

NEWCOMB HOUSE

1601 MAINE STREET, QUINCY, ILLINOIS

HARVEY CHATTEN AND/OR ERNEST M. WOOD, ARCHITECTS, 1890-1891

RICHARDSONIAN ROMANESQUE STYLE

The house at 1601 Maine Street, now known as Stillwell Hall, was built about 1890-1891 for prominent Quincy manufacturer Richard F. Newcomb. The house was probably designed by Quincy architect Harvey Chatten, although Ernest M. Wood, who worked with Chatten until he began his own architectural practice about 1891, may certainly have contributed to the design of the house. The house is in the Richardsonian Romanesque Style.

The Richardsonian Romanesque Style was named for Boston architect Henry Hobson Richardson, whose Romanesque Revival Style architectural work set a new standard and direction for American architecture. Although working in a revival style, Richardson's technique in adapting the Romanesque Style to his own ends was so well done as to cause a new style to develop in his name because of the wide spread influence that his work had. The Richardsonian Romanesque Style, marked by buildings that directly reflected the influence of Richardson's own work rather than the Romanesque architecture of France, the basis for the Romanesque Revival Style, reached a peak in the decade following Richardson's untimely death at age 47 in 1886. Richardson first achieved widespread fame with his design for Boston's Trinity Church in 1872. The succeeding fourteen years saw the construction of such important buildings as the library at Quincy, Massachusetts; the Allegheny County Courthouse at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; the Marshall Field Wholesale Store in Chicago, Illinois; and many fine residences throughout the country.

The characteristics of the Richardsonian Romanesque Style that are apparent in the Richard F. Newcomb House include the massive stone exterior of the house; the use of a spiky or leafy architectural ornament carved in stone; the contrast in color and texture of different construction materials, including the building stone of the exterior, the weathered bronze metal trim and the red tile roof; the subdivision of windows with stone transom bars; and the bold, forceful form of the building. Richardson's favorite architectural device, a broad, round arch, does not appear on the Newcomb House.

The plan of the Newcomb House features a central living hall around which were grouped a formal parlor and a den on the west side and an informal sitting room and dining room on the east side of the house. An entrance vestibule gives access to the living hall from the front porch and a library is located under the grand staircase. The kitchen and service spaces are located in a north wing of the house. The Newcomb House has a full basement that originally included a wine room with direct access to the den on the main floor and a laundry. The second floor, not accessible on this tour, also featured a generous central hall with bedrooms for the Newcomb daughters on the west side and a double suite for Mr. and Mrs. Newcomb on the east side; Mrs. Newcomb's room included a large dressing room. The servants rooms were in the north wing of the second floor. The third floor of the Newcomb House included a room for the Newcomb's son, a billiard room, a large trunk room, a large storage room, a central hall, a linen room, walk-in cedar closets, a sewing room and a room for a man's servant. The house originally had an elevator in the service wing that connected all four levels of the house.

The interior of the Newcomb House is notable for the variety of fine woods used in its construction. Quartered oak, mahogany, birch and pine were used on the first floor; cherry, cypress, yellow pine and quartered oak were used on the