The "Gouvêa e Cunha" Office: An Important Place for the Construction of Modern Campinas (1924-1936)

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Founded by the Portuguese Empire in the 18th century and later developed by the wealth of the coffee industry, Campinas grew into one of Brazil's most important political and cultural centers in the State of São Paulo. In the early 2oth century its architecture was designed by a small group of professionals who helped transform the city in two aspects: in its territory – the city grew and new neighborhoods were developed – and in its architecture, particularly in these new neighborhoods. This article elaborates on the contribution of one architectural office, Gouvêa e Cunha, and their many contributions to the architecture of Campinas between 1924 to 1936. Antonio Gouvêa and Lix da Cunha were alumni of the Rose Polytechnic Institute in Terre Haute, Indiana, in the United States where they received degrees in Architecture and Civil Engineering. Although the U.S. played a significant role in Brazilian architecture and urbanism, broad aspects of this relationship remain unexamined in Brazilian historiography. The American influence on, or references to Amercian design, in the cities of Brazil has been addressed only of late. Titles discussing this can be found in Brazil beginning in the 1990's, but these investigations have broadened in just the last five years. Fernando Atique's PhD thesis (2007) extended this discussion, and now he is examining the topic with his undergraduate students and several professionals who have also studied in the U.S. and work in Brazil. This research has revealed that certain American architectrual references were used by Gouvêa and da Cunha to shape the architecture of Campinas, and for this reason the work of their office was chosen for further investigation. This article demonstrates how the Mission Style was a constant in the office's design pallette, as well as picturesque styles such as Floreale, Fiorentini and Art Déco. This article also describes the formation of the office, and provides tables demonstrating the geographical distribution of the partner's projects in Campinas. Finally, an analysis is presented of the contribution of these two professionals in adapting and assimilating American architectural references, opening new paths to the understandining of this important city.

KEY WORDS: Americanism, Campinas, Brazil, Mission Style, Lix da Cunha, Antonio Gouvea.