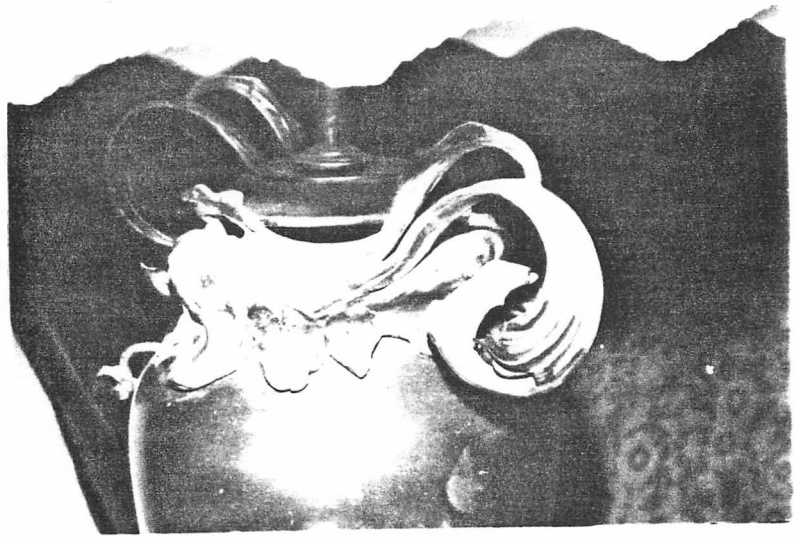
The late century interest in Orientalism survives in the Mallory-Neely accessory collection also. Several large Japanese cloisonné vases provide an added exotic touch to the parlor and music rooms. (Figure 310) According to tradition these were also purchased at one of the World's Fairs. Japanese cloisonné at this time was

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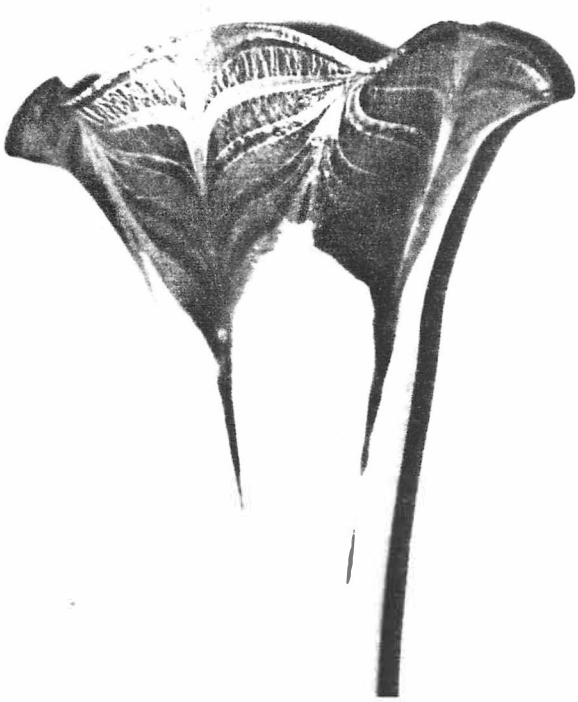
[170]See Art Nouveau: Art and Design at the Turn of the Century, eds. Peter Selz and Mildred Constantine (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1959).

[171]Bernard Champigneulle, Art Nouveau (Woodbury, New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1976), 90.

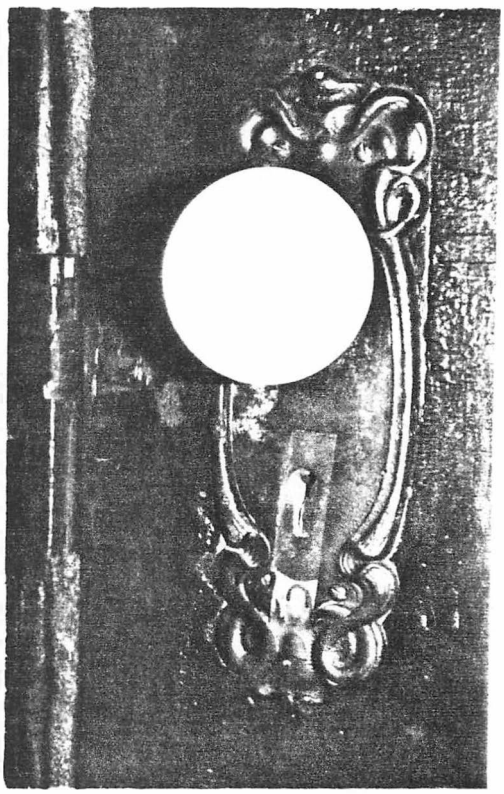
[172]Ibid., 90-91.



A

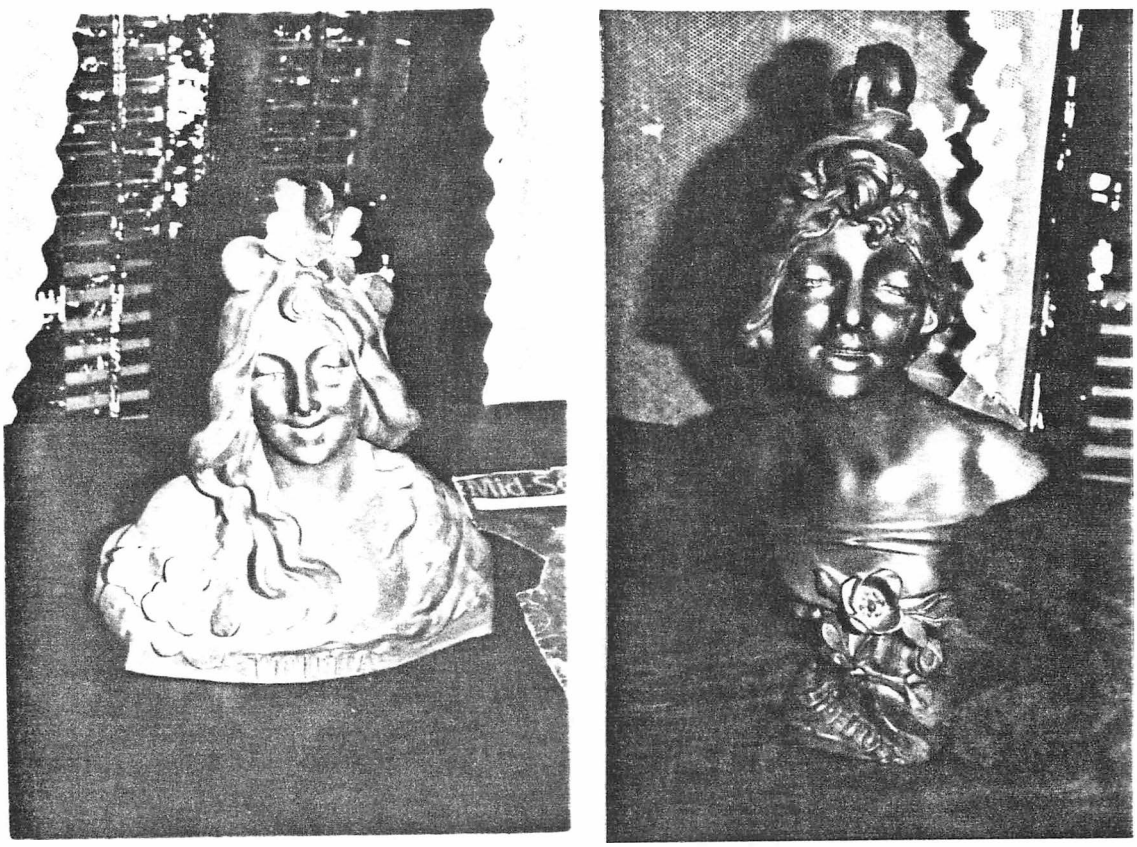


B



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. Escutheon 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

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[173]Harry Garner, Chinese and Japanese Cloisonné-Enamels (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), 104.

[174]See 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.

[176]Mrs. 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

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[177]Jane C. Nylander, Fabrics for Historic Buildings (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1983), 110.

[178]See Florence M. Montgomery, Textiles in America 1650-1870 (New York: W. W. Horton & Company, 1984).

[179]See D. H. Farnic, "The Textile Industry: Woven Fabrics," A History of Technology, V (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 569-592.

[180]E. 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 conversativeness 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

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[181]See, for example, Louis Brenni, The Manufacture of Italian Silk (Milan: Archetipografia di Milano, 1927).

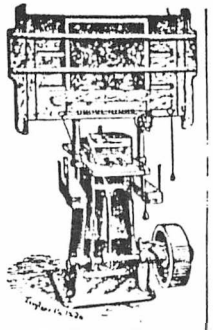
[182]Bury Hester, A Choice of Design 1850-1980, Fabrics by Warner & Sons Limited (London: Warner & Sons Limited, 1981), 18-19.

W. P. UHLINGER WORKS

MANUFACTURERS OF

Single Lift Jacquard Machines,
Double Lift Jacquard Machines,
Raise and Drop Jacquard Machines,
Jacquard Card-Lacing Machines.

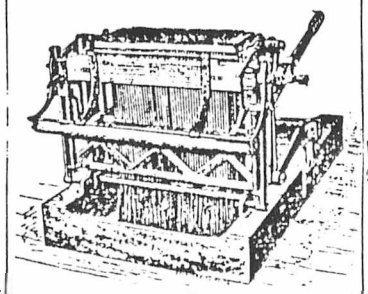
Witch Motions,
Dobby Machines,
Heddle Machines,



PIANO STEAM-POWER CARD-STAMPING MACHINE.

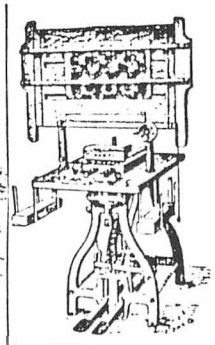
For Jacquard Cards

The speed is completely at the will of the operator, and will punch as high as 9 matches per minute. The capacity is about double that of a foot 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 set 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.

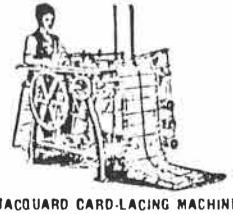
I have lately re-constructed this machine, making it more compact by a novel and durable escapement of the rack.

The only successful machine ever introduced for this pupose.

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.

Weighs about 500 pounds.

Machines now in operation and ready for the inspection of manufacturers.

Machines placed on trial with responsible parties.

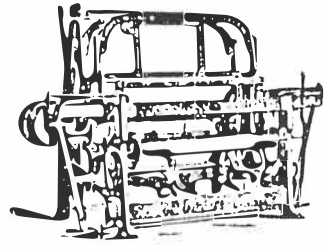
A

GILBERT LOOM CO.,

BUILDERS OF

LOOMS

For Woolens, Cotton, Carpets, Wire, Cane,

Velvet  and 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.

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]

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[183]The Upholstering and Decorating Record (New York: April 1901), 326, Special Collections, Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids.

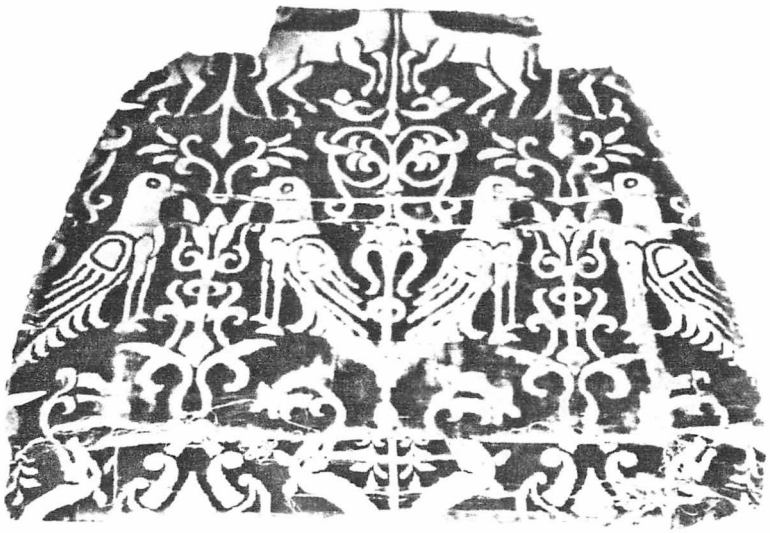


Figure 313. Covering the seat of an Elizabeth chair in the Mallory-Neely parlor this late nineteenth century cut velvet fabric, originally maroon in color, replicates a sixteenth century Renaissance original.

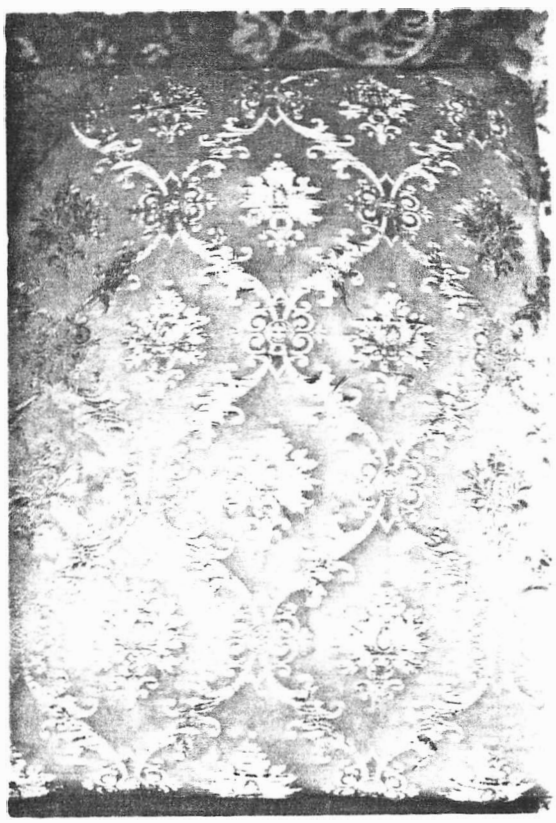


Figure 314. Cover of an Empire Revival stool in the Mallory-Neely House. This late nineteenth century damask fabric, originally crimson red, is a reproduction of an eighteenth century textile.



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

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[184]Lucie H. Armstrong, "The Progress of the Industrial Arts: Silks & Satins," Art Journal (1891), 21, Special Collections, Watson Library of the Metropolitan Museum, New York.

[185]Hester, 19.

[186]H. H. Manchester, The Story of Silk & Cheney Silks (New York: Cheney Bros., 1916), 49.

[187]F. Schumacher & Company, The Development of Various Decorative and Upholstery Fabrics (New York: F. Schumacher & Company, 1924), 10.

[188]See 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

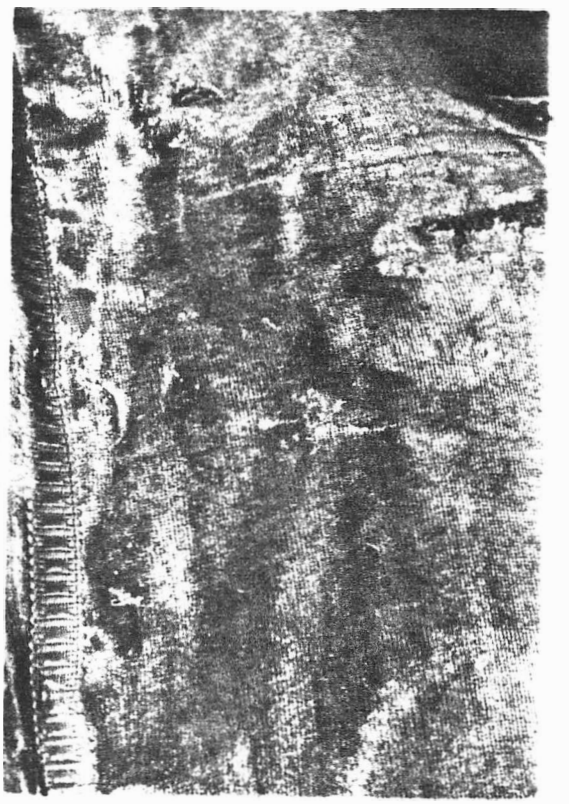
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[189]Ibid., 8-9.

[190]Aymer 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.

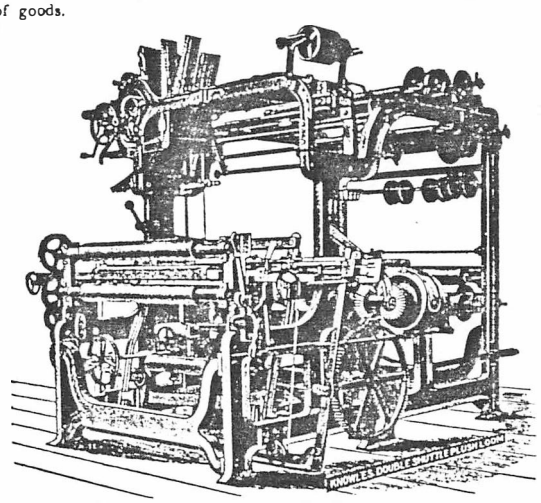
THIS ILLUSTRATION SHOWS OUR

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

Worsteds, Woolens, Dress Goods, Flannels, Blankets, Jeans, Ginghams, Upholstery, Draperies, Shawls, Ingrain Carpets, Silks, Satins, Ribbons, Suspenders, Bindings, Wickings, Webbings, 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).

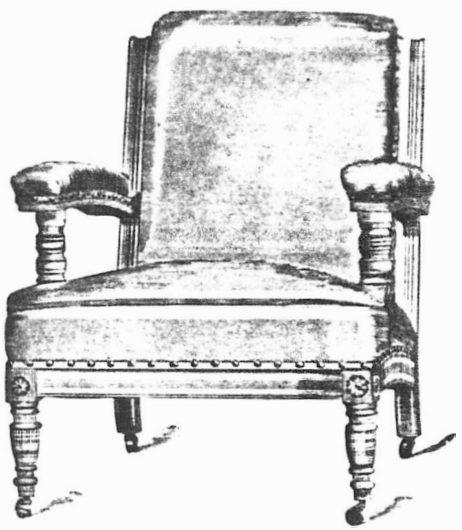
Figure 317. Advertisement for a mechanized plush loom from E. A. Posselt, Technology of Textile Design, 1889. Courtesy New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown.



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

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[191] Illustrated Catalogue of G. Stomps & Company Manufacturers of All Kinds of Chairs (Dayton, Ohio: 1887-88), 129 [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

[192] Shearman Brothers, Price List, Ironclad Upholstery Works (Jamestown, New York: 1889), n.p. [trade catalog], Special Collections, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

[193] Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 25 December 1884, 1.

[194] Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 25 December 1884, 1.

[195] Memphis 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, wasteboxes, 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

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[196]See Harvey Green, The Light of the Home: An Intimate View of the Lives of Women in Victorian America (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983).

[197]Our 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.

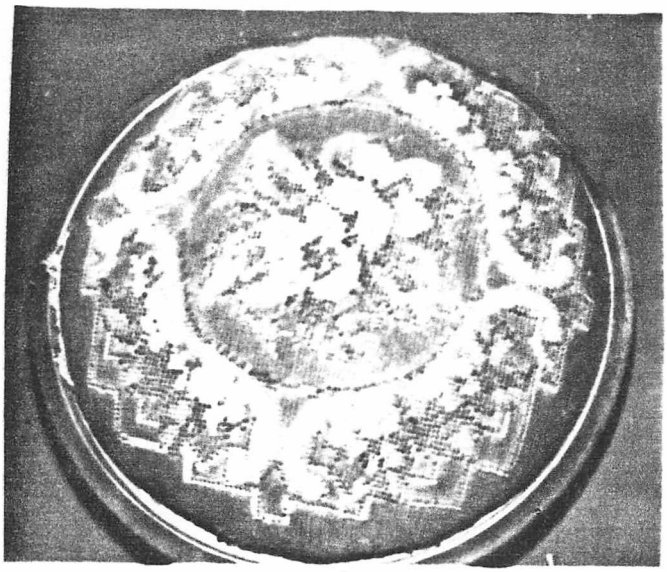
Today probably thought of as the most representative type of Victorian needlework, Berlin Work became a symbol to many design reformers of the era's visual lack of taste. Berlin Work had its beginning in the early nineteenth century in Berlin, hence the name. The design to be embroidered was painted 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.

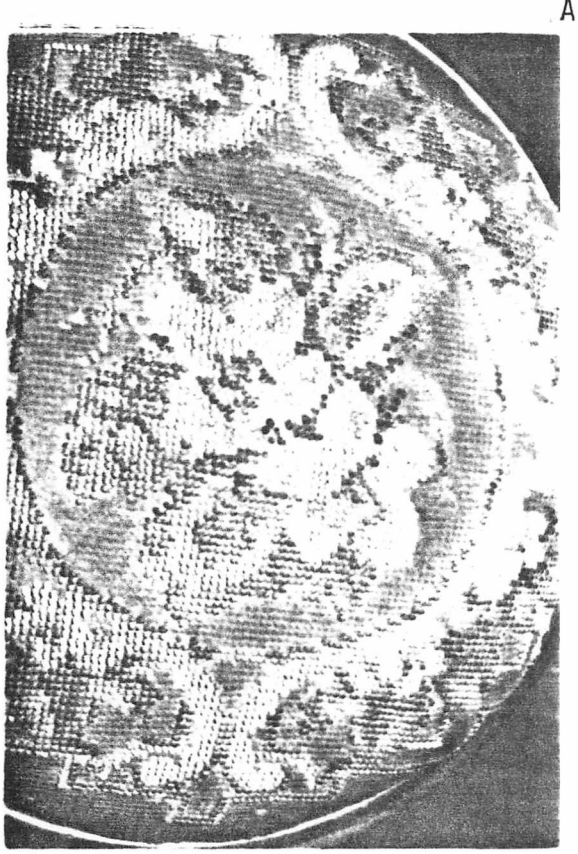
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[198]Sophia Caulfield and Blanche C. Saward, The Dictionary of Needlework: An Encyclopedia of Artistic, Plain, and Fancy Needlework (London: A. W. Cowan, 1882; reprint, Encyclopedia of Victorian Needlework II, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1972), 28.

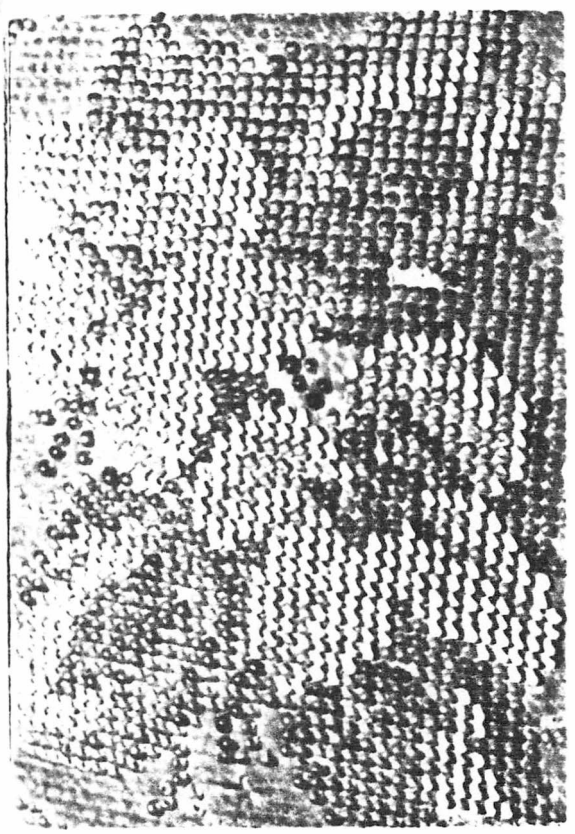
[199]Gabriel Juri, Victorian Furniture and Furnishings (New York: Grosset & Dunlop, 1971), 26.



A



B

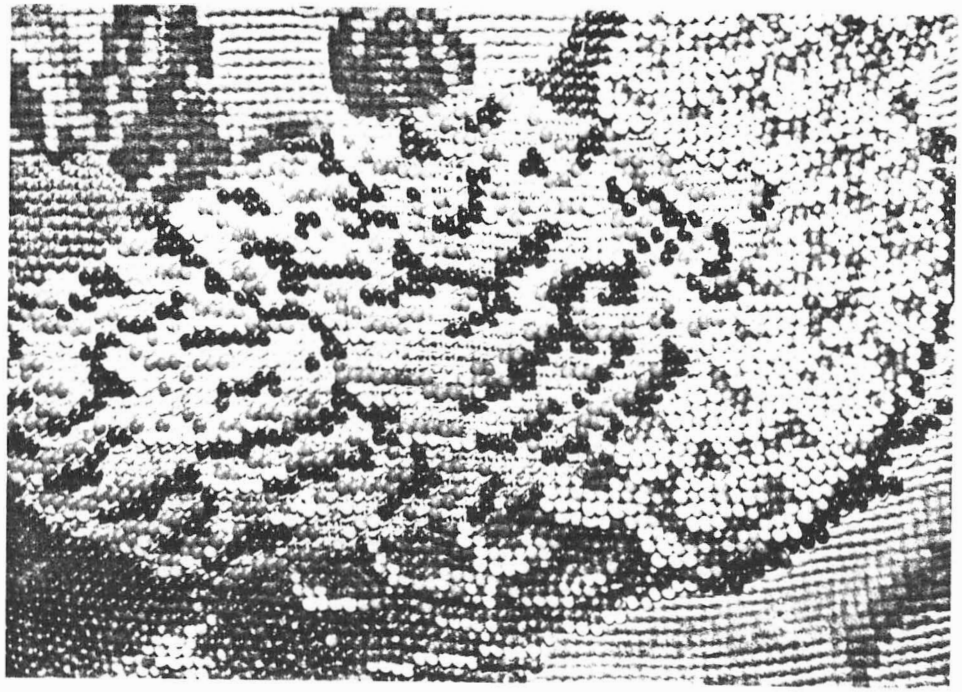


C

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.



A



B

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]

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[200]Barbara M. Morris, Victorian Embroidery (New York: Universe Books, 1962), 28.

[201]See, 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]

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[202]Peter Thornton, "Room Arrangements in the Mid-Eighteenth Century," The Magazine Antiques (April 1971), 556-561.

[203]Giedion, 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]

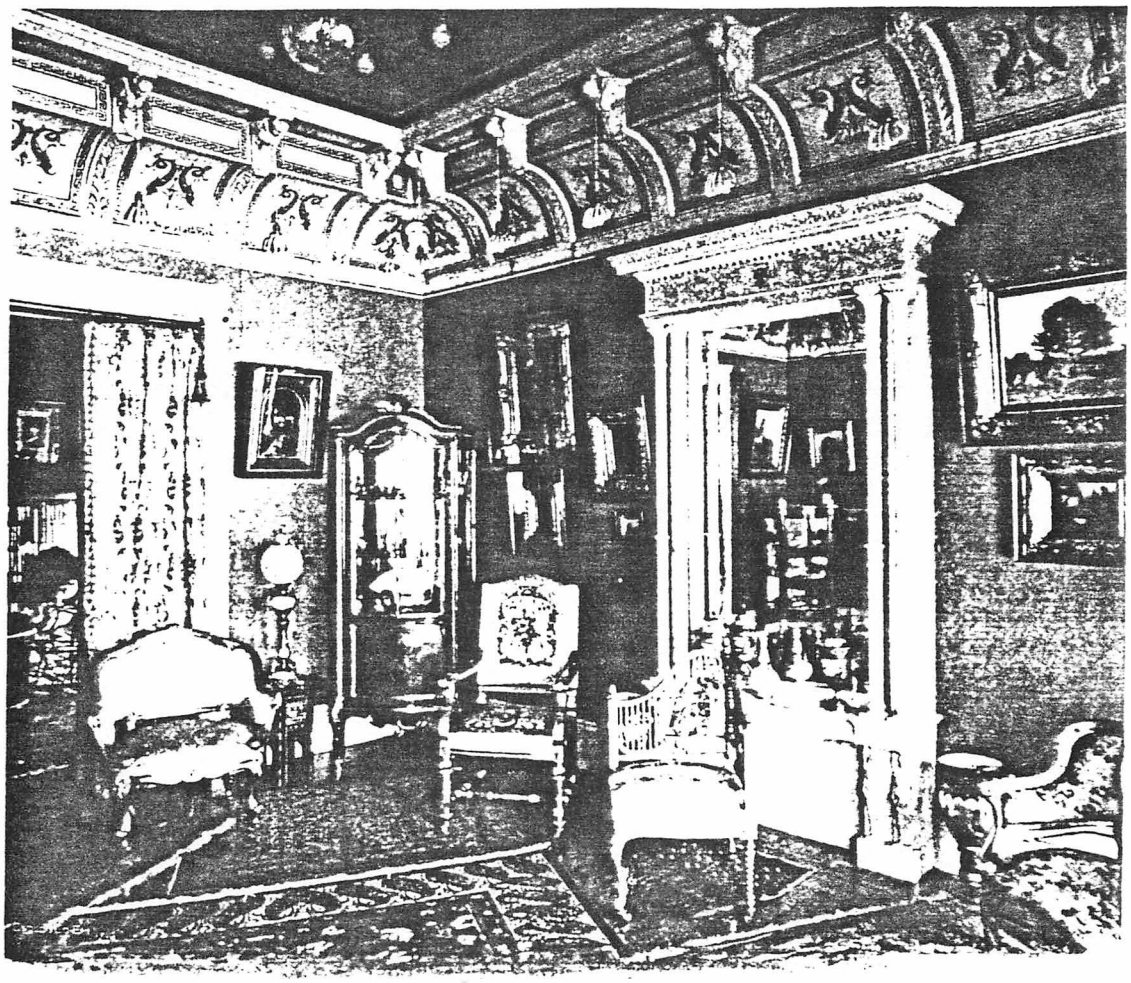
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[204]"The Devaluation of Space," Encyclopedia Victoriana, eds. Harriet Bridgeman and Elizabeth Drury (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1975), 30.

[205]Giedion, Mechanization Takes Command, 279-343.

[206]Cecilia Otto, American Furniture of the Nineteenth Century (New York: Castle Books, 1965), 208.

[207]Thornton, 221.



Drawing-room — Residence of Mr. Josep 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

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[208]"The Devaluation of Space," 29-30.

[209]Roger Moss, "Victorian Lighting," Paper presented at the 38th Annual Seminar on American Culture," New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York, 2 July 1985.

[210]McClaugherty, 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]

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[211]Ibid., 13.

[212]Cooper, 74-77.

[213]William 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.

[214]Spofford, 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.

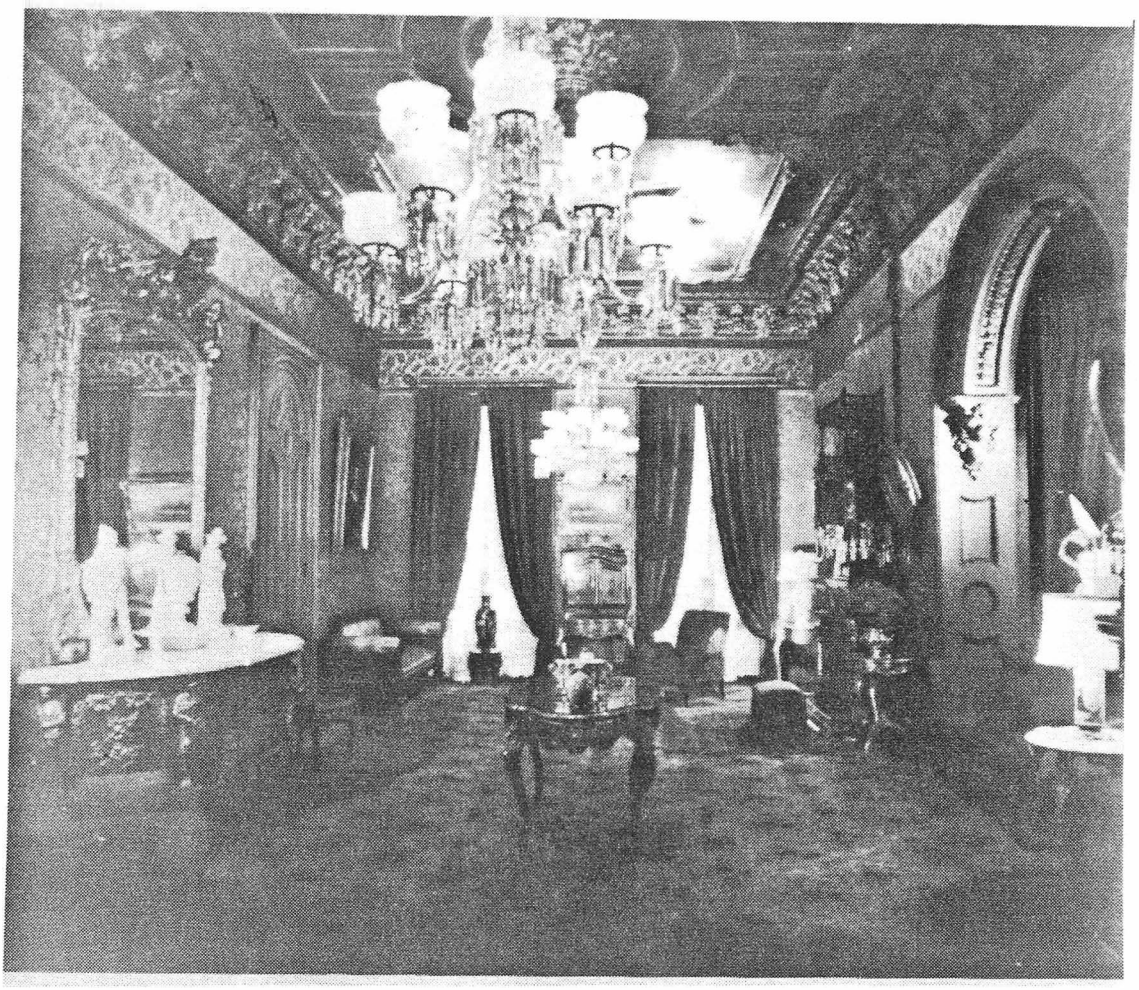


Figure 322. View of the Mallory-Neely parlor showing the density of objects crowded into the room.

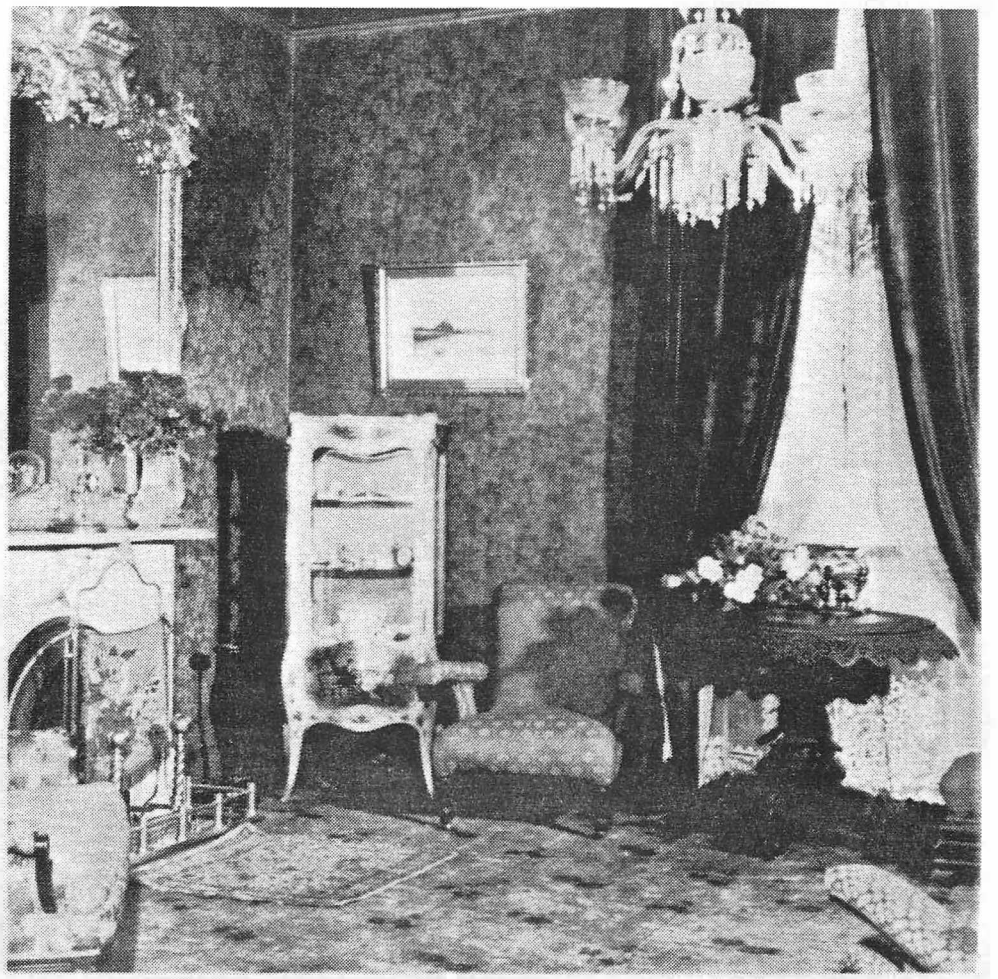
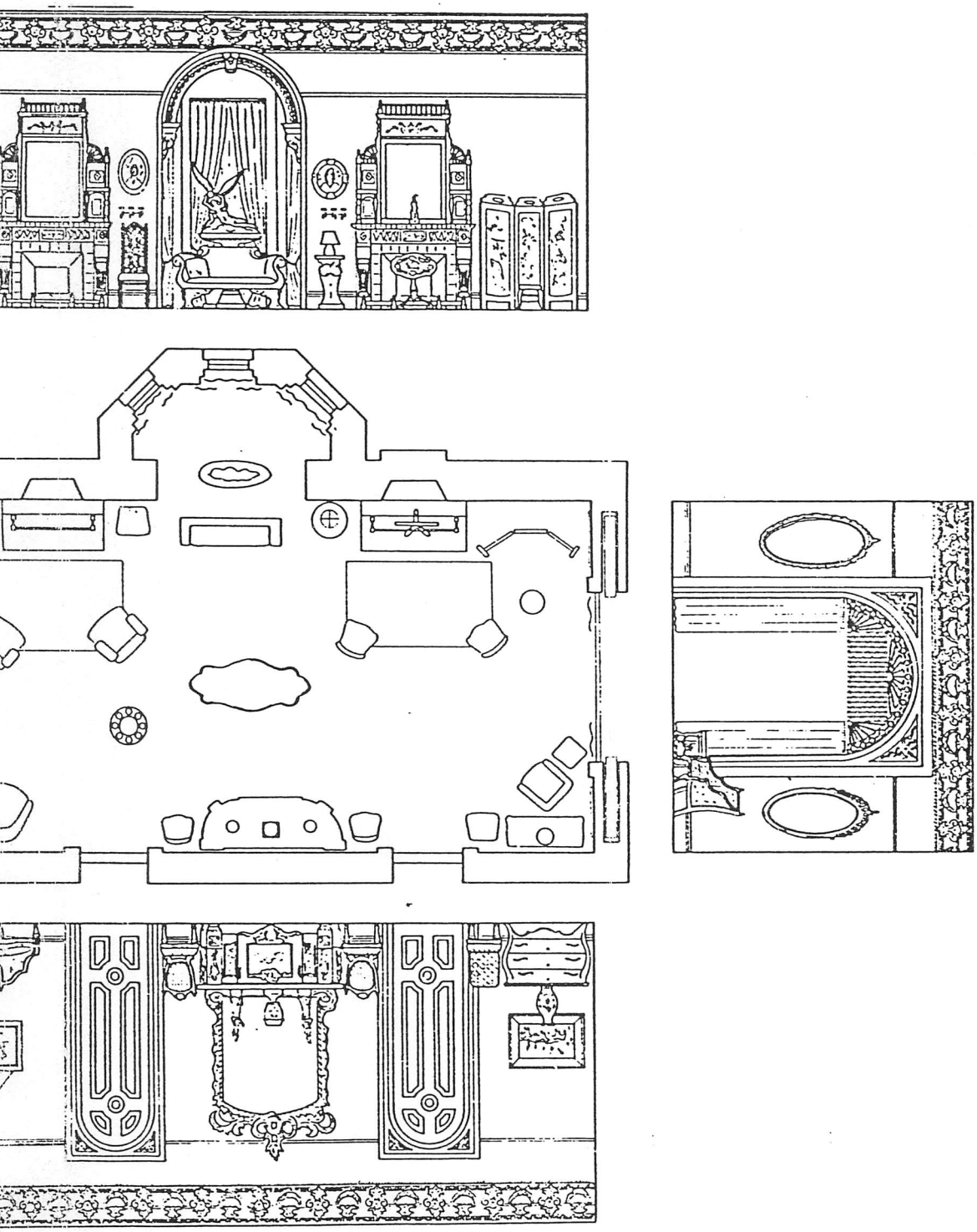


Figure 323. Object cluttered interior of the Mallory-Neely music room.



of the Mallory-Neely parlor showing the arrangement of the furnishings.

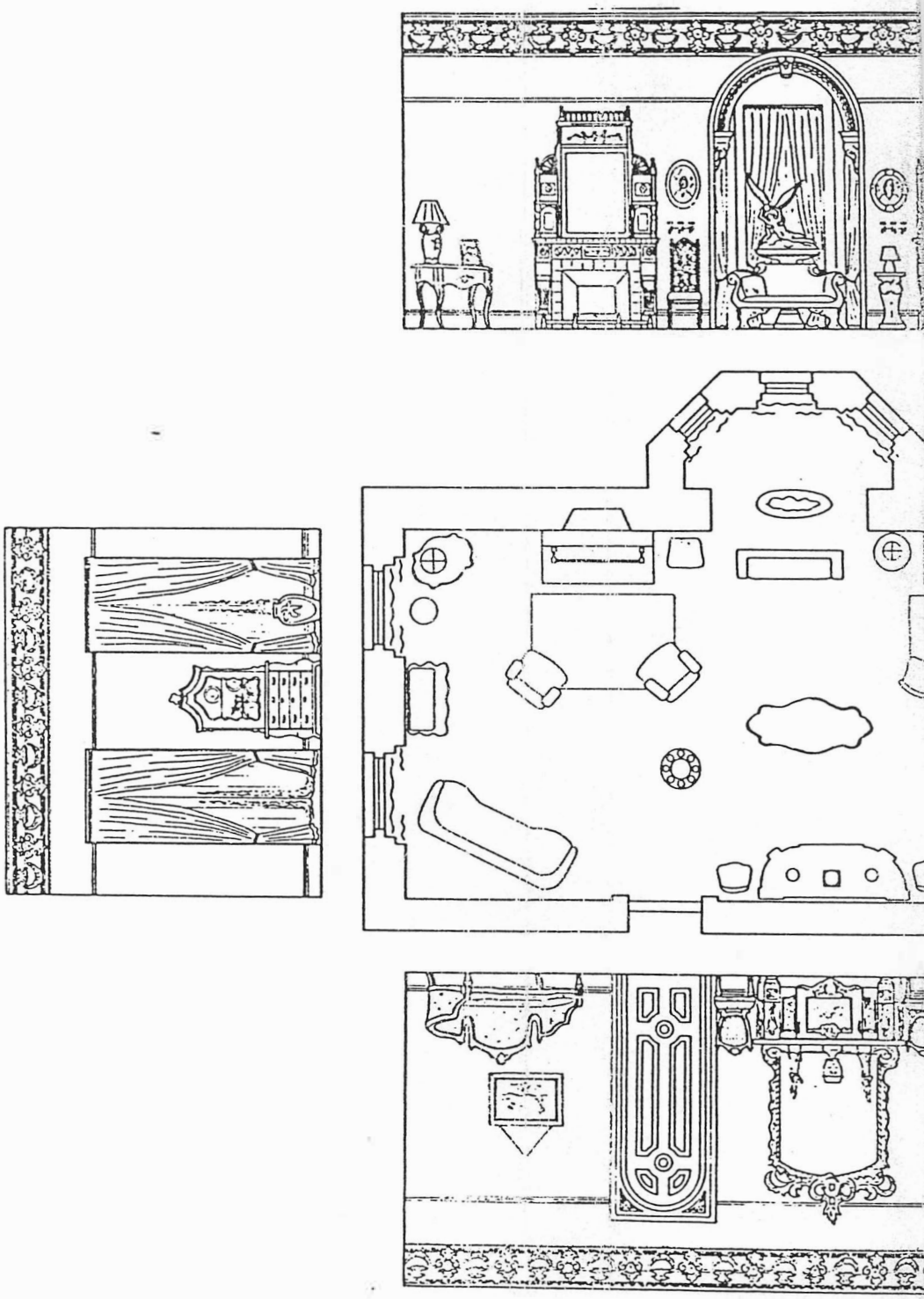


Figure 324. Plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely parlor

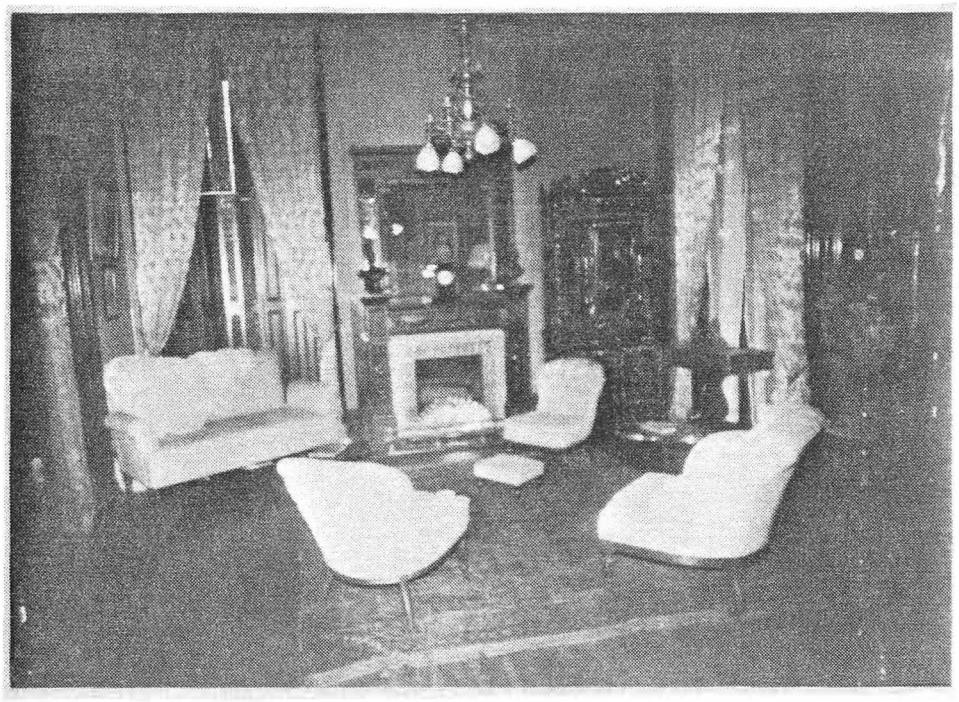


Figure 325. View of the Mallory-Neely sitting room showing the congregation of furniture out into the space of the room.

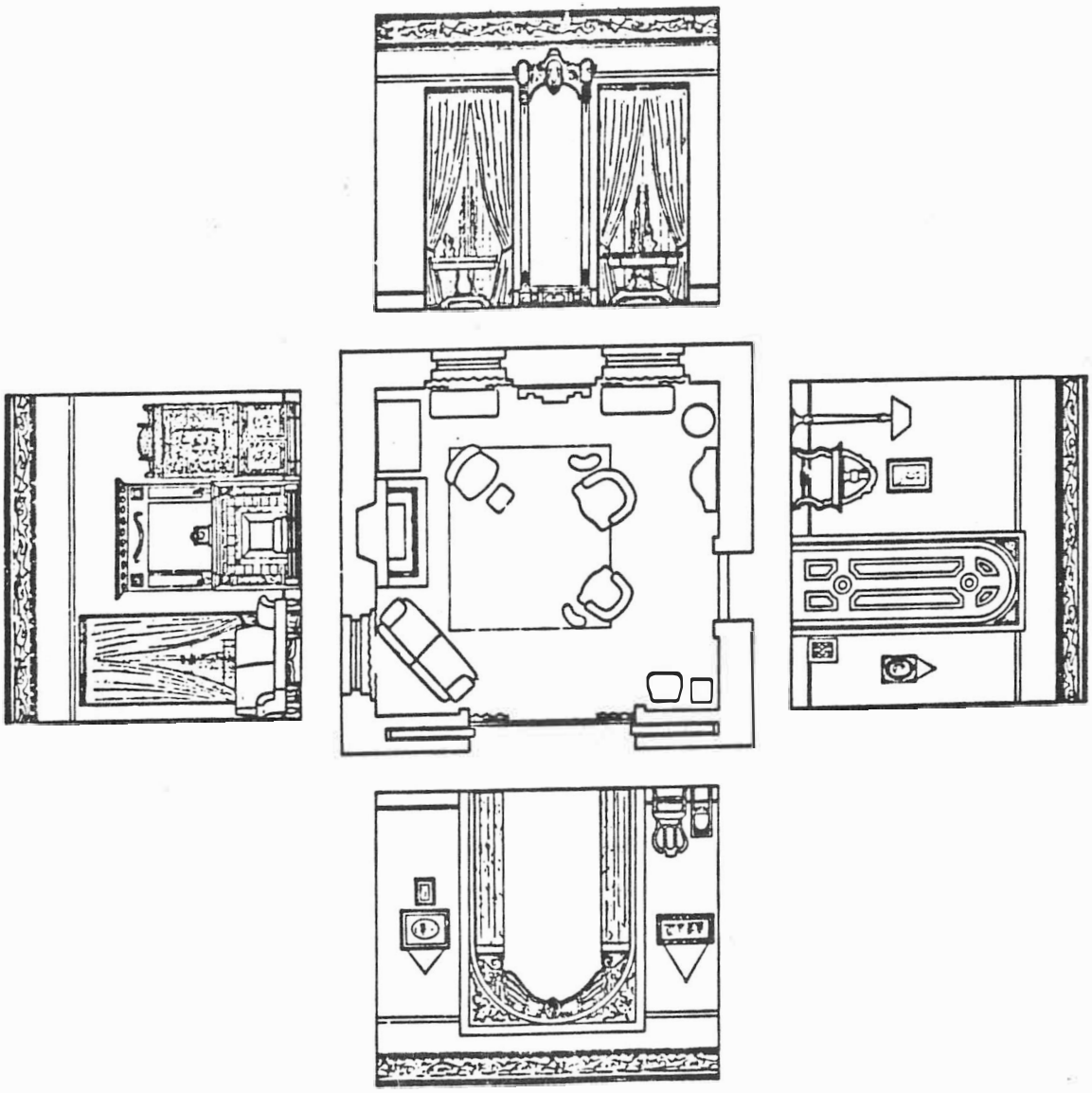


Figure 326. Plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely sitting room showing the arrangement of the furnishings.