

**“A Matter of Taste:” The Interior Designer William C. Pahlmann  
and the Creation of an American Style in the Post-World War II Era**

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## Chapter 1 – Introduction: Meet William Pahlmann

When William C. Pahlmann received the prestigious Elsie de Wolfe Award in 1964, for excellence in interior design, it was said that “except for Elsie de Wolfe, no one has influenced American home decoration more than Mr. Pahlmann.”<sup>1</sup> Despite this enthusiastic praise, little material has been published recently about Pahlmann and his work. Other than a short chapter or passage in a few general texts on twentieth-century interior design, and a few limited magazine articles, Pahlmann has not received the attention that someone so influential might deserve. This paper aims to examine Pahlmann’s contributions to American home decoration, specifically by discussing his defining work at the one of the highest points of his career – the late 1940s and early 1950s – within the context of the cultural environment of postwar America.

The interior designer William Carroll Pahlmann (1900-1987) [Illustration 1] had a very long and productive career in America, from the 1930s through the mid-1970s.<sup>2</sup> He established personal celebrity by creating dramatic and fantastical model rooms while working as the head of the interior decoration and home furnishings department at the New York department store Lord & Taylor before World War II. From the time he opened his own design firm in 1946 and closed its doors thirty years later, the firm completed hundreds of critically acclaimed decorating projects, including homes, apartments, offices, department stores, restaurants, hotels and university buildings. The public frequently gained a look into some of his most prominent commissions when they were covered by current magazines and newspapers, including *Town and Country*, *House Beautiful*, *Good Housekeeping*, *House & Garden* and *Life* magazines. Like many other interior designers of his day, Pahlmann also functioned as an industrial designer and

created product designs, such as furniture, lighting and fabric designs, for example. He opened his studio to the public for regular exhibitions of model rooms, which he called “Pahlmann Previews.” Aside from the sheer number of projects completed over the course of his career, Pahlmann had a keen eye and was gifted with the almost unparalleled ability to keep a finger on the pulse of public taste. He garnered praise from both the media and his colleagues for his creativity and frequent reinventions of current home fashions.

Pahlmann is best known for his eclectic room designs, in which he mixed furnishings from different time periods and countries, incorporated bold and sometimes contrasting colors, and accessorized deliberately with consideration of the homeowner’s personal taste. He also championed functionality and suitability for residential interiors in particular. Called a “trail blazer” by his peers, Pahlmann always endeavored to do things differently than what was ordinarily done by others.<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of his career, while some other designers would do one period only, such as Nancy McClellan who was known for her “French Provincial” designs, Pahlmann did away with strict period room interpretations and introduced an air of informality that became essential to the American lifestyle. In the postwar era, after the economic despair of the Great Depression and shortages during the Second World War, Pahlmann’s comfortable and functional, yet elegant, style was welcomed across the board – from his wealthiest clients to the middle-class homemaker. Although Pahlmann indeed created a considerable number of very luxurious and dramatic designs, he also executed with aplomb many more restrained and practical interiors.



A highly capable designer, Pahlmann was an able teacher as well, both to the industry and the public. Pahlmann strongly believed people should be educated about proper style and taste and assumed a great deal of educational efforts. He devoted a substantial chunk of his time advancing the interior decorating profession, and asserting that it was a serious profession requiring substantial study. As chairman of the board of the New York Chapter of the Association of Interior Decorators (A.I.D.)<sup>4</sup> and first president of its Resources Council, and later elected as a Fellow, Pahlmann promoted the profession through frequent lectures to his colleagues, women's clubs, professional associations, students and the interested public. He also regularly participated in promotional design exhibitions in New York and throughout the country. Many of the shows were sponsored by the A.I.D. as well as influential institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art, Midtown Galleries, and the Chicago Merchandise Mart. He authored *The Pahlmann Book of Interior Design* in 1955 (revised in two editions of 1960 and 1968), a best-seller which served as a "how-to" decorating guide directed towards the middle-class American wife and homemaker.<sup>5</sup> Later in his career, he penned a syndicated, thrice-weekly newspaper column, called "A Matter of Taste" (1962–73), through which he answered readers' design questions and provided general decorating tips, which ran three times per week in newspapers across the nation.

Although he often said of his career, "I'm primarily interested in helping Americans live better," Pahlmann's outreach was not without business intent.<sup>6</sup> A strong presence in the press and among interior design interest groups was one of the best ways to attract clients and uphold his reputation. While he certainly wanted to create beautiful and functional interiors for his clients, he also was devoted to advancing his profession.

He felt that good designers, through their professional training and experience, should be able to convey to the public the virtues of good design and functional living. He wanted people to recognize good taste, but also to be aware that they did not have the skills alone to design a really successful interior, and if possible, they should consult a professional designer for guidance.<sup>7</sup>

Pahlmann had an unmatched proficiency for public relations and salesmanship, which was arguably his most significant aptitude. This skill was pivotal to his success in an era of unprecedented consumerism. Considered to be worldly, attractive and eloquent, Pahlmann was exceedingly charismatic, thus perfectly suited to work both the media and the New York socialite circles. Pahlmann's hired publicity people admitted he could do a better job with the media than even they could.<sup>8</sup> Pahlmann created an authoritative name for himself in decoration and the fashionable sought out to be associated with him and his designs, or if they could not afford his services, his design advice. Companies sought him out to endorse their products for the home, such as lighting devices, carpets, windows, plastics and plywood. He was chosen to appear in advertisements for the Calvert Whiskey Company as their "Man of Distinction" in the early 1950s. Perhaps one of the greatest, but often overlooked achievements, was the work of Pahlmann's firm under the esteemed architect Phillip Johnson at the Four Seasons restaurant in the Seagram Building (1957-59). Although Johnson usually gets full credit for the restaurant interiors, which still remain largely intact, Pahlmann consulted heavily and was in fact the innovator behind the idea of changing the decoration according to the seasons.

The postwar era was a time when America was coming into its own and shaping its cultural identity on the world stage. This setting created an ideal moment in time for

the introduction of Pahlmann's style. During the early years of William Pahlmann and Associates, from the late 1940s to the first half of the 1950s, Pahlmann's design ideals for residential living of comfort, functionality and adaptability – ideas that Pahlmann explored before the war and that would permeate his work throughout his career – really began to come together at this time and manifest themselves in a meaningful way in his product designs and interiors. At this same time, he began to promote his design approach through the press in a deliberate, yet sometimes subtle way, to appeal to the broadest range of consumers. Pahlmann adeptly responded to the new values of the postwar era, yet rather than working within the “high” design culture of mid-century modernism, strict historicism, or the trends of popular culture, he provided an alternative, “eclectic” style that Americans could identify with. This paper will explore how the postwar environment in America enabled Pahlmann's tremendous success, and show how he utilized the climate to proliferate his designs, in keeping with the modern American design ideals.

## **Chapter 2 – Modern American Living in the Post-World War II Era**

The years from 1945 through the 1950s – generally identified as the postwar era – are often characterized by unprecedented prosperity, optimism, and consumerism.<sup>9</sup> While Europe had suffered massive devastation due to World War II, the United States benefited financially. Soldiers returning from war enabled the creation of families and a record rise in the birth rate. New families needed a place to live, so suburbs were developed and houses were built in record numbers and with unparalleled efficiency (often from start to finish in six weeks).<sup>10</sup> Jobs, educational opportunities and technological developments stimulated the economy and afforded American citizens greater spending power than ever before in the nation's history.<sup>11</sup> Consumerism became a way of life and Americans sought fulfillment through consumption of goods and services.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, society's interest in family life and a happy home became paramount.

The postwar era boasts the greatest period of economic growth in America, especially within the rising middle class. Between 1945 and 1960, United States per capita income grew by 35 percent and gross national product grew by almost 250 percent.<sup>13</sup> The number of people with discretionary income doubled during the 1950s, and by 1960, thirty-one million of the country's forty-four million families owned their own home.<sup>14</sup> After the war, new single family residential homes, or housing starts, were being built at a record pace – predominantly in the suburbs. Data has shown there may have been as many as 1.952 million housing starts in 1950, about 1.65 million in 1955, and no fewer than 1.3 million per year for the rest of the decade, such that the increase in home ownership exceeded the entire preceding century and a half.<sup>15</sup> The postwar era also

delivered an unprecedented “baby boom” in America. Birth rates rose tremendously – 1.212 million babies were born in 1945, and the number rose every year until it peaked in 1957 at 1.837 million.<sup>16</sup>

With the uptick in young families in the late 1940s and 1950s, American perceptions about home life were also changing. Happiness, measures of success and self-esteem were now closely tied to the nuclear family and achieving an agreeable home life. Previously, with the economic stress of the Great Depression and cutbacks during the war, homes in the first half of the twentieth century were often multi-generational, and extreme saving measures were taken, especially during the war.<sup>17</sup> Wages were generally low and the government offered few social programs, which resulted in fewer opportunities for home ownership. During the war there were housing shortages and families were separated by the call to military duty. The climate changed dramatically, when after the war, acquiescence to domestic life became the defining element of middle-class status and success.<sup>18</sup> People were expected to find all happiness and amusement, and to have all their personal needs met, within the family unit.<sup>19</sup> Societal attitudes suggested that the traditional, nuclear family (away from elder generations) was the “modern” approach, and implored newlyweds out to the suburbs to start their new family fresh.<sup>20</sup> The government encouraged this through initiation of programs that offered education benefits, job training, housing loans and mortgage insurance through the Federal Housing Administration and Veterans Administration, and infrastructure projects such as more sewers and highways. This allowed middle-class and even working-class people to aspire to strong family values – such as stability in marriage, child rearing, jobs and community structure.<sup>21</sup> Historians agree that in the 1950s, the family became the

“focus of fun and recreation,” and formality in the home was abandoned in favor of “livability,” “comfort” and “convenience.”<sup>22</sup> Social and recreational activities now took place in family homes – in playrooms or dens, on swing sets, and at backyard barbeques.

The increased income among the growing middle and even working classes, coupled with the various governmental economic support programs, encouraged the population to “invest” in purchases, especially for the home rather than personal indulgences.<sup>23</sup> In the five years following World War II, consumer spending increased 60 percent, but purchases of household furnishings and appliances rose 240 percent.<sup>24</sup> The suburban home itself became the quintessential commodity that energized the economy and lifted the American standard of living.<sup>25</sup> Despite widespread fears of another depression, which was still fresh in the minds of many, Americans made purchases for their homes, which strengthened their sense of security.<sup>26</sup> Investing in the home, as well as in the accouterments that would enhance family life, was considered the best way to plan for the future.<sup>27</sup> Consumerism was a virtue if the purchases were both practical and enriched family life.<sup>28</sup> With this increased spending power, product manufacturers and advertisers in the postwar era formulated new methods of tapping into the market. In previous times, consumers purchased things out of necessity, and used them until they wore out, and if they did not, they passed those items on to others. By the mid-1950s, however, most homes had an excess of disposable income and could afford standard domestic appliances and a car. In order to continue sales and profitability, advertisers had to convince people to purchase the newest and latest appliance, car or home item, even if they did not technically *need* a new one. Journalist Vance Packard, a contemporary observer in the late 1950s, studied the psychological reasoning and

techniques postwar advertisers used to convince consumers to continue to purchase. In *The Hidden Persuaders* (1957) he found that marketers appealed to consumers' desire for prestige, style and modernity, over the quality or durability of the product. He further explored in *The Status Seekers* (1959) why consumers strove to surround themselves with visual indicators of the superior status they were asserting. Whether or not he had contemplated the reasons why, Pahlmann certainly was keenly aware of this rising interest in consumption. Early on, when he was working at Lord & Taylor, he often advised industry members that "good interior decorating is also good merchandising."<sup>29</sup> He advocated indulging in the purchase of home goods, such as furniture pieces and decorative accessories, as a method to express one's personality and interests. Although Pahlmann cautioned that people should choose accessories and furnishings based on the way that they live, not based on what some other friend or neighbor has chosen, in his suggestion to surround oneself with meaningful and practical furnishings, was a justification for purchasing and "investing" money in one's home.

Surpassing even the most efficient kitchen appliances and luxurious automobiles, the television set was the single most influential consumer novelty that gained precedence in America during the postwar era. 1948 marked the first year of significant sales of television sets. Sales continued to swell to 7 million during 1950, and by 1954 television sets were so widespread in the United States that manufacturers started selling the idea of an additional set for the kids and the bedroom, for example.<sup>30</sup> By 1959, almost 90 percent of American homes had a television set.<sup>31</sup> An entire industry was born in a little over a decade. In keeping with the overarching postwar theme of domesticity, marketers promoted the television as the hub of family life. Unlike the Hollywood film industry,

which had been unmatched for over three decades and had become imbedded into American life, television could be shared within the home. By mid-decade, it had become a moderately affordable technology that entered homes in almost all levels of society.

It follows that the television would become a perfect vehicle to promote the postwar values and products. Historian Stephanie Coontz argues that the “wholesome” television programs of the 1950s, for example “The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet” (1952-56) and “Father Knows Best” (1954-63), which were overtly family-centric, were even early attempts to connect entertainment to sales of goods. Advertisers preferred to sponsor shows that had “universal themes” with the hope that they would capture the majority of viewers, and that viewers would identify with the families who were enjoying their new kitchen appliances and domestic conveniences. In the shows, the television set was often strategically placed at the center of the storyline, to demonstrate the importance of this appliance to family interaction. Furthermore, television shows, particularly those directed towards ethnic or working class groups, promoted a classless society where the all the families portrayed exhibited consumer behavior. Many of the situations depicted in shows such as “The Honeymooners” (1955-56), for example, centered on the purchase of consumer home goods, and characters urged each other to “buy on installment” and “live above our means – the American way.”<sup>32</sup> Consumerism was also promoted as a means to assimilate into the American way of life.<sup>33</sup> However, it went beyond the simple purchase of goods, rather it suggested important cultural values, manifested success and upward social mobility, and delineated particular lifestyles.



Despite their focus on traditional, nuclear family values, including community and gender roles, among others, Americans were generally progressive during this period and desired comfort, efficiency, and practicality – “modern” values. Americans were prospering, and they wanted to spend their money to experience conveniences in their homes, as well as impart a particular level of prestige. As most historians will concur, there were generally two main trends in design in the postwar era – the style of the mass or popular culture that was promoted by advertising, television and magazines, and the high-design modernism that emerged from Europe and was appreciated by educated consumers with good taste and sophistication.<sup>34</sup> Both of these visual styles were considered modern at the time. In the postwar era, as the rising middle class was consuming products of mass culture, much of consumers’ chief concern was in associating themselves with a particular type of “lifestyle.”<sup>35</sup> Others, however, aspired to separate themselves and exercise their educated, “good taste” through their choices of luxurious or “high-cultural” designed consumables.<sup>36</sup> Those seeking distinction looked towards trained artists, designers and architects, mostly European males, for their designer goods.<sup>37</sup> Pahlmann was able to strike a balance between the two trends of modern living. He was one of the foremost proponents of preaching good taste, yet routinely appeared in the mass media to communicate his message and permitted the homeowner autonomy in forming her own design style. Like other American designers from as early as the 1930s through the postwar era, Pahlmann rejected the type of modern design observed by the Museum of Modern Art and the Bauhaus architects – modern design that he felt promoted “living on a high, severe plane, and contemplating one’s navel.”<sup>38</sup> Explaining that he is personally tired of the “intellectual snob appeal of certain

advocates of modern architecture and design,” Pahlmann suggested that designers should use more wood, ornamentation and interesting fabrics to soften the harshness of the modern style.<sup>39</sup> Pahlmann introduced an eclectic version of modern design that suited the American spirit and way of life.

One of the most significant fashions that emerged during the first half of the century is what we know as “modern.”<sup>40</sup> The visual style associated with modernism – simple, unadorned, straight lines, and the “form follows function” logic – rooted itself in the work of the pioneer European modernist architects and designers of the 1920s and 1930s. American artists exploring modern design and the New York art establishment sought inspiration from the various manifestations of the style in Europe.<sup>41</sup> Aside from this visual element, however, there was an additional lifestyle element which included taking advantage of what modernity had to offer, such as technologically superior products, economic opportunities for upward mobility, and supposedly greater access for women to the public sphere.<sup>42</sup> By the late 1920s and in the 1930s, artists and manufacturers in style centers of America, particularly New York, began to respond to the changes brought about by contemporary lifestyles, including small living spaces, the lack of household staff, as well as trends in contemporary art like speed, skyscrapers and cubism.<sup>43</sup> Designers responded to American values, however, through products and designs that bridged the ideals of modernism that championed industrial materials and functional forms, and the American values of tradition and familiarity.<sup>44</sup> After World War II, in late 1940s and 1950s, the desire for a modern life went mainstream in the United States – people routinely desired those things that helped them live a modern lifestyle of convenience, efficiency, and informality. In the second edition of her book,

*An Introduction to Design and Culture: 1900 to the Present*, design historian Penny Sparke analyzes a number of theoretical texts on twentieth-century design and considers how “design became everyone’s bridge to their own brand of modernity.”<sup>45</sup> Not only did people want things to help them live modern lives, they wanted them to look modern too.

Further delving into the concept of “design,” Sparke explains: “design expresses itself visually and materially, primarily (although not exclusively) in the context of consumption, and it is negotiated through the agency of “taste,” which underpins consumer choice.”<sup>46</sup> Not unrelated to Vance Packard’s observations decades before, Sparke explains the phenomenon about how consumer goods inform and define identities within our culture. In fact, in the postwar era the “consumption of modern material culture” had evolved to become the “primary means” of forming one’s identity and expressing social status and success in society.<sup>47</sup> People expressed themselves through the consumer choices they made, particularly in the choice of home goods, as those domestic items represented by far the greater part of personal expenditures. It was not until the 1970s when spending became “less home-centered” and people indulged in entertainment and personal recreation.<sup>48</sup> At least one cultural historian proposes that the new levels of “hedonism” and “materialism” that emerged in postwar American culture were tempered by their attachment to family “togetherness.”<sup>49</sup> Spending that was family-centered and home-centered was perceived as upholding traditional American values of pragmatism and morality, rather than indulging in decadence or luxury.<sup>50</sup> This put Americans at ease with their beliefs that affluence would strengthen the American way of life – consumerism was virtuous if it was practical and done with the purpose of enriching the family.<sup>51</sup>

With the new interest in family togetherness and emphasis on enhancing the convenience of the family home with consumer purchases, the preferred architectural style of the house was altered to accommodate this lifestyle. Although modernism in its very strictest sense was not embraced widely by mainstream America, some of its design elements were. One of the most important contributions modernist architects made to American postwar houses was the opening up of the space.<sup>52</sup> In the very early twentieth-century, Frank Lloyd Wright in America (and Le Corbusier in France) began designing homes with wide open living spaces – the “open-planning” concept.<sup>53</sup> Open planning, particularly as encountered in the smaller, inexpensive ranch-style homes that exploded in the American suburbs after World War II, was appropriate to the postwar lifestyle in a number of ways.<sup>54</sup> First, suburban tract houses were made quite small, as many were squeezed onto tracts of land, and the space had to be utilized economically. The open-planning approach on one level provided more efficient space, or at least a more spacious feel, to these homes, some of which were a mere 900 square feet. There was also adequate room for modern appliances and other home goods. Furthermore, a home with an open living plan was less costly to build. Linking the kitchen to the dining room, or creating at least a pass-through window, allowed greater ease and speed in the serving of food and clearing of dishes, so the woman of the house could spend less time in the kitchen away from her family.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, open plan homes were conducive to supervising children; the mother could keep an eye on the children from the kitchen or out the large picture window that opened from the living area to the yard. Unlike previous house styles, which generally separated the domains of women and men, the suburban ranch-style of home, with its open living space and more private master

bedroom, reflects the family-centric ideals of postwar America.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, its low profile and large, ground level windows allowed a connection with nature and the community, albeit in a simplified and controlled manner.<sup>57</sup> This natural look was seen as a more informal, private, and personal living arrangement than formal city dwellings and commercial structures.<sup>58</sup> Although Pahlmann generally did not enjoy decorating homes with children, his many residential interiors of the late 1940s and early 1950s considered this growing interest in family.<sup>59</sup> Many country homes were cropping up in Westchester County, New York, for example, that reflected this interest in comfortable and flexible suburban living. These homeowners, mostly city-dwellers, desired a country retreat where they could escape the crowds and cramped conditions of the city. Many of the homes Pahlmann decorated, although inhabited by childless couples or even single people, were of the ranch style and the interior arrangement and furnishings selections promoted group interaction.

Along with an overwhelming focus on family life, Americans were also concerned with the matter of shaping their cultural identity on the world stage. As seen in popular advertisements at the time, Americans valued efficiency, practicality, convenience, and informal living. However, they also desired comfort and legitimacy, which they found in associating themselves with historical precedents, European models and worldliness. Strict European-style modernism and the futuristic aesthetic of mass popular culture, however, did not provide a sufficient answer to their desires. Primarily, modernism in Europe had a socialist element to it, which the thriving capitalist, individualist United States generally rejected. Furthermore, modernism had much to do with simplifying and getting rid of things, but in the postwar consumerist age, Americans

wanted to express themselves through their purchases which they could display in their homes for others to see. Consumption of goods, as long as those goods were practical, in the American tradition, was associated with the freedom of expression and opportunity. Although severe modernism was in fact adopted for many corporate buildings, it was not embraced in the mainstream home. Instead, Americans did accept the push for elegant and simplified living, but with an added element of “enrichment,” an approach set forth by the forefathers of American modernism, Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright.<sup>60</sup> This approach worked well for both the consumers and for the producers, such as magazines, manufactures and designers. Consumers could express their individuality and status through their purchases, while manufacturers and designers could produce more varied products. The influx of various choices and plethora of goods on the market was perceived as the democratic way. Magazines and newspapers had no shortage of material to promote the variety of products and range of modern styles entering the marketplace. A good expression of this influx of choices into the marketplace can be seen in an article entitled “Many Moods of the Modern Chair.”<sup>61</sup> Betty Pepis, esteemed home editor, covered a lecture presented by a home furnishings consultant to an industry trade group where thirty-one modern chairs were on display. The chairs exhibited had become generally available to Americans since after the war and ranged from the simple and straightforward to the most creative, by designers such as Hans Wegner, Mies van der Rohe, Eero Saarinen, Jens Risom, William Pahlmann, Edward Wormley, T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings, George Nakashima, Charles Eames, and Paul McCobb, for example. This article suggested that “modern” in America could have many interpretations.

Similarly, an article in the July 1949 edition of *House & Garden* promoted the idea that America could create a style of its own to reflect its cultural values. The article, entitled “Only in the U.S.A.,” asked twenty-one of the most popular American interior and industrial designers their opinion on the state of present day design. Respondents included Dorothy Liebes, Edward Wormsley, Isamu Noguchi, James Amster, T.H. Robsjohn-Gibblings, Florence Knoll, Henry Dreyfuss, William Pahlmann, and others that had established careers in decorating and design. The purpose of the question was to note the differing opinions of each personality. The article proposed that the existence of these different approaches, incidentally all intended to make American home life more comfortable and houses more attractive, were the hallmark of a distinctly American phenomenon. Less important were the actual design ideas proffered in the magazine pages, but rather the article’s key point was that the state of varied design approaches being acceptable and actually desired could only happen in the U.S.A. The article assured the reader, that when it came to design matters, in a country which is “a vast mélange of cultures and viewpoints, where everyone can have his say... there is no single party line.” The article boldly declared in its concluding lines: these designers have one objective in common: “to make American homes the envy of the world,” and one trait in common: “they are the unmistakable product of a democracy.”<sup>62</sup> Pahlmann’s eclectic designs, which also could be described as incorporating “a vast mélange of cultures,” seemed to be a case in point. Furthermore, Pahlmann’s answer to the question – “Like many Americans, I have a taste for the past but I also demand comfortable, modern living.” – neatly summarized the design approach that was accepted and practiced as the American modern style.<sup>63</sup>

Throughout his career, Pahlmann was devoted to the principle that the way people live should dictate the decoration of their homes. Although he rejected strict modernism in both form and principle, and he certainly did not think of himself as a modernist, his designs were in fact modern in character.<sup>64</sup> It was early in his career when Pahlmann realized that the modern style meant “nothing more than keying decoration to the conditions of modern life.”<sup>65</sup> Pahlmann ascribed to this ideal and his designs responded to the changing circumstances of home life in postwar America. He aimed to help people live better by decorating their homes to correspond to their living habits and thereby making their lives easier. His furniture and interior designs of the postwar era, which were definitive of his decorative style, did just that. He recognized the U.S. as a country of “rugged individualism” that embraced differences between people and communities.<sup>66</sup> He individualized designs for his clients and he advised homeowners to embrace and express their individuality. Although they exhibited consistent design techniques, the eclecticism within Pahlmann’s room treatments was inherently individual to the home owner and convenient to her lifestyle, and thus American.

As revealed in this chapter, there were many developments in the cultural and social climate of the United States beginning immediately after World War II, in particular relating to American home life. In the following chapters, this paper will examine the characteristics of Pahlmann’s eclectic look and discuss why it appealed to the American public at this moment in time. Furthermore, the paper will discuss Pahlmann’s two fashionable furniture lines in the context of American modernism and the trends in interior design. Next, it will examine two influential residential interiors that Pahlmann created around 1950 that reveal, not only his signature design techniques,



but also his solutions to the increasing interest in the modern manner of living – including informality, flexibility, comfort and convenience. Finally, it will discuss how Pahlmann also took advantage of this environment of consumerism and desire for modern living through his publicity efforts. Consumerism and affluence were important values to the nation as it formed its cultural identity and the postwar era, with its emphasis on home life, optimism, and the spending power of American citizens, was the perfect environment for Pahlmann to thrive. A consummate tastemaker, Pahlmann created a style that appealed specifically to both the American taste and postwar values that were crucial to the nation's identity.

### **Chapter 3 – William Pahlmann’s Early Career (1927–1942)**

Born in Pound Ridge, Illinois on December 12, 1900 to German and Swedish parents, William “Bill” Pahlmann was one of four children. At the age of six, Pahlmann and his family relocated to San Antonio, Texas, where he grew to over 6 feet tall in his teens, and took on the “Texas image.”<sup>67</sup> Pahlmann had a rather modest childhood and started his first job at age 18 as a travelling salesman peddling Texas-made sewer pipe. His interest in design and decoration, however, emerged early on. He had done some flower arrangements and decorated for parties at a local Baptist church, and so while spending many nights alone on the road as a salesman, completed a correspondence course in interior decorating offered by *Arts and Decoration* magazine. He also dabbled in the field of decorative arts when in 1925 he began working in a shop in Houston which dealt in Chinese and Japanese items. In 1927, he booked passage on a ship to New York City to pursue formal schooling in interior decoration at the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts (now Parsons). Pahlmann worked his way through school as a dancer in Broadway musicals, eventually getting promoted to assistant stage manager after recommending set improvements.

Pahlmann’s class notes from Parsons reveal a meticulous student and are somewhat of a window into his formative ideas and opinions. Although much of what Pahlmann learned in school can be seen reflected in his room designs, he also chose to divert from some lessons in his quest to develop a novel style. Pahlmann’s notes and writings on the “modern trend” in particular expose the most information about his design approach that manifests itself, particularly in the designs of his most definitive years after World War II. Some of the features of the “modern trend” articulated in his

class notes and which would later appear in his postwar designs, are simplicity, harmony of indoor and outdoor space, informality, and a “wonderful finish” to furniture.<sup>68</sup> The class notes document that he was aware of the new trend in France (in the late 1920s when he was a student) for designers to do not only the house, but also the walls, rugs and even the porcelain.<sup>69</sup> He particularly admired the furniture designs coming out of France at the time and certain contemporary French designers, including Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann, the design team Sue et Mare, Edgar Brandt, Paul Poiret and Maurice Dufrene. He felt the comprehensive approach of these designers represented “the best Modern feeling.”<sup>70</sup> Clearly he was aware of the growing regards for a cohesive design approach, where all elements of the room, including the architecture and the objects within were considered and even created by the designer. He admired built-in furniture. He also stated that convenience and practicality were the prime factors in the “new era” and recognized the importance of new materials, such as steel in particular. He noted that the material of an object governs its style, above anything else. For example, although a cabinet may reflect the same lines as an Empire commode, if it is made of newer materials, then it would be considered a contemporary piece. Later, in his key furniture lines, Momentum and Hastings Square, Pahlmann would adapt classic furniture forms and cover them with modern materials for practicality, attractiveness, and convenience.

On the other hand, while he championed certain aspects of design in the modern era, his class notes also reveal his hostile feelings toward modern art and artists. He seems to have been affronted by the state of modern art in the late 1920s – he compared modern artists to children trying to get attention, desiring nothing more than to be noticed, and they do this by presenting something entirely new “while sticking up their

noses at the masterworks of the glorious past which they profess to think should be ignored as “‘dated’ ...dreadful word...and therefore outmoded.”<sup>71</sup> He noted that study of the past was essential as a foundation for expressing a twentieth-century life. Pahlmann had a lifelong appreciation for historical precedents and often incorporated elements of the past in his designs. He also promoted an appreciation of the past in his design advice. Later in his life, he would often opine that good taste could be acquired by exposing oneself to established works of fine interiors and artistry.<sup>72</sup>

In addition to some of his sweeping overviews of certain design styles, much of his class notes indicate specific design tenets, some which he ascribed to and others which he completely disregarded. Some of his more daring designs can be attributed to veering away from these established design rules. He noted, for example, that fabric should never be hung on the wall just for a backing, rather it should always form a complete picture or tell a story, like a tapestry. Yet, some of his innovative uses of fabric included using mattress ticking as a wall covering (1939) and applying fabric canopies on the wall behind a bed. In one of his own earlier apartments in New York City, he created a tent-like ceiling treatment of striped satin for the foyer (1937), a ceiling treatment he used again for clients later in his career (1959). He also noted that curtain and upholstery finishing fabrics should match, and all colors in a room must be related and harmonize. However, many of his model rooms at Lord & Taylor incorporated contrasting colors like pistachio green together with shades of dark purple (1938) or candy pink and bright green (1939). As his career continued, he continued to experiment with colors, patterns and textures, and was known for creating lively and livable color schemes with various fabrics. He also noted that the modern trend advised not to imitate materials. Pahlmann

did exactly this, for example, with a brick-pattern wallpaper in the hallway of one of his most influential residential interiors (1951). Finally, he was taught that mixing contemporary periods of furnishings from various countries was nearly always acceptable, but one should never include a piece made (or in a style) prior to that period evoked by the room.<sup>73</sup> The notes make no mention of rooms that are not defined by any one period. Although it is not articulated in his notes, perhaps this lesson gave Pahlmann the idea that mixing countries and periods may be a novel approach to modern design.

In assessing “the contemporary trend” as a student of interior decoration, Pahlmann recognized that his generation must go on creating, trying new ideas, and adapting designs and styles to changing needs.<sup>74</sup> People live differently in America than in Europe, he noted, and those in New York City live differently than others throughout the nation. He realized early on that no one style could work for everyone in the United States, and thus he went forward creating one that could be adapted and modified as necessary. Even as a student, Pahlmann was starting to notice the American ideals of flexibility and practicality that would take center stage after World War II during an important time of cultural development, economic growth, and opportunity.

A stellar student, Pahlmann won a competitive scholarship to Parsons’ Paris atelier. In Paris, he met the movers and shakers of the American expatriate community, including Mary Louise Bousquet (later editor of *Harper’s Bazaar*), Jean Cocteau, Ernest Hemmingway and Dorothy Parker.<sup>75</sup> His time abroad also turned into a very influential Grand Tour – he visited grand palaces and chateaux under William Odom, head of the interior design department at Parsons and director of its Paris branch, and at the completion of his studies, he toured Egypt at the invitation of his friends and hosts in

Paris, Josephine and Seaton Henry. Mrs. Henry was the daughter of Mr. Joseph Drexel, the founder of the major banking house Drexel & Co., and thus the Henrys had significant wealth and circulated in upper crust circles. Upon return to the states in 1931, the Henrys commissioned Pahlmann's first major job, their eighteenth-century homestead on the Delaware River called "Pen Ryn." Pahlmann's grand manner of decoration was commended and promptly published as a feature article in *Country Life* magazine (February 1936). Even at the early stages of his career, Pahlmann was working for the well-connected social elite, which doubtless helped propel him into early professional success.<sup>76</sup> Some of his very first clients included Mrs. William S. Paley, wife of the CBS broadcasting executive, and Pauline Rogers (later Mrs. Walter Hoving as of 1937), a New York socialite.<sup>77</sup>

Throughout his career, and particularly during his early years, Pahlmann was credited with a number of interesting design "firsts" in America, that were indicative of his experimental and creative approach to room decoration.<sup>78</sup> Many of these inventions were unveiled within the Lord & Taylor model rooms. Some firsts include the introduction of Swedish furniture designs in blond wood (Lord & Taylor's "Swedish Modern" show, January 1938), the use of cotton mattress ticking as a decorative fabric (Lord & Taylor's "Lush Beds" show, October 1939), mobile furniture, double and triple dressers, and the oversize "Hollywood bed," so named because the Hollywood sets picked up on it, which is a bed with an upholstered headboard against the wall but without a footboard (Lord & Taylor's "Lush Beds" show, October 1939). Perhaps Pahlmann's most well-known contribution, was his popularizing and making almost essential the large and low cocktail or coffee table in the center of a living room, a

furniture form for which there was no historical period precedent.<sup>79</sup> In February 1952, Pahlmann presented “The Cocktail Table Story” as his first themed display at “Pahlmann Previews.” Here he included seventy- nine different low tables, mostly available for sale as well – some of his own design along with imported examples from Italy and China, among others. Legend was that the first low table evolved about two decades prior when an antiques dealer tried to put a slab of wood on a worn out bench, but then discovered it worked better for serving than for sitting.<sup>80</sup> The intent of this Pahlmann Previews exhibit was to provide the public with a variety of creative low table options that could be integrated into any type of room.

*Lord & Taylor Model Rooms (1936-1942)*

Although Pahlmann was beginning to create a reputation for himself in his own right in the 1930s, one of his most significant career breaks came in 1936. Mr. Walter Hoving, then director of the swanky New York City department store Lord & Taylor, hired Pahlmann as head of the interior decorating and home furnishings department. Like Pahlmann, Hoving was very concerned about matters of good taste and deplored the many items of poor taste that were displayed and sold in department stores.<sup>81</sup> Pahlmann brought creative zeal to the industry through his room designs and display approach.

Earlier, in 1927, the R.H. Macy & Co. had explored an idea of model rooms with its *Exposition of Art in Trade*. Organized in conjunction with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the exposition aimed to introduce the public to modern design and improve public taste through the presentation of discrete architect-styled model rooms.<sup>82</sup> A series of similar expositions followed at The John Wanamaker Store, Abraham & Straus, Frederick Loeser & Co., Lord & Taylor, and B. Altman & Co. Presenting the model

rooms as serious art exhibitions, the department stores were venues through which to communicate the newly-developing contemporary style of modern design. A few years later, in the mid-1930s, Pahlmann began using the model room presentation as a merchandising technique, where he would display products and designs for the public's retail consumption. In some cases, he designed the rooms using items from the "Decorators Budget Shop," a department within the Lord & Taylor, that included stylish pieces from the store's middle price range of regular floor stock.<sup>83</sup> At Lord & Taylor, the success of Pahlmann's rooms changed the customary method of display and marketing of home furnishings in the department store. Up through the 1930s, department stores generally lined up their merchandise in plain, uninventive rows or groups by item type. Departing from this model, Pahlmann created full-scale, complete room arrangements – from furniture, floor treatments and fabrics, all the way through to the accessories. He had complete freedom to express his designs, which were often daring, flamboyant and theatrical.<sup>84</sup> He introduced the idea of placing period pieces against contemporary fabrics and backgrounds, a novel approach at this time. Pahlmann's work at Lord & Taylor was one of the earliest expressions of the model room merchandising technique that we know today in many furnishings stores.<sup>85</sup>

Hoving and Pahlmann worked together very well, which was evidenced by the many projects Pahlmann completed over the years for Hoving – both personal and commercial – including the interior design for the Bonwit Teller department stores and Tiffany's, two important retail outlets that Hoving eventually directed after leaving Lord & Taylor. To garner publicity for Lord & Taylor, Hoving suggested conceiving the model rooms around themes.<sup>86</sup> Pahlmann, who had experience in the theater and had



learned about stage design during his courses at Parsons, delivered upon this request. Each of the model room shows at Lord & Taylor, renewed every few months, had a central theme, such as “International” (October 1937), “Fantasy/Dramatic Rooms” (October 1938), or “American Art and Décor” (April 1941). Some of Pahlmann’s model rooms, particularly those designed in the late 1930s, were extremely dramatic, and quite exaggerated, even for the most intrepid homemaker.<sup>87</sup> For example, the “Excitement into Summer” (May 1939) dining room [Illustration 2] included so much draped fabric, it appeared as a complete canopy with mirrors enclosing a metal and glass dining set and a large glass chandelier, while the dining room of the “Marbleized Fabric Show” [Illustration 3] (January 1940) included an overwhelming combination of mirrors, stripes, patterns and shapes. The rooms were intended to grab the public’s attention, provide ideas, and challenge prejudices, as well as announce the presence of a competent and creative decorating department that would be available to serve customers. In the age of the Great Depression, very few shoppers might actually decorate their homes in this manner, but the fantasy of it was alluring and it brought the public through the doors of the store. Once inside, people might end up spending at least a small amount of money on another, less costly item for sale, even if they could not afford costly home furnishings.

Other model rooms were more realistic and offered a “livable charm.” One of the more subtly innovative model room shows Pahlmann prepared in this vein was “Swedish Modern” (January 1938). The Swedish Modern show was a precursor to the design aesthetic that Pahlmann would offer in the early postwar years. In 1932, Pahlmann took a six-week trip to Europe, focusing on Scandinavia, and was most impressed by Swedish

designers. He came back to the U.S. and reported to the media what Europe was like “through a decorator’s eyes.” He was searching for the trends in European furniture and decoration as well as highlights of modern design. In the Stockholm department stores, he found furniture with fine veneer work, sophisticated finishes and very good quality. Most woods were light in color and caning was used extensively in an over-scaled pattern. Pahlmann noticed in the Swedish furniture that although it was unmistakably modern in character, it retained a faint hint of the traditional.<sup>88</sup> Pahlmann commented that the treatment of modern rooms in Scandinavia “fortunately” exhibited a graciousness that could not be achieved with the “extremes” of some modern design.<sup>89</sup> Pahlmann’s comments could suggest his displeasure with certain types of modern design, particularly that which was cold and stark, as well as his interest in making rooms feel comfortable and familiar to the residents.

The winter following his trip, Pahlmann unveiled his five-room Swedish Modern model apartment at Lord & Taylor [Illustrations 4, 5, 6, 7]. Editors admired these rooms on two accounts. First, the rooms showed American-Swedish furniture pieces that a designer would appreciate, that is, furniture which exhibited the modern aesthetic. However, editors also favored the personalized quality of the rooms which Pahlmann achieved by the inclusion of selected antiques, particularly Swiss items.<sup>90</sup> Here, one of Pahlmann’s earliest forays into mixing modern and traditional was admired by one home editor as “simple and pleasing” and “pleasant in an unobtrusive manner.”<sup>91</sup> The editor further said of Pahlmann’s style: “Mr. Pahlmann’s modernism, being the product of thoughtful and careful evolution, has reached that stage which no longer jars esthetic sensibilities, for it is reasonable...”.<sup>92</sup> The color schemes included gray-green (almost

celadon) walls, gray-blue fabrics, blond wood furniture (beech, birch, walnut and some mahogany), dark blue and apricot accents, and some colorful plaid upholstery. These colors were considered both lively and calming.

Although the rooms were inspired by modern Swedish furnishings, the rooms were considered by reporters to be distinctly American. The furniture in particular, almost all of which was made in Grand Rapids, Michigan, after Swedish precedents, was acclaimed for reaching a “rational” balance of modernism. In warm wood tones, such as “harvest” mahogany, coupled with suave fabrics, the furniture retained the congeniality of traditional forms, yet embodied the grace and delicacy of modern designs.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, Pahlmann replaced traditional Swedish decorative elements, like the shag carpet, with a smooth carpet to lend a sophisticated appearance that was desired by Americans. The Swedish Modern model rooms were one of Pahlmann’s attempts to address the development of an American modern style. He considered fitness of purpose when choosing what items to include in the rooms. Although the modern American might desire beautiful and well-made furniture, she was practical and would not be likely to discard all family heirlooms and antiques simply because they were old. According to Pahlmann, the first basic aspirations of the modern style consisted of comfort and ease, so including these familiar historical items, already possessed by the homeowner, would add to that quality.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, the lively yet understated color scheme and simple fabrics also added to the modern desire for lightness. In September 1938, *House Beautiful* published a short feature about the “American Modern” style, in which it described Pahlmann’s Swedish Modern rooms “inherently sophisticated, as American Modern is.”<sup>95</sup>

Pahlmann would later revisit this interest in Sweden with his last set of model rooms at Lord & Taylor in 1942, except with a more “Swedish peasant” feel.

Of Pahlmann’s many highly acclaimed model rooms, one of the most publicized was “Pahlmann Peruvian” (November 1941). Once again, Pahlmann took an international trip, this time five weeks to South America, to gather inspiration for fabrics, furnishings and accessories for the model rooms. After his return to the U.S. in late August 1941, he recounted the exotic findings of his trip in articles for *House Beautiful* (September 1941), *Interiors* (December 1941) and *House & Garden* (April 1942) magazines. Proclaiming that “South America is North America’s newest design source,” Pahlmann cited items he found to be inspirational: colossal geraniums, Inca potteries called “huacos,” wrought iron grilles and furniture, llamas, and tiled palaces, for example.<sup>96</sup> Within six weeks of his return, his designs had been translated into a line of fabric and rugs for Schumacher & Company and fabricators had installed his six model rooms at Lord & Taylor [Illustrations 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13]. Fabric prints for Schumacher reflected both monotone and colorful prints of Indian masks, Incan ruins, iron grill work and lush geraniums. The opening party for the Lord & Taylor rooms was quite a spectacle. In addition to the rooms, Pahlmann had installed a number of exhibits with Peruvian clothing, historical artifacts, and decorative objects, and models dressed in Peruvian traditional costume completed the presentation.<sup>97</sup>

Critics found his individual pieces and bold Incan-inspired colors praiseworthy, but some felt the overall ensemble was a bit “overpowering.”<sup>98</sup> The media commended Pahlmann’s Peruvian rooms for their introduction of exciting and dramatic colors, as well as the fresh influences from a new source – South America – rather than tired Western

European precedents. Although the media overall was most impressed by the inventive color palette, including cobalt and ultramarine blues, cerise, chartreuse, yellow gold and emerald, critics noted that some of these colors were likely liberal adaptations of the actual Peruvian sources and questioned whether South America could really offer inspiration for American interiors as their way of life was so different.<sup>99</sup> Other editors, however, swooned over the “entirely creative way” he translated the source material into suitable home decorations and how he configured designs of another day into a contemporary mode.<sup>100</sup>

Pahlmann modeled three of the six rooms after a traditional precedent – the Peruvian colonial style – and the other three in a predominantly contemporary character with Peruvian inspirations. Most writers recognized these rooms as experiments with old and new, tradition and derivative, and authentic and adaptation.<sup>101</sup> The most popular presentation of model rooms, Pahlmann Peruvian attracted an estimated 20,000 and 30,000 visitors per month.<sup>102</sup> When compared to the more subdued Swedish Modern rooms, Pahlmann Peruvian was clearly more embellished and exhibited the dramatic decorative techniques that Pahlmann used at Lord & Taylor and often reserved for his more specialized commissions, such as liberal use of mirrors and mirrored furniture and the heavy use of fabric and a canopy bed. The high levels of visitorship and extensive press coverage of Pahlmann Peruvian when compared to Swedish Modern may be testament to the widespread interest in fantasy and luxury that predominated before the war.

Through his rooms at Lord & Taylor, Pahlmann was shaping his design style and proving how he was able to reconcile in a successful way seemingly contradictory

decorative elements. Even through his very early experience in the 1930s, Pahlmann had discovered that Americans still preferred eighteenth-century reproductions, but now combined with elements of good modern design.<sup>103</sup> He felt that the modern pieces should be tempered with some traditional themes in order to make them more attractive and should be “American modern,” that is, varying from place to place rather than one specific modern design that works in New York but might not be suitable for the Midwest region.<sup>104</sup> Although the Lord & Taylor rooms were sometimes outlandish, Pahlmann would use these same techniques of eclecticism and internationalism in the more conservative residential designs that he would focus on after World War II. By the time the Peruvian rooms were unveiled, according to *Interiors* magazine, Pahlmann had already “established himself as one of the most spectacular decorators in the whole field of interior design.”<sup>105</sup> Crowds always flocked to see the latest Pahlmann display. The model room designs at Lord & Taylor were generally the “talk of the town.” After World War II, W. & J. Sloans and other department stores started following suit and displaying home furnishings in model rooms. No other store designer, however, obtained the personal acclaim that Pahlmann did. Barbara D’Arcy, the famous merchandise display designer at Bloomingdale’s in the 1960s, was the next designer to be credited in this personal way. In fact, later in the 1960s and 70s, D’Arcy admitted that she was inspired by Pahlmann’s work of the earlier period when she created her model room displays for the New York flagship Bloomingdale’s store.<sup>106</sup>

In 1942, Pahlmann was one of a few interior and stage designers who volunteered for the U.S. Air Corps after completing a Works Progress Administration course on camouflage. Graduating with honors, Pahlmann and the other designers were credited

with knowing more about “cast perspective and false shadows” than their WPA instructors.<sup>107</sup> This was the end of Pahlmann’s career as head of the design and home furnishings department at Lord & Taylor. During the war he directed the Jefferson Barracks Camouflage School in St. Louis, Missouri, where he instructed soldiers on individual camouflage by simulating battle conditions. He was further called upon to decorate the Officer’s Club in the lively Pahlmann manner, which he did in an unexpected color scheme of chartreuse, cerulean blue and red. These earlier accomplishments set the stage for Pahlmann to resume his career postwar, at a time when professional interior designers were exerting a notable influence on American homes.

## **Chapter 4 – “The Pahlmann Eclectic Look”**

After retiring from war service in 1946, Pahlmann opened his own design firm, William Pahlmann Associates, in New York City. Riding on the fame acquired from his years at Lord & Taylor and the publicity from his camouflage work, Pahlmann’s firm prospered and he served countless wealthy and famous clients all over the country and internationally. The early 1940s through the 1950s was the most significant time period for William Pahlmann and Associates. Pahlmann and his firm were involved in a variety of commercial projects in addition to residential designs, including department stores, restaurants, country clubs, hotels, showrooms, offices, and apartment lobbies. They completed projects in the U.S., as well as internationally in places like the Bahamas, Cuba and Hong Kong. With regards to product design, in the first half of the decade alone, Pahlmann designed two popular furniture collections and three popular fabric lines inspired by his international travels. By the mid 1950s, after Pahlmann had substantially built up his firm’s reputation and signature style, Pahlmann began relying heavily on his associates to carry out many of the commonplace tasks of the numerous projects that were procured by the firm. He generally reserved his personal involvement for particularly wealthy or long-standing clients and high-profile commercial commissions. At this time, Pahlmann also started focusing on promoting himself, his business, and the interior design profession in the press and through a busy schedule of public speaking engagements.

This chapter will highlight the key elements of Pahlmann’s design style that can be observed routinely in his interiors through a discussion of a selection of his model rooms for design exhibitions and for Pahlmann Previews, various magazine features on



his style, and the furnishings fabrics he designed in the early 1950s. Pahlmann's most substantial contribution to American interior design is what was known as "the Pahlmann eclectic look." Most frequently, has been described as a blending of objects or stylistic elements from a variety of periods and countries. Pahlmann also accessorized with the purpose of expressing the residents' various personal interests and tastes and placed great importance on a carefully selected combination of interesting colors. Pahlmann's design success could be attributed to his good taste and trained eye. Rather than appearing overdone or cluttered, his rooms were harmonious and he did have a design method. Pahlmann believed, for example, that although accessories could add interest and contrast to a room, items such as ashtrays and lamps should be kept in the same spirit as the furniture, such as formal or informal, massive or delicate.<sup>108</sup>

By the early 1950s, important shelter magazines were acknowledging that dual- or multi-purpose rooms "are the trend in American living today."<sup>109</sup> Pahlmann's eclectic style worked well in multi-purpose rooms, which were necessary as the middle-class moved out to small suburban homes and began organizing their various social activities within the walls of their family home. Rooms were no longer assigned to traditional means of organization, such as parlor, drawing room, and dining room, for example, and therefore many historic design standards were no longer applicable. Furniture and room arrangements worked better if they were practical and modified to suit the needs of the residents. Eclectic, by its definition of comprising variety elements derived from different sources, implies that eclecticism, in some form, would likely offer something for everybody. Unlike followers of strict modernism and devotees to rigid period interiors, Pahlmann always strived to do something different and to push the limits of

creativity. He avoided the “room-with-a-theme look” which would mark a designer as not keeping ahead of competitors in the industry.<sup>110</sup> It was difficult to identify any one theme in Pahlmann’s eclectic room designs for residential interiors. In his own design projects, his good taste enabled the end product to be balanced and appealing – legitimized by accepted historic design precedents, but full of freshness and character – a comfortable room that could be lived in and enjoyed.

The eclectic look is perhaps the closest semblance of an “American style” of design that was developed after World War II. Pahlmann, ever keen to the American interest in consumption, remarked that the U.S. may never settle on any one particular “American style” for any length of time because American merchandising techniques prevent this.<sup>111</sup> Consumers insist on new products and designs as frequently as every six months, he said, so no one design or style can persist for long.<sup>112</sup> The eclectic style, however, was perfectly suited for the postwar, more informal rooms that were designed for middle-class living, as well as the rampant consumer culture which had developed since the end of the war.

#### *Combining Elements from Different Periods and Countries*

A key element of Pahlmann’s design style was his hesitancy to commit to a particular period within a room. He liked to mix new and highly functional furniture pieces and materials and trendy colors with antiques and collectables. Furthermore, he enjoyed deriving inspiration from international sources and including decorations from various countries. In his early years, Pahlmann had an interest in traditional European period styles, in particular those of Italy and France, such as the style of Louis XVI and

Directoire. Soon thereafter, Pahlmann developed a lifelong interest in the arts of South America and Mexico, the Far East, and most passionately, Portugal.

For six weeks in the summer of 1952, Pahlmann took a highly publicized six-week trip to Portugal to study the country's folklore and customs, to find design inspiration for furniture and fabrics, and to collect art objects for his collection and for his decorating projects. Pahlmann discovered that Portugal was "full of charm and color, which can enrich contemporary American homes."<sup>113</sup> Pahlmann found the art forms of Portugal to be refreshingly simple, natural, warm, personal and highly decorative. He was so fond of Portuguese art and culture that he collected Portuguese pottery and other decorative arts and was invited twice by the Portuguese government to do a Portuguese promotion, which was quite an honor. At his spring presentation of the "Pahlmann Previews" model room display regularly featured at his design studio, Pahlmann chose a Portuguese theme and entitled the presentation "Portuguese Bazaar." The model room arrangement comprised a three-room model apartment display of living-dining room [Illustrations 14, 15], bedroom [Illustration 16] and kitchen [Illustration 17], plus an additional formal drawing room decorated in a grand, traditional Portuguese-inspired manner [Illustration 18]. He showcased Portuguese treasures from his own collection, such as a ceramic rooster, a handmade basket, a patterned ceramic platter and a two-handled vase, and furnished the rooms with authentic Portuguese furniture and decorative objects. He offered for sale from his shop an assortment of decorative objects and selected antiques. He also juxtaposed furniture styles from his modern American "Hastings Square" furniture line (to be discussed in the following chapter) with upholstery in the traditionally-inspired fabrics. At Pahlmann Previews, in the three-room

model apartment display of living-dining room, bedroom and kitchen, he unveiled his “Pahlmann Portugal” line of “Everglaze” fabrics that he designed for the Cyrus Clark Company.<sup>114</sup> The furnishings fabrics were brightly colored and based on Portuguese inspirations – for example, one print featured the spatter design he saw painted on oxen yokes by Portuguese peasants, another, in green and white, was comprised of a typical “Manueline Gothic” motif he saw in stone at the Monastery of San Geronimo [Illustration 19], another presented an interpretation of a blue, orange and white Moorish tile pattern he discovered in a villa at Sintra, near Lisbon [Illustration 20], another with various polychrome emblems observed at peasant fairs [Illustration 21], two polka-dot patterns [Illustration 22], and a bright plaid that he observed on the flannel shirts of the fishermen in a town called Navare [Illustration 23]. Portuguese furniture, which Pahlmann included in his “Pahlmann Previews” model rooms, was difficult to classify as any one historical style, yet Pahlmann made it fit well in the room with contemporary American pieces. He happily married a handmade “native” rug and Portuguese ceramic lamps with his Hastings Square furniture pieces. Pahlmann’s “Portuguese Bazaar” was covered extensively by the general media and featured in shelter magazines. The Mosaic Tile Company featured the kitchen in its advertisements as Pahlmann, who endorsed the company’s products, used Mosaic brand tile on the floors and countertops. Contemporary fashion designers, such as Pauline Trigere and Myron Herbert, used these model rooms as a setting for their fashion photography that summer. When Pahlmann introduced the trend for spring 1953, retailers such as Macy’s and Lord & Taylor followed suit and offered decorative and useful wares for the home in the Portuguese manner.

At the same time he was promoting his Portuguese line of fabrics and decorative inspiration, Pahlmann was commenting on the American public's likes and dislikes of design. Not coincidentally, he announced that Americans like "gimcracks," that is, "we [Americans] like to have stuff around, to express ourselves" rather than to pare down to the aesthetic of stark modernism.<sup>115</sup> The Portuguese designs, with color and pattern for example, added the needed "spice" to modern American homes.<sup>116</sup> The strict modern ideal left no room for "gewgaws" or other obvious trappings of materialism, so America invented a new type of modern that allowed room for personal expression and ornamentation. Pahlmann consistently created designs and products that appealed to America's consumerist desires. Introduced by Pahlmann and validated by the media and other retail outlets, the Portuguese trend provided fodder for the upwardly mobile American homemaker in the postwar era, the consummate consumer who sought home decorations that were appropriate and fashionable.

Having many varied interests, Pahlmann was also very much enamored with Japan and "oriental" things. He was known for mixing "east and west" and his preference for decorations from the Far East can be observed in his own apartments on East 52<sup>nd</sup> Street (ca. 1945-54) [Illustrations 24, 25], East 58<sup>th</sup> Street (ca. 1954) [Illustrations 26, 27] and Central Park South (ca. 1963) [Illustration 28]. He thought a decorator was at his best when he traveled.<sup>117</sup> He was a life-long collector and traveler and displayed much of his collection in a professional manner in his Central Park South apartment. Along with his collection of Far Eastern artifacts, he had a great collection of export porcelain from Asia, particularly platters. He collected Derbyshire spar (Blue John), a blue and yellow colored mineral found in England, as well as Porphyry marble.

He collected bamboo furniture, which he loved to decorate with and eventually became quite expensive, early Chinese screens, Portuguese pottery, and Victorian glass. Along with Portugal and Japan, another one of Pahlmann's favorite countries was Mexico, where he retired in his older years.

In the summer of 1953, after promoting his Portuguese-inspired look, he took a two-month trip around the world, travelling from east to west, thereby following the path of the sun. Some of the highlights of his trip included Japan, Hong Kong, Bangkok, India, Beirut, Athens and Rome. Pahlmann had sufficiently publicized to the media his trip around the world so that upon his return to the United States, the industry was anxiously awaiting his findings. He was interviewed by the press and actively lectured to clubs and other organizations, such as the Fashion Group, Inc., about his Far Eastern travels, particularly to Japan. He advised that the Far Eastern influence in home decoration, which was gaining momentum in America, would likely be prevalent for many years. Syndicated editor Alice Hughes featured a column on Pahlmann's experiences in Japan. Pahlmann reported that he was greatly influenced by Japanese civilization, including their intimacy with nature, hospitality and tranquility of spirit.<sup>118</sup> He noticed that the Japanese interiors were designed not only to meet functional needs, but also to address a spiritual interest. No matter how modest a home in Japan, there was always a "takanoma" or a "place of beauty."<sup>119</sup> Hughes explained that although "we Americans" will not contemplate lowering our living standards to that of the Japanese, much can be learned from their superior utilization of free space in a crowded country. As space in America was becoming more of a premium, Pahlmann believed that if Americans are able to create neat and economical living spaces as well, they too might

find some time for spiritual reflection. Pahlmann believed that elements of the Japanese mode of living could be translated into postwar American homes.

By the fall of 1953, the media was routinely reporting that Far Eastern influences were making their way into American interior design and they often credited Pahlmann for skillfully introducing such influences. Soon after his trip around the world in 1953, Pahlmann was advising that travel would have a profound impact on American interior decoration. Complementing the general public and perhaps appealing to its desire to be regarded as sophisticated, Pahlmann suggested that Americans are generally curious by nature and have the sense and good taste to avail themselves to the world's offerings.<sup>120</sup>

In January 1954, after finding inspiration from the decorative styles, colors and tastes of the Orient, Pahlmann unveiled a line of decorative "Everglaze" furnishing fabrics that he designed for the Cyrus Clark Company. The fabric line was called "Path of the Sun" in honor of his trip. The line was advertised as incorporating the "simple, basic designs of the Far East" together with the era's trend for more "casual, less formal living" and for communicating "a wanderlust for far-off places" [Illustration 29].<sup>121</sup> The patterns were inspired by shoji screens [Illustration 30], exotic foliage like grasses and flowers growing by rice paddies [Illustration 31] and plants on the banks of the river in Thailand [Illustration 32], formal gardens with bamboo trellises and wisteria [Illustration 33], and the classical Japanese Kabuki theatre [Illustration 34]. The colors and style of Oriental design and color were "faithfully interpreted with a contemporary flair." The fabrics were available at the B. Altman department store [Illustration 35]. When interviewed about his designs, Pahlmann explained the Japanese tendency for "maximum use of space and love of simplicity and beauty" in their homes was particularly relevant

to American homes as the cost of living space rose in the postwar era.<sup>122</sup> At the same time living space was becoming more limited, travel was becoming more and more widespread, so people would be more apt to be exposed to Far Eastern design – if not through their own visit, than through artifacts and images brought back from other travelers. In keeping with the Far Eastern theme, and to promote the fabric line, the spring 1954 presentation of Pahlmann Previews was entitled “Path of the Sun” and offered four model rooms decorated with Pahlmann’s fabrics [Illustrations 36, 37, 38, 39].

Pahlmann was commended for bringing a fresh inspiration to the market through his Path of the Sun fabric designs. In fact, for the spring 1954 fashion season, he entered into the world of fashion clothing. He designed a line of Everglaze fashion cottons for the William Simpson Company. These cotton prints, also named “Path of the Sun,” were used specifically for ladies’ clothing and were different from the furnishings fabrics [Illustration 40]. They were, however, also inspired by his travels along the trade route from the east to west, including China’s morning sun, the caravans travelling between China and Damascus, a Siamese screen, Bangkok temples, and a Hindu woman’s sari. Garnering praise like his furnishings fabrics from this line, the “brilliant” Path of the Sun fashion fabrics were commended by the media for being “very new and striking” and “captur[ing] the wonder of the magnificent East.”<sup>123</sup> Pahlmann achieved such success in bringing “all the rich excitement and color of the Orient” and “a delicacy and precision of designs” into the fabrics that at least one editor predicted “the Far Eastern story shows no sign of ending.”<sup>124</sup> A compelling influence, Far Eastern inspirations continued to appear in home furnishings and ladies’ fashions through the later years of the decade.



An excellent example of Pahlmann's eclectic approach can be observed in one of the celebrated model room designs that his firm prepared for a design exhibition. In conjunction with the June 1954 Chicago furniture markets, the A.I.D. sponsored an exhibition of model rooms and vignettes entitled "At Home in America, 1954." Various A.I.D. members prepared or contributed furnishings and ideas to the model rooms. William Pahlmann and Associates created a remarkable lounge area for television and music, which was singled out and hailed by the media for showing the era's most desired style, which was the combination of traditional and modern in furniture, color and accessories [Illustrations 41, 42]. This room featured almost all of Pahlmann's signature decorative techniques. The room was to be multi-purpose, for relaxing or serving as an informal dining area for use while enjoying television or music. The design included international influences – Pahlmann's "Path of the Sun" furnishings fabrics inspired by the Orient and two Japanese-style lacquer tables. The room also incorporated time-honored antiques with modern furniture productions, for example, an antique Louis XV-style chair along with a Pahlmann-designed modern club chair on casters, and an example of high modern design, a leather sofa designed by Jens Risom. Pahlmann also addressed the modern, practical interest in multi-use furniture pieces with the addition of a custom-designed cantilevered walnut shelf that served its second purpose as an end table and a room divider that doubled as a television-music unit. Such pieces were particularly compelling due to the postwar interest in the television set. The choice of Amitco brand rubber floor tiles, a modern and fashionable floor material, tackled contemporary concerns regarding durability and ease of care for a highly used living space. The floors, in a jazzy terrazzo pattern of cerulean, white and "nubian," contributed to the inspiring

color palette in the room. Walls were painted “chutney” and the glazed chintz curtains featured the “Shoji” fabric pattern in terracotta and blue. Further adding punch to the color scheme, there were accents of yellow, red, pink, and aquamarine. Finally, Pahlmann accessorized with contemporary artworks – a sculpture by Louise Kruger and a painting by J.M. Hanson from Passedoit Gallery, a trendy art gallery in New York City.

By this time, the mid-1950s, Pahlmann had already spent almost nine years building up the reputation of his firm and defining his design style. The combination of past and present along with various international influences was now being utilized by many others in the interior decoration profession. In fact, one of the overarching themes observed in the A.I.D. model rooms in general was the harmonious blending of modern design elements with traditional references, plus “the flavor of other times, foreign places.”<sup>125</sup> After the exhibition, the press was reporting this as the most pervasive trend of 1954 – both the combining of different furniture pieces and objects from the past and present, as well as the influence of historical design models in new, modern furniture designs. Editors reported that the influence of Egypt and the Orient, specifically, were to be seen in home furnishings design for fall of 1954. The inclusion of international influences in room designs was another component of Pahlmann’s hallmark eclectic style.

By the end of the 1950s, Pahlmann had completed countless decoration projects in the United States and for American clients in other parts of the world. The media was advising that the “modern approach” to decorating would be to ignore the dates of things and focus instead on “good design” from any time or place.<sup>126</sup> The best rooms captured the present by combining many ingredients of good design into a harmonious whole, so

the resulting rooms were as far removed from the past as they were from the future. By introducing and promoting many of these trends, Pahlmann had shaped the concept of American style and good taste at that moment. One *House Beautiful* article, in its discussion of a Pahlmann-designed interior for an American businessman in the Bahamas, declared that the characteristic mid-century American look results from “an enthusiastic, free yet controlled mixture of design elements from the world at large” – or in other words, an eclectic mix of furnishings. The article further elaborated on the look of the mid-century American home – “it’s a measure, we think, not only of the more sophisticated taste that our new, more frequent contacts with the world are giving us, but a healthy sign of a true internationalism.”<sup>127</sup> The mid-century American style, particularly described in this manner, was symbolic of America’s participation on the world stage could be used to validate the refinement of the nation’s citizens.

*Personal Expression through Accessories and Color*

As discussed earlier in this paper, scholars contend that the mass media promoted consumerism, not as a personal indulgence, but as a civic duty to improve the living standards for the nation in its entirety.<sup>128</sup> Along with this growing middle class of mass consumers, came an interest in social mobility and materialism. The postwar era was one of conspicuous consumption and middle-class suburbanites endeavored to “keep up with the Joneses.” One way in which people could display their wealth and buying power, as well as their sophistication and good taste, was through the objects and furnishings they displayed in their homes. Design experts advised, however, that purchases were not to be made in a haphazard or spontaneous manner. Space was at a premium, so nothing was to be superfluous and furniture pieces were to serve double and sometimes triple duty for

various purposes.<sup>129</sup> Consistent with these principles, Pahlmann advised that furnishings should harmonize and add to the overall function and purpose of the room and that the best accessories should be meaningful and enhance the look and feel of the room.<sup>130</sup>

Despite the overwhelming amount of consumer items being offered in the marketplace, Pahlmann cautioned about being too concerned with impressing the neighbors. Instead, he believed in accessorizing carefully and deliberately to express one's personal tastes, and that homeowners should not be afraid of their choices.<sup>131</sup> He believed an owner's choice of decorative accessories and *objet d'art* revealed information about her personality and interests and should be appropriate for the homeowner.<sup>132</sup> For his own projects, in order to determine which decorative accents were best, and to gain a better understanding of their needs and desires (and budget), he always interviewed each client, as well as others such as family members who would be using the space.

In August 1952 Pahlmann prepared a feature insert in *Good Housekeeping* magazine, in which he revealed to readers the "secrets" of decorating. "Accessories are the top secret, he announced, and without exception, modern interiors must be ornamented with great care.<sup>133</sup> The overarching theme of his design advice was that decorating one's home is a highly personal undertaking, and that a good interior results from sensible study of the inhabitants' needs and careful planning. Furthermore, Pahlmann cautioned against slavishly copying someone else's home or using a disliked accessory simply because it has some legacy. Remarking that "individuality is the hallmark of good decorating," Pahlmann appealed to the American interest in individual expression, and advised that since no two people are exactly alike, the most satisfactory results derive from adapting ideas to one's own personal circumstances.<sup>134</sup> He also

advised to think of furnishings and accessories as a total effect, and to avoid buying isolated objects without a good idea of where they will be used. Home accessories need not cost a bundle, Pahlmann explained to his readers, and could be purchased at any curiosity shop, department store, gift shop, or even the five-and-ten, as long as they are chosen with imagination and a discerning eye for good taste. He also provided examples of accessories one could use in their own homes, from antique to modern, including items that could be purchased at Pahlmann Previews, the display and shop at his studio. After publication of the article, in fact, Pahlmann and *Good Housekeeping* received numerous inquiries about where to purchase the furnishings illustrated.<sup>135</sup> Accessories shown were suitable for a variety of home styles – French Provincial, Early American, French and Italian eighteenth-century, and of course the modern home. Pahlmann further explained that shapes and textures were important in choosing modern accessories and they should be “few in number, distinguished in quality, and dramatic in placement.”<sup>136</sup> He also mentioned that the strength and character of “primitive” objects are particularly suitable for the modern interior.<sup>137</sup>

Some of Pahlmann’s additional secrets included the advice to choose upholstered furniture pieces that are simple, as furniture was often one of the more costly elements in a room and should be enduring rather than trendy. Pahlmann suggested the addition of old things, such as antique or traditional ornaments, to add warmth to the “starkness” of functional modern furniture.<sup>138</sup> He also suggested adding a conversation piece, like an interesting hat rack, in the foyer for example, because it was usually a small and awkward area that was difficult to decorate. One of his favorite decorative treatments was the grouping of framed pictures and prints, even of different colors, styles and sizes, together

on one wall. This “eclectic picture wall” [see Illustrations 24, 27] in fact became a hallmark Pahlmann decorative technique and can be observed in many of his projects, as well as in his own homes. Pahlmann cautioned, however, that more dramatic ideas should be carried out by a professional decorator, and if one did not want to hire a professional, then she should certainly keep her ideas simple.<sup>139</sup>

Although Pahlmann was often a master of drama and created interiors that were full of colors, accessories, multi-purpose furniture pieces, and imaginative ideas, he often preached the virtue of simplicity in decorating. This may seem like a contradiction within Pahlmann’s ideals, however, he believed that only professional decorators had the required experience and education that could not be achieved by a layperson. Although Pahlmann often lectured and wrote advice columns, and even authored a decorating manual, he strongly maintained that the most successful rooms were those designed by an educated professional – “flair is not enough; it just muddies the waters” he cautioned.<sup>140</sup> Despite the fact that Pahlmann’s direct interior design services may have been out of reach of some Americans, he persisted in educating the public about good taste with the hopes that they would be able to discern fine quality and appropriateness and maybe even seek the advice of a local designer or trained decorator on-staff at their local department store. In fact, one newspaper article published as early as 1941, when Pahlmann was vocally advocating for the professionalism of the trade, suggests that even the white-collar worker who lived in a modest home should be employing the advice of a decorator.<sup>141</sup>

Another defining characteristic of Pahlmann’s work was his creative and sometimes daring use of color. The aggressive use of color was actually a general trend

in postwar interiors that often characterized modern design. The design concept commenced in the late 1940s in response to the drabness of the preceding war years.<sup>142</sup> Bold use of color permeated the highest level of design all the way through to the popular products and designs that were consumed by the masses. Americans enjoyed the freedom of choice and expression of individuality that came with a varied color selection. For example, suburban tract houses were often two-toned or two-textured with contrasting shingles, brick or stone-faced bases, brightly colored siding, or “rainbow brick.” This added visual interest as well as fancy elements to be flaunted to your neighbors. Furthermore, when manufacturers wanted consumers to replace their old, yet workable appliances, from refrigerators to automobiles, they designed newer versions in newer colors.<sup>143</sup> Variety in colors gave increasingly fashionable American consumers an opportunity to showcase their style, taste and individuality. Designers generally aimed to create bold contrasts in color and pattern choices, rather than harmonious color coordination. There was also an element of psychology to color choices in postwar interiors – that of dark or neutral colors were representative of quiet or restful areas in a room, while shockingly bright colors were meant to invigorate certain points in a room.<sup>144</sup>

The media picked up on the interest in color and ran columns on the importance of color and how it can influence your life activities, such as your emotions, work habits or appetite.<sup>145</sup> Pahlmann was a close friend and collaborated with Dorothy Liebes, the brilliant textile designer and one of the greatest colorists.<sup>146</sup> One of Pahlmann’s most strongly held principles throughout his career was that if an owner liked a certain color, she should have it in her home, provided that she could “live up to it.”<sup>147</sup> He believed

each person should choose colors in decorating that suit their emotional and physical attributes, rather than choose colors just because they are fashionable. Other designers agreed with Pahlmann's attitude towards a freer use of color – at least one suggested that color is the very best way for homeowners to express their individual personalities.<sup>148</sup>

Pahlmann's theories regarding color and accessories can be observed in practice in a feature article published in *Life* magazine. In "Portrait Backgrounds: Decorator Chooses Setting for Five Types of Women" Pahlmann selected five famous American women and designed portrait backgrounds for them including colors, fabrics and accessories. Although he met and talked with each of the women, he did not ask them their preferences in home furnishings. Instead, he prepared the rooms for them based on their personalities and associations with carefully thought-out colors and decorations. For Margaret Truman, the daughter of President Truman, he created an "American Look" [Illustration 43]. Pahlmann found her to be "forthright, young, and unmistakably American," so he set the room with a Colonial feel.<sup>149</sup> He chose a nice medium blue to complement her blue eyes and blonde hair and as an appropriate backdrop for a mix of carefully selected antiques and modern pieces. The pine clock and English Lowestoft vase were antiques, while the side chair by Paul McCobb was a modern design based on a Shaker original. Pahlmann included two pieces of modern furniture – a coffee table of his own design and a sideboard – and added a restrained international touch with a Puerto Rican rug. Other elements of an early American style included a Grandma Moses painting, chintz fabrics on the table, and a bowl of fruits and vegetables. Ms. Truman found this room to be "all together exact and appropriate" to her tastes.<sup>150</sup>



For Metropolitan Opera star Patrice Munsel, Pahlmann designed a room of rich “Baroque Elegance” with a color scheme in pink and lavender and a touch of pale blue to match the warmth of her personality [Illustration 44]. He chose baroque-style accessories on a grand scale to accentuate her grace and smallness, including a Venetian doorway, gold and white candelabra, French Directoire clock, and an immense porcelain flower urn, and small Italian items to correspond to her elegance, such as a Venetian mirror, chair and stool, and marble bust. To address her femininity, Pahlmann used delicate materials such as silk and taffeta. The only modern element in this particular setting was the black and white vinyl floor. Although it may be hard to imagine, Ms. Munsel found this room “too sedate” for her tastes and would have liked a bit of humor added, although she admitted the period was fitting.<sup>151</sup>

Pahlmann thought the television and movie actress Nina Foch was an ideal sophisticated American woman [Illustration 45] and thus suited for a “Fanciful Modern” backdrop. For her setting, Pahlmann chose a misty gray background to complement her pale blonde features. He chose a Swedish woven rug, and Dorothy Liebes fabrics for the woven blinds and upholstery on the modern chair by Edward Wormley, all in complementary colors with bright accents. He felt that African masks and the contemporary Stamos painting would be the types of artwork a “ladylike siren” would collect. Although Ms. Foch liked the colors, she would have wanted a comfortable chair and would have done without the African masks.<sup>152</sup>

Pahlmann found the red-headed actress Shirley Booth to be “the friendly, unaffected sort of woman who dislikes formality,” so he chose for her a setting of “Provincial Comfort” [Illustration 46]. He used soft colors, in shades of green and

orange, along with comfortable French provincial furniture and textured silk, country-style fabrics. American pieces included a wooden mixing bowl set on legs and filled with vegetables, a clothes rack, and weathervane. The hooked rug was modern, but the copper kettle, flower pots with ferns, and copper warming pans suit the provincial spirit. Ms. Booth was completely satisfied with her portrait room.

Finally, for radio and television star Jinx Falkenburg McCrary, Pahlmann created a “Casual Ranch Style” (so chosen in honor of her husband’s name “Tex”), incorporating rusty orange tones to complement her “happy medium of blonde-and-brunette beauty” [Illustration 47]. The informal ranch setting expressed her “free-and-easy, outdoor girl personality,” complete with items that evoked the American Western spirit, such as a casual, large printed Indian fabric, a water buffalo skull and an oversized plant. Pahlmann included a modern, yet comfortable, chair designed by Robsjohn-Gibbins and a bamboo ladder for “atmosphere.”<sup>153</sup> Like Ms. Booth, Mrs. McCrary remarked that she would not change a thing about her portrait room. This project demonstrated the importance of decorating a space with careful consideration of the inhabitant’s personality, interests, and associations.

Although Pahlmann prepared this feature in *Life* without any direction from his subjects, for his own work, he preferred to be more direct. If his clients did not tell him first, Pahlmann would ask them what colors they liked, believing that they knew their own instincts and they knew what colors suited them best. He also felt certain colors were appropriate for certain locations, for example, for one particular commission in Florida, he thought Bimini blue (a clear sparkling blue of the sea), citrus yellow (a relative of the grapefruit), and papaya (an appealing orange) were best suited.<sup>154</sup>

Pahlmann believed that blue was the most universally appealing color and had an aversion to dead white. He often used one particular shade of blue, similar to a turquoise but more like soft, robin's egg blue-grey. He found that both women and men liked the color, and it became known as "Pahlmann Blue." He liked every color – and his interest in appropriate choice of color can be observed in all of his work, from the most glamorous to the most reserved designs.

Pahlmann understood that the use of accessories and color was essential in the American postwar interior. As middle-class Americans made efforts to improve their social and economic status, it was important that their gains were reflected in a visible manner. Accessories gave the homeowner an opportunity to display her interests or sophistication, while color might indicate one's individuality, good taste, and keen eye for style. Especially for those who previously had little disposable income for luxuries and consumption, the American home became the forum for expression of these attitudes that pervaded in postwar communities.

## Chapter 5 – Two Modern Furniture Lines

In addition to the accolades he garnered for many skillful interior decoration projects and the creation of an eclectic style, Pahlmann was also an accomplished industrial designer. Early in his career at Lord & Taylor, Pahlmann experimented with furniture design in the model rooms and created custom pieces for many of his clients. It was soon after World War II, however, when Pahlmann created two lines of modern furniture – Momentum and Hastings Square – that went into production and were sold in department and furnishings stores throughout the country. Pahlmann's two furniture lines often reflected his design ideals and suggested specific ways that he worked with and helped define American taste and values in the postwar era.

In all of his work, Pahlmann promoted the ideology that “good decoration is a design for living.”<sup>155</sup> In his analysis of prewar modern furniture, he felt that it lacked graciousness and livableness.<sup>156</sup> He thought that modern designers often forgot the role of beauty, which was just as necessary as functionalism. He felt that modern designers started out incorrectly: they completely neglected the past, and started in “space somewhere in a self-conscious effort to be different and separate from anything that has gone before.”<sup>157</sup> When evaluating the needs and the desires of the postwar American family at home, he noticed that people had a need for smaller scale furniture, flexible units with storage spaces, and reasonable prices.<sup>158</sup> Pahlmann's ability to meet the needs and desires of the modern American consumer resulted in the widespread success of his furniture lines at this time. Because of the simple styling coupled with hospitable and practical materials, Pahlmann's furniture designs fit seamlessly into the eclectic and functional interiors that he was designing for residential clients.

*Momentum for Moderns*

In 1949, Pahlmann designed his first full furniture line, called “Momentum.” The line was manufactured by the Winchendon Furniture and Chair Company (in Massachusetts) for distribution through their Contempo Shops. Popular department and furnishings stores, including Bloomingdales, Abraham & Strauss, and Jacksons carried the Momentum line [Illustration 48]. Pahlmann specifically designed this furniture in response to the domestic interests and challenges of the time. With the proliferation of small suburban homes for the growing middle class, he recognized that the current trends in home design favored “complete freedom from the restrictions imposed by space and room arrangements.”<sup>159</sup> Marketed as “Momentum for Moderns,” the pieces were designed for “modern living,” which included a desire for freedom and mobility, in addition to, a significantly increased fascination with the television.

A key feature of the Momentum line was the use of the oversize, semi-pneumatic, rubber wheels that allowed even the heaviest pieces to be easily rearranged throughout the room for conversation groups or entertainment purposes [Illustration 49]. Considering the popular emphasis on recreation within the home, Pahlmann designed the furniture on wheels particularly with the activities of both conversation and television in mind. Furthermore, many of the pieces were multi-purpose in character and solved the problems presented by limited space and multi-use rooms. The pieces in the furniture line generally could be broken up into three distinct types: wood storage units, larger-scaled mobile upholstered chair-and-table units, and small-scaled upholstered pieces in a moderate price range. The upholstered pieces had foam rubber cushions for comfort and the wood pieces were available in two fancy-sounding finishes – mongoose beige or

coconut brown mahogany. The upholstered pieces could be ordered in a large range of colorful fabrics, and the case pieces could have lacquered fronts of “flamboyant” (a subtle coral) or “wild lemon” (a yellow-green), colors inspired by Pahlmann’s recent trip to the Virgin Islands, while many were embellished with caning or reeding decorative effects. These enhancements added a small element of exoticism to the pieces.

Distinctive pieces designed for mobility included a single-unit comprised of two attached arm chairs flanking an end table [see Illustration 49], as well as a chaise longue with a small side table attached, both that could be moved about on large casters [Illustration 50]. Some other Momentum pieces that were designed for many uses in a small space included a credenza that had two twin cots inside, along with space for pillows and bedding [Illustrations 51, 52]. Also for homes that were short on space, he offered a dining table built into a storage unit, where the table top served as the front door of a tall cabinet that could be pulled down to reveal storage shelves and silver drawers hidden within [Illustrations 53, 54]. Some of the pieces, particularly for television and radio-phonograph sets, were modular in character and could be stacked up vertically with shelving units, for magazines and the like, or bed-lamp units, if the homeowner needed to back up two twin beds against the main unit [Illustrations 55, 56]. Another one of Pahlmann’s solutions to house a television set included a cabinet into which a table model television fit perfectly – it had wheels, so it could be rolled up to a bedside, for example. To address the growing prevalence of technological appliances in the home, Pahlmann provided a multi-use wall unit where the radio and phonograph could be stored along with books and other items in the drawers [Illustration 57]. One of the most sought-after items in the line was a 54-inch square coffee table on large rubber wheels,

that was large enough to be placed between two fireside loveseats or arm chairs, with a removable metal compartment built in that could hold plants, bottles or ice and cold drinks [see Illustration 48]. One of the key features of the Momentum line was its flexibility for use and modern convenience coupled with comfortable and decorative finishes and fabrics.

*Furniture Manufacturer* magazine hailed Pahlmann's Momentum line as "an encouraging example of the bold new thinking that has come into decoration since the war."<sup>160</sup> These versatile pieces were commended for their suitability for all rooms in the home. The line seemed to be right on target for the need and desires of the consumer at this time. Industry publications were reporting that along with the desire for versatility, consumers also sought furniture that was less severe and favored upholstered pieces with rich and colorful textures and patterns. Consumers desired hospitable furniture that European-inspired designs could not provide. The Momentum furniture was available upholstered in modern materials, including Lurex, a newly developed metallic fiber that was washable, odorless and non-tarnishable, or designer fabrics by Dorothy Liebes. Finally, Pahlmann's Momentum furniture allowed the American family the freedom for various entertainment activities in the home, in particular for television watching.

The importance of television as a new entertainment medium at this time cannot be overstated. In the postwar era, "televieing" was considered a family-centric event. Quality time could be spent in the home, watching adaptations of novels and short stories, dramatic productions, situation comedies and comic-variety shows. Furthermore, with the rise of single-family suburban dwellings and decline of traditional, urban communities as central to social life, the television became a window to the outside

world.<sup>161</sup> The media touted that the television set was “here to stay” and updated the public on its technological advances, such as the growing number of broadcasting facilities and regulations for efficient black-and-white and experimental color programming imposed by the FCC. An article published in July 1948 reported that 20 broadcasting stations were currently in operation, with 72 additional stations in process, and about 172 applications pending with the FCC to build and operate a station.<sup>162</sup> The same article proclaimed, “this is television’s year,” and reported that the number of television sets owned nationally had increased from 7,000 in 1946 to 300,000 at the time of the article’s writing, and would amount to a projected 750,000 by the end of 1948 – producing an audience of about three million people.<sup>163</sup> With the importance of the television set rapidly on the rise, interior designers delved into the design challenge of incorporating this new machine into the average home.

Beginning in the second half of the 1940s, the press regularly discussed with home decorators how a television set should be designed, and if and how one should disguise her set as not to ruin her home decoration. There were two primary schools of thought about the best way to treat the television set in the American home – either accepting the television set as a new and unique entertainment medium or trying to conceal it. Some designers took the position that the actual television set was a modern invention and therefore its design should be based on its unique status, rather than treated as if it had some historical furniture design precedent. Therefore period cabinets and the like were generally thought of as an inappropriate choice for housing a television, a modern electronic apparatus. The form was so far removed from the function, that this approach challenged the concept of good taste.<sup>164</sup> Additionally, designers suggested that



efforts to model the television set after cabinets for radio phonographs, another electronic device, were ill-suited due to the necessity to actually view television set. The best way to treat the television set, some designers believed, was as just one more modern appliance added to the home.

A 1950 article that surveyed well-known furniture and industrial designers set forth a variety of creative design ideas for housing the television, some of which were mere fantasy and others that were actually realized. Ideas included a television set that had a movable screen that could readily tilt to the viewer's satisfaction, and a set that was built into the wall of the home, and would come standard in modern suburban dwellings, like the picture window.<sup>165</sup> Other ideas including housing the machinery in a transparent case, to satisfy the era's fascination with machinery, and the television set built onto a cart with wheels so it could be moved about the home as necessary. Even in the formative years of television set design, designers recognized the utility of having the controls located away from the actual set to prevent people from having to sit at arm's length or blocking the view when getting up to change the channels.<sup>166</sup> Later in the decade, some advised that the television set should become the new focal point in a room (much like it is today). In one newspaper article, Pahlmann suggested arranging the dining room as a theater, with the television as the focal point.<sup>167</sup> Historian Lynn Spigel proposes that the television, like the large, glass picture window, meshed perfectly with the aesthetic of the modern suburban home.<sup>168</sup> It fostered the illusion of space and satisfied the desire for "easy living" by introducing the outside world into the home with minimal effort on the part of the residents.<sup>169</sup>

Although furniture designers were quick to recognize the prospects that the television set put forth for innovative cabinet design, other interior decorators of the adverse school of thought explored the possibilities for concealing the television unit. Some decorators suggested the simplest option, to house it inside an existing piece of furniture, while others developed more creative treatments. One article advised “how to hide the ghostly eye of television” and suggested various cabinetry treatments to hide the apparatus – from simple ideas such as a cabinet with a sliding tambour door that opened to reveal the set hidden inside or a wall of built-in cabinetry that could accommodate the television and other electronic accoutrement – to more imaginative treatments such as a cabinet painted with a *trompe l’oeil* bookcase cover and a built-out room divider with the television hidden behind a two-piece corner door and on a swivel, so that it could be rotated to serve both rooms.<sup>170</sup> It was even suggested to hide the television behind a painting on the wall. By the early 1960s, perhaps when the technological novelty of the television wore off a bit, manufacturers made special period-style case furniture to disguise the television and other electronics if one wanted to incorporate these modern devices seamlessly into the interior decoration of a room.<sup>171</sup>

In June 1949, when American television viewership was estimated at about six million people, a panel of designers at the A.I.D. convention discussed the challenges interior designers would face with television sets infiltrating American homes.<sup>172</sup> They considered technical aspects, such as the proper viewing distance and angle and the best lighting conditions. Furthermore, the designers considered the whole activity of television watching, which included the way the audience was situated in the room and the manner in which the room was being used. The A.I.D. recognized Pahlmann’s

Momentum furniture line as one good idea for addressing the needs of the modern American family in the postwar era, including its increasing enjoyment of the television. The Momentum furniture line spoke to both aspects of the television – the mobile seating designs accommodated comfortable viewing of the device and easy rearrangement of the room, and his multi-purpose pieces allowed fashionable integration and disguise of it. The furniture was also comfortable with its plush foam seats, attractive in a variety of colors, fabrics and wood tones, and practical in its mobility and modern, easy-to clean materials.

Some of the best press coverage Pahlmann received for his Momentum furniture was through an article in *Life* magazine wherein three eminent decorators with different design approaches – Nancy McClelland, William Pahlmann, and T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings – were asked by *Life* to design a barren room in New York City's Pagano studios using whatever materials they preferred. Recognizing that although most Americans could not afford the services provided by these three interior designers, but that these designer styles would ultimately affect the choices average Americans made in the furnishings stores, the article then published images of the designs and compared the three design approaches. The three design styles were quite different: McClelland specialized in traditional furnishings, Pahlmann blended ideas to suit a client's personality, and Robsjohn-Gibbings had developed a distinctly modern style.<sup>173</sup> Pahlmann's room, practically a mini-studio apartment, contained numerous Momentum pieces, notably the large, square coffee table, the metallic-upholstered chairs on wheels, the flip-down dining table, and the cabinet housing two twin beds. Additionally, the room featured the adjustable pendant lamps that he also used in one of his key residential

projects (discussed in Chapter 6). Readers wrote in and commended Pahlmann's room for its comfortable appeal.<sup>174</sup> Following the publication of the article, Pahlmann received several letters from readers inquiring about where to purchase the furniture pieces.<sup>175</sup> Pahlmann had learned through experience that furniture is "only as good looking as it is efficient and only as efficient as it is mobile and easy to use."<sup>176</sup> The Momentum line, Pahlmann's first complete furniture line of his career, was right on point during the television era and gained some popularity among Americans and acclaim for Pahlmann. However, his next furniture line would surpass the success of Momentum.

*Hastings Square and "Good Design"*

In 1952, Pahlmann designed his most acclaimed furniture line, called "Hastings Square," which remained in production for about seven years. Pahlmann was very active in the A.I.D., and in this capacity he became well known to the many furniture companies in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the heart of America's furniture manufacturing industry. He routinely visited the Grand Rapid Furniture Market to deliver lectures on home decorating to the attendees and exhibitors. The Grand Rapids Bookcase and Chair Company, from Hastings, Michigan, approached Pahlmann and asked for his designer expertise specifically to develop a furniture line "which would reflect contemporary America as Americans live in it."<sup>177</sup> The company wanted to provide modern Americans with a product that was best suited to their needs and tastes. By this time, the designer-manufacturer collaboration practice was not uncommon, as traditional furniture designers wanted to update their productions to keep current with contemporary design culture.<sup>178</sup> In fact, it was in the 1950s that furniture design began to be treated as a specialist form of design engineering.<sup>179</sup>

The evolution of modern furniture, although started well before the postwar era, picked up great energy in postwar America. By the late 1940s, with the development of open-plan modern homes, architects and designers advocated that a new type of furniture was necessary to suit the dwelling arrangement.<sup>180</sup> Bulky, traditional furniture was ill-suited for the small, open-plan homes with multi-purpose rooms. These dwellings required furniture pieces that could be moved easily and used for various functions. Postwar designers responded by creating scaled-down, lightweight furniture. It was functional and technical concerns, over aesthetics alone, that would dictate the creation of postwar furniture.<sup>181</sup> By 1952, the media was reporting that homemakers were demanding functional furniture of good design, particularly for the small home.<sup>182</sup> Pahlmann's Hastings Square collection, marketed with an overtly "American" overtone, was ideal for the new style of American suburban open-plan home.

Prior to designing the line, Pahlmann felt that there was too much "self-consciousness" in the recent modern furniture designs that had been presented at the annual Good Design Exhibition, which was a prestigious furniture show and design competition sponsored by the Chicago Merchandise Mart and the Museum of Modern Art.<sup>183</sup> He was concerned that they "seemed to bend over backwards accepting things that are stark and uncompromising."<sup>184</sup> At least half of the designs presented, he opined, were uncomfortable and unpleasant to look at.<sup>185</sup> With his Hastings Square line, however, he tried to present an alternative, softer version of modern. Hastings Square revealed the sleek, clean straight lines of designer-styled modernist furniture, yet could be happily included in a traditional interior. The pieces were available in warm woods, such as "enchanted American walnut" and "teakwood" and with finishes such as "dark

meerschaum” and “mellow soft beeswax” to complement any décor. In some of the pieces in this line, Pahlmann combined the traditional material with modern, sturdy materials such as Micarta by Westinghouse (a composite plastic containing linen or paper fabric), Lurex upholstery, and golden aluminum (tarnish-proof) pulls. The Hastings Square coffee table, which appears in some of Pahlmann’s best interior design projects, flaunts a colorful yellow tabletop of modern Micarta, a material that Pahlmann promoted in an advertisement as “an ideal blend of utility and charm” [Illustration 58].<sup>186</sup> His Hastings Square club chair was available upholstered in Naugahyde, a synthetic material that had the breathability of a woven fabric and the durability of a vinyl. Intended for “daily use in the country’s finest homes,” the furniture line was appropriate for “living rooms that are easy to live with,” “dining rooms that reflect contemporary elegance,” and “bedrooms that are at home in the American home.”<sup>187</sup> The Grand Rapids Bookcase and Chair Company’s advertisements claimed that each piece showed the “remarkable new concept of design for living in the American manner.”<sup>188</sup>

Pahlmann designed the Hastings Square line to be adaptable, versatile, graceful and comfortable. The intention was that these elegantly simple pieces could slip into anyone’s home, whether formal or casual, large or small, traditional or modern. Similar to the combination of traditional and modern materials in the Hastings Square pieces themselves, this quality fit well with Pahlmann’s design style of combining decorative elements of the past and present. A homeowner did not have to remove her period pieces or accessories in order to incorporate a Hastings Square piece.

Furthermore, the pieces could be used in a variety of ways or in various rooms. Like Momentum, many of these pieces had rubber casters (although smaller) so the

owners could reconfigure the room for television watching or other socializing without difficulty. For those who did not like casters, the Hastings Square pieces could be ordered with traditional legs and many were small and light enough that moving them would not be too burdensome [Illustration 59]. The pieces also boast a multi-purpose quality, such as a serving cart that had enough compartments that an entire dinner could be served without reloading [Illustration 60, 61], or a writing table that had four drawers on its desk side for storage and a lower level on its other side that could be used as a bookshelf and a table surface at the same time [Illustration 62]. These multi-purpose pieces addressed the modern interest in convenience, as well as economized on space – an issue of growing import as the small suburban tract house became widespread to the American middle class.

Pahlmann received three awards for his pieces in this line: the A.I.D. awarded two honorable mentions for Hastings Square at their 1952 Design in Home Furnishings Competition, and store buyers attending the 1953 “Good Design” Exhibition in Chicago (sponsored by the Chicago Merchandise Mart and the New York Museum of Modern Art) chose a Hastings Square walnut chest of drawers as the number one “good design” out of 500 design items exhibited [Illustration 63]. The line was commended by the press as “ageless” in form and style, that is, “a kind of modern that isn’t dated at all,” as well as ideally suited for “today’s manner of informal living,” where the hostess may have to accommodate a few or even many guests at a moment’s notice.<sup>189</sup> Scaled down to accommodate smaller rooms, many pieces had a “floating look of airy lightness” [Illustration 64].<sup>190</sup> The Hastings Square bedroom storage piece was notable because its “drawers of several sizes, some behind doors, are scientifically proportioned for men’s

and women's clothing and jewelry" [Illustration 65].<sup>191</sup> Although the article is referencing a dresser essentially, the mention of scientific proportions may have appealed to the American consumer's interest in technologically advanced products.

Hastings Square drew quite a bit of attention at the Good Design Exhibition in Chicago in 1953 and was covered widely by the press. The designs were considered "good" if they addressed the needs and reactions of the users, as well as showed appreciation for the manufacturing process and materials.<sup>192</sup> Pahlmann designed his furniture specifically with needs of the users in mind, and conceded to their interest in reliable, traditional materials like warm woods. The Hastings Square furniture line exemplified Pahlmann's signature design tenet of combining the past and the present, which was also generally understood as an American design preference of a more conservative version of modernism. The Grand Rapids Bookcase and Chair Company, in much of their promotional material, routinely attributed Pahlmann's design of the Hastings Square collection to his assertion: "Like many Americans, I have a taste for the past but I also demand comfortable, modern living."<sup>193</sup> One newspaper article, which reported on the widespread success of Hastings Square referenced Pahlmann's statement and recognized that it was a sentiment shared with most Americans.<sup>194</sup> Another article that surveyed the Good Design Exhibition declared that "practical, conservative, modern" expressions in furnishings predominated throughout and were less shocking than in years before, rather revealing a "graceful simplicity of line."<sup>195</sup> It seemed designers were figuring out ways to remain true to the modern movement, but also convey particular styles and trends. The press advised that in order to acquire the "sense of selection and discrimination called good taste," one has to look at examples of already established good



design.<sup>196</sup> When designers were asked about contemporary American taste, contemporary furniture designer Paul McCobb explained that one reason why Americans like traditional styles is because it is a symbol of security – they know it has been accepted and is associated with the past.<sup>197</sup> The press even suggested that the “conservative mood” expressed at the Good Design Exhibition might be due to world insecurity, thereby linking home furnishings selections to greater issues on the minds of postwar Americans.<sup>198</sup> At a time when Americans were asserting their unique style and identity, they wanted to look towards the future as modern people, but also they wanted legitimacy, which could be rooted in historic precedents.

Momentum and Hastings Square were the only two furniture lines Pahlmann designed. He was a design consultant for James Lee Carpets and Schumacher Fabrics, among others, so his influence was indirectly felt beyond those designs, ideas and products openly ascribed to his name. By the end of the 1950s, Pahlmann ceased to design furniture. With the increase in beautiful and innovative furniture designs, he felt he could not compete, and chose rather to work with people in designing their rooms.

## **Chapter 6 – Two Practical Interiors for American Postwar Home Life**

The late 1940s and greater part of the 1950s were formative years for the signature style and spirit of William Pahlmann and Associates. It was during this time that Pahlmann created some of his most defining designs for residential interiors. Many of the visual elements included in Pahlmann's designs of this time were not only distinctive of his style, but also representative of his image and design ideal – functionality, appropriateness, easy sophistication, and durability. The interiors also exhibited the typical Pahlmann eclectic look, including expressions of the owners' personalities and the mixing of components from different periods and countries to create a distinctly American brand of modern design.

Two projects completed in the very early 1950s can be selected as particularly representative of this aspect of Pahlmann's residential work in the postwar era. The decorative styles exhibited in these designs were practical and could be enjoyed by the growing number of mainstream Americans in the postwar era who owned houses in the suburbs, or in this case, "country" homes outside the city. Furthermore, they are good examples of the "particularly American" concept of "casual living" that decorators and the media would later recall as having brought some refreshing ideas to modern design.<sup>199</sup> Highly published and acclaimed at the time by leading shelter magazines and the media, these two projects had an effect on the development of an American modern style. Coincidentally, both projects were located in Westchester County, New York – Ruth and Milton Steinbach's house in Rye and Margaret Cousins' house in Dobbs Ferry – and were two of Pahlmann's favorite projects that brought him great pride.

*“Ruth’s House” for Mr. and Mrs. Milton Steinbach (1949)*

The Steinbach house in Rye, New York, in Westchester County, just outside of New York City was recognized as a successful combination of old and new [Illustration 66]. Betty Pepis, the home editor, remarked that although the furnishings included pieces from several periods – “sometimes modern, sometimes traditional” – the design and decoration had “consistency” and produced “an effective and livable home.”<sup>200</sup> The house was largely one level, with the first floor including a living room, dining room, kitchen, library, two bedrooms and two bathrooms and a glass indoor terrace, and the smaller second floor including two maid’s rooms, a hall bath, two storage or extra rooms and a guest bedroom with en-suite bath and dressing rooms. Milton and Ruth Steinbach had been living in a traditional apartment in New York City on Park Avenue and decided to build a modern house in the country. It was not uncommon for people to experiment with new architectural and design styles for a weekend home, which they might consider too unconventional for their primary residence.<sup>201</sup> Pahlmann was aware of the Steinbach’s concerns that transitioning into a modern home might be difficult and require significant deliberation after having spent so much time living in traditional interiors.<sup>202</sup> The homeowner, Ruth Steinbach, formerly an interior decorator herself, wanted to retain the beautiful antiques she owned but desired the conveniences of a modern house. She felt that she could not handle the job on her own and sought the expertise of Pahlmann, who had become known as a chief proponent for mixing the old with the new.<sup>203</sup> Mrs. Steinbach, the architect Percival Goodman, and Pahlmann worked together to create a unique and livable home. Pahlmann and his firm consulted extensively on this project

and were involved in just about every aspect of the decoration. The house is of a modern design, with large windows and an open living-dining room floor plan.

The entry foyer of the home, designed by Goodman, is particularly modern in character with the stairs left exposed behind 4” by 4” upright beams [Illustration 67]. Pahlmann chose a bright, multi-colored carpet to line the stairs and a thick, modern area rug to correspond with this. However, the dark wood bench is a seventeenth-century antique that easily blends into this area. The entry foyer sets the tone for the mixing of period furnishings that would define this modern country home.

The furniture was a combination of fine traditional pieces from different periods, as well as some modern and custom-designed pieces. Pahlmann’s first line of furniture, the Momentum line on semi-pneumatic wheels, figured prominently in this interior project. Despite this mixture, the result is a coordinated and cohesive interior. The interior design is unified through its color scheme – the basic color is a dull moss green accented by different colors of the red family, from pale pink in the master bedroom to earthy rust in the den to fuchsia in the living room.

The living area, which was designed to be the family gathering place, features the large picture window that was a defining characteristic of the single story ranch-style homes that were popularized in the 1950s. From this window, the Steinbachs and their family could enjoy the rolling Westchester countryside and feel connected to their surroundings [Illustration 68, 69]. Pahlmann generally loathed to block or cover a picture window, especially when it opened to a beautiful view outside.<sup>204</sup> The fireplace, a traditional element, is treated in a modern way with its simple façade made of native

stone and slight step above the wood floors. Comfort was imposed on the highly-polished wood floor and conversation groups were encouraged through the placement of a heavily-textured modern Moroccan-type rug.<sup>205</sup> Pahlmann juxtaposed the rough stone fireplace with the bright plaid upholstery of the modern sofa. The modern cabinet, built in behind the sofa, served multi-purposes as a bookshelf, serving piece for the dining room, room divider, and cabinet for the television set, which was concealed at the end. The cabinet that housed the television, when not in use, could be hooked onto the built-in portion of the unit and served as a convenient back rest for the sofa [Illustration 70]. It was mounted on large casters so it could swing out to accommodate a range of viewers and rolled about at will [Illustration 71]. This modular television cabinet treatment was considered particularly creative by the press and was featured in a few of the many articles that discussed how the television should be treated and best incorporated into a homeowner's interior scheme. The open architecture of this room necessitated some special treatment. Pahlmann designed a wooden "totem pole" sculpture to artfully conceal the Lally column (steel column used to support the ceiling beams) and included built-in storage below for firewood [Illustration 72]. He included antique elements in the living room, such as a French provincial armchair and French tables, to contrast with his modern furniture. The six-foot coffee table, which was custom-made, features a mosaic top that was especially designed to tie in all colors in the room, pinks, reds and greens [see Illustrations 68, 69, 86]. The setting included two leather-covered Eames plywood chairs with rich brass bases – a nod to American modern design and industry. The living room, in the true Pahlmann manner, also contained antique and international pieces, such as an antique Chinese desk and a second coffee table, also Chinese, as well as Puerto

Rican derived accessories and fabrics for the lamps [see Illustration 68]. Window treatments were designed by Dorothy Liebes, one of Pahlmann's frequent collaborators. The all-purpose room was planned to seat twelve people for dinner and conversation without difficulty.

The dining area, connected to the living room, could be closed off with floor to ceiling heavy, hand-woven drapery on a motorized ceiling track. Movable room dividers, in this case curtains, were a practical and decorative element that Pahlmann often used in these open floor plan homes of the late 1940s and early 50s. Here again, Pahlmann featured modern pieces, such a modern chest (to be used as a dining room server) of Macassar ebony and lacquer and a curved, two-part, rosewood-topped Macassar ebony table, coupled with a set of ten antique chairs covered in tortoise-shell leather [Illustration 73]. One part of the table was designed to fit up against the dining room server for space-saving purposes. On the other side of the room, Pahlmann placed the second part of the table, of identical form and composition [Illustration 74]. For larger dinners, the two tables could be brought together in the middle of the room for seating eight to ten people. This is one of Pahlmann's ideas to economize floor space as well as provide flexibility. While the tables were separated, the homeowners had two options for dining, but when guests arrived, they had the option to entertain a larger group. Pahlmann found a prominent spot for one of his signature decorative treatments, the picture wall, above the server in the dining room [Illustration 75].

In the guest room, Pahlmann again combined informal English antiques with a modern white-painted desk and chest of drawers with attractive brass shell-shaped pulls [Illustration 76]. The walls are papered with a sophisticated metallic pattern called

“Doll’s House Flowers” by Katzenbach & Warren. The repeating small flower pattern appeared as texture when viewed from a few feet away. Pahlmann especially chose a dark brown color wallpaper to afford subdued light in the early morning.<sup>206</sup> The beds, side table, desk chair and arm chair are all nineteenth-century simulated bamboo. Modeled after the type of Asian exoticism and English eccentricity of the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, Pahlmann thought this type of bamboo-style furniture was particularly “smart.”<sup>207</sup> Pahlmann particularly enjoyed bamboo furniture and was an avid collector of the pieces himself. Aside from some successful high-style furniture designs in bamboo and rattan (part of the palm family) pioneered by the modernist designer Paul Frankl in the 1930s, bamboo furniture in the early days was generally used in servants rooms.<sup>208</sup> At the same time Pahlmann started collecting it and featuring it in interiors, it became very chic and its value began to rise.<sup>209</sup> In the Steinbach guest room, Pahlmann also placed a bamboo frame mirror above the modern chest of drawers to correspond with the bamboo-style furniture pieces [Illustration 77]. Although the chest of drawers was shallow, it offered good storage space within eight drawers. The lamps on the chest were French porcelain oil lamps that have been electrified. The blinds were custom made for Pahlmann by Dorothy Liebes and include woven roll window blinds. The desk was made wide enough to serve as a bedside table for the two single beds and there are two individual reading lights with pull chains installed on the wall above the beds.

The master bedroom was designed in a predominantly French provincial style, with some notable eclectic touches. The fireplace surround was a French antique, and the writing desk, chair and lamps were French imports. Other pieces included a combination of modern and Italian provincial. However, the room featured prominently a large

Portuguese antique headboard [Illustration 78]. This single furniture piece combined two of Pahlmann's hallmark touches – the use of a single headboard for two single beds pushed together, a furniture treatment Pahlmann was credited for introducing, as well as his interest in Portuguese arts. The color palette in the master bedroom was in keeping with the theme of the house, various tones of green and red. Pahlmann chose a soothing beige-pink for the walls and carpet, mauve for the bedspread, a matching mauve, green and black plaid fabric for the arm chair, olive green for the chaise longue near the window and a rose-print chintz for the curtains. The placement of the writing desk in front of the window allowed for a quiet place to catch up on correspondence while enjoying the peaceful landscape outdoors [Illustration 79].

The den, one of the more intimate rooms in the home for informal gatherings, continued with the moss green and red color scheme. Pahlmann used wood paneling with plaster on the walls for warmth, and used pieces from his Momentum line of furniture with large, semi-pneumatic wheels [Illustrations 80, 81]. The sofas could be used for sitting in the day and sleeping at night, like most of Pahlmann's rooms, he designed the furniture and setting for multiple uses. Allowing for flexibility in the room, the coffee table was on wheels as was the chintz-covered chair, with its wheels discretely concealed by the floor-length skirt. The lamps conveniently hung from a moveable reel inside the ceiling, so they could be adjusted easily for reading or the like. Pahlmann believed that the lighting installation was the one element that required the utmost study and consideration of the homeowner's needs and proposed use of the room – and it was often the most complex installation. Even before the decoration was planned, aspects such as the room's length, width, ceiling height, fenestration, and architectural character,



were considered first for proper placement of lighting fixtures.<sup>210</sup> Usually, Pahlmann chose to use general, diffuse lighting overall in the room with accent spots for activities like reading and card playing. Pahlmann often used these adjustable lamps as an example of effective lighting in articles and speaking engagements on the topic.<sup>211</sup>

With regards to accessories, Pahlmann took great care in the Steinbach's home to address the homeowner's interests as well as choose items that were, in his opinion, suitable for the casual quality of the country home. Pahlmann accessorized with an interesting mix of art objects and artifacts on the built-in bookshelf in the living room, which he designed especially for this project [Illustration 82]. The exposed Lally column presented a problem, which Pahlmann solved in a practical and creative manner. Rather than enclosing the Lally column within a wall, for example, Pahlmann covered it in leather and used it to support one side of the shelving unit, while the stone pier supported the other. Pahlmann displayed a variety of accessories from various countries and periods on this shelf. Items include an early Mexican stone figure, Chinese pewter ducks and horse's head, a Spanish leather jug, an Inca water bottle and jug, and an old Chinese musical instrument. Although the items were old, Pahlmann felt the "sturdy primitives" were a good choice to suit casual spirit of this contemporary home.<sup>212</sup> This combination presented a nice mixture of historic, yet what was considered casual, artifacts together with a modern home design. Additionally, Pahlmann was able to devise an attractive solution for Mrs. Steinbach's collection of porcelain miniatures. He believed that many small accessories scattered about the home not only make little impression but also could be in danger of being accidentally broken. Here, Pahlmann enclosed the miniature collection in a French eighteenth-century armoire on shelves edged with tasseled fringe to

correspond to the spirit of the collection [Illustration 83].<sup>213</sup> The piece was flanked by metal wall sconces adorned with Dresden flowers. In contrast with the modern shelving unit in the living room, this antique armoire and collection of porcelain miniatures have a decidedly personal quality and traditional appearance. Yet both installations corresponded either to the contemporary spirit of the home or the collecting interest of the homeowner. The eclectic style that Pahlmann promoted was appropriate for the more informal living style that was being routinely adopted after the war.

“Bringing the outside in” was a frequent technique of postwar architecture and decoration, while outdoor living, comprised of living, dining, entertaining and playing, gained popularity.<sup>214</sup> Amenities such as the portable barbeque and weather-resistant furniture enabled the American family to enjoy the outdoors when the seasons would permit. The ranch style houses that proliferated in the suburbs and country during this period were frequently very small, so the back yard was a logical area to increase living space. It was not uncommon for suburban ranch homes to have an outside terrace furnished with seating pieces, tables and other accouterments of a finished room, and by the mid 1950s, the decoration and organization of outside areas were routinely falling under the scope of work of the interior designer. Designers treated the outside area as they would any multi-purpose living space, suggesting various groupings for activities like dining and playing. The enclosed terrace at the Steinbach home, with a louvered wall of redwood, was a Pahlmann design [Illustrations 84, 85]. As opposed to a less expensive home, which more likely would have had an open terrace, the Steinbach’s had the luxury of a glass-enclosed terrace that could be used all year. Despite the enclosure, the sunroom nevertheless evoked an outdoor spirit. Pahlmann chose outdoorsy materials,

for example, stone tiles for the floor and grass reed blinds for the windows, as well as and wrought iron furniture pieces that were most often intended for outdoor use. Furniture manufacturers, responding to the trend for outdoor living at this time, began producing a selection of stylish outdoor furniture in practical materials that could easily transfer indoors during the winter to the multi-purpose living rooms that had gained popularity.<sup>215</sup> In keeping with Pahlmann's eclectic style, the sunroom was made consistent with the rest of the house through the inclusion of modern Momentum pieces on casters, such as the seating and end tables, yet also corresponded with the outside environment with the inclusion of many eye-catching plants.

Pahlmann was quite proud of the Steinbach's project and it was featured in the press as a model for modern and casual, yet elegant, living numerous times. The Steinbach living room was featured as a gracious example of informal country living in *The Social Spectator: The Resort Magazine of Society* in July 1950. When Pahlmann was selected as Lord Calvert Whiskey's "Man of Distinction" to appear in their advertising campaigns in the early 1950s, he chose the Steinbach's living room in Rye as the setting for his promotional portrait [Illustration 86]. After images of the Steinbach house were published in magazines, Pahlmann received numerous inquiries from the public about the Momentum pieces used in the Steinbach home, particularly the two large coffee tables (the square coffee table pictured in the Calvert Whiskey advertisement and the rectangular table in informal den) as well as the upholstered seating pieces on wheels. In June of 1955, five years after Pahlmann completed the decoration of the Steinbach house in Rye, Pahlmann sponsored an outing where he invited members of the A.I.D. to visit some of William Pahlmann and Associates' best projects located in Westchester

County. The Steinbach's house was included on the tour, along with a traditional home outside of Rye belonging to Ruth Steinbach's sister, the Mount Kisco residence of the famous actor Billy Rose, and the home of Margaret Cousins in Dobbs Ferry. As was the case often with Pahlmann and his clients, he developed a friendship with the Steinbachs after the project in Rye and went on to decorate additional projects for the couple over the years, most notably their New York City apartment at Hampshire House on Park Avenue. He also updated the residence in Rye with some new furniture, carpets, fabrics and upholstery later in the late 1960s. He remarked that working with the Steinbachs was one of the "great delights" in his professional career.<sup>216</sup>

In the mid-1950s, Pahlmann wrote an article expressing that the Steinbach living area was one of his favorite design projects. He admired it as the sort of design that has become "a powerful trend."<sup>217</sup> He was quite satisfied with the way he handled the problems (organization of space, lighting, Lally columns) presented by the open, free-flowing architecture that was essential to modern living. Pahlmann thought this room was "the epitome of casual, contemporary elegance and luxurious country-house living in the modern manner," with an interesting selection of textures and careful planning of functional furnishings that suited the purpose of the room.<sup>218</sup> A lover of the past, Pahlmann enjoyed the combination of modern practical furnishings with the Steinbach's many fine old antiques. Although the budget for the Steinbach home was certainly higher than the average American, the design principles employed, which were showcased in the media, were universal across all income levels.

A “Small House in the Country” for Maggie Cousins (1951)

Margaret Cousins’ home, located in Dobbs Ferry, New York, a small village about 35 minutes outside of Manhattan in Hastings on the Hudson, was one of Pahlmann’s most celebrated commissions of his career. Cousins, a native of Texas, was a magazine editor working out of New York. After studying English and journalism at the University of Texas in Austin with the intention of becoming a writer, she began her career in 1926 as an editor for the *Southern Pharmaceutical Journal* in Dallas, a trade magazine published by her father. In 1937, however, she fulfilled a dream and moved to New York City to develop her writing career, and possibly due to a failed engagement.<sup>219</sup> At the time she moved into her Dobbs Ferry house, Cousins was managing editor of *Good Housekeeping* magazine and had established a successful career as a writer over the previous 20 years. Accomplished in her career, Cousins also worked as an editor for *McCall’s*, the *Ladies Home Journal* and the publishing companies Doubleday and Holt, Rinehart & Winston. By the end of her career, Cousins had sold hundreds of short stories for magazines, wrote several children’s books and novels, and published a much-loved book of Christmas stories. Despite the overwhelming societal push for marriage and Cousins’ often expressed desire to have been married, she remained single throughout her life and was instead devoted to her career.

Maggie Cousins’ home was located on a two-and-a-half-acre parcel of wooded land in Villard Hill near the Hudson River. Cousins considered herself to be a modest person, and thus wanted a modest yet “distinctive” little house in the country that was designed in the manner of family living, even though she was a single lady.<sup>220</sup> She hired architect Eldredge Snyder to design a comfortable and livable plan and sought out

Pahlmann and a landscape architect soon thereafter. Cousins had learned, through her experience as a home magazine editor, that the best results are achieved when these three important advisors worked simultaneously.<sup>221</sup> A single story, the home was U-shaped and comprised a living room, dining room, gallery, study (guest room), two bedrooms, a dressing room, three bathrooms, kitchen and maid's room. The river side, on the west of the home, was largely glass, while the wooded side opened up to a patio [Illustrations 87, 88]. While the building of the house was in its formative stages, in 1950, she approached Pahlmann about decorating her home after admiring the "charm and quality" of his designs for a "small house in the country" in a recent National Home Furnishings Show.<sup>222</sup> Additionally, she felt an affinity towards him due to their shared home state of Texas and had been impressed by the "marvelous charm" of his Lord & Taylor model rooms from his early career.<sup>223</sup>

For the decoration of her home, Cousins provided Pahlmann very few direct instructions. She mentioned her budget, which was somewhat limited compared to many of Pahlmann's clients, and indicated her desire to keep some of her present furniture and accessories that she liked and were in good condition. She informed him that the living room floor would be concrete and the large windows would limit wall space, thereby necessitating quite a bit of freestanding furniture. She also indicated that she wanted a home that did not require a great amount of care, and after having lived in a cluttered New York City apartment for some time, she desired space, simplicity and durability. Finally, she requested that the styling and design of the interior decoration of the house should have Pahlmann's personal touch and thus reflect "the Pahlmann hallmark."<sup>224</sup> One of Cousins' friends and neighbors, Elizabeth Gordon, the influential managing editor

of House Beautiful magazine was enthused about Pahlmann's work on the project, advising Cousins that his "style and taste have given American decoration its greatest impetus."<sup>225</sup>

Otherwise, Cousins provided Pahlmann, Snyder and the landscape architect only with a detailed and honest written description of herself and her way of life. Cousins included some seemingly mundane details, such that she was born in West Texas and grew up in Dallas, her father was a pharmacist, she liked to sit and lie on the floor either to read or simply relax, and she grew up in a home with 15-foot ceilings. Of course, she indicated that she was a successful writer and worked very hard at it, and added a few paragraphs of what she liked and wanted out of life in the future.<sup>226</sup> Aside from this initial information, Cousins refrained from commenting on the detailed planning that went into the decoration.<sup>227</sup> Called a "perfect client" because of her open mindedness and complete faith in her designer, Cousins found herself living in a unique home that spoke to her personality, interests, and needs.<sup>228</sup>

Like all of Pahlmann's definitive projects, Cousins' home reveals a comfortable mixture of periods and international influences throughout, as well as indications of the owner's personal interests. Furthermore, the design was conceived to add the utmost flexibility and versatility for the manner of living and activities.

The main living area, comprising the living room, a glass-enclosed gallery and the dining room, was the most prominent and spacious room in the home [Illustration 89]. This open floor plan was a defining characteristic of postwar home design. For the decoration of the home, Pahlmann chose a principal color palette of brick red, yellow-

green, russet brown and natural beige. The expansive windows allowed a feeling of “bringing the outside in,” a popular goal for homes at this time. Because the large picture window opened to views of the Hudson River, Pahlmann chose colors that would complement the outdoor environment. Accents of sunny yellow, white and black differentiate the living room from other areas. Pahlmann coordinated the colors throughout the home so carefully as to allow chairs from the dining room, study and even bedroom to be brought into the living room seamlessly if needed.<sup>229</sup> The lightweight reed chairs, which were designed for both indoor and outdoor use, could be moved outside to the terrace if desired. They also complemented the sofas, chairs and coffee table that were popular pieces from Pahlmann’s smart and modern Hastings Square furniture line. The furniture arrangement in this room was conceived to be adaptable. Seating could accommodate one very large group or several smaller groups. The white upholstered Hastings Square arm chairs were on hidden, oversize rubber casters, to allow mobility, a feature that Pahlmann promoted during this era. The two sofas were covered in a colorfully patterned orange and black Peruvian linen fabric that Pahlmann designed, called “Spanish Grille.” Peru was a source of inspiration for Pahlmann so it comes as no surprise that he would choose imported materials from and designs influenced by Peru for his projects. The coarse material was sturdy, so there was little fear of harming it with daily use, which enhances the practicality and livability of the room. Pahlmann placed a fifteen-foot metal and slate bench against the window wall, which could serve as a shelf for plants, fruit bowls and accessories, as well as additional seating for two with its linen-covered cushions. This multi-use piece added both a decorative and functional aspect. To add to the international and national *mélange*, Pahlmann also incorporated a



Portuguese wooden painted chest, topped with marble from Austin, Texas. The large Hastings Square coffee table, one of Pahlmann's most popular furniture designs, had a distinctive yellow Micarta top, appealing to both the modern interest in new materials and again to practical concerns [Illustration 90]. The table top was impervious to heat and stains and could be washed with simple soap and water, appealing to Cousins' desire for convenience and limited maintenance. Suitable for the casual spirit of the home, Pahlmann chose accessories that were robust in character and made of sturdy materials – earthenware, copper, brass and wood. Notable accessories in the living room included eighteenth-century white and pale mustard yellow apothecary jars from Provence on the fireplace mantel, meant to be a reminder of her father's profession as a pharmacist [see Illustration 89].

Near the west window in the gallery, Pahlmann placed a lightly bleached chaise longue, where Cousins could sit to enjoy the landscape out through the window [Illustration 91]. Pahlmann chose white China silk with a delicate pattern of black tree branches for the curtain fabric in the living areas, to reference the tree-filled wooded landscape outside. With so many views to the outdoors in this heavily windowed house, Pahlmann chose colors and patterns for the interior decoration that blended well with the environment.<sup>230</sup> Above the chaise, Pahlmann hung an illuminated drawing of the Texas lupine and bluebonnet, the state flower, a nod to Cousins' native Texas, juxtaposed with three antelope skulls. The floor, with convenient radiant heat below, was covered in clay tile and cotton carpeting, which also allowed for minimal maintenance. The ceilings, designed by the architect, rose on an angle and were serrated with shallow windows at the top. Because Cousins indicated she liked to lie on the floor and grew up in a home with

15-foot ceilings, the architect intentionally made the ceilings interesting to look at and created an illusion of height in the low-lying, single story house that Cousins' desired.<sup>231</sup>

Although the living and dining areas adjoined, the dining room could be separated by sliding partitions made of wooden frames with cane-covered panels. After living in a cramped New York City apartment for some time, Cousins wanted one area of the home where she did nothing but eat.<sup>232</sup> Pahlmann utilized floor-to-ceiling sliding partitions throughout the living areas of the home because they provided flexibility to use the wide open space, for entertaining or otherwise, or to create more intimate and private spaces as needed [Illustration 92]. The spatial arrangement in this house borrows from the Japanese tradition, a culture that Pahlmann very much admired. Pahlmann and Cousins both shared with the Japanese their sensibility of economy of space.<sup>233</sup> Although Cousins' house was only 2,200 square feet, it felt much larger due to the open floor plan. In general, it was felt that hallways were a waste of space and difficult to decorate and keep clean. By incorporating the "traffic lanes" into the rooms, the rooms were made larger and the inhabitants could circulate the home with ease and speed. The sliding partitions allowed each room to retain its identity, but without the undesirable aspects of fixed hallways. The furniture in the dining room was limited to the dining table and chairs and an old English table with a travertine marble top to be used for serving. Aside from the Hastings Square pieces in the home, Pahlmann also designed or restored other pieces of furniture especially for Cousins, such as the mahogany lacquered-top dining table, which was manufactured by the Grand Rapids Book Case and Chair Company, and the antique dining chairs he had covered with tortoise shell leather. For storage in the small room, Pahlmann had built in an entire wall of cupboards that was only one foot

deep [Illustration 93]. This solution provided more than ample storage for dinnerware, kitchen appliances, utensils and linens. The doors on the wall cupboards, of waxed walnut and covered in pandanus cloth (fabric derived from a grass-like tree), corresponded with the sliding partitions to attractively provide ample storage without taking up too much space.

The small study was located behind the living room [Illustration 94]. Despite its limited size, it was to be used as an office, library, sitting room, and even a guest room. It shared the same fireplace wall as featured in the living room, so inhabitants could also enjoy the wood-burning fireplace from the other side. The study could also be separated from the corridor with the sliding partitions. This type of privacy option was necessary for this room so it could function as a guest room. As American homes were relatively small, it was quite common to have multi-purpose rooms like this. Pahlmann chose a cow skin rug for the study, as both a reference to Cousins' native Texas and to accommodate her desire to lie on the floor comfortably. Like many of Pahlmann's preferred furniture pieces, the sofa in the study was made of a foam-rubber mattress with bolsters that could be made into a full-size single bed. The small chest on the side of the sofa also doubled as an end table and a chest of drawers for guests' belongings. The study also included a writing desk for Cousins, with a comfortable chair, and bookshelves at hand along the fireplace wall. She wrote daily, both for work and for pleasure, and enjoyed reading, so these elements suited her activities. The writing desk, also designed by Pahlmann, was particularly compact for the small study, but it was efficient with six shallow pull-out trays instead of drawers and a flat top that could be raised to reveal a typewriter shelf. He also saved space on the desk top by omitting a desk lamp, and

instead running a lighting strip under the lowest bookshelf. Finally, keeping with Pahlmann's distinctive combination of new and old, the coffee table was an antique metal tole tray on a modern black iron stand.

The sleeping quarters, the private and quiet areas of the home, were located in a wing of the U-shaped house separated from the living area. To achieve privacy and quiet, this was generally done in the modern, open-plan, single story homes that were built in America after World War II. The master bedroom included beige walls and an olive green carpet, to correspond with the patterned linen bed spread in olive, brown and orange [Illustration 95]. Pahlmann created this bed spread design for the Head Bed Company, one of the many furnishings manufacturers he worked with over the years. Pahlmann hung two illuminations with the Texas emblems (the state flag and seal with a pecan leaf, a tree native to Texas, and the bluebonnet) over the bed and designed for the large windows a floral curtain fabric, called "Texas Flowers," both in obvious reference to Cousins' native state. The pale blue background of the fabric was brightened by the morning sun to a bright azure shade, which enhances the glowing orange cactus flowers. To add some international and eclectic finesse, Pahlmann centered between the illuminations a Mexican madonna on a gold leaf wall bracket decorated with a steer's head. The spool bed was copied from an old Portuguese import piece. It is not surprising that Pahlmann would choose a Portuguese antique because the styles of Portugal were of great interest to Pahlmann and he traveled there several times in the 1950s for enjoyment and to seek decorative inspiration. The use of one headboard for two twin beds, which saved space and created a more streamlined look, was one Pahlmann's many "firsts" – an invention that he utilized often and popularized over the years. The lamps were modern

creations made from antique pieces – the two bedside lamps were made out of Chinese vases, while the tall lamps on the dresser were made from old brass candlesticks. To add a slight old European flair, a Meissen clock was placed on the modern dresser as well [Illustration 96]. The bedroom also included a separate and spacious bath-dressing room, which was one of Cousins' lifelong wishes [Illustration 97].<sup>234</sup> Pahlmann used tall lamps in the bedroom that were made from a pair of old candlesticks, set atop a basic and sleek-looking chest of drawers with cabinet doors that Pahlmann designed. The simple appeal of this piece was consistent with the style of the time, and its rich wood grain lent an air of warmth to the room. Its modest profile allowed room for a direct path from the bedroom to the dressing room. Pahlmann used Schumacher fabrics and carpets throughout the house, which he designed especially for this project. One feature Cousins particularly liked was that her bedroom opened up to an outdoor terrace, where she could sit each morning for breakfast before catching the nine o'clock train into the city for her job at *Good Housekeeping*.

The second bedroom, designed as a bed-sitting room, was also situated on the quiet north wing of the house, across from the master bedroom [Illustration 98]. During the day, the room was arranged as a sitting room with two mattresses with bolsters that could be used as seating. In the evening, the mattresses could be used as two full-size single beds. In this particular room, Pahlmann used many of his typical decorative treatments and space-saving solutions. To economize on space in a small room, one of the beds slides into the corner under a large table, which Pahlmann called a "bed-garage," when not in use, converting it into a short sofa. This furniture arrangement, abutting two sofa-beds against a corner unit, was a typical Pahlmann technique and can be observed in

many of his residential projects. Pahlmann designed the table with an ample storage drawer for bedding. In the same room with these modern furnishings, Pahlmann included an antique chest, a Victorian gas lamp, and an old gilt mirror [Illustration 99]. In the Pahlmann style, these antiques blended well together with the other modern furnishings and add a bit of charm to the room. To accessorize the room, Pahlmann included an “eclectic picture wall” – a decorative treatment that he often used to create an area of interest and to allow the homeowner to display her personality or art collecting interests. The room is filled with entertainment possibilities, including a contemporary table-top television in the corner, which could swivel around on its base and a portable radio. Housing the television in this room ensured viewers could watch without being disturbed by others in the living room, and vice versa. For those with an interest in traditional recreational pursuits, Pahlmann added bookshelves just outside the door, a comfortable chair and good reading light.

One of the few design treatments Cousins managed herself, aside from the laundry, was the kitchen. Cousins selected the cabinets from a General Electric showroom, a prototype that never went into production, and insisted upon incorporating a large slab of marble as a work surface. Practical for making sandwiches, pastries and candies, nevertheless, the marble slab was largely nostalgic as there was a marble work surface in her childhood home upon which her mother used to make biscuits. Certainly this element was a personal touch. Although Pahlmann was not involved with the decoration of this room, the spirit of individuality and a personal touch was consistent with his design approach and perhaps even rubbed off on Cousins a bit. Another personal, and especially whimsical, item Cousins added to the home was a wicker bull’s

head, the kind used by children when practicing bull-fighting, that some friends brought back from Spain, which she hung on the outside wall of the home and decorated with tree ornaments at Christmas time.<sup>235</sup> Decorative accessories like this allowed the home owner to express her personality and sense of humor.

Although the decoration of her home was not quite finished, Cousins moved in at the end of June 1951 and was resident for much of the installation. Cousins often discussed her pleasure with the outcome of her home in Dobbs Ferry, and in fact threw a party for the Pahlmann crew to celebrate and express her appreciation for a job well done. In fact, Cousins and Pahlmann developed a life-long friendship and working relationship. Subsequent to this project, he proceeded to design for her another country home in Montauk and at least two of her New York City apartments. He threw parties in her honor, they circulated in the same social circles, and she worked with him in writing his syndicated “A Matter of Taste” column in the 1960s and 70s. Taking pride in the successful outcome of her home’s design and decoration, she featured it in a March 1952 article in *Good Housekeeping* entitled “The House with 50 Ideas.”

When Pahlmann took the A.I.D. members on a tour of his firm’s work in Westchester County in June 1955, he chose Cousins’ house as an example of the type of design he likes to do for a “simple, informal” house.<sup>236</sup> Furthermore, Pahlmann chose Cousins’ Dobbs Ferry home as the “Prediction House” for a movie series on home decoration for consumers that he pitched to various production companies.<sup>237</sup> He thought the Cousins house showed design trends that would show up in American living for the following ten years or more.<sup>238</sup> When asked to write an article on his favorite projects in 1953, Pahlmann chose Cousins’ Dobbs Ferry living room overlooking the Hudson River

as one of his selections. He remarked that his favorite rooms are always the ones that best reflect the people and purposes for which they were created.<sup>239</sup> All of Pahlmann's selections were not the most sumptuous of rooms, but were the ones designed with the very sensible goals of comfort, convenience, durability and charm.<sup>240</sup> Cousins' living room, he explained, represented "the finite realization of the owner's dream" and has been made "as ageless and dateless as it possibly could be made, and will be, I feel, as satisfactory after a decade as now."<sup>241</sup>

These two highly successful commissions – for the Steinbachs in Rye and Maggie Cousins in Dobbs Ferry – boosted Pahlmann's already favorable reputation and served as superb examples of good, modern American design. Expressions of the owner's personality, coupled with the inclusion of modern conveniences, created a comfortable, practical, and familiar environment that was exceptionally livable and well-suited for the modern resident. Furthermore, these designs were particularly timely. The mid-century modern home now had broad appeal and these two commissions manifested Pahlmann's many ideas and contributions to the discourse on American modern design.



## Chapter 7 – Conclusion: “The Great Pahlmann Appeal”

One of the consistent themes woven within this paper is the tremendous amount of exposure Pahlmann received in the media and the deliberate and tireless efforts Pahlmann put forth to promote his work and design style. These efforts doubtlessly contributed to Pahlmann’s widespread professional success and the dissemination of his design style across the nation.

Pahlmann’s many important social connections from his very early days at Parsons and throughout his career certainly bolstered his celebrity status. Aside from the wealthy and connected people he met during the early 1930s at school in New York and in Paris, who became some of his first clients, and the many wealthy and famous clients and associates, he had countless influential press contacts. He was a long-time friend of editors Frances Heard and Elizabeth Gordon of *House Beautiful*, and Harriet Morrison of the *New York Herald Tribune*, as well as Betty Pepis, the esteemed home editor of the *New York Times* and author of a best-selling interior design manual, and Margaret Cousins, editor of *Good Housekeeping* and other popular magazines. These writers routinely covered Pahlmann’s work and his designs figured prominently in these major magazines. As mentioned previously, Pahlmann and Cousins were particularly good friends. He decorated a number of her residences, threw parties in her honor at his country home, and later collaborated with her in the 1960s and early 1970s on the writing of his “Matter of Taste” column. In fact, Pahlmann’s papers reveal correspondence between the two indicating that many columns were actually ghost written by Cousins with Pahlmann’s approval. Pahlmann frequently suggested and prepared feature articles for *Good Housekeeping* under Cousins’ management, such as the Book of Decorating

Secrets (discussed in Chapter 4) and a lengthy feature entitled *The Decorator's Studio: Window Treatments* (October 1952), for example.<sup>242</sup>

In his early years, he often spoke on radio programs about home decorating topics. Perhaps one of the finest compliments, after one particularly successful syndicated segment on the radio show, "Facts-Foods-Fancies," the producer wrote to Pahlmann to thank him and remarked: "whenever you open your mouth, diamonds drop out in the form of good copy."<sup>243</sup> As television took over, it came as no surprise that Pahlmann would make appearances. With his strapping good looks and eloquent manner, the medium was perfect for him. He was called upon periodically to cover the furniture market for CBS, and became very friendly with Dave Garroway, the founding host of NBC's "Today" show in the 1950s.<sup>244</sup>

Pahlmann seemed to be keenly aware of how important media exposure was to his career and personal image. Generally, the mass media has always worked to encourage a shared value system among members of society and has played a crucial role in shaping cultural ideals. Pahlmann used his status as an expert for matters of good taste and home decoration to shape the attitudes of American consumers that would be purchasing his products and seeking his services and advice. One article in *Interior Design* magazine explained that the "great Pahlmann appeal" could be summarized by one word, "showmanship." "He lends drama to rooms which in less skilled hands would be dull and pedestrian. He has given an aura of drama to the profession itself and has approached it like a showman."<sup>245</sup> The showmanship, which this commentator describes as manifesting in his interiors, could also be observed in the way he handled the media with aplomb and deliberation.

Aside from just providing interviews to the media and publishing articles in print, Pahlmann and his firm participated in an impressive number of design exhibitions sponsored by established institutions such as the A.I.D., the Chicago Merchandise Mart, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Midtown Galleries. The design exhibitions not only set trends, but also gave designers an opportunity to showcase their creativity and interpret trends in a practical setting.<sup>246</sup> Pahlmann also developed an innovative designer's shop and exhibition space at the William Pahlmann and Associates' studios. Called "Pahlmann Previews," the presentation comprised of an interior design display (usually organized around a theme) and furnishings shop that was open to the public. This was an excellent way to publicize the firm's work and to attract people to the studio. Pahlmann Previews regularly changed out its display rooms and merchandise, usually a collection of antiques, *objet d'art* and other accessories as Pahlmann debuted many of his product lines at Pahlmann Previews and created model rooms to attract visitors. Often, the Pahlmann Previews theme corresponded with the major design shows hosted in New York City.<sup>247</sup> The annual Christmas shop at Pahlmann Previews was endorsed by newspaper editors as a chic source to obtain designer-selected antique and modern gifts. Items ranged from very affordable trinkets to expensive, custom-made or unique pieces. Each year, the firm spent considerable time preparing a unique and much-anticipated Christmas card, which was utilized to keep in touch with acquaintances, clients, and business contacts. Furthermore, the firm published a newsletter, dubbed "Pahlmannia" that chronicled the activities, projects and social events of Pahlmann and the employees at his firm. The newsletter ran from 1955 to 1958 and was sent to New York's wealthy population, as well as the firm's friends and clients.

Throughout his career, Pahlmann was dedicated to the A.I.D. and devoted countless hours to organizing and participating in promotional design exhibitions, representing the organization throughout the country at symposia and other public presentations, and collaborating with fellow members for professional enrichment and educational activities. He was always personable and good friends with many of his colleagues: Nancy McClellan, James Amster, Edward Wormley, John Wisner, Mary Dunn, and T.H. Robsjohn-Gibblings, for example, and they frequently participated in symposia and other outreach forums. Through his work with the A.I.D., Pahlmann not only promoted himself and his firm, but also promoted the profession of interior design and decoration. Symposia and lectures that were open to the public or directed to women's clubs, garden clubs and similar organizations, headlined by A.I.D. members routinely attracted large crowds.<sup>248</sup> Pahlmann had a specific way of lecturing, which he started early on – he would often sit on the table when he was addressing a group, which imparted an appealing air of informality to his talks.<sup>249</sup> Starting in the early days of his career, Pahlmann frequently discussed the level of hard work that was required to elevate the trade to its “proper importance and creativeness” – including the knowledge of materials, design, layout, proportions and periods.<sup>250</sup> Later on, Pahlmann devoted an entire “A Matter of Taste” column to counseling readers that with regard to matters of interior decorating “good advice is a good investment.”<sup>251</sup> He likened the situation to the care one would take in seeking financial advice from an expert banker, rather than someone unqualified such as friends, a mother-in-law or anyone else who is not an expert. Additionally, his later advertisements for William Pahlmann and Associates capitalized on the principle of hiring a trained professional to produce the best possible

result [Illustration 100]. One of the most significant legacies Pahlmann has left is his work towards elevating the professionalism of the interior design and decoration trade.

Pahlmann's influence on American interior decoration can still be observed today, even if the designers and homeowners do not realize from whom the inspiration derived. At the beginning of his career Pahlmann's design approaches were novel. The eclectic model rooms he created at Lord & Taylor came as quite to a shock to the public that was accustomed to formal period rooms. He was fired from his first job at B. Altman & Co. in early 1936 for "for putting on a too-astounding show of mirrored furniture."<sup>252</sup> This seemingly unfortunate circumstance turned into one of the biggest opportunities in Pahlmann's career, as it made him available to Lord & Taylor, where he displayed his intrepid and experimental creations as the head of the decorating and home furnishings department. His tenure there catapulted him into the public eye and garnered him personal celebrity and admiration. Later, when modernism was being touted by many architects as the newer and better style, Pahlmann joined other prominent American designers in tempering the severity of the approach. He encouraged nostalgia, comfort, and personal expression in home decoration, but without sacrificing modern ideals of flexibility and practicality.

Initially, Pahlmann was known for his glamorous and dramatic room settings and interiors for wealthy socialite clients, marked by daring colors, bold fabrics, striking accessories, and abundant use of mirrors. However, he soon proved his proficiency in more practical and conservative projects that appealed to great numbers of Americans. He responded to the American desire for modern living and became a trendsetter and innovator who refused to be limited by historical precedents and tradition or restricted by

tenets of modernism. He walked a fine line of educating the public to recognize and appreciate good taste, but at the same time, persuading them that only trained interior design professionals had the skill and education to create a really successful room.

At the height of his career, Pahlmann was dubbed “the million-dollar decorator” by *The Saturday Evening Post* in an article, so named, due to the wealth of his extensive clientele and the relatively high-priced interiors that he furnished. The article, published in 1957, praised Pahlmann as being one of the most influential designers over the previous ten years (since the profession began to exert a formidable influence on American décor, and incidentally, right about the time Pahlmann opened his own firm).<sup>253</sup> The article continued with various anecdotes about how Pahlmann convinced his clients to pay whopping sums of money for decorative furnishings, that seemed questionable at the beginning but then turned out to be a stunning success.<sup>254</sup> Although this article was certainly a feather in his cap, Pahlmann indicated in letters to friends that he was not entirely thrilled about the way he was portrayed and wished the author had taken another angle (such as the more humanitarian aspects of his advice).<sup>255</sup>

Every day we experience eclectic interiors where homeowners choose comfortable seating pieces purchased from contemporary stores, accessorize with prized souvenirs from trips around the world, and display unique and heirloom furnishings inherited from generations past. Contemporary rooms can be filled with inexpensive knick-knacks along with valuable collector’s items. Unlike some of Pahlmann’s contemporaries, such as Isamu Noguchi and his famous wood and glass streamlined coffee table or Russell Wright and his American Modern dinnerware, we cannot easily ascribe any one piece of furniture or decorative item to Pahlmann’s design. His

contributions to the field of interior design and decoration are intangible but perhaps most pervasive. With his eclectic interiors and design approach geared towards flexibility, suitability, and functionality in the home, Pahlmann contributed overall good taste to American interior design and the freedom to express one's personality in the home environment. Although Pahlmann zealously advocated his profession and business, he could never have been as influential without his keen eye and impeccable taste. As *House and Garden* magazine explained, "he blithely creates a kind of never-never setting that makes each piece appear as though it never had a previous life of its own."<sup>256</sup>

In addition to his sheer talent, Pahlmann's tremendous success was closely tied to the postwar environment in America. The economic boom, the growth of suburbia with its emphasis on the nuclear family home, and the increasing internationalism of this era set the stage for Pahlmann to flourish. His design ideals spoke directly to those attitudes. Through his many high-profile decorating commissions and his educational outreach efforts, Pahlmann achieved widespread influence on the American home and helped shape the course of American modern design.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Albin Krebs, "William C. Pahlmann, Decorator Known for Eclectic Designs, Dies," *The New York Times*, November 11, 1987.

<sup>2</sup> The terms "interior decorator" or "interior designer" may be used interchangeably throughout this paper as they were both appropriate terms during the historical time in question. Although there has been some discussion as to which designation is preferred and is more accurate, no distinction should be drawn from this paper. It should be noted, however, that Pahlmann prefer the term "designer," which he sometimes expressed in interviews, because he felt that he was creating an entire functional space for his clients unlike "one of the little ladies who throw out a piece of chintz and never worry about the architectural background." "Viewpoints: Interview with William Pahlmann, F.A.I.D.," *Interior Design*, September 1972; 143-150, 150. He felt "interior designer" was more appropriate for the serious people like himself, rather than "the dilettantes who go in for interior decorating, [they] just muddy up the waters for the workers." Adeline Fitzgerald, "These Charming People," *Chicago Herald-American*, ca. fall 1940. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Jack Conner by Gayle Gibson, December 6, 1989, p. 35. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>4</sup> The Association of Interior Decorators (A.I.D.), founded in 1931, was later re-named the American Institute of Interior Designers, but kept the acronym A.I.D. This organization, along with the National Society of Interior Designers (NSID), was absorbed in 1975 into the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), which is currently the leading professional organization for the field.

<sup>5</sup> This paper does not focus in detail on *The Pahlmann Book of Interior Design*. The author chose to omit in-depth discussion of this book because it serves as a summary of Pahlmann's design principles, style, and techniques in an aggregated manner, which can be otherwise learned from the William Pahlmann and Associates papers at the Hagley Museum and Library. The author felt that more compelling and interesting information could be gathered from newspaper and magazine articles, and Pahlmann's writings in the press, that were published concurrently when the projects themselves were completed.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Palmer, "Design in Your Life: Taste – To William Pahlmann – Means Appropriateness," *San Francisco Examiner*, February 7, 1963. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 20, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>7</sup> "Profit Making Aired at NRDGA: Designer, Decorator, Editor and Manufacturer Express Ideas on the Modern Merchandising of Furniture and Bedding," *Retailing Daily*, June 22, 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 2, Hagley Museum and Library. From his very early years and more zealously in his later years when he devoted the bulk of his time to publicity and work with the A.I.D., Pahlmann promoted the value of an interior decorator/designer and the professionalism of the field. Although most of his lectures and writings to the public about decorating were educational in nature, he never wavered on his opinion regarding the importance of consulting a trained professional.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Jack Conner, p. 11. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Hagley Museum and Library.



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<sup>9</sup> The tendency of many is to look back at the age through rose-colored lenses, recalling the time as one of general harmony, patriotism, hopefulness and prosperity. Statistical studies clearly show that the postwar era in America was wrought with many serious social problems. Along with the fear of communism, there was great poverty among certain groups, particularly in the cities, rising juvenile delinquency, rampant racism and sexism, and fear of “doomsday bombs.” See Martin Halliwell, *American Culture in the 1950s*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007); see also Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*, 2000 Edition, (New York: Basic Books, 1992). Historians agree that the postwar era in the 1950s was one that was particularly complex and wrought with contradictions. The subject of the paradoxes of the 1950s, and a misguided nostalgia for the era, as an exclusively positive “golden age” in American history, is one that is covered by many historians, from a variety of different perspectives. For example, Martin Halliwell, in his book *American Culture in the 1950s*, examines in detail the many political, intellectual and cultural facets of the “cold war culture” that was both hopeful and fearful. Stephanie Coontz, in her book *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*, examines the common misperceptions about harmonious and uncomplicated family life in the 1950s and Elaine Tyler May, in her book *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, analyzes the contradictions and frustrations people experienced in their home life during this time. Countless books have been written on these and related subjects. These topics, however, are outside the scope of this paper and therefore are not discussed in detail, but noted nevertheless.

<sup>10</sup> Between 1947 and 1953, the suburban population increased by 43 percent, while the total population increase was only 11 percent. Through the course of the 1950s, cities in the largest metropolitan areas grew by only 0.1 percent, but their suburbs grew by 45 percent. Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 195.

<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that these opportunities, including the possibility of purchasing and living in a house in the suburbs, were available to whites only. Blacks were excluded from these opportunities by formal governmental policies and local ordinances.

<sup>12</sup> See Richard Wrightman Fox, “Epitaph for Middletown: Robert S. Lynd and the Analysis of Consumer Culture” in Fox, Richard Wrightman, and T.J. Jackson Lears, *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983); 101-41. Fox explains that the characteristic institutions and habits of consumer culture, such as the motion picture, automobile, photo-newsmagazine, installment buying, five-day work week, and suburban living, for example, were introduced during the 1920s and 1930s (the interwar years). Enjoyment of these benefits was stymied for most by the Great Depression and the Second World War. It was not until the postwar era, however, that millions of Americans could join the middle class that availed themselves of the consumer culture.

<sup>13</sup> Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 24.

<sup>14</sup> Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 24-25. In 1940, only 43 percent of Americans owned their own homes.

<sup>15</sup> Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 24; William L. O’Neill, *American High: The Years of Confidence, 1945 – 1960*, (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 19. Coontz reports there were 1.4 million housing starts in 1950, however, O’Neill reports that the 1.4 million figure was found to be inaccurate, and there actually were 1.952 million that year. Coontz also reports that at no time during the 1950s did the number of annual housing starts fall below 1.5 million, however, O’Neill reports that it was no fewer than 1.3 million per year, except for one year during the decade.

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- <sup>16</sup> With the growing population of children, society placed a strong emphasis on an agreeable family life and teaching their children, above all, “how to be citizens and how to get along with other people.” O’Neill, *American High*, 25-26.
- <sup>17</sup> Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 28. During the war, Americans saved at a rate more than three times higher than they had in the both the previous and subsequent decades.
- <sup>18</sup> Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 28.
- <sup>19</sup> Although there was a strong sense of appropriate gender roles, both women and men alike based their identities in their familial and parental roles. Family functions were specific and closely tied to consumption in the marketplace. For example, men were to provide income for the household, and women were to spend it on household goods. May, Elaine Tyler, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 166-67.
- <sup>20</sup> Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 26.
- <sup>21</sup> Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 29, 32-33. Marriage and family was touted as practically a “duty” at this time. Women were pressured into the family role as doting wife and caring mother, such that single or childless women were perceived as defective in some way and working women were believed untrustworthy; men were also pressured into the breadwinning role, such that bachelors were considered immature or even deviant.
- <sup>22</sup> Clifford Clark, *The American Family Home, 1800-1960*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 209, 216; Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 28.
- <sup>23</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 165.
- <sup>24</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 165; Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 25. During this same period, purchases for food rose only 33 percent and purchased for clothing rose only 20 percent.
- <sup>25</sup> Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic*, 195-96. Cohen explains that suburban life offered ordinary Americans a “bigger piece of the pie.” It allowed them to become people “of property” for the first time and enabled the incorporation of a broad range of Americans into a mass consuming middle-class.
- <sup>26</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 165.
- <sup>27</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 165.
- <sup>28</sup> The woman’s role as consumer within the American economy was vastly important at this time. As the very definition of “household goods” changed at the time to include a great array of consumer goods, the female homemaker’s expenditures kept industry afloat and sustained jobs for the male workforce. May, *Homeward Bound*, 166-67.
- <sup>29</sup> “Decorating Means Good Merchandising: William Pahlmann, Lord & Taylor’s, also feels mass produced furniture is better; Speaks to Boston Fashion Group,” *Retailing*, December 2, 1940. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library. It should be noted, that at this time, interior designers were not paid for their time and advice. Rather, they received a commission on the goods they recommended and sold to the clients for their designs. Pahlmann explained in a speech to members of the Boston Fashion Group (industry trade organization) that his job as

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a decorator was also to help clients choose goods to purchase, so therefore a good salesman technique was also necessary to be a good interior designer.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Hine, *Populuxe*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 21; Halliwell, *American Culture in the 1950s*, 147.

<sup>31</sup> Halliwell, *American Culture in the 1950s*, 147.

<sup>32</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 172.

<sup>33</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 172. May explains that purchases could placate the discontented housewife, instill pride in the breadwinner whose job may have not supplied intrinsic rewards, and enable children to fit in with their peers at school.

<sup>34</sup> See Thomas Hine's book, *Populuxe*, for an inquiry into the style of design that infiltrated mass or popular culture in America during the postwar years through about 1964. See also Lesley Jackson's book, *'Contemporary': Architecture and Interior Design in the 1950s*, for an examination of the high-culture type modern design that emerged in Europe and also in America during the 1950s.

<sup>35</sup> Penny Sparke, *An Introduction to Design and Culture: 1900 to the Present*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 161.

<sup>36</sup> Sparke, *An Introduction to Design and Culture*, 161.

<sup>37</sup> Sparke, *An Introduction to Design and Culture*, 161. In Chapter 8 of *An Introduction to Design and Culture*, Penny Sparke examines the rise of "designer goods" in Western cultures after 1945 and the separation of two "modern" worlds – one of mass culture and another of "high-cultural" design. She acknowledges a division between designer culture and popular culture – the former which yielded product designs associated with a fine art historical context, usually stemming from European traditions, and the latter which yielded product designs associated with the anonymous, industrial culture that came to characterize postwar America.

<sup>38</sup> "More Grace and Color in U.S. Design," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 9, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 8, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>39</sup> "More Grace and Color in U.S. Design."

<sup>40</sup> Sparke, *An Introduction to Design and Culture*, 7.

<sup>41</sup> Friedman, *Selling Good Design*, 8. Friedman summarizes some various modern design approaches in Europe in the 1920s: the traditionalists and rationalists in France, the futurists and novecento designers in Italy, the high-craftsmanship of Josef Hoffmann and the Weiner Werkstatte in Austria, and the Bauhaus in Germany, which supported industrialization, functional perfection, and standardization. In 1929 the New York art establishment finally accepted what was considered "modern design" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 1929 industrial arts exhibition.

<sup>42</sup> Sparke, *An Introduction to Design and Culture*, 7.

<sup>43</sup> Marilyn F. Friedman, *Selling Good Design: Promoting the Early Modern Interior*, (New York: Rizzoli, 2003); 7-8.

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<sup>44</sup> Kristina Wilson, *Livable Modernism: Interior Decorating and Design during the Great Depression*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004); 3. Wilson coins the term “livable modernism” to describe the products offered by modernist designers in the 1930s that integrated modernist design ideals with American consumer desire.

<sup>45</sup> Sparke, *An Introduction to Design and Culture*, 7.

<sup>46</sup> Sparke, *An Introduction to Design and Culture*, 6.

<sup>47</sup> Sparke, *An Introduction to Design and Culture*, 122. In the mid-1960s, Pahlmann published “A Matter of Taste” column lamenting that Americans are now spending more on alcohol, tobacco, recreation, equipment for play, and automobiles than they do on furniture and home furnishings. He suggests that maybe next time they are tempted to “fritter away” their money, they at least buy something for the home that they can keep. See Pahlmann, William, “What Is More Important Than Home?,” Draft text for “A Matter of Taste,” August 15, 1966. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 14, Box 5, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>48</sup> Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 174.

<sup>49</sup> Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 171.

<sup>50</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 166.

<sup>51</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 166. In *Homeward Bound*, May links consumerism to the cold war climate in America.

<sup>52</sup> Lesley Jackson, *‘Contemporary’: Architecture and Interiors in the 1950s*, (London: Phaidon Press, 1994), 81.

<sup>53</sup> Jackson, *‘Contemporary’*, 81.

<sup>54</sup> For obvious reasons, it was not practical for the whole house to be an open plan, and thus the sensibility of the open plan was debated during the 1950s. To solve this problem, quiet and private areas were located in a different “zone” of the house. This explains many of the L-shaped postwar homes with the communal and private areas located on different arms of the L. The concept of zoning, which was developed in American town planning, was adapted to solve this problem. Jackson, *‘Contemporary’*, 91.

<sup>55</sup> Not only did the open-plan interior have aesthetic and practical implications, it had social implications as well. According to design historian Lesley Jackson, the open-plan kitchen and dining room corresponds at this time to the woman’s increasingly important and assertive role in the home and in the workplace, while cultural historian Elaine Tyler May suggests that appliances and technological advances in the home were not intended to enable the housewife to have more time to herself, but were to increase standards of cleanliness and allow her to devote more time to her children. Jackson, *‘Contemporary’*, 88; May, *Homeward Bound*, 171.

<sup>56</sup> Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 28.

<sup>57</sup> Clark, *The American Family Home*, 198, 210-13, 236.

<sup>58</sup> Clark, *The American Family Home*, 210-13.

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<sup>59</sup> Pahlmann often discussed how he felt that children, if they were not disciplined and taught properly by their parents, were prone to disrespecting nice things and spoiling a very fine interior. He once recounted in an interview how he walked out on a potential client when he met her poorly-behaved children who abused the home in his presence during his initial visit. Furthermore, he refused to design interiors for people with cats as he found that cats destroyed good furniture by scratching at it.

<sup>60</sup> Hine, *Populuxe*, 79.

<sup>61</sup> Betty Pepis, "Many Moods of the Modern Chair," *New York Times Magazine*, October 19, 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 6, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>62</sup> "Only in the U.S.A.," *House & Garden*, July 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>63</sup> "Only in the U.S.A."

<sup>64</sup> "Viewpoints: Interview with William Pahlmann, F.A.I.D.," *Interior Design*, September 1972; 143, 150. When asked during a 1972 interview about the tenets he believed in, Pahlmann answered in part: "I think most people who go in for extreme modern are poseurs. They like to pose as great intellectuals.... Most of the plastics furniture I see around is what I call 'washing machine modern' – stamped out modern. It is cold. I think people want a little warmth."

<sup>65</sup> Charles Messer Stow, "Modern Style Reflects Life," *New York Sun*, February 4, 1939. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>66</sup> William Pahlmann, "The Democracy of Modern Design," *National Furniture Review*, June 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Box 8, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>67</sup> Allen Tate and C. Ray Smith, *Interior Design in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1986), 376; C. Ray Smith, "William Pahlmann at 84: A Birthday Salute to a Celebrated Designer," *Interior Design*, December 1984; 193.

<sup>68</sup> William Pahlmann, "Dissertation on Art Moderne," Class Notes, August 13, ca. 1928. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 11, Box 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>69</sup> William Pahlmann, "The Awakening in Europe....," Class Notes on The Modern Trend, ca. 1928. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 11, Box 4, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>70</sup> William Pahlmann, untitled, Class Notes, c. 1928. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 11, Box 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>71</sup> William Pahlmann, "A Treatise from Spur on this new Art," Class Notes on The Modern Trend, ca. 1928-30. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 11, Box 4, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>72</sup> Despite the disdainful tone with regards to modern art, Pahlmann actually did collect paintings and artworks by contemporary artists in his day, and frequently included artworks by contemporary artists in his interior designs.

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<sup>73</sup> William Pahlmann, "Lecture on Treatment of Rooms – General," Class Notes, 1928. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 11, Box 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>74</sup> William Pahlmann, "The Contemporary Trend . . .," Class Notes on The Modern Trend, ca. 1928. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 11, Box 4, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Jack Conner, p. 2. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Jack Conner, p. 2-5. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>77</sup> C. Ray Smith, "William Pahlmann at 84: A Birthday Salute to a Celebrated Designer," *Interior Design*, December 1984; 193; Interview with Jack Conner, p. 2-5. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Hagley Museum and Library. Pahlmann designed in New York a Beekman Place house for Mrs. Paley and a River House apartment and Long Island country house, called "Port of Missing Men," for Mrs. Rogers.

<sup>78</sup> Pahlmann was an early proponent of sectional units, overscaled lamps, splashy drapery prints and shaggy floor coverings. Other innovations include mirror-upon-mirror for cabinet fronts and recesses and rubbing gold flecks into pickled woods. He introduced sharp, clear pastels and proliferated the use of deep, armless chairs with swag skirts, "blackamoors," plaster shells, and yards of taffeta draped around windows. "Meet William Pahlmann," *House Beautiful*, January 1946. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 2, Box 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>79</sup> The low table of this sort was originally referred to as a "cocktail table," but "coffee table" came to be the generally preferred terminology because it did not have alcoholic connotations.

<sup>80</sup> Betty Pepis, "Cocktail Time Tables," *New York Times Magazine*, February 17, 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 6, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>81</sup> "The Way People Live Influences Decorator," *Philadelphia Record*, February 2, 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library. Walter Hoving was an adamant proponent of "good taste." In the mid-1950s, he became concerned that ideas of good taste and style in America were being compromised by the proliferation of mass production and mass distribution. To combat the cheapening and vulgarization of merchandise, when he was chairman of the board at Tiffany's in 1955, he held a clearance sale of all stock and started new – buying only high quality items of good taste and flawless style, at all price levels. Six years later, he reported, the business had increased substantially because people could rely that they were purchasing an item in good taste from Tiffany's. Pahlmann shared Hoving's concerns about taste in America and wrote and lectured frequently on the matter of good taste. See Hoving, Walter, "Can Taste Survive in America?," Pamphlet published by Tiffany's, ca. 1961. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 4, Box 4, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>82</sup> In her book, *Selling Good Design*, Marilyn Friedman explores the cooperation between department stores and museums and designers groups in the 1920s and 30s as they worked to influence the development of modern design in America. Friedman discusses how the New York art establishment could reach the greater public through the department stores, while the museums' association lent the stores artistic

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credibility. Furthermore, posits that these exhibitions introduced a large variety of modern designs and conferred commercial credibility to the new design style. See Friedman, *Selling Good Design*.

<sup>83</sup> “Lord & Taylor Turns to Swedish and Traditional,” *Retailing*, January 30, 1938. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Jack Conner, p. 7. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Jack Conner, p. 11. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Hagley Museum and Library. Conner recounts his memory of department stores furnishings displays prior to Pahlmann’s work at Lord & Taylor as “rows and rows of sofas and chairs usually red or blue velvet and overstuffed and then you had dining room tables. There was no room set up with dining room chairs like people would live with. It was just there; lamps for example,...”. He further explains how other stores, such as W.J. Sloan’s & Co., started doing model rooms immediately when they saw the success at Lord & Taylor.

<sup>86</sup> C. Ray Smith, “William Pahlmann at 84: A Birthday Salute to a Celebrated Designer,” *Interior Design*, December 1984; 193.

<sup>87</sup> See Gayle Gibson, “The Early Career of William C. Pahlmann, 1936-1942,” M.A. Thesis for the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture, 1990, for a discussion of Pahlmann’s work at Lord & Taylor in conjunction with the designs of his concurrent private residential commissions. Gibson focuses on the theatricality of three of Pahlmann’s most outlandish shows and observes how certain decorative techniques were translated into three wealthy clients’ actual home environments.

<sup>88</sup> William Pahlmann, “Seeing Europe Through a Decorator’s Eyes,” *Furniture World and Furniture Buyer and Decorator*, August 5, 1937. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>89</sup> Pahlmann, “Seeing Europe Through a Decorator’s Eyes.”

<sup>90</sup> “Lord & Taylor Turns to Swedish and Traditional,” *Retailing*, January 30, 1938. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>91</sup> C.M.S., “Modern Swedish Rooms Shown,” *New York Sun*, ca. July 1938 [?]. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>92</sup> Charles Messer Stow, “Modern Style Reflects Life,” *New York Sun*, February 4, 1939. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>93</sup> Charles Messer Stow, “Sweden Sways Our Furniture,” *New York Sun*, July 30, 1938. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>94</sup> C.M.S., “Modern Swedish Rooms Shown,” *New York Sun*, ca. July 1938 [?]. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>95</sup> “American Modern,” *House Beautiful*, September 1, 1938. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

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<sup>96</sup> William Pahlmann, "South America – Modern Design Source," *House and Garden*, April 1947; "South America's Imprint," *House Beautiful*, September 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 2, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>97</sup> Pahlmann worked with the Peruvian government and a private collector to install an exhibition of Peruvian traditional and contemporary clothing and jewelry and Incan treasures in conjunction with his model rooms at Lord & Taylor. He also displayed his personal photographs he took on the trip.

<sup>98</sup> "Pahlmann Peruvian," *Interiors*, December 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 2, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>99</sup> Charles Messer Stow, "Six Pahlmann Rooms Give the Town Something to Talk About," *New York Sun* (attributed), ca. October/November 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 2, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>100</sup> Esther Skaar Hansen, "Lord & Taylor's Peruvian Rooms," *Retailing Home Furnishings*, November 17, 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 2, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>101</sup> Stow, "Six Pahlmann Rooms Give the Town Something to Talk About."

<sup>102</sup> C. Ray Smith, "William Pahlmann at 84: A Birthday Salute to a Celebrated Designer," *Interior Design*, December 1984; 193.

<sup>103</sup> "Decorating Means Good Merchandising: William Pahlmann, Lord & Taylor's, also feels mass produced furniture is better; Speaks to Boston Fashion Group," *Retailing*, December 2, 1940. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>104</sup> "Decorating Means Good Merchandising."

<sup>105</sup> "Pahlmann Peruvian," *Interiors*, December 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 2, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Jack Conner, p. 7. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>107</sup> "Pahlmann's Farewell," *Interiors*, July 1942. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 20, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>108</sup> Ann Pringle, "Choosing Home Accessories: Three decorators offer their advice on how to select and place small objects in a room," *This Week Magazine (New York Herald Tribune)*, February 26, 1950. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 3, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>109</sup> "American Fashions in Decoration," *House & Garden*, October 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 8, Hagley Museum and Library. In this issue, *House & Garden* featured multi-purpose rooms (living-dining, bed-sitting, and library-TV) created by nineteen influential American designers.



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- <sup>110</sup> Anne Hannan, "Decorator Aims To Be Step Ahead Of Today's Ideas," *Newsday* (NY), February 28, 1964. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 20, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>111</sup> "Merchandising Demands Change: 'American Style' Long Way Off Designer Asserts," *Grand Rapids Herald*, March 30, 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 6, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>112</sup> "Merchandising Demands Change."
- <sup>113</sup> Harriet Morrison, "Treasure from Portugal," *New York Herald Tribune*, May 24, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 8, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>114</sup> Everglaze was a type of shiny, glazed cotton chintz fabric that was washable and durable. Everglaze was trademarked in the 1940s by the Joseph Bancroft & Sons Company and was used widely in the postwar years for furnishings and clothing. Cyrus Clark Company was one of the smaller companies under the Joseph Bancroft & Sons umbrella. In his Elsie de Wolf Award Acceptance Speech, Pahlmann thanks Ralph MacIntyre, president of Joseph Bancroft & Sons from 1947 to 1963, for funding his trips abroad to Portugal and the Far East to obtain inspiration for his internationally-inspired fabric lines. William Pahlmann, Elsie de Wolf Award Acceptance Speech, February 27, 1964. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 4, Box 4, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>115</sup> "More Grace and Color in U.S. Design," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 9, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 8, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>116</sup> Elenore Lester, "Portuguese Touch Adds Spice to Modern Homes," *Newark Star-Ledger* (NJ) and *Ada Evening News* (OK), August 9, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 8, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>117</sup> "We Hitch Our Wagons: Mlle's twenty guest editors, heads in the clouds, see their favorite luminaries..." *Mademoiselle*, ca. January 1948. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 3, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>118</sup> Alice Hughes, "A Woman's New York," *Reading Eagle* (PA) & *Dayton Herald* (OH), October 23, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 8, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>119</sup> Hughes, "A Woman's New York."
- <sup>120</sup> Lois Hagen, "Young Designers Have Important Roles in World's Economic Future," *Dallas News*, January 10, 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>121</sup> "Path of the Sun Promotion" published by the Cyrus Clark Company, ca. 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>122</sup> Harriet Morrison, "Journey East to the Sun," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 21, 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>123</sup> "Fashions Follow 'The Path of the Sun'," *Mobile Press* (AL), April 12, 1954; Sally Sanders, "Oriental Prints in Dress, Drapery Fabrics Praised," *Boston Herald*, April 21, 1954.

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<sup>124</sup> Morrison, "Journey East to the Sun."

<sup>125</sup> Lois Maxon, "'54 Homes Blend Past and Present." *Saturday Feature Magazine (New York World Telegram)*, June 19, 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>126</sup> "Period Pieces in Modern Dress," *Baltimore Sun*, May 25, 1958. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 14, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>127</sup> "The New American Style in the Bahamas," *House Beautiful*, April 1960. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 14, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>128</sup> Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic*, 112-13. Consumer spending in post-World War II America had strong political implications, most of which is outside the scope of this paper. Lizbeth Cohen, in her book *A Consumer's Republic*, discusses the connection between politics and mass consumption in postwar America and how this shaped the nation's identity.

<sup>129</sup> Jackson, 'Contemporary', 158.

<sup>130</sup> "Casual U.S. Living Hailed as Refreshing Modern Decoration," *Buffalo News*, April 30, 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>131</sup> "Don't Be Afraid of Your Taste," *Look*, January 29, 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 6, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>132</sup> William Pahlmann, "Good Housekeeping's Book of Decorating Secrets," *Good Housekeeping*, August 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 6, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>133</sup> Pahlmann, "Good Housekeeping's Book of Decorating Secrets."

<sup>134</sup> Pahlmann, "Good Housekeeping's Book of Decorating Secrets."

<sup>135</sup> See letters from readers addressed to *Good Housekeeping* or William Pahlmann regarding the "Book of Decorating Secrets" article published in August 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 1, Box 29, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>136</sup> Pahlmann, "Good Housekeeping's Book of Decorating Secrets." Examples of modern objects illustrated in this article a modern red-enameled ash tray, a modern carved-wood figure, a humorous Italian ceramic bird, a Steinberg print in a modern off-white frame, and two Italian ceramic fanciful figures.

<sup>137</sup> William Pahlmann, "Good Housekeeping's Book of Decorating Secrets." Examples of "primitive" objects illustrated in this article seem to be an old Persian musical instrument, African brass animals, a North African cooking vessel, an old Chinese pewter tea canister, and a mounted animal skull.

<sup>138</sup> William Pahlmann, "Good Housekeeping's Book of Decorating Secrets."

<sup>139</sup> William Pahlmann, "Good Housekeeping's Book of Decorating Secrets."

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<sup>140</sup> “Pahlmann Tells How It’s Done and What He Uses,” *Retailing-Home Furnishings*, January 13, 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>141</sup> Charles Messer Stow, “Decoratively Speaking,” *New York Sun*, January 18, 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>142</sup> Jackson, ‘*Contemporary*’, 114-17.

<sup>143</sup> Hine, *Populuxe*, 50-52. Decorative embellishments appeared on the front of suburban houses only, as this side of the house was for public’s eye. The backs of these houses were generally entirely flat and covered with one color of siding or shingles.

<sup>144</sup> Jackson, ‘*Contemporary*’, 117.

<sup>145</sup> “Color – and Its Importance in Your Life,” *Elkhart Truth* (IN), May 1, 1953; “Pick Colors to Follow Fashions? Experts Warn This Is a Mistake,” *Fort Worth Press*, March 16, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 7, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>146</sup> Pahlmann devoted one of his “A Matter of Taste” columns to his good friend Liebes, in which he complemented her home for expressing its inhabitants’ personalities through its decoration and remarked on the fantastic parties she and her husband hosted. See William Pahlmann, “A Date with Dorothy Liebes,” Draft text for “A Matter of Taste,” February 6, 1966. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 14, Box 10, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>147</sup> Interview with Jack Conner, p. 12. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>148</sup> “Casual U.S. Living Hailed as Refreshing Modern Decoration,” *Buffalo News*, April 30, 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>149</sup> “Portrait Backgrounds: Decorator Chooses Setting for Five Types of Women,” *Life*, May 5, 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library. Georgetown University, Joseph Mark Lauinger Memorial Library.

<sup>150</sup> “Portrait Backgrounds.”

<sup>151</sup> “Portrait Backgrounds.”

<sup>152</sup> “Portrait Backgrounds.”

<sup>153</sup> “Portrait Backgrounds.”

<sup>154</sup> Kay Murphy, “Best Colors for Florida Come From Sea, Fruits: Pahlmann,” *Miami Herald*, December 15, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 8, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>155</sup> “Viewpoints: Interview with William Pahlmann, F.A.I.D.,” *Interior Design*, September 1972; 143-150, 143.

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<sup>156</sup> “Modern Vies With Old in Club Confab: Pahlmann, Tudor, McAlister and Stow Discuss Trends of Future at Decorator Show,” *Retailing*, March 13, 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>157</sup> Elizabeth MacRae Boykin, “Design Today Errs In Effort To Be Completely Different, Interior Decorator Declares,” *unidentified newspaper*, ca. fall 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 2, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>158</sup> “Two Questions for Prominent Designers,” *Upholstering*, January 1948. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 3, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>159</sup> “The Sketch Book: William Pahlmann designs for today’s living in today’s homes,” *Furniture Manufacturer*, March 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>160</sup> “The Sketch Book.”

<sup>161</sup> See Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). In *Make Room for TV*, Spigel explores the role of the television within the social environment of the postwar years. In chapter 4 she discusses the paradox of public and private life experienced by suburban inhabitants. Although people were moving out to the suburbs to a seemingly more private life, they actually fostered community togetherness. She additionally discusses the function of open-plan houses and the picture window as architectural elements that brought the outside in, or melded the private and public realms. Similarly, the television set could provide the sense of “going places” in the outside world without actually leaving the house.

<sup>162</sup> Don Graf, “Time for Television,” *House and Garden*, July 1948. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 14, Box 9, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>163</sup> Graf, “Time for Television.”

<sup>164</sup> Graf, “Time for Television.”

<sup>165</sup> “Cabinet Design: ‘The set would look better if...,’” *Retailing Daily*, September 18, 1950. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 14, Box 9, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>166</sup> “Cabinet Design.”

<sup>167</sup> “Television Set Replaces Fireplace,” *Mobile Register* (AL), November 12, 1957; *Cedar Rapids Gazette* (IA), July 13, 1958. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>168</sup> Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, 102-3.

<sup>169</sup> Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, 102-3.

<sup>170</sup> “How to Hide the Ghostly Eye of Television,” *House Beautiful*, March 1959. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 14, Box 9, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>171</sup> Helen Harris, “Fidelity is Higher,” *Home Furnishings Daily*, September 19, 1963. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 14, Box 9, Hagley Museum and Library.

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- <sup>172</sup> “Ultra High Frequency,” *Interior Design and Decoration*, June 1948. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>173</sup> “Three Decorators: Each Adorns a Bare Room to Show Best in U.S. Interior Design,” *Life*, October 3, 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>174</sup> Letters to the Editor, *Life*, ca. October/November 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>175</sup> See Letters of correspondence received by William Pahlmann and Associates. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 1, Box 29, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>176</sup> Anne Pringle, “Pahlmann Furniture Gathers Momentum,” *New York Herald Tribune*, January 17, 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>177</sup> “The Story of Hastings Square” brochure published by Grand Rapids Bookcase and Chair Company, ca. 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 6, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>178</sup> One of the most popular practitioners of this approach was the American firm Herman Miller, which collaborated with the celebrated designers Gilbert Rohde, George Nelson, Charles and Ray Eames, Alexander Girard, and Isamu Noguchi. These partnerships enabled Herman Miller to gain a reputation for some of the finest mid-century modern designed furniture in America.
- <sup>179</sup> Jackson, ‘*Contemporary*’, 147.
- <sup>180</sup> Jackson, ‘*Contemporary*’, 144.
- <sup>181</sup> Jackson, ‘*Contemporary*’, 144.
- <sup>182</sup> AP Newsfeature, “Homemakers Are Demanding Functional Furniture,” ca. 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 6, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>183</sup> “Merchandising Demands Change: ‘American Style’ Long Way Off Designer Asserts,” *Grand Rapids Herald*, March 30, 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 6, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>184</sup> “Merchandising Demands Change.”
- <sup>185</sup> “Merchandising Demands Change.”
- <sup>186</sup> Magazine advertisement for Westinghouse Micarta, featuring William Pahlmann and an image of his Hastings Square coffee table with a yellow Micarta top, ca. 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 6, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>187</sup> “Hastings Square” brochure published by the Grand Rapids Bookcase and Chair Company, ca. 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 7, Hagley Museum and Library.

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<sup>188</sup> “Hastings Square” brochure.

<sup>189</sup> “Some Furniture is Ageless,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 24, 1953; “Furniture is on the Move,” *Marshall Fields & Company Pace*, March 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 7, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>190</sup> Grace House, “A New Furniture Group of Distinction,” *San Francisco Examiner*, July 5, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 8, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>191</sup> “Old and New in Furniture,” *Grand Rapids Press*, January 10, 1953 & *Milwaukee Journal*, January 18, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 7, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>192</sup> Virginia Lockett Franklin, “Practical, Conservative Modern Evident Throughout Furnishings,” *Houston Post*, January 11, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 7, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>193</sup> “The Story of Hastings Square” brochure published by Grand Rapids Bookcase and Chair Company, ca. 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 6, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>194</sup> Virginia Franklin, “Taste for the Past Interpreted Into Modern Comfortable Living,” *Houston Post*, February 8, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 7, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>195</sup> Virginia Lockett Franklin, “Practical, Conservative Modern Evident Throughout Furnishings,” *Houston Post*, January 11, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 7, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>196</sup> Virginia Franklin, “Many Elements Go Into Judging of ‘Good Design’,” *Houston Post*, June 3, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 7, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>197</sup> “Designs Turn From Radical,” *Bloomsburg Press* (PA), March 25, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 7, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>198</sup> “Designs Turn From Radical.”

<sup>199</sup> “Casual U.S. Living Hailed as Refreshing Modern Decoration,” *Buffalo News*, April 30, 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>200</sup> Betty Pepis, “Combining Old and New,” *New York Times Magazine*, March 7, 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 10, Book 33, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>201</sup> William Pahlmann, “A Weekend House,” Draft text for “A Matter of Taste,” February 6, 1964. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 14, Box 9, Hagley Museum and Library. By the mid-1960s, it was not uncommon for even middle class people to own a weekend home or apartment, as they were now being sold by developers in package deals. Pahlmann notes that as of February 1964, well over one million Americans owned two homes.

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- <sup>202</sup> Letter from Milton Steinbach to William Pahlmann, New York, March, 22, 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 1, Box 29, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>203</sup> Betty Pepis, "Combining Old and New," *New York Times Magazine*, March 7, 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 10, Book 33, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>204</sup> Elizabeth Luft, "Settle for Simple Lines is Designer's Advice," *unidentified newspaper*, ca. June 1951. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 5, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>205</sup> Luft, "Settle for Simple Lines is Designer's Advice."
- <sup>206</sup> William Pahlmann and Associates, Notes written about the Steinbach home in Rye for potential publication, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 10, Box 33, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>207</sup> William Pahlmann and Associates, Notes written about the Steinbach home in Rye.
- <sup>208</sup> Christopher Long, *Paul T. Frankl and Modern Interior Design*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007); 124-25; Interview with Jack Conner, p. 23-24. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>209</sup> Interview with Jack Conner, p. 23-24. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>210</sup> William Pahlmann, "Lighting in Interior Design: Address given at Conference on Home Lighting jointly sponsored by N.Y. Chapter A.I.A. and publishers of *Lighting and Lamps*," *Lighting and Lamps*, February 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 7, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>211</sup> Pahlmann, "Lighting in Interior Design."
- <sup>212</sup> William Pahlmann and Associates, Notes written about the Steinbach home in Rye.
- <sup>213</sup> William Pahlmann, "Good Housekeeping's Book of Decorating Secrets," *Good Housekeeping*, August 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 6, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>214</sup> "Exterior Decoration Answers a Space Problem," *Living for Young Homemakers*, June 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>215</sup> "Five Top Interior Designers Show Us How to Live Outdoors: Areas for living, dining, entertaining are put in plans usable for small space," *Louisville Courier Journal* (KY), June 12, 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.
- <sup>216</sup> "An Afternoon in Westchester" Schedule for day trip to William Pahlmann and Associates' projects in Westchester County, New York, June 9, 1955. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 10, Box 33, Hagley Museum and Library.

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<sup>217</sup> William Pahlmann, "My Favorite Rooms: Eminent Decorator Tells Why," *Furniture Age*, January 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 7, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>218</sup> Pahlmann, "My Favorite Rooms."

<sup>219</sup> Patricia Bradley, "Maintaining Separate Spheres: The Career of Margaret Cousins," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Memphis, Tennessee, August 3-6, 1985, p. 12. Education Resources Information Center, ED258223.

<sup>220</sup> The house was to be occupied by Cousins and her long-time friend, also from Texas and working at *Good Housekeeping* as editorial promotion director, Mildred Randolph Culbreath. Culbreath, also unmarried, and Cousins had been roommates while living in the city. Unfortunately, Culbreath died suddenly in 1951 of a cerebral hemorrhage while the home was still under construction. Although Culbreath's interests and preferences were also considered initially when designing the home, Cousins alone is referred to as the owner and her preferences alone are noted in articles and other documentation discussing the design and decoration of the home. See Patricia Bradley's paper, "Maintaining Separate Spheres," for a detailed discussion of Cousins' career and life and her attitudes about the role of women.

<sup>221</sup> Letter from Margaret Cousins to William Pahlmann, October 18, 1950. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 1, Box 15, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>222</sup> Letter from Margaret Cousins to William Pahlmann, October 18, 1950. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 1, Box 15, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>223</sup> Letter from Margaret Cousins to William Pahlmann, November 9, 1950. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 1, Box 15, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>224</sup> Letter from Margaret Cousins to William Pahlmann, November 9, 1950. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 1, Box 15, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>225</sup> Letter from Margaret Cousins to William Pahlmann, December 15, 1950. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 1, Box 15, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>226</sup> Rhea Talley, "Texan, Now Editor of National Magazine, Has Unique House," *Houston Post*, August 15, 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>227</sup> Dorothy Witte, "Writer's Retreat from City," *The Milwaukee Journal*, August 1, 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>228</sup> "William Pahlmann's Perfect Client Provides a Decorator's Holiday," *Interiors*, March 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 10, Box 8, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>229</sup> "The House with 50 Ideas," *Good Housekeeping*, March 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 6, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>230</sup> "The House with 50 Ideas."



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<sup>231</sup> Rhea Talley, "Texan, Now Editor of National Magazine, Has Unique House," *Houston Post*, August 15, 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>232</sup> Talley, "Texan, Now Editor of National Magazine, Has Unique House."

<sup>233</sup> Dorothy Witte, "Writer's Retreat from City."

<sup>234</sup> "William Pahlmann's Perfect Client Provides a Decorator's Holiday."

<sup>235</sup> Dorothy Witte, "Writer's Retreat from City."

<sup>236</sup> "An Afternoon in Westchester" Schedule for day trip to William Pahlmann and Associates' projects in Westchester County, New York, June 9, 1955. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 10, Box 33, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>237</sup> Pahlmann had a few initial ideas about how his television/movie series would work. One idea was for a short, monthly movie segment possibly called "William Pahlmann Talks on Decorating" that would be sold to department stores and women's clubs and would serve as a decorating "clinic" to teach people tricks of the trade and how to shop. Another idea was for the production of a series of 15-minute shorts on interior decoration that would be aired on television weekly for two, 13-week series, called "Decorating Caravan." Unfortunately, Pahlmann worked for much of the 1950s towards this goal, and although some of the correspondents expressed interest, the programs and films never took off. However, Pahlmann recycled much of the work he did on the scripts for his "Matter of Taste" advice columns that he started in the 1960s. See various written correspondence between William Pahlmann and television companies and advertising agencies; Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 2, Box 2, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>238</sup> Film Prologue for "Prediction House" drafted by William Pahlmann, et. al., 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 2, Box 2, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>239</sup> William Pahlmann, "My Favorite Rooms: Eminent Decorator Tells Why," *Furniture Age*, January 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 7, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>240</sup> Pahlmann, "My Favorite Rooms: Eminent Decorator Tells Why."

<sup>241</sup> Pahlmann, "My Favorite Rooms: Eminent Decorator Tells Why."

<sup>242</sup> Pahlmann's written correspondence reveals a letter from Margaret Cousins regarding the results of a recent survey of *Good Housekeeping* readers wherein she learned the preferences of the readers, their likes and dislikes, and what type of home topics they would like to see in upcoming issues. The results of the survey are particularly interesting to get an idea of what American homemakers were interested in. The overarching theme was that the content was too high-style and expensive for the average American. They desired more practical advice on how to complete various small projects and handicrafts, as well as more economically feasible ideas. These two large features, published the following year and offering practical advice, are likely result of this survey information. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 2, Box 2, Hagley Museum and Library.

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<sup>243</sup> Letter from Florence Smith Vincent (Earl Newson & Company) to William Pahlmann, New York, April 20, 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>244</sup> Pahlmann had numerous cameo appearances on television to offer his opinions on design and decoration. He appeared on almost every network, more than once, on shows such as NBC's "Home" show, the "Today" show, and CBS segments on furniture and design, for example. One of his more substantial appearances was a two-hour "Today" show special on American taste and furniture, which aired in April 1965.

<sup>245</sup> "William Pahlmann, F.A.I.D.," *Interior Design*, March 1964; 158-162. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 20, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>246</sup> Pahlmann routinely participated in the National Homefurnishings Shows each September in New York. Various room themes included: "Canadian sports shack," (1953), "Venetian Loggia," (1954), "Plantation Sitting Room" (1957), "Alaska Room" (1958) and a lady's "Morning Room" (1960), for example. Pahlmann usually borrowed the materials used in these shows from antique dealers such as Jeane Freidlander (one of his favorites) and contemporary furniture manufacturers. This gave him an opportunity to promote his services, as well as various furnishings goods, fabrics and other decorative accessories. The shows were covered by the press and generally well-attended, with the number of attendees increasing each year (66,000 in 1949 and almost 210,000 in 1953, for example). See assorted papers in Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 2, Box 13, Hagley Museum and Library. Another annual show, that served to help legitimize the profession of interior decoration, was the "Art in Interiors" show sponsored by the Midtown Galleries in New York. Pahlmann, along with other contemporary interior and industrial design professionals, participated in this annual exhibition a number of times from 1952 through 1958, which aimed to help people visualize art in the home. This collaboration of designers and contemporary American artists demonstrated the compatibility between the two mediums and brought prestige to the interior design profession. See assorted papers in Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Books 8 and 9, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>247</sup> For example, "Paris in New York" was a design exhibit presented in April 1954, which was organized to benefit the Relief Projects of the Committee of French-American Wives, the American Aid to France Student Center in Paris, and the American Library in Paris. Pahlmann participated in the exhibition by designing a "French artist's studio" – incorporating French accents against a contemporary background. He also mounted a Pahlmann Previews display that featured three model rooms decorated in a Parisian springtime theme. See assorted papers in Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>248</sup> One case of a successful program was the "Decorating with Antiques Forum," sponsored by the *World-Telegram Sun* in May 1954. Pahlmann, along with other contemporary decorators and fellow members of the New York chapter of the A.I.D., gave lectures to the public regarding decorating tips, trends and techniques. Pahlmann specifically addressed the psychology and philosophy of interior decoration to help listeners understand the big picture of decorating and how it will affect everyone living in the home. Others spoke about including well-chosen antiques in the modern home, a popular trend in decorating that year. The program was open to the public, the largest of its kind than ever before, and proved to be well-attended with over 12,000 attendees over a two-day program. See assorted papers in Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.

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<sup>249</sup> Adeline Fitzgerald, “These Charming People,” *Chicago Herald-American*, ca. fall 1940. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>250</sup> “Decorating Means Good Merchandising: William Pahlmann, Lord & Taylor’s, also feels mass produced furniture is better; Speaks to Boston Fashion Group,” *Retailing*, December 2, 1940. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>251</sup> See William Pahlmann, “Good Advice is a Good Investment,” Draft text for “A Matter of Taste,” April 26, 1966. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 14, Box 5, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>252</sup> William Pahlmann, Elsie de Wolf Award Acceptance Speech, February 27, 1964, p. 3. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 4, Box 4, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>253</sup> Maurice Zolotow, “Million Dollar Decorator,” *The Saturday Evening Post*, November 23, 1957, p. 28. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 2, Box 27, Hagley Museum and Library. The article documented Pahlmann’s earnings – the previous year (1956), Pahlmann sold \$1.5 million worth of goods (interior designers were not paid for their advice, only for the goods they sold) and after all expenses were paid, Pahlmann’s personal earnings amounted to about \$400,000 before taxes.

<sup>254</sup> For example, Pahlmann convinced one client, wife of Standard Oil tycoon Henry H. Rogers, to cut down a \$5,000-rug so that the floor would be exposed; another time he convinced the actor Billy Rose to purchase two chairs for the sum of \$1,900. One particularly dramatic anecdote is that of playroom for Max Hess, Jr., a wealthy Allentown, PA department store owner. Hess requested a bar be installed in the basement play area, however, Pahlmann noticed the ceiling was too low for such an installation and the proportions would have to be corrected first. Hess protested, but ultimately Pahlmann convinced him to spend \$25,000 to fix the proportions and he ended up with a interior even more wonderful than he could imagine. Zolotow, “Million Dollar Decorator.”

<sup>255</sup> See personal correspondence between Jack Palmer White and William Pahlmann, December 1957. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 15, Box 2, Hagley Museum and Library.

<sup>256</sup> “Blended to Taste,” *House and Garden*, September 1948. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Box 3, Hagley Museum and Library. The full quote reads: “With a set of unrelated objects (that would drive less imaginative people to hotel apartments and despair) he blithely creates a kind of never-never setting that makes each piece appear as though it never had a previous life of its own.”

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## Illustrations



1. Portrait of William C. Pahlmann, as pictured on the *The Pahlmann Book of Interior Design*, ca. 1950-52. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Hagley Museum and Library.



2. "Excitement into Summer" model room designed by Pahlmann at Lord & Taylor, Promotional photograph, May 1939. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 1, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.



3. "Marbleized Fabric Show" model room designed by Pahlmann at Lord & Taylor, Promotional photograph, January 1940. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 1, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.





4. "Swedish Modern" Bedroom, model room designed by Pahlmann at Lord & Taylor, Promotional photograph, January 1938. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 1, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.



5. "Swedish Modern" Living Room, model room designed by Pahlmann at Lord & Taylor, Promotional photograph, January 1938. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 1, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.



6. "Swedish Modern" Living Room (alternate view), model room designed by Pahlmann at Lord & Taylor, showing combination of modern American furniture in the Swedish style combined with antiques, Promotional photograph, January 1938. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 1, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.



7. "Swedish Modern" Living Room/Den, model room designed by Pahlmann at Lord & Taylor, Promotional photograph, January 1938. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 1, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.





8. "Pahlmann Peruvian" model room designed by Pahlmann at Lord & Taylor, showing a formal dining room inspired by the Peruvian Colonial style, November 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 1, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.



9. "Pahlmann Peruvian" model room designed by Pahlmann at Lord & Taylor, showing a living room inspired by the Peruvian Colonial style, November 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 1, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.



10. "Pahlmann Peruvian" model room designed by Pahlmann at Lord & Taylor, showing a bedroom inspired by the Peruvian Colonial style, Promotional photograph, November 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 1, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.





11. "Pahlmann Peruvian" model room designed by Pahlmann at Lord & Taylor, showing a modern interpretation of a Peruvian-inspired dining room, Promotional photograph, November 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 1, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.



12. "Pahlmann Peruvian" model room designed by Pahlmann at Lord & Taylor, showing a modern interpretation of a Peruvian-inspired living room, Promotional photograph, November 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 1, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.



13. "Pahlmann Peruvian" model room designed by Pahlmann at Lord & Taylor, showing a modern interpretation of a Peruvian-inspired one-room apartment, Promotional photograph, November 1941. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 1, Book 1, Hagley Museum and Library.





14. Living Room designed for “Portuguese Bazaar” three-room model apartment for “Pahlmann Previews” exhibited at William Pahlmann and Associates studios, Promotional photograph, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.



15. Dining Area designed for “Portuguese Bazaar” three-room model apartment for “Pahlmann Previews” exhibited at William Pahlmann and Associates studios, Promotional photograph, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.





16. Bedroom designed for “Portuguese Bazaar” three-room model apartment for “Pahlmann Previews” exhibited at William Pahlmann and Associates studios, Promotional photograph published in *Furniture Age*, August 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.

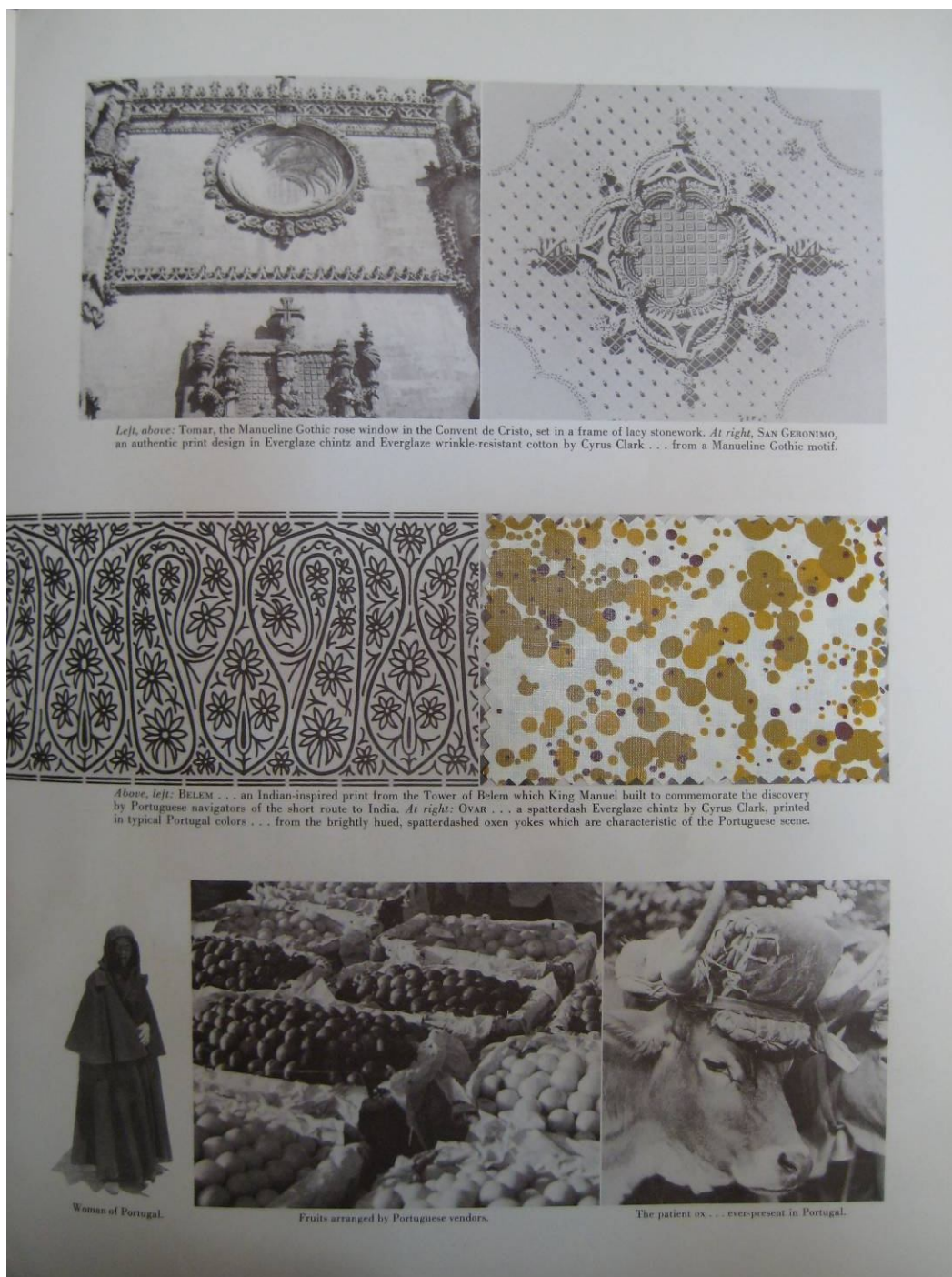


17. Kitchen designed for “Portuguese Bazaar” three-room model apartment for “Pahlmann Previews” exhibited at William Pahlmann and Associates studios, Promotional photograph published in unidentified magazine, ca. summer 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.



18. Formal drawing room designed for the “Portuguese Bazaar” themed model rooms for “Pahlmann Previews” exhibited at William Pahlmann and Associates studios, Promotional photograph, 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.





19. “Pahlmann Portugal” line of Everglaze fabrics, showing the “San Geronimo” pattern inspired by a typical Manueline Gothic motif, the “Ovar” pattern with a colorful splatterdash print, and the “Belem” pattern, Promotional material published in *American Fabrics*, summer 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.

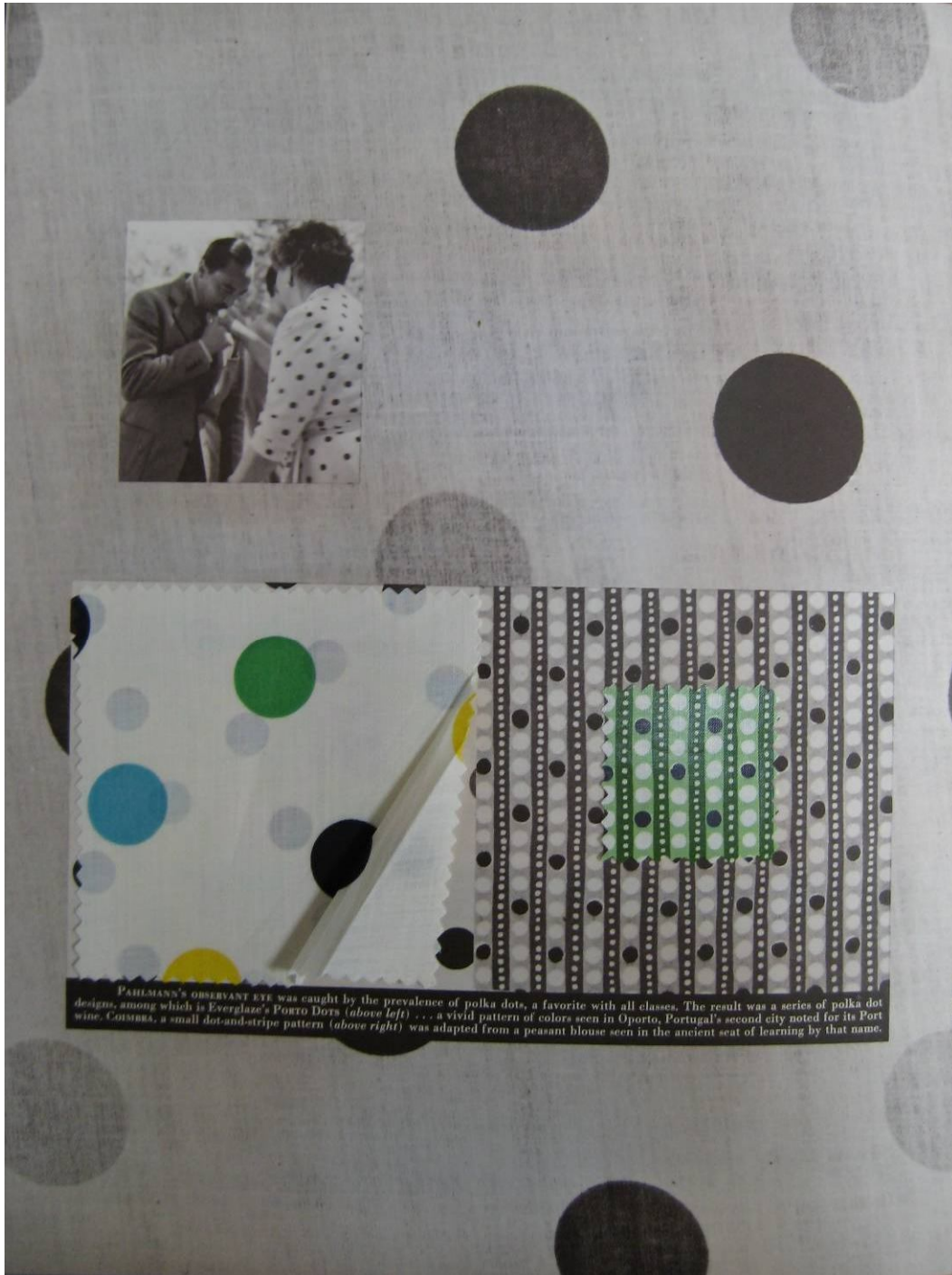


20. “Pahlmann Portugal” line of Everglaze fabrics, showing the “Sintra” pattern inspired by sixteenth-century Moorish tiles, Promotional material published in *American Fabrics*, summer 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.



21. “Pahlmann Portugal” line of Everglaze fabrics, showing the “Country Fair” pattern inspired by emblems and objects discovered at a Portuguese county fair, Promotional material published in *American Fabrics*, summer 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.





22. “Pahlmann Portugal” line of Everglaze fabrics, showing the “Porto Dots” and “Coimbra” patterns inspired by the various polka-dotted patterns seemingly admired by all classes of Portuguese people, Promotional material published in *American Fabrics*, summer 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.



23. "Pahlmann Portugal" line of Everglaze fabrics, showing the "Navare" pattern inspired by the flannel shirts of Portuguese fishermen, Promotional material published in *American Fabrics*, summer 1953. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.





24. Living Room of William Pahlmann's apartment on East 58<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, ca. 1948. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 10, Box 26, Hagley Museum and Library.



25. Den/dining area of William Pahlmann's apartment on East 58<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, ca. 1948. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 10, Box 26, Hagley Museum and Library.



26. Living room of William Pahlmann's apartment on East 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, New York, ca. 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 8, Book 17, Hagley Museum and Library.





27. Den/Study, showing the eclectic picture wall, "Path of the Sun" fabrics, and a convertible day-bed in William Pahlmann's apartment on East 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, New York, ca. 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 8, Book 17, Hagley Museum and Library.



28. Display of artifacts and collectables in William Pahlmann's Central Park South apartment, ca.1963. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 8, Book 17, Hagley Museum and Library.



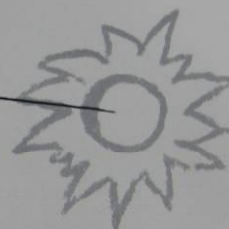
WILLIAM PAHLMANN, famous designer-decorator, who followed the path of the sun around the world last summer. The result of his 2-month trip is an inspired collection of "Everglaze" decorative fabrics by Cyrus Clark.

the story of *Cyrus Clark*

**PATH OF THE SUN**



**EVERGLAZE . Fabrics**



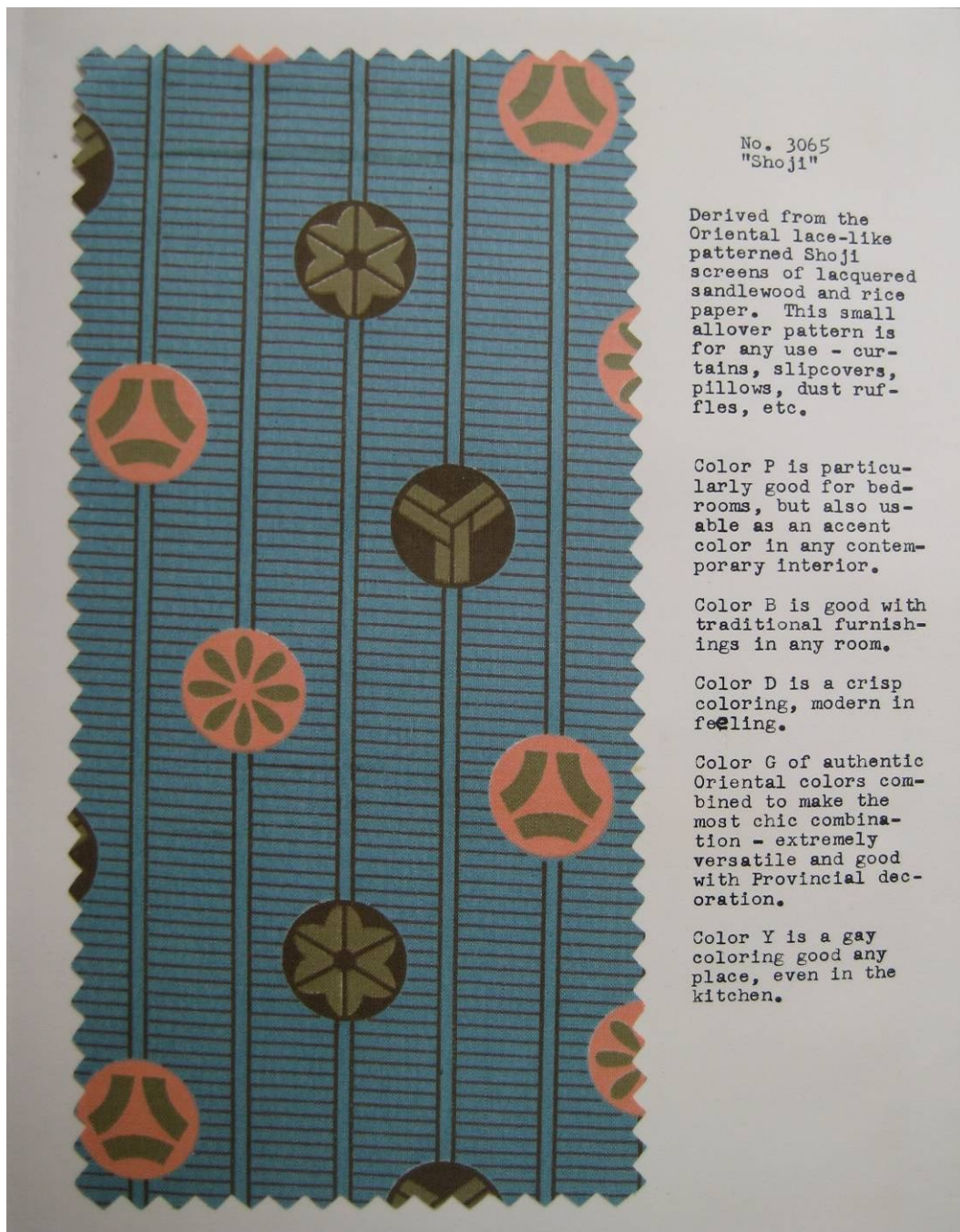
William Pahlmann, internationally known designer-decorator, had a brilliant idea. He thought it would be fun, and smart, too - from a design point of view - to follow the path of the sun around the world, and follow it he did, stopping off all along the way to study the design motivations of the various countries he visited. Gathering a considerable amount of valuable material, he brought it back and adapted it for our use and pleasure.

As a result of this two-month trip, the Path of the Sun group of "Everglaze" fabrics, designed by Pahlmann for Cyrus Clark, was born. All the stimulation and inspiration of Oriental design and color have been faithfully interpreted with a contemporary flair. The group incorporates the simple, basic designs of the Far East with today's trend toward more casual, less formal living, and fills one with a wanderlust for far-off places.

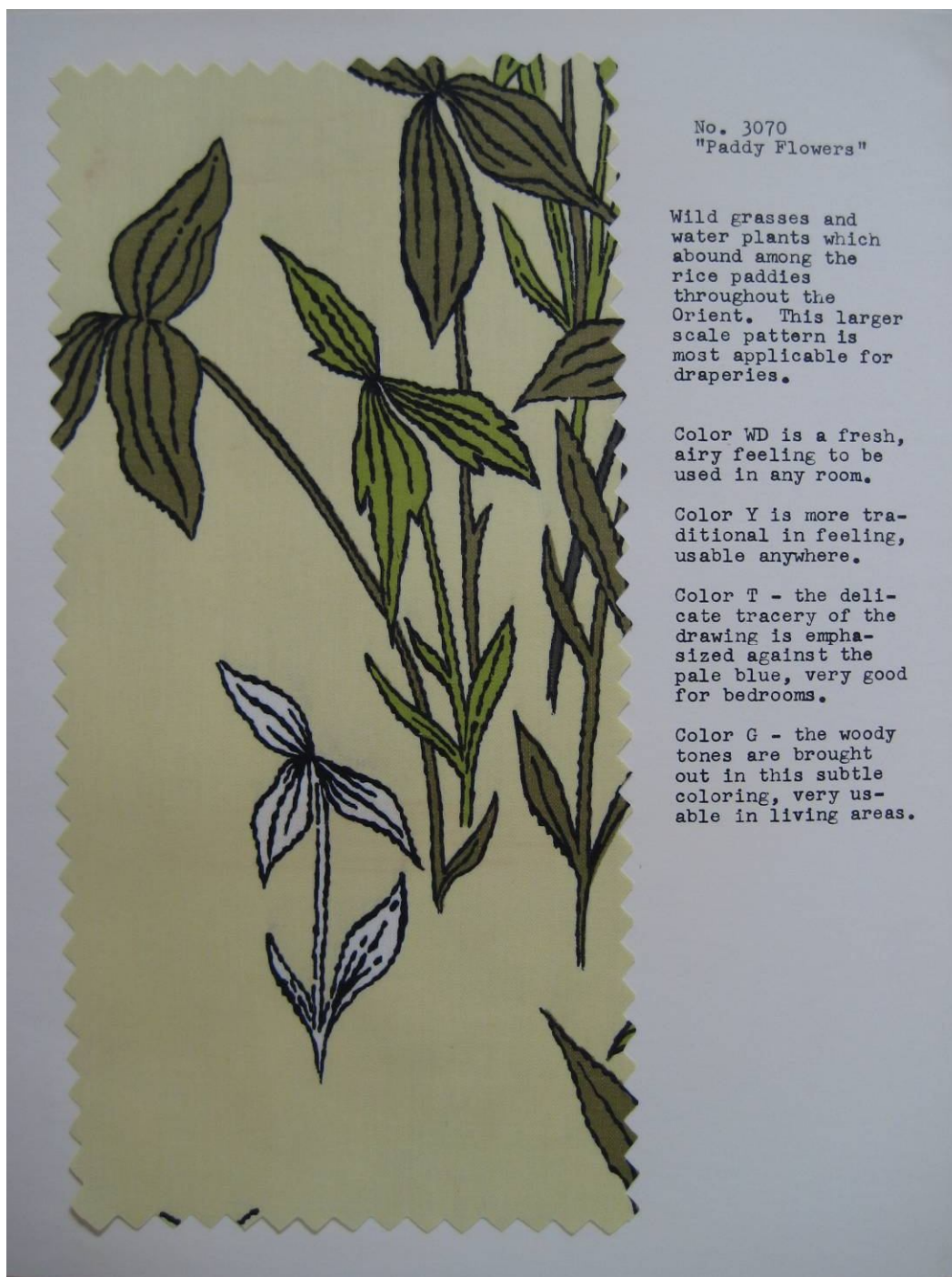
William Pahlmann suggests these uses for Cyrus Clark Path of the Sun Everglaze (R) fabrics:

29. Promotional materials/press kit for "Path of the Sun" line of Everglaze fabrics, published by the Cyrus Clark Company, ca. 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.



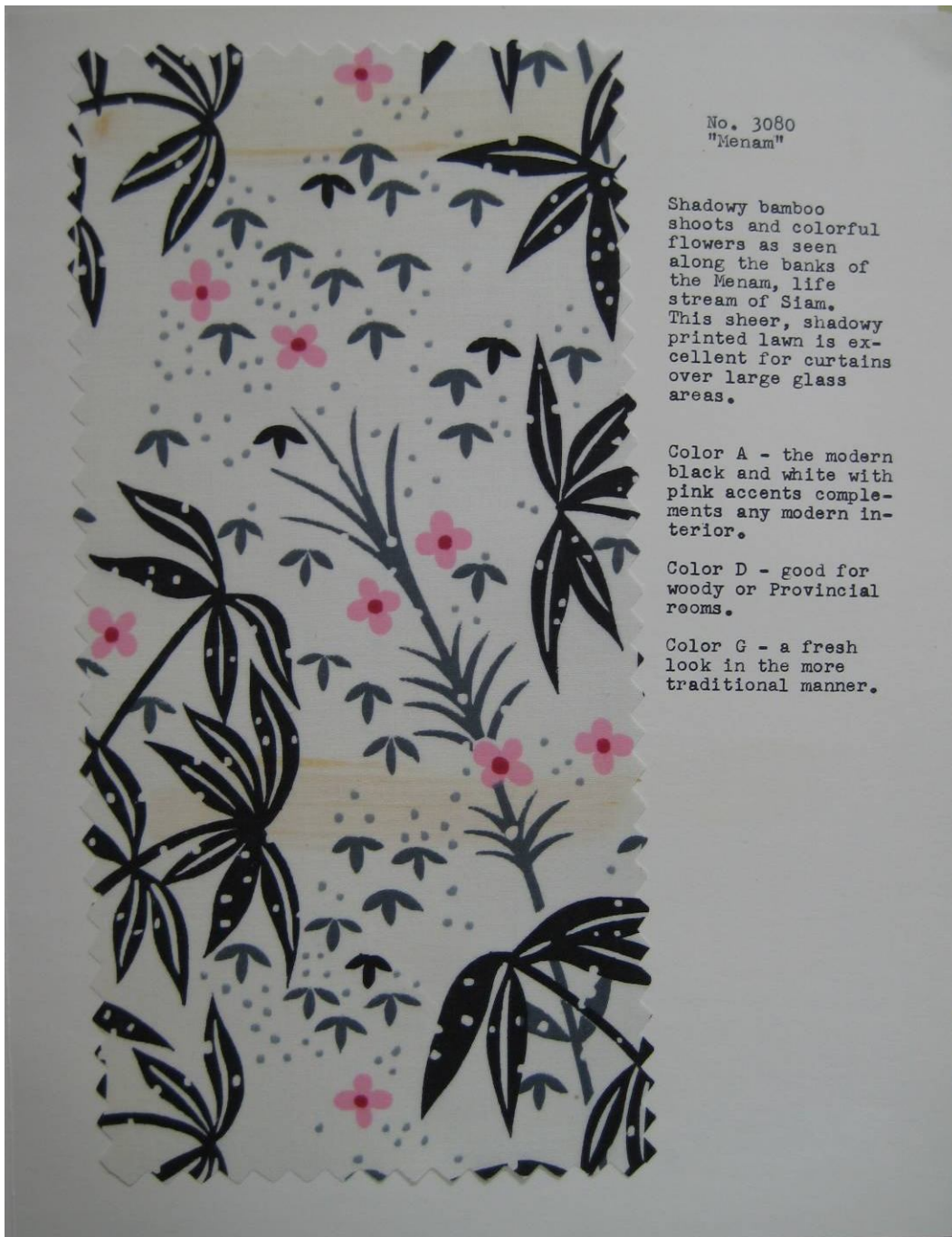


30. "Path of the Sun" line of Everglaze fabrics, showing the "Shoji" pattern inspired by shoji screens observed in Japan, Promotional material/press kit published by the Cyrus Clark Company, ca. 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.



31. "Path of the Sun" line of Everglaze fabrics, showing the "Paddy Flowers" pattern inspired by water grasses growing nearby rice paddies, Promotional material/press kit published by the Cyrus Clark Company, ca. 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.





32. "Path of the Sun" line of Everglaze fabrics, showing the "Menam" pattern inspired by flowers growing on the banks of the river in Thailand, Promotional material/press kit published by the Cyrus Clark Company, ca. 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.

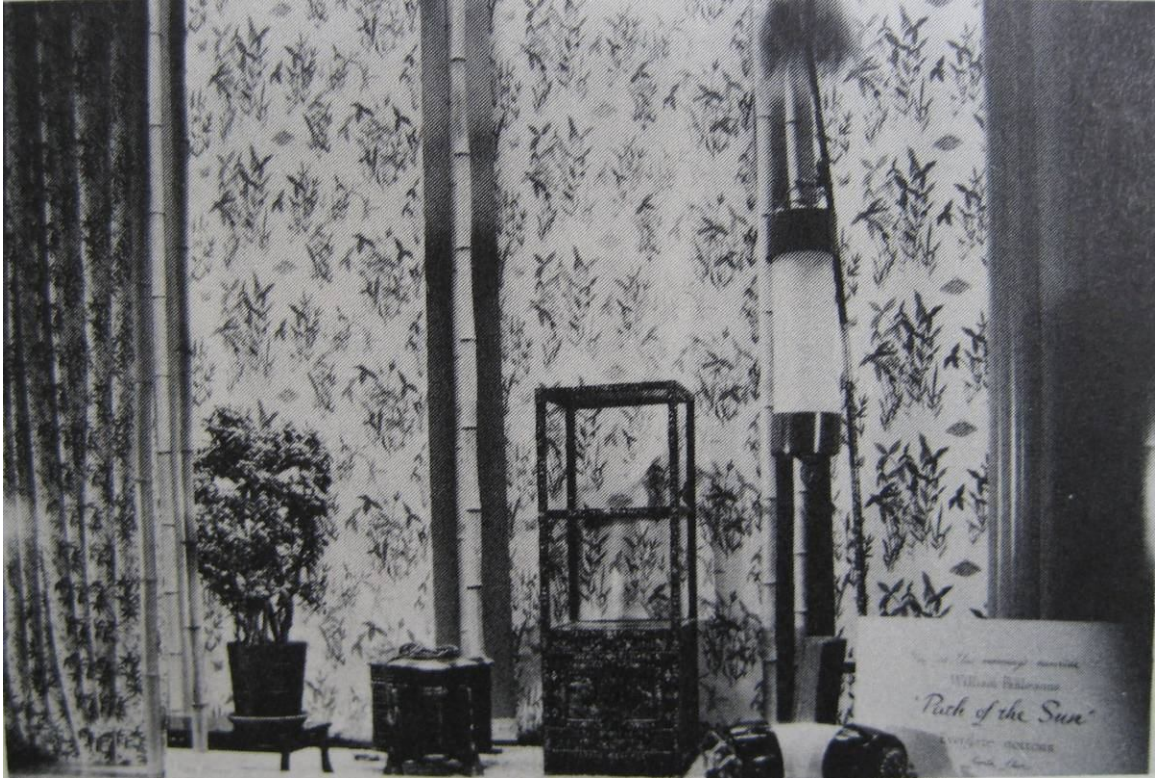


33. "Path of the Sun" line of Everglaze fabrics, showing the "Kowloon" pattern inspired by Chinese gardens, Promotional material/press kit published by the Cyrus Clark Company, ca. 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.





34. "Path of the Sun" line of Everglaze fabrics, showing the "Kabuki" pattern inspired by the classical Japanese theater, Promotional material/press kit published by the Cyrus Clark Company, ca. 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.



35. Window display at the B. Altman department store on 34<sup>th</sup> Street in New York, showing Pahlmann's "Path of the Sun" fabrics, Photograph published in *Retailing Daily*, ca. 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.





36. "Japanese loggia," showing the "Shoji" pattern from the "Path of the Sun" line of Everglaze fabrics, model room designed for "Pahlmann Previews" exhibited at William Pahlmann and Associates studios, Promotional photograph, spring 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.



37. Dining Room, showing “Menam” pattern from the “Path of the Sun” line of Everglaze fabrics, model room designed for “Pahlmann Previews” exhibited at William Pahlmann and Associates studios, Promotional photograph, spring 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.





38. Living Room. showing different patterns from the "Path of the Sun" line of Everglaze fabrics, model room designed for "Pahlmann Previews" exhibited at William Pahlmann and Associates studios, Promotional photograph, spring 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.



39. Living Room/Den, showing bamboo reed-covered walls and the “Kabuki” pattern from the “Path of the Sun” line of Everglaze fabrics, model room designed for “Pahlmann Previews” exhibited at William Pahlmann and Associates studios, Promotional photograph, spring 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.



*path of the sun*



William Pahlmann... internationally known designer-decorator, followed the Path of the Sun around the world to glean inspiration for his first venture in fashion fabrics, this thrilling new collection.

*Pahlmann Prints*


**bright new EVERGLAZE® cottons**  
by *Wm. Simpson*

These charming Pahlmann Prints are destined to be seen in some of summer's prettiest styles. Lovely sheer lawns and soft rich poplins, they are perfectly suited to every kind of summer fashion. And, being "Everglaze" fabrics, they have washability, lasting beauty, crease-resistance, and many other wonderful qualities guaranteed through thorough testing.


Wm. Simpson, Sons & Co., Inc.  
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"Phoebus"—an exciting, mat-lustre "Everglaze" poplin by Wm. Simpson



"Kashmiri"—a rich, soft-lustre "Everglaze" poplin by Wm. Simpson



"Gossamer"—a petal-soft "Everglaze" embossed lawn by Wm. Simpson



"Caravan"—a lovely, sheer "Everglaze" lawn by Wm. Simpson



"Filiaree"—a dainty "Everglaze" embossed lawn by Wm. Simpson

Path of the Sun "Everglaze" fashions by five well-known designers are being featured in the April issue of Glamour.

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40. "Path of the Sun" fashion cottons designed by William Pahlmann for the William Simpson Company, Advertising piece published in *American Fabrics*, ca. 1955. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 9, Hagley Museum and Library.



41. Model room designed by William Pahlmann and Associates for the "At Home in America, 1954" Exhibition sponsored by the A.I.D., 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.



42. Model room (alternate view) designed by William Pahlmann and Associates for the "At Home in America, 1954" Exhibition sponsored by the A.I.D., 1954. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 6, Book 13, Hagley Museum and Library.





43. Image of first daughter Margaret Truman in her portrait setting designed by William Pahlmann, published in "Portrait Backgrounds: Decorator Chooses Settings to Match Five Types of Women," *Life*, May 5, 1952. Georgetown University, Joseph Mark Lauinger Memorial Library.



44. Image of Metropolitan Opera star Patrice Munsel in her portrait setting designed by William Pahlmann, published in "Portrait Backgrounds: Decorator Chooses Settings to Match Five Types of Women," *Life*, May 5, 1952. Georgetown University, Joseph Mark Lauinger Memorial Library.





45. Image of actress Nina Foch in her portrait setting designed by William Pahlmann, published in "Portrait Backgrounds: Decorator Chooses Settings to Match Five Types of Women," *Life*, May 5, 1952. Georgetown University, Joseph Mark Lauinger Memorial Library.



46. Image of actress Shirley Booth in her portrait setting designed by William Pahlmann, published in "Portrait Backgrounds: Decorator Chooses Settings to Match Five Types of Women," *Life*, May 5, 1952. Georgetown University, Joseph Mark Lauinger Memorial Library.





47. Image of Jinx Falkenburg McCrary in her portrait setting designed by William Pahlmann, published in "Portrait Backgrounds: Decorator Chooses Settings to Match Five Types of Women," *Life*, May 5, 1952. Georgetown University, Joseph Mark Lauinger Memorial Library.





48. Store window at Marshall Field & Co. department store in Chicago advertising Pahlmann's Momentum furniture line with fabrics designed by Dorothy Liebes, August 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 10, Hagley Museum and Library.



49. Momentum furniture line, showing large coffee table and upholstered seating/end table pieces with large, semi-pneumatic wheels, Promotional photography of model room at Bloomingdales (attributed), ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 10, Hagley Museum and Library.



50. Chaise longue one wheels with attached end table from the Momentum furniture line, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 10, Hagley Museum and Library.





51. Credenza closed to hide two cots from the Momentum furniture line, Promotional photograph published in *Interiors Magazine*, March 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.





52. Credenza open to reveal two cots and bedding from the Momentum furniture line, Promotional photograph published in *Interiors Magazine*, March 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 8, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.



53. Dining server with fold-down table from the Momentum furniture line, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 10, Hagley Museum and Library.



54. Model demonstrating how the table folds down from the dining server, Momentum furniture line, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 10, Hagley Museum and Library.





55. Modular television and shelving unit (closed) and other smaller-scale pieces (these without wheels) from the Momentum furniture line, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 10, Hagley Museum and Library.





56. Modular television and shelving unit (open) and other upholstered pieces on wheels from the Momentum furniture line, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 10, Hagley Museum and Library.

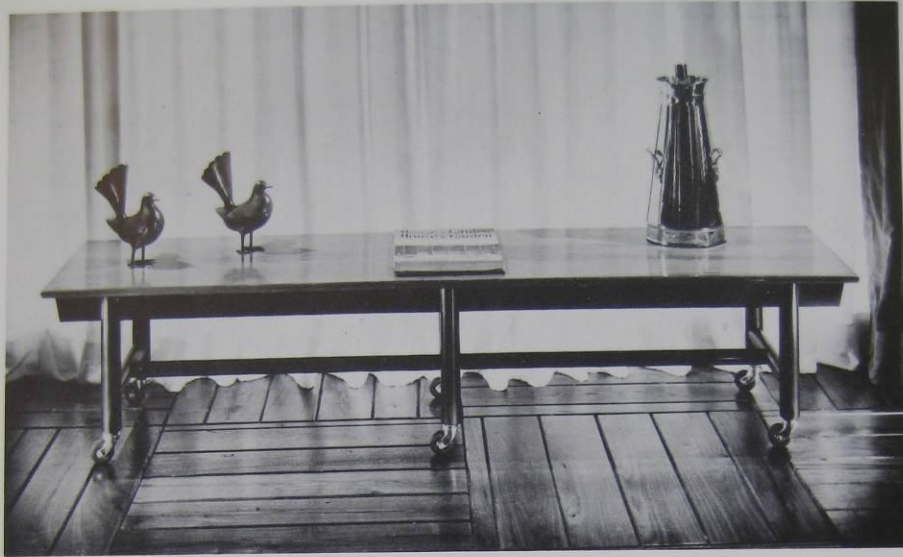


57. Media unit, bookshelf and table piece from the Momentum furniture line, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 10, Hagley Museum and Library.



58. Hastings Square furniture line, showing square coffee table with Micarta top and club chairs on wheels, Image in press kit published by the Grand Rapids Bookcase & Chair Company, ca. 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 10, Box 15, Hagley Museum and Library.





**No. 1818 Mobile Bench**  
 Top 72 x 16 Height 16  
 Walnut  
**No. 1818A** Same as above without Casters.



**No. 1839 Bench**  
 Length 60 Width 18 Height 16  
 Walnut

59. Maple bench available with or without casters from the Hastings Square furniture line, Image in catalogue published by the John Stuart Inc. showrooms, ca. 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 10, Box 15, Hagley Museum and Library.

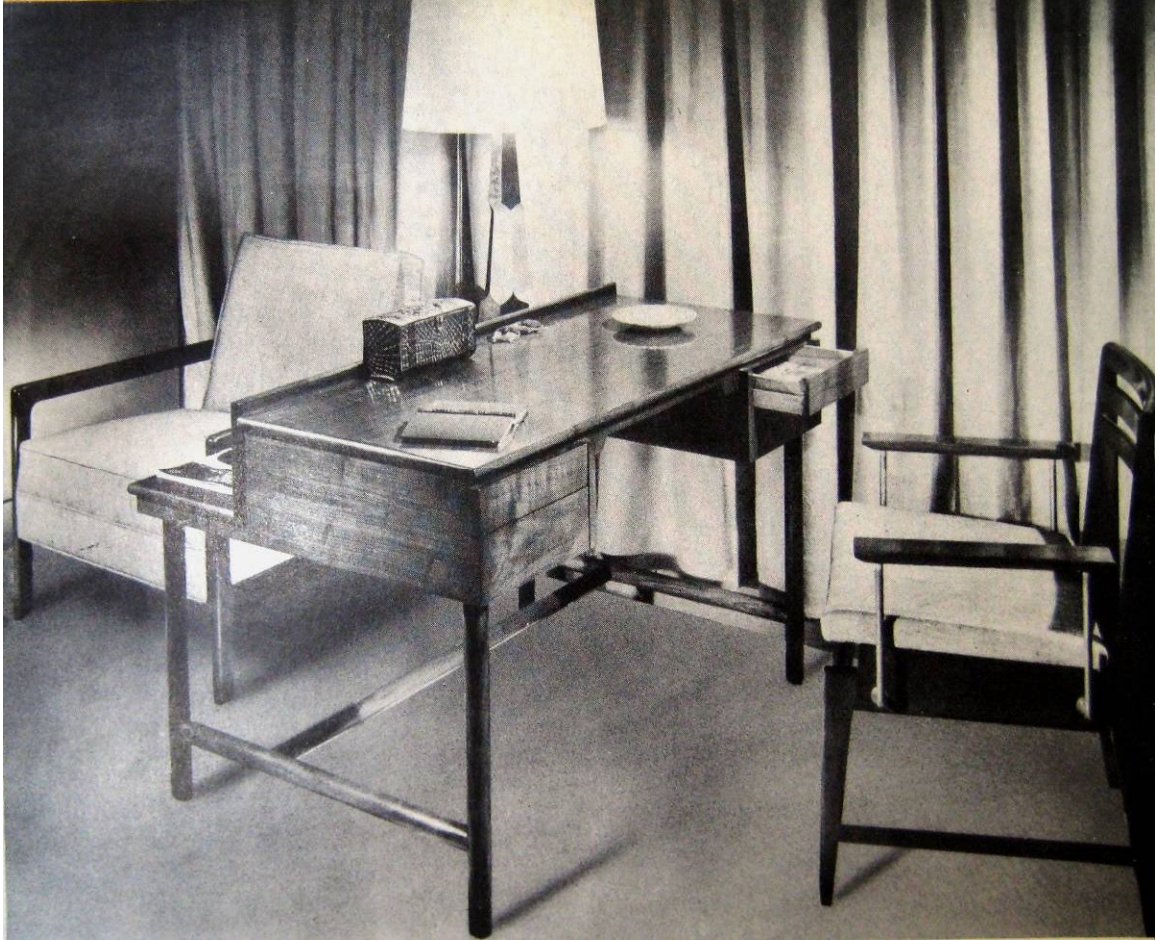


60. Mobile serving cart (closed) from the Hastings Square furniture line, Image in catalogue published by the Grand Rapids Bookcase & Chair Company, ca. 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 10, Box 15, Hagley Museum and Library.



61. Mobile serving cart (open) from the Hastings Square furniture line, Image in catalogue published by the Grand Rapids Bookcase & Chair Company, ca. 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 10, Box 15, Hagley Museum and Library.



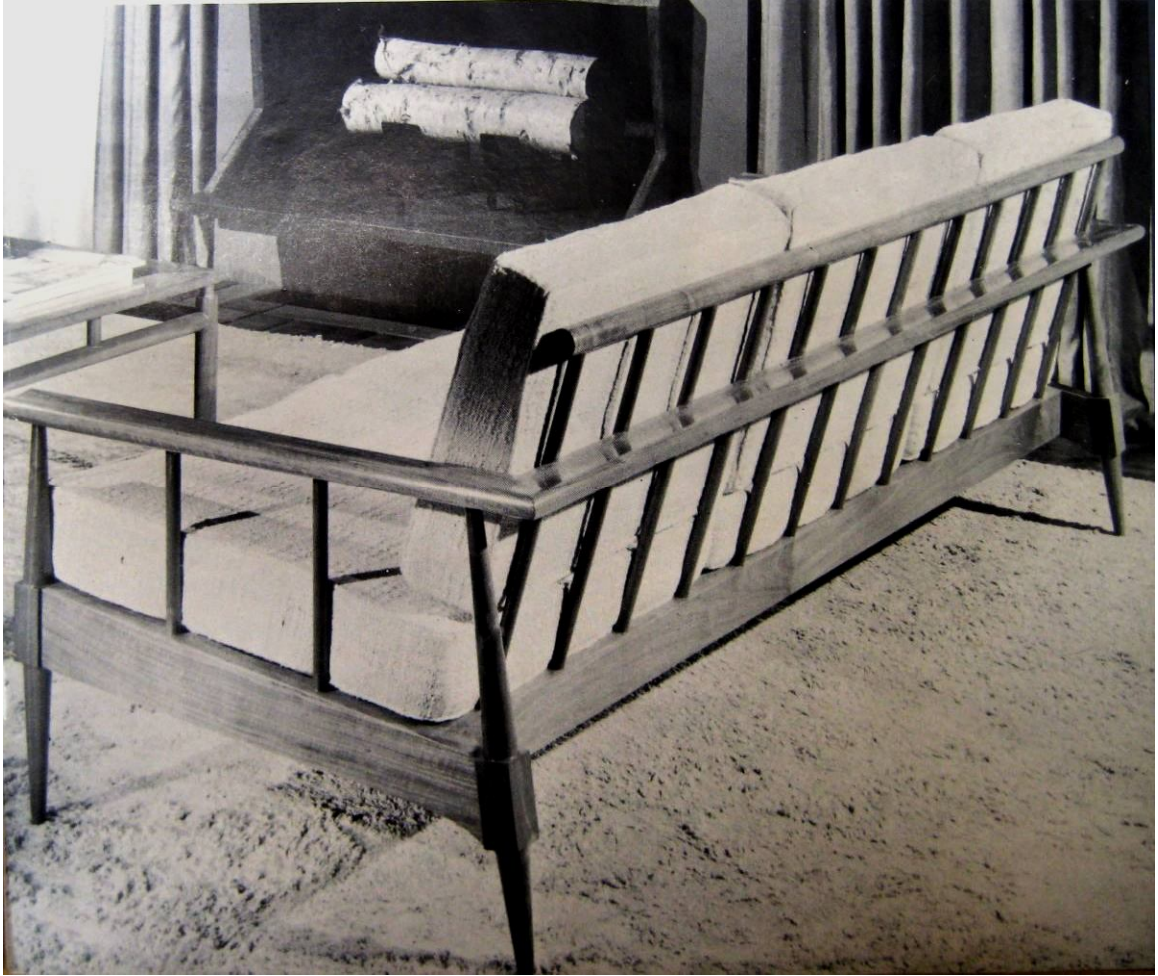


62. Desk and bookshelf from the Hastings Square furniture line, Image in catalogue published by the Grand Rapids Bookcase & Chair Company, ca. 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 10, Box 15, Hagley Museum and Library.





63. Walnut chest of drawers from the Hastings Square furniture line, chosen as the best example of “good design” by furniture buyers attending the 1953 Good Design Exhibition in Chicago, Photograph from the Merchandise Mart News Bureau, ca. 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 1, Box 29, Hagley Museum and Library.



64. Light and airy sofa from the Hastings Square furniture line, Image in catalogue published by the John Stuart Inc. showrooms, ca. 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 10, Box 15, Hagley Museum and Library.





65. Bedroom dresser with “scientifically proportioned” storage areas for men’s and women’s clothing and jewelry from the Hastings Square furniture line, Image in press kit published by the Grand Rapids Bookcase & Chair Company, ca. 1952. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 10, Box 15, Hagley Museum and Library.



66. Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, designed by architect Percival Goodman, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.



67. Entry Foyer – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.





68. Living Room – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.



69. Living Room, with curtains open revealing picture window and showing the Momentum coffee table on wheels – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.





70. Living Room, showing television cabinet (closed) – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.



71. Living Room, showing television cabinet (open) – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.



72. Living Room, showing wood totem pole next to fireplace – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.





73. Dining Room, showing first half of dining table and serving table on far right – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.



74. Dining Room, showing second half of dining table with curtains drawn to separate from living room – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.



75. Serving table in dining room showing a conservative “eclectic picture wall” – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.





76. Guest Room, showing bamboo furniture – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.





77. Guest Room, showing modern, white chest of drawers coupled with bamboo mirror – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.



78. Master Bedroom – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.



79. Master Bedroom (alternate view) – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.





80. Den, showing adjustable ceiling lamps and Momentum furniture – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.



81. Den (alternate view) – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.



82. Custom designed shelving showing Lally column covered in leather on far left – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.





83. French, eighteenth-century cabinet to display the homeowner's miniature collection – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.

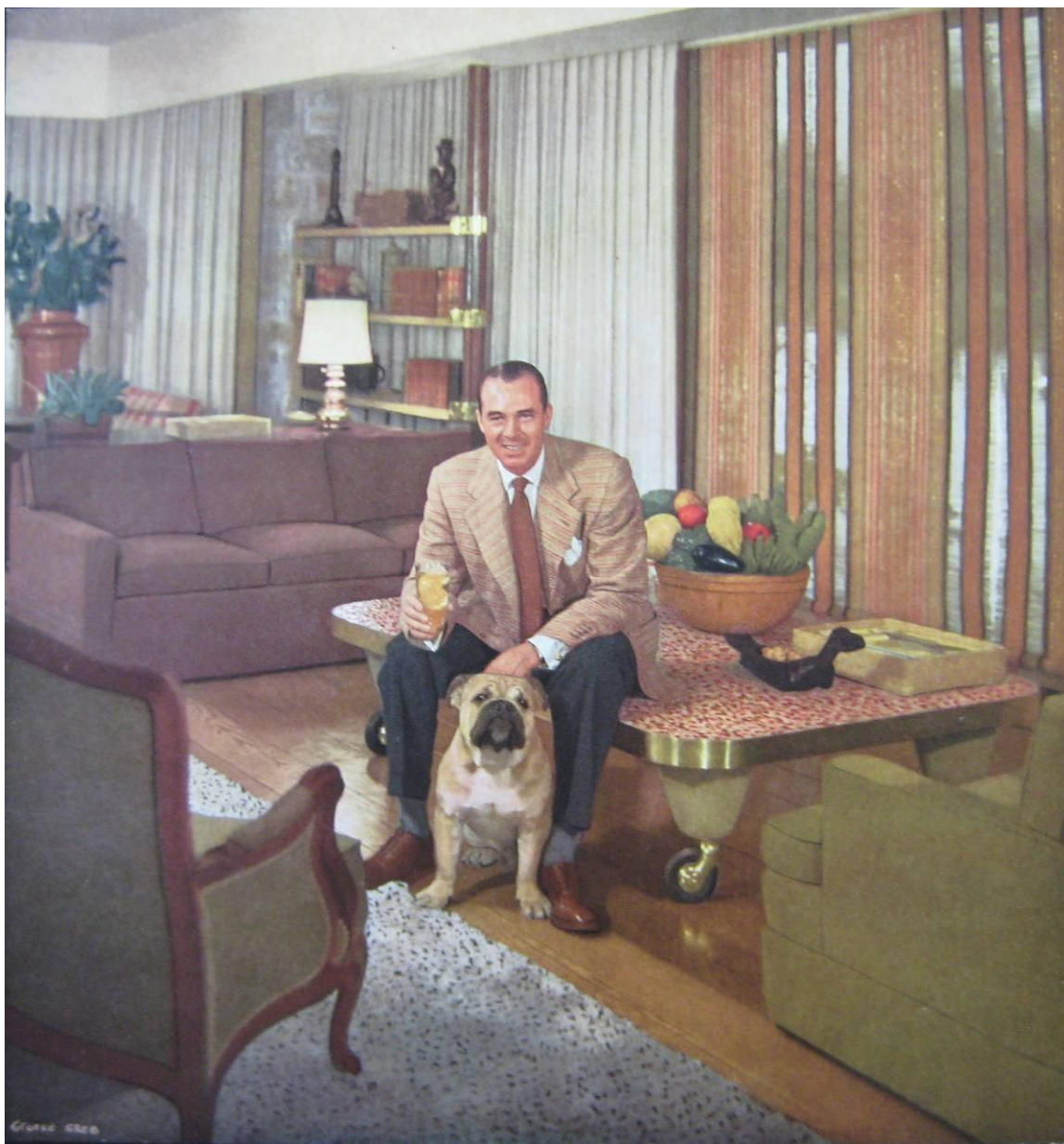




84. Covered sunroom, showing tile floor and metal furniture – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.



85. Covered sunroom, showing grass reed blinds and Momentum furniture pieces – Home of Milton and Ruth Steinbach, Rockledge Road, Rye, New York, Promotional photograph, ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.



86. William C. Pahlmann pictured as Calvert Whiskey's "Man of Distinction" in the Steinbach's living room at their home in Rye, New York (image used in Calvert Whiskey advertisements), ca. 1949. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 11, Book 4, Hagley Museum and Library.





87. Home of Margaret Cousins (west view), Dobbs Ferry, New York, designed by architect Eldridge Snyder, ca. 1951. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 2, Book 3, Hagley Museum and Library.



88. Home of Margaret Cousins (east view), Dobbs Ferry, New York, designed by architect Eldridge Snyder, ca. 1951. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 2, Book 3, Hagley Museum and Library.



89. Living Room – Home of Margaret Cousins, Dobbs Ferry, New York, ca. 1951.  
Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 2, Book  
3, Hagley Museum and Library.





90. Living Room, showing Hastings Square upholstered arm chairs and coffee table with Micarta top – Home of Margaret Cousins, Dobbs Ferry, New York, ca. 1951. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 2, Book 3, Hagley Museum and Library.



91. Gallery, showing chaise lounge with Texas drawings and antelope skulls – Home of Margaret Cousins, Dobbs Ferry, New York, ca. 1951. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 2, Book 3, Hagley Museum and Library.





92. Sliding partitions (this image viewed from study), showing how rooms can be separated from traffic lanes if necessary – Home of Margaret Cousins, Dobbs Ferry, New York, ca. 1951. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 2, Book 3, Hagley Museum and Library.



93. Dining Room, showing built-in cabinet storage – Home of Margaret Cousins, Dobbs Ferry, New York, ca. 1951. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 2, Book 3, Hagley Museum and Library.



94. Study, showing writing desk and cow print rug – Home of Margaret Cousins, Dobbs Ferry, New York, ca. 1951. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 2, Book 3, Hagley Museum and Library.





95. Master Bedroom, showing single headboard for two beds – Home of Margaret Cousins, Dobbs Ferry, New York, ca. 1951. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 2, Book 3, Hagley Museum and Library.





96. Modern wall cabinet in Master Bedroom – Home of Margaret Cousins, Dobbs Ferry, New York, ca. 1951. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 2, Book 3, Hagley Museum and Library.



97. Dressing Room in Master Bedroom – Home of Margaret Cousins, Dobbs Ferry, New York, ca. 1951. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 2, Book 3, Hagley Museum and Library.



98. Second Bedroom/Bed-Sitting Room – Home of Margaret Cousins, Dobbs Ferry, New York, ca. 1951. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 2, Book 3, Hagley Museum and Library.





99. Second Bedroom/Bed-Sitting Room (alternate view, showing antique chest) – Home of Margaret Cousins, Dobbs Ferry, New York, ca. 1951. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Series 9, Box 2, Book 3, Hagley Museum and Library.



**You don't build your own house or fill your own teeth. Why on earth should you be expected to know how to place furniture, pick out a color scheme, design a room, plan for light or understand a family's traffic pattern.**

I get plain mad when I hear women (and men) discussing the traumas over a new paint job, or a new room or a new house, for that matter. Decorating should be a pleasure. It should give you a charge—a new way to enjoy your life. If it doesn't do this for you, it's time you saw a good decorator.

Certainly there are some basic rules to working with a decorator. Make it clear how much you have to spend and insist on a budget from him. If old furniture is to be used, say so now, not later. If you know your husband hates red, tell him. If Aunt Mary spends the night

on your couch once a week when she's in town, plan for it, or get rid of Aunt Mary. Be open with your decorator and he'll make every effort to help you. But don't sweep the facts under the carpet.

Remember, taste is not handed down from on-high to people. The women who have it in their homes work at it. They develop it just as they develop their minds reading good books, their art by seeing good paintings. A good decorator can help you enjoy your home life more. It costs a lot of money to not hire one.

**WILLIAM PAHLMANN** F.A.I.D., William Pahlmann Associates, 136 E. 57 St., N. Y.

100. Magazine advertisement for William Pahlmann and Associates, ca. 1960s. Accession 2388, William Pahlmann and Associates Records, Hagley Museum and Library.