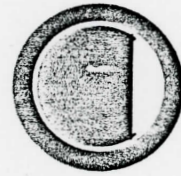


Tulsa Historical Society & Museum

2014.001.573

September 22, 1989



Editor, Tulsa Tribune
P. O. Box 1770
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74102

Dear Sir:

As representatives of the C.C. Cole family, we take issue with your September 6th, 1989, stories by James Watts on Bruce Goff which indicates he designed The Boston Avenue Church.

Our family emphatically feels he did not design The Boston Avenue Church, but that this structure is the work of Dr. Adah Robinson. We have challenged this false credit to Bruce Goff everytime it has appeared in print.

Although the principals directly involved in building Boston Avenue are dead, and the building is now 60 years old, periodically a reporter stirs up the old controversy causing the descendants of those principals needless turmoil. Enough please!!! Can we not once and all lay this argument to rest? We think the following might do so.

You might ask who was C.C. Cole though earlier generations of your family would not have needed to. C.C. Cole was the Chairman of the Boston Avenue Building Committee when the church was built. He and his wife Audrey were largely responsible for the church hiring Adah Robinson. A large part of the C.C. Cole's fortune was tied up in building Boston Avenue Church and the Cole's were instrumental in raising a good portion of the cost of the structure from other congregation members. At the time The Boston Avenue Church building was conceived, C.C. Cole was a successful Tulsa businessman in his early forties who had served on many committees and boards. As he was one of the original founders of The Tulsa Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, The Tulsa International Airport, The Tulsa YMCA and a trustee of The University of Tulsa, he was no stranger to working with architects; he had participated in many building projects. One would think that his belief that Adah Robinson designed this building would be enough. Apparently, not so.

Dr. Robinson was a Quaker who believed in modesty to a point that she refused to issue any statement regarding her design of the church. This reticence of course did nothing to stop the false claims. The Methodist Church, although giving Dr. Robinson every accolade, never took an official position in this controversy, believing it was not appropriate for that denomination to do so.

However, there are a number of documents in our family records which definitely support the idea that Dr. Robinson designed The Boston Avenue Church, some of which are listed below. We are prepared to make any of them available to you should that be necessary. They are as follows:

OLSEN-COFFEY, ARCHITECTS
A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

324 EAST 3rd STREET

TULSA, OKLAHOMA 74120

918-585-1157

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1. Photostat of contract between Rush, Endicott & Rush, Architects and The Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South dated June 6, 1926. This contract states that the architects were to work closely with Dr. Robinson as she was in charge of all matters artistic. Bruce Goff is not mentioned.
2. Photostat of letter of agreement with Adah Robinson and C. C. Cole, Chairman of Building Committee, Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South dated June 28, 1926. The letter retains Dr. Robinson's services for "all matters artistic both as to inside finish and outside design".
3. Tulsa Daily World, Sunday, October 14, 1928, full page article on The Boston Avenue Church crediting the design to Adah Robinson. Bruce Goff is not mentioned.
4. Chicago Evening Post article, page 16, Tuesday, February 19, 1929, a full page on The Boston Avenue Church. Adah Robinson is credited with the design of the building. Bruce Goff is not mentioned.
5. 1929 Boston Avenue Church Dedication Booklet attributing the design to Adah Robinson in several places. Bruce Goff is not mentioned.
6. Letter by Audrey Cole dated June 8, 1937, in which she refutes Bruce Goff's claims to the design of Boston Avenue and credits Adah Robinson with that work.
7. A letter from Dr. Watts dated May 22, 1940, (a former pastor of Boston Avenue in the 1940's) in which he states that Dr. Adah Robinson designed Boston Avenue.
8. Correspondence between Dr. Watts and the assistant editor of the Encyclopedia Britannica stating the same as in Item 7 above.
9. Tulsa Tribune article dated Sunday, June 8, 1941, attributing the design of Boston Avenue to Adah Robinson.
10. Correspondance to and from Mary Caroline Cole's father and Roger Cole Coffey's grandfather, C. C. Cole, concerning the National Geographic episode when the magazine credited Dr. Robinson with the design of the building and Bruce Goff protested. This controversy culminated in a letter from C.C. Cole dated June 9, 1941, which is enclosed.
11. 1968 photo from Tulsa Daily World by Bill McKee with caption attributing the design of Boston Avenue to Adah Robinson. Bruce Goff is not mentioned.

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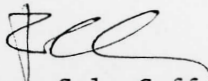
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12. Letter published by the Tulsa Daily World dated June 12, 1973, by Mary Caroline Cole, Architect, and C. C. Cole's daughter. Miss Cole denies Bruce Goff's claims and supports the design of the church by Dr. Robinson.
13. Letter published by the Tulsa Tribune October 31, 1979, by Mrs. Sterling W. Davis, daughter of Dr. John A. Rice, pastor of Boston Avenue when it was conceived. Mrs. Davis states her father credited the design of the building to Dr. Robinson.
14. Quote from the plaque on the bronze bust of Adah Robinson displayed in the church parlor, attributing the design of the church to her. Needless to say, there is no bust in the church of Bruce Goff.
15. And last but not least, information on Boston Avenue Church used when it was entered on the National Register of Historic Places by the Tulsa Preservation Office indicating it was designed by Adah Robinson.

We would hope this material would be conclusive even for the most dedicated Goff followers. We are sending a copy of this letter to Charles Ward, a fellow architect and friend mentioned in your article, in the hopes that this will convince him that he has been misinformed.

Sincerely,



Roger Cole Coffey
Architect AIA
(C.C. Cole's Grandson)

Mary Caroline Cole
Architect, Fellow
(C.C. Cole's Daughter)

Copies to:

Jess Evans, Chairman Administrative Board
Boston Avenue Church

Dr. Mouzon Biggs, Senior Pastor
Boston Avenue Church

Charles Ward, Architect

Enc.

bcc:

Sheila Parr
Tom McCrory
Robert Powers, Tulsa County Historical Society
Martha and John Bradley