HOMES DOWN EAST

Classic Maine Coastal Cottages and Town Houses

EARLE G. SHETTLEWORTH, JR.
CHRISTOPHER GLASS
SCOTT T. HANSON

Photographs by DAVID J. CLOUGH

Tilbury House, Publishers, Thomaston, Maine

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To those late nineteenth and early twentieth century architects who created a distinctive residential style in Maine that inspires us still.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Maine Homes for a National Audience

The United States entered an age of expansiveness following the Civil War. Railroads, manufacturing, and the exploration and settlement of the West—all enabled by increased industrial capacity—led to urban expansion and new patterns of living. Suburban housing developments took shape and were served by trolleys and rail; and colonies of vacation homes arose where well-to-do families could escape the heat, congestion, and contagions of the cities during the summer months.

The Maine Coast flourished as a destination for summer vacationers. Starting with boarding houses and hotels, resorts such as Kennebunkport, Prouts Neck, and Bar Harbor developed fashionable cottage colonies. Between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of World War I, architects faced the challenge of creating new house forms for summer lifestyles, varying from informal to grand, depending on the means and desires of their clients. The stone foundations, vernacular lines, and open plans of the Shingle Style were especially suited for coastal locations.

The rise of the Maine Coast as a summer retreat paralleled the development of American architectural magazines that provided architects with opportunities to publish their designs. There had been builders' companions and pattern books since the early days of the republic, but now publishers issued monthly periodicals with house plans and advertisements for all the new hardware, decorative detailing, and appliances that were vying for attention in the marketplace. These magazines give us today a view of what was in the minds of builders more than a century ago.

The first major periodical of this kind was the *American Architect and Building News*, which began in Boston in 1876. Throughout its early years, this magazine and its competitors were restricted to using wood engravings on their pages, supplemented by separately produced photographic and color plates. By about 1890, however, photolithography had advanced to the point that a photograph could be printed directly on a page as an illustration.

The *Scientific American Architects and Builders Edition* was launched in New York in 1885 by Munn & Company as a special trade edition of the *Scientific American*. As it

evolved, its name changed first to *Scientific American Building Edition* in 1895, then to *Scientific American Building Monthly* in 1902, and finally in 1905 to *American Homes and Gardens*, which merged with *House and Garden* in 1915. From its first issue, in November 1885, this monthly architectural magazine focused on providing "the latest and best plans for private residences city and country, including those of a very modest cost as well as the more expensive." The format adopted after 1890—black-and-white photolithographed illustrations accompanied by line drawings of floor plans—proved attractive to many architects, who submitted photographs and floor plans of their recent domestic commissions in the hope of attracting new clients.

Portland architect John Calvin Stevens' publishing history with the *Scientific American Building Monthly* is a good example. In 1887 Stevens submitted a pen-and-ink rendering of the Denison Cottage, at Delano Park in Cape Elizabeth, which appeared in the January 1888 issue. Four years later, in January 1892, the magazine illustrated Stevens' Baptist church in Gardiner with a photograph. From that point to its last issue in 1905, the magazine published twenty-two of Stevens' residential designs in photographs.

This book presents all fifty-two of the Maine houses that appeared in the magazine during its thirty-year run. The architects whose Maine cottages were featured in the *Scientific American Building Monthly* represented varied backgrounds. Of the Maine architects, Francis H. Fassett of Portland was the senior figure, having trained John Calvin Stevens, Frederick A. Tompson, and Antoine Dorticos in his office. In fact, both Stevens and Tompson were junior partners in Fassett's firm early in their careers. Fassett, Stevens, and Tompson all enjoyed successful statewide practices, while Dorticos taught French at Portland High School and confined his work to designing summer cottages for the Casco Bay islands.

George Burnham is remembered for planning the Cumberland County Courthouse with Guy Lowell of Boston and the Burnham & Morrill Baked Beans factory, both in Portland. Based in the prosperous Kennebec River city of Gardiner, Edwin E. Lewis was a popular Central Maine architect during the 1880s and 1890s who designed a wide range of buildings.

While Fred L. Savage of Bar Harbor was equally versatile, he was most noted for his prolific design of Mount Desert summer cottages, seventy of which were built in his native Northeast Harbor. Savage also supervised the construction of island summer homes designed by out-of-state architects.

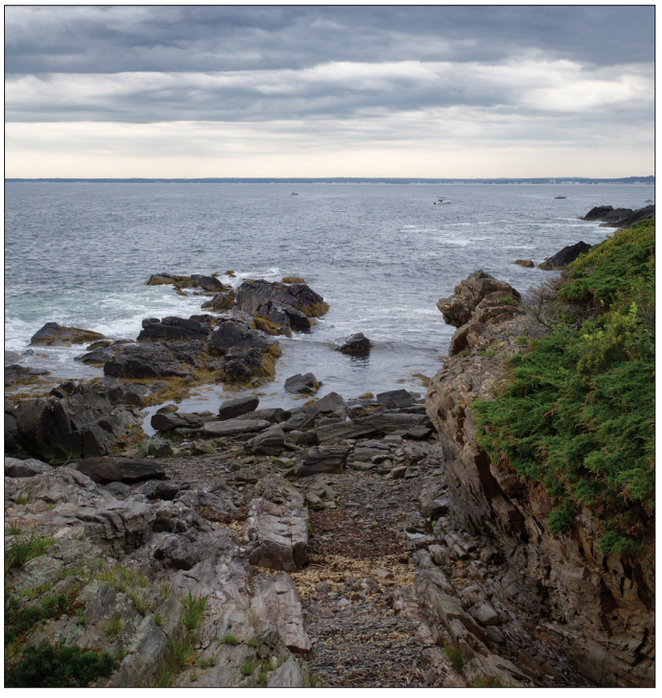
The three architectural firms "from away" who designed Maine summer homes appearing in the *Scientific American Building Monthly* were from Boston: Clark & Russell; Chapman & Fraser; and Richards & Richards.

Clients whose cottages appeared in the *Scientific American Building Monthly* varied according to the demographics of the summer colony. Of the eleven cottage owners in Kennebunkport, nine were out-of-state businessmen and professionals. Prouts Neck clients were from outside Maine: a businessman, an artist, a doctor, and a wealthy Philadelphia socialite. In contrast, the clients building in the Portland-area colonies of Delano Park (in Cape Elizabeth) and Great Diamond and Cushing's islands in Casco Bay were predominantly local business and professional men wanting well-designed, conveniently located second homes for the summer months. Given its cosmopolitan social pretensions, it is unsurprising that Bar Harbor's contributions to the *Scientific American Building Monthly* were built by the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, a physician from Washington, D.C., and a literary figure from Kentucky.

Although coastal cottages comprise the majority of published Maine house designs in the *Scientific American Building Monthly*, fourteen Maine houses built in urban or suburban settings were also published. Nine of these were constructed in Portland from designs by John Calvin Stevens. The earlier examples, including Stevens' own home on Bowdoin Street, were in the Shingle Style and had much in common with his summer cottage designs of the same period. The later houses were more urban in character, primarily in the Colonial Revival style, like the Franklin C. Payson House, also on Bowdoin Street. Published houses by George Burnham and Frederick A. Tompson were also located in Portland, one near the Western Promenade and the other in suburban Deering Highlands. Three houses were modest middle-class homes located in Augusta and Gardiner.

In July 1905 the *Scientific American Building Monthly* became *American Homes and*

Gardens. By this time the publication had provided architects, builders, and prospective clients with high-quality illustrations, floor plans, and descriptions for nearly two decades. As *American Homes and Gardens*, it proposed to furnish the same material in a more narrative and illustrative format aimed at a broader popular audience, along with a variety of special features of interest to home owners. Throughout its decade of publication *American Homes and Gardens* included several Maine summer homes that appear in this book. While the *Scientific American Building Monthly* had published a wide range of houses, from modest Casco Bay cottages to palatial Bar Harbor retreats, its successor focused on the more expensive properties, reflecting the last phase of Gilded Age life before the dramatic societal changes resulting from World War I. The war in Europe was already more than a year old when *American Homes and Gardens* was absorbed into *House and Garden* in October 1915, signaling a shift back to a more middle-class view of the future that would characterize the postwar America of the 1920s.



But what of the published Maine houses themselves?

They started out as simplified versions of the elaborate Queen Anne style we think of as Victorian. After some flirtations with borrowed styles such as medieval castles, the rise of summer cottage colonies along the coast produced designs for a run of simple but playful small cottages clad in shingles, with intersecting and enveloping rooflines and freely placed windows with varied muntin patterns. The freedom and simplicity of these little houses gave architects an opportunity to experiment with open floor plans, asymmetrical window placements, dramatic rooflines, and a new way of relating to the rugged coastal terrain. These cottages in turn influenced the design of more substantial houses in the new suburbs, houses that departed from the basic boxes of contemporary design to capture some of the freedom of the open coast. Some architecture critics did not know what to make of these shingle houses, using the phrase "odd cottages" to describe them, especially when the style migrated into town.

As summer colonies increased in wealth and status, houses became larger and more "serious." Taste moved toward a more accurate emulation of earlier architectural styles, particularly the style of the early republic (ironically called Colonial Revival) and of the earlier English Tudor period. And the magazines followed suit. By the 1930s all these styles were being challenged in turn by the arrival of European modernism in the form of the International Style.

Only in 1955, with the publication of *The Shingle Style*, by Vincent Scully—Sterling Professor Emeritus of the History of Art and Architecture at Yale and "the most influential architecture teacher ever," according to the architect Philip Johnson—were these "odd cottages" given a separate identity and some appreciation. Thanks to Scully's advocacy and influence, generations of young architects began to rediscover these cheerfully creative shingled cottages and the simple virtues of vernacular forms, open plans, and local materials that had engaged their predecessors from the 1880s to the early 1900s. On Mount Desert Island, Edward Larabee Barnes's August Heckscher House of 1975 and Robert A. M. Stern's "Points of View" of 1975–76 were among the first to reinterpret the Shingle Style in contemporary terms, and in the last few decades the Shingle Style has experienced a revival equal to or greater than its original flourishing.

Today, in this postmodern age, the Neo-Shingle Style is a widely accepted form of architectural expression, and many examples can be found on the Maine Coast alongside the Shingle Style cottages of the past. From the vantage point of a century or more, presenting the Maine work of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architects through the pages of this book both informs us of our design heritage and guides us toward our architectural future. Thus the original intent of the *Scientific American Building Monthly* takes on a new purpose for our own time.

The Maine houses and cottages published in this magazine were built in a variety of styles, including Queen Anne, Shingle, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and others, between 1883 and 1910. Looking back at them today, they provide a window through which we can glimpse the rise of the original Shingle Style in one of its original locations, Maine. These "odd

cottages" have come to be so identified with Maine that they can be considered an iconic part of Maine's image in the twenty-first century. Through the historic images and text reproduced in this book, we can see these houses as they were seen when new, and in many cases we can see them as they are today. More than forty of the fifty-two Maine houses published in the *Scientific American Building Monthly* are still standing—a true testimony to the enduring appeal of these homes as winningly captured by David Clough's photographs for this book. Some of the houses have been enlarged or altered since their original building, but whenever possible, David has taken his new photographs from the same vantage as the originally published ones.

The text that follows consists of essays on each house written by architectural historians Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. and Scott T. Hanson as well as architectural commentary on each house by architect Christopher Glass. The architectural commentary is in italics to distinguish it from the architectural history essays. The chapter introductions and other materials were written collaboratively by the three authors.

The six "Victorian" houses in the first chapter are in the Queen Anne style, like tens of thousands of houses built across the nation in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Although some of these examples were built later than many of the Shingle Style cottages and homes included here, they are good examples of the types of residential architecture most common throughout the period and from which the Shingle Style emerged in the 1880s as the first distinctively American architectural style. The Walter G. Davis House provides an example of Queen Anne Sstyle by Francis H. Fassett and John Calvin Stevens just as Stevens was about to set out on his own. Stevens continued to design in the Queen Anne Sstyle while designing the Shingle Style cottages in the next chapter, as is seen here in the Edward T. Burrowes House of 1885. The last of the six houses in this chapter, the John Kelly Robinson Cottage, was designed by Fassett & Tompson. This was the new partnership formed by Francis H. Fassett and Frederick A. Tompson after the departure of Stevens. The house shows hints of the developing Shingle Style in its use of an open plan inside and fieldstone and shingle siding outside, while largely retaining the form and detailing of the Queen Anne style.

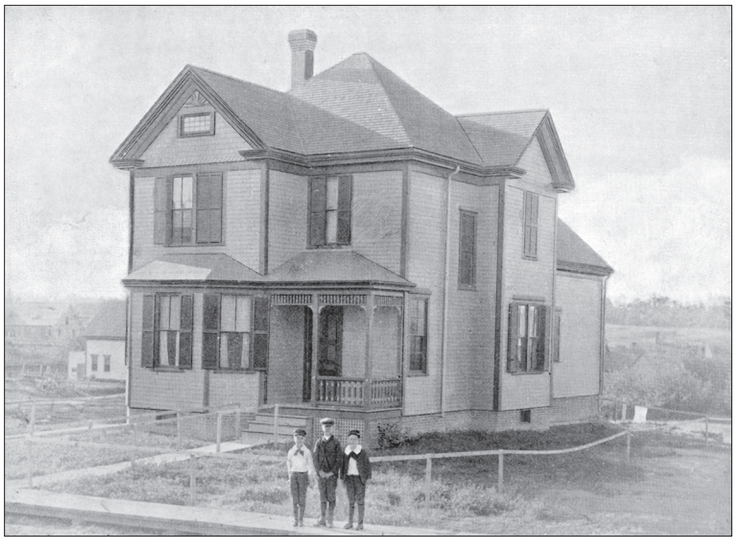
John W. Thompson House

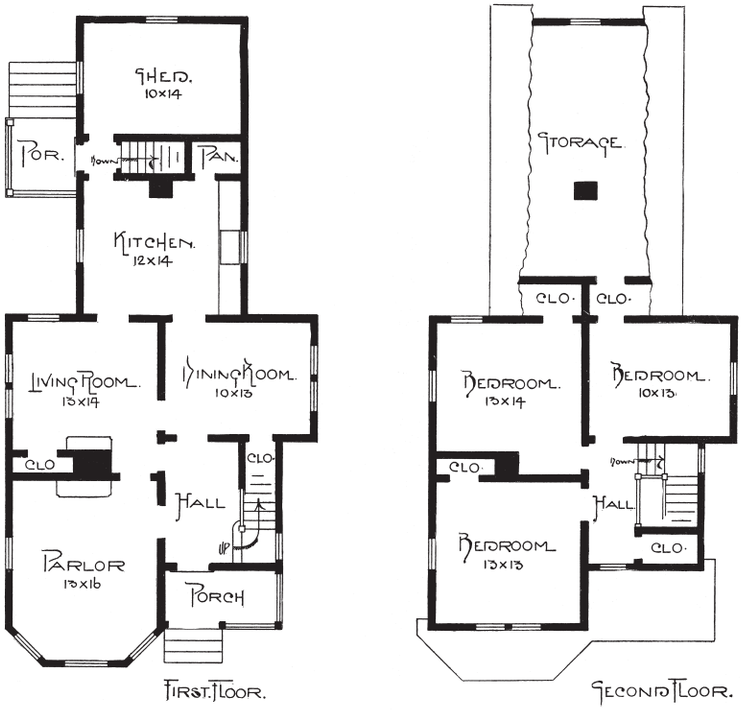
Central Street,
Gardiner

1891, Extant

Papermaking was one of nineteenth-century Gardiner's major industries. Mills such as Hollingsworth & Whitney attracted a skilled labor force to the community by offering housing to middle- and upper-level management employees. Thus, a night foreman with the company, John W. Thompson, could rent one of three identical Queen Anne style homes on Central Street within easy walking distance to the mill. Described as "a dwelling of low cost," this company house included both a parlor and a living room as well as three upstairs bedrooms. The $1,900 construction budget fell below the cost of many 1890s summer cottages published in the *Scientific American Building Monthly*.

This house shows the state of the art for 1891. It is a cube with a hipped roof, extended by ells and bays. The underlying shape would become a feature of many mail-order houses that later historians would describe as the American Foursquare. It is as vertical as the three boys on good behavior in the front, and looks as uncomfortable—tall, thin, and angular. The plan is all right angles except the living room bay, which, unusually, is the full width of its room, perhaps foreshadowing future geometric adventures; but each of the rooms is a rectangular box connected to others by simple doorways. There is no bathroom. It is against the backdrop of houses such as these that other architects published by Scientific American Building Monthly *created the new cottages of the Shingle Style.*




SHED.
10×14
POR.
PAN.
KITCHEN.
12×14
LIVING ROOM.
13×14
DINING ROOM.
10×13
CLO.
CLO.
HALL
PARLOR
13×16
PORCH
FIRST FLOOR.
STORAGE.
CLO.
CLO.
BEDROOM.
13×14
BEDROOM.
10×13
CLO.
HALL
BEDROOM.
13×13
CLO.
SECOND FLOOR.

D. W. Emery House

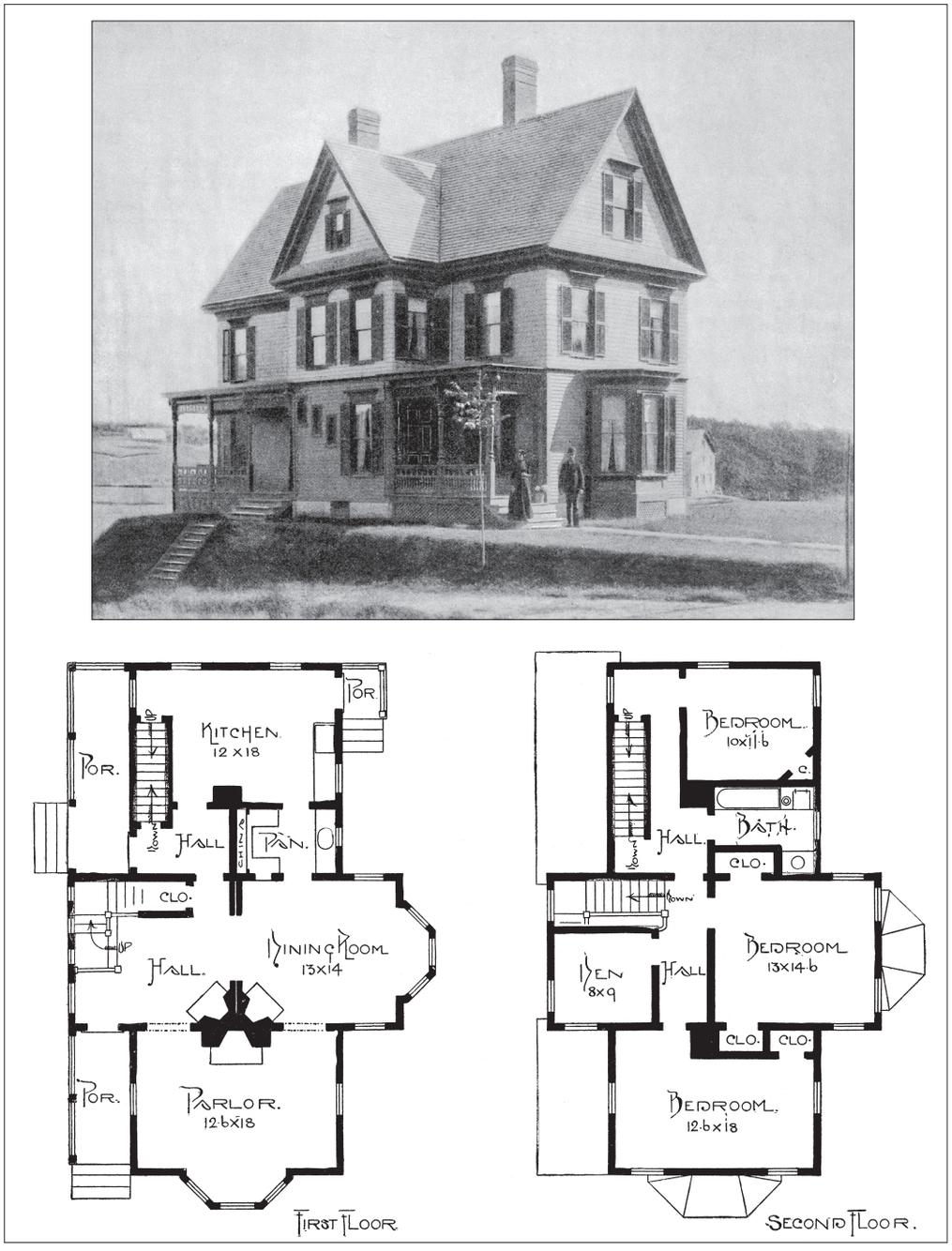
20 Columbia Street,
Augusta

1890, EXTANT

D. W. Emery built this trim Queen Anne house at the corner of State and Union streets, Augusta, in 1890. After two decades of operating a planing mill, Emery became a clerk in the state treasurer's office and constructed his $3,200 residence diagonally across from the Maine State House for convenience to his employment. Emery's architect and builder remain unknown. In recent times, the house was moved to a nearby location to make way for a state office building.

This is another upright house, with more conventional bays simply added to the room in place of single windows. The downstairs plan is much more open, with parlor doors from the hall to the dining room and open arches from both to the parlor. The central chimney with three fireplaces creates a focus in the open plan. Compared to the previous house, this plan is considerably more integrated, though all the rooms are still rectangular. The bath, placed strategically between the family bedrooms and the back bedroom, which could be for a servant, is quite sophisticated, with its rectangular toilet seat probably not for a "water closet" but rather a "hopper"—a wooden seat over a bowl, with a vent exhaust through the roof.

There is a foreshadowing of the horizontal organization of the Shingle Style in the continuation of all of the roof cornices across the gables; the porch and bay cornice continued around the whole house as a belt course. Shingles above and clapboards below the belt course try to create an illusion of horizontality in this otherwise vertically proportioned house.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POR.
HALL
CHINA
PAN.
CLO.
HALL.
DINING ROOM.
13X14
POR.
PARLOR.
12.6X18
FIRST FLOOR.
BEDROOM.
10X11.6
C.
BATH.
HALL.
CLO.
DOWN
BEDROOM.
13X14.6
DEN
8X9
HALL
CLO.
CLO.
BEDROOM.
12.6X18
SECOND FLOOR.

First Baptist Church Parsonage

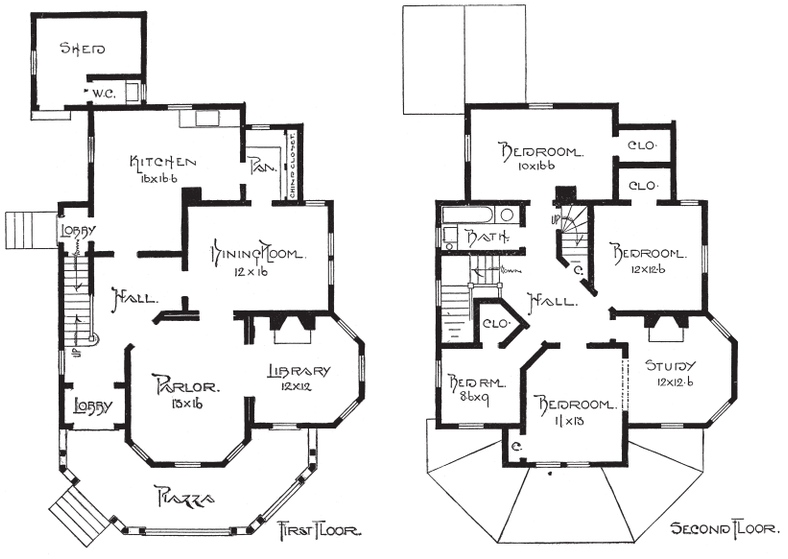
Church Street, Gardiner

Edwin E. Lewis,
Architect

1890, EXTANT

In 1889 the First Baptist congregation of Gardiner constructed a striking Shingle Style church by John Calvin Stevens similar to other Baptist churches designed by Stevens in Skowhegan, Yarmouth, Westbrook, and other Maine communities. The next year the Gardiner Baptists chose the local architect Edwin E. Lewis to design an adjacent parsonage to complement their new church. Constructed during the summer and fall of 1890 for $2,500, the minister's residence was described by the *Gardiner Home Journal* on October 29, 1890, as "one of the prettiest and most conveniently arranged houses that have been built here for some time."

Here the outside gives little hint of an adventurous interior landscape. The geometry of the piazza and the library/study bay are the only exterior indications of the diagonals that energize the plan of the halls up and down. The upstairs hall is especially exciting, with its diagonally organized space lighted by the stairway. But the outside is not as eventful. It is still a rectangular box with added gables and with the small belt course between floors.


SHED
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KITCHEN
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PAN.
DINING CLOSET
LOBBY
DINING ROOM.
12 x 16
HALL.
PARLOR.
15x16
LIBRARY
12x12
LOBBY
PIAZZA
FIRST FLOOR.
BEDROOM.
10x16.6
CLO.
CLO.
BATH.
BEDROOM.
12x12.6
HALL.
CLO.
BED RM.
8.6x9
BEDROOM.
11 x 15
STUDY
12x12.6
SECOND FLOOR.

Walter G. Davis House

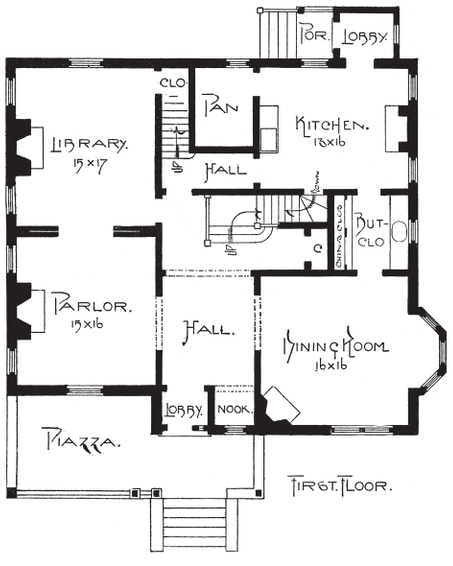
82 West Street, Portland

Fassett & Stevens
Architect

1884, DEMOLISHED

During the last year in which Francis H. Fassett and John Calvin Stevens practiced architecture together, Walter G. Davis (1857–1918) commissioned the firm to design an elaborate brick Queen Anne house at West and Vaughan streets in the Western Promenade area. When Fassett and Stevens dissolved their partnership in April 1884, Davis became Stevens' client, and the house was completed under his supervision that year. Walter G. Davis prospered as a partner in the Portland Packing Company, a food-canning business his father had founded with Samuel Rumery and James P. Baxter. Early in 1904 he returned to John Calvin Stevens to plan an extensive remodeling campaign for his home. By this time Stevens was being assisted by his son, John Howard Stevens, and the Davis drawings of 1904 to 1906 are among the first to list both their names as architects. The Stevens firm provided Davis with plans that included a new hallway, reception room, dining room, billiard room, and sunroom.

The emerging cottage style Stevens had begun to use on Great Diamond and Cushing's islands is not immediately apparent in this formal brick town house, but the extension of the principal roof down over the entry piazza does recall the cottages then being built on the Casco Bay islands. The plan of the house, with its double parlor and grand entry hall open to the parlor on one side and dining room on the other, provides for generous spaces. The grand staircase, with its arched landing window, leads to an equally generous upstairs bedroom hall. For the first time we see a complete bathroom with tub, sink, and toilet. The bay windows and semi-octagonal dormer soften the rigidity of the brick box. So though this is clearly a grand town house, there are bits of the informality of the cottages to be seen.


PAN
KITCHEN.
13x16
LIBRARY.
15x17
HALL
BUT-
CLO
PARLOR.
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HALL.
DINING ROOM.
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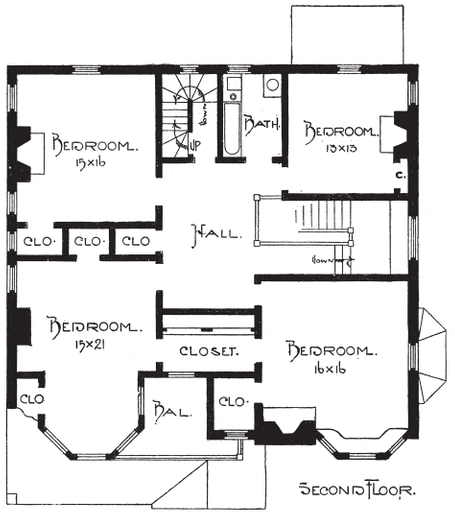
LOBBY.
NOOK.
PIAZZA.
FIRST FLOOR.


BEDROOM.
15x16
BATH
BEDROOM.
13x13
CLO.
CLO.
CLO
HALL.
BEDROOM.
15x21
CLOSET.
BEDROOM.
16x16
CLO
BAL.
CLO.
SECOND FLOOR.

Edward T. Burrowes House

271 Western Promenade, Portland

John Calvin Stevens
Architect

1885, DESTROYED

John Calvin Stevens thought so highly of the Edward T. Burrowes House that he published its design in the *American Architect and Building News* for July 11, 1885, in his book *Examples of American Domestic Architecture* of 1889 and in the *Scientific American Building Monthly* of February 1892. His client, E. T. Burrowes (1852–1918), illustrated the house in catalogues for screen doors and windows, which he manufactured in a large brick factory complex on Spring Street in downtown Portland. In 1885—the same year that Stevens planned Burrowes' house—the architect designed the factory, which took three years to build, contained five acres of space, and housed the largest screen manufacturing operation in the world.

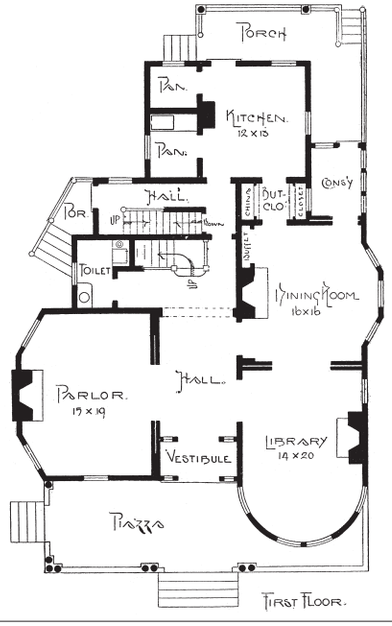
The Burrowes House was a picturesque two-and-a-half-story, frame Queen Anne style dwelling. Stylistic characteristics included the use of clapboards and shingles on the exterior, the corner turret on the façade, and the two tiered bay windows on the side capped by an overhanging roof gable ornamented with decorative panels.

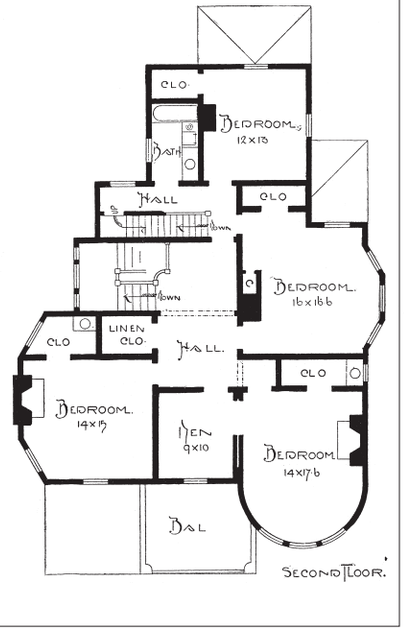
The interior plan was a model of convenience. The first floor contained a central hall that led to a front staircase. A parlor flanked the hallway on the left, with a library and dining room on the right. A kitchen and pantries were located in the rear ell. The second floor was devoted to four bedrooms, a bathroom, and a den. The servants' quarters were in the attic, which was accessed by a back staircase.

In 1889, John Calvin Stevens and Albert Winslow Cobb wrote in *Examples of American Domestic Architecture*, "From the windows of this dwelling the view is superb; since the house is located at the very brow of the Western Promenade."

While at first glance the house seems to be a box with bay windows and a round ell added on, the plan shows that the interior spaces pinwheel around the central stair hall in ways that break out of the box. Parlor and library and dining room all have their own axes, with the space ballooning out from the hall. Again, only the kitchen with its pantries and back stair are cut off from the free flow of space.

Though there is an awkward collision between the second-floor balcony and the round tower, the porch is supported by the clustered columns that make a more formal statement than mere porch posts and look forward to the stricter interpretation of Colonial precedents that Stevens will adopt in his later work.





"The Birches," John Kelly Robinson Cottage

Cushing's Island, Casco Bay

Francis H. Fassett & Frederick A. Tompson
Architects

1889–90, EXTANT

Cushing's Island in Portland's Casco Bay became a summer resort in 1862 with the opening of the Ottawa House Hotel. In 1883 the island's owners, the Cushing family, engaged the eminent landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted to create a plan for cottage development. In his report that year, Olmsted stated that "The Island is not a good place for a neighborhood of smart and fine suburban residences such as many prefer to pass their summers in." From 1883 until 1909 John Calvin Stevens followed that dictum by providing designs for more than a dozen Shingle Style cottages that were compatible with Cushing's natural beauty.

In contrast to Stevens' approach, Fassett & Tompson's Cushing Island cottages for George H. Knight (1887), William J. Spicer (1887–88), and John Kelly Robinson (1889–90) were in the more ornamental Queen Anne style. The frame construction of the Knight and Spicer cottages reflected the suburban residential architecture of the times, while the rubble stone first story, rounded central bay, and decorative windows and dormers of Robinson's cottage captured the fanciful spirit of summer life.

Known as "Honest John Kelly," Robinson was a self-made man whose industry, wit, and generosity were widely admired by his contemporaries. His fortune resulted from his invention of the diamond-shaped match, which became the chief product of his highly successful Diamond Match Company. Robinson's business stature and his residence in Chicago probably contributed to the design for "The Birches" being featured in the November 1889 issue of that city's magazine, *The Inland Architect*.

Fassett & Tompson's stone cottage shows much greater understanding of the cottage style. It is still a box with a round tower somewhat awkwardly centered on the façade (towers are more ef-

fective on corners, where their military forebears would have been). The roof now comes down to shelter the porch and lower the appearance of the house, and the stone rises convincingly to support the roof. This idea—the stone base supporting a shingled roof structure—is one that will intrigue the cottage architects throughout the period. Walls, which interrupt the flow of the landscape, were always something of an embarrassment.

Here the downstairs has almost no interior walls. Every space opens into every other. Of course this is helped by the absence of a kitchen, which must have been down the steps from the dining room. Upstairs the narrow corridors are almost all gone except for an awkward shortcut to the balcony and a perhaps misleading note labeling the leftover space under the eaves as a linen closet!

Also on this page we see the last holdout of the graphic artists who had dominated magazine publishing in the decades preceding the ability to reproduce photographs. The days of elaborate renderings of highly detailed and ornamented Queen Anne houses are gone, and the artists are still allowed—for a while—to provide decorative frames and borders.