

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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**Buildings: 1734**

"He who alters an old house is ty'd as a Translator to Original, and is confin'd to the fancy of the first Builder. Such a man would be unwise to pull down a good old Building, perhaps to erect a worse new one."

The above quotation is from Builders Dictionary, 1734, and is a chapter heading in "Colonial Williamsburg, "Its Buildings and Gardens," published by Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia and written by A. Lawrence Kocher and Howard Dearstyne.

A Lawrence Kocher is brother of Dr. R.A. Kocher of Carmel and the son of the founder of one of the first jewelry stores in San Jose. His is a native Californian, having been born in San Jose, where he still has many family connections. Many of the excellent and beautiful photographs used to illustrate the book were also the artistic work of a native Californian, Herbert Matter, now a resident of New York.

Mr. Kocher is a well-known architect and scholar who once headed the school of architecture at the University of Virginia and for ten years was editor of Architectural Record. He has been a member of the advisory committee of Williamsburg since its inception, and is engaged in the task of assembling and editing all architectural records for the restoration project. Mr. Dearstyne is his assistant.

The architects and two photographers, working closely together from the start, have pooled their talents to tell the story of the restoration of an American town; not only to show its buildings and gardens as they appear today, but to outline the principles of the restoration work and the significance of the undertaking which is carried out under the motto: That the Future May Learn from the Past.

The book "is a study of Virginia's restored capital—whose statesmen formulated the tenets of Democracy—whose builders created a notable architecture." Its contents include chapters on: The Virginia Planters' Capital, Buildings and Builders of Williamsburg, The Manner of Furnishings, the Gardens of Williamsburg, the Restoration of an American Town, A Photographic Tour of Williamsburg and Bibliographical Notes. It would prove an excellent handbook for the historian and a joy to the lover of

beautiful gardens, old furniture, glass and china, and architecture that will live.

Chapter headings included the following quotations in old type and spelling:

Let there be adjoining the House a convenient Garden, it being the purest of human pleasures, and a great refreshment to the spirit of man, without which Buildings are but gross Handyworks..." Primatt.

"How much more agreeable it is to sit in the midst of old furniture...which (has) come down from other generations, than amid that which was bought from the Cabinet-maker's, smelling of varnish, like a coffin." Thoreau.

The only recipe included in "Colonial Williamsburg" is one for cooking Virginia ham as found on the fly leaf of Bible that belonged to Colonel William Byrd of Westover: To eat ye Ham in Perfection steep it in Half Milk and Half water for thirty-six hours, and then having brought the water to a Boil put ye Ham therein and let it Simmer, not boil, for 4 or 5 hours according to the size of ye Ham—for Simmering brings ye Salt out and boiling drives it in."