



HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

The Ordinary Iconic Ranch House

Mid-20th Century Ranch Houses in Georgia

PART V: DISTINCTIVE ASPECTS OF THE RANCH HOUSE IN GEORGIA



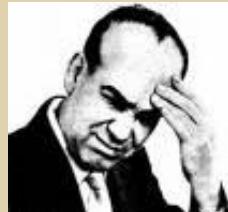
September 2011

Richard Cloues, Ph.D.

The Ordinary Iconic Ranch House is about the mid-20th-century Ranch House in Georgia. It is presented in six parts.

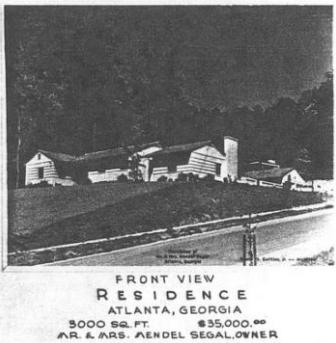
Part V (this part) identifies the distinctive architectural and historical aspects of the “Georgia” Ranch House.

Other parts of *The Ordinary Iconic Ranch House* tell other parts of the Ranch House story.

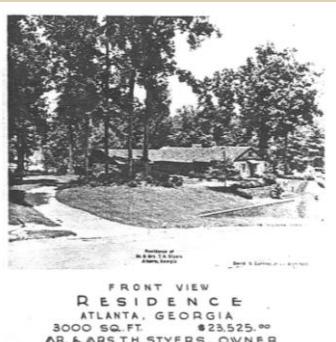


What accounts for this tremendous variety of new Ranch House designs all across Georgia at the middle of the 20th century?

Something more than just the national trends and influences, as persuasive as they may have been?



Certainly the presence of *professionally trained architects* in the state contributed to this phenomenon:



Precedent-setting architects such as *David Cuttino* in Atlanta, a 1928 graduate of the Clemson University School of Architecture, who after relocating to Georgia in the late 1930s designed the earliest Ranch Houses in Atlanta;



James H. "Bill" Finch, a Georgia Tech School of Architecture graduate, who introduced the Contemporary-style Ranch House to Atlanta in 1950 with the houses he designed for the Golf View subdivision -- but who then pretty much abandoned residential architecture for commercial and institutional buildings;

Ellamae Ellis League in Macon, classically trained at the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design in New York and then the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Fontainebleau France, who then established her own firm and in 1942 designed what may have been the first Ranch House in Macon ...





LOCATION Macon, Georgia
ARCHITECTS League, Warren and Riley
OWNERS Mr. & Mrs. Joseph C. League

COST FACTS: \$16,200 in 1950. 1766 square feet at \$9.17 per square foot.

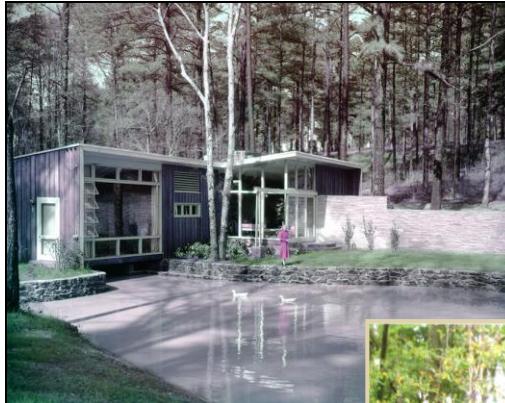
MATERIALS: Concrete floor slab over hollow tile on fill. Wood frame, with redwood siding, plate glass and jalouses.

PLAN FACTS: This house's modest appearance, well-tempered materials, give it an indigenous quality characteristic of the simpler type of house in the South. The main problem was to arrange the important rooms, because this side of the property had privacy.

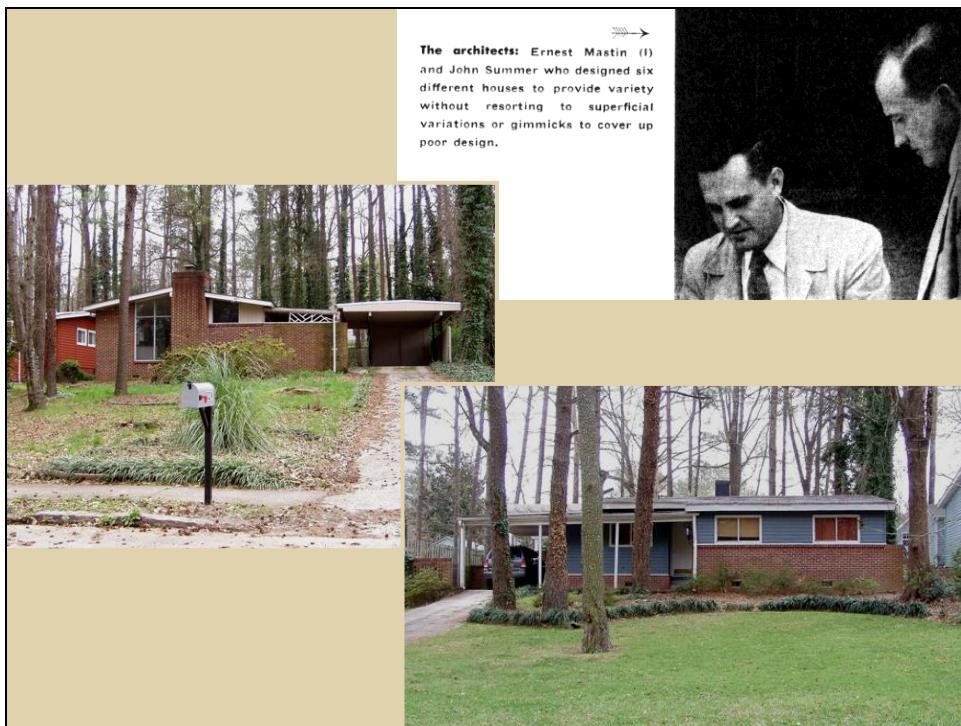
The kitchen is accessible to bedrooms without going through the living area. The sleeping wing, containing three bedrooms and two baths, is nicely isolated from the living part of the house. Each bedroom has its own outside door, and is insulated from the neighboring room by closet walls. Adjacent to the kitchen and utility room, the carpent and service porch give an open look to this side of the house. A screen from the steel porch and fence mask the service porch. The brick fireplace wall of the living room screens the main entrance hall, and has a wood storage box which may be filled from outside.



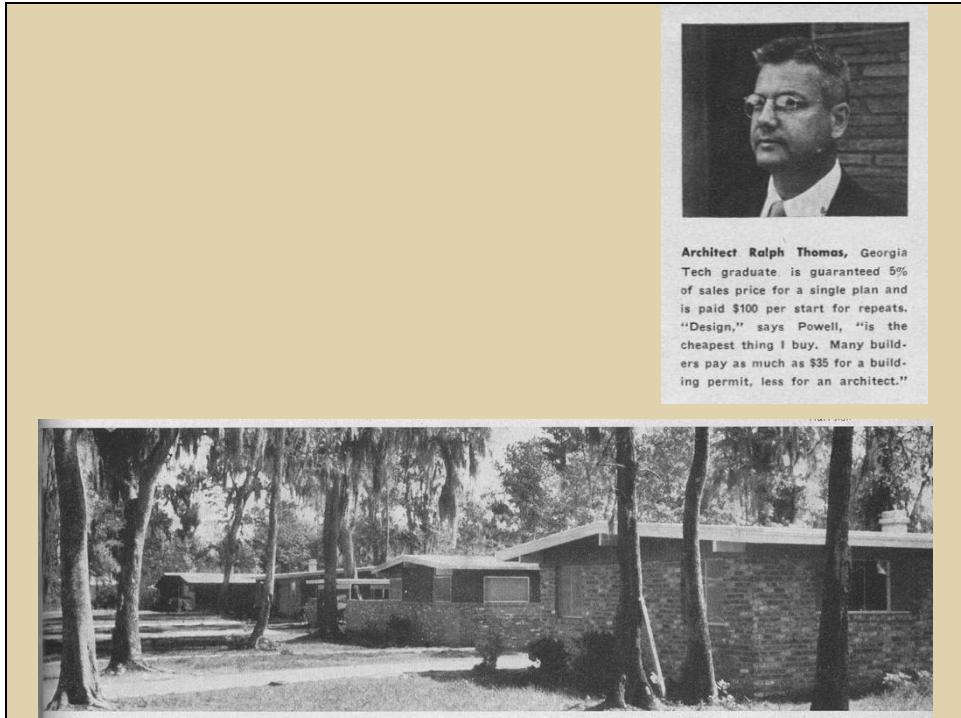
and her daughter, Jean League Newton, who earned her architectural degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Design and in 1950 designed this Contemporary-style Ranch House for her brother and sister-in-law – the first Ranch House in Georgia to be individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places;



Bernard Webb, another graduate of the Georgia Tech School of Architecture, who worked for five years for Ellamae Ellis League in Macon prior to World War II, then worked as a draftsman in a California architectural office for a short time, and then returned to Macon to open his own practice in the late 1940s, design his own Contemporary-style Ranch House in a ravine in Shirley Hills in 1950, and design another across town in 1951;



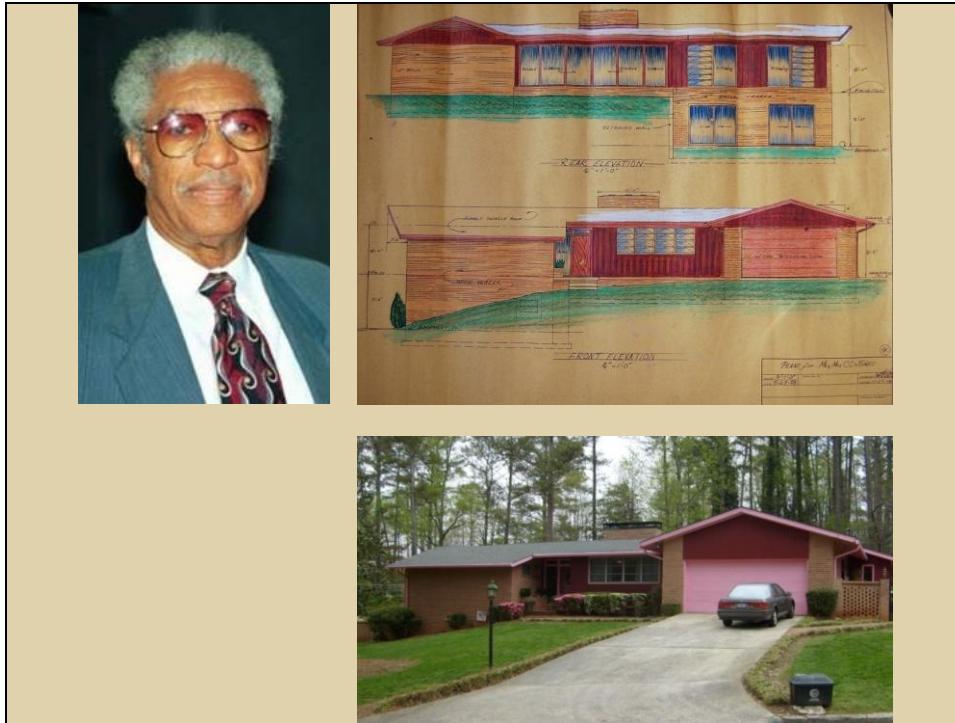
Ernest Mastin and John Summers, both Georgia Tech School of Architecture graduates, who starting in 1953 designed half a dozen Contemporary-style "model" homes for Walter Talley's Northwoods development in Doraville;



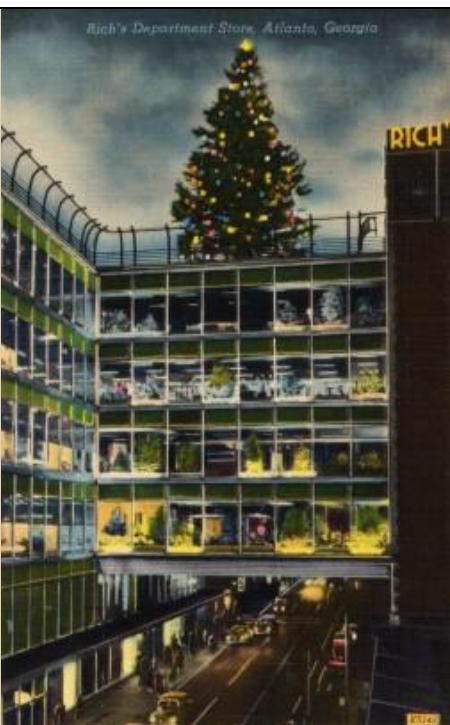
Ralph Thomas in Savannah, yet another Georgia Tech-trained architect, who in the mid-1950s introduced "Eichler" style Ranch Houses to Savannah and Georgia and who partnered with a local developer to build them;



Clement J. Ford, a 1929 Georgia Tech School of Architecture graduate, who in mid-career designed this seemingly plain, seemingly simple, *classic* “red-brick” Ranch House featured in a two-page color spread in Better Homes & Gardens 1952 issue of *Five Star Homes*;



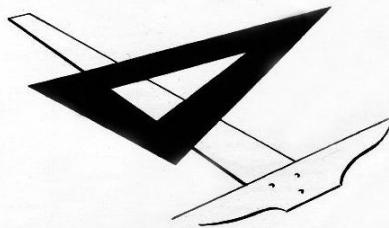
and Joseph Robinson who designed hundreds of single-family houses including many Ranch Houses for Atlanta's African-American society.



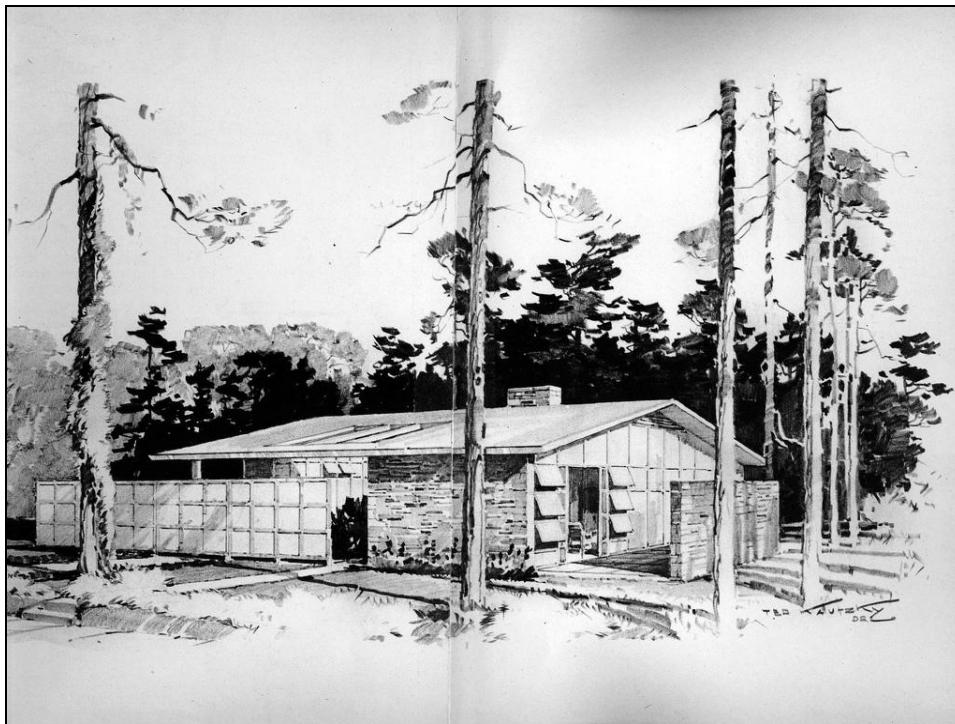
Another contributing factor to the variety of Ranch House design was a *design competition* sponsored by *Rich's Department Store* in Atlanta right after World War II.

At that time, Rich's was expanding its "Store for Homes" in anticipation of the post-war frenzy for new homes and home furnishings.

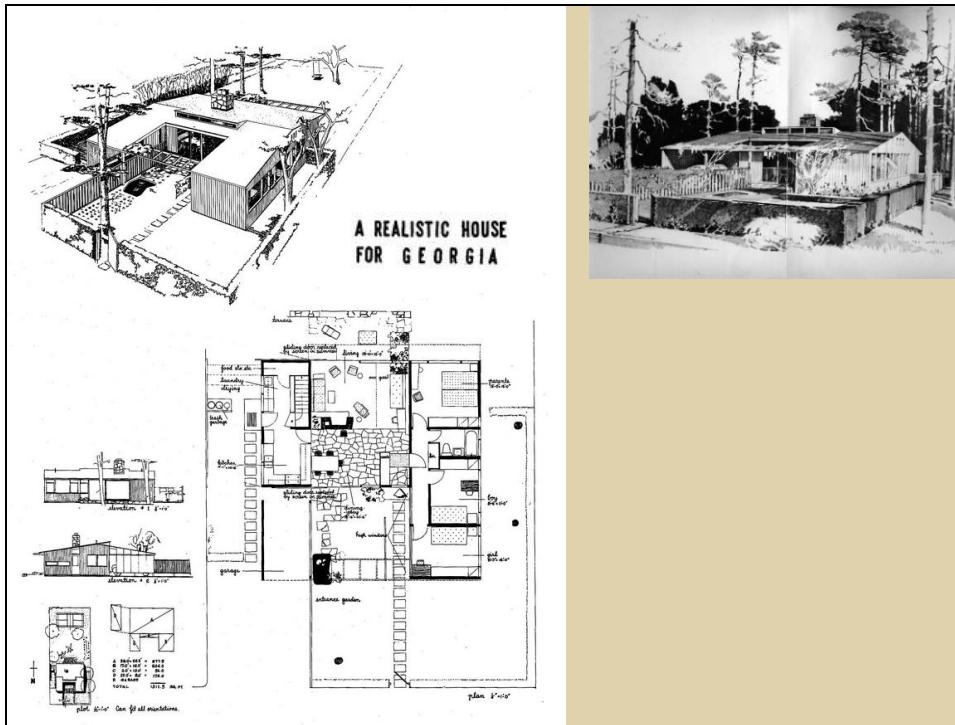
The "Georgia Builds" Architectural Competition
sponsored by
RICH'S
and "Progressive Architecture" Magazine



To promote its expanded home furnishings store, Rich's sponsored a national home design competition, in cooperation with *Progressive Architecture* magazine, to show its customers the kinds of new houses that could be furnished with its products.



This is the kind of house that was featured: the *new Ranch House*.

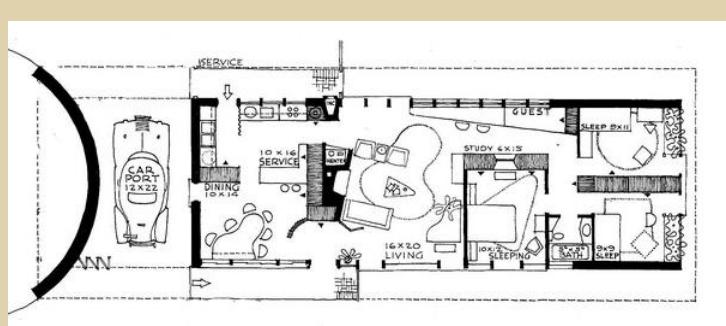


Here's another one: a rather sophisticated California-Contemporary style courtyard-type Ranch House, somewhat prosaically called "a realistic house for Georgia."

It was designed by an up-and-coming modernist architect, Hugh Stubbins, another Georgia Tech graduate who had gone on to the Harvard Graduate School of Design and was practicing in Boston.



And here's the classic "linear" Ranch House, with bedrooms at one end, carport at the other, and open family living spaces between.



But just as important -- arguably more important -- was the role played by *plan book publishers*, especially those in the Georgia market, who aimed their catalogs directly at builders, developers, and all those prospective homebuyers.

**"DESIGNS
for
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Realizing the need for a book of plans designed for the Southern States, we believe we are offering a well-balanced selection of practical, livable, economical home plans on the following pages.

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Each Additional Set 5.00

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If you wish special plans, we can design them for you. All we need is your "home-mode" sketch or plan . . . size and number of rooms, type of home, etc. The charge is reasonable and based on time and work involved.

HOME BUILDERS PLAN SERVICE
"Complete Service for the Home Builder"
22 Marietta Street Building • Atlanta 3, Georgia
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PRICE
\$1.00

One of the most important was the *Home Builders Plan Service* headquartered in Atlanta.

In 1948 -- at the very dawn of the ranch-house phenomenon in Georgia -- the company published its "Designs for Better Living."

This single plan book pretty much defined the new Ranch House for Georgia:



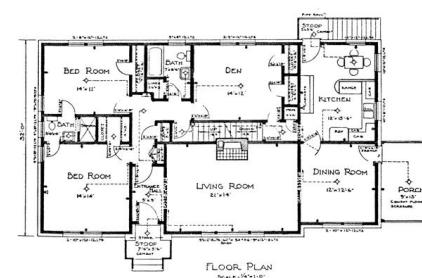
208-A

SEMI-MODERN BEAUTY

This six-room, two-bath, brick home is ideal for the average family. Large livable rooms with windows placed for good furniture arrangement. Note entrance hall, large closets and kitchen arrangement with its

attractive breakfast nook with corner windows. Hip roof with wide overhang, stone entrance and large picture window result in attractive exterior.

House Area 1782 Sq. Ft.
Porch Area 117 Sq. Ft.



HOME BUILDER'S PLAN SERVICE • 22 MARIETTA STREET BUILDING • ATLANTA 3, GA.

And *there it was*, prominently featured, a "semi-modern beauty:"

the seemingly plain, hip-roofed, red-brick Ranch House that would quickly become the "signature" Ranch House in Georgia.



207-A
RANCH TYPE — SEMI-MODERN



193-A
FOUR-ROOM RANCH TYPE HOME

With houses like these, the Home Builders Plan Service brought the western Ranch House to Georgia and the South in all its different forms ...



209-A
STRAIGHT LINES CAN BE ATTRACTIVE

This two-bedroom, and den, two-bath home is very livable as well as attractive. Note the abundance of closet space as well as the wide hallways permitting all rooms to be reached from the central

hall, except the dining room.

House Area 1350 Sq. Ft.

Porch Area 188 Sq. Ft.



HOME BUILDER'S PLAN SERVICE • 22 MARIETTA STREET BUILDING • ATLANTA 3, GA.

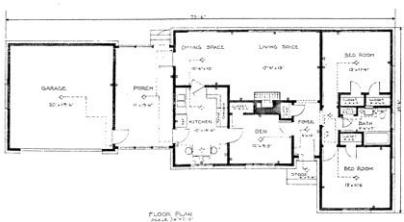
including the basic *linear* type ...

the linear type with a projecting cluster of bedrooms at one end ...

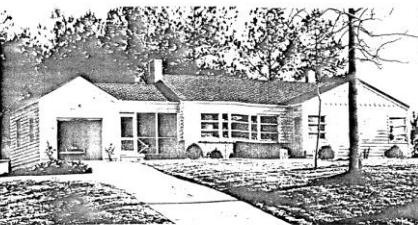
219-A
LIVING ROOM TO REAR

This home has two bedrooms, a den, large entrance hall and large living and dining area combined located to the rear of the home. Note the breakfast area, the breakfast porch and rear-car garage.

House Area 1310 sq. ft.
Porch Area 193 sq. ft.
Garage Area 473 sq. ft.

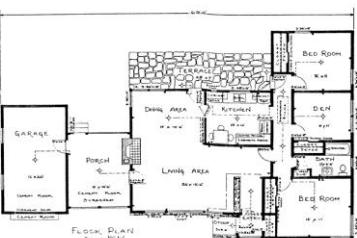


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213-A
COMING BEAUTY AND SERVICE

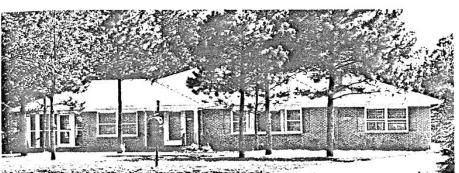
This home has many features which make it attractive and livable. An entry hall is created by use of a half partition wall with full glass and shelves where potted plants and bric-a-brac may be displayed. There are two bedrooms, a den and well-arranged kitchen.

House Area 1442 sq. ft.
Porch Area 144 sq. ft.
Garage Area 277 sq. ft.



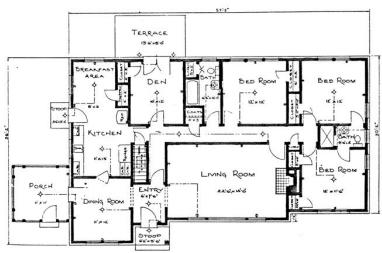
HOME BUILDER'S PLAN SERVICE • 22 MARIETTA STREET BUILDING • ATLANTA 3, GA.

modestly "rambling" Ranch Houses with their offsets or setbacks ...

189-A
SEALINE HOME

A real "Design for Better Living" has three bedrooms, den and two baths. A terrace leads off from the rear of the house. The exterior is made attractive by a low hip roof with wide overhang. All rooms in the house are accessible from the central hall.

House Area 1880 Sq. Ft.
Porch Area 121 Sq. Ft.

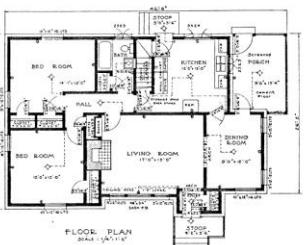


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217-A
ATTRACTIVE AND LIVABLE

A compact five-room home with versatile entrance. Living porch is to the rear of dining room for privacy. Inside stairs are provided for use of a basement. The low hip roof and wide overhanging eaves create an attractive exterior appearance.

House Area 1142 sq. ft.
Porch Area 176 sq. ft.



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216-A
DESIGNED FOR GRACIOUS LIVING

This home of two bedrooms and a den features comfort and livability built in two wings, with living room between and large front and back terraces.

House Area 1,628 sq. ft.
Terrace Area 307 sq. ft.

FLOOR PLAN
Scale 1/4" = 10'

196-A
SPACE FOR ENTERTAINING

This Atlanta home is featured by the large living and dining rooms opening together, and French doors leading to back terrace. This gives room for entertaining away from the bedroom part of the house. Also the plan puts the kitchen where it is needed, adjoining both the dining area and the terrace.

House Area 1,217 Sq. Ft.
Terrace Area 150 Sq. Ft.

HOME BUILDER'S PLAN SERVICE • 22 MARIETTA STREET BUILDING • ATLANTA 3, GA.

and courtyard and half-courtyard or L-shaped Ranch Houses.

208-A
SEMI-MODERN BEAUTY

This six-room, two-bath, brick home is ideal for the average family. Large livable rooms with windows placed for good furnace heat. Large front entrance hall, large closets and kitchen arrangement with large breakfast nook with corner windows. Hip roof with wide overhang, stone entrance and large picture windows result in attractive exterior.

House Area 1,782 Sq. Ft.
Front Area 117 Sq. Ft.

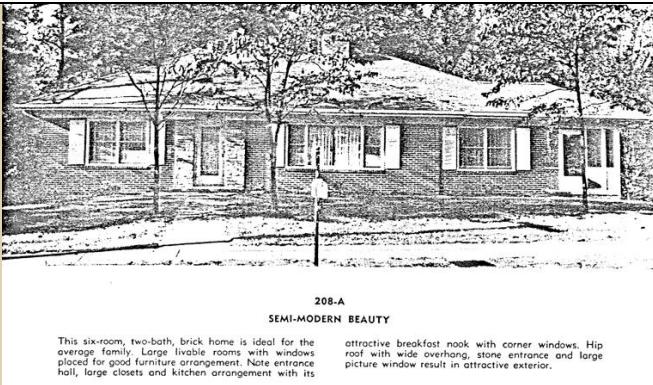
FLOOR PLAN
Scale 1/4" = 10'

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HOME BUILDER'S PLAN SERVICE

As unexciting graphically as it may have been, at least by today's standards, this 1948 plan book pretty much introduced the full range of middle-of-the-road Ranch Houses to builders and homebuyers alike in Georgia.



This one, the “semi-modern beauty,” was built in the Parkwood subdivision in DeKalb County,



In 1955 another Atlanta plan book publisher, the Small Homes Plan Service, published this catalog of new house designs including a few Split Levels along with more numerous Ranch Houses (at the present time it is unclear whether this was the company's first publication or one in a series).



No. A-511
Check These Good Living Features

Space is wonderfully well organized in this three-bedroom ranch type house. There is a big living room and commanding views, a sunroom, a large window at back makes for privacy.

House Area 1415 Sq. Ft.
 Porch Area 228 Sq. Ft.
 Car Ports and Storage Area 326 Sq. Ft.



Small Homes Plan Service 732 West Peachtree Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia

This catalog is of particular interest because it features Ranch Houses that *already had been built* by 1955.



No. A-510
Best Features for Maximum Livability

If you will study the arrangement of this excellent brick home design you will appreciate its efficient floor plan. A house that is good for the family is one that is planned with comfort in mind. There are two distinct areas, with three bedrooms and two

lathes in each of them—and on the opposite side a spacious living room, separate dining room, kitchen and porch. Ample storage space throughout. Just the home for an active family.

House Area 1430 Sq. Ft.
 Porch Area 229 Sq. Ft.
 Car Ports Area 322 Sq. Ft.



Small Homes Plan Service 732 West Peachtree Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia

These included a broad range of “middle-class” houses, from the then-popular “red-brick” Ranch House with its carport and screened porch ...



No. A-613
Here's a Modern Version You'll Like



House Area . . . 1346 Sq. Ft.
Car Port Area . . . 259 Sq. Ft.

The interesting low roof lines of this old brick and vertical siding house brand it as distinctive and modern. You see many houses of this type construction every day. This two-bedroom house has a sheltered entrance adjacent to the front door, a sunroom, and leads easily to any part of the house. The living arrangement includes a living room, dining room, kitchen with ample work space, just right for the young in heart.

Small Homes Plan Service 732 West Peachtree Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia

to the rather avant-garde Contemporary-style Ranch House ...



No. A-643
Ranch Style Home for Modest Budget



House Area . . . 1343 Sq. Ft.
Car Port Area . . . 177 Sq. Ft.

You'll be delighted with the clean-cut, efficient design of this lovely, light-colored brick ranch house, with three large bedrooms, two baths, a sunroom, a living room with top multi-paned windows, kitchen and breakfast with entrances through kitchen. There is abundant closet and storage space. This type of home is more popular today than ever, because of the warm, homelike atmosphere, insulation and excellent floor plan. Will look great on any lot.

Small Homes Plan Service 732 West Peachtree Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia

and the “plain-style” red-brick Ranch House with its clean-cut lines, incised window openings, paneled picture window, and open carport.



No. A-405
Practical Refinement With Comfort

This home will meet the needs of many families most satisfactorily because it offers a maximum of living space with a minimum of construction. Attractive brick and stone-trimmed exterior — with wide overlapping roof — an low porch rail that adds interest to the entrance. There are three bedrooms and two baths. The kitchen has large laundry. Simple lines bring beauty of both beauty and economy.

Area : 1945 Sq. Ft.
Porch Area : 230 Sq. Ft.
Car Park Area : 230 Sq. Ft.



Small Homes Plan Service 733 West Peachtree Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia

Also included were courtyard-type Ranch Houses ...



No. A-433
Colonial Charm and Distinction

Time-tested favorite of the South, this brick Colonial will give a full measure of satisfaction in its long life and maximum livability. Graceful entrance radiates hospitality. There are two bedrooms, two baths, and sun with fireplace. On the opposite side



Small Homes Plan Service 733 West Peachtree Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia

and examples of a more formal Colonial Revival-style one-story house that might be called the “Georgian” Ranch House.



No. A-642
Cozy — Compact — Convenient

A cleverly planned small home into which has been packed a surprising number of features usually found in larger homes. The design provides three bedrooms—living room and dining area—plus two baths, plus an abundance of storage space in areas adjacent kitchens. In fact this unusual plan doesn't sacrifice a single feature for comfort and economy.



Small Homes Plan Service 731 West Pasadena Street, B.M., Glendale, California

Evidencing the great variety of Ranch-House plans, this outwardly typical linear-with-cluster plan reversed the more common functional arrangement by locating the family living spaces in the “cluster” and the bedrooms in the “linear” section.



No. A-598
Clean-Cut, Comfortable Ranch Type

This catalog also featured Ranch Houses with patterned brickwork enlivening the “plain” red-brick walls ...



No. A-597
Attractively Modern, Efficient Ranch Type

and with fieldstone paneling around windows and doorways, another hallmark of the 1950s Ranch House in Georgia.



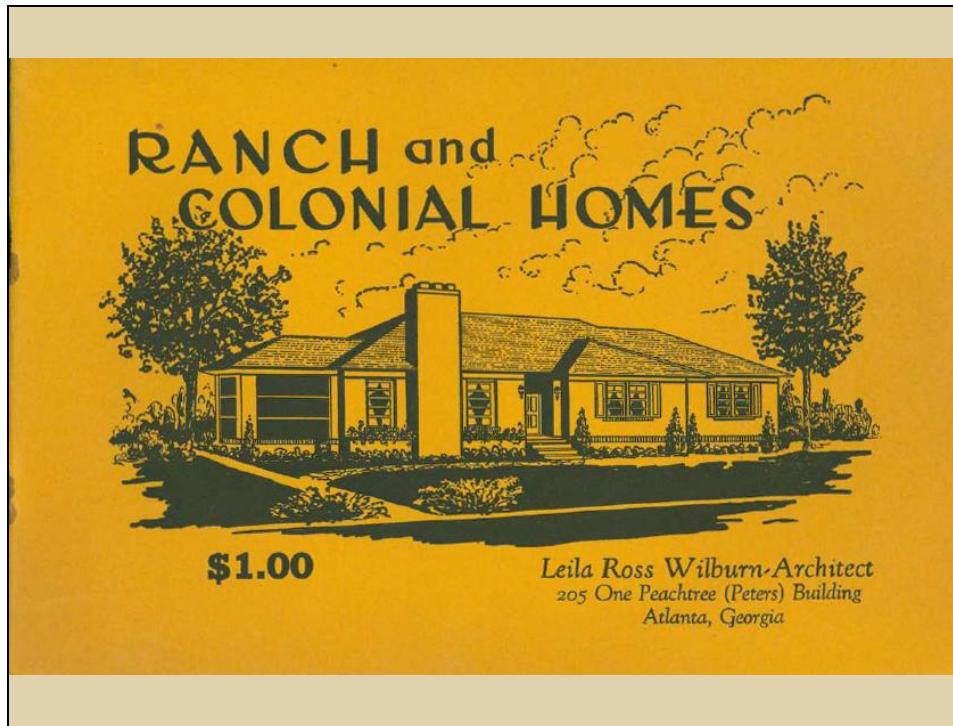
No. A-640
Attractive Little Home Planned for Economy

Of particular interest are the numerous examples of Ranch Houses with Stone Mountain granite foundations.

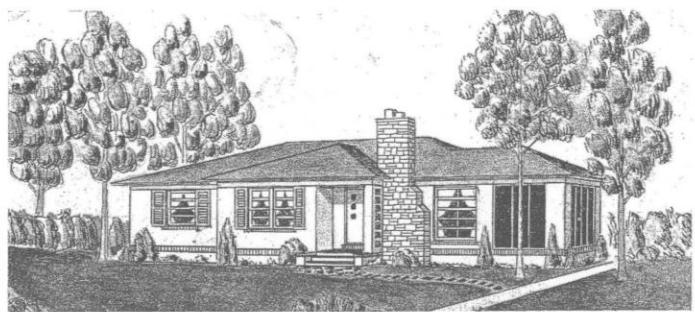


No. A-938
Personality and Charm With Efficiency

The use of this locally available stone for foundations appears to be a distinct regional phenomenon in the 1950s.



Leila Ross Wilburn, an Atlanta architect better known for her earlier Craftsman Bungalow house plans, also entered the mid-century Ranch-House plan book market.



No. 1555

Here's Help for Builders

Select the design that will best fit your needs.

The group of attractive and practical homes illustrated in this book were especially designed for the average American family. If you do not find the house to suit your desires in "Ranch and Colonial Homes," see page 56 for a list of my previous plan-books. The designs shown in one plan-book are not repeated in any other book.

Order Plans From
LEILA ROSS WILBURN, ARCHITECT

205 One Peachtree (Peters) Bldg., Atlanta, Ga.

Her plan books were aimed at *builders* (although prospective homebuyers certainly got their hands on them) ...

COMPLETE PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS
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 EXTRA SETS, PER SET 8.00
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Quite up to date is this little white ranch type, brick-veneer house with its six well-proportioned rooms. The screened porch gives access to the attached garage. The floor plan calls for large rooms with practically no space wasted in halls. The front vestibule has a convenient coat closet. Among the many noteworthy features are a fireplace, a sunny breakfast corner in the kitchen, two closets and two full baths. The den is planned so it may be used as a third bedroom. Stairs lead to attic storage and basement where heating plant, laundry and maid's toilet is located.

Order Plans From
LEILA ROSS WILBURN, ARCHITECT
 205 One Peachtree (Peters) Bldg.,
 Atlanta, Georgia



No. 2145



Like other locally produced catalogs, her plan books help show where the designs for many of the Ranch Houses in Georgia came from.

RANCH AND COLONIAL HOMES

COMPLETE PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS
(AS SHOWN OR REVERSED) - - - - - \$30.00
EXTRA SETS, PER SET - - - - - \$ 5.00
LUMBER AND MILL LIST - - - - - \$ 5.00

Brick veneer walls, covered stoop, planting box under living room picture window and wide eaves are exterior features that you will like. Note how successfully the car port and connecting porch blend with the good lines of the low-pitched roof. Bedrooms have windows on two sides, sliding door closets and direct bath connection. Eating space is left at one end of the kitchen by placing the fixtures in a U-shape. The basement takes care of the heating plant, laundry and maid's toilet. Permanent stairs from hall lead to the large storage attic.



No. 2221

53

Order Plans From
LEILA ROSS WILBURN
ARCHITECT
205 One Peachtree (Peters) Bldg.
Atlanta, Georgia



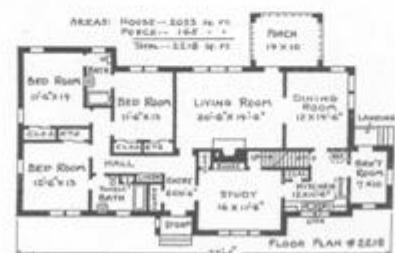
RANCH AND COLONIAL HOMES

55



No. 2218

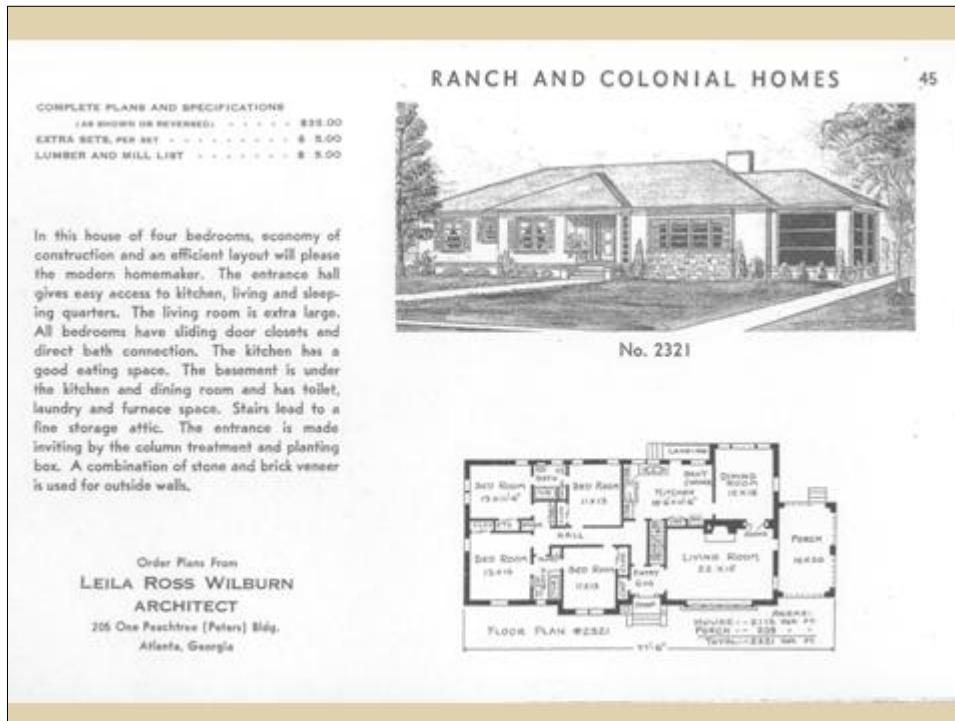
Most of her Ranch Houses were of the relatively "plain" red-brick mode.



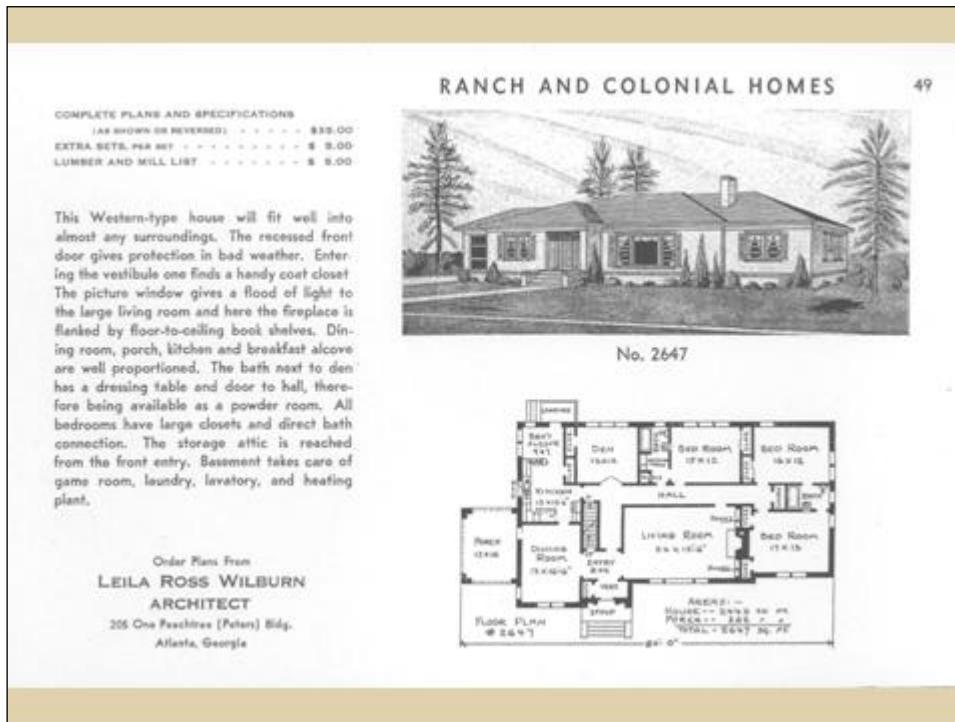
A hallmark is the cascading hipped roof which both unifies and enlivens her designs.



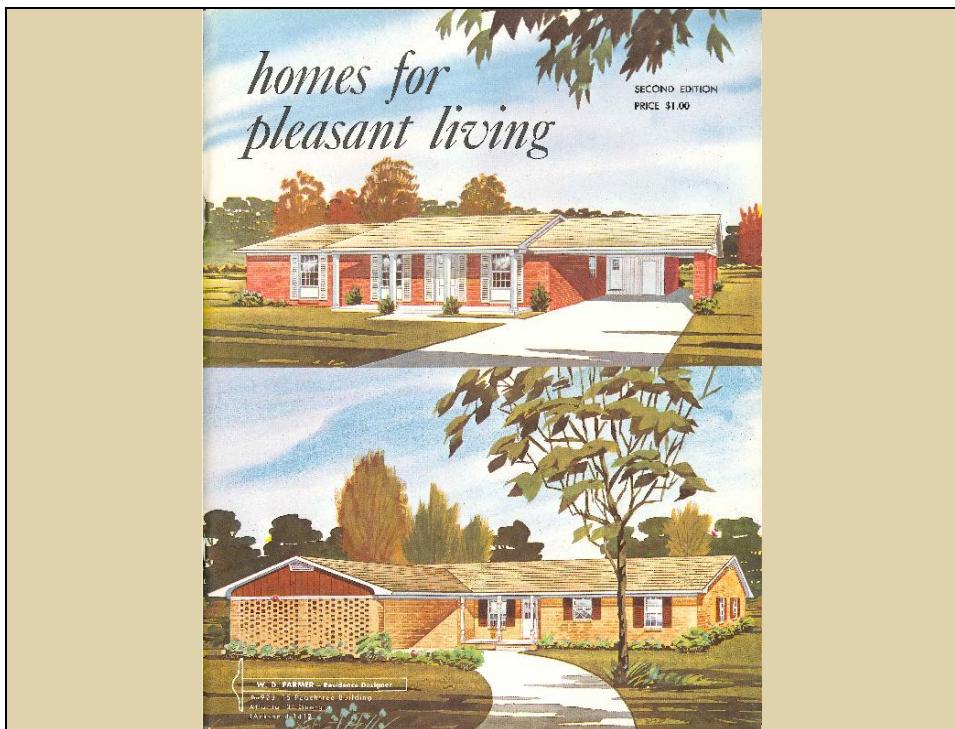
Another is a marked tendency toward more traditional "enclosed" rooms, particular the living room, dining room, and kitchen.



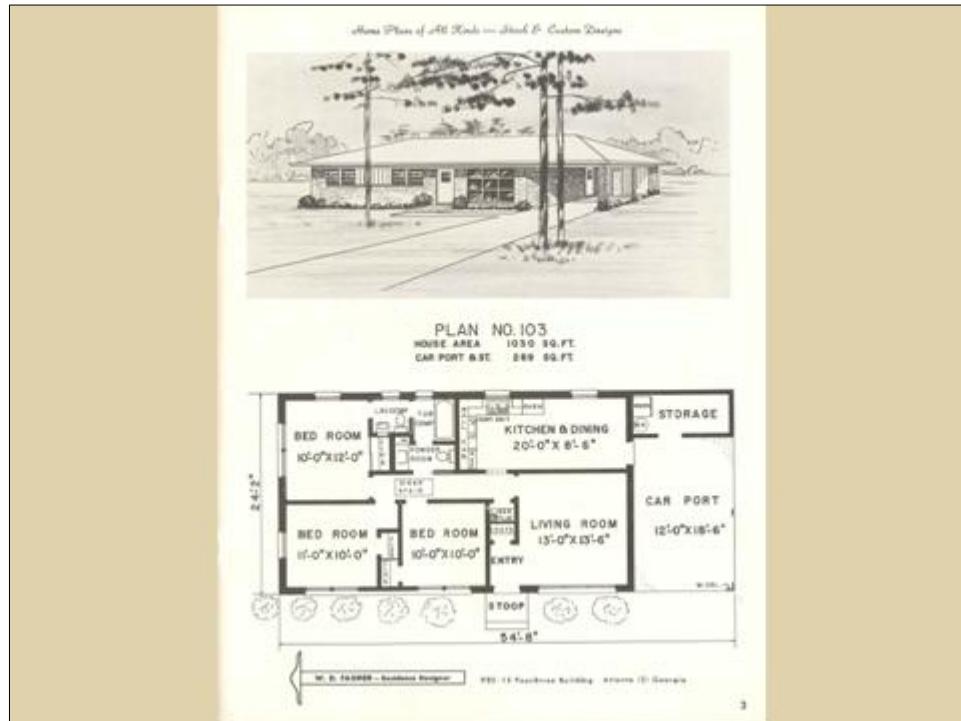
In some instances these rooms were fully enclosed.



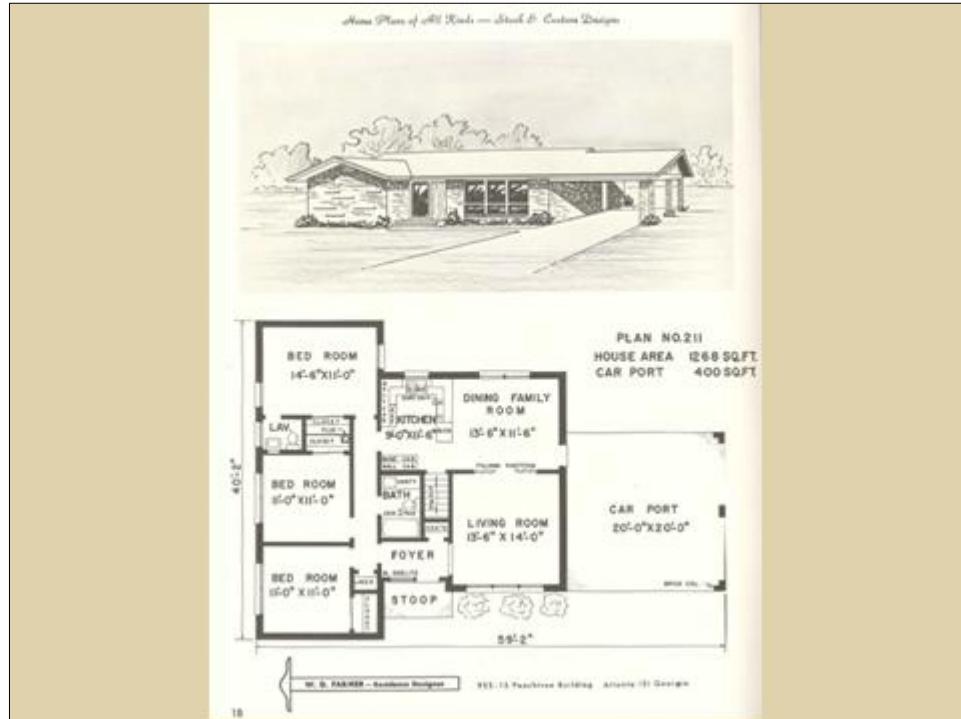
In this regard, her designs represented a strong regional preference for clearly defined interior spaces rather than the more prevalent open-space planning.



In the early 1960s, another Atlanta plan-book producer, W. D. Farmer, competed with the Home Builders Plan Service, the Small Homes Plan Service, and Leila Ross Wilburn, expanding and modernizing the local palette of Ranch Houses designs.



Farmer's designs ranged from modest "red-brick" Ranch Houses ...

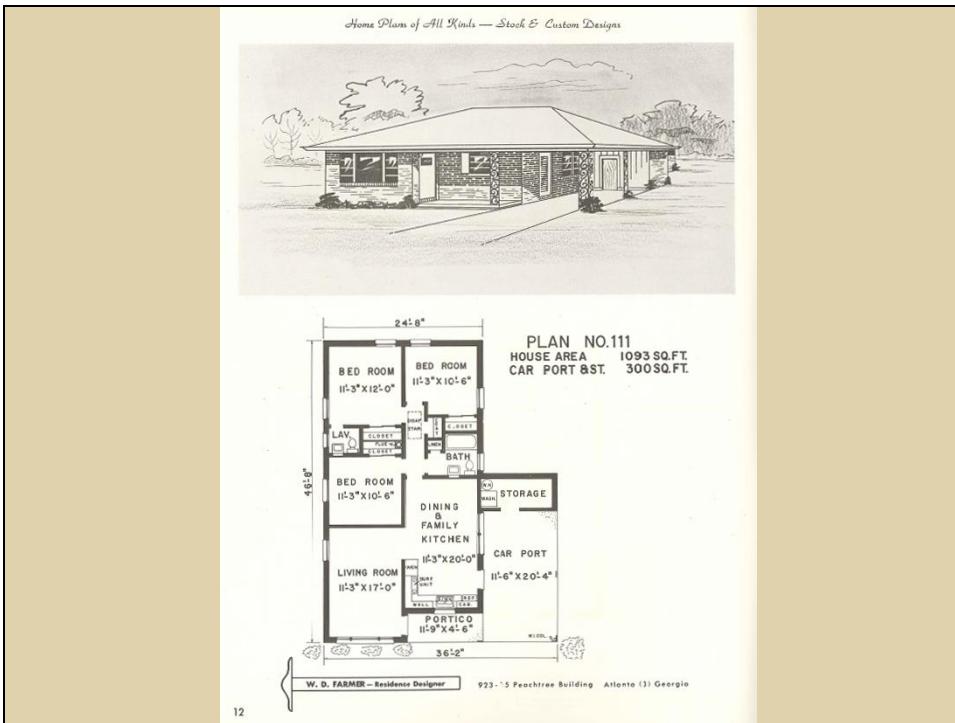


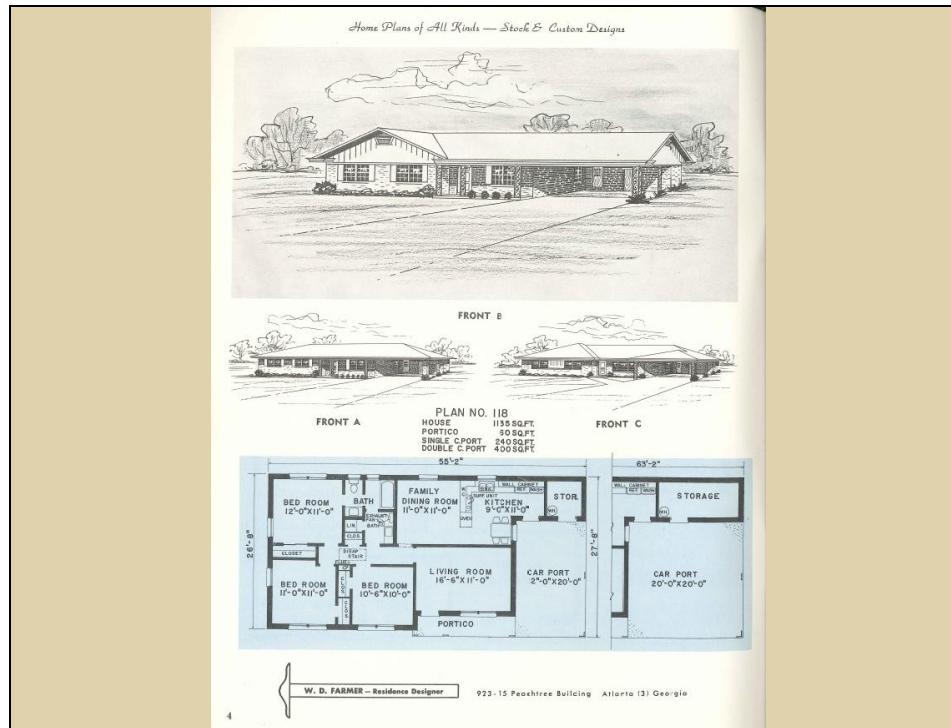
And Contemporary-style houses ...

To expansive examples of both.

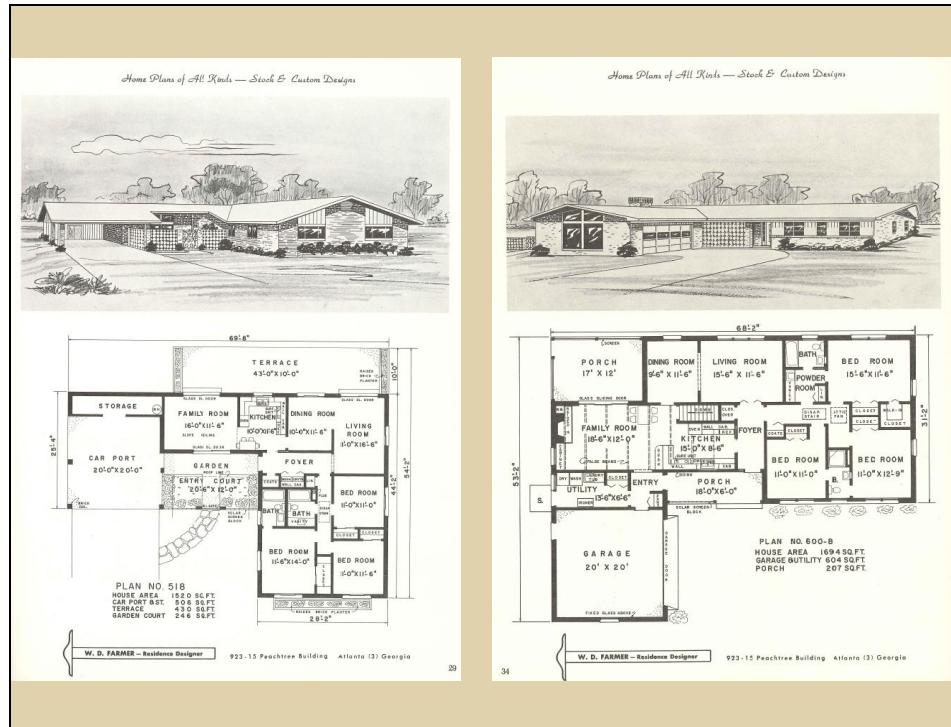


He also designed a number of transversely oriented Ranch Houses suitable for narrower building lots. But in contradistinction to other architects' transverse designs, Farmer placed the family living spaces in the front and the bedrooms to the rear.

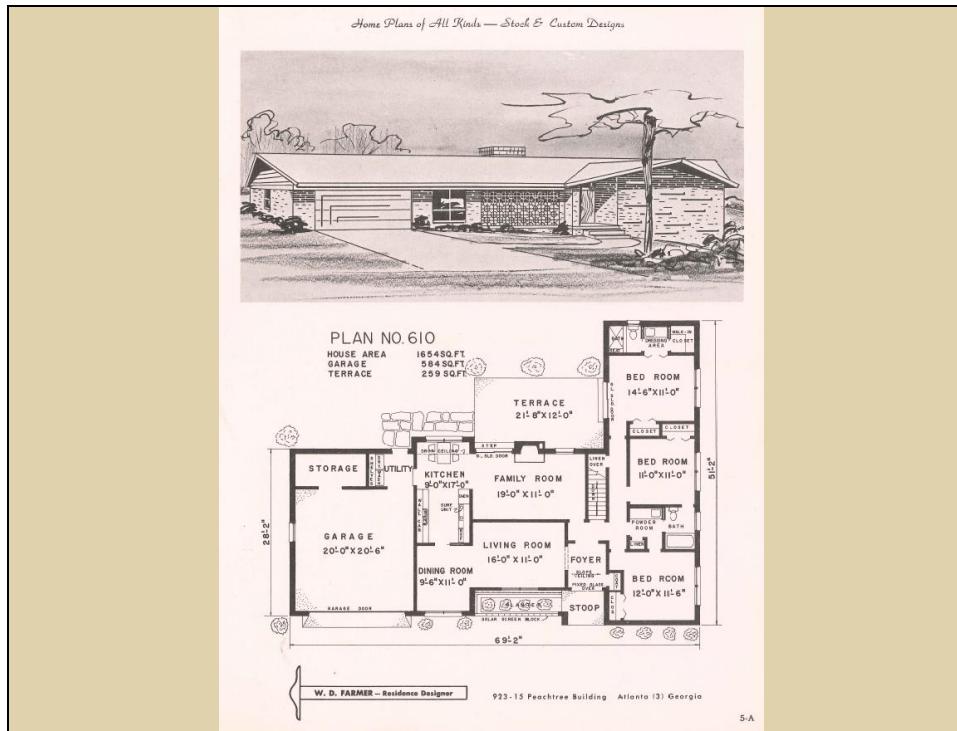




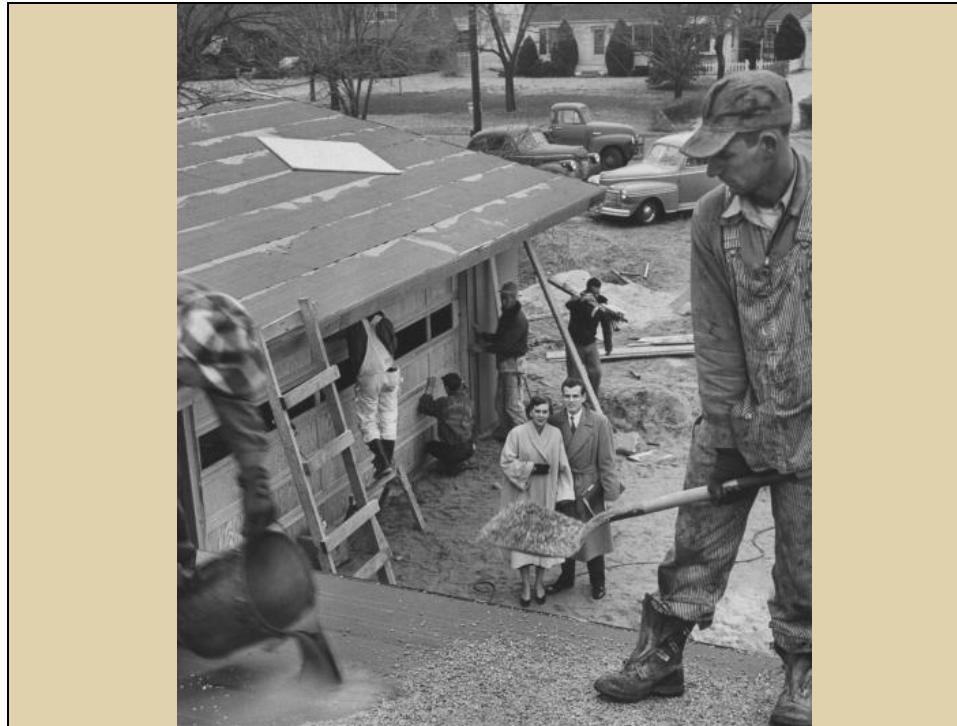
W. D. Farmer's claim to fame was focusing first on the *plans* and the *forms* of the house and then dressing them up in any number of architectural styles to suit his clients' tastes. In this example, the same floor plan is given three distinct exterior architectural treatments.



Here are two different examples of some of his largest Ranch House types -- the *true* L-shaped or half-courtyard on the *left* and the *faux* half-courtyard (with just the garage in the “L”) on the *right* -- with similar Contemporary styling.



In breaking away from the more traditional “red-brick” exteriors, Farmer also incorporated new decorative materials and features in his designs: textured brick walls, perforated concrete-block screen walls, big paneled windows, and angled gable-roof overhangs.

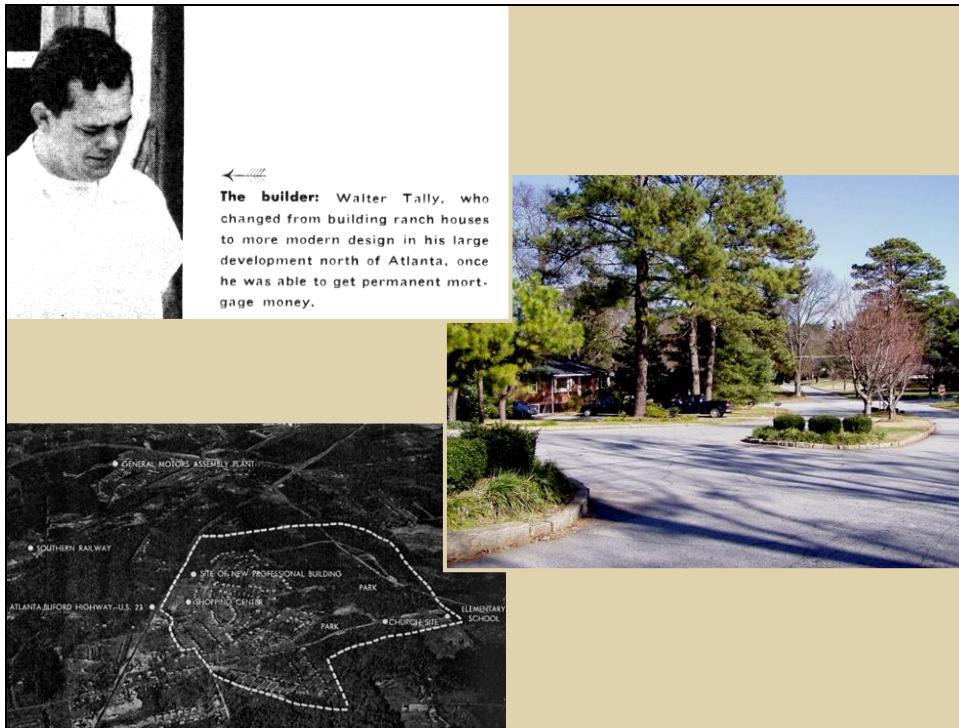


Also contributing to the proliferation and diversity of mid-century Georgia Ranch Houses were the many new *builders and developers* who supplied the market with a full range of new houses.

They fall into three main groups:



- (1) a very small group of developers who built a few full-fledged *suburban communities*;
- (2) a very large group of smaller-scale developers who built the many *subdivisions* in the growing suburban areas around the state's larger cities;
- (3) and a large group of builders who built *individual houses* in older neighborhoods as well as the new suburbs.



Chief among the few large-scale developers was *Walter Tally* of Atlanta. Anticipating the demand for new post-war suburban houses in DeKalb County, in 1950 he began developing *Northwoods*, the state's first successful mid-century planned suburban community, comprising more than 700 houses and community facilities on 250 acres of former farmland near Doraville.



Tally's initial houses were of the relatively plain, red-brick type, with designs likely taken from a local plan shop such as the Home Builders Plan Service.



In 1953, he retained two Georgia Tech-trained architects, Ernest Mastin and John Summers, to design half a dozen Contemporary-style "model" homes.

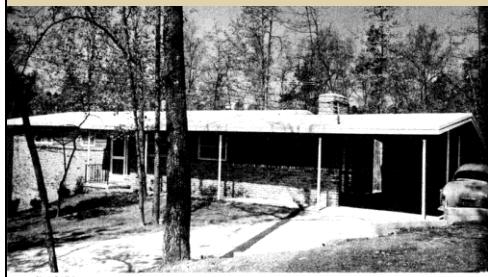


Photo: Bob McLean
This is one of six wholly different models in the Northwinds development outside of Atlanta.



Atlanta contemporary:

a lesson for lenders



«
The builder: Walter Tally, who changed from an architect to a developer, designed his large development north of Atlanta, used the new money to get permission to expand his original plan.

«
The architect: Ernest Martin (l) and John Summer, who designed six different models of houses, without resorting to superficial variations or gimmicks to cover up poor design.

«
The local mortgage builder: Captain Harrison, whose company had the courage to back Tally and Summer's plan, became the first institutional lender to finance the first new houses.

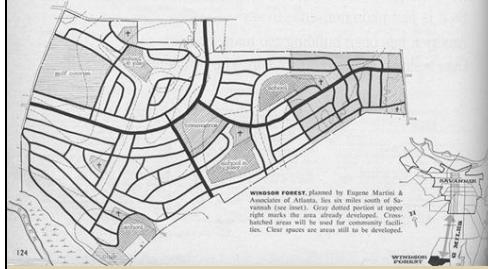


This new style of Ranch House proved so popular with Tally's local middle-class clientele that it garnered national attention.



ENTRANCE, marked by brick fence and full-grown trees, helps builders' new 1,000-acre community look well established.

JOINT VENTURE IN LAND:



how six competing builders started a new community

These six builders joined forces and licked one of today's toughest problems: the shortage of developed land. They raised \$95,000 capital and formed the Delta Land Corp. to buy and develop a 1,000-acre tract—site big enough to accommodate an independent town for 10 years to come. The project, called Windsor Forest, is located in a rural area of Georgia.

After 20 months of operation Delta's record is impressive: 100 acres of densely wooded forest turned into 357 tract houses in a year.

Even more noteworthy is the builders' own work: 150 houses built and sold in Windsor Forest. (The 150 include about 20 houses built by the other five builders as stockholders). The six stockholder builders compete with each other, as well as with the outside.

The six builders have no written joint development "so long as it is divorced from joint building," joint advertising, or other group activities.

If we did not have that detail, "says Delta vice president Clayton H. Powell, "I would enlarge the area for possible disagreement." Adds vice president Cecil H.

Mason: "The most important thing about a joint venture is a common interest. We all need developed land."

The six builders find they can do many things working together that they could not do alone:

They can build houses tomorrow at today's land prices. By buying the 1,000-acre tract in one piece, the builders bought enough raw land at today's price to last them eight to ten years. So even as they build more and more houses their raw land price will not skyrocket.

They can develop enough land at a time to cut costs. Together they build over 300 houses a year. This lets them save money on labor and other expenses on a much bigger scale than if each were developing his own lots.

They can offer a better service to the public. The city of Savannah (which operates utilities as a self-supporting business) put in a water system and a sewage system. The builders are responsible for maintaining houses a year after the first year—enough to give the city a profit.

They can create a real community. Windsor Forest is the first planned community in the area. A real community with attractions a small project could not support.

A second new suburban community was planned for Savannah in the mid-1950s by a *consortium of local builders and developers* including Clayton Powell.

To see how Delta works, turn the page



Less successful than Tally's Northwoods, it was nevertheless highly successful in introducing a new style of Ranch House to Georgia -- the "Eichler" style -- designed by local architects including Ralph Thomas.

DELTA LAND CORP. *continued*

1 BIG PARADE OF HOMES BROUGHT OUT THE CROWD
Delta got a big boost by persuading the Savannah Home Builders Assn. to hold its first Parade of Homes at Windsor Forest. Thirteen builders put up houses, drew 15,000 paid admissions. "The traffic and foot traffic," says Cecil Mason, who is president of the association, "really put the new community on the map."

These four promotion ideas

2 SIX HOMES SOLD AT GOLF CART RACE MEET
Delta is marketing a new community much more than its first few families because buyers want to be sure they'll find

3 ARCHITECT'S SHOW-PIECE HOUSE MADE LOTS OF TALK
This good-looking house was designed by William P. Berger, one of Savannah's prominent architects. Delta got

4 COMMUNITY POOL ADDS EXTRA VALUE TO CLINCH SALES
Delta built this \$40,000 swimming pool and bath house and gave it to the country club "to dramatize what Windsor Forest has that more older and smaller communities don't have." Later the club will be given a 9-hole golf course. Savannah Country Day School is building on site next to Windsor Forest.

Here are the financial details to show you how Delta operates

The company was capitalized at \$95,000 to acquire and develop the land, negotiate an addition to the city of Savannah, include a golf club and a tennis center.

Negotiations for the 1,000-acre site that is now Windsor Forest began in 1953. The city wanted \$350,000. But Delta also wanted a low down payment and a big loan. After some negotiations, the deal was worked out, the purchase price came to \$370,000 and the down payment to \$100,000.

For the first year, Delta's capital was \$437,000 on-year mortgage with interest at 3%, payable quarterly. The company paid off the principal and interest of principal every year, beginning two years from the date of

purchase, Nov. 1, 1955. Under the terms of the sales contract Delta also agreed to pay off \$800 per acre for any land developed in excess of 100 acres per year.

After making the \$80,000 down payment, Delta had only \$337,000 left for basic development costs for the first 100 acres were estimated at \$522,000!

Here's how the \$522,000 development cost figure was arrived at:

Land	\$100,000
Water and sewage systems	100,000
Swimming pool and bath house	40,000
Community center	10,000
Reserve fund	10,000
Interest on \$100,000	10,000
Interest on \$337,000	10,000
Interest on \$437,000	10,000
Interest on \$522,000	10,000
Total development cost for first 100 acres	\$522,000

This large cash requirement was obviously beyond normal borrowing capacity and called for financial ingenuity if Delta was to get off the ground.

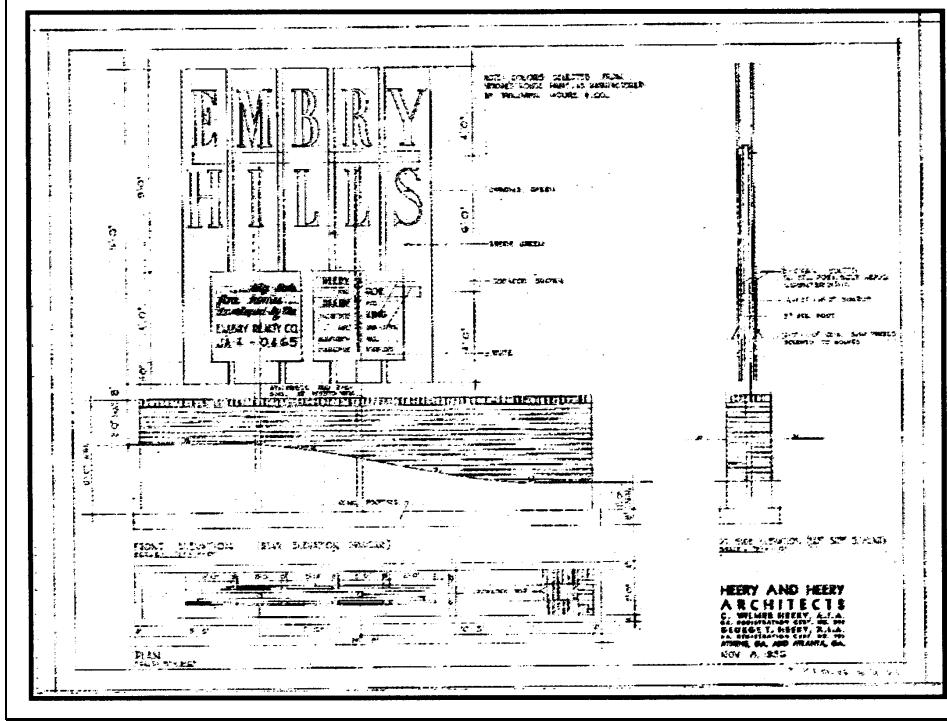
Delta met the occasion, quickly raised \$200,000 by selling raw lots at finished-lot prices to its site builder shareholders.

Each shareholder bought lots in proportion to the amount of stock he held: a \$20,000 investor in Delta took 25 lots, a smaller shareholder, say, \$5,000 in stock, took ten lots. This maneuver brought in \$100,000 in cash back to Delta, but that was still a long way short of the cost of the first 100 acres.

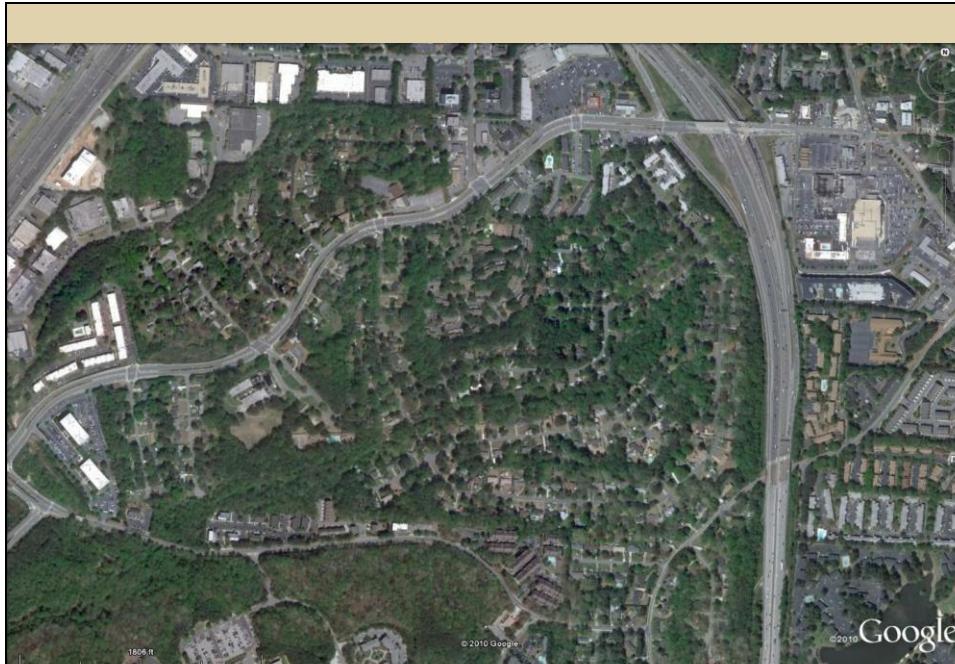
Delta's next step was to reduce the amount of cash required. It had to do this because the city of Savannah was not willing to give the city a profit from the monthly water and sewage systems. The city wanted to be paid for the cash it was giving up.

Even after the water and sewage systems were taken over, Delta was still \$109,000 short of the cash needed for its first two years' development work.

To see Windsor Forest houses, turn the page



A slightly later planned suburban community was Embry Hills in northern DeKalb County. Development was begun in the mid-1950s by the Embry Realty Company, owned by the three Embry brothers, Jack, James, and Neal.



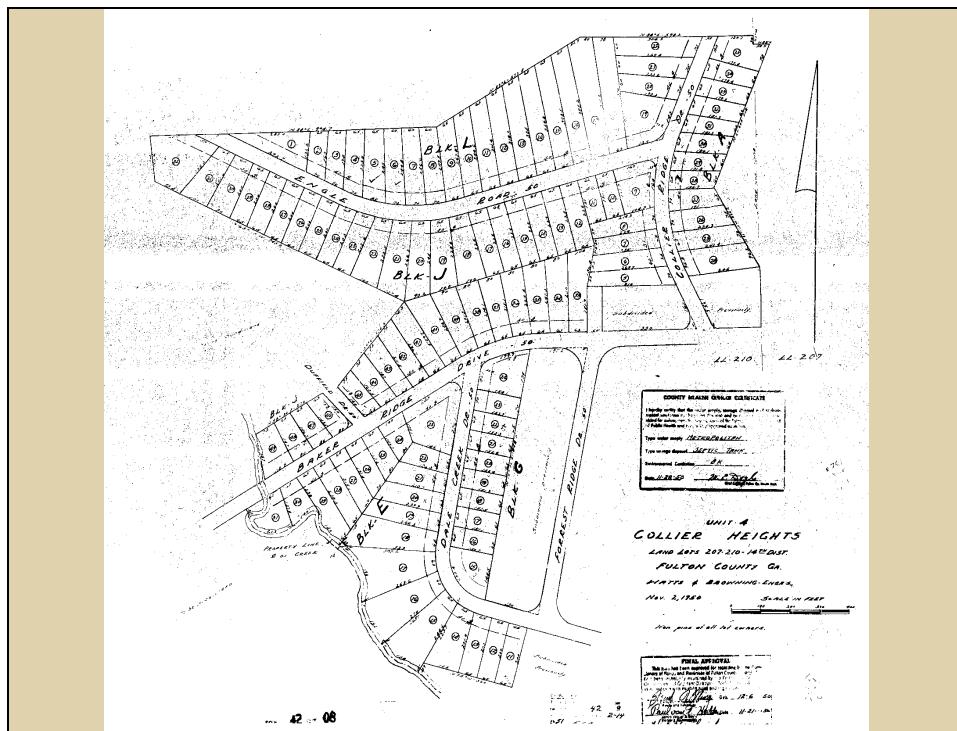
Encompassing some 600 acres of former farmland, the development eventually included nearly 1,000 houses, several apartment complexes, retail stores, and offices.



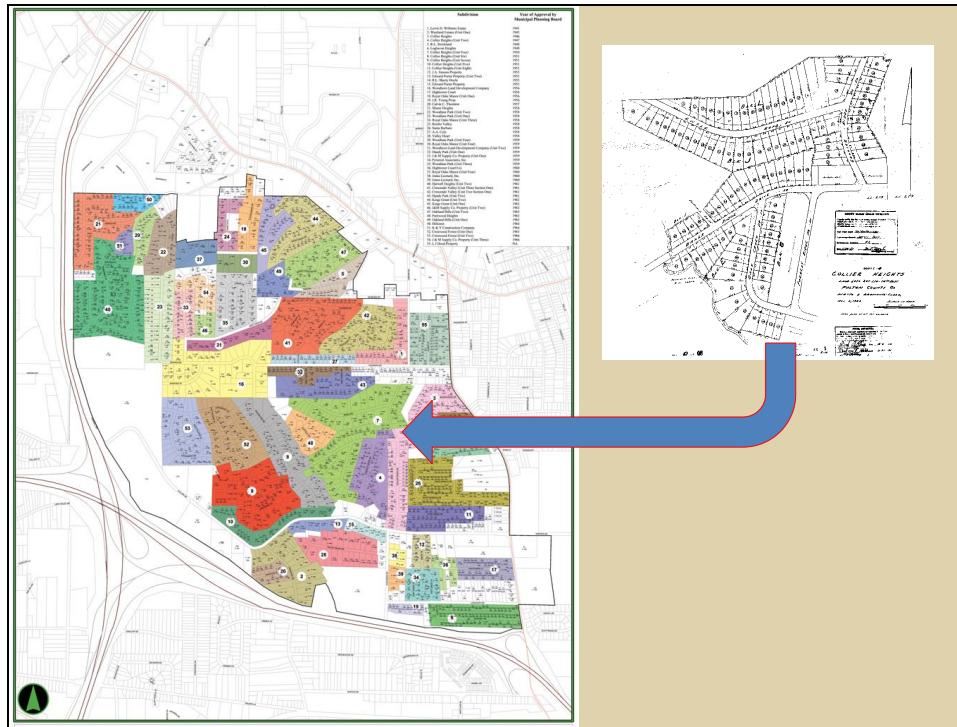
Many of the new houses were Ranch Houses, most of the "signature" red-brick kind.



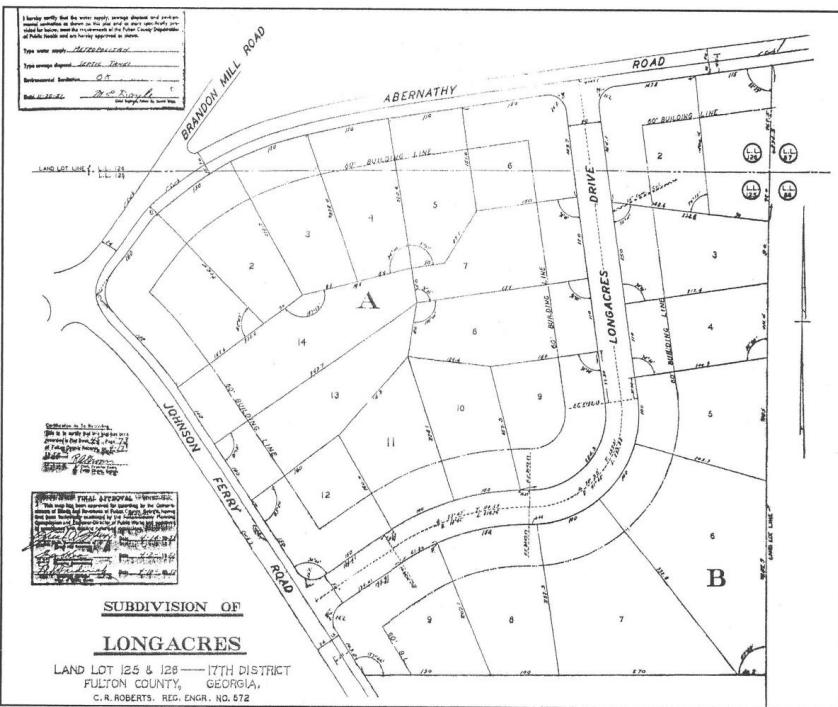
Indeed, in the mid- to late-1950s, nine out of every ten new houses in Embry Hills were Ranch Houses.



Other large suburban developments were developed in a piecemeal manner, over time, by a single developer, as time, money, and the market permitted. For example, this plat map is for Section 4 of the Collier Heights subdivision which eventually comprised eight separate but interrelated subdivisions ...



all part of a much larger constellation of subdivisions comprising the Collier Heights suburb on the west side of Atlanta.



The plat for this subdivision, Long Acres in Sandy Springs north of Atlanta, represents the more typical post-war subdivision. It was developed starting in 1952 by the Roy D. Warren Company. It was one of the first subdivisions in Sandy Spring.



The company bought former farmland at the corner of a historic Land Lot, subdivided the property into some two dozen building lots, and installed basic infrastructure including streets and drainage. The company then sold the individual lots to a builder, Q. S. King Contracting Company, which built houses for sale on speculation.

72



The houses were the new, seemingly plain, immensely popular "red-brick" Ranch Houses, very much like those introduced to Georgia just a few years earlier by the Home Builders Plan Service.

73



This type of small-scale piecemeal development, occurring over and over again, eventually built out much of the sprawling post-war suburbs around not just Atlanta but all of Georgia's larger cities.



Photos: (above) Wray Studio; (others) Gabriel Bensus

Expensive land, near town and golf course (upper right), dictated narrow 65' x 230' lots that cost up to \$3,000 including improvements. But architects achieved privacy by proper siting and fencing, and variety by alternating, reversing and turning the three plans. Wall design permitted alternation of wood siding with five different types of brick. *Foreground: a street of older houses.*

Complementing the likes of Warren's work were *Thomas Northcutt and Raymond Sanders* who developed the equally small-scale Golf View subdivision in northwest Atlanta starting in 1950.

Comprised of only 16 lots, the subdivision was distinguished by its architect-designed houses.



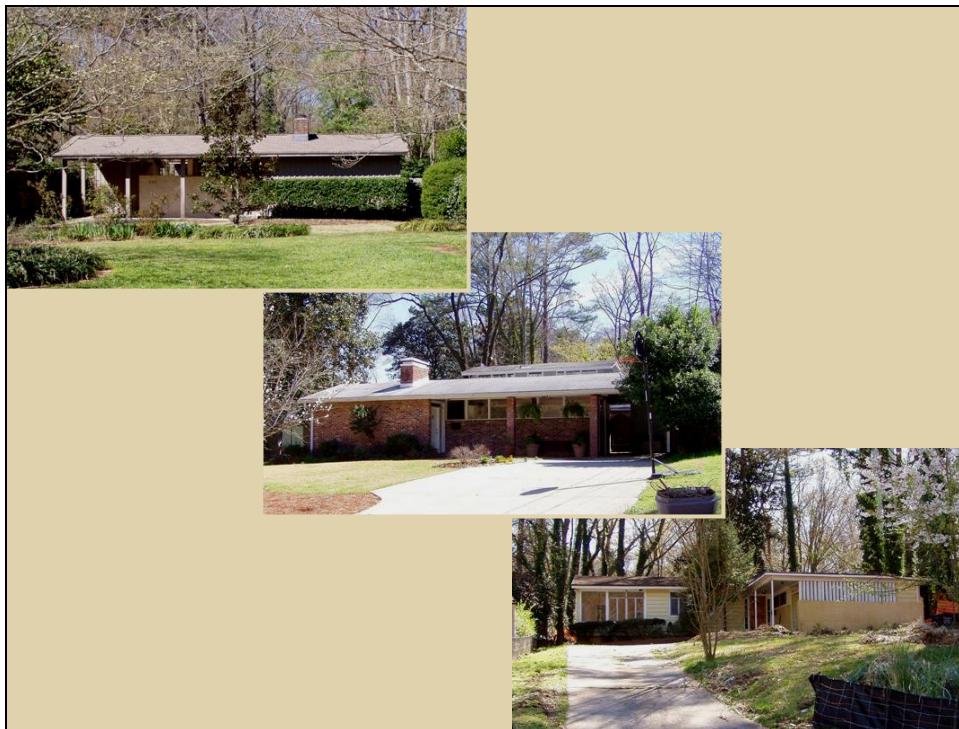
This is adaptable to flat or sloping sites. Single, sloping roof line of house on right gives it large and lower enclosed appearance.



One-story grouping of end sections, with side colonnade section facing above and below sections, creates 12' seven' nine' of modern plan.



Northcutt recruited Georgia Tech-trained architects William "Bill" Finch and Miller Barnes to design a suite of the new California Contemporary-style Ranch Houses.



These houses were among the earliest examples of this new style in Georgia ...

Photo by Gabriel R.

Atlanta goes modern

—without going overboard. Architects Finch & Barnes gave their builders clean design, efficient techniques and just a hint of tradition. Result: a "new" market in the old South

GOLF VIEW SUBDIVISION
LOCATION: Atlanta,
FINCH & BARNES, architect
THOMAS NORTHCUTT & RAYMOND SANDERS, builders
PRICES: \$21,000-\$23,000

and were recognized as such in the national architectural press.



Representing the other end of the spectrum of builders in Georgia – small-scale builders who built individual Ranch Houses in a particular community -- are *Billy Barr* and *Geraldine Berry*.



Geraldine Berry began building houses in Savannah in the 1940s and in the 1950s built some of the earliest local Ranch Houses.

Her houses, locally called "Berry Built" houses, were held in high esteem by their owners.



Billy Barr was a Georgia Tech-trained industrial designer who, after World War II, went into the homebuilding business in Cedartown, where he built a number of new Ranch Houses on the outskirts of established neighborhoods.

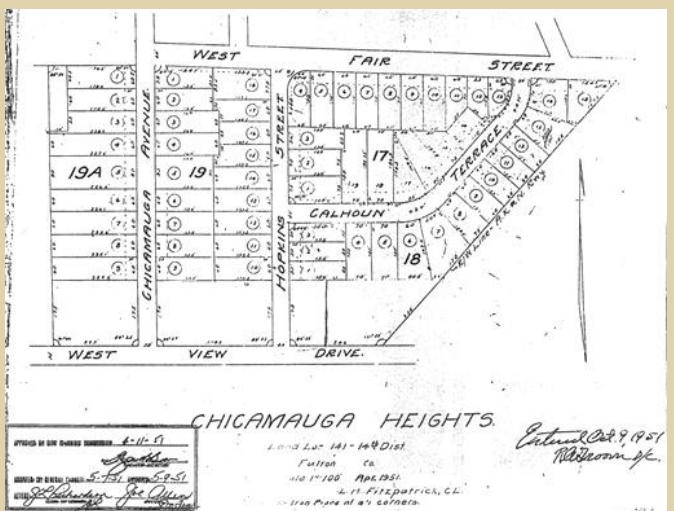


A different approach to building houses was taken by the post-war Knox Company of Thomson, Georgia, which designed and prefabricated Contemporary-style Ranch Houses and shipped them for erection anywhere in the state.

homes of imagination...  by Knox



Neighborhoods on the west side of Atlanta provided unique opportunities for African-American developers and builders in the post-war period, and they introduced the Ranch House to African-American homebuyers.



John C. Calhoun, an insurance company executive and real-estate sales person, went into the residential development business in 1951 with his Chicamauga Heights subdivision.



The new Ranch House was his choice for this exclusive new African-American neighborhood.



Q. V. WILLIAMSON

Crescendo Valley Is Ninth Williamson & Company Subdivision Since 1955

With the announcement of its new Crescendo Valley Subdivision, the Williamson and Company real estate firm bring to a total of 9 the subdivisions it has developed or sponsored since 1955. It was that year that the company served as promoters and exclusive agents for the history-making Crestwood Forest Subdivision.

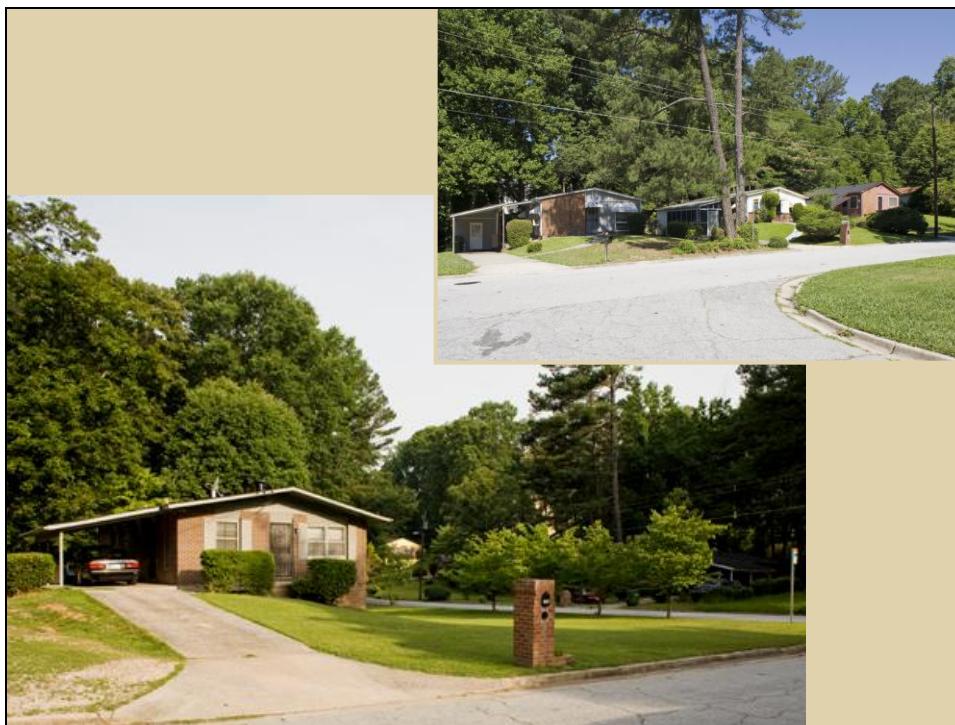
The Crescendo Valley homes are being offered to veterans on a No Down Payment, 100 percent loan basis. Non-veterans may take advantage of low down payments with FHA financing.

The 117 homes in the new community will bring to over 700 the number of houses handled by the crack sales force of Williamson and Company since 1955. These salesmen sold over two and a half million dollars worth of property last year. Of the 117 houses to be erected in the Crescendo Valley Community, 42 have already been sold and were under construction before any advertising had been done.

In 1954, Q. V. Williamson, president of the firm, a group of Atlanta business men founded the National Development Company. Land was purchased in northwest Atlanta beyond the point of any previous Negro residential penetration. It was on this land that the Crestwood Forest homes were built.

Since that time the subdivisions promoted and sponsored by Williamson & Company have included Dahl Creek Drive, 34 houses; Poole Creek, 101; Santa Barbara, 92; Renfro Valley, 28; Larchwood, 134; Miami Heights, 53; Fair Lane Hts., 156; and now Crescendo Valley, 117.

Quentin V. Williamson, head of Williamson and Company real estate, oversaw the development of several subdivisions in the exclusive Collier Heights neighborhood in Atlanta ...



also featuring the new Ranch Houses.

'Chief' Aiken Shows Nation How It's Done

AS FAR as the housing crisis is concerned, Atlanta Negroes find themselves in a happy situation, principally because of the bustling energy and organizational ability of its one-man housing boom, Walter "Chief" Aiken.

"Chief," a Hampton graduate, and native of Delaware, who made a national reputation for himself as a football coach, before devoting his talents to the contracting business, is recognized today as the nation's greatest Negro builder of small homes. He is Georgia's home building champ, regardless of color.

Not only has he built more than 3,000 small homes in the last seven years, but he has made them accessible to those most in need of them by financing the purchase of them himself under a plan whereby only a small down payment is re-

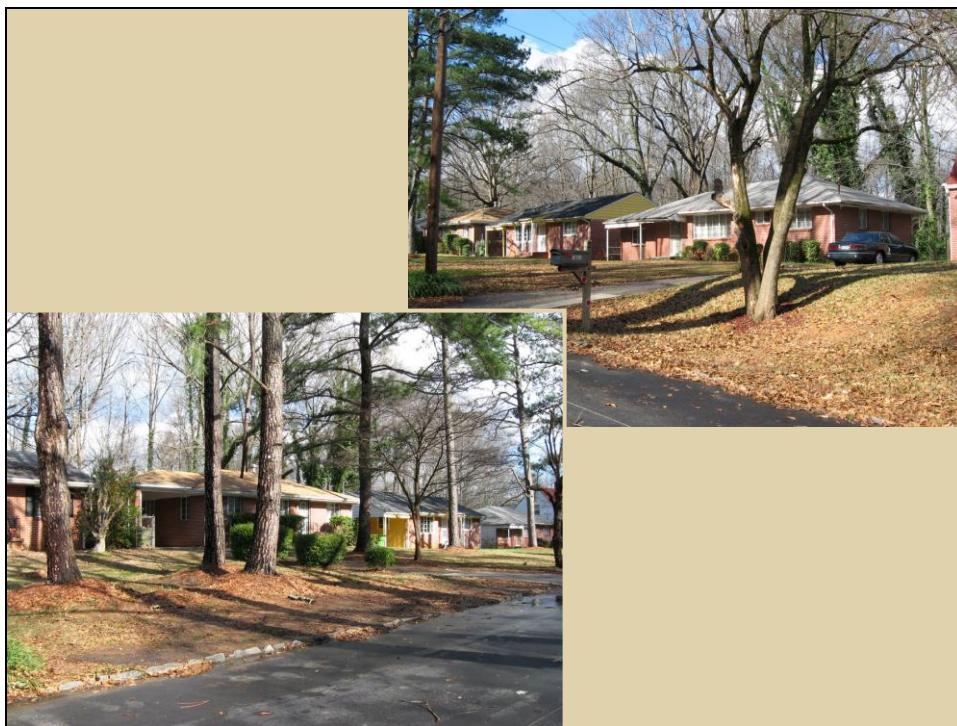


"CHIEF" AIKEN

quired. This is possible because of two reasons: 1.—Mr. Aiken does his construction on a mass production basis that is a cross between prefabricated and custom construction; 2.—As a matter of business principle, he is the Woolworth of the housing, earning a small per unit profit. Unique not only for the South, but for the country as a whole, is his organization. He hires white and colored workers indiscriminately on a strict ability basis. His construction firm is a living example of the workability of the fair employment practices even in

Walter Aiken, Atlanta's most prolific mid-century builder, built more than 3,000 single-family houses on the west side of the city from the 1920s into the 1960s.

88



Starting in the 1950s, he specialized in building Ranch Houses.

89



Lots of Ranch Houses

Warren Whatley Sr., 92, knew and built history

By RICK BADIE
rbadie@ajc.com

Warren Whatley Sr. was a master carpenter and builder who operated Whatley Bros. Construction with two siblings, part of a crew that helped build the aircraft for the Tuskegee Army Flying School, a decorated World War II Army veteran.

With his family and friends, Mr. Whatley was also a "griot," the African word for a chronicler of family and community history.

"Daddy remembered all the stuff from the days of segregation," said his son, Warren Whatley Jr. of Atlanta. "He could tell stories about" the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Dr. Martin Niemöller. He had a great memory and could remember detail. We did a video of him" giving an honorary "when he was in his 80s."

Warren Settles Whatley, Sr., 92, of Atlanta, died Thursday morning at Emory-Clayton Long Hospital. The funeral is 11 a.m. today at Providence Missionary Baptist Church. Murray Brothers Funeral Home is handling arrangements.

Mr. Whatley learned carpentry and construction skills from his father. He used those skills to help pay his way through Morehouse State University and Morehouse College. He received an athletic scholarship to play football for those schools.

As World War II unfolded, Mr. Whatley became a carpenter for the military, working on defense projects throughout the South. Relatives say he helped construct the Tuskegee Army Flying School, which was built by the Tuskegee Airmen in Alabama, the country's first



Warren Whatley Sr. was among the first African-American contractors to build commercial buildings in metro Atlanta. Family photo



Many of the Ranch Houses in all these new subdivisions were actually *built* by Warren Whatley, Sr. Right after World War II, Whatley and his brothers founded a construction company, Whatley Bros. Construction, that specialized in the construction of houses for black and white developers alike.



Let's look now at some of the *distinctive architectural characteristics* of Georgia's Ranch Houses.



Things that might make Georgia's Ranch Houses "Georgia," so to speak, or at least "Southern."



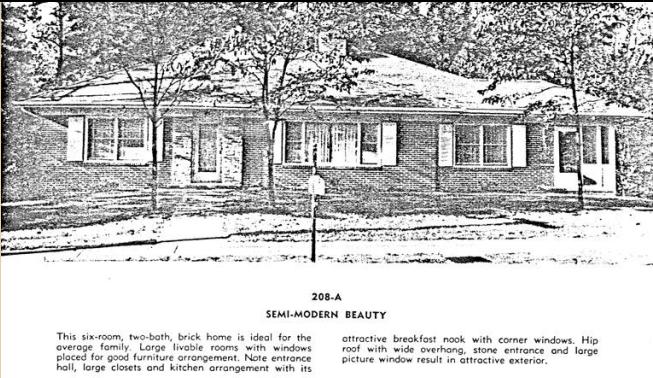
"*Distinctive*" if not necessarily "*unique*."



A good place to start is so obvious that it is often overlooked: *red brick*.



Red-brick Ranch Houses first appeared in numbers in 1947 -- right at the beginning of the post-WWII ranch-house boom -- and then quickly became the “signature” Ranch House in Georgia.



As we have seen, they were featured in the 1948 Home Builders Plan Service plan book.

That same year, the *Atlanta Journal* noted that "a large percentage [of new homebuyers in Georgia] prefer a *rambling type* brick house."



Five Star Home No. 2103

Five Star Home No. 2103 is a compromise—and a happy one. Avoiding the triteness of some Traditional as well as the starkness of some Modern, it emerges as a house with a fresh, pleasing style of its own. This is a good house, though, in more than looks alone. This is, first, an *affordable* house. Basementless except for one small room to house furnace and water heater, its laundry and most of its storage areas are upstairs—where they belong. This is a *comfortable* house. Awnings windows all around mean you don't have to sprint around closing them every time it rains. This is a *friendly* house. The pictures at right attest to that, as do the roomy parking court, the picture-windowed dining room, the shaded terrace behind. Designed by Architect Clement J. Ford.

2103 five star plan

1	Stories
74 x 37	Overall width, depth
1	Rooms
2	Bathrooms
1	Bedrooms
1	Basement

65

Red-brick Ranch Houses in Georgia gained national attention in 1952 when *Better Homes & Gardens* magazine featured a red-brick Ranch House designed by Atlanta architect Clement J. Ford.

This seemingly simple house was heralded as the epitome of what a middle-class Ranch House should be:

Five Star Home No. 2103

Five Star Home No. 2103 is a compromise—and a happy one. Avoiding the triteness of some Traditional as well as the starkness of some Modern, it emerges as a house with a fresh, pleasing style of its own. This is a good house, though, in more than looks alone. This is, first, an *affordable* house. Basementless except for one small room to house furnace and water heater, its laundry and most of its storage areas are upstairs—where they belong. This is a *comfortable* house. Awnings windows all around mean you don't have to sprint around closing them every time it rains. This is a *friendly* house. The pictures at right attest to that, as do the roomy parking court, the picture-windowed dining room, the shaded terrace behind. Designed by Architect Clement J. Ford.

2103 five star plan

1	Stories
74 x 37	Overall width, depth
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1	Bedrooms
1	Basement

66

In the editors' opinion, it "avoided the triteness of the Traditional as well as the starkness of the Modern" and presented a "fresh pleasing style of its own."

This pretty much legitimized the seemingly plain red-brick Ranch House as the Southeast's answer to the Southwestern Ranch House!

**YOUR BEST
BUY IS
A NEW *brick*
HOME**

See Your Builder Today

SPONSORED BY MEMBERS OF THE
STRUCTURAL CLAY PRODUCTS INSTITUTE

Why red brick, you might ask?

After World War II, brick was aggressively promoted by the brick industry as a durable, maintenance-free, and relatively inexpensive building material ...

and Georgia had lots of red clay being made into bricks at brickyards in Macon and elsewhere.



So in a very real sense, the red-brick Ranch House that we're all so familiar with is an unheralded *indigenous* structure!

100



Other regional characteristics include modern *awning or jalousie windows* that provided for ventilation during rainy weather and summer thunderstorms ...

101



and *picture windows flanked by with operable sash*, again for ventilation during warm weather.

102



Wide overhanging eaves, another Ranch House hallmark, provide shade from summer sun and protection from rain.

103



This picture shows how the wide eaves work in conjunction with the new awning windows to provide for shade, ventilation, and protection from the rain.

104



A distinctive detail on many early Georgia Ranch Houses is the use of *stonemasonry contrasting with the red brick* around the front doorway.

105



This detail shows up in some of the earliest Ranch Houses in the state ...

106



and persists through the 1950s, where it sometimes is integrated with planters and terraces.

107



This same stone detail can often be found around front picture windows as well.

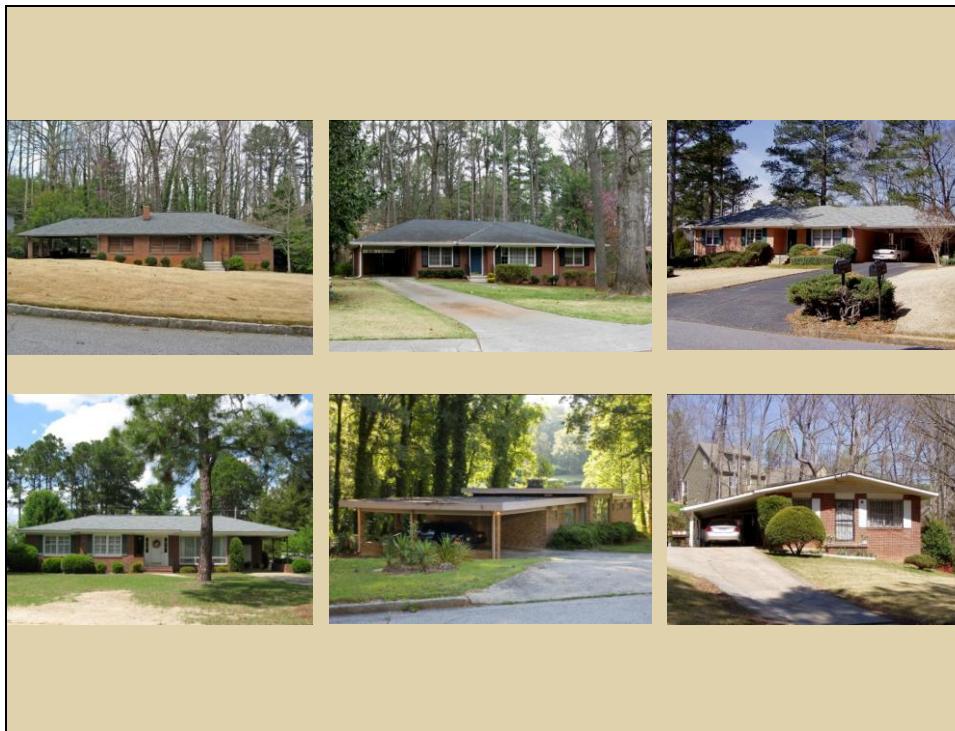
One theory is that this kind of stonework
was a design “conceit” ...



recalling the traditional adobe brick and
stucco walls of those ancient Ranch Houses
in the Southwest.



110



Carports, although certainly not unique to Georgia, are another characteristic of Georgia's Ranch Houses.

They come in a wide variety of sizes and shapes.

111



Most were either one-car versions like this ...

112



or two-car versions, reflecting the increasing number of two-car suburban families.

113



Some early Georgia Ranch Houses had enclosed *garages*.



They were almost always attached to or part of the main house, just like the carports ...

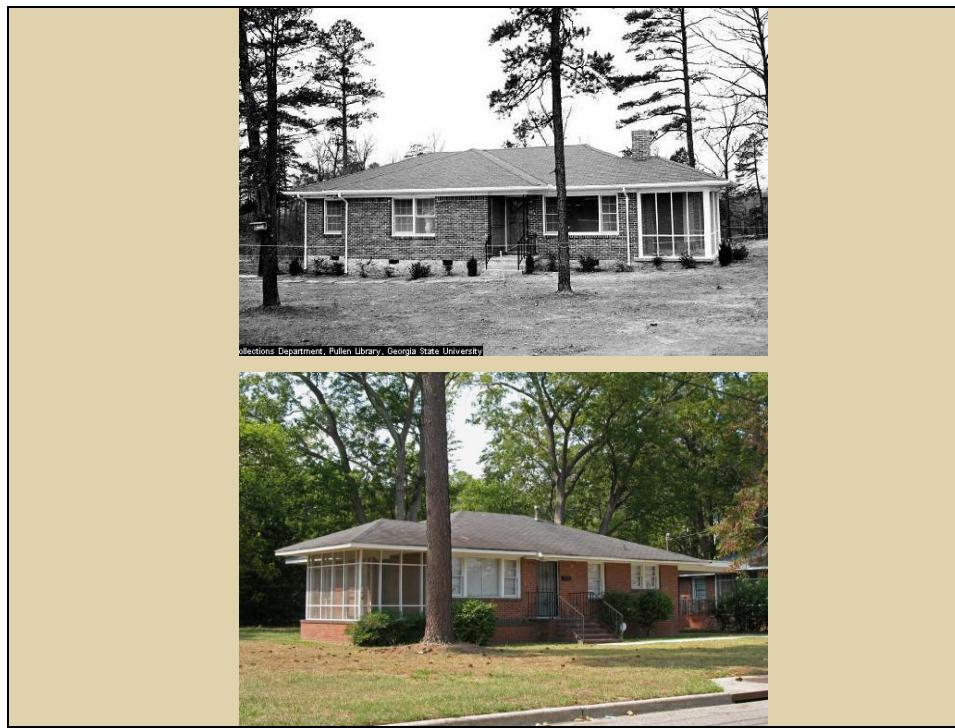
sometimes extending the length of the house ...



and sometimes configured into a front courtyard, especially in the 1960s.



In the northern part of the state, where building lots are steeply sloped, garages and carports were sometimes tucked *under* the main body of the house.



Another important regional feature is the *screened porch*.



Screened porches first show up in the early 1940s (about as early as any ranch-house feature in Georgia could show up) ...



and in greater numbers with the late-1940s red-brick Ranch Houses.

120



They continued to be built as integral parts of the houses well into the 1960s (in spite of the advent of central air conditioning).

121



Most are on the sides (or ends) of the houses.

122



A few are on the front, where they often form a courtyard effect.

123



Some are integrated between the house and carport.

124



But many are on the backs of houses, where they can't be seen very well from the street.

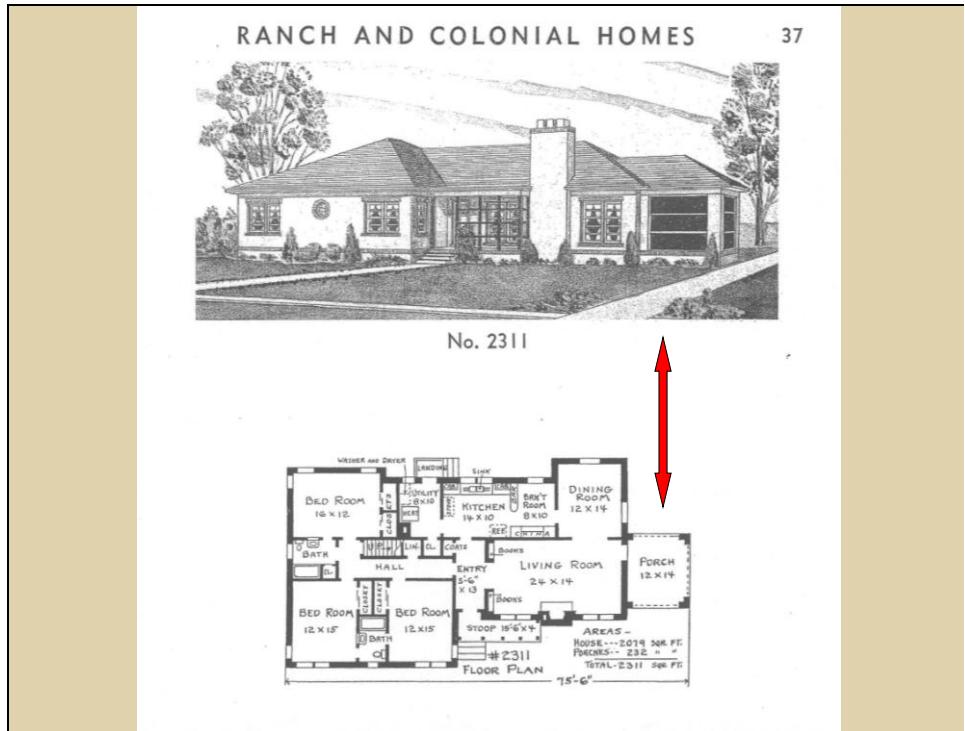
125



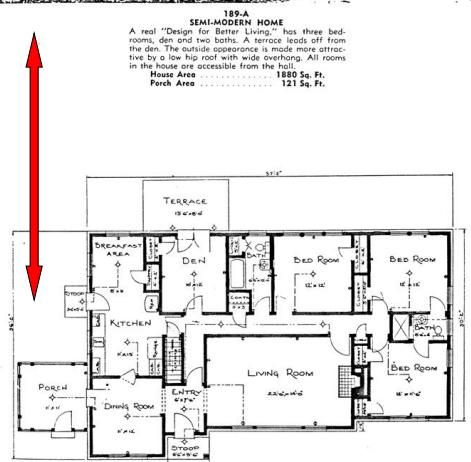
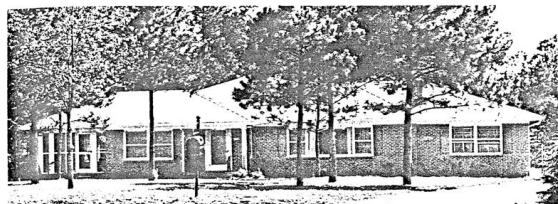
In this case, you might think that this Ranch House had no porch, or that an original porch on the end of the house was infilled to make an additional room in the house.



But when you look around the side of the house, you can see the original porch, on the back corner, recessed under the main roof.



Leila Ross Wilburn, an Atlanta architect, incorporated screened porches in many of her early Ranch House designs ...



HOME BUILDER'S PLAN SERVICE • 22 MARIETTA STREET BUILDING • ATLANTA 3, GA.

as did the local Home Builders Plan Service.

Apparently the West Coast ranch-house designers who liked the open-air patios were unaware of Georgia's gnats and mosquitoes!

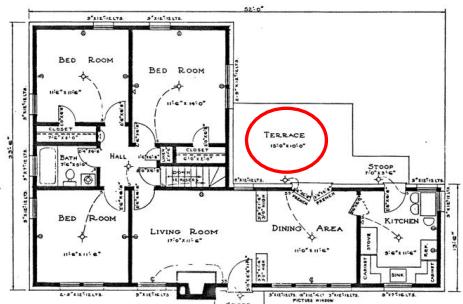


Although, having said that, it should also be noted that, gnats and mosquitoes notwithstanding, many Georgia Ranch Houses do in fact have the more California-type open-air patio or terrace ...

194-A
SPACE FOR ENTERTAINING

This Atlanta home is featured by the large living and dining rooms opening together, and French doors leading to back terrace. This gives room for entertaining away from the bedroom part of the house. Also the plan puts the kitchen where it is needed, adjoining both the dining area and the terrace.

House Area 1217 Sq. Ft.
Terrace Area 150 Sq. Ft.



HOME BUILDER'S PLAN SERVICE • 22 MARIETTA STREET BUILDING • ATLANTA 3, GA.

and in its 1948 plan book the Home Builder's Plan Service included a number of plans for Ranch Houses with open-air terraces.



DESIGNED for living. This semi-modern home was planned by Home Builders Plan Service, Atlanta. The variety in roof lines helps to avoid a "severe" appearance. The wide windows, and the porch with iron grillwork, add to the pleasing appearance of the home which has 1,525 square feet of floor space. The carport area adds another 276 square feet.

A somewhat "odd" Georgia Ranch House trait is a predilection for *more "enclosed" interior spaces* --traditional "rooms" -- rather than the new "open" floor plans.

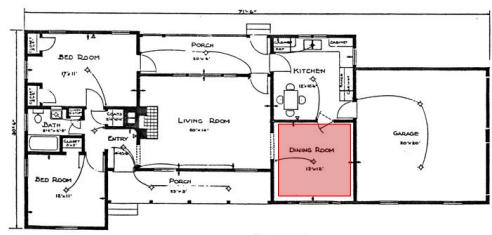


40-A

LOW, SPREADING RANCH TYPE

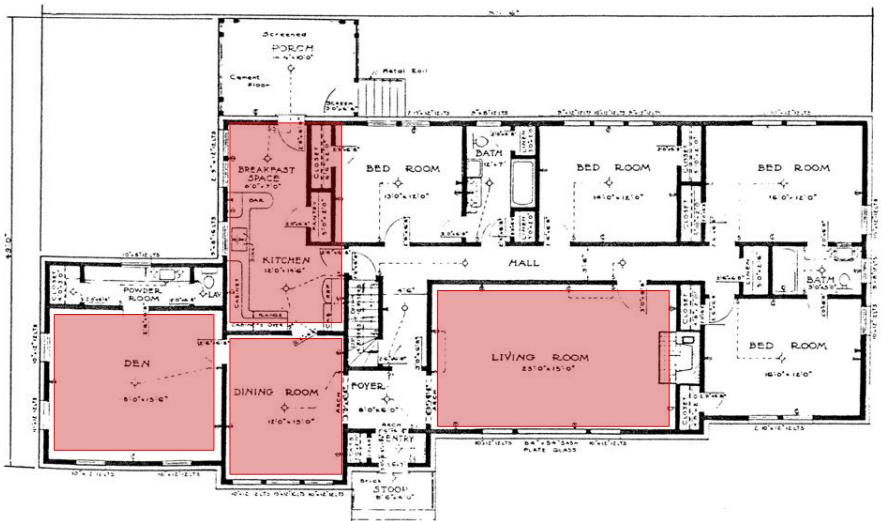
The five-room ranch type home was designed for a wide level lot in a suburban area. It has an entry hall with coat closet; two well arranged bedrooms with ample closet space. The living room has both front and rear exposures affording good view, light and ventilation, with an arch opening into the dining room behind which is a spacious kitchen. The two-car garage is attached with doors opening to the side of right elevation.

House Area 1132 sq. ft.
Porch Area 245 sq. ft.
Garage Area 430 sq. ft.

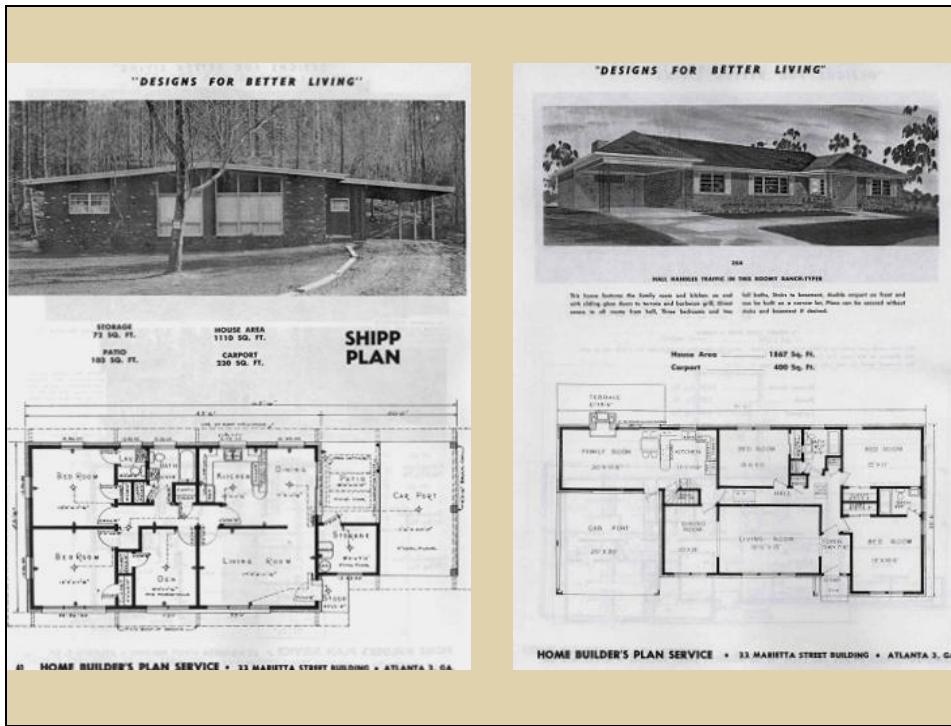


HOME BUILDER'S PLAN SERVICE • 22 MARIETTA STREET BUILDING • ATLANTA 3, GA.

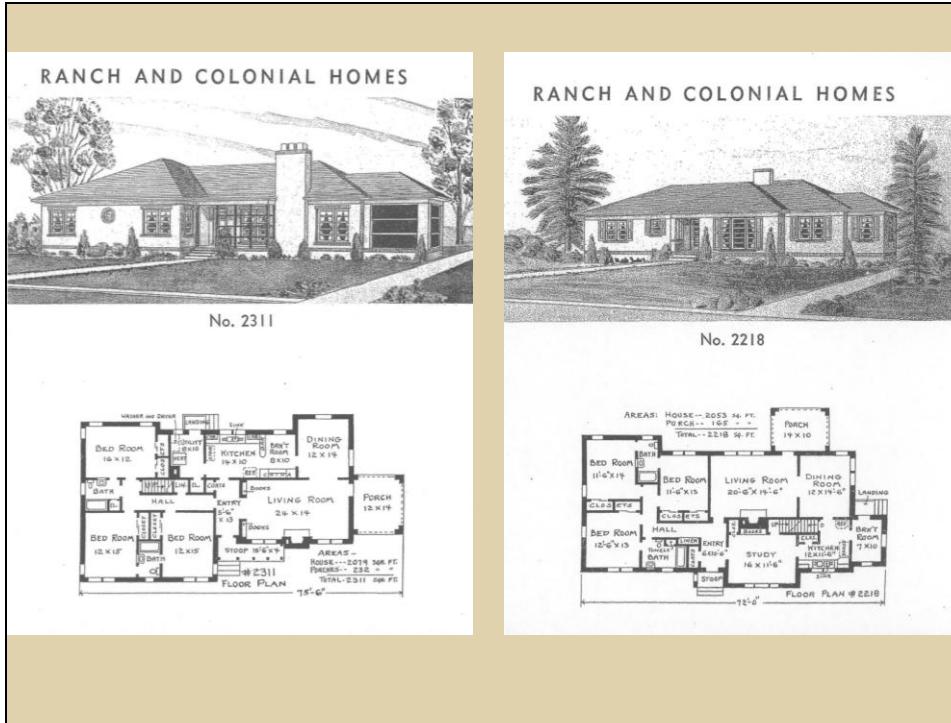
The same 1948 *Atlanta Journal* article that noted the preference for brick Ranch Houses in Georgia also noted that "a large percentage [of new homebuyers] prefer the rambling type ... house ... *with a dining room* in spite of decorators' magazines designed to popularize the combination living-dining room such as is featured in functional houses."



You can see in this Home Builders Plan Service floor plan how not only the dining room but also the kitchen, den, and living room are separate rooms, walled off from each other.



This design trait is evident in many of the Ranch House plans offered by the Atlanta-based Home Builders Plan Service ...



and it is also evident in house designs by Leila Ross Wilburn whose houses are everywhere in the Atlanta area.

This may be a reflection of a broader regional conservatism in house design.

Perhaps it has something to do with Southern manners and a sense of decorum?

136



A related conservative trait is retaining the *traditional front entry and traditional front windows* ...

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instead of a blank front façade as was the way with many trendy California designs.



Now let's consider a few things that distinguish *the history* of Georgia's Ranch Houses.



For one thing, as we've already seen, Georgia has a *lot* of Ranch Houses.



This simple fact makes Georgia's Ranch House history distinctive.



1 BIG PARADE OF HOMES BROUGHT OUT THE CROWDS
Delta got a big boost by persuading the Savannah Home Builders Assn. to hold its first Parade of Homes at Windsor

Forest. Thirteen builders put up houses, drew 15,000 paid admissions. "The traffic and fanfare," says Cecil Mason, who is president of the association, "really put the new community on the map."

And with good reason: It resulted from the state's tremendous growth during the two decades following World War II.

4-E THE ATLANTA TIMES, Fri., June 12, 1964

Home construction spirals to match population surge

Residential construction is heading for a banner year as 1964 nears the halfway point and the upward spiral in the industry will continue as Metropolitan Atlanta edges ever closer to the two million figure on the books of the United States census.

Obviously, the area's population growth and the number of new housing units constructed are directly, irrevocable related. And there is nothing to indicate Atlanta's growth is about to reach a levelling off stage.

Quite the opposite is outlook as the bumper crop of post-war babies enter adulthood, join the blissful state of matrimony and start a family of their own.

Hobart Whitney, president of the Home Builders Association

trend toward larger homes. "Consider this," Whitney said. "Just a few years ago a built-in kitchen was a luxury but this is no longer true. Home buyers today expect to have an automated kitchen. Air conditioning also is becoming more standard. Yes, the trend is definitely toward larger homes with more luxuries."

Atlanta currently ranks third in the nation in the number of new housing units constructed since 1950, ahead of such metropolitan areas as Cleveland, Memphis, New Orleans, San Francisco, and Seattle. The only two metropolitan regions ahead of Atlanta are Tampa-St. Petersburg, which leads the nation, and second-ranked San Diego.

difference between Atlanta and the two front-runners and that is the virtual absence of the foreclosure problem.

Tampa-St. Petersburg has had a serious foreclosure situation for the last two years and there are still about as many houses being reclaimed weekly as there are sales of foreclosed properties.

The Tampa FHA insuring office which has jurisdiction over 21 Florida counties has had as many as 4,200 foreclosures on record at one time. But these were concentrated mostly in Tampa, St. Petersburg, Orlando and the Cape Kennedy area.

That problem does not exist in Atlanta. The area is not overbuilt and does not appear to be in any danger of becoming in-

tion. Everywhere new apartments are opening or about to open. Some skeptics claim the region already is overbuilt, apartment-wise, while other developers counter with the thought that the skeptics are deliberately distorting the picture simply to discourage competition.

But one thing is certain. There are apartments galore, all of them competing vigorously for the tenant's dollar with luxuries, community areas, swimming pools, tennis courts and countless other sales points.

The F. W. Dodge Co. reported residential construction for 1963 increased 28 per cent over the previous year with a figure ap-

New homes rising rapidly in growing DeKalb County

More than one-fourth of all the homes being built in Georgia are located in DeKalb County, the second largest county in the state, local officials point out.

More than one-fourth of all the homes being built in Georgia are located in DeKalb County, the second largest county in the state, local officials point out.



Sub-division springs up

with DeKalb County in metropolitan Atlanta leading the way, accounting for more than 25% of all new homes being built in Georgia during this period of time.

NEW STREETS CUT TOO FAST TO NAME

Doraville and Chamblee in Midst Of Building Boom; More Projects Seen

In the past year new streets have been cut in Doraville and Chamblee faster than they could be named. As soon as a street is opened plans are developed to open others.

Indeed, in some parts of the DeKalb county, new subdivision streets were being developed faster than they could be named!

PERFECT FIT FOR FAMILY OF FIVE

Happy Home Owners Have
No Harsh Words for Builders

By LOIS NORVELL
"If we had it to do over again we don't know of anything we would change about our house."

"The couple talking was Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Thomas. Martha does her homework at the house while the assistance of contractors in whom we had confidence made two things possible: a house plan and two words for architects or contractors.

They added one 'unless' to their first statement. "Unless we had unlimited funds, of course," but you get the picture. "Unless they couldn't think of any changes."

The Thomases, including Martha, the wife, and their son, Wayne, live at 2025 Dale Dr., N.E. in a charming home with an exterior of good cedar shingles which was dreamt of, planned and built to suit the needs of their family.

"OUR KITCHEN was too small in our other place," said Mrs. Thomas. "The children are always growing and I knew that I felt sure they would be whenever I was. So we planned a kitchen large enough for them and me, too.

"In this home our kitchen meets all our needs. Not only does it share of the work in our family. It is separated from the den by a screen partition which has its back to the kitchen stove. It is from the den that can be come directly to the kitchen. I have a large window seat in the kitchen which I like to enjoy in the evenings.

"Actually," put in the man of the house, "we never know what to do with the kitchen. I suppose 'den' will do. We have a den, a breakfast room and a big living room. The den is large, but that this room serves the purpose of all three."

The favorite spot with the youngsters, has a fireplace, a television set, a desk, and an easy chair with a good reading lamp.

Mrs. Thomas, "but, of course, ready to guide us away from any bad mistakes."

"We reviewed the plan for our house with the assistance of contractors in whom we had confidence, and then we worked with Mr. Thomas. "We worked out the details with them, then went to an architect on the telephone and refined and drawn up. We had the finest co-operation from our contractors."

"THE HOUSE has three bedrooms, or really four at present. Now many families might com-

plain about the train racing by



And the house of preference during this time period was, clearly, the new Ranch House.

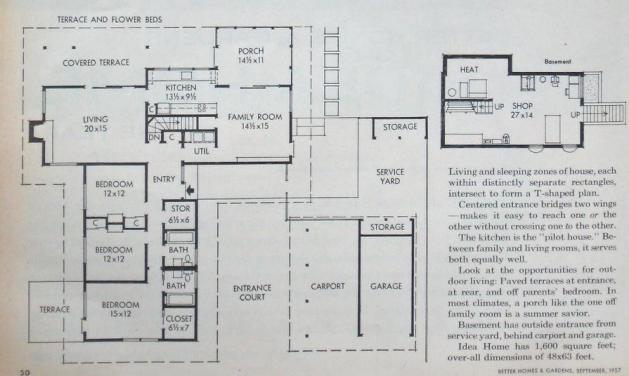
Georgia also has some pretty good examples of *early* Ranch Houses ...

starting with that mid-1930s house in Fort Valley ...



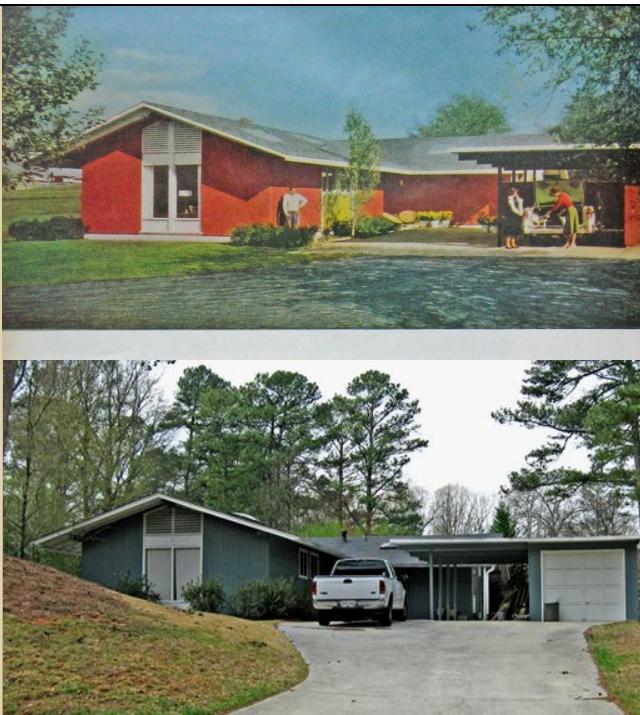


and that 1941 architect-designed red-brick Ranch House in Lenox Park in Atlanta.



Ranch Houses in Georgia also kept up with the times.

Here's the *Better Homes & Gardens* "Idea Home" for 1957, representing the latest in ranch-house design ...



and here it is (on the bottom) as it was built in DeKalb County that same year.



THE BASIC HOUSE

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W. MONTGOMERY ANDERSON, architect

WILLIAM DUNN, Photographer

Trim House With Simple Lines, Well-Located Garage, Spacious Garden and Play Area

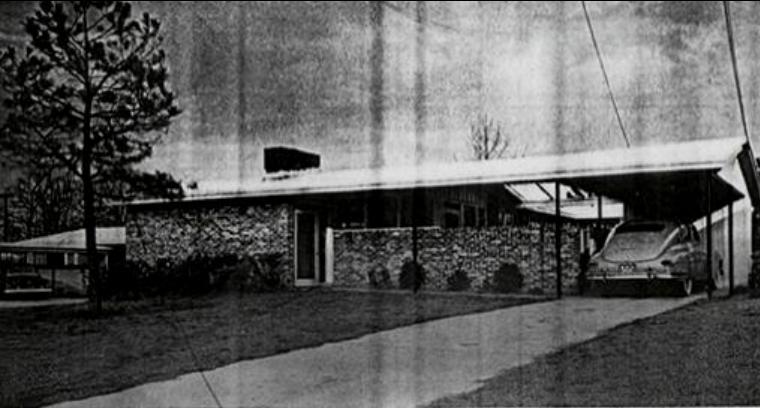
29480 CU. FT. (NOT INCLUDING GARAGE OR FUTURE BEDROOM)



This house, which received honorable mention in an architectural competition held by the American Gas Association, embodies many good features: simple exterior with large windows and cross ventilation; convenient access to the kitchen from both entrances; a porch for outdoor living and dining; privacy for bedrooms and bath; and well located garage. The living room is a good bit in the line of traffic and some of its light may be cut off by the porch. The breakfast room adds little to the dining room which could be used just as easily. Again the architect has included a basement, which in Atlanta where this house is located, seems unnecessary. The space for the breakfast room might have been used for the laundry and a small heater, thus saving the cost of basement and stairs. But even as it stands the house is better than most small houses.

Georgia's Ranch Houses and their architects also received some *very early and continuing notice in the national press*.

The 1946 *Book of Houses* featured an early Ranch House designed by Atlanta architect W. Montgomery Anderson. This was about as early as anyone could get a Ranch House featured in a national publication



Atlanta goes modern

—without going overboard. Architects Finch & Barnes gave their builders clean design, efficient techniques and just a hint of tradition. Result: a "new" market in the old South

GOLF VIEW SUBDIVISION
LOCATION: Atlanta,
FINCH & BARNES, archi
THOMAS NORTHCUTT & RAYMOND SANDERS, buil
PRICES: \$21,400-\$25,000

The early 1950s Contemporary-style Ranch Houses in Atlanta's Golf View subdivision, designed by Georgia Tech architect Bill Finch, also got national publicity ...



PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE

p/a
march 1959
world's largest architectural circulation

residential design

LOCATION Macon, Georgia
ARCHITECTS League, Warren and Riley
OWNERS Mr. & Mrs. Joseph C. League

COST FACTS: \$16,200 in 1950. 1766 square feet at \$91.7 per square foot.

MATERIALS: Concrete floor slab over hollow tile on fill. Wood frame with redwood siding, plus glass block sections.

PLAN FACTS: This home's modest appearance, as well as local materials, give it an indigenous quality characteristic of the simpler type of house in the South. The main problem was to arrange the important rooms and the terrace on the southern exposure, be-

cause this side of the property had privacy. The kitchen is accessible to bedrooms without going through the living area. The sleeping wing, containing three bedrooms and two baths, is nicely isolated from the living part of the house. Each bedroom has its own outside door, and is insulated from the neighboring room by closet walls. Adjacent to the kitchen is a service wing, which includes a service patio give an open look to this side of the house. Six foot high storage lockers and fence mask the service patio. The brick fireplace wall of the living room screens the main entrance hall, and has a wood storage box which may be filled from outside.

Arch. Riley

44

as did Jean League Newton's 1950 contemporary Ranch House in Macon, which was showcased in no fewer than *five* national architectural magazines and a subsequent book (*Quality Budget Homes, 1954*).

Five Star Home No. 2103

This Five Star Home No. 2103 is a compromise—and a happy one. Avoiding the triteness of some Traditional as well as the starkness of some Modern, it emerges as a house with a fresh, pleasing style of its own. This is a good house, though, in more than looks alone. This is, first, an *efficient* house. Back of the kitchen is a central room to house furnace and water heater, its laundry and most of its storage areas are upstairs—where they belong. This is a *comfortable* house. Awning windows all around mean you don't have to sprint around closing them every time it rains. This is a *friendly* house. The pictures at right attest to that, as do the roomy parking court, the picture-windowed dining room, the shaded terrace behind. Designed by Architect Clement J. Ford.

2103 five star plan

48 49

In 1952, as we already have seen, a seemingly plain red-brick Ranch House designed by Atlanta architect Clement J. Ford was highlighted in a full-color two-page spread in the *Better Homes & Gardens* magazine.

Atlanta contemporary:
a lesson for lenders

The builder: Walter T. Ford, who started from building small houses to more modern design in his large Atlanta firm, was the first to offer credit he was able to get personalized enough money.

The architect: Clement J. Ford, and his business partner, who designed 30 different houses to provide variety without repetition. They also offer vacation or permanent residence on plan designs.

The local mortgage broker: Eugene Hinsinger, whose company had the largest volume of loans in Atlanta, eventually succeeded in finding an insurance underwriter to finance the first few houses.

Just a few years later, the developers of the Northwoods suburb outside Atlanta received national notice for successfully marketing their new contemporary designs to a previously resistant middle-class clientele.

Builder Clayton Powell started as a contract builder on \$1,500 a month. Now he's a full-fledged home builder with 15 months, organized the Home Builders Assoc. of Savannah, of which he is now president.

Architect Ralph Thomas, Georgia Tech graduate, is guaranteed 5% of the cost of his designs and is paid \$500 per start for reports. "Most people don't realize the cheapest thing I buy. Many builders pay as much as \$50 for a building permit, less for an architect."

1953: Cross-space house, built high on its foundation, was the kind of house Powell built; conventional "just like everyone else's."

1953: Powell dropped house off cross space and set slab, gave an even longer lower look to an already enlarged house.

1953: Lower pitch to roof, larger glass areas were next design steps. Though hip roofs are popular, Powell also built gabled roofs.

Small builder grows bigger with easier, better ways to build

"Every day is a new day."

With that philosophy builder Clayton Powell has started a small revolution in Savannah home building. Built himself a business that will see him do from 50 to 60 houses this year, set an example every small builder would be smart to follow.

Most builders on year after year doing things the hard old way because the hard way is easier and cheaper at first than learning more efficient methods and teaching them to unthorough crews and subcontractors. But the hard way is not the only way. There are easier ways. And there are easier ways to build. If they were easier, they must be faster. And if they were faster, they must be cheaper. And if they were cheaper, they must be better for business.

He got his first big idea at the NAHB convention and exposition in Chicago in January, 1953. He got more from House & Home's report on "The post-and-beam house" in its July, 1953 issue. He got more from the report of the new way and will tell himself 1953. He got more from House & Home's study of post-and-beam construction in June, 1954. He gets still more from working with his Georgia Tech-trained architect, Ralph Thomas.

As president of the Home Builders Association of Savannah, he is president of the local home builders association which he originated. And he has a 24-hour construction schedule, which he calls "the new day."

On any given day Powell has no more than five houses to check; yet is always assured of completing each of them in about 24 days, sometimes 27. That's the new day.

Simplicity Powell (and dealers, please note) uses more lumber to save labor and simplify erection. Occasionally he wastes two or three 4x4's in building six different plans. "The important thing is we never change the plans." He has 200 plans.

Scheduling His 24-hour schedule (p. 159) is synchronized with FHA inspection, his own crew capabilities and subcontractor availability.

Subcontracting Powell subcontract all specialty work (dry walling, plumbing, heating, electrical) but since he can control his post-and-beam company and its costs, he uses his own crews for the major structural operations.

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145

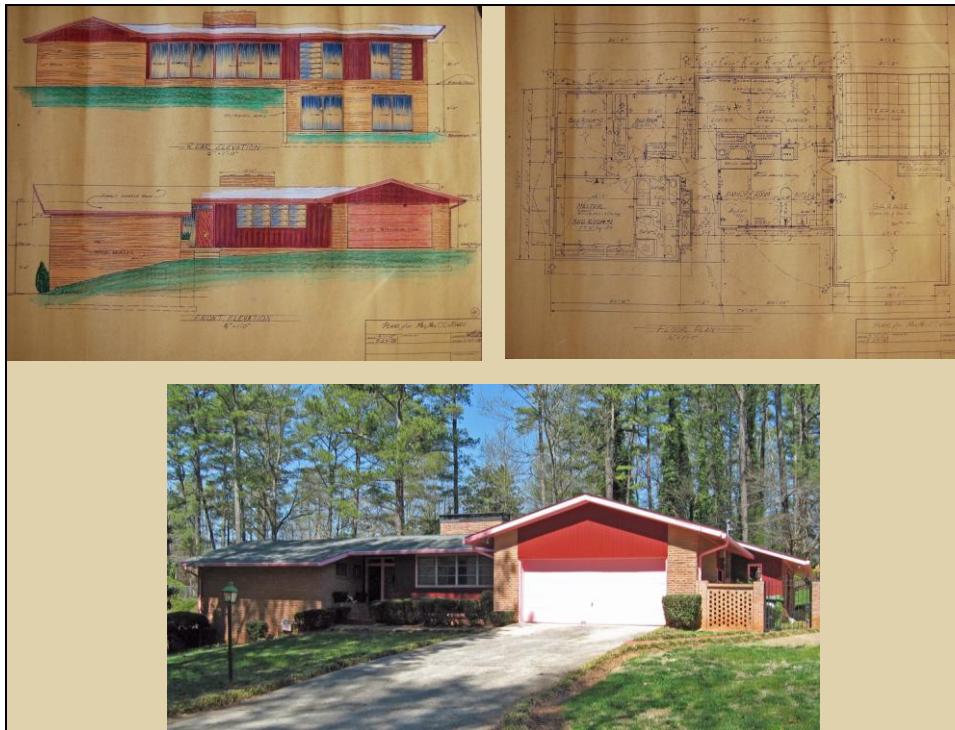
1954: Post-and-beam house was Powell's first venture as a merchant builder. Structural windows along the front and side under eaves reflect the new framing and building techniques in a new way. Though house has narrow end to street, low-pitched roof and long side, it is a two-story house at side, still elevation, gives an impression of spaciousness. Post-and-beam construction meets living needs of today's home buyers; have two baths, family room. House has 1,000 sq. ft., 300 sq. ft. of screened porch, sets for \$14,000 on \$1,000 lot.

HOUSE 4 - JULY 1955

In Savannah, developer Clayton Powell and architect Ralph Thomas gained national publicity for their collaboration on the design and construction of new Eichler-style Ranch Houses in the July and August 1955 issues of *House and Home*.

Also in the mid-1950s, Georgia's Ranch House history was enriched by the work of Joseph W. Robinson in Atlanta. Robinson was one of Georgia's earliest African-American architects and the first to specialize in designing Ranch Houses.

In his home office, which he had designed and built in 1953, he drew plans for several hundred Ranch Houses for a largely African-American clientele.



Robinson was best known for his fashionably up-to-date Contemporary-style designs, like this house in Atlanta's Collier Heights neighborhood.



Now let's look at some larger characteristics of the Ranch House generally but that also apply to Georgia.

One is what we call "*democratization*." "Leveling up" is what it was called in this 1950 *House Beautiful* article.

In short: every homebuyer could participate in the ranch-house phenomenon at some level.



This is how it played out, at least in Georgia:



Right from the start, homebuyers could choose from big Ranch Houses to small Ranch Houses ...



and from the plain and simple to the avant-garde.



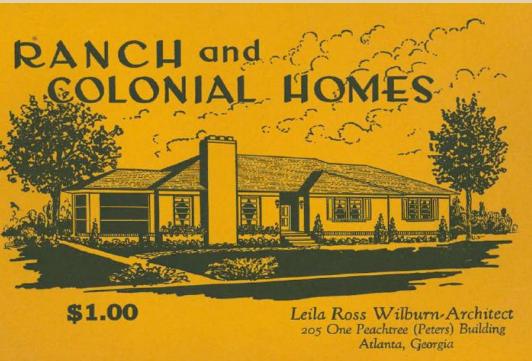
We are passing these ideas on to you
as a home builder because we know that



you want a better home

THOUSANDS of ideas pass over editors' desks at *Better Homes & Gardens*, and the best of these we present here for your use. They've been tried and found to be true by architects and homeowners who once were planners like you. There's another thing they've found to be true, too.

Much of the "leveling" or "democratizing" came from the mass media which distributed information about the Ranch House to just about everyone in America at the time.



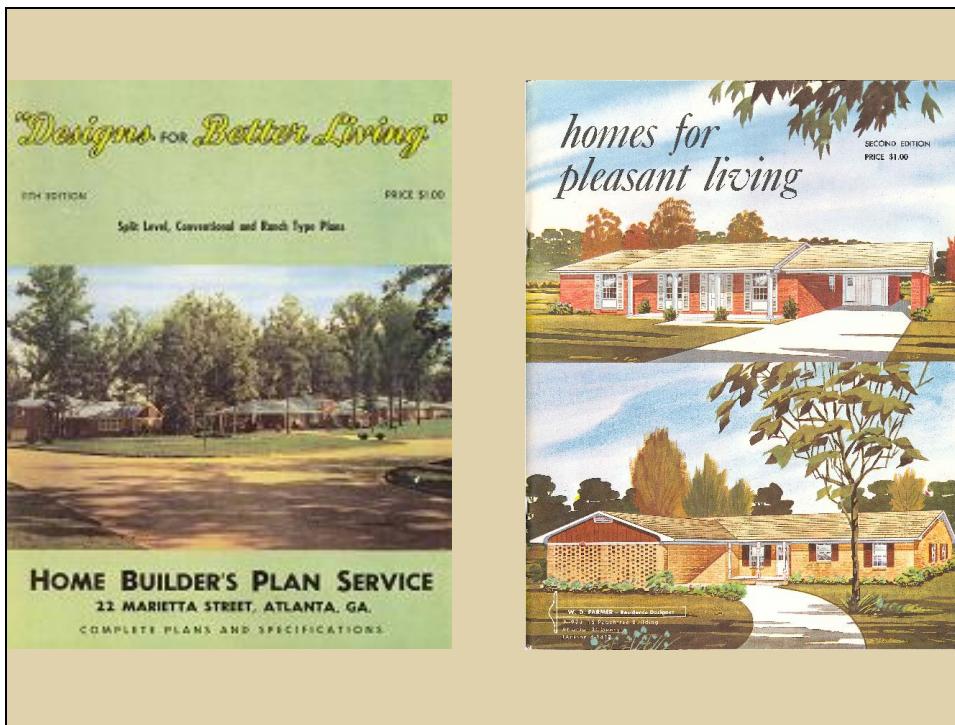
Here's Help for Builders

Select the design that will best fit your needs.

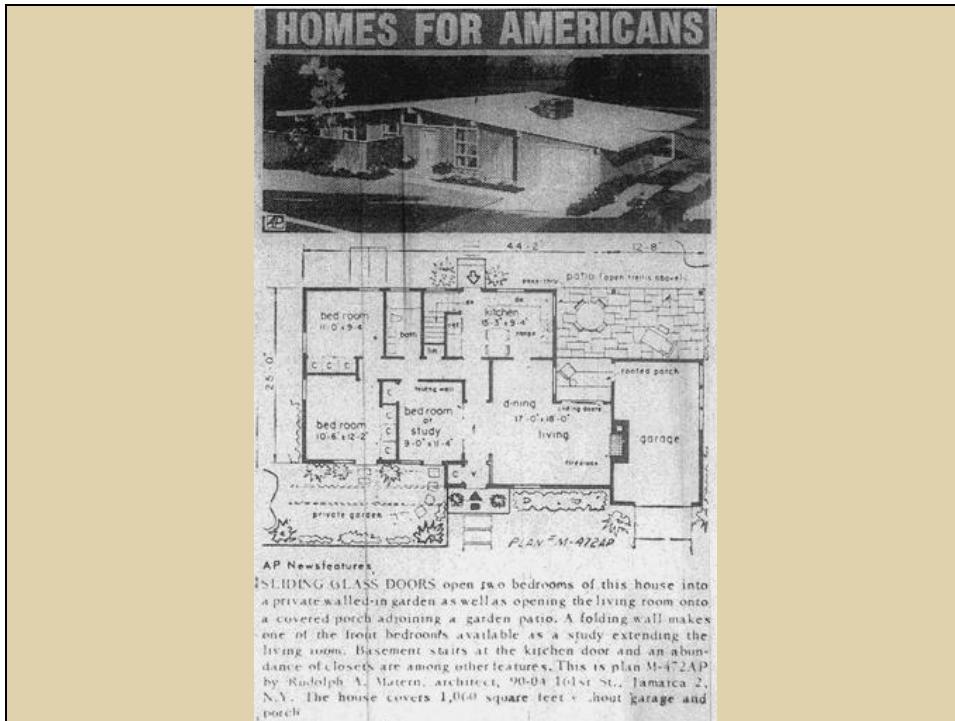
The group of attractive and practical homes illustrated in this book were especially designed for the average American family. If you do not find the house to suit your desires in "Ranch and Colonial Homes," see page 56 for a list of my previous planbooks. The designs shown in one plan-book are not repeated in any other book.

Order Plans From
LEILA ROSS WILBURN, ARCHITECT
205 One Peachtree (Peters) Bldg., Atlanta, Ga.

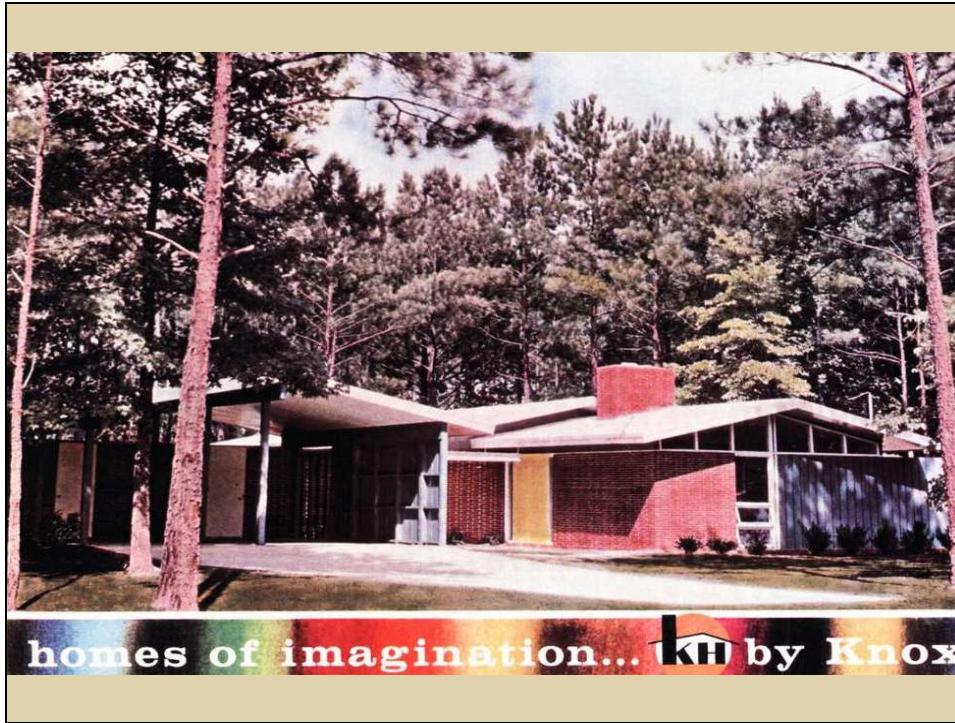
In Georgia, this phenomenon was supported by architects such as Leila Ross Wilburn who not only custom-designed houses but also published plan books and catalogs for homebuyers and builders ...



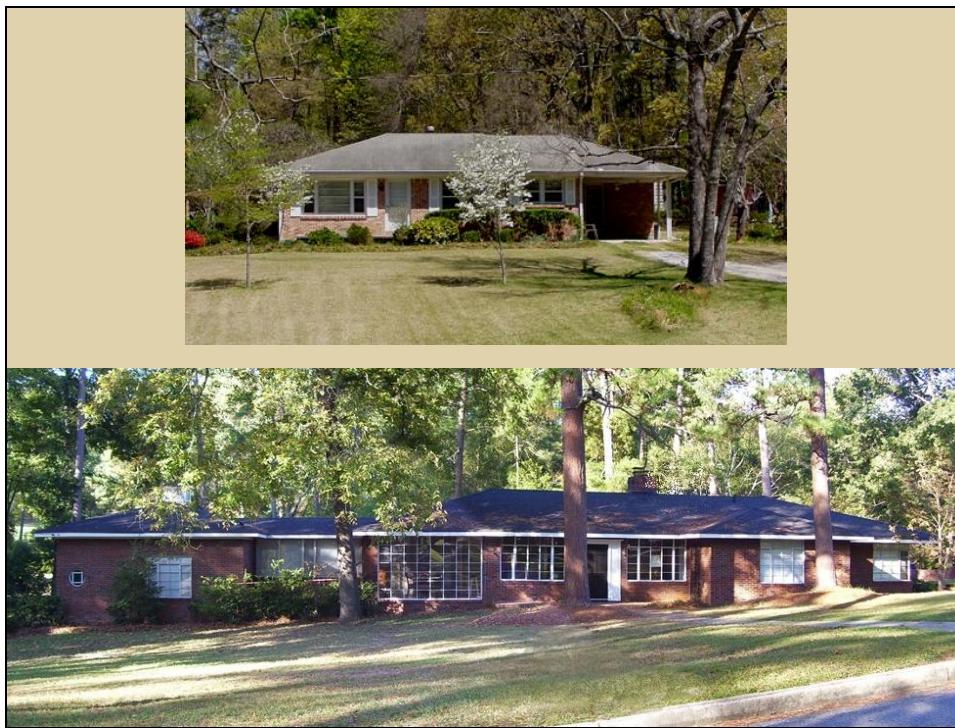
and to an even greater degree by local commercial plan book publishers such as the Home Builders Plan Service and W. D. Farmer in Atlanta which made ranch-house plans available to everyone.



And, as we've seen, even the newspapers got into the act with weekly features about Ranch Houses.



There also were builders and contractors ready to provide just about anyone with house designs as well as construction services ... like the Knox Company of Thomson.



In a very real sense, then, the Ranch House in Georgia and elsewhere truly knew *no economic or class boundaries*.



Interestingly enough, the Ranch House in Georgia also knew *no racial boundaries*.

Although ranch-house *developments* clearly respected the prevailing segregated housing patterns of the time, the Ranch House itself provided housing for black and white families alike.

These two similar “standard” Ranch Houses built on opposite sides of Atlanta in the early 1950s attest to this.

These two similar custom-designed Ranch Houses in Atlanta, one by a white architect for a white client, the other by a black architect for a black client, make the same point.



168



Two similar mid-1950s housing *developments* on opposite sides of Atlanta also demonstrate this phenomenon:

North Druid Woods subdivision near Decatur was an exclusively white middle-class suburban development.

169



Here is a view of a street in North Druid Woods.

170



Here is a typical Ranch House on a street in the neighborhood ...

171



and here's another, on one of the new-fangled cul-de-sacs.

172



The *Urban Villas* subdivision in west Atlanta was planned, financed, built, and lived in by African-Americans.

173



This is one of the entrance streets into the development.

174

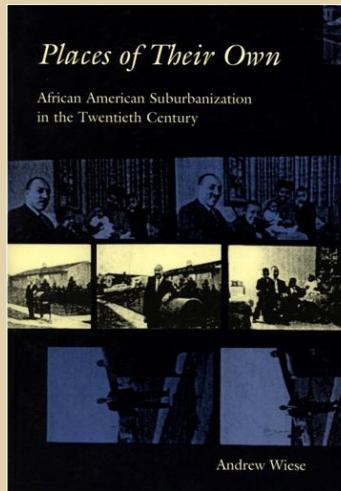


This is a typical street scene in the neighborhood ...

175



and these are two typical Ranch Houses in the neighborhood.



African-American suburban development in the South is just now being recognized by historians and geographers as a distinctive regional development.



The west side of Atlanta has an exceptional collection of African-American ranch-house developments dating from the early 1950s ...



culminating in Collier Heights, now recognized through its recent listing in the National Register of Historic Places as the one of the foremost mid-20th-century African-American suburbs in the country.





HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

The Ordinary Iconic Ranch House

Mid-20th Century Ranch Houses in Georgia

PART V: DISTINCTIVE ASPECTS OF THE RANCH HOUSE IN GEORGIA



September 2011

Richard Cloues, Ph.D.

This concludes Part V of *The Ordinary Iconic Ranch House*. The story of the Ranch House in Georgia continues with Part VI, "Concluding Remarks and Sources of Information."