

Monroe Bengt Bowman (1901-1994)



Dates of Interview:

July 28, 1983

Location of Interview:

Winnetka, Illinois

Interviewer:

Betty J. Blum

Length of Transcript:

62 pages

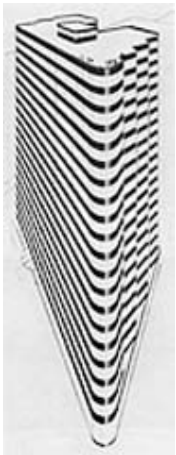
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Biographical Summary

Monroe Bengt Bowman was born in 1901 in Chicago. After graduating from Armour Institute of Technology in 1924, he found jobs in the Chicago office of Benjamin Marshall and, later, at Holabird & Root. Bowman and his brother Irving left Holabird & Root in 1929 to open their own office, surviving the Depression by designing and manufacturing avant-garde metal furniture. The Bowmans' progressive design work attracted the attention of Philip Johnson, who included them in the ground-breaking exhibition of modern architecture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in 1932. Indeed, they were the only Chicago architects whose work was included in that exhibition. The brothers disbanded their office several years later when Irving left Chicago to work in North Carolina. Monroe continued his practice with commissions mainly for industrial and commercial structures. Monroe Bowman died in Chicago in 1994.

Interview Highlights

Bowman speaks about Armour Institute; working for Benjamin Marshall; working for Holabird & Root; the office of the Bowman Brothers; his attitude toward architecture; manufacturing metal furniture; the Museum of Modern Art exhibition; the Century of Progress International Exhibition, 1933-1934; working for Alfred Shaw; working in Charleston, North Carolina; his return to Chicago; some biographical information; his current projects.



Rendering of Apartment Project at Rush and Delaware Streets; Chicago, 1930.
Photo courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.