

OLD FARMHOUSES OF THE CHESAPEAKE: THEIR MESSAGE: BY WILLIAM DRAPER BRINCKLOE



THE Eastern Shore" folks call it; that flat, fertile stretch of land spread a hundred-odd miles along the eastern side of the Chesapeake from Havre de Grace on the Susquehanna to Tangier Island off the Pocomoke. Oysters and crabs for the catching; razor-backs, canvas-backs, diamond-backs, corn and red-ripe tomatoes by the "bugeye"-load! But better than these grosser joys, is the wondrous beauty of the water fronts, where the little salt fiords and creeks wander up into the pastures and woodlands. No malarious marshes or dreary sand-dunes, but fields and old forest trees sweeping down to the very touch of the tides.

Back in the seventeenth century, Lord Baltimore brought out his Catholic Englishmen to settle these shores; but a steady stream of Quakers and Church-of-England folk soon overflowed the first immigrants. The land was fat and good; the Indians friendly; the climate mild.

Colonial farm life on the Eastern shore of Maryland was a far softer, smoother thing than in the more northern colonies, with Iroquois, witches and bitter winters to make life hard and dour!

And so, scattered all along the eastern waters of the Chesapeake,



FIGURE 2-A: A PICTURESQUE FARM COTTAGE IN KENT ISLAND, QUEEN ANNE CO., MARYLAND: ITS FURTHER DEVELOPMENT IS SHOWN ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE AND THE IMPROVEMENT IN FLOOR PLAN ON PAGE 119.

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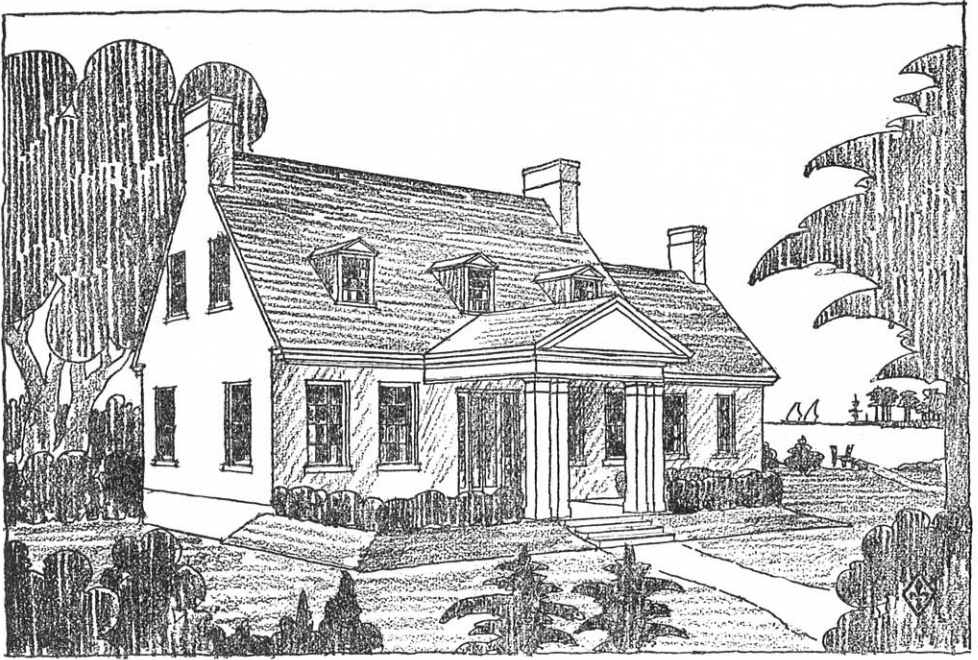


FIGURE 2-B: IMPROVED PLAN OF THE KENT ISLAND COTTAGE WITH LONGER KITCHEN, ADDITIONAL BEDROOMS, A SECOND BATH AND STORAGE: BRINCKLOE AND CANNING, INC., ARCHITECTS.

we find the little farm homes of these early Marylanders; homes that reflect the simple, pleasant life of the builders. Wonderfully interesting and suggestive, are these low-set farm cottages, and they have a very definite message to us, if we will heed it. For they are simple, straightforward, and free from all affectation; depending for their effect solely on proportion, symmetry and balance.

They are distinctly American, developed under conditions of climate and social life very similar to our own today. By studying the several types and adjusting them to our fuller modern needs, we shall get something most satisfactory and attractive; far better than much of the forced, exotic stuff we so often see.

Figure 1-A is a most interesting old farm cottage, built of brick, as were all the Eastern shore farmsteads; the porch is a somewhat later addition, but very skilfully worked in, nevertheless. All the very early homes of these colonists were copied more or less directly, from porchless English cottages; and the builders didn't realize, at first, the very great difference between the cool, moist climate of the Old Country, and the hot tropical summers of Maryland. The stuffy little bedrooms, with their tiny port-holes of windows, show this; veritable torture-chambers on an August night!

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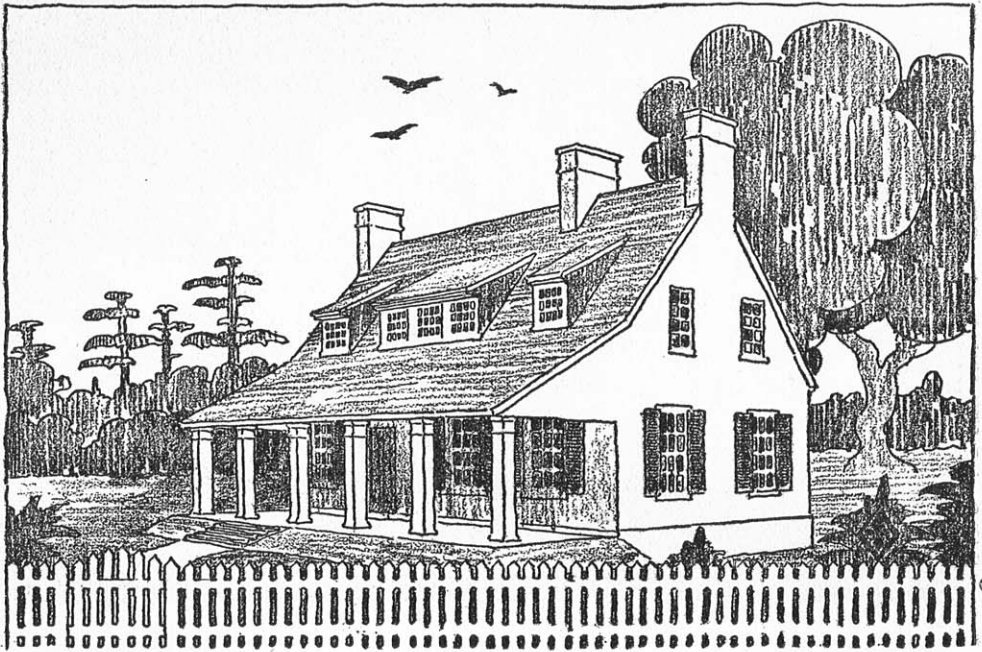


FIGURE 1-B: SHOWING THE COLONIAL COTTAGE ENLARGED AND ADJUSTED TO MODERN STANDARDS OF COMFORT: FLOOR PLAN ON PAGE 119: BRINCKLOE AND CANNING, INC., ARCHITECTS.

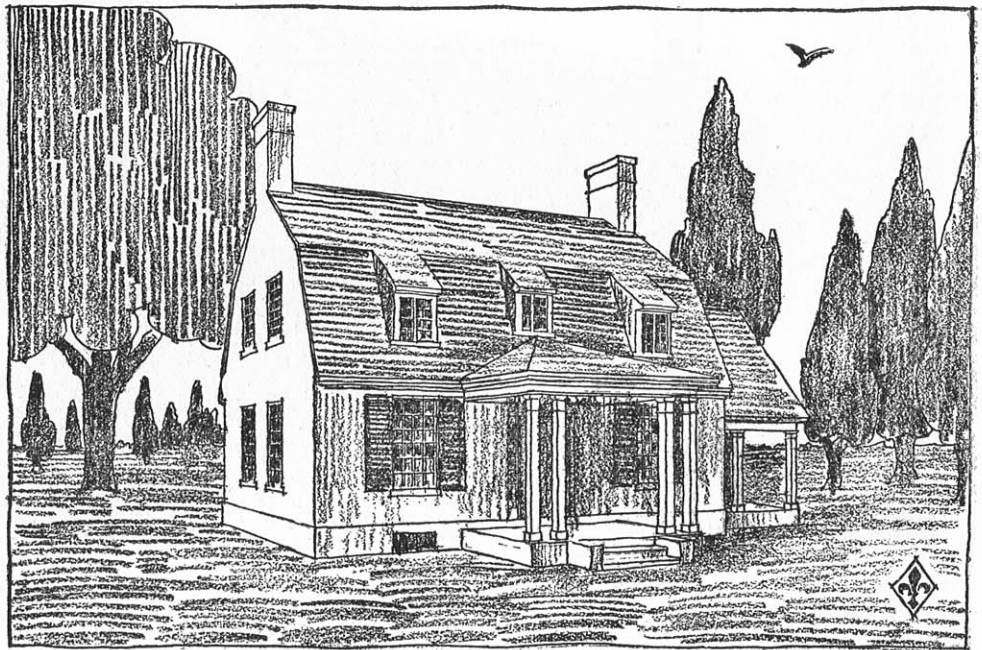


FIGURE 3-B: SKETCH OF THE EARLY GAMBREL ROOF COTTAGE WITH THE ENLARGED KITCHEN, MORE SUBSTANTIAL PORCH AND BETTER SPACING OF BEDROOMS: FLOOR PLAN ON PAGE 120: BRINCKLOE AND CANNING, INC., ARCHITECTS.



FIGURE 1-A: AN OLD FARM COTTAGE BUILT OF BRICK ON THE EASTERN SHORE OF MARYLAND: PICTURESQUE BUT LACKING PRACTICALLY EVERY CONVENIENCE: ON PAGE 96 IS THE MODERN PLAN BY MR. BRINCKLOE, AND THE FLOOR PLAN IS ON PAGE 119.

FIGURE 3-A: A TYPE OF COTTAGE WHICH DEVELOPED IN THE SOUTH IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: ONE OF THE FIRST EXAMPLES OF THE USE OF THE GAMBREL ROOF: ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE IS MR. BRINCKLOE'S IDEAL TO WHICH THIS COTTAGE COULD BE RAISED BY A THOUGHTFUL ARCHITECT AND PRACTICAL BUILDER: FLOOR PLAN SHOWN ON PAGE 120.



FIGURE 4-A: TWO VIEWS OF ANOTHER INTERESTING EXAMPLE OF THE SOUTHERN COTTAGE WITH GAMBREL ROOF: THESE PHOTOGRAPHS ARE FROM AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY HOUSE AT DOVEY BRIDGE, MARYLAND: ON THE NEXT PAGE IS SHOWN MR. BRINCKLOE'S DEVELOPMENT OF THIS RATHER SIMPLE HOME INTO A COMFORTABLE MODERN COTTAGE WITH GOOD-SIZED LIVING ROOM, DINING ROOM, FOUR BEDROOMS AND A SPACIOUS BATH: FLOOR PLANS TO BE FOUND ON PAGES 119 AND 120.

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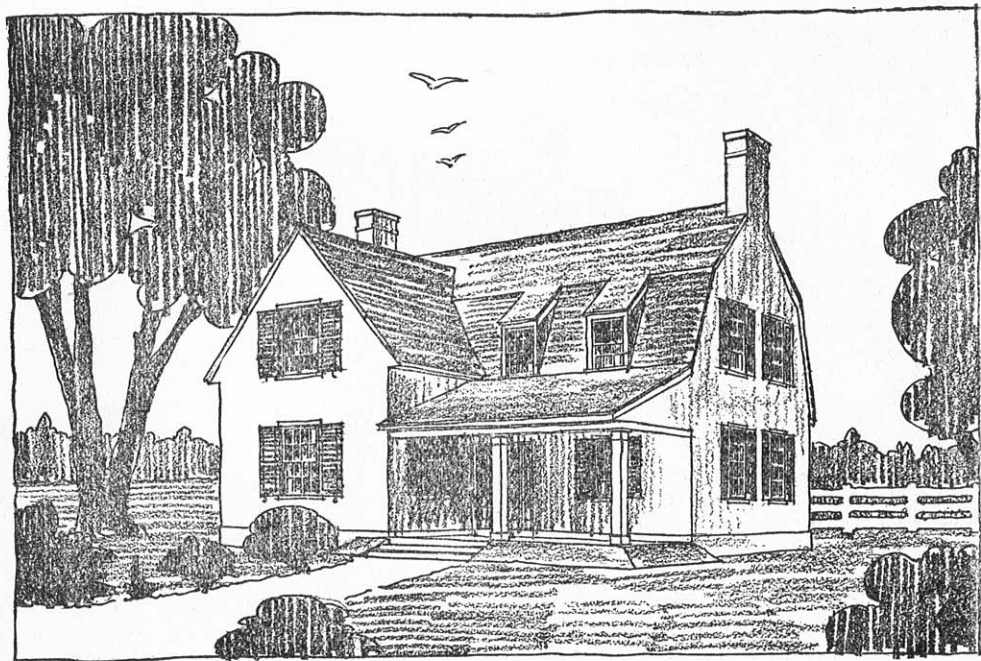


FIGURE 4-A: SHOWING IMPROVED MODEL.

Therefore, we must give better bedroom service; and the most convenient scheme is shown in Figure 1-B. A big living room fills the center of the first floor, with ample windows front and rear; a good-sized bedroom, with adjoining bath, uses up the right end of this story. Above, are three more bedrooms, and another bath; ranges of wide, low "Dutch" dormers give the needed light and air. Indeed, this sort of dormer seems to suit the sweep of the roof somewhat better than the peaked dormers of the old design.

Dining room, kitchen and pantry are at the left of the first floor; front stairs run up from the living room, meeting the kitchen stairs on the first landing, above the pantry.

The porch posts are made much sturdier, and various other small refinements of design are carried out; but the general proportions of the house are most carefully conserved.

Figure 2-A, from Kent Island, Queen Anne County, is a similar type, so far as the original house goes; but the porch added later is quite different. The frame kitchen too, is an afterthought of some fifty years; the colonists had come to realize the comfort and convenience of keeping the kitchen with its heat, smells and flies, outside the main house. The general proportions are excellent, but the porch is too small and too low with its eaves chopping into the windows on

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FIGURE 5-A: THE MOST ATTRACTIVE OF ALL THE SOUTHERN COTTAGES WHICH MR. BRINCKLOE HAS PHOTOGRAPHED IN MARYLAND: RENDERED SO, NOT BY THE ORIGINAL DESIGN BUT BY PICTURESQUE ADDITIONS AND BY THE PLANTING OF VINES IN THE DECORATIVE FASHION SO POPULAR THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN FRANCE.

either side. So, we work up a somewhat larger porch, with open terraces on either side; quite a good scheme, this.

The original plan was extremely simple—just one central hall, with living room and dining room on either hand, kitchen off to the left, two bedrooms and a hall room above. But we need another bedroom; so (Figure 2-B) we lengthen out the kitchen wing, shift the

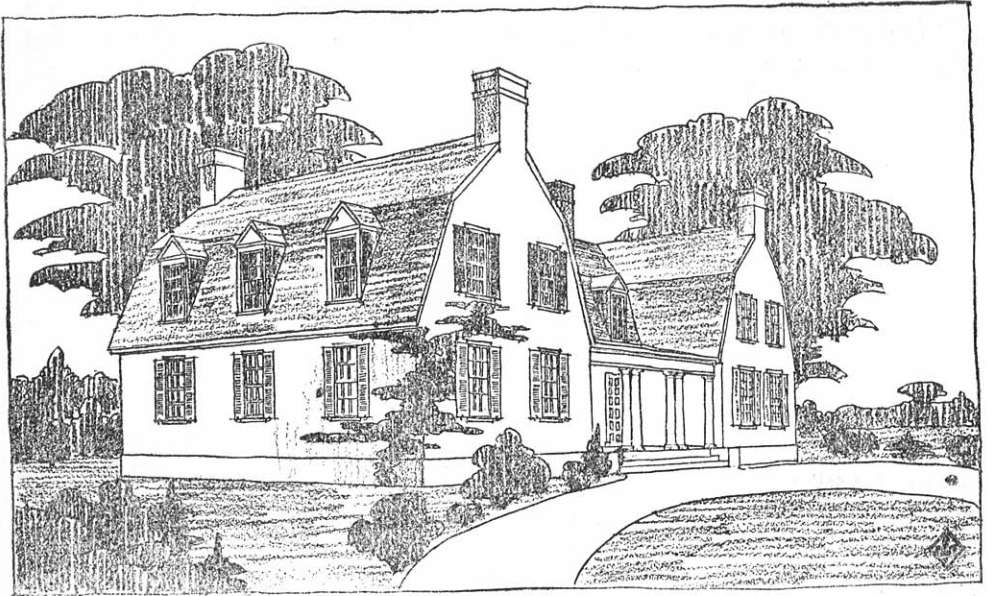


SECOND VIEW OF FIGURE 5-A, SHOWING PORCH AND INTERESTING ROOF.

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dining room and living room about somewhat, and thus get space for a large bedroom and bath, on the first floor. Upstairs, we have two good bedrooms, a second bath, and a storage room; though the bath may be omitted and a sewing room worked in, if desired.

So far we've been dealing with seventeenth century cottages; but along in the eighteenth, a new type developed—the gambrel roof (Figure 3-A). A purely American development, this; it seems to have been worked out simultaneously by the Puritans of New England, the Dutchmen of New York and New Jersey, the Swedes of Delaware, and Lord Baltimore's English Colonists of Maryland. A half-dozen more or less fanciful reasons have been given for its



THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOUSE SHOWN IN FIGURE 5-A ADDS MUCH TO THE COMFORT AND CHARM OF LIVING IN THE COTTAGE, BUT SEEMS TO HAVE LESSENED A LITTLE THE BEAUTY WHICH AGE AND CHANCE CONFER UPON THE ORIGINAL DWELLING: FLOOR PLAN SHOWN ON PAGE 121: BRINCKLOE AND CANNING, INC., ARCHITECTS.

birth, but the real reason seems just this: the colonists needed bigger, better, and cooler bedrooms to their story-and-a-half homes, and the gambrel-roof was the only practical solution. Figure 3-A is a typical example; though the ramshackle frame kitchen and the low-roofed front porch are obviously later additions.

A gambrel roof is a most pleasing thing when skilfully designed; but if an amateur meddles with it, the result is quite apt to be horrible beyond words! A few degrees too much or too little in the slant of one or the other roof-members; a few feet too long or too short, . . .

(Continued on page 119.)