

BRUCE COFF AND HIS ARCHITECTURE

by

PAUL NICHOLAS NICOLAIDES

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INTRODUCTION

Almost 200 years ago, a new nation was born, formed and based on the value of the individual, and on the principle that each has the right and privilege to express himself and to act as a free man, equal to all. Through the years that followed, the dream of the founding fathers became a reality. The United States of America today stands as the leader of the free nations. Leadership implies honors, but it carries heavy responsibilities, and in this day and age, the burden of awesome decisions.

Americans are capable of making the right choice in the crucial issues of the day and they are able to fulfill the obligations arising from them. However, the only true justification of a position of leadership, insofar as history is concerned, is a contribution to the cultural development of the human race. The billions spent every year in helping other countries, the military strength of the country, and the possession of awful forces of destruction can but offer a leadership based on charity and fear. Throughout history, no nation or culture has lasted long without a more solid footing—one that is grounded on faith and love—one that is built on cultural prestige, and achievement.

Through the centuries, in man's struggle for peace, he has tried almost every route available to him to lead him to his goal. None has succeeded. Today the human element deals with unpredictable powers, with forces almost beyond its control, certainly beyond its understanding or capability to withstand. Soon, the very real fear of self-destruction will lead all nations to a so-long cherished, lasting peace. When the power of utter destruction is replaced with that of culture, the cultural scale will evaluate nations and determine the leaders. Thus the question arises, is

the United States mature enough to lead, culturally? The answer is debatable (there is always Alexander Woolcott's Frenchman, who said that the United States was the only nation to spring from Barbarism to degeneracy with no culture in between), but indisputable is the fact of an abundance of inspiring cultural resources lying hidden in the drama of the American tradition.

During the five years I have been in the United States, I have wondered many times if these people realized the cultural potentialities of their country. "We are but a young nation. Look at the roots and traditions that the European nations have," is the excuse the average American used for all questions of cultural activities and the contributions of his country to the world of arts. He forgets the unique traditions of the foresighted, vigorous and inventive pioneers who stepped into the wilderness to conquer the unknown and shape it into a shining symbol of freedom and prosperity. Until the "intellectual" American develops as good an eye for his own as for that across the sea; until the authorities and individuals, as well, recognize, encourage and support creativity; until the American public develops understanding and embraces indigenous expressions; until experimentation and "basic research" in creative work will be accepted as an important step to progress; until the creative genius is recognized as a hero; the United States' position in the international cultural scene will be that of the strong, but blind, youth that follows the steps of the weak, but sighted, old man.

These are the conditions that make any contribution to the development of an American expression a fact of the utmost importance. These are the conditions that make Bruce Goff, and a few other pioneers, the building stones of the cultural structure of this country.

Who is this Bruce Goff? There are those who call him great, genius,

a master, while others refer to him as mad, an anarchist, vulgar, or an undisciplined romantic. Which is he? Does he live in a dream, or does the dream live in him? He answers only with his work. It is an answer at once as clear and yet as opaque (to the purblind) as the scriptural "handwriting on the wall." With courage, distinction and veracity he continues his mission; the advancement of an indigene Architecture. For beside his foreign influences, he remains an American, complete with the virtues of individualism, regionalism and nationalism.

The early work of this amazing Architectural revolutionist attracted the attention of professional circles with comments like: "Remarkable in one so young," (13, p. 5) Louis Sullivan. "One of the outstanding talents in this country devoted to an indigene Architecture (13, p. 5) my logical successor on the American scene," (34, p. 9) Frank Lloyd Wright. Later, his work was described as "the only real, new American Architecture," (13, p. 5) by Amancio Williams, Argentine Architect, and "the most one-hundred per-cent American Architect" (3, p. 110) by various professional magazines and books. His professional principles, his regionalism, his modular and interspatial composition, plus his new vocabulary of materials and forms, brought him international recognition. In Germany, France, England, Japan and South America, professional magazines offered whole issues on his work and his philosophy.

Americans should be proud of contemporaries with the simplicity, sureness, dedication, and missionary zeal of Bruce Goff. They should be grateful he has exercised an unusually significant influence, particularly strong with the young, but his contributions to the American culture have been the result of a lifetime of devotion, sacrifice and fierce struggle. A struggle imposed because he did not conform; because he was honest with himself and his profession; because he was radical and therefore, must be destroyed before

he pulled down the sacred cow of the cult of the "status quo." As his native, naive vision endangered the security of the established, he had to taste the bitterness of social and professional scorn. It was Prometheus, Gallileo, DaVinci, Sullivan...the same story again and again...society versus the creative genius.

To the creative geniuses of this country, and to all that helped me make my educational dream a reality, I dedicate this treatise, a small contribution toward the recognition of an American culture.

THE ARCHITECTURAL SCENE 1900-1920

At the turn of the Nineteenth century, American Architecture is as deep in eclecticism as ever. In the last decade of the century, an important change had taken place in the economic scene of the country. With the land conquered, its overlords drifted to the cities in an attempt to organize their assets upon a more sophisticated financial base. The industrialists of the "gilded age" moved their activities from the "field" to Wall Street and other equally mundane centers of commerce. This concentration of idle riches in the metropolitan areas led to a sort of competition as to who was to out-do whom, who would have the biggest railroad, who could burn the most money and most fantastically, who was going to erect the most profligate palace.

Now the average of "nouveau riche" of the period was one that had accumulated vast wealth, an absurd abundance of overwhelming riches. He had done so during the span of his own lifetime; hence, neither he, nor his spouse, owned the roots, sophistication or tradition that he found in his new metropolitan environment. Hence, the only manner in which he could establish himself in his new society was in an ostentatious display of the only thing he had to offer, his money.

This struggle for status and social prestige, combined with the theme of the age, opulence and magnitude, led Architecture, once more, back to Rome. For, after all, what other historical period could express the spirit of Boston, New York, the resorts of Saratoga, Newport and Bar Harbor, where hosts like James Hyde and hostesses like Mrs. Jack Gardner vied, with one another, to see who could spend the most—the great, magnificent, powerful, the "gilded mongols," the period which the Roman historian, Ferrero has

called a "veritable recommencement d'histoire." (4, p. 125)

True did America's new nobility set the pace for the masses, for were not they the chosen of God? The very path of society, especially in the east, led the Architects of the period to the museum to dieinter bits of a doed beauty--vague images transported out of other times, other cultures.

Architecture is a living art; it is closely interrelated with the attitude and needs of the people it serves; and it cannot come, altogether, from Architects. The development of Architecture is possible only when capable and honest Architects are encouraged and sustained by an intelligent, truly cultured public. A public that strives for profounder ideals than those of fashion and prestige.

Although the free-spending magnates of the 1900's provided a substantial financial base for the Architectural style of the period, other equally important factors participated in this made game of eclecticism. From their very arrival on the continent, the newcomers had been looking to the far side of the Atlantic for fashions and modes and had been adapting them as faithfully as they knew how. The practice of Architecture conformed to this false attitude toward life and then, at this time, French teachers and methods were overwhelmingly adopted. As a result, a whole generation of "Ecole des Beaux Arts" Architects, stuffed with an utterly foreign view, were turned out. In addition to this, young Americans of promise or wealth followed another continental custom--that of the "grand tour." Some studied in Germany, some in Italy, some at the fountainhead itself, Paris. The result was confusion compounded--the blind leading the blind. Architects, the more eminent the better, differed wildly in their opinions of which historic style was the panacea, which the universal solvent of any design problem.

A chaotic situation indeed, as the architects neglected to think in

terms of place, time, local culture and tradition. Architects, in the press of business, became to depend, more and more, on their draftsmen. This led to a repetition of details and forms, all borrowed from the past (or the more successful of their fellows). It was hardly possible (it still is), therefore, for them to see the difference between novelty and originality. This lack of fundamental study, research, thought, experimentation (taste, if you will) was another contributory factor towards an Architecture that had a little of everything but honesty, courage and the creative spark.

There was, to be sure, a great variety of form. Inspiration was sought in every possible direction except the right one. The Roman palace led to the Greek temple, which in turn gave way to the French Renaissance manoir. One house may suggest a Tudor cottage of half-timber, its neighbor a Spanish hacienda of stucco and adobe, while another is a chamber-pot melange of every style carried in the copy-books. A folly compounded by Vanderbilt's trains which carried Hudson River brick from Haverstraw, limestone from Bedford, Indiana, sandstone from Brier Hill, Ohio, granite from Crotch Island, Maine and steel and slate from Pennsylvania anywhere on the continent.

Not enough attention has been given to the influence of the design of college buildings on Architecture in the United States. In contrast with European universities, the American counterpart is a community in itself. A place in which one expects to find a sophisticated, forward-thinking atmosphere. This, normally, is the place where new ideas may be discussed, accepted and applied. Collegiate Architecture, unfortunately, for reasons of prestige and false tradition, imitated the Gothic of Tudor or Jacobean England, Classic Greece, or the Renaissance in the truest application of the "ivory tower." This, then, is the picture that the graduates take back to their home towns. These are who the Architect must face as members of

his various building committees; who, so many times, he failed to convince of his "native" solution as they were sold down the river when they were at college.

Another point which historians have failed to emphasize is the tendency of Americans towards a standardization in Architecture. This started on a conformistic principle and later was practiced on an economic basis. The result of this was the identification at the early part of this century of the Greek column with finance, the Renaissance style with government and the Gothic with religion.

In the west the work of the "padres" had set its stamp good and for all upon the Architecture of the Pacific coast. The Mission style, by 1916, was replaced by colonial, and again the great estate, the palace, was much in evidence. There were exceptions, but they only proved the rule. Green and Green, Willis Polk, Schindler and a few others were designing lovely, spreading, wooden buildings, unhistorical in detail and conception, using materials and the site in a most natural and charming way. Another oasis in this cultural desert was Maybeck, in San Francisco, whose beautiful, directly designed homes with their open interiors are the direct antecedent of so many of the fine houses in the west today.

The area of most importance to American Architecture and to this subject of this treatise, however, is the middle-west. The middle-west, isolated from the foreign elements so rife on the coast and free from the strangling traditions of the south, was destined to become the cradle of a few courageous Architects who did not fall prey to the siren-song of the false prophets of eclecticism. In this middle-west, in Chicago to be exact, there arose in the 1880's the "Chicago School" of fresh, new thought. Led by Louis

Sullivan and John Root, they substituted, for the so-fashionable "facade Architecture" of the day, a thoughtful, original design concept that proceeded logically from uniquely American requirements to solutions specially suited to them. Although this school was castigated by the adherents of the Beaux Arts, their ideas fell upon fertile soil in Chicago where its resolute enterprise and public spirit, its great accumulation of capital, the phenomenal growth of its commercial and social institutions, together with the intelligent ambition of its people to achieve a distinctive position in all the arts gave them the opportunity of true originality.

Then came the collapse of all these ideals, in the form of an insidious fifth column right at home--the "White City" of the Chicago Exposition of 1893, to re-establish eclecticism and kill the hope for so long cherished that Americans may at last have the unforced and natural growth of an independent expression in Architecture. Although the shoots from the organic freedom of Richardson and Sullivan were effectively stifled, there was one bud left on the vine. It was one of uncommon truth, and the one that was to flower with awesome results. Frank Lloyd Wright survived to lay waste the bastions of materialism, the citadels of eclecticism and to extend such a great influence upon the Architecture of his country, of the world and upon Bruce Goff.

After the turn of the century, the brilliant and original ornament and philosophy of Sullivan, the long, low, casemented houses of Wright, the enthusiastic work of the followers of the Chicago School (Perkins, Guenzel, Drummond, Byrne, Maher, Purcell, Ellmslie, et al) arose, but the effort to provide a truly American, indigenous Architecture failed. Many of the youngsters who saw, in the golden arch of the Transportation Building, the rainbow promise

of a golden age of American Architecture as middle-aged Architects were, won over to eclecticism. The faithful few practiced with a clientele of the free and liberated who can never be numerous.

Thus, it cannot be said that the Chicago School established an indigenous, Architecture in the middle west. In fact, the perfect common sense and serene beauty of the bell-flower of this school, the tall office building, was even discarded with disdain. The stigma of the counting house was disguised with motifs from Greek and Roman temples, French and English cathedrals, or Florentine towers. This can be seen as late as 1922 in the competition for the Chicago Tribune Tower. The skyscraper was never fully developed, its form, in New York and elsewhere, was a result of code restrictions and not of creative thought integral with the structural qualities of such a building.

The end of the First World War found thousands of ex-servicemen obsessed with the idea of an English manor house, a French chateau or an Italian villa. It was the same sort of sterility as before. Barry Byrne, Chase McArthur, Lloyd Wright, among others, sought to develop an organic Architecture, but they were swimming against the current. During this period, however, there is a growing use of the dramatic climax, a variation of materials, of textures, a love of color and a growing sensitivity in form. Even the classicism of the day was modified by a more or less original study of the massing of the structure and a simplification of detail. But, the true development of an American Architecture became almost impossible as foreign modernism was more and more the rage. Even today, it is possible to associate the great bulk of American Architects with one or the other European Architectural expressions. It seems as if the inventive, pioneering spirit, so pronounced a characteristic of American culture, had been misplaced, had lost the way in the path of Time.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE I

Bruce Goff: Architect, Educator, Painter

PLATE I



PERSONALITY

For hundreds of years, but especially after the art revolutions of the last century, people have associated artists with a particular way of living, and a particular breed of personality. Society has learned to excuse their cantankerous actions and eccentricities. In fact, some expect the artist's appearance to be at least as radical as his ideas. A number of so-called "artists" take advantage of this social demand and try to build an interest and a colorful atmosphere around their names by intellectualizing their vocabulary, expressing a cosmopolitan approach in life, holding wild parties, and wearing beards. Those of unusual talent, who have been accepted by the public as such, develop through the years an ego, arrogance, and authoritative attitude that becomes synonymous with their names: Hemingway, Picasso, Frank Lloyd Wright, Mias Van der Rohe, just to mention a few.

Although Goff in his art expressions and taste is radical to the extreme, his appearance and manners in most respects are not unlike those of a folksy Midwesterner. The first impression for all those that come to see "the man with the queer ideas" has been a continual disappointment. "My, you aren't a bit like what I expected," a visitor would say. Concerning this Goff usually comments, "I don't know what they expected to see," and chuckles. (27, p. 96)

Goff is of a little more than average height and weight. His ordinary facial characteristics very rarely express his emotional feelings. Light brown wavy hair that lately has turned gradually to white and a pair of extremely active eyes complete the picture. The sole aspect of his appearance that expresses his individuality and proclaims his artistic personality is his own style of apparel, which he never alters, despite the occasion. I still remember his appearance the first time I met him; in fact, he was

wearing the same outfit two years later when I said goodby to him. On both occasions and during the many months between, he wore a pair of grey-violet suede shoes, grey slacks and a slate blue jacket with silver buttons, both unpressed, appearing to have taken the contour lines of his figure. On rainy and cold days a wornout top coat completed his standard "uniform" when at the University of Oklahoma. Newcomers at the school were so shocked with this wornout sight" that some expressed the wish to collect money and buy him a decent suit.

As to his shirts, this is a different story. Custom made, usually of imported materials of extremely vibrating colors these cost him sometimes as much as 35 dollars, and he has quite a variety on hand. I never remember his wearing a tie, but I have been told that when he had one on, it was usually chartreuse, purple, or orange. In the rare cases that his "uniform" changed, Goff took great pleasure in contrasting combinations such as a white sports-coat over a brilliant red shirt and on top of dark-as-night trousers—quite a macabre sight in the conservative atmosphere of Oklahoma.

His apparel today, even though unusual, is not as unique as that of the past, and his clothes, as I noticed on my recent visits, are neatly pressed. Who is to be blamed for the change? His relaxed movements and soft voice, create the impression of someone who wishes not to attract attention. He never seems to get upset or angry under any circumstances. Tender towards other's feelings to the extreme, he lets the entire situation be the generator of his actions rather than going by a preconceived unmoving standard. He is friendly and respects everyone independently of position, knowledge, or age. As a student has said, "Goff just likes everybody." (27, p. 96) His midwestern accent and such expressions as "It sure was nice," "That's pretty ratty looking," and "It was real swell," make his prairie clients feel at home. The result

of his homespun manners, his impressive knowledge of human psychology, and his practical and logical way of showing his drawings account for his success in getting approved designs that others would think disastrous if even mentioned to clients.

Goff has never tried to change his manners to a more cosmopolitan or sophisticate way. He probably realizes that "his disarming and unassuming personality wins over the opposition in spite of his radical ideas," (27, p. 96) as President Cross of Oklahoma University once said. His folksy appearance has also had an encouraging effect on his students and fellow architects. As one of his colleagues has remarked, "Bruce pulls a cork out of a lot of people in the profession; they think, 'If this quiet little fellow can do it, why can't I?'" (27, p. 98)

Goff cares nothing for material things for himself. He neither drinks nor smokes. He does not drive a car; instead he likes long walks. He sleeps for six hours at night, and during the rest of the time, designs, paints and studies when he is not being interrupted by his many visitors. His devotion to creative work has limited his social activities to an absolute minimum.

Goff is an exceptional speaker and he can charm the audience with his unlimited store of anecdotes told in a very soft tone of personal intimacy. Although he prefers to let others do most of the talking, he is the one who controls, directs, and leads each discussion. His manner focuses the spotlight upon himself, but in such a subtle way that most of the people around him do not notice it.

Goff's talent and enthusiasm have attracted admirers since his twenties. He feels a particular pleasure in being among them and has a tremendous capacity for enjoying his friends and talking to visitors. But Goff himself

is a mystery. His "real world" is esoteric to the extreme. As has been said he is "a bachelor and in a sense a recluse, who lives almost like a monk in his own world," (27, p. 190) a spiritual world that he jealously keeps all to himself. "He is everybody's friend and nobody's friend. You do not realize it at first but there is a wall between Bruce and everyone else." (27, p. 190) I dare say that, in spite of his gay and joyful appearance, in spite of the many friends and admirers that surround him, Goff is a lonely soul. His paintings, in which he more noticeably lets himself go, inspired the comment that "Some of these are so lonely that they make me want to cry." (27, p. 190) I actually saw this emotional reaction in the eyes of a viewer not long ago.

Goff, feeling sure of what he is doing, never asks for advice and closes his ears to criticism. A favorite quotation from Debussy's essays expresses his attitude towards life and art. "Give ear to no man's counsel, but listen to the wind which tells in passing the history of the world."

FAMILY AND CHILDHOOD

Bruce Goff's father, Corliss Goff, was the youngest of the seven children of a builder in Cameron, Missouri. As a young man he learned the trade of watch repairing and, when he decided to strike out on his own, he moved west to Wakeeney, Kansas, where he opened a small jewelry shop. He was a handsome person, possessing a generously humorous nature and a marked fondness for a good drink. He was inventive, imaginative, and his interest in music made him join the local band. Pictures taken during the period when he was in Kansas, show a man of such good taste in his clothes and so meticulous in his appearance that I guess he was quite a striking exception for that rural area of Kansas in those days. Even pictures taken in 1948, the year of his death bear the marks of a dignified personality, and those of a pleasant character.

One day a young lady entered his store in order to repair her watch. It was not long after this incident that she became Mrs. Goff. They were married in 1903, in Ellis, Kansas, at the house of the bride's parents. Her graduation picture shows a delicate girl without any striking exceptions in her appearance. I would say she appears to be an ordinary girl from the wheat land. She was the second oldest child in a family of five, and since life was not easy for her family, she went to work as a "school marm" at the age of 16. This was a very pleasant job for her since she loved children all her life.

Since 1920, Goff's mother has worked for an interior decoration firm in Tulsa, and after the death of her husband, she married again, in 1953, to John Wafal. Her place in Tulsa, Oklahoma is furnished in a simple and reserved fashion with a few oil paintings of midwest landscapes. The neatness and order of the interior gives the impression of a well-organized and systematical

woman. She has worked very hard all her life and many times, in the lean years, her small income has supported the whole family. Generally she is quite a contrast with the late Goff who more or less took life as it occurred.

After their marriage the Goffs moved to Alton, Kansas. Alton, a small farming community, lies at the side of the South Solomon river, the banks of which are covered with willows and elm trees. Just south of the river bluffs of limestone rise up to 200 feet and stand as a landmark to the rest of the area which is flat, with only a few rolling hills here and there, Bruce Goff was born here on June 8, 1904. He was born on Frank Lloyd Wright's birthday and at the time Debussy was composing his famous "La Mer." Both persons were to become the idols of the newly born Bruce in his later life and "La Mer," one of the great inspirations for his interspatial theory.

But even in the new place life was full of hardships for the Goffs, hence, in the spring of 1905, they took their one-year old baby and moved south to Tulsa, Oklahoma. It was here in Tulsa that one day the baby while looking at the electric light with his big blue eyes, said, "Pitty-pitty," his first, though somewhat babbling, artistic reaction.

The family at the end of the summer left Tulsa and for the next seven years drifted first to Henrietta, Oklahoma, a mining town, where a baby girl was added to the family in 1906, and then to Skiatook and Hominy, Oklahoma, both Indian towns. Here the child for the first time saw Cherokees whirling as they danced their tribal dances, and the primitive patterns and colors of their ceremonial costumes left a life-long impression on him.

At Skiatook, Bruce started his formal education and it was here, at the age of six, that he saw pictures of the Mormon Temple at Salt Lake City, his first architectural experience. It was about this time or a little later on

at Hominy that his inclination towards architecture was first expressed in the sense of childish scribbles on wrapping paper or in the form of clay houses that he called "Bruce Goff's Palaces." According to his mother, "he drew castles and fanciful cathedrals almost before he could even write." (39)

Intriguing things always fascinated him. He stood for hours in front of the show window at his father's store looking at the "sun-motor" that was rotated by the sun's temperature--trying to find out what made it turn. One day his father brought him a paper-mache doll that was in a store advertising some product. He called it "Happy Hulligan," and spent days playing with its mechanism until he found what made the doll's head and hands move. Imagination, curiosity, and an interest in intriguing things are all characteristics of most children at this age, only that in Bruce's mind, all these found a fertile soil. These early impressions engraved themselves deeply and were to be revealed in the years to come as elements and principles of his architectural work.

Bruce was nine years old when the family decided to move to Colorado, where they stayed for a year and a half. In the spring of 1913, the father went alone to Denver and tried to establish a spearhead for the rest of the family that was to join him at a later date. During this period, Mrs. Goff and the children moved to Ellis, Kansas, where they stayed with her relatives. In the summer that Bruce spent in Ellis, Kansas, he was especially attached to his great-grandmother, Mrs. Messick. She was a self-taught painter. In her small home she kept a collection of sea shells, crystals, feathers, etc. These objects seem to have impressed Goff greatly, for later on he became very fond of such items, the form and colors of which can easily be recognized in his painting and Architectural compositions. Bruce was also much impressed by Mr. Messick's small paintings of birds, flowers, and fruits; in fact, he still

keeps three of these in his collection, along with a landscape done by his grandmother, Mrs. Furbeck, who also had done some painting. One day when Bruce was at the house all by himself, he decided to add a little color to the family room, so he cut the color pictures from a Sears-Roebuck catalog and pasted them on the wall. His first job in interior decoration ended with a spanking remembered by him to the present day.

It was here in Ellis, Kansas, that Bruce became familiar with nature, that marvelous book of creation. Many times the boy, walking in the woods and crossing the creeks near the farm, was overpowered by the structure, order, and beauty of Nature. Since those days, Nature became for him almost a religion and many times in his life he turned to Nature's unexhaustable fountains for inspiration.

At the end of the summer the family joined the father, who meanwhile had opened a small jewelry shop, in Denver, Colorado. The boy was to love this place more than any other that the wandering family had visited. The vertical force expressed in the jagged mountains around Denver, the clear summer sky, and the sparkling crystal-like icicles in the winter deeply impressed Bruce. His boyhood dream now is to do "a temple of diamonds for a Maharajah," a dream that later shaped one of his best creations--the Crystal Chapel.

One day as he came back from school while in the fourth grade, he noticed in the front window of a store a few plaster casts of Greek and Roman statues displayed against a foil of velvet curtains and black floor. The boy pressed his nose against the glass and an expression of wonderment crossed his face as his senses were captured by the beauty that he saw before him. He decided to have a closer view, and ignoring the sign at the door that said "No Admittance," he entered the store. Suddenly the Italian owner came from the back

room shouting at him to "get out." The boy stepped back and said, "But I like these statues; I want to learn how to make them." This touched the professional pride of the shop owner. He showed Bruce around and told him if he would agree to carry water at the workshop after school, he would teach Bruce this art. Therefore, the next day he started working at the casting studio. At that time, they were making elk heads for an Elk convention at Denver and the boy thought that these casts were the most wonderful things.

It was during his second week at the studio that the Italian contacted Bruce's father and asked him to take his son out of the workshop because the technicians, not being able to curse in front of the boy, felt uncomfortable. "That ended my sculptor's career--if things had been a little different, I might have become a sculptor; I liked the idea at that time so much," Goff said. (33)

At that time he also had his first acquaintance with foreign parts of the work. He was fascinated with the pictures and patterns on postage stamps and also the color arrangements of flags, so he started collecting both. It was in Denver that the child became conscious of Architecture. In his wanderings in Cheesman Park, he saw the park's Greek style memorial, and many times he went to the top of the Daniel and Fisher Tower to enjoy the view of the city as it lay beneath his feet. He was highly impressed by both, and his childish scribbles started taking a more definite Architectural form. At this time a family friend gave him some drawing tools, and instead of playing games with the other boys of the neighborhood, he remained at home and created with his imagination his own playgrounds, his own world, to the distress and scorn of his sister who was the tomboy of the family. In fact,

I do not know of anytime that Goff expressed any wish for outdoor activities, except walking.

Both parents, but especially his mother, recognized the artistic abilities and forceful drive of their child for drawing. "I always had faith in my son's talent and I did my best to encourage him," his mother once said. (39) However, Goff today explains, "My parents did not encourage me but did not discourage me either. They just let me go my way. For me this was the greatest help I could get. Even today my mother does not get excited about my work when I am present, but from what I hear, she does not hesitate to express her pride when she is talking to others." (38)

While in Denver, another family friend gave Bruce an erector set. He spent quite a bit of time making variations with its elements and experienced for the first time the basic structural principles.

One day when both parents were out, Bruce, along with some other boys carried dirt from an empty lot up to the attic and planted sunflowers. But water dripped through the ceiling below and the father upon his return, bent the rod on him. "Thus ended my first attempt to integrate indoors-outdoors." Goff says chuckling. (38)

His individualism, later on to become one of his major characteristics, is expressed as early as in pictures of the Denver days. He posed in an unforced and natural way, thus trying probably to say that "I am bigger than my age." Pictures of this period show the same expressive eyes and facial characteristics that Goff has today, although they show him to have been extremely lean. In fact, he was very thin until he later joined the Navy.

Soon the time came for the family to move again. For a year and a half the Goffs tried hard to establish roots in Denver, but like all other attempts

of the past, this too ended in failure and misery. Father's business had been a continuous struggle so far, and Bruce quickly became aware of the hardships in life as many nights he went to bed feeling hungry. The family decided to return to Tulsa where they finally settled. Bruce reacted violently to this decision, for he loved Denver. It was the place of so many first impressions and experiences. Upon their arrival in Oklahoma, the father gave up the trade of watch repairing and became a salesman for grocery equipment.

The first year in Tulsa, Bruce attended the sixth grade in the Lincoln Public school, where in the person of his first art teacher, Miss Brown, he found a strong moral support in his individualistic art expressions. In fact, he was lucky to find the same sympathetic attitude later on in the high school, where it was arranged for him to design what he wished and to be spared the usual class assignments. By this time he had developed into a very temperamental boy. He was especially agitated by his tomboy sister, who, knowing this, was continually playing tricks on him. One day he had finished a water color painting and he was getting ready to clean the table when his sister came in, bumped the water jar and splattered with the dirty paint water everywhere including the painting. "For a moment I felt paralyzed; I thought I was going to kill her. I felt so proud about that painting, the best I had done so far. But I decided to change the routine. I did not run after her and I did not say anything to our parents." (38) This incident brought about an unexpected result: his sister never bothered him again, and Bruce came to realize that control of his temper was a great aid for happy relations. The extreme control of his feelings since that period gives to Goff the appearance of an unemotional individual. It was during the first year in Tulsa, in 1916, that one day the father, after having a few drinks at the local saloon,

returned home to find Bruce sketching, as usual, "Goff towers." He told the boy to put his coat on. Then he put some of Bruce's drawings in his pockets and led him downtown. The father stopped a cab-driver and asked him if he knew who was the best Architect in town. The driver looked in astonishment for a moment at the man and then at the scared boy and showed them the way to the office of Rush, Endacott and Rush. There Goff spread out the sheets of the boy's drawing and said, "Here! You take this kid and make an Architect out of him."

THE YEARS OF GROWTH

Thus, on the following day Bruce started afternoon and Saturday work at the Architectural office that was destined to be his professional cradle and home for the next fourteen years. In 1916, Tulsa was still a small city "just a few stages advanced from a frontier town. Indians in long black braids, still uncomfortable in their newly acquired white man's clothes, walked the streets that a few years before had been prairie grassland," Goff reminisces. The new wealth acquired from oil resulted not only in a rapid growth of the city and a fast adjustment on the part of the people but also in a parallel desire for cultural development and activities. The people of Tulsa, sure of their potentialities and without any preconceived cultural ideas, were not afraid to discuss, accept, and try new ideas. This "nothing-is-impossible" attitude of the 1916 Tulsane became Bruce Goff's belief all his life. Although "Cherokee Gothic" and "Prairie Classic" buildings were erected, generally it was a healthy atmosphere for a young artist with fresh ideas. The pace of development was so fast that by 1925 Tulsa took the shape of a modern American metropolis, and that early drive for culture contributed in making Tulsa one of the most refined cities not only of Oklahoma but of the whole region.

Bruce's association with the firm of Rush, Endacott and Rush, which concentrated mainly on commercial and industrial jobs, proved to be a most educational and gratifying experience. In this office he found understanding and a sympathetic attitude, "I was very lucky on my first job, in fact, I've been lucky all my life," Goff says, (27, p. 190)". A. W. Rush the main principal of the firm was in his late seventies, and at this time was actually retired, although it was his custom to drop in at the office. He took Bruce under his

wing and taught him the "Greek and Roman temple, the fundamentals in good Architecture," as he used to say.

Frank Lloyd Wright had just begun to be known. E. A. Rush, the son of the main principal and the designer for the firm, became a secret admirer of his work and in his private cabinet kept some publications about Wright. In his design he tried to combine Wright's sense of form with Louis Sullivan's feeling for ornament. It was through Rush's designs and teachings that Bruce indirectly first fell under the influence of his later idol.

Endacott, a Kansas State graduate and the engineer of the firm, was a progressive man with a real talent for mixing humor with a philosophical approach to life, and for highly colorful stories. He was the first person to recognize Bruce's individualism. He openly encouraged him and made the boy aware of the pitfalls that exist in the professional and social world. At the office Bruce found a great number of professional publications and nothing could stop him from satisfying his thirst for knowledge. To satisfy his enormous curiosity, he read everything he could find about the arts.

Bruce was first put to work copying classical architectural elements, but as the months went by, he became convinced that copying was not going to lead him any place, and he looked upon these assignments as a most distasteful task. He had been with the firm for about six months when, on a hot summer day, disgusted and bored over the design of a Corinthian column, he was approached by Endacott who asked what was bothering the boy. "Oh, I don't like to do this," replied Bruce. "Then what the hell are you doing it for?" asked Endacott, who continued, "You'll never get anywhere that way. Why don't you see what you can do? Design a house." (27, p. 190)

Thus, Bruce started his first house studies. By 1918, the principals thought that he was ready to try his hands on a real job, and he designed his first project at the age of fourteen. This was a duplex home built in the eastern part of Tulsa. The building was not anything striking by today's standards, but then the low pitched roof, open planning, and French windows caused quite a stir, consternation and bewilderment in curious by-standers. One day as the proud young Architect was looking over the finishing touches on the job, he overheard some sightseers who approached, shouting, "Oh look at the funny looking house." Bruce looked and looked again trying to see what they meant, but he could not see anything funny in his creation. He knew the house was different but he could not understand why others were unable to see the handsome and practical solution, to experience what he did.

This was Goff's first contact with public reaction to his work, a reaction that remained unaltered through the years as the people learned to love his old work, but continued to be shocked at almost every appearance of his new designs, Plate II. This was a reaction that became synonymous with Bruce Goff's work. This first episode annoyed the boy-designer and he reported it to Endacott upon his return to the office. "What's wrong?" the older man replied. "As long as you are in the trenches with everyone else, doing what they are doing, nobody will notice you or laugh at you. It's when you get in no-man's land that they start shooting at you from both directions and son, the way you are heading," he continued prophesying, "you had better get a good tough hide, because you are going to be in no-man's land all your life." (38)

In this new environment, although being shy and reserved, Bruce formed a few friendships, but his part-time job kept him from participating in the usual after school games. On Sundays he liked to accompany his father on his fishing trips and to wander about the shores of the lake. These trips

EXPLANATION OF PLATE II

The first reaction:

"My God...I can't believe it but I've got to...there it stands."(34,p. 9)

PLATE II



Pict. (35, p. 71)

brought even closer the father and son.

Bruce's Architectural designs, two bungalows in Tulea, and his studies subsequent to the design of his first house drew the comments from the people at the drafting room that his designs "look like some of that damn fool Wright's work." "Who is he?" asked Bruce. "Oh, a screwball Architect up in Chicago," he was answered. His curiosity aroused, he began to hunt for Wright's work at the local public library and bookstores, finally ending successfully at the Rush's private cabinet, where he found in 1908 copy of Architectural Record containing some pictures of Wright's early houses. Goff describes his reaction by saying, "Looking at these houses I got the biggest thrill I ever had. For the next two years I couldn't eat, sleep, or think anything but Frank Lloyd Wright." (33, p. 341)

A long letter of admiration that he sent to Wright resulted in Wright's sending him a beautiful German publication that contained most of the Master's early work. Thus started a long-time, indirect apprenticeship for Bruce and a life-long friendship between the two Architects. For the next year he studied Wright so thoroughly that very soon his design had fallen "much in the manner of" this idol.

His studies of Wright and, later on, of other avant-garde architects expressed a peculiar way of approach. In order to fully get the character and feeling of the masters' works, he did not limit himself to the analysis of the pure Architectural design but tried to comprehend their techniques of presentation as well. It is almost impossible, even for a historian, to distinguish Bruce's studies (fig. 1) of that period from the work of Wright and the other forerunners of Modern Architecture. The only element in the design that differentiates them is the signature. Although the character of these studies bears the mark of somebody's influence to the extreme, they

are definitely free of copying elements.

Fig. 1

In 1920 we have the first sign of Bruce's interest in music, an Art expression that he later on so strongly tied with Architecture. It was one day in high school that a friend, a pianist, invited him to listen to some records he had just bought. Among them was "The Fountain", by Ravel. Bruce was so impressed by this music that Ravel became his musical hero. In his quest to find information on Ravel, he read an article accusing his hero of imitating Debussy; thus he bought a couple of Debussy's records. What a great disappointment when he played them at home. He did not like

them at all; Debussy's music was absolutely foreign and boring to him. But he had invested money that represented many a day's lunch. Hence, for the days after, he continued playing the records again and again. Suddenly he realized that this music had begun to be appealing to him, and as the days went by, he started to realize the beauty in its structure, harmony, and melody. Soon Debussy took a place next to Ravel in his estimation, and at the same time, he formed the conviction never to disregard any person or anything on first impression, and never to offer his faith to one idol. Applying this conviction to his Architectural studies, he started working his way out of Frank Lloyd Wright's influence. (fig. 2, 3)



Fig. 2

It took Bruce Coff many years of desperate efforts to blast himself out of this influence, although in rare cases details of his work show that he never really succeeded in completely breaking these ties.

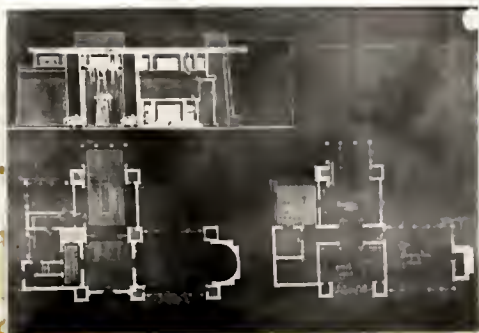


Fig. 3

He always accepted the seniority of the Master in the Architectural field and nothing has come along to make him change this admiration. Once Goff, speaking about the commission for the United Nations building, said, "How could Wright have been denied this opportunity?" (20, p. 104) On the other hand, Wright, when asked if Goff had ever studied at Taliesin (he has not), drew himself up and replied with pride, "Mr. Goff has been a student of mine for 20 years." (27, p. 95) What finally remained from Wright's influence was a worship of organic Architecture, the principles of which Goff practiced all his life.

His extensive and minute study of Wright's work led him to Sullivan and the design of the Mausoleum for Grand McCullough (fig. 4) has more Sullivan than if the "old man" drew it himself. At the age of eighteen, in 1922, he graduated from Tulsa's Central High School and, upon the recommendations of Sullivan and Wright, decided to remain with the Architectural firm rather than to attend what he terms "the old eclectic Architectural schools where, if there was any creative ability in the individual, it was quickly killed by them. Those schools never taught the possibilities of what could be done, but only,

and with finality, what had been done." (38) How true a picture of some Architectural schools "even today.



Fig. 4

But the decision to stay on at Rush, Endacott and Rush did not actually stop Goff's education. In the evenings and nights he studied so hard for so long and on such a variety of subjects that, in his later life, he had accumulated a knowledge equivalent not to one but many university degrees. Bruce thinks of education as a life-lasting process, worthy of any efforts, for "some people are born with a large amount of talent (like a father's bank account) and this may not need to be replenished for a long time. But it will inevitably run dry. When one stops "taking in," he "dies." Resources must be continually built up." (5) He realized that the tree had to branch out roots if it was to grow, and he built up his resources, he broadened his studies, the hard way.

As a youngster in the raw, fast-growing city of Tulsa, he saved money

by sacrificing his lunch most of the time, not to buy pleasures of his age, but to collect fifty cents a week for obscure avant-garde magazines like The Broom. These magazines contained reproductions of experimental paintings by Derain, Gris, and Picasso, and writings by Stein, Cocteau, Pound, and Cummings on the revolutionary movements that were taking place in Europe during and after the First World War. It was through these publications that he first felt the force of the Cubist, Futurist, and Dadaist movements and the influence of the European experimental Architects. Since that time Goff has become a fervent admirer of and has developed a high respect for the genius of Mies van der Roë and Le Corbusier. He feels that they have created a very great art, but he believes that their work has been so much imitated by others that it has become detrimental, in part. Also, some of the books and magazines that he ordered from Europe introduced him to the work of the Bauhaus group, and his design studies of that period show how closely he studied Gropius and the others of that group.

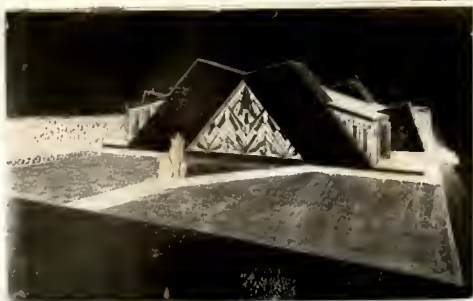


Fig. 5

Thus, even though Bruce was isolated in the heartland of America, he kept

a contact with and spiritually participated in all those radical movements and fresh expressions that characterize European art at the early part of this century. (fig. 5, 6, 7)

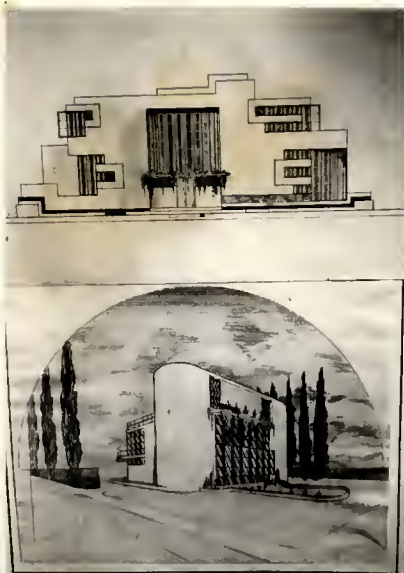


Fig. 6



Fig. 7

For a short period Bruce became especially attached to the early work of Eric Mendelson. He was fascinated with the completely ungeometric, organic forms and the boldness of expression exhibited by Mendelson's sketchwork during the war. An example of this period is a study Bruce did for a house in the hills, (fig. 8) rendered in a Mendelson fashion even though Bruce had and still has perfect sight.

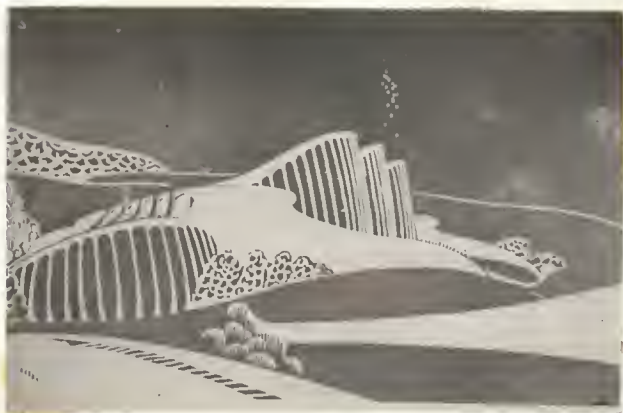


Fig. 8

But the force that Bruce felt very strongly, and almost all those who have written about him have missed it completely, was that of the Art Nouveau movement. It was probably due to the association of this movement with Debussy's early music, Mallarmé's and Verlaine's poetry, and oriental art, for which Bruce had by this period started to develop a special interest, that

it had such a strong appeal for him. The exotic and mystic patterns that prevailed in this expression fascinated him and the intriguing surface patterns left an unmistakable stamp on his paintings and Architectural work of the Twenties. Art Nouveau and oriental art became the sources of inspiration for some of the major elements of Goff's Architecture; the mysterious, the intriguing, the exotic.



Fig. 9

His beautiful collection of Beardsley, Crane, Klimt and other Art Nouveau artists date back to those days, and it was the exhibit of this collection later on at the University of Oklahoma that exerted an unobjectionable, on Goff's part, influence to some of his students. This influence was more emphatically expressed following Bruce's resignation from the School of Architecture, when posters (fig. 9) and other student designs

were done much in the manner of Mackintosh and Frances Macdonald. The design for the dining room at the First National Bank in Tulsa (fig. 10) and many elements in his other designs of that period (fig. 7) prove the strong association of Goff and Art Nouveau.

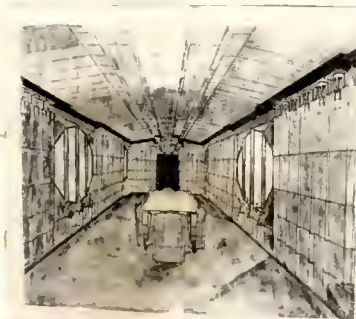


Fig. 10

Bruce's favorite painters, beside those of the late Nineteenth Century Viennese school (Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, etc.) included the French post-impressionist Seurat, Gauguin, and later on Dali, Dechemp and Max Ernst, whose works express a strong assault against the conventional world.

Bruce, in his studies, never limited himself to one direction. He looked to all points of the horizon, studying and analyzing everything that attracted his observing eyes, gaining either a major or minor impression which becomes proportionately expressed in his subsequent work. /Although I do not have any definite date showing the connection of Behrens and Perret with Bruce, the similarity of character between the interior of Convention Hall in Tulsa, (fig. 23) designed by Goff, and that of the hall of the Administration Building of the Dye Industry, designed by Behrens, is very striking. A similarly remarkable resemblance exists between the climax of Bruce Goff's Boston Methodist Church (fig. 13) and that of the N. D. DuRancy Church,

designed by Perret. In addition, some of Goff's exterior elements and interior details suggest rather strikingly Maybeck's Christian Science Church in California, erected in 1912. Gaudi's organic elements and Bruno Taut's fantastic glass form, as in the 1914 pavillion for the Deutscher Werkbund exhibit, also seem to have left their marks on Goff's later work. These relationships to the elements of others resulted from impressions that probably even Goff does not remember after the elapse of so many years.



Fig. 11

The list of the early Twenties' studies includes Goff's first circular plan (fig. 11). This is an indication that his belief in the circle as a friendly and intimate form especially suitable for residential work, dates back to those days, inspired probably by boyhood impressions when he was living in Indian towns. These studies of "circular" and "open" plans (fig. 12) of that period were the forerunners of similar principles that are expressed in some degree to all projects of his later life.

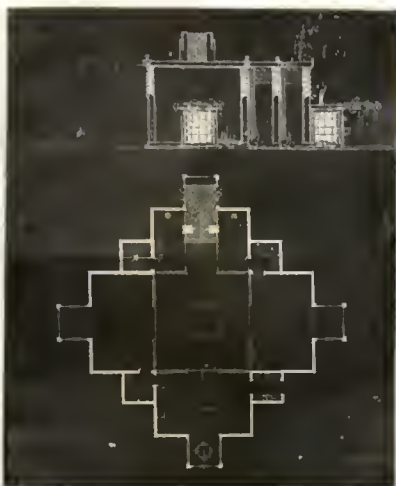


Fig. 12

As a result of a romantic license inherited from the folk outline of the American Middle West, Bruce looked toward exotic and primitive cultures as a point of reference, but not as an end in itself. He admits that Japanese, Chinese, and Javanese Architecture, plus primitive islands art forms, have been a source of inspiration for a number of his designs. He was, and still is, particularly fond of paintings by Korin, Ito, Okyo, and wood-block prints by Hokusai, Hiroshige, and Hasus, all of which he considers much freer in conception than Western designs. Through the years he has accumulated a collection of 3000 prints and a great number of portfolios, which many times he has exhibited to the delight of his students. It is almost impossible for someone to attempt to trace Goff's principles and beliefs to their source and discover all his heroes, his outlook and his inner convictions of the past. He has a tremendous appreciation of art expressions

of the past and present.

Goff, since his early life, has decided to keep himself out of direct association with any art group or movement. He admits that he spent a lot of his time and efforts in cul-de-sacs searching for direction that would not have been necessary with some guidance. But, on the other hand, once he found his direction it was definitely his own.

In spite of all these foreign references, Goff remains basically a Middle Western American, and from these roots stems his individualism, regionalism, boldness, imagination, but also his romantic license, and sometimes, his lack of restraint. By the mid-Twenties, the influences of his youth had been assimilated and, although he had not yet fully developed his personal expression, what came out in the following years was distinctly Bruce Goff.

During this period of growth, Goff designed the following projects that were built in the area of Tulsa, except for the Summer House for B. L. Graves that was built in Los Angeles:

- 1920 George Way Residence
- Consolidated Cut-Stone Office
- H. O. McClure Residence
- Summer House for B. L. Graves
- 1921 Fred Hansen Residence
- Tulsa Building, and Chamber of Commerce
- 1922 Director's Dining Room - 1st National Bank (fig. 10)
- 1923 Adah Robinson Studio

In 1925, at the age of 21, Goff married and the newlyweds lived with his parents for 6 months; then they moved to an apartment until the marriage ended in a divorce a few months later, "because we both realized I had to go my own way." His creative work demanded the monopoly of all his physical and mental capacities, absolute freedom of actions and thoughts. Everything personal bore down heavily on him, family problems most of all. After the failure of his marriage, he returned to his family home and stayed with his

parents until the time he left for Chicago in 1934.

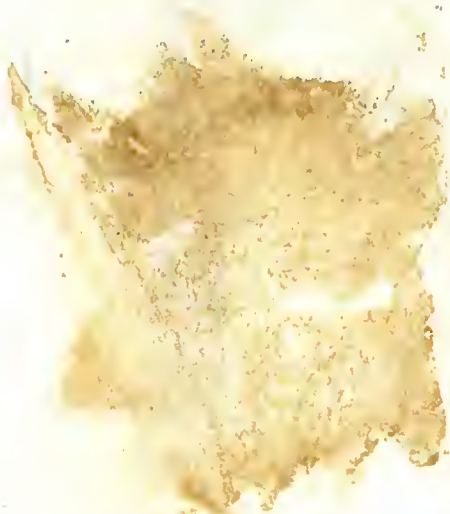


Fig. 13

In 1926, by now the established designer of the first even though only 22 years old, Bruce designed the Commercial Building for C. C. Cole and his famous project of the 1920's, the Boston Avenue Methodist-Episcopal Church, in South Tulsa (fig. 13, 14, 15). This latter is the project that rocketed him to the heights of fame, where he has remained since that time. The design of this church not only brought Goff praise in American professional magazines but also introduced him to European circles through Neutra's book America, that was published in Vienna, in 1930. Sheldon Cheney, in his 1930 book The New World Architecture, hailed this project with the following comment:

It is in Tulsa, Oklahoma, that the most provocative of different church building has emerged. The Boston Avenue Methodist Church. This is of a form that anyone would recognize as "Church like" at a distance of close by, inside or out. Its style begins with the accenting of the aspiring line. But its detail is daringly new, its ornamental idiosyncratic fresh and vital, its masses fairly well sculptured and perfectly expressive of plan. But why for the Methodists? That I could not explain. Incidentally, the plan of the building illustrates a trend of life even within the most traditional and institutionalized of the sects. (2, p. 341)

The highest praise that Goff considers he ever received, however, came from his sister's Negro cleaning woman in Tulsa, who said, "That is the most beautiful building I ever saw. It looks like it came right down out of heaven." (27, p. 95)

Goff, striving towards a free organic Architecture, found the Gothic style closely associated with the basic principle of this approach in design, and the Boston Methodist Church bears the marks of this association. Goff refers to the church as "Modern Gothic." Although the Gothic feeling is pre-eminent in this project, its detailing strives for a new regional symbolism.

The site is at a turning point of Boston Avenue, bounded by streets on three sides. The tower is on an axis with the avenue and is the dominant feature. The tower-entrance opens into the auditorium from the right, balanced by the educational plant on the left. Significantly, a "social lobby" runs through the building between these two main units and connects the three entrances.

The auditorium has a capacity, with the balcony, of 1800, and the seating is arranged in concentric circles, with the center at the major point of interest--the pulpit. The choir flanks the pulpit on both sides, and the organ console, directly behind it, echoes the music in the ceiling. The choristers can be seen and their voices converge in the center of the auditorium.

Generally the accoustical problem has been very sensitively solved and a balanced distribution of sound has been achieved.

PICTURE HAS BEEN REMOVED

Fig. 14

Sunrays, passing through the ceiling and the eleven stained glass windows, flood the interior with a soft light, creating a strong feeling of mysticism. Additional light is provided by indirect illumination from circular coves in the ceiling. The long high ceilinged social lobby provides for the parishioners an area for meeting and chatting before and after the services. The social activity area beneath the auditorium is equipped with a stage and a kitchen for banquets. The educational plant that occupies three floors has an independent circulation pattern and is an element by itself.

Exterior walls are of Indian limestone blended with polychrome terracotta and steel casement windows. The sculptures adorning the exterior, created by Robert Garrison, are sensitively executed and match the character of the whole building perfectly. The steel frame of the tower was designed by Endacott, and its climax of copper and glass fins that sparkle in the sunlight is the outstanding feature of this project, and one of the few elements that indicate Goff's later development.

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Fig. 15

Of course this more or less radical design was not approved with cheers from all those concerned, by far, but it was accepted after many trials and tribulations. This is how its designer described it:

From the very first, this building pursued a perilous course. Everywhere we bumped into people who were afraid--church boards, Architects, sidewalk critics, etc.--all afraid. Of what? Of the idea, as Sullivan would say. How could we dare do such a thing? Fortunately we had, in

the building committee, a group of men strong enough to know what they liked. Even after the completion of the church, the man in the street usually liked it, the trained Architects seldom did. (11, p. 519)

But in the course of time the feelings of everyone changed to those of appreciation and admiration. The Tulsans accept with pride the Boston Avenue Methodist Church as the religious landmark of their city, and its present parishioners are so strongly attached to its character that they create quite a few problems for the Architect, who these days is designing an extension and a parking garage for the church.

Some Architects, comparing this project with Goff's later work, have said that "he died (professionally) with the completion of this design." To this he replied, "They are right, in fact, I have died many times since that time, because many times I have been born." (5)

PICTURE HAS BEEN REMOVED

Fig. 16

In 1927 Goff designed the Page Warehouse, (fig. 16) which is still functioning as such. He rates this design above all previous ones. Here he uses the structural elements of concrete, columns, and floors as decorative

features of the elevation and, by introducing a patterned brick frame, he creates an interesting surface pattern, counterbalances horizontal and vertical forces, and gives a unique character to the building.

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Fig. 17

It was in 1928 that Goff designed the Guaranty Laundry and the Riverside Studio, (fig. 17) the latter for Mrs. Patti Adams Shriner, a local music teacher. The studio is situated on a sloping lot facing the Arkansas river. The following description is from a 1929 magazine published after the project's completion:

The plan (fig. 18) is composed of two major elements, the house and the studios. The studios are entered from Riverside Drive on either side of the large circular window. The entrance hall is two stories high. On both sides are practice studios, above and below, and a flight of steps leads up half a story to the recital hall. On the landing is a large decorative mural by Olinka Hrdy, extending from the

landing up to the ceiling out to the reflector.

The recital hall is intimate in its seating arrangement and is used almost exclusively for small musical gatherings. On either side are three doors, separated by murals. These murals represent different forms of music and there are executed in eight panels in all. These are Modern American, Vocal, Piano, String, Symphonic, Primitive, Choral and "Music of the Future." These are among the first adventures in abstract decoration in America and are all the work of Olinka Hrdy.

PICTURE HAS BEEN REMOVED

Fig. 18

The stage is large enough for two piano concerts. To the left of the stage is the dinette and the kitchen. These are for teas and the like as well as for the personal use of the owner. The stage connects with the entrance hall at the right which is entered from Houston Street. This connects the garage with the living room and the stairs leading to the bedrooms above. The living room has windows around all three sides and commands a splendid view of the river. It is papered with light green Japanese wood veneer; the ceiling is aluminum. The fireplace is made of black glass and green marble. The owner's bedroom above also has a fireplace of glass. Above this bedroom is the roof garden, which has an outdoor fireplace. Each bedroom is arranged so as to have three exposures.

The exterior walls are constructed of hollow etuccoed tile, and are snow white. The windows are all stock steel casements, enameled black,

with sheets of plate glass. Within the studio, the windows have inlaid black designs and are so arranged as to be the dominating decorative motif. The fountain designed as part of the entrance steps is made of black, orange and white art marble and chromium metal. It is by Alfonso Iannelli, whose work is well known for its purity and good sense. The building is the result of the owner's needs and requirements and has been constructed at a very low cost. (28, p. 17)

Now the studio is used by a small theater group that performs for charity purposes. During my last visit I noticed the many changes in the interior that have taken place since the writing of the above description. The small sculpture in front, by Iannelli, is in fairly good condition although some of its elements bear the marks of vandalism and time.

PICTURE HAS BEEN REMOVED

Fig. 19

I do not have any definite information concerning the influence of Olinca Erdy on Goff, but there is a definite association of the murals in this building (fig. 19) with some of Goff's compositions. They probably both have been under the same influence--Art Nouveau. In fact the character of this project,

although expressing a strong originality and individuality in details, in general terms reveals a close relation to Dutch and Austrian Art Nouveau Architectural design.

In 1929 Goff passed his license examinations, and upon retirement of Rush the following year, the firm became "Endacott and Goff".

PICTURE HAS BEEN REMOVED

Fig. 20

PICTURE HAS BEEN REMOVED

Fig. 21

During this year he designed the Indian Memorial and started experimenting with glass--executing a study for a glass house (fig. 20)-in an effort to introduce transparency, translucency and lightness to his Architecture. The

design of the Indian Memorial (fig. 21) expresses a serenity and monumentality by far greater than its size, and the decorative patterns on the facade show that by this time Goff was fully aware of the character of American Indian culture.

THE DEPRESSION

The daring financial ventures of the Tulsans in stock markets, associated with the oil industry made the Depression even more strongly felt in this area, and this almost shattered the financial life of the city for many years. Early in 1930, Tulsa felt the Depression at its climax. Yesterday's millionaires found themselves in the streets trying to find the necessities of the day. People accuse and blame everyone in every direction, in their effort to pin-point the source of their misfortunes. Bankruptcy, unemployment, and confusion composed the picture of that era.

Of course under these conditions and during the years that they lasted, building construction fell to a minimum. Architectural offices lingered on with their practice for sometime, hoping for a change, but a number of them had to give up and close as the time went by and no sign of a "better tomorrow" appeared in the horizon. The firm of Endacott and Goff paradoxically, during the year that depression hit Tulsa the hardest, was blessed with four major commissions. In fact the execution of these commissions plus some minor work kept the firm on the surface for the next couple of years. The list of 1930 projects include the Exhibition Building for the Merchants of Tulsa. Although its heavily ornamented entrances contrast with the refinement and clarity of the detail of the Page Warehouse, its wall piers, free of ornaments, create a bold rhythm that was to become fashionable in this country twenty years after.

A sketch that Goff did at this time for a fraternity house (fig. 22) is of great importance to the study of Goff's development. This is the first design that, even though unrefined, reveals that Goff, by 1930, had already established principles and beliefs that led to the design of most of his

California projects, the Crystal Chapel, the Wilson residence, and other interspatial Architectural compositions.

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Fig. 22

In Western art expression, a beginning, a development, and an end in specified relations to each other are always apparent. This is a path of composition. In Architecture the eye follows a path predetermined by the Architect, from the usually heavy lower elements, to the gradually lighter elements progressing to the climax--the dome, spire, etc. The oriental culture was the first to eliminate this creative approach. This is apparent in the tatami patterns and painted folding screens that were placed behind the entrance protected the household from the "evil spirits". Each panel of the screens is a complete statement in itself, and at the same time, an integral part of the total "message" of the composition. Incidentally, among the many oriental items that decorate the interior of Goff's office is a very valuable entrance screen that dates back centuries, although it is not, of course, placed in the entrance! This oriental method of design, Debussy's

music, and an article entitled "Composition as Explanation" by Gertrude Stein, in which she expresses a theory of "Composition in a Continuous Present", have all been the source of inspiration for Goff's Architectural interspatial theory.

The surface treatment in the sketch of the Fraternity House suggests a composition of many beginning and ending relationships, an interspatial composition that Goff later introduced also to Architectural elements and space parts. The first scheme for the Pittsburgh Equitable Meter Warehouse is important because of its very unique (unique, at least, at that time) butterfly roof and because of its showing Goff's first use of angular character. During the same year he designed the Dr. Latham residence, an addition to Skelly Building, and the interior redecoration of the Convention Hall in Tulsa. (fig. 23)

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fig. 23

The following years, the first was just holding on money done by previous projects. In 1933, Endacott and Goff, the long-time partners and friends, were finally forced by the national disaster to dissolve the firm and to fight for their professional lives individually. Hence, the office where Goff first saw the light of the Architectural day, the office that had nourished him from a small boy to a full-fledged Architect, closed its doors, never to open them again.

CHICAGO

With the dissolution of the Endacott-Goff firm and the continued hardships of the Depression, Goff, early in 1934, accepted an invitation by Alfonso Ianelli to join him in Chicago and to buck the hard times by collaborating on industrial product designs. Ianelli, a sculptor and designer, was already nationally known for his previous work with Berry Burn, Frank Lloyd Wright, and other progressive Architects of that period. Goff had admired Ianelli's work since the Twenties, and Ianelli had been similarly impressed with his.

At the time of Goff's arrival in Chicago, Ianelli's studio was busy with product design and some Architectural work. Goff worked there for a few months, but "he was too much of an individualist to be able to design products for mass use", Ianelli recalls. "It was a struggle. We had to readjust everything he did to make it generally acceptable." (27, p. 96) Goff's first attempt at industrial design proved, as one might expect, to be an unsuccessful venture.

Therefore, in January of 1935, Goff opened the first office of his own in Park Ridge, a suburb of Chicago. At that time, he also accepted an invitation by the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts to teach art composition classes twice a week. While still at Ianelli's studio, Goff had met Frank Cole, the editor of the Park Ridge paper. Their common interest in music soon developed into a deep friendship and this resulted in Goff's first commission in the Chicago area.

Goff's design of the Cole residence (fig. 24) was the first to indicate, though not too clearly, the extent of what was to come later. The modular plan, the angular character of the elevations, and the unusual treatment of the windows show that this concept was the result of an inspiration never

before experienced by Goff. In this project, Goff also introduced dimestore merchandise--plats around the doors and light fixtures--to his Architecture for the first time.

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Fig. 24

Fig. 24

While Goff was still at work on the Cole residence, the Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Company asked him to become the director of their design department. Since the Depression had not abated, he accepted the offer. It did not take him long to realize that the "old timers" were grossly behind the times in their design ideas. A few months after hiring Goff, the Company decided to move the design section from Chicago to its Headquarters in Toledo, Ohio. Most of the design personnel refused to move from Chicago and resigned. Thus, in Toledo, Goff was able to rejuvenate his department and it was not long after this that the Company's sales soared upwards.

As director of this department, Goff supervised the designs of others and had very little opportunity to do creative work of his own. However, the time

he spent with the Company proved to be very rewarding. He accumulated a great deal of knowledge concerning glass and its possibilities, and this, in the years following, expressed itself in a great number of his projects.

Finally, even though the Company managers offered him more money to stay, Goff resigned. "I could have stayed there all my life--good salary, nice people to work with--but I was afraid that the security would kill my drive for creative work." (38) So Goff, near the latter part of 1935, returned to Chicago, opened a new office, and resumed his teaching at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts. After his return, his first commission was the design of the Turzak residence, but this project was limited by an existing foundation and is of little or no importance.

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Fig. 25

Two F.H.A. houses, the Elen (fig. 25) and Rank (fig. 26) residences, designed during the following year, 1936, made it possible for Goff to try a notion of simplification, and to experience the integral design of two residences on

contiguous lots. Although most of the projects Goff executed in Chicago had F.H.A. limitations and although the conservatively-minded people in the area continuously looked askance, Goff attacked each problem with an enthusiasm that has always characterized his reaction any time a challenge was to be met. Commenting on this period, Goff says, "Certainly I could say that the authorities interfered; there was not enough money; the clients refused to go along with the idea. All of these and many more were valid excuses that could have been given on almost every project. It is simply that they had to overcome." (33, p. 349)

PICTURE HAS BEEN REMOVED

Fig. 26

In 1937, Goff designed a showroom for a glass company in the Merchandise Mart and the Colmorgan residence. (fig. 27)

PICTURES HAVE BEEN REMOVED

Fig. 27

In this residence, Goff begins to combine materials. Shaggy spruce, brick, flagstone, and glass are orchestrated in a pleasant composition. The split-level floor that provides partial seating for the diners, the vertical view through a sky window in the bathroom, and wood screens flush with the glass panes were all tried by Goff for the first time in the Colmorgan house, and

their success here resulted in an extensive use of them in his later residential designs.

At this same time, Goff developed an interest in cantilevered elements, variations in the use of glass, and texture. This interest is expressed in terms of the soaring gutters that drain into the rock garden pool, the use of unframed panes of various kinds of glass, and the weeping horizontal mortar joints--one of the very earliest examples of such joints in this country. Goff has said, concerning this house, "I think that the Colmorgan residence was my first house of some importance"(38).

The cosmopolitan character of Chicago offered an abundance of cultural activities for Goff's enjoyment. When he was not busy with his painting, he spent his idle time visiting exhibits and galleries and listening to concerts. Being conveniently close to Taliesin North, he quite often visited Frank Lloyd Wright. On one of these visits, Wright proposed that Goff join him and take charge of his drafting room. But Goff wisely refused, feeling that Wright's dynamic personality and genius would overpower his own expression. His desperate efforts during the Twenties to free himself from Wright's influence were still fresh in his memory.

Goff's work during the Thirties bears much evidence of his admiration of Wright. The earth-hugging masses, the low horizontal and geometric outline of his Chicago designs, and his use of natural materials caused Goff to be regarded as only another of Wright's followers. But a closer inspection reveals major differences. The tensional feeling of Goff's daring Architectural effects, the spacious open areas, the large glass areas, and the lightness of structure of his work during the later Thirties do not parallel anything of Wright's. It is the conceptual level, that of organic Architecture, that brings these two Architects together and that has created such an impression

in professional circles.

Goff, in 1939, designed the first scheme of the Unseth residence. In order to achieve a spacious effect within the confines of the narrow lot, he decided to try a plan based on an angular concept. His triangular plan was a modular study of 30° and 60° . The street's proximity to the building line created problems of privacy. This and the problem of the limited view to the sides inspired Goff to dispense with the usual solid roof in favor of view--affording transparency. Although the interior space was thought of as a continuous becoming, the rooms were arranged on various levels, thus achieving distinction and privacy.

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Fig. 28

This design pleased the client but, unfortunately, proved to be beyond

his budget limitations. Thus, in 1940, Goff designed the second scheme. (fig. 28) He kept the triangular form, but placed all of the rooms on one level. All glass areas were fixed, and the parts that open ere made of wood. This is the first time that Goff used the same material, cypress, ell over and made use of a skylight above the fireplace. "This way, I achieved a verticel continuity of space and of the chimney element and, at the same time, offered daylight to masonry which looks cold end lifeless without it."(38) Placing the skylight in this particular location became one of the characteristics of Goff's later work.

The son of Mrs. Irma Bertman was one of Goff's students at the Chicago Academy, and it was through this acquaintance that, late in 1940, he came to design a vacetion house (fig. 29) on a hill near Louisville, Kentucky, for Mrs. Bertman. It wes named appropriately with the Greek work Triero, which means a three-sided element exposed to the wind.

This wes the first project in which Goff wes commissioned to execute a complets design, including the furniture, carpets, fixtures, etc. Ideas shaped in the Thirties and hesitantly expressed in the Cole and Unseth residences take the form, in this project, of bold end mature statements. The clarity of the plan, the lightness of structure, and the idea of transparency--all major characteristics of his later work--are expressed very clearly in this project end leave no doubt that Goff, at this time, had struck out on his own tangent.

The floating roof of the Triero House, the first example of its kind in this country, is free of supporting walls or perimeter columns, and its sweeping eaves are perforated in order to give an airy feeling to the form and to reduce the upverd wind force. The redwood perts of the walls house the closets, and the rest of the area, composed of large glass panels, produces e crystalline

effect. Each piece of furniture is designed as an integral part of the overall design.

Another innovation in this project is the reversed movement of the Venetian blinds, which drop into pockets in the floor. Thus privacy is preserved but, at the same time, an abundance of light and a generous upward view are made possible. The Triaero House, the last of Goff's Chicago projects, indicates the freshness, originality, and boldness that was to come, the direction that Goff was to take in the years to come.

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THE WAR

Although Bruce Goff had decided to enlist in a Naval Construction Battalion only three months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese, it was not until July of 1942 that he was called to report for active service. During July and August, Goff underwent basic training, first in Rhode Island and then at Gulfport, Mississippi. In September of the same year, he found himself a Chief Petty Officer on a ship sailing to the Aleutians.

The ship arrived at Dutch Harbor during a 100 mile an hour Williwaw, a cocktail mixture of a hurricane and a cyclone. "It was wild with Williwaw," Goff recalls. "We stayed aboard the ship for three days before we were able to land, when we finally stepped ashore, sleet and snow still lashed at us from all directions, but we were loaded into open trucks and taken far out near the mountains and dumped in the middle of a high snow drift. 'Here we are,' we were told simply (40)."

Without one tree in sight, the place resembled a strange ice-bount desert. Only a few tent peaks which showed above the blanketed of white snow gave indication that someone had been there before. It was almost dark when the men, exhausted from shoveling all day, finally lay on their bunks within the dirty tents. These shelters, with their ice floore, coal stoves, and absence of lights, were anything but encouraging. Goff reminisces, "It was quite a jumping-off place. I felt very unhappy that night. It looked like it was going to be a long, hard winter (40)."

The next morning, Goff gazed out of the tent apprehensively and was astounded by what he saw before him. Everywhere stood grotesque mountains. some flat, some terrifically rugged, and some resembling perfect cones, casting their richly purple shadows across the expanse of snow tinted a

pastel pink by the light of the rising sun. "They were the most fantastic forms I had ever seen," Goff remarked later. In this opalescent atmosphere, Goff's sensitivity to natural form drew him out of reality. "I felt I was living an unearthly experience; it left me breathless. This was a grand place, and I knew in that brief moment of ecstasy that I was going to love it (40)."

Goff's past life had been one largely withdrawn from the world, characterized mostly by indoor activities. The few persons he had associated with shared more or less common interests and subjects of discussion had usually revolved around the world of art.

His experiences in the Navy, however, opened for Goff a completely new life of experiences. He found the outdoor life quite pleasant, even in the Aleutians. As Goff says, "The time I spent there was a great vacation for me. I enjoyed every minute, and it was against my wishes when, after eighteen months, I was shipped back to the states (40)." While in the service, Goff met a great number of fascinating people from an equal number of different backgrounds. This broadened his scope and increased his knowledge and understanding of human character. "I became extremely interested in people. My everyday association with them made me less bashful, less self-conscious, and more self-confident. It was the first occasion that I had plenty of time to reflect on myself, to look back and re-evaluate my past experiences and life (40)."

With the advent of the short summer, the Aleutian landscape changed into an exotic garden. Flowers of myriad forms and colors gave a mosaic appearance to the surrounding scenery, Goff recalls that, "lupins, Japanese iris, violets, and grey fox grew in wild profusion. Lord, you could not step anyplace without walking all over them (40)." Within the valleys, the tundra

covered everything like a mat and changed from an olive brown to the color of a Holstein hide and finally to an emerald green as the winter ice gave way to summer. Goff spent many hours hiking in the mountains. His sensitive eye experienced the beauty of waterfalls with their tiny rainbows that resembled loose washes of color, and his imagination played upon the exotic schemes of the rock formations.

Goff's assignment to the Aleutians, one normally dreaded by all servicemen, resulted in a great aesthetic experience, to be remembered for years to come, an experience that served to enrich his vocabulary of form and color. The assignment did not, however, result in any new designs of much importance. It is true that Goff designed a club house, a mess hall, an officers' club, and others, even more minor, projects, but these were necessarily conventional and uninspired.

In March of 1944, Goff was transferred to Camp Parks, in California, for rehabilitation and reassignment. "I do not know why they wanted to rehabilitate me. I was feeling fine and was ready for my next assignment," Goff says, chuckling (40). After this boring rehabilitation period, he spent some time in a machine gun school, but Admiral Reeves, who knew about and was pleased with Goff's work at Dutch Harbor, instructed the Commanding Officer of Camp Parke to have Goff transferred to the base operations force. This was done, and Goff remained at Camp Parke until the time of his discharge in July of 1945.

In early 1943, the authorities at Camp Parks, decided to remodel and enlarge some of the existing service facilities for the benefit of the men stationed there and their civilian visitors. The project finally included the remodeling of eight buildings and the erection of the McGann Memorial Chapel.

Captain James D. Wilson, the Chief Engineering Officer of the base, gave to Chief Petty Officer Bruce Goff the assignment of designing the various projects. He pointed out that the whole job--erection, decoration, landscaping, etc.--had to be done with labor and facilities immediately available on the base. Likewise, for reasons of economy and the war-enforced scarcity, the materials to be used must be either on hand or scrap. Restrictions and limitations meant no more than a refreshing challenge to Goff and he proved, once again, he was more than equal to the task.

Captain Wilson and Senior Chaplain Paschal E. Kerwin were, at first, surprised and timorous when Goff submitted his schemes, but more and more, they realized the beauty and practicality of the seemingly unorthodox solutions. They, in turn, submitted the projects to higher echelons with a fervor that bent all opposition, and finally, the drawings were approved.

The unusual project found opposition not only from the "man-on-the-street," but those connected with the profession as well. Typical of this attitude is the following related by a building contractor at Ardmors, Oklahoma, Mr. W. E. McClanahan, who, at that time, was a Chief Warrant Officer in the Sea-Bee's, and was the man in charge of erecting the Chapel. He describes it thus:

I had just gotten back from overseas and was expecting leave, when topside told me to report to a Chief Goff. Well, I was mad as hell, but there it was, so I started looking for this damn chief. I finally found him stuck way off in a corner and he turned out to be a real nice guy, but I was still pretty upset. Hell, there was a war on and I didn't like to spend it building some crazy church, but I rounded up a bunch of carpenters and we went to work. Well, by the time we finished the damned thing I not only realized that these men were real craftsmen, but so was Chief Goff and so was his Church (7).

This occurs, with variations, again and again, through all of Goff's practice. Those that called him crazy soon found he was more sound than

they.

In the same vein is a statement of a former Ssa-Bes to one of Goff's students, "Don't you listen to those nuts that say he is crazy. They always knock the real smart ones. You are mighty lucky, boy, you maybs don't realise it, but you ars. You listen to svery word he says (7)."

It was during the last days of the war that his combination of creativity, skill and tenacity resulted in the completion of the project. Time proved that the pleasant, new Architectural environment was an important factor in strengthening the morale of the camp.

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Fig. 30

The Chapel, (fig. 30, 31) perhaps the most outstanding building in the group, was situated in the center of the camp on a slope overlooking the administration building. It was purchased as war surplus in 1955 and re-erected in San Lorenzo, California. Two 40 x 100 foot "elephant" type Quonset huts, placed end to end, used as the basic enclosure, were pene-

trated by two massive masonry pylons. A smaller Quonset, as a west wing, housed the welfare department. A pool at the front and a garden at the back offered a natural setting to the project. Although the arched rib of the Quonset was imposed by the circumstances, its form was a happy marriage with the symbolism of the project since the arches' visual action is to draw the eye up--to God.

Glare reducing glass, tinted light blue, closed the ends of the barrel-like main element and controlled the brilliant sunlight of California; further control was provided by the use of a dark blue translucent curtain. These glass areas were supported by perforated, aluminum painted, metal columns. This theme of blue glass and aluminum painted structural members was echoed in the "V" shaped skylight that runs the entire length, at the ridge line, of the main vault and floods with light the entire area of the arched walls. The illumination of the Chapel provided a monumental and dramatic setting for religious services.

The two pylons at the main facade were of pink brick laid in a stratified horizontal coursing. The one to the rear (with a stone cross on it) provided the focus for the entry and housed service equipment. It visually separated the low ceilinged foyer from the nave. The central pylon divided the vault into chapel and library (at the north end) and provided facilities for the air-conditioning unit, and also formed the chancel back. Although it covered more than half of the semicircular section, the continuity of the vault form was achieved by covering the remaining area with large glass panels.

Advantage was taken of the sloping site in providing an office under the library, and in the design of the auditorium, whose floor was covered

with a pinkish-copper carpet; while a rust colored asphalt tile was used in the rest of the building. Exposed structural materials, inside and out, the pink acoustical insulation that sheathed the interior walls, the golden brick used in the sanctuary walls, and the redwood furniture and fixtures were orchestrated in a fascinating harmony of exciting colors and textures.

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Fig. 31

Since the chapel was non-denominational, the cross on the pylon at the rear of the chancel was two-sided. The plain, or Protestant, side and a crucifix on its reverse. During Jewish services, the cross was easily replaced by the tablets of Moses.

Ernest Thalman, the landscape designer, supplemented the project with a superb use of plants in the island of the front pool, the hanging crystal balls in the chapel, and in the tubbed plants in the lobby. Another Sea-Bee that contributed to this project was Herring M. Coe. His ornaments at the altar and the seven animal forms submerged in the front pool show a high degree of skill and imagination.

The chapel was a resounding success. Goff had produced one of the most

successful variations of the Quonset-type structure. It was chosen by the Church Council of America as one of the fifteen best churches in the United States. The success of this project had a great influence on Goff for later he used Quonset elements and "second-hand" or "as-found" materials in a number of projects.

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Fig. 32

An "H" shaped building, originally a contractor's construction shed, was remodeled into a "Hostess House" (fig. 32) to offer a meeting place for the enlisted personnel and their civilian friends. In the design of this project, the Architect took into consideration the comfort of the visitors. He provided features so unusual for a military camp, as complete dressing areas for women, and a nursery. The elimination of partitions allows the space to move

freely, and the dance floor and recreation area provided a maximum space for week-end social events. The relation of exterior-interior space was emphasized with the use of an indoor-outdoor pool and flower boxes, which, at the same time, lend an informal atmosphere to the building. The pool served, not only as a reflector, but also as a cooling system. On warm days the water level was lowered, letting cool breezes sweep unimpeded into the building, while the warm air was drawn out by an automatic exhaust fan. Goff also used this successful device later in the Crystal Chapel. The lounge, provided with alcoves and placed far from the noisy dance and recreation areas, offered some measure of privacy. Finally, the use of blue lights and submarine type fixtures in lighting the lobby and the planted areas gave a romantic touch to the over-all environment. Architectural features, as at the west exterior of the recreation area, bore a personal expression of Goff's in an angular, imaginative modulation of redwood, brick and glass.

Characteristic of the remodeling project of the "Beer Hall and Ship's Store" (fig. 32) was its sensible plan that provided a free traffic circulation and easy access to the various stores. The standard (and mostly second-hand) materials were used in a skillful way to create a shopping center character at the stores area. The diagonally placed tables at the Beer Hall accommodated a maximum number of people with a minimum of space, and also allowed free movement toward the bar. The walls were of redwood, small scrap panes of glass and a planting box at head height around both the exterior and interior of the hall.

The small "Star" bar was designed for entertainers that had performed at the camp and was situated back stage at the theater. Materials, made wholly of scrap as the metal columns penetrating and supporting tables,

leopard skin-like upholstery, string screens, and porthole windows created an unearthly and unique atmosphere.

Goff's other remodeling projects at Camp Parks included an Officer's club, a cafeteria, the Chief Petty Officer's club, the Women Officer's quarters, a WAVE barracks, a restaurant, and a theater.

Although done during rather extreme and trying conditions, the Sea-Bee project had quite an appeal to professional circles, but perhaps more important was its impact on the uninitiated. Indicative of this attitude was an experience of one (later a student of Goff's) who at the time was stationed at Camp Shoemaker, the Naval Base adjoining Camp Parks. He relates, "I noticed an old friend whom I hadn't seen for quite some time in a mob at a bus stop. After pounding one another on the back, I asked where he was going. 'I'm on a tour of Camp Parks.' 'Well what for?' 'I want to see those damned buildings again!' 'Again!' 'Yeah, I've already been twice, but I want to see that Chapel one more time.'" (7) By then (1946), Camp Parks was deactivated and completely lifeless and devoid of all interest but Goff's buildings. Is it not strange that a group of naive, unsophisticated, unread, enlisted men would be so impressed by the purely aesthetic?

While in the Navy, Goff was asked by some of his service friends to design their post-war homes. These requests resulted in designs for the Wold, Innis, Durfee, and Balley residences, executed in 1943 and 1944. However, none of these is important Architecturally, except as an indication of Goff's gradual evolution toward the characteristics which distinguish his California period.

CALIFORNIA

Upon his release from the services in 1945, Goff, having several prospective clients and no other plans, decided to set up an office in Berkeley, California, the climate and landscape of which he liked. During the year and a half that Goff practiced in California, he designed nine projects, none of which was built, although his solutions were approved by the clients. In the first year following the war, the great demand for housing was not compatible with the particularities of Goff's designs. The contractors were already busily and lucratively engaged in building "regular" houses and did not wish to be bothered with the unusual working drafts of Goff's designs. In addition, the scarcity of materials created another problem to be overcome.

Most of Goff's designs of this period indicate a radical departure from those of the thirties, and reveal an unrestrained flight into fantasy not to be squelched in any previous or subsequent period. It was the work of this period in particular that earned for Goff the epithets, "romantic," "undisciplined," and "just plain crazy."

Major characteristics of Goff's California period are the extensive use of quonset ribs in various combinations, corrugated elements, rugged stone walls with irregular openings and endings, interspatial compositions in the surface treatment, and a looseness in design. The character of the Architectural elements, although geometric, create a feeling of free form and indicate Goff's tendency toward flexibility and movement of space.

The projects of especial importance during this period were the "Lily Pad" House and the "Helix House." Mr. Donald Leidig, in his first interview with Goff, said that he was such a water garden enthusiast that

he would not even mind living in a water pond. Knowing this, Goff tailored the house to match Mr. Leidig's tastes and hobby.

The "Lily Pad" House (fig. 33) was the first of Goff's designs in which a suspended roof was applied and in which he conceived of everything--the garden, the furniture, and the Architecture--as a single, integrated entity. "This house was a change in the character of my design," Goff comments. "It led me even further away from Wright than had the Triacro House; it was the most important one up to that time." (40)

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Fig. 33

Four circular "island," the living, dining, sleeping, and guest areas, are suspended over a water garden and are connected by hardwood plank walkways. Each of these island shapes is repeated by a lily pad monitor above the continuous, flat roof suspended from an overhead beam which is, in turn, supported by the center columns of three of the islands. Privacy is insured by serpentine side walls, and the colors of terra cotta and cream are used to set off the lush pinks and blues of the blowering trees, shrubs, and water

plants. Finally, the outdoor-indoor aspect of the house is augmented by the water which flows through the house under plate glass floor sections.

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Fig. 34

In the "Helix House," (fig. 34) designed for Constance Gillis of Bend, Oregon, Goff further explored the interrelation of spaces, and he divorced himself from the use of angular forms. The spiral nature of this house with five levels, the irregular pool that extends into the house, and the curved wall of volcanic rock indicate Goff's progressive fondness of natural forms and materials. Both of these projects then--the "Lily Pad" House and the "Helix House"--are the direct forerunners of one of Goff's most unusual and most famous residences--that of the Bavinger's, in Norman, Oklahoma.

GOFF, THE EDUCATOR

Many have argued that Bruce Goff's most important contribution to American Architecture and culture lies not in his Architectural work, but in his association with the school of Architecture at the University of Oklahoma, where he worked from 1947 through 1956. Of course, the "particular case of Bruce Goff" has not ended yet. He is still living, designing a great number of projects every year, and no one can prophesy if, in the final judgment, the scale will lean toward the Goff-Educator or the Goff-Architect. But even the existence of this argument indicates the importance of his teaching work. As Bill Goddner, an Oklahoma Architect, said, "To set down a personal account of Bruce Goff without relating his work at the Sooner School of Architecture would be to create a main character without writing one of his most important chapters." (18, p. 13)

In 1948, President Cross, of Oklahoma University, gave credit to Goff the educator by saying, "I think he is one of the most important additions to the faculty since I became president. We feel that we have the makings of one of the best schools of Architecture in the country. And Goff is responsible for the change to a feeling of optimism and enthusiasm," (27, p. 98). This is an enthusiasm unparalleled by any of the Universities I studied, visited, or know--an enthusiasm, awakening and creativeness that became synonymous with that unique school. "I myself, once upon a time, believed the function of a university to be to awaken sleepers, and this school of Architecture has encouraged that belief by its teachings." Frank Wright said on one of his visits, and continued, "This is already well established by its own young Architect's work which has done more to put Oklahoma in the front rank of cultural pursuits than anything else it can show," (30, p. 10). Mendelson,

making the rounds of the drafting rooms expressed his enthusiasm by saying, "I congratulate you yourselves that you can work in this school. Because I have seen in my long life many schools of Architecture, not only in this country but all over the world, I think that it is very fortunate for you to be studying in this school." (30, p. 10)

I could easily cover pages with praising statements like the above by leading Architectural personalities of our century, about the school that Goff inspired, reformed and developed. It is the comparison of that school with a great number of others that made it such an important issue to Architecture and culture of this country. In my many years of studies and travels, I came in contact with many institutions and educators. Their attitude toward teaching and the profession convinced me that the absence of a truly indigenous American Architecture is a result of Architectural mis-education. Under the authoritarian method of teaching, the student never has a chance to find his own way because he is taught that someone else's way is right. Even capable professors teach, not what they believe, not the ideals and ethics of the profession, but rather, they practice a teaching method that will guarantee "the bread and butter" of the day.

I will try to give a picture of the Sooner's School of Architecture, not only because among the lines you may find Bruce Goff, his Architectural principles and his educational beliefs, but also to give the opportunity, to all open-minded Architectural educators, for an inspiration for their profession—a profession which, although unrecognized and underpaid, carries stronger ideals, principles, obligations and responsibilities on a national level than that of a practicing Architect. It is the Architectural school that will determine the professional ethics, pride, enthusiasm and American character of the future, Architects and the Architectural

destiny of this nation. In B.G.* (before Goff) days, students were taught, at the beginning, the "old eclectics," the Architecture of by-gone days, Greek, Roman, Gothic, etc. Later on, and particularly after the war, the students were told to model their design in "new eclectic" fashion. It was understood that copying the present day greets was a safe way to "Architecture." Of course, this was, and still is, the general trend in a number of schools. They taught the students, as Goff once said, "What has been done, what is being done, and not enough of what the student can do."

(18, p. 15)

In 1945 a group of young professors prepared the ground for the coming of Goff. They staged a minor revolution in guiding the campus building program toward modern design. A series of meetings and lectures with faculty and boards resulted in changing the attitude of the campus officials towards modern Architecture. This same group, in 1946, contacted Goff, who at that time was practicing in California, but the results were discouraging. Goff was not willing to give up his practice. The university officials opposed offering a professorship to a person who had never stepped inside the door of a university, and they were appalled by Goff's fantastic and radical designs. It took a lot of effort and delicate juggling by the small band of his admirers, who, by that time, had been entrenched on the campus, to bring about the union. Goff's interest in education had been growing since he taught at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts in the Thirties, and since that time the idea of bettering Architectural education had occupied much of his thinking. This, plus an assurance of leeway to continue practicing

*B.G. stands also for "Bruce Goff."

and a desire to get to the Middle West, lured him inland again. Thus, finally in January, 1947, Goff agreed to come from California to run the gamut of a faculty interrogation. Following is a description (27, p. 98) by one of those present at that meeting--a meeting that was destined to change the school of Architecture into a cultural center of national significance, the professional fountainhead of many young Architects all over the world.

Before a company of deans, administrative officials, the president of the university and professors of architecture, engineering, art, music and sociology, Goff expounded his buildings and his beliefs for 45 minutes, as comfortable as though he were chatting with each person at home. Wearing a typical costume of maroon suede shoes and a cardigan jacket, blue trousers, gold turtle-neck sweater, and pink socks, occasionally rocking back in his chair and speaking in his quiet midwestern manner, he managed to mesmerize the entire group. His final triumph came afterwards when a man who had opposed his appointment rose to question him: "I travel a lot and I know the architecture of the State pretty well," said the stern official, "and I think the Gulsa Building is the most beautiful one in the State. Now Mr. Goff, would you mind telling me what you think of this building?"

Goff rocked back in his chair, looked out the window and finally stammered: "Well, sir, that's a very hard question for me to answer. To tell you frankly, I don't know quite what to say, I've seen the building many times; in fact, I designed it when I was 18 years old."

Thus, in February of 1947, Goff was appointed professor and started teaching. Very soon students and faculty felt the galvanic force of his personality and dogged his heels, at the school and around the campus, while he preached about the sins of imitation and the power of the individual. In 1948 he was elected chairman and headed the school until his resignation on December 1, 1955. Right from the beginning, his efforts were directed toward making the best school of Architecture. One devoted to development of the creative individual. Thus, the most important issue became stress on individuality. The motto of the school: "We believe in the individual, because only the individual can create," dates back to those days. The student was given the greatest freedom possible. He was taught that there is no "ideal solution" or approach that has all the answers and he was urged

to develop and explore his own methods.

The next time you see something that strikes you as being very clever and you ask yourself, "Why didn't I think of that?" The reason will no doubt be that you did not, and someone else did, because that someone else got out of the groove of regular associations and thoughts and did not bind himself unconsciously with the usual thought processes and expected relationships. It is the expected things that keep us from seeing so many new relationships and uses for processes, or materials, or ideas. (37, p. 63)

Much as we admire what's done now, if we ever think it's the last word in Architecture, it's deadly. (27, p. 100)

With convictions like these, faculty and students worked together towards the exploration of the individual's potentialities and a search for the possibilities of today's Architecture. No teacher was allowed to touch a student's design. Instead the instructor tried to make the student see the weakness in his work, but he never substituted his idea, for the student's. In this "organic" method of teaching introduced by Goff, the student was allowed to develop from inside out, free of external rules and forces. In fact, this was the major difference between that school and those of Bauhaus, Taliesin, Cranbrook and other cultural centers of our century. Commenting on the results of this individual approach in teaching, and in design, Mrs. Elizabeth Mock, former head of the Architectural Department of the New York Museum of Modern Art and renowned Architectural author said, "This is one case where we have not ruined individuality of students but have developed it," (18, p. 14). In fact, she was so impressed with the school that she joined the staff as head of the Architectural History Department till her marriage two years later.

In 1948, four faculty members moved to an eastern school, lured by an offer bettering their position and salary. This even was of great importance to the re-organization of the school, because it gave an opportunity for Goff to select a unified faculty. Goff's presence, and the unique character of that school, attracted some of the finest teaching talents in the field—

all practicing Architects with a proper perspective in their teaching in relation to job conditions, all "individuals" with their own ideas, their own Architectural convictions, not being afraid to state their beliefs and argue them, even with Goff. "There are no 'yes men' in my faculty," he frequently said, "In fact the only thing we agree on is that Architectural education should be individualistic and that Architecture should be progressive." (18, p. 14) An example of the new additions to the faculty was Mendel Glickman who's structural virtuosity has been proved in Johnson Wax building, Falling Waters, Guggenheim Museum and many other projects designed by Wright. The student was encouraged to have his own ideas but a special emphasis was placed on respect and no one was to impose his beliefs on others. In this atmosphere, flooded with individuality and originality, any attempt to design by using a collection of cliches from the dead past or the dead present was considered the greatest of sins. The advanced students knew how to exclude a shallow design that idly stayed in the realm of copy and their sarcastic comments discouraged any attempt along this line.

Honest Architecture is not the result of warmed over ideas. It is very important that we learn in Architecture not to follow just because something is good or great or style. We need very much to look into it, and inquire into what we can do with it, and study Architecture as a principle bigger than anyone, or anyplace, or anytime. We should try to re-evaluate this concept, always, in terms of our materials, methods and civilization that we are part of. (6, p. 3)

This is the way Goff preached his approach to Architecture, an approach that was a basic principle in all design classes.

Of course this personal search for each to find his own expression presented more dangers than the safe path of a style and required more of the students and the faculty. But, this approach helped to develop the student's own principles and convictions, pride in trying to create his own "game," and stimulated a keen interest, curiosity and awareness in creative design. As

Goff said, "If we can train young Architects to have principles of their own and the courage of their convictions the problem will be half solved." (27, p. 100) Goff repeatedly and emphatically discouraged students to design in "B.G. manner," although sometimes it was impossible for the student, especially beginning and transfer students, to withstand the temptation of experimenting with the "Goffic style."

Of course, all these are principles, ideas and beliefs that most Architectural educators would not oppose. The major difference is that, in Goff's school, they were applied without deviation. Each student was on his own, he was there to develop himself, and not to compete with the rest of the class. Goff, and the rest of the faculty did their best to emphasize this idea. Grades and instructor's, "likes" and "dislikes" did not influence the student's design. The exhibits included all students work, bad and good, and no student knew his fellow student's grade. In this non-competitive system, evaluation was based on terms of student's development and the sincerity of his efforts.

Goff's greatest ability as educator was his native talent of instilling confidence and bringing forth the best that the student's potential allowed. I never heard him say anything to discourage the student, even if his work was hopelessly bad--no threats, snorts, or disparaging comments, but rather, in a mild, kind and gentle way he prodded one into finding himself. For Goff believes that the only discipline worth considering, in design, is self-imposed. Goff always respected any sincere experimental effort, apart from the term good or bad, as he would any great masterpiece, and this had a contagious effect on the people around him. "That an active mind be denied a chance for experimentation is unfortunate. Even though fear of the new and the different is constantly in evidence never close your mind to a new

ides, because anything is worth considering even for the sake of consideration itself." (37, p. 63) This is the way one student expressed the experimental attitude of that school.

Experimentation and research was emphasized in every facet of the educational program, and was not easy for the student to by-pass. I still remember a very low grade on a history paper that took me a whole week at the library to prepare. The professor had marked in the front page, "Too factual, I want your opinion, your own comments, your own analysis."

Goff's great patience, encouragement, and confidence in the student's design helped to develop students' enthusiasm. An unbounded enthusiasm and optimism, a pride and flaming spirit that soon took the form of a missionary vision, of bettering society through Architecture, an Architecture warm and human. This became the major characteristic of all graduates of his school. Thus the school, under the strong leadership of Goff, rose in fame, and, in a period of seven years, increased the number of students from 125 to 275. The overwhelming impression of students' accomplishments attracted, from all over the country, free souls, trying to find an environment where they could grow, free of "Classicism" and "Institutional Ruttness," many of them top designers. By 1951 the school had 50 per cent more transfer students than beginning freshmen, and the class roll-call sounded like the one at the auditorium of the United Nations—Japan, China, Turkey, Syria, Arabia, Norway, Bolivia, and Venezuela, to name a few, were represented. This verified what Goff had said several years previously, when he was in the process of reforming the school, "A good Architectural school is a rare product nowadays, let's build one and stop worrying about getting students." (5)

Goff, most of the time, taught the first and last course in design.

As he used to say, he caught the students "coming and going." The first course, which included abstract compositions such as Goff's own, (fig. 35, 36) and sculpture was designed to loosen up the student's mind and soul of any inhibitions, to free his imagination, to "let yourself go."



Fig. 35



Fig. 36

At the same time he developed his sensitivity in form, color, space, and texture. The important thing was for the student to be "natural," independent of mediums, techniques of mechanics. It was an approach of uncritical enjoyment. This is one of Goff's principles in art. He mistrusts the intellect, but his confidence in soul is unlimited. He believes in a direct response to art. Any attempt to intellectualize it is apt to destroy the feeling and character of the beauty created. After all, art is not the result of combinations and formulae, but of the mystery of soul and the spirit of its creator. In the first exposure to Architectural design, the student was set free to work without any restrictions as to cost, structure, and other practical elements. As Goff used to say, "Anything goes at this stage of the game." He did not want to impede the imagination by making the student worry about the finer details without first loosening up and widening the range of the individual. Occasionally the result was a pure Architectural fantasy, but Goff believed that, as the student begins to learn the practical aspects of the profession he would adjust his design to these conditions while still maintaining the freshness, originality, and imagination of his early work.

Thus the student, with an increasing awareness to the practicability of his creations, progressed to the fourth year where he was to get the most important single piece of his education in the "Architectural course 273." In this course, every Monday evening from 7 to 10, Goff lectured on modulation, rhythm, depth, simplicity, balance, scale, and all other major elements of art composition. He illustrated his lectures with works of Wright, Mies, Corbusier, Mendelson, or with Greek, Roman or other period of Architecture. In these lectures slides of Japanese prints and art expressions of primitive cultures played as an important role as paintings by Picasso, Matisse,

Mondrian, sculptures by Moore and the other "greatest" of modern art. Finally, literature and music closed the cycle of his illustrations. His ability in presenting the most abstract and complicated subjects as crystal clear, and his virtuosity of blending lecture and art illustrations left no dark corners in the student's mind. I still remember the way he presented the correlation of Debussy's La Mer to the steps and form of the pyramids in Egypt when he was talking on the subject, "Theme, variation, development, climax." Illustrations of compositional principles in Architecture, sculpture, music, literature, painting and illustrations from nature were brought before the student in an abundance for analysis and consumption. These principles, inherent in all great creative expressions, were absorbed within each student and resulted in a subconscious development in understanding artistic values, the continuity of all arts and the close relationship of one art form to the other. [This course was based on Goff's belief that an Architect should cultivate and develop an intense understanding of the philosophy of all arts. He should partake and share experience in all media. This would help him to enlarge his horizon, create a richer vocabulary in his Architectural expression and produce a more valid art.] Only after my experience with that course could I understand why the upper class students cut down their clothing and food budget to save money for a Japanese print, a book, a painting or a record. After the Monday lecture, and for the rest of the week, the student had to express in a drawing, by the use of Architectural elements, his interpretation, understanding and impression of the week's subject. This approach of art education Goff carried from the classrooms to the walls of the gallery and his office where paintings, prints, photographs, and sculpture were always exhibited for the delight and study of the students. A great part of his teachings was in this fashion, beyond the verbal level.

The fifth year thesis was the one that "separated the men from the boys." The student, starting from the selection of the problem, had to carry a multi-function project through all its facets to specifications and contractor's bids. He had to unquestionably prove that his creation could be built with existing materials and present-day methods. This problem proved whether the student had mastered the over-all program of the school which was to teach him how to blend design, Architectural engineering and practical conditions. As professor Glickman put it, "The Architect who has been taught to develop his ideas and imagination and is not capable of determining the practicability of his design has not learned much." (18, p. 15)

One of the most popular institutions that Goff established at the school on his arrival was the music session. Every Friday evening he played records from his collection--today numbering more than 6,000 selections from all over the world--for the enjoyment of students, their friends and the many "outsiders" that attended those sessions. As Goff said, the purpose of these musical evenings was, "To purify the tired souls from a week's hard work and recharge them for next week's efforts." But what he really meant was that all activities at the school were an important part of education. (Many times he had tempted students, who were feverishly working at night to finish their assignments, by saying, "You shouldn't let your studies interfere with your education." (8) After listening to music, they would all go to a local restaurant for coffee and conversation. Goff's favorite, perhaps his only, recreation was an interesting discussion over a cup of coffee, and he never missed the opportunity of starting one. These informal conversations, at coffee breaks in his office, in the hallways, in fact during every waking hour, were as much a part of Goff's system of education as the regular class-work. He was always the first to arrive at school, at 7:30 in the morning,

and the last to leave, usually about midnight. The door of his office was always open and no secretary was in front to stop the student for interrogation. In this atmosphere of complete informality even by American standards, the student always felt free to walk into Goff's office to see his exhibits on the wall or to talk with him. Goff was a good educator because he was a good student himself. He never stopped the process of learning and developing himself. He admits that he learned a lot from the students. In fact, he once said, chuckling, that it keeps him busy trying to keep ahead of the students.

The full, warm passion, the youthful spirit and the international environment of the school was an education in itself, for this was the place where students of many nationalities and races exchanged ideas and discussed politics, social institutions and cultural activities. The French magazine L' Architecture d' Aujourd'hui ends one of its articles about Bruce Goff by saying: "It is difficult to forecast in which way Bruce Goff will evolve. Fireworks without tomorrow? Curiosity of the History of Architecture? Or manifestation of weariness opposite all the formulae tending by their systematization, to become academic?" (15, p. 99) Of course it is difficult to tell the future, but I can assure L' Architecture d' Aujourd'hui, that the picture of Bruce Goff will not vanish from the scene of tomorrow, because the hundreds of his students from the small Oklahoma towns to the ends of this world will carry on the light of an indigenous and honest Architecture independent of old or new eclecticism, an Architecture of "no style" but one of individual expression, an Architecture that will grow from their passion, sensitivity and love, as his.

The hope that the school could become another Bauhaus and perhaps excel in quality and significance, was cut short by the resignation of Goff in 1956—a very unfortunate event for Goff, the school, the country, and Architecture. Although a high quality of design continued to come out of the student's hands for a number of years, and the school was better organized than in Goff's days, my recent visit convinced me of the inevitable change.

NORMAN, OKLAHOMA

During the years that Goff was associated with the University of Oklahoma, he designed a number of projects that are rich in invention, form, and character.

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Fig. 37

In the Ledbetter residence, (fig. 37) designed in 1947, Goff applied his experience in the War and that of the California period, plus a careful study on light and its effects. He tried, for the first time, to achieve a balanced light in the interior, and he set the windows on an angle to avoid street reflections and glare. In previous cases, he had noticed that pro-

jecting elements, especially at the corner, create a sagging optical illusion. Thus, in that project and thereafter, he tried to correct this by extending upwards the end of the supporting beam. Upon its completion and during the open house week, the unusual solution of this project attracted the biggest non-athletic crowd in Norman's history.

At the end of the year Coff designed a summer lodge for the same family. As it was to be occupied only periodically, the form was result of the security problem. The main floor was raised above the ground, beyond reach, thus providing a shaded area beneath and a good view of the lake. The exterior wooden walls were hinged to the floor. Dropped down they formed tetraces and raised up they covered the glass area when the tenants were not there. Other projects of that early period in Norman are the Cox residence and an alteration for Bachman residence (fig. 38) in Chicago, both designed in 1948.



Fig. 38

In Aurora, Illinois (about forty miles from Chicago), there is a house with more nicknames, possibly, than any other ever constructed. It has been called the "bird-cage," the "mouse trap," the "jockey cap," some enamored of the vegetable kingdom have entitled it the "pumpkin," the "tomato," the "big apple," while others, more materialistic, would have it as the "hangar," the "umbrella"--all these and more. It is, of course, the Ford House, famed by Life, Look, as well as almost all the various Architectural publications on Goff. It is the residence of Mr. Samuel Ford, a gas company executive, and his wife, Mrs. Ruth Van Sickle Ford, the director of the Chicago Academy of fine arts. (fig. 39, 40, 41)

PICTURE HAS BEEN REMOVED

Fig. 39

In 1949, the building contract was let to the young Don Tosi, a master of craftsmanship and precision, who enthusiastically began erecting its unusual frame. From the beginning, its umbrella-like structural concept attracted snide comments from neighbors and the casual passers-by (these unfortunate, but seemingly inevitable, gestures of ignorance, gave rise to

the now famous sign the Fords posted, "we don't like your house, either," (36, p. 119) In spite (or maybe because) of the neighborhood's reaction, the residence was completed at a cost of some \$64,000. It brought turbulence, consternation bewilderment and even delight, not only to professional circles, but to over 4,000 visitors a week at that time.

That time is long since past, and the Ford residence, through the years, has enthused many an admirer with Goff's innovations in plastic form, color, texture, the use of materials and especially in its concept of inter-spatial composition. It had a special appeal to purist Mies van der Rohe, as well as other leading Architects in this country and abroad. The most delighted of all is its owner. "We would not know how to live in another house. I even get uncomfortable when I go to see my friends. Being in a room with a flat ceiling gives me a funny feeling." (27, p. 95)

Built on one and one-third acres, its three main elements--living area and two bedrooms--look from the nearby highway like the components in a chemical symbol and have a striking resemblance to an African hut or an Indian "stupa," (yet another example of Goff's being influenced by primitive and oriental cultures). Goff abhors houses that look like boxes with little holes, and believes that a circle is an informal, gathering-around, friendly form. This principle was not only applied in the design of this project, but also is found in most of his recent work.

The working and living area consists of a huge, 166 foot hemisphere attached to which are the two bedrooms, themselves segments of spheres. All are formed by standard Quonset ribs painted a bright crimson. This frame is covered, on the exterior, with close-packed scales of dark green stained shingles and on the interior with white cypress laid in a herringbone pattern. Exposed steel beams, also painted crimson, are butt-welded to the ribs at a

lower level, while a central pylon framed with steel and sheathed in glistening copper supports the Quonset rib frame, incidentally forming an excitingly patterned skylight where the ribs bow in to meet the support.

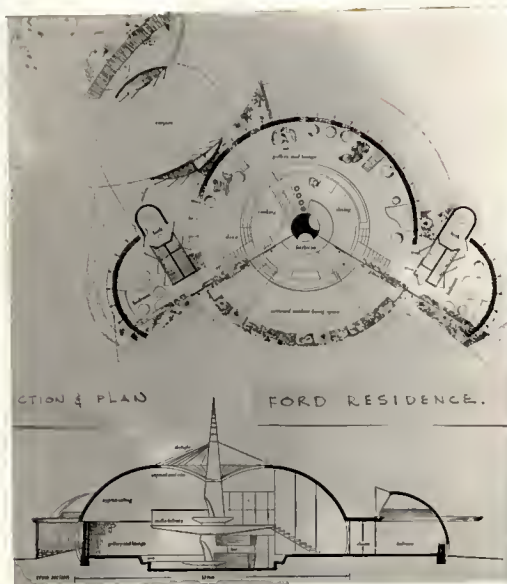


Fig. 40

This pylon also supports a saucer-shaped studio balcony and houses the chimney of a two-faced fireplace, one side opening to the screened patio, the other to the dining area. At the base of the central dome, a non-structural, matt-black, cannel coal wall, in a random ashlar pattern, encloses the space and provides over 75 lineal feet of wall space for the exhibition of Mrs. Ford's paintings. Sparkling 100 pound culllets of glass set into the wall add a richness to the gallery, and, when the sun strikes their outer surface, they emit an emerald-like glow. The rear third of the main hemisphere is cut-off

by glass walls running from the pylon at the center to the ribs, intersecting the dome, balcony, and floor areas like a cake slice, thus forming a screened porch (as the exterior ribs are only sheathed with wire mesh) for outdoor activities and also serving to tie, visually, the inside with the outside. Planting at the glass walls the unwary of a lack of passage. A circular sunken pit around the pylon provides space for intimate activities and seating around the fireplace. A separation of the kitchen area from the gallery is achieved by the use of suspended shelves from the balcony above, one side of which are cupboards and the other bookshelves.

PICTURE HAS BEEN REMOVED

Fig. 41

The continuous space flow of the gallery area allows a flexibility in social functions, and a free movement of the public whenever Mrs. Ford exhibits her paintings. All of this is achieved with a minimum of effort insofar as maintenance and furniture arrangement to fit the various occasions.

The low, flat ceilings in the bedroom wings (which are treated to give a feeling of privacy and intimacy) are covered with navy-surplus, tarred to

rope in a coil fashion. Interest is provided by the use of a peaked skylight through which the shingled, curved surface of the dome can be seen during the day and the stars at night. Hinged louvers and ceiling vents take care of the ventilation in these areas, while they are heated by pipes radially embedded in the concrete floor. In the bath, a large mirror reflects its cyprese walls and black concrete floor. The black terrazzo tub has a plastic dome skylight directly overhead.

Upon entering from the low-ceilinged carport, one is led into a space with an infinite number of depth relationships and movements. The eye is carried around the walls, under, above, and around the fishnet-screened balcony, thence to the crown. Space quite literally flows. It envelops the viewer in its dynamic twists and twirls, forcing him to participate in this unusual experience. It is interspatial composition at its best, without beginning or end.



Fig. 42

Windowless for privacy the Hopewell Baptist Church (fig. 42, 43) stands as a mark of high imagination, faith and hard work. Its form, a combination of a tee-pee and an oil-derrick, reflects the region and the people who, in this case, erected it themselves. Pipe welders, drillers and riggers from the oil fields of Oklahoma used salvaged oil-drilling pipe and waste materials to build Goff's design. In this project Goff tried a flue effect for ventilation. The air enters through vents around the auditorium perimeter and exhausts through the skylight (like in a smoke hole) which opens pneumatically.

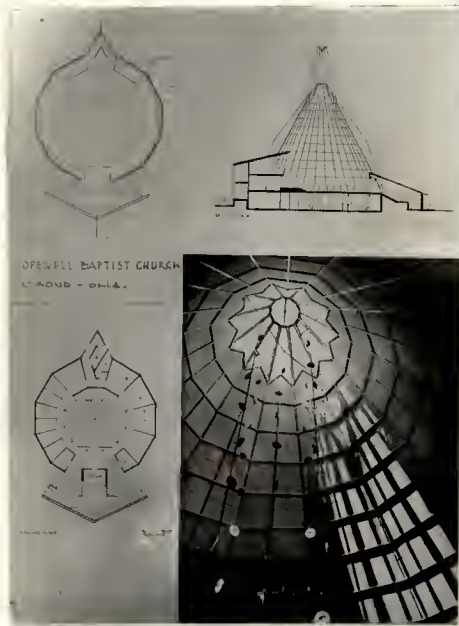


Fig. 43

In the Garden apartments, through the use of perforated hexagonal concrete blocks, Goff created a lace like effect. The refined details of this project

prove that Goff's imagination is not limited by the material, instead that he can master industrial products as well as materials of natural character.

PICTURES HAVE BEEN REMOVED

Fig. 44

Bruce Goff's quest for transparency and lightness culminated in the Crystal Chapel. (fig. 44, 45) These principles are expressed with maturity, courage, distinction and clarity. It is one of the major contributions to contemporary Architecture. A statement of such grandeur that it places this all-faith chapel for the University of Oklahoma among the classics of American Architecture.

The Architectural Forum hailed this project with: "Here, at last, is a rocket-flight use of techniques and materials never before available to

realize a form of beauty and religious experience never before possible-- it marks the farthest point of advance of a long Architectural quest." (16, p. 87) German publications praised it with: "In the Crystal Chapel a new monumentality is achieved by transparency, translucency, and a light, delicate scale--with no conventional religious symbols, the Crystal Chapel achieves a contemporary expression for all religions." (33, p. 350)

Goff believes that secular Architecture should express not only the religious aspects of the community but also the cultural life and attitude of its members. "For years now, there has been a tendency to put on Christian clothing to cover pagan nakedness--but paganism peeps forth."(5) Thus, Bruce Goff, by his dynamic vitality, and ingenious way of orchestrating materials, created in this project not only a source of inspiration for the worshippers, but also a refined, cultural, progressive atmosphere; one that certainly should exist on a university campus.

The triangular crystalline motif is not only characteristic of the exterior of the two buildings that comprise the center, but is carried also into the interiors in terms of fixtures, pools, choir, etc. This is done in such a variety of colors, textures and surface relationships that unity is achieved without a feeling of monotony.

The Crystal Chapel has a seating capacity of 300 and its flexible space is planned to serve equally well for meditation, group meetings, weddings and funerals, as well as the conventional worship service of the various faiths. A covered walkway links the Chapel with the Student Building, where areas are provided for offices, counsel rooms, a library, the YMCA, and YWCA, and a social hall. Parking facilities are under the first floor of this wing. Access is provided by the use of ramps from the street, thus keeping the serenity of the spaces surrounding the building free from a sea of tin.

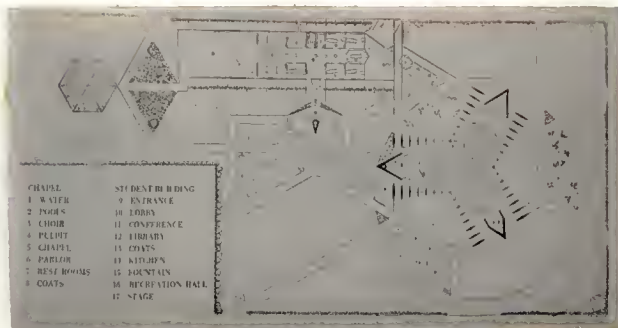


Fig. 45

The three wings of the Chapel, reflected in a circle of water gardens, extend an invitation to all directions. Breezes sweeping into the building across sunken pools will cool it, while warm air is exhausted by a fan at the Chapel's peak (incidentally reinforcing the omnipresent breeze). In the cooler months, the water level will be raised cutting off the, by then, unwanted air flow. The diamond-like, many-faceted roof of rosy translucent glass (a two pans sandwich with glass fibers and pink plastic filler) provides adequate insulation and light diffusion, thus creating a miraculous sensation of being suspended in a vertible prism whose aluminum structural frame is little more than a spider web. This roof rests on triangular piers of unpolished, pink, Oklahoma granite. This is also the material used for the 150 foot chime tower, tipped with wings of aluminum and glass, that forms the climax of the whole project as it is visible for miles on the flat plains of Oklahoma. Set between these piers are wall panels of "Gemmeaux glass" a material made by sealing colored glass fragments between two sheets of plate glass. These panels are designed in harmony with the rest of the structure and add a tone of richness to the overall impression.

As one enters from the low entrances, the space explodes into a vast, breath-taking interior. The slanting roof planes carry the eye up through luminous space to the apex 75 feet above the floor. Chains of silver end glass are suspended from this focus, as the Architect says, "to give a feeling of vertical stability as a counterpoint to the many angular planes of the interior," (16, p. 88) A basement tunnel permits an unobserved, dramatic entrance to the elevated stone pulpit and sunken choir. The extreme ends of the three arms that form the chapel house coat-rooms, a parlor, and a small chapel for minor services. During the night cold-cathode tubes concealed in the aluminum frame, and underwater lights in the pools, transform the Chapel into a sparkling, glowing gem.

One of Goff's colleagues referring to the impact the Chapel would have on the rolling plains of the Southwest, said, "it is a landscape that takes gratefully to an occasional bold accent. Such would be this great pink crystal, symbolic of Oklahoma's religious life; laced with the sky, luxuriant with water, its hundreds of facets touched with glitter by day, mysteriously radiant by night." (16, p. 88)

From 1949-50, Goff tried his hands in a land development project for Mr. Wetzler, of Norman, Oklahoma. He plotted the lots and he designed the Whitaker, Godman, Goff, Bell, Keys, and the "tee-pee" residences, of which only the last two were built, before the Korean war discouraged any additional building.

The "tee-pee" house (fig. 46) was an important study on low cost housing of the \$5000 range. Inspired by the Orient, Goff conceived a circular pit-house. The wooden frame, plastic sheets, stone work, etc. were designed in such a way that even unskilled people could put them together. The delicately

designed canopy adds an exciting tone to the structure. Unfortunately, Mr. Magyness, for whom it was designed, got a divorce and the project never was completed.

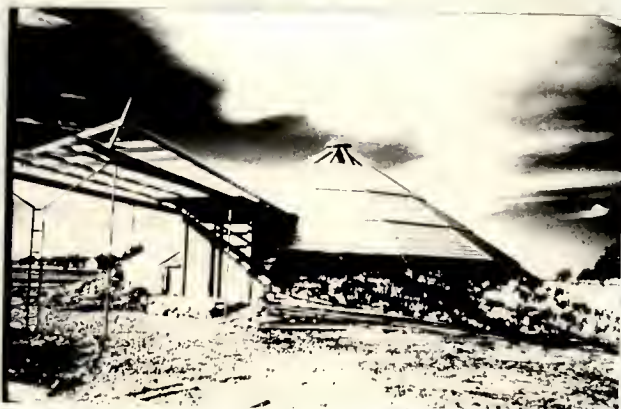


Fig. 46

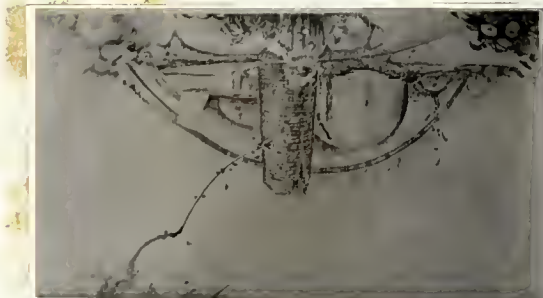


Fig. 47

In 1950, Goff designed the Henkle residence, characterized by the free arrangement of window openings. The design of the Blakeley residence (fig. 47, 48) presents a new concept for a house. It was his first composition using circular elements in a moving space, and an attempt to escape from the idea of

walls. The secluded site provided adequate privacy and gave Goff the opportunity to fully express his principles on translucency and transparency. The entirely translucent roof is supported by two laminated wood arches, and the curved glass areas are clipped without frames. All elements were hung from the roof, free in space, and, in this project, the furnishings were more successfully designed as an integral part of the form than in any of his previous projects. The stone tower, of a "romantic" character houses the utilities.

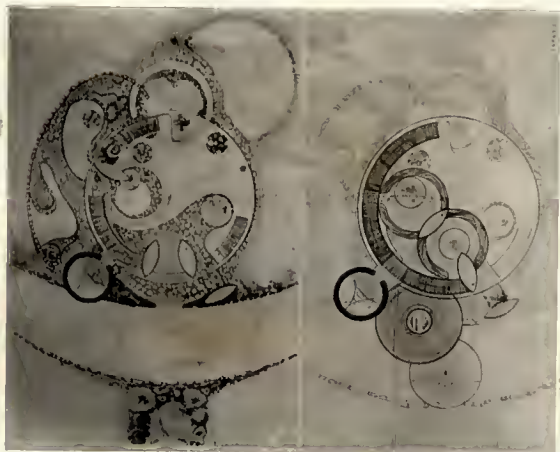


Fig. 48

Up to that time most of Goff's sections and elevations were a vertical extrusion of the plans. But, he noticed that, in cases of circular and angular plan, the form was lacking in character and unity. Thus, in the "Family Circle" residence (fig. 49) designed for publicity of the Midwest City development, he tried to correct this by curvilinear wall and roof sections.

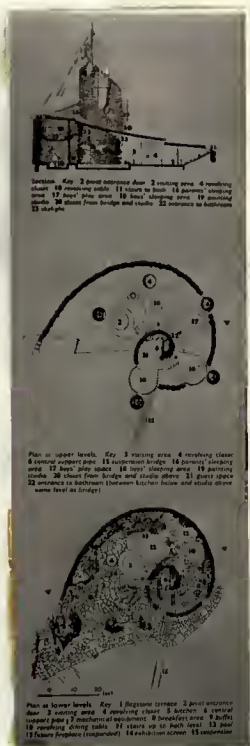


Fig. 49

"When the Bavingers came to me as Architect of their new home (fig. 50) they had several unusual requirements which were both challenging and inspiring," (21, p. 5). Goff, being at his best when challenged, created with the design of this house, one of his most unconventional solutions and a space study of great importance to Modern Architecture. The Bavingers, who disliked the idea of living in the usual conglomeration of little boxes, wished a large open space in which all of their family needs and professional interests (both are artists) could be satisfied. "We wanted a house designed specifically for us and we got it," (9) Bavinger said recently. With a great respect, as always, for the site, Goff designed the house as an organic outgrowth of it, and it stands today as a natural feature of the landscape.

The location is five miles east of Norman, Oklahoma. The lot includes a ravine with a small lake and a jungle-like growth of prairie trees. A natural clearing at the edge of the lake was leveled, but native stone was left here and there to become integral parts of the ground floor area, the

greater part of which is a tropical garden with fish-ponds and a waterfall.



PICTURES HAVE BEEN REMOVED

Fig. 50

The outside flagstone terrace continues inside through a forty foot glass wall on the eastern side toward the lake. Large panels offer a perfect view of the flower garden at the opposite side of the ravine and, also, a nice view to the "outsiders" of the interior garden and the non-private areas of the house. The entrance is on the south side of the glass wall.

A 96 foot wall of native sandstone starts at this point and, taking the form of a logarithmic spiral, encloses and forms the interior space which is absolutely free of partition walls. This wall and the ceiling spirale upward to a height of three stories at the center of the coil, with the kitchen located on the first, the bathroom on the second and the guest area at the top, from which one can enjoy the endless landscape and the beautiful sunsets of Oklahoma. Five carpeted bowls, suspended around the center coil and stepped up at intervals of three feet, serve as: living room, master bedroom, boys' playroom, boys' bedroom and, at the top, Mr. Bavinger's studio. Each bowl has its own revolving closet of a copper finish. All furniture is designed as an integral part of the house itself. The entire roof, the interior stairs, the living area bowls and the bridge over the ravine are suspended from a 55 foot oil-well pipe at the center of the coil. Two continuous skylights at the edge of the up-spiraling roof flood the garden and the stairway around the inner coil wall with light. On the ground floor, and only an arm's distance from the pool, is a recess. This is the dining area, covered with the same gold carpet as the suspended bowls, and separated from the kitchen by cabinets. A series of stepping stones in the pool provide a bridge and connect the entrance hall and dining area.

Space is the most important, but also the most abstract element, in Architecture. Many of the great Architects of the past and present spent part of their professional life, trying to free space, and the human element that lives in it, from such elements as partition walls and embarrassing corners. Paul Nelson experimented with a rectangular structure and suspended space cells. Gropius, in one of his early studies, followed the more logical

approach of a spiral. He, thus, achieved a horizontal movement of space, but sight, and sound privacy were sacrificed for this space effect. Corbusie's Labyrinth has also a motion of space movement. Goff, in the Bavinger's house, by diminishing space not only horizontally, but also vertically (floor and ceiling are not parallel), offers a space that flows continuously in all directions, a never-ending space, "a sense of living in space three-dimensionally" as Goff said, (32, p. 155). The vertical separation of the living areas provide reasonable sight privacy, but sound privacy still remains a problem to be solved. The element of mystery, one of Goff's Architectural principles, is introduced by this unique treatment of space. At no time can one see the interior all at once. The reflections from the pool and the big glass cullete embeded in the wall, the tropical plants up to 20 feet tall, the sound of the waterfall, the saucer-like suspended bowls covered with fishing nets, all these elements result in an effect beyond common associations--a dream house. By public demand, the Bavingers opened their house for visitors; in fact, they started charging "a dollar per head." In the years that followed its erection, they have collected more than enough money to cover the cost of their house.

One of Goff's most unique designs was the first scheme of the Garvey Residence (fig. 51) in Urbana, Illinois. A family of musicians wanted a house where they could play their instruments without annoying each other, and without being disturbed by the noisy street. This request resulted in satellite units in the form of metal spheres, connected by a tubular ramp around a central garden. In order to cut down on unused space, the whole complex was covered with a "morning glory" form, made of light steel ribs covered with chicken wire and sprayed with plastic which changed from translucent

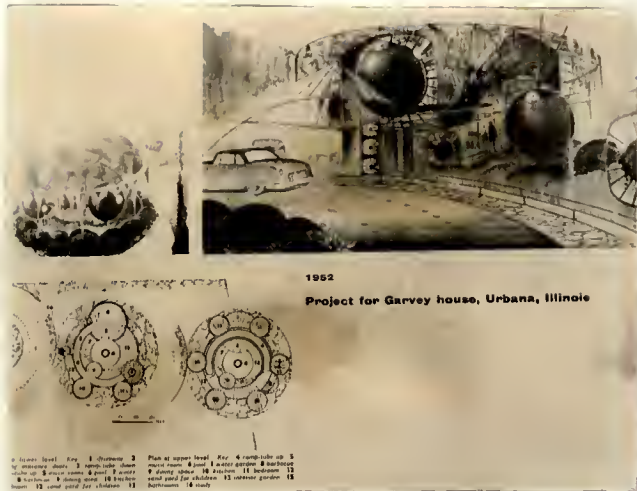


Fig. 51

at the bottom to transparent at the top. A pipe at the edge of the roof allows water to trickle down the funnel, cooling the interior by evaporation and watering the garden. In winter, this water forms an ice coating providing adequate insulation. The temperatures in the rooms and ramp are independent from the rest of the enclosed volume. Each spherical room, half of which extends outside, is framed with a transparent window that emphasizes the continuity of form and space. The interior of each sphere is insulated with cork and lighted by irregularly placed plexiglass domes. The design of the Garvey residence was so far removed from Goff's previous work that it surprised even those acquainted with his radical schemes, and proved one of his major principles in Architectural design, that "each project is a unique story never to be repeated again in any way." (40)

balanced daylight throughout the interior space so far.

In 1952, Goff designed the Newton and Stulman residences. The first plan is composed of pavillion-like rooms where native (Florida) coral and seashells are correlated with the Architectural elements.

In 1953, Joe Price, a bachelor and an amateur photographer, asked Goff to design his studio-residence in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. In the first scheme, the steel frame is raised from the ground on pylons that contain the mechanical equipment. No two surfaces, in this project, run parallel, thereby creating a spacious effect. The walls are canted outward to create the illusion that they move away from the occupants. The studio and lounge areas are covered with white carpet that continues up to the angled walls for reclining. A seating pit below floor level accomodatees the bar and hi-fi equipment. Close to the pit there is a large, square window, set diagonally and filled with purple glass cullete.



Fig. 53

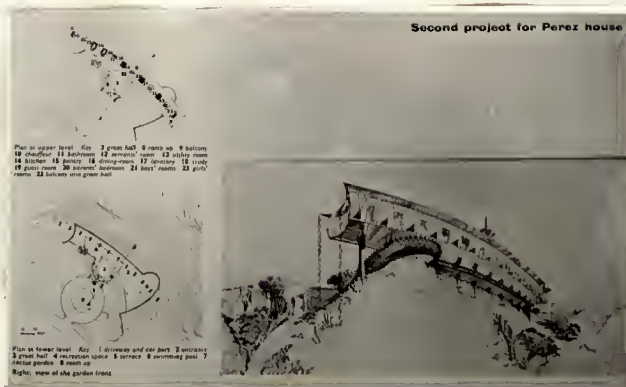


Fig. 54

In both schemes of the Perez residence, (fig. 53, 54) that was to be built in Caracas, Venezuela, Goff tried to harmonize the structure with the precarious site—a bluff overlooking the ocean. Although the elements in these designs are the result of geometry, they express a smooth and free movement of form. Both schemes are rich in ornament and bold in expression.

The major characteristic of the Corsaw residence (fig. 55, 56) in Norman, Oklahoma is the unusual treatment of the vertical surfaces, reminiscent of the Chicago period.

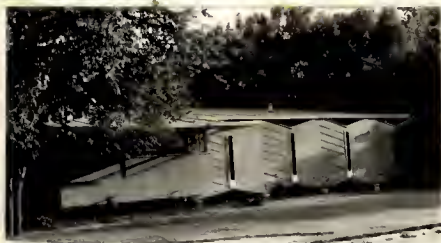


Fig. 55



Fig. 56

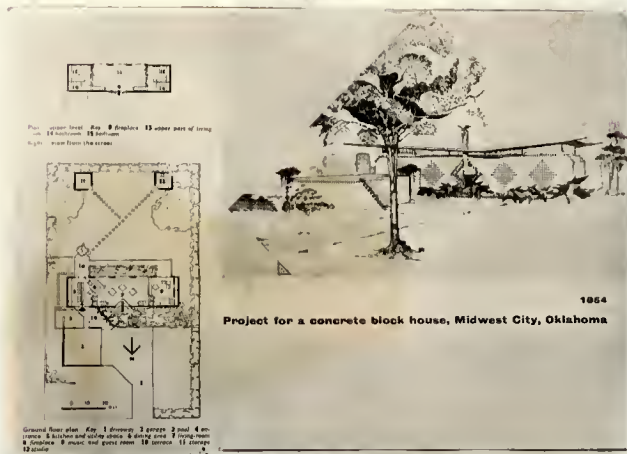


Fig. 57

In the Murdock residence, (fig. 57) Goff applied, for the first time, the "balcony plan," the elements of which indicate a return to rectilinear forms. The perforated concrete block, which gives the character to the building, is used in a delicate fashion, creating interesting patterns, completely integrated into the other elements of design. The butterfly roof is separated

from the walls; a connecting glass strip provides adequate ventilation and light to the interior.

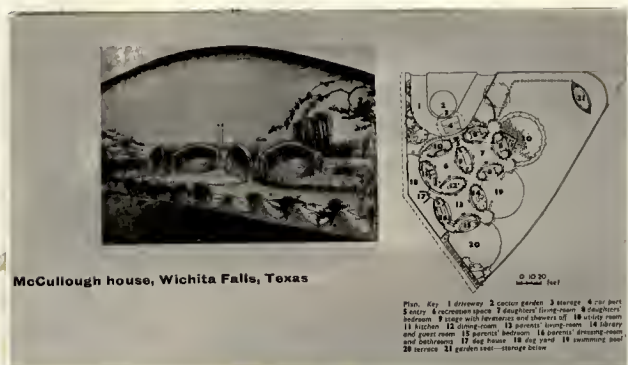


Fig. 58

The first scheme of the McCullough residence (fig. 58) is an attempt to accommodate family activities according to various ages. The parents' and daughters' quarters can function independently or can be combined during large social activities. The plan, which is a composition of circular segments, indicates Goff's ability to introduce mystery and intrigue, in Architecture, by using simple geometric forms.



Fig. 59

The second scheme of the Garvey residence (fig. 59) has the music room in a centrally located seating pit and the family rooms arranged around the perimeter, separated from the central space by accordion walls. Concrete sewer pipes support the roof beams and are used as outside planters. Externally the earth is bermed up to the sill of the windows, which, in turn, slopes outward to the eaves line, thus adding that space to the interior.



Fig. 60

In 1955, Goff designed the residence for the owner of the Francoma Pottery Company, in Sapulpa, Oklahoma. (fig. 60) Since the client was interested in ceramics, clay tile, quarry tile and local glazed brick was used in an unusual way as in the Spanish tile that covers the north sloping wall, creating a bold and unique texture. A number of the tiles used were designed by Goff and manufactured in the client's plant. Another innovation, in this house, was the cementing of perforated ornamental tiles on both sides of the plate glass panes adjacent to the main entrance. The large boiler ends,

used as flower pots and placed above the skylights in the bathroom area, offer a dramatic experience at night, as the light from the interior illuminates their undersides.

In the Cunningham residence, a pinwheel plan provides privacy in the intimate areas from the central living-dining area. A particular effort was made, by Goff, in this project, to provide conditions appropriate for the somewhat forbidding Oklahoma climate.

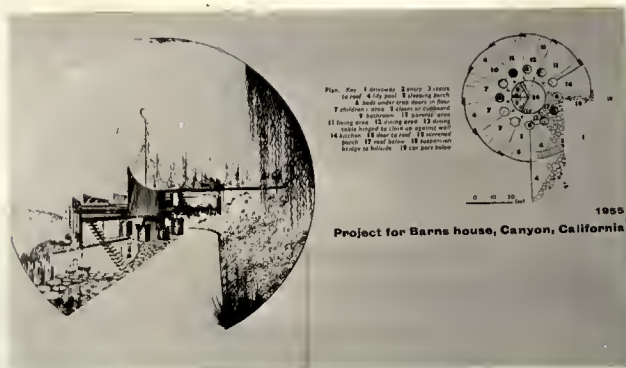


Fig. 61

The Barns residence, (fig. 61) in Canyon, California, was designed for a Quaker carpenter, who was going to build it himself. It is a study for a hillside house requiring flexible spaces, and a minimum of furniture. Due to the site, a central steel pipe supports nine floor and nine roof panels of identical design, resting on a single foundation. The panels rise in 18 inch steps, with glass clerestory strips. By extending above and below roof and floor levels, the outside walls form fences. A bridge connects to the hillside. The furnishing problem was solved with great ingenuity. The stepped level provides seating in the interior and on the roof "play ground."

done in that stimulating environment. His teaching and his discussions with the young, prospective Architects made him aware of many of the potentialities in the field. The "Norman period" also gave Goff the opportunity to apply, in his design, ideas that were born and nourished when in the Aleutians and California. During this period, and in the years after too, he was assisted in some of his projects by Professors J. Boggs, W. Wilson, and by a number of students.

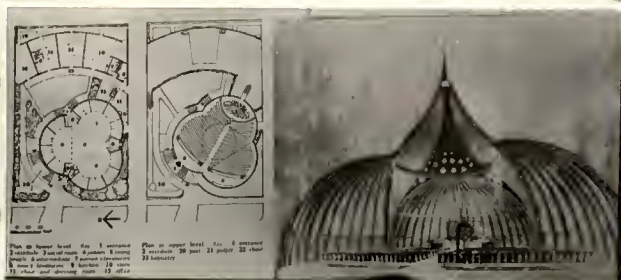


Fig. 63

BARTLESVILLE

Upon Bruce Goff's resignation from the University of Oklahoma in 1956, he decided to make Bartlesville the headquarters for his continuing Architectural activities. Bartlesville was a swiftly growing city, situated not far from Tulsa, with a great accumulation of wealth derived from its oil interests. The city's central location placed all the states within reasonable distance and facilitated Goff's visiting clients and projects as his work became more and more national in scope.

Goff opened his office in the newly completed Price Tower, a building designed by his life-long and much admired friend, Frank Lloyd Wright. His anticipation of working in a structure created by Wright was pleasurable and, in addition, "Price Tower" was an address that would be easily remembered by his clients and friends.

Today, Goff has neither partners nor associates, employing only a few extremely talented assistants. His method of working, like his method of thinking, is personal and individual. The drafting and living areas of his apartment-office are decorated with Japanese prints, Polynssian carvings, Klimpts and American Indian paintings, and of course, his own paintings and Architectural works. Goff frequently changes this exhibit, substituting items from his valuable collections, to the delight of his staff and the many omnipresent visitors who cause Goff to do most of his work late at night or early in the morning.

After settling himself in Price Tower, Goff's first project was the design for the Bass residence (fig. 64) in Tulsa. Here the basic concept is similar to that of the McCullough residence #1 (fig. 58). The parents', the daughters', and the recreation areas, functioning independently, are

designated by three pentagons. The addition of remaining elements completes the plan that has the form of two interlocking five-pointed stars. The residence is constructed of steel covered with aluminum and is distinguished by an extensive use of marble. Heating, air conditioning, and lighting are integrally designed with the Architectural elements.

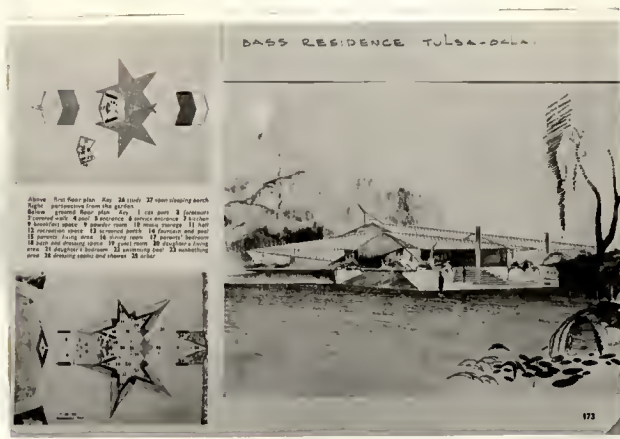


Fig. 64

Also in 1956, Goff designed his first large scale project, the Circle Center development (fig. 65). The development's scheme includes a shopping center and a small residential area in Bartlesville. A stream, meandering through the center of this area is employed as a natural division between the shops, situated on a lower ground level, and the homes of the residential area, on higher ground, overlooking the shopping center.

Goff has achieved a complete separation of vehicles and pedestrians in this project without the usual long "car to store" walkways. Driving and

parking on the roofs of the shopping center make the individual stores easily accessible by "travelator" ramps, which are also used to carry traffic to the gardens and pedestrian promenade below. All services to and from the shops are handled from the outer perimeter through tunnels running below the center.



View from the south-west looking towards the shopping center. The two towers are an office building and an apartment block. The long low structure between towers, back part of the exhibition area.

1955

Project for Circle Centre Development, Bartlesville, Oklahoma

Fig. 65

Two circular towers, identical in principle and similar in form to those of the Circle apartments (fig. 72), rise out of garden courts at the corner of the site. One of these is designed for professional offices and the other for apartments. The low structure situated between these towers accommodates a branch bank, a post office, a library, and an exhibition area.

On one of their visits to Oklahoma, the Dewlen family became fascinated with the Bavinger residence (fig. 50), and they asked Goff to design a home for them. Mr. Dewlen is the writer of The Night of the Tiger, The

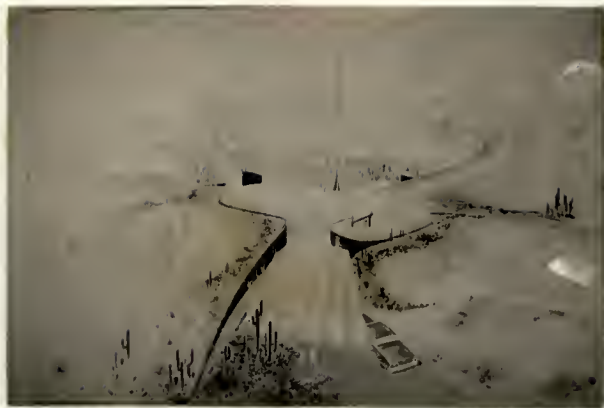


Fig. 66



Fig. 67

Bonepickers, and other well-known historical novels about Texas. Mrs. Dewlen is a painter.

The site of the Dewlens' house (fig. 67) is near Amarillo, in the deserted expanses of western Texas. It is on a mesa-like bluff on the side of a small stream that, quite surprisingly, runs year around. This is the

site selected by Goff for one of his most individualistic expressions. The Dewlen family had requested "a little world of their own to live in," (17, p. 42) and Goff gave them an oasis-like place as a relief from the surrounding desert by the abundant use of water and lush greenery.

In this residence, three identical coal walls, with pyrite veins resembling spiderwebs, curve irregularly to form the interior triangular space. The house's three interior areas are stepped up in a pyramid fashion. Each bed-sized step is carpeted in white fur and provides sitting, reclining, and sleeping areas on the various levels overlooking the centrally located pool. Thus the occupants actually live on the furniture. The space inside and beneath the steps is used for storage.

The Dewlen's residence is built entirely underground. Aside from assuring safety from storms, this simplifies the problem of heating and air conditioning. A tripod arrangement at the center of the house supports a roof constructed of small cables and a fabric sprayed with aluminum on the outside and lined with a sponge-like Dupont product on the inside. The floor is composed of black slate, the entire color scheme of the home being black and white, with occasional accents of red.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Dewlen wanted private working areas. This, plus Goff's desire to keep them from feeling like moles led him to suspend two studios at the ends of the long tubular ramps that form the galleries.

In the summer of 1956, Goff designed a Tele-movies office and also did a sketch of an institute for space studies (fig. 68). This was sponsored by the Atlas Cement Company in its bid to promote experimental Architectural design.



Fig. 68

The second scheme of the McCullough residence (fig. 69) was the next to be designed by Goff, and here a twelve-sided plan with a core at the center is employed. Independent areas can be converted into a single large space by the retraction of accordion partitions.

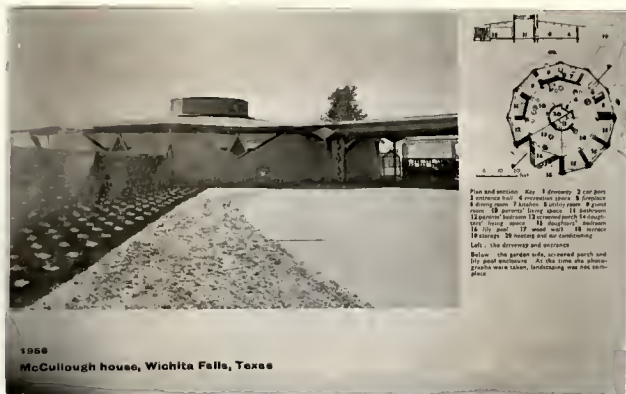


Fig. 69



Fig. 70

When the Comers visited Goff for the design of their house in Dewey, Oklahoma, they asked him, "What style would best suit our needs?" Not believing in static "styles," Goff answered abruptly, "The Comer style, of course." In this residence, (fig. 70) a "dual idea" was applied. Family and entertainment areas were duplicated in a formal and informal character.

The Motesbocker residence, (fig. 71) designed in 1957, reveals a very sensitive orchestration of materials and a refined blend of surfaces.



Fig. 71



Fig. 72

The design of the Circle Apartments (fig. 72) in the same year was the execution of an idea that was originated during the Circle Center Development, (fig. 65) the towers of which are, strangely enough, of a finer form. To combat the problem of obsolescence, Goff envisioned a building free of columns, beams, or other cumbersome and unsightly supporting elements. Thus, its flexible space could be easily converted for almost any use.

To achieve this end, Goff specified silo forms to be used in the construction of a central core, containing toilets, lifts, stairs, ducts, etc. The circular lift up slabs of each floor are supported at the center by the silo core and at the outer periphery by steel cables under tension. The space between the acoustical ceiling and the slab above provides for free movement of ducts and conduits. Stored movable partitions can be set up and an entire floor can be arranged overnight. The building's extreme flexibility

is further heightened by the use of independently adjustable louvres, which create an ever changing pattern on the outer surface. In comparison to the construction costs of conventional buildings, Goff's Circle Apartments tower offer an estimated 30 per cent economy through the use of this simplified structure.



Fig. 73

The second scheme of the Price Studio (fig. 73) designed in a three dimensional triangular modulus. The masonry of this building is of black coal with embedded glass cullets. The structure's wooden frame is covered with gold anodized aluminum. The character of the interior is similar to that of the first scheme, and here Goff has also designed the compositions on the glass doors and windows.

Even though Goff does not have faith in competition, his interest in the idea of a cowboy hall of fame caused him to participate in the competitive design of such a hall. Since the cowboy wanderer is not identified

with any kind of Architecture, Goff, in his design, tried to express a notion of wide-open spaces. For the first time he consciously used symbolism and the result is a scheme of forms resembling horse shoes, stirrups, and spurs, ornamented with western patterns. Color, proportions, lines, and symbolic forms become a composition with its own meaning and feeling, and the individual resemblances become subordinated to the dominant impression of the whole project.



Fig. 74

The Pollock residence, (fig. 74) designed in 1958, stands on a corner lot in the northwest part of Oklahoma City. The plan, composed of nine square units, has a notion of interspatial composition which is expressed also in the exterior. Here a central kitchen separates the parents' area from the childrens'. Each room has its own skylight and roof which, at the perimeter, continues its slope down over the wall closets that screen the interior from the streets. Small windows placed between the closets provide additional light for the rooms. A plastic covered porch connects the garage with the house and covers a balcony for outdoor activities. The project is one of Goff's best residential designs and the one least liked by the "stylish" neighbors.

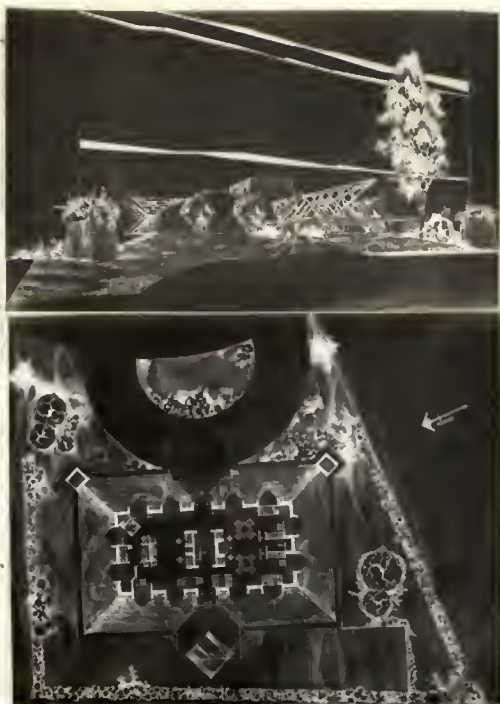


Fig. 75

In his designs for the Stull and Darling #1 residences, Goff tried once more to introduce prefabricated grain bins in low cost housing.

The Snyder residence (fig. 75) has an area arrangement similar to the Pollock house. A centrally located kitchen, surrounded by dining and living areas, separates the parents' bedroom from that of the children. An innovation in this residence is the integration of windows with walls and roof. All windows cut through the roof and project beyond the walls, thus eliminating eaves.

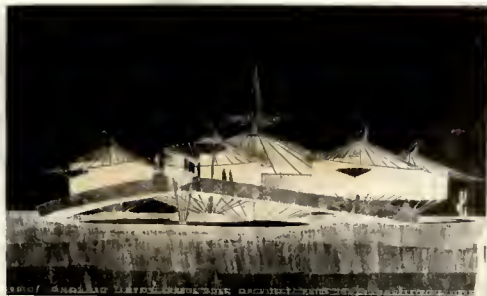


Fig. 76

Goff designed the Dord Fitz Studio (fig. 76) for an art school in Amarillo, Texas. Here again grain bins mounted on pipe frames have been employed, erected around a large central meeting room and exhibition hall. Skylights at the top of each unit provide a balanced light for the interior.

Never has Goff gone seeking for prospective clients. All those who contact him to create their houses have some notion of what design to expect. But in the spring of 1958, the Whites gave Goff the commission for their house, not because of their fascination with his unusual Architectural work, but because of a personal acquaintance with the man. Goff says, "I was faced with a problem, all right. I had to practice what I preached--to form the character of the house suitable to the family for whom it was built, rather than to force my own taste upon them." (40)

Although the result, a Goffy version of a New England cottage, is not what Goff would like it to be, it is organic Architecture at its best, because the design starts with the clients' personality. In spite of the design limitations, the entrance, living room, kitchen, and porch have been conceived in a more open way, giving an informal character to the interior space. Rejected bricks, weeping mortar joints, and cedar chakes in some wall areas give a fresh character to the stylish form.



Fig. 77

Bruce Goff designed the Adams residence (fig. 77) in Vinita, Oklahoma, for a district judge. The first scheme is in the form of a suspended house of triangular composition. The triangular plan--three triangular walls, three triangular sloping roofs, with a flat triangular roof over all--forms the interior space. All exterior and interior walls, except under the central part of the roof, are covered with corrugated aluminum. The corner windows have adjustable sunshades made of plastic and the second floor balcony, at the center, opens outside.

The first scheme of the Allen residence was one of Goff's most important designs during the Bartlesville period. Here all the Architectural elements are curved in section and plan, with ramps connecting the cantilevered, in-space bedrooms. The project is a study of form and space where, again, floor, walls, and roof are conceived as a continuous one.



Fig. 78

In the early fall of 1958, Bruce Goff designed the Deutch and Durst residences (fig. 78). The second of these was built in the most stylish suburb of Houston, Texas. This location probably influenced Goff in his choice of materials and in his treatment of the front elevation. The lot, which slopes considerably down to a ravine, resulted in a split-level plan that opens at the rear. In designing the plan, Goff endeavored to spare as many of the pine trees that shade the site as possible. Thus the plan's

composition is entirely asymmetrical. The positions of the curved wall in front and the axial interior walls were designed in relation to the center of the turn-around in front of the house. In the brickwork of the front wall, every other course is projected and the three windows, seven feet in diameter, for reasons of privacy are partially in the wall and partially extended beyond to form dormers.

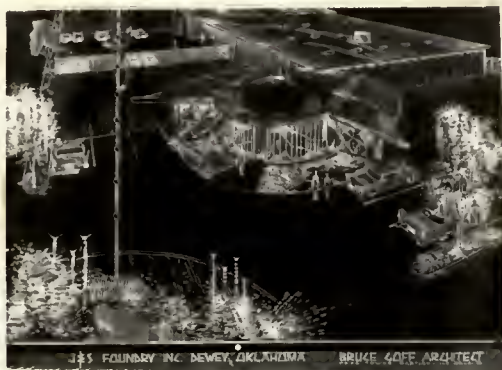


Fig. 79

The design of the J. & S. Foundry Inc. Building (fig. 79) is composed of two elements: the foundry, which for some reason is below Goff's design level, and the office, which in character resembles a number of previous projects.

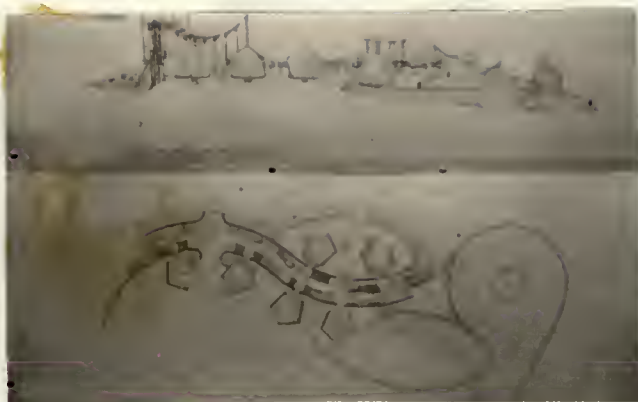


Fig. 80

One of Goff's most important projects, as far as its basic notion is concerned, is the Rudd residence (fig. 80) in California. In the past, residential design in this country has been composed of small, unrelated boxes. Frank Lloyd Wright did much to loosen up this plan and to bring the "family around the fireplace," but he kept the bedrooms separate. Later on, some progressive Architects, Goff included, opened up the plan to make it one great space.

Today, however, family activities and attitudes are becoming more and more decentralized in nature. Age, hobbies, radio, and television demand individual privacy and encourage a more decentralized plan. With this notion in mind, Goff designed the Rudd residence to be built on a heavily wooded hill, overlooking a small valley. The plan bears resemblance to a vine with its melons lying here and there along its stem. A long serpentine passage, necessitated by the trees, connects the separate and independent rooms. The floor of the corridor follows the contour lines of the site, and its walls are composed of greenish stone.

Each person in the Rudd family has his own room, the form of which is an icosahedron made of gold anodized aluminum. The plan of each of these units is pentagonal, with one of the side walls dropping down to form an outdoor terrace. Triangular windows continue upwards and become skylights, framing the landscape and sky.



Fig. 81

Mrs. Jones, who collects early American furniture, approached Goff and commissioned him to design a house (fig. 81) suitable to the character of her hobby. The result is a residence that is as close to the early American expression as it is far from any Architectural forms of that period. The plan is a composition of six octagons, with the resulting square forms used as secondary elements, like the four-way fireplaces on the first and second levels. At sill level, the elevation projects outward to create space for continuous vents, thus providing ventilation and freeing the fixed glass areas from screens.



Fig. 82



Fig. 83

The last of the 1958 projects is the Collins residence #1 (fig. 82, 83). It is a tri-level "train plain," the walls of which are arranged in harmonious relation to the center of a cul-de-sac in front of the house. The exterior walls of field stone are bermed up to half their height with earth. The living room, which occupies the centrally located third level, has a gabled roof with a continuous skylight that runs the length of the ridge. The

remainder of the residence is covered with a flat roof.

In 1959, Bruce Goff designed the Freeman residence, which was built the same year in Joplin, Missouri. It has a split level plan and is situated on a sloping, wooded site. The carport is an extension of the sloping roof, the one end of which is supported by two pylons through the use of steel cables. This residence is characterized by an "overdose" of glass cullets that cover the interior, the exterior, and even the roof.

On an inner bay of the Gulf of Mexico, close to Gulfport, Mississippi, the Gutman residence is located. This location is occasionally flooded with water, so Goff has raised the house from the ground level. This affords a better view of the water and provides adequate privacy since the neighboring houses are situated on the ground level. This is the first time that Goff has so boldly elevated a structure.

The form of the Gutman house is triangular with a three-sided roof and an identical "belly" that forms an upside down attic and provides housing space for the mechanical equipment. The open spaces under the residence is used as a carport and an outdoor activities area.

A pit at the center of the house is covered with turquoise blue carpeting and provides the seating for the living area. All the rooms have a view of the bay and have access to screened porches through glass doors. Three steel trusses, 80 feet in length and painted a deep blue, form the house's sides and are held by a steel pipe frame. The whole building is raised and supported by three clusters of pipe columns.

Structurally, there is another very interesting feature in this residence. Horizontal ties of a hexagonal network, visible from the living areas, take care of the horizontal thrust and allow the roof to be very light in construction. Finally, white stucco, with ships of broken glass

thrown into it, covers the outside surfaces and adds to the feeling of lightness and cleanliness that distinguishes this residence.



Fig. 84

The Swambat residence (fig. 84) was designed by Goff for a hill site in the Indiana sand dunes area. Its plan is composed of four pointed ellipses overlapping each other. The living room occupies the central area, while the rest of the rooms are situated at the pointed areas of the ellipses. A pergola connects the garage, which is on a lower level, with the house. Fin-like terminals shade the glass areas of the exterior walls, the remainder of which is covered with shingles and native stone.

A tri-level plan and an interesting blend of wood and stone surfaces

characterize the Collins residence #2. This design is a more inexpensive version of the first scheme.



Fig. 85

The owner of the Venus Soft Drinks Bar (fig. 85) wanted a building designed that would attract the aircraft workers in the area of Wichita, Kansas. For this purpose, Goff created an "eye catcher" which, in character, is a blend of space-age forms and Kansas grain bins. The major element of this structure is held in space by a cluster of steel pipes, radially arranged. Its interior is illuminated by the use of plastic blisters for windows and its metal frame is covered with gunite.

The Tolf residence (fig. 86, 87) is located on Lake Koshkonog, Wisconsin. The angular plan of this building, which even as an abstract composition has its merits, was designed with a solid wall on the north side to create privacy from the road and an open area on the south side, toward the lake. The stone walls, also displaying an angular expression, gave a rustic and bold character to this house-cottage residence.



Fig. 86

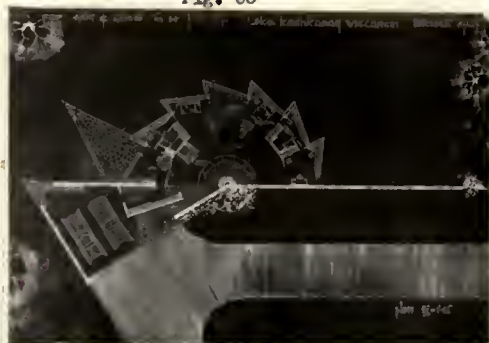


Fig. 87

Goff's design in most cases is characterized by an angular treatment and a feeling of tension. In fact, this is one of his major differences from other Architects who practice an organic approach in design.

The first scheme of the Daphne residence (fig. 88, 89) is a striking departure from this. The plastic quality of its elements, the soft transition from one material to the other, the modulation of its horizontal and vertical elements, all give to this residence a character of smooth flow and serenity.



Fig. 88



Fig. 89

The second scheme of the Allen residence (fig. 90) has a pavillion like plan; it can be converted into one large interior space or, its peripheral glass panels can be opened out to numerous balconies which surround the house. Square closets, at the perimeter of the plan, are intergated with the vertical structural elements and create a very interesting rhythm as they alternate with the glass areas in the elevations.

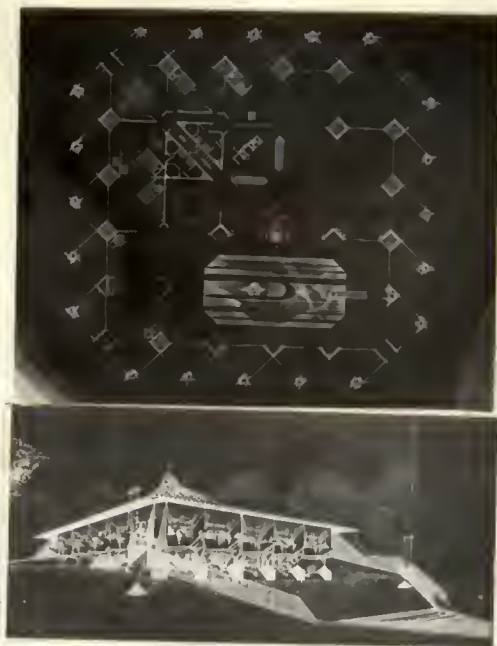


Fig. 90

The Adams residence #2 is of a circular plan, having a covered patio-pool at its center and the living areas at its perimeter. The circular exterior wall is made alternately of sliding doors and revolving closets. Boiler ends have been used above the closets as planters. This design is characterized by the simplicity of its concept and the unity of its elements.

Mr. Rudd, for whom Goff had designed a residence the previous year, sensed that the unusual character of Goff's work could be utilized in attracting clients to his home appliance stores in California and elsewhere. So Goff was retained to design the remodeling of a number of Rudd's stores, but the most extensive alterations were done to the one in San Francisco. Angular

in character, the interior and exterior treatment create a pleasant and gay environment for business.

The form of the first scheme of the Gelbman residence, (fig. 91) suggests an inverted wooden boat, the ridge of the house's roof being the keel. All the rooms in this building open in upon a centrally located pool that reflects, in the interior, the major characteristic of the site, water. The most striking element in this residence is a stone wall next to the entrance. The wall's scrap marble finish and the clear glass marbles placed at the joints create a web-like design.



Fig. 91

Toward the end of 1959, Goff designed two projects; the alterations for the Akright residence and the Redeemer Lutheran Church (fig. 92), both in Bartlesville. The church, due to the nature of its program, is divided into two major elements, connected by a covered walkway. The two parts are the religious education building, consisting of a central assembly hall flanked



Fig. 92

on either side by classrooms, and the church proper. A decentralized parking system, achieved by utilizing the driveways, eliminates the usual great "sea" of concrete, and provided more freedom to the designer in the arrangement of the buildings.

On the ground level of the church are located the service rooms, the pastor's office, waiting room, the mechanical equipment, etc., and on the upper level is the sanctuary, which is accessible from the outside by ramps. The plan of the church is basically rectangular, with the side walls slightly curved out and partially closed at the ends by semicircular glass areas of a deep sapphire color that gradually becomes less dense as it ascends.

The non-structural side walls are composed of granite masonry at the bottom and reinforced glass masonry at the top. A longitudinal ferro-concrete girder supports the inverted curved roof which, at the edges, is decorated with perforated aluminum spires that terminate all vertical structural elements. Skylights between the roof and the glass walls admit into the

interior a soft light, accentuated by thousands of sparkling reflections from the multicolored glass cullets.

Two split level dwellings, the Bennet and the McBryde (fig. 93) residences, complete the picture of Goff's work in 1959.



Fig. 93

Goff's period in Bartlesville has been, up to now, one of great activity in a number of projects and of richness in the invention of new forms and use of materials. The outstanding characteristic of this period is a more geometric approach in Goff's design. But Goff's use of geometry in most aspects is fresh in feeling and character, unrelated to the works of others.

In general, geometry has, up to now, been used largely in terms of two dimensional elements. In most cases, space has been formed by extruding the two dimensional plan, as is largely the case in Frank Lloyd Wright's buildings. Goff, with his introduction of the polyhedron gave a three dimensional aspect to space, and created new possibilities for geometric form, form which has, in itself, ornamental characteristics.

With the designs of this period, Goff proved more emphatically than ever before that prefabricated materials and shapes offer enrichments of space, texture, and ornament limited only by the imagination of the designer. Hence, Goff once again expressed his basic principle of not limiting himself to resources, but instead, of reaching in every direction in order to serve his active imagination.

Due to the attitude of conformity that prevails in our society and the prevailing ignorance of Goff's whole work, his radical designs have been characterized as outrageous, undisciplined, and plainly creations of a sick mind. By presenting, in this treatise, Goff's total Architectural work for the first time, I hope that I may help those interested to discover that Bruce Goff's creations are nothing more or less than a demonstration of his explosive imagination in the use of materials, forms, and space as he seeks an answer to a realistic problem, that of creating a stimulating and human environment.

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APPENDIX

LIST OF BRUCE GOFF'S ARCHITECTURAL PROJECTS: 1918 - 1961

NOTE: Projects are listed in the chronological order that they were designed.
 CODE: P-Project; PB-Project to be built; B-Project has been built.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>NAME OF BUILDING</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CODE</u>
1918	1	Duplex House	East Tulsa, Okla.	B
1919	2	Wright Bungalow	S.E. Tulsa, Okla.	B
	3	Baughman Bungalow	East Tulsa, Okla.	B
1920	4	Mausoleum for Orant McCullough	Tulsa, Okla.	P
	5	George Way Residence	Tulsa, Okla.	B
	6	Consolidated Cut-Stone Office	Tulsa, Okla.	B
	7	H. O. McClure Residence	Tulsa, Okla.	B
	8	Summer House for B. L. Graves	Los Angeles, Calif.	B
1921	9	Fred Hansen Residence	Tulsa, Okla.	B
	10	Tulsa Bldg. and Chamber of Commerce	Tulsa, Okla.	B
1922	11	Director's Dining Room-1st National Bank	Tulsa, Okla.	B
1923	12	Adah Robinson Studio	Tulsa, Okla.	B
1926	13	Commercial Bldg. for C. C. Cole	Tulsa, Okla.	B
	14	Boston Ave. Methodist Church	Tulsa, Okla.	B
1927	15	Page Warehouse	Tulsa, Okla.	B
1928	16	Guaranty Laundry	Tulsa, Okla.	B
	17	Riverside Studio	Tulsa, Okla.	B

TULSA 1918 - 1934

1929	18	The Indian Memorial		Tulsa, Okla.	P
	19	A Study for a Glass House		Tulsa, Okla.	
1930	20	Merchants Exhibition Bldg.		Tulsa, Okla.	P
	21	Phi Beta Delta Fraternity		Norman, Okla.	P
	22	Dr. Latham Residence		Tulsa, Okla.	B
	23	Addition to Skelly Bldg.		Tulsa, Okla.	B
	24	Pittsburg Equitable Meter Warehouse		near Tulsa, Okla.	B
	25	Convention Hall - Redecoration of Interior		Tulsa, Okla.	B
CHICAGO 1934 - 1942					
1935	26	Frank Cole Residence		Park Ridge, Ill.	B
	27	Turzak Residence		Chicago, Ill.	B
1936	28	George Elen Residence		Northfield, Ill.	B
	29	Chester Rant Residence		Northfield, Ill.	B
1937	30	L.O.F. Show Room		Chicago, Ill.	B
	31	Collmorgan Residence		Olenview, Ill.	B
1939	32	Unseth Residence #1		Park Ridge, Ill.	P
1940	33	Unseth Residence #2		Park Ridge, Ill.	B
	34	"Vriiaero House"		Fern Creek, Ky.	B
NAVY 1942 - 1945					
1943-44	35	Aleutian Projects		Aleutian Islands	B
	36	Wold Residence		Altadena, Calif.	P
	37	Innis Residence		Coronado, Calif.	P
	38	Durfee Residence		Chatanooga, Tenn.	P
	39	Balley Residence		Portland, Oregon	P

1944-45	40	Seabee Base Project (Chapel etc.)	Camp Parks, Calif.	B
CALIFORNIA 1945 - 1947				
1945	41	Patri Residence	Corte Madena, Calif.	P
1946	42	Garage Apartments	Pleasanton, Calif.	P
	43	Church for Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints	Cody, Wyoming	P
	44	Kosak Residence	Marin County, Calif.	P
	45	"Lily Pad House"	Hayward, Calif.	P
	46	"Helix House"	Bend, Oregon	P
	47	Buttler Packing Co. - Interior of Executive Office	Oakland, Calif.	P
	48	Thomson Residence	Hillsborough, Calif.	P
	49	Hudson Residence	Hayward, Calif.	P
NORMAN 1947 - 1956				
1947	50	Ledbetter Residence	Norman, Okla.	B
	51	Ledbetter Summer Lodge	Texoma Lake, Okla.	P
1948	52	Cox Residence	Boise City, Okla.	B
	53	Bachman Residence - Alteration	Chicago, Ill.	B
1949	54	Ford Residence	Aurora, Ill.	B
	55	Hopewell Baptist Church	near Edmond, Okla.	B.
	56	Garden Apartments	Norman Okla.	P
	57	Crystal Chapel	Norman, Okla.	P
1949-50	58	Wetslar Addition Whitaker Residence Godman Residence Angelino Residence Coff Residence	Norman, Okla.	P P P P P

116	Alterations Akright Residence	Bartlesville, Okla.	B
117	Redeemer Latheran Church	Bartlesville, Okla.	PB
118	Pennet Residence	Bartlesville, Okla.	B
119	McBryde Residence	Kansas City, Mo.	PB
1960			
120	Daphne Residence #2	Hillsborough, Calif.	PB
121	Darling Residence #2	Eldorado, Kansas	PB
122	Gelbman Residence #2	Jacksonville, Fla.	B
123	Cryder Residence	Ocean Springs, Miss.	PB
124	Marsh Residence - Alteration	Bartlesville, Okla.	PB
125	Coff Residence	Tulsa, Okla.	PB

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BRUCE GOFF AND HIS ARCHITECTURE

by

PAUL NICHOLAS NICOLAIDES

Diploma, British Institute of Engineering Technology, 1954
B. Arch., University of Oklahoma, 1958

AN ABSTRACT FOR A THESIS

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requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

Department of Architecture and Allied Arts

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1960

American Architecture during the first thirty years of our century is characterized by an extreme conformity to historical styles. This "Period Architecture" was the result of the failure on the part of the Architects to design in terms of time, place, and American traditions. Their eclecticism led to the creation of meaningless traditional forms, and to foreign expressions. Instead of bringing the light of indigenous Architecture to the people, they betrayed the cause of their profession by conforming to the "fake" social ideal of that period. Thus the Architects during the early part of this century brought their profession to a sterile and static condition. But, such a static condition could not last, and a change to different modes of thinking, a return to the progress of evolution was inevitable. This turn towards Architectural progress was the result of the struggle and sole fight of a handful of visionaries. They saw, in their native land, the fertile soil for the seeds of a new Architectural expression—an expression that would become part of the culture of their country. Their step was first, the road now, the vision unborrowed. They paid no heed to the beasts and snakes of their professional and social environment, for only one thing existed for them—the fulfillment of their mission of bringing the light of creation to American Architecture. The Creative Man, the unsubmissive, the leader, the Promythens of all centuries, stands in the opening chapter of every legend mankind has recorded.

Bruce Goff is one of those few, and even though he is still living, he seems to have become a legend in the professional circles. His many faceted contributions to contemporary Architecture brought him international fame and made him an integral part of the American culture.

When still in Oklahoma, I was surprised to find that, although professional magazines here and abroad have offered whole issues on Goff's work, nothing had, nor has it yet, been written in the area of a biography, analysis, or record of his work. Since those days, the ambition to write about Bruce Goff has occupied much of my thoughts. I realized that the task was beyond my capabilities—language problem, difficulties in getting information, lack of money available for research—it seemed impossible. But in 1959, I decided to give it a try. The results of efforts, that only my departmental colleagues can evaluate is in this treatise on "Bruce Goff and His Architecture." This very first treatise on Goff is my contribution to my field, as a recognition of the American culture.

The English magazine, Architectural Design, in its issue of May, 1957, commented that ignorance of Goff's total work has made possible a number of absurd speculations. Also, an article that appeared in the December, 1959 issue of the American Institute of Architects Journal mentioned that, "Despite Goff's full life of building and design activities, we do not know enough about his work." (p. 33) Both statements reinforced my intention of presenting as fully as possible, Goff's life, influences and his Architectural and educational work.

Since most publications on Goff repeat themselves in presenting the very small number of his most famous projects, and since very little has been written about his life, my research included many hundreds of letters, personal visits to relatives, friends, associates, contractors, and clients, as well as a three-week series of interviews with Goff in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

Bruce Goff was born in Kansas in 1904. The first ten years of his life, before the family settled in Tulsa, were spent on the plains of western Kansas, in small Indian towns throughout Oklahoma and in Denver, Colorado. These environments left a deep impression on him and is reflected, later on, in his work. While still at school, at the age of 12, he was apprenticed to the Architectural firm of Rush, Endacott and Rush in Tulsa, Oklahoma. At the age of 14, he designed his first residence to be built, and his design of the Boston Methodist Church in Tulsa, at the age of 22, introduced him to professional circles here and abroad. During the Twenties, through an extensive self-education and experience, and under the influence of various cultures and avant-garde personalities of the art world he formed his basic principles in Architecture. In 1934, Goff moved to Chicago where he practiced and taught at the Academy of Fine Arts, until he joined the Navy at the beginning of the war. He served with the Sea-Bees for whom he designed a number of projects. After the war, he practiced in Berkely, California until 1947, when he joined the faculty of the University of Oklahoma and became the chairman of the School of Architecture. In 1956 he resigned from the University of Oklahoma and he opened his office in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

Through all his life, his creative efforts have been directed towards an organic and indigenous Architecture. His originality in terms of space, form, material, etc. opened a new horizon to Architectural expression, and his principles and philosophies enriched the art vocabulary. This is Goff's contribution to America and part of America's cultural contribution to the world.