

The Ozarks Strangest Dwelling

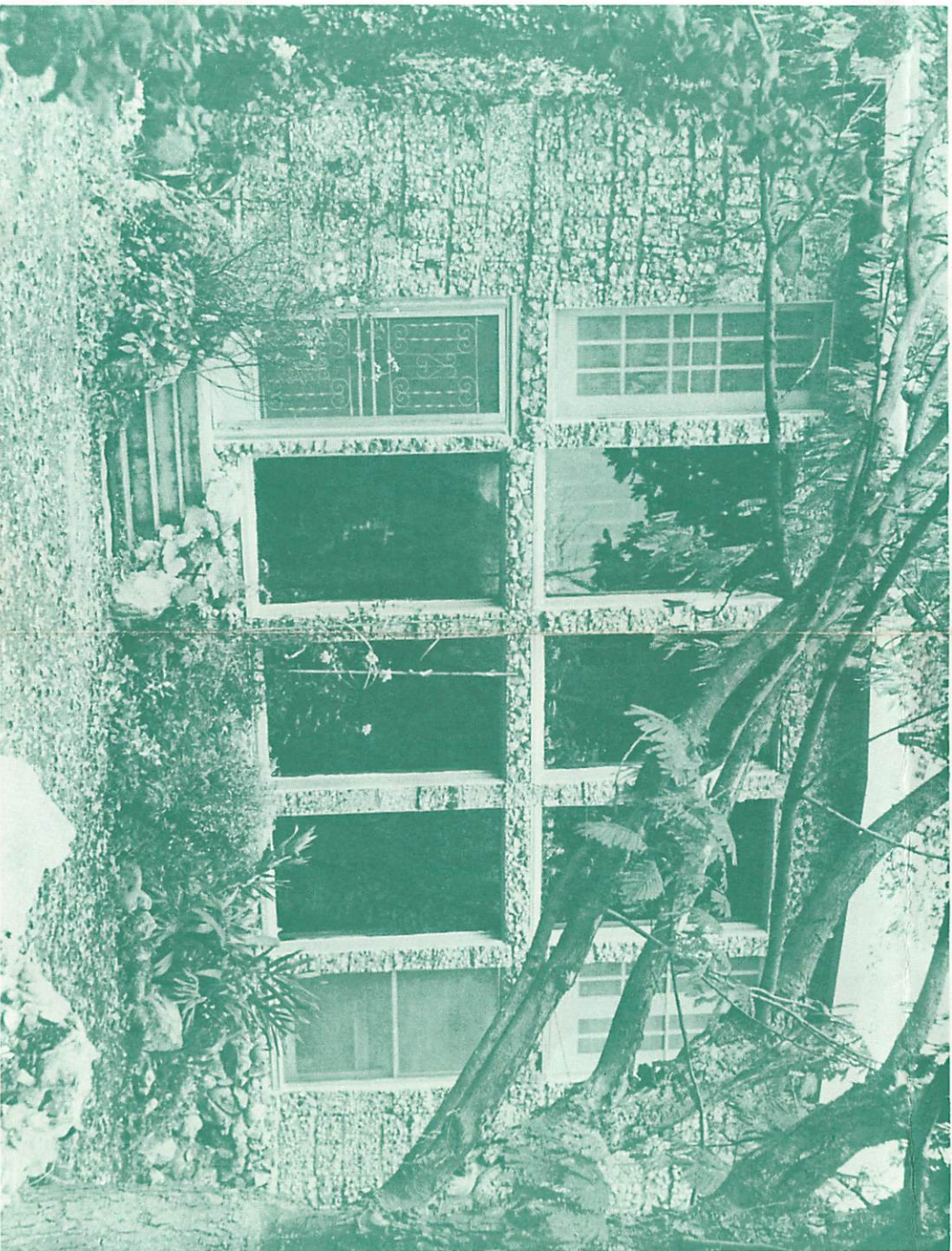
Admission \$1.50

Children Under 15 with Parents — Free
QUIGLEY CASTLE is a must. It has suspended rooms with flowers
and shrubs growing inside the house, a unique rock collection
beyond your imagination and is beautifully built with the rocks
covering four walls.

Open daily 8:30 P.M. till 5:00 P.M.
Except Sunday 1:00 P.M. till 5:00 P.M.

1980

MAY 20 1981
Quigley's
Castle



Located 4½ Miles South on Highway 23 of . . .

EUREKA SPRINGS, ARKANSAS

'We're Going to Tear Down the House'

Wife 'Rocked' Husband Into 'Castle'

by Conaly Bedell
Tulsa World Correspondent

QUIGLEY CASTLE, Ark.—As soon as Albert Quigley headed for work and was out of sight down the country road one June morning in 1943, Mrs. Quigley gathered their five children about her and ordered: "We're going to tear down the house."

And demolish the family's three-room house they did. "When Bud got home that night," Mrs. Quigley related 25 years later, "he was living in a chicken house, where we'd moved all of our stuff. I knew he'd never do anything about a new house as long as the old one was standing."

Construction began immediately. Mrs. Quigley wanted two things: Plenty of room for the robust family, and "a house where you felt like you were living in the world instead of in a box." She designed it in her mind "but I couldn't tell anybody what I wanted, so I sat down with scissors and paste and cardboard and match sticks and made it."

FROM THAT MODEL OUT OF THE GOOD EARTH, the Quigleys built a house 4½ miles south of Eureka Springs that, without intention, became a favorite stopping place for folks from all across the land. Lately it's been included as a "stage stop" on the petroleum industry's Ozark Frontier Trail.

Proud that people want to see her home, Elise Quigley, a short woman and merrily round, gladly greets the world which comes to her door, and most visitors go away feeling the charm of her personality.

The house so quickly torn down was the one that Elise and Albert built 15 years before, when they moved to their 80-acre farm at the end of a rocky Ozark mountain road.

Back of the house site stood a heap of rocks and fossils that Mrs. Quigley began picking up as a 9-year-old girl newly arrived in the Ozarks from California. The pile in the back yard had grown into a mountain as she continued collecting from hillsides and creek beds in moments snatched from motherhood. "I love archeology," she explained.

THE ROCKS WERE TO ASSUME AN IMPORTANT part in the house. Working tenderly, carefully for three years, Mrs. Quigley covered the four-two-story walls from her rocks selected for their beauty of shape or color, or their resemblance to familiar objects, or their fragment of ancient history.

Close together on the north wall are a piece of petrified wood, a fossilized turtle shell, the prehistoric imprint of a deer's hoof, and Indian grist stone, a rock shaped like a prussian helmet, and ordinary American marbles her sons had played with through childhood.

To achieve her "wordly effect," Mrs. Quigley ordered four feet of earth left bare between the edges of the floors and three of the walls inside the house. Into the soil which bordered the rooms on the south, east, and west, subtropical shrubs, trees, and flowering plants, along with southwestern cactuses, were planted. Year round, sun warmth beamed through 12 four by six-foot windows, stirring the plants to lush growth, until now they reach to the second-story ceiling.

SUPPORT FOR THE SECOND STORY COMES from pillars of oak bolted to the edge of the main floor. At the four

corners and at intermittent points along the walls, the inner pillar structure is braced and bolted to the outer walls.

For seven months the whole family slaved at masonry and carpentry. Once again their own trees were sawed and planed into lumber at nearby mills where Quigley worked. Only \$2,000 in cash was spent on labor and materials, that money earned by raising turkeys.

Winter coming, but with the house yet unfinished, the Quigleys moved into their new home. To ward off cold, heavy muslin was tacked over the spaces reserved for 28 windows. Each time the temperature dropped, a son hung more sacks.

After the house was finished, Mrs. Quigley wrote the patent office about patenting her design. Yes, she was told, she could have a patent, but one hardly seemed worth the expense because, the bureau said, to build such a house would cost \$60,000 in 1944 currency.

JUST AS THE OUTSIDE WALLS ARE A MUSEUM of rocks, the inside of the house is a collection of antiques and mementoes. In the den, along with a 160-year-old rocking chair, is an elaborately oxygenated goldfish tank; and 20 year-old African violets—each expressive of Mrs. Quigley's varied tastes.

From any room in the house, particularly the bedrooms, which are upstairs, the unique construction with expanses of windows and flora screens gives a feeling of living in the cradled arms of Mother Nature.

"WE REALLY LIVE OFF WHAT GOD PUT IN THE world," said Mrs. Quigley with satisfaction. "You can practically live off a cow. She'll raise your meat, and if she's a real good cow, she'll raise an extra calf for taxes. You can get all the milk and butter and cottage cheese you can use."

An Ozark botanical garden secludes the house. Trees and bushes give leaf cover to the green yard that is more a network of wide paths than a lawn. Along the paths are birdbaths and houses, a fish pond, a dove cage, arches, all built from stones and pebbles, most from the immediate area.

The tourists descended upon them unexpectedly. "I never dreamed of anybody else being interested in my house," the builder said. "But people started coming here to see it, and the number just started growing. We were busy building and didn't have time to piddle with them. Finally though, I got the house done and had more time, so I started charging. The first year I took in \$75.

OF HER TWO-DECADE PROJECT, MRS. QUIGLEY reflected bemusedly, "Oh, we must have been crazy. It's all really nutty. This is the first time I've taken out time to think about all I've been doing all these years."

Asked how long she'd been married, she thought a while then replied, "I guess 37 years, I'm not one to remember things like that. Been too busy. I never heckle my husband about anniversaries."

When visitors realize they too could construct with their rock collections, she is pleased. "I don't know why they don't think of it themselves. But this has stimulated other rock hounds to build, so I've helped people too, I wouldn't want to do it again, but I'm glad I did it once."