



GARDEN of EDEN

LUCAS, KANSAS 67648

Phone 913-525-6395

Hello Friends,

Here's our press release and new postcards we just completed. We're also reproducing 30 of Dinsmoor's original postcards. We're also interviewing most everyone still living who were involved with the Garden, including the second Mrs. Dinsmoor.

Thanks for your interest and best wishes,

John



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Garden of Eden, Inc. Purchases Garden in Lucas, Kansas

"This is my sign--'Garden of Eden'--I could hear so many, as they go by, sing out, 'What is this?' so I put this sign up. Now they can read it, stop or go on, just as they please."
--S.P. Dinsmoor

Lucas, Kan., Feb. 28, 1989--A group of Kansas artists and preservationists, headed by an Oskaloosa sculptor, has purchased the Garden of Eden, a landmark created environment in Lucas, Kan.

On Feb. 15, 1989, Garden of Eden Inc. completed the purchase of the remarkable Kansas site, which was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1976. The corporation, formed by John Hachmeister of Oskaloosa, acquired the site to guarantee that it will remain intact.

Samuel Perry Dinsmoor (1843-1932) built the Garden of Eden in the first three decades of the 20th Century. He completed the home in 1907; the site acquired its name in 1913. In the complex Dinsmoor combined his interpretation of the Biblical Eden with his populist political views.

Hachmeister's group bought the landmark from Wayne and Luella Naegele of Lucas, who had acquired it in 1967. At that time the house had been divided into apartments and the cement figures and trees were overgrown. The Naegeles restored the property and reopened it as a tourist attraction. That policy will continue under Garden of Eden, Inc.

The new owners plan further restoration to the Garden and its surroundings as well as adding a visitor's center to house a museum for grassroots art.

S.P. Dinsmoor was an avowed populist who built the Garden of Eden as a permanent legacy to his beliefs. Today, this concrete monument of life-sized figures and animals, which cavort around Dinsmoor's "Cabin Home," still stands much as it did at his death in 1932. The cabin is a unique 11-room structure of concrete and limestone logs.

Along the west side of the property life-size, concrete figures of Adam and Eve guard the entrance of a grape arbor entwined with two serpents. One snake offers an apple to Eve. Overhead is the Devil. Cain and Abel stand with their offerings to God atop one of the twenty-nine concrete trees. He built trees in two sizes: fourteen are from eight to 20 feet high, fifteen are from 30 to 40 feet high. For his rendition, Dinsmoor added two girls to this episode, reasoning, "You know and I know and everybody knows that the girls are always hanging around the boys." Storks adorn another tree in the belief that they were in the original Garden. His written description states: "I have substituted some things that I know were there. The storks were there, because the kids were there: Cain and Abel. The storks always bring the kids." To complete the story, an angel comes to the dead Abel, and Cain escapes with his wife.

At the corner of the lot, the scene changes to a representaion of "present day civilization"--a soldier fires at an Indian, a girl chases the soldier, and they are at the mercy of the monopolies depicted as large claws wrapping around the figures. Dinsmoor abhorred the government's protection of business, over the interests of the people. "They (the money interests) are protected by the Star Spangled Banner," he once wrote. "That flag protects capital today better than it does humanity. It drafted the boys but asked the money to volunteer."

Several other structures stand on the property including the stone log cabin mausoleum, where Dinsmoor and his first wife are buried. An unusual feature of his coffin is its glass lid, through which visitors can view Dinsmoor's remains. In his will, he stated, "...none except my widow, my descendants, their husbands and wives, shall go in to see me for less than a \$1.00." He promised to smile at everyone who paid their dollar.

The Garden of Eden is 16 miles north of Interstate 70 on Kansas Highway 232. This short stretch of state highway, which crosses the dam on Wilson Lake, is considered one of the most beautiful drives in the state.

The Garden of Eden is open seven days a week: during March from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; April-September from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. (10-6 on Sunday); October-February from 1 to 4 p.m.

Admission and the guided tour are \$4 per adult; children under 12 are free. Tour groups receive a discount, reservations are encouraged. The charge for school groups is \$1 per child; accompanying teachers are admitted free.