

Architectural Developments in the Early Colonial Period: an Outline

Spanish settlers and the Pueblo conversion (end of chapter 2)

Spain, the pre-eminent colonizing power of Europe, followed Columbus's footsteps with explicit missionary goals which were harshly imposed (**requirimento**: natives were required to accept their status as subjects of the Crown and ultimately convert to Christianity);

New Mexico: key example of the brutal "pacification" measures imposed by Spain on its colonies

Although native cultures did suffer a great deal of destruction, they also survived with many of their traditions intact – the book asks how did an eventually successful blending of the two cultures take place

- trade already characterized the Pueblo cultures; New Mexico had contact with Mexico city via trade routes such as the Camino Real
- although Spaniards tried to suppress native traditions, they took advantage of the trade in a way which expanded resources and skills
- because their goals extended beyond material trade, and they established missions, eventually there was a strong degree of religious blending
- Not all of the interaction occurred through amiable or willing means: in the late 17th century, natives did unite to overthrow some of the earliest Spanish settlements and missions, destroying churches, retaking kivas and returning them to their original use; the tables turned once again in 1692 when the Spaniards regained control;
- it wasn't until the 18th century that Spanish reforms allowed the Spaniards to continue their conversion of the Pueblos without eliminating them

I. Spanish settlements: New Mexico and Florida (chapters 2 and 3)

Spain established very careful rules for the organization of its colonies: wide streets, orderly grids, carefully ruled and composed with the use of a compass and a ruler; in many cases, the early Spanish settlements were combination mission, fort and civic center

"Laws of the Indies" existed since 1573; printed in 1681

buildings in the Spanish territories were a combination of Spanish and Indian techniques, in particular, the use of adobe:

the Governor's palace (Santa Fe, NM): (1610-14; recon. In 1913)

- a long corridor of rooms connected by a loggia (colonnade) with wood columns in front
- portal and wood posts are not original structure and are most likely the part which reflects what people "thought" the original looked like – they are true to traditional Anasazi building styles which involved laying beams, called vigas, across the tops of walls before forming the roof
- purpose of vigas: to supply a form of tension to the walls
- colonnaded porch, or **portales**, was not part of the Anasazi tradition but was a familiar part of Mediterranean and Renaissance architecture

Mission/pueblo churches:

Generally built using local techniques, they nonetheless incorporated elements which would be characteristic of any Catholic church in Europe at that time: the basilica plan, the higher nave, the west end towers.

The Mission of Acoma and the San Esteban church:

- basilica church with a long nave; towers on the west end
- Uses the adobe and viga system
- thick adobe walls which taper toward the top
- San Esteban emphasizes the solid cubic masses which can be seen in the Acoma Pueblo; other Spanish churches had more in common with Spanish baroque architecture

San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo Mission, San Antonio (in chapter 4):

- a relatively authentic example of Spanish baroque;
- at one time the walls were painted
- an elaborate sculptural program on the facade
- domes made a striking contrast to the typically flat roofs and ceilings of mission architecture

Mission Church of San Jose in Laguna Pueblo:

- begun in 1699, completed in 1706;
- altarpiece (retablo) (added in the 1800s):
- exuberant mixture of Pueblo iconography, decorative elements, and Christian icons: Saint Joseph in the center panel, carrying the infant Jesus, Saint John Nepomuk, Saint Barbara (the patron saint of gunners), above them a trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; in some photographs we see wall panels, painted on buffalo skins and therefore removable; in one photograph we see Pueblo symbols lining the walls of the nave: cornstalks, symbols of sun, rain and thunder
- perhaps most unusual in this mixture are the serpentine columns, a very baroque form which in this work contributes to the emphasis on patterning that tends to be an important part of both santero art and pueblo art

Preserving the Hispanic identity in art:

Santero tradition and retablo tradition

Santero: artists who made religious representations (called santero art)

retablo: painting of a saint on a flat surface, usually a wood panel

bulto: 3-dimensional representation of saint, usually carved from wood

Most of the examples we have in Artstor (and those in your textbook) are actually from a later period than the colonial period, in part because the Pueblo Indian Revolt of 1680 resulted in the large-scale destruction of religious objects in New Mexico. It's generally believed that the tradition is an older Mexican tradition which migrated to the southwest US after the war with Mexico. In New Mexico, it seems to have taken root during a period of increased religious

activity around the turn of the 19th century along with increased demand for santos in both Hispanic homes and Pueblo. If it does not truly qualify as “early colonial art,” neither does it seem to be a new art form in the 19th century and may provide an example of a fusion of native, Mexican, and Spanish traditions. In this case, the fusion took place at an earlier time and we are assuming that the works we see today are a continuation of this early fusion.

Santero art continues to be made today although the growth of lithography did contribute to a decline in the santos tradition. Although most of the 19th century santeros we know of were male, women also became and continue to become santeras. Marie Romero Cash is an example of New Mexican artist from Santa Fe, who makes retablos and bultos as well as art which is clearly not intended to serve religious functions but does draw on the santero tradition.

II. British colonies

- England was the last of the three major European nations to send people to the new world;
- early reasons were goal of interference with Spanish trade, followed by Raleigh’s efforts to develop a permanent settlement on Roanoke island in 1585;
- the next stage of settlement was more strongly oriented to the development of both trade routes and products for export, leading to the implementation of the plantation system as an early form of landholding, with many of the settlers bound to work for landholders before they arrived
- the motives for settling New England were different and more oriented toward religious freedom, which means that two different forms of English colonies emerge, with equally different preferences for architecture and art, whether we define art as paintings or as visual preferences for certain types of land formations, as your book does

In both New England and Virginia, houses were generally characterized by small plans with one, two or four rooms, as this was the norm in English housing; whereas southern style English housing tended to have two chimneys, the massive chimney in the center was a common feature in New England; other differences reflect available building materials, climate, and function

Old-Ship Meeting House, Hingham, MA, 1681, with later additions

outside consistent with houses

interior- curved braces

square plan with a focus on the pulpit rather than the altar

Parson Capen House: Topsfield MA

central chimney

overhang of the upper story

exterior kitchen

main block of house is rectangular, with two rooms on each side of the entry

minimal ornament: the overhang, the chimney, the string course of bricks, and the corbels

the parlor and hall are on opposite sides of the chimney and the stairs, right upon entry, are

against the fireplace

Jonathan Fairbanks House: Dedham, MA, 1637 (earliest timber framed house to remain standing in the US)

- the original house: hall, parlor, and hearth: three most important kinds of rooms
- rear lean-to was added in 1641 for the son and wife
- in 1654 another lean-to was added for hired workers: plans change by accretion and according to need; as wealth increases, spatial differentiation increases as well
- in many cases, the lean-to eventually became a planned kitchen area

Uses of typical rooms:

In general, the parlor was initially a space for sleeping, for congregation of family members (combined living room/bedroom)

- the hall tended to be a place for storage and for woman's work
- products made by family members might be displayed in the parlor
- framing techniques in these wood/timber-frames houses used a purlin and rafters; usually there would also be a ridge beam but the Fairbanks house does not have one

Virginia:

St Luke's Church, Newport Parish, va, 1632/85, made of brick.

- Most of the evidence for the other churches and the existing churches built in the next century suggest that St. Luke's was a typical church in form, structure and plan.
- Buttressed brick walls, single story wall, 3-story square bell tower, west entrance and east window, are all familiar signs of the Romanesque and English Gothic – and are also definitions of the typical Virginian parish church of this period

Bacon's Castle, Surrey County, Va, 1650s

- modeled on a British country manor house, rather than a medieval or vernacular village house, as we saw in New England
- the placement of the fireplace changes it from being strictly functional to decorative massing
- this house actually has three chimneystacks oriented diagonally, making it a very deliberate ornamental form
- the unusually shaped gables, which your book calls "Flemish," were in fact imported into England from Flanders or Holland in the 16th century

Although the parish church is quite typical, Bacon's Castle is not and does seem to be more of a memory trace than a revival or restoration of British vernacular. The plantations in chapter 4 have even less to do with the vernacular style we saw in New England. Yet they will form what we might think of as a southern vernacular.

III. French Territories

The French were more intensively located in Canada near Quebec; in other parts of North America, they were primarily interested in Louisiana at New Orleans and other sites along the

Mississippi as their interest lay in trade routes, not in missions or religious settlements

- cities were based on a grid, often had a plaza, like the Spanish towns, but the architectural style was different
- half-timber structures with closely spaced vertical posts, filling the spaces with grass and clay or stones and clay, and generally steep pitches in the roofs, derived from the medieval tradition; the “galerie” seems to be the French version of the “portales”
- the common technique was known as *poteaux-en-terre*, placing the posts directly in the ground
- *poteaux-en-sole*: placed the posts in a base plate, increasing the life span

Cahokia courthouse: used the poteaux-on-sole form of construction

square plan with 4 rooms and an attic

gallery surrounding the house, a double-pitched roof and two chimneys

Parlange plantation: the house is raised up off the ground, feature which becomes commonplace in the French colonial formula

Lafitte's Blacksmith shop:

no gallery, square shape in plan, has two dormers

cyprus studs and infill of brick which was then plastered over

Cabildo: a different style although we still call it French colonial, but this one makes reference to the French empire style (in the roof) while the portico suggests a direct reference to Spanish-American architecture