

**FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT**

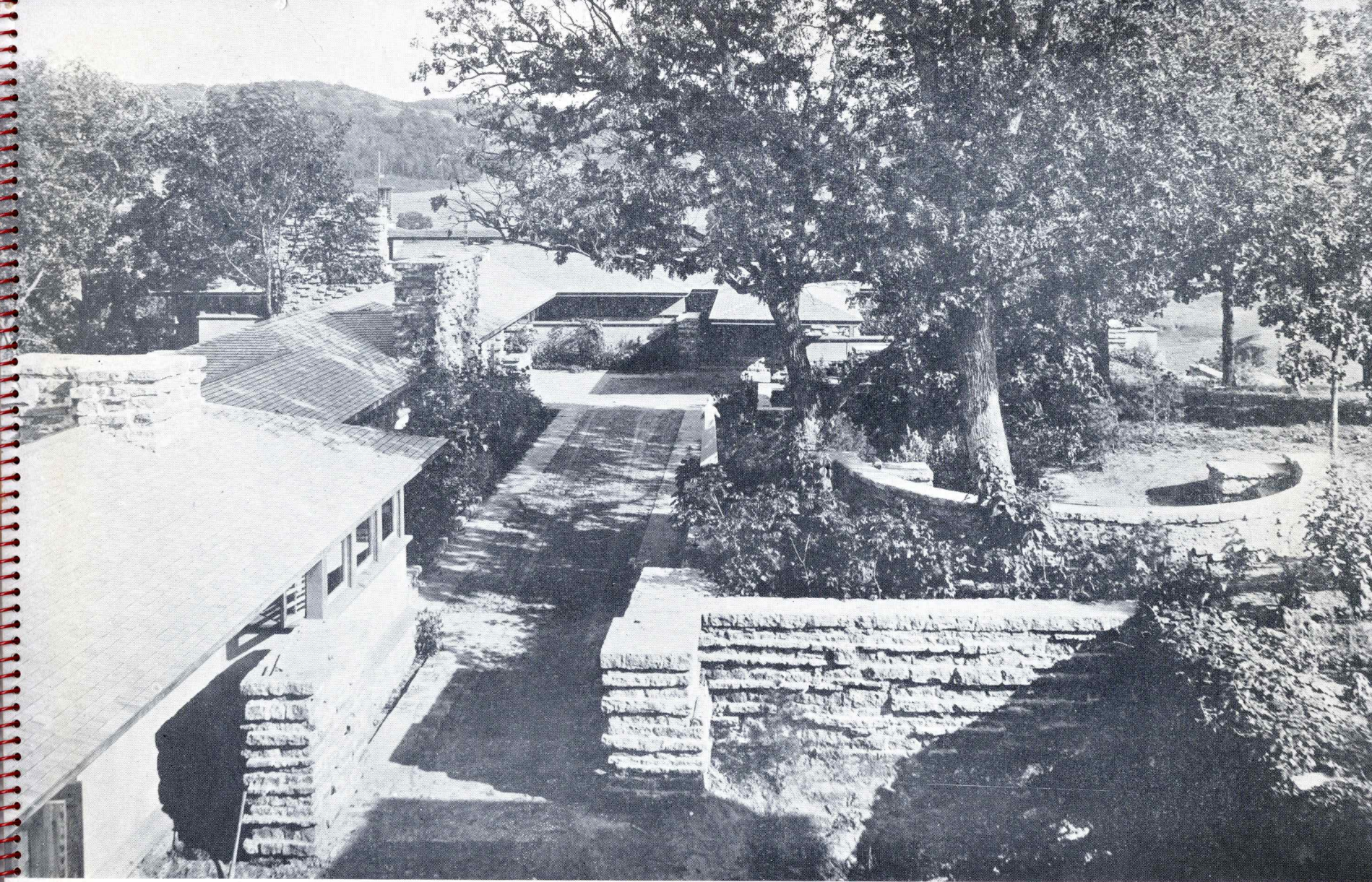
FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT



Finally it was not so easy to tell where pavements and walls left off and ground began. Especially on the hill-crown which became a low-walled garden above the surrounding courts, reached by stone steps walled into the slopes. A clump of fine oaks that grew on the hill top stood untouched on one side above the court. A great curved stone-walled seat enclosed the space just beneath them and stone pavement stepped down to a spring or fountain that welled up into a pool at the center of the circle. Each court had its fountain and the winding stream below had a great dam. A thick stone wall thrown across it, to make a pond at the very foot of the hill, and raise the water in the valley to within sight from Taliesin. The water below the falls thus made, was sent, by hydraulic ram, up to a big stone reservoir built into the higher hill, just behind and above the hill top garden, to come down again into the fountains and go on down to the vegetable gardens on the slopes below the house.

*Autobiography*





TALIESIN: THE GARDEN COURT



Supplement to the Loan Exhibition held  
by THE INSTITUTE OF MODERN ART  
at 270 Dartmouth Street, Boston ■  
January 24 – March 3, 1940

■ *with notes selected from the published  
writings of the architect and a foreword by  
Joseph Hudnut, Dean of the Faculty of Design,  
Harvard University*

# FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT



A PICTORIAL RECORD OF ARCHITECTURAL PROGRESS



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## *Notes on the Exhibition*

At seventy, Frank Lloyd Wright is no longer the prophet without honor in his own country. Early acclaim abroad has been superseded by tardy recognition at home. The full impact of his architecture on our twentieth century culture has neither crystallized nor been appraised, but his place as a modern architectural pioneer is secure and unchallenged.

The present exhibition at the Institute of Modern Art is by no means comprehensive. It is frankly thematic in character, and is restricted in scope to a general development of his residential architecture on the arbitrary premise that Wright is first and last a builder of homes — such successful monuments as the Larkin and Johnson Buildings to the contrary notwithstanding. The Institute's demonstration has been conceived as a prelude to the thoroughly documentary exhibition planned by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, for the coming autumn. This is the essay or critique — that will be the definite treatise. With this collaboration in mind, we have omitted elaborate bibliographical or historical data and any list of Wright's work. We have quoted freely from *Modern Architecture: the Kahn Lectures* for 1930, Published for the Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, 1931; *An Autobiography: Frank Lloyd Wright*, Longmans, Green and Co., 1932 and the *Architectural Forum*, January, 1933 (issue devoted to Wright's architecture).

The Trustees of the Institute extend warm thanks to Mr. Wright and the members of the Taliesin Fellowship for their splendid cooperation, and



to Dean Joseph Hudnut for his admirable foreword to this volume. Particular thanks are due Mr. Nelson W. Aldrich for his indefatigable efforts in planning the exhibition. The design for installation is entirely his. We are most grateful to Joseph Barron, Syracuse, and Henry Fuermann and Sons, Chicago, for making available to us their extensive photographic material, and to John McAndrew, John C. Hagerty, and Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. for their good offices in our behalf. Marc Peter, Jr. has kindly acted in an advisory capacity.

The courtesy of the following photographers in allowing the use of their negatives and prints is gratefully acknowledged:

Hedrich-Blessing, Chicago (Taliesin, Kaufmann House, photograph of Mr. Wright); Roy Petersen, Racine, Wis. (Jacobs House, Johnson Co.); Roger Sturtevant, San Francisco (Hanna House); Luke Swank, Pittsburgh (Kaufmann House).

JAMES S. PLAUT

## Foreword

The decision of the Institute of Modern Art to limit their present exhibition of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright to a survey of his suburban houses will, I think, encourage rather than restrict an understanding of his total achievement. Domestic shelter, the most ancient of architectural forms, remains to this day the most plastic, the most responsive to the free imprint of the human spirit. It is of all constructions the nearest to man—the intimate theatre of his sentient life, the most elemental and the most evocative. Here, after a hundred thousand years, is still that *cave* in which man took the first fateful step towards the growth of cultures, that *home* which shaped and disciplined his emotions, that *space* which he first refashioned to accord with those inward unaccountable promptings from which architecture takes its beginnings. Of all the themes of architecture this must have been the most congenial to an artist like Wright, whose unique and insistent individuality conceives architecture, not so much as a collective expression—still less as an intellectual activity—but rather as a garment for spiritual realities.

If we are to understand Wright, we must think of him not as a logician but as a poet. The logic of Wright—as Oud remarked in 1926—too often contradicts that which his construction teaches. His

rational principles defend but do not explain an art whose distinguishing characteristic is a lyricism which constantly outruns the slow progress of doctrine. “Find genius”, he writes, “and you will find a poet”; and how else except as the utterances of a poet can we explain this torrent of designs so varied and perverse which mark the contrary roads by which Wright arrived at his destiny? A conveyor of emotions, like Rodin, a searcher for meanings, like Picasso, Wright subjects his art to passionate experiments. It is now Richardson, now Morris, now Sullivan; it is by turns Japanese, Mayan, American Indian; it acknowledges the prairie, the California hills, the harsh geometry of the industrial city; it is sensitive and then insensitive to those discontents which shatter the traditions of sculpture and painting; it obeys and then ignores economic and social principle. Neither theory nor high language can encompass so esoteric a fertility; but the poet who yields himself to his intuitions finds unerringly the outlets of his own sky.

What is most remarkable about this stream of intuition and feeling—besides its palpable sincerity—is its fusion with analytical experiment and invention. Emotion is kindled rather than cooled by concepts which are purely scientific in nature; expressive relationships and forms are developed from ideas which



originated in practical necessity; the hard, new techniques of engineering are transformed into the materials of romance. That new quality of space, sovereign in Wright's later designs — that stratified space composed of geometric volumes, now lightly and now energetically confined, flowing into and through each other — has an origin which is definitely functional. The conception of exterior walls arranged in rhythmic blocks of varying size which shape and direct the interior spaces; of windows as transparent planes so wide as to unite along definite boundaries inner and outer space; of wide overhanging roofs which assert so magnificently the idea of shelter and invite a union between constructed forms and the non-human world; these are only the more conspicuous of those formal elements in Wright's architecture which began with considerations of structure and use but whose development was charted by the poetic imagination.

Not his inventions but the use he makes of invention is the true measure of an architect. The forms of Wright's architecture — still less the meanings which they embody — do not develop as inevitable necessities from his inventions. The inventions rather are made a part of the vocabulary of a form-language which has as its more urgent end the expression of values unidentified with time and specific circumstance. Fascinated by modern science, Wright accepts eagerly its practical fruits; but not the realism which is its philosophical implication, still less the austere functionalism which translates that philosophy into aesthetic terms. The genuine spirit of science, engaged in its eternal struggle with the forces hostile to man, addressed to a collective

destiny, building patiently on foundations economically feasible, socially attainable, escapes him entirely; nor can he discover in the new architecture in which this spirit is manifest any quality other than sterility and a pernicious negation. His own ideas constantly enrich that new architecture; but his achievement, so fascinating in its imaginative quality, so flawless in execution, so reasonable within its self-imposed limitations, remains curiously apart from that ascending current.

Perhaps this is the explanation of that sense of unreality — of an aloofness from contemporary life — which the houses of Wright seem to convey. With all their assertion of modernity they do not exist in a modern world integral with our time, our way of life. They are interwoven, not with industry and social experiment but, rather, with the earth upon which they rest; and that transcendental spirit which inhabits meadow and hill, stream and tree, seems also at times to inhabit them. The early Chicago houses translate the prairie into constructed forms and the later California houses grow out of the sides of enchanted mountains. Taliesin is a vine rooted in the Wisconsin hills; Bear Run, a white bird which has captured the forest.

Of all these houses, it is the Kaufmann house which best summarizes the art of Wright — as if all of his earlier houses were preliminary studies addressed to this inevitable opportunity — as if he had been long preparing with certain foreknowledge for a client who would want to live on a cantilever above a waterfall! These great slabs of concrete, precise, actual and cal-

culated, have strangely escaped from an arid civilization which was their home; they penetrate and are penetrated by the Nature which surrounds and flows through them; and by magic they are made to participate in her ancient and consoling rhythms.

It was Wright's mission to recover these fundamental relationships — to free our individual dwellings from an accumulated pedantry, from a deadening load of convention and rule, and through the operation of

an intense and lively individuality, reaffirm the universal and enduring values of this most ancient and most immediate of architectural themes. A new development and growth is now made possible.

JOSEPH HUDNUT

*Cambridge, Massachusetts*  
*January 19, 1940*

# *Chronology*

- 1869 Born in Richland Center, Wisconsin. Welsh antecedents.
- ca. 1880 Family settled in Madison, Wisconsin upon their return from Massachusetts, where his father had occupied a Baptist Pastorate at Weymouth.
- 1885-1887 At University of Wisconsin. No Architectural School, but studied engineering and worked on construction of campus buildings.
- 1887 To Chicago. Became draughtsman for J. S. Silsbee. Built Hillside Home School at Spring Green for his aunts, the Lloyd-Jones sisters.
- 1888 Entered office of Adler and Sullivan. [Sullivan's architectural daring and liberalism impressed him profoundly, and exerted a powerful influence on his early works]. Entrusted with most of firm's residential work.
- 1893 Winslow House, River Forest, his "first" house, though he had built some fifteen houses for Adler and Sullivan.
- 1894 Becomes an independent architect.
- 1895 Spencer House, Lake Delavan, Wisconsin — earliest simple, informal, organic residence.
- 1896-1903 Extensive activity in Chicago suburbs and Wisconsin; development of the "prairie house."
- 1904-1905 Major activity in Buffalo — Larkin Soap Co. Building, Martin and Heath Houses.
- 1906 First trip to Japan. Deeply impressed by Japanese philosophy, art and architecture.
- 1908 Robie and Coonley Houses.



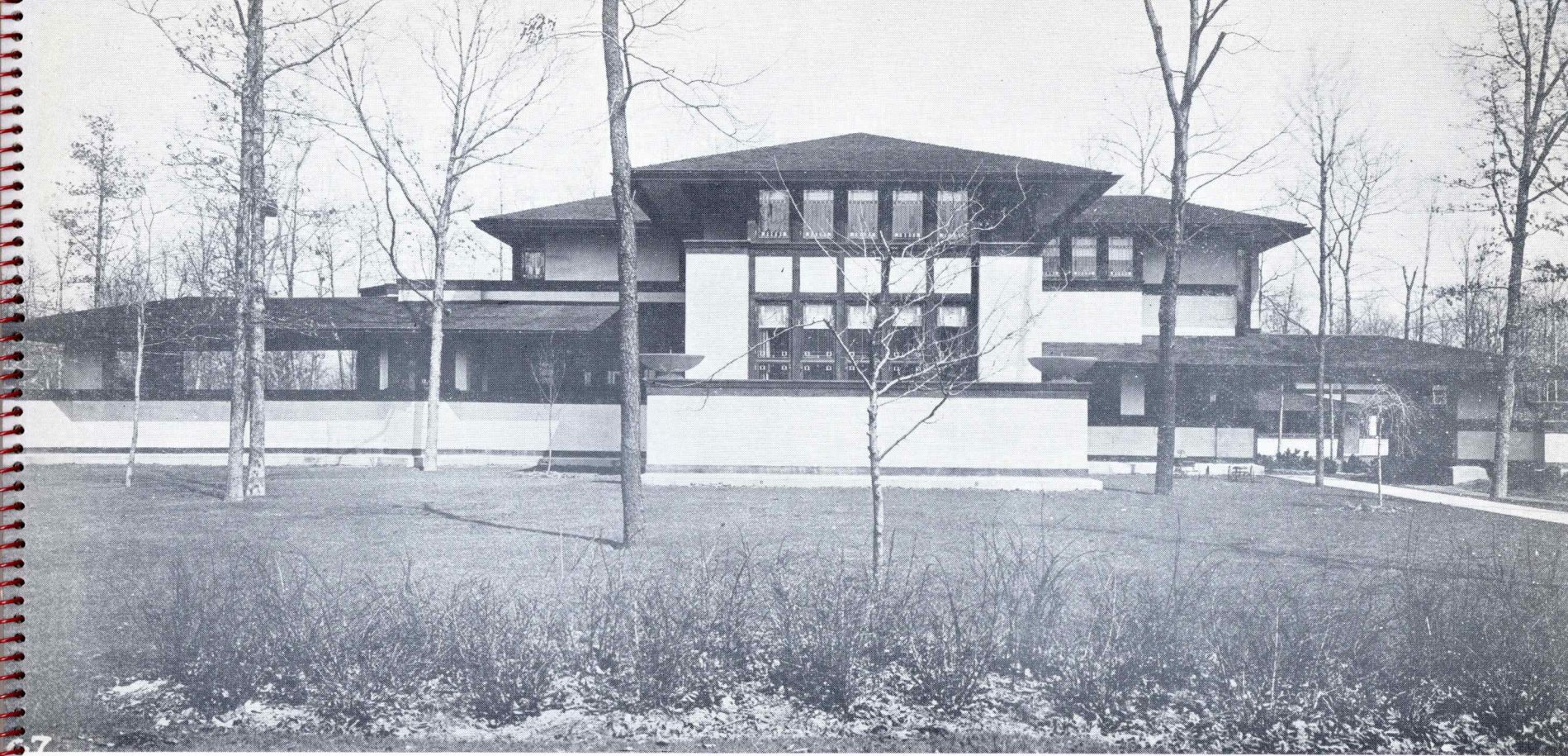
- 1910 To Germany, in connection with the appearance in Berlin of two comprehensive publications of his architecture, and to Italy.
- 1911 Taliesin I, Coonley Playhouse.
- 1913 Midway Gardens (mammoth restaurant and amusement center in Chicago — supplanted by a garage during Prohibition and subsequently demolished). Inauguration of elaborate decorative style which prevailed throughout the next decade.
- 1914 Domestic tragedy and destruction of Taliesin I by fire.
- 1915 Taliesin II.
- 1916-1920 Imperial Hotel, Tokyo, Japan — four years in process and his most ambitious undertaking. Extravagant decoration and unique, earthquake-resistant, "floating" construction.
- 1921 Beginning of series of concrete block houses in California. Experiments with steel and glass (skyscraper projects — etc.)
- 1924 Second devastating fire at Taliesin.
- 1925 Taliesin III.
- 1925-1929 Period of travel, personal difficulties, several elaborate architectural projects [unrealized].
- 1929 Ocatilla Camp, Chandler, Arizona. Important projects: San Marcos in the Desert and St. Mark's in the Bouwerie (skyscraper apartments.)
- 1930 Delivered the Kahn Lectures at Princeton University.
- 1932 Publication of "An Autobiography — F. L. W."
- 1937-1939 Renewed activity: Willey, Hanna, Jacobs, Kaufmann and Johnson houses; S. C. Johnson (Wax) Co. building; Suntop Housing project, Ardmore, Pa.
- 1940 At work on 65 small houses and plans for college in Florida.

# *Prophecy and Accomplishment*

At this time, a house to me was obvious primarily as interior space under fine *shelter*. I liked the sense of shelter in the "look of the building." I achieved it, I believe. I then went after the variegated bands of material in the old walls to eliminate odds and ends in favor of one material surface from grade to eaves, or grade to second story sill-cope, treated as simple enclosing screens, — or else made a plain screen and around the second story above the window-sills, turned up over on to the ceiling beneath the eaves. This screen band was of the same material as the under side of the eaves themselves, or what architects call the "soffit." *The planes of the building parallel to the ground were all stressed, to grip the whole to earth.* Sometimes it was possible to make the enclosing wall below this upper band of the second story, from the second story window-sill clear down to the ground, a heavy "wainscot" of fine masonry material resting on the cement or stone platform laid on the foundation. I liked that wainscot to be of masonry material when my clients felt they could afford it.

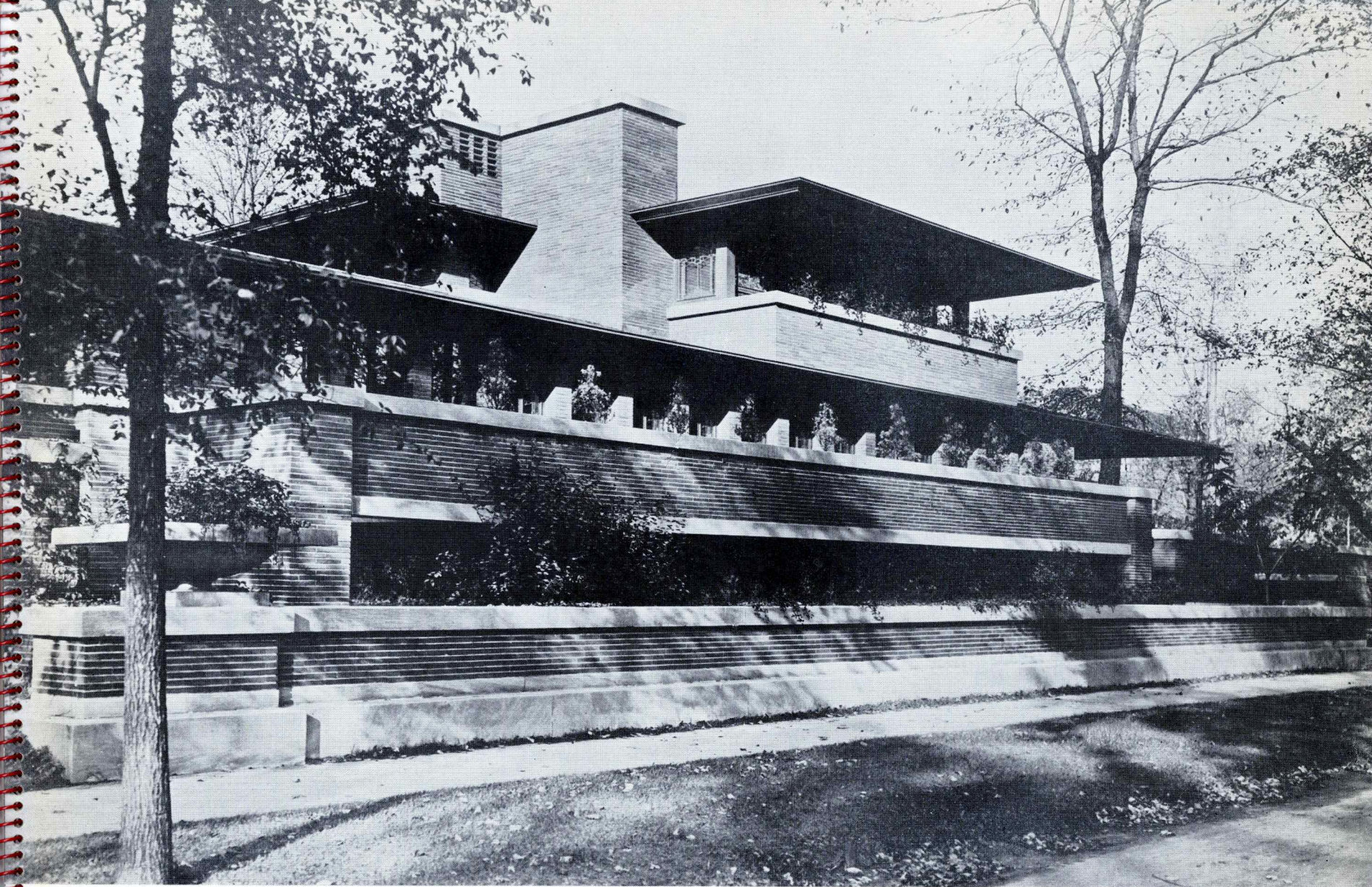
*Princeton Lectures*





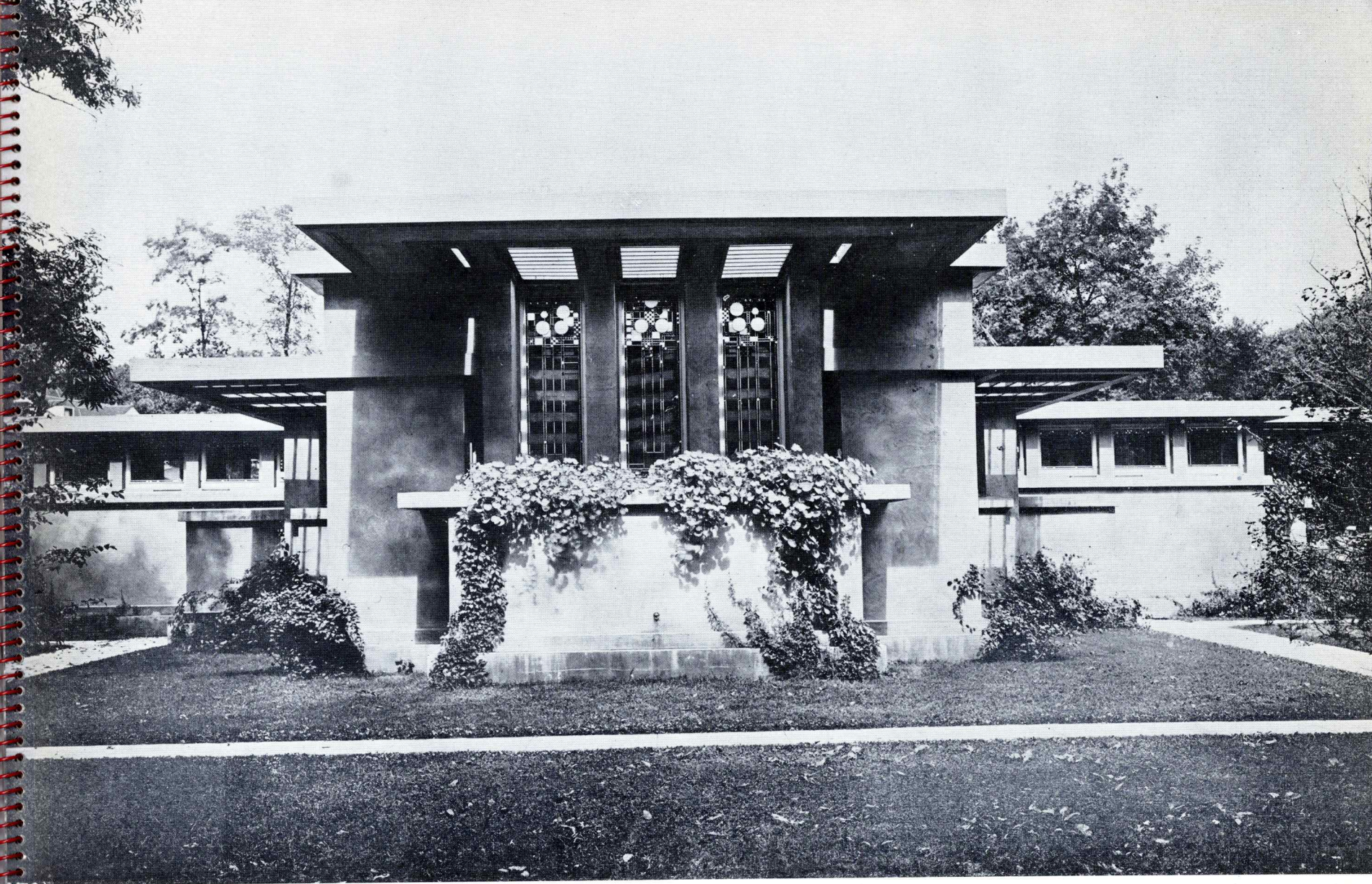
WILLITTS HOUSE, HIGHLAND PARK, ILLINOIS, 1901





ROBIE HOUSE, WOODLAWN AVENUE, CHICAGO, 1908





COONLEY PLAYHOUSE, RIVERSIDE, ILLINOIS, 1911



Taliesin was the name of a Welsh Poet . . . Literally the Welsh word means "shining brow." . . . This hill on which Taliesin now stands as "brow" was one of my favorite places when I was a boy . . . When you are on its crown you are out in mid-air as though swinging in a plane, as the Valley and two others drop away leaving the tree-tops all about you. "Romeo and Juliet" stands in plain view to the southeast, the Hillside Home School just over the ridge . . .

Taliesin, of course, was to be architect's workshop, a dwelling for young workers who came to assist. And it was a farm cottage for the farm help. Around a rear court were to be farm buildings, for Taliesin was to be a complete living unit, genuine in point of comfort and beauty, from pig to proprietor. The place was to be self-sustaining if not self-sufficient and with its domain of two hundred acres, shelter, food, clothes and even entertainment within itself. It had to be its own light-plant, fuel-yard, transportation and water system.

I wished to be part of my beloved southern Wisconsin and not put my small part of it out of countenance. Architecture, after all, I have learned, or before all, I should say, is no less a weaving and a fabric than the trees . . . Yes, there must be a natural house, not natural as caves and log-cabins were natural but native in spirit and making, with all that architecture had meant whenever it was alive in times past. Nothing at all that I had ever seen would do.

*Autobiography*





TALIESIN, SPRING GREEN, WISCONSIN, 1911, 1915, 1925  
Twice destroyed by fire and rebuilt



For the first time in my practice, where residence work is concerned in recent years, re-enforced concrete was actually needed to construct the cantilever system of this extension of the cliff beside a mountain stream, making living space over and above the stream upon several terraces upon which a man who loved the place sincerely, one who liked to listen to the waterfall, might well live. Steel sash came within reach also for the first time. In this design for living down in a glen in a deep forest, shelter took a definite masonry form while still preserving protection overhead for extensive glass surface. These deep overhangs provide the interior, as usual, with the softened diffused lighting for which the indweller is invariably grateful, I have found.

This structure might serve to indicate that the sense of shelter — the sense of space where used with sound structural sense — has no limitations as to form except the materials used and the methods by which they are employed for what purpose. The ideas involved here are in no wise changed from those of early work. The materials and methods of construction come through them, here, as they may and will always come through everywhere.

*Architectural Forum*





FALLING WATER, KAUFMANN HOUSE, BEAR RUN, PENNSYLVANIA, 1937-9



## *Development of Plan and Mass*

When, "in the cause of Architecture," in 1893, I first began to build the houses sometimes referred to by the thoughtless as "The New School of the Middle West," the only way to simplify the awful building in vogue at the time was to conceive a finer entity—a better building—and get it built. The buildings standing then were all tall and all tight. Chimneys were lean and taller still, sooty fingers threatening the sky. And beside them, sticking up by way of dormers through the cruelly sharp, saw-tooth roofs, were the attics for "help" to swelter in.

*Princeton Lectures*

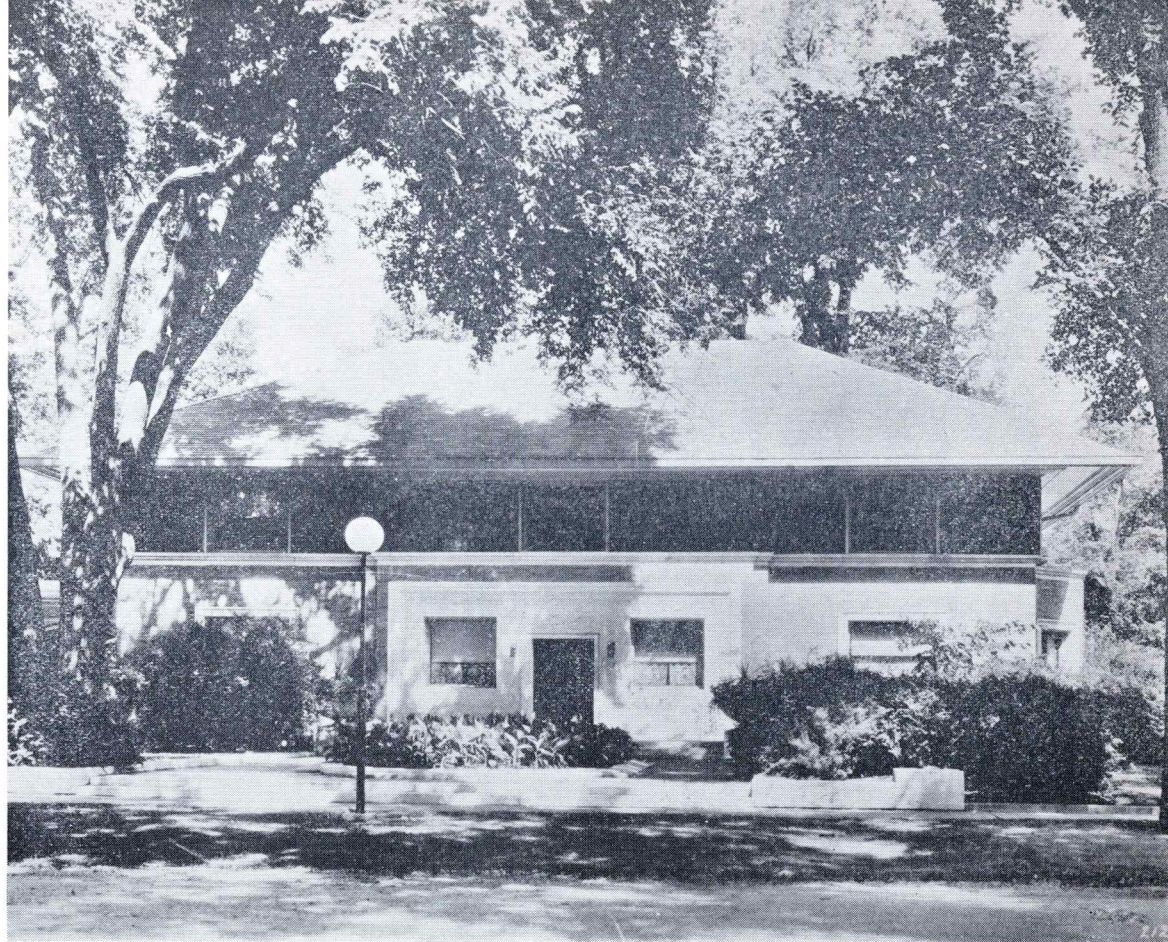


The conventional, elaborately decorated suburban residence against which Wright's revolt was directed.



WINSLOW HOUSE  
RIVER FOREST, ILL.  
1892-3

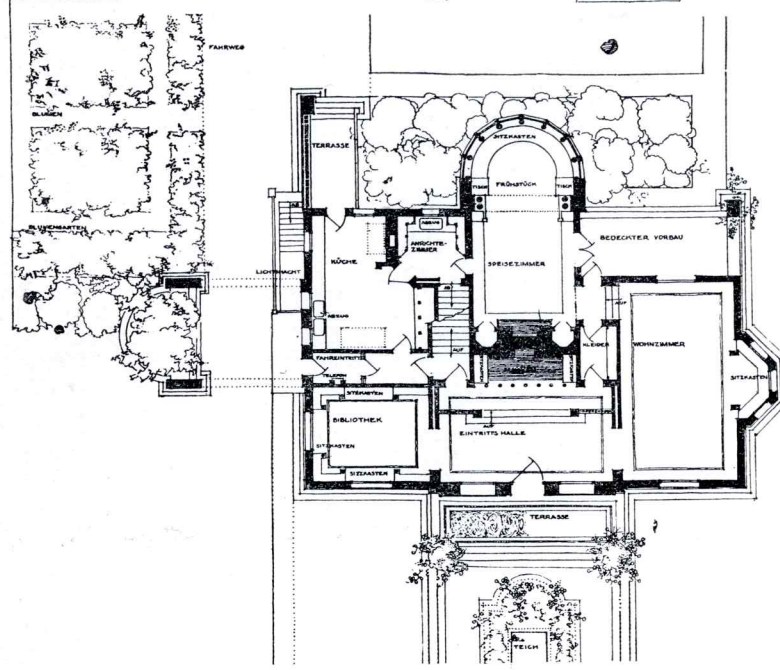
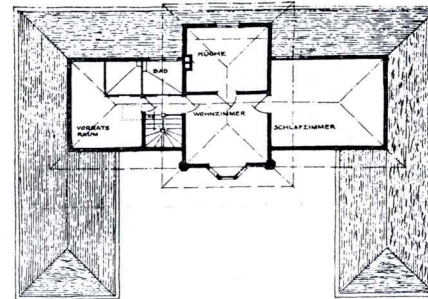
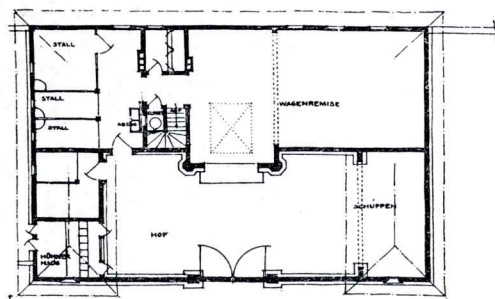
According to Wright,  
the first house entirely  
his own in every detail  
of plan and design.



Simplicity was as far from all this scrap-pile as the pandemonium of the barnyard is far from music. But it was easy for the Architect. All he had to do was to call: "Boy, take down No. 37, and put a bay-window on it for the lady!" So — the first thing to do was to get rid of the attic, therefore, of the dormer and of the useless "heights" below it. And next, get rid of the unwholesome basement, entirely — yes, absolutely — in any house built on the prairie. Instead of lean, brick chimneys, bristling up from steep roofs to hint at "judgment" everywhere, I could see necessity for one only, a broad generous one, or at most, for two, these kept low down on gently sloping roofs or perhaps flat roofs.

*Princeton Lectures*





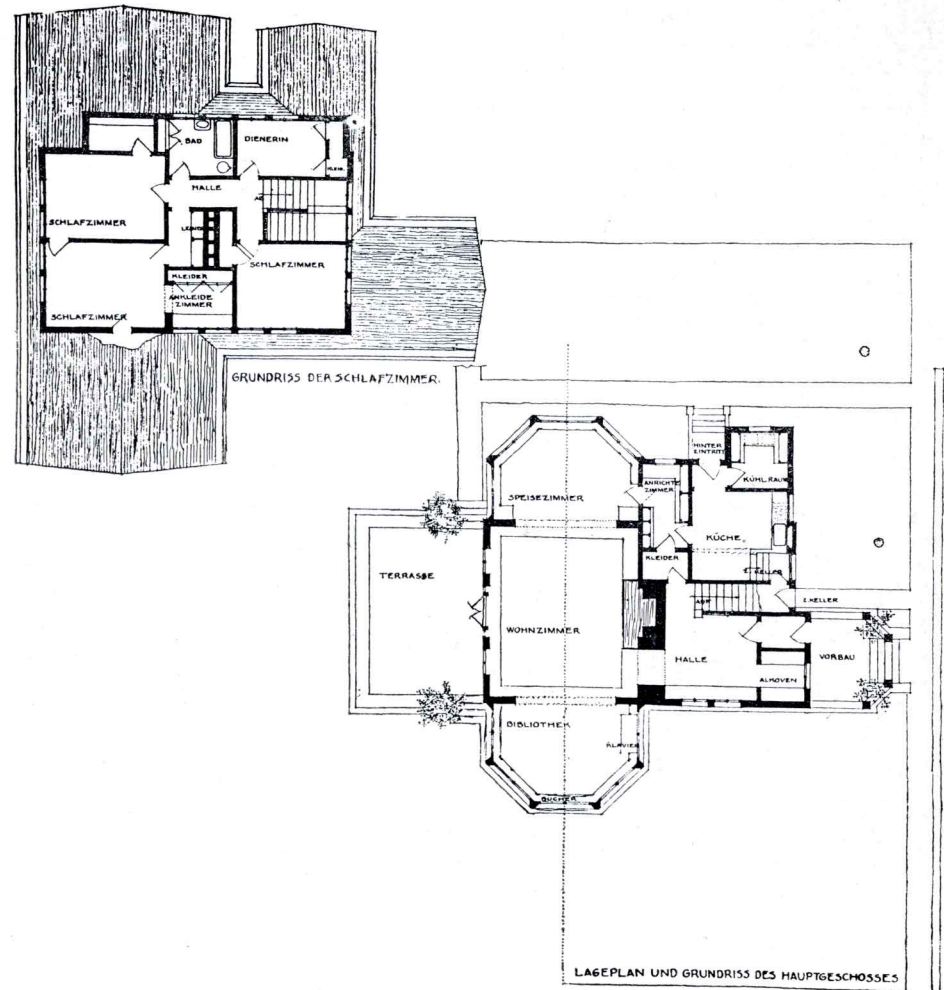
# PLAN OF THE WINSLOW HOUSE

The earliest attempt  
to free the plan of its  
conventional box-like  
character.



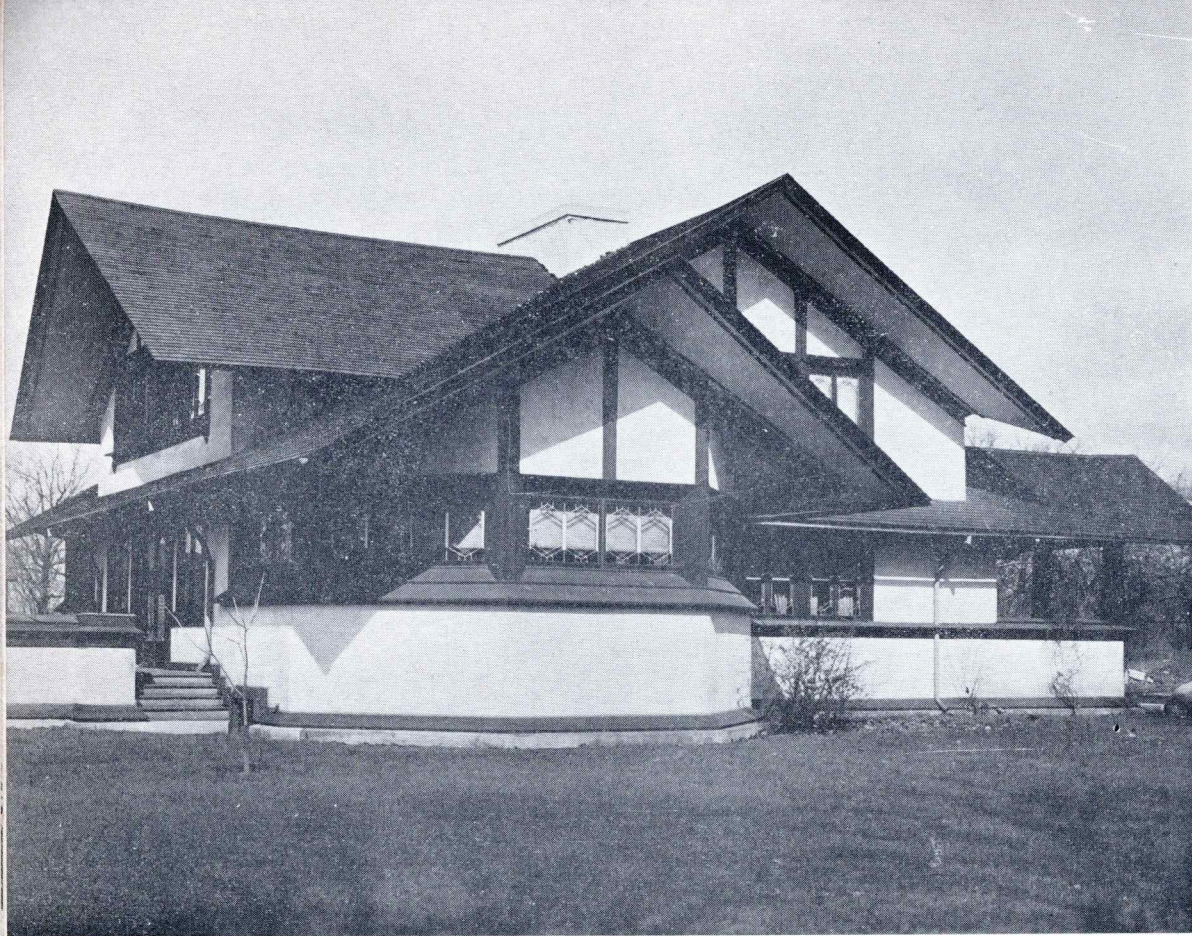
## PLAN OF THE HICKOX HOUSE

The main living quarters are open, the rooms flowing simply into each other.



Architecture, as modern, now becomes the expression of the liveable interior space of the room itself. The *roomspace itself* must “come through!” The “room” must be seen as architecture, or we have none. No longer do we have outside as outside. Or inside as inside seen as two separate things. Now the outside may come inside, and the inside may go outside. They are *of* each other . . .

*Autobiography*



HICKOX HOUSE  
KANKAKEE, ILL.  
1900

Early elements of  
prairie house design  
— projecting eaves  
and continuous fen-  
estration.

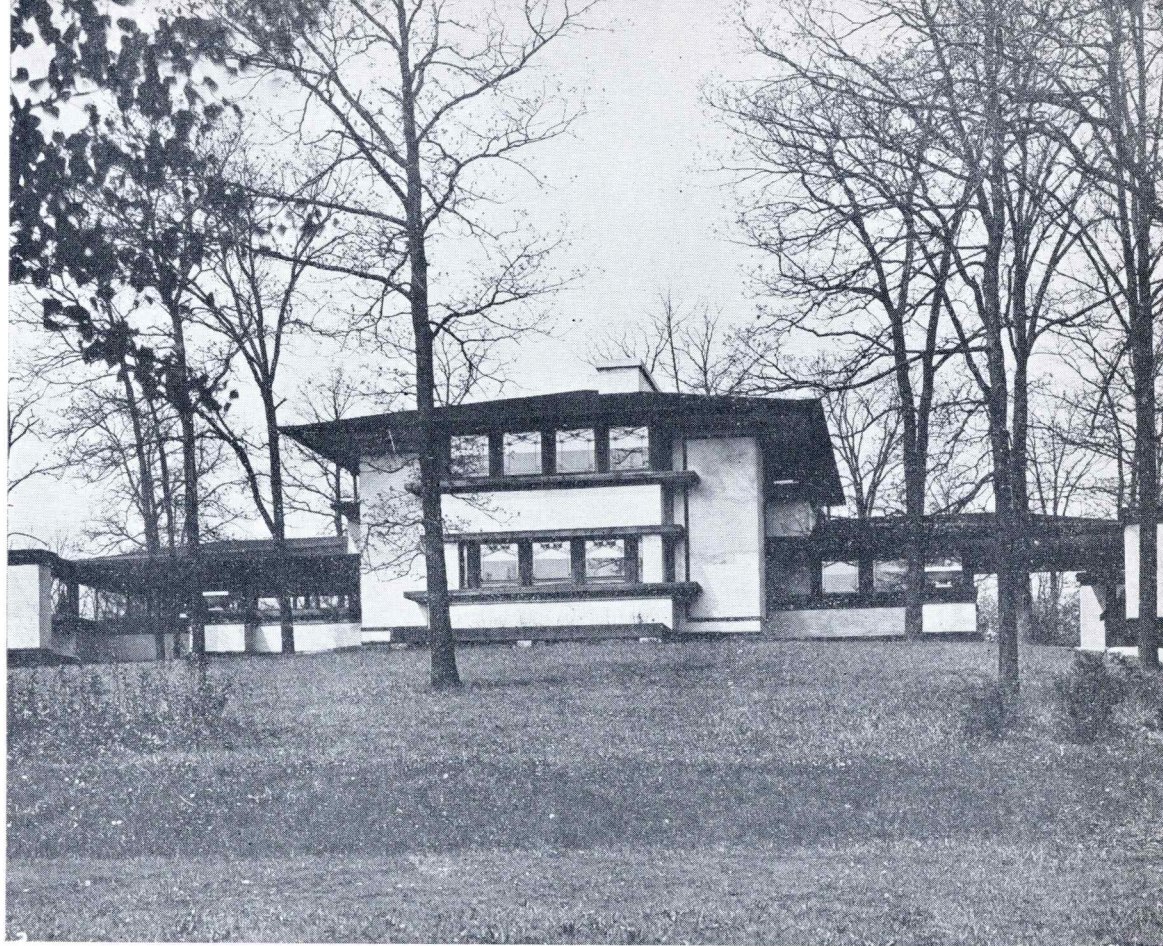
Gratitude for that “overhead” — and the sense of it — has been with us all down the ages as the Cornice, finally become an emblem — a symbol — showed. Instinctive gratitude is of course fainter now. But whenever the Cornice, true to that primeval instinct, was *real shelter* or even the sense of it, and dropped roof-water free of the building walls — well, the Cornice was not a Cornice then but was an overhanging *roof*. Let the overhanging roof live as human shelter. It will never disappear from Architecture. The sense of Architecture as human shelter is a very fine sense.

*Princeton Lectures*



EVANS HOUSE  
LONGWOOD, ILL.  
1904

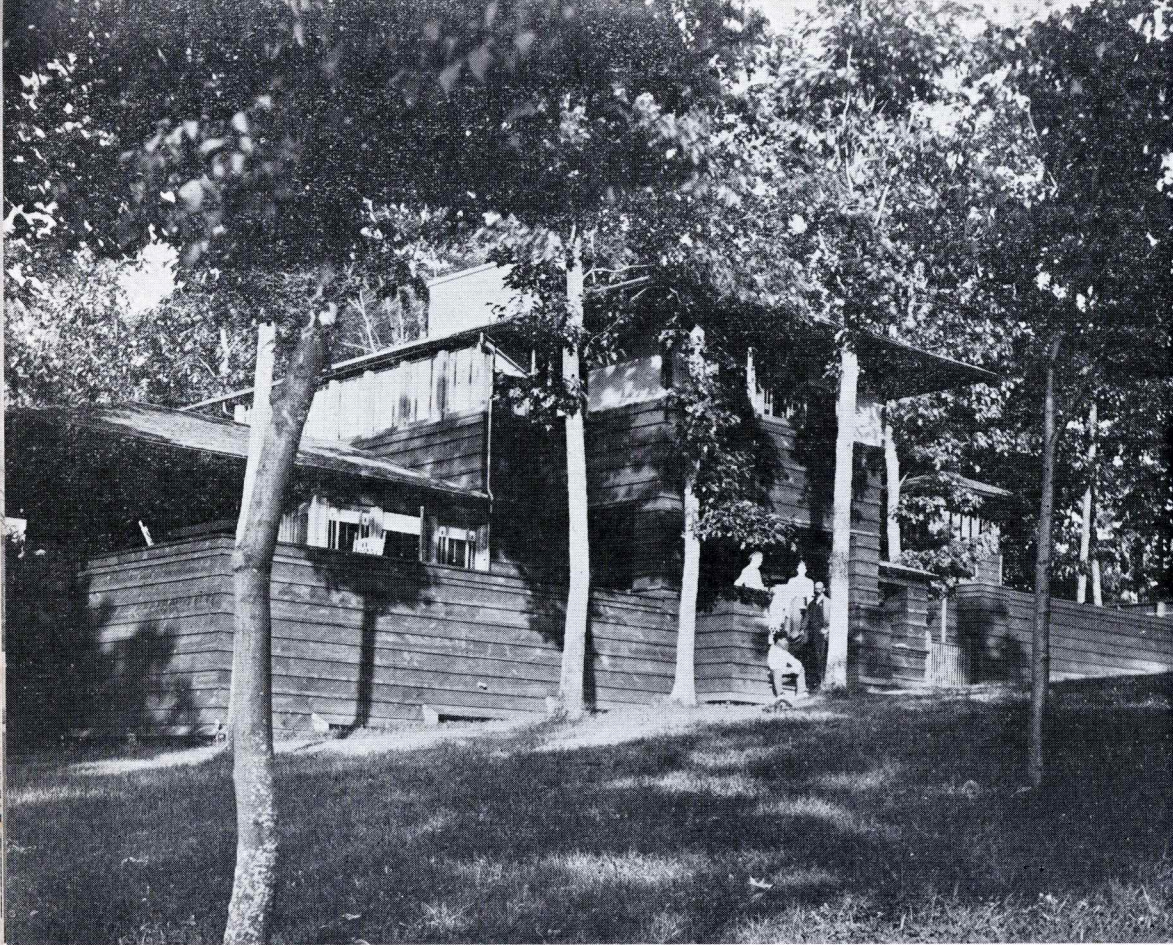
Fully developed  
prairie house in  
stucco and wood.



The climate, being what it was, a matter of violent extremes of heat and cold, damp and dry, dark and bright, I gave broad protecting roof-shelter to the whole, getting back to the original purpose of the "Cornice." The undersides of the roof projections were flat and light in color to create a glow of reflected light that made the upper rooms not dark, but delightful. The overhangs had double value, shelter and preservation for the walls of the house as well as diffusion of reflected light for the upper story, through the "light screens" that took the place of the walls and were the windows.

*Princeton Lectures*





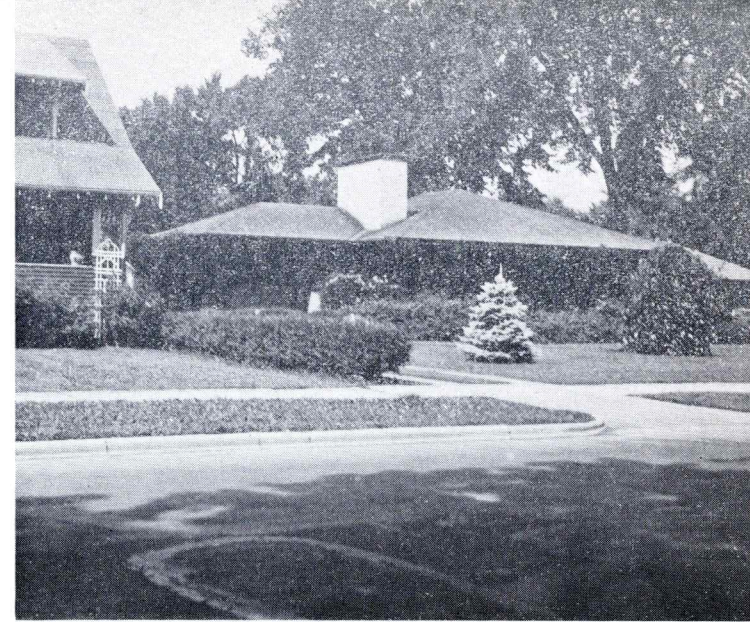
ROSS HOUSE  
LAKE DELAVAN, WIS.  
1902

Extraordinary modernity in a simple country house at the turn of the century.

Here entered the important element of Plasticity — indispensable to successful use of the Machine, the true expression of Modernity. *The outswinging windows were fought for because the casement window associated the house with out-of-doors — gave free openings, outward.*

*Princeton Lectures*



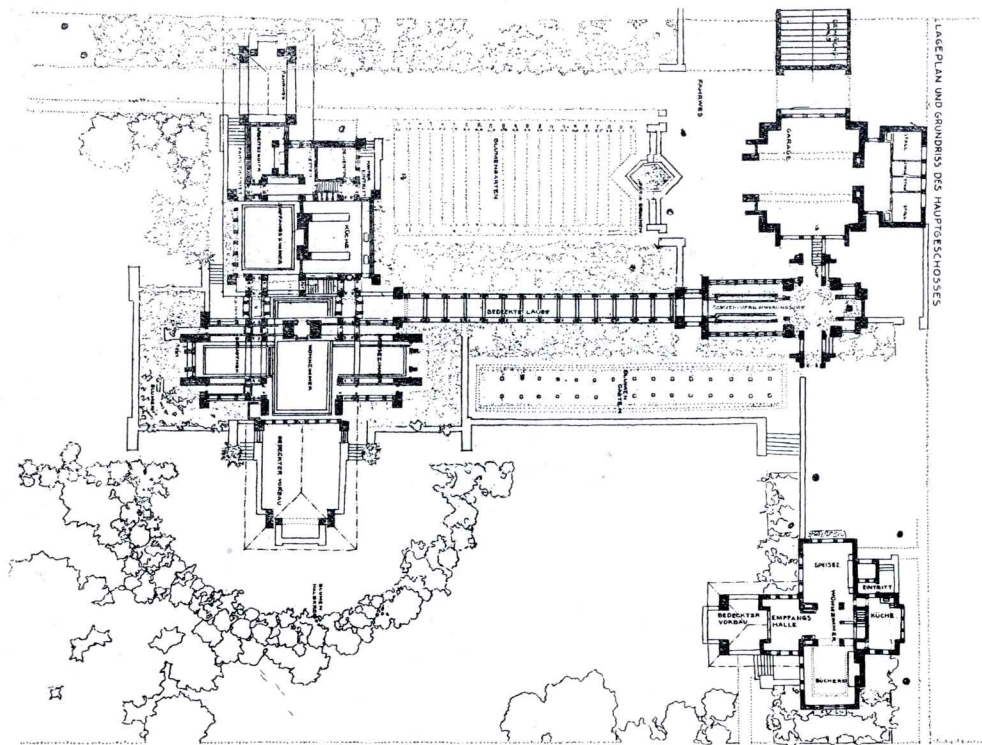


What I have just described was all on the *outside* of the house and was there chiefly because of what had happened *inside*. Dwellings of that period were "cut-up," advisedly and completely, with the grim determination that should go with any cutting process. The "interiors" consisted of boxes beside or inside other boxes, called *rooms*. All boxes inside a complicated boxing. Each domestic "function" was properly box to box. I could see little sense in this inhibition, this cellular sequestration that implied ancestors familiar with the cells of penal institutions, except for the privacy of bed-rooms on the upper floor. They were perhaps all right as "sleeping boxes." So I declared the whole lower floor as one room, cutting off the kitchen as a laboratory, putting servants' sleeping and living quarters next to it, semi-detached, on the ground floor, screening various portions in the big room, for certain domestic purposes — like dining or reading, or receiving a formal caller. There were no plans like these in existence at the time and my clients were pushed toward these ideas as helpful to a solution of the vexed servant problem. Scores of doors disappeared and no end of partition. They liked it, both clients and servants. The house became more free as "space" and more liveable, too. Interior spaciousness began to dawn.

*Princeton Lectures*

HUNT HOUSE  
OSHKOSH, WIS.  
1912

Compare with its  
neighbor and an-  
other house in the  
same block.



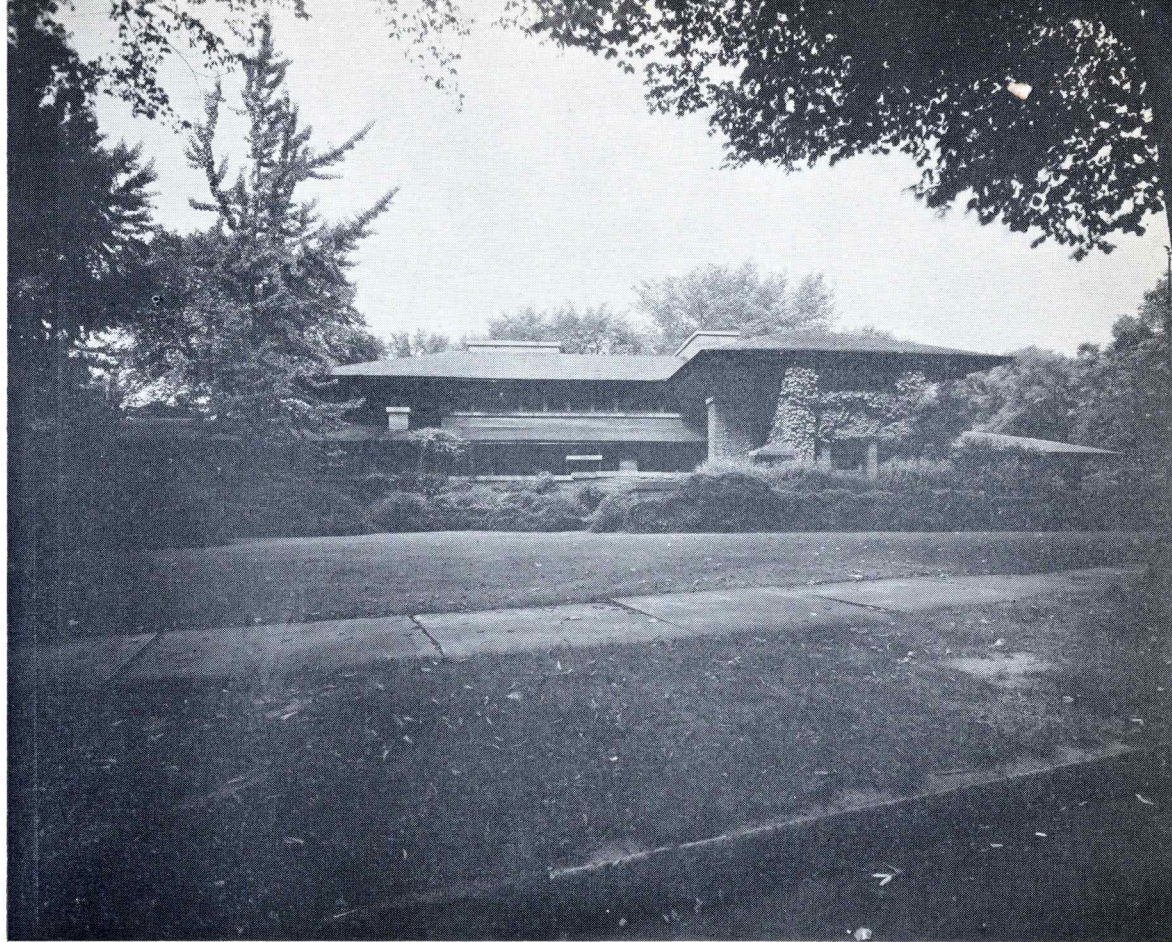
## PLAN OF MARTIN HOUSE

— the first "rambling"  
plan on a large scale.



MARTIN HOUSE  
BUFFALO, N. Y.  
1904

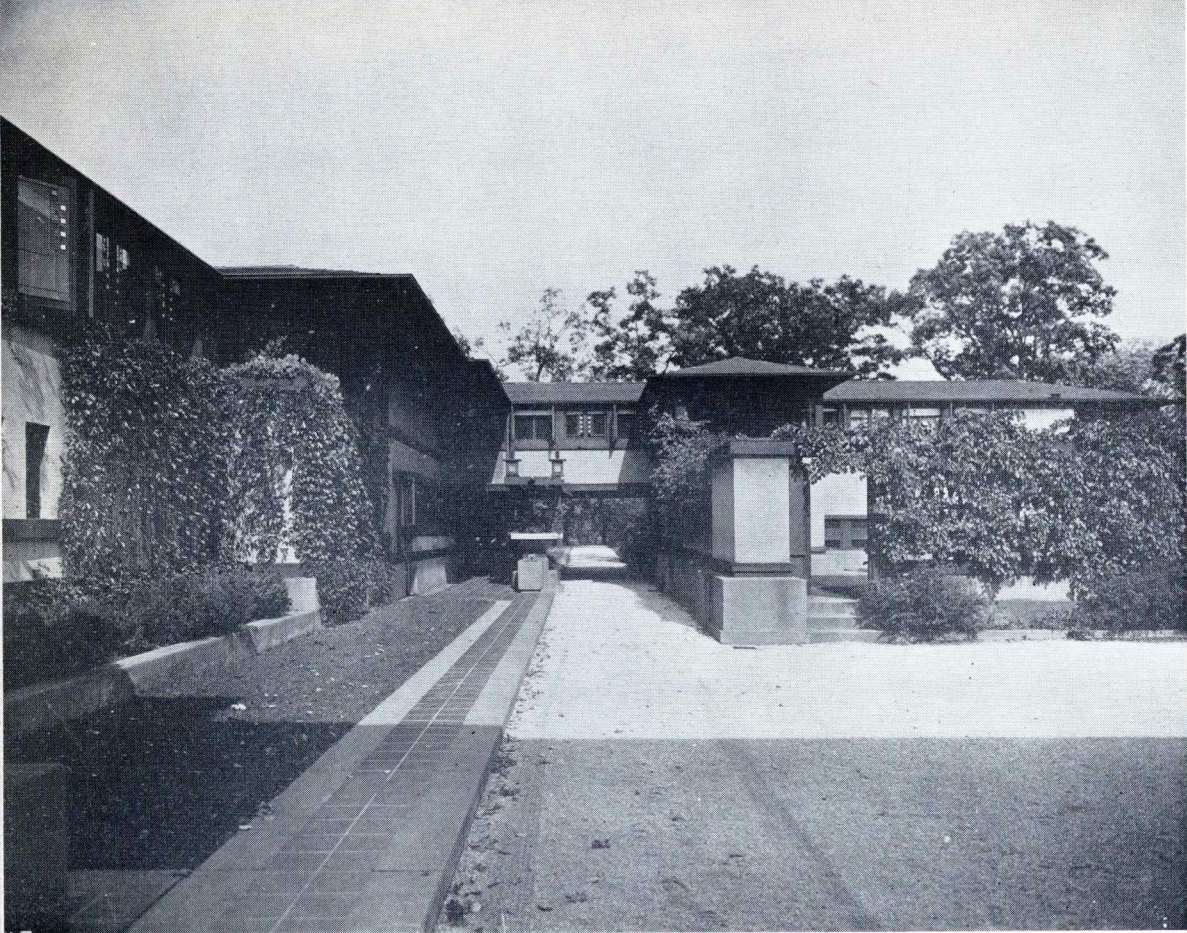
Represents with the  
Robie House the full  
maturity of his  
suburban type.



House-walls were now to be started at the ground on a cement or stone water-table that looked like a low platform under the building, which it usually was but the house-walls were stopped at the second story window-sill level, to let the rooms above come through in a continuous window-series, under the broad eaves of a gently sloping, overhanging roof. This made enclosing screens out of the lower walls as well as light screens out of the second story walls. Here was true *enclosure of interior space*. A new sense of building, it seems.

*Princeton Lectures*



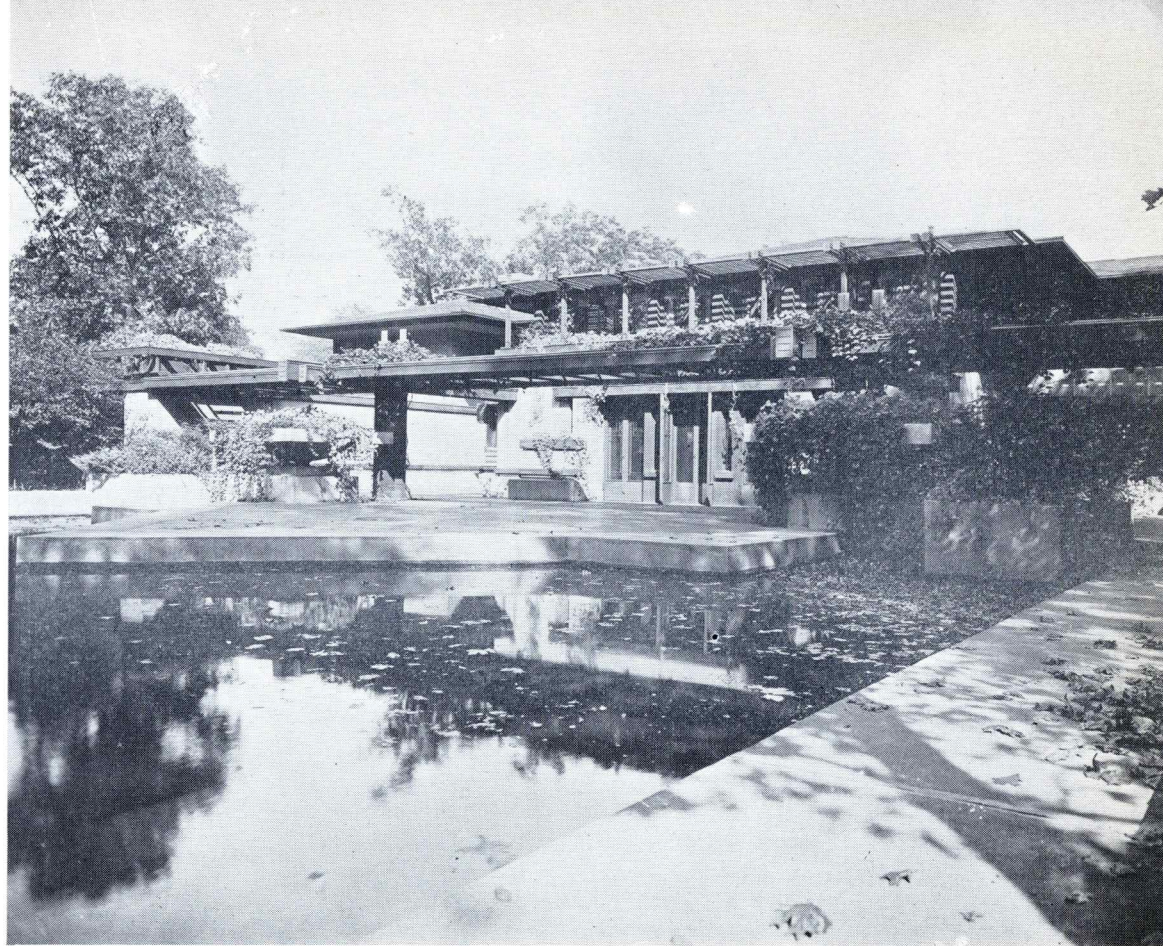


COONLEY HOUSE  
RIVERSIDE, ILL.  
1908



## COONLEY HOUSE

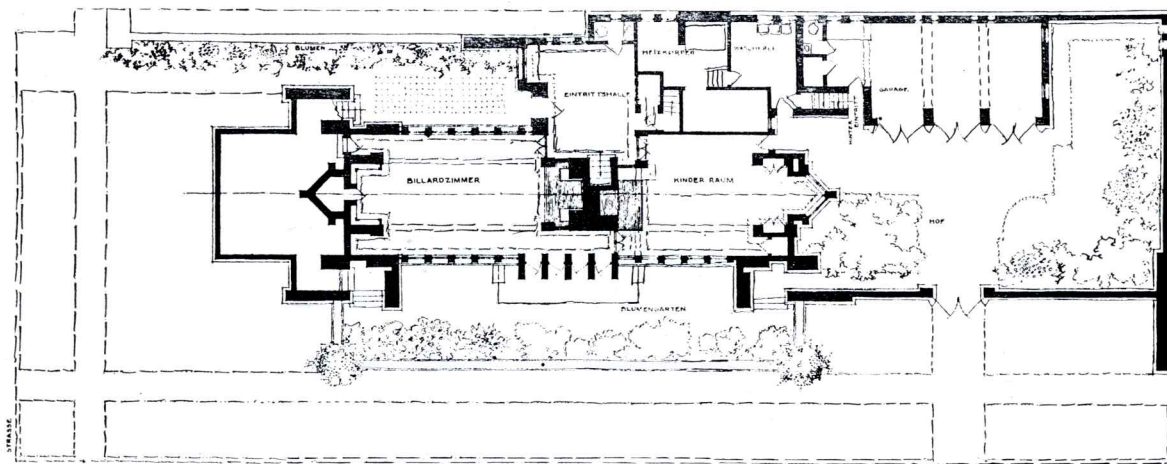
The garden side.



Before long, by way of glass, the garden will be the building as much as the building is the garden. Walls are vanishing . . . The cave is disappearing . . . Walls themselves will become as windows, and windows as we know them will be seen no more. Ceilings will become as window-walls, too, often enough. The textile may now be used as a beautiful robe for space, an attribute of architecture instead of the decorator's camouflage. Modern mechanical heating, integral-lighting and standardized-unit sanitation all make it reasonable as twentieth-century ideal to abolish building as either boxment or borough.

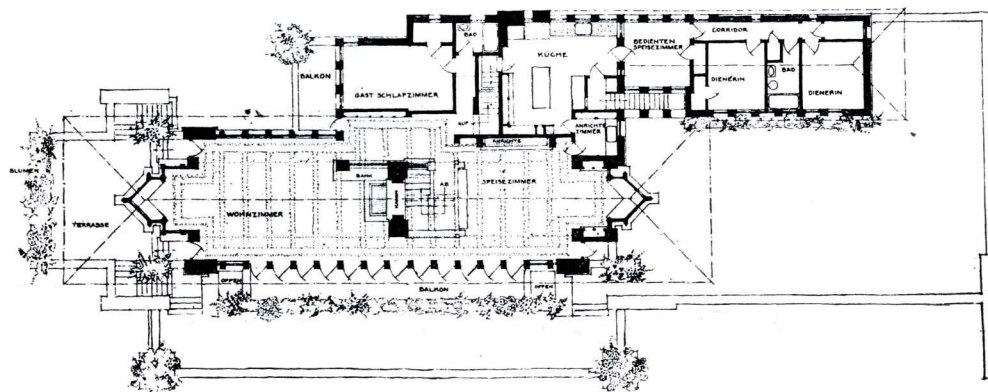
*Autobiography*





PLAN OF THE  
ROBIE HOUSE  
CHICAGO

1908





## TALIESIN

Corner of the living  
room.



Long cords of this native stone, five hundred or more from first to last, got up there, ready to hand, as Father Larson, the old Norse stone mason working in the quarry beyond blasted and quarried it out in great flakes. The stone went down for pavements of terraces and courts. Stone was sent along the slopes into great walls. Stone stepped up like ledges on the hill, and flung long arms in any direction that brought the house to the ground.

*Autobiography*



Always the desire to get some system of building construction as a basis of architecture was my objective—my hope. There never was, there *is* no architecture otherwise, I believe. What form? The concrete block? The cheapest (and ugliest) thing in the building world. It lived mostly in the architectural gutter as an imitation of “rockface” stone.

Why not see what could be done with the gutter-rat? Steel wedded to it cast inside the joints and the block itself brought into some broad, practical scheme of general treatment—then why would it not fit for a phase of modern architecture? It might be permanent, noble, beautiful. It would be cheap. There should be many phases of architecture as modern. All that imagination needed to make such a scheme feasible was a plastic medium where steel would enter into inert mass as a tensile strength. Concrete was the inert mass and would take compression. Concrete is a plastic material—susceptible to the impress of imagination. I saw a kind of weaving coming out of it. Why not weave a kind of building? Then I saw the “shell”. Shells with steel inlaid in them. Or steel for warp and masonry for “woof” in the weaving. For block-size—say manhandled units weighing 40 to 50 pounds—all such units or blocks for either weaving or shells to be set steel-wound and steel-bound. Floors ceilings, walls all the same—all to be hollow.

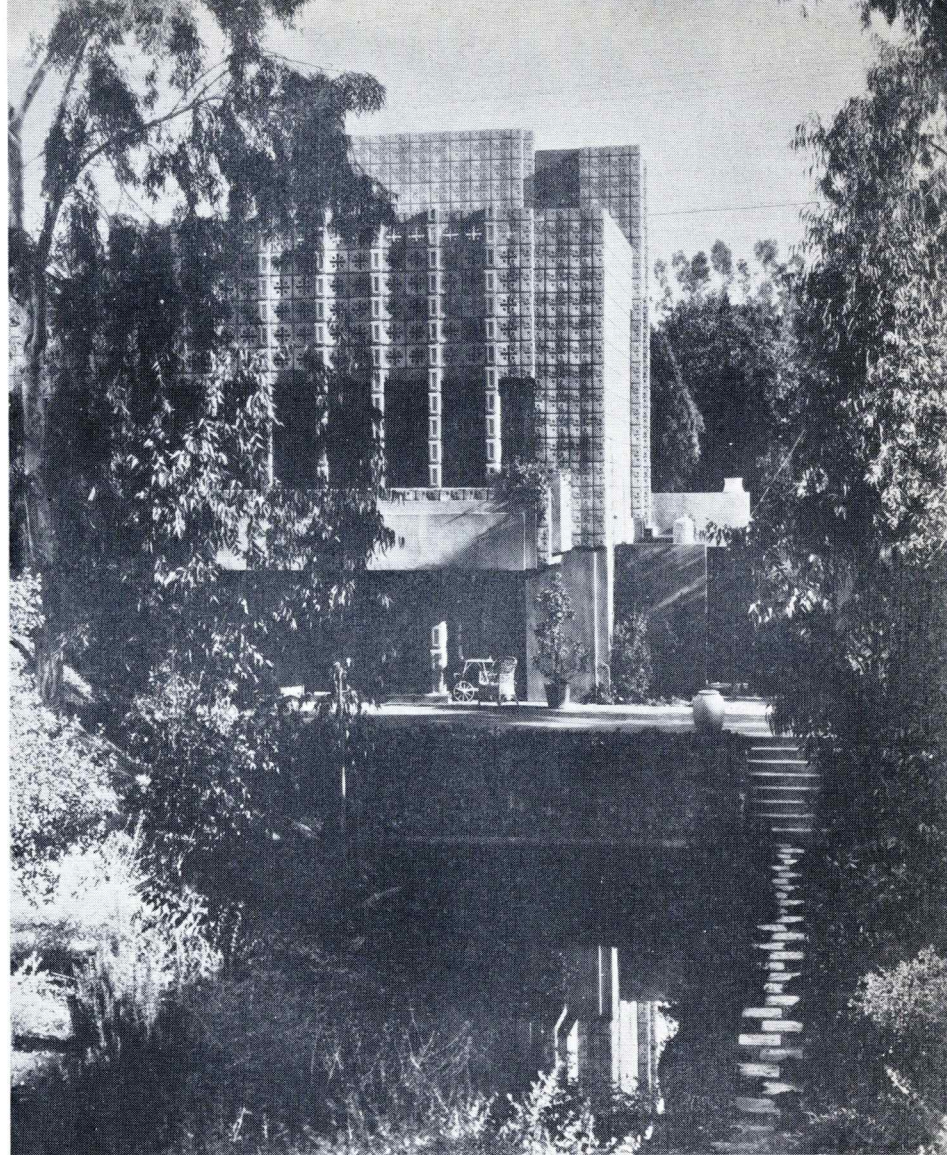
I had used the block in some such textured way in the Midway Garden upper walls. If I could eliminate the mortar joint I could make the whole fabric mechanical. I could do away with skilled labor. I believed I could and began on “La Miniatura”. Lightness and strength. Steel the spider, now spinning a web within the plastic material to be wedded to it by inner core of cement. Hollow wall-shells for living in! The “shell”, as human habitation.

*Autobiography*



LA MINIATURA –  
MILLARD HOUSE  
PASADENA, CALIF.  
1921

– First in the series  
of concrete block  
shell houses.







## SAN MARCOS IN THE DESERT, 1929

A dream of Dr. Alexander Chandler's was an undefiled "desert resort" for wintering millionaires. He wanted to build it on a tract of several hundred acres of pure desert, in the Salt Range ten miles from his town of Chandler, Arizona . . . As I saw this desert resort it was to embody all that was worthwhile that I had learned about a natural architecture . . . We worked out a great system of inter-communicating terraces, three of them, each with its pools and gardens, one terrace rising above the other against the mountain side. A mono-material building and the latest expression of the block-shell system. Re-inforced masonry within and without . . .

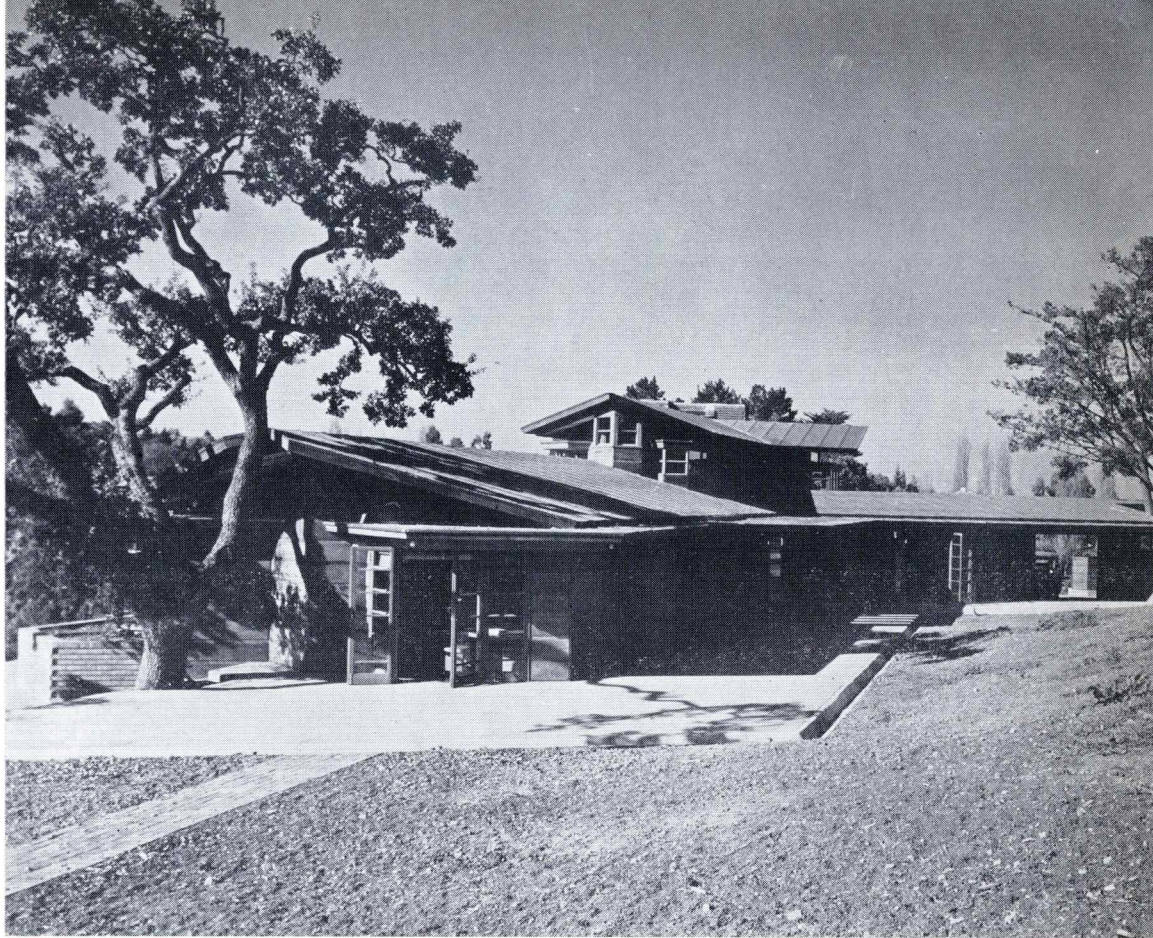
In every respect the far-flung, long-drawn-out levels of the terraces afford each room, each bathroom, each closet, each corridor, sunlight. Every living portion of the building is free to the magnificent views and has the warm southern exposure that every winter resort covets . . . Completely equipped and appropriately furnished according to reliable estimates San Marcos In The Desert would have cost, thus completely furnished in character, \$4,000 per room . . . The Arizona desert itself was architectural inspiration and actually the architect's workshop in this endeavor. Is this not what we mean by an "indigenous architecture"?

*Autobiography*



HANNA HOUSE  
PALO ALTO, CALIF.  
1937-8

The "honeycomb"  
house.



Again we have a preliminary study for prefabrication—also made in humble native materials—principally redwood board partitions erected on a concrete mat cut into hexagonal tiles. Another experiment because I am convinced that a cross-section of honeycomb has more fertility and flexibility where human movement is concerned than the square. The obtuse angle is more suited to human “to and fro” than the right angle . . . The hexagon design has been conservatively treated—however, it is allowed to appear in plan only and in the furniture which literally rises from and befits the floor pattern of the concrete slab upon which the whole stands . . . I find it easy to take a definite unit of any simple geometric pattern and by modern technologies suited to the purpose, adjusted to human scale, evolve not only fresh appearances but vital contributions to a livelier domesticity.

*Architectural Forum*



The house of moderate cost is not only America's major architectural problem but the problem most difficult for her major architects . . . Let's see how far the Herbert Jacobs house at Madison, Wisconsin, is a sensible house. This house for a young journalist, his wife, and small daughter, is now under roof: cost \$5,500, including architect's fee of \$450.

*[Mr. Wright enumerates the following points in describing the house]*

#### NON-ESSENTIALS WHICH HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED

1. The visible roof (with dormers, hips, etc.)
2. The garage (carport substituted)
3. Basement (except for heater space)
4. Interior "trim" and decoration (built-in furniture used)
5. Radiators and light fixtures (lighting is part of actual wiring system; heat radiates from pipes laid in concrete floor)
6. No painting (natural wood used)
7. No plastering
8. No gutters or down spouts

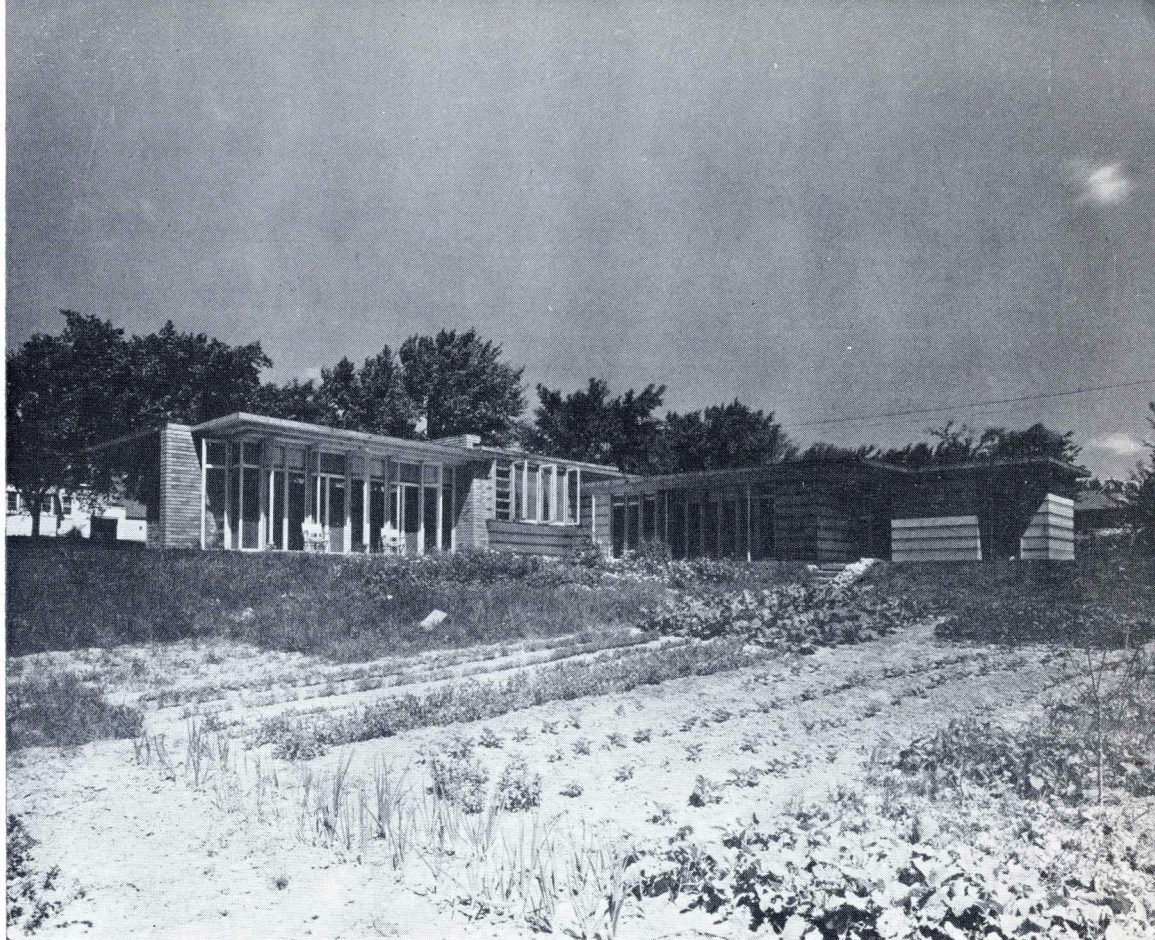
Here is a moderate cost brick and wood house that by new technology of a lifetime has been greatly extended in scale and comfort. A single house. Imagine how the cost would come down were the technique familiar or if many were executed at one time—probably down to \$3,500, according to number built and location. There is freedom of movement, and privacy too, afforded by the general arrangement here, unknown to the current boxment.

*Architectural Forum*

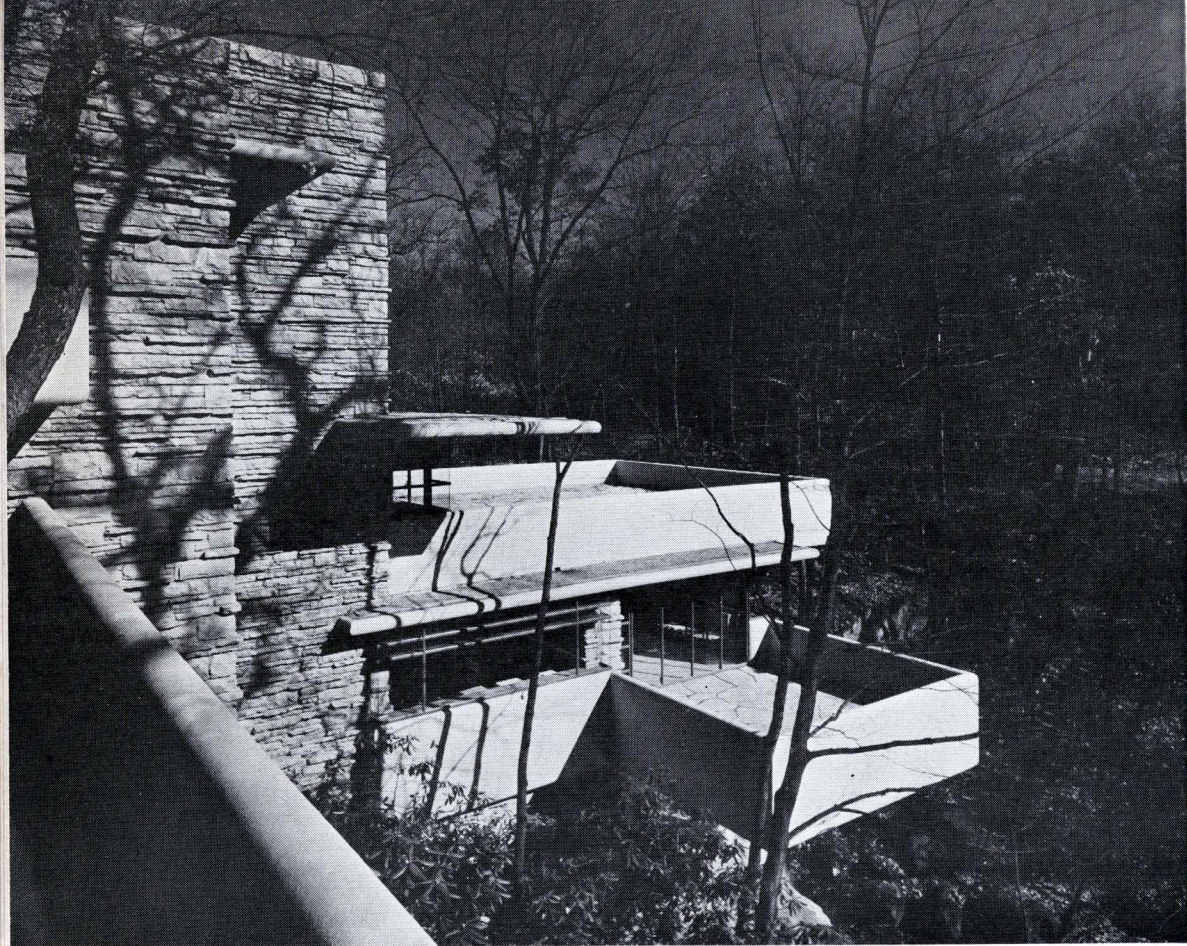


JACOBS HOUSE  
MADISON, WIS.  
1937-8

—The \$5500 house







KAUFMANN HOUSE  
1937-9

This building is a late example of the inspiration of a site, the cooperation of an intelligent client and the use of entirely masonry materials except for an interlining of redwood and asphalt beneath all flooring. Again, by way of steel in tension this building takes its place and achieves its form. The cantilever slabs here carry parapets and the beams. They may be seen clutching big boulders. But next time, I believe, parapets will carry the floors — or better still we will know enough to make the two work together as one, as I originally intended.

*Architectural Forum*

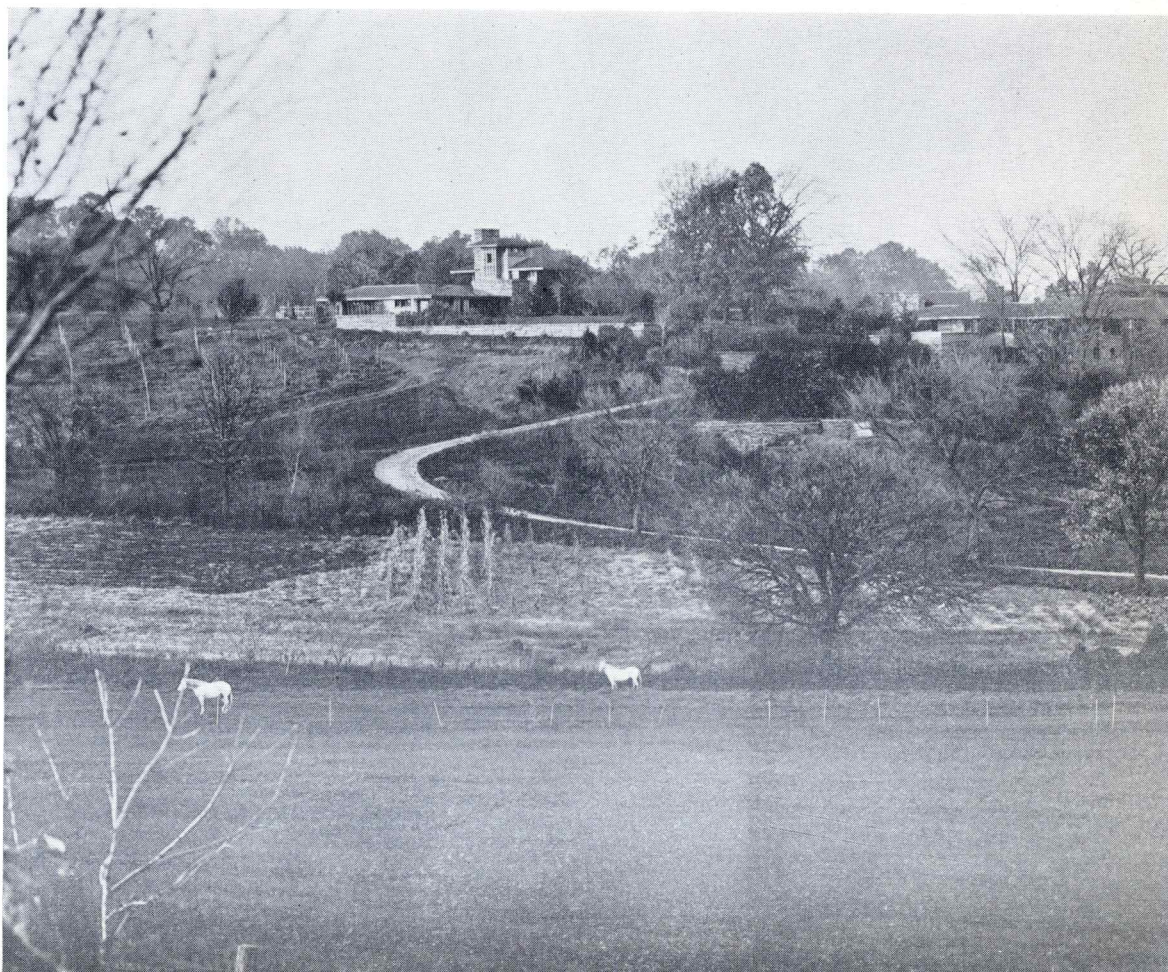


## *Adaption to Site*

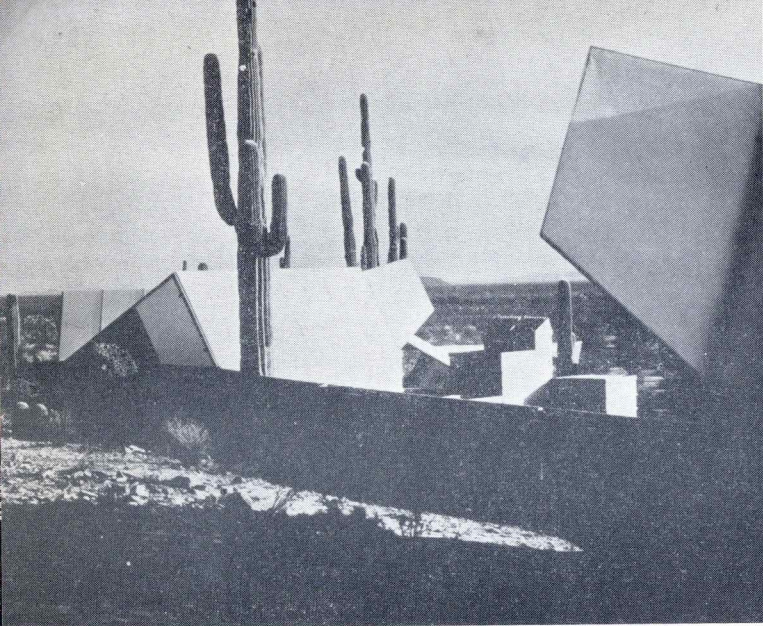
I knew well by now that no house should ever be *on* any hill or *on* anything. It should be *of* the hill, belonging to it, so hill and house could live together each the happier for the other . . .

*Autobiography*

TALIESIN from  
an adjacent hill.







OCATILLA: THE  
ARCHITECT'S DESERT  
CAMP, CHANDLER,  
ARIZONA, 1929.

We need fifteen cabins in all. Since they will be temporary, call them ephemera. The cabins themselves will be connected together by a low "staggered" box board wall, its horizontal zigzag lines completing the enclosure just referred to as a "compound".

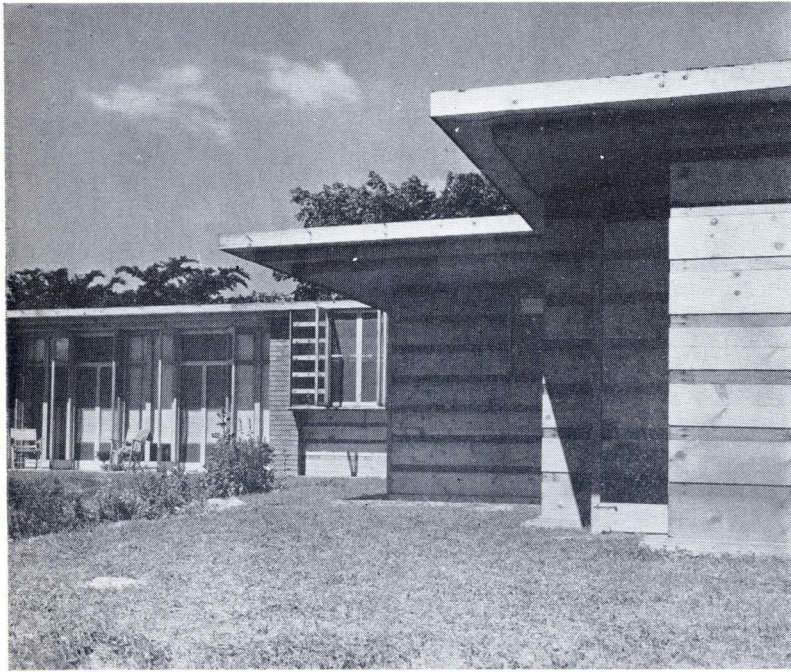
The necessary openings in the canvas-topped box buildings? We will close them with canvas-covered wood frames or "wings" hinged with rubber belting to open and shut tight instead of doors and windows, of which, of course, there will be none . . . The one-two triangles seen made by the mountain ranges around about the site will be seen reflected in the gables of the camp. We will paint the triangles scarlet, make the cabins bloom with these scarlet one-two triangles like the one-two triangles of the ocatilla bloom itself.

So we call the camp "Ocatilla". All this impromptu effort, as you now see, is a human circumstance as appropriately "nature" in Arizona as Arizona cacti, rocks and reptiles themselves . . . And I found the white luminous canvas overhead afforded diffusion of light within so enjoyable I now feel more than ever oppressed by the thought of the opaque solid overhead of the heavy mid-western house . . . Why in any changing period of our relation to the soil are transient buildings not best?

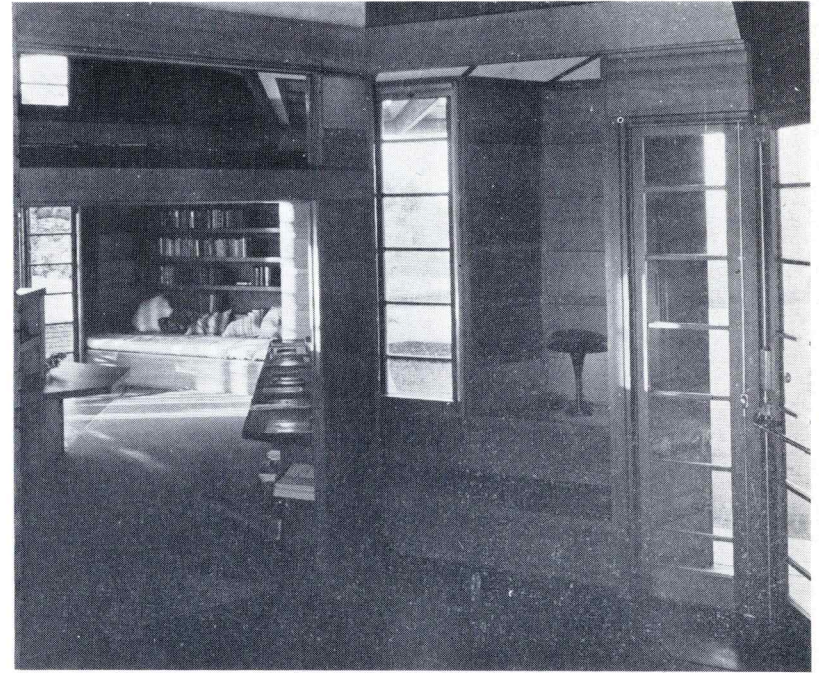
*Autobiography*



## *Use of Materials in Structure and Design*



PLYWOOD WALLS: JACOBS HOUSE

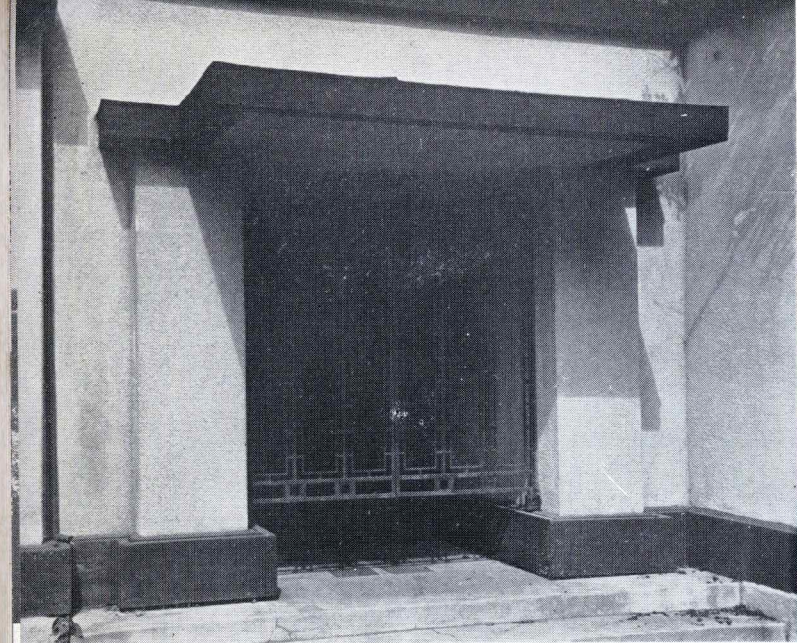


PLYWOOD INTERIOR: HANNA HOUSE

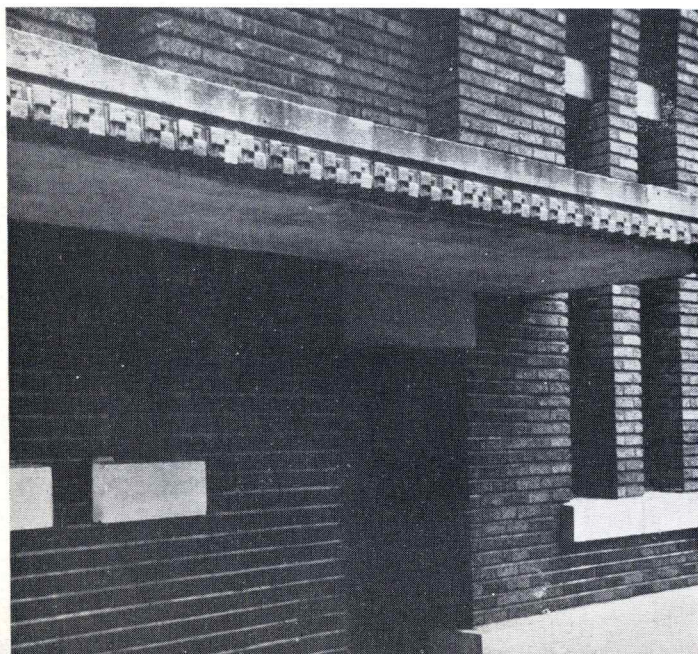
Glass? Yes, the modern house must use glass liberally. Otherwise this house is a simple wood house under a sheet of copper — thin as paper, enough material in the whole construction only to make it substantial. Not a pound to waste. It might be said of this building that it is a plywood house, plywood furnished.

*Architectural Forum*





STUCCO AND WOOD:  
CANTILEVERED  
PORTICO,  
WESTCOTT HOUSE  
SPRINGFIELD, OHIO  
1904

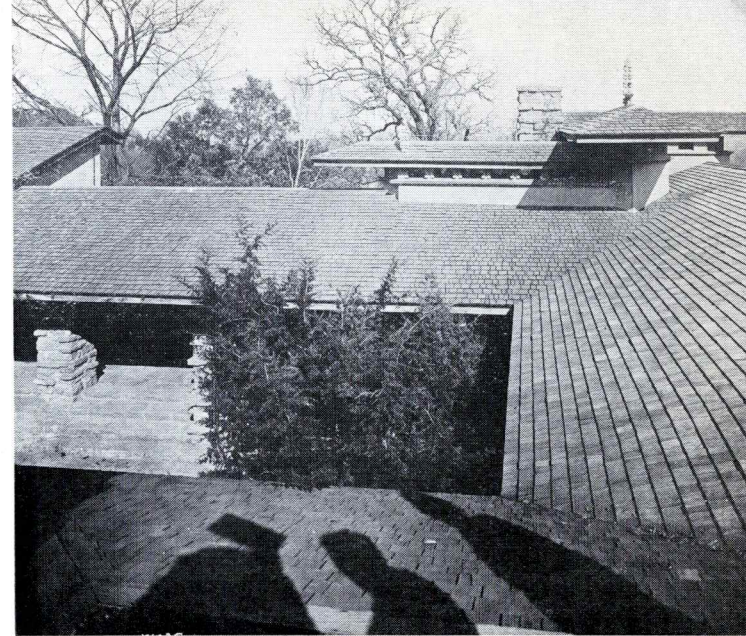


BRICK AND CONCRETE:  
CANTILEVERED  
PORTICO, BOGK  
HOUSE, MILWAUKEE,  
1911

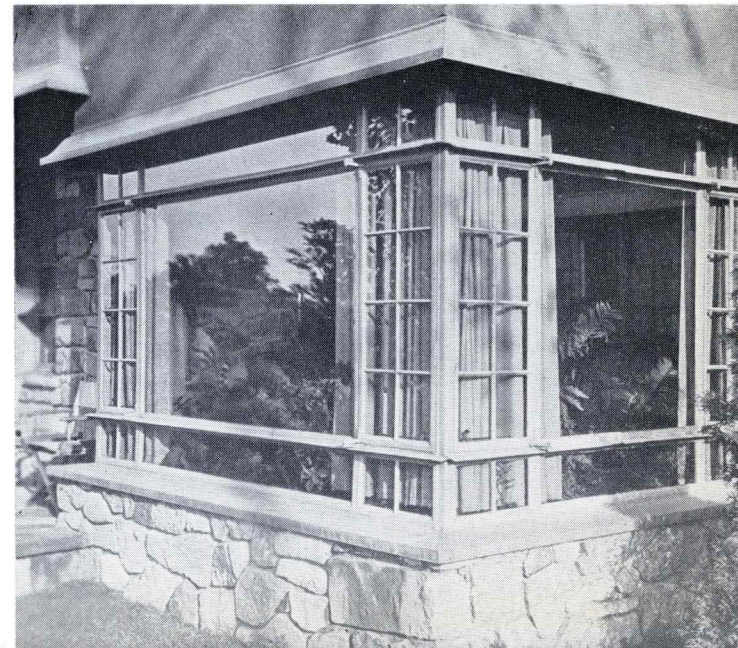
Anticipates use of these  
materials for exterior  
decoration of Midway  
Gardens (1915) and the  
Imperial Hotel (1916-20)



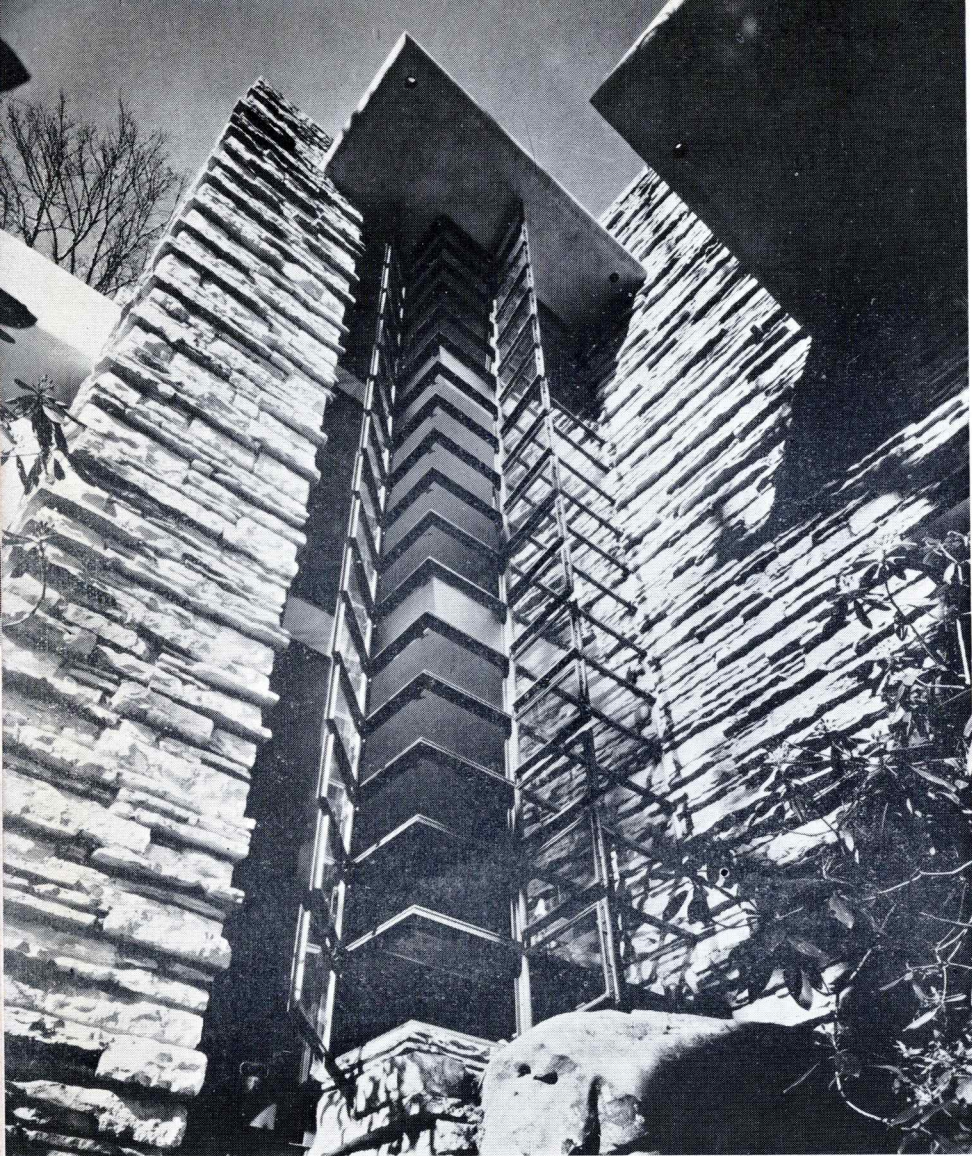
FAVORITE DEVICE:  
CONTINUOUS ROOF  
LINE, IMPARTING  
ASPECT OF PRO-  
NOUNCED HORIZON-  
TALITY – TALIESIN



FAVORITE DEVICE:  
CORNER WINDOW,  
IMPARTING LIGHT-  
NESS TO STRUCTURE  
– USED AS EARLY AS  
1900 (ROSS), AS LATE  
AS 1939 (KAUFMANN).  
DETAIL OF MARTIN  
HOUSE, LAKE ERIE,  
1924.





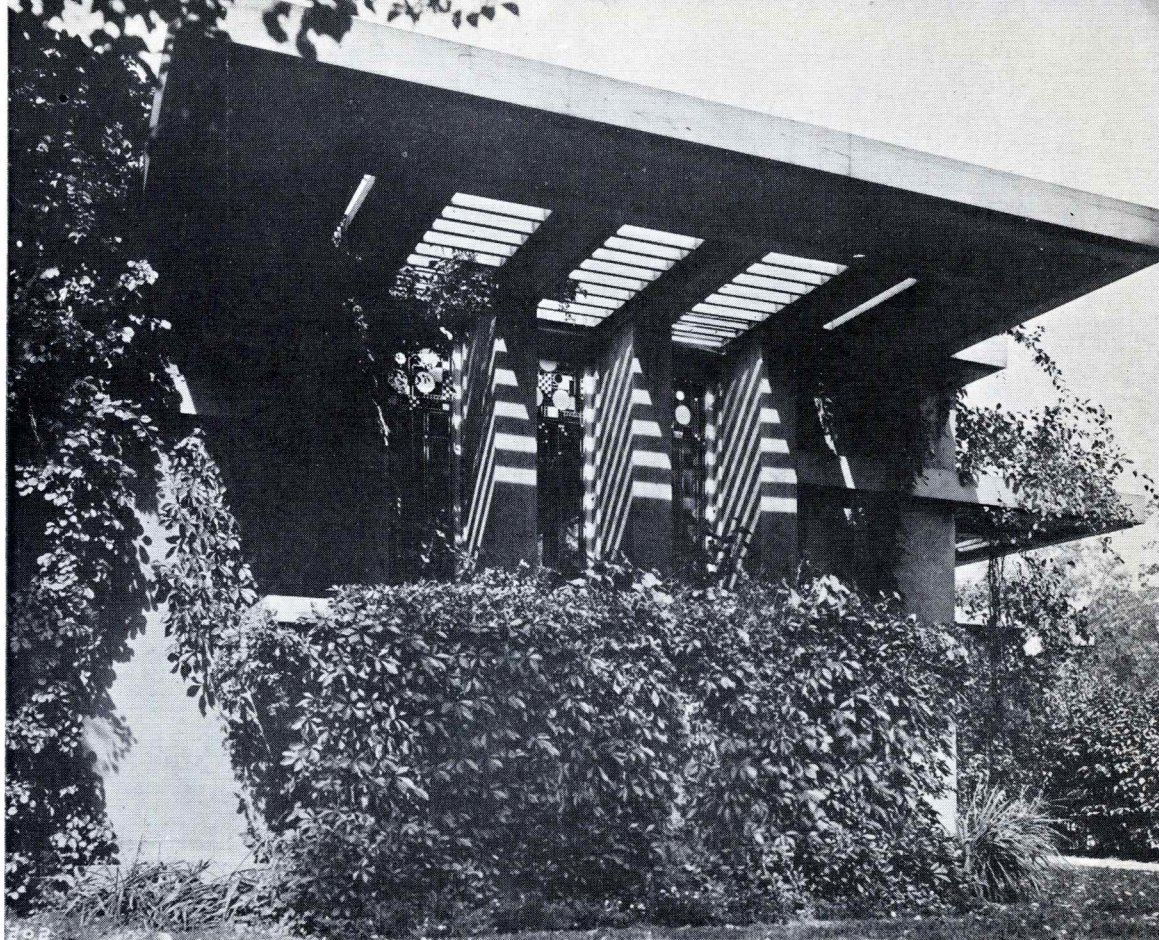


DESIGN IN STONE,  
CONCRETE, STEEL  
AND GLASS:  
KAUFMANN HOUSE  
1937



DESIGN IN STUCCO  
AND WOOD:  
COONLEY  
PLAYHOUSE.

1911





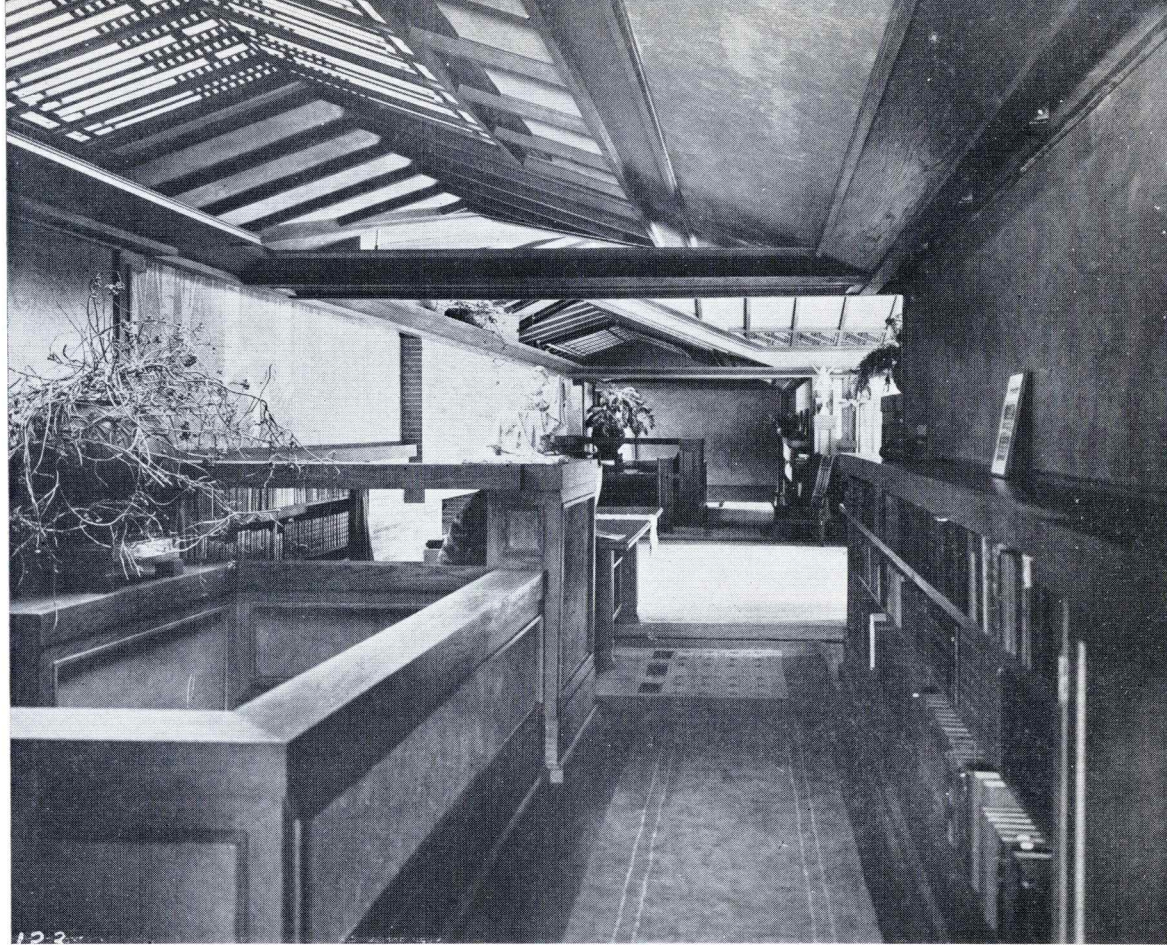


CORRIDOR AT  
TALIESIN

*Scale*



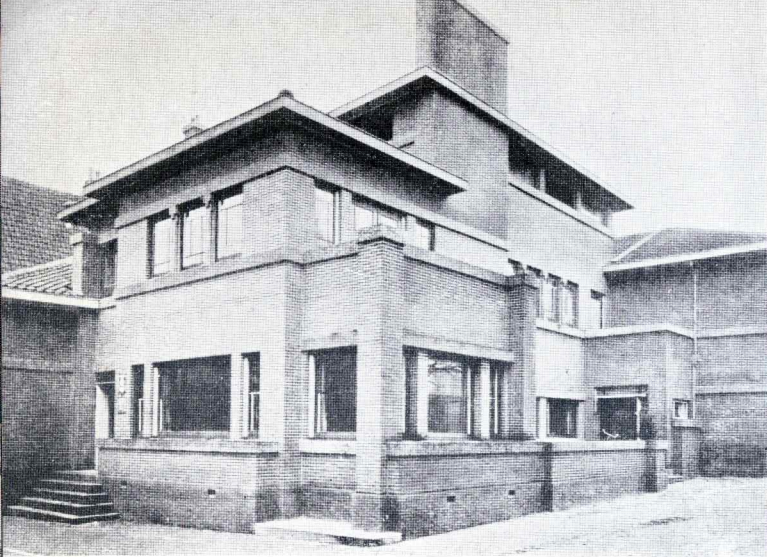
UPSTAIRS HALL,  
COONLEY HOUSE,  
1908



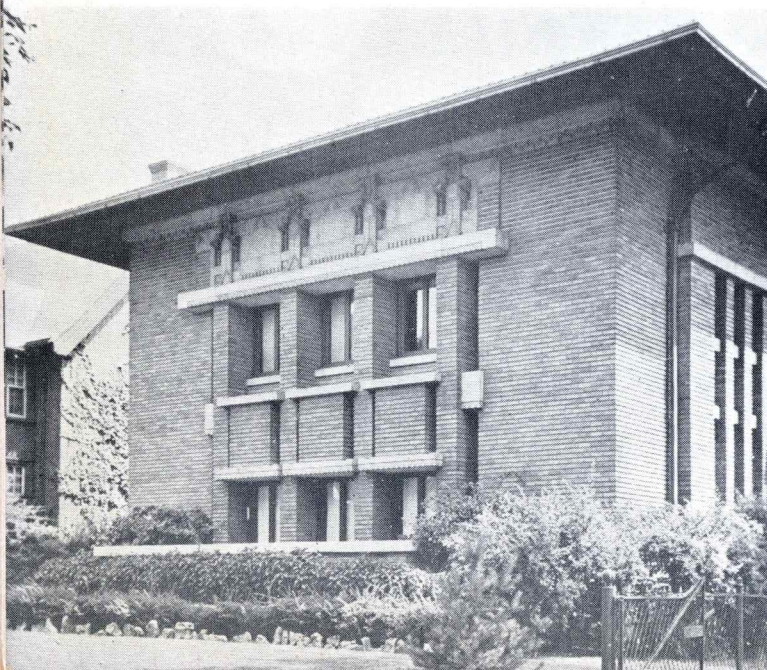
Taking a human being for my scale, I brought the whole home down in height to fit a normal man; believing in no other scale, I broadened the mass out, all I possibly could, as I brought it down into spaciousness. It has been said that were I three inches taller (I am 5' 8½" tall), all my houses would have been quite different in proportion.

*Princeton Lectures*





J. WILS:  
CAFE AT WOERDEN  
HOLLAND,  
1918



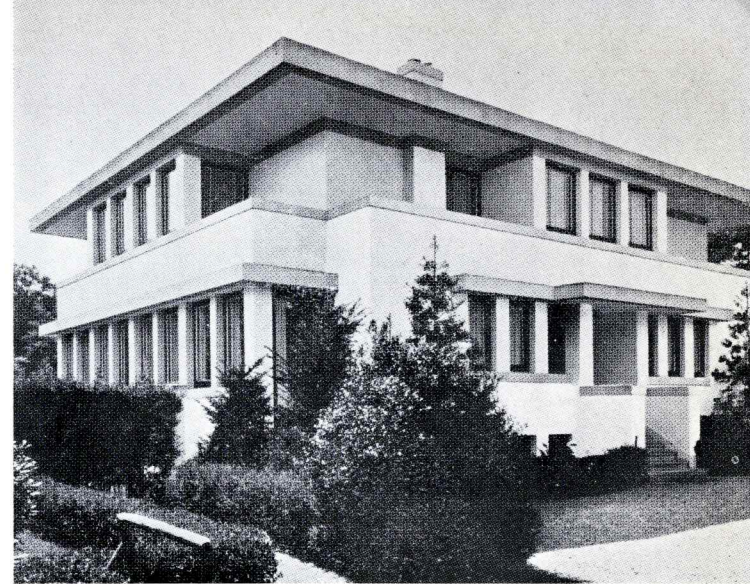
WRIGHT:  
BOGK HOUSE,  
MILWAUKEE,  
1911

*Influence*



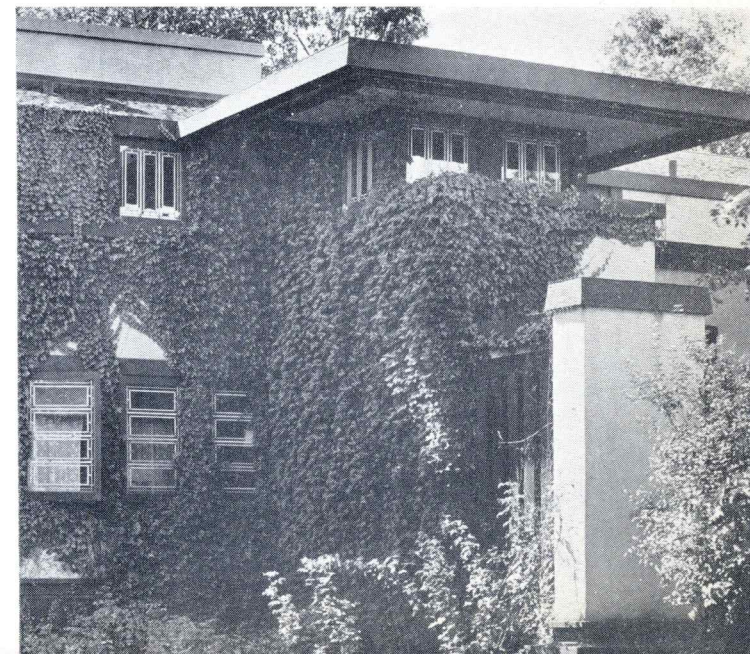
ROBERT V. HOFF:  
COUNTRY HOUSE,  
HOLLAND

1915

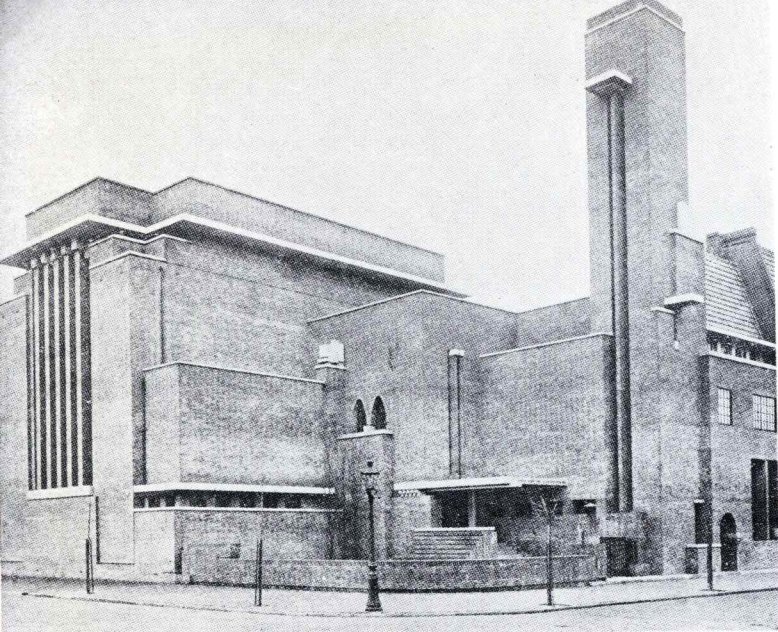


WRIGHT:  
COONLEY PLAYHOUSE  
DETAIL

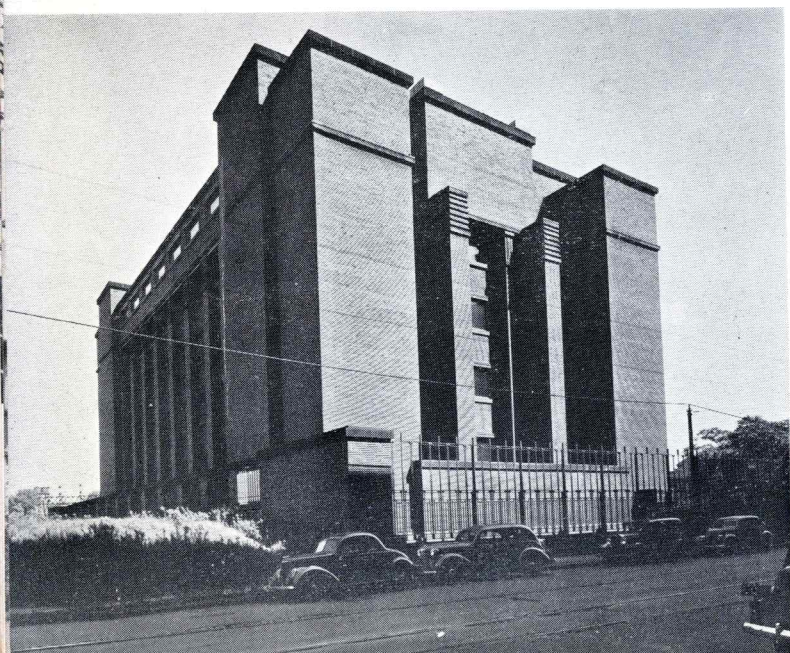
1911







H. ELTE:  
SYNAGOGUE,  
AMSTERDAM,  
1928

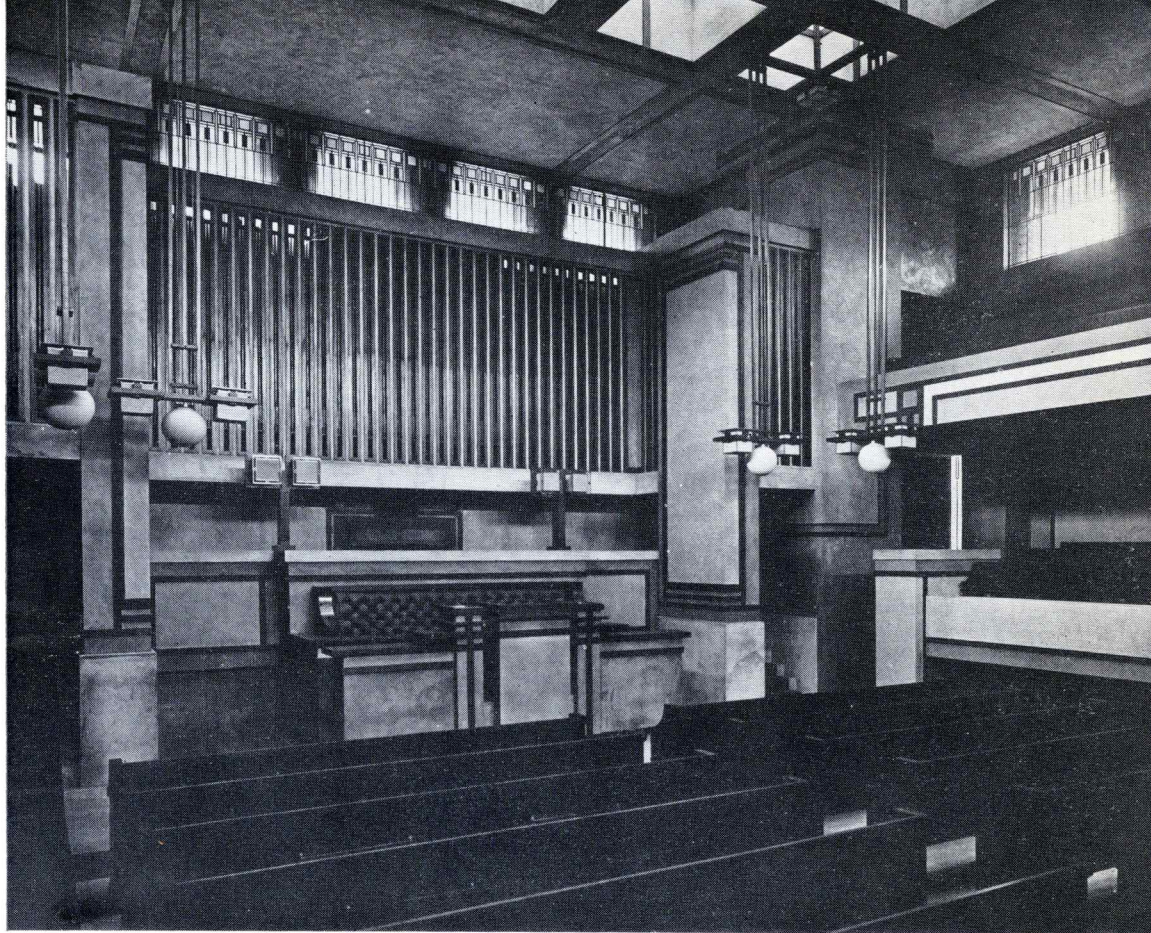


WRIGHT:  
LARKIN SOAP CO.  
BUILDING, BUFFALO.  
1904-5

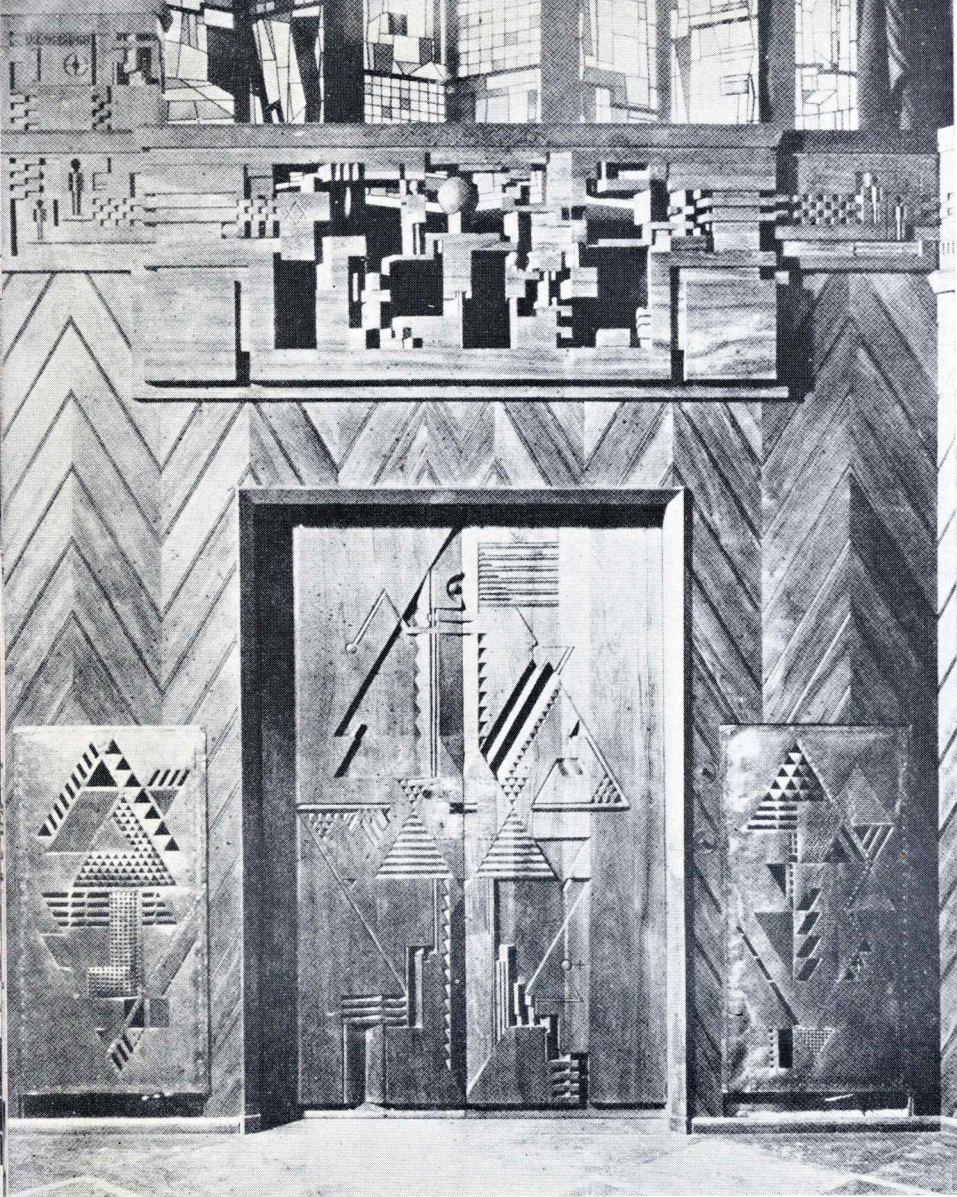


WRIGHT:  
INTERIOR, UNITY  
TEMPLE, OAK PARK.  
1905

Early preoccupation  
with geometric  
design.





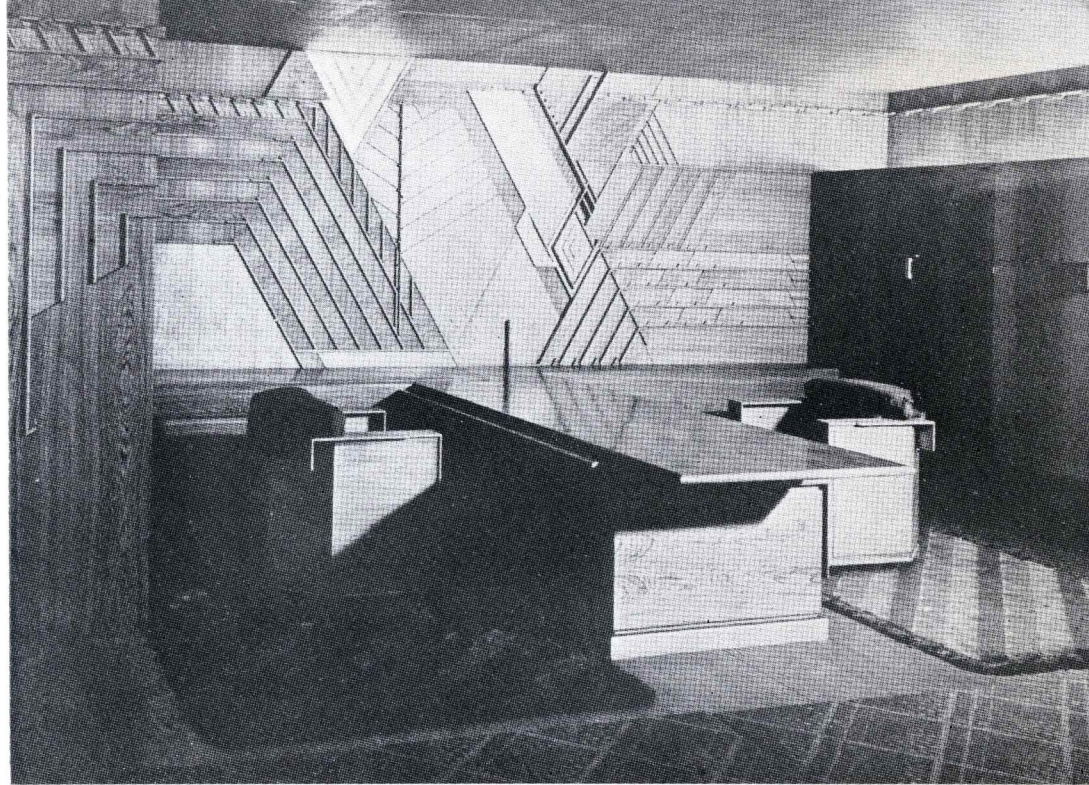


W. GROPIUS:  
BLOCKHAUS SOMMER-  
FELD, GERMANY.  
ca. 1925



WRIGHT:  
INTERIOR, EXECUTIVE  
OFFICE, KAUFMANN  
STORE, PITTSBURGH.  
1937

Derivation from Unity  
Temple and Midway  
Gardens decoration.





# Observations

Somewhere, sometime a prospective client asked me how much I could build a ten-thousand-dollar house for. I said I didn't know but supposed it could be built for about what it would be worth with something fine thrown in that money couldn't pay for. That home cost \$18,000. The owner admitted it was worth it.

*Autobiography*

Any house is a far too complicated, clumsy, fussy, mechanical counterfeit of the human body. Electric wiring for nervous system, plumbing for bowels, heating system and fireplaces for arteries and heart, and windows for eyes, nose and lungs generally. The structure of the house, too, is a kind of cellular tissue stuck full of bones, complex now, as the confusion of Bedlam and all beside. The whole interior is a kind of stomach that attempts to digest objects.

*Princeton Lectures*

The sense of freedom in space is an abiding human desire because the horizontal line is the line of domesticity — the earthline of human life.

*Princeton Lectures*

I believe the city as we know it today is to die — we are witnessing the acceleration which precedes dissolution.

*Princeton Lectures*

Surface and Mass are subordinate to the great Trinity of *the Nature of Materials, the Third Dimension and Integral Ornament.*

*Princeton Lectures*



More unfortunate, however, than all this fiasco, is the Fiasco al Fresco. The suburban house-parade is more servile still. Any popular avenue or suburb will show the polyglot encampment displaying, on the neatly kept little plots, a theatrical desire on the part of fairly respectable people to live in Chateaux, Manor Houses, Venetian Palaces, Feudal Castles, and Queen Anne Cottages. Many with sufficient hardihood abide in abortions of the Carpenter-Architect, our very own General Grant Gothic perhaps, intended to beat all the "lovely periods" at their own game and succeeding.

*Princeton Lectures*

The desert shows a remarkable scientific building economy in these constructions. And the desert could teach any architect applying for lessons. He may see the reinforcing rod employed in the flesh of the sahuaro but he may see the lattice reed and welded tubular construction in the stalk of the cholla, the staghorn, the bignana. The sahuaro (giant cactus) itself is a perfect example of "reinforced" construction. With its interior vertical rods it holds upright the great columnar mass for six centuries or more.

*Autobiography*

"Be clean" was the soul of Shinto, the ancient religion of Japan. And the Shinto religion finally made the Japanese dwelling the cleanest of all clean human things. Clean too, in a spiritual sense. The sense that abhors waste as matter out of place. Therefore dirt. Therefore ugly . . . As the centuries went by, every Japanese home, whether of the coolie or of the aristocrat, has been worked out in this "be clean" spirit as a temple.

Becoming more closely acquainted with things Japanese, I saw the native home in Japan as supreme study in elimination—not only of dirt but the elimination, too, of the insignificant. The Japanese house fascinated me and I would spend many hours taking it to pieces and putting it together again.

*Autobiography*

Shadows were the "brush-work" of the ancient Architect. Let the "Modern" now work with light, light diffused, light reflected, light refracted—light for its own sake, shadows gratuitous. It is the Machine that makes modern these rare new opportunities in Glass.

*Princeton Lectures*



THE LINE OF DIRECT  
DESCENT: INTERIORS  
OF THE S. C. JOHNSON  
CO., RACINE, WIS.,  
1938, AND THE LARKIN  
BUILDING, BUFFALO,  
1904







