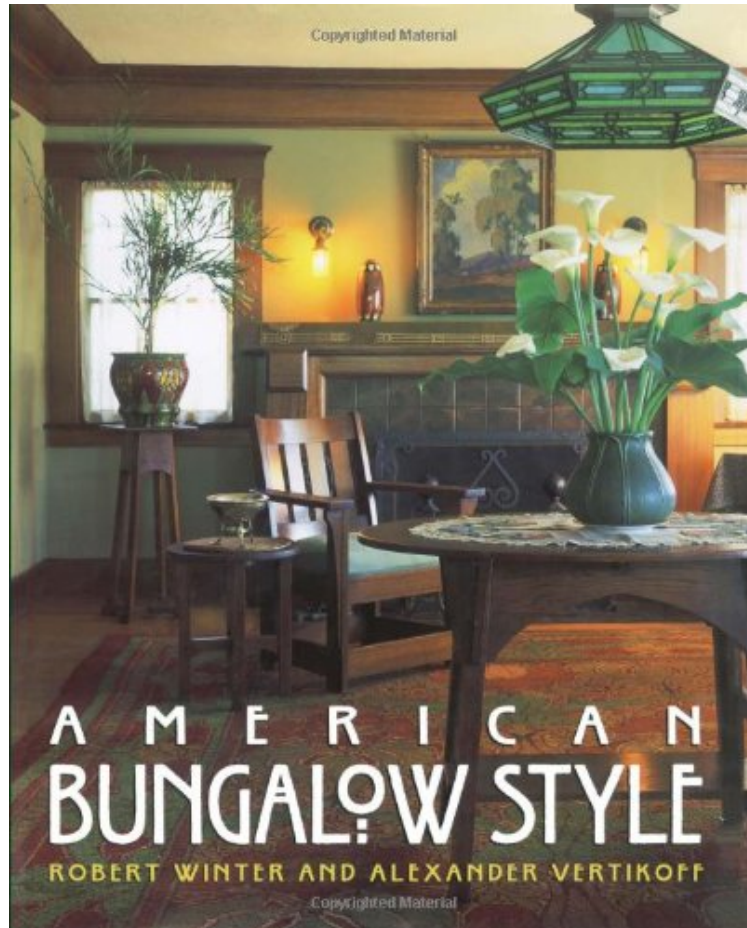


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## American Bungalow Style

*Robert Winter*

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**Robert Winter : American Bungalow Style** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Bungalow Style:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Beautiful book! By Jennifer Beautiful book! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Customer great product 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Bungalow Bob strikes again! By charmion125 In the history of the Arts and Crafts Movement, Robert Winter was there at the beginning, defining a unique American housing type and teaching us all how to enjoy the bungalow's warm and comfortable style. In this book, he shows examples across the country in Alexander Vertikoff's superb photographs and finishes with a useful compendium of modern reproductions. A basic text for bungalow owners.

America once had a love affair with bungalows -- and it's being rekindled coast to coast. This elegant book showcases exceptional examples and features a catalogue of period furnishings. With a flaming fire in the cozy hearth, a comfortable Morris chair, and soft, natural colors everywhere, bungalows have long embodied the ideal of the

American home. At the turn of the century they took the country by storm, providing well-designed and well-priced shelter nationwide. Bungalows revolutionized residential architecture in America and grew into a beloved symbol of domesticity by offering stylish yet affordable housing for the average person. Today whole neighborhoods of bungalows are being saved and restored by people who appreciate the simple and natural lifestyle made possible by these small houses. Beautifully illustrated with more than three hundred color photographs, "American Bungalow Style" presents two dozen American houses that capture the bungalow spirit. Many are Arts and Crafts in style, others show a touch of Spain or colonial America, and all exemplify the charms that enticed thousands of bungalow buyers during the form's heyday from 1880 to 1930. Among the bungalows included are examples by famous architects from Frank Lloyd Wright to Bernard Maybeck, as well as Gustav Stickley's own log cabin retreat. Many are the work of anonymous but skilled builders, and some were ordered by mail. Bungalows may differ widely in style and size, but they have in common a simplified natural lifestyle made possible by these small houses. Beautifully illustrated with more than three hundred color photographs, "American Bungalow Style" presents two dozen American houses that capture the bungalow spirit. Many are Arts and Crafts in style, others show a touch of Spain or colonial America, and all exemplify the charms that enticed thousands of bungalow buyers during the form's heyday from 1880 to 1930. Among the bungalows included are examples by famous architects from Frank Lloyd Wright to Bernard Maybeck, as well as Gustav Stickley's own log cabin retreat. Many are the work of anonymous but skilled builders, and some were ordered by mail. Bungalows may differ widely in style and size, but they have in common a simplified plan that places most of the living spaces on one floor. They are typically one or one and a half stories high, low in profile, and fitted with lots of built-ins and all the conveniences of their time. On their own piece of land, with a garden in front or back and space to park a car, bungalows provided the privacy and independence that many Americans favor. The idea that simplicity and artistry could harmonize in one affordable house spurred the bungalow's popularity -- a rare movement in which good architecture was found outside the world of the wealthy. Bungalows allowed people of modest means to achieve something they had long sought: respectability. With its special features the bungalow filled more than the need for shelter. It provided fulfillment of the American dream. A fully illustrated appendix features more than one hundred furnishings suitable for bungalows and Arts and Crafts houses. This special catalogue section highlights modern reproductions of tables and chairs, lamps, textiles, wall coverings, tile, and hardware that look right at home in bungalows old and new, commodious and compact.

From Library Journal The "simplicity and artistry" of bungalow residences, built during the first part of this century, continues to generate admirers, and throughout the country "bungalow heavens" are being revived. Expanding on his California Bungalow (Hennessy Ingalls, 1980), Winter provides a historical and architectural overview of bungalows, describing room by room the function and importance of each to a bungalow dweller's lifestyle. Beautifully photographed examples of restored houses from throughout North America comprise the majority of the book. Ending with descriptions and suppliers of decorative items that typify bungalow interiors, this comprehensive guide will be a popular addition to any interior design collection. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. About the Author Robert Winter is the Arthur G. Coons Professor of the History of Ideas, emeritus, at Occidental College in Los Angeles, where he has taught American and European social and intellectual history for many years. Author of The California Bungalow (1980) and "The Simple Bungalow" in Home Sweet Home (1983, Charles Moore, ed.), Winter has written extensively about the American Arts and Crafts movement and has recently edited Toward a Simpler Way of Life, a book on California's Arts and Crafts architects. His other books include A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California (1985) and Los Angeles: An Architectural Guide (1994), both with David Gebhard. An active preservationist, Winter has served on the Los Angeles and Pasadena, California, cultural heritage commissions. He lives in a glorified bungalow, the Pasadena house built by Ernest and Alice Batchelder that is included in American Bungalow Style. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter 1 BUNGALOW MANIA At the turn of the century bungalows took America by storm. These small houses, some costing as little as \$900, helped fulfill many Americans' wish for their own home, equipped with all the latest conveniences. Central to the bungalow's popularity was the idea that simplicity and artistry could harmonize in one affordable house. The mania for bungalows marked a rare occasion in which serious architecture was found outside the realm of the rich. Bungalows allowed people of modest means to achieve something they had long sought: respectability. With its special features -- style, convenience, simplicity, sound construction, and excellent plumbing -- the bungalow filled more than the need for shelter. It provided fulfillment of the American dream. The bungalow was practical, and it symbolized for many the best of the good life. On its own plot of land, with a garden, however small, and a car parked out front, a bungalow provided privacy and independence. To their builders and owners, bungalows meant living close to nature, but also with true style. THE BUNGALOW DEFINED What is a bungalow anyway? Where does the name come from? And what is so good about bungalows? The definition seems easy. Most dictionaries are explicit: a bungalow is a one- or one-and-a-half-story dwelling. Good enough, except that since the period when most bungalows were produced -- roughly 1880 to 1930 in the United States -- literally every type of house has at one time or another been called a bungalow. Two-story houses built on the grounds of hotels are still called bungalows, for example. And

to further muddy the matter, the great southern California architect Charles Sumner Greene went out of his way to call his Gamble house (1909) in Pasadena a bungalow (it is a spreading two-story residence with a third-floor pool room). Despite deviations in form, the dictionary definition of bungalows is the best point of departure. When bungalows were at their greatest popularity, most writers accepted this definition and usually apologized or tried to explain themselves when they departed from it. A bungalow's chief distinction is its low profile. There are no vertical bungalows, even though in a few cities such as Sacramento, Seattle, and Vancouver, British Columbia, the basically horizontal house type is raised on high foundations. Promotional literature in the early twentieth century almost always noted that the chief purpose of the bungalow was to place most of the living spaces on one floor. The advantages are obvious: The absence of a second story simplifies the building process. Utilities can be installed more easily than in a two-story house. Safety is provided because, in case of fire, windows as well as doors provide easy escape. Best of all, the bungalow allows staircases to be eliminated, a boon for the elderly and also for the homemaker, who can carry out household tasks relieved of the stress created by stair climbing. A common impression of the bungalow is that it must be small. To be sure, most bungalows are compact to save steps and filled with built-ins to conserve space (an aim that sometimes leads to claustrophobia). Many bungalows, however, are large -- even very large -- houses that preserve a horizontal line. Such commodious dwellings usually depended on the availability of cheap land: if the typical city lot could be augmented by extra land, the house could spread its wings -- thus the relatively large bungalows in southern California and the mainly small ones cramped on narrow lots in the Chicago area.

THE WINDS OF DEMOCRACY

The answer to the question of where the term bungalow came from is not at all complicated. Throughout the period in which bungalow building flourished, authors of books and magazine articles traced the source to the Indian province of Bengal. There, the common native dwelling and the geographic area both had the same root word, *bangla* or *bangala*. Eighteenth-century huts of one story with thatched roofs were adapted by the British, who used them as houses for colonial administrators in summer retreats in the Himalayas and in compounds outside Indian cities. Also taking inspiration from the army tent, the English cottage, and sources as exotic as the Persian verandah, early bungalow designers clustered dining rooms, bedrooms, kitchens, and bathrooms around central living rooms and thereby created the essential floor plan of the bungalow, leaving only a few refinements to be worked out by later designers. This house type spread to other parts of the British Empire and was copied by other turn-of-the-century imperial powers for use in their domains. The bungalow actually became a symbol of imperialism. The British, French, Dutch, and finally the Germans and Russians also domesticated bungalows by building them at home in seaside resorts, on lakefronts, and at mountain retreats. Eventually they built bungalows as suburban housing units and in working-class areas such as Paisley near Glasgow, Scotland. Almost inevitably, this economical, practical type of house invaded North America, where it was well suited to the conditions of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century population growth. Bungalows provided respectability and even style for emigres to both country and city. The first American house actually referred to as a bungalow was designed in 1879 by William Gibbons Preston. Contrary to the usual definition, it was a two-story house built on Cape Cod at Monument Beach, Massachusetts, and was probably called a bungalow because it was in the tradition of resort architecture. A more orthodox bungalow was illustrated in 1884 in Arnold W. Brunner's *Cottages or Hints on Economical Building* as the frontispiece captioned "Bungalow (with attic)." This was a dormered Queen Anne-style cottage with an attic that was used for what Brunner called "dormitories." Otherwise the house generally conformed to the requirement that all main living quarters, including bedrooms, be located on the first floor. From the East the idea moved westward. Naturally California -- in everyone's mind the ultimate resort -- was a promising locale for building bungalows. Land was relatively cheap, and the possibility of affordable and comfortable housing was attractive to the young on the make, the sick on the mend, and the old on modest pensions. The first California house designated as a bungalow was designed by the San Francisco architect A. Page Brown for J. D. Grant in the early 1890s. A true bungalow, this one-and-a-half-story residence was set on a high foundation and located on a hillside. It was a strange congeries of Bengalese, Queen Anne, and Swiss chalet architecture. The bungalow craze actually took off after the turn of the century when Americans obsessed with the notion of health or simply attracted by the economic opportunity to be had in California began pouring into the state, a phenomenon that caused Charles Dudley Warner to speculate, "What sort of community will result from this union of the Invalid and the Speculator?" In the city of Los Angeles alone the population rose from 50,395 in 1890 to 1,238,048 in 1930. While other cities did not grow quite so fast, all but the northernmost part of the state participated in this phenomenal growth. The demand for inexpensive but comfortable and even stylish housing advanced with the increase in population and, of course, contributed dramatically to the popularity of the bungalow. Its success in California was paralleled in the rest of the United States, where developers and construction companies often identified the house type with the Golden State, calling it "the California bungalow." Although the first bungalows were created in the East, the idea was exploited in the American West and then moved eastward again. As the historian Frederick Jackson Turner said, in a somewhat different context, "The winds of democracy blow east." The building of bungalows became a national phenomenon in every part of the country that encountered population growth in the 1910s and 1920s -- just about everywhere. Before World War I a small bungalow could be built for \$900, according to the not-always-accurate sales pitches of the time. A good-sized bungalow might cost \$3,500.

Considering that even \$900 was then quite an outlay for a family of modest means, the bungalow was not built by the poor or even the lower middle classes, but it was affordable for people with steady jobs. Even when prices took off in the 1920s, would-be homeowners with average incomes could afford to construct or buy a bungalow, although, because of high interest rates on mortgages, some were ruined in economic downturns such as the Great Depression of the 1930s. Ironically, the house type that had once been the symbol of retreat to the countryside became the architecture of the city and its suburbs. Yet the bungalow did not lose its identification with the rural idyll and a better, golden day. Be it ever so humble, it embodied an ideal for the majority of Americans -- the freestanding, single-family dwelling set down in a garden, an ideal that clings to us today, especially as that goal seems threatened by a more complex and certainly much more populous society.

### SELLING THE BUNGLOW

Something more than its practicality coupled with the dream of Eden (California) sold the bungalow to Americans. An excitement about it was stirred by the popular press and magazines, many of them directed at women who were traditionally devoted to domestic concerns. *Good Housekeeping*, *House Beautiful*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and many other women's magazines adopted the bungalow as a cause. The real estate sections of newspapers carried articles almost every week on "particularly interesting" bungalows, for men were also attracted to them. Henry L. Wilson, who advertised himself as "the bungalow man," established a journal devoted to the subject, *The Bungalow Magazine*, published first in Los Angeles, then Seattle, and finally Chicago. Even the professional architecture journals, which might be expected to be suspicious of the homely cottage, could not ignore it. In fact, some of the best articles on the bungalow can be found in professional journals such as *Architectural Forum* and *Architectural Record* in the years before World War I. At least in the period from 1900 to 1920, the bungalow was closely associated with the Arts and Crafts movement, which had been founded in England in the late 1880s as a clarion call for unity of design, humanization of labor, and quality for everyone. One of the movement's founders, William Morris (1834-96) -- a devout reformer who could never seem to produce anything that the common person could afford -- would have been delighted with the American bungalow. In spite of his apparent radicalism, he was a sentimental Marxist who really wanted to return to a preindustrial handicraft society. It is an understatement to say that Morris's socialism never caught on in America, but his sentimentality certainly did. On the minds of many Americans, including some industrialists, was the concern that industrialism, however successful in some ways, had turned into a disappointment, alienating people from the products of their work, breaking up families, causing depression, and even driving people into crime. It is in this way that Morris's ideas were interpreted in America. The almost-too-perfect leader of the American Arts and Crafts movement was Gustav Stickley (1858-1942), the founder and editor of *The Craftsman* magazine, which was the chief organ for American Arts and Crafts ideas. At the same time Stickley was a businessman who in his own factory near Syracuse, New York, turned out beautifully crafted furniture by employing machines as well as workers. If this description suggests that he compromised with industrialism, so he did. What he wanted to do, like his contemporary, Theodore Roosevelt, was reform industry rather than abolish it, to soften the effect of the machine by putting it to use in bettering human lives. It is no wonder that in *The Craftsman* (1901-16) Stickley crusaded for bungalows that would give the working class as much respectability as business people attained from their mansions. Here, in the simple dwelling set in a garden, was a symbol of preindustrial individualism. In a sense, it humanized cities by allowing workers all the best aspects of rural living and at the same time all the blessings of an urban civilization. *The Craftsman* probably did more than any other magazine to further the idea of the bungalow in the United States. Stickley even built a bungalow for himself near Morris Plains, New Jersey (pages 88-93), and filled it not only with furniture from his United Crafts factory (renamed *Craftsman Workshops* in 1904) but also with Grueby ceramics and other Arts and Crafts products. Magazines were not the only promotional literature available on bungalows. Several books were written on the subject. Of these, the most important were *Bungalows* (1911) by Henry H. Saylor and *The Bungalow Book* (1925) by Charles E. White, Jr., published at the height of bungalow construction. Saylor's book, which came out in the period of the "high art" bungalow and the Arts and Crafts era, was nicely divided into chapters with such titles as "Types," "The Plan," "goof Materials," "Furniture and Furnishings," "Fireplaces," "Lighting Systems," "Sewage Disposal," and even "Planting." It mainly gave practical advice on its subjects and thus is a rich resource for present-day restorers. White's book is similar except that, being an architect (in the Prairie School), he is more thorough on topics such as construction and details such as dumbwaiters, door mats, telephones, electrical gadgets, and garages. Readers of these books would have had no trouble knowing what to look for in the ideal bungalow. Hundreds of other smaller books also gave tips on good design. William Phillips Comstock's *Bungalows, Camps and Mountain Houses* (1908, 1915, 1924, with Clarence Eaton Schermerhorn) dispenses plenty of advice, the 1924 edition even containing a section on bungalows in Puerto Rico and other territories in "the American tropics." The greatest stimulus for the spread of bungalows throughout the United States was business enterprise. Literally hundreds of books, some in hard cover but most of them in rather solid but smaller pamphlets, were produced by salespeople eager to profit from bungalow mania. They showed elevations and floor plans and then encouraged potential customers to write for detailed drawings so that the local carpenter could construct every detail with complete confidence. In *The Bungalow Book* (1910) Henry L. Wilson advertised his desire to deliver a complete set of plans consisting of "a foundation and cellar plan, floor plans, four elevations and all necessary details and a complete set of specifications" for only \$10 and also

estimated the cost of construction, which was usually under \$3,000. Most of the writers of these books and pamphlets warned their readers of the dire consequences of having their carpenter build their house without complete plans, but it is safe to say that many bungalows were put up based on only one elevation and one floor plan. The Southern California Standard Building Company not only produced its own bungalow book enticing prospective customers with dreams of good design but also sold real estate and arranged for loans and insurance. For people who lived in the East, Standard would even take over their property and give them "something in Sunny California" in exchange. Noting its comprehensive package, Standard stood by its slogan, "We Can Do It." The success of the bungalow led its designers and promoters to change its original purpose. At first one of the beauties of the bungalow was that it gave the average person an opportunity to live in a single-family, one-story house with a garden. What happened when efficiency-minded developers chose to make even more economical use of the land? The answer in Chicago was to build narrow bungalows that covered most of the narrow city lots and thus eliminated all but a tiny garden. An approach to the same problem in California and elsewhere was the "double bungalow," a semidetached structure that preserved some of the garden at the expense of the idea of a freestanding house. The designs were often ingenious and sometimes good looking, but privacy was compromised by higher density. BUNGALOW COURTS California came up with another answer to the problem of density: the bungalow court. In 1909 Sylvanus Marston, a young architect educated at Cornell's school of architecture, was commissioned by a developer to design a group of bungalows in Pasadena. They were to be assembled around a modest court and, although relatively small, provide wealthy visitors to California a place in the sun, far from the rigors of eastern winters. St. Francis Court, as it was called, provided them with all the amenities from Persian rugs and up-to-date kitchens to rooms for servants. It was a successful -- albeit upper-class -- speculation that gave rise to more plebeian efforts. Also in Pasadena, Bowen Court (1910), designed by the firm of Arthur S. Heineman with Alfred Heineman serving as project architect, was much more modest in its intentions and had a greater concentration of bungalows -- and people. Twenty-three tiny bungalows were constructed on a large L-shaped lot. The great Arts and Crafts architect Charles Sumner Greene was aghast at this clever speculative device: "It would seem," he wrote, "to have no other reason for being than that of making money for the investor." And he added, "This is a good example of what not to do." The bungalow court idea was greatly exploited not only in California but also in the rest of the United States and Canada, not as resort architecture but as housing for people of modest means. It was, in a sense, an alternative to the apartment houses that were appearing in cities in the 1920s. The bungalow was used also for hotels. The Heineman firm was responsible for building grouped houses where motorists might spend the night and was apparently the first to call the grouping a "mo-tel."

**MAIL-ORDER BUNGALOWS** Another important refinement of business strategy was the prefabricated or "ready-cut" bungalow, whose parts were mass-produced in a factory, numbered, loaded on a freight car, and then sent to any part of the country where a skilled carpenter could put them together "in a day" by following the complete specifications provided. Probably the most famous of these mail-order firms was Sears, Roebuck and Company, but in the 1910s and 1920s a number of others throughout the United States and Canada also advertised their ability to provide prefabricated bungalows. The most important of these was the Aladdin Company, based in Bay City, Michigan, with plants in Hattiesburg, Mississippi; Wilmington, North Carolina; and Portland, Oregon. Aladdin drew on the popular association of the bungalow with California in designs named The Pomona, The Pasadena, The Burbank, and The Sunshine. Other names evoked the bungalow's ability to survive in colder climes -- The Genesee, The Plymouth, The Kentucky, joined by The Tacoma, The Willamette, and The Spokane. Advertising that it operated on "The Golden Rule" (a motto its public relations people boasted was backed by a U.S. patent), Aladdin was so proud of the quality of its product that it offered customers one dollar for every knot they could find in the wooden components. Because of the company's efficiencies, Aladdin asserted that it could sell its house kits for around \$1,000, well below the price of a custom-built bungalow. Conscious of middle-class Americans' desire for well-built houses at low cost, the company noted that it had created a "Board of Seven," a design team that scrutinized every phase of production. Aladdin observed that "unless the cost of these high-priced men's time could be spread over a hundred or more houses of each design, the cost would be prohibitive. But when they spend two hours or more hours valuable time on the design, drawings and cutting sheets of an Aladdin house, the cost is not all charged to that one house but to several hundred houses of that same design sold during the year."

Around 1920 rows of Aladdin bungalows sprang up in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina (page 43), one of a number of company towns built or expanded quickly with mail-order residences. In Bay City, Michigan, Aladdin was joined by another "ready-cut" house company. The Lewis Manufacturing Company produced bungalows similar in style and interior arrangement to those of Aladdin. So did Harris Brothers of Chicago and Gordon-Van Tine of Davenport, Iowa, as well as Sears, Montgomery Ward, and Pacific Ready-Cut in Los Angeles. At least one factory was located in Vancouver, British Columbia. These mail-order firms manufactured bungalows that were humble, but with their intelligent floor plans, built-ins, and fireplaces they were as respectable as any larger house built nearby.

**BUNGALOW BUILDERS** All the major architects of the time -- from Bernard Maybeck and Frank Lloyd Wright to Charles and Henry Greene -- as well as most of the less noted ones, designed bungalows. The great majority of bungalows, however, came from people who were never identified in print. Developers and construction firms often hired young architects who had not yet established practices on their own. The Pasadena construction company of

Austin and Grable, for example, produced some beautiful bungalows, leading one authority to conclude that the Austin of the firm was the well-known Los Angeles architect John C. Austin; it has been established, however, that he had nothing to do with the firm. The real designer was banished to anonymity. And who were the designers of prefabricated and pattern-book bungalows? In the manner of big business, the faces of the creative people usually faded into the process of industry. Exceptions can be found. Writers of how-to-do-it books such as Henry L. Wilson and Charles E. White, Jr., and a few salespeople such as William Phillips Comstock were at pains to credit the designers. But in most bungalow books and pamphlets, finding the architect of a particular house is usually a chance discovery. Alfred Heineman designed a number of bungalows for his brother Arthur's architectural firm but sometimes sold design rights to promoters. Around 1911 one of his bungalows appeared on the cover of a little brochure entitled Sweet's Bungalows (pages 1213), and several exteriors and interiors of his buildings were illustrated in it. A picture of his Bowen Court in Pasadena (pages 20-21) appeared on the cover of Clyde J. Cheney's *Artistic Bungalows* (1912). The Heineman firm was not even mentioned in either book. Another designer employed by Cheney was Ross Montgomery, but the only way one would know that is because Montgomery signed his handsome rendering "RM del" (delineator). Only knowledge of his style from other signed designs allows identification. It is possible that Montgomery may have been the artist who touched up an interior view that Cheney plagiarized from Gustav Stickley's *The Craftsman* (page 18).

**BUNGALOW REDUX** At the same time that the bungalow was being altered for higher-density living in bungalow courts and mail-order houses, it somehow lost its glamour. The spirit seemed drained from its proponents. Bungalows had always been disparaged by those who equated a high standard of living with the two-story house. The prosperity of the 1920s also had something to do with the loss in esteem for the modest house. The waning of the Arts and Crafts movement led to the stage scenery of period revival buildings. In these circumstances the little house was set aside or laughed at -- a fact that gave meaning to Woodrow Wilson's epithet for his arch-enemy, Henry Cabot Lodge: "bungalow minded." Then came the stock market crash of 1929, followed by the Great Depression in the 1930s. The hard times were very hard on the idea of architecture for people of modest means. After World War II bungalow building revived, but the new houses went under new names such as the Cape Cod cottage, the ranch house, and the tract home. The term bungalow was used to disparage the small house built earlier in the century. Until fairly recently it thus was possible for developers of condominiums and freeways to plow through bungalowlands everywhere without much thought or public condemnation. The last ten years have seen a revival of interest in the bungalow. People are moving back to the old bungalow neighborhoods that still exist and calling them "bungalow heavens." In fact, the bungalow -- like its predecessor, the Victorian house -- is becoming gentrified. Several books and many articles have been written on the subject, and a magazine, *American Bungalow*, has been created to reflect and encourage the revival of the bungalow. On whole streets and blocks, pleasant but aesthetically undistinguished cottages have been preserved and a spirit of community prevails -- or has been recreated. The modesty and even conventionality of the housing masks the fact that these neighborhoods often have a high degree of social cohesion, in which neighbor looks out for neighbor and where restrictions are self-imposed by the residents. Our age craves the restoration of the family and even the respectability that the bungalow once provided. Text copyright 1996 Robert Winter