The Making of Virginia Architecture

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COVER: Architectural process and product combine in a photograph of one of
America’s most beloved homes—Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello—and a finely rendered
elevation of the building, drawn for Jefferson by the young draftsman Robert Mills,
later a noted architect in his own right. Photograph of Monticello hand-colored
by Marsha Polier Grossman. Cover images combined with kind permission of
the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, which owns and operates Monticello,
and the Massachusetts Historical Society, which owns the Mills drawing.
(See survey number 12, Monticello, Second House, page 220.)

TITLE PAGE: An initial sketch for Dulles Airport by Eero Saarinen brings the
architect’s first ideas for a new, modern airport to life; the completed building turns
idea into reality. (See survey number 107, page 410.)
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BUILDING ON THE FOUNDATIONS
The Historic Present in Virginia Architecture, 1870–1990

by RICHARD GUY WILSON

After observing the annual exhibition of the New York Architectural League in 1932, Fiske Kimball, the eminent architectural historian, critic, and museum director, caustically noted: “There is no good architecture south of Washington, D.C.”1 Certainly Kimball did not mean the architecture of the seventeenth through the early nineteenth centuries, about which he had written so eloquently in his many and memorable books nor, one assumes, his own work in Virginia. No, his comments were directed to recent architecture of the South. In a sense Kimball expressed a common Yankee prejudice: the South was a cultural wasteland. “The Sahara of the Bozart” was how H. L. Mencken, using an architectural pun, had summed up the region’s culture a few years earlier.2 This benighted view of the South as artistically barren—especially in the twentieth century—has been revised in so many ways with recognition of literary and educational achievements that it scarcely needs recounting here.

But what about architecture? Yes, the South’s architecture, specifically Virginia’s, is recognized and hailed. But seldom, if ever, is it the architecture of the past century; rather, lauded and pictured is the earlier Colonial, Georgian, and Jeffersonian. Look in almost any book on American architecture and what do you see that comes from Virginia? There are plenty of seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and early-nineteenth-century buildings, but what is shown that dates since the Civil War? The myth, of course, is that nothing happened for years after The War, and after that, well, it is a purely local affair. The only buildings of national stature that might be pictured are Eero Saarinen’s Dulles Airport Terminal (SURVEY NO. 107) and possibly Frank Lloyd Wright’s Pope-Leighey House (SURVEY NO. 96), but these could exist almost anywhere in the United States. Also shown would be one other twentieth-century architectural creation, though it will seldom be identified as such: Colonial Williamsburg and the Capitol and Governor’s Palace (SURVEY NOS. 83–86).3
Ironies abound: Virginia's past is more present than the recent; history exerts a stronger hold and seems more real than the present; and Virginia's best-known recent buildings are by outsiders, non-Virginians.

This chapter explores "recent" Virginia architecture—since the 1870s. It examines the myth of the Old Dominion and the popular picture of a commonwealth of red brick and white trim, of white weatherboards and dentils, of churches modeled after Wren and Gibbs, of Monticellos nestled on hilltops, of large extended-wing James River mansions, of great-columned planters' houses, and the smaller reproductions of the neat and tidy houses of villages and towns like Williamsburg. It also explores some of the causes for these views of Virginia's architecture and the reasons for some of the obscurity of the last century or more, along with other patterns that have emerged from the architectural carpet. But several caveats need to be made. The territory is not completely unmapped; research and commentary on later Virginia architecture has been undertaken, and some of it is of very high quality. However, much of it appears in isolated pockets, the necessary study of individuals, towns, cities, or counties. But the larger picture has not been brought into focus. Hence Virginia's architectural landscape resembles in some ways what the first colonists saw: a vast terrain with the close-at-hand known—a stream, a lake, a large tree, and then, glimpsed off in the distance, a few mountain ranges—but the overall geography is unclear. There is a need to give more contours to this landscape, to understand both its temporal and physical dimensions, to begin to map the surface, to lay down a few trails of observations and suggestions.

History is a mental creation; it is a view of facts arranged in patterns that provide meaning; yet multiple meanings or interpretations do exist, though frequently in contradiction. History is made by those who record it; historians take the actions of individuals, the decisions of patrons, the drawings and designs of architects, the labor of builders, and gives them a pattern. So the one who writes, or creates, or preserves and saves history is important. Architectural history in Virginia has been written by many individuals: the women of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, the architects who measured the colonial remains, the photographers who document what has been built, and the numerous local historical societies. All of these and others have been important in one way or another, but over the years three centers of study have emerged: the University of Virginia since the arrival of Fiske Kimball in 1919, Williamsburg since the beginnings of restoration in the mid 1920s, and the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission (now more bureaucratically titled the Virginia Department of Historic Resources) in Richmond. Since the mid 1960s this agency has worked to establish a statewide program to identify and preserve significant buildings. Overlaps occur between these three centers, along with changes of emphasis on what is studied; but it is from individuals within these institutions that the shifting views of Virginia's architecture have emerged. The University, being a school of architecture, has tended to emphasize the grand manner, formal design, modernism, and Jefferson and to follow national trends; Colonial Williamsburg, while containing aspects of this for-
mality in its early years, has tended towards the smaller scale and the humble approach; and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources has been far more inclusive, attempting to encompass the entire state. Patterns of interaction have occurred between historians, preservationists, and architects; what interests the one impacts the others at some point. The traffic pattern, though, is not one-way: preservationists have awakened architects and historians to aspects of the past, but equally, there has been another direction, with architects changing our perceptions of what should be studied.

Some aspects of Virginia's recent architecture are fairly clear, for as the examples in the Survey (Chapter 6) illustrate, they follow the broad stylistic contours of the national scene. The architects operating in Virginia, whether native sons or from elsewhere, have created many designs that would not appear out of place in New York, Chicago, or Atlanta. Virginia follows the well-trodden path—High Victorian (and its subtleties Second Empire, Gothic, Romanesque), then Late Victorian and the various eclectic styles (French, Colonial, Tudor Revival or "Tudorbethan"), then Modern and Postmodern. A surprise or two might occur along the road, but the general outline is well known. Architecture, however, is more than the recording of styles; it is more than physical shelter for activities. It also represents a mental shelter, it encompasses values, beliefs, and views about the world, expressions and concepts of status, that need to be explicated.

This chapter investigates what is popularly identified as Virginia architecture and how it came to be. But the state's architecture is too synthetic and too diverse to claim some sort of all-encompassing regional, environmental, functional, or stylistic definition. Wide divergences and little commonality exist among the many buildings constructed within the fictive boundaries of the Commonwealth. Virginia's architecture is quite simply all that which has been built within the state's borders. But out of this apparent chaos, out of these hundreds of thousands of buildings, there are certain patterns that appear to be uniquely Virginian.

One further caveat—architecture both represents and creates social and cultural conditions. In the period from 1870 to 1990, Virginia underwent great changes; the population grew from 1,225,000 to 6,187,358. With it came new cities, buildings, factories, mills, warehouses, roads, highways, commercial strips, settlement patterns, gardens, parks, national forests, and a myriad of other changes. Like other states across the nation, Virginia developed a lively vernacular architecture of the road and the automobile, but these can only be partially inferred from this chapter, for there are many gaps: in this book there are no shopping centers, diners, motels, fast-food outlets, or supermarkets. For this essay does not offer a complete cross-section of the architecture of the state, whatever that may be. The drawings and photographs in this book are of important buildings by significant architects, but they can only show the highlights of what Virginia architecture has meant in the past 120 or so years. And similarly, this essay can only suggest and point to those social and cultural issues that affect architectural design.
Implicit in this selection is the question: What is architecture, and how does it differ from other types of building design? For this book is not a history of the total built environment, although references are made to barns, silos, log cabins, shacks, tract houses, buildings by anonymous builders, and all the other constructed flotsam of American civilization of the past 125 years. This book is above all a study of the sources of inspiration for architecture, the interaction between high and low art, the high art of architecture as practiced by architects and the more popular or common building traditions. Whether they be regional vernacular houses from Louisa County or commercial Colonial Ranch houses at Battlefield Estates is important. There has been interplay in both directions: sometimes architects draw inspiration from the vernacular, as with Floyd Johnson's house (Survey No. 101), and similarly the ubiquitous Builder's Colonial draws upon Virginia's earliest architecture.

The sources for some of Virginia's buildings have also been house pattern-books like Gustav Stickley's Craftsman Homes (1909) and house catalogues from Sears, Roebuck and Company (Figure 3.1). Equally important have been designs like those shown on a page from a builder's pocket-book dating from the 1860s or 1870s, in which a floor plan and the costs were all that was needed to begin (Figure 3.2). The unknown builder of this design had an

![Figure 3.2](image-url)

*Figure 3.2. On this page from an unknown builder's pocket-book, circa 1860, a simple floor plan and a list of the cost estimates were all that was needed to begin construction of a house. Pen on paper, 5 by 6 inches. (Courtesy of Henry J. Browne, Charlottesville.)*
intuitive understanding of what a house plan should be like, and from it the elevations would follow. The Sears “Jefferson” and the unknown builder’s sketch are part of the history of recent Virginia architecture, and while they do not bear the imprimatur of a high-art architect, neither can they be ignored. Both illustrate changing views of what might be studied.

One method by which to understand the Commonwealth’s architecture from 1870 to the present is to recognize its polymorphous nature: that many patterns are in operation, and that they can be contradictory, exist independently from each other, run parallel, and also overlap. These patterns of contradictions frequently have a bifurcate or dualistic quality. The purpose of history is to sort out the information into usable and understandable patterns but these patterns may still remain contradictory to each other.

**Geography and Art History**

One of the most common conditions affecting Virginia’s architecture is its geography, which frequently has meant an emphasis on the rural, and a slighting of the urban. Many buildings are identified not by the town where they are located, but by their county. More important architecturally has been the deep and abiding hold that the rural or country mentality exercises upon Virginians. It is the country house, or place, that represents Virginia. The historical survey-books well illustrate this: it is the country house, Monticello and Westover, that appears again and again. The plantation house, or particularly the houses along the James River (Carter’s Grove, Westover, Shirley) or the Potomac (Mount Vernon, Gunston Hall) have been appropriated and duplicated throughout the state and across the nation.

Originally, of course, the country house in Virginia was the seat of economic and political power, but in the twentieth century it has become more of a retreat, a stage prop. The “country place” phenomenon began in the late 1890s and grew substantially until the Depression, though in recent years it has expanded again. Country places were large houses that served the wealthy as rural retreats; these properties were not themselves the source of wealth but rather an artifice that imitated the English “squirearchy.” Because Virginia was one of the few states that originally had houses on a scale with those of minor English gentry, it became a source for architectural models and a scene of development. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries wealthy Northerners began to move South and to purchase and restore old Virginia estates: members of the duPont family at one time owned Montpelier and Frascati in Orange County, and Amthill in Cumberland County. This passion for imitating the aristocracy in Virginia soon moved on to constructing entirely new estates resembling the old, as can be seen around Charlottesville in Albemarle County, or the Upper-ville area in Fauquier County. But there is also a very different aspect of this attraction for the country, the two- or three-acre rural site with a brick ranch and a satellite dish, or the sprawling suburbs around any city. The attraction of the country is strong for citizens of all classes.
But the history of Virginia architecture is not just the house in the country or the suburbs, for an extensive urban architecture has created the state's cities and towns. Virginia's pattern of urbanism and urban architecture has followed the general trend in the United States: urban centers growing in the nineteenth and twentieth century up to about 1940, then a dispersal outwards, and now a decline of the central city. The result has been that the best urban architecture dates from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; buildings after the 1940s tend to be viewed as isolated objects. While Virginia does follow the national pattern, still some of the ethos for this dispersal—and the lack of planning regulation which has led to strip developments—must be laid to Virginia's political heritage: to the Jeffersonian doctrine of a society of small towns and farms, with a minimum of governmental regulation.

Other geographical patterns exist, such as the split between the Tidewater and the Piedmont, or between Virginia east of the Blue Ridge versus the Shenandoah Valley and western Virginia. Historically very different architectural traditions functioned in these areas: the eastern part has operated within the English architectural tradition, and the Valley followed patterns that were brought south from Pennsylvania. Perhaps the most obvious duality is the political one—which has obvious architectural implications—of Northern Virginia (or the Washington suburbs) versus Richmond and the rest of the state. Northern Virginia is architecturally much more of a colony of Washington, D.C., than it is part of the rest of the Commonwealth. Hence some buildings represented in this survey—Arlington Memorial Bridge (Survey No. 78), National Airport (Survey Nos. 97, 98), the Pentagon (Survey No. 102), and Dulles Airport (Survey No. 107)—exist independently from Virginia. They are really national buildings and symbols and only happen to be Virginian because of their geographical location.

Across the state there has been a pattern of strong architects and firms located in the major cities and towns. Architects, even if they are designing country houses, have traditionally operated from urban settings. These architects have exerted their influence both within their city and in their immediate area, and at times had an impact on the state as a whole. Their spread of influence has been directly proportionate to improvements in communication and travel. Geographical politics has also played a role, as can be seen in the commission for the State Capitol expansion of 1904–06 (see Survey No. 67). But Northern Virginia notwithstanding, Richmond has long been the first city of the state and from it have come firms with long histories—like Baskervill (originally Noland & Baskervill), Carneal & Johnston, and Marcellus Wright Cox & Smith and others—who have dominated the profession for the past eighty to ninety years. Norfolk, as the leading city of the Tidewater, has been the second city and from there, individuals such as John Kevan Peebles have built a statewide reputation. Beyond are the smaller cities, more regional in their focus—Alexandria, Fredericksburg, Lynchburg, Roanoke, Charlottesville, Staunton, and Lexington—in which local firms have operated, and at times moved on to the larger statewide stage. Stanhope Johnson, for example, dominated architecture in
Lynchburg and Charlottesville from the 1920s through the 1940s. Milton Grigg of Charlottesville gained a nationwide reputation for his church designs in the 1940s, and is one of few Virginians to have designed abroad. T. J. Collins & Son dominated Staunton for years and helped to create a particularly cohesive small town there. The growth of Northern Virginia since World War II has attracted large, relatively anonymous firms to set up headquarters in the area, yet they operate on a national scale.

In still another way geography has determined who designs Virginia’s notable buildings: in many cases it has been out-of-state architects. However competent Virginia’s own architects have been, there had always been a tradition of going to out-of-state architects for many of the state’s most important buildings. Early in the nineteenth century one could see the pattern begin to develop, as Robert Mills and Alexander Parris, and later Thomas U. Walter, Alexander Jackson Davis, Samuel Sloan and Ammi B. Young were designing buildings and monuments for Virginia. These were followed in the post-Civil War years by such noted architects as Elijah E. Myers, John R. Thomas, Reuben H. Hunt, Richard Morris Hunt, James O'Rourke, McKim, Mead & White, Wilson Brothers and, after the turn of the century, by Carrère & Hastings, Ralph Adams Cram, Warren & Wetmore, Frank Lloyd Wright, Richard Neutra, Fay Jones, and Charles Moore, to name but a few. In many cases the best work of these architects has not been in Virginia, but the roll-call of eminent American architects who have designed in Virginia is daunting, perhaps unmatched by any other state. It speaks to the aspirations of Virginia patrons for creating first-rank architecture; but then, what does it say about Virginia’s own architects?

When the individual commissions for these out-of-state architects are investigated, particular reasons for obtaining them become apparent. James G. Hill, architect of the Federal Courthouse in Danville (Figure 3.3); Mifflin E. Bell, who designed the United States Courthouse in Lynchburg; James Knox Taylor, who designed the Post Office in Martinsville (Figure 3.4); and James O’Rourke, who designed the Post Office in Roanoke (Survey No. 61) were all on the federal payroll, in the same way that earlier, Ammi B. Young had been the Architect of the Treasury. Federally sponsored architecture, especially of important buildings with a symbolic role, is generally designed by “outsiders.” Well-publicized competitions brought in outsiders like Arquitectonica for the Center for Innovative Technology in Herndon (Survey No. 115). Reuben Hunt (Survey No. 65) received his Baptist Church commissions in Newport News through his own association with the church.

Some architects were clearly the leading national, indeed international figures of their time. McKim, Mead & White and Richard Morris Hunt were chosen to work on major projects in Virginia because of their prestige. University campuses, particularly in recent years, have been showplaces of innovative architecture, and consequently the leading stars—Modernists, Postmodernists, and Neo-traditionalists—have been asked to design them. Others were chosen because of their specialties: John Eberson for his colorful theater designs and Alfred Bossom for banks and skyscrapers.
Some patterns are even more determined by geography. To be expected is a large number of New York-based designers, but why so many Philadelphians? Buildings by Watson & Huckel, Yarnall & Goforth, Wilson Eyre, M. Hawley McLanahan, Bissell & Sinkler, Frank Miles Day, Cope & Stewardson, and Kenneth Day can all be found in the state. The Philadelphia presence became established earlier in the nineteenth century with Thomas U. Walter, Samuel Sloan, and others. Railroads created the pattern: Philadelphia was more accessible than New York, which was across the Hudson River. Similarly, Lynchburg had rail connections with Baltimore and numerous Maryland architects, builders, and contractors found their way to the “city of seven hills” and have exercised a presence throughout the state. Given the proximity of Washington, D.C., its architects have a strong presence only in Northern Virginia; elsewhere they are largely absent except for Charlottesville, where Paul Pelz, and the office of Alfred B. Mullett, and later Waddy B. Wood designed buildings at the turn of the century. In other areas, Wood and more recently Hugh Newell Jacobsen have done work in Virginia’s hunt country—Middleburg and Warrenton. The connections between these areas and Washington point to the fact that the patrons had stronger ties outside the state than to Virginia.

This reliance on non-Virginia designers indicates a dichotomy in Virginia. On one hand it views itself as part of a national culture; its businessmen and cultural leaders have always had strong ties elsewhere and consequently have turned to architects from those areas. But this stands in direct opposition to the strong sense of identity and pride that many Virginians profess toward their state. Some of this loyalty comes from a reverence for the past, an obsequiousness to the historical Old Dominion. Yet to recreate this history Virginians have often patronized Yankee designers. Might one conclude that Virginians have distrusted “home-grown” architects, especially for the larger, more prestigious commissions?

Architectural Education and Professionalism

Two historically based patterns have helped to obscure recent Virginia architecture and have contributed to the dominance of out-of-state architects: self-image or promotion, and education. Throughout the nineteenth century the usual path for the training of architects was the apprentice system. Professional, university-based architectural education in the United States did not begin until 1865 when the Institute of Technology (now the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in Boston established an architectural program based, in part, on the curriculum of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. The Beaux-Arts, which many Americans attended until well into the 1920s, served as a model for other American schools of architecture. It was not until the late 1930s that American schools began to reject the Beaux-Arts model and to adopt a new European import, based on the Bauhaus in Germany. By 1900 at least fifteen schools had established departments of architecture: eleven were in the North, two were in Canada, and two were in the South: Tuskegee, founded in 1893, and Tulane, 1894. In the next
two decades more schools of architecture were founded in the North, and in the South there was Texas A&M (1905), Auburn (1907), Georgia Tech (1908), the University of Texas (1909), Rice (1912), and Clemson (1917). The first school of architecture in Virginia was at The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, founded in 1919 with Fiske Kimball as the head. The school’s first graduating class was in 1923. In 1928 Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg established under Clinton Cowgill a program in architectural engineering that became a full degree-granting architecture program in 1957. The third school of architecture in Virginia, established under the direction of William H. Moses at Hampton Institute in 1940, became a full program in 1948.

In spite of its glorious beginnings, the Commonwealth lagged in professional architectural education. Most Virginians, like John Kevan Peebles and Edward Frye, developed their skills through the apprentice system. Lacking any state requirements for licensing, anybody could use the title of architect, and many builders and contractors did so. The builder-architects should not be sneered at, however, for in the nineteenth century they provided much of this country’s building stock. But for Virginians who desired well-trained architects with an intellectual basis and the ability to design sophisticated and complex buildings, the state lacked strong academic foundations. Virginians who wanted to be architects went elsewhere for training, and out-of-state architects were invited to design in-state.

Virginia has never lacked for those who call themselves architects, but precisely who qualifies as an architect is a complex question. The professionalization of architects and the exclusion of builder-architects in America is a still an unrecorded history. The professionalization of certain occupations (i.e., doctors, lawyers, teachers) is a recurring theme in the nineteenth century, and architects appear to have lagged. The American Institute of Architects (AIA), founded in 1857, has been the main vehicle for architects. Located in New York until 1899, when it moved to Washington, D.C., the AIA was viewed by most architects outside New York as an exclusive gentlemen’s club that did not represent their interests. In the 1880s and 1890s many architects in different cities organized themselves in local “leagues” or “clubs” and held exhibitions of drawings and sponsored guest lectures. In Virginia there was no such organization, although architects from out of state did exhibit their drawings for Virginia buildings elsewhere. Watson & Huckel of Philadelphia, for example, entered their rendering of Christ Church, Norfolk (SURVEY NO. 72), in five different exhibitions. During the late 1880s and 1890s the AIA sought to expand its influence by setting up regional chapters. One was a Southern Chapter, initially based in Atlanta, which only lasted from 1892 to 1896. Of the chapter’s thirty-five charter members, three were Virginians: Walter P. Tinsley of Lynchburg served as its secretary and Marion J. Dimmock of Richmond was its second, and final, president. The next attempt to organize professionally came in 1911, when the Richmond Association of Architects was formed, with William C. Noland as president, and other leading local architects, including Henry Baskervill, Marcellus Wright, Charles M. Robinson, and W. Duncan Lee among
the eleven founding members. The U.S. Census for 1910 had recorded 163
individuals who called themselves architects in the state. William Noland,
along with Frank Baldwin and Phillip Stern of Fredericksburg, and Benjamin
Mitchell and Clarence Neff of Norfolk, founded a Virginia chapter of the AIA
in 1914. The principal work of this AIA chapter, with its few members, was to
lobby for state licensing of architects. The regulation finally passed in 1920. Virginia was the twenty-first state to require licensing of architects, and William
Noland received the first license. The Virginia chapter grew very slowly in the
1920s and the 1930s, no doubt because of the Depression. By 1950 the U.S.
Census listed 593 Virginians who claimed to be architects; only 344 of them
were registered or licensed. The very size of the state meant that many architects
had little allegiance to an organization based in Richmond and, over time,
regional sections were set up in Northern Virginia, Roanoke, and the Tidewater
area, as well as Richmond; all operated from within the Virginia Society of
Architects.

Official registration increased professionalism among architects, since it
required either university schooling or a lengthy period of apprenticeship and,
in time, the passing of a licensing exam. While anyone could design a house,
only licensed architects could get designs accepted for large commercial and
public buildings. And although architects did not completely give up the single-
family house, residential design increasingly meant the high-budget, luxury
house, and not middle-class housing, which was left to the developers and
builders. The weight of the profession shifted toward large institutional com-
missions. The educational requirement meant that after the 1940s students were
trained as Modernists and would have little sympathy for traditional Virginia
architecture, and certainly had little ability to design it.

Virginia architects have generally not promoted themselves or their work in
the past 125 years. Articles abound in both professional and popular periodicals
on Virginia architecture, but these are largely historical in scope, being more
concerned with the glory days of the Colonial and Federal periods. A few
Virginia architects have attempted to publish their own work, but their numbers
are minuscule, especially when compared to out-of-state architects, like William
Lawrence Bottomley, who published their work extensively. Here and there, in
*The American Architect and Building News* or *Architectural Record*, appears a
design by Peebles, Baskerville, Lee, or Frye, but they are far outnumbered by
articles on old Virginia.

Since the late nineteenth century most significant American architectural
publishing has originated in New York and Boston, and in that context work
by Virginians has not seemed especially distinguished. Even in a regional mag-
azine, such as *The Southern Architect*, based in Atlanta, Virginians are seldom
represented. Virginia-based publications have been few and, until recently,
limited in appeal. Publication of one's work is admittedly controversial among
architects, especially by those who do not publish. And publication certainly
does not guarantee quality, but the absence of any attempt to show one's work
to the larger world implies that it lacks importance. Such a conclusion might be
drawn because it is widely agreed that architectural publication is self-promotion, and Virginia architects by and large have not expended much effort. The architecture created by Virginians fits in most cases within the broad mainstream of America—safe, competent, and mainline—and distinguished only in special cases.

**Race and Gender**

The profession of architecture both nationwide and in Virginia has been almost exclusively dominated by white, upper-middle-class males. Certainly there is a history of contributions by blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans, as well as by women, but such variance still remains to be documented.

Architecture by and for blacks in Virginia is still largely unrecorded. The legacy of slavery and the exclusion of blacks from white middle-class professions continued long after the Civil War. Within their communities black builder-architects have provided houses and other structures, but professionalism for blacks who desired to become architects came slowly. Training for black architects has been split between black colleges and the white-majority schools. Architecture programs were established in the South long ago at black schools such as Tuskegee Institute in Alabama (1893), Howard University in Washington D.C. (1919), and Hampton Institute in Virginia (1940). Commissions for black professionals, largely from other blacks, have been for churches, schools, Masonic temples, and similar black institutions and organizations. William Sidney Pittman (1875–1958), a black architect from Washington, D.C., who trained at Tuskegee, designed the Negro Building at the Jamestown Tercentennial in 1907 (Figure 3.5). Apparently the first major exhibition structure by a black architect, and one devoted solely to the achievements of black Americans, it was a wood-frame structure with an exterior of pebble dash and a large-columned portico. The Tidewater area has tended to be the most hospitable...
region in Virginia for black architects. Among the leaders was Harvey Nathaniel Johnson, the son of a Richmond building contractor, who studied at Virginia Union University and later attended architecture school at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh. During World War I he was assigned to Washington as an architectural draftsman, but when his race was discovered, he was transferred to Newport News to design warehouses and shipyard facilities. After the war he set up an office in Norfolk with Charles T. Russell, another black architect, and they designed a number of buildings, including the Attucks Theatre building (1919, Figure 3.6), a facility named for Crispus Attucks, a half-black, half-Native American, anti-British agitator who was the first colonial to be killed in the American Revolution. Although Johnson entered the ministry in 1924, he continued to design and advise on architecture, especially black churches, for the remainder of his life.20

The feeling among many blacks that they were deliberately excluded from the white architectural world can be seen in the controversy surrounding the Virginia exhibit for the 1939 New York World’s Fair. In 1938, the Virginia Art Commission sponsored an open competition for the design of the Virginia exhibit, or Virginia Room, at the Fair. Virginia would not have a separate building, but rather would occupy a space in a larger structure. On November 17 of that year, the Art Commission announced that the winner was William Henry Moses, Jr., of Hampton, who would receive a monetary prize of $350. The announcement noted that, according to the rules of the competition, the winning design “could be altered or nullified” by the Virginia subcommittee of the New York World’s Fair Commission. Moses’ design, estimated to cost $10,000, would feature a scale model of the recently restored Colonial Williamsburg in the middle of the room, with photomurals on the surrounding walls arranged in ten topics—ranging from agriculture to history—that symbolized Virginia. Below would be photographs of the subjects, and a 37-foot-long double-lighted photomontage map of Virginia would cover one wall (Figure 3.7).21

Although Moses’ plan was initially given extensive publicity, it quickly ran into difficulties. In late November 1938, Wilbur C. Hall, Chairman of the State Conservation Commission and secretary of the subcommittee of the Virginia World’s Fair Commission, met with executives of Colonial Williamsburg, Inc.; Moses was not informed about the meeting and was not invited to attend. The group criticized his design scheme as being too costly and for placing too much emphasis on Williamsburg. According to a published letter to Virginia’s governor James H. Price from Vernon M. Geddy, vice-president of Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., on behalf of the Williamsburg restoration organizations, it was felt that “the exhibit should . . . represent the life of the whole State, and should not feature particularly any one section or place of interest.” At the meeting, it was decided to invite Leslie Cheek, Jr., chairman of the Fine Arts Department of the College of William and Mary, to prepare an alternate design. On November 29, 1938, another meeting was held in Williamsburg, at which Cheek accepted the commission. 22
FIGURE 3.7A. Elevation and plan, 1938 design competition entry for Virginia Exhibit, 1939 New York World’s Fair, by William Henry Moses, Jr. (Reproduced from Phylon [1940], opposite page 321).
Cheek's design for the Virginia exhibit at the Fair (Figure 3.8), which was ultimately carried out, incorporated the work of three associates from the College of William and Mary. In the center of the room was a large fountain with a sculpture of "The Spirit of Virginia’s Rivers" by Edwin C. Rust (Figure 3.9). Around the walls were twelve niches with murals that symbolized Virginia topics, painted by Leonard V. Haber. Bookcases that lined the walls held 227 albums with twenty-five photographs each, representing different aspects of the state. Arthur Ross planned the indirect lighting for the room, and sofas and tables provided a comfortable setting, where "a smiling butler distributed glasses of ice water to the tired and thirsty." The cost of the completed installation was just over $30,000. The Virginia Room, as it was called, was in a "simple, modern manner," and received favorable comment in the press.21

Moses did not learn that his design would not be followed until he read about Cheek's design in the newspaper on January 6, 1939.22 Later that month, Wilbur C. Hall, as secretary of the subcommittee of the Virginia New York World's Fair Commission, published his subcommittee's reply to an inquiry from L. R. Reynolds, director of the Virginia Commission on Inter-racial Cooperation. Hall first expressed the subcommittee's regret that "there were only three competitors for the design," and stressed that neither "racial or religious prejudice" had played a role in the decision not to use the Moses design but that the design "called for a photomural plan, with the floor design devoted wholly to Williamsburg... which might result in sectional criticism." The subcommittee also stated that, upon investigation, they found that many other states were planning to use photomurals. Also, they had determined that Moses' design with the lighted map would be too expensive to produce.23
The cancellation of Moses’ design caused outrage among many blacks. A headline in the black-owned Norfolk newspaper, the Journal and Guide, proclaimed: “State Spurns Moses’ Plan.” Another article, by Mentor A. Howe in Phylon, a journal edited by W. E. B. Du Bois at Atlanta University, observed that “the dilemma created by the winning of an open and anonymous contest by a Negro, however brilliant, is to the ‘true Southerner’ too embarrassing for comfort.”

The history of women in Virginia architecture has been studied even less. For most Virginians the woman’s accepted role was extremely traditional, even if the facts proved otherwise. So although women worked in factories and on the farm, higher education for them was confined to circumscribed activities: they might be teachers, homemakers, or active in cultural and civic-minded projects, but architecture, among others, remained a male profession. Within the household, in matters of decor and furniture, and outside, in the garden, women played a major role, but again, little research has been done to document it. As most architects will attest, the woman frequently plays a major role in commissioning the design of a house, and in seeing it get built. Maude Cooke (Mrs. Andrew Cooke) in Virginia Beach kept two sets of account books: one to show her husband, the other containing the real costs, all so she could build her Frank Lloyd Wright house. Carter’s Grove became a passion for Molly McCrea, and because of her interest Duncan Lee made substantial alterations, creating a mythical eighteenth-century plantation house.

In the world beyond the home, the female contribution in Virginia has not been so much in design itself as in other areas: Mary Wingfield Scott wrote on historic Richmond architecture, Ann Pamela Cunningham is credited as the savior of Mount Vernon, and Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman and Mary Jeffery Galt co-founded the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, the first such organization in the United States. The Daughters of the American Revolution and other groups have carried on similar activities with historic houses. The preservation movement in Virginia was not just led by women, they virtually created it. Without so many women’s efforts on behalf of preservation, the ruins at Jamestown, Mount Vernon, and many other historic buildings would no longer exist.

The Garden Club of Virginia, which was founded in 1920 and quickly became a leading social force, not only raised public consciousness about architecture and landscaping through its activities, restorations, and tours, but also became an important source of commissions for some architects. For many houses designed by William Lawrence Bottomley, the Garden Club connection was important; many of his clients were members. Virginia W. Christian, who along with her mother, Mrs. Andrew H. Christian, wrote many of the Garden Club’s early guidebooks, married Bottomley’s favorite Richmond contractor, Herbert A. Claiborne, of Claiborne and Taylor. And Mrs. Herbert McKelden Smith of Staunton was president of the Garden Club in 1928–29 when Bottomley received the commission to design the McKeldens’ house, Waverley Hill (Survey No. 87).
Women have also been credited with the creation of Civil War memorials through the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Confederate Memorial Literary Society. In a related field, the noted photographer Frances Benjamin Johnston (1864–1952), was responsible for an elegant and eloquent survey of Southern and Virginia buildings, which she completed under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation of New York in the 1930s (see three examples of her work in Survey Nos. 3, 29, and 31).

In the design profession women were barred, or at least discouraged, for many years. As for female designers who have earned significant reputations and developed an independent practice, Chloethial Woodard Smith (born 1910) is the best known. With an office in Washington, D.C., Smith was instrumental in introducing modern residential design to Northern Virginia, where she designed parts of Reston, the innovative planned community in Fairfax County.

*The Modern Presence and Postmodernism*

Although the historical image has dominated Virginia’s architecture, still there has been a history of Modernism in the Old Dominion. Modernism can be defined in many ways: for some it is synonymous with contemporary. In this broad sense, nearly every building of the past 250 years was at one time considered “Modern.” By a very different definition, Modern is change, a definition in which the present is seen as distinct and different from the past; and this definition involves the development of a historical consciousness. Modernism in this sense only can exist when there is an equally strong concept of tradition or history. Most architects and historians in the twentieth century have defined Modernism as containing elements of this narrower, more precise definition as a self-conscious stylistic movement in which the design of objects, furniture, and
buildings should eschew the past and avoid historical precedents. Although it is common to speak of Modernism as a monolithic movement it was not. Instead there were many opinions about what was Modern. High-rise buildings, whether hotels or offices, are primarily Modern structures even though they may be clad in historical garb. Two examples can be seen in Charlottesville’s Hotel Monticello and Roanoke’s Boxley Building, both dating from the 1920s (Survey Nos. 77, 80). Similarly, the style of Harvey Warwick’s Colonial Village apartments (Figure 3.10) in Arlington, built around 1935–40, is “Colonial” but was in fact an extremely updated concept derived from the Green-Belt ideas developed by Clarence Stein and Henry Wright.

A similar conflict in definition can be seen in a public highway such as the Blue Ridge Parkway, a scenic road linking Virginia’s Shenandoah and North Carolina’s Great Smoky Mountains national parks. Actually Virginia has three other parkways from the same period: the Skyline Drive in the Shenandoah National Park (1931–39); the Mount Vernon and George Washington memorial parkways (1931–32), which linked Mount Vernon with Washington, D.C.; and the Colonial Parkway (1938–40), which connects Yorktown and Williamsburg. Stanley W. Abbott was the major designer for both the Blue Ridge and the Colonial parkways; his intention was not just to preserve natural beauty, but to enhance it by restoring nature where it had been destroyed.

The Blue Ridge Parkway was a major accomplishment, a design of international stature. Abbott took the idea of a linear park road and elaborated it or, as he described it, “You worked with a ten-league canvas and a brush of a comet’s tail,” by threading a highway through spectacular scenery. The major features of this park—panoramic views, farm land, old mills, log cabins, tree-lined corridors, sheer rock walls, and quiet ponds—could be appreciated by people riding in that most modern of all twentieth-century machines, the automobile. The roadway, the bridges, and the engineering were all the most up to date available, and yet the architectural embellishments, from fences to roadside structures, were consciously designed in a rural vernacular idiom (Figure 3.11). In the case of all the parkways, Modern design is put in the service of adapting the use of that machine, the automobile, to historical, or commemorative, or preservation ideas, as well as to the enjoyment of natural beauty. Is this a Modern concept? Yes, it certainly is, but it is not Modern in style.

Self-consciously stylistic Modernism is primarily a twentieth-century phenomenon, but it has roots in the High Victorian and Queen Anne architecture of the later nineteenth century. In buildings such as Elijah Myers’s Richmond City Hall (Survey No. 38), or James G. Hill’s Danville Federal Courthouse (Figure 3.3), the buildings are in fact eclectic assemblages of a variety of motifs—some historical, others newly created, freely adapted and combined in novel ways. The drawing for the Danville Courthouse is a wild concoction of Romanesque, Flemish, English, and American Colonial details. Although orthodox Modernism rejected this wild eclecticism of different sources, the building’s freedom of design would be considered a valid and an important feature.
The earliest example of what would be called Modern architecture in Virginia is probably Frank Lloyd Wright’s Larkin Company Pavilion at the Jamestown Tercentennial of 1907 (Figure 3.12). Standing amidst other buildings that self-consciously quoted the past, Wright’s little pavilion must have seemed like a creature from another planet. Instead of the overall enforced style—red brick, white trim, imitation marble (“staff,” a mixture of plaster-of-paris and horsehair), and the columns and pediments on other buildings in the so-called “Colonial city”—Wright’s building was predominantly horizontal and asymmetrical. Abstract geometry, not historical images, ruled his design. Wright had essentially reproduced in Virginia one of the Prairie-style houses that he had been designing in the Midwest since the late 1890s. For the Larkin Company, a Buffalo-based concern, he had done a headquarters building and several houses for executives in the Prairie style. Wright had claimed that his Prairie idiom was a response to the midwestern landscape. Interestingly, Wright’s pavilion won one of the few gold medals for architecture.

Although Wright is usually identified as a major architect of the Modernist or Progressive movement, especially for later examples such as the Pope-Leighey House (Survey No. 96), the sources of his early work and those of his Chicago contemporaries in the Prairie School were in the Arts and Crafts Movement of the turn of the century. This movement originated in England under the artist and designer William Morris and the philosopher and critic John Ruskin, as a corrective measure for an increasingly machine-dominated society. In America, the Arts and Crafts Movement exhibited a variety of attitudes towards the machine. Wright had actually praised it but many others, among them Ralph Adams Cram, despised it. The Arts and Crafts Movement in America encompassed many philosophical and stylistic responses. Cram’s, neo-Gothic works at the University of Richmond (Survey No. 74) and Watson & Huckel’s
Christ Church, Norfolk (Survey No. 72), are examples of a conservative Arts and Crafts approach in contrast to the progressivism of Frank Lloyd Wright and others.\textsuperscript{35}

Study of the Arts and Crafts Movement in the South, and in Virginia in particular, is still in its infancy. What encompassed and was identified as Arts and Crafts, except for the most superficial knowledge, is unclear. At the Jamestown Exposition, both Tiffany Studios and Stickley Brothers were represented, and there was an “Arts and Crafts Village” (Figure 3.13) populated by “artisans, or really artists,” who displayed what were claimed to be seventeenth-century crafts: pottery, copper, silver, wood, rush, textiles, and iron. Although descriptive commentary claimed the seven shingle-covered structures with low-lying roofs to be “old colonial buildings,” they were quite clearly new structures, heavily indebted to the New England seacoast and the bungalow.\textsuperscript{36} From the early 1900s until well into the 1920s, this bungalow style popularized by Gustav Stickley and others was built throughout Virginia. The Oakwood Country Club in Lynchburg (1914; Figure 3.14) by John Minor Botts Lewis illustrates the application of the low-rising, essentially a historical bungalow idiom, to other building types. A great sheltering roof engulfed the flat planes of the lower floors.\textsuperscript{37} Some of the designs of Staunton’s T. J. Collins’s sons, Sam and Will (Survey Nos. 60, 68), reflect knowledge of the designs of Louis Sullivan. Their Ice Factory Building (1910; Figure 3.15) for the Smith Fuel Company, is a good example. The Collinses adapted Sullivan’s National Farmer’s Bank of Owatonna, Minnesota, which they had seen illustrated in The Architectural Record magazine. But such designs are rare, and the Collins boys did not follow up on this direction.\textsuperscript{38} As can be seen with the Jamestown Village Exposition, the Arts and Crafts Movement has elements of the Colonial Revival, and certainly this guided some of the designers at Colonial Williamsburg in the 1920s, who had been trained by Cram. But this borrowing is still a far cry from citing the Arts and Crafts Movement as a source of Modernism, and indicates the conflicting elements inherent not only within the movement, but also among the many definitions of Modernism.
In the 1920s and 1930s Modernism as a stylistic response becomes much more distinct, though many different approaches ranged from the so-called “stripped Classical” to Art Déco to the streamlined style, and later the International Style. With the Virginia War Memorial Competition, the Commonwealth had a chance to lead the United States with the erection of an early example of stripped or modernized Classicism. Popularized by Paul Cret of Philadelphia, this pared-down version of Classicism was just that: traditional forms and symmetry were retained, but historical ornament and details were eliminated. Cret and Marcellus Wright won the 1925 competition, but the memorial was never built (see drawing, Survey No. 81). Stripped Classicism was conservative Modernism. It respected the classical past and became the official government style in the 1930s, seen in numerous public buildings such as the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Norfolk (1934) by Benjamin F. Mitchell, and at National Airport in Arlington. The Commonwealth also applied this style in the Department of Highways Building (1937; Figure 3.16) by Carneal, Johnston & Wright and the State Library and Supreme Court (1937–39; Figure 3.17) by Carneal Johnston & Wright and Baskervill & Son.

More aggressively Modern was a style we call Art Déco which, in the 1920s to 1930s, had several other names: Modernistic, Moderne, the vertical style, and the skyscraper style. Influenced in part by the world’s fair from which its name was abbreviated, the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes (Paris, 1925), and by American sources, especially new perceptions of the machine, architects of the period saw buildings and their details as parts or pieces arranged in complex patterns, their profiles stepped back, with intertwining foliate and geometrical ornament. Marcellus E. Wright, Jr., who studied architecture under Paul Cret at the University of Pennsylvania in the late 1920s, recalled, “There was little of Art Deco in school; some of my colleagues were playing around with these shapes—not shapes but more, well, I call it sort of wheat [and chaff], different ways of taking nuts and bolts and locking them, and seeing what they looked like. Everyone thought it was new and fun and a little different.”39 Tall, set-back skyscrapers became important symbols of America cities, and the Old Dominion’s cities were no different. Both Central National Bank, Richmond (Survey No. 89) by New Yorker John Ebers, and the Allied Arts Building in Lynchburg (Survey No. 99) by
architects Johnson and Brannon, are the equals of any skyscraper built in the North. For Richmond businessmen and the Chamber of Commerce, the setback skyscraper became "Richmond of the Future" (Figure 3.18). On a smaller scale, two-, three-, and four-story Art Déco structures were built throughout the state. Richmond architect Carl Lindner was especially successful in creating vibrant structures with abstract ornamentation derived directly from Paris (Figure 3.19).40

Figure 3.10. In Richmond of the Future, an illustration for an advertisement placed by the Ralph L. Dombrower Advertising Company in 1929, the stepped-back skyscraper became an icon for growth, prosperity, and urban boosterism. Richmond Magazine (September 1929): 2.

Modernism as it developed from the 1930s onwards tended toward simplification of forms, the avoidance of decoration, and sparse, geometrical elements. Streamlining and the International style were two of many idioms that were part of 1930s and 1940s Modernism. Smooth facades and rounded corners cropped up in the new roadside environments. Although “officially” introduced in 1932 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the International style did not appear in Virginia until later in the decade. The Model Tobacco Factory, Richmond (1938–40; Figure 3.20), by Schmidt, Garden and Erikson—a Chicago firm that originally worked in the Prairie style with Frank Lloyd Wright—is a hybrid of the International style, with its continuous horizontal fenestration and volumetric form, and Art Deco in the huge vertical signpost at its entrance.  

Of the few International-style houses in Virginia from the 1930s, the most interesting is the one Amaza Meredith designed for herself and her companion, Edna Meade Colson, next to the Virginia State University campus near Petersburg (Figures 3.21, 3.21A). Born in Lynchburg, Miss Meredith attended Virginia State College, a two-year college for black students, and then went north, to Columbia University, to earn both the bachelor’s and the master’s degrees in art. She later returned to Virginia State University, and taught art there for the rest of her life. Her modest house of 1939, constructed of concrete block, illustrates her knowledge and sophistication with regard to the most advanced art currents of the period. Volume rather than mass, regularity rather than symmetry, and the avoidance of applied decoration—the principles of the
International style—define the exterior of her house. A rounded corner, large picture windows, glass block, and a flat roof made it one of the most advanced residential designs in the state in its day. Extremely controversial because of its advanced design, it was scarcely appreciated by anybody.

Virginia's basic conservatism was reflected in the results of a poll conducted by Architectural Record in 1940 of the buildings most admired in Richmond. Leading citizens (doctors, lawyers, businessmen, ministers, and the like) voted the State Highway Department Building as their favorite, and the Virginia State Library as runner-up. The Model Tobacco Factory took fourth place, and the next most modern structure, the new streamlined WMBG Radio Station by William H. Rhodes, tied for last place, eighth, with a Colonial Revival-style research laboratory by Francisco & Jacobus. The magazine summarized the results "A local preference in general for the architectural styles of tradition."
The International style finally arrived full blown in the 1950s when Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, with Gordon Bunshaft as the major designer, was commissioned to design the Reynolds Metals Building in Richmond (1953–58, Figure 3.22; Survey No. 105). Crisp in form and elegantly detailed, the Reynolds building seems to sit on a pedestal while its symmetry and aluminum-clad steel supports evoke the air of a Greek temple. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill would provide a number of other Modern-style buildings for Virginia, especially in the form of skyscrapers for banks and municipal institutions.

From the 1950s onward the Virginia architectural landscape, like elsewhere across America, changed dramatically: cities were torn up internally with new high-rise structures replacing the old. On the outskirts, corporate headquarters, malls, and industrial parks appeared. Freeways were carved through cities, towns, and farmlands, and vast parking lots became ubiquitous. The new environments were in some ways alien and inhospitable, but the change was not so much caused by architecture as by new economic and technical forces at work. Changing land values in urban and rural areas alike, the need for consolidation of some businesses and dispersal of others, new types of white-collar employment, and new transportation systems were the root causes. The automobile provided freedom—supposedly because it allowed people to escape the city to
the far suburbs. However, this harsh assessment of recent urbanism should be placed in a historical perspective. Americans tend to distrust the city, to bemoan their current problems, and to find greater virtue in some mythical city of the past. But the citizens of that historical city also saw it as a failure, and indeed in many ways it was. Violence, alienation, racism, endemic poverty, and class stratification have always been part of the American city. Colonial Williamsburg may appear wonderful to us now; Richmond of the 1910s and 1920s looks today like a decorated wonderland with its grand theatres, shops, skyscrapers, monuments, and Colonial Revival houses. But in each area, the same harsh features can be found, and most of the residents of the past would have preferred a house in the country.

Modern buildings and houses, many of them of very high quality, have been built across Virginia by out-of-state architects, among them Richard Neutra, Robert Anshen, and Edward Durrell Stone, and by Virginia architects Leonard J. Currie, Carlton Abbott, the firm of Glave Newman Anderson, and others. Frank Lloyd Wright returned to Virginia in the late 1930s with his special brand of Modernism that he called "organic" and designed a Usonian house for Loren Pope in Falls Church (Survey No. 96). Then, in the 1950s, he designed three more houses—two of which were built—for Andrew Cooke, Virginia Beach (1952–56), and Luis Marden, McLean (1952). And there is much more. Schools in particular, by out-of-state firms like Caudill, Rowlett and Scott, and Virginia firms such as T. J. Collins and Son, are also part of a tremendous revolution in how people lived in twentieth-century Virginia.

Northern Virginia stands out for the significance of its Modern designs. Dulles Airport (Survey No. 106) marked a new, more expressive phase of Modernism, and became the new formal gateway to the nation's capital. Of perhaps more significance in actual living patterns is the work of Charles Goodman. Though born and trained elsewhere, Goodman’s career has been primarily in Northern Virginia, where he designed a great many buildings, including the Hollin Hills subdivision (Survey No. 100).

Postmodernism

Because Postmodernism, now informally called “PoMo,” is a relatively recent development, its full historical contours (and of course its future) are not yet fully evident. Its roots can be traced to the 1960s and even earlier, to dissatisfaction with Modernism as it unfolded. Although some critics would claim that Postmodernism marks a fundamental break with Modernist orthodoxy, Modernism in fact was never monolithic and always encompassed many approaches. Similarly, Postmodernism does not encompass a single outlook, but ranges from aggressively abstract buildings, like Arquitectonica’s Center for Innovative Technology in Herndon (Survey No. 115), to reworkings of historical models. One branch of Postmodernism reintroduced the validity of looking at historical models as a source of design and ornament. Early Postmodern work in Virginia, like Turnbull’s Zimmerman residence in Great Falls (Survey No. 109)
and Venturi's Newman Library addition at VPI (Survey No. 110), has an edgy, somewhat awkward quality. Some Postmodernists, like Michael Graves, have very explicitly recalled early Modernist works, especially Art Déco (Survey No. 116). Others—such as Wright, Cox & Smith for the University of Richmond (Survey No. 112)—have veered toward historical recall, but with witty and critical overtones. And finally, some Postmodernists have gone the whole way towards a full-scale historical revival, as with recent work by Robert A. M. Stern of New York and Hartman-Cox of Washington, D.C., at the University of Virginia (Survey No. 117 and Figure 3.23).

The Historical Presence

When Virginia's Colonial Revival architecture is mentioned, many people think of those magnificent houses by Bottomley and Stanhope Johnson, or Cram's Carillon Tower or the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts by Peebles and Ferguson, (Survey Nos. 80, 87, 92, 93). Usually forgotten are Stony Point (Survey No. 79) or Colonial Williamsburg (Survey Nos. 83-86), though they are equally valid examples of twentieth-century architecture. The Colonial Revival is the most obvious manifestation of a pattern of historicism that is fundamental to Virginia's architecture during the past century. In spite of stylistic Modernism and of the great changes in styles of living and working, buildings cloaked in historical styles have continued to dominate Virginia's architecture. The Virginia pattern of historicism is no different from many other areas of the United States, where historical designs continued all through the twentieth century, but in Virginia there is a special intensity. This pattern involves a complex interworking of preservation, of the research and writing of architectural history, and of architectural design itself.48
Virginia's place in American history, *sui generis*, has given it a past that could not be ignored. This history includes its status as the first colony, its preeminent role in the formation of a new nation, the presence of so many founding patriots—such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, and George Mason—not to mention the substantial artifacts and buildings dating from its first two centuries. Equally important, the antebellum period and the Civil War itself also contribute to the perception of Virginia as a historical, indeed a mythological landscape. How could the present, the modern day, ever hope to compete with so much history?

The pattern of historicism can be seen emerging very early in the campaign to save Washington's home by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association in the 1850s, a fight over Arlington House (the Custis-Lee Mansion) during the 1870s, the restoration of the Moore house as part of the Yorktown centennial in 1881, and the founding of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) in 1889. APVA's initial concerns were the preservation of the remains of Jamestown Island and the seventeenth-century church tower there, saving the home of Mary Washington, mother of the first president, in Fredericksburg, and the purchase of the old Powder Magazine in Williamsburg. Homes of famous individuals and historical sites, from whatever period, became objects of interest. Preservationists were the first to define what architectural historians would study and what architects would refer to as models.

Most historical accounts have treated the Colonial Revival as a northeastern—Yankee—phenomenon that began in the 1870s around resorts like Newport, Rhode Island, and at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Heavily promoted by magazines and sophisticated young architects who had just returned from study abroad, the initial concerns of the nascent Colonial Revivalists lay in appreciating the seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century vernacular. Influenced by the contemporary Queen Anne and Olde English (or "Tudor Ethan") that was being imported from England, American architects like Charles F. McKim and Stanford White created in the late 1870s and early 1880s a style that has been christened the "shingle style," though it was known at the time as Modernized Colonial. By the mid 1880s McKim, White, and their followers turned to the more formal architecture of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century—the Georgian period—and were designing large symmetrical houses of clapboard and brick. A formalization in plan, shape, and sources of the Colonial Revival continued in the 1890s and into the twentieth century, while the earlier shingle-covered Colonial largely disappears into the Arts and Crafts Movement. Also beginning in the 1890s and gaining force in the 1900s and 1910s was the discovery of regional models for the Colonial style, such as the Dutch in New York, the French in Louisiana, the Spanish in the Southwest, and the plantation house in Virginia.

The role played by both Virginia architecture and her architects in the Colonial Revival has, for the most part, been ignored by architectural historians. The early shingle style, or Modernized Colonial, was imported and used by Virginia architects in the 1880s and 1890s, and examples can be found through-
out Virginia. The first explicit reference to Southern Colonial motifs probably came in McKim, Mead & White's Commodore William Edgar House, Newport, Rhode Island (1884–86; Figure 3.24), in which the extended wings and the arched chimneys are reminiscent of Stratford Hall, Westmoreland County. Whether McKim and his partners were explicitly thinking of Stratford for their Newport mansion is unclear, for they never explained their sources, but unquestionably Virginian were the houses for James Breese in Southampton, New York (1898–1902) and Alfred A. Pope in Farmington, Connecticut (1898–1901), where the long porticoes recall Mount Vernon and were so noted by writers. These later examples, however, come well after Virginia entered the Colonial Revival picture.

Virginia had long been interested in reviving its Colonial past. One of the earliest attempts was Bremo Recess in Fluvanna County (1834–36; Survey No. 31) by John Hartwell Cocke, who specifically named Bacon's Castle in Surry County as a source for his Jacobean design. Cocke's work parallels that of Washington Irving at Sunnyside in Irvington, New York, and this early explicit reference to the American past may indicate similar Colonial intentions by other architects of the day, such as Alexander J. Davis and A. J. Downing.

Another element in the Virginia story is the question of Colonial survivals, such as Cobham Park, the Rives family summer home in Albemarle County (circa 1856; Figure 3.25). This residence well illustrates that certain building traditions usually associated with the 1790s to 1820s continued further into the nineteenth century. Undoubtedly, similar examples will come to light. Bishop William Meade's Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia (1857), which described and illustrated early churches on the 250th anniversary of the Jamestown settlement, did much to popularize architecture of the colonial era through the history of Virginia's church buildings.

The years immediately following the Civil War are unclear, but interest in Virginia's colonial-period architecture can be inferred from paintings of Westover and Berkeley plantations by Edward Lamson Henry dating from the 1860s and 1870s. A New Jersey architect, Van Campen Taylor (died 1906), measured Mount Vernon in 1876 (Figure 3.26). His was apparently the first such attempt to do so, and parallels similar documentary projects in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Only a few articles on Virginia subjects appeared in the architecture press in the North in the 1870s; but more appeared in the 1880s. Among the first were Glen Brown's brief paragraphs and drawings of interior details from Northern Virginia; then came much more substantial articles by A. Burnley Bibb (see an architectural illustration by Bibb, Figure 4.44). Photographs and drawings appear of Virginia monuments: Mills's Monumental Church, St. Luke's Church, and the Virginia Capitol. Accompanying the Colonial Revival in the North in the 1870s were articles on travel and regional curiosities in the popular press—Harper's, Scribner's and The Century magazines—but only a few featured Virginia. Reconstruction and the "bloody shirt" still dominated public consciousness of Virginia, but with their passing in the 1880s many more articles on Colonial Virginia began to appear in the
Figure 3.26. Among the first attempts to preserve and document historic American buildings was this drawing of the East Elevation and Plans of George Washington's Home, Mount Vernon, Virginia, as measured and drawn February 1876 by architect Van Campen Taylor (died 1906) of Newark, New Jersey. Ink on linen. (Photograph courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association.)
Northern popular press. The stories, novels and historical studies of Thomas Nelson Page and others in the 1880s, 1890s, and 1900s mixed fact and fiction with the Colonial, antebellum, and Civil War past. From the pages and illustrations of popularized historical romances, Americans fell in love with the stories of Virginia’s architectural past.

The first building with specific Virginia references by a native Virginian (or an adopted son) is the Virginia Building at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago (1893; Figure 3.27) by Edgerton Rogers (1860–1901). The son of the sculptor Randolph Rogers, Edgerton had only a brief career in Virginia. Born in Rome, he had some foreign training and arrived in Richmond in 1888 with the commission from Major James H. Dooley for his Richmond estate, Maymont. At the Chicago Fair, other states produced buildings based on their heritage: Massachusetts built a replica of the Hancock house, Pennsylvania had a confection based in part on Independence Hall, California produced a mission, and Virginia had Rogers’s “exact reproduction” of Mount Vernon. Although some accounts sneered that “the state did not furnish a building architecturally the equal of those of some other commonwealths” (McKim, Mead & White had designed a replica of the Villa Medici, Rome, for New York), still “the historic interest attached to the house far more than compensated.” Surviving photographs of Rogers’s Mount Vernon indicate that he embellished some of the details and added an entrance porch. It proved to be an extremely popular attraction, setting in motion the duplication of Washington’s home for a tremendous variety of purposes. Already existing in that elite status as an American icon, Mount Vernon became an architectural form to be adopted, as we have seen, by Northern architects like McKim, Mead & White and many others, and reproduced indiscriminately as homes for the wealthy, insurance offices, and tract homes. The Commonwealth of Virginia itself revived Mount Vernon—with the assistance of Sears, Roebuck and Company—as the state building for national and international expositions in 1915, 1931, and 1932.

The Chicago World’s Fair also contributed to what came to be known as the generic type of Southern Colonial Revival, the giant-columned and porticoed two-story house that can be seen throughout the South and is well represented in Virginia. One example is H. H. Huggins’s Mountain View, the Fishburn house (Survey No. 69) in Roanoke. Several of the state buildings at the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 were identified as “Southern,” apparently because of their porticoes and columns. The house that provided the specific model, however, was the Connecticut State Building, by Warren R. Briggs of Bridgeport. Briggs’s imaginary confection had a projecting portico supported by paired columns of the colossal order, and behind it a single-story columned porch (Figure 3.28). This motif had no basis in Connecticut Colonial-style architecture, and was actually more reflective of French Beaux-Arts design. Paradoxically, and certainly because of the popular view of the South as the home of large-columned houses, the giant-columned portico became Southern in the popular mind. George Barber (1854–1915), the Nashville mail-order architect, picked up the motif and replicated it widely.
columned porticoes following the Connecticut model or other configurations began to crop up throughout the South, especially in Virginia: Selma in Loudoun County by Noland and Baskervill (1902), and Ednam in Albemarle County by D. Wiley Anderson (1905), were two of the best known. The equation of Colonial architecture in the South with giant columns would persist: as Thomas Mott Shaw, one of the restoration architects at Williamsburg recalled, “To a Southerner, colonial means columns—and of course here at Williamsburg there were practically no columns. I think that Jefferson was very disappointed in the College of William and Mary because it didn’t have any columns.” Shaw reveals not only the common perception of what the Colonial style was in the South, but also the importance of Jefferson’s post-Colonial, or early Republican architecture, with its large porticoes, in forming that view.

**Figure 3.29.** Westover, originally built in 1735, was remodeled into an Edwardian country house in 1902 for Wm. McC. Ramsey, by Marion Johnson Dimmock (1824–1908) and George R. Tolman (active 1890–1906), with William H. Mersereau (1862–1933). Compare with 1992 photograph of Westover, figure 1.32. (Photograph of rendering courtesy Virginia Historical Society.)

Red-brick and white-trim Colonial, or Georgian Revival, buildings began to appear in Virginia at the turn of the century. Restoration—or more properly, creative additions—were proposed and made to Westover, the most venerable of the James River houses, by William H. Mersereau of New York and by M. J. Dimmock and G. R. Tolman of Richmond. Arcaded hyphens, in what can best be called “Queen Anne” but thought to be in the same style as the original house, were built. As the rendering (Figure 3.29) shows, the additions made Westover a turn-of-the-century Edwardian country house. At the same time Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson of Boston began work on Sweet Briar College.
Ralph Adams Cram, who acted as the main designer for the project, found that "history, tradition, and architectural style pre-determined the course to follow," and that instead of his beloved medieval model, red-brick Georgian was the only appropriate image for the young ladies. Cram did not believe in archaeological reproduction, but that "historical precedent as a basis" could be expanded into a "romantic and pictorial form." The extravaganza that Cram dreamed (Figure 3.30) was only partially realized. It draws on Jefferson’s University at Charlottesville, but is far more complicated with its cross axis. The scheme has a French flavor with the Pantheon-like lecture hall, and its English quotations recall James Gibbs in its towered chapel and Jones in its elevations. Colonnade piles up on colonnade.
A similar free interpretation of Virginia’s heritage can be seen at the Jamestown Tercentennial Exposition of 1907. John Kevan Peebles of Norfolk was chairman of the Board of Design; the other architects were Parker & Thomas of Baltimore and Boston; the landscape architect was Warren H. Manning of Boston; and Robert S. Peabody of Boston served as architectural advisor. This team produced what the promoters called a “Colonial City”: large red-brick and white-trimmed facades and two-story columned porticoes. Peebles was probably responsible for the main ensemble on Raleigh Square, where the domed auditorium’s source was obviously an enlarged and decorated Monticello (Figures 3.31, 3.32). The Virginia Building, by the Norfolk architects Breese and Mitchell, was Southern Colonial with a giant two-story columned portico (Figure 3.33).²

**Colonial Revival and American Renaissance**

Several points must be made about the Colonial Revival wherever it developed. For although the details were carried out with archaeological and almost scientific exactitude, there was seldom wholesale reproduction. Instead, architects operated with a free-wheeling and creative reinterpretation of the past. The term “revival” is perhaps inappropriate; better would be “Colonial interpretation.” What was viewed as Colonial was very broad and included the entire period from Jamestown through the 1820s. Considered as Colonial were the styles of Federal, Early Republican, Jeffersonian, and Greek Revival, or the entire period of late Georgian architecture from the 1780s to the 1820s. The line between Colonial and these other Classical idioms was very thin—if indeed it can be defined at all—and most architects, critics, and historians saw it all as part of the same architectonic and cultural system. The same architects who designed Colonial Revival buildings also did buildings in Italian Renaissance, French Renaissance, Jacobean, and other styles. Additions made to the University of
Virginia illustrate the conjunction. John Kean Peebles, who, with his partner James R. Carpenter, designed Fayerweather Gymnasium (Figure 3.34) in 1893, wrote one of the first articles on Jefferson as an architect. He disparaged Brooks Hall by John R. Thomas in 1876 (Survey No. 54) and the Gothic Chapel by Charles Cassel of 1885, and argued that Fayerweather Hall partook of the “Classic in feeling and in detail,” but that the design was in no way a reproduction.73 Peebles created a Roman Corinthian temple facade, raised up on a podium, that housed sweaty athletics. This is not the Roman architecture of Jefferson’s Palladio, but a Beaux-Arts interpretation of it. Similarly McKim, Mead & White also “restored” and added to the University in what they considered to be compatible red-brick and light-colored-trim buildings, with large temple fronts—Cabell, Cocke, and Rouse halls. The idiom that Stanford White developed at the University came from his perceptions of Jefferson’s work, which he explained: “They’re wonderful and I am scared to death. I only hope I can do it right.”74 In his book of 1904, Joy Wheeler Dow made it very explicit that American Colonial and Georgian and their revivals, and the Classical architecture of Europe were all interrelated; in the United States it was the “American Renaissance.”75 The American Renaissance is the broader platform, a mental consciousness of the period from the 1870s into the 1930s, that attempted to place American culture on the same level as that of the Old World. Through the visual arts, painting, sculpture, and architecture, America would be glorified and extolled as the heir of Western civilization.76

The development of the Colonial Revival in Virginia went hand-in-hand with the creation of the myth of the “lost cause.”77 This is nowhere better seen than on Monument Avenue in Richmond (Figure 3.35), where the Robert E. Lee monument (1890), the extension of the Avenue after 1900, and the placement of the other statues—J. E. B. Stuart and Jefferson Davis (1907),
Stonewall Jackson (1919), and Matthew Fontaine Maury (1929)—are in a setting of various architectural styles, especially Colonial Revival (Figure 3.35a).78 Most of the Confederate monuments throughout Virginia were erected after 1900. They are the South’s and Virginia’s answer to a similar campaign that began in the North in the 1880s. One of the first big preservation battles in Richmond was over saving the White House of the Confederacy, which was threatened with demolition in 1889. Mrs. Joseph Bryan, a leader of the APVA, led a group that opened it as a museum in 1896.79 The competition in 1910 for the Battle Abbey, the Confederate Memorial in Richmond, illustrates the conjunction: many of the ninety-seven entries in the competition were in various Colonial or Classical idioms. McKim, Mead & White’s unsuccessful design adapted Jefferson’s University Rotunda, but with a Doric order (Figure 3.36). Bissell & Sinkler of Philadelphia won with a large temple-fronted design, then altered it. The building as erected in 1912–13 became much more specifically English in the style of the eighteenth century (Figure 3.37).80
This memorializing and glorification of the War between the States, and by extension the mythologizing of “the olde South” and its antebellum, white-columned plantation culture, was a product of the American Renaissance, the quest to add a mythic dimension to American history. What events could give a more Homeric dimension to history than a battle of brother against brother, or the epic tragedy of a noble, agrarian-based culture trampled by mercantile industrialism?

So in Virginia there still exists a nostalgia for the past, a quest for the simplicity of “olde times” before the War, and even back to the noble days of the founding fathers; but there is also a complexity, for it was not all nostalgia. The Colonial Revival comes at the time of the “New South,” a conscious quest by many Southern leaders to abandon the agrarian, poverty-stricken past, and to compete commercially and industrially with the North—to become, in effect, modern. Progressive Virginia businessmen adopted the “New South” ethos and the architectural language of the American Renaissance. The tall office buildings, banks, markets, large estates, and even the addition to the State Capitol are all expressions of this new Southern sophistication. At a regional level it was the Colonial Revival and the monuments to Civil War heroes that provided the images for this New South. The Colonial Revival was urban in origin, created by urban sophisticates, who not only used it in cities but also for rural retreats.

The Colonial Revival was not an isolated movement, but part of a larger search for national identity that extends throughout most of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, first in the Western world, but more recently in other nations as well. Frequently interpreted as nostalgia, which can never be discounted, the nationalist quest for a style has other sources; it is intensely political and a product of the modern nation-state and its secular “religion” of patriotism. Nations throughout the past two centuries have excavated different styles and motifs of architecture to represent their national ethos. The Colonial Revival gave national identity to Americans, and provided unique personalities for regions and states. While historical and backward-looking, still the Colonial Revival is also a product of the modern mind, of a system of history that marks out the past in distinct epochs and periods, and seeks virtue in tradition. The Colonial Revival provided a canonical view of the American past, a hegemonic interpretation that was generally white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant. Other regions of the country modified this to suit their cultural roots, but the overriding perspective, aided and abetted by the ladies who supported historic preservation, was that of a WASP ethos. The Colonial Revival embodied the story and myth of America, of the colonists who created a new land, of a heroic generation of great leaders who created a new nation out of a wilderness. It symbolized and taught values to the young, to the immigrants, and to the citizens of all colors.

During the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s, stylistic preferences in the Colonial Revival changed, as new views emerged about what was Colonial and appropriate for Americans and Virginians. John Russell Pope’s John Kerr Branch House on Richmond’s Monument Avenue (Figures 3.38, 3.38A) is one
FIGURE 3.39. Virginia House was originally an English Tudor country house that was dismantled and reconstructed in Richmond, Virginia, in 1926–28, with extensive modifications by William Lawrence Bottomley (1883–1951) and Henry Grant Morse (1884–1934). The remodeled structure contains an addition designed to recall George Washington’s ancestral home in England, Sulgrave Manor.

FIGURE 3.40. Agecroft, another fifteenth-century English antique relocated to Virginia, was dismantled and rebuilt in 1926–28 with extensive changes for Thomas C. Williams in his new residential development in Richmond, Windsor Farms.

of the first instances of a new American birthright, though its roots can be traced all the way back to Breemo Recess (early 1830s; Survey No. 31). The “Tudorbethan” style could be used on many different scales, as demonstrated in Richmond at Stony Point (Survey No. 79), and the Williams house in Petersburg (Survey No. 95). At Windsor Farms in Richmond’s far West End during the mid 1920s, two English houses—the Tudor-style Virginia House and the fifteenth-century half-timbered Agecroft Hall (Figures 3.39, 3.40) were purchased in Britain, disassembled, shipped, and re-erected in Richmond with significant changes. William Lawrence Bottomley and Henry Grant Morse worked together on Virginia House and incorporated in it new features that recalled George Washington’s ancestral home in England, Sulgrave Manor. The area known as Windsor Farms was developed by Richmond attorney and philanthropist Thomas C. Williams, who also owned Agecroft Hall. Williams had several of the community’s structures done in similar styles, and the streets were laid out by city planner John Nolan in comforting curves. A promotional brochure for the development claimed that the English cottage “belongs as a sort of inherited right...Virginia is bound...to the mother country where for centuries such splendid old houses have survived.”82 Most of the building at Windsor Farms was not “Tudorbethan”, however, but Colonial Revival, including some of Bottomley’s great works.
The giant-columned Southern Colonial never disappeared entirely in Virginia, but appeared in a more restrained and tasteful eighteenth-century form, rectangular and without columns. The models are many but the most popular is a form based on James River estates, or the more simple story-and-a-half, like Gunston Hall. A comparison of Bottomley’s early work, such as the Coleman Wortham House (1917–25; Figure 3.41) with his later designs, such as Waverley Hill (1928–30; Survey No. 87) illustrates how the free assemblage of many motifs from different periods is replaced by the more accurate and overall cohesive designs that are generally more faithful to a single style. In this case, the later house’s facade is based largely on American examples from the 1750s and 1760s, while the earlier example is more Federal in origin,
with one of the largest porticoes Bottomley ever used—one inspired by the Roman Baroque architect Francesco Borromini—with Georgian pineapples. Contributing to this trend toward simplicity was the Modernist rhetoric of elimination. Virginia-based Colonial Revival architects of these years are many; though the standouts would be John Kean Peebles, Stanhope S. Johnson, and W. Duncan Lee (1884–1952). Lee designed several outstanding houses on Richmond’s Monument Avenue and elsewhere. He had trained with Captain Marion J. Dimmock in Richmond, may have worked on the Westover plantation house, and did conduct a “restoration-plus” on Carter’s Grove in the late 1920s (Figure 3.42). At the turn of the century, the New York architect William W. Tyree (1874–1943) had done some restoration for a new owner, T. Percival Bisland. Working for later owners, Molly and Archibald McCrea, Lee added the hyphens in a manner that, as he claimed, followed the intentions of the original designer. He also raised the roof and added dormers for more space. Carter’s Grove’s famous paneled hall had already lost its original paint: in the 1870s it had been painted red, white, blue, and green! Tyree stripped the paint in the hall and gave it a high-gloss dark stain varnish. Under Lee’s direction the stain was lightened, and this contributed to the popular view that eighteenth-century Virginia interiors were left a natural wood finish. For House & Garden magazine in 1934, Lee provided designs for a “James River Colonial,” an adaptation of the main block facades of Carter’s Grove. “The grand manner, of the wide-flung symmetrical wings” could not be used, but one small wing incorporated a garage. Lee also served on the Advisory Committee for Colonial Williamsburg, and was involved with at least two, maybe three of the great architectural icons of the Commonwealth—Colonial Williamsburg, Carter’s Grove, and Westover. Consequently he was also responsible for popularizing the image of Virginia as red-brick Colonial.

The shifts in perception in these years can be laid to several factors, but most importantly to the thousands of publications—books, articles, reports, and drawings—that appeared on the Colonial style in general, and on Virginia’s Colonial style in particular. Among the books was Fiske Kimball’s Thomas Jefferson, Architect (1916) and Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic (1922); the continuing White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs (1916–40); The Architects’ Emergency Committee’s Great Georgian Houses of America (1933, 1937), edited by William Lawrence Bottomley; and Thomas Tileston Waterman and John A. Barrows’s Domestic Colonial Architecture of Tidewater Virginia (1932), which was a direct outcome of the Williamsburg restoration. Waterman’s successive works, Mansions of Virginia (1946) and Dwellings of Colonial America (1950), became, and still remain, the canonical books defining Virginia’s architectural contributions. Marcus Whiffen added to the Williamsburg canon with books on public buildings (1958) and houses (1960, 1970). These books all represent what might be called “advances,” or greater knowledge on the subject, but they also represent a particular view of architecture founded on the Beaux-Arts system of education. The drawings published in the books by Kimball and
FIGURE 3.43. The concept of tracing the European roots of American architecture and identifying the mastermind behind its creation has been a common theme in traditional architectural scholarship. A favorite model can be seen in this Reconstruction Drawing of Rosewell, Gloucester County, Virginia, in the 1930s by Thomas Tileston Waterman (1900–1950). Reproduced from Waterman and Barrows, Domestic Colonial Architecture of Tidewater Virginia (New York: Scribners, 1932), 94–5. [Compare the photograph of Rosewell in ruins: figure 1.23.]

Waterman (FIGURE 3.43) show that vision well: admired features are the center hall with symmetrical, balanced compositions; details are crisp; and their sources, along with those of the overall building, can be clearly traced to European models, giving them a pedigree. Great attention is paid to identifying the author of particular designs. This focus on a single master-mind at work is typical of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art history, but in actuality early

FIGURE 3.44. Believing that historical precedent should guide creativity, scholar-architect Sidney Fiske Kimball (1888–1955) designed Tusculum, also called Shack Mountain, as his home in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1934–35. South elevation, pencil on vellum, 11¾ by 19 inches. (Photograph courtesy of the University of Virginia.)
Virginia Colonial buildings were the products of many different talents and not a single designer. The authors of these latter books preferred brick buildings, which are more permanent and hence more architectonic. All of this is the result of how they had been taught to view architecture, or of how they were educated: academic and theoretical in the case of Kimball at Harvard, or practical and applied, with Waterman in Cram’s office. They viewed themselves as scholar-architects and felt that a sound knowledge of historical precedent should be a guide to creativity. This approach can be seen in Shack Mountain (1935–36; Figure 3.44), Fiske Kimball’s tour-de-force for himself and his wife, outside of Charlottesville. Drawing on his beloved Jefferson, Kimball created a single-story pavilion of amazing grace and at the same time with a large, Tuscan-coulnned portico that commands the landscape.86

The restoration of Colonial Williamsburg (Survey Nos. 83–86) beginning in the 1920s indicates how successfully the Colonial Revival summed up the quest for an American national style.87 Such was its intention, as stated by its sponsor, John D. Rockefeller: “restoration of . . . a complete area entirely free from alien or inharmonious surroundings as well as to preserve the beauty and charm of the old buildings and gardens of the city and its historic significance. . . . It teaches of the patriotism, high purpose, and unselfish devotion of our forefathers to the common good.”88

The Colonial Williamsburg restoration also culminates the Colonial Revival quest for accuracy or fidelity to original sources. Architecturally, it was important not so much for the larger structures such as the Capitol, the Governor’s Palace, and the Wren Building, though they did become icons, but at the smaller, domestic scale, providing a new repertory of plans for houses and commercial buildings, along with appropriate paint colors, wallpaper designs, furniture, and other items for reproduction and sale. The project also provided a training ground for a large group of architects. There was the old guard, represented on the Advisory Committee by such leading figures as Fiske Kimball, Edmund S. Campbell (then chairman of the University of Virginia’s architecture program), A. Lawrence Kocher, and others. There were also the many architects who worked on the project and went on to other jobs: Thomas Waterman as an architectural historian, Everett Fauber as a restoration expert, and Milton Grigg as an architect. In many ways restored Williamsburg became a paradigm of the twentieth-century garden suburb with its generous open space, its heavy vegetation and trees (some believe these are least forty percent more than in the 1770s), its overall cleanliness, its concealment of modern utilities, and its neat reproductions of historical buildings. The homemakers’ press fell over itself praising the restoration and seeking lessons from its success. Hiram J. Herbert, writing for Better Homes & Gardens in 1936, felt that the business blocks of the town “offer an example of one way by which urban communities can be made ideal places in which to live.” He found a hairy woodpecker in front of the small-paned, mullioned windows of the A&P store, “suggestive of a residence.”89 The only thing missing during daytime hours was the automobile, which arrived in the evening.
Yet the Colonial Revival does not stop in Williamsburg and the 1930s, for any look at Virginia’s suburbs and countryside in the succeeding decades shows its strong continuance, including the work by Grigg and Johnson in Hollymead in 1935 (Survey No. 94). But a change does occur in the architectural press concerning the validity of designing in the historical styles, including the Colonial. This is most evident in the treatment of Williamsburg, which Architectural Record described as a “Restoration,” with no relevance to contemporary design.90 Only in the homemakers’ press, in magazines like House & Garden—where architects Perry, Shaw & Hepburn provided house designs based on Williamsburg models—does the Colonial Revival remain a viable option.91

In spite of its conspicuous presence, the Colonial Revival went underground in the architectural press and in the schools. This is evident in the case of A. Lawrence Kocher (1885–1969), director of the University of Virginia’s architecture program from 1926 to 1928, succeeding Fiske Kimball (1919–23) and Joseph Hudnut (1923–26). From Virginia, Kocher went to New York, where he became the managing editor of Architectural Record from 1928 to 1938, transforming it into the leading American epistle of Modernism. While he served on the architectural advisory board for Colonial Williamsburg, Kocher designed with Albert Frey several radically modern buildings. Later, in the early 1940s, he designed the main building at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, an institution devoted to Modernism in the arts, and also taught there. Kocher accepted the position of architectural records editor at Colonial Williamsburg in 1944, and remained there until his retirement in 1954. In 1947 Kocher designed “A Virginia House of Today” (Figure 3.45) as part of Your Solar House, a project sponsored by Libby-Owens-Ford Glass Company. Architects representing every state were commissioned to show Americans how they could profit from the use of glass in their homes. Many of the designs were in the Modern style, and the contributors are a virtual roll-call of leading architects of the period. A few of the designs were in traditional styles, including Colonial, but not Kocher’s for Virginia. Instead he provided a flat-roofed International-style derivative; even the so-called “Virginia brick” used for construction was painted. Here most graphically appears the bifurcated view of the Colonial: it was apparently considered appropriate for historical restorations, but not for Virginia homes which, Kocher explained, need only a few special provisions for shade and coolness, “Otherwise, the house of America is the same, whether it be north, south, east, or west.”92

A full circle seems completed with the Postmodern rehabilitation of the Colonial Revival in the 1970s and 1980s. Architects who, a generation earlier, would have been designing in Modern idioms now used Colonial. The work of Robert A. M. Stern (Survey No. 117), Hartman-Cox (Figure 3.23), and Allan Greenberg at the University of Virginia; Tony Atkin in Northern Virginia; and the new respect paid to older architects like Grigg & Johnson, are all indications of the shift. With the Postmodern revolution of the 1970s and 1980s came a new architectural history that examined all those styles that the Modernists had despised: Beaux-Arts, American Renaissance,
Colonial Revival, even High Victorian. Myers's old Richmond City Hall (Survey No. 58) became an object of praise and was saved from the wrecker's ball. An aesthetic revolution occurred; the passage of time added distinction. One force behind these reevaluations was the historic preservation movement, which became official government policy in the 1960s. Actually, this shift in perceptions is in many ways a product of the modern consciousness: time is a succession of waves, or periods, and inherent values reside in the past.

Figure 3.45. A non-traditional International style defined this perspective of A Virginia House of Today drawn in 1947 by Louis W. Ballou (1904–1979), and designed by A. Lawrence Kocher (1883–1969), to illustrate how glass could add beauty and efficiency to the home. Reproduced from Your Solar House, a project sponsored by Libby-Owens-Ford Glass Company (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1947), 52.

But such a sense of closure, with the Colonial Revival riding high, gives a false ending; for history does not end, it is open-ended, and a new, even more abstract, modern style, looms forth. Other alternatives exist. Those who write history create it, and in the past twenty years a new interest in the vernacular has emerged: the other side of Virginia's past, the log cabins, the ubiquitous I-houses, the barns and shacks, the buildings of the yeomanry who didn't live in James River estates, and the poor, both white and black. Historian Henry Glassie has been the leader of this group with his pioneering research on building types in western Virginia and in Louisa and Goochland counties. Research by Edward Chappell, Dell Upton, Cary Carson, and Mark Wenger also explores Virginia's "other" past.

The impact of this new scholarship on actual buildings has been most in obvious in museums: in Staunton, at the Museum of American Frontier Culture, and at Colonial Williamsburg, with the reconstruction of the Public Hospital, the Anderson Blacksmith Shop, and the Slave Quarter at Carter's Grove (Survey No. 118). Actually, architects have drawn from the vernacular
since the nineteenth century; it is a continuing tradition. Virginia examples might include Floyd Johnson's small house in Charlottesville (Survey No. 101), and the structures Stanley W. Abbott designed in the mid 1930s for the Blue Ridge Parkway (Figure 3.46). Abbott, a landscape architect, drew directly on the mountain vernacular of log cabins, shacks, and farm buildings to create gas stations, snack bars, and gift shops. His tightly composed designs, which used local stone for massive chimneys and foundations and relied on existing models, illustrate that even from the traditions of his early twentieth-century education he could look at the vernacular as well. More recently, Hartman-Cox's Immanuel Presbyterian Church in McLean (1978–80; Figure 3.47) draws on the idiom of barns and other rural structures. Conceived as a large barn behind a pre-existing house, the various additive forms recall vernacular churches while the side elevation comes from the Pennsylvania Germans at Ephrata. Certain features of Immanuel Church are later twentieth century: the large square window in the end elevation and the simulated board-and-batten siding (actually plywood sheets with battens added), which gives scale and

**Figure 3.46.** A rural vernacular style was chosen for this design for a Typical Coffee Shop & Gas Station, Blue Ridge Parkway, (1936), by Stanley W. Abbott (1908–1975). Pencil on tracing paper, 9 by 12 inches. (Photograph courtesy of the Blue Ridge Parkway and the National Building Museum.)
provides an economical exterior surface. This "new" vernacular is still in its infancy, but if the pattern of history holds—that a dialogue does exist among preservationists, historians, and architects—then we might expect other "new" or different buildings that recall Virginia's architectural heritage.

As we have seen, Virginia architecture of the past 125 years exhibits a multiplicity of images, forms, and intentions. While there is certainly a popular perception of Virginia's contribution to American design as residing in the early period, from 1607 to the 1820s, this view was created primarily by historians and the Colonial Revivalists. There is no one type of Colonial, or Colonial Revival, architecture for Virginia, but many: large-columned houses, extended-wing brick mansions, and more humble story-and-a-half builder's variety Colonial. So persuasive has the Colonial image become that the form of the eighteenth-century Virginia courthouse has been appropriated by the Commonwealth to serve as rest stops and "Welcome Centers" along Virginia highways (Figure 3.48). This is the popular image, but there are other aspects of Virginia's architectural heritage that are equally worthy of study, preservation, and emulation, from High Victorian to Modern. The challenge is to recognize the values inherent in each and how those values represent who we are.


4. The important studies are noted throughout this chapter or elsewhere in pertinent passages, but several should be singled out: William B. O’Neal, *Architecture in Virginia: An Official Guide to Four Centuries of Building in the Old Dominion* (New York: Walker Company, 1968), now out of print, is the only guidebook; Doll Upton, "New Views of the Virginia Landscape," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 96 (October 1988): 403–70; while largely concerned with earlier architecture, is important for its perspective. Finally, and indispensable, is Calder Loth, ed., *The Virginia Landmarks Register* 3rd ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986).


11. "Architects Form an Association," *Concrete Age* 15 (October 1911): 25. Letters in the AIA Archives indicate that the AIA tried to establish a Virginia chapter in 1900 but did not for lack of interest among Virginia architects themselves.

12. John Wells of Richmond has kindly supplied me with this information.


15. This observation is based on an extensive survey of both magazines up to the 1920s.

16. This conclusion is based on examination of about 25 monthly issues of *The Southern Architect* from 1889 to 1932. Because complete collections of this periodical are scarce, it is difficult to base such a conclusion on any more thorough sampling. Stanislaw J. Meikowski, who taught at the University of Virginia from 1913 to 1955 and practiced in the Charlottesville area, was on the editorial board of *The Southern Architect* during the 1920s. *Southern Architecture Illustrated* (Atlanta: Harman Publishing Company, 1931), by the same publisher as *Southern Architect*, illustrates 100 contemporary houses. Only six are from Virginia: three are by Duncan Lee, two are by Smith & Tardy, and one is by Matthews & Short. Additionally, two Virginia Colonial-style designs are in the introduction, by Dwight James Baum: Chatham and Lower Brandon.

17. Beginning in 1953 the Virginia Magazine, later Virginia and *The Virginia Record*, and finally *The Virginia Record*, devoted one issue (sometimes several) to Virginia architecture. Poorly produced and with apparently few standards, the magazine was strictly a trade publication. In January 1990, the Virginia Society of Architects established *Inform*, a much more attractive publication, with the intention of appealing to a wider audience.


20. Interview with Harvey Johnson, Jr., Virginia Beach, February 16, 1980, and examination of materials in his possession.

21. Announcements of the winner were published in Norfolk's
VIRGINIA-Pilot (November 17, 1938): 1, 3; and Richmond Times Dispatch (November 17, 1939): 16. Moses’ original drawings have been destroyed; however, reproductions of his winning entry can be found in Mentor A. Howe, “Come to the Fair!”, Phylon 1 (no. 4, 1940): 20-21; and the Newport News Times Herald (November 19, 1938): 2.


31. The connections between the Garden Club and noted architects’ commissions in Virginia were pointed out by architectural historian Davyd Foord Hood.

32. The Mount Vernon Parkway was later subsumed under the newer project, the George Washington Memorial Parkway; the final section of the Colonial Parkway in Williamsburg was completed in 1957. For the Blue Ridge Parkway see Hervey E. Jolley, Painting with a Camera’s Eye (Bonnoc, N.C.: Appalachian Consortium, 1984); Jolley, The Blue Ridge Parkway (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1983); Reuben Rainey, “The Blue Ridge Parkway: A Linear Park for the Automobile Age,” Utahland (Stockholm: August 1991, forthcoming); and Rainey, “Stanley William Abbott,” Virginia Dictionary of Biography (Richmond: Virginia State Library and Archives, forthcoming).


36. See Robert A. Reid, ed., The Jamestown Exposition Beautifully Illustrated (New York: Jamestown Official Photograph Corps., 1907), unpaginated. The Official Blue Book, p. 577, lists Tiffany Studios, who won a gold medal; and p. 474 lists Stickley Brothers of Grand Rapids, Michigan, who showed gothic furniture and leather goods. However, in the Norfolk Public Library’s copy of the Reid catalogue, catalogued above, the frontispiece has a hand-colored rendering of the L. & J.G. Stickley Library, done in the high Arts and Crafts mode, with a note that the furniture illustrated therein could be purchased at Willis-Smith-Craik Co., Norfolk, indicating that the latter had a display at the Tercentennial, as well.


42. Information on Arnaud Meredith comes from conversations and correspondence with Lucious Edwards, Jr., architect at Virginia State University. In addition to her residence, Meredith did a number of other architectural designs.


44. Now owned by the Virginia State University Alumni Association, the house is currently restored after years of neglect.

45. “The Record Full,” Architectural Record 88 (December 1940): 16-18. The Record conducted similar polls in other cities not only finding similar conservatism, but also finding much more Modernist sympathies.


55. Information provided by Cedar Lath.


57. Drawings by Taylor are in the Mount Vernon archives. In 1874–75 McKim had photographs taken of Newport antiques and in 1877 McKim, Mead & White and William Bigelow took a sketching trip of Cape Ann, Massachusetts.


62. Thomas Nelson Page, The Old South (New York: Scriber's, 1893); In Old Virginia (New York: Scriber's, 1897); and The Old Dominion (New York: Scriber's, 1908), are but three of many such books and articles.

63. Information provided by Mary S. Boase, former curator, The Maymont Foundation, Richmond.


65. Drawings are in the Mount Vernon archives. Charles K. Bryant (1886–1950) of Richmond was in charge. Mount Vernon replicas were used as the Virginia Building at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco, 1915; the United States of America Building at the Exposition Coloniale Internationale de Paris, France, 1931; and as the City of New York Bicentennial Commission Building, Prospect Park, Brooklyn, New York, 1931. For the St. Louis Exposition of 1904, the Virginia building was built on Montecello.

66. The Kentucky, Delaware and West Virginia buildings were identified as "Southern" in Buildings and Art and the World's Fair (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., 1931), unpaginated.

67. I am greatly indebted to the research of Timothy Mathewson, former Chief of Interpretation and Education, McKieon-Ward House, Beaumont, Texas, who has shared with me his information on this topic. The Barber catalogues that illustrate Southern Colonial are Modern Dwellings (Knoxville: S. F. Newman and Co., 1886–1907) and Modern American Houses (Knoxville: Graft-ogden Co., 1903–07). Rooths, in Colonial Revival I: 1, cites an article in the American Architect 48 (April 6, 1895): 5, on a design of Eames and Young in St. Louis for the David Francis house, which included a two-story porch. This feature was described as "almost part and parcel of the southern colonial."

68. There may be some houses that predate the Connecticut example, such as Altha Hall (1859–1959), Fairfax, but its dates are uncertain. Also, there is the Doubleblad Mansion of circa 1850. None are illustrated in Eleanor Lee Templeman and Nan Netherton, Northern Virginia Heritage (privately published, 1966), 50–53.


74. Quoted in Edward Simmons, From Seven to Seventy (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1922), 241.


91. House & Garden 72 (November 1937) devoted the entire issue to Williamsburg, and published three house designs (pp. 69–80) by Perry, Shaw & Hepburn based on Williamsburg models.
