

# The Significance of a Portico

## Charleston's Miles Brewton House

C. Allan Brown

The superposed, pedimented porticoes featured in Andrea Palladio's *I Quattro Libri dell' Architettura* (1570) and later English editions, became very influential in American architecture, especially in the Southern region, from the late 1760s through the early 1830s. That Palladian form, also known as a two-tiered or double-storied portico, persisted into the antebellum era, yet often acquired a more Greek Revival aspect. Palladio's original conception evidently had been inspired by ancient Roman forms.<sup>1</sup> His pedimented villa porticoes were remarkable for giving a temple-like appearance to a private residential structure.<sup>2</sup>

A strong case can be made that the front portico of the Miles Brewton house in Charleston, SC, erected 1766–1769, was the first domestic expression of the fully projecting, superposed, and pedimented portico in America, and the chief template for this now familiar feature in our residential landscapes.<sup>3</sup>

The Brewton house exterior is basically a cubic brick block with understated details. The elegant austerity of its simple flat arches over the east front windows with *voussoirs* of gauged brick recalls the planar simplicity of Palladio's woodcut elevations.

The portico gives the exterior its interest. Aside from practical value in providing cover in harsh weather and a pleasant sitting spot or viewing vantage, the portico inscribed classical cultural values onto a vernacular building element. As one scholarly study concluded, the classical portico has for millennia symbolized virtue, distinction, and authority.<sup>4</sup>



Miles Brewton house, 27 King Street, Charleston, SC  
 Photograph by Calder Loth

More than a century ago, noted architectural historian Fiske Kimball and his co-author Harvard Dean George Harold Edgell recognized that:

It was not until 1765 or later that the free-standing portico with a pediment was applied to dwellings, and this did not become at all common until after the Revolution. In a few instances, notably the Miles Brewton house in Charleston, South Carolina (c1765), there were superposed porticoes on the general scheme of many of Palladio's villa designs....<sup>5</sup>

Kimball and Edgell were careful to use quite precise, qualifying language, which has been lost on less attentive readers. In a review of *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston*, 1917, Kimball reiterated

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# Tours, Award, and Seeking Board Members

JOHN J. ZEUGNER, AICP, PRESIDENT



John J. Zeugner

We have had a busy spring and summer. We organized a weekend excursion to Chestertown and Annapolis in April for an exciting three days. Chestertown, on Maryland's Eastern Shore, was a major colonial port for the upper Chesapeake Bay. Its agrarian exports also fueled its prosperity, as did a slave trade. This diverse and cosmopolitan town grew quickly, with stately Anglo-Palladian and classical homes along

its waterfront and business districts, with several shady parks. This little-known town is the state's second largest historic district. You should plan a weekend trip there and please reach out to me if you want more info.

Saturday evening we were entertained by Board Member Emeritus Warren Cox, FAIA, and his wife Claire at their magnificent home, Kennersley, 1785-1789. It's a large five-part brick house surrounded by huge boxwoods, axial gardens, and a lush agrarian landscape. The restoration of the Cox home provides surprise after surprise in each room. The central block is 35 feet square, two and a half stories high, with a pitched gable roof. Flanking one-story hyphens connect the central block with a pair of flanking one-and-half story wings. If you wish to study Warren's works, look for *Hartman-Cox Architects, Selected and Current Works* by partner



The Old Senate Chamber in the Maryland State House, Annapolis

Calder Loth, restoration advisor, spoke on its historic significance

Photograph by Calder Loth

George E Hartman, AIA. Several other books about the firm capture its neo-classicism. Although many of its works are in DC, Hartman-Cox also designed the elegant Jefferson Library adjacent to the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies at Kenwood.

Sunday, we visited Annapolis, with its nationally significant homes, charming port and ships, the US Naval Academy, and its recently renovated Maryland State House. This brilliant restoration, with displays of its 400 years of continuous history, could be the centerpiece of another early American architectural expedition.

Closer to home, we organized two afternoon visits, in June and July, to historic homes east of Richmond. CPSA Board member,

## Palladiana

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# Palladiana



The Paca House, Annapolis  
Photograph by Calder Loth



Kennersley  
Warren and Claire Cox's home for tour and reception  
Photograph by Calder Loth

Dr. Bryan Green, author of *In Jefferson's Shadow*, has been supervising the restoration on two New Kent County significant landmarks: Hampstead and Mount Sterling.

By the time you read this, our long-postponed CPSA study-trip to see the great Anglo-Palladian estates north of London, will have occurred. This is the second half of the trip we took in 2019 with Martin Randall Travel, newly renamed Heritage Travel. Seventeen of us anticipate 11 days of exploration, lectures, comradery, and great food. Heritage will roll out the red carpet obtaining entry into estates generally open only to scholars and donors.

We are still working on a future trip to Breemo to also a few nearby properties, and our CPSA annual meeting is being planned as well.

Congratulations to CPSA Board member, Andy Johnston on his award of a world heritage fellowship from the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property. Andy is an architectural history associate professor in UVA's School of Architecture and director of its historic preservation graduate certificate program, a liaison to the Veneto Study Abroad program, and an exacting preservation researcher. Bravo!

Lastly, the CPSA is soliciting new Board members. If you are a member, you know our mission. If you work in or are interested in early American architecture, Palladian classicism, and travel, send me a note or a resume indicating your willingness to serve. Quarterly meetings are generally held in Charlottesville, and zoom attendance can be arranged. ■



## Submissions

We welcome researched articles about Palladio and the influence of his work on American architecture as well as reviews of books on the subject. Submissions should be approximately 1000 words, single-spaced, in 12 point Times New Roman. Please submit your article to Editor Calder Loth [cloth@verizon.net](mailto:cloth@verizon.net) or Copy Editor Kay Slaughter [katherineslaughter61@gmail.com](mailto:katherineslaughter61@gmail.com).

Images must be a minimum of 300 dpi at 8½ inch width. Send these in advance as a jpeg or tiff without editing or resizing to copy editor, [katherineslaughter61@gmail.com](mailto:katherineslaughter61@gmail.com), for review for print quality by the designer.

Our deadline for the spring 2024 issue is February 1, and we appreciate early submittal of potential articles.

Palladiana

# Palladio in Moscow

Calder Loth

During a 1992 visit to Russia, I was enjoying a September afternoon drive with my guide along the streets of Moscow. Suddenly, to my astonishment, there stood Palladio's Palazzo Thiene! I had our driver slam on the brakes to help me realize I was not hallucinating and to allow me to take a photograph of what appeared to be a near perfect copy of the façade of Andrea Palladio's famous Vicentine palace. Later inquiry revealed that the mansion was completed in 1912 for A.G. Tarasov, a prosperous Moscow merchant. It was designed by Ivan Zholtovsky, 1876-1959, who achieved considerable

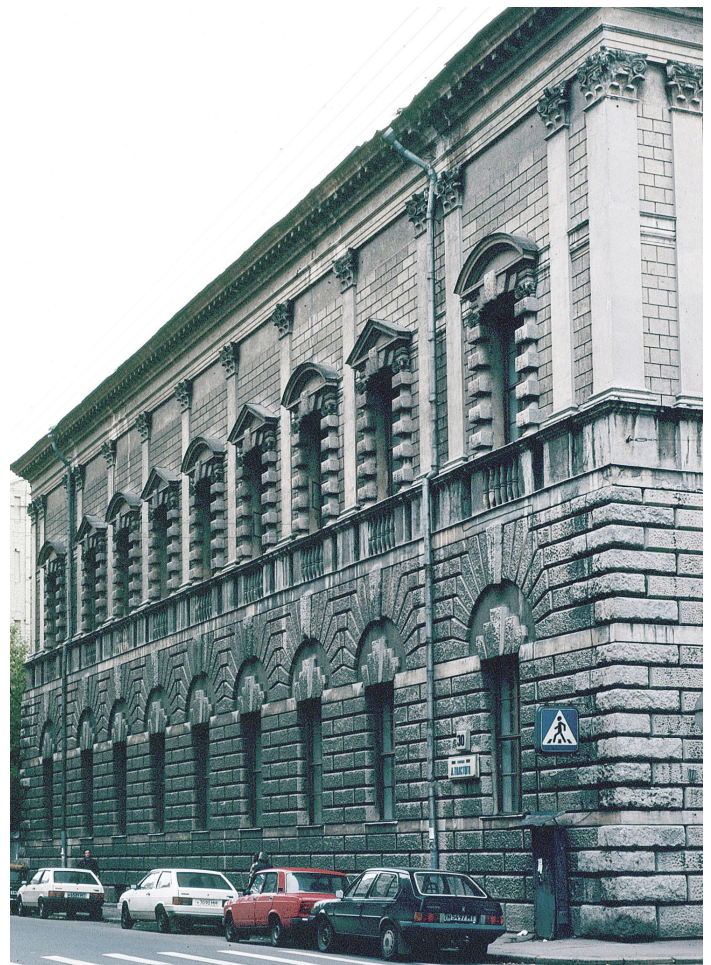
prominence as an architect and teacher before the 1917 Revolution and continued well into the Stalinist period.

Early in his career, Zholtovsky became enamored with Palladio, and was only 34 when he designed Tarasov's mansion. He was fluent in Italian, traveled extensively in Italy, and translated Palladio's *The Four Books* into Russian, which was published in 1936. As with the Tarasov mansion, Zholtovsky's early works were part of the Russian Renaissance Revival. He continued to produce Palladian adaptations after the Revolution, most notably a massive apartment building closely inspired by Palladio's Loggia del Capitaniato. Placed facing the Kremlin, the building was completed in 1934 and stood as an example of Stalin's reaction against Modernism. As late as 1957, Zholtovsky designed a Moscow cinema with a façade referencing Palladio's Villa Poiana.

For the Tarasov mansion, Zholtovsky slightly reduced the Palazzo Thiene's proportions to make it more in scale with neighboring buildings; otherwise it's an admirable replication down to the details of its complex rustication. Following the Revolution, the mansion housed the USSR Supreme Court. It later served as an embassy for Germany and then for Poland. It now is the headquarters for the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of African Studies. ■



Palazzo Thiene, 1558: Vicenza, Italy  
Photograph by Calder Loth



Tarasov Mansion, 1912: Moscow, Russia  
Photograph by Calder Loth

# CPSA Summer Tours

Two Tidewater Virginia plantation houses—Hampstead and Mount Stirling—were the focus of CPSA summer trips for members and guests. Both were led by CPSA board member Bryan Clark Green.

On June 17, the group toured Hampstead in New Kent County, one of the country’s most ambitious and accomplished examples of Federal-style domestic architecture. The plantation mansion was built c1825 for Conrade Webb. Webb attended Brown University and could well have sought design assistance from John Holden Greene, Providence’s leading architect, to carry out such a singular undertaking. The mansion has many of the qualities of Greene’s designs. Dominating Hampstead’s interior is a flying circular stair winding from basement to attic. Hampstead is currently undergoing a meticulous restoration by a private owner.

On July 15, CPSA members met in Charles City County for a tour of Mount Stirling, a suave, high-style Greek Revival plantation



Hampstead, New Kent County, VA  
Photograph by Calder Loth

house. The formal, five-bay structure exhibits the urbane character of antebellum Richmond mansions of the period, and likely employed Richmond builders and craftsmen. The house was built in 1851 for William Jerdone, one of the county’s wealthiest planters at the time, and has remained largely untouched by alterations. The plantation was occupied by Union troops in 1862, and again in 1864, but escaped damaging pillage. ■



Mount Stirling, Charles City County, VA  
Photograph by Calder Loth

# Palladian English Architectural Tour

*As Palladiana goes to press, 17 CPSA members are embarking on a trip to Northern England postponed from 2020 because of Covid. The group has a full itinerary beginning in London. Here's what we anticipate our friends will see. We include photos here to give you an idea of the grand architecture and landscapes in the hope that you might be interested in the next Palladian adventure abroad. — Editors*



Based at the St. Ermin's Hotel in central London for the first two nights of the tour, the group will visit a number of key works in the history of Palladianism and other 18th century English styles in London's West End, including Burlington House and Spencer House, the finest private house in London, designed by John Vardy and James Stuart. Dr. Michael Douglas Scott will be the primary guide and lecturer throughout the tour.

The group next travels to Northamptonshire to see two rare examples of 17th century pure classicism: Stoke Park Pavilions, which are the remains of a 1620s house and among the earliest manifestations of English Palladianism, attributed to Inigo Jones. His pupil, John Webb, designed the robust and rusticated Lamport Hall in 1655.

The journey continues to Leicestershire and travels to Rotherham for a visit to Wentworth Woodhouse. Wentworth, the largest private house in England, has the longest house frontage in Europe. Despite a complex building history, it is essentially 18th century Palladian, and contains some very good interiors.

Wentworth Woodhouse was the subject, "From Baroque to Palladian The Two Faces of Wentworth Woodhouse" by Dylan Wayne Spivey, published in *Palladiana*. The group will also visit Nostell Priory, an architectural treasure by James Paine, with modifications by Robert Adam, and containing a collection of Chippendale furniture.

In York the travelers will view many fine buildings from every era: Lord Burlington's Assembly Rooms of 1732; York Minster, England's largest gothic cathedral, and Fairfax House, 1745, one of the best preserved and furnished Georgian town houses in England.

The group also anticipates visiting Castle Howard, one of the great houses of Europe begun in 1699 by the leading architect of the English Baroque, Sir John Vanbrugh. Later, the tour will continue to Scampston Hall, an English country house, combining fine architecture with a wealth of art treasures, parkland designed by Lancelot Capability Brown, and a contemporary garden.

On the outskirts of Leeds, the group will visit Harewood House, a dazzling Neo-Classical property with architecture by John Carr, 1772, and James Barry, 1843, interiors by Adam, furniture by Chippendale, park by Capability Brown, and excellent paintings, Renaissance to modern.

The group journeys to Derbyshire, visiting Chatsworth House, the home of the Duke of Devonshire, dating largely to the 1690s and 1840s. Chatsworth is not only one of the grandest country houses in Britain but also an extraordinary treasure house of great art, fine furniture and lavish interiors. Haddon Hall, a late medieval and Tudor property, is next on the itinerary; it remains extraordinarily unchanged amid exquisite terraced gardens. Also, the group will travel to Kedleston through the Capability Brown park to Kedleston Hall, one of the supreme monuments of Classical architecture and decoration in England, which aspires to recreate the glories of Ancient Rome in the foothills of the Peak District. Kedleston was created by Sir Nathaniel Curzon and, initially, three architects, of whom Robert Adam emerged the victor. ■



Wentworth House, west front  
Photograph from Wikipedia



Scampston Hall, front elevation  
Photograph from Wikipedia/Pauline E

# CPSA Annual Meeting

The Wilton House Museum will be the site for CPSA's annual meeting Friday, Oct. 27 beginning at 4 pm. Members will have the opportunity to tour the house from 4–6 in small groups with a host. During this same time, wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served in Wilton's auditorium. After the tours and reception, a brief meeting will be held. You may utilize the online QR code to make your reservation.

For more than 100 years, members of the Randolph family lived at Wilton. Built c1753 for William Randolph III, it was the centerpiece of a 2000-acre tobacco plantation; at one point, it housed the largest enslaved population in Henrico County.

The Randolph family entertained a number of Virginia's most elite figures at Wilton, including George Washington shortly after Patrick Henry delivered his famous "Give me Liberty, or Give me Death!" speech during the Second Virginia Convention in 1775. In 1781, Governor Thomas Jefferson visited Lafayette while he was headquartered at Wilton and 2000 Continental and Virginia militia troops camped on the grounds.

After successive generations of the Randolph family owned Wilton between 1753 and 1859, the property passed out of the family. Wilton survived the Civil War and then had four separate



Wilton House Museum  
Photograph by Matthew Scarnaty

owners before it went into foreclosure during the Great Depression. In 1932, The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in the Commonwealth of Virginia raised funds to purchase Wilton. However, as the land on which Wilton was located had been rezoned for industry, the group had the house dismantled and rebuilt on a new site in Richmond overlooking the James River.

Wilton, a classic example of Colonial Georgian architecture, boasts some of the finest 18th-century paneling in the country. The property is headquarters to Virginia's Colonial Dames and hosts public programs and educational exhibits. ■

## Agenda

### Friday, October 27

Wilton House Museum  
215 South Wilton Road, Richmond, VA 23226

4–6 pm Small group house tours  
Wine and hors d'oeuvres reception

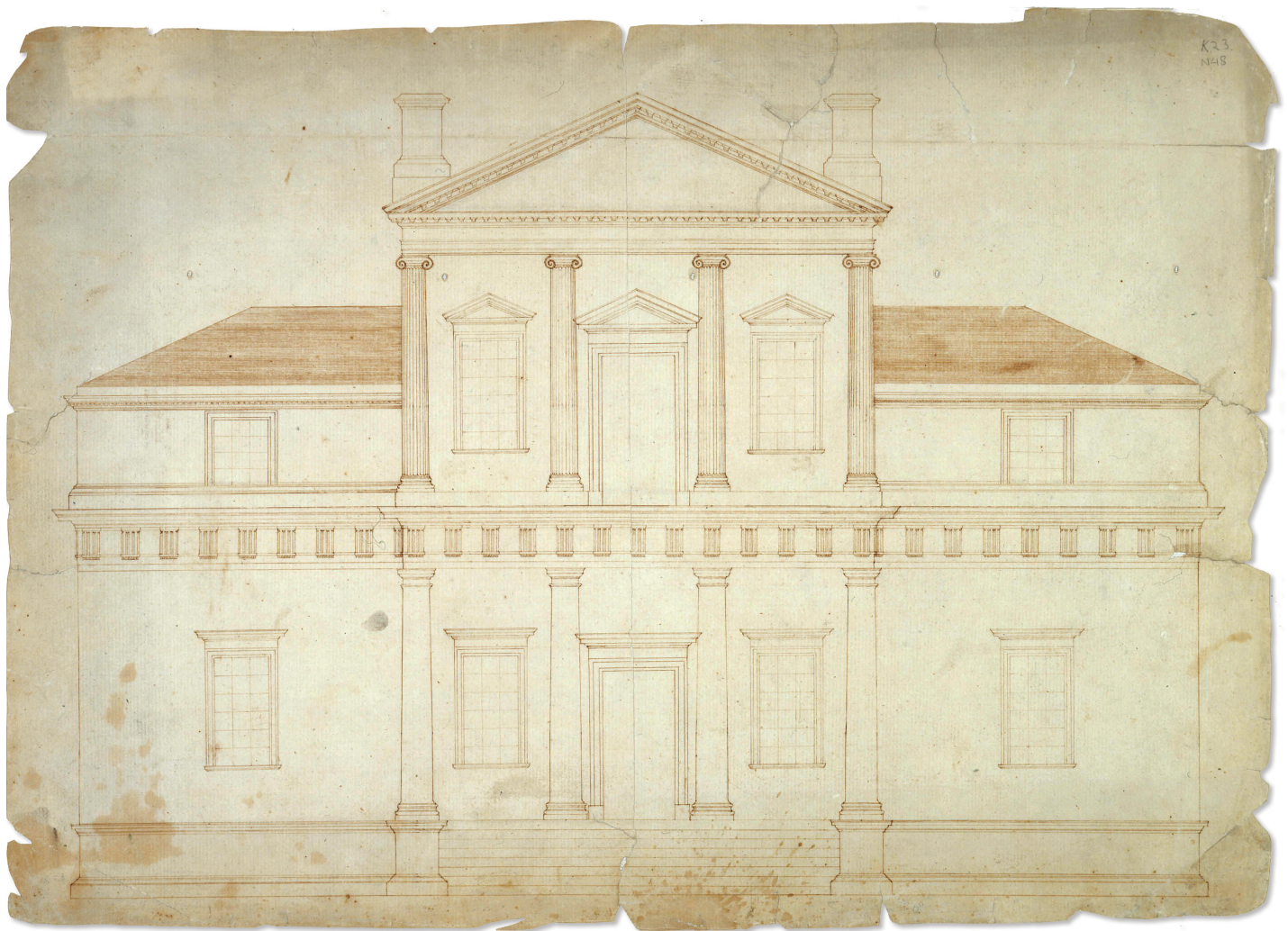
6–7 pm Membership Meeting



### RSVP please!

Use your phone to go to the RSVP form.  
Or email [palladianstudies@gmail.com](mailto:palladianstudies@gmail.com).





Elevation by Thomas Jefferson of the northeast front of Monticello, 1st version, probably before March 1771

Courtesy of Coolidge Collection of Thomas Jefferson Manuscripts, Massachusetts Historical Society

Continued from page 1.

his finding that the Brewton portico was “the earliest [residential] example of the superposed portico on this side of the Atlantic.”<sup>6</sup> British authority Giles Worsley has explained the international context in which this continental landmark portico is properly understood:

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of American Palladianism before the Revolution was the use of the two-story [i.e., superposed] portico.... Although a common feature of Palladio’s villas, the English never used such two-story porticoes. Their popularity in America shows that native architects were looking directly at Palladio....<sup>7</sup>

Worsley makes a very significant point that some American colonial architects were not merely following British pattern-book interpreters of Palladio. Yet his broader statement requires some

qualification. Sir Christopher Wren famously had used the superposed form at monumental scale for the new portico of St. Paul’s Cathedral, London, c1675. And even earlier, Inigo Jones, or perhaps his associate John Webb, had designed a large tripartite building whose central block boasted of a tetrastyle, superposed portico.<sup>8</sup> But the feature was almost never used in Georgian Britain.<sup>9</sup> Its bifurcated form, which is more susceptible to modulations of scale than the single-height or colossal portico, was well-suited to modest American colonial situations.

As the Miles Brewton house was being completed at No. 27 King Street in Charleston in 1769, some 500 miles to the north on a remote Virginia mountaintop, young Thomas Jefferson was beginning his architectural endeavors at Monticello. Looking closely at a copy of Palladio’s treatise, he designed a pedimented, superposed portico that strictly followed the master’s principles.



It stood from about 1774, until the mid-1790s, although the upper level may never have been completed.<sup>10</sup>

Somewhat similar porticoes were added probably in the 1770s to the c1738 plantation house of Shirley in Charles City County. Jefferson openly disparaged the awkwardly composed, two-tiered portico which had fronted the Virginia capitol in Williamsburg from about 1753; it seems to have had little influence in the colonial era.<sup>11</sup> Yet soon after the Revolution, that unique form of portico, so well represented in Jefferson's c1771 Monticello design, was carried westward in Virginia to places like James Steptoe's Federal Hill in Campbell County, VA, c1782, although the present portico was rebuilt, and Matthew Page's Annefield in Clarke County, c1795. Both families had close connections to Jefferson.

Thus, it appears that there were two centers of cultural diffusion of that portico type in late colonial America: the Carolina Low Country

and, slightly later, the Blue Ridge Piedmont of Virginia. While the form would be replicated throughout the South, it was rarely used in the North. Was this because it was inappropriate for the Northern climate or perhaps because it came to symbolize slave-based, Southern plantation culture? A notable early northern exception was Gov. John Penn's suburban retreat, Lansdowne, near Philadelphia, c1772. Another was Richmond Hill, on the northwest edge of New York, erected sometime between 1767 and 1776.

The first residence in Charleston to emulate the novel Brewton portico may have been the William Washington house at No. 8 South Battery, begun about 1768 by Thomas Savage; sadly, no image of its original portico survives.<sup>12</sup> The first clear evidence of the spread of the fully projecting portico in South Carolina was manifest with the Joseph Kershaw house built in the new inland town of Camden, c1777–1780.<sup>13</sup> It was not a close copy of the



Joseph Kershaw house, c1777–1780, Camden, SC, photograph before February 1865 when it burned,  
Courtesy of South Carolina Department of Archives and History



Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, near Nashville, border inset, 1831 Ayres and Criddle map of Nashville  
 Tennessee Historical Society, image courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives

Brewton portico, rather, a deft variation. Like Brewton, Kershaw was a successful merchant. He regularly worked in Charleston during the late colonial era as part of his backcountry supply endeavors. Evidently he had admired the style-setting porticoes of the Brewton and Savage-Washington houses.

Sometime between 1772 and 1787, Mary Man erected another variation of the form for her handsome new house in Georgetown, SC.<sup>14</sup> By the late 1780s, the Thomas Fuller and Richard Gough houses in Beaufort, SC, also sported double-storied porticoes with temple-front pediments. Another fine example is Prospect Hill, in the countryside near Georgetown, built c1794.

Of course, we should always keep in mind there may have been other examples now lost to the ravages of time, especially in the Carolina Low Country where two wars had a devastating impact on the cultural landscape. Although the Revolution slowed its adoption, a number of versions of the original Brewton portico form were built in the Low Country by the 1790s, serving as models for imitation throughout the South.

A simplified version appeared at Rock Castle, near Nashville, TN, the home of Daniel Smith, who had links to Jefferson. The portico was added c1796 or later to the house begun c1784. President Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, also near Nashville, featured a Palladian superposed portico with flanking, one-story colonnades, before it burned in 1834 and was rebuilt in the Greek Revival style.<sup>15</sup> Middle Tennessee, exemplifying Jacksonian America's expanding destiny, loomed large in cultural significance at that time. The suburbs of Nashville in the early 19th century displayed an undeniable Palladian influence. According to Prof. James Patrick, the superposed, pedimented portico "was among the most popular features of Tennessee plantation houses from 1815 to 1840.... These houses imitate the type represented by the Miles Brewton house in Charleston...."<sup>16</sup>

By 1800, the two east-coast streams of diffusion of this portico type had converged at the Nashville Basin, and that locality became the new transmontane center of influence. *White Pillars*, a 1941 study by architect J. Frazer Smith, traces the spread of the classical

portico throughout the lower Mississippi River valley.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps the two most evocative emblems of the Old South were the white pillars of the porticoes and the glossy green leaves with large white flowers of the Southern Magnolia in surrounding landscapes. Arguably, the two were first combined at the Miles Brewton house. Two *Magnolia grandiflora* trees, then rare in American gardens, were planted at the east end of the Brewton flower garden about 1770. Over time, their branches grew into the front courtyard, brushing against the white columns of the portico, creating the very icon of romanticized Southern culture.

Other particularly noteworthy examples of superposed and pedimented residential porticoes erected in America by 1835 are Cedar Grove, Edgefield, SC, c1800; Verdier house, Beaufort, SC, c1804; Diamond Hill, Chatsworth, GA, c1804; Grouseland, Vincennes, IN, c1804; Seabrook house, Edisto Island, SC, c1810; Woodlawn, Nashville, TN, c1812; Rosedale, Charlotte, NC, c1815; Wilkinson house, Conetoe, NC, c1815; Grundy Place, Nashville, c1818; Blount house, Milledgeville, GA, c1818; Gaillard-Shoolbred house, Charleston, c1800, portico c1819; Meridian Hill, Nashville, TN, c1820; Overton house, Nashville, c1820; Magnolia Grange, Chesterfield, VA, c1822; Mount Nebo, Milledgeville, GA, c1823; Belle Mont, Tusculumbia, AL, c1828; Dancy house, Decatur, AL, c1829; Berthold house, St. Louis, MO, c1830; Fairvue, Gallatin, TN, c1832; and Glencairn, Greensboro, AL, c1835. Numerous others could be cited, but this gives an idea of the geographic dispersion of some of the best examples. Variations proliferated, such as two- or four-colossal columns or square pillars with a second-story balcony, either engaged with the columns/pillars or cantilevered. This was a derivation of another Palladian scheme as in his design for the double loggia of Villa Thiene at Cicogna in the *Quattro Libri*.

As Palladio asserted in Book II, Chap. XVI, a portico makes the principal entry to the house more prominent, providing a focus for the architectural composition. Moreover, it lends “*grandezza e magnificenza*” to the building. Imagine how arresting the portico of the Miles Brewton house was when new, when few Americans had entered a private residence in such an imposing fashion. Walking through the wrought-iron gate with elegant overthrow and lanterns and into the walled forecourt, and then stepping onto the marble steps of the perron, one follows an indirect, rotational route upward to the portico. Landings mandate a brief pause. These manipulations of movement were calculated to give dignity and drama to the ceremony of arrival as genteel deportment was a clear expression of one’s status in the Georgian social hierarchy.

Earlier houses in Charleston typically had modest stoops; this marked the first appearance of the Palladian perron and portico together.<sup>18</sup> Palladio had combined the two features at the Villa Foscari, c1560, in a similar manner. Lord Burlington famously elaborated the concept at his Chiswick villa, near London, c1729.<sup>19</sup> With an elevated principal floor so requisite in the Low Country and throughout much of the Lower South, numerous graceful variations, some with curving stairs, were created during succeeding decades.<sup>20</sup> This orchestration of arrival conduct culminated, if successful, in admittance to the formal drawing room, on the upper floor. The Brewton house fully exploited the Palladian “potentialities of portico, perron and *piano nobile*.”<sup>21</sup>

The Brewton portico, with its Tuscan order below and Scamozzi’s Ionic above, adheres closely to classical principles of formal structuring. The proportions of those Portland Stone columns shipped from Dorset and the angles of the pediment are in perfect harmony. Following Palladio’s reiteration of Vitruvius’s suggestion, the spacing between the innermost columns was made wider than for the rest. Here, that adjustment was exaggerated into a square opening, framing the doorway in a generous vista from the street. That frontispiece is a remarkably sophisticated design for the colonial era. As with so many other features of this house, it was novel then.<sup>22</sup> Kimball determined that it was the earliest employment of a semi-elliptical fanlight in America.<sup>23</sup>



Palladian villas in suburbs of Nashville,  
border inset, 1831 Ayres and Criddle map of Nashville

Tennessee Historical Society,  
image courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives

Overlapping pilasters in deep relief, a hallmark of Palladio's design ingenuity, flank the door, enhancing the axial perspective. The complete effect of the frontispiece is an elegant, Adamesque interpretation of the Venetian or Serlian/Palladian motif.<sup>24</sup> That semi-elliptical, Roman Doric archway is echoed in the interior Ionic entry to the second-floor Corinthian drawing room, sometimes called the dining room. The classical hierarchy of orders from Tuscan to Doric to Ionic and ultimately Corinthian is reflected in a rational spatial progression as one moves from exterior to interior, downstairs to upstairs. My discovery of a previously unnoticed house inventory from 1783 documents room-use designations and notes particular furnishings throughout, confirming that intended hierarchical order of experience.<sup>25</sup>

While the portico and other features are distinctly Palladian, certain elements at the Brewton House are decidedly unorthodox. For instance, the floor plan follows a local scheme long favored by the Charleston gentry. A central passage on the first floor leads upstairs to a large drawing room, which stretches behind two-thirds of the front façade. Moreover, the exterior entablatures of the portico and under the eaves display wholly "modern" ornament.<sup>26</sup> The design of the house conflates various influences from near and far. That cosmopolitan complexity argues for the presence of an exceptionally astute designer, or collaboration of designers, unlike any previously working in Charleston.

Ezra Waite (1723–1769), self-identified "Civil Architect, House-builder in general, and Carver," with "twenty-seven years experience...[working] in noblemen and gentlemen's seats," composed the paneling schemes and executed much of the wood carving; in his words, he "finished the architecture."<sup>27</sup> Born in Bowes, Yorkshire, he came to America about 1766, at age 43, after serving sentences in London gaols for polygamy and bankruptcy.<sup>28</sup> The *London Gazette* nevertheless still accorded him the social status of "Gentleman."<sup>29</sup> Waite's fanciful Gothic Rococo details, both inside and out, complement the otherwise rather staid Palladianism of the house.<sup>30</sup> As one commentator remarked nearly a century ago, "so great was the élan of the craftsmen that they even attempted some original design...."<sup>31</sup> The extent of fine interior carving, from the hands of at least three master artisans, was unrivalled in its day.

From its Palladian portico to its imported marble mantels and extensive *papier-mâché* ornament, in so many respects the Miles Brewton house stands out as exceptional in colonial American architecture.<sup>32</sup>

To be continued in Spring 2024 Issue of *Palladiana*. ■

Before recently retiring, C. Allan Brown worked as an independent consultant in historic preservation for over 40 years. Engaged by the Peter Manigault family, owners of the Miles Brewton house and lateral Brewton descendants, Brown investigated the history of the property's house, work yards, and gardens from 2015–2021. He holds an MLA from the University of Virginia School of Architecture, where he also completed the certificate program in historic preservation, then directed by the late Mario di Valmarana. That professor's inspiring lectures introduced him to the cultural significance of the Miles Brewton house.

- 1 It is unclear which, if any, ancient, superposed models Palladio may have known. Roman examples of superposed portico-like structures may be seen in the ruins of the theater, Merida, Spain; the library, Ephesus, Turkey; the gymnasium, Sardis, Turkey; and the Roman-influenced monastery, Petra, Jordan. Apparently the earliest known example of the form was Greek, dating from the second century BCE, the propylon of the sanctuary of Athena, Pergamon. See William L. MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire: An Urban Appraisal*, Yale University Press, 1986, 2: 229–231.
- 2 Palladio mistakenly thought ancient Roman houses had pedimented porticoes; see *Quattro Libri*, Book II, Chapt XVI. Lorenzo II Magnifico and his architect Giuliano da Sangallo were the first in Renaissance Italy to put a pedimented portico or loggia (but not superposed) on a residence at Villa Medici, Poggio à Caiano, c1485.
- 3 Although lot acquisition began in late 1765, construction did not begin until the following year. The house was completed by the late summer of 1769; *South-Carolina and American General Gazette*, 21 August 1769.
- 4 Richard Riddell, *Temple Beauties: The Entrance-Portico in the Architecture of Great Britain, 1630–1850*, Archaeopress, 2011.
- 5 Fiske Kimball and George Harold Edgell, *A History of Architecture*, Harper & Bros., 1918, pp.537–538.
- 6 *American Historical Review*, 1918, 23:707. See also Fiske Kimball, *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic*, C. Scribner's Sons, 1922, pp.99, 224, 278; *idem*, *American Architecture*, Bobbs-Merrill, 1928, pp.48–49. Kimball provides a concise history of portico development in early America in *Architectural Review*, 1918, 6:37–38.
- 7 Giles Worsley, *Classical Architecture in Britain: The Heroic Age*, Yale University Press, 1995, pp.284–285. In a review of this book, Marlene Elizabeth Heck cites "the value of the free-standing portico" as a key concern in American architectural history; *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 120, 1996, p.275.
- 8 William Kent, *Designs of Inigo Jones, 1727*, vol. 2, pls. 49–50. Cf. also pl. 30 with hexastyle portico. Considering that a plate in this book probably provided the design for the overmantel in the entrance hall of Drayton Hall, did these early and exceptional portico designs also influence the creation of its portico/loggia?
- 9 Perhaps the most noteworthy example of the superposed form in Britain is the south portico and colonnade of West Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, erected c1761–1763.
- 10 Jack McLaughlin, *Jefferson and Monticello: The Biography of a Builder*, Henry Holt, 1988, pp.58–60, 160–173.
- 11 *Ibid*, pp. 59–60.
- 12 See *Charleston News and Courier*, 26 December 1977, 22 May 1978. The Savage-Washington house is a frame structure and the present portico is of a later date.
- 13 Kenneth E. Lewis, "A Functional Study of the Kershaw House Site in Camden, South Carolina" (1977), esp. pp.12–13, 37, 58; Harriette Kershaw Leiding, *Historic Houses of South Carolina*, J.B. Lippincott, 1921, pp.170–173. It was occupied by British General, Lord Cornwallis, and other officers in 1780–1781. The Kershaw house burned in February 1865; and was reconstructed 1974–1977.
- 14 Katherine H. Richardson, "The Man-Doyle House, Georgetown, SC: An Architectural Survey" (1992). The lower level of the portico originally extended in a colonnade across the entire front.



Photograph by Dan Addison, UVA

## Andy Johnson To Research International Heritage Conservation

ICPSA board member Andy Johnson has received a prestigious award for a visiting fellowship from the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property. The purpose of this ICCROM fellowship is to bring new perspectives and stimulate new avenues of research to enrich world heritage conservation.

Andy will spend two months researching how universal theories and methods for heritage preservation, developed in post-World War II Europe and promoted by UNESCO, ICCROM and other institutions, have been challenged by regional cultures. Through case studies, he will explain how these challenges have affected ICCROM's efforts.

An associate professor at UVA's School of Architecture, Andy is director of its historic preservation certificate program. He has extensive experience both in practice and in academia. Andy has served as a supervising architect for the Historic American Engineering Record and as an environmental planner for the California State Department of Transportation, working with a wide range of experts and stakeholders on the preservation and interpretation of historic cultural landscapes. In China, he joined with UNESCO affiliates as one of a team of experts working on historical gardens, intermediate cities, and urban cultural landscapes and served as Consulting Architect in Heritage Preservation with the China Suzhou Institute of Architectural Design.

*Palladiana* readers will recognize Andy's and Will Rourke's collaboration in an article "Recording the Ruins: 3D Documentation of Barboursville," Spring 2021 *Palladiana* as well as Andy's past work on 3D imaging at Villa Rotonda in Vicenza. ■

- 15 The Hermitage's c1831 portico was something like that at the Man-Doyle house, Georgetown, SC, discussed above. A similar example c1829 can be seen at Linden, Natchez, MS.
- 16 James Patrick, *Architecture in Tennessee, 1768-1897*, University of Tennessee Press, 1981, p.81.
- 17 For another treatment of the influence of the Palladian superposed portico in early America, see Roger Kennedy, *Architecture, Men, Women and Money in America, 1600-1860*, Random House, 1985, esp. pp.25, 119-120, 309-311. I disagree, however, with his generalized use of the term "bilogial." Also, the portico at Carnton, near Franklin, TN, p.310, was not original to the c1826 house, but added c1847.
- 18 By 1752, the Charles Pinckney house in Charleston evidently had a forecourt and perron arrangement, but no portico; see Gene Waddell, *Charleston Architecture, 1670-1860*, 2 vols., Wyrick & Company, 2003, 1:101 n.61.
- 19 Perron was the Anglicized French term used by the British Palladians for such bilateral exterior stairways. See Richard Hewlings, "Chiswick House and Gardens: Appearance and Meaning," in Toby Barnard and Jane Clark, eds., *Lord Burlington: Architecture, Art and Life*, Bloomsbury, 1995, esp. pp.24-26; Howard E. Stutchbury, *The Architecture of Colen Campbell*, Harvard University Press, 1967, *passim*. The term was not adopted in America; I use it here to better explain its Palladian pedigree.
- 20 The curving form of the British Palladian perron dates to Inigo Jones's c1616 design of the Queen's House, Greenwich, yet its popularity in Britain only began in the mid-1750s; *ibid.*, p.137.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p.92.
- 22 For the common design concern for the relationship of "Frontispieces and Porticoes" in early 19th-century America, see Asher Benjamin, *Practice of Architecture*, Carter, Hendee & Company, 1833, pp.70-77.
- 23 Kimball, *Domestic*, pp.101-102. See also Steven Parissien, *The Georgian House in America and Britain*, Rizzoli, 2008, p. 104.
- 24 The device recurs in traditional semi-circular form on what was originally the projecting rear staircase "tower" (sides infilled later).
- 25 Jacob Motte estate inventory, 1783, ser. L10136, Charleston County, Court of Ordinary, Charleston District, Inventories and Appraisements Books, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, SC (entry mistakenly omitted from published index). After Miles Brewton and his family were lost at sea in 1775, his sisters, Rebecca Brewton Motte and Frances Brewton Pinckney, inherited the house. By 1777, the Mottes had moved in and were de facto owners (estate not legally settled until 1790). It was known during that period as "Mr. Jacob Motte's...formerly Miles Brewton, Esqr.'s," *South-Carolina & American General Gazette*, 4 February 1780. My consultant's report in the Miles Brewton house archives provides a full discussion of this inventory's significance.
- 26 Fiske Kimball traced the distinctive "Gothic dentils" to William Pain's *Builder's Companion* (1758); see *Great Georgian Houses of America*, Architects' Emergency Committee, 1932, 2:20. Thomas Jefferson, as a Palladian purist, did not approve of such "barbarous ornaments;" *idem*, *Domestic*, p.138.
- 27 *South-Carolina & American General Gazette*, 21 August 1769.
- 28 *London Chronicle*, 26 March 1763; *London Gazette*, 8 May 1764; *Gentleman's Magazine* (May 1764), 34:251. See also *Waite v. Holme Abbey*, J90/373, National Archives, Kew, UK. I am grateful to Christopher Thornton for assistance in locating these notices. See C. Allan Brown, "Clarifying the Role of Ezra Waite (1723-1769) in the Creation of the Miles Brewton House Completed 1769; and New Biographical Information on Him and Some of His Craftsmen Colleagues Who Also Worked on the Construction of that House" September 2021, Miles Brewton house archives.
- 29 *London Gazette*, 7 December 1765.
- 30 Waite had a "preference for the neo-Gothic as opposed to the French or Chinese modes of the rococo style;" John Bivins and J. Thomas Savage, "The Miles Brewton House, Charleston, South Carolina," *Antiques* (February 1993), p.299. For that distinctive British Palladian-Gothick dialectic, see Timothy Mowl and Brian Earnshaw, *An Insular Rococo: Architecture, Politics and Society in Ireland and England, 1710-1770*, Reaktion, 1999.
- 31 Thomas E. Tallmadge, *The Story of Architecture in America*, W.W. Norton, 1927, p.50.
- 32 The imported stone mantels of the Brewton house are among "the earliest examples of the Adam style known to exist in Charleston;" Waddell, *Charleston*, 1:86, 143 n.2. The delicate *papier-mâché* ornament is the supreme surviving example in a colonial American house; Morrison H. Heckscher and Leslie Greene Bowman, *American Rococo, 1750-1775: Elegance in Ornament*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992, p.35.

# Remembering Mary Lee Allen

The CPSA board and members acknowledge with sadness the death on March 18 of long-time board member Mary Lee Allen.

Mary Lee became involved with the CPSA in the mid-1980s, shortly after its founding. Her extensive knowledge of historic architecture and her passion for landmark American houses led her to be elected to the CPSA Board of Directors. In 1990, she was elected board secretary and served until her retirement in 2014.

As secretary, Mary Lee recorded CPSA board meetings, helped plan architectural tours, and established the first CPSA website. She helped develop *Palladiana* and served as its editor, chief writer, and photographer for more than 15 years. Upon retirement, Mary Lee was made a board member *emeritus*.

Because of the many benefits from Mary Lee Allen's exemplary dedication, knowledge, and contributions to Palladian studies, CPSA dedicates this issue to her memory. ■



Mary Lee Allen  
1927-2023

## A Revisit

### In Jefferson's Shadow *The Architecture of Thomas R. Blackburn*

Bryan Clark Green, Princeton Architectural Press 2006

Thomas Blackburn was a rural builder who had moved to Albemarle County to work on the construction of the University of Virginia under the direction of Thomas Jefferson. After that project, Blackburn designed and built a number of other buildings in the Central Piedmont and Shenandoah Valley areas.

CPSA Board member Bryan Clark Green researched and wrote a book about Blackburn's architecture, and in 2019, led CPSA members on a Staunton tour of several buildings. The trip and more about Blackburn are chronicled in his article, "Moral Treatment: Thomas R. Blackburn and Western State Hospital," in the Fall 2020 issue of *Palladiana*, available at [palladiancenter.org](http://palladiancenter.org).

Blackburn produced designs for several buildings in the Western State Hospital complex, originally called the Western State Lunatic Asylum. The building has been renovated and is currently used as the Blackburn Inn, open to the public. Blackburn helped redesign the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind, Staunton's second largest institutional building.



Cupola, Blackburn Inn  
Formerly Western State Hospital  
Photograph by Bryan Clark Green

The architect had also designed several homes in Albemarle County and an 1844 wing to expand Stuart House in Staunton, which had been built in 1791 in classical revival style.

Reading Green's book and taking a day trip to Staunton to visit the Inn, perhaps see a Shakespeare play at Blackfriars Theater, and drive by the School for the Deaf and Blind on Beverley Street are yet other ways to enjoy Virginia architecture influenced so long ago by Palladio.

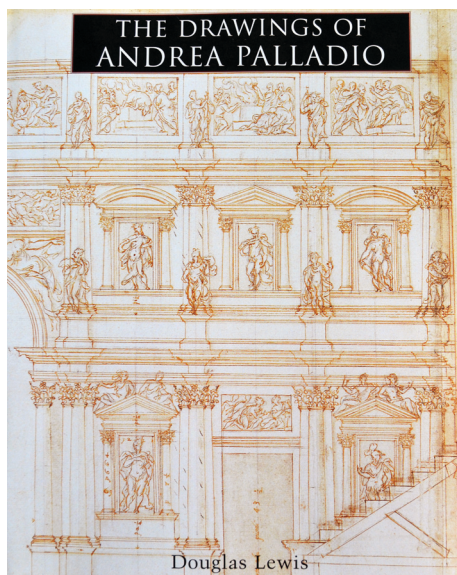
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