

# FURNITURE

American furniture styles were greatly influenced by the English as well as by the European immigrants who settled here. Over the past 400 years or so, styles of American furniture evolved through a number of important periods and influential eras. While it would be impractical to include all of the influences on American furniture styles and construction, an abridged summary is provided here in the hope that it may help give you a better idea of how furniture styles have evolved and useful information on the characteristics of certain styles that continue to be mimicked and admired today.

- **Jacobean (1600-1690)** – Much of American furniture in its early days was based on this medieval English style of furniture. Sturdy furniture with rather straight lines, dark finishes and ornate carvings are characteristic of Jacobean styles.
- **Early American (1640-1700)** – Based largely on English, French, Scandinavian and Spanish styles, Early American furniture in this period was built from readily available local furniture woods and built more for rugged comfort than refined elegance.
- **William and Mary (1690-1725)** – A tribute to royals William and Mary of England, furniture crafted in this style used ornately turned legs with a ball or Spanish foot at the end of each leg, as well as caned seats and beautiful Oriental lacquers. William and Mary styles later influenced Colonial furniture.
- **Queen Anne (1700-1755)** – Queen Anne styles are based on William and Mary period furniture with some refinements. Queen Anne furniture is moderately proportioned, often constructed from Walnut, and is characterized by a variety of feet, including claw and ball, scroll, spade and square feet, as well as wing back and fiddle-back chairs. Over time, the Queen Anne period evolved from the very ornate and decorative, appealing to the elite society, to refined and comfortable, yet delicate: equally appealing to a much broader base of society. Georgian furniture (1714-1760) also appeared during this time, and is considered a more ornate version of the Queen Anne style.
- **Colonial (1700-1780)** – American Colonial furniture styles were influenced by some of the style characteristics of the William and Mary and Queen Anne periods. During the mid to latter part of the Colonial era, designs were also influenced by the strength and simplicity of country made furniture designs by Thomas Chippendale (1718-1779) of England. In the United States, the Chippendale style was a more elaborate version of Queen Anne style with cabriole legs, ball-and-claw feet, and broken pediment scroll tops on taller pieces.
- **Georgian (1714-1760)** – Coinciding with the reign of Kings George I and George II of England from 1714-1760, in terms of furniture, works from this period can be described as more ornate versions of Queen Anne furniture, with heavier proportions, elaborate carvings and gilding.

- **Federal (1780-1820)** – It was during the Federal era, around the birth of an independent America, when some of the most beautiful and elegant antique furniture was produced. Federal era furniture in America was often constructed of cherry and sometimes red-stained walnut, unlike British Federal furniture, which was often mahogany. Many American Federal furniture works incorporated symbols of the new-found American freedom, like eagles and stars. Some of the important, influential furniture designers of this period included Duncan Phyfe, John Shaw, John Dolan and Samuel McIntire. The styles of English designers Thomas Sheraton and George Hepplewhite also influenced American Federal design. Outstanding examples of American Federal furniture have been preserved and are on display in museums and historic homes in many of the historic districts around the nation's capital, such as Georgetown, Alexandria, and Rosslyn, Virginia.
- **Shaker (1820-1860)** – Shaker furniture represents a substantial contribution of the utilitarian lifestyle of the religious group, the United Society of Believers. Living in self-contained communities, Shaker craftsmen were responsible for creating “beauty through utility”. Shaker furniture was often constructed from maple, and sometimes cherry, birch, and walnut: furniture woods that were readily available within their communities. Shaker chairs, including side chairs used at meetings, and rocking chairs for the elderly, sewing rockers for Shaker women, made without arms to allow access to the sewing basket, are all important contributions to American furniture design. Shaker communities continue to exist today, where furniture craftsmen continue to construct beautifully practical, handmade furniture pieces in small numbers, with careful attention to detail. Shaker style is characterized by straight tapered legs (tilted legs on chairs, with ball and socket construction) and mushroom shaped wooden knobs.
- **Victorian (1840-1910)** – Extending for a period of 70 years during the reign of Queen Victoria, the Victorian era in England saw noted changes from its early days to late Victorian style. During its early years, no single style emerged as dominant. Instead, furniture was styled around influences from earlier periods, including Gothic, Tudor, Elizabethan, Renaissance, English Rococo, and Neo Classical. Ornamentation was extensive, and, in the opinion of some, a bit overdone. Mahogany and rosewood were often used, and, to a lesser extent, oak in furniture designed for the masses. Iron and paper maches were also used in some pieces. During the latter part of the Victorian era, the Arts and Crafts and the Aesthetic or Art Furniture movement were born. A number of antique styles were also revived. Late Victorian furniture was known for its straight lines and solid woods with dark stains and less upholstery than earlier Victorian pieces. Painted decorations replaced carvings. The Victorian period was the first furniture style to be mass produced.
- **Arts and Craft (1880-1910)** – Furniture from the Arts and Craft movement (also referred to as Mission style) is characterized by simple utilitarian design, and construction, just as Shaker design was centered on utility. William Morris and John Ruskin inspired the movement, which was in part meant to restore the craft of handmade furniture. Victorian Arts and Crafts style furniture in England was handmade in a country or farmhouse style and often looked good, but in some cases, was uncomfortable for sitting.

No Furniture Style Guide would be complete without mentioning at least a few other styles. For example, Pennsylvania Dutch style is a reflection of the Pennsylvania Dutch way of life - simple, utilitarian and focused on quality craftsmanship. It is characterized by colorful hand painted motifs, massive cupboards of walnut or cherry, sometimes also painted with fruit or floral decorations. Like the Shakers, Amish, Mennonite and Pennsylvania Dutch communities still exist today and the furnishings, rugs, quilts and other products they produce have retained their exceptional quality craftsmanship and beauty. Scandinavian Contemporary style originated from Danish and Swedish craftsmen. It emphasizes utility (function over form) with straight or sometimes gently curving lines and little to no ornamentation.

# AMISH



# 1800's

shaker (1800's/1940 updated)

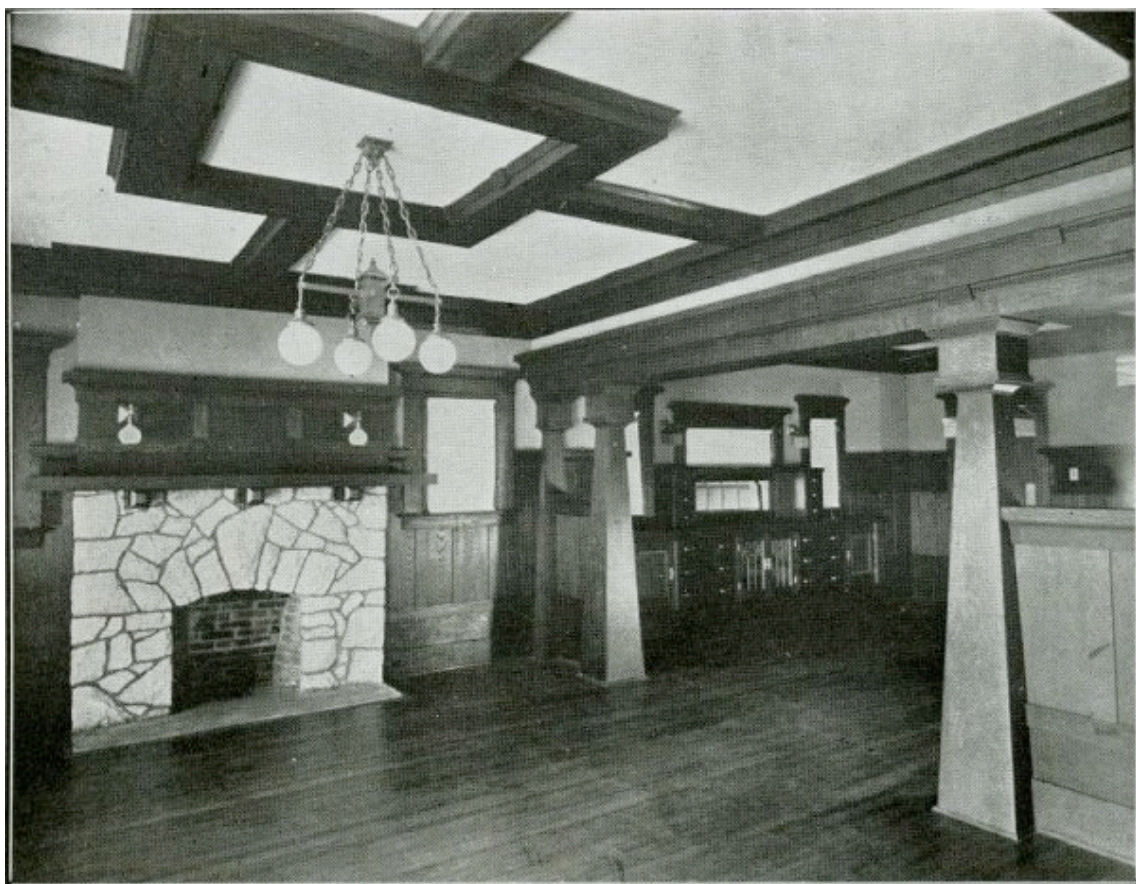




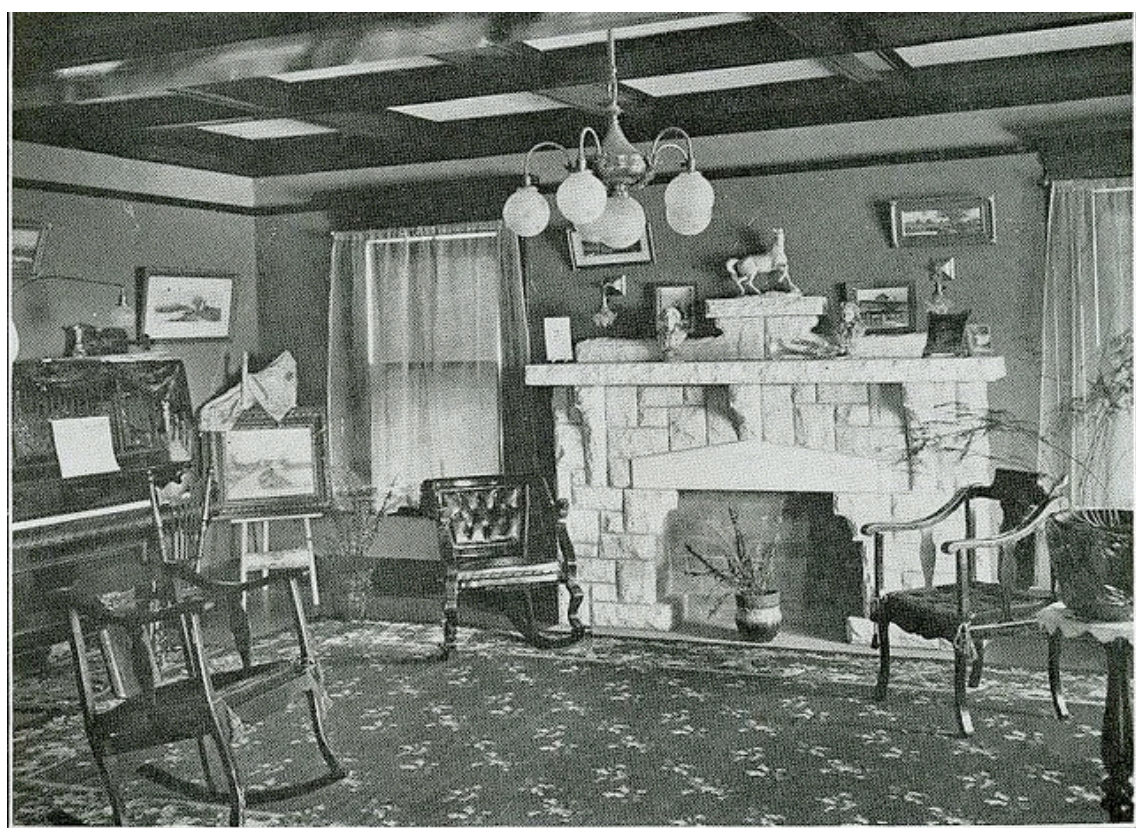
## 1900's







Interior, No. 551.

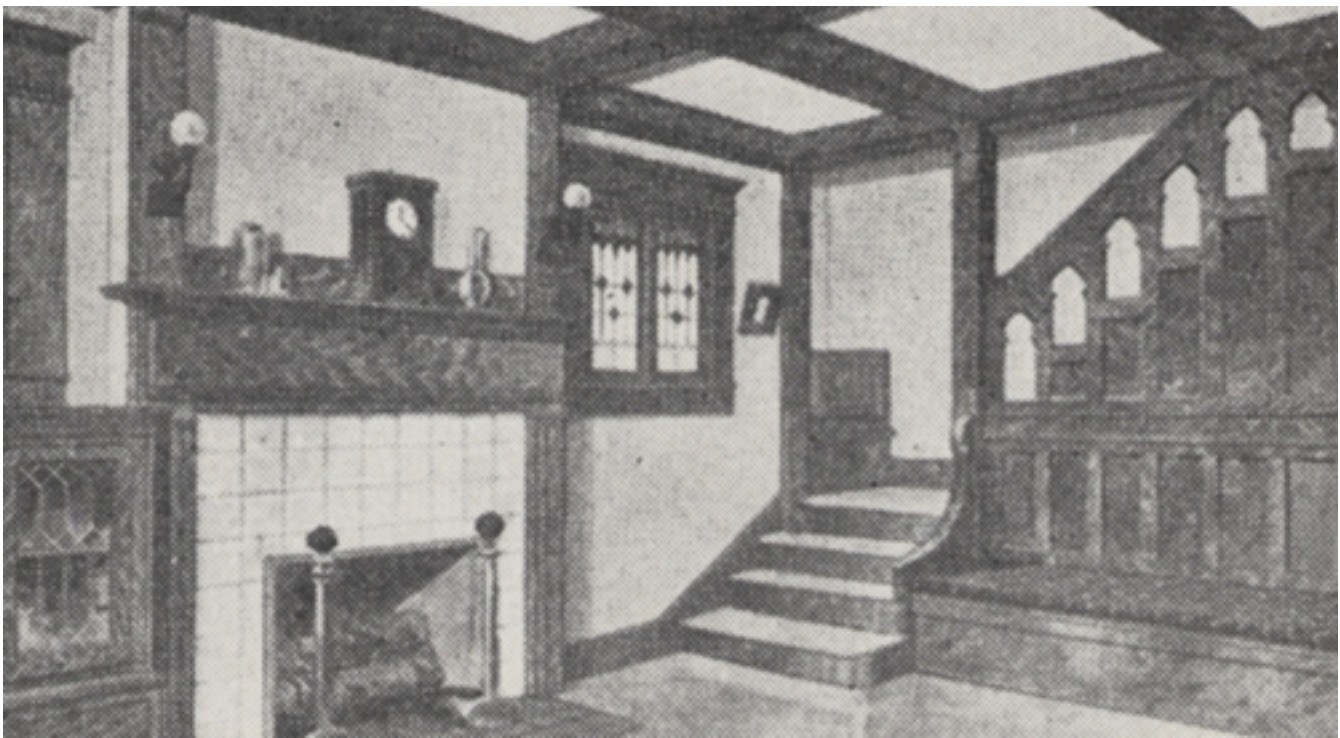


Interior No. 2.









dinning room





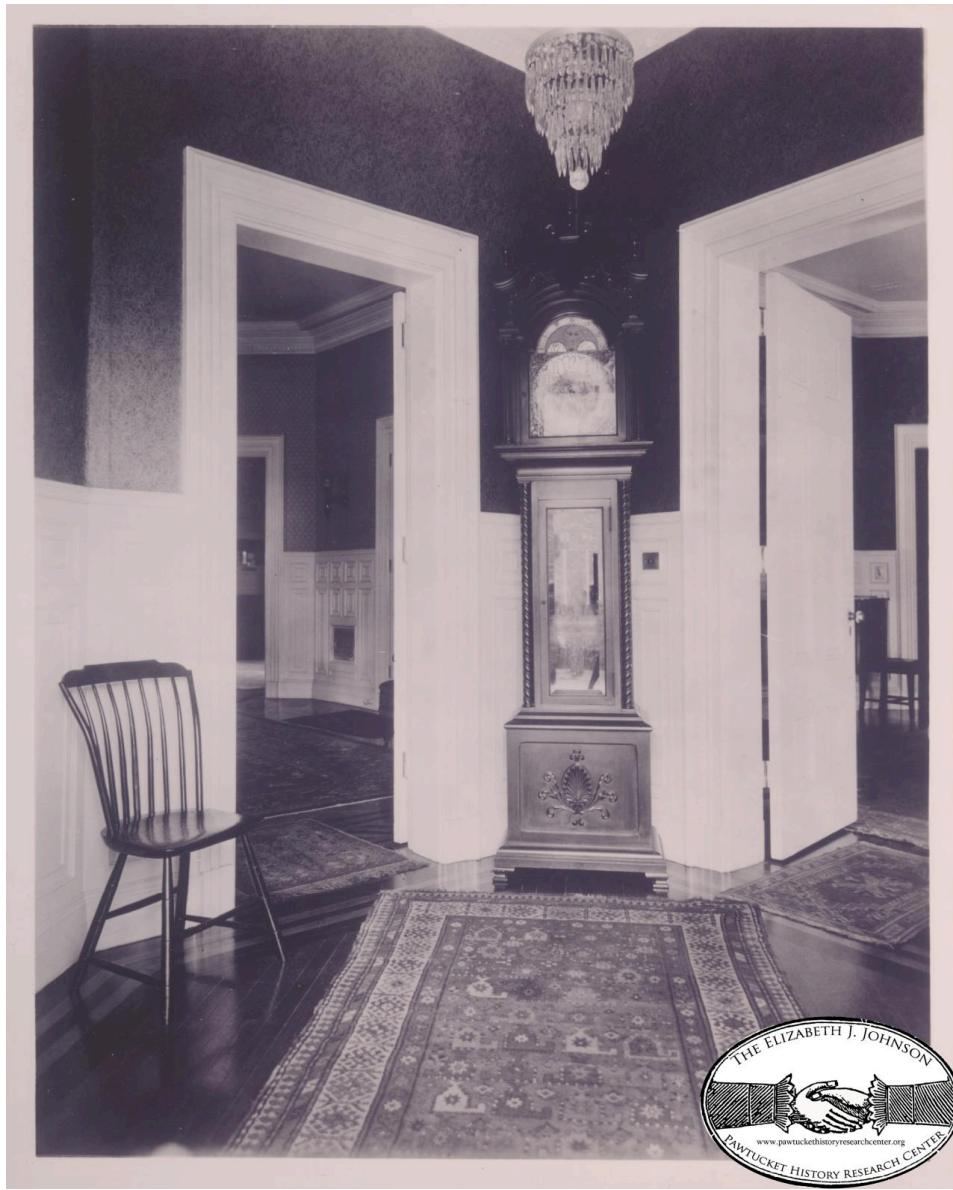
living room



parlor



front hall





## 1920's



1930's





1940's





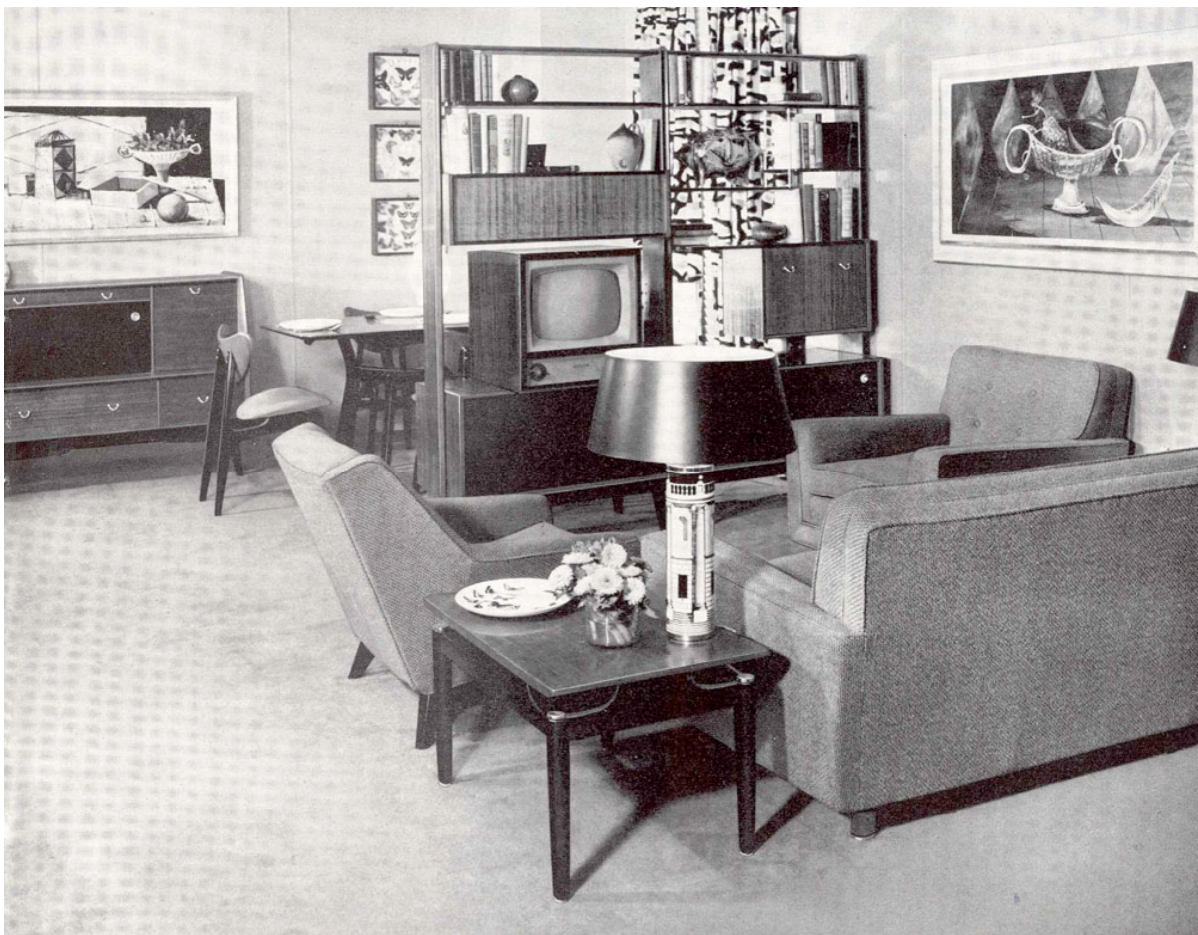


# 1950's



ROOM BY INTERIOR DECORATING DEPARTMENT, RICH'S, ATLANTA













## 1960's



**Armchair, Charles Eames**  
€425.00



**Coffee Table, Acton Björn  
and Sigvard Bernadotte**  
€635.00



**Ceiling Light Glass, 1960s**  
€75.00



**Sofa, 1960s**  
€795.00



**Ceiling Light, 1960s**  
€125.00



**Coffee Table, 1960s**  
€260.00

