

BUNGALOWS OF THE BLUEGRASS

Last May was Preservation Month 2007 in Lexington, Ky., and it featured a bungalow fest to remember.

Lexington was the hometown of Clay Lancaster, author of the basic resource on the American bungalow, *The American Bungalow, 1880–1930* (1985). Lancaster, who grew up in a bungalow, was fascinated by the variety and abundance of suburban bungalows throughout America. He trekked to California to interview the brothers Greene & Greene and wrote scholarly articles on Arts and Crafts houses in the 1950s. Shortly before his death in 2000 at 83, he created the Warwick Foundation to continue his scholarship, advocacy and creativity through programs in education and preservation.

During Preservation Month, the foundation sponsored special community events highlighted by a major photographic exhibition, “Bungalows of the Bluegrass.” Featuring craftsman structures in Central Kentucky—including Lancaster’s boyhood home—the exhibition was installed in the gallery of the Lexington Public Library and handsomely embellished with furniture and decorative accessories provided by The Gustav Stickley Collection.

The foundation also partnered with the library to host two public lectures to interpret the installation. In the first, *American Bungalow* magazine publisher John Brinkmann delivered an evening talk placing the Craftsman home in historical perspective, exploring its continuing adaptability and popularity for 21st-century living. In a



presentation enriched with archival views of the style and photos of vibrant bungalow neighborhoods, he underscored the cultural importance and architectural durability of a style well known to his audience.

The second lecture drew decorative-arts enthusiasts to hear Treena Crochet, award-winning author of *Bungalow Style: Creating Classic Interiors in Your Arts and Crafts Home* (2005), on the design potential of the Craftsman home. Working from a variety of historic and contemporary images and from her own file of case histories, Crochet shared experiences from her practice as a design consultant.

These events were capped by a bungalow tour, sponsored by the Kenwick Neighborhood Association. Kenwick, across the street from the historic home of U.S. Sen. Henry Clay, is one of the community’s oldest bungalow enclaves, recognized for its high standards of preservation and maintenance.

With the city’s bungalows now approaching the century mark, Lexington preservationists are expressing increasing concern not just for retaining individual structures but for maintaining the integrity of neighborhoods that consist predominantly of bungalows.

The Warwick Foundation’s “Bungalows of the Bluegrass” show and the activities that surrounded it heightened public awareness about an important feature of the community’s historic built environment. In addition to exciting interest in authentic restorations, sources for replicas of furnishings in the Craftsman style and the adaptability of bungalows to contemporary living, the program raised provocative questions

regarding the protection of historic buildings and neighborhoods—a topic to which Lexingtonian Clay Lancaster devoted much of his career in Kentucky, Brooklyn and Nantucket.

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