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Farm Family
Living
Rooms

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FARM FAMILY LIVING ROOMS

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INTRODUCTION

Every family needs a room set apart for family living. Yet in this age when families no longer live in the largest houses they can afford, but in the smallest which will contain them, some make the grave mistake of omitting the living room. This is one room that should never be considered as an unnecessary expense. The family members and their friends find the cheer, peace and relaxation here that no other room in the house can give. Then too, it is easier for the family members to form the habit of spending some of their leisure time together if there is a room for the purpose.

There are certain factors that deserve consideration when planning any type of living room:

1. The architecture of the farm house.
2. The climatic conditions.
3. The functions of the living room.
4. The location, size and shape of the room.
5. The family income.

The time spent in making plans is never wasted. The details will require many family councils before the room provides the space and furnishings that are necessary for each activity.

The architectural style of the house usually determines the type of living room, because the exterior of any house expresses certain qualities that should also be found in its interior. A farm house, regardless of style, size, or age, expresses informality, simplicity, and sturdiness. It should never imitate the formality and elaborateness of city apartments or mansions. Therefore, when building a new farm home, a French, Spanish, or extremely modern house plan should never be chosen because not only the house, but the barn, garage, granary, and poultry house are part of the rural setting and all should be in harmony.

The terms "informal" and "simple" do not mean that the style of the living room should be the rustic type suitable for a log house. The terms refer to a room with comfortable furnishings that give a much-lived-with appearance and are "never too good" to use daily. The elaborately carved and curved furniture of the French and Spanish home would spoil the liv-

able effect of a farm living room just as much as the extremely modern style would spoil that of the log house.

Climatic conditions determine the location of the living room in the house plan. In a windy locality the room should be in the most sheltered part of the house, so it is well to determine the direction of the prevailing winds. Neither should the room face the west in warm climates, because it cannot be used during the summer months.

The relation of the living room to the other rooms must also be considered when drawing the plans. The living room should be easily accessible to the other rooms of the house. This makes it possible for the housewife to use the room between household tasks. It is also easier to heat the room and it is less likely to be closed up during the winter months as it would be when away to itself.

The living room has more functions than any other room of the house. There will be as many types of family living in its four walls as there are members of the family. Each member, regardless of age, needs space and the necessary furnishings to carry on his or her interest in music, reading, studying, writing, sewing, games, conversation, and entertaining friends.



Fig. 1. Living Together as a Family Group.

It seems impossible to provide space for all of these many activities, yet there must be space in one room for all of them. Of course the room should be the largest in the house. A room 12'x15' can be arranged to accommodate a family of four or five comfortably if their interests are not too varied. Rectangular shaped rooms are more livable than square ones because the furniture and its accessories can be arranged in units that seem to give the occupants more privacy as they pursue their various activities.

The windows and doors have an important place in the floor plan and in determining the location of the room. There should be sufficient openings for ventilation and passage, but not so many that there is no wall space for large pieces of furniture. The windows should give the best outside view that nature can offer on that particular farm.

The outside door of many old house plans faced the highway, regardless of whether a walk or the driveway led to it. This "front door" as it was called, was never used except for ventilation during the summer months. A window would serve this purpose much better and the family could also enjoy the view of the highway through the window pane. Whether the driveway runs in front of the house or at the side, the outside living room door should open onto it. Then even the closest friends and relatives will enter the house through this entrance and not by way of the kitchen.

Another reason for front doors being unused was because front porches and steps were omitted from the house plans. We agree that large porches are unnecessary, but some type of covered entrance should be used. The steps leading to the entrance should be carefully planned, in order that the most elderly visitor can use this entrance.

A living room must reflect the personality of the family as a whole and not the individuality of one or two members, as is true of the bedrooms and the kitchen. Grandmother's friends should feel as comfortable sitting in the room with their knitting as the teen-age boy and his friends will on a rainy Saturday afternoon when they gather for a game of dominoes.

The cost of creating a living room is considered last, because the other factors have more influence on the room's success than the cost of the furnishing plan does. Memories of living rooms that have brought enjoyment do not bring forth costly interiors, where fashionable calls were made, but com-

portable rooms where the lateness of the hour was forgotten in pleasant conversation or games played on a much used table. The cost of the furnishings was not responsible for the pleasant memories.

When building or furnishing a new home, it is well to consider the amount of money that can be invested and the portion for each room. Even when the living room is the only one to be redecorated or refurnished, its appearance in relation to the other rooms should be considered. The living room should never be furnished beyond the family budget or beyond that of the other rooms of the house. A beautifully furnished living room is in harmony with comfortable bedrooms and a well-equipped kitchen. The only exception to this rule would be in the home of a musician when a baby grand piano, a harp or other expensive instruments would cause the living room budget to be far beyond that of the other rooms.

LIVING ROOM BACKGROUNDS

The background includes the ceiling, walls, woodwork, windows, doors and floors. All of these together form the setting for the room furnishings. Each is so closely related that one cannot be planned without considering the influence of the others. A pleasing background brings out the best qualities of worn furniture and yet an unsuitable background will destroy the beauty of the finest of new furnishings. The right background will have the best color, design, and texture that can be found for the room exposure, its furniture and its accessories.

Ceilings

The lightest value of the background color should be used for the ceiling because the first principle of room decoration is to work from a dark foundation to a light overhead covering. This light color also helps the ceiling to reflect light in the room. A continuation of the wall color in its faintest tints is better than white because this keys the colors more closely and yet gives the same effect of height and spaciousness that white would.

Dark ceilings reduce the height of a room so are often used when decorating a large room with high ceiling. The lowered effect helps to create the cozy, friendly feeling that was missing in the high ceiling room. Of course the darker color will not reflect light, so the room should have many windows when this plan is used.

If the picture molding or border is dropped a short distance down the wall and the ceiling color is continued to it, the ceiling seems to be much lower than it really is.

It is usually customary to use the same materials for finishing the ceiling and the walls, so this subject will be discussed in connection with wall finishes.

Borders

The line where the wall and ceiling meet may be covered by picture molding or a narrow border of wall paper. The wooden picture molding is always preferred as it is more durable and more attractive than paint or paper borders with their poor designs. The wood of the molding is also in closer harmony with the woodwork and baseboards. Molding therefore, has a purpose even though it is no longer used for hanging pictures.

Walls

No part of the room background has as much influence as the walls upon the decorative scheme of the room. The walls surround the entire room and are the surface against which the massive furniture, the pictures and window treatment are placed.

COLOR. Since the walls cover the largest area of the room, their color will determine the color scheme of the room.

The functions of the room and the time of day it will be used should be considered in addition to the usual one of allowing the room exposure to influence the choice between a cool and a warm color scheme. Usually it is better to select a warm color scheme regardless of the exposure because warm colors give the note of cheer and welcome that such a room needs. Then, too, the family is attracted indoors on dark, rainy days or cold, winter ones as well as after the evening chores are done. For this reason they prefer the warmth and brightness given by warm colors because they aid in heating and lighting the room.

It is possible to use the cool colors in other parts of the room to add interest or accent. Such warm colors as ivory, cream, tan, sand, taupe, and others are suitable for living room walls. These form a pleasing background for cool colors and are a medium to hold several colors together. Warm colors also give a softer effect to old furnishings, while the cool colors which are lighter and clearer bring out the poor lines, mars, and scratches.

Colors also alter the size of a room. Deep colors clamor for attention and bring the walls closer, which causes the room to appear smaller and more crowded than it really is. The same room appears larger when a tint of the same color is used.

TEXTURE. The textural quality of the walls and ceiling is determined by the type of living room. Unsmoothed plaster or wall paper that imitates the same rough effect suggests rustic furniture and homespun draperies. Smooth plaster and wall paper of satin smoothness are more suitable backgrounds for fine walnut furniture.

PLASTER. Due to the many uses of plaster it is our most common wall finish. It is often left unsmoothed, but gives a softer effect to a living room when the surface is smooth.

Unsmoothed plaster may be left in its natural color or colored in one of the following ways: whitewashed, painted or calcimined. The natural or whitewashed walls make suitable backgrounds for primitive homes. The delicate colors of paint or calcimine seem to soften the rough effect of the wall, so are sometimes suitable with finer furniture.

Smooth plaster is a more suitable background for fine furniture because it gives a softer effect and is more pleasing to the touch. Walls of this type may be painted or calcimined but are more pleasing when wall paper is the covering.

Surface finishes for walls include paint, calcimine, and paper.

PAINT in its many colors brings plastered walls into harmony with the color scheme and the type of room furnishings. Oil paint is usually chosen because it comes in many colors, cleans easily, and can be applied to give either a dull or a satin finish. Dull finishes are more appropriate than enamel or glazes for the living room. The latter increases the lighting effect to such an extent that the room has a bright and glary effect.

It is more economical to size the walls before finishing them. The sizing prevents the plaster from absorbing the first coat of paint. The walls should be given at least two coats, yet they do not need to be the same color. The undercoat may be white to lighten an old dark finish or a deep one that is used to give color to the light top coat.

Design may be introduced on painted walls by using a stipple finish or spatter work. Neither should be attempted by the inexperienced as it is difficult for even decorators to get a pleasing design, when using these methods. Plain walls give a softer effect and draw less attention than either spatter work or the stipple finish.

CALCIMINE has some advantages over oil paint. It is less expensive, can be easily mixed, and dries quickly. Calcimine can be applied over either wall board or plaster. Due to the fact that it is a water color paint, it dissolves in water so of course the finish cannot be washed and kept clean as long as oil paint.

WALL PAPER has more good qualities as a wall finish than either paint or calcimine. It costs less, especially when covering an imperfect wall, than the other finishes. Machine methods and new inventions for making wall paper make it possible to have imitations of the lovely colors and patterns of expensive papers in even the cheapest rolls. The texture of paper is more pleasing because it softens the light and creates a more charming atmosphere than either paint or calcimine. The pattern of paper also adds interest and design to the room.

Wall paper patterns are of two kinds—decorative and background. Few living rooms can use decorative walls because the many wall openings, the large number of furnishings, and the people that assemble there form enough design to break the plain effect. Decorative patterns are usually poor in both color and design, so it is difficult for an untrained person to find a pleasing one. The large designs and scenic patterns of these papers decrease the size of the room and supply so much design that neither pictures nor wall hangings can be used.

Background patterns are nearly always a better choice because their inconspicuous design and soft colors give a plainer effect.

When selecting wall paper patterns it is well to consider the following:

1. It is always safer to take several rolls home on approval and pin the different patterns on the wall by both artificial and day light before making the final choice.
2. Walls are less noticeable and the room will appear larger when there is no contrast in the color of the design.
3. Avoid spotty patterns that are created when the designs are disconnected. These will never give a restful atmosphere.
4. A design that has a suggestion of a tiny stripe gives height to a room with a low ceiling.
5. Horizontal designs decrease the size of large and high ceiling rooms.

The Wood Trim

This includes the woodwork, doors, window frames, picture molding, and mopboards. All of these should be an inconspicuous part of the background, and with the walls and ceiling form a single unit of color. Aside from the pleasing color harmony, the room will appear larger and more restful than when there are contrasts of light and dark in its different parts.

Oak, gum, cherry, walnut, mahogany, and pine are some of the materials that may be used for the wood trim. They may be finished by coats of varnish, wax, or paint. The most pleasing finish for the wood trim is several coats of clear varnish applied and each rubbed down to give a soft, dull effect. This finish merely enhances the natural beauty of the wood color. A coat of wax acts as an additional protective coat. Some omit the varnish and use several thin coatings of wax as the only finish. It is best to use this method when the wood is new or of beautiful grain.

Paint covers the natural beauty of the wood trim, so makes a good finish for old woodwork or woods such as pine and others that have an unattractive grain. The color should be the same as the largest area of the wall covering.

Window Treatments

The windows take up such a large area of the wall space that their treatment can play either a favorable or unfavorable part in the decorative scheme of the room. Window treatments may be divided into two types—decorative and background. The latter is better for the living room unless the room is large or in need of color and design.

Window treatments are divided into three parts, the shade, the glass curtains, and the draperies. Few family living rooms are large enough or furnished in a manner that require all three. An over-dressed window treatment may interfere with the purpose of the window, which is to admit light, air, and the view. The window treatment merely creates the mellow light which softens the bold outline of the window frame and the room furnishings.

SHADES. The term shade refers to the material on rollers which gives privacy at night and adds to the color effect of the room by day. Therefore, the material should be of the lightest color that harmonizes with the color scheme.

Shades should be adjusted during the day according to the changing sunlight and the type of living room activity. Except on very bright days, they should be rolled up out of sight

or so they do not cover more than one-third of the window pane. Dimly lighted rooms cause eye strain and provide the darkness that is favorable to the growth of many household pests.

Shades add much to the cost of the window treatment so their fabrics should be chosen to give as much service as possible.

Shades look much better when hung inside the window casing than on the outside. They also roll much easier as their brackets are not as close to the curtains.

VENETIAN BLINDS have been revived and are appropriate if the architecture is suitable. They are too formal for most farm homes. If they are chosen, they should be hung at all of the windows of the house and especially in those rooms that have windows facing the front or on the driveway. This is necessary if there is harmony in the exterior appearance of the house. The price of venetian blinds is prohibitive for most families, but after the initial cost they prove to be less expensive than other shades because only the tape that holds the wooden slats will ever need replacing.

GLASS CURTAINS refer to the sheer materials that are necessary to cover the windows when shades are hung and that may be used to soften the formal effect of venetian blinds. The materials should soften the daylight, but be sheer enough that they do not interfere with the view. Cream-colored marquisette, nets, scrim and other sheers are always suitable because they are in harmony with the informal furnishings and can be easily laundered. Silks, chiffons, silk gauze, and celanese are more expensive, more difficult to clean and are out of harmony with most informal furnishings.

The beauty of glass curtains is in the simplicity of the soft hanging folds and not in elaborately draped effects. Two full widths of 40 to 50 inch material are required for each pair to give the necessary amount of fullness. The length depends upon the effect needed. Curtains that reach the sill or merely cover the apron are suitable for most informal settings. Many curtains that are used without draperies are made to come within one inch of the floor. This gives the room a more luxurious appearance. The tops of glass curtains are finished with a heading one inch wide. The casing should be the width necessary for the curtains to slide easily on the rod. A one-inch hem should replace the side selvages as selvages shrink and fade when they are laundered. The hems vary in width from three to five inches. Wide hems give an effect of weight

to coarse or heavy materials and are more appropriate for floor length curtains than are narrow hems.

DRAPERIES is a term used when heavy materials are draped at the sides or partly over the glass curtains. Draperies give most windows an over-dressed appearance, but whenever they can be used successfully, add much to the decorative scheme.

Drapery materials are of heavy textures so their cost adds to the expense of the window treatment. The material may be of plain soft colors, but due to the manner in which the folds hang at the window, a conventional design in soft colors is usually more suitable.

Floors and Floor Coverings

There is a wide variety of types of flooring and floor coverings on the market and each is particularly adaptable to the purpose for which it was made. Therefore it is advisable to select one which is suitable for a family living room in that locality and for the architectural style of the house.

FLOORS. Wood floors are most often used for living rooms. Hardwoods are preferred to soft woods because they wear and keep their beauty longer. Oak is the most common hard wood grown so its cost is less than the other hard woods which include beech, birch, maple, or walnut. Pine is the most satisfactory soft wood used for flooring and may be finished to look almost as attractive as a hard wood floor. Of course pine, like all soft woods, does not make as durable a flooring.

Some families economize on the initial cost of their floor and floor covering by using soft wood floors and wall-to-wall carpets. The carpet adds to the wearing qualities of the floor.

Narrow strips ($2\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide) of flooring have been in use for some time and are usually the best choice when buying a new floor. Yet if the old wide flooring is in good condition, it isn't necessary to replace it or cover it with the narrow type because it can be finished as attractively as the narrow flooring can. Then, too, a floor with wide boards seems to fit in with Early American and Cottage type furniture.

FLOOR FINISHES. A finish should preserve the beauty of the wood, simplify cleaning and add to the floor's wearing qualities. Good finishes are economical as they give longer service.

Although dark floors give the best effect of fulfilling the art principle of working from a dark foundation, they are not recommended for rooms that have as much traffic as the living room. Dust and footprints show up more readily on dark floors than upon light ones. The light floor is not out of harmony

because it can be made to match the natural finished woodwork and thus give less contrast than when a dark floor is used. A light-colored finish is also as durable, as attractive and as easily cleaned as a dark finish. It is sometimes necessary to use dark finishes on old floors that cannot be refinished in light colors.

The flooring should first be made smooth by sanding parallel with the grain of the wood. The finishing includes a coat of stain if desired, one of filler to close the pores and bring out the beauty of the wood, several coats of varnish and wax. Since shellac gives a hard metallic coat it is a good protective coat for wood. One coat may be applied before the varnish.

Highly waxed floors are slippery and even though wax protects the varnish, it should be omitted in homes where there are young children or old people.

Paint is not as satisfactory as other finishes because it covers up the natural beauty of the wood and does not wear well. The cost is usually more than for other finishes because it is often necessary to apply two or three coats to the floor. Then one or two coats of varnish should be put over the paint so it will wear longer.

FLOOR COVERINGS. Although beautifully finished floors may be left bare, the room does not seem as completely furnished or as attractive as when floor coverings are used. The covering protects the finish, deadens the sound, and makes the floor more comfortable for walking as well as adding color, design, and texture to the room.

Due to the cost of floor coverings, they are not replaced as frequently as wall coverings or window treatments, so the homemaker should be certain that her selection will be satisfactory for many years.

The most important points to consider in selecting floor coverings are their appropriateness, which includes type, color, and size, and their wearing qualities which are determined by the material and construction. Of course the choice will also be influenced by the amount that can be invested.

A practical homemaker educates herself on the many different qualities found on the market before making a selection. It is very difficult to detect inferior qualities until after the floor covering has been used. It is then too late to make a wiser selection. A little study of charts, books, pamphlets, and best of all, gaining first-hand information by examining samples and rugs in the stores, will make anyone quality-conscious.

Neutral colors in their deepest values are best for floor coverings. They give the depth and strength that are needed for the foundation color of the room. Although solid-color rugs or carpets make the most pleasing foundation, they are not practical for the farm living room. The beauty of their surface is soon marred by dust, footprints, and spots, so they require constant care. A small inconspicuous all-over design of several deep colors will give the floor almost as flat an effect as the solid color and will be a surface that will keep its beauty regardless of living room traffic.

The size of the floor covering is important because much of the beauty depends upon the space it covers. Wall-to-wall carpets and rugs do not change the natural outline of the room's foundation, so extend the floor space to the fullest extent. Such rooms appear larger than they really are, so this plan should be used whenever possible for small crowded rooms.

The next choice in size is a rug which leaves not more than 12-18 inches of wood showing. Since after the large wall furniture is arranged very little of the narrow border of wood is left, the room appears almost as large as when wall-to-wall coverings are used.

Small-sized rugs, often called throw rugs, are difficult to use where there is as much traffic as a family living room. Due to their size they are not heavy enough to remain flat on the floor and must be frequently arranged. They also break up the line of the floor space, decreasing the size of the room and giving the floor a spotty appearance.

TYPES OF FLOOR COVERINGS. Carpets and rugs are the usual choice of floor covering for living rooms. A carpet is finished on only two sides while a rug is finished on all four sides. Carpeting may be bought in narrow widths of 22½ inches, but is also woven as wide as 30 feet. Rugs come in many sizes from that of throw rugs to one 12x15 feet.

Carpets usually have all-over patterns, but each rug is a complete design in proportion to its size and shape. Many rugs do not have borders as they add more lines and design to break into the floor pattern.

The materials used for rugs and carpets are of worsted, woolen, linen, hemp, jute, and cotton. Worsted yarn is the most durable because it is made of long wool fibers. The term "all wool" merely means that the surface yarn is wool. It does not denote long fiber or a close weave. It is necessary to study both of these qualities as they determine the length of service of a floor covering. The closely woven carpets and rugs contain more yarn and give the best service.

Rugs are named by the method of weaving and can be divided into two classes: those of flat weave and those with a pile. The pile may be cut or left uncut. Those with the cut, which are the most luxurious, are called Wiltons, Axminsters, Chenille, and Tapestry Velvets. Under the uncut heading are the two types of Brussels and those known as ingrain, rag, linen, grass, or fiber rugs.

LINOLEUM is becoming a common floor covering for living rooms, since it is being made in plain dull colors and appropriate designs. It makes a more comfortable surface than a bare floor, but gives the room about the same appearance as when the floor is painted.

Linoleum is the most practical covering for a home in which the floor covering gets hard service from small children. It is also a wise choice in localities where there is danger of dust, mud, or grease being tracked over its surface since it is more easily cleaned than wool.

LINOLEUM is becoming a common floor covering for living rooms. It is made of cork and boiled linseed oil with various gums to make a plastic mass which can be pressed into a backing of burlap or felt paper. Plain, inlaid, and printed are the three types found on the market. The *plain* has no design and the coloring is added as the materials are being mixed. A design is needed for interest in some rooms and as was said with carpets, shows footprints less easily. *Inlaid* is the best grade of linoleum with a design because it is so made that each color used in the design extends to the backing. The pattern remains even though the material wears away. *Printed* linoleum is a thin grade and has its design stamped only on top. Its short length of service is hardly compensated for by its low cost.

HOMEMADE RUGS. Rag rugs, as they are often called, may be full-sized woven carpets or the small-sized throw rugs that are woven, braded, hooked, or crocheted in the home. Their only cost is the rug maker's time and patience, as they are made of materials found in the farm home. Of course they are more appropriate when used with quaint furnishings, but may be used successfully in front of the fireplace of most family living rooms.

LIVING ROOM STORAGE

Storage space has been taken for granted and provided for in every room of the house except the living room. If a need for storage is considered, the living room has as many reasons for being fitted with closets and built-ins as the other rooms do.

There are always books, magazines, newspapers, albums, and portfolios around. Then too, most families use at least one game table and several different games and toys for all ages. Those interested in music have sheet music, victrola records, and small musical instruments. The immediate problem of the housewife is to store and care for this social hour equipment so that it is convenient when wanted, yet out of sight when not in use.

ROOM CLOSETS. Clearly, a well-planned closet of some sort is needed. If the house is being built or rebuilt such a closet can be included in the room plan, yet any small closet near the living room can be used. Wherever it is, its interior should be fitted with shallow shelves that provide space for objects of unusual shape and situated to the height of the members of the family. It should also have some drawer space, as it is difficult to arrange some articles on shelves.

If a room closet is not available it may be possible to use the long narrow space behind bookcases, the space at the end of the fireplace or below the window seat. The doors to these small closets should be made in such a way that they look like the panel of the room. Secret catches or decorative objects may be substituted for door knobs.

BOOKCASES

The present generation uses bookcases for storing magazines and decorative objects in addition to the family library of books. This new style arrangement adds interest and color in a room, but it also adds to the storage problem.

Careful study of a room reveals corners and narrow wall spaces where there is not room for chairs or tables; yet they provide just the space needed for other corner bookcases, tall, narrow cases, or low shelves.

The style, color, and wood should blend with the other room furnishings. It is usually best to finish them to match the woodwork so they will be an inconspicuous part of the room background. If the color of the woodwork is not suitable, the shelves may be finished to match the massive pieces of furniture.

Built-in Type

Built-in bookcases or shelves are preferred to any other type because they do not take up any floor space. Of course, they must be planned when the house is being constructed as they are built into the thickness of the wall, and are a permanent part of the room background.

Sometimes there is an unused door or a window with an unattractive view that can be replaced by built-in shelves.

Fig. 9 shows the bookcases built as a part of the fireplace unit.

Open Shelf Type

Books are more attractive and more accessible when placed in open shelves. If the books are dusted frequently and the house kept free from silverfish and fish moths the books may be preserved almost as well as in a glass case.

Open bookcases are also less expensive than other types. The back may even be omitted and the wall itself used in place of the back support. Of course the arrangement plan for grouping books and decorative objects is more attractive when the wood and not the wall is the background.

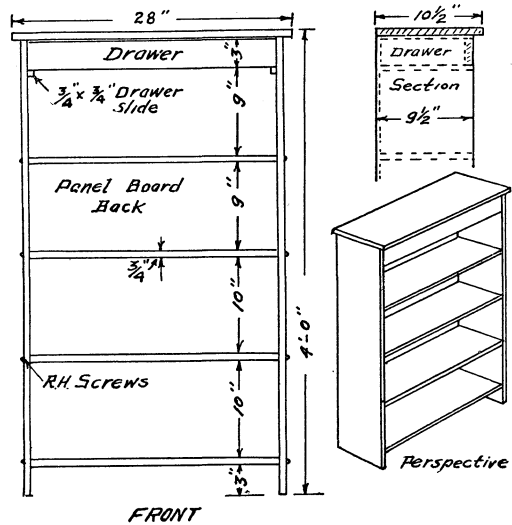


Fig. 2. Open Book Shelves.

If the room or storage space seems drab the inside of the shelves may be painted a color to emphasize the coloring of the books or decorative objects.

The Hanging Book Shelf

When the room is too small or crowded or there are too few books for a bookcase, one shelf or a group of short shelves may be hung on the wall. The latter are called hanging shelves.

A single shelf or hanging shelves may be used over a study table, a desk, a reading chair, or other living room unit that requires this type of storage.

Combination Bookcase and End Table

A low bookcase may be constructed so its top can be used as an end table when placed by a divan or easy chair. Books, magazines, or newspapers can be placed on the shelves within easy reach.

Combination Desk and Bookcase

The ends of a desk may be finished as open shelves. Students prefer this type as their school books and reference books are more accessible.

Glass Inclosed Bookcases

Choice books should be kept behind glass doors. A family seldom has enough of this type to fill a large case so is able to store its few prized possessions in a glass topped desk or secretary.

When the choice collection of books is large and a glass bookcase is needed, the sectioned type should be the choice as it can be moved and arranged according to the wall space.

Dimensions of Book Shelves

The dimensions of book shelves are very important. Shallow and narrow shelves are useless for large books, yet tall and wide shelves take up more room than is necessary. After carefully measuring books to be certain of the space they require, it has been found that the following measurements may be used for home libraries.

Type of Book	Height of Shelf	Depth of Shelf	Percentage of Entire Case
Most Fiction	9 inches	6 inches	80%
Most large books	10 inches	8 or 9 inches	15%
Very large books	12 inches	9 inches	5%

One three- or four-inch shallow shelf should be made at the bottom of the case for school annuals or other large periodicals. If these are laid flat and lengthwise of the shelf, a half dozen will fill the space.

OTHER STORAGE SPACES

Desks, chests, or window seats will give additional storage space.

When buying a desk, the filing compartment and drawer space should be studied as carefully as the wood, its construction, and cost. The spaces these provide may mean the difference between an orderly and efficiently run household and a cluttered one.

If a window seat is built below the living room windows, the seat will be a substitute for a chair or divan and the space below used for storage. Whenever possible, one or two drawers should be built below the seat. Using drawers for storage is more convenient than lifting the seat and storing articles as in a trunk or cedar chest.

ARRANGEMENT OF LIVING ROOM FURNISHINGS

A livable room depends far more upon its arrangement plan than upon the cost or quality of its furnishings. Even simple, worn furniture may be arranged to give an atmosphere of comfort and welcome. It is rather difficult to do this successfully in the living room because of the many different sizes and kinds of furniture and accessories.

If the room always seems disarranged or cluttered after the family or guests leave, the room has not been conveniently arranged. Neither is the plan correct if the room appears to be in such perfect order that it has a formal atmosphere. Whatever the fault, it can be remedied if the following points are studied:

1. To consider the comfort and convenience of each member of the family.
2. To observe the art principles that apply to furniture arrangement.

Expressing comfort and convenience is the more flexible point. Few families will give the same definition for comfort and few individuals interpret it alike. Comfort to each means convenient arrangement of the furnishings that meet his needs. For instance, comfort to the man who smokes while he reads means having a well equipped smoking stand as well as the other necessities for a reading unit. Convenience is therefore the foremost quality in the minds of each individual. Years ago we thought only of how a room looked but we now judge a room as to how well it will work.

Convenience in furniture arrangement is gained through grouping together all furnishings needed for each activity. A group of this type is called a living room unit. The units usually needed are—reading, writing, relaxation, conversation, and music. A family should list its needs and decide just how many units can be included in the room and how each may be located.

A brief outline of the furnishings required for these units is:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Reading | 2. Relaxation |
| Comfortable chair | Divan or comfortable chair and ottoman |
| Footstool | Small table with reading material |
| Small table or shelves for books and magazines | |
| Lamp | |

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>3. Writing or Study
 Desk or Study Table
 Desk chair
 Lamp
 Writing materials
 Waste basket</p> <p>4. Music
 This varies with the needs of the family
 Radio
 a. Cabinet type
 Radio bench
 b. Portable type
 Table</p> | <p>Victrola
 These are kept by many families in order to enjoy prized collections of records.</p> <p>Piano
 Bench
 Cabinet for music
 Small music instruments as violin, cornet</p> <p>5. Entertainment Unit
 Folding game table
 Pull-up chairs
 Games</p> <p>6. Conversation Unit</p> |
|--|---|

The relaxation unit with its divan or the fireside grouping of comfortable chairs is ideal for a conversation unit. When several guests come it will be necessary for family and guests to sit in the chairs that are part of the various units and yet be part of the large group conversing together. This brings an additional problem of arranging the units so they are not separate, but parts of one living room unit.

The Art Principles Applied to Furniture Arrangement

It is necessary to know and apply the art principles which influence good arrangement, as no one is born with knowledge nor with the ability to make a successful arrangement plan. Good taste comes from training and from living in surroundings that are expressive of the finest art principles. Some of the most important principles to study are: harmony, proportion, rhythm, emphasis, and balance.

HARMONY. This quality is present when the room as a whole expresses restfulness and unity. All of the furnishings have something in common. The likeness may be that all of the massive furniture is selected from the same period or all of the wood or coloring of the furniture is the same. It is also possible to have harmony in furniture selected from different periods if the shape, size or line is similar. There should also be harmony in the quality of the furnishings. A rustic type of chair is out of harmony in a room of antiques as is a needle-point footstool in a modern setting.

Color harmony is also important if a room expresses the beauty it should. This subject has been discussed under Living Room Backgrounds.

PROPORTION. When the shape, size, color, and design of the room furnishings are closely related, they are in proportion with each other.

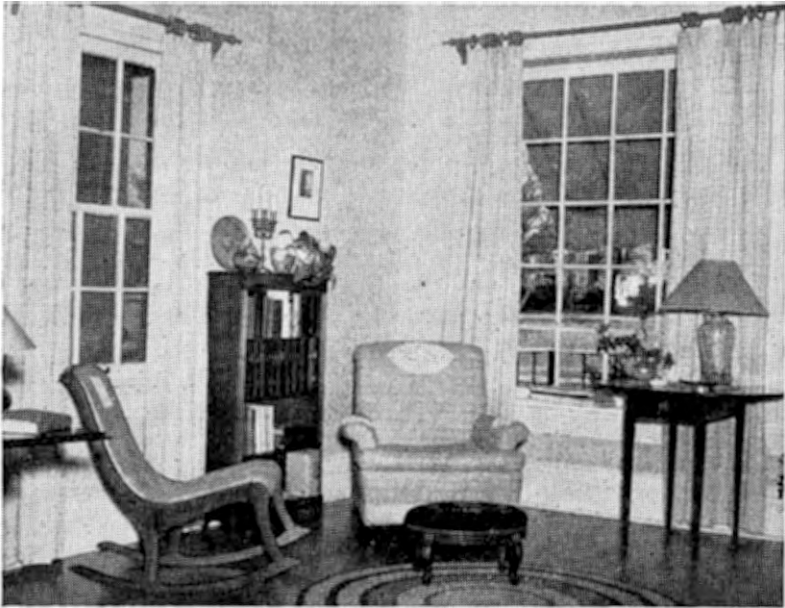


Fig. 3.—Good proportion and harmony are expressed in this furniture group. The small overstuffed chair is in scale and weight for this group as well as for the 13x14 foot living room where the picture was taken.

Large rooms require massive furniture, while the utility and beauty of a small room is spoiled by even a few such pieces. Small rooms can be just as comfortably furnished as large ones if furnishings of small scale are used.

The shape and size of each part of a unit should also be in proportion. A tiny cricket rocker is dwarfed when a large overstuffed chair is used in the same conversation unit, and a large reading lamp will look top-heavy on a small end table.

Whenever it is necessary to combine large and small furniture in one room, the small furniture gives a more massive appearance if a number of pieces are grouped together, and a single large piece is placed near a large wall space.

RHYTHM. This term means related movement and is present in decoration when a wall or entire room is pleasing to the eye. This is due to easy movement of the eye from one object

to another, because there are no broken lines that cause the eye to jump from one spot to another. Therefore, a room has rhythm when:

1. The designs in the wallpaper are connected by finer lines so they do not give a spotty effect.
2. The large pieces of furniture and rugs are placed parallel with the walls and not cater-cornered or criss-crossed.
3. Table covers such as square centerpieces, luncheon cloths, and runners are placed with the lines of the table.
4. Pictures hang flat to the wall instead of being tilted outward.

EMPHASIS. There should be a center of interest in every room arrangement. One unit should dominate the room and attract the eye first, so all other furnishings are subordinate to it. Emphasis may be placed on an object in the group or upon one color in the color scheme.

The center of interest is usually the fireplace group in winter, but the room can be rearranged in summer so a group of windows attracts the eye. A music loving family will focal all attention on a piano or harp, an artist on a lovely painting, and a family without much else, upon the lovely view from the bay window.

BALANCE. This is the quality that seems to unite all of the other art principles and cover up any defects of the room. Balance gives the same effect in a room that is felt when a teeter-totter is parallel with the ground. Regardless of size or weight of the children, they are sitting at the proper distance from the center to equally distribute their weight.

Formal balance is obtained whenever there is a definite repetition of objects on each side of a central point of view. This form of balance expresses more dignity than most farm homes need. It is also less interesting than informal balance because the repetition of spacing, line, shape, and size tends to be monotonous.

It is more difficult to gain good informal balance but it is more practical in most homes. Few rooms have door and window openings to allow the furniture arrangement to express formal balance. Then too, few families possess pairs of chairs, book-cases, tables, and small objects.

After studying the art principles, good arrangement can best be achieved by a little planning with pencil and paper. Massive pieces of furniture can be moved about on a paper plan without using the strong-armed method which usually results in both sore muscles and scratches on the floor. In planning the room on paper, place only those pieces of furniture that are ab-

solutely necessary for comfort. After the plan has been perfected, it is wise to remove all of the room furnishings except the few massive pieces. This also includes all such wall decorations as pictures, mirrors, and window ornaments.

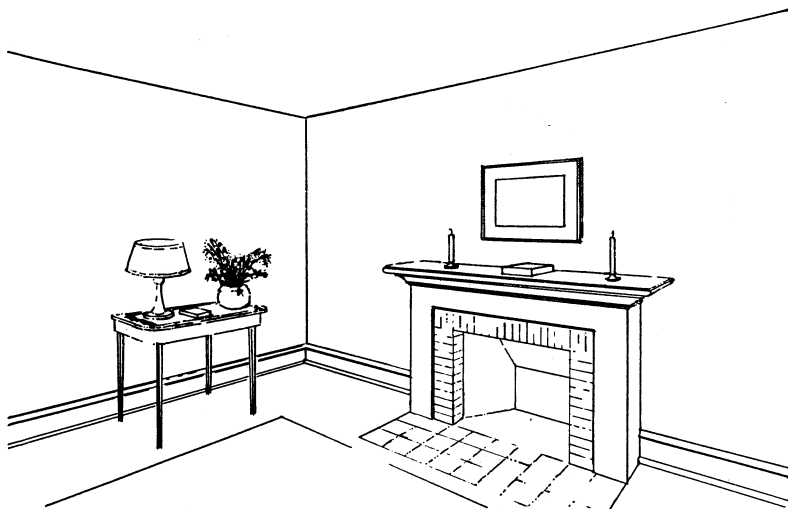


Fig. 4. The arrangement on the table top expresses informal balance and that of the mantel formal balance.

The furniture should enhance the architecture of a room, so the important and few large pieces must be placed parallel with the wall. Pieces of this type are divans, pianos, large desks, bookcases, and large tables. Each of these pieces should be placed in the wall space that brings about the best proportion and balance. A room will need a piece of furniture on the wall opposite the fireplace that suggests similar weight and size. Two chairs and a table may be grouped to give the width necessary to balance a divan on the opposite wall. A picture or wall hanging will be necessary over a low piece of furniture if a tall desk or dark door is on the opposite wall.

After the massive pieces of furniture are arranged to make parallel lines with the walls, it is necessary to bring in the chairs, footstools, and small tables and place them out from the wall to soften the severe, straight lines of the room. The chairs in each unit should be turned toward each other and yet not away from the other units of the room. Passageways and door openings must be kept free from furniture so it will not be necessary to walk around chairs or through conversational groupings to answer the door.

The last part of the arrangement is to add the few pictures or decorative objects that are needed to complete the picture of a liveable room. These will be discussed more fully in this bulletin in connection with accessories for the living room.

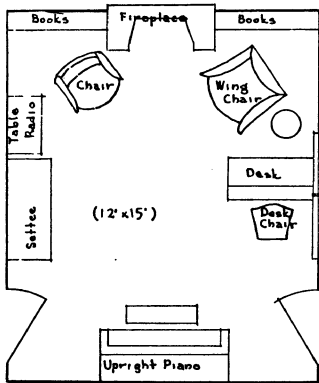


Fig. 5. The fireplace and bookcases are the center of interest of this arrangement for winter living.

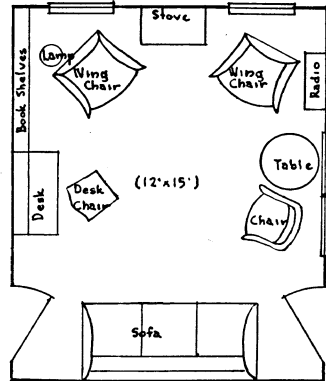


Fig. 6. The same arrangement may be used with a stove.

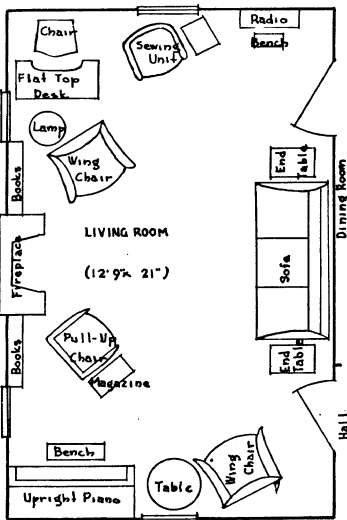


Fig. 7. A large room provides space for more types of family living.

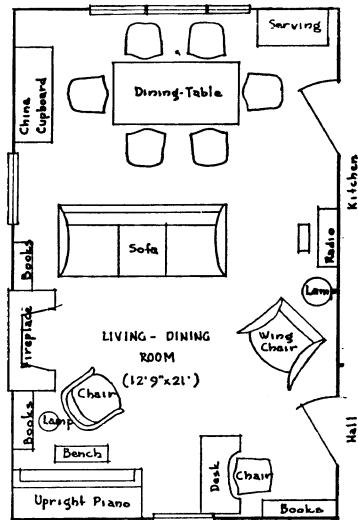


Fig. 8. Many homes of today combine the dining and living room in one large open space.

HEATING SYSTEMS

The living room may be heated by a fireplace, a stove, a circulator heater, or a furnace. Only the first three add to the decorating problems, as the furnace is not part of the room furnishings.

According to the home decorator, a fireplace is the most attractive form of heating to use. The friendly, cozy, glow of the flames adds something to the living room that cannot be duplicated by any other type of heating system. The fact that a fireplace is built into the wall eliminates many arrangement problems. The size, the radiant heat, and the colorful flames are all attractive features that cause the fireplace grouping to be the center of interest of most rooms.

The grandfather of all American fireplaces was the type used by the Pilgrims. Its functions were only for warmth and cooking. The later colonial styles for finer homes added a decorative function by using mantels and some decorative features but eliminated that of cooking in the living room fireplace.



Fig. 9. Simplicity and comfort are suggested in this fireplace setting. The wood paneling used for walls, built-in bookcase and mantel form an ideal background for the Early American furniture.

The fireplace in the farm home of today should imitate many of those features, especially their simplicity of design. The visible parts, which are the mantel, the wood paneling, stone, brick, or tile, should be a continuation of the wall color and not form a decorative ornament in the room. The texture of the material should be in close harmony with the wall material.

A farm fireplace should really function as a heating system and never be the imitation gas log type used in city apartments. One that is properly constructed will give out radiant heat that circulates through the room without raising the temperature or lowering the humidity as some of the less expensive stoves do.

Stoves require less fuel than fireplaces for heating a room because none of the heat passes up the chimney as it does in many fireplaces. The circulator heater with its metal jacket utilizes heat more efficiently than either an ordinary stove or fireplace.

The type of stove chosen is influenced by the fuel which is the most reasonable in price in that locality. A new type of stove that burns kerosene has been tried during the past few years, and is proving to be an economical and satisfactory heater.

The disadvantages of stoves are in the amount of floor space they require, the difficulty of arranging them in a furniture group, and their shape, color, and design. The design and the color of the new heaters show much improvement over the old parlor stoves. The metal decorations are omitted and their materials imitate the rich brown coloring of the massive wooden furniture of a room.

SELECTING LIVING ROOM FURNITURE

It may seem that all of the points for selecting furniture have been discussed, yet there are some definite standards of judging the furniture itself that should be established before a single purchase is made.

Living room furniture is always more satisfactory if it is bought as separate pieces, as the different colors, materials, and sizes of furniture add more interest to the room than when bought in a suite of furniture. Of course, buying a suite of furniture is the more simple method because it includes the necessary massive pieces; they all match and only one decision has to be made. Yet the fact that they are such a perfect match in color, size, and material can give a room a monotonous appearance.

There are two types of furniture: case goods and upholstered furniture. Fewer mistakes are made when selecting case goods because they are the all-wood pieces and their good and poor qualities show on the surface. These qualities are underneath the attractive coverings of upholstered furniture, so mistakes can be made in getting a comfortable and desirable piece. The need for knowing what hidden qualities a piece of furniture should possess is evident if a wise investment is made.

Case Goods or Wooden Furniture

DESIGN. The best designed furniture is simple and expresses all of the art principles previously discussed. Beauty of wooden furniture depends upon the structural lines and the materials, and not upon its decoration.

MATERIALS. Furniture is made of both hard and soft wood but of course, fine quality furniture is made of only hard wood. Its superior qualities are: closeness of grain, durability, and ease of finishing. After years of service, hard wood does not sag under weight as soft wood does; so it is really an economical furniture wood.

The most common furniture woods are:

BEECH—is a pale wood resembling maple. Since it has a very close grain it is preferred to other hard woods for furniture in public buildings which will receive hard service.

BIRCH—is a straight-grained wood that ranges in color from blonde to a light brown. It may be used both in solid form or as a veneer.

CHERRY—is a fruit wood found in old pieces of furniture, but is rather scarce now. It has a fairly close grain and is reddish-brown in color.

ELM—does not have an interesting grain, but it does take a fine finish and is a durable hard wood.

GUM—is one of the most common and inexpensive furniture woods and can be finished to imitate walnut, mahogany, or maple. It is also finished natural for furniture of modern lines.

MAHOGANY—is the most satisfactory furniture wood. It may be used in both solid form and a veneer. It lends well to fine carvings or lovely finishes. It is a deep, soft, red-brown color and has a fine, even grain.

MAPLE—has always been popular as both a solid and veneer cabinet wood. The natural color is light, slightly reddish-brown, but can be finished in shades from blonde to russet. This hard wood is very appropriate for early American type furniture.

MYRTLE—is blonde in color and rich in grain, so makes a fine veneer for modern furniture.

OAK—lends itself to more different cutting techniques than any other wood and is suitable for both solid and veneer forms. It is naturally light but can be finished in colors ranging from light brown to deep brown.

PINE—is called a soft wood when white pine is being used and a hard wood when yellow pine is chosen. Neither is used for fine furniture. The hard pine does not have an attractive grain and even though the soft pine is used for furniture reproductions it is not durable.

ROSEWOOD—has long been used for fine furniture. Its handsome red-brown surface marked with black takes a beautiful finish.

WALNUT—is next to mahogany in popularity. It is slightly yellow-brown in color and is used in both solid and veneer form. The beautiful grain of walnut makes it one of the more popular veneer woods.

The Construction

It is difficult to find the defects of a finished piece of furniture. In the first place many are not visible, and second, few know what to look for.

Many have the mistaken idea that furniture made of a solid piece of wood is always superior to that which has been veneered. The name veneer usually lessens the cost, but it does not denote inferiority. A veneered piece is often stronger than a solid one and is more resistant to the sudden changes in the dry air, so is less likely to warp than a solid piece. Veneered furniture is usually more beautifully grained than the solid varieties because veneering makes it possible to match the unusual grain of freak logs and stumps by sawing them into 1/32 inch thicknesses and gluing them over a solid piece of wood.

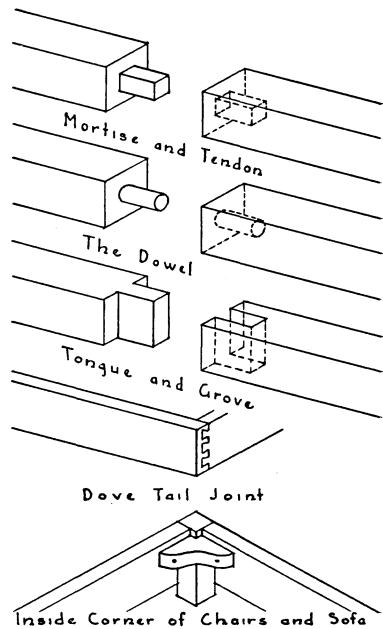
The advantages of a piece of solid wood construction are that it can be carved, can be planed after it becomes worn, and it does not peel or blister.

The edges of the wood show whether the piece is solid or veneer so it is well to examine these carefully.

STRUCTURAL DETAILS. The defects in the construction are usually in the joints. In the best furniture the joints have been carefully fitted together. Drawers should never have sides nailed to the front and back but joined by a series of

interlocking wedges that resemble the fantail of a dove. These are called dove tail joints. The drawers should fit well and slide easily.

The three other common methods of joining are the mortise and tenon, the dowel, and the tongue and groove. These methods will prove their worth by years of service. The inferior grades of furniture are joined with glue or nails. Joints of this type soon pull apart so are constantly in need of repair. The only use of glue is when the best grade of animal glue and screws are used in placing the corner block (Fig. 10) in sofas and chairs. This is a method used for even fine quality furniture.



THE FINISH—The surface finish should never call attention to itself but should merely be a dull protective coat that preserves and enhances the natural beauty of the wood. Hard wood has a closer grain than soft wood, so only a natural finish should be used. Circular No. 265, *Practical Methods of Refinishing Furniture*, gives the steps for finishing different woods.

Soft woods are stained to imitate oak, mahogany, or walnut. When the finish wears away the unattractiveness of the grain is revealed.

Upholstered Furniture

When selecting an upholstered piece of furniture it is always safest to buy of a reputable dealer. Many parts of the construction of these pieces are not visible as they are encased by the cover.

THE COVER should be of a closely woven, hard finished material, that will resist hard usage and will not fade. The designs of elaborate weaves—velours and velvets—soon crush, become worn and look fuzzy.

THE FRAME should be made of chestnut, hard maple, or birch as these hard woods will not sag under the weight of the upholstery or the weight of the people who use them. The legs should be run to the top of the rail, and not merely be doweled to the bottom of the frame.

THE WEBBING should be of the best quality material. The strips should be at least three and one-half inches wide, tightly stretched over the frame and fastened with two rows of tacks.

THE SPRINGS should be oil-tempered, coiled-steel springs, as they are more durable and will not squeak. Each of the 12 to 16 springs in the chair and the 36 to 48 of the sofa should be tied eight ways. Burlap should be stretched over the springs, sewed to each one and tacked to the hardwood frame.

FILLING. The largest percentage is horse hair, the remainder cotton felt, excelsior, tow, moss, cotton batting, or sheet wadding.

FURNITURE STYLES

It is possible to furnish a home successfully without knowing that the table is Duncan Phyfe, but knowing and recognizing these styles of the past leads to a better appreciation of these everyday surroundings. It is necessary to know the dominant characteristics of a few period styles in order to judge the designs found on the market today. It is possible to know something about the different styles without becoming a student of historic furniture.

The present styles of furniture reflect the evolution of the designs that have become established during the last few centuries. Certain designs and motifs have been selected from this period or that and adapted to the present styles. As a result, few pieces on the market today are true reproductions of any one period.

EARLY AMERICAN. This name has been given to the style of furniture that was made in the homes of the English Pilgrims. Few were craftsmen or designers and few had the tools needed for carving designs, so they modeled the essential pieces after the simple, durable style used in the rural homes of England.

Manufacturers of today have revived this style because it is possible to reproduce the straight legs and plain surfaces by machinery without losing the charm of the hand-made style of the Pilgrims. This furniture is very practical for the family living room of today. It is possible, in such furnished

homes, to live in an environment expressing good taste without fear of spoiling its beauty. This is possible because of the solid hardwood construction and the ease of keeping its smooth surface polished and keeping the small amount of upholstery clean. Early American furniture is also one of the most reasonably priced styles of the fine quality furniture group.

QUEEN ANNE was the first furniture in England which combined beauty with comfort. It followed closely upon the early efforts of our American colonists and was named for the English Queen Anne (1702-1714). Chair arms and backs were curved to fit the body, less ornament was used, and massive pieces of previous periods shrank to normal height.

This style with its more simple line and smaller scale is suitable for the farm home, but is not as durable as some of the other styles.

MIDDLE PERIOD furniture including that made by such craftsmen as Chippendale, Hepplewhite, Sheraton, and Duncan Phyfe, was of lighter structure and on a smaller scale. Mahogany, due to its beauty and strength, was the wood most commonly used.

Many of these styles may be used alone or combined satisfactorily in a room. Of course the details of their design and their material cause them to be priced beyond the average farm home budget. Then too, they are not as practical for most living rooms because they are not as durable and will require more care than some of the other styles.

MODERN FURNITURE was first designed to introduce a style foreign to that of any other period. Some of the first pieces were so extreme in line and shape that they were out of harmony with any interior that had not been especially designed for them. The word "modernistic" was used for those extreme styles, but it does not apply to the more conservative modern style of today.

The conservative designers have modeled a style that can be made by machinery expressing the simplicity of Early American, the light structure of the Middle Period Styles and the utilitarian features needed in the twentieth century home.

Due to the fact that the living room should express the spirit of the home, it is necessary to furnish alike all rooms used in common by family and friends when modern furniture is used in the living room. The new style is so different that it does not combine well with other periods nor harmonize with the background of many rooms.

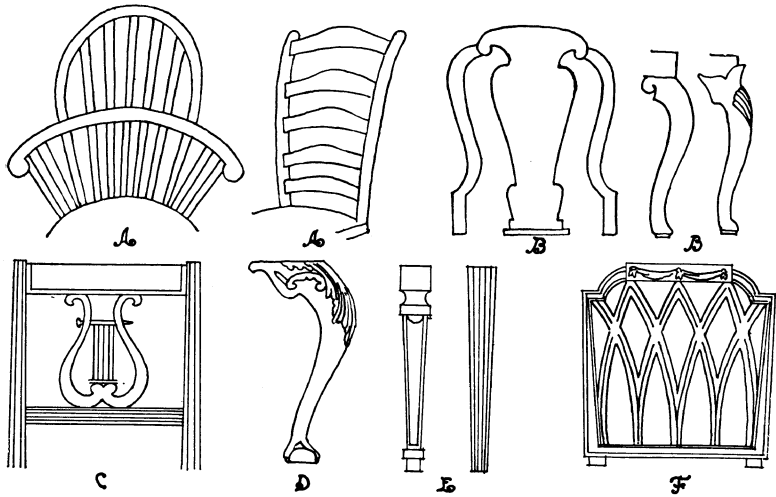


Fig. 11. Furniture Styles

a. Early American

b. Queen Anne

c. Duncan Phyfe

d. Chippendale

e. Hepplewhite

f. Sheraton

FURNITURE COSTS

The following chart was prepared after studying furniture prices in several Oklahoma towns ranging in size from 7,000 to 100,000 population.

Of course it is possible to find articles lower in price than the minimum price given and higher than the maximum given. We are quoting the lowest price that we found an article which measured up to our standards for selecting a piece of furniture. Our maximum figure is for those pieces which we felt had the best characteristics and would give the greatest return for the money invested. Few homes would need higher priced furniture than the maximum price given.

Chart of Furniture Prices

Article	Description	Minimum Cost	Maximum Cost
Suite	Overstuffed divan and chair-----	\$ 54.95	\$149.50
	Solid Maple divan and chair-----	49.50	79.50
Sofa or Divan	Large size—overstuffed-----	37.50	85.00
	Small size—overstuffed-----	29.50	79.50
Chair	Studio couch-----	19.95	79.95
	Large easy type-----	24.95	69.95
	Lounge type-----	29.50	49.50
	Wing type-----	24.50	69.00
	Arm chair-----	9.98	20.00
	Occasional chair-----	2.98	22.50
Pull-up type-----			
Desks	Side chair-----		
	Secretaries-----	19.98	39.50
	Flat-top Desk-----	9.98	49.50
Tables	Drop-lid type-----	15.98	39.00
	End or Side Table-----	1.80	14.98
	Tilt-top style-----	2.98	16.98
	Drum-----	14.98	30.00
	Pie crust top-----		
	Gate-leg-----	14.98	39.50
	Game tables-----	.98	4.98
Coffee tables-----	3.98	14.98	
Book Cases	9"x12" depth-----	2.98	12.98
	4 shelves-----		
Magazine Racks	—all wood type-----	.98	12.00
Wool Rugs	Axminster 9'x12'-----	27.53	59.00
	Wilton 9'x12'-----	48.00	72.00
	Small or Throw Rugs-----	2.95	6.50
	Rug cushions 9'x12'-----	3.95	6.50
Linoleum Rugs	—Thin quality 9'x12'-----	3.75	4.95
	Heavy type—5 year guarantee-----	7.50	8.50

LIVING ROOM ACCESSORIES

It is through a room's decorative objects—books, clocks, small sculpture, lamps, pottery, flowers, textiles, and other accessories that the personality of the family is revealed. Many a dull and uninteresting room is transformed into a charming and distinctive one when a few chosen accessories are put in place. These objects should express their name by being accessories to the room and its furniture and not be of so great a number or of so conspicuous a type that they dominate the room.

The price of accessories does not always determine their art quality. Many inexpensive objects are beautiful in form, color, and texture. Accessories should be chosen for both their utilitarian and artistic merits. Such objects range from the usefulness of a beautiful clock or lamp to that of a piece of pottery or a textile that adds the color or design which a room may need.

Money is wasted when spent for accessories that have no artistic merit. Such objects include some souvenirs, knick-nacks, and bric-a-brac. These objects should be discarded as they collect dust and do not add beauty to the room.

LAMPS are the most useful living room accessory and yet notwithstanding the illumination they give, they can be the most hideous object in the room. Unusual shapes and ornamental bases and shades spoil their beauty. Lamps of very conservative styles and color should be chosen because these are in harmony with the bright light they convey in the room. The color and type of lamp used should be suitable for the other room furnishings. Wood, pottery, iron, pewter, and aluminum are some of the appropriate materials for lamp bases in the farm living room. The shades for these lamps may be of plain parchment paper or coarse cloth.

The size of the lamp base is determined by the type of floor lamp, table lamp, or pin-up type needed. The beauty of the base depends upon the material, its *natural* color, and upon its structural lines.

The lamp shade is necessary to soften the light and regulate its rays in the room. Its size, material, and color should be such that they merely add to the beauty of the base. A faint tint of a warm color is usually chosen for the shade as this increases the warm glow of the light.

CLOCKS are chosen less today for decorative purposes than they were in the past. So many of the older decorative types are on the market that it is difficult to find a suitable style. The best clocks are the small mantel or desk types that do not take up floor space. These should be made in simple designs, have good structural lines and colors that are suitable for the room.

Books are the most interesting and decorative living room accessory. They add more to the cultural development of the family than any other furnishing. The saying, "Without a love of books the richest man is poor," is very true.

The number of books used in a room depends upon the size and the storage space, but whatever the number, they should be arranged on open shelves with thought as to their size and color. Large books should be on the lower shelves to give an appearance of strength and weight to the arrangement. The dark books should be arranged wherever needed for color accent and balance. The dark ones usually look better when put on the lower shelves or at the ends of the rows of light colored ones.

DESK EQUIPMENT is regarded as a necessary room furnishing as well as being decorative. The accessories used on top of the desk—blotter, letter file, pen set, and paper clip—may be the decorative type needed to add color or interest, but the waste basket used on the floor should be the dark foundation colors of the rug and of a plain and inconspicuous design.

Flower Arrangement

Flowers are the only natural beauty that can be added to a living room. All other is man made. Therefore there should be very few days in the year when at least one flower arrangement is not used.

Few can duplicate the perfect picture made by Japanese flower arrangements, but by studying and practicing their basic arrangements, anyone can make improvements in her own.

The farm offers an endless variety of plant life—wild flowers, grasses, berries, branches, seed pods, and even weeds which are attractive. Then every yard should have a small fenced-in flower garden that will supply blossoms from spring until the first freeze.

Some secrets of the Japanese arrangements are:

1. Use flower containers without decoration and of the same coloring as that from which the flowers grow.
2. Select the flower arrangement most suitable for the flowers and for the room where they will be placed.

The three arrangements suitable to farm living rooms are:

- a. Line arrangement—Only a few flowers, seed pods, grasses, branches, or berries are arranged in a bowl so the space between each shows up their characteristic line of growth.
- b. Mass Bouquets—Many flowers are combined for their color and texture effect. The mistake often made is in using too many flowers for the size of the container or in having an arrangement that looks as if a bunch had been picked up and pushed into the container. Even when using the mass arrangement, the flowers should be placed one at a time in the container.
- c. Platter Bouquets—The heads or blossom ends of a few flowers as hollyhocks, pansies, and others may float in a flat receptacle.

Placing the flower arrangement in a suitable place is as important as the arrangement itself. Large bouquets may be used on the floor or on low stools or tables. Drooping flowers, vines, or branches look better when placed higher than the eye level—on the mantel or a wall bracket. Small mass bouquets usually look well on the desk or on small low tables.

Living Room Pictures

The framing and hanging of pictures is the last step in room decoration and yet it is certainly far from being the least important one. Many otherwise perfectly decorated rooms are marred by the pictures on their walls. The most common mistakes are: hanging too many in one room, selecting subjects which are not appropriate, combining pictures of the wrong types and hanging pictures too high.

Almost anyone who will devote some time to studying pictures in art shops and reading books on the subject can develop good taste in selecting and hanging pictures.

The living room is used by the family and its friends so the pictures should have a common interest to all. Landscapes, marines, decorative flower arrangements, architecture, reproduction of famous portraits by the great masters, and occasionally a family portrait are all subjects of common interest.

The pictures should have a special meaning to the family members and be suited to their personalities. The big living room of the ranch family would have stronger subjects than the smaller cottage living room of an aged farmer and his wife. The latter would prefer more sentimental subjects of delicate coloring. The subjects chosen should also give pleasure as this room is created to give cheer. The pictures "Hope," "The Lone Wolf," and others are outstanding pieces of art, but there is too much sadness and gloom expressed for them to be worthy of a place on the wall.

PICTURES SHOULD BE CHOSEN IN RELATION TO THE BACKGROUND. When the wall has a great deal of color and design it is better to omit pictures, as there is enough movement and color in the room.

Plain colored walls need drawings or etchings to supply pattern and line. When the rooms seem drab and colorless the pictures should have rich color for the center of interest. This brings up the problem of suitability of colors. North rooms will seem even colder and less bright if the pictures have cool colors predominating. The same room will have a note of cheer if a picture of flowers in warm colors is used.

PICTURES IN RELATION TO THE FURNISHINGS AND THE ROOM. A chair or rug becomes worn and is discarded before it is out of date, but good pictures last indefinitely. There is no reason for using pictures that are out of harmony with the new style furnishings because some can be reframed and others can be discarded for the more modern types. New inventions in photography and in color printing have made it possible to buy reproductions at reasonable prices. A living room furnished with antiques should have appropriately framed pictures done in deep colors by the old masters, while one with Swedish modern furnishings will have modern pictures of much lighter coloring.

Rooms also require pictures in scale to the wall space and the size of the furniture. Only a few small pictures will be needed to finish the decorative scheme of a small room, and yet they would seem mere dots on the walls of a large room with massive furniture.

COMBINING PICTURES—All of the pictures in one room should be in harmony. A delicate water color cannot be used in the same room with an oil painting of strong coloring or with a picture with a strong subject.

FRAMING PICTURES—Pictures are framed in order to protect them, to enhance their beauty and to form a boundary line between them and the wall. The picture is the center of interest so the size of the frame and its coloring should never call attention and detract from the picture. The color of the frame should be a little lighter in value than the darkest value of the picture. Narrow frames are appropriate for pictures of dainty subjects or delicate coloring. Wide or heavy frames are more suitable for large pictures or those that give an impression of weight. These include pictures with strong subjects, those of deep coloring, and oil paintings.

HANGING PICTURES—The number of pictures in a room depends upon the size of the room and the size of the pictures. Usually three or four pictures 14 by 18 inches or 20 by 24 inches in size are sufficient. Yet, two or three small ones can be substituted on a wall space for a larger picture and the same effect given *if they are hung properly*. One picture should dominate in size and beauty and should be hung in the place where it will be the center of interest, above a sofa, a low desk, or a low fireplace. If a person possesses too many pictures it is better to put some away and change the pictures with the season or when those that are hung cease to be of interest.

Some rules for hanging pictures are:

1. Pictures should be hung flat against the wall.
2. Whenever possible, pictures should be hung so the wire is invisible.
3. If a heavy picture requires visible wires, two parallel ones should be used.
4. Pictures should be hung to form part of the background for a single piece or group of furniture and never in an isolated spot on the wall.
5. Pictures should be hung so that the center of interest comes at about the eye level of the average height person. Pictures over desks will usually be hung lower than those over the fireplace.

PICTURE SUBSTITUTES—Many times a mirror, a map, a framed sampler, a motto, or a textile will seem more appropriate with certain groups of furniture than pictures do. The same rules regarding harmony of subject, coloring, frame, and method for hanging are used for these picture substitutes.

