

Marland's Grand Home Centennial Articles – January 2016

1910-1920

Note: This is the first article in a monthly series of articles on the history of the Marland Grand Home. The home was built between 1914 and 1916 with the Marland family moving in in December of 1916. The home will be celebrating its 100 year anniversary this year. Staff at the site will submit articles by decades monthly to the Ponca City News.

E.W. Marland Builds Large Estate on Grand Ave.

Marland's Background

The Marland Grand Home located at 1000 E. Grand Ave. in Ponca City, Oklahoma, was the first large mansion home of oil magnet, E.W. Marland, from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Marland came to Oklahoma in 1908 seeking his second fortune in oil. He had already acquired one fortune while only a young man in the hills of West Virginia, but unfortunately had to part with his earnings due to the Bank Panic of 1907. Although educated as an attorney, oil was in Marland's blood. Marland joined with the Miller Brothers of the famous 101 Ranch to obtain new leases. The men created the 101 Ranch Drilling Company in 1911 which transformed into Marland Oil in 1916.

Home

The Marland Grand Home cost completed as a residence in 1916 approximately \$350,000 to build. In today's standards the amount would be equal to over \$3.5 million. Highly acclaimed architect, Solomon Andrew (S.A.) Layton, was hired to draw up plans. Layton also designed the Oklahoma State Capitol Building in Oklahoma City. The 22 room Ponca City home is styled in the Italian Renaissance Revival style. It boasts 16,500 square feet with an indoor swimming pool, central vacuum system, a dishwasher and air-conditioning...all unheard of for their time in Oklahoma.

Gardens and Golf

After touring Europe many times Marland acquired a great love for English and French gardens. Marland himself was of English decent and very much a British gentleman in heart and manner. With the help of Japanese garden, Henry Hatashita, Marland planned for five blocks of lovely formal gardens at his new residence which would stretch eastward from the home to what is now known as 14th Street/HW 177. Marland also constructed a 9-hole, 60 acre golf course for the community to use free of charge. The course was located across the street to the north of the home. An entourage of 30 gardeners tended the course on a regular basis as well as the estate's formal gardens to the east and vegetable gardens to the south..

Miller Bros and the 101 Ranch

The basement of the site at 1000 E. Grand Ave. was the original recreation area of the home. It included three large rooms of adjoining space for relaxing, playing cards and pocket billiards. The far west room contained

the billiards table and bar. Under the east outside terrace was an indoor underground swimming pool and dressing room, also connected to the indoor recreation area.

Presently the basement holds memorabilia and artifacts of the 101 Ranch and Wild West Show owned by Marland's partners in oil exploration, the Miller Brothers. Three collections have now been brought together for exhibit. Current owners of the items, the 101 Old Timers group, the 101 Collectors group, and the City of Ponca City, display hundreds of mementos reflecting the days of the active ranch and touring show. Vintage film footage now plays continuously so visitors can learn about the ranch which was a self-sustaining city in and of its self.

Family

The years between 1916 and 1920 saw great growth at Marland Oil. EW and Mary Virginia Marland, his wife of 13 years, were childless. Mrs. Marland had a sister in Pennsylvania who had four children and had just taken on two more abandoned orphans of a relative who had died. It was decided, as was common practice of the day, that the two oldest children belonging to the sister would come to live with the Marlands to share expenses. In 1916 after a series of long-term visits, George (18) and Lydie (16) Roberts were formally adopted into the Marland Family. They moved into the new home which was completed in December of the same year just in time for Christmas holiday. George most probably stayed in a 2nd floor guest room while at home from college and Lydie had her own 2nd floor bedroom with hand-painted walls depicting several sporting activities in which a teen age girl could participate.

Mary Virginia's Illness

Unfortunately at this time as EW Marland was rising in business, his wife of 13 years, Mary Virginia, was becoming increasingly more ill. History suggests that her condition was most likely some form of cancer, although no permanent records of proof had been found. During this time Marland purchased another home in the Kansas City Plaza District to allow Mary Virginia to be closer to her doctor, Dr. Abraham Sophian, a renowned Kansas City Jewish doctor of the day. Mrs. Marland was able to spend many months in Kansas City between 1917 and about 1925 for her "treatments". Her bedroom at the Ponca City residence was the northeast 2nd floor corner room which was complete with her own private bath. In 1919 air-conditioning was installed for this one room only for her comfort while in Oklahoma.

End of the Decade

By the 1920s Marland had amassed over \$100,000.00 profit in Marland Oil. In today's terms he had become a billionaire. He was now poised to help the community grow into a fine city of its day introducing both polo and fox hunting for the public to enjoy. He expanded his beautiful gardens at the estate, helped to create a public parks system in the city, created an athletic field and dressing rooms for the community, and gave to numerous charitable causes. He is quoted as saying "I spent money on my community and its people and they flourished like a rose."

Note The next article in the series will be published in February.*

The historic home is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10AM to 5PM. Admission prices are \$5 Adults, \$4 Military and Seniors, \$2 Youth, Under 6 Free, with Ponca City residents at no charge. Museum space holds

exhibits on local Native American tribes, the 101 Ranch and Wild West Show, and the E.W. Marland family and the Marland Oil Company. Self-guided tours can be taken at any time during public hours of operation. Special guided tours by a period costumed guide are optional on request as can be made available.

For more information on the Marland Grand Home see the web site at marlandgrandhome.com or call 580-767-0427.



EW Marland, born 1874. Circa approx. 1910 at age mid-30s.



Mary Virginia Marland, born 1876. Circa approx. 1900-1905 in her mid to late 20s.



EW Marland driving car and MV Marland seated behind him circa approx. 1912 in front of first Oklahoma home, the Arcade Hotel in downtown Ponca City.



The Marland Grand Home under construction in 1916.



Marland Grand Home during the late 1910s. The home now landscaped for the future.