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Vernacular Architecture and the Cultural Landscape of the Maritime Provinces — A Reconnaissance*

By contemporary Canadian standards, the Maritimes remains a highly traditional region. Comparatively, its cultural landscape has been little altered by the post-war building boom; its rich folk traditions have not atrophied as quickly as in other parts of the country. But while the settlement landscape of the Maritimes has an individuality all of its own, there are no simple landscape metaphors which apply to the entire region in the way that an ordered cadastre and the remains of a strong agrarian heritage mark the rural landscape of Quebec and Southern Ontario. Diversity is the mark of Maritime Canada. This might well be expected, given the separate colonial histories of the three provinces, and given an economic base variously oriented to fishing, lumbering, farming, mining and factories. Recent attention to migration and settlement histories and to the rapidly changing economic condition of eighteenth and nineteenth-century society have begun to unravel some of the diverse strands of the region, but surprisingly little attention has been paid to domestic architecture.¹

This paper attempts to describe the houses of the majority of the rural population of the Maritime region, particularly those houses built before 1900, and emphasizes the more widespread and more prosaic “folk” or “vernacular” architecture — the array of buildings constructed by and for common people.² Initially, the builders of these houses relied on ideas and designs passed from one generation to another informally. But increasingly in the nineteenth century

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- 1 Several people have written on the exceptional houses of the region, the houses of the wealthy and powerful, those who could afford grand designs as statement of their social eminence and taste. See, for example, Arthur W. Wallace, *An Album of Drawings on Early Buildings in Nova Scotia* (Halifax, 1976); Alan Gowans, *Building Canada: An Architectural History of Canadian Life* (Toronto, 1966); Thomas Ritchie, *Canada Builds, 1867-1976* (Toronto, 1967); W. W. Alward, “Architecture in New Brunswick”, in R. A. Tweedie *et al.*, *The Arts in New Brunswick* (Fredericton, 1967); Stuart Smith, “Architecture in New Brunswick”, *Canadian Collector*, x, 3 (1975), pp. 37-42.
- 2 For good examples of the study of folk architecture see: R.W. Brunskill, *Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture* (London, 1971); Henry Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (Philadelphia, 1968); Peter Ennals, “Nineteenth Century Barns in Southern Ontario”, *Canadian Geographer*, 16 (1972), pp. 257-70; Michel Lessard and Gilles Vilandré, *La Maison Traditionnelle au Québec* (Montreal, 1974).

builders were also reacting, in one way or another, to changing architectural fashions which penetrated the region through a variety of more formal and systematically published sources, and some of these ideas were adapted to older traditional designs. In either case, few of the houses can be precisely dated through extant records. Our concern here is not with precise chronological description, but rather with the broad patterns of life and livelihood revealed through field inspection of house form and house appearance.³

An examination of the surviving housing stock illuminates the regional variety of the Maritimes.⁴ Housing reveals much of past patterns of living, of cultural antecedents, social aspirations, economic circumstances and adaptation to new environmental settings.⁵ This is particularly true in Maritime Canada where pre-industrial ways of building, often connecting individual ways of living to long standing regional traditions, persisted well into the nineteenth century. Though affected by stylistic fads, the house remains a durable indicator of economy and society. Consequently the house can illuminate questions of regional variety, highlight the intensity of external influences (such as aesthetic fashions and encroaching industrialism as a way of life), and cogently point up cultural orientations and persistences. Subsequent research will adopt more rigorous sampling procedures; the descriptions presented here are generalizations arising from field inspection and measurement of houses scattered widely

- 3 The assigning of precise dates to particular houses or house types presents problems. Rarely was the building of a house recorded except incidentally and there are no systematic records one can use for this purpose on a broad regional scale. Even the assignment of very rough time periods does not prevent the later appearance of a specific type. Unlike "high style" houses of the nineteenth century whose appearance and fashionable appeal tended to be chronologically discrete, folk or vernacular housing forms were more enduring, and in some instances the conservative yearnings of individuals or groups such as the Loyalists, led to the construction of house types a generation or more after the form had been superceded elsewhere. Recognizing these problems we have assigned very broad dating parameters to suggest a general chronological sequence.
- 4 The use of surviving housing stock also presents problems. Large numbers of earlier structures have long since disappeared — the victims of fire, neglect or replacement — and many others have been significantly altered. It is very difficult then to know how representative is the array of surviving buildings. Nevertheless, in the absence of alternative sources for studying building form, the surviving buildings represent the best and only record for examination, albeit one that must be judged with appropriate prudence.
- 5 Within geography, this perspective is exemplified by Fred Kniffen, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion", *Annals, Association of American Geographers*, 53 (1963), pp. 549-77; Pierce Lewis, "Common Houses, Cultural Spoor", *Landscape*, 19 (1975), pp. 1-22; David B. Mills, "The Development of Folk Architecture in Trinity Bay, Newfoundland", in John J. Mannion, ed., *The Peopling of Newfoundland* (St. John's, 1977), pp. 77-101; John Lehr, *Ukrainian Vernacular Architecture in Alberta* (Edmonton, 1976); Deryck Holdsworth, "House and Home in Vancouver: Images of West Coast Urbanism, 1886-1929", in G.A. Stelter and A.F. J. Artibise, eds., *The Canadian City: Essays in Urban History* (Toronto, 1977), pp. 186-211. Also see Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia* (Knoxville, 1975).

throughout the region.⁶ This field reconnaissance is integrated into a synthesis of the limited existing work on Maritime housing, setting the stage for a discussion of the social meaning of the house.⁷

Six distinct house types can be found in Maritime Canada. None is exclusive to a particular part of the region, but regional concentrations of some styles are evident (Figure 1). Each of the house types is classified on the basis of floor plan, nature of construction, roof design and exterior detail, and their temporal and regional distributions are noted.

The simplest house identified is a version of the hall and parlour house found throughout eastern North America.⁸ Houses of this type are small, single-storey, rectangular structures with a gable roof and loft (Type I, Fig. 2). Originally, most comprised only two or three rooms: a large kitchen (hall) occupying up to two-thirds of the floor space and one or two bedrooms at one end of the house. Entry doors — not necessarily located symmetrically in the facade or opposite each other — occurred on both long sides of the house; in some cases the door was on the end wall. Single chimneys within the walls of the house were set in locations ranging from the centre of the house to the end wall of the kitchen. Generally of timber frame construction, these houses were finished in the simplest of materials.⁹ Shingles and clapboard were prominent in early

- 6 Extensive traverses were carried out by the authors over a two year period. In addition to the superficial inspection of hundreds of houses encountered along the way, detailed interior and exterior measurements were taken of some forty houses.
- 7 The visual record and most detailed description of individual houses in Nova Scotia are provided in the volumes published by the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia: *Seasoned Timbers* (Halifax, 1972); *Founded Upon a Rock* (Halifax, 1971); *South Shore* (Halifax, 1974). Also see Sharon Reilly, *Selected Buildings in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia* (Ottawa, 1977) and Ronald McDonald, *Report on Selected Buildings in Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia* (Ottawa, 1977); Gordon B. Kinsman, *Colchester County Century Farms* (Truro, 1979). For Prince Edward Island, see Irene L. Rogers, "An Approach to Island Architecture", in Harry Baglole, ed., *Exploring Island History* (Belfast, P.E.I., 1977); Irene L. Rogers, "Island Homes", *The Island Magazine*, no. 1 (1976); for New Brunswick, see Smith "Architecture in New Brunswick", J. R. Bourque, *Social and Architectural Aspects of Acadians in New Brunswick* (Fredericton, 1971).
- 8 See Lewis, *op. cit.*; Glassie, *op. cit.* The use of the term "hall and parlour" in reference to early Maritime houses may gloss over subtle and important cultural distinctions. European folk housing scholars have distinguished several regional variants of the simple one and two room house which is found throughout Britain and France. We have not yet attempted to differentiate between houses built by Maritime Scots, Irish, Acadian, or others. Nevertheless, in a personal communication, Professor John Mannion argues that the Irish on the Miramichi only adopted our Type I house form during the second half of the nineteenth-century, having earlier built a cruder "cabin" — a more self consciously Irish version of the traditional peasant cottage. Also see John J. Mannion, *Irish Settlement in Eastern Canada: A Study in Cultural Transfer and Adaptation* (Toronto, 1974), ch. 7.
- 9 In the past, log building techniques were used in some parts of the region, and many of the log buildings probably were of this type. A striking feature of the landscape sketches made by John Woolford are the number of simple hall and parlour houses, crudely built, often with logs and

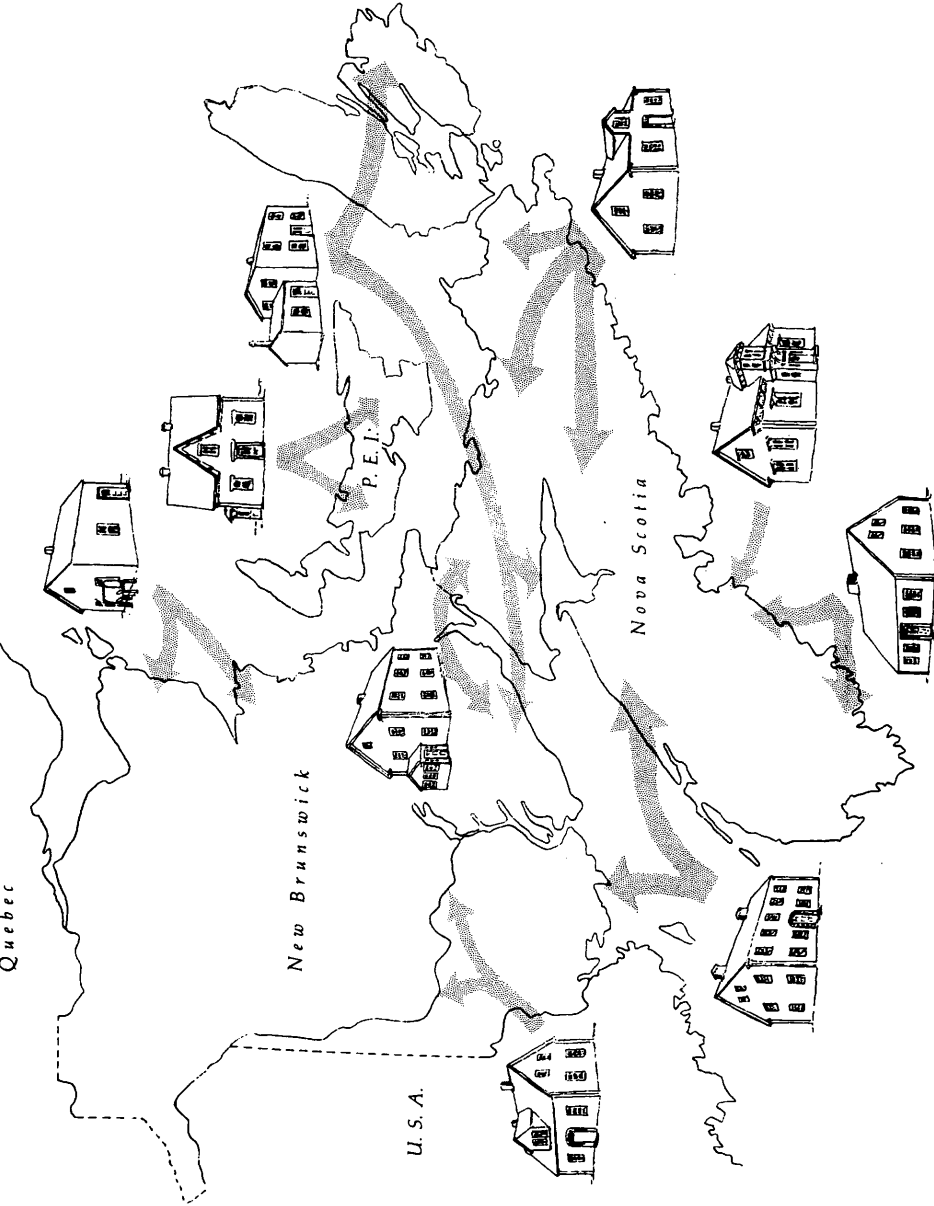


Fig. 1 Regional distribution of vernacular housing types in the Maritimes.

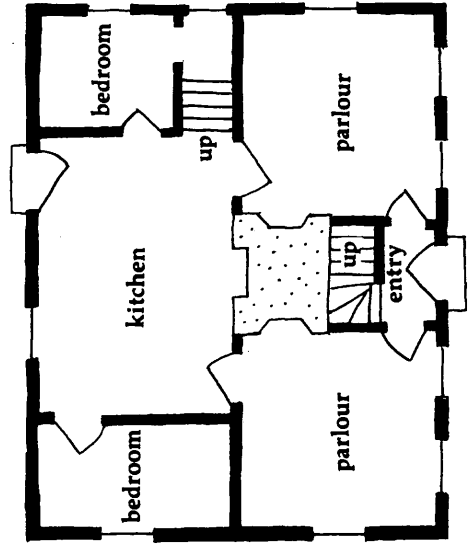
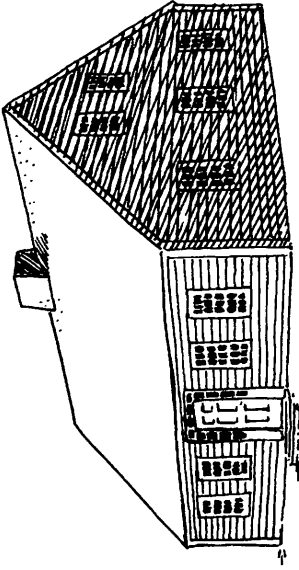


Fig. 3
Type II — the Cape Cod house (1770 to 1850)

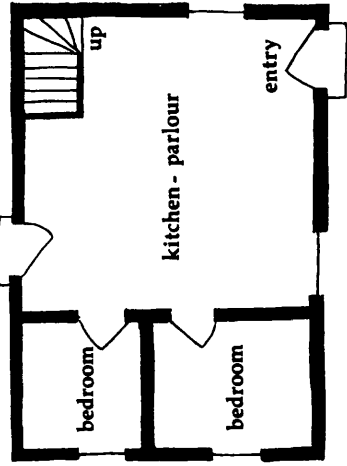
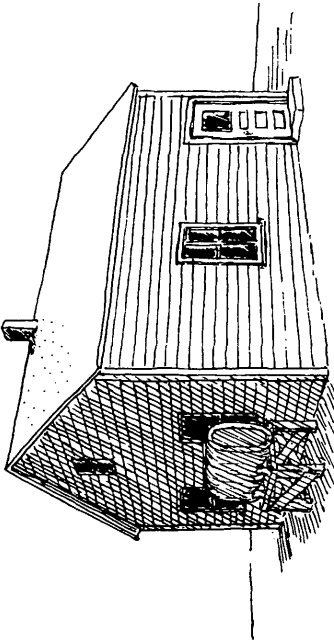


Fig. 2
Type I — the hall and parlour house (1750? to 1950)

examples; more recently tar paper and insulbrick have been used. In some cases, the wall cavity between the timbers and sheathing may have been packed with mud and clay, wood and mortar, sawdust, seaweed, straw, birch bark, or stone rubble.¹⁰ Almost ubiquitous in the region, the hall and parlour house is most common in Acadian New Brunswick, in areas of Irish settlement (the Miramichi and parts of the New Brunswick interior), and in Cape Breton and the counties of Pictou and Antigonish where it is associated with Scottish settlement. Type I houses are among the most difficult to date even roughly for they appear to have been built from the late eighteenth century until the present. Most surviving examples, however, appear to have been constructed during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The Cape Cod cottage forms a second common house type.¹¹ This is a more formal and rigidly symmetrical dwelling than the hall and parlour house; of one and a half storeys it usually has a central chimney and a large steeply pitched gable roof whose eaves almost meet the tops of the first floor windows (Type II, Fig. 3). The Cape Cod cottage is approximately square in plan. Two large front rooms flank the central front entrance; that to the south and/or west formed the “winter parlour”, while the other, a more formal parlour, was unused in winter. In the rear of the house, there were three or more small rooms; one was a kitchen, the others generally served as bedrooms. The front door opened onto a small vestibule from which a tight box staircase led to two or four upper floor rooms. Most examples included a fully excavated cellar accessible from above by stairs or trap door. Later additions — typical features of all Maritime house-types — frequently added one or more rooms to side or rear. Timber framed upon a field stone foundation, these buildings are generally shingle clad; clapboard is an infrequent alternative. Original windows are small; six over six, or six over nine light combinations are common. The simple decoration of main doorways included a four light transom and a “Christian door” (a panelled door in which the proportions of the upper four panels depict a cross).¹² Houses

interior end chimney. See his “Sketches in Nova Scotia in 1817”, Nova Scotia Museum, and the “Woolford Sketches” in the William Inglis Morse Collection, Dalhousie University Library. For a detailed study of one Acadian example, see Ronald Poirier and Bernard LeBlanc, *Maison Celestion Bourque-Memramcook Ouest* (Moncton, 1976). For the Irish houses of the Miramichi, see Mannion, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-64. Good examples of this house type which are accessible to the public are the Mazerolle House, a log building at the Village Historique Acadienne, and the Lint House at King’s Landing Historical Settlement.

10 The practise of filling the wall cavity with various insulating materials was probably common in all early Maritime houses. Even now many rural people continue to pack the outside foundation wall with spruce boughs, sawdust or seaweed as a way of creating a dead air space to help prevent heat loss in winter.

11 Ernest Allen Connolly, “The Cape Cod House: An Introductory Study”, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XIX (1960), pp. 47-56; Doris Doane, *A Book of Cape Cod Houses* (New York, 1970).

12 Robert Cunningham and John B. Prince, *Tamped Clay and Salt Marsh Hay* (Fredericton,

of this type are found along the Nova Scotia coast west and south of Halifax from St. Margaret's Bay to Yarmouth and most were built between 1770 and 1840.

One and a half storey dwellings are the most common house form of Maritime Canada. By the 1840s they formed the basis of a regional vernacular. Distinguished from the Cape Cod type by a less steeply pitched roof and the greater height of both first and second floor walls, houses of this third type (Fig. 4) are also set apart from Type II by the replacement of the large central chimney stack by smaller chimneys located half way to the end walls or later, just inside the end walls. These changes permitted a central hall or passage to be opened through the house, increased the usable space on the second floor, especially with the addition of a central dormer, and led to a more rigidly formal plan with two front parlours flanking the hall, and a dining room and kitchen behind. Sleeping rooms were generally confined to the second floor.

Stylistic variation of this basic regional form focussed upon the dormer (Fig. 5). A simple gable dormer (A) was widely used throughout the region. Five sided "Scottish" dormers (B) occurred in the Scottish settlements of Pictou County, and in the fishing coves south of Halifax.¹³ A large triangular dormer integrated into the roof line, and reminiscent of the classical pediment (C), was particularly characteristic of the Annapolis Valley and Prince Edward Island. Later the pitch of the dormer was steepened in the neo-gothic fashion (D) promoted by American designers such as Andrew Jackson Downing.¹⁴ A simpler vernacular interpretation, sometimes referred to as "Fisherman's gothic" (E), occurs in some localities as a triangular capped window; these often appeared in a sequence of three dormers. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the dormer became a far more complex element in the design, and was thrust forward from the main line of the roof. In Lunenburg, the projecting dormer (G) took on an elaborately bracketed and tiered "wedding cake" appearance and extended over the front door.¹⁵ Elsewhere the design was simpler and invariably the projecting plane extended through both upper and lower floors (F) so that the main entrance was also thrust forward. As a final elaboration of the type, bay windows became widely used; they too came to extend over the two levels of the house, thus producing a style that appears to have been distinct to the region.

1976), p. 85; Eric Sloane, *A Reverence for Wood* (New York, 1965).

13 The five sided dormer is a striking element of Scottish vernacular housing. It has been suggested that the masons working on the Shubenacadie Canal in 1832 were responsible for introducing this dormer, but it may easily have been a solution used by other Nova Scotia Scots for whom it may have been the way to add a dormer; see *Founded Upon a Rock*, p. 76.

14 Andrew Jackson Downing, *Cottage Residences* (New York, 1842).

15 This type of dormer is so strongly evident in Lunenburg that it is popularly termed the "Lunenburg dormer". It is also found in many fishing settlements further around the coast, particularly Clark's Harbour, Yarmouth and Digby, suggesting that there are diffusion links to be explored within the fishing economy.

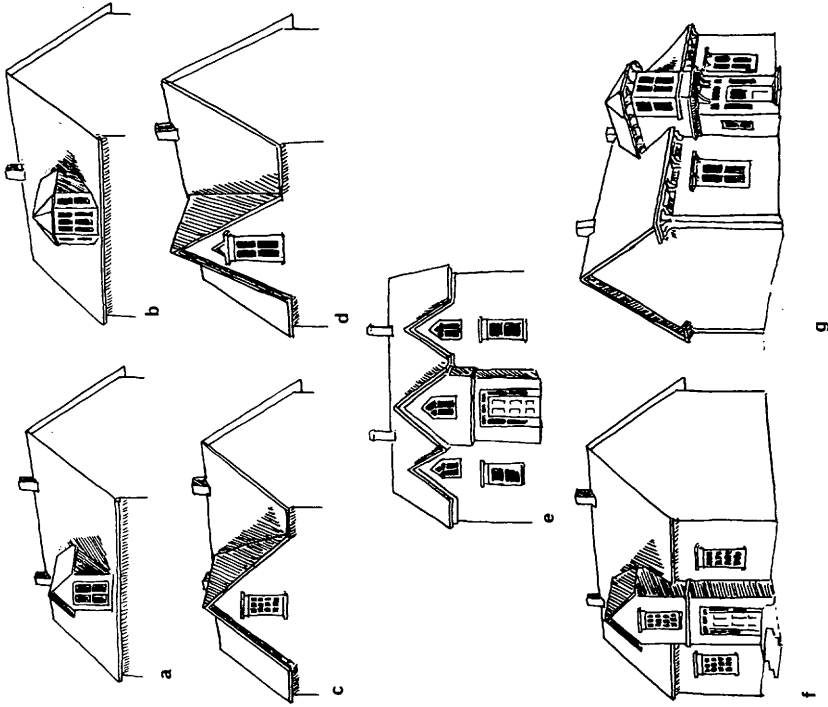


Fig. 5 Typical dormer styles

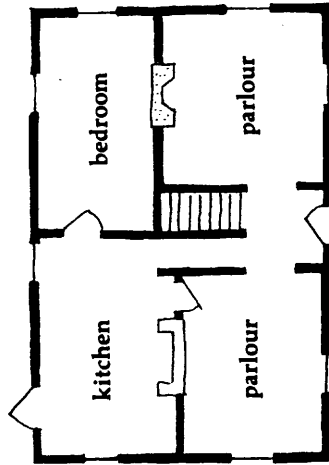
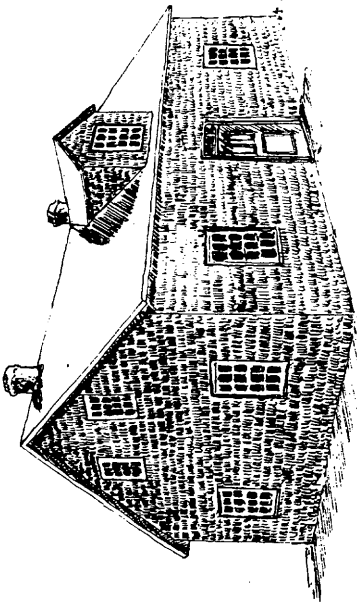


Fig. 4 Type III — the Maritime vernacular house (1800 to 1900)

But, whatever these changes, the interior arrangement of space remained largely unaltered, except that the upper room or projecting dormers frequently served as a bathroom, a use absent from houses built before the last quarter of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Type III houses were built from the 1840s to about 1900; it is difficult to precisely date appearance and duration of specific dormer styles, but generally the sequence is that shown in Figure 5.

Full two-storey houses of Type IV closely resemble Type III houses in plan and design. Larger in dimensions and often more pretentious in decoration, these houses (Fig. 6) have a central hall and two chimneys, each serving half of the house, both upstairs and down. Symmetry and proportion are striking characteristics of these two storey houses. Windows in the upper level are set directly above the openings below, giving all bedrooms one or more windows on the front or rear of the house. There are two typical roof forms: hipped, which like the stone houses of Chignecto reflect British models, and the more common simple gable. Entrances are formal, opening onto a spacious hall and staircase. Main doorways are frequently of neo-classical design with elliptical transoms and sidelights, although some are obscured by a small enclosed porch. By the 1830s and 40s these houses were finished with wide pilasters on the corners, with matching cornice boards and return eaves.

A fifth common house type has its main entrance on the shorter gable side of the house and as a consequence, its plan is radically different from previous examples. Generally, the main door, near one corner of the house, opens onto a spacious vestibule and a staircase leading to the second floor. Rooms open off a hallway running the length of the house along one long wall (Type V, Fig. 7). The first room off the hall is the parlour; the second room most often serves as a dining room, although it too may have been a parlour in the past. A third room beside the dining room at the end of the hall passage was usually the kitchen. This small kitchen is often extended by an appended wing; originally a summer kitchen, this was frequently upgraded later and integrated into the main kitchen. The upper floor was given exclusively to bed chambers, usually matching the room arrangement of the ground floor with the addition of a small bedroom over the entrance hall. In some examples, the kitchen extension is also two storeys and provides additional sleeping space accessible by a staircase from the kitchen and may also be connected to the upper landing of the main house.¹⁷ The earliest of these houses, which probably made their appearance in the region

16 The technology for water closets had been in existence in the eighteenth century but they only began to appear in the houses of the Canadian elite after the middle of the nineteenth century. After 1875 patented water closets design improved the technology, and they became more widely accepted. Anthony Adamson and Marion MacRae, *The Ancestral Roof* (Toronto, 1963), p. 249.

17 In other cases this auxiliary attic sleeping space was kept quite separate from the family's bedrooms, indicating perhaps a conscious desire to maintain a social distance between family and hired help.

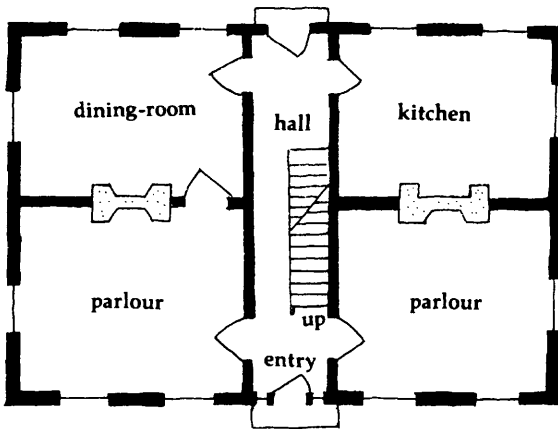
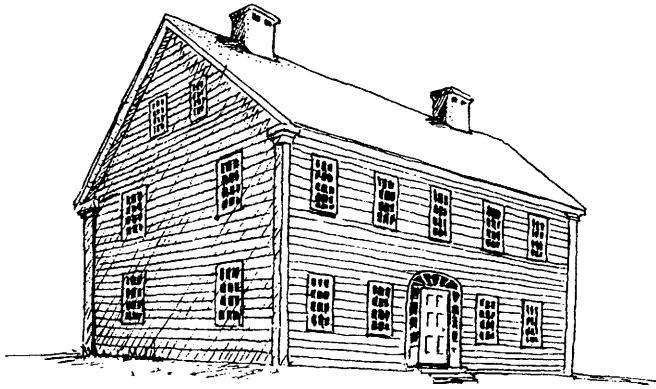


Fig. 6 Type IV — the full two storey house, popularly referred to as the 'Loyalist', or the Georgian style (1770 to 1850)

during the late 1830s, were finished in clapboard and were similar to later Type III houses in their vernacular interpretation of neo-classical trim. Houses with the same plan were built during the second half of the nineteenth century, but these later examples were smaller in their dimensions and plain and unadorned, except perhaps for a gothic dormer added to the roofline, or a bay window placed on the front or side (Fig. 8). Whereas the earlier houses are particularly evident in an area between Sussex and Truro, the more common later form occurs widely in the towns and farms of the region.

A sixth house type is distinguished by its extremely low pitched, almost flat, roof and the simplicity of exterior trim. The house is a full two storey

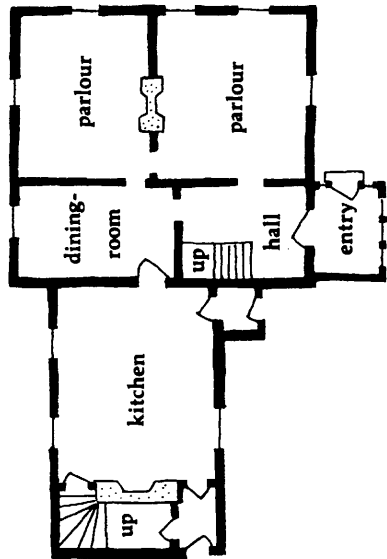
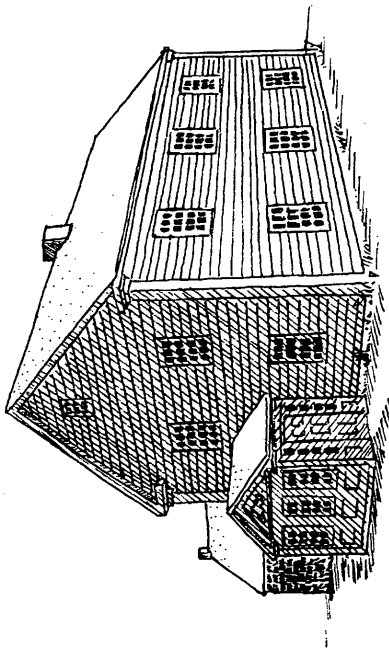
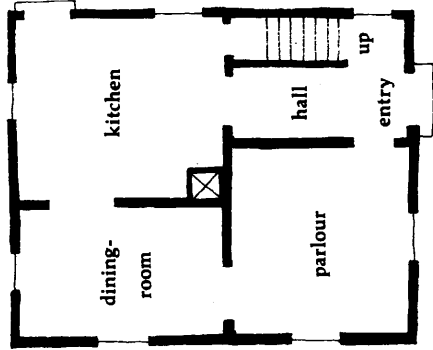
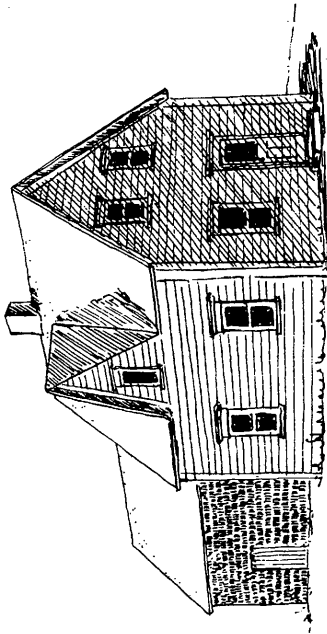


Fig. 8
Type V(b) — the later form of end gable entry house
(1860 to 1920)

Fig. 7
Type V(a) — the "temple" house (1830 to 1850)

rectangular dwelling of modest dimensions (Type VI, Fig. 9). It has a symmetrical facade, although a few exceptions have the front door set to one side. The exterior cladding is usually clapboard or tongue and groove siding. Corner boards, cornices, window and door trim are invariably very spare giving the house a plain appearance. These houses have a greater variability of floor plan than most other regional types. Many examples resemble Type IV, with two rooms on either side of a central passage. In cases where the door is offset, the plan follows that of Type V; in others the kitchen occupies half of the house, a parlour and dining room the remainder. Frequently, a one storey kitchen wing with a separate entrance built onto one end of the dwelling allowed one or more ground floor rooms to be used as bedrooms. In all examples, there were three or four bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs. Chimneys were located inside the end gable walls; houses with kitchen wings had another prominent chimney, extended to the height of the main gable ridge to carry smoke and sparks aloft and clear of the dwelling. Unlike most earlier types, these houses were constructed from sawn lumber rather than heavy timber.

From our broad survey a number of observations can be made about the extent of persistence and innovation in Maritime folk architecture. The evidence suggests that settlers in the region were extremely slow to initiate or absorb new forms of building. While the first season's house for most immigrant groups was undoubtedly a mere shack with minimal space and certainly little aesthetic pretension, the succeeding permanent dwelling reflected a continuity of traditional ways of creating shelter, modified both by materials at hand and current economic conditions. Some Loyalists could replicate New England forms immediately, with their own funds and government assistance in provision of building materials; most other groups, with fewer resources on arrival, readily perpetuated the size and floor plans of their earlier abodes, although they were forced to make adjustments because of the available materials. Only when some level of basic subsistence had been established might a more elaborate house type replace this earlier hall and parlour plan. Indeed, it took about two decades of living at Chignecto before the stone and brick houses of Yorkshiremen emerged.¹⁸ A similar time was required before the more prosperous Scots of Pictou began to replicate the cut stone houses of their homeland, and throughout the region one senses a strongly persistent conservative strain in many house types.

The simple asymmetrical hall and parlour folkhouse represents a significant and surprisingly persistent building tradition within the region. That the type is associated most strongly with Acadian areas and those of Celtic settlement is hardly surprising for these groups appear to have had a greater internal cohesiveness and consequently less cultural fusion than many of their neighbours from England, or New England. It might be too that groups like the

18 Cunningham and Prince, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-2.

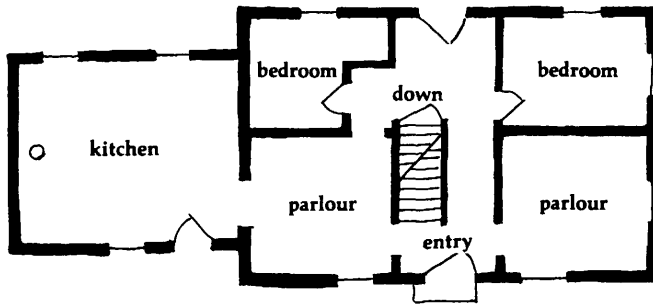


Fig. 9 Type VI — the hatch roofed house (1890 to 1920)

Irish and the Scots were selfconsciously trying to preserve in the Miramichi or, in rural Antigonish, Pictou or Cape Breton, a way of life snatched from them in their homeland. Re-established on small plots or marginal land, they continued to use traditional farming techniques. The small hall and parlour house was but one example of this conservative ethos.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the small folk house represented by Type I did undergo significant adaptation to New World conditions. Few emigrants from Highland Scotland or from Ireland would have been familiar with wooden building techniques of whatever form, and the adaptation of the plan to timber frame construction was probably learned from New England settlers. Post-Expulsion Acadian building technology must also have come from this New England source.²⁰

19 For an analysis of Scottish houses, see I. F. Grant, *Highland Folkways* (London, 1961) pp. 141-97. Some sense of the continuity of old ways of living, including the presence of some animals into the house, emerges from a reading of C. H. Farnham, "Cape Breton Folk" (1886), reprinted in *Acadiensis*, IX (Spring 1979), pp. 90-104. For rural Ireland see E. Estyn Evans, *Irish Folk Ways* (London, 1959); Caoimhin O Danachair, *Ireland's Vernacular Architecture* (Cork, 1975).

20 Cunningham and Prince offer a conjectural pre-clearance Acadian house form for the Tantramar area, but both the *Maison Celestine Bourque* and the *Vielle Maison Meteghan* suggest clear New England origins. Cunningham and Prince, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-4; Poirier and

The majority of other housing forms in the region probably derived from a New England source. As the name suggests the antecedents of the Cape Cod House are clear. Many early settlers to the coast between Halifax and Liverpool had moved north from Cape Cod after 1760 and the form of the house would have been known to them.²¹ Climate and economic conditions were strikingly similar and no modification of forms was required. It is interesting that the type was apparently adopted by Lunenburgers and later arrivals from Britain who came to share this coast and whose own building traditions apparently were not as immediately adaptable to the new setting. The majority of extant examples were built before 1830 but houses of the type were built until the mid-nineteenth century by which time the type had diffused in a very modest way to other locations in the region.²²

Other American immigrants introduced different house types to the region. Most Type IV houses reflect a New England root and in the minds of Maritimers, this house is typically associated with the Loyalists.²³ In this case the house reflects a New England vernacular interpretation of the Georgian form, and is characteristic of the farms and villages of the Annapolis Valley, as well as the Kennebecasis and Saint John River Valleys of New Brunswick. It is a house that was built with little alteration in form up to the middle of the nineteenth century, providing another example of a very persistent and perhaps conservative ideal that resisted the changes in fashion that were occurring elsewhere in North America during the period. American influences continued to dominate throughout the nineteenth century. For example, the strongly neo-classical look of Type V (a) is a clue not only to its chronology but also its origins. During the two decades after 1820, American architectural fashion was dominated by the Greek Revival movement.²⁴ Emerging from this was not only the high style house complete with columned portico of which the southern plantation manor

LeBlanc, *op. cit.*; see also *la maison Helene et Roma Bourgeois* (Moncton, 1977); C. Chevrier, *Les Défricheurs D'eau* (Ottawa, 1978); Jacques Boucher, *Les Elements du Village Historique Acadien* (Bathurst, 1978). For Nova Scotian Acadian examples, see *Seasoned Timbers*, vol. 1, pp. 130-1. The tradition of owner built houses seems very strong among Acadians. Whether it is a function of culture or of poverty is uncertain. For evidence of the persistence of Type I houses, one need only look at large sections of Dieppe, a suburb of Moncton.

21 *The South Shore — Seasoned Timbers*, vol. 2, *passim*.

22 Examples can be found in Colchester County. See Kinsman, *op. cit.*

23 Smith, "Architecture in New Brunswick". The linking of Loyalists and this house type is evident in the interpretation of buildings at King's Landing, the outdoor museum created by the New Brunswick government near Prince William, N.B. It is important to recognize that a few examples of this type owe their origin to British immigrants, such as the Yorkshire settlers of Chignecto and the timber merchants in Pictou and in the Miramichi.

24 For a discussion of Greek Revival architecture, see Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture since 1780. A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969); Henry L. Williams and Ottalie K. Williams, *A Guide to Old American Houses 1700-1900* (New York, 1962), ch. 3.

is a vivid and popular expression, but also a more vernacular “temple” style that is found widely across the northern states. Type V must be seen as the Maritime expression of this movement. By turning the gable end into the main facade, the image of the Greek temple is recalled. The image is incomplete without the portico but the pilasters and other minor elements of trim reinforce the style, albeit in a modest way. The later variant of this house (Type Vb) probably was also introduced from the United States and it is questionable whether the two were directly related. It seems likely that the later version arises out of the need to provide cheap working class housing particularly suited to narrow urban lots. This house with its end to the street satisfied these requirements and it probably was diffused across the continent during the latter part of the century. It does not therefore represent a case of continuous evolution within the region but rather a case where a similar plan was reintroduced from outside.

The connections with the United States, particularly New England, were strong. People moved back and forth in considerable numbers and New England journals circulated in the region. The two regions also shared a tradition of building in wood, and the decorative arts as they applied to housing employed the same techniques, whereas the use of stone and brick in Britain, and in other parts of North America, demanded different skills. It is significant that in the areas where European building craft traditions were attempted, namely by Scottish stone masons in Pictou and Yorkshire masons in Chignecto, these building traditions quickly gave way to the less costly and less specialized wooden technique. But the borrowing of New England technology and style was both selective and conservative. Maritime Canada did not become an extension of the New England cultural region, parroting every stylistic change as it came along. While the Cape Cod house was transferred to Nova Scotia, the Connecticut salt box house was not.²⁵ Nor was the more ebullient neo-classical or late nineteenth-century ornamentation as widely used. Maritime houses all display an economy of materials and a plainness of decoration that is in striking contrast to American houses and one notices the difference as soon as one crosses the border. Is this difference a reflection of poorer people, or were the craftsmen not available to produce the embellishments? It may be that the differences point to a more fundamental cultural distinction: Maritimers were less expansive, less given to displaying their wealth through their houses than their American cousins. Moreover, much of the American neo-classical architectural movement was tied through its images and ideals to the emerging

25 Woolford's 1817 volume records the existence of five salt box houses. An early example (1736) built at Annapolis Royal still stands. If salt boxes are an organic stage of a house reflecting additions to an earlier smaller structure, then it is unlikely that the form would be built as an initial house by new immigrants. By the time additions were required, summer kitchens and other lightly constructed sheds were added in train-like fashion. In parts of Newfoundland where several generations occupied a house site, salt box silhouettes typify one stage of the organic evolution. See David Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

American ideology, and for this reason Maritimers, and for that matter Ontarians may have been reluctant to adopt the style. Thus, while the American temple style neo-classical house appears in the Maritimes as Type V, it is a pale reflection of its high style antecedent, and in the hands of Maritime builders it was very much a vernacular relative that never became widespread.

It is true that a Maritime vernacular architecture does emerge out of the transplanted New England forms. The Cape Cod cottage and the temple style house had by mid-century begun to develop a distinctive appearance. The application of dormers in the centre of the facade roofline transformed the appearance of the earlier house and served also to open the landing or upstairs hall to more light and headroom. By the end of the century a radically different roof line was applied to the early designs. The influence of neo-gothic stylings on dormers, windows and roof pitch, again via New England sources but again with conservative Maritime translations, contributed to this later nineteenth-century Maritime vernacular.

By the end of the century a distinctly Atlantic house type emerged in the region as expressed as Type VI. The origins of this type are not readily evident. The most distinctive feature of these houses is the unusual roof line,²⁶ a type often associated with Newfoundland. Yet it is clear that houses of this type, which probably date to the period after 1890, are found widely in the Maritimes, from the industrial towns of Cape Breton, to much of early twentieth-century Halifax, to the small outposts of South Shore Nova Scotia and the Fundy Coast. One tantalizing hypothesis for the sudden appearance of this roof line links shipbuilding and housebuilding. The roof line bears a striking similarity to the form and construction technique of hatch covers and the cabin roof of nineteenth-century wooden sailing vessels. A low pitched roof would shed water but create little wind resistance or obstruction to the activities on deck. It is not unreasonable that ship carpenters might have adapted the form to housing, and the strong association of this house type in shipbuilding centres on the Fundy shore (Port Greville, Harvey Bank and St. Martins) supports the connection. The unorthodox truncated roofline would not have been unusual to the nautical eye. Moreover, there is a striking correspondence in timing between the expansion of industrial Cape Breton and Halifax and the period when shipbuilding was declining and it may be that shipbuilders turned to housebuilding. Of course, by the end of the century housebuilding technique was changing. The advance of "balloon framing", which used a large number of lighter pieces of wood in place of a heavy rigid box frame, represented a major break from

26 The roof is extremely simple to construct. The rafters are tied to a ridge pole and to a heavier (2" x 6" or 2" x 8") joist which also supports the ridge pole. The whole unit then forms a shallow truss which rests on the top plate of the walls. Because it rarely spanned a width of more than about five metres the *structure* was both strong and cheaply constructed.

earlier building technique.²⁷ Not only did construction become less costly but the building trades became less specialized and much of the rough carpentry could be done by almost anyone, including the prospective home owner. In this sense, these buildings are truly modern — they used mass produced materials and no longer demanded the services of a master craftsman. Such buildings provided an ideal solution to the need for cheap, mass housing in the cities of the region. But, whatever the reason, and the two hypotheses need not be mutually exclusive, the modification of form and technique seems to have produced a house type distinctive to Atlantic Canada, and it is likely that its appearance in Newfoundland represents a diffusion from the mainland.²⁸

The persistence of these forms and plans varied within sub-regions, and might well be understood within the context of the different pace of social and economic change occurring within the Maritimes, rather than that of the migration and diffusion histories of the various settler groups. To date we know little of domestic life within the region. Family size probably varied markedly but most couples could expect at least five or six children to reach adulthood. The addition of other relatives (aged parents, orphaned nieces and nephews), live-in domestics, labourers, or lodgers added to household size.²⁹ Seasonal labour migration to the woods or to the sea may have reduced numbers temporarily, but many houses were crowded by modern standards. Not surprisingly, many houses expanded over time to meet the needs of a growing household. Expansion took many forms: a larger house incorporating the earlier dwelling as an appendage, the addition of a new wing of one to two storeys, or the addition of a second storey on an existing structure. Kitchen wings were common to many early Maritime houses and frequently the space above the kitchen was set aside as the sleeping area for the domestics, or the seasonal workers. These sleeping areas were usually more crudely finished, and may or may not have been connected to the upper floor of the main dwelling. In this way the separation of the family and workers could be maintained.

27 For a discussion of balloon framing, see John I. Rempel, *Building in Wood* (Toronto, 1967), pp. 114-117; John A. Kouwenhoven, *The Arts in Modern American Civilization* (New York, 1967), pp. 49-53, 62-7.

28 David Mills, *op. cit.*: Michael Staveley, "Population Dynamics in Newfoundland: The Regional Patterns" in Mannion, *The Peopling of Newfoundland*, p. 69. Newfoundlanders were apparently involved in the construction of company housing in Sydney and built houses for themselves nearby; see C.W. Vernon, *Cape Breton Canada at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century* (Toronto, 1903), p. 277.

29 A cursory analysis of the manuscript censuses of the region provide ample evidence of the size and composition of Maritime households after 1851. A sampling of completed families from the 1851 Census of Kings County, N.B. reveals that the average size of family was 8.2 while the average household consisted of 8.7 person. There is evidence to suggest that similar figures were typical for an earlier period. Debra A. McNabb, "The Historical Demography of Horton Township — The First Sixty Years", unpublished research report, Historical Atlas of Canada Project, Toronto, June 1980.

In general, most Maritime houses reveal a tendency to develop a highly compartmentalized space. The four or more bedrooms within most houses allowed the separation of adults from children, boys from girls, family from domestics. Technological change facilitated some of these developments. With the advent of the heating and cooking stoves during the 1860s, life no longer had to revolve around the fireplace. Stoves could be located almost anywhere and connected by stove pipes to the chimney. Many late nineteenth-century houses had a maze of pipes linking rooms, joining upper and lower floors, and distributing heat about the house. Yet many Maritime households closed off certain rooms during the winter. Families slept communally on upstairs landings warmed by stove pipes, landings designed sufficiently large to accommodate the entire family. In this way the rhythms of the season punctuated life within the house, and while the house itself was becoming modern, the imperatives of climate forced the society into living patterns that were pre-modern.

Changes in social attitudes generally, and towards the use of space particularly, were manifest in other ways. The desire for greater personal privacy paralleled the assertion of a more individualistic world. This new emphasis also was expressed in the weakening of community bonds and by a retreat into the private world of the family. Henry Glassie argues that these changes led to the more rigidly formal houseplan. Rather than the door opening into the multipurposed hearth, it only revealed the impersonal entrance hall, which served as a social screen protecting the householder from intrusions into the series of private spaces within the house.³⁰ Moreover the whole facade with its symmetry and classically dictated rules of design served to highlight the more scientific and less organic world that accompanied the Industrial Revolution.³¹ Ironically, in many Maritime houses the formal front door was rarely used although it was incorporated into the house. Like the formal Victorian parlour that also became a commonplace during the latter part of the century, the front door served a largely ceremonial function being used only for visits from distinguished guests such as the clergyman. By custom most familiar visitors entered by the back door into the kitchen complex. Such practises highlight again the persistence of older folk patterns of life within the dwelling and suggest that for many rural families there was an ambivalence toward many aspects of the modern house form. Thus while many Maritimers may have ensured an outward display of modernity in the form of one of the fashionable neo-classical facades, the reality was that life within the house was frequently more attuned to traditional rhythms.

30 Henry Glassie, "Folk Architecture and the Social Revolution" (address to a symposium on folk housing held at the University of Maine, Orono, 23 February 1978). Also see Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia*, pp. 188-9.

31 David P. Handlin, "The Detached House in the Age of the Object and Beyond", in J. W. Mitchell, ed., *Environmental Design-Resources and Practice* (Los Angeles, 1972), pp. 721-8.

The transition of social ideology and its attendant house-forms proceeded haltingly. There was no continuous line of evolution, and the old ways persisted alongside the new order. Even within the industrial world of Douglstown, Glace Bay and Stellarton a distinctive type of housing developed in the hands of corporate planners. What is striking about these house forms is the extent to which the older folk tradition as represented by Type I is joined with the emerging regional vernacular as represented by Type III. The result is a semi-detached dwelling that was contemporary in external appearance but maintained the multipurpose hall and parlour form inside. For the people recruited from rural Cape Breton or elsewhere to work in the collieries or mills, the living space provided by the company must have been familiar indeed. Perhaps only in the brick company houses of Marysville or the three-decker tenements of Saint John were there emphatically new industrial housetypes.³²

Maritime Canada is no single cultural or economic region but a complex layering of landscapes, each reflecting the specific origins of its inhabitants, economic orientations, and chronology. It is a region that developed from geographically separate remnants of an earlier Acadian population, colonies of Swiss and German "foreign Protestants", New Englanders and Yorkshiremen, displaced Highland Scots, Loyalists from as far away as the Carolinas, and early nineteenth-century British and Irish emigrants. These groups tended to create a cellular structure within the region and sub-regional distinctions could for a time be established and reinforced. Thus the Yorkshire settlers could transfer to Chignecto, in the first generations at least, the brick house types they had known in the Vale of York, and Scots could maintain the Gaelic language through several generations after migration. But all experienced cultural adaptations and change. Some groups such as the Lunenburgers turned to harvesting the sea after a heritage on the land in Europe and initially in Nova Scotia. Generally, connections to, and participation in the Maritime economy of the North Atlantic as seamen and traders, and the almost continuous to-ing and fro-ing by Maritimers with the "Boston States" after 1850 had a modifying effect on all transplanted cultures.

On the basis of housing evidence alone, it is hardly possible or proper to attempt to draw firm cultural boundaries within the region. It may be that a more microscopic analysis of areas such as Pictou, the Annapolis Valley, or Prince Edward Island, or of specific elements such as structural technique, will

32 The architecture and layout of Marysville, New Brunswick is similar to the New England milltowns of Lowell or Lawrencetown, Massachusetts; equally, it might be argued, the morphology of Marysville is reminiscent of English milltowns such as Saltaire, Yorkshire. Clearly there is considerable scope for work on the region's industrial housing landscapes as well as those of earlier and rural ways. Indeed, there may well be considerable continuity of rural building types and floor plans in early industrial housing. See, for example, the continuity of rural building types and floor plans for industrial housing which has been documented by J. B. Lowe, *Welsh Industrial Workers Housing, 1775-1875* (Cardiff, 1977).

provide a sharper delineation of both subtypes and subregions. However, given the complex geographic intermixing of economies in the nineteenth-century, it seems likely that building form, and other cultural features, may be more strongly reflective of particular economic orientations than they are of local and ethnic origins. The result is that many landscapes contain a mix of housing styles. It is not uncommon to find a small hall and parlour cottage alongside the more pretentious high style Queen Anne house of a local merchant or sea captain. The latter, because of his greater wealth, his travels to cities outside the region, and his willingness to act as an arbiter of taste, became the agent for bringing new styles and new ideas to many communities. Diffusion of American styles also occurred by means of a variety of published sources, particularly the agricultural journals published in Albany, New York.³³ Through these publications, the ideas and designs of Andrew Jackson Downing and others gained wide expression in eastern North America. Pattern books aided local carpenters to interpret the designs, and by the 1870s if not earlier, a measure of standardization was becoming apparent across the North American continent. This standardizing trend became the enemy of the folk and regional vernacular traditions, and the Maritimes did not escape. For this reason we have deliberately avoided incorporating many of the later nineteenth-century styles into our classification, but recognition of their presence is essential. Indeed, the Victorian exuberance of many streetscapes in Amherst or Moncton or New Glasgow is testimony to the wealth generated in the first flowering of Maritime industrialisation. Much more needs to be learned about the extent to which Halifax, Saint John, and other urban centres served as gateways for innovation and diffusion of architectural ideas for a wider hinterland.

On top of this eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landscape are the accretions of the twentieth century, all of which enhance the sense of complexity. For the observer in the 1980s a number of strong emotions and impressions are inevitable. One is continually struck by two contrasting images. On the one hand, one repeatedly confronts lines of settlement that seem isolated from any strong economic base and one wonders how people survive. The existence of these settlements is a testament to past population expansion and to a once vigorous economic life related to the lumber industry and to the sea, and the fact that people remain, perhaps commuting many miles to a job, is a poignant reminder of the tenacity and sense of place that many Maritimers have. That many of these older houses display a fresh coat of paint and are carefully maintained reinforces the impression. On the other hand, one confronts with equal ease and frequency, a landscape of squalid mobile homes, abandoned cars, and venerable

33 Journals such as *The Agriculturalist* and *The Cultivator* carried a regular feature on 'rural architecture'. While it is difficult to know how widely these journals circulated among the rural population, it is also true that these features were frequently "lifted" for presentation in local and more widely read newspapers.

houses transformed beyond recognition by modern sash, vinyl siding, and artificial stone. The new vernacular asserts itself around every corner and only when one recognizes that this process of adaptation and change has been continuous throughout the entire settlement history of this region does one gain a perspective, if only grudgingly.