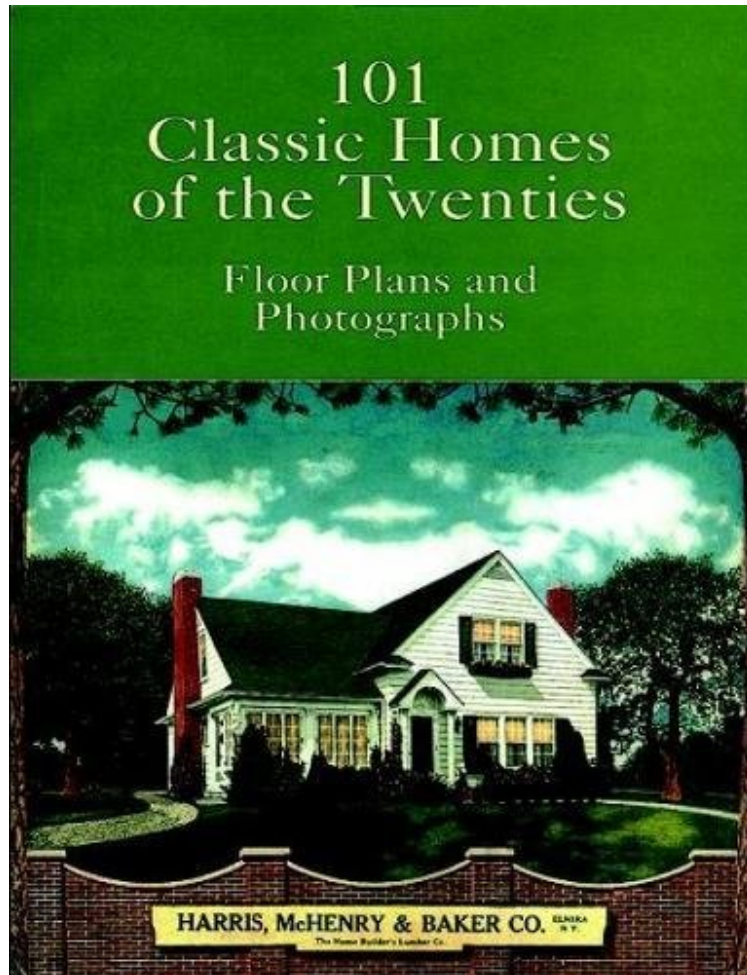


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101 Classic Homes of the Twenties: Floor Plans and Photographs (Dover Architecture)

Harris McHenry Baker Co.
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Harris McHenry Baker Co. : 101 Classic Homes of the Twenties: Floor Plans and Photographs (Dover Architecture) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised 101 Classic Homes of the Twenties: Floor Plans and Photographs (Dover Architecture):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. NOT a "Harris, McHenry Baker" CreationBy Jeweler's GranddaughterThis book is a very good reprint of an excellent 1920's home planbook.This book, however has consistently been attributed to the wrong source. This is NOT a "Harris, McHenry and Baker" book. They did not create the home designs, write or edit the text, or cause the book to be printed. What they did do, was order a quantity of the original plan books from the original company that wrote and published it, and have their business name and location printed on the cover.At the time, this was such a common occurrence that it didn't even merit mentioning.

Every building materials and lumber supplier did this at one time or another and many consistently, in order to offer the books to their own customers. (You will get an inkling of how common this actually was, by examining the bottoms of the two other covers of Standard Homes Company plan books I have supplied along with this review. Each has very similar information at the bottom of the cover, although tailored to reflect the book supplier.) Adding the suppliers' information on the cover of the books made sure to keep their name in front of potential customers' eyes, so if they did decide to build a plan in one of those books, they would have that suppliers' name to refer to for acquiring the blueprints, supplies lists, blank contract forms that could be filled in and used to create legal agreements between parties; and building materials and other items needed to build it. The materials dealers were the source for all items needed to build. They could even recommend local contractors, or carpenters, plumbers, masons, electricians, etc., if the builder/customer wasn't familiar with them. Harris, McHenry Baker, who have been given credit by Dover Publishing erroneously, were actually building materials dealers located in Elmira, New York in the 1920's! And the real creators of this very interesting, easy to read, and creative book? Standard Homes Company! The plans and elevation images are beautifully done, the plans are very easy to read, so you won't need a magnifying glass to make them out (for most folks). The text, however, isn't an overblown diatribe extolling the house's measurements, arrangements, and so forth. In fact, the characteristics of the home are barely mentioned at all! What they DO talk about though, are the flowery, poetic virtues of the family, and the benefits the family will most assuredly receive by choosing to live in one of their homes! How the man, who must make certain sacrifices towards saving money, and perhaps constructing the family home on his own (!) to provide such a wonderful home for his home-loving wife and children, and how having her own kingdom during the daytime in their own "private home" - that part seems to be mentioned frequently - will soothe her home-loving desires, and her mothering skills. Also, how they all shall certainly benefit morally and socially by choosing to live in such a home as....and they will then certainly avoid all the horrid, immoral, unhealthy, socially unredeeming factors that they would surely be prone to by living in the squalor and crowded, unhealthy and crime-ridden conditions of the teeming tenements of the city! It's a very socially uplifting experience just to read about the benefits that everyone shall surely experience, by choosing to live in one of their homes, even down to the smallest cottage! I have found a few other plan book companies who have taken this tack when writing and printing their books, but not many, and most haven't changed the style very much at all in that particular style of text. They are all equally florid when extolling their home's virtues. It's a wonderful company with a very long history, and is still in business today, being run and managed by its fourth generation in the same family. They have a website, they bring vintage plans back into the present from time to time, with appropriate updates, of course. The website address is fairly intuitive, and if you can't assemble the proper URL, just Google them. I have added the covers of two other of several planbooks by Standard Homes, the Brick and Stucco book from the Roaring Twenties period of 1929, obviously just before the "Big Crash" and the entry into the "Dirty Thirties" of no building hardly at all. The other book, is showing an entry drive into a beautifully constructed, but obviously restricted community from 1928. Only one year before, but quite a bit of difference, one from the other. They are located on archive dot com, for free viewing. This book, being reviewed, is not.

27 of 28 people found the following review helpful. Great addition to a collection of plan books

By R. Kelly Wagner

This is a reprint of a house plan catalog from 1925; originally, it was the catalog of the Harris, McHenry Baker Co., a lumber company. These books from Dover are exact reprints of original plan books from the turn of the century (1880-1925, roughly - this book is one of the latest years in the series). Dover adds little or no modern explanations, just presenting the catalog as it was. So when one looks to review these books, one isn't really judging the modern-day publisher, or editing, or writing. To judge the books, one has to compare each one to others of its kind, and then to decide whether the material in it is thorough and complete according to the standards of its time. Since there are several dozen of these catalogs published by Dover, we have the basis for such a comparison. This particular homes catalog has several unusual elements to it which make it worth adding to a collection. For starters, almost all of the houses are illustrated with photographs, rather than drawings, so we are seeing actual, finished models of the houses. The photographs include some things we'd be unlikely to see in a drawing or artist's rendering, for example, the photo of the Webster model shows the driveway, and the garage with carriage-house type doors behind the house. And the Kingston shows a car in the driveway - just the rear of the car, I couldn't identify the make or model, but it is neat to see a nice middle-class house with a car, something we couldn't take for granted in earlier years. Some plan books have no text except the price listings and how to order; others have entire sections of articles, or extensive suggestions as to furnishings, colors to finish the house in, etc. This book falls in between those extremes as to amount of text, but what's actually written for each house, although short, is quite unusual. The company is apparently trying to push social engineering along with new homes. For example, here's the text accompanying the photo of the Van Buren model: "Clean men, both of hand and heart, are invariably the product of happy home unions. It is around the harmonious hearthstone where the glow of mutual interest and understanding temper the finer senses that men mould character of sterling worth. It would be a violation of a natural law if homes in The Van Buren class should produce other than men of clean purpose." And here's the text for the Dumont Duplex: "The Dumont cannot be surpassed as a double house, and will make homes of exceptional advantages and refinements for those whose experience and education have taught them the value of good fellowship

and neighborly kindness. Learning to co-operate with our fellow creatures is the secret of overcoming selfishness and all of its poisoning effects upon our better selves." Well! Is that the best reason for living in multi-family housing you've ever heard? This book is late enough into the century that we can take interior bathrooms for granted; the 1920's are quite modern compared to 15 years earlier. A plan book from 1912, for example, still has half the houses without indoor baths, and many not wired for electricity. On the other hand, there are not yet garages featured automatically with the houses, and the kitchen stoves still need a chimney vented to the outside. I greatly enjoy comparing books from a few years apart, to see the progress being made. Many of the houses have the "built-in" features that became popular in the teens: built-in fold-down ironing boards, breakfast nooks with built-in bench seating, laundry chutes from upstairs to downstairs, built-in bookcases next to the fireplace or between the living room and dining room. There are quite a few houses that seem ahead of their time as to modern features. The Van Buren has two bathrooms upstairs, one for the master bedroom and the other for all the other bedrooms. Both bathrooms have both a bathtub and a shower stall. In fact, looking at the floor plan for the Van Buren, one could imagine living in it today fairly easily, with just the addition of a bit more kitchen counter space. The Chesterfield, likewise, is a house I'd love to live in, with not only two full bathrooms, but built-in bookcases downstairs, and built-in window seats upstairs in the bedrooms, a walk-through pantry with more built-in cabinets than most, and beautiful balconies. The Webster has a "radio room" off the dining room - presumably for the hobbyist! It also has a downstairs powder room as well as the usual upstairs bathroom. The Westhaven offers a dumbwaiter to the basement (presumably where there is storage), a separate laundry room, a downstairs washroom with both toilet and a double sink and an upstairs bathroom, as well as a sewing room, a clothes chute, an indoor refrigerator instead of an ice box that has to be near the back door, and a waste-burner disposal. (Remember, this is before we were worried about air pollution! A waste burner was very modern then!) Most of the houses still have the refrigerators situated right by the back door, still assuming the need for ice delivery, and many with slots for milk delivery as well, but there were the first few real refrigerators, as well as real washing machines, at this time, and this company appears to be forward thinking enough to have designed houses for these brand-new conveniences. In summary: a must for continuity from "old" houses to "modern" and also for the unusual text which will keep you amused. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic descriptions! By Penny Thoughtful This book does a good job of showcasing plans for houses of a variety of sizes and layouts. What makes it stand out from other books of 1920's house plans on my shelf is the descriptions! The advertisements are wordy, trying to convince the buyer that if he builds his own house, his wife will love him more and his children will grow up to be better citizens. Some of the descriptions are hilarious and others are almost touching, given today's society's relative ignorance of the concept of civic duty.

Originally published in 1925 by the Harris, McHenry Baker Company of Elmira, New York, this authentic plan book advertises 101 "modern homes," selected from several thousand submitted designs. Chosen for aesthetic appeal as well as utility of arrangement and economy of construction, the houses encompass a truly impressive array of sizes and styles. Now this meticulous reproduction of the company's plan book offers modern readers a look back at these charming residential homes of the 1920s. Detailed floor plans with measurements and an actual photograph of the completed dwelling accompany each model. Designs include "The Stratford," a Tudor-style brick-and-stucco home with a library and servants' quarters; "The Northcliff," a three-bedroom Dutch colonial with a sun parlor; "The Belvedere" and "The Strathmore," attractive two-family homes; and many others. Invaluable for restoring residences remodeled in the past, this handy volume will be of particular interest to owners of houses built in the 1920s as well as to restorers and preservationists in search of authentic plans.