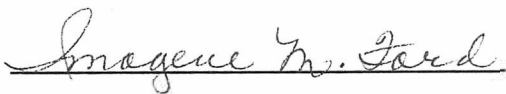


To the Graduate Council:

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

  
Robbie G. Blakemore, Major Professor

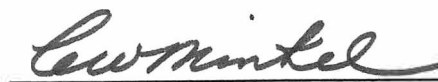
We have read this dissertation  
and recommend its acceptance:







Accepted for the Council:

  
Vice Provost  
and Dean of The Graduate School

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

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

Lawrence Allen Ray  
August 1988

Copyright © Lawrence Allen Ray, 1988  
All rights reserved

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

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During the more than two years of preliminary research necessary to write this dissertation, a considerable number of people have generously assisted me, and I am deeply indebted to the following: especially the chairperson of my doctoral committee at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Dr. Robbie G. Blakemore, Department of Textiles, Merchandising, and Design, for her considerable guidance and direction, and the committee members, Dr. Susan Becker, Department of History; Dr. Mary Frances Drake and Dr. Imogene Ford, Department of Textiles, Merchandising, and Design; and Dr. Frederick C. Moffatt, Department of Art; at Lambuth College: the Board of Trustees; Dr. Harry Gilmer, former president, Dr. Bruce K. Sherbine, former academic dean, Dr. Charles Mayo, executive vice president and academic dean, and the Professional Development Committee, Dr. Rodger Bates, chairman, for generously granting me a one year sabbatical leave; the DAR-SAR-CAR Chapter House, Inc., Memphis, Tennessee, especially Mrs. Jane Hanks, president, and Mrs. Patty Wurzburg and Mrs. Dana McKelvy, both past presidents, for countless hours of assistance; the Mallory family, especially the twins, Mrs. Walter Morgan of Rye, New York, and Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr. of Memphis, for generous access to private family papers and the thoroughly enjoyable hours spent listening to recollections of their family home; and to Mrs. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr. for her hospitality; the City of Memphis

Department of Public Service, and the Memphis and Shelby County Office of Planning and Development; in Knoxville, the staffs of the Main Library at The University of Tennessee, especially Mary Frances Crawford, and specifically of the Non-Print, Special Collections, Inter-Library Loan and Reference Computer Research Departments; in Memphis, especially Dr. John Harkins, archivist, city library system and archives; and Delanie Ross, director of the Mississippi Valley Collection, John Willard Brister Library at Memphis State University, both of whom have most generously shared their bountiful knowledge of Memphis-related research materials and resource persons; the staff of the Memphis State University Library; Dr. Jim Johnston, head of the History Department, Heather Dowasky, Joan Cannon, and other staff members of the Memphis-Shelby County Room Collections, Memphis-Shelby County Archives, at the Memphis and Shelby County Public Library and Information Center which has been the major research font for this dissertation; the Memphis-Brooks Gallery of Art, Richard Gruber, acting director; Emily Flowers, assistant director and catalog librarian, and Bill Short, reference librarian at the Burrow Library, Rhodes College; Dr. Bobby Flannery and staff at the Memphis-Shelby County Archives; Bobby Dunavant, Probate Court Clerk and his staff, Probate Court Records, Memphis-Shelby County Courthouse; Mary Montgomery, curator, Memphis Pink Palace Museum; Midge Holmes, curator, the Magevney House; Memphis Heritage, Inc.; in Nashville, the Tennessee State Museum, and the staff of the Tennessee State Library and Archives; in Jackson, Tennessee, at

Lambuth College especially Dr. Grace Whetstone, Department of English for her editorial advice; and to Mrs. Judy Hazelwood, head librarian, Mrs. LuVera Turner, periodicals librarian, and Mrs. Linda Hayes, circulation librarian, of the Luther L. Gobbel Library for their aid with interlibrary loan materials; in Louisville, Kentucky, the staffs of the Kentucky Room of the Louisville Free Library and of the Filson Club; Mr. Giles Stephens, director, and the staff of the Brennan House; Mr. M. A. Allgeier, director of research and the staff of the Louisville Landmarks Commission; Barbara McCaskill of Paul Shultz Catalogs, Inc.; and Mr. Vincent Mattei of the Louisville Statuary Company; in Cincinnati, the staff of the Cincinnati Historical Society, especially Frances Forman, Linda Bailey, and Judy Malone of the Photography Department; the staff of the library of the Cincinnati Art Museum; Mr. Maitland Pedretti, and Mrs. William S. Nagel; in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a special thank you to Gordon L. Olsen, city historian of Grand Rapids; Linda Vanden Engel and the staffs of the Michigan Room and the Furniture Library at the Grand Rapids Public Library; and of the Grand Rapids Public Museum very especially Nancy S. Powell, curator of collections and Marilyn Merdzinski, registrar; and Dr. W. D. Frankforter, director, and the staff of the Voigt House; in New York City, Phoebe Barnard and the staffs of the library and the Textile, Wallpaper, and Photography Departments at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum of the Smithsonian Institution and of the Thomas J. Watson Library of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; of the New York Historical Society; of the Brooklyn Museum;

of the Mercantile Library; of the Avery Library at Columbia University and especially Herbert Mitchell of the Classics Collection, Allison Eckardt Ledes, associate editor, The Magazine Antiques, and Dover Publications, Inc.; in New Albany, Indiana, Lisa Higbee, curator, the Culbertson Mansion Indiana State Memorial; in Richmond, Virginia, Elizabeth Childs, Sheri Jost, and staff of the Valentine Museum; in Washington, D.C. the Library of Congress; in Philadelphia, Dr. Roger W. Moss, Jr., director, and Sandra Tatmun, architectural librarian, and Bruce Laverty, archivist, of the Philadelphia Athenaeum; in Wilmington, Delaware, Alberta M. Brandt, Neville Thompson and the staff especially of the Rare Book Room of the library of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum; in Rochester, New York, Janet Homfeld, and the staff of the library of the Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum; in Newark, New Jersey, the staffs of the New Jersey Historical Society and the Newark Museum; in Albany, New York, the staff of the Albany Institute of History and Art; in Cooperstown, New York, Eileen J. O'Brien and the staff of the library of the New York State Historical Association; in Watkins Glen, New York, Glen Holden and the American Life Foundation and Study Institute; in Buffalo, New York, Mary F. Bell and the staff of The Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society; and in Ithaca, New York, Sara F. Ekholm and Historic Urban Plans; in High Point, North Carolina, the staff of the Furniture Library; in St. Louis, Missouri, Bryan Stephen Thomas and the staff of the Missouri Historical Society and the staff of the Campbell House; in Chicago, Illinois, the staffs of the Newberry Library



and especially my longtime friend Dr. Willard White, vice president for development; of the Burnham Library of Architecture at the Art Institute of Chicago; and of the Joseph R. Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago; and Anne Steinfeldt and the staff of the Chicago Historical Society; in New Orleans, the staffs of the Historic New Orleans Collection, the Gallier House, and the Louisiana State Museum, especially Timothy J. Chester, associate director for collections; Mary Schoeser, archivist, Warner Fabrics Archives, England; and Dr. Christian Witt-Dörning, director of the furniture department, the Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, Austria.

A deeply felt thank-you to the following for encouragement, guidance, and direction: Dr. Douglas Hyland, director of the Birmingham Museum of Art, formerly of the Memphis Brooks Art Gallery for originally suggesting the Mallory-Neely House as a topic; Dr. Kenneth Ames, director of advanced studies, the Winterthur Museum; Robert Kauffman, of the Costume Institute, Metropolitan Museum, formerly head of the library and archives at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum; and Mary Lohrenz, curator of collections, State Historical Museum, Jackson, Mississippi, formerly curator of the Mississippi River Museum, Memphis.

A thank-you for enrichment in the area of material culture studies to the following: Frank Horton, director, Sally Gant, education director, and the staff of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Cheryl Robertson, education director, and staff of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum

of American Decorative Arts; and especially for Victorian material culture studies, the staff of the New York State Historical Association and the Victorian Society in America for their outstanding and enlightening co-sponsored seminar on American culture entitled, "Life With A Flourish: Victorian America 1830-1900."

It is important to acknowledge the following persons and firm whose previous research related to the Mallory-Neely House has been of great value to this dissertation: Mrs. Clarence Smith for her extensive genealogical research and collecting efforts in compiling a scrapbook of materials during the years that the DAR-SAR-CAR groups administered the house; Mrs. Pat Leeker for several related articles and a Mallory-Neely House guidebook; National Heritage, Philadelphia, and Yeates & Gaskill Restoration Architects, Inc., Memphis for their report, "Master Plan for the Mallory-Neely House"; and Mrs. Eleanor D. Hughes, longtime chairperson of the Victorian Village Association, and Memphis chapter president of the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities, for her many long years of laborious architectural and genealogical research concerning Memphis architects, Victorian Village houses, and owning families.

A note of deep appreciation to my fellow staff at Lambuth College in the Department of Art, Fashion Merchandising, Home Economics, and Interior Design for their assistance and understanding. A very special thank you to staff member Susan Foote for her tireless support and help, and also to my work-study student assistants especially David Burns, for his assistance in inking plans and elevations.

Thank-you to the following individuals who have provided aid along the way: Mr. and Mrs. Ruskin Longworth, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Venable of Wilmington, Delaware; Mr. Wayland Rogers, Chicago, Illinois; Mrs. Sue Studebaker, Dayton, Ohio; Mr. and Mrs. John Townsend of Bemis, Tennessee; Mrs. Beverly Callis and her staff at Beverly's World Travel, Miss Marcie Mittelstadt, Mrs. Connie Helms, Mrs. Virginia Elliott, Mrs. Vivian Hudacek, Mr. Terry Bivens, Mrs. Yvonne Frazier, Dr. Bob Hazelwood, all of Jackson, Tennessee; and to the following Memphians: Mr. Charles Poole, and Mr. John Vincent Robinson, historical restoration and decorative consultant, and to a lifelong family friend and relation through marriage to the Mallorys, Mrs. Frances Chamberlain, who offered valuable personal recollections; Mr. and Mrs. Grady Thurman of Darien, Connecticut; Mrs. Katherine Thurmond, Richmond, Virginia; Dr. J. H. Morrow, chairman History Department; and Mrs. Ann L. Lacava, Thesis/Dissertation Coordinator at The University of Tennessee; Mrs. Marilyn Caponetti and Dr. Jonathan Sowell, Knoxville, Tennessee; Mr. Sammy Holden and Miss Mandy Corlew of Nashville; Dr. David Hislop of the Rochester Historical Society in Rochester, New York; Mr. Phil Mueller, New York City; Mr. Alex Barrington, Florence, Italy; and to members of my family, Mr. Louis Ralph Tognetti, Mrs. Josephine Pearce Tanner, Dr. Raymond Tanner, and Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Edward Ray for shelter, food, transportation, and encouragement. Lastly, a posthumous thank you to the late Mrs. Barton Lee Mallory ("Miss Daisy") for cherishing and preserving the Mallory-Neely House so that we can enjoy it today.

## ABSTRACT

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

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

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

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

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
VOLUME I	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Background and Need for the Study. . . . .	1
Purpose and Methodology. . . . .	13
Significance . . . . .	23
II. THE VICTORIAN ERA. . . . .	37
The Name . . . . .	37
Characteristics. . . . .	39
Rapid Development of Science and Industrialization . . . . .	41
"Gospel of Progress" and Optimism. . . . .	42
Rise and Dominance of the Middle Class . . . . .	43
Re-examination and Re-thinking of Traditional Values . . . . .	43
Pessimism, Anxiety, and Need for Stability . . . . .	44
Triumph of Scientific Materialism. . . . .	47
American Victorianism. . . . .	47
III. MEMPHIS CITY HISTORY . . . . .	50
IV. MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: SEQUENCE OF OWNERSHIP. . . . .	70
Isaac Kirtland Family. . . . .	71
Benjamin Babb Family . . . . .	76
James Columbus Neely Family. . . . .	81
The Daniel Grant and Barton Lee Mallory Families . . . . .	96
V. MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: ARCHITECTURAL EVOLUTION. . . . .	107
Architectural Background . . . . .	107
Italianate Style--Theoretical Meaning and Stylistic Features . . . . .	116
Italianate in the Mid-South. . . . .	138
Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852). . . . .	145
Architectural Services . . . . .	145
Pattern Book Sources . . . . .	151
Italianate Features. . . . .	153
Regional Characteristics . . . . .	158
Technological Modernization and Building Materials . . . . .	163
Mallory-Neely House (c. 1890). . . . .	170
Stylistic Updating (c. 1890) . . . . .	170
Influences of Architectural Literature and Building Technology . . . . .	182

CHAPTER	PAGE
VI. MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING. . . . .	200
Landscape Architecture . . . . .	200
Mallory-Neely Landscape, c. 1852 . . . . .	202
Mallory-Neely Landscape, c. 1890 . . . . .	204
VII. MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: INTERIORS AS ARTIFACT. . . . .	229
Influences on Victorian Interior Design. . . . .	232
Advertisement. . . . .	233
Printed Materials. . . . .	234
Retail and Department Stores and Mail Order. . . . .	242
Developing Role of the Interior Decorator. . . . .	250

## VOLUME II

VIII. MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE AND DECORATION . . . . .	252
Surviving Interior Features of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852). . . . .	253
Millwork (c. 1852) . . . . .	257
Mantels (c. 1852). . . . .	267
Plasterwork (c. 1852). . . . .	272
Phase One of Neely Redecoration: The Second Empire Style. . . . .	286
Decorative Ceilings. . . . .	297
Color Scheme . . . . .	362
Wallpaper. . . . .	367
Wall-to-Wall Carpet. . . . .	372
Second Phase of Neely Redecoration: The Aesthetic Style . . . . .	384
The Aesthetic Movement . . . . .	385
Aestheticism in America. . . . .	391
Aestheticism in Memphis. . . . .	397
Aestheticism in the Mallory-Neely House. . . . .	404
Mallory Redecoration . . . . .	551
IX. MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: FURNISHINGS. . . . .	554
Furniture. . . . .	554
Furniture and Technology . . . . .	556
Furniture Sources. . . . .	575
Furniture Styles and Fads. . . . .	597
Accessories. . . . .	688
Textiles . . . . .	716
Room Arrangement . . . . .	734

## VOLUME III

X. THE MALLORY-NEELY INTERIORS: AN INTERPRETATION. . . . .	746
Victorian Ritual and Symbolism . . . . .	746
Symbolism of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) . . . . .	748
Symbolism of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1890) . . . . .	755

CHAPTER	PAGE
The Mallory-Neely Interiors: A Stage for Victorian Ritual . . . . .	783
General Social Ritual and Entertainment. . . . .	800
Rites of Passage . . . . .	812
Seasonal Rituals and Festivals . . . . .	817
Special Festivals and Political-Civic Celebrations . . . .	818
 BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	 824
I. PRIMARY SOURCES. . . . .	825
Books. . . . .	825
Court Proceedings. . . . .	839
Directories. . . . .	839
Interviews . . . . .	839
Manuscripts. . . . .	840
Periodicals. . . . .	842
Trade Catalogs . . . . .	845
 II. SECONDARY SOURCES. . . . .	 853
Books. . . . .	853
Dissertations--Theses. . . . .	867
Encyclopedia . . . . .	868
Exhibition Catalogs--House Museum Guides . . . . .	868
Leaflets--Booklets . . . . .	869
Lectures . . . . .	870
Manuscripts. . . . .	873
Periodicals. . . . .	874
Programs . . . . .	879
Reports. . . . .	880
Scholarly Journals . . . . .	881
 APPENDIXES . . . . .	 883
APPENDIX A . . . . .	884
APPENDIX B . . . . .	892
 VITA . . . . .	 899



## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Parlor of the Mallory-Neely House . . . . .	4
2. Mrs. Daisy Mallory at age 90 beneath her debut portrait in the entrance hall of the Mallory-Neely House. . . . .	6
3. Methodological system developed for investigation of the Mallory-Neely interiors . . . . .	21
4. Riverfront view of Memphis as it appeared in the May 1862 issue of <u>Harper's Weekly</u> magazine . . . . .	52
5. An 1819 map of Memphis. . . . .	55
6. Characteristic scenes of commercial activity on the Memphis riverfront during the nineteenth century. . . . .	57
7. Riverfront, Memphis, in 1862 as shown on the cover of <u>Harper's Weekly</u> . . . . .	60
8. Memphis in 1870 . . . . .	66
9. Gilded era Memphis mansions . . . . .	68
10. Babb related artifacts. . . . .	79
11. James Columbus Neely. . . . .	84
12. Mrs. James Columbus Neely . . . . .	86
13. Premises of typical Memphis wholesale grocery and cotton factoring businesses in the late nineteenth century similar to that of the Brooks-Neely firm. . . . .	90
14. Newspaper advertisements for Brooks, Neely & Co.. . . . .	91
15. Captain William Barton Mallory. . . . .	97
16. Mallory House . . . . .	99
17. Mallory related artifacts . . . . .	100
18. Mr. Barton Lee Mallory. . . . .	102

FIGURE	PAGE
19. Mrs. Daisy Mallory and her three children: Francis, Barton Lee, Jr., and William Neely. . . . .	103
20. Stereoptican view of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852). . . . .	109
21. Photograph of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852), as it appeared when the Neelys purchased it from Benjamin Babb in 1883 . . . . .	110
22. Enlargement of a section of Figure 8 (page 66) of the "bird's eye" view of Memphis in 1870. . . . .	111
23. Osborne House (1845), Queen Victoria's stylistically influential Italianate style villa on the Isle of Wight, England. . . . .	120
24. Characteristic Italianate elevations and plan from Andrew Jackson Downing <u>Cottage Residences</u> (1850) . . . . .	125
25. Italianate villa from <u>The Model Architect</u> (1852) by Samuel Sloan, one of Downing's many imitators. . . . .	126
26. Views of a "painterly" Italianate villa from Samuel Sloan, <u>The Model Architect</u> (1852). . . . .	130
27. "American Country Life--May Morning". . . . .	136
28. Annesdale (c. 1850) . . . . .	141
29. Photograph of an unidentified and no longer standing Memphis suburban villa in the Italianate style. . . . .	142
30. Variations in plan and elevation of an Italianate villa as illustrated in Calvert Vaux, <u>Villas and Cottages</u> (1857) . . . . .	152
31. Elevation and plan from <u>Modern American Architecture</u> by M. F. Cummings and C. C. Miller (1867). . . . .	154
32. Details of some of the characteristic Italianate features of the original two floors and tower of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) . . . . .	156
33. Italianate window awnings . . . . .	161
34. Service-kitchen wing of the Mallory-Neely House . . . . .	164
35. Pre-fabricated millwork . . . . .	166

FIGURE	PAGE
36. Pre-fabricated windows. . . . .	167
37. One of several pages from the 1869 Hinkle, Guild & Company catalog illustrating Italianate style houses constructed throughout the Mississippi Valley using its pre-fabricated millwork. . . . .	169
38. Second Empire style Memphis mansions. . . . .	171
39. Mallory-Neely House as it appears today with J. C. Neely's post-1890 additions grafted on top of Kirtland's c. 1852 Italianate villa. . . . .	174
40. Villa in the Norman style from Samuel Sloan, <u>The Model Architect</u> (1852). . . . .	176
41. Mallory-Neely House showing Neely's circa 1890 additions. . . . .	178
42. Memphis mansions (now destroyed) built during the late nineteenth century contemporary with Neely's alteration of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1890) . . . . .	183
43. Memphis mansions (now destroyed) showing influences of the Queen Anne, Chateausque, and Romanesque styles . . . . .	184
44. Details of Neely's post-1890 additions to the Mallory-Neely House . . . . .	186
45. Houses with similar architectural features. . . . .	190
46. Lowenstein House. . . . .	191
47. Edward Culliat Jones, noted nineteenth century Memphis architect . . . . .	197
48. Advertisements for the Jones and Baldwin architectural firm. . . . .	198
49. Illustration from Samuel Sloan, <u>The Model Architect</u> (1852) showing an Italianate villa harmoniously situated in its landscape surround. . . . .	201
50. Illustration from Frank Scott, <u>The Art of Beautifying Suburban Grounds</u> (1870) showing an Italianate villa centered in a naturalistic landscape. . . . .	205
51. Typical landscape plan from Frank Scott, <u>The Art of Beautifying Suburban Grounds</u> (1870) . . . . .	208

FIGURE	PAGE
52. Plan of the Mallory-Neely House grounds in the early twentieth century based on a sketch drawn in 1985 by Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr. . . . .	212
53. An avenue of homes each in a landscape setting: Adams Street, Memphis, at the height of the gilded era. . . . .	215
54. Late Victorian flower beds. . . . .	219
55. Victorian creepers. . . . .	221
56. Advertisement from Samuel Sloan, <u>The Model Architect</u> (1852). . . . .	223
57. Victorian garden arbors . . . . .	225
58. Mrs. J. C. Neely (c. 1900). . . . .	227
59. Mallory-Neely House floor plans . . . . .	230
60. Frontispiece to <u>Beautiful Homes</u> (1878). . . . .	237
61. Display at the World's Columbian Exposition (1893). . . . .	240
62. Display at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904) . . . . .	241
63. An 1881 city directory advertisement for a Memphis specialty store . . . . .	244
64. Menken's Department Store . . . . .	246
65. Lowenstein's Department Store . . . . .	248
66. Goldsmith's Department Store. . . . .	249
67. Mallory-Neely (c. 1852) doors . . . . .	260
68. Part of a page from the 1869 Hinkle, Guild & Co. catalog showing mail-order Italianate style doors . . . . .	262
69. Details of some of the Mallory-Neely millwork (c. 1852) . . . . .	263
70. One of many pages from the 1869 Hinkle, Guild & Co. catalog showing profile sections of available mail-order moldings . . . . .	264
71. Other examples of the Mallory-Neely c. 1852 millwork. . . . .	265
72. Music-room fireplace. . . . .	270

FIGURE	PAGE
73. Italianate mantel . . . . .	271
74. Morning room fireplace. . . . .	273
75. Hinkle, Guild & Company catalog (1869). . . . .	274
76. An 1857 Horton & Macy Company invoice . . . . .	275
77. Rococo style cornices . . . . .	277
78. Morning room crown molding survives from Kirtland's original decor (c. 1852). . . . .	278
79. Centers in sitting and dining rooms . . . . .	280
80. Commercially produced centers . . . . .	282
81. Ceiling of the Mallory-Neely House morning room . . . . .	284
82. Furnished plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely morning room. . . . .	285
83. Romantic functionalism. . . . .	287
84. Gold and white salon of the Finance Ministry in the New Palace of the Louvre in Paris, France . . . . .	291
85. Views of Charles Garnier's Second Empire style Paris Opera (1861-1875) . . . . .	294
86. Characteristic Second Empire interiors in the Paris Opera .	295
87. Mallory-Neely parlor ceiling. . . . .	300
88. Plates from Franz Meyer <u>Handbook of Ornament</u> (1894) illustrating suggested divisional systems for ceiling design and decoration . . . . .	302
89. Plaster ceiling centers . . . . .	304
90. Details of the complex crown moldings of the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room . . . . .	306
91. Strapwork cartouches and grotesque masks from Franz Meyer <u>Handbook of Ornament</u> (1894) . . . . .	307
92. Detail of the ornamental plasterwork of the Mallory-Neely parlor bay window ceiling . . . . .	309

FIGURE	PAGE
93. Prefabricated mail-order plaster ornaments from the 1882 catalog of the W. A. French & Company . . . . .	311
94. Prefabricated mail order plaster ornaments from the catalog of the Architectural Decorating Company (n.d.). . . . .	312
95. Ornamental plaster brackets . . . . .	313
96. Detail of the Mallory-Neely parlor ceiling. . . . .	318
97. Detail of the parlor ceiling. . . . .	319
98. Detail of the music room ceiling. . . . .	320
99. Mallory-Neely music room ceiling. . . . .	322
100. Stylized decorative motifs. . . . .	323
101. Neo-Grec ornaments. . . . .	325
102. Plate from George and Maurice Audsley, <u>The Practical Decorator and Ornamentalist</u> (1890) showing characteristic conventionalized Neo-Grec ornament. . . . .	326
103. One of many suggested decorative ceiling treatments made up of Neo-Grec ornament from <u>Boyce's Fresco and Decoration</u> (1883). . . . .	328
104. Suggested method for painting a cornice suitable for a drawing room from Paul Hasluck <u>House Decoration</u> (1910). . .	331
105. Mallory-Neely sitting room ceiling. . . . .	333
106. Details of the Mallory-Neely sitting room ceiling . . . . .	334
107. Illustration from the <u>Stencil Treasury</u> (1895) showing various stencil tools and brushes . . . . .	336
108. Cupid frieze pattern. . . . .	337
109. Characteristic page from the 1895 <u>Stencil Treasury</u> showing varieties of border stencils available for order. . . . .	338
110. Plates like this one from the <u>Deutsches Maler-Journal</u> served as inspiration for decorative ceiling artists. . . .	340
111. A plate from the <u>Deutsches Maler-Journal</u> in the Beck Collection showing a ceiling design with cupids, trellises and vines . . . . .	341

FIGURE	PAGE
112. A preparatory watercolor rendering for a decorative ceiling border from the Beck Collection. . . . .	343
113. Preparatory rendering from the Moeller Collection. . . . .	344
114. Pedretti family advertisement from the Cincinnati city directory (1893) . . . . .	355
115. Frontispiece of the 1879 Mitchell, Vance & Company Catalog showing their New York showroom and factory. . . . .	360
116. Late Victorian gasoliers . . . . .	363
117. Decorative globes. . . . .	364
118. Detail of the wallcovering of the Mallory-Neely sitting room . . . . .	368
119. An 1880 engraving showing mechanized wall paper production . . . . .	371
120. Advertisements for a Memphis wallpaper dealer. . . . .	373
121. Detail of the panels that comprise the field of the Mallory-Neely parlor wall-to-wall Brussels carpet. . . . .	375
122. Engraving of a late nineteenth century mechanized carpet loom from an advertisement in E. A. Posselt, <u>Technology of Textile Design</u> (1889) . . . . .	377
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) .	379
124. Line drawing of A. G. Morrison's suggested method for laying roll carpet and border from <u>Drapery, Decoration, and Architecture</u> (1906). . . . .	381
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 . . . . .	382
126. Ideal Aesthetic interior as illustrated in Bernard S. Smith, <u>Designs and Sketches for Furniture in the Neo-Jacobean and Other Styles</u> (1876) . . . . .	389
127. Late nineteenth century newspaper photographs showing formal and informal variations of "artful" interior decoration in Memphis. . . . .	399

FIGURE	PAGE
128. Views of the Mallory-Neely front doors . . . . .	406
129. Large stained glass window on the entrance hall stair landing of the Mallory-Neely House . . . . .	407
130. Mallory-Neely stained glass. . . . .	409
131. Details of the Mallory-Neely stained glass windows showing the variety of jewels and textures used. . . . .	411
132. Details of the parquet border of the Mallory-Neely entrance hall floor. . . . .	413
133. Catalog of the J. W. Boughton Company of Philadelphia (1893) . . . . .	415
134. Page from the 1875 trade catalog of the National Wood Manu- facturing Company showing both the construction of their flooring and methods for its installation. . . . .	418
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. . . . .	419
136. Huttig, Moss Manufacturing Company catalog (1903). . . . .	420
137. Examples of Mallory-Neely area Oriental rugs . . . . .	423
138. More examples of Mallory-Neely area Oriental rugs. . . . .	424
139. Oriental rug catalog pages . . . . .	427
140. Staircase and newel post replacements. . . . .	428
141. Page from the Hinkle, Guild and Company catalog (1869) . . . . .	431
142. Mallory-Neely angular staircase and catalog page . . . . .	432
143. Peeling paint on the ceiling of the Mallory-Neely entrance hall reveals the original stencil decoration. . . . .	434
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 . . . . .	435
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. . . . .	436



FIGURE	PAGE
146. Details of several of the combing patterns used on walls in the Mallory-Neely House . . . . .	438
147. The original stenciled frieze and ceiling survives in the Mallory-Neely third floor hallway. . . . .	440
148. Details of the stenciling of the Mallory-Neely third floor hallway frieze and ceiling . . . . .	441
149. Plates from <u>The Art of Decorative Design</u> (1888) by Dr. Christopher Dresser, English educator and design reformer, showing his recommended evolutionary design process. . . . .	443
150. One of many plates from George and Maurice Audsley, <u>The Practical Decorator and Ornamentalist</u> (1890), showing suggested border designs incorporating scrolling leafage, stylized foliage, and flowers all organized in varying sized bands. . . . .	444
151. Preparatory watercolor from the Beck Collection. . . . .	445
152. Details of original graining . . . . .	449
153. Original cherry graining on the inside of the Mallory-Neely dining room closet doors . . . . .	450
154. Details of the oak graining on third floor bedroom doors . . . . .	451
155. Assorted graining rools and brushes as illustrated in the <u>Stencil Treasury</u> (1895). . . . .	452
156. Advertisement from the <u>Stencil Treasury</u> (1895) . . . . .	453
157. Two or three part wall divisional systems, based on wall proportion, from Louis Osborne, <u>Painting and Interior Decoration</u> (1925). . . . .	457
158. Gold and green English made wallpaper with all over conventionalized flowers from the Cooper-Hewitt Collection . . . . .	459
159. Detail showing frieze and field of the two part wall divisional system used in the Mallory-neely parlor and music room . . . . .	461
160. Conventionalized floral designs in the Anglo-Japanese manner similar to the design used for the Mallory-Neely parlor field paper . . . . .	462

FIGURE	PAGE
161. The Mallory-Neely parlor and music room gold and sage green flocced wall-field paper . . . . .	463
162. Mallory-Neely frieze paper and advertisement . . . . .	464
163. Interior view of a well stocked turn-of-the-century Memphis wallpaper store. . . . .	466
164. Section and detail of the Lincrusta Walton covering the dado area in the Mallory-Neely dining room . . . . .	469
165. Engraving from Charles Locke Eastlake, <u>Hints on Household Taste</u> (1878). . . . .	472
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, <u>Drapery, Decoration and Architecture</u> (1906). . . . .	474
167. Document of the original c. 1890 crimson plush drapery of the Mallory-Neely parlor and music room. . . . .	475
168. Drapery hardware . . . . .	478
169. Two types of brass drapery tie backs used as part of the Mallory-Neely window treatments. . . . .	479
170. Two pages from the 1891 J. C. Iverson Company catalog showing various metallic drapery chains. . . . .	480
171. Advertisement for sets of lace drapery panels from the 1902 catalog of The Sanitary Manufacturing Company . . . . .	483
172. Mandel Brothers' 1901 catalog. . . . .	484
173. Details of Battenburg lace drapery panels that survive in the Mallory-Neely House. . . . .	485
174. A page from the catalog of the 1893 J. W. Boughton Company emphasizes the Eastern and exotic nature of transom grilles. . . . .	490
175. Transom grilles in the Mallory-Neely House . . . . .	491
176. Characteristic page from the 1893 Boughton Company catalog showing a wide assortment of decorative transom grilles. . . . .	492

FIGURE	PAGE
177. Page from the catalog of the 1903 Huttig, Moss Manufacturing Company showing transom grilles and listing prices and choices of wood and finish. . . . .	493
178. The Mallory-Neely sitting room mantel is a monument of Aesthetic design . . . . .	495
179. Characteristic English Aesthetic fireplace with carved wooden mantel, art tiles, and artistic metal work as illustrated in Bernard Smith, <u>Designs and Sketches for Furniture in the Neo-Jacobean and Other Styles</u> . . . . .	497
180. Sketch for an English etagere overmantel by A. Jonquet from <u>Original Sketches for Art Furniture</u> (1879). . . . .	499
181. A later (1891) mass produced American version of the Aesthetic fireplace from the trade catalog of the J. C. Iverson Company. . . . .	500
182. Etagere overmantel in the Mallory-Neely House and overmantel from a catalog. . . . .	501
183. Details of some of the characteristic carving found on the set of etagere mantels in the Mallory-Neely parlor . . . .	503
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 . . . . .	504
185. The Aesthetic mantel pieces as an interior focal point and miniature museum of quality designed objects as shown in Smith, <u>Designs and Sketches for Furniture in the Neo-Jacobean and Other Styles</u> (1876) . . . . .	505
186. Page from the 1888 catalog of the Bradley and Currier Company of New York. . . . .	506
187. Company stationery and note. . . . .	508
188. Mechanized tile production machinery . . . . .	510
189. Hearth tiles . . . . .	512
190. Sitting room tiles . . . . .	513
191. Sitting room hearth. . . . .	514
192. Dining room tiles. . . . .	515

FIGURE	PAGE
193. Typical Minton advertisement . . . . .	517
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 . . . . .	519
195. Page from the 1882 catalog of the J. L. Mott Ironworks Company of New York showing a coordinated set of brass fireplace fittings . . . . .	521
196. Details of the "artistic" brass firebox frame in the Mallory-Neely dining room. . . . .	522
197. Details of the "artistic" brass firebox frame in the sitting room . . . . .	524
198. Illustrations from the 1882 catalog of the Mott Iron Works of New York showing late nineteenth century brass fireirons. . . . .	525
199. Characteristic late nineteenth century brass fender in the reform style from the Mallory-Neely sitting room fireplace. . . . .	526
200. Late century fireplace fenders similar to those used throughout the first floor of the Mallory-Neely House. . . . .	527
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. . . . .	528
202. Fire tool. . . . .	529
203. An 1873 catalog of the Supplee Hardware Company. . . . .	530
204. Firebox sets . . . . .	532
205. Detail of the side panel of the more elaborate Mallory-Neely sitting room firebox set decorated in relief with an exotic theme. . . . .	534
206. Artifacts of early Memphis electricity . . . . .	536
207. Combination fixture. . . . .	538
208. "Renaissance" style brass combination gas-electric fuxture located in the Mallory-Neely sitting room. . . . .	539

FIGURE	PAGE
209. Brass fixture. . . . .	541
210. Page from the 1878 Mitchell, Vance and Company catalog is illustrated with a variety of gas fixtures all in the Anglo-Japanese manner. . . . .	542
211. Late Victorian "artistic" doorknobs in the Aesthetic taste characteristic of those found throughout the first floor of the Mallory-Neely House . . . . .	544
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. . . . .	545
213. Elaborate drop escutcheons from doors on the first floor of the Mallory-Neely House . . . . .	546
214. Page from the catalog of the 1873 Supplee Hardware Company showing a selection of drop escutcheons. . . . .	547
215. Reform style hardware in the Mallory-Neely House . . . . .	548
216. Page showing a variety of shutter bars similar to those in the Mallory-Neely House from the 1873 <u>Supplee Hardware Company Catalogue of Shelf and Heavy Hardware.</u> . . . . .	549
217. Reform style hinges. . . . .	550
218. Engravings from the 1900 catalog of J. A. Fay & Company showing machinery used to manufacture furniture in late nineteenth century America . . . . .	559
219. Illustration of a machine for carving decorative ornament for furniture from the 1900 catalog of J. A. Fay & Company. . . . .	563
220. Illustrations from the 1877 <u>Nathusius Illustrated Catalog of Patented Wood Ornament</u> showing carvings available for order by furniture manufacturers for use on their products . . . . .	565
221. Details of ornamental carving used to embellish Victorian furniture in the Mallory-Neely collection. . . . .	567
222. Details of ornamental carving used to embellish furniture in the Mallory-Neely collection. . . . .	568
223. Late Victorian upholstered furniture . . . . .	570

FIGURE	PAGE
224. Engraving from Henry Williams and Mrs. C. S. Jones, <u>Beautiful Homes</u> (1878), illustrating characteristic overly embellished late Victorian upholstery treatment . . .	571
225. Plates from Franz Meyer, <u>Handbook of Ornament</u> (1894) . . .	572
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. . . . .	573
227. Illustrations from the C. Sidney Norris & Company, <u>Illustrated Catalogue of Cabinet and Upholstery Goods</u> (1880) . . . . .	574
228. Crowded interior of a late nineteenth century furniture store as shown in the 1883 catalog of Paine's Furniture Manufacturing Company of Boston. . . . .	577
229. Page from the 1876 catalog of Nelson-Matter & Company of Grand Rapids, one of the first to use photography to illustrate their merchandise . . . . .	578
230. One of the display rooms of the Grand Rapids Furniture Exposition (summer 1905) . . . . .	579
231. An 1867 city directory advertisement for the Flaherty Furniture Company. . . . .	582
232. An 1852 newspaper advertisement for McKinney and Company, Memphis furniture dealership . . . . .	584
233. Rococo revival card table located in the Mallory-Neely sitting room . . . . .	587
234. Underside of the same table with the painted initials Mck (McKinney) . . . . .	588
235. McKinney and Bryson Company furniture. . . . .	589
236. An 1854 McKinney and Company newspaper advertisement listing a variety of tables. . . . .	591
237. "Wishbone" dresser in the Mallory-Neely master bedroom and inside the top drawer the badly faded label of the Cincinnati manufacturer. . . . .	592
238. An 1863 newspaper advertisement for Mitchell, Hoffman and Company, the Memphis outlet for the Mitchell and Rammelsburg Company of Cincinnati. . . . .	593

FIGURE	PAGE
239. Early twentieth century Empire Revival console card table in the Mallory-Neely sitting room. . . . .	596
240. Newspaper photographs of exterior and interior views of turn-of-the-century Memphis furniture stores . . . . .	598
241. Exuberantly designed hall tree located in the Mallory-Neely entrance hall. . . . .	602
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. . . . .	603
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 . . . . .	604
244. Empire console card table located in the Mallory-Neely sitting room . . . . .	606
245. Elizabeth chair in the Mallory-Neely collection and illustration of similar chairs . . . . .	610
246. Rococo Revival furniture as illustrated in Andrew Jackson Downing, <u>Architecture of Country Houses</u> (1850) . . . . .	613
247. Memphis furniture company advertisements showing Rococo Revival furniture. . . . .	614
248. An 1858 invoice head of a Memphis furniture company, from the <u>Robertson Topp Papers</u> , showing Rococo Revival furniture. . . . .	615
249. Marble top Rococo Revival center table located in the Mallory-Neely master bedroom . . . . .	617
250. Rococo Revival half-tester bed located in the Mallory-Neely master bedroom . . . . .	618
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 . . . . .	619
252. Renaissance Revival parlor suite from the 1874 catalog of McDonough Price & Company. . . . .	623
253. Renaissance Revival sofa in the Mallory-Neely House and similar illustrations from trade catalogs. . . . .	624

FIGURE	PAGE
254. One of the chairs in the Mallory-Neely parlor from a Renaissance Revival suit . . . . .	625
255. Details of the Mallory-Neely sofa showing characteristic Renaissance Revival ornament . . . . .	626
256. Renaissance Revival bedroom suit in the Mallory-Neely collection . . . . .	627
257. Details of the Mallory-Neely bed showing characteristic Renaissance Revival ornament . . . . .	628
258. Renaissance Revival sideboard in the Mallory-Neely dining room. . . . .	630
259. Cresting and base of the Neo-Grec style pier mirror in the Mallory-Neely sitting room . . . . .	631
260. Pier mirrors similar to the one in the Mallory-Neely House from the catalog of Pape Brothers & Kugemann of Cincinnati, n.d. . . . .	632
261. Neo-Grec marble top table located in the Mallory-Neely master bedroom . . . . .	633
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 .	635
263. Line drawings of characteristic English furniture in the reform mode. . . . .	637
264. Reform style library table in the Mallory-Neely collection . . . . .	639
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. . . . .	640
266. Reform style bed lounge located in the Mallory-Neely master bedroom . . . . .	642
267. Bed lounges from the catalog of the C. & F. Vogel Company of New York, n.d.. . . . .	643
268. These chairs in the Reform style are located in the Mallory-Neely dining room. . . . .	644



FIGURE	PAGE
269. Chairs similar to those in the Mallory-Neely House were illustrated in the catalog of the Robert Mitchell Company of Cincinnati, n.d. . . . .	645
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. . . . .	647
271. Intricately carved Ch'ing Dynasty screen located in the Mallory-Neely parlor . . . . .	651
272. Details of the embroidered panels from the Mallory-Neely Ch'ing Dynasty screen. . . . .	652
273. Elaborately carved and inlaid Ch'ing Dynasty cabinet located in the Mallory-Neely sitting room. . . . .	653
274. Details of the Mallory-Neely Ch'ing Dynasty cabinet. . . . .	654
275. View showing the general arrangement of the Chinese Exhibits at the St. Louis World's Fair, 1904 from the <u>History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition</u> . . . . .	655
276. Display of carved blackwood furniture and screens in the Chinese Exhibition at the St. Louis World's Fair, 1904, from the <u>History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition</u> . . . . .	656
277. Exhibit of Chinese carved ebony furniture on display in the Liberal Arts Palace of the St. Louis World's Fair, 1904, from the <u>History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition</u> . . . . .	657
278. Elaborately carved South Indian table located in the Mallory-Neely music room and similar table in illustration . . . . .	659
279. Details of the intricate carving of the Mallory-Neely South Indian table . . . . .	660
280. Arab tabouret tables in the Mallory-Neely collection . . . . .	661
281. Turkish chairs . . . . .	664
282. Turkish suite in Mallory-Neely House and illustration from Paine's Furniture Manufacturing Company catalog (1883) . . . . .	665
283. An 1896 shipping invoice for a small boulle writing desk no longer in the Mallory-Neely collection. . . . .	670

FIGURE	PAGE
284. Bouille center table located in the Mallory-Neely parlor and the label from its underside . . . . .	671
285. Mallory-Neely bouille table and a rendering of a similar one from a French furniture catalog. . . . .	673
286. Nineteenth century reproduction of an eighteenth century Dutch marquetry cabinet. . . . .	675
287. This late nineteenth century reproduction of an early nineteenth century Empire sofa is located in the Mallory-Neely entrance hall. . . . .	676
288. Shown in the Mallory-Neely entrance hall are two pieces from a nineteenth century suite of furniture which replicates seventeenth century originals . . . . .	677
289. Nineteenth century reproduction of a seventeenth century cabinet located in the Mallory-Neely entrance hall . . . .	678
290. Early twentieth century Neo-Rococo table (inscribed on the underside--Austria) is inset with hand painted porcelain plaques. . . . .	679
291. Vernis Martin vitrine decorated with a copy of the painting "In Love" . . . . .	681
292. A 1900 Oriel Cabinet Company advertisement for their Vernis Martin goods. . . . .	682
293. An early twentieth century trade journal advertisement shows reproductions of both Empire and Chippendale pieces. . . . .	683
294. Revere glass paintings of George and Martha Washington hang in the Mallory-Neely master bedroom . . . . .	685
295. Empire Revival sofa. . . . .	687
296. Empire Revival sofa positioned in front of the bay window in the Mallory-Neely parlor. . . . .	689
297. Illustrated with an Empire Revival sofa this 1909 advertisement focuses on the manufacture of period reproduction furniture . . . . .	690
298. Argand lamps in the Mallory-Neely collection . . . . .	693
299. Elaborate gilded Rococo overmantel mirror. . . . .	694

FIGURE	PAGE
300. Pair of French bisque figurines highlighted with gilt decoration . . . . .	699
301. Representation of the international scope of the accessories in the Mallory-Neely House . . . . .	700
302. Oil painting of Venice and watercolor of landscape . . . . .	701
303. Two oil paintings that adorn the walls of the Mallory-Neely parlor . . . . .	702
304. Copy by R. Clemison of Sir Edwin Landseer's "Monarch of the Glen". . . . .	704
305. Display of Victorian pictures. . . . .	705
306. Classical Parian figurine from the Mallory-Neely collection . . . . .	706
307. Marble copy by Lampini of Canova's "Cupid and Psyche" (Louvre) and illustration of similar sculpture from C. Hennecke & Company catalog. . . . .	707
308. The organic nature of Art Nouveau design is illustrated by objects in the Mallory-Neely collection. . . . .	711
309. Two of the many Art Nouveau bronze busts in the Mallory-Neely collection . . . . .	712
310. Two of the brilliantly colored and intricately executed Japanese cloisonné enamel vases in the Mallory-Neely collection . . . . .	713
311. Part of the Japanese cloisonné exhibit in the Palace of Varied Industries at the St. Louis World's Fair (1904) . . . . .	715
312. Advertisements for mechanized textile looms from E. A. Posselt, <u>Technology of Textile Design</u> 1889 . . . . .	719
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 . . . . .	721
314. Cover of an Empire Revival stool in the Mallory-Neely House. . . . .	722
315. Chair upholstery . . . . .	723

FIGURE	PAGE
316. Remains of a Reform style chair in the Mallory-Neely attic. . . . .	726
317. Advertisement for a mechanized plush loom from E. A. Posselt, <u>Technology of Textile Design</u> 1889 . . . . .	727
318. Similar Reform style chairs from the catalog of the Robert Mitchell Company of Cincinnati, n.d.. . . . .	728
319. Small stool in the Mallory-Neely collection. . . . .	732
320. Colorful Berlin Work embroidered firescreen in the Mallory-Neely music room . . . . .	733
321. Photograph from the Mandel Brother's Department Store, Department of Interior Design's guide to home decorating (1900) . . . . .	737
322. View of the Mallory-Neely parlor showing the density of objects crowded into the room. . . . .	741
323. Object cluttered interior of the Mallory-Neely music room.	742
324. Plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely parlor showing the arrangement of the furnishings . . . . .	743
325. View of the Mallory-Neely sitting room showing the congregation of furniture out into the space of the room .	744
326. Plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely sitting room showing the arrangement of the furnishings . . . . .	745
327. The large framed photograph of the Neely family displayed on the second floor hallway of the Mallory-Neely House symbolically reflects the hierarchial status in the Victorian family with James Columbus Neely as the central seated figure. . . . .	751
328. Rear view of the Mallory-Neely House . . . . .	753
329. Plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely master bedroom. .	754
330. Neely initial on the front gate of the Mallory-Neely House. . . . .	762
331. Stylized heraldic crests . . . . .	764
332. Royal fleur-de-lis patterns. . . . .	765
333. Part of the Mallory-Neely china collection . . . . .	766

FIGURE	PAGE
334. Nineteenth century reproduction of an eighteenth century French commode located in the Mallory-Neely parlor . . . .	767
335. Details of the bronze mounts of the Mallory-Neely French commode. . . . .	768
336. George C. Love House (1889) in the Greenlaw suburb . . . .	770
337. Photographs of turn-of-the-century slum housing in Memphis from the <u>Susan Coulan Scruggs Papers</u> . . . . .	774
338. More photographs of Memphis turn-of-the-century slum housing from the <u>Susan Coulan Scruggs Papers</u> . . . . .	775
339. A 7 October 1900 Memphis newspaper advertisement showing characteristic pieces of turn-of-the-century middle class furniture. . . . .	776
340. A 7 October 1900 Memphis newspaper advertisement showing characteristic turn-of-the-century middle class furniture.	777
341. Page from the 1889 catalog of the Pinkham & Willis Company showing a characteristic parlor suite priced moderately for the middle class market . . . . .	778
342. Characteristic pieces of golden oak furniture as illustrated in the 1895 Montgomery Ward catalog . . . . .	779
343. A 4 November 1900 Memphis newspaper advertisement for Hunter's Furniture Company . . . . .	781
344. Typical pieces of American middle class furniture as illustrated in the 1895 Montgomery Ward catalog. . . . .	782
345. Photograph of a poor Memphis family taken inside their home from the <u>Susan Coulan Scruggs Papers</u> . . . . .	784
346. Miss Pearl Neely . . . . .	787
347. Mr. James Columbus Neely, Jr.. . . . .	791
348. The Mallory-Neely parlor, sometimes called "the dancing room" in newspaper accounts, was the appropriately appointed scene for the staging of numerous social functions. . . . .	795
349. Neely calling card . . . . .	801
350. Neo-Tudor hall tree and Anglo-Japanese style calling card receiver. . . . .	803

FIGURE	PAGE
351. Plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely entrance hall . . .	804
352. Plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely dining room . . .	808
353. Dining room of the Mallory-Neely House as set by Mrs. Daisy Mallory for a garden club tour in 1961. . . . .	809
354. Plan and elevations of the Mallory-Neely music room. . . .	811
355. Daisy Neely and Barton Lee Mallory's wedding invitation. .	813
356. Oil portrait by Memphis artist, Kate Karls, of Daisy Neely in her debut gown. . . . .	815
357. Proudly proclaiming ownership and residence, James Columbus Neely's initials, chiseled in granite, repeatedly adorn the ornamental front fence of the Mallory-Neely House. . . . .	823

VOLUME I

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

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

#### Background and Need for the Study

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

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

---

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

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



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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

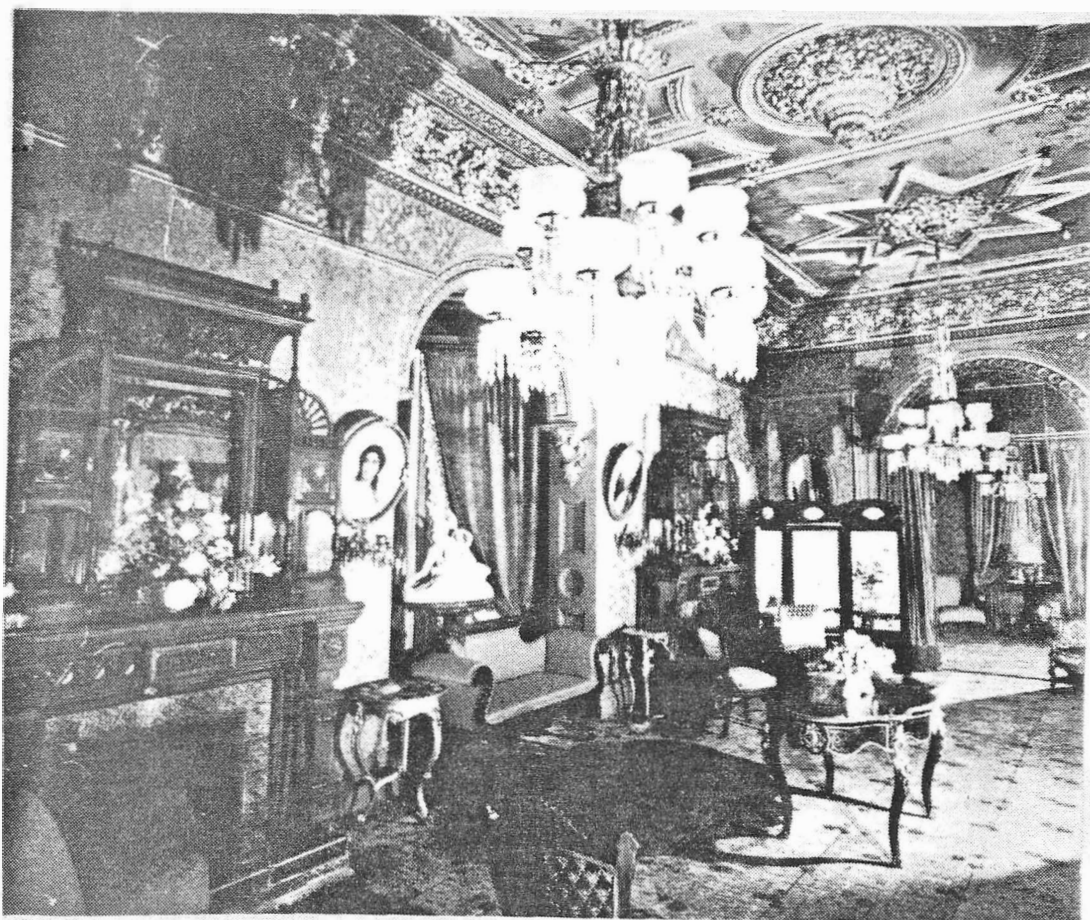


Figure 1. Parlor of the Mallory-Neely House. Courtesy The Magazine Antiques.

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

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

---

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

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

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

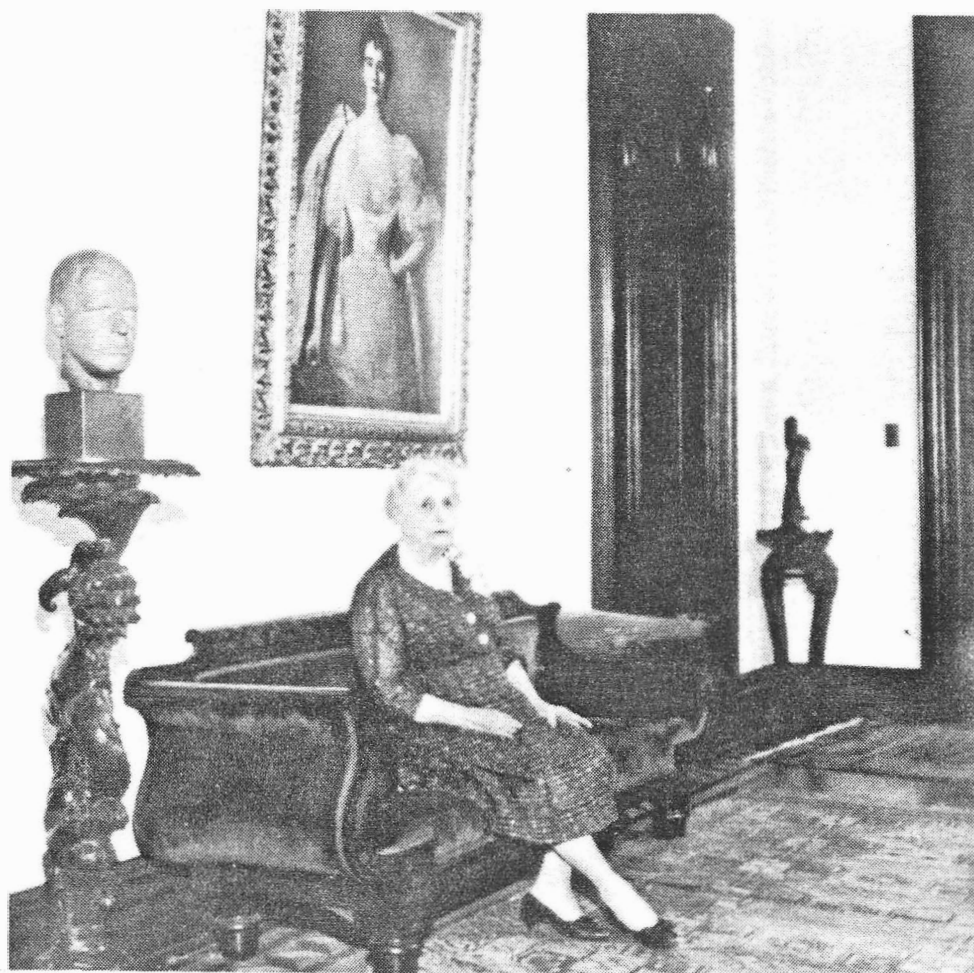


Figure 2. Mrs. Daisy Mallory at age 90 beneath her debut portrait in the entrance hall of the Mallory-Neely House. Courtesy Barton Lee Mallory, Jr.

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

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

---

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

<sup>11</sup>Matching federal funds were obtained for several of these projects.

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

<sup>13</sup>Mrs. Jane Hanks, Interview by author, Memphis, Tennessee, 14 October 1984.

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

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

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

---

<sup>14</sup>Mrs. Jane Hanks, Interview by author, Memphis, Tennessee, 8 February 1985.

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>21</sup>Kidder Smith, 12.

scheme, but also because of its extraordinary state of preservation.<sup>22</sup>

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>22</sup>Milner et al., "Master Plan," 15.

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

#### Purpose and Methodology

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

inquiry.<sup>30</sup> Thomas Schlereth defines both material culture and material culture studies:

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 91-92.

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



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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

---

## A Room Interior As An Artifact

### I. IDENTIFICATION

#### Visual Analysis and Physical Description of Room

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

### II. EVALUATION

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

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

### III. INTERPRETATION

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

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

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

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

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

### Significance

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

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

---

<sup>47</sup>Ames, "Attitudes Toward the Home, Changing Research Strategies."

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

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

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

---

<sup>48</sup>Alderson and Low, 10.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 3.

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

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

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

---

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

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



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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He went on to say blasphemously:

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

---

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

<sup>64</sup>"Editorial," The Magazine Antiques, 161.

<sup>65</sup>Maass, 8.

generation but there are of course no "good" and "bad" periods of design.<sup>66</sup>

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

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

---

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 14.

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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



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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>74</sup>McAlester and McAlester, 495.

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

<sup>76</sup>Kimball, 103.

## CHAPTER II

### THE VICTORIAN ERA

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

#### The Name

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

Early Victorian . . . . .late 1830s-1850s

Mid or High Victorian . . . . .late 1850s-1860s

Late Victorian. . . . .1870s-1914

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

### Characteristics

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

---

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

<sup>9</sup>Houghton, 3.

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

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

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

#### Rapid Development of Science and Industrialization

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

---

<sup>10</sup>Howe, 7.

<sup>11</sup>Brown, 29.

<sup>12</sup>Jordan, 25.



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

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

#### "Gospel of Progress" and Optimism

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

---

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

<sup>14</sup>Houghton, 240.

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

### Rise and Dominance of the Middle Class

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

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

### Re-examination and Re-thinking of Traditional Values

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

---

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 40.

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

#### Pessimism, Anxiety, and Need for Stability

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

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

---

<sup>16</sup>Meyer, 70.

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

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

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

---

<sup>17</sup>Jordan, 32-33.

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

<sup>19</sup>Houghton, 145.

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 395.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 343.

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

### Triumph of Scientific Materialism

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

### American Victorianism

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

---

<sup>22</sup>Howe, "Victorian Culture in America," 26.

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

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

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>26</sup>Howe, "American Victorianism as a Culture," 507.

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



## CHAPTER III

### MEMPHIS CITY HISTORY

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

<sup>5</sup>Kirby, 249.

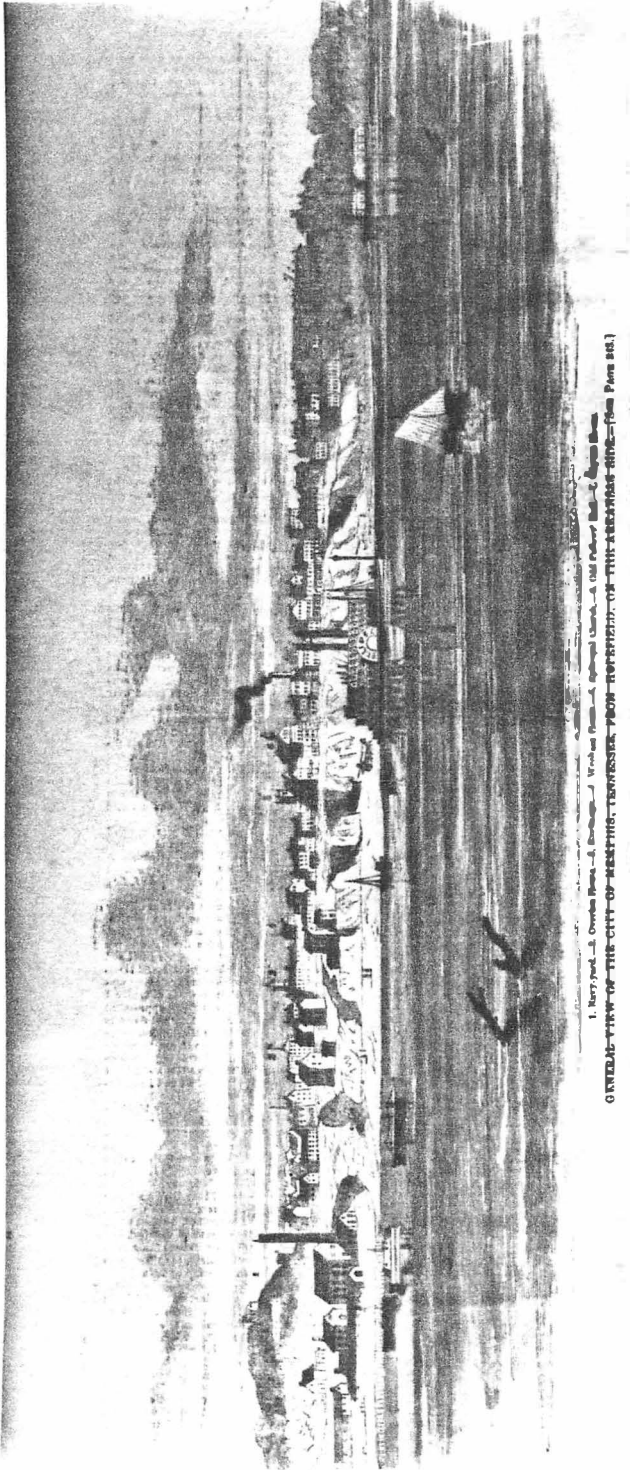


Figure 4. Riverfront view of Memphis as it appeared in the May 1862 issue of Harper's Weekly magazine.

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

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

---

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

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 86.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 122-123.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 92.

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

<sup>13</sup>Magness, 9.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 14.

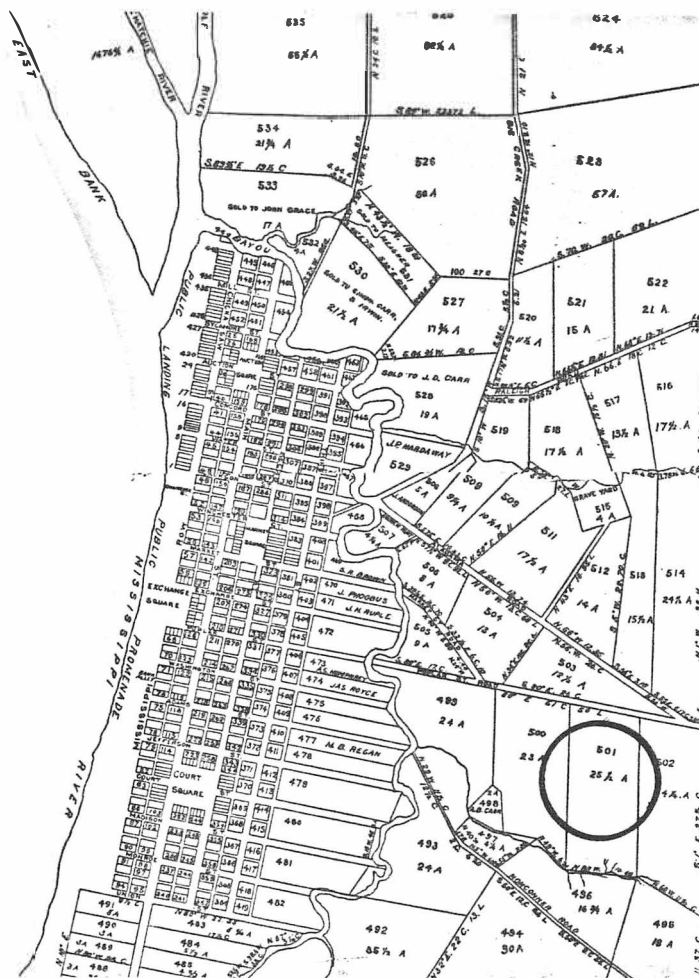


Figure 5. An 1819 map of Memphis. The plan shows "city lots" laid out in a grid pattern, and surrounded by irregularly shaped "country lots." The Mallory-Neely House would later be constructed on country lot 501. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

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

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

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

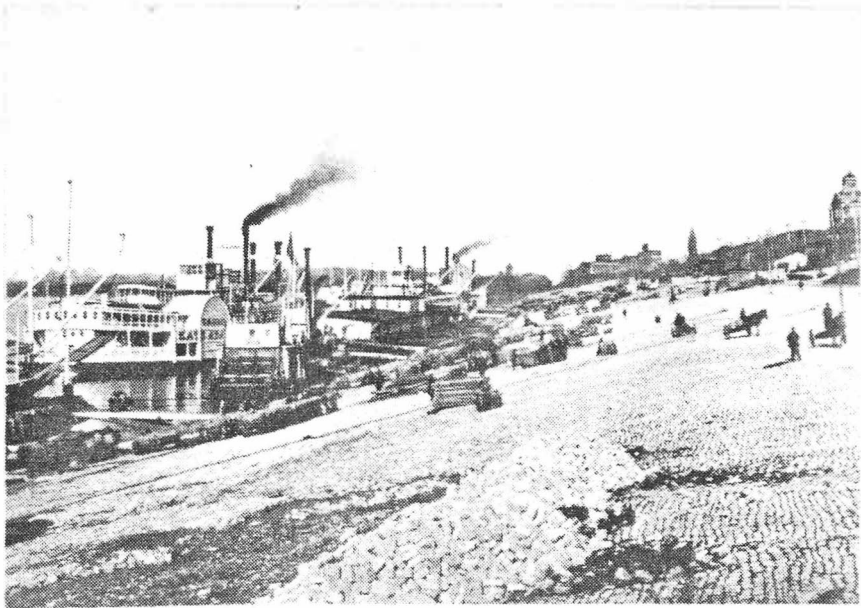
The total economic contribution made to Memphis in its early history by the Mississippi River was enormous. No estimates have been made which have quantified its

---

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

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

<sup>17</sup>Warner, 293.



A



B

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

A. The steamboat landing.  
B. Cotton and other agricultural commodities.



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

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Harkins, 78.

<sup>21</sup>Warner, 294.

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

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>22</sup>Ornelas-Struve, Coulter, and Hassell, I, 78.

<sup>23</sup>Harkins, 54.

<sup>24</sup>Ornelas-Struve, Coulter, and Hassell, II, 23.

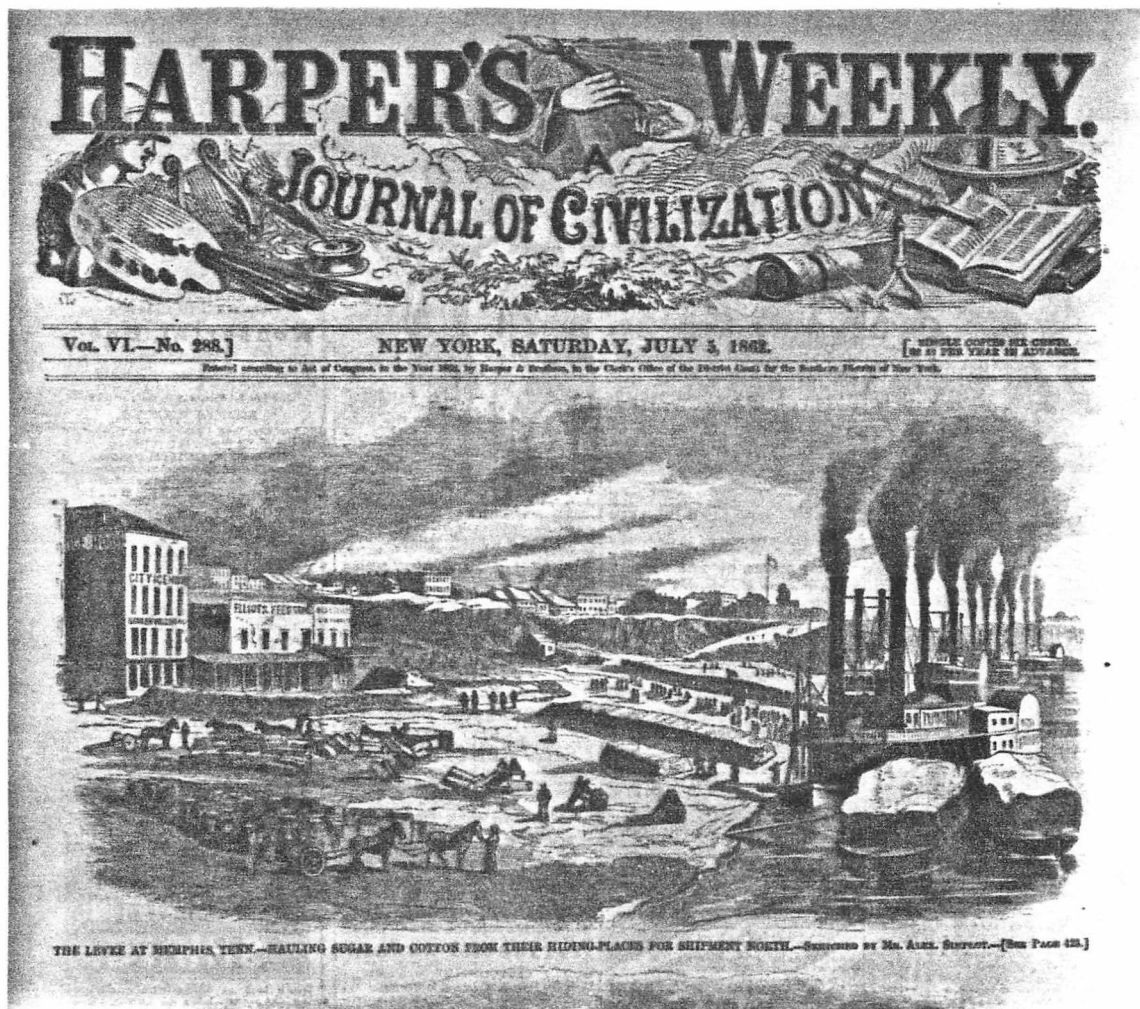


Figure 7. Riverfront, Memphis, in 1862 as shown on the cover of Harper's Weekly.

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>25</sup>Magness, 12.

<sup>26</sup>Warner, 294.

<sup>27</sup>Memphis and Shelby County Centennial Souvenir, n.p.

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

Memphis, forced into near bankruptcy, surrendered its charter in an unorthodox maneuver concocted by its members in the state legislature in order to save the city. Memphis ceased to exist as an incorporated city and became a taxing district of the state from 1879 until 1893.<sup>29</sup>

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

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

---

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

<sup>29</sup>Ornelas-Struve, Coulter, and Hassell, III, 88.

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>31</sup>Kirby, 167-168.

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>36</sup>Harkins, 98.

<sup>37</sup>McIlwain, 257.

rechartered. It witnessed phenomenal population growth from around 33,000 in 1860 to 102,320 in 1900.<sup>38</sup> This growth was reflected in the physical expansion of the city. In 1898 twelve square miles of surrounding area were annexed, "quadrupling the city's size and changing its confrontation from a rough rectangle hugging the banks of the river to a nearly square shape . . . this constituted a major directional change for Memphis."<sup>39</sup> (Figure 8)

Much of the city's renaissance was based on improved sanitation and disease control. Central to this was: first, the construction of the Waring Sewerage System, an innovative flush system incorporating manhole covers, overflow systems, and periodic inspection; and second, a safe public water supply via the discovery and then drilling of artesian wells in 1887.<sup>40</sup> This health and sanitation modernization also included garbage service, house to house sanitation inspection, plumbing regulation, meat and milk inspection, birth registration, compulsory vaccination against smallpox, the cleanup of the Bayou Gayoso, and the destruction of breeding places for mosquitoes.<sup>41</sup> This health reform movement culminated in the

---

<sup>38</sup>Harkins, 103.

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

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

<sup>41</sup>Capers, 211.



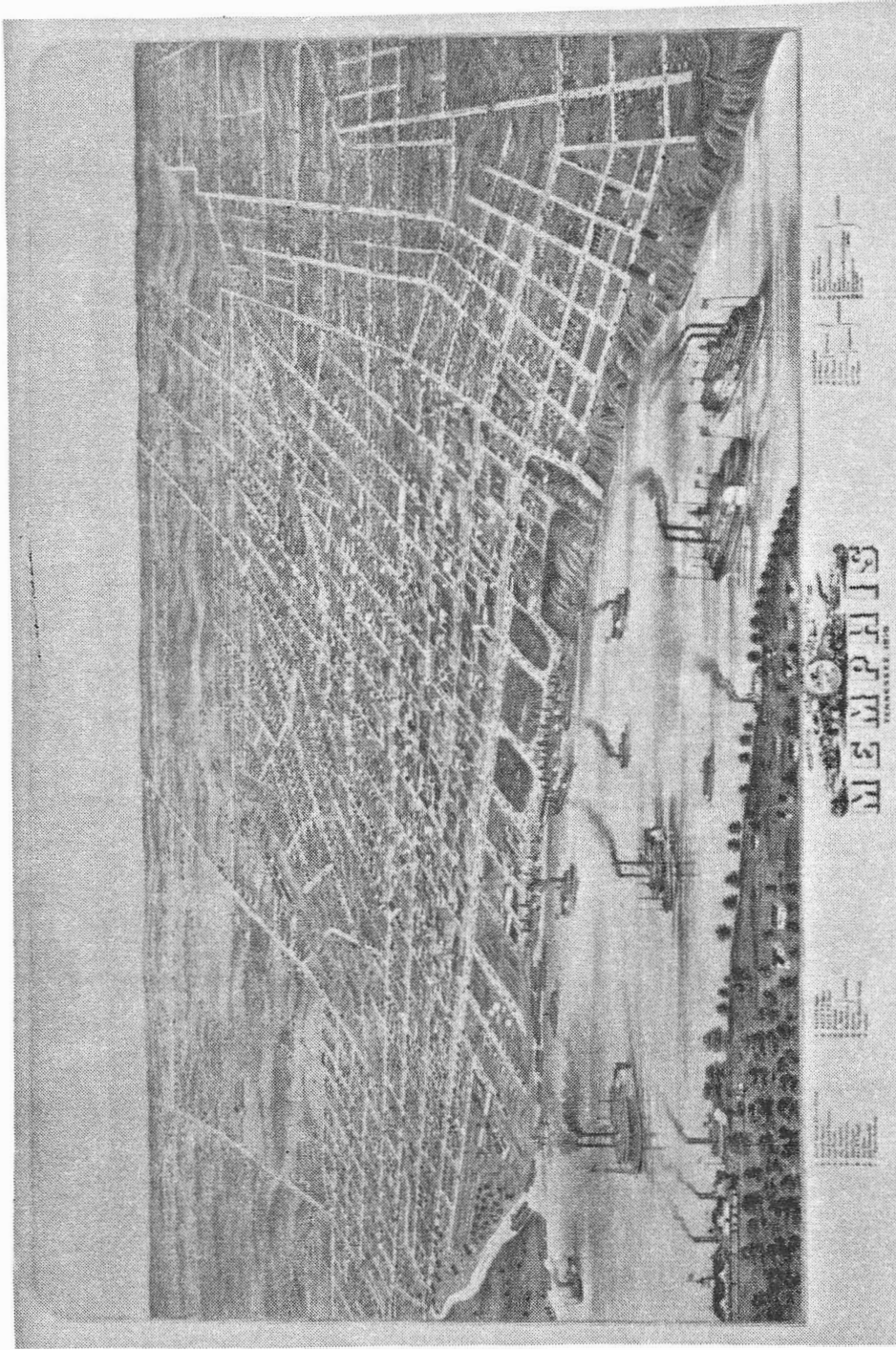


Figure 8. Memphis in 1870. Courtesy Library of Congress and Historic Urban Plans.

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

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

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

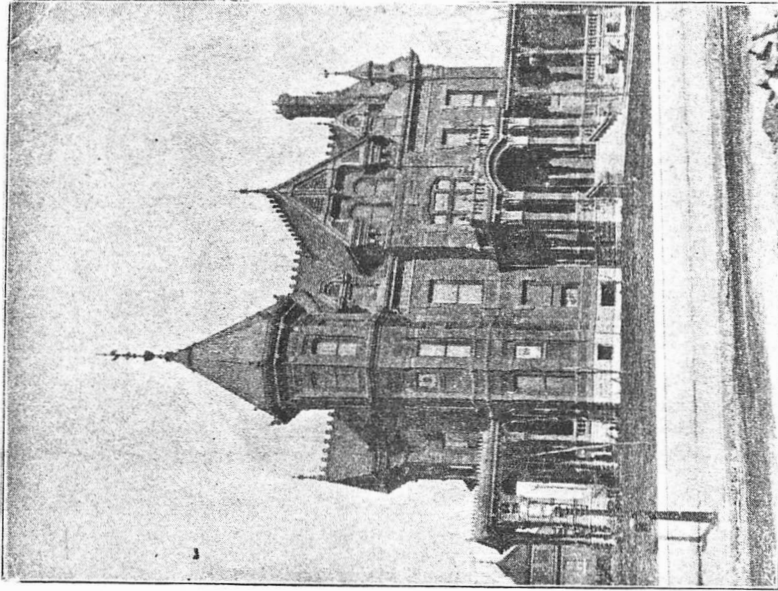
---

<sup>42</sup>Miller, 17.

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



A



RESIDENCE OF H. M. NEELY.

B

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

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

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

---

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

## CHAPTER IV

### MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: SEQUENCE OF OWNERSHIP

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

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

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

---

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

### Isaac Kirtland Family

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>8</sup>Kirby, 222.

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

<sup>10</sup>Smith, "Isaac B. Kirtland," n.p.

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



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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>15</sup>Curry, 118.

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

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

#### Benjamin Babb Family

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>19</sup>Vedder, 27.

<sup>20</sup>Benjamin Babb: From Virginia to Tennessee, 5.

<sup>21</sup>"Necrological," Memphis Daily Appeal, 10 January 1859, 2.

<sup>22</sup>Smith and Webb, "Benjamin Babb," n.p.

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

On 12 December 1864, Babb purchased the Adams Street home of Isaac Kirtland for \$40,000.<sup>26</sup> Excepting a single material object, a glass globe with the name BABB etched into it, there is virtually nothing to date known of Babb's tenure in the house and whether there were any improvements to the house and grounds. (Figure 10) Some oral tradition survives that Benjamin Babb completed Kirtland's house, enriching the interiors and adding either the second or third story. Most articles about and early guides to the house repeat much of this as fact, as does the application to the U.S. Department of Interior's National Park Service for placement of the

---

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

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

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

<sup>26</sup>"Isaac Kirtland Deed to Benjamin Babb," 211.



A



B

Figure 10. Babb related artifacts.  
A. Photograph of Benjamin Babb. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.  
B. Etched glass globe in the Mallory-Neely House collection.

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

#### James Columbus Neely Family

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

---

<sup>28</sup>Vedder, 27.

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



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

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

---

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

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

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

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

James Columbus Neely was born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, on 19 April 1826.<sup>35</sup> (Figure 11) His father Moses Neely,

---

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

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

<sup>35</sup>Vedder, 162.



*J C Neely*

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

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

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

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

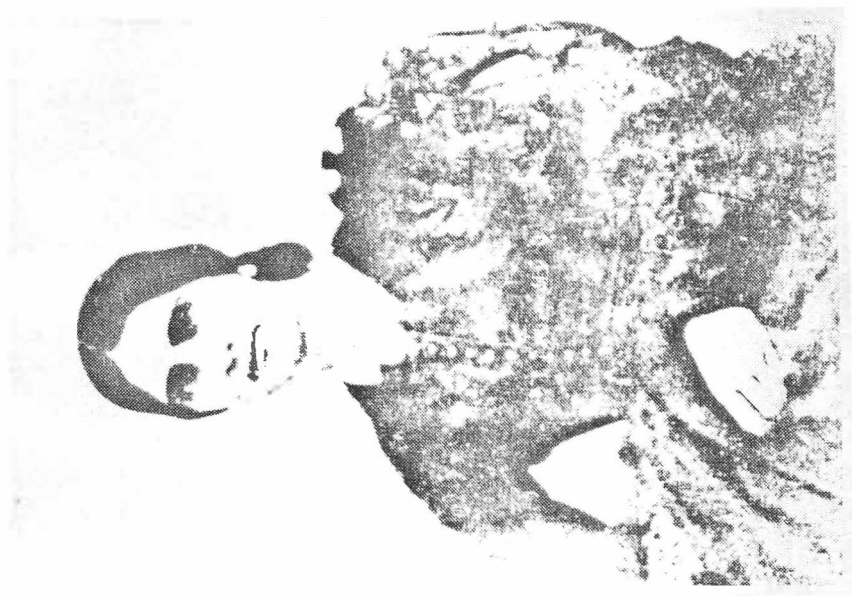
---

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

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Neely Family Papers, n.p.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.



A

Figure 12. Mrs. James Columbus Neely.

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

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



B

opening of this territory by Andrew Jackson in 1836.<sup>40</sup> Milton, Jesse and Eliza's son, later bought lands of his own from the Chickasaw Chief Lush PumTubby; and in time he extended this property so that he became a large landholder and cotton planter.<sup>41</sup> Milton Blocker died a premature and tragic death caused by injuries suffered aboard the Mississippi steamer Medora when it exploded and burned on 28 February 1847. Fortunately, due to his industriousness he left his family in a sound financial situation. Vedder in The History of Memphis and Shelby County states that the Blockers were one of the finest families of North Mississippi and noted for their wealth and refinement.<sup>42</sup>

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

---

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

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Vedder, II, 163.

<sup>43</sup>Smith, "The Neely Family," n.p.

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

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

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

---

<sup>44</sup>"Death of J. C. Neely," Commercial Appeal, 23 January 1901, 1.

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

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

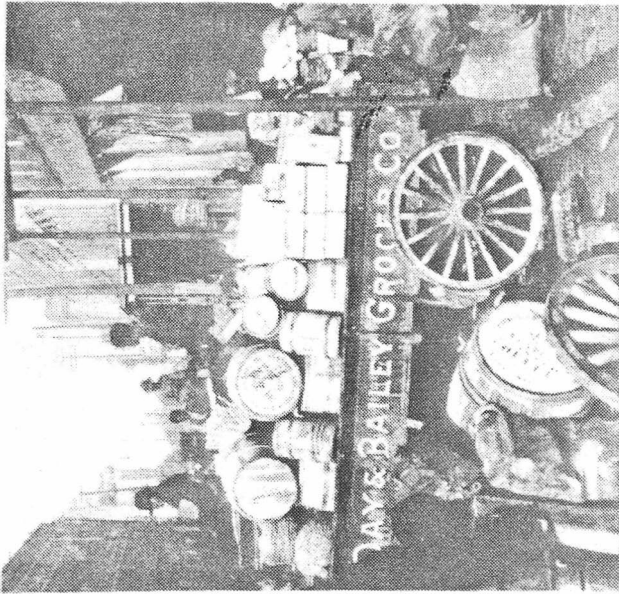
The business premises located at No. 367 Front Street is a spacious four-story brick building with a commodious cellar, measuring 35 feet front by 234 feet deep, and is filled from top to bottom with a huge stock of staple and fancy groceries, provisions, plantation and contractor supplies, etc. In addition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

---

<sup>46</sup>"Death of J. C. Neely," 1.

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





Exterior View of

**DAY & BAILEY**

**GROCER COMPANY'S STORE**

360-362 Front St.



A

B

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

A. Day & Bailey Grocery Company.

B. Duffin Brothers and McGehee Cotton Factors and Grocers.

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

**Brooks, Neely & Co.**

WHOLESALE

**GROCERS, COTTON FACTORS**

AND COMMISSION MERCHANTS,

No. 867 Front street,                      :                      :                      Memphis, Tenn.

A

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

**BROOKS, NEELY & CO.**

WHOLESALE

**Grocers, Cotton Factors**

—AND—

**COMMISSION MERCHANTS,**

867 Front Street,                      MEMPHIS, TENN.

Agents for "STAR COTTON GIN."

B

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

by bad weather, and materially lessening the chance of fire.<sup>48</sup>

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>53</sup>Neely Family Papers, n.p.

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

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

<sup>56</sup>Vedder, Vol. II, 163.

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

In July of 1883 James Columbus Neely purchased Benjamin Babb's home on Adams Street for \$45,000.<sup>58</sup> Though no written documentation seems to have survived, physical evidence together with early photographs and family oral history testify to the changes wrought by the Neelys during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The following is illustrative of how contemporaries viewed the Neelys and their newly renovated home:

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>59</sup>Vedder, Vol. II, 163.

<sup>60</sup>"Death of J. C. Neely," 1.

### The Daniel Grant and Barton Lee Mallory Families

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>62</sup>Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., Interview by author, Memphis, Tennessee, 21 October 1985.



CAPT. W. B. MALLORY.

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



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

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

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

---

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

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

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

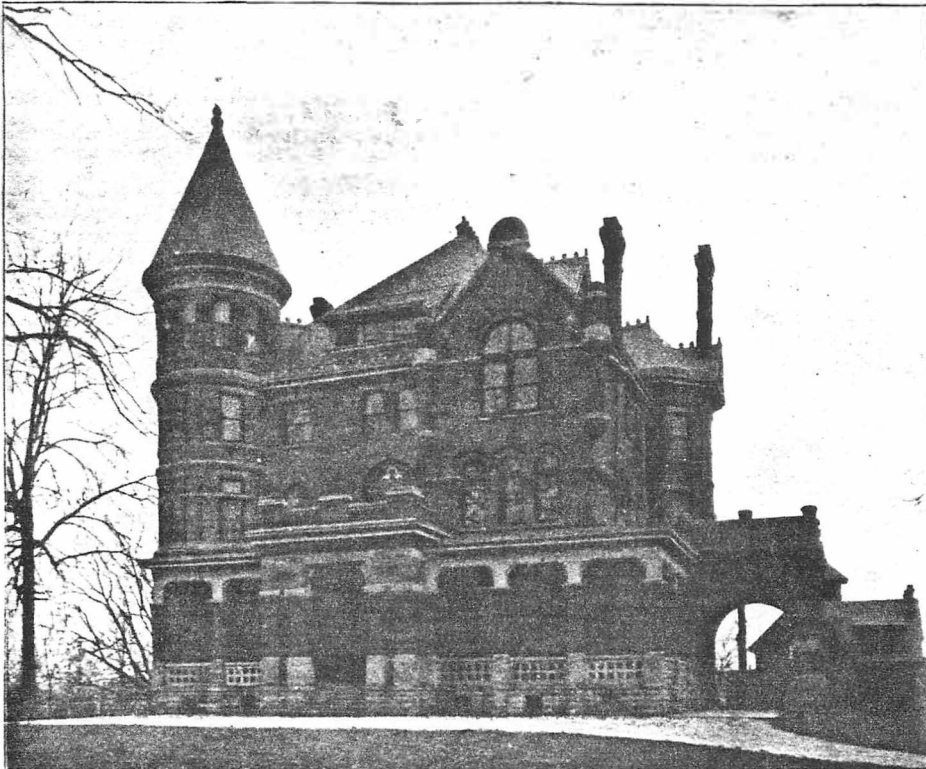


Figure 16. Mallery House. This now demolished mansion built by Captain William Mallery was one of the grandest homes constructed by the gilded-era merchant princes of Memphis. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

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

**MALLORY, CRAWFORD & Co.**

**WHOLESALE**

**Grocers, Cotton Factors**

**AND COMMISSION MERCHANTS,**

**254 Front Street, MEMPHIS, TENN.**

A



B

- Figure 17. Mallory related artifacts. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.
- A. Mallory, Crawford & Company city directory advertisement.
  - B. Photograph of the interior of the Mallory Company cotton and grocery provision warehouse at the turn-of-the-century.

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

The marriage of Barton Lee Mallory and Daisy Neely was one of the many made between members of the elite "ruling" families of the city which helped to consolidate and perpetuate their power and influence.<sup>68</sup> (Figure 18) Excepting a short time period the Mallorys lived almost all of their married life in the home of her parents. In this home they raised their three children, William Neely born in 1901, and the twins, Frances ("Franny") and Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., born in 1903.<sup>69</sup> (Figure 19)

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

---

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

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Sigafoos, "Memphis Economic Emergence," n.p.

<sup>69</sup>Mallory Family Papers, n.p.

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



B. L. MALLORY.

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



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

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

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

---

<sup>71</sup>Mallory Family Papers, n.p.

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

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>"Barton Lee Mallory, Whose Initiative Helped Make Memphis," 1.

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

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>75</sup>Mallory Family Papers, n.p.

<sup>76</sup>"Editorial," Memphis Press Scimitar, 5 May 1938, 5.

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



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

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

---

<sup>78</sup>Hackett to Mallory.

## CHAPTER V

### MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: ARCHITECTURAL EVOLUTION

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

#### Architectural Background

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

---

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

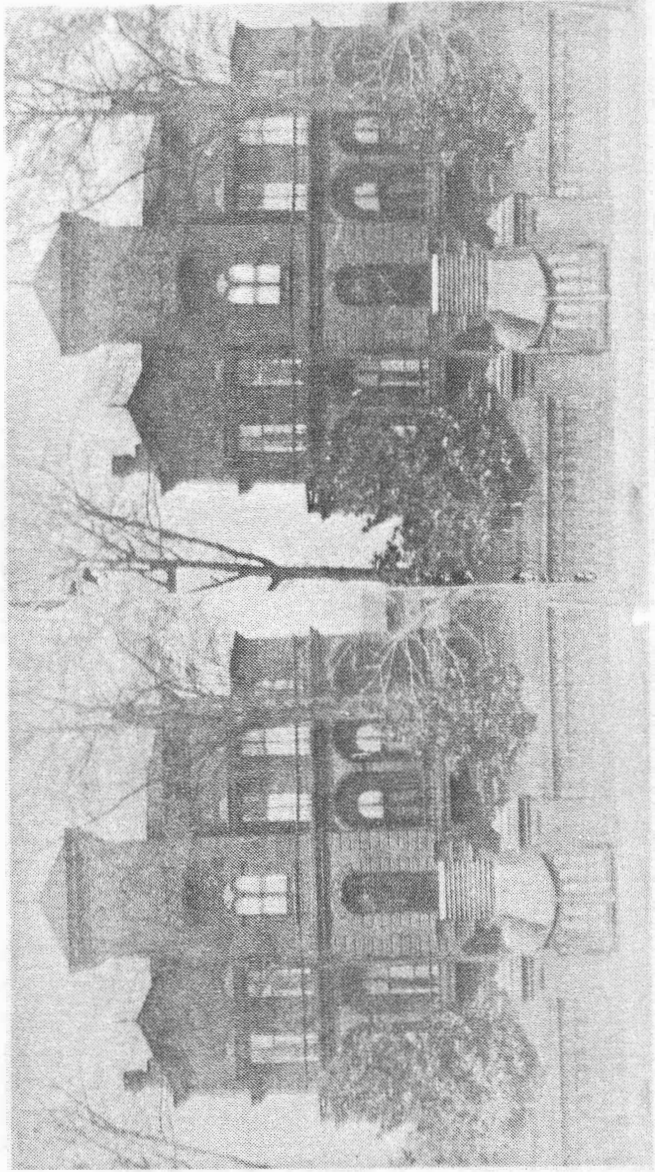
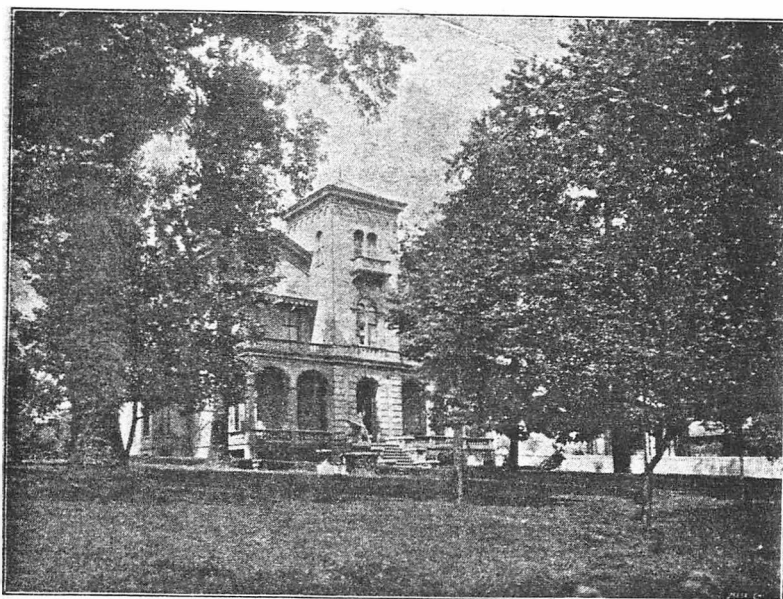


Figure 20. Stereoptican view of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852). The photograph was taken prior to the post-1890 alterations by J. C. Neely. Courtesy Barton Lee Mallory, Jr.



RESIDENCE OF J. C. NEELY.

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



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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>6</sup>Jordan, 42-57.



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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

<sup>9</sup>Pierson, 5.

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

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

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

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

### Italianate Style--Theoretical Meaning and Stylistic Features

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

---

<sup>10</sup>McAlester and McAlester, 211.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 212.

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

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

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

---

<sup>13</sup>McAlester and McAlester, 212-213.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 211.

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>16</sup>Maass, The Victorian Home in America, 62.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

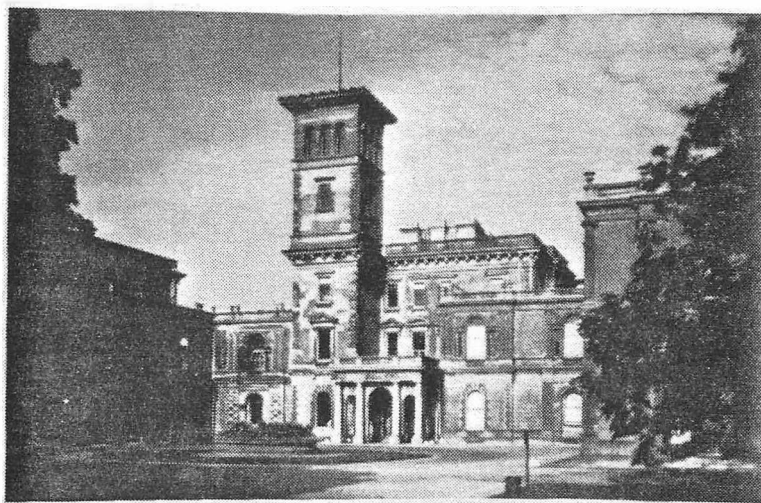


Figure 23. Osborne House (1845), Queen Victoria's stylistically influential Italianate style villa on the Isle of Wight, England.

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

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

---

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

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

<sup>24</sup>Loudon, 963.



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

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

---

<sup>25</sup>Lynes, 21.

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

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>28</sup>Tatum, "Andrew Jackson Downing."

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

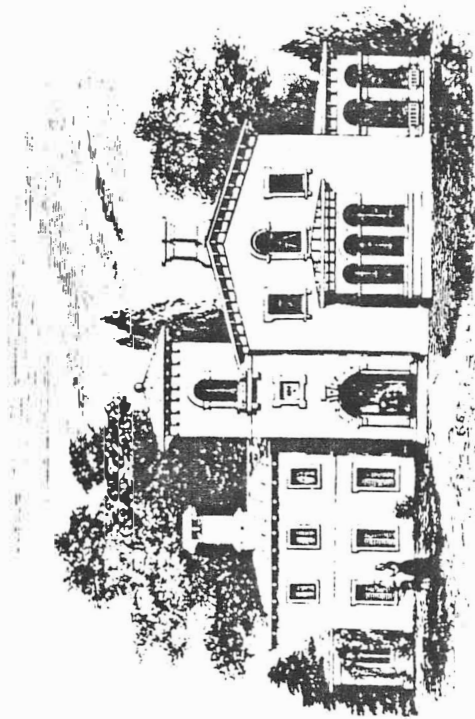
<sup>32</sup>Pierson, 352.

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

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 184.

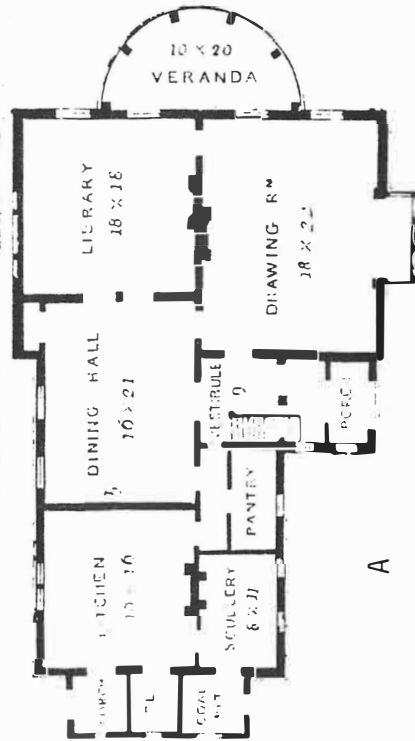
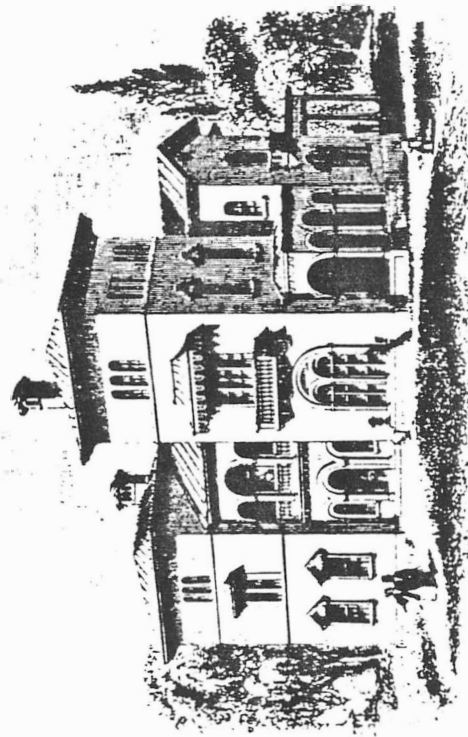
DESIGN XXII

VILLA IN THE ITALIAN STYLE



DESIGN XXVIII

VILLA IN THE ITALIAN STYLE

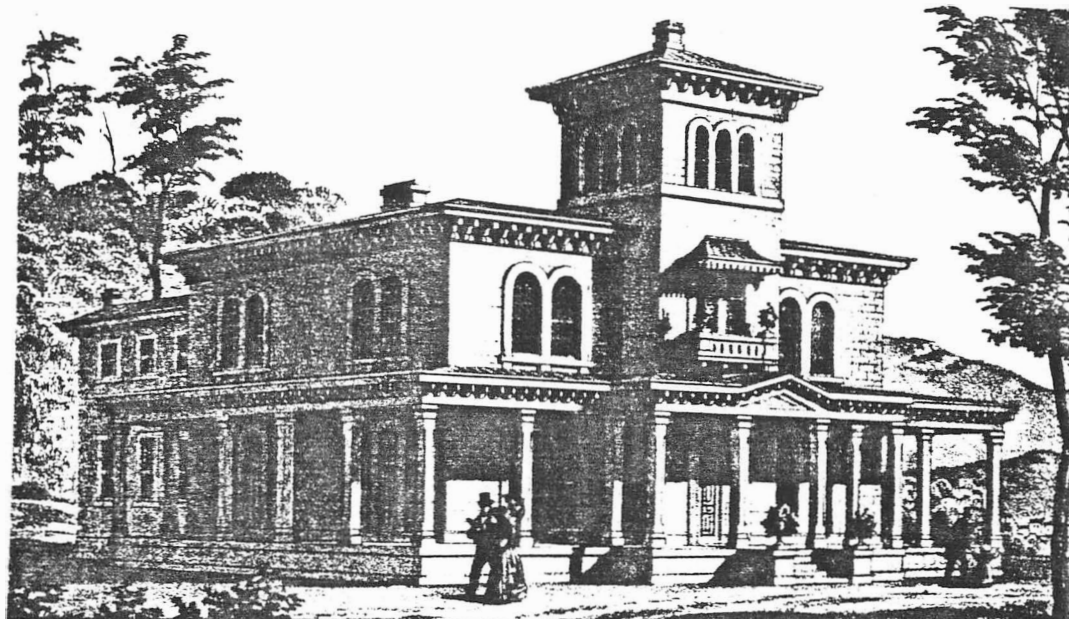


B

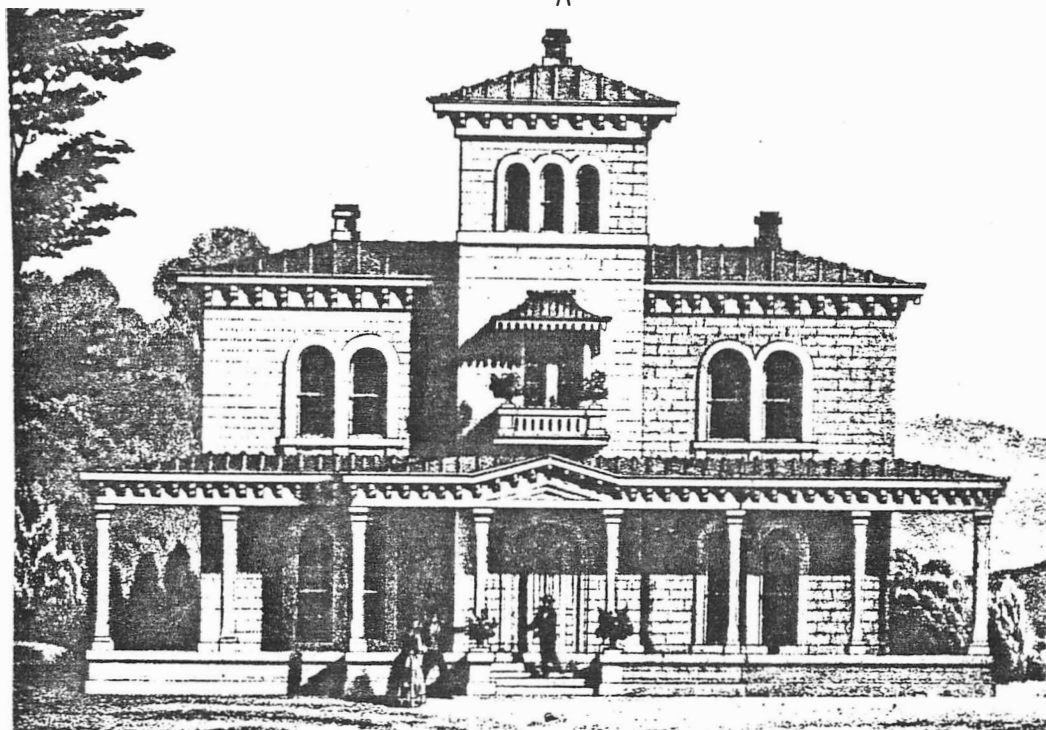
Figure 24. Characteristic Italianate elevations and plan from Andrew Jackson Downing Cottage Residences (1850). Courtesy Dover Publications, Inc.

A. Plate Twenty-Two.

B. Plate Twenty-Eight.



A



B

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>36</sup>Jordan, 55.

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

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

---

<sup>38</sup>Hussey, 218.

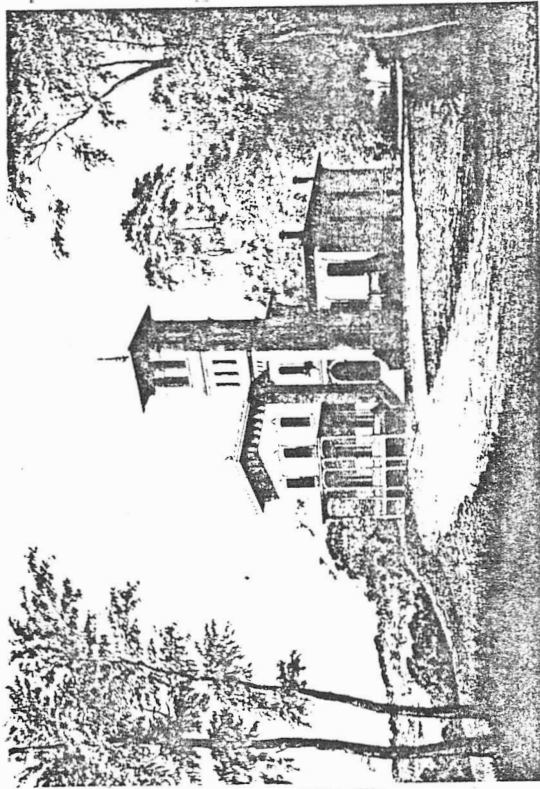
<sup>39</sup>Andrew Jackson Downing, Cottage Residences (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Publishers, 1868), 18, Special Collections, Athenaeum, Philadelphia, 18.

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

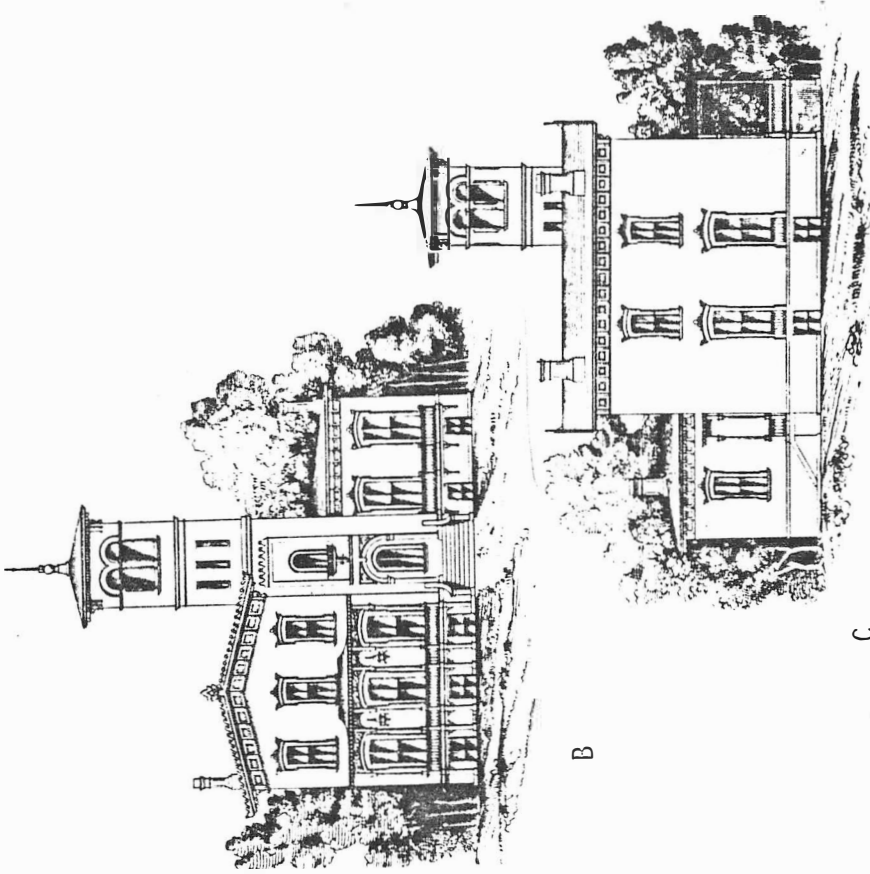
<sup>41</sup>Pierson, 332.

<sup>42</sup>Downing, Cottage Residences, 18.





A



B

C

Figure 26. Views of a "painterly" Italianate villa from Samuel Sloan, The Model Architect (1852).  
Courtesy Special Collections, Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.  
A. The villa in its landscape setting.  
B. Front elevation.  
C. Side elevation.

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

---

<sup>43</sup>Early, 64.

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

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

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 37-39.

Associative meaning.

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

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

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

---

<sup>47</sup>Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 24.

<sup>48</sup>Early, 30 and 35.

<sup>49</sup>Maass, The Victorian Home in America, 3.

<sup>50</sup>Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 260.

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>51</sup>Andrews, 98.

<sup>52</sup>Sloan, 13.

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

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

---

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

<sup>54</sup>See Stein, John Ruskin and Aesthetic Thought in America.

<sup>55</sup>Tatum, Foreword to The Architecture of Country Houses, xiv.

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>57</sup>Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 15.

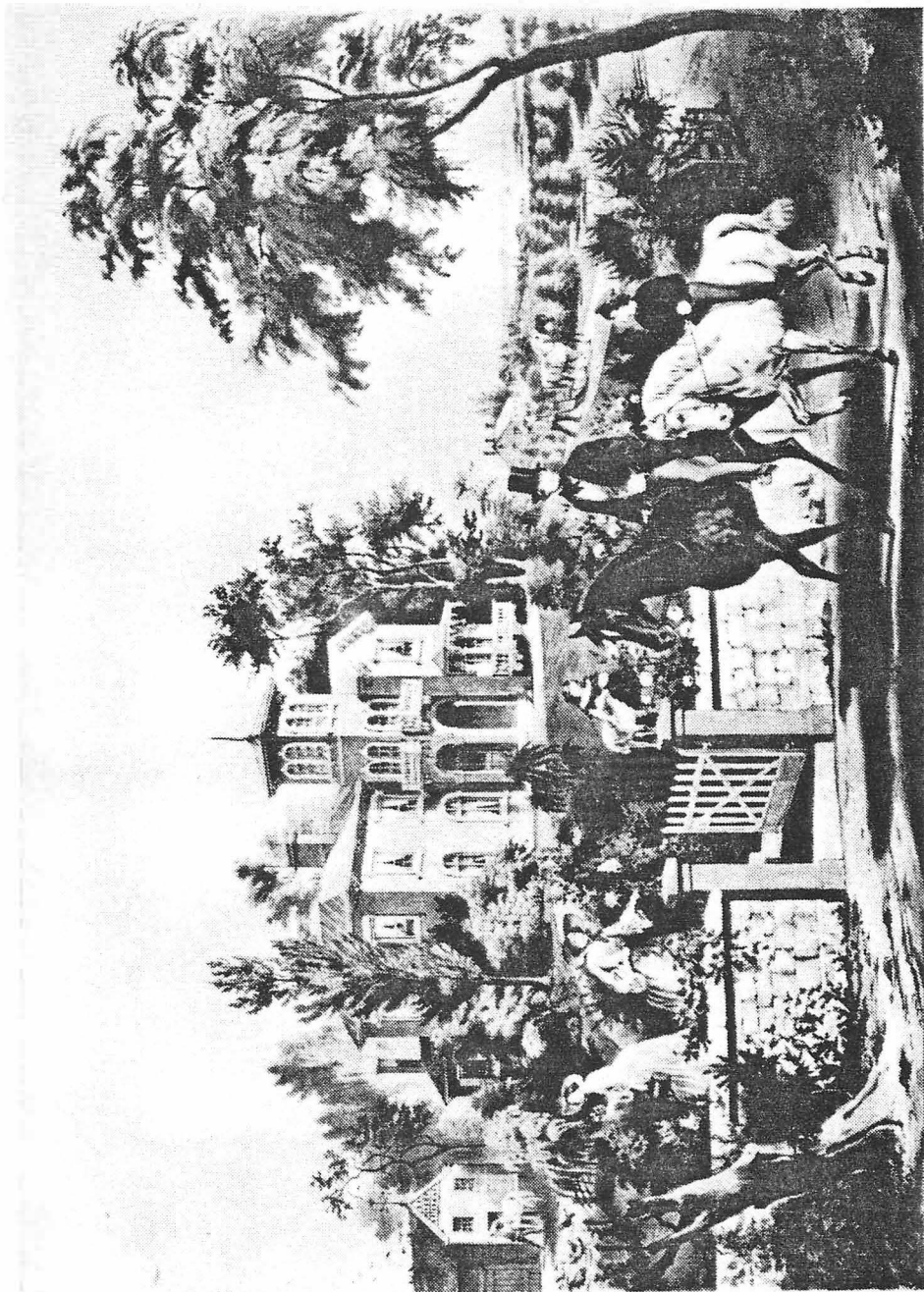


Figure 27. "American Country Life--May Morning." Lithograph by Currier and Ives showing a suburban retreat, the American ideal during much of the nineteenth century. An Italianate style home serves as a focal point of the print. Courtesy Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum.

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

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

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

---

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 259.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 10.

<sup>60</sup>Downing, Cottage Residences, 12.

<sup>61</sup>Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 24-27.



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

### Italianate in the Mid-South

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

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

---

<sup>62</sup>Early, 41.

<sup>63</sup>Upton, 149.

<sup>64</sup>Patrick, 141.

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

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

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

---

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

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

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*

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

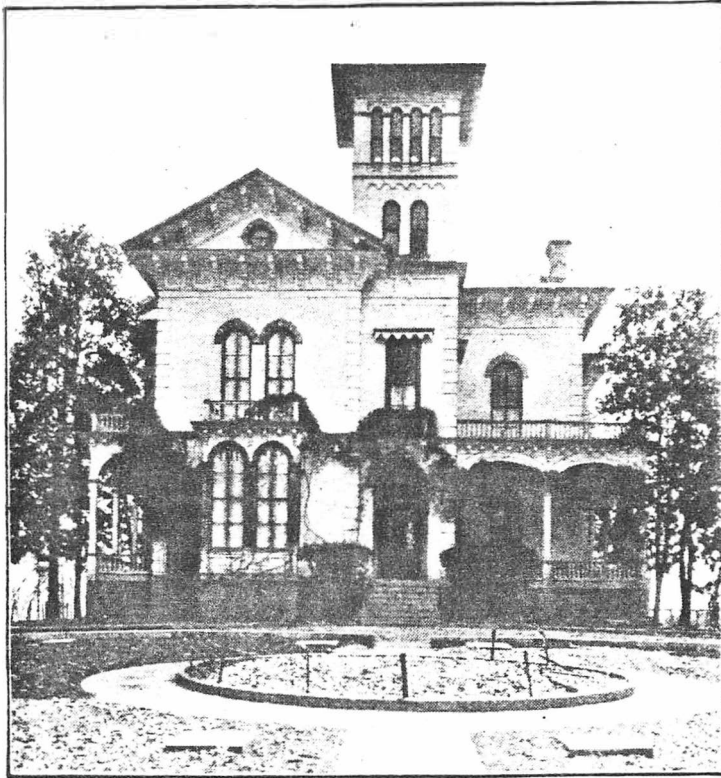
---

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

<sup>70</sup>Magness, 91.

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

<sup>72</sup>Patrick, 165.



R. B. SNOWDEN.

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

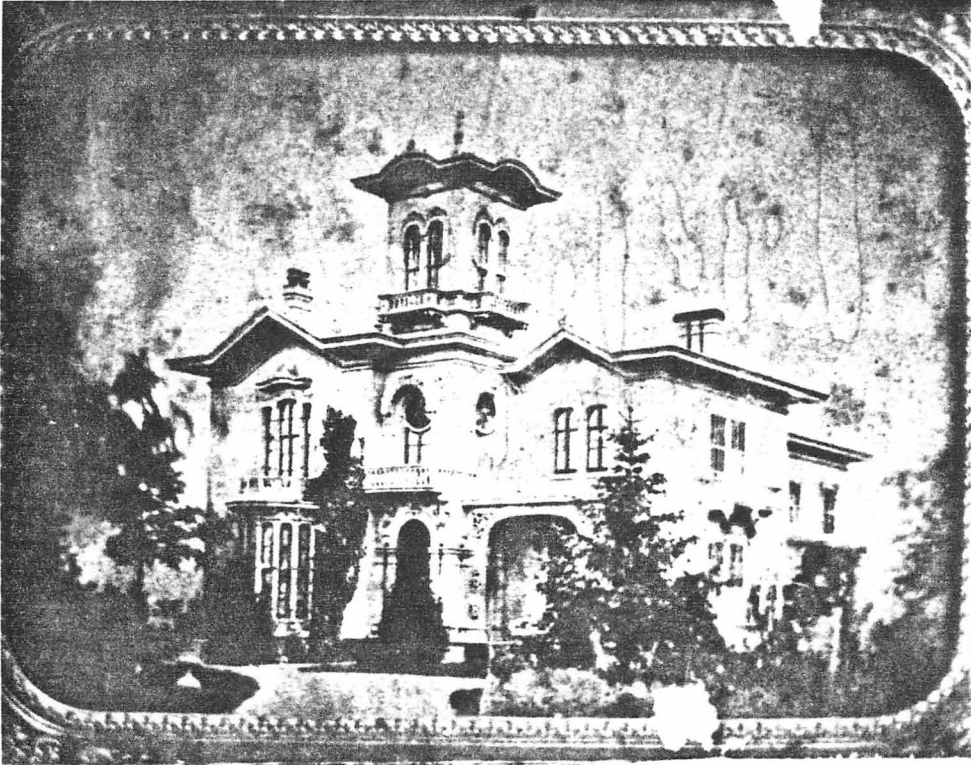


Figure 29. Photograph of an unidentified and no longer standing Memphis suburban villa in the Italianate style. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 151-152.

<sup>75</sup>Lockwood, 145.

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>78</sup>Patrick, 41.

<sup>79</sup>Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 3 May 1852, 2.

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

### Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852)

#### Architectural Services

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

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

---

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

<sup>81</sup>See Patrick, Chapter III, 31-40.



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

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

---

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 35-37.

<sup>83</sup>"Titus Block-1850," 3.

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

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

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

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

---

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

Plastering, Painting, and everything in my line will receive prompt attention.<sup>86</sup>

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

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

W. L. Vance  
J. M. Hill  
Amos Woodruff  
Henry A. Montgomery  
Hugh M. Neely<sup>87</sup>

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

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

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

---

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

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

<sup>88</sup>"Personals," Memphis Daily Appeal, 8 March 1885, 7.

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

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

Out-of-town and itinerant architects.

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

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

Cincinnati Architects Anderson and Hannaford . . . communications from a distance will receive prompt attention.<sup>91</sup>

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

---

<sup>89</sup>Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts Folder.

<sup>90</sup>Patrick, 129.

<sup>91</sup>Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 21 January 1860, 17.

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

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

---

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

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

<sup>94</sup>Memphis Daily Appeal, 4 July 1884, 11.

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

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

#### Pattern Book Sources

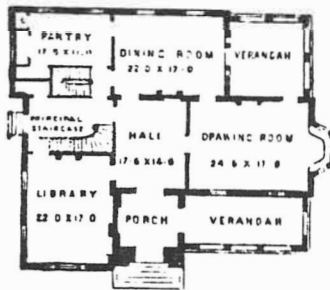
One questions whether the owner, professional architect or contractor responsible for designing and building the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) used a particular plan for the house taken from one of the popular architectural pattern books. Despite extensive research, no exact elevation or plan has been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

---

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

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

## DESIGN No. 19.—(D. &amp; V.)



PLAN OF PRINCIPAL FLOOR



PLAN OF PRINCIPAL FLOOR



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

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

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

### Italianate Features

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

---

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

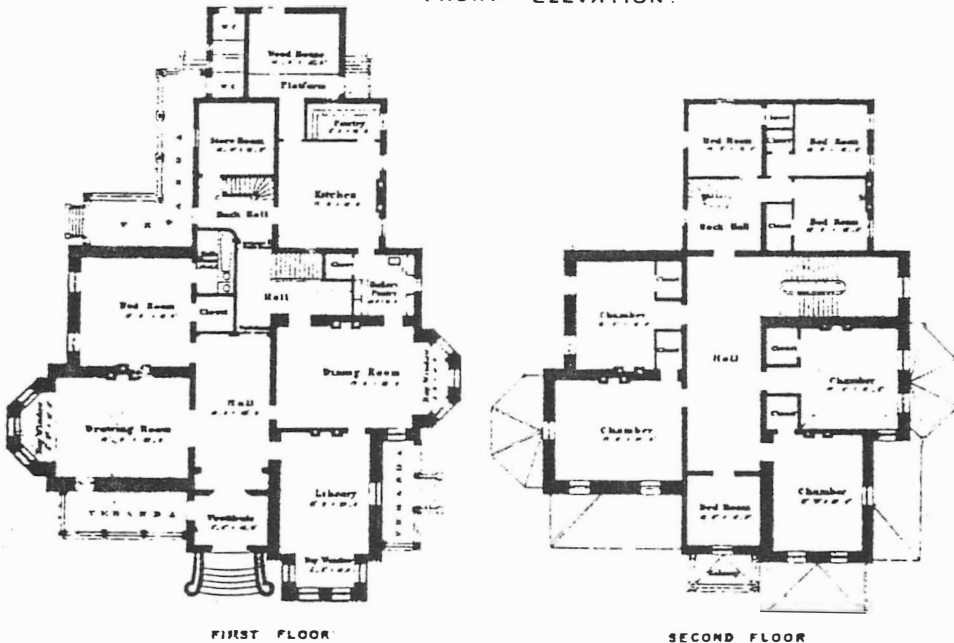
<sup>98</sup>Upton, 136.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 149.





FRONT ELEVATION.



FIRST FLOOR

SECOND FLOOR

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

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

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

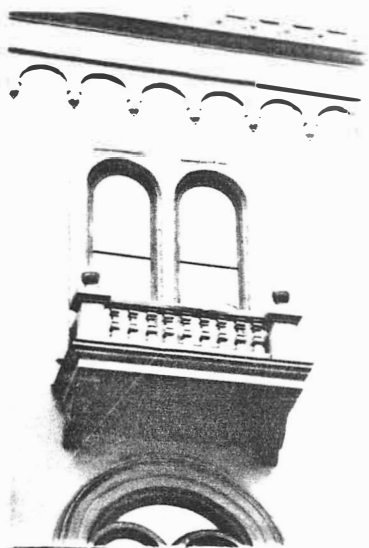
---

<sup>100</sup>Jordan, 112.

<sup>101</sup>Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 37.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 37.

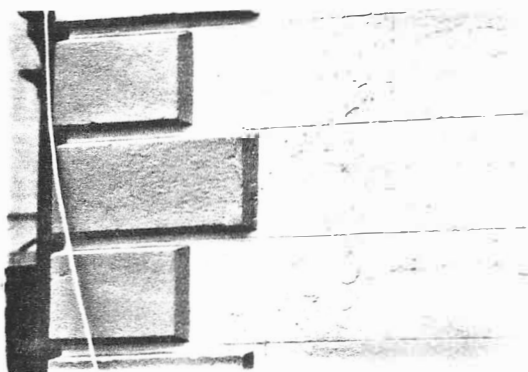
<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 63.



A



B



C

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

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>105</sup>Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 199.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., 201.

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

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

### Regional Characteristics

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

---

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 202.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 310.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 116.

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

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

---

<sup>111</sup>Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 7.

<sup>112</sup>Early, 98.

<sup>113</sup>Sloan, 114.

<sup>114</sup>Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 21.

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 313.

<sup>116</sup>Sloan, 81.

<sup>117</sup>Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 396.

<sup>118</sup>Wheeler, Rural Homes, 138.

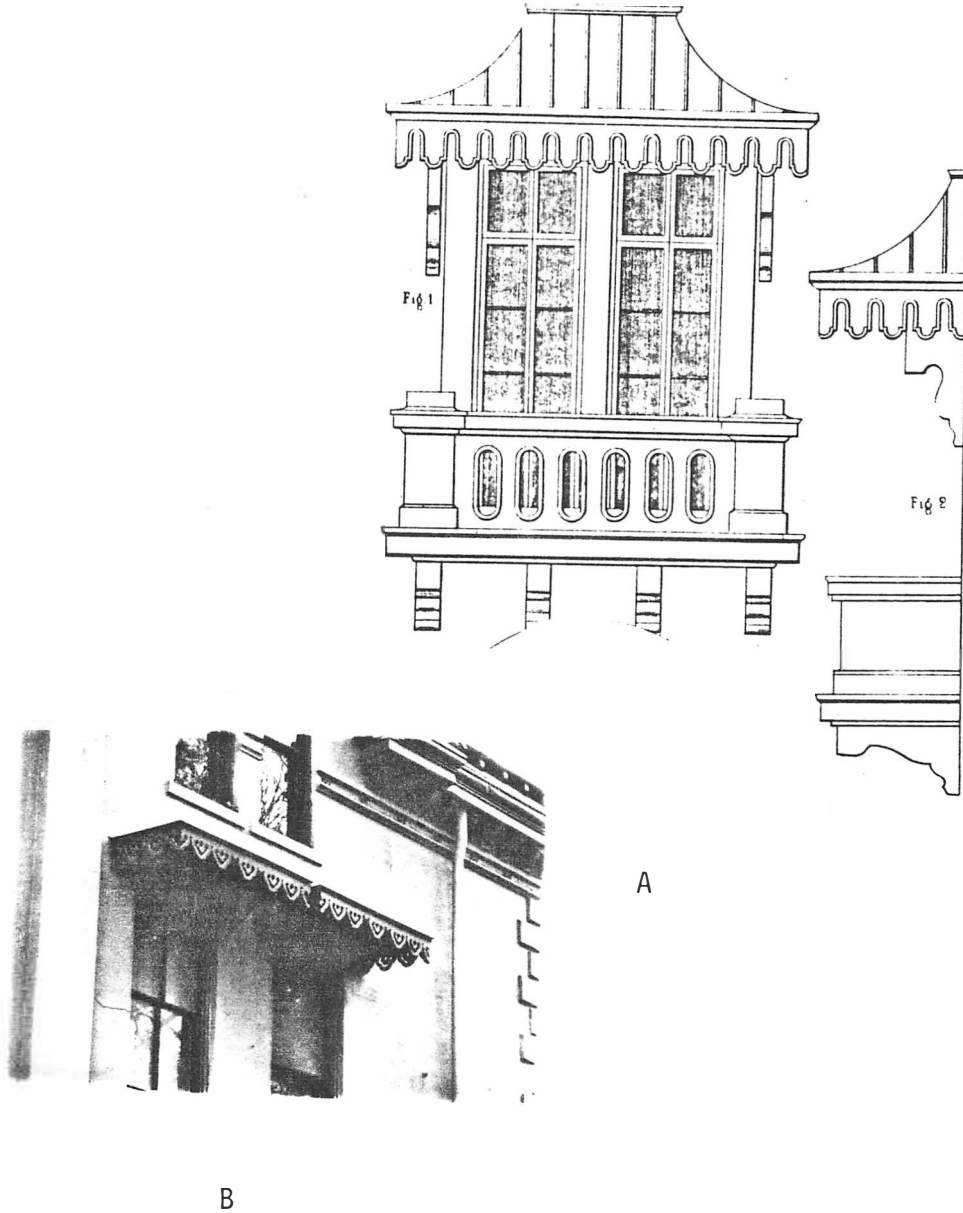


Figure 33. Italianate window awnings.  
 A. Front and profile drawings of a window canopy for an Italianate dwelling from Samuel Sloan, The Model Architect (1852). Special Collections, Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.  
 B. Detail of the two window canopies (c. 1852) still in place on the Mallory-Neely House.



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

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

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

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

---

<sup>119</sup>Wheeler, Homes for the People, 119.

<sup>120</sup>Sloan, 55.

<sup>121</sup>Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 373.

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

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

#### Technological Modernization and Building Materials

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

---

<sup>122</sup>Sloan, 123.

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

<sup>124</sup>Wheeler, Homes for the People, 133.

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

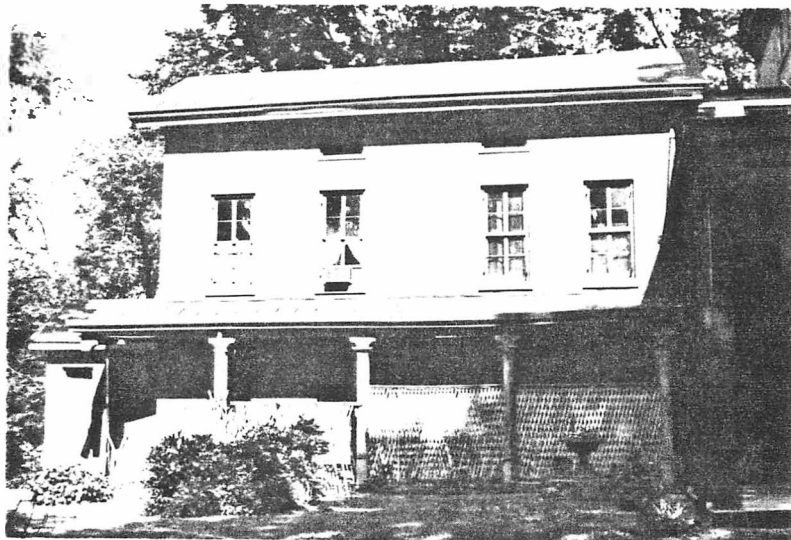


Figure 34. Service-kitchen wing of the Mallory-Neely House. This building, containing three floors, six rooms, and a privy, was originally detached and connected only to the main house by a porch and covered walkways.

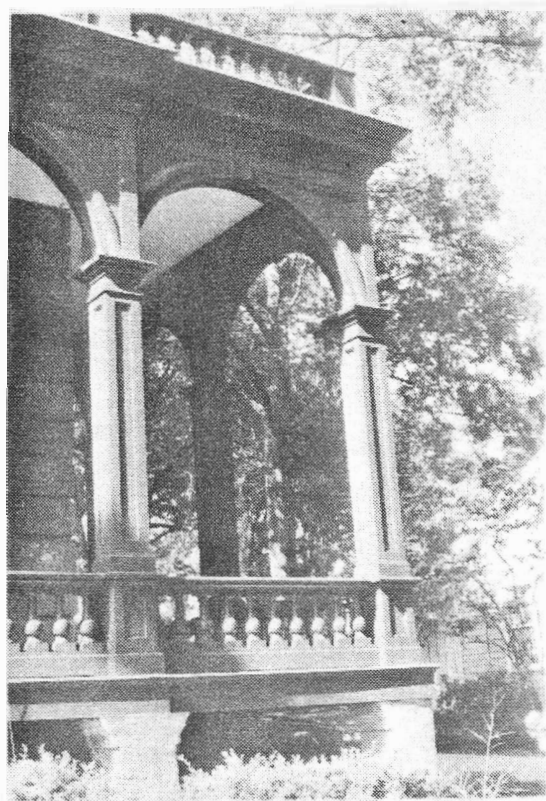
are illustrative of early technological advances and inventions in the milling industry such as steam powered lathes and a variety of specialized saws. It is likely that the Mallory-Neely millwork was ordered prefabricated from manufacturing distribution centers like Cincinnati and sent by river packet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

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

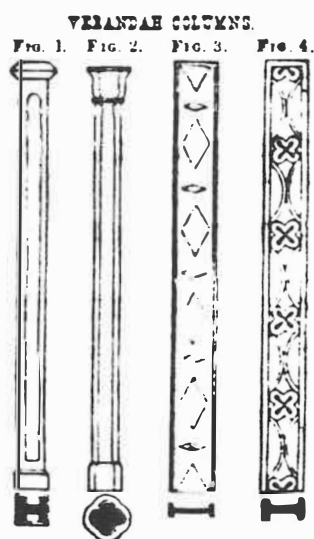
In presenting our book of plans, moldings, etc. to the public, we call attention . . . to the plans of a few of the private residences which we have furnished to different localities in different sections of the country . . . and show that our manufactured work is used in private residences of the first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

---

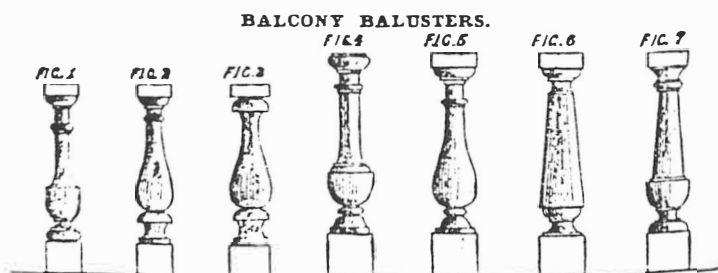
<sup>126</sup>Hinkle, Guild & Co. Plans of Buildings, Moldings, Architraves, Bases, Brackets, Newels, Balusters, Rails, etc., Cincinnati, 1869, n.p. [trade catalog]; Special Collections, Cincinnati Historical Society, Cincinnati, Ohio.



A

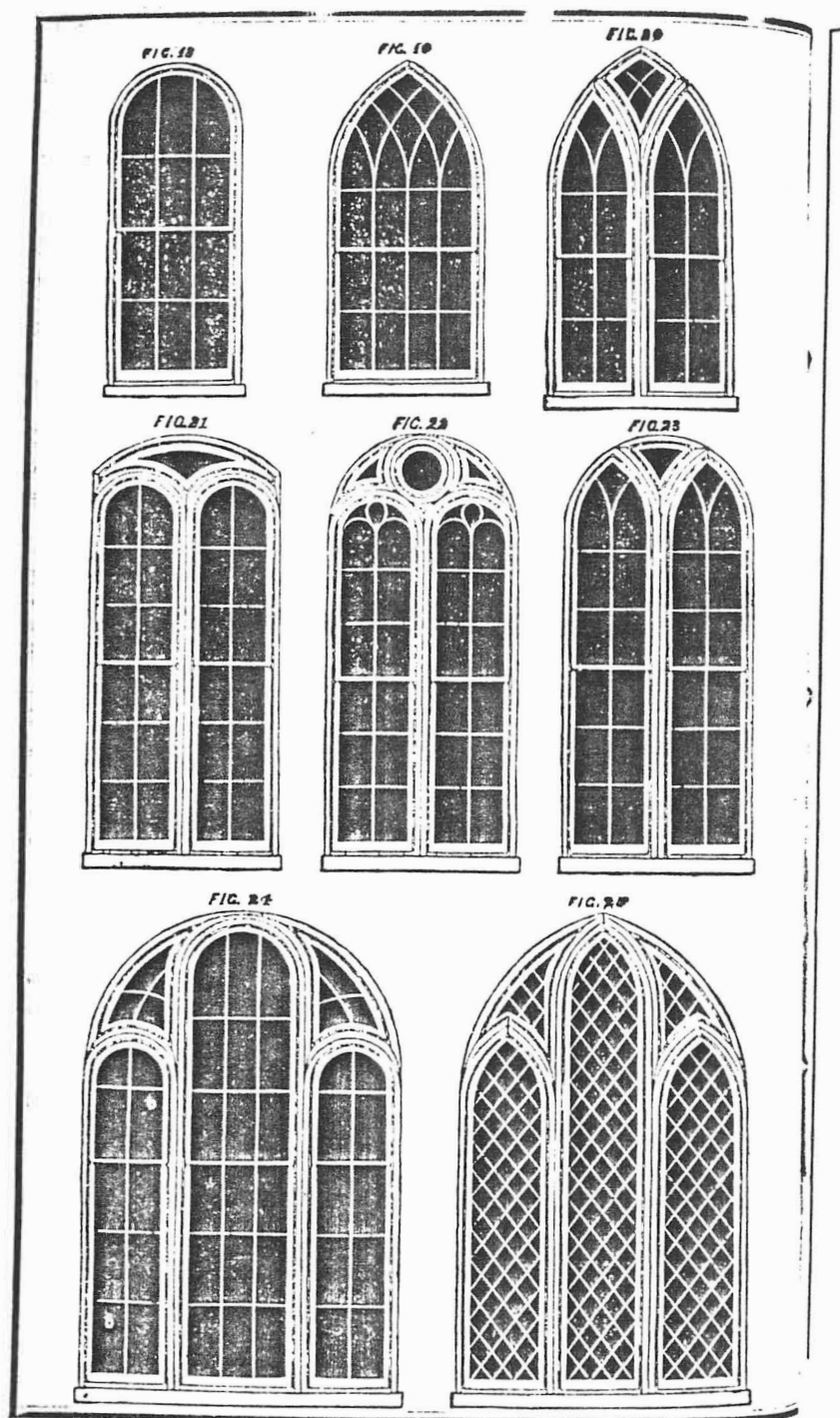


B



C

- Figure 35. Pre-fabricated millwork.
- A. Detail of a c. 1852 section of the Mallory-Neely House showing some of the original wooden millwork including turned balusters, square paneled columns supporting arches, and cornice moldings.
  - B. Detail from the 1869 catalog of Hinkle, Guild & Company showing mail-order verandah columns.
  - C. Detail from the 1869 catalog of Hinkle, Guild & Company showing mail-order balusters. Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society.



B

A

Figure 36. Prefabricated windows.

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

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

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

---

<sup>127</sup>Robertson Topp Papers, Box 10, Accounts Folder; and Box 8, Folder 4.

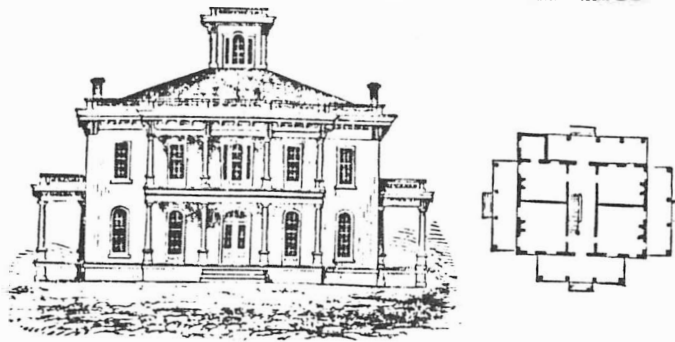


FIG. 6. 26-foot Front, 61-foot Deep.  
 RESIDENCE OF ABNER KINNISON, FRANKLIN CO., MISS.  
 ROBERT TRATT, Architect, Fayette, Miss. JOHN MANIFOLD, Builder, Fayette, Miss.



FIG. 7. 22-foot Front, 48-foot Deep.  
 COUNTRY RESIDENCE OF P. HEIDELBACK, CLIFTON, OHIO.  
 WALTERS & WILSON, Architects, Cincinnati, Ohio.  
 JAMES HINDLEY, Superintendent and Builder.



FIG. 8. 34-foot Front, 60-foot Deep.  
 RESIDENCE OF MRS. EGGLESTON, LEXINGTON, MISS.  
 A. DOYLE, Architect, Lexington, Miss.



FIG. 9. 27-foot Front, 29-foot Deep.  
 RESIDENCE OF W. C. CHAMBERLAIN, NATCHEZ, MISS.  
 J. EDWARD SMITH, Architect, Natchez, Miss.

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

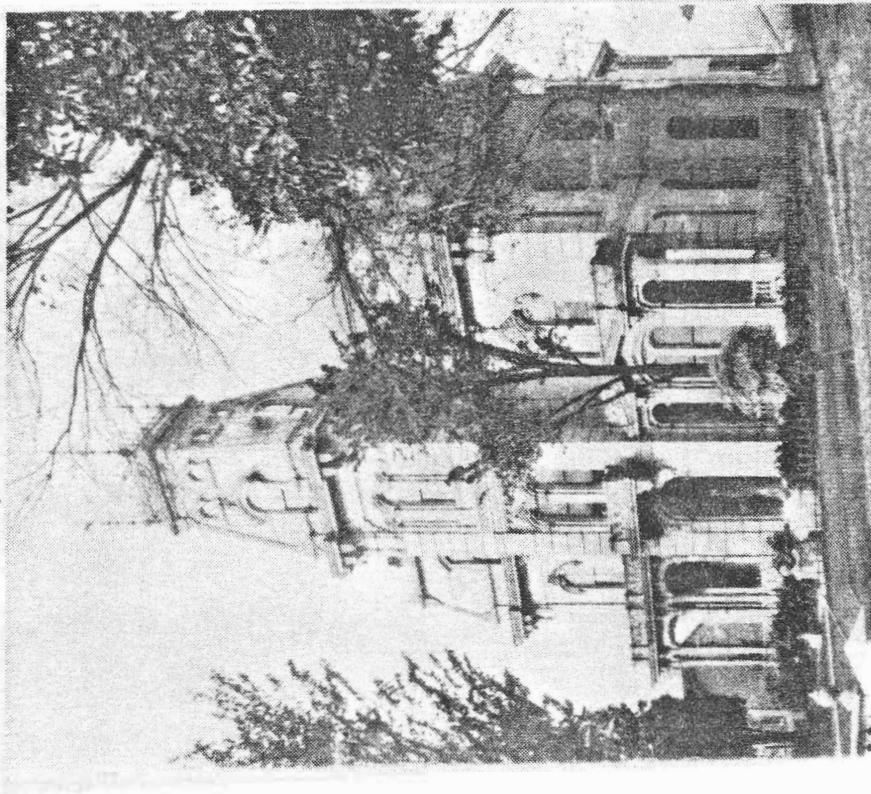


### Mallory-Neely House (c. 1890)

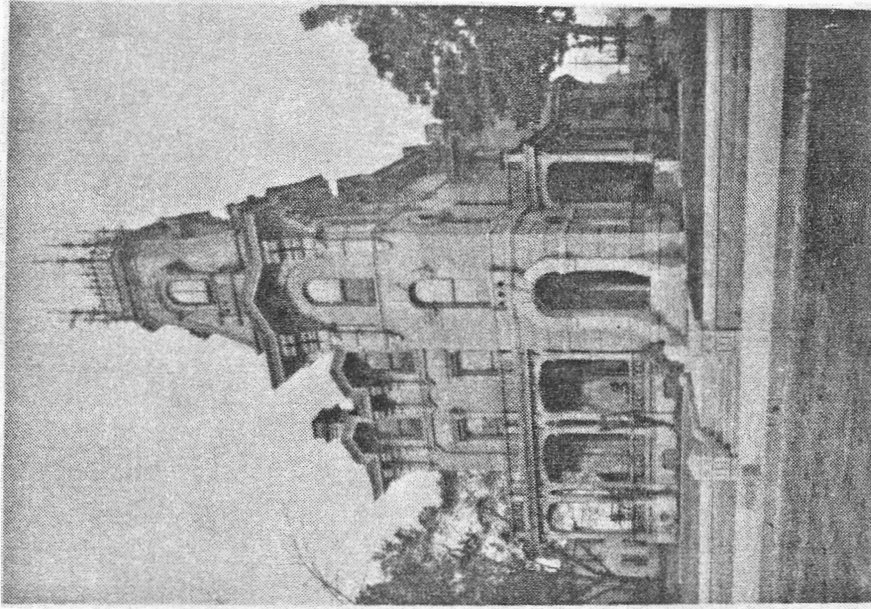
After his purchase of the house in 1883, James Columbus Neely began architectural alterations to the former Kirtland-Babb home which had survived thirty-three years in its original form through changing ownership, war, pestilence, and economic upheaval. The Neely home would undergo a stylistic metamorphosis,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

### Stylistic Updating (c. 1890)

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



A



B

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

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>129</sup>Magness, 66.

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

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

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

---

<sup>131</sup>Sloan, 48.



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

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

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

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

---

<sup>132</sup>Massey, n.p.

<sup>133</sup>Sloan, 48.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid.

<sup>135</sup>McAlester and McAlester, 302.

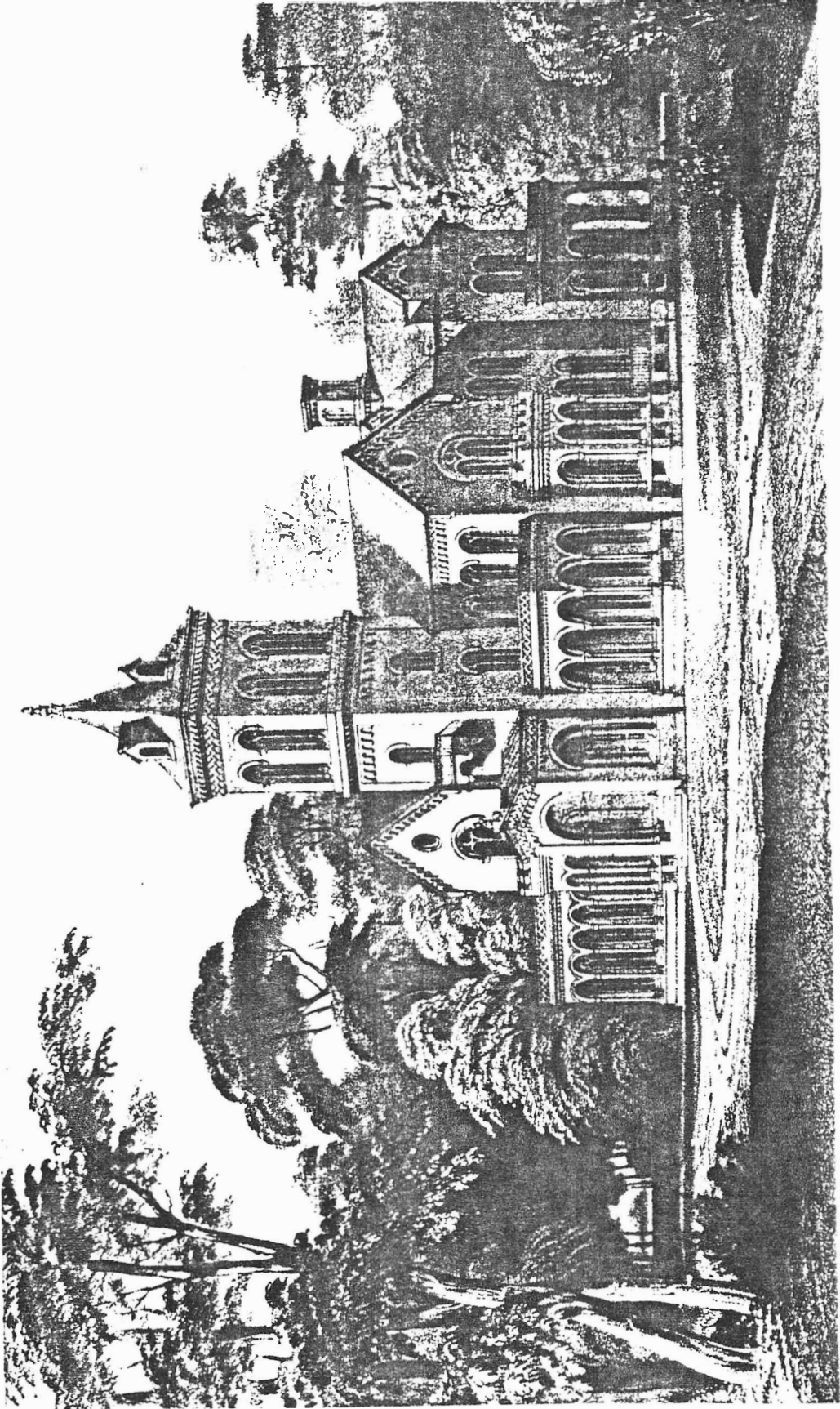


Figure 40. Villa in the Norman style from Samuel Sloan, The Model Architect (1852).  
Courtesy Special Collections, Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

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

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

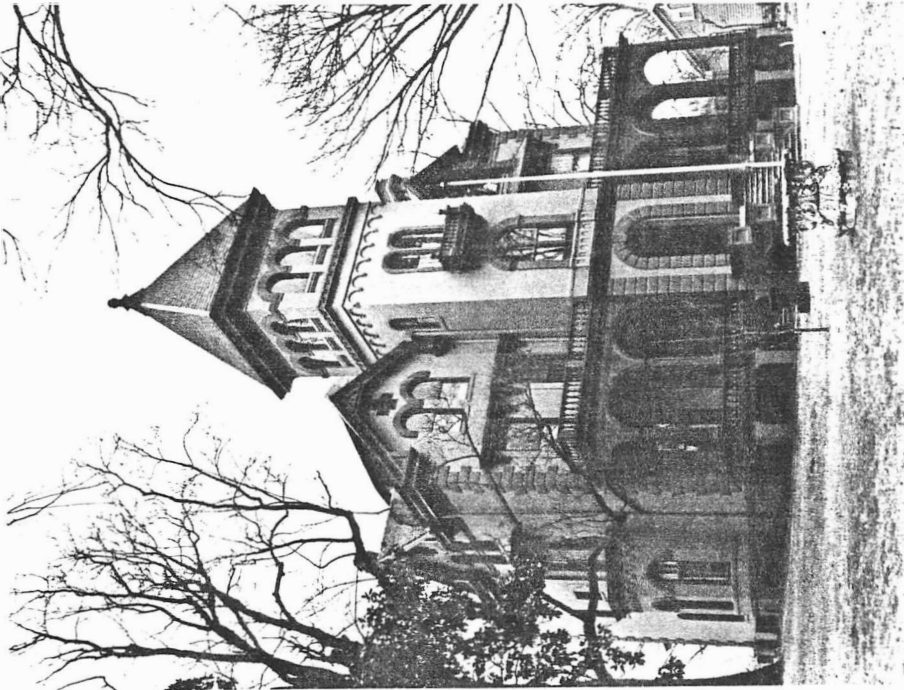
Visual analysis of J. C. Neely's architectural additions and study of contemporary architectural trends reveal that the remodeled home cannot be solely described as Norman. By the 1880s there was even less stylistic purity than there had been before! Homes built during this time were stylistically eclectic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

---

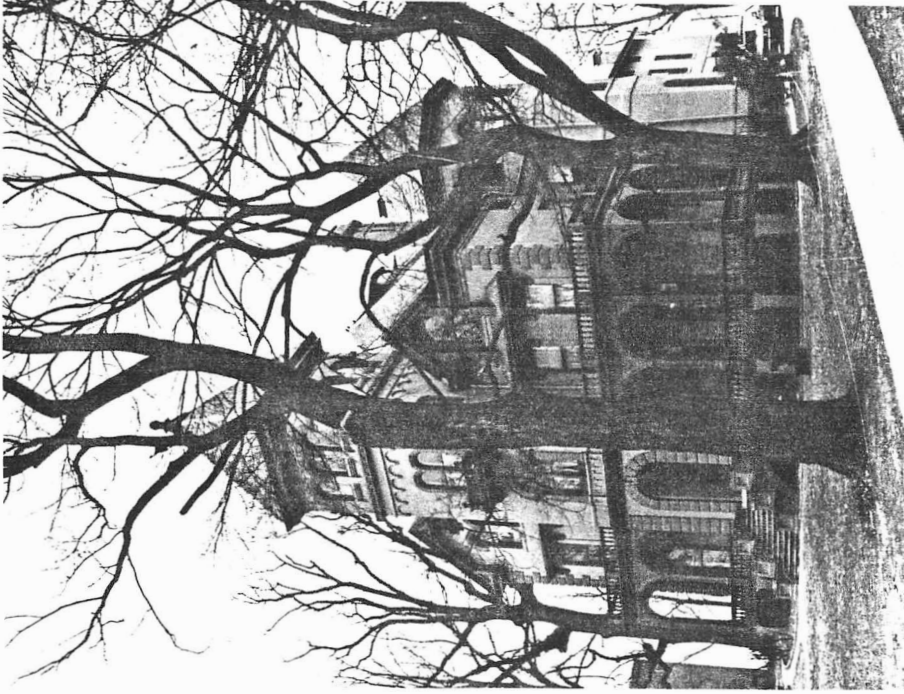
<sup>136</sup>Priddy, 142-145.

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





A



B

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

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

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

---

<sup>138</sup>Massey.

<sup>139</sup>See James Early, Romanticism and American Architecture.

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., and Maass, Victorian Architecture in America, 140.

<sup>145</sup>Girourd, 28-29.

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>146</sup>McAlester and McAlester, 373-375; and Rifkind, 64-65.

<sup>147</sup>McAlester and McAlester, 373.

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

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

#### Influences of Architectural Literature and Building Technology

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

---

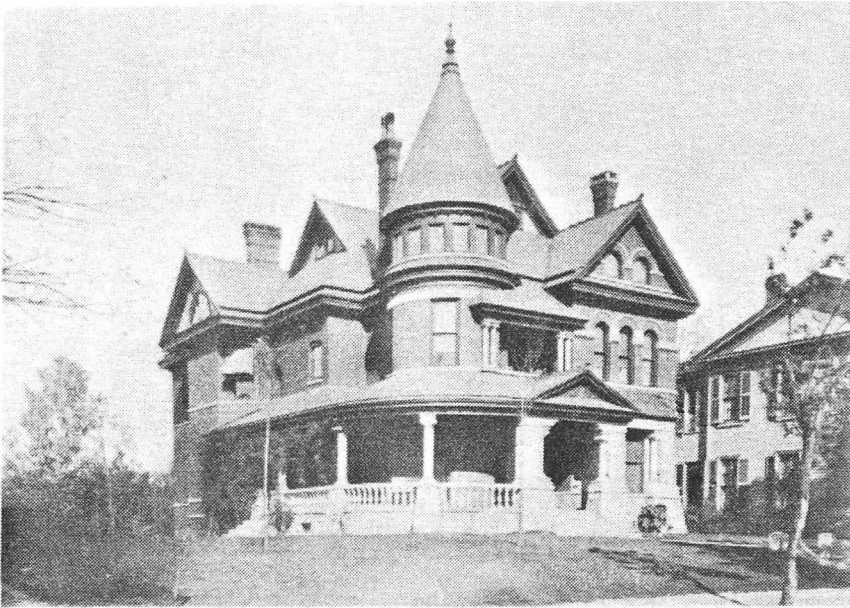
<sup>148</sup>Art Works of Memphis (Chicago: Gravure Illustration Company, 1900); Art Works of Nashville (Chicago: W. H. Parish Publishing Co., 1894); Art Works of Louisville (Chicago: Charles Madison Company, 1897); Art Works of St. Louis (Chicago: W. H. Parish Publishing Co., 1895).

<sup>149</sup>Girourd, 25.



RESIDENCE OF H. C. WARINNER.

A

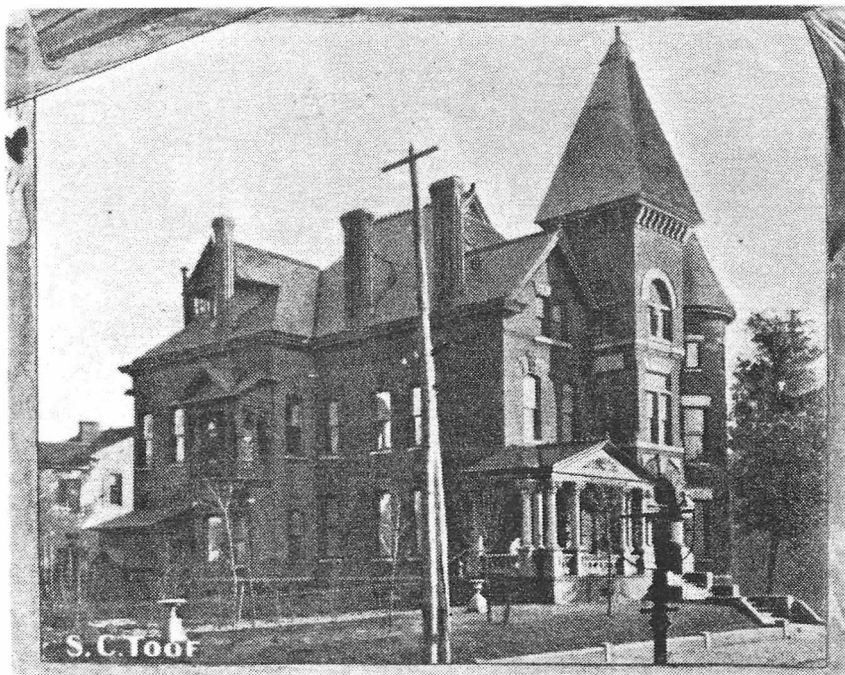


RESIDENCE OF HENRY WETTER.

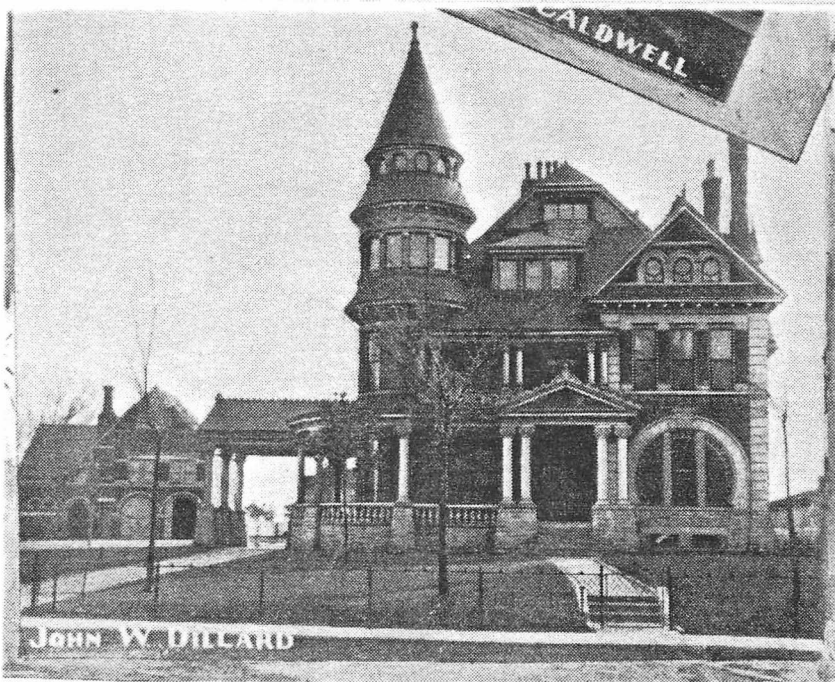
B

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

- A. Residence of H. C. Warinner.
- B. Residence of Henry Wetter.



A



B

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

A. Toof residence.

B. Dillard residence.

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

In contrast to the prefabricated wooden embellishments used on the Mallory-Neely House in 1852 are such elements as the bracket cornices, entire dormer surrounds, hooded gable cornices, the ornamental ridge cresting and tower ornaments used in Neely's post-1890 addition. All of these are made from galvanized sheet metal either pre-molded, pressed, or sheathed over wooden forms. (Figure 44) Reflective of increasing industrial mass production and distribution at this time are these prefabricated galvanized metal architectural "parts," especially the pressed metal forms imitating wooden ones which were produced in vast quantities using new technological processes. Catalogs surviving in archival collections attest to the widespread use and large variety of prefabricated architectural metal that was available. The 1882 catalog of a Salem, Ohio firm, Bakewell and Mullins Architectural Sheet Metal Ornaments and Statuary, promoted a large variety of products in sheet zinc, brass, or copper; they stated that their stamping and spinning department produced brackets, consoles, a large selection of capitals, as well as pressed zinc finials and crestings for rooftops and towers.<sup>151</sup> The Mesker

---

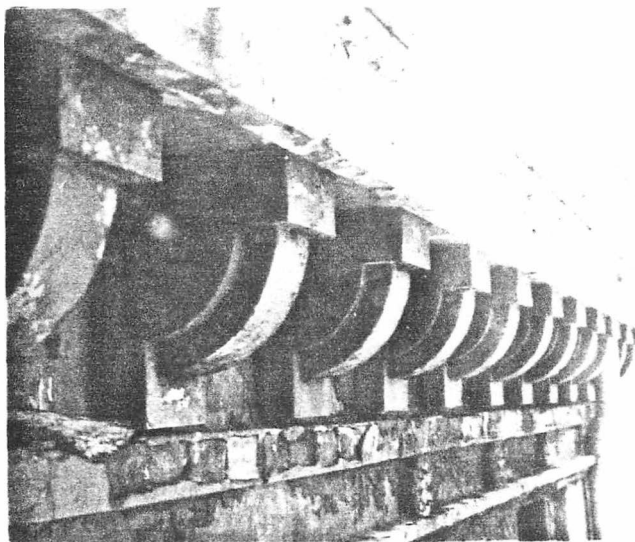
<sup>150</sup>Schmidt, 25.

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





A



B

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>153</sup>Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisement], 1 July 1883, p. 7.

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

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

<sup>156</sup>Henry Montgomery Papers, Box 9, Folder 10.

showing that other prefabricated metal parts were sent by train.

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

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

---

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

<sup>158</sup>*Ibid.*, 310-312.

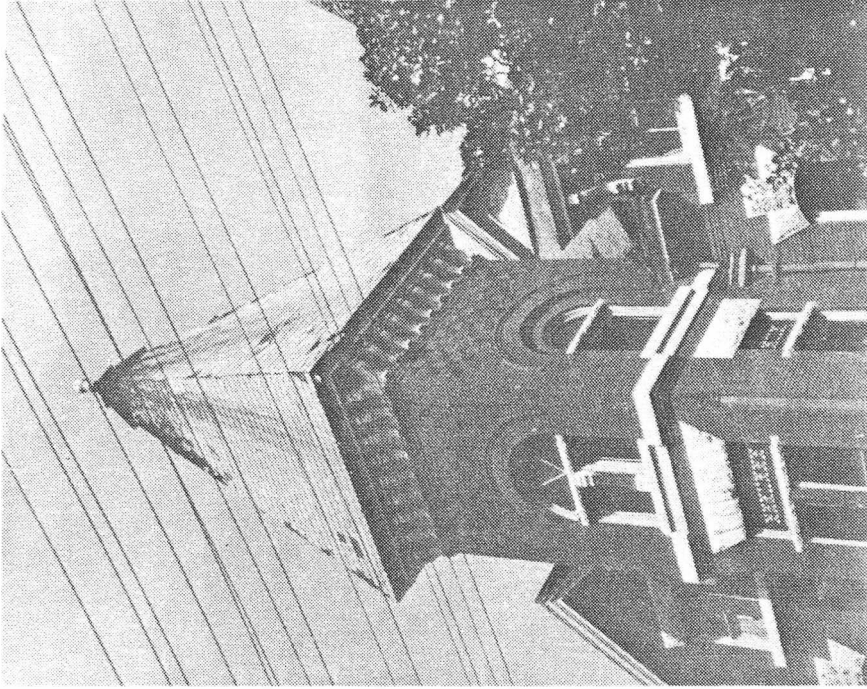
issues included house plans, elevations, numerous articles about architecture, the latest technological developments, interior decor, and advertisements of new products associated with the foregoing.<sup>159</sup> In addition, William T. Comstock's Modern Architecture Designs and Details Containing Eight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

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

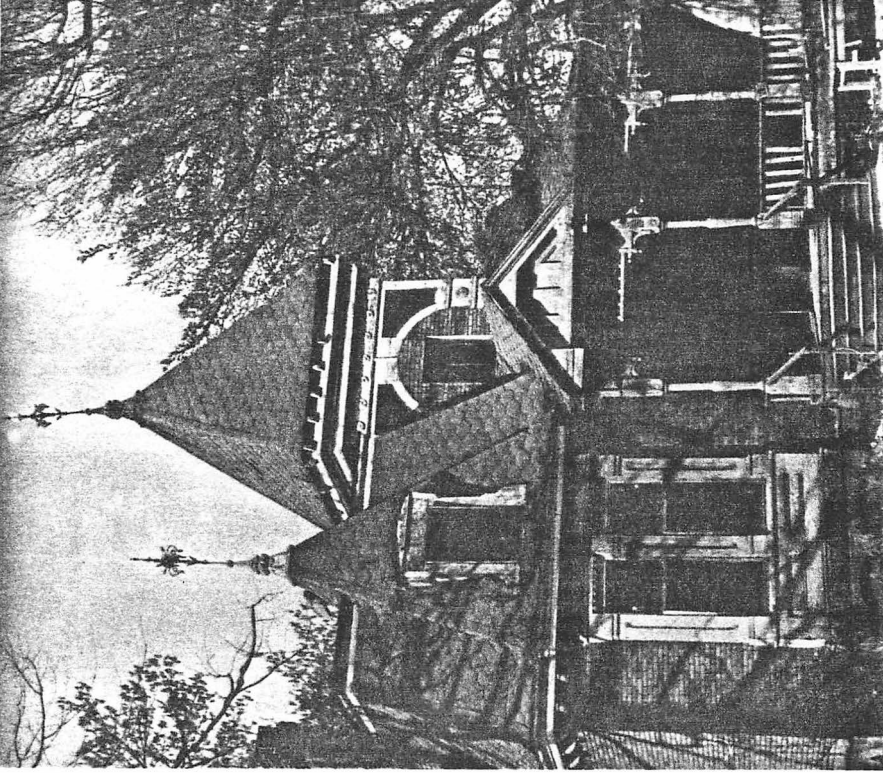
---

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

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



A



B

Figure 45. Houses with similar architectural features. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.  
 A. Detail of the Toof House (destroyed) on Lauderdale Street.  
 B. House on Pontotoc Street in Memphis.



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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

<sup>166</sup>Henry Montgomery Papers, Letter Copy Book, Box I.

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

<sup>168</sup>Moss, "The Colorful Victorians."



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

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

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

---

<sup>169</sup>Upton, 107-150.

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

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

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

Despite problems, architectural practice had become far more sophisticated in Memphis by the 1880s. There were several firms of note including that of James Cook and the partnership of E. C. Jones and Mathias Baldwin. Cook and Jones and Baldwin were responsible for most important public buildings, churches, and private residences built in Memphis during this time. James Cook came from England where he was an architectural graduate of King and Putney Colleges. Following his responsibilities as supervising architect for the famous Crystal Palace, he moved to Memphis and started practice in 1857.<sup>171</sup>

---

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

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

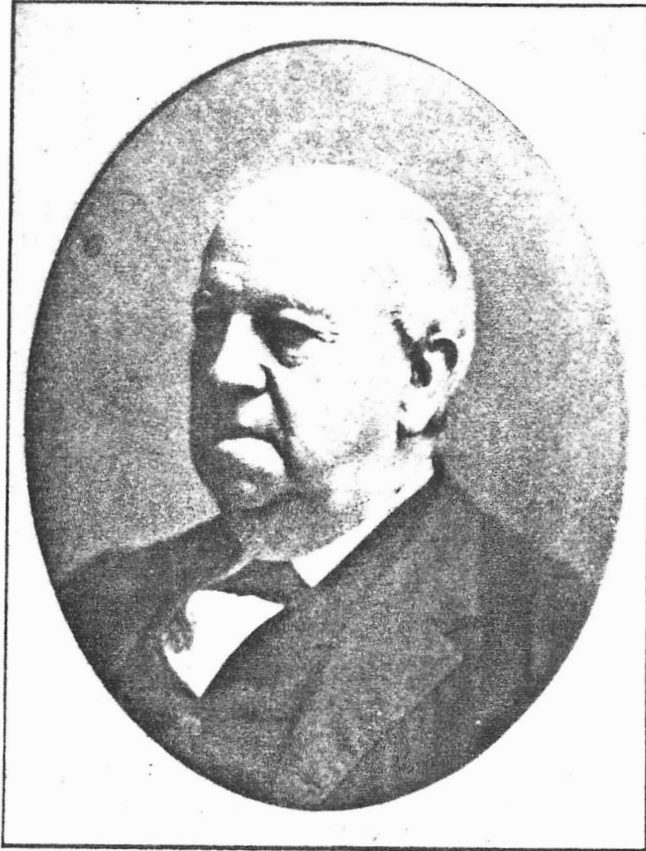
Regional architectural historian Mary Wallace Crocker states without explanation in her essay "Architectural Styles in Victorian Village" that she personally suspects that E. C. Jones was the architect of the Neely additions to the house.<sup>173</sup> Basing this assumption solely on their long association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

---

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

<sup>173</sup>Crocker, "Architectural Styles in Victorian Village," n.p.

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



E. C. JONES.

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

EDW'D C. JONES. M. H. BALDWIN.

JONES & BALDWIN,

**A B C D E F G H I S,**

Planters Insurance Building,  
*Rooms 31 & 33,* MEMPHIS, TENN.

A

EDW'D C. JONES M. H. BALDWIN.

JONES & BALDWIN,

**ARCHITECTS**

*PLANTERS INSURANCE BUILDING.*  
**Rooms 31 & 33, MEMPHIS, TENN.**

B

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

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

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

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

---

<sup>175</sup>Hughes, n.p.

## CHAPTER VI

### MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

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

#### Landscape Architecture

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

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

---

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

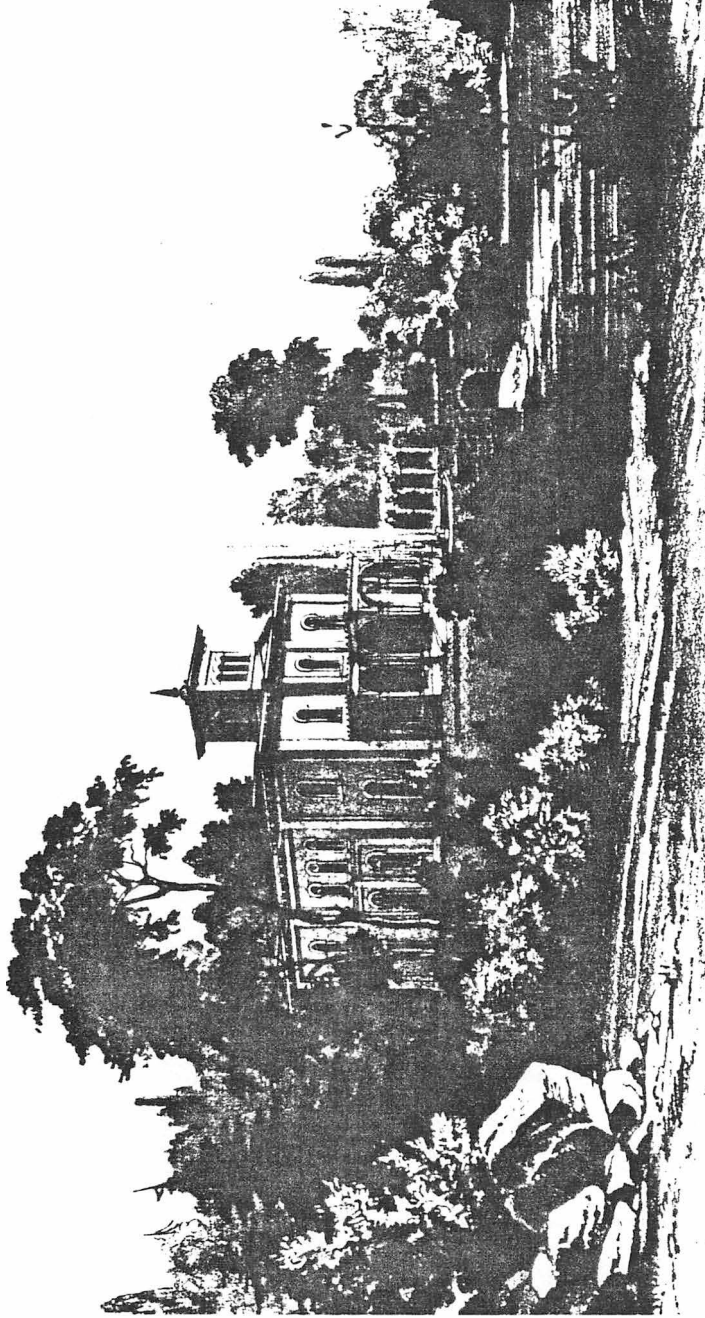


Figure 49. Illustration from Samuel Sloan, The Model Architect (1852) showing an Italianate villa harmoniously situated in its landscape surround. Courtesy Special Collections, Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.



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

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

#### Mallory-Neely Landscape, c. 1852

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

---

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

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>5</sup>Sloan, 91.

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

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

(Figure 50)

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

#### Mallory-Neely Landscape, c. 1890

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

---

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

<sup>8</sup>Glazier, 354.

<sup>9</sup>Warner, 298.

<sup>10</sup>Beale, 135.

FIG. 43.

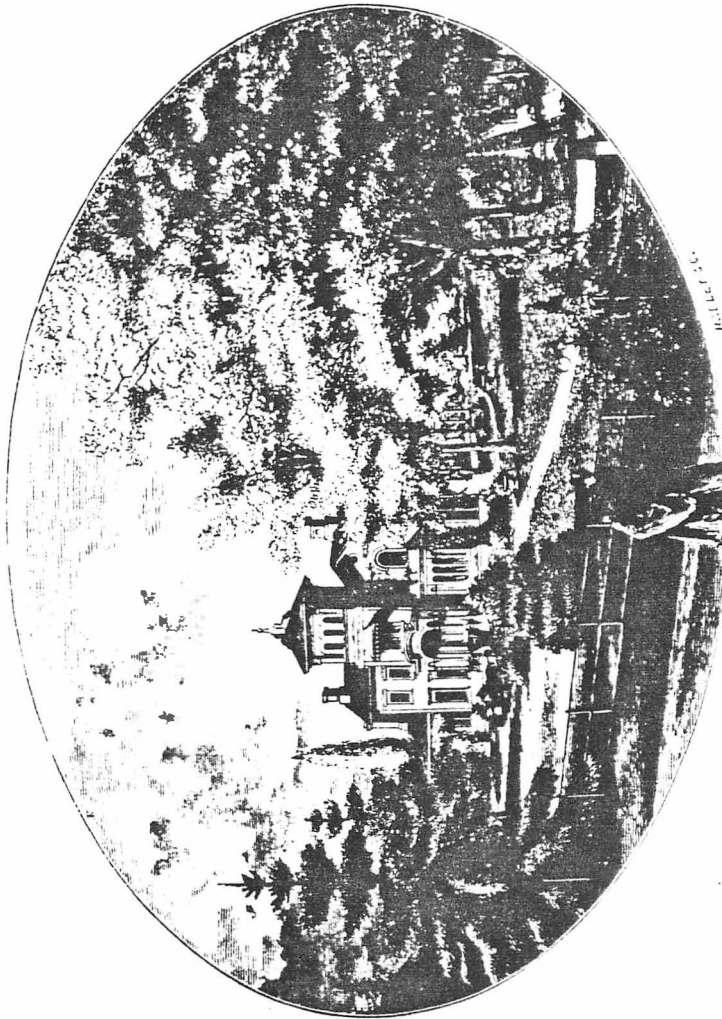


Figure 50. Illustration from Frank Scott, The Art of Beautifying Suburban Grounds (1870) showing an Italianate villa centered in a naturalistic landscape. Courtesy American Life Foundation and Study Institute.

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>12</sup>"Mallory Home," Commercial Appeal, 27 April 1941, 4.

of the fashionable suburban garden of late Victorian America.<sup>13</sup>  
(Figure 51)

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

---

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

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

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.

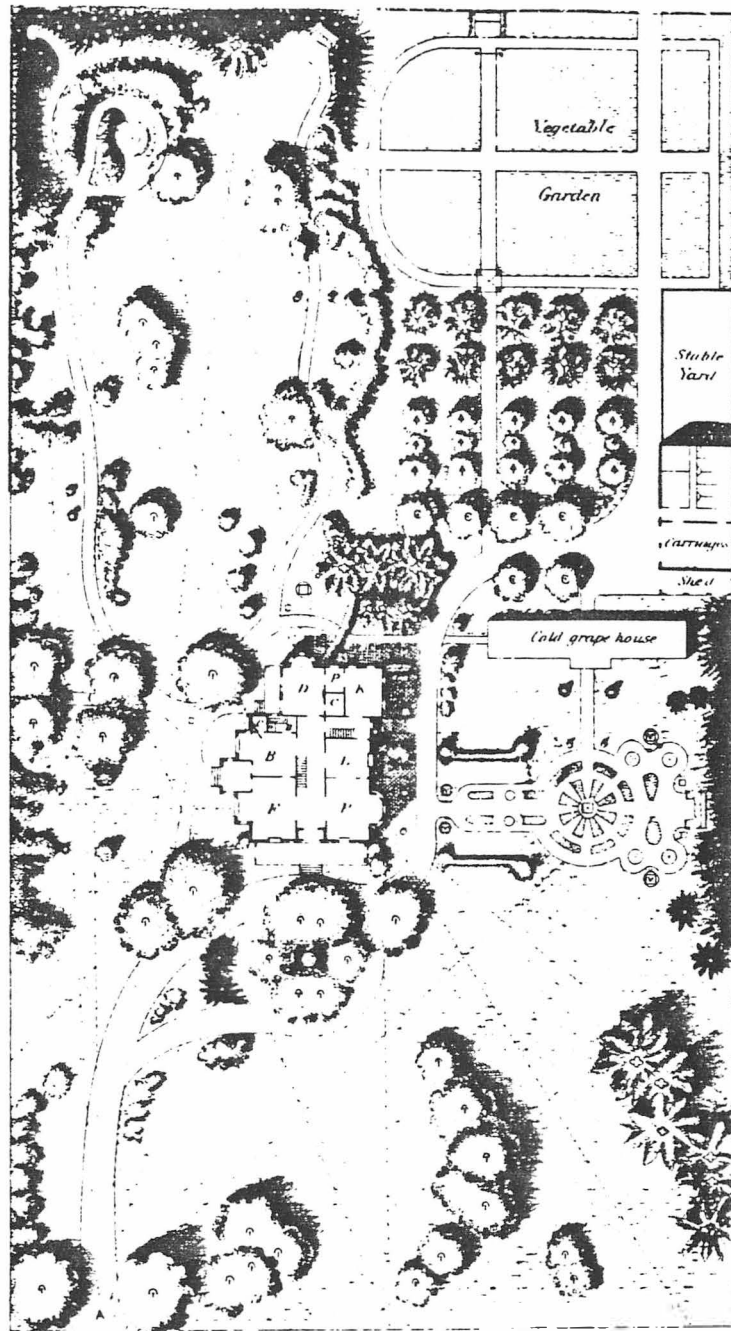


Figure 51. Typical landscape plan from Frank Scott, The Art of Beautifying Suburban Grounds (1870). This plan shows similar features to the Mallory-Neely late-Victorian garden including ornamental area with formal flower beds and utilitarian area with carriage house and stable yard. Courtesy American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

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

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

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

---

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

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 27-47.



philosophically, a whole new approach to the garden. An industrially based society shifted from practical agrarian gardening to suburban oriented, leisure time, and recreational gardening. The growing popularity of gardening by Americans in the nineteenth century has been interpreted as a reaction to ever increasing urbanization. Suburban gardens located near the city, yet partially rural, contained the best of two worlds.<sup>18</sup> To the Victorians gardens became a buffer zone, a haven of repose, health, and a sanctuary especially for the modern businessman. "A velvety lawn and the shadows of common trees provided very elegant refreshment for the businessman's wearied eye."<sup>19</sup> The editor of The American Garden magazine in describing a garden stated, "the whole place is wholesome; a place in which a man may find rest for body and mind, and in which good work may be done."<sup>20</sup>

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

---

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

<sup>19</sup>Scott, 22.

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

<sup>21</sup>Tice, 68.

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

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

Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr. provided both a sketch and oral memories of the grounds of the Mallory-Neely House as they were when he was growing up prior to his mother's embellishments. (Figure 52) These, along with a study of existing features, show that, like the typical late-Victorian gardens, the Neely gardens were both decorative

---

<sup>22</sup>David P. Handlin, The American Home, Architecture and Society 1815-1915 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 188.

<sup>23</sup>Catherine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, American Woman's Home (New York: J. B. Ford & Co., 1869); reprint, Hartford, Connecticut: Stowe-Day Foundation, 1985.

<sup>24</sup>"The Greatest Prosperity," The American Garden 12 (8 August 1891), 451, Special Collections, New York State Historical Society, Cooperstown, New York.

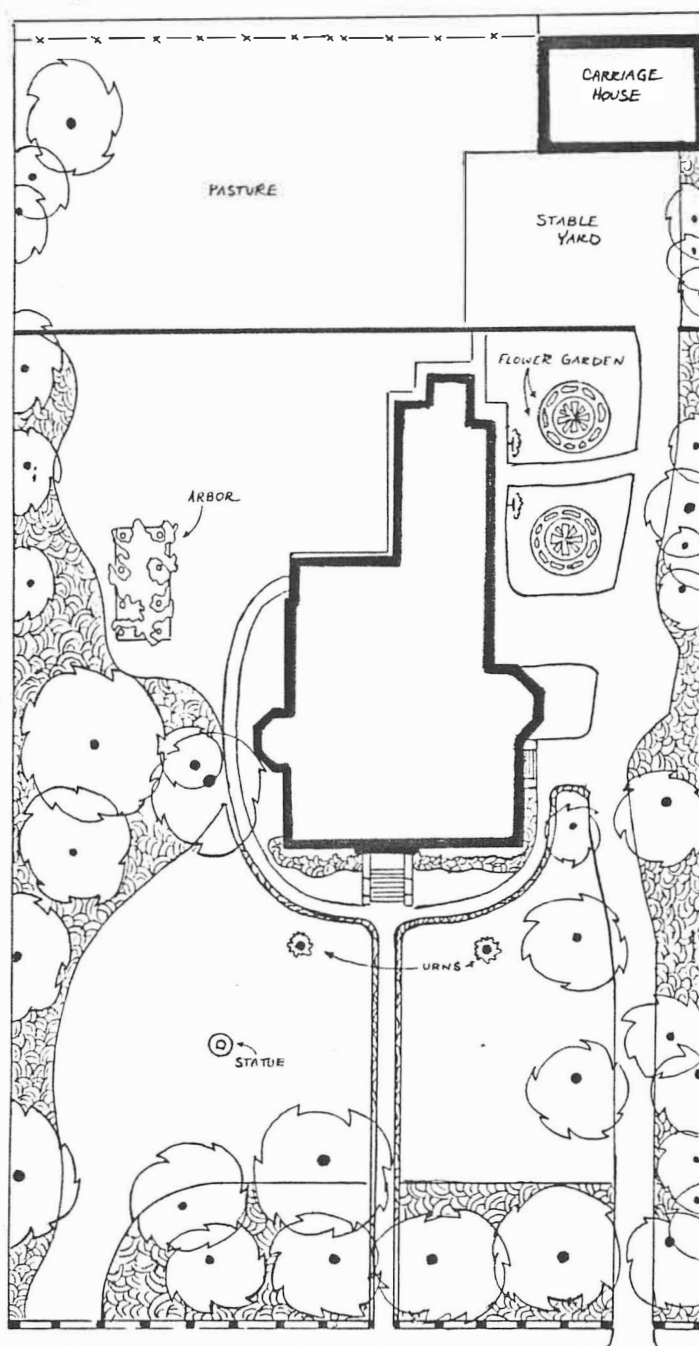


Figure 52. Plan of the Mallory-Neely House grounds in the early twentieth century based on a sketch drawn in 1985 by Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr.

and functional. Victorian interiors were divided into very distinct ceremonial, private, and service areas. The surrounding gardens were likewise separated into public ornamental areas and utilitarian service areas.<sup>25</sup> The public front and side areas of the Mallory-Neely grounds were treated as an ornamental garden. The grounds to the rear of the house adjacent to the kitchen-servant quarters and fronting onto the less fashionable Washington Street were given over to the practical. Fencing divided these two areas. Located in the service area were a carriage house, vegetable garden, and a small pasture which ran across the entire back part of the lot. Later Mrs. Mallory re-landscaped this area into an ornamental garden with a formal rose garden. In the pasture the Neelys and Mallorys kept a dairy cow and chickens.<sup>26</sup> The gardens of both rich and poor in this pre-refrigeration and pre-supermarket era usually had an area set aside for the cultivation of vegetables. The characteristic American suburban kitchen garden was also made possible by the modernization of the horticultural industry. All kinds of new vegetable and fruit varieties were introduced to the American consumer at this time, radically altering attitudes toward the healthfulness of vegetables and, consequently, the national diet.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup>Favretti, 57.

<sup>26</sup>Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., Interview by author, Memphis, Tennessee, 21 October 1985.

<sup>27</sup>See Roger A. Kline, Robert F. Becker, and Lynne Belluscio, The Heirloom Vegetable Garden, Gardening in the Nineteenth Century (Ithaca, New York: New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, 1984).

The ornamental sections of the garden were the subject of much discussion. Gardening authorities advised homeowners that an ornamental garden was a harmonious marriage of the arts of nature and man made arts. It was, therefore, important to do careful pre-planning in which varying aspects of design such as shape, line, color, texture, and variety were considered.<sup>28</sup> The American Garden magazine stated that it was the gardener's "problem to make selections and then arrange them into a harmonious composition."<sup>29</sup> It was also suggested that the ornamental areas of the suburban garden be treated in picturesque fashion. Each home along a suburban street was to present itself as one in a sequence of pictures.<sup>30</sup> The owner was encouraged to create further pictures with plants and accessories within each of these individual suburban gardens.<sup>31</sup> The gardens of the estates of the well-to-do and those of the middle class living on Adams Street in the late nineteenth century must have given this impression. (Figure 53)

Components of the Mallory-Neely garden. The authors of most late Victorian garden guides suggested that the ornamental garden should include the following features: turf, trees, shrubbery,

---

<sup>28</sup>Scott, 72-73.

<sup>29</sup>The American Garden 12 (12 August 1891), 385, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

<sup>30</sup>Hamlin, 175.

<sup>31</sup>Scott, 19.



Figure 53. An avenue of homes each in a landscape setting: Adams Street, Memphis, at the height of the gilded era. The Fontaine House is in the foreground with the tower of the Mallory-Neely House showing above the trees in the background. Courtesy Tennessee State Library and Archives.

flowers, beds, creepers, walkways, drives, architectural features, and garden furnishings. All of these still exist in the Mallory-Neely garden.

Turf. Large unbroken expanses of neatly mowed grass were considered an important component of the "Gardenesque" style. This type of turf became practical only after 1870 when lawn mowers became readily available to the public.<sup>32</sup> The Neely's landscape was designed with open expanses of grassy lawn surrounding the house.

Trees and shrubbery. Downing and others advised that the "luxuriant verdure" surrounding the domestic home helped more than any feature to harmonize house and nature. Trees and shrubbery were grouped near the house and also as a screen around the perimeter of the lawn creating "a picturesque, natural looking boundary."<sup>33</sup> They also served as a shadowy background which helped to emphasize the house as the picturesque centerpiece.<sup>34</sup> As with flowers and vegetables, whole new varieties of trees and ornamental shrubbery were introduced. Garden authorities suggested that these be planted in naturalistic groupings with size, texture, shape, and color as important considerations. Shrubby and trees were highly recommended as aids in creating vistas into and out of the garden. Scott in The Art of Beautifying Suburban Grounds recommended these as "verdant

---

<sup>32</sup>Tice, 64.

<sup>33</sup>Downing, Cottage Residences, 129.

<sup>34</sup>Scott, 65.

frames" which help create "leading ranges of view."<sup>35</sup> Towering clusters of poplar, magnolia, and other trees as well as naturalistic groupings of azaleas help to screen and frame the Mallory-Neely House and at the same time gently delineate the property's boundaries.

Flower beds. After having been banished from gardens for half a century, flowers made a comeback in the nineteenth century. Flower beds were thought of as embellishment like jewelry was to a lady's attire. Advocates of the "Gardenesque" style suggested the controlled use of formal flower beds which they felt should be adjacent to the house since their geometrically planned designs related more to architecture than to the surrounding natural features of the garden. Downing labeled them "architectural flower gardens."<sup>36</sup> So that one could best observe their complex patterns, it was recommended that "they should be near the house and in view of the windows of the most frequented rooms."<sup>37</sup> Garden periodicals and guidebooks published line drawings of all types of designs and plans for floral borders and for circular, semi-circular, star, square, crescent, and organically shaped flower beds.<sup>38</sup> The most effective

---

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 215.

<sup>36</sup>Downing, Cottage Residences, 147.

<sup>37</sup>Lewis F. Allen, Rural Architecture (New York: C. M. Saxton, 1852), 205, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

<sup>38</sup>See for example: Elias A. Long, Ornamental Gardening for Americans (New York: Orange Judd & Co. 1893), 212-213, Special Collections, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.



way to go about filling these ornamental beds was subject of much discussion. Most Victorians favored a massing system which is out of style today except in some of our city parks. Characteristic of carpet bedding was the use of repeated rows of plants often in vivid colors. It was recommended that the choice of ornamental plants to be used in these elaborate designs be pre-planned with great care and "great artistic feeling" since the creation of these beds was considered a high horticultural art.<sup>39</sup>

Two circular formal flower beds, ringed with brick, survive in very battered condition close to the east side of the Mallory-Neely House. (Figure 54) Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr. remembers that these were planted with roses and some flowers for cutting. Possibly this area was treated as a "rosarium," a highly romantic and popular feature of late Victorian gardens.<sup>40</sup> These two formal beds could be observed from the Mallory-Neely dining room and master bedroom. Mr. Mallory also remembers informal beds of calla lilies planted near the foundation across the front of the house.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps these served to screen the unattractive open areas beneath the elevated front porch.

---

<sup>39</sup>Doell and Doell, n.p.

<sup>40</sup>Favretti, 71-72.

<sup>41</sup>Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr., Interview by the author, Memphis, Tennessee, 21 October 1985.



PLATE XXXI Forms for Rose Beds

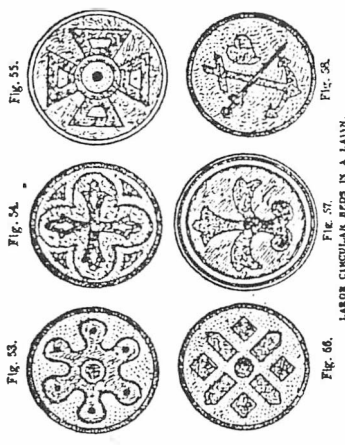
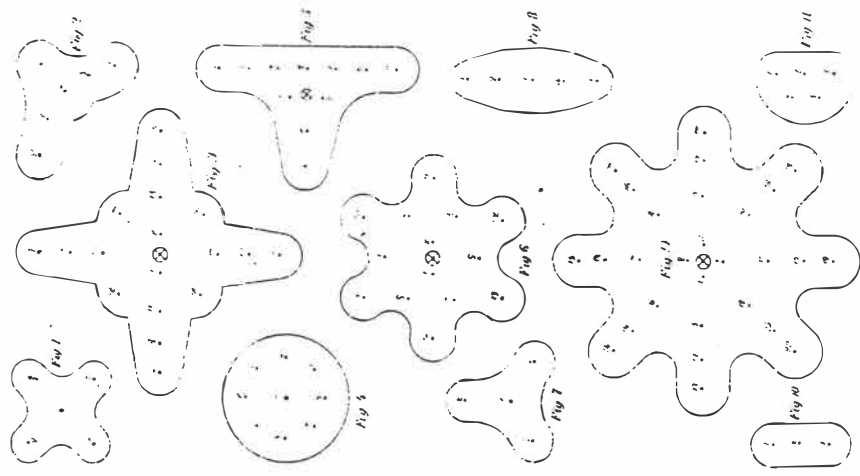


FIG. 53. FIG. 54. FIG. 55. FIG. 56. FIG. 57. FIG. 58. LAROS CIRCULAR BEDS IN A LAINN.

- A
- Figure 54. Late Victorian flower beds. Courtesy American Life Foundation and Study Institute.
- B
- A. Remains of a formal garden as viewed from the master bedroom of the Mallory-Neely House.
- C
- B. Designs for circular flower beds from Ornamental Gardening for Americans (1893) by Elias Long.
- C. Designs for rose beds from The Art of Beautifying Suburban Grounds (1870).

Creepers. Vines and flowering creepers climbing the house were the most characteristic features of the "Gardenesque" approach. Downing especially favored their luxuriant beauty because he felt that they softened geometric edges and gave character to the architecture. They were thought to add greatly in harmonizing the house with nature. He cautioned, though, that they should be used in moderation on a house with notable architectural features and used abundantly on lesser architectural types such as cottages.<sup>42</sup> Creepers "weaving their pliant beauty" up and around the verandahs also created natural screens or "foliage drapery," semi-shielding these private areas from public view.<sup>43</sup> Many old photographs exist showing the Mallory-Neely House virtually nestled in lush greenery, especially the front verandahs which were covered with Jackson Vine creepers that have been removed in recent years. (Figure 55)

Walkways. Late-Victorian landscape authorities divided garden walkways into two categories, the useful and the pleasurable.<sup>44</sup> Useful walkways like the main one leading from the street to the front door or those leading to service areas were to be straight, practical, and functional.<sup>45</sup> Pleasurable walkways used for leisure

---

<sup>42</sup>Downing, Architecture of Country Houses, 212.

<sup>43</sup>Wheeler, Homes for the People, 61.

<sup>44</sup>Weidenmann, 8.

<sup>45</sup>Jeanloz, 376.



A

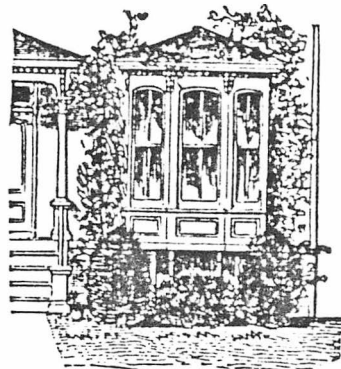


Fig. 42.—SHRUBS, FLOWERS, AND CLIMBERS ABOUT A BAY WINDOW.

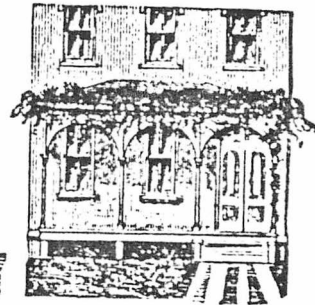


Fig. 43.—VERANDA COVERED WITH CELASTRUS.

B

Figure 55. Victorian creepers.  
 A. Mallory-Neely House.  
 B. Suggestions for vine treatment from Ornamental Gardening for Americans (1893).  
 Courtesy New York State Historical Society, Cooperstown.

time were to be meandering and natural, following the curving contour of the landscape. Brick and gravel were preferred materials for these walkways. Examples of both practical and pleasurable walkways such as these survive as part of the Mallory-Neely Victorian landscape design.

Garden furnishings. Furnishings such as statuary and urns usually associated with formal gardening were allowed back into the "Gardenesque" landscape. Because these had "qualities of architecture" such as regularity and symmetry, Downing and others felt that they should be placed near the house.<sup>46</sup> By late nineteenth century manufactured garden furnishings were available in great quantities and varieties, and Victorian gardeners used them like they did their interior bric-a-brac.<sup>47</sup> These mass-produced Victorian garden furnishings are examples of early modern technological processes.

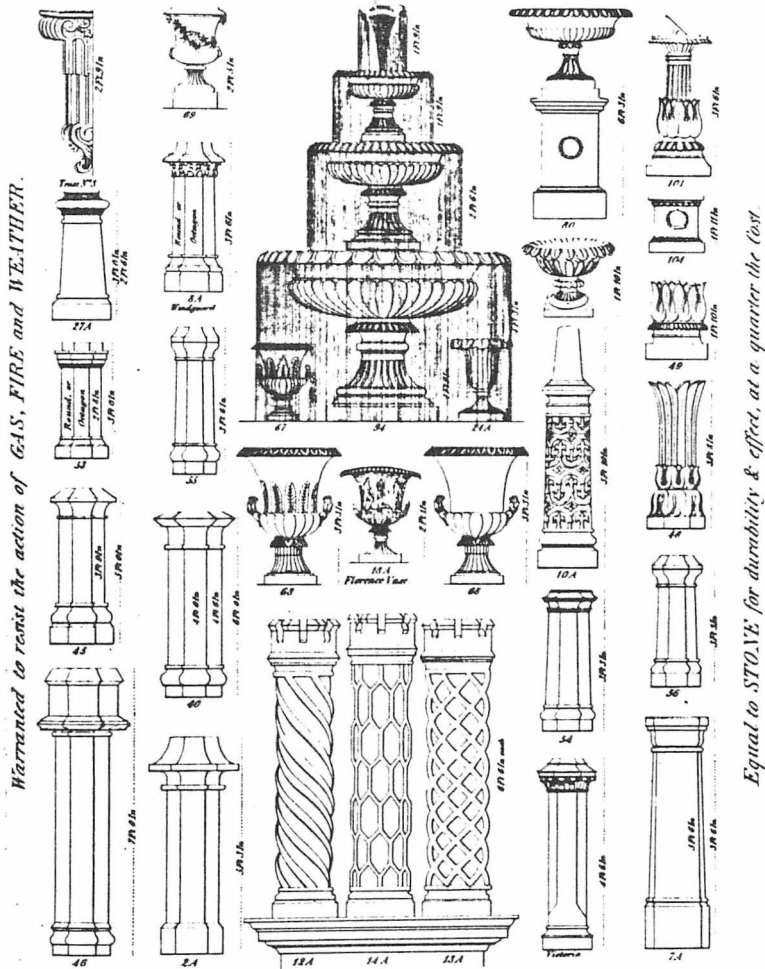
Characteristic Victorian cast iron urns survive in the Mallory-Neely garden. These urns were available in a variety of forms made to match the fashionable eclectic architectural styles. (Figure 56) The Mallory-Neely urns are all classic types thought suitable for the Italianate. Downing felt that these urns should be left empty with their outline standing clear in the garden since they were an architectural feature. He felt that they should be "sanded" and painted soft grey or a neutral color (similar to the house) to

---

<sup>46</sup>Downing, Cottage Residences, 148.

<sup>47</sup>Doell and Doell, n.p.

LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
**LIBRARY OF THE ARCHITECTS**  
**for Cottages, Villas, Pleasure Grounds &c.**



Such as Chimney Tops, Vases, Flower Pots and Pedestals,  
 Fountains, Statuary &c. &c. From the Garkirk Works.

Imported and for Sale at Moderate Prices by

**J. E. MITCHELL** 44 York Avenue, Philadelphia.

Figure 56. Advertisement from Samuel Sloan, The Model Architect (1852). Garden urns such as those shown here were based on classical prototypes and were therefore recommended for use with the Italianate. Courtesy Special Collections, Library, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

represent stone or marble in order to further harmonize them with the architecture of the house.<sup>48</sup> Late Victorian authorities, though, recommended that these garden vases be "lushly overflowing" with cascading vines and a variety of graceful and brilliant plants.<sup>49</sup>

One old photograph of the Mallory-Neely House shows a statue, the large fountain base of which remains in the front lawn. (Figure 57) At least one other base used for an ornamental birdbath remains elsewhere in the garden.

Mr. Mallory remembered that architectural features in the Mallory-Neely garden included a wood-frame arbor to the west of the house which served as a screen to hide the back pasture from Adams Street. Although the arbor no longer exists, corroborating evidence can be seen in an early photograph of the house. (Figure 57)

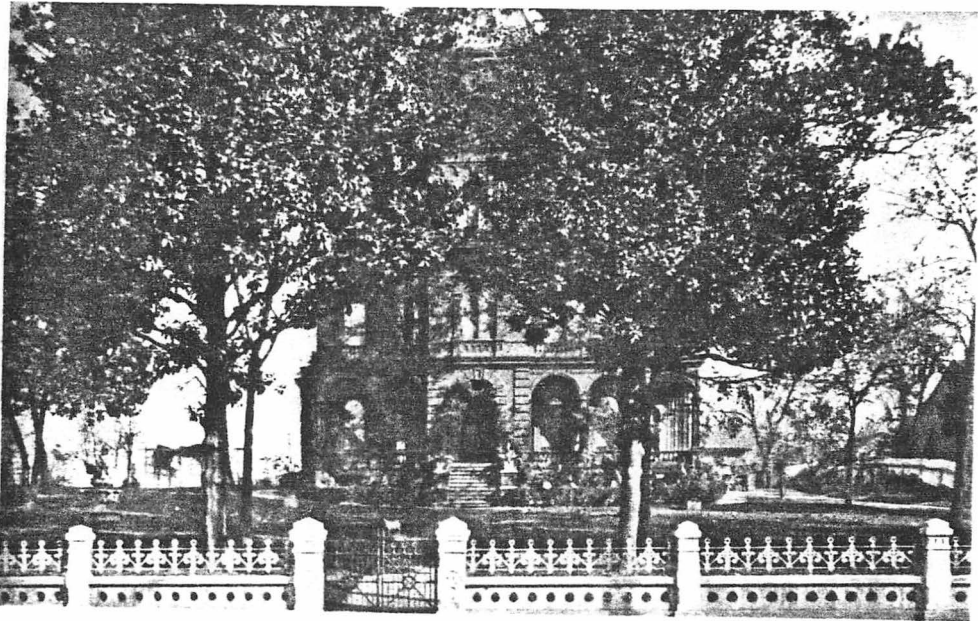
An impressive architectural feature of the garden today is the ornate granite and wrought-iron fence stretching across the front of the property. This fence was one of the post-1883 changes to the property made by James Columbus Neely. His monogram adorns the granite gate posts and the letter "N" centers the wrought-iron entrance gate. The surviving stereopticon view of the Mallory-Neely House (c. 1852) shows an earlier less elaborate fence.

Cast-iron fences such as this became increasingly popular in America by the end of the century. They were available in a

---

<sup>48</sup>Tice, "The Well Kept Garden," 79.

<sup>49</sup>Scott, 63.



RESIDENCE OF J. C. NEELY.

A

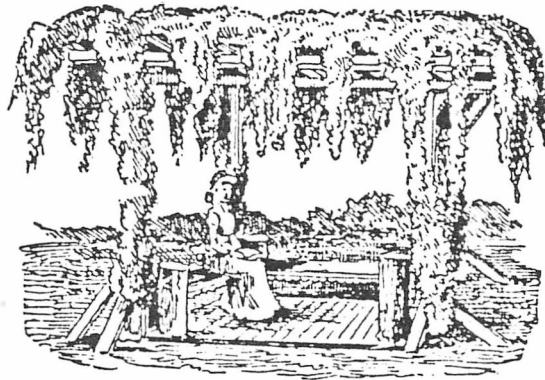


Fig. 41.—PLAN FOR ARBOR OVER A GARDEN SEAT.

B

Figure 57. Victorian garden arbors.

- A. Photograph (c. 1900) of the Mallory-Neely House. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.
- B. Engraving of an arbor from Ornamental Gardening for Americans (1893). Courtesy New York Historical Association, Cooperstown. The photograph of the Mallory-Neely lawn shows many characteristic late-Victorian garden features including a sculpture, lushly overflowing urns, vines growing on the facade, and an arbor similar to the one illustrated from Ornamental Gardening.



variety of revival and "modern" styles.<sup>50</sup> Their open design created a psychological sense of boundary rather than a barrier.<sup>51</sup> These fences are also illustrative of developing modern industrial production. They could be ordered from catalogs and shipped anywhere by railroad. They could also be purchased locally. Two late nineteenth century Memphis firms specializing in metal fencing were the Memphis Wire & Iron Works located at 387 Second Street and the Charles Goebels & Company, Tennessee Wire & Iron Works at 415 Second Street who advertised that they could provide wrought iron, metal, and wire fences.<sup>52</sup>

Written documentation records how the gardens of the elite homes on Adams Street were used for grand affairs and lavish entertainments with verandahs open and decorated for parties and receptions. They were also most certainly used for informal daily life. A photograph in the personal collection of Mr. Barton Lee Mallory, Jr. shows his grandmother, Mrs. James Columbus Neely, seated on her furnished front porch, shielded from public view by a "foliage drapery." (Figure 58) The openness of house to grounds provided for the Mallory-Neely interiors an elegant, pleasurable and natural extension which

---

<sup>50</sup>Elaine Freed, "Cast Iron Fences," Old-House Journal Compendium, eds. Clem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980), 379-380.

<sup>51</sup>Jeanloz, 376.

<sup>52</sup>Memphis Daily Appeal [advertisements], 5 January 1890, 5.

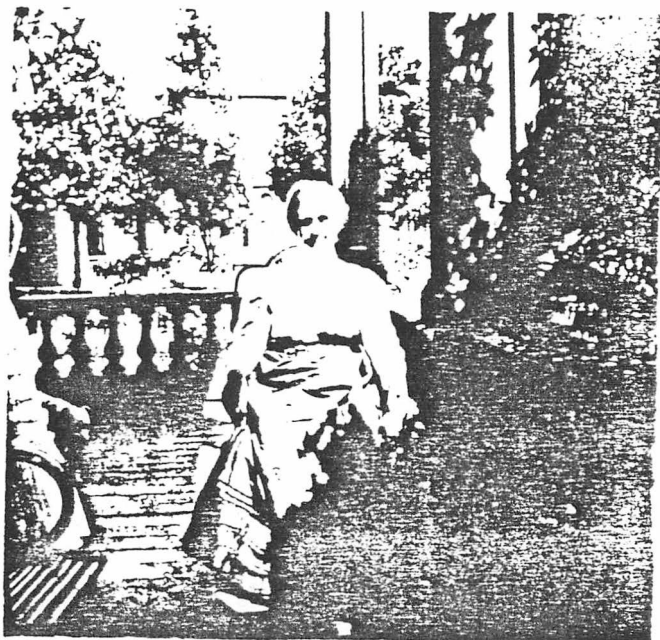


Figure 58. Mrs. J. C. Neely (c. 1900). Shaded by "foliage drapery" Mrs. Neely relaxes on the front verandah of the Mallory-Neely House. Courtesy Barton Lee Mallory, Jr.

must have been especially refreshing and practical in the typically hot (then unairconditioned), humid spring, summer and early fall months in the Mid-South.

## CHAPTER VII

### MALLORY-NEELY HOUSE: INTERIORS AS ARTIFACT

The interior is not only the Universe, but the sheath of the private man. To inhabit means to leave traces. In the interior these traces are accentuated.<sup>1</sup>

The layered features of the interior decor and accumulated furnishings of the Mallory-Neely House represent a fascinating stratification of nineteenth and early twentieth century styles, trends, and fashions reflective of advancing modernization and technology. These are illustrative not only of a transition from traditional hand craftsmanship to that of the machine, but also of developing consumerism, mass distribution, merchandising, and sales promotion.

It was necessary to "archeologically" separate these "strata" and then to organize them into some type of logical structural system and chronological sequence for analytical and descriptive purposes. Consequently, the following organizational structure has been used: first, an analysis of the interior architecture and decoration; second, analysis of the furnishings including furniture, accessories and textiles; and last, analysis of the use of space and arrangement of the interiors. (Figure 59)

---

<sup>1</sup>Praz, 22.

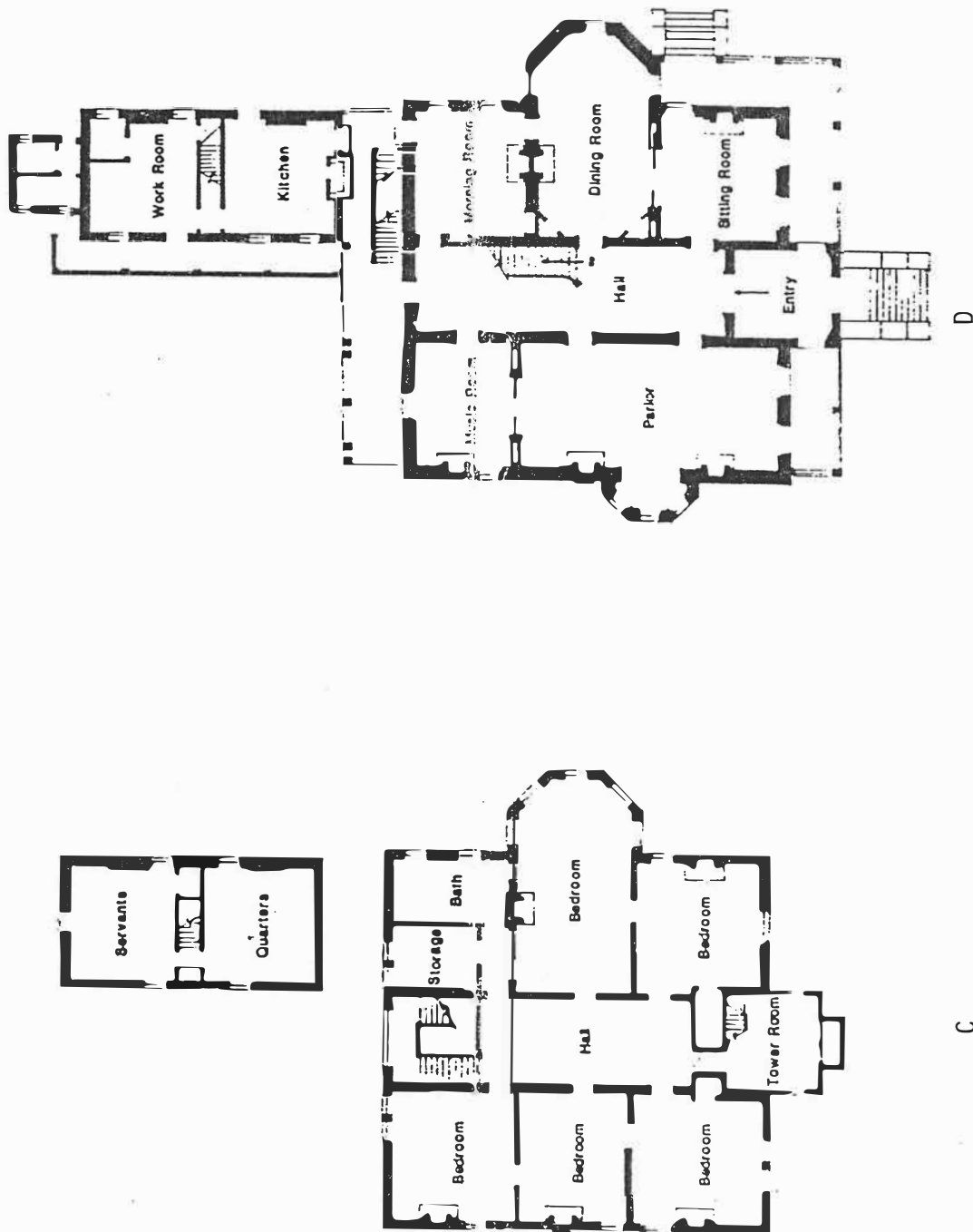
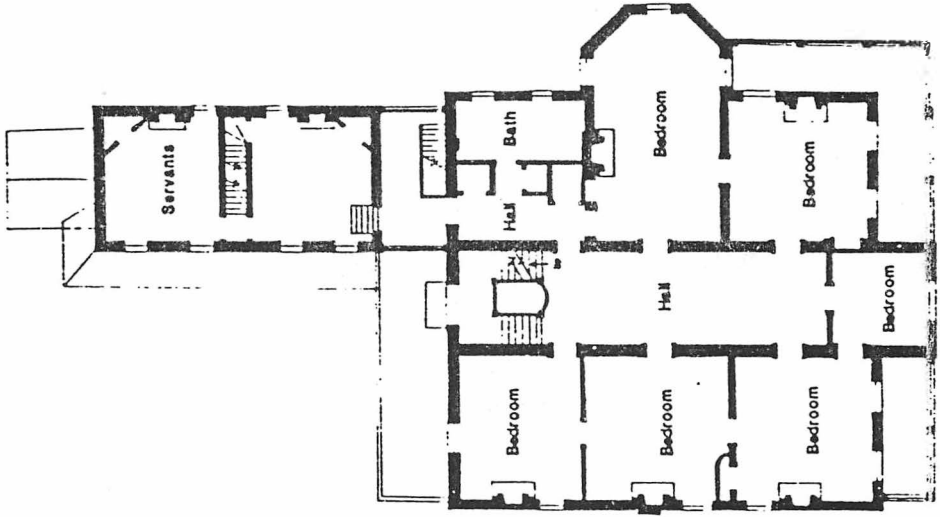
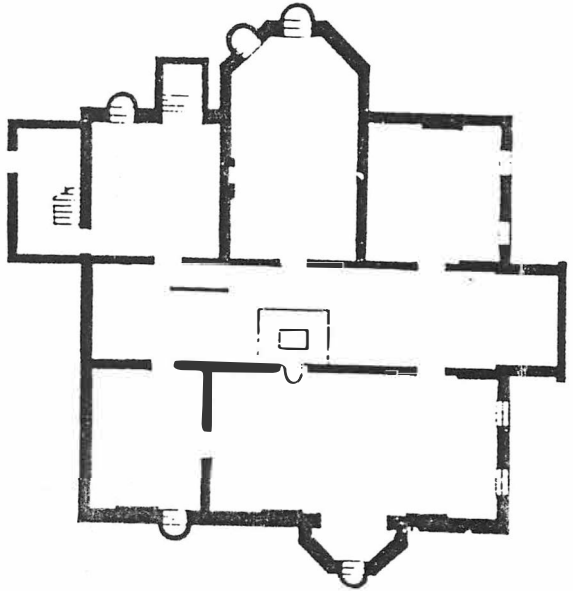


Figure 59. Mallory-Neely House floor plans.  
A. Basement floor.  
B. Third floor.  
C. Second floor.  
D. First floor.



B



A

It is expedient to identify first several themes which are interwoven through the next several chapters and are of value in an interpretation of the Mallory-Neely interiors. In an article entitled "Early American Decorative Arts as Social Documents," E. McClung Fleming describes the many levels of value that a study of the decorative arts can provide to the historian and others.<sup>2</sup> He begins by stating that they are an important part of a society's autobiography. Fleming then discusses varying types of evidence that this study can provide from the standpoint of their historic, cultural, aesthetic, and social roles; he suggests that decorative arts provide documentation for interpretation of the trade of a society, the technology of the time, the standard of living, everyday life, manners, customs, social patterns and usage.<sup>3</sup>

Though in his article the focus is on colonial decorative arts, most of what Fleming says can also be applied to those of the Victorian period and may provide suggestions of additional ways that the Mallory-Neely House contents, along with the present sweeping look at them as the furnishings of a wealthy family, can be interpreted so as to be of increased educational value.

Following are some of what might be termed "sub-themes" of the next two chapters including questions asked and discussed; all

---

<sup>2</sup>E. McClung Fleming, "Early American Decorative Arts as Social Documents," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 65, No. 1 (June 1958), 278-283.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

of these are reflective of an evolving modern American culture and the commercialization of the American home.

Changing Visual Styles - Fashions. What were these styles and fashions? Who created them? What were the sources of these in America at large, and particularly in Memphis? How did Memphians find out about them?

Mechanization - Production. How and where were these artifacts made? How are they reflective of technological modernization? Were any of these Memphis-made products?

Distribution - Marketing. How did they get to Memphis? How were they marketed? What were Memphis' trade sources and linkages nationally and regionally, especially through the Mississippi Valley, during the Victorian era?

Consumerism - Lifestyle. How are the Mallory-Neely contents reflective of modern consumerism and changing approaches to lifestyle? Do the contents and their arrangement reflect modern attitudes of comfort, leisure and domesticity?

### Influences on Victorian Interior Design

In addition to the foregoing it is also important to cite and discuss briefly some related yet additional influences that specifically affected American Victorian interior design. These include (a) advertising, (b) printed materials such as interior decorating guides, books of ornament, and magazines; (c) World's Fairs and regional industrial expositions; (d) modernization of the distribution and



marketing of products for the home including specialty stores, department stores, and mail order merchandise; and (e) the developing role of the interior decorator as an authority and guide.

### Advertisement

CONSUMERISM is one of the major characteristics of late Victorian and modern society. The editors of The Culture of Consumption in their introduction cite the following general reasons for the development of consumerism in nineteenth-century America: materialism created by the establishment of a national marketplace and mass advertising; emergence of new structures of business and corporate professionals and managers; and a new gospel of therapeutic release through consumption.<sup>4</sup>

Described by Thorsten Veblen in The Theory of the Leisure Class as a modern manipulative method of communication, mass advertisement as a pervasive language played a major role in the development of American consumerism.<sup>5</sup> The late Victorian period witnessed the evolution of a traditional protestant hard working anti-materialistic society into a consumer-oriented culture that is characterized by compulsive spending and conspicuous consumption.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>See Introduction, Fox and Jackson Lears, The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980.

<sup>5</sup>Veblen, 86 and 92.

<sup>6</sup>T. J. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930," The Culture of Consumption, eds. Richard Wrightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 4.

T. J. Jackson Lears in his essay, "From Salvation to Self Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930," states that by 1880 national advertising in the United States, "as an all pervading new visual environment," had become very much a part of the American scene with the use of brand names, trademarks, slogans, sensational tactics for attracting attention, psychological studies, and manipulative strategies.<sup>7</sup>

### Printed Materials

The importance that printed materials had on American visual design throughout the nineteenth century was profound.<sup>8</sup> In this period of transition and instability the Victorians placed great faith in authority and dogma. This was equally at work in matters concerning architecture and landscape where the influence of such authority-tastemakers as Ruskin, Loudon, Downing, Wheeler, Sloan, and Scott, were paramount. As vehicles of authority and dogma, printed materials with improved visual illustration likewise had a major influence on interior decoration.

Through the second half of the nineteenth century, Victorian design and designers were especially influenced by an outpouring of publications; articles, profusely illustrated, ranged from the entire history of ornament, traditional and modern, to the processes

---

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>8</sup>Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., "Nineteenth Century Design," Perspecta 6, Yale Architectural Journal, 6 (1960), 57.

for creating new forms of decorative design. The most famous and surely one of the most popular of these guides was published in 1856 by Owen Jones, English author and designer, entitled The Grammar of Ornament.<sup>9</sup> It was illustrated with large color plates showing international examples of both historic and modern ornamental design. Others illustrative of this type of publication include F. Edward Hulme, Principles of Ornamental Art, George and Maurice Audsley, Outlines of Ornaments in the Leading Styles, and Lewis F. Day, The Anatomy of Pattern, The Application of Ornament, and Nature in Ornament.<sup>10</sup>

By means of these handsomely illustrated books, ornament from all over the world and every historic period, as well as the most current, became available to designers and manufacturers. Designs taken from these books are found throughout the Victorian interior in ornamental plaster, fresco, stenciling, furniture, wallpaper, carpets, silver, glass, and porcelain.

In addition to these publications which were of primary value to the design professional, there were abundant popular interior decorating guides. These were published for the general public by so-called experts who offered their advice to those many who were

---

<sup>9</sup>Owen Jones, The Grammar of Ornament (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1856).

<sup>10</sup>F. Edward Hulme, Principles of Ornamental Art (New York: Cassell Potter & Galpin, 1875); George and Maurice Audsley, Outlines of Ornaments in the Leading Styles (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1881); and Lewis F. Day, The Anatomy of Pattern (London: B. T. Batsford, 1887), The Application of Ornament (London: B. T. Batsford, 1888), and Nature in Ornament (London: B. T. Batsford, 1892).

eager to learn what was the right or most fashionable thing to do to their homes. (Figure 60) Illustrative examples include Mrs. C. S. Jones and Henry T. Williams, Household Elegancies: Suggestions in Household Art & Tasteful Home Decorating and Beautiful Homes, Mrs. H. R. Haweis, The Art of Decoration and Beautiful Houses, Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, Suggestions for House Decoration, and Interior Decoration by Arnold W. Brunner and Thomas Tryon.<sup>11</sup>

But the popular magazines, which became increasingly available to all classes and in all places in the United States as the century progressed, were by far the most important form of printed communication used for the spread of the concept of the good life achieved by consumerism.<sup>12</sup> This proliferation of magazines was made possible by the rise of advertising, and by improvement in printing, reproduction of illustrations, and methods of distribution. Magazines became both a social and an economic force, changing the tastes and habits of Americans; inventing and "arousing new desires and new consumer demands"; and at the same time creating a mass market and new forms of marketing research and commodity distribution.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup>Mrs. C. S. Jones and Henry T. Williams, Household Elegancies: Suggestions in Household Art & Tasteful Home Decorating (New York: Henry T. Williams, 1875), and Beautiful Homes (New York: Henry T. Williams, 1878); Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting, Woodwork & Furniture (London: Porter & Coates, 1877); and Arnold W. Brunner and Thomas Tryon, Interior Decoration (New York: T. Comstock, 1887).

<sup>12</sup>See Christopher P. Wilson, "The Rhetoric of Consumption, Mass Market Magazines and the Demise of the Gentle Reader 1880-1920," The Culture of Consumption, eds. Richard Wrightsman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983).

<sup>13</sup>James Playsted Wood, Magazines in the United States (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1949), 230.

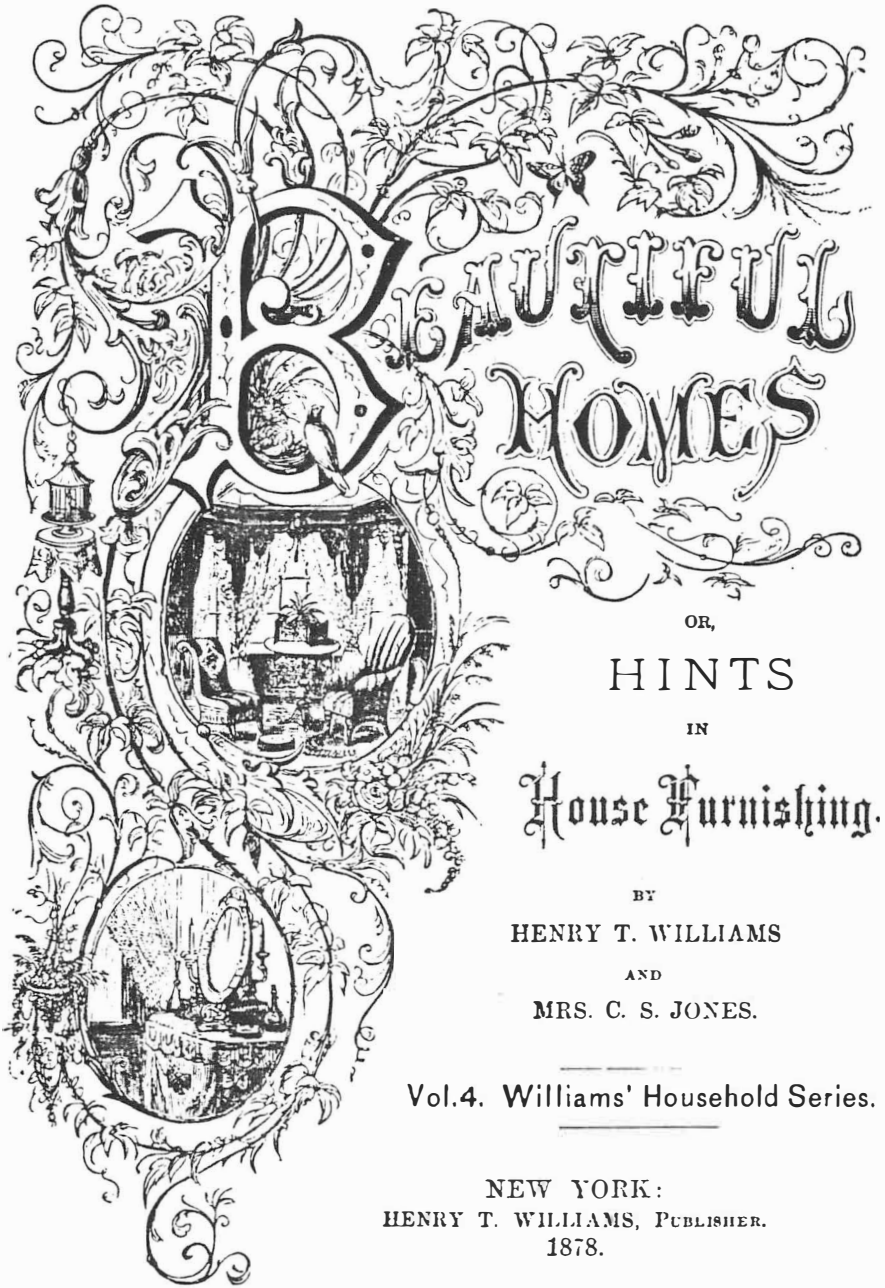


Figure 60. Frontispiece to Beautiful Homes (1878). It is symbolic of the multitude of decorating guidebooks published during the late nineteenth century. Courtesy Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum.

Interior design and taste in general in the United States were especially influenced by magazines, which played a crucial role in homogenizing the American home along with the nation's lifestyle. From 1830 into the 1880s Godey's Lady's Book actually set the pattern as a guide for American women in creating and maintaining a home.<sup>14</sup> It became a national institution, "affecting manners, morals, tastes, fashions in clothes, homes, and diet of generations of American readers."<sup>15</sup>

The passage on 3 March 1879 of a bill allowing second class mailing privileges for magazines opened the door for an onrush of periodicals which climbed from 1,800 monthly in 1860 to 3,300 in 1885. Ladies Home Journal (1885), McCall's Magazine (1870), Good Housekeeping (1885), and many others like them were aimed at female readers, giving them advice on the arts, social graces, cooking, and interior decorating. Ladies Home Journal, which by late century had over one million readers, "ran pictures of home interiors in every issue."<sup>16</sup> There were also specialized interior design magazines like The Decorator and Furnisher and Interior Decorator.

World's Fairs/Industrial Expositions. The great World's Fairs held during the nineteenth and the early-twentieth century epitomized

---

<sup>14</sup>Winkler.

<sup>15</sup>Wood, 54.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 99 and 105.

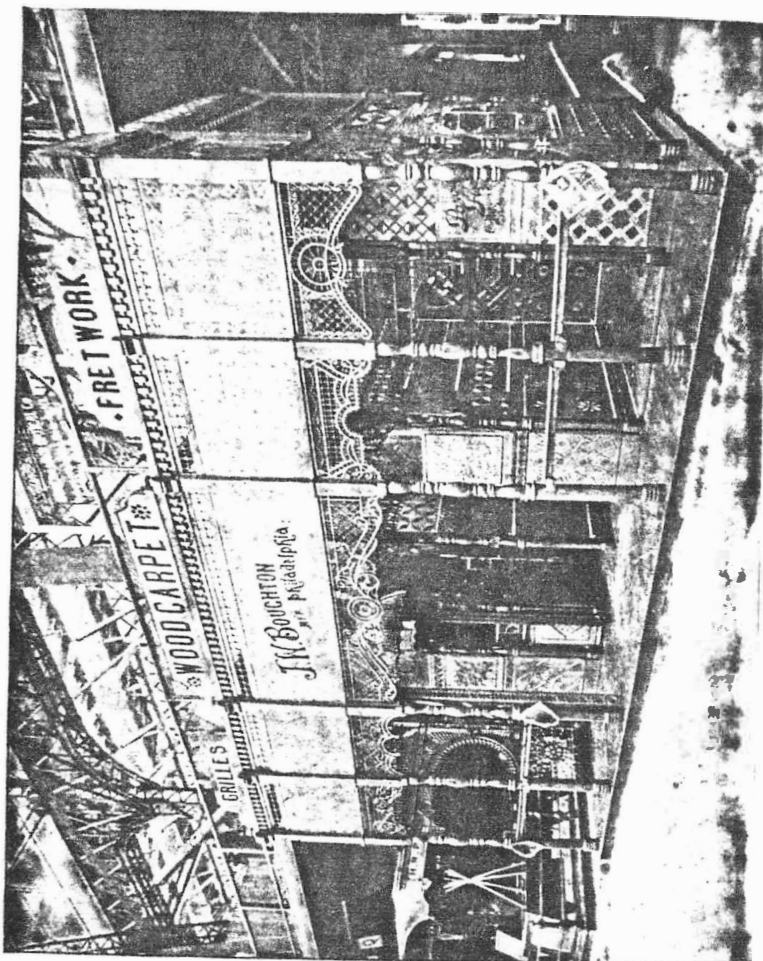
the Victorian belief in the "gospel of progress" achieved through scientific materialism. They are also illustrative of rising nationalism and regional boosterism. At these fairs were represented "the products of modern machinery and man's skillful handiwork in every form and design."<sup>17</sup> International, national, and regional expositions of industrial and manufactured goods were of great importance during the Victorian Period in introducing technological modernization and consumerism to the American people and in spreading the latest design concepts and fashions. (Figures 61 and 62) Beginning with the Great Exposition held in London in 1851 there was a seemingly endless chain of these events staged throughout Europe and America.

The most important ones held in the United States were the Centennial Exposition, Philadelphia (1876); the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago (1893); and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis (1904). Besides these blockbuster World's Fairs there were also many smaller regional versions including these that were near to Memphis: the Great Southern Exposition, Louisville, Kentucky (began 1883); the Cotton States and International Exposition, Atlanta, Georgia (1895); and others held in New Orleans and Nashville. The influence that these expositions and the resultant publicity and publication had on American taste and fashion is incalculable.

---

<sup>17</sup>Columbian Exposition, Chicago U.S.A., Classification and Rules, Department of Manufactures (1893), 3, Special Collections, Newberry Library, Chicago.

1875  
J.C.
ESTABLISHED IN PHILADELPHIA IN 1876  
 ESTABLISHED IN NEW YORK IN 1866  
 J. W. BOUGHTON, MANUFACTURER  
 The Highest Premium awarded at the Centennial Exhibition over all European and American Exhibitors to  
**J. W. Boughton, Philadelphia, Pa.**



The above cut shows our **Exhibit** at the Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Illinois. And we invite comparison with any goods made at home or abroad

It is in Section Q of the Manufacturers' Building, on the wide aisle, under the edge of the north gallery towards the lake, and the third exhibit from the middle main north and south aisles.

*As we go to press we have received notice that we have been awarded the Prize at Chicago*

Figure 61. Display at the World's Columbian Exposition (1893). Exhibits like that of the J. W. Boughton Company at the Chicago World's Fair exposed Americans to the latest in technology and design for the home interior. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library: Collection of Printed Books.



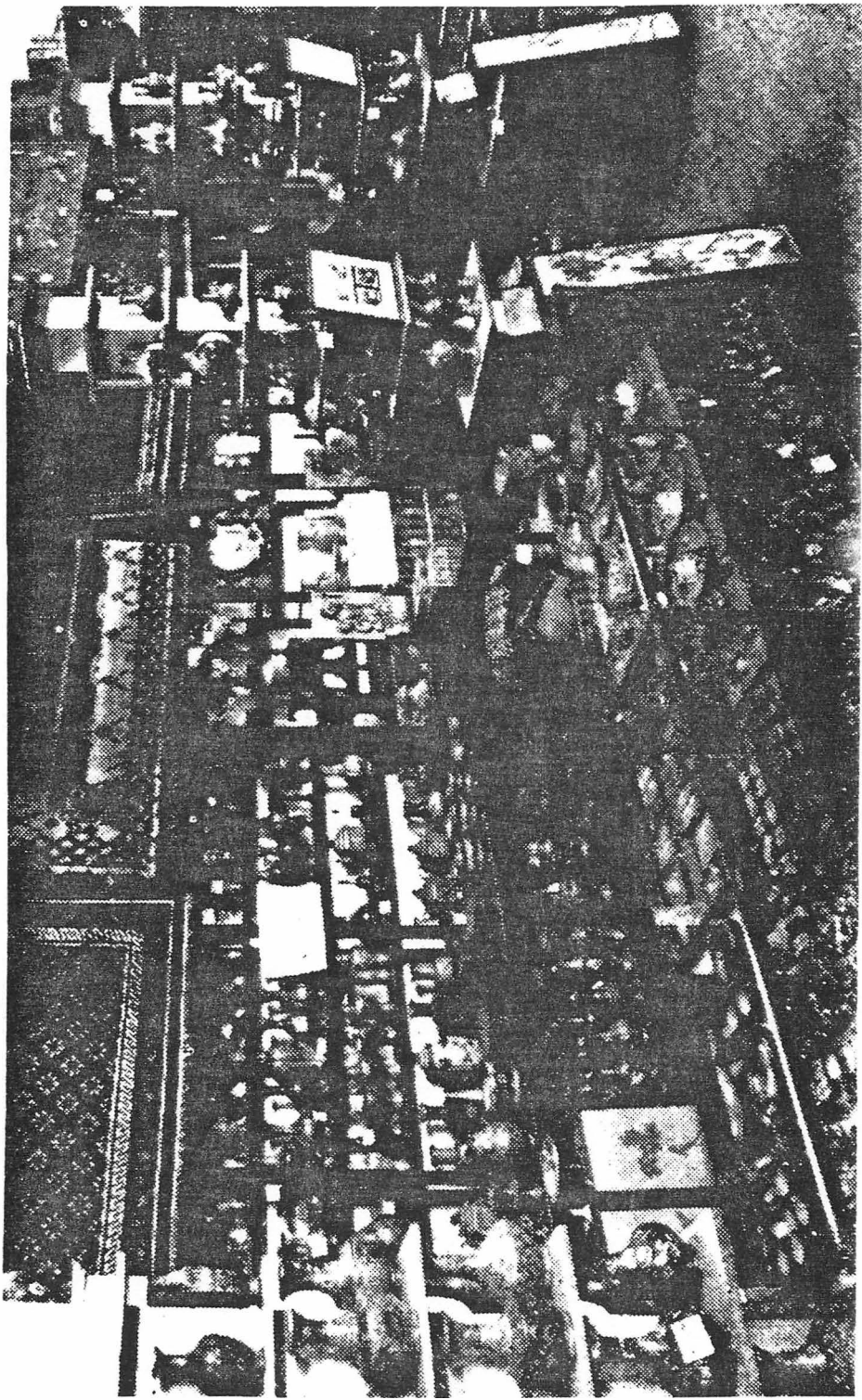


Figure 62. Display at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904). International exhibits like that shown above at the St. Louis World's Fair filled with an array of exotic crafts including carpets, embroidery, porcelain, and cloisonné broadened American taste. Courtesy Missouri Historical Society.

The James Columbus Neelys and the Barton Lee Mallorys attended the Chicago and St. Louis World's Fairs, purchasing important items for their home. Surviving correspondence in the Neely Papers shows that family members also traveled to the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition.

#### Retail and Department Stores and Mail Order

Advertising and promotion alone were not enough to change a nation's purchasing habits; the easy availability of products was also a factor. Especially important was the rapid development of the American railnet system which enabled products to be shipped anywhere and available at a phenomenally reduced cost.

Early in the nineteenth century in communities like Memphis, situated far from major centers of manufacture, products, especially those for the interior, which were not an absolute necessity, were not easily accessible. Some things were made locally, but most were brought to Memphis by river steamer. Dry goods stores were the standard source for almost everything. Several advertised in the Memphis newspapers that they carried wallpapers, fabrics, even furniture. Obviously there was not a great deal of choice, and written evidence shows that anyone wanting anything luxurious or truly fashionable had to travel personally or write the manufacturer in order to purchase such an item.

By the second half of the century and primarily as a result of the railnet system, this isolated condition had changed. Though

the river shipping industry remained vital to Memphis, the city had become a major railnet hub with linkages literally throughout the nation. Retail specialty shops made their appearance as towns like Memphis grew in size and in turn became distribution centers for their own hinterland. (Figure 63) Goods to supply wallpaper, furniture, carpet, light fixture, fabric, and upholstery specialty shops were purchased wholesale from jobbers in distribution centers or directly from manufacturers in cities like Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, St. Louis, and Cincinnati. The Memphis customer could at last either purchase the latest in his own hometown or order through the specialist.

The latter half of the century also saw the full flowering of the department store which became a major source for home furnishings products. The department store concept revolutionized retailing by combining many specialty stores under one roof, and literally ushered in the concept of mass marketing.<sup>18</sup> In so doing the department stores aided in homogenizing American consumer products. These large stores brought a change from the early dry goods store; passive retailing was replaced with innovative merchandising, new sales promotion, lavish architectural and interior surroundings, and even entertainment. Far from being passive, the department store, "by means of skillful advertising, special exhibitions, and tempting bargains," actually influenced behavior.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup>John William Ferry, A History of the Department Store (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1960).

<sup>19</sup>Robert Hendrickson, The Grand Emporium, The Illustrated History of America's Great Department Store (New York: Stein & Day, 1979), 25.

AMES, BEATTIE & CO.  
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL  
FURNITURE, CARPETS  
OIL CLOTHS,  
Window Shades, Mattresses, Etc.  
At Lowest Prices, and Guarantee Satisfaction,  
**862 & 865 Main Street, MEMPHIS.**

Figure 63. An 1881 city directory advertisement for a Memphis specialty store.

A few early examples of these new consumer-social centers include: Macy's, New York (1842); John Wanamaker, Philadelphia (1861); Jordan Marsh Company, Boston (1841); John Shillito, Cincinnati (1830); Rich's Inc., Atlanta (1867); Thalheimer's, Richmond (1842); and Carson Pirie Scott & Company, Chicago (1854).<sup>20</sup>

An offshoot of the department store was the mailorder business with its concept of consumer goods for all whereby products were shipped throughout the nation. The Sears-Roebuck and Montgomery-Ward catalogs offered all kinds of home decorating products to anyone who could afford them.

Memphis along with other American cities had its own department stores whose advertisements in the city's newspapers included the latest interior fashions such as carpets, curtains, and furniture. In 1888 the new building which housed Menken's Department Store, founded in 1862 by J. S. Menken of Dutch descent, was described as one of the largest and most complete in the state: "five stories high and divided into twenty-eight departments with two hundred assistants and doing an annual business transaction of \$1,500,000."<sup>21</sup>

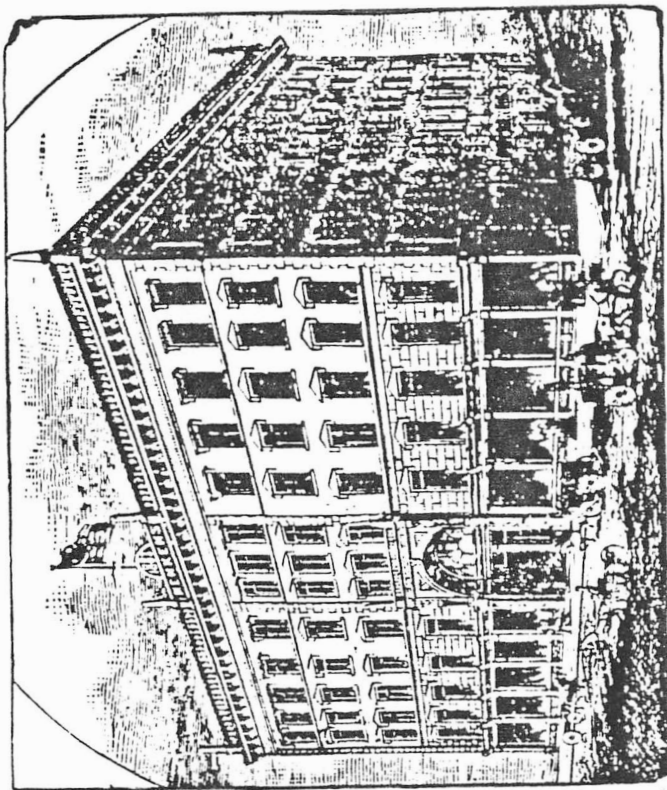
(Figure 64) At the grand opening, the newspaper reporter noted that

The display of goods was so great, varied and beautiful. . . . The general line of dry goods, ladies' suits, children's clothes, boots and shoes, carpets and curtains, china and glassware, each department represented by superb specimens, was certainly one of the grandest

---

<sup>20</sup>Ferry, 104-105.

<sup>21</sup>Vedder, 155-156.



A

# RESIDENCES FURNISHED!

We are now prepared to furnish Residences with  
the following useful and ornamental articles  
at extraordinary low prices :

China and Glassware,

Carpets and Rugs,

Cutlery and Plated Ware

Curtains and Shades,

Statuary and Vases,

Portiers and Cornices,

Ceramics and Bric-a-brac

Furniture Damasks,

Table Damasks, Napkins, Towels and Sheetings.

# MEYER BROTHERS.

B

Figure 64. Menken's Department Store.

A. The Menken's building in 1888.

B. Menken's advertisement from the 30 September 1884 Memphis Daily Appeal.

displays ever seen in this country. The house was filled with visitors examining the magnificent articles on exhibition, many of them being imported goods of the very finest quality and most attractive features. The quantity of goods and extent of the house are entirely too great to be written up.<sup>22</sup>

Described as a Palatial Dry-Goods Emporium, the Menken's building had large windows and high ceilings throughout. Two hydraulic elevators connected the various floors. On the third of these was a ladies' parlor or reception room with a variety of comfortable easy chairs and sofas, a grand piano, and all the latest magazines.<sup>23</sup>

Lowenstein's Department Store was founded in 1855 by Benedict Lowenstein from Darmstadt, Germany. He was joined by his three brothers in 1869.<sup>24</sup> Late-century newspaper accounts describe it as a mammoth retail establishment with palatial showrooms.

(Figure 65)

Goldsmith's Department Store was founded in 1870 by Jacob Goldsmith of Baden, Germany.<sup>25</sup> Like Lowenstein's, it grew from a small dry goods store into a major department store and is the only one of the three mentioned which is still in existence. (Figure 66)

---

<sup>22</sup>"Menken's Celebration of the Opening of Their Palatial Store a Most Gratifying Success," Memphis Daily Appeal, 10 October 1884, 12.

<sup>23</sup>Hensley, 88.

<sup>24</sup>Emmett Maum, "Memphis Great Growth Reflected by Lowenstein's Soon Starting 103rd Year," Commercial Appeal, 29 December 1957, 1.

<sup>25</sup>Paul R. Coppock, "Bridging the Generation of Business Growth," Commercial Appeal, 11 November 1976, 1(B).



A

**DAILY APPEAL.**

FRIDAY, JANUARY 3, 1885.

VOL. XLV-NO. 8

**B. LOWENSTEIN & BROS.**

**GREAT REDUCTION SALE.**

To Reduce Our WINTER STOCK as Much as Possible We have Reduced Prices in Every Department Throughout the House. Don't Miss Our Great Clearing Sale of

**FUR-LINED GARMENTS AND PLUSH WRAPS!**

At the prices we have put upon them you can well afford to buy if you don't use them until Next Winter.

**Special Bargains in Black and Colored Silks, Velvets, Plushes, Satins**

And DRESS GOODS. Such bargains will not be offered again.

**VERY DECIDED BARGAINS IN LACES AND MADE-UP LACE GOODS.**

**OUR CARPET and UPHOLSTERY DEPARTMENTS**

Are full of Choice new Goods at Prices Lower than any other House.

All our Novelties and Fancy Goods leftover from the Holidays we have marked to sell for one-half former price

All of these goods are yet on exhibition on Second Floor. Look at the Assortment and if they please you we will name the right price.

**B. LOWENSTEIN & BROS.**

B

Figure 65. Lowenstein's Department Store. Courtesy Memphis Room, Memphis-Shelby County Public Library and Information Center.

A. The Lowenstein's building in 1886.

B. Lowenstein's advertisement from the 3 January 1885 Daily Appeal.





### Developing Role of the Interior Decorator

During the nineteenth century the foundations were laid for the modern interior design profession. Earlier in the century and before, the architect or the upholstery and cabinetmaking firms provided these services. From mid-century in large Eastern cities the specialist interior decorator made his appearance.

With the incredible proliferation of ready-made goods came the rise of a new breed of professional whose sole job it was to complete the interiors of a house after the architect and builder had left. Neither architects nor cabinetmakers, these men were quick to realize the potential of dispensing advice on household decorations.<sup>26</sup>

During the 1870s the Aesthetic Movement with its emphasis on artistic interiors fostered an even greater need for interior decorating authorities as well as the large outpouring of their interior decorating guide books. Rhoda and Agnes Garrett explained the role of the modern decorator as follows:

Until lately a house-decorator has meant simply a man who hangs paper and knows mechanically how to paint wood. In his proper place he would fulfill the part which a dispenser does to a doctor; he should be able faithfully to follow directions and honestly to carry out instructions and as a rule this role he is able to fulfill. But a decorator should mean someone who can do more than this; he should be able to design and arrange all the internal fittings of a house, the chimney pieces, grates, and door heads, as well as the mantel hangings, curtains, carpets, and furniture.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup>H. Ward Jandl, "George Platt, Interior Decorator (1812-1873)," The Magazine Antiques (June 1975), 1154.

<sup>27</sup>Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting, Woodwork, and Furniture (London: Porter & Coates, 1877), 5, Special Collections, Strong Museum, Rochester, New York.

By late century interior decorating specialists could be found in large cities across America. Fresco artists, wallpaper dealers, and upholsterers also advertised as interior decorators. Decorators did not make their appearance in Memphis until after the turn of the century and even then they were usually dealers in paper, drapery, or upholstery who advertised as decorators. The 1902 Memphis city directory lists "Price & Boyer, Interior Decorators," and the 1906 directory lists "DuVal, Barnum & Gottlieb, Interior Decorators--Correct Period Decorations."<sup>28</sup> Both were primarily wallpaper dealers.

No written or oral evidence survives as to whether or not the Neelys or Mallorys received any assistance in their decorating. Oral tradition suggests that Mr. Neely made most of the decisions and selections himself. The Neelys and Mallorys very likely received advice from local decorator/dealers or those in other cities in the selection of specific items for their home such as wallpaper, paint colors, or upholstery.

---

<sup>28</sup>R. L. Polk & Co.'s Classified Business Directory of Memphis, Tennessee (Memphis: R. L. Polk & Co., 1902), 1215, and R. L. Polk & Co.'s Memphis City Directory (Memphis: R. L. Polk & Co., 1906), 1748.