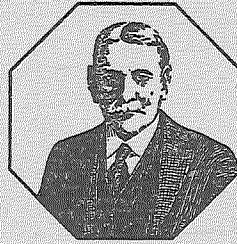


Journal of The American Institute of
ARCHITECTS



ROBERT S. PEABODY

May, 1949

Guest Editorial by Sidney Wahl Little

Acceptance Speech of Frank Lloyd Wright

First National Honor Awards

Problems of Passive Defense

Rides of March

Trends in Landscape Architecture

A Cool Glance at Interior Decoration

35c

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With the aim of amplifying, as through
a microphone, the voice
of the profession

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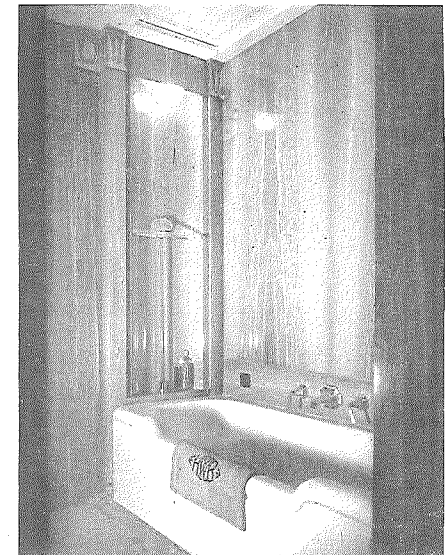
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tan areas and the grass roots from Miami to Portland. The solution is not easy, and if it is to be done properly it may hurt some more than others. It is obvious, however, that unless the entire profession works in harmony toward a solution, we will find ourselves unprepared to meet new professional demands that are at present screaming for our attention. There seems to be only one possible solution, that is for each firm to plan now for space and budget for its share of the young men who will enter the field during the next three years. Plan to spend more of your own time helping those of them who are best prepared for early entrance into individual status as professional men on their own. Encourage these young men to do small work which you are refusing—and to do it in your office, partly on your time if necessary, so

that they can begin to get the feel of personal practice. This will help with the salary they must have to support the families many will bring as a natural product of an abnormal war period. If each architect will do his share, the burden on any group will not be too great and the problem will be solved in a normal manner. We will also be blessed with a good crop of eager, well-trained young professional people who will materially aid the progress of the profession toward greater service.

These men are on the way. Let each of us prepare for their arrival in the same professional manner which we expect them to use in carrying on the profession. Let's greet them as the professional colleagues they are to be. Let us also show our sister professions that at least the architectural profession knows what prior planning means.



Honors

ARTHUR FEITEL, F.A.I.A., has been cited by M. René de Messières, the Cultural Counsellor of the French Embassy, who presented Mr. Feitel with the *Palme*

Academiques for his work on behalf of French art and culture.

DR. FRANCIS ROGERS BACON, Dean of the School of Architec-

MAY, 1949

ture, Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, received a citation for distinguished service to his profession from the Cleveland Chapter, A.I.A. The occasion was his twenty-fifth anniversary as Dean of the School which was started by the Chapter in 1923.

Acceptance Speech of Frank Lloyd Wright

UPON RECEIVING THE GOLD MEDAL FOR
1948 OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF
ARCHITECTS, RICE HOTEL, HOUSTON, TEXAS,
MARCH 17, 1949

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

No man climbs so high or sinks so low that he isn't eager to receive the good will and admiration of his fellowmen. He may be reprehensible in many ways; he may seem to care nothing about it; he may hitch his wagon to his star and, however he may be circumstanced or whatever his ideals or his actions, he never loses the desire for the approbation of his kind.

So I feel humble and grateful. I don't think humility is a very becoming state for me, but I really feel touched by this token of esteem from the home boys. It has reached me from almost every great nation in the world. It's been a long time coming from home. But here it is at last, and very handsomely indeed. And I am extremely grateful.

I don't know what change it's going to effect upon my course in the future. It is bound to have an effect. I am not going to be the same man when I walk out of here that I was when I came in. Be-

cause, by this little token in my pocket, it seems to me that a battle has been won.

I felt that way when I was sitting in my little home in Arizona in '41, and the news came over the wire that the Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects had fallen to a lad out there in the Middle West, in the tall grass. Well, I felt then that the youngsters who have held, we will say, with me and who have believed and made sacrifices and taken the gaff with me, had won a worldwide fight. But it hadn't been won at home. The Cape Cod Colonial—by the way, have any of you observed what we fellows have done to the Colonial? Have you seen it come down, and its front open to the weather, and the wings extend and have it become more and more reconciled to the ground? It has; you notice it.

Well, anyway, it is very unbecoming on an occasion like this to boast. But I do want to say something that may account in a meas-

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ure for the fact that I have not been a member of your professional body, that I have consistently maintained an amateur status.

Long ago, way back in the days of Oak Park, I set up a standard of payment for my services of ten per cent. I have consistently maintained it. I have always felt a competition for the services of an architect, who to me is a great creative artist, was a sacrilege, a shame, and pointed to history to prove that nothing good ever came of it. And I think nothing good ever *will* come of it.

Also, I think that to make sketches for anybody for nothing, to tender your services, to hawk yourself on the curb in any circumstances, is reprehensible.

Now, I know the ideals of this Institute very well. I took them to heart years ago, and believe me, with this Medal in my pocket, I can assert truthfully that never have I sacrificed one iota of those ideals in any connection whatsoever.

The man does not live who can say that I sought his work. And I remember in the very early days, when the children were running around the streets without proper shoes, and Mr. Moore, across the way, wanted to build a house, a fine house. A fine man, a great opportunity for a youngster like me. Well, I had these ideals at heart even then, and I never went to see Mr. Moore and I never asked anybody to say a word for me, because who was there who could say an

honest one? They didn't know anything about me.

So I glanced up one day through the plate-glass door—and, by the way, I *started* the plate-glass door—there were Mr. and Mrs. Moore. Well, you can imagine how that heart of mine went pitty-pat. He came in and sat down opposite me.

"Now, Mr. Wright," he said, "I want to know why every architect I ever heard of, and a great many I *never* heard of, have come to ask me for the job of building my house?"

"Well," I said, "I can't answer that question, but I am curious to know did Mr. Patton come?" Mr. Patton was the President of The Institute—that is, of The A.I.A. at that time.

"Why," he said, "he was the first man to come.

"Well now," Mr. Moore said, "why haven't you come to ask me to build my house? You live right across the road."

"Well," I said, "you are a lawyer, aren't you, Mr. Moore? You are a professional man. If you heard that somebody was in trouble, would you go to him and offer him your services?"

"Ah!" he said, "I thought that was it. You are going to build our house."

Well it began that way, and it began to get noised about. The next man was Mr. Baldwin, who was also a lawyer, and wanted to build a house. Mr. Baldwin appeared several months afterward

and laid a check on the table. It was not a big check. It was \$350, but it would be \$3,500 now. And you can imagine what this did to me. And he said, "Here is your retainer, Mr. Wright."

Well, now, that is how that began, and it has been that way ever since, and I've never in my life asked a man to say a good word for me to another man who was going to build. Well, now, as a consequence, I have been sitting around, waiting. I have spent a good many years of my life hoping somebody would come and give me something to do. And every job I ever had hit me out of the blue on the back of the head. Now, that's true. So, this Gold Medal—let's forget all about design, let's forget all about contributions to construction and all the rest of it—I feel I can stick it in my pocket and walk away with it just because I sat there waiting for a job.

Now, of course, architecture is in the gutter. It is. I have heard myself referred to as a great architect. I have heard myself referred to as the greatest living architect. I have heard myself referred to as the greatest architect who ever lived. Now, wouldn't you think that ought to move you? Well, it doesn't. Because in the first place they don't know. In the next place, no architect, in the sense that a man now has to be an architect, ever lived, and that's what these boys in front of me don't seem to know.

Architects as they existed in the

ancient times were in possession of a state of society, as an instrument to build with. The guilds were well organized. The predetermined styles were well established, especially in the Gothic period. An architect in those days was pretty well furnished with everything he needed to work with. He didn't have to be a creator. He had to be a sentient artist, with a fine perception, let's say, and some knowledge of building, especially if he was going to engage in some monumental enterprise, but he didn't have to create as he does now.

Now we have an entirely different condition. We live by the machine. Most of us aren't much higher in our consciousness and mentality than the man in the garage, anyhow. We *do* live by the machine. We *do* have the great products of sciences as our tool box, and as a matter of fact science has ruined us as it has ruined religion, as it has made a monkey of philosophy, as it has practically destroyed us and sent us into perpetual war.

Now, that isn't our fault, but where, I ask you, were these new forms of building to come from that could make full use of these advantages that have proved to us so disadvantageous? Who is going to conceive these new buildings? Where from? How come?

Now, it's a great pity that the Greeks didn't have glass. A great pity that they didn't have steel, spider spinning, because if they

had we wouldn't have to do any thinking, even now. We would copy them with gratitude. No, not with gratitude. We would not know even we were copying them. We would not know. We would not have the least gratitude.

But now what must an architect be if he is going to be really one worthwhile, if he is really going to be true to his profession? He *must* be a creator. He must perceive beyond the present. He must see pretty far ahead. Well, let's not say that, because we can all do that, but he must see into the life of things if he is going to build anything worth building in this day and generation.

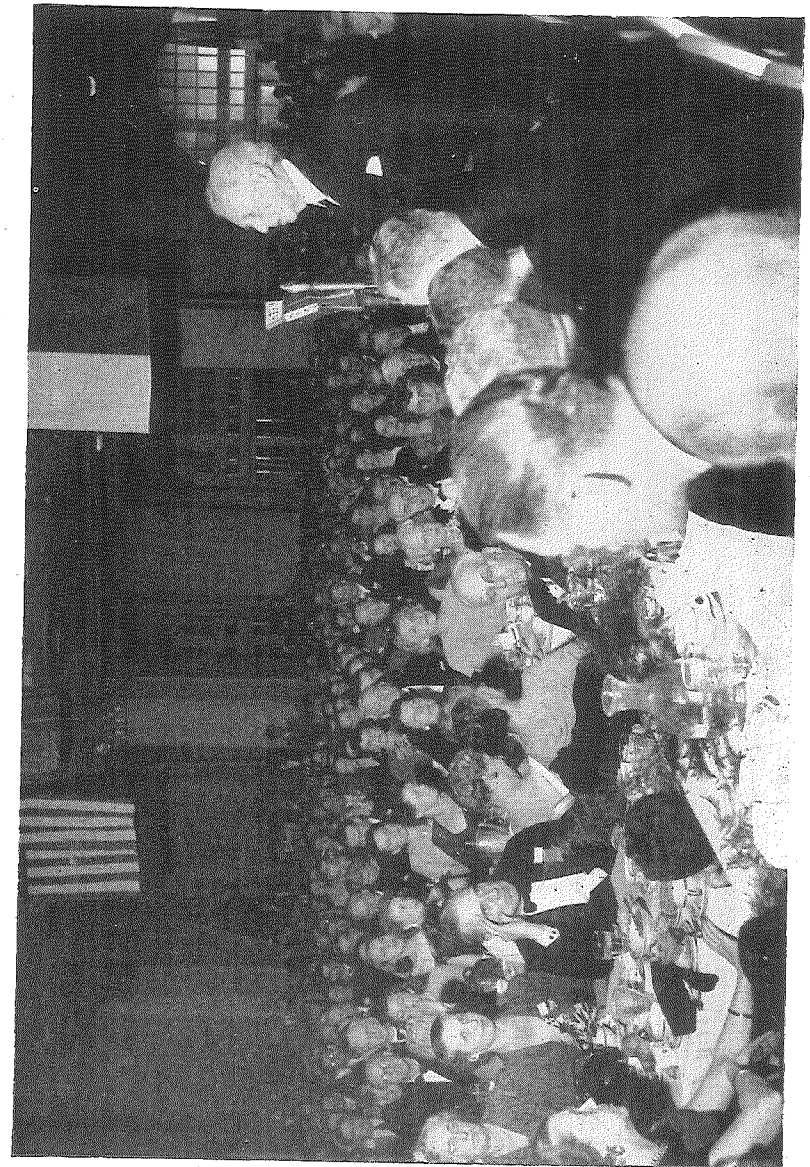
And, do you know, we ought to be the greatest builders the world has ever seen? We have the riches, we have the materials, we have the greatest release ever found by man in steel and glass. We have everything, but. We have a freedom that never existed before. We profess democracy out of a "mobocracy" that is shocking, astounding and arresting. But we have built *nothing* for democracy. We have built *nothing* in the spirit of the freedom that has been ours. No. Look at Washington. Look anywhere. You can even go out and see the Shamrock. And, by the way, I want it recorded right here and now that that building is built in what is called the "International Modern Style." Let's give the devil his due. Let's put it where it belongs. And anyhow, while we are speaking of that exploit, why?

It ought to be written in front of it, in great tall letters, in electric lights—W-H-Y—Why?

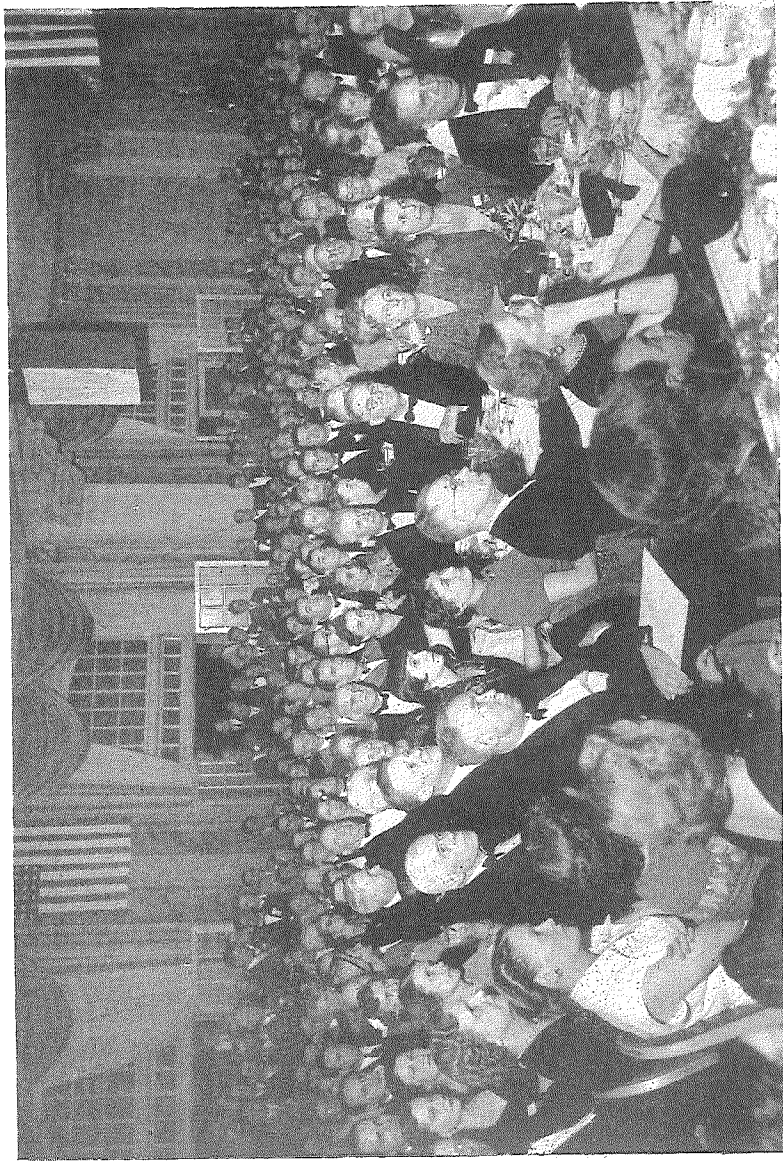
Well, Houston has it. And Houston is a good example of the capitalist city, the pattern of the capitalist city—one single, great broad pavement, skyscrapers erected at one end and, way out in the country at the other end, skyscraper, and in between, out on the prairie and in the mud, the people.

Well, now, we are prosecuting a cold war with people who declare with a fanatic faith that is pitiful in the have-nots. We declare a faith in the "haves," when we act. We declare a faith in the union of something beneficial to both the "haves" and the "have-nots" when we talk. When are we going to practise what we preach? When are we going to build for democracy? When are we going to understand the significance of the thing ourselves, and live up to it? When are we going to be willing to sit and wait for success? When are we going to be willing to take the great will and the great desire for the deed?

Now, we can do it. We have got enough "on the ball," as the slang phrase is, to go on within that direction if we will. But to me, the most serious lack, the thing we haven't got—and if you look over the political scene, of course, it is obscene—of all this thing we are talking about. Honor? Nowhere. Now, what is the sense of honor? What would it be in architecture? What would it be



Frank Lloyd Wright Accepts the Gold Medal of The Institute for 1948 at the Annual Dinner in Houston



A Continuation of the View from the Speakers' Table on the Occasion of Frank Lloyd Wright's Speech of Acceptance

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in the building of buildings? What would it be in the living of a life, in a democracy, under freedom? Not mistaking license for freedom, not mistaking individuality for personality, which is our great error, and which characterizes a mobocracy instead of a true democracy. Now, what would a sense of honor be, that sense of honor that could save us now? As science has mowed us down and we are lying ready to be raked over the brink, what could save us but a sense of honor? And what would that sense of honor be?

Well, what is the honor of a brick? What would be an honorable brick? A *brick* brick, wouldn't it? A *good* brick. What would be the honor of a board? It would be a *good* board, wouldn't it? What is the honor of a man? To be a *true* individual, to live up to his ideal of individuality rather than his sense of personality. Now if we get that distinction straight in our minds, we'll be able to go on. We will last some time. If we don't get it, we might as well prepare for the brink. We are going over.

Now, I have been right about a good many things—that's the basis of a good deal of my errors. And it has a basis, that's one thing I can say for *my* errors. We can save ourselves. We're smart. We have rat-like perspicacity. But we have the same courage and that's what's the matter. I don't know of a more cowardly—well, I'm getting too deep in here and I cannot swear,

not tonight. But we are certainly a great brand of cowards in America. We've got all our great opportunities to live a spiritual life, with great interior strength and nobility of purpose, and minds go by the board. Why? I have asked myself all these years—Why? You've all seen it. I am not telling you anything new. Churches—religion—what has it become? Philosophy—what is it? Education? What have you? Cowardice. What are the universities today? Overflowing with hungry minds and students. And yet, as I stand here now I am perfectly willing to admit and to confess that it's not the fault of the universities. It's not the fault of education. None of this is the fault of the systems that exist among us. They are our *own* fault. *We* make these things what they are. We allow them to be *as* they are. We've got the kind of buildings we deserve. We've got the kind of cities that are coming to us. This capitalist city, of which Houston is an example, we did it. It came to us because we are what we are, and don't forget it. If we are ever going to get anything better, if we are going to come by a more honorable expression of a civilization such as the world is entitled to from us—we put ourselves on a hill here, in a highlight, we talk about the highest standard of living the world has ever seen, we profess all these things, and we don't *deliver*.

Now why we don't isn't the

fault of the institutions. It is not the fault of any class. It is not the fault of the big boys that make money and make the blunders and shove us over the brink, like this out here that we spoke of a minute ago. No. How would they learn better? How is the architect who built the building going to know any better? How are they going to find out? They can only find out by your disapproval. They can only find out by your telling the *truth*, first to yourselves and then out loud, wherever you can get a chance to tell it.

Now, we have got to find honor. You know the old sayings—we dislike them now because they are a reproach. We don't honor the people, really, the men who came over here with an ideal in their hearts and founded this basis, as they thought, for freedom. They couldn't foresee, by the way, its sudden riches and these new scientific powers put into our hands, that we would be so soon degenerate. No.

I think if we were to wake up and take a good look at ourselves *as ourselves*, without passing the buck, without trying to blame other people for what really is our own shortcoming and our own lack of character, we would be an example to the world that the world needs now. We wouldn't be pursuing a cold war. We would be pursuing a great endeavor to plant, rear and nurture a civilization, and we would have a culture that would convince the whole world. We'd

have all the Russians in here on us, working for us, with us, not afraid that we were going to destroy them or destroy anybody else.

It is because of cowardice and political chicanery, because of the degradation to which we have fallen as men—well, a crack comes to mind, but I'll refrain. My wife knows what it is, I am not going to say it.

Well now, that's serious enough, and that is all I think I ought to say.

Now, I want to call your attention to one thing. I have built it. I have built it. Therein lies the source of my errors. Why I can stand here tonight, look you in the face and insult you—because, well, I don't think many of you realize what it is that has happened, or is happening in the world that is now coming toward us. A little place where we live, with 60 youngsters—we turned away 400 in the past two years—and they come from 26 different nations. They all come as volunteers because this thought that we call organic architecture has gone abroad. It has won abroad, under different names. A singular thing. We will never take an original thought or an idea until we have diluted it, until we have passed it around and given it a good many names. After that takes place, then we can go, and we do go.

Well, that has happened. This thing has been named different names all over the world. It has come back home and I use the

word—I say come back home advisedly—because here is where it was born. Here it was born in this cradle—as we are fond of calling it—of liberty which has degenerated into license. Now, what are we going to do with it? Are we going to let it become a commonplace and shove it into the gutter, or are we really going to

look up to it, use it, honor it—and believe me, if we do, we have found the centerline of a democracy. Because the principles of an organic architecture, once you comprehend them, naturally grow and expand into this great freedom that we hoped for when we founded this nation and that we call democracy. Well, it's enough, isn't it?

Problems of Passive Defense

By Rear Admiral William S. Parsons, U.S.N.

Remarks before a Convention session, Houston, Texas,
March 15, 1949

THE PROBLEMS of city planning and design of structures for resistance to atomic bombing might offhand seem to bear little resemblance to the problems of ship design. But I feel that one of the general conclusions from the Bikini tests has application to national planning, city planning and structural design.

This general conclusion was that changes in ship design to give increased resistance to atomic blast and radiation should not be such as to handicap the ship in performing its primary function.

To illustrate the point: a destroyer needs to be light, fast and hard-hitting—above the surface, on the surface and below the surface. If, in order to make this ship resist

atomic bombs at less than half a mile, it were loaded down with heavy shielding and its radar equipment were reduced to the point of loss of range and sharpness, then we would have bought a small increase in security at a great cost in operational value.

What we can do is to consider most carefully all of the effects of atomic bombs against ships and take these into account whenever a redesign is made. For example, most stacks and radar antennas suffer from all kinds of blast, including typhoons. It is quite reasonable to redesign these projecting elements to increase their ability to resist lashing from severe storms and to stop at this point.

In connection with Bikini, you