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NEW BERN
"The Athens of North Carolina"

BY

Charles Francis Hannigan

X
AN
Architectural Monograph

NEW BERN

"The Athens of North Carolina" X

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Being the FIRST Number of Volume XIII and

THE SEVENTY-FIRST MONOGRAPH OF

THE WHITE PINE SERIES

Intimate treatises of the ARCHITECTURE of the *American Colonies* and of the *Early Republic* presented with well ordered completeness, to further a broader understanding and to create a permanent Record of *Early American ARCHITECTURE*.

RUSSELL F. WHITEHEAD, Editor

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THE GROENENDYKE (HARGETT) HOUSE, BURN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA



NEW BERN

"THE ATHENS OF NORTH CAROLINA"

by Charles Francis Hannigan

I DOUBT whether the expert or the amateur alike, will find more and finer expressions of colonial architecture than are so happily presented in this ancient and well preserved seat of England's rule in North America. Here in New Bern, I dare say, the learned and artistic-minded Colonials were as charmed in their day, as we are now, with the sense of beauty nature has so lavishly distilled in eastern North Carolina. The superb trees and flowering shrubbery; the trumpeting loveliness of the landside; the broad, broad rivers; the semi-tropical climate; impelled them to have their houses stand unashamed in the midst of all this luxury.

Such environment and, maybe, too, the presence in New Bern of the "most beautiful residence in the Americas," the Royal Governor Tryon's palace, challenged their sense of proportion and architectural harmony. Anyhow, you can come to our romantic New Bern and find that what is here imaged forth is but a pallid picture of what rests yet untold.

New Bern, which was once called "Chattawka," is situated on a tongue of land between the Neuse and Trent rivers. The land was purchased from the Indian King Taylor by De Graffenried about 1710, when he joined the Swiss colonists who had embarked in Holland, sailed to northeast England and then for Carolina by way of Virginia.

In 1713 the settlement was broken up by Tuscarora Indians, but by November 1723 we find New Bern made a township covering two hundred and fifty acres and soon after it became the capital of the colony. It was the second town in North Carolina, Bath having been laid out in 1705. In the second year of the reign of George II the colony was sold to the Crown and the proprietary rights ceased. The first Royal Governor assumed his functions in 1731.

The population of New Bern in April 1775 was about six hundred. In 1792 there were about four hundred houses, all of wood excepting the Palace, the Church, the Gaol and two dwelling houses which were brick. By

1798, there were about 2000 people in the town and ship building was carried on extensively. The ropes, iron work and timber were of home manufacture. The designers and craftsmen who found outlets for their talent in the shipyards seem to have worked also hand in hand with the Guilds who wrought in brick and wood to provide a domestic architecture of great interest and beauty.

The first "show-place" of the town, Tryon's Palace, built in 1767, was designed by John Hawks, an architect who came to New Bern from the island of Malta. This three storied brick house with two storied wings, separated from the main building by curved colonnades, had a frontage of 87'-0" and a depth of 59'-0". £15,000 were raised by the people to pay the costs. Unfortunately it was burned in 1798 and only one wing is now standing. The absence of the "Palace," however, need not discourage the student and lover of early American architecture, for on almost every street one stands gratified in the presence of buildings which display real design and stunning craftsmanship.

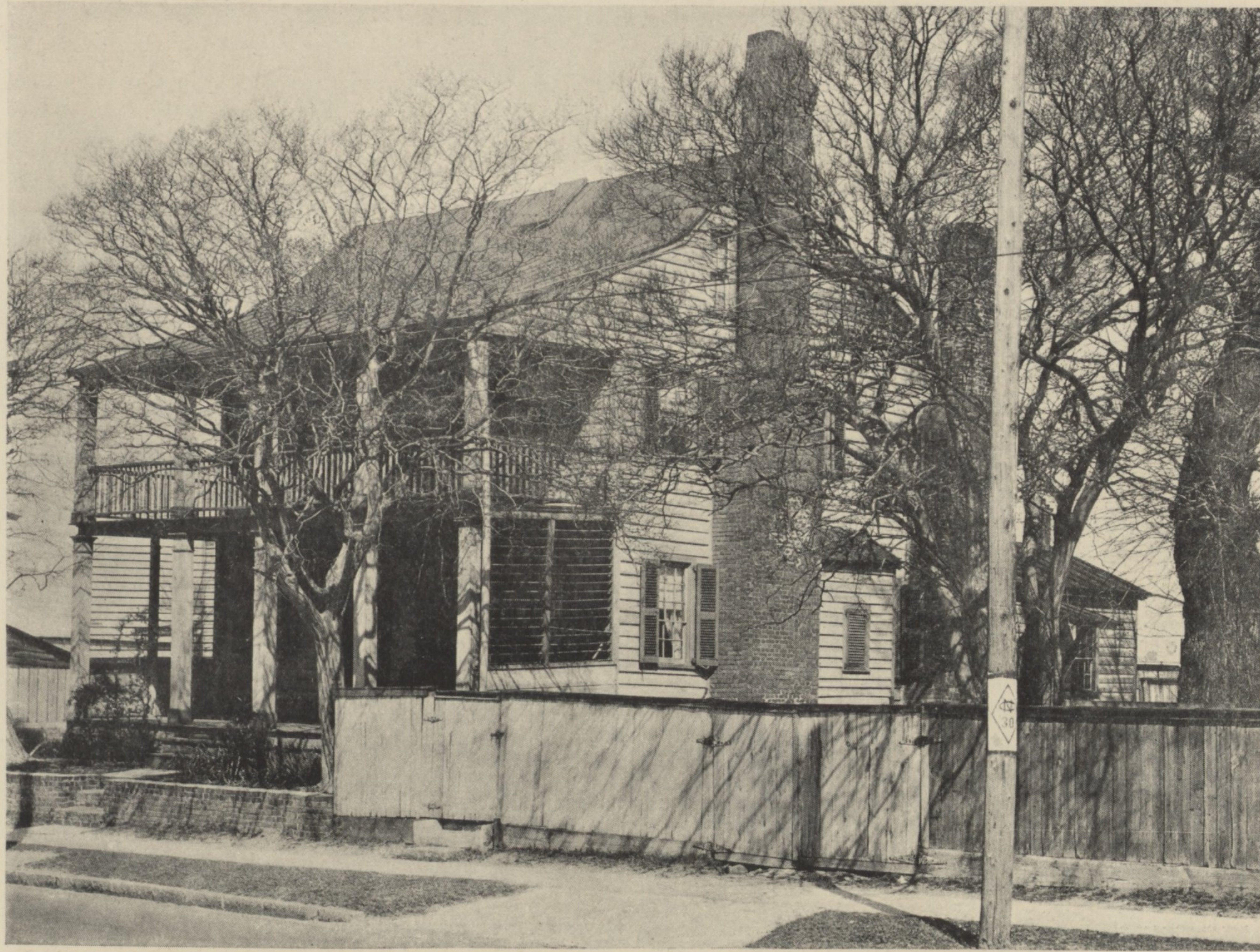
New Bern contains such a wealth of architectural material that this first monograph will serve only as an introduction. I may mention here but a few selected examples.

The Groenendyke House, now known as the Hargett House, is a warm expression of ideals of comfort which the ancient merchants brought from Holland to our Carolina. One should not be surprised at the degree of preservation of these timbered homes. There were giant trees in those days; and only the eternal heart of them went into the making of colonial homes. Time was given to building them and no nails were used, where nails would disintegrate the fabric. Cozenly, an English Walnut tree stands by the Groenendyke House and, at front, two crimson laurels, their trunks fluted and spiral; and a rose tree, growing there, it would seem, when the arch-mason of the Carpenters' Guild spent loving days of labor on this so nobly simple house. I think you will want to repeat the comfort and spaciousness of this apparently small house. The fire-

place, you will surely want to repeat—I wonder whether we have added much to the things that really ease our weariness. Have we not abandoned the play of repose? I think great thoughts and tender fancies found food in the minds that clustered around the fireside in all our colonies. Well, anyway, our immortal men were to this manner born and reared. There was he who came out of Mt. Vernon; the Sage of Monticello;

much of his life in the gelid north but he has not found any scenes that this New Bern landside were ashamed to meet.

The "Louisiana" House, pictured below, stands facing the Neuse, and looking on to the south. Many a soulful watcher, I dare say, stood in the shade of that old gallery, looking for the homecoming of a sea-faring father, or a shining-eyed and weather-beaten lover.



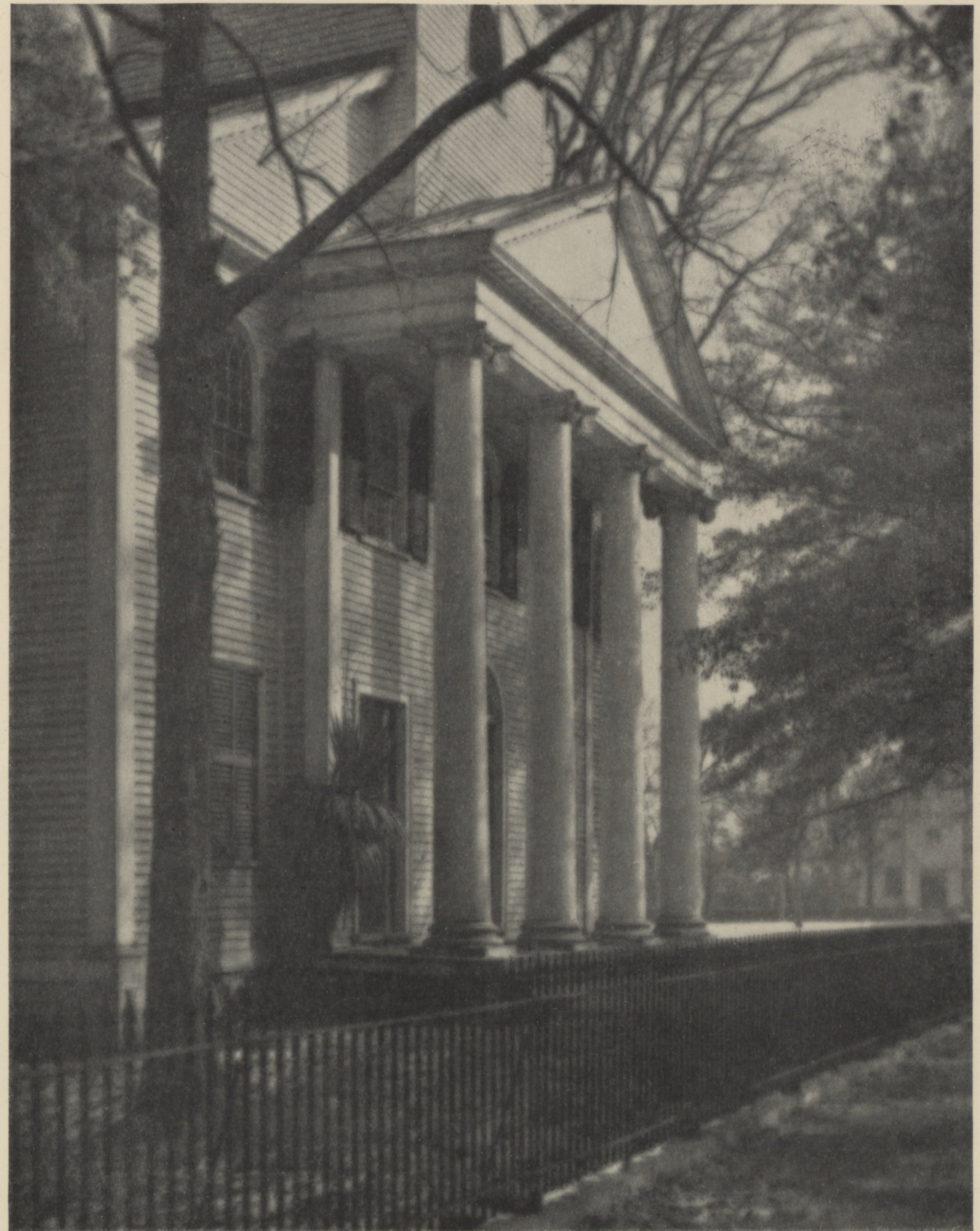
THE "LOUISIANA" HOUSE, EAST FRONT STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

the great wood-chopper and his log cabin; Andrew Jackson's shack here in Carolina; Alexander Hamilton. Thanks be! for the gathering love of ancient noble things.

There's little to choose between the climate of Louisiana and the coastal plain of North Carolina. So close are we to the fireside of the great Gulf Stream, that we do not shiver much here in winter; and in summer the breezes that come from the Neuse and the Trent, nights, sing "Always" to us. Fancy? Very well; take it so, if you will; but come and see. This writer lived

You should see the River Neuse, as it comes up almost to the feet of the "Louisiana" House. It is quite a mile and a half wide at this point; and as it moves on to the Sound, it widens and widens and widens. I seem to see it, a beautiful aisle, colonnaded by mossy water-oaks, umbrella pines and mimosa trees.

What influences one in the "Louisiana" House are spaciousness and tonal effects. I just don't know how to tell these things technically; but I feel them and enjoy them thoroughly.



THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA



THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

The Presbyterian Church is a noble building. The patrician portico is eloquent. Plato, likely, dictated his immortal sentences near columns such as these. The building is fifty-five feet in width and seventy feet in length with a steeple rising to a height of one hundred and twenty-five feet. Three doors open into an ample vestibule whence two open into the audience room. The pulpit is between the two doors at the entrance into the audience chamber. The floor gradually ascends toward the rear of the church elevating the pews to give a clear vision of the pulpit.

It is little wonder that we find the Jarvis (Slover) House and the Smallwood House, following so soon after the completion of this jewel of an early American Church. To architects, these houses must be luscious bits; to us laymen, beautiful works and gardens of repose. I think they are doing mighty much to tell our people that the builders of this Republic were not only political scientists; but men of poetic feeling and artistic expression. If I dared, I should almost say that they vied with their architects in fidelity to harmony and composition. The exquisite detail of these houses gives us to think that what they sought was not curtailment of cost, but rather the fulfillment of an ideal.

Why those large and sculptured firesides? James Boyd, in "Drums," has a beautiful page that answers this question. Forensic art was developed there; classic lore had its chair there; political science was taught there.

When President George Washington came to New Bern in 1792, the Masonic Opera House was facing the Common, just as it is today. I do not know that I am reverent enough in speaking of this gracious old building, as quaint. I don't know that it represents any period; I do know it to be associated with the nobler sentiments of this community. One of its charms is the dignified lodge room on the upper floor.

A very "Kentucky Cardinal" of a Catholic priest lived in New Bern a hundred years ago. He had a very small congregation and was devoted to them. His love for his fellowman went out to the trees and song birds and his Irish terrier. It was such a person as this who built the little ridge-roofed house, with the delicate porch, you see illustrated at bottom of Plate IV.

The Hannah Clark House has distinction and articulation. Houses of this character are passed a hundred times unnoticed. Then they are discovered!

George III, the George who forced our Declaration of Independence, was represented here by an able,

kindly and courteous governor—William Tryon. New Bern was the seat of government in Carolina. Governor Tryon built, what in 1768, was regarded as the most pretentious house in America. George Street began at the entrance of the Tryon Palace; went north—the King's Highway—to Kingston; and then on to the summer capital, Hillsboro, the farthest point north of the colony. Naturally, along this street worthy homes were built. One of these is the Hanff House. (Plate VIII)

Of a piece with the Hanff House, is the Blackwell House, now owned by G. C. Eubanks. This charming residence was built by Josiah Blackwell, in

1774. Josiah Blackwell was a lumber merchant, and into this construction, went materials of a beautiful texture.

The doorway of the Nixon House, is like a "Mammy Crochet" Rose—colorful and daintily reminiscent of the days of long ago; a fitting portal to a gracious interior. This house on Craven Street is the only remaining example, in this section of New Bern, of the elegant town house of the early 19th century period.

Athens was cultured, indeed; and made of her language a most fluid and beautiful speech; but she is known best for her Parthenon and her undying Acropolis.

THE MASONIC OPERA HOUSE
New Bern, North Carolina



HOUSE ON BROAD STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA



HOUSE AT 167 MIDDLE STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA



THE HANNAH CLARK HOUSE, CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA



THE BLACKWELL (TAYLOR) HOUSE, BROAD STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

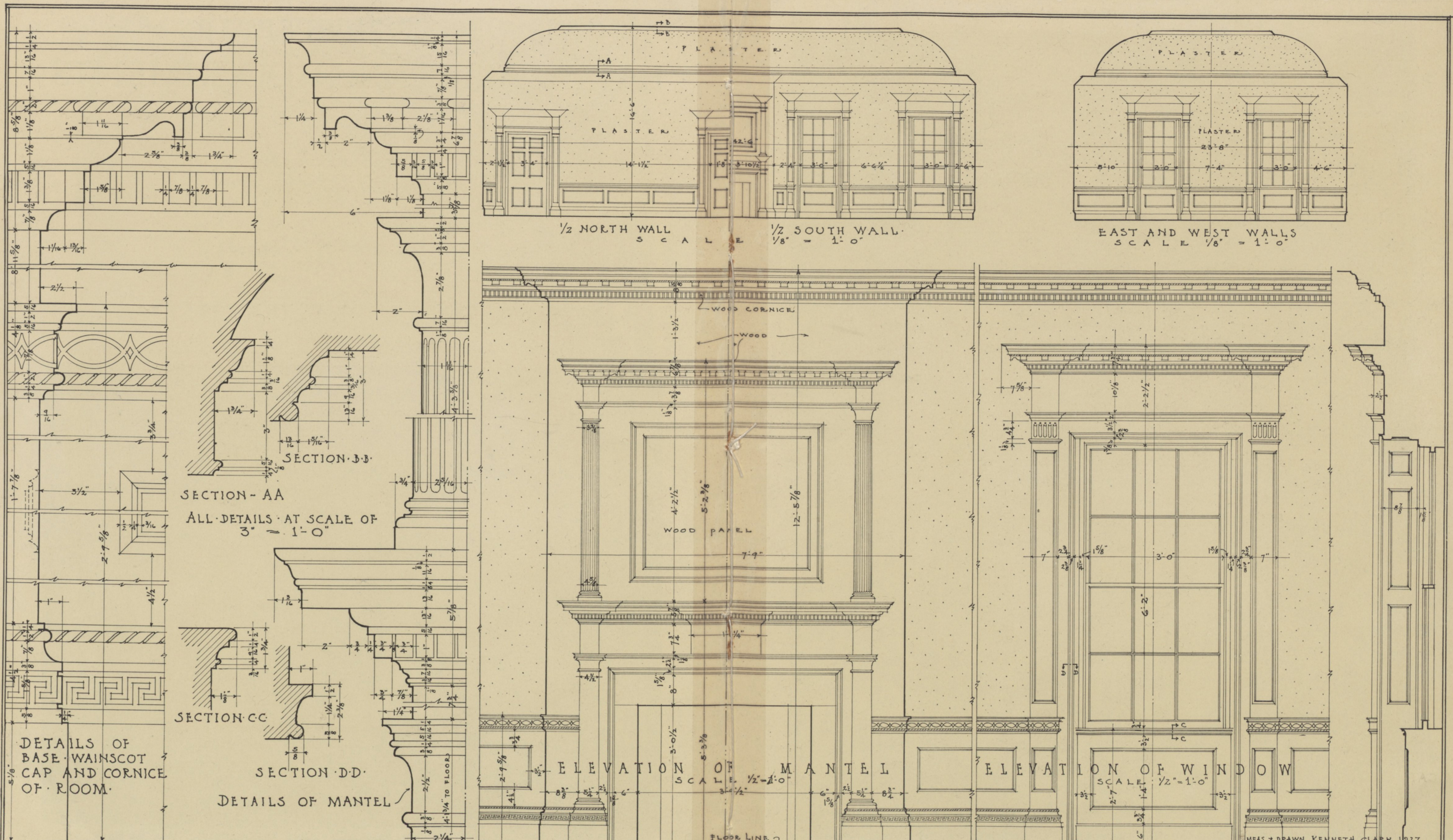
The WHITE PINE SERIES of EARLY AMERICAN DOCUMENTS

With MEASURED DRAWINGS from
The George F. Lindsay Collection

The MASONIC LODGE ROOM NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA



WEST WALL OF THE MASONIC LODGE ROOM



INTERIOR MASONIC LODGE ROOM
 NEW BERN NORTH CAROLINA

Drawings are reproduced exactly at the scale marked

MEAS + DRAWN KENNETH CLARK 1927.



THE HANFF HOUSE, GEORGE STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA



A GAMBREL ROOF HOUSE, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA



HOUSE ON HANCOCK STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA



THE HUGHES HOUSE, CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA
Torn down in 1925 and replaced by a garage!



THE NIXON HOUSE, CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA
Original steps removed when street was widened



THE NIXON HOUSE, CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA



WOOD CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

NOTES FOR THE SPECIFICATION WRITER

In Connection with Drawing on Page 23

Nationally accepted standard trade association lumber terms should be used in an architect's specification, rather than the obsolete or local grade names. This will eliminate much of the confusion now existing between the architect, builder and lumber dealer and will also save the client the possibility of having to pay a "safety premium," necessitated by specifications which are not clearly understood by those who contract to supply the lumber. In the suggestions that follow, offered for the assistance of the specification writer in connection with the wood construction details, shown on the following page, the data are stated in terms which have become standard in the producing districts from which the different species are obtained.

Special attention is called to **INSULATION**: one of the most important of recent developments in the building field

LUMBER: In view of the dangers of green or only partially seasoned lumber getting into a building and to establish the authority for the grade names used in the following specifications, it is suggested that a general clause be included in all specifications where lumber is specified as follows:

Specifications-General: "All lumber for any purpose mentioned in these specifications shall be at least air dry when delivered for use and shall be in accordance with the standard lumber association grading rules of the producing district from which the particular kind of lumber furnished shall come."

FRAMING OR STRUCTURAL LUMBER: The lumber required for framing or purely structural purposes need not, of course, be clear lumber so long as such technical defects as it contains do not impair its strength or serviceability for this use. In fact, it would be nothing short of gross extravagance to demand clear lumber for this use. Furthermore, there are several different woods from as many different lumber-producing regions of practically equal structural merit as far as all ordinary house building requirements are concerned. Which one of these woods to choose in any given locality is therefore a question as to which one can be purchased in that locality most economically, a matter determined largely by the distance from the source of production and the consequent freight haul to the market in question. For this reason the specification of Structural lumber should be more or less elastic as is suggested in the following notes:

PLATES, RAFTERS, JOISTS, ETC.

Specifications: "All structural members, including studding, plates, rafters, joists, blocking, etc., shall be No. 1 Common grade Douglas Fir (or Pacific Coast Hemlock) or (Northern Pine) or (Fir and Larch) and shall be at least air dry when delivered on the job."

INSULATION: As suggested at the top of this page no single item in the construction of the modern house is more essential to comfort, both winter and summer, than a proper job of wall and roof insulation. Nor is there a more important factor in making a house easy and economical to heat. The brand of insulation recommended, namely, Balsam-Wool, is a Weyerhaeuser product, made from chemically treated, fire-resistant, sanitary wood fibre made waterproof and wind-proof between two sheets of tough, asphalt-lined kraft paper. It is a blanket form of insulation; flexible to permit a good, tight job and of greater practical insulating efficiency than any other similar product on the market today.

A good job of insulation requires that the insulation ma-

terial be flexible and capable of tucking in to calk the cracks. This is particularly essential around window frames.

It may be a new thought to many that exterior brick walls should be insulated. Various researches on the subject have proven conclusively, however, that approximately 31% more heat escapes through an uninsulated 8" brick wall than through the ordinary uninsulated frame wall. The reason, of course, is not hard to understand. Brick is a conductor of heat. It is also porous enough to absorb moisture, which, if any thing, increases its conductivity.

Tests on actual wall sections show that the result of insulating a 8" brick wall with one layer of Balsam-Wool is to reduce the heat loss 59% from which it would appear that the elimination of "cold, damp walls" and the reduction in the amount of fuel required to heat the *uninsulated* house make insulation a matter not of expense, but of comfort and actual economy.

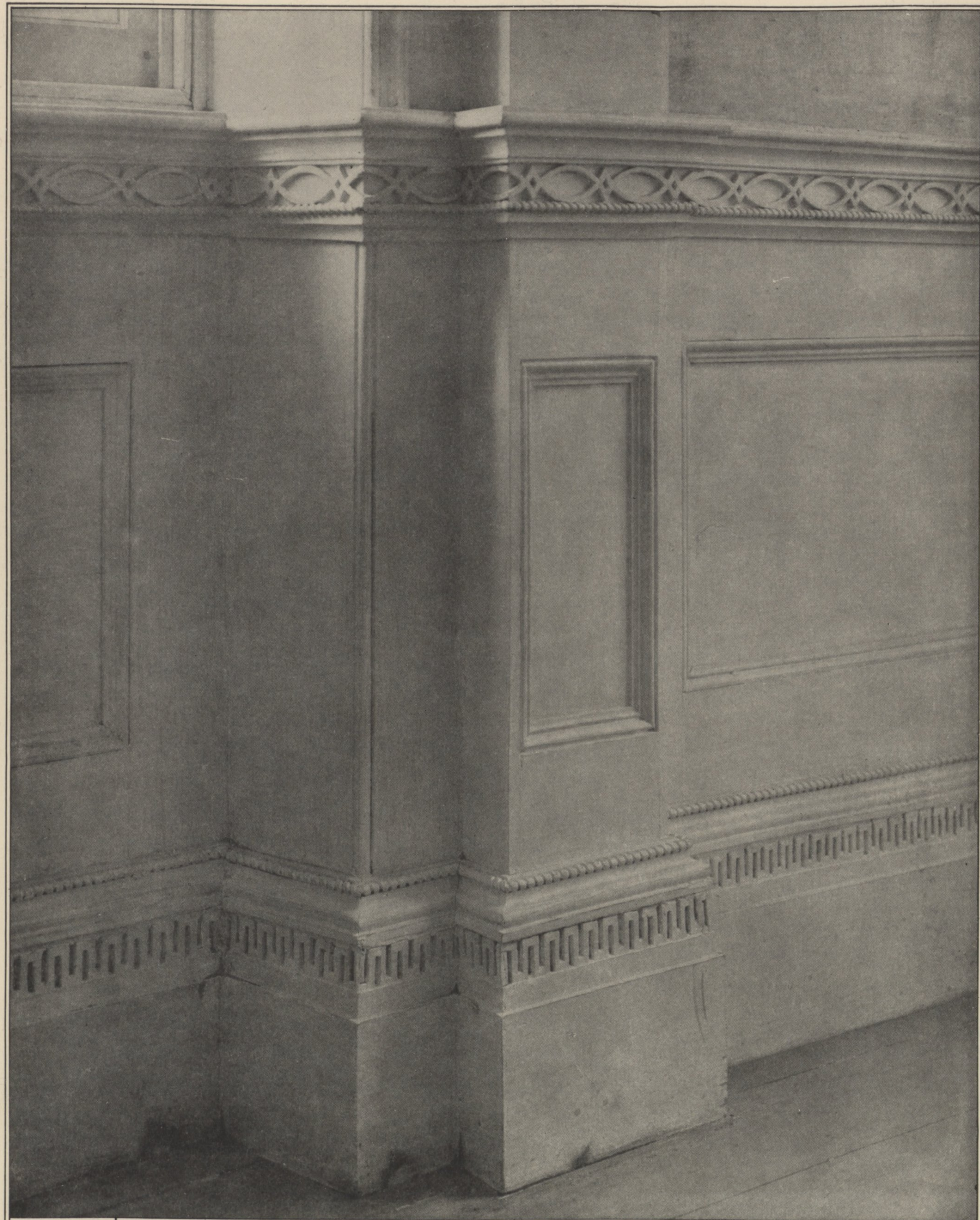
Suggested specifications for a complete job of insulation are on file in most architects' offices or may be secured from any of the branch offices of the Wood Conversion Company (Weyerhaeuser By-Products Division), at 1955 University Avenue, Saint Paul; 1849 Straus Building, Chicago; and 103 Park Avenue, New York.

Specifications-General: "Heat insulation shall be standard 1/2"-thick Balsam-Wool, except for roof or top-floor ceiling insulation which shall be 1" thick Balsam-Wool, manufactured by the Wood Conversion Company (Weyerhaeuser By-Products Division), Cloquet, Minnesota. Continuity of insulation shall be maintained. Where floors, ceilings or roofs are insulated, as well as outside walls, insulate thoroughly between joists and rafter ends. Throughout, all joints shall be made airtight, especially at door and window openings. Use full-length strips of insulation. End joints, where necessary, shall be butted and covered with lath, nailed through insulation to boarding or header. Insulation strips shall in all cases run in the same direction as studding, joists and rafters."

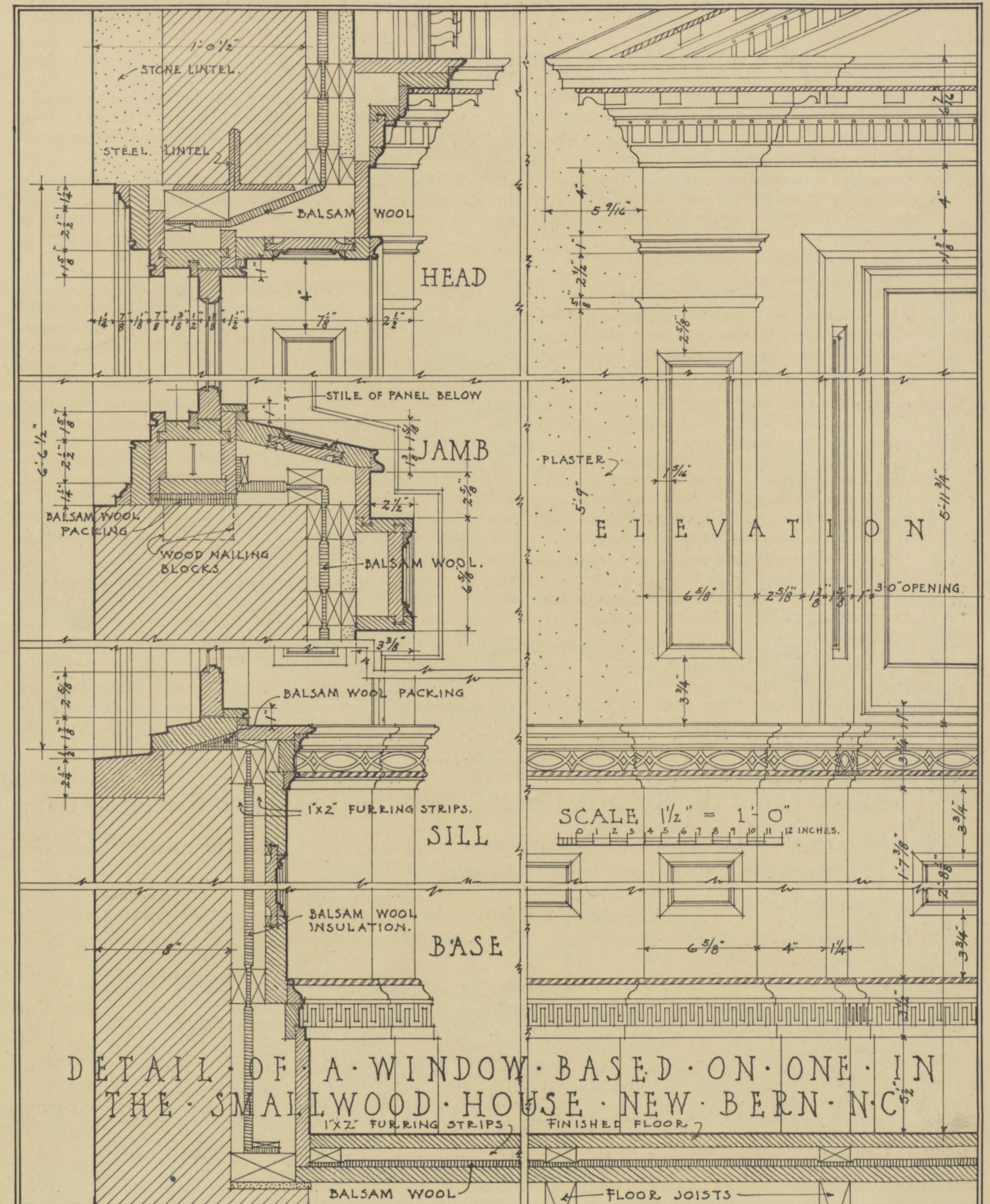
For Masonry Outside Wall Insulation: "Fur the wall with 1" x 2" furring strips, 16" O. C. shimmed plumb and true. Insulate with 3/4" width Balsam-Wool applied on inside faces of furring, edges butted together on every other strip. Fur over insulation with 1" x 2" furring strip, on each wall; furring strips to receive lath and plaster."

For Insulating Around Window Frames: Pack strips of Balsam-Wool tightly between window sills and headers and wherever else there are cracks which can be calked in like manner.

[Continued on page 24]



WOOD CONSTRUCTION DETAILS
 SUGGESTED BY
WEYERHAEUSER FOREST PRODUCTS
 SAINT PAUL MINNESOTA



DETAIL OF A WINDOW BASED ON ONE IN
 THE SMALLWOOD HOUSE NEW BERN N.C.



WOOD CONSTRUCTION DETAILS
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 SAINT PAUL MINNESOTA



WOOD CONSTRUCTION DETAILS (Continued)

For Floor Insulation: Insulate with 33" width Balsam-Wool applied over sub-floor with edges butted together over every other joint. Fur over insulation with 1" x 2" furring strips over each joint to receive finish floor.

WINDOW FRAMES: For window frames it is peculiarly essential to use a durable wood and White Pine is therefore recommended without substitutes for all exposed parts such as sills, etc. Again, the grade of material from which the frames are to be worked may safely be left to the millwork manufacturer except as provided for as follows:

Specification: "All window frames shall be manufactured from Genuine White Pine of Weyerhaeuser standard either Northern White Pine (*Pinus Strobus*) or Idaho White Pine (*Pinus Monticola*), of suitable grade, free from sap and with clear faces wherever exposed, made to sizes and as per detail shown on drawings."

WINDOW SASH: In addition to Genuine White Pine for window sash, another wood is beginning to enter the millwork field from the Pacific Coast, viz: Douglas Fir. A most excellent wood for a great variety of uses and being exceptionally free from sapwood, due to the large sizes of the logs from which it is cut, it is giving a good account of itself and is deserving of more than ordinary consideration. In allowing it in specifications for sash cuttings, care should be taken, however, to insure its being vertical grain as suggested below:

Specifications: "Window sash shall be made from clear cuttings of Genuine White Pine (*Pinus Strobus* or *Pinus Monticola*), free from sapwood (or shall be made from clear cuttings of Vertical Grain Douglas Fir).

EXTERIOR TRIM: For outside trim, including pilasters, casings, cornice lumber, mouldings, caps, etc., there is no satisfactory substitute for Genuine White Pine in the better class of building construction. A naturally durable wood, White Pine has the important ability to "stay put" and to

hold tight at the joints plus the further advantage of taking and holding paint.

Inasmuch as these items are usually furnished by the millwork house, manufactured from "Shop" or "Factory" grades, no grade specification is recommended beyond that suggested in the following specification:

Specification: "All outside trim, including pilasters, casings, cornice lumber, mouldings, caps, etc., shall be cut from Genuine White Pine (*Pinus Strobus* or *Pinus Monticola*), free from sapwood and of such grade as to yield practically clear faces on all exposed surfaces."

INTERIOR TRIM, including interior casings, stools, wainscot caps and bases, cornices, splayed window jambs and soffits, panels and stiles and all carved and applied ornament. Genuine White Pine or Ponderosa Pine are suggested for all *inside* trim of the character detailed on the preceding page. Genuine White Pine lends itself to intricate carved ornament a little more readily, perhaps, than the general run of Ponderosa Pine. Both of these woods are practical and will give service and, with the proper selection of stock at the millwork factory, either one will meet the requirements imposed by the details under consideration. The availability of these species of wood, the ease and care with which they can be worked, the ability to "stay put" after once in place, and the perfection with which they take and hold paint are qualities which recommend their specification.

General: All lumber used for interior trim (carved and moulded work, pilasters, casings, plinth blocks, panels, wainscot, etc.) shall be Genuine White Pine (or Ponderosa Pine) having clear faces wherever exposed and shall be of detail as shown on the drawings.

NOTE: Clear cuttings in both Genuine White Pine and Ponderosa Pine are available in the so-called "Factory" or "Shop" grades carried in stock by millwork manufacturers.

The Facts about the Relative Durability of the GENUINE WHITE PINES

Durability ratings of California Sugar Pine (*Pinus Lambertiana*), Idaho White Pine (*Pinus Monticola*) and Northern White Pine (*Pinus Strobus*) show that:

Northern White Pine (*Pinus Strobus*) averages 60% more durable than California Sugar Pine. Idaho White Pine (*Pinus Monticola*) averages 35% more durable than California Sugar Pine.

To insure getting the more durable species, specify that

"All Genuine White Pine shall carry the Weyerhaeuser Genuine White Pine species mark."

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CLOQUET LUMBER Co., Cloquet, Minn.	EDWARD RUTLEDGE TIMBER Co., Coeur D'Alene, Idaho
HUMBERT LUMBER Co., Sandpoint, Idaho	SNOQUALMIE FALLS LUMBER Co., Snoqualmie Falls, Wash.
JOHNSON-WENTWORTH Co., Cloquet, Minn.	WEYERHAEUSER TIMBER Co., Everett, Washington
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