



The Westcott House Foundation
1340 East High Street
Springfield, Ohio 45505
www.westcotthouse.org

Indicating the importance of the Westcott House to his flourishing Prairie Style, Wright chose to include it in the first major publication of his work: the 1910 Wasmuth Portfolio (*Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe von Frank Lloyd Wright*), published in Berlin. This is a reproduction of the original architectural rendering as it appears in the Wasmuth Portfolio; it was, in fact, the second design presented to Burton and Orpha Westcott. Wright revised the original design, and, ultimately, this rendition of the house was approved and built by the Westcotts.

The two "elegant volumes" were published in Germany by the distinguished architectural publisher Ernst Wasmuth and combined elements of the *Beaux-Arts* Classicism and the English Arts and Crafts movement. Although Wright made little impact on architects in America with his new Prairie Style, the reaction in Europe's *avant-garde*, stimulated by the innovative ideas presented in the Wasmuth Portfolio, could be seen throughout Europe. The Wasmuth Portfolios was to be an important ingredient in the architectural movement that was destined to become Modernism.

It is important to note that The Westcott House is the only example in Ohio of Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie Style. Respected historian Grant Carpenter Manson refers to this period as "the first Golden Age of Frank Lloyd Wright," and many other scholars consider it to be Wright's most significant architectural period. The Westcott House is a consummate example of Prairie Style; its omission from nearly all contemporary publications about Wright is due strictly to the early alterations to the home and does not reflect the quality or the innovation of the design. Now fully restored, The Westcott House ranks among Wright's most significant contributions in Prairie Style architecture as it successfully balances all the important elements of the architect's mature work.

Studies and Executed Buildings by Frank Lloyd Wright

The following excerpts come from the Foreword by Vincent Scully.

"In 1910 - 11 the distinguished German architectural publisher Ernst Wasmuth issued a pair of elegant folios covering the work of Frank Lloyd Wright to that date. The 'Wasmuth Portfolios,' which permanently secured Wright's reputation in Europe and had enormous influence on the architects of the day, have since become world-famous and highly prized by collectors, scholars, and followers of Wright's career."

"This book, the *Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe von Frank Lloyd Wright*, suggested to Wasmuth, so Wright believed, by the German professor Kuno Francke, is one of the three most influential architectural treatises of the twentieth century. The other two are Le Corbusier's *Vers Une Architecture*, of 1923, and Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, of 1996. How different those three books are. *Vers une Architecture*, of very moderate size, mixes photographs, drawings and text in an explosive crackle of images and ideas. *Complexity and Contradiction*, printed microscopically in the first edition, also incorporates illustrations in the text but pursues a quiet, relentless argument, reflecting respectfully upon the past. Both books are concerned with an integrated structure of forms and ideas, and both were written by men whose own mature work was yet to come. *Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe* is totally different. It presents the work of an architect who had been carrying on a rich and revolutionary practice for almost twenty years. It is a record of work accomplished. Words and images are separated. One may read the introduction or not. I suspect that most Europeans at the time merely skimmed it, since its message would have been familiar enough to them from the European criticism which they already knew. Attention is focused on the drawings. The whole publication is directed toward that end, and the quality of its reproductions, along with its air of noble detachment, makes *Vers Une Architecture* and *Complexity and Contradiction* look very tatty indeed."