

1950's Architecture

by Peter Healey

Demand for Architecture

At the end of WWII thousands of soldiers were returning to the U.S. to start families that would need new houses. At the end of the war there was also a rise in demand for consumer products. This rise also created the need for new houses to be built. Resulting in these demands came a new age of architecture in which new styles and technology would flourish and advance.

Frank Lloyd Wright

Leading the way in this new age of architecture was Frank Lloyd Wright. Today he is known as one of America's most important and influential architects of all time. He is famous for his style of organic architecture. Organic architecture describes buildings that harmonize with their environments and complement the lives and work of their inhabitants. Wright designed approximately 1,000 buildings, of which 400 were actually built and 280 are still standing today.



Frank Lloyd Wright 1967

Fallingwater

One of Frank Lloyd Wright's most recognizable and famous buildings is Fallingwater. In 1991 the American Institute of Architecture hailed it "the best all-time work of American architecture." It is also considered to be the most famous residence ever built. This masterpiece truly uses Wright's concept of organic architecture. It was designed for the Pittsburgh department store owner Edgar J. Kaufman and his wife Liliane. This astonishing house is built over and through a 20-foot waterfall in the wilderness of Pittsburgh. This is personally my favorite Frank Lloyd Wright building.



Me at Fallingwater 2011

Louis I. Kahn

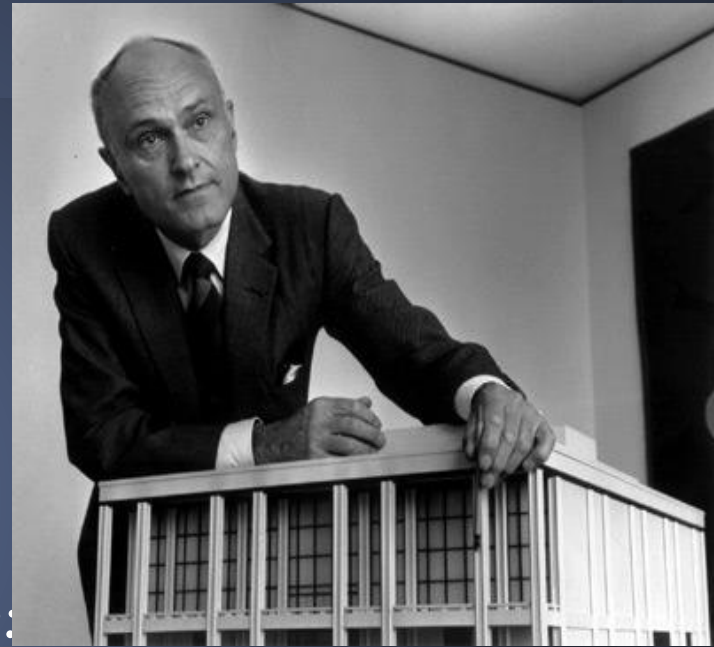
Louis Isadore Kahn led a major shift in American architectural thought in the mid-1950s based on the inspirational dimension of design that emphasized the need to search for what the building wanted to be. Born on the island of Osel in Estonia on February 20, 1901, his family immigrated to Philadelphia in 1905. He then later became a U.S. citizen in 1915. In 1947 he became a professor of architecture at Yale where he further influenced people. Kahn's philosophy in his buildings was to call for a more personal approach to link architectural concepts with human values. This idea influenced American architecture greatly and can still be seen today.



Louis Kahn 1954

Philip Johnson

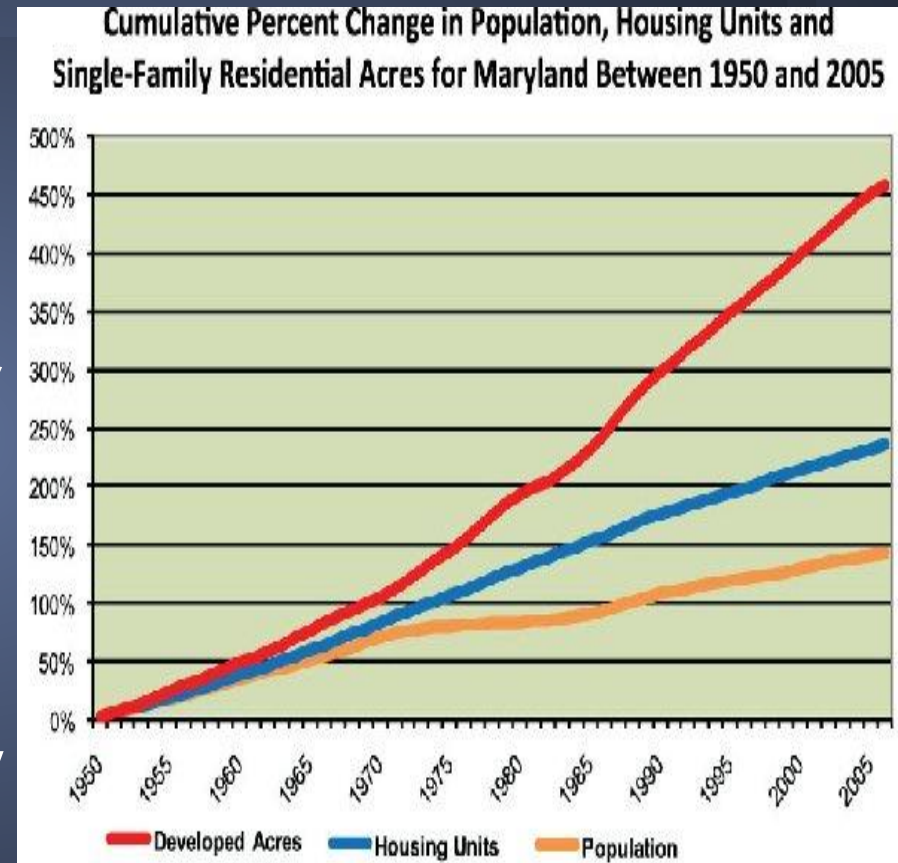
Philip Johnson was a dominant figure in American architecture as a author, historian, museum director, and a practicing architect. Johnson was born into a wealthy family in Cleveland, Ohio, on July 8, 1906. While a director of the department of architecture at New York's Modern Museum of Modern Art he organized the momentous "Modern Architecture" exhibit. He also wrote a very influential book titled, *The International Style: American Architecture since 1922*. This book defined the modern style of architecture know as "International". This style described designs that were simple and functional that could be widely produced using modern materials such as concrete, steel, and glass. This idea of International style of architecture is shown throughout America to this day.



Philip Johnson 1957

Impact and significance of architecture on America

During the 1950s the need for houses and buildings was very high. This was because of the many soldiers coming home. These soldiers started many new families that were buying houses. This graph shows that since the 1950's along with the population the need for houses has greatly increased. It is because of this that American development of new architectural styles and technology would prove to be very important. Due to the new technology and styles created by many influential architects of the 1950's America was able to flourish and our economy greatly gained from these architects' achievements.



Number of population and number of Housing units in the U.S. since 1950.

Citations

Bradley, Becky. "1950-1959." *American Cultural History*. Lone Star College-Kingwood Library, 1998. Web. 7 Feb. 2011.

"Frank Lloyd Wright." Image. Cirker, Hayward and Blanche Cirker, eds. *Dictionary of American Portraits*, 1967.
American History. ABC-CLIO, 2012. Web. 26 Feb. 2012.

"Fallingwater." *American History*. ABC-CLIO, 2012. Web. 26 Feb. 2012.

Kahn, Louis I. (1987). *Louis I. Kahn: Complete Work 1935-1974 (2nd Rev. and Enl. Ed edition ed.)*. Kirkhauser Verlag AG. p.437.

Harmon, Justin, et. al. "Louis I. Kahn." *American History*. ABC-CLIO, 2012. Web. 26 Feb. 2012.

"Louis I. Kahn." Image. AP/Wide World Photos. *American History*. ABC-CLIO, 2012. Web. 26 Feb. 2012

"Philip Johnson." *American History*. ABC-CLIO, 2012. Web. 26 Feb. 2012.

"Nation & World Innovation, influential architect Philip Johnson, Seattle Times Newspaper".
seattletimes.nwsourc.com.