



Uncommon Vernacular: The Early Houses of Jefferson County, West Virginia, 1735-1835

John C. Allen Jr.

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Within the picturesque borders of Jefferson County, West Virginia remain the vestiges of a history filled with Civil War battles and political rebellion. Yet also woven into the historical landscape of this small county nestled within the Shenandoah Valley is an unusual collection of historic homes.

In this fascinating architectural exploration, John C. Allen, Jr. details his expansive seven-year survey of Jefferson County's historic residences. By focusing on dwellings built from the mid-eighteenth century to the arrival of the railroad and canal in 1835, Allen unfolds the unique story of this area's early building traditions and architectural innovations. The 250 buildings included in this work—from the plantation homes of the Washington family to the log houses of yeomen farmers—reveal the unique development of this region, as Allen categorizes structures and establishes patterns of construction, plan, and style.

Allen's refreshing perspective illuminates the vibrant vernacular architecture of Jefferson County, connecting the housing of this area to the rich history of the Shenandoah Valley. Varying features of house siting, plan types, construction techniques, building materials, outbuildings, and exterior and interior detailing illustrate the blending of German, Scots-Irish, English, and African cultures into a distinct, regional style.

Adorned with over seven hundred stylish photographs by Walter Smalling and elegant drawings, floor plans, and maps by Andrew Lewis, *Uncommon Vernacular* explores and preserves this historic area's rich architectural heritage.

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