

THE E. W. MARLAND MANSION AND ESTATE

By *Denise Browning**

In June, 1928, Ernest Whitworth Marland's new mansion northeast of Ponca City, Oklahoma, was completed. To celebrate the occasion, he sent out ninety-five invitations to children of the members of his polo club. They were met at the west gate by pony drawn hayracks to escort them into the 300 acre game preserve in which his mansion was located. There they enjoyed a picnic, a dog show and swimming in Marland's Olympic-size swimming pool. As they left, Marland presented each child with a silver loving cup memento with his name engraved on it.¹

On the 300 acre game preserve, in addition to the mansion—known originally as Marland's Lodge—were the gate house, administration building, swimming pool, caretaker's house, stables and a dog kennel. This was only part of the 2,500 acres set aside by Marland as an extensive recreational area for the people of Ponca City. By 1928 the following were already built and maintained by Marland for public use: a landscaped golf course, attractive floral gardens, three polo fields and recreational tracts for his company employees.²

Three sides of his game preserve were planted with several varieties of roses which had grown to completely cover the existing wire fence, thus creating two miles of beautiful rose hedges. These were to be part of a six mile entrance to the mansion around two sections of land which was to be called Sunbonnet Drive. Within this area, Marland planned to create an English-type village housing approximately 400 managers and employees of the estate and their families. The village would have all modern conveniences: city water, sewage, electricity, paved roads and every possible comfort. While Marland's game preserve was being planned and developed, he lived in an elaborate house in the heart of Ponca City at 1000 East Grand Avenue, a location presently used as the Ponca City Cultural Center and Indian Museum. His first mansion was to be turned over to a Catholic order for use as a vacation home for a period of three years.³

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¹ Invitation from Ernest W. Marland to Roy Stephenson, Jr., Ponca City Public Library, Ponca City, Oklahoma; William R. Brown Speech to the Ponca City, Oklahoma, Rotary Club, January 16, 1967, Ponca City Public Library.

² *Ponca City News* (Ponca City), June 10, 1928.

³ *Ibid.*



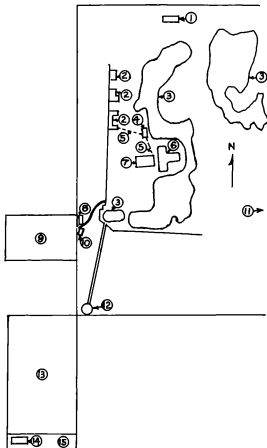
E. W. Marland at the height of his financial empire

It is estimated that Marland spent \$2,500,000 on his mansion alone. Having assets of \$85,000,000 from his self-made Marland Oil Company, money was no object. His only instructions to the architects concerning the building of the new mansion were to buy the best!⁴

Marland was just as free with his money with respect to the people of

⁴ *Ibid.*, October 3, 1941, p. 1 and October 5, 1941.

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The Marland Estate (1) Stables (2) Artist Studio (3) Lake (4) Boat House (5) Underground Tunnel (6) Swimming Pool (7) Mansion (8) Administration Building (9) Polo Field (10) Gatehouse (11) To the American Legion Home and the Remaining Grounds of the Estate (12) Pioneer Woman Statue (13) Nine Hole Golf Course (14) First Mansion (15) Floral Gardens

Ponca City. He employed 10,000 persons—approximately one-third of Ponca City's adult population—and was one of the first employers to provide free dental, hospital and medical care for his employees. He also built a housing development for his workers and often offered them his home for their use. For the city, he donated \$150,000 and a parcel of land to the Sisters of St. Joseph for construction of a hospital and \$75,000 and a piece of land to the American Legion for construction of an orphanage.⁶

Through his ventures in the oil industry, Marland acquired and lost two fortunes. However, he did not start out to be an oil man. He was born on May 8, 1874, to Alfred and Sarah MacLeod Marland in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His father, Alfred Marland, was a well-to-do ironmaster, who had been educated in England. He had served in the Crimean War, being wounded in the Charge of the Light Brigade and later was nursed by Florence Nightingale. His son, Ernest, attended the University of Pittsburgh and graduated with a law degree from the University of Michigan in 1893 at the age of nineteen. He practiced law for two years, then studied geology and surveying. With this new training, he started in business as a buyer of oil and coal leases in Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia. In 1905, he opened the Congo District in West Virginia. Here, in Hancock, he drilled an oil well and made his first million dollars, only to lose it in the economic Panic of 1907.⁷

In 1908, almost penniless, Marland came to Oklahoma. He became acquainted with the Miller brothers, owners of the 101 Ranch, south of Ponca City. One day, Marland and George L. Miller rode out to view the Ponca Indian practice of placing their dead in wicker baskets on a platform. Near the platform, Marland saw a perfect geological dome. Negotiations were opened with the Indians, who were reluctant, but finally agreed to let Marland drill for oil near their cemetery. An old Indian, Chief White Eagle, later told Marland in sign language by the first oil derrick: "You are making bad medicine for me and my people, and for you."⁸

This led to the opening of the Ponca Oil Field in 1913 with the Marland offices on First Street in Ponca City. In 1917-1918, a new plant was built by Marland starting with five cracking stills. He later expanded his operations in 1918 and 1919 and doubled its size in 1925. This same year he built a tank farm with a storage capacity of 10,000,000 barrels.⁹

⁶ Unidentified Newspaper Clipping, *Kansas City Star* (Kansas City, Missouri), 1932, Ponca City Public Library.

⁷ *New York Times* (New York, New York), October 4, 1941; Unidentified Newspaper Clipping, *Kansas City Star*, 1932, Ponca City Public Library; *New York Times*, January 6, 1928.

⁸ E. W. Marland, *My Experiences with the Money Trust* (Enid: Enid Press, 1932), p. 3.

⁹ *Ponca City News*, October 5, 1941.

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Marland controlled the richest mid-continent fields: the Burbank, the Thomas, the Hubbard and the Tonkawa in Oklahoma; the Valley Center near Wichita, Kansas and the Reagan County field of Texas. His business enterprises grew to include the Kay County Gas Company, the Marland Oil Refining Company, the Marland Oil Company of Mexico, the Marland Oil Company of Canada and the Marland Oil Company of California. Marland was a leader in using the science of geology in locating and drilling test wells.⁹

Through success, Marland thus controlled one-tenth of the world's oil supply. Therefore, his business interests took him all over the world, even to Russia. It was while on a business trip to New York City that he commissioned John Duncan Forsyth as the chief architect for the mansion to be located in the middle of his game preserve. Forsyth was born on July 23, 1887, in Florence, Italy. He was actually Scottish, but his mother had been sick, so his father sent her to the warm climate of Italy. They quickly returned to Edinburgh, Scotland. Young Forsyth studied engineering at the University of Edinburgh, but ran away to Paris, France, to study architecture at the Sorbonne. It was here that he met and roomed with Jo Davidson, a sculptor, who later did a limestone statue of Marland, which presently stands on the lawn of the Ponca City Civil Center, located at 500 East Grand Avenue. A New York architect named Pope saw Forsyth's work in Paris and convinced him to come to the United States. In 1917, during World War I, he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Corps but was soon discharged due to a flight injury. He returned to work for Henry Killam Murphy and Henry Dana III, who soon sent him to Shanghai, China, to head their operations there. Forsyth built the Fah Tan University at Shanghai and the National City Bank in Hong Kong, China. He returned to the United States in 1921 to work for Dana building New England colonial residences. In 1925, Forsyth set up his own offices in Ponca City, with a Commission from Marland to develop his large estate and design his mansion.¹⁰

Marland had purchased the 300 acre game preserve in 1922. He bought all of the northwest one-fourth, 160 acres, of Section Twenty-three for \$1,800 from George and Mable A. Fields on May 22, 1922. From Ellis Owen, he bought most of the southwest one-half of Section Twenty-three for \$34,000 on September 23, 1922. On the extreme west side of this land he built a wall of limestone with an entrance gate and a gatehouse. This was to be the main entrance to the game preserve. From this gate, a road led

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Tulsa World* (Tulsa), August 10, 1975; *Ponca City News*, August 22, 1975; Personal Papers of Mrs. John Duncan Forsyth, 2740 Woodward Boulevard, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

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eastward to the western wall of the private grounds of Marland. On the extreme north side of Section Twenty-three the stables were erected by Marland for his well-bred horses used on the polo fields and on the fox hunts. An abandoned stone quarry within the inner walls of the estate was originally used by the Santa Fe Railroad as a crusher depot. This was utilized in building the swimming pool and the mansion.¹¹

Marland wanted the mansion for entertaining large numbers of people and for the display of his art objects. Therefore, Forsyth explained that "the European Gallery type of plan was adopted, calling for unusually large room areas, high ceilings, blank wall space being of utmost importance."¹² This formal style of the Mediterranean Sea area was adopted. Forsyth then went to Florence, Italy, for six months to study the Davanzati Palace. It was built early in the fifteenth century in the Italian Renaissance style. Many features of the Davanzati Palace were incorporated in Marland's mansion. Such characteristics were the stone carved corbels, wooden entrance door with silver handles, lead and bottle glass windows, designs of the molded plaster and painted wooden ceilings, vaulted ceilings and the tile floors.¹³

Even though these fifteenth century features were used, the mansion had the utmost in modern conveniences. It was built with electricity, steam heat and even air conditioning, not very common in 1926 when the cooling unit was purchased in New York City. A trained engineer was employed full time to run the unit. Each room had separate heating and air conditioning vents, electrical outlets and telephone connections. Other interesting modern conveniences included a dishwasher, an electric sauna in Marland's bathroom and an elevator.

The mansion was built on a bed of limestone directly west of the swimming pool and in line with its east-west axis. The three story rectangular structure was built entirely of limestone and cement, without one piece of structure supporting wood. The exterior of the mansion measures 126' by 78', and is built of finely finished layered limestone. Its windows and doors are covered with wrought iron grille work designed mostly by Forsyth and made on the estate.¹⁴

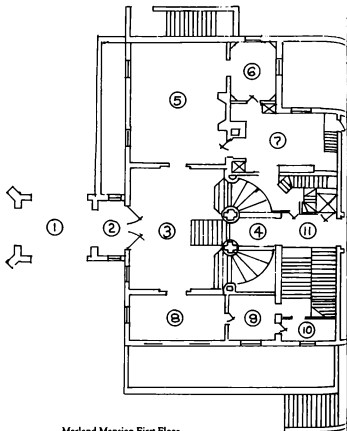
¹¹ Warranty Deed, *Deed Record*, Vol. LXVIII, No. 555, Kay County Court House, Newkirk, Oklahoma; *ibid.*, Vol. LXIX, No. 370; John Duncan Forsyth, "Notes on the Residence of the Late E. W. Marland, Ponca City, Oklahoma," pp. 1-2; Personal Papers of Mrs. John Duncan Forsyth.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹³ Louis Conrad Rosenberg, *The Davanzati Palace, Florence, Italy: A Restored Palace of the Fourteenth Century* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1922), pp. 3, 13-14, 47, 60.

¹⁴ Forsyth, "Notes on the Residence of the Late E. W. Marland, Ponca City, Oklahoma," p. 1; Interview, Mrs. John Duncan Forsyth, June 19, 1976.

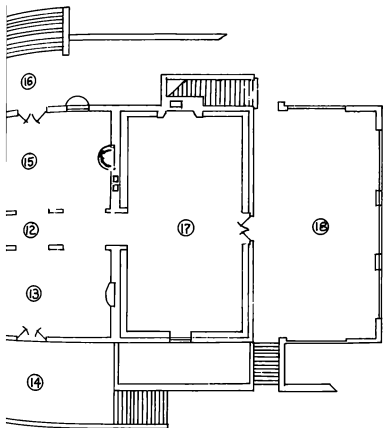
THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA



Marland Mansion First Floor

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| (1) Porte Cochere | (5) Dining Room |
| (2) Vestibule | (6) Breakfast Room |
| (3) Entrance Hall | (7) Pantry |
| (4) Entrance Hall Landing | (8) Reception Room |
| (9) Ladies' Dressing Room | |

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(10) Ladies' Lavatory

(11) Stair Hall

(12) Loggia

(13) Living Room

(14) South Terrace

(15) Salon

(16) North Terrace

(17) Main Gallery

(18) East Terrace

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The main road from the west entrance led through the west gate in the inner wall to the Porte Cochere, which was attached to the west side of the mansion. This enabled cars to drive through and let passengers out at the west entrance, where the Porte Cochere protected them from the weather. It was built of coursed limestone walls and a heavy wooden ceiling. On the east side of the Porte Cochere, adjoining the mansion, are two carved stone corbels supporting the wooden beams as well as two on the west. These were carved by the internationally known Italian sculptor named Pellegrini, in the likeness of Marland's four dogs, without the use of clay models or drawings. The wooden entrance door is set in the semi-circular arched limestone doorway. The ironworks on the door are, according to Forsyth, "particularly fine examples of the Florentine wrought ironwork (executed by William H. Jackson of New York)."¹⁵

Just inside the doors is the vestibule which leads to the first floor of the mansion, containing eight rooms, a ladies' lavatory and a pantry. The vestibule is a small room measuring 10'6" by 7'0", with finished stone walls, painted wooden ceiling, walnut trim and two narrow bottle glass windows, one on the north and one on the south.¹⁶

On the east side of the vestibule is a beautiful glass and iron grille work door that opens into the entrance hall, measuring 33'0" by 30'0". The walls are very high and built of finely finished layered limestone, the floor is hand laid tile, and the ceiling is of painted wood. Vincent Mangliotti painted this ceiling as well as the decorations above the north and south doors. The only windows are two of leaded bottle glass of various colors on the west. In the east part of the entrance hall are three flights of stairs, one straight and two circular; the two circular ones lead to the same landing, five feet above the entrance hall floor. The arches and supporting columns that separate the landing from the entrance hall were carved by a Norwegian sculptor, Gustav Berglumd. Pellegrini added two carved stone night owls with electric eyes that serve as night lights for the landing. The vaulted ceiling was painted by Mangliotti to resemble a gold mosaic.¹⁷

To the north of the entrance hall is the dining room, measuring 23'0" by 29'11", exhibiting an Elizabethan style. The walls are completely paneled in English Pollard Oak by Irving and Casson of Boston. Forsyth describes the ceiling as made of "decorative plaster, cast at bench level, then

¹⁵ John Duncan Forsyth, "Sheet No. 3: First Floor Plan," October 24, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, City Engineer's Office, Ponca City, Oklahoma; Forsyth, "Notes on the Residence of the Late E. W. Marland, Ponca City, Oklahoma," pp. 2-3.

¹⁶ Forsyth, "Sheet No. 3: First Floor Plan," October 24, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, City Engineer's Office.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; Forsyth, "Notes on the Residence of the Late E. W. Marland, Ponca City, Oklahoma," pp. 3-4.

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hoisted to its ceiling position and wired in place."¹⁸ The floor is a slab of cement with slate placed around the edges, making a border for the recessed handloomed carpet. There are three windows, two on the west and one on the north, each bearing a circle of stained glass at the top that depicts English hunting scenes. Of particular interest is the handcarved wood that decorates the fireplace on the east wall and the top of the paneling around the entire room.¹⁹

Marland also employed Forsyth as an interior decorator for the house, making him responsible for the furnishings and the drapes. One example of this was Forsyth's choice of Charles II furniture for the dining room. William R. Brown, the associate architect of the Marland mansion, describes this furniture as consisting of twenty-four chairs costing \$550 each, a host chair costing \$675 and the table costing \$3,000. This added up to a total of \$16,875 for the furniture in the dining room.²⁰

The northeast door of the dining room leads to the breakfast room, the smallest room in the house, measuring only 14'0" by 10'6". The corners of the room are angled, giving the entire room the shape of an octagon. The ceiling is plaster, and the walls are of molded plaster. The floor is a concrete slab covered with inlaid gray slate. There are two sets of wrought iron and glass doors, one opening to the gardens on the north and the other opening to the east onto the north terrace.²¹

South of the breakfast room is the pantry, which has exits to the dining room, to the salon and to the breakfast room. This is actually a warming kitchen, with the main kitchen being directly below. There is a dumbwaiter that brought the hot food from the main kitchen, and it was kept in the warming tray on the south wall. All of the cabinets in the room are of stainless steel and glass, with green velvet lining to display the china. Marland's more expensive service ware was kept in a large safe. On the north wall is the dishwasher and the sink, while on the east wall is the refrigerator and more cabinets. The walls and the ceiling of the pantry are of plaster and the floor is linotile. The approximate measurements of the room, since it is not a perfect square, are 20'0" by 4'6".²²

To the south of the entrance hall is the reception room, measuring 23'0" by 11'11". This room as designed by Forsyth displays the styling of Chris-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4; Forsyth, "Sheet No. 12: Dining Room," September 1, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, Marland Mansion and Estate Museum, Ponca City, Oklahoma.

²⁰ William R. Brown Speech to the Ponca City, Oklahoma, Rotary Club, January 16, 1967, Ponca City Public Library.

²¹ Forsyth, "Sheet No. 3: First Floor Plan," October 24, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, City Engineer's Office.

²² *Ibid.*

topher Wren in the late Georgian period. There are American walnut panels covering the walls from floor to ceiling, which is ornate plaster. The floor is terrazzo tile, made by pouring a mixture of cement and crushed marble into square brass dividers. Opening to the west and to the south are three lead and bottle glass windows.²³

The west door of the reception room leads into the ladies' dressing room, measuring 11'3" by 11'1". The walls are of plaster with walnut trim, the ceiling was designed originally to be of painted canvas, and the floor is of black and white terrazzo tile. There is only one iron casement window which opens to the south. There are two doors in the east wall: the northern one leads to the stone staircase, which in turn leads to the stair hall just east of the landing in the entrance hall. The southern door in the ladies' dressing room leads to the ladies' lavatory, which measures 14'0" by 5'5". It contains one lavatory and one commode with a marble partition between them. The walls and ceiling are plaster, and the floor is tile.²⁴

Even the stair hall has lavish flourishes, for it boasts a walnut ceiling painted by Mangliotti in subdued colors and gold leaf. The walls are Italian stucco and the floor is terrazzo tile. In the northeast corner is the elevator which serviced all three floors and in the northwest corner is the entrance to the service stairs and the pantry. On the west is the entrance hall landing, to the south are the stairs leading down to the ladies' lounge and up to the second floor, and the loggia—open gallery—opens to the east separating the salon from the living room.²⁵

The loggia is a long hall, measuring 42'0" by 9'3", separated from the living room to the south by three open arches supported by carved stone pillars and separated from the salon to the north by a second set of three open archways. The ceiling is beautifully painted in the Chinese Chipendale style. The floor, like the living room and salon, is black and white terrazzo tile.²⁶

The living room, south of the loggia has walls of finely finished layered limestone, with a marble base around the bottom. The ceiling is paneled with gold-leaf paint and in the style of the later Italian Renaissance. The large wrought iron and glass doorway opens onto the south terrace, designed to give a view of the botanical garden and the planned Pioneer

²³ *Ibid.*; Forsyth, "Notes on the Residence of the Late E. W. Marland, Ponca City, Oklahoma," p. 4.

²⁴ Forsyth, "Sheet No. 3: First Floor Plan," October 24, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, City Engineer's Office.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*; Forsyth, "Notes on the Residence of the Late E. W. Marland, Ponca City, Oklahoma," p. 4.

Woman memorial. This is a large room, measuring 36'10" by 22'2¼", with copious blank wall space for the purpose of displaying Marland's tapestries, paintings and objects of art. The salon, very similar to the living room in size, has layered limestone walls, terrazzo floor and paneled ceiling. The few differences are the plain paneled ceiling and three arched iron and glass openings to the north; the original plans called for a fountain on the east wall.²⁷

To the east of these rooms lies the main gallery or ballroom. It is one of the largest and most elegant rooms designed by Forsyth, measuring 30'0" by 56'0". The ceiling is coffered-plaster—recessed panels—and gold leafed in the later Italian Renaissance style. From the ceiling hangs two large sterling silver and Waterford crystal chandeliers estimated to have cost \$15,000 each in 1926. The original plans called for plaster walls from the ceiling down to walnut bookcases that were to line the room. Now the walls are layered limestone and there is no evidence of the bookcases. The floor is terrazzo tile like the other galleries. On the north is a carved stone fireplace, originally to be surrounded by carved walnut. On this same wall hang three large oil paintings of the family. Directly over the fireplace is an oil painting of Marland, to the east is a full-length portrait of his wife Lyde and to the west was a portrait of his adopted son George Marland. On the east is a beautiful glass and wrought iron door that leads to the east terrace, which is as large as the ballroom. This terrace overlooked the swimming pool and is built of limestone. On the exterior wall above the east terrace of the mansion are two triple-arched niches with planter boxes under the niches decorated by small octagonal sculptures of domestic and farm animals.²⁸

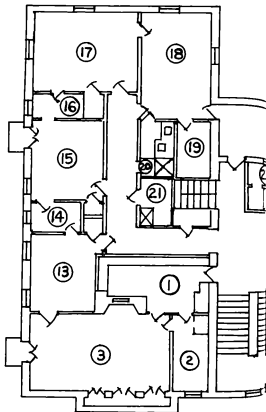
Access to the second floor is by the elevator or the stone stairs, both located in the stair hall. The second floor was the private floor of the mansion and was not open to the public. It contains the bedroom suites of Marland, Mrs. Marland, George and rooms for their guests. In all, there are nine bedrooms, eight bathrooms, three dressing rooms, a library and a small pantry. The stair hall on the second floor is also decorated with an ornate plaster barrel ceiling, stucco walls and terrazzo floor. West of the stair hall is George Marland's bedroom suite, to the east is Mrs. Marland's bedroom suite, and to the east of hers is Marland's library and bedroom suite, occupying the entire

²⁷ Forsyth, "Sheet No. 14: Living Room," November 26, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, Marland Mansion and Estate Museum; Forsyth, "Sheet No. 17: Salon," revised September 23, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, Marland Mansion and Estate Museum; Forsyth, "Notes on the Residence of the Late E. W. Marland, Ponca City, Oklahoma," p. 5.

²⁸ Forsyth, "Sheet No. 13: Picture Gallery," December 4, 1926, Plans for the Lodge, Marland Mansion and Estate Museum; Forsyth, "Notes on the Residence of the Late E. W. Marland, Ponca City, Oklahoma," pp. 5-6.

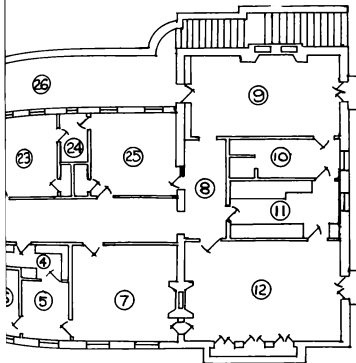
THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

Marland Mansion Second Floor



- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (1) George Marland's Dressing Room | (7) Mrs. Marland's Bedroom |
| (2) George Marland's Bathroom | (8) E. W. Marland's Entrance Hall |
| (3) George Marland's Bedroom | (9) E. W. Marland's Library |
| (4) Mrs. Marland's Closet | (10) E. W. Marland's Bathroom |
| (5) Mrs. Marland's Dressing Room | (11) E. W. Marland's Dressing Room |
| (6) Mrs. Marland's Bathroom | (12) E. W. Marland's Bedroom |

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- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (13) Guest Bedroom Number One | (20) Pantry |
| (14) Lavatory | (21) Linen Closet |
| (15) Guest Bedroom Number Two | (22) Lavatory |
| (16) Lavatory | (23) Guest Bedroom Number Five |
| (17) Guest Bedroom Number Three | (24) Lavatory |
| (18) Guest Bedroom Number Four | (25) Guest Bedroom Number Six |
| (19) Lavatory | (26) North Terrace |

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east wing of the mansion. The six guest rooms are on the north section the west wing, and the north half of the center section.²⁹

George Marland's rooms have an entrance in the stairhall leading to his dressing room. This room is entirely paneled from floor to ceiling with walnut. The closets are all cedar lined, and the dressing table is a solid slab of black marble. Inside one of the closets is a separate compartment for shoes and above that is a wall safe. The floor is a cement slab covered with carpet, the ceiling is plaster and the dimensions are 10'7" by 11'0". There are two doors in the south wall, one leading to George Marland's private bath and the other leading to his private bedroom. His bathroom measures 8'8" by 15'0", has a plaster ceiling, tile floor and wainscoting. The fixtures include a lavatory with medicine cabinet, towel cabinet, commode, bathtub and a separate shower with a glass door. There is only one window, which opens to the south.³⁰

George Marland's bedroom measures 25'11" by 15'0", has a cement floor covered with carpet, stucco walls and a plaster ceiling that was originally intended to be covered with painted canvas. There is a beautiful carved stone fireplace on the north. On the south, three wrought iron and glass doors, with carved stone pilasters between them, open onto a long narrow stone balcony which has hand carved corbels by Pellegrini supporting the floor. There is also a window on the west which opens onto a small balcony with stone floor and wrought iron railing. There is a door on the north which leads into the first guest room.³¹

East of the stair hall is a corridor that gives access to Mrs. Marland's closet and her bedroom, guest bedrooms five and six and to Marland's separate hall. This corridor is also decorated; it has a terrazzo floor, plaster walls and a plaster ceiling, with walnut doors into each room.

Mrs. Marland's suite is smaller than Marland's or George's, but it is the most elegant. Her walk-in closet is separated from her dressing room by a door. Her closet is cedar lined and contains a safe. The floor is cement covered with carpet, and the ceiling is of plaster. Her dressing room is comparatively small, measuring only 10'7" by 9'3". It has carpeted cement floors, plaster walls and a plaster ceiling that was originally to be covered with painted canvas. It has one window which opens to the south, an east door leading to her private bedroom and a west door leading to her private

²⁹ Forsyth, "Sheet No. 4: Second Floor Plan," October 25, 1926, Plans of the Lodge. C. Engineer's Office.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

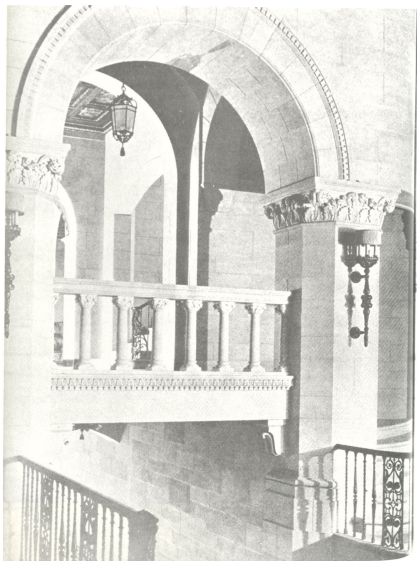
³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

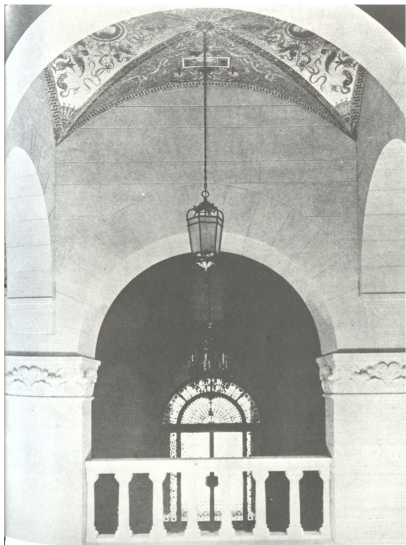


Marland Mansion Dining Room Fireplace as it looked during the 1920s

bathroom. Her bathroom is rather small, measuring 7'1" by 12'8". It does not have a shower but it contains a bathtub, commode and a lavatory with a medicine cabinet. It has one window which opens to the south, a green



Marland Mansion Entrance Hall showing the stone carving by Berglund



Marland Mansion Entrance Hall Landing which shows gold painted Mosaic by Mangliotti



Marland Mansion Reception Room during the 1920s

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tile floor, a green tile wainscot, plaster walls and a plaster ceiling planned to be covered with a painted canvas.³³

Mrs. Marland's bedroom, though small, being only 21'1" by 17'6", is one of the most elegant, being designed in the Louis XV style. The entire walls are covered with limewood hand-carved paneling, the floor is also wooden and the ceiling is plaster, originally to have been covered with painted canvas. On the east wall is an ornately carved pink marble fireplace. There are two windows that open to the south, and an east door that enters Marland's private bedroom.³⁴

Marland's suite consists of an entrance hall, library, private bedroom, bathroom and dressing room. The entrance hall is 21'10" long, runs east and west, the walls are entirely wood paneled, and the ceiling is of barrel-cast plaster.³⁵

The library, located on the north end of the east wing, is a large room measuring 30'0" by 17'0". Like all of Marland's rooms, this is also in English Tudor style. It has a carpet covered cement floor, walnut paneled walls with a hand-carved cornice around the plaster ceiling. On the east and west walls are inlaid bookcases, with a secret door underneath. On the north wall is a carved marble fireplace with an iron back. The metal casement windows also have carved wood above them, and the east window leads to a small stone balcony. A door on the west opens onto the second story north terrace, which on the east is part of Marland's private cantilevered staircase leading to the swimming pool. The corbels which support the staircase are carved with grotesque mythological animals and birds. Around the top of the staircase is inscribed in Latin "a man's home is his Palace."³⁶

Marland's bathroom is south of his library, measuring 21'6" by 8'6". The floor is green tile, the walls are green wainscoted tile and plaster, and the ceilings are plaster. It has only one window which opens to the south. The fixtures include a lavatory and medicine cabinet, commode, bathtub and heated cabinet designed to sit in. Next to this is a large shower cabinet—four feet square—which has numerous shower nozzles placed at different levels so that the body would be completely covered by spray.³⁷

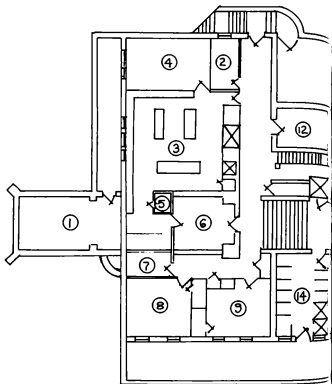
³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*: Forsyth, "Notes on the Residence of the Late E. W. Marland, Ponca City, Oklahoma," p. 7.

³⁵ Forsyth, "Sheet No. 4: Second Floor Plan," October 25, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, City Engineer's Office.

³⁶ Forsyth, "Notes on the Residence of the Late E. W. Marland, Ponca City, Oklahoma," pp. 6-7; Forsyth, "Sheet No. 20: Mr. Marland's Library," revised, September 29, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, Marland Mansion and Estate Museum.

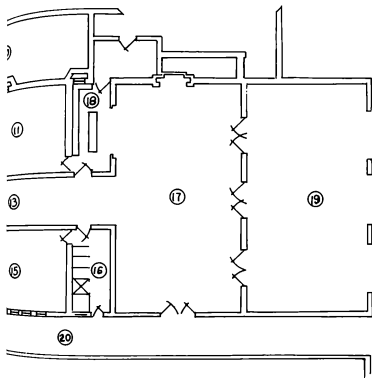
³⁷ Forsyth, "Sheet No. 4: Second Floor Plan," October 25, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, City Engineer's Office.



Marland Mansion Basement

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| (1) Transformer Rooms | (6) Storage Room |
| (2) Servant's Lavatory | (7) Servant's Bathroom |
| (3) Main Kitchen | (8) Servant's Bedroom |
| (4) Servant's Dining Room | (9) Servant's Bedroom |
| (5) Broom Closet | (10) Machine Room |

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- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (11) Boiler Room | (16) Ladies' Shower and Dressing Room |
| (12) Mechanical Equipment Room | (17) Lounge Room |
| (13) Gallery | (18) Lounge Room Kitchen |
| (14) Men's Shower and Dressing Room | (19) Outer Lounge |
| (15) Exercise Room | (20) South Arway |

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South of the bathroom is Marland's dressing room, measuring 21'6" by 13'0". It is completely paneled in walnut, with a solid slate of black marble for the top of the dressing table. The floors are carpeted cement, and the ceiling is plaster. All of the closets are cedar lined, and contain a separate compartment for shoes, but there is no personal safe hidden within these closets. On lead and bottle glass window opens to the south.³⁸

Marland's bedroom is large, measuring 30'4" by 17'0". The floor is carpeted cement and the walls are wainscoted with oak. The ceiling was originally plaster, but was later covered by a painted canvas. On the west wall is a stone fireplace with three carved wood panels above it depicting Marland's two favorite polo mounts. On the south wall are three metal casement doors designed by a sculptor named Critall, which open out onto a long narrow stone balcony, with carved stone corbels underneath to support it. There are carved stone pilasters between the doors and a carved wood cornice around the top of the wall. On the east is a smaller door opening onto a small balcony with a stone base and wrought iron grille. Also, in one of the walls is a large five tumbler safe.³⁹

The hall in the west wing has carpeted cement floors, plaster walls and, according to the original plans, was to have a painted canvas ceiling. It opens into guest bedrooms one, two, three and four, containing a total of three bathrooms. Also on the east is a small pantry containing a dumb waiter that brought up food from the main kitchen. There is access also into a large walk-in linen closet, back of which are the service stairs going up to the attic and down to the second floor. Guest bedrooms five and six and their two adjoining bathrooms open off the central corridor. These guest rooms are not nearly as elaborate or as large as the three main suites. They all had carpeted floors, plaster walls and plaster ceilings, but none of them have fireplaces. They vary in size, but the average would be 15' by 20'. Each room has its own closet and most have access to a balcony. The bathrooms are comparatively small and even though there are enough bathrooms for each room to have access to one, most open into two bedrooms. All bathrooms were originally to have canvased ceilings.⁴⁰

The north balcony extends the entire length of the center wing of the mansion. It has an entrance from the hall, two guest rooms and Marland's library. It has a tile floor and stone borders. It offers a view of the gardens as well as of the Arkansas River.⁴¹

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Forsyth, "Sheet No. 20: Mr. Marland's Library," revised, September 29, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, Marland Mansion and Estate Museum.

⁴⁰ Forsyth, "Sheet No. 4: Second Floor Plan," October 25, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, City Engineer's Office.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

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The basement or lounge floor has a wide assortment of rooms. On the west end are all of the servants' quarters, the main kitchen and the transformer rooms. In the center are the mechanical room, boiler room, handball court and large men's and ladies' restrooms. On the east are the inner lounge, with a small kitchen, and an outer lounge near the swimming pool.⁴²

Directly under the porte cochere on the west end of the basement are the two transformer rooms. Their accumulative measurements are 26' by 12'8", and they are surrounded by cement and steel walls 1'8" thick. The only entrance is by the north through an outside areaway that is accessible by an iron rung ladder.⁴³

The servants' access to the building is by an outside flight of stairs on the north side leading to the basement. Upon entering, immediately to the right, is a bath area which contains a commode, lavatory, showers, dressing room and bench. The floor is tile, and the walls and ceiling are finished cement.⁴⁴

The next entrance along the north-south corridor leads to the main kitchen, with the servants' dining room attached to the north. This dining room has a linotile floor, plaster walls and a plaster ceiling, measuring 20'0" by 15'10". It has one window on the west that opens into the area-way.⁴⁵

The main kitchen is very large and well equipped. It had a linotile floor, and plaster walls and ceiling, with overall dimensions, including the storage room, measuring 14'9" by 12'0". There are three work tables in the center of the room: one has a plain surface and shelves underneath, another contains the mixing machine and has shelves underneath, and still another is the chef's table. This table had a utensil rack over it, plain top, and a warmer and shelves underneath. Along the north wall, moving west, are a dresser with cupboards underneath, servants' dishwashing sink, a hand basin and more cabinets. Along the west wall, moving south, are a drainboard and cupboards, two vegetable sinks, another drainboard and more cupboards, a pot sink, another dresser, a cutting bench and an ice cream freezer. The south wall is covered with three huge refrigerators. At this end of the room is also a broom closet with a mop sink. On the closer south wall is a combination gas and electric range, gas and electric broiler and a pan rack. On the east wall are a closet, the dumb waiter and the incinerator.⁴⁶

⁴² Forsyth, "Sheet No. 2: Lounge Floor," May 26, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, City Engineer's Office.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

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South of the kitchen is a bathroom and two bedrooms for the servants, the slightly larger one measuring 15'10" by 12'6". They both have wood floors, with plaster walls and ceilings, and two windows that open to the south areaway, which runs the entire length of the mansion. The bathroom is small, but it contains a commode, a bathtub, lavatory and medicine cabinet.⁴⁷

On the extreme north in the center of the north wall is the machine room, which is completely surrounded by a 1'6" cement and steel wall. The only entrance is by the servants' stairway. The room measures 46'10" by 6'6", has a cement floor, and plaster walls and ceiling.⁴⁸

South of the machine room is the boiler room and the mechanical equipment room. The boiler room has a composition floor and cement walls and ceiling, measuring 28'9" by 21'3". Its walls are over one foot thick and it has an entrance on all four sides. The mechanical equipment room is also surrounded by thick walls, even though it is smaller, measuring only 13'8" by 8'11". South of it is the servants' stairs, the elevator and the main stairs from the stair hall on the first floor.⁴⁹

The main stairs lead to a long corridor that also serves as a gallery. The floor is tile over a slate base, and the walls are finely layered limestone. The ceiling has wooden beams with a little fat nymph carved in each corner; each of the nymphs characterize a portion of the phraseology of eat, drink and be merry, with a fourth depicted as snorting snuff. North of this corridor is the boiler room, while south of it is a large men's shower and dressing room.⁵⁰

The men's shower and dressing room has an entrance from the corridor and from the south areaway which lead to the swimming pool. The floors are tile, the walls are tile wainscoted and Keene's plastered—a highly finished plaster. The measurements are 14'0" by 21'1". It has eight dressing rooms separated by marble partitions, two showers, one commode and lavatory. There are two windows that open onto the south areaway.⁵¹

The exercise room is large, approximately 29'2" by 21'3", and contains a handball court. It has an entrance both into the men's and ladies' dressing rooms. The floor is maple and the walls and ceiling are plaster, with birch trim. There are five small windows that open onto the south areaway.⁵²

The ladies' shower and dressing room is smaller than the men's, measuring 9'3" by 21'1". There are only three dressing compartments with marble

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*



Marland's Stables, located north of the Mansion

partitions, one large shower, one commode, one lavatory and one window opening onto the south areaway. The floor is tile, the walls are tile wainscoted with Keene's plaster and the ceilings are of Keene's plaster.⁵⁸

The main corridor or gallery leads to the lounge room. This is a very large room and has a small kitchen in the northwest corner. The floor is tile over slate, the walls are layered limestone and the ceiling consists of painted cement beams supporting the gallery above. Mangliotti and three helpers spent six months in Washington, D. C., at the Smithsonian Institution studying the history of the early Indians in Kay County, Oklahoma, before painting this ceiling. On the ceiling in succession from the southeast corner to the northeast corner is painted the history of Kay County from the earliest known days to 1928. On the last beam is a picture of the Marland Oil symbol, the red triangle. Also on the last beam is a picture of Harry

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

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Cragin on a bicycle, the only Oklahoman to make the Run of 1893 which opened Kay County.⁵⁴

The kitchen is very ornate and cheery; it is separated from the lounge by folding carved wood doors. The floor is tile, and the walls and ceiling are of highly finished cement. The measurements are 9'0" by 21'3". A table in the center of the room has a cutting block in the center and a warming compartment and shelves underneath. It has plenty of cabinet space, and the counters are covered with colorful hand-painted ceramic tile. It has a broiler, four electric hotplates and a spit. Over these is a hand hammered copper exhaust vent. In the north wall of the kitchen is a door that leads to a vault, probably intended for wine. It also has an entrance into an underground passageway, which has very thick walls, a composition floor and cement walls and ceiling.⁵⁵

On the east wall of the lounge are three iron and glass doors designed by Critall. They open up into the outer lounge or porch looking out over the swimming pool. The south outer lounge is a large room almost surrounded by glass. The floor is terrazzo, the walls are roughly finished random layered limestone and the ceiling consists of cement beams which support the east terrace on the first floor. The original plans were for these ceilings to be left bare, but Mangliotti volunteered to paint them. In his design, he tried to capture the feeling of the late 1920s when the mansion was constructed. He used many brilliant colors. There are three large sets of iron and glass doors that open to the east towards the swimming pool, and another large set opens to the areaway on the south.⁵⁶

An underground tunnel leads from northeast of the mansion to the boat house, then west to the artist's studios. The boat house is north of the mansion. It is built of limestone and has a huge safe in its inner wall.

Another interesting feature of the mansion is its drainage system. The gutters and drain pipes are of lead and bear the initial "M" at intervals, as well as the date 1927. The drainage of the east terrace ends in carved stone gargoyles spewing water from their mouths. The drainage of the south terrace comes through a carved head of Pan, a Greek god, emptying the runoff from his mouth into the well under the front terrace.

⁵⁴ Forsyth, "Sheet No. 9: Lounge," November 12, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, Marland Mansion and Estate Museum; Forsyth, "Notes on the Residence of the Late E. W. Marland, Ponca City, Oklahoma," pp. 6-7.

⁵⁵ Forsyth, "Sheet No. 9: Lounge," November 12, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, Marland Mansion and Estate Museum.

⁵⁶ Forsyth, "Sheet No. 2: Lounge Floor," May 26, 1926, Plans of the Lodge, City Engineer's Office; Forsyth, "Notes on the Residence of the Late E. W. Marland, Ponca City, Oklahoma," p. 7.

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East side of Marland Mansion during construction, showing the already completed Swimming Pool

Marland had all of the land surrounding the mansion landscaped into what he called a botanical garden. He tried to use every tree and shrub known to man. From the south gate of the inner wall he constructed a grass aisle lined with trees and statues leading to the southwest, towards the city. This distance was to be traveled on foot only and was to be open at all times for public use. This view was later terminated by his donation to Ponca City of the Pioneer Woman statue in April, 1930. This grass aisle was lined with small bronze statues of a cowboy, a cowgirl, an American Indianman, an Indian girl and a pioneer man. There was also an open view to the north and to the west.⁵⁷

The small bronze statues that lined the grass isle vista to the south of the mansion are no longer in their original location. They have been transferred to the Woolaroc Museum, fourteen miles southwest of Bartlesville, Oklahoma. The stables, polo fields and nine hole golf course are no longer

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5; Unidentified Newspaper Clipping, *Kansas City Star*, 1932, Ponca City Public Library.



Marland Mansion Boat House and Artist's Studio during the 1920s

in existence, having been removed to make way for housing developments needed for the expansion of Ponca City. Except for the stables, the other buildings of the estate remain in almost the exact condition as when constructed.

Marland and Forsyth became close friends during the three years Forsyth developed the mansion and estate. Forsyth was Marland's campaign manager once and finally a pall bearer at his funeral. On April 2, 1929, Forsyth became a naturalized citizen. During World War II, he was employed by the federal government as a designing engineer for the Ardmore Air Force Base, Ardmore, Oklahoma; the United States Naval Installation at Inyokern, California; the United States Marine Corps camp at Pendleton, California and the Douglas Aircraft Plant at Long Beach, California. In 1948, Forsyth set up a private practice in San Clemente, California, but soon returned to Oklahoma to establish his architectural office in Tulsa. Some of his most notable works in Oklahoma are the Will Rogers Memorial at Claremore, the Oakridge Country Club in Tulsa, the Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa and the Oklahoma Military Academy at Claremore.

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Interior view of the Marland Mansion Administration Building during the 1920s

as well as many private homes in Tulsa. Forsyth died on October 5, 1963, at the age of seventy-six.⁵⁸

After Marland completed his mansion in June, 1928, he could afford to live in it for only eighteen months. In 1927, he had encouraged the board of his oil company to borrow \$30,000,000 from the J. P. Morgan Company of New York City to expand his oil company and to pay off its debts. The board was not able to repay the money, and the J. P. Morgan Company gained more and more representation on the board until it practically voted Marland out. Marland resigned as board chairman in October, 1928. The J. P. Morgan Company took possession of his home on Grand Avenue in Ponca City and used it as a residence for the new president. Shortly after Marland resigned, the Marland Oil Company merged with the Continental Oil Company. "I'm in the position of the man," Marland explained, "who was asked what he'd do with all the money in the world, and he replied, 'I'd pay it on my debts as far as it would go.'"⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Personal Papers of Mrs. John Duncan Forsyth.

⁵⁹ John Kobler, "Where is Lydie Marland?" *Saturday Evening Post*, Vol. CCXXXI, No. 21 (November 22, 1958) p. 16; *Ponca City News*, October 5, 1941.

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North side of the Marland Mansion during a party given shortly after its opening in 1928

This did not stop Marland, however. He felt that he had more knowledge than almost anyone when it came to finding oil. In 1932, he organized the Marland Oil Company of Oklahoma, which lay dormant while he served as governor of Oklahoma from 1935 to 1939. Then he moved the offices of his company to his mansion, then finally to Arkansas City, Kansas, where it existed until his death. In addition to serving as governor of Oklahoma, he ran for the United States House of Representatives in 1932. Even while governor, he used his talent for finding oil. With the help of the Oklahoma National Guard, he had oil wells drilled on the Oklahoma State Capitol lawn. These wells netted the state \$2,866,376, which was used to construct state buildings.⁶⁰

Marland believed that given a little time and good health, he could make a third fortune. But his health failed, so he decided to sell most of his property. On May 22, 1941, he sold all of his mansion estate property, except for approximately three acres and a few buildings in the northeast corner

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, *New York Times*, October 4, 1941.

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of the estate, to the Discalced Carmelite Fathers of Oklahoma. Marland died only a few months later on October 3, 1941. His body laid in state at the East Junior High School Auditorium of Ponca City and was buried in a mausoleum in Odd Fellows Cemetery.⁶¹

The Discalced Carmelite Fathers purchased the mansion estate property for a mere \$66,000. It was to be used as a college of philosophy, starting with twelve students. The fathers are alleged to have whitewashed the ceiling depicting the history of Kay County in the lounge of the mansion. They added no buildings and later sold the mansion estate property to the Fellician Sisters of the United States of America on September 9, 1948, for \$1,500,000.⁶²

In 1949, the sisters completely renovated the mansion and replaced the wiring. They filled in the deteriorating swimming pool and all of the lakes except for the one in the northwest corner which Mrs. Lyde Marland still owned. In 1952, they built Angela Hall, located between the mansion and the artists' studios. It was built as a combination classroom facility, laboratory and dormitory. It is built of limestone, is two stories high and contains 11,153 square feet. In 1962, another combination structure was constructed consisting of the Novitiate House and the Administration House. An enclosed hallway connects them with the southeast corner of the mansion. The building is of limestone, is three stories high and contains 25,318 square feet. Assumption Chapel was also built in 1962. It is south of the Novitiate House complex, is built of limestone, has four floors and contains 6,191 square feet.⁶³

By 1973, the Fellician Sisters decided to sell the Marland estate, which they called Assumption Villa. On September 16, 1975, the people of Ponca City voted to buy it. It was to be paid for with a one cent sales tax, making up one-half of the cost. The other half was to be donated by the Continental Oil Company, which had merged with the Marland Oil Company in 1928. The property was sold on November 24, 1975, to the City of Ponca City for \$1,435,000. The Continental Oil Company paid \$717,500 and Ponca City paid \$717,500. The city has opened the mansion for tours and one of the studios has been turned into a petroleum hall of fame. Future plans include a possible art college and museums.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Warranty Deed, *Deed Record*, Vol. CIXX, No. 380, Kay County Court House, Newkirk; *Daily Oklahoman*, October 4, 1941.

⁶² Warranty Deed, *Deed Record*, Vol. CLXX, No. 142, Kay County Court House, Newkirk.

⁶³ *Ponca City News*, September 5, 1975 and September 11, 1975.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, September 17, 1975, p. 1; Warranty Deed, *Deed Record*, Vol. LXXXII, No. 44, Kay County Court House, Newkirk; *Now*, Vol. VII, No. 2, (March-April 1976), p. 6, newsletter published by Continental Oil Company, Ponca City, Oklahoma.

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Through the purchase of this property, the public has the opportunity to view the indulgences of an Oklahoma oil baron. It shows the ideals of the era in which it was created, a time when great quantities of oil wealth were quickly made and as quickly lost. Marland's style of living was far above average even among the wealthy. He lived a life that few people of his time could afford. Besides providing a view of Marland and his lifestyle, his mansion also gives the public the opportunity to view its art treasures of design and decoration. Marland brought some of the ablest craftsmen and designers to be found anywhere to a little hill on the Oklahoma prairie to display their skills and talents.