



The Pearl S. Buck Foundation, Inc.

DEDICATED TO THE EDUCATION AND GENERAL WELFARE OF THE DISPLACED CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

*A Walking Tour of
Pearl S. Buck's Home
in the words of
Pearl S. Buck*

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This text is transcribed from a tape made by Pearl S. Buck on April 8, 1972
at Green Hills Farm, in Dublin, Pennsylvania.

Walking from room to room, Miss Buck vividly describes the treasures in
this, her home, where she has written most of her books.

Together with her late husband, Richard J. Walsh, she raised her international
family of nine here.

We welcome you to Green Hills - home of Pearl Buck, and we thank you for
sharing this memorable day with us.

The Board of Directors and Staff of
The Pearl S. Buck Foundation

You came in through the front gate where the two big stone pillars are and then you came up a winding driveway. On your right you passed a very large barn. It is an exceptionally fine barn and it looks on the outside just as it did when we came here to live.* Inside there are many changes.

You might like to know how I found this house. One has a feeling, I think, for fine houses. I looked at many houses but I knew the region where I wanted to live was some medium point between the mountains, the sea and my retarded child's school. This was almost an equal distance of about eighty miles from all of these points. I made up my mind I wanted a stone house because I wasn't used to living in wooden houses. In China our houses were all stone, brick or adobe. I first saw the picture of this house in an agency in New York, the Strout Agency. I went in and asked if they had any farm or farm houses in this area of Pennsylvania. As I entered the door of the office, at the right were some folders. On a folder was a picture of a house just as small as an ordinary stamp. I looked at that house and I thought, that is exactly the house I want. So I went in and asked them about it and they told me it was in Pennsylvania, it had a brook, which was one of my requirements; it was on a hillside, which was another requirement; and it had woods, some trees which was something else I wanted. I came down to see it and with me came my husband-to-be, before we were married. I fell in love with the house immediately though it was in a state of, I won't say disrepair, because it is a very well built house, but it had not been occupied for seventeen years.

My fiancé insisted that I look at some other houses, which I did that day. But this house was the one that had taken my heart at first sight. You fall in love with a house just as you do with a person and so I said, this must be the house. The real estate agent who accompanied me said that I could put down \$100 and then pay the rest of it if I decided on the house. I did that. I might say that there were about 48 acres at that time with the house, which later I increased to about five hundred acres because I ran a farm here for twenty years. We had a total of seven farmhouses which were used for the farm manager and other farm people to live in. I wanted a guernsey farm and created it. We raised prize cattle and lived almost entirely from the farm but, of course, that was years later.

The big barn you saw is one of the finest, I think, in the whole area. It was the usual barn inside with hay lofts and machinery places, and so on. Its date is 1827. Of course, now when you go in, you will see, as I said, something very different. It was made into a recreation room, not only for my own children as they grew older, but it became a community place and many people use it for parties, weddings and various local gatherings.** It has also a freezing room necessary for farm, and now garden use, and the generator for electricity for the whole place is there. From the outside, however, the barn looks just as it did when it was built more than a century ago.

Then you come around the driveway. When I first saw it, there was the barn but there was no driveway and a road ran quite near the house, between the barn and the house. I remember asking the real estate agent if that road was used and he said no, it wasn't used at all, although it was a public road, and so I felt quite safe about it. Later, I found that he was wrong because when we came to live here, immediately a great number of people began to use that road and I had to have it declared a

* Stained glass panel (Sydenstricker, Precious Gem) moved from Delancey Place in 1974

** Converted to offices in 1974.

private road, which I did later when we had small children. But the house itself looks much the same as it did, except it has had its additions.

Now, we will look at the dining room first:

I am sitting in the dining room at this moment. It was the kitchen, the original old farm kitchen. The same fireplace is here. I'm sorry to say that it didn't draw very well and we had it filled in with stone. It is the original fireplace, however, and the mantel piece is the same as it was. We put in a brick floor because the floor was gone, and later on, we took into the house a little porch, which has now become part of the dining room. We also added the few feet which is now at the front of the house.

In this room, to the left of the fireplace, as you face it, are closets for silver, glassware, dishes, and linen and so on. I will mention especially, the grandfather clock. It is a very fine one and has stood here for many decades. It was bought from a friend and it once stood in the house of Joseph Chew, in Philadelphia.

Under the window, is a deacon's bench, an antique of the early Pennsylvania type. The corner cupboard belongs to the same era. I bought that cupboard in New York many, many years ago and it contains, as you see, luster ware, and so on.

The silver that you see here in this room, with the one exception, is mostly English. One or two are early American pieces. Most of them are English, however, and the wall brackets are English pewter. We had them made into wall lights. There are two water benches of the early Pennsylvania type against one wall and I don't know that there is anything notable about them, except that they are very fine examples of their period. The two red glass bowls for sweets, covered, are English. The chest on the other side of the room, a tall chest with drawers, is a very fine antique of the Pennsylvania type; the tray and the soup tureen on top of it are English Sheffield plate. In the corner of the room is a small chest for silver. The table, of course, is not an original. The table that was here was a long Pennsylvania tavern type and that was what the children grew up with.* This is a modern table my daughter preferred for her family when she moved in. So that is something new.

On the mantelpiece is an old pewter flower holder from China. It's up there because it leaks so I have to keep it as an ornament instead of a flower bowl. The dishes are pewter and clay pottery, which I brought from China. They are made in a special area of China and are peasant work, but they are fine potteryware from one of the northwestern provinces.

The breakfast table is an antique of the Pembroke type. On the wall, under one of the beams, hangs an iron picture of a grapevine. It is Chinese and is more of a craft than an art. The story is that a group of artists was once exiled from their home area in China to a very poor mining area. I don't know why they were exiled, that's what the story says. When they reached this area where iron was their only material, they began to work in iron. Two very fine examples of this work are in the Foundation house, my Philadelphia townhouse, in the library.** This one is very good, but it is not as fine as the ones in the townhouse library.

* Tavern table has been returned to dining room.

** Now hanging in living room.

I ought to call your attention to the small figure on top of the clock, which I forgot to mention when I was talking about the clock, because it is a little European figure and doesn't really belong there. It was given to me by an antiquarian Rudolph Hommel. He was an old friend and spent seven years in China. He furnished me with many of the things that are in this house, but he found this little European figure in some strange sort of curio shop in Yang Chow, China - a city across the river from my home and a city where Marco Polo had been Governor for three years, centuries before. My friend asked the curio dealer when the little figure had been brought there. The man said he didn't know. It had always been there, even in his grandfather's time. My friend bought it for a few pennies and when he came back to the United States, he sent it to Germany to a museum to analyze. There they told him it was indeed European and probably had once decorated a piece of European furniture which had been sent to China. This was all that had been left. Perhaps the piece of furniture was stolen and this was pawned, or something - I don't know.

This has been our family dining room and a very serviceable room. When things were spilled the brick floor didn't bear any permanent marks as a result. I remember one time, my oldest son - of course now grown with children of his own - wishing to be helpful - he was about five, and at Thanksgiving dinner - he went into the kitchen himself and brought in a large pumpkin pie which, unfortunately, he overturned on the floor - but with no harm except perhaps a little labor! That's the reason the floor was made of brick, so the children couldn't do any damage. I forgot to mention the piece from Denmark. Just over the other table, which is at the opposite end from the breakfast table, there is a small serving table and over it is a lovely tray which hangs on the wall as a picture, an example of Danish woodwork. I bought that in Denmark at the same time that I bought the wooden plates which are looking a little worn now, but they are here, on the shelf in one of the water benches.

I believe this covers the room fairly adequately and we won't go into the kitchen because that is a modern addition. The only piece of great value in that kitchen - well, there are two pieces; one is the long table which was my husband's desk. It is a Pennsylvania antique. It was my husband's desk when he was not yet my husband. He was only my publisher and the table was in his New York office. I saw him sitting behind it and that was the first time I ever saw him.

The kitchen is very much a family room and so we put it there. The Franklin stove in the kitchen is a treasure. It's one of the earliest of the Franklin stoves and we light it at breakfast in winter, if we have breakfast there. The children always have their breakfast there. It depends on where I am, where I have my breakfast. But the kitchen is a very cheerful place in winter and the stove is a miracle of - what shall I say, cheer? - on a snowy day. Above the stove hangs an illustration, done by a very good artist, of my children's book Johnny Jack and His Beginnings. Originally a Russian painting hung there, of which I was very fond - Troika horses in the snow. That painting is now in my Vermont home, Danby House.

Beyond the kitchen, is the utility room, added as a mud room for the children.* The old pump still works. It was here when we came. On the stone wall hang two aerie photographs, but taken too early to show the house as it is now. My husband gave those to me as a birthday gift.

*Now the reception room.

We enter the living room from the dining room and just to the right is an old French armoire. We use it for children's toys - first for my children and now for the grandchildren or visiting children. To the left of this entrance is a Pembroke table with early American chairs. Also there is a very fine table on the opposite side of the room. On either side of the front door you will see hanging two black and white - what appear to be pictures, but they are not. They are Japanese and they are cut paper designs for the printing of silks and brocades...very rare. On the wall above the large antique American tavern table, you will see a modern Indian painting. It was done by a modern Indian artist and is of Juhu Beach, outside of Bombay, where I lived for some time in India.

On the table is a large tray of copper. It's an Egyptian tray and was a wedding present to my husband and me from his business partners. The brass bowl, which holds flowers usually, is Indian. I brought it from India on a visit there. There are two early English Georgian silver candlesticks. I think they are Sheffield. Those are genuine antiques and very nice ones. The floors in this room are all the original oak floors as are the beams. I don't think these beams were ever meant to be uncovered but we took the ceiling off in order to make the room a little higher. The upstairs rooms all have beamed ceilings which are of finer beams than these. These beams are original, except the two heaviest ones which run across the middle of the rooms to brace the house and the other two, we added when we made an addition to the living room. To the right as we enter, you will see a corner table of pine. This was my grandfather's work table. He liked to tinker with watches and jewelry and it was sent to me from my birthplace in West Virginia and may have to return there if the birthplace is finished in time for such a bequest. It ought to go back into my grandfather's room, I think, some day. On this table is a brass tray which is Indian and above this table, on the right wall, is a Redfield painting. The American artist is one of our best. He was a friend of mine, lived in New Hope, and when he was very old, before his death, I bought from him several fine paintings. The painting of "Spring," near the terrace door, between the windows, was one of his favorites, and is mine, too. Between the windows near the corner table is the clock shelf, original. The clock is an antique but we had it electrified for family convenience. By the way, I must not forget to call your attention to the two drawers under the windows on this wall. I am told by old settlers that these were money drawers and that the farm help was paid each week through the upper part of the Dutch door between the windows.

Incidentally, when we changed the wooden panels of the upper part of this door to glass, in order to get more light, we found written with a soft lead pencil inside the panel the following inscription:

"I, Joseph Housekeeper, made and worked this door. On August 13, 1850,
I married Magdalena, my true love."

The magazine table in front of the couch under the painting is a "marriage," as antique collectors call it, for the base is that of an old Pennsylvania Dutch table, and the top, also old, was our original dining room table, before we turned the farm kitchen into the present dining room, as you have just seen.

The carpets on the floors were all made in Peking, China, and were in my house in China for some years, before I brought them here. They were sent to me during the

wartime, at my request, because I had left the China house meaning to go back to it and I never did go back. When the war broke out, I asked my Chinese friends to roll the rugs up and send them to me and they reached me safely until they reached New York. But in between New York and here, five rolls were lost. I couldn't imagine that, so I wrote to the head of the American Express Company for explanation. He agreed that it was quite incredible and please to give him time. I gave him three months and he found them and sent them here, and here I have used them ever since.

The fireplace, of course, is not original. There was a fireplace here once, because the chimney was here, but we had the stone from our own region made into a fireplace and chimney piece. Above it hangs a painting by a talented Italian artist. It is a painting of two very fine Tang horses of the Tang Dynasty. During that period, the arts of China flourished. These two horses were borrowed from a museum. Of course such horses in the original stone would be fabulously expensive. This is a very fine painting and very fine specimens of the Tang horses. They were loaned by a Chinese antique dealer. The polo riders are Mongol women, and the ponies are Mongol ponies. A little brass urn stands just under them and that comes from Korea.

The piano, a Steinway, we had specially made for our New York apartment, where the furniture was English modern. It's been used in this house for a number of years. And, let me see, what else - the painting over the television set is by a distinguished English artist - and the painting over the piano is by a Pennsylvania Dutchman, a very good artist, William Baum.* He is no longer living...I think that covers the living room.

The door to the terrace opens to the place where we spend a great deal of time in summer. My husband and I used, also, to spend a great deal of time on the lower terrace which is really a courtyard. My husband said he was certain I wouldn't be happy until I had a courtyard and somehow or other we managed to have it. We joined the office building where he had an office, I had one, and there was a third for our secretaries. Incidentally, the office he chose is the oldest part of the house, is pre-Revolutionary and is probably the first building.

I might say that the overhead lamp here in the living room is the base of an ancient Japanese lantern. It was very cleverly designed by my antiquarian friend, Rudolph Hommel. We used to have couches on both sides of the fireplace and this magazine table was between so we had that strong light when we played games with the children in the evening.

At one time, on both sides of the chimney piece, there hung some very handsome Chinese paintings, which at present are in the drawing room of the Delancey Place house.**

Immediately as you enter the main library you go down from the living room three or four steps. Both libraries are additions, made about 1930. The rugs here are Chinese, too, and were in my home in China. The library table is an early Pennsylvania antique and a very beautiful one. You will see that the lamps are, of course, early

*These two paintings have been replaced since 1972.

**Returned to original location.

Pennsylvania pottery. One of them has been broken. This happened the night that Ed Murrow was here interviewing me. He had about forty men here and about fifty miles of cable. A man broke this vase, but it was cleverly mended by my son-in-law. On the table is a Chinese sweets dish, a blue one which is old and came from my home in China. The other things are a Chinese pen holder and ruler, an Italian writing book, and a large pottery flower bowl. You'll see, especially, the Korean chess set is stone - given to me by an old friend in Korea. We are all chess players in my family. This set stands on a very interesting antique table, but it can also be made into a chair. The other chairs are all early American and the globe is one that my husband chose for me decades and decades ago. Particularly interesting to me is the painting over the fireplace which is an original painting - in fact, the original illustration of John Galsworthy's first short story published in this country. At that time my husband was Editor of Collier's magazine and he introduced Galsworthy to America through the short stories which he published.

This painting illustrates the story of a dancer who was held over one stormy night in a nunnery where she danced for the nuns. There is a little novice in the audience who is making up her mind whether to take her vows the next day. After she saw the dance, she ran away and joined her lover - instead of becoming a nun.

Under one of the windows is a beautiful old Pennsylvania treasure chest. I suppose it was a money chest, but we keep newspaper and kindling wood in it which is a desecration, I suppose. The lights on the walls are English pewter plates backing the electric lights.

This library was built by an old Pennsylvania Dutch builder and it is extremely strong. It was designed by a famous architect. The two glass doors open on the courtyard which in the summer is sort of an extra living room. It was grass once but the children muddled it, especially in the springtime, so we put in stone. There is a fountain there which has stood so many years that regularly its arms fall off in the winter but they are glued back on again by the gardener in the spring. This courtyard is a lovely place in the summertime. A peony terrace adds to its beauty.

The books in the library are just the family collections. As I said, there are biographies on both sides of the fireplace and the new books, or more or less new, over by the doors. The fiction is in this middle section and the politics and sociology there by the window on the right. The children's books are to the left of the steps and to the right are the encyclopedias and big books. The stairs go up to the children's rooms, or what were once the children's rooms - mostly grandchildren now.

We enter the small library. It contains our rare books. The painting over the fireplace is a "double" of the one that hangs in the library at the Delancey Place house.* When the Danish artist Quistgaard did my portrait, much against my will but at my husband's will, he asked if he could duplicate it for himself. I said yes. Later, he died, and his widow sold it to me. It hangs here. The original was painted about 1934....There is a very fine antique ship above the big window..The chandelier is an old chandelier, used originally in my husband's offices in New York. There is an early American chair here beside the dropleaf table by the door and an early American bucket that we use as a wastebasket. I don't think there is anything else of particular

*The painting from Delancey Place has been returned to Mr. Walsh's office.

interest in this room, except the books, and the old Pennsylvania pottery on the windowsill.

Some of the books here are very good - very rare and unusual. The rest of them are shut away in the closets. This room was designed by my husband, and is used mostly when one wishes to read alone. It is more of a reading room than anything else now.

Out of the window you see the big black walnut tree. When we first came here, there were only two trees. One was the maple tree by the kitchen and the other is this big black walnut. All the other trees we planted so we have a forest of trees of our own as well as the old woods that were here originally across the brook.

And from this room we go through a connecting passageway to the office rooms - the middle being the one my husband used and which is the oldest part of the house.

The passageway is floored with brick. It is open in the summer but closed in the winter, for we keep large plants here.

Now we are in my office. Here I have written most of my books.

The view from this big window is my favorite view. There are usually ducks on the big pond at the bottom of the hill. The upper pond is full of gold fish - some of them nearly eight to ten inches long - they have been living there so long. And then, of course, you see the swimming pool* and the rose garden. The trees were all planted by us. I must say I am so Chinese that no landscape is perfect to me without water and so I made the water visible to this window. As we entered, by the way, the door just to the left, where the steps are, there is hanging a little narrow picture, which is of cut paper. The Chinese like to cut paper and decorate their houses with it, particularly on feast days. That's all I have of such things.

The stairs go to a balcony where I used to do my sculpturing. I always did the heads of my children, and some of them are on the window there, as you see. Two of my sons one day when they were small and naughty, broke their heads, so I have only the face of my eldest son left there. The other had to be thrown away.

The rugs in this room are Tibetan. I bought them in Darjeeling, India, where there was a refugee group of Tibetans who were making rugs to support themselves. The dyes are all vegetable dyes. This rug has faded somewhat. It was a deep pink, but I don't mind its being faded. On the wall just on the right of the door as we entered, there is a very fine old landscape scroll - by an unknown Chinese artist, but it is a very fine painting. Underneath it, there is a little table made by my eldest daughter when she was working with school crafts and it is, therefore, valuable to me. Over the window where the heads are, is a piece of beautiful Chinese calligraphy - an excerpt from the classics of a favorite passage of mine which says that "all under heaven are one family." I like to keep it there to remember an old Chinese friend. The two last characters on the second line from the right and the two top characters on the third line from the right, are "Tien Hsia Wei Gung" - "Tien" is the word for heaven and "Hsia" is the word for under heaven and "Wei" is are and Gung is one. And my new novel which is coming out next year is called All Under Heaven.

* The pool has since been filled in.

There is a little silhouette of me done by Rudolph Hommel, my antiquarian friend. Above the mantelpiece, there is a very fine photograph of an Indian Donor Princess. I am not sure whether it was given to me in India or whether I bought it there. I think I bought it in India. She is called a Donor Princess because she gave the money for one of the ancient temples in India. Underneath is a little sculptured reproduction of the great trinity in the Elephanta Caves in India, near Bombay. I have been in India many times and this time I was making a film. We were working in the Elephanta Caves and there was a great head there of Shiva with the three faces. I bought this little reproduction to remind me of Shiva - God the Destroyer, God the Creator and God the Mother. The table in front of the desk is an antique. The lamp is early Pennsylvania pottery. The desks are strictly utilitarian and that's where I do my work. Most of my books have been written here and two desks together give me ample space. I collect stones and my grandchildren take them away sometimes, but you will see a very knobby stone on a brass tray, that I picked up from the bottom of the river Jumna, which is one of the two great Indian rivers. It was very dry when I was there. I picked this one up and brought it here to use as a paper weight. There is nothing unusual about these desks except that they are good to work on.

You will see that this room opens onto two greenhouses - one provides our winter cut flowers so that we have flowers all year round in the rooms. The other one goes into the Camellia House where there is a little fountain in order to keep the air moist. That's one of my joys and delights because all during the winter we have beautiful camellias, rose and pink, and white. I thought that I couldn't live without them because they were one of my favorite flowers in China and so we built this in addition for them.

To the left is a framed letter from the former Ambassador from China, Dr. Hu Shih, now dead, congratulating my husband on the 25th anniversary of Asia Magazine which at that time we owned.

On the wall behind my desk are two Indian paintings done on a leaf of a particular tree and I framed them. They came to me really as cards of congratulation, but I framed them because I think them interesting. The painting is done on the dry veins of a special tree in India. At the door of the Camellia House is a very old Japanese print and on the other side, near the greenhouse door, is rather a charming scroll, given to me by a Chinese friend, who painted it.

Over the balcony, there hangs a Chinese rug that is not beautiful in design but I value it because it was made for me by a group of Chinese peasants who were just beginning to create an industry for their village. They gave me the first rug that they made. It always curls up a little so I hang it rather than put it on the floor but the design was theirs and they thought it was beautiful. I think it is beautiful because they made it and gave it to me.

I don't think there is anything else in this room - the chairs are strictly for comfort and for use and the things on the desk are things I use almost daily. The books are mostly my reference books and change from time to time depending on what book I am working on. And, I believe that's all.

Beginning on this passageway between my office and my husband's, you will see, on the right, a photograph of my very dear old friend of many, many years, now dead, William Ernest Hocking, who was Professor of Philosophy for years at Harvard. He visited me first in my Chinese home in Nanking and followed my career thereafter. He helped me in many ways for many decades.

In this passageway, I ought to mention, too, besides the picture of Professor Hocking - what shall I call it - a poster - from Rockingham Castle in England. It is a reproduction of an original one by Charles Dickens. Friends of mine, Lady Faith and Sir Michael Culme-Seymour, live in Rockingham Castle. I visit there whenever I go to England and they gave me that reproduction. In this castle Charles Dickens wrote Bleak House. It was one of his novels, as you know, and he used that castle for background and it was a Royal Seat for 500 years. Queen Elizabeth the First visited there as did King John and others - a charming place to visit now for it is one of the most beautiful small castles in England and dates back to the ninth century. I was very pleased to have this poster, for Charles Dickens was my earliest inspiration as a writer and my first experience with the West. I think I was about five when I read Oliver Twist, and cried a great deal and read it over again and cried some more. After that I read Charles Dickens through faithfully every year until I was about 15.

Of that early set of Dickens from my childhood, which was in our library in China there are a few volumes that have survived the revolutionary wars which destroyed my home (it was a rather dingy blue-gray set - I wore it out completely) and they are now in the Delancey Place house at the Foundation in Philadelphia in the alcove where there are some other things from my home.*

This little passageway was the smokehouse where the settlers used to smoke hams.

Above the fireplace, you will see a piece of brocaded Japanese satin which is an ancient obi. An obi, as you know, is what Japanese women wrap around their middles, this is an especially fine one. My husband bought it in Japan. There are a variety of things on the chimney-piece which are more or less interesting. The tall trophy is interesting to me because it was given to my husband's father on the occasion of his retirement from the Johns-Mansville Company where he was for many years the chief inventor. He invented many interesting and fascinating things. On the floor is a Tibetan rug, which I bought at the same time I bought the other one in my larger office. The sunlight has not fallen on this one so its color has not faded as much as the other one. The armchair is interesting. It is interesting to me, but publicly interesting only because it was in my husband's room when he was a student at Harvard. Harvard is the family university for men. The window opens into the Camellia House. Just under the window is the Indian bamboo, which doesn't quite survive in this climate, so I have it inside.

The desk in this room is a very fine antique, again a tavern table, Pennsylvania in style. The desk chair is English, an English captain's chair. Of course, the wastepaper basket, again is Pennsylvanian. The lamp on the table is early Pennsylvanian.

*Returned to Green Hills Farm.⁶

pottery; on the wall just at the stairs hangs an old Japanese print. There is another Japanese painting over the bookcase, which was given to me by Mr. Yamada, a very famous Japanese lacquermaker, now dead, I am sorry to say. But his sons carry on the business. Five generations they have been lacquermakers to the Imperial Family in Tokyo. I have a collection of that lacquer, a fine one in my home in Vermont. On the scroll by the window is a beautiful old painting, not too old, but fairly old. It is Korean. Above the little bookcase by the fireplace is a sketch by a well-known American artist. It is a sketch of an Oriental child, by William Smith. That little bookcase, by the way, is an original - I think it was a cupboard. The floor in this room is original oak and by the door into the terrace, there hangs a photograph of my husband. Underneath it is a little framed verse, a quotation from an ancient Chinese poet, Po Chu-I. It says, "It is proper to attend to one's business without leisure time and without whims, yet here things conspire to entice one outdoors and indoors at the same time." My husband framed the verse and hung it there and I hung his picture above it. I believe I have covered everything in this room. No - wait - the painting above the bookcase is, of course, Fujiyama. Those of you who have traveled on the fast train from Tokyo to Kyoto, realize that this mountain is one of the sights in the world which is actually more beautiful than any painting or any reproduction of it, though we see these paintings very often. I'll put Fujiyama in the same class as the Taj Mahal in Agra, India. The Taj Mahal is more beautiful than any description or any picture and so is Fujiyama. The latter I am sorry to say, is getting somewhat damaged by the pollution from the industries which are being formed near it. The Japanese will have to devise a way of not polluting their air because it is such a beautiful country - small, but beautiful, a gem of a country. They are beginning to be worried by pollution, too.

The wood box here is just an old Pennsylvania box. The fireplace - ah, here we had some problem. It always smoked and I don't know what the early settlers did with it. But, it is the original fireplace and mantelpiece, except we filled in the stonework, in the attempt to solve the problem. We solved that, but I regret a change otherwise.

I have to say I was very fortunate in my parents. They were scholars. They had a library which would have been a credit to any home in New York or Philadelphia, or any great city. I don't know how they accumulated those books in the heart of China or how it was we had a piano and organ or where they got them. I think the organ was sent by my mother's family to her but we had an extraordinary background of books and literature when I was growing up as a child. This shaped my whole life and nature in Western culture while I was being reared in Chinese culture.

So, I suppose that background explains this house which is, in itself, a mixture of East and West. Sometimes when I am thinking by myself, in this old house, I wonder what it would have been like if I had grown up and matured in my own country. Would I have written different books? I would have written books, of that I'm sure, because I never thought of being anything but a writer. But would I have written the same books? Would I have written better books? And was it a good thing for me to have been taken to China when I was three months old? Or would it have been better for me to have grown up in my great-grandfather's beautiful old mansion in West Virginia, or in my other grandfather's great house in Virginia? I don't know - but I am what I am - made up of East and West and that's my destiny. I suppose.....



Credit: Clara E. Sipprell

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