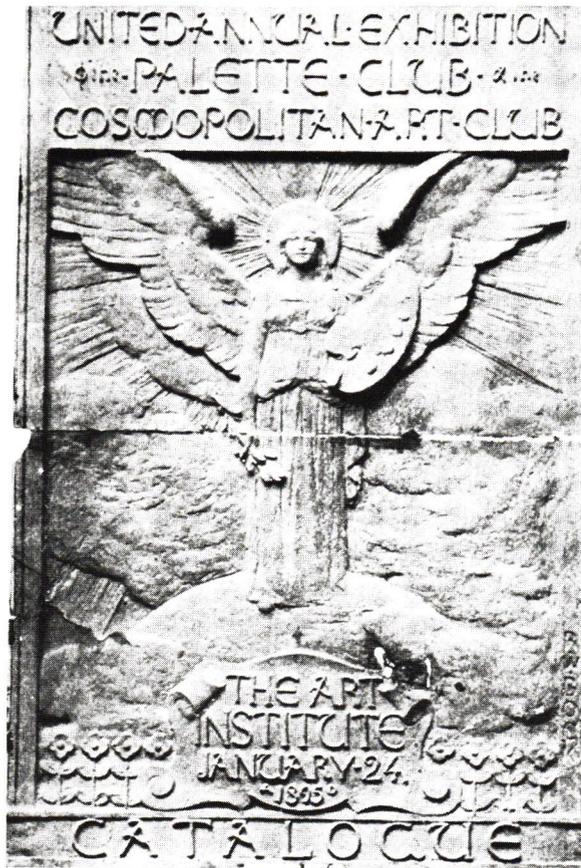


*The*  
**PRAIRIE**  
**SCHOOL**  
*Review*

Volume VIII, Number 1

First Quarter, 1971

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**ABOVE:**

*In the mid 1890's with a recession in progress, Richard Bock executed several small reliefs. This plaster panel for the cover of the Cosmopolitan Art Club Exhibition Catalogue of 1895 used the familiar Victory figure standing upon a globe. Bock photo.*

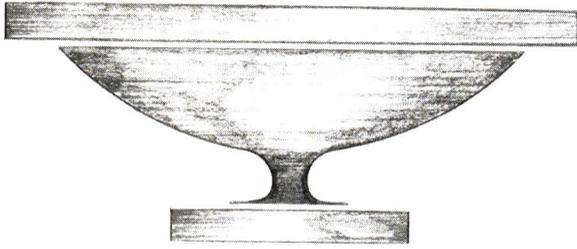
**COVER:**

*The Schiller Building.*

*In this detail of the upper arcade, the heads and roundels can be seen against a background of profuse ornament. The first and fifth heads are identical. Photo by Richard Nickel.*

*Photos not otherwise credited are either by Mr. Hallmark or from his private collection of photos by unknown photographers.*

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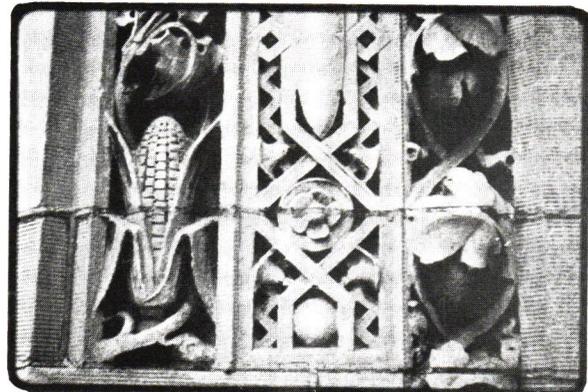
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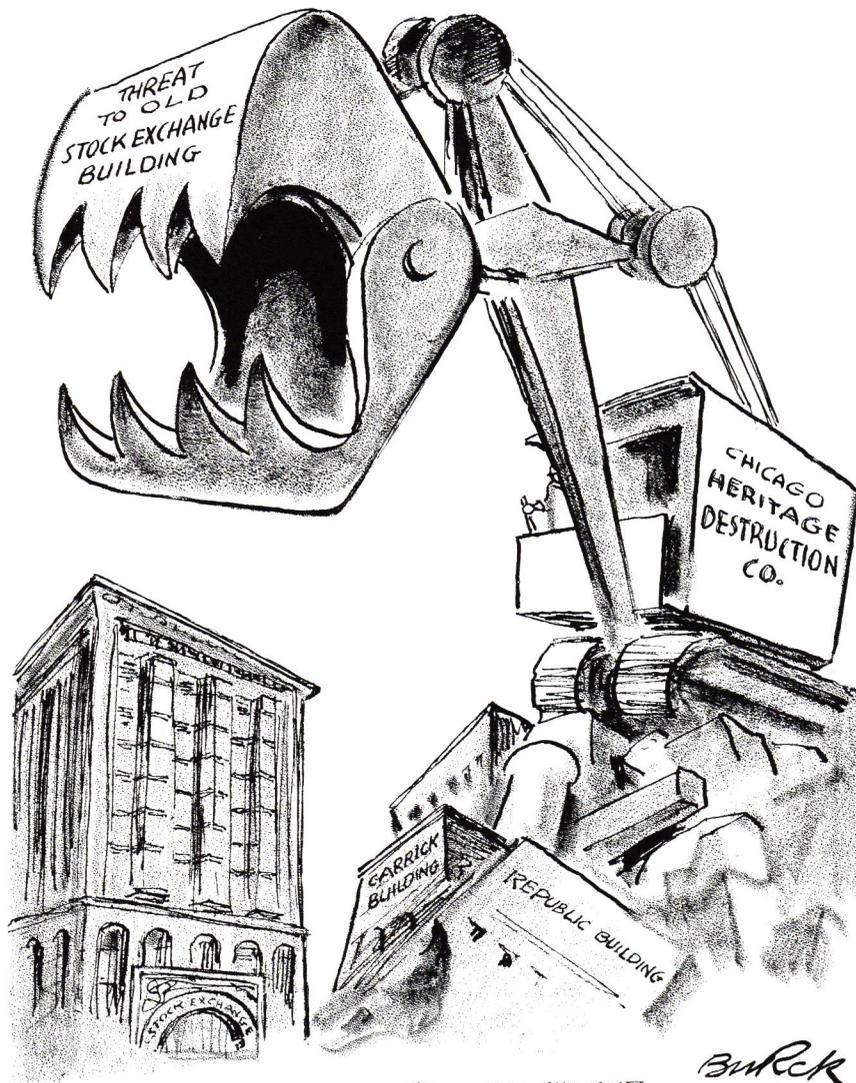
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*Detail of an ornamented doorway at Hitchcock Hall, a dormitory on the campus of the University of Chicago, 1901-1902. Photo by Mary Jane Hamilton.*



## From the EDITORS



4

1971, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

PROGRESS?

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# *Richard W. Bock, Sculptor*

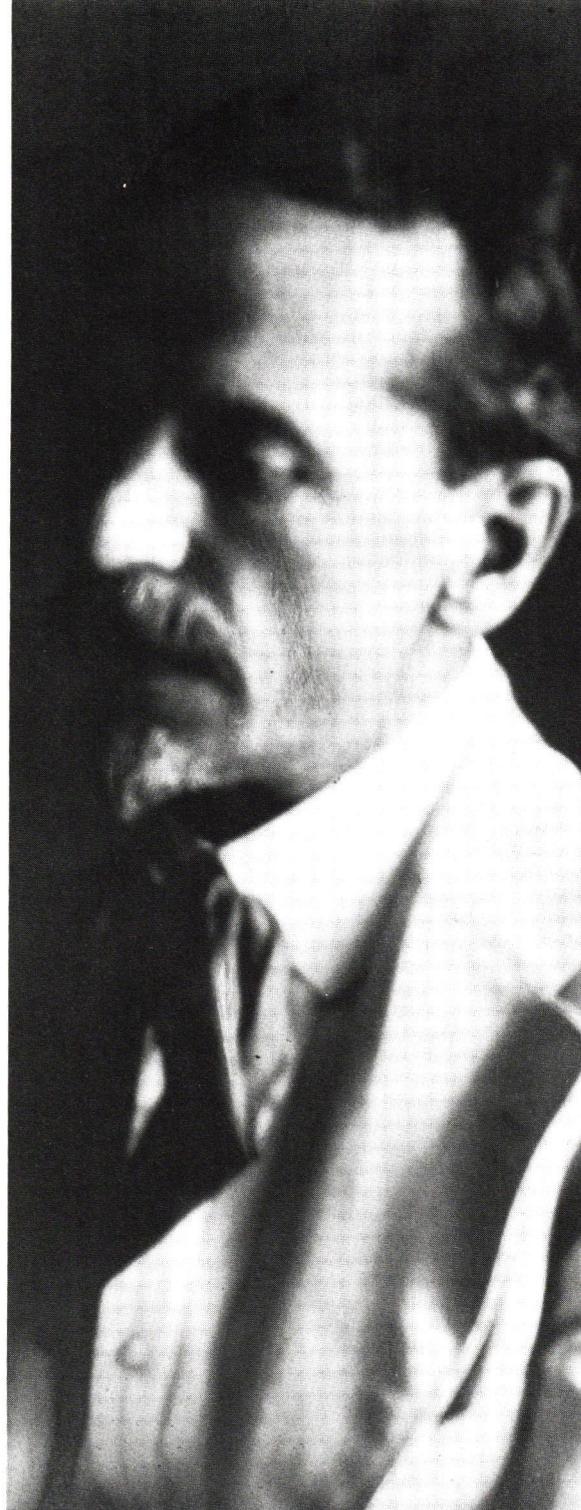
By Donald P. Hallmark\*

## *Part I: The Early Work*

If Richard Walter Bock had not executed a great amount of sculpture to embellish the buildings designed by a group of noted and avant-garde Chicago architects shortly before and after the turn of this century, he would be relegated to a relatively obscure position among his fellow American sculptors. The sculpture being produced in the United States was not progressive nor was it truly American, for it was dependent upon European tradition and training. Bock acknowledged this fact when he too joined the painters and sculptors crossing the ocean to enroll for courses in European institutions. To be able to return to America and say that he had been schooled in the great academies of Europe was an important status factor to both a young and aspiring sculptor and the wealthy patron who would commission him. Even among architects there were only a few who refused to go abroad, the most noteworthy being Frank Lloyd Wright,<sup>1</sup> whose belief in his own abilities and ideals was exceptionally strong. This belief, however, did not prevent Wright from associating with and using the talents of men with European training such as the sculptor Richard Bock.

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography*, New York, 1943, p. 126.



*Richard W. Bock in 1917 when the sculptor was fifty-two years old. He died in 1949.*

\* Sincere thanks are due to the children of Richard W. Bock, Thorwald Methven Bock and Dorathi Bock Pierre, whose numerous letters and suggestions helped to make the thesis possible.



*Literature, Science, and Art for the Indianapolis Public Library was begun and completed during the same years as the work at the Columbian Exposition and the Schiller Building. It was originally placed atop the library and is now in temporary storage. Photo courtesy Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library.*

If the study of Frank Lloyd Wright is responsible for the interest in the work of Bock, it would be both unfair and inaccurate simply to remember him as the sculptor used by Frank Lloyd Wright, for he was employed by many private persons and public organizations and by many other architects of the Chicago School. At one time or another, on one project or on many, Richard Bock produced sculpture for the structures of Louis Sullivan, Dwight Perkins, Robert C. Spencer, Jr., Charles E. White, Jr., and William Gray Purcell, among others.

Bock was born in the small town of Schloppe, Germany, in 1865 and accompanied his family a few years later when they emigrated to Chicago.<sup>2</sup> In good European tradition the father took the son into his craft to become a cabinet maker, although the son would aspire to be a part of a more

2 The date of 1865 is given in "Richard W. Bock," *American Art Annual*, XX, New York, 1923, 446 and in "Richard W. Bock," *Who's Who in America*, XXII, Chicago, 1942, 345, but his citizenship papers are undated. His daughter, Dorathi Bock Pierre, believes that the 1865 date is correct. "Death Claims Richard W. Bock, Famous Sculptor," *Oak Leaves*, July 7, 1949, p. 40 gives a date of 1864.

respected occupation, that of modeller and finally sculptor. By the 1880's Bock had obtained a job as a wood carver with a local interior decorating firm but was also taking life drawing and modelling lessons. Within five years he was a carver and modeller for Chicago's Northwestern Terra Cotta Company, and he also traveled to New York where he worked for several decorating firms. When the amount of work declined after only one year, Bock decided to return to his home in Chicago. He was hired as a modeller of terra cotta ornament but soon began to plan an extended trip on which he could see the great monuments of European art and also be educated in European schools. In about 1888 he left America, spending two years studying in Berlin and one year at the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* in Paris, where he was a pupil of Alexandre Falguiere.<sup>3</sup> During this time he met and made friends with other aspiring sculptors of future American fame. Among these were Karl Bitter, Hermon Atkins MacNeil, and Frederick MacMonnies.

However much time Bock spent as a student in a studio, he still was able to make trips to look at art and architecture and therefore saw many of the major artistic monuments of Germany and France, and before returning to America he even undertook a brief journey during the summer of 1891 through Italy.

With the prestige of a European education and a knowledge of the great art works of Western civilization, Bock arrived in Chicago in late summer 1891 and set up his first studio in Chicago's Loop. Of course Bock knew of the migration of hundreds

3 Much of this information on the early life of Bock is found in Bock's "Autobiography," Unpublished manuscript 1943-1946, in the possession of Thorwald M. Bock, Northridge, California, with copies in the William Gray Purcell Archives, formerly in Pasadena, California, now at the University of Minnesota, and in the possession of Wilbert R. Hasbrouck, AIA, Executive Director of the Chicago Chapter of A.I.A. The autobiography was originally written on twenty-five pads of paper with extremely confusing page numbers. The typewritten copy has the information assembled in chronological sequence with the pagination being reorganized so that most chapters are designated by a Roman numeral and begin with page one. Footnotes will use the typewritten copy's method of designating page numbers.

It must be remembered that Bock was nearly eighty years of age when the "Autobiography" was written, and that although lucid, he could not always correctly recall dates and names.

For a detailed discussion of the early years of Bock's career see the author's "Richard W. Bock: Sculptor for Frank Lloyd Wright and the Architects of the Chicago School," Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Iowa, 1970, chapter II. Copies of the thesis may be found at the Oak Park Public Library, the Chicago Historical Society, the Avery Architectural Library at Columbia University, and The Prairie School Press archives.

of laborers and artists to the city at this time, for the contracts for the construction of the buildings of the World's Columbian Exposition had been awarded in May and June and work was plentiful. Within a few months he had obtained three large commissions: extensive decorative work for several buildings of the Chicago Fair, the interior sculpture of Louis Sullivan's Schiller Building, then in the early stages of construction, and a free-standing monumental sculpture group for the new Indianapolis Public Library.<sup>4</sup>

In 1893 occurred one of the important events of American cultural history, the World's Columbian Exposition. While Daniel Burnham, the Director of Works, was selecting ten of the country's most successful and well-known architectural firms to design the major buildings and several leading American sculptors to carry out the important sculptural commissions, Richard Bock was still an art student in Paris planning his forthcoming trip through Italy. Thus, he was not present when Frederick MacMonnies, only two years Bock's elder but already having established a reputation at the *Ecole des Beaux Arts*, was chosen by his former teacher Augustus Saint-Gaudens, chief consultant for sculpture at the Columbian Exposition, to execute the monumental Columbian Fountain. Neither did Bock have the luck of young Karl Bitter, who, upon coming to the United States from Germany, was immediately befriended by New York architect Richard M. Hunt and hired as his modeller. When Hunt received word that he was to design the Administration Building for the Chicago Fair, Bitter was appointed to do all the sculpture for the facade. At the time Bock returned to America and Chicago, he had no reputation and was not acquainted with any noted architects. Had Bock come back from Europe three months earlier and been able to obtain the Schiller Building sculpture commission from Louis Sullivan at that time, Sullivan might have appointed him to execute the sculpture for his Transportation Building. This opportunity never arose, and Bock was forced to go directly to construction firms at the site of the fair to obtain work.

Returning to Chicago too late to be considered for one of the special appointments for sculpture, Richard Bock found employment with Phillipson and Company, the construction firm that had won the contract rights to build the Mines and Mining

<sup>4</sup> Throughout the 1890's Bock continued to enter competitions for academic sculpture work even when involved in projects for Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. See Hallmark, chapters II, VII.

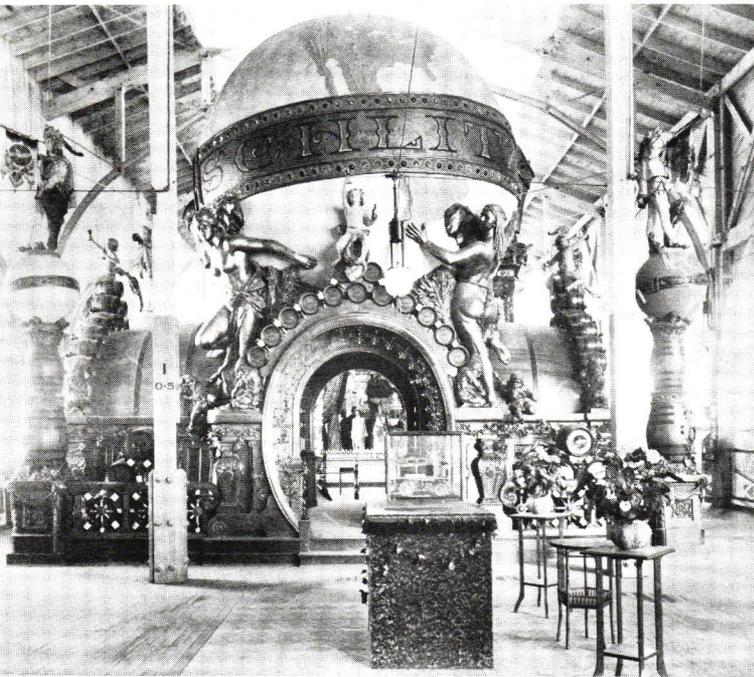


*Bock was responsible for the decorations of the south entranceway of the Mining Building of the Columbian Exposition. Solon S. Beman, architect. Courtesy Chicago Historical Society.*

Building and the Electricity Building, where a pair of structures which were to stand next to each other on the north bank of the Court of Honor.

The Mining Building with its horizontal lines and heavy features was given a wealth of ornament, and therefore is important for studying the early work of Bock. For this structure he executed the spandrels of the north and south entrances, various figural sculptures, and probably the large, decorative medallions on the piers flanking the entrances. The work for the Mining Building, when considered as a whole, represented Bock's largest single effort at the exposition. He had combined neoclassical elements with touches of realistic contemporary life, a troubling combination of the familiar and the symbolic without admitting the contradiction. In producing sculpture that was an integration of two opposite ideals, Bock was not alone, for all of the sculpture of the Columbian Exposition was a testimony that he was working in the correct "style".

When the work for Phillipson and Company had been completed sometime in 1892, Bock was able to obtain a commission on the grounds of the fair for the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company's walk-through exhibit which consisted of a large globe (the Schlitz Company trademark) and numerous



*The Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company exhibit at Chicago. This is the first appearance of the globe and supporting figures that would be a favorite subject of Bock's work throughout the nineties and even for Frank Lloyd Wright on the Larkin Building c. 1905. Photo courtesy Schlitz Brewing Company.*

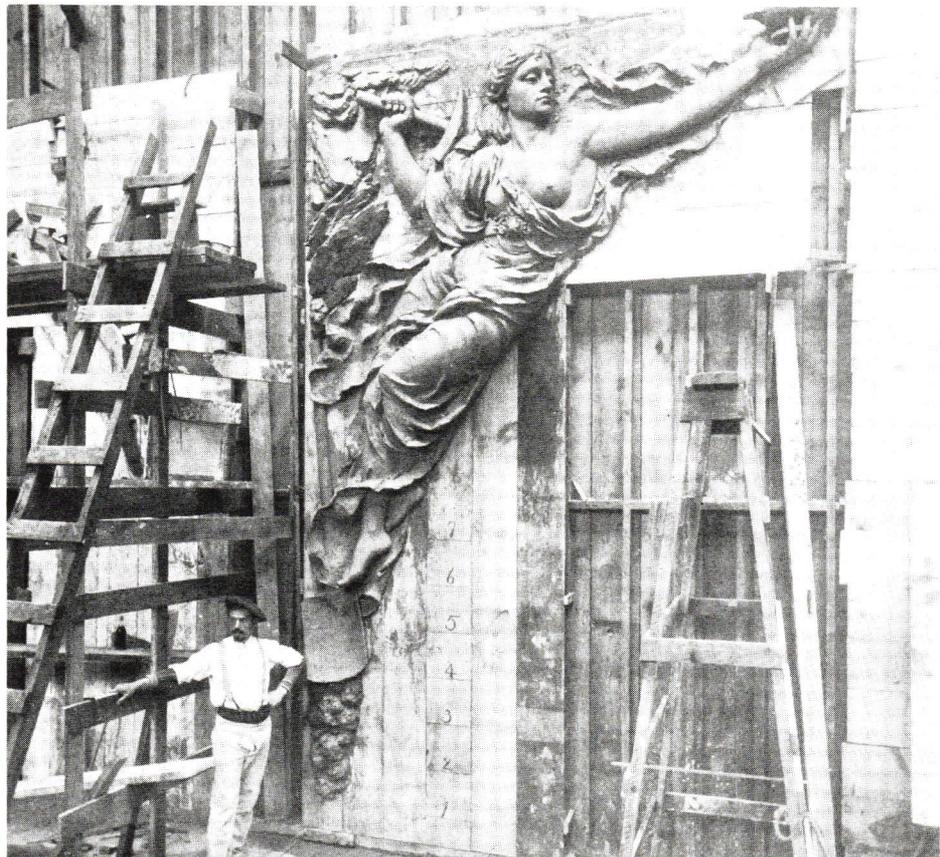
decorative figures.<sup>5</sup> It was Bock's first use of a globe and supporting figures, a motif that he would employ several times in sculpture for Frank Lloyd Wright.<sup>6</sup> As was typical of Bock's work at this time, the Schlitz composition relied heavily upon the ideas of nineteenth century Parisian sculpture, in this instance a monumental group by Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux. Surely this sculpture must be the origin of Bock's globe and supporting figures.<sup>7</sup>

The ideas used in the exhibit for the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company remained in Bock's mind for many years and did not disappear as quickly as the actual sculpture did upon the completion of the fair's run in late 1893. The reappearance of the globe motif occurred at least twice more in Bock's work of the nineties and three times in the architectural sculpture for Frank Lloyd Wright in the

5 The exhibit was situated in the Manufacturer's Building at the fair.  
6 On this sculpture he collaborated with Franz Rugiska (Rusiska?), who had worked with Thomas Boyle on the sculpture for Sullivan's Transportation Building.

7 Carpeaux' *Fontaine de l'Observatoire: the Four Quarters of the Globe* had been placed in Paris only two decades before Bock arrived in Europe.

*Neoclassical spandrel for the Mining Building, staff (a mixture of plaster and hemp), 1891, World's Columbian Exposition. The standing figure beneath the sculpture is Richard W. Bock.*



*Photo courtesy Chicago Historical Society.*



This group by the Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux was undoubtedly known to Bock when he was in Paris. The "Autobiography" mentions that he had seen the work of Carpeaux. From Frederick Licht, *Sculpture, 19th and 20th Centuries*.

early years of the twentieth century. Whereas his work on the Mining Building was more important at the time of the fair, in the end the Schlitz globe motif proved to be immeasurably more influential on his future sculpture.

Bock was not preoccupied solely with his own work at the fair, however, and had taken notice of Louis Sullivan's Transportation Building. Years later he wrote:

... the gem of all buildings, which was Sullivan's Transportation Building with its rainbow arch entrance. This distinction was accorded Mr. Sullivan by all national and international architects, and it still continues to live and leave its message of pure architectural tenets.<sup>8</sup>

In late 1891 Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler were designing the Schiller Building for downtown Chicago, and from them Bock obtained a sculpture commission that was completed at the same time as

<sup>8</sup> Bock, *op. cit.*, chapter IV, p. 1.

the work for the Columbian Exposition. It was also in the office of Louis Sullivan that Bock first met the young Frank Lloyd Wright.

Richard Bock's first sculpture studio was located in a building housing numerous artists on Wabash Avenue near Van Buren Street, only one block from the Auditorium Building where Adler and Sullivan maintained offices high in the tower. In the early months of 1891 the architects received the commission for the Schiller Building, a structure that was to contain both offices and a theater. In conception it was very similar to another of their multiple-use buildings, the Auditorium hotel with offices and theater, completed less than two years before the awarding of the architectural contracts for the Schiller complex. Under the general supervision of A. C. Hesing, a prominent Chicagoan of German ancestry and a part owner of the building, construction contracts were let in June of 1891. The intention of Hesing and his financial backers was to establish a home for a German opera company, a home that would provide an appropriate and rich setting for operatic performances. Under obligation to design a lavish interior, Sullivan decided to use artists and sculptors, including Albert Fleury, previously employed by Sullivan for the murals in the theater of the Auditorium, and Arthur Feudel, a German-born mural painter residing in Chicago.

With the securing of the commission of *Faust and Marguerite* for the Schiller theater, Arthur Feudel returned to his offices located in the same building as Bock's studio. In working with Sullivan Feudel discovered that a sculptor for the Schiller work was being sought, mentioned the possibility of employment to his friend Richard Bock, and thereby provided the impetus for Bock's visit to the architect's office only a short distance away. The importance of this commission in Bock's career cannot be underestimated, for it provides not only an interesting association of architect and sculptor but also reveals the artistic principles under which Sullivan and Bock worked. In addition it was perhaps here at the Schiller that several architects of the Chicago School first encountered Bock's work, memories of which would remain only to be recalled later for their own sculpture commissions for which Bock would be chosen. Unknowingly, he had begun to establish himself as the primary sculptor for the Chicago School of Architecture.

Upon hearing of the Schiller commission, Bock went to the offices of Adler and Sullivan where Louis Sullivan quickly glanced at his offerings and dismissed him, "brushing it all aside as of no consequence."<sup>9</sup> Persistent, Bock told A. C. Hesing

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter III, p. 2.

ing of the event, and Helsing, who had been introduced to Bock by Arthur Feudel, accompanied the sculptor back to the office of the architect. The new confrontation produced rapid results. "Do you want Mr. Bock to do this work?" queried Sullivan of Helsing.<sup>10</sup> There followed an affirmative answer, whereupon Sullivan agreed and told the sculptor to obtain blue prints from his chief draughtsman, who was then Frank Lloyd Wright. Bock was given the necessary plans, and at the age of twenty-six came under the ascendancy of America's greatest practicing architect of the time.

The reasons for the initial rejection of Bock were known only to Louis Sullivan and died with the architect in 1924, but there is sufficient evidence to warrant speculation. Although trained in drawing, Bock did not consider drawing as an end in itself, as Sullivan often did for architectural renderings and ornamental features of his buildings. The architect was known to be an unrelenting perfectionist, a characteristic the sculptor simply did not have, and thus the drawings must have struck Sullivan as being rough, unfinished, and poor in quality, whereas the sculptor considered them only as a preliminary step on the way to three-dimensional plasticity. Sullivan's first opinion may have been strengthened by a second one: Bock was not a particularly creative or innovative artist and belonged to a tradition established by nineteenth century academicians. To Sullivan, the great designer, Bock was a competent but uninspired sculptor. A third factor perhaps affecting the architect's decision was that unless a man and his work were outstanding, Sullivan simply did not have time to spend interviewing applicants, for in the same year as the Schiller commission Adler and Sullivan designed several major structures, ornamental details of which had to be thought out, sketched, and sometimes rendered by Sullivan himself. Chosen by Daniel Burnham in 1890 to design the Transportation Building for the Columbian Exposition, the Adler and Sullivan firm was required to submit plans for construction purposes by late spring of 1891, roughly the same period as the Schiller commission and construction contracts.<sup>11</sup> When Ellis Wainwright's wife died on April 15, 1891 and was buried in St. Louis, he turned to his friend Sullivan for a design of a mausoleum.<sup>12</sup> There was also the ill-fated project for the thirty-six story Fraternity Temple, the most massive structure ever planned by Adler and Sullivan. What with these

10 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

11 Louis Sullivan also served as the secretary for the Board of Architects of the Columbian Exposition.

12 The Wainwright Tomb, constructed in 1891-1892 in Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis, is still extant.

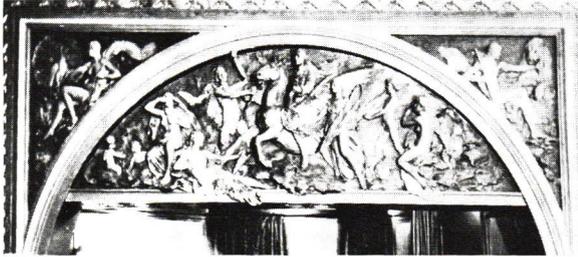
projects and occasional periods of rest and relaxation at his cottage in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, Sullivan was extremely busy. When Bock's designs did not immediately impress him, he quickly rejected them in favor of more pressing and important problems.

Sullivan's reversal of the initial opinion is both more surprising and yet more easily explained. Although he was noted for his uncompromising attitude on all matters pertaining to architecture, Sullivan perhaps realized in a second meeting that Bock was extremely congenial and would produce whatever the architect wanted. The first opinion had been that Bock would be a detriment because of his lack of creativity and the unimpressive quality of his drawings; at the second meeting Sullivan realized that Bock might be an asset because of his temperament and willingness to carry out the architect's basic ideas. Bock was hired as quickly as he had been dismissed.

Upon receiving specifications and, possibly, certain suggestions concerning the subject matter from Helsing and Sullivan, he made sketches for the two large lunettes, their spandrels, and the surrounding decorations that were to be placed above the boxes on either side of the theater. In no way can these sculptured lunettes be considered of minor consequence in Sullivan's design of the interior. It is true that they were extremely ornamental and were meant to enhance and complement the architecture, but the position of the lunettes was such that no person attending the theater could miss them, for they flanked the stage and served somewhat as introductory screens.

Each of the lunettes<sup>13</sup> contained six major figures and several putti, with one spandrel figure on each side of the main scene. Monumental in size, these lunettes were eighteen feet in length and were placed seven feet above the floor of the boxes. To the left of the persons in attendance at the theater was the composition of Homer reading his verses. Seated in the midst of a small group of listeners, he was depicted as a Jupiter figure elevated upon a dais and seated on a throne. The scene around him was an idyllic one composed of nudes, lush foliage, and, in the background, a Greek temple having an overabundance of Doric columns. Other than this architectural structure, there was little attempt by Bock to produce a *trompe l'oeil* effect of three dimensionality. Except for the high relief of the figures, the composition remained flat and decorative, an embellishment of the wall surface, with the

13 The lunettes and spandrels were removed c. 1930 and are now lost or destroyed.



*These photographs of the lunettes of the Schiller Theater belonged to Richard Bock and are the only known reproductions showing the complete sculpture in detail. Above: Homer reading his verses. Below: Schiller Astride Pegasus.*

profuse plant life serving only as decoration and not as an element of landscape and perspective. At the sides of the lunette were figures representing Art and Music, the one holding a brush and palette, the other playing a violin. These spandrels were similar in conception to several of the spandrels of the Columbian Exposition's Mining Building on which he was working at about this same time. More consistent in decorative effect, the Schiller sculpture was purely neoclassical.

On the other side of the theater was the lunette depicting Johann Christoph Schiller riding the winged horse Pegasus and being led by the nude figure of Genius, who held a torch of enlightenment, a motif also used at this time in the Indianapolis Library group. As in the composition of Homer reading his verses, Schiller was centrally located and surrounded by idealized types. Flanking this lunette were allegorical figures of Strength (Hercules) and Beauty (Diana), the former accompanied by a lion, the latter by a peacock. Life-size statues of children standing on pedestals were finished, perhaps intended for the low wall enclosing the boxes beneath the lunettes, but as the placement of the children impeded the view of the stage, these figures representing Morning, Noon, Evening, and Night were removed.

A problem arises in attempting to determine the facts of the actual execution of the Schiller panels, for it is not known whether Bock and his assistant (or assistants) worked on the final sculptures. Most likely Richard Bock and his one known pupil and assistant at this time, James Earle Fraser (1876-1953), made clay and plaster models, which were

then either cast in terra cotta or carved in marble by stonecutters. Although Fraser eventually established a reputation among academic circles that surpassed that of his teacher and employer Bock, he cannot be given a major role in the creation of the Schiller lunettes and spandrels because in 1891 he would have been only fifteen or sixteen years of age and thus would have been more involved in the menial duties of an apprentice.

As Bock was modelling the lunettes, Sullivan sent Frank Lloyd Wright to inspect the progress of the panels.

That gave me the first opportunity on my part to inspect the nuclei (sic) of a coming great man in architecture . . . First of all, he was a breezy young man (two years younger than Bock), well groomed, with a definite self-assurance, and no doubt bespoke his destiny as he does to this day (1946). His inspection of my work was very moderate.<sup>14</sup>

Upon returning a second and final time to determine the state of sculpture, Wright departed, and Richard Bock saw him no more for three years until 1895, the date the architect was adding the Studio to his own home in Oak Park. However brief his association with Bock during this first acquaintance, Wright remembered the sculptor of the Schiller lunettes and employed him for many of his most well-known buildings.

Perhaps because Bock was closely following the dictates of Louis Sullivan, Wright recommended no major changes in the lunettes designs, although the groups as finally placed were much altered, for as previously mentioned neither the children on pedestals nor the caryatid lions were used. A. C. Helsing, spokesman for the owners of the German opera house, Mr. Temple, the lessee of the theater, and Sullivan had argued about the problem of obstruction in the boxes due to the excessive amount of statuary.

Mr. Helsing asked me if I couldn't design something else as a supporting medium in place of the lions, and I answered offhand that it could be done if that would pacify all concerned. Mr. Sullivan, hearing of this, threatened me that I would never get another piece of work from him — a pledge that he kept — if I should change his design in the slightest degree.<sup>15</sup>

Here Bock has told us the degree to which Sullivan had planned the Schiller sculpture. In agreeing to change Sullivan's design by eliminating the lions and the children, the sculptor had incurred the

<sup>14</sup> Bock, *op. cit.*, chapter III, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

wrath of the uncompromising architect. The forms and figural types may have been Bock's, but the design of the Schiller lunettes and spandrels was Sullivan's.

With the completion of the lunettes and spandrels in 1892, Bock was free to pursue other sculpture commissions. Before leaving the Schiller Building and its decoration, however, we should consider the perplexing problem of the authorship of the extensive amount of sculpture for the exterior of Adler and Sullivan's opera house, for it is possible that Bock was involved with the decoration of the exterior. If he was responsible for the models of the numerous terra cotta portrait heads and other ornamental panels that separated the floor levels of the main block, a great body of work would be added to Bock's oeuvre, and, more important, a new understanding of the Sullivan-Bock relationship would result. Thus far we have established Sullivan as architect and designer, and Bock as his hired modeller, but if the exterior sculpture is Bock's, the building and its sculptural ornamentation become more of a collaboration between architect and sculptor. This statement is not intended to reduce in any way the importance of Louis Sullivan as the Schiller's guiding decorative force nor is it intended to elevate Bock to the level of co-designer. Most likely Bock obtained his ideas from the architect and from Schiller's owner Hesing, made sketches of what they had described in words, and submitted the designs to them for approval. If Sullivan was displeased he probably returned the drawings to Bock with suggested changes. The amount of sculpture on the facade, if the heads and decoration were modelled or designed by Richard Bock, transforms what was previously a large and important commission into a truly monumental one, and without doubt, one of the most significant sculpture projects in Bock's career.

With the complete destruction of Sullivan's office records in a fire,<sup>16</sup> one of the primary sources of information on the building was lost. Bock is of no help either, for although his "Autobiography" mentions the lunettes and spandrels, no statements are made concerning the exterior work. Most damaging for the theory of Bock's authorship is the fact that there are no photos of the Schiller Building exterior sculptures in the sculptor's extensive photographic files, in which he kept a rather thorough pictorial record of all his work.<sup>17</sup> If both Sullivan and Bock were silent on the matter of the exterior sculpture,

so were many of the contemporary periodicals and accounts of the Schiller construction, and thus, there is no documentary evidence as to the identification of the creator of the sculpture. Long an authority on Louis Sullivan and a prolific photographer of his works, Richard Nickel is the only known source<sup>18</sup> to connect a sculptor's name with the busts on the exterior when he recalls "that Bock was credited with twelve busts of the composers and poets" that were situated in the Schiller Building arcade on the second floor.<sup>19</sup> With Richard Bock as the most likely candidate for authorship of the sculptural embellishments on the facade, a consideration of the actual portrait busts and decorative panels should be undertaken before final judgments are made.

One of the few extant Adler and Sullivan records of the Schiller Building is a drawing of the Randolph Street facade dated July, 1891.<sup>20</sup> In the locations on the facade where the busts and panels were to be placed, no details are drawn, and over the blank areas appear the words "terra cotta ornament"; therefore, by July, the exterior sculpture had not yet been planned. Only the bare skeleton of the building had been begun by the end of the year, but it is safe to assume that plans for the ornamentation had been formulated by Sullivan and Hesing and perhaps the sculptor before that time.

What finally appeared on the facade in 1892 were twelve portrait busts in the spandrels of the second story arcade, three ornamental panels of masks amidst profuse foliage, the masks being placed beneath the windows at the tops of the round-arched bays and repeated on all sides of the main block, and a second group of portrait heads in the arcade beneath the eaves of the structure. This row of heads, however, differed from that of the second story in that the portrait busts of the same men were repeated every fifth time.<sup>21</sup> A comparison of the heads in the upper and lower arcades reveals that perhaps they all were the work of only one sculptor, a sculptor who obviously disliked a rigid, frontal pose and much preferred turning the head in varying degrees, not because of compositional re-

18 Further research may prove this statement to be incorrect.

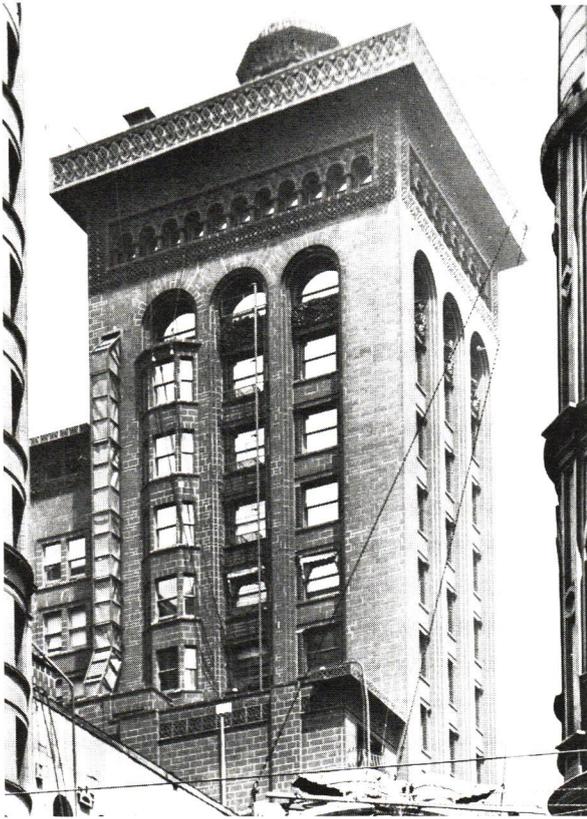
19 Letter to the author from Richard Nickel, September 17, 1969.

20 The original drawing is in the Ryerson Library collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.

21 The number of portraits appearing in the upper arcade on the Randolph Street facade was eight, making two complete sets of the four busts. The arcades along the sides of the Schiller's central block were longer and therefore required an additional two sculptures, making a total of ten portraits or two and a half sets.

16 Letter to the author from Hugh Morrison, June 13, 1969.

17 The files are in the possession of the sculptor's daughter Dorathi Bock Pierre, Sherman Oaks, California.



*The eaves of the Schiller Building were removed, but the decorative embellishments on the facade were left intact. The ornamental panels between floor levels can also be seen. Photo by Richard Nickel.*

*The interior of the Schiller Building Theater, later known as the Garrick Theater. The previous location of Bock's sculpture for the lunettes and spandrels can be seen in this photo taken during the building's demolition in 1961. The sculptures were removed from the theater in the 1930's. Photo by Richard Nickel.*



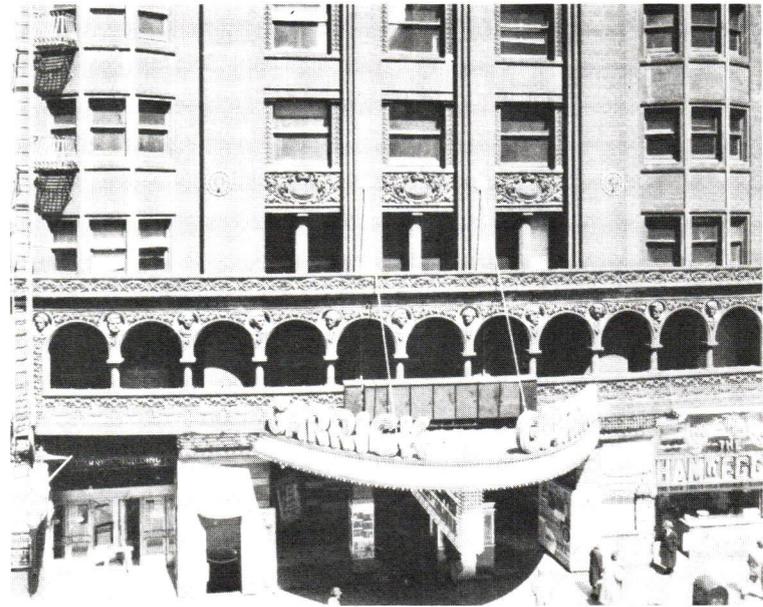
quirements but simply because he seemed to have wanted variation in their positions. The rectangular panels of masks and foliage were naturally of much different character than the bust sculptures and are even more difficult to assign.

We may assume that the person who modelled the busts must have had in mind the portraits by Lorenzo Ghiberti in his *Gates of Paradise*, c. 1448 in Florence. A comparison of the Ghiberti head with one from the lower arcade of the Schiller reveals a similarity in the basic conception of the form emerging from an abstract roundel, as if the figure were poking his head through a porthole. Although most sculptors in Bock's time were aware of Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise*, we may assert that the doors would have been foremost in the memory of Bock, for only a few months prior to the Schiller sculpture he had seen Ghiberti's work in Florence.<sup>22</sup>

The recent viewing of Ghiberti's *Gates* and the use of the roundel in the Schiller portraits may only be a coincidence, but the motif must be considered a supporting factor in determining Bock to be the author of the heads. A second argument is that he worked at the Schiller on the lunettes, and, although Bock does not mention the exterior heads,

<sup>22</sup> In the "Autobiography" Bock mentions Ghiberti, along with several other noted Florentine sculptors and their works. Bock did not seem greatly impressed by Ghiberti's accomplishments. See the entire chapter on Italy.

*The remodelling of the Schiller Building entranceway and the change of name to the Garrick Theater did not affect the existence of the second floor arcade and the twelve sculptured busts. They remained on the facade until the 1961 demolition. Photo by Richard Nickel.*



there is no evidence that he could not have done them and neither is there another candidate to compete with him for authorship, as of this time. A third factor supporting him as sculptor is that he had already done several portraits of friends and relatives, thus demonstrating that portraiture held no special problems for him.<sup>23</sup>

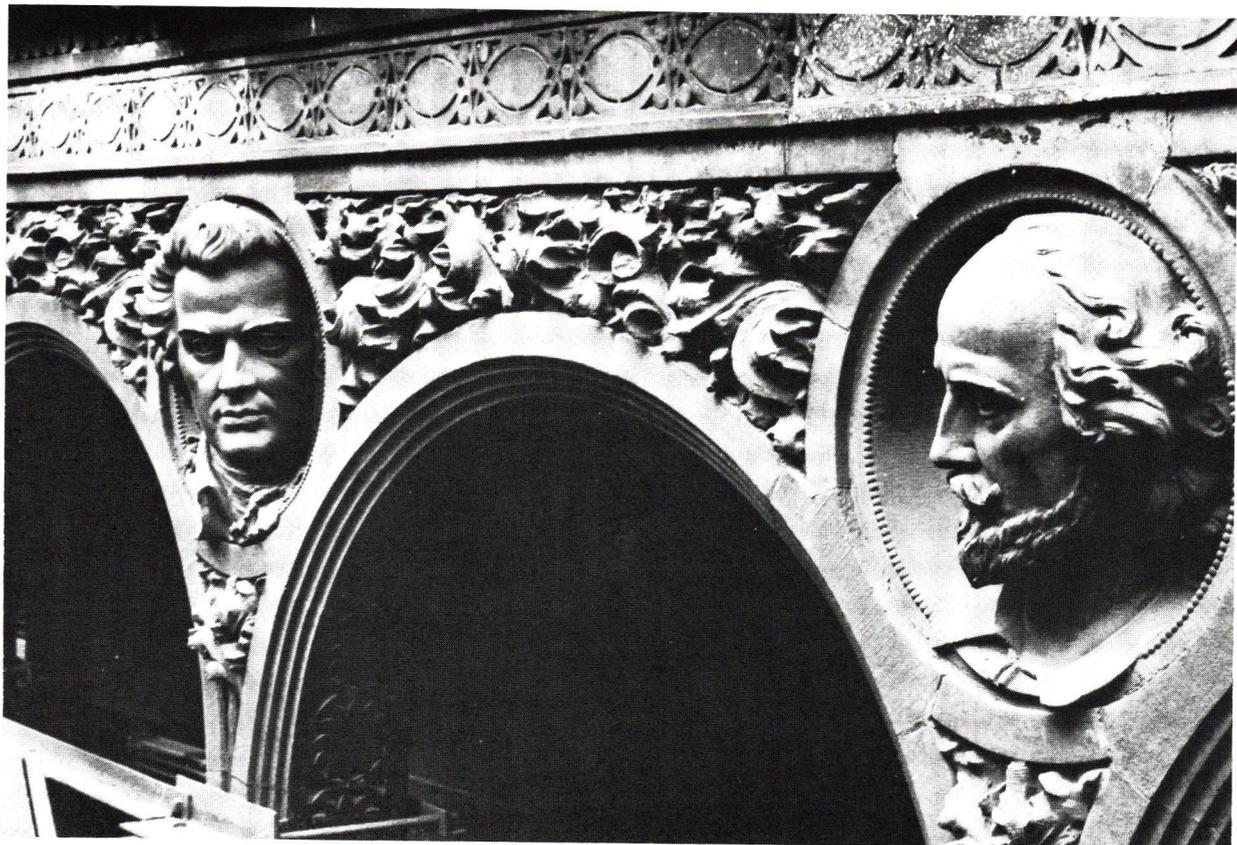
However tempting it may be to assign the work to Bock, there are certain factors of equal and in some cases greater merit that support the contention that he did not participate in the execution of any exterior sculpture. The first is the matter of time. He had recently returned from Europe and had been in America only a few weeks when he made a model for the Indianapolis Library Sculpture Competition, which he subsequently won. By early 1892 he had probably begun work on a larger model or individual studies of the figures in preparation for the full-size model that was completed late in that same year. Meanwhile, Bock had obtained several sculpture commissions at the Columbian Exposition by October of 1891, continuing his work there throughout 1892. The Schiller lunettes, being eighteen feet in length, comprised a large commission by anyone's standards, even if Bock had used one or more assistants and if he was responsible only for a full-scale model and not the finished work in terra cotta or stone. To add a total of

23 The locations of these portraits are unknown.



*The portrait heads on Ghiberti's Gates of Paradise in Florence emerge from the surface by means of roundels. The motif is repeated in the heads of the Schiller facade. From Charles Seymour, Jr., *Sculpture in Italy 1400-1500*.*

*Portrait heads of the second floor arcade were made of terra cotta as was most of the exterior decoration. As far as can be determined, none of the heads were identified or signed by the artist. Photo by Richard Nickel.*



sixteen different models for portrait busts<sup>24</sup> and at least three decorative panels to the already existing work load would seemingly have inundated the sculptor as the busts were nearly two feet in height, and the panels measured more than three feet by five feet. If the work was Bock's, the year 1892 was by far the busiest in his long career, and particularly so because he was never known as a prolific or fast worker, his total oeuvre being about average in quantity and size of pieces for a sculptor of his time.

Unless documentary evidence is discovered to corroborate Richard Bock as the sculptor of the busts, there is little way of knowing the sculptor's identity even after having viewed the actual works,<sup>25</sup> for the panels and portraits, as placed on the facade, were of terra cotta and, therefore, not the work of the artist. He would have been responsible only for a full-scale model which then would have been used by the terra cotta modellers to create the final works. The sculptor perhaps never touched the terra cotta; the idea was his, the heads and panels were not.

Had he executed this work, Richard Bock most surely would have commented on the exterior sculpture for building that would have been seen by millions of city residents and visitors, for he had no other commissions that could rival, in terms of public display, the Schiller decorations. Neither the Larkin Building in comparatively small Buffalo nor, later, the Burlington Railroad Station in the prairie town of Omaha were comparable, yet Bock said not a word about the Schiller's exterior embellishments and owned no photographs of its busts or decorative panels.

With time against Bock, and considering the complete lack of documentation in the sculptor's own writings and photographic collection, the sculpture cannot at present be attributed to Richard Bock. More evidence may prove otherwise.

The Schiller work completed, Sullivan and Bock parted, never to be associated again, for Sullivan kept his word about not using the sculptor if he allowed the original design of the lunettes to be changed. In general terms a conflict of personalities had occurred, but there was on trial here something

<sup>24</sup> The sixteen different portrait busts consisted of the twelve heads on the second story arcade and four heads on the arcade high on the central block, the remaining busts under the eaves being copies of the original four.

<sup>25</sup> A large section of the Schiller facade including several busts may be seen on the front of the building housing The Second City Theater north of Piper's Alley on North Wells Street in the area of Chicago called Old Town. The Ryerson Library Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago contains another of the busts. Other heads were saved at the time of the building's demolition, but their location is unknown by the author.

far more important, the principles of artistic creation. While Bock was a sculptor who measured success in terms of his ability to please his clients and thereby please himself, Louis Sullivan, as architect, worked first for himself, emphasizing what *he* thought was in the best interests of a client. When Hering requested alterations in the design, Bock readily complied, for to him a patron's satisfaction was foremost. Sullivan disagreed. George Grant Elmslie, the architect's chief draughtsman for many years after the departure of Wright, said of Louis Sullivan:

he lost many jobs because he would not compromise his ideals, nor play fast and loose with vital conceptions of what was fitting for the purpose intended.<sup>26</sup>

The architect's and sculptor's principles and personalities clashed, and each man left the Schiller Building thinking he was right. Said Bock:

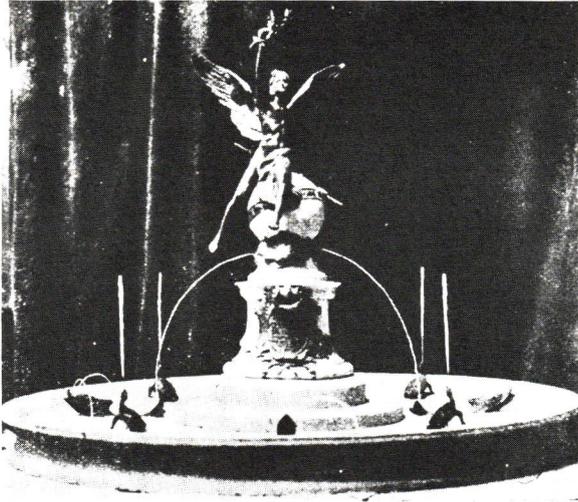
My panels are in place and the painters have completed their work of giving them an ivory-toned finish. For me this was my private unveiling of my artistic effort, and I had many compliments about this work.<sup>27</sup>

Following the completion of the Indianapolis Library group and the sculpture for the Schiller Building, there was very little work to be found. This same year an economic recession occurred and had dire effects on most artists and architects, the established firm of Adler and Sullivan suffering no less a loss in commissions than Bock himself. During the years 1893-1895 the architects began only two structures, the Stock Exchange Building in Chicago and the masterful Guaranty Building in Buffalo, while Bock was not given a single major commission of his own until the Omaha Fair of 1898. However financially bleak the period may have been, Richard Bock did manage to attract a number of small commissions, important in their own right and important in the unfolding of his career. By the end of the decade he had established himself as one of America's leading artists, beginning with several works at Omaha. As we consider the sculptures of these years, we should remember that Frank Lloyd Wright took notice of Bock in 1895, commissioning several works throughout the remainder of the decade. As these pieces constitute the first stage of Bock-Wright collaboration, they will be covered in the following issue.

During the summer months when the Columbian Exposition was attracting large crowds, Bock produced several plaster models and decorative

<sup>26</sup> Willard Connely, *Louis Sullivan as He Lived*, New York, 1960, p. 203.

<sup>27</sup> Bock, *op. cit.*, p. 6.



*Never executed, the project for a fountain designed in 1897 used the recurrent globe motif. The plaster model has been destroyed. Photo from the 1897 Chicago Architectural Club Exhibition Catalogue.*

*A portion of the Elijah P. Lovejoy Monument models in the Richard Bock studio in Chicago, c. 1895-1897. The memorial is still extant in the city cemetery, Alton, Illinois. Bock photo.*



relief sculptures.<sup>28</sup> In 1894 there were no major commissions of any kind, and 1895 was no different. During these years, however, Bock had joined various art clubs in the Chicago area. The first of these was the Cosmopolitan Art Club, members of which included rival sculptor Hermon Atkins MacNeil, a painter Arthur Feudel, and the young James Earle Fraser. One of the few works Bock executed in 1894-1895 was a plaster model of the cover of the Cosmopolitan Art Club Exhibition held at the Chicago Art Institute. It was a very simple design depicting an angel-goddess dressed in classical garb and holding a palette and brushes. Standing atop a partial globe symbolic of the world, the figure had both wings and halo, the wings being soft and billowy, while the halo behind her head became a symbolic sun with radiating beams of light.

Bock used another Winged Victory figure on the cover of the 1895 *Chicago Architectural Club Exhibition Catalogue*, this show also being held at the Art Institute. Here, however, the Victory was relegated to a minor role atop a column in the background. What was striking about the Architectural Club cover was its mixture of classicism and contemporary realism. Leaning upon a low wall, a philosopher (or architect) contemplated an architectural plan somewhat similar to Bramante's central plan of St. Peter's. In the background to the right of the philosopher was the neo-Renaissance facade of the newly constructed Art Institute which Bock rendered in faithful detail. Although Bock never officially became a member of the Chicago Architectural Club, he continually exhibited with the group for almost twenty-five years except when he was involved in large commissions or ones that kept him out of town.<sup>29</sup> Due to his associations with a variety of Chicago architects belonging to this club, Bock undoubtedly made friends and clients who would be instrumental in his future successes. Among these were Dwight Perkins, Robert C. Spencer, Jr., and sometime exhibitor Frank Lloyd Wright.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> For details see Hallmark, *op. cit.*, chapter V, pp. 60-61.

<sup>29</sup> While the plaster cover was the only piece contributed by Bock to the exhibition in 1895, the 1896 exhibition was the first time he submitted a large group of objects, including the projects for a Champlain Monument at Quebec, a lion fountain, a Lincoln Monument, and two soldiers' monuments. Other works included a lion group, a statuette, a bust, and a bacchante.

<sup>30</sup> How Bock became involved in the club's activities is a mystery. It is unlikely that Wright introduced him there in 1895 or earlier, for Wright did not exhibit until 1897 even though he employed Bock perhaps as early as 1895. Wright never became a member of the club. Bock probably met some of the architects at the Art Institute during exhibitions in 1894-1895, as the Art Institute was a favorite place of young artists and architects.

From 1895 to 1897 Bock was the modeller for a very large academic sculpture group for the Elijah P. Lovejoy monument at Alton, Illinois.<sup>31</sup> With the end of Bock's active part in the Alton sculptures, he designed a project for a fountain which used a Victory figure and the globe motif like that in the Schlitz exhibit at Chicago and in the Victory compositions for the two art club exhibition catalogue covers. In the Architectural Club Exhibition of 1897 Richard Bock submitted the fountain project along with the plaster models for the monument at Alton.

On July 1, 1897, construction contracts for the Trans-Mississippi Exposition at Omaha were let, one of the major buildings having been designed by architect Dwight Perkins, an official of the Chicago Architectural Club and an acquaintance of Bock. In the spring Perkins decided that the sculpture would be executed by his friend Richard Bock, who readily agreed.<sup>32</sup>

For Perkins' Machinery and Electricity Building the sculptor designed a large group ten feet high and four large eagles to be placed atop the central main entrance. Two less complex compositions were designed for the corners of the building, these groups being cast twice so that all corners might be adorned. The works first required a small clay model, then a quarter-sized model of the final sculpture, while the last phase consisted of a full-

31 For details of the project see Hallmark, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-67.

32 Bock mistakenly dated Perkins' letter March of 1896, an improbability since the construction contracts were awarded as late as July of 1897. Most likely the correct date of the Perkins' letter was March of 1897, a year later than Bock acknowledged.

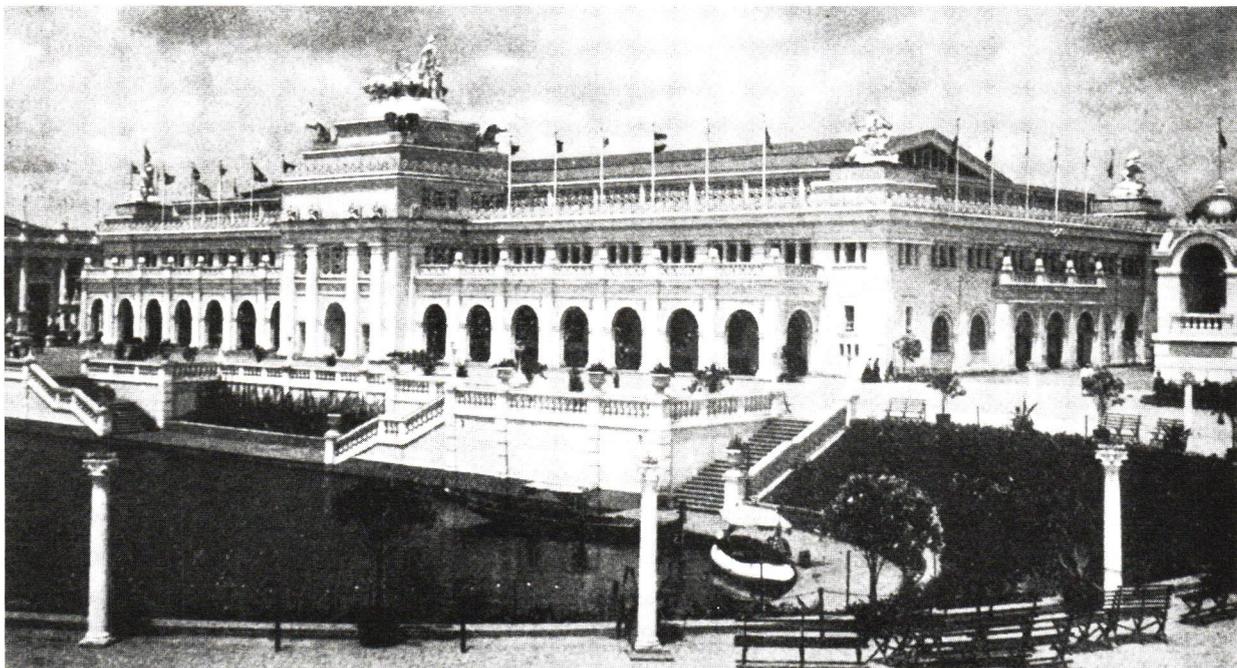
scale clay model for each of the groups. All works were to conform to the theme of Man's struggle to control the forces of nature.

The Omaha Fair, in being the first major exposition since the Columbian Exposition of 1893, could do nothing else but imitate the major achievements of the former, although Omaha's funds were much less than those of Chicago, the total ground area was one-fourth the size of the 1893 fair, and the roof area of the major buildings only one-ninth that of the Columbian Exposition.<sup>33</sup> Following the precedent of the Court of Honor at Chicago, the Omaha fair was designed as a harmony of Renaissance stylisms. Dwight Perkins, original architect that he was, submitted to the congruity of the whole but still managed to create a powerful facade. Almost all of the sculpture used at the fair originated in the European Beaux Arts tradition and was quite similar to the work at the Columbian Exposition. Bock also acceded to the prevailing trend.

Throughout the last two years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century, Bock continued working on sculpture for architectural surfaces and large monuments. The pediments of the Burlington Railroad Station at Omaha

33 *Official Guide to the World's Fair: The Louisiana Purchase Exposition, 1904*, St. Louis, 1904, p. 9.

*The sculpture on Dwight Perkins' Machinery and Electricity Building at the Omaha Fair of 1898 was based upon the theme of Man as master of nature. The central group above the entranceway consisted of a chariot being pulled by five lions. At the corners were groups of Man Taming Nature and Man as Protector and Conqueror.*



and the arcade of a Minneapolis department store filled the years 1899-1900.

Returning to Chicago in late 1900, Bock was contacted by architect Robert C. Spencer, Jr., the author of the first major article on the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. As several of Bock's works had been illustrated in this article which appeared in June of 1900, it was a matter of only a month or two later that Spencer offered a job to the sculptor. Spencer had also been familiar with the work of Bock through the Chicago Architectural Club exhibitions for which both men had submitted drawings and models. Thus Spencer called upon one of his acquaintances to execute a low relief to be placed above the mantel of a fireplace in the Williams home being constructed in Evanston, a suburb of Chicago. The panel was horizontally oriented, the dimensions measuring about four feet by six feet. The work, a realistic conception of a water scene with a formation of geese flying over a bed of weeds and cattails along the edge of a lake, was undistinguished.<sup>34</sup>

Not long after the completion of the Williams house sculpture, Bock was again employed by Dwight Perkins. For the design of Hitchcock Hall at the University of Chicago, both Perkins and Bock were forced to submit to the prevailing Gothic stylism that governed most structures on the campus. Bock was asked to model the decorative ornaments, highly original designs by Perkins that were based upon plants found in the state of Illinois. As with Wright, the interplay of the minds of architect and sculptor was probably extensive, although few facts of the commission are known.<sup>35</sup>

The final decorations being made of stone, Bock was asked only for the full-size models, which were then copied by the stone carvers. These complex decorations were placed on the cornices of the octagonal corner tower, while various other ornaments included dragon-head gargoyles and foliate panels. In the courtyard at the back of the L-shaped building were even more original embellishments placed above the piers of the porches, while the decorations framing the pointed arch doorways contained corn, violets, clover, and other plants common to Illinois. For unknown reasons Perkins

and Bock were never associated again, although both men continued to work in the Chicago area until the 1930's.

About the time of the Hitchcock Hall decoration, Bock won a competition to design an Illinois state war monument to be placed at the Shiloh, Tennessee, a Civil War battlefield. It required the major part of 1901-1902, while in 1903 he obtained a relatively small commission for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition that was to open in 1904. He executed only one group of figures for the Missouri State Building.

The precise reasons for his minor role at St. Louis may never be known, but the charge that he did not have an opportunity to secure a good commission is unfounded, for he was friends with several of the architects who designed buildings for the St. Louis Fair. Bock may have been asked to do more sculpture, but because of other commitments, he could not accept a major commission. Most important, though, is the fact that Frank Lloyd Wright was using sculpture by Richard Bock. Beginning with the work for the Dana house in Springfield in 1903, Wright and Bock began a successful and mature collaboration of several years duration. Bock knew of Wright's originality and talent and acceded to Wright's pleas, later to Wright's directives, so that the sculptor's interest now lay with the work for the Oak Park architect and not with temporary sculptures for public exhibitions.

In summary of the first years of Bock's career, his sculpture closely followed the European ideas and training of the time. By 1900 he had established a reputation as a prominent American sculptor competing with his friends Bitter, MacNeil, and MacMonnies and had obtained several important commissions at Chicago and Omaha, but the sculptured figures remained in the academic neoclassical mode of *Beaux Arts* tradition, and there was no sympathy yet between the sculptures of Bock and the new architecture that was developing in the studio of Frank Lloyd Wright and his associates. The relationship of Richard Bock and Louis Sullivan is interesting, as is the contact with Dwight Perkins and Robert Spencer, but the sculpture was not of great innovative force. Perhaps of most interest is the ability of Bock to work with many of the architects of the Chicago or Prairie School and the formation of ideas such as the globe motif that will be used in the work for Frank Lloyd Wright.

The story of Bock and Wright and Bock's later sculpture for the architects of the Prairie School will be discussed in the following issue of this journal.

34 The Williams house has not been located by this author, and it is unknown whether the relief is still extant.

Perhaps the scene alluded to the beauty of Lake Michigan, the body of water along which Evanston and Chicago form their eastern boundaries.

35 Hitchcock Hall, a men's dormitory, was begun in 1901 and finished in 1902. Exactly when Perkins contacted Bock is not known. Hitchcock Hall still stands on the corner of 57th and Ellis in Chicago.

## Book Reviews

*AN ORGANIC ARCHITECTURE, The Architecture of Democracy, by Frank Lloyd Wright. Lund Humphries Publishers, Ltd., and The M. I. T. Press, London and Cambridge, 1970, 82 pp. including plates, cloth, \$6.95.*

If wit and satirical criticism combined with homespun philosophy as espoused by none other than Frank Lloyd Wright is of any interest, then I highly recommend a recent re-publication of four lectures given by Wright in May, 1939. Wright delivered the series as holder of the Sir George Watson Chair of the Sulgrave Manor in England. Although a rather archaic and stuffy sounding title to be bestowed upon one of Wright's rebellious nature, the volume of lectures is one that preserves, fortunately for us, an impressive collection of Wrightian candor on a myriad of subjects not the least of which was architecture and its ramifications in a democratic society.

These lectures, published without editing or comment in 1939 and again in 1941, although preserving an introspective and enlightening capsule of Wright philosophy, remain relatively unknown compared to other works by or about him. Lund Humphries Publishers, Ltd. of London has now sought to alleviate this condition by publishing a photo-offset facsimile edition of the original. It is being distributed in the United States by M.I.T. Press under their imprint.

So full of varied topics and subject matter is this small book that one is perplexed when it comes to choose among them for mention. The titled subject, while ostensibly dealing with "democratic architecture," follows tangents that touch upon and intermingle a great many of the world's problems and considers what are the causative factors, and in some cases, what can and should be done about them. Some things, such as Wright's "Organic" and "Usonia" concepts receive lengthy explanations and examples, while other matters are relegated to the pith of a simple caustic statement. In the latter, one finds Wright at his best, his wit honed sharp by the bantering of questions proffered by his audience of young British architects and students. Although he admits about politics that, "I know little about politics; I confess that I respect politicians not at all," he nonetheless accuses capitalists, a term highly associated with the United States of whom Wright declares "own everything" through their strongholds of banks, insurance companies, brokerages, "and other money lending institutions."

Time as used by Wright is as variable as his subject matter, and is utilized by him to pull analogies from the past to uphold his statements on

the present, and predictions to cause contemplation on the future. Of the latter, Wright makes a statement concerning the future, twenty-five years hence (c. 1964) "If we are not able to see beyond the present and to plan accordingly for the future, we shall stay where we are — eventually to fight for existence in trenches in our city parks or rot in bomb-proof cellars." Certainly a relevant if not Orwellian statement.

Although dissatisfied with most of what he sees or knows of in the contemporary world, Wright does find a few things, *albeit few*, that he sincerely believes are right or good. Among them, naturally, is his own architecture as well as that of his "Lieber Meister" Louis Sullivan. Plaudets are also accorded architectures of the past which were, in his words, "Organic — in a sense," namely those of Egypt and the Gothic Middle Ages. Wright does make mention of several specific examples of his own work, although it is usually only to buttress or illustrate a role that architecture should play in democracy, or vice-versa. For those who know Wright mainly as a designer, they would do well also to know Wright as a thinker. The two are really inseparable. In these lectures Wright seems to have been caught up in the pleasure of his own company, but it is a company we can all enjoy.

Technically the book is adequate for its purpose, to reproduce Wright's four British lectures. The type is large and easily read, the total lecture text consisting of only forty-seven pages. There is a short anonymous introduction, with an equally short forward by Wright himself. A list of Wright's buildings and projects through 1939 and twenty-one pages of plates illustrating some of his work were retained in the facsimile as found in the original. The list however is neither complete nor very useful other than general reference since only project names, a date, and the city were listed. There are no addresses nor indication that the date refers to either design or erection. As for the illustrations, they have suffered somewhat when compared to the original, mainly in the loss of shadow detail, but in any case the plates serve their original purpose, that of a substitute for the slides and movies Wright used during the lectures. Some of the photographs I might point out are seldom seen views of well known Wright buildings. Neither the list or plates have any real bearing on the worth of this book.

I highly recommend its perusal by Wright buffs, and endorse it as a worthy addition to the book-shelf of any serious student of modern architecture and its thinkers.

Reviewed by Thomas Yanul  
Illinois Historic Sites Survey

*THE POPE-LEIGHEY HOUSE*, by Frank Lloyd Wright, an oral history published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. 1961, 120 pp., illus., cloth, \$6.50. (Cloth edition available only from The Prairie School Press). A paper edition is available from The National Trust.

*It is amazing to find how low cost housing in America is the crying need of the hour. I feel it is the most important field that we have and it has been neglected by our architects.*

With these words in 1936 Frank Lloyd Wright produced a 3 bedroom which cost \$4,800. including architect's fee. It was not one-of-a-kind prototype but the pilot model for a new type of house which Wright named "Usonian" meaning "of, or belonging to the United States". By 1959, the year of his death, Wright had designed over 300 Usonian houses, some 132 of which were built in 30 states of Usonia.

The basic idea of the Usonian house was one of simplicity, employment of natural materials, and use of factory methods of construction on the site, to achieve an architect-designed low cost house — one of Wright's fondest dreams. The houses were dreams but dreams made into reality. While they may have been no less costly to build than conventional houses they were no more expensive, and offered immeasurably more in human as well as architectural terms. The first Usonian clients were not the well-to-do self made businessmen of the Oak Park/Prairie years but struggling young professors, newspaper writers, and small town merchants. It is grimly shaking to realize that in 1971, 35 years of "advancement" after the inception of the Usonian house, these same struggling young people cannot even afford a tract house in suburbia much less an architect designed custom home.

The simple life these houses demanded was in keeping with the modest means and informal life style the clients already had. Usonian houses designed by Wright for wealthier clients were most often simply expanded low cost Usonian models. True to the spirit of a democratic architecture the only difference between low, medium and high cost housing was one of size. The materials used, quality of space, and relationship to nature was the same regardless of price. This concept could very well have provided the basis for a social revolution in which design excellence rather than economic ability would characterize the American dwelling place. However, the concept was ignored in 1939, in 1949, and in 1959, and it has taken the riots of Watts, Detroit, and Newark for designers to finally come face to face with architecture and democracy. Do we build as we say we believe?

The Usonian house provided a testing laboratory for Wright's ideas including new processes of heating and lighting, construction innovations, and use of standard details. The first Usonian house for Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Jacobs, Madison, Wisconsin, in 1936 was the first building to use Wright's invention of gravity heating. Once proven, the same heating system was installed in the Johnson Wax administration building as well as all of the later Usonian houses.

Fusing the lighting system and architecture into a harmonious unit was pioneered by Wright in the Prairie houses and the Usonian houses continued this experimentation. The Jacobs house had an exposed electrical raceway suspended from the ceiling which ran thru the entire house. Lighting fixtures were plugged into the raceway at various points depending on the type and amount of light needed for each space.

Panel wall construction (using plywood for the core-support rather than 2x4 studs) with tilt up wall construction was used in the construction of the Usonian houses. Most often the building site became the factory itself for wall fabrication but in some cases whole wall sections were shop fabricated and transported to the site for quick erection.

The use of a basic unit system or module upon which all walls and wall openings were based decreased the time/costs of design, working drawings, and construction, as well as ensuring a harmonious consistency within each house. Repetition of door and window sizes and use of a Standard Detail Sheet provided a standardization of construction for all the Usonian houses where ever they were built, further cutting building costs.

The definitive book on the Usonian houses has yet to be written but a tantalizing glimpse of what such a document could contain is in the small book devoted to a study of the Pope-Leighey house published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Pope-Leighey house was built in 1939 for Loren Pope, a young newspaper writer, and his family, near Falls Church, Virginia. The Popes moved from the Washington D.C. area in 1946 at which time the house was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Leighey. The Leigheys lived in the house until 1963 when the State of Virginia began demolition proceedings, clearing the way for a new highway which was to run right thru the house. The ensuing fight to save the house resulted in its removal to Woodlawn Plantation, Mt. Vernon, Virginia, under the protective wing of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The book contains actual correspondence between Loren Pope and Frank Lloyd Wright which

conveys the excitement and enthusiasm of both men in building something totally new far better than any observer could describe in their own words. Two other chapters are of particular interest in revealing the process by which this house was built and rebuilt. One contains an interview with Gordon Chadwick, the apprentice of Wright's in the Taliesin Fellowship who boarded with the Popes and acted as contractor and job supervisor. The other chapter is an interview with Howard Rikert, the builder of the original house and contractor for the disassembly, move, and reconstruction of the house. Both interviews are full of the day to day problems and solutions that accompany building a Frank Lloyd Wright house. These are intensely personal glimpses which make the whole process extremely human and offer fascinating insights.

The house was featured in an article called *The Love Affair of a Man and His House* which appeared in the August 1948 issue of *House Beautiful* magazine. The article, written by Loren Pope, has become a classic in the company of Usonian house owners. The National Trust book contains a sequel by Mr. Pope, *Twenty-Five Years Later — Still a Love Affair*. It describes how Pope learned of Wright, the events which led to the design of the house, and the reason for the sale of the house in 1946 to the Leighys.

From this point the Pope-Leighley history is related by Mrs. Leighley in a humorously written description of what it is like to really live in a Frank Lloyd Wright house. The pruning away of non-essentials in order to live in harmony with the house is lovingly recalled.

Other sections of the book are less significant but offer fill in material on the site and landscaping, interior design and furnishings, and the history of the house and its move to Woodlawn. Two additional chapters, one by H. Allen Brooks and the other by Edgar Kauffmann, Jr. relate the Pope-Leighley house to the whole panorama of Frank Lloyd Wright's life and works. Unfortunately, photographs of the house under construction and reproductions of the original working drawings are too small to be of any use in understanding the design-construction process.

The book, rather than reading like a historical tract becomes a scenario and the characters (Wright, Pope, Leighley, Chadwick, Rikert) become real people revealing their part in the drama. They dream reality, realize dreams, confront obstacles, overcome problems, and work out solutions.

What can be learned from the Usonian house experiments in terms of modest cost dwellings today? Certainly the natural materials used prior to

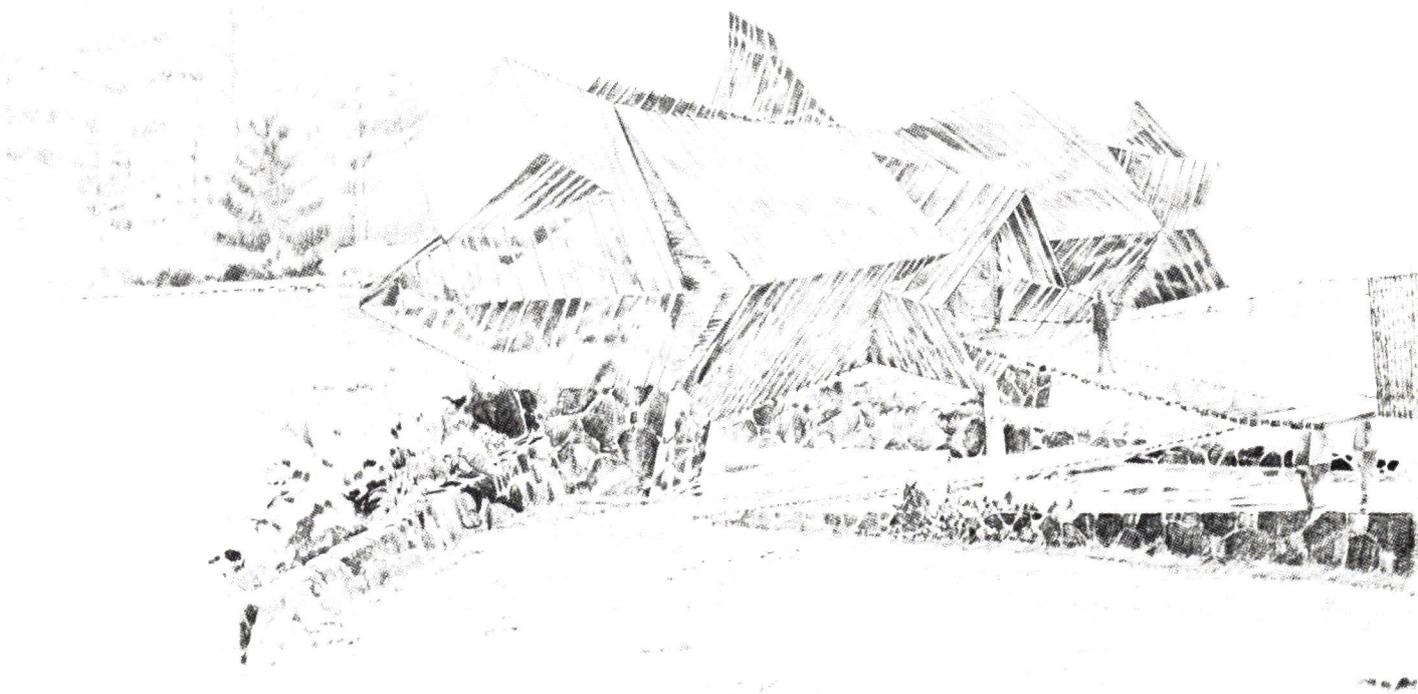
1959 offer no cost advantages now. Tidewater Red Cypress is almost unobtainable today, brick has soared in price, and colored finely finished concrete is no longer an inexpensive floor. Methods of construction which took advantage of the cheap labor rates of the depression are no longer useful. Brick chimneys with horizontally raked joints, board and batten walls lovingly screwed together with brass screws are only economical when carpenters get \$1.00 an hour, bricklayers 90¢ an hour. Even the hierarchy of room sizes which the Usonian house explored by trading minimal bedrooms, baths, and kitchen for one really large living room should be examined in light of family life in 1971. With extremes in work/study habits, entertainment preferences, and time schedules between family members can one public space, however grand, serve the entire range of demands?

It is easy to say that the lessons of the Usonian house is in the realm of the spirit. "All values are human values," said Wright, "else not valuable". Frank Lloyd Wright could and did put his uncopyable stamp of human values on the Usonians and this is not a transferable quality. But it is not copy material we are looking for but a way of making the individual house viable today — economically, aesthetically, practically — for the 75% of the Usonian population who still prefer to live in a single family dwelling.

Technology has been hailed as the solution to the housing problem from Bucky Fuller's 4D Dymaxion House in 1927 to the federal government's Operation Breakthrough in 1970. The meager industrial output is due to an array of problems not the least of which has been the poor visual result.

What possible uses can a book on one small Usonian house built in 1939 have on the problem of housing 26 million people in the next 10 years? Edgar Kauffmann, Jr. says in his chapter in the book "they (the Usonian houses) contain the seed of a sane approach to prefabrication without monotony." The book should be encouragement for all designers and architects currently working on prefabricated, mass-produced, factory made, production dwellings (including mobile homes). If they can learn from the Usonian experiment then the teachers, writers, and small businessmen who dream in rented apartments of better life in a home of their own can find cause for hope. It is a matter of necessity that the quality of life revealed in the Pope-Leighley book be made to live again. What existed as an opportunity for a few in 1939 should and can be made available to many in 1971.

Reviewed by Donald Kalec  
Chicago Art Institute



*BRUCE GOFF, A Portfolio, designed and compiled by William Murphy and Louis Muller, with an introduction by Herb Greene. The Architectural League of New York and The American Federation of Arts, 1970, 28 plates plus text, boxed, \$10.00.*

This portfolio is a boxed selection of twenty-two 11" x 17" prints of plans, renderings and photographs of seventeen projects and executed buildings by Bruce Goff. Also included are six half-size sheets of working drawings, an essay by Bruce Goff, an introduction by Herb Greene and a list of 236 buildings and projects dating from 1918 to 1968.

The first impression upon receiving this portfolio is disappointment in the actual "box" housing the prints which seems very temporary in nature and not up to the fine quality of the prints and the format of the presentation of the material. However, this apparent flaw in the portfolio makes one tend to reflect upon ideas for the use and preservation of the material contained within, and thereby immediately exaggerates the potential differences between the values of this type of presentation and the usual bound book-type format of presentation. Upon reflecting upon the means to preserve this material and use it to the fullest one immediately becomes more personally involved in the material as a participant rather than merely a "viewer of a book."

The first major advantage of this portfolio is that the description of the material is all presented on one sheet, with references to the plate numbers,

leaving the prints uncluttered in reference to titles and descriptions which might detract from the rendering or photograph. Therefore the prints are immediately seen as objects to be matted, framed or otherwise mounted to studio or office walls for more long term viewing and study. This is particularly important in a study of Goff work as the order and discipline inherent in his work is not always apparent in what appears to be a myriad of forms and diverse and complex compositions.

The unbound sheets are also meaningful in studying relationships of plans, sections and elevations which is more difficult to do in the more sequential revelations of the book form format. This is very apparent in studying the Duncan House which is a beautifully composed plan of interweaving arcs and circles but would be difficult to understand in relationship to the elevation without being able to juxtapose plan and elevation in a direct projection. This study is more revealing than numerous photographs would be, although the inclusion of photographs would have been helpful. (see *PSR* p. 14, Vol. VII, Number 2, 1970 for photos of the Duncan House). The six half-size prints (12" x 19-1/2") of working drawings of the addition to the Joe and Etsuko Price house are also an invaluable aid to the study of spatially complex structure and are a rather rare offering in regard to material usually presented about Goff.

The material presented in this portfolio that was previously unpublished is obviously important and



interesting, but equally important is the inclusion of original renderings of a size that make them more descriptive than photographs. The perspective of the Hyde residence is a case in point, as it more nearly approximates the feeling, sense of detail and design concept as experienced than any of the photographs. In this case the dark green colors of the actual building make it difficult to photograph, so the drawing more realistically delineates the building as it exists. This is particularly true of Herb Greene's renderings of the Bavinger house, in plan and elevation.

In regard to the renderings included in this selection it should be mentioned that proper credit is given to the delineators, which is all too often not the case. The delineators in most cases were students at the University of Oklahoma, and the individual styles of delineation could be considered as indicative of the work encouraged by Bruce Goff during his tenure as Chairman of the School of Architecture at the University of Oklahoma. The importance of the credit given to the delineators is somewhat indicative of one of the major contributions of Goff as an educator. It would appear that Goff has exercised a rather uncanny talent of being able to ascertain exceptional abilities in students even before that ability was made apparent and to encourage that ability in its inherent and individual direction rather than encouraging conformance to generally accepted contemporary standards.

The emphasis herein placed upon the value of studying relationships of the plans, sections and

elevations (including all details of the working drawings) rather than interpreting photographs should perhaps be elaborated upon. It is due to the particular dimensional nature of Goff's work that makes this necessary, and should help explain why the tag of "paper architecture" is a very inappropriate description of Goff architecture. In studying photographs taken of the work of Goff it is usually apparent that the photos do not represent what was seen and experienced. This shows the conflict of trying to represent in two dimensions something that exists in a multi-dimensional form which is expressing the full potential of our space/time continuum. In contrast it can be seen that photographs taken of much of the best of the "International Style" architecture look better than the actual building did when viewing it in three dimensions. This is primarily due to the fact that these buildings were conceived on paper, in two dimensions and studied to look their best in that form. When these two dimensional designs are extruded in three dimensional space as buildings, they then represent the inherent ambiguities of this approach and thusly are not as good in reality as they would appear on the original drawing or consequently as a photograph. The photograph then becomes a method of transforming the building back into the two dimensional form in which it was conceived. This is to explain in general that Goff architecture cannot be expressed realistically in two dimensions and is intended to encourage the first hand multi-dimensional experience of this

work in its final, true existence.

Meanwhile, we must in part depend on the "media as our message" and interpret it as best we can. The March, 1970 *Architectural Record* stated "Goff Show Makes Wave in New York City," referring to crowds jamming the New York Architectural League's extensive exhibition of drawings, slides and prints of buildings by Bruce Goff. For those unable to see that show, this portfolio has been made available and as such has a great value . . . a value enhanced by the rather limited edition published at this time.

Reviewed by Vincent E. Van de Venter  
Architect

*THE PRAIRIE SCHOOL, The Domestic Architecture of Chicago, by Gerald Mansheim. N. I. Associates, Inc., Iowa City, Iowa, 1971, 80 slides plus 19 pp. text. \$150.00 set.*

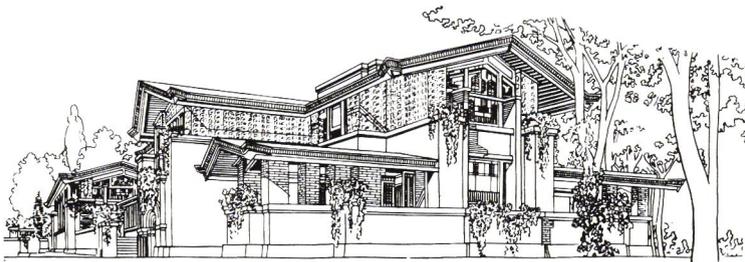
Strictly speaking, I suppose that one should not review a collection of slides on a book review page. In this case, however, we have much more than a mere collection of pretty pictures. Mr. Mansheim of N. I. Associates, who are professional photographers, rather than architects or historians, they are, nevertheless, extremely knowledgeable on the subject of midwestern architecture.

In their travels throughout the midwest in pursuit of their vocation, they have become fascinated by the architecture of the area. And, since they work in a wide area, usually traveling by automobile in order to carry their photographic paraphernalia, they have ample opportunity to find those bits and gems of architecture which so often are missed by the professional historian. Moreover, Mr. Mansheim has taken the time to research his findings and record names, dates, and all the other information one wishes he had when he sees a superb example of the architect's art in some long forgotten periodical where the editor conveniently forgot to list such "minor" items.

The set of photographs we have before us now consists of eighty standard 2 x 2 color slides. They

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*The Susan Lawrence Dana house. Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect.*



HOME OFFICE - BANNERSTONE HOUSE - SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

range from Richardson and Sullivan to Wright and his contemporaries, through Percy Bentley and Barry Byrne, with twenty-two architects named. Only four of the shots are unidentified as to architect. All include addresses, most have dates.

The set comes in a standard carousel along with a nineteen page commentary which includes a paragraph about each slide. They are roughly in chronological order ending in 1915, although those few unidentified houses may be later.

The set is in such a form that one could, if he wished, use it exactly as received. On the other hand, one could also insert, delete or expand upon the collection. The set we have for review is slightly uneven in quality of printing but I am assured by N. I. Associates that this is being taken care of. Knowing their other work, I have no doubt this will be so.

The collection of slides of a particular style of architecture can be a time consuming and costly task. We suggest that efforts such as we have here are a valuable addition to any historian's library. This is the first of three sets of slides the firm plans, the others already announced and in the works being on Wright's Early Works and Sullivan's Banks. We look forward to the future issues.

Reviewed by W. R. Hasbrouck

## Letters to the Editors

Sirs:

. . . Your price quote on *Bruce Goff in Architecture* by Takenobu Mohri is incorrect. A price of \$40.00 was quoted to me by Satoree Yoneyama, President, Kenchiku Planning Center in a (recent letter) . . .

Donald Palmer  
San Francisco, California

(Ed. Note:) Mr. Palmer is partially correct. We quoted the correct price only to discover later that the publishers were selling the book for \$16.75 in Japan while selling it for \$40.00 outside their own country. As a matter of fact, they first offered it in the United States for \$50.00. The book is a fine one, but we think it extremely unfortunate that the publishers have taken this attitude. For this reason we are not able to offer it to our regular customers.

Sirs:

Thank you for the fine article on Bruce Goff in your recent issue of *The Prairie School Review*. As a long-time admirer of Mr. Goff's work (even though it is completely outside my professional area), I was most pleased with the clarity and insight of your recent coverage. Of especial pleasure was the fact that its author apparently derived the majority of his

information from Mr. Goff himself, instead of utilizing secondary and tertiary sources — a characteristic all too common in the academic world. Thank you again. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,  
Charles L. Adams  
Professor of English  
University of Nevada

Sirs:

Bruce Goff is unquestionably one of the significant mavericks of the U.S. architectural scene, and the illustrations accompanying Robert Kostka's recent article in *The Prairie School Review*, aptly attests to his preeminence. Yet something must be said about Kostka's article itself. It does neither justice to Goff himself, nor to the author. Of course Goff is in a way a "loner," and yet his work beautifully mirrors the changes in architectural fashion which have been going on over the past decades. For example much of Goff's work of the '20s is, in its angular jaggedness, as "expressionist" as the then concurrent work of Frank Lloyd Wright, Lloyd Wright or of R.M. Schindler. In fact, much of Goff's vocabulary of this decade relies, as did that of the Wright's and Schindler, on a combination of the early Moderne and the Pre-Columbian. Thus Goff's 1923 study for a studio or his study for a glass house in Tulsa of 1929 could just as well have come from the hands of Lloyd Wright.

That Goff was not thoroughly aware of Frank Lloyd Wright when he produced such schemes as "A Study for a Stucco House with a Reflecting Pool," or the "Frame House with a 4-Way Fireplace" (both of 1918) or his 1920, "A Modern Home of the Midwest Type," is frankly unbelievable. These designs are too knowing and sophisticated to have been derived ". . . by houses that had in turn been influenced by the Prairie School . . . perhaps contractor house." By 1915 or 1916 when Goff presumably went to work, the designs and buildings of Wright and other Prairie architects had been well publicized both in the popular and professional press and therefore were readily available to any interested person.

To assert that Goff's ". . . roots are firmly in the Oklahoma Prairie" is one of those frequently encountered assertions that is as meaningless as one can imagine. His "Frame House with a 4-Way Fireplace," is quite close to the early Australian work of Walter B. Griffen (*sic*). Does this mean that Griffen's (*sic*) work is of the Oklahoma Prairie, or that Goff has transplanted Australia to the Western Prairie? Goff's "Glass House" for Tulsa could be closely matched by the designs and buildings of the two Wrights and Schindler, which according to

them, were specifically meant to mirror Southern California.

If these and other observations are Goff's: fine and good; the historian should indeed fully and accurately record them. But they should not be presented as the author has done as historic fact. From Goff, an assertion that, "His forms seem at once both geometric and organic, archetypal while still unique to each building . . ." is pretentious, obscure, but perhaps excusable. But for an historian to make such a statement is deplorable. Such an obscure use of language may be great for a TV commercial, where one is normally expected to put aside one's critical faculties, but it is hardly excusable for an historian attempting to explain the designs of an important architect. The historian's task should be to clarify, not to confuse, to critically perceive what the architect is about and what he has accomplished, not to obscure his subject with a lavish, imprecise rhetoric.

Sincerely,  
David Gebhard, Director  
The Art Galleries  
University of California, Santa Barbara

*Mr. Kostka replies:*

Sirs:

I think page 7 clearly indicates *when* Mr. Goff did and did not know about Frank Lloyd Wright's work, as told to me by Mr. Goff himself. As to the impossibility of a 12 year old boy living in pre-World War I Tulsa, Oklahoma *not* knowing all about Wright's work, it is as likely *then* as it would be *now*.

In his book review of *Bruce Goff*, (*PSR*, Vol. VII, #4) Richard Helstern brilliantly discussed the problem of Goff's forms, their complexity and inventiveness. My own analysis was not as well defined as Helstern's. "Organic" is a way of organization, in no way related to the regularity or irregularity of the units that comprise the system. Both Goff and Mies use geometric units, but within different systems of relationships. Mies's early buildings were asymmetrical within a sharply defined vertical and horizontal grid. As Mies's work evolved, it assumed a classical form of symmetry. Goff on the other hand uses geometric elements in either a sharply defined grid, or one with a graduated phasing. It is Organic in system and can be either regular or irregular.

The archetypal form for the Bavinger House is a spiral, a complex symbol of growth, cycles, etc., yet is a unique solution for the client whose favorite hobby is growing indoor plants.

Certainly there are always many cross-currents of ideas at any time, and in the 1920's Art Deco was certainly one of them. Yet why assume that these important innovators had to *have influences*, rather

than *be influences* in their own right. They were often very original in their work.

The continued unawareness of Non-Western architectures by many architectural historians is appalling, and frequently leads to confusions about their relationships to Western building. One such common confusion is the supposed Pre-Columbian influences upon the Prairie School. Ignoring the old tradition for carved stone walls within Japan itself, the myth persists that the Imperial Hotel was a "Mayan Building." If one assumes that Architecture is Space rather than Ornament, I have yet to find any example of influence at all, and I have experienced Pre-Columbian spaces from the American Southwest, through the Valley of Mexico, Oaxaca, Yucatan and on into Peru itself.

Ornaments from all cultures have been eclectically used, but no one considers New York's Summit Hotel a Pre-Columbian building or the Tribune Tower truly Gothic. One of the few examples of a Pre-Columbian kind of space in a Wrightian building that I can think of, that is usually pointed out as a prime example of *another* architectural style, is Falling Water.

I regret that the writing style was not up to the highest standard of the television commercial . . . a form that demands clarity, simplicity and persuasiveness . . . desirable qualities in *any* writing.

Robert Kostka

Sirs:

As a long time reader of *The Prairie School Review*, I have come to note that you seem to have a catholic range of interests based on your primary thesis that the Prairie School was and is a major American architectural achievement. You are right.

Upon reviewing various (and too few) of your readerships "Letters to the Editors", I find that when you do an article on some relatively well-known figure, you apparently get quite good and sometimes critical response. However, when you cover an unknown, such as Mr. Engelbrecht's article of last year on Trost, I see no comment. Why?

Lloyd H. Hobson  
Chicago

*(Ed. Note:) Mr. Hobson brings up an important point. We find that articles about well-known figures generate volumes of mail, much of which is valuable and some of which is repetitious. It is not possible to print all such letters. It is also true that we hear little concerning the lesser known architects. We believe this to be due to the fact that our professional historian subscribers, not having previously been aware of some of the subjects covered, do not feel in a position to criticize. We suggest that constructive criticism is always welcome.*

## Preview

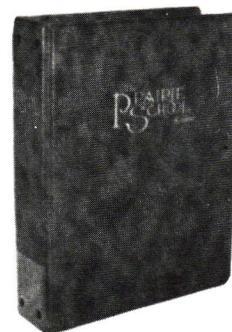
The next issue of Volume VIII of *The Prairie School Review* will complete the story of Sculptor Richard W. Bock with *The Mature Collaborations*. Bocks' work with not only Frank Lloyd Wright but with a number of other Prairie School architects will be covered in detail by Donald Hallmark.

Due to the length of next quarter's issue, we do not plan to have any books reviewed. We do plan to include some letters to the editors and look forward to receiving such material.

Articles concerning the Prairie School of architecture are invited from contributors. Those planning a major article should write in advance giving a fairly complete outline of what is proposed. Measured drawings, sketches and photographs are also welcome. Original material will be returned if a stamped, self addressed envelope is enclosed.

Contributors are asked to write for our style manual "Notes for Contributors" as noted in Volume VII, Number 2.

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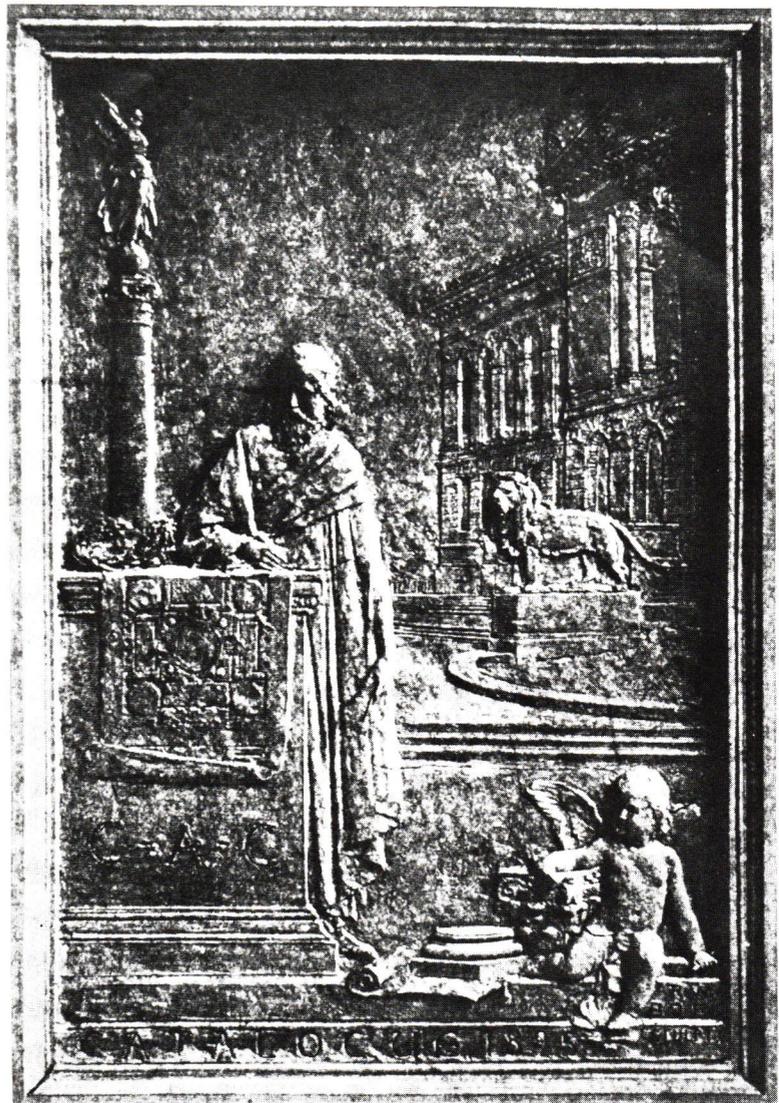
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Letters to the author from:  
Marion Herzog  
Henry-Russell Hitchcock  
Grant Carpenter Manson  
Hugh Morrison  
Richard Nickel  
Mark L. Peisch  
Mrs. J. Malcolm Smith  
John Lloyd Wright  
Dorathi Bock Pierre



*Inside the cover of the 1895 Chicago Architectural Club Exhibition Catalogue was the following advertisement: "Plaster casts of the cover design 24 inches, by Richard W. Bock, Sculptor, may be had by addressing Mr. Bock at the Club House. Price \$1.50." Models and casts are now lost. The price gives some indication of the relatively small size and unimportance of the commission.*

