

Frank Lloyd Wright once said, "The only thing wrong with architecture are the architects." Wright was a famous architect who was born on June 8, 1867 in Richland Carter, Winsconsin and died April 9, 1959. He also made his own stained glass and furniture. His father was William Carey Wright, who was a preacher and a musician. His mother was Anna Lloyd Jones, who was a teacher. His early childhood involved quite a bit of moving as his father traveled from one job as a minister to another in Rhode

Island, Iowa, and Massachusetts. The Wright family eventually settled in Madison, Wisconsin in 1878. Wright's parents divorced in 1885, making the family's financial situation even worse. To help support the family, Frank Lloyd Wright worked for the dean of the University of Wisconsin's department of engineering while also studying at the university at the age of eighteen. Wright's urge to be an architect grew to the point where he left Madison and went to Chicago. From there began a career of architecture

that would be remembered for many years.

In Chicago, Wright's unique architectural style developed from experimentation and Japanese influence. His career began when he was hired by the partnership between Louis Sullivan and Dankman Adler, commonly referred to as Sullivan and Adler. Wright constructed many homes which were assumed to be built by Sullivan. He soon married Catherine Lee Tobin. Wright negotiated a five-year contract with Sullivan in exchange for the loan of

the necessary money to build his own home. He purchased a lot in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park and built his first house, ( show Frank Lloyd Wright's House in Oak Park Chicago) a residence reflecting Wright's creativity as he experimented with geometric shapes and volumes. The exterior of the house looks as if a child was asked to draw a house, but upon taking several steps back, Wright's house appears to be made out of several geometric shapes as if the shapes were just placed on each other. The interior of the

house would become trademark to Wright's style as it featured rooms without doors that seem to flow into each other and a focus on the fireplace and chimney. Wright came across hard times, and began to accept independent residential commissions. When Daniel Burnham's Neoclassical Columbian Exhibition opened in Chicago in 1893, Wright took interest in one building, the "Ho-O-den" Japanese pavilion standing on the lagoon's wooded isle. The simplicity of the post and beam construction and the

wide eaves (edges of the roof that project over the face of a wall) would serve as inspiration for his future projects. In the same year, Sullivan charged Wright with breach of contract. Wright took this rift between the two as an opportunity to start his own office that designed homes for the American prairie.

The William H. Winslow House was Wright's first independent commission. (William H. Winslow House Front Exterior) While more subtle in appearance in

comparison to his later work with its broad shielding roof and simple gracefulness, it nonetheless attracted local attention. Like Wright's own home, the front looks like it was drawn by a child. (William H. Winslow House Back Exterior). Wright's experimentation with geometric forms is visible as it is not just a rectangular prism, but a series of geometric forms placed on top of each other and overlapping. For example, a hexagonal prism can be seen rising out of the building while being overlapped by

portions of the roof. (William H. Winslow House Interior). The interior of the home just speaks simple elegance with its wooden arches. He took an organic approach to building. Thoughts of rigid, defined rooms were replaced with planes that seemed to hover, exteriors that flowed into the interior, and other interiors flowing into other interiors. These concepts were unique to Wright at that time, and it began to evolve into something more than just experimentation and an organic approach.



Determined to create an original American architectural style, over the next sixteen years, Wright adapted the organic style of architecture into what became known as the Prairie Style. Prairie Style buildings were characterized by their low-pitched roofs, deep overhangs, a lack of an attic or a basement, and long rows of casement windows (windows attached to their frames through their hinges). One example of a Prairie Style building was the Robie House of 1909 in Chicago. There is a roof that

extends outward that is supported by nothing outside the house through cantilevers, long projecting beams fixed at only one end. On some sides of the house are rows and rows of casement windows. The overall look of the house focuses on extensions of the roofs and an out of place, yet natural horizontal forms. The cubic like feel of the house are remnants Wright's experimentation of geometric shapes. This avant-garde style caught on in Europe, and Wright succeeded in creating an original architectural style.

Despite his success , Wright could not find clients for larger projects.

With creativity, emotions, and number of clients dwindling, Wright was at a dead end in his career. Late in 1909, Wright left his family for an extended stay in Europe with Mamah Borthwick Cheney, a client that Wright loved despite having a wife and six children. Wright and Cheney returned unwelcomingly back to Chicago in 1911. Cheney died due to an insane servant setting fire and killing her, her

two children, and four others. Wright eventually married Olga Lazovich in 1928, giving the motivation for Wright to refocus on his architecture. Skipping forward to 1936, Wright designed the famous Fallingwater for Edgar Kaufman along a portion of the river Bear Run. This was arguably America's most famous modern house at the time. Fallingwater pushed Wright's concept of organic architecture to new limits. His building metaphorically lifted the stones out of the riverbed. Stacked shale stone

was seemingly held aloft by three cantilevered levels hovering over Bear Run. Once again, cube-like geometric forms are present in the building. In addition, instead of having the building face the waterfall, Wright had the building floating over the falls. This gives the appearance that the building is coming out of the local environment. Wright was back in action.

The next major project Wright took on was the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum on New York's Fifth

Avenue. Commissioned in 1943, Wright fought through years of zoning battles and many design revisions until he arrived at the final concept. (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Exterior) The end result was a spiral shaped building with a slightly domed top that contained a large central space, lacking the sharp geometric forms of his previous buildings, but still containing the flowing interiors and the round shape of the building contrasted the local buildings' sharp edges. (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

Interior) The spiral nature of showcasing art forced visitors to get closer to the art. The beauty of the domed top can only be described as a glass snowflake. The building was such a work of art that the fact that it overshadowed the art within it was part of the criticism that Wright received.

To conclude, Frank Lloyd Wright was a talented architect and creator of a style that was truly original. In spite of his chaotic life, he constructed many buildings in his unique style that he pioneered. To this day, several of

Wright's buildings still stand today as tribute to his work and creativity.