

GROVE HOUSE

A CALIFORNIA BUNGALOW GOES TO COLLEGE



BARRY SANDERS
PROFESSOR OF THE HISTORY OF IDEAS
PITZER COLLEGE

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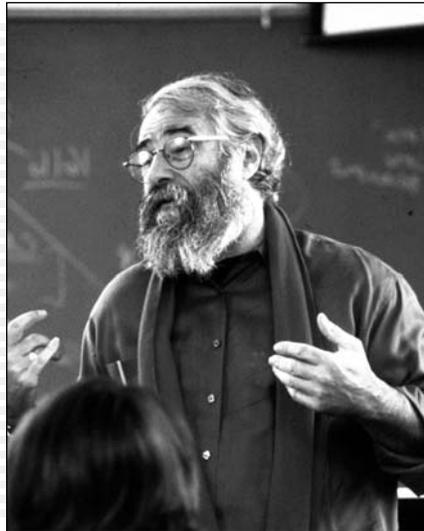


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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barry Sanders, Professor of English and the History of Ideas at Pitzer College since 1972, taught a class entitled “The Arts and Crafts Movement in America.” Professor Sanders and his class initiated the project that resulted in the move of the Grove House from Pilgrim Place to Pitzer College.

In addition to his campus based work and teaching, Sanders is the author of numerous books and articles. His most recent book,



PROFESSOR BARRY SANDERS

Alienable Rights: The Exclusion of African Americans in a White Man's Land, 1619-2000, was nominated this year for a Pulitzer Prize (a second nomination for Sanders).

The Grove House: A California Bungalow Goes to College brings together Professor Sanders' interest in the Arts and Crafts Movement, his passion for the homes and furnishings of the movement that exist in Claremont, and the fascinating story of the arrival on Pitzer's Campus of the building that became known as the Grove House.



A photo from the 1988 Pitzer College yearbook

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I.

INTRODUCTION: THE BUNGALOW

The Grove House (formerly the Zetterberg house) prior to relocation to Pitzer College campus



The Grove House—formerly the Zetterberg house—belongs to an architectural style called “the bungalow,” although it is a rather large example of the type. Derived from the Hindustani word *bangla*, the word in its initial use described a one-story dwelling, of slight construction, usually covered with a thatched roof. The British adopted the term in the early nineteenth century to refer to temporary lodgings that their own military officers cobbled together for colonial troops in various outposts across India. They brought these designs back to England and built bungalows in rural areas outside London. By the later nineteenth century, both in England and then in America as well, the style became enormously popular: *Bungalow* had entered common parlance and the buildings themselves suddenly got featured in architectural reviews, popular journals and novels.

Definitions make the world seem more tidy than in actually is; and that certainly holds true for the designation, *bungalow*. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, when America began to produce bungalows in great numbers, what started out as simple houses gradually appeared in all manner of shapes and sizes. In a democracy like America’s, politicians argued that both the upper as well as the more middle classes should be able to afford a home. (By 1930, a whopping 94 percent of all homes in

The Gamble House in Pasadena, the ultimate bungalow, designed in 1908



PHOTO BY ALEXANDER VERTIKOFF, COURTESY OF THE GAMBLE HOUSE

America were single-family dwellings.) The American bungalow could thus range from a relatively inexpensive one-bedroom house, which a person could order in pieces from any number of pre-fab companies, or from, say, a Sears-Roebuck pattern book, to custom-built bungalows in small, one-story versions, or even larger ones, of one-and-a-half, two and even two-and-a-half stories. For their more wealthy clients, contractors added special features, like expanding the normal front porch into a grand, wrap-around affair (which the British called “verandahs”). The most showy of the bungalows—on the West Coast—featured screened-in sleeping porches, dormers on the third floor, a piano room, maid’s quarters, multiple fireplaces, and elaborate rock work on foundations, chimneys and roof piers. Some had porte-cocheres, skeletal structures that extended from the house, across the driveway, and usually covered with hanging wisteria vines under which sat the new symbol of wealth in the teens in America, the family motorcar. In places like Southern California—in Pasadena and San Marino particularly—that car most often turned out to be an impressive driving machine like the Packard, or a Cadillac or a Lincoln Town Car.

Southern California weather, with its mild winters and balmy summer evenings, really accorded well with the bungalow lifestyle. Californians did not need to fuss with storm windows, nor remove drifts of snow from roof tops—indeed, no one needed to shovel snow at all, nor bother with mud rooms, nor even with much insulation for that matter. Fireplaces replaced central heating—no need to shovel coal, as most people did on the chilly East Coast. Californians enjoyed patio and porch life for much of the year—summer *and* winter—and the bungalow provided the ideal arrangement for such a lifestyle,

porous enough to allow the outdoors to flow gently and continuously into the interior of the house. Passersby could read such porosity as gestures of hospitality, a beckoning to those on the outside to come on in.

No wonder, then, that the bungalow style reached its zenith in Southern California—again, in Pasadena—with two brothers, the wildly successful architects Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene, who called their ultimate bungalow, the Gamble House, a “cathedral in wood.” They designed the house as a winter retreat in 1908-09 for Mary and David Gamble, head of Proctor and Gamble Soap Company, of Cincinnati, Ohio, for an astonishingly large amount of money for that period, \$50,400. They sited the 8,100 square foot house on Westmoreland Drive, just behind Orange Grove Boulevard (known later in the City as “Millionaire’s Row”), overlooking the Arroyo. The San Gabriel Mountains provided a dramatic backdrop.

The house really epitomizes all that was aesthetically exciting and philosophically compelling about the turn of the century revolution in art and architecture called the Arts and Crafts Movement. Constructed out of the finest woods—quarter sawn white oak, Burmese teak, Port Orford Cedar—the two-and-a-half story house fronted the street with a magnificent Tiffany glass entry mounted in a massive door, and flanked by narrow screen doors that, when opened, caught the cool breeze off the Arroyo. The stained glass depicted one of the recurring images in the paintings of the period, the California Live Oak, its gnarled branches twisting and overlapping throughout the entire doorframe. The door actually had two panes of glass, back-to-back, with about a quarter of an inch separating them, as if the Greens had intended the glass to capture the sunlight between its double panes. Seen from inside the house, with the light streaming through the window from behind, the effect is truly extraordinary.

The brothers Greene left nothing to chance, designing virtually everything in the house—curtains, rugs, furniture, switch plates, down spouts, flowerpots, the herringbone brick driveway, garden and hanging light fixtures, and in the living room, the piano. Believing that every detail of the house contributed to the overall significance of the house, they treated nothing as an afterthought. Even the smallest part of the house played its crucial part. And so their meticulous craftsmanship made a statement everywhere one looked, in every piece of metalwork, in the clinker brick walls and chimneys, and in the magnificent Japanese-inspired joinery. Tiffany sent an artist from its New York studios to Pasadena for

the express purpose of designing the glass for the front door. The Judson Studios, located farther down the Arroyo, executed the piece. The Tiffany method of copper-foil wrapping allowed an artist to approximate in glass the fine detail that a painter could achieve on a canvas.

Such a grand palace played into the hands of those hawking land and housing bargains up and down the West Coast. As the terminus of the transcontinental railroad, Los Angeles offered a most tantalizing destination: the land of plenty, of easy living, where anyone, of any class, could make it big—or really big, just like the Gambles. Or so the stories went. Orange trees hung heavy with ripe fruit in even the most humble of backyards; sunshine and health and fun, free for all. Ah, here was the new Paradise, in easy reach of whatever natural playground one desired: thirty minutes to the Pacific Ocean, the Mojave desert, the San Gabriel Mountains. From snow to surf, an exhilarating drive, all in a single afternoon. No need to defer the slightest pleasure. Pasadena rightfully billed itself as the one true middle ground in the entire country, a bold and beautiful Garden Community populated by artists and musicians and writers and, of course, by every stripe and breed of nature lover.

Pasadena—perhaps the West Coast in general—seemed to attract the eccentric and unsettled, those who loved the crazy and unpredictable. When Huck Finn decided to “light out for the territory,” he must have had a place in mind like unfettered, pristine California. For the country, in its expansion west, California has always stood for the “opposite coast”—the extremity, the border and sometimes, the fringe of the United States, that produced whole communities of eccentrics.

Consider Charles Fletcher Lummis, the “vagabond in corduroy” and the first prominent writer to take up residence in the Pasadena area. In 1884-85, Lummis left the bustle of Cincinnati for the West Coast, making his entire way on foot and built his house, El Alisal, with the help of a few local Indians out of granite boulders on the banks of the Arroyo Seco. Not content with merely accomplishing his astonishing 2,000-mile stroll, Lummis dashed off a series of letters along the way to Harris Gray Otis, the publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*. Otis loved Lummis’s flamboyant style to such a degree—both in his writing and living—that he perhaps went out of his way to match the audacity of Lummis himself. Almost immediately after his arrival in Los Angeles, much to his own surprise, Lummis found himself appointed editor of Otis’s metropolitan newspaper. An inveterate man of letters, Lummis later

edited *The Land of Sunshine*, one of the most important literary and cultural journals to have appeared on the coast. And later still, he founded the Southwest Museum for Indian Art and History.

What a time of optimism! Anything was possible. Everything was possible. One need only look around the country: Buildings began to soar high into the sky, trains started to run under the streets. Everywhere one looked there was innovation and invention. Success followed success. The nation was at peace, the American Dream, alive and palpable. And what made it tangible for many people was the bungalow. In this society, the house—private property, ownership—carried great symbolic weight. A house speaks of “stability,” “solidity,” a settling in and settling down. When Lincoln wanted a primary image to describe the Civil War, he drew on the image of a house to represent the beleaguered nation: “a house divided against itself cannot stand.”

Because it arose out of the exotic and the rustic—in faraway India—builders and contractors could promote the bungalow even in densely populated, urban neighborhoods, as they often did in Los Angeles, as retreats where one could pursue the enduring pleasures of the pastoral life. (At this time, there were few architects as we know the term, that is, men and women trained in colleges and professional schools with licenses and so on.) Even if those hucksters were not entirely truthful, bungalows, unlike their Queen Anne, Colonial and Victorian predecessors, still announced loud and clear a life of wholesome simplicity. They stood as concrete examples of the philosophy expounded by writers like Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edward Carpenter and others of the period, which urged a return to an uncluttered, harmonious existence lived close to earth.

To exploit that feeling, these houses were made to look as if they had grown naturally and organically out of the ground. Free of ornamental and architectural gee-gaws, shingles stained an earthy brown, bricks left unpainted, cedar shake roofs in their natural color, copper downspouts and screens left to patinate, surrounded by native oak or eucalyptus or fruit trees—all these things contributed to the sense that the building, resting on carefully arranged river rock foundations, not only met the earth gracefully and harmoniously, but had done so for centuries. Live in one of those houses and you live not *on* the earth, but *with* the earth.

For true Arts and Crafts practitioners, those houses exerted great force on the lives of their inhabitants. Such solid and honest construction, went the belief, could only encourage lives of high moral pur-

pose. Wide front verandas and open sleeping porches spoke of a corresponding openness of the occupants inside the house. Besides, bungalows became popular in the midst of the Progressive Reform Movement, and the tenets and the precepts of that movement—moral invigoration, spiritual determination, personal integrity—saturated every redwood board and nine-penny nail in each and every bungal-



William Morris

low, no matter the size nor location of the house.

The bungalow represents the supreme flowering of the Arts and Crafts Movement in America. Architecture began, after all, as the highest—the *arche* (as in the archangel)—of all the technical (techne) pursuits in the classical world. Hence, its honorific name in Latin, *arche techne*, or “architecture.” In the Middle Ages, architecture continued to enjoy top billing because of its privileged connection to God: Medieval architecture has very little to do with

design and much more to do with number, proportion, harmony and symmetry. Get the ratio and proportion spot on—witness Plato’s Golden Mean—and you can’t help producing pleasing designs. Out of the confusing jumble and flux of experience, proportion and symmetry—numbers—allowed people to see how God’s miraculous but invisible hand shaped the universe by revealing His hidden patterns. The universe has an order; the architect reveals it.

To grasp this notion requires understanding the highly charged spiritual nature of the Arts and Crafts Movement, and how that nineteenth-century revolution in aesthetics coalesced in the construction of buildings. As one of the leading British proponents of the Movement, A.H. Mackmurdo, puts it in the preface to his *History of the Arts and Crafts Movement*: “The more extensive our vision, the more intensive our sentiment, the greater appears the human importance of this movement, not as an aesthetic excursion; but as a mighty upheaval of man’s spiritual nature in an attempt to throw off the materialism of the age.” The Arts and Crafts Movement thus took up the fight against what its leaders saw as the crassness of the new machine age and all its promises to make life easier and faster, in favor of a philosophy that placed its emphasis on hand, heart and head. For Mackmurdo and others, machines turned people into robots; the mechanical numbed the soul. And a small band of British artists and writers firmly believed that was too high a price to pay for modernity.

T.J. Cobden-Sanderson, a designer and printer of fine books, was the first person to yoke together those two words, “arts” and “crafts,” in 1888, in an attempt to raise the level of craft to the serious level that the fine arts enjoyed. While the Movement has its roots in England in the 1880s, particularly in the philosophical and aesthetic theories of John Carlyle, Edward Burne-Jones, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and John Ruskin, its principal figure in Britain and without question its most outspoken and eccentric genius, has to be the committed socialist, William Morris. In lecture after lecture, to labor unions and workers guilds, Morris laid out his plan for a wholesale revolt against machine-made, decorative and household objects—furniture, pottery, metalwork, textiles, rugs—and their artificial and senseless, applied ornamentation and shoddy workmanship.

Morris and his friends offered a bold corrective: In the midst of turbines spinning faster and faster, of automobiles racing down the road, and airplanes soon to be lifting off the ground, that is, against the background of the industrial revolution, with its assembly-line production methods, Morris argued for a return to the high quality of objects made exclusively by *hand*. He found his ideal reflected in the hand-crafted work of the Middle Ages. As one summary of the Movement so succinctly puts it:

During the nineteenth century an awareness had developed that national style reflected the moral values of a society: If a society was unable to produce good design then the fault lay in its ethical system—a nation’s art was a symptom of its moral health. The Arts and Crafts Movement combined this feeling with its own social aims, finding a perfect symbolism in the return to medievalism. Fine craftsmanship was never in jeopardy, but the need for ‘an English art for England,’ culminating in the adoption of Gothic as the best national idiom, gave the men of the Arts and Crafts Movement, the majority of them architects, the necessary representation of a popular art and allowed them, in reflecting more traditional historical styles, to bring their art back to the people whom their political aim supported. Their furniture reflected in the concrete form, the way of life of the craftsman, stressing the honesty of production with structural features becoming often the focal point of decoration. ‘Fitness for purpose’ became an element of style, and although the same principle was held by designers whose work was machine-made, in the Arts and Crafts doctrine ‘purpose’ was defined in relation to everyday life among the wood shavings and smell of resin, in the silvershop or blacksmith’s, and not to the world of industry, commerce or the ‘laissez-faire.’

Morris found much to admire in the twelfth and thirteen centuries. In the medieval attitude toward work and the world, Morris believed that he had discovered the truest articulation of his own ideals. Like him, medieval workers, through their guild system, adopted a religious stance toward their creations. That vision allowed them to achieve an unparalleled integrity of design in art and the household arts. Morris's great hero, John Ruskin, had already appropriated the Latin phrase, *Laborare est orare*, "Labor is Prayer," as his motto. But Morris went well beyond all that, venerating the heroic stance of medieval poetry, and discovering in the peripatetic wanderings and the stupendous achievements of the heroes of that poetry, kindred souls. So much was Morris taken with the spirit and ethos of those long, highly nationalistic poems, he even translated the Icelandic sagas into English and published them in inexpensive editions.

What spoke to him most eloquently, however, were the twelfth-century Gothic cathedrals, with their huge, gently sweeping arches—structures made of monumentally heavy stone that seemed somehow, mysteriously, to be soaring so high as to pierce the very heavens themselves. What dedication, what single-mindedness of purpose! Time seemed to matter not at all; generations of families had dedicated their lives to the completion of those monuments to their Lord and Savior. Morris, a student of architecture at Oxford, fell madly, deeply and passionately in love with the power and commitment that could make adamant, stubborn stone defy gravity. He delighted in the defiance of every stone in every cathedral he visited. For Morris, nothing could surpass what those medieval workers had managed to accomplish with their hands. It signaled the clearest victory for him of spirit over matter.

Hands were holy. The potter, the poet, the metalsmith, the painter, the weaver, all of them did more than make some beautiful things. Every artist created an instantiation—an instance of God's design that lay behind everything in the universe. Every craft simply mimicked the major one, architecture, only on a smaller scale. In the end, though, the cup and the cathedral are both spatial creations. That's why *craft*, in Anglo-Saxon and in Middle English, as well, means "skill," "power" and "might": I make evident to you God's presence with my hands. And that is why attractive men and women in the Middle Ages could both receive the same compliment, handsome. A person's beauty resided not in the face, and certainly not in the body, but in those crucibles of power,

the hands. It's easy to see why the beauty of an object—God's beauty, really—got conflated with the beauty of the person—again, in reality, God's beauty.

Build anything, but above all build your own shelter, always an imitation of building a house for God. That's when a person, according to the medieval scheme of things, truly makes intimate contact with God. Above all, quite literally, stands architecture. Up is the key direction, of course, for up there lies heaven, up there resides God. Greed and power notwithstanding, some vague sense of the “up-ness” of our lives drives people—medieval and modern—to want to rise higher, to build yet one more story, a fourth or fifth floor, or to add a cupola, a tower, a turret, a spire—anything that will allow us to rise high enough to bathe in God's inspiration. That's the medieval way, the way of architecture in a world long gone for Morris, but one for which he so desperately longed. And one which he was determined to recreate in Victorian England.

The Arts and Crafts Movement blossomed in London in the late 1880s when Morris, Burne-Jones and Rossetti, began exhibiting their medieval-inspired designs in the household arts through a business cooperative they founded and which they named Morris, Marshall and Company. Although they offered a rather wide range of products—cabinetry, metalworks, textiles, wallpaper, ceramics, bookbinding and printing—their initial success (and recognition) came from the medieval images they borrowed from the famous cathedrals of England, and meticulously reworked and executed in their own stained glass creations.

To return the decorative arts to the elevated position they once occupied in the Middle Ages, Morris demanded a medieval devotion to the guiding principle of simplicity and function in all the arts. For Morris, the medieval workman represented the ideal of creativity and contentment generated by a strong, deeply founded sense of independence and authority. Morris believed that contentment came about in a fairly simple, straightforward way: To ensure integrity of design and strength of construction, the person who designed an object had to be the same person who brought that object to fruition. In that way, Morris hoped to ensure that form would always follow function, and that the workman would always take pride in his products. 

II.

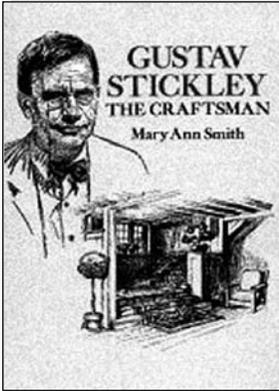
ARTS AND CRAFTS IN AMERICA: GUSTAV STICKLEY AND THE CRAFTSMAN MOVEMENT

Almost immediately, a great many designers of the decorative arts in America recognized Morris's genius. And though they had their own models, they quickly found inspiration in both Morris's writings and in his products. Louis Comfort Tiffany had opened his studios in New York nine years before Morris, in 1879. And yet contemporary critics could give him no higher praise than refer to him as "the William Morris of the century." Other art studios, in major cities across the country soon followed, some of them slavishly producing designs in imitation of Morris. No matter, for Morris had espoused a totally democratic spirit, giving license to men and women who had absolutely no training in art to gather in small groups in towns and cities across the country to make things with their hands. Some of those informal groups and societies enjoyed a phenomenal success, turning into full-fledged and important arts and crafts businesses.

Rookwood Pottery, for instance, evolved into a world famous business in the 1880s from fairly humble beginnings—a group of women painting ceramic blanks they had purchased from five-and-ten-cent stores. Newcomb College, in New Orleans, established a pottery department in 1894, and several years later began selling their hand-thrown vases and lamps to wealthy clients nationwide. The Boston Society of Arts and Crafts held their first meeting in 1897, and they, too, quickly began selling art objects—metal, ceramics, woodwork—of the highest quality. Chelsea Pottery opened in 1891 in Chelsea, Massachusetts; Grueby Faience in Boston in 1895. (The older subway stations in New York have mosaics made of matte finish Grueby tiles.) Today, ceramic objects from any one of those companies fetch high prices in New York auction houses.

The prominent social activist and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, Jane Addams, visited England in 1887 and happened to tour Toynbee Hall, a settlement house started by Oxford men determined to end the devastating poverty of the East End of London. When Addams returned to her own country, she came back believing she could carry on the same work in her own city of Chicago. With several other women, she started Hull House in 1897 to minister to the sweatshop workers in the meatpacking and steel industries.

Addams provided day care, kindergarten classes, English classes, public baths, and housing for single people and vagrants. She believed such work could take hold only if she attended to people's cultural and spiritual needs. To that end, she sponsored evening concerts at Hull House, staged plays, reading groups, and, as years went by, offered more and more training in handicrafts. One of the group's early members, attracted by Addams's commitment to serving *and* the soul, was a young man from the Midwest named Frank Lloyd Wright.



The cover of *The Craftsman*, a book about Gustav Stickley by Mary Ann Smith

The story of the Arts and Crafts Movement in America is a true American tall-tale, so outlandish are some of the details. For instance, the person who spread the philosophical principles of the Movement from one end of America to the other, was a mature, forty-year old unknown from Osceola, Wisconsin, who had spent his formative years working with his father as a stonemason. Born on March 9, 1858, he belonged to no arts and crafts society, attended no school beyond the elementary years, and had written nor essays or books. His name was Gustav Stickley. Early in 1898, his life dramatically changed. He had seen pictures of William Morris's work; he had read his essays; and he

wanted most desperately to meet him. By the time he got the money together to make the long trip to England, in 1897, Morris died. That was the last time, Stickley decided, that he would miss out on anything important in his life. With renewed determination, Stickley decided he would still make the sea voyage, for beyond all else he knew he had to see Morris's work for himself.

In England, as Stickley reported, he saw William Morris's hand everywhere—on rugs, textiles, furniture, wallpaper, paintings, in handset, fine printing (Morris's Kelmscott Press ranked as one of the very finest presses in the world), and of course in countless buildings. Stickley returned to America, vowing to do for his own country what Morris had done for England. His only real experience with making furniture came after his father abandoned the family and young Gustav went to work with his uncle, who produced very cheap and very primitive chairs fabricated out of broom handles.

Uneducated, poor, practically illiterate, abandoned at an early age, Stickley launched his career just when most business and professional people have begun to settle in and down—at age forty. With borrowed money, Stickley rented an abandoned stable in Eastwood, New York (now Syracuse) in 1899, for his furniture factory modeled on the medieval guild system, and dedicated himself to producing the very best possible handwork. Stickley called his new venture the United Crafts (a name he hoped would carry echoes of the guild system), and showed his first pieces of household furnishings in 1900, at the principal showcase for furniture in this country, the Grand Rapids, Michigan, Annual Fair.

Stickley vowed to replace the machine-made, excessively decorated furniture so popular during the Victorian era, with carefully constructed, handmade, simple designs, each piece distinguished by its personality—made visible through exposed joinery, accentuated grain and deep finish—the final work a unique and unmistakable creation of his United Crafts. Just in case anyone had doubts as to its authenticity as a product from his workshops, Stickley was the first furniture maker to apply to the United States Patent Office for copyright protection of his designs. He also made certain that his signature appeared on every piece.

Nothing could stop Stickley—not reason, nor odds; lack of money, experience, nor training. Nothing. Along the way, he frightened people with his overwhelming sense of confidence. When his own son-in-law quit as treasurer of the furniture factory, leaving in anger over his uncle's extravagant business practices, and warning that he and his factory were both headed for certain disaster, Gustav proved his son-in-law dead wrong. Stickley succeeded; and he succeeded in the most lavish, over-the-top, American way.

For Stickley had a nose for new ideas. His ability to smell out the new and interesting makes him the embodiment of the American character, a consummate entrepreneur—in the nineteenth-century sense of the word, as the director of a musical institution, like an opera house, or an organization, like a symphony orchestra. Stickley loved to orchestrate and direct—he could sense the rhythm and catch the beat of the times. He knew how to put just the right people together, how to put his own mark on that work, and most clever of all, how to market those ideas as distinctly his own. For almost two decades, he conducted an incredibly successful business. A previous generation would

have called him an impresario, a Sol Hurok of the decorative arts *and*, even more extraordinary, of popular architecture. With absolutely no architectural training, not even as an apprentice—even Frank Lloyd Wright knew enough to hire himself out to Louis Sullivan in his Chicago office—Gustav Stickley changed the face of residential architecture in this country by popularizing the bungalow style. Even there, he made the style his own, preferring to call his brand of buildings Craftsman Architecture.

In just twelve short years of retail business, in 1912, at the height of his career, Stickley could look down on Manhattan from his twelve-story office building, located at one of the city's most tony locations, 6 East 39th Street, just off Fifth Avenue, next to such heady shops as Lord and Taylor, Tiffany's and Franklin Simon. Stickley agreed to pay \$50,000 rent the first year and \$61,000 every year following, a most astronomic sum for the time. He paid more, in fact, than the Gambles did for their Greene and Greene mansion in Pasadena. Stickley was nothing if not bold, passionate, remarkably stubborn, and, as I have said, astonishingly self-assured. If one wanted to be successful, he believed, then a person had to look and act successful. And so, while he left his family behind in Morris Plains, New Jersey, he rented a penthouse apartment for himself on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. He ate at the finest restaurants in Manhattan, with well-known movie stars, and had his own box at the opera. He lived extravagantly, paying for everyone's dinner, no matter how many were at the table, wearing only the best clothes, taking cabs and limousines wherever he went, and, when the mood hit him, writing to his family back home in Morris Plains.

After his first year in business, Stickley needed to figure out how to popularize his own empire; after all, this was a huge country and competition was fierce. There were companies that had been making furniture in this country for decades. Stickley had no recognizable name. He needed to get the word out. Again, with absolutely no experience, he hit on a smart idea: a monthly magazine would enable Stickley to sell his home decorations door-to-door, without ever leaving his office and without ever having to hire a single salesperson. From October 1901 to December 1916, he published *The Craftsman: An Illustrated Monthly Magazine in the Interest of Better Art, Better Work, and a Better and More Reasonable Way of Living*. He dedicated volume one, number one, to William Morris—his mentor—and for that first issue wrote a long homage to Morris's life and work.

In content, *The Craftsman* resembled the old *Whole Earth Catalog* and became instantly popular. It included articles on furniture design, copperwork, ceramics, leatherwork, glass, jewelry and book-binding; but it also covered art, architecture, poetry, drama, politics, economics, history, gardening, city planning and education. In circulation, his monthly rivaled the leading design magazine of the day, *House Beautiful*, enjoying in 1909 more than 60,000 subscribers.

Without any formal training in design or business, Stickley managed, practically single-handedly, to transform the decorative arts in this country. Even more miraculously he affected the look of architecture across the country. Having no architectural training could not stop Stickley's methodical advance. Each month in the *The Craftsman*, Stickley published house plans for his so-called Craftsman Architecture, what most people knew as bungalows, or as Craftsman bungalows, with accompanying text carrying all the authority and confidence of a fully trained architect. Stickley pulled off something extraordinary and it cannot be said too strongly: A man with no background and no name began to dictate the parameters of good taste to an entire nation, from coast-to-coast. Perhaps even more extraordinary, people listened. He had tapped into something huge. And he capitalized on what he had uncovered.

As further evidence of his own confidence—more accurately audaciousness—through his newly formed publishing company, he marketed two enormously successful Stickley books, *Craftsman Homes* and, to meet the reader demand, a second volume, *More Craftsman Homes*. These books, too, carried plans and details and even lumber lists for over two dozen homes designed by Gustav Stickley and his staff. So popular was his brand of architecture that in one year alone, 1915, over twenty million dollars worth of homes were built along Craftsman lines, from Alaska to the Fiji Islands. Here's a taste of how Stickley described his homes:

The central thought in all Craftsman activities is the simplification of life and a return to true democracy. Accordingly, the exterior lines of the Craftsman house are very simple and its interior divisions are few. Elaborate ornamentation is eliminated by our method of interior treatment. Post-and-panel construction replaces useless partition. Native woods are used liberally. The fireplace is made an ornamental *feature*...The principles of cleanliness and sanitation are recognized in such a way as to make for economy, but possibly the greatest economy of all is the permanent quality of the homes we design.

Growing children reflect their environment. Home-builders who are influenced by the notions of others and who arrive to outdo their neighbors in building their homes, instill the same spirit into their children, and a home which is the product of weak imitation or freakish straining after originality, cannot have a wholesome effect on its inmates.

In the editorial columns he wrote every month and through the objects he produced every day, he enticed people—regular people—to grasp things again, to get back in touch with those miraculous instruments, so much admired by the Middle Ages, the hands. In *The Craftsman*, Stickley offered detailed plans and instructions on how to weave cloth, hammer copper, tool leather, bind books and embroider curtains and table runners; and he focused on popularizing his Craftsman philosophy, as a way of life, by printing a series of articles—300 in all—titled “Home Training in Cabinet Work.”

Those articles take us to the heart of Stickley’s thinking. In them, Stickley provided plans, lumber lists and step-by-step directions for building Craftsman furniture. He encouraged everyone—young and old, men and women—to participate, and counseled people to build their own pieces in home workshops and in school classrooms, in garages and backyards, as part of his desire to create what he called democratic art and to train young people in the manual arts. In this regard, he firmly believed in Carlyle’s notion that labor done well was truly a religious experience; that working with one’s hands produced more healthy, moral and upright lives. Make the chair solid and square, and thus make your own life more sturdy. (We might note here how far the country has come when children no longer participate in the manual arts, but prefer instead the martial arts.)

Stickley offered plans for dining chairs, tables, Morris chairs, cabinets, dressers, library tables, children’s beds, dressers and rockers—virtually every standard piece of furniture that Stickley featured in his catalogs—and he periodically reproduced photographs of the furniture that people had made in their own workshops. He also offered instructions on how to finish various woods, reserving his most detailed and loving advice for what he called that most democratic of woods, kiln-dried Indiana white oak.

Stickley’s “Home-Training” series gave rise to several *Popular Mechanics* books on building Mission Furniture, the most notable of which, because of its popularity, came out in three volumes, in three separate years. Because of his efforts, a great many high schools introduced manual arts

programs into the curriculum, in woodworking, metalsmithing, and drafting—shop courses that lasted nearly a century in this country. In addition, continuing a trend that William Morris inspired, Stickley urged groups of people to further organize into those arts and crafts societies that I earlier mentioned. Of course, out in the rural areas people worked with their hands all the time, not just in farming, but in one revival craft we know well, quilting. Stickley brought all the crafts into the cities and gave them legitimate, equal standing—pottery decorating on the same footing with painting or sculpture. He gave women a prominent place, urging them to move beyond the traditional feminine crafts into professions traditionally dominated by men, like architecture. Julia Morgan, to name just one such woman, designed many buildings in Pasadena, including the YWCA; and she designed a portion of the Scripps campus, including the Margaret Fowler Garden. Businessmen and bankers, housewives and sales clerks, the rich and the not so rich, joined arts and crafts societies where, while socializing with one another, they learned how to make things with their hands. Stickley made the Arts and Crafts Movement into a revolution in *tact*, and tried to make it a revolution in class, as well, hoping to bring along the middle class in what had been an enclave for the wealthy, upper crust for so long in this country, the world of art.

He faced no simple task. More and more things got locked up in the nineteenth century, in look-but-do-not-touch institutions. This was the time when zoological parks as well as botanical gardens first opened in this country, a time that saw a great philanthropical outpouring of money for museums, as well. Paintings and pottery went under glass. A pediatrician named Luther Holt even advocated putting babies behind bars—taking them out of the cradle and placing them into a new contraption called a crib. And then, shortly after the turn of the century, Henry Ford began to urge Americans to wrap their hands around the steering wheel of a Model T Ford and, as a fallout from this new pastime called driving, encourage them to look at their surrounding from a distance, though the windshield of a car. Both viewer and viewed now encapsulated.

While Frank and Charles Duryea sold but thirteen automobiles in 1896 as the first car company in America, by 1897 Ransom Olds had sold 425 Curved Dash Runabouts. Very quickly, by 1903, America already led the entire world in car production. Local authorities in this country held the car speed to the pace of buggies; but by 1903 England had raised the limit to twenty-five miles per

hour; and America quickly followed suit. An unknown Doctor, Horatio Nelson Jackson, and his mechanic, left San Francisco, in 1903, in a bright red Winton Touring car. Sixty three days later, they arrived—with the bulldog they had picked up on route—in San Francisco, having completed the first cross-country trip in a motor car.

That same year, 1903, Orville Wright left the ground at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. The world began to pick up speed and one had to move even faster to catch but a glimpse. The Titanic startled the world in 1912 by cruising at an amazing 22 knots—about 24 miles per hour, a swift pace for that time. The coastline disappeared rapidly into the distance. The rear-view mirror—another feature of that *annis mirabilis*, 1903, marks a true fissure in our perception, an unthinkable feat—to be gazing into the future while watching the past recede from sight—into the previous century.

To describe this odd displacement—the removal of people from the objects around them—the nineteenth century coined a word, *haptic*, from the Greek, meaning “to come into contact with.” First used as a medical term, it described a condition that we today might call *alienation* or *ennui*, an inability to make contact with objects and conversely, an inability to be touched by experience.

The material world began slowly to recede. People observed it as a distance—out of the windshields of their cars—or watched it—on a movie screen—or applauded it—at various sporting events. (Every major sport was professionalized in the nineteenth century.) As experience turned more insubstantial, more virtual for Americans, Stickley (and the Arts and Crafts Movement) handed them the heft of wood—highly sanded, deeply and richly colored, kiln-dried white oak from the forests of the Midwest. He used quarter-sawn pieces whenever possible to expose the beauty of the wood’s medullary rays—the glass-like fibers that run across the grain and bind the perpendicular fibers together to reveal what he called the “inner life” of the wood. Here, one could see the oak’s fingerprints in clear outline. Stickley colored his wood through a process called “fuming,” an early nineteenth-century technique that further accentuated the character of the wood by allowing ammonia vapors to react with the tannic acid in the oak. The result was a rich nut brown color, each piece curing to its own, individual hue, in an attempt to

fill out its unique, pre-ordained personality. Or, at least, that's how Stickley argued it. Stickley avoided using all chemical stains, because they lay on top of the woods, allowing light to merely bounce off the wood, obscuring the interesting patterns of the grain. He wanted as little reflection as possible, aiming instead for an effect whereby a person's gaze would seem to penetrate deep into the wood, into its heart where the wood's character just waited to be uncovered or discovered. Stickley wrote in a ministerial style, with the zeal of a religious convert; and he believed that the confrontation of person with wood was akin to a religious experience. Not only that, but he also believed that his process permitted the wood, in a certain sense, to find the light of day—to reach its maturity. Stickley was always either *converting* or *saving*, whether it be wood, metal or human being.

He hand rubbed the surfaces of his furniture with pumice, rottenstone and oil, sparing the wood any chemicals like varnish or shellac. Every chair, every table and cabinet proudly displayed its joinery, as if one were looking at an x-ray of the object—the bedrock silhouette of chair or table. Each piece, solid and heavy, invited touching. Settle into one of his broad-armed, leather cushioned Morris chairs, prop your feet up on one of his footstools, recline the back of the chair and you can sit and think for hours on end. The world stops. Movie theaters got along very nicely offering ghostly images, but not Stickley. He deliberately made his furniture heavy and intractable—stubbornly immovable: One had to reckon with his settles and china closets. A Stickley Morris chair has all the commanding presence of a Lazy Boy Recliner on steroids. It takes two people to move it and a single person has a struggle even carrying one of his smaller dining chairs. No one is going to move his furniture about in the house: once it is set into place, it remains there. This, too, exerted a ministerial force. For he believed that the solidity of his furniture would permeate family life and make it also stable and permanent. At various times, in various places, Stickley lamented the high divorce rate in America. And with a face as straight as one of his chair legs, he said out loud that his furniture could help to bring the numbers down.

All of Stickley's metalwork—mostly copper, though he did produce some things in brass—like handles on cabinets, tacks to hold down leather, straps on sideboards, lamps and ashtrays he hand

wrought. He also devised his own way of achieving just the right patina on his copper, which is to say he wanted the color to resemble the finishes he had seen on medieval copper pieces. In a process Stickley called “armor bright,” he rubbed onto the surface of each object a mixture of titanium oxide and rutile, then heated it, until a handle, say, had acquired a deep reddish brown patina. He sculpted the surface of each copper vase or lamp or ashtray or coalscuttle with hundreds of tiny facets produced by blows from a ball-peen hammer. These objects, too, say touch, feel, rub your hand over the patinated surface. Hold it up to the light. Turn it around. Get the feel for the object. 🏠

III.

THE DEMISE OF THE CRAFTSMAN ENTERPRISES

It didn't seem possible that Stickley could fail. But fail he did and in a big way. In 1912, Gustav Stickley was sitting pretty high, high atop his high-rise empire in downtown Manhattan. He had incorporated that year, issuing stock worth \$300,000, a staggering sum for that time. Three years later, at the beginning of 1916, he filed for bankruptcy. The *New York Times* reported liabilities of \$229,000 for Craftsman, Incorporated, and assets of only \$123,000. From one of the most well-known designers in American decorative arts, he fell into total and absolute oblivion. The *New York Times* printed a three-line obituary when he died on April 21, 1942, and could not even manage to spell his name correctly. It's tempting to think that his greed blinded him, that he lost touch with the public and what they wanted to buy. A more compelling argument for me, however, is that the public lost touch with him. After 1916, the bungalow also lost its appeal in America. People wanted to live in more elegant, bigger houses. They wanted to be seen as richer, more worldly, than Stickley's foursquare furniture had allowed them up to that point. GIs brought back antiques from overseas at War's end and those precious objects spoke of wealth and worldliness.

Stickley and his art and architecture were a detour, a short and brief side road, in America's drive towards a hands-off experience. I use the metaphor of driving here, because I think Stickley was in great part driven out of business. With the introduction of the car, its overstuffed seats and protective windshields, people slowly got lulled into sitting back and observing, and being moved—by a machine. And while not everyone could obviously afford a car, everyone wanted to own one. Demand was such that, by 1911, Ford had installed his gravity overhead line in the Highland Park, Michigan plant, the precursor of full-blown assembly-line production. In 1913, the first year autos outsold buggies, Henry Ford sold 189,080 Model Ts. Three years later, in 1916, the year of Stickley's demise, Ford sold a staggering 585,388 Model Ts.

We cannot of course blame Ford for Stickley's failure. Ford merely represents the avant-garde of a new desire in this country—for a rich variety of things that of necessity minimized the importance of quality and handwork and instead emphasized affordability. One can see it early on, in all the imitators

of Stickley's furniture. By 1910, the reigning king of the knock-offs, Sears and Roebuck, outsold the real thing by ten-to-one. Machine-made, veneered, chemically stained, the Sears version of Craftsman furniture—dealers called the generic version of the furniture Mission, claiming in a sales pitch, that the first pieces had been found in the California missions—sold for one-third the price of real Craftsman pieces. And people bought them. From a distance, who could tell the difference? One Morris chair looks pretty much like any other. But just sit in the Sears and Roebuck chair and one can immediately notice a world of difference. The seats are not quite as deep, not quite as firm, the leather's a bit tough, the arms a bit wobbly. Rub your hand on the wood; it's got rough spots. And don't rub too hard, you'll split the veneer. For lots of people, however, they just wanted a Morris chair in their living room and it did not have to be the real thing. The show, the display, was important.

Even the imitators, however, did not last long. The world kept speeding up, in a “Look ma, no hands” roller coaster ride into a roaring future. Between 1919 and 1929 industrial production doubled in America; as wages rose, a good many Americans found themselves with more buying power. The American household changed radically, as working men and women searched for ways to save precious time. Industrial engineers, scientists and designers responded with new items and gadgets that instantly became standard household fixtures. The number of telephones increased from 1,355,000 in 1900 to 20,000,000 by 1930. The consumption of canned goods doubled between 1914 and 1929. The electrification of homes increased dramatically, from 24 percent in 1917 to almost 90 percent in 1940. Electricity ushered in its own revolution in home appliances: radios, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, toasters—all of which could be purchased by even the most middle of middle-income families. And for those who could not afford the new conveniences, some stores began to advertise a new sales strategy called “buying on time.” Storeowners were eager to remove any obstacle to consumption.

The year of *The Craftsman's* demise, in 1916, marked the introduction to American homes of the electric refrigerator; five years later, 5,000 Americans had purchased electric refrigerators; by 1934, the number had skyrocketed to 7 million. *The Craftsman's* push for air cooled pantries and pie safes, home-canning, and solar power, seemed so far out-of-step with so-called modern life as to be laughable. Consumers willingly settled for packaged pies, canned foods and a seemingly endless supply of electrical power. They had little or no time to cook, let alone time to can and bake. America—progress—had handed Stickley his defeat. 

IV.

CLAREMONT AND ITS ARCHITECTURE

The Pacific Land and Improvement Company founded Claremont, on Santa Fe Rail Line property. The town entered the plat map in 1887. The following year, 1888, Claremont could already boast of a large hotel, located on Fourth Street, to welcome all those who traveled west to take advantage of the land boom of the 1880s.

The Pacific Land Improvement Company placed an advertisement in *The Tribune* for Saturday, April 23, 1887, touting the new town and the imminent sale of choice parcels of property: “The name Claremont is indicative of clear mountain air and clear mountain water, clear from malaria, frost, fogs, and most of the ills that flesh is heir to....This exquisite place was chosen because of the perfect altitude...unlimited supply of Artesian water...unsurpassable scenery of valley and mountain...great oaks and sycamores...the great extent of fertile country that surrounds it, covered with countless orchards with apricot, peach, pear, apple, an almost endless list of fruit and vineyards...roses that only ‘bloom in the spring, tra la’; but bloom all year round.”

Pacific Land faced only one problem: The great hoards of people seeking a fantastic land deal did not immediately materialize. “Claremont the Beautiful” seemed doomed before it had even started. Judy Wright, in her *Claremont: A Pictorial History*, summarizes Claremont’s predicament in those first years: “After the boom, the Pacific Land Improvement Company found itself with a dead town on its hands, a large and empty hotel, and a multitude of disappointed customers, many of whom still had payments to make on their unfortunate purchases. The auction sale in January 1888 was much less successful than the first sale of lots. Overwhelmed with obligations and fearful for the town for which they had promised so much, the land company searched earnestly for some way out of its distress.”

Fortunately, the Congregationalists rescued the town. From the earliest days of the colonies, they had founded schools all across the country—Harvard in 1636, Yale in 1701, Dartmouth in 1769, Amherst in 1821, Oberlin in 1833, Atlanta University in 1869, along with scores of other colleges and universities. On May 5, 1887, they had founded a new, co-educational college in Pomona, California. That undertaking, however, quickly ran out of money for lack of students. Forever entrepreneurial,

eternally optimistic, the Congregationalists took advantage of the near totally vacant hotel in Claremont called Claremont Hall. Knowing that a town cannot do much with an empty hotel—in fact it makes for bad press—the trustees of Pomona College negotiated to move their college—students, faculty and furniture—into Claremont Hall during the Christmas break 1888-89. They immediately renamed the hotel Sumner Hall, after the wife of Charles B. Sumner, the founder of Pomona College, and the secretary to its Board of Trustees. In one of those often-unexplained quirks of geography, Pomona College began holding classes, beginning January 1889, in a building located down the road in a different town, in Claremont, California.

The settling of Claremont, so different from most other towns or cities, centered on education and evolved out of a *building*, more precisely out of a building adapted for re-use. Architecture and education are bedfellows. To find out anything about education in the Middle Ages, one must look under the heading of “edification”—that is, one quickly finds oneself browsing among edifices. Our own schools in this country for teaching teachers, normal schools, were so-named for a medieval architecture tool, used to make right angles, the *norma*. How else to make upright citizens than with a ninety degree angle? The German word for novels that explore young men and women growing up are called *bildungsroman*. One raises children as one erects buildings—starting with sturdy foundations.

Claremont’s architectural history really begins in earnest during the most the years of the Arts and Crafts Movement, 1900-1915, a time when the city’s principle industry, citrus, met with great financial success, a success that attracted more and more people of wealth. Of course, the schools proliferated and improved, thus attracting still more families. Success fed on success. What also helped attract people was the city’s humanitarian bent: Claremont offered free lots to widows with children, for the city planners viewed their town as a safe haven for families and its schools as some of the best for miles and miles around. It was as if this other Garden Community—the most well-known, of course, Pasadena—put into practice the ideals of health and family that Stickley articulated in the pages of his magazine, *The Craftsman*.

As with its trees, Claremont lays claim to an eclectic variety of architecture, from Victorians, turn-of-the-century boxes, Colonial, Dutch Colonial Revival, stone houses, stone with half timbers, board and batten cottages, and, of course, dozens and dozens of handsome bungalows. One can even spot a

few that seem to have come right out of the patterns that Stickley offered in the magazine or in one of his books. Judy Wright comments on the city's store of fine but modest homes:

Some of Claremont's Craftsman houses were designed by architects but most were designed from pattern books, by merchant builders, or modeled after architect-designed structures. Again they are small in scale but true to the movement.

Although most Claremont Craftsman houses do not exemplify the fine art of a structure as designed by the prominent architects Charles and Henry Greene, they may, however, be more representative of the movement as fine 'democratic' houses commissioned by wealthy clients.

In the fall of 1975, when I taught the Arts and Crafts Movement in America, at Pitzer College, for the first time, one of my students, Paul Faulstich, who now teaches environmental studies at the College, produced the first architectural guide to Claremont, a small pamphlet of about eight or ten pages, which he ran off on a mimeograph machine and stapled together. At that moment, the city had no such brochure to hand out to visitors, but it very much prided itself on its architecture. And so it purchased a number of the booklets from Paul and distributed them in the city. Later, it printed more copies for use with a wider public. The booklet was an immediate hit.

That guide, a truly wonderful document, made a powerful contribution to the growing awareness of historical preservation in the city. While Paul surveyed all the significant houses in the city, his booklet covered in some detail just seven of them, along with a description of the Russian Village. Paul chose those houses that appealed most to him, either for their architectural, historical or cultural significance: The Crookshank House (1105 North College; 1928); The Daggs House (1102 North College; 1910); The Jones House (905 North College; 1930); The Darling House (College and Eighth; 1903); The Hathaway House (739 North College; 1905); and the Sumner House (105 North College; 1887).

Another of my students in that class actually convinced the owner of the Darling House to retrieve the Greene and Greene lanterns from their basement and to hang them once again over the entrance to the house. That student used the term "historical Claremont" to refer to the homes in the oldest part of Claremont. I do not know if he coined the term, but he decided, after close scrutiny of the architecture,

that the term was warranted.

The standard guide to architecture in Southern California, *A Guide to Architecture: Los Angeles and Southern California*, by David Gebhard and Robert Winter, published in 1977, denigrates the architecture of Claremont by hiding behind the following waggish line: “The town and its architecture are diminutive in scale, perhaps reflecting the size of professors’ salaries;” and essentially dismisses the entire town by adding the following terse remark: “Claremont is an attractive place on a smog-free day.” (Winter, at least, should know better. He lives in Pasadena, and gets his own fair share of pollution courtesy of Los Angeles.)

In those early days, 1977, architectural guides were in their infancy, preservation was just taking hold and most historians did not view Claremont as a town rich with architectural treasures. In fact, Gebhard and Winter’s earliest guidebook, published by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1965, and which served for many years as the standard, lists only one building worthy of comment in Claremont, Harvey Mudd College, and only because it was designed by the well-known architect Edward Durrell Stone. The 1977 guide notes 30 buildings of worthwhile interest in town, with only a mention of the Greenes’s first elegant bungalow, the Darling House. The revised edition of the guide, in 1985, increases that number to 37 buildings and places, with the authors acknowledging this time that the Darling House is “significant in the Greenes’s oeuvre for it is one of the first houses in the true Craftsman—in this case Swiss Chalet, with Oriental touches—mode.”

By the time Judy Wright published her inventory of the houses in Claremont, in 1980, she came to the task with more generosity and certainly more knowledge than those who preceded her. It’s hard to deny: for a town its size, Claremont simply possesses an impressive stock of interesting, well-maintained, well-designed houses. One of those houses is the subject of this brief history, the Zetterberg House. 🏠

V.

ACQUIRING AND MOVING THE ZETTERBERG HOUSE



A piece of
the puzzle

In 1963 while I was working on my Ph.D., I happened to meet an interesting, gregarious book salesman named Raoul Savoie, who worked for Harcourt/Brace Publishing. He told me that he and his wife had just purchased something called a Greene and Greene bungalow in Pasadena and, because he knew I was interested in architecture, wondered if I might like to see it. I gave him an emphatic yes, even though I wouldn't have been able to tell a Greene and Greene from a red and red. He had also picked up a few Stickley chairs, he said, from a local thrift store. I might also find them interesting, since they came from the same period as the house. Stickley's name, too, sounded foreign to me. Nonetheless, I took Raoul up on his offer and made the trek to Pasadena.

That trip changed my life. His house astounded me: I had never seen such attention to detail, such matching of various exotic woods, such use of light and space. In short, I had never really seen a house so much resemble a work of art. Not only did I want to know everything about the Greene brothers and the houses they had built in Pasadena and other places, but I became absolutely fascinated by the entire Arts and Crafts period.

Fortunately for me, the Savoies's home sat just behind the only Frank Lloyd Wright house in Pasadena, called La Miniatura, just down the street from the Gamble House. It was also only around

the corner from the house Charles Greene had built for himself and in walking distance of some of the Greenes's more fabulous work. The neighborhood overflowed with architectural gems. Eventually, I got to know all of them, and, most astounding of all, wound up living for a short time with my wife and daughter in the studio of La Miniatura.

Some years later, when I began full-time teaching, my wife and I met a couple who were graduate students at UCLA. They had two young children and needed some sturdy but cheap furniture for their apartment. Scouring the local thrift stores, they stumbled upon a few pieces of plain, solid oak furniture. They liked the design, but more than that, they appreciated how solidly each piece was built—just the right thing for two wild youngsters. They knew nothing about the maker of the furniture, only the name written in red ink under an arm of a chair or inside the drawer of a desk, Gustav Stickley. They also happened to find a few copies of his magazine, *The Craftsman*, along with one of his early furniture catalogs, all of which gave them important clues to Gustav Stickley's business career and life.

The year was 1970. That couple, Ethel and Terrance Leichti, began collecting furniture, lamps, pottery, paintings and any other accessories from the period with a vengeance. Whatever they ran across, they would snap up. At one point, they had several garages filled with stuff. They accumulated so much, in fact, that they began to trade duplicates of their purchases with other friends who had turned to collecting Stickley. They were the first Stickley collectors in the entire country; they resuscitated the Arts and Crafts Movement. And we—my wife and I—had the good fortune to meet them very early on. We, too, did not have much money, but in those days one could buy a signed Stickley chair or table for as little as \$20 or \$30 or \$40. At times the price could even be cheaper, if, for instance, the desk or chair needed stripping and refinishing or re-gluing. Most dealers at that point had no knowledge of Stickley nor any other accessories from that period. Indeed, few people wanted oak furniture of any kind. That was the poor person's furniture; those in the know demanded maple or mahogany. At any rate, prices were just not steep and, besides, we were hooked. We, too, now began to scour thrift and antique stores in search of the special "Stickley find."

In the fall of 1972, my wife, Grace, and I, traveled to Chicago. In great part, we went to see the first Arts and Crafts exhibition ever assembled, by Robert Judson Clark, Professor of Art at Princeton University. The show in fact had opened at Princeton and then moved to the art gallery at the

University of Chicago. We saw that show. We bought a catalog. For the next 30 years, we studied, researched and collected. I lectured and wrote about the period, publishing, among other essays on various aspects of the Movement, an anthology of articles from *The Craftsman*, a selection from *Craftsman Homes*, and a critical biography of Stickley, titled *A Complex Fate: Gustav Stickley and the Craftsman Movement*.

In the fall of 1975, I decided to teach a class at Pitzer College, English 151, titled “The Arts and Crafts Movement in America.” Aside from various readings on the period, the class went on an architectural tour of several bungalow neighborhoods in Pasadena; visited the Gamble House; Frank Lloyd Wright’s La Miniatura; Raoul Savoie’s thoroughly and meticulously restored Greene and Greene. Closer to home, we walked historical Claremont, and visited the studio of Sam Maloof, the world-renowned furniture maker, who talked to us about the intricacies of designing and making furniture by hand. When the semester neared the end and the question of a grade reared its nasty head, students declared they wanted to do something different from the usual final examination or term paper. They wanted to work on some project that would connect more closely with the Arts and Crafts period itself, something “hands-on” and, if possible, of real public service. Paul Faulstich had already set the tone. Several students came up with the idea of moving an old house, preferably a house from Arts and Crafts period, onto campus to use as a student center. A real college has to have a student center, they all agreed. As Leonard Harper, Dean of Student Activities, put it: “We want a student center where students could relax, play guitars, hold meetings, small dances, poetry readings and have a retreat from the pressures of studies.”

Most of us laughed at the idea, but decided we would give it a try. To start, the class divided itself into small groups, each with the task of canvassing a section of Claremont for our dream house. Cathy Curtis, a member of the class, told the *Los Angeles Times* (May 16, 1976): “We did a long search for a house. We called planning commissions and demolition crews for tips.” Then the strangest thing happened: We discovered that a house we had all dreamed about was sitting there all along, just a mile or so across town. And it was scheduled for demolition. From being the most impossible thing to imagine, it became the easiest. Well, almost the easiest.

Several students learned in a series of interviews with the directors of Pilgrim Place, that the retire-

ment community had plans to raze the fairly large house they owned at 721 Harrison Avenue, to make way for a new hospital. Then the grand offer (one we could not refuse): We could have the house, they said, for one dollar, if we would agree to move the house off their property. After all, they would have had to pay a substantial amount of money themselves, to remove the house and clear the land. That gracious offer turned into a five-year drama, filled with highs and lows, major setbacks and small victories and, finally, of course, a new house on the campus of Pitzer College.

We had only a short time—six months, perhaps a bit more—to give Pilgrim Place an answer. In the meantime, the class had ended, but the majority of the students from the class remained together and met regularly in an effort to pull off the monstrous project. We had transmogrified into the Zetterberg Committee (we discovered from Pilgrim Place the name of the previous owners): Arthur McCleod, staff member; Leonard Harper, Dean of Student Activities; Laura Weinstein, Cathy Curtis, Bill Ashley, Brian Weisbrod, and Rick Shapiro, students; and Ronald Rubin and Barry Sanders, members of the faculty.

The Zetterberg Committee acted as the steering committee. People told us that we were insane, that such a house would exceed a quarter of a million dollars to build in 1975. The move would have to cost at least that much. But we didn't know any better, certainly not enough to be daunted. And so we did the only thing we know how to do—we simply forged ahead.

We first contacted house movers to get a range of estimates for the work—around \$50,000, the most knowledgeable of the movers told us, to cut the house into thirds, to move all three pieces, and then to nail the house back together again. I wanted to preserve the rock work on the porch, the main chimney and the fireplace, which required that we number all the stones, remove them, stack them (carefully), transport them to the new site, and finally reassemble the lot at the new location. To launch such a total project, we needed the approval of the entire community, including students, staff, faculty, administration and, perhaps the most difficult of all, the Board of Trustees. President Robert Atwell gave his support, but only with the proviso that the College not spend any of its own money on the project. The class, or the committee, would have to underwrite the total cost of the project from outside sources—from gifts and foundations—if we wanted to bring the house on campus. At that point, the school was not even willing to ante up any money for on-going maintenance.

First, however, before anything else, we needed College approval. We decided that before we could start we would need the support of the overwhelming majority of the community. With that kind of commitment behind us, we thought we could more easily raise the money, which we now estimated, including some minimal landscaping and repainting, at close to \$100,000—a sizeable sum for a college that had been in business only a dozen years or so. Furniture would push the cost even higher. It didn't make sense to me to furnish the house in anything but period furniture, whenever possible, which would mean, for me, Gustav Stickley. (I always believed in trying to get the very best first and then only later settling for some compromise.)

In the ensuing months, the Zetterberg Committee produced informational newsletters, lobbied virtually every standing committee on campus and put together several exhibits of local history, including a retrospective of local orange crate labels, which we held at the house at 721 Harrison. Finally, we brought the idea to the College Council, the deciding body that makes final recommendations to the Board of Trustees, for a vote. President Atwell dedicated the entire two hours to the sole issue of the Zetterberg House vote. After almost two hours of at times heated discussion, the resolution passed with only one dissenting voice—a single no vote from a colleague who preferred a swimming pool on campus to a meeting place.

Without having raised a single cent, the Committee gave a resounding yes to Pilgrim Place. We wanted the Zetterberg House; we would move it, which prompted me to immediately send out scores of appeal letters and applications to foundations and philanthropic groups asking for money for the project. The Committee held several open houses at 721 Harrison, with some borrowed Stickley furniture and period lamps in place. We also served coffee and cake and brought in some live musicians, just to show people what the house might feel like in its new location, serving its new constituency.

Money would be difficult to raise I knew, but the times were definitely on our side. More and more people across the country had become interested in preservation and in old houses. Municipalities had begun to bring back to life the oldest sections of their towns and cities. That was also true for Claremont, enacting its first historic district ordinance in 1971. (Claremont had already lost some significant structures, including the Claremont Inn, the old library and the Woodford House at seventh and Yale. Gwendolyn Green Woodford was a member of the School Board from 1939-1951.)

1976 was the Bicentennial Year and it generated a good deal of interest for all things American, particularly for historic America; and of course the cause of preservation got caught up in all that fervent activity. The Claremont City Council revised its historic ordinance in 1976, and that same year, Claremont residents founded their own preservation group, Claremont Heritage. Saving the Zetterberg House fit nicely into the city's (and the nation's) renewed passion for saving old things rather than disposing of them.

Meanwhile, the College entered into a contract with Thomas Brothers House Movers to move the Zetterberg House the two and one-half miles across town and onto campus. Thomas Brothers had, near the turn-of-the-century, and even after, moved several houses from the City of Pomona to Claremont, including the Condit House (which served as Pomona College's first infirmary), the Sumner House (first occupied by Charles and Mary Sumner) and one of the oldest houses still standing in Claremont, located at 355 West Seventh Street.

The Zetterberg move, however, faced several crucial problems that no one had to deal with in the early 1900s. For one thing, the house could not move down Foothill Boulevard—if not the most direct route to campus, then certainly the easiest on account of its width—because Foothill Boulevard still had a designation as a federal highway, old Route 66, and right of way along federal highways required approval at the highest levels which was, we were assured, usually difficult if not downright impossible to obtain.

Second, to move down Claremont's streets meant passing under numerous electrical and telephone wires, each of which would have to be raised to have the house clear as it passed underneath. No resident of course wants electrical power or telephone service interrupted—especially for something as non-essential as a moving house. So Southern California Edison and General Telephone would have to disconnect each wire, raise it, attach a temporary wire, and then reconnect the old wire once again. And they would have to do it fast. Utility companies charged thousands of dollars *each and every time* they had to rearrange the wires. The total amount would be astronomic.

We had to find some other solution. I contacted the Santa Fe Railway—recall they were responsible for bringing Claremont into existence in the first place. My idea was to move the two main sections of the house at least part of the way down the railroad tracks in the dead of night when no trains ran. A

**The Grove
House on
wheels**



Thomas Brothers truck, it turned out, could perfectly straddle the tracks. We sent letter after letter, made phone call after phone call; weeks and weeks went by. Santa Fe found the proposal interesting, and if they agreed, they wanted assurance they would get publicity.

They also had a few stipulations. We would of course have to accommodate the train schedule and there could be no major delays. If the house got delayed on the tracks for any reason for more than a few hours, the project would have to be scrapped on the spot. I convinced the railroad that we could do it. I have no idea why they believed me. The third piece of the house, much smaller than the other two, could then move down Claremont's streets without disturbing a single electrical connection. The house was on the move.

In the meantime, the school retained the services of Raymond Girvigian, a preservation architect from Pasadena, to site the house (in the northeast quadrant of the campus, behind the Brant Clock Tower) and to oversee the work of the contractors. Because of the campus configuration and space limitations, Girvigian concluded that the house would best be oriented to the west, unlike its original siting, which had it facing to the south. While people sitting on the porch might not get full sun all day long, they could get a wonderful view of the sunset each evening. The front of the house lined up nicely with the end of Twelfth Street, so anyone arriving at campus would be first greeted by the Zetterberg House.



Pitzer students lead the Grove House to its ultimate destination

But then came the first of many surprises. The house could not be moved, we found out at the last moment, without the approval of the city's newly formed Architectural Commission, which consisted of five people from the community appointed by the mayor, out of them an architect. The Commission heard the case over several sessions, to a packed room of Pitzer folks. President Atwell spoke in favor of the project, as did Leonard Harper, myself, along with a host of students. At its April 13, 1977, meeting, the Commission finally voted in favor of the move with, once again, one dissenting vote. That member, Commissioner Peter Eng, felt that the house did not merit all the fuss, and certainly did not deserve any level of historic designation. The Commission Chairman, Alex Hughes, who became Mayor in 1989, approving of the move, countered Mr. Eng with the following terse remark: "The Zetterberg House means more to Claremont and environs than other more famous houses."

Money slowly began to come in, especially as the project seemed to become more and more of a reality. Then students, on their own initiative, decided in several town hall meetings, that they wanted to see the house on campus so deeply, they would pledge five dollars per student out of activity fees over five years to make the Zetterberg House a reality. Their amazing gesture got us some important coverage from local newspapers. One member of the Board of Trustees, Bill Gunther, a skeptic at first, donated money out of a Los Angeles foundation that he directed, the John A. McCarthy Foundation. We also received substantial donations from the Avery Foundation, The Samuel and Harold Shapero

Foundation, Stanley Ross and the Zetterberg family itself. The contractor poured the concrete slab for the foundation in the spring of 1977.

Saturday evening, July 16, 1977, at around 1:05 AM, with music and food and a small procession of fairly loud revelers, the house made its way to campus. President Atwell led the parade. One half of the house made its way down Cambridge Avenue to Bonita Avenue, then headed east to Indian Hill Boulevard. Crews from Southern California Edison and General Telephone raised the wires ever so slightly as the house rocked and rolled from side-to-side, creaking down the sleepy streets. Thomas then turned south on Indian Hill Boulevard to First Street, east on First Street, to College Avenue, then over the railroad right-of-way to Mills Avenue. *The Claremont Courier* described the rest of the journey:

The trip north on Mills was slowed by the fact that it took ten minutes to cut through each of four barricades recently installed on the street. The house was pulled by a winch up to its new location near the bell tower at the north side of the campus. This was to protect the grass, college officials said. The move took just under five hours.

That should have been a time for celebration. And it was. But with that move, our troubles just began.

Mrs. Brant, who with her husband had erected the Brant Clock Tower, complained that the house now sat too close to her tower and she threatened to withhold any future monies from the College. Then the general contractor noticed that the slab for the foundation had already developed large cracks; and the building inspector subsequently declared the foundation sub-standard. It would have to be re-poured.

Meanwhile, Ray Girvigian checked his blueprints only to discover that Mrs. Brant had a legitimate complaint: The supervising contractor, Walter Scott, had placed the foundation 70 feet closer to the tower than the architect had planned. Who was at fault? Should the architect have paid closer attention? The contractor? Ultimately, the question, of course, the only question in which the school had any real interest, was who would pay for the additional costs?

The Board wanted the courts to straighten things out, and sued both the contractor *and* the architect for gross negligence. The house would simply have to sit in its three pieces moldering on campus until



**Grove House
split in two**

the courts in their own sweet time sorted out the complicated and confused legal issues. Thomas Brothers wanted an additional \$50,000 to move the house back the required 70 feet. The Committee realized that the court battle would most likely drag out over considerable time and so quite wisely covered the house with tarps to at least keep some of the rain out.

A good thing, too, for the house languished for two years, in its three pieces, exposed to the elements—miserable-looking, desolate, unfinished, a house and at the same time not-a-house. A true, bright white elephant. At its October 3, 1978, meeting, the Board of Trustees met and decided, by a vote of fifteen to two, to terminate the project. This was the first of a series of Board meetings that would take place over the next several years in which the house sat like a condemned person on death row awaiting execution or the next reprieve.

Jim Jamieson, the acting President of the College, made the following announcement at the conclusion of that meeting:

The College began this project more than two years ago and at that time it was estimated it would require \$80,000 to complete. With construction costs increasing rapidly and the delays we have incurred in completing the project, we now find that it would cost nearly \$180,000 to complete the house. At this point, the Board of Trustees feels that we simply cannot justify that additional expense.

Grove House finds its final home on the Pitzer campus next to Brant Clock Tower



Jamieson went on to say, “It was a hard decision for the Board to make, because they still believe in the advantages of the project. However, in the final analysis, they could not justify the costs required to complete it.”

Early on in the project’s history, the Committee applied to the State to include the Zetterberg House in the Los Angeles County and Statewide Inventories of Historical Resources. We did this so that the house could fall under the authority of the Historic Building Codes, allowing us to expedite the completion of the restoration by sidestepping some standard code requirements, thus not only safeguarding the integrity of the house’s design, but also helping to reduce overall costs. While the Historic Building Code provides for adequate safety measures, it demands fewer requirements than standard codes with regard to buildings for public use. Claremont’s Architectural Commission recommended our application to the State Office, which granted the Zetterberg request.

That designation now provided us with a new strategy. The Committee, renamed the Save the Zetterberg House Committee, wrote to the Board President that, in order for the school to raze (or otherwise eliminate) the house, the Board was obligated to file an Environmental Impact Report by the city, giving precise details and reasons why they needed to remove the house. Board members were not happy about that prospect, but on the advice of the school attorney, realized they would have to comply with the demand. This step gave more time for lawyers for the school and the contractor to

sort things out in court, and for us to try to raise the additional money. The Committee and a good deal of the community still stood behind the project, and they did not see why the project should have been scuttled merely because experts had made some mistakes—some huge mistakes. At any rate, we persevered. On October 30, 1978, the school completed the supplemental Environmental Impact Report.

The Committee also asked to be on the agenda on the next Board meeting, December 5, 1978. Students and faculty members argued in favor of the house and pleaded for a stay of execution. The Board relented and agreed to rescind its demolition vote. It gave the Save the Zetterberg House Committee until its next meeting, February 6, 1979, to raise the additional \$54,000 to complete the project. Trustee William Gunther generously pledged \$23,000 from the John A. McCarthy Foundation, on whose board he served as director, which left \$31,000 for the Zetterberg Committee to find.

The Committee faced a tight schedule: school recessed approximately December 15 to January 15. We simply could not raise the \$31,000; and thus faced the Board at its February meeting. Now that we had run out of options, one of the students on the Committee, Rick Shapero, made a bold, unscripted move. He pledged \$1,500 of his own money provided that each Board member would make an equal contribution. No one moved to do so. We looked at each other. The boardroom fell silent. After two years of work the inevitable had arrived. The Board terminated the project.

The administration submitted the Environmental Impact Report that it had prepared the previous October, to the Architectural Commission in March. The Commission met at City Hall at 7:30 PM. That afternoon, I received a telephone call alerting me to the school's intent—members of the administration had placed themselves on the agenda for that very evening. The person asked to remain anonymous; but that person, a preservationist to the core, loved the project and did not want to see it end. My wife and I and Ron Rubin went to City Hall and sat in the back row. The meeting was already in progress and no one saw us enter the room.

Very quickly, Carl Bandelin, head of the Advancement Office at the College, presented the College's EIR and asked for permission to remove the house from campus. The Commission discussed among themselves for fifteen minutes or so, and then asked if anyone in the audience had any objections—this was, after all, a public hearing. Recall, the three of us had come into the meeting after it started and had taken our seats very quietly in the back row. No one knew we were there—that is, not until I

raised my hand and objected on the grounds that the Commission already had noted the house's architectural significance by agreeing to recommend it for the State's Inventory. The EIR, the Committee argued, had not adequately addressed the home's historical importance. The Commission debated again and charged the College with re-submitting a new draft, which the city would then send on to a review board in Sacramento, in anticipation of a final decision in 60 days.

The twelfth hour had once again come and gone. The house had seemingly exhausted every stay of execution. The Committee exhausted all its remedies. And everyone truly felt exhausted. We all went back home. We had stopped the execution, but we knew we had reached the end. We once again faced the eleventh hour and the clock was ticking fast. We met the following day on campus for coffee and consolation. And then, one or two days later, something of a miracle happened, something that none of us had certainly planned, and that none of us knew anything about. Although she told no one on the Committee, a senior Pitzer student and a member of the original Arts and Crafts Class, Sheila Kemper, telephoned her father, Crosby Kemper, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of the Missouri Bank Corporation, about the imminent demise of the house, a house she liked very much, and which she hoped she would have seen on campus before her graduation.

Mr. and Mrs. Kemper were themselves pioneer preservationists in Kansas City and St. Louis. As Sheila tells it, her father asked what the project needed to make it successful. She said *money*. And so, almost two years to the day that the house left the grounds of Pilgrim Place, on May 10, 1979, the Enid and Crosby Kemper Foundation made an astonishingly generous gift of \$100,000 to Pitzer College for the completion of the Zetterberg House move. Pat Hinds, the Director of Pitzer's Office of Communications, announced the receipt of the Kemper gift in her May 16, 1979, press release:

With the Kemper Foundation gift, the house will be restored as nearly as possible to its original condition. As part of the restoration, the fieldstone chimney and foundation will be reconstructed. The exterior shingles will be stained brown and a new roof of brown composition shingles will be added. The interior will be completely refinished and refurbished and provisions also have been made to cover some of the ongoing maintenance costs after work has been completed.

Restoration work will begin immediately after the moving of the house from its present site near the clock tower on the north end of the Pitzer campus to a new location north

of Mead Hall dormitory. It is expected that work will be completed by the beginning of the fall semester.

The money also helped us locate enough Mission furniture—much of it Stickley—to fill the house and porch. The Committee printed up a large poster and tacked copies all around town and in other strategic locations asking for donations of furniture or accessories for the Zetterberg House. Several chairs, a wonderful Mission table lamp, and three pieces of period pottery, made their way to the house as a result. By the end of September 1979, the house neared completion. I had also found a “picker” on the East Coast who scouted for Mission pieces for us; he came up with almost one hundred pieces of furniture. The shipment filled the garage of the new President, Frank Ellsworth. (The Zetterberg House had now spanned two presidents—Atwell and Ellsworth—and one acting President—Jim Jamieson.)

On May 20, 1979, Pitzer College celebrated its fifteenth graduation. Those students, who, as freshmen, had taken my Arts and Crafts course in the fall of 1975, now stood on stage, ready to leave school. The newly named Grove House sat at the other end of campus—plainly visible from the stage at McConnell Center—weather-beaten and bowed, but not broken. And certainly, and more importantly, not leveled. Sheila Kemper, in her robes, could plainly see the house from her seat on stage. Her parents, in the audience, saw it for the first time that Sunday. A *Los Angeles Times* reporter and his cameraman came to campus that day to interview what the paper referred to as the “Zetterberg students.” When the *Los Angeles Times* reporter asked one of them, Rick Shapero, about his feelings of being graduated without seeing the house a working reality, Shapero replied, “I’m sad I won’t see it,” but added that he was also pleased that enough money had been raised to finish the project “the way it should have been from the beginning.”

The school produced a major advertising piece at that time, an eight-page brochure, which they called, “Pitzer On The Move.” That brochure featured some startling photographs of the house making its way down Claremont’s deserted, nighttime streets, of students refinishing the furniture and of the house finally resting on its solid foundation well behind the Brant Clock Tower. The brochure concludes with the following two, rather telling paragraphs:

Moving a house is not a big deal. Lots of people do it. But most schools don't. Necessity has, however, over the years given birth to some pretty good ideas. Without a large endowment, Pitzer College had had to dream up some crafty solutions. And, if the sixties can be described as a time when we let it all "hang out," we are, during the seventies, being forced to stuff it all "back in." And now we're cinching our belts tightly. The "ME" generation of the seventies may have given way to the "RE" generation: to re-cycle, re-store, re-use, re-furbish, re-strict, all out of necessity. Old buildings, long vacant, are being re-defined and re-used. The Grove House is a fine example of craftsmanship in the service of an easy, relaxed way of life during the early part of this century. Pitzer is re-vivifying it for that same use.

The Grove House is perhaps Pitzer's most visible example that innovation and daring are rewarded even in the hardest of economic and political times. Moving the Grove House has taught us that institutions and individuals are alike. In William Faulkner's phrase, 'in order to endure and prevail, we must take risks.'

All of that was true, yes, but if one thinks about the old Claremont Hotel and how Pomona College re-used that building, we were only working in an old and trusted Claremont tradition.

But of course we did take risks. A whole lot of risks. Right from the beginning. Not just the Committee, but the Board, the President, the students, the Dean of Faculty—they all at one point or another went out on a limb for an old wooden house. We took risks and we learned to answer people's objections, no matter what they were. One of the objections the Board raised to the overall project, from its earliest days, was the question of theft and vandalism. Just look at the dorms, they said, students have wrecked nearly everything. They treat the dorms with utter disrespect.

I had two counter arguments. One, give students—or anyone, for that matter—surroundings that feel substantial, of high quality, made of real materials, and they will treat those surroundings with care. Two, and maybe even of more importance, if students have a hand in working on the furniture and the house—if they know, that is, that they have been an integral part of the project—they will take care of it all.

To that end, I taught a group of students how to refinish and repair all the furniture we received. We hired a stonemason, who lived on Mt. Baldy, by then nearly blind—he had worked on many of the early houses in Claremont—to show us how to set the river rocks in place around the porch in interest-



Grove House arrives on campus in 1977

ing patterns. He taught us how to use the mortar, how to point the seams between the small rocks and the larger ones. Students also did some of the refinishing of the floors, and a good deal of the painting in the interior of the house. Many students—some outside the Committee—worked on the grounds, clearing the land and planting small trees, shrubs and herbs.

At the October 3, 1979, meeting of the Board, President Ellsworth announced that Pitzer College finally had a campus center, which after consultation with members of the Zetterberg Committee, and with the family itself, he renamed the Grove House. President Ellsworth explained that “the new name reflects in fine fashion the history of the house, one of the first grove houses of the period and the many interests and contributions which have combined to bring it to campus.”

President Ellsworth also announced the receipt of additional funds from the Kemper Foundation to help underwrite the furniture, as well as a lecture series to bring students and folks from the wider community, off campus, to the Grove House. (The project at that point had raised over \$200,000.) Dedication of the house, the President further announced, would take place after the first of the year, 1980. In fact, it took place in February 1980.

The Grove House dedication took place over two days, Thursday and Friday, February 8th and 9th, 1980. It began Thursday evening with Neil Harris, Professor of History and the Social Sciences, at the University of Chicago, who delivered the first Enid and Crosby Kemper Lecture, entitled “The American Renaissance.”

Friday started off with another lecture, this one by Robert Winter, Professor of Architectural History

at Occidental College. He had written the first guidebooks, you may recall to Southern California architecture. Through a series of slides, Winter covered the history of the bungalow in its many shapes and forms in America, and ended his lively presentation by singing “In the Land of the Bungalow,” a song popularized by Al Jolson in the teens. Outside the Grove House, students set up booths selling silk-screened T-shirts and offering various ethnic foods. Led by Anthropology Professor Donald Brenneis, students played folk music. The dedication concluded that evening in the Bert Meyers Poetry Room with a poetry reading of Bert’s work by various readers, coordinating by his daughter, Anat.

The Grove House was intended to function as one large living room, one in which people could feel comfortable enough to sit, talk, eat, drink coffee and, in those days, even smoke. Hospitality, the core of bungalow life, would be its hallmark. Mr. and Mrs. Zetterberg generously donated the Oriental rug that covered the living room floor when they lived in the house. They also brought back to the house the old brass doorknocker that had inscribed on it, A.P. Zetterberg—a treasure from 1930. People scoured their attics and searched their basements and found several more period lamps and ceramics and donated those to the house. The only things stolen from the house were two brass porch lights that hung on either side of the front door, taken while the house sat in three pieces on campus. The morning after President Ellsworth announced that the Grove House would hold its grand opening shortly after the first of the year, a brown paper bag appeared on the porch of the house. Inside were the two lanterns and a note of apology: “I’m sorry. I thought the house was going to be destroyed. These looked so great in my dorm room. But they clearly belong to the house.”

The committee had hoped for a full-service kitchen, one that could provide a full range of dishes, from soup to sandwiches, to assorted hot meals, during both the day and evening; but that would have required more money to bring the kitchen up to commercial code. Ray Marshall, a board member and owner of the Acapulco restaurants, pledged sufficient monies to purchase all new commercial equipment—refrigerators, slicers, blenders, coffee makers, stoves, dishwasher—for the kitchen. Our plan was to use only quality ingredients—organic produce, filtered water, hand-squeezed orange juice, freshly ground coffee and so on. Greasy fried food students could get quite easily in the dining hall. We even bought thick Buffalo brand china from thrift stores, as well as heavy-duty pots and pans.



The Grove House is a popular gathering place on campus.

(Some years later, David Furman, Professor of Art, made dozens of ceramic mugs for the house.) My wife, Grace, along with a handful of students, prepared and served most of the food. The one exception was soup. Brenda Louch, whose husband taught philosophy at the graduate school, brought in homemade soup every morning. (The health department forbade us from cooking dishes like soup because the kitchen did not meet code requirements. We lacked an exhaust fan, for instance, and proper coving.) My wife and I donated to the house a wonderfully ornate, old Italian, brass espresso machine from a restaurant we used to own.

The back room we reserved for small classes. The front upstairs room the Committee named in honor of Bert Meyers, who taught poetry and creative writing classes at the College and who had always hoped for a place on campus where he could sit, drink cup after cup of strong coffee, smoke his Sherman cigarettes, and, as he put it, “gather images and just dream.” After a prolonged illness, he died in February 1980, having never seen the house become a reality. Upon his death, his wife, Odette, donated his entire poetry library—books and magazines and journals—to the house. Students could sit in the room on one of several Morris chairs, study and read poetry. Or just dream.

The room just east of the Bert Meyers Poetry Room the Committee named the Hinshaw Photography Gallery, in honor of Barbara Hinshaw, a Scripps student and dear friend of Cathy Curtis, who died in a car crash just after graduation in 1979. Barbara majored in art with a specialty in photography. Mr. and Mrs. Hinshaw endowed the gallery, contributing enough money to provide for its maintenance over the years. The Enid and Crosby Kemper Grant stipulated that we have one room devoted to women’s issues—that was Sheila Kemper’s major—and so the Committee allocated the sleeping porch on the second floor—the one with the splendid view of mountains—as a women’s studies room, where small meetings could be held, and some research could take place (we had enough money to purchase a small library for the room.)

One of the other rooms upstairs we planned as a guest room, to accommodate visiting parents, or visiting faculty members, or anyone, really, who needed to spend the night on campus. And the last room we reserved for the student caretaker, who for a school year would live free in the house, and supervise the maintenance of the house, bringing in rockers off the porch after the sun went down, locking up at night, and just generally keeping a watchful eye out for the welfare of the house and grounds.

The house was a raving success from the moment it opened. It received the City of Claremont’s first Architectural Award for Distinction. It got featured on television and in numerous newspaper articles. It served as inspiration, some people believe, for the administration of Pomona College to move the Seaver House from the City of Pomona to its own campus. Over the years, Pitzer has used photographs of the house in advertising brochures. *Sunset* magazine, in a photo essay about West Coast college campuses, singled out the Grove House and the surrounding arboretum as special points of inter-

est. Gebhard and Winter's latest guide, *Architecture in Los Angeles*, said about Pitzer College: "Not very distinguished in general except for McConnell Center...See also the Zetterberg House, a handsome, Orientalized Craftsman house that was moved to the Pitzer campus from 721 Harrison and restored by students and faculty." In exit interview after interview, many students confessed that they would have left school had it not been for the Grove House; that it provided a home away from home. 🏠

VI.

THE ZETTERBERGS SPEAK

According to Stuart Wheeler, the self-appointed historian of Claremont, Charley Loop, son of the Reverend Charles F. Loop, and another developer, A.R. Meserve, bought 200 acres of land, at \$8 an acre, from the early Pomona Valley family, the Palomares. On a chunk of that land, Charley Loop built one of those democratic bungalow houses, in 1902, at 721 Harrison Avenue, which he and his family of ten occupied. Larger than most, the two-story, 4,900 square foot grove house faced south, allowing the almost ever-present sun to pass across its big front and side porch most of the day. He also planted the orange groves on the property.

A broad porte-cochere, supported by boulder work done by one of the premier stonemasons of the period, dominated the west end of the house. A long, palm-lined drive brought visitors from Harrison Avenue, through that remarkable transition of palms, to the front of the large house. The experience, especially in the early days, must have truly been impressive. People knew they were encountering something special.

Louise Richards Mead, a 1919 Pomona College graduate, recalled her first friendship with the Loop family in a letter to the editor in the *Progress-Bulletin*, April 7, 1976, in just that special, almost regal way. (The Mead family had bought the old Ferguson House at the northeast corner of Tenth and Harvard, where they lived from 1910 to 1920.) Mrs. Mead remembers Mr. Loop as a businessman in Pomona; he may have owned a restaurant in town. He was a very large man, she recalls with some humor, “with a bay window, and a hearty manner.” She then goes on with almost a precision memory, to recount her playful times in the Loop house, her joyous moments with the children, and the movie-star quality of Mrs. Loop herself:

To my childish eyes, Mrs. Loop was a raving beauty, with all the attributes youngsters now apply to movie stars. My impression is that she was much younger than Mr. Loop and that she was the stepmother of Mabel Loop, Pomona ex-1915, but possibly then mother of the younger girl with whom I played but whose name I cannot recall. Mabel Loop transferred to another school from Pomona College and became a greatly respected and beloved English teacher

in a Los Angeles high school.

The Loops seemed very affluent to me, although we had all the comforts and luxuries usual at the time. One thing we did not have. The little Loop girl, who was quite a tomboy, had a brown and white Shetland pony and a wicker pony-cart built for two. In this we often took long rides with lunches on Saturdays, as far away as Lordsburg—now LaVerne.

The furniture in the Loop house impressed me greatly. It was all Chinese, of heavy, carved teak wood, imposing but uncomfortable. Golden Chinese dragons, ivory bibelots, huge green ceramic elephants and countless Oriental throw rugs adorned each room. The odor of incense permeated everything. I had never seen a double chair before, the first facing one way, the second the other—just right for a *tête-à-tête*.

Mrs. Loop's bedroom on the second floor spread from the east side of the house to the west and had a fireplace. In front of the hearth, on the hardwood floor, lay a giant white polar-bear rug, its stuffed head a fine place for a little girl to sit, its eyes and claws and big white teeth gleaming. To me this was the height of opulence. I remember the beautiful Mrs. Loop swishing around the room in a long Chinese dressing gown, clutching her little white poodle to her bosom.

Like most stars, the Loop house lost some of its luster over time. The fireplace in Mr. Loop's bedroom was boarded over, an outdoor entrance was added, and one wall was converted into a makeshift kitchenette. Downstairs, the porch that rims the house on two sides was glassed in, except for an area to the left of the entrance. But those changes were merely cosmetic. The structural integrity of the house still remained and it awaited some tender hands to restore it to its original state. George Newton Hamilton, and his wife, seemed destined to provide at least some of that care to the house. And they added a bit of their own taste and style to it, as well.

The Hamiltons, the house's second owners, made their way from Nebraska to settle in Pomona in 1908. Mr. Hamilton, an attorney, purchased a grove of over 30 acres of lemons and a small grove house the following year, on Mountain Avenue in Claremont. Perhaps as an indication of how fast people could make money those days in the citrus business—Hamilton sold his lemons at market—George Hamilton upgraded quite quickly, buying a much larger and more substantial house in 1911, at 721 Harrison.

Already hooked on raising citrus trees, Mr. Hamilton also purchased an additional five acres of land, so he could cultivate a greater variety of fruit trees.

The Hamiltons immediately began an extensive remodeling project, enlarging the house to twelve rooms, including six bedrooms and adding a large sleeping porch on the second floor. That room, with glass replacing the screens, served as a small dancehall for Pomona College and Claremont High School students during a time when those schools did not permit dancing on campus. The Hamiltons also planted the orange grove around their house. They took their fruit directly to the packing house on Indian Hill Boulevard, just south of the railroad tracks, a series of buildings now converted to retail stores.

Over the time that the Hamiltons lived in the house, some 19 years, they raised five children in the house—Grace, Helen, Rebecca, George and Frank. After all the children had grown and left the house, the Hamiltons found their large-scale bungalow just too much for their needs and so they decided to move. In 1930, then, George Hamilton offered the house, evidently with some reluctance, for sale. Quite clearly, the house occupied a special place in Claremont, evident in the brochure the Hamiltons had prepared announcing the sale. Indeed, the local Pomona newspaper described the house at the time of sale as “one of the show places of the city.” The paper offered an interesting description, which was helped, One has to believe, by the fact that the house stood outside the village—outside, that is, the commercial reach of the city of Claremont. In its location, Hamilton—or anyone else—could exploit the bucolic, pastoral surroundings of the California bungalow. George Hamilton himself helps to underscore that feeling by listing virtually every tree on the property. We should notice, however, that Hamilton begins his brochure by listing all the schools in the area, choosing to emphasize the town’s most valuable asset, its commitment to education:

CLAREMONT is the home of Claremont College, Pomona College, Scripps College for Women, Norton School for Boys, Webb School for Boys, Claremont Commercial College and School of Art, and has a high school, a junior high school, and an elementary school. Pomona College is 6 blocks east and all the rest except Webb are within easy walking distance of this home.

CLAREMONT is on the Pacific Electric and Santa Fe Rys., with 14 trains a day to and from Los Angeles. There are 18 lots in the tract (4.87 acres) with 285 15-year old orange trees, most valencias, and several peach, pear, nectarine, grapefruit, lemon,

walnut and ornamental trees and palms, shrubs and flowers, with an ample, very valuable, free water right for irrigation for grove and domestic use. There is a laundry and woodhouse, a large barn and garage and a small concrete swimming pool for small children. Claremont's population is between 3,000 and 4,000.

THE RESIDENCE has 12 rooms, 7 closets, 2 baths, 1 shower, and 2 separate toilets, 7 lavatories, a furnace and hardwood floors. There is beautiful tiling in 2 lavatories, 1 bathroom, shower stall, 1 toilet, and the kitchen.

Hamilton asked \$35, 000 for the house, and expressed a willingness to “give time on \$10,000 to \$15,000 on purchase if desired.”

In nearly 75 years, from 1902-1976, the house had only three owners. Very few houses can boast such a history, especially in a part of the country where people move around often and with ease. The house seemed to exert a hold on people; and, as we have seen, seemingly to enjoy a life of its own. It expanded and contracted, morphed and changed to satisfy the needs of every current owner—even when, much later in its life, a college and a whole horde of students took it over. The house and the land provided a livelihood for generations. It's a house that, when threatened with extinction at its original location, moved across town to more favorable conditions.

The third owners, Arvid and Winifred Zetterberg, purchased the house from the Hamiltons on March 20, 1930, quite willing to pay the asking price of \$35,000. Stephen Zetterberg, a son who grew up in the house now practices law in town. He, along with his wife, Connie, later donated the property on which the house stood to Pilgrim Place in 1976. Steve Zetterberg recalls seeing a letter that his father wrote to George Hamilton shortly after buying the house. (Mr. Hamilton held the paper on the house.) Arvid said he was not sure, given the disastrous state of the economy at that time, that he was going to be able to meet the payments, or even meet them on time; and that Mr. Hamilton should feel free to repossess the house whenever he began missing payments. Arvid would not stand in the way. According to Steve, George Hamilton responded in another letter Steve has seen, that he would rather take a chance with an honest gentleman like Arvid Zetterberg than with anyone else. Just pay me when you can, Hamilton wrote. Decades later, Steve ran into his father's banker in town, George Stone, who told Steve that over the years, even in the hardest times, his father never missed a single payment.

As Steve tells the history of his family, his mother and father came to Claremont from Newcastle, Indiana, in great part to escape the crushing effects of the Depression. Life had changed so dramatically and so drastically in the thirties in and around Chicago, Arvid wanted not just to invest his money outside the Midwest, but also, as Steve points out, “he was hard hit by the Depression, and he wanted to save from his earnings by purchasing the property on time.” Steve says that, “as Vice-President of Ingersoll Steel, my father had some business contacts on the West Coast. When he came out here, he saw Hamilton’s flyer for the house. And of course there was the promise of clean air.”

But more important than any of those reasons, Steve insists, “my parents were keenly interested in education. They knew Connie’s mother, who, after attending the University of Chicago, taught at Knox College. My mother was a student at Knox, too. They kept in touch, and news of Claremont passed back and forth.” From its beginnings, as we have noted, Claremont cultivated a reputation as a town rich with educational opportunities and that principle asset, a dedication to schooling young people, acted as a powerful draw to families from across the country over the years.

Connie Zetterberg came to Claremont in an entirely different way, but for similar reasons. As Connie tells it, “my mother’s father lived in Hollywood. When he died, my mother, Helen, came out west to make funeral arrangements. A cousin of hers told her about a little town just east of Los Angeles called Claremont that she thought she might like because of all the different levels of education—from kindergarten to college—and all the different forms of education—from public to private—packed into that one small town. We were living in Florida at the time,” Connie points out, “though I was born in Vancouver. And so we decided to make the move. We all drove across country in 1930—there were seven of us in the family—in two cars. I guess you could say we all came out here for the sense of community in Claremont.” Connie’s father, Sanford Avery Lyon, thoroughly dedicated to education, served on the Board of Scripps College very early on and helped to hire Ernest Jaqua, the College’s first president.

We have to think about Arvid’s purchase of that grove house from George Hamilton. For one thing, Arvid Zetterberg bought the house at a fairly high price—\$35,000—and he bought it the year after the stock market took its colossal nose dive and at the outset of the Great Depression. We know he did that deliberately, and saw the house and groves as part of his plan to “invest outside the Midwest.” But even his son Steve has remarked on the relatively high price of that house and property. Even though President Coolidge had announced in 1925 that “the business of America is business,” it still seems like a bold and

adventurous step to move from steel to oranges in such short order. One doesn't get much practice raising oranges in the Midwest. Arvid must have come to his new avocation without any formal training. On top of that, by 1930 bungalows had long since gone out of favor. People wanted more modern houses, preferring any number of revival styles to what they now saw as the antiquated and romanticized bungalow and all of its bucolic associations.

Arvid and Winifred came to a town, like any in America at that moment, that had just gone through a boom period. Claremont doubled its population in the twenties, from one thousand to just over two thousand. Pomona College thrived, as did the city's citrus industry, expanding its groves far north of what would be Foothill Boulevard. (The Boulevard opened in 1931.) As Judy Wright points out, "the relative prosperity in Claremont is evident in the kind of structures that were built during the period.... Most of the city's architect-designed houses were built during the twenties and many of the structures are more flamboyant than previous buildings." Just consider the fourteen stone houses that Polish immigrant and Claremont resident Konstany Stys managed to build on one stretch of Mills Avenue, today known as Russian Village. Like Stickley, Stys had no formal architectural training, according to Judy Wright, and probably no education beyond grammar school.

New commercial buildings sprang up as well in the twenties; and perhaps most significantly for the town, in 1923, President Blaisdell proposed a radical plan for developing Claremont's educational possibilities farther than they had ever gone before. He argued that "the close relationship between students and faculty might be preserved by the developing of a group system;" and hence he introduced the "cluster concept" or "Oxford Model"—the idea of a series of small colleges, each devoted to a different specialty. Four years later, in 1927, the second of those schools in the cluster, Scripps College, opened its doors to its first entering women's class. Blaisdell's was truly a "jazz age" idea—a group of specialized sisters all playing passionately in harmony to produce one tune.

In the midst of a revolution in machine manufacture and assembly-line production, entrepreneurs like Gustav Stickley blithely turned out the most durable furniture by hand. Now, in the economic, industrial and power education boom of the twenties, growers in Claremont stood out like so many throw-backs, working their rows and rows of oranges and lemons employing little more than arduous hand labor.

Claremont in the twenties! The Chamber of Commerce appointed its first planning commission charged it with drafting the first city plan; Webb School was founded; the Norton School for Boys opened

its doors, as well as the Graduate School; the Citizens Bank opened for business. Civic groups and organizations began to meet. Nonetheless, while the twenties roared, making a racket even in tiny Claremont, people steadfastly worked the fields, in a slow and sleepy pace, from their wood-frame grove houses.

And architecture, the harbinger of the future, had also rushed into the twenties like some tornado or typhoon. With so many new and modern styles, it left the bungalow looking like the decrepit past. Here is Judy Wright on the myriad new styles that came to be built in town:

Red tiled roofs of low pitch, arches, plastered exterior and interior walls, carved or cast ornamentation, arcades, balconies with railings of wrought iron or wood, window grilles, pergolas, and bracket capitals are some of the characteristics that might be parts of houses built during this era. Hispanic, or as they were often called, Mediterranean designs, spanned all building types. Most of the architecture is derived from California's Spanish or Mexican heritage and includes Spanish Colonial Revival, Mission Revival, Monterey Revival, and Pueblo.

Claremont also has examples of other styles prevalent in California and other parts of the country in the 20s: The English Cottage, late Bungalow, Period Revival, and the added attraction of the post-sabbatical house.... The preponderance of Mediterranean structures perhaps illustrates that many residents had fully adjusted to California and its architecture. Some did complain about the white houses, however, and it took them a long time to leave "the brown period" of American architecture and paint their houses white.

The Zetterberg House had also along the way received its obligatory coat of white paint. One of the things that must have attracted Arvid and Winifred to the property was the enormous number of trees—285 in all. While these were mostly Valencia orange trees, the house was truly surrounded by a wide variety of other trees, like peach, pear, nectarine, lemon, walnut, grapefruit and many, many ornamental trees. Closer to the main house, Steve points out, grew trees that would yield fruit all year around—one sweet orange, three St. Michael's, three navels, a lemon tree, a fig, a tangerine and a peach.

Steve remembers many pastoral moments at the house—mocking birds singing in the early evening and pickers singing in the groves during the early morning hours. As a young man attending Claremont High School, he could walk all the way from home to high school without ever leaving the orange

groves, so abundant were they in town. The air smelled of orange blossoms in the spring. The only other house Steve recalls passing in the western part of Claremont sat at Twelfth Street and Baughman Avenue. Steve loves to tell the story of the two grey-haired, well-dressed women who drove into the groves around the house one afternoon in their coupe, lost and bewildered, and slightly frightened, asking Steve where they were and how they could get home. Steve laughs: “We were really out in the country.”

Steve remembers not just the bucolic life at the house, but also the more unsettling moments, as well, like the earthquake of 1932. “I was riding my bicycle on East Sixth Street when the earthquake hit and I remember wondering why the bicycle wobbled. I remember lying in bed in my room upstairs in the house and feeling the house shake from after-shocks and watching the light fixture above my head swing.” Maybe the fixture in the dining room began to sway, as well, Steve went on. “But the old house survived.”

Arvid ran the grove as a business all during Steve’s time at high school. Steve has vivid memories of one bitterly cold winter in Claremont, the big freeze of 1937, when he and his father worked furiously to light the many smudge pots in the groves to keep the fruit from freezing. “It’s horrifying to think of all the black stuff we put in to the air,” Steve laments. “But there was a business to think about.”

The bungalow at 721 Harrison was grand and stately—large enough to have a combination barn and garage with room for four horses, four automobiles, and a good size haymow. Steve described his early times in the house: “When my family first moved in, the house had a solar heating system for the laundry area and we drew our own water supply from a reservoir at Foothill and Cambridge. We sold the water rights to the City of Pomona’s Water Department and they furnished us with water for irrigation. We gave the land on the corner to Claremont for a mini-park.”

Steve also teased the other kids about having the highest swimming pool in all of Claremont—in fact it was actually a water tower some 25 feet in the air. “I would climb up there and my brother would try to knock me in the water by throwing tangerines from our trees at me from the ground. One day I dropped a fountain pen into the tank, and decided to retrieve it. It was a hot day.” And so began Steve’s relationship with what he affectionately referred to his as his new swimming pool. The water tower is now, of course, long gone.

“My mother was an inveterate builder,” Steve says proudly. The first thing she changed was the haymow, converting it into living quarters. A woman named Mary Westbrook and her daughter lived in the

main section of the house with all of the Zetterbergs after her husband, a professor at Scripps, died. “When our family grew too large,” Steve adds, “we kicked the possum out of the barn and built two apartments for Mary and her daughter in there to her specifications.”

Steve’s mother created some apartments out of the rear of the house. She also managed to carve out a one-room apartment with a bathroom, at the back end of the house, on the second floor, which had its own outdoor stairway. Steve recalls his mother’s ingenious idea of separating the front of the house from the back by installing a Murphy bed between the two rooms. “When I was a kid,” Steve smiles, “I remember the great north view from the upstairs rear bedroom which had a large window facing the mountains. That was the room that I lived in when I went to high school and the first year of college. Part of the charm of the house for me,” Steve concluded, “were the great views of the mountains, particularly of Mt. Baldy and especially out of that back apartment.”

The apartment at the rear of the house, downstairs, Connie recalls, “was the apartment Steve and I lived in after we were married. The apartment was so small we had the bed built into the closet; and we could swing it out at bedtime, and swing it in the daytime. In fact, that apartment was so small that when Pierre was born there was no room on the floor for his cradle and so we had to keep it on top of the bed.” Connie remembers fondly “leaving from that little space for the hospital with our third child and coming back home to a large apartment.”

The flood of 1938 severely damaged the groves and Arvid began to sell some of the land. Finally, when it no longer proved economical to operate the groves, Steve reports, though his father did not want to sell off any land, they received some offers. The Quakers wanted some land for their Friends meeting house and the Christian Science Church also wanted some land for construction. And so Steve’s mother and father sold the southeast corner of the five-acre property. And then, in 1976, in an act of extreme charity, Steve and Connie sold the property to Pilgrim Place for an agreed-upon price of half of the appraised value of the land. The house itself they donated outright. (The world had changed so dramatically by 1976 that the land far exceeded the house in value.) At one point, the Quakers entertained the idea of relocating the Zetterberg House to use as their own meeting house, but decided such a move would cost too much. Steve attended Pomona College all four years. Connie spent her first two years at Scripps College and her last two years at Pomona College, graduating magna cum laude. Blaisdell’s cluster system worked to Steve and Connie’s advantage. Moving from campus to campus, in a kind of

educational *pas de deux*, allowed them to meet. She and her family lived at 739 Harvard, now the home of the President of Pitzer College. In fact, Steve and Connie got married in that house. “After his discharge from the U.S. Coast Guard in 1945 and the completion of a staff position in the U.S. Senate in Washington D.C., Connie and Steve moved back into the 721 Harrison Ave. house in 1946 to raise their family in Claremont. They lived there until they built their new home in Claremont in 1956. After 1956, Bob Stafford, one of Steve’s classmates at Yale Law School, relocated to Claremont and moved into the house for a time with his family. Later, in the 1960’s, Arvid and Winifred moved out to Claremont full-time from their earlier home in Newcastle, Indiana, and lived happily at the 721 Harrison Avenue house until they passed on in 1972 and 1975 respectively.”

The first time Steve had any inkling that something was going on with his old house was when he saw a couple of students in the village wearing T-shirts with a picture of the house and the words ZETTER-BERG HOUSE written across it. Steve asked them what the shirts were about, and the students told him more about the moving project than he probably cared to know. He of course said he and his wife would be happy to help in any way they could.

Both Connie and Steve attended the big move, taking in all the music and festivity—a moveable feast down the streets of Claremont. They both remarked on a construction worker who perched himself at the top of the pitch of the roof, a pole in hand, delicately raising each wire just ever so slightly as the huge piece of house passed under it. “He looked like he was riding an elephant in the circus,” Connie said, “it really was quite exciting.” They both said they were never quite sure that evening that the three pieces would finally join up in their proper positions on the Pitzer campus.

“Of course we were both a bit nostalgic,” Connie went on, “to see the house actually moving; but it’s quite wonderful to see the house in its new location.” Steve said he had gone up to the house scores of times for lunch, and saw many, many students sitting around, chatting, reading and eating. Connie added that it reminded her of the old Claremont Inn, the city’s first hotel and the meeting place for the University Club. The University Club began meeting at the Inn in 1942, and did so until the building was torn down, in 1968. “My dad went there every week. We even ate there. I remember Paul Scott, the manager, so well. Steve was on the committee to save the Claremont Inn, that is, to try to raise money to preserve it; but they just couldn’t do it. Anyway, the Claremont Inn was just the Grove House on a larger scale.”

Barry Sanders meets with his students on the patio outside Grove House, a popular campus gathering spot to this day.



Steve said, “It’s nice to see the house there now. It’s homey, and the garden around it makes me feel quite different from the time when we both lived in it. I like it, but we wouldn’t like to move back in.”

He added one last bit of lore to the peripatetic house: “I do remember that when the house was moved, it had its original Arts and Crafts fittings and fixtures, including the glass door knobs, light fixtures, all of which were originally Arts and Crafts features. We had an agreement with the College that if the house were torn down, we could remove the fixtures. Indeed, when it looked like the house would be torn down, Connie and I and our architect son Pierre went over with tools and removed all the fixtures and stored them. When the financing was found for the project, we went back to the house just before the reconstruction of the house, and Connie and Pierre and I reinstalled all the Arts and Crafts fixtures that we had stored.”

At this point in our interview, Steve paused. A wonderful smile lit up his face and he said: “Pitzer College is very adventurous. Not only the house, but in other ways as well. Intellectually, as well. They do such a good job.”

Indeed. 🏠