

Long taken for granted, for reasons including the pre-packaging of bungalow styles by the Sears, Roebuck Company for their mail order house business the Craftsman style did not attract the attention of serious students of architecture until the late 1980s. Many persons in the United States bought vintage Craftsman homes in the 1980s with the purpose of restoring them. California restoration architect Tim Anderson has said that:

"People who want to restore a Craftsman house often find that their sense of what that means expands during the process. Once they start, they begin to understand that all the parts and motifs integrate into a whole, and the home's visual image comes from the Craftsman ideals behind it."

The Craftsman style homes still existing in relatively excellent condition in Lackawanna County are beyond enumerating. They are found in every borough of the county, and certain blocks of some streets (especially those plotted out between 1910 and 1925) exhibit few buildings except the Craftsman and later Prairie styles. A number of excellent examples can be viewed on lower Miles Avenue in Dickson City, in the vicinity of Marywood College in Dunmore, and on upper North Washington Avenue in Scranton.

For further information about the Craftsman Style, the following books offer excellent examples and descriptions of the many varieties of Craftsman homes:

Blumenson, John J.G. *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945*. Foreword by Nicholas Pevsner. Nashville, Tennessee: American Association for State and Local History, 1977.

McAlester, Virginia, and McAlester, Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 4th ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986.

Poppeliers, John C.; Chambers, S. Allen, Jr.; and Schwartz, Nancy B. *What Style Is It? A Guide to American Architecture*. Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1983.

Rifkind, Carole. *A Field Guide to American Architecture*. New York: New American Library, 1986.

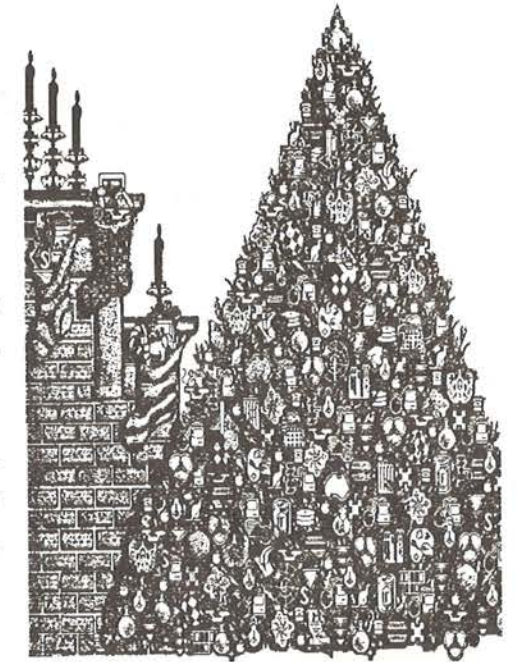
Stevenson, Katherine Cole, and Jandl, H. Ward. *Houses by Mail: A Guide to Houses from Sears, Roebuck, and Company*. Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1986.

Poore, Patricia. "The Bungalow," *The Old House Journal* 8 (May, 1985): pages 72, 90-93.

Sheid, Ann. "Unmistakably Craftsman." *Historic Preservation* 39 (November/December, 1987): pages 16, 18-21.

*Christmas Choral Program Scheduled at the Catlin House*  
Sunday, December 11, 1988, at 2:00 P. M.

Christmas choral music performed by a quartet of singers from the Robert Dale Chorale under director Robert D. Herrema will be part of the annual Christmas program presented by the Lackawanna Historical Society at the Catlin House museum. The program is scheduled for Sunday, December 11, 1988, at 2:00 P. M. The program, which will include traditional Christmas choral selections, is supported in part by a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and the Lackawanna County Department of Cultural Affairs and is presented free of charge to the public. Following the performance, tours of the historic Catlin House, decorated in the spirit of the season, will be conducted by Maryellen Calemno and Dorothy Silva, Society Director. Christmas spiced tea and cookies will also be served.



The Lackawanna Historical Society Bulletin is published quarterly by the Society.  
Editor and feature writer is Dorothy Silva, LHS Executive Director.



**The Lackawanna Historical Society**

**The George H. Catlin Memorial House**

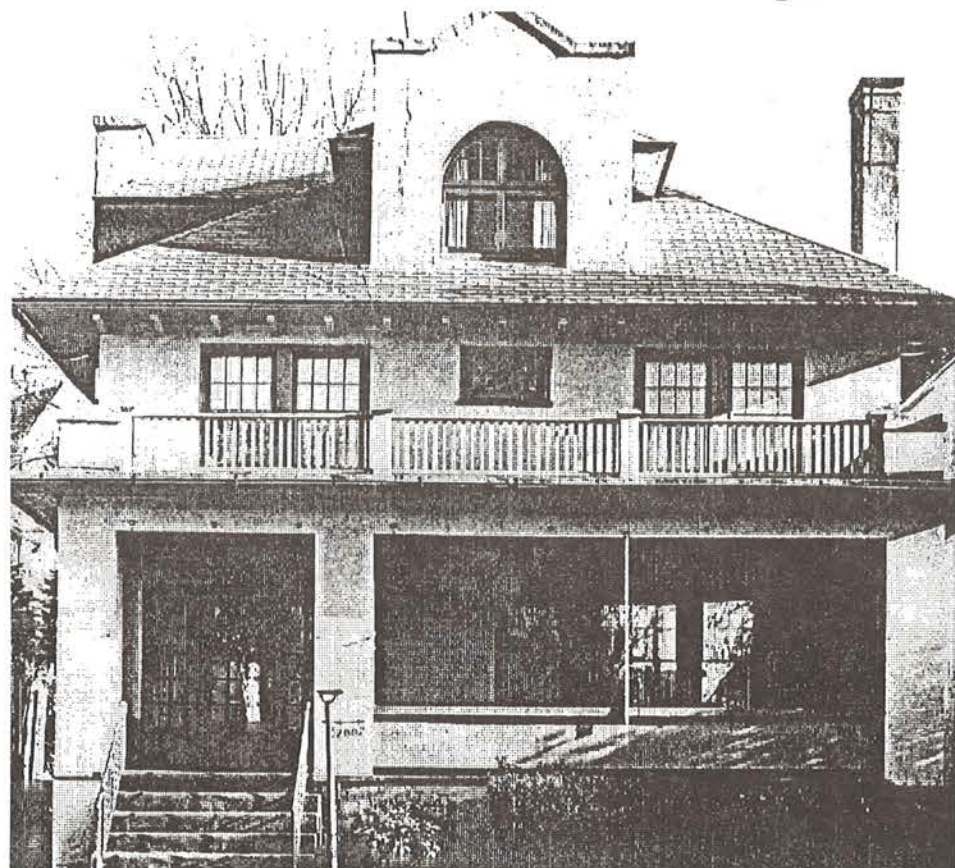
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### EARLY MODERN RESIDENTIAL STYLES

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the majority of private residences were built in traditional ways using traditional building materials. However, changing lifestyles and a shift in thinking concerning the function of "home" caused individuals to investigate alternative forms in providing human shelter. In Issue #2 of Volume 20, the architecture of the Eclectic Movement was described. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, transitions were beginning to be made between "old" and "new" thinking about architecture.



#### # 1: Mission Style

The Mission style home, originally conceived as a Period House, was one example of the transition. Mission Style homes first appeared in California in the late 1890s, and the style spread throughout the U. S. during the early decades of the twentieth century. In its original form, the style had the appearance of colonial Spanish mission buildings, but as the style evolved, it more closely resembled other homes of the early twentieth century.

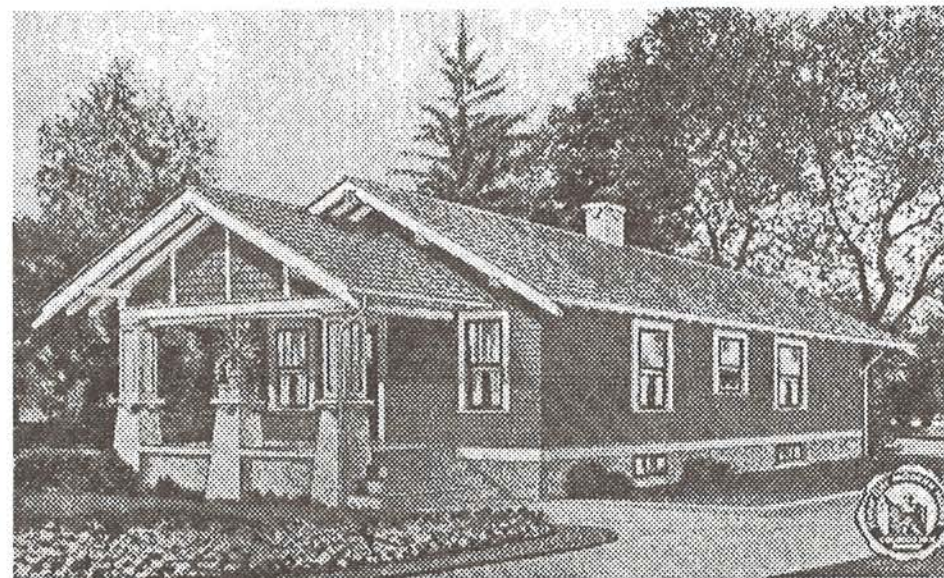
Mission style homes were usually square or rectangular with porches which usually extended the width of the front facade. Building #1, located on North Washington Avenue, Scranton, is a typical example of Late Mission style, with stucco wall covering (designed to resemble adobe), tile roofing material, shaped dormers and roof parapets. The wide overhanging eaves of Building #1 were not Mission style characteristics but rather were an example of the influence of newer thinking as proposed by twentieth century architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Gustav Stickley.

### PRAIRIE STYLES

In 1897, the Winslow family in River Park, Illinois commissioned architect Frank Lloyd Wright to draw plans for a home. Wright designed a home which had a horizontal visual orientation as a symmetrical rectangle with a low-pitched, hipped roof and wide, overhanging eaves.

"never fails to harmonize with its surroundings, because its low broad proportions and absolute lack of ornamentation give it a character so natural and unaffected that it seems to sink into and blend with any landscape. [It could] be built of any local material and with the aid of such help as local workmen can afford, so it is never expensive unless elaborated out of all kinship with its real character of a primitive dwelling. It is beautiful, because it is planned and built to meet simple needs in the simplest and most direct way."

The style was continued and modified by Charles S. and Henry M. Greene of California who formally defined it. Craftsman style homes could be constructed of wood (shingles or boards), brick, stone, stucco, or any combination of materials. Roofs were usually of the gable type.

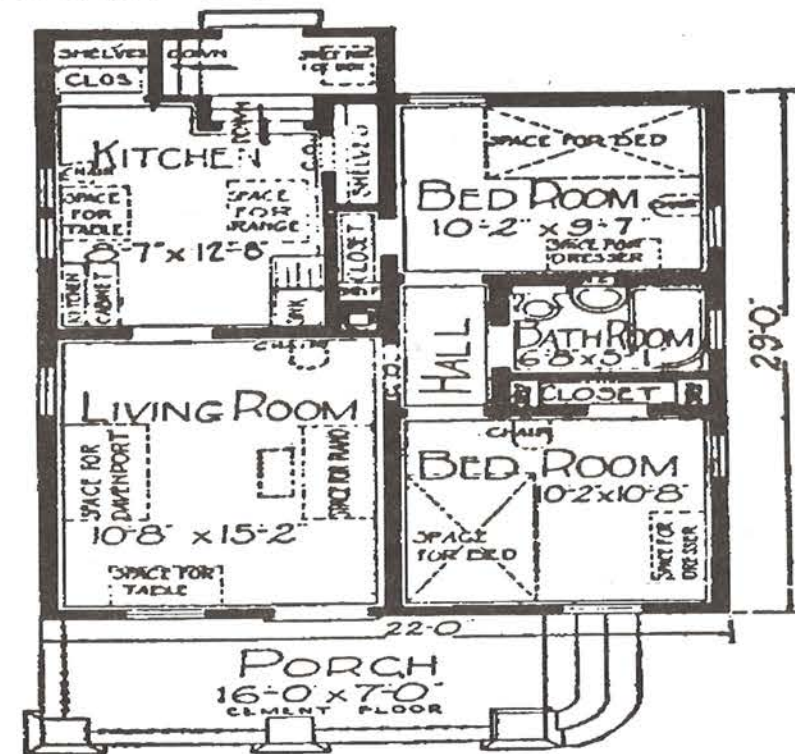


#### # 3: Craftsman

The major distinguishing characteristics of the Craftsman style were a low, squat appearance and exposed, extended rafters, ridge beams, and purlins. Porch supports were thick and heavy, often terminating with a flared base, as seen on building #3, a home offered for sale as "The Olivia" in 1921 in the catalog

*Honor Bilt Modern Homes* by Sears, Roebuck and Company of Chicago. The Olivia was priced at \$1,123 to \$1,283. It consisted of four rooms and one bath. The front porch with gabled roof was supported by the characteristic Craftsman tapered concrete piers which were topped by square wooden supports. Exposed rafters can be seen at eaves. The advertisement for this home stated, "Years of study devoted to making the most of every inch of space in a small house have resulted in the Olivia. It is simply astonishing how convenient this house is. Look over the floor plan and judge for yourself."

According to architectural historian Patricia Poore (editor of *The Old House Journal*), the words "Craftsman" and "Bungalow" were so closely allied that they came to refer to the same style. In 1911, Henry Saylor stated in *Bungalows* that the style of furniture most suited to the bungalow was "the sturdy craftsman furniture of brown oak."





constructed both by contractors using plans provided by the pattern books of the era as well as through erection of dwellings purchased from various mail order suppliers. The type home most readily available in Lackawanna County during this period was the vernacular Prairie Box, a style so predominant in the county that it is difficult to drive down any street and not see example after example.

Unfortunately, since most of the Prairie Box homes built in Lackawanna County were in the vernacular and were inexpensively built, most have not been preserved in their original forms. The building of additions, removal of porches, replacement of original porch supports with wrought iron, covering of original stucco or wood with aluminum or vinyl siding, and "modernization" by installation of "picture windows," have altered the form of most local Prairie-influenced homes. Nevertheless, many untouched examples remain, and one can still view groupings of such homes in some Lackawanna County locations, including Clarks Summit, Dickson City, Dunmore, and Simpson. Scattered examples of Prairie Box homes can be found in every borough of the county.

### OTHER EARLY STYLES

Even though the Prairie style faded from popularity soon after World War I due to the popular taste for Period Houses, proponents of architectural "Modernism" continued to experiment with new forms. The Art Deco form of Modernism was developed and used primarily for commercial and public buildings during the 1920s through 1940s; however, the style was rarely used for residential architecture. However, in the late 1920s and 1930s, Modernism developed another form: the Art Moderne.

The Art Moderne style was never widely accepted by the popular taste, but individual examples of architect-designed residences constructed in this style can be found. An interesting example of an Art Moderne residence, the only one in Lackawanna County identified by this researcher, is located at 58 Spring Street, Carbondale, (undergoing restoration at the time this issue of *The LHS Bulletin* was written.)

The Art Moderne style was characterized by rounded corners and curved surfaces, echoing the "streamlined" design for airplanes and automobiles which was common during the era. The building was usually flat-roofed with exterior walls of stucco or concrete. Edging, grooves, or lines created a horizontal visual orientation, and walls appeared to wrap around corners into window areas. Ornamental decoration, which was kept to a minimum, consisted of mirrored, cement, or metal panels, and occasionally low relief geometric floral motifs around doorways or windows.

### CRAFTSMAN STYLES

In 1909, architect Gustav Stickley published his book *Craftsman Homes* in which he extolled the virtues of residential architectural planning which would cater to the needs of the persons who would live in the homes. Spokesperson for the "Arts and Crafts Movement," Stickley published a magazine called *The Craftsman*, which promoted architecture which conformed to three principles: simplicity, harmony with nature, and the promotion of craftsmanship. Stickley called his designed homes "bungalows" (a word derived from the one story porch encircled dwellings found in India), but the style came to be known as Craftsman. Such a house, in Stickley's words:



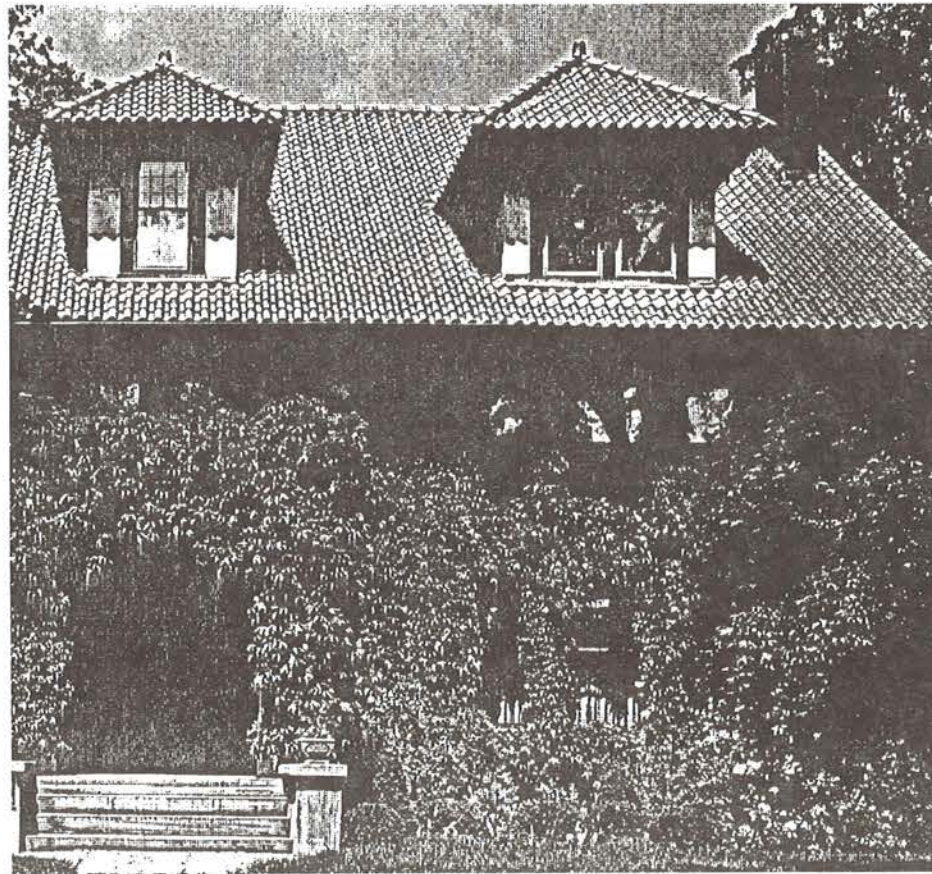
Between 1900 and 1913, Wright and other Chicago-based architects continued to develop a style with the same basic form as the Winslow house. The group of architects became known as the "Prairie School," because their objective was to create a form of residential architecture which would visually integrate with the landscape; and since the architects in the group were from the Chicago, Illinois area, the landscape with which they worked was the midwestern prairie.

Wright and the other architects of the Prairie School continued to develop the new style until 1913, and as it progressed it moved away from the simple form which it first exhibited to a more Modernistic appearing design having several sub-types. Unfortunately, the style, which was far ahead of its time, did not remain popular for a long period, for public taste had remained fixed on "Period" residences designed from adaptations of past styles.

The early Prairie style residences constructed in the midwestern United States by Wright and his ideological associates during the early 1900s gained national attention and were used as models for pattern book publications which became familiar throughout the country. The style in its vernacular form was then copied by architects, builders, and mail order companies, and variations of the early sub-type of the style were built in suburbs in all areas of the United States through the 1920s. In urban areas, three storied, multiple family versions were also built. Most Prairie-influenced homes in the vernacular were built with a wide, one story front porch which was supported by heavy square pillars.

## # 2: Prairie Box

The common vernacular Prairie house (sometimes called the "Prairie Box" or "American Four-square") was a two story squarish structure with a low-pitched hipped (occasionally gabled) roof with wide, boxed eaves, and it was usual for the roof line to contain a hipped dormer facing the front facade, as seen on building #2, "Salem Hall," a home located on Wyoming Avenue, Scranton. The Prairie house was usually built of stucco or brick combined with wood, and windows were usually double-hung sash type.



In Lackawanna county, the early part of the twentieth century was a period of continued population growth due to the financial success of the anthracite mining industry. An influx of people from Europe created a shortage of affordable housing during the time period 1915-1925, and a great number of homes were