

Sinnissippi Farm

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This is a history of land in Ogle County, Illinois, purchased by Frank Orren Lowden and his wife and operation of that land. Part of this land became Lowden-Miller Forest of State of Illinois. This document is intended to be used as supplement by visitors to that Forest.

History

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Acknowledgements

For assistance in obtaining information used in this document, I extend gratitude to the following:

Dave Stenger: former forester at Sinnissippi forest.

Otto Dick: past president of Ogle County Historical Society, and others there.

Grant Afflerbaugh: manager of Illinois Castle Rock state park and Lowden-Miller state forest.

Ogle County Department of Recorder

Howard Fox, Assistant Professor of Department of Forestry at University of Illinois, and resident director of forest at SF, and daughter Debra Eide

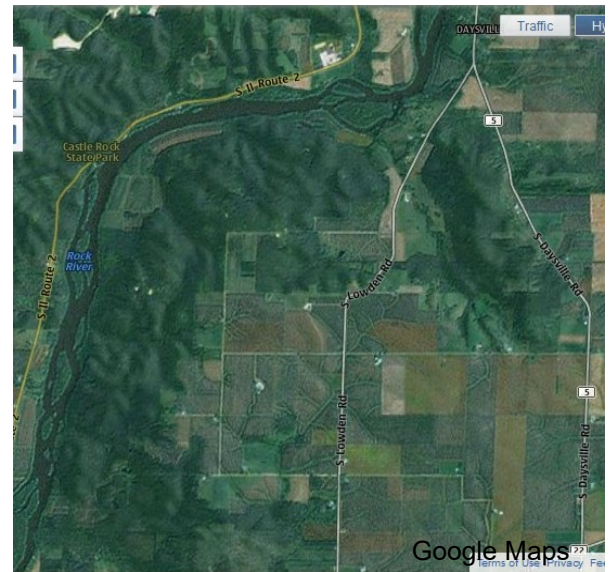
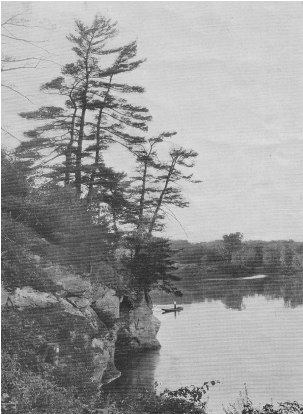
Kathy Miller, librarian at Oregon Public Library

Blanch Schroeder, wife of "timber boss" Ted Schroeder

Don Leary and wife

Lowdens Arrive and Prosper

Mrs. Florence Pullman Lowden was a daughter of rail-road coach manufacturer George Pullman (very wealthy, died 1897). May 15, 1899, in her diary she wrote: "[husband] Frank and I have been on a farm hunting expedition. We went ... to Oregon, Ill. to look at a very beautiful farm of 600 acres on the Rock River. We were most pleased and made an offer."¹ "The ... property, known as 'The Oaks', with its farm-house on a knoll a few hundred feet from bluff

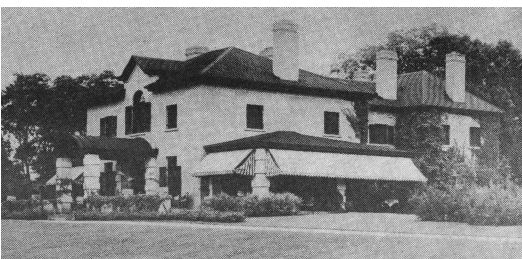


er, seemed idyllic. ... The rolling land, fringed on north by the island-dotted river, was beautiful to look upon. Grassy meadows, cleared fields, and stands of hard-woods invited relaxation, as well as diversified farming and the raising of live-stock." Mrs. Lowden and husband (and future governor) Frank Orren Lowden (FOL) purchased the land on May 20, 1899 (the 576 acres cost \$27,500).¹ Later, they made additional 36 purchases (for \$265,000) of additional land: from 1900-1908: about 3124 acres, 1919: 700 acres, and 1943: 7 acres (about 4400 acres total)⁹. This tract extended to Rock River on north-west, east of Daysville road and south to Hays road^{A3}.

In and soon after an 1824 government survey of section on which Lowden's first purchase of land is located, this section was divided by purchase by individuals in tracts not exceeding 320 acres. 1840, first white man to live on land of first Lowden purchase was John Carr, a "squatter". (Oregon was founded in 1836.) 1842, James Moore purchased this land from U.S. government (when land in this area could be purchased at Land Office at Dixon). 1845, Luke Hemenway, pioneer from New Hampshire^{A1} purchased it and erected stone house, quarried from Plantz Quarry, near Lighthouse Church (this land is now owned by David Point); house was, large, square, of stone, with wooden shutters, to deflect arrows of indigenous people²². At one time Indigenous American burial mounds were on lawn by river in front of it. George Reed of Daysville recalled that after every heavy rain, Indigenous American artifacts could be found there. 1880, Hemenway's land was purchased by General Franklin C. Callender, then, 1885, Emma Asay, and, 1895, Mr. Kneeland. At time of Lowden's 1899 and after purchases, this section contained 37 farms, of which 1250 acres were croppable; balance, 3150 acres, being too sandy, rocky or hilly to farm.



Lowdens brought "The Gilded Age" to people of Oregon area, most of whom had experienced no more than clap-board houses and out-houses. Soon after purchase, with direction of architects Pond and Pond and landscape designer O.C. Simonds²⁷, both of Chicago, no expense was spared modernizing and enlarging house with telephones, gas, electricity, plumbing, laundry, furnace, and porches. Stables and barns were repaired and enlarged to hold carriage, ponies, horses, and cattle. Lawns were leveled and seeded, numerous trees removed or moved, and shrubs and flowers planted. In 1900 when Mrs. Lowden, two children, three nurses, a cook, a coach-man, and several maids arrived at the Oregon station in Mrs. Pullman's private car for a two-week stay at "The Oaks" farm center, the size and complexity of the Lowden caravan





house before Lowdens: "The Oaks"

out-ran imagination of villagers. Soon after, a new stock barn ("largest and finest" in Ogle County, at cost of \$10,000) was built.² Manager's house, guest-house, play house, office, and servants' houses were built. FOL's livestock partners assembled a herd and exercised general management over farm's operations.³ In



The Original House at "Sinnissippi" Farm

After modifications: note added portico and

1901 8 short-horns won prizes, 25 miles of wire fence were erected and 8 miles of roads were constructed. In 1901 the *Oregon Reporter* stated that The Oaks farm center, with its Lowdens, servants, work-men and tenants, had become a "veritable village."³ It was living like English country nobility with American influence. In 1902 Mrs. Lowden changed name of property (originally Squaw Farm, then Point Bluff, then The Oaks) to Sinnissippi Farm (Sinnissippi was local indigenous people's word meaning rocky river or troubled waters).

Lowdens enlarged original house to limit permitted by its foundations, adding porches and servant's quarter,



The Rock River as Seen from the Lowdens' Front Porch at "Sinnissippi" Farm

but still found it too small for their needs. Unwilling to relinquish the wide vista of river (Rock) and farm lands afforded by its front windows, they had no choice but to raze it and erect a larger dwelling on same site²³. [Apparently, cost was no constraint.]

This Tudor style residence, designed by architects Pond and Pond, cost nearly \$100,000. Its 20 rooms were supplemented by a guest house, constructed several years before. Servants were employed to staff it. It assured hospitality of "Sinnissippi" to their many friends during years ahead.⁸ The Lowdens first occupied this "big house" in 1906.

Chicago Journal, October 6, 1906:

“Lowden Home Now Complete
Substantial Residence Crowns Scenic Beauty of Sinnissippi
Farm.

Efficient Water Works System Gives Protection From Fire
and Supplies all the Buildings.’

“Sinnissippi farm, the great country estate of Frank O. Lowden and which henceforth will be his permanent home, unless his duties may, in the future, take him to the national capital, has now reached that stage of its development which makes it the finest country seat in the west. Buildings costing a fortune have just been completed. Situated two miles from Oregon, it covers 4,000 acres, through which the Scenic Rock river flows for three and a half miles.”

“Some idea of its size may be imagined when it is known that there are twelve miles of roads on the farm and 15 miles of woven fence.”

The new house which has just been completed is a marvel of comfort and convenience. It contains twenty-one large rooms. In building it, special care was taken that an attractive view be obtained from every window, and the result is that from each room the river is plainly seen either up toward Oregon or down toward Dixon. The dining room is 25 by 38 feet and has at the north end a huge fireplace, so wide that regular cord wood only is used. There are eleven fireplaces in the house and one on the porch. It is said that Colonel Lowden now has the finest law and agricultural library in the country, and this is housed in a splendid room.”

Aside from the home of Colonel and Mrs. Lowden there is a guest house containing six bedrooms and a living room. Then there is a lodge for the housekeeper and the maids, a house for the superintendent and his family, and accommodations for engineers, foresters, coachmen, farm-hands and other employees on the estate.

Sinnissippi farm is a stock farm exclusively, only enough hay, oats and corn being raised to carry the stock. Some of the finest stock in the country is raised on the farm, and Sinnissippi wins prizes at the stock shows every year. They have a fancy herd of shorthorn cattle, a herd of fine thoroughbred Percheron horses, 150 of the finest Poland China hogs, and a flock of Shropshire sheep. Two years ago a lot of Angora goats were put on for the purpose of keeping the forest clear of underbrush.

Later at this house, FOL hosted meetings with Chicago *Daily News* owner and US Treasury Secretary Frank Knox, presidential candidates Alf Landon, Wendell Wilkie, and US President Herbert Hoover, among many. Two of Lowdens’ daughters and their son were married here. It served as social center for people living on SF. As time progressed, both Lowdens valued their life at SF and increasingly thought of it as home.⁴

During the early 1900’s three mansions were located in this region. 1893, Walter Heckman completed his, located near entrance of now Lowden State Park. 1928, Mr. Heckman sold 600 acres to Walter Strong, where Strong had constructed “Stronghold Castle”. Another estate in Ogle County at this time was located by Kennedy Hill near Byron: “Rock River Farms”, owned by Hanna McCormick.

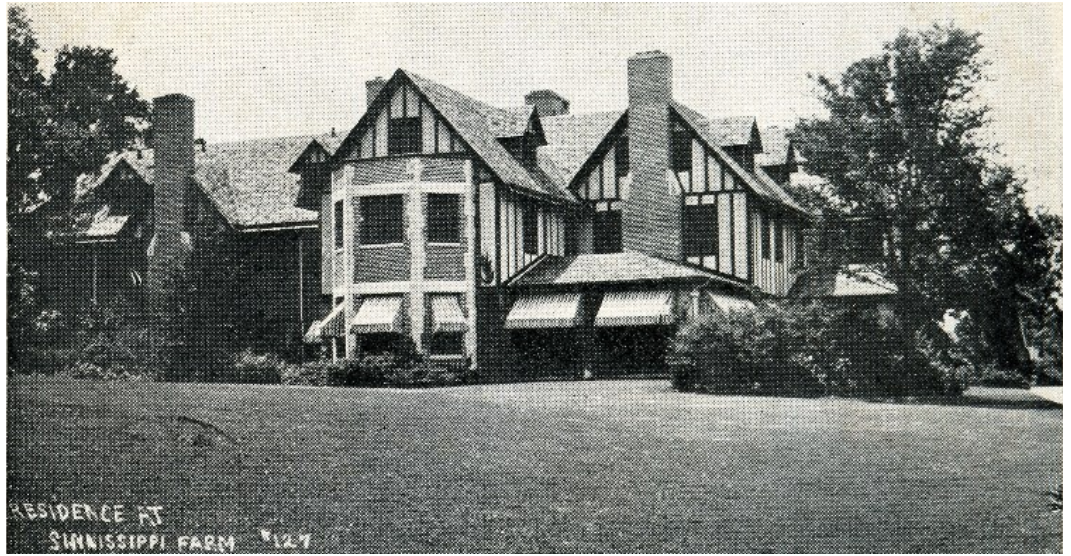
Pictures of house, out-side and in-side, follow.





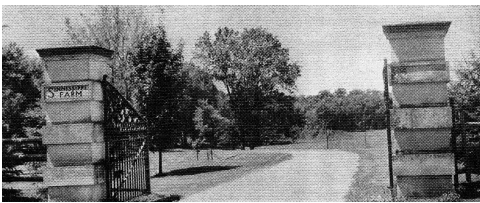
Entrance to the
Lowden Residence,
Oregon, 1914

view from north-west



RESIDENCE RT
MISSISSIPPI FARM 1917

view from east



entrance



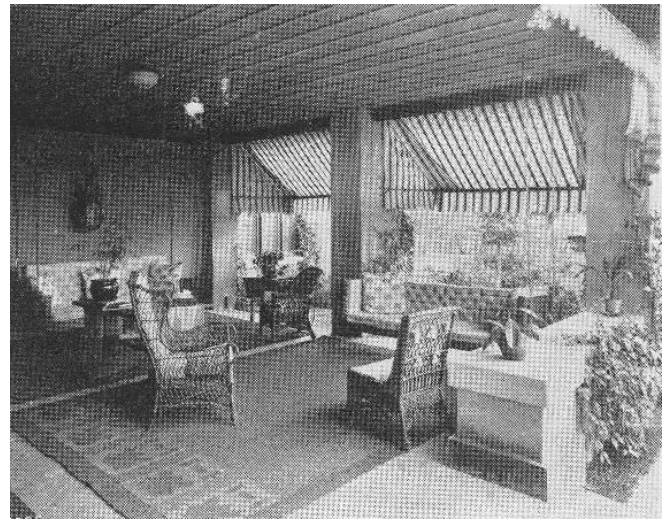
view from south-west



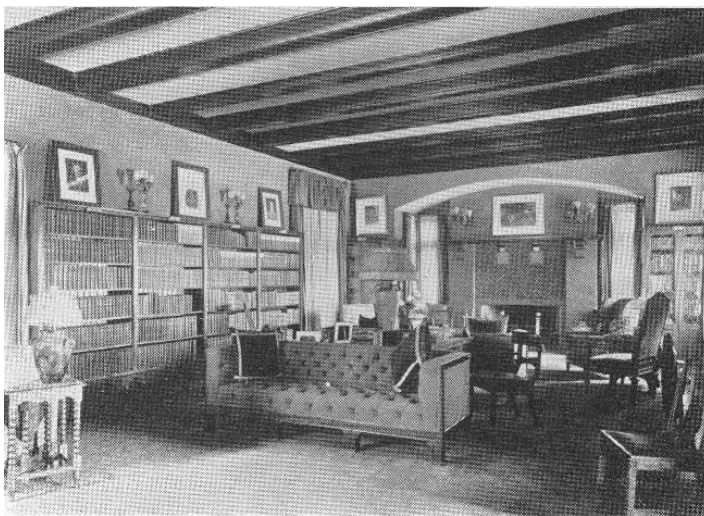
view from south-west



living



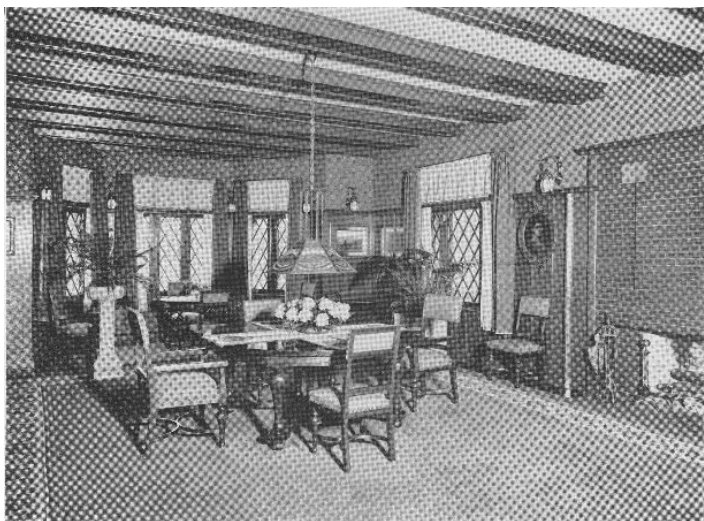
porch



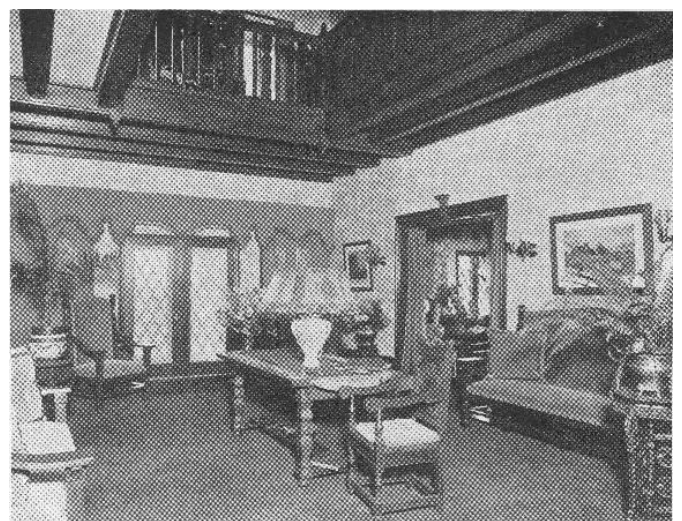
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Mr. & Mrs. Lowden



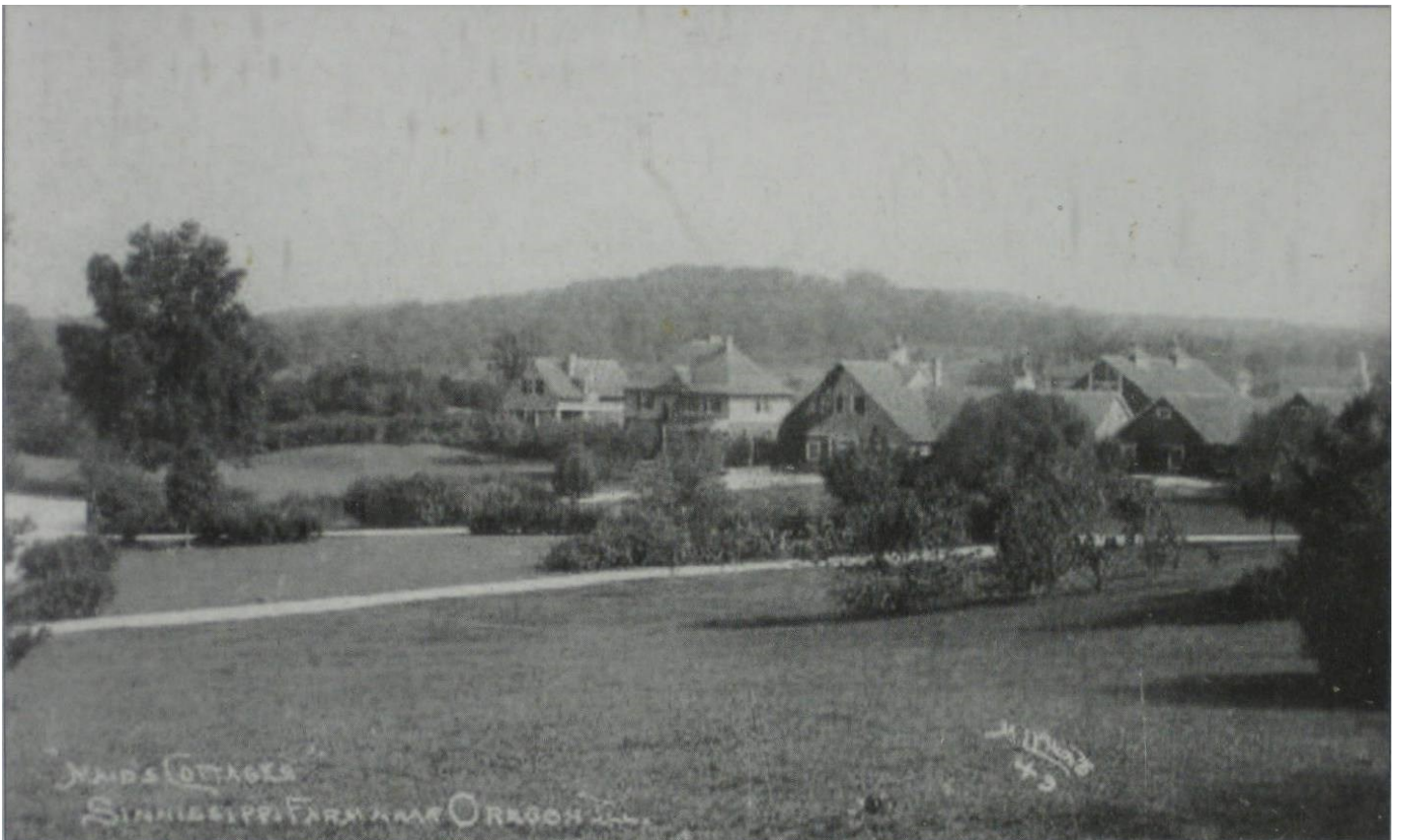
dining



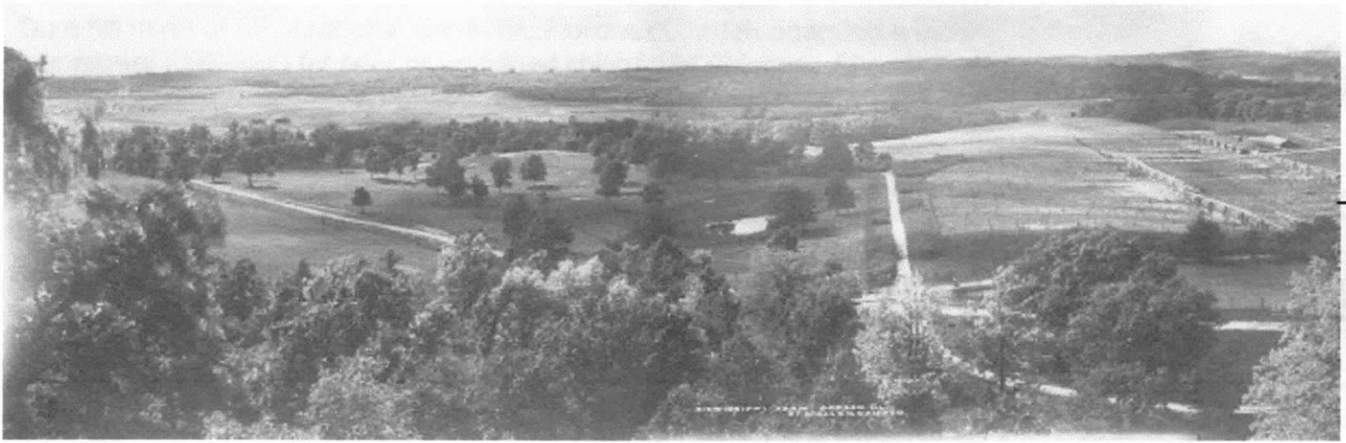
reception



SF buildings, from Wolf Hill, 1904. On top of Wolf (Picnic) Hill was a gazebo. (image: above to left, below to right)

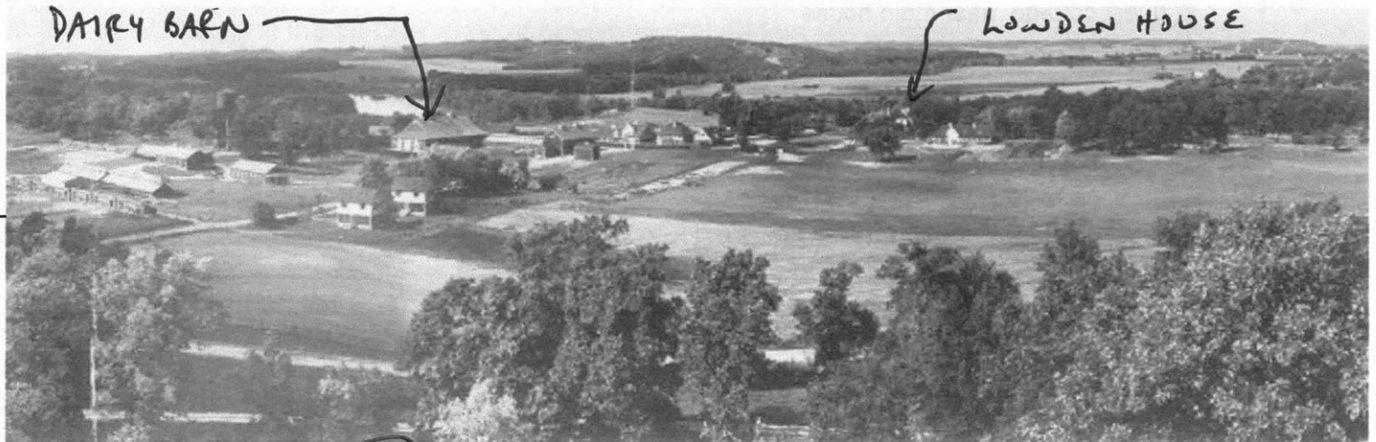


This photo, taken from Flagpole Hill adjacent to the Rock River, shows the maid's house, coachman's house (where stable-boys were also housed) and the stables and carriage barn as well as the roofs of a couple of farm buildings.

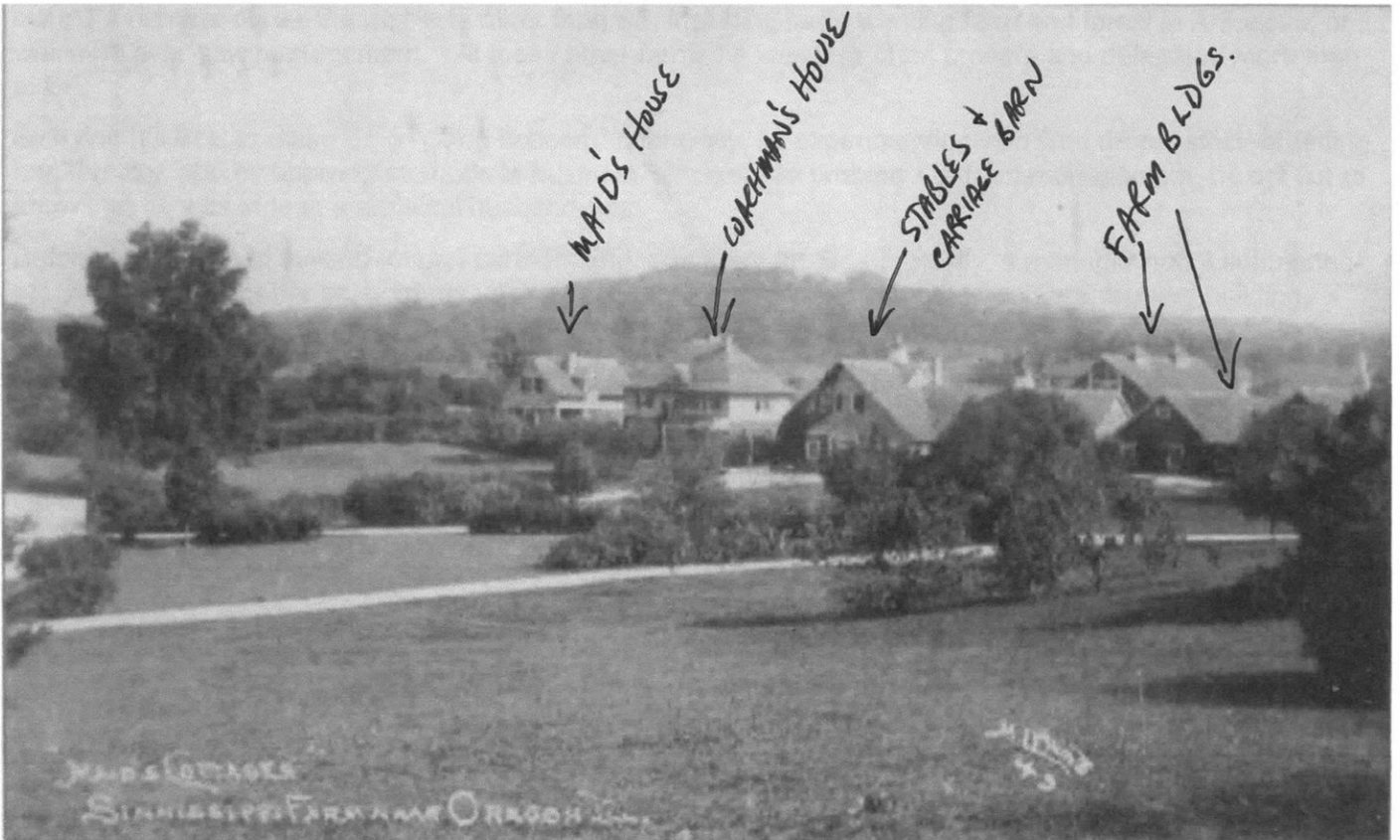


DAIRY BARN

LOWDEN HOUSE



7 SF buildings, from Wolf Hill, 1904. On top of Wolf (Picnic) Hill was a gazebo. (image: above to left, below to right)



MAIDS' HOUSE

LOKEMAN'S HOUSE

STABLES +
CARRIAGE BARN

FARM BLDGS.

MAIDS' COTTAGES
SINIBEL'S FARM AND ORCHARD

"maids' cottages"



guest cottage, near main house

On a hill north of SF, near or in Daysville, Florence Lowden operated a summer retreat ("Hill-top") for poor or orphaned children of Chicago. She also presented children of SF with Christmas presents.

Farm Operation

FOL believed that .. with modern science... the intelligent farmer could double his acreage production and improve the quality of his live-stock.⁵ As politician, FOL urged maintenance and, if possible, increase in quality and extent of arable land by means of flood control, reforestation, forest reservations, crop diversification, and the greater use of fertilizers care-fully adapted to varying types of soil, the encouragement of the Mississippi Valley live-stock industry and of better breeds of live-stock ... the study and control of plant and animal diseases; the appropriation of more public money for agricultural experimentation and education; and the co-ordination of governmental and private efforts to bring science to the aid of husbandry. His visit to the rural areas of France, Germany, and Switzerland in 1909 opened his eyes to the meaning of truly intensive and efficient agriculture. ... With the hope that he might have some influence in halting the flight from the farms, he accepted membership on the National Committee of the Boy Scouts of America. ... He sought to demonstrate at SF that forestation was practicable on marginal lands in northern Illinois.⁶ No field of study so fascinated Lowden as the application of science to agriculture in all its aspects. Soil chemistry, the development of better seeds and hybrids, the elimination of insect pests, the cure of animal and plant diseases, the discovery of more efficient systems of field drainage and cultivation, the adaptation of electricity and gasoline motor-driven implements to agricultural uses, and the drive for hard-surface roads and improved rural schools all meant better days to the farmer. ... his gratification of a strong personal desire to indulge in agricultural experimentation on his own acres, with the hope that it might benefit farmers everywhere, supplied reason enough for his extensive farm land purchases, but he anticipated financial profit as well. He owned a number of real estate tracts other than SF, including large working farm and forest in Arkansas, of which he over-saw management.⁷ At these other farms he was less often present and delegated more than at SF.

By trying his best to make SF a "going concern" financially, by experimenting with field drops, stock-breeding, and forestry, and by applying methods of business efficiency to problems of farm management, he set out to show that he was indeed a practical husband-man.¹⁰

Before 1937, FOL had several (many) partners and managers for SF. Typically, a manager had 3 submanagers: for Park (manor house, gardens, orchard, quarters for servants and other workers, laundry building, coach barn, tennis court, etc.)¹¹, farms, and live-stock¹².

1900 : FOL soon began molding agriculture activities of SF. SF Live-stock Department included 60 or 70 Po-



FOL^{A2}, old horse: aging rapidly

He combined supervision with exercise by riding horse-back almost daily over some part of his property.¹³

land China and Berkshire hogs, about 100 Shropshire sheep, some 2 dozen work horses together with a few thoroughbred Percherons, and up to 500 Angora goats assigned job of clearing meadows of hazel brush, but was known principally for its Scotch Shorthorns (for beef production only). Lowden's interest in these cattle remained at a high pitch for nearly ten years. Few awards



at SF

during his life-time brought him greater satisfaction than the blue ribbons won by his bulls.¹³

1903-06: Production of chickens and eggs was conducted, with large investment and resultant large production: about 25,000 chickens producing 200 dozen eggs per day. However, available market for chickens and eggs could not absorb such large production, so production was completely abandoned.¹³

1910 : FOL discontinued production of Percherons and Shropshires, retaining some Shorthorns.¹⁴



Col. Lowden takes pride in making his farm pay. The flat lines of horizon, land, and woods are repeated by cattle, crops, and hawthorns

1912-13 : Oregon had creamery, operating at less than full capacity. FOL, becoming aware of growing market for milk convinced him-self that he should adopt milk production. He gradually assembled a mixed herd of Holsteins, Guernseys, Jerseys, and milk-strain Short-horns. After a 2

month tour of dairy farms and co-operative creameries in Netherlands, France, and England, he came back singing praise of European methods and Holstein-Friesian cattle. After care-fully watching milk out-put of each of his cows for 2 years and judging between the several breeds in his mixed herd from stand-points of quantity and quality of milk, their sturdiness, intake of food, and other traits, he decided that Holstein-Friesians were making best over-all record. Therefore, in 1917 he disposed of his other bovines*.¹⁵ SF had creamery.

By 1917 about 3/4 of total SF was included in 9 tenant holdings, varying in size from 60 to 600 acres (3300 acres total), each under 1 of 3 carefully detailed agreements. The remaining 1200 acres, of which much was wood-land, was used for Park and home farm.^{14,16}

1917: Judson T Williams became partner of FOL in management of farms, for working Holsteins and producing crops.¹⁶ FOL contributed \$100,000 to this expansion. FOL joined Holstein-Friesian Association of America.¹⁵

1918: SF's arable land yielded about 25,000 bushels of grains and nearly 225 bovines yielding milk sales of nearly \$2,000/month.¹⁸

But, tuberculosis among animals, falling market prices and other operational problems led, in 1921, to dissolution of partnership.¹⁷ In that year, FOL hired Lee M Gentry as farm manager, who remained in that position for many years and provided effective professionalism. By 1924 FOL covenanted with his tenants such that in exchange for furnishing land, buildings and other improvements, and half seeds, livestock, and most operational expenses, he received half of each lessee's gross income from farming. Average size of a tenancy was about 200 acres, divided nearly equally between arable land and grass pasture. In time, SF would have maximum 11 tenant farms, later, as result of mechanization, amalgamated to 5.



*First successful permanent introduction of Holstein-Friesland cattle to U.S. was in 1861. In 1885 was founded Holstein-Friesian Association of America. In 1892, after about 8800 had been imported, "foot and mouth" disease occurred in Europe, causing importation to cease.

1920s : Although price of milk at Oregon creamery continued to be low, cattle paid their way. Increasing publicity accorded to Lowden's herd as it broke local and state milk production and butter fat records and won awards.¹⁹ 1921: FOL was elected president of Holstein-Friesian Association of America.¹⁹ By 1924 he was also associated with the National Dairy Council and the National Dairy Federation.²⁰

1929-: The nation-wide depression brought serious economic problems to the Lowdens and their children.²¹

1948: A barn on Farm 9, operated by Wayne Canfield family, burned in 1947?. Replacing it was a "dream barn".²⁴ Later, Don Leary famed this plot.

Land Conservation and SF Forest

1902-15 : In a 1902 speech, FOL spoke of value of crop rotation, nitrogenous cover-crops, soil analyses, carefully selected fertilizers, scientific stock-breeding and forecast that metrology would become service to farmers. FOL publically urged that soil be protected from erosion and over-cropping. Ardently embracing proper land use and strongly believing in reforestation as a way to retard soil erosion, he initiated on land of SF that was not good for agriculture reforestation program. Between 1902 and 1910, beginning on Flag Pole Hill near



his manor house and continuing from there to other partially timbered hills or brush-covered fields, he planted nearly 130,000 seedlings. As of 1906 these consisted of about 60 varieties of deciduous trees, 12 of coniferous trees, 62 of shrubs, and 25 of other hardy plants. Of conifers planted, over 70% were white pine, remainder larch, spruce, fir, red pine, scotch pine, Austrian pine, mountain pine. As much of this land was sandy*, deciduous trees did poorly, but coniferous trees did well, so beginning 1910 FOL increased yearly plantings to over 50,000. Hard-woods and young evergreens soon covered about 1/3 of SF.¹⁰ White pines planted here are believed to be first in current geological era in Illinois. (interrupted by WWs 1 & 2) were planted. Cumulatively and in total over half million trees were planted, some by FOL himself. "I like to think of this beautiful and fertile spot as the place where my children and my children's children and their children after them will gather long after I have become dust, and in the shade of old trees my own hand had planted."⁴



* Across Rock river is a large silica mining operation.

1914-15: FOL leased (for nominal cost) of all of his land to State of Illinois (administered by Game and Fish Department) for prohibition of fishing and hunting. (Adjacent land of Henry Dixon (south along river) was similarly covenanted.) Some-time before 1957 this lease lapsed.

After Christmas tree production began, damage to young trees from deer was conscioned, and hunting prohibition was altered to allow and promote hunting of deer,



Lowden daughters Florence and Harriet, who were active at SF, were proud of their top-rated Holstein dairy herds, and of being joint recipients of the first Friend of the Soil and Water Con-



ervation District award for out-standing service in areas of conservation, education and soil and wood-land management in Ogle County.²⁷



beaver work



Later Years

1937: Florence Pullman Lowden died at SF, willing FOL, with stipulation that upon his death this property pass to their children, a \$4.5 million estate that included SF, Castle Rest (Pullman's estate in New York), Florenden (Pullman's large farm in Arkansas) and the other Pullman real estate in Washington, Memphis, and Sioux City. These added to extensive real-estate previously owned by FOL. FOL was aging and his health was declining, such that he was no longer able to manage SF effectively. Under FOL's guidance the children formed themselves into a Sinnissippi Farm Corporation, to which was transferred SF, and from which he rented the property. In 1937 deed passing SF land to this corporation, tenant farms were identified, presumably by current tenant as 1) Sinnissippi, 2) McKenney, 3,4) -, 5) Stevens, 6) Adams, 7) Bishop, 8) Edmonds, 9) Ray, 10) Farwell, 11) March, 11) - . 1938 : FOL, declining in health, knew that he needed assistance managing his forest. He invited new forestry department at University of Illinois to conduct research on his developing forest in exchange for basic forest management and advice. Resident forester was paid equally by family Sinnissippi Forest operation and University of Illinois. This arrangement persisted until 1976 and included harvesting trees and selling cut wood. Today, nearly 80 percent of all data on Illinois hardwood forest growth has been developed at Sinnissippi.

1940: Annual "Masque" festival was held at SF, organized by Friends of Our Native Land-scape (formed for conservation and enjoyment of natural scenery and fostering planting of flower gardens and conservation of bird and animal life).²⁸

1940: FOL extended a cost free long term lease of 90 acres of SF to Boy Scouts of America, Black-Hawk Council, creating Camp Lowden.

1943: FOL (born 1861) died, aged 71, in Tucson, Arizona (Lowdens' winter home). His heir donated 90 acres (above location) to Boy Scouts, which later, with grant money, purchased additional 112 acres to south (outside SF), for total 202 acres.

1941-45: First area of trees for Christmas sale was planted, consisting of Norway-spruce, white-spruce, Douglas-fir, Colorado-blue-spruce and Fraser-fir. More plantings followed, adding red-pine and jack-pine.

1947: A saw-mill was built and began operation, producing 220,000 board-feet per year. Equipment was in place for treating posts with pentachlorophenol.²⁶ Some nonsawn wood was sold for fire fuel.

1948 : Pine trees planted in early 1940s required thinning, and selling trees for Christmas began as an experiment in 1948. That year forester Howard Fox sold almost 500 Christmas trees to Ogle County residents. The family's Sinnissippi Forest Christmas Tree (SFCT) business grew steadily and soon included a wholesale operation that sold trees throughout Northern Illinois as well as to Iowa and –

one year – to western Canada. In 1955, Sinnissippi Forest was designated the first Illinois Tree Farm. Over the years SFCT sold more than a third of a million Christmas trees. Until 1984 trees were sold in sawmill parking lot. That year first choose-and-cut field was opened; two years later a new building, on Lowden Road, housed sale of wreaths, greens, roping, tree stands and a gift shop. Horse-drawn wagon rides through the tree fields were popular after 1990; visits from Santa Claus and refreshments also contributed to the festive atmosphere.³⁰

1949: Harriet Lowden Madlener (daughter of FOL) and husband had construction of house near site of old "big house". As of 2012 this house is owned by their grandson Edward Culbertson. Florence Lowden Miller and husband resided in near-by old coach-man's house. The old "big house" was "huge". not insulated, was heated with several boilers and contained many fire-places, During winter house, even if not occupied, needed to be heated to prevent pipes from freezing, Also. Its design intended attendance by many servants. It



was expensive to operate. Anecdotally, a fire burned some of it. In 1947, 41 years after it was first occupied, the Lowden's children (and heirs) contracted of have "old house" razed. In 1949, after auction of items in it remaining after Lowden daughters Harriet and Florence removed what they wanted, house was demolished.

Warren Miller:

"Of the four Lowden children two – my uncle G.M.P. ("Pully") Lowden and my youngest aunt, Frances, no longer had much direct contact with Sinnissippi, and ,in fact, sold their inherited interest in Sinnissippi to mother and my aunt in the 1940s. My uncle lived in Southern California, and my aunt on the East Coast. We Millers lived in Chicago (dad [Phillip] was professor of medicine at the University of Chicago, so we lived in Hyde Park). My other aunt, Harriet Madlener, and her husband Albert also lived at the time in Chicago but apparently already had an interest in making Sinnissippi their home. However the "big house" was too big and no longer manageable: for example, I remember playing inside the basement furnaces (there were three) used to heat the house, and I recollect being told that in the winter when the house was in full use, it took a full cord of wood a day to heat it. Don't know whether that's entirely accurate, but it does indicate the monumental problem of staffing and maintaining the house. Staffing it was another major challenge. When built, there clearly was an assumption that domestic help would always be plentiful, which was no longer true after the war.

"But I suspect that the main reason was that my parents and the Madleners could not agree on joint use of the house, especially as my aunt and uncle wanted Sinnissippi as their permanent home while mother and dad wanted only a weekend and vacation home. So the Lowden house was demolished, the Madleners built a large stone house complete with swimming pool and pool house east of the big house, and my parents remodeled the coachman's house for us. (They had plans drawn up to build a new house on Flagpole Hill, but gave that idea up because of the cost.)

"I have to add that I have extremely fond memories of being at Sinnissippi, in and around our house, and am eternally grateful that the new house was never built. I often say that I was born and raised in Chicago, but grew up at Sinnissippi: Howard Fox was my scoutmaster; as a kid I palled around with (read bothered) the farmhands in the dairy barn and, when I was old enough, worked during summer vacations at the farm: baling hay, filling silos, etc. Had our house not been so close to the action, I'm not sure any of this would have happened."



Madlener house

1959: Sinnissippi Farms Inc. was dissolved. Real estate owned by it was divided between Lowdens' children Mrs. Harriet Lowden Madlener and Mrs. Florence Lowden Miller; brother Pullman Lowden and sister Frances Lowden Drake sold their shares to these sisters. Mrs. Miller retained right to names *Upland Farms Inc* and *Sinnissippi Forest* and operation of saw mill and sale of its products. Mrs. Madlener's share, named *Sinnissippi Farms* and *Sinnissippi Timber*, sold timber to *Sinnissippi Forest* operation.

About 1960: Howard Fox's daughter Debra (as recalled later): "You could go in there [forest] and hear a creek babble and trees rustle and could see an occasional deer. It was very tranquil and soothing. The solitude was wonderful. It was a wonderful place to grow up."³¹

1970s : Tenants of Sinnissippi Farms were Bill Herwig, Harlan Hughes and Tim Leary, while tenants of Upland Farms were John Leary, Don Leary and Wayne Canfield.

At time in here: Warren Miller sold some land bordering river, on which several houses were built. Also, Madlener daughter Nancy Madlener Culbertson sold some of her land, on which many houses were built. At

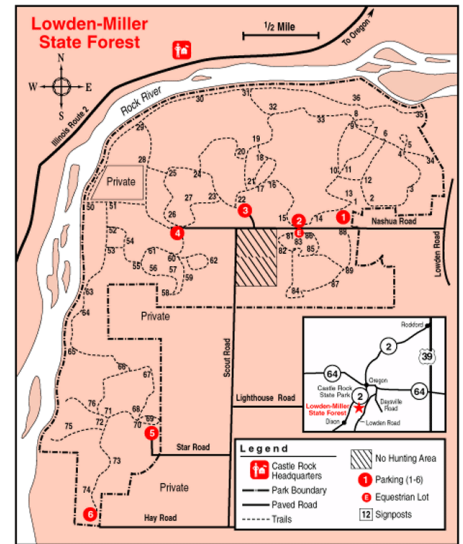
times unknown to me, all agricultural land belonging to Harriet and Florence Lowden was sold, some to tenants.

1976: Howard Fox retired. Dave Stenger became forester for *Sinnissippi Forests*.

1978 : Larger saw mill was built near old saw mill, producing 250,000 board-feet per year, Some timber was from Sinnissippi Forest and some was purchased elsewhere.

1987 : As harvestable local trees had been processed, saw mill was no longer profitable, and operations ceased.

1992-3 : Phillip Lowden Miller and brother Warren (grandsons of FOL), heirs to Upland Farms and Sinnissippi Farms, and their wives, to keep area actively managed forest and preserve its beauty for future generations, sold 2291 acres (927 hectares) to State Illinois. Most of this land was, and is, not croplable. Tract purchased by State Illinois consists of land north of Nashau road, which had been owned by Warren (1992), and land south of Nashau road, which had been owned by Phillip (1993). At that time some public question arose regarding removing this land from county taxation (as land was poor for agriculture, taxes were low). Warren Miller publicly stated “I firmly believe that the anticipated increased use of the forest will be an economic boost for Oregon area businesses. Increased public use equals increased local spending”³² This land, named Lowden-Miller State Forest, contains 1490 acres of hard-woods, 461 acres of pine, 190 acres planted for Christmas trees, 20 acres planted experimentally, 136 acres of wet-lands, and roads and wild-life areas.



to right:
building formerly used for Christmas-tree-purchasers to warm themselves and buy accessories

2009 : SFCT discontinued operation. After years of good sales, starting 2002 they declined. Owner Warren Miller cited declining sales and retirement of site’s manager as the key factors in his decision.³⁰

However. Christmas tree sales were reinitiated by Conroy family in conjunction of Oregon FFA (sinnissippitrees.com/index.html)

2012 : Buildings near site of now gone “big house” which originally contained stables, coaches, grooms and livery attendants had been largely reconstructed (into condominiums?); it is owned by Conroys. Remaining land in area of Lowden-Miller Forest owned by Warren Miller was bought by State Illinois and annexed to Lowden-Miller Forest (above).



SOME REFOLEC-
TIONS ABOUT
CHANGES WHICH
OCCURRED OVER
MANY YEARS

Dairy farming in ar-
ea has diminished.³³

Former tenant farms
are no longer owned
by Lowdens' de-
scendants and not
operated centrally.



Blanch
Schroeder, wife of
"timber boss" and
saw-mill operator
Ted Schroeder, lived
and worked at
Sinnissippi Forest
from about 1948-
1968 (spring and
autumn). At age 94,
she valued contribu-
tion of out-door ac-
tivity to good health
and family success.
Don Leary said that
"it was a great place
to grow-up". How-
ard Fox said that he
had a wonderful life
there.³¹

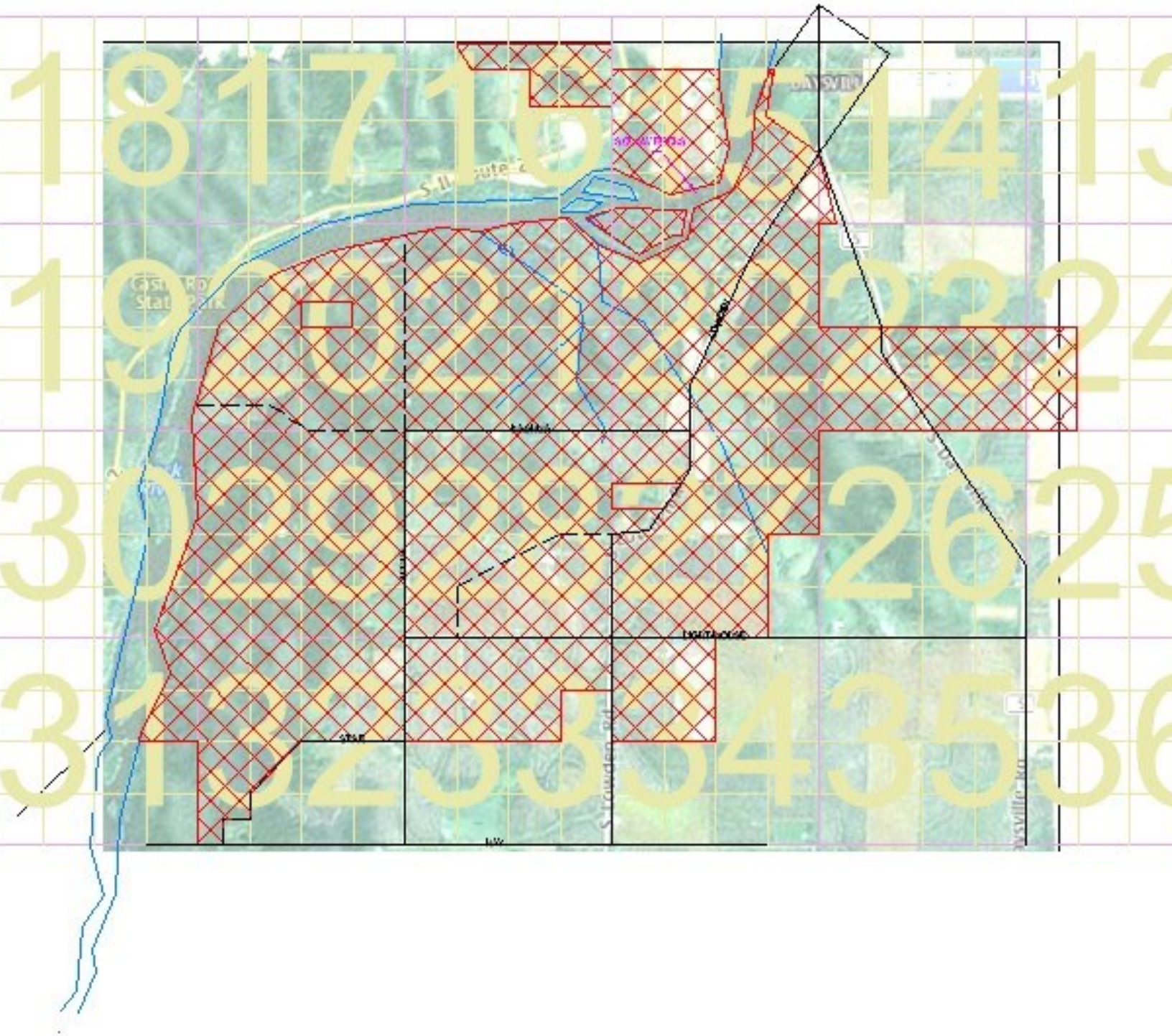




Addendum: Frank O. Lowden's Accomplishments

FOL's accomplishments include: Doctor of Jurisprudence (Union College of Law, Chicago), professor of law (Northwestern University, Evanston, Il), , success-full attorney and business owner and investor, member of Republican National Committee (1904-12), member of RN Executive Committee (1904, 1908), US Representative from Illinois, 13th Illinois district (northwest Illinois) (1906-1911), Governor of Illinois (1917-1921), candidate for US Presidential nomination (1920,1928), president of Holstein-Friesian Association of America (1921-30). Named in his honor: Lowden Boy Scout Camp, Lowden Illinois State Park, Lowden-Miller Illinois State Forest, 2 halls: at Northwestern University Chicago campus and Northern Illinois University DeKalb, Illinois.

Addendum 3: Sinnissippi Farm Real Estate as of 1930



References

Lowden of Illinois, The Life of Governor Frank O. Lowden, William T Hutchinson, The University of Chicago Press, 1957, LCC: 17-6274

1: p.71 2: p.72 3: p.73 4: p.75 5: p.161 6: p.162
7: p.211-21 8: p.224 9: p.227 10: p.228 11: p.230 12: p.232
13: p.233 14: p.234-5 15: p.237 16: p.238-39 17: p.497
18: p. 497-98 19: p.499 19: p.500-501 20: p.506 21: p.613

22: *Story of Oregon*, community project, 1986, p.51, taken from manuscript (not found) *Sinnissippi Farm, History to 1899*, U.G. Willis.

Oregon Republican Reporter, 24: 12/23/48, 26: 11/28/1946

25: *Ogle County Life*, 6/1/1987

28: unidentified news-paper clipping

30: *Ogle County News*, 7/22/2009

31: *Chicago Tribune*, 5/12/1992

32: *Rock River Register Star*, 4/15/1992

33: Don Leary

Pictures

Pre-Lowden house "The Oaks": *ORR*, 10/1/1986

After modifications: *Lol*, p.50-51

Entrance gate: *Images of America: Oregon, Illinois*, Keith Call, Arcadia, 2005

Rock River from Lowdens' front porch: *Lol*, p.454-455

Guest house: *Country Life*, 1913

Sinnissippi manor house, 1911: s, e & w views from files of Otto Dick; entrance: *SoL*

Rooms of manor house, *Country Homes*, about 1920

Lowdens on couch: cover, *Time* magazine, Nov. 28, 1927

Panorama, 1904: *Lol*, p.454-455

Cottages: *IoAO*

F. Lowden on horse: from photo on file at Ogle County Historical Society

Goats: from files of Otto Dick

Herding domestic bovines: *Country Life in America*, 4/1913

Bovine, face to face: *Scientific American*, 7/2009, p.59

Lowden-Miller Forest: upper right: State Illinois Department Natural Resources visitor guide on internet:
www.dnr.state.il.us/lands/Landmgt/PARKS/R1/Lowdenmi.htm

3 others: Henry Tideman

Saw-mill and tree farm: from files of Otto Dick

Notes

23: Manor house was between coach houses (now condominiums) and river.

27: *IoAO*. "O.C. Simonds also surveyed and arranged Graceland Cemetery in Chicago, a grave-yard for that city's prominent dead." Both Frank O. Lowden and Florence Pullman Lowden were buried there.

25: *OCLife*, 6/1/1987