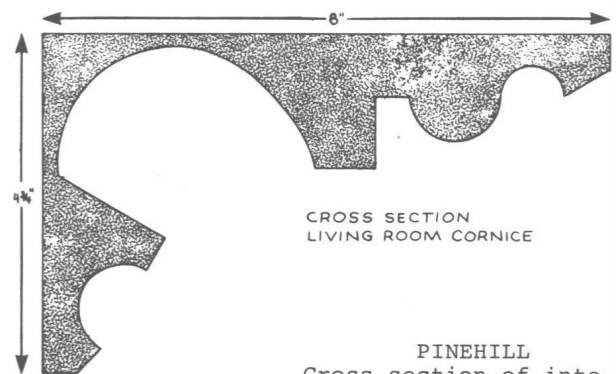
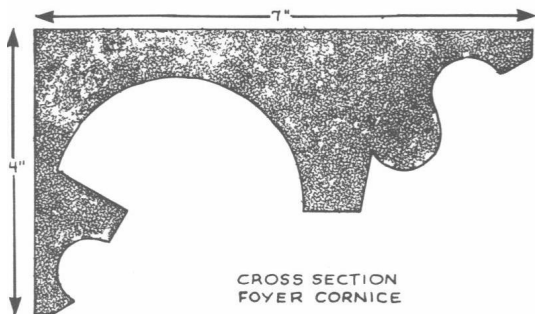
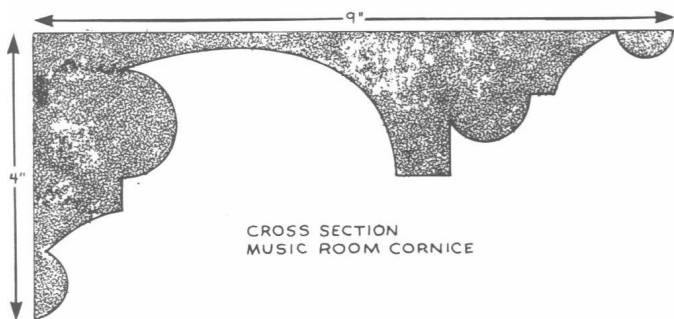
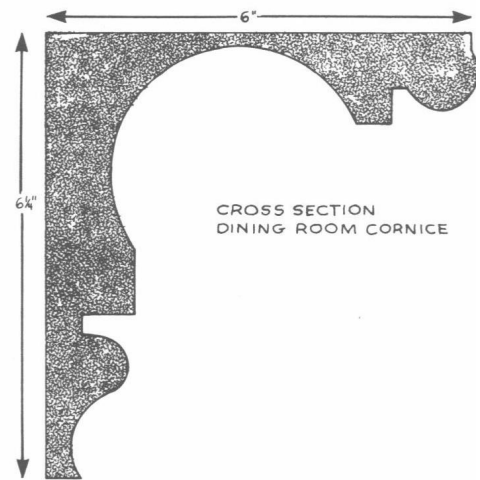
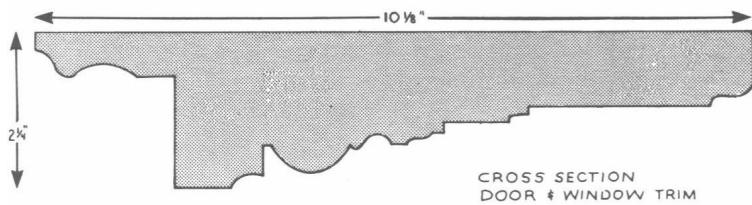




PINEHILL  
Decorative ceiling sculpture originally used as base for lighting fixtures. (1 of 9)

Beautiful ceiling sculpture from which hung ornamental oil lamps bedecked with crystal ornaments. (Comments by C. W. Mongan, Sr.) (Photo provided by George Fischer)



PINEHILL  
Cross section of interior plaster cornices and woodwork.

(Drawing provided by George Fischer)

were often doctors and lawyers in the small towns. They built homes in the Greek Revival period, he explained.

Their decision to buy the house was based, in part, that Oregon is Lois' home town. "Both of us like old homes and we are particularly interested in seeing that a house of this caliber be restored and maintained."

Fischer's house was built by William Judd Mix, well known Oregon businessman who lived in the house until 1891 when he sold it to Joseph Kaler for \$20,000.

Next owner was Thomas Seyster, lawyer and a bachelor who lived there from 1918 to 1948. The house was sold through his estate to Stuart Lytle whose wife, Emily, captured the beauty of the countryside in her oil paintings. Fred Louzon bought it in 1966 after the Lytles moved southward.

George Fischer, the sixth owner, with his wife, Lois, enjoys the house. He is gracious in showing it and telling of its long history.

Visitors find the deep rose circular window just inside the front hallway of unusual interest. When the snow lies white among the pine trees the scene through the window is like having a continual Christmas card, Fischer declares.

An eye catcher in the big, high-ceiling living room is a nine-foot tall clock which was built in 1869. It formerly occupied a central position in a jeweler's window in Waterbury, Conn.

Fischer says it was the timepiece used by residents to set all the other clocks in town. It is an eight-day clock and the pendulum is filled with three tubes of mercury which reacts to barometric pressure and adjusts the swing of the pendulum.

The adjoining dining room has a golden glow with champagne silk fringed draperies crisscrossed at the tall windows.

There's a butler's pantry around the corner where the original brass hinges, found in the basement, have been cleaned and placed on doors and white painted drawers.

Of historical interest is the circular stairway leading to the upper floors. The scenic French wallpaper on the staircase is 67 years old. Three separate layers were applied on top of each other, depicting hills in the background and trees in the forest of France.



*Music Room at the present time. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)*

Upstairs the bedrooms are spacious and marble fireplaces, some ornately decorated, heat the main rooms.

The Fischers say their house has a "Great Gatsby" look. Opulence of olden days. But it is more than that. It is a home to care for, to be lived in and loved.



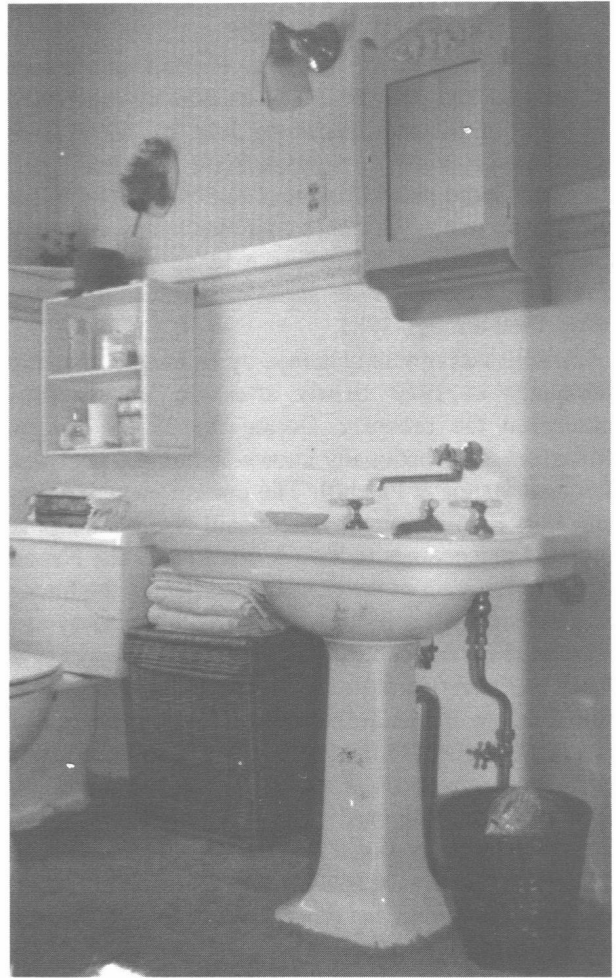
*Dining Room furnished with period furniture. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)*



*Mr. George Fischer standing at the foot of the beautiful stairway. We were sorry his wife Lois could not be there at the time picture was taken. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)*



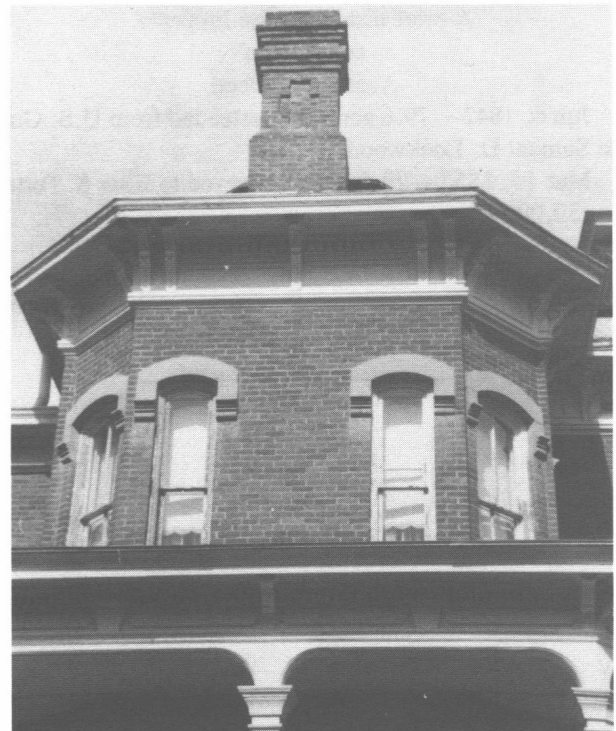
*Bedroom at the head of the stairs. Beautifully furnished and decorated. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)*



*Bathrooms are not original, but are as near as possible at this time. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)*



*One side of a beautiful upstairs bedroom. Note built-in closet. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)*



*A view of part of south side of Pine Hill showing contour of the roof and cornice work. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)*

## PINEHILL NAMED TO NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER

OREGON, Ill., Aug. 17, 1978—Pinehill, at the corner of Jackson and Mix Sts., was entered on the National Register of Historic Places on July 24, 1978, it was announced recently by Keith A. Sculle, Illinois National Register Coordinator. The home, built in 1874 by William Judd Mix, one of Oregon's first merchants, was chosen for its architectural significance as an example of the Italianate Country Villa style of architecture popular from 1860 through 1885.

Pinehill was officially named by an Oregon municipal ordinance in 1919 shortly after the Seyster family purchased the property. During the 1930's Somerset Maugham, internationally known author and poet was a frequent visitor at Pinehill. The present owners, George and Lois Fischer, purchased Pinehill two years ago and initiated proceedings to have it listed under the National Register Program of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

This is only the fifth property in Ogle County to be registered on the national list. The other properties are the John Deere Homestead, Grand Detour; Flagg Township Library, Rochelle; Holcomb House, Holcomb and Henry D. Barber Home, Polo. State preservation experts estimate that over 20 properties in Oregon are eligible for the National Register.

Listing on the National Register makes private owners eligible for federal grants-in-aid and federally secured loans for restoration and rehabilitation. Other protections and benefits are also available.

### PINEHILL

A brief history of the Property  
taken from  
Abstract of Deed

Jun 6, 1842—79.6 acres homesteaded from U.S. Gov. to Samuel D. Lockwood.

Mar 10, 1853—79.6 acres conveyed to Elias S. Potter for \$2,000.

May 27, 1853—Potter's addition becomes part of Oregon, IL, including Lots 25-26-27.

Feb 7, 1860—Elias S. Potter sells land to Henry A. Mix.

Sep 3, 1867—Henry Mix died, leaving property to Mary S. Mix, widow.

Apr 10, 1872—Lots 25-26-27 conveyed to William J. Mix.

Apr 20, 1872—Mix Street in front of property designated.

Sep 27, 1873—Lots 25-26-27 conveyed again to William J. Mix after clearing up a dispute.

1874—William J. Mix builds 17-room Victorian home.\*

Nov 14, 1889—Belle T. Mix sues William J. Mix for divorce, served in Jo Daviess County.

Dec 16, 1889—William J. Mix retains ownership of home and property for lump sum settlement of \$16,000.

Dec 28, 1891—William J. Mix sells property to Ezra J. Kailer, with \$7,500 mortgage as part of the consideration.

Mar 1, 1919—Emma & Ezra J. Kailer sell property to Thomas B. Seyster, an attorney, for \$15,000.

Aug 5, 1920—Thomas B. Seyster names property "PineHill Farm."

Oct 3, 1931—Thomas B. Seyster conveys property to I. C. Seyster and Ella M. Seyster, parents, as joint tenants, for \$10,000.

Apr 9, 1935—Ella M. Seyster, died, leaving property to her son Thomas B. Seyster.

Oct 1948—Thomas B. Seyster died.

Dec 28, 1948—Property sold by trustee to Stuart B. & Emma K. Lytle for unknown selling price.

Jun 1, 1966—Lytle's sell to Culligan-Dixon Water Conditioner Inc., an Illinois Corp. being purchased by Fred P. Louzon.

Jan 15, 1977—George & Lois Fischer purchase property.\*

\*Learned from other sources, but placed here for continuity purposes.

# Parks



*Compiled by Charles Mongan and Viola Myers.*

## **OREGON PARK DISTRICT**

*Submitted by Jim Grove*

The Oregon Park District was formed in December, 1966, and is located in central Ogle County. The district embodies two complete townships and portions of five other townships, a total of 97 square miles, serving a population of 6,550.

The original board of commissioners were Dick Davis, Anne Geiken, Frank Lupton, Dick Meyers and Jim Patrick. Jerry Garard served as the board's attorney at \$1 a year stipend.

Formed with the intent of building a swimming pool, referendums held in 1971, 1975 and 1976 were defeated.

A forward-looking park board saw an opportunity to annex the Commonwealth Edison Byron Nuclear Power Station and, after a series of court battles involving the Byron park district organizers and the Commonwealth Edison Co., Judge Alan Cargerman, in October of 1978

ruled on an election for the purpose of annexing the 525-acre Byron Station. The election was held on December 16, 1978 and the district overwhelmingly voted to annex the plant by a 713-20 vote.

At that time, the office of the Park District was located above the National Clothing Store in the old Fearer & Nye offices. They then rented space in the Ruby Nash School and in November, 1982 purchased the school, which is located at 304 S. 5th St., Oregon. The original building was built in 1896 with additions built in 1913 and 1949.

In June of 1983, a Citizen's Advisory Committee was formed to determine the needs of the citizenry and a new pool was the unanimous choice.

In August of 1984, the Park Board unanimously approved construction of a new indoor recreation facility

at an approximate cost of \$1,750,000, and in September of 1984, the 1896 and 1913 buildings of Nash were demolished; the 1949 building remains and houses the district's executive offices, kitchen, exercise room, gym and stage. The new facility (area) encompasses a 25-meter, 6-lane heated pool, whirlpool, two racquetball/handball courts, multi-purpose room, locker rooms, snack bar area, sundeck, greenhouse, and an information/reception area.

On December 30, 1985, the Nash Recreation Center was officially opened with a Grand Opening and Dedication on March 16, 1986.

In addition to the new Nash Rec Center the Oregon Park District owns and manages seven park sites which total 103 acres. Facilities include four lighted tennis courts, four ball diamonds (two lighted), three playgrounds, three picnic areas.

The district offers more than 120 recreation programs annually for all ages. The district also operates seven sports leagues and have over 6500 participants in the programs yearly.

The district has an assessed valuation of \$369,825,417 and a current annual budget of \$575,000. There are ten full-time employees and over thirty seasonal or part-time employees.

Current (1987) Board of Commissioners are Tom Corcoran, Pres.; Carol Daniels, Vice President; David Smith, Tim O'Rourke and Helen Drozd. James R. Grove serves as the Executive Director.

## **HISTORY/OREGON PARK DISTRICT PARKS**

*JOHN PHELPS PARK*, West Jefferson Street: The district's first park was purchased from the Oregon School District in 1971 for the purpose of constructing an outdoor swimming pool and tennis court complex. After several tax referendums failed, the pool construction was postponed and the tennis courts were constructed in 1975-76. Several classes from Jefferson School planted the shrubs around the courts in the spring of 1976. The park is currently used for tennis, soccer, T-ball and school district physical education classes. The park's name (John Phelps) was the result of a district-wide name-the-park contest. John Phelps was the founder of Oregon.

*OREGON PARK EAST*, River Road: The first LARGE park was leased from the Illinois Dept. of Conservation for several years before it was deeded over to the park district from the State of Illinois in March of 1979. The district entered into a cooperative development program called a Resource, Conservation & Development Measure Plan with the United States Dept. of Agriculture in 1980. This \$300,000 development project began in 1982 as a multi-year project that was completed in the fall of 1985. The park is "home" to the district's Leon Gasmund League baseball teams and hosts the district's first and longest continuous special event, the Annual Easter Egg Hunt. The park's most unique feature is the 'Overlook', which was constructed on the east bank of the Rock River adjacent to the Oregon Dam.

*SARA WADE PARK*, 500 block, N. 5th Street: Wade Park was leased from Dr. Harry Wade in the fall of 1979 for the purpose of developing a small neighborhood park for residents north of Route 64. The park is named for the daughter of Dr. Harry and Joy Wade. This is the smallest (.3 acre) park and is the only leased park. The playground equipment represents the district's first playground and also a cooperative project with neighborhood residents who assisted in the design and installation.

*OREGON PARK WEST*, Oregon Trail Road: This is the district's largest and currently the least developed park. It was purchased from the Ballard family in 1980 and has been changed from a 41-acre field into groomed parkland with several hundred trees and a softball diamond. Sixteen acres of the site are underdeveloped and the twenty-five acres are being developed into a community park with the assistance of an Illinois Dept. of Conservation grant. The park development is scheduled for completion by the fall of 1988.

*VETERAN'S FIELD*, 700 S. 10th Street: This park was developed as an adult softball facility by the City of Oregon in 1980 and the park district purchased it along with Lion's Park in 1982 for \$15,000. Approximately twenty acres of the park are leased for farmland because the area is prone to flooding.

*LION'S PARK*, 809 Webster: (*Information submitted by Wilbur Knutson*) In 1965 the Oregon Lion's Club was in search of a community project. It was the Oregon Development Association who gave the Lion's Club the opportunity to plan the block of land 360 feet long by 264 feet wide, located to the south of Webster Street and east of Tenth Street, as a playground for the young people of Oregon. On March 1, 1966 the plans for the shelter and park area were completed and approved by the Lion's Club. The Oregon Development Association had signed an agreement to lease the land to the Club. If the area was completely developed according to the plans, in seven years they would give the land.

The first thing to be done was to bring in fill. The west end of the block was about the same elevation as Lake Mistake. The top soil was moved to the east side of the area and the future park became a dumping ground for the City of Oregon, including Rockford Blacktop who were resurfacing streets in the city. Clyde Myers also delivered many yards of fill at \$1.00 per yard. Finally, the fill was leveled off and the top soil returned. Trees were planted, grass seed was sowed and the playground equipment was installed. Dutch Masters did the plumbing for the shelter and Max Newcomer did the construction. The ball diamond was laid out and the back-stop erected. The plan included one double tennis court with room for a second one. At the time Mix Park was well equipped with a tennis program, so the courts were traded for lights on the ball diamond. Commonwealth Edison furnished the poles and Ron Fafnis was responsible for setting the poles and doing the wiring.

May 30, 1969 the Lion's Park Shelter was dedicated in a public ceremony in memory of Cpl. Harmon S. Stone,

JR. who was born in 1947 and was killed in Vietnam in 1967. He was the son of Harmon Stone, who donated the flag pole in his honor. John B. Anderson gave the dedication speech, the Oregon VFW Post 8739 gave and presented the flag in the flag-raising ceremony and the Oregon VFW Women's Auxiliary also participated in the ceremony. Harry Wade, Mayor of the City of Oregon, accepted the shelter in behalf of the city. There is a bronze plaque on the north side of the shelter which was made and donated by Progressive Graphics. The names on the plaque are those who by their donation helped make the project possible.

Six years and \$17,600 later the Lion's Park project was completed. The Oregon Development Association officially dedicated the real estate and the improvements to the City of Oregon at the March 10, 1972 meeting of the City Council. Fred Deeth, Development Association President, and E. M. Weyrauch, Association Secretary-Treasurer, participated in the ceremony along with Mayor Wade, Douglas Sutton, City Commissioner, and Lion's Club President Chrissie Martin and Wilbur Knutson of the Lion's Club. Under the terms of the dedication, the Lions conveyed the park and its improvements to the City with the agreement that the City maintain the property and add items as might be found advisable in the future. The land is to be used for a Park only and it will be known in perpetuity as Lion's Park.

On March 8, 1982, the City of Oregon with James Barnes as Mayor, sold the Park to the Oregon Park District.

## **CASTLE ROCK STATE PARK**

### ***From State Department of Conservation Bulletin***

Castle Rock State Park is located three miles south of Oregon on Highway 2. The park is very representative of the Rock River Hills area with spectacular rock formations, deep ravines, and unique northern plant associations. A sandstone butte, adjacent to the river, has given the park its name.

Illinois Indian tribes inhabited the region until 1730 when the Sauk and Fox tribes, who were being forced westward by the colonists, invaded and inhabited the region. The Indians called the river in the new territory "Sinnissippi," meaning "rocky waters."

In the early 1800s the Indians were again forced westward into Iowa. In 1831, Blackhawk, the Sauk chief, led his people in a series of raids back into Illinois to reclaim their ancestral lands. The battles that followed were known as the Blackhawk Indian wars. Chief Blackhawk was captured in 1832 and ordered to a reservation.

The Castle Rock area was settled by New Englanders early in the 19th century. This area was proposed as a state park in 1921 by the "Friends of Our Native Landscape," and they were able to acquire some of the land they described as "a unique wilderness remnant of great natural beauty and scientific interest." In 1964, the Natural Lands Institute, a non-profit natural lands preservation group, conducted a public fund-raising campaign

to preserve part of the Castle Rock area.

Castle Rock was recognized by the Department of Conservation as an outstanding area of major scientific importance in 1965. It was established as a project area, and land acquisition by DOC was started in 1970. A master management plan for the development of Castle Rock was initiated by the Department of Conservation and signed in 1980.

At the present time, Castle Rock consists of approximately 2,036 acres, 710 of which are designated as an Illinois Nature Preserve. The site was dedicated as a State Park on August 29, 1978.

The basis for the acquisition of Castle Rock State Park is the protection of natural resources that are unique to Illinois. A thin layer of glacial till covers this region and several distinctive plant species, remnants of the native forest and prairie, still exist. In one valley, 27 different types of ferns have been identified. The park is one of the largest significant natural areas in the northern part of Illinois. Most of the outstanding natural features are located in the dedicated Nature Preserve which is protected by state law. Use of the 710-acre preserve will be restricted to scientific study and limited interpretation activities.

The planned development of Castle Rock centers around the Nature Preserve. All development is limited by soil types. Soil types consist of silt loams and fine sandy loams which are connected with the general high degree of slopes which limit use and development at Castle Rock. These soils are subject to severe erosion under heavy use.

Castle Rock is a large sandstone butte situated between the Rock River and Highway 2. The rock is made up of St. Peter Sandstone. There are only a few places in the state where St. Peter Sandstone comes to the surface even though it underlies practically the entire state of Illinois.

There are three picnic areas available for use with shelters, picnic tables, playground equipment, grills, toilets and drinking water. There are also scattered tables for use along the river. Two of the picnic areas offer a beautiful view over the Rock River Valley. The Old Orchard Picnic Area does provide facilities for the handicapped such as tables, grills, and toilets.

There are four miles of marked hiking trails developed at this time. These trails offer the opportunity to view woodland animals and birds that inhabit the park. The trails' scenic views also offer many chances for photographers to sharpen their skills. More trails are planned with park development. Cross-country skiing and tobogganing are also available when weather permits.

The park offers 1½ miles of bank fishing along Rock River. There is a boat ramp available for public use. Boat size is limited due to the varying depth of the river. The most commonly caught fish is the catfish, but some bass, northern, walleye, and crappie may be taken. A small fishing area for handicapped persons is available. The park also has a canoe camp area available along the river.

Limited hunting is allowed on park property during

designated months. From September 15 to October 15 squirrel hunting is allowed. From November 1 to December 31 deer hunting with bows and arrows is allowed. Deer hunting during the first three days of the shotgun season is allowed on the 580-acre tract that may be developed in to a campground at a later date.

Projected development at Castle Rock includes more picnic areas and a campground. The development of the campground will be limited to keep the area in its natural setting and will also include primitive tent campsites. More trails will be developed which will link various areas of the park, and signs will guide pedestrians through the park. A nature trail is also planned through the Dedicated Nature Preserve. A new boat launch and concession are also in the future plans.

## **LOWDEN MEMORIAL STATE PARK**

### ***Taken from THE 1987 RANGER***

What distinguishes Lowden Memorial State Park from other parks in the northern Illinois area is its rich history.

Lowden boasted an artist's colony for nearly 50 years; even today the park showcases the work of famous sculptor Lorado Taft. Many of the colony's buildings still stand, now part of Northern Illinois University's field campus.

The park area was purchased in 1898 by Wallace Heckman, a distinguished Chicago attorney, and for many years the business manager of the University of Chicago.

When he and his wife were students at Hillsdale College in southern Michigan, they developed a great love for the out-of-doors and for those, who through their artistry, were able to pass on this beauty to others.

The Heckmans, as patrons of the arts, invited a group of Chicago artists to use the site and assisted in providing a number of cabins. The colony was called "Eagle's Nest" from a tall, gaunt dead cedar tree clinging to the high river bank upon which eagles once nested.

The tree, with its bare, outstretched limbs, was the inspiration which promoted Margaret Fuller, well-known poet of the Concord Group, to write her famous poem, "Ganymede to His Eagle."

Among the members of the original group were artists Ralph Clarkson, Charles Francis Browne and Oliver Dennet Grover; writers Hamlin Garland, Henry B. Fuller and Horace Spencer Fiske; architects Irving K. and Allen B. Pond; Sculptors Lorado Taft and Nellie Walker; organist Clarence Dickinson and Secretary of the University of Chicago, James Spencer Dickerson.

Lorado Taft was the moving spirit behind the colony, and although he died in 1936, the colony flourished until 1942.

The park is named for Governor Frank O. Lowden, the World War I Illinois statesman. Following the Governor's death in 1943, the Illinois Legislature appropriated \$25,000 toward the cost of the memorial to him. Anticipating the adoption of the park an ideal memorial, the citizens of Oregon and vicinity, along with an allotment

from the Division of Parks and Memorials, matched that amount.

Authorized by the 63rd General Assembly as a memorial, the 207-acre plot became Lowden State Park in 1945.

The park offers 78 campsites with electricity and seven walk-in sites for tent camping. There are no showers at this time, but recent construction includes handicapped accessible restrooms.

Besides the park's abundant natural beauty, visitors will find one baseball diamond, one basketball court, one volleyball court, two horseshoe courts and 120 picnic tables to help them pass their time.

Drinking water, park stoves, outdoor toilets and litter cans are provided near convenient parking lots. Winter picnicking is permitted and a water hydrant is available.

Camping areas with vehicular access (except during thawing periods) have limited electricity and a sanitary station for trailers. A refreshment stand is open during the warm summer months.

Group camping is also available; groups of more than 25 persons must have advance permission to enter the park. All campers need a permit from the park staff.

Natural wonders and unique park features are easily reached by nearly four miles of good foot trails. The Rock River flows 34 miles through Ogle County, with an average mid-summer depth of three feet. Adjacent to the park, a launching ramp with boat docks accommodates boaters.

Motor and water skiing are allowed, but swimming is not permitted. Boat fishermen will find large mouth and small mouth bass, bluegill, sunfish, croppie, channel catfish, northern and walleye pike, bullhead, carp, sucker and drum.

Park hours are generally from sunup to sundown. The park encompasses 207 timbered acres, predominately oak, hickory, maple, box elder and cherry.

The campground is closed only in March and April, when thawing conditions make it practically impossible for large recreation vehicles to enter the park.

The park boasts many different wild animals, including wild deer, raccoon, fox and groundhog. Dr. Max Shank, ornithologist from the University of Illinois at Chicago brings a class of students to the park each summer to do some birdwatching. At present, Shank has documented everything from hawks to relatively rare woodpecker types, more than 225 in all.

More than 50 different types of trees exist harmoniously in the park, offering extensive shade and varying hues of green. A list of the local flora states that there are 301 different species that have existed or currently exist at the park.

More than 400,000 visitors pass through Lowden Memorial State Park each year. Park Superintendent Leroy Hayes reports that the busiest times for his staff are Memorial Day weekend and the first weekend in October. Those who come in the fall are interested in seeing Lowden's gorgeous suit of autumnal colors.



Another point of interest for Lowden's visitors is the Northern Illinois University field campus. In August, 1951, a 66-acre area, formerly known as the "Eagle's Nest" colony, was transferred to NIU. The location is now known as the Lorado Taft Field Campus, and is used for year-round natural science courses in an outdoor educational program. Most existing buildings were renovated by Industrial Arts classes and now serve as a center for outdoor teacher education.

The Field Campus provides lodging and study facilities for students and conference groups. There are three dormitories, a dining hall and a small clinic. A well-equipped library, research laboratory and craft shop are situated in the Taft House.

*Editorial note:* The Blackhawk statue is located in Lowden Park, Details of construction, etc. can be found in "River" section of this book.

## WHITE PINES FOREST STATE PARK

### *Information from Department of Conservation*

White Pines Forest State Park is about eight miles west of Oregon. During the pioneer days the blacktop road forming the south boundary of the 385-acre park was the old Chicago-Iowa Trail, for years the principal route east and west across this part of the state.

While developing the park for visitor's recreational use, the state has preserved its native charm and protected the virgin pine stand, the southern-most of its kind in the midwest.

Early Ogle County settlers found this forest along the east bank of Pine Creek extending back a quarter of a mile and covering an area of 700 acres. With a view toward preserving Illinois' last stand of white pines for future generations, a movement to set aside the area as a state park was started in the early part of the twentieth century.

Through efforts of Ogle County nature lovers, a bill appropriating \$30,000 for purchase of the land was passed by the legislature in 1903, but the measure was vetoed. It was not until 1927 that the forest was acquired for a state park.

The vicinity of White Pines Forest State Park, in the heart of the Blackhawk country, is rich in historic associations with the brave warrior who resisted for so long the efforts of the white man to drive his people from their beloved Rock River Valley.

Most of the park is an ideal habitat for the white pines. Moss-covered cliffs, decorated with trailing vines, are mingled with many hardwood such as maple, ash, elm, oak, basswood, and hickory. Bright blossoming flowers include trout lily, Solomon's seal, bloodroot, blue-eyed grass, spring beauty, and hepatica. Many common species of fur-bearing animals and birds can be viewed in the varied topography of the park. Red squirrels, raccoon, opossum, and chipmunk range this territory. Among birds are the pine finch and pine warbler, and in the winter there are many northern species.

Because of the turbulent water in rainy weather, fords

rather than bridges have been constructed along the roadway through the interior of the park.

## Facilities

There are several picnic areas along Pine Creek with water, fireplaces and tables. No cooking may be done except on park or camp stoves. Playground equipment is also available.

In addition to tent sites, the park offers a few trailer sites and a trailer disposal. Class C sites, with vehicular access, are available. The fee is based on one unit per site. All campers must obtain a permit from the park staff. Youth group camping is also available; all groups of 25 or more persons must have advance permission to enter the park. Soft ground and high water may close the campground at times.

Sledding on the rolling hills is a popular winter pastime. Cross-country skiing is also enjoyed.

The park lodge is open to the public from April 1 to November 1. Open on weekends in November and closed December 1. The rustic lodge houses a lounge in one wing with appropriate colorful Indian work. The other wing houses an attractive dining room. Thirteen one-room log cabins and three four-room cabins, equipped with bath/showers, heat, and air conditioning are available for overnight visitors.

The lodge and cabins are operated on the European plan with the price of meals separate from the room rates.

Many miles of foot trails wind through the stand of virgin pines and along the crest of the bluff in the west end of the park.



Mix Park, across from Alfano Pizza. (photo by Donna Kennedy)

Mix Park is a block square that lays between Third and Fourth Street and south of Webster and North of Gale.

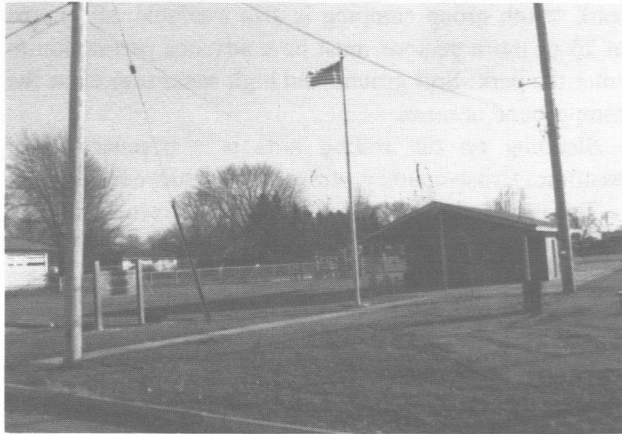
In 1920 Lyda Mix Slagle and her husband gave the land to the city with the stipulation that it remain free and open to the public.

The dwelling that faced Fourth Street and was in the middle of the block was removed. It is now located on the northeast corner of Fourth Street and Adams Street.

The landscaping was done by Thomas Seyster with

funds donated by Lucretia Benedict and "The fountain (two boys with dolphins) was created by Lorado Taft after figures in his Fountain of Great Lakes in Chicago and was erected to the memory of Mr. and Mrs. Ruel Mared Peabody, pioneers who came to this area in 1836. The fountain was the gift of Mrs. Emma O'Byrne, Oregon." From the Bicentennial History of Ogle County

The playground equipment was installed by the Woman's Club and recently basketball facilities have been installed under the direction of the City Council. (photo by Donna Kennedy)



Lions Park. (photo by Donna Kennedy)

Lions Park is at the southeast corner of Webster and Tenth Streets. It is part of the old George Snyder farm or "Commercial Farm" and was a gift to the Lions Club by the Oregon Development Corporation to be developed as a ball park in the 1950's.

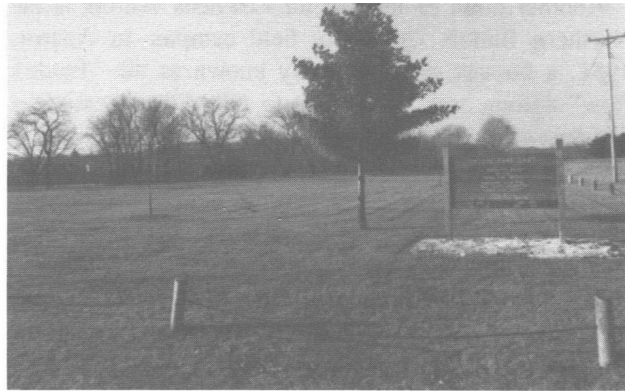
The Lions Club presented this park to the city in 1969 and dedicated it as a memorial to Corp. Harmon S. Stone, Jr. who was killed in Vietnam.

This then was purchased by the Park District in March 1982.



John Phelps Park. (photo by Donna Kennedy)

John Phelps Park once was agricultural. It is adjacent to the Oregon school ground on the west side and was purchased by the Park District from the school district in November 1971. In 1975-76 four lighted tennis courts were built.



Park East. (photo by Donna Kennedy)

Park East—along the river on the east side of the dam was acquired by a deed from the State of Illinois in March 1979. It was put in the Resource Conservation Plan by the Park District. The cooperative project consisted of the Oregon Park District, Blackhawk Hills RC&D, Ogle County Soil & Water Conservation District of the United States Soil Conservation District.

It has two shelters, a playground plus an overlook spot of the Oregon dam, and access to river bank fishing.



Sara Wade Park. (photo by Donna Kennedy)

Sara Wade Park on North Fifth Street has been leased by the Park District from the Dr. Harry Wade family since October 1979.

It is two city lots in size ( $\frac{1}{3}$  acre) and has been equipped with playground equipment. As of now it is the only park in the north end of Oregon and was named after Dr. Wade's daughter who died in early adulthood.



Vet's Field. Ball diamond behind Pineway supermarket. (photo by Donna Kennedy)

Vet's Field, part of the Commercial Farm on the west side of 10th Street is across the road from Lions Park. It consists of 33 acres that was purchased from the Oregon Development Assn. by the City of Oregon for recreational purposes. The present ball park was established in 1980.

The name was suggested by a citizen and the Council adopted it.

This park was also purchased by the Park District in March of 1982 with the Lions Park.



*Park West. (photo by Donna Kennedy)*

Park West is 41 acres west of the Koontz Subdivision that was purchased in October 1980 from Arthur Ballard and his brother's heirs by the Park District.

They have planted 1200 trees and have a natural prairie area.

The plans are for a ball diamond, hiking and bicycle paths, picnic areas, toilets, and a sledding hill.

### **THE SANDSUCKER HOLE**

*Provided by Clifford Steeves; originally from Nova Scotia; graduate student at Lorado Taft Field Campus; now living in Canada.*

Are there man-sized catfish in the Sandsucker Hole? This question remains a mystery to local residents who remember the large deep hole lying along the river bank just back of Water Street.

The Sandsucker Hole was the name given to the sand and gravel operation that used to operate along the Rock River. Conco was a sand and gravel company which operated from about 1918-1936. The location of the Sandsucker Hole is about ½ mile south of the bridge crossing the Rock River on Route 64 at Oregon.

Why call it the Sandsucker Hole? The basis of the operation was to suck sand and gravel from the bottom of the river and load it into gondola railroad cars located along the bank. Local people have estimated the hole to be 50-60 feet deep; some say 80 feet, while others feel it could be up to 90 feet deep. The hole extends along the river for about 400-500 feet, or about the length of a city block, and extends out about ½ the width of the river.

The river provided an excellent source of sand and gravel, which was apparently the result of glacial outwash

(the fine material washed out at the end of a melting glacier). This material was used in several local projects including the road bed for Illinois Route 2 and 64, the first Mud Creek bridge, as well as sewer and water projects. Conco also shipped many loads of mason sand to Iowa for brick and stone work.

Transport of the material was provided by the Burlington Railroad siding or spur line running up to the piano factory (now Conover Square), as well as a small narrow gauge (30") railroad line that ran up Webster Street all the way along 6th Street to the Fair grounds. This narrow gauge line continued all the way to Byron and was used to lay the road bed for the Blackhawk Trail which was Illinois Route 2. After the highway was put in, trucks hauled sand and gravel after the narrow gauge tracks were taken up. However, loads of only 1 or 2 yards at a time were all that early trucks could haul.

The dredging-like process began on the river where a series of pontoon boats were anchored offshore and held a 6-8" pipe that extended out into the river. Sections of pipe about 8' long were added as needed to increase the length of the line which sank to the bottom from its own weight as well as the force of the current. When enough sections of pipe were added, the end was attached to an electric pump which was located on shore.

As the rocks came out of the pipe, they landed on a conveyer. Two men sat on either side of the conveyer and picked out any large rocks, sticks, and shells, by hand. From here the material was dropped onto screens which separated the rock into three sizes. Then it was elevated into three wooden bins by way of a chain-link bucket conveying system. The wooden bins had vertical doors that opened into a chute that led directly into gondola cars sitting on the railroad siding. A string of about 50 cars were loaded and then taken away by the Switch engine of the Burlington Railroad.

Originally, the sand and gravel was loaded into smaller hopper cars and hauled by a small gasoline powered engine along 6th Street and north out of town as the road construction continued. It took several weeks to get the pontoon boats ready, beginning as soon as the ice left the river, usually in early to mid-March. The boats had to be waterproofed with calking, the lines had to be checked, and the pump had to be tuned up for the season. All that remains along the river now are two old foundations and a short 16' stretch of narrow gauge track. Of course the original siding is still in use today.

The Sandsucker was a great swimming hole by all reports, but it has taken its toll, as several drownings have occurred there. "No Swimming" signs were erected by Conco but did not seem to deter the local residents, although most of them knew of the dangers of swimming in such a deep hole with its treacherous currents.

Some residents have suggested that giant man-sized catfish have been spotted by divers and have been living at the bottom of the hole, for perhaps over 50 years. It was reported that no divers will enter the area because of the danger. Today it is estimated that the hole is about

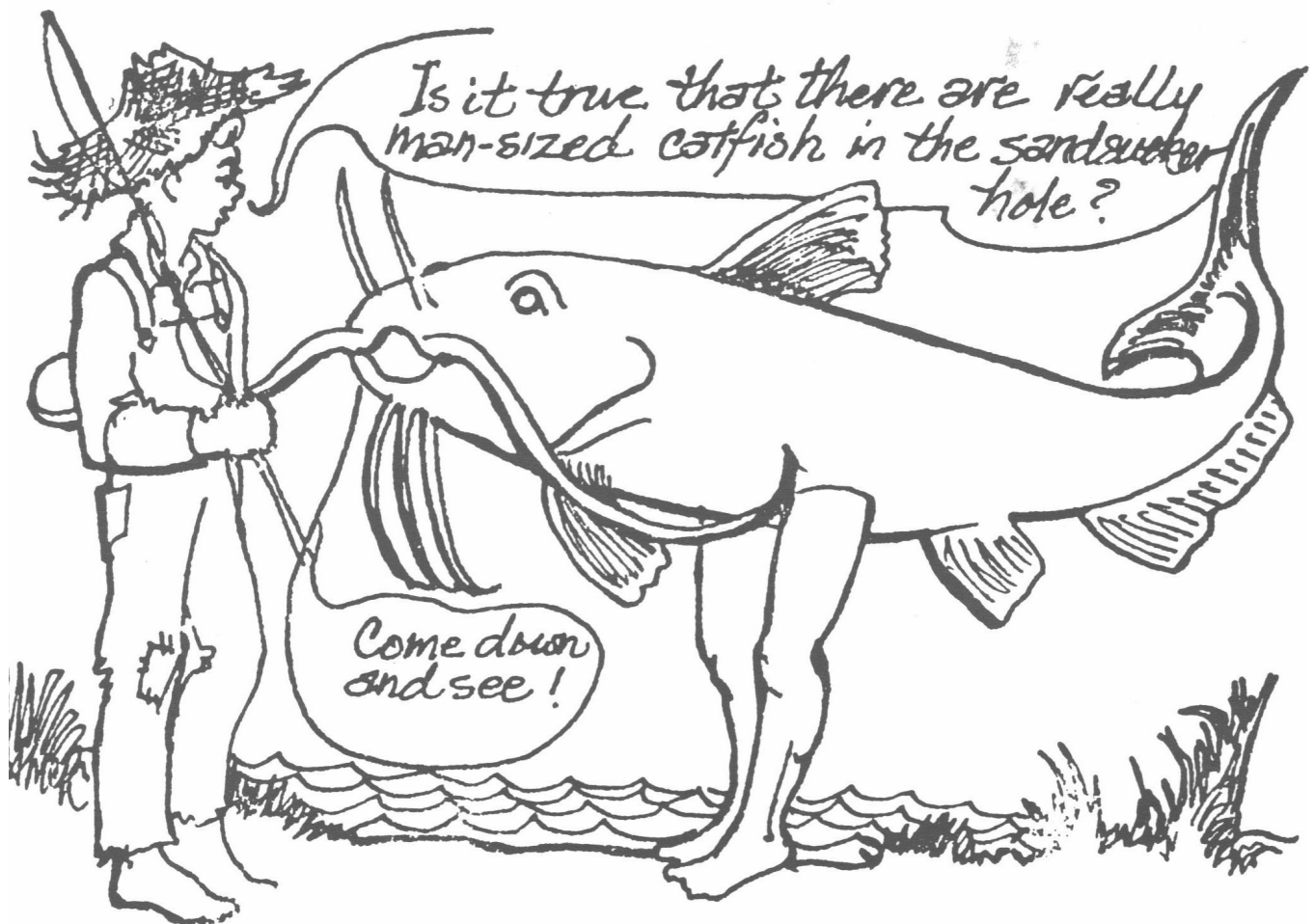
40' deep after having filled in over the years.

Commercial use of the site stopped when new gravel pits opened, making the site too expensive to operate. A second reason was that the Burlington Railroad stopped Conco from working there for fear of damage to the railroad bridge. As it was located just down stream, the Railroad felt that the dredging operation might cause damage to the piers holding the bridge up.

The City of Oregon has recently purchased the land along the river adjacent to the Sandsucker Hole. Perhaps

the local Historical Society will look into considering this area as a Historical Site. The outstanding natural beauty of the river with huge old oak trees standing by, provide the area with a tremendous amount of potential as a city park. This would make the site more attractive to visitors, as the area is well suited to picnicing, jogging, biking, walking, and fishing.

Perhaps, one day, the mystery of the giant catfish will be resolved to add still another chapter to the Sandsucker Hole and Oregon's history.



# Autumn on Parade



*Kathryn Gelander was 1986 Honorary Parade Marshal. Her sons, Ralph and Steve shared the honors. Kathryn, an authority on local history, also is a poet, has been a newspaper reporter and editor. She is also a talented painter and had enjoyed playing the piano. Kathryn named Oregon's fall festival "Autumn on Parade" 15 years ago, and helped design the new flag for the City of Oregon. (Rep. Rep. photo)*

## AUTUMN ON PARADE

By Bette Landers

Oregon held its 16th Annual Autumn on Parade Festival October 4 and 5, 1986. It was started as a means to promote the beauty of Oregon and the Rock River Valley.

The first year, only seven booths displayed their homegrown and homemade products.

Over the years, the Festival has developed in both content and popularity to host more than 120 exhibitors.

Among the many recreation and cultural events are the Old English Banquet at Stronghold Castle, "Livin' on the River", an original musical production highlighting Oregon's History, Flag Ceremonies each day in front of the courthouse, authentic Indian dances and demonstrations, Historical Art Show at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Pioneer Craft Show and demonstrations, Madrigal Singers, Blue Grass Music, Scottish Bagpipes, music by the

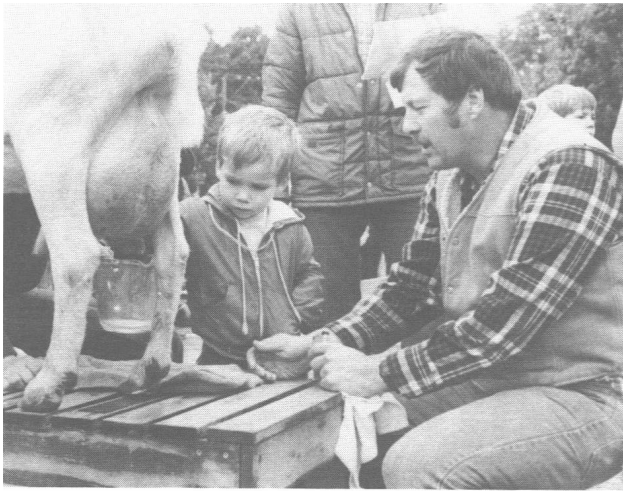
students from Oregon Bible College, square dancing, and The All City Band.

The Ogle County Historical Museum is open to the public both days.

Once a year Stronghold Castle welcomes guests for a tour of the facilities. Hundreds visit the castle on this weekend.

Family fun is planned at Nash Recreation Center which includes a milking derby, A.O.P. 500 big wheel race, pennies in the straw, parent-child sack races, and a greased pig scramble.

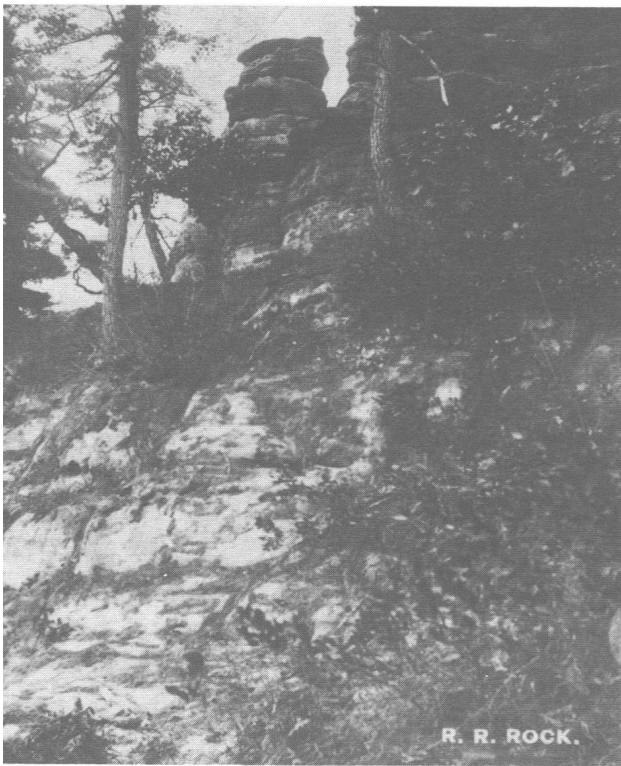
On the courthouse square there are children's pony rides, a kiddies' space pillow, many food stands and craft booths. People begin work on next year's items almost as soon as this weekend is over.



*"Now son, this is how it works"—The goat milking contest is always a challenge, and sometimes the results are less than profitable. (Rep. Rep. photo)*



*School days, school days, dear old golden rule days . . . One of the scenes from "Livin' on the River." (Rep. Rep. photo)*



*Blackhawk's Pulpit near the Railroad Bridge. (Courtesy of Ogle County Republican Reporter)*



*Keri Ziegler portrays the heroine in "Livin' on the River." Dr. David Anderson was the nasty villain. (Rep. Rep. photo)*



*"But I can't pay the rent", says the heroine, Keri Zeigler to the mean villain, Dave Anderson. Scott Dexter, the hero saves the damsel in distress. (Rep. Rep. photo)*



*The Can-Can dancers were a big hit in "Livin' on the River." (Rep. Rep. photo)*



*Mayor Jim Barnes and wife, Barbara walking in the parade. (Donna Kennedy photo)*



The rain didn't stop Mike Leitz and his mother Clarice from selling popcorn. (Donna Kennedy photo)



Prairie Crafts were seen at the Oregon Coliseum during Autumn on Parade. (Rep. Rep. photo)



Pony rides are always fun. (Donna Kennedy photo)



The greased pig scramble was for ages two to adults. These "squealers" are not going to let those kids get them. (Rep. Rep. photo)



The Madrigal Singers from Hoffman Estates High School sang for Autumn on Parade visitors. (Donna Kennedy photo)



The A.O.P. 500 Big Wheel Race is always a challenge. Perhaps this little guy doesn't know the meaning of "right of way," or else the "little miss" has decided to "cut him off at the pass." (Rep. Rep. photo)



*This young lad has found a treasure, while his little friends are still searching in one of the many activities planned at Nash Rec Center. This was called Pennies in the Straw. (Rep. Rep. photo)*



*Members of the Scottish Bagpipers carry the sign that tells it all. (Rep. Rep. photo)*



*Hundreds of people braved the cold, rainy day to visit the many craft booths in downtown Oregon on Saturday October 4th. (Rep. Rep. photo)*



*Craft booth was covered to protect against inclement weather. (Rep. Rep. photo)*

One of the biggest food stands is the one that the Oregon Methodist Women have—they sell apple fritters. One year they sold 800 fritters. Can you imagine how much work went into that project?

The Lions Club serves a pork chop barbecue, the Boy Scouts Troop 81 sells hot dogs—Oregon Booster Club prepares a chicken barbecue, the Jaycees their usual great brats, Kiwanis —barbecues, Knights of Columbus make yummy funnel cakes—Rock River Women have a taco stand, Explorer Scouts sell hamburgers, Boy Scout Troop 52—chili dogs, Masonic Lodge, chili, and the Tri-County Sheep Association sold lambburgers. This year the folks of the First Presbyterian Church served a turkey dinner with all the yummy trimmings.

All the food stands reported great results, and with the rainy weather people seemed to want to eat all day long on Saturday.

The Harvest Time Parade is one of the best in the midwest and usually has over 120 units taking part. One of the highlights is our parade marshal or marshals. Truly an honor for those chosen. In 1973 we were most honored to have Judy Ford Johnson, Miss America.

- 1975 Dr. Lambertus Warmolts
- 1976 Horace and Mary Etnyre
- 1977 Charles and Jennie Mongan
- 1978 Gerald and Harriett Garard
- 1979 Harry and Nell Franklin. Ferne Burrigh was also honored.

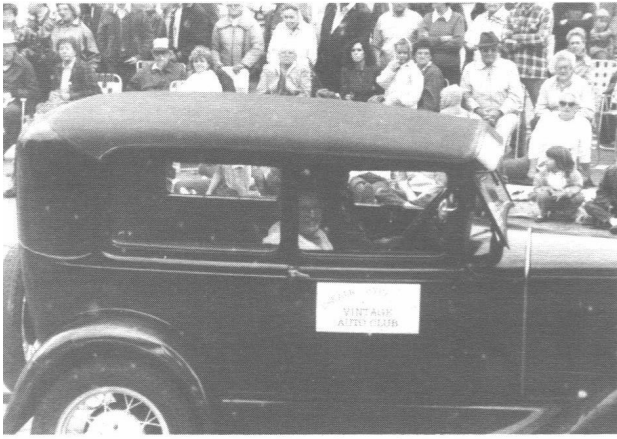
1980 Indian Princess Jessica Peterson (Chief Blackhawk's great-granddaughter).

- 1981 Coach Paul Holland and his wife Betty
- 1982 Emily Taft Douglas
- 1983 Sherman Landers accompanied by his daughter Sally Buffum

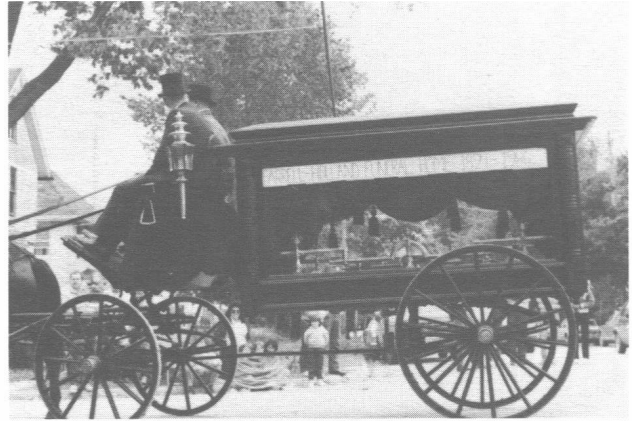
1984 Ferne Burrigh and Dr. Warmolts  
1985 Florence Lowden Miller and Harriett Lowden Madlener

1986 Kathryn Gelande, accompanied by her sons Ralph and Steve





One of the old cars in the Harvest Time Parade. (Rep. Rep. photo)



An old-fashioned hearse driven by Neil Holland and Geerd Fruin was truly the center of attention at the parade. The hearse and horse hitch both won first prizes. (Donna Kennedy photo)



Squire Sheeley always creates interest with his special pets. (Donna Kennedy photo)



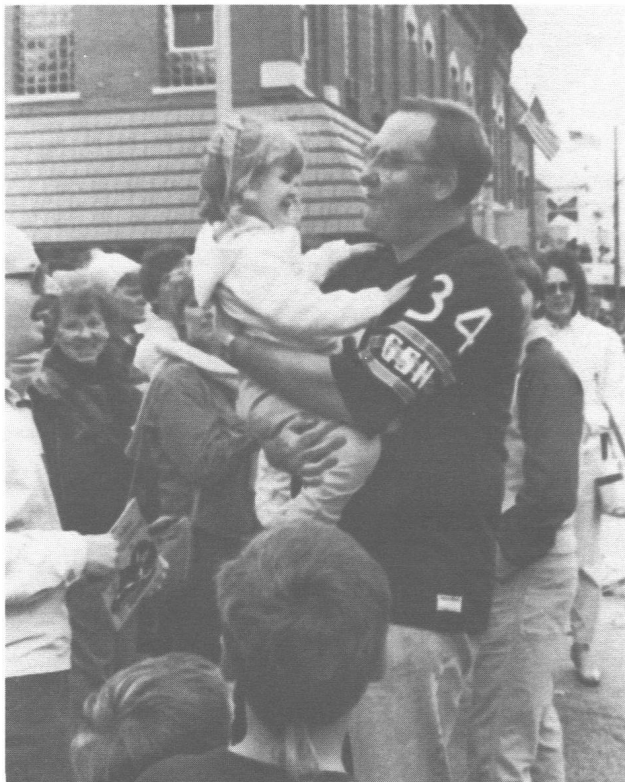
Big boys and little boys always enjoy a clown. Matt Seger of Oregon and B.J. Kapla of Chicago. (Lynne Kilker photo)



The Harvest Time Parade in 1982 was truly graced with the appearance of Emily Taft Douglas. (Viola Myers photo)



*Brownie Scouts wearing all Girl Scout uniforms in the 1986 parade. (Donna Kennedy photo)*



*Governor James Thompson gives young parade watcher a hug. The Governor and his wife, Jayne walked the parade route greeting their constituents. (Rep. Rep. photo)*



*Crisp, cool weather was the order of the day for the Harvest Time Parade, which enabled these Etyre Middle School Band marchers to put on a great performance. (Rep. Rep. photo)*



*The Freeport Chapter of Viet Now was welcomed with much applause. (Rep. Rep. photo)*



*Even Ronald Reagan's look alike was in the parade. (Rep. Rep. photo)*



*Ferne Burrignt was honored in 1984. (Rep. Rep. photo)*



*Here are the Lowden sisters at a very young age. Harriett on the left and Florence. The hugs tell it all. (Nancy Miller photo)*



*The Great Lakes Naval Band is always sharp. (Rep. Rep. photo)*



*1985 Grand Marshals were Florence Lowden Miller and her sister, Harriet Lowden Madlener. (Nancy Miller photo)*



*Sherman Landers of Philadelphia, PA., and former Oregon resident was parade marshal in 1983. His daughter Sally Buffum accompanied him. (Viola Myers photo)*

Usually over 20,000 people are in our town on Sunday. It takes hours of hard work by many people to make Autumn on Parade the success it always is. Who could have known sixteen years ago that it would grow to be one of the biggest and best festivals in Illinois? We have had beautiful sunny fall weekends and many cold, rainy, windy ones, such as this year, but spirits weren't dampened and all the activities went on as usual, though sunshine would have been welcomed.

The one thing different this year was due to the inclement weather we had for two weeks preceding, the craft and food booths that had been on the courthouse square for 15 years, moved their wares onto Jefferson and Fifth Streets. Many worried that this would not work out, but from all reports the majority took it in stride, and thought it worked out great.

This writer has never missed one Autumn on Parade weekend, and has always been involved in many of the activities. That's truly what its all about . . . caring and sharing.

Our town may be small but the people are hard workers and have big hearts. This is what it takes to make Autumn on Parade memorable for all throughout the year.



*Parade Marshals in 1977 were Charles and Jennie Mongan. (Charles Mongan photo)*



*In 1978 Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Garard acted as parade marshals. Mr. Garard was an Oregon lawyer for many years. (Viola Myers photo)*



*Coach Paul Holland and his wife, Betty shared the honors on the reviewing stand in 1981. (Viola Myers photo)*



*Of great interest to parade watchers in 1980 was Blackhawk's great granddaughter, Indian Princess Jessica Paterson. Princess Jessica was escorted to the reviewing stand by Mayor Barnes. (Viola Myers photo)*



*Paul Hardesty, Bertha Hedrick, Marilyn Schwartz, Ethel Hardesty, Daniel Schwartz and Dick Kilker enjoy the parade together. (Lynne Kilker photo)*



*Parade Watchers*



*The Franklin family in the touring car—Pat and John, Harry (who was Parade Marshal in 1979) and his wife Nell. (Nell Franklin photo)*



*Dr. Lambertus Warmolts, Oregon's "special" doctor for many years, was driven by John Snapp in his horse carriage in the parade in 1975. This gentleman was highly respected by all who knew him. (One little footnote: Dr. Warmolts hated to wear socks and being parade marshal was no exception—he didn't wear socks that day either.) (Viola Myers photo)*



*The American flag, the State flag and Oregon's City flag fly proudly in front of the Coliseum. (Donna Kennedy photo)*