Frank Lloyd Wright’s late career flowered in the wake of a wave of national publicity for his recent work early in 1938, when he was seventy years old. At this time, Fallingwater (1934–37) had just been completed, and the Johnson Wax Company Administration Building (1936–39) was under construction. The entire January 1938 issue of Architectural Forum, designed by Wright, was devoted to his work, while his popular reputation was shaped by a feature article in Time of 17 January 1938 that identified him as “the greatest architect of the 20th century.” The Depression had eased, Wright was resurgent, and he was clearly seeking the national clientele that would develop over the last two decades of his life. Among his patrons was Dr. Ludd M. Spivey, president of Florida Southern College in Lakeland, whose initial contact with Wright in April 1938 marked the start of a twenty-plus-year working relationship and friendship that resulted in Wright’s design of nine realized buildings within a comprehensive plan for the college’s new west campus. This site would come to hold the largest collection of Wright buildings in the world. The campus grew into a partial embodiment of Wright’s ideals for an organic architecture in the spirit of his utopian proposal for Broadacre City, which was first exhibited publicly in 1935.2

The first and most monumental building that Wright designed for Florida Southern was a chapel named for its donor, Annie M. Pfeiffer, which was dedicated on 9 March 1941 after almost three years of design and construction (Figure 1). The chapel was the first religious structure that Wright realized after his Unity Temple in Oak Park, Illinois (1905–9), and the first of a series of late churches and a synagogue that he built before his death in April 1959.3 The Pfeiffer Chapel was also related to Wright’s realized and unrealized designs for theaters and auditoriums. Though the building holds a pivotal position in his career as a public architect, it has never been closely studied. For Spivey, the new chapel was the centerpiece of his vision for the college as a theologically modernist institution. For Wright, the chapel was to fulfill his ideal of a modern architecture for the United States whose character derived from its regional authenticity, as distinct from the current International Style of European modern architecture. From these agendas arose a building whose structural system, based on the cantilever, was among the most artful of Wright’s oeuvre. Here he developed the expressive potential of modern construction for a client who sought an emblem of institutional aims.

Florida Southern College and Modernist Theology

Founded as a seminary in 1885 by the Florida Methodist Conference, which still owns it, Southern College acquired what became its permanent campus in Lakeland in 1921. The original seventy-eight-acre tract extended south along a considerable slope overlooking Lake Hollingsworth, named for the college’s first president, Joshua...
Hollingsworth. Located thirty-two miles east of Tampa, Lakeland was the center of the state’s citrus industry, set amid hundreds of lakes. Florida Southern claimed to be the only college in the United States that had a citrus grove as a campus. The grove, valued as an agricultural property at $100,000 in 1940, was leased to private operators who annually picked large quantities of oranges and grapefruit from its trees. When the college moved to Lakeland in 1922, the trustees commissioned Orlando architect E.H. Trimble to design a master plan for the campus, which is recorded in a model (Figure 2). The scheme shows a domed central library dominating the upland (north) side of the site and flanked by dormitory quadrangles, with a sloping green cleared of trees south to the lake. A steepled chapel is shown in the site’s northwest corner. Versions of five buildings in this plan were completed on the east part of the site in a neo-Georgian style before Wright’s involvement. The first was a three-story red brick women’s dormitory opened in 1922 (renamed Joseph-Reynolds Hall in 1937), facing west onto the grove (see Figure 2, a). Wright’s chapel would stand directly west of this structure (see Figure 2, b). Full accreditation coincided with the institution’s golden jubilee in 1935, when it was renamed Florida Southern College.4

Before becoming Wright’s client, Spivey had worked for thirteen years since his election as president in 1925 to erase the college’s large debt, build an endowment, and add new structures. He accomplished these formidable tasks following the collapse of Florida’s boom in land speculation in 1927 and the subsequent national depression. Born in Alabama in 1886, Spivey had served as an ordained Methodist minister before completing divinity studies at the University of Chicago in 1922. There he was deeply influenced by the philosophy of John Dewey (1859–1952), to which he frequently referred in his own writings and talks at Florida Southern. Dewey had left Chicago in 1904, yet his followers in philosophy, religion, and related fields were Spivey’s mentors, and Dewey himself later developed a personal friendship with Spivey.5
Dewey’s central philosophical creed of instrumentalism emphasized the value of experience in education and in art. His stress on a modern pragmatism as a guide for progressive schooling was central to Spivey’s vision of Florida Southern’s mission, where students were to learn religious precepts by incorporating them into their daily lives on campus. Like Dewey, Spivey opposed the idea of students as “spectators” who gained knowledge by assimilating information about the present and the past. In place of this tradition, Spivey believed that education should have an experiential component. As he had done with earlier campus structures, Spivey would realize this ideal in the expansion of Florida Southern College by having students work for their tuition by aiding in the buildings’ construction. He also subscribed to Dewey’s idea of “art as experience,” which held that art was not a field apart from living, but rather that all human activity had an artistic component, and that all work completed well or skillfully produced aesthetic satisfaction. From this perspective, the built environment of Florida Southern’s campus, in both its creation and its use, would be an encompassing experience that would assist students in living well together. Spivey thus proposed to realize Florida Southern’s traditional aim of religious formation by implementing Dewey’s modern philosophy in educational and architectural terms. For Spivey, as for Dewey, such progressive education was essential for a democracy.6

Spivey’s three years of study at the University of Chicago fell within the longer forty-year period of that institution’s early architectural development as a neo-Gothic campus, from its founding in 1892 until the Great Depression in 1932. Wright was also familiar with Chicago’s campus, near which he had built the Frederick Robie House (1908–10), the Midway Gardens (1911–14), and other houses. From its beginning, the university had planned a central chapel. Bond Chapel, designed by Coolidge and Hodgdon, was realized in 1926, connecting to the same architects’ Swift Hall, which was to house the divinity school, then focused on studies in the New Testament and Early Christian literature.7 In 1918, when Spivey studied at this school, Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue began designs for a modern Gothic chapel for the whole university, which was completed after his death in 1924 by his associates Mayers, Murray, and Phillip. Spivey saw the power of John D. Rockefeller’s final gift of $10,000,000 given in 1910 to build up the institution. A lifelong Baptist, Rockefeller had stipulated that at least $1.5 million of this gift be used to erect and furnish a university chapel, whose name was changed to Rockefeller Chapel after his death in 1937 (Figure 3). The chapel was intentionally medieval in construction. Its buttressing walls of stone, backed by brick, supported interior stone vaults, so that, as Goodhue said, “its buttresses ‘butt.’”8 At their base, the tower’s walls were eight feet thick, with foundations going down eighty feet to bedrock. Structural steel was used for roof trusses, bal-
conies, and the tower’s internal structure, but not for the main vaulting. Although the relative planarity of the stonework and the program of symbolic images marked the chapel as modern, it was as close to a medieval Gothic construction as then existed in the United States.

Wright’s Pfeiffer Chapel at Florida Southern would have a different relationship to the Gothic tradition. When Spivey became president of Florida Southern in 1925, he began to lead the institution away from the conservative theology long associated with the Gothic Revival. Although medieval in its architectural style, the University of Chicago during Spivey’s tenure was the intellectual center of a modernist movement in American Protestant theology, which emphasized the compatibility of religious and scientific knowledge, and posited the view that Christianity was the product of its own historical and social evolutionary process. Such a modernist view clashed with Biblical fundamentalism. The leader of the modernists was Spivey’s mentor, Dr. Shirley Jackson Case (1872–1947), the dean of Chicago’s divinity school, whom Spivey invited to teach at Florida Southern in 1938.9 Wright’s modern architecture, with its emphasis on structural innovation and authenticity relative to the natural history of a region, signified this modernist theological outlook, in contrast to the college’s earlier conventional neo-Georgian architecture of the 1920s. In this way, Pfeiffer Chapel clearly equated an architectural style with a religious ideology.

The Florida Methodist Conference had provided most of the financial support that had nurtured the college, whose teachings, even though it was no longer a seminary, were expected to conform to the conference’s theology as determined by its bishops. No Methodist minister ordained in the Florida Methodist Conference was to preach religious doctrine that went against the episcopally approved standard. Given that his education was influenced by Dewey and Case, Spivey’s intellectual horizons were distant from those of many of his regional colleagues. Their differences culminated in a public controversy of 1935. Spivey, who taught and preached at the college, publicly espoused the idea that the biblical prophecy of the Second Coming of Christ was not necessarily to be interpreted literally. This was in direct contradiction to official Methodist teaching at the time. In general, Spivey earned a reputation as a theological “modernist” in that he took a critical view of biblical texts, and advocated the study of social psychology and the education of pastors as psychiatrists for life in modern times. His opponents, including some of his own faculty, called Spivey’s actions into question, and demanded that he be removed as president of the college’s conference. However, the bishop of the Florida Methodist Conference, Rev. John Moore, supported Spivey’s liberal approach, and Spivey kept his position, much to the dismay of the conference’s and the college’s conservatives.10 From then on, although he did face further controversy, Spivey openly directed Florida Southern’s life toward an ideal of religious modernity, with Dewey’s philosophy as a guide. The college, now publicly modernist in its theology, would soon be housed in modern buildings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Spivey’s Original Vision: The E. Stanley Jones Educational Foundation

Spivey’s victory in the controversy of 1935 strengthened his hand for fundraising and building. In summer 1936, he traveled to Europe for the first time, touring the Soviet Union, Germany, and other countries. He recalled that his view of Florida Southern’s architectural future changed when he was visiting Geneva, then home of the League of Nations, and saw the Reformation Monument of 1909–17 from his hotel balcony. This 100-meter wall of stone featured larger-
than-life statues and reliefs of major thinkers and leaders who had advanced Calvinist ideals. Spivey recalled that “this monument suggested to me to return home as quick as possible and do something extraordinary here in America.” In 1936-37, he spoke about his missionary work to packed auditoriums in twenty-eight American cities. During the Christmas holidays of 1936, Spivey invited Jones to rest at Florida Southern. There he convinced Jones that this institution was the ideal place for realizing Jones’s program “to give spiritual teachings their proper place in the schools of America,” where modern scientific and religious education were to find a harmonious balance. In 1937, Jones permitted Spivey to create the E. Stanley Jones Educational Foundation at Florida Southern, aiming to raise $1,000,000 for endowment and new buildings to signify the foundation’s aims.

In the short film Florida Southern College: Insuring Our Destiny, Spivey and Jones presented their vision of “an inspiring monument to man’s effort to harmonize the intellectual and the spiritual.” As Jones narrated to their audience of potential donors: “I should like to see upon my return to America a building on your beautiful campus that would indelibly impress on the minds of the students, professors, and visitors in symbolic form what this college stands for and is really trying to accomplish. To symbolize what I am talking about I would suggest a building be created on your campus dedicated to the interpretation of the spiritual values of a college education.” This Hall of Religion would house departments devoted to comparative religions and to the history and contemporary application of Christianity to world and local problems, as well as a shrine for personal devotions. One of the building’s four wings would house a chapel, which this Methodist college did not yet have. The chapel “unit” was to be built first. Although rooted in Methodist culture, Jones’s foundation was “conceived as a vast project that will transcend denominational barriers . . . planned as a shrine for American Protestantism.” In this spirit, an endowment was to support a “preaching mission” each winter at the college chapel. As Jones said: “Distinguished ministers from all denominations will be invited here to preach. To this mission will be invited all the ministers of Florida as well as all the laymen who care to attend.”

The film and related publications illustrated designs for the building by the Methodist architect L. Alex Hatton of Bartow, Florida (Figure 4). Drawings and a model showed a cruciform building with four equal wings extending from a central towered rotunda. The plan shows the chapel at the end of a main axis opposite the entrance, past the central rotunda. Wings contained administrative offices, a library, and classrooms for biology, chemistry, home economics, physics, and astronomy. An octagonal structure for devotions stood beyond a sunken garden. Allegorical statues showing an entering and a graduating student were to stand in front of the entrance portico and beyond the chapel apse. Spivey imagined “an ideal site just off the present campus. . . . On a large open plot of ground overlooking Lake Hollingsworth there is ample space with a beautiful background of trees.” This site became that of Wright’s chapel. Hatton’s design was to be “of brick so as to be harmonious with the other college buildings.” Spivey said to Jones: “Your plan for a building that will concentrate and symbolize religious teachings at Florida Southern is tremendously appealing to me. It will serve to remind the students of Florida Southern and I hope the students of all America that the ideal education is an equal blending of religious, cultural, and scientific knowledge.”

Jones’s fundraising proceeded apace in 1937–38, beginning in Lakeland and then moving to other major Florida cities, where the question of the architecture and the architect repeatedly arose. One of Spivey’s close associates later recalled: “The general feeling of many people was that, if the college was really going to honor so unique and outstanding a leader as E. Stanley Jones, the buildings associated with his name should likewise be unique and outstanding.” Colleagues who knew of Wright’s work urged Spivey to consider him, and on 11 April Spivey telegraphed the architect: “Desire conference with you concerning plans for great education temple in Florida.” At this point, Spivey was still likely referring to the idea of the multifunctional building for the E. Stanley Jones Foundation. On 21 April 1938, Spivey visited Wright at Taliesin, where they discussed the project, with the understanding that Spivey did not yet have the funds in hand to realize his vision. Spivey recalled: “I told [Wright] that I wanted to do something very extraordinary. Well, he wasn’t enthusiastic about it because as you know he never did anything in the field of architecture unless he carried on a lot of research. But he said ‘I’ll come down.’” For three days, 9–11 May, Wright visited Lakeland, where he “walked slowly about the college campus, from time to time letting the Florida sand trickle through his delicate fingers.” Spivey recalled that Wright “had me drive him all over the country to see
the various parts of Lakeland and the county.”

At the end of this visit, Wright accepted the job because of his response to both the institution and the site, which he stated “could not be found any place else on earth.”

To raise funds, Spivey asked Wright to speak at a dinner in Lakeland. In his speech to a large audience that included a number of Florida architects, which Spivey arranged to have broadcast on radio, Wright sounded his familiar themes. He had long looked askance at academic education, but now for the first time consented to build for a college, saying “I love the religious spirit in an institution.” He continued: “This is a great opportunity here because you have a beautiful piece of ground. . . . I shall be very proud indeed to give the Foundation fresh form, a Florida form. No real Florida form has yet been produced. Most of you here have simply built as you built back home.” Echoing his mentor, Louis Sullivan, Wright stressed: “We do not need a French chateau for a firehouse nor a Greek temple for a bank.” Criticizing Hatton’s project, he asserted: “I believe we are now ready for a culture of our own, something indigenous to America. We have the 57 varieties in architecture. All my life I have longed for something we in America could call our own.”

Wright “had no idea what [the buildings] would be like, but he promised they would fit into the land, the life and the spirit of Florida.” Spivey “wanted the construction to be an expression of the ideals of the institution when he went to Wright.” He said to his architect: “We have the ideals, we know what we are trying to do, but we need a symbol for those ideals lest they be lost.” Wright told him: “This is the first time I ever have been absolutely idealistically interested in a college. Here is going to be the crowning event of my career, a shrine to both idealism and religion.”

Wright’s Campus Plan as Regionalist Manifesto

Wright’s campus design took shape in the late summer of 1938, after he received the plot plans of the site. In August, he wrote: “Dr. Spivey is waiting to see his preliminaries. We are at them early and late but they will be late because I am trying to duly put myself into them.” Because Wright intended to consolidate the many functions in Hatton’s building, initially Spivey envisioned a single multipurpose structure. He anticipated that “the building, with a series of courts and gardens, will extend for two blocks across the campus to Lake Hollingsworth.” Like European modernist interwar architecture, Wright’s plan distended what he called the “units,” or wings, of Hatton’s structure into a group of functionally and volumetrically discrete buildings, described as “units” of the overall plan. Wright was also to plan the landscaping. A bird’s-eye view from the northwest shows differently shaped structures for different functions, all connected by covered walkways or esplanades (Figure 5). Writing to Spivey on 20 September, Wright explained: “The general plan is a pattern of terraces and arbors connecting the various buildings—a free pattern, in itself the most important single feature of the design, I think. . . . The reflex enters into architecture in these plans for Florida
Southern as against the regimentation characteristic of the classic or Gothic architecture which have been a college habit in America. A spiritual catharsis in design, I should say, and a structural example of the freedom needed very much at this time in our national life."

The “reflex” to which Wright referred was the plan’s thirty- and sixty-degree angles for nonorthogonal walkways and buildings, with which he had experimented in site plans since the mid-1920s (Figure 6). Bounded on the west (see Figure 5, foreground) by South Johnson Avenue, the campus sloped down to Lake Hollingsworth on the south. Entering the campus near the center of the west side, north of a model theater (never built), one would walk to the circular and polygonal library (built 1941-45 as the original E. T. Roux Library), then turn thirty degrees southeast toward the chapel, which would be the new campus’s center. Wright sited the chapel on axis west of the neo-Georgian Joseph-Reynolds and Alan Spivey halls, which he “subordinated and set to one side of the scheme. Someday they may be altered and properly related to the general scheme.” The new structures collectively were “one comfort giving, protective, sympathetic building, divided into special buildings for special activities. . . . Each separate building finds a better way of doing the thing to be done in it than has been seen elsewhere as you will see. Each building is individual in character—practical in effect—yet contributing its share to an occult symmetry—delightfully informal and easy as a whole.” For Wright, such an “occult symmetry” signified the spiritual integration of buildings and their landscapes.

Among Wright’s earlier designs, one recent precedent for Florida Southern College was his largely unbuilt plan of 1932 for additions to his first institutional building, the Hillside Home School (1901–2) near his own home, Taliesin, in Wisconsin, which Spivey admired. Founded by his maternal aunts, Jane and Ellen Lloyd Jones, on the model of Welsh Unitarian academies, the Hillside Home School had become nondenominational and coeducational, and with emphasis on liberal ideas in education and daily life. The school was sited on the farm that the aunts had inherited from their parents, who had first settled in the area. Wright wrote: “The two sisters were disciples of John Dewey by way of Francis Parker under whom they once taught school.” In Wright’s view, “the unique homeschool founded on democratic non-sectarian lines had Francis Parker for patron saint. And Francis Parker bowed his head to John Dewey. Liberal faith—liberal thought, teaching liberality and trying to live it.” For Parker and Dewey, the ideal school was a miniature democratic community, or embryonic society, in which children’s group activities and problem-solving were a continuation of home...
This ideal paralleled Spivey’s vision of collegiate education at Florida Southern, where cooperative living and educational activities were the guiding theme of campus life.

In May 1915, before Wright’s aunts’ deaths in 1917 and 1918, they had transferred control of the school’s buildings and grounds to Wright, who promised that he “would see their educational work go on at beloved Hillside on the site of the pioneer homestead.” Beginning in 1928, Wright developed plans to renovate and expand the 1901–2 school buildings. They eventually housed the Taliesin Fellowship, which he and his wife, Olgivanna, organized in 1932 as a community that “still has the background of the liberal education established by the Lloyd Jones sisters.” The bird’s-eye view of the project from 1932 (Figure 7) shows a set of new structures, of which only the drafting room to the north of the original school was built. Both the Taliesin Fellowship complex and Florida Southern campus were set into agricultural sites: Taliesin on the Lloyd Jones’s tilled fields, and Florida Southern in its citrus groves. Both plans integrate buildings into a terraced or sloping landscape, and connect them by covered walkways that divide and contain segments of space. In its stone walls and hipped roofs, Taliesin’s architecture is more uniform, whereas the college’s structures, with their contrasting geometries and mostly flat roofs, reflect the European modern movement. In both sites, the structural rhythm of walkway piers corresponds to the unit dimensions used in the buildings. In both, structures and walkways are either orthogonal or set at thirty- and sixty-degree reflex angles.

Perhaps most important, in each design, the environment was to signify the ideals of the school, whose students would literally build their community. As Wright said of
Taliesin: “The Fellowship buildings practicing what the Fellowship preaches are simple expression of indigenous architecture and are being constructed by the Fellowship itself.” As Wright admired the ideals of Florida Southern, Spivey told Wright that he was “profoundly impressed by what you are doing for the young men and young women you have in your fellowship.” Wright recalled that Spivey had initially said that he “wanted me as much for my philosophy as for my architecture. I assured him they were inseparable.” Among Wright’s ideas, the Taliesin Fellowship corresponded to Spivey’s use of student labor to build Florida Southern, as a demonstration of Dewey’s ideal of learning by doing. Also, the campus’s architecture would convey institutional values, embodying Dewey’s idea of art as experience. Spivey wrote:

Mr. Wright’s plans for the Foundation buildings are expressive of the ideals that are the spiritual essence of this entire educational undertaking. He has given superb interpretation to the ideals of Florida Southern College and E. Stanley Jones. These buildings will be shrines of art, not just mere buildings. They will surely affect the inner self of every individual who enters them. They will result in an aesthetic quickening. . . . In creating the Foundation buildings to be erected in a setting of citrus trees, palms, and flowers, on a hill overlooking a lake, he seized the finest opportunity of his life to stress the illimitable, buoyant freshness of nature. He has skilfully arranged to bring much of the outdoor beauty of Florida into the interior of the buildings. He has designed each structure so that it will appear to grow out of the ground in harmonious relationship with vibrant nature.

Inspired intellectually by Dewey, Spivey commissioned Wright to create a campus plan that was in many ways the opposite of that of the University of Chicago. Like Florida Southern in Lakeland, the University of Chicago comprised a distinct landscape as the setting for a stylistically uniform architecture. Yet at Chicago, the collegiate Gothic bespoke the conservative intellectual style of a wealthy urban institution. At Florida Southern, in then rural Lakeland, with almost all of its students on financial aid, Wright’s architecture would foster a progressive ideal of higher education. Chicago’s rectilinear campus had similarly shaped buildings housing different functions, bounding quadrangular blocks and courts. Florida Southern’s diagonal esplanades pass through the campus to connect buildings with varied shapes for different functions. Chicago had modeled itself on medieval Oxford in contrast to the modern city; Florida Southern was to be future-oriented and regionally specific.
Wright claimed to have “planned the buildings as a harmonious whole expressive of the spirit of the college.” He said: “The buildings will have no touch of ‘grandomania,’ explaining that each unit will be related to the remainder in such a way that it will be impossible to judge the whole project by one building. There is much spaciousness and vista in the planning, but very little waste space. They will make much of association with the ground and thorough-going harmony, each to each and each to all. All the buildings, though modest in proportion are unique in pattern, especially so in adaptation to the work to be done in them.”

The other American college campus largely designed anew in this period was the Armour Institute of Technology, later renamed the Illinois Institute of Technology, on Chicago’s South Side. The architectural firm Holabird and Root had developed a plan for the forty-acre urban site in 1937, before the appointment of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe to head the institute’s Department of Architecture later that year. Mies’s plan for the South Side campus took shape starting in early 1939 (Figure 8). Mies had direct contact with Wright from late 1937, but it is not known that Mies in designing IIT either knew of or was responding to Wright’s 1938 plan for Florida Southern. In Mies’s scheme, continuous space predominated, with buildings and outdoor areas planned according to a twenty-four-foot module based on anticipated classroom and laboratory sizes. As Mies developed the design, he defined the buildings as almost uniformly rectangular volumes of steel, glass, and brick, with flat roofs parallel to the tablelike plane of the site. Though part of an integrated whole, each major programmatic element was to be freestanding, with no covered connectors.

Both Wright and Mies sought to create architecturally and spatially unified modern campuses. Yet Wright’s emphasis on the landscape elements as integral with the structures, his use of orthogonal and reflex angles, the variety of his building shapes, and the element of connective walkways all served to distance Florida Southern from the European modern movement’s tradition of spatial and institutional planning, which Mies’s campus epitomized. Wright’s proposed constructive system of textile-block walls and reinforced-concrete spans also contrasted with Mies’s vocabulary at IIT of the steel frame infilled with glass or brick. For Mies, space was the continuous entity of the design, whereas Wright, although he, too, wrote of architecture in spatial terms, proposed a campus wherein the multiunit building was conceptually continuous. His Florida Southern was not to be historically imitative, like the University of Chicago. Yet Wright’s plan represented his vision for a modern Ameri-
ican architecture that stressed individual variation and regional specificity, distinct from Mies’s interest in modern architecture as a universal ideal of spatial and structural form. Wright’s campus for Florida Southern thus exemplified the polemic against a uniform modern architecture that had characterized his work since the International Style’s exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1932. If Mies’s plan for IIT embodied that style in the United States, then Wright called his plan for Florida Southern “the first truly American college.”

Instead of looking to the tradition of ideas represented by Mies’s IIT, Wright was drawn to the campus of the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, designed in 1924–25 by Eliel Saarinen and opened in 1932. Cranbrook’s integration of architecture and gardens would have appealed to Wright, who had visited several times and would return in October 1938. Cranbrook was likely to have been one source for his thinking about the Hillside Home School and the Taliesin Fellowship, also begun in 1932. On 27 August 1938, he wrote to sculptor Carl Milles, then in residence at Cranbrook, about Florida Southern: “I have only the general scheme on the drawing boards but the good Dr. Spivey, President, is anxious that I make some disposition of the matter. So—could you come to Taliesin on a weekend soon with the Saarinens—we would be glad to see them too. We could put you all up overnights [sic] and see what ideas concerning the subject appear.” Wright asked Milles to design fountain and figural sculptures for the Jones Foundation at Florida Southern, but they were not executed.

The Original Design and Construction of the Pfeiffer Chapel, 1938–41

As partially built, Mies’s campus did ultimately include a chapel, whose overall cubic form in steel, brick, and glass made it minimally different from the surrounding academic buildings. By contrast, Wright’s chapel was to be figuratively distinct from all the other structures at Florida Southern. When completed in 1941, it replaced a popular outdoor chapel whose roof was a wire frame covered with Spanish moss. Spivey presented Wright’s new chapel as the “theme building” of the E. Stanley Jones Educational Foundation, with Jones himself laying the cornerstone on 26 November 1938. Wright labeled the building a “chapel auditorium,” capable of seating 1,000 for collegiate convocations. This term followed Methodist usage from the late nineteenth century, when “auditorium” referred to the entire worship space within earshot of the pulpit, as distinct from the “sanctuary” near a front altar.

Spivey recalled that when ground was broken in May 1938, he still had no funds. The chapel’s principal donor was Annie M. Pfeiffer of New York City (1859–1946), wife of pharmaceutical manufacturer Henry Pfeiffer (1857–1939). Both were international Methodist philanthropists. Through friends in Lakeland and at Florida Southern, Annie Pfeiffer became acquainted with the E. Stanley Jones Foundation. Spivey later said that when he met her in New York in late May 1938 to describe the project for the chapel, “I didn’t tell her it was designed by Mr. Wright, because I didn’t know her background.” Pfeiffer reportedly agreed to make her gift of $50,000 on the condition that she see plans, though it is unknown if she did or not. As the chapel neared completion, Spivey wrote to her that “there is nothing like it in the world,” as its unconventional form would appeal to its donor as a virtue. With Pfeiffer’s gift, excavation for the foundations began in early November 1938, after Wright’s initial plans had reached Spivey.

As in Hatton’s neo-Georgian design envisioned for the same site, the most prominent feature of Wright’s chapel would be its loftiness. Within the site plan, the chapel is the only structure with a markedly vertical form, dominated by its central lantern tower, which a rendering of August 1938 shows as taller and more elaborate than actually built (Figure 9). A fundraising pamphlet of 1939 included a version of this perspective and noted that Wright’s building “will rise rapidly from its foundation upward toward its specified height of eighty-five feet. As rapidly as the artistic blocks for its wall are produced, it will begin to tower above the citrus trees of the sixty-two-acre campus, and proceed upward to overlook all of Lakeland and much of the surrounding countryside.” Spivey had first envisioned a carillon as a structure separate from the chapel. In Hatton’s project, the central tower would contain chimes, while the chapel would be in the rear wing. Wright proposed that his central lantern tower serve as a carillon, with eighteen spherical gongs. These were “musical chimes to be played at sunrise and sunset and on special occasions.” The recurrent idea of the carillon was probably derived from the renowned Bok Singing Tower near Lake Wales, thirty miles southeast of Lakeland, dedicated in February 1929, which Wright apparently knew. Famed for its carillon and set amid the Mountain Lake Sanctuary of lakes, trees, and gardens, the structure was built largely of a golden-tinted stone composed of coquina shell and sand. Similarly seeking to create specifically Florida forms, Wright planned for “a beautiful hemicycle of flowers that will be developed in front of the chapel,” and for flowers and vines in the tower’s concrete boxes and iron trellises. Around the chapel’s base, “each promenade, known as a stoa, will be covered with growing flowers.”
Among surviving drawings for the chapel, one undated sheet shows a preliminary design for a half main floor and half balcony plan based on the campus’s six-foot-square module, with notations in Wright's handwriting (Figure 10). The cruciform plan is rectangular, with squared east and west ends, instead of the angled prows that were built. The section at the top of the drawing shows the central tower above a skylit ceiling. Unlike the built chapel, the central skylight’s angled planes extend those of a gabled ceiling, which cant upward at a thirty-degree angle, echoing the site plan. This angle is repeated in the five concrete “bow ties” in the tower (see Figure 10, a) above the skylight’s east and west ends. The tower extends vertically the site plan's reflex geometry, which would dominate the built chapel. In the plan’s center, Wright wrote “caryo,” a variant of “karyo,” meaning cell nucleus or kernel, as if he conceived the design in terms of an organic metaphor, with the tower as a kind of blossom, like the word “Florida.”

The spatially compact plan focused on the pulpit recalls Wright’s Unity Temple of 1905–9, his major earlier church building, designed for Unitarian Universalist worship. As for these liberal traditions, so for the Methodists, a Gothic-style church plan, with a long nave and deep chancel suggesting processional ritual and priestly hierarchy, was liturgically and symbolically inappropriate. Such a basilican plan was lacking in mutual visibility and acoustics, with the pulpit too far removed from the people. As built, the chapel’s “seating is so arranged that no one in the audience is more than fifty feet away from the rostrum and everyone has a direct view of the speaker.”

As Wright said in 1938: “The chapel will be perhaps the most spirited and spiritual expression of all the buildings. It will be free from the drawbacks of heavy stone masonry. After all, a chapel building is a thing of the spirit and for the spirit, and best serves its purpose when the body is comfortable, which it never was in Gothic architecture.”

Another preliminary drawing shows the basic cruciform balcony plan on a modular grid, now overlaid with traces of thirty-degree reflex angles that define the chapel’s east and west axial “prows” (Figure 11). This development of the earlier scheme recalls Wright’s unbuilt plan for the 1,000-seat New Theater at Woodstock, New York (1931), which he designed almost entirely with reflex angles (Figure 12). There three seating sections focus on a projecting
frontal stage, analogous to the chapel’s rostrum. The similarity of this plan with that of the Pfeiffer Chapel calls to mind the chapel’s function as the college’s auditorium. The drawing indicates that the chapel’s rectangular lateral arms still contain seating, flanked by the corner staircases reoriented north-south as in the built chapel. Four six-foot-square structural columns are located close to where they were later placed. Above the plan, the west elevation shows the lantern tower, with its bow ties and their reflex geometry. On the right side of the sheet, the chapel’s south elevation shows the lantern tower with unplastered cast block courses like the lower walls. Yet in the end, sprayed-on plaster, or gunnite, was applied to cover the tower walls’ imperfectly finished blocks so as not to waste them (see Figure 1).

Both elevations show a five-tier tower, with crowning trellises to support vines.

A sketch to the right of the south elevation in Figure 11 shows a miniature church plan with a square crossing bay, corner piers, squared transepts and nave, and apsidial choir, with traces of a longer nave below. This minute sketched plan recalls that of a traditional church like Henry Hobson Richardson’s Trinity Church in Boston (1872–77; Figure 13), and perhaps its Romanesque antecedents. Wright later wrote of Richardson as “the grand exteriorist,” meaning a designer who thought in terms of exterior massing and detail, rather than the three-dimensional interweaving of structure and space that Wright saw as a central virtue of his own works within the tradition of modern architecture. But in Trinity Church, as in its Romanesque sources, there is a clear relationship between the interior spatial volumes and the exterior masses, culminating in the central lantern tower. In both Pfeiffer Chapel and Trinity Church, four structural piers around the central spatial square crossing uphold a tall lantern tower. At Trinity, hidden horizontal iron tension rods span the spaces between these piers, analogous to the steel-reinforced concrete beams that

Figure 10. Wright, preliminary plan of Pfeiffer Chapel, showing six-foot modular grid, below preliminary cross-section looking east, with gabled ceiling continuing into central lantern tower, in which are shown below (a) five tiers of “bow ties”
Figure 11 Wright, revised preliminary plan of Pfeiffer Chapel, showing reflex angle shaping east and west ends, west elevation (top), and south elevation (bottom right), with miniature church sketch plan at far right

Figure 12 Wright, plan for unbuilt New Theater, Woodstock, New York, 1931
connect Pfeiffer Chapel's columns. The Trinity-like sketch plan in Wright's drawing suggests that in Pfeiffer Chapel he was condensing ideas from his and other earlier works into what appears at first glance to be an explicitly modern, nonhistoricist church.

On 13 December 1938, as the foundation was being laid, Wright wrote to Spivey: “I want the chapel to be ideal in every respect and have been studying it in a model. That study has determined me to change the plans somewhat. Not radically and not affecting the foundation but important just the same.” Wright visited the campus a second time during the Christmas holidays of 1938 to inspect the reinforced-concrete foundations and discuss construction plans. He visited again on 23–24 March 1939, the day before the dedication of the Johnson Wax Building, and left his son-in-law and chief assistant, William Wesley Peters, in charge of the project on site.

On 18 April, Wright wrote to Spivey that the chapel drawings were ready and that construction above the foundation would proceed once the right type of concrete blocks had been created. By 6 October, with building having progressed up through the first-story walls, Wright wrote to Spivey: “The Chapel became so expensive to build with what executive labor I saw down there that I had to simplify it greatly and I am happy to say it is also greatly improved.” Wright’s model is not known, yet when Peters returned to Florida Southern in November, the plans he displayed “revealed that Wright has altered the dimensions of the structure to make it lower than the originally planned height of eighty-five feet, but plans for chimes at the top of the tower have not been changed.” Later published drawings document the building nearly as built. In them, the four main structural and ventilating columns are fixed (Figure 14). Seats total 940, with those on the central main floor and balcony canted in plan at thirty degrees toward the speaker. The cross-section shows the tower’s height decreased from five to three tiers of concrete “bow ties.” Below the tower, the cross-section also now shows an ornamental block choir screen, with its repeated hexagonal openings based on the same thirty- and sixty-degree reflex angles that shaped the plan and tower section. Wright shortened the tower perhaps because it overstressed the supporting beams and cantilevers within the roof. The plan shows a unified space, with the angled rostrum projecting toward the center from the east and no central aisle between frontally oriented seating rows.

The final plans and section also hint at acoustic and visual effects inside and around the chapel. The cross-section shows “sound wells” or vertical slots at the back of the side balconies open to the main floor below (see Figure 14, a). These wells were to improve acoustics by preventing sound waves from being trapped in “dead zones” beneath the balconies. When E. Stanley Jones first used the chapel on 11 March 1942, he was “astounded” by the perfect acoustics, praising the interior as one of the most perfect places from this standpoint in which he had ever spoken. The cross-section shows the lantern tower as Wright intended it, with “bells” or chimes and flowers hanging from welded trellises above the gabled glass skylight, recalling the outdoor chapel. The nearly spherical cast chimes, donated by Mrs. Pfeiffer, hung in sets of three, one set above each bow tie. The chimes were modeled on Japanese temple gongs, in keeping with Florida Southern’s emphasis on the study of comparative religions. Given Wright’s aim that “we ought to help the indoors to go outdoors and the outdoors to come inside,” the section shows flowers in concrete trellises high outside and low inside the side balconies, as well as around the rostrum’s base, so that worshippers would be surrounded by regional flora. In sum, Wright created a modern meeting house recalling the outdoor chapel, and a structural form that was to signify the college’s modernist theological outlook.

Among the working drawings, a longitudinal section shows that the ground floor’s exterior block screen walls step outward slightly above their base (Figure 15, a) before rising to join the balcony floor. Just below the second or balcony floor, the block screen walls similarly project one
Figure 14 Wright, Pfeiffer Chapel, final first- and second-floor plans and cross-section looking east, as redrawn in ink for inclusion in Wright exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, 1940, and published in its monographic catalogue, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, in the Nature of Materials, fig. 408. Cross-section shows (a) slotlike sound wells in balconies, trellises, choir screen, and lantern tower bells or chimes.
block thickness outward beyond the first-story screen walls (Figure 15, a'). The steel-reinforced concrete balcony floor supports the upper block walls. The concrete balcony floors are cantilevers that extend from the four main structural columns, while the perforated-block walls around the chapel’s periphery are non-load-bearing screens. As one account noted, “comparatively little weight rests on the outside walls.” Documents thus refer to the block walls as the “curtain wall” and “screen walls.” A comparable structural system appears in Wright’s Johnson Wax Building (1936–39), which Spivey wished to tour.\(^6\) Comparison of the Pfeiffer Chapel’s longitudinal section (see Figure 15) with a sectional perspective through the Johnson Wax Building (Figure 16) shows a similar technique of reinforced-concrete floors cantilevered from interior columns.

The cantilevered floors carry non-load-bearing screen walls (of brick at Johnson Wax, of block at Pfeiffer Chapel). The Johnson Wax Building’s dendriform columns, brick, and glass were more costly than the chapel’s block columns and screen walls. For Florida Southern, Wright thus created a cantilevered structure that was less expensive and easier to build, but just as ingenious as at Johnson Wax.

As the first building Wright designed for the new campus, the Pfeiffer Chapel was the focus for his experiments with cement block as the signature material for the project. Wright’s attention to the local sand on his first visit anticipated his program of testing blocks made from a mixture of this sand and cement. When visiting the college for the second time in December 1938, Wright personally supervised experiments with blocks made from the sand in the orange
grove, but it proved unsuitable because of its fertilizer content. In January 1939, he requested that sacks of sand be shipped to Taliesin West so that blocks of different mixes and colors could be cast. Once prototypes were made, they were shipped back to Florida, where the blocks’ strength and durability under local conditions were further tested. Eventually he chose a sand made of coquina or crushed oyster shells from Florida’s east coast, near St. Augustine, where quarried blocks of the material had been used architecturally since Spanish colonial times. In keeping with a regional modernism, “the use of natural materials wherever possible is part of Wright’s philosophy of architecture. This, he says, gives indigenous character to buildings.”61 Since it contained evidence of oceanic life’s long history, coquina stone also conveyed the idea of natural evolution championed by modernist theology. The chapel blocks were nine inches high by thirty-six inches long, with ornamentally patterned faces, individually cast in wood molds (Figure 17). Walls had two thicknesses of block with a two-inch air space in between for insulation and soundproofing. Blocks were laid dry, their edges grooved to hold steel reinforcing rods and grouting, like Wright’s earlier textile blocks. The chapel walls had about 6,000 individual blocks in forty-six different designs, each design requiring its own mold made on campus.62
Wright’s contractual agreement with Spivey of 29 September 1938 noted that Wright was “to have complete charge of all building operations and that a building organization will be formed at Lakeland to execute the work as planned by him.”\(^{63}\) Robert Wehr was the superintendent of construction after Peters left Lakeland in January 1940. In keeping with Dewey’s philosophy of active education, the chapel was built mainly by student laborers under the supervision of skilled craftsmen. Class schedules allowed the students to work three days per week and attend classes on the alternate three days. Ultimately forty-six students contributed about 32,000 labor hours to the chapel, primarily molding 14,000 coquina blocks and laying 4,600 of them, but also learning skills of foundation layout, steel work, welding, concrete mixing and pouring, plastering, and glass setting. The creation of the college’s religious center was thus a communal educational process.\(^{64}\)

The Pfeiffer Chapel’s Original Structural System

Today one enters the chapel through aluminum-framed glass doors that replaced the original Florida cypress-framed glass doors. Because of the balcony overhead, the space’s full height is not immediately visible (Figure 18). The low, dark entries direct the eye to the first story’s perforated block walls with their myriad points of colored light. The light buff coquina blocks frame 50,400 red, amber, blue, green, and white glass cubes, suggesting that the walls are non-load-bearing screens. Today the central lantern tower’s skylights are of clear glass, though as originally intended, worshippers would be able to “look upward through the tower for nearly eighty feet, with sunlight streaming through scores of sheets of colored glass,” continuing the theme of colored glass in the base walls.\(^{65}\) One observer of the chapel as first built similarly described how “sunshine filters through the trellised tower of flowers and blue and white glass.”\(^{66}\) Original seating lacked a central aisle on the main floor or the balcony, and rows were inflected inward toward the frontal central pulpit at the reflex angle of thirty degrees, so that the space’s wholeness was unbroken around the pulpit. As one early observer wrote: “Upon viewing the chapel building over on the west campus at a height of over twenty-five feet, it seems that the visitor has been transported to the stage of an ancient theatre similar to that built by the Greeks many years ago. This is the impression gained as one walks around the inside of the structure and notices the work of steel and stone which makes up the appearance of an ancient building by its steps and terraced piers which rise above the ground.”\(^{67}\)

Since the Pfeiffer Chapel served as the college’s main auditorium, nearly 1,000 chairs were required on three sides to hold the entire student body, which gathered in the chapel for the first time on 18 September 1940 to open the college’s fifty-sixth year.\(^{68}\) The original pulpit elevated on its platform echoed a Methodist convention. This centerpiece was of Florida red cypress, thoroughly seasoned and kiln-dried, raised on a base of perforated coquina blocks screening electric lights set behind. The nine-inch-high horizontal boards continued the modular height of the block walls, while the pulpit’s V-shaped prow canted down at a thirty-degree angle. Originally Wright had envisioned the pulpit made of a coral pink colored stone (not a marble) which “occurs quite commonly in southern Florida and has small shells and remnants of marine life in it.”\(^{69}\) The original straight-backed seating, also of native red cypress with movable cushions, was designed by Wright and made by the college’s students of industrial arts (see Figure 18).\(^{70}\) Many visitors, including Wright, would speak from this pulpit. But most often it was Spivey’s rostrum. After the pulpit
was destroyed in the hurricane of October 1944, Spivey asked Wright to rebuild it so that it could be removed and to enlarge the frontal platform for recitals. Wright proposed to restore the pulpit "just as it was. It was a fine feature of the whole," and Spivey was unable to have his way until later renovations. 

Above and behind the pulpit, a ninety-foot choir screen of concrete block runs across the mezzanine level from north to south (Figure 19). Wright's drawings specified that the screen be a steel-reinforced beam, but such reinforcing was not built in, so the parapet beam below carries the entire load of the screen. Each six-foot-wide unit in the screen consists of patterned block arranged in seven superimposed courses between the balcony parapet below and the ceiling above. The screen's motifs observe the same thirty-sixty-degree angled geometry that governs the chapel's plan and recurs in the lantern tower's bow ties. Each unit of the screen rises at a thirty-degree angle from a narrow base through a widely spreading central section, much like branches cantilevered from the trunk of an orange tree. Loads on opposite sides of a tree are balanced around its trunk, like the counterbalanced cantilevers around the chapel's columns. The screen is thus an ornamental metaphor for the chapel's structural system, and a geometric conventionalization of regional flora, complementing literal flowers at the pulpit's base, on the side balconies' trellises, and in the central lantern tower's flower boxes and vines.

Wright intended the choir to flank the organ and to stand on a two-stepped movable wooden platform behind this screen, though such a platform does not survive. Six months after the Pfeiffer Chapel's dedication, the chapel's choral leader requested that Wright lower the screen to make the choir fully visible above the parapet railing. Wright responded: "For many years I have deplored the intrusion of personality with music even in the concert hall. How much more then in the house of worship. The first time I tried to do something about it was in Unity Temple, Oak Park. I put a close wooden screen in front of the choir singers. The singers revolted... So in this chapel I opened the screen wall so that there might be an awareness of the choir and yet not be too much distraction by way of the persons involved." Unity Temple as built had a screen for the organ, with the choir standing visibly to either side of the console below (Figure 20). In Pfeiffer Chapel, the elevated, screened choir kept attention focused on the pulpit below.

The largest constructions are the four six-foot-square columns, like Unity Temple's main corner columns (see Figure 20). The Pfeiffer Chapel's columns are the only visible elements, "upon which the building hangs and which support, by means of the cantilever system admired by Wright, the heavy balconies that overhang the main floor by as much as two yards," and more. Perforations near the column tops beneath the balcony ceiling reveal their ventilating function. An observer of the construction as it proceeded in 1940 noted how concrete as a "block reinforcement which is being poured to steady the giant shafts" was set in a cavity between inner and outer layers of block. This construction created column walls eighteen inches thick, "built with steel rods running horizontally and vertically," around the central air shaft. The main balcony level around all four sides of the central space is cantilevered from the four main square columns. The central balcony and the north and south side balcony sections step up toward the back. Figure 21 shows the steel reinforcing for
the balcony floor. The large quantity of differently shaped rods and varied wood formwork needed to cast the concrete balcony sections made this floor “the great item of costs so far as the whole building is concerned.”

Moving toward the center of the room, one sees the towering lantern as a crown through which abundant, constantly changing natural light passes down into the space (Figure 22). The effect calls to mind a monumental interior like that of the Pantheon in Rome, or the lantern of Ely Cathedral, albeit differently structured and on a much smaller scale. Although banks of casement window-doors line the upper rear of the north and south balconies, original descriptions stress that “the chapel lacks conventional windows, light coming through the skylights in the roof and tower.” One observer wrote: “During day services odd patterns of light and shadow move slowly across the speaker and audience.” With flowering plants above and beneath the central skylight, “sunlight streamed through the trellis-tipped tower to fall upon the grass and flowers growing around the base of the rostrum.” Yet the huge skylights trapped the heat created by plentiful sunlight, especially near the hundreds of balcony seats. After the chapel was completed, Spivey wrote to Wright: “I want you to keep in mind that actually there is a little too much sun in the building. When the sun passes across the building during the mid-day, it is almost impossible to sit in it even
This problem was solved only with the installation of air conditioning by 1967.

The high central lantern walls of cement block rise 26 feet 3 inches above the ceiling, as shown in a longitudinal section for rebuilding the tower after its collapse in the 1944 hurricane (Figure 23). This section shows the tower's north central lantern wall supported by horizontal steel reinforcing bars—visible today—set eighteen inches apart in the

Figure 22 Wright, Pfeiffer Chapel interior, view toward the southwest, showing flat ceiling skylights inside west structural columns, and cantilevers supporting lantern walls and west bow-tie end, as rebuilt after 1944 hurricane, and after remodeling of pulpit and seating, completed by 1967

Figure 23 Wright, Pfeiffer Chapel, Sheet No. X-4, longitudinal section through tower above balcony ceiling, undated, showing alterations for rebuilding after the hurricane of 1944. Note reinforcing bars (marked "a") at eighteen-inch intervals in the open slots between the north central lantern wall and the east and west bow-tie end towers, and a new beam H to make up the bottom 7 feet 6 inches of the rebuilt north lantern wall, below the newly raised skylight. Compare with Sheet No. X-3, a proposed post-1944 cross-section (Figure 32).
Figure 24  Wright, Pfeiffer Chapel, Sheet 10, roof structural plan, dated 20 October 1939, showing “beams” (meaning bundles of steel reinforcing rods) at balcony ceiling level. Penciled revisions were likely made after the roof’s partial collapse in the hurricane of 1944.

The roof’s structural plan reveals the extraordinary system of steel-reinforced concrete beams that uphold the central lantern tower (see Figure 24). Three axonometric drawings show the structural supports and block screen walls for the chapel’s first floor, balcony level, and roof level (Figure 25). Figure 26 is a detailed axonometric of the roof level on the chapel’s south side, showing beams drawn in the roof structural plan (see Figure 24). Wright designed a rack of beams set within the ceilings and resting on the four main columns. At each corner these include a 7-foot-6-inch-deep cantilever beam A running north-south, supported by two cantilever beams B and C extending east-west in from the column. Cantilever beams A support the lantern nearest its center under the ends of the high panel wall (points 0). North-south cantilever beams D coming in from the columns support the lantern near its outer edge (point 00) and continue as the V-shaped parapet beams E framing the lantern’s east and west ends. Outer east-west beam F...
Figure 25  Author’s axonometric drawing (using Form Z) of Wright, Pfeiffer Chapel, main structural supports and screen walls on first floor, balcony level or second floor, and roof level.

Figure 26  Author’s axonometric drawing (using Form Z) of Wright, Pfeiffer Chapel, south roof structural plan, with beams and points labeled as in Figures 24 and 27.
spans the side balcony between cantilever beams A. Inner east-west beam F spans the two structural columns. East-west beams G span the central lantern’s edge between points 0 and 00, the inner ends of cantilever beams A and D. On the roof structural plan (see Figure 24), “revised” with penciled changes probably after the hurricane of 1944, Wright shows an additional east-west wall beam H that forms the lower 7 feet 6 inches of the lantern wall between the ends of the two cantilever beams A (points 0). North-south wall beam I spans the cantilever beams A to support the side balcony roof from above. Thus Wright balanced cantilevered loads of balcony and roof inward from the columns toward the chapel’s center with cantilevered loads outward from the columns toward the chapel’s sides. One observer wrote: “Most of the weight of the building is carried on four large, hollow piers adjacent to each of the four entrances. Counterbalanced on these pillars are the mezzanine floor, second and third decks, and the 36-ft. tower.”

Perhaps to save expense and to enable flexibility in the system of reinforcing, one account noted that “no structural steel was used in the chapel building,” presumably meaning that the roof “beams” were not solid I- or T-beams of rolled steel, but rather bundles of $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{3}{4}$-inch steel reinforcing rods set in poured concrete, as shown in the balcony’s steel reinforcing plan (see Figure 21). Such rods appear in other working drawings and steel schedules for the building. Wright specified the rods’ sizes and shapes, which were crafted on site. One account noted that “a giant thumb screw is used to bend the steel rods used in the construction due to the weight and thickness of the steel. Some rods are over 40 feet long [about the length of beams F] and made of heavy steel.” A construction view of 1940 (Figure 27) shows cantilever beams A and D, points 0 and 00, cantilever beam B, beam G, and V-shaped parapet beam E below a bow tie, as labeled in Figure 26, before installation of skylight glass and plastering of concrete.
Wright recalled that his early experiments with dramatic cantilevers of steel-reinforced concrete had culminated in Unity Temple, whose plan was a point of departure for the Pfeiffer Chapel's. His most dramatic cantilevers had recently appeared in Fallingwater and in the dendriform columns of the Johnson Wax Building. Yet in both these buildings, the cantilevered concrete supports its own weight and limited loads above. In the Pfeiffer Chapel, the four central cantilevers support the weight of the concrete bow ties and the thirty-ton concrete block panel walls on the north and south sides of the central lantern. A precedent with which Wright would have been familiar was the cantilevered beams as foundational supports for multi-storied columns at the party walls of tall buildings. This structural technique was developed in Chicago when Wright apprenticed with Adler and Sullivan, who first used it in the Auditorium Building (1886–90; Figure 28, a). Similar cantilever beam footings upheld multi-storied columns at party walls in Holabird and Roche’s Old Colony Building in Chicago (1893–94; see Figure 28, b). In the Pfeiffer Chapel, Wright adapted the concept of dramatic cantilevers supporting weighty towers from its underground origins in commercial building, bringing it up into the light to crown a spiritual space.

In the Pfeiffer Chapel, Wright distanced his art from the Gothic Revival, yet inside there are analogies to the experience of Gothic architecture. Around the periphery, the colored glass in the perforated block screen walls evokes...
the cultural memory of stained glass in medieval architecture. When one enters the chapel’s central space, the towering lantern and its flanking skylights rising above the four major square structural piers create an overwhelmingly vertical impression, inviting one’s eyes toward the sky, which is clearly seen directly overhead (Figure 29). The soaring verticality of space lit from above recalls the effect of Gothic architecture, whose ribbed vaults suspended high in space above glass clerestories conjure the miraculous. Like the flying buttresses of Gothic architecture, the Pfeiffer Chapel’s system of cantilevered beams upon which the lantern walls and skylights rest is invisible from inside, so that one is confronted with what looks at first glance to be an architectural miracle. The effect is a sensation of wonder, in the sense of both awe at the technique of building involved and mystery as to how this puzzling feat was actually achieved.

In this regard, Wright successfully realized not the stylistic letter of the Gothic, as in Goodhue’s Rockefeller Chapel for the University of Chicago, but rather the principle of Gothic form in terms of modern construction. Wright, like Goodhue, admired Gothic cathedrals from childhood. For Goodhue, the heroic figure of the modern Gothic Revival was Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in his design for Liverpool Cathedral, begun in 1901, which was the model for the “modern Gothic” of Rockefeller Chapel. If the masonry buttress and ribbed vault are the language of traditional Gothic, then Wright’s modern variation on the ideal of structural art is based on the concrete column and cantilever. In the Pfeiffer Chapel, Wright recalled the thesis of Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, the great theorist of the French Gothic Revival. Since his youth, Wright had admired Viollet-le-Duc’s writings, especially his Entretiens sur l’architecture (Paris; vol. 1, 1863; vol. 2, 1872), translated as Lectures on Architecture in American editions of 1877 and 1885. In treating modern architecture, these lectures stressed the possibility of realizing the vivid structural expression of medieval Gothic architecture in iron-spanned public interiors for modern buildings, as in Viollet-le-Duc’s often cited design for a concert hall, with a central space spanned in a network of iron-supported brick vaults encased in a stone shell (Figure 30). Perhaps nowhere else in his oeuvre did Wright come closer to realizing the spirit of Viollet-le-Duc’s ideal than in the Pfeiffer Chapel. Wright’s building was a modern reinterpretation in steel of the Gothic ideal of architecture as an art of structural inventiveness based on rational engineering. As if echoing Viollet-le-Duc, he later wrote of modern religious buildings: “The Gothic era is past, and with it should go its architecture. Yes, it’s good-by to Gothic—as a style. But not to its spirit of reverence for beauty. That should be expressed in new styles attuned to the new day, using steel, concrete, glass, and other modern materials.”

The symbolic goal of Wright’s structural system was not to exhibit technical virtuosity but to accentuate perception of architecture as spatial rather than material form. In later statements, he equated material enrichment in building with materialism in modern life, exemplified for Wright by historicist architecture, such as at what he called “Rockefeller Chicago University.” In 1957, he reiterated an idea that had preoccupied him from the 1920s, saying: “Lao-tse declared the reality of a building did not consist in the walls and roof but in the space within to be lived in. Well, now, there you have the life of the spirit as reality rather than the things that go to make up what we call materialism. That has entered into architecture now. That interior sense of life is really true of organic architecture.” Like Unity Temple, the Pfeiffer Chapel does have a powerful spatial form...
even when empty, as if its spatiality, achieved through modern constructive techniques, exemplified both a stylistic and symbolic alternative to collegiate Gothic conventions. Hence the chapel’s form would express the modernity of its college’s ideals.

The Pfeiffer Chapel’s Collapse and Reconstruction

Wright created an extraordinary building that soon became an “object of controversy among architects and laymen alike.”99 Days before the chapel’s dedication on 9 March 1941, Spivey, who had traveled throughout Europe and the United States, wrote to Wright: “It is the most beautiful building I have ever seen. And, I believe that when you see it, you will believe that it is the finest thing you have ever done. People are charmed with it.”99 Wright could not attend the dedication, and had not seen the finished chapel, though in the months that followed, visitors came daily from all over the country. Many praised it; others called it a monstrosity. The chapel was featured in the exhibition of Wright’s life’s work at The Museum of Modern Art in 1940, since the curator, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, had taken much interest in it.99 One account noted: “Explaining that he had not overlooked the possibility of hurricane winds when he planned the building, Mr. Wright provided for double walls cemented together and reinforced with steel rods running horizontally as well as vertically. The result is virtually a meshwork of steel within the walls to take up any stress which the elements may provide.”99

This proved to be an over-optimistic assessment, partly because Wright had never before designed a building to withstand hurricanes. Their very high winds exert sudden, severe lateral pressure on vertical walls, like those in the chapel’s tower. On 4 December 1939, as construction above ground began, Peters wrote to Wright from Lakeland: “There is one thing that worries me about the Chapel drawings at present: the tall walls in the central part of the tower have absolutely no support against wind pressure. As you remember they were originally shown on the perspective with small connections at certain intervals to the end masses [see Figure 9]. On the set of drawings I have here these connections are not indicated at all. Please advise me as to what you desire here. Without some tie or other bracing it seems to me these free standing walls are dangerous. Would it be possible to brace them internally by means of steel braces having some reference to the skylight.”99 The relevant drawings to which Peters likely referred, such as Sheet 14, the cross-section through the tower (Figure 31), do not show such ties. Wright later claimed that the drawings were corrected on this point when the chapel was first built, with multiple ties connecting the lantern walls to the bow tie ends. Yet it is not clear if corrected details were supplied in 1940, or if such ties were originally built in.99

Through the night of 18–19 October 1944, a hurricane with winds of 100-plus miles per hour swept through Lakeland, whose building code is said not to have then covered hurricanes.100 After a night of buffeting winds, the tower’s two thirty-ton concrete block slab walls (but not the bow-tie ends) collapsed. That day Spivey wrote to Wright: “I am sorry to tell you that the hurricane did serious damage to our chapel. The two [panel] walls fell. Facing the west, the left [south] wall fell to the right, and, of course destroyed both of the skylights. The right [north] one fell likewise to the right, and destroyed the top of the building back to the
right wing balcony. No other serious damage was done. Soon thereafter, referring Wright to Sheet 10 of the drawings, the roof structural plan (see Figure 24), Spivey reported that several roof beams had been damaged. Negative wind pressure in the open slot between the tower's walls likely exacerbated stresses caused by winds buffeting the south face. High on its exposed slope, Wright's chapel reportedly suffered the heaviest damage to any structure in the Lakeland area.

With damage covered by insurance, Spivey sought to rebuild quickly. On 19 October, he wrote to Wright: “As soon as you get this letter, you must rethink how we are to rebuild it. I do not believe that it will be advisable to rebuild the wall as it was. The tremendous wind that gets up as high as 100 miles per hour will blow down any wall you put there. Why not think of some lattice work they [sic] would let the wind through, and yet function in the same way that the wall would function?” Wright replied: “The iron-rod connections crossing the open slots between the end towers and the panel walls must have been weak and torn away or the side panels could never have fallen. I have no way of knowing precisely what was done at those crucial points of contact. However, let’s put the roof back in shape immediately, just as it was. The damaged roof beams can be left where and as they are temporarily until we reinforce each of them with others cast just inside each of them and covering them from below. These new deep beams [beams H on Figures 24 and 26 forming the bases of the rebuilt lantern walls] will extend upward into the bottom of the two side panels to make all extraordinarily rigid... . There was no precaution taken against Hurricanes in the tower as I never realized we were down in the terrific Hurricane belt. But a one-hundred-mile wind should
not have damaged the tower. We will rebuild it now to stand anything that Florida has ever had.”

Wright’s surviving drawings for “alterations” to the Pfeiffer Chapel are dated late in 1944, and include structural revisions like those he described. He sketched possible changes on the roof structural plan, Sheet 10 (see Figure 24), and on the tower cross-section (Figure 31), where Wright penciled alternative reinforced beams at the lantern walls’ base and sets of four reinforcing bars inserted between the first and second, and between the second and third bow ties. Post-hurricane drawings for the rebuilding are marked “alterations” to the Pfeiffer Chapel. Among these, the longitudinal section (see Figure 23) shows the new steel reinforcing rods that were to link the lantern walls with the lantern’s bow-tie ends. This drawing also shows the rebuilding of the lantern walls’ lowest 7 feet 6 inches as a heavily reinforced beam of blocks, noted as “new wall beam H.” Comparison of the lantern tower cross-sections before the hurricane (see Figure 31) and one partly built proposal for reconstructing the tower (Figure 32) shows that in the rebuilt lantern walls, such pairs of half-inch reinforcing rods were to run horizontally between every course of concrete blocks, and vertically as well. Horizontal rods were included in the rebuilding between at least every other course, as shown in Figure 23, a longitudinal section for the rebuilt lantern. Figure 32 shows additional clusters of horizontal reinforcing rods at the lantern walls’ base, and embedded in beams set in the walls’ inner faces above each level of bow ties. These beams were not built, as shown in Figure 23. Wright also redesigned the skylight’s diagonal steel framing. Figure 31 shows the main skylight hung below the lantern walls as originally built, while Figure 32
shows the rebuilt skylight raised to laterally brace the lantern's panel walls. As Wright wired Spivey on 4 November 1944: “The demolished panel wall[s] will be rebuilt in connection with skylight which will now come well up between them and be part of them. Greatly improve the whole chapel, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat.”

Wright’s puzzlement at the chapel lantern’s collapse derived from his belief that he had specified more connections between the lantern walls and the bow-tie end walls than were actually built. Yet, as noted, it is not clear whether adequate reinforcing was ever specified. In late 1948, when considering Wright for the Gold Medal of the American Institute of Architects, the president of the St. Louis chapter asked Spivey if the chapel’s tower had collapsed and, if so, what the circumstances had been. Spivey replied that the south lantern wall’s collapse in the hurricane “was in no-wise due to [Wright’s] architecture. The contractor [Wehr] was an amateur and neglected to tie the sides on to, what I would call the [bow-tie end] pillars as was planned by the architect. It is a wonder that the wall stood up at all. . . . Since the above incident we have had two or three hurricanes without any damage. Let me say, again, this collapse was in no-wise related to the architecture of Mr. Wright. If the contractor had carried out the plans, the incident would have never happened.” Wright later wrote to Spivey that his chapel plans were “executed under circumstances too cheap and practically botched in construction.” Wright was upset when the college’s buildings “cost too little to be good enough and were a damage to our reputation—like the wreck of the panel walls of the chapel tower due to the ignoring of instructions. A direct timely letter concerning their anchorage I have found in our files.” It is unclear to which letter Wright may have been referring, but Spivey’s affirmation of Wright’s blamelessness in the tower’s fall must have quelled the A.I.A.’s concerns, for Wright was awarded the institute’s Gold Medal in 1949.

The Pfeiffer Chapel: Style and Ideology

Both Spivey and Wright placed considerable symbolic weight on the new architecture for Florida Southern College, but they brought somewhat different, if complementary, perspectives to its meaning. For Spivey, the future of Florida Southern lay with the ideal of modern religion as the foundation of democracy. With his creation of the E. Stanley Jones Foundation, Spivey envisioned his institution as a national interdenominational center, where scientific inquiry would coexist harmoniously with modernist theological studies amid a new modern architectural setting. But in the late 1930s, like his mentor Dewey, Spivey’s urgent international concern was the threat to American democracy from fascist and communist governments abroad. Spivey formed firsthand impressions of Europe during summer tours in 1936 and 1937, when he visited a score of countries. Upon his return in both years, he lectured widely on campus and regionally.

Although Spivey saw Nazi Germany as militarily threatening, like Dewey he focused more rhetorical energy on Soviet Russia, which presented an ideological challenge to the United States, then emerging from the Great Depression. Spivey claimed that “Russia is making great progress in a number of areas. In some ways she even outstrips America. But it is unthinkable that anyone who has experienced the fruits of both America and Europe should even consider exchanging our civilization for Russia’s way of life. Russia has solved the problem of unemployment, but is as far from growing free men and women as the old czarist regime was.” To Spivey, it fell to the United States, and its religions, to oppose foreign ideological threats. To this end, he raised funds for a Chair of Democracy at Florida Southern, announced early in 1939. A lecture series rather than a faculty position, the chair’s aims were “to combat Fascism, Communism and other un-American trends, to make clear the meaning of democracy, to insist that Americans be active in preserving their liberties.” Then hosted a Democracy Day at Florida Southern in 1940, to which he invited Dewey and nationally known clergy. Wright’s chapel was to signify such ideals. When it was dedicated, one editor wrote: “Unique in its conception, this temple of coquina blocks, steel and glass immediately becomes a symbol of applied democracy. It is a temple in which young people will be told to have a sacred regard for human personality. They will be told to do unto others as they would have others do unto them, and that is the major precept of democracy.” In his first address from the chapel’s pulpit in 1942, the Rev. E. Stanley Jones sounded a similar theme, claiming that American democracy had originated in its colonial religious life, and that democracy would survive the current era of world war only if religion flourished.

Democracy had long been Wright’s political and cultural ideal. For him, democracy in architecture meant not only a modern rather than a historically derived style, but also a modernism that exhibited the regional variety of organic architecture, not the uniformity of the International Style. He said: “The only way to avoid the unconfined spread of modernized mannersisms is to make people aware of the potentialities of their own regions and to dissuade them of the illusion that good American architecture is necessarily All-American.” The Pfeiffer Chapel was Wright’s
first public work to embody the ideal of democracy as regionalism. For its dedication, he wrote:

When the flowers are in the boxes and climbing up the metal trellises, and the round bronze bells are ringing above them, Florida will have found an expression in building of her proper name. I hope and believe that the chapel strikes, with new clarity, the chord between Florida character and beauty and the life of your many boys and girls. . . . There will be many, still, who “disbelieve” and long for accustomed religious forms. But they, at least, will have a glimpse of the world to come in this little window we have set there on the campus of Florida Southern College to look out upon that world.116

The Pfeiffer Chapel thus marked the intersection of the many symbolic concerns that Spivey and Wright brought to Florida Southern. It was to be both a chapel for a denominationally owned college, and the theme building for the nondenominational foundation that was to make the college a national religious center. It was to be a modern construction, not imitative of the Gothic style. Yet its block walls as perforated screens of colored glass, and its towering central lantern with its daring structure, did call to mind ideas of Gothic architecture as a cultural memory and as the epitome of rationally novel construction in the spirit of Viollet-le-Duc. For Spivey, the Pfeiffer Chapel was to be the setting for a program of preaching and lecturing that stressed democracy as a political ideal on the eve of American involvement in World War II, when that ideal appeared to be globally in retreat in the face of totalitarian aggression. For Wright, democracy was an architectural ideal, wherein he regarded not stylistic convention, whether historicist or modernist, but rather individual invention to be the keynote of the future.

Notes
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Wright’s other discrete structures on the Florida Southern campus are the Cora Carter, Isabel Walbridge, and Charles W. Haskins Seminar Buildings (1940), E. T. Roux Library (1941–45); Industrial Arts (later Lucas Pond Ordway) Building (1942–52); Emile Watson and Benjamin Fine administration buildings (1945–48); Science and Cosmography Building (1953); and the William H. Danforth Chapel (1954). Wright designed the covered walkways or esplanades between these buildings, and a watercourse (designed 1938; built as a circular pool 1948), which was later converted into smaller pools. Steven Rogers, a Florida Southern alumus, is completing a book on Wright’s campus. Lawrence Kinsley, of Lakeland, is also writing a volume on the subject.


3. Following the Pfeiffer Chapel, Wright’s realized religious buildings were the Community Church, Kansas City, Missouri (1940–41); First Unitarian Society Meeting House, Shorewood Hills, Wisconsin (1947–51); Beth Shalom Synagogue, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania (1954–59); Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin (1956–63); and the Pilgrim Congregational Church, Redding, California (1958–61), of which only the parish hall was built. Brief statements on these structures appear in Storrer, Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, 281, 292, 377, 403, 440. Wright’s First Christian Church in Phoenix was designed in 1951 and built in 1971–72, with the belltower added in 1978. See also Mary Jane Hamilton, “The Unitarian Meeting House,” in Paul E. Sprague, ed., Frank Lloyd Wright and Madison: Eight Decades of Artistic and Social Interaction (Madison, 1990), 179–88; Patricia T. Davis, Together They Built a Mountain (Lisitz, Pa., 1974); and John Gura, New World Odyssey: Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church and Frank Lloyd Wright (Milwaukee, 1986).

4. On its Lakeland campus, Florida Southern’s buildings constructed before Wright’s were the women’s dormitory (1922); renamed Joseph-Reynolds Hall in 1917); social hall (1922); renamed Edge Hall in 1935); athletic field and men’s dormitory (1926; the latter later a laboratory and music building); heating plant (1926); gymnasium (1927; dismantled 1935); Allan Spivey Hall (1936–37), a dormitory and classroom building; Rael B. Gilbert Gymnasium (1937); Frank D. Jackson Student Activity Building (1937); President’s Home (1937); Hindu Temple and Garden of Meditation (1938); Little Theater (1938); and Skating Rink (1939; later R.O.T.C. Building and other uses). See Thrift, Through Three Decades, 20–21, 25–27, 29–33; “Citus Grove Is Southern’s Campus,” Lakeland Ledger, 9 Mar. 1941, 1A; and Thrift, Of Fact and Fancy, v. xii. On his campus visits, Wright predictably characterized these buildings as “boxes with holes punched in them.” G. Bowdon Hunt ‘38, quoted in Thrift, Of Fact and Fancy, 37.

5. Sources on Spivey’s life include “Southern’s President,” Lakeland Ledger, 9 Mar. 1941, 6A, and Harris J. Sims, “Ludd Myrl Spivey,” Journal of the Florida Conference of the Methodist Church (1963), 301–2. Raised in Texas and Oklahoma, Spivey came from a family of successful retailers. Reportedly he had wanted to become a Methodist minister from childhood, and after attending Epworth University (1909–10) and Vanderbilt University (1910–12), he was ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. After three pastorates, he served as dean at Birmingham–Southern College, Alabama (1922–25). At Chicago, Spivey earned the degrees of bachelor of arts (1919), bachelor of divinity (1920), and master of arts in divinity (1922), with a thesis on Methodist education in America prior to 1820. The thesis prefaced his administrative career at Florida Southern in that it detailed the histories of eleven Methodist academies and colleges founded the United States after the War of Independence, including their fundraising and building programs. Dewey taught and chaired the Department of Philosophy at the University of Chicago from 1894 to 1904. During that period, he developed a Department of Pedagogy, devoted to the science and philosophy of education, and established an experimental elementary school known as the Laboratory School or the Dewey School. Steven C. Rockefemer, John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism (New York, 1991), 224–32. Spivey later created a Laboratory School at Florida Southern, for which Wright planned a kindergarten building (not constructed) in the campus’s southwest corner (see Figure 6 in present article).


6. Spivey’s devotion to John Dewey was legendary at Florida Southern, where he used Dewey’s works, including his Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology (New York, 1922), as a basis for his own courses in sociology. As one alumus recalled: “Dr. Spivey had been installed as president. He had a reputation of being quite liberal theologically and an ardent follower of John Dewey’s school of thought.” Cornin F. Tolle ’29, quoted in Thrift, Of Fact and Fancy, 57. Another alumna recalled that on Sunday afternoons Spivey invited a select group of colleagues and students to the president’s house to read and discuss Dewey’s works. Juliane Jordan ’52, quoted in Thrift, Of Fact and Fancy, 100. As the Pfeiffer Chapel was built, Spivey discussed Dewey’s ideas in many unpublished lectures and sermons. See typescripts, 13-K-00: Speeches by Presi-


9. On Case, see William J. Hynes, Shirley Jackson Case and the Chicago School: The Socio-Historical Method (Chico, Calif., 1981). See also William Dean, American Religious Empiricism (Albany, 1986). In 1938, Spivey brought Case to become a founding dean of the Florida School of Religion at Florida Southern. Case soon launched the quarterly journal Religion in the Making (1941–43), which he edited, and produced two major works of scholarship, Christianity in a Changing World (New York, 1941) and The Christian Philosophy of History (Chicago, 1943). Spivey’s fellow Chicago alumni selected him to present Case with their Festschrift volume of essays for him, John T. McNeill et al., eds., Environmental Factors in Christian History (Chicago, 1939). See “Faculty Members and Wives Dr. and Mrs. Spivey’s Guests,” Lakeland Evening Ledger and Star-Telegram, 29 Sept. 1939, 6. Spivey and Case invited major scholars to Florida Southern, such as the Methodist bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, whose lectures there were published as The Biblical Ideas of Jesus in a Changing World (New York, 1941).


12. The F. Stanley Jones Educational Foundation (Lakeland, 1938), 5, M-00-15; Jones, E. Stanley, Educational Foundation, Proposed Late 1930s, Spivey files, ARL. Overall, Spivey believed in Florida Southern’s destiny, saying early in 1942: “Here eventually will emerge a great university which will be known throughout the world.” Spivey, quoted in “Rilda Mounts Queen of Southern; Dr. Spivey Is Honored at Dinner,” Lakeland Ledger, 3 Mar. 1942, 2. On Jones, see Martin R. Johnson, “The Christian Vision of E. Stanley Jones: Missionary, Evangelist, Prophet, and Statesman” (Ph.D. thesis, Florida State University, 1978).

13. Jones, in film Florida Southern College: Insuring Our Destiny (New York, 1937), ARL. The impact of Jones’s speaking tour was compared to the Great Awakening in American churches of two hundred years earlier, which coincided with the origins of Methodism.

14. Jones, in Florida Southern College. Jones had stressed the study of comparative religions, and in March 1938 Dr. Frederick B. Fisher, pastor of the Central Methodist Church, Detroit, and a former bishop in India for ten years, gave a series of lectures at the college’s fourth annual founder’s week. An intimate of Jones since their student days, Fisher offered to publish his collection of books on comparative religions and suggested that oriental architecture be used in the foundation’s new building. In the college’s student newspaper, he was quoted as saying: “You are to erect a building that will be unique in America . . . The structure ought to have an oriental flavor. Perhaps a group of minarets, an oriental dome, tapestries and carvings, and certain niches for statues from Indian, China, and Japan.” Fisher, quoted in “Building May Begin Within Three Months,” Southern, 19 Mar. 1938, 1, 4, ARL. He argued: “It was in India [that] E. Stanley Jones evolved his great philosophy of religion and life. It was in looking to life through the eyes of the Orientals, absorbing the true beauty of their culture and philosophy that Jones discovered himself.” If similar men and women were to emerge from Florida Southern, “they must needs be broadened and enlarged through the proper assimilation and absorption of the best in every religion and the finest in every form of culture.” Sam Womack, “Fisher Discusses Oriental Art in Closing Speech Sunday Night,” Southern, 19 Mar. 1938, 1. Hoping to give impetus to adoption of his ideas, before Fisher died on 14 April he and his wife vowed to present to the college the only Hindu temple in America. This elaborately carved structure, made of 239 stones and standing twenty-six feet high, was typical of Hindu temples for individual worship. A gift of Fisher’s friends in India, the temple was dismantled at its original village and reerected in the college’s specially designed garden for meditation overlooking the lake. See “Hindu Temple to be Erected; Gift of Dr. Fred Fisher,” Southern, 30 Apr. 1938, 1; and “Memorial Temple Is Erected on Campus to Dr. Fisher,” Southern, 17 Sept. 1938, 1, 2. See also “Hindu Temple under Construction on College Campus,” Lakeland Evening Ledger, 22 May 1938, 7B; and Haggard, Florida Southern College, 70–72 (see n. 2).

15. Jones, in Florida Southern College. Hatton made an alternative unbuilt design for the Jones Foundation building, with a central tower recalling the unique crossing lantern of Ely Cathedral. This English Gothic monument may have also influenced the Bok Singing Tower near Lake Wales, thirty miles southeast of Lakeland, dedicated in February 1929. On this structure, see n. 47 below. On Hatton’s project, see E. Stanley Jones for Christian Education (Lakeland, 1938), M-00-15; Jones, E. Stanley, Educational Foundation, Proposed Late 1930s, Spivey files, ARL. In the film, aerial views of a model of Hatton’s design show tree-lined paths extending out from the building’s four arms. These paths may have inspired Wright’s later esplanades for the campus.


17. Spivey to Wright, 11 Apr. 1938, in Pfeiffer, Wright: Letters to Clients, 166 (see n. 2). It is said that Spivey may have learned of Wright from a potential Miami donor, or from Harris G. Sims, an instructor in journalism and editor of the local Lakeland Evening Ledger, who had read Wright’s autobiography and was familiar with his earlier work. Steven B. Rogers, “The Academician and the Architect: Ludd M. Spivey and Frank Lloyd Wright and the Creation of a Florida Architecture” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Florida Historical Society, 20 May 1994), 4–5, ARL. One of Spivey’s faculty colleagues recalled that Wright’s involvement began during a Miami campaign for funds to build a Georgian colonial style chapel to blend with the existing campus buildings. Dr. Spivey suddenly decided that if he were going to build a chapel, he would get the most famous architect in the world to design it for him. In the midst of the building campaign,
he announced that he was flying to Wisconsin to ask Frank Lloyd Wright if he would consider this monumental task." Donna Stoddard '37, quoted in Thrift, Of Fact and Fancy, 65. Spivey's visits to cities for fundraising after Jones's preaching mission in the same cities were noted in "Alumni Council Votes to Build $50,000 Library as Part of Jones Foundation," Southern, 23 Oct. 1937, 1.

18. Spivey, in Sage auf Deutsch.
20. Spivey, in Sage auf Deutsch.
21. Wright, cited in Thomas Mack, in Thrift, Of Fact and Fancy, 69. Mack, Professor of Citrus and Horticulture, escorted Wright on a tour of the college: "As we walked along, Mr. Wright talked about the natural beauty of the campus in terms of the lake, citrus trees, and rolling terrain. . . . It was this natural beauty of the site which had appealed to him so much."

Wright predictably critiqued Hatton's design as the antithesis of his own aims, though Hatton's scheme had been publicized to donors whom Wright was meeting as the college's new architect. Recalling his remarks at a luncheon in Tampa during his May visit, Wright wrote to Spivey that he "thought some explanation of the picture of the building [by Hatton] was needed, at the moment, and undertook to make it by saying that you and Dr. Jones, as things were in architecture in our country, were headed for some tragic end to your ideals as that design for a building indicated—but thanks to your own acumen we had you both safe in port from anything like that now." Wright to Spivey, 16 May 1938, in Pfeiffer, Wright: Letters to Clients, 167. After his plans were set aside, Hatton threatened suit against the college for its lack of compensation for his design, which had been the focus of the initial fundraising effort. His lawyer, E. A. Bosarge, in a letter to Spivey, 14 Dec. 1939, noted that legally an architect is entitled to compensation "even if the plans are not used by the owner." Spivey to Wright, 4 Jan. 1940, asked if Hatton could assist Wright on the chapel's construction. Frank Lloyd Wright Correspondence (hereafter FLW Correspondence), ARL.

In May 1938, Wright was preparing to lecture at the invitation of the Sulgrave Manor Board in England, and anticipated beginning plans for Florida Southern on his return. His tour was delayed until spring 1939, after completion of the Johnson Wax Administration Building, in Racine, Wisconsin, dedicated on Saturday, 25 March. On Wright’s lecture trip to England, see Donald Leslie Johnson, Frank Lloyd Wright versus America: The 1930s (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), 231–77.

23. “Noted Architect Foresees End of Big Cities,” Tampa Sunday Tribune, 22 May 1938, pt. 4, 2. Florida Southern claimed to be the first southern college to apply to the Federal Communications Commission for a shortwave radio broadcasting station in connection with its adult education program. See "Florida-Southern Applies for Short Wave Permit," Tampa Morning Tribune, 19 May 1938, 10. Spivey timed his funding appeal to Methodists to coincide with national, regional, and collegiate bicentennial commemoration of John Wesley's founding of the denomination in England on 24 May 1738. “Methodists to Observe 200th Anniversary,” Tampa Sunday Tribune, 22 May 1938, 7. The college staged a pageant about Wesley with a cast of five hundred students and faculty on 23–24 May, when Methodist leaders also attended the chapel's groundbreaking. "Break Ground May 24th, for Jones Building; Program Will Fall on 200th Anniversary of John Wesley," Southern, 2 Apr. 1938, 1, 2; and “Life of John Wesley Depicted in Pageant,” Southern, 21 May 1938, 1, 2. See also "Methodists to Unite in John Wesley Service Here," Lakeland Evening Ledger, 22 May 1938, 7B; “Breaking Ground for Building Here Tuesday," and Harris G. Sims, “Crowd of 3,000 Thrills to Wesley Pageant by 500 on College Campus,” Lakeland Evening Ledger, 23 May 1938, 1 and 2, respectively; and “Ground Broken for Stanley Jones Building," Lakeland Evening Ledger, 24 May 1938, 1, 2.

25. Spivey, quoted in “Tampans Raise $10,000 to Open College Drive," Tampa Morning Tribune, 17 May 1938, 13.
28. After Spivey visited Wright at Taliesin, he referred to Wright's "very wonderful home." Spivey to Wright, 23 Apr. 1938, microfiche no. F28E07, FLWA.
31. Parker had managed the innovative Cook County Normal School and had created the Chicago Institute, which became part of the University of Chicago in 1901. The institute had an experimental elementary school for training teachers, like Dewey's laboratory school at the university. See Rockefeller, John Dewey, 230–31, 250 (see n. 5). Wright used the reflex angle in his hexagonal house for the scholar of child education Paul Hanna and his wife, Jean, in Palo Alto, California (designed 1935–36; built 1937–38). In 1924, Paul Hanna went to Columbia intending to study philosophy with Dewey, who taught there from 1905 to 1930. In 1934, Hanna cofounded the


33. Ibid., 160. On Wright's initial plans from 1928 for a “Hillside Home School of the Allied Arts,” see Johnson, Wright versus America, 45–64; and Wright, “The Hillside Home School of the Allied Arts” (1931), in Pfeiffer, Wright: Collected Writings, Vol. 3, 38–49.


35. Spivey to Wright, 20 July 1940, FLW Correspondence, ARL.


38. “Wright Views First Work on Large Program,” Lakeland Sunday Ledger and Star-Telegram, 20 Dec. 1938, 1. Wright said that “the buildings are of a pattern indigenous to Florida and uniquely adapted to the work to be done in them.” “Wright Visits Campus during Xmas Vacation,” Southern, 7 Jan. 1939, 1, 3.

39. Frank Lloyd Wright, quoted in Haggard, Florida Southern College, 82 (see n. 2). Mies initially visited the United States from August 1937 to April 1938, and first met Wright at Taliesin late in 1937. Correspondence between Wright and Mies in the Wright Archives does not pertain to Florida Southern. On Mies's plans for IIT; see Franz Schulze, Mies van der Rohe: A Critical Biography (Chicago, 1985), 218–30; Phyllis Lambert, “Mies Immersion: Learning a Language,” and Sarah Whiting, “Bas-Relief Urbanism: Chicago's Figured Field,” in Phyllis Lambert, ed., Mies in America (Montreal and New York, 2001), 222–75 and 642–91, respectively. When Wright first toured Florida Southern, he reportedly fumed when his student guide expressed admiration for his architecture as “modernistic.” Stoddard, quoted in Thrift, Of Fact and Fancy, 66 (see n. 2).

Florida Southern linked to Wright's proposal for Broadacre City of 1935, a critique of European modernist urbanism. Broadacre City had been highlighted in the national publicity about Wright that had brought him to Spivey's attention early in 1938. Speaking to friends of the college at Tampa in May, Wright equated retrospective views of society and culture with historicist architecture and dense cities. Citing the automobile, electrical communication, and standardized machine production as “the forces driving the nation to a new life,” Wright claimed “that even with these inventions man is still using ‘horse and buggy buildings.’” He “blamed American education for hanging too long onto tradition and not pulling back the curtains of the future.” Wright argued for spacious distribution of houses and other buildings over the land. “Noted Architect Foresees End of Big Cities,” 2 (see n. 23). On Wright and interwar modernism, see Anthony Alcofin, “Broadacre City: The Reception of a Modernist Vision, 1932–1988,” Center 5 (1989), 8–43; Johnson, Wright versus America, 33–35, 101–5; Terence Riley, The International Style: Exhibition 15 and the Museum of Modern Art (New York, 1992), 41, 48, 61–67, 71–72, 87–88; Levine, Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, 218–20 (see n. 2); and Siry, Unity Temple, 234–41.

40. Wright to Carl Milles, 27 Aug. 1938, microfiche no. M081E08, FLW. Milles replied by telegram: “Please send plans will be glad to help you.” Milles to Wright, 31 Aug. 1938, microfiche no. M082A04, FLWA. Wright later wrote of “the power behind the throne at Cranbrook, Carl Milles. Carl is a sculptor—probably the greatest.” Wright, An Autobiography, in Pfeiffer, Wright: Collected Writings, Vol. 4, 208 (see n. 2). On Milles, see Robert Judson Clark et al., Design in America: The Cranbrook Vision 1925–1950 (New York, 1983), 241–52. On Cranbrook, see Albert Christ-Janer, Eliel Saarinen: Finnish American Architect and Educator (1948; rev. ed. Chicago, 1979), 69–82. On Florida Southern's sculpture, see Wright to Milles, 19 May 1938, microfiche no. M076B02, FLWA; Milles to Wright, 23 May 1938, microfiche no. M076D01, FLWA; Milles to Wright, 27 May 1938, microfiche no. M076D06, FLWA; Milles to Wright, 27 May 1938, microfiche no. M076E01, FLWA; Milles to Wright, n.d., microfiche no. M080E05, FLWA; Wright to Milles, 4 June 1938, microfiche no. M077C08, FLWA. After Wright visited Milles at Cranbrook in October 1938, Milles wrote to him: “I wished to tell you how happy I was to have you and Mrs. Wright here. You are certainly one of the few in the world who is through and through artist first of all. Beautiful to be with you and listen to you. How rich your spirit is! And as companionship what a woman in your wife with so much artistic understanding. Sorrow we live so far away from each other.” Milles to Wright, 18 Nov. 1938, microfiche no. M085A01, FLWA.

41. On the outdoor chapel, see Thrift, Through Three Decades, 27 (see n. 2). Services there usually had to be canceled in cold or rainy weather, although E. Stanley Jones once spoke there in the rain. Services were also held in the gymnasium. For convocations the college had used the nearby College Heights Methodist Church. “Southern's Anniversary Fete to Get Under Way with 'Tour of Campus,'” Lakeland Evening Ledger, 7 Mar. 1939, 1, 2.


From 1938 a low minor chapel was planned along a walkway southwest of the main chapel. Built in 1954 as the William H. Danforth Chapel, it sat fifty for Sunday school, vespers, small weddings, and occasional academic classes. Storrer, Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, 260 (see n. 2); and Douglas F. Hallman, “Developing Appropriate Liturgy for Use in the Chapel at Florida Southern College” (D. Ministry thesis, Drew University, 1989), 12. 43. Spivey, in Sage auf Deutsch (see n. 11). As he wrote to Wright: “As you know, Florida depends largely upon her citrus fruit. This year we are getting absolutely nothing for the fruit. Practically everybody who is interested in this project is in the fruit business, and since we are not getting anything for the fruit it is difficult to get money.” Spivey to Wright, 8 Nov. 1938, microfiche no. F32B05, FLWA.

44. Spivey, in Sage auf Deutsch. With her husband, Annie Pfeiffer made major gifts to churches, to colleges in the United States, South America, Korea, and China, and to homes for children and the aged. See “Chapel Donor,” Lakeland Ledger, 9 Mar. 1941, 9A; “Mrs. Pfeiffer Dies; Helped Colleges,” New York Times, 9 Jan. 1946, 24; and “Henry Pfeiffer, 82, Head of Drug Firm,” New York Times, 14 Apr. 1939, 23. Mr. and Mrs. Pfeiffer were persuaded to become donors in part by their friends, the Methodist bishop Rev. W. E Anderson, and the wife of Professor Charles W. Hawkins, who taught ancient languages. Haggard, Florida Southern College, 85. On 28 May 1938, Spivey wrote to Mrs. Pfeiffer confirming his understanding of her gift of $50,000 to the college “to erect a library or any other unit you care for in honor of Henry and Annie Pfeiffer.” Annie Pfeiffer folder, Spivey files, drawer 2–3, ARL. On 9 June 1938, Spivey wrote to Wright: “I have just
of Miami. A great deal of wall plastering, etc. It occurred to me that it might be a fine thing to use on the big plain expanses on the chapel. I thought we might be able to substitute it for plastering; we could set up the walls of blocks, thereby using up the facially imperfect blocks that we have been compelled to reject, finally gunning the whole. This is the work they commonly employ the guns for in Florida and thereby they obtain a remarkably fine and rich sand plaster finish, with a perfection and rectilinear quality that are beyond the results of hand plastering.” Microfiche no. F040806, FLWA.


53. Wright to Spivey, 13 Dec. 1938, in Pfeiffer, Wright: Letters to Clients, 170 (see n. 2).


55. Wright to Spivey, 6 Oct. 1939, and Wright to Spivey, 18 Apr. 1939, in Pfeiffer, Wright: Letters to Clients, 177 and 173–76, respectively.

56. “Ready to Begin Chapel,” Lakeland Evening Ledger and Star-Telegram, 6 Nov. 1939, 3.

57. “Jones Says Democracy Depends upon Religion,” Lakeland Ledger, 12 Mar. 1942, 2. One alumnus recalled: “I will never forget a chapel service for which Frank Lloyd Wright was the speaker. He approached the podium, took his pen from his pocket, looked around, tapped the pen on the podium two or three times, and said, ‘The acoustics in here are better than I thought they would be!’” Alfred B. Vought ‘52, in “Wright, F. O. F. and Fancy,” 105 (see n. 2). Another account noted: “Acoustics of the building have been called the ‘most perfect’ of any in the United States by a number of architects who have inspected it.” “Southern To Dedicate New Annie Pfeiffer Chapel,” Tampa Sunday Tribune, 9 Mar. 1941, pt. 3, 7. Another noted: “Bohumir Kryl, symphony orchestra conductor, was unusually impressed by the acoustics when his musicians played in the chapel before its dedication.” Chambers, “Innovation in College Chapel Architecture,” 17 (see n. 2). The “sound wells” in the chapel recall Adler and Sullivan’s Chicago Auditorium (1886–90), in whose design Wright assisted, and whose open rear stairwells enabled sound to travel vertically behind the audience. Wright and his suc-cessors after his death, ‘Talisin Associated Architects, incorporated a vari-ant of this idea in his Grady Gammage Memorial Auditorium for Arizona State University, Tempe (1959–64). See Joseph Siry, “Wright’s Baghdad Opera House and Gammage Auditorium: In Search of Regional Modernity,” Art Bulletin 87 (June 2005).

58. Peters wrote to Wright:

I suppose by this time you have got the bell that I sent by express. The bell as it is is the result of considerable experiment that I have been making in Florida. This particular casting was at first made almost perfectly spherical, with only a very small hole at the bottom. This we found gave almost no
tine. Gradually we cut off more and more of the lower edge until we reached
the present state. Incidentally, the metal mixture used in the casting was
that which was determined by Professor Ichigawa’s analysis of the “Great
Bell of Tokyo” which is essentially the same as this, that is, an extenor struc
gong rather than a bell proper, rung by an internal clapper

Peters to Wright, Jan. 1940?, microfiche no. F040B06, FLWA. Annie Pfeif-
fer’s gift is noted in “Collelge Gets Organ, Chimes for Chapel,” Lakeland
Ledger, 24 Aug. 1941, 1. The tower’s crowning trellis was designed as a chime
resonator, whose sound proved so annoying to neighbors that the chimes
were removed. “Florida Southern College, 50 Years in Lakeland,” cited in
Horwitz, “The West Campus at Florida Southern College,” 62 (see n. 2).

Perhaps in keeping with the college’s emphasis on study of eastern religions,
one of E. Stanley Jones’s followers wrote from Kashmir to Wright: “I want
to report to you that I have sent Dr. Spivey a dosal cloth from India to hang
above the altar. It is of Indian pure gold thread. It is very old, and I think it
is very beautiful. If you could design some woodwork as a reredos to set that
off, I think it would be beautiful. What other things could I bring from India
to put an Indian atmosphere into the chapel? I want to make it very beauti-
ful but have the essence of Oriental quietness pervade it.” W. H. Fraker to
Wright, 22 May 1939, microfiche no. F037A03, FLWA. After the chapel
was finished, Dr. Yehyi Hseih, a Chinese diplomat and the Chair of Democ-

ty lecturer for 1942, said that Wright’s architecture was “like an ancient


heits with cast block architecture in southern California from 1922, see
Robert Sweeney, Wright in Hollywood: Visions of a New Architecture
Wright, 206–15 (see n. 2), notes experiments with cement block in designs
for the unbuilt San Marcos-in-the-Desert Hotel in Arizona (1928-29).

63. “Record of Agreement between Ludd M. Spivey, President of Florida
Southern College and Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect, for Services Com-
plete in Connection with the New Buildings for Florida Southern College,”
29 Sept. 1938, in Pfeiffer, Wright: Letters to Clients, 169. In August, he had
said: “We are going to organize to build the buildings ourselves together
with the college.” Wright to Carl Milles, Cranbrook Academy of Art, 27
Aug. 1938, microfiche no. M081E08, FLWA. Cited in Rogers, “The Aca-
demician and the Architect,” 8 (see n. 17).

64. “Student Labor Used in Building Chapel,” Lakeland Ledger, 9 Mar.
1941, 9A. Chambers, “Innovation in College Chapel Architecture,” 16,
noted that the college was building Wright’s designs “mainly with student
labour supervised by skilled craftsmen.” See also “Frank Lloyd Wright’s
Architectural Masterpiece Begins to Take Shape,” Lakeland Evening Ledger,
8 July 1940, 2, 3. Since the college moved to Lakeland in 1927, there had
been a tradition of students working on the buildings and grounds to help
pay their way through school. James D. Hurt ’25, quoted in Thrift, Of Fact
and Fancy, 34. Haggard, Florida Southern College, 73, noted student labor in
building Allan Spivey Hall in 1936-37. For the chapel, Spivey reported
thirty or more different wooden forms made for casting blocks, all of which
were made on campus. Spivey to Wright, 20 June 1939, microfiche no.
F37D01, FLWA. Peters supervised the construction from October 1939 to
January 1940, followed by Wehr. A native of Hungary, Wehr had been a
construction superintendent at Yankee Stadium in New York. Lloyd G.
Hendry ‘44, quoted in Thrift, Of Fact and Fancy, 85. Peters reported: “Dr.
Spivey was most reluctant to place the operation in the hands of any one
person and insisted on every smallest purchase, nails, wire, etc., for instance,
being ordered though [sic] the college office, i.e., himself. There is some
logic in this as he is able to secure in some cases phenomenal bargains
which, it is true, no regular hired superintendent would or could. Never-
theless this works the greatest hardships on the building operations, espe-
cially when the Doctor is sometimes gone for hours or days without
indicating his departure in advance.” Peters to Wright, 1 Nov. 1939, micro-
fiche no. F039C01, FLWA.

65. “Work to Begin Monday on Beautiful Chapel,” Lakeland Sunday Ledger
and Star-Telegram, 6 Nov. 1938, 3A. The colors of the glass were described
in Sims, “Modernistic College Chapel,” 15 (see n. 2). Wright designed
twenty-three-foot-long lanterns (not built) for electric lights to hang down
above the altar. It is of Indian pure gold thread. It is very old, and I think it
is very beautiful. If you could design some woodwork as a reredos to set that
off, I think it would be beautiful. What other things could I bring from India
to put an Indian atmosphere into the chapel? I want to make it very beauti-
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was finished, Dr. Yehyi Hseih, a Chinese diplomat and the Chair of Democ-

ty lecturer for 1942, said that Wright’s architecture was “like an ancient

or ten hundred but when it is so crowded the place loses much of its beauty." Wright to Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney, 14 Nov. 1944, FLW Correspondence, ARL. In renovations beginning in 1957, the chapel's seating was changed to individual theater seats totaling 475 with a central aisle and wider side aisles between the doors on the main floor. Hallman, “Developing Appropriate Liturgy,” 10–11 (see n. 42).

69. Peters to Spivey, 3 Jan. 1941, FLW Correspondence, ARL. Wright’s detailed design for the pupil appears in drawing no. 3816.093, FLWA. The original 750 chairs, designed “to correspond with the chapel’s architectural style,” were made through a system of mass production. “Chairs for New Chapel Are Being Built at Southern,” Lakeland Ledger, 2 Feb. 1941, 2A. During the chapel’s rebuilding following the hurricane of 1944, Spivey wrote to Wright: “I hope that you will think again about the chairs for the chapel. They are beautiful but highly uncomfortable. I believe that you can design a chair that will be more suitable for this chapel. You made the chairs 15” deep, which is a standard chair, but the back cushion takes up 2” which leaves 13” depth for the body. This makes every chair uncomfortable. I am aware that in the long run this will be your greatest project, and I want it to be a genuine memorial to you in the years to come. Please keep in mind that I am deeply appreciative of what you do, and your fine attitude.” Spivey to Wright, 25 May 1945, FLW Correspondence, ARL. Seats similar to the original ones in the chapel are in the college’s planetarium in the Science and Cosmography Building, completed by Wright in 1953.

82. Spivey to Wright, 19 Oct. 1944. On 25 May 1945, Spivey wrote to Wright: “Here are a few observations I want you to remember when you make up the plans for the re-building of the chapel: (1) You must try to keep in mind that the sun in Florida for at least nine months out of the year is very hot. One of the sharpest criticisms that has come to me about the chapel is the sun shining down on the audience from the skylight during the service. It is impossible for people to bear it. We have to stop the meeting and ask the people to move out of the sun. Then, before the service is over, the sun has moved over into another portion of the audience. I hope you will devise some plan to take care of this criticism. Perhaps this can be taken care of by certain kinds of glass. . . . (2) The second thing I hope you will do is to re-build it in such a way that we can ventilate it, or else support an air-conditioning plant. This, of course, cannot be done until after the war. Let me remind you again that for nine months out of the year in Florida the weather is hot—very hot. When the sun beats down upon this concrete for a few hours a day the building becomes boiling heat.” On 16 March 1949, Spivey reminded Wright: “I want you to keep in mind that the chapel is not usable during eight months of the year in its present condition. The heat is terrific. This year, we are planning to entertain our Methodist Conference. We have no other place for them to meet other than in the chapel. It is utterly impossible to have them there without the air-conditioning. . . . With the proper air-conditioning in this chapel, we can use it the whole year. Since we are not planning to erect a larger auditorium, we must find a way to put this chapel into use.” FLW Correspondence, ARL.

Wright was approached about the lack of supports for the tower his company was working "were half completed, a severe windstorm caused one of the block walls of one of the towers to crumble. A hurried call made to Frank Lloyd Wright brought him to the campus to determine what had gone wrong. Although Mr. Wehr had earlier expressed misgivings about the specifications for the reinforcing steel for the block walls, the architect had firmly disagreed with him. . . . With his hands behind his back, the famous architect paced up and down the construction site viewing the situation and finally issued a brief edict as to the reason for the disaster. It was, he said, 'Poor workmanship.' . . . Work on the tower was resumed and completed. Poor workmanship may have been the cause of the initial collapse, but I can assure you that the reconstructed towers on the Annie Pfeiffer Chapel contain substantially more reinforcing steel than called for in the original specifications." Lloyd G. Hendry '44, in Thrift, Of Fact and Fancy, 85 (see n. 2).

After the tower lantern walls had collapsed in the hurricane of 1944, one account noted: "It took an entire year, using electric drills and axes, to clear the chapel of the huge pieces of concrete and steel. During the cleanup period, the builders discovered the enormous slabs had been held in place with only three one-inch wide pieces of construction steel. When Wright was approached about the lack of supports for the tower his company was working "were half completed, a severe windstorm caused one of the block walls of one of the towers to crumble. A hurried call made to Frank Lloyd Wright brought him to the campus to determine what had gone wrong. Although Mr. Wehr had earlier expressed misgivings about the specifications for the reinforcing steel for the block walls, the architect had firmly disagreed with him. . . . With his hands behind his back, the famous architect paced up and down the construction site viewing the situation and finally issued a brief edict as to the reason for the disaster. It was, he said, 'Poor workmanship.' . . . Work on the tower was resumed and completed. Poor workmanship may have been the cause of the initial collapse, but I can assure you that the reconstructed towers on the Annie Pfeiffer Chapel contain substantially more reinforcing steel than called for in the original specifications." Lloyd G. Hendry '44, in Thrift, Of Fact and Fancy, 85 (see n. 2).

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north wall lies on top of the beams. . . The other parts of the structure are sound—not even a crack. The tower is perfect. The lattice on top of the deck is still up and not damaged. It rests on both ends of the tower." On the damage, see also "Roof on Chapel Collapses," Lakeland Ledger, 20 Oct. 1944, 1.

103. Spivey to Wright, 19 Oct. 1944, FLW Correspondence, ARL.

104. Wright to Spivey, 30 Oct. 1944, FLW Correspondence, ARL. "The repairs on the chapel should be completed long before Founder's Week, Dr. Spivey announced. Mr. Frank Lloyd Wright has already drawn the plans for the repairs and the workmen have begun working. There will be no fundamental changes in the restoration, however, Dr. Spivey has asked Mr. Wright to replace the skylight so that not quite so much sunlight will come through and there will be a removable pulpit. The building was completely insured and the material for repairing is already here." "Repairs on Chapel Are Now Underway," Southern, 5 Nov. 1944. I. Spivey urged the U.S. War Production Board to ration enough steel for the tower's reconstruction. Rogers, "The Academician and the Architect," 21 (see n. 17).

105. Wright [to Spivey?], 4 Nov. 1944, FLW Correspondence, ARL. The lantern tower approximately as rebuilt after 1944 is shown in another undated cross-section (drawing no. 3816.029, FLWA). The post-hurricane roof structural plan showing alterations (drawing no. 3816.024, FLWA, published as fig. 156 in Futagawa and Pfeiffer, Frank Lloyd Wright Monograph, Vol. 6, 114), corresponds to the original sheet 10 (Figure 24 in the present article). In the ceiling south of the central lantern, the post-hurricane roof plan has dotted lines marking east-west cantilever beams A and north-south ceiling beams F to be repaired or replaced, indicating that other roof beams were undamaged. The post-hurricane plan also shows four altered skylights around the central lantern, and four spacers at six foot intervals in each of the lantern walls. Exterior holes for the spacers are near the tower's base (not visible in Figure 1 in the present article).

106. Kenneth E. Wischmeyer, president of the St. Louis chapter of the A.I.A., to Spivey, 5 Oct. 1948, FLW Correspondence, ARL.

107. Spivey to Wischmeyer, 9 Oct. 1948, FLW Correspondence, ARL.


109. "Dr. Spivey Says Hitler Mere Puppet of Munitions Men," Southern, 3 Oct. 1936, 1, 4. Dewey's major work in response to the rise of totalitarianism abroad was Freedom and Culture (New York, 1939), in which he argued for a vital social faith in democracy as a basis for both political and cultural freedom. On Wright's journey to Moscow in summer 1937 to attend and address the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Architects, see Johnson, Frank Lloyd Wright versus America, 179–230 (see n. 22).

110. "European War to Come, Dr. Spivey Says," Southern, 16 Sept. 1936, 1. See also "Church Here Must Combat Communism," Southern, 3 Oct. 1936, 1; and "Professor Spivey Lectures Thrice about Russians," Southern, 17 Apr. 1937, 1. After an extended tour of Great Britain and Scandinavia in summer 1937, Spivey voiced his approval of cooperatives in these countries, saying that the United States was too economically individualistic. "Dr. Spivey Attends Conference Abroad," Southern, 18 Sept. 1937, 1; "Prexy Says War in Europe Unlikely," Southern, 16 Oct. 1937, 1. After Hitler invaded Russia in June 1941, Spivey initiated courses in Russian history, which he saw as a subject "commonly ignored by most institutions." "Russian History Courses Will Be Offered at College," Lakeland Ledger, 11 Sept. 1941, 3. 111. "Chair of Democracy Has Purposes Set Forth in Leaflet," Southern, 4 Feb. 1939, 1. See also "Dedicate Chair of Democracy Here Next Sunday," Lakeland Sunday Ledger and Star-Telegram, 5 Nov. 1939; "Open Congress of Democracy Out-of-Doors," Lakeland Evening Ledger and Star-Telegram, 10 Nov. 1939, 1; "Democratic Meeting of Congress on Democracy," Lakeland Sunday Ledger and Star-Telegram, 12 Nov. 1939, 3A, 9A; "Enthusiasm Marks Chair Dedication on College Campus," Lakeland Evening Ledger and Star-Telegram, 13 Nov. 1939, 1, 3. The chair was to be occupied successively by outstanding scholars interested in democracy. The first speaker was Dr. William E. Dodd (1869–1940), a scholar of southern American history and a specialist on Woodrow Wilson, who had served as American ambassador to Germany from 1933 to 1938.

112. Editorial, "In This Temple," Lakeland Ledger, 9 Mar. 1941, 4A. Views on a need to heighten Americans' commitment to democracy in the face of totalitarianism appeared in "College Ready to Dedicate Chapel," Lakeland Ledger, 9 Mar. 1941, 1, 6A; and "Chair of Democracy at College Attracts National Attention," Lakeland Ledger, 9 Mar. 1941, 9A, 10A. In addition to Dewey, the college's guests on Democracy Day, 1940, included Rev. E. Stanley Jones, Helen Keller, Igor Sikorsky, William E. Dodd, and Rev. Willard L. Sperry, dean of the Harvard Divinity School. Haggard, Florida Southern College, 76–77 (see n. 2). Sperry (1882–1954) initiated the lecture series on religion at Florida Southern, whose aim was to "emphasize the purpose of the College to make religion an essential element in a liberal education." His lectures of 14–19 March 1940 were published as What We Mean by Religion (New York, 1940).


115. Wright to Spivey, 5 Mar. 1941, in Pfeiffer, Wright: Letters to Clients, 179 (see n. 2).
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Figure 8. Photograph by Hedrich-Blessing. Chicago Historical Society, HB-26823-B
Figures 19, 29. Photographs by the author
Figure 20. Inland Architect and News Record 52 (Dec. 1908)
Figure 28. Ralph B. Peck, History of Building Foundations in Chicago, Bulletin 373 (Urbana, 1948), 25–26; graphic notations by the author
Figure 30. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, Entretiens sur l'architecture, vol. 2 (Paris, 1872)