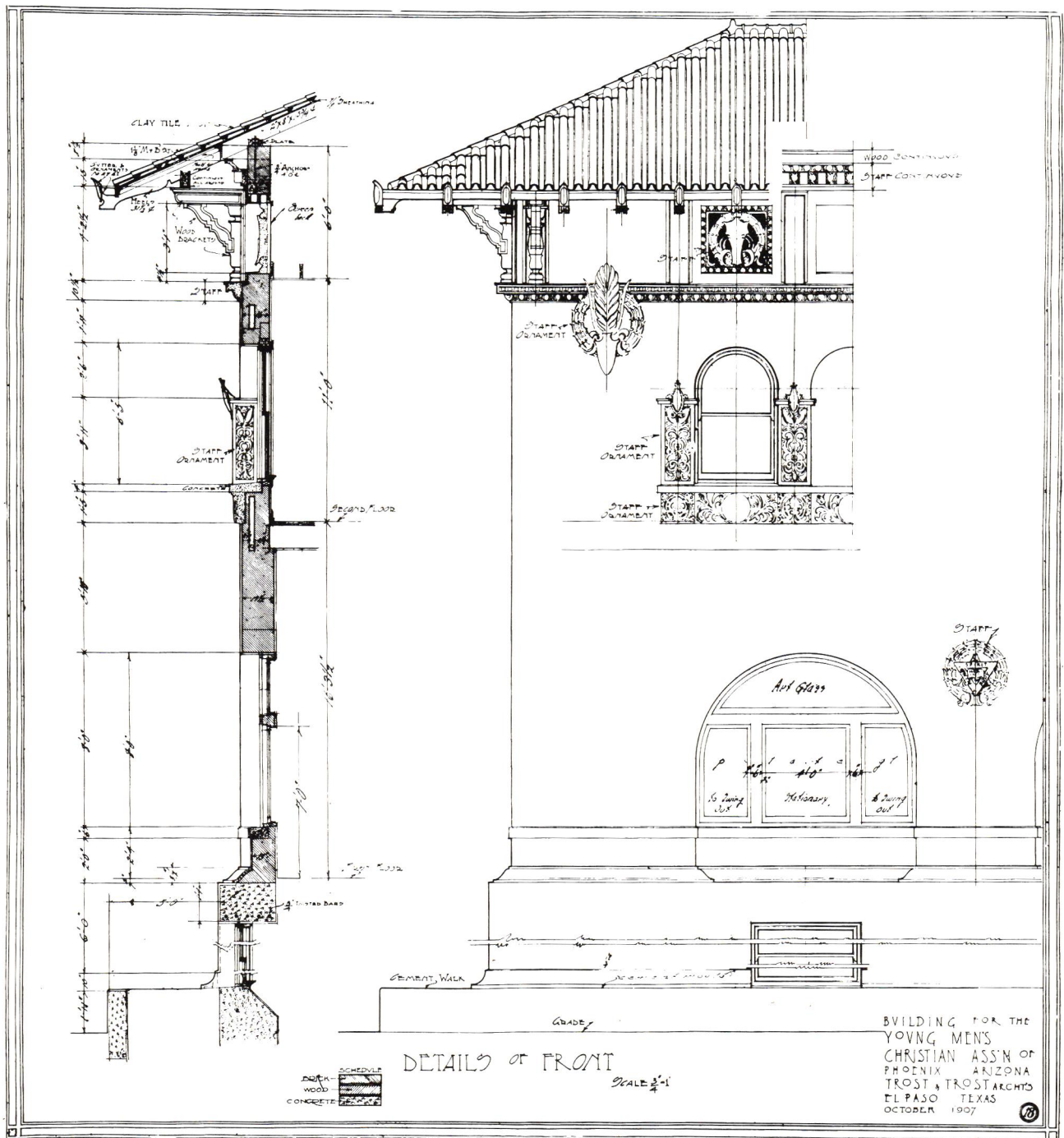


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Review

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Fourth Quarter, 1969

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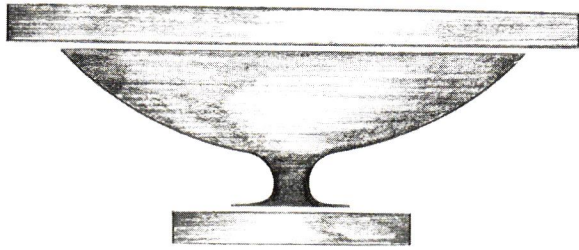


ABOVE: This drawing was prepared in the office of Trost and Trost for the Phoenix, Arizona YMCA Building. Drawing from *The Western Architect*.

COVER: The A. B. Poe house located in El Paso, Texas bears a strong stylistic resemblance to the work of the "Prairie" architects of the midwest. Photo by June F. Engelbrecht.

All photos not otherwise credited are by the author.

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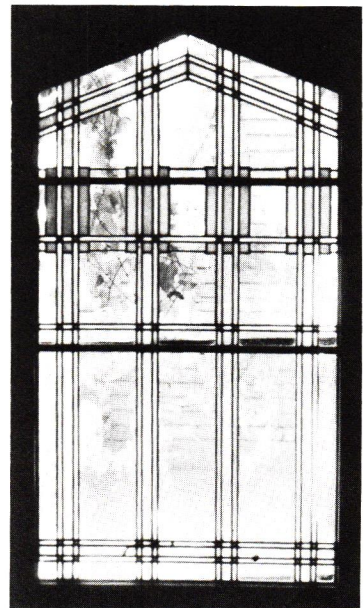
The PRAIRIE SCHOOL *Review*

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Leaded glass from the front door of the Henry C. Trost house.

From the EDITORS

Each year as we finish a volume of The Prairie School Review, it seems to be a good time to both reflect and look to the future. This year, these words are being written about six months later than we would really like. This issue, like some of its predecessors, is late.

The Prairie School Review is produced entirely by your editors from material submitted by various contributors. All production, editing, composition and costs are handled by the editors. It is our policy not to send an issue to the printer until sufficient funds are available to pay the costs of production. For this reason we have been steadily falling behind schedule. Despite all efforts, the past year has seen costs of every facet of production rise. Total cost of producing and distributing The Prairie School Review has doubled since it was started seven years ago. No editorial costs are included in this rise since no one receives any salary for work on the Review.

Some attempts have been made to find some kind of grant support for The Prairie School Review but none have been forthcoming. Therefore we have reluctantly decided to increase our subscription price. This should generate enough additional income to meet production costs and still permit the same or a greater amount of editorial material in future issues.

The new price becomes effective with this issue. Those subscriptions already purchased in advance will be honored at the old price but renewals will be on the new schedule. Hopefully those who have been with us during the first six volumes will stay with us for many more.



Photo montage lent by Ponsford Brothers, El Paso, Texas.

Henry Trost: The Prairie School in the Southwest

by Lloyd C. Engelbrecht

Research for this article was begun by Lloyd C. Engelbrecht while studying with Professor Paul Sprague at the University of Chicago, where Mr. Engelbrecht is completing a doctoral dissertation on the history of the Institute of Design in Chicago. Mr. Engelbrecht has taught at the Central YMCA Community College in Chicago and served as a librarian at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. In the Fall of 1970 he will join the faculty of the Bradley University School of Art in Peoria, Illinois.

A number of buildings in the Southwestern United States stand as representatives of the Prairie School and as the artistic legacy of Henry Charles Trost. Although his name is now nearly forgotten elsewhere, in El Paso, Texas Trost has become something of a legend, and there are still a number of people living in El Paso who knew him. Further, several of his buildings there are singled out for

praise by resident and visitor alike. The El Paso newspapers, in co-operation with the American Institute of Architects, continue to keep the legend alive with occasional feature articles on Trost and his buildings.

There are critical problems of dealing with Trost's work. During the years in which Trost designed buildings which show an awareness and

appreciation of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan, he also turned out a number of designs in what would have been described by many at the time, disapprovingly, as the "historic styles."¹ Thus a simple "progression" from designs in the historic styles to Prairie School designs does not exist to provide a neat line of development to which the critic may point.

Henry C. Trost was born in Toledo, Ohio on March 5, 1860, and he died in El Paso, Texas on September 19, 1933.² The details of his life are especially elusive in the period before he moved to Tucson, Arizona in 1898. In 1904 he moved from Tucson to El Paso and remained there for the rest of his life.

Trost's parents were Ernest and Wilhemina (Frank) Trost, natives of Germany. They arrived in Toledo in the early 1850's where Ernest Trost became, according to one account, a cabinet maker, and according to another, a successful contractor and builder.³

Henry Trost graduated from an art school at age seventeen and began three years as a draughtsman

1 For example, in 1900 Robert C. Spencer, Jr. began his influential article on the work of Wright with a castigation of the use of the "historic styles" as a "short line to practical results." In the same article he is on the defensive concerning Wright's Tudor style Moore house in Oak Park, Illinois. Years later in *An Autobiography*, Wright still felt defensive about this design, as will be discussed below. Spencer's article, "The Work of Frank Lloyd Wright," appeared in *The Architectural Review* (Boston), VII, June, 1900, pp. 61-72, plus unpaginated illustrations, and was reprinted in facsimile by the Prairie School Press in 1964.

2 The date of Trost's birth was taken from an anonymous article, "Henry C. Trost," which appeared in Frank W. Johnson, *A History of Texas and Texans*, edited and updated by Eugene C. Barker and Ernest William Winkler. American Historical Society, Chicago, 1914, IV, pp. 1764-1765. The same birth date was given in two of the three obituaries which appeared in El Paso newspapers: *El Paso Times*, September 20, 1933 and *El Paso World News*, September 20, 1933. These obituaries, plus the other obituary which appeared in an El Paso newspaper (*El Paso Herald-Post*, September 20, 1933), and an obituary in *American Architect*, CXLIII, November, 1933, p. 125, all agree that Trost died on September 19, 1933. In the only standard reference work which gives dates for Trost he is reported, apparently through a simple error, to have been born in 1863, but his date of death is given as September 19, 1933 (Henry F. Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*, compiled by Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathbun Withey. New Age Publishing Co., Los Angeles, 1956, p. 606).

3 Ernest Trost was described as a contractor and builder in "Henry C. Trost," in Johnson, *A History of Texas and Texans*. Mrs. Marion Doherty of Rockville, Maryland, the daughter of Henry Trost's brother, Gustavus Adolphus Trost, gave the spelling as Ernst Trost, and reported that her grandfather had been a cabinet maker (in a letter, Marion Doherty to June F. Engelbrecht, January 11, 1970).

with Toledo architects.⁴ In 1880 Trost left Toledo and for the next eighteen years, until he settled in Tucson in 1898, the available information is fragmentary and sometimes contradictory. Only two accounts of these years have been found which were published during Trost's lifetime, and in important respects they do not agree; some important items appear in one and not in the other; and both leave much unsaid. For example, neither mentions any association with either Sullivan or Wright.⁵

At any rate, Trost left Toledo for Colorado, where, after spending some time in Colorado Springs, and possibly Denver, he settled in Pueblo. Evidence has been found which places him in Pueblo in 1881-1883. He had offices in the Baxter Building or Baxter Block at Main and Fourth

HENRY C. TROST,

ARCHITECT!

Office:—IN THE BAXTER BUILDING,

Corner Main and Fourth Streets,

PUEBLO, COLO.

F. A. WESTON, H. C. TROST.
P. O. Box 1745, Colo. Springs. P. O. Box 220, Pueblo.
WESTON & TROST,
ARCHITECTS, Pueblo and Colorado Springs,
Colorado. Offices: Baxter building, corner
Main and Fourth streets, Pueblo. Opera House
block, Tejon street, Colorado Springs. dlf

The advertisements above were placed in The Colorado Chieftain in the year 1881 and 1882. Architects are no longer permitted to advertise if they adhere to the AIA Code of Ethics.

Streets. After a period during which he practiced or at least sought business on his own, he formed with the Colorado Springs architect, F. A. Weston the partnership of Weston and Trost. Both before and after forming the partnership Trost placed advertisements in the local newspaper, as did other architects and other professional men including doctors, dentists and lawyers. For the first five months during

4 Johnson, *op. cit.*

5 Johnson, *op. cit.* Also an anonymous article in an El Paso newspaper, apparently based on an interview, "Architect of Hilton Hotel Texas Pioneer," *El Paso Evening Post*, November 5, 1930.

which Weston and Trost advertised as partners, Weston was listed with a Colorado Springs address and Trost with a Pueblo address. After that only the Pueblo address was listed.⁶

A 1914 account summed up Trost's Pueblo years as follows:

Trost's first field of independent operations was in Pueblo, Colorado, where for several years he was the best equipped and most original architect and designer in the city. Until he left Pueblo in 1884 his services were employed in drawing the plans for many of the best business and public structures erected in those years.⁷

A 1930 account was more specific:

. . . Trost left his Toledo home and moved to Denver, Colorado. He had offices in Colorado Springs and Pueblo. Recently he visited these latter places and saw some of his buildings which were erected in 1880. One was a combined fire station and city hall, the fire department being on the ground floor. It is not used for either now, although still standing in the center of the city.⁸

Illustrations have been found of this combined city hall and fire department which also included a jail,⁹ but the only mention of architects in connection with the design of the building is the Pueblo firm of Cooper and Anderson.¹⁰ However, the 1930 account does seem based at least in part on an interview with Trost, and the building was designed while Trost was in Pueblo. Therefore it is possible that Trost might have lent a hand to the Cooper and Anderson firm in designing the building.

Trost seems to have had a role in the design of the Pueblo Central High School, part of which was occupied in 1883. But here Trost's role is also unclear; the firm of Weston and Trost took over the design from another architect, C. R. Manning when

the building was partly completed. Further, the upper story was not completed until after Trost had left Pueblo.¹¹ Weston and Trost did design the Bessemer School, the plans for which were approved in 1883.¹² No other buildings have been found in Pueblo with which Trost's name can be associated.

After leaving Pueblo he is identified with designs for the World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition, also known as the Cotton Centennial Exposition, which opened in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1884.¹³ 1885 found him in Topeka, Kansas where he worked on the Senate Chamber of the State Capitol in association with the firm of Haskell and Wood.¹⁴

One intriguing account puts Trost in Galveston in 1883 and 1884 where he was said to have worked with Nicholas J. Clayton (1849-1916).¹⁵ Clayton was an architect of fantastic inventiveness, unfettered by attempts to keep abreast of architectural fashions elsewhere. While it has not been possible to trace any direct influence from Clayton on Trost's work, Clayton may well have stimulated Trost's imagination and provided an example of independence.

But the biggest unsolved mystery of Trost's life is the almost total lack of information about his Chicago years. He arrived in Chicago at some time during the years 1886 to 1889, and left in 1896 or 1897. He is listed in the Chicago city directories for the years 1889, 1890, 1893, 1894, 1895 and

6 The advertisements found for Trost practicing without a partner appeared October 21 and October 26 through November 2, 1881, in *The Colorado Daily Chieftain*. November 2, the last day these advertisements appeared, was also the first day the Weston and Trost advertisements appeared. Those with joint Colorado Springs and Pueblo addresses appeared November 2, 1881 — March 24, 1882. The Weston and Trost advertisements with only the Pueblo address found thus far appeared at irregular intervals between March 25 and December 30, 1882.

7 Johnson, *op. cit.*

8 "Architect of Hilton Hotel," *El Paso Evening Post*, November 5, 1930.

9 *Historical and Descriptive Review of Colorado's Enterprising Cities, their Leading Business Houses and Progressive Men*, Jno. Lethem, Denver, 1893, p. 195. Andrew Morrison, *Pueblo and Colorado*. (publisher not available) 1890, p. 92.

10 *The Pueblo Daily Chieftain*, June 28, 1882, p. 3.

11 *The Pueblo Daily Chieftain*, August 6, 1882, p. 4. James H. Risley, *How it Grew; a History of the Pueblo Public Schools*. University of Denver Press, Denver, 1953, pp. 45-46. Risley referred to the firm of Weston and Trost as "Weston and Frost."

12 Risley, *ibid.*

13 "Architect of Hilton Hotel," *El Paso Evening Post*, November 5, 1930.

14 Reported in "Architect of Hilton Hotel," *El Paso Evening Post*, where it was reported that "Trost has the original blue prints in his El Paso office." Robert W. Richmond, State Archivist of the Kansas State Historical Society, has reported that Trost was listed in the Topeka city directory for 1885-1886 as an architect associated with the firm of Haskell and Wood, but that no other mention of Trost could be found in the Society's files (in a letter, Robert W. Richmond to Lloyd C. Engelbrecht, January 15, 1970). John G. Haskell of Lawrence, Kansas, has been identified as one of the architects who worked on the Capitol (Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration for the State of Kansas, *Kansas; a Guide to the Sunflower State*. Viking Press, New York, 1939, p. 285). Both sources give the 1880s as the date for the Senate Chamber.

15 "Architect of Hilton Hotel," *El Paso Evening Post*, November 5, 1930. The best source of information about Clayton is Howard Barnstone, *The Galveston that Was*, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1966.



1896.¹⁶ No explanation has been found as to why he was not listed in 1891 and 1892.

Although Trost was said to have "opened an office for practice in Chicago" in 1886 and "a considerable list might be drawn up of his work in that western metropolis,"¹⁷ no evidence has been found of any buildings that Trost designed in Chicago. However, the city directories do list him as a co-proprietor and vice-president, successviely, of two different ornamental metal companies, and this is interesting for several reasons.

An oral tradition exists in El Paso and in Tucson and among surviving relatives of Trost that he had something to do with the ornament on the Carson Pirie Scott store in Chicago. Some of the design work for this building may have begun as early as

This drawing, signed by Trost, was used in the 1892 issue of "Sketches" of The Chicago Architectural Sketch Club. Trost was listed as a member in the same book. Many of the advertisements in the publication were drawn by members of the Club.

1891, and construction commenced in 1899. The second of the ornamental metal companies with which Trost was associated in Chicago was known as the Chicago Ornamental Iron Company, located on South Halsted Street. Adrian Vanderkloot was the president of this firm during the years in which Trost served as vice-president.¹⁸ Although Vanderkloot died in 1912,¹⁹ a number of his relatives are still living. Clara Vanderkloot of Antioch, Illinois is the widow of a younger Adrian Vanderkloot, a nephew of the Vanderkloot with whom Trost was associated. Mrs. Vanderkloot has stated

16 *The Lakeside Annual Directory of the City of Chicago*, 1889, The Chicago Directory Co., Chicago, 1889. A personal entry is to be found on p. 1789, a business entry on page 1996. There were similar entries in subsequent years as noted. The earliest publication of The Chicago Architectural Sketch Club titled *Sketches*, of 1892, lists H. C. Trost as an active member. By 1897 he is listed as an active member but with a Colorado address.

17 Johnson, *op. cit.*

18 The information is from the Chicago city directories for the years 1893-1896. Adrian Vanderkloot was still listed as an officer of the Chicago Ornamental Iron Company in 1902 in *Men of Illinois*. Halliday Witherspoon, Chicago, 1902, p. 238.

19 *The Book of Chicagoans*, A.N. Marquis & Co., Chicago, 1917, p. 690.

that her husband's family always let it be known that their firm had executed the ornament on the Carson Pirie Scott store.²⁰ Other members of the Vanderkloot family who were contacted were also aware of this family tradition. While no documentary evidence can be produced, just as no El Pasoans and no surviving relatives of Trost can produce any documentary evidence that Trost had anything to do with the ornament, the fact that the city directories of Chicago connect both Trost and Adrian Vanderkloot with the same ornamental metal company indicates that there must be some truth to these persistent oral traditions.

A word of caution is in order here in view of a well known passage in Hugh Morrison's 1935 book, *Louis Sullivan*, which seems to tie up all the loose ends in the creation of the ornament on Carson's:

The detail, (of the three-quarter circle entrance) designed by Elmslie who had remained with Sullivan as chief designer, is extremely fine and intricate . . . Kristian Schneider, an artist-craftsman who worked with Sullivan more than twenty years, made the plaster models of the ornament from Elmslie's pencil drawings. He was very talented in this work, and modelled practically all of the ornament of Sullivan's buildings for execution in iron, terra cotta, or plaster from the time of the Auditorium to the late banks. Schneider's models were cast very precisely by the firm of Winslow Brothers by means of new and improved technical processes. The result was that unprecedented virtuositities became possible in this technique, and the mere technical achievement remains just cause for amazement. . . .²¹

Further, some typed notes now in possession of Paul Sprague, made by Morrison from some documents now vanished, list the names of six persons who worked on Carson's (the building was actually designed for Schlesinger & Mayer) for from 13 to 43 weeks, respectively. Trost's name is not included.

The role of the Winslow Brothers is confirmed by catalogs which they issued showing the ornament on Carson's. One of these is in the possession of the editor of *The Prairie School Review*.²²

20 Telephone interview, Lloyd C. Engelbrecht interviewing Clara Vanderkloot, December, 1969. The Vanderkloots were also involved with several other metal companies which were engaged in structural metalwork.

21 Hugh Morrison, *Louis Sullivan; Prophet of Modern Architecture*. W.W. Norton, New York, 1935, pp. 200-201. A reprint was published by Peter Smith, New York, 1952.

22 *Ornamental Iron & Bronze*, The Winslow Bros. Co., Chicago, 1910, p. 10.

William Wuehrmann, an architect with Prairie School connections in Chicago of his own who has practiced in El Paso for many years,²³ was acquainted with Trost. He has related that Trost's role in creating the ornament on Carson's was the preparation of the working drawings for Winslow Brothers,²⁴ a job which, from Hugh Morrison's account, would have been Elmslie's. Everett Bradt, an architect who worked for Trost & Trost from 1906 to 1946 and was a pall bearer at Henry Trost's funeral, related that he can remember no details of Trost's relationship with either Sullivan or Wright. However, he always thought there was a relationship of some sort since Trost spoke of both men often and with admiration and respect.²⁵

It is to be hoped that more information will come to light which will serve to delineate the role of the individuals and firms involved more closely. One possibility is that the Winslow Brothers might have sub-contracted some of the work to the Chicago Ornamental Iron Company. It is also possible that it was another Sullivan building which employed the talents of Trost and the Vanderkloots.

Since Sullivan's firm, Adler and Sullivan, was responsible for the design of one building in Pueblo, the Opera House Block, opened October 9, 1890,²⁶ it is tempting to suppose that Trost, with his Pueblo background, might have done some work at the site for this building. No evidence for this has been found, and a story in a Pueblo newspaper named the construction supervisor in Pueblo as Henry W. French.

Trost's other Chicago ornamental metal connection is known only from the Chicago city directories of 1889 and 1890. The firm was called American Art Metal Works, and was located at 23 to 25 Indiana Street, which would put it somewhere on the present East Grand Avenue. The co-proprietor with Trost was Emil H. Seeman (d. 1945).²⁷ Seeman, who was listed in the Chicago city directories of the 1890s variously as an architect, a draughtsman and a clerk, later became a mortgage

23 "Wuehrmann, William Gerhard," in *American Architects Directory*, edited by George S. Koyl, R.R. Bowker Co., New York, 1955, p. 622. "Wuehrmann, William Gerhard," in *American Architects Directory*. Second edition, edited by George S. Koyl, R.R. Bowker Co., New York, 1962, p. 783.

24 William Wuehrmann, interviewed by Lloyd C. Engelbrecht, August, 1969.

25 Everett Bradt, interviewed by Lloyd C. Engelbrecht, August, 1969.

26 *The Pueblo Chieftain*, October 10, 1890.

27 The information is from the Chicago city directories for the years 1889 and 1890. The date of Seeman's death was established from *The Chicago Herald-American*, April 28, 1945.



banker with the firm of H. G. Pauling & Co.²⁸ In 1923 he was elected president of the Chicago Mortgage Bankers' Association. In a biography on file with the Association Seeman was listed as a graduate of the Chicago Manual Training School, and was stated to have worked for building contractors who worked on the Auditorium.

E. H. Seeman is listed as an active member of the Chicago Architectural Sketch Club in 1892 along with H. C. Trost. Trost was described as being a charter member of the Chicago Architectural Sketch Club which was founded in 1885.²⁹ It later became the Chicago Architectural Club. One of the club's functions was a series of exhibitions held at the Art Institute of Chicago. A number of catalogs of its exhibitions were published. Henry Trost's name appears for the last time in these catalogs in the year 1897 when his address was given in Colorado Springs, Colorado.³⁰ However, his brother, Gustavus Adolphus Trost, also an architect, published two drawings of Italian churches in the issue for the Fourteenth Annual Exhibition in 1901. This was

28 *The Chicago Tribune*, February 25, 1923, part 2, p. 10.

29 *American Architect*, CXLIII, November, 1933, p. 125; Withey, *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 606; *El Paso Herald-Post*, September 20, 1933; *El Paso Times*, September 20, 1933.

30 Chicago Architectural Club, *Catalogue of the Fourteenth Annual Exhibition* . . . Chicago Architectural Club, Chicago, 1901, unnumbered pp.

The front elevation of the First Owls Club designed by Henry C. Trost. The building later became the residence of Albert Steinfeld. Photo from The Western Architect.

the catalog in which Wright's now famous lecture, "The Art and Craft of the Machine," was first published. Gustavus Trost, later associated in practice with Henry Trost, listed his address in a pamphlet accompanying the catalog as, Stitzer Building, Toledo, Ohio.

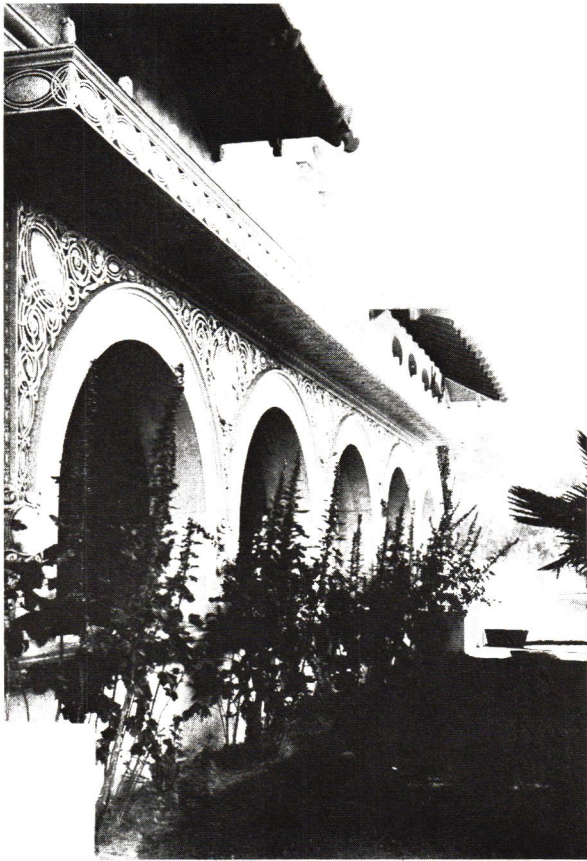
The only accounts found of Henry Trost's Chicago years which mention Wright and Sullivan were published after Trost's death and offer no documentary evidence. For example, in 1954 an *El Paso* newspaper said:

. . . he worked beside a bright young man, Frank Lloyd Wright, and under the direction of the father of modern architecture, Louis Sullivan.³¹

According to one account Trost returned to Colorado after leaving Chicago and spent about a year in Colorado Springs.³² At any rate it does seem certain that Trost arrived in Tucson in 1898. The move was only partly for professional reasons since

31 *El Paso Times*, April 4, 1954, p. 14-C.

32 Johnson, *op. cit.*



*A detail of the ornament on the front elevation of the First Owls Club. It is decidedly Sullivanesque. Photo from *The Western Architect*.*

a sister, Louise, who was moving to Tucson for her health, accompanied him. Also joining him in Tucson was a nephew, George Ernest Trost.

A 1914 account summarized Trost's work in Tucson as follows:

Architecturally considered Tucson in all its modern aspects is practically the creation of Mr. Trost's genius, and during his residence there he made many handsome additions, including the buildings for the University of Arizona, the Carnegie Library, the finest hotel in the city and many other notable buildings. It was in Tucson that he established a reputation since maintained for thorough and beautiful work.³³

One of Trost's earlier buildings in Tucson is also one of the finest of his career, and even without any documentary evidence, this building is testimony that Trost was a very able architect with an awareness of contemporary trends in Chicago. The building is the first Owls Club, later sold to the pioneer Tucson merchant, Albert Steinfeld, and published

³³ Johnson, *op. cit.*



A detail from the ornamental porch gable of the Diemel house in Chicago, designed by Louis Sullivan in 1887. Note the similarity to the Owls Club ornament shown at left. Photo by Paul E. Sprague.

in *The Western Architect*, June, 1922 as the Albert Steinfeld house. The building was commissioned in 1899 and finished early in 1900.³⁴ The building still stands on Main Street in the Paseo Redondo quarter of Tucson, a district of luxuriant semi-tropical vegetation built on the fertile soil of an old river bed.³⁵ It was actually commissioned by four bachelors to be used as their residence and as an Owls Club.³⁶

The building is a combination of the mission style with details similar to those in work by Sullivan. The street façade is capped with a curvilinear shaped gable in mission style flanked on each side by hipped, tile roofs with protruding rafters. Behind the gable is another roof section which extends back over a shallow rear wing. This center roof section is hipped in back.

³⁴ This information is based on research by Gordon Heck, who was able to date the building from newspaper accounts in *The Tucson Citizen*. Summarized by Heck in a letter, Gordon Heck to Lloyd C. Engelbrecht, January 8, 1970.

³⁵ Prentice Duell, "A Review of Modern Architecture in Arizona," in *The Western Architect*, XXXI, June, 1922, p. 74.

³⁶ Heck to Engelbrecht, *op. cit.*



Below the roof a row of oval clerestory openings completely encircle the building except for the gable. An arched loggia runs across the front, the sides and part of the back, and this, combined with the clerestory openings, probably provided a welcome cooling effect in pre-airconditioned sunny Tucson. At the same time the arches reflect a vernacular tradition in the Southwestern United States and Mexico.

Six of the arches of the loggia lie across the front of the building. Those on each end, approached by short flights of stairs, serve as entrances. The central four arches are richly embellished with Sullivan-esque vermiculate but symmetrical ornament and are topped by a richly ornamented canopy. The organic character of the ornament which embellishes the arches harmonizes well with the surrounding exuberant vegetation. This feature is echoed on each side of the rear of the building where the loggia ends on each side with a pair of arches. Each of these pairs has a canopy similar to the longer one in front.

A photograph by Marcus Whiffen in his book, *American Architecture since 1780* shows the present state of the building.³⁷ The canopy on the front of

The Second Owls Club designed by Trost in 1902 in Tucson, Arizona. Note the similarity of the ornament over the entrance to that of the First Owls Club. Also note the Sullivan-esque balcony on the side. Western Architect photo.

the building has been removed, and the ornament over the arches has either been removed or plastered over. A mission style window on the gable has been denuded of its ornament. Nevertheless Heck reports that the building is still in relatively good condition, although it is presently unoccupied.³⁸

Should the reader object that despite its appeal the first Owls Club is marred by a clash between its Sullivan-esque and its mission characters, this seems unlikely to have disturbed its original owners. The second Owls Club, completed in 1902,³⁹ displays this same tension, but in a generally less successful building. Further, added to the mission and Sullivan-esque elements are the *canales*, a kind of protruding rain gutter similar to *vigas* characteristic of the pueblo style, then in the process of "returning" to the Southwest which had inspired it from California.

useful book, Whiffen includes photographs of six Trost buildings and a brief summary of his career.

38 Heck to Engelbrecht, *op. cit.*

39 *Ibid.*

37 Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture since 1780; a Guide to the Styles*, M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, 1969, pp. 214-216. Although it is incidental to the main purpose of his fine and

An interesting feature of the second Owls Club is the balcony on the side. It is similar to the balcony on the Charnley house in Chicago of 1891, generally considered to have been designed by Wright when he was working in Sullivan's office.

At almost the same time he was designing the first Owls Club, Trost was designing a classic structure, the Carnegie Library in Tucson. Trost received the commission late in 1899 or in 1900 with a budget of \$25,000 exclusive of site costs.⁴⁰ The library is reminiscent of the classicism of France about 1800. Nevertheless Trost unified the building in a clever and unexpected way: the pair of ionic columns, flanked by pilasters which form the porch, are reflected in the facings of the wings which flank the porch on each side. Thus the porch is used to establish a module.

Another classical building indirectly prompted Trost to move to El Paso in 1904 after his ailing sister, Louise, died. This building was not designed by Trost, but by the St. Louis firm of Mauran, Russell and Garden. The El Paso Public Library, since demolished, had Henry Trost's brother, Gustavus Adolphus Trost, serving as field supervisor in El Paso. It was at least partly at Gustavus' urging that Henry decided to move to El Paso.⁴¹

George Ernest Trost, the nephew, also came to El Paso with Henry, and the two brothers and their nephew formed the firm of Trost & Trost which continued after Henry Trost's death until it was dissolved about 1946. In 1908 Gustavus' twin brother Adolphus Gustavus Trost, a structural engineer, came from Ohio to El Paso to join the firm.⁴² George Ernest Trost's duties included book-keeping, specifications writing and stenographic work and were only indirectly related to design, according to Everett Bradt and another El Paso architect, C. Ewing Waterhouse.⁴³ He later became chairman of the board of the El Paso Federal Savings and Loan Association.⁴⁴ Still another brother, Arthur Trost, was briefly associated with the firm, but according to Bradt his role was limited to odd jobs. He did not get along well with the other El Paso Trosts, and, in Bradt's words, "the Trosts turned him out." Completing the roster of Trosts in El Paso was a sister of Henry's, Mathilda. She lived with him and was present when he died. None of the El Paso Trosts married except Gustavus, who married late in life.

Thus, Henry Trost was always considered the chief designer of the firm. Other persons who contributed to the success of the firm in Henry



Carnegie Library
Tucson, Arizona
Western Architect photo

⁴⁰ Andrew Carnegie offered \$25,000 to Tucson for a public library on October 27, 1899. This offer was accepted by the city council on November 22, 1899, and the building was finished in 1900. George S. Bobinski, *Carnegie Libraries; their History and Impact on American Public Library Development*. American Library Association, Chicago, 1969, p. 238. *Library Journal*, XXV, January, 1900, p. 18. Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Arizona, *Arizona; a State Guide*. Hastings House Publishers, New York, 1940, p. 259. Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Arizona, *Arizona, the Grand Canyon State; a State Guide*. Completely Revised Edition, Hastings House, New York, 1956, p. 259.

⁴¹ *El Paso Herald-Post*, July 29, 1957. Bobinski, *Carnegie Libraries*, p. 217. *Library Journal*, XXVIII, December, 1903, p. 833 and two unnumbered plates.

Trost's lifetime, as recalled by Bradt, included a carpenter known as Pop Bartholomew; a Swiss sculptor whose last name was Zempf and Gustav Zierold, a sculptor described by Bradt as German, whose contributions included the ornamental lions' heads used on several buildings. Professor Gordon Heck relates that Zierold is part of the oral Trost tradition in Tucson. This tradition holds that Zie-

⁴² *El Paso Times*, April 4, 1954, p. 14-C. *El Paso Herald-Post*, July 29, 1957.

⁴³ Charles Ewing Waterhouse, interviewed by June F. Engelbrecht, September, 1969.

⁴⁴ *El Paso Times*, April 4, 1954, p. 14-C.



The W. W. Turney house at El Paso, Texas is shown here in its original condition as built in 1906. The east porch and portecochere have been removed in later alteration. From a photograph loaned by Everett Bradt.

rold was Czechoslovakian, that he had passed through Chicago, and that he did all of Trost's ornamental work in Tucson.

An important commission in the early years in El Paso was the largest private house Trost ever designed, the W.W. Turney residence, erected in 1906. This was an imposing classic structure of cream colored brick and two story corinthian columns and pilasters, topped with a roof balustrade completely encircling the building. The site is an entire city block. A separate coach house stands behind the main house. Today, with alterations and additions by the El Paso firm of Carroll & Daeuble & Associates, it serves as the El Paso Museum of Art. Edwin Carroll, one of the partners in Carroll & Daeuble & Associates, was employed by Trost & Trost from 1936-1941.⁴⁵

The interior of the Turney house, while consisting mainly of classic motifs, nevertheless dis-

⁴⁵ "Carroll, Edwin Winford," in *American Architects Directory*, 1956, p. 84. "Carroll, Edwin Winford," in *American Architects Directory*, Second edition, 1962, p. 106.



This is the main staircase of the W. W. Turney house showing the woodwork and the leaded glass executed in a style reminiscent of the Art Nouveau. This detail still remains in place. Photo by June F. Engelbrecht.

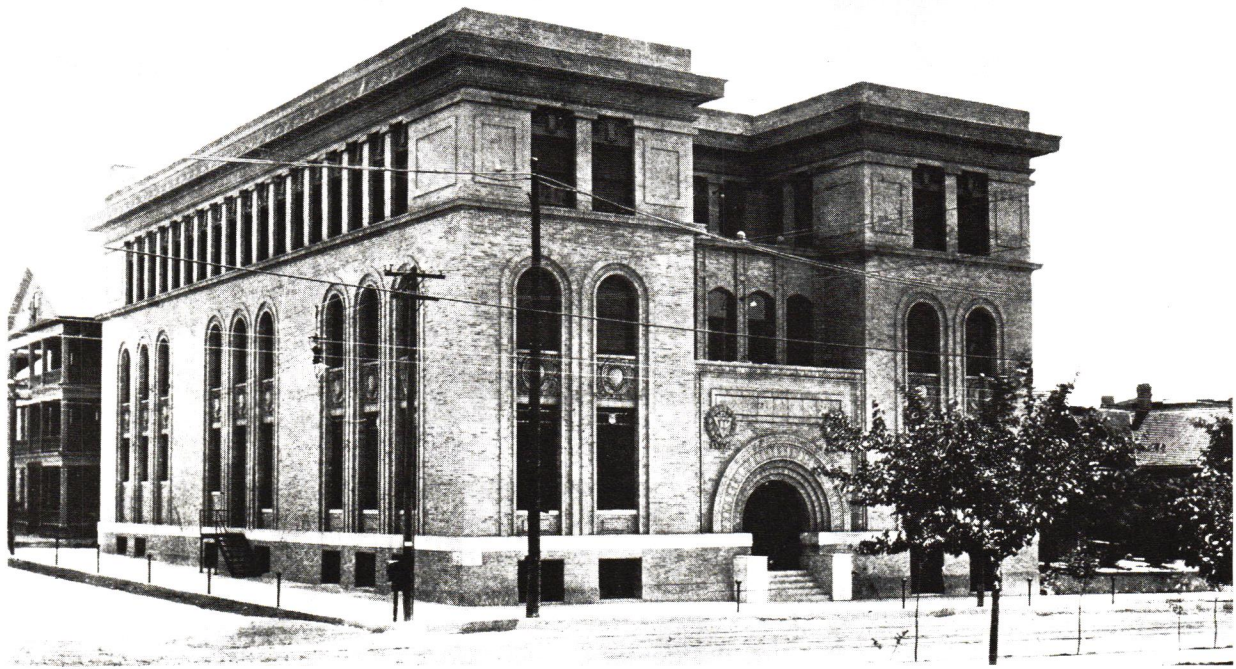
plays a feeling for interior woodwork characteristic of the Prairie School. This can be seen, for example, in the treatment of the interior stairway, a portion of the house little changed by the conversion into a museum. At a landing on the stairs between the two floors there is a leaded glass mural, somewhat art nouveau in feeling.

Two YMCA buildings were designed in 1907, one for Phoenix, Arizona and one for El Paso. Each had the same budget, \$60,000.⁴⁶ The Phoenix structure is the less successful one with too much of its interest concentrated on the upper stories leaving

⁴⁶ The budgets were listed in the *American Architect and Building News*, Building News Section, XCII, July 6, 1907, p. 3, and November 9, p. 112, respectively. Another reference to the Phoenix YMCA appeared in the same publication, October 19, 1906, p. 89. A drawing of details of the Phoenix YMCA, dated October, 1907, appeared in *The Western Architect*, XIV, September, 1909, following p. 26.

The W. W. Turney house today serves as the El Paso Museum of Art. The wings on either side are recent additions. The Museum houses the Samuel H. Kress collection. El Paso Museum photo.





*The El Paso, Texas YMCA Building as it appeared shortly after construction in 1907. Photo from *The Western Architect*.*

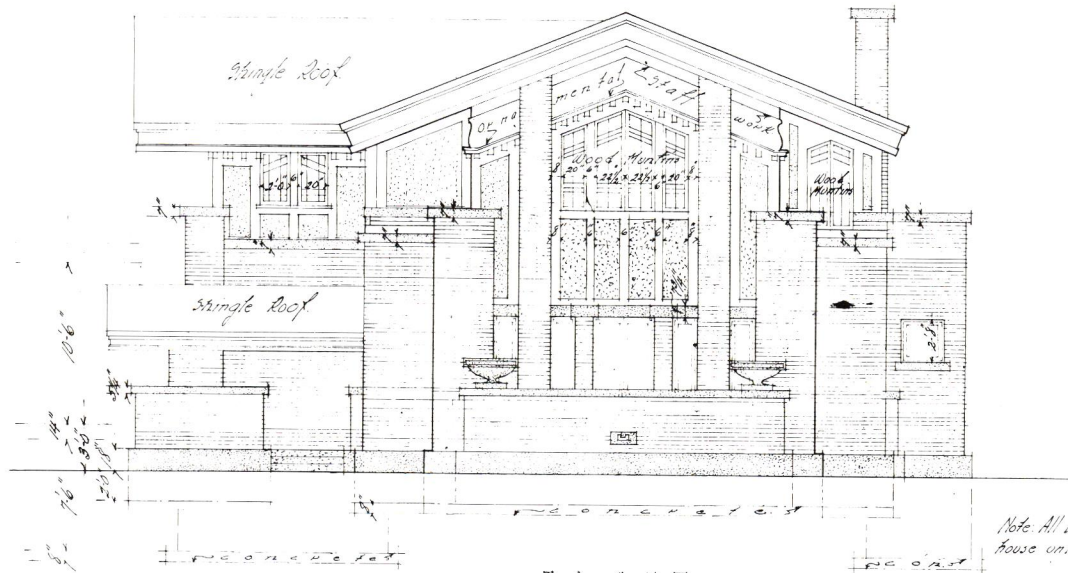
the lower portion rather blank and monotonous. The El Paso building, now demolished, achieves interest through lively handling of windows, mullions and spandrels, topped off with a flat cornice. The entrance is emphasized by a grouping of concentric arches, again recalling Sullivan.

*Below is the building Henry C. Trost designed for the Phoenix, Arizona YMCA in 1907. Photo from *The Western Architect*.*

But the most remarkable building of Trost's career is his own house of 1908. The evidence is clear that Trost planned every detail of the house, including its siting, its landscaping and its furnishing. It was a chance to work without a client and design one building to conform fully with his own vision. As Trost was approaching fifty years of age



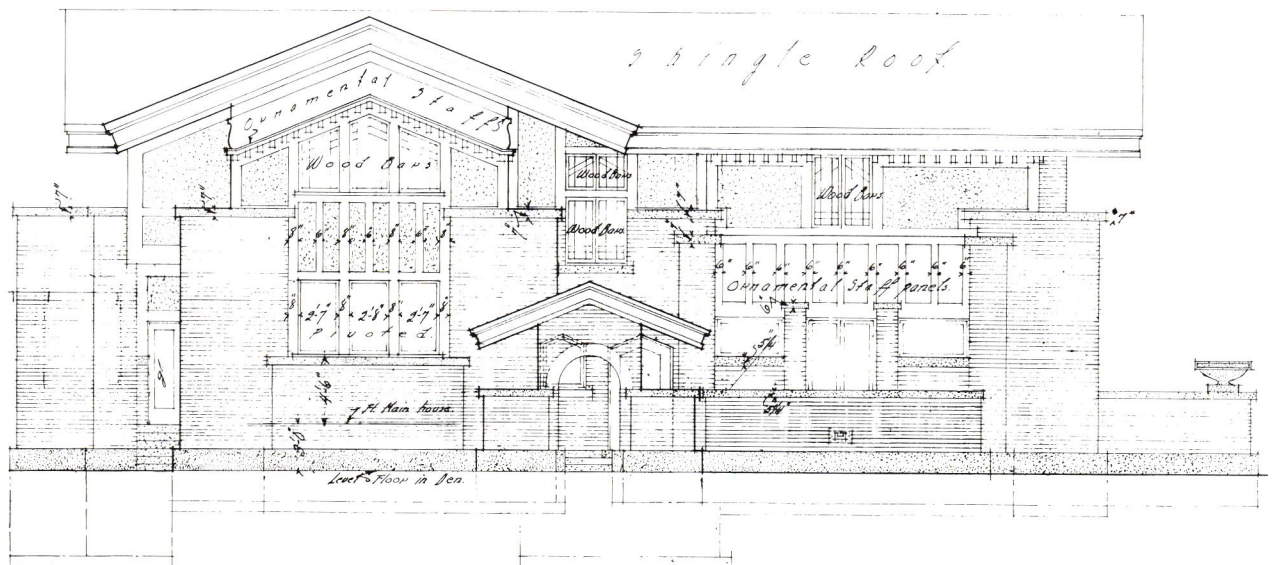
The drawings on this page are copies of the original working drawings prepared by the office of Trost and Trost for the home of Henry C. Trost. The house was constructed very nearly as the plans call for with only minor variations made during construction.



FRONT

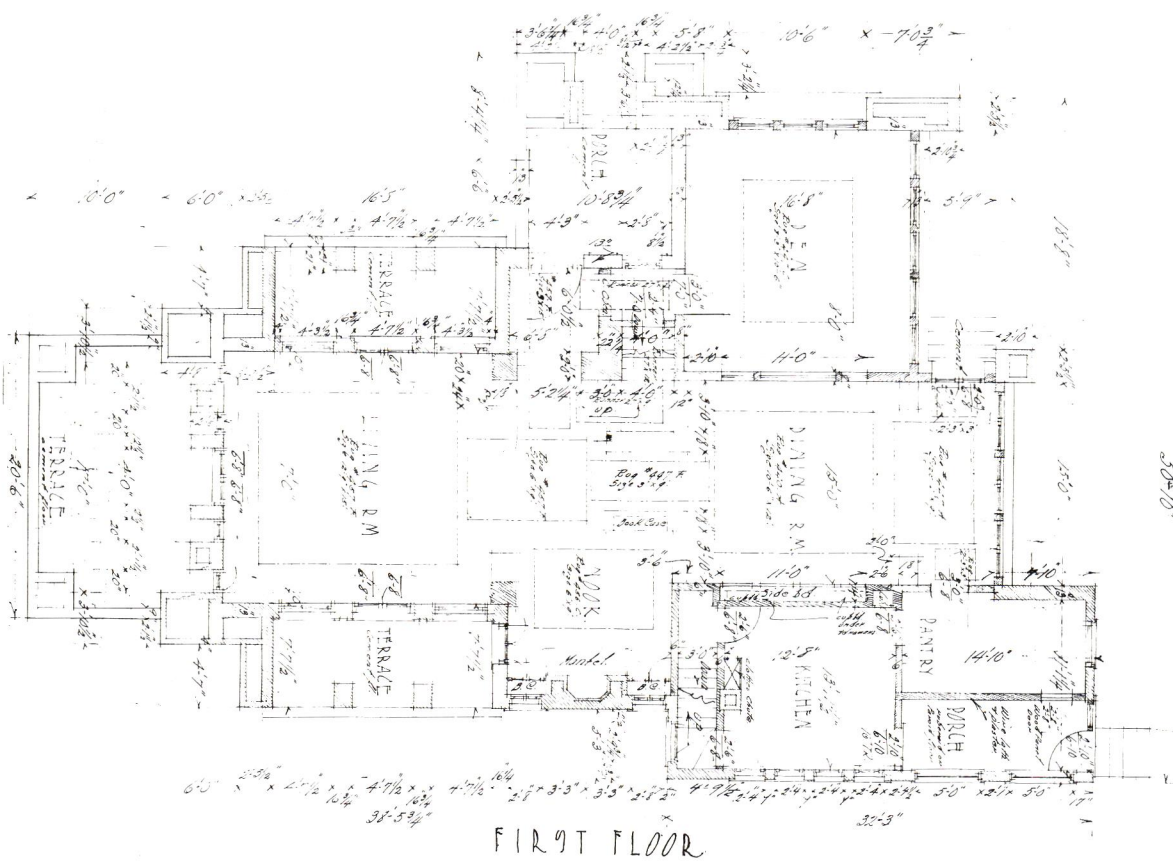
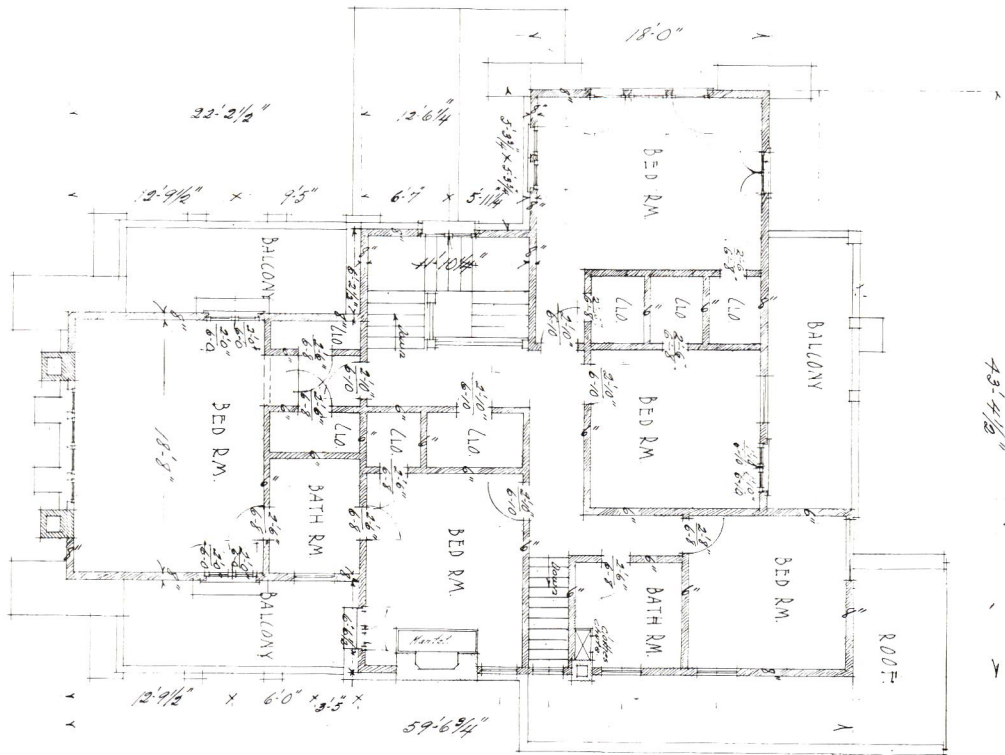
scale 1/4" = 1'

Note: All letters & words on entire house unless otherwise noted



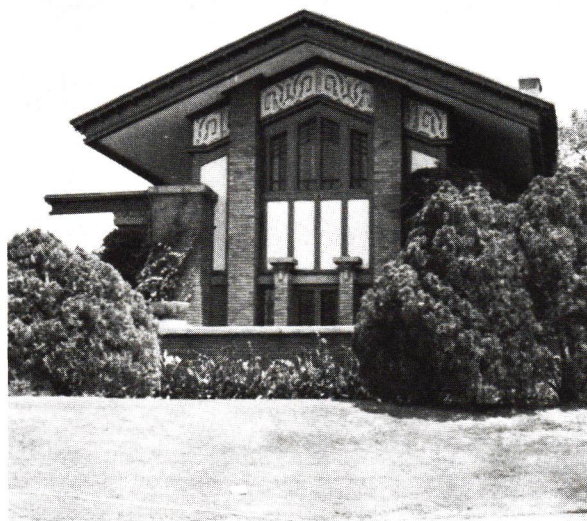
WEST SIDE

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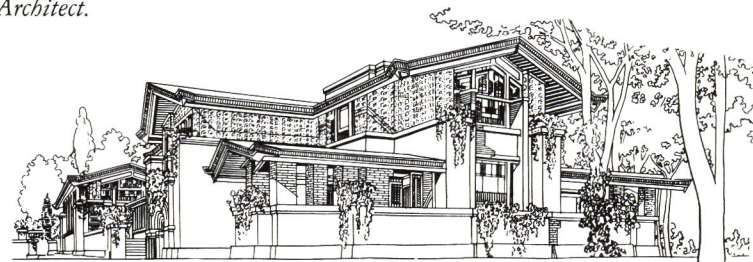
The Henry C. Trost house of 1908. The photo above shows the main entrance while that below is an elevation of the other street facade. The house shows a marked similarity to the Susan Lawrence Dana house by Frank Lloyd Wright although it is by no means a copy.



with nearly thirty years of experience as an architect and designer, it is understandable that he might want to build a house for himself with everything exactly as he wanted it to be.

The result is a building to which the mind returns again and again. The house stands at 1013 West Yandell Drive, on the corner of Yandell and Hawthorne Street on a southwest slope in the Sunset Heights district of El Paso. The site affords a view of the Rio Grande River, part of the city of Juarez, Mexico, and the Sangre de Cristo range of mountains, extending through Texas and New Mexico and curving down into Mexico behind the city of Juarez. This view was unobstructed until after World War II when a partial obstruction of the view from one terrace was caused by buildings erected across the street.

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



HOME OFFICE - BANNERSTONE HOUSE - SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

The house is in excellent condition. Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm McGregor bought the house in 1958 from owners who had purchased it from the Trost family, and live in the house with their young children. The McGregors are quite fond of the house and recognize its importance. The prominent location of the house on a residential but moderately busy street and its striking resemblance to the work of Wright cause many visitors to El Paso to speak to the McGregors about the house, some inquiring whether Wright designed it, others fearful lest the residents might not realize they are occupying an important house. No record has been found that illustrations of the Trost house have ever been published, although illustrations of it probably did appear at some time in the El Paso newspapers.

The Wright house with which it seems to have the most in common is the Dana house of Springfield, Illinois completed in 1904. There are, however, important differences between the two houses, and between the design of the Trost house and the general characteristics of Wright's work at that time.

Cream colored brick was used in the Trost house. The brick is of ordinary proportions, unlike the roman brick used for the Dana house, but the mortar was applied in a manner which emphasizes the horizontal line. That is, the mortar is flush with the surface of the brick on the short side of the brick but recessed at the long side, thus creating a shadow which gives a horizontal accent to the brickwork. Wright often employed this technique.

The gabled roof is pitched to a very obtuse angle, and extends well out past the building. In this respect it is similar to a number of roofs on houses designed by Wright as well as other Prairie School architects, but here this type of roof was an important aid to keeping cool in El Paso's warm, sunny climate. In the case of the Trost house, the cooling effect was increased by making the roof hollow.

The entrance on Hawthorne is in a little pavilion with its own gabled roof and a rather high set of stairs rising from the level of the sidewalk to the level of the first floor. An arched entry leads to the small porch from which a door opens off center. This, combined with the fact that no apparent entry is visible from the "main" front of the house on Yandell, makes the entry doubly elusive.

The first floor of the house is largely devoted to a long living room-dining room, broken where the rooms join by waist high structures or islands. These mark a stairway and nook, but are ingeniously unified in spite of the fact that the living room is wider than the dining room.

The basic unifying devices form a complicated series of rafters, purlins, wall plates, corbels and piers. While all these seem at first glance to be essential to the structure of the house, upon investigation they turn out to be a decorative frame whose only "function" is their visual, unifying one. The piers do have a structural function, which is to support the wall plate. The rafters, the purlins and the corbels are merely applied; in fact, they are all hollow.

Trost put a good deal of time and effort into working out this system. While exact dates are not available, Trost began the design in 1906 and occupied the house in 1908.⁴⁷ A number of drawings of the house are in the possession of the McGregors, and these show some of the stages the design went through. However, only one set of plans was found, and on these the interior piers do not appear.

The design of the house was complete in most other respects when Trost decided on the final form of the living and dining room. Some of the reasons he took this long can be seen in the final result. It is apparent that the elements of his unifying system could not be made to co-ordinate "rationally" in every respect. The corbels, for example, are not lined up with the centers of the piers in the living room although they are in the dining room. The piers are not only of differing size and spacing in the two rooms, but they extend out from under the wall plate in the dining room. They are in turn recessed beyond the edge of the wall plate in the living room, thus allowing the wall plate to extend the length of the house in a straight line. This helps to mask the fact that the living room is wider than the dining room.

The whole arrangement is very effective, creating an exhilarating feeling of a space sweeping through the length of the house. Thirteen rafters cross the ceiling at regular intervals nearly the whole length of the house, stopping at an arched brace which marks the transition from dining room to breakfast room. The arched brace continues the line of the rear wall of the den, six feet from the rear wall of the main part of the house. The breakfast room, with a ceiling higher than that in the dining room, has plain rectilinear walls and ceiling.

47 A city engineer's survey of the site, now in the possession of the McGregors, is dated 1906. The date 1908 for the completion of the house was agreed upon by all those questioned about it, including the McGregors. This was also the date assigned for the completion of the house in recent newspaper stories: *El Paso Times*, April 4, 1954, p. 14-C; *El Paso Times*, August 16, 1964, p. 11-A; *El Paso Times*, August 16, 1969.



Above is a detail of the stenciled frieze on the wall of the main floor of the Trost house in El Paso, Texas.

A more subtle unifying device is the frieze of plant forms painted on the canvas covered wall plate. The corbels are framed by the frieze and thus made part of the design. The walls are a pale burnt orange with the frieze red-brown, brown, rose and green. The ceiling and the purlins are ochre and the rafters and corbels dark brown.

The nook opening off the living room balances the stair and entrance area on the opposite side of the room. Each provides a break in the row of piers which line the walls of the living room and dining room thereby helping to make the differences in the widths of the two rooms, marked by the piers, less noticeable. The nook, which contains a fireplace, has a low ceiling rising only to the lower level of the wall plate. The den to the west of the dining room has the same ceiling height as the rest of the first story but its floor is three feet below the floor of the main house.

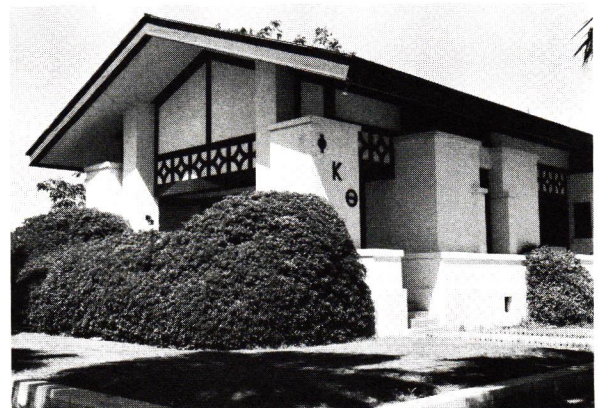
Except for the master bedroom, the upper floor is simple and unpretentious. Trost seemed to recognize that a certain blandness and informality of the private rooms was necessary as a relief from the extreme formality of the public rooms of the house. Trost's touch is barely visible except in the leading of the glass of some of the windows, and even these are simplified from his original designs. Most windows, however, do frame particular features of the landscape and the view from the master bedroom is spectacular. The doors used upstairs are ordinary panel doors, available from stock, while the down-

stairs doors include such details as Trost's amusing caricature of an artist in colored leaded glass on the door to the den.

It is the piers on the exterior on the Yandell front of the Trost house which present the most obvious point of resemblance to the Dana house, in spite of some differences in treatment. The Trost house also resembles in this respect another house in Tucson designed by Trost published by Whiffen.⁴⁸ Whiffen dated the Tucson house c. 1905, but a more exact dating would be instructive because the Tucson house could then be placed either before or after his own house in Trost's *oeuvre*.

A deeply sculptured frieze lies just below the roof and encircles a large part of the Trost house. This frieze is much narrower than the similar frieze on

⁴⁸ Whiffen, *op. cit.*, pp. 206-207.



This house was designed by Trost c. 1905. It is located in Tucson and is now used as a fraternity house. Little else is known of it. Photo by Marcus Whiffen.

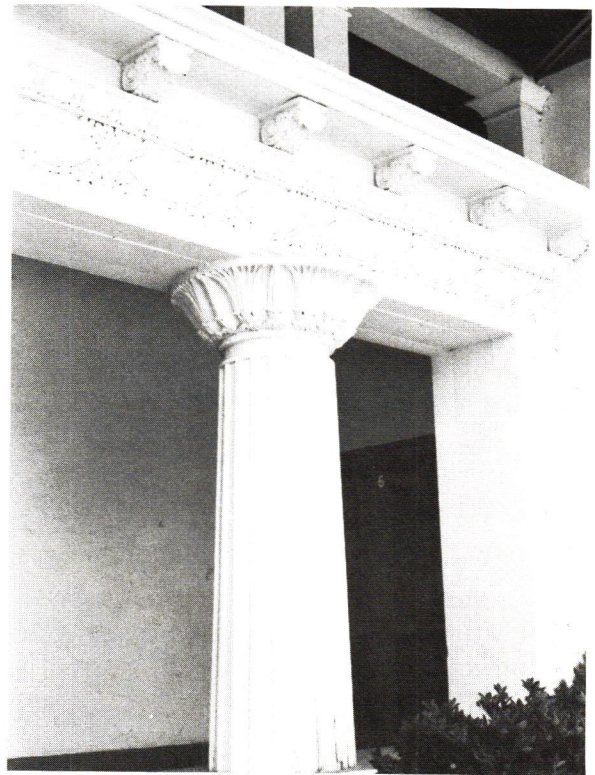
The Douglas Grey house in El Paso, Texas. The original condition of this house can be seen in the title page montage. The detail to the right shows the column on the porch with its Sullivanesque ornament. Photos by June F. Engelbrecht.



Italian Renaissance villa. Only the interior woodwork of the Swartz house derives from the Prairie School. Taken together, the two houses make an effective demonstration of the range of Trost's work.

Another house from about the same period, now somewhat altered, is the Douglas Grey house, dating from about 1910 at 1205 North El Paso Street. Two photographs of the original form of the house can be seen in the montage of buildings which frames Trost's portrait. In spite of its small size, the entire façade was given over to a formal front which provided a shading and cooling effect for the front part of the house. The two squat

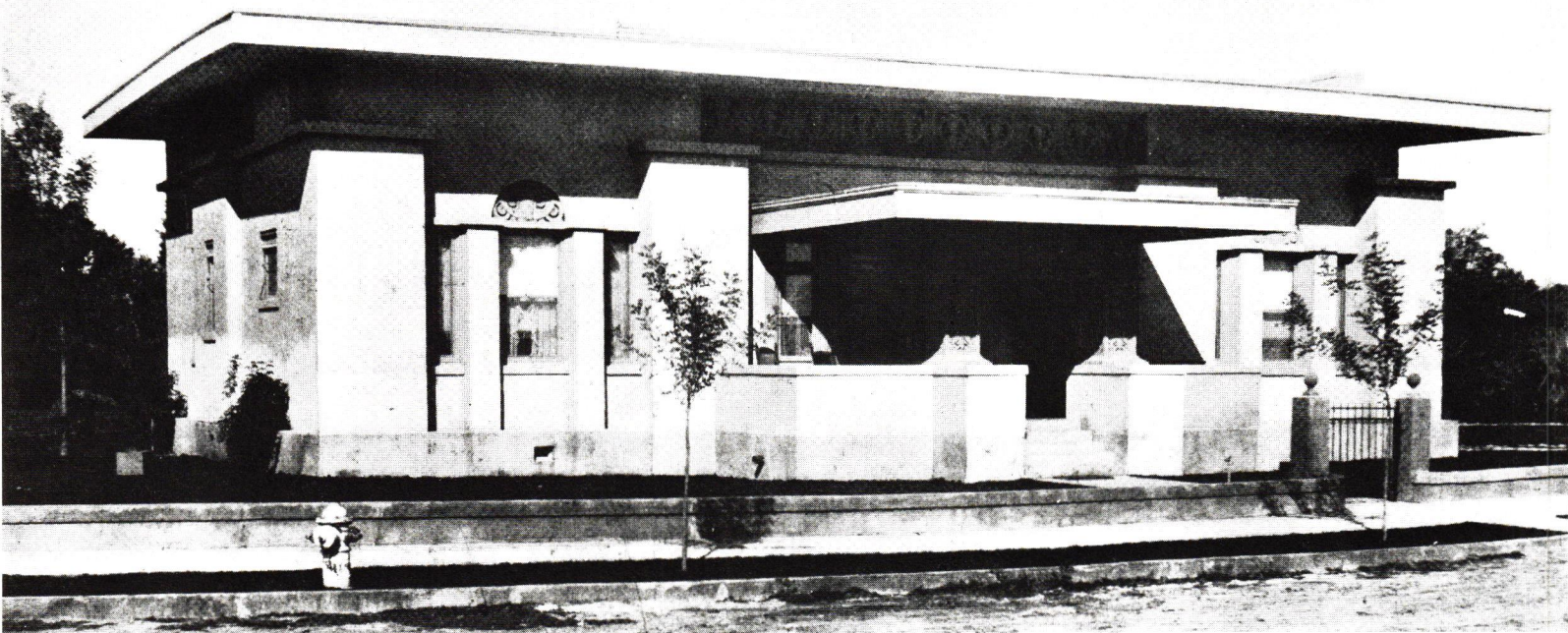
Henry C. Trost's design for a house at 1108 Upson, El Paso, Texas. Photo by June F. Engelbrecht.



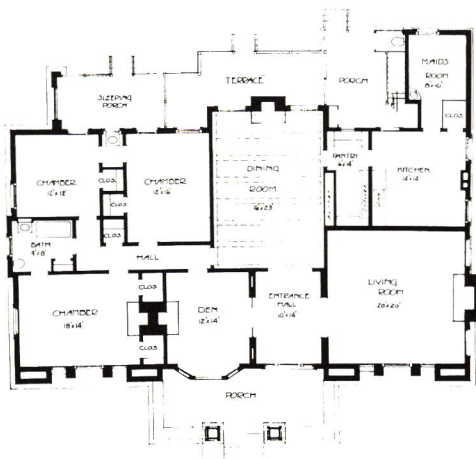
"Egyptian-doric" columns are framed by a post and lintel frieze which contrasts a band of ornament very much in the Sullivan tradition with a band of egg-and-dart ornament.

The house at 1108 Upson, probably dating from about 1910, was once owned by the grandparents of the writer's wife, Mr. and Mrs. William N. Fink. The names of the original clients were not determined. The porch to the left of the house, originally open, was closed in to form a conservatory by the Finks about 1940, but the original outlines of the porch were retained since the porch as built ran only along the left side of the house. The first story forms an unsettling, asymmetrical contrast with the symmetrical upper story and attic. The main entrance at the right is placed directly below the upper window, but the window on the first story seems placed in total disregard to the window above. The somewhat plain surfaces are accented by ornament framing the small center window on the second floor and the leafy capitals on the pairs of columns which frame the entrance to the porch.

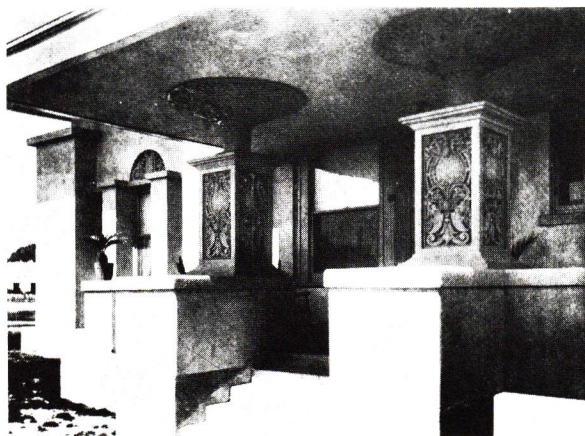
The Donan residence seems unique among all of Trost's *oeuvre* in that it seems related to the International Style. When the Donan house was published in *The Western Architect* in February, 1914, the stage was just being set for the emergence of the International Style in the work of European architects such as Walter Gropius and Adolf Loos. One is tempted to recall that both Trost and Loos were in Chicago in the 1890s. However, it must be pointed



*The house that the office of Trost and Trost designed for the Donan family is one which appears to have been heavily influenced by the work of Wright and his contemporaries. Photo from *The Western Architect*.*



*Above is the floor plan of the Donan residence. The plan shows little relationship to the work of other Prairie architects in contrast to the exterior. Below is a detail of the entrance. Plan and detail from *The Western Architect*.*



out that no contact between the two men, either directly or through publications of their buildings, can be traced. And, for all its resemblance to the International Style, the kinship between the Donan house and Trost's own house is present in the massing of the front on either side of the entrance. The Yandell front of the Trost house is clearly reflected in the thick, pier-like window mullions and the thick piers which frame the windows.

The formal front of the Donan house does little to prepare one for the off-center entrance, the asymmetrical massing of the rear of the house and the irregular arrangement of the rooms. The exact location of the house in El Paso and its present condition have not been determined.

A number of the houses discussed above illustrate Trost's tendency to avoid the expected and easy solutions in his houses. In his own house the unstructural but seemingly structural interior frame of the living room-dining room might be cited; the unusual use of rock facing in the first B. F. Stevens house, the symmetrical second story and the asymmetrical first story of 1108 Upson, the unexpectedly small scale of the Grey house, and the unexpected location of the main entrance and unexpected room arrangement of the Donan house might be cited as well. None of these houses is what the first impression leads one to expect. Each offers evidence of the operation of a restless and independent mind.

Trost was also an extremely successful commercial architect. A number of office buildings were designed by Trost during his first decade in El Paso. An accurate date is available only for the Mills Building for which the design in reinforced concrete was completed in 1910. The Roberts-Banner Building, probably completed about 1908, was also built of reinforced concrete and, as Trost's first venture



The Roberts-Banner building in El Paso. The lightning rods were part of the original design by Henry C. Trost. Photo by June F. Engelbrecht.

with the technique, served as a study for the Mills Building. The availability of cement and stone for aggregate locally was probably a factor in deciding on the materials to be used in both buildings.⁵¹

The Roberts-Banner Building consists of five stories, and comprises two wings open to the street separated by a U-shaped light well. The building is located at Mesa and Mills streets at one corner of San Jacinto Plaza on which several other Trost buildings, including the Mills Building, front. Whatever ornament was present on the ground floor of the Roberts-Banner Building has been removed by remodeling, but the bold, large scale ornament which was used to mark the spandrels and to accentuate the cornice remains.

51 By 1916 a cement plant in El Paso was producing 500,000 barrels of cement a day. H.Y. Benedict, *The Book of Texas*, by H.Y. Benedict and John A. Lomax. Doubleday, Page & Company, New York, 1916.

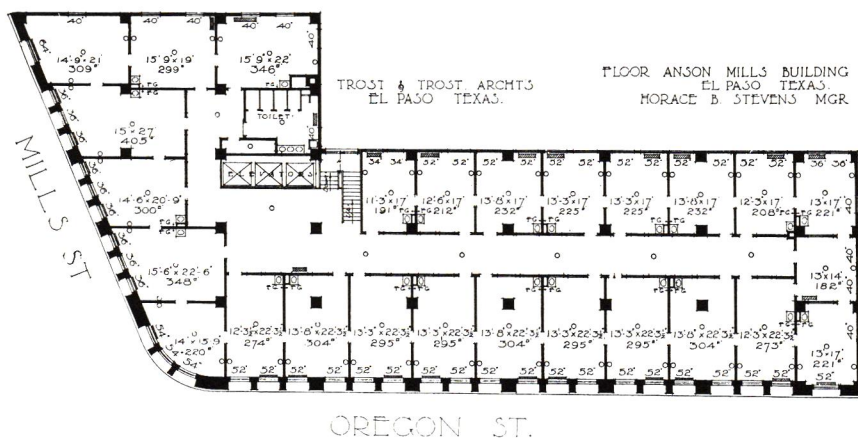


Above is the Anson Mills building as it appeared shortly after completion and before the removal of the classic "porches" at the ground level. Photo El Paso Library.

The Mills Building is one of Trost's most important buildings, and its client, Anson Mills, was one of Trost's best known clients.⁵² In 1858 and 1859 as a young surveyor he had plotted the streets of El Paso, and thus given their present form to the streets in much of present day El Paso.⁵³ A businessman and diplomat, Mills capped a long military career during which he rose to the rank of Brigadier General with an active role in The League to Enforce Peace, an organization which tried to keep the United States out of World War I. In his

52 Brief biographies of Mills appeared in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1934, VII, pp. 1-2, and in *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, John T. White & Co., New York, 1909, X, pp. 453-454. His autobiography is Anson Mills, *My Story*. Edited by C.H. Claudy, published by the author, Washington, D.C., 1918.

53 Mills, *ibid.*, pp. 53-57. C.L. Sonnichsen, *Pass of the North; Four Centuries on the Rio Grande*. Texas Western Press, University of Texas at El Paso, 1968, pp. 144-145.



autobiography Mills included a photograph of the Mills Building, and a short description of it. But nowhere in his autobiography does he mention Trost, although he was once photographed with him.⁵⁴ Mills' account of the Mills Building was as follows:

By 1912 the only piece of property I had remaining in El Paso became so valuable that I tore down the two-story building then on it, and built a monolithic cement building twelve stories high, containing no steel beams, the concrete being held in place by steel rods interspersed through the walls, columns, floors and roof. There is no wooden floor in the entire building from basement to turret, even the wash-boards in the rooms are made of cement and on all sides not exposed to parks the windows are fireproof. This was said to be the first building of the kind erected in the United States, and, so far as I know, it is still the only one of that magnitude.⁵⁵

The magnitude of the Mills Building has remained the subject of discussion ever since. Whiffen, for example, states that at the time it was completed it was the world's highest reinforced concrete building.⁵⁶ Similar statements have appeared in the El Paso newspapers.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, it would seem that the fifteen story Marlborough-Blenheim Hotel of 1905 in Atlantic City, New Jersey designed by Price and McLanahan⁵⁸ was taller, although its somewhat more irregular form may have resulted in a building which was less large in terms of cubic feet of concrete used or cubic feet of enclosed space.

But questions of size and priority aside, the building is a handsome one. After it was completed, Trost & Trost had its offices there and listed the firm's address simply as "Mills Building, El Paso, Texas." A regular rhythm of structural bays framing two mullions gives a vertical emphasis to the building. Each bay seems to reflect the tower of the now demolished Schiller, or Garrick, Building of Sullivan dating from 1891, but without the separate window system for the top story used there and in several other of Sullivan's office buildings. At the same time, in its massing, the twelve story Mills Building resembles the twelve story portion of the

⁵⁴ The photograph appeared in the *El Paso Times*, April 4, 1954, p. 14-C.

⁵⁵ Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

⁵⁶ Whiffen, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

⁵⁷ For example, on at least three occasions the *El Paso Times* referred to the Mills Building as the largest re-inforced concrete building in the world at the time of its completion (April 4, 1954, p. 14-C; August 16, 1964, p. 11-A; August 16, 1969).

⁵⁸ Peter Collins, *Concrete: the Vision of a New Architecture*, Horizon, New York, 1959, p. 87.

Carson Pirie Scott store erected in 1903-1904. Even the treatment of the corners is similar to Sullivan's use of mullions flanking relatively narrow windows in contrast to the wide Chicago windows of the straight parts of the façade.

Originally the Mills Building had two story tall "stripped down classic" porches on each of its street façades. In order to protect the building from the unsightly telephone lines which were still carried on poles in downtown El Paso at that time, Trost used a series of "ornamental" lions from which brackets protruded to hold the telephone lines in a more pleasing pattern. The porches and the brackets have been removed.

An anonymous writer in *The Architectural Review* (Boston) provided one of the rare published comments on a Trost building. Along with a reproduction of one of the illustrations which had appeared without comment in *The Western Architect* of October, 1913, the anonymous writer described the building as ". . . an office building of little merit in elevation, but presenting a façade of perpendicular lines when viewed from the street beneath," and thus "worthy of comment."⁵⁹

The only other comment on the Mills Building found which was published during Trost's lifetime was written in 1928 by G.H. Edgell, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture at Harvard University. Edgell included an illustration of the building in his book, *The American Architecture of Today*, and in his comments on the building was the first person thus far found who compared Trost's work to Sullivan's in print. Edgell wrote that: ". . . the Mills Building at El Paso, Texas (Trost & Trost), is designed in the spirit, and really in the letter, of Louis Sullivan's ideas."⁶⁰

Edgell also provided, partly at second hand, the most interesting comment on one of Trost's buildings made during his lifetime. The comment was made about another reinforced concrete building, one of Trost's many hotel commissions, the Franciscan Hotel in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In his book Edgell wrote:

In Albuquerque, Trost & Trost have designed the Hotel Franciscan, applying the principles of the pueblo style to hotel architecture on a large scale. This is modernism rampant, yet finely done. All detail is consciously crude. Angles are blunted, the mass of material is emphasized. Blocklike ornament with heavy cast shadows

⁵⁹ *The Architectural Review* (Boston), II (new series), November, 1913, p. 278.

⁶⁰ G.H. Edgell, *The American Architecture of To-Day*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1928, p. 83.

takes the place of the vocabulary of the historic past. The effect is cubistic, but cubism under definite intellectual control. Paradoxically, the building is full of harsh harmonies. It is closely related to the modernist productions of the German and Scandinavian peoples, by whom it has been acclaimed, but the ideas which it embodies, the forms which it displays, are taken from the pueblo style of the district in which it exists. It is thus a work of ultramodernism with an archaeological basis, is appropriate to its setting, and represents an original experiment in American architecture, as well. Incidentally, its thick walls, and especially its heavy reveals, have a great functional value in a climate like that of New Mexico, where high winds are frequent and constantly impregnated with sand.⁶¹

Unfortunately Edgell fails to identify the way in which the Franciscan Hotel has been acclaimed by the German and Scandinavian peoples. No mention of Trost has as yet been located in any European publications. Perhaps Edgell referred to remarks made to him orally by visitors to the United States.

Writing from a later perspective, Whiffen goes on to connect the Franciscan Hotel with the expressionistic movement in European architecture which flourished in the 1920's simultaneously with the emergence of the International Style.⁶² This is more sensible than is the reference by Edgell to cubism, which after all was a term with direct reference only to painting, and which had no real counterpart even in sculpture, much less in architecture.

Exactly how aware of European developments Trost was at any point in his career can only be guessed.

The books and periodicals of the firm of Trost & Trost were given to the Fondren Library of Rice University in Houston in May, 1954 after which they were dispersed into the Library's working collection and can no longer be identified.⁶³

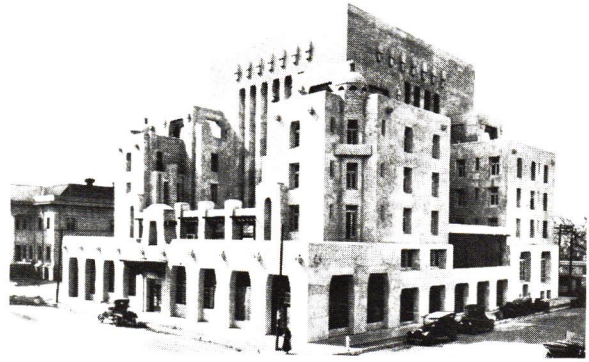
A passage in the 1914 account of Trost's life reads:

While he has been devoted to his profession in its practical aspect, Mr. Trost has always been a student, and has never allowed himself to lag

61 *Ibid.*, p. 340.

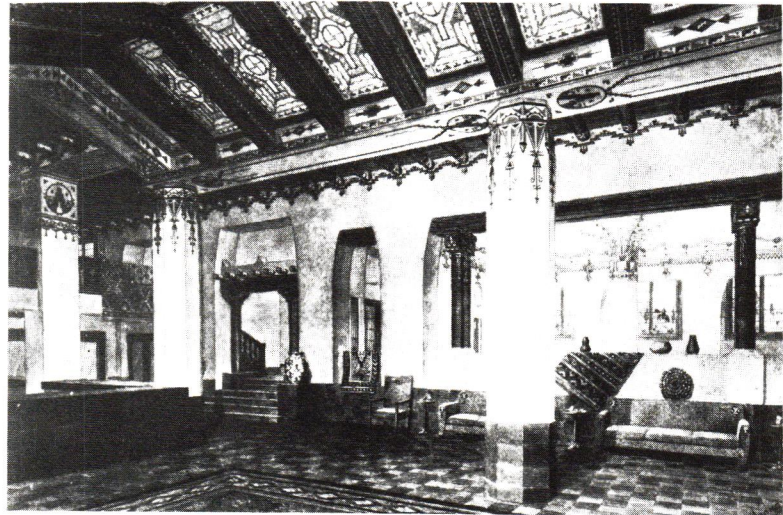
62 Whiffen, *op. cit.*, p. 232 and 269.

63 The date of the gift is from a letter, Marion Doherty to June F. Engelbrecht, January 11, 1970. A letter from James Steed, Special Assistant for Archives, The Fondren Library, Rice University, to Lloyd C. Engelbrecht, January 30, 1970 states, in part: "The books and periodicals . . . were shelved in the stacks to support our working collections, and no list of them is available."



A general view of the Hotel Franciscan at Albuquerque, New Mexico that was designed by Trost in 1923. The main entrance is in the center of the left facade above. Western Architect photo.

This is a watercolor rendering by the office of Trost and Trost showing the lobby of the Franciscan as it originally appeared. Photo from The Western Architect.



behind in his professional attainments. A part of nearly every year is spent in the east, where he enjoys association with the best known architects of America, and where he has opportunity to learn all that is new and noteworthy in his field.⁶⁴

Since it is impossible to know precisely what was meant by "the east," or to whom Trost spoke while there, it is hard to draw any definite conclusions from the passage. Still, it does indicate that Trost tried to keep aware of developments in architecture outside the areas in which he customarily worked.

The attention given to the Franciscan Hotel is noteworthy because by 1923 a good many pueblo style buildings had been erected in Albuquerque and in nearby Santa Fe and other parts of the Southwest, some of which were buildings of considerable merit. Thus the comments of Edgell and of

64 Johnson, *op. cit.*

his anonymous European contacts, and Whiffen's more recent comments, must be read in the context of the selection of one pueblo style building from among a multitude of them for special attention.

The lobby of the Franciscan Hotel seems specifically archaeologically "Southwestern," albeit more Spanish Colonial than pueblo. However, by contrast the kitchen is all efficiency, with clean lines and a complete lack of any ornament.

One last pair of buildings must be considered. This is the Luhrs Tower of 1928 in Phoenix and its near twin, the Bassett Tower in El Paso. The Bassett Tower was first published in August, 1930.⁶⁵ The Luhrs Tower has the distinction of being the only Trost building to be mentioned in *The Encyclopedia of World Art* although it is not illustrated there.⁶⁶ A somewhat whimsical watercolor drawing of the Luhrs Tower is reproduced in this issue. Both the Luhrs Tower and the Bassett Tower are setback skyscrapers with strong vertical emphasis and sparingly applied ornament.

Only a small portion of Trost's buildings can be illustrated and discussed here. His output was enormous, and included hundreds of schools and many hotels. The hotels included one of the early essays in the chain of Hilton Hotels erected in 1930 in El Paso and since renamed the Plaza Hotel.⁶⁷ In addition to a large number of houses there were a number of religious and other institutional buildings. Some of the buildings must be considered unsuccessful, such as the Odd Fellows Building of 1906,⁶⁸ in El Paso, and the Masonic Temple of 1912, now demolished, which also stood in El Paso.⁶⁹

The difference between Wright's and Trost's attitude towards the historic styles and toward their clients can be summed up in a description of three commissions: Wright's Moore house in Oak Park, Illinois; Trost's El Paso County Court House; and Trost's four buildings for the University of Texas at El Paso.

65 The Luhrs Tower is not to be confused with another Luhrs building in Phoenix. It was dated from Whiffen, *American Architecture*, p. 240. The Bassett Tower was published in *The Western Architect*, XXXIX, August, 1930, p. 126.

66 *Encyclopedia of World Art*, XIV, McGraw-Hill, 1967, columns 654 and 655. The passage which mentions the Luhrs Tower is part of an article signed by John Pearce.

67 "Architect of Hilton Hotel," *El Paso Evening Post*, November 5, 1930.

68 *American Architect and Building News*, Building News Section, XC, January 27, 1906, p. xii. The budget was \$60,000. No published illustration has been located.

69 *Ibid.*, CII, August 21, 1912, p. 16. The budget was \$125,000. Illustrations were published in *The Western Architect*, XX, February, 1914, on 2 unnumbered pages.



The Luhrs Tower, Phoenix, Arizona, 1928. This rendering was made in the office of Trost and Trost. Some influence from the Chicago Tribune Tower competition may be noted here. From a photograph loaned by Everett Bradt.

In his *Autobiography* Wright discussed his Tudor style house for the Moores in 1895 in terms of "selling out." Wright wrote that the commission came at a time when he sorely missed money to support his three children and his wife. He described his agreement to design the house in a Tudor style as "the one time in the course of a long career that I gave in to the fact that I had a family and they had a right to live . . ." ⁷⁰

Trost designed the El Paso County Courthouse in 1915. The model which he followed was the "new courthouse" in Dallas.⁷¹ The decision to do so was made by a five man committee, including Trost, which visited Dallas. Further, the commissioner's court which gave Trost the commission was unable to resolve differences in taste and agree on furniture. The impasse was resolved, not by asking the architect to design or even select furniture, but by the

70 Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography*. Duell, Sloan and Pearce, New York, 1943, pp. 128-129. The first edition of the book was dated 1932.

71 J. Morgan Broadbudd, *The Legal Heritage of El Paso*. Texas Western College Press, El Paso, 1963, pp. 156-159. It is not clear which Dallas building was the model. It was probably the Municipal Building rather than the Dallas County Criminal Courts and Jail Building. They are illustrated, respectively, on p. 67 and 73 of *The Western Architect*, XX, July, 1914.

appointment of a citizens' committee to select the furniture!

When a new campus was needed for the Texas State School of Mines and Metallurgy, now the University of Texas at El Paso, it was the wife of the Dean, Mrs. Stephen Howard Worrell, who suggested the design motif which was ultimately followed by Trost in designing the first four buildings for the new campus. Mrs. Worrell had been intrigued by an article on Bhutan in the April, 1914 issue of the *National Geographic Magazine* and noticed the similarity of the terrain in Bhutan and the new campus site. This suggestion was in fact followed by Trost, and the resulting buildings were quite well suited in their colors and in their massing to the bare and rocky site.⁷²

It is not known whether Trost accepted these commissions in good grace, but surely no one can imagine Wright accepting them at all. Trost was not impelled to evolve an identifiable personal style, while Wright not only did so, but also allowed his sense of identity and his ego to become bound up with his architectural style. Trost, certainly by contrast with Wright, and probably by any standards, was a self-effacing man. This conclusion is inescapable from the almost complete lack of biographical material published during his lifetime and from the fact that Trost was not impelled to put his ideas about architecture into words and publish them. Thus Trost was freer than Wright to make use of any stylistic vocabulary he pleased. Nevertheless in spite of his use of various "historic" styles, many of Trost's buildings betray his restless mind, his independence, and his artistic inventiveness. This can be seen in his "archaeological" Franciscan Hotel in Albuquerque, a clear victory of originality over archaeology.

Henry Trost's buildings are of more than local significance, and it is time that a beginning be made in identifying and listing them. And it is time also that the known facts of Trost's life be published, and some of the intriguing questions concerning his life and work be identified and stated. One of the difficulties in characterizing Trost's work as a whole is that his work encompasses a wide variety of styles and types of buildings, from modest bungalows to tall office buildings. But his most successful buildings reveal an architect who deserves wider recognition and further study.

72 Francis L. Fugate, *Frontier College, Texas Western at El Paso; the First Fifty Years*. Texas Western, El Paso, 1964, passim. Fugate's book contains excellent color photographs of the campus. The article to which Mrs. Worrell referred was John Claude White, "Castles in the Air; Experiences and Journeys in Unknown Bhutan," *The National Geographic Magazine*, XXV, April, 1914, pp. (365)-455.



Stained glass on the den door of the Trost house in El Paso.

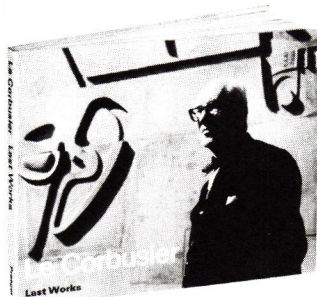
This article would not have been possible without the interest, co-operation and help of many persons. Professor Paul Sprague of the University of Chicago provided not only encouragement but also a number of valuable insights and suggestions. My colleague at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, Mrs. Deirdre Ford, who is in charge of interlibrary loan, and her assistant, Mrs. Anna Riley, provided helpful advice and secured loans and copies of numerous obscure but essential publications. Without their service, cheerfully offered and efficiently rendered, many points of information and documentation could not have been secured. Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm McGregor were generous, gracious and patient in answering questions and in providing access to the Trost house. As owners of the house they also deserve gratitude for their loving and responsible stewardship, which sets an example for other owners of important buildings. Also helpful were many members of the Vanderkloot family, including Nicholas J. Vanderkloot and Dr. Adrian Vanderkloot of Chicago; Mrs. Clara Vanderkloot of Antioch, Illinois; Mrs. A. Kenneth Higbee of Holmes Beach, Florida; John Vanderkloot of Laguna Beach, California; and William J. Vanderkloot, Jr. of Chappaqua, New York.

Several persons were generous in providing information through interviews with me and with my wife: El Paso architects Everett Bradt, William Wuehrmann, Ewing Waterhouse and Edwin Carroll; and Walter T. Ponsford of Ponsford Brothers, General Contractors, El Paso. Others were generous of their time in supplying information in answer to letters: Mrs. Marion Doherty of Rockville, Maryland; Mrs. Frances Moore of the Austin-Travis County Collection, Austin Public Library; Baxter Polk, my classmate and long time friend and Librarian of the University of Texas at El Paso and Bud Newman, his Assistant Archivist; Mrs. Virginia P. Hoke, Head, Southwest Reference Section, El Paso Public Library and Mrs. Margo Groff of her staff; Mrs. Nancy Reeves McAdams, Architecture Librarian, University of Texas, Austin; James Steed, Special Assistant for Archives, the Fondren Library, Rice University, Houston; Professor Howard Barnstone of the College of Architecture, University of Houston; Mrs. Marion Murra, Reference Librarian, Pueblo Regional Library, Pueblo, Colorado; and Robert W. Richmond, State Archivist of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

Professor Marcus Whiffen of the College of Architecture, Arizona State University, Tempe, supplied some needed information and was good enough to send a photograph on short notice. Professor Gordon Heck of the University of Arizona, Tucson, was extremely generous in offering material gathered during years of research on Trost.

My mother-in-law, Mrs. Julia L. Fink, a lifelong resident of El Paso and astute observer of that city's architecture, helped in innumerable ways, but most importantly in kindling my interest in Trost. Her knowledge of the geography, history and architecture of El Paso, her aid in contacting clients of Trost and present owners of his buildings, many of them her friends of long standing, and her research into many Trost problems, all were generously put at my service. Her brother, Dr. Wayne Lorentzen, was also of service, most notably in helping with the photographic documentation. Finally, my wife, June, gave me aid which was essential and beyond measure. She provided numerous insights from her own background as an art historian and as a long time resident of El Paso. She aided in conducting the interviews and in the lengthy correspondence, searched several valuable picture files in El Paso, and performed many other tasks which were an essential part of the research. It needn't be added that she also helped in the intangible ways in which good wives do.

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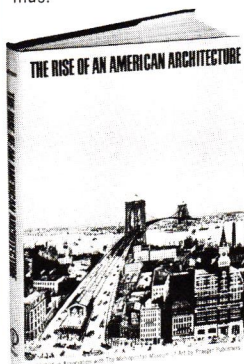
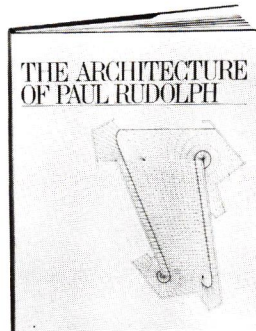
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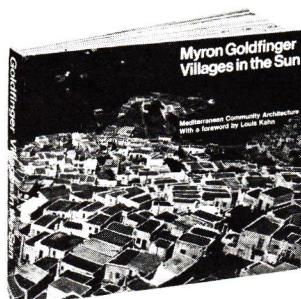


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The first issue of Volume VII of *The Prairie School Review* will have an article written by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1907 entitled "The New Larkin Administration Building." This previously unknown work was written by Wright for inclusion in the Larkin Company's house magazine. It tells in detail how the architect solved the problem of a large business building.

Due to lack of space in the current issue, we are rescheduling various book reviews. The following will appear in the next issue.

The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment

Reyner Banham

American Architecture Since 1780

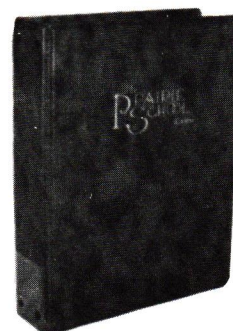
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The Lawton house at 1712 North Mesa in El Paso, Texas designed by Henry C. Trost. Photo by June F. Engelbrecht.



The Brazos Apartments building. This El Paso building shows a marked similarity to the Charnley house in Chicago designed by the office of Adler & Sullivan during the period Henry Trost was in Chicago. Photo by June F. Engelbrecht.



The Adolph Swartz residence, El Paso, Texas designed by Henry C. Trost is now the Fanny & Adolph Swartz memorial. Photo by June F. Engelbrecht.

