

## OFF THE RECORD

By Jim Arpy

For heaven's sake let's quit quibbling like a bunch of little kids over the question of whether or not Scott County should have a large artificial lake in the county park area.

First, let's realize this: That the five men who make up the County Conservation Board are a fine and upstanding group of citizens who would find somewhere to serve at a reduced job without pay. I'm sure too that those members who favor a small lake do so because in their own minds they are convinced that will be best for the park area.

Maybe they are right, maybe they are not. The truth is that a great number of citizens believe they are not right. This being the case, the board should take a "no" attitude, and then not feel too bad about both sides of the issue.

If it can be satisfactorily proved that a large lake is not feasible, the board will stand by its "no" attitude. If it can't be proved, then the conservation board will be in for tough sledding for the rest of its existence.

It is a simple question, and a logically simple. The State Conservation Commission will gladly examine both sides of the issue and give an opinion based on its long experience. Let's see what they have to say.

Let's end this bickering in the Scott County family.

Two distinguished gentlemen have volunteered to "ghost" this column while yours truly is on vacation for the next couple of weeks.

The first week's column will be written by a frequent contributor Henry Hook, publisher of the Morning Democrat. By the way, he's also agreed to write a column when he attends the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles next month.

The second week's column will be written by Paul Conway, very special night editor of the Morning Democrat.

Four years old" Don Halle, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Donald H. Halle of Cedar Rapids, was born when dad was a halfhead.

When she started skipping the tubs she exclaimed: "Oh daddy, don't pull my swim suit off."

White Mrs. Lewis Freder of Davenport was in the hospital recently she shared a room with a woman who died and her husband in that room.

He'd planned to take their 8-year-old daughter to the show, but when he saw what was playing he sold her he didn't think she'd like it because it was "too scary."

"What's that mean?" the girl wanted to know immediately.

The husband floundered a bit. "Well," he said, "it's the difference between a man and a woman."

The girl gave him a long, long look, shook her head at the strange ways of adults — and went out to play.

Orchids in Rock Island State's Att'y Bernard Moran for his tough attitude with the hoods who beat up a East Moline hospital security guard.

He knows from long experience that mollycoddling and slaps on the wrist won't make good boys out of bad ones. Other prosecutors might take heed.

Unusual gifts — at the Royal American Shrine's special benefit show for the Royal American Shrine Club recently — a tough-looking rooftop worker on his equally rugged, appearing buddy. "Come on, son, let's dig it up, dig out some money. After all it's for crippled kids."

P. S. He threatened and wheel'd the guy out of a \$20 donation.



Embellished by the "gingerbread" so characteristic of Victorian-style houses, the sketch above guided builders in the construction of what is best known as the C. A. Ficke mansion, although Ficke himself did not build the place. A complete set of working drawings for the mansion were uncovered in the old house several years ago.

At right is a drawing of the first floor. A few dimensions:  
Dining room, 27 by 16 feet  
Sitting room, 26 by 18 feet  
Two matching parlors, each 18 by 17 feet  
Entry Hall, 44 feet by 10 feet  
Downstairs bedroom, 24 by 19 feet.

SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 1960



The entry hall of the old Ficke mansion is still immense today. This photo was taken from the vestibule. On the stairs is Mrs. M. E. Dugan. She and her husband own the place today.

# CINGER BREAD GIANT

Like A Fine Lady, This Magnificent Mansion

Is Still Proud And Regal In Its Old Age

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Hold back a moment to the Victorian era — an affluent period of yesterday when the horn of plenty ran full. A dollar earned was a dollar saved, with little interference from Uncle Sam. The wealthy lived in elegance, and a man's hallmark of success was his home. And what mansions they built in the Victorian age — grand with high ceilings, walls and floral carpeting covered the floors. The windows were bordered with shutters and layered with lace and velvet draperies, every ottoman was tufted and every table was marble-topped — and in every corner, a heraldic whitewash. Here is the story of such a home, another in the Sunday Times-Democrat series on "The Magnificent Mansions of the Quad-City Area."

By BILL WYNDEHAM  
Sunday Editor

At 58, this grand dame of Victorian formation, work was started in 1881 and the massive place was not completed until 1884. The cost was said to be \$100,000 — a tremendous outlay in those days. "They didn't seem to spare a thing in this house," says M. E. Dugan, present owner. "They had everything, from kitchens in the basement to dumb waiters and a couple sets for servant-calling systems. We have found the original working doors and windows still in the house. It's difficult to count the rooms. For instance, do you call a 10 by 10 foot pantry a room?"

Through them go the heavy, wide oak doors. Through them have passed famed figures, governors and presidential aspirants and headliners makers like Mark Twain, who entertained the South Pole and Jane Addams of Hull House who won a Nobel prize.

They marveled at the birds of paradise which still perch in leaded glass in the vestibule and at the numerous grand staircase that reached all the way to the third floor art gallery and museum.

This was the home of C. A. Ficke, one of Davenport's most influential and interesting citizens. Twice he served as mayor, and twice he traveled around the world in search of art and antiques. He was a member of the city's selectest men, and each year, Davenport newspapers traditionally carried a story that "Ficke is again the city's leading taxpayer."

While he was no snob and he fretted at times that his residence in such a big house might make people think of him as a high-toned "playboy,"

But his house was his pleasure, and he lived in it and loved it for nearly 40 years.

Of all the Victorian mansions in the Quad-City, this one was the most Victorian of all. Every line was festooned with the elegance of the period in which it was built. On the most reliable in-

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MANSION—  
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With 38 rooms on four floors, this mansion at 1208 Main St., Davenport, was one of the finest homes in the city. (Staff Photo by Harry Bell)

