

MONTFORT HALL AND ITS ARCHITECT,
" WILLIAM PERCIVAL

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MONTFORT HALL AND ITS ARCHITECT,
" WILLIAM PERCIVAL

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ABSTRACT

BUSHONG, WILLIAM BRIAN. Montfort Hall and Its Architect, William Percival. (Under the direction of RAYMOND H. PULLEY).

This thesis studies the theoretical and practical design concepts employed in the construction of Montfort Hall, an Italianate villa built in Raleigh, North Carolina in 1858. The findings revealed two prevailing themes: first, the typological character of the villa and the practical aspects of its design and construction; second, the architect's theory of design for this home and its significance to North Carolina's architectural history. Consequently, William Percival, the architect of Montfort Hall, was of central importance to this study.

The method used to explore the design concept of Montfort Hall involved a study of three separate but interrelated subjects which included the inhabitants, the building, and the architect. Each subject served as a central focus to a chapter in this work. The procedure for the study of the design concept of Montfort Hall involved the accumulation of primary evidence from public records like deeds, wills, contracts, agreements, maps, census records, private collections of family papers, journals, diaries, and commercial papers. Also, oral evidence from knowledgeable old people provided valuable information to clear up some of the obscure problems. Secondary material utilized in this study included all published materials related to the property, its development, use, and occupants. In addition, news stories, advertisements, obituaries, and marriage notices all provided valuable information. Finally, peripheral sources related to the period under study were used which included architectural handbooks, business directories, and trade catalogues that were available to the designer and the owner of Montfort Hall.



Montfort Hall

After a study of this evidence, the findings revealed Montfort Hall and its significance to the architectural history of North Carolina lay in the fact that it was an important example of William Percival's artistic and engineering genius. The heart of his design for this elegant residence was the architect's desire to create a dwelling with regional and personal significance. In this regard, Percival was an advocate of the design concepts proliferated by Andrew J. Downing and Alexander J. Davis, and he echoed their concern for the improvement of American architectural taste. However, the findings in this study also reveal the complexity and originality of Percival's work in North Carolina and suggests that the architect left his own mark on architectural taste in the state. Therefore, Montfort Hall is a fine example of the possibilities Percival envisioned for domestic architecture in North Carolina and it manifested an important development in the architectural heritage of the state.

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INTRODUCTION

In a clustered residential area in the western section of Raleigh stands Montfort Hall, a hallmark in the domestic architecture of North Carolina which helped proliferate a new concept in dwelling, the villa. The now disfigured residence was originally built on expansive acreage as a symbol of the wealth and position of its owner, William Montfort Boylan, as well as a reflection of his love of pleasure and enjoyment. Montfort Hall was once one of the most respected homes in Raleigh. North Carolinians were fascinated with the new style of abode because they had been accustomed to the conservative lines and ornament of classical design in their utilitarian plantation homes. This new form of architectural achievement featured many unique and special qualities which strongly influenced the evolution of nineteenth century domestic architecture in the United States.

This thesis will examine the theoretical and practical design concepts employed in the construction of Montfort Hall with regard to the villa, to the inhabitants of the villa, and to the architect who designed it. An in-depth examination of Montfort Hall will reveal two prevailing themes: first, the typological character of the villa and the practical aspects of its construction and design; second, the practical and philosophical aspects of the architect's theory of design for this villa and its significance to North

Carolina's architectural heritage. Consequently, William Percival, the architect of Montfort Hall, will be of central importance to this thesis.

Percival has been an enigma to scholars who have studied his work in North Carolina. Very little has been known about the architect prior to his arrival in the state in 1857 or after his departure in 1860. However, this short period in the architect's life might have been one of his most prolific. During his stay in the state, Percival received seventeen commissions from which eleven new buildings were constructed in the picturesque modes of the Italianate, Gothic Revival, and Renaissance Revival styles. The design of this work was original and was of a high calibre of workmanship. Consequently, the lack of information regarding Percival has impeded scholars and critics from forming a just appraisal of the architect's designs. Therefore, the architect's career in Virginia and North Carolina has been examined in this paper to add to the body of information available regarding Percival and to foster a better understanding of the architect's skill for his profession.

The styles of architecture Percival chose for his buildings and the skill in which he rendered them is an important consideration. The Picturesque Movement had gained widespread popularity in many parts of the United States by the mid-nineteenth century. Yet, in North Carolina the Greek Revival still held a tenacious hold upon the design

preferences of most North Carolinians. Percival advocated picturesque modes of design in his buildings and helped change architectural taste in the state. Alexander J. Davis had introduced the picturesque Italianate style to North Carolina in 1844 at Blandwood for Governor John M. Morehead in Greensboro. However, the full impact of his pioneering work in the residential architecture of the state was not felt until advocates of the picturesque design philosophy, like Percival, incorporated Davis' ideas and interspersed picturesque buildings throughout the state.

Percival arrived in North Carolina during a prosperous and progressive epoch. The decade of the 1850s was marked by educational and humanitarian reform and by the advancement of cultural interests. In this climate of prosperity and progress, it was not a surprise to find that wealthy patrons were inclined to build dwellings that were progressive in their design. William Montfort Boylan became one of Percival's first clients in the state, and his home would rank as a fine adaptation of a villa design to suit the needs and tastes of its occupant. Consequently, in order to fully understand the general concept of the design, it is necessary to be introduced to the character and personality of the person who commissioned the project. Therefore, it will be necessary to begin an analysis of Montfort Hall with a study of the inhabitants of the structure.

CHAPTER ONE

THE INHABITANTS OF MONTFORT HALL

The man who accumulated the wealth and power to finance the construction of Montfort Hall was William Boylan, the father of the original proprietor. Boylan was originally from Pluchamine, New Jersey and came to North Carolina to work in the print shop of his uncle, Abraham Hodge. Hodge was the first editor of the Minerva and was the state printer at Halifax.¹ The ambitious young assistant Hodge employed soon became his partner. In 1797 the firm moved their office to Fayetteville and renamed their paper the North Carolina Minerva and Fayetteville Gazette. They remained in Fayetteville for two years. In 1799 the firm moved to Raleigh and became known as the North Carolina Minerva and Raleigh Advertiser. They eventually simplified the name to the Minerva.²

Young Boylan immediately became embroiled in partisan politics, and the Minerva became a formidable opponent of the Raleigh Register edited by Joseph Gales. The Register was

¹William W. Holden, "Address Delivered to the Press Associates of North Carolina at Winston on the 21st Day of June 1880. On the History of Journalism in North Carolina." William W. Holden Papers, Manuscript Department, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

²Samuel A. Ashe, Biographical History of North Carolina, Vol. VI, (Greensboro: Charles Van Noppen Publishers, 1907), pp. 89-93.

founded as a mouthpiece of the Republican Party in North Carolina, and Gales used all the forces at his disposal to serve the Party. On the other hand, the Minerva, edited by Hodge and Boylan, became a staunch supporter of the Federalist Party. Since both papers were in Raleigh, the capital became an arena for political debate and partisan journalism.³ There were heated controversies between the Raleigh papers; upon one occasion, William Boylan confronted Joseph Gales and provoked him into a fist fight. This had not been an unusual practice at Halifax where Boylan had his first experiences with journalism.⁴ However, Boylan was to be punished in Raleigh for his behavior. Joseph Gales instituted a suit for damages for which he was awarded one hundred dollars.⁵

In addition to his role as editor of the Minerva, William Boylan had an active political career and became a city commissioner during the early years of Raleigh's growth. This was to become a rewarding post in city government because of the experience Boylan gained in dealing with land

³Robert Neal Elliot, Jr., The Raleigh Register, 1799-1863, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), pp. 12-20.

⁴William W. Holden, "Address Delivered to the Press Associates of North Carolina . . . on the History of Journalism in North Carolina." Holden Papers, Manuscript Department, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

⁵Ashe, Biographical History of North Carolina, pp. 90-93.

transactions for the payment of overdue taxes.⁶ Exercising his new knowledge, he became an extremely shrewd land speculator in these early years in Raleigh. As an example of his skill, he bought a town lot in 1809 from Joseph Gales for the sum of forty pounds and sold the same lot in two parcels with improvements within ten years for a combined total of forty-three hundred dollars.⁷

Boylan continued his political career by representing the people of Wake County in the lower house of the State Legislature during the War of 1812. After his term of office, he became the Chairman of the Justices of the Peace of Wake County.⁸ Boylan, who had neglected his newspaper business because of his busy schedule in local and state politics, eventually decided to pass the Minerva to his brother Abraham Boylan.⁹

⁶This conclusion was drawn from the fact William Boylan bought five lots in Raleigh from the City Commissioners from 1807 to 1815. These lots were sold by public auction to the highest bidder. See Book U, p. 94 and p. 100, also Book I, p. 46, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

⁷Boylan sold two-thirds of this original purchase to Elizabeth Geddy for \$3,500; see Book I, p. 172, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse. The remaining one-third was sold to Thomas Scott for \$800; see Book 3, p. 206, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

⁸Kemp P. Battle, "The Early History of Raleigh, the Capital of North Carolina. A Centennial address delivered by invitation of the Committee on the Centennial Celebration of the foundation of the city, 18 October 1892," (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printers, 1892).

⁹Ashe, Biographical History of North Carolina, pp. 90-93.

In 1818 Boylan bought a house and two hundred and seventy acres on the western outskirts of Raleigh.¹⁰ He purchased this property from Peter Browne, a native of Scotland, who had obtained the land and home from Joel Lane.¹¹ This purchase was vital because it formed the nucleus for the vast acreage Boylan was managing by 1818.¹² His prosperity increased due to his wise land deals and due to his anticipation of the profits to be derived from the production of cotton. Boylan became the first farmer in Wake County to plant the crop.¹³

¹⁰Deed between Peter Browne and William Boylan, 25 May 1818, Deed Book 3, p. 255, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

¹¹Joel Lane was a revolutionary patriot and is regarded by historians as the "Father of the Capital City" due to the fact Raleigh was located on land purchased from Lane. Peter Browne was a Scottish lawyer who closed his practice in Raleigh at the age of 55 and returned to his homeland. He evidently either missed his adopted home or was not content in Scotland because he returned to Raleigh within three years to practice law. For an account of the foundation of Raleigh and short sketches of these men, see an address delivered by David L. Swain, "Early Times in Raleigh," (Raleigh: Walters, Hughes and Company, 1867).

¹²Through an examination of Boylan's land purchases, it is evident that his interests in becoming a planter steadily increased. As the purchase of property in the city declined, his purchase of lands for farming increased. In 1818 he bought 949 acres on the Crabtree Creek north of Raleigh from Isaac Dawson, Deed Book 2, p. 153, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse. If this is added to the property he bought from William Jones in 1802 known as his Crabtree Plantation comprising 644 acres, it becomes evident that by 1818 Boylan was consolidating property and forming a huge estate north of Raleigh. See Deed Book T, p. 420, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

¹³Ashe, Biographical History of North Carolina, pp. 90-93.

Boylan continued to be a public servant in Raleigh throughout most of his life. The offices he held were numerous: he served as printer for the state, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Raleigh Academy, President of the State Bank, Treasurer of the North Carolina Agricultural Society, President of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad, and as a commissioner for the rebuilding of the State Capitol.¹⁴ These positions reflect his wide range of interests in the literature, education, finance, agriculture, and internal improvement of his community and of his state.

A concern for the improvement of his state involved Boylan in the fight for internal improvements during the 1840s. He played a major role in helping John Motley Morehead realize the dream of a North Carolina Railroad Company. The company had to acquire one million dollars in private stock subscriptions in order to obtain state aid for the project. After canvassing the state, Morehead and his followers had failed to raise the required amount. As a last resort, Boylan joined with Morehead and others and purchased the remaining stock and secured state aid for the project.¹⁵

Boylan was the kind of man who possessed an uncanny ability to predict trends and capitalize on the business

¹⁴Writer's Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of North Carolina, Raleigh, Capital of North Carolina, (New Bern: Owen G. Dunn Publishers, 1942), pp. 23-25.

¹⁵Ashe, Biographical History of North Carolina, pp. 90-93.

opportunities they provided. His portrait shows a stern face with eyes that reflect determination. (Figure 1)

David L. Swain once remarked,

The late William Boylan, the first editor of the Raleigh Minerva and the immediate successor of Colonel Polk as President of the State Bank, was a gentleman, sedate and grave in manner to a degree, that to a stranger, might have been taken for austerity.¹⁶

However, he was a more compassionate man than his formal appearance might suggest. During the bitter winter of 1857, his wagons were the first to brave the elements and deliver loads of wood to the poor.¹⁷ He was also responsible for organizing and building the first poor house in Wake County.¹⁸ The energy this man devoted to his business enterprises and public duties seemed endless. It was not until he was seventy-eight years old that he considered a successor as the master of his Wakefield Plantation. In 1855 Boylan deeded one hundred acres of the homeplace to his son, William Montfort Boylan, indicating his chosen heir to the estate.¹⁹ However, by the time of his death in 1861, his confidence in and generosity toward his son had been tempered considerably.

¹⁶David L. Swain, "Early Times in Raleigh," (Raleigh: Walters, Hughes and Company, 1867), p. 18.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 18-20.

¹⁸Hope S. Chamberlain, The History of Wake County, North Carolina, (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1922), p. 145.

¹⁹Deed between William Boylan and William Montfort Boylan, 18 September 1855, Deed Book 23, p. 546, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

Upon his death, William Boylan left behind a vast estate comprising plantations in North Carolina and Mississippi, large holdings of slaves, and monetary wealth. Yet, William Montfort Boylan, his eldest son and heir apparent to this wealth, received a surprisingly small inheritance from his father.

The reason for this change might be discovered in an examination of the personality of the son who had been given almost half of Wakefield. William Montfort Boylan was a man whose energies were spent in self-indulgence rather than in rallying for public causes. He loved the country life and was particularly fond of spending his afternoons foxhunting. Throughout his life, his dedication to this sport remained constant.²⁰ Boylan enjoyed his life of leisure, hunting, and hard drinking, and in these respects he differed from his civic-minded father.²¹ But he was like his father in his generous disposition and kind nature, and after his father's death his slaves continued to refer to him as "Marse Buck," a nickname from childhood that distinguished him from his father.²²

²⁰The News and Observer (Raleigh), 4 February 1899.

²¹Elizabeth C. Waugh, North Carolina's Capital, Raleigh, (Chapel Hill: Junior League of Raleigh, 1967), p. 99.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 99.

The younger Boylan had found disfavor with his father; his frivolous nature and distaste for public life had probably caused his father to reconsider his trust in his son by the time of his death. An indication of his son's love of display and the good life was witnessed in the fall of 1858. In the month of September, William M. Boylan, along with William Percival, a Richmond architect, two builders named Thomas Briggs and James Dodd, and a host of onlookers stood on a high hill overlooking Raleigh to commemorate the beginning of the construction of Montfort Hall.²³ This development must have dismayed his father who had lived in the Joel Lane house for many years and had always envisioned it as the Boylan homeplace. Montfort Hall was completed in 1860 prior to William Boylan's death. Consequently, the younger Boylan's lavish taste and disregard for family tradition might have contributed to the void between father and son. The dwelling the son was to build was symbolic of their contrasting tastes. William Boylan had been well pleased with his colonial dwelling with its practical and modestly-furnished interior. William Montfort Boylan was to choose an elegant design that was furnished with the best materials available. Architectural taste merely underlined a conflict that reached its logical culmination upon the reading of William Boylan's will.

²³Spirit of the Age (Raleigh), 29 September 1858.

During his life, the elder Boylan had amassed a huge fortune. His estate consisted of four plantations in North Carolina, two plantations in Mississippi, and one hundred thousand dollars in cash. His wife, Jane Boylan, received thirty thousand dollars in cash, acreage on Crabtree Creek, and his home and its furnishings. Catherine Boylan, his daughter, inherited the most prestigious property, inheriting one of the Mississippi plantations, the remaining acreage of the Wakefield Plantation, and thirteen thousand dollars in cash.²⁴ The low esteem Boylan felt for his son, William M. Boylan, was apparent from a clause in his will that read:

I am sensible that I impose an annual expense on my daughter but she is the only one of my children, that will likely be able or willing to keep up the place and take care of the library which I wish her to dispose to one or more of my grandsons, but if she should make no disposition thereof, it is my desire that it shall go to my grandson William, son of William M. Boylan.²⁵

His son's home, Montfort Hall, stood less than a quarter of a mile from William Boylan's homeplace; yet, Boylan did not trust his son with the responsibility of caring for his home and library. He chose his daughter and even stipulated that his homeplace should pass to his grandsons after her death. This theme was echoed throughout the will.

²⁴North Carolina Wills, William Boylan, 1861, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

²⁵Ibid.

William Boylan wrote his will in a manner that specifically denied inheritance of land, ancestral home, and other valuable possessions to his eldest son.

His father did not leave him out of the will. William M. Boylan did receive ten thousand dollars in cash, the Crabtree Plantation in Wake County, and a tract of land in Mississippi. However, in comparison to the inheritances of his relatives, his share was meager. The women in the family received the bulk of the estate, notably Catherine and Jane Boylan, who together received half of the total cash dispersed and four hundred and ninety acres of land. John H. Boylan, the youngest son and a bachelor, inherited ten thousand dollars in cash and his father's plantations in Chatham County, North Carolina and in Yazoo County, Mississippi. The final major benefactor from the will was Boylan's grandson, James Boylan, who received a plantation in Johnston County, North Carolina.²⁶

Soon after his father's death in 1861, William M. Boylan had to dismiss any dreams of a large inheritance and had to fight for economic survival. The onset of the Civil War placed a heavy burden on Boylan's resources; yet, he managed to keep his lands intact. It is probable that Boylan opposed the war or at least remained indifferent because he avoided service in the Confederate Army by supplying a

²⁶Ibid.

substitute.²⁷ His distaste for politics and the war can be discerned from his petition for pardon on 28 June 1865:

I was not an inspired secessionist and did not give the rebellion any encouragement until, by the actions of the committee of the State of North Carolina, she had gone into rebellion.²⁸

Boylan did not give the Confederacy any aid except through the payment of taxes; it could have been this fact that saved the house from any abuse during the Yankee occupation.²⁹

Eventually, the war came to Raleigh, and the gardens of Montfort Hall became a campground for Union troops. The Union occupation disrupted the routine of the plantation to an intolerable degree. As Elizabeth Waugh observed,

The front porch of the mansion was used as a barbershop. Food, prepared in the outside kitchen, was speared off platters, by the invaders, before it reached the Boylan dining room.³⁰

William M. Boylan was in favor of the restoration of civil authority as soon as possible and, with that restoration, a removal of occupying troops.

In order to assess the impact of the war upon the Boylan estate, a comparison of Boylan's wealth in 1860 and 1866 seems appropriate. In 1860 Boylan declared fifteen thousand dollars worth of real estate and fifty thousand dollars in

²⁷William M. Boylan to President Andrew Johnson, Petition for Pardon, 28 June 1865. North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Waugh, North Carolina's Capital, Raleigh, p. 99.

personal estate.³¹ The tax lists of 1866 reveal that his worth in real estate to have increased to twenty thousand and four hundred dollars and his personal estate to be worth eleven hundred dollars.³² It would seem that the value of his real estate had increased from the 1860 figure. However, this was not the case. This figure does not account for the twelve hundred acres he had inherited from his father in 1861. As a result, the 1866 tax figures indicate heavy losses. His personal estate of fifty thousand dollars was erased by the conflict.

Boylan had suffered great losses, but he had survived the war and was surprisingly able to increase his personal estate to three thousand dollars by 1867.³³ By the 1870 census, his occupation was listed as farmer, and he declared his real estate to be worth fifty thousand dollars, an exact reversal of the 1860 figure.³⁴ How realistic an estimate these figures are is speculative; however, taking into account the value of his real estate in 1866 and the fact

³¹Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Wake County, North Carolina, Population Schedule, 149, microfilm of National Archives manuscript copy, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina

³²Wake County Tax Lists, 1866, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

³³Wake County Tax Lists, 1867, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

³⁴Ninth Census of the United States, 1870: Wake County, North Carolina, Population Schedule, 294, microfilm of National Archives manuscript copy, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

that the lands he inherited from his father in Mississippi were not included, the figure seems feasible.

During the decade of the 1870s, the Boylan estate was to gain financial stability. In December of 1870 John H. Boylan died, leaving an estate of twelve thousand dollars to his nieces and nephews, the children of William M. and Mary K. Boylan.³⁵ At the time, the four children lived with their father; and the money and lands were added to the Boylan wealth. This development lasted only as long as the children were minors. As they left to establish their own homes, they took their respective inheritances with them.

Boylan was more fortunate in 1875 because his sister, Catherine, gave him ninety-two acres of her share of the Wakefield Plantation.³⁶ This acreage did not include the Joel Lane house; in this regard, she continued to follow her father's wishes. However William Montfort Boylan had in his possession almost the entire original tract of land his father had bought in 1818. The remaining acreage was in his sister's possession and that of the State of North Carolina.

³⁵Letters of Administration, North Carolina Wills, John H. Boylan, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

³⁶Deed between Catherine Boylan and William M. Boylan, 1875, Deed Book 41, p. 706, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

Catherine Boylan sold the twenty-two acres where the State Penitentiary now stands.³⁷

Apparently the economic status of William M. Boylan throughout the remainder of his life remained stable. There are no public documents or family papers available to shed light on this question. Unfortunately, he did not declare his wealth on the 1880 census, so any conjecture would be difficult to establish. The family had begun to leave Montfort Hall by 1880, and only his son, William, and his daughter, Mary, remained at home.³⁸ This might have depleted Boylan's resources to some degree, but this probably had been anticipated and had little effect on his wealth.

Before he died Boylan received an inheritance from his sister, Catherine Boylan, who died in 1895 leaving an estate of thirty-five thousand dollars to members of the Boylan family.³⁹ William M. Boylan received a small parcel of land and two thousand dollars as his share of his sister's estate. The Joel Lane house and the bulk of her money went to her nephews and nieces. Betsy Snow received the largest

³⁷Deed between Catherine Boylan and the North Carolina State Penitentiary, 30 August 1869, Deed Book 27, p. 656, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

³⁸Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Wake County, North Carolina, Population Schedule, 359, microfilm of National Archives manuscript copy, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

³⁹North Carolina Wills, Catherine Boylan, 1895, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

inheritance, nine thousand dollars and property in Raleigh. William Boylan, her nephew, received her land in Mississippi and co-ownership of the Joel Lane house with Adelaide Boylan, daughter of John H. Boylan.⁴⁰

William Montfort Boylan was to finish his life holding valuable property in Wake County. His life spanned seventy-six years. During his life, his occupational title changed from planter to farmer, but his aristocratic bearing persisted. Through all these years, he clung to his birthright and its heritage. Ironically, he did not die at his beloved home, Montfort Hall, or even in North Carolina. He had left Raleigh in 1899 to have a wart removed from his nose at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. After a successful operation, he suffered a stroke that ended his life.⁴¹

At his death, he was well known as a humanitarian and as one of the last of the ante-bellum Southern gentleman. He did not contribute his energies toward bettering the city or Wake County as his father had, but he deserves a place in the folklore and tradition of Raleigh. He will always be remembered as the liquor-drinking, fun-loving huntsman of Boylan's Hill.

The last will and testament of William M. Boylan left his most valuable property to his wife and daughters. Montfort Hall and its surrounding lands were bequeathed to his

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹The News and Observer (Raleigh), 4 November 1899.

wife, Mary K. Boylan. The Crabtree property totaling some twelve hundred acres was left to his daughters, Betsy Snow and Mary A. Haywood. It was stipulated that upon his wife's death that his home and its lands were to be divided among his four children, Betsy Snow, Mary A. Haywood, William Boylan, and James Boylan.⁴²

The striking aspect of this will was its brevity which seems to confirm Boylan's distaste for legal and business matters. Also, his logical heir, William, received very little from this will. It seemed that father and son were again at odds. William Boylan had broken from the landed tradition of his father and apparently was a businessman like his grandfather. He was Manager of the Interstate Telephone Company in 1901 and by 1908 managed the Capital City Telephone Company in Raleigh.⁴³ He also became part owner of the Boylan-Pearce Company, a department store started by his brother, James, and inherited by William after his brother's death.⁴⁴

Mary K. Boylan continued to live at Montfort Hall until she died in 1902. At the turn of the twentieth century, Raleigh's growth began to encroach upon the Boylan homestead.

⁴²North Carolina Wills, William M. Boylan, 1899, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

⁴³Maloney's Raleigh City Directory, 1901, and Hill's Raleigh, North Carolina Directory, 1907.

⁴⁴Ibid.

This was signaled in 1901 when the house, for the first time in its history, was given a numerical address, Sixty South Boylan Avenue.⁴⁵

Mrs. Boylan must have realized the danger of the city's expansion, and in her will she tried to reaffirm her husband's dedication to his homeplace and keep the home and its lands intact.

I bequeath the half of my Insurance \$2500 to my son William Boylan to enable him to perform the dearest wish of my heart that is by adding money enough of it with his share of the place, to purchase and keep the house and its needs in land in the Boylan name.⁴⁶

This might have been the final attempt of a faithful wife to compromise the differences between her husband and son. However, she did not succeed as a squabble ensued between the children over the division of the estate. William Boylan lived at the home for several years until his expanding financial interests and family pressures forced him to consider Montfort Hall more of a burden than an asset. He vacated the house in 1904, and it was sold to the Greater Raleigh Land Company along with its lands for forty-eight thousand dollars.⁴⁷ The children could not work out a

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶North Carolina Wills, Mark K. Boylan, 1903, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

⁴⁷Deed between William Boylan, et al., and the Greater Raleigh Land Company, 18 June 1907, Deed Book 219, p. 546, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

suitable compromise; as a result, the only solution was to sell the house and property and divide the cash.

The Greater Raleigh Land Company was incorporated in 1908. The goal of the company was to buy large tracts of land and to cut them up into subdivisions with graded streets and generally to improve the property.⁴⁸ Montfort Hall and the historic plantation upon which it stood became one of the company's first projects. The Greater Raleigh Land Company hired Kelsey and Guild, landscape architects from Boston, to plan the neighborhood that was to be named Boylan Heights.⁴⁹ The land was broken into lots as planned, and streets were added, all evidently named in honor of the Boylan family. However, the spelling was altered due to error or choice. Several examples of this are Mountfort Street named in honor of William Montfort Boylan, Kinsey Street named for Mary Kinsey Boylan, and McCulloch Street named for Elizabeth McCulloch, William Boylan's first wife and the mother of William Montfort Boylan. In 1907 there were ten homes in the neighborhood; the most notable home was Montfort Hall which was allocated the largest plot of land in the subdivision.⁵⁰

⁴⁸Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Merchants Association; Raleigh Illustrated, 1910, (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1910).

⁴⁹Book of Maps, 1885, Vol. II, pp. 1-4, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

⁵⁰Ibid.

The house and its tract of land remained unsold for several years during the early development of Boylan Heights. Finally, Zebulon M. Caviness, a Raleigh doctor, bought the property in 1911.⁵¹ The Caviness family moved into Montfort Hall and immediately began to try to adjust it to their needs. After extensive interior and exterior alterations, they resigned themselves to having a new home built on Hillsborough Street. They lived in the home for only three years, and the death of their youngest son in the house added the impetus for their move.⁵² After their new home was completed, they sold the mansion to their neighbor, J. A. Sanders.⁵³

Sanders seemed to have bought the property as an investment. He collected rent on the home from a traveling salesman named D. M. Campbell and a tailor named Triplett Noel until he sold the house in 1915 to George H. Brown, an Associate Supreme Court Justice.⁵⁴ Brown also rented the home to Campbell and Triplett. The property did not stay in

⁵¹Agreement between Z. M. Caviness and the Greater Raleigh Land Company, 28 August 1911, Deed Book 252, p. 457, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

⁵²Interview with Mrs. Zebulon M. Caviness, 27 June 1977.

⁵³Deed between Z. M. Caviness and J. A. Sanders, 5 March 1914, Deed Book 283, p. 414, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

⁵⁴Deed between J. A. Sanders and George H. Brown, 25 June 1915, Deed Book 285, p. 48, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

Brown's possession long. Laura Brown, his wife and co-owner of the home, sold the mansion in 1918 to a salesman named Rufus T. Coburn.

The reason the home changed ownership so frequently was because many believed Montfort Hall to be on the wrong side of the tracks. The state asylum for the insane and the State Penitentiary were within walking distance of the house. The location of the home became a deterrent for any prospective buyer who wished to settle in the house. Ironically, the location was the motivating factor for Rufus Coburn's purchase. According to his daughter, Gerie Coburn Cox, the location of the house was perfect: "Father actually bought the house to be near Union Station, since he made frequent trips to New York, Chicago, St. Louis, and Lynchburg, Va."⁵⁵ It may have been a strange logic that prompted Coburn to buy Montfort Hall, but it was the charm of the building that kept in the Coburn family's care for the next thirty-five years. Only William M. Boylan had owned the house longer. The Coburns renamed the house "Coburnsville" and became as much a part of the history of the house as their nineteenth century predecessors, the Boylan family, had been.

The Coburns were soon to become aware of the dangers of living so close to a penitentiary and a mental hospital.

⁵⁵Gerie Coburn Cox to William Bushong, 17 September 1977. Upon request, Mrs. Cox wrote a letter containing her reminiscences of Montfort Hall and her family's stay there.

One afternoon a prison guard escorted a prisoner from Union Station in Raleigh. The prisoner broke free and ran toward the house. The guard fired his gun, and the man froze in his tracks. According to Gerie Coburn Cox, "The guard fired point blank and the prisoner (white) died. I was looking out of the window and saw part of the scene."⁵⁶ The close proximity of these institutions made the Coburn children come to realize the problems of society at an early age.

The Great Depression was also a major impact upon the Coburn's lives. During these years of hardship, the Coburns lived fairly well, but their house seemed to attract hobos from all over. The hobos came and begged for food, then slept under the porch in the cool shade, many times sleeping off hangovers from cheap wine; finally, they would be carried off to unknown destinations by the next train that came by.⁵⁷ However, the social and economic problems the Coburn family experienced did not overshadow the joyful years the family spent in the home.

Rufus T. Coburn loved to entertain in the mansion. He often held banquets for business and pleasure. A large horseshoe table was placed in the dining room with space for some forty people to sit in relative comfort. The Coburn family enjoyed the house because of its ability to accommodate large social functions. Gerie Coburn Cox recalled that,

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

"It was perfect for parties, banquets, piano recitals, and voice recitals for which the acoustics were excellent."⁵⁸ Coburn and his family enjoyed Montfort Hall as the designer had intended for it to be enjoyed, as a dwelling for joy and family growth.

The Coburns were to grow up and leave their homeplace just as the Boylans had before them. In 1948 Rufus T. Coburn died, and the attempt of Gerie Coburn Cox to convince her brother and two sisters to donate the home to the state for use as a Civil War Museum failed. The family felt that they could not afford such a financial sacrifice. As a result, the house lay vacant for several years and then was rented to a mechanic and a partsman for a motor company during 1950 and 1951. After his family's occupancy, the house again lay empty, but this time it was vandalized.⁵⁹

Finally in 1953 after years of neglect and abuse, the Coburns were able to sell the home to Emily Purcell for twenty thousand dollars.⁶⁰ Several months later she deeded the property to the Boylan Heights Baptist Church, and for the next twenty-four years, the ante-bellum mansion built for a hard-drinking gentleman served as a house of God.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Deed between Rufus T. Coburn, Jr., et al., and Emily Purcell, 6 July 1953, Deed Book 1128, p. 290, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

The church prospered as long as the neighborhood prospered. As Boylan Heights deteriorated and became an area of renters instead of homeowners, the church membership declined. The church had to sell the building because the declining membership could no longer sustain the cost of maintenance.⁶¹ Before they sold the home, the church members attempted to give the house to the city of Raleigh on the condition the home would be restored. The city declined the offer, and the church found a buyer who assured them that he would restore the home.⁶²

The home is presently owned by John and Margarete Jadwick who came to North Carolina from Nashville, Tennessee. The Jadwicks are deeply interested in restoration and preservation and are members of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Restoration. They are confident that they will one day restore Montfort Hall to its original character. This will not be an easy task. The house has been like a chameleon, changing its appearance to suit its environment. During the Boylan years, it was an impressive Italianate structure that was complemented by its surrounding acreage. After the turn of the century, additions were made, and the house was overlaid with a neo-classical facade that suited

⁶¹The News and Observer (Raleigh), 7 June 1977.

⁶²Deed between the Trustees of the Boylan Heights Baptist Church and John Jadwick, 4 August 1978, Deed Book 2645, p. 512, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

the families who lived in a prosperous middle-class suburb. Finally, as a church, it was painted white and loudspeakers were attached to the cupola to simulate the bells that would emanate from the makeshift spire. An understanding of the evolution of the structure of Montfort Hall is necessary for the appreciation of the original design.

CHAPTER TWO

AN EXAMINATION OF THE STRUCTURE

William Montfort Boylan would not recognize his home-place if he were to walk down Boylan Avenue today. The structure has been so camouflaged by the additions of the Boylan Heights Baptist Church that it is hard to imagine this home as a product of a romantic period in American architecture. (Figure 1)

During the early months of 1858, Boylan employed the services of an architect to design his new home. The man he chose was William Percival, an Englishman, who had opened an office in Raleigh in January of 1858.¹ Thomas Briggs and James Dodd, a Raleigh building firm, contracted to construct the home and employed slaves to provide the labor. An advertisement appeared in the Richmond Daily Dispatch to announce this proposed construction:

Wanted--To Builders--a first class foreman to lay off work from architectural drawings and superintend colored hands; to take charge of the brickwork of two large homes, near Raleigh, N.C., to such liberal wages will be paid. Address with references to Messrs. Briggs and Dodd, Builders, Raleigh, N.C.²

The homes alluded to in this advertisement were the Rufus S. Tucker villa and Montfort Hall. (Both structures were designed in the Italianate style, but beyond the general

¹Raleigh Register, 20 January 1858.

²Richmond Daily Dispatch, 17 March 1858.

characteristics of the style--a broad roof, wide verandas, and cool airy apartments--the designs differed considerably.) The Tucker villa was a red brick structure with a single dominant tower, wide overhanging eaves, and decorative brackets. The design was irregular and bold. (Figure 2) In contrast, Montfort Hall was symmetrical with classical overtones. (Figure 3) The patronage these men bestowed upon Percival's architectural skill evoked praise even before both structures were completed. The Raleigh Register reported on 23 November 1859:

In addition to the improvements above enumerated, the elegant residences of Messrs. Wm. M. Boylan and R. S. Tucker in the western part of the city, the former nearly and the latter fully completed, add no little to the architectural beauty of our city, and reflect much credit upon the taste and skill of their designer, Mr. Wm. Percival.³

In order to appreciate the design Percival rendered for Montfort Hall, it is necessary to reflect upon the philosophy and general principles that influenced his work. Percival advocated the architectural theory advanced by Alexander J. Downing in his work The Architecture of Country Houses.

Downing's impact upon American architecture was immense. Through his books and editorials, he played a major role in the movement away from the Greek Revival; he became the

³Raleigh Register, 23 November 1859.

"Arbiter of American Taste."⁴ His three most important works were A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America; Cottage Residences, Rural Architecture and Landscape Gardening; and The Architecture of Country Houses. His Treatise was published in 1841 and was the first American work to treat the art of landscape gardening in a philosophical and scientific manner. In this work he devoted a chapter to rural residences, examining the relationship of the house to its landscape. This theme was continued the following year in Cottage Residences. The emphasis was now placed upon architecture and not landscape gardening, but he continued to advocate the building of residences that would blend with their environment. His final work, The Architecture of Country Houses, published in 1850 delineated his philosophy regarding domestic architecture and included a discussion of interiors, furniture, and heating and ventilation.⁵

In The Architecture of Country Houses, Downing asserted that utility and beauty were values that all good domestic architecture should embrace. The structure must provide its inhabitants with convenience, comfort, and the satisfaction

⁴For a full discussion of this statement, see George B. Tatum, "Andrew J. Downing, Arbiter of American Taste," (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1962).

⁵William H. Pierson, Jr., American Buildings and Their Architects, Technology, and the Picturesque, The Corporate and the Early Gothic Styles, (New York: Doubleday Company, 1978), pp. 350-351.

of human needs. Downing summarized the importance of utility in the following manner:

To the majority of mankind the useful is the largest satisfaction derived from architecture; and while an able architect will always treat the materials placed in his hands for a new design, so as to give something of the expression of beauty even to the simplest forms, he must never imagine that in his art he can largely neglect the useful for the beautiful.⁶

Utility alone was not sufficient for a dwelling classified as a villa; beauty was also a tangible part of the theory for constructing the villa.

Downing's definition of beauty involved two major concepts. The first of these was "absolute beauty" or the "beauty of form" which was the product of proportion, symmetry, variety, harmony, and unity. The second was "relative beauty" or the "beauty of expression" which rendered a structure "significant" to the man.⁷ The design would be "significant" if the architect designed a structure that reflected the personality, character, and manner of his clients.

Percival shared many of the convictions Downing expressed in The Architecture of Country Houses. A description of the design of Montfort Hall echoes the theory of utility and beauty for domestic architecture. The utility

⁶Andrew J. Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, (New York: D. Appleton Publishers, 1850; reprint ed., New York, New York: Dover Publishing Company, 1969), p. 6.

⁷Tatum, "Andrew J. Downing," pp. 160-161.

of the home was to a great extent determined by the floor plan, so this facet of the design will be examined first. (Figure 4)

The entrance of the house led into a foyer which was flanked by doors opening onto verandas. Beyond the foyer was a lower gallery dominated by four Corinthian columns featuring unusual capitals decorated with squirrels, doves, and flowers. (Figures 5 and 6) Directly above on the second floor was an upper gallery with a large rotunda containing a stained glass oculus. The view from the lower gallery to the rotunda was unobstructed. The north door of the lower gallery led into a front parlor that was connected to a drawing room by a set of sliding doors.

The library, located on the southeast corner of the house, connected to the dining room and the lower gallery with doorways that could be closed to insure privacy. The large dining room was serviced by a pantry, connected to the cellar by a flight of stairs and a dumbwaiter. Evidently, food was brought from the outside kitchen to the cellar where it was kept warm for service and was then transported upstairs on the dumbwaiter, providing efficient service with a minimum of noise that might disturb diners.

A room behind the pantry was probably used as an office; these rooms on the southwest corner were connected to the back hall. This hall featured a stairway leading to the

upper chambers. Across from the stair was the entrance to a bedroom and dressing room.

The utility of this arrangement is immediately apparent upon recalling the gregarious nature of Mr. Boylan. His love of entertaining was reflected in the plan of his house. Once the sliding doors between the drawing room and the front parlor were opened, a large room that was designed to accommodate recitals and parties was created. However, if privacy was required, the doors could be closed, and two separate rooms could be utilized. Access to the dining room from the drawing room was available through the second hall, thus creating a vast amount of floor space that could be devoted to entertainment. The remaining rooms on the first floor included a library secluded from the dining room and lower gallery, an office located on the southwest corner of the house, and a master bedroom.

The rooms of the upper level followed the symmetrical pattern of the first floor. (Figure 7) Both the large winding staircase ascending from the main hall and the small staircase ascending from the back hall led to the bedrooms on the second floor. The small staircase from the back hall allowed servants to attend the occupants of the bedrooms without disturbance in the main hall. The main staircase led to a large barrel-vaulted hallway which opened into the upper gallery featuring a large rotunda. There were four bedrooms on the second level. The largest of this group was

the northwest bedroom and its adjoining dressing room. Adjacent to the southeast bedroom was a bathroom with a water closet. This completed the second floor plan that Percival designed for Boylan.

The overall plan of the interior of the villa was convenient and provided efficient use of floor space. The design met the principle of utility and at the same time provided beauty with a creative use of interior space which featured a rotunda and viewing galleries.

The exterior appearance of Percival's design continued to blend the practical with the elegant. Montfort Hall was a red brick structure laid in common bond with elaborate sandstone moldings. Its main facade faced east and was dominated by a central projecting bay that featured a large window decorated with carved sandstone. This window was enhanced by the use of twin side lights and was united by heavy sandstone cornice hoods. The main doorway, framed with a rounded arch of sandstone, contained double doors surmounted by a glass fanlight. Above the door was a balcony which rested upon heavy wooden brackets. A delicate iron balustrade surrounded the balcony, and floor length double doors provided access.

Verandas located on each side of the projecting bay featured paired Tuscan columns. Under the verandas there were pairs of floor length windows with heavy sandstone moldings that rested upon a sandstone string course. The

windows on the second level were single with sandstone moldings and segmental cornice hoods. A heavy entablature encircled the entire building that was broken by paired groups of brackets offset by wooden panels. The building was capped with a low-hipped roof. An octagonal cupola flanked by chimneys completed the outline of the building.

Percival rendered a symmetrical design and interspersed a variety of ornament that brought interest and character to the structure. He utilized this ornamentation to bring beauty to the utilitarian aspects of the symmetrical plan. Every element was proportionate to the mass of the building, and great care was taken to see that these elements were harmonious to the overall composition. Montfort Hall was a structure that was finely proportioned, varied, and harmonious; yet, its greatest attribute was its unity of design. Downing defined unity as a concept that was the "highest idea or quality of abstract beauty" that comprehends, includes, and governs the design of the structure.⁸

Percival's design reflected this single comprehensive spirit, and every element of the building whether simple or complex was instilled with a recognizable and consistent feeling. His design faithfully documented what Downing defined as the "beauty of form" or "absolute beauty." However, the final test to determine the structure's beauty

⁸Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, p. 19.

would be the fulfillment of "relative beauty" or its significance to the man for whom it was built.

Underlying Downing's concept of "relative beauty" was the romantic belief that truth and beauty were inseparable. It followed that architecture must be "truthful" or "significant" if it was to be beautiful. The villa would be significant to the man if it truthfully reflected his character, personality, and manner. This was accomplished by blending the client's home to its environment and manifesting his individuality in the development of the design. The technical aspects of matching the style of a dwelling to the climate of an area and designing the mass of the structure to complement the landscape were easily attended to by a competent architect. However, reflecting a man's individuality in brick and stone required the architect to possess artistic expression in his work.

Downing's explanation of this ingredient for a successfully designed villa can be found in an allegory he published in The Architecture of Country Houses:

The significance or truthfulness of a man's house, especially if that house be a villa, is a matter which he also should well consider, for in it lies the whole philosophy of both its beauty and its utility. . . . There is, for instance, something wonderfully captivating in the idea of a battlemented castle, . . . But unless there is something of the castle in the man, it is very likely, if it be a real castle, to dwarf him to the stature of a mouse.⁹

⁹ Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, pp. 261-262.

Montfort Hall was Boylan's "castle" fashioned from brick and stone to express the taste and personality of the gregarious, robust planter who lived within the villa.

Both utility and beauty are exhibited in the design of the structure from the overall plan to the minutest detail. A study of the materials and the modes of construction that were used illustrates the utility and beauty of the detail incorporated at Montfort Hall. The walls are of high-quality red brick that are twenty-one inches thick. There is a hollow space of five inches between the two courses of the brick that makes up the wall. This bricklaying technique has a very useful purpose. The inner walls of the house remained dry, and the problem of dampness in the cellar was eliminated.¹⁰ Percival employed materials that were native to North Carolina to blend the structure into its environment.¹¹ North Carolina sandstone ornamented the exterior of the structure, and local pines provided the flooring, moldings, and sliding louvers of the interior. Walnut was used for the doors, stair rails, and balustrades. The walls of the interior were of sturdy lath and plaster. Plaster of

¹⁰ For an explanation of this building technique, see Samuel Sloan, The Model Architect, Vol. 2, (Philadelphia: E. S. Jones Publishers, 1852; reprint ed., New York, New York: Da Capo Press, 1975), p. 142.

¹¹ Percival received praise from the North Carolina press for his efforts to use North Carolina sandstone in his projects. Montfort Hall was specifically mentioned and praised for its use of the native stone in the North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 16 November 1859.

paris formed the bas-reliefs and medallions that graced the ceilings.

The home was extremely well built. The plaster and lath and the frame of the structure built one hundred and twenty years ago are still in fine condition. (Figure 9) Briggs and Dodd were excellent craftsmen and received awards for their carpentry at the State Fair in 1858.¹² Their skill was manifested throughout the house, but exceptionally-fine examples still exist on the cupola and on the bracketing of the cornices. (Figures 10 and 11) These details, though invisible to the naked eye, are excellent examples of the high calibre of carpentry of the structure.

One of the most interesting aspects of construction in the home was the installation of plumbing and gas lighting. The villa was one of the first structures in Raleigh to have gas lighting, indoor plumbing, and a water closet. In order to provide the Boylan and Tucker villas with these modern conveniences, Percival employed the services of Daniel O'Donnel, a Richmond plumber and gasfitter.¹³ Only remnants of this plumbing system remain in Montfort Hall, but they are enough to suggest that the system was outlined as follows:

¹²North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 27 October 1858.

¹³North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 9 June 1858. O'Donnell listed Percival and Rufus S. Tucker as references in his advertisement for the plumbing trade. It is probable that he also installed the plumbing system at Montfort Hall which did not begin construction until September 1858.

We will suppose that in this case the owner is entirely dependent upon what he can collect from his roofs, and upon a well in the yard. Two large cisterns should accordingly be supplied, so built that between them may be one of a much smaller size for filtration, connected with a cistern on either side, and from which the pipes that should supply the building should be drawn. In addition, there should be a tank in the roof--so placed as to permit water from the eaves to discharge into it,¹⁴ and its overflow to run into the cisterns below. . . .

Fresh water for drinking was drawn from the well by the use of a hydraulic ram. The well was also used to supply the water tank in the attic if rain water was scarce. The water tank provided a reservoir for the flushing of the water closet on the second floor. All that remains of the system today is the water tank and a few sections of drain pipe. (Figure 12) Originally all of the bedrooms and bathrooms were provided with wash stands that had marble tops.¹⁵ Unfortunately, none of these fixtures are in Montfort Hall today.

The tremendous amount of interior alteration makes it impossible to establish the original decoration of Montfort Hall. In some rooms the walls have been removed, and there

¹⁴Gervase Wheeler, Homes for the People in the Suburb and Country, (New York: C. Scribner Publishers, 1855; reprint ed., New York, New York: Da Capo, 1972), p. 172.

¹⁵Two items lead to this conclusion. Daniel O'Donnell was brought from Richmond to install plumbing systems in the villas designed by Percival in Raleigh. O'Donnell's advertisement listed the items he might install. Stationary wash basins with marble tops were prominent on this list. The Estate Papers of William Montfort Boylan, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, reveal that wash basins with marble tops were to be found in the bedrooms and bathrooms according to an inventory taken of the Boylan Estate in 1902.

is no possibility of paint research. However, there are a few documents that describe the original furnishings, and some rooms have remnants of their original decoration. The bedrooms of the second level have strips of wallpaper remaining from the original decoration. It is evident that these upper rooms were papered with a bright floral pattern. All of the fireplaces are made of wood and are of a simple classical design. The door, window, floor, and ceiling moldings follow this simple classical pattern.

The lower level where Boylan entertained was far more ornate. The four major rooms on the first floor had large fireplaces with beautiful Italian black, white, and pink marble mantels. Immense brass chandeliers hung in the dining and drawing rooms, and decorative brass hardware was installed in all of the doors.¹⁶ Intriguing possibilities exist regarding the remainder of the interior decoration of these lower apartments. Percival had a German frescoe painter in his employ during 1858 and 1859.¹⁷ August Freund had painted the Tucker villa, and with the almost simultaneous construction of the two villas, he may have also helped decorate the interior of the Boylan home. The

¹⁶Interview with Mrs. Zebulon M. Caviness, Raleigh, North Carolina, 27 June 1977. This description of the house was how it appeared in 1911 when she moved into the house with her husband.

¹⁷Raleigh Register, 10 August 1859. August Freund listed Percival and Rufus S. Tucker as references in an advertisement describing his skills and the services he could provide.

moldings, ceiling bas-reliefs, and terra cotta ornaments that seem so bland today would have been excellent areas for a skilled painter to apply his craft. (Figures 13 and 14)

Even if this type of skilled painting was not used, the painting of a villa was no easy matter. The usual practice was to use either a distemper paint or an oil paint to bring color to the rooms. Oil paints were by far the most difficult to apply and usually were only applied in rooms that received heavy use. The dining room and drawing room would definitely receive this treatment, and depending upon the client's wishes, it might be used in all of the rooms. However, the usual practice was to paint the parlor and library with a distemper paint.¹⁸

The color scheme probably would have followed the general rules of the time. The halls, staircases, and entries were usually painted in cool somber colors such as a grey or blue. The drawing room would have been one of the most beautiful rooms in the house. Colors such as rose, pearl grey, and pale apple green with darker side walls for relief would be excellent examples of possible color schemes. The dining room would have used strong and bright colors that would give a feeling of warmth to the room. The library was

¹⁸Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, pp. 399-400.

usually painted in quiet colors, such as fawn, in accordance with the mood of the room.¹⁹

The furnishings of Montfort Hall were inventoried in 1902 after the death of Mary K. Boylan. The interior decoration of the home during the later nineteenth century reflected the family's preoccupation with quantity. Beyond the articles of furniture that were established by use and tradition were a sea of tables, whatnots, chairs, and rockers that occupied any vacant space that was not used for passage.

The dining room was furnished with a bulky rosewood sideboard, an oak dining table, and twelve walnut chairs. The walls were covered with seven large paintings and hanging baskets of plants. A bronze figurine and a gilt clock graced the mantle and completed the apparatus of the room.²⁰ Adjacent to the dining room was the library which was lined with black oak bookcases. Any vacant wall space was adorned with sporting prints, one space with a china wall plaque. A mahogany writing desk, lounge chairs, and cherry and oak rockers completed the comfort of this room of studious seclusion.²¹

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 403-405.

²⁰Estate Papers of William M. Boylan, 1902, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

²¹Ibid.

Across the hallway through the cluster of umbrella stands, hatracks, coathangers, tables, and wicker furniture was a front parlor used as a music room. It contained a piano, sofa and pillows, and three chairs. A whatnot and a marble topped table supported the busts of Robert E. Lee and Napoleon. In addition, a statue of Venus stood in the corner of the room which, with the china figures, flower vases, and jars, made navigation through this room hazardous.²²

The full splendour of this cluttered interior arrangement was found in the drawing room. This was the area that received guests, and as a result, it was the most impressive. There were seven plush chairs, three satin chairs, a large round center table, a small table that displayed the Boylan family album, and a vast array of ornaments that included flower vases, pictures, mirrors, statues, and candlesticks.²³

The bedrooms of the house were equipped with marble washstands and their china equipment, dressing tables, bureaus, wardrobes, and large mahogany or walnut bedsteads. Each room had its necessary supply of pictures, momentos, and photographs. Amid the bedrooms was a large bathroom probably furnished with a zinc tub encased in walnut or varnished pine. The water closet was probably treated in

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

a similar manner.²⁴ The room was essentially used for the storage of towels and linens, but also such items as silver fruit stands, napkins, and silverware were to be found in the bathroom closet for the service of breakfast in bed.

It is difficult to verify the original appearance of the interior of Montfort Hall because the home has undergone extensive alterations. The most devastating change occurred in 1913 when Zebulon M. Caviness renovated the home. The exterior of the Italinate mansion was altered to resemble a Neo-Classical dwelling. The effect was a dismal failure. The extension of the verandas on the first level, the addition of a large second floor balcony, the extension of the portico, and the addition of huge Tuscan columns combined to destroy the symmetry and proportion of the structure and gave it a heavy, overburdened appearance. (Figure 15)

The remodeling of the interior was also considerable, and it altered the entire character of the first floor plan. The drawing room became a dining room; the bedroom and dressing room on the northwest corner of the house was cut into a kitchen and servant's quarters; and the office on the southwest corner was remodeled as a bedroom and bathroom. The library became a parlor and the door that connected it to the dining room was removed. The doorway was widened,

²⁴Gerie Coburn Cox to William Bushong, 17 September 1977. In a letter detailing her reminiscences of the home and her family, Gerie Coburn remembered finding the wooden casing for the bathtub under the house.

and flanking Tuscan columns were introduced to enhance the aperture. However, Caviness did make an improvement to the original pine flooring with the addition of a fine oak and pine parquet. (Figure 16) These floors were polished to a high gloss and remain impressive in the rooms in which they survive.²⁵ (Figure 17)

Boylan Heights had been created in 1908 by the Greater Raleigh Land Company and it immediately prospered. New homes were constructed at an ever-accelerating rate and as a result, settlers in the area overlooked the large home on Boylan Avenue. Finally, Rufus T. Coburn bought the property and his family resided in the house for the next thirty years.

Coburn made one major alteration to the floor plan during his thirty-year occupancy. This remodeling was essentially an elaboration of the pattern set by Zebulon M. Caviness. In order to provide for the health of his children, he extended the southwest wall of the house to accommodate a sleeping porch and gymnasium.²⁶ The corner of the house had originally been an office and had been altered to

²⁵Interview with Mrs. Zebulon M. Caviness, Raleigh, North Carolina, 27 June 1977. The description of interior and exterior remodeling was based on the recollections of Mrs. Caviness and an interview with the daughters of Rufus Coburn. Interview with Mrs. Joseph Coburn Bouchard and Mrs. Edward Coburn Rubes, Raleigh, North Carolina, 4 August 1977.

²⁶Interview with Mrs. Joseph Coburn Bouchard and Mrs. Edward Coburn Rubes, Raleigh, North Carolina, 4 August 1977.

a bedroom by Caviness. Coburn also added a rose arbor to the north side of the house to bring a measure of symmetry back to the eastern facade.

Upon the death of Coburn in 1948, the home was once again to suffer abuse. From 1948 until 1953, the home was used as rental property and then finally left vacant. This vacancy allowed vandals and thieves to break into the home on several occasions and cause considerable damage to the interior of the structure. In fact, upon one occasion, professional burglars complete with blow torches broke into the home and stole the figurines that decorated the chandeliers. This prompted Rufus T. Coburn, Jr. to remove the marble mantelpieces, and he placed them in his new home.²⁷

At this point, what had been a beautiful mansion was quickly becoming a dilapidated shell. In 1953 the property was purchased by Emily Purcell, and the structure became the Boylan Heights Baptist Church.²⁸ The church used the building for the next twenty-four years before declining membership forced the sale of the property. During this period of time, the villa underwent a series of changes to accommodate its new occupants. Unfortunately, many of these alterations

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Emily Purcell purchased the home from the Coburn family in 1953 and deeded the property to the Trustees of the Boylan Heights Baptist Church in 1954. See Rufus T. Coburn, Jr., et al., to Emily Purcell, 14 September 1953, Deed Book 1128, p. 290, and Emily Purcell to the Trustees of Boylan Heights Church, 24 February 1954, Deed Book 1145, p. 40, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

were highly destructive to the building. The complete southside of the first floor became an auditorium for their services. This alteration entailed knocking down the walls that had divided the original dining room, library, pantry, and office. In addition, the servant's quarters in the northwest corner of the house became rest rooms and a storage room was added to the back hall.

The second floor also suffered severe changes. All of the bedrooms were cut up by the haphazard addition of dry wall partitions. The gallery on the second level was destroyed by the removal of the balustrade and was boarded over. The attractive walnut balustrade was sawn into pieces and used as a protective barrier for the floor length windows in the northwest bedroom.

As the congregation grew, additional rooms were added to the second level by enclosing the second floor veranda. This treatment was continued on the first level where the large veranda added by Caviness was enclosed to provide space for two additional rooms. The final product of these enclosures was the creation of an exterior facade that was barely recognizable as Italianate. Only the decorative brackets and cornice hoods on the second floor remained as visible signs of the home's original appearance. A coat of white paint over the brick and the addition of loudspeakers to the cupola completed the camouflage.

John and Margarette Jadwick purchased the home from the Church in 1978 with the intention of restoring the villa.²⁹ Considering the condition the structure is in today, the project will be a difficult and expensive task. The structure has been entirely altered on the interior and contains almost none of its original decoration. Moreover, the removal of several walls on the south side of the house has destroyed the original arrangement of rooms. Therefore, there are two possible alternatives, renovation or a restoration that will be interpreted as closely as possible to the period the structure was built. The Jadwicks have chosen the latter option, so it is this alternative that will be examined.

Major reconstruction is necessary upon the interior of the south side of the villa. The walls that once separated the library, dining room, pantry, and office will need to be rebuilt. This reconstruction process includes the replacement of fireplaces where they have been removed and the installation of marble mantels in the four major apartments of the villa as originally intended. The front parlor had a pink mantel, the library's mantel was black with a white swirl pattern, the drawing room and dining room had

²⁹ Trustees of the Boylan Heights Baptist Church to John and Margarette Jadwick, 4 August 1978, Deed Book 2645, p. 512, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse.

white marble mantels with a black swirl pattern.³⁰ Care should be taken to select mantels of a classical design to be in accord with the Grecian door, ceiling, and floor moldings.

Other important interior decorative elements that will need replacement are plaster ceiling medallions and brass chandeliers for the four major rooms of the first level. It will be important to obtain chandeliers of a sufficient size for each room so that harmony and balance will be maintained. In addition, the tile floors of the foyer, lower gallery, stair hall, and entire south side of the house will have to be removed and if possible the parquet floors cleaned and refurbished. A possible color scheme for the rooms of the first floor has already been discussed in describing the original appearance of the building and this will not be repeated here.

The upper level will also need extensive repair and restoration. After the removal of the dry wall partitions in the bedrooms, the walls could be examined and necessary repairs made to the plaster. Once the cleaning and repair of the walls has been accomplished, the walls could be repapered to a close approximation of their original appearance. Fragments of the original wallpaper exists in some of the rooms, and therefore these pieces could be matched

³⁰ Interview with Mrs. Zebulon M. Caviness, 27 June 1977.

to a pattern and new wallpaper hung. The most difficult task on the upper level will be the reopening of the gallery and a replacement of the balustrade. Fortunately, fragments of the original balustrade have survived as a makeshift protective barrier in the windows of the northwest bedroom and can be duplicated. The most fascinating work on this level would be to reconstruct the water closet and bathroom as they originally appeared. However, this would also be the most economically prohibitive, and the lack of convenience to modern living would probably rule out this ambitious enterprise.

Since very little of the interior design remains as originally planned, an accurate restoration of its decoration would be impossible. Therefore, this places additional importance upon the exterior restoration because this can be established due to the fact it has not received the abuse of the interior. The first step in returning Montfort Hall to its original appearance will be to stabilize further deterioration of the structure and immediately repair the roof, bracketing, and eaves. After this is completed, the box-like additions, extended portico, and Tuscan columns should be removed. This work will reveal the main facade and give it accessibility for the extensive cleaning process that will follow.

The removal of white paint from the brick of the entire house and the yellow and fawn paints on the sandstone

moldings will require patience and care. Once it has been determined whether oil base or casein paint has been used, the proper cleaning methods should be utilized. Oil paint is easier to remove because paint remover and a stiff brush with repeated scrubbing will usually remove the softened substance. However, if casein paint was used, paint remover will not work. In this case, the brick and stone should be soaked with a mild solution of trisodium phosphate which will loosen the paint, and then a high pressure hose with an aerated nozzle utilizing about 1,000 pounds of water pressure should successfully remove the paint without damaging the materials. After the walls have been cleaned, they should then be waterproofed with a solution of silicon. The exact amount should be left to a contractor who is familiar with this type of work and the climatic conditions of the Raleigh area.³¹

The architectural character of the building will have to be considered above expense during the exterior restoration of the building. Reconstruction of the verandas, steps, and the ornate iron balcony will be a costly but worthwhile expense. Once the additions have been removed, excavation of the ground immediately around the main facade of the building will reveal the original foundation for the verandas and front steps. Therefore, their replacement should not

³¹See Orin J. Bullock, The Restoration Manual, (Norwalk: Silvermine Publishers Incorporated, 1966), pp. 132-140.

pose too difficult a problem. However, the recreation of the ornament of the veranda columns and the wrought iron balcony over the door will be a vital concern for an accurate restoration. Luckily the dimensions of the balcony can be determined by the physical evidence of the structure and the fact an almost exact duplicate was designed by Percival for the William S. Battle villa in Tarboro. The veranda columns will also be similar to the Battle villa design in dimension, but in this case they should be of the Tuscan order and not the Corinthian of the Battle mansion.³²

Finally, the possible coloring of the building should be considered. In this regard, Calvert Vaux, an English architect and close friend and associate of Downing, would be an excellent authoritative source. In his work Villas and Cottages, he outlined the general principals for the coloration of a villa:

The main walls should be of some agreeable shade of color; the roof trimmings, verandas, and other woodwork being either a different color, or a different shade of the same color, so that a contrast, but not a harsh one, may be established. The third color, not widely different from the woodwork should be applied to the solid part of the venetian blinds, and the movable slats should be painted a fourth tint.³³

This description completes a general narrative of the work

³²An old photograph of the building prior to the Cavi-ness remodeling shows Tuscan columns on the structure. See Waugh, North Carolina's Capital, Raleigh, p. 99.

³³Calvert Vaux, Villas and Cottages, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1864; reprint 2nd ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1970), p. 68.

necessary for the structure's restoration. Once completed, this home will rank as one of the finest Italianate structures in the state. How important this structure was to the architectural history of the state is an interesting question.

The building illustrated a transition in the skill and complexity of building in the domestic architecture of Raleigh. Thomas Briggs and James Dodd needed assistance to lay the brickwork for Montfort Hall. Yet, after the Civil War, Thomas Briggs not only built but designed many of the notable structures constructed in Raleigh.³⁴ It seemed his association with Percival from 1858 to 1860 sharpened his building skills.

In order to answer questions regarding Montfort Hall's significance to the architectural heritage of the state, and the influence William Percival had upon local building practices, it will be necessary to examine the body of work he produced in North Carolina and also to trace his background for an understanding of his artistic expression. Therefore, the following chapter will be devoted to an examination of Percival's background and his career in Virginia and North Carolina.

³⁴Lawrence Wodehouse, "Architecture in North Carolina, Part II," North Carolina Architects (January/February 1970), p. 21.

CHAPTER THREE

WILLIAM PERCIVAL AND HIS CAREER IN NORTH CAROLINA

William Percival came to North Carolina in 1857 and within a two-year period he designed many residences and public buildings, leaving the state a rich heritage of Italian Villa, Renaissance Revival, and Gothic Revival structures.

Very little is known about Percival. None of his business or personal papers are listed in the inventories of United States repositories. Not even the dates and places of his birth and death have been found by historians after a prolonged search. The few facts about William Percival's life that are known have been pieced together from newspaper advertisements and news stories and from a few comments about him in letters.

The earliest evidence of the architect's career in the United States occurs in a letter written by Peyton Johnston to Colonel Christopher Tompkins of Richmond, Virginia, on 12 September 1855 in which he asked Tompkins to read a request from Percival. The letter of request was forwarded

by Johnston to Tompkins, and it is to be found in the Tompkins's family papers at the Virginia Historical Society.¹

In the letter, Percival stated that he had opened an architectural and engineering office at Goddin's Hall in Richmond, and he described a private railroad he had designed and supervised for William Allen of Surry County, Virginia. It is not known whether Tompkins assisted Percival in locating commissions.

A month later Percival posted an advertisement in the Richmond Enquirer declaring himself to be a civil engineer and architect. He placed a decided emphasis on his engineering skills. The services he offered included designs for public, private, and farm buildings, surveys for railroads, plank roads, and mining projects, all to be provided with general and mechanical drafting.²

Percival also announced that Oswald Heinrich, a civil and mining engineer, would assist him in his business ventures. It was noted that Heinrich was a graduate of the Royal Mining College of Freiberg in Saxony and that he had worked for several years in North Carolina.³ Heinrich was

¹In forwarding the letter, Johnston referred to "my friend Cornet Percival," and described him as a "nice fellow." Peyton Johnston to Colonel Christopher Tompkins, 12 September 1855, Tompkins Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

²Richmond Enquirer, 12 October 1855.

³*Ibid.*

twenty-nine years old when he became Percival's assistant.⁴ This might be the reason that Heinrich did not become a partner in the firm. Presumably Percival had more experience and was in a better economic position than Heinrich.

Percival's advertisement also included an impressive list of referrals: the Keysville and Christiansville Plankroad, the city of Manchester, Andrew Talcott, William Allen, and Bolling and Richard Haxall.⁵ The references convey two items of interest--the first is that Percival probably listed only engineering projects; and second, the chronology of the listings might place Percival in Virginia prior to 1855. His first listing, the Keysville and Christiansville

⁴Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Henrico County, Virginia, Population Schedule, microfilm of National Archives manuscript copy, 413, State Archives, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

⁵All of these referrals were prominent citizens of Richmond or major engineering concerns. What Percival did for each of these clients is not known except for William Allen. See Peyton Johnston to Christopher Tompkins, 12 September 1855, Tompkins Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia. In a letter of request for recommendation for engineering commissions, Percival described his work for Allen as follows:

"I have just finished W. Allen's RR in Surry Co. The cost of it was \$30,000 having 6 miles [sic] in length--flat bar iron--37 tons to the mile--3/4 of a mile of the road rather heavy work--with a descending grade for that distance of 180 ft. per mile. It works admirably." The work done for the rest of his clients is at this point conjectural. He evidently worked on the Christiansville and Keysville Plankroad in some capacity. Andrew Talcott was described as the "late Chief Engineer and Superintendent of the Richmond and Danville R.R." in the newspaper advertisement, so it is possible Percival worked on this project. The other commissions are a complete mystery, possibly a public works project for the city of Manchester and mechanical drawing for the Haxall Brothers who were owners of the Columbian Flour Mills.

Plankroad, began construction in 1853 and was within six miles of completion by 1 December 1854.⁶ As a surveyor, Percival should have been present during the earliest stages of construction. The commission for William Allen was listed as second from last in the references. Percival stated in his letter of request to Tompkins that he had just completed the railroad for Allen, and this would indicate the work was done sometime during the late summer and autumn in 1855.⁷ Assuming that Percival listed his references in a chronological sequence, it is reasonable to believe his whereabouts in 1853 and 1854 must have been in Virginia. In the early 1850s, "the railroad movement became a mania" in Virginia; and it was perhaps this "mania" which brought Percival to Virginia.⁸

Percival's career took a different course soon after his arrival in Richmond. He decided to enter his architectural drawings in the Second Annual Fair of the Virginia Mechanics Institute. The Fair was established in 1854, and

⁶William W. Oliver to the Keysville and Christiansville Plankroad Committee, 1 December 1854, Keysville and Christiansville Plankroad Papers, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia. Percival was not mentioned in these papers, but this was not unusual as the papers mainly dealt with the financial situation of the company and therefore mainly consisted of reports to stockholders, etc.

⁷Peyton Johnston to Christopher Tompkins, 12 September 1855, Tompkins Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

⁸Charles W. Turner, "Virginia Railroad Development 1845-1860," The Historian, Vol. X, No. 1, Autumn 1947, pp. 43-62.

its purpose was to allow artists and mechanics the opportunity to display their skills.⁹ Diplomas and cash awards were offered by the Institute for inventions, products, or art work judged as having merit and usefulness.¹⁰

The awards were probably secondary motivations for Percival's entry at the Fair in 1855. He had just opened an office in September, and the Fair provided an excellent opportunity to display his talents to the people of Richmond. Percival won a first-class diploma for his architectural drawings which was the highest award offered at the Fair.¹¹ He undoubtedly expected these entries to earn him recognition and, more importantly, engineering and architectural contracts.

Percival placed a new advertisement in the Richmond Daily Dispatch on 27 November 1855. The notice announced his recent success at the Virginia Mechanics Fair and emphasized the fact he had won a first-class diploma. The text of the advertisement was identical to the notice in the paper of September except there was no mention of Heinrich or a list of referrals.¹²

The success of this new advertisement in drawing potential clients is difficult to determine due to the lack of

⁹Richmond Daily Dispatch, 16 October 1855.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Richmond Daily Dispatch, 27 November 1855.

material concerning his career. However, within three months—another advertisement appeared that might indicate his office had been highly successful. Percival's advertisement on 19 March 1856 announced his intention to open a drafting room and, with the aid of a group of competent assistants, to produce both mechanical and ornamental drawings for the manufacturers of Richmond. The services he offered were designs and copies of machine work, plans for bridges, copies of railroad and canal maps, and designs for wood, stone, or iron ornamental work.¹³ If his office could support the added expense of hiring draftsmen, it seems likely he had secured an increasing number of projects in Richmond. The result of this attempt to increase his business led to a new phase in his career. By increasing the number of contracts devoted to smaller projects, he was able to provide the mechanics and manufacturers of Richmond a service that had previously been obtained from Baltimore and other northern cities.¹⁴

The Virginia Mechanics Institute realized the value of his service and contracted Percival to organize a curriculum and to teach drafting to the mechanics of the city. The Institute opened a school of design on 10 November 1856.¹⁵ The founders of this school were Samuel Landrum, Thomas

¹³Richmond Daily Dispatch, 19 March 1856.

¹⁴Richmond Daily Dispatch, 14 February 1857.

¹⁵Richmond Daily Dispatch, 28 October 1856.

Wynne, and William Ettenger.¹⁶ The purpose was to provide the mechanics of the city with the skills of drafting and designing that would enable them to be independent from professionals.¹⁷

The course of instruction Percival devised encompassed five major areas of drawing. The first area was elementary sketching which aimed at helping the mechanic gain a satisfactory proficiency in the "education of the hand and eye in acquiring a free and firm touch of the pencil, with a just estimate of the size and form of objects independent of any mechanical aid."¹⁸ The second area comprised of instruction "in the use of drawing instruments, practical geometry, and projection in plan, elevation, and section."¹⁹ After a student completed the initial phase of instruction, he could branch out into three sub-areas. The third area was tripartite; and instruction was offered in architectural, mechanical, and ornamental drawing.

¹⁶Richmond City Directory, 1856, p. 261. All of these men were extremely interested in the mechanical arts and the training of draftsmen for their business interests. Thomas Wynne was the Superintendent of the gas works of Richmond. Samuel Landrum was a painter, and William Ettenger manufactured steam engines.

¹⁷Richmond Daily Dispatch, 2 January 1860. In an article announcing the second session of the design school to be taught in 1860, the purpose of the school was reported as "to make mechanics independent of professionals."

¹⁸Richmond Daily Dispatch, 11 December 1856.

¹⁹Ibid.

The architectural class was taught to draw delineations of buildings in plan, elevation, and section. They were also given lectures concerning the "several orders and styles of architecture."²⁰ The mechanical class involved the instruction of drawing machinery in plan, section, and elevation. The third division of the tripartite area involved instruction in ornamental, figure, and landscape drawing.

The fourth area of the curriculum involved instruction in the shading and coloring of the finished design, and the final area comprised of instruction in map and topographical drawing. Upon completion of the five areas of study, the student received a diploma from the Virginia Mechanics Institute endorsed by its committee and the principal of the design school, William Percival.²¹

The lectures Percival presented to his students covered all areas of the science of drawing. Several of his lectures were delivered to public audiences and were reported by the press. In one of these lectures, Percival traced the evolution of man's designing skill from the Biblical times to 1857. A reporter summarized the content of his lecture:

Mr. Percival, principal of the School of Design of the Mechanics Institute delivered a very interesting lecture on the art of "Design" last Thursday night, at the Institute Hall. After a brief and well-timed preface, Mr. Percival remarked that "Design" may be said to have

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

had its origin in the great example afforded us by the creator of the universe. Man's powers are limited, yet his Maker has richly and harmoniously interspersed throughout nature, unlimited beauties, and, affording him the mental endowments, has left him to gather and arrange them and make them subservient to his purposes.²²

Percival elaborated his Romantic ideals by using examples from the Bible to emphasize his viewpoint. The Book of Genesis he said contains the statement "Cain built a city, which he named after his son Enoch." This quotation proved that man has been preoccupied with design from an early period in his history. He also used a statement from the Book of Kings that described two brass pillars to illustrate man's inspiration of design forms was derived from nature. Percival described the design of the capitals, one of which was "decorated with lillies upon a network ground, and the other with pomegranates," demonstrating man's utilization of natural design.²³ Percival traced the development of design up to 1857, emphasizing the utility and beauty of architecture through the ages. He dealt with the geographic areas of the United States, France, Germany, England, Ireland, Scotland, and the British possessions. He concluded his lecture with an appeal to the people of Virginia to encourage drawing and design as an important element in the training of those in every profession.²⁴

²²Richmond Daily Dispatch, 3 January 1857.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

The press continued to follow Percival's progress and to give periodic reports on the School of Design. The first of these dispatches was made on 8 January 1857 and read as follows:

It is gratifying to witness the zeal manifested by the pupils in the School of Design of the Mechanics Institute, and to observe the progress they are making in these studies. Of the thirty scholars under the charge of Mr. Percival, at least two-thirds of them promise to become superior draftsmen in a short time.²⁵

Percival's instruction was directed toward supplying Richmond with the "homemade" architects and draftsmen that the manufacturers of the city felt they needed. His instruction served these men and at the same time enriched the education of the young mechanics under his tutelage. Evidently his efforts were rewarded. According to a news report on 18 February 1857, his students made rapid progress.

Several of the pupils have progressed so rapidly that their executions are little inferior to accomplished draftsmen. Mr. Percival and his assistant, Mr. Grant, are sparing no efforts to perfect the young men under their charge in the science of drawing.²⁶

Percival's stature in the community increased during his appointment as principal of the Design School. He was soon requested to give a public lecture on the "rise and progress of Design, with its utility as a practical accomplishment."²⁷

²⁵Richmond Daily Dispatch, 8 January 1857.

²⁶Richmond Daily Dispatch, 14 February 1857.

²⁷Richmond Daily Dispatch, 18 February 1857.

The major areas Percival covered in his lecture involved the history of design with an emphasis on the benefits it conferred on society and the importance of making "sketching, designing, and drawing a part of elementary education."²⁸ The recognition of Richmond's need for complex drawings blossomed into a teaching position, and eventually public lectures were offered for the improvement of public taste in the art of design. Percival's association with the Virginia Mechanics Institute was advantageous to both parties. The architect supplemented his income and gained a favorable reputation, while the Mechanics Institute developed a new school that would eventually provide the city with the architects and draftsmen it needed.

The Mechanics Institute contracted Percival for a period of four months as principal of the Design School. The school did not close as scheduled but extended its session for an additional month.²⁹ This might suggest that the lectures Percival gave were popular, and the Design School committee decided to continue Percival's employment. The influence Percival left upon the Mechanics Institute was significant. He organized the first Design School the Institute developed and was a major influence upon the instructors who followed him. Two of Percival's assistants became directors of the program he had instituted--Oswald

²⁸Richmond Daily Dispatch, 21 March 1857.

²⁹Richmond Daily Dispatch, 23 May 1857.

Heinrich taught during the 1857-1858 session of the School, and John Grant instructed the students of the 1859-1860 session of the School.³⁰

Percival did not teach another session in Richmond after 1857, and apparently his ambition to design buildings influenced this decision. Immediately following the close of the Design School for the 1856-1857 session, Percival formed a partnership with John Grant. Their advertisement appeared on 23 May 1857 and ran in the paper for two months. The text of the notice read as follows:

Percival and Grant, Architects and Civil Engineers, Office, Goddin's Hall, Richmond, Va., respectfully offer their services to the public. With a professional training and combined practical experience of more than 30 years, they hope to give satisfaction to those who favor them with orders. In the Architectural line: will furnish designs for churches, public buildings, town houses, stores, villas, and alterations of old buildings, and working drawings, specifications, and superintendence. In the engineering department will attend to branches connected with railroads, sewage, drainage of farm lands, with all the necessary plans and estimates. A variety of complete sets of plans for churches, villas, farm cottages, bridges &c. can be seen at their office.³¹

Engineering did not receive the amount of space allocated in Percival's earlier advertisements. Architecture had become the main business of his office. The partnership did not have long to wait before it received a major

³⁰It was announced that Oswald Heinrich would be an instructor for the Virginia Mechanic Institute's Design School in the Richmond Daily Dispatch, 4 November 1857. A similar announcement appeared naming John Grant in the Richmond Daily Dispatch, 6 October 1859, as instructor for the 1859-1860 session.

³¹Richmond Daily Dispatch, 23 May 1857.

contract. On 24 June 1857, a notice appeared in the want ads of the Richmond Daily Dispatch announcing the need for bricklayers, builders, and carpenters for the construction of a Gothic church in Raleigh, North Carolina.³² The firm based its operations in Richmond at that time, but business in the city did not keep them fully occupied. The firm opened a small school to supplement its income, offering mid-day and evening instruction at its office.³³ The firm also entered designs in the Virginia Mechanics Fair of 1857 and won an award for architectural drawings.³⁴

Evidently Percival traveled between Raleigh and Richmond during the months of October and November of 1857. This trend probably stopped in January when the firm announced that it would open a branch office in Raleigh.³⁵ Percival's time in Raleigh proved profitable. A number of clients were added for the firm during the months of 1857. The references attached to the announcement advertising the opening of a branch office in Raleigh included the Building Committee of the University of North Carolina, Rufus S. Tucker, and William M. Boylan.³⁶

³²Richmond Daily Dispatch, 24 June 1857.

³³Richmond Daily Dispatch, 10 November 1857.

³⁴Richmond Daily Dispatch, 7 November 1857.

³⁵Raleigh Register, 20 January 1858.

³⁶Ibid.

The opening of a new office might have caused problems in the relationship of Percival and Grant that eventually led to a dissolution of their partnership. In the month of February, Grant advertised he was available to teach drawing and perspective; and he opened his own architectural office in May 1858.³⁷ The reason for Grant's departure from the firm raises interesting questions: was Grant unwilling to leave Richmond to continue architectural work, or was he making a good income as a teacher of design and did not want to lose his stable position? The result of this dissolution was significant. William Percival located his practice in Raleigh and for the next two years devoted his talents to the improvement of architecture in North Carolina.

Percival announced his new status in the Raleigh Register in August 1858 after the paid advertisement of Percival and Grant had expired. The advertisement referred prospective clients to his office at Goddin's Hall in Richmond or to his branch office in Smith's brick building in Raleigh.³⁸ It also added some interesting information that had not been included in Percival's earlier notices. The advertisement stated that Percival had sixteen years of experience on public and private works in Europe, Canada, and the United States. His clients included the Building

³⁷Richmond Daily Dispatch, 23 February 1858, and Richmond Daily Dispatch, 12 May 1858.

³⁸Raleigh Register, 28 August 1858.

Committees of the Raleigh Baptist Church and the University of North Carolina, and William M. Boylan, Rufus S. Tucker, and William S. Battle.³⁹

Five major projects were under the direction of the architect, and the demand for his skills increased through 1858. He added improvements to the home of Daniel M. Barringer of Raleigh during the fall of 1858. Barringer wrote to his wife to inform her of his arrangements:

My arrangement is to put Mr. Percival the Architect to make a survey of the house and premises--as they are now and also as they will be with the improvements--then to send them on for your inspection and approval and suggestions, if any, and then for him to hire out the work by contract, as soon as possible and to supervise it himself. He says⁴⁰ it could all be done by December or 1st January next.

In addition to the work for Barringer, Percival was to direct renovations on the State Capitol. He was involved with improving the ventilation and supplying the building with water.⁴¹ He also directed the installation of water closets in the building during October and November.⁴²

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Daniel M. Barringer to Elizabeth Barringer, Daniel Moreau Barringer Papers, 26 August 1858, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Barringer's home and property in Raleigh were sold to the Trustees of Shaw University in 1870. See Book 30, p. 172, Register of Deeds, Wake County, North Carolina, Courthouse. The only residence left standing on this property is the Shaw Divinity School which has undergone numerous alterations; and if this was Barringer's home, Percival's additions are unrecognizable.

⁴¹Spirit of the Age (Raleigh), 29 September 1858.

⁴²Executive and Legislative Documents Session, 1860-1861. Report of the Comptroller of Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending 30 September 1859. (Raleigh, 1861).

During the autumn of 1858, Percival secured one of the most important commissions he was to design while he was in North Carolina. The project was the Caswell County courthouse in Yanceyville. Percival announced preparation for its construction in a Raleigh newspaper:

Notice to Carpenters, Bricklayers, Stone Masons, Slaters &c. Plans, working drawings in detail, and full specifications for a Courthouse, to be erected in Yanceyville, Caswell County, N.C. can be seen at William Percival's Architectural Office, Raleigh, N.C. . . .⁴³

He exhibited the drawing of the courthouse with other designs at the State Fair during October 1858. An article in the North Carolina Standard describing his work read as follows:

In passing around Raleigh says the editor of the Greensboro Times, we noticed some fine additions in the way of new buildings. We learn they are the fruits of Mr. Percival's designing skills. . . . Among the particular designs he exhibited at the Fair, we were particularly struck with the beauty and magnificance of the new Court House to be erected in Yanceyville, in Caswell Co.⁴⁴

The judges at the Fair praised not only Percival's architectural drawing but also his art work and engineering. An award was presented to him for "a number of pastime sketches of English scenery," and premiums were also given to him for his water color painting and drainage plates for farm and city use.⁴⁵

⁴³North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 8 October 1858.

⁴⁴North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 10 November 1858.

⁴⁵This information came from several sources regarding awards given at the Fair. See Spirit of the Age (Raleigh), 27 October 1858, also 3 November 1858, and the North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 27 October 1858.

Percival's career in North Carolina during the month of October 1858 had reached a high point. He had seven structures under his direction and had established himself as a skilled architect. Several newspaper articles appeared in the autumn of 1858 that praised his work and ingenuity. In October his accomplishments were assessed very favorably:

Mr. Percival, the Architect, has aroused up quite a spirit of improvement in our city, and his ornamental creations of his genius cluster around us, with the most pleasing effect, adding grace and beauty as well as comfort to the homestead.⁴⁶

Percival's talents gained recognition and at the same time echoed the lectures he gave in Richmond regarding the "utility and beauty" of architecture. His desire to make his architecture useful led to innovation. He added new plumbing systems to the villas he designed, and he used new building materials as soon as they became available. An example of this innovative spirit was Percival's incorporation of sandstone in his designs. Sandstone was discovered in Wake and Orange Counties in 1858, and Percival immediately utilized this mineral in the construction of Montfort Hall for William M. Boylan.⁴⁷ The Raleigh Register posted a short notice regarding the development of sandstone as follows:

At the late fair in Raleigh, the utility of the North Carolina sandstone for architectural purposes was highly recommended and the effect well illustrated by William

⁴⁶Raleigh Register, 20 October 1858.

⁴⁷Spirit of the Age (Raleigh), 29 September 1858.

Percival, Esq. a Richmond architect of talent and education in our Southern States.⁴⁸

Percival's prestige was not only recognized in Raleigh. A correspondent of the Iredell Express also considered Percival as newsworthy. The correspondent traveled with Percival from Hillsboro to Chapel Hill in a mail hack. The anonymous reporter who called himself Quilp made some interesting observations about his fellow traveler:

This portly gentleman at my side is Mr. Percival, the Architect. He is a man of learning, taste, and ability and as an Architect has no superiors and few equals in the south. He is superintending the structure of many elegant buildings in the State, and among others the two new college edifices on the campus at Chapel Hill.⁴⁹

Quilp's dispatches echoed the accolades of the press in Raleigh. The interesting aspect of Quilp's commentary was not the praise he lavished on Percival but his description of his physical appearance. The adjective Quilp used to describe Percival was "portly." This suggests Percival was a plump person, and it also might indicate he was reaching later middle age.

A second dispatch sent to the Iredell Express was also of a complimentary nature:

The new Baptist Church in Raleigh is now verging towards completion. It was erected at a cost of twenty-eight thousand dollars, and will compare favorably with any structure of the kind in the state. To say that it was erected under the direction of William Percival, is sufficient guarantee for its good taste and architectural beauty. By the way, cannot Mr. P. be induced to deliver

⁴⁸Raleigh Register, 10 November 1858.

⁴⁹Iredell Express (Statesville), 7 January 1859.

a series of lectures through our state on Architecture? Let us try him. He is a man of fine education, and great architectural skill, and one of his lectures would be worth a hundred windy orations from a modern politician.⁵⁰

Quilp's correspondence was a tribute to a man who had in the space of a year made himself the premiere architect in the state. Percival had four large villas, two university buildings, a church, and a courthouse under his direction at this time. The list of buildings was impressive for a man who was virtually unknown upon his arrival in North Carolina.

A few months after the Quilp correspondence, Percival entered an advertisement in The Southerner of Tarboro. His list of references provides an excellent summary of his work in North Carolina to that point. Included among his clients were those named in earlier notices--William S. Battle of Rocky Mount, Rufus S. Tucker, William M. Boylan, and Carter B. Harrison of Raleigh, and the Building Committees of the Raleigh Baptist Church and the University of North Carolina. Several new clients appeared--the Building Committee of the Yanceyville Courthouse, Kenelm H. Lewis of Nash County, and Robert Norfleet of Tarboro.⁵¹

⁵⁰Iredell Express (Statesville), 14 January 1859. I am indebted to Mr. Robert Topkins, Historical Publications Section, Division of Archives and History, for the Quilp Correspondence.

⁵¹The Southerner (Tarboro), 12 March 1859. The referrals of Kenelm H. Lewis and Robert Norfleet have not been verified. The commissions were possibly additions to their present homes.

Percival's impact upon the architecture of North Carolina was immediately recognized by his contemporaries. He had been a topic of conversation and a newsworthy figure in many of the newspapers in the state. People continued to be fascinated by his architectural design. On 16 November 1859, the North Carolina Standard published two lengthy articles concerning Percival's architecture and the improvement he had brought to the state with his designing skill. An excerpt from one of these articles reads as follows:

The new Baptist Church, in this city, is an imposing and effective structure, admirably adapted to its objects. Its acoustic powers, when its Gothic roof is considered, is said to be remarkable. It is a building highly creditable to the respectable denomination which erected it, and the architect who designed it.

Then we have, in the western part of the city, the striking and handsomely arranged villa of our enterprising citizen R. S. Tucker, Esq., and south of that near the line of the Central Railroad, we see rising the handsome and imposing residence of W. M. Boylan, Esq. In another portion of our suburbs, north of the old depot of the Raleigh and Gaston Road a beautiful and unique building is going up for Carter B. Harrison, Esq.

There are other buildings in contemplation, to adorn our "City of Oaks"--among them the Peace Institute, the Baptist College, and the new Bank.

West of this among other buildings in course of erection is the Court House in Yanceyville, the design of which was so much admired when on exhibition at the State Fair last year. In the eastern portion of the State, W. S. Battle, Esq., of Rocky Mount, is erecting a grand and massive residence; while in Tarborough a new Episcopal Church is to be erected, the design for which has met the unqualified approbation of its pastor.

Mr. Percival, of this city, is the architect of all these buildings. With commendable zeal and State pride he is using as extensively as he can, and to the best advantage, the Sandstone of North Carolina, which is said to be equal to the best in the country.⁵²

⁵²North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 16 November 1859.

This article was significant because it named almost every major project that Percival designed in the state. Only the university buildings at Chapel Hill, the First Baptist Church in Hillsboro, and renovations for Daniel M. Barringer, Kenelm H. Lewis, and the State Capitol were deleted. His architectural design was spread throughout the state, and notable structures designed in the ecclesiastical, public, and domestic architectural domains graced the countryside of North Carolina.

The first commission he gained in North Carolina was the First Baptist Church in Raleigh. The church stands on the corner of Union Square directly across from Christ Church designed by Richard Upjohn and built in 1854. This was important because Upjohn was a major proponent of the Gothic Revival in America. Upjohn had emigrated to the United States from England, and he brought with him "an awareness born of experience" that was to help shape America's attitude toward the Gothic style.⁵³ Percival also brought this experience of seeing Gothic structures and feeling the power and impact they had upon the English countryside. As a result, it is no surprise to find his designs of churches to be in accord with his fellow countryman.

The First Baptist Church is a symmetrical structure dominated by a spire with pinnacles and gabled ends. Its windows are of the decorative style, and its main facade

⁵³Pierson, American Buildings and Their Architects, p. 173.

features a large rose window. (Figure 18) The interior of the structure has a wooden vaulted roof that is supported by decorative corbeled brackets that are similar to the design used by Upjohn at Christ Church. The sanctuary is cruciform with short arms, and the interior space appears to be oblong with corners to provide for stairs and dependent rooms.⁵⁴ The church is a strict version of the Gothic style and consequently lacks the imaginative spirit that Percival is noted for in his design.

Percival did not always stay within the strict interpretation of the ecclesiologists. He could be highly romantic and imaginative in his use of the Gothic style. The original design for the Tarboro Episcopal Church is a fine example of his imaginative use of Gothic elements. (Figure 19) The church began construction in 1860; but due to the outbreak of the Civil War, it was not completed until the cessation of hostilities. An exceedingly good cotton crop and the patronage of some of Tarboro's wealthy citizens provided the church with the funds needed to complete the structure by 1867.⁵⁵ The Building Committee deviated from the original design by building brick spires and leaving the structure without its planned stucco finish.

⁵⁴Lawrence Wodehouse, "William Percival, Architect," The North Carolina Architect, November 1967, p. 17.

⁵⁵Joseph Blount Cheshire, The Church in Edgecombe County, 1749-1880. Joseph Blount Cheshire Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Otherwise the structure faithfully followed a design which incorporated twin spires on the west facade. The plan of the church is oblong and is entered from the side. Again the Upjohn-like cross vaulting system was used in its interior.

Percival's ecclesiastical architecture could also recall the parish church of his homeland. He designed a small parish church in Hillsboro that followed the tradition of the village church of England. The beauty of this church is in its asymmetrical design which allowed great freedom in the utilization of its interior space. The plan of the church was oblong with a tower on the northwest corner. Percival utilized simple round-headed arched windows in the church to unify his design. (Figure 20)

Several public buildings owe their beauty to William Percival's designing skills. The most notable of these structures was the Caswell County Courthouse in Yanceyville. The building is a fine example of the Renaissance Revival mode of design. (Figure 21) Percival used a symmetrical design for the building and accented it with a curvilinear roofline and crowned the structure with a cupola that housed a clock. The North Carolina Standard reported the structure was in construction in November 1859. The extent of this construction must be established to attribute the structure

to Percival.⁵⁶ A month before the report in the North Carolina Standard an artist by the name of William Roberts who was working in Raleigh received an interesting letter from his brother and father in Yanceyville who described the new courthouse as follows:

. . . The new corthouse [sic] looks to me like some of your mountains doo [sic] to you. I recon [sic] they are done [with] the brick work on the wall and are fixen [sic] to finish the roof [and] the cupilo [sic] [is] up some 12 to 15 feet. . . .⁵⁷

This dispatch was written on 9 October 1859, and it established the fact that the exterior of the courthouse was nearly completed. Percival did not leave North Carolina until March or April of 1860, so the structure's exterior must have followed his design. Local tradition records the fact the structure was completed by an itinerant Frenchman who designed the interior plaster and added corn and tobacco capitals to the pilasters on the main facade.⁵⁸ However, it is feasible that the plan which was near completion was followed by the Building Committee. The courthouse did feature unusual corn and tobacco capitals, but Percival

⁵⁶There is a good deal of confusion regarding who designed the Caswell County Courthouse. The building was attributed to John William Cosby-William Powell, The History of Caswell County (Chapel Hill, 1976). It also was attributed to McKnight and Berry-Mary Wilson Brown, "If Courthouses Could Only Talk," Popular Government, March 1935, p. 4.

⁵⁷James L. and E. F. Roberts to William Roberts, 9 October 1859, William Anderson Roberts Papers, William Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

⁵⁸Greensboro Daily News, 14 February 1960.

had certainly seen this type of ornament at Chapel Hill. Alexander Jackson Davis had used this form of ornament in his design for Smith Hall (Playmakers Theatre) in 1850.

Another interesting public building that can be attributed to Percival was the Raleigh Banking and Trust structure which stood on the corner of Fayetteville and Hargett Streets in Raleigh and was known as the "Round Steps" bank. (Figure 22) This bank began construction in 1860 and met the same fate of other structures designed by Percival in that construction was halted due to the Civil War.⁵⁹ However, before the work was stopped, the walls were up and the roof had been completed.⁶⁰ The bank was mentioned in the article concerning Percival's career as a project "in contemplation." This was the "new" bank that began construction in the spring of 1860. Thomas Briggs completed the structure shortly after the war, and Daniel O'Donnel

⁵⁹North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 7 March 1860. An advertisement for proposals from carpenters, builders, etc., was published with a full description of the proposed bank; and it was indicated the plans could be seen at the present bank and that construction would begin immediately.

⁶⁰This conclusion was drawn from several sources. It was reported that the bank was in "progress" and probably had been started sometime in March or April 1860, North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 26 September 1860. Thomas Briggs, Jr., wrote in his diary on 2 October 1866 that the "Yanks are vacating the New Bank Building." Since it is highly unlikely that any construction was continued during the war, this statement might suggest that the building was far enough along to shelter troops. See Thomas Briggs' Diary, 2 October 1866, Willis Briggs Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

supplied the gas fittings and plumbing.⁶¹ The familiar cast of characters would suggest Percival designed this structure, but the maturity of the Italianate design and the incorporation of sandstone moldings might confirm it.⁶²

Two other structures were "in contemplation" during November 1859. The first of these was the Peace Institute which did not follow Percival's design for the structure. The location and the appearance of the female seminary was reported by the Spirit of the Age (Raleigh) on 16 November 1859:

Just across the street from Mr. Harrison's building, the "Peace Institute" of the Presbyterian Church is to be located; and soon the massive walls and towering dome of a magnificent structure devoted to education and piety, will greet us, . . .⁶³

According to the North Carolina Standard (Raleigh) of 16 November 1859, Percival had been contracted to design the school. Evidently the description of the building was taken from a design he exhibited at the State Fair of 1859.⁶⁴

⁶¹See Thomas H. Briggs, Jr. Diary, 14 November 1866 and 14 June 1867, Willis G. Briggs Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁶²Thomas Briggs was well acquainted with Percival since he had built three villas designed for William M. Boylan, Rufus S. Tucker, and Carter B. Harrison by the architect. Daniel O'Donnel had been brought to Raleigh by Percival to install plumbing and gas lighting in his villas. See North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 9 June 1858.

⁶³Spirit of the Age (Raleigh), 16 November 1859.

⁶⁴Raleigh Register, 26 October 1859. Percival exhibited eighteen architectural drawings at the State Fair and won an award for his architectural drawing. It is very probable he exhibited his design for the Peace Institute at the Fair that year.

Unfortunately the design was not completed or even attempted. After Percival left Raleigh in 1860, a young architect named Thomas J. Holt supplied a design for the building which today is the Main Building on the campus of Peace Junior College in Raleigh.⁶⁵ Instead of the elaborate structure Percival envisioned for the school, an eclectic design was adopted that mixed Italianate elements with a heavy classical facade. (Figure 23)

The final structure that was mentioned as being "in contemplation" was a Baptist College. The Baptist denomination never intended to construct a new building, but they wanted to buy and renovate Bain's Hotel to house their school. The hotel was sold to the Baptists in July 1859 for the sum of eight thousand dollars.⁶⁶ It is known from the article concerning Percival's career that he had designed proposed improvements, but whether these improvements were implemented has not been verified.

Two notable public structures were not mentioned in the article of November 1859 because they were discussed in

⁶⁵Raleigh Register, 2 May 1860. An advertisement for builders, carpenters, etc., was published with the instructions to report to the office of T. J. Holt, architect, to see the plans for the construction of Peace Institute.

⁶⁶William T. Bain to Lizzie Bain, 12 July 1859, William T. Bain Papers, Manuscript Department, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. The hotel known as Bain's Hotel was originally known as Guion's Hotel and after the Civil War became the Eagle Hotel. Eventually, it became office space for the Department of Agriculture and was razed in the 1920s. See Waugh, North Carolina's Capital, Raleigh, p. 37.

a separate article on the same page of the North Carolina Standard. These buildings were the New East and New West dormitories which were under construction at the time of the report:

We learn that the new buildings for the University at Chapel Hill are located about one hundred and twenty feet east and west of the present East and West buildings. Their full fronts face northwards, towards the village. They will be spacious and commodious, containing two large and finely finished society halls, four recitation rooms, two capacious and well lighted library rooms, and forty good-sized and well-ventilated dormitories. One of them (the West Building) is already roofed, and even in its unfinished state promises a beautiful and imposing frontage. The East Building will be ready for roofing by the first of the ensuing year, and it is confidently expected both the buildings will be completed by next commencement.⁶⁷

The New West Building was three stories high, and the New East Building was constructed to four stories. The two buildings are oblong in their plan and were built of brick and stuccoed to imitate stone. The appearance and height of the structures was determined by the sloping of the site that required Percival to increase the height of the New East Building to maintain symmetry in the overall plan of the campus. (Figures 24 and 25)

Percival's relationship with the Building Committee at the University of North Carolina was tenuous, and several times he came close to losing the commission. Percival and President David L. Swain were constantly at odds over the project at Chapel Hill. From the very beginning of his employment, Swain complained to other members of the

⁶⁷North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 16 November 1859.

Committee regarding Percival's tardiness with plans or the execution of instructions given to him by the Committee.

Due to a heavy influx of students attending the University from 1848-1858, it became necessary to consider additions to the campus. Alexander J. Davis was requested to submit plans in 1856 for these improvements. At the time the enlargement of Gerard Hall and the erection of cottage dormitories were considered effective counter measures to accommodate the rising enrollment. However the plan was not implemented, and the population of the campus continued to rise and by January 1858 a new plan was needed.⁶⁸

William Percival, of the firm of Percival and Grant, was in North Carolina during this period; and the urgency of the situation at the campus probably led to his employment. Alexander J. Davis would have had to travel to the campus and reevaluate the problem and then design the new structures proposed. On the other hand, Percival had located a branch office in Raleigh and could immediately meet the needs of the Building Committee.

Unfortunately it was not to be a smooth transition for him to move from Richmond to Raleigh. Percival was swamped with new commissions upon his arrival in the state; and during a crucial period of the firm's expansion, he lost his partner, John Grant. Swain was soon to inquire about

⁶⁸ Archibald Henderson, The Campus of the First State University (Chapel Hill, 1947), pp. 149-151.

Percival's delay in the early months of 1858. He sent a brief note to Percival and Grant that expressed his concern as follows:

I am greatly disappointed by the delay of Mr. Percival to report on the system of improvements submitted to his consideration. I fear a most favorable opportunity to secure advantageous contracts is in danger of being lost.⁶⁹

The note was sent on 23 February 1858, and it should be recalled that Grant was advertising himself as an art teacher in February 1858.⁷⁰ It seemed that the firm was having internal difficulties at a crucial time. Percival was quick to react to Swain's note and within a week sent a reply informing Swain he would be in Raleigh within a few days and would be ready to meet the Building Committee there or in Chapel Hill. The reason for the delay had been the "great press of business to meet" and the illness of his partner and assistant.⁷¹

The following months of Percival's employment were to be equally as turbulent. Percival met with the Building Committee as promised in March, but by 30 March 1858 Swain was again to complain to William A. Graham:

⁶⁹ David L. Swain to William H. Battle, 23 February 1858, Battle Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. In this letter to Battle, Swain sent a copy of his note to Percival and Grant as an enclosure.

⁷⁰ Richmond Daily Dispatch, 23 February 1858.

⁷¹ William Percival to David L. Swain, 2 March 1858, David L. Swain Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

I am greatly surprised and disappointed by the tardiness of Mr. Percival in the preparation of plans, and advertising for proposals. Judge Battle and I gave him specific instructions ten days ago to advertise in some manner.⁷²

Graham immediately replied on 1 April 1858 to inform Swain that he had visited Percival's office and had learned from him that the advertisements for proposals for the construction of the college buildings had been sent to the newspapers and could be expected in the next issue. He also sent Percival's apologies for the delay in drawing up the plans, but it was unavoidable due to the number of drawings that were necessary and the fact his assistant had been ill.⁷³

March had been an extremely busy month for Percival. He had the construction of two villas to prepare for William M. Boylan and Rufus S. Tucker, the supervision of the First Baptist Church to attend to, and the preparation of plans for the college buildings to be rendered. In addition to this work, he had the instability of his partnership to consider. Grant opened his own architectural office in May 1858 and ended his association with the commissions his partner had obtained in North Carolina.⁷⁴

⁷²David L. Swain to William A. Graham, 30 March 1858, William A. Graham Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁷³Graham to Swain, 1 April 1858, Swain Papers, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁷⁴Richmond Daily Dispatch, May 1858.

After the partnership of Percival and Grant was dissolved, his conflict with Swain abated. Percival had settled in Raleigh for a period of time and consequently was able to devote the attention necessary to keep the Building Committee content. During the summer of 1859, Paul C. Cameron was added to the Building Committee which now was comprised of four members, William A. Graham, William H. Battle, David L. Swain, and Cameron. This was extremely significant because Cameron would be a powerful voice in the decision making of the Committee due to the fact he was to help finance the construction of the college buildings.⁷⁵

On 21 June 1859, on the recommendation of the Building Committee, Percival presented his plan and estimates for the heating and lighting of the new structures.⁷⁶ The plan was a bold attempt to modernize the campus by installing steam heat in the structures and bringing gas light not only to the new buildings but also to the existing buildings on the campus. The men who were proponents of Percival's plan were William A. Graham and Paul C. Cameron. The Committee member who needed to be convinced of the plan's feasibility was

⁷⁵Mrs. C. P. Spencer, "A Biographical Sketch of the Honorable Paul C. Cameron." The University Magazine, (December 1886), pp. 126-127.

⁷⁶From the University Papers, Trustees Minutes, 21 June 1859, in the University of North Carolina Archives at the University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

David L. Swain. Graham expressed his views on the situation in a letter he wrote to Swain on 25 June 1859:

I had a conference with Mr. Cameron last night in reference to the subjects of it [the letter he received from Swain], and the result is that we concur in adhering to the previous conclusion of the committee, to warm the new buildings with hot water Furnaces, and illuminate with gas. . . . I am willing to modify or suspend the matter of lighting for further consultation--and can regard nothing as finally determined in either until the architect shall furnish his written report and recommendation. I have heard nothing from him since we left Raleigh. I perceive no reason for abandoning the plan of warming with Furnaces except the apprehension of failure from inability to manage works of the kind among us. This we must risk.⁷⁷

The conference that Graham and Cameron had at Hillsboro was a decisive factor in the adoption of the steam heating system proposed by Percival. Cameron was in complete agreement with the architect on this facet of his plan. Writing to President Swain on 27 June 1859 he said:

He who builds a large & costly House either for public or private use should not only provide for present use, but as far as practicable anticipate the necessities of the future. In heating by the old fireplace--with no near prospect of coal--we must in time to come to obtain supplies of fuel, from a limited number of fuelholders, who will as the supply is diminished become very exacting--& the more so as your improving village shall increase in wealth and population. . . . but the question of economy is not the only one to be brought into view--cleanliness--& increased safety of the property--& the consequent selection of the rates of tolerance--I know of no objection on the score of health--and this mode of heating is used in Hospitals, as well as in Hotels & Manufactories. It seems to me that under all

⁷⁷Graham to Swain, 27 June 1859, Battle Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

the circumstances our course is a plain one--use the Hot water pipes.⁷⁸

Cameron's argument in favor of the system was almost entirely practical. Steam heat was the most efficient, clean, and economic system the University could employ in their new structures. Cameron also agreed with the plan to light the campus with gas, but in this area he did have reservations. He believed that Percival's estimate of eight thousand dollars was exorbitant and the costs should be defrayed by inducing the citizens of Chapel Hill to contract for the installation of gas lighting in their homes and businesses. Cameron even went so far as to suggest that the University might be able to obtain an income from the gas system if they placed the supply fixtures in a location that could also service the village. Finally, he recommended that Percival's proposals for the gas lighting be recorded in a written contract since the original contract for the construction of the college buildings did not include gas lighting.⁷⁹

Percival did not report to the Building Committee about the gas lighting and heating system until August. His neglect of the University buildings deeply concerned the members of the Committee and drew criticism from Graham in a letter he wrote to Swain on 13 July 1859:

⁷⁸Paul C. Cameron to David L. Swain, 27 June 1859, David L. Swain Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁷⁹Ibid.

His [Percival] delay in reporting to you in relation to lighting the edifices with gas, and his failure to notify Mr. Coats that we had determined to adopt hot water furnaces, excites some apprehension that his remissness may derive from a habit not calculated to increase his reputation as an architect.⁸⁰

There are intriguing possibilities as to why an architect who had been as successful as Percival would be so neglectful of his duty.

Percival's incoming commissions had dwindled by July 1859, and consequently he may not have wanted to enter into a contract that would require his supervision and keep him in the state.⁸¹ Percival probably never intended to stay in Raleigh any longer than was necessary. His advertisements in 1858 and 1859 in the North Carolina newspapers always stipulated that he could be contacted at either his office in Raleigh or at Goddin's Hall in Richmond. He continued his listings in a Richmond City Directory of 1859 and in a regional business directory in Virginia for 1859-

⁸⁰Graham to Swain, Graham Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁸¹Percival's last verifiable structures are the Tarboro Episcopal Church and the First Baptist Church of Hillsboro. Advertisements for proposals from builders were posted in the North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 11 May 1859. Later commissions mentioned in the article concerning Percival's career as "in contemplation" probably were not contracted to require his supervision. This might explain why the Peace Institute did not follow his design in 1860 and why builders were requested to submit their proposals for the bank to George Mordecai, the bank president, and not to the architect's office.

1860.⁸² Neither listing mentioned his Raleigh office, which suggests Percival never severed his ties with Richmond and intended to return. Another indication of his desire to leave the state was an advertisement that was posted as follows:

Wanted by an experienced manager of mines a situation as Head Mining Agent, who thoroughly understands everything necessary to constitute an accomplished manager of mines and who can produce the best testimonials and references.
ABC Richmond, Virginia.⁸³

This advertisement was placed anonymously by Percival in July 1859. William W. Holden's ledger book for that year records that on 27 July 1859 he received payment from Percival to run an advertisement for him signed as ABC in his newspaper the North Carolina Standard.⁸⁴

Percival probably spent most of the month that his advertisement ran in the paper in Richmond. By 8 August 1859, Swain was writing to Graham to inquire about "... the course to be taken with respect to Mr. Percival who has neither visited me nor written since I saw you."⁸⁵ It

⁸²See the First Annual Directory for the City of Richmond, 1859, George M. West, Publisher; also Business Directory, Cities of Richmond, Petersburg, Norfolk, and Portsmouth, 1859-1860 (New York: William F. Bartlett, Publishers, 1859).

⁸³North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 27 July 1859. The advertisement ran for one month in the semi-weekly edition of the paper.

⁸⁴William W. Holden Ledger Book (1858-1864). William W. Holden Papers, the Manuscript Department of the William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

⁸⁵Percival to Graham, 5 September 1859, Graham Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

seemed that once again the architect was in danger of losing his commission. However, this was not to be the case. Percival returned to Chapel Hill by 25 August 1859 and met with Swain to discuss the business of the college buildings.

Battle wrote to Graham on 25 August 1859 to inform him of Percival's interview with Swain. He also requested that Graham and Cameron come to Chapel Hill where the Building Committee could inspect the progress of the buildings as a group and determine whether the plans as they were adopted were being faithfully followed.⁸⁶ His chagrin over Percival's behavior during the summer was indicated in a letter from Battle to Graham:

Contractors and architects require to be looked after as well as other persons, and it may not be amiss that those in our employ should learn at once that we shall hold them to proper accountability.⁸⁷

Evidently Percival convinced the Building Committee of his good faith to finish the work at the campus. By 5 September 1859, he was back at work planning the location of the gas fixtures for the campus.⁸⁸ Ten days later he conducted a survey of the area with the gas contractor, a man

⁸⁶Battle to Graham, 25 August 1859, Graham Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Percival to Graham, 5 September 1859, Graham Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

named Waterhouse.⁸⁹ Percival wanted to install the fixtures that would supply gas to the buildings so that the old buildings could be fitted with gas immediately. Swain did not agree with this "piecemeal" proposal and wanted the gas system to be fitted all at one time after New East and West were completed.⁹⁰

A report that was published in the North Carolina Standard seemed to indicate that Swain had won the argument:

We learn that all the university buildings are to be lighted throughout with gas, a resolution to that effect having been passed by the building committee, authorizing their architect, Mr. Percival, to have the same executed; also instructing him to make contracts with reliable parties for the necessary fixtures for heating the buildings.⁹¹

This article was published in November 1859; and if the report was current, it seemed the gas fixtures for the older buildings had not been installed. It is also noteworthy that the contract for the steam heating system had not been secured by anyone at this time.

This problem was not solved until at least after 21 February 1860 because Thomas Coates, the builder of the college buildings, was still to obtain the furnaces for the

⁸⁹Waterhouse was a partner in the firm of Waterhouse and Bowes who installed the gas works for Raleigh in 1858. See Moses N. Amis, Historical Raleigh from its Foundation in 1792, (Raleigh, 1902), p. 131.

⁹⁰Swain to Graham, 15 September 1859, Graham Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁹¹North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 16 November 1859.

system.⁹² Evidently Thomas Coates had taken over the supervision of construction on the campus because on 2 March 1860 he was negotiating with the Building Committee to provide alterations on the South building.⁹³ By June 1860 he secured the contract for the alterations and was referred to in the Trustees Minutes of the University as "Mr. Coates--the Architect."⁹⁴ This development would suggest that Coates had supervised construction of the steam heating system Percival designed.

Percival had left North Carolina and had returned to Richmond in 1860. On 4 June 1860, Graham wrote to Cameron to inform him of the situation on the campus at Chapel Hill:

In answer to your inquiries.
1st the Building Committee I presume is expected to meet this week at the University--and it may be necessary to consult the Board of Trustees in relation to some matters confided to them. Supposing you had left town [Hillsboro] I this morning enclosed to Gov. Swain a note received last week from Mr. Percival at Richmond saying his long absence had been occasioned by a fall &c. I forgot to state its contents to you on Saturday.⁹⁵

⁹²Swain to Battle, 21 February 1860, Battle Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Swain wrote:

"Mr. Coates is here; he has been sick with pneumonia. He promises to set off for Phil in a day or two, and make all the necessary arrangements about furnaces."

⁹³Fetter to Graham, 2 March 1860, Graham Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁹⁴Trustees Minutes, 6 June 1860, University Archives, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁹⁵Graham to Cameron, 4 June 1860, Cameron Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

The importance of this dispatch is that it does place Percival in Richmond during the construction of the system. Consequently, the attempt to introduce the system to University was a dismal failure. Kemp P. Battle observed in his History of the University of North Carolina:

The plan proved a failure, the rooms near the furnaces being too warm and those at a distance being too cold. After much expense the system was disused, not because the principle was faulty, but because there was a defect in the work.⁹⁶

Percival was an engineer, and it seems unlikely the system would have failed if he had supervised the work. Unfortunately this was not to be the case; and the practical, clean, efficient, and economical system he designed was later replaced with coal burning fireplaces.

The final body of work that Percival produced during his stay in North Carolina was the private structures for his wealthy clients. He designed four villas; these include Montfort Hall, the Barracks, and the Tucker and Harrison homes. The first to be completed was the Rufus S. Tucker villa in Raleigh. This structure began construction in 1858 and was completed by the fall of 1859.⁹⁷ The villa was built of red brick with a single dominant tower and wide overhanging eaves. It was decorated with bracketing common to the Italianate style, and Florentine windows brought harmony to the overall appearance of the structure.

⁹⁶Kemp P. Battle, The History of the University of North Carolina, (Raleigh, 1888), p. 660.

⁹⁷North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 23 November 1859.

The second villa to be built was Montfort Hall for William M. Boylan. The home began construction in September 1858 and was completed in 1860.⁹⁸ This structure had an elegant symmetrical design ornamented with carved sandstone and capped with an octagonal cupola. During the early months of 1859, the Barracks began construction in Tarboro for William S. Battle.⁹⁹ Again a symmetrical design was utilized; only this time two large corinthian columns were added, and the window and door moldings were simplified to bring a restrained classical elegance to the structure. (Figure 26) The Carter B. Harrison villa began construction in 1859 and was the final domestic structure Percival designed in North Carolina.¹⁰⁰ The design was asymmetrical and utilized elements from a variety of Percival's past works. The curvilinear roof was used to its full splendour in this design, and the bracketing utilized was especially elaborate which gave the structure's roofline tremendous variety and a feeling of immense power. The design was completed with Florentine windows, twin campaniles, and capped by an octagonal cupola. (Figure 27)

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 15 September 1858. Percival invited proposals to be sent or brought to his office during the week of October 11-16. Construction probably did not begin until the late months of 1859 or the early months of 1859.

¹⁰⁰ Spirit of the Age (Raleigh), 16 November 1859.

After studying these structures and the chronology of their construction, it seems Percival was undecided in his use of the picturesque modes of design. Logically the order of construction should have been the Barracks, Montfort Hall, Rufus B. Tucker villa, and finally the Carter B. Harrison villa. This would have stated a progressive development from the classical to the picturesque. However, this was not the case because deeply imbued in Percival's design was the philosophy of Romanticism.

His designs were statements of what Andrew J. Downing had theorized in his influential work, The Architecture of Country Houses. Downing had a deep Romantic belief that he described as the "beauty of expression" or "relative beauty." Simply stated, this philosophy meant that the architect should render his designs "significant" to the man who was to live in the structure. To be "significant" a structure must reflect the character or individuality of the owner. Percival tried to embody this philosophy in the villas he designed in North Carolina.

Percival's embodiment of Downing's theories in his villas becomes apparent upon examining the biographical data of his clients. Rufus S. Tucker was twenty-nine years old when he hired Percival to design his home. He had been married only two years and was an extremely wealthy merchant in

Raleigh.¹⁰¹ Tucker was a businessman who required a suburban dwelling that would express his position in society and his enterprising spirit. Percival reflected his character by designing an irregular, bold structure that expressed power and dignity in its form.

At Montfort Hall Percival had an entirely different character to satisfy. William M. Boylan was a wealthy, gregarious planter. The symmetrical design Percival utilized reflected the tradition of the southern plantation house, yet the incorporation of elaborate ornament manifested his client's love of the good life. This symmetrical plan was used for William S. Battle, who was also a planter; but the addition of Corinthian columns and the simplification of the cornice hoods and moldings reflected the fact he was a justice of the peace and a cotton manufacturer.¹⁰² The restrained classicism Percival added to the home was a masterful adaption of basically an identical design he had rendered for Boylan.

The final villa built for Carter B. Harrison in 1859 derived its form from a highly picturesque idiom. Harrison was a bachelor aged 46 who owned vast tracts of land and was a railroad entrepreneur when Percival was

¹⁰¹Jerome Dowd, Sketches of Prominent Living North Carolinians, (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1898), pp. 255-257.

¹⁰²Ashe, Biographical History of North Carolina, Vol. VI, p. 87.

commissioned to design his home. However, he was to be married in 1860 to a beautiful young widow named Margaret McKnight Jeffreys of Franklin County. This was the most flamboyant villa Percival rendered in the state. If it is taken into account that his client was an aging bachelor intent on impressing his sweetheart with his new home, then the highly elaborate villa seemed to reflect Harrison's love of grandeur.¹⁰³ Percival used artistic sensitivity in his domestic architecture, and his villas were romanticized portraits of their owners. He was a gentleman who joined the elite class and used its patronage to sponsor his art of design. From the materials of North Carolina, he fashioned homes that were considered architectural wonders at the time. To the people of North Carolina, he possessed the genius and feeling of an artist. Percival received praise in the press for his work and became an important man in the cultural development of the state. Who was Percival and what was his background? These are important questions to be answered before any assessment can be made of his work in the state.

Percival, at this time, is an enigmatic figure in the architectural history of North Carolina. The only direct description of his origins was in Kemp P. Battle's History of the University of North Carolina. Battle stated that William Percival was "a retired officer of the British

¹⁰³Ida Kay Jordan, "Ghost of No. 18 Seaboard Could Spin Saga of Ante-Bellum Life," News and Observer (Raleigh), 27 November 1961.

Army."¹⁰⁴ The evidence in this paper complements Battle's statement. Percival's lectures at the Design School of the Virginia Mechanics Institute encompassed the whole field of architectural history, but there was a decided emphasis upon Great Britain and her possessions.¹⁰⁵ Percival's advertisements listed the geographic areas his experience in architecture and engineering was obtained as Europe, Canada, and the United States.¹⁰⁶

Other indications of Percival's English origin were an award he won at the State Fair of 1858 for English pastoral scenes and the mention of his rank as cornet in the Tompkins correspondence.¹⁰⁷ All of this evidence verifies Battle's observation that Percival was a retired British army officer. The evidence in this paper suggests Percival emigrated to Canada, then probably made his way south and was drawn to Virginia to work on plankroads and railroads. Evidently he liked the area and opened an office in Richmond and sought employment in either the fields of civil engineering or architecture. Percival's ability to mold his talents to what was available in terms of employment is evident from

¹⁰⁴Battle, History of the University of North Carolina, p. 827.

¹⁰⁵Richmond Daily Dispatch, 3 January 1857.

¹⁰⁶Raleigh Register, 28 August 1858.

¹⁰⁷Johnston to Tompkins, Tompkins Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia. Also, see Spirit of the Age (Raleigh), 27 October 1858, for reference to Percival's art work.

his year in Richmond. He became an instructor of design to supplement his income. A survey of his advertisements from 1855 to 1859 reveal that he wanted to work in the field of architecture, but the opportunities were not conducive to his ambitions. Percival's early advertisements of 1855 and 1856 had a strong emphasis on engineering because this was the field that employment was most feasible. In 1857 after his term as an instructor, Percival formed a partnership and began to enlarge the space allocated to architectural services in his notices. By 1859 after a very successful year in North Carolina, his advertisements began with bold-face capitals declaring ARCHITECTURE as the main occupation of his office.

Any critical estimate of an architect's work and his significance to architectural history depends upon what has been written about him by eminent scholars and critics. In Percival's case a just appraisal has been impeded by a lack of detailed information about the man and his career. This paper has attempted to add to this body of information so that Percival's life and work might receive more than the scant recognition he has received from architectural critics and historians.

Percival had extraordinary talent for his profession. He came to North Carolina for two years and in this brief period designed ten notable structures to grace the state. The designs he rendered in North Carolina are only one

chapter in this man's colorful career. The possibility that there are other structures in Canada, Europe, and the United States that would further testify to Percival's skill limits the scope of any conclusions that may be drawn about his impact on American architecture.

However, there are intriguing possibilities that exist that further research might prove to be significant to the cultural history of Virginia and North Carolina. It is known that Percival had thirty people under his direction in Richmond, several apprentices in Raleigh, and two builders in North Carolina that associated with him and became architectural draftsmen.¹⁰⁸ Percival did not limit his thoughts on architectural design to a classroom for young mechanics. He also delivered public lectures in Richmond and probably in Raleigh to help improve the public's taste in architectural design. A correspondent of the Greensboro Times in Raleigh informed his fellow Greensborians of Percival's intentions as follows:

Our friend Mr. Percival is thinking of giving a few lectures on Architecture in the course of the winter; there is no one more capable of doing justice to the subject

¹⁰⁸See the Richmond Daily Dispatch, 8 January 1857, for a report regarding Percival's instruction of his pupils in Richmond. The names of two of Percival's apprentices are known. The first of these is Fred J. Thorn whose name was inscribed upon the cornerstone of Montfort Hall. The second apprentice was William Clegg who was named as Percival's student in the Raleigh Register, 26 October 1859. Two builders who designed structures after their association with Percival were Thomas Coates (see p. 85) and Thomas Briggs (see p. 35).

either on paper or in the more durable materials of brick and stone, and should he complete his design, he will add greatly to the attractions of the capitol this winter and confer a lasting obligation on his numerous friends.¹⁰⁹

Percival made a lasting impression upon the people of Raleigh. His architectural achievements were constantly followed in the local newspapers. Percival's design evoked excitement and praise from the people of the state. His designs displayed his talents of architectural design and engineering skill that amazed the people of Raleigh. His design seemed magical to them. Percival rendered structures in modern styles and incorporated the most modern conveniences available. Water closets and gas lighting were new wonders for his clients to enjoy. Upon the completion of the Tucker villa, a large crowd inspected his new home. A report from a Greensboro correspondent on 25 July 1859 read as follows:

Mr. R. S. Tucker, having finished and furnished his new house, very kindly set it open last week, for the inspection of his friends, many of whom availed themselves of the privilege; the mansion is regarded as a marvel of architectural skill, full of the greatest conveniences and magnificently furnished throughout.¹¹⁰

The citizens respected and admired the talented architect that settled in Raleigh. In two short years Percival left an indelible imprint upon the city and the state that reflected a development in the architectural heritage of

¹⁰⁹Greensboro Times, 1 October 1859.

¹¹⁰Greensboro Times, 25 July 1859.

North Carolina. Percival's significance can be found in the complexity of his design. He introduced ideas that necessitated a move forward for the acceptance of the technology of the Industrial Revolution in domestic architecture. Percival introduced technology into his design to increase its utility for its occupants. The introduction of engineering was not a gimmick to win commissions but a sound realization of the needs of his clients. He attempted to meet the demands of his profession by designing structures that satisfied the needs of his clients and displayed aesthetic beauty.

There are qualities in Percival's work that can be seen in any structure he designed. Percival's buildings have a character of expression that is as recognizable as an artist's signature upon a canvass. The structures he designed are an emotional response to Romanticism yet deeply ingrained in all of his work was a logical treatment of picturesque form. Percival was an artist, architect, and engineer and his work reflected these aspects of his training.

The villa that Percival designed for a fun-loving huntsman one hundred and twenty years ago is a fine example of the possibilities he envisioned for domestic architecture in North Carolina. Montfort Hall is the only villa Percival designed for his clients in Raleigh that still stands. This building illustrates the excellence of its architect's design, and it manifests an important development in the architectural heritage of Raleigh.

At the heart of the design of this elegant residence was an attempt to create a dwelling with regional and personal significance from the picturesque forms of the Italianate style. In this regard, Percival echoed the hopes of Andrew J. Downing and Alexander J. Davis in his design. The dream these men shared was to design architectural forms that would encourage the development of a truly American domestic architecture.¹¹¹ The villa would be the foundation of this dream because the picturesque modes of the Gothic Revival and the Italianate became idioms to create buildings that expressed localism and the individuality of the proprietor. Percival must have realized that as an Englishman he could not truly reflect an American style, yet he must have believed in its eventual development because he continually taught mechanics, apprentices, and builders architectural drafting.

Percival also introduced a dynamic synthesis into his design between the nature-oriented idealism of picturesque form and the technology of nineteenth century engineering that broadened the impact of his work. This synthesis introduced ideas to the people of the state in the new forms

¹¹¹See Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, p. 362, for his views regarding the use of ornament to bring a "national character" to the villa, and Vaux, Villas and Cottages, pp. 25-44, for a discussion of the prerequisites to the development of a "genuine originality" in American buildings. It is noteworthy that this book was dedicated to Andrew J. Downing, who had brought Calvert Vaux to the United States to become his partner in an architectural firm.

being advocated and it also precipitated a move forward in the acceptance of the technology of the Industrial Revolution in domestic architecture. The luxury of plumbing, gas lighting, and water closets soon became necessities in the homes of wealthy citizens. Percival introduced technology into his design to increase its utility, yet it also played a creative role in the acceptance of new forms of architecture and experimental technologies in North Carolina.

Therefore, Montfort Hall and its significance to the architectural history of the state lies in the fact that it is an important example of Percival's artistic and engineering genius and that it is a structure that once restored will be useful and spiritually inspiring for all time.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF COMMISSIONS

Buildings designed or renovated by William Percival are listed as nearly as possible according to the chronological order of their execution. The following information will be given for each structure: name, location, date of construction, and the firm that built the structure. There are no office records to consult, and this made a complete list of Percival's work difficult to compile. All data available through old periodicals, manuscripts, and inspection of the buildings themselves have been included in this list.

1. First Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C. 1857. Thomas Coates.
2. Rufus S. Tucker Villa, Raleigh, N.C. 1858. Thomas Briggs and James Dodd. Razed 1968.
3. North Carolina State Capitol Improvements, Raleigh, N.C. 1858. Thomas Briggs and James Dodd.
4. Montfort Hall (William M. Boylan), Raleigh, N.C. 1858. Thomas Briggs and James Dodd.
5. Daniel M. Barringer Improvements, Raleigh, N.C. 1858. Builder unknown.
6. University of North Carolina Improvements, Gerard Hall (1858), New East and New West (1859), Chapel Hill, N.C.
7. The Barracks (William S. Battle Villa), Tarboro, N.C. 1858. Builder unknown.
8. Caswell County Courthouse, Yanceyville, N.C. 1858. N. M. Roan.
9. Carter B. Harrison Villa, Raleigh, N.C. 1859. Thomas Briggs and James Dodd. Razed 1962.
10. Kenelm H. Lewis, Rocky Mount, N.C. 1859. (Nature of work undetermined.)
11. Robert Norfleet, Tarboro, N.C. 1859. (Nature of work undetermined.)
12. William Dozier Home, Tarboro, N.C. 1859. Builder unknown.
13. Peace Institute, Raleigh, N.C. 1859. (Design was not executed.)

14. Baptist Female Seminary, Raleigh, N.C. 1859. (Bain's or Guion's Hotel was razed in 1925 and verification of proposed improvements has not been found.)
15. Raleigh Banking and Trust Building, Raleigh, N.C. 1860. Thomas Briggs and James Dodd. Razed 1923.
16. Calvary Episcopal Church, Tarboro, N.C. 1860. Thomas Coates.
17. First Baptist Church, Hillsboro, N.C. 1860. D. Kistler.

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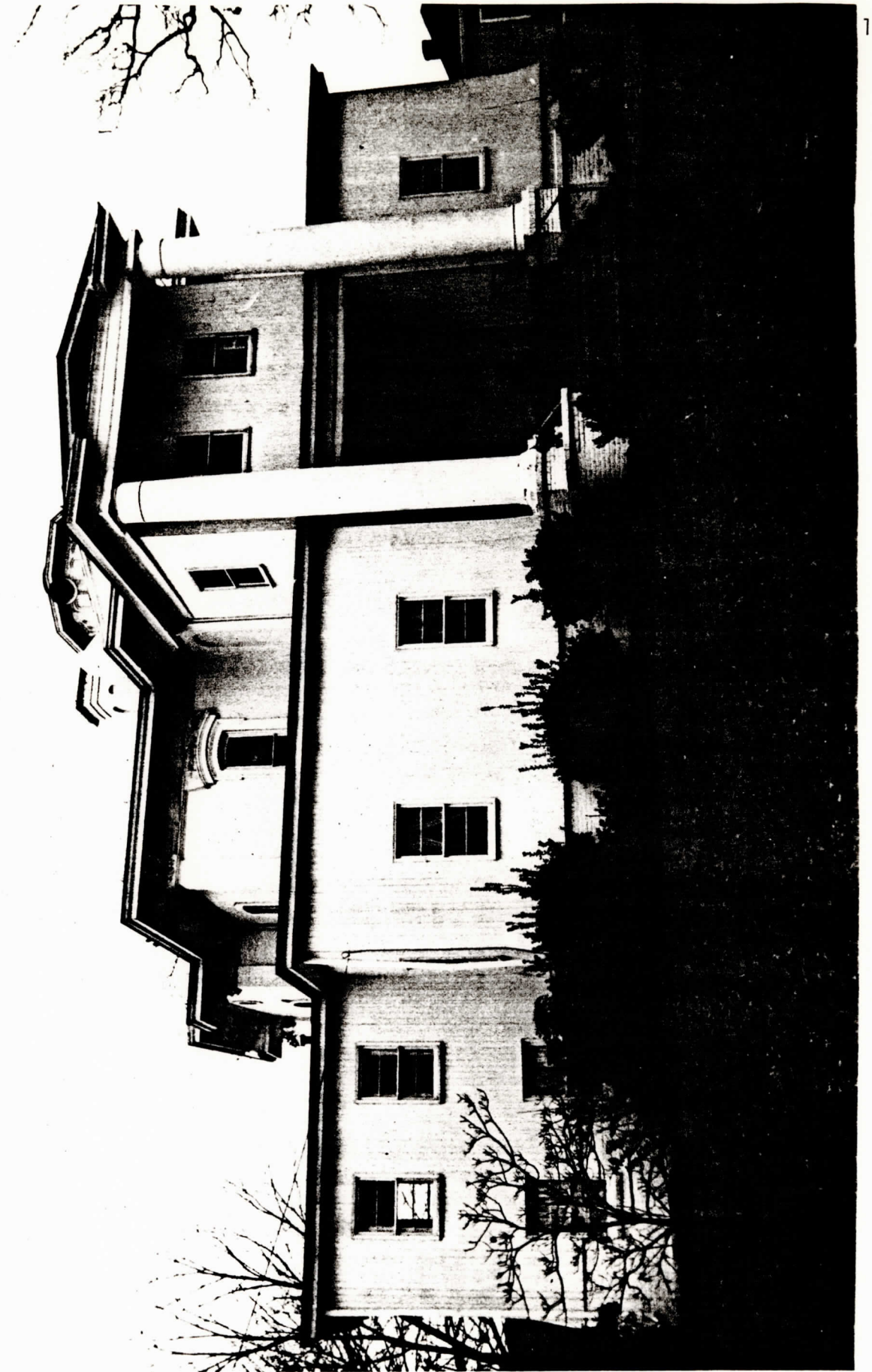


Figure 1. Montfort Hall as it appears today.



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Figure 2. The Rufus S. Tucker Villa - razed 1968
(Photograph courtesy of North Carolina
Division of Archives and History)



Figure 3. Montfort Hall as it originally appeared
(Conjectural drawing by Robert J. Wallace)

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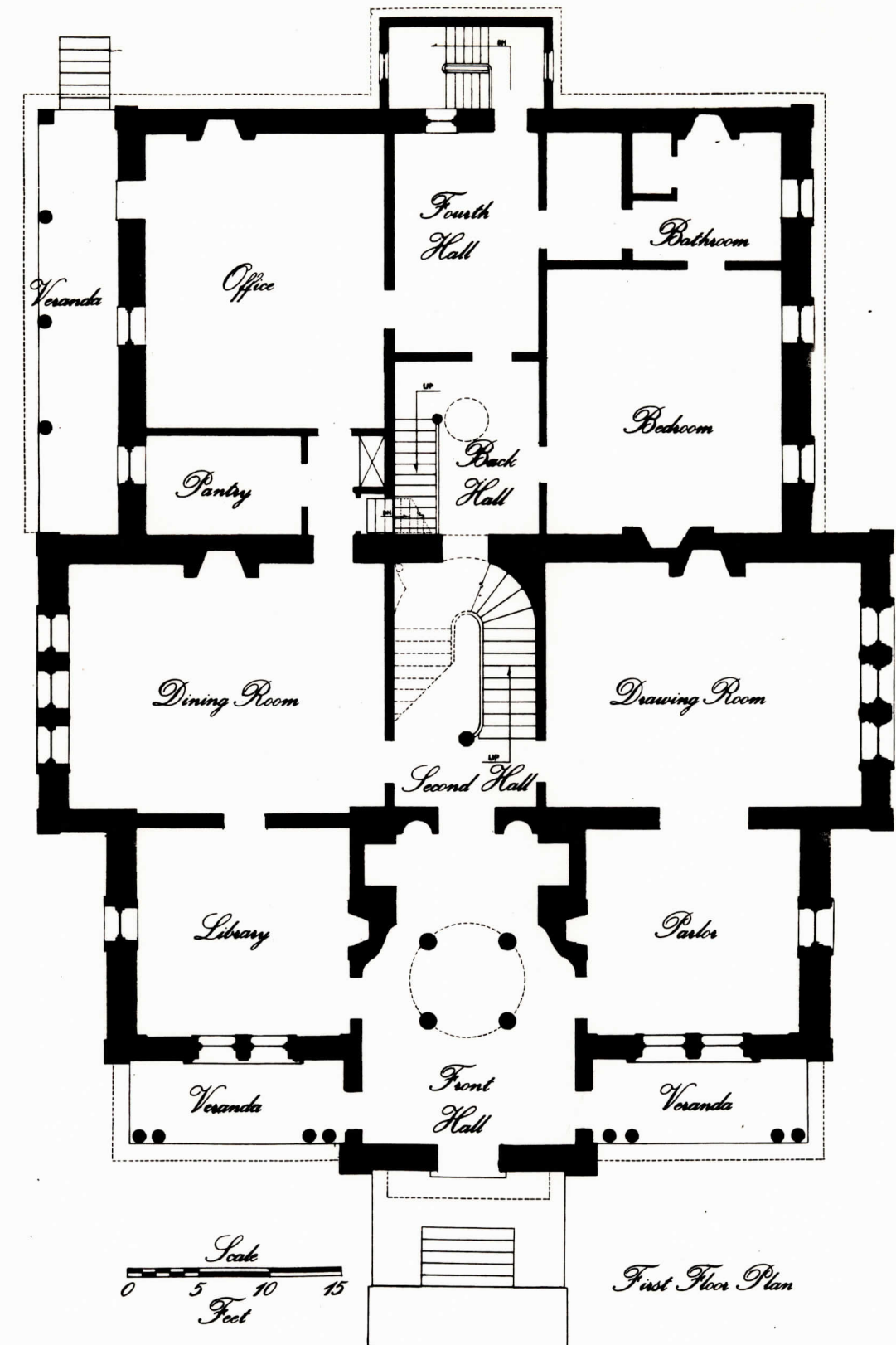


Figure 4. First floor plan
(Conjectural drawing by Robert J. Wallace)



Figure 5. View from the entrance of Montfort Hall into the lower gallery



Figure 6. Detail of a Corinthian capital

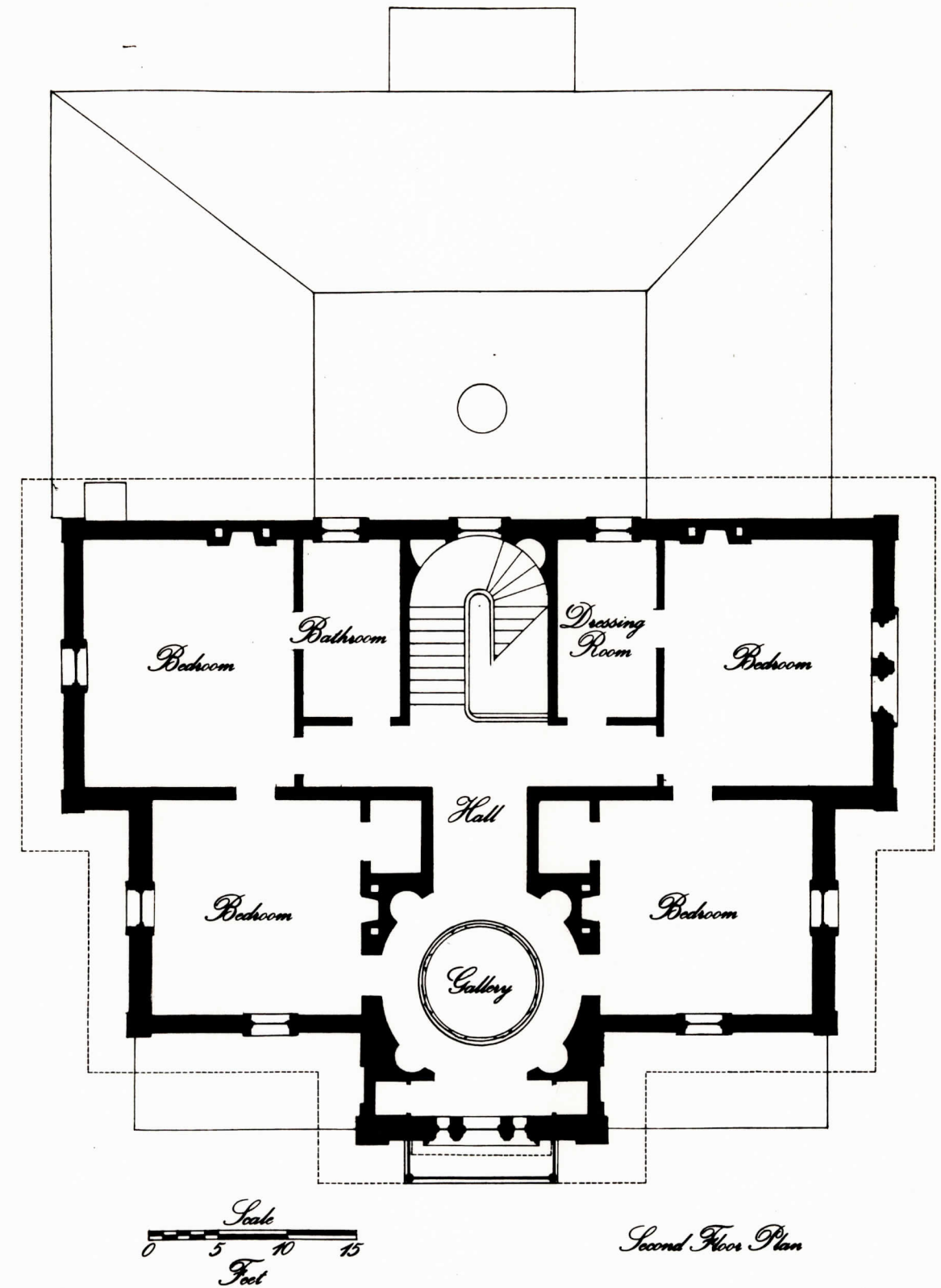


Figure 7. Second floor plan
(Conjectural drawing by Robert J. Wallace)



Figure 9. Detail of dome construction

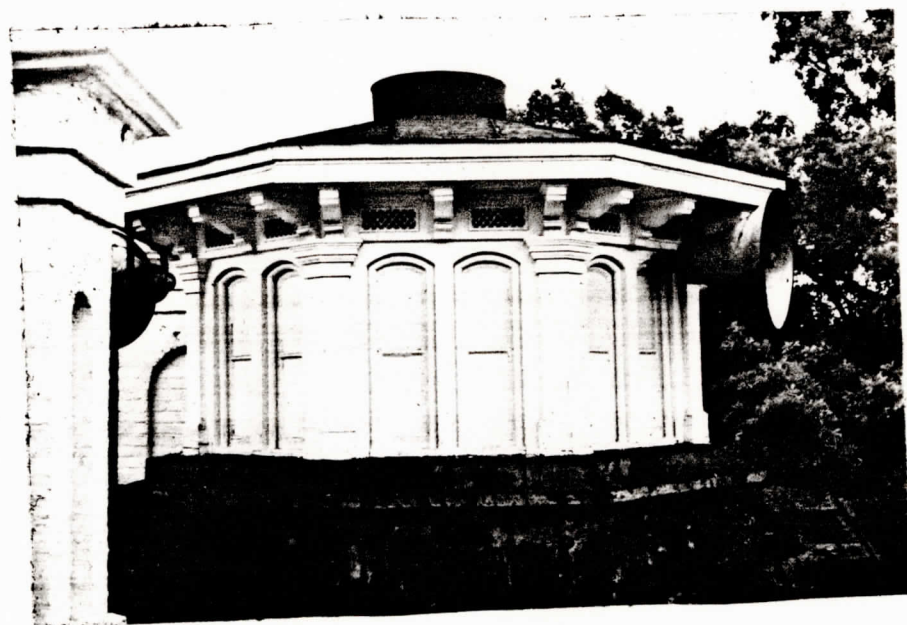


Figure 10. Detail of cupola

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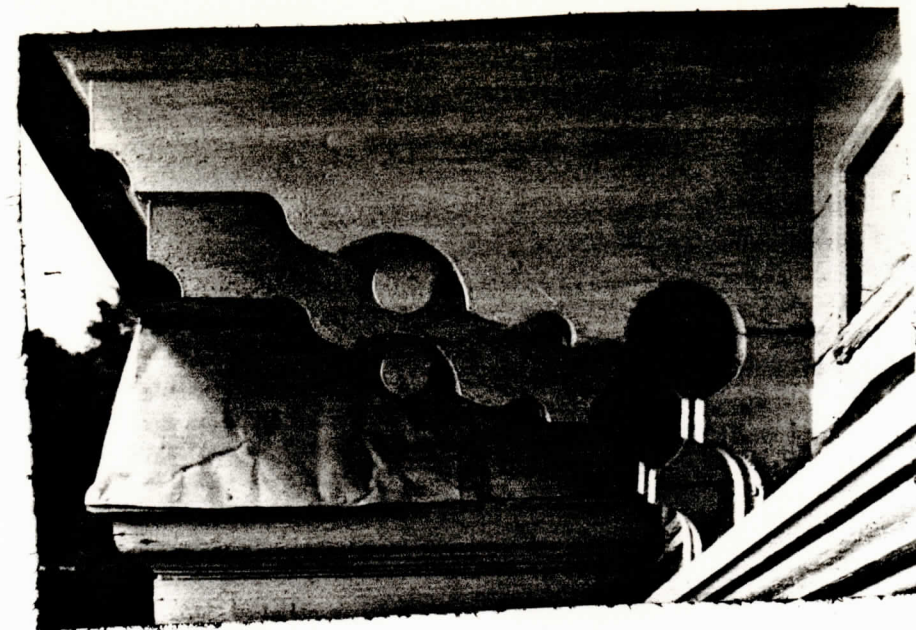


Figure 11. Detail of bracketing

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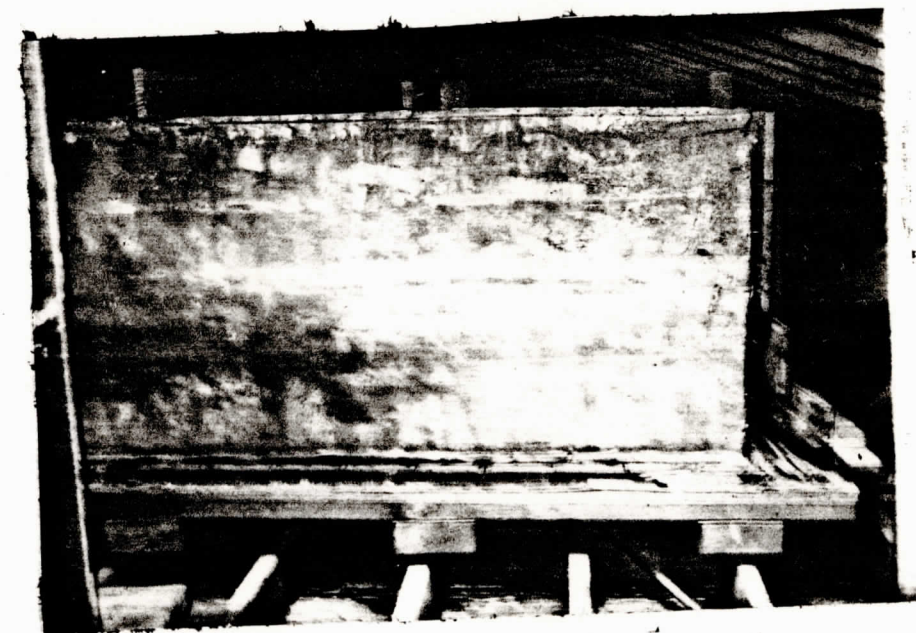
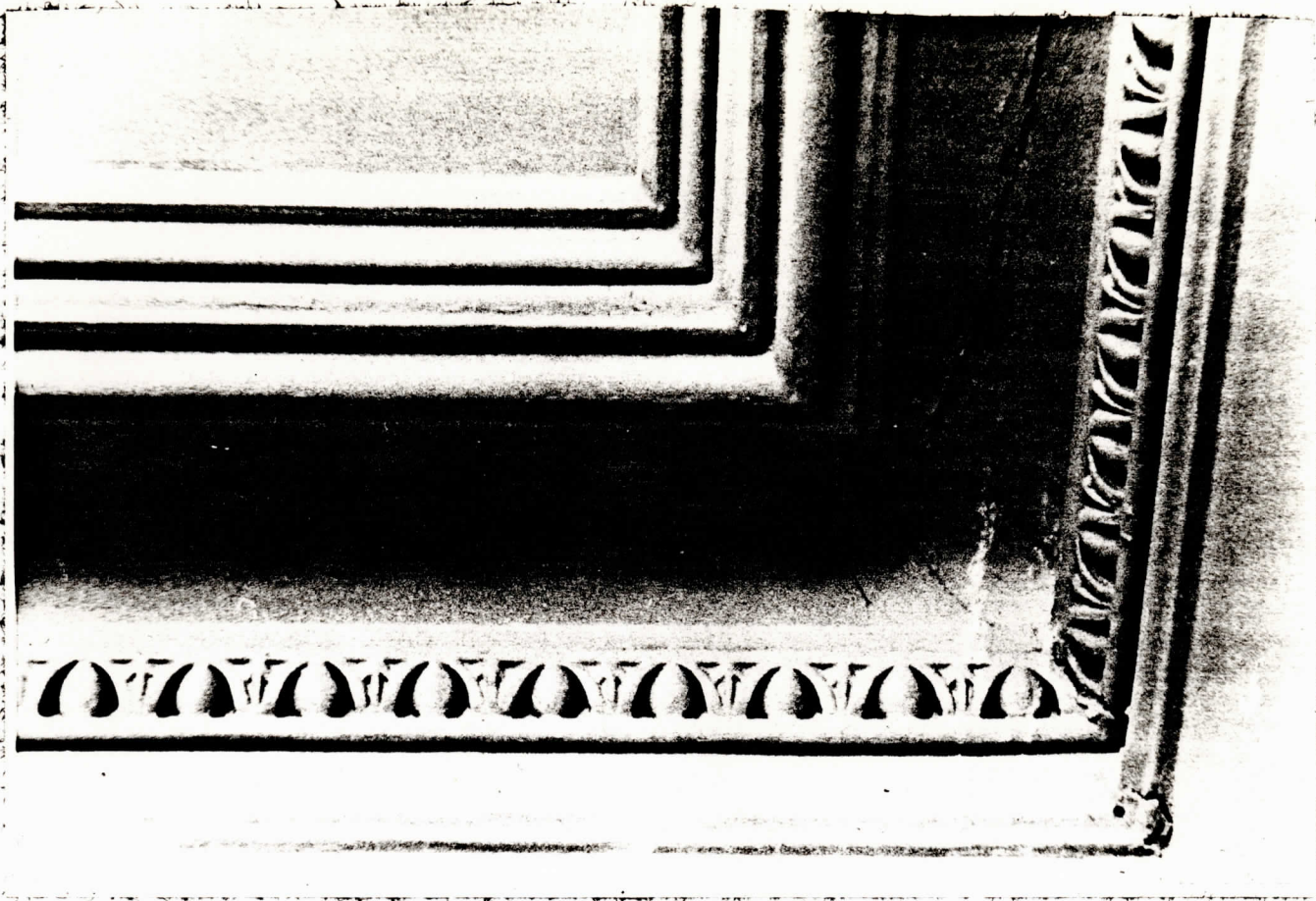


Figure 12. Detail of water tank

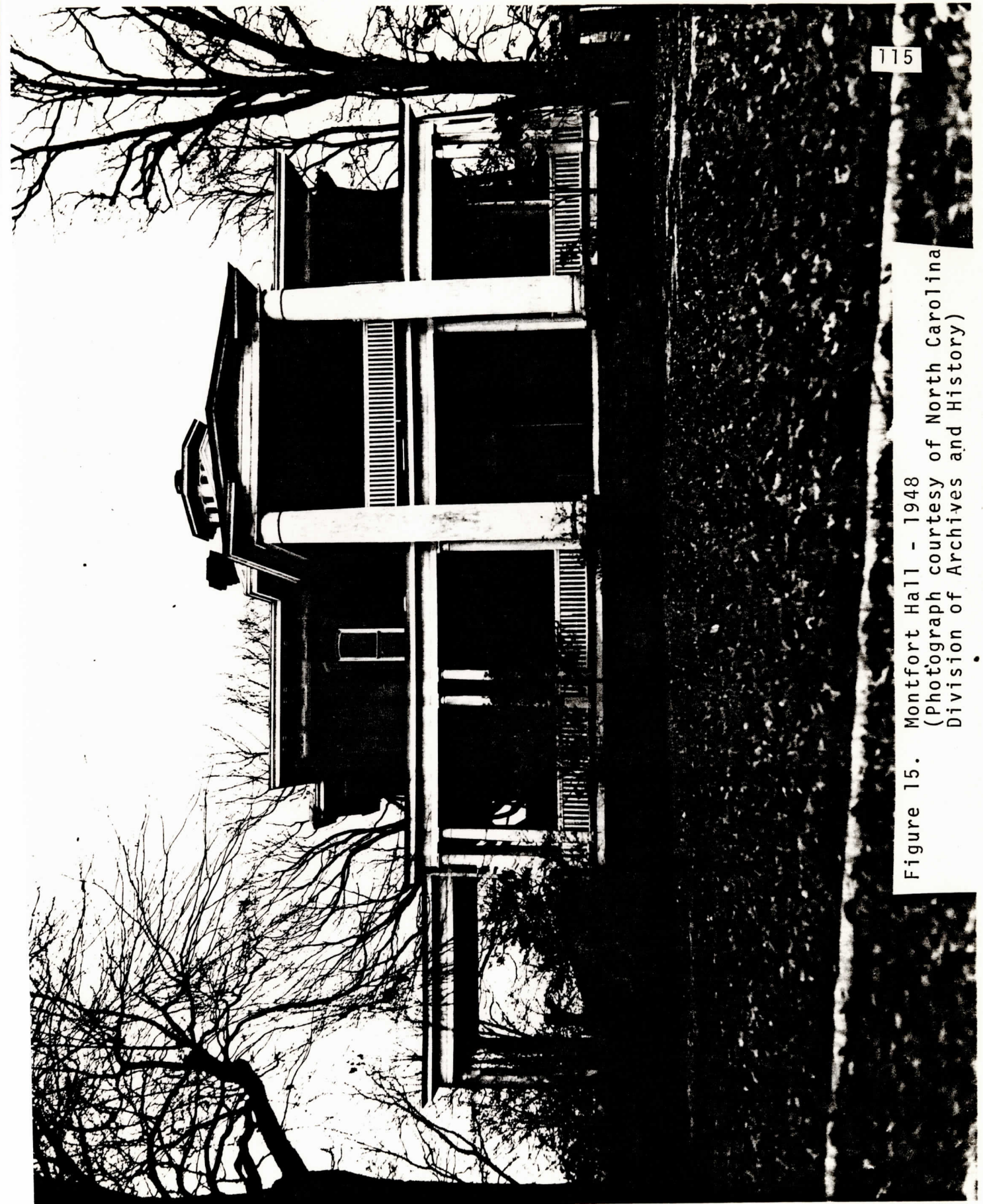


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Figure 13. Detail of ceiling molding with bas-relief



Figure 14. Detail of door molding in the stair hall



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Figure 15. Montfort Hall - 1948
(Photograph courtesy of North Carolina
Division of Archives and History)

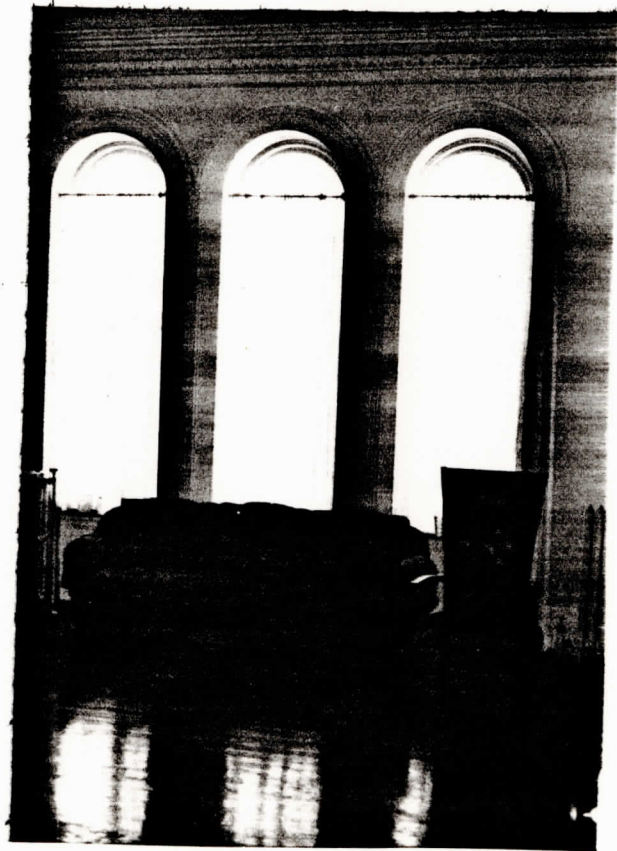


Figure 17. View of drawing room - 1978

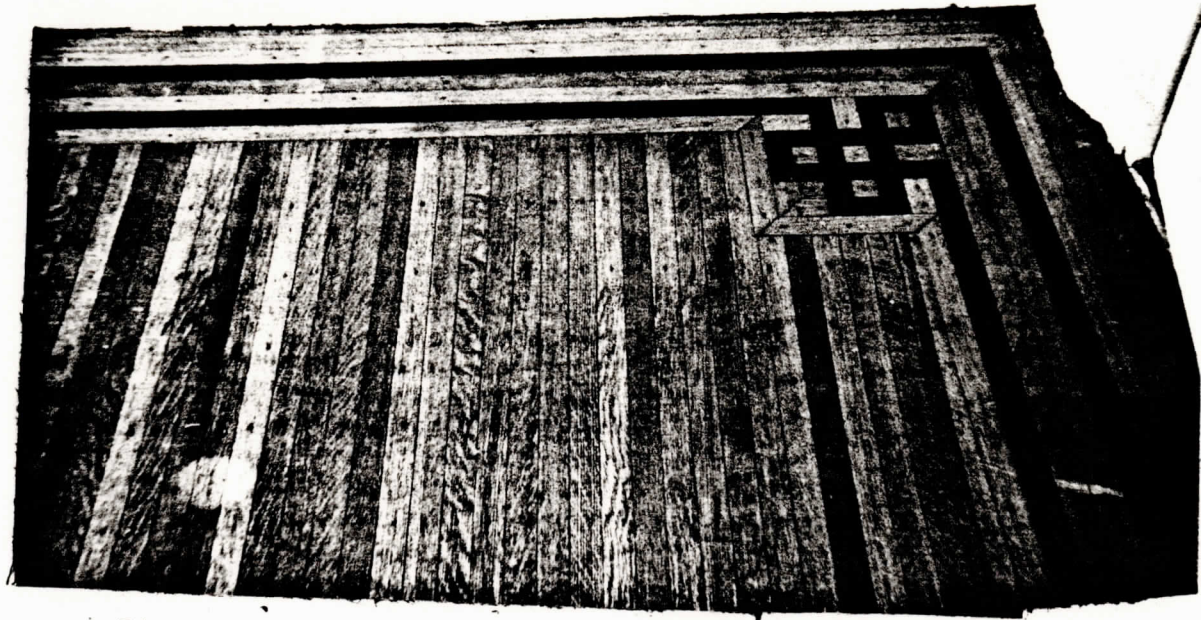


Figure 16. Detail of parquet inlay installed 1913

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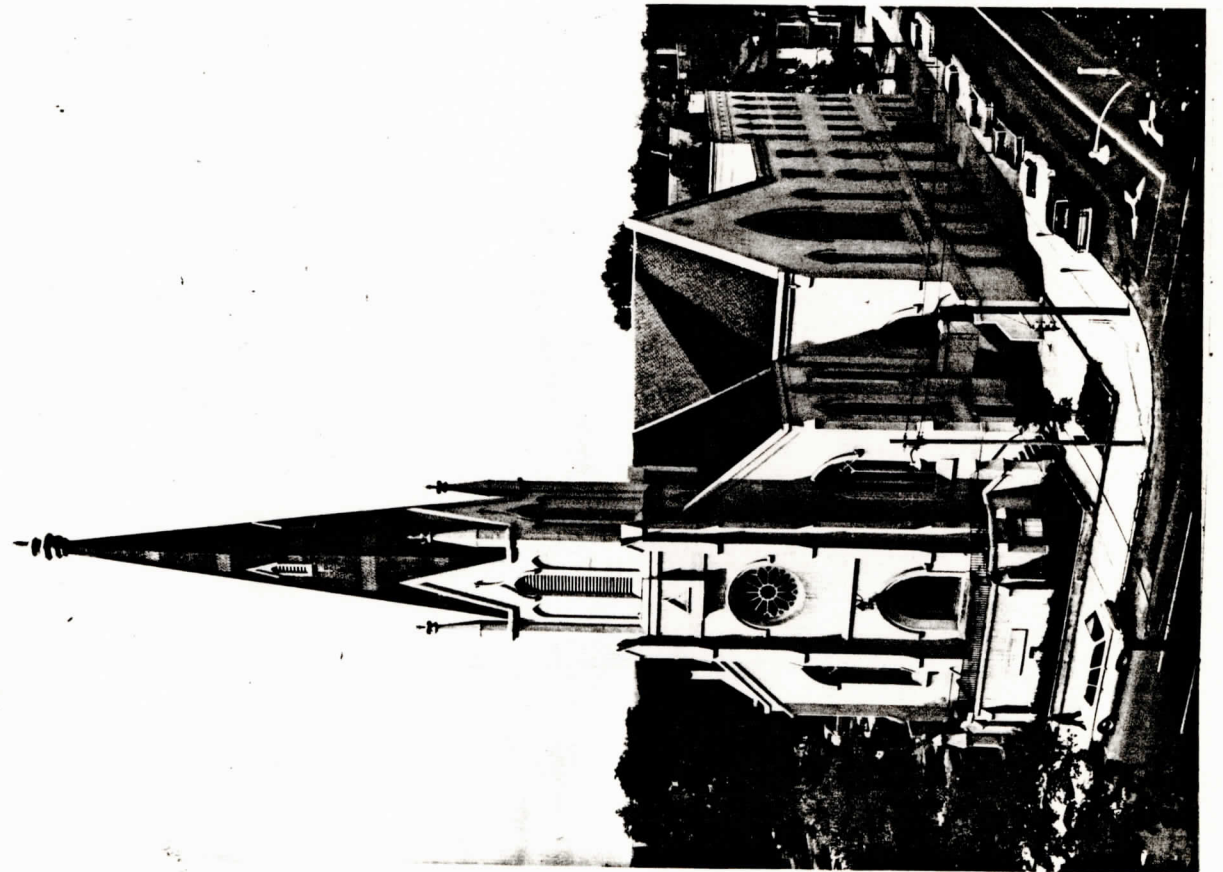


Figure 18. The First Baptist Church in Raleigh
(Photograph courtesy of North Carolina
Division of Archives and History)

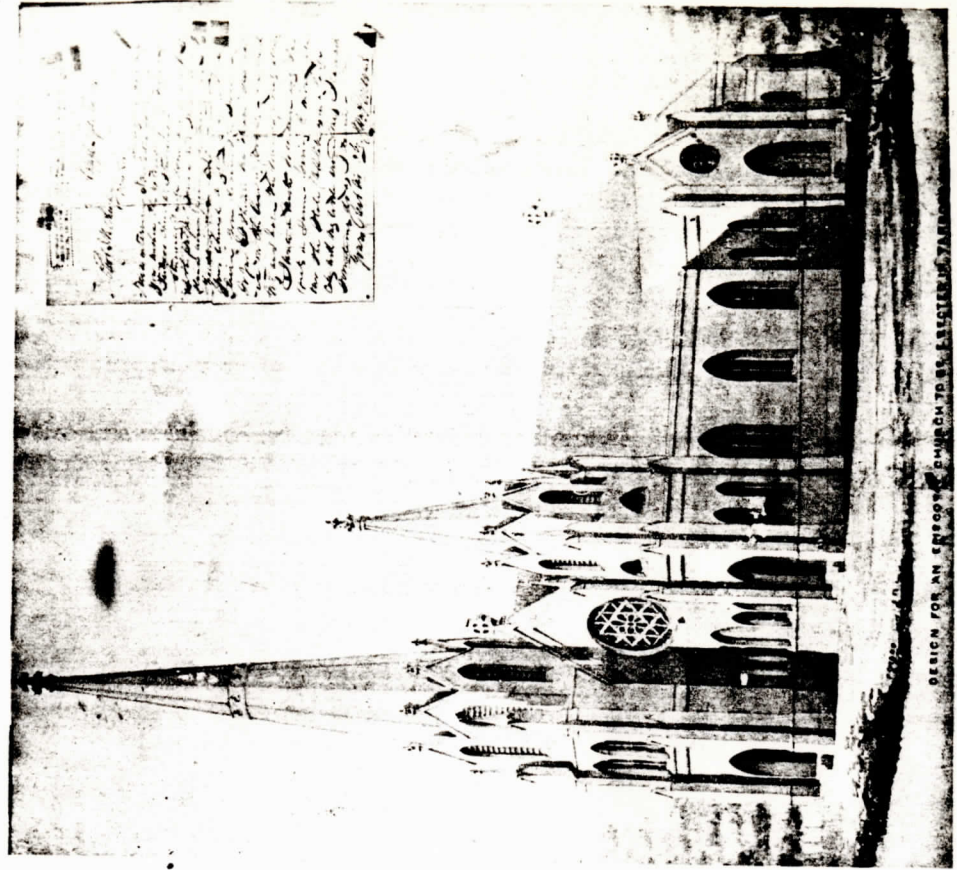


Figure 19. Calvary Episcopal Church in Tarboro
(Photograph courtesy of the Edgecombe
County Historical Society)

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THE MESSENGER

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

GEORGE E. SIMMONS, PASTOR

WAKE STREET AT CORNER OF KING STREET AND MARGARET LANE

IN HISTORIC HILLSBOROUGH

NORTH CAROLINA 27278



WELCOME

To you who are weary and seek rest;
To you who mourn and long for comfort;
To you who struggle and desire victory;
To you who are idle and look for service;
To you who sin and need a Savior;
To whoever you are - First Baptist opens
Wide her doors and offers a welcome
In the name of Jesus Christ, her Lord.

*"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into
the house of the Lord."—(Psalm 122:1)*

Figure 20. The First Baptist Church in Hillsboro

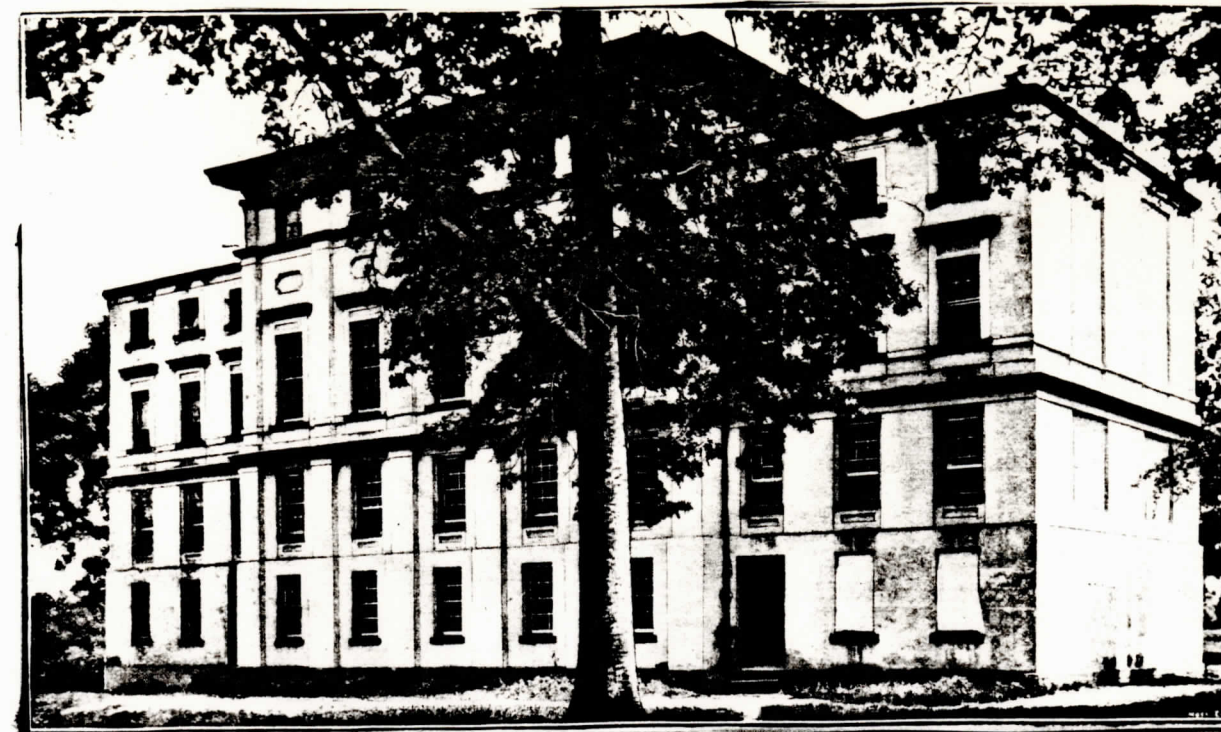


Figure 21. Caswell County Courthouse



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Figure 22. The "Round Steps" bank - razed 1925
(Photograph courtesy of North Carolina
Division of Archives and History)



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Figure 24. New East as it appeared ca. 1880
The building was remodeled in 1926.
(Photograph courtesy of North
Carolina Division of Archives and
History)



Figure 23. The Peace Institute - known today as
the Main Building on the campus of
Peace College in Raleigh

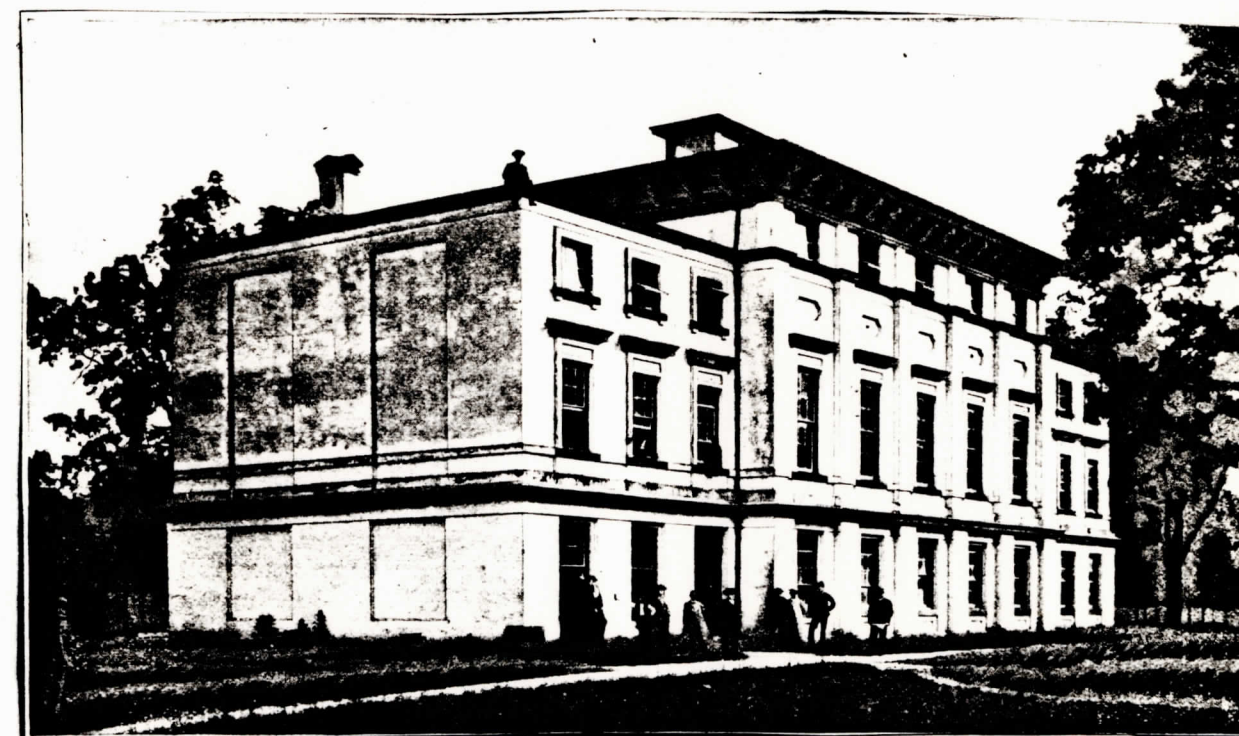


Figure 25. New West as it appeared ca. 1880
The building was remodeled in 1925.
(Photograph courtesy of North
Carolina Division of Archives and
History)



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Figure 26. The Barracks - Home of William S. Battle, Tarboro



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Figure 27. The Carter B. Harrison Villa - razed 1962 (Photograph courtesy of North Carolina Division of Archives and History)

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