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A Study Of The "Guilded Age": T. H. Kleinschmidt And His Home

Thomas Mertes
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A STUDY OF THE "GILDED AGE":

T. H. KLEINSCHMIDT AND HIS HOME

A thesis submitted to the Department of History at
Carroll College in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for academic honors with a
B. A. Degree in History and a minor
in English.

Thomas Earl Mertes
March 22, 1983
This thesis for honors recognition has been approved for the Department of History.

Dr. Robert Swartout, Director

Mr. Jeremiah T. Sullivan

Mr. Henry Burgess

March 22, 1983
DEDICATION

To all the people who have given me leadership and guidance in life including:

Mrs. Elaine H. Mertes
Mr. Francis T. Mertes
Mr. Thomas J. Hanrahan
Sr. Miriam Clare Roesler
Dr. Robert Swartout
Fr. Humphrey Courtney
Fr. Daniel P. Hillen.

Summas gratias vobis ago.
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In addition, I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Henry Burgess and Fr. Jeremiah T. Sullivan for their critiques and encouragement. I pledge gratitude for the initial insights into the cultural aspects of history to Dr. Eric Hansen. To Dr. Robert Swartout, I give great thanks for the time, encouragement, and invaluable criticisms but more importantly for the friendship and example he has provided in my years at Carroll College.

And finally, I wish to express my appreciation to my cohorts, "family," and teachers.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The culture of any nation embodies the way in which society, art, and intelligence manifest themselves. Architecture is one facet of most cultures. As such, architecture is often a more permanent and tangible product of a culture. The architecture of the United States from 1870 to 1900 exemplified many of the values and trends that helped to form the culture of this age. The age may be labeled in several descriptive ways. "The Victorian Era" is a common label for the age in which Queen Victoria reigned as Queen of England, Ireland, and as Empress of India from 1837 to 1901. A title which specifically applied to the United States was the "Gilded Age." Samuel Clemens employed this title for the period from 1870 to 1900 which he considered "gaudy."

The term "gilded" means to overlay something of lesser value with gold. This situation existed in the United States between 1870 and 1900. A few men became rich while the majority stayed poor. Those who achieved prosperity often wished to display this wealth ostentatiously. One method used to demonstrate affluence was
to patronize the arts. They also aspired to establish themselves among the social elite of America. To do this and to appear prosperous, many of the "nouveaux riches" visited Europe and admired the cultures that had developed there. Marrying into an established, elite family was another method of advancement to a higher class. While attempting to join the higher classes, most of the new rich desired to maintain their individuality.

Other aspects of life in the "Gilded Age" were as new as this class. America evolved from an agrarian nation to an urban-industrial power during this era. The demographics of the United States changed dramatically. Following the Civil War (1865), the population grew from thirty-one million to fifty-five million people. One-fourth of the population lived in the cities in 1865, but by 1910 the percentage was nearly half. The influx of emigrants from Europe was striking in numbers and in variety of nationalities. One-seventh of the population of the whole United States was foreign-born by 1910. The countries of origin were no longer in Northern Europe, but also in Southern Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Orient. Each country produced a slightly different culture which the immigrants brought with them to the United States.

Many common elements of the period also demonstrate the change that was taking place, as the following quote
explains:

Thus, the society of 1860-1885 was one in which railroads were the dominant transportation, gas the dominant lighting, the telegraph the dominant means of fast communication, wall-bearing buildings and cast-iron fronts the dominant ways of building important buildings, the horsecar the dominant means of urban travel. Iron was more common than steel, natural cement more common than artificial. But in this time electric lights, telephones, electric streetcars, elevators, steel frames, fireproofing, and reinforced concrete were all suggested. In terms of the changes of daily life they implied, the innovations of 1860-1885 were explosive. By the turn of the century, the innovations of 1860 to 1885 were in common use.

Capital and business grew at the same fast pace as other aspects of life. Capital and business produced the "nouveaux riches" class which would patronize much of the period's architecture. The trend in business (and in labor) was toward consolidation. Large corporations yielded two-thirds of the nation's manufactured goods by 1900. In 1904 there were 318 large corporations in the United States, many controlled by powerful individuals. For instance, J. P. Morgan held "341 directorships in 122 corporations, banks, insurance companies, manufacturing and trading companies and public utilities with total resources of capital at twenty-two billion dollars." Though Morgan may be an extreme example, he demonstrates the tremendous wealth that could be consolidated. Yet, Morgan was only one of many entrepreneurs who were very successful during the "Gilded Age."
Eclectic architecture was a product of this culture which was experiencing great change. Eclectic architecture combined different styles of architecture into one structure, as will be discussed in Chapter III. Because Eclectic combined various techniques, former styles of architecture which originated in Europe could be used effectively in the design of a building. Hence, a builder could demonstrate his good taste in European culture without sacrificing individuality.

One method of enhancing buildings built in the Eclectic style was with "gingerbread" decoration. "Gingerbread" decoration was the adorning of a building with devices which served no integral part of the building's structure. In some sense, it was a "gilding" of a structure. Therefore, the adornment displayed the wealth of its owner.

The Eclectic style and "gingerbread" decoration could be found in most major cities during the "Gilded Age." Helena, in west-central Montana, was becoming a major political, transportation, and banking center for the intermountain West. Thus, many of the buildings which were constructed during the age illustrate the Eclectic style, ornamented with "gingerbread" decoration. The homes of Morris Silverman, Samuel T. Hauser, and T. H. Kleinschmidt were all designed in the style and decorated in the mode which was popular in the period from 1870 to 1900. In conclusion, Helena homes built
during this epoch display features common to the age. A fine example of one of these homes is the T. H. Kleinschmidt Home which is still standing and in use. The home is a model of the Eclectic style with "gingerbread" decoration being built for a member of the new rich, T. H. Kleinschmidt.
ENDNOTES


2Ibid., s.v. "Queen Victoria."


5Ibid., p. 151.

6Ibid., p. 84.

7Ibid., p. 159.
CHAPTER II

T. H. KLEINSCHMIDT: HIS LIFE AND TIMES

Theodore H. Kleinschmidt, as a member of the new rich, exhibited qualities that have been identified with the "Gilded Age." He, like many other members of the "nouveaux riches" class, traveled to Europe; he also patronized artists such as Charles M. Russell. He consolidated his wealth with Samuel T. Hauser and became rich as a consequence. His home also displays the style which was typical of the era from 1870 to 1900. The structure was built in the Eclectic style with "gingerbread" for decoration.

Similar to many of Helena's new rich, T. H. Kleinschmidt was an emigrant to the United States who was able to join the ranks of the social elite and wealthy. Marcus Daly, the famous Copper King, experienced a similar history. T. H. Kleinschmidt was born on August 2, 1839 in Prussia. At two years of age, his family emigrated to the United States as did so many other Europeans during his lifetime. When he was twenty-one, he was working in St. Louis at a banking firm. This job provided Kleinschmidt with valuable experience for the future.¹

In 1862, he learned an additional trade that would
benefit him later in life. This trade was the mercantile business, which he learned while in Denver. However, within half a year, Kleinschmidt liquidated his Denver holdings and moved to Virginia City (in the territory of what would someday become Montana) to open another mercantile business. While in Virginia City, he invested in placer mines near Deer Lodge, and was active with the Vigilante Committee. Deer Lodge was the next site of Kleinschmidt's mercantile endeavors. In 1865, he returned briefly to St. Louis to manage a family business. During his residence in St. Louis, he met his future partner, employer, and the eventual governor of Montana, Samuel T. Hauser. In the spring of 1866, Kleinschmidt and Hauser arrived in Helena. Upon their arrival, the First National Bank of Helena was established. Kleinschmidt was appointed the assistant cashier and a board member.2

T. H. Kleinschmidt diversified his investments, as did many great Montana entrepreneurs like C. A. Broadwater and William A. Clark.3 He was interested in real estate in Montana and the West. He even bought land ten miles outside of San Diego, California.4 Besides banking and real estate, he had interests in mining, cattle, and sheep.5

In 1867, Kleinschmidt married Mary M. Blattner, daughter of Jacob Blattner, who was a resident of St. Louis. She and T. H. Kleinschmidt brought six children
into the world, raising five of them to maturity (the sixth child died at a young age). Mary Kleinschmidt was active in community affairs. She was a member of the Sons and the Daughters of the Pioneers and a petitioner to establish Masonic lodges in Helena. She remained with her husband through financially good times and bad.

The Kleinschmidts and many other Helenans suffered badly during the Panic of 1893. The First National Bank of Helena, T. H.'s employer, was forced to close its doors for six months. A deed from 1893 shows that Kleinschmidt sold his home to Massena Bullard, a well known Helena lawyer, for one dollar and "other valuable considerations." This transaction may have been concluded to escape a lein, or bankruptcy, which would have forced him to forfeit his house. However, T. H. survived the economic misfortunes and bought his home back the next year.

As was typical of many of Montana's new rich, Kleinschmidt was very active in community and state affairs. He was a founder of the Helena Electric Company. He helped to organize the Presbyterian Church in Helena, the Artisan Well Company, the Turner Society (a society for Germans and their descendents), and the Northwest Cattle Company. Like his wife, he was a signer of a petition to establish the Order of the Eastern Star, a Masonic organization.
His participation in Masonic activities allowed him to be elected Past Worshipful Master of Morning Star Number Five in 1869. In 1884, he was elected Grand Chancellor of the Montana Grand Lodge of the Knights of Pythias. These fraternal organizations were not Kleinschmidt's only social contributions. He was the first president of the Helena Rod and Gun Club, a charter member of the Sons and Daughters of the Pioneers, and the first vice president of Associated Charities. At various times, he was president of the Helena Board of Trade, the Mikado Mining Company, and the Bank of Townsend. He was also the director of the Montana Fair Association, and the vice president for the Helena Gas, Light, and Coke Company.

As an experienced banker, T. H. Kleinschmidt was elected or appointed the treasurer of many organizations and businesses. At various times, he was treasurer of the Helena Board of Trade, the Helena Electric Company, the Sons and Daughters of the Pioneers, the Helena Building Association, the Home Building and Loan Association, the Helena Water Company, the Livingstone Coke and Coal Company, and the Spokane Ranch Company. He was also treasurer of the Scottish Rite Lodge and the Morning Star Lodge Number Five.

As an official of the community, he was appointed by his friend and then current governor of Montana, Samuel T. Hauser, as Montana's first Public Notary.
In addition, he was Helena's mayor three times: from 1883 to 1884, from 1886 to 1887, and from 1891 to 1892. In 1884, he lost his incumbent office as mayor to J. L. Sullivan by only two votes! He performed many services to the community, including representing Helena when the railroad tracks leading to Helena were joined in 1883. In 1895, Kleinschmidt sat on the platform from which William Jennings Bryan spoke as he was running for the presidency of the United States. Kleinschmidt also signed the petition to make Helena the permanent capital of Montana. Finally, he was an adamant supporter of the construction of Canyon Ferry Dam.

On September 6, 1913, Theodore H. Kleinschmidt died in the city he had lived in for four decades, Helena. He was survived by four sons and a daughter (his wife died in 1904). One of Montana's influential, versatile, and active builders had died, leaving a personal history familiar to many of his contemporaries. The home he built remains as a legacy to his past.

Though William E. Norris, architect of the Kleinschmidt domocile, was twenty-three years younger than his client, the two men shared some historical similarities. He was born on the prairie enroute from Utah to Virginia City, July 10, 1862. As with Kleinschmidt, so too Norris lost his father at a young age. Like T. H., he was active in the community affairs of Helena. He was a member of the Home Loan Association and the
State League of Building and Loan Associations.  

William E. Norris was also the owner (with his brother, James) of a confectionary shop. Norris was noted for the fine decorations which he produced. Perhaps, this skill aided him when he was decorating the homes which he designed. As an architect, he advertised, "Fine Residences a Specialty," in this occupation from 1891 to 1900. Under this advertisement, Norris placed Kleinschmidt's dwelling as an example of his accomplishments.

The young architect, similar to his client and many other men of the day, was affected adversely by the Panic of 1893. He was forced to close his confectionary shop and find work elsewhere. He recovered his losses and moved from Montana in 1900. He died in Santa Rosa, California on April 11, 1944, at the age of 84.

The structure Norris designed serves as an excellent example of the architecture of Helena, Montana, and of the West during the "Gilded Age." The Kleinschmidt House incorporates several varieties of architecture--such as the romanesque arch, elements from the Queen Anne Style, and "gingerbread" decoration.

The Kleinschmidt abode does have "gingerbread" adornments, but they are balanced and not overly done. This is a credit to the architect. The cornices on the veranda and balconies, the decorative facades hanging
from the roof's arches, the terra cotta relief on the second floor of the tower, and the spires on top of the roof's arches all serve to give pleasure to the eye, while demonstrating the wealth and taste of the home's owner.

The fact that Norris did not make this house overly ornate adds to its beauty. This beauty is also complemented by the home's balanced and well-defined lines. Jean Baucus, a student of Helena architecture, refers to the dwelling as the "'Flagship' of the fleet of homes. . ." in the Lenox division. John N. DeHaas, professor of architecture at Montana State University, uses the home as an example of the Eclectic style and of "gingerbread" decoration in the state of Montana. Lambert Florin, a student of the Victorian Age in the West, includes this house as a typical example of the mansions built during that period. Hence, the Kleinschmidt Mansion is regarded as a fine piece of architecture and as an excellent example of Helena's, of Montana's, and of the West's architecture during the "Gilded Age."

The parcel of land that this illustration of Eclectic architecture occupies was purchased by Kleinschmidt in 1890. The home was probably completed in 1892, as this was the year in which Kleinschmidt was first listed as residing there at 1823 Highland Avenue. The location of the home is north and east of "Last Chance Gulch" and the now-existing capitol building.
is part of the Lenox division which had been the property of Richard Lockey, the "Duke of Last Chance Gulch."
This far-eastern locale, in respect to other mansions built at the same time in Helena, adds to the uniqueness and view of the Helena valley from the residence.

Despite its remoteness from downtown Helena, the home's locale did not hamper the installation of the conveniences of the day, including water, sewage disposal, gas, and electricity. There was even trolley service to the mansion which took fifteen minutes to arrive from the "Gulch."

In conclusion, Theodore H. Kleinschmidt and his house are typical of the epoch in many ways. T. H. Kleinschmidt was an emigrant who was able to advance economically and socially. He was active in community and state affairs. Most important for our purposes, he built a mansion which displays the Eclectic architecture and "gingerbread" ornamentation so popular during the "Gilded Age." The home will serve as a tool for further study of the social and architectural style of the period from 1870 to 1900.

2Ibid.

3Michael P. Malone and Richard B. Roeder, *A History of Two Centuries* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), p. 159. As a capitalist, "For a Time [W.A.] Clark and Daly cooperated in their common financial interest, . . . They became known, along with Helena capitalist Samuel Hauser and C.A. Broadwater, as the 'Big Four' of the ruling Democratic party."

4*Helena Independent*, November 21, 1893.


6*Helena Independent*, July 26, 1904.

7Lewis and Clark County, *Deed Book* (1893) bi. 31:505.

8*Helena Independent*, July 10, 1892.


10Ibid.

11Ibid.

12*Helena Independent*, April 6, 1884.

13Ibid., August 22, 1883.

14Ibid., October 3, 1895.

15Ibid., September 1, 1892.

16Ibid., April 22, 1892.

17Ibid., September 7, 1913.

19 Polk's Helena Directory, eds. 1892 to 1901.

20 Ibid., ed. 1893.

21 Obituary File, "William E. Norris."

22 American Heritage Dictionary describes "romanesque" as "pertaining to, or designating a transitional style of European architecture prevalent from the 9th to 12th century."

23 Ibid., describes "cornices" as "A horizontal molded projection that crowns or completes a building or wall."

24 Ibid., describes "terra cotta" as "A hard, semi-fired, waterproof ceramic clay used in pottery and building construction."


26 Interview with Janet Sperry, Owner of Kleinschmidt Home, Helena, Montana, October, 1982.


28 Polk's Helena Directory, ed. 1892.
CHAPTER III

ECLECTIC ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of the American "Gilded Age" reflected the culture which produced it. The culture of the period from 1870 to 1900 was, in part, both funded and inspired by the "new rich." The parvenu class was also a product of the "Gilded Age." Thus, the ideals and tastes of this class are identifiable in the structures which it financed to erect. These ideals included individualism, capitalism, and elitism. Eclectic architecture served to promote these ideals and tastes.

The definition of Eclectic architecture varies according to the tastes of the analyst. The American Heritage Dictionary describes it as "Choosing what appears to be the best from diverse sources, systems, or styles." This analysis is mild in comparison with the vehemence of the following quotation:

"Eclectic is the artistically valueless imitation of old, and therefore irrelevant, architectural styles for the gratification of the predatory, philistine rich." On the other hand, Eclectic could be praised by other analysts:

One may perhaps generalize about Eclectic Classicists, Gothicists, and the others and
describe their art as an affair of taking up forms of proven and mature beauty from the formal and the vernacular architectures of the past and adapting them learnedly but with personal touches.  

Whatever the taste of the analyst, Eclectic architecture in America was built with American ideals, tastes, purposes, and scales in mind. Therefore, Eclectic architecture in America was specifically American. Yet, American architects often found inspiration in the buildings of Europe and antiquity.

The point at which the Eclectic first appeared in the United States is debated. Most critics of the period would agree that by 1872 the style was being used. By that year, Charles Locke Eastlake's *Hints on Household Tastes* was an "instant success" in the United States. This book provided sketches and patterns to follow which advanced the Queen Anne Style but in the Eclectic mode. Charles Follen Kim, another eminent architect introduced the Colonial Revival in 1872 in Newport, Rhode Island. In the following year, Henry Hobson Richardson, America's most influential architect at the age, designed the Trinity Church in Boston, which some scholars claim to be the first Eclectic building constructed in the United States. Hence, Eclectic architecture came into use gradually, rather than bursting upon the scene between 1870 and 1900.

The styles popular in the "Gilded Age" indicate the diversity of inspiration which served the architects
of the period. These styles included: Italinate, Second Empire, High Victorian Gothic, Stick Style, Queen Anne, Richardsonian Romanesque, Classical and Colonial Revivals. John C. Palmes, an architectural historian, divided the various styles into two streams for the period that he labels the "Second Eclectic Phase," which encompassed the years between 1860 and 1930. The first stream in this epoch promoted the Romanesque Revival which culminated in the famous buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright. The second stream of the age was more academic than the first school, being influenced by the Ecole des Beaux Arts, which was a university in France. The second school promoted the Italian and French Renaissance, Ancient Greek and Roman Classicism, and the High Victorian Gothic. It was during this period, Palmes maintained, that American architecture became significant internationally.

Though the Eclectic in America became significant, it was influenced by trends originating outside the United States. England and France provided the majority of these influences. It must be stressed that American architects followed some examples of the Europeans but added American ideals, tastes, purposes, and scales.

The English made a great impact on Eclectic architecture in America. Besides Eastlake's sketch-book, Bruce Talbert, a very famous English architect, designed a Victorian Gothic home with "Eastlakean solidity and
rationalism."8 This dwelling would serve as an example to American architects who were following Talbert's and Eastlake's model. This model was known as the Queen Anne Style, which mixed together with elements of Georgian, Jacobean, and Japanese domestic architecture.9 This style was one of the most popular styles of the period in England and the United States.

The social structure producing Eclectic architecture in England was similar to the social division of America that produced comparable architecture. The aristocracy and landed gentry of England desired homes and other dwellings which were "spectacular and richly ornamented, and which had correct historical, religious and moral overtones. . ."10 the established, elite patrons of America. However, "While old aristocracy and gentry tended to keep the Gothic and Elizabethan style, the 'nouveaux riches,' who wanted something more showy for their money, frequently chose the French Renaissance . . . [It was] particularly popular among bankers and financiers."11 The tendency of the "nouveaux riches" in the United States and England toward ornamentation and showiness had its derivation in England. Thus, "gingerbread" decoration, which was used extensively by the "new rich" in America, had its impetus in England.

The French also influenced American architecture during the "Gilded Age." France advanced a vast amount of material for sketch-books (detailing architectural
forms) because France was a haven for almost all major styles from the past, including Gothic, Romanesque, Renaissance, and Classical forms. France also sponsored the Ecole des Beaux Arts, which many great American architects from the era attended. The school stressed ideals of beauty, clear planning, and a return to past glory, all with a pragmatic approach. Some typical features which the school forwarded were the mansard roof, rough-surfaced stone, "overdone" columns, and entablatures. Though France and England most influenced Eclectic architecture in America, other parts of Europe also provided models and inspirations which "overcultivated" young architects brought back and used in the United States.

The patrons of these young architects were usually members of wealthier classes, especially the parvenu class. The "nouveaux riches" determined the direction of architecture because they appreciated, and therefore paid for, the style which was built. Thus, the patron was as influential in the design as the architect. Walter C. Kidney, commentator on the period, explains, "[it was] purely as an affair between the client and his bank account. . . ." The ideals and tastes of the rising "nouveaux riches" were demonstrated in American Eclectic architecture. One of these ideals was individualism. Because of this individualism, "eclecticism is one of those phases in
architectural history when the human factor was involved most conspicuously. Many regional styles grew out of the spirit of individualism as ethnic groups desired to imitate a style from their country of origin. For this reason, in the Southwestern states, and in Louisiana, and Florida, many of the buildings were Spanish or Latin in imitation. New England illustrated a tendency toward English influences as this region consisted of many people of English descendent. Ultimately, the very nature of Eclectic architecture allowed for individualism because it did incorporate so many different styles and methods of decoration which were utilized in an infinite number of ways.

Another ideal of the parvenu class was the demonstration of capital. John Burchard, a scholar of the social aspects of architecture, describes this notion thusly: "the rich built a flagrant display of wealth and a half-preserved European taste. . . ." There were two methods of achieving this ideal. One method was by designing massive structures with towers, pavilions, marble loggias, and ponderous antiques. Another approach was to ornament a design with needless adornment. This would lead to the reaction which was guided by the "modernists," the post-Eclectic architects. They avoided gaudiness so as "to design escaping the traps of ostentation and vulgarity that pervaded Millionaires' Row on Fifth Avenue." Walter C. Kidney, a scholar of the period,
notes that the "nouveaux riches" "was pretentious and ambitious, and spent money on showy architecture."18

Another aspiration that marked the "new rich" class was their inclination to imitate the past. Thus, while Eclectic seemed to be new, it was often based on styles of the past rather than on a new or revolutionary mode. The styles of antiquity, especially those from Europe, did not change and carried with them some notion of dignity and royalty. Burchard explains the parvenu class as "they who wistfully hoped to acquire prestige through foreign forms. . . ." He contends that the "barons" wanted an imperial architecture; in other words, they sought to be seen as an elite group, an upper class.19

Though the "nouveaux riches" wanted to be in the same class, these men yearned to be distinct from one another. The many different modes added greater emphasis to the ideals of Eclectic architecture in the "Gilded Age." Through observations and demonstrations, many styles within Eclectic can be discussed for insights into the culture of this epoch. Because the Eclectics studied mass, color, proportion, scale, and materials, they designed these facets into their plans to heighten the optical effect of their edifices. The intended purpose of a dwelling aided in the choosing of a style or styles. Homes were often Georgian, Cotswold, or Tudor in New England. Mansions were erected in Victorian
Gothic, Queen Anne, and Second Empire styles. Churches were often Colonial, Romanesque, or Gothic Revival in production. Christian Scientists often preferred the rational modes of the Classical Revival, as did many American governments at the national, state, and local levels.

During the "Gilded Age," the locale of Helena also provided an environment which fostered the development of Eclectic architecture in Montana and the West. Moreover, Helena was fortunate to preserve some facets of culture which reflected the ideals and tastes of the "new rich" who were living in Helena at the time of the "Gilded Age." By 1889, Helena had reached the peak of a decade of furious building, which declined after the Panic of 1893. It was during this decade that the majority of Helena's mansions were constructed. Thus, "At about this time [about 1875] the leading people of Helena realized that architectural style was important in buildings and the dormered mansard roof of the French Second Empire was introduced. . . ."21

The "Sanford Home" on 404 North Benton Avenue in Helena, Montana is an excellent example of the Second Empire style. This home, erected in 1883, has a mansard roof with cast-iron pinnacles to crown the house. The construction was of red brick, which was consistent with other Second Empire designs using commercial brick. The windows were "headed" by lintels with shaped upper
edges. The quasi-tower with a terra cotta relief in a floral pattern was also typical of this French-inspired design. Two features common to most Second Empire plans were an undulating facade and a rusticated stone for the basement or bearing walls. Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate the common traits of the Second Empire style.

The Victorian Gothic style was the most popular style in the United States during the "Gilded Age." This style exploited brick, industrially produced, in polychromy or multi-colored bands which set-off contrasting colors. Wood was also employed, usually in the form of clapboards and ornamental shingles. These techniques resulted in a broad, tall structure with Gothic arches, complex rooflines, towers, and porches. The decoration, which was usually "gingerbread," was often extensive and could be found in all parts of the design. This decoration included carved scrolls, lattice, spindles, and basket-weave patterns in terra cotta (see figure 3). Though this style was very popular, no Helena mansion adequately typifies the unique qualities of the Victorian Gothic.

The Saint Helena Cathedral built in Helena, beginning in 1905, was a miniaturized copy of a Gothic cathedral in Vienna. Thus, the European style obviously served as the inspiration for this Gothic Revival edifice. However, the scale of this church is American (see figure 4).
Figure 1

Photograph of the "Sanford Home"
Figure 4
Saint Helena Cathedral
The Richardsonian Romanesque was a very prevalent style in America and in Helena. This mode was employed in all types of buildings, but it was most popular in churches and business buildings. Two edifices in Helena were constructed by Thomas C. Power, entrepreneur and one time senator for Montana. Both of these structures were executed in the Richardsonian Romanesque. This style featured heavy, rough-hewn stone which was dark in color. It employed low romanesque arches supported by stubby columns. The plan was usually squarish, with very little ornamentation, to stress qualities of weight, density, and permanence. The home and business of T. C. Power reflect the previously mentioned qualities as seen in figures 5 and 6.

Classical and Colonial Revivals were typically more austere in decoration than most of the other styles of the "Gilded Age." For this reason, Classical Revival was executed in fraternal and civic buildings which were massive but calm in bearing. This style was more popular among the "rich and knowledgeable families." The Montana capitol was designed in the Classical mode, as the symmetry, balance, and austerity of the structure demonstrate (see figure 7). Other types of revivals common during this epoch of eclecticism included: Georgian Revival, Jacobean Revival, Neo-Renaissance Revival, Mission Style Revivial, Spanish Colonial Revival, and the Tudor Revival which inspired certain aspects of
Figure 5
The Power Building
Figure 6

Detail of the T.C. Power home
Figure 7
Montana State Capitol Building
St. Charles Hall, Carroll College, Helena.26

The Queen Anne style was very popular in America and in Helena. It "vies with High Victorian Gothic as the most exuberant and eclectic style in color, forms, and massing. . . ."27 Its popularity is illustrated in by this quotation:

During the 1880's, the Queen Anne style of housing became popular in the United States, and as Montana by this time had relatively quick communication with the rest of the country, architectural styles of building spread rapidly. There are probably more Queen Anne houses in Helena built at the time than any other style.28

The style of Queen Anne was characterized by elaborate columns and railings. The mode often incorporated a porch or veranda over a wide section of the edifice. A tower or turret was usually placed in one or two corners of the dwelling. The first floor was often brick, while the upper half of the structure was constructed of wood. Tall chimneys were another common element of these structures. The Queen Anne style was well suited for ornamentation.29 In light of the mode's popularity and exhibition of wealth through adornment, it can serve as a very good example of the architecture of the period between 1870 and 1900 (see figure 8).

The mansion of T. H. Kleinschmidt was constructed in the Queen Anne style and will be discussed in great detail in Chapter IV. Eclectic architecture was born out of the "Gilded Age." This architecture represented
Figure 8

the ideals and tastes of the patrons of this form of culture, like T. H. Kleinschmidt. These patrons, the "nouveaux riches," built structures that reflected their personal emphasis on individualism, capitalism, and elitism. The diversity of individualism aided in the profusion of styles which were used during the "Gilded Age." Thus, the preceding chapter discusses an individual edifice expressing not only many of the ideals of its owner but also the many facets of the age from which it arose.
ENDNOTES


3Ibid., p. 1.

4Ibid., p. 5.

5Ibid., p. 15.


9Ibid.


11Ibid., p. 43.


13Ibid., p. 58.

14Ibid., p. 68.

15Ibid., p. 45.


17Ibid., p. 111.


21Ibid., p. 4.


23Ibid., p. 55.


27Ibid., p. 52.


29Wrenn and Mulloy, *America's Forgotten*, p. 56.
CHAPTER IV

THE HOME OF T. H. KLEINSCHMIDT

A lasting product of the "Gilded Age" is the architecture of the parvenu or the "new rich" class. Eclectic architecture was the most predominant architecture which the "new rich" patronized. Often the structures which were built in this mode were decorated with "gingerbread" ornamentation. The homes built in Helena during the "Gilded Age" by members of the "new rich" displayed elements common to the whole era. The house built by Theodore H. Kleinschmidt, a member of the parvenu class in Helena, reflects many of these common features. The Kleinschmidt house also exemplifies many facets of the Queen Anne Style, a style within Eclectic architecture.

The home of T. H. Kleinschmidt combines several styles, the main inspiration being, as indicated, the Queen Anne style. This mode often incorporated lengthy verandas, towers, brick constructed lower stories with wooden structures for the upper floors, and tall chimneys. The home built by T. H. Kleinschmidt was built with these features, though the second floor was constructed of brick and the tall chimneys have been replaced. A
further and more detailed exploration of the components of this mansion aid in our understanding of the architecture and the culture which gave birth to the house.

The T. H. Kleinschmidt house, like many other mansions built during the period, was erected on a large plot, and in a prominent position. The lot on which the home stands slopes toward a retaining wall that accents the prominence of the structure. An early photograph (see figure 9) of the house shows no shrubs around it, but presently there are many shrubs and a large cottonwood off the northeast corner of the building (see figure 10).

The structure has a one-story veranda or porch which shades two-thirds of the north face of the home and curves around the east face to an extension or canopy which forms the carriage entrance. There is also an extension of the veranda from the front entrance to some wooden steps that lead to Highland Avenue. Both of these extensions have pointed arches decorated by a triangle which the arch forms. These arches were originally crowned with spindles, but presently these spindles are absent (compare figures 9 and 10). The veranda has a balustrade, or hand rail, supported by spindle-shaped balusters\(^1\) around the veranda's perimeter. The balustrade is complemented by a cornice\(^2\) hanging from the roof. The cornice is also filled with spindles but of a different shape than those of the hand rail.
Figure 9

An early photograph of the T. H. Kleinschmidt house (Courtesy of the Montana Historical Society, Photograph Archives)
Figure 10

A present photograph of the T. H. Kleinschmidt house
Below the cornice are flattened arches which are supported by thin, undecorated columns (see figure 10).

The mansion's basement of rubble stone wall is full-sized and stands partially above ground level. Upon this foundation, the first two stories of the three story home were built of red brick. This brick is similar in composition and color to the brick found in other Helena mansions erected during the "Gilded Age." Most of this brick came from Kessler's brickyard, a famous Montana brickyard.

The carriage entrance is located on the east side of this brick and wooden structure. Also part of the first-floor of the east-side is a romanesque arch which forms a window, and a wooden screen porch which was once a greenhouse. Above the first-floor, a balcony was constructed which is open to the east and the north. Like the other second story balcony, the lower half is also composed of brick. In contrast to the west-side porch, the east-side balcony is covered with "fish scale" shingles. The roof of the east-side balcony seems to be supported by two flattened arches which face east and north. On both sides of the east-facing arch are two open screens of thin wooden spindles with wooden balls at the intersections of the spindles (see figure 11).

Above and to the south of the balcony, a steep, pointed arch stands prominently in front of the higher
Figure 11

East face of the T. H. Kleinschmidt house
arch. This arch is smaller than its superior and serves to complete the southern half of the building. The higher arch, which is the highest arch of the building, is atop the mid-section of the mansion (see figure 10). Both arches extend out several feet from the structure's walls. A foot-wide facade hangs from the arches' roofs. The lower arch's facade is carved with half daisies while the upper arch's facade is carved with rectangles separated by circles. The rectangles, circles, and daisies, when painted, add a fine appearance to the home (compare figures 9 and 11). A triangle with beveled wooden slats resembling sunbeams that are gathered into a half-circle ornaments the highest arch. Both arches were originally capped with wooden spires, as were the other remaining arches. Unfortunately, these spindles are no longer in place (see figure 11).

Beneath both of the east-side's arches are located windows. The lower arch overhangs two windows which are formed from a wall decorated with horizontal slats of wood. The higher arch of this side of the building is projected over three windows formed from a wall ornamented with curved slats of wood beside the windows and squares of wooden slats above the windows (see figure 11).

The south-side of the building faces the foothills. The wooden screen porch of the east-side is enclosed on this face of the building. The rear entrance of
this structure is protected by an open area supported by a square brick column. The south-side is under one arch. This arch has no decorations on its foot-wide facade or in its peak. Yet, the wooden third floor wall is covered with "fish scale" shingles (see figure 12). The fact that the south-side of this building was not decorated or ornamented to the extent of the other sides may indicate the designer and/or patron were concerned with showing extreme wealth only on those sides of the structure which would be readily seen.

The west side of the building faces the city of Helena. To accommodate this view and the view to the south, two porches were built. (The second-story porch is properly called a balcony.) The first-floor porch is composed of two romanesque arches facing west and south. The second-story balcony has a two-foot wall of brick with a rough-hewn, grey stone crown as its base. The roof of the balcony is the same construction as the east-side balcony. Nevertheless, the flattened arches face south and west, rather than north and east. In parallel construction to the east side, the first floor of the west side contains another romanesque arch (see figure 12).

The west side of the T. H. Kleinschmidt home, like the east side, has a steep, pointed arch formed by the roof which connects the two highest arches of the building. The decoration of this arch complements the opposite
Figure 12

South and west faces of the T. H. Kleinschmidt house
side of the structure by repeating the ornamentation of the arch and of the foot-wide facade (compare figures 11 and 12). A different method of embellishment was used beside and above the windows of the west side. Beside the third-story windows "fish scale" shingles are used for adornment. In contrast to other sides, above these west-side windows, staggered wooden slats decorate the wall (see figure 12). A tower completes the west side; it will be discussed with the north side of the edifice.

The north face of this mansion is the most complex, as it serves the front entrance and, consequently, is viewed by more people. This method of displaying more decoration on those areas of a building which were viewed most frequently was a common technique among the "Gilded Age" architects.

A veranda covers two-thirds of the first floor of this edifice's north face. The other third of the first floor is placed at the base of the tower. A Romanesque arch completes the ground floor. The arch is enhanced by its position on the tower (see figure 13). The tower, located at the northwest corner of the structure, is extended out several feet from the main building. The tower is square-shaped. The second floor of the tower has two windows on the north face. Below these windows a decoration in terra cotta is located. The pattern of this terra cotta relief is comprised of flowers
Figure 13
North face of the T. H. Kleinschmidt house
centered around a sea shell (see figure 14). The tower's third story has two windows on the north face. The walls of the third floor are covered with "fish scale" shingles. Crowning the walls of the upper-most story, but not part of the roof, is a band of carved daisies, equidistant from one another (see figure 14). The roof of the tower is described by John N. Dehaas, professor of architecture at Montana State University, as a "quasi-onion shaped pointed roof having small dormers [a window on a sloping roof] framing a semi-circular light or window." A lightning arrester completes the tower (see figure 14).

Like the tower, the east side of the north face extends several feet from the house. The second floor has three windows. One window is larger than the other two and is framed on three sides with stained glass. The bottom of the third floor is demarcated by a band of circles executed in wood. These wooden circles are larger than those spheres on the band that marks out the third floor of the tower on the east side and the west side (compare figures 11, 12, and 13).

The eastern two-thirds of the third floor of the north face is produced by an arch. The walls under the arch are covered by horizontal slats of wood. From the wall, a balcony is projected in the fashion of an oriel window. The balcony is open to the east, north, and west (though the view of the east and the west is somewhat obstructed by the roof). The main view is
Figure 14

Detail of the Northwest Tower of the T. H. Kleinschmidt house
directed to the north and the Helena Valley. A hand rail filled with spindles forms a base for the balcony which is supported by a flattened arch. The east and west faces, which are angled at forty-five degrees form the north face, have solid wood hand rails with a carved circle protruding from their centers. Above the eastern and western hand rails are two cornices of criss-crossing lattice in the same execution as the east side balcony (compare figures 11 and 13). A pointed arch rises above this third-story balcony. The arch is ornamented by a foot-wide facade that is carved in the same manner as the two highest peaks. Distinctive of this north-side arch is its triangle. The triangle holds a half-circle of spindles drawn to a solid half-sphere (see figure 13). The third floor of the north side is especially typical of "gingerbread" decoration with its balcony, triangle, and arch facade.

The tower roof, the parallel arches of the east and west sides, and the arches of the north and south ends of the T. H. Kleinschmidt home all unite to form the most complex roof-line of any of the mansions erected in Helena during that period. Hence, the architect, William E. Norris, while including a certain sense of symmetry in designing the home, also went out of his way to add unique features (such as the third-story balcony and the north-west corner tower) that were indicative of the age's Eclectic architecture.
The interior of the building is equal to, or even surpasses, the external beauty and complexity of this mansion. Beyond the wooden front doors, there is a small entry-way with another set of doors executed in a similar technique as the other front doors. Beyond this entry-way, a nineteen-room mansion with five fireplaces, five bedrooms, a ballroom, and other rooms, exists with no major changes in design since its erection in 1892.

The entry-way opens onto the hall, which is paneled with four-feet-high stained oak. The panels are stained unevenly, with darker areas separated by lighter areas. The staining was done very well as it gives the hall a pleasing appearance. Like many of the other rooms of the house, this hall has closets which are on both sides of the entry-way. Two sliding doors of oak are located in this hall, which open into two parlors (see figure 15).

Other than the sliding doors, the hall also holds a fireplace. The fireplace is surrounded by brown tile, with a tile relief of a maiden holding a tamborine as she stands among some foliage. This relief is directly above the fireplace yet below the mantel. The mantel of oak encloses the tile and the fireplace on three sides. This mantel is carved into four columns with corinthian capitals and maple leaf decorations. A large mirror is held by the mantel and by the ledge
Figure 15

First-story floor plan of the T. H. Kleinschmidt house
that the mantel forms.

At the far end of the first-floor hall are steps that proceed to the second floor. Beyond the first step, and a platform that the steps form, is a cornice or screen suspended from the ceiling. The screen is composed of two rectangles which hold half-circles formed by beautifully carved spindles.

The stairway from the first floor forms an uncoiled square as it ascends to the second floor. A newel post, with an ornately incised sphere resting on its top, starts the balustrade which begins at the platform of the stairway. This post is one of four, the second of which is on a midfloor platform that serves as another corner of the uncoiled square. The third post is at the top of the stairs. The fourth newel post is a corner-post for the balustrade that occupies the perimeter of the void which the stairs create. The posts and accompanying balustrade are constructed of oak, as are the balusters or spindles that fill the balustrade. The stairway's walls are paneled with stained oak in the same fashion as the first-floor hall.

Before ascending these steps, we should examine in detail the first floor. While in the hall, one can go to a parlor on the right or the left. The parlor on the right-hand, or the northwest corner, of the building sits below the tower. It is lit during the day by three windows, one of the windows being formed by
the romanesque arch on the north face of the structure. The room has a fireplace that is surrounded by brown tile, but of a lighter color than the tiles of the hall fireplace. Like the hall fireplace, this fireplace is encased in an oak mantel that is similar in all respects except tile coloring. The oak paneling of the hall continues in this room as it does in the parlor on the left-hand or eastern side of the first floor.

The parlor, or sitting room, of the left side of the edifice is more spacious in width and has better lighting than its counterpart on the right side. This room also has a fireplace but the inlaid tile is green rather than brown. The fireplace is based in cement with small colorful tile inlays. The cement forms a rectangle. The mantel encompassing the fireplace is executed in the same design as the other fireplaces, with the exception of its material, which is cherry rather than oak.

This sitting room contains a door that opens into the dining room (see figure 15). This spacious dining room is lit during the day by a large window shaped by a romanesque arch which is part of the east face of the building. The window is divided into four sections. The top two sections hold exquisite productions of stained glass. In the western corners of the dining room, two unique cabinets are hung. Seemingly, they are supported by ornate posts with stylish arms connected
to the room's walls. The cabinets were done delicately as they support large pieces of glass that make up the majority of the cabinet's doors. Almost in the middle of the west wall of the room is a door which forms a ninety-degree angle with the staircase. The south wall contains two doors (see figure 15). The first of these doors (more toward the east side of the house) opens into a small greenhouse. The second door leads into a smaller room, which in turn leads to the kitchen. This smaller room has no decoration and may have originally served as a pantry.

The kitchen is rather austere in decoration, though there is a romanesque arch formed in the western wall of the room. The kitchen is located so that conversation cannot be heard from other rooms. A bell and intercom system had, at one time, been installed, but presently it does not function. The kitchen contains a stairway leading to the basement, and the rear entrance is also located in this room. The basement has a wooden floor and is finished in oak. It also holds a fireplace which is formed by carved Italian marble.

The second floor is as well decorated as the first floor. The hall of the second story begins at the top of the stairs leading to the first floor. Behind the stairwell is a servant's bedroom and a narrow corridor which leads to the steps ascending to the third floor (see figure 16).
Figure 16

Second-story floor plan of the T. H. Kleinschmidt house
The second-floor hall is paneled similarly to the first-floor hall. The doors in this hall are hinged, rather than sliding, where they open onto the second-story parlors. Near the north end of the hall an open sitting area exists because two partial walls protrude at ninety-degree angles to the hall's walls (see figure 16). The ninety-degree walls are connected by a screen of elaborately carved wood. Within this area is one large window facing northward. The window is framed on three sides with stained glass.

In the northeast corner of the mansion there is another sitting room. It has two windows directed northward and one window directed to the east. This room also contains a fireplace comparable to that fireplace in the first-floor hall. The mantel, nevertheless, is carved in cherry. This parlor has an exit into the master-bedroom.

The master-bedroom is large and is well lighted during the day by three windows. This bedroom contains a marble sink in the southwest corner of the room. A narrow corridor that proceeds to the south end of the building gives form to a bathroom (see figure 16). There is also an exit opening to a balcony which is part of the east face of the edifice. The balcony looks to the north and to the east.

The northwest corner of the structure might have been another sitting room but more likely was a bedroom.
The room has three windows, two of which face north. Because this room has three closets, the architect intended it to be more than a parlor or sitting room.

Sharing a common wall with the preceding room is another bedroom. The room is illuminated in daytime by two windows on the west wall of the house. Akin to the master-bedroom, this room is serviced by a marble sink and a balcony. The balcony opens the the south and the west. This bedroom has an exit into the hall near the stairwell (see figure 16).

South of the stairwell, there is a small passage, also paneled, which passes a small and austere servant's bedroom before ending at a door (see figure 16). The door opens to a set of steps that ascend to the third floor. The third floor, or attic, is primarily a ballroom. The ballroom is expansive as it is forty feet in width. There are four rooms adjacent to the ballroom (see figure 17). The ballroom ceiling reaches a height of twelve feet at its apex and tapers down to about six feet in some corners. The room receives sunlight from five windows in the east wall and three windows in the west wall. Under the windows of the western wall, rests a bench of oak.

There are two rooms to the south of the ballroom, one on either side of the doorway leading to the stairs. These rooms are small and were designed possibly for storage or as servants' quarters. The ceiling slopes
Figure 17

Third-story floor plan of the T. H. Kleinschmidt house
down in these rooms so that near the south wall the space is limited to a few feet.

On the opposite side of the third story of the mansion are two larger rooms. The first of these rooms is in the northwest corner as it is part of the tower. The room has four windows facing north and west. The room is suitable for a sitting room or a bedroom (see figure 17). Adjacent to this sitting room on the east side is another bedroom of greater size. This bedroom is connected to the balcony that opens to the north, east, and west (see figure 17). The third-floor balcony is a classic example of "gingerbread" decoration as illustrated and commented upon by Jean Baucus, a student of Helena's mansions, in her book, *Helena: Her Historic Homes* (Volume II).

When we consider the mansion on a whole, we are struck by a number of characteristics. The home is an example of the very popular Queen Anne style architecture with "gingerbread." This adornment effectively used many species of trees both on the inside and the outside. The various carvings included spindles, balusters, mantels, and triangles in the arches. Moreover, various uses of stone and brick also exemplify the beauty of the house and its showiness. As for the interior layout of the home, we see the house serving a dual function. It offered adequate space for entertaining large numbers of public guests; yet at the same time,
it provided the family with luxurious private quarters. Perhaps the most striking example of Eclectic architecture is the widespread use of bisecting arches to form the structure's extremely unique roof line. Clearly, the Kleinschmidt home as designed by William E. Norris was a striking addition to the architectural development of "Gilded Age" Helena.
ENDNOTES


2 American Heritage Dictionary defines "cornice" as a moulded projection that may either crown a structure or as a decoration between a wall and a ceiling.

3 "Fish scale" shingles are shingles that lay in such a manner that they resemble the scales of a fish.

4 American Heritage Dictionary defines "facade" as the face or front of anything; especially a false front. The facades of the Kleinschmidt home refer to a foot-wide board that decorates the arches of the home.


6 American Heritage Dictionary defines "oriel" as a projecting bay window which is supported by brackets.

7 American Heritage Dictionary defines "corinthian" and "capital" as a style that originated in Corinth. The style used columns with flowers incised on the head.

8 American Heritage Dictionary defines "newel" as a post that supports a hand rail at its corners and ends.

9 Interview with Janet Sperry, Owner of the Kleinschmidt House, Helena, Montana, October, 1982.

10 Ibid.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis is to add insight into the "Gilded Age." One method of analyzing the era is to focus on one aspect of the period that seems to exemplify many qualities inherent in the age. For this reason, T. H. Kleinschmidt and the home that he built were singled out to reflect the images of the "Gilded Age."

T. H. Kleinschmidt was chosen as a symbol of the era because he, like many other prominent men of Helena, exhibited common traits of the "new rich" class. Kleinschmidt joined Samuel T. Hauser to form the First National Bank of Helena. Through this investment and others, Kleinschmidt was able to become a wealthy member of Helena society. Similarly, he was adversely affected by the Panic of 1893, as were other investors. Ultimately, T. H. Kleinschmidt attempted to elevate himself in public offices, fraternal organizations, and civic associations.

Theodore H. Kleinschmidt, as a representative of the epoch between 1870 and 1900, exhibited qualities that the "new rich" wished to express, consciously or
unconsciously. He was an individual who had hopes and dreams which other men in the same circumstances shared. As a capitalist, he wished to increase his wealth. Why else invest? Kleinschmidt hoped to become part of an elite group or social class. Hence, he joined fraternal organizations with strict entrance requirements. He sought and obtained positions of prominence in local government and in civic organizations. Yet, this furious activity was not unique to Kleinschmidt, for many of Montana's, and the nation's, parvenu class portrayed these same qualities.

The architecture that the "new rich" preferred and patronized was Eclectic architecture. This architecture expressed the spirit of the class. The architecture relied on past forms combined in new and expressive manner. The patron could then feel secure in a proven architectural mode of the past, without sacrificing his individuality.

The Eclectic form was often easily decorated with "gingerbread" embellishment. This embellishment of houses was very popular during the "Gilded Age" because wealth could be ostentatiously displayed through the use of many and complex decorations.

The mansion that T. H. Kleinschmidt, a member of the "new rich" class, built holds characteristics that are part of the period from 1870 to 1900. The house is a fine example of Eclectic architecture, incorporating
romanesque arches and the Queen Anne style. Further, the structure is ornamented with "gingerbread" embellishment, as were other homes built during the same epoch in Helena, and in many parts of the United States. Hence, the mansion of Kleinschmidt represents a detailed source of information concerning the "Gilded Age" that survives to this day.
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