

**POOR QUALITY
ORIGINAL_____**

Pgs 1-4



Handsome porch of what is now the Ward Library in Canaan was built about 1840.

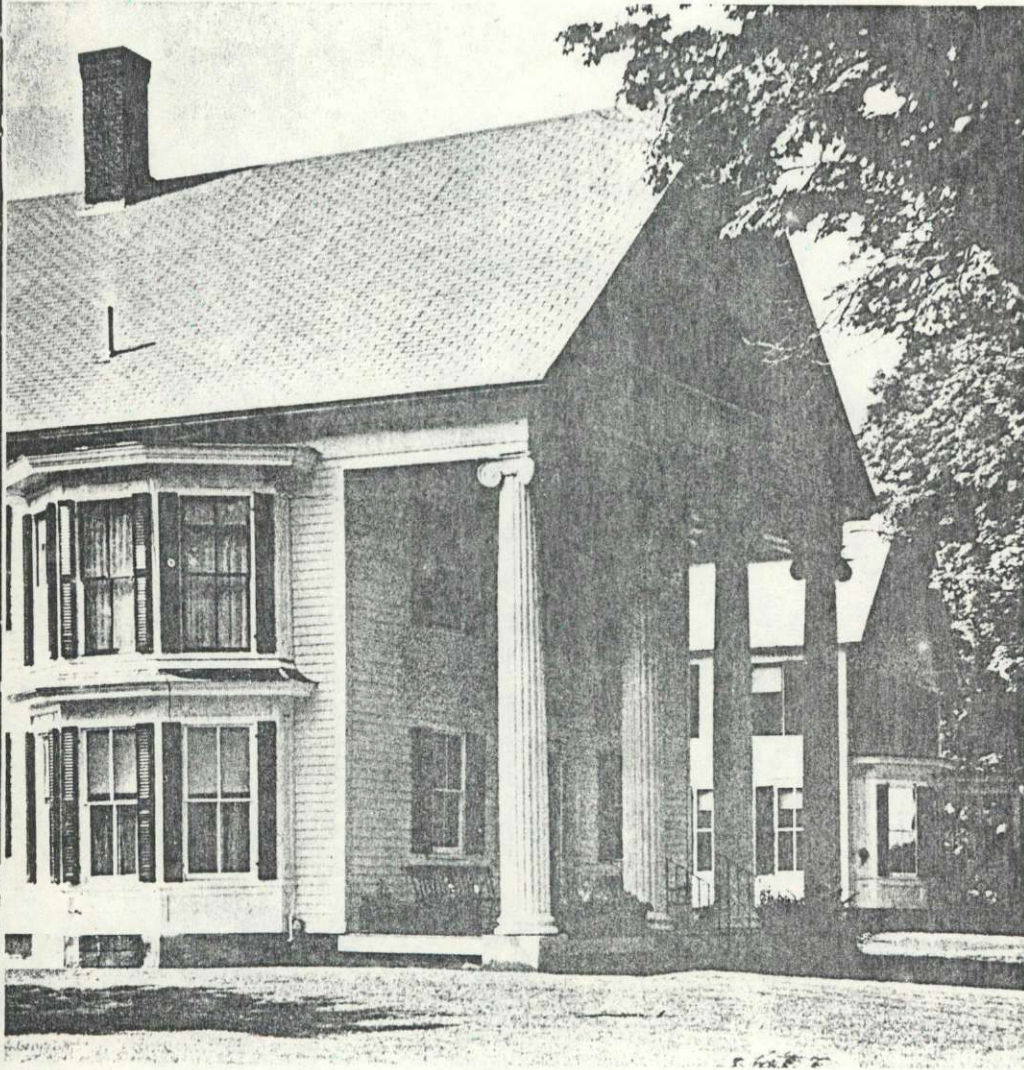
Recessed Porches ARE A FEATURE OF VERMONT ARCHITECTURE, BUT MYSTERIOUSLY THEY ARE TO BE FOUND MAINLY IN THE EASTERN HALF OF THE STATE!

by NELL M. KULL

Photographs by JOHN HARRIS

ALTHOUGH a few examples of the recessed porch (one extending out from the second or third storey) are to be found in Canada's Eastern Townships and in Massachusetts, and even one as far afield as Freeport, Illinois, this porch style seems to be a piece of architectural beauty peculiar to Vermont. Some fifty or more are to be found in one half of the state, east of the Green Mountain range, from Dummerston on the south to Derby Line on the north. In a single day's lazy drive, one can easily reach and admire a dozen or more.

As well as can be determined, most of the recessed porches date back a century and a half to the first quarter of the nine-



Above is the Kimball House in Newfane and opposite the handsome old Rowell's Inn at Simonsville, near Chester.

teenth century, a period in the classical revival. The porch of our interest was usually built on the front of the house, although occasionally on its side, as in Jamaica. We may liken the house front to the Greek portico. Beneath a broad peaked gable, and out from the second or third storey, there extends an over-hanging porch, the Greek pediment, supported by simple posts or imposing columns, which rise from a porch floor below. Through doors

or windows of the back wall, this upper or recessed porch opens into either bedroom, hall or chamber.

But the beauty of this piece of architecture is the graceful arch which usually crowns the opening in the partially closed outside wall of the porch. At floor level a graceful railing protects the persons within, a modified entablature. When a recessed porch extends from a third storey, the residence is larger and more elegant, such as the Kimball house across the green in Newfane and the Low house in Bradford, where, in both cases, four handsome Doric columns rise from a first floor level to support the recessed porch above.

How and why did this fascinating archi-



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*John Whalen home lies on the
Healdville road in Mt. Holly.*

tectural detail of the Greek Revival happen to emerge?

The fact that Vermont's recessed porches occur in a narrow strip of the state (two or three examples are often found in the same neighborhood or village) would suggest that a few local carpenters had the use of master-builders' manuals, inspired by the curves and columns of the Greek Revival. It would not have been difficult to persuade a patron that a lovely recessed porch on his new house would make it a show-place in the community—so another

one was built, and owner pride boosted.

For weather-conscious Vermonters, a partially enclosed porch, facing the south or east, as most of them do, which would let in the winter's morning sunshine may have been another reason for the recessed porch. Because few of these porch arches fail to frame a striking landscape of mountain or valley suggests another reason for their being.

Enjoyment of the out-of-doors as part of his dwelling has long been the desire of civilized man. Hundreds of years ago, balconies of stone jutted from the walls of Roman villas as did those of wrought-iron grill work from Spanish palaces, all in the effort to catch fresh air and sunshine, but

out in public view they furnished no privacy. In modern city apartments, balconies are again a much desired feature.

In the handsome modern apartments designed by the New York architect, M. Milton Glass, balconies are part of the outside wall, but they are recessed into the frame of the building, presenting the maximum of privacy, as well as sunlight and air and a view of the street or park below.

A century and a half ago, the recessed porch in Vermont, partially walled, gave to its owner, through its graceful arch, this very combination of comfort, besides being a flower of the brief classical revival, an architectural thing of beauty in New England.



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Knight House, Newbury
Survey # 0907-1 #37