

THEODORE LYMAN HOUSE

*Hapgood & Hapgood
Architects*

1895



Stephen B. Swigert
Trinity College
American Studies 811
December 15, 2002

Theodore Lyman House – 1895

Architects: Hapgood & Hapgood

22 Woodland Street
Hartford

(home of The Town and County Club since 1925)

I. INTRODUCTION

Built in 1895, the Theodore Lyman House is a fine example of the early Colonial Revival style. Its architects, Melvin and Edward Hapgood, were among the most prominent in Hartford at the time, distant cousins who had distinguished separate careers but practiced together for only five years. The Lyman House is the only Colonial Revival residence they designed together that still stands in Hartford.¹ It combines the exquisite interior work that Melvin Hapgood was best known for with an exterior design by Edward Hapgood in the style he would later make his specialty.

The Lyman House reflects the history of Woodland Street and the Asylum Hill neighborhood. It was built at the height of the area's prestige as a residential neighborhood, but during the next 30 years the West End and nearby areas of West Hartford became the residential neighborhoods of choice for Hartford's elite. Lyman died in 1920 and his widow died five years later. When Mrs. Lyman's estate put this luxurious house up for sale in 1925, its location made it more desirable as a clubhouse

¹ In 1992 the Stowe-Day Foundation (now called The Harriet Beecher Stowe Foundation) sponsored an exhibition of the Hapgoods' work. The exhibition catalogue includes a list of all known commissions of both cousins. (Stowe-Day Foundation, *The Architecture of Melvin H. Hapgood and Edward T. Hapgood (exhibition catalogue)*, Hartford, 1992 [hereinafter referred to as the "Stowe-Day Exhibition Catalogue"], pp. 23-36.) Six of the 10 free-standing houses designed by Hapgood & Hapgood and built in Hartford still stand. All but the Lyman House are variations of the Queen Anne style that was the most popular for single-family houses in the 1890's.

than as a private home, so it was purchased by a newly-organized private women's club, the Town and County Club. The Club, which remains active today with more than 400 members, has maintained the Lyman House in excellent condition for more than 75 years.

II. DESCRIPTION

Neighborhood Context

Woodland Street is on the western edge of the Asylum Hill neighborhood. The Lyman House is on the eastern side of the street, very close to Farmington Avenue, and faces west. When the house was built, Asylum Hill was one of Hartford's most prestigious residential neighborhoods and Woodland one of its most prestigious streets. Today the two blocks of the street between Farmington and Asylum Avenues consist primarily of nineteenth century houses that have been converted to medical or other professional offices. There are also a couple of twentieth century office buildings, a high-rise apartment building, two churches—and the Lyman House, home of the Town & County Club.

Basic Features of the House

The house that Theodore Lyman built is three stories tall. Its exterior walls are buff-colored brick, with limestone trim. Its roof is hipped and covered with red asphalt shingles (the available drawings for the house don't indicate the original roofing material). The foundation is trimmed in limestone. The basic shape of the house is a rectangular block, with the shorter sides of the rectangle facing the front and rear. A small rectangular service ell that cannot be seen from the front extends toward the rear from the left side of the block. The windows are double-hung, in various sizes, and all have only one pane of glass in each sash. The window trim is limestone, with a simple flat sill under each window and a splayed lintel composed of several chunks of limestone,

including a prominent keystone, above each first and second floor window. (The third floor windows extend up to the cornices at the roofline and therefore have no crowns.)²

Elevations

Façade (West). The Lyman House is set back about 20 feet and faces directly onto Woodland Street. Its façade is strictly symmetrical, with three bays presenting windows and a central front door in a 1-1-1 pattern. The central bay is a gabled pavilion that projects modestly from the principal block of the building. Four of the house's eight square-shafted brick chimneys are visible, one directly behind each side of the central gable and one on each side of the house. The central gable forms a near-pediment with prominent eave returns on either side. Cornices with prominent modillions extend below the roofline all around the house. The corners of the building and of the projecting pavilion are decorated with limestone quoins in a pattern of alternating large and small stones.

The main entrance is sheltered by a semicircular, one-story entrance porch. It has a flat roof that is supported by Doric columns. (All of the houses's columns are fluted and have bases in the Roman manner.) There is a pair of columns on each side at the front and a single column at the back. An elliptical Adam³-style fanlight covers a solid mahogany double door decorated with egg-and-dart molding. White molding extends around the fanlight and white wooden Ionic pilasters flank the door. On each side of the door, cut into the brick, there is an oval side light surrounded by white wooden molding. The fanlight and sidelights display delicate patterns of leaded glass. (The Club has enclosed the porch in order to create an additional room for its members, so it no longer functions as an entrance.)

² Soon after acquiring the house from the Lyman estate, the Town and County Club added a ballroom and a members' dining room. The interiors of these additions harmonize well with the original design of the house, but their external appearance departs significantly from the original style. I will confine my discussion in this paper to the original features of the building as designed by the Hapgoods.

³ The terms "Adam" and "Federal" are both used to refer to the refined development that followed the earlier Georgian style—"Adam" being equally applicable to the original English version of the style as introduced by Robert Adam. I use them almost interchangeably in this paper, preferring "Adam" when referring to specific aspects of the style and "Federal" when referring generally to the American incarnation of the style.

All windows in the front elevation are double-hung with 1-over-1 sashes. The side bays have single windows on each floor, and there are Palladian-inspired three-part windows on the second and third floors of the central bay. In all three bays, the height of the window sashes decreases from the lowest to the highest floor while keeping the same ample width. This pattern minimizes the apparent height of the house. In the side bays, the first floor windows (in the library and the reception room) are floor length, the second floor windows have more typical proportions and the third floor windows are shorter than they are wide. In the central pavilion, the second floor three-part window is the same height as the other second floor windows. The rectangular portion of the third floor three-part window are as short as the third floor windows in the side bays. They are crowned by a simple molding set at the same height as the eave returns connected to the cross gable roof. A semicircular window extends above this molding into the gable to give the Palladian effect. (Each window on the second or third floor of the façade is located in one of the nine bedrooms and sitting rooms used by the family and guests.)

Rear Elevation (East). Like the façade, the original rear elevation displayed three bays, but since this was not the face that Theodore Lyman or the Hapgoods intended to present to the world, it was somewhat plainer and asymmetrical—less typically Colonial Revival. After the Club's addition of the members' dining room, the right bay, which is the end of the ell, is the only one that survives intact. The first floor of this bay has a one-story rectangular porch. The flat roof of the porch is supported on either side by a group of three Doric columns, with an engaged column on either side at the rear—a very impressive entryway for a kitchen. This bay has small windows on the left side of both the second and third floors.

The original left bay, part of the main rectangle of the house, had a two-story porch, with a veranda on the first floor and a balcony above it on the second floor. Each story was supported by fluted columns arranged in the same pattern as the columns on the kitchen porch—but in this porch, the columns had Ionic capitals. The veranda on the first floor (now replaced by the members' dining room) had a door connecting it to the dining room, and the second floor balcony (which survives but isn't used because it overlooks the roof of the addition) has a door connecting to the main hallway. On the third floor, a small window overlooks the roof of the porch from the servants' sitting room. The

central bay had a pair of small windows on each floor (in the butler's pantry and in the second and third floor hallways).

South Elevation. The south elevation is on the right side of the house, facing the rear of Immanuel Congregational Church (built four years after the Lyman House in 1899), which fronts on Farmington Avenue. Although the addition of the Club's ballroom on the right (rear) side significantly changed the overall appearance of the building, the three bays of the main block of the house in this elevation remain essentially as they were in 1895. These bays are considerably wider than those of the façade. On the first floor, each of the left and right bays has two separate 1-over-1 double-hung windows. The central bay is a semicircular pavilion projecting from the main block. Its first floor has a bay window composed of three nearly-adjointing windows. The second floor has two windows in the left bay, two windows on either side of the pavilion and only one window in the right bay. All of these windows are the same height as the windows in the façade on the same floor—first floor windows are floor length and second floor windows are shorter. On the third floor, the windows have the same short sashes as those in the front elevation.

In the original design of the house, the south elevation included the two-story porch at the rear (right) corner of the main block of the house (described in the Rear Elevation paragraph above). Also visible at the far right side was the south face of the service ell that extends from the north side of the main block. There were three small windows on the first floor of the wing (in the kitchen and rear entryway). On the second floor, there is a small window to the left (in the hall), but on the right an oriel window projects from what the architectural drawings refer to as the "card room." The oriel contains an elaborate modified Palladian window with leaded glass at the top echoing a fanlight extending over all three parts of the window. On the third floor above, there are two small windows (in the hall and a servant's room).

North Elevation. The north elevation is comprised of the main block (three bays) and the service ell (two bays). A driveway runs along this side of the house straight back to the rear. The north elevation of the main block is similar in many respects to its south elevation. The bay at the far right, nearest the front of the house, is the mirror image of the corresponding bay in the south elevation: it has two windows on each floor that

decrease in height from floor length on the first floor to very short on the third. The central bay projects slightly and has a cross-gable similar to that of the façade. A “carriage porch” (porte cochère) covers the driveway and shelters a small entrance door on the right side of the bay. The one-story porch is rectangular in shape, with a flat roof supported in all four corners by a pair of Doric columns. The second and third floor of the central bay have Palladian-inspired windows almost identical to those in the central pavilion of the façade. To the left of the carriage porch is a narrower bay with two windows on each floor. These windows don’t follow the pattern of the windows near the front of the house. The right-hand windows on the first and second floors (located in the “den” that served as Mr. Lyman’s home office) are similar in size to the second floor windows in the front. The left hand windows on those floors are smaller, while both windows on the third floor match the third floor windows in the façade and south elevations

Inside the next bay to the left, where the ell meets the main block, is the service stairway for the house. As with the kitchen, its entrance belies its function. The simple entrance door is sheltered by a triangular pediment supported by two pairs of Doric columns. On the second floor above the pediment there is an oval leaded glass window (in the stairway) similar to the side lights by the front door. There is a single small window on the third floor. The bay on the far left has three small windows on the first floor (in the kitchen and a storeroom). On the second floor it has one large window on the left (in the card room) and two small windows on the right (in closets). In the third floor, there are two small windows (in a servant’s room).

Interior

The interior of the Lyman House is much larger than the façade leads one to expect because, contrary to most Colonial houses, its side elevations are wider than its façade. Not including additions made by the Club, each floor encompasses approximately 5,600 square feet. There are 26 rooms and 17 fireplaces. As soon as one enters the building, it is apparent that the Hapgood cousins paid as much attention to interior details as to the exterior appearance of the house. The woodwork is particularly outstanding. All floors are quartersawn oak. Most are made of standard floorboards laid

straight, but the floors of some of the main rooms on the first floor have been laid in various parquet patterns. In nearly every room, the windows are recessed with adjoining interior shutters so they can be covered if desired.

First Floor. Just inside the entrance doors is a small vestibule trimmed in mahogany, with mosaic tile on the floor. A single mahogany door topped by a round fanlight leads from the vestibule into the hallway. The leaded glass patterns in this fanlight emulate those in the elliptical fanlight above the entrance doors on the other side of the vestibule.

Each of the principal rooms on the first floor employs a different kind of wood in its woodwork, but common design themes appear throughout. The central hallway is done in painted pine, with Colonial-styled wainscoting on all the walls, detailed cornices at the ceiling and Ionic pilasters in pairs and clusters in every corner. An unusual rose pattern is carved in the center of each pilaster's capital. Wide segmental arches lead from the hall to every room. Sliding pocket doors allow the rooms to be closed off but leave the doors hidden when they aren't being used. The mahogany dining room (painted now, but probably stained originally) has a ceiling criss-crossed with beams and an especially elaborate fireplace. A small room connecting the central hallway and the dining room has a built-in mahogany silver cabinet with an impressive pattern of leaded glass in the doors. The molding, fireplace trim and built-in bookcase in the "reception room" on the south side of the front of the house are fashioned from white mahogany, a paler version of the tropical wood. The pilasters on either side of the bookcases in this room are Doric. The living room, which includes the bay window on the south side of the house, has elaborate crown moldings and a richly detailed fireplace of painted pine. The den and adjacent lavatory are trimmed in birdseye maple.

Melvin Hapgood's most impressive woodwork is his work with quartersawn oak in the library. Elegantly fluted engaged Ionic columns surround the room, on either side of each window, at the corners of the fireplace, and between the glass doors of the bookcases that line all four walls. The wall above the fireplace is divided into three delicately carved niches, separated by more engaged Ionic columns. All the capitals incorporate the same rose motif found in the hallway pilasters. The ceiling is rimmed

with elaborate modillioned cornices, and Adam-style decorative elements such as swags and drapery festoons appear throughout the room.

The five fireplaces on this floor are trimmed in five different marbles and have five unique wooden mantels and/or surrounds. Each fireplace also has a different design for its cast-iron fireback.

Leading from the hallway to the second floor is an outstanding staircase with gracefully-turned spiral balusters of mahogany spaced closely together going up the stairs and continuing in a balustrade surrounding the upper landing. The stairway begins in the center of the hallway and rises to a landing where a modified Palladian window overlooks the carriage porch and a window seat runs the length of the wall beneath the window. Then the stairway splits into two parts that return up either side of the hallway until reaching the upper landing on the second floor.

Second Floor. As originally designed, the landing at the top of the split stairway led directly into the second floor hallway under an 18-foot wide segmental arch. (Unfortunately for the appearance of the building, twentieth century fire laws required the Club to fill this opening in.) There are three segmental arches surmounting the long hallway extending from the front to the back of the house. With five family bedrooms and sitting rooms, a children's dining room and the card room, the second floor has seven fireplaces. The fireplace surrounds are more simple than those on the first floor. These fireplaces utilize tile instead of marble, but there are different varieties of tile, and the tiles in the front sitting room and the children's dining room in particular are outstandingly beautiful.

Third Floor. A modest staircase hidden behind a door leads to the third floor, but the balustrade at the landing at the top has painted white balusters that are equally well turned, if not so large, as those in the main staircase. The third floor has four guest bedrooms, three servants' bedrooms and a servants' sitting room. The guest bedrooms and the sitting room have five more unique fireplaces. One of the guest bedrooms is located in the front center gable and has a very high ceiling—which it needs to fit the Palladian window.

Stable

The plans for the Lyman House show there was originally a large stable in the back of the property at the end of the driveway. Its first floor had three horse stalls, two cow stalls, a harness room and a carriage room large enough to hold several carriages. The stable hand had a bedroom on the second floor. This outbuilding was also built in Colonial Revival style. It had a high hipped roof with pedimented dormers and a cupola on top. The windows were double hung with 12-over-12 sashes. Some time after the Town and County Club purchased the property, the stable was demolished.

III. ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

As an Example of the Colonial Revival Style

The Lyman House is an excellent early incarnation of the Colonial Revival style. It incorporates many features of early American styles—more Federal than Georgian—but it does not attempt, as many later Colonial Revival houses did, to be historically correct. It is an effort to create something new out of familiar elements. Like most high-style Colonial Revival houses, it has a masonry exterior.⁴

The Centennial celebrations of 1876 encouraged Americans to become interested in their Colonial and Early Republican past. Charles McKim, William R. Mead and Stanford White, the principals of the most prominent architectural firm in the country, made a sketching tour of the Massachusetts coast the following year and “rediscovered” Colonial and Federal architecture.⁵ The first buildings built in Colonial Revival style were churches and public buildings, but by the mid-1880’s the style was being applied to private houses. McKim, Mead & White was a leader of this movement. The firm

⁴ McAlester, pp. 324, 326.

⁵ David F. Ransom, “The Architecture of Melvin H. Hapgood and Edward T. Hapgood,” in Stowe-Day Foundation, *The Architecture of Melvin H. and Edward T. Hapgood: An Exhibition of the Stowe-Day Foundation*, Hartford, 1992, p. 5 at 11.

designed Colonial Revival houses in Newport, Rhode Island and Boston in 1885 and 1886 and four more in Boston and Long Island in 1890.⁶

The new style was in part a reaction against the Picturesque point of view that had dominated American architecture since the 1840's. Like the related Classical Revival, the Colonial Revival sought to reimpose order on architecture.⁷ Where Picturesque styles were irregular, Colonial Revival designs were symmetrical. The rough, "natural" surfaces of such styles as Queen Anne and Richardsonian Romanesque were supplanted by more uniform surfaces. Instead of the movement characteristic of the Picturesque, Colonial Revival designs emphasized stability. Intricacy and variety were no longer valued in themselves. In Colonial Revival buildings, departures from simplicity were justified only when they enhanced the sophistication and elegance of the design. Most early Colonial Revival houses—like the vernacular "Colonial" style houses that remain so popular in New England today—aimed to create new designs from old Colonial features. It was not until several years after the Lyman House was built that serious efforts were made to replicate the Georgian and Adam styles.⁸

The Lyman House employs many Colonial features, but they are combined in ways that would never have been found in an authentic early American house. The house has a symmetrical façade, with a central gabled pavilion, in the manner of some of the most sophisticated Georgian and Federal precedents. The front door is centered and balanced by windows on either side in the same rank on all three floors. The door is accentuated by a single-story porch. The windows are double hung and there are some Palladian and Palladian-like windows. Columns and pilasters on the exterior follow classic Doric and Ionic forms in the delicate Adam style. The interior decoration includes marvelous woodwork with carved niches, engaged columns, and Federal

⁶ Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (revised edition), Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1992, p. 160. Also see Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, fourth (second integrated) edition, New York, Penguin Books, 1977, pp. 541-542.

⁷ Whiffen, p. 160.

⁸ McAlester, Virginia & Lee, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2002, p. 326.

decorative motifs such as swags. But the buff brick is a color that, to the best of my knowledge, never appeared in original Colonial or Federal architecture. And instead of having six or more panes in each window sash, like all high-style Georgian and Federal buildings, each sash in the Lyman House has a single pane of glass that, except in the smallest windows, would have been technologically impossible to make in the Federal period.⁹

Significance in the Local Context

Woodland Street runs from Farmington Avenue on the south to Albany Avenue on the north. It lies at the westernmost end of Asylum Hill, farthest from downtown Hartford, and the properties on its west side border on the North Branch of the Park River. Members of Hartford society began building large homes on the street before the Civil War, including what is now known as the Perkins-Clark House at 49 Woodland, which was built in the 1850's.

After the war, Asylum Hill became the city's most prestigious neighborhood (with the possible exception of Nook Farm, which began at the Mark Twain House, less than a block away from the Lyman House, directly across Farmington Avenue). Early homes in Asylum Hill were "suburban residences"—estates complete with servants and outbuildings for the horses and carriages. The advent of streetcars along Farmington and Asylum Avenues made it practical to commute to downtown. The Goodwin Castle was built on the corner of Woodland and Asylum Avenue in 1871, and streets to the east were built up more rapidly on smaller lots.¹⁰

The two blocks of Woodland Street between Asylum and Farmington Avenues were only partially built on when Theodore Lyman constructed his house at Number 22. Although the demolition of certain houses to accommodate later commercial construction makes it impossible to be certain, the Lyman House and a house built the same year by Col. Louis R. Cheney at 40 Woodland were probably the first houses on the street to be

⁹ See McAlester, pp. 320-324, for a good discussion of differences between Colonial Revival houses and the Georgian and Federal buildings that inspired them.

¹⁰ Gregory Andrews and David Ransom, *Structures and Styles: Guided Tours of Hartford Architecture*, Hartford, Connecticut Historical Society and Connecticut Architecture Foundation, 1988, p. 143.

built in the Colonial Revival style. The Perkins-Clark House is an early Gothic Revival design, and the Goodwin Castle was a very sophisticated example of High Victorian Gothic. (One of the Lyman House architects, Melvin Hapgood, had built his own residence on Woodland north of Asylum in 1892-93, but since that building has been demolished and the architectural drawings have not been preserved, I have been unable to determine what style it was built in.¹¹)

Both Lyman and Cheney—who was a superintendent at the Cheney Brothers silk factory in South Manchester—probably wanted to make personal statements by having their homes built in a style that was still *avant garde*, although becoming more popular in sophisticated circles in the Northeast. The Cheney House, with its red brick exterior and white trim, was closer to actual Georgian precedents, but its idiosyncratic two-story pilastered pavilion was unlike anything seen in Colonial times. It is definitely a more showy building than the Lyman House. At least two of the houses built in the block between Farmington Avenue and Niles Street after the Lyman House were in Picturesque styles—Hapgood & Hapgood designed a Queen Anne house at 19 Woodland for Charles H. Talcott in 1898 and another architect designed an impressive Tudor Revival house for Melancthon W. Jacobus, Sr. in 1908.¹²

In addition to Louis Cheney and his family, the Lymans' neighbors in 1895 included the family of Harriet Beecher Stowe's nephew Charles Perkins, in the Perkins-Clark House, and the family of James Junius Goodwin in the Goodwin Castle. There is an 1890's photograph in the collection of the Connecticut Historical Society that depicts Col. Cheney and his daughter outside the stable at their new Woodland Street home with their horses and their dog. The photograph shows that the houses on the street were few and widely separated. The feel of the neighborhood was distinctly suburban and upper class.¹³

¹¹ The existence and demolition of Melvin Hapgood's home, "Wild Acre," which he designed himself, is recorded in the Stowe-Day Exhibition Catalogue at p. 30.

¹² See Andrews and Ransom, p. 151.

¹³ This photograph is accessible through the Internet at www.cthistoryonline.org.

As an Example of the Hapgoods' Work

Melvin Hapgood practiced architecture in Hartford for 17 years. His cousin Edward did so for 22 years. But they practiced together for only six years, from 1893 to Melvin Hapgood's death in 1899. During that time, most of their commissions were for institutional buildings, particularly schools, but they also designed many private residences. The Lyman House is significant because it displays the best residential design talents of both architects—Melvin Hapgood's flair for interior woodwork and Edward Hapgood's affinity for designing Colonial Revival elevations. It also suggests how the joint career of Hapgood & Hapgood might have proceeded if Melvin had not died of cancer at the age of 40.

Born in 1859, Melvin Hathaway Hapgood studied art and decorative design at Charlestown (Mass.) High School. After graduation in 1877, he became an apprentice in the Boston architectural office of William Gibbons Preston. He continued to study at the Massachusetts Normal Art School and the Appleton Street Evening Drawing School and attended architectural lectures at M.I.T. until 1882, when he was invited to join the firm of John C. Mead, a Hartford "architect/builder."¹⁴ For three years, he concentrated on interior finishes. Then in 1885 he started his own architectural practice, advertising himself as a specialist in stained glass, frescoing and interior woodwork. Two outstanding interior jobs that he completed in the 1880's were the renovation of the Lucius A. Barbour House at 130 Washington Street and the library of the Ebenezer Roberts House (now known as the Isham-Terry House). Both combined stained glass windows with classical friezes in wood.¹⁵

In 1890, Melvin joined with Charles C. Cook and formed Cook, Hapgood & Company. Like Mead, Cook was primarily a builder, and Hapgood became his principal designer. Throughout this period, most of the firm's buildings followed Picturesque styles. The only Colonial style building that Melvin is recorded as designing before his cousin joined his practice was the Simsbury Free Library, a slightly smaller building than

¹⁴ Catherine Lynn, "An Education in Ornament," in Stowe-Day Foundation, *The Architecture of Melvin H. and Edward T. Hapgood: An Exhibition of the Stowe-Day Foundation*, Hartford, 1992, p. 17 at 19. Ransom, at p. 6.

¹⁵ Ransom, at pp. 6-7.

the Lyman House, which he did in 1890. Like the Lyman House, the Simsbury Library has a symmetrical façade with a cross-gable in the center and an entrance porch with a roof supported by paired columns. Also like the Lyman House, its combination of Colonial features departs from actual Colonial precedent. The Library has multi-paned windows like those of Georgian and Federal buildings, but they are (inauthentically) grouped instead of separate. Also, Palladian windows appear more frequently and in different places than they would have in true Georgian or Adam designs. The Library is uniformly covered in brick, a very Colonial feature, but instead of being a natural red, the brick is painted yellow. Although the Library was a successful design in the new style, all of the houses built by Cook, Hapgood & Company were apparently designed to in one subtype or another of the dominant Queen Anne style.¹⁶

Edward Thomas Hapgood was Melvin's third cousin, seven years younger. He was born in Sing Sing, New York (later renamed Ossining after the prison became too famous), and studied architecture at the art school of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. After completing the European tour that was common for beginning artists at the time, he worked in the office of George Martin Huss, a New York architect. In 1889, when he was 23, he opened his own office, specializing in suburban houses. Most of Edward's houses were in the Queen Anne style, but many incorporated classical decorative details. Virginia and Lee McAlester would describe such houses as examples of the "Free Classic" subtype of the Queen Anne.¹⁷ In 1892, Edward married the daughter of a Hartford lumber merchant and was soon commissioned to design a house for Archibald G. Loomis, president of the Aetna National Bank, on Washington Street. The house is no longer standing, but its drawings show it was in the Colonial Revival style, with a gambrel roof, heavy quoins and a portico with columns topped by a balustrade.¹⁸

In May 1893, Edward moved to Hartford and became a partner in Cook, Hapgood & Company. Cook soon left, and Melvin and Edward continued the firm under the name

¹⁶ See Stowe-Day Exhibition Catalogue list of commissions, at 23-36, and Ransom, pp. 8-12.

¹⁷ See McAlester, at 264, 276-281.

¹⁸ Ibid., at p. 9.

Hapgood & Hapgood. The partners soon arranged for each to specialize in what he did best. Edward created the concept for each building and planned the elevations. Melvin developed the designs and the interior finishes. I have seen or seen drawings of 16 of the 23 houses that are recorded as having been designed by Hapgood & Hapgood, and the Lyman House is the only one executed in the Colonial Revival style. All of the others were Queen Anne, although many incorporated the “Free Classic” elements that marked a transition between the older style and the Colonial and Classical Revivals.¹⁹ The architects clearly remained most comfortable with Picturesque designs. When the firm built Edward Hapgood’s own home on Gillett Street (one block east of Woodland Street in Asylum Hill) in 1897, he chose a Queen Anne design with Tudor Revival half-timbered gables.²⁰

The Lyman House does not have any of Melvin’s distinctive stained glass—that artistic medium was associated much more with Picturesque than with Classical styles—but the woodwork and other ornamentation inside the house are so well done that this is nevertheless one of Melvin’s best works. And although the exterior is simple for a house of its size and interior splendor, Edward’s design is elegantly proportioned and makes very good use of architectural features from the Colonial era. Beginning soon after Melvin’s death, Edward received increasing numbers of Colonial Revival commissions. The Lyman House shows clearly the direction that he and other architects would take with the style in the next 20 years. My personal count of the houses he designed in Hartford’s West End (and adjacent areas of West Hartford) indicates that between 1900 and 1908, about half of Edward Hapgood’s house designs were Colonial or Classical Revival. All nine of the houses he designed between 1909 and his death in 1916 were Colonial Revival—three of the “Eclectic” variety like the Lyman House and six modeled closely on actual Colonial styles—from Virginia, not New England.²¹ One of the six is a near-copy of George Washington’s white frame house at Mount Vernon with the

¹⁹ Ibid., at p.10.

²⁰ Stowe-Day Exhibition Catalogue, p. 27, Edward Hapgood, architectural drawings at the Stowe Library.

²¹ Dates and addresses for these houses are found in the Stowe-Day Exhibition Catalogue, pp. 23-36.

distinctive two story columned porch. The others are red-brick, white-trimmed Georgian Revival mansions modeled after other Colonial Tidewater estates.

IV. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Within its Time Period and its Locale

The Lyman House is one of many grand houses that Hartford's elite built in the Asylum Hill neighborhood during the last third of the 19th century, when Asylum Hill was Hartford's most prestigious neighborhood. The house is notable as one of the first Colonial Revival residences in the neighborhood and in Hartford.

Significance of its Owners

Theodore Lyman was a prominent lawyer and financier from an old Hartford family.²² Born in 1836, he traced his ancestry back to Richard Lyman, one of the original settlers of the city 200 years before. His grandfather Gaius had originated the family fortune by trading with the West Indies and starting a lumber business. His father Christopher had expanded the lumber business and later, when insurance began to develop as one of the city's principal businesses, he had invested in the Hartford Fire Insurance Company. Christopher Lyman served as a director and assistant secretary of the Hartford and became its largest shareholder.

Theodore had received the proper education for a talented member of the city's elite class. He graduated from the well-regarded Hartford High School in 1851 and from Yale four years later, with a Phi Beta Kappa key, at age 19. Law schools were in their infancy in the 1850's—Yale's had barely become established enough to rent its own

²² The information in this section is drawn primarily from the obituaries published by the *Hartford Courant* and the *Hartford Times* after Lyman's death on August 12, 1920. The conservative *Courant*, being more respectful of and impressed by prominent members of the leading families of the city, made his glowing obituary one of the major stories on its front page. The Democratic *Times* put its story on page 18 with the other obituaries. (See *Hartford Courant*, August 13, 1920, p.1, and *Hartford Times*, August 13, 1920, p. 18)

space²³—so Theodore took the more typical course in those days. He studied law in the office of Thomas and Charles Perkins (who would become his neighbor on Woodland Street some 40 years later) before going out on his own as a real estate specialist.²⁴ In addition to practicing law, Lyman succeeded his father as a director of The Hartford Fire Insurance Company and associated himself with other financial institutions in the city. Over the course of his career he was a Vice President of the Society for Savings, Hartford's oldest savings bank, a director of Connecticut General Life Insurance Company and a trustee of the Hartford-Connecticut Trust Company. He was also an active member of the University Club.

Lyman was 59 and near the peak of his success when he sold his former home on Myrtle Street, at the opposite end of Asylum Hill near the railroad station, and built the big house on Woodland Street. At least some of that space was really needed, as he and his much younger wife, the former Laura Sherman of Milford, Massachusetts, still had four children at home when they moved into the new house.

Lyman's choice of Hapgood & Hapgood to design his new home was not surprising because he was very familiar with Melvin Hapgood's work. In 1885 he had hired Melvin to design stained glass for his home on Myrtle Street. And Cook, Hapgood & Company had built Lyman a country home in Norfolk, Connecticut in 1893.²⁵ To make sure his new house was completed in accordance with the Hapgoods' designs, Lyman chose Albert W. Scoville, one of Hartford's best-known builders. Scoville was known for innovative design in the houses he built from his own designs, as well as for quality work.

Significance of its Use

The Lyman House began as an upper class suburban residence in a residential area, but the growth of the region's population and the move of its upper crust to neighborhoods and towns further west led the area and the use of the house to change in

²³ See Frederick C. Hicks, "Yale Law School: The Founders and the Founders' Collection," Pamphlet No. 39, Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut, Committee on Historical Publication, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1935

²⁴ Lyman was listed as a sole practitioner in *Geer's 1895 Hartford City Directory*. (Elihu Geer, *Geer's 1895 Hartford City Directory*, p. 205)

the first half of the 20th century. Woodland Street has developed into a largely professional area. The Lyman House has itself become a club, and several other old houses have been converted into professional offices or commercial businesses. Today the only residential buildings in the Lymans' old block of Woodland Street are three large apartment buildings and a group of smaller apartments, all from the mid-20th century.

The conversion of the Lyman House to a clubhouse is probably the main reason that the character of the house has been preserved so well. Very few individuals today could afford or would want to incur the expense of maintaining such a massive place as a private home. But the rooms are just small enough to make an inviting setting for socializing and participating in the activities of a club with hundreds of active members.

V. CONCLUSION

The Theodore Lyman House is an excellent early Colonial Revival residence designed by two of Hartford's most prominent architects at the turn of the last century. It is notable because it combines a carefully-designed exterior by Edward Hapgood, who later became one of the city's leading residential architects in this style, with remarkable interior woodwork by his cousin Melvin Hapgood, one of the city's leading practitioners in the decorative arts. Having been carefully maintained by the Town and County Club since 1925, the house stands as a reminder of the time a century ago when Hartford's elite lived in great style on Asylum Hill.

²⁵ Stowe-Day Exhibition Catalogue, pp. 28, 31 .

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andrews, Gregory and Ransom, David, *Structures and Styles: Guided Tours of Hartford Architecture*, Hartford, Connecticut Historical Society and Connecticut Architecture Foundation, 1988

Donohue, Mary M. and Andrews, Gregory, "Theodore Lyman House (Town and County Club)," description in The Greater Hartford Architecture Conservancy and The Stowe-Day Foundation, *The Architecture of Melvin H. Hapgood and Edward T. Hapgood (house tour guide)*, Hartford, 1992

Geer, Elihu, *Geer's 1895 Hartford City Directory*, Hartford, 1895

Hapgood & Hapgood, Architectural Drawings, Library of The Harriet Beecher Stowe Foundation ("Stowe Library")

Hapgood, Edward T., Scrapbook 1890's-1900's, Stowe Library

Hapgood, Melvin H., Scrapbook 1870's-1890's, Stowe Library

Hartford Courant

Hartford Times

Hicks, Frederick C., "Yale Law School: The Founders and the Founders' Collection," Pamphlet No. 39, Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut, Committee on Historical Publication, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1935

Hitchcock, Henry-Russell, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, fourth (second integrated) edition*, New York, Penguin Books, 1977

McAlester, Virginia & Lee, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2002

The Stowe-Day Foundation, *The Architecture of Melvin H. Hapgood and Edward T. Hapgood (exhibition catalogue)*, Hartford, 1992

Whiffen, Marcus, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles (revised edition)*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1992

Internet Resources:

Connecticut Historical Society, et al., www.cthistoryonline.org

Laura
Laura

When Stephen B. Swigert and his wife Margery attended Liz and Ray Payne's daughter's wedding reception at The Town and County Club in 1997, Stephen was entranced with the architecture of the house. Several years later in 2002 while taking an American Studies course at Trinity College, he wrote a paper about this great example of the Colonial Revival Style. Hartford architects Melvin and Edward Hapgood (Hapgood & Hapgood) designed the house for Theodore and ~~Maria~~ ^{Laura} Lyman and their four children, who lived here from 1895 until 1925 when the Club was founded. The three Lyman daughters (the Lyman's also had a son) were among the first members of the Club. Stephen Swigert is a graduate of Amherst College, and Harvard Law School. Mr. Swigert has made a copy of his paper on the architecture of The Town and County Club available to members and their guests. You will find it in the library.

(Put this under "Mrs. Lyman's Neighborhood," or the membership page if there is room, or shorten it up to put under tidbits.)