



“IT IS HERE WE

✿ Minneapolis Homes *and the*
Arts and Crafts Movement



LIVE”

PATTY DEAN

A Minneapolis curbside scene with small Arts and Crafts houses built around 1915 (Arthur Street at Twenty-sixth Avenue Northeast, photographed in 1939)

WHILE DRIVING OR STROLLING through core city neighborhoods in St. Paul, Minneapolis, Duluth, and some of Minnesota’s smaller towns, one sees block after block of homes inspired by an earlier era’s progressive—if not revolutionary—ideas of design and construction. This new philosophy, often called the Arts and Crafts movement, had originated in midnineteenth-century Britain, but its imported qualities—honesty, individualism, and democracy—closely matched Minnesota’s cultural values. From about 1875 to 1920, the movement swept the state and the nation. Minnesotans of European descent joined clubs that encouraged handicraft and creative expression, and they read and even published magazines that promoted “open-plan houses and furnishings derived from the lines and colors of the natural environs rather than eclectic combinations of details borrowed from European historical styles.”¹

In 1849, the year that Minnesota became a territory, Oxford University’s first art history professor, John Ruskin, published his influential book *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*. In it,

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he emphasized the beauty of handmade architectural ornament that reflected “the sense of human labour and care spent upon it.” Ruskin preached that any building or object must be created with enjoyment to be of value.²

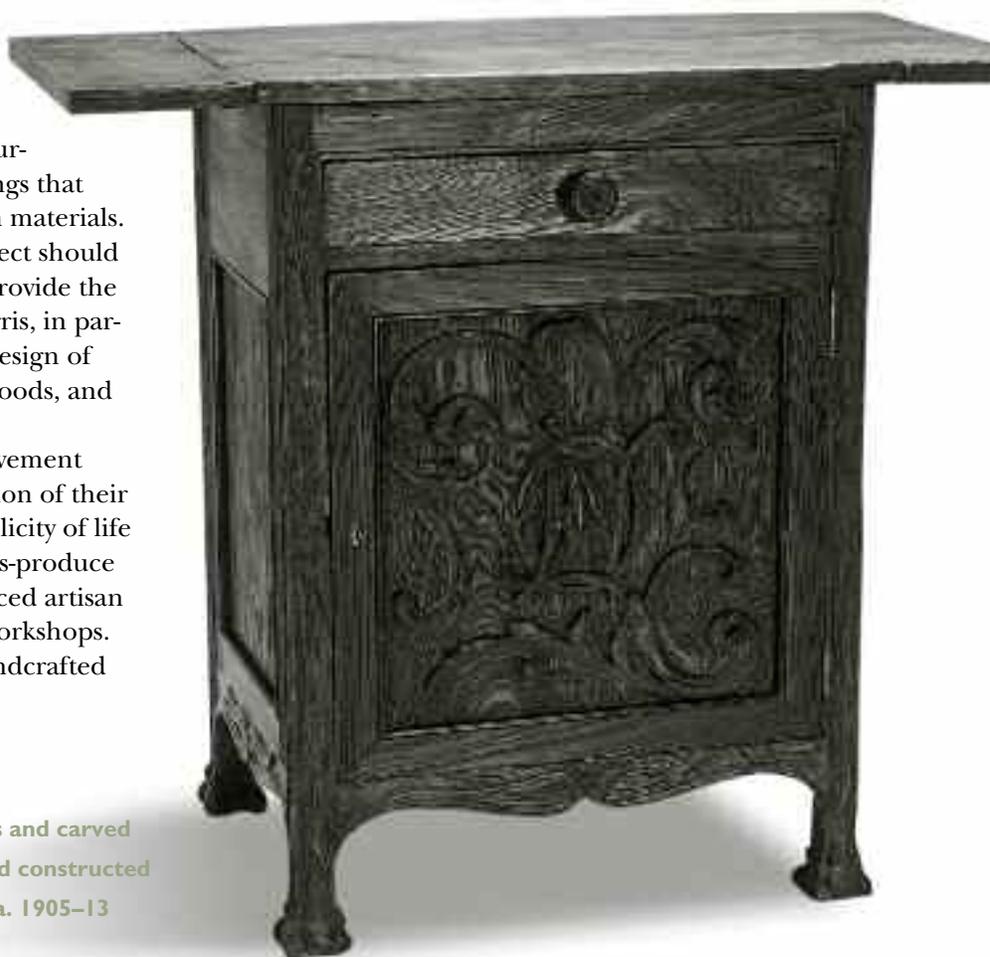
Ruskin had been greatly influenced by fellow countryman A. W. N. Pugin, an architect-designer who sought to imbue daily life with a sense of the spiritual. Pugin, Ruskin, and other theorists including William Morris were reacting against Victorian design with its unnecessary fretwork and bric-a-brac, which they saw as insincere and denying an object's true essence or function. The home was fundamental to the Arts and Crafts movement. In their holistic view, these reformers believed that societal ills could be remedied by improved home environments—and that improvement began with the creation and arrangement of household articles embodying utility, natural beauty, and simplicity. They valued things that appeared to be handmade from common materials. Ideally, the designer and maker of an object should be the same person, and nature should provide the materials and inspiration. Pugin and Morris, in particular, extended this philosophy to the design of churches, houses, furniture, household goods, and even wallpaper, books, and fabric.

Proponents of the Arts and Crafts movement also believed that the rapid industrialization of their times devalued the basic beauty and simplicity of life and work. Not only did new factories mass-produce identical consumer goods, but they replaced artisan workers who crafted items in their own workshops. Design critics like Ruskin saw unique, handcrafted

objects as more authentic because they were not mass manufactured.

The values of utility, natural beauty, and simplicity were also hallmarks of the common perception of the Upper Midwest as an Arcadia, a “garden of the World.” In early-twentieth-century Minnesota, nature, independence, and confidence in the value of work intertwined to produce “the good life” for many in the state's growing urban middle class. As cultural geographer James R. Shortridge stated: “Prosperity was attributed not only to the richness of the land but also to the industry of the people. Bountiful rural life fostered independence and self-reliance and these traits in turn produced . . . an egalitarian society . . . and social progress on a wide variety of fronts. With no one beholden to any other person, true democracy could flourish.”³

Although neither Morris nor Ruskin visited the United States, their aesthetic ideals struck a chord with many Americans. Their writings and work were well



A jin-di-sugi cabinet with hinged drop leaves and carved monogram, designed by John Bradstreet and constructed of cypress treated to resemble driftwood, ca. 1905–13

A hammered-copper plant jardinière embellished with a band of pierced copper, produced by the Minneapolis Handicraft Guild about 1912

known through reading clubs and displays at the Philadelphia, Buffalo, Chicago, and St. Louis expositions, held between 1876 and 1904. Minnesotans were clearly attuned to the Arts and Crafts message. For example, the charter of the Minneapolis Chalk and Chisel Club, founded in 1895, emulated these ideals. Later renamed the Society of Arts and Crafts of Minneapolis (1899) and then the Handicraft Guild (incorporated in 1905), it continued to promote these values through programs, design and art classes, and exhibitions of hand-made objects.⁴

News of the Minneapolis club's activities first appeared in *The Craftsman*, a monthly published by Syracuse, New York, furniture designer Gustav Stickley to promote "a simple, democratic art [and present] material surroundings conducive to plain living and high thinking." In 1903 a favorable review of the Minneapolis group's third public exhibition reported: "A local exhibit was that of beadwork, the display being chiefly of old pieces and including bracelets, charms, belts, bags and tobacco pouches. Colonial, Indian and modern work was represented and the quaint patterns proved pleasing to the many visitors." The range of other Minnesota-made objects exhibited (from bookplates to a "Paul Revere lantern," ceramics shining with lustrous glazes, and a chest with sixteenth-century-style carvings) represented the variety of inspiration, process, and forms typical of the Arts and Crafts movement. That same year, *The Craftsman* reported on other Arts and Crafts activities outside of Minneapolis, naming the Woman's Auxiliary of the Church of the Holy Communion in St. Peter in a listing of national exhibitions, which it termed "encouraging signs of the times."⁵

Stickley, often described as "the American William Morris," visited Minneapolis the next year and met with local designer and tastemaker John S. Bradstreet in Bradstreet's studio, showroom, and garden. He "unexpectedly found a place of beauty which deserves to be widely known." Urging readers of *The Craftsman* to examine Bradstreet's work, Stickley wrote, "Such study will afford a strong impulse toward Nature



and simplicity. It will demonstrate that beauty is not necessarily produced by large expenditure. It will promote habits of observation among the people and tend to create a critical public, which shall permit no crimes to be committed in the name of municipal art. The unobtrusive work of Mr. Bradstreet is worthy to initiate a national movement."⁶

A Massachusetts native and resident of Minneapolis since 1873, Bradstreet had by 1900 synthesized Moorish and Japanese influences into his own Arts and Crafts aesthetic. His promotional literature invited comparison of himself and his Craftshouse—a complex of showrooms and workshops at 327 South Seventh Street—to William Morris and his home, Kelmscott Manor.⁷

Bradstreet's Craftshouse, classes and exhibits at the Handicraft Guild, and manual-arts classes in public schools acquainted members of Minnesota's growing urban middle class with aesthetic developments, both national and local. They could also read *The Craftsman*, other Arts and Crafts publications, such as the Minneapolis-published, nationally distributed *Keith's Magazine* and *The Bellman*. The widespread appeal of Stickley's monthly, for example, was evident in published testimony from such Minnesota readers as Mrs. I. D. Webster of Mankato, who wrote that she planned to incorporate Craftsman ideas into the design of her future home. A Minneapolis bookkeeper for the National Elevator Company, who read *The*



Arts and Crafts tastemaker John S. Bradstreet, about 1910, and his Minneapolis Craftshouse studio and showroom at 327 South Seventh Street, about 1904



Craftsman at the public library, wrote that the publication “appeals to all the aspirations in me and stirs my heart at the possibilities of my own nature—artistic and constructive.”⁸



PERHAPS THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF ART promoted by Stickley and others was most clearly seen in the new relationships emerging among those responsible for the design, construction, and furnishing of the home: the architect (once the most powerful member of this triad), the interior designer or crafts artist, and the homeowner. The Arts and Crafts movement asserted the professional equitability between designers and architects. And, as early as 1901, proponents were encouraging a symbiotic relationship between the architect and client, “showing how the one must use his art and skill to serve the purpose of the other and how much of the friction that continually arises between the two could be done away with if each but understood the limitations and scope of the other.”⁹

In the past, homes had certainly been built and decorated without the benefit of either architects or decorators, following the dictates of cultural or folk tradition or personal finances. Beginning in the late-nineteenth century, however, a variety of middle-class homeowners could choose not only how to build and decorate the home but who might do it. How did this come about?

First, there was the relative ease with which people, regardless of gender or means, could learn handicraft through publications or classes and “experience the joy of craftsmanship.” For example, an 1899 issue of *Keith’s Magazine* noted, “One may see some very solid chairs and some substantial chests, and cabinets, rich with hand carving executed by women, some of them noted society women. In fact there is almost nothing which they do not now attempt.” Both *Keith’s Magazine* and *The Craftsman* sold standard plans for building bungalows so that individuals without architects could build their own Arts and Crafts home.¹⁰

Meanwhile, Arts and Crafts proponents lobbied hard to improve the status of designers. Milwaukee interior architect George Niedecken, who collaborated with Frank Lloyd Wright on the design of his furniture and interiors, believed that the failure of architects and the public to give interior decorators proper professional acknowledgment was responsible for “the lack of harmony between the interior and the exterior of a house . . . during the past twenty years and especially . . . in the middle west.” Niedecken enumerated the comprehensive qualifications required of the interior decorator: “He must be an artist not only at heart, but in fact, with sufficient talent to paint creditable



Bradstreet's cavernous Crafthouse, featuring Minneapolis-made and imported Japanese, Moorish, and European wares



We desire to call the particular attention of the readers of the *Bellman* to the fine and beautifully executed carving as shown in the library table here illustrated, designed and completed in our own shops at the Crafthouse.



John S. Bradstreet & Co.
 377 South Seventh St., Minneapolis
 Established 1898

pictures; he should have had training in architecture and modeling; a practical knowledge of the weaving of fabrics and rugs; of the treatment of plaster, wood and all other building or decorative materials which come into the scope of the interior development of buildings." Bradstreet had anticipated Niedecken's declaration several years earlier. An advertisement in the *Western Architect* advised readers that "Architects everywhere will do well to consult Mr. Bradstreet in regard to their residence interiors, for his knowledge, from woods to their completed finish, is second to none."¹¹

In elevating the status of interior designers, the Arts and Crafts movement paid particular attention to women, considered to be the keepers of domesticity on both the home and municipal fronts. A 1907 *Craftsman* feature, "Pioneer Work of Women in Tasteful and Economical Interior Decoration," praised female decorators who "accomplished the most original and practical work. . . . It seems but logical that when at last houses

are finished inside, or built, by women that difficulties known only to women should be overcome, and that beauty and comfort should be voted more essential than worn-out, moth-eaten theories.” Similarly, a career-advice booklet for women published by the University of Minnesota in 1913 reinforced the holistic, democratic nature of the Arts and Crafts movement: “The Interior Decorator in helping a community to possess more attractive, livable homes may exert her influence for a better and simpler expression of a given individuality, and may so feel herself a part of the universal uplift.”¹²

Not everyone had the desire or means to hire a decorator or architect, whether male or female, but by about 1900 most Minnesotans were at least observers of, if not participants in, the culture of consumer capitalism. They had ample opportunity to view and purchase new furnishings either in department stores or through mail-order catalogs. Minnesota department stores such as Donaldson’s Glass Block (its hanging gardens illustrated in a *Craftsman* article on “Civic Progress in Minneapolis”) and the New England Furniture and Carpet Company, which sold “Pure ‘Mission’ Furniture,” presented moderate-cost versions of the more expensive and unique custom-designed furnishings seen at specialty stores such as Bradstreet’s Crafts-house.¹³ This democratizing of interior design—which allowed middle-class Minnesotans to have a hand in defining their own living space—was exactly what Arts and Crafts reformers hoped would elevate the mass-consuming public to lives of simplicity and beauty.

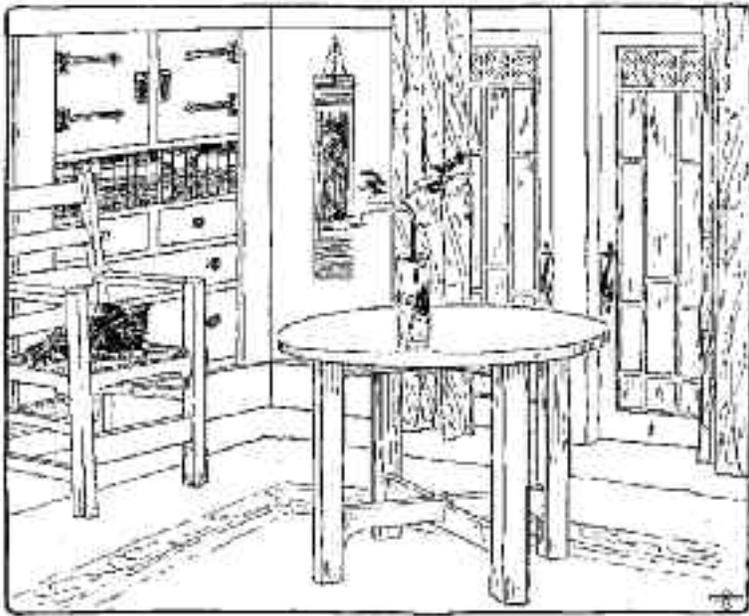
A NUMBER OF MINNEAPOLIS DWELLINGS, from the humble to the grand, embodied these Arts and Crafts principles. Profiled in the movement’s magazines, they undoubtedly inspired other readers to pursue their own dreams of domestic comfort and happiness. One



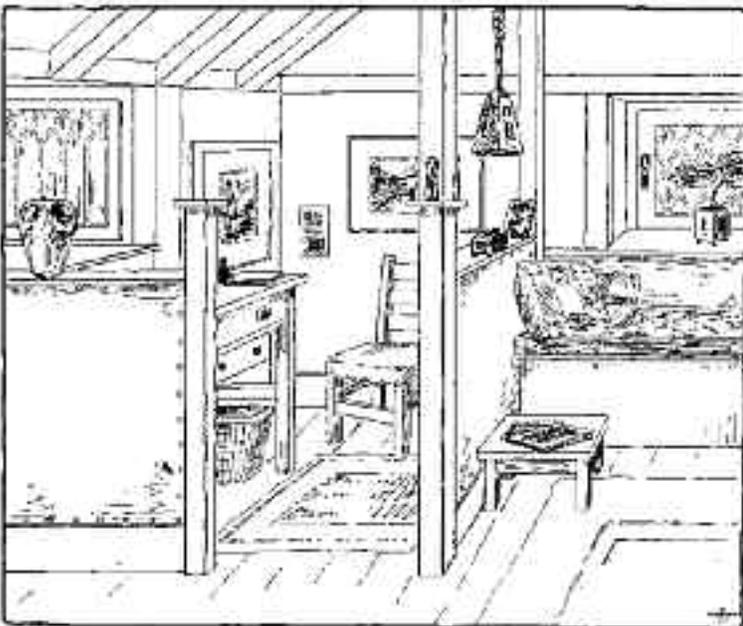
Commentary from *Keith’s Magazine*, January 1910

outstanding example was extolled in 1905 in *Keith’s Magazine* by Mary Moulton Cheney, a Minneapolis artist, designer, businesswoman, and teacher. Cheney described a visit to the home of a possibly fictitious colleague, “Napoleon.” After knowing him for 18 months, Cheney wrote, she pondered his perpetual cheeriness and wondered why others in similar, modest circumstances could not be so. The answer was waiting at his neat and attractive dwelling. “An air of common sense

Designer Cheney drew a home's cozy attic where "doors slid like the partitions of a Japanese house" to reveal storage and a booth or "ingle" permitted happy children to "cut, paste and whittle to their hearts' content." (*Keith's*, December 1905)



Doesn't that still look like the backroom of a Japanese house?



This little place has ten world full of a touch!



The Minneapolis Handicraft Guild's Mary Moulton Cheney, about 1910

economy," she wrote, "pervaded the place. We felt instinctively that things were for use and for enjoyment."¹⁴

Napoleon proceeded to explain to Cheney how he and his family had remodeled their attic to be a living room, exposing the beams and rafters, applying a coarse plaster to the walls and ceilings, and staining the floor and pine woodwork a deep coffee color. Sliding doors, similar to Japanese shoji, were installed under the eaves to maximize storage.

An analysis of Napoleon's home furnishings (he made much of the furniture) illustrates the numerous influences that characterized interior decoration of this

period: a built-in cabinet's medieval strapwork recalling Philip Webb's furniture designs for William Morris's Red House outside of London; a print showing a kimono-clad figure; a sturdy Mission-style armchair and round table with notched and pegged stretchers clearly visible. This aesthetic sensibility continued in the adjoining inglenook (a small space by a chimney or fireplace) with its built-in window seat, Mission-style desk, beam-hung Arts and Crafts lantern, surfaces for the display of decorative boxes and art pottery, and fabric tacked on the half-walls.

Convenience, efficient use of space, objects that carried personal meaning, and visible construction details were values that Napoleon and his family embraced in their furnishing and decorating. At the end of Cheney's visit, Napoleon voiced the Arts and Crafts philosophy:

I have been so deeply interested in the execution of our ideas as to what a practical, homelike living-room should be, I have hardly been able to get home fast enough to get hold of my tools, or away early enough in the morning, to earn the few dollars necessary to complete this little room which has so much of ourselves wrought into it. Here we seem to appreciate one another more and here our friends like best to come. It is here we live.

Napoleon's cozy dwelling had many of the characteristics of a home built to Arts and Crafts standards. Open floor plans favored functional rooms that utilized space for many needs. The living room—the center of the home—was different from the insular Victorian parlor. Configured to seem spacious and open, it often connected directly to the dining room and kitchen. It was to be a family forum, bringing generations together around the hearth.

Built-in cabinets, bookshelves, and closets further maximized space. Walls were often roughly plastered and woodwork was natural, dark, and rarely painted. Hardwood floors, easy to keep clean, were covered with patterned Oriental rugs. Furniture was sturdy, spare of decoration, and usually constructed of quarter-sawn oak—a sawing method that showed off the wood's dramatic graining. Metalwork and fixtures were often made of hammered copper or iron, and fabric choices tended toward homespun, natural materials in warm, earthy colors.

At about the same time that Cheney was describing her visit to Napoleon's aerie, Edwin Hawley Hewitt, a founding partner of Hewitt and Brown (one of the state's most prolific architecture and engineering firms) began constructing a home for his family near the intersection of Franklin and Stevens Avenues in Minneapolis. A Red Wing native, Hewitt had received his education at the University of Minnesota and L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He had also worked in the architectural offices of Cass Gilbert in St. Paul and Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge in Boston.¹⁵

While the cost of the Hewitt family home was far greater than that of Napoleon's, the same values of simplicity, utility, and beauty guided its design and execution. Extensive descriptions of the Hewitts' house in *The Craftsman* and *Keith's Magazine*, both read by people of modest means, demonstrated the Arts and Crafts conviction that everyone would attain artistic integrity and harmony.

The Craftsman's account, "A House of Harmonies: The Effect of A Happy Combination of Personal Interest and Professional Skill," described the residence's design aesthetics:

The house shall be so planned, decorated and furnished that each separate detail shall be apparent only as an unobtrusive part of one well-balanced whole. . . . The decorator has to steer a very careful course between the restlessness of too great contrast in strongly individual features and the equal restlessness produced by a sense of monotony in color and form. . . . The most satisfying results are gained only when there is a keen personal interest in the work; nothing done by a professional architect or decorator . . . can have the little intimate touch of individuality that arises only from the expression of personal taste and direct response to the needs of the life that is to be lived in the house.¹⁶

Hewitt collaborated with decorator Mary Linton Bookwalter, a former director of the Minneapolis Handicraft Guild who had recently moved to New York. The inspiration for the exterior and interior color schemes of the Tudor Revival house was fittingly simple: a piece of hand-dyed silk in Bookwalter's possession, "a wonderful bit of color, showing as it did all the lights and shadows to be found in copper. . . . From



Edwin H. and Carolyn Hewitt's handsome Arts and Crafts house at 126 East Franklin Avenue, about 1907

this . . . evolved a color scheme based on coppery brown tones, relieved by forest green, touches of old blue, and all the hues that come into natural and harmonious relation with copper.”

The Craftsman praised the house's individuality, noting that it was derived from a “straightforward expression of the desire of Mr. Hewitt and his family to have in their home the maximum of comfort and convenience as well as of beauty.” Open floor plans usually relied on woodwork to provide visual unity between rooms. But in this house Bookwalter achieved continuity through textiles, using a green-and-tan canvas resembling dullish copper on the beamed ceilings

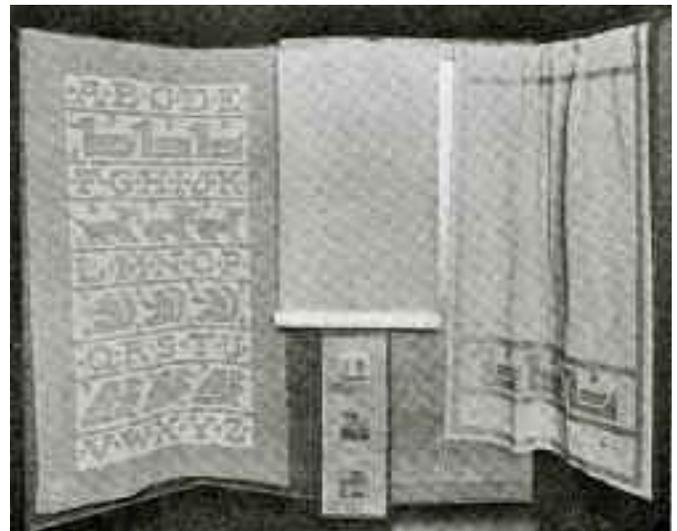
of the hall, living room, and dining room. Textiles dominated the house furnishings.

For the Hewitts' three-year-old daughter's room, Bookwalter designed a rug of “squared animals” and alphabet letters and matching curtains in an indigo-blue and tan palette. Another textile, this one a piece of Japanese embroidery in gray-green, tan, and soft rose on a cloudy gray ground, inspired the colors and decorative glass motifs of the sunroom. The curly red-wood woodwork in the sunroom was charred, sanded to dramatize the contrast in the graining, and then coated to render a “cool, light, grayish brown with vivid dark markings.”

The fireplace occupied a special place in the Arts and Crafts home, providing “a sense of welcome and home comfort.” Fireplaces also offered artists the opportunity for individual expression. For the Hewitt house’s inglenook and copper-hooded fireplace, the Minneapolis Handicraft Guild used hand-formed, matte-glazed earthenware Mercer tiles from Pennsylvania’s Moravian Pottery. Most were undecorated, save for a few molded in the “manner of primitive picture writing . . . the whole scheme of the decorated tiles symbolizes the discovery of the use of fire and the story of the hearth.” The woodwork in the hall and living room was brown ash with a deep, reddish-brown stain that ranged in appearance from nearly black to very dark copper due to the grain’s variegation.

The Japanese influence inside the house—from the textiles to a movable shoji screen that divided the third floor—extended to exterior details as well. Carved grotesque heads ornamented the roof brackets, and a paneled screen shielded the kitchen entrance at the back of the house. These details are possibly the influence of Orientalist John Bradstreet, whom Hewitt greatly admired.

Yet, no one style or period dominated the home’s exterior or interior. The eclectic array of furnishings included a copy of a heavy oak table Bookwalter had found in Germany, carved antique furniture Hewitt



Arts and Crafts aesthetics called for simple fabrics, such as the curtains Mary Linton Bookwalter designed for the Hewitt family’s sunroom (top) and an animal rug, mantel facing, and wall covering for a child’s room (bottom). The sample (at left in the top photo) shows the sunroom’s charred redwood paneling.

The Hewitt family sunroom and living room, where the color scheme was suggested by a piece of hand-dyed Japanese silk

had selected as a student in Europe, wicker armchairs and table, a generously proportioned Gothic Revival dining table with simple leather and wooden chairs, and various Colonial Revival pieces. The third-floor studio-playroom contained a Queen Anne side chair, oversized rattan armchair, paper lanterns hung from the beamed dormers, organ, and Hewitt's collection of Japanese sword handles.

BOTH HEWITT AND BOOKWALTER also proved capable of applying Arts and Crafts tenets to homes of modest cost. In late 1912 *Keith's Magazine* profiled a house Hewitt designed, "An Artistic Little Home in Minneapolis," in a series that featured "small, low cost yet convenient and comfortable homes." Unfortunately, no interior photographs are known to exist, but the article described features that lent this house harmony, sincerity, and interest—for a total cost of \$3,782.¹⁷

Keith's ascribed the artistic and economic success of this house to what happens "when both architect and client can free themselves from traditional forms and reduce construction to the essentials of good design."

This brown-stained shingle home designed by Edwin Hewitt appeared in a 1912 *Keith's Magazine* article that noted: "There are two cities in the United States noted for the unusual merit of their small houses—Pasadena, Cal., and Minneapolis, Minn."



The interior treatment repudiated "superfluities and frills," preferring fir woodwork stained brown and waxed. The fireplace maintained a prominent station, occupying about one-third of the interior living-room wall, its mantel consisting of a "plain, heavy slab of fir." A "living porch" adjacent to the living and dining rooms ran the entire length of one side of the 29-by-45-foot house; large dormers brought air and light into the second floor.

Bookwalter's contribution to the art of the modest home had emerged earlier, in about 1904, when she worked with a Minneapolis homemaker's \$3,000 budget for purchasing a lot and building and decorating a house suitable for two people. Here, again, a commodious side porch provided additional light and living area in the warm months. The straightforward and convenient floor plan of this picturesque plaster house, designed by Minneapolis architect A. R. Van Dyck, was in keeping with those who lived independently—that is, without servants. Bookwalter's desire "to form a home environment for people of cultured tastes and sensitive perception" indicates the mutually respectful, democratic relationship she had with her client, a relationship that undoubtedly contributed to the success of this house.¹⁸

Initially, the plans called only for rudimentary baseboards and picture moldings, but Bookwalter ingeniously specified an inexpensive variation by placing "two boards in the ceiling angle, one extending seven inches out on the ceiling and the other five inches down on the wall and meeting in the angle, with the picture molding below. The effect of this simple device in adding character and interest to the room was astonishing, and . . . most satisfying."

Soft tans and greens predominated in the living room, which was furnished with wicker and family pieces of mahogany that complemented the dark woodwork. In the small, 10-by-12-foot dining room, Bookwalter attached a soft yellow cretonne shade to a hanging brass light fixture. The yellow lining of the blue, green, and white curtains no doubt enhanced the room's lambent

glow. Silver and ceramic objects were displayed on shelves between two windows. The three bedrooms on the second floor each contained a closet, white woodwork, and walls in either soft yellow or pink. An inherited mahogany four-poster bed and card table furnished the largest of the bedrooms.

WHILE THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT sought to elevate the status of designers, it also preached individual involvement in work. Perhaps the most unconventional variation on the architect-decorator-client relationship occurred when a person designed, built, and decorated his or her own home without the counsel of professionals—an expression of true individualism. Such was the case with Mary Garner McIntosh’s “Sunshine Cliff on the Mississippi,” a one-and-one-half-story, white-brick cottage with red-cedar shingles built for \$1,377 in 1909 on one acre near what is now the intersection of Riverside and Forty-sixth Avenues South in Minneapolis. McIntosh, the manager of the New England Furniture Company’s Priscilla Tea Room and daughter of an Iowa contractor, believed that “a house is a better fit if it is designed by the one who is to live in it.”¹⁹

Frugality and convenience were essential in the design and construction of the house. Only one room deep, it was built from a train carload of white-sand lime brick purchased directly from the manufacturer. The millwork was done on-site, and Mrs. McIntosh and her invalid husband did much of the finish work themselves. A German carpenter (whom she plied with biscuits and honey whenever a critical stage of construction was imminent) and a boy trained in carpentry by the public schools supplied additional labor.

Although known for her charity work, McIntosh proved a stern supervisor, as the following account by a local arts writer illustrates: “Every bit of the work was done under the owner’s supervision, except for one day. That day she had to be absent, and the men, who had chafed mightily under a woman’s bossing, hurried up and did three days’ work in one. All the mistakes in the house she lays to that one day’s absence.” The determined tearoom manager did not allow a small pile of leftover brick to go to waste, using it in a garden wall she constructed herself after the mason declared he could not do “fancy work.”

Nature pervaded the McIntoshes’ home—from the 37-foot-long “living porch” that ran the length of the back of the house, to the eastern and western light



Mary Linton Bookwalter, Arts and Crafts designer

streaming into each well-ventilated room, to the screened sun porch on the first floor and additional ones at either end of the second floor, to the climbing roses and vines on the house and entrance gate. But in a Minnesota home, there were times when it was desirable to keep the “natural world” at bay. This need was satisfied by a fireplace that was actually a small furnace with a heat register installed above a welcoming motto. Heat was piped to the second floor so there was “no shivering in this cozy little house, and the household has the pleasure of seeing the coal burn.” Heating and cooking could occur simultaneously and conveniently with hot water recycling from the kitchen stove to a radiator at the end of the living room.

The 30-foot-long living area exhibited the simplicity and artistry typical of Arts and Crafts homes, with its beamed ceiling of Washington fir stained deep brown, buff sand-plaster walls, built-in seat covered with a Southwest Indian textile, and such furnishings as an English breakfast table, Oriental rug, Mission rocker, and neoclassical two-drawer table. Lounging, dining, reading, and entertaining occurred in this multi-use space with its variety of furnishings and open floor plan recalling that of the much larger Hewitt family home. With its emphasis on minimal cost, nature, and simplicity, Mary McIntosh’s home demonstrated a beauty similar to what Stickley had observed in Bradstreet’s Craftshouse gardens.

WHILE ARTS AND CRAFTS tenets could be somewhat radical, historicism was at the heart of the movement. This was apparent in its romantic reverence for objects or buildings constructed with traditional materials, techniques, or form, such as those *The Craftsman* praised at the 1903 Minneapolis exhibit. Some homeowners, however, preferred to emulate the perceived taste and values of their American antecedents. Minneapolis resident Robert W. Wetmore, in charge of the Shevlin-Carpenter

and Clarke Company timber properties, chose the Colonial Revival style because, to him, “its spirit of design and workmanship conveyed the most appropriate type of architecture to express the needs of the American people.” According to Wetmore, it was “traditional, and grew out of the needs of our forefathers. . . . Why should I not, being a New Englander myself, carry out some of the ideals of my ancestors?”²⁰

The construction and decoration of Wetmore’s house near Lake Harriet drew upon such Arts and Crafts values as comfort, efficiency, and appropriate use of materials and furnishings. Designed by Minneapolis architect Carl Gage in about 1915, the entire house was built of “A” grade white pine and cedar shingles. Wetmore’s uncle, a contractor from Vermont who specialized in “reconstructing and rebuilding and readjusting old colonial farm houses to suit the needs of wealthy city owners,” personally supervised the construction of his nephew’s home.

The strip lathing for the ceilings was secured with ten nails for every lath (nearly double the usual number), and mineral wool insulated the window jambs. The living-room wainscoting was recycled from a colo-

Mary Garner McIntosh’s “hand-made home,” Sunshine Cliff on the Mississippi, at 2906 Forty-sixth Avenue South



nial Vermont house, and the plaster cornices were made by an English craftsman familiar with Elizabethan and Jacobean house ceilings. The front entrance consisted of a hand-carved white-pine entablature and pilasters surmounted by a gilded eagle from the ridge-pole of an old Cape Cod house. Like Napoleon's homey dwelling, this large, efficient house allowed no nook or space to go unused with its many kinds and sizes of storage room and closets.

Living areas, too, received serious consideration, exhibiting the typical open floor plan. Wetmore reflected, "I reasoned that we would want to gather around the fire, and at other times to read or have some music. I planned the room so that, like Caesar's Gaul, it was divided into three parts." A pair of Empire sofas framed the fireplace at the center of the room, making it a gathering place. At the west end of the long room was a music corner furnished with a phonograph and grand piano. The "library," appointed with built-in bookcases and a comfortable wing chair, was at the other end. At the back of the house, a three-story porch, its various levels serving as a conservatory, dining area, and summer sleeping quarters, overlooked a one-block-deep semiformal garden.



Sunshine Cliff's living and dining porch, where "even a corn beef and cabbage aroma would be smothered by the fragrance from the garden, where grow roses, verbenas, mignonette, sweet peas, pansies and lilies"



The living room expresses "a unity of idea" and the fireplace forms "a family forum or gathering place" in Robert Wetmore's hillside home at 4815 Sheridan Avenue South, designed by Carl Gage, about 1915.

A SAMPLING OF ARTS AND CRAFTS HOMES, BUILDINGS, AND FURNISHINGS

Most of the Minneapolis homes described in this article may be viewed from the street; please respect the owners' privacy. Mary McIntosh's home is no longer extant; the address of the stucco Van Dyck-Bookwalter collaboration is unknown. Part of Bradstreet's Craftshouse complex at Seventh Street and Fourth Avenue South was razed in 1919; the Andersen Consulting tower now stands on its site.

- ✿ The Robert Wetmore home, 4815 Sheridan Avenue South, Minneapolis, retains its block-deep back yard to Russell Avenue South.
- ✿ The Hewitt family home, 126 Franklin Avenue East, is now Hodroff and Sons Funeral Chapel. It is a few blocks north of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, where Hewitt was a trustee of the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts from 1914 to 1921. For a visual survey of Hewitt & Brown buildings, see the Hennepin History Museum website: http://hnmuseum.org/ex/ex_hba.htm#12
- ✿ The brown-stained shingle home that Hewitt designed at 4640 Dupont Avenue South, Minneapolis, had a dark roof and black window sashes. Its 9' x 28' living porch has been enclosed.
- ✿ The 1907 Minneapolis Handicraft Guild building still graces the southwest corner of Marquette Avenue and Tenth Street South. In 1998 the city council designated it an historic structure.



- ✿ The Romanesque James J. Hill House, a Minnesota Historical Society historic site at 240 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, features extensive interior wood-working and some pieces of furniture that were crafted beginning in 1894 by John Kirchmayer. The lead carver for Irving and Casson of Cambridge, Massachusetts, Kirchmayer became a charter member of Boston's Society of Arts and Crafts. For information on the Hill House and public tours, see <http://www.mnhs.org/places/sites/jjhh/house.html>
- ✿ The Minneapolis Institute of Arts features works from the Arts and Crafts and Prairie School movements. A recent installation includes the living room and furnishings from Duluth's William and Mina Prindle House, decorated in about 1904 by John S. Bradstreet and acknowledged to be a mature expression of his jin-di-sugi technique. For digital images of this room, see <http://www.artsmia.org>
- ✿ Duluth's Glensheen was designed and built by St. Paul architect Clarence Johnston between 1905 and 1908. One of its most significant Arts and Crafts features is the Rookwood-tiled breakfast room with jin-di-sugi fittings and furniture. The Minneapolis Handicraft Guild fabricated the room's light fixture. For information about touring the home, operated by the University of Minnesota, Duluth, see <http://www.d.umn.edu/glen/>
- ✿ The 1871 Second Empire home of R. D. Hubbard in Mankato was redecorated in 1905 by Bradstreet. For information about touring the historic house, operated by the Blue Earth County Historical Society, see <http://www.internet-connections.net/regg/bechs/hhouse.html>
- ✿ The Twin Cities Bungalow Club presents regular tours and lectures on the beauty and utility of the small home. Its website is <http://www.mtn.org/bungalow/index.html>

For digital images and descriptions of furniture designed by early-twentieth-century Minnesota craftsmen including Bradstreet and held in the Society's collections, see <http://www.mnhs.org/library/search/museum/furniture.html>

Wetmore home, 4815 Sheridan Avenue South

Like some other homeowners of the period, Wetmore reveled in making his own design and decorating decisions. Renowned for his collecting acumen, this bachelor homeowner acquired colonial-style furnishings for nearly four years before building his house. Once in it, he decided to complete the decoration within one year. He auditioned various pieces in different groupings made from the quantity of objects he had purchased: 19 footstools, four-poster beds, 100 chairs, and assemblages of Staffordshire china and pewter. A contemporary writer noted that he “not only purchased his furniture, selected the wall papers, rugs, curtains, but he arranged the furniture and hung the pictures. ‘I did not want a decorator’s house,’ he said.” The writer continued, “Strange as it may seem, the entire house pulls together as a splendid example of unity. . . . When articles for use in the home can be collected, assembled, and displayed, and at the same time maintain a harmonious relationship it is evidence of good taste.”

ART HISTORIANS have generally cited World War I as the end of the Arts and Crafts era. Recent scholarship suggests, however, that rather than being subsumed or transformed by World War I, some of the movement’s more egalitarian and individually fulfilling initiatives were integrated into the state’s cultural mainstream.

Indeed, in Minnesota such organizations as the Architects’ Small House Service Bureau (1919–41), a national corporation founded in Minneapolis by engineer Edwin Hacker Brown (Edwin Hewitt’s partner and brother-in-law), provided tasteful and affordable architect-designed home plans through mail-order. Some former Minneapolis Handicraft Guild students participated in a new profession, occupational therapy, teaching handicrafts to wounded soldiers. The Handicraft Guild itself, after encouraging craftsmanship and self-expression and instilling the essentials of good design in its students, dissolved in September 1918 but was reactivated eight months later as the art education department at the University of Minnesota.²¹

Architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson has noted that the “Arts and Crafts movement, whether in America or Europe, was expressed not in a specific style but as a mood, an attitude, a sensibility. At its core, the Arts and Crafts movement advocated a search for a way of life that was true, contemplative and filled with essences rather than superficialities.”²² Whether built by architects or not, decorated by designers or homeowners, these Minnesota homes of this period did not subscribe to a specific style. Rather, they sought to express certain democratic cultural values in an individual, personal manner—with the process, not the outcome, serving as the source of unity. □

NOTES

1. Cheryl Robertson, “House and Home in the Arts and Crafts Era: Reforms for Simpler Living,” in *The Art that is Life: The Arts & Crafts Movement in America, 1875–1920*, ed. Wendy Kaplan (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1987), 336.

2. Here and below, Elizabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan, *The Arts and Crafts Movement* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 12.

3. James R. Shortridge, *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 29.

4. So great was Ruskin’s fame that even 14 years after his death the “John Ruskin” brand of Havana cigars continued to be advertised—complete with his portrait—in Minneapolis papers; *Minneapolis Journal*, Aug. 14, 1914, p. 13.

5. Cumming and Kaplan, *Arts and Crafts Movement*, 178; Katherine Louise Smith, “An Arts and Crafts Exhibition at Minneapolis,” *The Craftsman*, Mar. 1903, p. 373–77; “Recent Exhibitions of Arts and Crafts Societies,” *The Craftsman*, Dec. 1903, p. 315–16.

6. Gustav Stickley, “A Garden Fountain,” *The Craftsman*, Dec. 1904, p. 69–75.

7. The comparison may not have been so far-fetched. One of Bradstreet’s salesmen, William H. Colson, had graduated from London’s South Kensington School of Art and Design, which had been established to promote better design in Britain. William Morris often advised its allied museum (now the Victoria and Albert) on textile acquisitions. On Colson, see *Western Architect*, Nov. 1905, XI. See also *Interior Furnishings & Decorations* (Minneapolis: John S. Bradstreet & Co., 1905), n. p.; *Western Architect*, Apr. 1907, VII; Michael P. Conforti, “Orientalism on the Upper Mississippi: The Work of John S. Bradstreet,” *Minneapolis Institute of Arts Bulletin* 65 (1981–82): 2–35; Michael Conforti and Jennifer Komar, “Bradstreet’s Crafthouse: Retailing in an Arts and Crafts Style,” in *Minnesota 1900: Art and Life on the Upper Mississippi, 1890–1915*, ed. Michael Conforti (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), 63–91. Bradstreet’s work and jin-di-sugi technique for making wood resemble driftwood were also featured in two articles in *Keith’s Magazine*, Mar. 1913, p. 173–74, Feb. 1916, p. 118–21.

8. “Extracts from Our Correspondence,” *The Craftsman*,

Nov. 1905, p. 304; "Open Door," *The Craftsman*, Jan. 1905, p. 503.

9. Cumming and Kaplan, *Arts and Crafts Movement*, 146; Elmer Grey, "The Architect as Craftsman," *Keith's Magazine*, Apr. 1901, p. 207.

10. Cumming and Kaplan, *Arts and Crafts Movement*, 168; H. P. Keith, "The Question of Furniture," *Keith's Home-Builder*, Oct. 1899, p. 149. This monthly, published from 1899 to 1931 by the Keith family of Minneapolis, was successively entitled *The Home-Builder*, *Keith's Magazine*, and *Keith's Beautiful Homes Magazine*. It featured advice columns, construction plans, and illustrated articles, with a particular emphasis on small homes in Minnesota and southern California.

11. George M. Niedecken, "Relationship of Decorator, Architect and Client," *Western Architect*, May 1913, p. 42; *Western Architect*, Apr. 1907, VII.

12. "Pioneer Work of Women in Tasteful and Economical Interior Decoration," *The Craftsman*, Dec. 1907, p. 353; Mabel Robinson, "Interior Decoration," *Vocations Open to College Women*, Bulletin of the University of Minnesota, extra series, no. 1 (Minneapolis, 1913), 16.

13. William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 3–12; E. C. Hillweg, "The City of Lakes and Gardens: Civic Progress in Minneapolis," *The Craftsman*, Apr. 1915, p. 48; advertisement, *The Bellman* (Minneapolis), Oct. 19, 1907, p. 450.

14. Here and three paragraphs below, Mary Moulton Cheney, "The Living-Room Under the Roof," *Keith's Magazine*, Dec. 1905, p. 370–73. When Cheney wrote this article, she was a teacher at Minneapolis's Handicraft Guild; the 1907 *Minneapolis City Directory* lists her occupation as "designer."

15. "Edwin Hawley Hewitt," *Northwest Architect*, Aug. 1939, p. 4.

16. Here and six paragraphs below, "A House of Harmonies," *The Craftsman*, Sept. 1907, p. 678–89. The finishing process for the sunroom's woodwork is very similar to Bradstreet's Japanese jin-di-sugi. Hewitt's esteem for Bradstreet is reflected in his article, "John S. Bradstreet—Citizen of Minneapolis: An Appreciation of Life and Work," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, Oct. 1916, p. 424–27, published after Bradstreet's death.

17. Here and below, "An Artistic Little Home in Minneapolis," *Keith's Magazine*, Dec. 1912, p. 417–419.

18. Here and two paragraphs below, Mary Linton Bookwalter, "A Three Thousand Dollar House That Is Conveniently Arranged and Beautiful," *The Craftsman*, Nov. 1907, p. 200–05; "Artistic Low Cost Residences of Minneapolis," *Western Architect*, Dec. 1910, p. 131.

19. Here and four paragraphs below, Harriet S. Flagg, "A Hand Made Home," *The Minnesotan: An Illustrated Monthly Magazine About Northwest People, Products, Possibilities*, Aug. 1916, p. 23–25. Harriet Small Flagg was an occasional contributor to *House Beautiful* as well as a columnist for *The Minnesotan*, published by the Minnesota State Art Society. This organization was headed by her husband, Maurice I. Flagg, the original director of the Minneapolis Handicraft Guild, a contributor to *The Craftsman*, and a founding director of the Architects' Small House Service Bureau, a national mail-order corporation selling plans for architect-designed small homes. Both Flaggs wrote frequently on Arts and Crafts and Progressive Era issues.

20. Here and four paragraphs below, Harriet S. Flagg, "Where Other People Live," *The Minnesotan*, Jan. 1917, p. 21–23, and "When East Moves West: A Faithful Expression of Colonial Architecture Found in the Home of Mr. Robert W. Wetmore, in Minnesota," *House Beautiful* 46 (July 1919): 9–11. The Flaggs were New England transplants to Minnesota and no doubt found Wetmore's "expression of colonial architecture" a familiar and comforting sight.

21. See Architects' Small House Service Bureau Records, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul; Thomas Harvey, "Mail-Order Architecture in the Twenties," *Landscape* 25 (1991): 1–9; Robert T. Jones, ed., *Authentic Small Houses of the Twenties* (1929; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1987); Architects' Small House Service Bureau of the United States, *Your Future Home* (1923; reprint, Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Architects Press, 1992); Marcia Gail Anderson, "The Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis: A Model of the Arts and Crafts Movement," in *The Substance of Style: Perspectives on the Arts and Crafts Movement*, ed. Bert Denker (Winterthur, DE:

Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1996), 213–28; Marcia G. Anderson, "Art for Life's Sake: The Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis," in *Minnesota 1900*, 122–50.

22. Richard Guy Wilson, "'Divine Excellence': The Arts and Crafts Life in California," in *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California: Living the Good Life*, ed. Kenneth R. Trapp (New York: Abbeville Press, 1993), 16–17.



The images on p. 255 (The Craftsman, Sept. 1907), p. 256 (Keith's Magazine, Dec. 1912), and p. 252 (right) are courtesy the Minneapolis Public Library, Minneapolis Collection. Bookwalter's portrait on p. 257 is courtesy Laura Linton MacFarlane, Pasadena. All the other images—including the photo on p. 252 from Western Architect, May 1904; on p. 250 (bottom) from The Bellman, Jan. 2, 1909; on p. 258, 259 (top and bottom), and 260 from The Minnesotan, April 1916 and Jan. 1917; and on p. 262 from John S. Bradstreet's Interior Furnishings and Decorations (1905)—are in the MHS collections. Photos on p. 246 and 247 by Peter Latner/MHS.



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