

Marland's Grand Home Centennial Articles – August 2016

1980 to 1990

Note: Eighth in the series of twelve monthly articles on Marland's Grand Home. Some, but not all, of the information was taken from past articles by the P.C. News.

Era of Renovations

In the 1980s additional upgrade and restoration of the site was needed. Della Castor, then curator of the Cultural Center, discovered an interesting fact regarding an item found on the exterior as work continued.

Castor stated, "When the Cultural Center was experiencing a face lift both inside and out, an original feature was uncovered which previously had gone unnoticed. While scraping away loose paint a workman uncovered a small metal box which city electrician, Ray Falconer, identified as part of an early day security system. It was thought that E.W. Marland, original owner and builder of the home, probably installed the system in the late 1910s worried about the many kidnappings of family members of wealthy men of the day."

The box apparently housed a rather unsophisticated system of fixed check points. A night watchman on a time clock made his regular rounds and inserted his key in the device to prove that all was well and he hadn't been sleeping on the job. Mrs. Castor went on to say that a much more elaborate system was incorporated later into the Marland Estate, the magnificent stone villa the Marlands moved into in 1928 following their stay at 1000 East Grand Avenue. The larger estate was purchased by the City of Ponca City in 1975 to become an historic house museum and special events center.

As a sideline hobby, Falconer and his wife Velma became glass negative and historic photo collectors. They had in their possession a large collection of over 200,000 glass negatives of which several were made into photos for the Cultural Center to use in its exhibits and to have as reference. Well known and early 1900s photographers, Prettyman and Doubleday, and other photographers of the surrounding area and its people, were included in the Falconer collection.

Interior Discoveries

Another interesting find following the City's purchase was the old central vacuum system. Edward Lindsay Sr., who worked for Vacu-Maid of Ponca City at the time, examined the apparatus and identified it as an Arco Wand system. The brass wall outlets, dated "Patented May 10, 1914," were lined up on straight conduit cast iron pipes which attached to a piston pump in the basement. The hoses used were one inch rubber tubing covered by braided horse hair. Not much suction accompanied the hoses, hence their smaller size than today's standard central vac hoses. The motor and hose hook up were located in the far west room of the basement laundry area. These vacuum systems were used even before electricity, according to Lindsay. However, he is convinced electric motors powered the ones at the Marland's house from the start.

Arco Wand systems were sold beginning in about 1905. This particular system was sought after in the 1920s and was expensive at about \$3,000. An average home at the time cost \$5,000.

"Most early houses were lucky to have one, but the Marland house had two Arco Wand systems, one on each side of the home!" said Castor.

Smaller round brass plates on the walls at head height were another find. Inside the plates was a small box with electric connections. The insulation and inner workings of this early system contained old metal wiring of early day houses. The thought was that these wall plates were probably electric outlets for lighting artwork utilizing a light clipped from above a painting.

Art Work Featured

Mrs. Lydie Marland was consulted on some of the furniture and paintings donated to the site before her death in 1987. E.W. Marland had commissioned Henry Balink in the late 1920s to paint eight portraits of famous Indian chiefs at \$2,000 in gold plus expenses. These painting were housed in the original Indian Museum at the Ponca City Library. The paintings have since found other homes; however, a large oil portrait of Ponca Chief White Eagle by another artist, Emil W. Lenders, remains.

Lenders was born in London in 1864 but grew up in Bingen on the Rhine in Germany. His father was of German descent, and his mother was English. Under the invitation of Joe Miller, Lenders spent 20 years at the 101 Ranch studying the cowboys, resident bison, and some of the Indians from the nearby reservations in order to paint them as subject matter in his artworks. After staying at the ranch a while, Lenders moved to the Thunderbird Ranch close to Bliss (Marland), OK, and then to a studio in Ponca City. He died in 1934. Lenders also painted the portrait of Iron Tail, chief of the Sioux, which was used as a model for the Buffalo Nickel.

Other featured art at the site include works by Lenders, Louis Ship Shee, Robert Wood, Ralph B. Shead, Jacque Hans Gallrein, and local artists Walt Harris, Gene Dougherty, and Clyde Otipoby.

Assistance Sought

During the 1980s a “Cultural Center Board” advised the museum, and an Indian Museum Board oversaw the Indian artifact portion assisting the curator. The center invited guest speakers to speak about the topics of early day White Eagle, the Ponca’s Reservation, Kaw City, and other related American Indian topics of interest. The Indian Museum was well advertised as the highlight of the center at the time.

Having need for an additional citizen’s advisory group to consult on the activities of several cultural sites in Ponca City such as the Cultural Center, the City Commission put into place a cultural commission to advise on certain matters. This commission, which was in place and ready to serve by 1980, advised the Board of Commissioners and City Manager on matters concerning the operation, regulation, promotion, and improvements of the Cultural Center, Indian Museum, and all matters relating to the cultural affairs of the City. The group still exists today with the same mission in support of the renamed Cultural Center, Marland’s Grand Home. *(I took this description directly off the city’s 2016 web site.)*



Caption: One of the many round brass intake plates of the original Arco Wand central vacuum system. The plate states "Patented May 10, 1914" on the top edge. (Note, however, the wording is turned upside down.)

Photo of Arco Wand system coming soon. Getting from a vacuum expert in Chicago.



Emil W. Lenders was known as the premier buffalo painter of his day. Colonel W.F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) pronounced Lenders as "The best buffalo painter in the world." Lenders was adopted into the Sioux Tribe and also became a member of the local Cherokee Strip Cowpunchers Association in 1910.



Caption: Emile W. Lenders oil portrait of White Eagle, chief of the tribe of the Southern Poncas after their removal from Nebraska to Indian Territory.



Caption: Oil portrait of Chief Pawhuska of the Osage Nation by Louis ShipShee.



Caption: Oil landscape of Marland's Grand Home by Gene Dougherty.