# ~ ARCHITECT ARTHUR BRIDGMAN CLARK

Three of the houses in this book (623 Cabrillo, 618 Mirada, and 775 Santa Ynez) were designed by Arthur Bridgman Clark, an architect and professor of art at Stanford. He was born in August 1866 in East Onondaga, New York, where he spent his youth and received his early schooling. In 1888, after receiving an A.B. from Syracuse University, he began his teaching career in architecture there; three years later, he received an M.Arch. from Syracuse. His life took an interesting detour from academe when he worked as an instructor and director of a trade school at the State Reformatory in Elmira. In 1892 Stanford's first president, David Starr Jordan, recruited him to teach drawing at the new Stanford University in the Far West.

On September 1, 1891, Clark married Hanna Grace Birge, who was born in Hector, New York, in 1866. Before her marriage, she attended normal school in Hector and taught secondary mathematics at Onondaga Valley Academy.

The Clarks had four children. David and Birge became architects, and during his long life in Palo Alto Birge became somewhat of a local treasure. Daughter Esther became a pediatrician and was an early member of the Palo Alto Medical Clinic. A third son, Donald, became a chemical engineer. Grace Clark was an avid genealogist, and copies of her tracing of the Clark and Birge antecedents can be found in A. B. Clark's papers in the Stanford University Archives.

Clark taught at Stanford until his retirement, in 1931. He died in May 1948. His colleagues greatly respected his devotion to the study of graphic arts, as their words in his Memorial Resolution make clear:

> It is due largely to Professor Clark's vision, enthusiasm, and untiring effort over nearly forty years that the Art Department was developed from a drawing course into a substantial curriculum in art embracing both practical training in drawing, painting, design, and crafts, and an enlightened appreciation of art as an active living experience. It is hard to realize that with the energy and devotion he put into his teaching and administration of the department, and the concern which he showed for the problems of his individual students, that he could have found time to work so devotedly at so many other tasks.
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> He was active in the early development and incorporation of the Mayfield community; later the Palo Alto City Planning Commission originating the master plan of the community and working on problems of arterials, underpasses, and a civic center. He was a practicing architect, designing numerous public buildings and homes both at Syracuse University and in the Stanford–Palo Alto community. Of interest among these are the David Starr Jordan and Herbert Hoover residences. He delivered numerous lectures throughout the country and wrote several books including texts on perspective, house design, and community planning. He was for many years an active member of the American Committee for the International Congress of Art Education, and was founder and first president of the Pacific Arts Association which has contributed more than any other

> organization to the vigorous development of art education in the West. He traveled extensively in both the United States and Europe, beginning in 1898 with a trip to New York to study painting with William Chase, and to Europe with Mrs. Clark in the same year to study with Twachtman and Whistler. He conducted several European tours for students of art. Following his retirement in 1931, he toured Europe again with Mrs. Clark, making notes and sketches which he later illustrated with his own wood engravings and published in journal form for his family and friends. As a teacher he was exceptionally gifted. His firm conviction of the rightness of honesty and good sense tolerated no compromise, and this together with his unusually broad background of art experience and his own creative energy and enthusiasm for good art expression were contagious and have left their mark on the Art Department and on the countless art teachers, artists, and others who had the good fortune to study under him.

After Clark's death, in 1948, his wife lived continued to live in the house he had designed at 618 Mirada (formerly 767 Santa Ynez) until her death, in May 1959.

## CLARK'S ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY

Clark designed 12 houses in Palo Alto and several on campus, including these:

1896 553 Mayfield (originally on Salvatierra); moved to present site in 1974; no original features
1905 623 Cabrillo for W.F. Durand
1909 618 Mirada for his family
1913 Old bookstore (now Career Planning and Placement Center)
1913 669 Mirada (with Birge Clark) for George Barnett
1914 775 Santa Ynez for Frank Mace MacFarland
1920 623 Mirada (Hoover House) with Birge Clark for Herbert and Lou Henry Hoover
1921 661 Cabrillo for S. D. Townley
1921 675 San Juan for Weldon J. Crook

## CLARK'S PHILOSOPHY OF DESIGN

In a book published in 1921, an outgrowth of his classroom lectures over almost three decades, Clark discussed his ideas for designing houses and their interiors. Its all-encompassing title—*Art Principles in House, Furniture, and Village Building: An Exposition of Designing Principles Which Every House Builder, Furniture User, and Village Dweller Should Know*—made clear its scope and the hoped-for audience.

In the introduction, Clark wrote that "ignorance in art is more dangerous than illiteracy…mistakes in street planning made one or two hundred years ago are still obstacles to the dignity and beauty of many cities, and mistakes made today will cause annoyance hundreds of years hence." Believing in a system that looked at the use of primary and secondary masses and proportionality in analyzing building design, he asserted that "to have a method of classification enables one to observe, to think about, and to enjoy what one sees; that is, to have intelligence on the subject of house composition." He liked clean lines and abhorred "millwork disease," the overdecorating of houses, where primary and secondary masses lost definition.

One chapter in the book, especially useful for historians of house architecture, discusses nine styles of domestic architecture predominant in the United States. He identifies them as colonial, neo-grec or classic revival, northern tradition (steep roof), California bungalow, western plains, mission or Spanish Renaissance, Italian influence, half-timber or

Elizabethan, and pueblo. [pages 51–52]

Another chapter, focusing on floor plans and the specialization of rooms, has many gems that help us see houses of the early 20th century through his principles of design:

> Barrie has written about a certain class of Scotch people who have but one room to serve as kitchen, living room, and for all social purposes. One end of this room, called the "ben" is considered more "genteel" than the other; occupying this end is called "sitting ben the hoose."…the reason for a change to our many-roomed houses is chiefly that we have more leisure for "sitting ben the hoose" and consequently provide for it with separation of rooms and the luxuries of davenports, library tables, book shelves, writing tables, hammocks on porches, morning rooms and evening rooms. The leisurely portion of the house is set off from the work portion, and the sleeping rooms are set apart from either. Individual members of the family have increasing privacy, and guests have certain allotments. [pages 66–67]

This principle is clearly seen in the Durand house (623 Cabrillo), where the entry hall has a fireplace and bench away from the living room. Here guests can wait in privacy, until the residents are ready to receive them.

> The living room is…the common room for the social life of the family. The typical living room is occupied but little in the morning, many of the family not even sitting down in it before mid-day, although a few receive intimate morning callers considerably, and finish their morning work early, say at nine or ten. It may be used for morning music practice, and aged members of the family may give it constant morning use. During the afternoon the mistress will use it for herself and callers, and the whole family will use it as a gathering place during the late afternoons and evenings, and all day upon Sundays. The hours of its use suggest that it should have the finest view, and if consistent with the view, the most favorable afternoon sun. Its shape may be oblong or square. A narrow oblong room may be used by two groups of people. The fireplace should be in the center of the long side to permit a large circle around it. [page 74]
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> The dining room may be used for serving three meals a day, although a breakfast room may usurp this morning function; and often it is used in part as a living room, sewing room, children's playroom, or as a study when it affords more seclusion than does the living room. When used strictly as a dining room it should be nearly square. A dining room with octagonal or oval corners is an ideal shape, and an eastern exposure is generally preferred, but the dining room takes what is left after the living room is provided for. [page 74]

The dining room at 618 Mirada, with its eastern exposure, is a good example of these principles.

Of sleeping rooms he said:

> It is important in these to see that which article of furniture has a proper space and light. The sleeper's eyes should not face the windows. The person using the dressing table should have direct light in the face, either from both sides or from a high window in front, or from artificial light from the same direction. It is also desirable to have cross ventilation, with windows on two sides of the room and plenty of them. Drafts are not as deadly as our grandparents thought them.

And of sleeping porches, which are a part of many of the houses in this book:

> Sleeping porches are an experiment of the last ten years and are not yet as finality. They are undoubtedly desirable during most days of the year, but one should not have his bed rained upon, and this is difficult to avoid in some climates. In some localities the rain comes from one general direction and never drives in from others. When this rain exposure for sleeping porches is necessary, the most satisfactory treatment is to provide windows with which it may be closed. When this is done the sleeping room with one or more all glass sides, and this may be the ultimate solution of the sleeping porch problem. [page 75]

Of bathrooms:

Several ingenious relations of chamber [bedroom] and bathroom are possible. A bath connecting two rooms is frequently the best that a modest house can afford, although a separate bath for each room is what all would prefer. A single bathroom with direct doors to two chambers and also a third door from a hall way should be avoided unless at least one of the doors is continuously kept locked. The purpose of two doors in such a case is to throw the bath "en suite" with either of two rooms. In a house with but one bathroom, one door only should be built. [page 75]

Closets are also discussed at some length, and a whole chapter dedicated to kitchens and pantries focuses on the "routing principle" as the fundamental organization of work. Its two main elements are the route of food preparation and serving and the route of clearing away:

> The working centers of kitchen operation are three: the preparing table or counter, the range, and the sink. Almost of equal importance in placing are the cupboards for table dishes and the cool closet." [page 78]

Clark clearly put a great deal of effort into designing functional kitchens, and he cites his design of 775 Santa Ynez as an example of his principles and Mrs. MacFarland's ideas. This was a kitchen designed with a place for everything and everything in its place.

**SOURCES**

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