

About Marshall Erdman ...

(Marshall Erdman, 1922-1995)



Background (1922 to 1946)

Mausas Erdmanas (Marshall Erdman) was born September 29, 1922, in Tver (Tverai) Lithuania. When he was 17, although he spoke no English, his father sent him to the United States to live with his uncle in Chicago where he was able to finish high school. Marshall attended the University of Illinois at Champaign, until he joined the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1943. After the war he enrolled in the University of Wisconsin and received his B.S. in Political Science in 1946.

Early Years (1947 to 1960)

After finishing school Marshall purchased the property at 5117 University Avenue and opened a small construction company building conventional buildings of all types.

Frank Lloyd Wright (FLW) requested that Marshall build the First Unitarian Church in Madison, which made him well known but cost him his fee plus what he had to borrow against his life insurance to finish the job.

Marshall Erdman and Associates, Inc., (ME&A) was incorporated in 1951 with a total of 12 employees. A few years later saw the production and sales of the "U-Form-It" House, using pre-cut, pre-marked lumber and cabinetry. In 1953 LIFE Magazine featured the home with this comment: "...Neither the first nor the cheapest but probably the best designed manufactured house."

Frank Lloyd Wright, after criticizing the Erdman Houses, designed three prefabricated homes to be built exclusively by ME&A. The December 1956 issue of HOUSE & HOME Magazine featured the FLW prefab homes and included Marshall in the cover story.

During this time period, although the company had already built several medical buildings, Marshall continued to research medical building design. "I spent almost a full year studying and learning what makes an efficient and pleasant doctor's office..." With this information and more, he published numerous articles about Erdman Medical Buildings including a series titled "Management Blueprint" in "Physician's Management - The Doctor's Business Journal."

1957 was the beginning of the Erdman Schools and 1959 was the start of the ME&A profit and retirement plan for salaried employees. This plan was one of the first in the country and was studied extensively by the federal government. It became a milestone for judging other plans.

Middle Years (1961 to 1967)

In 1961, the Director of the Peace Corps, Sargent Shriver, asked Marshall to be a design and construction consultant for Peace Corps training camps in Puerto Rico and later, for schools and houses in Gabon, Equatorial Africa. Thirty schools and 100 houses were built and the project was considered one of the most successful in Africa. It was at this time that Marshall met with Nobel Prize winner Albert Schweitzer to discuss the building of local schools. Marshall also did work in the Dominican Republic, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Ghana.

1965 - 1966 saw more Peace Corp camps at St. Croix and St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands. One of Marshall's major accomplishments at this time was the organization of Mendustrie, a factory in Tunisia that produced standardized windows and doors. Vice-President Hubert Humphrey visited the plant in 1968. The success of the projects in the Virgin Islands and Tunisia was recognized by the U. S. Government and was written into the Congressional Record.

Latter Years (1968 to 1995)

As President and CEO of ME&A, Marshall continued to pursue new ideas and projects. Between 1967 and 1971 Marshall purchased high tech plastic laminate machinery in Europe, directed the purchase of 45 acres of land in Waunakee, built a 200,000 square foot plant and installed the new machinery.

The production capacity of this equipment exceeded the medical building needs and allowed development of a cabinetry line that was marketed by Sears and Roebuck for a few years and then became "Techline". The first "Techline" studio opened in Chicago in 1979.

Marshall continued to promote his design-build concepts. In 1980 because of his efforts in Wisconsin the Company was awarded a contract to design-build the state office building, GEF III (General Executive Facility - 3). This project set many records for excellence of construction, energy efficiency, short construction time and cost savings.

In 1982, the Art Program started by Marshall was publicly recognized and applauded as "...taking art out of the museums and putting it back into the workplace..." The company collection became one of the largest and "...most impressive private corporate art collections in the state..."

By 1991, on the fortieth anniversary of Marshall Erdman and Associates, the Company had constructed over 2,300 medical buildings for over 22,000 physicians. The number of employees had grown from 12 to 850.

Marshall's last major project, in 1993, involved architect Andres Duany to assist in the development of Middleton Hills as a "traditional neighborhood" development.

September 17, 1995. Marshall Erdman dies at 72 years of age.

Bob Davis composed the following Marshall Erdman bibliography.

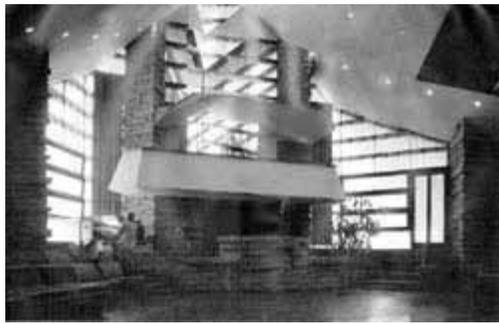


5117 University Ave., Madison, Wisconsin.

The building is built of concrete block and heavy timber wood trusses that Marshall salvaged from a remodeling project at Truax field. The building became the Erdman Lumber Co., then the Erdman-Peiss Lumber Co., and finally, Marshall Erdman and Associates.



Frank Lloyd Wright and Marshall at the site for the Unitarian Church.



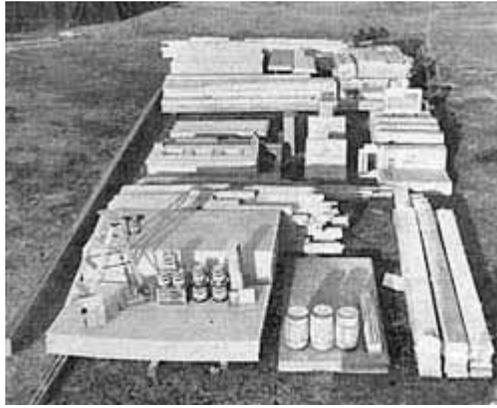
Photos:

Early sketch of the Church, exterior of Nave and interior of Nave.

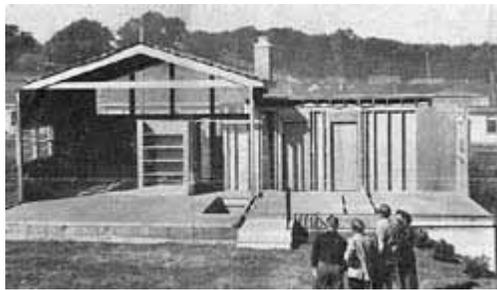
Marshall waived his commission, donated some of his own money, borrowed on his life insurance and lost his pick-up truck to help finish the church.



Marshall and Henry Peiss formed the "Erdman/Peiss" lumber company.



Pre-cut lumber and material to build the "*U-Form-It*"



"*U-Form-It*" during construction

*"...Neither the first nor the cheapest but probably the best designed manufactured house."
(1953 LIFE Magazine)*



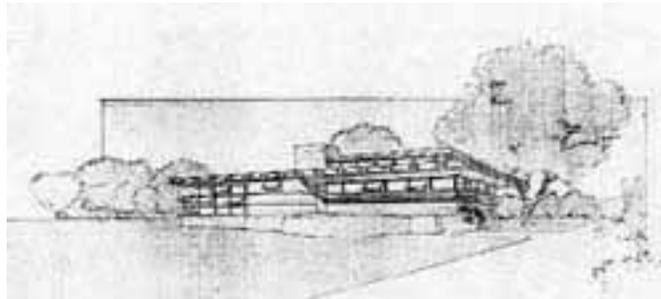
Mr. Wright and Marshall viewing a model of the first FLW prefabricated home



design No.1



design No. 2



design No. 3 (never built)

A photo of house No. 1 appeared on the cover of a national magazine after which Marshall received over " ... 10,000 letters from around the world. I couldn't afford the stamps to respond..."



The first of many articles written by Marshall
One of the many schools built by the Peace Corps with the guidance of Marshall and the help of Erdman construction personnel. Note the space between the double roof construction, which helped keep the buildings cooler in this tropical climate.



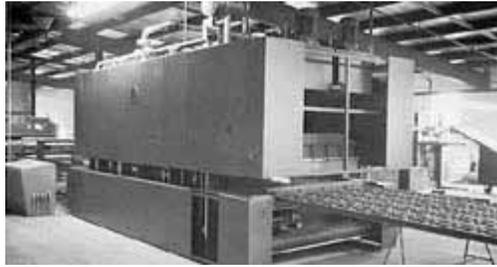
Albert Schweitzer and Marshall Erdman in Gabon, Equatorial Africa.



The U.S. Small Business Administration selected six American businessmen to visit Tunisia to determine the possibility of assisting the Tunisians in developing some of their resources. Using a 50% grant from the *Agency for International Development (AID)*, Marshall proposed and built a millwork manufacturing plant called "Mendustrie." The company logo is shown above.



The success of Mendustrie was recognized by Vice President Hubert Humpfrey and was written into the Congressional Record.



One of the many types of European machinery purchased by Marshall that allowed the Company to become a leader in plastic laminated furniture.



"A lot of U.S. (furniture) manufacturers are too concerned about style and variety and not enough about design and quality." -- *Marshall Erdman*



GEF III was the third office building built for the State of Wisconsin. The contract called for 50-50 sharing of savings from the contract price. When the building was completed, ME&A returned over \$150,000 to the State. The first year it cost 0.15 cents/square foot to heat GEF III versus at 6.14 cents/square foot to heat GEF I.



Marshall began the art program to provide works of art for the medical buildings that would be selected, framed and installed by Erdman staff. The client has to agree to live with these selections for one year. After a year the entire collection or individual pieces may be returned for a cash refund.



Photos:

Marshall looking over his Middleton property, walking the property with Douglas Duany and Tim, and presenting an early proposal.

Marshall had envisioned an old-fashioned neighborhood development on his 150-acre grounds in Middleton. With Andres Duany, an architect know for his 'traditional neighborhood developments', Marshall's "swan song" became a reality.

ME&A History

- 1946** Marshall Erdman buys property at 5117 University Avenue and opens a small construction company with primary emphasis on residential construction.
- 1949** Erdman is asked by Frank Lloyd Wright to build the Unitarian Church. Finished in 1950.
- 1951** Erdman incorporates as Marshall Erdman and Associates, Inc. - total number of employees is 12.
- 1950 - 55** Production and sales of U-Form-It House, using precut, premarked lumber and cabinetry.
- 1953** Erdman signs contract for first medical office building at 3414 Monroe Street, Madison, Wisconsin. Finished in 1954
- 1955 - 59** Production of Wright-designed prefabricated houses.
- 1956 - 67** Erdman designs and builds medical and dental offices at Doctor's Park in Madison. Erdman house shown in the Parade of Homes.
- 1957** Erdman and Associates enters school building field; and designs and builds 28 schools over a 20-year period.
First FLW prefab #1 house, Madison.
FLW Wyoming Valley School.
- 1958** Faith Baptist Church completed. First pre-fabricated church.
- 1959** Start of the ME&A profit and retirement plan for salaried employees.
Sherman Village, Madison, 100 houses.
First FLW prefab #2 house, Madison.
- 1960** First Division office opened in Hartford, Connecticut.
California office opened.
- 1961** Eastern office moved from Connecticut to Princeton, New Jersey.
Last FLW prefab #1 house, Tappan, NY.
- 1963** USAID program; Gabon West Africa schools.

- 1965** Dallas office opened; California office closed.
Peace Corps camp at St. Croix in the Virgin Islands.
ME started work in Tunisia to develop a prefabrication plant under a USAID program.
- 1966** Peace Corps camp at St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands.
The USAID program prefabrication plant in Tunisia completed.
- 1967** Purchase of first European machinery for automated cabinetry line.
- 1968** ME meets with Vice-President Hubert Humphrey in Tunisia to review prefabrication plant ME helped build in 1966.
- 1969** Purchase 45 acres in Waunakee and move of manufacturing from Madison.
- 1970** Atlanta office opened.
200,000 square foot Waunakee plant to produce plastic laminated doors, cabinets, movable walls, storage partitions and furniture.
- 1971** 21,000 square foot Waunakee plant addition to produce modular housing and clinic assembly lines.
First modular medical building, Delbarton, West Virginia.
Skidmore, Owings and Merrill presentation to Middleton for development of the "Middleton Project"
- 1975** Contract signed for the first Marshfield Clinic building.
- 1976** Princeton office split between Hartford and Richmond.
- 1979** First Techline Studio opened in Chicago.
- 1981** Washington office opened.
First contract signed with Kaiser Permanente HMO.
- 1982** Techline introduced at High Point, North Carolina furniture market.
- 1983** Erdman introduces Art program.
- 1985** ME&A purchased the 7-UP buildings and land adjacent to the Madison office.
- 1987** Denver office opened.

- 1989** Erdman signs biggest contract to date for 26 million with Charlotte Memorial Hospital.
- 1990** Techline Studios total 46. Over 300 retailers are selling Techline furniture.
- 1991** Marshall Erdman and Associates celebrates 40-year anniversary of its incorporation.
Over 2,300 medical buildings have been completed for more than 22,000 physicians nationwide.
Total number of Erdman employees is 850
- 1993** Middleton Hills plan developed by Andres Duany and Marshall Erdman and Associates.
- 1994** Middleton City Council approves Middleton Hills.
Tim Erdman becomes president of Marshall Erdman and Associates.
- September 17, 1995. Marshall Erdman dies at 72 years of age.**
- 1996** First homes ready in Middleton Hills.