

Barnum, Bluestone, Battell Are British Built Houses In Cobourg And Port Hope Portrayed

"The Poplars, Grafton, built by Eliakim Barnum, has the timeless charm of Neo-classicism in wood," says a recently published book, *The Ancestral Roof*, of Barnum House museum. The *Ancestral Roof* is the story of the ancestry of the domestic buildings of Upper Canada.

It is a truly remarkable and valuable record of Canada's early years, covering the period between 1784 when the United Empire Loyalists first began organized settlement in Upper Canada and 1867, the date of Confederation.

The book notes a peculiar building style of a number of the houses eastward of Toronto and makes special mention of the house at 271 Spring Street, Cobourg, an old Battell family home. This house has a door set in the central gable over the entrance doorway. About this upper door is a small veranda.

The peculiar building style is that of the old houses outside of the United Counties the upper door is often found but nearly always without the veranda around it. It simply opens outward to reveal a full storey drop, a fact that may have proven an unpleasant experience for the unwary visitor who decided to step out for a breath of fresh air.

The *Ancestral Roof* deals considerably with the houses of historic value in Cobourg and Port Hope and vicinity. Under a full page picture of Barnum House the caption

A porch, light in scale, designed for the Neo-classic facade of Whitehall, Cobourg.



reads: "The Poplars, Grafton, built by Eliakim Barnum, 1817, has the timeless charm of Neo-classicism in wood". Barnum House is also known as The Poplars. The book describes the building, now a museum, as being a "large timber framed house, a two-storey centre block with one-storey lateral wings, the back and sides clapboard, the flushboarded facade relieved by blind arcades, and the whole painted white".

The reason for the main entrance door being placed in one side of the main block of the building and not in the centre was because the centre hallway was simply not practical in a nineteenth-century house. As a result the hallway was set to the left of the main block where the door fits nicely between the two end pilasters.

"The pilasters of the Barnum door," states the book, "are smaller replicas of those which support the arcade. This order is a species of carpenter's Tuscan, the column not unlike Roman Doric, but without fluting. The orders employed in the design of Neo-classic houses in Upper Canada were almost invariably Roman in origin."

Another full page picture is that of the Bluestone House.

(Continued on page 2)

HOUSES

Houses

(Continued from page 1)
Port Hope. "The focal point of the Classical Revival house was not so much the entrance door as the porch which sheltered it," reads the caption. "The portion of the Bluestone House, Port Hope, is admirably expressed in the Ionic Order." This, too, was built more than 100 years ago.

"The book gives a concise history of the development of the Classical Revival including the fact that "early manifestations of the Classical Revival in Upper Canada are almost exclusively of British derivation. Many of the architects and master craftsmen who emigrated to the colony were from the expanding industrial areas of northern England,

southern Scotland, and Ireland, where a modified Classicism was entrenched and they were acquainted with the appearance of Classical architecture."

It is reported that perhaps the most widely known of Classical Revival houses of "Canada West" is the Bluestone House. It is thought that the name may have been derived from the building's limestone walls which are now hidden by a coat of stucco. "With the Ionic porch, the cornice and all the glazing bars in white this was a Classical house true in title color."

Also included is an interior

(Continued on page 15)

HOUSES



*Historic Barnum House
Built by Col. E. Barnum in 1813,
this House is one of Ontario's finest
remaining examples of Domestic
Georgian Architecture. Visited
every year by thousands of
tourists, it is located on Hwy. No. 2
just east of Cobourg, Ont.*