

A COUNTRY HOUSE FOR CITY PEOPLE: THE STORY OF FALLINGWATER

Introduction

Fallingwater became famous even before it was finished and its fame has increased decade by decade. This is because the house in its setting embodies a powerful ideal - that people today can learn to live in harmony with nature. As technology uses more natural resources and the world's population continues to grow, harmony with nature is necessary for the very existence of human society.

Designed by a masterly architect, Fallingwater is closely harmonious with its land. Originally the house and land together brightened the life of a family; now, they are open to the public. Life, land, and design combine to give Fallingwater its unmistakable character.

The harmonious interaction of people and nature is also the ideal that formed and guides the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, to whom Fallingwater was entrusted. Visiting Fallingwater itself, you will experience the serene vitality of its art.

Many books, textbooks, articles, televised documentaries, and countless websites have explored the Fallingwater story. The most accurate resources on Fallingwater – the resources used by Fallingwater staff – are listed here for you. These resources are based on the accounts of Fallingwater patron and Wright scholar, Edgar Kaufmann, jr., and on thorough historical research of primary sources.

Primary sources are documents and artifacts that were created by the persons involved in the story. Most museums, including Fallingwater, maintain archives

containing photographs, personal letters, business papers, drawings, and other documents relating to that museum's mission. Through those primary documents we can glimpse what people were really thinking at the time the story was unfolding. Whenever possible, it is exciting to introduce students to voices from the past using primary sources.

This unit presents a summary of the basic Fallingwater story: the impetus for the commission, its construction, its use during the Kaufmanns' habitation, and its transition to a public institution. The exercise, Fallingwater voices, will introduce your students to what the house meant for its architect, its clients, and people then and now.

BEST RESOURCES:

- *Fallingwater: A Frank Lloyd Wright Country House* by Edgar Kaufmann, jr.
- *Fallingwater: The House and its History* by Donald Hoffmann
- *Fallingwater: Frank Lloyd Wright's Romance with Nature* by Lynda S. Waggoner
- *Fallingwater: A Conversation with Edgar Kaufmann, jr.* video (60 minutes)
- *House on the Waterfall* video (30 minutes)

Videos are available for loan from the Fallingwater office or for purchase from the Fallingwater Museum Store

A note about websites: There are innumerable Fallingwater websites, but only one presents accurate, up to date, and official information.

www.fallingwater.org