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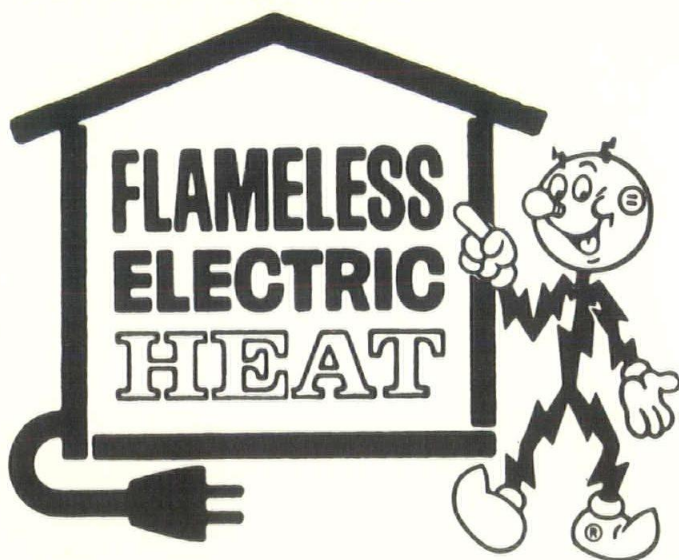
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# SKYLINES

and  
MIDWEST ARCHITECT

Vol. 14 No. 6

June 1964

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Cover Design by Roy D. Campbell

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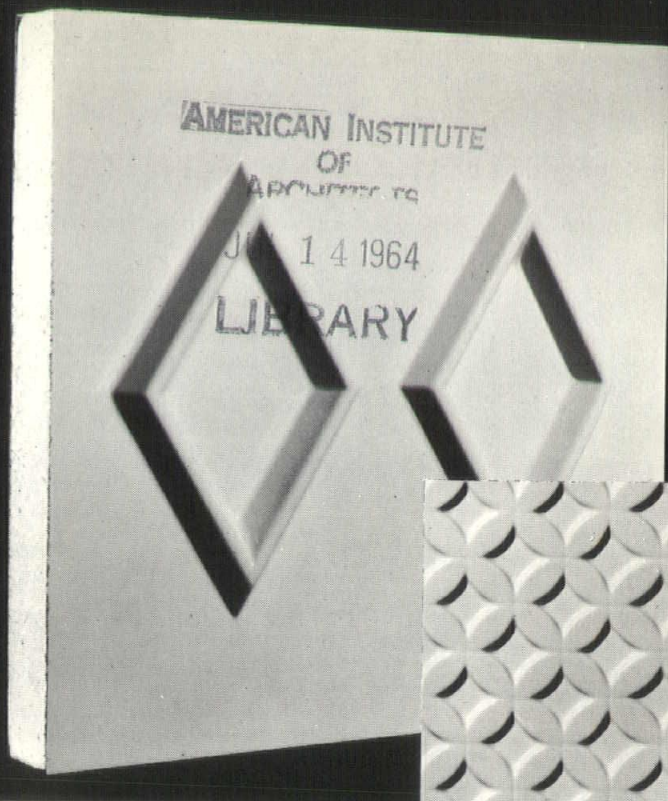
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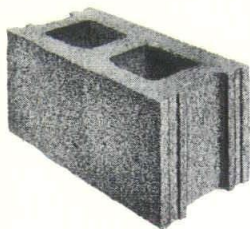
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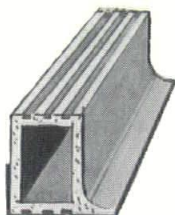
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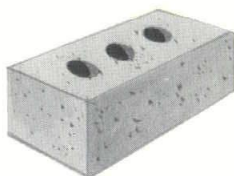
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LOUIS GEIS

## President's Page

In all probability the geographic location of St. Louis may have been responsible for the record-breaking representation of our chapter at the recent National A.I.A. Convention. The Kansas City group was made up of more than thirty-five members, most of whom were accompanied by their wives. Those who attended, I am sure, will "spread-the-word" to those not in attendance as to the fruitfulness of these events.

The Central States region, we are sure, emerged leaving a very distinct impression on the other regions, as well as the national office, with our Director being responsible for the most impressive portion of the program, our candidate for Secretary of the Institute being elected, and six new fellowships coming into being.

We have always wanted to be a force in the Institute – and now we are. Let us use this force for the betterment of ourselves, our Chapter and the Institute.

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# New Members and Membership Changes

## ASSOCIATES



RICHARD N. BILLS

Southwest High School - 1948  
Kansas University at Lawrence - 1953 -  
B.S.  
A.I.A. Associate 1955-1961 terminated  
due to conflicting schedules.  
1959- Folger & Pearson

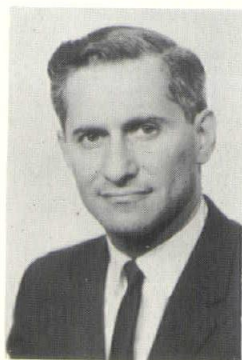
JACK L. BLOOM

Paseo High - 1951 graduate  
U. of K. at Lawrence, Ks. 1956 B.S. in  
Arch.  
Chief Draftsman for McCall-Watson  
Registered Missouri 1961 - Kansas 1956



LEON MASLAN

Central High - 1929  
Junior College - 2 in '31  
U. of Illinois at Urbana - 1934 BSCE  
Registered Missouri and Kansas 1951  
Practicing Architect since 1949



JOSEPH J. OSHIVER

Overbrook High, Philadelphia - 1939  
U. P. Philadelphia - 3 years  
Michigan State at Lansing - 1944 ASTP  
degree  
U. Illinois - 1950 graduated B.S. in Arch.  
Practiced 1957-63 in New York  
Specializing in space analysis, facilities  
planning and interior designing.  
Registered: Missouri 1963, Kansas 1964

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## New Members

### RONALD A. SALTS

Wyandotte High - 1956  
K.C. Ks. Jr. College - 1 year  
U. of Ks., Lawrence - 1962 - B.A.  
Jr. Draftsman Black & Veatch



### CHARLES LEE TERRY

K. C., Ks. Jr. College and  
K. C., Mo. Jr. College and  
U. of K.C. night classes  
U. of Ks., Lawrence - 1963 B.S. Arch  
and Eng.  
Draftsman for Tanner-Linscott & Assoc.,  
Inc.

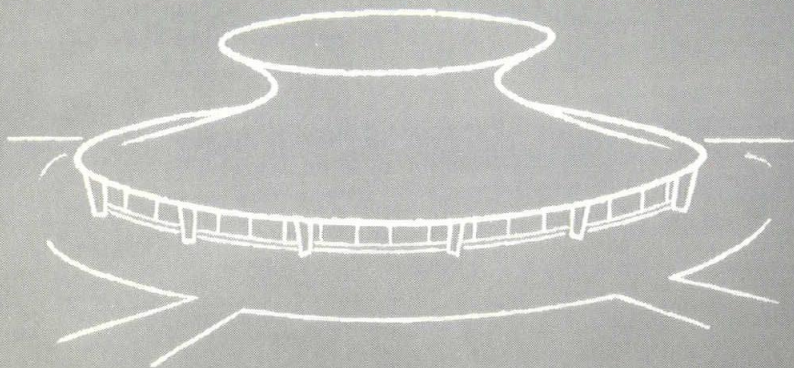


### KANSAS CITY DELEGATION TO 1964 CONVENTION

Though Kansas City Chapter members attending the national convention in St. Louis number more than twenty, some of the delegates posed for this picture during a meeting last month. Standing are: John T. Murphy, Angus McCallum, William M. Conrad, and Herbert E. Duncan, Jr. Seated are Gene E. Lefebvre, Frank H. Fisher and Louis H. Geis.



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# THE LAST WORK OF LOUIS CURTISS

by Donald L. Hoffmann

*New facts are being learned about the architecture and life of Louis Curtiss (1865-1924) of Kansas City. His career was first discussed at length by Fred T. Comee in an article published last August in Progressive Architecture and reprinted in Skylines.*

Already, Louis Curtiss had begun to seclude himself in his third floor apartment at 1118 McGee Street when Harry G. Miller, Sr., came to him in 1919 for a house.

Miller operated the Kansas City Pattern and Model works, and knew Curtiss because the architect had come to him for architectural models. "I did a world of work for him," Miller recalled recently. "He enjoyed making perspectives, and we made models for him."

(In particular, Miller recalls making a model of a Curtiss project for a Masonic Temple. The design called for a pyramidal roof. Someone had told Curtiss that the slope of the sides were not sufficiently steep. Curtiss used the model to argue that the pyramid would be viewed from below, making the sides appear much steeper than they did in his sketches. The temple, Miller says, never was built.)

When Miller asked for house plans, Curtiss was no longer an active architect. He was pursuing his structural studies without any particular commission in mind. Curtiss pulled out some old plans for a house he called "The Home of the Future," offering to adapt them to Miller's needs. He told Miller the plans once won him a prize in Paris.

The formal education of Curtiss remains uncertain. Born in Belleville, Ontario, Curtiss was in Kansas City as early as 1887, when he won third place in a competition by the Kansas City Architectural Sketch Club for a clock tower. Curtiss then was only 22 years

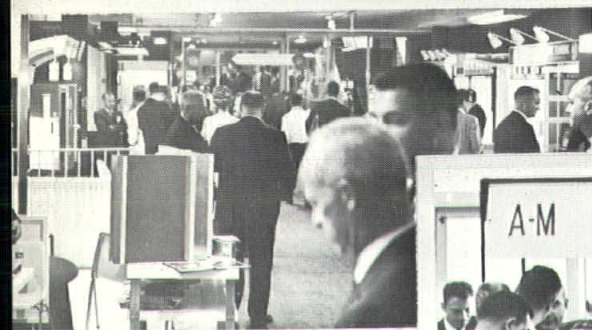
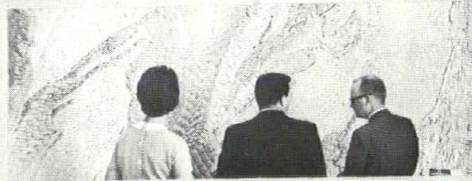
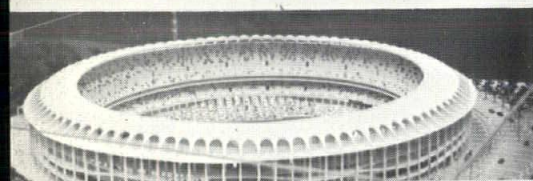
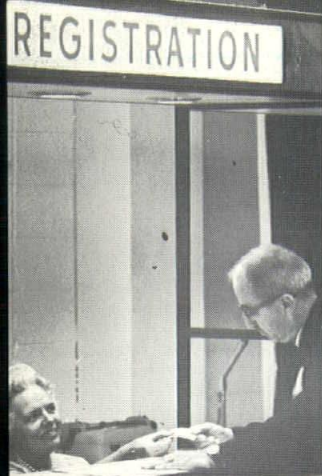
old. He later told friends he studied engineering at the University of Toronto. However, the school's records do not confirm that Curtiss was ever there.

In 1902 an article in The Kansas City Star, concerning the opening of the Willis Wood Theater, designed by Curtiss, reported that Curtiss had his plans for a courthouse exhibited in the Beaux Arts Salon while he was studying at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris in 1896. Miller, however, believes Curtiss was in Paris shortly after the turn of the century. Perhaps Curtiss was at the Beaux Arts more than once; but the school has not responded to recent inquiries about him.

Thus the date of the original conception of "The Home of the Future" is a mystery. Miller accepted Curtiss's proposal, and when Curtiss objected that Miller's lot was too small, Miller accommodated him by buying a fine corner site at 2204 Washington Boulevard, Kansas City, Kansas, where the home now stands. Foundations were begun late in 1920 and the house was completed in 1921. Miller and his family have lived there since.

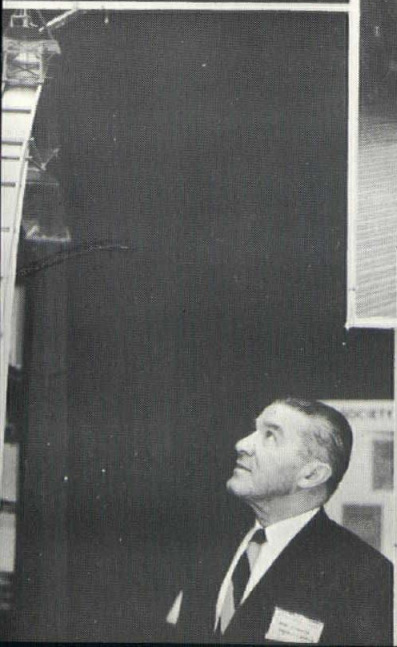
The Miller house from the street appears to be a large bungalow in the Spanish style, with stuccoed walls and tiled roof. It stands high above the street level, affording much privacy. The house is 86 feet long, and inside seems even more spacious. The Curtiss exterior motifs include the sturdy cypress trellis patterns, similar to those of the Norman



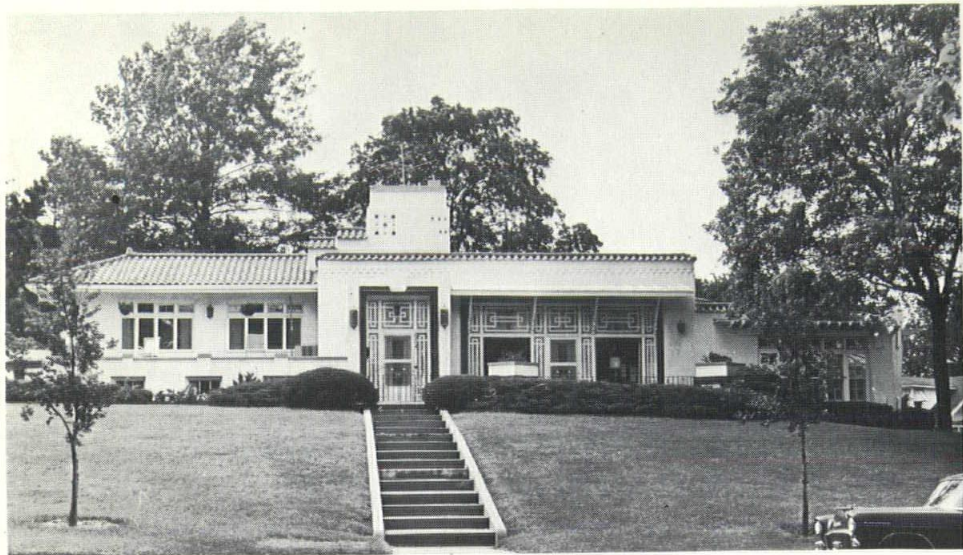




THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS  
ANNUAL CONVENTION  
★ 1964 ★







**Entrance**

The Harry G. Miller, Sr., house at 2204 Washington Boulevard in Kansas City, Kansas, was the last building by the Kansas City architect, Louis Curtiss. It was constructed in 1920 and 1921. Curtiss died in 1924.

Tromanhauser house of 1914 at 3603 West Roanoke Drive, Kansas City, and the clerestory panels of streaked amber with lighting concealed behind them.

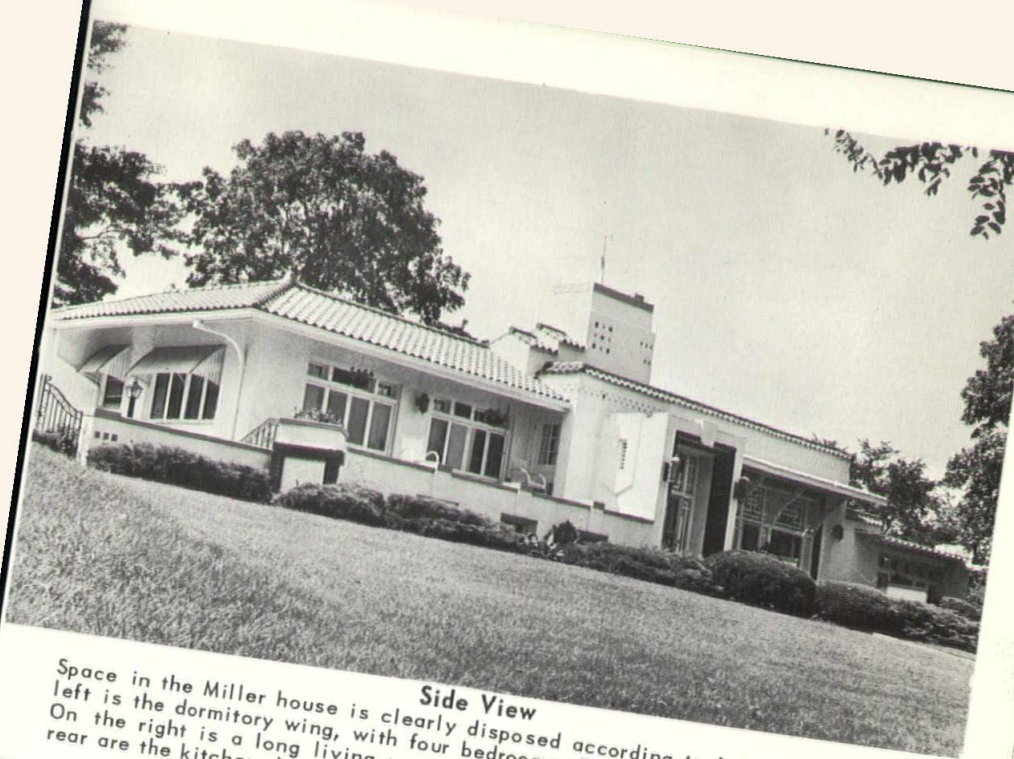
Inside, the Miller house is also richly decorated. Patterns designed by Curtiss are stencilled onto walls and even certain pieces of furniture. One enters through a small foyer. Ahead are steps upward to the bedroom level; to the left are steps leading up to a door opening onto a front terrace, and to the right is a wall broken by two compound-arched entrances, one on either side of the fireplace, to the living room.

The living room is extraordinary. It is in the form of a tunnel vault based on a low, three-centered arch, with no demarcation between walls and ceiling. This continuous surface is ornamented with arabesques executed in very low relief by applying sand through stencils, with the surface uniformly covered with gold leaf. The color is not brilliant, and works rather well with the red brick courses forming the pointed-arch entrances and the red brick fireplace, and with the dark oak trim at the far end of the room.

As one might expect, the room is acoustically very alive. Besides its oriental splendor, Curtiss may have had musical advantages in mind when he planned the vaulting. Curtiss in his own apartment (which Miller still calls a "Turkish harem") had an organ given to him by William Rockhill Nelson, founder of The Star, which he used to enjoy playing at unseemly hours of night.

Steps at the end of the living room lead down to a porch, once screened, but now glazed in. Parallel to the living room, and directly behind it, are the kitchen, breakfast nook and dining room. The opposite side of the house is the dormitory wing, with three bedrooms, two of which face the elevated front terrace, and a master bedroom suite. Beneath the dormitory wing are four finished basement rooms for recreation and entertainment. Since the bedrooms are several feet above grade, the basement rooms below are well lighted by daylight. On still a lower level, beneath the living and dining spaces, are the basement garage and utility areas.

Continued on page 15



**Side View**

Space in the Miller house is clearly disposed according to function. On the left is the dormitory wing, with four bedrooms. Two face the raised terrace. On the right is a long living room, stepping down to a porch. In the right rear are the kitchen, breakfast nook and dining room.

Continued on page 20

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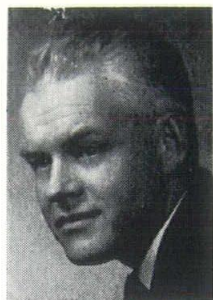
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## "OZ" THORSON ELECTED SECRETARY OF THE INSTITUTE

The Central States Region can be justly proud of its victorious candidate for the office of Secretary of the Institute, O. H. "Oz" Thorson, of Waterloo, Iowa. Elected to his new post during the National Convention in St. Louis, "Oz" will assume his new duties on July 1.

Thorson, a partner in the firm of Thorson, Brom and Broshar, Waterloo, has served a three year term as Central States Regional Director. He is a past president of the Iowa Chapter and current president of the Iowa Board of Architectural Examiners.



*Thorson*

A few days after convention, L. H. Geis, president of the Kansas City Chapter, received the following letter from Thorson:

"I hope the members of your Chapter realize how much the support of the Chapter and those of you who were at the convention meant to me in my campaign for the office of Secretary. I hope you will give them all my personal thanks.

"The tremendous backing I received was not a personal matter, but was rather the indication of the continuing fine cooperation and support by the Chapters of the Region, indicating the loyalty that we all have to each other.

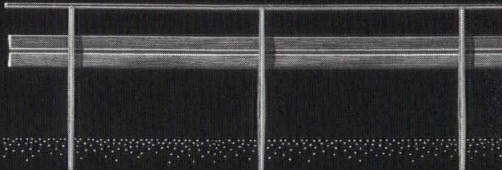
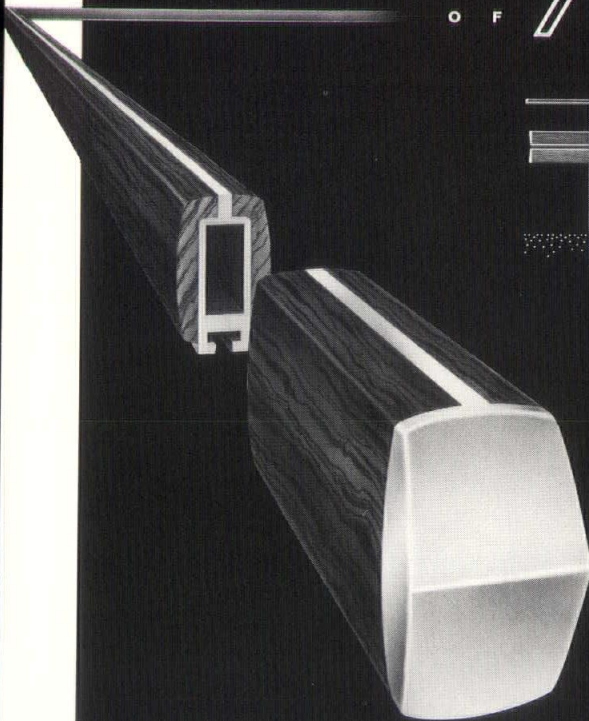
"By the tremendously competent performance of the St. Louis Chapter in putting on the convention, and the solidarity shown by the various Chapters in the campaign, I am certain that the Institute as a whole is more aware of the Central States Region than it ever has been. This is as it should be.

"If I can ever be of any particular help to any members of your Chapter, please get in touch with me immediately.

"Thank you again for your tremendous support."

Sincerely,

Oz Thorson



**NEW WOOD HANDRAILS** with an aluminum core substructure are furnished as a complete unit by Blumcraft. The solid walnut wood, with a natural hand-rubbed oil finish, is bonded to the aluminum at Blumcraft's factory. This new railing concept combining wood and metal is trademarked **RAILWOOD\***

Complete 1964 catalogue available from Blumcraft of Pittsburgh, 460 Melwood St., Pittsburgh 13, Pa.



the AIA's Alaska Chapter, and engineers representing the Engineers Joint Council. Alaska members of the Institute already have been involved in considerable survey work.

After its on-the-spot survey of damaged cities and towns, the AIA team expects to offer a number of recommendations on how these communities can be rebuilt through sound urban design techniques and architectural practices.

## **A.I.A TEAM SURVEYS ALASKAN DAMAGE**

A team of architects and city planners appointed by The American Institute of Architects left early this month for Alaska to survey earthquake-damaged cities and towns and make recommendations for their future planning and rebuilding.

The committee of eight will perform its services under the auspices of the Federal Reconstruction & Development Planning Commission for Alaska. Appointment of the group came after J. Roy Carroll, Jr., FAIA, of Philadelphia, president of the Institute, offered the services of AIA to President Johnson and the Commission, which is chaired by Senator Clinton P. Anderson (-N.M.).

Each member of the architectural committee was selected for his outstanding achievements in one or more of the following fields: industrial architecture, building codes and safety, earthquake construction, urban design, transportation, and building materials.

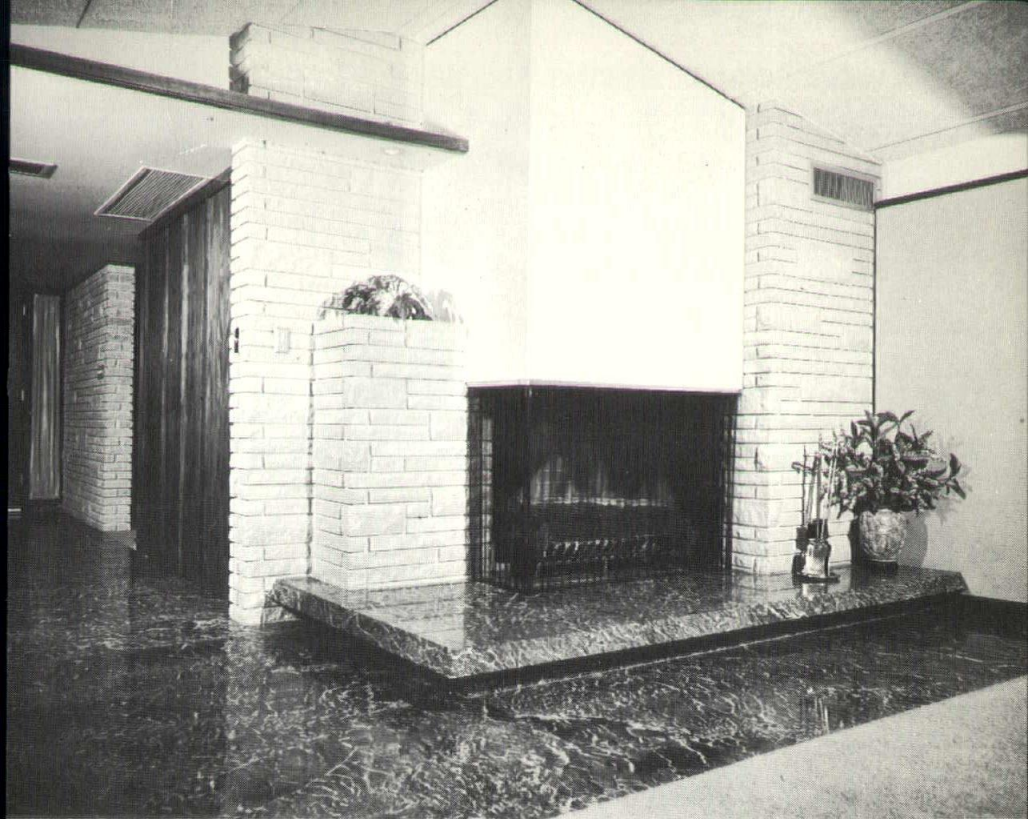
The committee members are William H. Knowles, AIA, of Hertzka & Knowles, San Francisco, chairman; Wm. Glenn Balch, FAIA, of Balch-Hutchason-Perkins, Los Angeles; Charles A. Blessing, FAIA, Director of City Planning, Detroit; Kenneth W. Brooks, AIA, of



## **OVERHEARD AT CONVENTION**

Cleaning up in room 145 of the Bel Air West the morning after a gathering of Kansas City Chapter members, the maid was heard to say "Leastways, you artecture men is neat wit your mess!"





Rugged Split-Face Carthage Marble protects the outside of this house and forms the durable surface for many of the interior walls, finally framing this handsome fireplace.

Forest Green marble leads the visitor from the parking area with stepping stones, paves the covered entrance porch, and leads him through the door and down the entry hall to the fireplace, where it forms the wide, raised hearth.

Sparkling white Colorado Yule marble tops counters in kitchen, family room and dining room, finally reaches its focal point within the house with two huge slabs enclosing the chimney above the fireplace.

This is unity, purpose, and harmony in the architectural use of marble.

*Architect:* Albert C. Esterly, Springfield, Missouri

*The House:* M. E. Potter Residence, near Carthage, Missouri

# CARTHAGE MARBLE

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Kansas City, Mo.

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## THE LAST WORK OF LOUIS CURTISS

Continued

With such livable space, the idiosyncrasies in decoration are easily tolerated. Curtiss's decorative fantasies, eclectic throughout his life, may have stemmed from his travels. "He had gone to the Middle East and the Orient in his studies," Miller recently recalled. "He was an authority on the Middle East."

Miller has maintained his house superbly and has had occasion to make only a few alterations in 43 years, such as glazing the porch and changing the living room windows. The walls, for example, have not been redecorated, but merely cleaned. "His theory was permanence," Miller said of Curtiss. "He felt everything should be sound and permanent."

By the time the Miller house was under construction, Curtiss was completely cloistered in his downtown apartment. He delegated the

supervision of construction to an assistant F. S. Wilson. Curtiss visited the site only once, but Miller recalls that his quick mind immediately focussed on details which varied from his plans, and he had them corrected.

"This was his last job, because he became ill in 1921 and 1922," Miller said. "In fact he would not have designed this if he hadn't had the material on hand."

The glory of the Miller house is that it is extremely well-defined functionally. Not only are the areas of different purpose clearly separated in plan, but they are organized vertically in a staggered manner that does not detract from the overall horizontal emphasis of the house. The articulation, in sum, makes good sense—far better sense than most of the "split-level" houses of today.

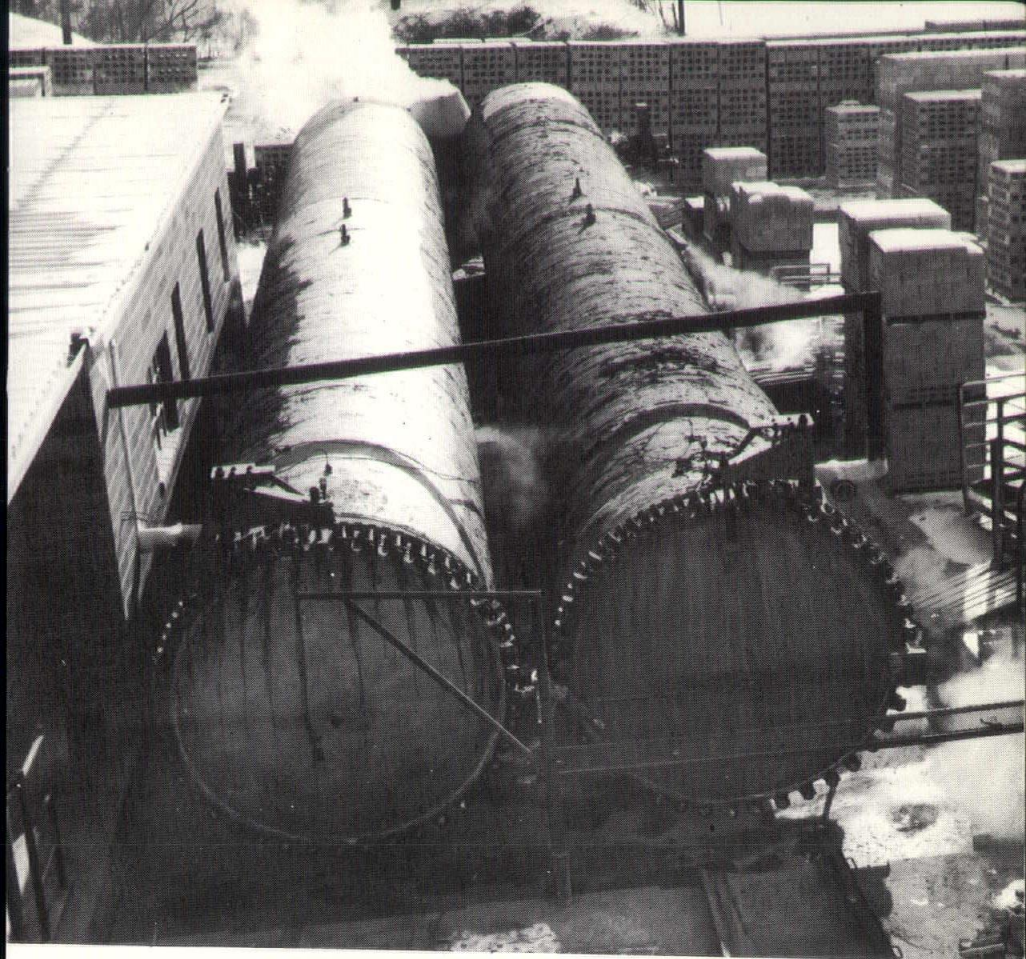
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### CLOCK DESIGNED BY AN ARCHITECT FEATURED AT THE NATIONAL OFFICE FURNITURE ASSOCIATION SHOW AND AT THE NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR



Section®<sup>®</sup>, the battery-operated clock designed by the famous Milanese architect, Angelo Mangiarotti, and manufactured in Switzerland, was featured by Smith Metal Art at the N.O.F.A. - N.S.O.E.A. Show at the New York Coliseum last month. Section will also be seen at the New York World's Fair in the Swiss Watch Pavilion.





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## **London's Insulation Exhibition Features Natural Rubber Anti-Vibration Mountings**

Noise and vibration is a building problem that natural rubber mountings can lick. That seemed to be the message of a number of displays at the Insulation Exhibition held in London early this year.

A variety of natural rubber anti-vibration applications were shown. These included various types of machines, broadcasting studios, sound chambers, laboratories and a concrete staircase in a large new building. In each instance the architects and builders had introduced natural rubber to prevent interference from ground or structure-borne vibrations caused by traffic or machinery.

One case in point is the British Broadcasting Corporation's new studio building in London's Television Center. Here, natural rubber mountings have been fitted under each of the 20 reinforced concrete columns that carry the building's weight. These are arranged in groups of three, four, five and seven, according to the weight involved.

The deflection of 0.14 inches provided by the mountings gives effective insulation against structure-borne vibration and noise of 20 c.p.s. and above.

In contrast to this application in which the supported load is concentrated at a few points, the B.B.C. broadcasting studios at Broadcasting House, London, provided a problem that required spreading the load over a wider area.

The difficulty here was the noise and vibration occasioned by a subway run some 50 feet from the basement. To solve this, a continuous strip of natural rubber carpet mountings was laid on a shallow concrete plinth which is spanned by the concrete slabs on which the studio is built.

In some of the larger studios the concrete slabs are centrally supported by a row of carpet mountings. Each studio is separated from the main structural elements of the build-

ing by an air gap. The static deflection provided by the carpet mountings is 0.125 inches.

The material above was extracted from "Rubber Developments," a Quarterly covering the latest advances in natural rubber technology. The full article carries a complete and illustrated account of various natural rubber anti-vibration techniques shown at the London Insulation Exhibition.

For a free copy write: Natural Rubber Bureau 1108 16th Streets, N. W., Washington D. C., 20036.

## **TWO NEW FIRE RATINGS FOR VERMICULITE**

Vermiculite Type-MK fireproofing of a cellular steel floor using trench headers has been awarded a three-hour fire rating by Underwriters' Laboratories of Chicago. The structural beam received a four-hour rating.

The floor was a 3" RK Robertson topped with 2½" of concrete. A 36" wide trench header for electrical and communication distribution was installed in the long span; two 6" wide header ducts with 6" of concrete between them were in the short span.

The underside of the floor was protected with 5/8" of Type-MK following the contour (¾" across the top of the flutes). Directly below the trench header the flutes were filled and 1-1/4" of Type-MK was applied. A 1" thickness was used following the contour below the two header ducts. These thicknesses extended 3" beyond both sides of the headers and the ducts.

The beam supporting the floor was protected with 1-1/4" of Type-MK following the contour.

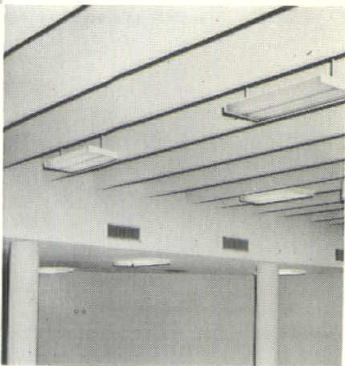
The test was part of Vermiculite Institute's continuing program to obtain ratings on minimal fire-protective thicknesses, E. R. Murphy managing director, said.





Wilson prestressed concrete double tees six feet wide form the flooring of the new St. Ann's Church in Prairie Village, Kansas, by Architects Morley & Geraughty. Spanning 42 feet, the double tees leave the basement area clear of supporting columns, making it suitable for a wide variety of uses. The under side of the concrete tees were merely sprayed with acoustical plaster to complete the basement flooring. Besides being economical, the Wilson prestressed concrete forms a sturdy, firesafe flooring.

are members of the new KPCA (Kansas Prestressed Concrete Association) and subscribe to their specifications and rigid inspection program. Write us for specifications KPCA-S04-64.



# Wilson

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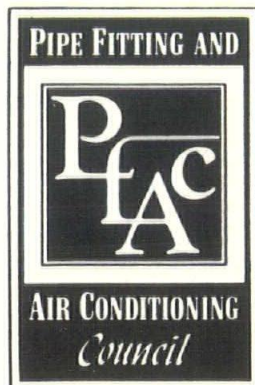
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