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"Country," Past, and Nostalgia: Examination of an American Popular Ideal

Kyoko Ito
College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

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"COUNTRY," PAST, AND NOSTALGIA:
EXAMINATION OF AN AMERICAN POPULAR IDEAL

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the American Studies Program
The College of William and Mary in Virginia


In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Kyoko Ito
1993

APPROVAL SHEET


This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

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Author

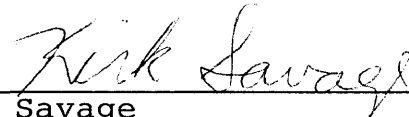
Approved, August 1993



Robert A. Gross



Barbara Carson



Kirk Savage

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PREFACE

I chose an American home decoration magazine as my thesis topic because of my interest as a foreigner in American homes. People's way of living is reflected in their way of decorating homes and using spaces. My main impression of an American home is its atmosphere of informality and friendliness. While attempting to clarify characteristics of American home interiors, I hoped to better understand American people and culture.

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ABSTRACT

This essay, focusing on Country Living a country-style home decoration magazine, discusses how and why "country" as a lifestyle became popular among American middle-class families.

Country Living came into being in 1978 due to women's increasing interest in home interiors, which has been developed through popular women's homemaker magazines. Targeting middle-class female readers in cities and suburbs as well as in the country, the magazine supports and encourages modern technology and consumerism along with the simplicity of the Arts and Crafts movement.

By comparing Country Living with two other home interior magazines, Colonial Homes and House Beautiful, it becomes clear that Country Living presents objects which are displaced from the past and thus invokes domestic and sentimental memories. In so doing, Country Living creates the warm, comfortable, and informal atmosphere of "country" middleground which is associated with American pastoral values.

In conclusion, despite all kinds of social and economic pressures on today's American middle-class, "country" living, by bridging the past with the present, provides middle-class families with a sense of security as they look toward a changing future.

"COUNTRY," PAST, AND NOSTALGIA:
EXAMINATION OF AN AMERICAN POPULAR IDEAL

INTRODUCTION

"Country" has become a word Americans find irresistible. Americans decorate their houses with a "country" flavor, shop in "country" stores, eat out in "country" kitchens, and lodge in "country" inns. While the notion of country has taken on a special appeal since the 1970s, it has its roots in an earlier phenomenon, discussed in Leo Marx's The Machine in the Garden. Pastoralism, "something of the yearning for a simpler, more harmonious style of life, an existence 'closer to nature,'" pervaded nineteenth-century thought.¹ Americans sought the pastoral ideal "located in a middle ground somewhere 'between,' ... the opposing forces of civilization and nature."² However, today's country is not only an ideal of place, located in the rural middleground between city and wilderness; as rural life itself has been transformed, country has become a temporal ideal as well, nostalgically recalling the American past. Country can sometimes refer to colonial life, at other times frontier life, or simply rural life in the past. Why, in modern society that enjoys science and technology and believes in its future progress, does the past continue to attract so many Americans?

For one thing, as Yi-Fu Tuan argues in "The Significance

of the Artifact," it is "a consequence of the awareness of historical time" that people appreciate artifacts of the past.³ The threat to American heritage posed by demolition led 20th-century America to develop the historic preservation movement. While historic preservation was first initiated by genteel classes, eventually it received widespread support and became a national phenomenon. Michael Wallace writes that "in the 1970s, it seemed as if the entire culture had done an about-face. Community groups and corporations, banks and courts, state governments and private developers -- all supported 'historic preservation.'"⁴ As a result, "the past is everywhere," as David Lowenthal writes in an introduction to The Past is a Foreign Country.⁵ He continues:

Nowadays the past is also pervasive in its abundance of deliberate, tangible evocations. To an American, the landscape of the 1980s seems saturated with 'creeping heritage' - mansarded and half-timbered shopping plazas, exposed brick and butcherblock decor in historic precincts, heritage villages, historic preservation; Once confined to a handful of museums and antique shops, the trappings of history now festoon the whole country

However, the historical significance of our environment is not the only value of the past; there is also a sentimental attachment to the past. Today's consumer industry, recognizing people's persistent sentiment towards the past, often uses the past as a marketing strategy. For example, Pepperidge Farm introduces its cookies in a nostalgic way: "Remember the cookies in Grandma's cookie jar? Simple, fresh baked cookies made from timeless recipes That's the kind of cookie Pepperidge Farm remembers and brings to you."⁷

An important and revealing example of pastoralism combined with a sentimental and consumerist appeal to the past is Country Living, a home decoration magazine popular among the middle-class. In this magazine, country becomes today's utopia for middle-class Americans; beyond Leo Marx's pastoralism, country represents a middle ground between the past and the present. By examining the contents of Country Living -- how domestic objects are presented and valued and how a country home is created by those objects -- I will explore the meaning and appeal of "country" in contemporary America.

CHAPTER I
WHAT COUNTRY MEANS

Country style has never been clearly defined.⁸ C. Ray Smith in his explanation of "Country Vernacular" gives us some hints:

The 1970s also saw widespread interest in Country Vernacular and in Arts and Crafts and Mission style furniture. It was something of a resurgence of the Peasant Vernacular of the 1930s, but Americanized. Residential subdivisions and shopping malls were designed as farm-like, barn-like spaces, with exposed wood beams and trusses,⁹ woodsy textures, and nostalgic cracker-barrel imagery.

However, this account tends to rely on vague images of rural houses rather than definite stylistic analysis.

In fact, Country Living pays little attention to the history of architecture or furniture; instead, atmosphere is more important than period style. Rachel Newman, editor-in-chief of Country Living says that "the whole idea of "country" really had its roots in what people today call 'Early American' -- that rustic, homey, informal interpretation of the more formal furniture styles of the big cities. Today 'country,' which represents warmth, coziness and accessibility, appeals to more Americans than any other style because Americans are very informal people"¹⁰ Although Newman refers to "country" as "Early American" style, words like "rustic," "homey,"

"warmth," "coziness," and "accessibility" do not define style in any precise way. Instead, she emphasizes the informal atmosphere of rural life in the past. In addition, as she points out, readers are interested in home life surrounded with reminders of the past.¹¹ Nostalgia, as an important part of "country" decoration, reinforces the familiar atmosphere of the past.

Advertising on a magazine subscription slip(fig.1) confirms Newman's description of "country": "For millions of Americans, 'Country Living' has become the preferred lifestyle - casual, comfortable, welcome relief from the hassled pace of today's world." The magazine helps to add "a warm and pleasing 'country look' to your home, a hearty country flavor to your cooking and a little old-fashioned country cheer to your life." Using such adjectives as "warm," "pleasing," and "hearty," Country Living privileges a familiar atmosphere created by house decoration over artistic style. Being described as "relief from ... today's world," "country" living has an idealistic connotation, creating images of an ideal past life in America. Because Country Living treats the whole past as one, classification of the style of furniture matters little in creating a sense of the past. An inclusive quality of "country" creates a sense of an ideal lifestyle shared by a majority of Americans in spite of their different experiences in the past. As a result, this ambiguous nature of "country," open to any interpretation, may be the key to the wide popularity of the magazine.

CHAPTER II
GROWING INTEREST IN HOME DECORATION

Although we understand what country means in Country Living, now we need to know why and how the country style decoration Country Living represents became popular. The answer must be situated in a history of advice books and magazines on home decoration. As Richard Guy Wilson asserts, these publications have made a decisive impact on people's attitude towards house decoration: "One of the greatest influences on home design has been the mass circulation homemaker magazine. A study of these magazines, . . . , is essential to any understanding of the popular culture of the home."¹²

According to Jean Gordon and Jan McArthur's "Interior Decorating Advice as Popular Culture: Women's Views Concerning Wall and Window Treatments, 1870-1920," in the 1870s there was a "proliferation of decorating advice" in popular magazines and books due to social expectations about women's domesticity and the economic availability of manufactured goods.¹³ An exemplary book about women's domesticity is Catherine and Harriet Beecher's The American Woman's Home published in 1869.¹⁴ In their book, underlined by the principles of being "healthful, economical, and tasteful," home decoration is part of

housekeeping practice.¹⁵ To meet women's increasing interest in housework and interior decoration, popular magazines began to be published: Good Housekeeping started publication in 1885; Ladies Home Journal, in 1883. A decade later, House Beautiful, a magazine devoted to houses, gardens, and matters of decoration, appeared. They all agreed with The American Woman's Home that women were responsible for the home.

Women writing about interior decoration played an important role in shaping the taste of their time and promoting magazine sales.¹⁶ Unlike professional architects, their attitudes focused on "making do with what they have."¹⁷ This attitude became a long-time motto of popular homemaker magazines. Also women began to pursue careers in interior decoration. Elsie de Wolfe became America's first woman professional decorator. According to Smith, de Wolfe brought "light, air, and comfort" into the home interior, opposing late-Victorian dark rooms.¹⁸ With the breakthrough of her design style, interior decoration as an artistic field became open to women. Homemaker magazines played a crucial part in legitimizing home decoration by women decorators.

Another influence on the development of popular interest in American home decoration came from the English Arts and Crafts movement around the turn of the 19th century. Advocating simple, functional, and honest furniture, the Arts and Crafts movement spread in America through Charles Eastlake's Hints on Household Taste, a masterpiece of the movement. Arts and Crafts style, suited for both the rich and the less affluent, drew enough

attention from the wider population to establish a base for the popularity of interior decoration among Americans.¹⁹

While women actively participated in home decoration and the Arts and Crafts style from abroad appealed to the American middleclass, consumerism helped to enlarge the circulation of home decorating magazines. Theodore Peterson's Magazines in the Twentieth Century explains the circulation growth of popular home magazines in the twentieth century.²⁰ Popular magazines "playing a significant part in raising the material standard of living," advertised new products or materials on home furnishings and encouraged readers to be consumers.²¹ As prominent proponents of consumer society, popular magazines expanded their circulation. Between 1926 and 1941, Good Housekeeping and Better Homes & Gardens, both women's homemaker magazines, recorded a circulation of a million.²² Through creative editing and regional publishing, magazines of these kinds continued to grow. In 1963, Good Housekeeping reached a circulation of 5,269,000.²³ In the 1960s, the circulation of House Beautiful was 912,000.²⁴ The growth of popular homemaker magazines has been a natural outcome of society's wide acceptance of consumerism.

The domestic interior decorating advice in popular magazines and books tended to be regarded as popular culture, distinguished from the high culture of professional interior design.²⁵ However, it is true that in forming popular tastes, those magazines have been greatly influenced by professional architects, decorators, and artists. For instance, the work

of Frank Lloyd Wright appeared in Ladies' Home Journal.²⁶ House Beautiful also "gave space to craftsmen and the Craftsman tradition" originating in the Arts and Crafts movement.²⁷ Moreover, "the emergence of post-modernism since the mid-1970s ... has blurred some of the distinctions between high art architecture and popular architecture."²⁸ To some extent, the magazines' way of promoting popular tastes cannot be separated from professional interior design trends.

Gordon and McArthur write about the trends of interior decorating style in homemaker magazines in "Popular Culture, Magazines and American Domestic Interiors, 1898-1940."²⁹ Although there appeared a variety of decorating advice during the first half of 20th century, a big change in decoration came about due to domestic architectural modification. As American homes became simpler in the early 20th century, what David E. Shi calls "Progressive Simplicity" began to be sought in home interiors: while accepting new materials and building techniques, people appreciated plain style and brought "nature" indoors.³⁰ As a result of pursuing this "simplicity," some people returned to colonial styles and others favored the Arts and Crafts style.³¹ In 1925, despite the explosion of consumerism in urban life, people showed a great deal of passion for old-fashioned styles instead of "modern" design.³² However, materially and technically, such passion could not be satisfied without a technique of reproduction. Also, the advent of the automobile, another technological invention, made possible "a new kind of genteel country living."³³

In the 1970s when "Country Vernacular" became a boom in architecture due to an increasing attention in historic preservation, people took an increased interest in early American style in home decoration, a phenomenon similar to the early twentieth century when people returned to traditional styles. To serve this new popular taste -- home decoration based on simplicity, modern technology, and nostalgia for the past -- new magazines, namely Colonial Homes in 1976 and Country Living in 1978, emerged in the 1980s.

CHAPTER III

COUNTRY LIVING AND TODAY'S MAGAZINE MARKET

With the steady increase of popular interest in home interiors, Country Living came into being in 1978 under the title of Good Housekeeping's Country Living. The magazine consists of articles on decorating, cooking, real estate, antiques, crafts, and gardens. Since the early editorship of Rachel Newman, there has been very little change in format except for the addition of a section titled 'Gardens.' Because Country Living is derivative of Good Housekeeping, they share some characteristics in regard to readership. Therefore, Country Living, despite its short publication record, will be better understood in comparison with Good Housekeeping.

Since its start in 1885, Good Housekeeping has been enjoying a wide circulation as a general-interest homemaker magazine. In 1911, Randolph Hearst was "looking for new magazine properties" when he purchased Good Housekeeping.³⁴ By the mid-twenties, circulation of Good Housekeeping had passed "the million mark."³⁵ Full of "articles of advice on household affairs, cookery, dressmaking, house-designing and furnishings," according to F. L. Mott, Good Housekeeping aimed at "higher life in the household."³⁶ Country Living, though concentrating

on home decoration, has also attracted a large audience. According to the Audit Bureau of Circulation, during the second half of 1988 the average circulation was 1,833,816.³⁷ Country Living was "the best-performing title of the 1980's," named one of the ten hottest magazines of the year for the fourth time.³⁸

The wide popularity of both magazines may be due to their middle-class appeal. Good Housekeeping specifically targeted "women of modest income who had few opportunities to refurnish their homes."³⁹ In contrast, House Beautiful, another home decoration magazine founded in 1896, addressed women who editors "assumed to be wealthy enough ... to be able to determine the character of an entire house complete with interior furnishings and surrounding grounds."⁴⁰

Country Living's middle-class focus is clear if we compare the magazine to Colonial Homes, a counterpart which evolved from House Beautiful in 1976. Having begun publication with the title of House Beautiful's Colonial Homes, Colonial Homes is a magazine about house furnishings in identifiable early American period styles. Although Colonial Homes and Country Living are both retrospective in decoration, Colonial Homes pays more attention to architecture and high-style antiques(fig.2). As both titles indicate, Country Living focuses on a way of "living" while Colonial Homes centers on styles of "homes." Different classes of readers may account for the distinction between the two magazines.

According to Adult Reader Profile of the two magazines,

there is a difference in income and home value between those readers.⁴¹ While the median household income of Country Living's audience is \$39,872, that of Colonial Homes's is \$42,651. Also, 34.2% of Country Living's audience earns more than \$50,000 as opposed to 41.4% of Colonial Homes's audience. As for home value, it is obvious that Colonial Homes's readers can afford to buy more expensive houses than those of Country Living: 30.9% of homes owned by Country Living's audience are worth more than \$100,000. On the other hand, 40.4% of Colonial Homes's audience live in such homes.

To appeal to a slightly less affluent readership, Country Living and Good Housekeeping both attempt to "create a close relationship with their readers."⁴² This reflects the official principles of the Hearst Corporation, which emphasizes "a commitment to service" and a commitment to community.⁴³ Under this doctrine, Good Housekeeping was a reader-oriented magazine, including sections such as correspondence/letters, consulting, and shopping guides. Its "Seal of Approval," given by its own testing laboratory, best characterizes the magazine's purpose and plays the role of expert advisor to its readers. This didactic approach can be found in Country Living with its introduction of new products and materials. By referring to a section titled "Reader Service"(fig.3), readers easily find commercial and service information they need for things featured in articles. Country Living, containing the readers' column, has established an intimate relation with its audience.

Like other general homemaker magazines, Country Living

promotes consumerism by providing information on commercial commodities. As seen in such regular features as "Shopping by Mail," "Country Classics You Can Buy," and "House Plans You Can Buy," it promotes consumption throughout its pages. In 1988 Country Living recorded its tenth consecutive year of advertising page growth.⁴⁴ Having known that Country Living was named "the NO.1 hottest magazine in America for 1983-1988," it is not difficult to conclude that Country Living has been an effective means of advertising a wide variety of commercial products and services.⁴⁵

Another characteristic of Country Living is that with 72% of the audience being women, it has a domestic tone with the motto of traditional women's homemaker magazines of making do with what they have. Country Living, recognizing that readers have an interest in "doing it themselves -- whatever 'it' is, encourages a do-it-yourself attitude."⁴⁶ Readers "don't hire decorators."⁴⁷ Consequently, this casual attitude helps to create an informal and familiar atmosphere of "country." In contrast with Country Living's amateurism, professionalism penetrates House Beautiful's display. House Beautiful is full of names of interior decorators, architects and all sorts of artists. While in Country Living everyone can be a decorator, House Beautiful gives the license of house decoration only to the professionals. As a result, Country Living claims nostalgic feelings created by a do-it-yourself approach as the main theme whereas in House Beautiful, nostalgia is merely one of the elements to which artists give new meanings through their

creativity. Rather than finding sentimental value in things of the past, decorators in House Beautiful use them as a motif for their work of art.

The idea of Country Living came from the editor-in-chief of Good Housekeeping, who recognized "the American family's renewed interest in a natural, American lifestyle and a growing trend toward traditional living."⁴⁸ Still, the magazine does not disregard modern conveniences:

Country Living speaks directly to this new generation of American families helping them create a lifestyle combining traditional values with the sophistication of 20th century tastes.

Houses shown in Country Living have microwaves, electric appliances, modern heating systems. In "Progressivism and the Colonial Revival," Bridget A. May describes "Modern Colonial" in the early twentieth century as the successful combination of progressive ideas and colonial style: "Modern Colonial" houses are "preserving traditional values while keeping abreast of modern requirement."⁵⁰ Although May is discussing a very specific type of house during a limited period, the idea of modern adaptation is also true of Country Living. Country Living's approach is eclectic in the sense that its ultimate goal is to meet Americans' present needs.

Although Country Living displays scenes and houses in the countryside, it is targeted at people living in metropolitan areas. This is clear from the articles such as "Country in the City" and "Country Kitchens: Big City Makeover." By offering a chance to realize a life of country outside the country,

the magazine tries to attract people living in cities and suburbs as well as in the country.

Besides its urban market, Country Living finds favor with readers in the Eastern and North Central region of the United States. According to geographic analysis of total paid circulation in Magazine Publisher's Statement, there is an interesting regional distinction between the audience of Country Living and that of Colonial Homes.⁵¹ Colonial Homes is more often purchased and read in New England (Me. N.H. Vt. Mass. R.I. Conn.), the Middle Atlantic (N.Y. N.J. Pa.), and the South Atlantic (Del. Md. D.C. Va. W.Va. N.C. S.C. Ga. Fl.), or where European settlement began; percentages of circulation in these regions are 9.2%, 17.3%, and 25.8% respectively while those areas represent 5.5%, 16.2%, and 16.3% of the national population. This seems that Colonial Homes shows its greatest appeal proportionately in New England, and the South Atlantic. On the other hand, Country Living is more popular in New England, the South Atlantic and both West and East North Central (Oh. Ind. Ill. Mich. Wis. Minn. Ia. Mo. S.D. N.D. Neb. Kan.), than in other areas; percentages of circulation in these regions are 7.3%, 17.3%, 9.0%, and 21.6% respectively while general population percentages of each region are 5.5%, 16.3%, 8.0%, and 18.4%. Country Living often shows country images from the North Central region more than Colonial Homes which may account for its popularity in this region. Although California bungalows and ranch houses are featured in Country Living, its main images are rooted in the Eastern and Central region.

However inclusive the word "country" is as defined by Country Living, the definition is limited by cultural boundaries. The magazine is eager to feature "folk" arts, but rarely includes Native American, Spanish American, or African-American arts. Even if a Maine Micmac Indian basket(fig.4) is displayed in the stone home featured in November 1990, it is used more to evoke rusticity as an element of "country" than to exemplify Indian culture. Also hardly seen is Asian influence, which appears as a sign of elegance and high-style in Colonial Homes. On the contrary, there are all sorts of things from England, France, Holland, and other European countries. Folk art in the colonial time is also appreciated. Country Living's display reflects a western European-based culture.

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CHAPTER IV

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF COUNTRY LIVING'S INTERIORS

Before analyzing the ways of life which Country Living represents and promotes, we need to identify the distinctive features of Country Living's interiors. There are two essential strategies in virtually every interior presented: displacement of objects and properties, and appeal to domestic sentimental memories.

In "Artefacts, Memory and a Sense of the Past," Alan Radley discusses the significance of artifacts in modern societies.⁵² Playing "a powerful role in shaping and maintaining people's memories of their collective past," objects, once displaced from their original context, gain new cultural values.⁵³ The enduring nature of artifacts is important in their functioning as symbols of the past. Radley continues his argument:

... objects may be transformed in their function, both at a personal and at a cultural level. Yesterday's functional artefact can become tomorrow's memento or museum piece, although today its displacement may remove it to a limbo where it has outlived its usefulness though not yet been rediscovered or been marked as of special interest.⁵⁴

Because Country Living tends to display things of the past or those which relate to "countryside" landscapes, the displacement of objects is key to understanding the way in which material

things are shown in the magazine. Carefully chosen, objects are displaced in both time and place.

In several ways, objects are displaced in time. First, styles of the past are reproduced in the present setting. As seen in a renovated Welsh kitchen(fig.5) in the October issue of Country Living in 1990, the early 18th-century style is revived by the use of "raised spiral turnings, known as 'barley-sugar twists,' and the rich patina of reclaimed pine."⁵⁵ Consequently, the kitchen of late-20th-century living has both a historical and a "country" look. In another case, a newly refurnished homestead in Fair Haven, NJ featured in the November 1991 issue recreates the old style. In the family room(fig.6), a new hearth, woodwork, paneling, and window treatments support "the spirit of the structure's mid-19th-century architecture."⁵⁶ In the dining room(fig.7), reproduction bow-back Windsors surround the dining room's 1780s New England sawbuck table, enhancing the character of the period.

Besides the use of reproduction, signs of age are also important in Radley's discussion of displacement. For example, weathered brick and beams, as seen in the Welsh kitchen, create an old look in any interior space. This old "look," a distinctive way of presenting things in Country Living, is so powerful that "country" life, set apart from the context, is possible even in the city of New York; Country Living in November 1991 features the Manhattan kitchen(fig.8) in which "rusted steel sheeting with burned edges" was installed.⁵⁷

are different from those seen in Colonial Homes. In Colonial Homes, antiques are valued not only for their age but for their sophistication, condition, and style. Moreover, collectors are concerned about when, where, and by which maker antiques were made and who was the purchaser. In other words, provenance is a very important element in evaluating antiques. As a result, they can be highly expensive because of their rarity value. However, antiques in Country Living, though old, are neither expensive nor sophisticated in style. The extreme case is a display of "junk" furniture such as a chipped-table in a Baltimore town house(fig.9) featured in February 1992 and a paint-chipped stepback cupboard in the homestead(fig.7) in Fair Haven, NJ. "Country" antiques have a different value, expressing oldness in a rustic way. Standards of monetary value are no longer applied to antiques in Country Living.

In contrast with Country Living's rustic and primitive interiors, Colonial Homes is renowned for its display of sophisticated furnishings. The dining room(fig.10) of a town house in historic Muncy, PA featured in "Tranquil Treasure" is a case in point.⁵⁸ Unlike the rustic pottery and baskets presented in Country Living, elite and expensive stuff such as export china and decorative china and silvers are shown in Colonial Homes. Wealth becomes a source of sophistication. Colonial Homes' furniture reveals the luxurious and rich life of the owners. The June 1991 issue's "Antebellum Elegance" introduces a magnificent seventeen-room plantation manor(fig.11). Along with its historic significance as "a place in Civil War

history," every piece of furniture -- piano, mid 18th-century portrait, highboy, marble mantel, chandelier -- is elite.⁵⁹ Not only antique furniture is elitist. Wealth is even implied in such small pieces as candle stands and china. Antiques play an important part in uplifting the elitist standards of the houses in Colonial Homes. This reflects the audience's interest in and positive attitudes towards antiques. According to Colonial Homes' subscribers profile, 85.8% of the subscribers own antiques.⁶⁰ Readers list lounging about antique shops as the main purpose of traveling; 71.1% purchased antiques while traveling.

Displacement of objects from the countryside to city or suburb is an effective way of achieving the illusion of rusticity in a modern setting. A birdhouse and a stuffed-fabric cow in a kitchen(fig.12) in Country Living's feature article "Mountain Retreat," as well as natural raw materials such as twig chairs, homespun luncheon mats, and rustic pottery, create the rustic look of the "country." Display of green plants and bunches of herbs, adding a natural look, also create a "country" image in any environment. In the Manhattan kitchen mentioned earlier, flowers and greens -- from a bouquet of poppies on the table to a house plant at the kitchen area -- are shown. Echoed in the patterns of a table cloth, floral accents help to realize "country" landscape indoors. More importantly, the kitchen was designed to bring in an image of rustic countryside through the use of natural materials. Besides the soapstone sink with a synthetic mountain-stone backsplash, there is "another earthy,

organic feature: decorative laminate faux bois cabinetry complete with knobs fashioned from river stones."⁶¹ Plain and sturdy natural materials create rustic images: "Cabinet handles crafted from branch segments," the sprig-leg table along with simple chairs, and a display of baskets and rakes reinforce "country" imagery.⁶² Furniture and decor are not the only sources of the rustic look; tableware such as terra-cotta dishware also have a rustic finish. Moreover, the color of the Manhattan kitchen is also carefully chosen to enhance natural tones: "Italian stone tiles harmonize with the subtle tones of the cabinetry."⁶³ Green-color coffee cups, terra-cotta dishware, and wooden furniture also enhance the natural tone of the kitchen. As a result, this New York kitchen holds an image of "country," despite the practical addition of such equipments as the oven, dishwasher, mixer.

Another displacement occurs by means of hand-crafting. Handmade quilts and hand-crafted cabinets, as opposed to factory/machine-made, remind us of a less technologically advanced time now associated with rural life. It is in contrast with urban life which is surrounded by technology and manufactured goods. By using traditional handcraft skills, Country Living tries to achieve what Marx calls "a middle ground" between nature and civilization -- an informal, warm, and friendly atmosphere characteristic of pastoral life. For example, stenciling, historically inexpensive decoration for the middle class, is revalued for its hand-made quality in bringing a "country" look as well as a warm feeling to the room.

At the height of handcrafts is Arts and Crafts furniture which historically resulted from resistance to industrialism and machine-products. For the same reason, people appreciate furniture made by local craftsmen. Having the same mentality, outmoded technology such as woodstoves and old-style bicycles, no longer practical whether used today or not, has value in being a mediator between nature and civilization.

In the process of displacement, objects are often cut off from their original functions. For example, "painted-edge" breadboards in the farmhouse kitchen(fig.12) are used as serving platters. More than simply a creative reuse of things, they provide a feeling of "country" by adding rustic accents at the table. Fireplaces and woodstoves offer an interesting case of displacement from the original function. The October 1990 issue of Country Living features the latest models of woodstoves. Whether they recall "the opulence of the Victorian era" or reproduce "the traditional American hearth," woodstoves are more important for recalling a sense of the past than for their function of warming.⁶⁴ More interestingly, the article in the earlier page, entitled "Friendly Fuel", not only refers to the "romance" a woodstove provides but also explains how safe woodsmoke is for human beings.⁶⁵ As a result, the value of fireplaces and woodstoves shifts from the original function of warming to their roles as a link to the past and they are even given a new environmental meaning.

Quilts demonstrate another displacement of objects from the past. We value their "oldness" and hand-craft work as well

as their artistic quality. Like other old things, they play a mediating role by bringing a sense of the past to us as readers. Their primary function is no longer practical. Rather, quilts, evoking sentimental feelings towards the past, are considered a significant part of American heritage. An owner of a town house in Baltimore recalls that "I can remember watching my grandmother make quilts when I was growing up."⁶⁶ Quilts acquire a cultural function, becoming symbolic of family tradition.

As another important technique of presentation, Country Living makes use of domestic and sentimental memories. Those memories, either told or embedded in objects, are important in clarifying Country Living's emphasis on domesticity, family-ties, and a sense of continuity. First of all, Country Living attempts to connect readers with memories of domestic life. Articles such as "Grandma's Toasters," "Mama's Trashy Love Affair," and "Doin' the Wash," telling about various old types of toasters, mother's ability to turn trash to useful purposes, and what laundry was like in the turn of the century respectively, prove Country Living's emphasis on and connection with domesticity. The kitchen, a recurrent topic of Country Living, as seen in the series "Country Kitchen" and "Country Cooking," is important to "country" living as a center of domestic and family activity. The "country" kitchen becomes a symbol of domesticity. Also due to their connection to kitchens and cooking, tableware and other kitchen utensils -- from European folk pottery to spatterware to graniteware --

is highlighted in Country Living.

Country Living appeals to sentimental memories to evoke nostalgia. For example, childhood memories are recalled through a variety of stories. A series entitled "Kids in the country" tells us about the pleasant time we might have had in the countryside in our boyhood; for instance, an exciting experience of climbing a tree or a friendly relationship with animals. Objects play an important role as a reminder of childhood memories. Titled as "Kid Stuff," a variety of mugs and plates are shown in the November 1991 issue of Country Living; "Victorian-era children often received a personalized plate or mug as a token of affection or tribute to good conduct."⁶⁷ Also found are children's toys. In the December 1990 issue, as titled "A Favorite from Toyland," toy horses and rocking horses are introduced in close association with joyful memories of childhood.⁶⁸ In the section "Antiques & Collectibles" on another page, "beautiful hand-decorated sleds" are introduced in the nostalgic way in which they remind us of happy Christmases in childhood: "For the children of long-ago winters, a hand-painted or stenciled wooden sled under the Christmas tree held promises of speed and adventure on snow-covered hill"⁶⁹ Those sleds, given as Christmas gifts by families or friends, are closely tied to joyous memories in the past.

Kitchenware, important as a symbol of domesticity, is also used to evoke the nostalgic past in Country Living. In the section "Antiques and Collectibles" in the February 1992 issue, Country Living features graniteware as "American's favorite

kitchen collectible."⁷⁰ They are valued due to their sentimental quality; "many American families still use graniteware pots handed down from a mother or grandmother."⁷¹ In contrast, white china featured in House Beautiful in February 1992 has no relation to nostalgia; House Beautiful introduces a new dimension of white china that "looks both contemporary and classic."⁷²

Through its stress on domestic, sentimental memories, Country Living emphasizes close family-based relationships and a sense of continuity. Domestic and sentimental memories play a mediating part in bridging the past and the present. For instance, family heirloom silvers and a handmade quilt which may have been handed down from the old generation are "reminders of the past ... that represent roots and a sense of family."⁷³

Similarly, Country Living focuses on the small neighborhood community rather than America as a nation.⁷⁴ Folk art and locally crafted objects are favorite feature topics. In "Quilter's Notebook" in the November 1991 issue, folk art is defined as a product of domestic life; "the quilts are sewn ... and are hand quilted in exactly the same way the Amish make them for their own families."⁷⁵ Folk art, recalling stories of ordinary folks rather than "the lives of many of the state's leading citizens," is a suitable subject for Country Living's intention to create images of community for its readers.⁷⁶

In contrast to Country Living's use of domestic and personal memories, Colonial Homes recollects nationalistic and public memories. Showing museum-like photographs of houses, Colonial Homes tends to emphasize the historical and social significance

of the houses. Its stress on historic and social significance is reflected in the way of describing houses through memories. First, nationalistic memories are recounted in the introduction of historic places. For example, the December 1991 issue of Colonial Homes features historic Cohasset, Mass. as a town where Captain John Smith's ship landed.⁷⁷ The article continues: "During the 19th century, Cohasset established itself as a busy seaport. Its sailing vessels, including commercial and fishing fleets, numbered about 368; 21 master shipbuilders worked in its shipyards."⁷⁸ The name of Cohasset, as an early example of the development of the nation, remains in American history. Even personal collections of old clocks become things symbolizing a glorious part of American history. Americans find "fascination with old timepieces: 'clockmaking was among the earliest and most important American industries, especially in New England.'"⁷⁹ More familiar to readers is the settlement story told in a feature article on Duxbury, Mass. in the April 1991 issue: "Settled in 1627 by a group of Mayflower Pilgrims, Duxbury prospered as a farming community"⁸⁰ In this way, houses in Colonial Homes are deeply rooted in their original historic location with public memories.

Secondly, Colonial Homes speaks of memories of heroic persons. In the section "Life-styles" of the October 1990 issue, Colonial Homes tells of an owner's attempt to relive "the lives of the Buell family."⁸¹ As a settler in the early English colony of Litchfield, Capt. John Buell is and will be recognized in a history shared by the community.⁸² Not only early settlers

but also governors, doctors, servants at the Revolutionary War, and planters are among the original owners of historic houses. A Georgian house in Yarmouth Port, Mass. is introduced as a house built by Winslow Crocker: "Winslow Crocker was born in 1755 and became an ardent patriot When the Revolution began, Crocker joined the American navy."⁸³

CHAPTER V

HOW COUNTRY LIVING'S INTERIOR IS PRESENTED AS A "COUNTRY" HOME

Having given an overview of Country Living's main themes and strategies, it is now time to focus on how these are synthesized in the interiors Country Living represents. Those interiors come from a wide range of homes including houses from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century, from colonial style homes to Victorian houses to California bungalows and ranch houses. Yet they all have in common a "country" quality. I will examine the interiors of three houses from Country Living -- a New England Cape-style house, an American bungalow, and a town house in Baltimore -- and compare them with typical interiors in Colonial Homes and House Beautiful.

The November 1991 issue of Country Living shows a seven-year-old Cape-style home in Morrisville, Vt.⁸⁴ The article opens with a photograph of an inviting living room (fig.13) spread over two pages. A brick fireplace enriched with shades of rust, red, and the patina of oldwood warms the room. Readers' attention goes to "wide-plank pine floors, beams salvaged from an abandoned barn, and bricks from an old church."⁸⁵ A variety of hand-crafts -- a well-worn paint-decorated blanket chest, quilting art, and stencil on the wall -- finds their right

places. The room is lit softly by old types of lighting -- lamps and candles -- and wood flame at the fireplace. From the ceiling, beams and mantel to an antique blanket chest, a late 19th century cupboard and exposed flooring, wood is the preferred material and contributes to the quiet, solid and protective tone of the room. A full-page photo of the dining room(fig.14) focuses on "mid-19th century stenciled chairs" and the craftsman-made dining table. The table is set -- inviting us to partake of a Thanksgiving dinner. Flowers and garden harvest dress the dining table and windows, and echo the outside landscape of fruitful fields. Candles on the table and chandelier add sparkle to rustic materials such as baskets hung from the ceiling. Wood furniture and autumn tints of yellow, orange, and brown decide the pastoral character of the room.

The color and material of the kitchen(fig.15) echo the wood tones of the living and dining rooms. The refrigerator is painted in dark brown to match nature's tints of cherry-wood cabinetry and a pine table. Colors of "seasonal bounty" and "a line-up of yellowware" offer variations of autumn color. As a result of those interiors, Country Living creates visual images which bring nature inside, invoking old values of durability and enduring value of things. At the same time, the owner's effort of "gathering bricks and weathered wood" and collecting "old beams, doors, and shatters" through newspaper advertisements bespeaks a twentieth century version of farming, the harvest being a 20th century consumption of the past.⁸⁶

Country Living's interiors are different from those of House Beautiful, reflecting its different attitudes towards lifestyle. In Marie-Paule Pelle's bedroom (fig.16) featured in "The New French Decorating" in February 1992 House Beautiful, the designer uses "bold" color -- red, black, and white -- for her interior. The sheet-metal sleigh bed and upholstered chairs are streamlined. Geometrical openwork on the screen, black-and-white stripe on curtains, and marble patterns on the carpet and ottomans are contemporary. As for material, the designer prefers metal to wood and even gilds the feet of chairs, ottomans, and a floor lamp. A wall-like mirror, gilding, and polished furniture help increase the shimmering effect of illumination created by "early 20th-century sconces and torchere," a floor lamp, and table lamps. A sectional photo on page 52 focuses on a modern-art object, a 19th-century painting, and a black-and-white print which make up a stylistic "melange" by the designer.⁸⁷ While in Country Living, rural scenery from windows plays a significant role of evoking "country" imagery, House Beautiful's interior, without green plants and views of fields from windows, has no connection with nature. The designer's choice in material, style, pattern, and color scheme evokes a search for novelty, attempts to startle and surprise us rather than drawing on the soothing and enduring flavors of pastoral simplicity.

Although the modern bedroom in House Beautiful includes such classic materials as sconces and torchere and a 19th-century painting, they are used to create an aura of sophistication

in interiors, not evoke nostalgia. With the creation of a new scene as the ultimate goal, House Beautiful's designers "mix periods and styles, mix classics with the unexpected."⁸⁸ Unlike Country Living's familiar look, House Beautiful's interiors are unique and modern.

However, modernity is not excluded from Country Living. At the first glance, a newly built California bungalow featured as "The House of the Year" in February 1992, updated with modern technology, seems quite contemporary. In particular, its kitchen and breakfast area(fig.17) includes modern lighting and "up-to-the-minute appliances" such as a microwave. Yet a blue-painted breakfast table and chairs and white stools around the kitchen island are plain in style. Instead of decorative objects, there are fresh vegetables and fruits as if they were just picked from the back yard. The room is also filled with potted plants and flowers. The photo of the interiors presents an image of a sunny morning in the country and makes us feel fresh air and warmth of sunshine from open windows, again invoking a fruitful natural world and the lasting value of simple, sturdy possessions.

The focal point of the bedroom(fig.18) is "a gracefully turned four-poster bed" covered with a bedspread of bird-and-flower motif. The same pattern is applied on fabric for an armchair; other floral patterns are used for a border, a rug, a table cloth, and cushions. Along with the use of subtle colors of white, pink, rose, brown and green, these patterns unite the interior space. A bed, a chest, and chairs seem to

be made from the same kind of wood. With a sweater, stationery, and a pair of glasses scattered around, the bedroom gains a personal and casual look. As a result of these furnishings, the bedroom speaks in one voice as a source of "warmth, comfort, and personality."⁸⁹

The preceding pages show a living room(fig.19) with plenty of cheerful colors and patterns. As the article notes "amply proportioned seating, a palette of cool greens, and decorative motifs derived from the natural world conspire to create a cheerful and cozy environment reminiscent of an English country cottage," the living room photographed at eye level from the entry way invites us into an informal setting for afternoon tea, and suggests we participate in a comfortable lifestyle in the English countryside.⁹⁰ The text accompanying the photographs explains that the cottage's interior is a manifestation of the American Arts and Crafts movement, including fine handcrafted works: a massive central fireplace and grid-pattern doors on built-in bookcases. More significant, as the caption illustrates, the interior is unified by "the repetition of the particular motif ... an over-all grid pattern echoed in windows, bookcase doors, and fretwork."⁹¹ Appropriate as "the hub of the Craftsman-style home," the living room creates a harmonious tone by the repeated use of floral design and a grid pattern. This floral design and grid pattern is "echoed in windows, cabinetry, tilework, and woodwork" throughout the house.⁹² However, unlike the Arts and Crafts' emphasis on natural wood and muted colors, walls are painted in pastel colors

-- cool green for the living and the dining rooms, yellow for the kitchen-and-breakfast area and the sitting room, pink for the bedroom and attached bathroom. The lighter palette, floral design, and overstuffed furniture provide a late twentieth century American rendering of English cottage style while the stone fireplace and grid design elements echo early twentieth century American bungalows. By combining styles of English cottage and California bungalows, Country Living successfully created this American bungalow well suited to today's living.

As for color and form, interiors in Country Living contrast with those of House Beautiful. The February 1992 issue of House Beautiful shows artist Frank Faulkner's house entitled "A Hudson Valley Classic Burnished by Time." There are few colors; in the living room(fig.20), white walls, white slip covers of chairs, and a tea set of white china stand in contrast to dark tones of a portrait on the mantel, a dark-wood coffee table, and two black painted arm chairs. Owing to this monochrome color contrast, interiors make a sophisticated visual impression. Unlike Country Living's overstuffed rooms, there is no curtain hung on windows; no quilt on the sofa; no floral pattern on fabric. The room displays a classic German Biedermeier butler's desk, a hexagonal hall table of solid mahogany, and old paintings. However, the massive club chairs are modern-looking and unique art objects such as the armillary sphere and "rusted metal garden finials" on the table decorate the space. In fact, the owner is interested in placing objects in a creative, contrasting way to intrigue and impress us, instead of making

a soothing and familiar atmosphere.

The bedroom(fig.21) illustrates Faulkner's unique technique of interior decoration even more clearly. Objects of classic and modern style are juxtaposed; ivory-white ceramics and rustic baskets, the wooden flooring and "faux zebra rug," cast-iron candle stands and a modern slim floor lamp. The interior also demonstrates "a subtle counterpoint of dark and light tones."⁹³ White colors of a "Shaker-plain, all-white" poster bed and beddings, walls, and a chest are balanced with dark tones of a portrait of a gentleman, a rug, a mirror frame on the mantel. Knowing the effect of lighting, "the designer uses little color but traps the light with bare windows, pale paint, many mirrors."⁹⁴ In the evening, "the linen-white walls turn a soft gold, the blacks of the prints and the bronze lamps take on mysterious definition. A faded Oriental rug glows."⁹⁵ Like art canvasses, what the owner creates is not a past or "pastoral" scene but a work of art.

Although Country Living invites us readers to home life in pastoral setting, it does not necessarily mean living in the country. "Country in the City" is one of the serial articles in Country Living, featuring houses in cities. The February 1992 issue features a town house in the heart of Baltimore, Md. In the dining room(fig.22), 1950s Art Deco style chairs surround a glass-top dining table. New and old objects are placed side by side such as "a graphic hooked rug from about 1880" and "a 1950s painting on dining-room walls." However, they are not arranged to express uniqueness. Rather, along

with the warmth of a glowing fireplace and yellow-based color scheme, the photograph captures a comfortable setting for informal gathering. Period furniture and decorative objects are not important, but the comfort and warmth they present account for the creation of "country."

Neither a specific period nor a specific location are essential for the creation of country houses. The den (fig.9) in the town house has a primitive chipped table, a simple striped sofa, and a wreath of twigs on the wall. The warm color of terra-cotta walls and floral-pattern fabric for a table round, cushions, and curtain balances add comfort and warmth to the room. Because of these interiors, the house, displaced from its urban context, becomes a "country" house. Beyond the real setting of environments, "country," as Country Living emphasizes, "is not simply a place, but a state of mind."⁹⁶ In summary, though its interiors relate to a sentimental past, Country Living has little interest in history. As long as interiors have a "country" look and an informal atmosphere, Country Living does not concern much about the time period and the place they belong to.

On the contrary, the history of towns and houses is important to Colonial Homes. The April 1992 issue of Colonial Homes features Farmington, Conn. as a "venerable village." The history of the town dates back to colonial time. "In 1640, the English colonists who settled it found Tunxis Indians living along an undulating river, rich with shad and salmon, in a fertile valley. The town ... in 1645, took the name Farmington

...."⁹⁷ Then the article moves to the introduction of several historic houses. The Stanley-Whitman House(fig.23) built about 1720 is introduced as "one of the best examples of early New England 'overhang' architecture."⁹⁸ "On its facade, the second floor juts out over the walls of the first, creating a 1 foot overhang that is embellished with carved pendant drops."⁹⁹ Historic location and architectural details characteristic of historic places are important to Colonial Homes as a value system; historical significance represents a status for houses in Colonial Homes. Another example is a mariner's townhouse shown in the serial "A History House Plan" in the June 1991 issue of Colonial Homes. Houses in Newburyport, Mass. were "built by wealthy shipowners and sea captains in the 18th and 19th centuries"¹⁰⁰ The article illustrates the details of exterior as well as interior with fine drawings(fig.24):

On the front exterior, a lunette crowns the entrance doorway, which is flanked by sidelights and scrolled pilasters. Twin chimneys, a high gambrel roof, a brace of dormer windows, a bracketed cornice, and symmetrically balanced windows add to the facade's appeal. The rear exterior has a curved extension with a bow window that admits light to a commodious breakfast area. Doors flanking the window open to a paved terrace.

Significance of architectural detail to Colonial Homes is even reflected in words in a window advertisement. Along with efficiency of windows, the manufacture emphasizes that their products are "historically correct."¹⁰² While Country Living, less occupied with precise recreation of styles and period, attempts to create the mood of "country," -- comfort, warmth, informal setting -- Colonial Homes is strict about historical

accuracy of the architecture. Houses in Colonial Homes, which remain original or are restored to the original state, are valued for their authenticity. This exclusive nature of the houses, requiring of readers some kind of expertise for appreciation, suits the elite.

As a typical interior of Colonial Homes, let's take a look at an early-18th-Century home in Litchfield, Conn. in a feature article "Historians Domain" in October 1990. The photo of its parlor(fig.25) shows not only period furniture -- the Queen Ann cherry table, the two-drawer pine blanket chest -- but also lighting by sconces and candles, the antique English lantern clock, traditional window treatment, hand painted floors. There is not much color -- dark brown, bluish green, and rose red. These colors blend well in the hand-painted floors and dark-tone wood furniture which present themselves well against white wall. More significantly, the accompanying caption explains the style and time period of each piece of furniture. As seen in the phrases such as "typical of the era," "painted to replicate colors," and "period decoration," interiors are furnished to present the past as exactly as possible.¹⁰³ As the owner of the colonial home in Muncy, PA. says that "we found the real thing, not a modern-day recreation of the past but an authentic place," Colonial Homes emphasizes the originality of the houses.¹⁰⁴

It is interesting to see how Country Living's interiors reveal residents' lifestyle and their way of using space. The dining room in the Baltimore town house mentioned earlier is

photographed with a glowing fireplace in the center of the room. Also highlighted is a casual and colorful table setting. The picture shows Country Living's focus on the domestic circle consisting of family and close friends as the primary source of "warmth, coziness and accessibility."¹⁰⁵ A caption clarifies Country Living's attitude: "With a fire in the hearth and friends gathered around the table, this is a place to linger -- a "country" room in the truest sense."¹⁰⁶ Fireplaces become a symbol of warmth and comfort. Country Living also emphasizes the kitchen as an important site for domestic and sentimental memories.¹⁰⁷ Also frequently featured are family rooms, dining rooms, children's rooms, and bedrooms. Country Living stresses the informal lifestyle, which they define as "country life," through their interiors. At the same time it claims that domesticity is the essential quality for the realization of "country" living.

House Beautiful designs its space quite differently. The December 1991 issue features Glenn Harrell's article on a high-rise apartment on Chicago's Lake Shore Drive. The apartment is designed to center around not a family room, not a living room, but a dining room for frequent parties. The owner, "a bachelor with no need for privacy," transforms his apartment to a social space for guests.¹⁰⁸ The apartment's "streamlined gallery kitchen"(fig.26), incorporated in the dining room by "doors that become part of the dining room wall," is no longer the place for sentimental attachment.¹⁰⁹ Instead, it is a product of advanced technology; it "absolutely worked like as

machine."¹¹⁰ We hardly recognize it as a kitchen because everything is concealed under white wall-like cabinets; only the wide porcelain enamel mural bearing abstract splashes of color stands out against the all-white space. The kitchen, the core of domesticity in Country Living, has changed its role to an efficient working place. This modern apartment encloses no domestic and private space. Nor does the Marie-Paule Pelle's bedroom and artist Frank Faulkner's house in Hudson Valley. Frequent display of bachelor's quarters in House Beautiful contrasts with Country Living's family homes. Interiors of bachelors are stylized, designed by professionals, and made for display. To suit a single life, not a family life, its interiors are not a source of warmth and comfort, but a background for social life.

In another case, designer Mary Drysdale turns her house "into a dramatic setting for French antiques and contemporary art" in the November 1991 issue.¹¹¹ As a result of art-oriented display, the focal point of the living room(fig.27) is rearranged. The fireplace, a signifier of comfortable domestic life in Country Living, is no longer the center of the room; instead, the space is organized around the large-scale abstract painting hung on the side wall of the fireplace. The fireplace, playing a less important part in House Beautiful, does not create an informal atmosphere of "country."

Colonial Homes does show cozy family homes, but they play a different role in their representation of houses. Colonial Homes presents formal and wealthy elite life, as can be seen

from their presentation of a dining room displaying expensive silverware, china, and gorgeous flower centerpiece. Also, Colonial Homes is most likely to show houses which are open to the public; they are inns and restaurants, house museums, and antique shops. Although they are still residential, these houses are more important as national treasures than as residence. Their public role is reflected in the types of memories -- historic and nationalistic -- recalled in Colonial Homes. Advertisements for Colonial Homes are more explicit in claiming its commercial and public nature: "Journey with us to homes of surpassing beauty in every part of the country. Shop and browse among American antiques, ... stay at a refurbished colonial inn."¹¹² While Country Living's primary goal is to engage readers in creating a fulfilling home life, Colonial Homes aims at showcasing great national history.

However, it would be a mistake to think that Country Living does not invoke any nationalistic memories and lacks an American quality. In fact, in a different way from Colonial Homes, Country Living's interiors represent American tradition. Country Living's important themes, simplicity and rusticity, draw on longstanding American pastoral values. Also folk art and "country" furniture produced by local craftsmen are valued as American traditions. Although Country Living sometime shows interiors which are rooted in European countries, they are incorporated into an "American" style. On the other hand, House Beautiful does not seem to be concerned about "American" origin. As exemplified by the title of an article on new French

decoration in February 1992, "Will this be the decade of French design?" House Beautiful is willing to introduce exotic taste to promote "a change in mood."¹¹³ Its interiors, seeking novelty and a new style, accentuate the "cosmopolitan." In contrast with House Beautiful's innovative and experimental display, Country Living pursues "American" identification not through heroic figures nor great historic events but through enduring values of family and community-based daily life.

CONCLUSION

To conclude my study on "country" style interiors, I am going to transform an apartment into a "country" home by applying techniques and themes used in Country Living. Let us suppose that a young couple with children wanted to decorate their apartment following advice given by staff of Country Living.

To begin in a living room, the couple would replace carpeting with light-color wood flooring. At the windows, instead of white blinds, floral-pattern curtains would be hung. In the place of TV set, they would buy a mantelpiece as if there were a fireplace and put a basket of firewoods besides it. The couple would use a well-worn oak chest found in a local flea market for a coffee table. On the chest, there would be a tea set of warm-color ironstone and a pile of old books. Grouped around the chest would be a rocking chair and a sofa covered with light blue cotton plaid fabric. Hand-made quilts would be laid on the sofa and the chair. A candle, a family photo, and a bouquet of dried flowers on a side table would add the warmth to the room. On the wall, a water-color landscape painting and flower prints would be preferred to abstract painting. By the window, a contemporary steel desk would be replaced with a wooden side table which accommodates a variety

of potted flowers. The couple would prefer old lamps and candle-style lights to light the room. Finally, the couple would repaint the bleached white wall in cream yellow to compliment the furnishings.

As a dining set, the couple would purchase a second-hand pine table and bowback Windsors in a local "country" shop. Ready on the table would be Sunday brunch adorned with bouquets of flowers, candles, and fruits baskets. A red cotton braided rug would partially cover the hardwood floors. There would be a chipped step-back cupboard which displays a collection of family china. The couple would make a kitchen cabinet from plain pine. Atop the cabinet would be a variety of willow baskets and pottery. Kitchen utensils and copperware would decorate the kitchen wall. Although the kitchen would include modern conveniences such as dishwasher, oven, and electric range, a simple display of old tins, bundles of dried flowers, and paintings of farm animals would determine its character as pastoral "country."

In the master bedroom, the couple would like a simple panel bed covered with a homespun blanket. They would use floral-chintz fabric for the curtains and cushions on a side chair. There would be no walk-in closet; instead the couple would purchase a handcrafted seven-drawer Shaker-style chest. The doll sitting on the chest would be a reproduction of those made during the 1800s. There would be quilt design prints and a grapevine wreath on the ivory-colored wall. Finally, with the soft tone of table lamps and lanterns, the bedroom would

create a comfortable and cozy atmosphere for private life.

In Machine in the Garden Leo Marx interpreted industrial progress as a major threat to American pastoralism. In "the contradiction between rural myth and technological fact," he suggested the pastoral ideal became the spring board for industrial prosperity in the future.¹¹⁴ American pastoralism is not a withdrawal from urban society. Rather, the pastoral ideal "enabled the nation to continue defining itself as the pursuit of rural happiness while devoting itself to productivity, wealth, and power."¹¹⁵

In the 1980s and 1990s, American middle-class families feel more threatened than ever before. A feature article of Business Week in 1989 finds those threats in the overview of American demographic changes in the 1980s.¹¹⁶ First, since agriculture gave way to manufacturing, people, abandoning the farm, have been losing a faith in agrarian life which had been a foundation for the nation. On the other hand, with cities left in decay, the function of cities is moving to suburban area. Consequently, the rural countryside is disappearing in America.

The second threat is a decline of the economy. In the early 1970s, due to stagnating productivity, "incomes stopped rising, and the gap between rich and poor began to widen again."¹¹⁷ Pay cuts and high unemployment rates shook economic stability for American families.

Thirdly, in addition to economic and industrial problems, American families are falling apart; from outside, new waves

of immigrants bring new values and languages which confuse Americans, and from inside, the growth of divorce and a rise in single parent households threaten the traditional family values which are a source for national prosperity.

Lowenthal writes that the emergence of historic houses is one consequence of the breakup of American families: They reflect longing for the "home" they used to have. Lowenthal suggests that:

Long uprooted and newly unsure of the future, Americans en masse find comfort in looking back; historic villages and districts become 'surrogate' home town¹¹⁸

"Country" represented by Country Living's interiors extends beyond a comfortable looking-back stance. An article in The New York Times in 1981 introduces a new theme of Country Living: "The ideals of yesterday, the ideas of today."¹¹⁹ "Country" not only represents a pastoral place between nature and civilization but also bridges the past and the present-future so that our life is present-oriented. With a sense of roots and identity provided by "country" living, the American middle class feels secure. What Country Living creates is a cocoon which protects the middle class from all social threats and provides a comfortable lifestyle yet without making a historical retreat. Assured of a sense of continuity, Americans can lead a political, economic, and social life of today while aiming toward the future. In this way, using a retrospective motif of ideal "country," American home decoration creates a utopia in the name of "country" for the middle-class Americans.

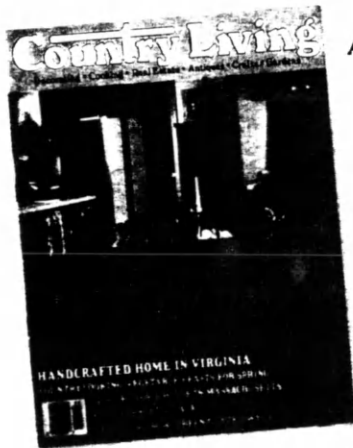
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Figure 1



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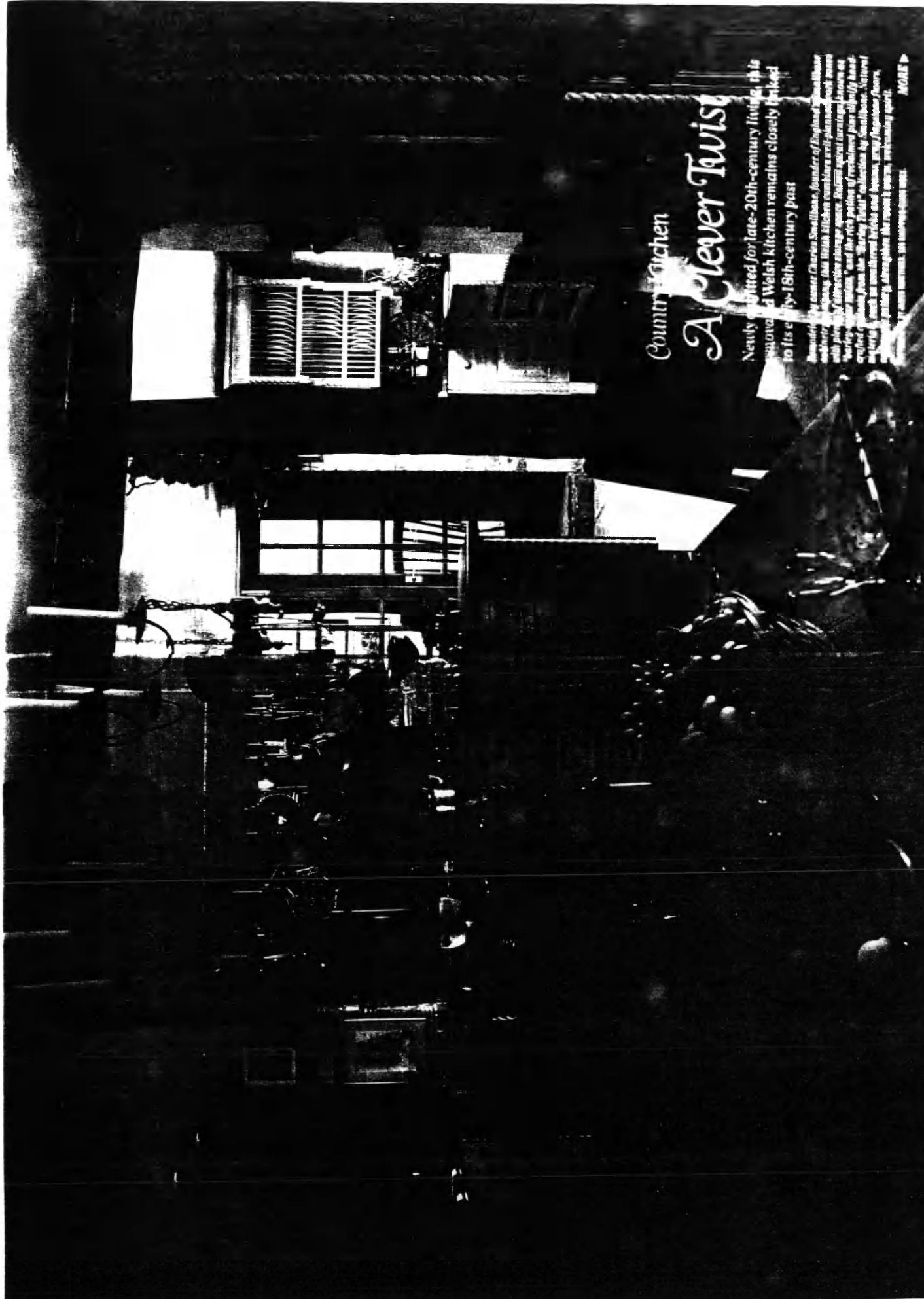


COUNTRY LIVING
NOVEMBER 1990

Precious Stone Home in Ohio

Dennis and Judy Conrad's hard
work and treasured antiques
restored the radiance of this
150-year-old sandstone abode

In an upstairs guest room, a Maine Micmac Indian basket tops a polychrome wardrobe (c. 1790 to 1820) found at a local flea market. The splint-seat rocking chair's acorn finials and five well-worn slats suggest an early vintage. (Most later ladderbacks have only four slats.)



Country Kitchens

A Clever Twist

Newly spotlighted for late-20th-century living, this innovative Welsh kitchen remains closely linked to its early-18th-century past

Interior designer Charles Swailhouse, founder of England's Smallhouse Company, says this Welsh kitchen combines well-planned work areas with plenty of attractive storage space. *Historical interior designers have been "very particular" and the rich patina of reclaimed pine adds beauty and character to the "Working Table" collection by Swailhouse. A travel trailer with a wood-burning stove and house, prop up a stone fire, and a group of people are gathered around the room's stone, rustic fireplace.*

MORE ▶

Figure 5

Home Again: A Classic Comeback

Vacant and woefully run-down 20 years ago, this mid-1800s farmhouse in Fair Haven, N.J., was turned back to life by collectors Pat and Paul Pritchard.

Like a recent addition, the family game room is part of an L-shaped wing built on a site previously occupied by a rambling shed that was abandoned by the city and razed in the 1960s. The room is richly crafted woodwork, paneled, and walls on the north house the spirit of the structure's mid-19th-century architecture. Among the antiques, including a late-1700s blanket chest, 18th-century tavern table and chairs, Queen Anne side chair, valance and mirrors, character, here and throughout the house.

Below: Freshly scraped, cleaned, and painted, the dwelling's jagged weathered remarkably well over 150 years. Original clapboard and trim distinguish the farmhouse's style, structure, which blends elements of late-Federal and pre-Victorian architecture.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRICK J. HENNING



Figure 6

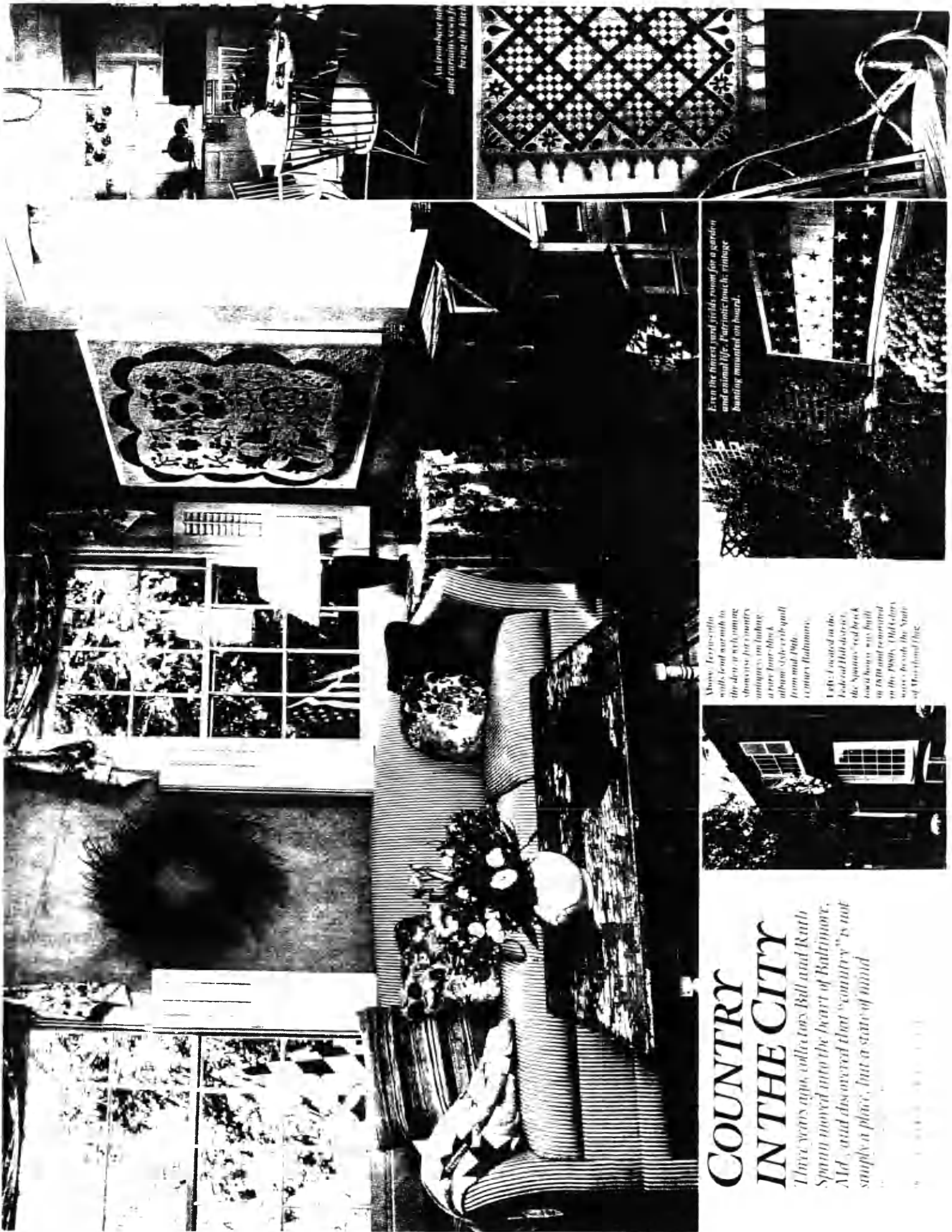


Designer Kerry Fuller and
 Carolyn Condit - wanted an
 extensive kitchen without
 sacrificing warmth and
 informality. Working with
 designer Gregory Knack, they
 created a low-maintenance
 work space - and dining area
 with European flair.

DESIGNER: KERRY FULLER AND
 CAROLYN CONDIT
 PROJECT: KITCHEN
 LOCATION: BOSTON
 STYLE: MODERN
 MATERIALS: WOOD, METAL, GLASS
 COLOR: DARK WOOD, WHITE, GREY
 LIGHTING: CHANDELIER, PENDANT
 FURNITURE: ISLAND, DINING TABLE, CHAIRS
 ACCESSORIES: SEAT PILLARS, CUSHIONS, PLANTS

COUNTRY KITCHENS
BIG CITY MAKEOVER
 Rich textures, rich textures, and innovative materials,
 efficiency and casual country charm

Figure 8



All iron-ore tables and curtains vs. bringing the ditch

Even the finest yard finds room for a garden and seasonal life. Patriotic touch: vintage banding mounted on board.

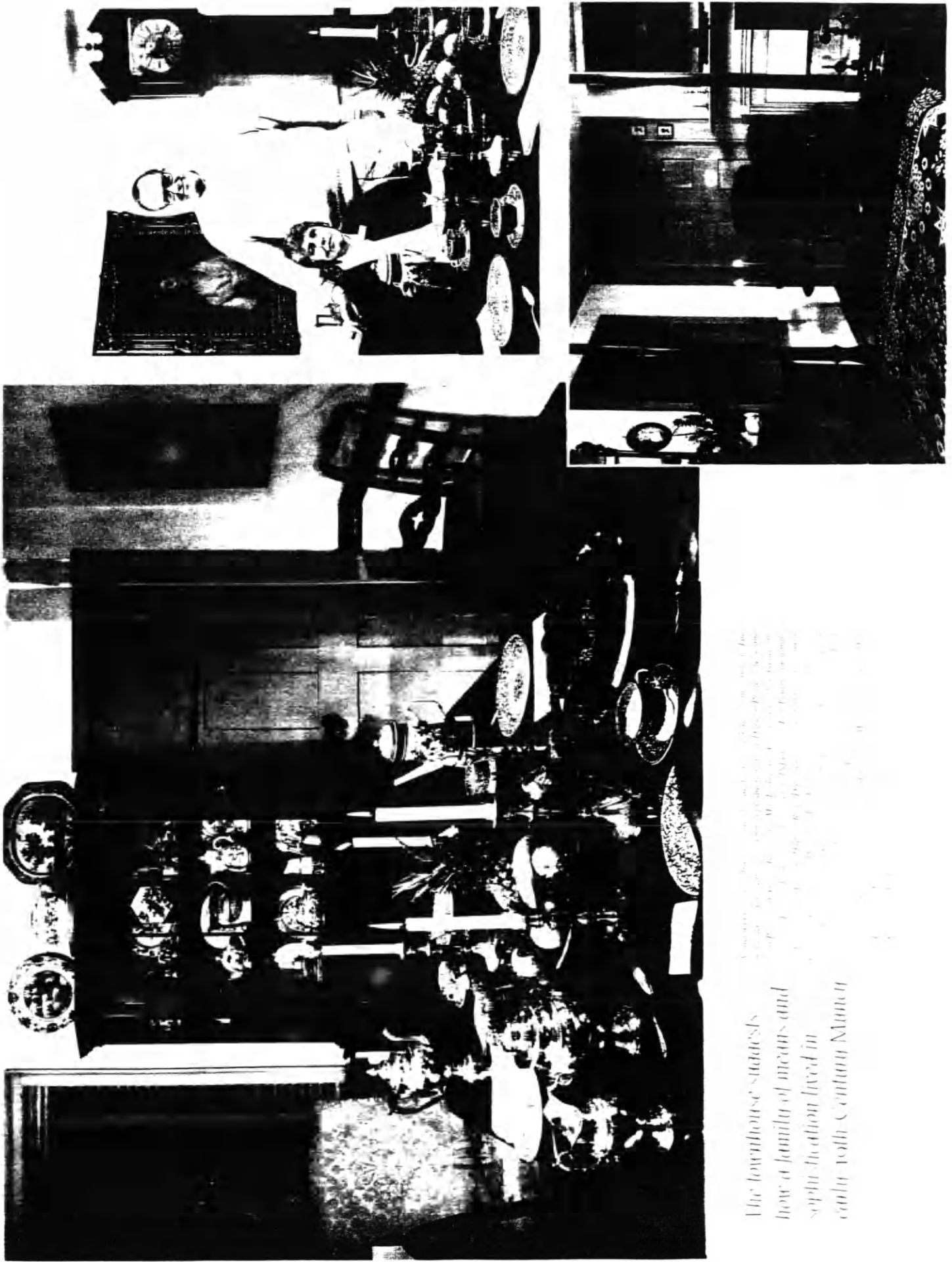
Below: Terraces with walls lead way with the idea of well-coming showpiece for country antiques on lobby. A rare four-block album style with quilt from mid-19th century (Hollands).

Left: Located in the Federal Hill district, the Spanish "red brick" town house was built in 1810 and renovated in the 1980s. Old clay was beside the State of Maryland flag.

COUNTRY IN THE CITY
 Three years ago, collectors Bill and Ruth Spurr moved into the heart of Baltimore, Md., and discovered that "country" is not simply a place, but a state of mind.

BY JENNIFER WOOD

Figure 9



The townhouse studies how a family of means and sophisticated culture lived in early 20th-Century Munich

Figure 10



Figure 11



Hand-painted pantry bears fill the kitchen's 19th-century New Hampshire cupboard. A Suffolk-fabric cow grazes beside a barnyard brookhouse big enough to shelter an entire flock of feathered friends. A well-worn worktable of El Paso, Texas, supports a mound of fair "blue jeans" and a stack of painted-edge boards that Tishia sometimes employs as long platters.

STRAWBERRIES

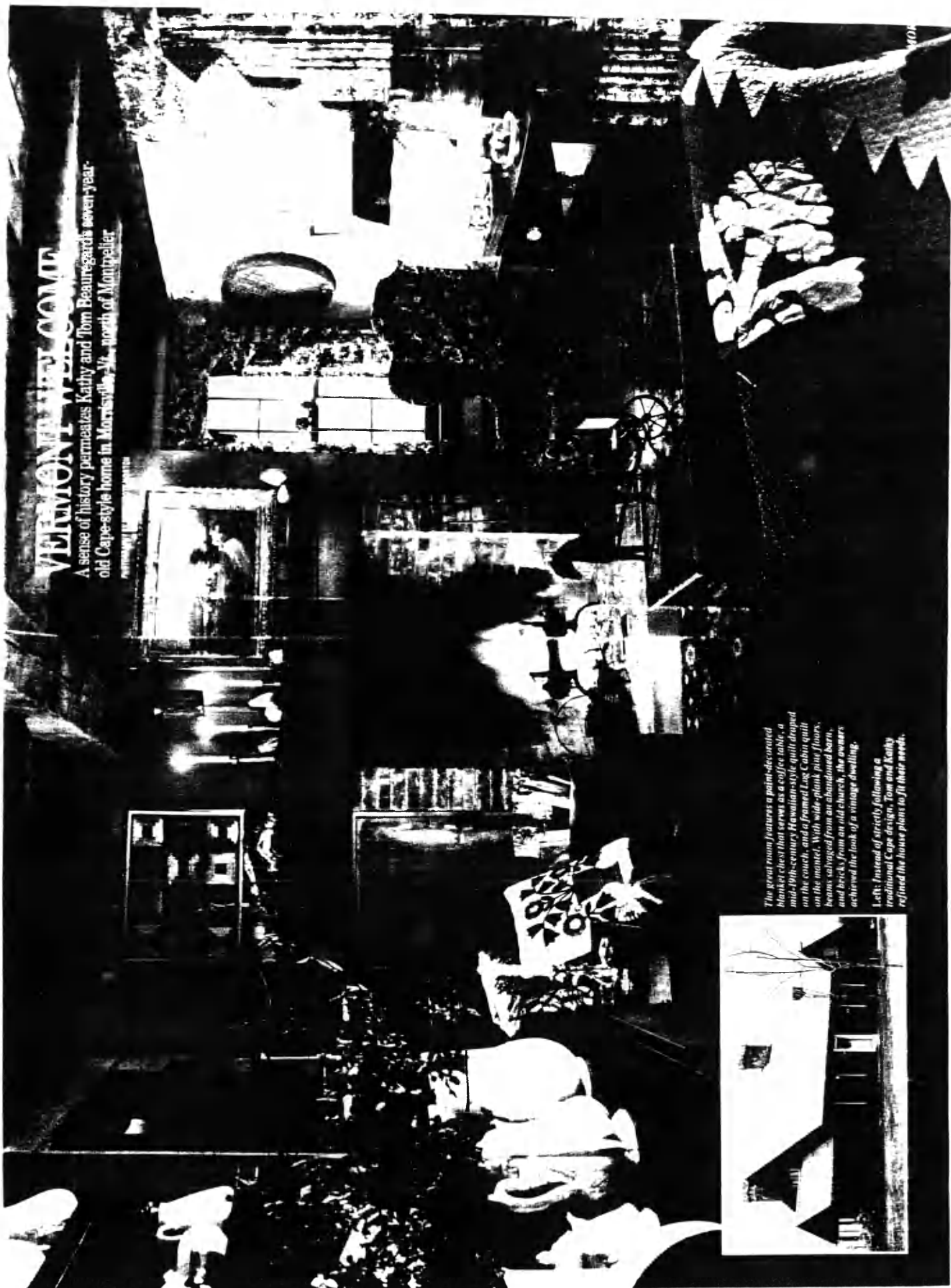


EGGS
 PEEVEE 10¢ doz
 PULLET 13¢ doz
 MEDIUM 18¢ doz
 LARGE 20¢ doz
 EX. LG. 25¢ doz

FRESH MADE BUTTER

MORE

Figure 12



VERMONT WELLS COME

A sense of history permeates Kathy and Tom Beauregard's seven-year-old Cape-style home in Morrisville, Vt., north of Montpelier.

The great room features a paint-decorated blank chest that serves as a coffee table, a mid-19th-century Hawaiian-style quilt draped on the couch, and a framed Log Cabin quilt on the mantel. With wide-plank pine floors, beams salvaged from an abandoned barn, and bricks from an old church, the owners achieved the look of a vintage dwelling.

Left: Instead of strictly following a traditional Cape design, Tom and Kathy refined the house plans to fit their needs.



Figure 13



Mid-19th-century spenciled chairs gather around the dining-room table a local craftsman fashioned from the top of a grain box. Favorite collectibles include white ironstone, pressed-glass wine goblets, and a 1920s hooked rug. A colorful quilt handmade by Kathy hangs by the window.

Figure 14

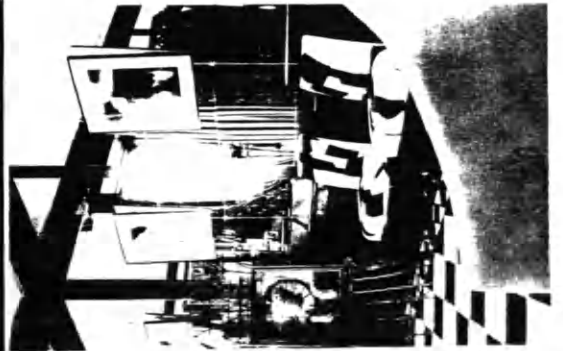


More than a year before Kathy and Tom Beauguard finalized construction plans for their house, they started gathering bricks and weathered wood for the project. "We answered ads in the newspaper for old beams, doors, and shutters and enlisted the help of four teenagers who hauled the heavy materials to our storage spot," Kathy recalls. "Even though we'd be living in a brand-new house, we wanted it to look old."

...and cabinetry, a tall, four-table high with seasonal baskets, and a lineup of yellowware signed a harvest home.

MORE ▶

Figure 15



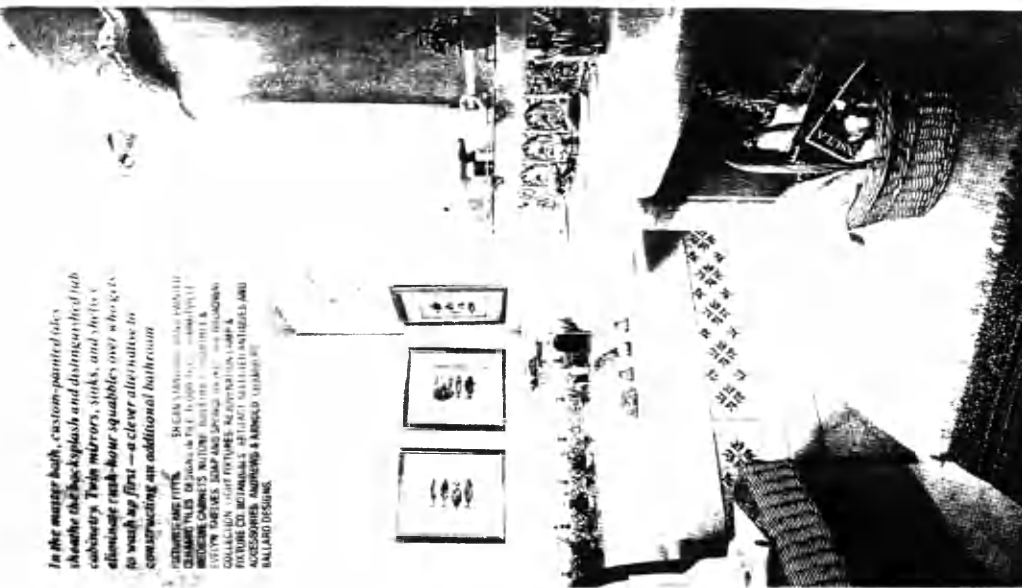
Marie-Paule
Pellé's
luxurious
bedroom for
a bachelor
reveals her
love for
symmetry,
big scale and
bold color



Marie-Paule Pellé designed the couple's bedroom from Sage, Copenhagen. The bed and opposite chest by Douglas Laneau. Drawings by Lucien Kravitz for Hermès. Furniture with a by Pellé. All pieces by Marie-Paule except the desk by Douglas Laneau and chair by Lucien Kravitz. Photo courtesy of Marie-Paule Pellé. Photo by Philippe Besson. Photo by Pellé. Photo courtesy of Marie-Paule Pellé. Photo by Philippe Besson.

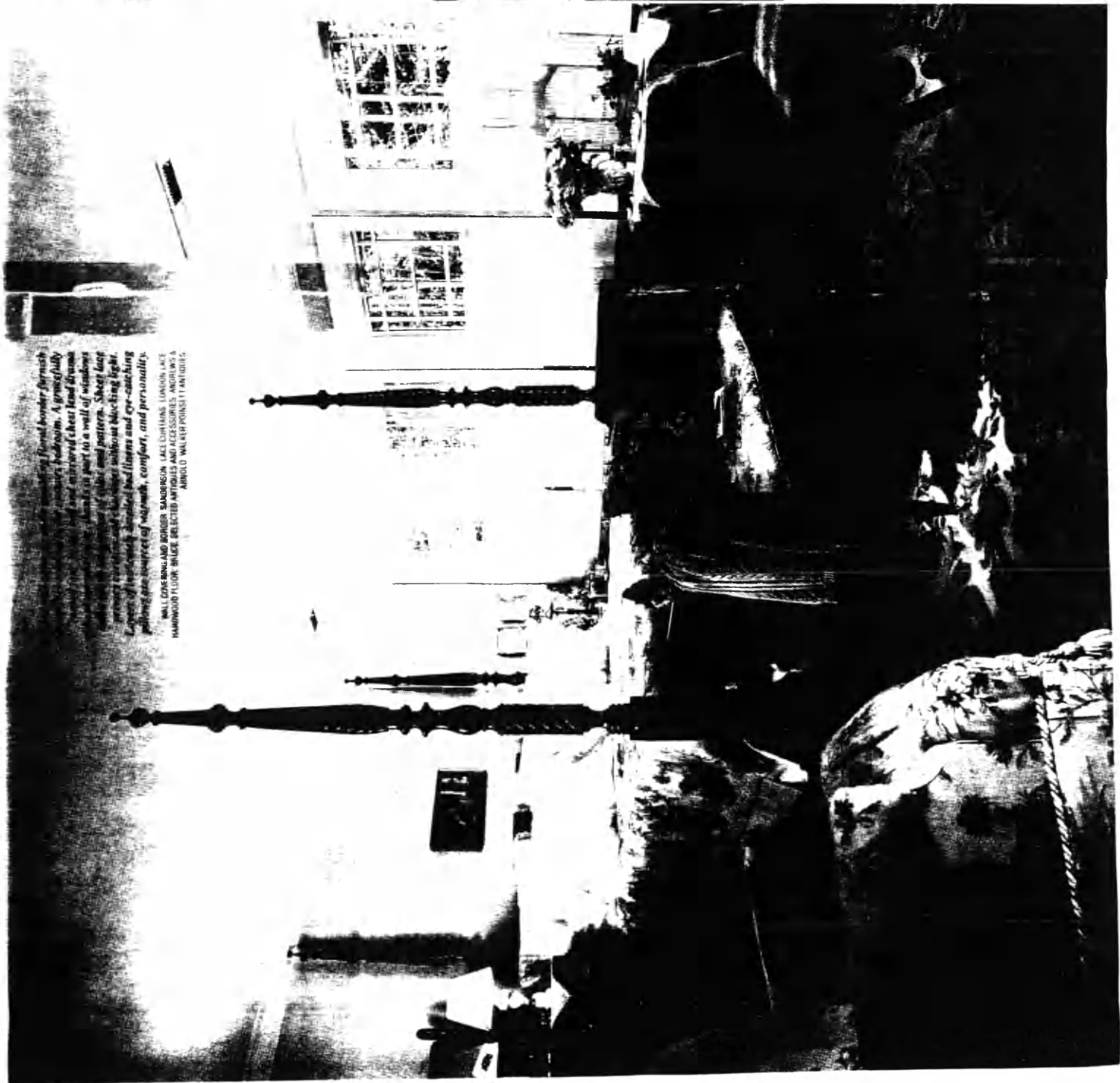
Marie-Paule Pellé designed the couple's bedroom from Sage, Copenhagen. The bed and opposite chest by Douglas Laneau. Drawings by Lucien Kravitz for Hermès. Furniture with a by Pellé. All pieces by Marie-Paule except the desk by Douglas Laneau and chair by Lucien Kravitz. Photo courtesy of Marie-Paule Pellé. Photo by Philippe Besson. Photo by Pellé. Photo courtesy of Marie-Paule Pellé. Photo by Philippe Besson.

Figure 16



In the master bath, custom-painted tiles breathe the backdrop and distinguish the tub cabinetry. Twin mirrors, stools, and the vintage antique wash-hour squabbles over who gets to wash up first—a clever alternative to constructing an additional bathroom.

INTERIOR DESIGN: SHERA VANDERKAM; FURNITURE: CHAMBERLAIN; TUB: JACOBI; MIRROR: ANDREAS; VANITY: CUSTOM; BATHING: JACOB; CURTAINS: JACOB; LIGHTING: COLLECTION; LIGHT FIXTURES: RESERVATION; LAMP: A. FUTURE; CEILING: ANTONIO; ACCESSORIES: ANDREAS; ART: MALINDA DESIGN.



Even floral border breathes the master bedroom. A gracefully patterned curtain, a gracefully patterned chair and frame, and a gracefully patterned bed frame—all part of a wall of windows that let in light and pattern. Sleep long and peacefully, without blocking light.

INTERIOR DESIGN: SHERA VANDERKAM; FURNITURE: CHAMBERLAIN; TUB: JACOBI; MIRROR: ANDREAS; VANITY: CUSTOM; BATHING: JACOB; CURTAINS: JACOB; LIGHTING: COLLECTION; LIGHT FIXTURES: RESERVATION; LAMP: A. FUTURE; CEILING: ANTONIO; ACCESSORIES: ANDREAS; ART: MALINDA DESIGN.

In Craftsman style dwellings, motifs and material borrowed for nature possess special significance. Handwood floors, stylized tile patterns, and exterior and interior masonry detail nature as if ultimate designer—a unifying force that perfectly integrates form and function. Antiques, accessories, and objects made especially for a bungalow (the bathroom's custom-painted tub, for example) prove evidence of the human touch as they support the photographs that ex-hausts—whether old or new, tubs—a unique expression of the owner's personal vision. Upholstered with the fabric of a building material, electrical appliances that make the most of space and energy. The "Pop" House of the Year and all of its contents are yours to enjoy and to plan. —SHERA VANDERKAM, INTERIOR DESIGNER

Figure 18



"There is usually only one special placement of furniture in a room," says Faulkner, whose collection has moved with him from house to house. He felt that the massive, dark chair belonged close to the fireplace, their bulk lightened by plain, dark slipcovers. The German Biedermeier table's seat between the living room windows (this page) was found at the New York shop of Faulkner's decorating mentor, Neil Smith.

Figure 20



The house is furnished to reflect the life of a Colonial family in rural Connecticut. In the kitchen (opposite), an 18th-Century worktable stands ready for preparing corn. An early 1700s mortar and pestle for grinding kernels fronts a c. 1685 carver's chair. An 18th-Century shoulder yoke hangs at left; to its right is a c. 1750 gateleg table. The whitewashed ceiling is original. The open door leads to the front hall (right), which contains a staircase ascending to second-floor bedrooms. The fire buckets date to about 1830. The front exterior of the house (below) displays a framed overhang. A lean-to added about 1750 gives the gable end of the house a salt-box shape. The casement and sash windows have quarrels, or diamond-shaped panes, and the clapboards are hand-split oak. Behind the house (above) a large stone provides a work area. Herbs, vegetables, and flowers flourish in the garden. The two-story ell dates to 1934.



Figure 23

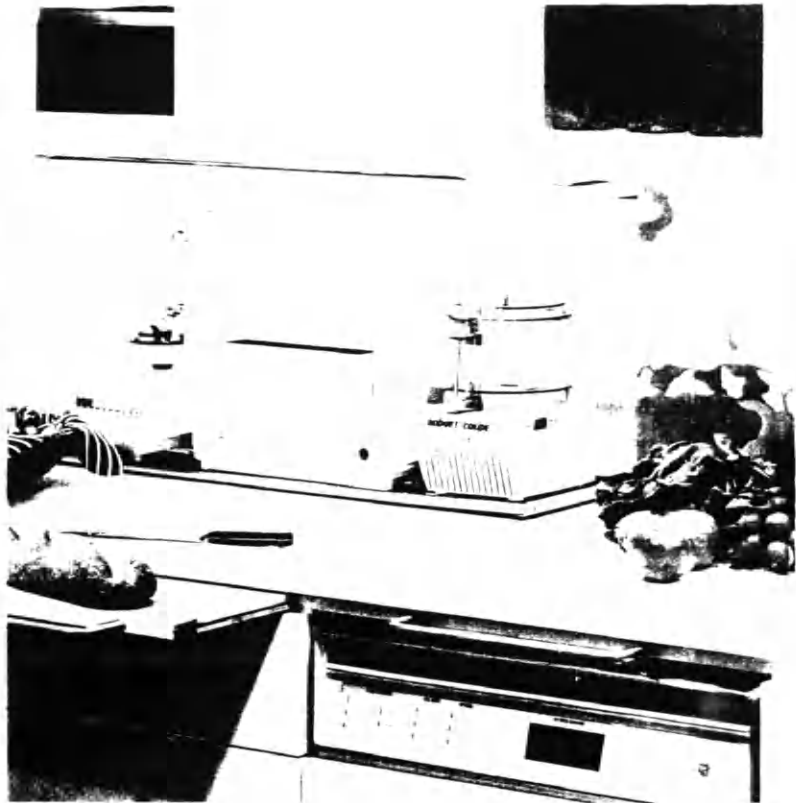


Newburyport, Mass., boasts fine homes built by wealthy shipowners and sea captains in the 18th and 19th centuries. Many of these dwellings achieve a beauty of proportion and a purity of scale that is remarkable in view of their compact size. Not a square foot is wasted, and the structures have the tidiness and efficiency of their owners' sailing ships. Our History House, for which you may order plans, traces its provenance to Newburyport's stylish but sensible manors. It offers ten rooms on three floors; yet its dimensions are only 44' by 32', ideal for a city lot.

On the first floor, equal-sized living and dining rooms, both with fireplaces, flank an entrance foyer. There is also a family room with a half-moon-shaped breakfast area; a kitchen with a snack bar; a powder room; and a laundry room. The second level comprises a master bedroom with a fireplace, a master bathroom, two bedrooms, and another full bath. The third floor has a large studio and a guest bedroom with a full bathroom. The house encloses 1,618 sq. ft. on the first floor, 1,408 sq. ft. on the second, and 1,021 sq. ft. on the third, totaling 4,047 sq. ft. of space.



Figure 24



Study's library table of English brown burl oak is bathed in morning light (opposite). At desk level in the bookshelf is a commissioned acrylic on canvas by Robert Natkin. Above left: A closet for table linens and a wet bar are concealed by doors that become part of the dining room wall. Above right: "Appliance garage" when closed blends into wide porcelain enamel mural. Below: The streamlined valley kitchen is outfitted with appliances custom-finished in white. Countertop, Corian.

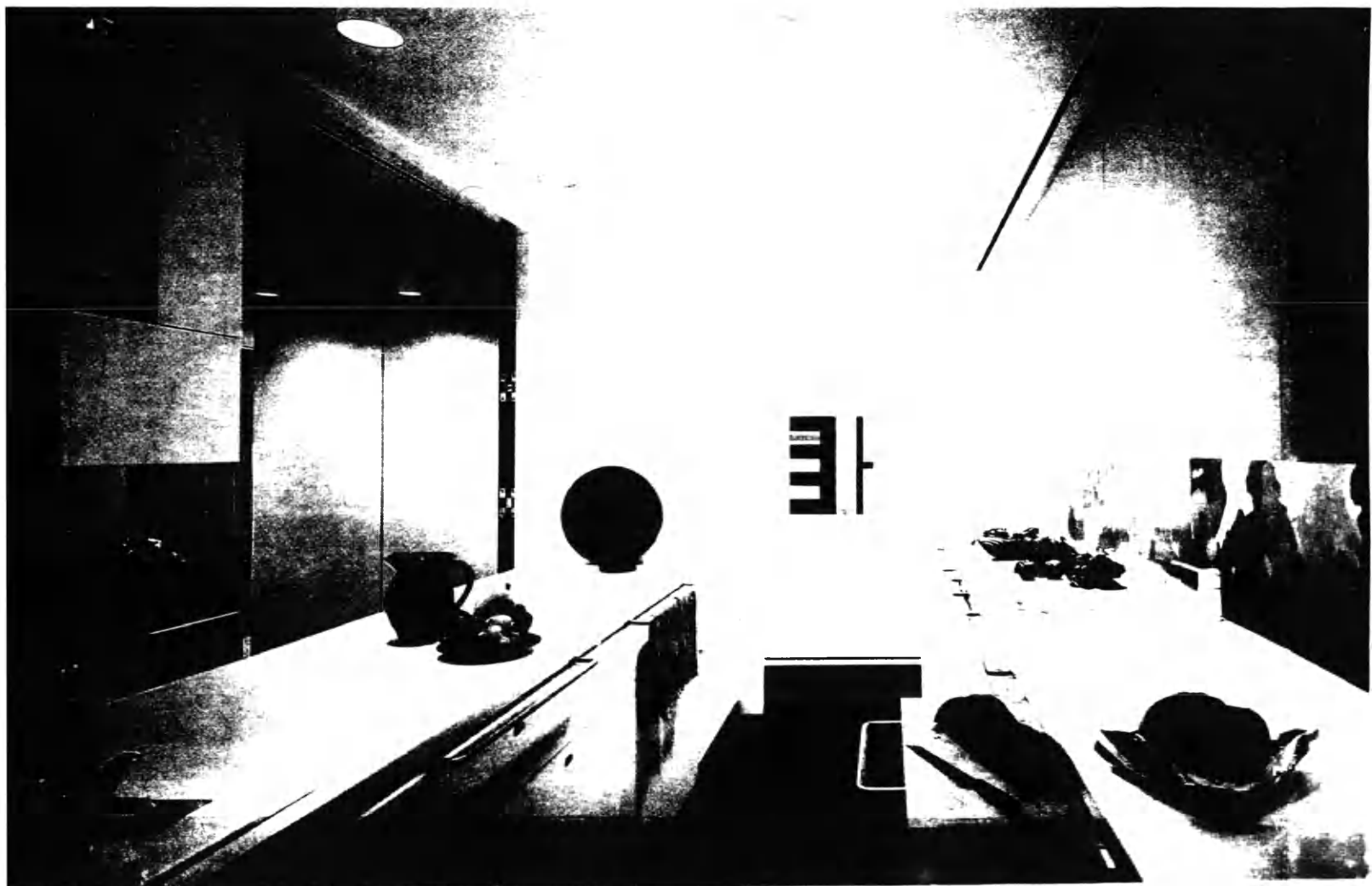
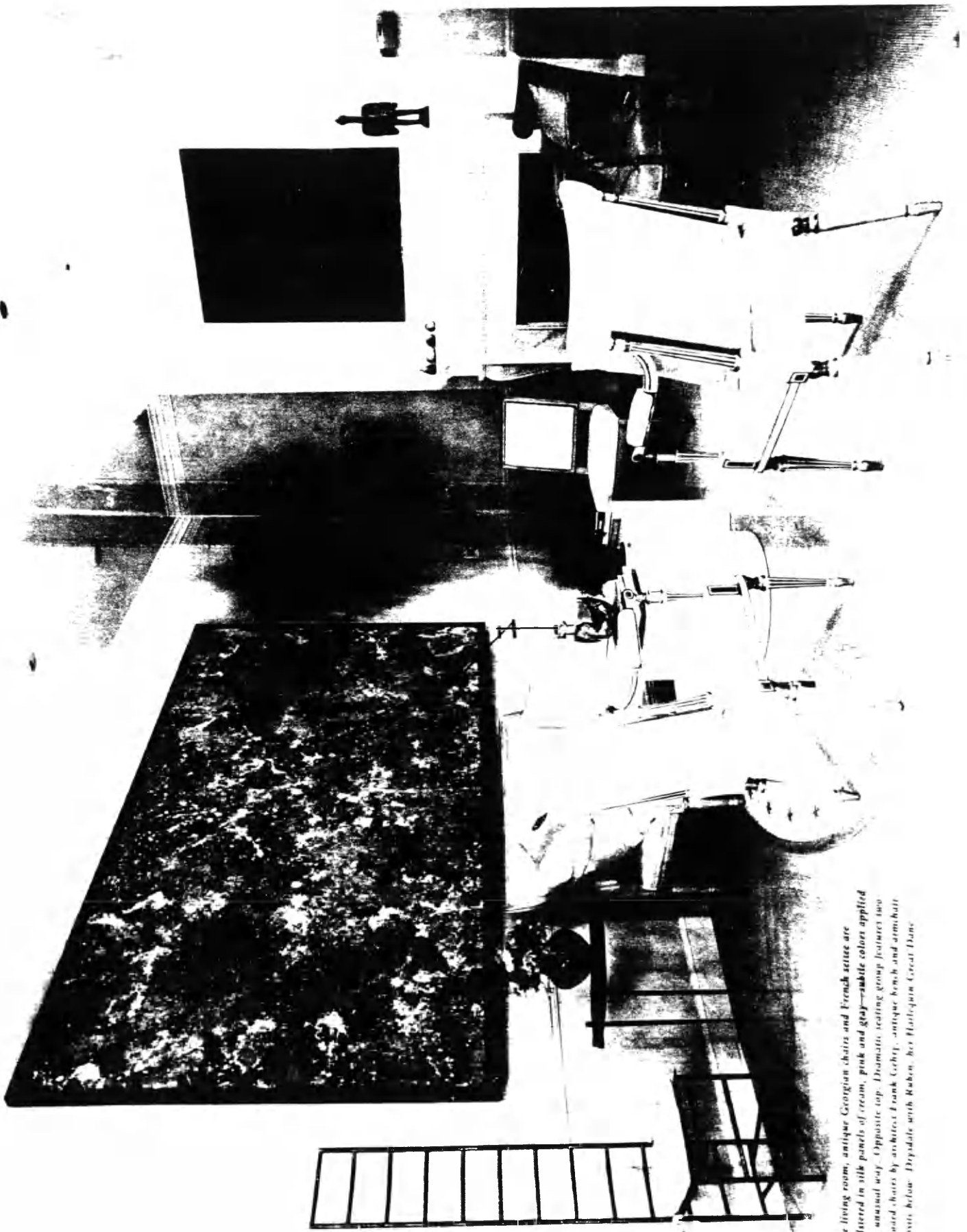


Figure 26



In the living room, antique Georgian chairs and French settee are upholstered in silk panels of cream, pink and gray—subtle colors applied in an unusual way. Opposite top. Dramatic seating group features two solidboard chairs by architect Frank Gehry. antique bench and armchairs Opposite below. Draped with Ruben, by Hellequin Great Dane

Figure 27

Notes

¹ Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 6.

² Marx, p. 23.

³ Yi-Fu Tuan, "The Significance of the Artifact," Geographical Review, 70 (October 1980), p. 471.

⁴ Michael Wallace, "Reflections on the History of Historic Preservation," in Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rozenzweig (eds.), Presenting the Past (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), p. 166.

⁵ David Lowenthal, The Past is a Foreign Country (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. xv.

⁶ Lowenthal, p. xv.

⁷ Chocolate Chip Cookies of Pepperidge Farm.

⁸ According to Jose Wilson and Arthur Leaman's Decorating American Style (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1975), while 'American Empire,' 'Colonial Revival,' or 'Art Deco' is defined in time and style, no explanation about 'country' style is found. Although the word 'Country furniture' seems related to 'country' style, its explanation of "charming furniture made by country craftsmen" does not give us a clear idea about style. Also, there is no article about 'country' style except 'country furniture' in 1991's Encyclopaedia Britannica.

⁹ C. Ray Smith, Interior Design in 20th-Century America: A History (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1987), p. 289.

¹⁰ Rachel Newman, "The Essence of Country Living and Country Living Readers" This was obtained from Country Living's editorial office in December, 1991 upon request.

¹¹ Newman

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¹² Richard Guy Wilson, in Thomas Inge (ed.), The Handbook of American Popular Culture (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), p. 83.

¹³ Jean Gordon and Jan McArthur, "Interior Decorating Advice as Popular Culture: Women's Views Concerning Wall and Window Treatment, 1870-1920," Journal of American Culture, 9 (Fall 1986), p. 15.

¹⁴ Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, The American Woman's Home (New York; J.B.Ford & Co., 1869)

¹⁵ The American Woman's Home, p. 24. Chapter VI is devoted to home decoration.

¹⁶ "Interior Decorating Advice," pp. 15-16.

¹⁷ "Interior Decorating Advice," p. 16.

¹⁸ Smith, p. 22.

¹⁹ "Interior Decorating Advice," p. 15.

²⁰ Theodore Peterson, Magazines in the Twentieth Century (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964)

²¹ Peterson, p. 442.

²² Peterson, p. 63.

²³ Peterson, p. 216.

²⁴ Peterson, p. 216.

²⁵ "Interior Decorating Advice," p. 15.

²⁶ Smith, p. 40.

²⁷ Smith, p. 40.

²⁸ Wilson, p. 82.

²⁹ Jean Gordon and Jan McArthur, "Popular Culture, Magazines and American Domestic Interiors, 1898-1940," Journal of Popular Culture, 22 (Spring 1989)

³⁰ "Popular Culture," p. 43.

³¹ "Popular Culture," p. 44.

³² "Popular Culture," p. 47.

"Notes to pages 10-16"

33 "Popular Culture," p. 49.

34 Frank Luther Mott, A History of American Magazines, v.5 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 133. Theodore Peterson, p. 212.

35 Mott, p. 136.

36 Mott, pp. 126, 130.

37 Country Living's editorial office, "General Overview"
Also obtained from the editorial office.

38 "General Overview"

39 "Popular Culture," p. 36.

40 "Popular Culture," p. 36. With its long history since 1896, House Beautiful has retained its early motto of "devotion to simple beauty, ... interest in the development of new art forms and the revival of old ones." (Mott, p.156.) However, its focus changed to more fashion than ever. According to a New York Times' article in April, 1985, aiming at "the magazine of home fashion," House Beautiful launched a new advertising campaign; it "will play up the above-average demographics and fashionability of individual women readers." Along with its emphasis on fashion, House Beautiful focuses on the modern or contemporary style.

41 My comparison was based on Adult Reader Profile surveyed by Mediamark Research Institute(MRI) in the fall of 1991.

42 Mott, p. 130.

43 Frank A. Bennack, JR., The Hearst Corporation 100 Years of Making Communications History (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 9.

44 "General Overview"

45 "General Overview"

46 Newman

47 Newman

48 "General Overview"

49 "General Overview"

"Notes to pages 16-27"

50 Bridget A. May, "Progressivism and the Colonial Revival," Winterthur Portfolio: A Journal of American Material Culture, 26 no.2/3 (Summer/Autumn 1991), p. 122.

51 Magazine Publisher's Statement for six months ended June 30, 1991, reported by Audit Bureau of Circulation.

52 Alan Radley, "Artefacts, Memory and a Sense of the Past," in David Middleton and Derek Edwards (eds.), Collective Remembering (London: SAGE Publications, 1990), pp. 46-59.

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VITA

Kyoko Ito

Born in Osaka, Japan, December 18, 1963. Graduated from Ibaraki High school in Osaka in March 1982. Obtained B.A. from Kobe University, 1986. Entered American Studies Program at the College of William and Mary in 1990.