

Vivian Linn McMorrow, 1944

Vivian Linn McMorrow, born in 1920, grew up in Howard Lake (Wright County). In 1942 she married Ralph Gland, then serving in the army. Vivian had been teaching at country schools since 1939 but in 1943 moved to Minneapolis to be near her family after Ralph shipped out to Europe. "He was my childhood sweetheart. We were king and queen of hearts on Valentine's Day in sixth grade."

Ralph participated in the D-Day invasion of France on June 6, 1944.

I just don't remember D-Day. It just meant to me . . . now he's in the fighting. . . . I got the first telegram on a Friday after work, about the first of July, that he had been "slightly wounded in action" and my thought was, oh good, now he'll be coming home. . . . Then on the Fourth of July I was visiting a girlfriend . . . and mother called me up and said another telegram had come and they would bring it over to me and come and get me. I said, "What does it say? What does it say?" That he had died of his wounds. He had lived eleven days, but he had never regained consciousness. So now I knew. On the seventeenth of June he had died, and I got the notice on the Fourth of July. . . . I had lived the whole month of June, and here he was already dead and I had no idea.

I was devastated. I cried and I cried and I cried. And I told my mother, "Are you sure that this isn't hell that we're living in right now?" That's how devastated I was. It can't be part of the good earth. It's got to be hell. What did I ever do to deserve living in this hell?

I stayed to myself the first week. Then I went back to work. I had to go back to work. . . . I taught night school. Worked in the office daytime and taught night school. So I kept busy. . . . I had to keep my mind on something else.



Vivian and Ralph, March 15, 1943 (Courtesy Vivian McMorrow)



**Minnesota's
Greatest
Generation**

The Minnesota Historical Society is in the midst of a long-term project to preserve and present the history of "Minnesota's Greatest Generation," the men and women who grew up during the Great Depression and came of age during World War II. This essay is part of a series that spotlights the experiences of generation members from all walks of life. For more on the MHS project, visit www.mngreatestgeneration.org.

Lindholm Service Station, Cloquet



FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

loved automobiles and, by the early 1930s, recognized that road travel had enormous potential to impact the American way of life. “The great highway is becoming,” he observed, “the horizontal line of a new Freedom extending from ocean to ocean.”

Wright believed the car was critical to rethinking patterns of civilization and could help shift population away from polluted, overcrowded cities to new, “decentralized,” self-sufficient communities. He called his 1934 prototype “Broadacre City,” based on the utopian concept of one acre of land for every man, woman, and child.

Ease of transportation was key to decentralization, so Wright focused on creative design solutions for road infrastructure, including highways, bridges, overpasses, intersections, and gas stations for Broadacre City. One innovation was the Standardized Overhead Service Station, so named because fuel lines were suspended from a cantilevered roof, thereby eliminating service-pump islands. Although Broadacre City was never built, one (and only one) overhead station was—on Highway 33 in Cloquet.

In 1956 when R. W. Lindholm commissioned Wright to design a Phillips 66 gas station, the architect dusted off his standardized plan. The efficient, functional modern design, constructed of concrete block, glass, steel, and copper, was a bold departure from the colonial “sweet-pea cottage” station facades of the day,

which Wright abhorred. Although fire codes prohibited the suspended overhead fuel lines, the metal-clad cantilevered roof was built nonetheless and later became a ubiquitous gas station feature nationwide.

Long a magnet for tourists, the only Frank Lloyd Wright service station in the world is now for sale and its future uncertain. But for now, it stands as irrefutable proof that the road from utopia can lead to northern Minnesota.

—JANE KING HESSION

Jane King Hession is the co-author of Frank Lloyd Wright in New York: The Plaza Years, 1954–1959 (2007) and incoming president of the Chicago-based Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy.

Sources: Liz Holum, Lindholm Oil Company Service Station, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1984, State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society; David G. DeLong, *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Living City* (Wiel am Rhein, Germany: Vitra Design Museum/Skira editore, 1998); Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1998); William Allin Storrer, *The Frank Lloyd Wright Companion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).





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