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AMERICAN BUNGALOW

Legacy

TWYXCROSS HOUSE TURNS 100 THIS YEAR. It was built by a young couple, Ruth Sparks and Converse Twycross, who were about to be married. The home they built for their future family was different from the houses they knew as children. It had a friendly, mildly exotic name: it was called a bungalow.

The new bungalow meant a new life for the Twycrosses—and millions like them. It took a stand against the fussy Victorian era, replacing gingerbread with honest simplicity; decoration with artistry, towering pretense with a humble assertion that it belonged to the earth. It lifted the restraints of starched-collar formality to reveal intimate ties with Nature. It dismissed the idea of servants. It was efficient, inside and out, with built-in cabinetry, handmade of selected woods, and a small, efficient floor plan that left lots of room on the property for a mini-farm and a five-tree orchard. There was a garage for a motor car—out back.

The self-sufficient bungalow created a peaceful social revolution. It arrived at a time when ordinary people were looking to have property of their own. The rights of the individual were at the house's very essence, yet it stood shoulder to shoulder with other individuals in supportive neighborhoods, lending strength through a union of the diverse. Increasingly, the bungalow's leading lady had as much ownership of the home as did the Lord of the Manor, even if she didn't have a right to vote. Yet.



Two years after the last Twycross passed away, their cherished house became the office of a design company. It had charm and the price was right. It didn't take long for its essence to capture the designers—and a magazine on bungalows was born out of its spirit.

Bungalows are popular again today. But what about tomorrow? Will an old house meant to suit 1914 horse and buggy needs make sense as a home after more than a century of warp-speed progress?

Young adults today are vastly different from Ruth or Converse. Today's first-time homebuyers have long since abandoned fountain pens for technology and instinctively communicate globally, instantly, and constantly. But aren't they just as interested in living in harmony with nature and each other? If today's young adults are more concerned about the environment—what could be more ecologically responsible than to restore and reuse rather than tear down and build? And if they prefer to live organically and locally, how much better does it get than fresh produce from your own garden?

Another bungalow revolution may well be gaining strength. In time the new bungalow generation will warm up to the honesty and singular beauty of Arts and Crafts. With your help, the Twycross-inspired will try to fan the spark into a flame.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

john@ambungalow.com