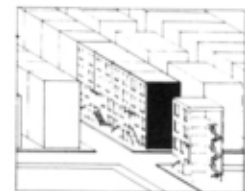


RURAL & URBAN HOUSE TYPES

IN NORTH AMERICA

"We have built for this world a family mansion, and for the next a family tomb. The best works of art are the expression of man's struggle to free himself from this condition, but the effect of our art is merely to make this low state comfortable and that higher state to be forgotten. There is actually no place in this village for a work of fine art, if any had come down to us, to stand, for our lives, our houses and streets, furnish no proper pedestal for it. There is not a nail to hang a picture on, nor a shaft to receive the bust of a hero or a saint. When I consider how our houses are built and paid for, or not paid for, and their internal economy managed and sustained, I wonder that the floor does not give way under the visitor while he is admiring the gewgaws upon the mantel-piece, and let him through into the cellar, to some solid and honest, though earthly foundations."

-Henry David Thoreau, 1854



STEVEN HOLL

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Pamphlet by Mark Janson.

INTRODUCTORY

This pamphlet is one of a series of catalogues probing for the fundamental properties of American architecture. It follows *The Alphabetical City, Pamphlet Architecture #5*, which investigated the relation of urban building types to the gridded city. Both of these pamphlets are based on material gathered according to building types, but otherwise, without an a-priori theory. Buildings are examined and compared with the aim of illuminating a cultural logic which transcends a regional one.

The intent of this investigation is dual: first, it reviews a diversity of American house types which offer a framework for thinking about alternatives to the suburban tract house; second, it pursues an understanding of simple, idiosyncratic house forms for underlying typological and conceptual principles. The latter aim is a search for the logic in America's inventive and untutored architectural beginnings.

The houses collected here are not the most typical in North America, nor are the examples intentionally focused on a particular historical period. However, the 18th, 19th and early 20th century houses selected provide the most thought provoking typological organization. This pamphlet is divided according to rural and urban house types; in both divisions houses are arranged in order of complexity beginning with the simplest forms.

S. Holl December, 1982

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FOUNDATIONS: AMERICAN HOUSE TYPES

Even in a cursory study of American house types, it is important to focus on basic forms to achieve an understanding of more complex and sophisticated ones. Just as rhythm and melody are considered basic to the study of music, so too is the elemental interrelation of plan and section in building type fundamental to the study of architecture. If syncopation and triadic harmony should be suspended from the elementary music lesson, so should complicated variations in style be suspended from an elementary architectural analysis. In comparing and studying American vernacular architecture, American folklorists, historians and geographers have, for several decades, used the tool of typological classification. This method, which analyzes and organizes buildings according to type, has recently re-emerged as an analytical tool in current architectural theory.

In numerous papers and field research, historian Fred Kniffen has stressed the distinctions in methods of study of American houses. The typical architectural historian's interest is, according to Kniffen, "in superficial treatment that may disguise a single old and fundamental form as generally Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival or Gothic . . ." Professor Kniffen, tenaciously ignoring criticism that America's brevity of historical time span rendered its history inconsequential, carried forward a typological approach in studying American vernacular architecture. Kniffen's field experiences and observations began in the 1930s with mostly unchronicled American house forms.

He observed and later presented several recurring typological continuities in rural houses. Preferring the cultural uniformity of the rural dwelling, Kniffen wrote: "There are, architecturally speaking, two cultures, rural and urban."

Beginning from a different perspective, similar conclusions were made by Edna Scofield in her 1936 article on Tennessee house types when she wrote: "A purely natural landscape is one which has never been occupied by man. An area which is unified upon the basis of the way in which man has used and transformed the natural landscape is a cultural landscape." Scofield attempted to define house types within a cultural geography comparable to a classification of species in the natural sciences. Sighting the simple one room house as the seed from which nearly all house have sprung, she wrote: "The original one room house represents the origin of a given species, for there are species of houses, and also different varieties of a given species."

Typology, in the work of these cultural historians, was arrived at in an a-posteriori way, from field observations of various recurring indigenous houses. This method is distinct from the academic propositions of architectural classification found in the work of such important theorists as Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand (1760-1834). Durand's inductively defined building "genres" were the result of an a-priori derivation and were meant to serve as models.

The houses in this pamphlet are not meant to serve as models. They are presented collectively in order to illuminate a cultural and architectural interrelationship. 19th century interest in typology was a product of the belief that there could be a universal theory of architecture which would apply to all buildings, in all places, for all times. This investigation seeks to use typology in a more modest way within a relative view of culture. In America, for example, there is the ideal that each human holds the rights of equality. Within this conceptual setting, there emerges a struggle for each being to express individuality. The houses of such a cultural milieu are therefore conceived from more than the context of a specific region or neighborhood—they are conceived, as well, from an abstract concept in the mind. Suggesting an abstract context and an unconscious logic behind the derivation of these house forms is more the intent here than presenting model house of definitive causation. With this in mind, the houses selected strain the academic sense of the word "type."

The houses collected here exhibit a simplicity and integrity of construction and expression which link them to modern architecture. The materials of construction retain a visible and tactile connection to their natural state. Ornament is sparse and directly related to the craft of working the materials in which it occurs. Henry Glassie, who has extensively analysed American folk housing in several excellent books has observed: "The folk designer anticipated by nearly two centuries the Bauhaus master's call for architectural honesty, for adherence to impersonal type forms and the rejection of ornamental obfuscation." Glassie illuminates the dominance of geometrical ideas in the silent artifacts of indigenous rural houses the way a composer/analyst might discover the fundamental dotted dance rhythm or the structure of melodies with imperfect cadence in a folk song.

The links between modern and folk architecture are comparable to those between modern and folk music and the latter were observed by modern composers such as

Bela Bartok and Zoltan Kodaly. In architecture, as well as in music, form, rhythm, proportion and mathematics are of elementary importance, suggesting the possibility of comparable methods of study. The work of composer and musicologist Bela Bartok provides an example of a method of observation similar to that used in this study: When Bartok traveled over the Hungarian countryside collecting folk music, he had in mind not just the contemplation of the peasant's "pentatonic scale without semitones," or the "isometric verses of four lines." Bartok was interested in the permeation of modern music with genuine peasant music. Speaking of this he wrote: "We are concerned not only with achievements of purely scientific issues, but also those which have a stimulating effect on composers. According to the natural order of things, practice comes before theory."

In this brief study, the houses are arranged in two groups: rural and urban. The rural group examines various house forms built on rural landscapes. The urban group studies the relation of the house to the larger pattern of the city. Whereas the latter condition depends on the contiguous interlocking of houses within city blocks and streets; the former relies on the relationship of the house to the earth and the sky, on an unspoiled perspective of hills and trees revealing the isolated event of a house.

In the collection of rural houses, the variety of types share common principles: 1) a recurring plan/section schemata as the primary character, regardless of applied stylistic treatment; 2) adherence to geometric simplicity from overall mass to elements such as porches, windows and doors; 3) proportion of detail to mass, rendering detail subordinate to mass; 4) ornamentation which is directly developed from craft, construction and the nature of materials.

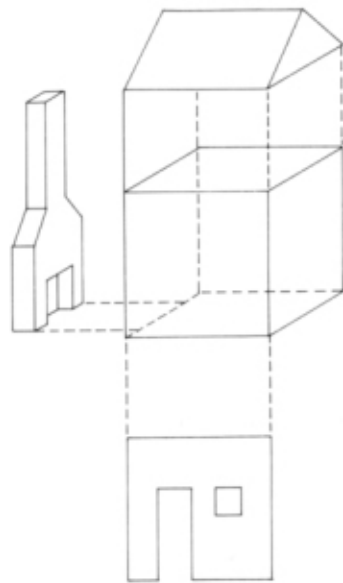
In the collection of urban house types, the common principles are: 1) definition of a public street or place; 2) three types of walls: public street facades; party or blind walls; and walls internal to the block or courtyard) 3) relation to an overall city plan or morphology.

RURAL HOUSES



ONE ROOM HOUSE

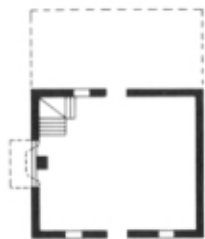
The basic one room house was constructed in different materials depending on the region or period in which it was built. Whether clapboard of New England, stone of Utah, brick of Virginia or sod of Nebraska, the nearly cubic form is common. Here the elements of door, window, chimney and roof are in a primary relation to the central form of the house. One room houses have been recorded in various dimensions yielding on the average a square of about 16'6" on a side. This tiny building block is termed simply "basic cottage" in the New England area, "basic tidewater" in the Chesapeake Bay area and "single pen" in areas typified by log construction.



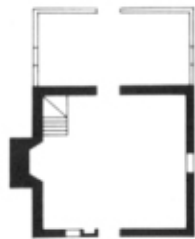
Elements of the one room house.



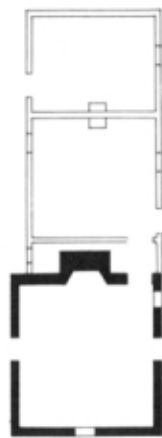
Sappington house,
Howard Co., Mo.



Boone Co., Mo.



Martin house,
Audrain Co., Mo. 1850.



Kivett farm,
Howard Co., Mo. c. 1840.



Northampton Co., Va.



Virginia Valley.



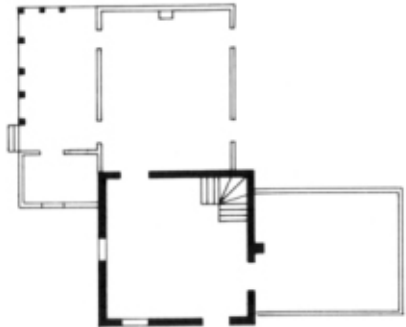
Martin house, Audrain Co., Mo. 1850.



Wilkens house, N.C.

STACK HOUSE

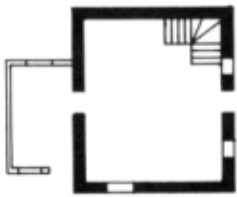
Also called "one over one" and "one up and one down," the stack house is a vertical extension of the one room house. Considered by some historians as one third of a central hall "I" type—this type usually has one chimney centered on the gable end. (Any chimney must extend above the highest point of a roof for the fireplace to draw smoke properly.) Usually the stack house type has its entry centered between two windows on the lower level with windows aligned above them on the second level. Winder stairs located in one corner are typical in the constrained space and are often partially enclosed.



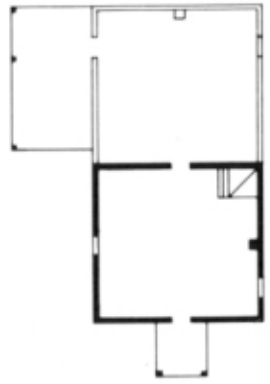
Baldwin house, Callaway Co., Mo.



Stack house.



Jake Straw house, Callaway Co., Mo.



Wells house, Howard Co., Mo.

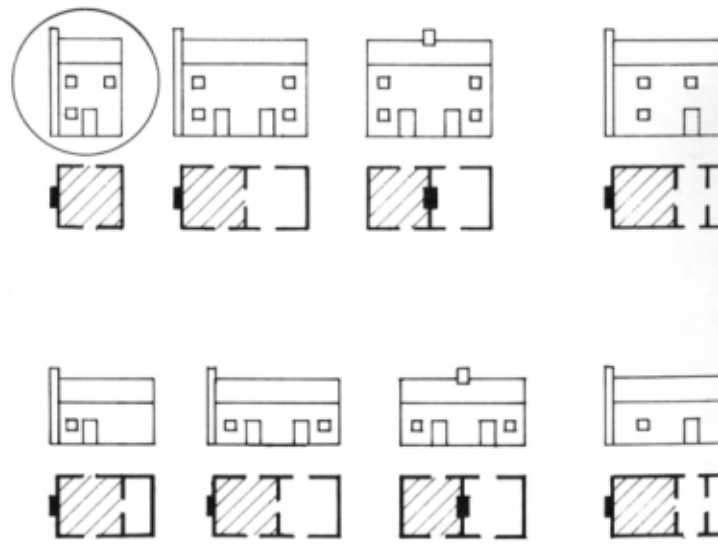


Callaway Co., Mo.

5



Slayden house, Virginia, 18th C.



The stack house represents a first phase of transformation from the one room house.

SADDLEBAG HOUSE

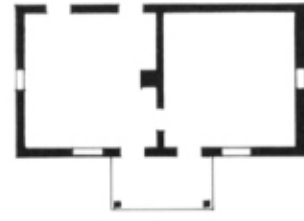
This common house type has been called saddlebag type, simple two room type or (in log construction) double pen type. The saddlebag name originates from the analogy of the two rooms, which straddle the central mass of the chimney, to saddlebags.

Some of these houses were the result of building end additions onto the fireplace wall on a basic one room house. When constructed all at once the house often had a symmetrical front elevation. When the form was the result of additions, the house was often assymmetrically fronted.

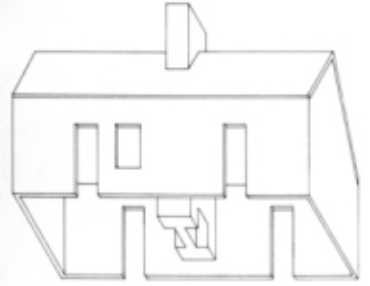
In this house type, the basic impulse toward giving the free-standing house an identifiable front is evident. Frontality is achieved not only through the location of the front door or porch, but through the attention to composition: alignment of windows, proportion of blank wall surfaces and the relation of these to the geometry of the roof. While rear and side windows are more freely arranged, the front exhibits attention to the composition. Frontality here is the result of intuitive logic. In the urban house it is a necessary condition.



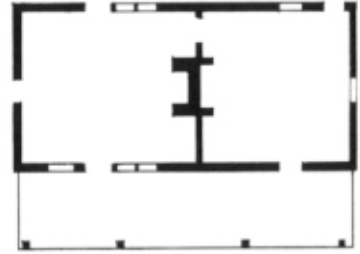
Vandeventer house, Monroe Co., Mo.



Audrain Co., Mo. c. 1915.



Up-turned saddlebag.



Moses Payne house, Howard Co., Mo.



Virginia, 19th C.



Virginia, 19th C.

DOGTROT HOUSE

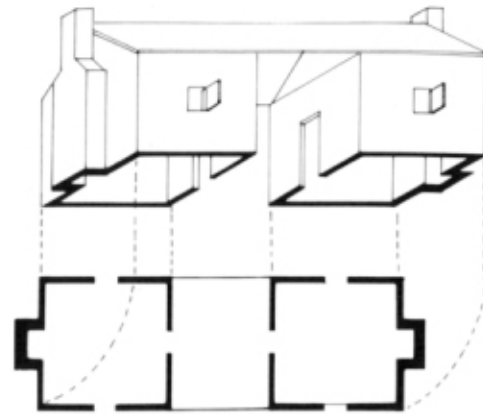
The dogtrot house consists of two equal one story rooms on either side of a central hall joined by a common gable roof. In some examples there is a sleeping loft in the roof over the central hall (which is an open passage) and in others the open passage passes through a two story house. The dogtrot or "possum trot" was named by early observers who saw the purpose of the passage as an animal shelter—a place where dogs could run through the house. This type was prevalent in the South and Southwest, where the passage also functioned as a shady breezeway where meals could be taken in hot weather.

Richard Hulan in an article for *Pioneer America* writes: "The true dogtrot house is not so much a way of framing space as a way of living in space. Thus many dogtrots have been closed up and have become central-hall houses; but a few central-hall houses have been opened up, becoming dogtrots. If the typical Cumberland settler cooked on the left, ate in the passage, and slept on the right, the typical tidewater central-hall dweller probably did not; he may have had a dog in the hall, but not a possum or a turkey. On the other hand, there are many (and were more) two-story houses in Tennessee, the ground floor of which was lived in after the dog-possum-turkey-trot manner; the architecture says 'I' house, but the tracks on the floor say dogtrot. And a dogtrot by any other name, still smells like a dogtrot."

The dogtrot was also described by Mark Twain in *Huckleberry Finn*: "It was a double house, and a big open place betwixt them was roofed and floored, and sometimes the table was set there in the middle of the day, and it was cool, comfortable place." When approaching this type of house, the view through the opening onto the landscape beyond emphasizes the center of gravity of the house. The recurring nature of the type cannot be given a purely functional explanation. The clarity of the void which distinguishes this simple scheme is an emblem of its enigmatic character.



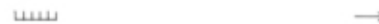
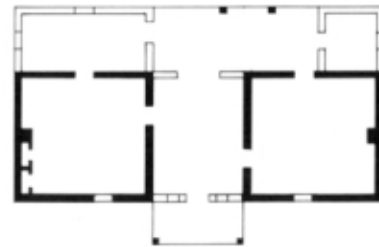
Antecedent: primitive European construction.



Up-turned dogtrot.



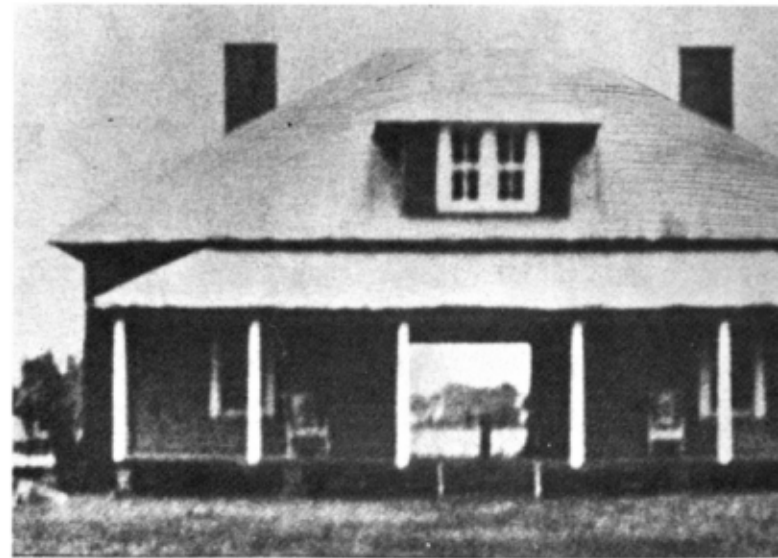
George house, Monroe Co., Fl. c. 1832.



Audrain Co., Mo. 19th C.



Tennessee



Alabama

"I" TYPE HOUSE

These very common structures (also called two over two houses) were first termed "I" houses in the 1930s after the cultural historian Fred Kniffen noted the incidence of their recurrence in Illinois, Indiana and Iowa as well as their narrow "I"-like profile. One room deep and two stories high, the narrow plan made light and ventilation properties especially flexible.

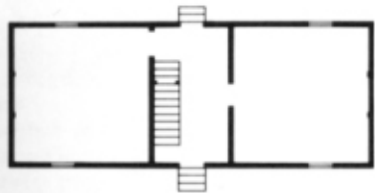
Because of the abundant wall surface available for windows on the long side, the end walls are often windowless.

Some historians suggest that this building type was popular because it served as a symbol of achievement. It presents the largest possible façade for a four room house. The ambitious farmer usually positioned the front wall to face the nearest road, regardless of sun orientation.

While few pure examples of the "I" type exist, many exist with various rear additions.



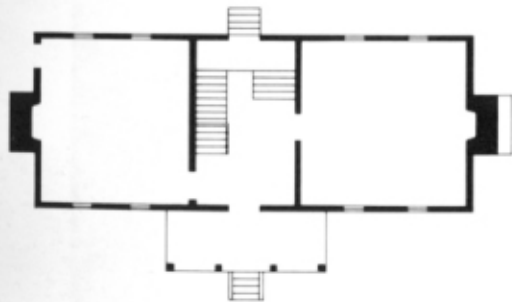
"I" type house exploded.



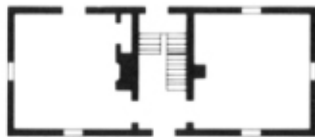
Virginia, 19th C.



Augusta Co., Va.



Rigsby house, Va. c. 1770.



Pendleton Co., Kt.



Mitchell house, Franklin Co., N.C. c. 1820.



Foster house, Franklin Co., N.C.



Young house, Vance Co., N.C. 19th C.



Pinet house, Callaway Co., Mo.

TELESCOPE HOUSE

A telescope or "spyglass" house has three main characteristics: 1) roof lines that are all about the same pitch; 2) outside walls making nearly regular setbacks in a progression of adjoining masses; 3) overall form is in descending masses such that "theoretically the sections of the building could collapse neatly into each other." In a pure telescope type, the size of the window opening is directly proportional to the building mass in which it occurs. Fireplace chimneys are generally located on the wall of adjoining segments.

These houses were developed for over two centuries from the 1630s to the 1850s in the Chesapeake Bay area and to a lesser extent in the northern New England area. The obvious cause for this house form was the need for expansion. It seems that the form came naturally into being when the addition of a new wing was aligned with the existing house—rhythmically increasing or decreasing in size. It is evident in most examples that additions were not "stuck on" but carefully planned by the builder for whom rhythm and proportion were intuitively important.

Historians have noted the enigmatic characteristics of the type. While some houses were constructed in an order A-B-C ("A" being the smallest section and "C" being the largest), other houses were constructed C-B-A. Still others were constructed with the middle portion first in the sequence B-C-A. Finally the telescope type has also been found with all sections built at the same time. The telescope house is a model; not of cause and effect, but of the essential puzzle of house type and its replication.



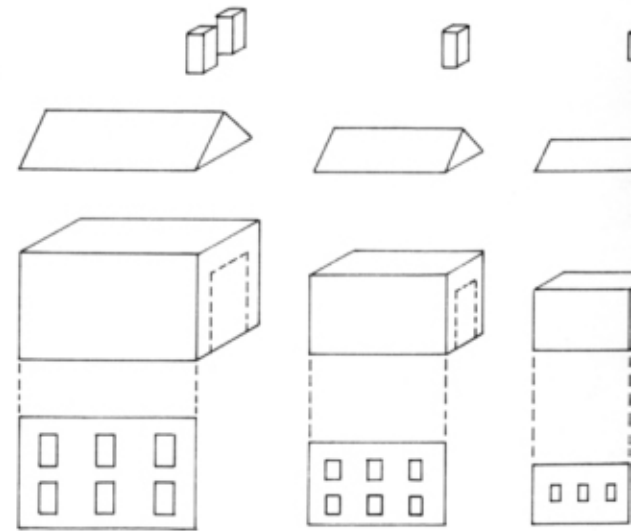
Proportional Study.



Mount Airy, Harborton, Va., 1849.



Hard Bargain, Charles Co., Md., c. 1780.



Analysis indicated relations of relative masses and proportion of window to relative

HIGHWAY HOUSE

Highway houses began with the shopkeeper-above-the-store mode as it was adapted to the selling of gasoline. As automobiles proliferated, service stations grew into chain industries, causing this building type to disappear.

The first two of three examples shown here (from Western New Jersey) function today as dwellings and service stations. The last example has an even more complex connection to the rural transportation network: It drops fifty feet into the ravine beyond with a door opening to a freight rail line.



21



22



23



Highway house.

Highway houses in western New Jersey.

PLANTATION HOUSE

The plantation type or galleried house, with open galleries running across one or more sides, is common in the Southeast, especially in Louisiana. Examples of the house have been built in various places as remote as South Dakota. The galleries are not applied to the completed house form, rather the composition is a geometric whole from which galleries have been recessed. In some cases the gallery serves as the only corridor connecting rooms and eliminating internal corridors. The gallery and floor serve as solar controls, screening walls from sun and reducing glare. The open galleries on the second, main living level afford ample space for shaded sitting in hot and humid weather, as well as an elevated view of the predominantly flat surrounding landscape.

There are many variations of the type (see diagrams) as well as many styles of execution, yet these houses are distinctly identified by the subordination of the parts to the whole. The two major characteristics of overall geometric purity together with lightness and repetition of elements make the building type similar to a modern open plan type with comparable flexibility.

Louisiana houses are raised above the ground to prevent dampness in the living area. Even in the smaller one-story house in the damp South, the ground floor is raised two or three feet on brick piers (see shotgun house type). In his 1948 paper on Louisiana architecture Buford Pickens wrote, "In other times and places, notable architects, among others Palladio, Wright, and Le Corbusier, have all used the 'raised cottage' idea, but in Louisiana it is prescribed by nature."



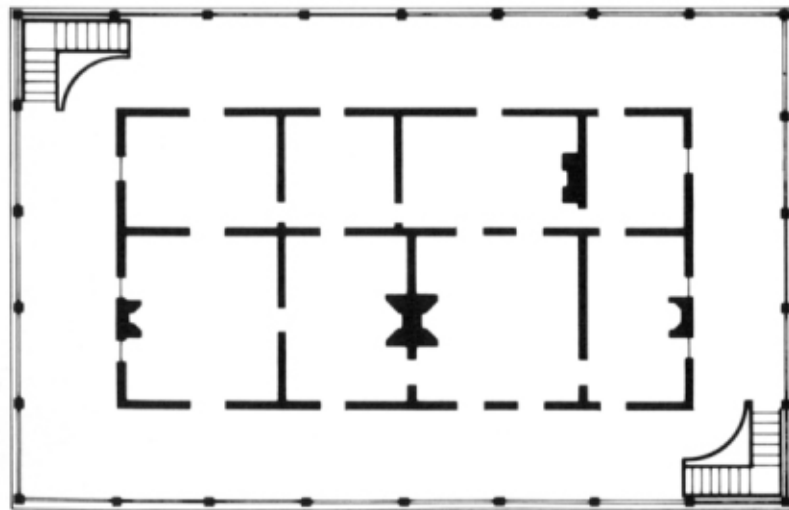
Homeplace Plantation. Section.



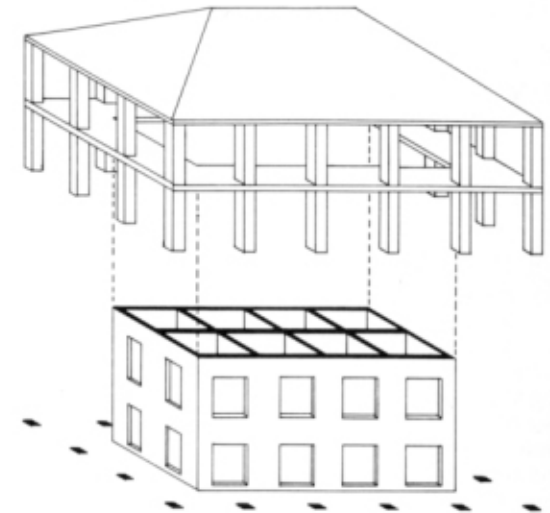
Homeplace Plantation, St. Charles Parish, La. c. 1801.

Homeplace Plantation, Plan.

24



|||||



Plantation house exploded.



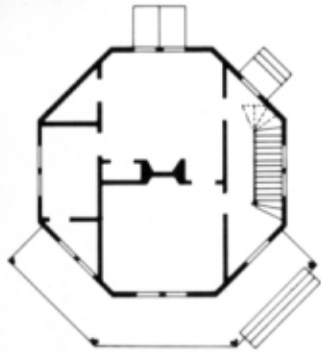
Wavertree, Tensas Parish, La., c. 1860.

OCTAGON HOUSE

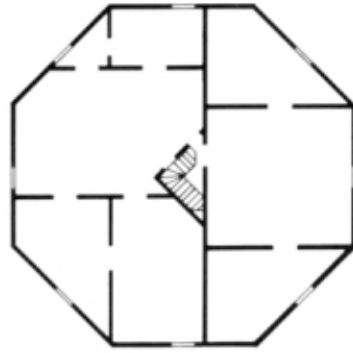
In 1848, Orson S. Fowler, a phrenologist, published a book titled *A Home For All, or The Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building*. Fowler proposed the octagon as the ideal house form for several reasons including the utilization of a minimum exterior wall for maximum enclosed area. In the decade following the book's publication, nearly 1000 octagon houses were built. In Vermont, New York, Wisconsin, Mississippi, California and Utah the building type was adapted to local climate and built in every conceivable material.

In his 200 page book, Fowler gives details and arguments as to why his gravel wall building material is superior to all others. The lime and coarse gravel wall, "hardens with age, enables poor men to build their own houses, is abundant everywhere as any size of stones can be used . . . all the way along up to stones the size of fist or head." Fowler predates Louis Sullivan and Adolf Loos in his argument for purposeful form: "Everything in nature is the perfection of beauty, yet is any single useless ornament found throughout all her works?"

Although the octagonal building has occurred historically in such buildings as the Chapter House of York and Westminster and the Baptistry in Florence, some historians cite Fowler's as the first true innovation in American domestic building types.



Octagon cottage from Fowler's book.



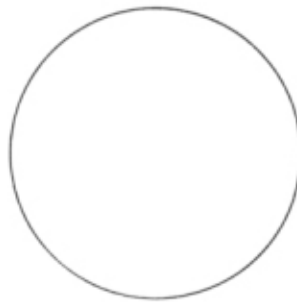
"Third Story of the Sixteen-foot Octagon", by Fowler.



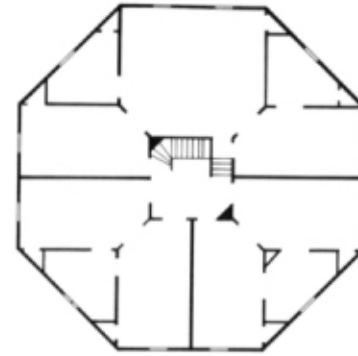
The long & narrow form.



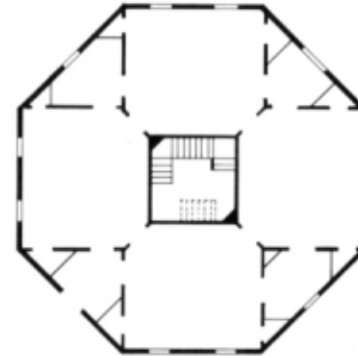
The square form.



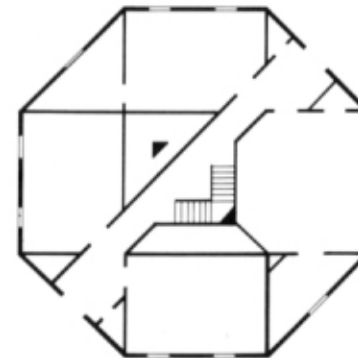
The circular form.



"Best Plan", Second Story, by Fowler.



"Best Plan", First Story, by Fowler.



"Best Plan", Basement Story, by Fowler.



Homer, Cortland Co., N. Y.

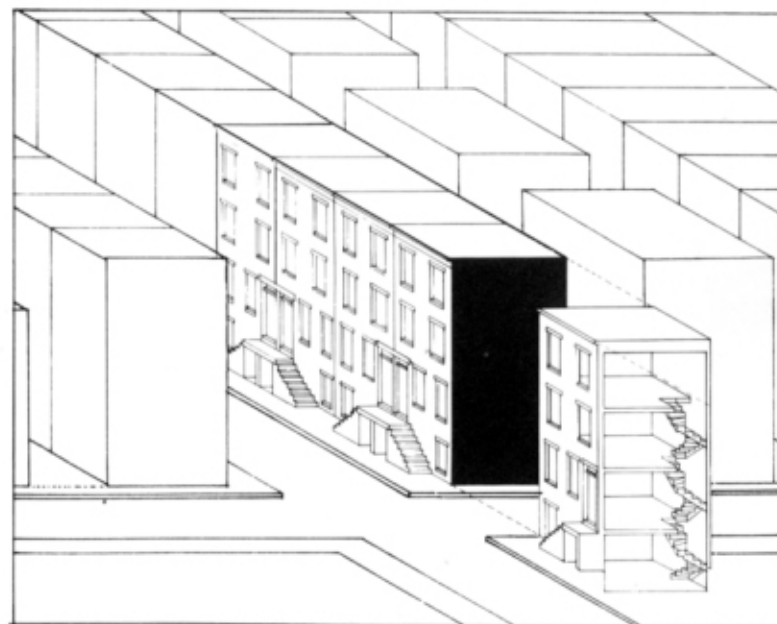


Delanson, Schenectady Co.



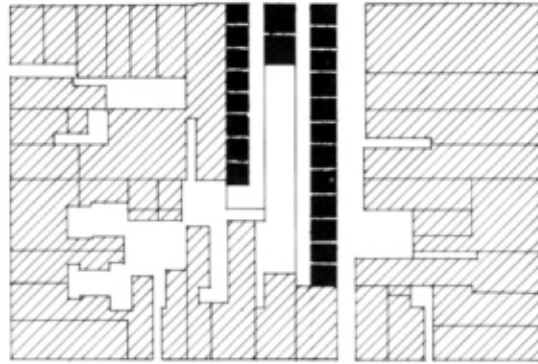
Greene, Chenango Co., N. Y.

URBAN HOUSES

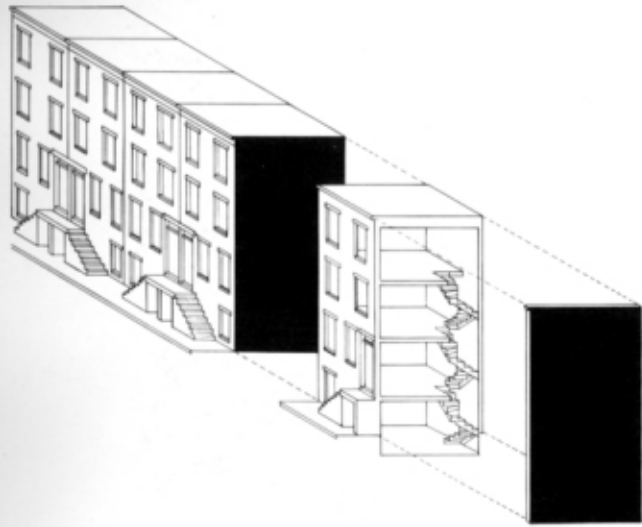


FATHER-SON-HOLY GHOST HOUSE

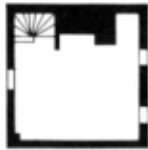
The Father-Son-Holy Ghost house type (also known as the bandbox type) developed on the interior blocks of Philadelphia on lots sized 13' x 20'. This building type dates from c. 1750. Each building has one room per floor and is three or four floors high. Some buildings on Manning Street in Philadelphia have five levels: 1) sub basement, 2) kitchen at a half-level below the street, 3) living room, 4) bedroom and bathroom, 5) bedroom. The stacked arrangement of single rooms of this building type makes it the vertical equivalent of the railroad or shotgun type.



Waverly Street, Philadelphia, Pa.



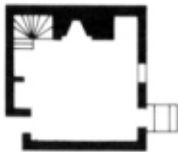
Father-Son-Holy Ghost exploded.



Third level



Second level



First level



Basement level



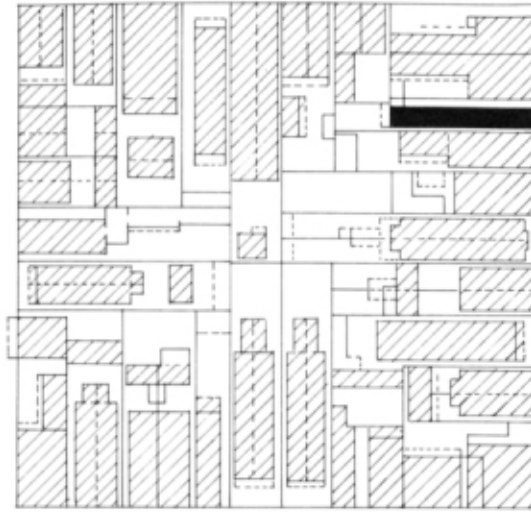
Rodman Street, Philadelphia.



Waverly Place, Philadelphia, Pa.

SHOTGUN HOUSE

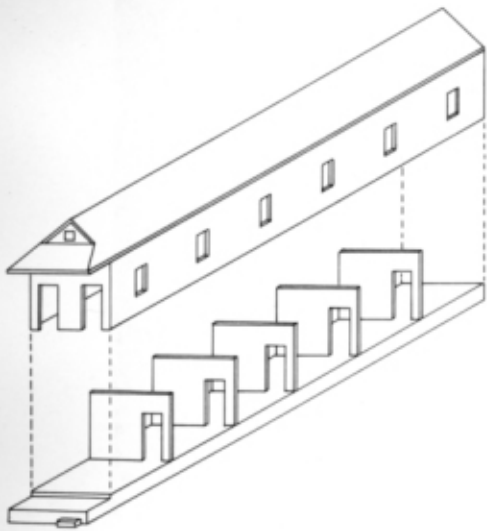
The Shotgun House Type is quite developed in New Orleans, but can be found in other states as well, especially Texas. The large square blocks of the New Orleans city layout and the narrow lot divisions conditioned the development of a house form with one room aligned behind another. The name derived from the idea that in the straight through floor plan a shotgun could be fired through the house unimpeded and emerge from the rear. It is interesting to note that superstitions developed concerning spirits moving in the same penetrating way through the house. In some cases a plan with shifting alignments of doors was purposefully made to prevent the penetration of evil spirits.



New Orleans block plan with shotgun, double shotguns.



Shotgun, New Orleans, La.



Shotgun exploded.



Two story shotgun, New Orleans, La.



New Orleans, La.

DOUBLE SHOTGUN HOUSE

The plan of a single Shotgun is one room wide usually with two openings in front. Double shotguns occur when two single shotguns are joined. In the latter form there are usually four openings across the front.

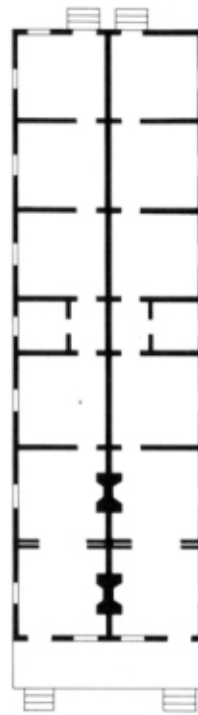
Three bay single shotguns (three openings across the streetfront) usually have a side gallery or an interior hallway.

Because of the close spacing of this type (usually four or six feet between houses) a street front definition occurs in a block of shotguns. The street definition, and resulting definition of public and private realms, places the New Orleans shotgun type in the category of urban house.



New Orleans, La.

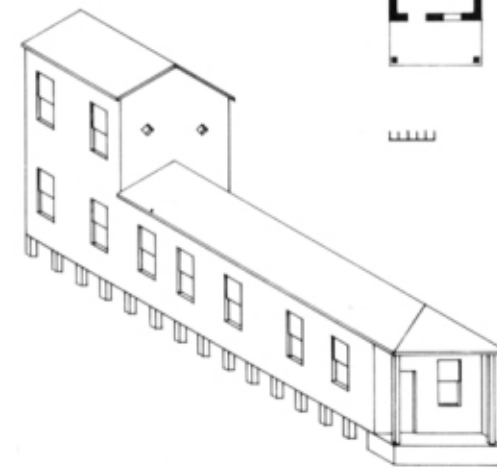
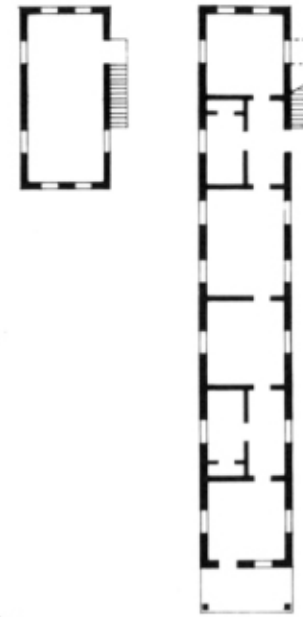
35



New Orleans, La.

CAMEL-BACK SHOTGUN HOUSE

The Camel-Back Shotgun developed when an additional room was added to the single shotgun. This room addition almost always occurred as a second story section sitting on the rear of the house because of city tax laws. While the city placed a higher tax value on two story houses, the camel back, because of its single story alignment with the street front, was regarded and taxed as a one story building.



Camelback shotgun.



New Orleans, La.



New Orleans, La.

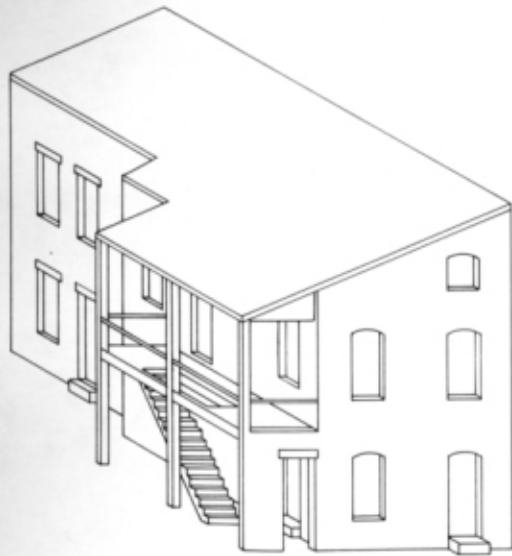
FLOUNDER HOUSE

An urban house form called "flounder," "half-house," or "half flounder" appears to be an accidental form but is actually a deliberate one with numerous examples in Old St. Louis, and Alexandria, Virginia.

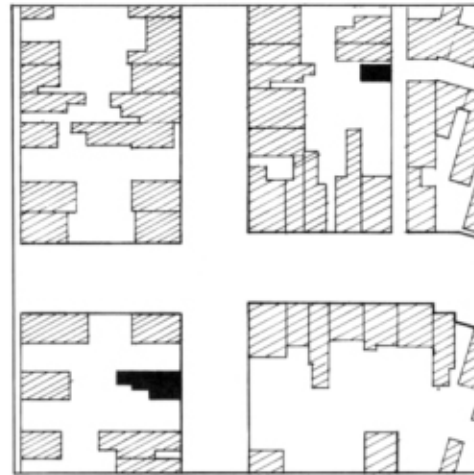
The houses, whose "half" character resembles that of a flounder—a half split down the center of the back—always have the long wall set on the side lot line. They are usually two stories high with a half-gable (shed) pitched from the party wall into the lot. This form, emphasizing the dividing wall, has been described as a variation on builder's row houses intended for contiguous repetition.

In Alexandria, there are several theories of its origin. One is that at the auctioning of land in 1749, the city required every buyer to build on his land within a two-year period or the lot was reverted to city ownership. Accordingly, flounder houses were built as wings of larger house plans which were never completed.

In St. Louis, the form was discussed in a *St. Louis Heritage* report: "The mystery of the half-house or half-flounder design may never be completely solved but one probable explanation is that the half-houses were built to shed roof rainwater to one side of the property." Another explanation for the form relates to city taxes (although there are no specific mentions in the 1811, 1861 and 1871 ordinances). Taxes on a half-house were assessed at half-rate.



Flounder house.



Geyer Av. & Rear Geyer Av., St. Louis.



Plan, Geyer Avenue, St. Louis, Mo.



Plan, Rear Geyer Avenue, St. Louis, Mo.



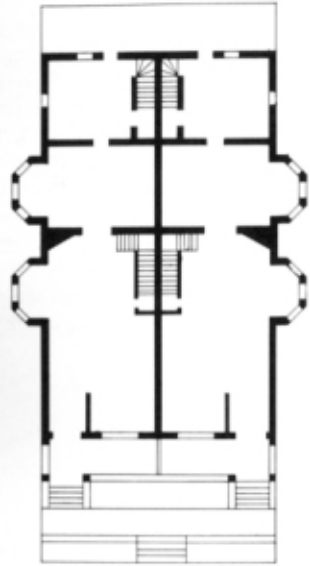
Flounder house, St. Louis, Mo.



Flounder house, St. Louis, Mo., view from behind.

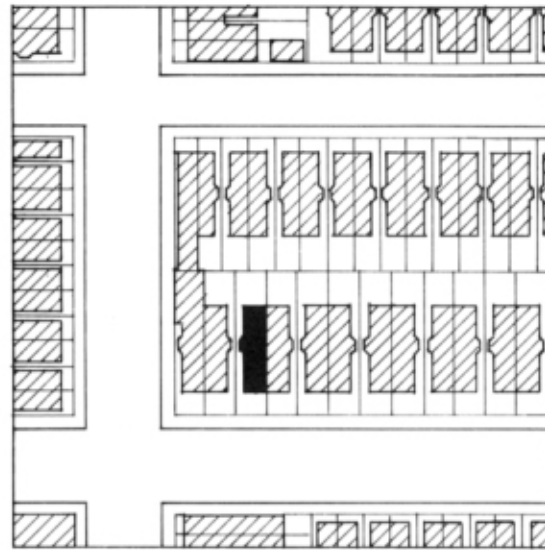
DOUBLE HOUSE

Double houses or semi-detached pairs of houses occur frequently in Toronto. These houses are clearly urban: their nearly contiguous character (usually four feet apart) creates a boundary of public street space. The front and back facades are differentiated (public facade, backyard facade) while the walls perpendicular to the street are similar to the typical blind party walls of row houses. As George Baird has pointed out, "In the case of semi-detached houses . . . the sides are differentiated between the party wall and the open side but are equivalent to one another."



|||||

Cedar Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa.



Cedar Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa.



Cedar Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa.



Toronto, Ontario.



Toronto, Ontario.



Toronto, Ontario.

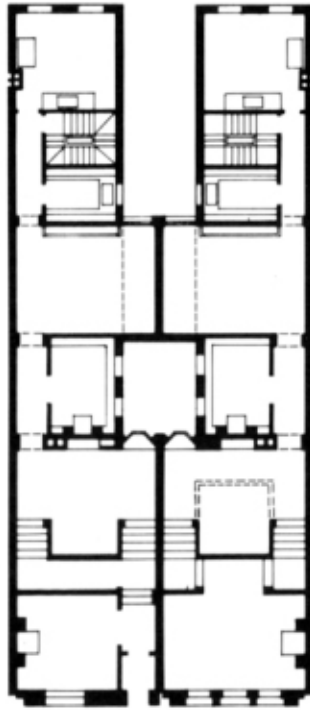


Double h

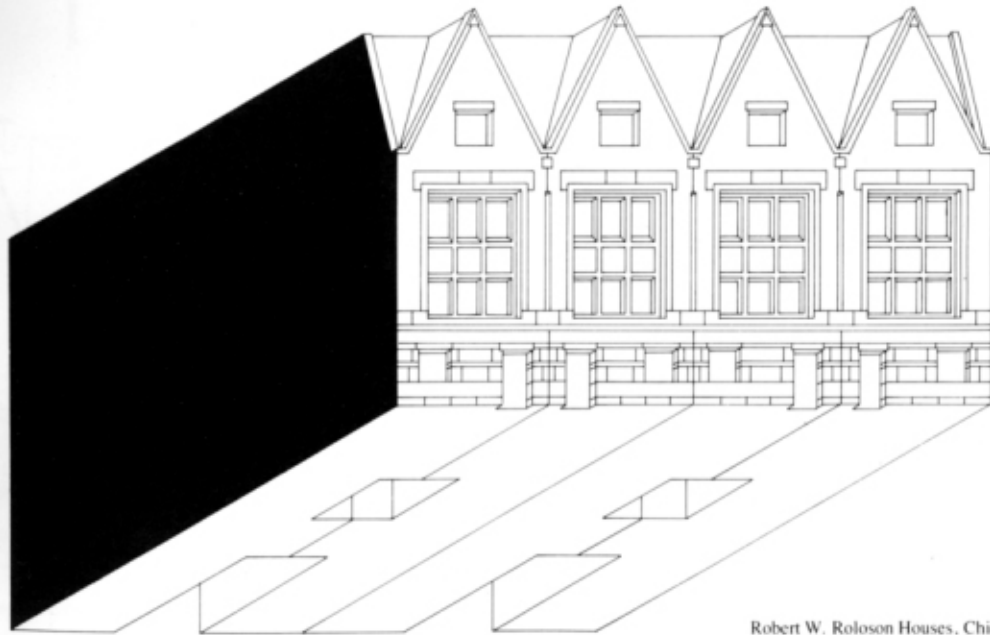
ROW HOUSES GROUP

Row houses with each house exhibiting a different character are typical in many North American cities. A more unique type is the row house group.

When a few contiguous lots, less than an entire block, are combined into a row house grouping, compositional rhythms emerge in the group. For example, in the Victor Falkenau houses in Chicago, Louis Sullivan combined three nearly identical plans to get an A-B-A reading of the composition of three houses. In another group of row houses in Chicago, Frank Lloyd Wright combined four houses in a single yet individualized grouping—AAAA.



LUUU

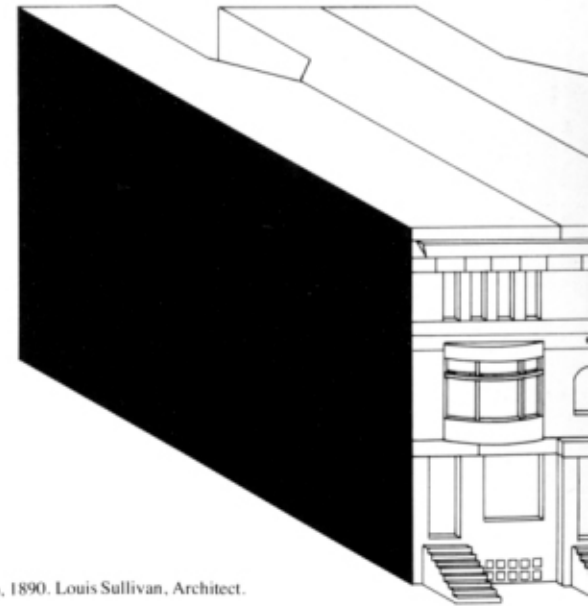
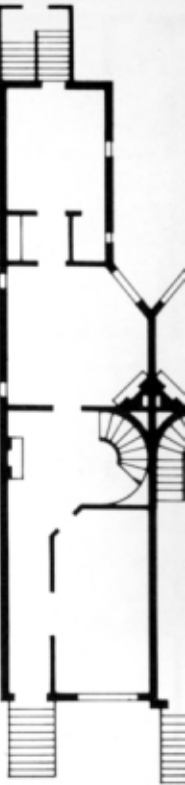


Robert W. Roloson Houses, Chicago, 1894.
Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect.

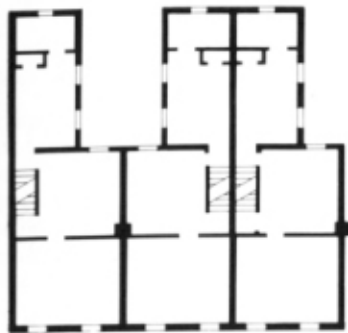


Victor Falkenau Residences.

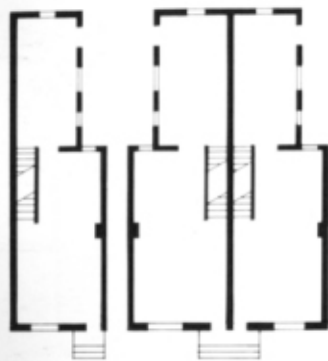
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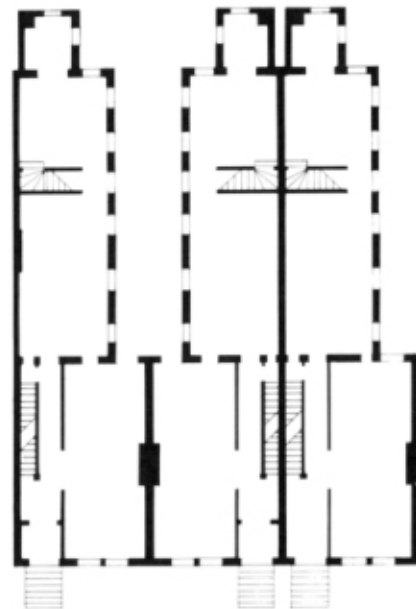
Victor Falkenau Residences, Chicago, 1890. Louis Sullivan, Architect.



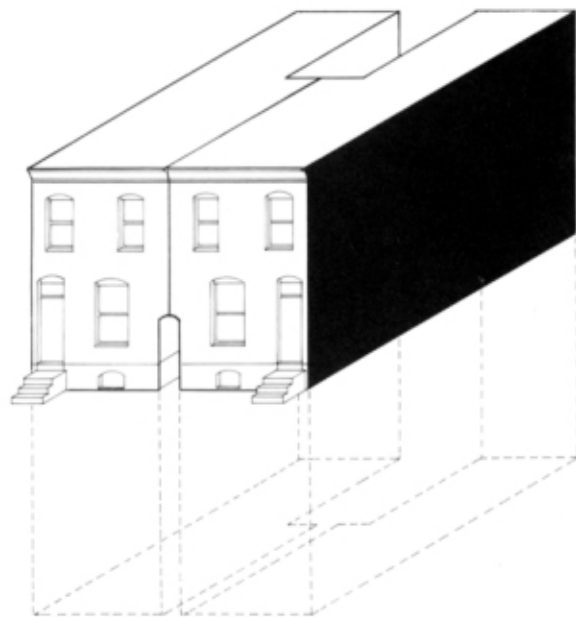
upper level



Reading, Pennsylvania.



Reading, Pennsylvania.



Passages between row houses in Reading, Pa., provide access to open spaces in the rear of the lot.



Reading, Pennsylvania.

44



Reading, Pennsylvania.



Passage, Reading, Pennsylvania.

46



Reading, Pennsylvania.

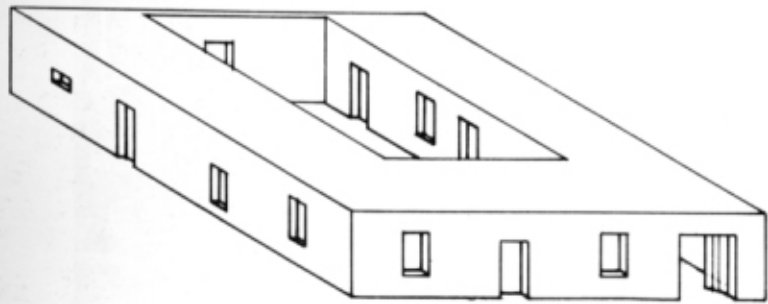
COURTYARD HOUSE

The courtyard house is a set of rooms that enclose and centrally focus upon an open space. The history of the type spans many cultures reaching a point of refinement in the Roman atrium house. Although predominantly an urban phenomenon, the courtyard house also appears in rural settings as a free-standing house.

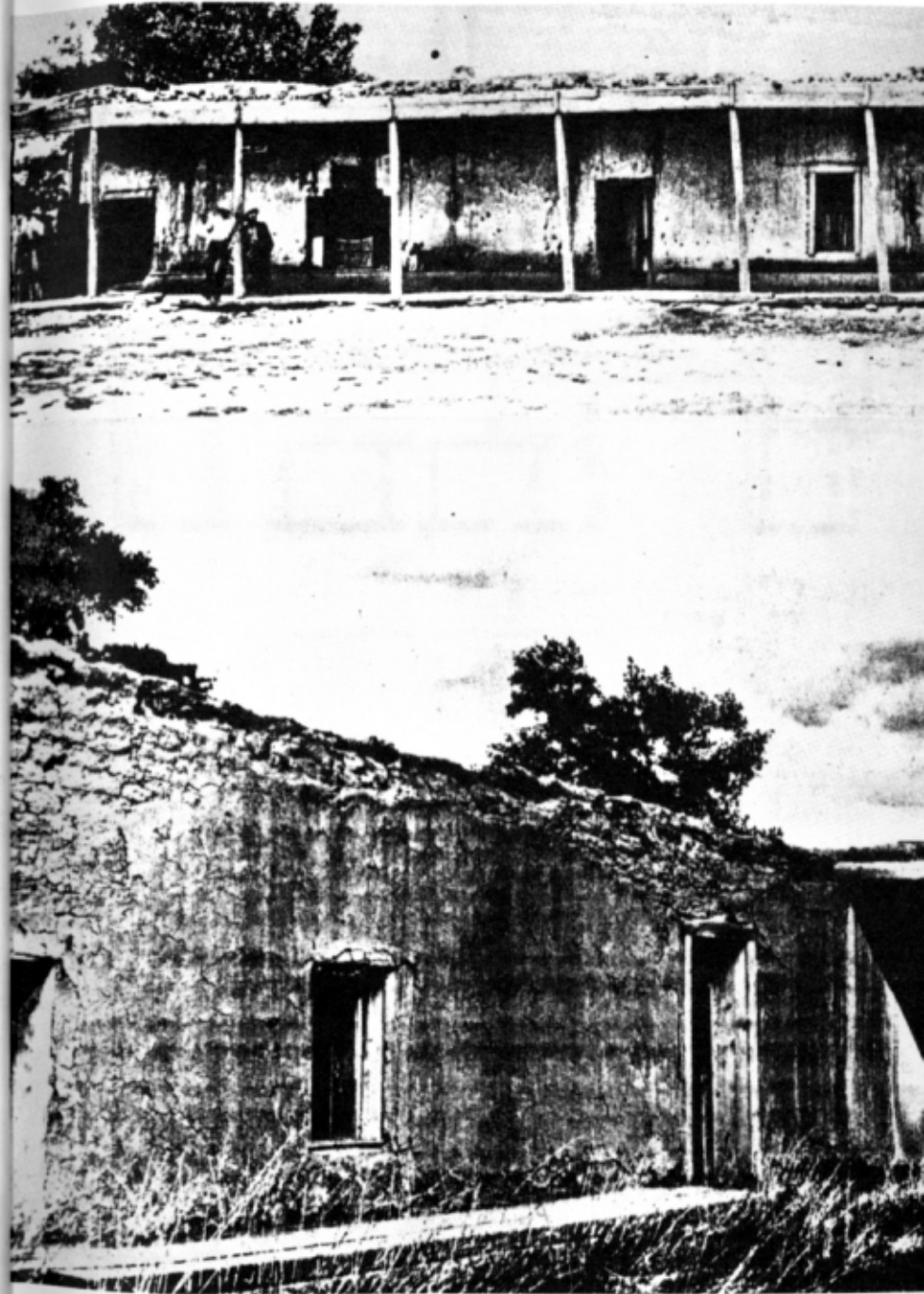
In America, many examples of free-standing courtyard houses may be found in New Mexico where they occur frequently as individual units of urban compounds that define the street walls of the cities. These houses have the characteristics of buildings commonly found in Spanish territories from Andalusia to Peru and Mexico. The main elements composing them are: the patio (placita), which is approached from a wide entry portal (zaguáy) having barred gates; a service courtyard sometimes attached to the house serving as a stable (corral) ringed by store-rooms. For defense purposes, many early New Mexico courtyard houses had no windows or openings in the outer walls except for those located in the main gateway. Later, when Indians were not hostile, windows were cut into the outside walls. Houses facing onto open air courtyards are of course not unique to the state of New Mexico. Many diverse examples can be found in Florida, Arizona and California.



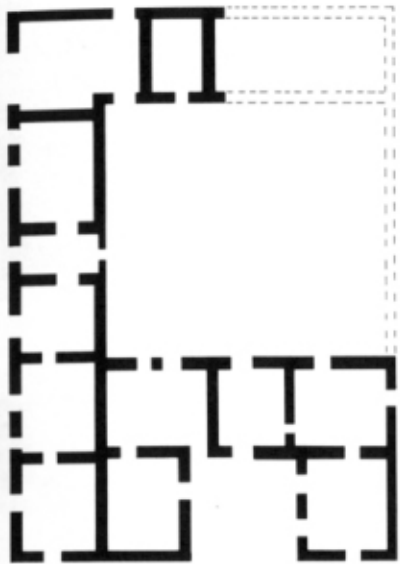
Santa Fe, c. 1846.



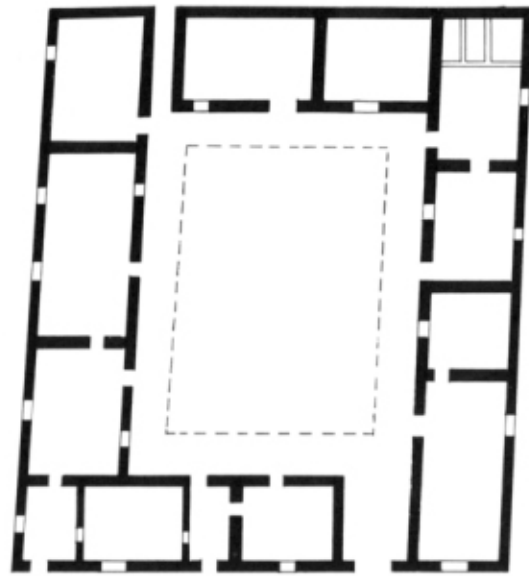
A courtyard house.



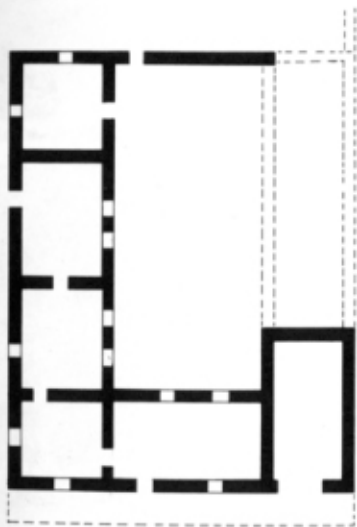
Pascual Martinez house. Front elevation and court.



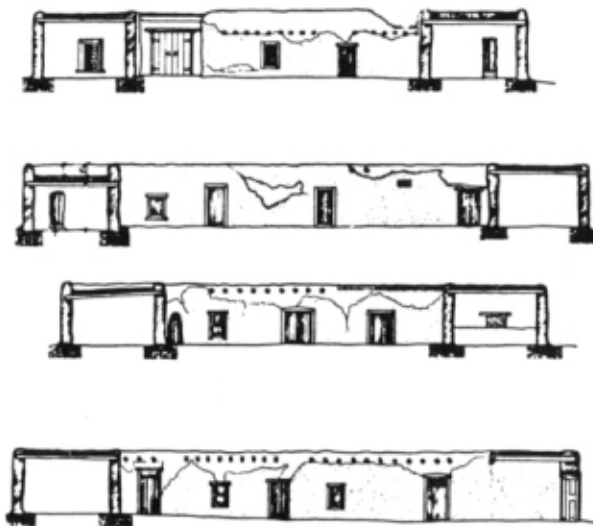
Jose Gregorio Valdez House,
Taos, New Mexico, c. 1834.



Pascual Martinez House, Taos, New Mexico, c. 1824.



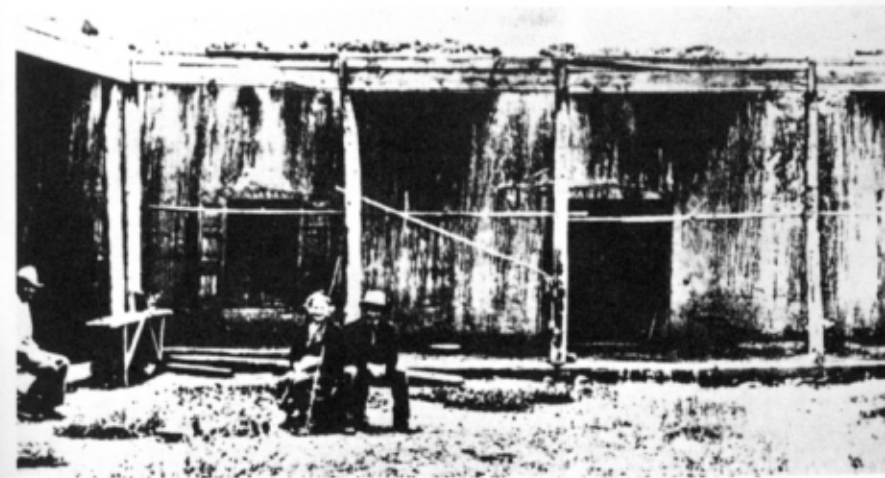
Jose Maria Martinez House,
Taos, New Mexico, c. 1833.



Pascual Martinez House, Section and court elevations



Pascual Martinez House, North Wall of Court.



Pascual Martinez House, West wall of court.

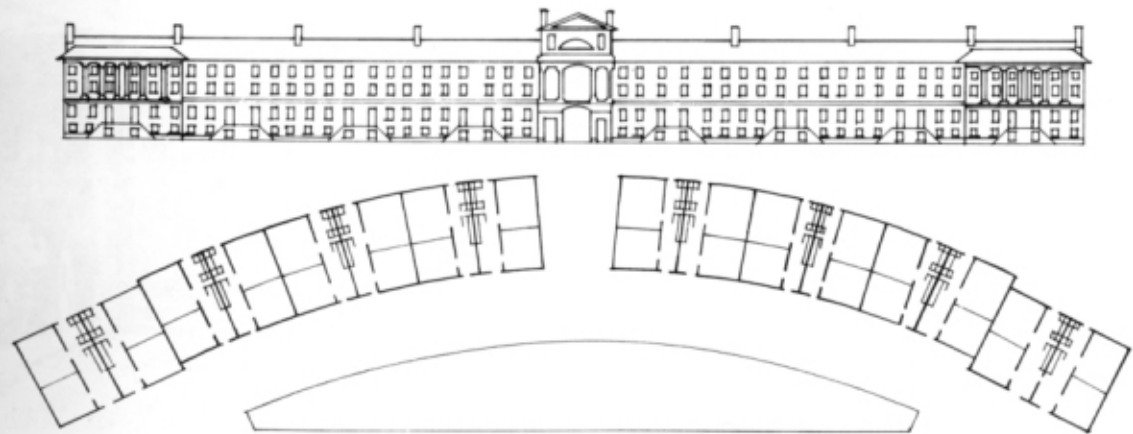
CONTINUOUS ROW HOUSES

The continuous row of identical houses forming a repetitive wall of façades along the street is a unifying house type that is rare in North American cities. In 1519 when Thomas More wrote *Utopia* he described this type of house in his ideal city: "The houses be of fair and gorgeous building, and on the street side they stand joined together in a long row through the whole street without any partition or separation . . . the houses be curiously builded after a gorgeous and gallant sort with three storeys one over another. The outsides of the walls be made wither of hard flint or of plaster, or with timber work. The roofs be plain and flat."

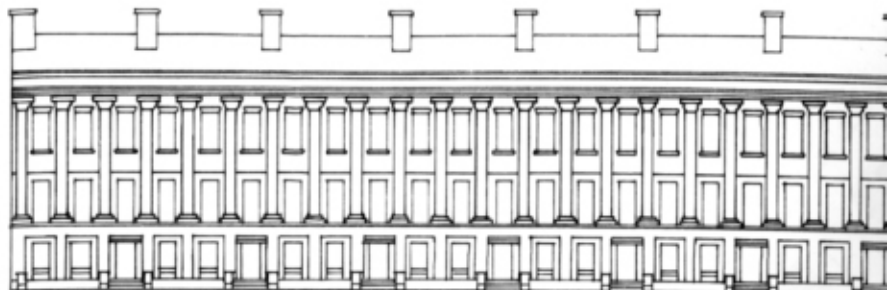
Examples of continuous row houses include the Gordon Block built in Savannah, Georgia in 1853, Scudders Row and John McDonough Row, also in Savannah. In New York, Colonnade Row, originally a row of nine houses, was built in 1833. Examples of the continuous row also exist in Buffalo, and Baltimore, Maryland.



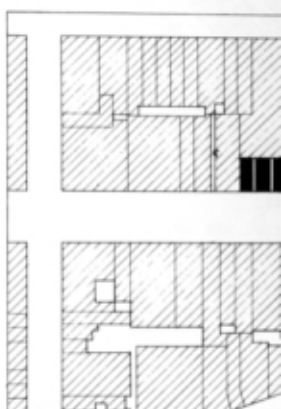
Franklin Place, Boston, Ma., 1793.



Franklin Place, Boston, Ma., 1793.



Colonnade Row, New York, 1833.



Colonnade Row, New York, 1833.

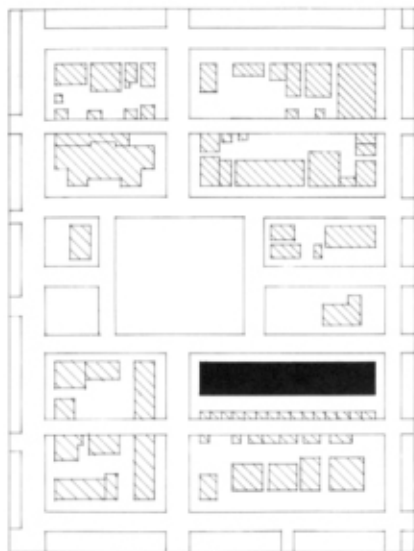


Gordon Block, 1853



1848.

form the edges of urban space in
Ga., and Louisburg Square in



Gordon Block, Savannah, Ga.

CONCLUDING NOTES

A spirit of geometry, a sense of independent thought, a consistent measure and proportion of detail, and an overall coherence in each house are all principal characteristics of these rural and urban house types.

Geometric simplicity is a persistent and unwavering characteristic which can be seen in even the most basic house form. With two doors, two windows and a fireplace, the one room house is a picture of geometric clarity, its cube form crisply cut into the steep triangular gable of the roof. Windows and doors are subordinated to the mass, being cut directly into it without elaboration around the openings. Even in the complex porch-surrounded plantation house, the geometric mass of the house is never obliterated or violated. The porch is not an added element, but part of an overall, nearly transparent whole which retains geometric absoluteness.

Simplicity of form is reinforced by the location of windows and doors in relation to the mass. In some cases, symmetry orders the location of windows, in others, a dissonant rhythm emerges. The dissonant window openings of the American rural house appeared to Thoreau, "as if each occupant had punched a hole where his necessities required." Windows and doors freely arranged on the surface of a wall without alignment and symmetry emphasize the overall wall rather than the subdivisions within it.

In looking at examples of American house types, it is interesting to observe, again and again, the choice of geometric rigor over complicated programmatic forces. Attention to simple elements and to an untheoretical sense of proportion underly the resulting strength of these works.

In describing how the carpenter-architect stuck to his model, often sacrificing certain physical needs to achieve geometric clarity, Henry Glassie has written: "The house is an expression of a cultural idea that valued the intellectual model over emotional need. It is not that the spaces provided by the house for human action were dysfunctional, but that the people were willing to endure chilly corners or rooms that may have felt a bit spacious or cramped in order to live in a house that was a perfect representation of an idea." In writing about the precedence given to the square form, Glassie goes on: "The squared volume was probably comfortably familiar, but it cannot be said that the designer was striving foremost to meet the need of personal space; clearly his major directive was to adhere to an intellectual model that demanded a specific geometric image." The compositional clarity and formal simplicity of vernacular houses was not an indulgence, but an important formal solution to spiritual as well as physical needs.

Proportion of detail to mass in these houses always has detail subordinated to the overall architectural form. Whether we are speaking of the glazed brick ends forming a "black diapering" pattern on the wall of a telescope house or the cypress detail work on the handrail of a plantation house, the relation of detail to mass is constant. The subordination of detail to mass has characterized the work of great architecture on a monumental scale in the works of H. H. Richardson or Louis Sullivan. Only in our present decade does this principle seem completely out of balance. We have, on one extreme, total absence of detail on unresolved constructions, and on the other, assemblages

with gross decorative elements, obliterating overall form.

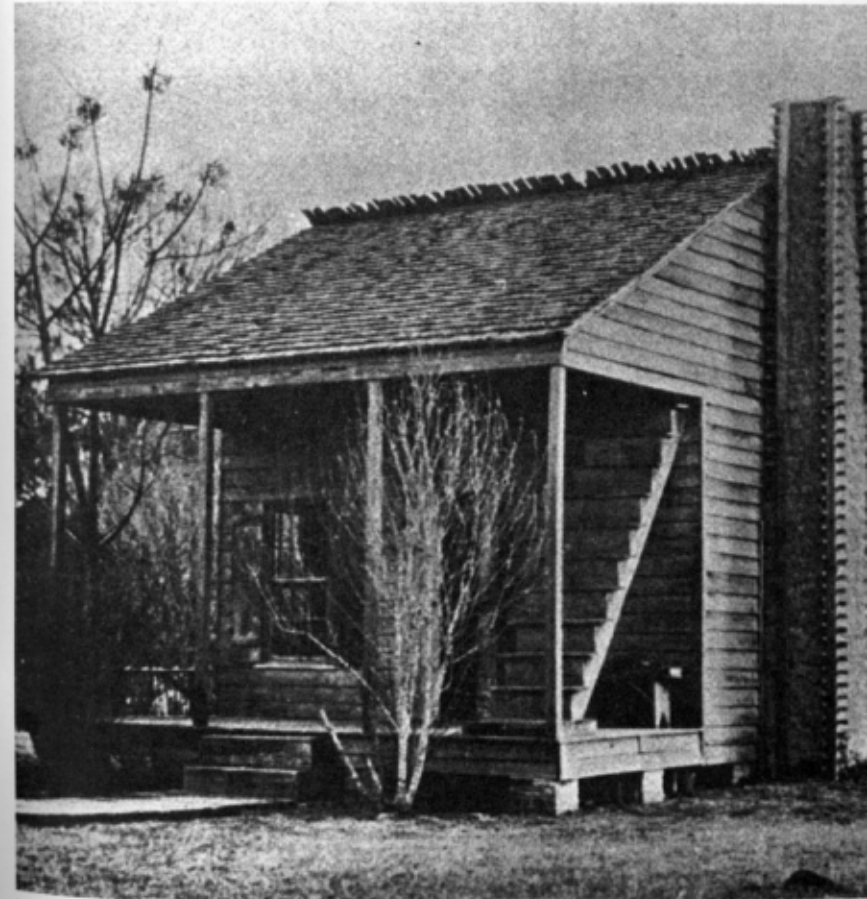
The self-confidence of the American settlers to take an unprecedented course was a quality of disposition which carried into their architecture. Invention for the carpenter-architect did not mean concoction of strange forms; the square, the triangle, and the circle are primary geometries which were combined and recombined. However, traditions of style and old world types were often willingly transformed or abandoned as other types emerged. For example, Fowler's Octagon house and his manifesto-like book is full of the innovations of its time: central heating, speaking tubes, running water, etc. The fact that such a little book could inspire over 1000 constructions exemplifies the culture's willingness to embrace new ideas. Changing forces directly transformed house types. In the case of the Highway house type, the invention of the automobile gave birth to it, and the development of modern freeways eliminated it. These houses present the notion of typology not as a method for citing precedent but as one for studying cause and effect.

In these houses, the whole is always greater than the parts. This architecture, at its most elemental, is mass line and space organized through adherence to type and geometry. The elemental house is not made significant by decoration with representational symbols; it becomes representation in its totality. Adherence to the schemata of plan/section and geometric form, especially in the rural house, projects the entire house as representation. An applied representational facade to an amorphous entity will seldom be found.

In the case of contiguous urban houses, the facade is part of the definition of the street. The facade is a public representation backed by a geometrically simple plan delimited by the overall urban pattern. There are three separate wall conditions: facade, blind walls and court or rear walls which are unified by plan and section. Unity of type binds the parts of these houses into a greater, if more ambiguous, meaning.

The characteristics manifested in these houses are the result of the carpenter-architect's carrying out of an uncompromising realization of an intuitively held goal. For us, such a goal must be held conceptually. A clear architectural idea, frankly stated, is analogous to the intuition which set the path for the carpenter-architect. In today's circumstances, where numerous individuals work as a team to achieve a construction, a unified result demands a clearly stated concept.

The carpenter-architect's adherence to type and geometry was a silent expression of values which transcend the merely fashionable. The symbolic power of these buildings stand as a mute argument to those champions of the academic who reject vernacular constructions as without text and theory and therefore irrational and meaningless. As a cultural expression, these houses are part of an elementary stock of forms in which coherence and emotional feeling can be detected; which is to say that they exhibit theory in the same sense that Cassirer referred to when he wrote, "All intuition is bound up with theoretical thinking."



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