



**ARKANSAS HISTORIC
PRESERVATION PROGRAM**

Low, Light and Livable: From Modern to Ranch, 1945-1970

By Holly Hope
Special Projects Historian, AHPP

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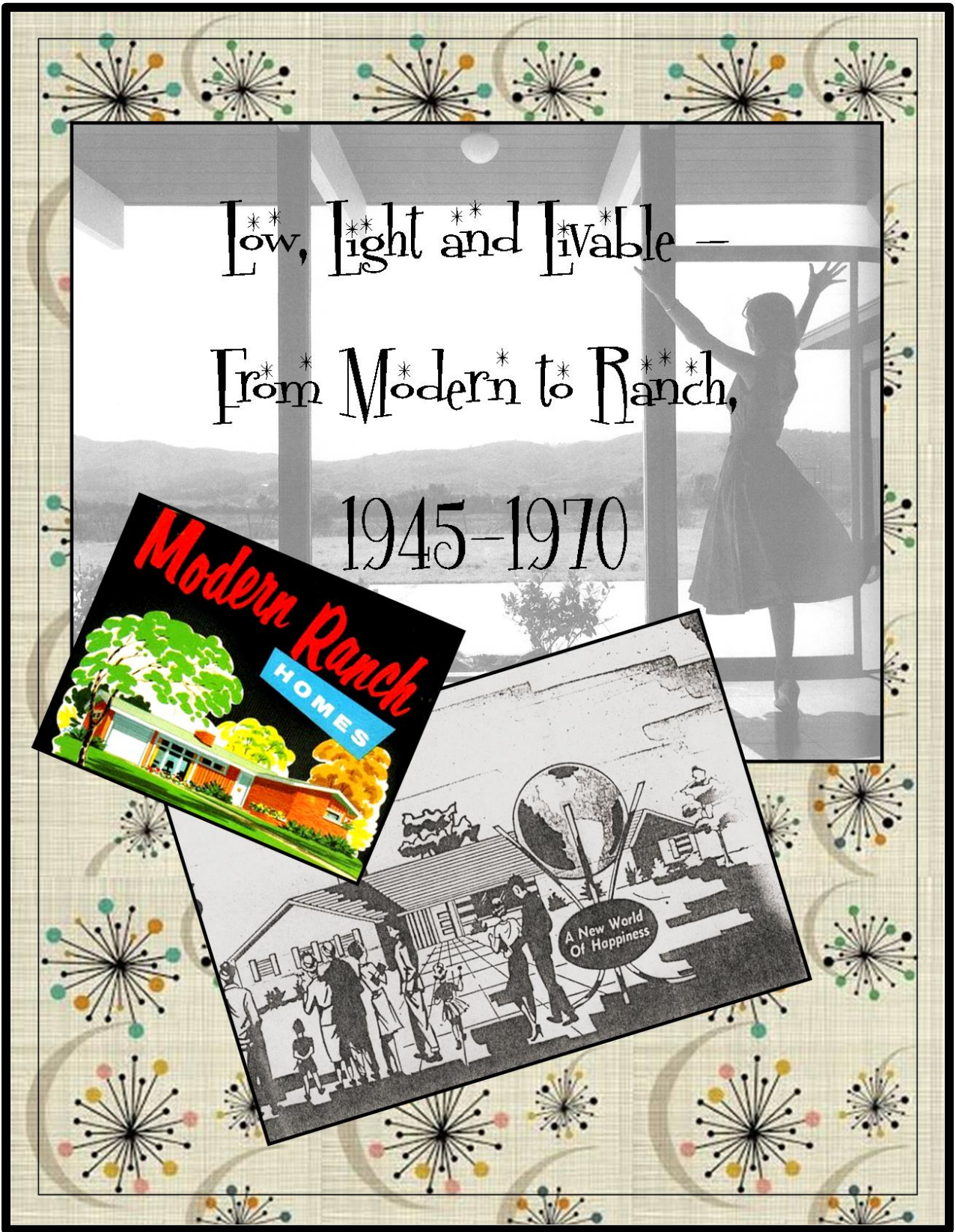
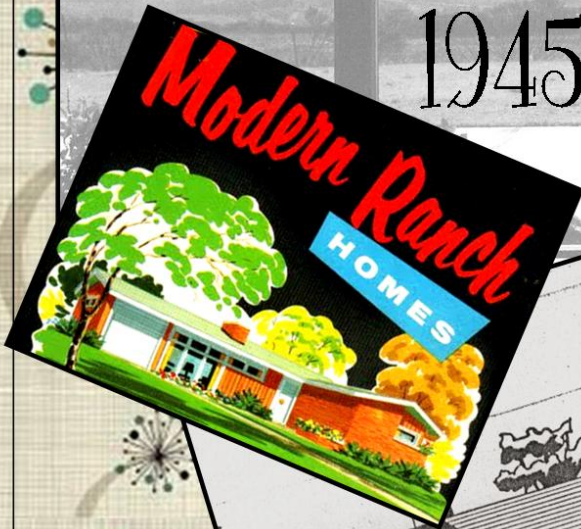
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Low, Light and Livable —

From Modern to Ranch,

1945-1970



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A Historic Context Written and Researched
By Holly Hope
2014

Photographs and illustrations from the research files
of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

LOW, LIGHT AND LIVABLE – FROM MODERN TO RANCH IN ARKANSAS, 1945-1970

COMPATIBLE STYLES

The home is where the heart is – and the rumpus room, the carport for the Pontiac Strato Streak, garden court, work center and master bath. Amenities like these marked a mid-century transition in residential design, family dynamics and neighborhood planning. Mid-century homes were more than just a slavish re-hash of the tried and true; they were the malleable statement of the Post-World War II family.

The metamorphosis to Modern and Ranch-type homes from the Craftsman bungalow or historic revival styles was groundbreaking. Beginning with the Modernist movement, the styles dramatically impacted architecture from the period just before World War I and up to three decades after World War II. Several factors influenced the increasing use of Modern as a residential style by the mid-1940s. Women entering the workforce or becoming heads of households with fewer children changed the family structure.¹ Other dynamics such as wartime shortages of building materials (which subsequently led to the invention of innovative construction materials), new building techniques, open interior arrangements and popular culture added to a growing acceptance of Modern homes.

Ranch architecture was extolled as the home of choice in 1950s subdivisions as suburban shifts became more frequent for young families. Modern and Ranch co-existed, but large-scale developers could see that the Ranch form lent itself more readily to prefabrication and quick construction in large numbers. Although government agencies were hesitant to finance Modern houses in the beginning because they were out of the norm, the Ranch gradually became a prevalent style that was reproduced in many sizes and forms in subdivisions across Arkansas for decades. The Ranch shared architectural characteristics as well as the attitude of Modern architecture, and it could be said to have evolved from that style as it quickly overshadowed it.



The Form of the Ranch

¹ Although the 1940s and 1950s were known as the baby boom years, there were fewer children born in those decades per 1,000 people than in the early 20th century, Infoplease, "Live births and Birth Rates, By Year, 1910-2005," online article found at <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0005067.html>.

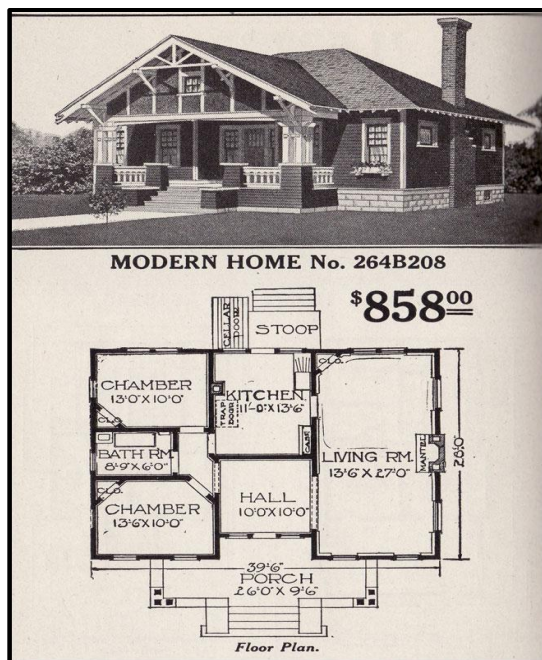
Progressive Space

Precedence for the minimalistic trends of mid-century Modern and Ranch surfaced at the close of the 19th century. The fussiness of the Victorian era was abandoned for simplicity and balance in exterior and interior treatments of homes. Central to this was the comfort of the middle-class family. Previously, the familiar domestic unit adhered to prescribed behavior. The stay-at-home mother under the authority of a hands-off father would serve as supervisor of the children and the house. By 1910, technology and economic growth allowed for a shift in women's roles. Women were exploring new life purposes outside the home. This trend led to the popularity of straightforward architecture with less furniture, fewer rooms and reduced maintenance.

Fresh interior arrangements deleted warrens of rooms with traditional uses and opened the house by eliminating walls. This was progressive space that could be enjoyed by every member of the family without worrying about bric-a-brac and florid furniture. Simplification of surfaces and furnishings was advocated by sanitarians because microbe-carrying dust particles

were partial to the embellishments of Victorian carving and heavy curtains.

During the Progressive era (1880-1920), architects and reformists attacked the large complicated Victorian house. "Honesty" became a frequent catchword for the new age. This referred to the integrity of man's casual beginnings and a return to a more humble environment in a smaller house (the bungalow) constructed with natural materials and authentic textures. Similar to the tracts of Ranches in the 1950s, neighborhoods of bungalows furthered changes in social conventions. These small homes were considered to be appropriate for young people just beginning their lives. They were not meant to be monuments to the familial line and it



Sears Craftsman House

was acceptable that ownership changed frequently. Hardy, comfortable spaces and furniture invited the enjoyment and participation of children as active members of the household. These ideals contributed to the popularity of the bungalow form within suburban settings.

Like the bungalow dwellers, mid-century houses in communities with schools, parks and shopping centers were attractive to young newlyweds. Military families were ready to create their independent lives with an up-to-the-minute environment hand-picked from developer's plans. Those plans continued the bungalow trend of including spaces that were appropriate for children. The Serviceman's Readjustment Act enabled veterans to make their dream of a new home a reality through federal loans. Suburban movement was also spurred by the trend of the media and architects to promote the traits of healthful environments as well as the Progressive standby - honesty in choosing new home design.

The path to mid-century Modern and Ranch forms could previously be seen in the general architectural elements of the West Coast bungalow. The forms shared characteristics, such as a primarily one-story plan under a low roof, wide eaves, and a relationship to nature via ribbons of windows that allowed enjoyment of outdoor spaces and natural light. Mid-century homes were inexpensive to build and the interior floor space echoed the new informal relationship of the family with rooms that could be used for many purposes. Light rooms with large glass expanses that revealed private garden areas were also emphasized with "visor" eaves that provided shade.²

The transformation of architecture was facilitated by the automobile, which in turn allowed advanced suburban growth, new technologies, new cultural values and modern family needs. Each were historic reasons for the changes in architecture and each dovetailed into the same underlying rationale for building characteristics: function. The population of certain eras looked at their lives and chose the requirements that were pertinent to them.

By the mid-1940s the facade became less purposeful than the interior. Eventually a grand entry was replaced by the terse punctuation of a severe front door with minimal porch or stoop, windows of linear rectangles and perhaps a nod to variety with combinations of exterior veneer and integrated planters. The interior offered more of a glimpse into the mid-century family relationship via the floor plan, numbers of rooms, their uses and inventive methods of storage and lighting. Modern and Ranch architecture was comparatively more sparse than the Craftsman bungalow and other earlier styles; however, their selling point was similar - they offered what the mid-century family needed. For their part, Arkansas developers and home builders conveyed the prevailing needs of the nation. Subdivisions and individual commissions

² Clifford Clark, *The American Family Home, 1800-1960*, (The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill and London, 1986), 132, 135, 144, 146-147, 157, 173, 179, 197.

after WWII to 1970 included Modern as well as the wildly popular Ranch examples throughout the state.

MODERNISM

Events like the Depression and WWII were searing experiences that imposed self-denial. Families began to lighten up with the end of the war and an improved economy. Arkansans welcomed a new philosophy of life when they didn't have to ration or make do with one cup and plate for six people and no food to put on that plate. People were encouraged to relax, partake and have fun. The architectural personification of this attitude was American Modernism.

The term "Modern" regarding mid-century architecture was rather amorphous in popular culture. It could be used to describe academic examples of Modernism or to describe any groundbreaking architecture (Ranch included). The Federal Housing Administration's (FHA) early take on the term referred more to a new way of life revolving around consumerism and updated technology in home furnishing, appliances and utilities. Modernism branched into several subtypes famously manifested in multi-story commercial and institutional structures or for large, high-income residential commissions to the 1970s. The examples this context considers are the small vernacular or developer-produced forms of Modernism. Often, "contemporary" was used as a description in the mid-century for what could also be included in the Modern genre. For those reasons, "Modern" here refers to the most basic form and elements borrowed by the Ranch.

Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright famously expressed the philosophy and articulation of the Modern American trend in architecture and its link to the American Progressive social movement. Sullivan and Wright advocated Humanism – designing a building to connect the inhabitants emotionally to the site – not seeking to emulate traditional formalism. The architect was looked upon as an artist with a blank canvas whose craft evolved without input from tradition or client. European Modernists before WWI were influenced by Wright's geometric forms featuring reduced ornament.

European craft did differ though, in that nature and the building site were not considered in the design philosophy. The goal was to create a rational international style that could be grasped by anyone, anywhere. Industrial forms of the architecture and its statement of function used a different vocabulary from the Humanists – Internationalism.³

³ Mark Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context*, (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1999), 211, 226-227, 237; "Modernism: How the

Prefabrication as Modern

The introduction of revolutionary building methods in the mid-century resulted in Modern forms reminiscent of the Bauhaus school displaying smooth facades and cubic forms. Prefabrication used in home construction was touted as a fast and economic method of building and it soon became wildly popular. World Wars I and II contributed to increased use of prefabrication for war housing, which became acceptable for mainstream residential design.



Tennessee Valley Authority Houses

Several companies emerged in the 1930s that marketed pioneering homebuilding products and techniques borrowed from factory processes. These companies partnered with others that produced modern home products to build demonstration houses to showcase their state-of-the-art lines. Naturally, the homes had to be eye-catching to pique the curiosity of customers so most settings for display and advertising were in the Modern style.⁴

Some prefabricated homes were of traditional design, but the point was speed and economy, which often imitated the lines of Modernism. Homes produced by the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory in 1935, displayed low profiles, flat roofs, corner windows, ribbon windows and simple facades. The Tennessee Valley Authority offered funds for the construction of prefab houses that could be motored to location. The separate pieces of the house, much like today's double-wide trailers, were fitted together on the site. When complete, they too, were decidedly Modern with flat roofs, cantilevered overhangs and high ribbon windows.

In 1935, Robert McLaughlin, Jr., offered the steel and asbestos American Homes, Inc. "motohome." McLaughlin's flat, steel-roofed houses initially designed to provide worker housing for miners, were sheathed with modular wall panels on a steel frame. They featured asymmetrical entries and corner casement windows. The motohome came in 12 models

Principles Developed – A Brief History," *Modern San Diego*, online article found at www.modernsandiego.com/Modern, accessed 07/26/2011.

⁴ Ward Jandl, *Yesterday's Houses of Tomorrow: Innovative American Homes, 1850 to 1950*, (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1991), 12, 18.

including a two-story version and it was introduced at Wanamaker's Department Store in New York City, wrapped in cellophane and tied with a red ribbon.⁵

Similar to the Motohome was the Lustron, which was developed in the mid-1940s. Ranch-type porcelain-enameled steel homes of 1,000 square feet were produced in a factory then transported by tractor trailer to the building site. They were favored by the Truman Administration to ease the WWII housing shortage and were marketed nationwide. The Lustron had low gabled roofs, asymmetrical entries and large picture windows. The company was foreclosed on by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) in 1950, but before then 2,500 Lustrons were built nationwide. Arkansas had a few known examples of these in Little Rock, North Little Rock and West Helena but 12 in total were shipped to the state. Reasons for the small numbers and isolated appearance of Lustrons in Arkansas could be the documented hesitation on the part of the FHA to finance mortgages on out of the ordinary homes and the existence of traditionalist building codes.⁶

Arkansas Modernism

In 1929 the International style hit New York when the Museum of Modern Art launched an exhibit praising Modernism for its aesthetics. The simplicity of the American International style was appealing to clients because of its abstracted format and economical construction. This was in contrast to the European representation of Internationalism as an expression of political ideals or rising technology. The form was articulated in flat roofs, low massing, flush ribbons of windows, unornamented entries and stark stucco veneers.⁷

The International style in Arkansas was largely manifested in commercial buildings but there are a few recorded International residences in the archives of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Local examples include the Justin Matthews House in North Little Rock (NR 12/19/1990), the Warner-Faith-Knoop House in the Hillcrest Historic District, Little Rock (NR 12/18/1990) and the Parker House in Star City (NR 06/02/2000).

Modernism exhibiting Art Deco, Moderne and International influences as well as vernacular interpretations, were popular choices for commercial, institutional and industrial buildings in Arkansas from the late 1940s to 1970. International and basic copies derived from

⁵ *Ibid.*, 20, 141-142, 148.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 183-199; Thomas T. Fetter, *The Lustron Home; The History of a Postwar Prefabricated Housing Experiment*, (North Carolina, London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), 141.

⁷ Gelernter, 242-243, 249-250; Raunekk, "What is Modern?" online article found at <http://www.brighthub.com/engineering/civil/articles/59583>, accessed 5/30/2012.

standardized plans could be found stretching along newly-laid highways with suburbs feathering out from the edges. These squat buildings were centered in a pool of asphalt for easy parking.

The earlier Art Deco and Moderne were often the result of late-to-early 19th century storefront remodeling projects shouldered on Main Street in historic downtowns. In Arkansas, Art Deco was used sparingly on industrial structures like the Stebbins and Roberts Building in Little Rock and the Jackson Cookie Factory in North Little Rock (destroyed). Movie theaters, banks and commercial structures tended to be a little more flamboyant but Arkansas examples were not as exuberant as those found in Miami, Florida or Tulsa, Oklahoma. Many of the Art Deco buildings in the state have been destroyed or regrettably altered. The number of Art Deco commercial structures that have been surveyed in Arkansas is higher than Moderne examples; residential and commercial. International forms are scattered throughout various neighborhoods and stand out as lone representatives among more traditional forms.

Mid-century Modern tentatively stepped into Arkansas subdivisions but only a few identified areas contain a concentration of the style. One small grouping is found at Coffeepot Lane in Little Rock. Four homes constructed on a cul-de-sac in circa 1954 offer the gamut of Modern features. The low houses roaming over multiple levels have rooflines with extensive sheds, large banks of windows, as well as high ribbon and clerestory openings.⁸

The Miramar Subdivision in Pine Bluff, completed in 1952, contains the largest grouping known in the state of Modern cottages. Three curving streets are lined with low gabled, shed and flat-roofed homes. These houses are less high-style than the Coffeepot Lane residences and exhibit a repetition of plans typical of tract housing.

High Point subdivision located on High Drive and W. 37th Street in Little Rock was approved by the Planning Commission in 1950. The homes were constructed in circa 1958. The two-street addition features Modern middle-income homes with shed roofs, small clerestory windows and ribbon window configurations to take advantage of the view. These small homes are conspicuous among the late nineteenth to early twentieth century houses on Martin Luther King Drive (formerly Wolf Street) leading to the addition.⁹

Sierra Madre Drive in North Little Rock features several Modern duplexes built from circa 1960 to circa 1966. Some of the duplexes are built on top of their garages, which are

⁸ *Arkansas Democrat*, August 15, 1954.

⁹ Little Rock City Planning Commission, *City Planning Commission; Little Rock, Arkansas, 1950*, (Little Rock, AR: Little Rock City Planning Commission, 1950), 2; Information on construction dates obtained from Zillow.com, http://www.zillow.com/homes/High-Drive,-Little-Rock,-AR_rb/#/homes/for_sale/Pulaski-County-AR-72206/89444_rid/34.714465,-92.288072,34.711052,-92.291607_rect/17_zm/1_fr/, Accessed 02/03/2014.

enclosed but others have open carports. It is unknown if the garages were always enclosed or were open as well. Modern features found on the low, front-facing gabled-roofed duplexes are clerestory windows in the pediment and ceiling beams continuing from the interior to the narrow overhang of the roof, which provides shade to the multi-windowed front façade and minimal shelter for the front entries.¹⁰



Sierra Madre Drive

Sometimes Modern examples were early unique construction in undeveloped areas that were later subdivided and filled with more “normal” styles by developers, which can explain their intrusion into rows of Ranches.¹¹ The modular Arnold House in Little Rock is such an example. The flat-roofed house was situated in the country to the west of the city’s center in 1950 until development exploded in the area in the late 1960s. Today, it is sited in a small wooded lot surrounded on all sides by shopping centers, subdivisions of Ranches, split-levels and apartments. A second Modern home to the east of the house was destroyed circa 2010.

REJECTION OF MASS PRODUCED MODERNISM

The reasons for the lack of subdivisions exhibiting Modern architecture were sometimes governmental or cultural, but also practical on the part of the developers. As prefabricated methods of home-building became more popular in the late 1940s, building material and appliance industries heavily promoted Modern residential design. Advertising and homebuilder’s magazines would showcase their new technologically advanced products within a functionally

¹⁰ Zillow. com, http://www.zillow.com/homes/402-Sierra-Madre,-North-Little-Rock,-AR_rb/#/homedetails/434-Sierra-Madre-Dr-North-Little-Rock-AR-72118/82849708_zpid/, Accessed 02/03/2014; Google Streetview, Accessed 02/03/2014.

¹¹ PAgis, “Mapping Monuments,” online subdivision search at http://www.pagis.pulaski.ar.us/webapps/index.html?config=Monument_config.xml, accessed 11/15/2013.

spare Modern setting. Such promotion techniques were a logical outgrowth of what Americans had learned from the war as far as using progressive products and the confidence they had that postwar life could go nowhere but up.¹² However, it was not always so easy to implement on a large scale.

Adjustment for Nonconformity

Despite the growing attention to Modernism, Mary Gillies of *McCall's* magazine cautioned in her 1945 report *Let's Plan a Peacetime Home*, that early functional planning went too far. In her opinion, the move away from the usual led to a trend toward homes that “had beauty only for a surrealist. The neighbors called them ‘monstrosities.’” The authoritative Gillies referred to Modern homes as a fad in a national publication.¹³ The spread of these novel residences was also hindered by the fact that local building regulations in many areas did not commonly approve new building techniques or materials. As early as 1936 the FHA addressed the suitability of Modern design. The agency exhibited a degree of tolerance of such houses but left the option open for denial in their technical bulletin, *Addressing Modern*. It was noted that *FHA Circular No. 2: Property Standards*, did not contain anything that would outright disqualify Modern design for insurance but it still had to run the gauntlet of risk rating procedures.

A house might receive a low property rating from the FHA if the design was so far left of “... the norm of acceptable houses, and how greatly such departure is in the direction of public receptivity or anticipated receptivity.” Also, architectural inspectors might not be able to divorce their own feelings about the appropriateness of a house style while conducting Architectural Attractiveness rating assessments. Consideration for Adjustment for Nonconformity might determine that a Modern house was *too* nonconformist to fit into an established neighborhood of more traditional design.¹⁴

This circular was released during the popularity of International, Art Deco and Streamline Moderne. At that time cantilevered porches, disjointed modules, flying rooflines, monitors and banks of asymmetrical windows had not yet come to the forefront for residential design. The FHA eventually accepted that such architecture was not fleeting and by the end of the 1950s agency standards were updated to give Modern designs at least a chance. However, in

¹² Paul Adamson & Marty Arbunich, *Eichler: Modernism Rebuilds the American Dream*, (Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith, 2002), 91-92.

¹³ Mary Gillies, et al., *Let's Plan a Peacetime Home*, (Toledo, OH: Surface Combustion Corporation, 1945), 14.

¹⁴ Federal Housing Administration, *Technical Bulletin No. 2: Modern Design*, (Washington, D.C.: Federal Housing Administration, 1936), 8-9.

the long run, its own uniqueness prevented Modernism from being widely used in subdivisions in many areas. Compared to the Ranch, the numbers of Modern house forms in Arkansas were definitely on the low side.

Despite the Usonian

In the mid-1930s Frank Lloyd Wright advocated that standardization in subdivisions could be avoided through consideration of the climate, use of local materials and involvement of the owner in the design. Developers were interested in speed of construction and quantity at a reasonable cost when they built prefabricated homes for mid-century subdivisions. Fitting their design to the environment or forging an identity with the site and owner was not always possible or economical for the tract developer.

Wright's Modern Usonian designs introduced new technologies and home forms that represented the progression of a dawning era. The reality was that most developments were built by unskilled labor and the technology was mostly concentrated on appliances and amenities for the interior. The basic rectangle was a cost-saving measure as was mass buying and mass assembly. Homebuyers of the mid-century were primarily force-fed the choice of three or four Ranch plans interspersed through the neighborhood. These homes could be quickly built by using prefabrication rooted in traditional building processes. A touch of Modern could be utilized but not to the extent of the Usonian.¹⁵

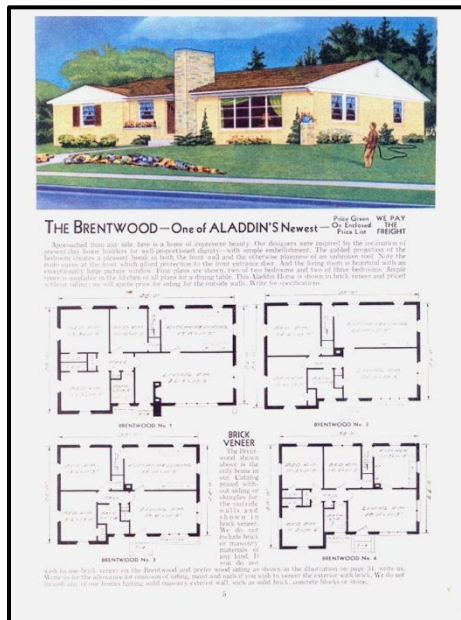
Cultural Roadblocks

Besides the economic and governmental reasons for the rebuff of Modernism in subdivisions, there were cultural indicators that perpetuated safety in conventional architecture. Even in the movies of the 1950s and 1960s Modernism and Modern interior design was used to symbolize breaking from the norm - being an outsider. For example, Rock Hudson and Doris Day love stories typically began with the bachelor bad-boy in his Modern apartment with remote controlled fireplace. The usual conclusion to the movie was that after they were safely married the love interests ended up in a more customary home symbolizing permanence. Females found in Modern movie settings were usually portrayed as fringe artist types. As with the male counterparts, these characters were individualized and not your average housewife.¹⁶

¹⁵ Adamson, Arbunich, 92-93.

¹⁶ Deborah Sorensen, "Bachelor Modern: Mid-Century Style in American Film," *Blueprints* (Spring/Summer 2008), 2-4.

Homebuilder magazines featured the avant garde in architecture and interior design in order to sell their products. *American Home* showcased many Modern houses across the United States, but they were primarily designed by the owner or a hired architect on isolated tracts.



Aladdin Homes Ranch

Similar homes were secluded vacation cottages. The styles were like exotic animals; they were not side-by-side with hundreds of other similar homes on a cul-de-sac. Modernism was expressed most exuberantly in the 1940s in such magazines until the Ranch caught on.

Liberty Kit Homes and Aladdin Homes also tended to offer the accepted to the masses. Up until circa 1962, Aladdin Homes offered the same low Ranch form with double-hung windows. In that year, houses with a distinctly Modern look were featured, including the split-level. Clerestory windows, window walls and ceiling beams that followed the ridge line from the outside of the home into the interior were new features. The plans were

still basically the low rectangle but the areas of glass were becoming more prominent and forms more varied with L-plans.¹⁷ Yet, even these were not a radical break with the prescribed domesticity that neighborhoods characteristically exhibited.

Locally, the realtor sections of the *Arkansas Gazette* and *Arkansas Democrat* primarily stuck with the basic Ranch, which mimicked the WWII cottage and Colonial Revival or Minimal Traditional styling through the 1970s. Higher-income neighborhoods might introduce several spots of Modernism but additions primarily composed of Modern homes were small and few in comparison to Ranch-filled subdivisions.

ARKANSAS'S MODERNISTS

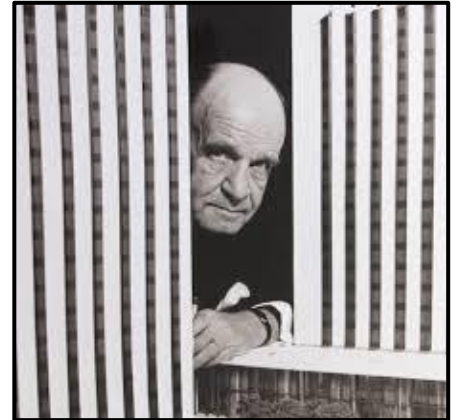
Three Arkansas architects made contributions to the state's Modern movement. Two internationally-known proponents of Post-WWII Modernism from Arkansas were Edward Durrell Stone and Eunine Fay Jones. Stone and Jones, both residing in Fayetteville, were inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's use of natural materials, modular forms and arrangement of

¹⁷ "Aladdin Read-cut Homes, 1961-1962," Online article found at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/daily-bungalow/sets/72157615595463143/>, Accessed 12/26/13; Interestingly, even when the exterior of the home was a total break from the standard subdivision fare many of the featured families in *American Homes* held on to their Early American and antique furnishings.

light and place. Both followed his “organic” movement to produce landmark institutional and residential buildings in the state and across the world. Yandell Johnson was a contemporary of Stone and Jones based in Little Rock, but his work drew from different influences. Nonetheless, the Johnson form was a distinctive example of Modernism in Arkansas.

Edward Durrell Stone

Stone had a field office in Fayetteville, Arkansas, from 1955 to 1959. The campus of the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, held Stone commissions that utilized Modern forms. These buildings differed from his Arkansas residential works in his use of contemporary materials and planned landscaping. The 1950 Fine Arts Center’s ribbons of windows were shaded by cantilevered concrete awnings. Its core of linear buildings was softened with integrated outdoor areas and an amphitheater. The 1957 married student



Edward Durrell Stone

dormitory Carlson Terrace (destroyed 2005), was a group of two-story flat-roofed buildings arranged around a centered courtyard, designed to introduce a sense of community. The new language of Modernism that celebrated openness and bringing the outdoors in was expressed by Stone in this campus complex. Stone grillwork punctuated by cantilevered concrete block balconies provided privacy and shade while involving the inhabitants in the outdoors. The grillwork was considered by *Architectural Record* to mute the institutional feel that such structures at the time could convey, and were deemed a Modern return to ornament by Stone. In 1954, Edward Durrell Stone designed the United States Embassy in New Delhi, which paired his classical training with modern materials.¹⁸

Although Stone rejected the term “Modern” to identify his work by the late 1950s, his examples in Arkansas exhibit typical characteristics of the form. By that time Stone’s work had evolved from the strict International style of the 1930s to long, low structures with horizontal emphasis, window walls and clerestory lighting. Stone’s Modern homes in Arkansas, the Felix Smart House in Pine Bluff, the Jay Lewis House in McGehee (NR 01/20/2005), and the Willis

¹⁸ Ethel Goodstein-Murphree, “In Memoriam: Edward Durrell Stone’s Carlson Terrace, 1957-2007,” *Preservation, Education & Research*, 3, 2010, 23-24.

Noll House in Fayetteville (NR, 01/20/2005), reflected Wright's influence in the embrace of the land and natural materials.¹⁹

The commissions he received in the mid-1950s were mainly for institutional and commercial structures across the world. However; he returned to Arkansas in the 1960s to execute the 1968 Pine Bluff Civic Center (NR 06/01/05), and the 1969 First National Bank in Hot Springs. The Civic Center was heavily influenced by his United States Embassy and displayed grillwork, colonnades, underground parking and courtyards as did the embassy. These were Stone's last Modern works in Arkansas.²⁰

E. Fay Jones

Euine Fay Jones's designs were expressed in a different manner than Stone's, but he was also an admirer of Wright's work. He used that influence to introduce a similar compatibility with the landscape. Using native materials and expressing functionalism, Jones was able to employ light and the Arkansas Ozark topography to move air and illuminate open floor plans. His earliest works in Fayetteville, such as the Hantz House (NR 11/19/2001), the Adrian Fletcher Residence (NR 5/28/2013), and his own home, the E. Fay and Gus Jones House (NR 4/28/2000), were unique to the state and the nation at the time. His belief was that he was a success if it looked as though he had collaborated with the earth. But Jones was not averse to tweaking nature when siting a building to ensure that the translation was appropriate. Using this method, the end result was humanistic. His hope was that this interaction would inspire an appreciation for nature on the part of the resident and the viewer.²¹

E. Fay Jones maintained his architectural link to the environment throughout his career and held that the situation of a house should not replace the beauty of a hill top; rather it should grow from the hill. In his interaction with potential clients he stated that he examined the effect of nature and geology on the site then formed what the family needed to the natural space. His larger and more well-known commissions could be considered more decorative than the typical Modern form because of his use of "dripping eaves," custom-designed light fixtures and stabilizing cross-bracing that created tracery effects. However, the ornament on Jones' buildings

¹⁹ "North Carolina Modernist Houses," online article at <http://trianglemodernisthouses.com/stone.htm>, accessed 10/01/13 ; Stone's 1936 Collier's Model Home was an example of his textbook International style homes.

²⁰ Ralph Wilcox, "Pine Bluff Civic Center," National Register nomination on file at Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR, 2005, Section 7, p. 9, Section 8, p. 5, 7.

²¹ Dana Lawrence & Kara Ousterhaus, "Hantz House," National Register nomination on file at Arkansas Historic Preservation Program: Little Rock: AR, 2001; Department of Arkansas Heritage, *Outside the Pale: The Architecture of Fay Jones*, (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 1999), xi.

was not a gratuitous element; it added tensile strength, concealed ductwork or served to fit the structure to the site more efficiently.²²

Jones incorporated overhanging eaves, window walls, chimney walls, clerestory windows, skylights and exposed beams with a signature all his own. These features could be found on low, rambling commissions like Pine Knoll (Little Rock), the Blass House (Little Rock) and Raheen (Fayetteville). Jones' designs are recognizable for his individual execution but his mid-century buildings are unmistakably Modern as well.

Yandell Johnson

Architect Yandell Johnson was less known for using organic influences in his Modern works and his Arkansas buildings were more inspired by the Bauhaus School. Johnson and his wife Mary moved to Jonesboro, Arkansas, in 1938. Both were architects and in 1946 the couple started an architectural practice in Little Rock. Their work was described as "ultra-modern." Mary addressed that with her definition of Modernism as "... a state of mind, not an architectural style, and the state of mind can be applied to any preferred type of building."²³

From the mid-1940s to 1978, Johnson designed over 300 residential and commercial structures in the state. Although he could count several traditional Colonial Revival-influenced Ranch designs among his commissions, many displayed International influences. The most notable was the National Old Line Insurance Company in Little Rock. The seven-story office building, constructed in 1955, featured strong lines of ribbon windows topped with continuous cantilevered stone awnings. The awnings and windows wrapped the building, creating a strongly horizontal symmetrical facade broken by vertical elements.²⁴ Johnson's smaller commissions often used cantilevered porch coverings, such as the remodeled first story of his nineteenth century office building at 113 E. 9th Street in Little Rock, remodel of Red Crown Cleaners, Cumberland Street in Little Rock (destroyed), and the Murdock Acceptance Corporation on West Capitol Avenue in Little Rock. His residential designs displayed cantilevered elements as well, adding to the horizontality. Johnson's home at 3325 Lakeview, North Little Rock (remodeled), featured a continuous cantilever that linked rambling flat roofed modules.

²² Department of Arkansas Heritage, 26.

²³ *Arkansas Gazette*, (01/07/1951) in Yandell Johnson papers, on file at Butler Center, Little Rock, AR, Series 1, Box 4, File 17.

²⁴ Jesse Toms, "Modern Arkansas: International Style in the Capital City: Part 3," online article at <http://modernarkansas.blogspot.com/2013/07/international-style-in-capital-city.html>, accessed 11/26/13.

Johnson used windows of varying sizes and styles placed asymmetrically on the same elevation. His favored window type was the awning and it could be found in pairs, multi-paned banks, window walls and short single openings, or he would incorporate them into ribbons placed high on the elevation. Often he used folded rooflines with monitors and projecting eaves with close-set rafter tails that swept upward from shingled elevations. His individual commissions revealed his Modern take on architecture, which sometimes translated into a more typical Ranch form. Johnson also collaborated with Jack Bracey of Bralei Homes to contribute small, middle-class houses for Meadowcliff Subdivision in Little Rock. It is unclear if Johnson designed all the homes or just a few in the mid-1950s neighborhood. Meadowcliff features a mix of traditional small Ranch houses with an occasional exaggerated folded gable or shed roof with multi-paned picture windows that look much like Johnson's larger individual commissions.

Yandell Johnson also designed the small homes in the 1952 Miramar Subdivision in Pine Bluff. Streets with idyllic floral motifs such as Jonquil, Iris and Rose are lined with flat-roofed and low, front-gabled Modern cottages. Each home reveals the typical Johnson stamp of varying window types; use of shingle siding and exaggerated shed roof slopes, or flat roofs.²⁵ Yandell Johnson joined two other Arkansas architectural firms after 1966 and retired in 1978. He introduced his Modern "state of mind" to Arkansas's built environment through his use of applying Modern facades to historic buildings and constructing middle-class mass-produced housing.

RANCH

As the 1950s wore on the Ranch came to be more prevalent in Arkansas than the Modern style, which was often architect-designed for upper-middle class individuals. High-style Ranch homes emerged nationally in the 1920s and 1930s but these were more expansive and more expensive than the mid-century homes built for the average Post-WWII population. Eventually, the influence of Modernism melded with Ranch in the use of glass and incorporation of the outdoors with the interior as well as the use of exposed structural elements.

²⁵ Yandell Johnson Papers, Series II, Box 5, photographs; The Johnson's take on Modernism was applied to historic buildings like Johnson's Little Rock office and the Red Crown Cleaners when he added jarringly Modern entries to late 19th and early 20th century structures.



Historic Ranch Form

In contrast to Modernism, the Ranch could be translated into small, economical units. These could be quickly constructed by a developer or spread across the division by an architect utilizing the panoply of Ranch characteristics on a small scale. During the Depression the uncomplicated construction of the Ranch was also embraced by the Farm Security Administration in an effort to provide low-cost housing.²⁶ The origin of the Ranch style is logically linked to the colonial Spanish complexes found in the 16th century southwest. The climate, available materials and the influence of missions and ranchos led to the well-known 1950s incarnation, which surfaced first in California.

The Hispanic adobe home and the rustic nineteenth century farmhouses of California, New Mexico and Texas inspired West Coast architects Charles and Henry Greene in the early twentieth century. They produced Craftsman bungalows wrapped around courtyards modeled on the low, casual residences of organic materials historically found in those areas. The popularity of period revival forms in the 1920s and 1930s continued to filter from architecture influenced by Hispanic building traditions.²⁷

The thread between Modernism and Ranch could be seen in the joining of interior and exterior and the manipulation of light sources through cove lighting, skylights, glass walls and a low profile that was linked to the earth. California home designer Cliff May used these elements in his early examples of Ranch homes in the mid-1930s. Author Alan Hess stated that rather than a palette for formalism or an expression of the machine, May's designs were part of a

²⁶ David Bricker, "Ranch Houses Are Not All the Same," *Preserving the Recent Past 2*, edited by Deborah Staton and William G. Foulk (2000).

²⁷ Mary Mix Foley, *The American House*, (New York, Cambridge, Philadelphia, San Francisco, London, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Sydney: Harper Colophon Books, 1980), 88-89; New South Associates, "The Ranch House in Georgia: Guidelines for Evaluation," (Stone Mountain, GA: New South Associates, 2010), 7.

movement to “hospitable Modernism.” May said his designs were a reaction to the typical “box” with a garage. His plans called for residences that focused on a backyard patio and provided cross-ventilation with spread-out rooms. Such a form was appropriate for the mild weather in California and the use of backyard patios and courtyard entries were almost required on the Ranch because of it.²⁸

The western Ranch form was nebulous, its purpose being easygoing living more so than a prescribed presentation. Even as it spread across the nation and was mass-expressed in developments, several subtypes emerged and in some instances historic architectural influences were minimally articulated. In Arkansas there was little Hispanic inspiration in the mid-century Ranch house and few displayed an overtly “western” character. By the 1970s a small number of homes with Ranch characteristics exhibited Neo-Hispanic elements like grillwork, arcades and stucco veneer. Most influences were Colonial Revival (also referred to as Traditional by realtor ads) or straightforward Minimal with typical picture window, wrought-iron porch posts and integral planters. Some Arkansas Ranch homes in the late 1950s were described as Gallic or French Provincial.

Hess wrote that “the Ranch House reflected a mass taste that cut across social class.” He was referring to California, but Arkansas Ranches also demonstrated that equitable distribution. Early 1950s Little Rock Ranch developments such as Broadmoor and Coolwood were small middle-class examples; but contemporaneously, there were larger Ranch homes built as individual commissions on expansive acreage. By the mid-1950s to the 1960s, several subdivisions in the Heights of Little Rock, West Little Rock and in the Lakewood area of North Little Rock contained large Ranches. Headlines in the women’s sections of local newspapers through the 1950s never let Arkansans forget that the Ranch “... Seems Here to Stay.”²⁹

Subdivision growth continued throughout the state in the 1960s but the Ranch seemed to become more compact and developed an identity crisis. The 1962 Parade of Homes included houses built in “Contemporary, Traditional, Cape Cod, French Cottage, Cape Cod/Texas Ranch, Colonial and Transitional,” which were all less exuberant takes on the original Ranch form.³⁰

²⁸ Daniel P. Gregory, *Cliff May and the Modern Ranch House*, (New York, NY: Rizzoli International Publications, 2008), 32; May later changed the name of his homes from Haciendas to Rancherias.

²⁹ Alan Hess, *The Ranch House*, (New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, 2004), 13; “Ranch Style House Seems Here to Stay,” *Arkansas Gazette*, August 5, 1956; other headlines included “Ranch Style Established as Favorite,” “Ranch Type Gaining in Popularity,” *Arkansas Gazette*, 1953 and “Ranch House Tradition Really Comes to Town,” *Arkansas Gazette*, June 2, 1957.

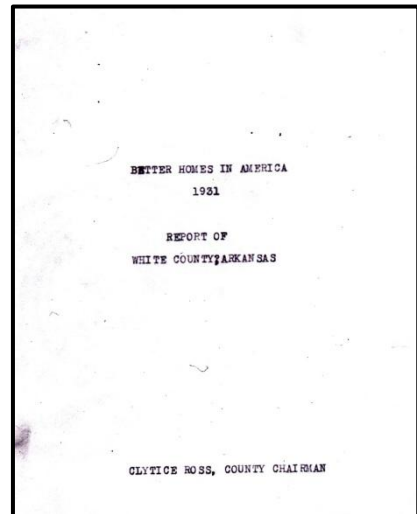
³⁰ *Arkansas Gazette*, July through September 1962 women’s sections; The “transitional” form alluded to use of “old brick” or “antique brick,” classic columns, dentils, shutters and bay windows.

MID-CENTURY GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE AND GUIDELINES FOR SUBDIVISIONS

The natural habitat of the Ranch – the subdivision – was not new to the state at the mid-century mark. However, such layouts became synonymous with Ranch and Modern architecture as a result of societal transformations and government, industry and municipal standardization after WWII. Sprawling neighborhoods of homogenous homes were a symbol of progress, sophistication and attaining a certain station in life. Families were getting a leg up through increased household incomes. Their new cars were funneling them out of the decaying city centers via improved roadways to the suburbs. Movies, television, advertising and magazines promoted the image of domestic goddess and professional head of household interacting with their children within an efficient symbol of their orderly lives – a Modern or Ranch home.

Better Homes in America, Inc.

The explosion of mid-century subdivisions was a continuation of 1920s suburban expansion buoyed by the federal government. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover encouraged efforts to remedy a dearth of housing stock by using the federal government to stem shortages. With the support of the government the Architects' Small House Service Bureau, formed in 1921, drew up traditional house plans at a modest price and assisted in classes on do-it-yourself construction projects. Hoover instituted the "Own Your Home" campaign to aid war industry workers in purchasing homes through long-term mortgages. He was also a supporter of the 1923 Better Homes in America, Inc., program, which sponsored tour houses in rural and urban areas to promote owning and maintaining a home during Better Homes Week.



Arkansas Better Homes in America, Inc.

In Arkansas, White and Pulaski counties participated in Better Homes Week during the early 1930s. Clytice Ross, county chairwoman and home demonstration agent, filed a report on White County activities in 1931. Ross stated that Little Rock had hosted a Better Homes School. There were County Better Homes Schools as well as District Better Homes Schools that

provided ideas for various county campaigns during Better Homes Week. Timely reports from these campaigns resulted in prizes for activities that ... “encouraged thrift for home ownership, and to help make accessible to all American families homes of beauty, comfort, and convenience.” Homeowners in Pangburn, Beebe and Searcy took part in tours that showcased landscaping, interior decoration and remodeling projects.³¹

Government assistance eventually moved from encouraging the proper mindset for home ownership to actual involvement in fiscal assistance for potential home buyers. The first steps were taken by Hoover in 1931 when he held the President’s Conference on Building and Homeownership. After Roosevelt came to office the Federal Housing Administration grew out of the National Housing Act. This agency provided low-interest, long-term mortgages to boost the economy. The administration allowed developers to obtain bank loans for subdivision of land and construction of homes, which became a more lucrative process for the developers by the post-WWII era. Technical bulletins distributed by the FHA provided guidelines for subdivisions. The agency recommended in 1939 that developments should reflect a cohesive sense of community that allowed each occupant to take a proprietary interest in maintaining his or her home. This had the effect of promoting long-term mortgage security.³²

World War II truncated the success of the low-interest mortgage program because of limits on construction and materials. The Veterans Administration’s (VA) mortgage guarantee program of 1944 attempted to staunch the WWII housing shortage by eliminating down payments on new homes for veterans. The Housing Act of 1949 provided for safe and adequate construction to create a “suitable” situation for families. This would be overseen by the Housing and Home Finance Agency among other federal agencies.

The Veterans Emergency Housing Program (VEHP), headed by the National Housing Expediter, was organized in 1945. This program ensured that scarce building materials would continue to be routed to middle and low-cost housing for veterans despite the push for decontrol. By the 1940s, FHA standards included the stipulation that older neighborhoods were not eligible for assistance; a clue to the character and proliferation of mid-century subdivisions outside the

³¹ Clytice Ross, *Better Homes in America, 1931: Report of White County, Arkansas*, Better Homes in America, Records, 1923-1935, Box 30, folder 9, on file at the Herbert Hoover Institute, Stanford University, Stanford, CA; Better Homes In America, Inc., promoted zoning, construction standards and good citizenship as well as stemming racism and communism through homeownership. Special sermons in local churches during Better Homes Week and placards placed in store windows helped promote the activities of Arkansas committees.

³² Emily Pettis, et al., *NCHRP Report 723: A Model for Identifying and Evaluating the Historic Significance of Post-World War II Housing*, (Washington, D.C.: Transportation Research Board, 2012); Alexandra Griffith Winton, “A Man’s House is his Art’: the Walker Art Center’s *Idea House* Project and the Marketing of Domestic Design 1941-1947,” *Journal of Design History*, 17, 4 (2004), 381.

city core. The transformation of residential neighborhoods continued into the 1950s despite a sputter in building because of restrictions incurred due to the Korean War. Government aid and the post-war housing need combined to change the way developments were constructed. Developers didn't just sell lots; they also built the homes, instituting tract housing.

In 1958, the FHA standards were upgraded allowing for homebuilders to choose "modern or 'revolutionary' architectural techniques." Distinctive Modern architecture in comparison to tract housing was usually favored by clients who wanted their home to reveal their economic or social standing. They were not interested in fitting in and being inconspicuous. Fear of this unorthodox mindset could reasonably be a factor in why the FHA stuck with conservative design and gave Modern buildings low rates on "Adjustment for Conformity." People with those attitudes would hurt mortgage security for everybody. By 1959, houses showcased in the women's section of the *Arkansas Gazette* began to include more innovative designs in Modern forms, but still the numbers did not reach the level of Ranch examples.³³

Federal and Municipal Impact on the Form of Subdivisions

Evolving house styles gave rise to plans and studies by city and federal governments, which dictated the size and physical layout of subdivisions. City planning had emerged in America by 1909 with the formation of the First National Conference on City Planning and the Problems of Congestion in Washington, D.C. The planners addressed issues similar to those that are officially named sprawl today, and sought to tackle the problem of tying a sense of community to disparate neighborhoods. Emerging mobility of Americans made street patterns a prominent factor in their plan. From the first technical circular produced by the FHA in 1935, the agency advocated accommodating the natural environment of a proposed subdivision in order for a developer to receive guaranteed mortgage insurance. A monotonous street grid was rejected for a calming conformation to the land. Other patterns that promoted safety, saved money on paving, and provided a pleasing setting were cul-de-sacs, courts and lanes separated

³³ Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America*, (Cambridge, MA, London, England: The MIT Press, 1981), 197, 200, 241-243, 246, 248; Committee on Banking and Currency United States Senate, *Housing Act of 1949: Summary of Provisions of the National Housing Act of 1949*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1949), 1; The Housing Act also provided for slum clearance and urban redevelopment; Federal Housing Administration, *Subdivision Standards*, Circular No. 5, (Federal Housing Administration: Washington, D.C., 1939); Pettis, et al., 56-57; William Remington, "The Veterans Emergency Housing Program," 12, *Law and Contemporary Problems* (Winter, 1947), 143; "Is Housing Rule Confusion to End in '58?," *Arkansas Gazette*, January 12, 1958; Joy Monice Malnar, *Sensory Design*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 37; Robert Woods Kennedy, *The House and the Art of its Design*, (New York, NY: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1953), 17 .

by grassy medians. Such arrangements became typical of early mid-century neighborhoods in Arkansas and were easy to accomplish given the hilly land over the majority of the state. So, besides being a concession to government assistance, the shape of Arkansas's suburbs was easily dictated by natural features.³⁴

Most of the residential expansion in Central Arkansas followed the typical grid pattern until the introduction of Progressive ideals. The Hillcrest, Prospect Terrace, Edgewood, Cliffewood, Shadowlawn and Capitol View neighborhoods of Little Rock reflected this with their curving lanes that followed the lay of the land. Midland Hills Addition, established in Hillcrest at the turn of the century, was the first area in Little Rock to utilize such patterns. Edgemont's Skyline Drive in Park Hill, North Little Rock, also meanders along a hilltop in an irregular path above I-40.³⁵ Burgeoning subdivision development in the 1950s took full advantage of the sinuous road pattern and it was a standard feature in that decade. By the 1960s and 1970s there seemed to be a return to the grid.

The Amorphous Subdivision Lot

In the 1940s the typical shape of lots in subdivisions was being altered as neighborhoods evolved from checkerboard road plans. Narrow lots were historically favored for putting distance between outbuildings and the house. The lot orientation began to change as the backyard became a focal point of the home and the desire for more privacy led to new planning methods.³⁶

The lot size for homes in the 1907 Wat Worthen Addition of Little Rock was 45 feet wide by approximately 150 feet long. By 1942, Cammack Woods Addition was offering lots at 50 feet by 145 feet. In 1950, the Little Rock City Planning Commission revised its regulations for the first time since 1939. The commission regulated that lot widths were to be 60 feet and should not contain less than 6,000 square feet. In that year the Coolwood Addition plat map showed that lots were between 60 and 70 feet wide. The irregular contours of the addition, which is situated at the bottom of a hill, provided for lot depths of between 117 to 301 feet. The upper-income Scenic Heights subdivision, established in 1950, featured some lot widths up to

³⁴ Michael Southworth and Eran Ben-Joseph, "Street Standards and the Shaping of Suburbia," *APA Journal*, (Winter 1995), 71, 74; Federal Housing Administration, *Subdivision Development: Standards for the Insurance of Mortgages on Properties Located in Undeveloped Subdivisions*, Circular No. 5, (Federal Housing Administration: Washington, D.C.), January 10, 1935, 8.

³⁵ Cheryl Griffith Nichols, "Hillcrest: The History and Architectural Heritage of Little Rock's Streetcar Suburb," (Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program), ND, 3.

³⁶ Miles Colean, *American Housing: Problems and Prospects, the Factual Findings*, (New York, NY: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1944), 19.

142 feet.³⁷ An increase in lot sizes made it easier to comfortably construct the wider Ranch home with a carport. In comparison to Coolwood, the homes in Scenic Heights are wider and would be considered high-style examples of the Ranch.

THE CAR

Discussion of the Ranch or Modern subdivision cannot exclude the automobile. Roads that made life simpler in the subdivision by calming traffic were amped up for feeder routes in order to move the car to suburbia faster. After World War II the car was proclaimed a necessity of life by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.³⁸ No other method of transportation contributed as much to the growth of homebuilding and symbiotic links of commercial strips on former farmland. The car is synonymous with not just the movement of neighborhoods, but also with new forms of housing and new cultural forms of family life. Road building and upgrading projects kick-started the advancement.

The Arkansas Highway Commission managed to amass funds for desperately needed road improvements by 1941; however, WWII resulted in the Defense Highway Act. Road building in Arkansas during the war was contained to access roads for war-related industries or training facilities. Improvements were bumped up after the war when Governor Sid McMath pushed for a general obligation bond issue to boost highway maintenance and construction, but the state continued to lag behind the national average. Promises to the public regarding a highway construction program did not meet expectations but McMath did get 1,458 miles of road paved by 1952. Construction of the state's Interstate highway system was started in that year, and Arkansas began to shake off the doldrums of lackluster industrial development. The National System of Interstate and Defense Highways of 1956 and the Arkansas Highway Commission's "Critical Inventory of the State Highway System," provided funds for access highways. Improved roads contributed to the growth of rural areas ripe for residential and industrial growth.³⁹

³⁷ PAgis, "Mapping Monuments," <http://www.pagis.pulaski.ar.us/WebDocuments/ScannedPlats/2955.PDF> <http://www.pagis.pulaski.ar.us/WebDocuments/ScannedPlats/2955.PDF>; *Ibid*, <http://www.pagis.pulaski.ar.us/WebDocuments/ScannedPlats/216.PDF>; *Ibid*, <http://www.pagis.org/WebDocuments/ScannedPlats/215.PDF>, Accessed June 26, 2013; City Planning Commission, *Land Subdivision Regulations, Little Rock, Ark.*, (Little Rock, AR: City Planning Commission, 1950), 9.

³⁸ Martin Wachs, Margaret Cranford, eds., *The Car and the City: The Automobile, The Built Environment and Daily Urban Life*, (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1992), 138.

³⁹ Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, *Historical Review: Arkansas State Highway Commission and Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1913-1992*, (Little Rock, AR: Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 1992), 54, 61, 64, 76, 86, 90; Ben Johnson, *Arkansas in Modern America, 1930-1999*, (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2000), 95; Christie McLaren, "Arkansas

The Auto and the Shopping Center

Roads and cars began the process of suctioning life from the city core to cheaper, more plentiful land. Arch Booth of the 1956 National Chamber of Commerce, attributed the stretch of

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subdivisions to “motorization” and electricity for “mechanical servants.” Booth noted the natural progression of stores and office buildings following residential construction. Such development flourished because of campus-like landscaping on ample land and free parking right at the door. His concern for the diaspora of business from the city was countered by his advocacy of urban renewal – “clearing structures that block progress.” The solution was auto-centric. To keep up, said Booth, downtowns must oblige the automobile and provide attached parking and drive-in facilities.⁴⁰ In the end, efforts to become one with the auto were not enough to break the link between suburbanites and the movement of residential and commercial cores.

Pleas to Shop Downtown

In 1957, *Redbook* magazine encouraged “living by the automobile in the age of the pushbutton.” The magazine sponsored promotions called “Easy Living” and “Happy Go Buy It” to young suburban residents. Shopping centers were vibrant and used youthful, multi-colored schemes. Some provided nurseries and activities for the kids so unfettered parents could easily acquire goods for the home that would fit in the car.⁴¹

The American Planning and Civic Association held a conference in Little Rock in 1957 on the revamping and maintenance of downtown shopping areas although several shopping centers were in the works on the peripheries of Little Rock. Victor Gruen, the keynote speaker, prophetically warned that “hordes of mechanical monsters” were contributing to the downfall of

Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965,” (Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1999), 10-11.

⁴⁰ Chamber of Commerce of the United States, “The Dynamic American City, 1956,” online video found at www.archive.org/details/0524_dynamic_american_city_the, Accessed 04/30/2013.

⁴¹ *Redbook Magazine*, “In the Suburbs,” 1957, online video found at www.archive.org/details/inthesub1957, accessed 04/30/2013.

Main Street.⁴² Little Rock's downtown planners were not quite ready to accept the progressive method of scaling for humans in landscaping and architecture to resuscitate downtown. They plunged into the spirit of catering to the car.

The 1957 opening of a parking deck at Fourth and Louisiana streets in Little Rock was marked by a foreign sports car parade and flowers for female drivers. It made the newspaper when a second parking deck with drive-in facilities for Worthen Bank on Main Street was built the next month. Downtown Little Rock was not ready to succumb just yet, but the propagation of modern shopping centers would not be checked.⁴³

Early note was made of construction on a 1955 shopping center in southwest Little Rock. The center was close to a new industrial development complex and the Meadowcliff, Rolling Hills and Sunset additions were nearby. Plans for the Village Shopping Center in Little Rock at the intersection of the new U.S. 67-70 highway, were also documented in 1955.⁴⁴ The 1956 Town and Country Shopping Center was described as the "first integrated shopping center with all the stores under one roof." This center was also located at the intersection of U.S. 67-70 and was less than a mile from the burgeoning Broadmoor neighborhood.⁴⁵

The *Arkansas Gazette* proclaimed 1959 the year of the shopping center for Little Rock. The construction of Park Plaza Shopping Center and a center in Pine Bluff with the Arkansas-based Gus Blass Company store as an anchor were publicized in the late 1950s. This was the first time Blass had moved outside of downtown Little Rock since its early-nineteenth century inception. Store officials felt that their original locations still had enough potential to control commerce so expansion would necessarily have to be outside of the metropolitan area. Although the merchants resisted it, this was a sign that the tendrils of suburbanism were beginning to tear at Little Rock's Main Street. The large Little Rock department stores managed to barely

⁴² "National Planners Open Little Rock Session Today," *Arkansas Gazette*, June 10, 1957; "Traffic-choked Main Street Outmoded, Cars Must Go, National Planners Told," *Arkansas Gazette*, June 11, 1957; Gruen's other progressive predictions that the car would compete unfairly with pedestrians on Main Street unless the cities experience a renaissance encouraging residential development downtown with parks and green space have happily come to pass in Little Rock.

⁴³ "A New Dimension in Downtown Parking: Newrock," *Arkansas Gazette*, June 2, 1957; "New Parking Deck For Little Rock Plans Office Space," *Arkansas Gazette*, July 14, 1957.

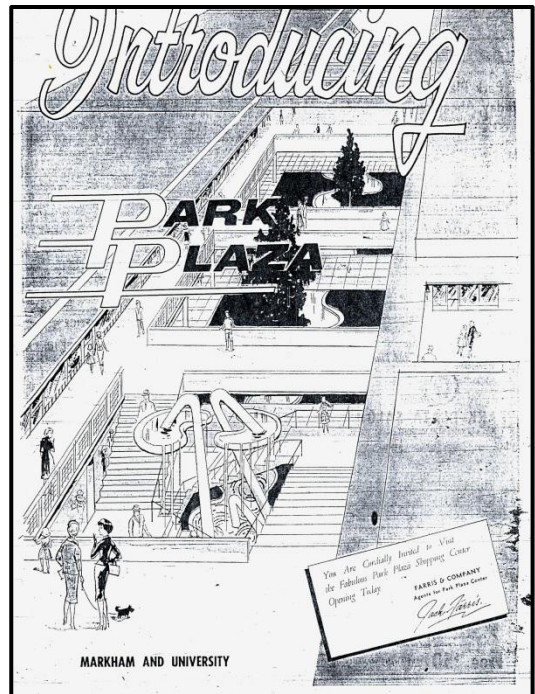
⁴⁴ "New Center at Geyer Springs Set," *Arkansas Democrat*, August 28, 1955; "New Shopping Center Planned," *Arkansas Democrat*, August 28, 1955.

⁴⁵ F. Hampton Roy, Sr., Charles Witsell, Jr., and Cheryl Griffith Nichols, *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City*, (Little Rock, AR: August House, 1984), 215; Town and County shopping center included plans for a playground, but it was not included in the final center.

maintain their downtown locations through the 1980s when Main Street commerce stalled for several decades.⁴⁶

University Avenue (then known as Hayes Street) was still a dirt road circa 1954, but road improvements were enabling developers like Elbert Fausett and Jack Bracey to entice families to their massive subdivisions, Broadmoor and Meadowcliff. The increasingly active developers knew that the national trend of bringing goods to the people would work in Little Rock and also would encourage home sales. Fausett was responsible for the construction of the EZ Center on Hayes Street at the entrance to Broadmoor and he also developed the Park Plaza Shopping Center. Hayes Street was becoming the new Main Street. The *Arkansas Gazette* reported in 1958 that “At all of these developments, provisions are being made in advance to insure plenty of parking space – something not taken into consideration in development of the downtown area... The shopping centers will provide stiff competition for downtown stores.”⁴⁷

The design of the 20-acre Park Plaza Shopping Center and its 1,870-slot parking lot was a new wave in commercial architecture. The parking lot was planned to eliminate traversing busy intersections and customers never had to walk more than a block from



Park Plaza Shopping Center

their cars to get to the center. In addition, covered walkways protected them from wet weather. Consumers could easily get to the center via “mechanical monsters” on a wide, paved thoroughfare but they could be parked within a comfortable distance of a collection of stores in a condensed area.⁴⁸ The lure of piped-in music and the soothing fountains in the courtyards of a modern shopping center became irresistible to Arkansas suburbanites. Soon, an associated shopping center became an expected feature of new development.

⁴⁶ “Bloss Going Into Pine Bluff With Big Department Store,” *Arkansas Gazette*, December 27, 1959; The end was actually temporary as downtown Little Rock experienced a renaissance by the 1990s that is ongoing.

⁴⁷ “Hayes Street: A New Town is Booming,” *Arkansas Gazette*, September 14, 1958.

⁴⁸ “Plaza Takes Sprawl Out of Center, Brings Togetherness,” *Arkansas Gazette*, December 1, 1960.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN MID-CENTURY HOME DESIGN

By the mid-century American women were becoming more active outside the home, but the roles of housekeeper and caregiver were still traditionally attributed to mother. The average age of married women fell from 22 to 20 in 1953. The birth rate rose and the wartime stacking of multiple family members in an apartment or single home was reduced to an average of fewer than five people consisting of the nuclear family. Before World War II the number of women in the American labor force was 10,752. By 1950 it had risen to 18,369. The social upheavals of the 1960s helped women up their entry into the workforce and by 1970 there were 31,543 working women. The percentage of women in the labor force with children under 18 in 1955 stood at 27 percent; a level that incrementally increased to 35 percent in 1965 and 47.4 percent by 1975.⁴⁹

Family spending jumped with the increase in income provided by working mothers. The growing number of families purchasing single-family homes fueled consumerism. Even though more women were working, merchandisers knew that home was still the domain of the female. Cultural documentation of the mid-century reflected that women were the force behind housing styles and needs.

Advertisements in *American Home* magazine of the 1940s through 1970 were significantly geared toward women. Every Sunday, the *Arkansas Gazette* women's section would feature a new home with photos of the interiors. The woman of the house was always photographed alone in the living room or the kids would be posed in their bedrooms, but typically dad was nowhere to be found.

By WWII the opinions of women on house needs and forms were increasingly sought after. In 1944, *McCall's* magazine held contests for war bonds that resulted in four reports: *What Women want in their Living Rooms of Tomorrow*, *What Women want in their Dining Rooms of Tomorrow*, *What Women want in their Kitchens of Tomorrow*, and *What Women want in their Bedrooms of Tomorrow*. The last report included statistics on what kind of house the participants would like to build or buy. The two choices were Traditional and Modern. Out of the 10,848 contestants, 4,432 indicated they would be building or buying a home. Two-thousand-forty-six people of that group stated they wanted to have a Modern home built to order,

⁴⁹ Kristen Peeler, et al, *Housing an Air Force and a Navy: The Wherry and Capehart Era Solutions to the Postwar Family Housing Shortage (1949-1962)*, (Frederick, MA: R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, 2007), 50; "Women in the Labor Force," online article at www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0104673.html, Accessed 01/08/2013; "Mothers in the Labor Force, 1955-2010," online article at www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0104670.html, Accessed 01/08/2013.

rather than a Traditional one. As for interiors, the Modern camp preferred corner windows, built-in storage, uncluttered rooms that were easier to clean and a balance of masculine and feminine décor – all traits that were typical of Modern homes and eventually the Ranch.⁵⁰

Science began to back up the influence of women into architecture, even if it didn't stray far from the accepted opinion of their place in society. The University of Michigan undertook a 1947 study on the sociological impact of house size and space arrangements. The goal was to determine the level at which a house became unhealthy and unsatisfactory to family life. A main concern was how large the house could be before the housewife became fatigued while working outside the home and caring for children. Cost per room and the amount of housework needed to maintain them were benchmarks.⁵¹

Women's Congress

The passive role of women as lab rats for housing trends evolved to actual implementation of female ideas and needs in house design. In 1956, the Housing and Home Finance Agency hosted 103 women in Washington, D.C. for a Women's Congress. They were asked to offer their thoughts on single-family home design for the interior and exterior.

The congress allowed women to relate what they thought builders and architects were doing wrong in design. Their contributions were applied to three "dream homes" constructed in 1956 in the "ideal mid-America location" of Munster, Indiana. The majority of the participants in the congress expressed a preference for one-story homes, but one split-level was constructed in the White Oak Manor division of Munster. Fifty-nine features included in each house expressed what the women felt would make life psychologically, economically and strategically better. Their thoughts were validated by a total of 3,500 people who came from across America to view and tour the homes.

All of these features were enveloped in Ranch-style forms and expressed the new tenets of mid-century life, including efficient use of space, open forms and segregated public-private and adult-children areas. While the interiors were considered cutting edge, the exteriors were

⁵⁰ Mary Davis Gillies, *What Women Want in Their Bedrooms of Tomorrow, A Report From the Bedroom of Tomorrow Contest*, (McCall's Corporation: New York, NY, 1944), 17, 27; Gillies' report stated that the 10,848 voters participating in the bedroom contest were "almost all women." The contest categories did not specify whether Modern referred to a textbook example of the style or whether they were considering Ranch as Modern. As previously stated, Ranch was often referred to as Modern.

⁵¹ College of Architecture and Design, University of Michigan, *Proposed Housing Research on Effects of Space Arrangements and Material on Housework*, (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1947), 1, 11.

reported as presenting nothing new - the standard Ranch "... built around activities and family values, rather than pretty architecture."⁵²

McCall's Congress on Better Living

The successor to the Women's Congress was *McCall's* 1957 Congress on Better Living. Again, women convened in Washington. The expectations of 100 women for the exterior of the home had evolved away from acceptance of the usual. Despite a trend toward individuality they still wanted a home that conformed to the neighborhood image – nothing "flashy." (Code word for Ultra-Modern). The agenda of the representatives was still design for comfort, but a new outreach tool was the awarding of congressional certificates to builders for "excellence of design" and "ease of living."⁵³

The opinions and solicited ideas of women were significant in the form of the mid-century house. As they gained more traction in society their vocabulary for living shaped the interiors in particular, which subsequently influenced the exterior. The hand of the woman continued to shape the house through the 1970s, as evidenced by the home magazines that enduringly appealed to the female with articles and advertising. In the 1960s and 1970s many schools of architecture set mandated female enrollment levels at 50 percent. Women served as faculty, took their places in private architectural practices and often teamed with their husbands professionally as the mid-century wore on. So the perspective and the actual role of the woman in design trends became a dominant factor in the form of the Ranch in particular.⁵⁴

MODERN AND RANCH FORMS FROM THE INSIDE OUT

The Modern and Ranch were the thinking man's dwellings. In the mid-century, society had changed so drastically that shelter began to come alive, taking on a vibrant personality that stretched out of the traditional boundaries of architecture. The home was always the calling card of status and family. By the 1950s it truly projected the honesty of the Progressives as the face of the family and the neighborhood. Part of this honesty was the characteristic of individuality. The findings of the 1956 Women's Congress on Housing ultimately concluded that there was no

⁵² "Open Women's Congress Homes," *The Hammond Times*, Hammond, Indiana, December 16, 1956, C-19; "59 Basic Features Are Included," *The Salisbury Times*, Salisbury, Maryland, December 8, 1956; "3,500 See Congress Homes," *The Hammond Times*, Hammond, Indiana, December 23, 1956, C-11.

⁵³ "Women Blunt about Homes," *St. Petersburg Independent*, St. Petersburg, Florida, December 27, 1959, D-1; "Better Living Congress Seeks Wife's Home View," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, August 17, 1957, p. 6; "McGovern House Cited," *Express and News*, San Antonio, Texas, April 25, 1959, 26.

⁵⁴ Wilma Pearl Mankiller, ed., *The Reader's Companion to U.S. Women's History*, (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), 37.

across-the-board arrangement for every family.⁵⁵ This was a sign of the loosening of societal strictures. New configurations, room sizes and modern technology were cultural indicators that revealed the characteristics of the mid-century family. These features contributed to changing conclusions about neighborhoods and the roles of family members.

Efficiency, Efficiency, Efficiency

“Informal, convenience, easygoing, efficiency, livability.” These were catchwords used in realtor ads and home magazines to describe the Ranch phenomena. Cliff May’s theory was that the Ranch home should be easy to traverse. The open flow of the house should be unencumbered with steps and the outdoor areas should be on a plane with the house. This was the California ethos that came to represent the informal character of the mid-century family through a throwback to “the careless aristocratic air of the old ranchos.”⁵⁶ Ranch and Modern houses in Arkansas could present informality through a single-story form from the street, but often a basement level was concealed by the hills of the subdivisions.

Yandell Johnson’s wife stated in 1952 that women were inherently lazy; therefore,



Planning for Peacetime

movement through the house should stem from a single central hallway. Open rooms radiating from the hall would provide an efficient circulation pattern for the busy woman.⁵⁷ Some forms of Modern could be multi-level but the movement of interior space was free and not confined by steep enclosed staircases or dark hallways. Loft areas and use of window walls gave mid-century Modernism a relaxed quality.

The mid-century house was metamorphosed by the family, but in some instances the house could be said to have altered them. During WWII couples were encouraged to start dream books for their new home. In 1945, *McCall's*

magazine counseled that couples should not decide on the architecture of their home first, but rather take the “modern, scientific” route and start with the inside.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Albert M. Cole, *Women's Congress on Housing*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), 37.

⁵⁶ Gregory, 23.

⁵⁷ “House Builders Please Note: Women are Lazy,” *Arkansas Democrat*, March 9, 1952.

⁵⁸ Gillies, 14.

Growing mid-century families called for adaptability, beginning with the interior footage. The 1947 Levittown homes were very small, but they included attics that could be finished out later as needed.⁵⁹ Rooms could be simply transformed for different uses through a new furniture arrangement rather than remain chained to a single function. It was easier to introduce changes to rooms in a one-story home such as the small Modern and Ranch because the added complication of a second-story was eliminated.⁶⁰ That possibility of expansion invited young families to embrace the expanding tract home environment and also led to the acceptance of less ornate exteriors as the inside was now the nexus and character of the family.

The Society of the Mid-Century House

The seemingly primary location of mom – the kitchen – was evolving as a consequence of women’s new role in the family and the world. Home building and decorating magazines heavily emphasized the design of the kitchen. In 1953, author Robert Woods Kennedy stated that “The housewife cannot be expected to enjoy cooking as long as it is thought of and expressed as a duty which interferes with life. It must be a part, an important part, of life itself.”⁶¹

Architectural Record had suggested in 1949 that the absence of servants and the access of guests to the kitchen dictated that it be divorced from its reputation as a room for drudgery. It should be a center for family and social life, perhaps by combining it with the dining room or living room.⁶² Mom was at the helm of the kitchen and in a mid-century floor plan she could participate actively in home life while still getting the job done. Pass-throughs and strategically placed windows allowing for supervision of the kids as well as its juxtaposition to a family room or living room, gave the kitchen the new designation, “work center” or “living kitchen.”⁶³

The kitchen figured into the early supervision needs of children in that an open plan and windows on the yard allowed mothers to keep an eye on their kids in any situation. In the mid-century more consideration was being given to the mental development of children. As they grew it became important to provide bedrooms for each child as well as informal family rooms. This allowed children and teens to learn from their interactions with adults and visitors in the

⁵⁹ George H. Marcus, *Design in the Fifties: When Everyone Went Modern*, (Munich, New York: Prestel-Verlag, 1998), 40-41.

⁶⁰ George Nelson, Henry Wright, *Tomorrow’s House; A Complete Guide for the Home Builder*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1946), 22.

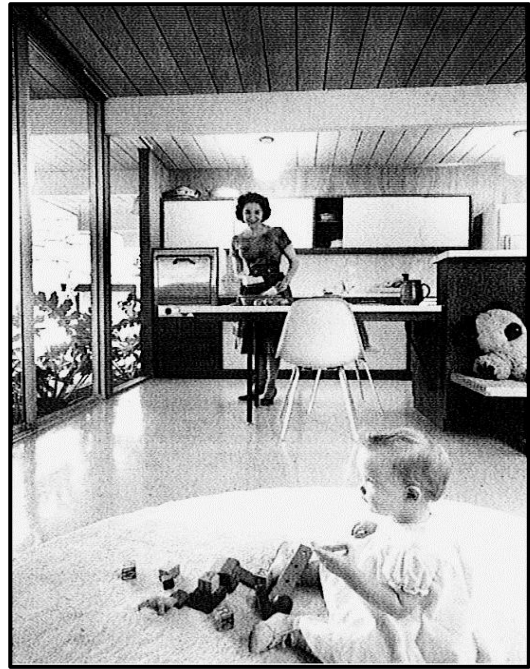
⁶¹ Kennedy, 253.

⁶² Arthur McK. Stires, “Home Life and House Architecture,” *Architectural Record*, (April 1949), 105.

⁶³ Wolfgang Langewiesche, “The Next American House; By a Man who’s Going to Build One,” *House Beautiful* (April 1953), 145.

family room, then take what they had learned to their bedroom. There, they could be their own person but they could practice responsibilities and respect learned from exchanges in the family room.

The women who participated in the Women's Congress on Housing felt that the bedrooms should be separated from the family areas for quiet and privacy. Separating bedrooms from the public rooms had long been done with two-story homes but the rectangular one-story Ranch or Modern lent itself to creating "active zones" and "quiet zones." The parent's bedroom or the master bedroom with associated master bath emerged in larger homes. This adult area usually included the formal living room, which created a space for dad to get away from the kids after a long



Mom at the Work Center

day at work and allowing for adult interaction between the parents.⁶⁴ These configurations emerged because of the economic sensibility of the mid-century house and the expression of the family dynamic. There was no wasted space and every inch of the house had an everyday use so there was no superfluous nook or cranny.

Why Sizzle While You Watch T.V.?

The withdrawal of the family into their homes because of technological progressions such as air conditioning and the television set shaped exterior architecture and interior space in the mid-century. Air conditioning had been used in industrial and commercial settings during WWII. As the blue collar sector grew, people weren't happy about coming home to a sweat box after spending the day in a cooled office. Family life became more insular because of these modern amenities. There was a diaspora from the porch and public interior spaces were increasingly oriented toward the backyard, which was also sheltered from the public via various methods.

Window units for the home were must-have items in Arkansas by 1953. This coincided with mushrooming residential development and change in the house form. Design of the air conditioned home utilized the old technique of alignment on the lot, which was not new, but it

⁶⁴ Kennedy, 87; Cole, 80; Wright, 255.

became more pertinent by the early 1950s. Many builders moved large window openings to the north or south elevation. In Ranch or Modern plans a picture window or sliding glass door in these spaces was ideally situated toward a private landscaped backyard.

Betty Furness says: "Be at the Heat with Westinghouse!"

WHY SIZZLE?

Pick up the phone
for immediate . . .
and lasting relief with a

**NEW WESTINGHOUSE
ROOM AIR CONDITIONER**

Arkansas Air Conditioner Ads

Statistics showed by 1954 that eight of 10 people with air units tended to stay home more. Air conditioning was said to contribute to a decline in movie attendance and less visits to parks, pools and the countryside, resulting in more opportunities for home entertaining and home-cooked meals.⁶⁵ It wasn't just Mom who was staying at home; families were retreating en masse from the public realm.

As early as 1950 architects were faced with the accommodation of the television set. Housing and Home Finance Agency director, Dr. Richard Ratcliff, cited the findings of research done in collaboration with various agencies, regarding the effect of the television on home life.

⁶⁵ "Air-Conditioned" Families Spend More Time at Home," *Arkansas Democrat*, May 9, 1954; The *Arkansas Gazette* in the May 31, 1959 edition stated that air conditioning provided health benefits. Artificial cooling was said to be useful for removing . . . "radioactive materials and other contaminants."

He felt that the television was disruptive to others in the family and he suggested the findings would indicate the creation of a new room for the sole purpose of television viewing.⁶⁶

Little Rock received its first TV station in 1953. An avalanche of information regarding television poured forth in the state's newspapers. Among the TV set advertisements and technical articles, a complicated guide to appropriate furniture arrangement was published in the 1953 *Arkansas Democrat*. Consideration for lighting, "televieing" distance to combat eye-fatigue, placement of lamps and manipulation of blinds for best illumination were covered. Of course any seldom-used room could be converted to a televieing room, but accommodations could also be included in new construction.⁶⁷ A family room, also known as a rumpus room could be devoted entirely to the noisy pastime of TV or children's recreation. An adaptable home would be more amenable to the creation of a space devoted to society's modern needs.

The extensive change in leisure-time activities due to the television were reported to have been instrumental in the closing of movie theaters in Arkansas. The JuRoy in North Little Rock was one of nine theaters that had closed within the three years prior to 1957. The trend was attributed to the impact of television as well as air conditioning.⁶⁸ Both were major factors in the shape and presentation of the mid-century home. They were also a factor in how the family changed in its interactions with the community in order to embrace them.

Turning Your Back to the World

The mid-century home was becoming increasingly more of a retreat. The idea that the façade should indicate a family's social standing had been abandoned, and architecture of the time was often described as having no back or front. Money was better spent on the interior and as *House Beautiful* stated in 1948, houses should be "... good for us to live in, rather than look imposing for others." The magazine reported that the luxury of the inside was disguised by austere exterior styling and families should plan "... to gain the advantages of turning your back to the world."⁶⁹

These new attitudes led to major changes to the façade of the home. The front porch as a significant area for interaction shrank or was relegated to the back yard. A trend toward the

⁶⁶ "Television is the Architects' Headache," *Arkansas Gazette*, April 16, 1950.

⁶⁷ "First TV Station Due Here Next Year," *Arkansas Democrat*, September 25, 1952; "Helpful Hints on TV Arranging," *Arkansas Democrat*, March 15, 1953; The television also offered healthy advantages. The *Arkansas Democrat*, September 25, 1952, reported that TV was responsible for straightening crossed eyes. TV viewing was said to strengthen weak eye muscles.

⁶⁸ "TV Stands for Theater Vacant In Little Rock Movie Trade," *Arkansas Gazette*, June 2, 1957, 1C.

⁶⁹ "A House to Set the Pace," *House Beautiful*, 90, 2, (February 1948), 89, 132.

presentation of a less ornate and less welcoming façade was the result of what *House Beautiful* called the “impersonal and noncommittal” house.⁷⁰ Restrictions on access were carried to the interior. Beginning at the principal entrance, small foyer areas with trellises or half-walls served to retain delivery men or uninvited visitors before they were granted a pass into the family space. The backyard and privacy of the area were prominently mentioned in the women’s pages of the *Arkansas Gazette* and *Arkansas Democrat*.

As people concurrently rejected the licentiousness of the street they ironically began embracing the outdoors, just not the part that could be seen from the street. The extensive use of glass at the rear of the home served to bring the outdoors in, but it was outdoors on the terms of the homeowner. Nature was overpowered by graveling or paving to provide a patio, offering the illusion that the house and yard were continuous space. The catch phrase of home magazines in the early 1950s for the marrying of those spaces was “outdoor living room.” Fay Jones used this system extensively by flooring interior spaces with flagstone that continued uninterrupted through window walls to outdoor patios.

The commissions that Jones received were primarily in the scenic Arkansas Ozarks with large wooded lots. Most subdivisions in the state did not provide the extensive acreage or hillside situations that would make for exclusive backyard living. Close set houses on small lots meant that the neighbors could be part of family time in the yard whether they were invited or not. Devices such as fencing, plantings, screens, end walls and solid walls provided privacy for outdoor activities.⁷¹ Some houses included an inner court open to the sky and wrapped completely by the interior walls. This space was not seen as often in Arkansas as the screened porch, a favored element of Yandell Johnson, who used it on his own home in Lakewood.⁷² In Arkansas, most lower-to-middle income subdivisions developed in bulk did not include an elaborate patio area with BBQ grill, terracing and landscaping. However, a sliding glass door, wildly popular in the 1960s, could provide the proper portal to the yard and perhaps a small concrete pad.

Planning for those private areas to the rear of the home meant that the placement of the garage needed to be considered. Garage spaces in a front wing took up footage for the yard because it placed the house farther back on the lot. The solution was to make the garage or carport contiguous with the front façade. This method of building can be seen principally in

⁷⁰ Langeweische, 139.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 209; Mead and Hunt, 120.

⁷² “A House to Set the Pace,” 64-65.

Arkansas subdivisions built for middle-class customers, rather than the higher-income neighborhoods with larger lot lines.⁷³ The more expensive homes were more of the rambler style and could include a front-facing ell to provide a garage.

THE CUL DE SACS OF ARKANSAS

The trendy form of the Modern and Ranch home became popular in Arkansas subdivisions by 1951. In the early 1950s Little Rock and North Little Rock grew outward from historic central areas by the Arkansas River. Subdivisions in Little Rock were being built in large numbers in the 1950s despite a decline in state population, which had begun in the 1940s. Little Rock's population did not fall during that period, but its growth rate was the lowest it had been since the early twentieth century. Increase continued at a sluggish rate into 1960 but between then and 1970 there was a rise in the city of 24,670 people.⁷⁴

During WWII the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce actively planned for job creation to occupy the state's veterans and war workers at the end of the conflict. After the war the city recognized that further industry expansion was critical. Improvements that assisted the state and the city in job formation were updates to the Little Rock airport, construction of U.S. Interstate 30 and construction of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System and the Little Rock Port Authority. In the mid-1950s the Little Rock Industrial District was also completed and the 1955 Little Rock Air Force Base in Jacksonville contributed mightily to the economy.⁷⁵

An expansion of Little Rock's city limits five miles in each cardinal direction was advocated by a new county planning code in 1952. Larger boundaries and industrial expansion were aided by modern roads and upgrades. In that year Pulaski County Judge Arch Campbell built Hayes Street (now University Avenue), facilitating a north-south connection between Arkansas Highway 10 and Asher Avenue, or State Highway 5. It was paved in increments, the second phase in 1955. Campbell was credited with paving about 200 miles of road in the county by 1959.⁷⁶ In that year, other road projects included the construction of expressways, road widening and extensions.

⁷³ "Turning House Around to Get View of Yard Can Pose Problems," *Arkansas Democrat*, July 2, 1950.

⁷⁴ Roy, Sr., Witsell, Jr., Nichols, 207; Nate Bell, "Little Rock (Pulaski County)," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Online article found at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=970>, Accessed 02/04/2014.

⁷⁵ Roy, et al., 207-210.

⁷⁶ "More than 400 Miles Paved: Campbell Cites 8-Year Mark," *Arkansas Gazette*, March 22, 1959; "Edge of City" Planning Mandatory," *Arkansas Democrat*, February 17, 1952.

By the late 1940s the confidence of American developers swelled because government financing programs made their jobs more lucrative. In Arkansas it had become easier to obtain GI loans and 13,840 veterans were funded for new homes or improvements by 1949. The building industry felt that the imminent end of rent control had an influence on the higher numbers of new construction. The increase in mortgage funds from the Federal National Mortgage Association, the openness of private investors to honor the 4 percent interest rate on mortgages and the availability of low-priced houses were also cited as reasons more people were buying homes.⁷⁷

Optimism characterized the news about construction in Arkansas. The *Arkansas Democrat* reported in 1950 that the \$7 million mark had been reached in new construction within the first five months of the year. Despite a slow start because of a shortage of mortgage money, in 1954 home construction eventually reached 92 percent above totals for 1953. Figures for 1955 showed that new home building in Arkansas had reached the highest level since 1950.⁷⁸ The population of Arkansas grew in the decade between 1960 and 1970 by 8%, an increase of 137,000. The central area of the state, Little Rock, North Little Rock and Pine Bluff, increased by 19 percent; however, much of this rise was attributed to annexation. Housing units statewide increased by 15 percent. Although this total included multi-family homes, it was affirmation that the central downtown areas of Little Rock and North Little Rock had suffered from the movement to new western and southwestern subdivisions. The 1960s through the 1980s were the worst years for historic downtowns in Arkansas because associated goods and services followed the neighborhoods.⁷⁹ Nationally, the FHA encouraged suburban growth over urban density which played right into the hands of the state's developers. This led to a trend of developer-built homes, which brought in a higher profit and resulted in larger numbers of houses being built within additions.⁸⁰

Local and national dynamics made it easier for developers to market their single-family homes and from 1950 through the 1960s they took full advantage of it. The Little Rock City

⁷⁷ "Getting GI Loans Now Easier," *Arkansas Democrat*, December 4, 1949; "War Vet Important To Arkansas Market," *Arkansas Democrat*, October 16, 1949; "Building Boom Erases Spring Slump," *Arkansas Democrat*, September 25, 1949.

⁷⁸ "Building Tops \$7 Million in Five Months," *Arkansas Democrat*, July 2, 1950; "State Home Construction Up 92 Pct.," *Arkansas Democrat*, December 12, 1954.

⁷⁹ U.S. Department of Commerce, *1970 Census of Population and Housing: Final Report. General Demographic Trends for Metropolitan Areas, 1960-1970*, Vols. 1-18, (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: Washington, D.C., 1971), 4-6.

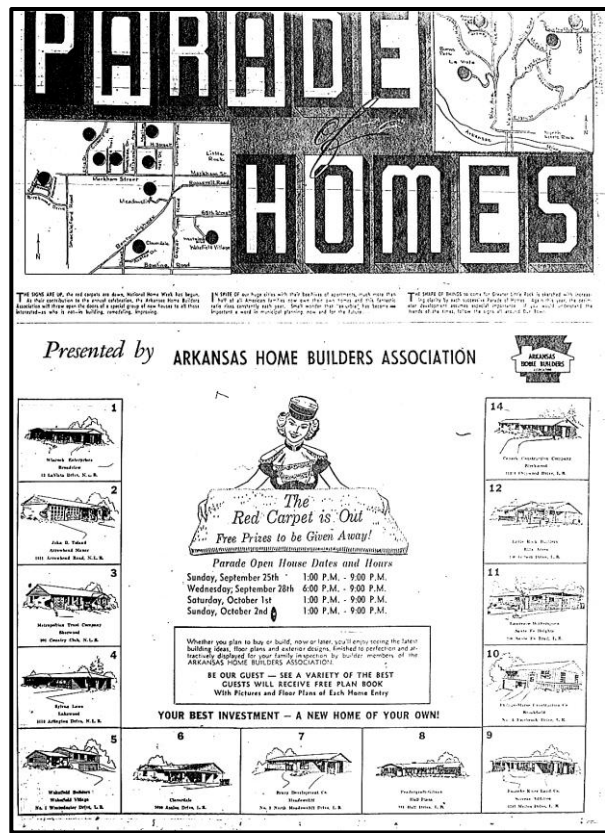
⁸⁰ Wright, 248.

Planning Commission approved 16 subdivisions in 1950 and 27 in 1959.⁸¹ During the boom years of the early 1950s for construction, Little Rock spread west and southwest while North Little Rock extended north and northwest toward the new air force base.⁸²

How to Sell a Ranch

Home-shopping was an event in mid-century Little Rock. The annual Parade of Homes, sponsored by the Arkansas Home Builders Association, began in Little Rock in 1952. Twelve houses were presented at the parade, which was attended by 30,000 people over the period of a week. Attendees could use the tour to help them make decisions on building products, technological advances and housing styles that would be most appropriate for their family. The decision on which houses to feature fell to an American Institute of Architects committee who reviewed plans presented by Pulaski County builders.⁸³ The homes were mapped in the newspapers in their respective subdivisions, which became gradually more widespread.

Such a sales system was new in the mid-century and the Parade of Homes was an expansion of the groundbreaking “model home” method. A landscaped, furnished house with the hottest conveniences was advertised as an example of a new subdivision’s offerings. Once a family made the trip to look it over then returned home, the comparison served to make them see their current house as rather scruffy.



Parade of Homes Advertisement

⁸¹ “6 Bridges, Expressways Will Lead Into Future,” *Arkansas Gazette*, June 21, 1959; Little Rock City Planning Commission, *City of Little Rock Annual Report, 1959*, (Little Rock, AR: Little Rock City Planning Commission, 1959), 2, 9.

⁸² “1955 Boom in New Housing Construction In Pulaski County Could Break All Precedents,” *Arkansas Democrat*, July 3, 1955.

⁸³ Arkansas Home Builders Association, “Parade of Homes Plan Book ... Presenting a Preview of 1953 Homes,” promotional brochure, 1953, 4; “Parade of Homes Hit Since ’52,” *Arkansas Democrat*, September 11, 1955; “Home Purchase \$ Goes Long Way,” *Arkansas Gazette*, September 21, 1958; Other techniques to draw in customers to open houses were a “talking car” parked in the drive of homes to greet customers and inform them of the modern features they would soon see and an “X-ray” house. A hole would be opened in the exterior of the house to demonstrate the construction method, insulation and heating systems.

The earlier Kingwood addition of Little Rock had used that sales practice in 1951 as soon as a complete home could be built.⁸⁴ Home building shows such as the “Comparearama” at the Barton Coliseum in Little Rock featured home building vendors. The need for replacement housing was hammered into the public’s mind through the mid-century via the parades and various trade shows despite the end of the housing shortage. The building of enthusiasm and the presentation of a perceived need was used efficiently by Arkansas’s developers.

The most widely publicized developments containing Ranch and Modern examples in the early 1950s were Coolwood, Cloverdale, Meadowcliff and Broadmoor in Little Rock and Lakewood in North Little Rock. These were not the earliest of such neighborhoods, but they were planned and promoted by astute businessmen who managed to get attention-grabbing articles and advertisements in the local newspapers.

Mid-century builders began to plan the entire neighborhood. They built the homes rather than selling the lots and leaving the design up to the customer. This was considered a plus because it removed the possibility that someone would build a home next door that would detract from the neighborhood and lower property values.⁸⁵ The inclusion of churches, schools, playgrounds and shopping centers became expected resources within developments. Community planning took on new meaning as cities became divided into small villages linked by high-speed roadways.

You Can Really Live in Coolwood

Some Arkansas developers got their names in the paper on a regular basis, but none more often than Elbert Lion Fausett. He started out as a Ford dealer, was a car collector and racer, legislator, publisher-printer and used car salesman before becoming a nationally known builder. Fausett was the first realtor to utilize extensive advertising in the form of print, radio, bus benches and billboards. Among the state’s most prolific developers, by 1954 he had built 12 subdivisions and had branched into Faulkner and Saline counties.⁸⁶

Fausett was best known for the early 1950s Little Rock subdivisions, Coolwood and Broadmoor. Both were built to attract middle-income customers, which was another first for Fausett, since low-income families had long been the target of Arkansas builders. Fausett and Company advertised Coolwood in 1951, its name probably attributed to its location at the base of

⁸⁴ “New Sales Technique Adds To Demand for New Housing,” *Arkansas Gazette*, December 11, 1949.

⁸⁵ “Planning Now Best in History,” *Arkansas Democrat*, September 19, 1954.

⁸⁶ “Broadmoor Latest Step in ‘Fabulous’ Career,” *Arkansas Democrat*, September 19, 1954.

a hill that allowed breezes from the nearby Arkansas River to circulate. Arkansas Highway 10 or Cantrell Road made it a five-minute car ride from Main Street to the addition.⁸⁷

Coolwood was a small development of 47 houses with room for a business section. Unlike his later Broadmoor and College Terrace divisions this did not include related resources like parks and schools, but it was comprised of the latest in the small Ranch style. Coolwood homes were veneered in combinations of brick and horizontal or vertical siding. Some were all-brick with vertical siding underneath the carport. Only a few of the houses were built with enclosed garages. Fausett's advertisements stated that every home was different. He also appealed to the woman of the house by stating "There are scores of features that women like ..."⁸⁸

The random placement and size of windows was not used by Fausett in this addition; he stuck with two-over-two horizontal double-hung openings. Some of the houses were built with picture windows flanked by double-hungs or pairs of windows emulating the picture window form. Front porches were small and wrought-iron was a common support for porches and carports. While Kingwood and Queen Manor subdivisions to the west of Coolwood held what could be considered true Ranches by 1951, Coolwood houses were more Transitional Ranches. They had the long, low profile of a Ranch, hipped roofs and carports, but they were more compact than the "high-style" Ranch. They had not strayed very far from the Minimal-Traditional WWII cottage.

Light Hearted Living in Broadmoor

Fausett's most ambitious residential development was Broadmoor in Little Rock. Fausett purchased the property on Hayes Street for the addition in 1953. Prior to development it was the hunting land of Raymond Rebsamen and it included a small lake and a log lodge. Originally outside the city limits, it was annexed into Little Rock in 1957. When Fausett was through with it, Broadmoor covered 190 acres, had seven miles of paved road and contained 553 homes. He also installed a swimming beach for the lake and a shopping center with a "buffer zone" for

⁸⁷ Plat maps indicate that a small business section was planned for the eastern edge of the Coolwood, but an apartment building stands at that location now. Conversations with former tenants of Coolwood reveal that there was never a commercial center on that lot.

⁸⁸ Advertisement for Coolwood, *Arkansas Gazette*, May 27, 1951.

BROADMOOR HOME STYLE #3618-A

BROADMOOR HOME STYLE #3618-A

*You May Choose From Many Styles
and Types of Homes in Fausett's*

BROADMOOR

18 DIFFERENT
FLOOR PLANS

and a wide variety of exterior arrangements

Nowhere else can you have so much for so little for yourself and family as in Fausett's BROADMOOR. Check the many exclusive features and make your own comparison.

No look-alikes in BROADMOOR . . . the many styles and types of homes and varied exteriors give you the opportunity for individual styling, regardless of the location you choose.

Broadmoor Brochure

church construction and by 1955, a kindergarten was dedicated. An elementary school was built south of Broadmoor and an associated junior high school opened in 1956.⁸⁹

Broadmoor was ideally situated because it was across Hayes Street from Little Rock Junior College (University of Arkansas at Little Rock), was just east of Boyle Park and was a short distance to U.S. Highway 70, the “Broadway of America.” Hayes Street at the time was considered to be a scenic route as it was lined with wooded expanses and very little development. This was a subdivision that could hardly fail with all it had going for it.

Broadmoor was publicized as the largest subdivision in the state from 1953 to 1955. Fausett’s addition was also advertised as the only one with “year ‘round air conditioned homes” and central heating. What made it unique and all the more relevant to mid-century home buyers

⁸⁹ “New Views and Home Plans Set in Broadmoor,” *Arkansas Democrat*, September 11, 1955; There was a lot of publicity in the local newspapers regarding the number of homes for Broadmoor and the fact that this was the largest subdivision to date in the state. Conflicting information is available in various articles about Lakewood, however, that indicate about 500 homes had already been built in that neighborhood by 1953. It’s not clear though, whether that included the Park Hill area, of which Lakewood was considered an extension. Fausett was a prolific builder and attention-grabber. He was very adept at getting the press to cover his developments while Matthews seemed to be less interested in publicizing his houses and more in touting the community planning and restrictive covenant aspects.

was that Fausett offered 18 plans, later expanded to 24 to accommodate the terrain and all were built in the new Ranch style.⁹⁰

Fausett used assembly-line construction processes at Broadmoor, which he said made customers eligible for immediate GI, FHA and conventional loans. The interior amenities he included also made them more attractive to lenders. Broadmoor was built utilizing on-site prefabrication methods in shops set up at the addition. Specialized workmen operated a metal shop and a cabinet shop where all woodwork was completed then applied in complete sections. A mill on Broadmoor Drive allowed workmen to pre-cut sections then take them to lots for construction. Broadmoor also had its own roofing supply and decking yard. Using this process crews could complete one house within one or two weeks, saving Fausett money. By 1955, over 350 homes in Broadmoor were finished, which surpassed Fausett's expectations. In the end, initial projection of 700 homes total, ended up being 553 when the last home was built in 1957.⁹¹

Before Broadmoor was even finished Fausett began construction of College Terrace to the south on Hayes. Ninety-six houses were available in a choice of 10 plans. These homes were to be larger than those in Broadmoor because of fewer plan options, use of the new Masonite Shadowvent siding rather than brick and less "frills." College Terrace homes did mimic some aspects of the popular Ranch homes of Broadmoor in the use of features such as low, hipped roofs with 30-inch roof overhangs, high windows, picture windows and carports.⁹²

Abundant Living in Lakewood

Lakewood subdivision was built up around six lakes and dams in North Little Rock. The lakes were built by the Lakewood Development Company in 1931 and were the opening efforts toward a new subdivision established by Justin Matthews. Matthews had platted adjacent Park Hill in 1921 but the Depression and WWII interrupted progress. In 1946, Park Hill was annexed into North Little Rock and the first Lakewood lots were sold the next year.⁹³

The subdivision was a totally planned community and a 1948 sales brochure for Lakewood outlined many of the principles that Fausett followed in community planning.

⁹⁰ "Broadmoor Displays Air-conditioned Home Plan to Public," *Arkansas Democrat*, September 20, 1953; "This is Fausett's Broadmoor," Information provided by Lanita Reynolds, Little Rock, 7/25/2012; "Fausett Sees Completion of Broadmoor by 1956," *Arkansas Democrat*, September 19, 1954.

⁹¹ Reynolds.

⁹² "Fast-Growing Broadmoor to Be Completed Year Ahead of Schedule," *Arkansas Democrat*, July 3, 1955; "Luxury Homes Provided for the Average Man," *Arkansas Democrat*, September 20, 1953; "College Terrace Finishes Fast," *Arkansas Democrat*, September 11, 1955.

⁹³ Rachel Silva, "Lakewood Park," Sandwiching in History tour script, October 4, 2013, On file at Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR.

Recreational areas were foremost and lots for future schools were placed next to existing parks. Shopping centers were to be built at major intersections with off-street parking. Buffer areas, like those utilized by Fausett, were to be composed of churches, duplexes and community buildings. Wide avenues were planned to move traffic quickly through Lakewood but narrower residential streets would stymie through-traffic and make for a calmer environment.

The addition was planned for expansion within “units” consisting of roughly 1,000 families. Schools to accommodate the projected 400 to 500 students within each unit would be

centrally located. New construction would not occur until streets and utilities were available for those areas and until demand warranted further growth. Protective covenants were in place, which kept the neighborhood all-white until the 1970s and restricted any unacceptable architecture. Matthews’ philosophy of planning was a safeguard against depreciation of land values and spread of blight.⁹⁴



Lakewood Addition Brochure

The Lakewood Property Owners Association kept an eye on improper development, settled disputes and

maintained order in the recreation areas. These community features seemed to encourage growth as development continued in Lakewood through the 1960s under the leadership of his son John Matthews.⁹⁵

Matthews was as ambitious as Fausett and Lakewood was reported to include 600 families in 1955. A total of 1,300 homes were built by 1961. Much of the success of Lakewood could be attributed to the proximity of the Little Rock Air Force Base and the influx of airmen and their families. In contrast to the homes in Broadmoor and Fausett’s many other developments, Lakewood features a great variety of architecture with more examples of upper-income Ranch and Modern homes. The 1953 Parade of Homes featured 12 houses on Lochridge Road in Lakewood. A telling clue to the architectural diversity was that all the homes were built by different companies by their own architects. All were in the Ranch style or were overtly Modern, but some had traditional flavors with double-hung windows and constrained styling, while others featured flat and low shed roofs, awning windows and carports placed at the front

⁹⁴ Metropolitan Trust Company, “You Can Live in Lakewood,” Brochure, 1948.

⁹⁵ “Lakewood Stresses Recreation, Appearance, Community Living,” *Arkansas Democrat*, July 3, 1955.

door. One Lakewood home designed by S.E. Pettifer was the definition of ultra-modern with cantilevered porch overhangs, prow decks and banks of window walls. A 1955 brochure for Lakewood listed 23 builders approved by the Arkansas Home Builders Association. A drive through Lakewood today reveals an eclectic collection of homes that are anything but the typical tract fare.⁹⁶

Beautiful Meadowcliff

The neighborhood of Meadowcliff was formed by Bralei Corporation in 1952. Bralei had been formed by Buford Bracy in North Little Rock in 1946 and the company contributed several homes to the Park Hill neighborhood after WWII. In 1952, General Manager Jack Bracy reached great success with the Miramar subdivision in Pine Bluff and hoped to emulate his earlier efforts in Little Rock. Following the path of Hayes and the New Benton Highway he planned for 450 homes in the Meadowcliff addition. Development began in 1954 and 68 houses were sold before the model home had even been completed. The first family moved to the neighborhood in 1955. By 1959, the addition contained 515 finished homes and Bracy had plans for 34 more. Meadowcliff was built in separate phases and included small Ranch homes with Modern styling categorized as Contemporary in 1950s newspapers.

Yandell Johnson collaborated with Bracy on Meadowcliff in designing homes similar to those he had provided at Miramar. More than just a Ranch, they were termed “Premiere” and “DeLuxe” houses and were larger than those previously built in the neighborhood. Bracy stated that many styles were available in Meadowcliff and he could “satisfy virtually any architectural taste. We can provide a traditional gable roof house, ranch style or the new contemporary style.” Most homes found in Meadowcliff are more modern than traditional. Bracy planned for completion in 1957, and like Fausett and Matthews, he provided residents with park facilities and a school. Bralei later became known as Bracy Realty and the firm went on to construct Kavanaugh Place, South Road Terrace and Sheraton Park, all in Little Rock, by 1959.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Arkansas Homebuilders Association.

⁹⁷ “Meadowcliff Grows Fast,” *Arkansas Democrat*, April 22, 1956; “Two Ultra Modern Model Homes to Be Unveiled This Afternoon at Open House in Meadowcliff,” *Arkansas Democrat*, April 25, 1956; “Bracy Realty Plans 200 Homes in 4 Years at Sheraton Park,” *Arkansas Gazette*, November 22, 1959; The Sunnydale addition to the east of Meadowcliff across U.S.70 developed by Paul H. Spikes in 1954, contains a small collection of Ranch homes that could be considered to be heavily influenced by Modernism like those that Johnson designed for Bracy.

Planned-For-Future Cloverdale

Cloverdale was a planned community in southwest Little Rock that received great attention in the mid-1950s. Gus and Leonard Ottenheimer of Little Rock wanted to bring the architectural influence of “Florida architecture” to their projected development. Features that seemed to satisfy that description were slab foundations, tile roofs, terrazzo floors and sliding glass doors to a patio for the continuing trend of outdoor living. Homes followed the Ranch lines with hipped roofs, carports, combinations of double-hung and high sliding windows. Eighteen floor plans with 40 home styles were available.⁹⁸



Cloverdale Home

The dream of Cloverdale began when the Ottenheimers purchased 145 acres of flat land at the intersection of Hayes and Baseline in 1954. The brother’s newly formed corporation, O.B.G. (Ottenheimer, Block, Grundfest) planned for 425 homes in Cloverdale. This was about 2 miles south of Meadowcliff and Sunnydale and was considered the vanguard of residential development in that area. The first installment of the subdivision was formally opened in 1956. In the late 1950s there was much optimism about the potential of southwest Little Rock. The formerly rural area was taking shape as a metropolitan area while remaining “country” enough to attract people looking for tranquility. Publicity of the 1950s further expressed confidence in the

⁹⁸ No homes retain their tiles roofs in Cloverdale today.

area's development by the listing of future facilities like airports, lakes, ice skating, race tracks, skyscrapers and super highways.⁹⁹

Like Lakewood, the development included two schools, community shopping and a park (Ottenheimer Park) with a lake. Convenience was built in as it was ten minutes from downtown after I-30 was constructed, four minutes from Town and Country shopping center and the industrial center was just around the corner. The Ottenheimers also borrowed from Fausett's lead and manufactured lumber and concrete roof tiles for the homes in their own on-site fabricating mill. Other ground breaking features that made Cloverdale stand out was that the addition had its own sewage treatment plant and each home had "adequate" wiring certified by the Arkansas Adequate Wiring Bureau. This was important as it provided for the modern demands of mid-century electrical technology including air-conditioning.¹⁰⁰ Cloverdale was at the head of on-going development in the southwest area of the city through the 1960s with more shopping centers and residential additions.

The Hansel & Gretel

In 1959, Storybook Village was opened in southwest Little Rock. The subdivision featured Ranch homes influenced by "provincial German sources." This was the first such subdivision in Arkansas and was situated on two streets called Cinderella Circle and Gingerbread Lane. Four styles designated "The Thunderbird, Snow White, Hansel & Gretel and Cinderella," were offered by Putnam-Mobley Realtors.

The homes included belcast bays with what can only be described as faux bird houses in the pediment of the gable, which was further embellished with scalloped bargeboards. Windows displayed diamond pane (called "criss-cross" in advertising) muntins. Small integral front porches were set beneath an exaggerated length of gabled eaves. Porch supports were often slanted oversized turned spindles. The gable ends of the homes featured either a flamboyant jerkinhead with "bird house" or upswept hip with birdhouse. Storybook Village homes had enclosed

⁹⁹ "Suburban Fever and the Great Southwest City," information found in Gus Ottenheimer Collection on file at the Butler Center, Little Rock, AR, Box 1; Carolyn Gray Lemaster, *The Ottenheimers of Arkansas*, (Little Rock, AR: Self-published, 1995), 43; The ice skating, race tracks and skyscrapers never materialized in the immediate area; however, the 10-story Arkansas Highway and Transportation Building on I-30, built in 1966, could be considered to be the first (and only) skyscraper in the southwest Little Rock vicinity.

¹⁰⁰ "Planned-For-Future Cloverdale Offers Convenient Living," *Arkansas Gazette*, May 20, 1956; Percy Knighton, "The Ottenheimers Are Optimists," *Southwest Arc*, May 9, 1957, 4.

garages with an applied cross-bracing design. The veneer of the houses was a combination of brick with board and batten. Some windows had oversize scalloped surrounds.¹⁰¹



Storybook Village “Bird House”

Only about 11 German-influenced homes can be found there today but they are architecturally intact. Most of the homes on those two streets are traditional brick Ranches with wrought iron porches, some with the “Colonial Revival” look. These were primarily built in the late 1950s and early 1960s as well. An occasional Hansel and Gretel type home shows up in other subdivisions and a small collection can be

found on Evergreen Road in West Little Rock. A couple such homes are situated along U.S. 167 in Jacksonville. Overall, this style was not as popular in Little Rock as the typical Ranch or Modern home.

The Ranch Wanes

By 1959, the *Arkansas Gazette* women’s pages started profiling the split-level and they began to dot the state’s subdivisions; however, the Ranch continued in spades as the house of choice. In the 1960s the usual brick veneer branched into different color palettes like white, yellow, blue and different shades of red. Wrought iron was still popular through the decade and aluminum windows steadily replaced wood. Modern elements were utilized, but the Colonial Revival, Gallic or French influence slowly became a safer bet for tract housing. It was a stretch to say that these homes could be influenced by historic styles in those forms – Storybook Village did a more adequate job - but realtors managed to justify the designations. Colonial Revival homes were recognized by the use of brick, referred to as “old brick” (Stating that it was old was likely a liberty on the part of the realtor), dentils, shutters and Tuscan columns. Gallic and French styles displayed diamond pane windows, applied pediments over front doors and wrought-iron.

¹⁰¹ “Long-Bell is Introducing a New Trend in Home Construction,” *Arkansas Gazette*, March 22, 1959; “Unusual Subdivision Will Be Previewed,” *Arkansas Gazette*, October 26, 1958; “Storybook Village Medallion Homes,” *Arkansas Gazette*, November 2, 1958.

As the 1960s wore on new subdivisions in Little Rock tended to be built in West Little Rock and the progression in that area continues today. Additions like Ellis Acres, Briarwood and Brookfield contained the ubiquitous Ranch. By the late 1960s two-story houses became more popular and the split-level continued its rise in popularity. Uncut stone in combination with vinyl or aluminum horizontal siding appeared as well as stationary slit windows. Eventually, the two-story Neo-Colonial Revival, Neo-Classical Revival form with full height porch and the Neo-Tudor ended the true Ranch era. Modernism has continued to trail into the 21st century since it is an accommodating style descended from Internationalism, recognized by anybody, anywhere.

The original enthusiasm of the post-WWII era translated into an exciting architectural period that was the result of higher incomes, blue-collar jobs, transformations in society and new opportunities. Historically, Arkansas lagged behind the rest of the nation in instituting popular styles, but the Ranch and Modernism appeared in the state as quickly as it did nationally. Although Arkansas was considered a rural state into the 1970s, the central regions kept pace with the rest of the country as far as suburban development was concerned. The mid-century home was a symbol of all things to all people as that was what it was meant to express. This could be perceived as a continuation of the influence of Modern Internationalism and its function as a multi-purpose home. The influence of the Modern movement's philosophy was manifested in the Arkansas Ranch and also independently articulated. Both forms contributed to the mid-century landscape of the state's subdivisions and commercial areas and both continue to relate the story of Arkansas's thrust into a new age.

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**ARKANSAS HISTORIC
PRESERVATION PROGRAM**

Low, Light and Livable: From Modern to Ranch, 1945-1970

By Holly Hope
Special Projects Historian, AHPP

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