THE POMPÉE HOUSE: BUILDING AND BOARDING IN AUSTIN'S EARLY WEST CAMPUS COMMUNITY, 1875-1910

John Miller Morris Jr.

APPROVED:

Supervisor: Terry D. Jordan

Dr. Terry Jordan

Peter Coleman

Peter Coleman

THE POMPÉE HOUSE: BUILDING AND BOARDING IN AUSTIN'S EARLY WEST CAMPUS COMMUNITY, 1875-1910

APPROVED:

Supervisor: Terry D Jordan
Dr. Terry Jordan

Peter O. Coltman
Peter Coltman

Copyright

by

John Miller Morris Jr.

1989

IN MEMORIAM:

Carroll Edwin Cook

(Oct. 30, 1896 - Jan. 27, 1989)

"Mr. Cook"

THE POMPÉE HOUSE: BUILDING AND BOARDING IN AUSTIN'S EARLY WEST CAMPUS COMMUNITY, 1875-1910

by

JOHN MILLER MORRIS, JR., B.A.,M.A.

REPORT

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

May, 1989

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of Austinites have been exceedingly helpful in the preparation of this study. Wayne Bell, David Reynolds, Russ Young, Dave Oliphant, Paul Schmidt, David Pittard, Dr. Terry Jordan and Peter Coltman, among many others, have generously given of their time and thought. Particular thanks are due to the late Carrol E. Cook and Marian Clarke Cook for their interest, interviews, and personal encouragement. Lastly, Irma and Ernest A. Guenther kindly provided me with genealogical details, rare photos of the Pompees, and gravestone translations from the German.

February, 1989

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
List of Figures	vii
Chapter I. Introduction	1
Chapter II. Adolph and Lilli (1844-1874) . . .	5
Chapter III. The Pompée Cottage (1875)	17
Chapter IV. Detail and Design	28
Chapter V. At Home in the Horst Addition: Work, Play, and School (1875-80) .	48
Chapter VI. Boarding (1880-85)	62
Chapter VII. Col. Holland's New Career (1885-90)	75
Chapter VIII. The Mauve Decade and Beyond (1890-1909)	87
Chapter IX. The Caldwell Boarding House . . .	104
Chapter X. Neighborhood Succession: An Epilogue	120
Appendices	132
Bibliography	134

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 1: Adolph Pompée 13

Figure 2: Lilli Pompée 15

Figure 3: Horst Addition 19

Figure 4: Pompée Cottage Floorplan and the I-Stud 24

Figure 5: 1875 Framing Detail 31

Figure 6: North 1875 Facade 34

Figure 7: 1875 West Facade Designs 37

Figure 8: 1875 Design Appearance 38

Figure 9: "Cross of Christ" 41

Figure 10: Restored Design Details 43

Figure 11: Pompée Cottage (West Facade) 50

Figure 12: Adolph Pompée 58

Figure 13: Pease-Lundell-Pompée Receipt 68

Figure 14: 1883 U.T. Catalog Strictures 71

Figure 15: Emilie Pompée 74

Figure 16: J.K. Holland 80

Figure 17: 1890-91 Addition 91

Figure 18: Phineas Lawrence Windsor 99

Figure 19: Post and Wire Fence on east side of Pompee house 112

Page

Figure 20: The Young Walter Prescott Webb . . . 114

Figure 21: "506 W. 22 St. ca. 1930": Photo . . . 123

Figure 22: The Radiance of Armadillo Wisdom . . 125

Figure 23: Emilie Pompée 131

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> It is a brief tale to tell, but a nice one, and you could build a novel on it, with people wandering around far from different homes and building solid lives on accident.
>
> -- John Graves, Texas Heartland

> And so I found myself in a strange, but very cheerful, tenement called the Marusovka -- familiar in all probability to many a generation of Kazan students. it was a large, dilapidated house on Rybnoryadsky Street and appeared to have been captured from its owners by the hungry students, prostitutes, and living phantoms of people who had outlived their time.
>
> -- Maxim Gorky, My Universities

To the eccentric who loves old houses for their own sake, now and then the keenest pleasure can be derived from one of their least important manifestations. During the fin de siécle heyday of Austin's West Campus "Horst Addition" neighborhood, for instance, the modest Pompée House at the northeast corner of Nueces and West 22nd Street was surrounded and overshadowed by large, stately Victorian residences. Unfortunately however, the dynamics of

urban neighborhood succession over the past half century have erased many of these grand houses. Many homes, like the A.J. Peeler mansion on San Antonio Street, were demolished to develop their large sites into parking lots, churches, commercial buildings, apartments, and the like.

But the Pompée House, one of the oddest and least prepossessing of the original Horst Addition homes, survived by a continual (and often marginal) usefulness as a "boarding-house," or a "tenant house," or, in the current vernacular, a "rental property." Indeed, since 1875 the Pompée House has hung on, sheltering a diverse array of people, often young newcomers to Austin or to the University of Texas.

Intent as we now are upon both destroying and preserving our past, the odd structure at West 22nd and Nueces can serve as an interesting case study on the importance of local history in assessing neighborhood succession. As this interdisciplinary household history from 1875 to 1910 suggests, the documentation of a house can be inductively a documentation of the local community as well. In this sense a study of the old Pompée House may help the

planner's efforts to understand, preserve, and foster the sense of place at the neighborhood level.

A chronicle of this structure's early household life and setting may also allow us to see that similar community needs for shelter around a hundred years ago led to different spatial accommodations from today. Further, the diverse boarders, owners, tenants, lenders, and their families provide an interesting demographic transect of post-Reconstruction neighborhood development in Austin. Last, a narrative account allows the observer to consider broader issues as well: the origins of idiographic or popular housing, ethnicity and local settlement, the "American Dream" of private home ownership, and the socioeconomic realities of "boarding" or renting one's home.

In this larger sense, the 1875 Pompée House serves as a significant reminder of the optimistic nineteenth century neighborhoods newly emerging from the troubles of Reconstruction Texas. These buoyant Victorian localities, like the Horst Addition west of Guadalupe Street, were in turn swept by new waves of urban growth and change. Thus, a number of the changes affecting the City of Austin in real estate,

neighborhood quality of life, education, taxing, utilities, architectural design, adaptive use, and so on, are idiographically mirrored by an analysis of this curious structure. As Marvin Mikesell reminds us, "the historic preservation movement and the national concern for quality of life have encouraged and occasionally even compelled appreciation of the attributes of particular places."[1]

---

[1]Marvin Mikesell, Annals of the Assoc. of American Geographers, 68:1 (March, 1978), p. 15. Emphasis added.

CHAPTER II

ADOLPH AND LILLI (1844-1874)

> There is no despair so deep as the despair of a homeless man or woman.
>
> -- Hamlin Garland, "Under the Lion's Paw"

The cottage house at the "corner of Palmetto [West 22nd Street] and August [Nueces Street]" was built in the spring of 1875 by a young couple, Adolph and Lilli Pompée, as their first home. Their pursuit of the "American Dream" of private home ownership would also reflect distinct ethnic attributes, since both were born in Germany and emigrated to Texas as young children. In order to appreciate more fully their idiosyncratic choices in design, construction, financing, and siting, attention should be directed to Adolph and Lilli's background and ethnic context.

Adolph Pompée was born on August 24, 1844 in the ancient Hanseatic port of Bremen. He was given the same name as his father, a possible descendant of Huguenot emigrés from France to Germany. In any case, the name caused no confusion as the elder Pompée died within a few years of his son's birth. The young

widowed mother, Emilie Pompée, remarried a twenty-seven year old cousin in 1847, Hans Adolf Hoppe of the town of Hannover.[1]

Unpleasant economic and restrictive social conditions in the Kingdom of Hannover inspired Adolph Hoppe to emigrate to Texas with his family (including the young Adolph Pompée) in the mid-1850's. The Hoppe family settled among the closely-knit German settlements in Austin County. It is possible though, that the rigors of oceanic travel, the increased incidence of disease during and shortly after arrival in Texas, and the many hardships of resettlement proved too taxing for Emilie Pompée Hoppe's health. Adolph's mother is known to have died in 1855 at about the time the Hoppe's arrived in Texas.[2]

By the age of eleven Adolph was an orphan and a boy growing up in the New World. He continued to live with his co-sanguine stepfather, H.A. Hoppe, but Hoppe soon remarried, and had at least three more children -- Adolph's half-sisters, Theodora and

---

[1]Sept. 1981 Interview with Irma and Ernest Guenther, compilers, "Genealogy of the Schroeter/Richter/Hoppe Families," 4501 Spanish Oak Trail, Austin, Texas.

[2]Ibid.

Elizabeth, and his half-brother, George. In the late 1850's or very early 1860's, the entire Hoppe family relocated to a sparsely-settled area of Burnet County.

There, the difficulties and dangers of the Civil War period overwhelmed the struggling emigrant family. As Ottilie Fuchs Goeth, a relative, narrates in her gossipy Memoirs of a Texas Pioneer Grandmother:

> A few miles from Marble Falls, on the road to Johnson City, one can see a place [Karst sinkhole] where men favoring the North were killed and thrown into a cavern after a trial of sorts was held there. Many of the best men of this area lost their lives at this spot. One of these was Adolf Hoppe, father of George Hoppe, the son-in-law of my brother William. After the war, sacks full of human bones were removed from the so-called "devil's hole" to be ceremoniously buried at Burnet.[3]

Although we do not know Adolph's exact whereabouts during the cold-blooded murder of his stepfather in 1862, he undoubtedly heard about or witnessed many of the tragic events described below. Indeed, his later interest in the municipal politics of 1870's Austin may reflect an activism first

---

[3]Ottilie Fuchs Goeth, Memoirs of a Texas Pioneer Grandmother [Was Grossmutter Erzaehlt], translated by Irma Goeth Guenther (Burnet, Texas: Eakin Press, 1982), p. 77.

engendered by Secessionist Texas. For those fleeing Old World tyranny, the New World's capacity for local political oppression and assassination may have encouraged active, ethnic participation in the political process.

Most of the details of Hoppe's murder emerged slowly after the Civil War. Apparently Adolf Hoppe left his remote home one morning in early 1862 to chop fence posts. Later in the day his team returned with harnesses cut. Hoppe had disappeared; a search party found no traces. About a year later, however, several men dimly saw harness fragments hanging off a limestone ledge in a nearby sinkhole -- the infamous "Dead Man's Hole." The historian Joe B. Frantz relates:

> They lowered a lantern into the Hole to burn out any poisonous air, and then dropped one man on a rope. He found a skeleton wearing Hoppe's shoes, as well as several other piles of human bones.[4]

By his nineteenth birthday in 1863, Pompée's natural father and mother were long dead, his

---

[4]Joe B. Frantz, "Ethnicity and Politics in Texas," in Glen E. Lich and Dona B. Reeves, German Culture in Texas, A Free Earth; Essays from the 1978 Southwest Symposium (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980), p. 195.

stepfather had been recently murdered by Confederate "Fire Eaters" for beliefs he himself likely cherished, and the entire family was under an ominous pall of suspicion. The following years must have been very hard ones for this shattered family, now even more dependent upon an ethnic and community network of friends and relatives.

After the Civil War, an apparent witness emerged. A Texas Ranger testified during an inquiry that while riding with two (unnamed) men, they had come upon Pompée's stepfather chopping cedar. The other two men (so the Ranger said) compelled Hoppe to join them and then pointedly accused him of attendance at a Unionist meeting. A nervous Hoppe denied this dangerous accusation and, appearing to accept his accented protests, the two "Fire Eaters" rode off. As the historian Joe Frantz relates, the Texas Ranger then rode away himself for several miles when he heard a distant gunshot pierce the silence of the cedar breaks. The Ranger testified that he turned back to investigate, but found no trace of anyone. No one was ever tried for Hoppe's murder, but even after a century, "Hoppe's descendants still believe that Southern sympathizers waylaid him and dumped him there

[Dead Man's Hole] as punishment for his belief in black freedom."[5]

Better times were ahead though; four years after the close of the Civil War, the 24-year old Adolph Pompée married a lively, pretty 25-year old Blanco County resident, Lilli Schroeter. In a springtime ceremony -- quite possibly in Austin -- Adolph and Lilli exchanged vows on May 30, 1869. Lilli Schroeter had a revealing background as well.

She was born on April 8, 1844 to Huldreich Ludwig Schroeter and Wilhelmine Luise Schroeter of the city of Hannover.[6] Her hard-working father, who died when she was three, was a talented jeweler who traveled to England every year to repair the clocks in the royal palace. After Lilli's father died in 1847, her mother remarried Huldreich's master apprentice, Rudolf Richter. Interestingly, Rudolf was sixteen years younger than she was. Lilli's adventurous brother, August Friedrich Schroeter, was an ardent and adroit draft-dodger. He fled to Texas aboard the brig

---

[5]Ibid, pp. 194-96.

[6]Irma and Ernest Guenther, compilers, op. cit. See also the "Schroeter" family entry by Helen Sundstrom in Burnet County History (Burnet: Aiken Pubs.), pp. 278-80.

WESER (a regular on the Bremen to Galveston route) in 1854 rather than fight for the British Army in the Far East. With August as pathfinder, Lilli, her stepfather, two sisters, mother, and half-brother followed his lead in 1855. The family settled in Washington County, where Mr. Richter opened a mercantile firm in Brenham.

As the youngest daughter, Lilli's childhood and early youth were influenced by townlife in Hannover, Germany and Brenham, Texas. However, in the early 1860's (when Lilli was about 16 years old) the Richter family -- like the Hoppe's -- moved to Burnet County. They also suffered from the Civil War privations and the fears common to many of the Hill Country Germans. Having leaped from the Hannoverian frying pan into the Secessionist fire, as it were, Lilli's brother, August, skillfully managed to dodge the Confederate draft as well. On one occasion family tradition relates he donned a bonnet, dress and gloves, and worked assiduously in the family garden as a lady to avoid a party of Southern "bushwhackers."[7]

---

[7]Sundstrom "Schroeter," op. cit., p. 279.

Adolph and Lilli's love probably blossomed in the verdant hills and river valleys -- Double Horn, Cypress Mill -- of the Colorado River between Burnet and Blanco counties. Lilli's home on the south bank of the Colorado (below the modern Max Starcke Dam) would have been a likely courting place as well. Nevertheless, both Adolph and Lilli were apparently determined (or predisposed) to better their fortunes in the urban rather than the rural context. As skilled mechanics were in demand in Austin as Reconstruction began to recede, Adolph -- a wheelwright and carriage maker -- and Lilli likely chose Austin as the future basis for their happiness around 1869 or 1870.

Certainly the Pompée's were in Austin when the first Austin City Directory was issued in 1872, as a "Pompee, A." appears as a "carriage maker" with the Jones & Stelfox firm. A daughter, Emilie (named after Adolph's natural mother), was born in 1870. Without a home of their own, the Pompée's boarded with Adolph's boss, John Jones, as their residence address ("cor. Hickory and Brazos sts.") is the same as his.

Adolph (see photo, Figure 1) took an interest in Reconstruction politics as well, signing his name



Figure 1: Adolph Pompée
(H.B. Hillyer photo)

to a public letter of support in 1873 for one of Austin's most intrepid of mayors, Thomas Benton Wheeler. Mayor Wheeler's calm appeals in 1873-74 helped to defuse the potential rioting during the tense Coke-Davis Controversy in the state capitol.[8] The letter appeared in the August 29, 1873 edition of the Daily Democratic Statesman and was signed by a number of Austin's ethnic German and Swedish leaders (Walter Tips, F.W. Petmecky, C. Lundberg, inter alia). Ostensibly a request for T.B. Wheeler's candidacy in the November municipal election, this letter represented a clear signal of support from the ethnic German community for Mayor Wheeler's reasonably impartial administration.

By 1874, then, Adolph was an established mechanic (see photo, figure 1), supporting a wife and daughter, and participating in Austin's tumultuous political life. Lilli, well-read and busy with homelife (see photo, Figure 2), no doubt was an active host when her brother, August Schroeter, married Hedwig Klappenbach in May of 1874 in Austin. (Hedwig

---

[8]See, M.H. Farrow Troublesome Times in Texas (San Antonio: Naylor Co., 1959), p. 47.



Figure 2: Lilli Pompée
(H.B. Hillyer Photo)

Schroeter later authored the interesting book of reminiscences, Else, Ein Lebensbild Aus Texas.) Austin's remarkable growth from 1870 to 1875, when the population given from around 4,000 to 8,000 residents, led to greatly increased pressures for housing. No doubt many young couples boarded with their employers, friends, or even strangers in order to find shelter. By 1874, it would appear that the successful young Pompée couple began to dream of a home of their own as well. Adolph's translation of the home ownership dream into the urban design reality of Austin would constitute an innovative expression of man's ingenuity in the construction of housing.

CHAPTER III

THE POMPÉE COTTAGE (1875)

> The city is filled with people, and there is a great demand for tenement houses. Five hundred good cottage residences should be put up this spring . . .
>
> -- Daily Democratic Statesman
> March 10, 1875

Real estate activity was increasingly active in Austin after the worst of the Coke-Davis Controversy, and Louis Horst was there to take advantage of it. Horst's sense of timing and shrewdness was excellent in general. He had left Germany for Texas during the very first surge of German immigration, arriving first in New Orleans in 1836. From there he left for the Allen brothers' new town of Houston in 1837, then arrived on the west bank of Waller Creek in 1839, where he settled down to survive the perilous years of early Austin.[1]

Louis Horst butchered cattle, sold meat, prospered, and bought 59 acres of pasture for his

---

[1]Frank Brown, "Annals of Travis County and of the City of Austin (From the Earliest Times to the Close of 1875)," Austin History Center: Vol. VI, p. 74.

slaughter stock in 1848 on the northern edge of Austin. Here he built in 1854, a two-story, stone dwelling along Waller Creek. This large tract of land was commonly known as "Horst's Pasture" (since he kept his slaughter-stock there) and was the site of numerous Bar-B-Ques and festive public gatherings.[2] When the 1872 state election ensured Austin's position as the permanent state capitol, Horst decided to develop the west side of his pasture. In 1873, therefore, he had the "Horst Addition" to the City of Austin surveyed. The addition that ran north from 19th to 24th Streets and west from the barren, 40-acre University Square (or "College Hill") to Rio Grande Street (see Figure 3). Lots, a spacious 70' x 120', were placed on the market in April of 1874, with inner lots selling for $500 and corner lots for $600.[3]

Nine months later, on January 26, 1875, Adolph and Lilli paid Horst $600 for a fine corner lot (Lot 18, Block 34, Division) on the northeast corner of "Palmetto" (West 22nd Street) and "August" (Nueces). On the headwaters of Little Shoal Creek,

---

[2]Joseph Jones, Life on Waller Creek, (Austin: AAR/Tantalus, Inc., 19820, p. 44.

[3]Frank Brown, op.cit., Vol. XXXII, p. 28.

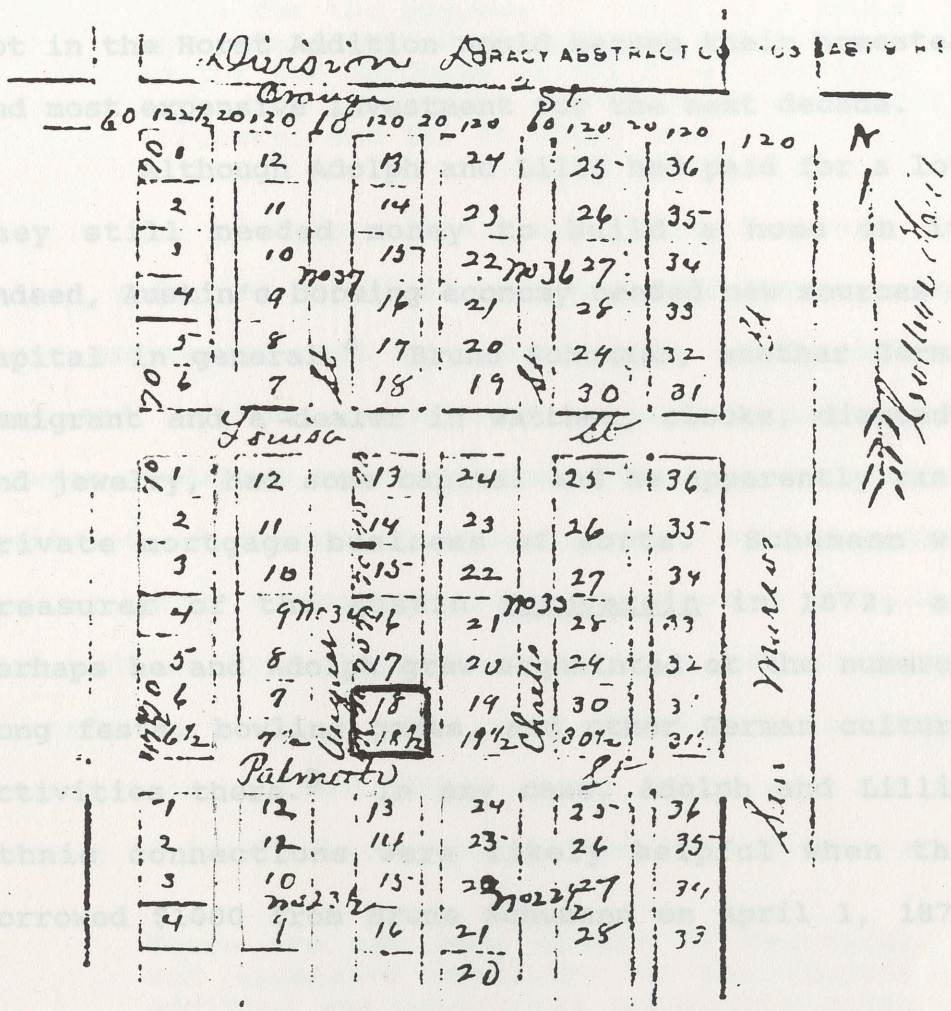


Figure 3: Horst Addition
Louis Horst's Outlet No. 34
Division "D"; the Pompees
acquired lots 18 and 18 1/2
(in red)

their gentle lot enjoyed a panoramic southern view of Austin. Several small springs were nearby. This nice lot in the Horst Addition would become their homestead and most expensive investment for the next decade.

Although Adolph and Lilli had paid for a lot, they still needed money to build a home on it. Indeed, Austin's booming economy needed new sources of capital in general.[4] Bruno Schumann, another German immigrant and a dealer in watches, clocks, diamonds, and jewelry, had some capital and he apparently ran a private mortgage business of sorts. Schumann was treasurer of the Austin Turnverein in 1872, and perhaps he and Adolph grew acquainted at the numerous song fests, bowling games, and other German cultural activities there.[5] In any case, Adolph and Lilli's ethnic connections were likely helpful when they borrowed $1000 from Bruno Schumann on April 1, 1875.

---

[4]"Half a million dollars were tied up in local construction during 1875 . . ." Jane Manaster, "The Ethnic Geography of Austin: 1875-1910," (Austin: unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Texas), p. 42.

[5]Mary Starr Barkley, History of Travis County and Austin, 1839-1899, (Austin: Steck Company, 1967), p. 319.

The funds were to be used,

> . . . for the purpose of erecting a house upon the above described Lot [18]: that is for the purchase of building materials and the payment of Mechanics and laborers, and for no other purpose . . .[6]

As Adolph, Lilli, and the five-year old Emilie rode out to their new homesite that spring, their excitement must have been great. Their lot was centered in the new Addition, on the highground between Guadalupe and Rio Grande Streets. Just to the southeast of their lot a small creek headed near a spring that flowed down along Nueces Street.[7] Although still in its infancy as a neighborhood, already a number of new houses were under construction. Frank Brown would later note in his "Annals of Travis County and of the City of Austin":

> There are now many dozens of beautiful and expensive dwellings in the [Horst] addition and others are constantly going up. In a few years, the university will

---

[6]Bergen, Daniel and Gracy, "Abstract of Title to the West 48 feet of Lots Nos. 17, 18 & 18 1/2 in Outlot No. 34, Division 'D' (Jan. 26, 1875 to Jan. 28, 1932)," hereinafter called "Abstract of Title." Photocopy from the original in the Estate of Carroll E. Cook.

[7]M.S. Barkley, op.cit., p. 96.

> have an attendance of two thousand or more students, when all this property will be very valuable.[8]

There was, of course, a rough, almost barren 40-acre pasture some 300 yards to the east of the Pompée lot. Optimistically called "College Hill" [see extreme right, Figure 3] on early maps, most of the ancient elm and oak trees on this site had been chopped down eleven years before by General Magruder. But there were persistent hopes by many lot owners and speculators in the 1870's that <u>something</u> would -- eventually -- sprout up there in the way of a public university.

With Schumann's $1,000 (at 10%) in hand,[9] Adolph and Lilli probably began work on their prospective home at once that spring of 1875. It is possible that Adolph's step-brother in Cypress Mill, George Hoppe, may have pitched in, since he was noted as a master builder.[10] But Adolph was a respectable wheelwright himself, a skilled mechanic with years in woodworking. A saying then current -- "A

---

[8]Frank Brown, <u>op.cit.</u>, Vol. XXXII, p. 28.

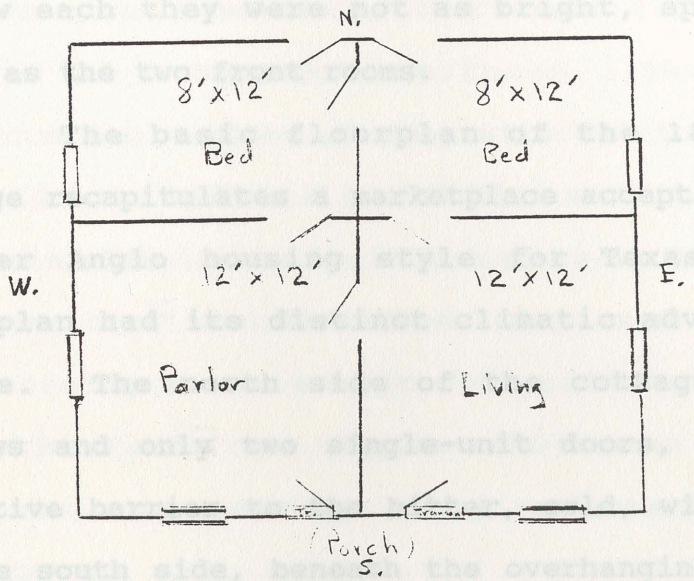
[9]"Abstract of Title," p. 8.

[10]Ottilie Fuchs Goeth, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 77 and <u>passim</u>. Note the photo of George Hoppe, p. 147.

wheelwright's dog is a carpenter's uncle" -- encapsulated the point that few people had the skills or knew the intricacies of wood joinery as well as a master wheelwright. It is most likely, therefore, that the popular Pompée residence and its unusual framing system sprang from Adolph's creative mind and hands.

In appearance, the single-story, gable-roofed, 20' x 24' "Porch Entrance Cottage" with modest Greek Revival trim was simplicity itself. Indeed, one of the heavy floor joists bear the stamped insignia of "SIMPLEX" (as opposed to "DUPLEX" floor joist systems, one supposes). Within the 20' x 24' structure were four rooms: two 12' x 12' rooms at the front (south), and two 8' x 12' rooms at the back (north) (see Figure 4-A). Four interior and four exterior doors and six windows allowed for street views, light and ventilation. In layout, the Pompée House was modeled after the traditional Anglo-American porch entrance home, a compact version of the older "dogtrot" structure (only without the dogtrot). The resulting floorplan also resembles that of one for Louisiana French houses. Each of the back two 8' x 12' rooms (formerly in the nature of lean-to's attached to pens)

A. 1875 Pompée Cottage Floorplan:



B. The I-Stud:

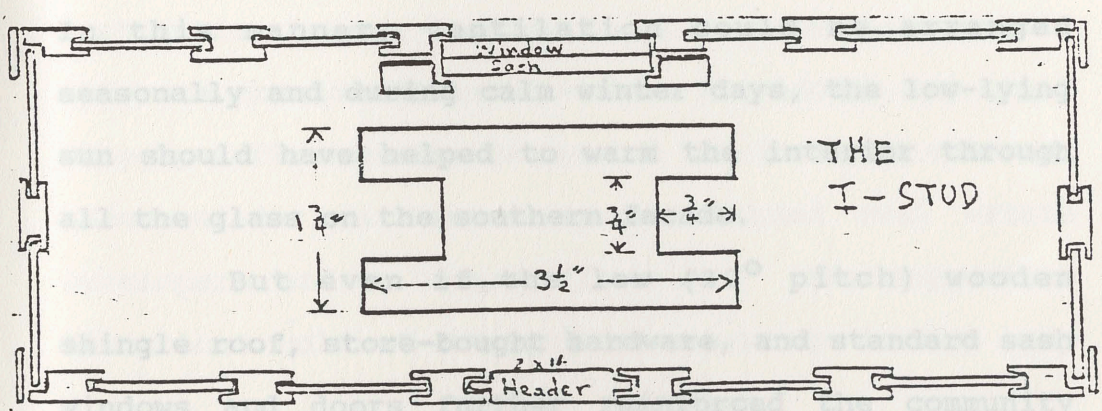


Figure 4: Pompée Cottage FLoorplan and the I-Stud

was given an outside door as well, but with only one window each they were not as bright, spacious and sunny as the two front rooms.

The basic floorplan of the 1875 Pompée Cottage recapitulates a marketplace acceptance of the pioneer Anglo housing style for Texas.[11] This floorplan had its distinct climatic advantages of course. The north side of the cottage, with no windows and only two single-unit doors, was a more effective barrier to the bitter, cold, winter winds. On the south side, beneath the overhanging porch and subject to the prevailing southerly winds, were two double-hung sash windows, two doors, and two transoms. In this manner, ventilation could be arranged seasonally and during calm winter days, the low-lying sun should have helped to warm the interior through all the glass on the southern facade.

But even if the low (30° pitch) wooden shingle roof, store-bought hardware, and standard sash windows and doors further reinforced the community

---

[11]"In the positioning of doors and windows," as Dr. Jordan notes, "the Hill Country Germans conformed to Anglo-American patterns from the very first." Terry Jordan, "German Folk Houses in the Texas Hill Country," in Lich and Reeves, op.cit., p. 118.

acceptability of this residence (as well within the Anglo-American tradition), there were also signs and touches of a Germanic heritage. There was no ponderous Anglo stone chimney attached to the gable-end; Adolph and Lilli clearly saw the "glaring inefficiencies in the Anglo house, as in the fireplace arrangement";[12] and therefore, they used an interior wood-burning stove for greater efficiency at less cost. But to be fair, by the 1870's even Anglos were abandoning stone chimneys and fireplaces for factory-made stoves.

The issue of the ethnic attributes of the Pompée House is significant. In today's complex, institutional maze leading to home ownership, ethnic ties are considered irrelevant. For Adolph and Lilli though, a fine cottage house and lot involved a German owner-builder, a German butcher turned real estate developer, and a German financier. The supportive historical role of the ethnic community in the leap

---

[12] Ibid., p. 119.

into Austin home ownership is an important topic.[13] But the Pompée House is more than a German built version of an Anglo pattern. As a consideration of August Meitzen's thought should remind neighborhood planners, the 1875 cottage they built is a popular house: a place where the owner-builders tried to some extent to express their souls.

These suggestions are more apparent after a thorough discussion of the structure's idiographic construction and design details. Since few (if any) 19th century owner-built homes in the Horst Addition have survived, the Pompée folk house provides a major glimpse -- into the soul as it were -- of a family of in post-Reconstruction Austin. Not surprisingly, subtle architectural details will be important in this search for individual meaning within a community context.

---

[13] Cf. Manaster, op.cit., passim. Note also the strongly Germanic settlement within Austin mentioned by Barkley, op.cit., p. 126. She quotes from a (questionable) June 6, 1886 article: "There is a German settlement in this city wherein the settlers refuse to enroll their children or return their names to the census taker, for the reason that they do not want them to learn the English language."

CHAPTER IV

DETAIL AND DESIGN

> Hollow Walls. -- Mr. Sherwin, the architect, is introducing into this city the hollow wall feature in building, which has become so popular in large cities the past few years.
>
> -- Daily Democratic Statesman
> June 3, 1875

During the same 1875 spring that Mr. Sherwin was "introducing" the newsworthy balloon frame ("hollow walls") to the booming building trades in Austin, Adolph Pompée was working on his box-and-strip Greek Revival cottage. Pompée's framing system, however, was neither the balloon frame of the innovative Mr. Sherwin nor the traditional Anglo box construction method.[1] His unusual system at once conveys the negation of the "hollow wall" concept and implies its eventual triumph as a mass production technique for housing a growing community.

Pompée's framing for his 1875 cottage begins with a thoughtful variation on the old plank frame

---

[1]Dennis Cordes, "Box Construction in Texas," (Unpublished paper, Austin, 1979).

system of the South: he substituted laterally grooved 2" x 4" vertical studs in place of the cosmetic, applied batten strips of the plank frame. In cross-section these unusual studs resemble a fat capital "I", and therefore, for convenience they will be called I-studs (see Figure 4-B). These nominally measured and planed 2" x 4"'s were tongued with a 3/4" channel (in depth and width), into which feather-edged 1" x 10" or 1" x 12" or 1" x 14" boards were slotted. Snugly fitted into the I-studs, these boards were nailed to sills and rafters as well. Visually this framing system exposes a 1/2" thick, 3-1/2" wide "batten" on <u>both</u> sides of the resultant wall.

This novel I-stud frame relied on and took obvious advantage of then recent availability of inexpensive, nominally measured lumber, arriving from Houston into Austin on the newly completed railroad. Significantly, Adolph may have used a local power saw to mass produce the desired I-studs. The bottom of the grooves are rough, striated and irregular, while the sides are quite smooth with circular saw patterns.

Although the I-stud is perhaps a machine-age product of the late nineteenth century, it is nevertheless a remarkably versatile member. When

conceptually and materially shaped by the ancient joinery techniques of hand tools and craftmanship, it shows a clever, expressive character. That is, by back-sawing, chiseling, and planing the I-studs, Pompée's tenons, mortises, rabbets and dadoes combine to create a strong, lightweight and interlocking series of structural members keyed to the new nominal dimensions of Houston lumber.

It helps here to view the I-stud frame as something of a machine-age analog to the medieval timber frame. The intricate joinery (see Figure 5) can involve a lot of close tolerance and craftsmanship. On the 24' long south facade, for example, the structural wall also had to accommodate two doors, two windows, two transoms and a porch.[2] The result though is a lightweight, weathertight and resilient structure, one that recalls Vincent Scully's concept of an emergent "Stick Style" in its assembly of light, standardized members in a visually expressive manner.

Being a mere single thickness, the Pompée membrane walls articulate their skilled, mechanical

---

[2]The porch was destroyed in 1883 by a later expansion of the house.

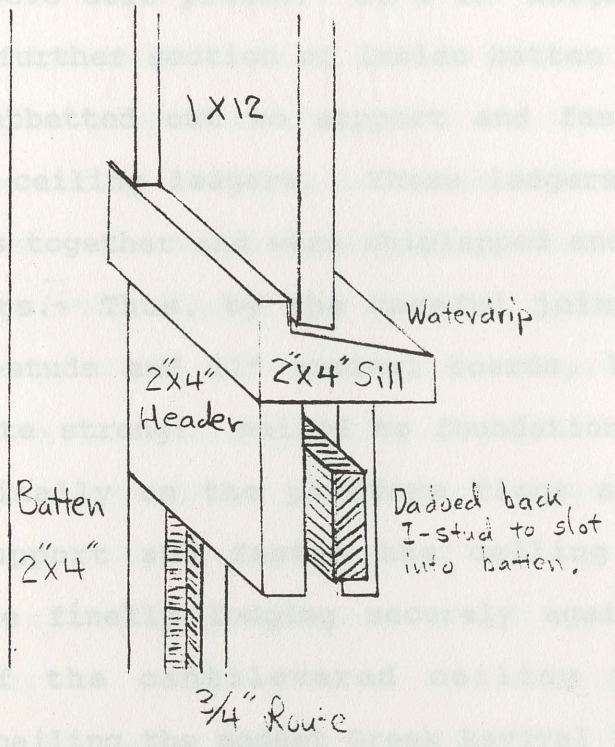


Figure 5: 1875 Framing Detail
(Transom and Window)

construction both outside and inside. Further, these inside battens were rabbetted back from the bottom to rest snugly on top of a platform floor of 1" x 6" tongue-and-groove sole plates. At a 10' height about the floor, a further section of inside batten on each I-stud was rabbetted out to support and fasten the full 2" x 4" ceiling ledgers. These ledgers linked all four walls together and were shiplapped and bolted at the corners. Thus, by the careful joinery and spacing of I-studs and 11" nominal boards, Pompée's walls are quite strong: nailed to foundation sills, resting marginally on the platform floor and then rising to support and fasten the ceiling ledger plates, before finally lodging securely against the underside of the cantilevered ceiling joists. Moreover, by nailing the modest Greek Revival 1" x 10" frieze board over the exterior "battens," a series of half-inch vents were created for unobtrusive attic ventilation.

Mechanically the house seems to be one of those elusive transitional structures -- a synthesis by an intelligent owner-builder who sought to assimilate the materials and machines of an emergent industrial age with the tools and traditions of

ancient craft production. Thus, while patterned after the traditional plank wall framing, there are suggestive mechanical elements also of the ancient half-timber frame, with the exposed skeletal structure joined by mortises and tenons, and bolts and nails used rather like pegs (see Figure 6). And perhaps there are elements of the balloon frame with the tall I-studs notched for a transverse ledger that in turn supports the joists. There may even be parts of the western platform, with the criss-cross sills, joists and platform 1 x 6 soleplates. Obviously it would be of interest if anyone knows of other examples of this framing system or how it was assembled.

Aesthetically, the house achieves that willful economy of purpose that took expression in forms like the Windsor chair or, more aptly for 1875, the American buggy -- an ingenious manipulation of new materials by native wheelwrights. Pompée may well have been influenced by his profession: "wagon-building" > "wagen scot" > "wainscot", with the I-studs as stiles and the feather-edged one-bys as panels perhaps. In this view the 1875 walls are a wainscoted variant of board-and-batten construction that transform the thick, massed and anxious walls of

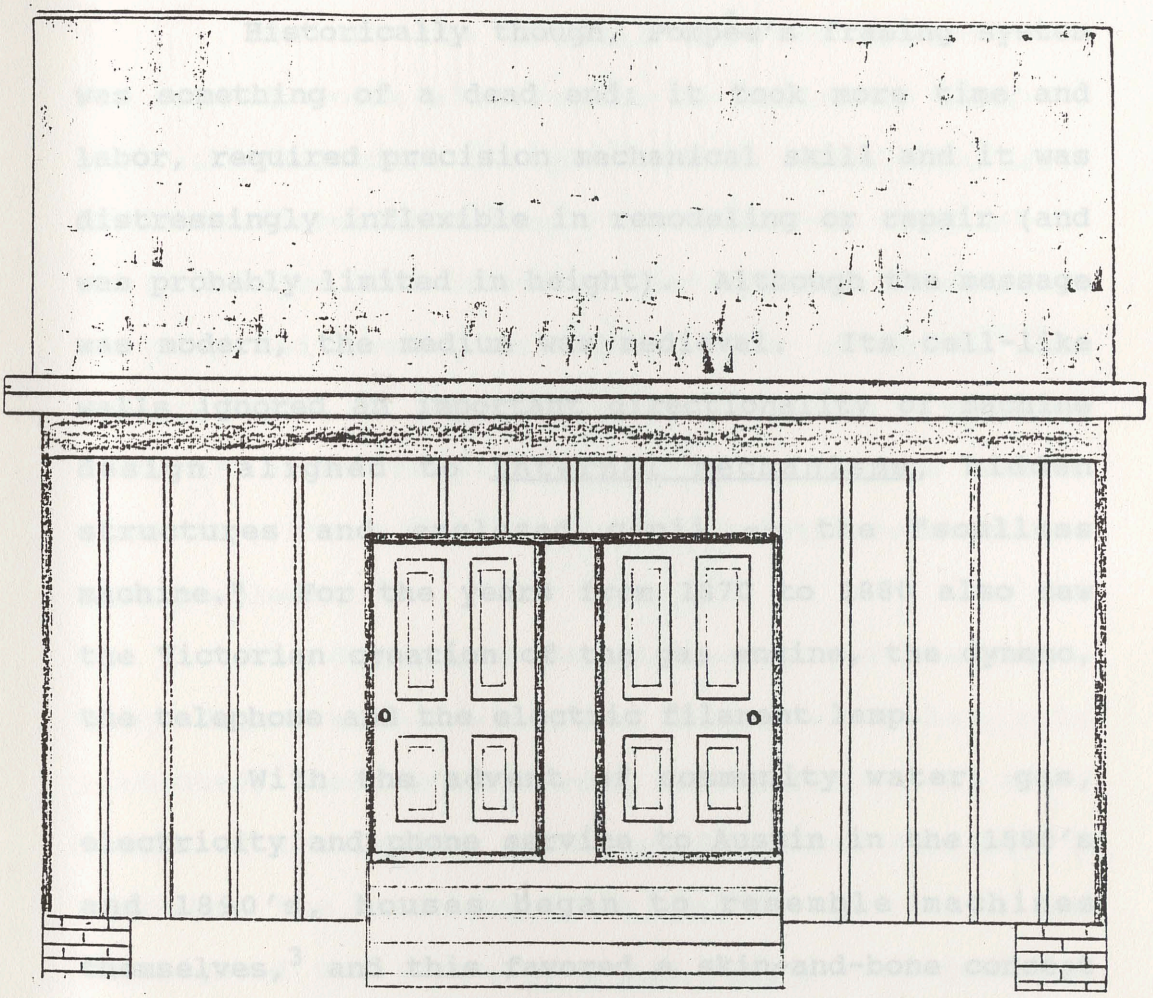


Figure 6: North 1875 Facade

Austin's past into the light, integral, membrane walls that complimented an age of buggies.

Historically though, Pompée's framing system was something of a dead end; it took more time and labor, required precision mechanical skill and it was distressingly inflexible in remodeling or repair (and was probably limited in height). Although the message was modern, the medium was medieval. Its cell-like walls ignored an important directionality of machine design aligned to internal mechanisms, hidden structures and enclosed genii -- the "soulless machine." For the years from 1870 to 1880 also saw the Victorian creation of the gas engine, the dynamo, the telephone and the electric filament lamp.

With the advent of community water, gas, electricity and phone service to Austin in the 1880's and 1890's, houses began to resemble machines themselves,[3] and this favored a skin-and-bone concept that soon relegated Pompée's marvelous membrane walls to archaic quaintness. Indeed, an early series of remodelings covered them up and unsuccessfully attempted to transform them into that very concept

---

[3]Cf. Lewis Mumford, Technics and Civilization (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970).

introduced on a June morning in 1875 to the Austin public: Mr. Sherwin's "Hollow Walls."

Besides the unusual framing system, the Pompée folk house also retains an enigmatic group of exterior ornamental designs. After removing a layer of later Victorian siding (to expose the original I-stud face on the house's west gable), and after scraping and sanding off three coats of paint,[4] the designs shown in Figure 7 were identified. With the lack of other comparable examples in the Austin community, their identification and interpretation has been problematic.

The discovered designs consist of weathered-grey depressions within a field of relatively protected, fresh-grained wood on the central 1" x 12" panels of the facade. That is, the brisk sanding (in removing the old, exterior paint) freshened and highlighted the surrounding and raised wood grain in contrast to the worn, shallow depths of the design itself. In this accidental manner, the otherwise very faint designs were detected.

---

[4]White (with light brown trim) over a bayberry green over the original 1875 pearl grey milkpaint with charcoal grey trim.

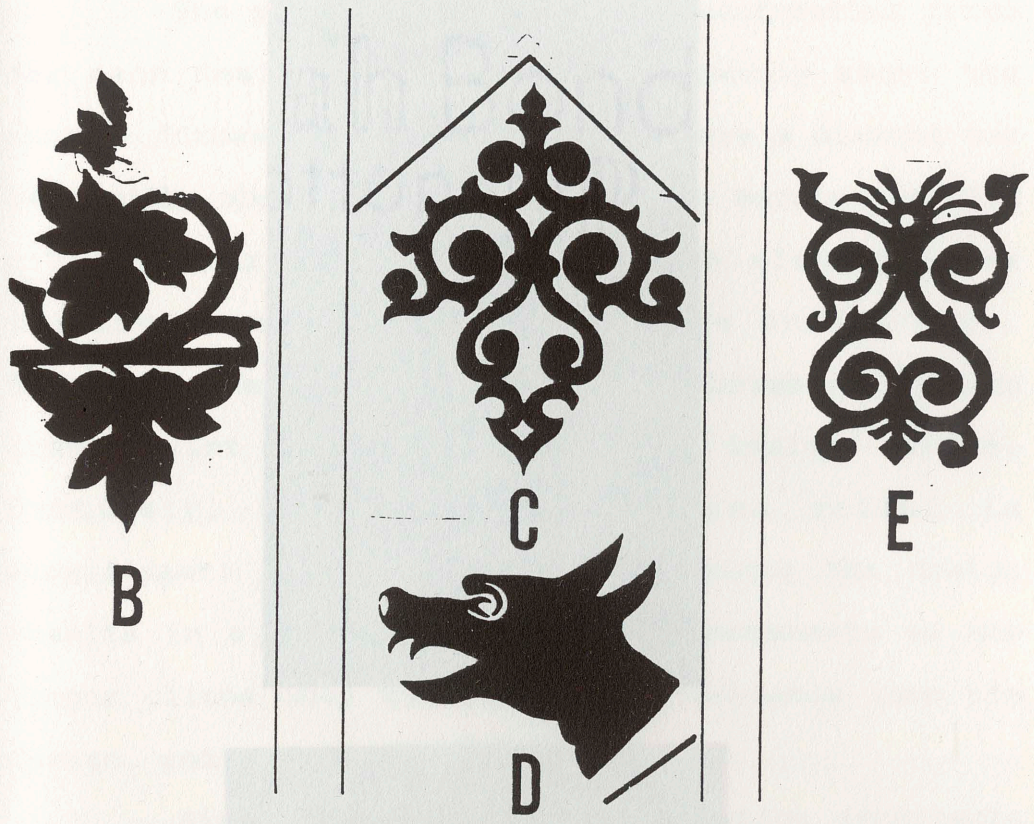


Figure 7: 1875 West Facade Designs



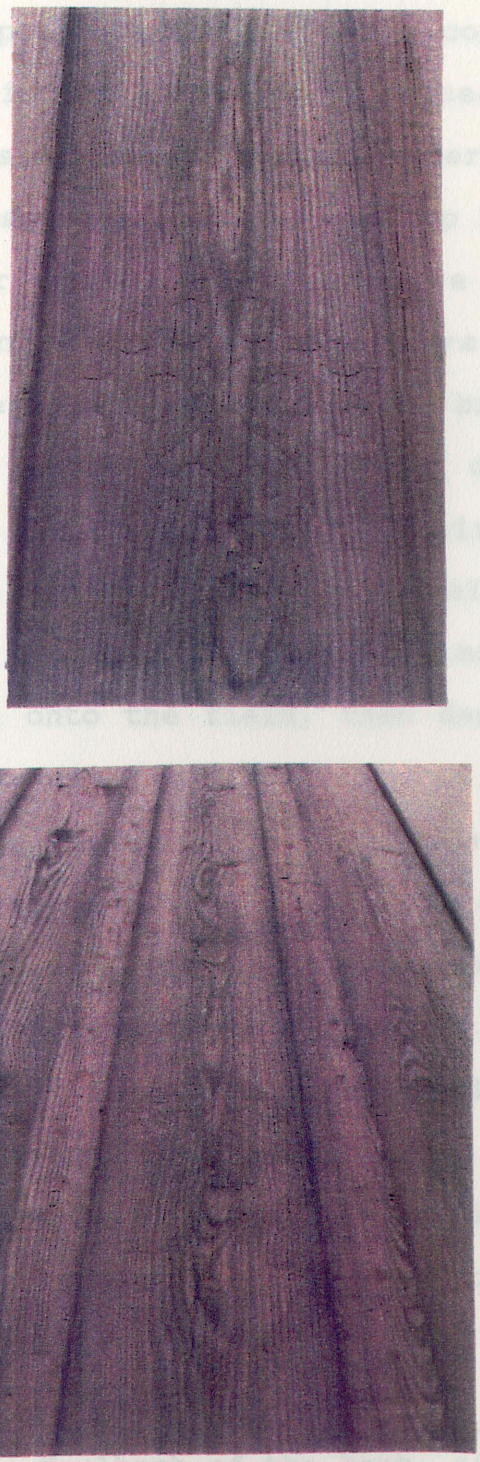


Figure 8: 1875 Design Appearnace

The possible boundary of a contrasting frame for each design is indicated noticeably above the central "Cross of Christ" design,[5] where a diamond top is readily observable. Along its top margin are tiny pit and wear marks, as if erosive elements were wearing down against a protective obstruction. Visually, there are remnants of a bright, viridian green paint associated with the design fields. Tactilely, the sense of changing relief is significant; running one's fingers along the design results in a series of up and down movements as the finger climbs onto the field, then descends into the design, and so on.

Since even well-known restoration architects like Dr. Wayne Bell are puzzled by these charming designs, we are forced to consider several possibilities. Hypotheses of applied ornaments, for instance, must contend with three problematic aspects: no evidence of application, the short duration of any possible environmental weathering or "imprinting," and the delicacy of ornament structure -- on the "Cross of

---

[5]Help in naming these designs was received from Dr. Ernie Kaulbach of the Dept. of English at the Univ. of Texas at Austin.

Christ" the pattern often becomes quite thin (1/8") at numerous points (see Figure 9). These problems are mitigated though with a xylographic interpretation, one which views the designs as the end result of a process that deliberately images the 1" x 12"'s themselves.

After accepting the opinion of a trained stenciler, Buie Harwood, that the images are not stencils, further suggestions have been made regarding stamping, carving, punching and pressing. For example, if Adolph Pompée had a set of tiny finger planes, he could have outlined the margins of a framing field, and then incised the design into the field grain in a delicate manner.

Of further interest is the graphic scrollwork design detected at the top of the slotted panel beneath the northside window (Design "A" in FIgure 6). This nineteenth century "Parrot's Beak" design is quite apparent at first, but then it completely vanishes half-way down the panel. Larger in scale and keyed to the window, this design also forces the restoration planner to consider the case for extrapolation. That is, there may have been more designs on more boards.

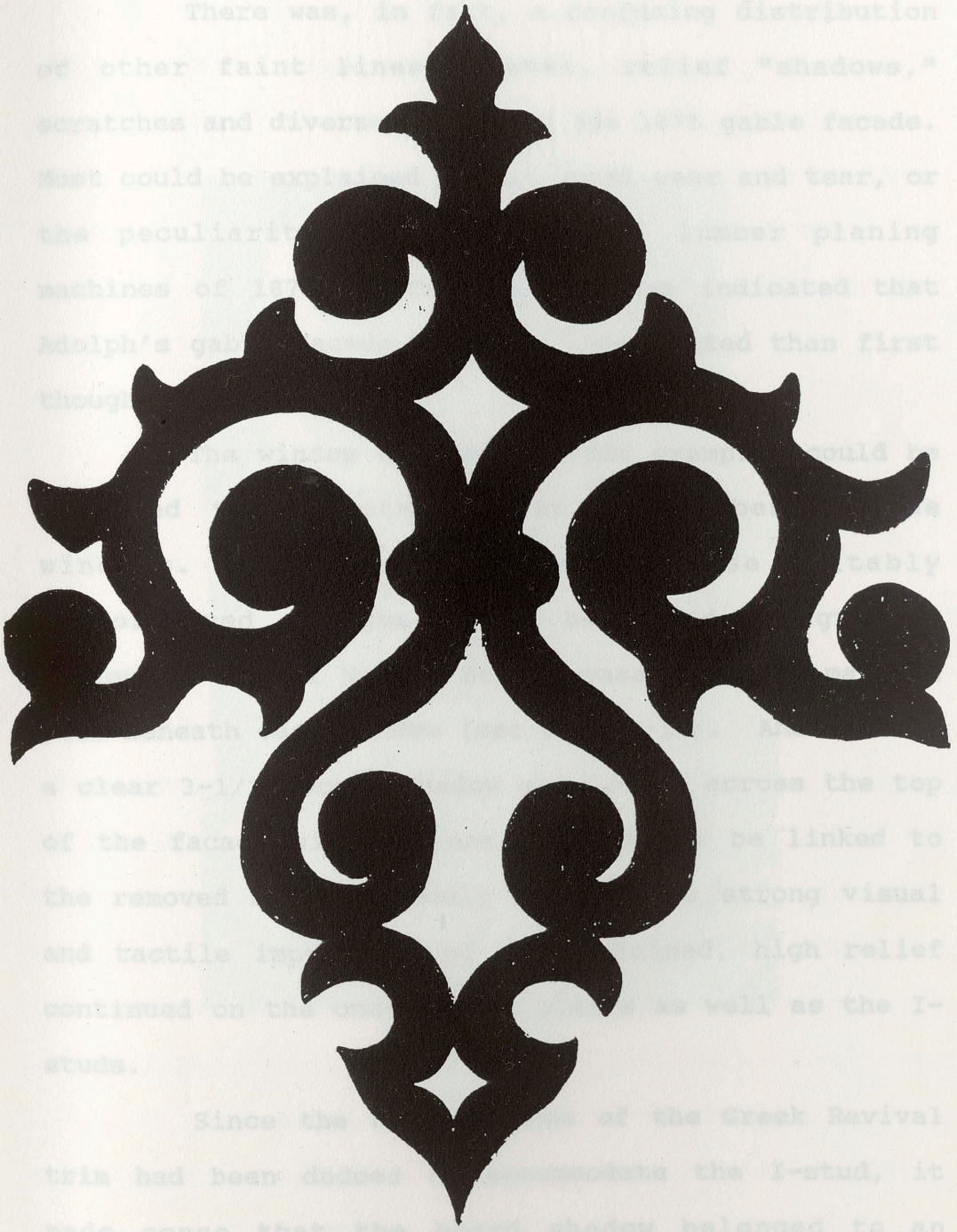


Figure 9: "Cross of Christ"

There was, in fact, a confusing distribution of other faint lines, curves, relief "shadows," scratches and diverse stains on the 1875 gable facade. Most could be explained as the usual wear and tear, or the peculiarities of the nominal lumber planing machines of 1875. But several areas indicated that Adolph's gable facade was more complicated than first thought.

The window design "A", for example, could be extended to the other three panels beneath the windows. At their full-length these suitably proportioned designs would have made a graphic statement to the Nueces Street passers-by, a matched pair beneath each window (see Figure 10). And second, a clear 3-1/2" board shadow was traced across the top of the facade windows, one that cannot be linked to the removed siding. Oddly enough, its strong visual and tactile impression of fresh-grained, high relief continued on the one-by wall planks as well as the I-studs.

Since the box cornices of the Greek Revival trim had been dadoed to accommodate the I-stud, it made sense that the board shadow belonged to an original architrave board across the top of the

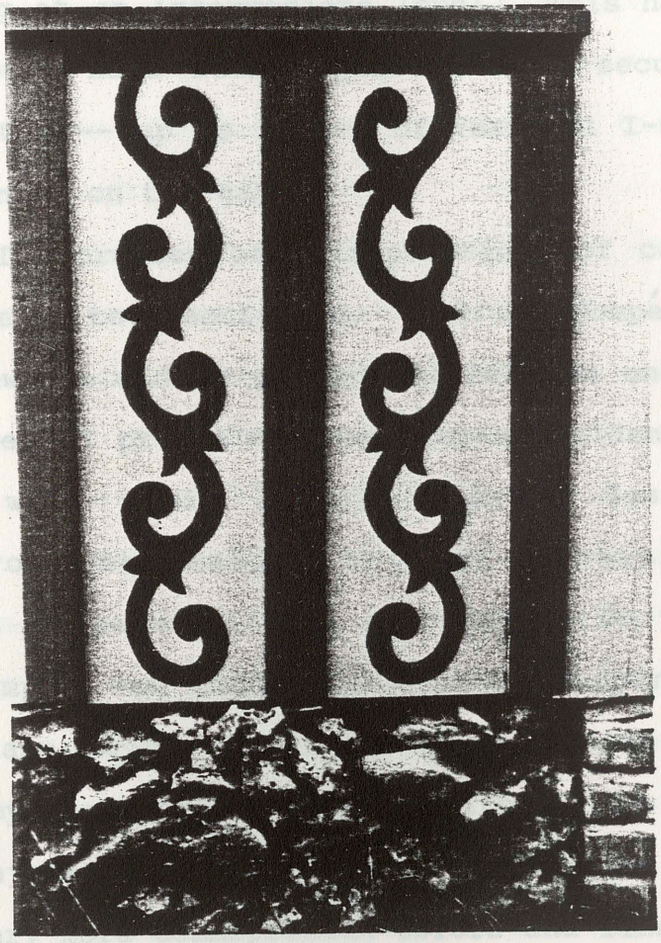


Figure 10: Restored Design Details

windows. By laboriously dadoeing this architrave to fit onto the exposed battens, Adolph Pompée managed to tighten the vertical framework and counteract warpage or racking at an intermediate level. This horizontal member would have been significant in securing the long lengths -- up to 17′ -- of vertical I-studs and one-by panels on the gable.

The problem of extrapolation, of course, is that it leads to speculation. What did Pompée have in mind and where did he get the style? On one hand, a fair number of pre-1875 German-Texas residences still survive with their lovely interior designs and stencilwork bespeaking a long, albeit fading, tradition of personal home adornment. On the other hand, Pompée was building in a developing, upper middle-class Austin neighborhood at a time of great civic buoyance, when newspaper editors, for instance, openly cajoled the citizens to forego plain white for the bolder, more cosmopolitan colors and lines derived from current Victorian fashion: "Deliver us. -- Yes, deliver us from the glaring, dazzling, blinding influence and effect of white stone walls, white stone

and whitewashed houses and fences."[6] Pompée's timely avoidance of the decried limestone and whitewash may indicate the increasing community acceptance of new, bolder house colors, an iconographic acknowledgement, perhaps, that Reconstruction was over in Texas. But his picturesque designs also may reveal ties to Old World ethnic influences.

The placement of the designs is significant in this question of origins. Gable ornamentation in Austin was normally associated with the upper part, the tympanon, as with the contemporaneous gable designs on the 1875-76 Lundberg Bakery on Congress. Pompée's emphasis on lower decorative friezes (around the windows in particular), perhaps recalled the rich Niedersachisch gable facades of Bremen,[7] facades he may have remembered seeing as a child. Mention was made earlier that the I-stud facade is analogous to the half-timber in that both share an exposed, regular, skeletal structure, one that readily suggests and lends itself to a decorative panel treatment.

---

[6]Daily Democratic Statesman (June 16, 1875), p. 3, col. 1.

[7]See the informative discussion in Yukio Futagawa, Wooden Houses (New York: Abrams, Inc., 1979), pp. 99-123.

Sytlistically, the interpretation of the central designs is complicated because of their variability. The organic oak-leaf "Fleur de Lis" design may have signified peace and plenty. In the center of this enigmatic group is the stylized "Cross of Christ" with its religious overtones. To the right of this symbol is the abstract, "Parrot's Beak" image of unknown signification. And lastly, below the stylized cross is the profoundly symbolic Wolfhead, with its heraldic, folkloric, and Teutonic associations.

Was the Wolfhead an anti-hex symbol, a way of keeping the "Wolf of Want" from the door? Or was the image more positive? The Old German etymology for "Adolf", for instance, was "Adal-wolf" or "Noble Wolf," a hero and brave warrior. Interestingly, Adolph Pompée's Wolfhead occurs at a time of profound change in the relationship of men and wolves in Texas. As cattle replaced buffalo, wolf predations soared; public sentiment shifted accordingly in the 1880's from appreciation of the wolf's endurance, speed and cunning to a broad fear and revulsion, captured in Theodore Roosevelt's description of the animal as, "the beast of waste and desolation." An appropriate

image for 1875 had clearly lost favor twenty years later.

Indeed, of all the designs the ambiguous wolfhead best captures the idiosyncratic character of the Pompée house. Colored like the Texas Gray Timber Wolf, the intricate grey milkpaint walls were also cunning, noble and enduring. Shortly after the western facade was imaged with this symbol of the plains, Adolph and his family settled in to begin homelife in a new neighborhood.

CHAPTER V

AT HOME IN THE HORST ADDITION

WORK, PLAY AND SCHOOL (1875-80)

> panels of a history of tongue & groove
> of "pumpkin" pine made tung-oil smooth
> porcelain knobs on doors of a perfect fit
> in '80 before Webb would room & board
> kids by height scribbling their arithmetic
> on Miss M.V. Jones Select School walls
> early solutions there for all to check.
>
> -- Dave Oliphant, "Nueces"[1]

The Pompées lived in their home-made cottage from 1875 to about mid-1880. Details of their daily lives then are faint. A large pile of oyster shells under a destroyed porch suggests a family enjoying the evening air, eating fresh oysters from the Gulf and conversing in German from time to time. While a modern American family might be quite cramped in only 480 square feet of enclosed living space, the Pompée's transition from boarding to owning must have been emotionally rewarding.

There were friends and relatives to entertain, house and yard improvements to show-off

---

[1]Dave Oliphant, Austin (Fort Worth: Prickly Pear Press, 1985), p. 93.

(see Figure 11) and soon, the prospect of Lilli's second pregnancy to consider. Lilli gave birth to a boy, Willibald, sometime in 1876; the birth was likely at home with an attending doctor. In late June of 1876, the newspapers were full of General Custer's massacre at the Little Big Horn. The six-year old Emilie would have helped her mother with household chores, perhaps, and some care for the infant son.

Adolph was busy working in and commuting to downtown in this period. In 1877-78 he was operating out of a shop on the southeast corner of Guadalupe and Cypress (West 3rd Street). However, the 1879-80 City Directory showed him plying his trade as a "carriage maker" on the southeast corner of Colorado and Pecan (West 6th Street). About this time, he appears to have begun a long-standing business relationship with the pious Swedish emigrant, S.A. Lundell.[2] Lundell's "General Blacksmith and Horseshoeing" firm was located at 213 West Pecan and this address is constantly given as Adolph's work address until 1887.

---

[2]Adolph also advertised in August of 1879 to buy a carriage "in good repair": "Apply to A. Pompe at Bennet's shop, Pecan Street." Daily Democratic Statesman (Aug. 16, 1879), p. 3, "Twenty-five Cent Column."

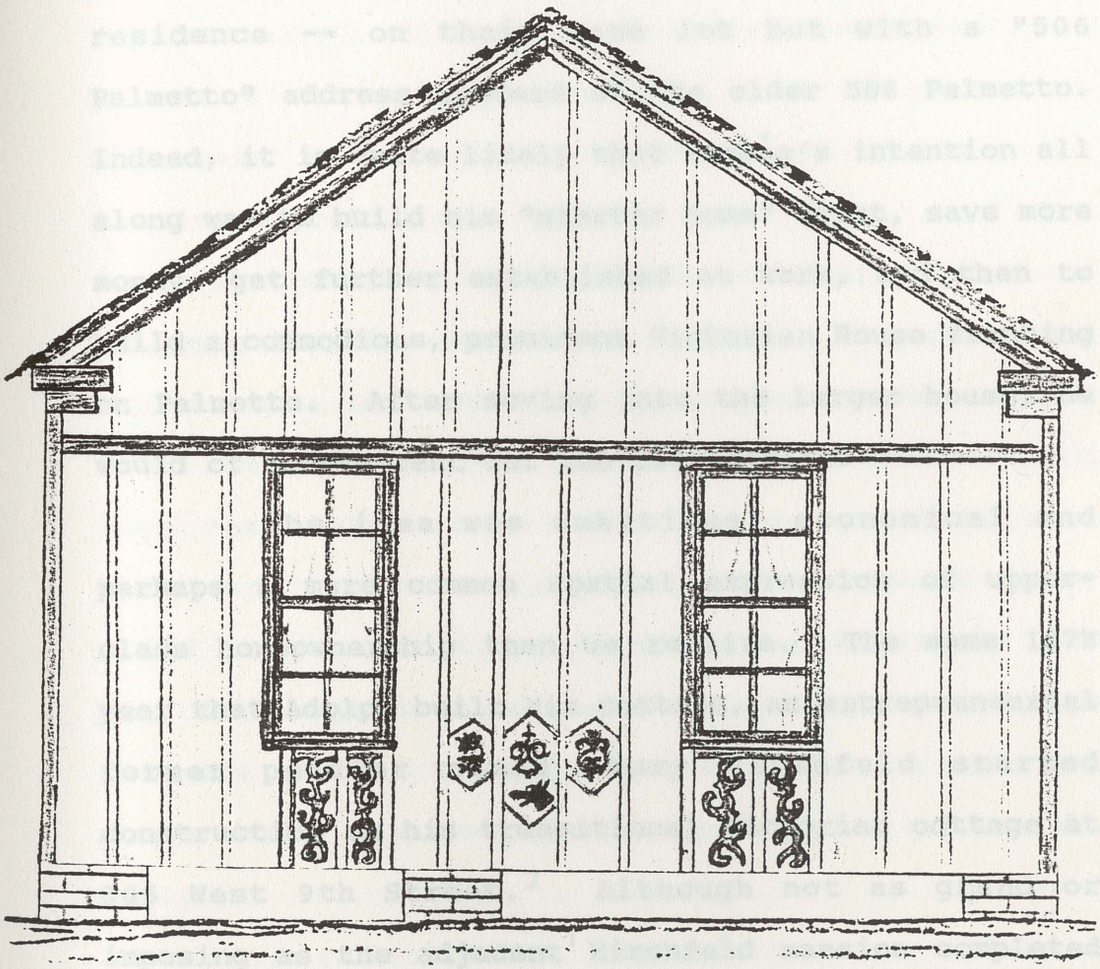


Figure 11: Pompée Cottage (West Facade)

A further step taken by the family around 1879-80 was the planning for an adjacent and larger residence -- on their same lot but with a "506 Palmetto" address instead of the older 508 Palmetto. Indeed, it is quite likely that Pompée's intention all along was to build his "starter home" first, save more money, get further established at work, and then to build a commodious, prominent Victorian House fronting on Palmetto. After moving into the larger house, he would of course rent out the old cottage.

The idea was ambitious, economical and perhaps a more common spatial expression of upper-class homeownership than we realize. The same 1875 year that Adolph built his cottage, an entrepreneurial former peddler named Henry Hirshfeld started construction on his transitional Victorian cottage at 305 West 9th Street.[3] Although not as grand or imposing as the adjacent Hirshfeld mansion completed in 1885 the cottage nevertheless displays charm. Like the Pompée's first home, the Hirshfeld Cottage also utilizes its Greek Revival stylistics to convey a sense of simplicity, innocence and restraint.

---

[3]Barkley, op. cit., p. 305.

One spatial aspect of this cottage/mansion lot development was the Victorian expression of "evolutionary" affluence. Neighbors could see at a glance a family's progressive rise in status as expressed in materialistic fashion. Indeed, the proximate relations between the "past" and the "future" houses encapsulated the community ideal of progress itself. Few modern families, of course, can emulate this sentimental pattern; rigid modern zoning laws, family mobility, compatibility standards and high residential turnover rates now preclude this mixed or "evolutionary" approach to housing. Nor would many current neighborhood associations (or realtors) support an initial low-income housing design with the owner's vague promise to build a bigger and better house adjacent as soon as they could raise the money.

Paradoxically, Austin's boom-and-bust residential construction in the 1980's displayed an intense, almost histrionic adherence to an idealized Victorian "American Dream" version of housing: the single-family detached home on a nice lot in the suburbs. Popular 1980's revivals by developers of nineteenth century-inspired house designs -- often

tract homes embellished by bits of gable-and-porch Victoriana -- were built and marketed in this wild period, as developers, buyers and builders alike scrambled to turn community need and speculative greed into cash. This study suggests actual nineteenth century spatial models of home life may show considerably more complex, tolerant, adaptive, frugal, privatized, mixed-use or even vernacular aspects than their erstwhile modern counterparts. Certainly a modern zoning planner would be aghast at Adolph Pompée's next move in 1880: in the middle of the residential Horst Addition he leased the cottage to Miss M.V. Jones for commercial purposes.

Although Adolph Pompée and Miss Mary Jones may have known each other for some time, certainly their destinies begin to cross as the year 1880 unrolled. On February 4th, another venturesome advertisement appeared from a cash-hungry Adolph:

> Teachers in need of good school desks and benches (combined) should call on A. Pompee, who makes them very reasonable, samples to be seen at [S.A.] Lundell's shop on West Pecan St.[4]

---

[4] Daily Democratic Statesman (Feb. 4, 1880), p. 4, col. 5.

Miss Jones, a disgruntled schoolteacher, may have shown an interest in these combined "desks and benches" since she and five other teachers were planning that spring of 1880 to open their own private schools.[5]

Only the summer before she had interviewed with a young city visionary, A.P. Wooldridge, who invited her to start teaching in September at that maligned and controversial "public school," the Austin Graded School. Although Miss Jones accepted Wooldridge's offer, the low and irregular salaries and the vocal public resentment of tax-supported education, led to much frustration.[6] Therefore, in the late spring of 1880, she decided to open her own private "Select School" that next fall.

The community's emotions in general were inflamed that summer by the burning issue of educational reform. The movement for public education was led by the indefatigable Wooldridge with heavy support from the German Republicans. The opposition

---

[5]See, Willie Madora Long, "Education in Austin Before the Public Schools" (unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Texas, 1952), pp. 176-214.

[6]Ibid., p. 185, See also p. 205.

was led by the town's dominant newspaper, the Daily Democratic Statesman. With almost no attempt to present a balanced view, Democratic editorials inveighed against the loss of parental control over children, against the proposed taxation of local property, and against the vulgar or "inferior" quality of public schools.

But as a recent researcher concludes, the Texas Democrats were mired in an anti-tax, knee-jerk tradition of sabotaging Reconstruction Republicans with the school issue. "The Democratic party," C.H. Moneyhon writes, "was in fact ready to undermine the schools in order to return to power." And therefore, Democratic leaders often "took advantage of elements hostile to the schools, forging a coalition by using propaganda that was self-serving and inaccurate."[7] The results on August 16, 1880 of the special, hotly-contested city election to decide the issue, however, were in favor of Wooldridge and the public school advocates. After a year to organize, the City of

---

[7]Carl H. Moneyhon, "Education and Reconstruction Politics," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Vol. XCII, No. 3 (January, 1989), p. 415.

Austin would attempt to open a free system of public education for its children.

For the unique 1880-81 school year, however, Austin's various private schools -- like the new "Miss M.V. Jones Select School" listed in the City Directory -- would have to fill the transition period. A paid notice in the Sunday, September 5, 1880 Daily Democratic Statesman, therefore, announced that Miss Jones' private school would open the next day.

But shortly after midnight that day, a suspicious fire broke out and burned her school to the ground. Occurring only three weeks after the bitter public school election, the fire was blamed in the next day's paper on "the work of an incendiary." The subsequent account of this Sixth Ward fire makes exciting reading.[8] In their hurry to respond, the "Hope, Hook, and Ladder Co. No. 2" carriage ran against a stump and broke a volunteer's collarbone. Once there, low pressure at the local waterworks hydrant and too much distance for the hoses left the

---

[8]Daily Democratic Statesman, September 6, 1880, page unknown.

building defenseless.[9] Fortunately, the reporter noted, Miss Jones' school "desks and seats" -- moved into the house only the Saturday before -- were saved by unnamed neighbors.

One of the nearest neighbors, Adolph Pompée, may in fact have built these schooldesks (see Figure 12). The Pompée's lived not quite a block further north from the destroyed property. Cries in the night of "FIRE!" conceivably could have brought citizen Pompée to his front porch, where he could then see and hear the flames. A half-minute's sprint would bring him to the burning house, where he could assist in the removal of school furniture, perhaps his own creations (and perhaps unpaid for).

If the fire was arson, the attack likely underestimated the mettle of M.V. Jones. Ignoring any latent message, she publicly announced that her school would open anyway, only a day later, at the Charles Denny residence below 19th Street.[10] Six weeks later, the Daily Democratic Statesman observed on October

---

[9]The burned house belonged to Charles Denny. The site of this fire is presently occupied by a later 1880's home, the Rutherford House, at 2002 Nueces.

[10]Daily Democratic Statesman, Sept. 7, 1880.



Figure 11: Adolph Pompée

17th that, "having secured more pleasant rooms," Miss M.V. Jones "will continue her school one block north of Col. Peeler's residence [at 2002 San Antonio]."[11] Although the newspaper's directions to her new school were vague, in fact, the "Miss M.V. Jones Select School" had relocated that October to the grey-toned Pompée cottage.

Adolph and Lilli were likely sympathetic to Miss Jones' unhappy situation after the fire. Perhaps they were in the process of finishing their new, two-story, Italianate house next door and thus needing a tenant for their old homestead on the corner. Further, the memory of Adolph's murdered stepfather may have challenged him to stand up to the psychological "Fire Eaters" of 1880 over public education. Was the schoolhouse fire another reminder of New World tyranny at the community level?

There was also the possibility of a young "firebug" at work that warm summer of 1880, when the city seemed to burn both emotionally and physically again. From June to September at least five dangerous

---

[11] Ibid., (Oct. 17, 1880).

fires broke out suspiciously.[12] While Austin's male adults electorally debated the wisdom of providing a key public service to their children, perhaps a few of the neglected were, in effect, criminally demonstrating how real the need for guidance, attention and citizenship was. Although the schoolhouse fire led to no arrests, certainly earlier in July, the police had arrested and wrung a confession from a juvenile boy for the loss of the Eldridge Perry residence to an unexplained fire.

Although the evidence is circumstantial, it seems likely that the literate Adolph and Lilli valued public education and voted for its provision. To a noticeable degree, the ethnic Germans would support the public school ideal in the crucial 1875 to 1885 period of Austin's educational revolution. Further, the official 1880 U.S. Census shows that their ten-year old daughter, "Amelia [sic]" had her profession "At School." But was Emilie enrolled in Mary Jones' school or a private German establishment? And to what

---

[12]Compiled from the newspaper index files of the Austin History Center. A year later the old capitol building burned to the ground due to a janitor's mishap.

degree was she assimilating to the English language and regional culture?

With about a score of pupils distributed into the Second, Third and Fourth Grades, Miss Jones must have been busy that school year of 1880-81. The of the four rooms Pompée house could have accommodated three mini-classrooms, one for each grade, with one of the remaining small back rooms set aside for storage or the teacher's use.After a long day of circulating from grade to grade, maintaining order and dispensing wisdom, Mary Jones may have been eager to lock up the school and hurry back to her room at the Ramey's. Given all those busy hands and writing implements, not surprisingly both the interior and exterior of the house accumulated random amounts of child-like graffiti, one inside lavender milkpaint wall in particular.

CHAPTER VI

BOARDING (1880-85)

Austin is a city of
boarding houses.

-- William Sydney Porter,
Rolling Stone (1895)

The four Ramey girls were among Miss Jones' best students. While running her private school, Mary boarded with the W.N. Ramey family at 19th and San Jacinto, so perhaps these pupils had some slight extracurricular benefit in instruction. There may have been as well an exchange of "Select School" tuition and Ramey rent and board in some convenient, private fashion. Given the low pay, single women schoolteachers often boarded with respectable citizens or families for the savings, the convenience, and the social society of the boarding life.

Since the social core of the 19th century boarding experience has been largely displaced a hundred years later by the anomie of apartments, perhaps it is worth noting that an important percentage of "homeless" Austinites in 1880 - the young, the mobile, and the poor for instance - were

often spatially and socially integrated into the community through the custom and practice of boarding. Indeed, the 19th century institution of boarding was so common in the early Austin City Directories as to merit its own abbreviation: "bds". Besides Adolph, Lilli, Emilie and Willibald, the 1880 U.S. Census report for the Pompée family also includes a linked listing for Frank Glaeckner, an 18 year old, white male "boarder (single)" and possible Pompée apprentice. (Glaeckner was a first generation German-Texan and "wheelwright")

In an age of few and expensive hotels, Austin's boarding houses played a major role in bringing diverse people together in a fairly friendly fashion. Often the boarders' meals would be ruled by the culinary taste and social personality of the proprietess of the house, but there were many dynamic variants and individual arrangements that would challenge modern zoning theorists. Women, particularly widows, were conspicuous in establishing many of the popular boardinghouses in Austin.[1] The

---

[1]See Audrey Bateman, "Waterloo Scrapbook", Austin History Center, P. 29. (Austin American-Statesman: May 6, 1977 article)

unexpected death of a husband was followed frequently enough by the opening of a rented boardinghouse in a home owned or leased for the purpose. Miss Jones for example would eventually leave the Rameys for Mrs. Andrews, a widow who ran a public boarding house at 100 W. Peach Street.

That spring of 1881, though, the M.V. Jones Select School was not all rote learning or pedagogical drudgery. A friendly notice in the town's leading newspaper reported on May 1st that Miss Mary V. Jones

> gave the scholars of her school a most enjoyable basket picnic yesterday. The picnic ground was on Shoal Creek, back of the Glasscock place. It was well attended by the people, together with parents and friends, and all enjoyed themselves greatly.[2]

Perhaps the Pompées were in attendance as friends of the school. The site of her school's communal "basket picnic" is in Pease Park, near W. 24th St., the same place where early U.T. students held "beer parties", and where thousands now gather to celebrate Eyore's Birthday in spring.

---

[2]Daily Democratic Statesman (May 1, 1881).

The school closed for examinations on June 3rd; by the 7th the Daily Democratic Statesman painstakingly printed a list of those pupils answering "three-fourths of the questions propounded," for the three grade levels. Miss Bettie Ramey carried the honors for the Fourth Grade, Master Charley Neill took them for the Third grade, and clever Miss Sallie Ramey earned highest honors for the Second Grade. Five years later, Bettie Ramsey would deliver an address at the Millett Opera House for the first commencement of Austin High School students. Her talk on "The Girls of To-day" was prudently followed by her sister's speech, "The Sermons our Lives are Preaching." Bettie later gained admission to the University of Texas during the 1886-87 school year.

While the children were free from school for the rest of the 1881 summer, their parents had another school issue election that June. Led by the hard-working strategist (and a former educator) A.P. Wooldridge, the proponents of public schools further approved a small tax for school provision and maintenance. Buildings and supplies were hastily organized, and on September 12, 1881 the Austin City Public School System opened its doors. Former "Select

School" pupils would have recognized an old fried among Austin's first public school teachers. Miss M.V. Jones was there to greet her classes, having been re-hired over the summer by her friend, A.P. Wooldridge.

Alexander Penn Wooldridge, a tireless administrator and protean reformer, was soon embroiled in another crucial election in the fall of 1881: the statewide campaign for the location(s) of the university system in Texas. Wooldridge's promotional campaign included geographic, economic, and sentimental arguments for the selection of Austin as the permanent home.[3] On September 6, 1881 the voters of Texas agreed; Wooldridge and the other active participants (like Col. A.W. Peeler, who owned property a block from the proposed university) could then heave a collective sigh of relief.

About two months after this momentous election, the old capitol caught fire through a janitor's neglect and burned to the ground. For the Horst Addition neighbors, watching the fire from their

---

[3]See the detailed discussion in Ruth Ann Overbeck, Alexander Penn Wooldridge (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1963), pp. 11-23.

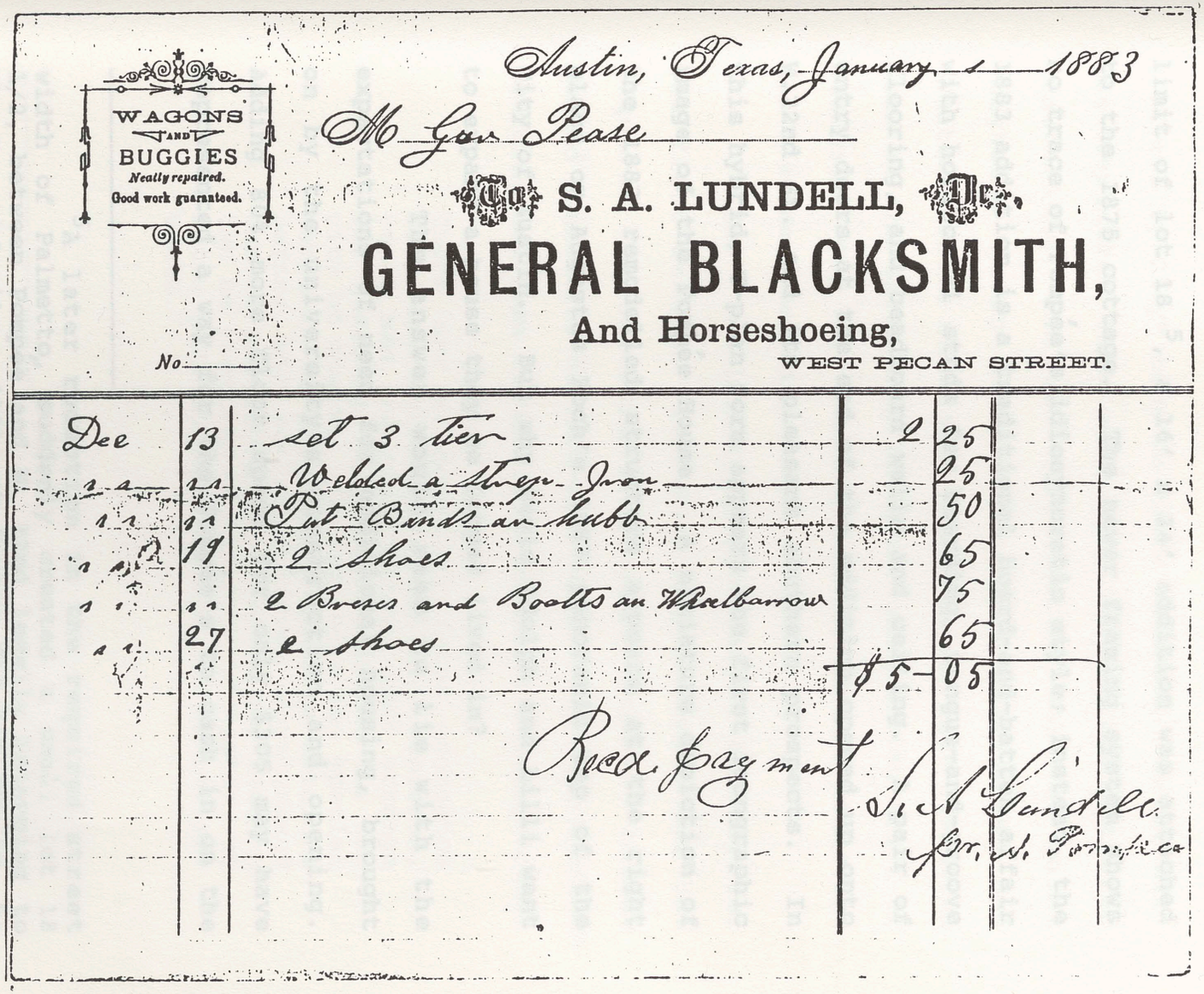
elevated position, it may have seemed almost a portent: a new development arriving next door, an old one disappearing downtown. A year later saw most of the Sixth Ward neighbors turn out for the ceremonious laying of the university cornerstone.

By 1883, Adolph Pompée was still working out of Lundell's blacksmith shop. One of his clients was Gov. Pease and Pompée's name appears on several receipts stored carefully in the E.M. Pease Collection at the Barker History Center (See Figure 13). Exactly who rented or boarded at the 1875 Cottage during these years is a mystery. Nevertheless, the actual opening of the University of Texas on September 6, 1883 seemed to have catalyzed Pompée's speculative intentions with respect to the house.

That is, eleven days after the university opened, Pompé gave a "Mechanic's Lien" to the Austin Contractor Henry Struve for $305 worth of "material and labor necessary to erect improvements on said premises . . ."[4] It is believed that Struve's improvements consisted of a large expansion of the cottage to the South. Running almost to the legal

---

[4]Tavis County Deed Records, Vol. 57, pp. 361-62.



Austin, Texas, January 1 1883

M Gus Pease

To S. A. LUNDELL, Dr.

WAGONS AND BUGGIES
Neatly repaired.
Good work guaranteed.

GENERAL BLACKSMITH,

And Horseshoeing,

WEST PECAN STREET.

No

Dec	13	set 3 tier	2	25
"	11	Welded a Strap Iron		25
"	11	Put Bands on Hubb		50
"	19	2 Shoes		65
"	11	2 Bress and Boults on Wheelbarrow		75
"	27	2 Shoes		65
			$5	05

Rec'd Payment
S. A. Lundell
per A. Pompée

Figure 13: Pease-Lundell-Pompée Receipt

limit of lot 18 [5], a 16′ x 24′ addition was attached to the 1875 cottage. The newer framing system shows no trace of Pompée's idiosyncratic style; instead, the 1883 addition is a traditional board-and-batten affair with horizontal studs for boarding, tongue-and-groove flooring, and beadboard walls and ceiling. A pair of entry doors at the end of the addition opened up onto W.22nd St. and its pleasant southern prospects. In this hybrid, T-plan form appears the first icongraphic image of the Pompée House. A miniature depiction of the 1883 remodelled structure appears at the right place on Augustus Koch's 1887 panoramic map of the City of Austin. But why would Adolph and Lilli want to expand a house they no longer lived in?

The answer would seem to lie with the expectations of need for additional housing, brought on by the university's construction and opening. Adding 80% more floor space for only $305 may have represented a way for the Pompée's to cash in on the

---

[5]A later reduction in the required street width of Palmetto, suddenly created a small lot 18 1/2, between Pompée and W. 22nd, legally belonging to the Horst family. Although Pompée did not own it, he doubtlessly used it in his everyday life. Probably he dickered at length with the Horsts over price, in no hurry since 18 1/2 was too small to do much with.

"University City" boom so often foretold. After all, the September 1883 addition, the entire interior remodelling, and the new exterior coat of paint (bayberry green paint with lilac-gray trim) had created a fresh structure, one that may have sheltered some of the University of Texas' pioneerring staff or students. One very possible use for the new structure was a student boarding house.

The "Preliminary Announcement" catalog for the first session (1883-84), for example, all but required the incoming students to board. Amidst period strictures on self-control and warnings against extravagance (see Figure 14), the first catalog noted:

> There are no dormitory rooms connected with the University, and all students, young men and young women, must arrange for boarding in private families in the city of Austin. In each case the special sanction of the Faculty must be obtained before any such individual arrangement can be permitted . . . Board and lodging can be procured in the city of Austin, at rates ranging from $15.00 to $25.00 per month.[6]

---

[6]"Preliminary Announcement of the University of Texas at Austin, Texas. First Session -- 1883-4" (Austn: Eugene W. Swindells, State Printer, 1883), pp. 8-9.)

There are no detailed rules of discipline, but full confidence is felt in the upright principles and honorable feeling of the young men and young women of Texas, for whose benefit the University has been founded. It is, however, the reserved right, as it is the duty of the Faculty, to exclude from this benefit any students who either by misconduct or by persistent neglect of their studies, prove that they are doing harm to themselves or others. Offenses against State or municipal law will be remitted altogether to the civil authorities to be dealt with.

It should be understood that a University is for students capable of self control, and not requiring constant restraint by parents or teachers. It is most unwise to send to such an institution those who are too young to be safely trusted to their own government in morals and habits, since, although they may be aided by judicious advice from their teachers and good influence from home, they incur grave risk of injury if sent out into the world before they are themselves prepared to resist such influence for evil as is of necessity everywhere to be met in some degree.

There are no dormitory rooms connected with the University, and all students, young men and young women, must arrange for boarding in private families in the city of Austin. In each case the special sanction of the Faculty must be obtained before any

such individual arrangement can be permitted. Parents and guardians are warned against the serious dangers connected with extravagance in the supply of money to students, and are strongly advised to deposit the funds of their children and wards, either in the hands of a discreet friend, or with the Proctor of the University.

Board and lodging can be procured in the city of Austin, at rates ranging from $15.00 to $25.00 per month.

COURSES OF STUDY AND TEXT BOOKS.

SCHOOL OF ANCIENT LANGUAGES.

PROFESSOR MILTON W. HUMPHREYS.

I. GREEK.

First year: Grammar (Goodwin), Prose Composition (White's Lessons, supplemented by the Professor), Selections from Xenophon's Hellenica and from Herodotus (Goodwin's Selections), Lysias.

Second year: Demosthenes' Philippics, Plato's Pythagoras, Homer's Iliad, Medea of Euripides; Goodwin's Mood's and Tenses, advanced exercises in translation from English into Greek, Lectures on Metres, etc.

Figure 14: 1883 U.T. Catalog Strictures

As attendance slowly grew during the 1880's and 1890's,the Horst Addition began to play a prominent spatial and social role in non-campus university life. Faculty like George Garrison bought homes there, students boarded there, and lot owners developed and subdivided there. As the Horst Addition prospered, some of the original residents decided to sell out.

The historical record says nothing of Adolph and Lilli's intention when they sold their property on September 5, 1885 to two sisters, Bettie H. McFarland and Lillie E. Flewellen. The Pompée's moved to less pretentious quarters further north, where Lilli Pompée died unexpectedly at the age of forthy-three on April 16, 1887. Her death was undoubtedly a hard blow for Adolph and the children. They buried Lilli at Oakwood Cemetery in Section 2 Lot 448. Three lines of German verse decorate her tombstone:

> Zur Ruh gegangen
> Wo Du hast kein Weinen, auch kein Schmerz
> Wo Du hast das Gluck and ruhet das Herz.
>
> (Gone to rest -
> Where you shed no tears and feel no pain,
> Where you find joy and peace of heart.)

Soon thereafter, Adolph Pompée seems to have sought greater peace of heart for himself far away

from Austin. His name disappears from the City Directories; the last county legal papers place him in or near Denver, Colorado. Apparently, Adolph, Emilie (See Figure 15), and Willibald relocated to Denver and settled in with the large German ethnic community there. Of his last twenty years almost nothing is known.



Figure 15: Emilie Pompée

CHAPTER VII

COL. HOLLAND'S NEW CAREER (1885-1890)

> When I first knew Austin, during the 40's, it was a little country town on what was then the Texas Frontier, and had only a few hundred inhabitants. Those were the log cabin days of the Republic . . . At that time houses in Texas had no parlors.
>
> -- Col. Holland, "Reminiscences of Austin and Old Washington"[1]

Bettie McFarland and Lillie Flewellen had ulterior motives in mind when they bought the Pompée property in September 1885. These two cultured Holland daughters had married into well-to-do families and prospered, while their distinguished father, James K. Holland, had experienced several financial and political losses. Although the Holland sisters signed the paperwork and promissory notes, it was their father who soon moved into the large house at 506 West 22nd Street.

---

[1]J.K. Holland, "Reminiscences of Austin and Old Washington," The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, Vol. I, No. 2 (OCtober, 1879), p. 92.

James K. Holland was born in 1822 in Tennessee. His father, the politician Spearman Holland,[2] resettled the family in East Texas when James was twenty. Four years later with "the women in tears," he left the Elysian Fields community in Harrison Co. and marched to Monterrey to participate in the Mexican-American War.[3] Returning as a captain, he followed his father into politics by winning elections for seats in the Third, Fifth, and Ninth legislatures. However, his 1863-65 service as a Confederate colonel on the staff of Gov. Pendleton Murrah effectively terminated his political career thereafter.[4]

Besides politics, Holland had an abiding concern with education in Texas. As a member of the

---

[2]See James K. and Spearman Holland entries in W.P. Webb, ed., The Handbook of Texas, Vol. I (Austin: TSHA, 1952), p. 826.

[3]Holland's journal of the trip presents a lively account of the Texan's participation. J.K. Holland, "Diary of a Texian Volunteer in the Mexican War," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXX, No. 1 (July, 1926), pp. 1-33.

[4]A plaintive letter to Gov. Hamilton on September 11, 1865 admitted: "I have been your political enemy, but I quit it all now." Hamilton Letters, 1865, Texas State Library.

Texas State Senate in 1853, he chaired the Committee on Education and worked closely with Gov. E.M. Pease in passing the famous School Law of 1854. Around 1880, the colonel moved to Huntsville solely to educate his children in the Normal School there. And according to his citation in The Handbook of Texas, Col. Holland, "made the first report ever presented in the legislature on the University of Texas."[5]

Indeed the opening of the university in 1883 seems to have precipitated his decision to relocate to Austin. The 1883-84 and 1885-86 City Directories show him as a "farmer," renting his lodgings at 4310 San Gabriel and 909 San Jacinto respectively. But Col. Holland's fortunes improved considerably with his daughters' purchase of the Pompée property. First, Bettie and Lillie deeded over the West 22nd Street houses to him in March of 1886. And second, the next City Directory (1887-88) shows him suddenly as a "real estate agt" with an office and residence at the larger house. The Pompée cottage next door (and its 1883 addition) was likely leased by the real estate-minded colonel, perhaps to students or staff at the new institution nearby that he revered.

---

[5]Webb, ed., op. cit., p. 826.

There was, of course, a nice touch of Victorian family sentiment involved in Bettie McFarland and Lillie Flewellen's gift. They deeded the Pompée property to their father on the golden anniversary of Texas' Independence -- March 2, 1886: "for and in consideration of love and affection, for our devoted father J.K. Holland . . ."[6] Paying the Pompée's a fair $4,050 in cash and short-term notes, the two daughters' Warranty Deed goes on to note that the funds were from their "separate effects, bequeathed to us by our grandfather, J.D. Andrews . . ."[7] (Both of their husbands were asked to sign the conveyance as well.)

In some sense, Betty and Lilly's gift of the Pompée tenant house was part of an idealized, Victorian, semi-retirement plan for the sixty-three year old colonel, his wife, and their Black maid, Rose. The March 2nd timing of their gift commemorated their father's decades of public service on behalf of Texas; it was also a symbolic gesture of recompense for the shelter he provided them. Additionally, his

---

[6]"Abstract of Title," p. 101, 91-92.

[7]Ibid., pp. 91-92, 101.

new home was only a short distance from the three-year old reality of one of his cherished dreams for the state.

Holding sway over the corner property, opening his real estate office and new career, and visiting the University of Texas, were a few of the pleasant prospects before the colonel that spring of 1886. He apparently became active in the community affairs of Austin, perhaps out of a stronger commitment to free public service than to commercial real estate.

Of all the nineteenth century personalities who dealt with the Pompée house, J.K. Holland (see Figure 16) presents, perhaps, the drollest wit and most historical turn of mind. Shortly before his death he penned a quaint article for the second number of The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association. In "Reminiscences of Austin and Old Washington,"[8] Holland narrated in a folksy manner about the early communities of Austin and Washington-on-the-Brazos. Housing in the state capitol of the 1840's was by his account a modest business. "General

---

[8]J.K. Holland, op. cit., p. 92.



J. K. HOLLAND.

Figure 16: J.K. Holland

Houston lived in one of the Austin log cabins, which he called his wigwam," Holland related.

With Houston's "wigwam" long gone by the mid-1880's, J.K. Holland's retrospective article also urged the people of Texas to preserve their lore. "Texas has an unpublished history," Holland wrote, "as interesting as it is real, hidden within the dusty leaves of the past . . ." Elsewhere in the same issue he gave a sample not only of his lore but also of his wit. In the "Notes and Fragments" feature of The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, Holland told the ironic story of his "old body-servant, Tom," a capable former slave who won election to a Reconstruction legislature. His conclusion:

> Tom was a good man; far better, in fact, than his white associates. I now have in my possession a bill of sale executed in the days of slavery for this member of the Texas legislature, and it is barely possible that he was not the only member that was ever bought and sold. But of this, let him that knoweth speak.[9]

In the spring of 1889 though, Col. Holland was interested in raising money. Given his new career, his classic solution was to subdivide his own

---

[9]J.K. Holland, op. cit., p. 126.

homestead. Measuring off 47-1/2 feet from the western end of lots 18 and 18-1/2, he created a tiny but separate lot for the original 1875 cottage. Holland's real estate stratagem legally severed Pompée's two houses and would lead both structures down different ownership paths for over six decades.

Holland was not, of course, the only subdivider of the large lots in the Horst Addition neighborhood. As the new university next door continued to add staff and students over the years, land use began to intensify in spots of close proximity. Other interior lot owners though, probably continued to view the late nineteenth century Horst Addition as primarily the place for large, upscale, single-family Victorian residences. A hundred years later, the surviving family homes built by the neighborhood's academics, lawyers, businessmen and others, constitute a rich heritage for Austin's West Campus area, one that invites our appreciation and preservation.

The subdivision stratagem proved successful when on August 6, 1889 the colonel conveyed the cottage and improvements to Hugh Landon for $1,800, almost 45% of the purchase price for the entire

property four years earlier. While Holland's pecuniary motives seem obvious enough,[10] one wonders why the obscure Hugh Landon, a businessman from San Miguel, New Mexico Territory, would want to own a home so far away. Landon declared in the Travis County Deed Records, "that I have never resided in Austin,"[11] and yet, he paid Holland in cash for the home at the closing. The lack of direct, available evidence on his motives forces us to consider his local context instead.

One possibility that may have lured Landon into the Austin real estate market was the relative insecurity of life and property back in San Miguel County. The old Spanish town of Las Vegas, where the eastern foothills of the Sangre de Cristo mountains meet the grassland plains, began to boom after the Civil War. The Atchinson, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad arrived on the Fourth of July, 1879 and

---

[10]J.K. Holland sold the remainder of his property several years later. Around 1893-94 he moved to the newest and grandest subdivision in Austin, Hyde Park, where he continued his real estate and public activities. Col. Holland died on May 26, 1898 in a buggy accident at historic Tehuacana Hill. Frank Brown noted his passing with a tribute. Brown, op. cit., XVI, p. 28.

[11]"Abstract of Title," p. 106.

inaugurated a fresh boom for the 1880's. There was money to be made in Las Vegas--for the lawless as well.

Crime rates and violence soared in this boomtown, pro-growth, territorial community of the late 1880's. A chronicler lamented that, "The heretofore smiling town of Las Vegas had become a 'No Man's Land'."[12] Indeed, as Landon walked the mean streets of Las Vegas, he may have sympathized with the wild west dramatics of Carlos Cabeza de Baca's account:

> Up to 1891, an untold number of murders and robberies had been committed. The town of Las Vegas had been taken over by murderers, thieves, and prostitutes . . . The barking of .45 guns were almost as common to the ear then as the honking of auto horns are in our present day.[13]

Already a rough community, a particularly gruesome series of murders from 1888 to 1890 had shocked and terrorized many in the community. The victims were usually well-known citizens although

---

[12]Carlos C. de Baca, Vicente Silva, The Terror of Las Vegas (Palmer Lake: Filter Press, 1978), pp. 9-10. A quick reworking of the rare Manuel C. de Baca 1896 narrative.

[13]Ibid.

some, like the male torso without limbs and with the face skinned, could never be identified. Although the City of Austin had its share of lawlessness,[14] it did not have the sense of community terror that afflicted San Miguel County.

Many people in the outlying communities were terrorized also by Las Gorras Blancas -- "The Whitecaps" -- in 1889. These white-hooded, pro-free range marauders organized against the enclosure and subdivision process of grazing lands on the Ceja and the Llano. Fencing was cut, barns burned and lives threatened by the secret societies that emerged in those days.[15] In this climate of fear, citizens of San Miguel County like Landon, may well have considered investing in tangibles elsewhere. With San Miguel County cattle, sheep, fences, cash and citizens subject to disappearance, rental property in the Texas state capital, close to the new

---

[14]An 1884 anti-San Antonio editorial by Austin's Daily Dispatch on the apparent murder of Ben Thompson noted glumly: "We hope never to hear anything said about lawlessness in Austin again." Floyd Benjamin Streeter, Ben Thompson, Man With a Gun (New York: Frederick Fell, 1957), p. 200.

[15]Fabiola Cabeza de Baca, We Fed Them Cactus (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1953), pp. 89-111.

university and in the respectable Horst Addition, may have represented a safer, speculative investment for Hugh Landon than he could readily find in his own town.

There was certainly reason for Landon to exercise caution in 1889. Unknown to the community at large, the well-groomed owner of the town's Imperial Saloon, Vicente Silva, had organized the year before what might now be called a "continuing criminal enterprise." Don Manual Cabeza de Baca, a contemporary of Hugh Landon, enumerates twenty-seven of Silva's accomplices in his rare 1896 narrative, including three members of the Las Vegas police force.[16] Masquerading some of his operations, Silva was also a leader in Las Vegas' secret political society, El Partido del Pueblo Unido.

Landon's interests, however, were likely with the rival Sociedad de Mutua Proteccion. Many of Las Vegas' businessmen and stockowners joined this popular vigilante group. Their patience was eventually rewarded as Silva and his group self-destructed. But in the meantime, Landon sold the Pompée tenant house and the title left San Miguel County.

---

[16]Carlos C. de Baca, op. cit., pp. 3-7.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MAUVE DECADE AND BEYOND (1890-1909)

> Without lapsing into society column compliment, the Windsors may be set down as a positive gain to University social life. College-bred women, who are efficient home-makers, are a good ensample [sic] among us, in our condition of coeducation.
>
> -- The University of Texas Record March, 1904[1]

When the Austin capitalist R.L. Brown bought the Pompée house on July 7, 1890 from Hugh Landon, he bought it with speculative intentions in mind. Further, the same $1,800 that he paid Landon for the property was only his initial investment; Brown intended to expand and remodel the existing structure on the tiny lot. He would add the technological conveniences of the 1880's with the new 1890 style and create in the process, a residential product with the potential for profitable resale.

R.L. Brown and his brother, J. Gordon Brown were major investors in Austin real estate then. As

---

[1]University of Texas Record, Vol. V, No. 3 (March, 1904), p. 280.

land mortgage bankers,[2] their acquisition of the old Pompée house also points to the importance of large capital interests, managed by active professionals, in the Austin housing market of 1890. The two brothers ran in the best of Austin's "Violet Crown" Society, and they had diverse interests in this city of 15,000 people.[3] Their specialty, however, was raising British and Scottish capital at low rates of interest for investing locally in Austin at high rates.

Robert Brown frequently traveled to London and Scotland scouting for capital. A prominent Scotchman who had settled in Texas, he served as a socially-correct conduit for Scotch and English capital into Texas development. It is likely that the Brown Bros. firm at 614 Congress was responsible for the next and major remodeling of the house in 1890-91. That is, both Holland and Landon sold the home for $1,800; but when it appeared on the market nine months later, it commanded a tidy $3,000 selling price for the Browns.

---

[2]Mary Starr Barkley, op. cit., p. 143.

[3]Audrey Bateman, "Waterloo Scrapbook" (Austin History Center, March 11, 1977), p. 21.

Essentially, Brown Bros. remodeled the 1875 cottage and its 1883 addition into a contemporary Queen Anne residential house. Like R.L.'s personal home at 2001 University Avenue, their vision of the new Pompée house included the proportions and gingerbread gilding of an age rich in material affluence. Advancing southward onto Lot 18-1/2, a large Victorian parlor, a mansarded entry and a gingerbread porch were added overlooking West 22nd Street. For the roof three picturesque towers were added, the east one crowned with fancy ornamental ironwork. The 1883 "T" addition was then flanked on its remaining west and east sides with gingerbread porches and an unusual pattern of milled siding. Calcasieu Lumber Company supplied most construction materials.

A number of other improvements were made as well. Stained glass doors, brick foundations, patterned glass transoms and a polychromatic new paint job brightened up the exterior considerably. The interior was modernized with gas lighting, a kitchen, a bath and new fixtures. A variety of colorful wallpapers refinished the interior room surfaces as

well. An exotic, mauve-toned wallpaper was chosen for the parlor.

The Brown Bros. addition and renovation in 1890-91 marked the fullest architectural expression of the 19th century Pompée house (See Figure 17). With their efforts a "hybrid house" was created, a structure that literally embodied a range of architectural expression, from Pompée's vernacular Greek Revival to the corporate jigsaw craftsmanship of the Brown Bros. When the work was finished by the spring of 1891, the result was the distinctive transformation of a modest tenant house into a charming, modest Victorian residence.

In any event the transformed structure -- and its easy financing (at 10%) -- caught the eye of Ambrosio DuBlanc, who purchased it for $3,000 on April 17, 1891. DuBlanc remains as something of a stereotypical metaphor of the Gay Nineties in Austin; during much of the Mauve Decade in the "Violet Crown," he served liquor. His origins are unknown, possibly Creole, but his name first appears in the 1877 City Directory as a "saloon-keeper."[4] By 1890 he was the

---

[4]There are many variants of his name: "A. Dublance" and "Ambrose De Blanc" for example.



Figure 17: 1890-91 Addition
(during 1984 Restoration)

proprietor of the popular "Exchange Saloon" at 206 West 4th, once the favorite bar of Ben Thompson. DuBlanc's dealings are murky, but he apparently used his new real estate acquisition for rental property. The 1893-94 City Directory shows a G. Fielding Smith, "cotton broker," residing at the 508 West 22nd address and a Gordon Shirky at the "ne cor of W. 22nd and Nueces."

The 10% interest was adding up in the meantime. Ambrosio DuBlanc still owed R.L. Brown (as trustee) considerable sums of money on the house. Brown renewed notes for $2,450 on January 18, 1896, also at a high rate of interest. And there were city taxes to pay on the property as Austin invested heavily in its municipal appearance in the 1890's.

For example, in 1894-95 the City of Austin erected a 165 foot Tower Light, now called a "Moonlight Tower," on the corner catty wampus to the Victorian Pompée house. At night its pale light enveloped the house, attracting numerous insects to the light's vicinity. Eventually a robust colony of bats settled into the Victorian towers of Ambrosio's

house. By night the bats harvested the insects; by day they slept off their feasts in the attic.[5]

After eight years of speculative ownership Ambrosio DuBlanc had had enough of a good thing by the end of the 1890's. On October 24, 1899 he deeded the house back to R.L. Brown for cancellation of five Brown promissory notes.[6] Perhaps the Austin real estate market had not proved as profitable as 10% promissories. The Brown Bros. would probably have preferred that DuBlanc keep the house and pay the notes, for they -- and their hidden investor backers -- found themselves with a house on their hands for the next two years.

Stating that he had been acting "in trust," R.L. Brown conveyed the property in a special warranty deed to Benjamin Graham of New York and James Brown Potter of Newport, Rhode Island.[7] These two "Gilded Age" gentlemen had earlier filed legal paperwork with the Browns to establish their interest in the house.

---

[5]Hundreds of pounds of insulating and potentially igniting bat guano and dust was found in the attic in 1978.
wealthy husband, Dillwyn Parrish of London. Shortly

[6]"Abstract of Title," p. 115.

[7]Ibid., p. 117.

Apparently they had acquired an earlier investment with Brown Bros. by Sarah De Coursey Parrish and her after DuBlanc gave up, Austin's Lake McDonald dam burst during a flood and, among other things, real estate values were affected as the city's magic aura was tarnished nationally. Robert and Gordon Brown must have been concerned.

Collecting signatures for all the paperwork took time as well. James Brown Potter of Newport, Rhode Island, signed one set of papers in 1901 in Mexico City, where he was overseeing his investments in mining and coffee plantations. This nephew of New York's famous Bishop Potter had a complicated life in general from 1899 to 1902, much of it due to his wife. While Adolph and Lilli Pompée were living in their humble first house, James had married, in 1877, the beautiful and spoiled Cora Urquhart of New Orleans. As socialites they moved to a mansion in New York where they "became the leaders of the social life of that time, which centered around Washington Square."[8] The Brown Potters were also credited for first

---

[8]"James Brown Potter -- Obituary", New York Times, Feb. 23, 1922, p. 15, col. 3.

recognizing the railroad suburb of Tuxedo Park and making it a rendezvous for society.[9]

Mrs. James Brown Potter's taste for the dramatic exceeded that of James, however. Eventually they separated over her growing involvement with the theater in the late 1880's. Trained by the incomparable David Belasco, Cora Potter was "one of the first American society women to go on the stage."[10] Traveling with her daughter, Fifi, "Mrs. James Brown Potter" used her society name with impunity in the 1890's. Reportedly Cora asked $250,000 from her husband to remove the name from public attention. But to be fair she also helped to disconnect the genteel public's former equation of an actress with a prostitute. As the self-conscious American version of Lily Langtry, she toured the world to immense publicity at the end of the Mauve Decade.

Mr. Potter's revenge began to take shape in 1900. First, he married his pampered daughter Fifi to the immensely rich Rockefeller heir, James A. Stillman, in a fabulous fin de siécle wedding at the

---

[9]Ibid.

[10]Phyllis Hartnoll, ed., The Oxford Companion to the Theater, Third Edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1972) p. 759.

Waldorf.[11] Second, he laboriously obtained a divorce from Cora in 1900. With all these expenses, it must have been a small but nevertheless positive distraction for James Brown Potter when R.L. Brown finally located a buyer for the Pompée house in late 1901.

Sarah Adalene ("Addie") McCrillis signed the paperwork on January 7, 1902 and acquired title to the house from Potter and Graham for a bargain $1,200. Miss Addie McCrillis and her sister Anna were strong educators, Baptists and confirmed spinsters. Miss Addie McCrillis was an influential Austin principal in the public school system and she also showed a flair for property management. The McCrillis' already owned Lot 17 and its house to the north, for instance. For the next sixteen years Addie McCrillis owned and leased the home, often to incoming and interesting University of Texas faculty, staff and students.

---

[11]Fifi's marriage ended in one of the most notorious socialite scandals of the early 1920's: the sensational "Stillman Divorce Case." Fifi's honor and family name was at stake when her husband charged her with improper relations with an Indian guide.

After boarding in luxury hotels for decades, Cora Urquhart ("Mrs. James Brown Potter") retired to the Island of Jersey, where she made a home and lived quietly until her death.

There was, for example, the popular P.L. Windsor family who lived at the 508 West 22nd Street residence during 1906 and 1907. Phineas Lawrence Windsor was born in 1871 at Chenoa, Illinois. Widely educated, he held a succession of posts before arriving in August, 1903 as Librarian of the University of Texas. Windsor was an active Librarian and reportedly was instrumental in drafting the paperwork for the "Texas Library and Historical Commission."[12]

Windsor family life at the Victorian Pompée house showed in many ways the pervasive influence that the University of Texas began to play in the transformation of the Horst Addition into a West Campus neighborhood. During his stay at the house, Phineas likely entertained socially a number of university officials and faculty. Despite her college degree, Mrs. Windsor stayed home to manage the house and care for the children. Phineas enjoyed a short walk down West 22nd Street to his duties in the Library, then housed in the basement of Old Main.

---

[12]"Univ. of Illinois Bulletin, Library School Assoc. Newsletter," Vol. 37, No. 25 (Feb. 13, 1940).

Asked years later about his memories of the university in those days, Dr. Windsor described U.T. male students firing their revolvers on March 2 and the "fields of bluebonnets and rainlilies" presently occupied by buildings and a stadium. Once, "there was a rare snow storm and excited students made the faculty stay at home."[13] In 1909, P.L. Windsor left Texas to become a noted Librarian of the University of Illinois at Urbana (See Figure 18). He was quite successful there, building the Urbana campus into first place among state university libraries by his retirement in 1941.

Not all of the Pompée house residents were as high-toned as the Windsors. The Hubbard women, for example, had known times of want and lower-class lodgings. Louisa Hubbard, a widow, her schoolmarmish daughter, Alice P. Hubbard and her youngest daughter, Miss Mercedes Hubbard lived in the Pompée house for several years from about 1907 to 1909.[14] The Hubbards provide several insights into the role that affordable

---

[13]Windsor Clipping File, Barker library, no source given on the clipping.

[14]Marion Clarke Cook Interview, Feb. 12, 1979. See also Austin City Directory for 1909-1910.

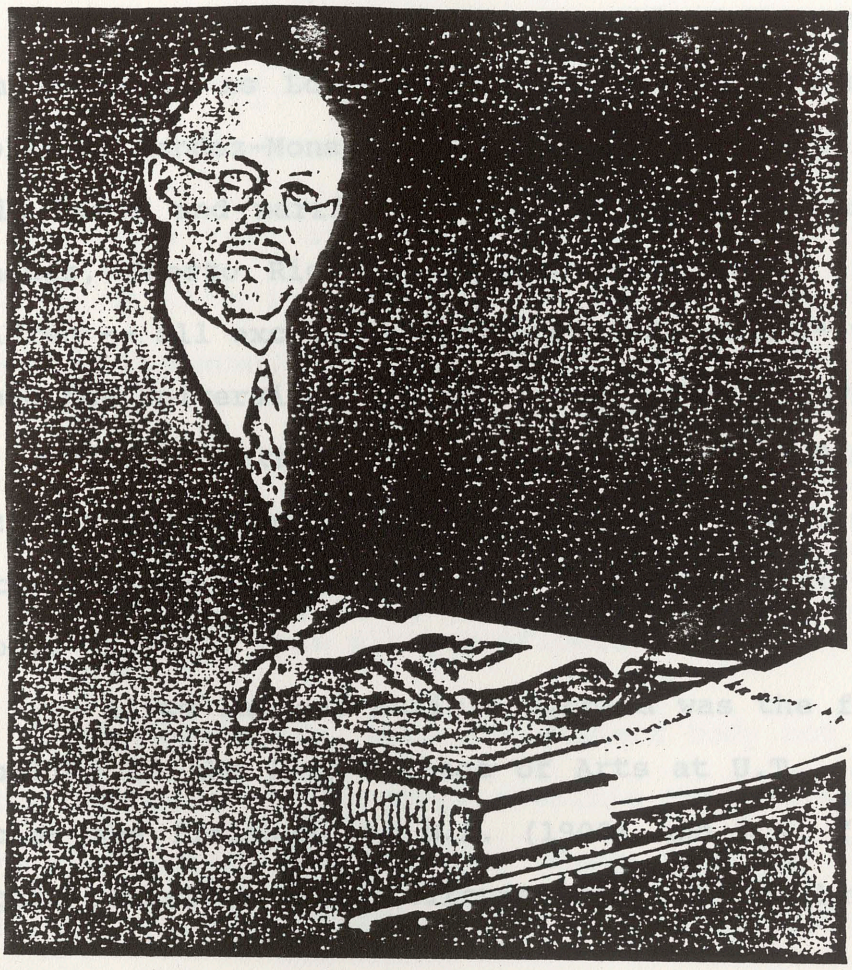


Figure 18: Phineas Lawrence Windsor

campus housing for families played in the life of the early University of Texas student body.

The "Louisa Hubbard" casually mentioned in the Austin City Directory was actually born on St. Thomas Island as Louise Adelaide Amalia Prudencia Nicolasita Mendez-Monsanto. A charming girl, she grew up in Paris and married the United States Consul in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico.[15] Two of their four living children -- all excellent speakers of Spanish -- would attend the University of Texas in its formative years. The premature death of Louisa's husband in El Paso in 1892 left Alice and Louis Hubbard little choice as to which college to attend when they finished high school.

Alice Philena Felicia Hubbard was the first, enrolling in the 1896 College of Arts at U.T. A top scholar she finished her B.A. (1900) and M.A. (1902) despite penurious family circumstances.[16] Her brother

---

[15]See Louis H. Hubbard, Recollections of a Texas Educator (Salado, Texas: Anson Jones Press, 1964), pp. 4-6.

[16]W.J. Maxwell, compiler, General Register of the Students and Former Students of the University of Texas -- 1917 (Austin: Ex-Student's Association, 1917), p. 46.

Louis arrived in September 1899, to join his sister and mother in Austin:

> To put it mildly those four years financially were a tight fight with a short stick. Between my sister Alice's small salary as a tutor and Mama's meager income we were barely able to get by . . .[17]

The Hubbard's turn of the century encounter with the university also illustrated the role that housing played in the spatially-conscious society of the time:

> I could not afford to be convivial in my habits . . . There were probably other reasons why I was not invited to join. I am sure the unknown social status of the family and the small and unattractive house in which we lived [in 1900; not the Pompee] were also contributing factors.[18]

Nevertheless, with the student body not quite a thousand yet, it was still possible to know many of one's classmates. Louis' 1899 class included as new students Ima Hogg and John Lang Sinclair (who composed "The Eyes of Texas" a few years later).[19] Louisa

---

[17]Louis Hubbard, op. cit., p. 35.

[18]Ibid.

[19]W.J. Maxwell, op. cit., pp. 60-63.

Hubbard helped her children through college as best she could. Much of her "meager income" came from her private tutoring in Spanish.

One of Louisa's best "students" was Dr. Herbert E. Bolton. After finishing his doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania, Bolton soon came to the University of Texas in 1901. Learning of U.T.'s connection with the Garcia Collection, this Wisconsin native decided to plunge into Spanish. For six months Louisa Hubbard taught him intensive Spanish, until he was able to dig into the historical archives that would make him renowned.[20]

By 1908 when the Hubbard women were settled in the Pompée house, their family fortunes had improved. Alice was a new instructor in Spanish at U.T. Her brother Louis visited frequently at the house. He was proving to be a great educator in Belton. (In 1924 he would become U.T.'s first Dean of Students; one of his first actions was to revise the tangled "rooming and boarding house regulations." Acutely sensitive to place and homelife, Dean Hubbard's Committee on Housing was a pioneering effort

---

[20]See Webb, Handbook of Texas, Vol. 3, op. cit., p. 94; and Louis P. Hubbard, op. cit., p.37.

to develop adequate and affordable housing for students.)[21] Louisa was tutoring and looking after her daughter, Mercedes Hubbard. Miss Mercedes, totally deaf from a childhood attack of scarlet fever, was by all accounts a relaxed and positive young lady of 25. In her brother's memoirs, she celebrated her ties to the community by becoming an "Easter lady":

> Naturally artistic, she developed great skill in designing Easter eggs of unusual beauty, and she gladdened the hearts of hundred of neighboring children with these eggs placed in lovely baskets of her own design and making.[22]

As a family, the Hubbards remind us of the costs and opportunities that a college education often provided. For many new arrivals in the Horst Addition, the question of affordable room and board was a great concern. Certainly the next group to capture and inhabit the Pompée house would demonstrate this concern as well.

---

[21]Louis P. Hubbard, op. cit., pp. 138-89.

[22]Ibid., p. 286.

CHAPTER IX

THE CALDWELL BOARDING HOUSE (1909-10)

> the odyssey of a home where Webb composed country boy wrought-up by the magic meaning of words set down in their rhythmic order with a music for those now and those to come though never recommended any writing course just bridgebuilding welldrilling lovemaking windjamming widereading poker hoboing war
>
> -- Dave Oliphant, "Nueces," Austin[1]

Officially, the Austin City Directory for 1910-11 shows the Pompée house to be "Vacant." This apparent absence, however, ignores Addie McCrillis' presence of mind in leasing her rental property. In point of fact she let the Pompée house to Cliff M. Caldwell, who moved in with his wife and small children in the summer of 1909. Caldwell was studying law at the university, and his practical wife agreed -- as others before her had -- to take in boarders to meet the McCrillis rent and other bills.

Marion Clarke, the young girl who lived next door with her parents, remembered the place then as

---

[1]Dave Oliphant, Austin (Fort Worth: Prickly Pear Press, 1985), p. 94.

simply "the Caldwell Boarding House."[2] While there had been other boarding arrangements at the address before (Adolph Pompée's 1880 boarder, for instance), the Caldwell Boarding House days were especially rich in legacy and details.

Cliff Caldwell and the three boarders -- Paul Crowley, Nels Rosenquest and Walter Prescott Webb -- were all from Stephens County, Texas. There was a territorial bonding of sorts among these young men, one keyed to the county level of community feeling. The freshman Webb would later write an undergraduate paper on the very subject of Stephens County attendance at the University of Texas. H.Y. Benedict, for instance, enrolled at U.T. in 1888, and this native of Stephens County would become "the first Texan to be president of the University."[3] Many new arrivals at the University of Texas, often poor and ambitious youth from the farms and small towns, probably replicated similar micro-communities within the formidable urban context of Austin.

---

[2]Marion Clarke Cook Interview, Feb. 12, 1979.

[3]Mike Kingston, Walter Prescott Webb in Stephens County (Austin: Eakin Press, 1985), p. 65.

On the other hand, Breckenridge Hall, the grandest rooming house of them all in 1909, was still grouping so many residents from so many places that a popular, rough and very democratic spirit infused this Victorian residence hall. From 1891 to 1926 over 5,000 mostly poor young men created a vibrant, tradition-rich community at B Hall, "The Citadel of Democracy," as one former resident would write.[4] Other new arrivals like Crowley, Rosenquest and Webb, however, continued to fill the traditional boarding houses of the Horst Addition, which likely offered greater privacy and less prankish behavior in general than the B Hallers. Whether private house or public B Hall though, the boarding experience and consequent sense of place must have made a strong impression on the incoming freshmen.[5]

Walter Prescott Webb was a 21-year old freshman when he arrived. His very presence at the

---

[4]Tom V. Smith, "B Hall The Citadel of Democracy," in Nugent Brown B Hall, Texas (San Antonio, Texas: Naylor Co., 1938), pp. 1-3, 11-25. Interestingly, both Smith ("Citadel of Democracy") and Brown ("The Nursery of Jeffersonian Democracy") describe the community spirit of Breckenridge Hall in spatial metaphors.

[5]Ibid.

university was something of an afterthought.[6] While teaching in the small town of Merriman, he received an early January, 1909 letter from his distant New York benefactor, William E. Hinds. In his quaint and persuasive style, Hinds inquired in a casual postscript if Walter had made plans for college in the fall:

> Have you planned going to College in the fall, if you haven't planned it, is it something you would like to do, if so what College have you in mind? Now answer all these questions, please.[7]

Inspired by his benefactor's queries, Webb decided that winter to enroll at U.T. in the fall of 1909 and to finance his education with savings and a $500 loan limit from Hinds.

Like many students, Webb's arrival in Austin to attend college was a memorable experience, as clear "as pictures on a screen," as he noted in his unpublished autobiography. As his able biographer, Necah Stewart Furman, relates from his memoirs:

---

[6]Necah Stewart Furman, Walter Prescott Webb (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1976), p. 33.

[7]Quoted in Mike Kingston, op. cit., p. 65.

> The train pulled into the station at five o'clock on a clear September morning. The city lights were dimming with the dawn and an elderly Negro peddled papers at the depot. Another, called Pindar, hauled away the trunks of the incoming passengers. With some impatience the young man waited at the station until the town began to stir. He ate breakfast, then took the streetcar north to Twenty-Second Street. At this stop he got off and walked west to the Cliff Caldwell home [Pompee house], where he would be boarding . . .[8]

By most accounts Webb's freshman and sophomore years at U.T. were not an academic success. He was one of about 2,000 students registered in the College of Arts. Aspiring to become a writer, he innocently enrolled in various English classes, where he received crushing criticism and poor grades. Webb later harshly summed up his first two years at U.T. as "practically wasted," but one suspects there was more to the experience than a total waste of time and effort. "All my life I have had these dead periods,

---

[8]Furman, op. cit., p. 36. See also Webb's "Texan's Story" and "Autobiography" in the Walter Prescott Webb Collection, Barker History Center, Box 2M293. Webb set out to record three unforgettable precepts of life connected with the experience, but never returned to fill in the blank space allotted, leaving a mystery for later scholars.

doldrums," Webb wrote later, "and perhaps they have a psychological and spiritual value."

Living next door in Pompée's larger, 1880 home, the young Marion Clarke remembered Walter Webb quite well during his Caldwell Boarding House days.[9] When interviewed she recalled in particular his gravity and kindness. The boarding house was somewhat crowded that fall with the Caldwell family and three grown boarders all sharing the same facilities. Mrs. Caldwell prepared the breakfast fare and then Cliff Caldwell was off to his law school classes, and Paul Crowley and Walter Webb walked east down 22nd Street to their respective classes.

Playing in her father's front yard, Marion visited with Walter Webb in the afternoons and weekends while he sat out on the east Victorian porch of the Caldwell home. Often he was writing, perhaps an English essay, or a letter to his parents, or a missive to his patron, William Hinds. Although Webb would later express regret over his freshman compositions, chroniclers like Necah Stewart Furman have been kinder. Furman noted his eager and failed

---

[9]Marion Clarke Cook Interview, Feb. 12, 1978.

attempts at a style of "romantic formalism," but she also recognized the autobiographical and regional strengths of Webb's early work.

An October 29, 1909 essay, "The Old Homestead", expressed an embellished and sentimental view of his Stephens County farm home,[10] but this essay also captured regional color and fair local characterization. While naively overwriting the prose perhaps, this early essay nevertheless tried to express his emotional ties to family, home, and community. Further, as Walter Webb explored Austin itself in 1909-1910, the city's environmental context began to appear in his essays as well. For instance, an April 25, 1910 essay, "On Deep Eddy," extolled the refreshing waters of this bluff spring.

Despite fair efforts, Webb's composition grades were so low, D's, that he grew disillusioned with his prospects as a writer during his first semesters in residence. Years later, Marion Clarke remembered the grave, serious, almost intense demeanor

---

[10]Gregory Tobin suggests that Walter invested "the daily routine of the Webb home in Stephens County with the grandeur of an idealized plantation." Tobin, The Making of a History (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), p. 37.

that characterized him in public. In the summer of 1910 he fought a bout with typhoid fever.[11] But she also saw a patient, friendly, and good-natured young man who apparently enjoyed children. Webb often took a moment to play and chat with her. A favorite game involved Marion balancing on the post-and-wire fence subdividing the Pompée lot. With Walter holding her hand, steadying, and offering advice, Marion would "walk the fence" to the end and back (see Figure 19).

Socially, the Caldwell Boarding House was a success as well. Nels Rosenquest and Paul Crowley were old chums and good role models. Nels was finishing his college education following various teaching stints to pay the way. Paul was a boon companion who had chased girls together with Webb back in Stephens County.[12] Undoubtedly Webb's poor grades depressed and worried him from time to time. But the camaraderie of Nels and Paul must have offered a tonic of sorts, a boarding house balm to combat the alienation that many freshmen feel: the sense of being lost, adrift or in the "doldrums" as Webb wrote,

---

[11] N.S. Furman, op. cit., p. 51.

[12] Ibid., p. 32.



Figure 19: Post and Wire Fence
on east side of
Pompee house

with a characteristically geographic metaphor for the mind of man.

While Walter Prescott Webb as a freshman often found the University an uninspiring or frustrating place, his affection for friends, the Horst neighborhood, his continued correspondence with Hinds, and his interest in the social and natural communities of Austin appeared to reflect a deep and abiding concern with a sense of place. From the nostalgic essay on "The Old Homestead" to his bucolic account of Deep Eddy, to his depiction of a boat trip and sunset on the Colorado River, Webb seemed to have searched for meaning by also looking at the ordinary world around him. Perhaps this localism sought expression because the immediate and ordinary world -- the simple game created and shared with a young girl for instance -- was in many ways far more real to Webb than the details of punctuation or hyperbolic phrasing that drew his instructors' lances.

Living in the heart of Austin's West Campus area, the Stephens County colonists likely shared many a local tale and memory from their familiar provincial contexts as well. While the young Webb (see Figure 20) did not always garner encouragement for his local

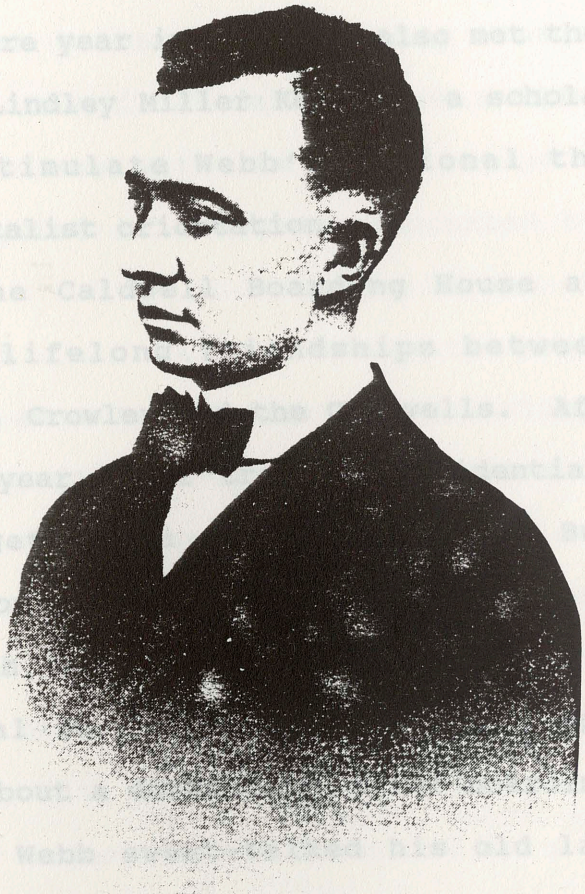


Figure 20: The Young Walter Prescott Webb

or regional perspectives at school, he was personally involved with these perspectives "at home" in the Pompée house. Certainly his best school writings, as a biographer noted, "were those written on subjects about which he had firsthand experience."[13] During his sophomore year in 1910, he also met the flamboyant Professor Lindley Miller Keasbey, a scholar who would greatly stimulate Webb's regional thinking and environmentalist orientation.

The Caldwell Boarding House also further cemented lifelong friendships between Webb and Rosenquest, Crowley and the Caldwells. After Walter's sophomore year, Paul Crowley providentially assisted Webb in getting a teaching job at Bush Knob in Throckmorton County. Webb's experiences on the range that harsh winter of 1911-12 would later prove influential in his writing of The Great Plains.[14] Further, about a dozen years after boarding with Cliff Caldwell, Webb sweet-talked his old landlord into advancing the funds for a special new prize devoted to "the story of the unimportant."

---

[13]Furman, op. cit., p. 38.

[14]Mike Kingston, op. cit., p. 69.

Like Walter Webb, Cliff Caldwell was destined for greater success than he might have imagined in 1909-10. After he finished law school the Caldwells returned to Stephens County, where Cliff set up a law practice at the county seat of Breckenridge. He soon joined Breck Walker in developing a major oil field there. By 1924, Cliff Caldwell was a rich businessman based in Abilene with the funds to endow, easily, a statewide prize in a contest announced by his former boarder.

In 1924 Walter Prescott Webb was still struggling as a teacher in U.T.'s history department. He had just failed his preliminary oral examinations for the Ph.D. at the University of Chicago, a severe psychological shock. Back teaching in Texas, Webb was also serving his time in the trenches of academia as "Managing Editor" for the "Texas History Teachers' Bulletin." With Cliff Caldwell's financial connivance he quickly organized and announced in a 1924 article

the "Caldwell Prize in Local History."[15]

Published in "The Texas History Teachers' Bulletin" (Vol. XI, No. 1), Webb's eleven page article is a manifesto on the importance and value of local history itself. His painstaking instructions on the collecting and writing of community history do display a regional pride. But they also show a deep faith in the artefacts of the ordinary world -- the diaries, county records, folklore and interviews --, and their ability to generate meaningful accounts of the Texas experience.

The purpose of the Caldwell Prize was "to stimulate an interest in local history."[16] Webb prefaced his announcement with Dr. Logan Esarey's epigrammatic statement that, "Evidently the approach to history must begin nearer home and nearer now." By reprinting Dr. Esarey's 1921 environmentalist essay on

---

[15]See, Joe B. Frantz, "Remembering Walter Prescott Webb," where he quotes from Webb: "I conceived the idea of having local history written by school students and I persuaded Cliff Caldwell of Abilene to give $100 for use in prizes in the first contest . . ." In special Dobie-Webb issue, Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Vol. 92, No. 1 (July, 1988), p. 26.

[16]All quotes from Webb, "Caldwell Prize in Local History," "Texas History Teachers' Bulletin," Vol. XI, No. 1 (No. 2315: dated April 15, 1923), Austin: University of Texas, 1924, pp. 5-15.

"The Approach to History" (immediately following his own article), Webb arranges a further impetus towards the "nearer home and nearer now" local perspective, one that would take account of the environmentalist setting behind community development.[17] Webb distinguishes local from state or national history by noting simply: "Local history is the history which may be found in your own community." Moreover, "Local history is not the story of important men or of great events." Rather it is "likely to be the story of the unimportant."[18]

Walter Prescott Webb's interests would certainly broaden over time, as he moved from local history and folklore to the regional perspectives of The Great Plains and Divided We Stand. Eventually he would undertake a provocative global vision in The

---

[17]Note Esarey's 1921 comments on geography: "The fundamental ideas of geography are land, water, climate, distance, direction, people and the products of all these singly and in conjunction. These lie all about us in our immediate presence. Teachers of geography have finally come to recognize that the only approach to their subject is through the immediate neighborhood to the world at large." Logan Esarey, "The Approach to History," in Webb, "Texas History Teachers' Bulletin," op. cit., p. 16. Emphasis added.

[18]Ibid., p. 7.

Great Frontier. Nevertheless, he always remained a faithful steward to the ordinary, localite world of, say, Flat Top, or The Handbook of Texas, or Friday Mountain. Cliff Caldwell's interests also expanded from local community to regional perspectives. Not long after funding the Caldwell Prize for his old boarder, he became a Regent for the University of Texas. Returning to Austin for Board of Regents' meetings may have reminded him of how far he had gone since his boarding house days at the Pompée house.

CHAPTER X

NEIGHBORHOOD SUCCESSION: AN EPILOGUE

> How far will this debauching of education go? Will the universities sink eventually to the level of the schools of such barbarous states as Texas?
>
> -- H.L. Mencken, 1926

The importance that people like Walter Webb, James K. Holland, Louis Hubbard and Phineas Windsor attached to intelligent localism, to the documentation and "the study of the unimportant" reflects the bias of this impressionistic study as well. Like many homes the Pompée house has accumulated a rich and idiosyncratic patina of people-and-place. The house also serves as a reminder of the importance of heritage and material culture in encoding our dreams of family, of the home and of the college education.

The arrival of more and more students to U.T. following 1910 would also increase the redevelopment pressure on the old Horst Addition Victorian neighborhood. Increasingly the dynamics of neighborhood succession began to remake the West Campus area. The adjacent Wheatsville community of

Black Austinites began to decline around 1910 owing to segregation and commercial redevelopment pressure.

From 1910 to 1978 the Pompée home also experienced a series of remodelings and multi-occupants. Miss Addie McCrillis died on September 2, 1918 at the age of 77 and the property was sold in October of 1919 to the James M. Harris family. The Harris' thoroughly converted the house into a rental duplex, one unit facing Nueces Street and the other fronting on West 22nd Street. For the next 35 years the Harris family and heirs rented out the Pompée house to students, state employees, soldiers, an engineer, a minister, bluecollar workers, U.T. instructors, widows and even businesses from "Travis Creosote" to "Laybourne's Radio Service." The beautiful and aristocratic poetess and literary historian, Selma Metzenthin-Raunick, lived in the house during 1928-29, where she wrote extensively on the German literature of Texas. As many as ten people lived in the structure at the same time during some of the Depression years in Austin.

Certainly by the mid-1950's the house, like a lot of the neighborhood, had deteriorated into run-down rental property. Some of the grand old homes had

already been torn down and more would follow from 1955 to 1965. Various architectural flourishes on the house were now broken or destroyed. The wrought ironwork on the mansarded entry was lost to a World War Two scrap-iron drive for example (see Figure 21).

The Pompée house might have been destroyed in the late 1950's, but for the timely intervention of an old neighborhood resident who returned to Austin from New York. Marion Clarke, the young girl who "walked the fence" with Webb's assistance, had married the U.T. student and oil geologist, Carroll E. Cook; after various preregrinations around the world, the Cooks eventually retired to Marion's old family home at 506 West 22nd Street in Austin (See Figure 21). In February, 1955 Marion bought the old Pompée house next door from the Harris'. A major remodeling of the interior restored the house's viability as a rental structure for two more decades.

Owing to its unusual, perhaps even strange looks by now, its good location and the moderate rent charged, the Pompée House would emerge in the mid-1960's as one of Austin's paradigmatic hippie houses. "A string of artists and musicians -- including rumor persists, Janis Joplin -- hung out there, the line

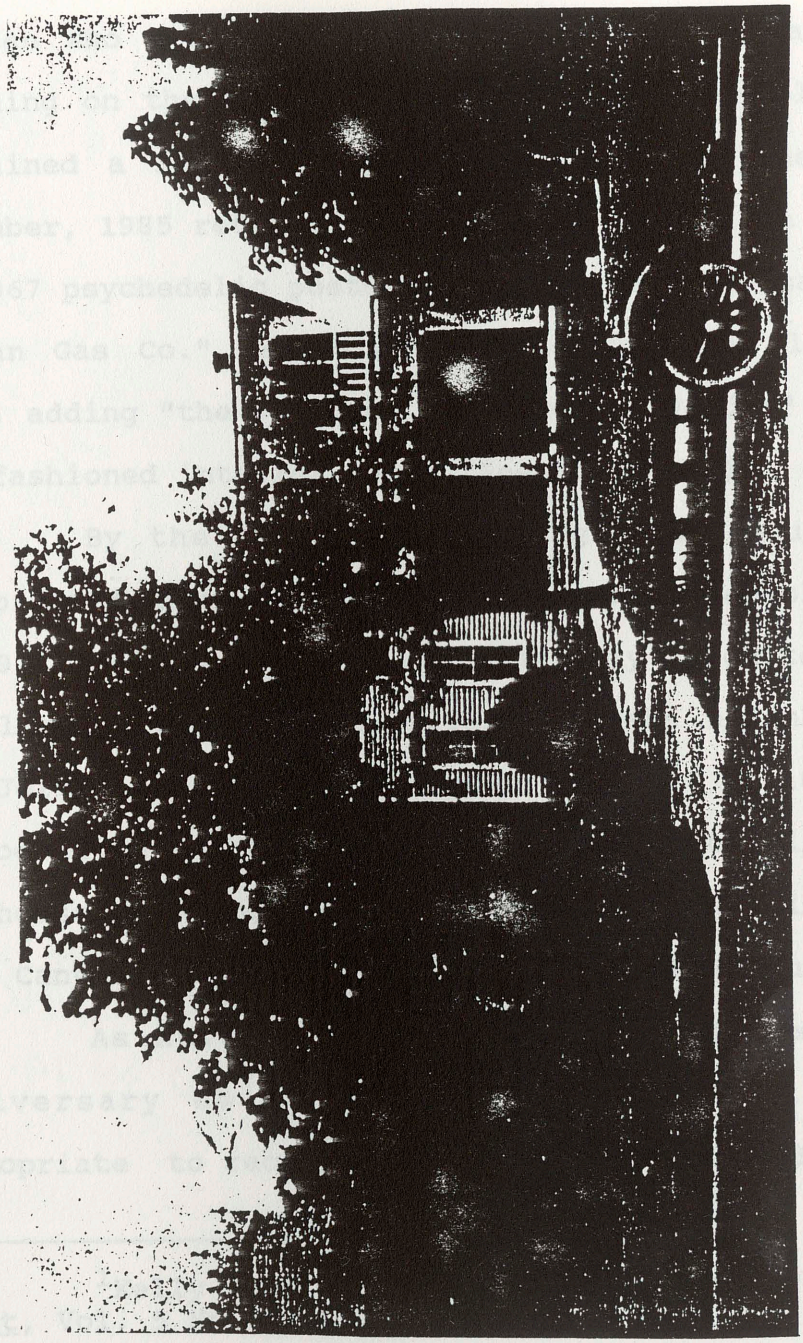


Figure 21: "506 W. 22 St. ca. 1930" Photo. (ex. Mr. Carroll Cook) Note: Pompee house mansard with ornamental ironwork to extreme left.

between who actually paid the rent and who was just crashing on the floor for a few weeks often blurry," explained a reporter for Third Coast magazine in a December, 1985 retrospective article.[1] A large number of 1967 psychedelic posters from Austin's seminal "The Vulcan Gas Co." decorated various walls as late as 1978, adding "the radiance of Armadillo Wisdom" to the old-fashioned interior decor (See Figure 22).

By the late 1970's though, the house was dilapidated and increasingly subject to demolition. In 1978 the Pompée house was privately relocated into the largely undeveloped North West Oaks neighborhood off Jollyville Road in northwest Austin. Following a period of rezoning and related developmental impacts, the house was moved again[2] in September, 1985 into the Long Canyon neighborhood off RR 2222 in West Austin.

As Austin prepares to celebrate its 150th anniversary as a community in 1989, it seems appropriate to recall the past efforts and education

---

[1]Kelly Fero, "History Repeats Itself", Third Coast, Vol. 5 No. 5 (December, 1985), p. 43.

[2]The "Aynesworth-Wright House", a restoration project and branch office of the defunct Franklin Savings, suffered a similar double-move fate. This house was recently donated to the Jordan-Bachmann Pioneer Farm east of Austin.



Figure 22: The Radiance of Armadillo Wisdom

of citizens like Webb, the Hubbards, the Pompées, J.K. Holland, the Cooks, Miss Jones, the Caldwells and the Windsors in preserving and cherishing the sense of local heritage. While contemporary housing analysts like Dolores Hayden trace the roots of our current housing crisis back to the nineteenth century Victorian idealized homelife,[3] the Pompée house also reminds us of the flexible, adaptive and multi-occupant uses for Victorian houses.

This exploration of household history -- through architectural, social, and neighborhood development -- also raises methodological points of inquiry into past spatial behaviors. Before demolishing "unimportant" housing remnants from the past, urban planners should carefully consider that they are destroying significant information on the spatial lifeways and heritage of past generations. While the first or most prominent owner usually gets all the attention, it is the cycle of neighborhood succession, with all the residents and owners represented, that contains important data on community

---

[3]See, Dolores Hayden, Redesigning the American Dream: The Future of Housing, Work and Family Life (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984).

development over time and space. Thus, this idiographic study of multi-occupant housing methodologically attempts to reveal the changing nature of Austin and the Horst neighborhood through the study of a particular locale. To recall Webb and Esarey, if we can do history and geography "nearer home and nearer now," why not urban planning?

Further, the Pompée house illustrates the development of a neighborhood "personality" over time as it were. Blaine A. Brownell argues in his perceptive book, The Urban Ethos in the South, that Southern cities often took pride in developing distinctive community personalities.[4] By extension, neighborhoods like the Horst Addition were also quick to develop distinctive spatial and cultural characteristics within the dynamic context of Austin.

In part, this community sense of place responded to the Victorian deterministic sensibilities about proxemics and the role of environmental attributes in man's affairs. We see, therefore, the early emphasis upon the boarding experience for the

---

[4]Blaine A. Brownell, The Urban Ethos in the South, 1920-1930 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975), p. 63.

first U.T. students. That is, approved rooming arrangements with respectable families in good neighborhoods are meant to spatially and morally check the pernicious environmental influences that might otherwise overwhelm the innocent new arrivals. As an artefact of the boarding experience, the Pompée house can provide an exemplary window on the past spatial sensibilities of early Texas. The later transformation of Austin's early West Campus neighborhoods -- by apartments, condominiums, dormitories, fraternity and sorority houses, commercial development and parking lots, for example -- should not obscure our recognition of the benefits of boarding: the presence of family role models, the sociability of the group, the communal meals, the sense of shared place and the self-employment or individual income opportunities it could represent.

My own search for the final life of Adolph Pompée came to a conclusion late one rainy afternoon in Austin's East Side. Whatever their proximate material and spatial relationships in life, many of the Victorian residents and owners of the Horst Addition now share the same "multi-occupant" place in death -- Oakwood Cemetery. Walking through this

picturesque graveyard, searching for the 1887 grave of Lilli Pompée, one can also encounter the mortal remains of the McCrillis sisters, R.L. Brown ("Fell Asleep"), J. Gordon Brown, James Harris, A.J. Peeler, Ambrosio DuBlanc and others.

Next to Lilli's tombstone was Adolph's, executed in a similar style. He died on May 24, 1907 and his body was brought back to Austin for burial. Six lines of German verse from Goethe's Wanderers Nachtlied II speak to us as a serene voice from the hereafter:

> Uber allen Gipfeln ist Ruh
> In allen Gipfeln spuerest Du
> Kaum einen Hauch
> Die Vogel schweigen im Walde
> Warte nur balde
> Ruhest du auch.
>
> "Over all the hilltops
> Is peace
> In all the treetops
> Winds well cease
> Or scarcely blow;
> The birds are asleep in the trees.
> Wait, soon like these
> Sweet peace you'll know."[5]

There is a third tombstone in the Oakwood plot as well, that of Emilie Pompée Goeth. As a

---

[5]Translation by Gilbert J. Jordan, The Morning is Not Far, Some poems by Gilbert J. Jordan (Dallas: n.p. , 1974), p. 46.

bright-eyed girl in 1875 (See Figure 23), five year-old Emilie Pompée had watched her father and mother build their first home together. Growing up in the Horst Addition, she literally saw Austin launch a public school system, build a university and rebuild a state capitol. Several years after her father's death, she finally married a former newspaperman, Ernst Goeth, Jr., founder of The Schulenberg Sticker.[6]

Emilie and Ernst eventually settled in San Antonio, owning and running the old Lomita Hotel on Crockett Street. As a child Emilie had lived with the renters and boarders of her father's house; as an elderly, childless lady she watched the Lomita Hotel guests for many years after Ernst died in 1943. Her father's promise of rest arrived on June 26, 1961, when Emilie died at the age of 91 in San Antonio. She was buried next to her father at Oakwood Cemetery in Austin, completing the spatial metaphor of family - father, mother, child - in death, even as she had lived it in life not far away. Her tombstone epitaph reads simply "Auf Wiedersehen."

---

[6]See "Ernst Goeth Wanted His Newspaper to Stick", The Schulenberg Sticker, November 27, 1969.



Figure 24: Emilie Pompée

APPENDIX A-1

Ownership Information: 1848-1919

	Grantor	Grantee	Date	Vol./Page
Lot 18	State of Texas	Louis Horst	27 Oct. 1848	265/204-05
	Louis Horst	Adolf Pompée	Jan. 26, 1875	28/293-94
Lot 18½	Margaret Horst Exctrs.	James Horst	July 1879	44/151-53
	James Horst	Adolf Pompée	Jan. 12, 1885	64/605-06
Lots 18 & 18½	Adolf Pompée	Bettie H. McFarland Lillie E. Flewellen	Sept. 5, 1885	67/51-53
	Bettie McFarland et al	James K. Holland	March 2, 1886	84/348-351
West 48' of Lots 18 & 18½	J.K. Holland	Hugh Landon	Aug. 6, 1889	88/183-85
	Hugh Landon	Robert L. Brown	July 7, 1810	96/477
	Robert L. Brown	Ambrosio Du Blanc	April 17, 1891	97/255
	Ambrosio Du Blanc	R.L. Brown (Brown Bros.)	Oct. 24, 1899	163/93
	R.L. Brown	Benjamin Graham James Brown Potter	Jan. 6, 1902	172/505
	James Brown Potter et al	Sarah Adalene McCrillis	Jan. 7, 1902	173/466-67
	Sarah A. McCrillis Exctr.	James M. Harris	Oct. 16, 1919	315/373/74

APPENDIX A-2

POMPÉE HOUSE: Street Addresses

Street addresses and lot locations for the structure have changed considerably over the last 124 years. The list below enumerates the locations in chronological order:

1. "Corner of Palmetto and August" (1875)
   (Lot 18, Block 34, Division D [Horst Addition]

2. "508 Palmetto" (1880-1890
   (lot 18, Blk 34, Div. D; from 1885 to 1889 Lot 18½ was attached)

3. "508 West 22nd" (1890-1955)
   (West 48' of Lots 18 & 18½, Blk. 34, Division D)

4. "2201 Nueces" (1890-1955)
   (West 48' of Lots 18 & 18½, Blk. 34, Div. D)

5. "2201 Nueces A (1920's to 1978)
   2201 Nueces B"
   (West 48' of Lots)

6. "11295 Taylor-Draper Lane" (1979-1984)
   Lot One, "Nasha Mozhno Addition"

7. "8905 Bell Mountain Drive" (1985 to date)
   Lot 79C, Phase II-A, "Long Canyon"

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Archival Sources

1. Austin History Center (Austin Public Library)

   Austin City Directories; 1872-1960

   Biographical Files/Clippings:
   R.L. Brown; Charles Denny; M.V. Jones; A. Pompee; and Bruno Schumann

   Newspapers: Daily Democratic-Statesman; 1875-1881

   Tax Records (City of Austin); 1875-1885.

2. Barker History Center (University of Texas Archives)

   Biographical Files/Clippings; C.M. Caldwell; James K. Holland; Louis H. Hubbard; and P.L. Windsor.

   E.M. Pease Collection

   Walter Prescott Webb Papers

3. Travis County Deeds and Records (Travis County Courthouse, Austin)

B. Manuscripts/Unpublished Sources

Bateman, Audrey, "Waterloo Scrapbook." Bound collection of newspaper articles; Austin History Center.

Bergen, Daniel and Gracy. "Abstract of Title to the West 48 feet of Lots Nos. 17, 18 & 18-1/2 in Outlot No. 34, Division 'D'." (Jan. 26, 1875 to Jan. 29, 1932) Photocopy from the original in the possession of the Estate of Carroll E. Cook.

Brown, Frank. "Annals of Travis County and of The City of Austin, (From the Earliest Times to the Close of 1875)." 35 Vols.; typescript reprod., Austin History Center.

Cordes, Dennis. "Box Construction in Texas" Unpublished paper, Austin, 1979.

Guenther, Ernest A. "Genealogies of Goeth Fuchs, Guenther, and Schroeter-Richter-Hoppe Families." Austin.

Long, Willie Madora. "Education in Austin Before the Public Schools." M.A. Thesis, Univ. of Texas 1952 (Education).

Manaster, Jane. "The Ethnic Geography of Austin, Texas: 1875-1910." M.A. Thesis, University of Texas, May, 1986 (Geography).

Morris, John Miller, Jr. Personal papers, photographs and files.

C. Interviews

Wayne Bell, October, 1980.

Carroll E. Cook & Marion Clarke Cook, February 12, 1979.

Denis Cordes, July, 1980.

Ernest A. & Irma Goeth Guenther, July 30, 1981.

Bowie Harwood, October, 1980.

D. Periodicals

Fero, Kelly. "History Repeats Itself." Third Coast Magazine, Vol. 5, No. 3 (December, 1985), pp. 43-44.

Holland, J.K. "Reminiscences of Austin and Old Washington." The Quarterly of the Texas

State Historical Association Vol. I, No. 2 (Oct. 1897), pp. 92-95. See also pp. 125-26.

Jordan, Terry G. "German Folk Houses in the Texas Hill Country." In Lich and Reeves, eds., German Culture in Texas: A Free Earth; Essays from the 1978 Symposium. Boston: Twayne, 1980, pp. 103-20.

Metzenthin-Raunick, Selma. "A Survey of German Literature in Texas." Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Vol. 33 (1929), pp. 134-59.

Moneyhon, Carl H. "Education and Reconstruction Politics." Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Vol. XCII, No. 3 (January, 1989), pp. 393-416.

Webb, Walter Prescott. "Caldwell Prize in Local History." The Texas History Teachers' Bulletin, Vol. XI, No. 1 (#2315:April 15, 1923), pp. 5-16.

_____. "The Search for William E. Hinds." Harper's Magazine, Vol. 223, No. 1334 (July, 1961), pp. 62-69.

E. Books

Alexander, Drury Blake. Texas Homes of the Nineteenth Century. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1966.

Barkley, Mary Starr. History of Travis County and Austin, 1839-1899. Austin: The Steck Co., 1963.

Brown, Nugent E. B Hall, Texas. San Antonio, Texas: Naylor Co., 1938.

Brownell, Blaine A. The Urban Ethos in the South, 1920-1930. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975.

C[abeza] de Vaca, Carlos. Vicente Silva, The Terror of Las Vegas. Palmer Lake, Colorado: Filter Press, 1978.

Cabeza de Baca, Fabiola. We Fed Them Cactus. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1954.

Debo, Darrell, ed. Burnet County History. Burnet, Tx.: Burnet County Historical Commission/ Eakin Press, 1980.

Farrow, Marion Humphreys. Troublesome Times in Texas. San Antonio: Naylor Company, 1959.

Foley, Mary Mix. The American House. New York: Harper and Row, 1980.

Furman, Necah Stewart. Walter Prescott Webb, His Life and Impact. Albuquerque, Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1976.

Futagawa, Yukio. Wooden Houses. New York: Abrams, Inc., 1979.

Glassie, Henry. Patterns in the Material Folk Culture of the United States. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania, Monograph in Folklore and Folklife, No. 1, 1968.

Goeth, Ottilie Fuchs. Memoirs of a Texas Pioneer Grandmother [Was Grossmutter Erzaehlt] 1805-1915, Second edition, trans. by Irma Goeth Guenther. Burnet, Texas: Eakin Press, 1982.

Hayden, Dolores. Redesigning the American Dream: The Future of Housing, Work, and Family Life. New York: W.W. Norton, 1984.

Hubbard, Louis H. Recollections of a Texas Educator. Salado, Texas: Anson Jones Press, 1964.

Jones, Joseph, Life on Waller Creek. Austin: AAR/ Tantalus, Inc., 1982.

Jordan, Terry G. Texas Graveyards; A Cultural Legacy. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984.

_____. Texas Log Buildings: A Folk Architecture. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978.

King, Edward and Champney, J. Wells, ed. by Gray, Robert S. Texas: 1874, An eyewitness account of conditions in post-Reconstruction Texas. Houston: Cordovan Press, 1974.

Kingston, Mike. Walter Prescott Webb in Stephens County. Austin: Eakin Press, 1985.

Lich, Glen E. The German Texans. San Antonio: The Univ. of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures, 1981.

Lich, Glen E. and Reeves, Dona B., eds. German Culture in Texas: A Free Earth; Essays from the 1978 Southwest Symposium. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980.

Lynch, Kevin. What Time is this Place? Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1972.

Maxwell, W.J. and Lomax, John A. General Register of the Students and Former Students of the University of Texas. n.p.: Ex-Students Association, 1917.

Metzenthin-Raunick, Selma. Deutsche Schriften in Texas. San Antonio: Freie Presse Fuer Texas, 1936.

Moursand, John Stribling. Blanco County Families for One Hundred Years, Second edition. Burnet, Tx.: Eakin Press, 1981.

Mumford, Lewis. Technics and Civilization. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970.

Oliphant, Dave. Austin. Fort Worth: Prickly Pear Press, 1985.

Overbeck, Ruth Ann. Alexander Penn Wooldridge. Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1963.

Potter, Cora U[rquhardt]. My Recitations (Third Edition, 1886). New York: Arno Reprint, 1969.

"Preliminary Announcement of the University of Texas at Austin, Texas, First Session -- 1883-4." Austin, Texas: Eugene W. Swindells, State Printer, 1883. (Catalog preparation by Alexander Penn Wooldridge.)

Ragsdale, Crystal Sarre. The Golden Free Land. Austin: Landmark Press, 1976.

Streeter, Floyd Benjamin. Ben Thompson, Man With a Gun. New York: Frederick Fell, Inc., 1957.

Tobin, Gregory M. The Making of a History, Walter Prescott Webb and "The Great Plains". Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1976.

Webb, Walter Prescott, et.al., edits. The Handbook of Texas, Vols. I-III. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1976.

VITA

John Miller Morris, Jr. was born in Canyon, Texas on October 10, 1952, the son of school teachers, Patsy Blair Morris and John Miller Morris. Completing Tascosa High School in Amarillo, he attended the University of Veracruz, the University of Vienna and the University of Texas at Austin, from which he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1974, Summa cum laude, with Special Honors in Plan II. Subsequently, he entered the Graduate School in January 1976 and earned a Master of Arts Degree in Slavic Literature and Languages, with a minor in Soviet History.

From 1978 to 1985 Morris was engaged in a variety of business endeavors. In January, 1984 he returned to the University of Texas as a student in the Community and Regional Planning Program in the Graduate School of Architecture. In the fall of 1986 he entered the Joint Geography/Community and Regional Planning Ph.D. program. During 1985 and 1986 Morris actively worked to restore the Pompée House at a new site.

Permanent Address: 8905 Bell Mountain Drive
Austin, Texas 78730

This report was typed by Papers-To-Go.