

The Philadelphia Country House: Architecture and Landscape in Colonial America.

By MARK REINBERGER and ELIZABETH MCLEAN. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015. 430 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$69.95.)

For the importance of its subject, the intelligence of its argument, and its visual quality, this is the best book on the architectural history of British colonial America. Its first half provides a richly authoritative transatlantic analysis of the “bourgeois country house” that gained architectural hegemony in Philadelphia. Based on a comprehensive series of individual estates’ histories, the second half is an even more impressive narrative of country house building.

Reinberger and McLean unnecessarily freight their interpretation with the overdetermining “bourgeois,” when “regent,” “notable,” “patrician,” or even “would-be aristocratic” would less anachronistically identify the patrons of the estates studied. Country house building in Philadelphia began with the first generation of colonists, who followed the lead of founder William Penn. The builders were nearly all Quakers, and they intended their creations to be “long-term, even permanent retreats from the city where they could practice God’s work, agriculture, and live frugally and plainly” (209). Diverse early designs belied this unity of intent, but the colony’s second generation of builders, still predominantly Quakers, adopted “a more standard house type, the compact, or double-pile house”: “two and a half stories, five to seven bays, hipped roof, brick, central-hall Georgian plan” (209–10). Here, Philadelphia’s “bourgeois” residents drew on designs fashionable among the English gentry, and they gave a corresponding priority to agriculture. This gentrification of Philadelphia intensified in the 1730s and 1740s, with estates built by the proprietor, Thomas Penn (no Quaker), Governor James Hamilton (no bourgeois), and William Peters (a lawyer for *rentiers* and eventually head of the Penns’ Land Office), but now with Palladian-styled aristocratic villas modeled on those being built up-Thames from London. Penn’s Springettsbury was “the first predominantly ornamental pleasure garden in Pennsylvania” (234). It even had a deer park, a landscape redundancy in deer-infested North America but the height of conspicuous spatial consumption according to aristocratic traditions in the mother country. The architectural elegance of these pleasurable retreats proclaimed their builders’ “artistic, intellectual, and epicurean” refinement (265). In their wake came a flood of more modest imitators. Even people in Germantown built such houses “as newcomers distanced themselves from the older town and its inhabitants” (264). Such distancing, however, often synthesized vernacular traditions in highly original ways, most notably with John Bartram’s estate. Socially, the story culminates where it began, with Governor John Penn’s Lansdowne, built in the 1770s and described breathlessly by John Adams in a 1795 letter to Abigail: “very retired, but very beautiful—a splendid house, gravel walks, shrubberies, and clumps of trees in the English style—on the banks of the Schuylkill” (327).

The Johns Hopkins University Press has invested resources appropriate for a fine coffee table book on a first-rate piece of scholarship. Its generous format allows solid amounts of text, large-scale illustrations, and subsidiary comments and details to be integrated on single pages. The paper stock has just the right balance between low reflection for readability and glossy finish for precise images. The buildings come to life visually, with over two hundred figures—architectural plans and elevations, natural history illustrations, maps, landscape drawings and prints, and photographs—nearly two dozen of them in color. Mark Reinberger took most of the present-day photographs, which provide superb images that precisely develop the analysis. One can only hope that other presses will take this book as a model for publishing visual culture history.

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America's First Chaplain: The Life and Times of Reverend Jacob Duché. BY KEVIN J. DELLAPE. (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2013. 232 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$75.)

In *America's First Chaplain: The Life and Times of Reverend Jacob Duché*, Kevin J. Dellape examines the life of Jacob Duché Jr., the Anglican clergyman who opened the First Continental Congress with a moving prayer and served as chaplain to this body until October 1776, when he resigned for stated health reasons and his duties at Christ Church, Philadelphia. In truth Duché had second thoughts about independence and chose to stay in town for the British occupation of Philadelphia, when he was arrested as a notorious revolutionary. In October 1777 he authored a private letter to General Washington suggesting that the general stop fighting and negotiate a settlement with the British. After the letter became public knowledge, Duché found himself ostracized from both sides in the conflict. He departed for England later that year to explain his actions to the Bishop of London. In his absence Pennsylvania authorities proscribed him as a traitor, confiscated his property, and barred him from reentry. Following the 1783 peace, Duché unsuccessfully lobbied for permission to return from exile. By 1793, after moderates, many of them friends of Duché, gained power in Pennsylvania, the minister was allowed to return and given a pardon.

While Duché was satisfied to return to his town of birth, historians have long struggled to categorize his political leanings. In contrast to the majority of historians, who view Duché as a reluctant loyalist, Dellape sees his loyalty as fixed. He argues that Duché's support for the boycott of British goods and war against the empire is less important than his proposal "that independence be rescinded and negotiation for American rights commenced"(138). In Dellape's view, the