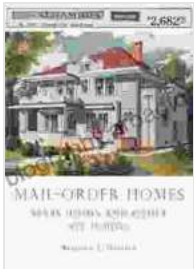


Sears Homes and Other Kit Houses: A Historical Exploration



Mail-Order Homes: Sears Homes and Other Kit Houses (Shire Library USA Book 645) by Rebecca L. Hunter

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 22394 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 64 pages



In an era characterized by rapid urbanization and industrialization, the advent of kit houses offered a revolutionary solution for affordable and efficient housing. Sears Homes, an iconic brand within this field, played a pivotal role in shaping the residential landscape of the United States. This book, part of the Shire Library USA series, delves into the captivating history of Sears Homes and explores the broader phenomenon of kit houses in the USA.

The Origins of Kit Houses


The concept of prefabricated homes emerged in the mid-19th century, coinciding with technological advancements in mass production and transportation. Notable early pioneers included Andrew Jackson Downing, a landscape architect who advocated for prefabricated housing, and George Franklin Barber, a prominent architect who designed numerous

mail-Free Download homes. However, it was Sears, Roebuck and Co. that would popularize kit houses on an unprecedented scale.

Sears Homes: A Retail Giant's Foray into Housing

In 1908, Sears, Roebuck and Co., well-established in the retail industry, introduced a line of kit houses through their mail-Free Download catalog. These homes, designed by renowned architects, offered a wide range of styles and sizes to cater to diverse customer needs. The convenience of Free Downloading a home through a catalog, along with competitive pricing and financing options, made Sears Homes an instant success.

FOUR ROOMS, BATH AND PORCH




The HATHAWAY Home Kit **\$1,299⁰⁰**
No. 2075 "Always Cut" and Fitted.


At the price quoted we will furnish all the material to build this four-room cottage, including all mill work, lumber, lath, fire-chief roofing, porch ceiling, flooring, finishing lumber, building paper, board trough, sheet asphalt, sash weights, hardware and painting material. We guarantee enough material to build this house. Price does not include cement, brick or plaster.

DESCRIPTION—This kit house is a really attractive and desirable home in covered with vines and flowering trees. Sashes of black double hung and one window is made of six with an entrance of glass construction. The house is built with a porch on the front and a small porch on the side. The construction is of a simple design. It is very well suited for the country and is a good investment. The price is low and the house will stand up for years. The house is built with a porch on the front and a small porch on the side. The construction is of a simple design. It is very well suited for the country and is a good investment. The price is low and the house will stand up for years.


First Floor



Second Floor



Basement



OPTIONS

- Sheet Floor and Plaster Finish to take the place of wood bath, \$100.00 extra. See page 114.
- Clear Maple Flooring furnished for kitchen, lobby, breakfast room and bathroom, instead of yellow pine, for no charge.
- Stain Doors and Windows, \$58.00 extra.
- Stain Doors and Windows, black wire \$28.00 extra, galvanized iron, \$49.00 extra.
- This house can be built on a lot 25 feet wide. Clear base express siding instead of stone, \$44.00 extra.

SEARS ROEBUCK AND CO. CHICAGO-PHILADELPHIA

The Kit House Phenomenon

Sears Homes were not the only kit house provider in the market, but their widespread distribution and marketing prowess made them synonymous with the concept. Other notable kit house companies included Montgomery Ward, Aladdin, and Gordon-Van Tine. These companies offered a variety of home designs, from modest cottages to elaborate mansions, and their

products reached all corners of the country. The popularity of kit houses extended beyond rural areas, as urban dwellers also embraced the affordability and efficiency of these prefabricated structures.

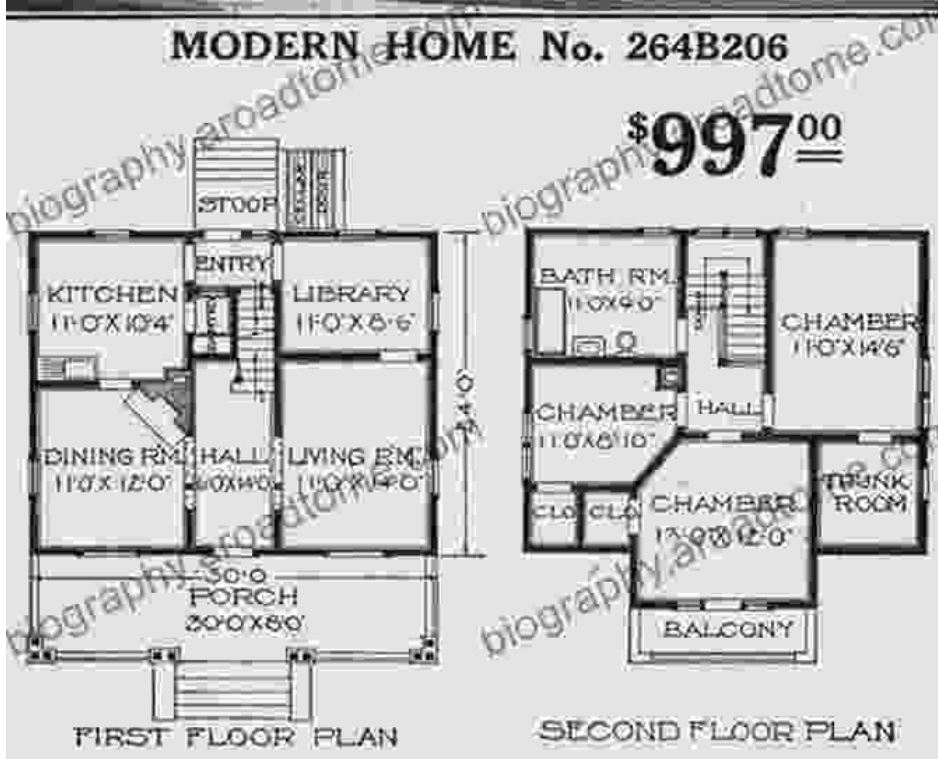
The Architectural Significance of Kit Houses

Kit houses were not merely practical solutions; they also had a significant architectural impact. The designs offered by Sears and other companies reflected the popular architectural styles of the time, including Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival. These homes often featured intricate details and high-quality materials, challenging the notion that prefabricated housing was synonymous with low quality. Kit houses also played a role in disseminating architectural ideas across the country, as they were shipped and assembled in diverse locations.



MODERN HOME No. 264B206

\$997⁰⁰



A Craftsman-style Sears Home

The Challenges Faced by Kit Houses

Despite their popularity, kit houses also faced certain challenges. One significant issue was the stigma associated with prefabricated construction, which was often perceived as inferior to traditional stick-built homes. This

stigma persisted for decades, even as the quality of kit houses improved. Another challenge was the lack of customization options. While kit houses offered a range of standard floor plans and exterior designs, homeowners had limited ability to modify these plans to suit their specific needs.

The Legacy of Kit Houses

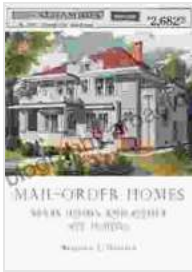
The era of kit houses reached its peak in the early 20th century, but their legacy continues to this day. Many Sears Homes and other kit houses still stand as testament to the ingenuity and practicality of this building method. These homes have become part of the architectural fabric of towns and cities across the USA, adding character and historical charm to their surroundings. In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in kit houses, with enthusiasts restoring and preserving these unique structures.

Sears Homes and other Kit Houses played a transformative role in American housing. They provided affordable, efficient, and stylish housing options for countless families, and their designs continue to influence residential architecture today. This book offers a comprehensive exploration of this fascinating topic, providing detailed historical accounts, captivating images, and insightful analysis. Whether you are a homeowner, an architecture enthusiast, or simply curious about the history of American housing, this book is an invaluable resource.

References

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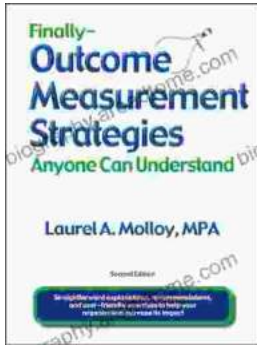
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