



OHS WAREHOUSE
214 E. Douglas St.,
Bloomington, Open
Wed., Fri., Sat., 8-5



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OHS HOLIDAY PARTY
DEC 7, 5 - 7:30
LOCATION TBA



**FAST FASHION &
COOKIE CUTTER
HOMES LECTURE &
EWING MANOR TOUR**
PG. 3



OLD HOUSE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Ewing Manor

Known as Ewing Manor, Ewing Castle, and Sunset Hill, this beautiful estate sits like a crown at the top of the hill where Towanda and Emerson intersect. Though its solid stone and beam construction appears to be something from France in the 1800s, this home was actually built in 1929 by Davis and Hazle Buck Ewing.

Davis Ewing owned a concrete company here in Bloomington in the early 1900s, producing everything from sidewalks to concrete building blocks and fence posts. Hazle's father was Orlando Buck, business partner to William Wrigley, Jr. of Wrigley Gum. Hazle earned a philosophy degree from the University of Chicago and married Davis in 1907. In 1924-1925, Davis and Hazle took their adopted son Ralph on a one-year trip around the world, along the way keeping journals that included notes and photos of their favorite buildings, pieces of art, and other items of influence. Upon returning to Bloomington, Davis shared his inspirations from this trip with local architect Phillip Hooton, and they started construction of a new home that was inspired by the Ewings' travel experience. Hooton had previously designed the Ensenberger Building (with Arthur Pillsbury) and the downtown State Farm Building (with Archie Schaeffer after Pillsbury's death).

Ewing Manor originally sat on 60 acres, many of which were pasture for Hazle's three horses and pony. Hazle was an avid equestrian, and a commissioned oil painting of her in her riding gear suggests that she preferred her breeches over the dresses that were customary at the time. Her vintage jodhpurs, riding boots, and other attire are still a part of the Ewing Collection and are displayed throughout the year.

Eventually the Ewings divorced and Davis moved out of state, but Hazle kept Ewing Manor as her home. Over time, Hazle began to donate



**The Davis and
Hazle Buck Ewing
home built in 1929
is now the Ewing
Cultural Center.**

portions of her 60 acre estate for the benefit of the community, including what is currently Ewing Park I, II, and III. She also donated 202 acres of timber in Funks Grove to the State of Illinois, 18.6 acres of which was officially dedicated as a Nature Preserve in 1986.

When Hazle died in 1969, she left Sunset Hill and the 6.5 acres surrounding it to the Illinois State Foundation. Her wish was that the home and property would serve the community by promoting intercultural understanding, as is evidenced in its present name: Ewing Cultural Center. *By Tara Henry.*

For more information on the Ewing Cultural Center and their upcoming events, visit their [website](#) or [Facebook](#) page.



The Gardens and Theatre of Ewing

Ewing Manor is as well-known for its gardens as it is for the beautiful home that centers them. While the property is one cohesive unit now, the estate has actually been developed piecemeal, one area building upon the next.

The Compass Garden Ewing Manor was completed in 1929, and renowned Danish landscaper Jens Jensen was hired to create the initial landscape design. Known for his innovative use of native plants to create prairie-style landscapes, he submitted to the Ewings a planting plan that contained a square garden divided into four sections, with a circular path in the center on which one could stroll through gardens originally featuring a variety of roses, iris and larkspur, with a border of violets, surrounded by a lilac hedge. This garden is referred to as “The Compass Garden” due to its appearance from an aerial position, as well as the inlaid stone compass shape in the center. Jensen also created an adjacent rectangular vegetable garden south of the Compass Garden, which has been replaced by the plantings that line Emerson Street.

The Moriyama Japanese Garden The second garden in the present property layout is the Moriyama Japanese Garden, built in 1986 on the northwest side of the home. This garden was designed by local Japanese architects and named to honor the first man who chaired the Sister Cities Committee in Japan. This garden was a gift from Bloomington’s sister city (Asahikawa) and the Bloomington-Normal Sister Cities Committee.

Ewing Theatre The third addition was the construction of the Ewing Theatre, which was funded by the ISU Foundation in 1999. The Theatre is best known as the current home of the annual

Fast Fashion and Cookie Cutter Homes
Lecture with Tour of Ewing Manor Fri., Sept. 29th 6-7:45 pm (Free, Open to the Public)

Matt & Elisabeth Reed will present an OHS lecture on the relationship between craftsmanship in clothing to that in homes and how society is trending back towards simplicity and sustainability, including:

- The relationship between fast fashion consumption to cookie cutter homes (materials, space, construction details)
- A brief history of fashion consumption over the last 100 years
- How the pendulum is swinging back to simplifying and more mindful consumerism (tiny houses, capsule wardrobes)
- How living in an older home is a very sustainable lifestyle

Vintage clothing pieces from the Hazle Buck Ewing collection will be on display.

Matt is a Licensed Architect and Elisabeth is an Instructional Assistant Professor in Fashion Design and Merchandising.

Park at St. John's Lutheran Church (1617 Emerson St., Bloomington). Use the pedestrian walk to cross Towanda Ave.; follow signs to the south central entrance.

Illinois Shakespeare Festival, which is in its 40th year of production. There was originally a tennis court located where the Theatre sits.

Genevieve Green Gardens The Genevieve Green Gardens were installed in 2007, funded by Bloomington resident Bruce Green as a memorial to his late wife, Genevieve. These gardens include the Woodland Garden along Towanda, the Shakespeare Garden along the east side of the house (this garden features Shakespearean quotes dispersed amongst the plantings), the White Garden, and the garden that welcomes visitors at the southeast iron gates. The most recent addition, the Pollinator Garden, was installed this summer through a grant from the Illinois Native Plant Society. *By Tara Henry*

Jens Jensen and Sunset Hill



Jens Jensen was an internationally-known Danish landscape designer who loved the ecology of our Midwest; he loved it so much that he made Mid-America his home for most of his life. Jensen used native plants to create innovative prairie-style landscapes and used principles of ecology in ways that were way ahead of his time. He created hundreds of residential landscapes for wealthy people of influence across the Midwest and beyond, including Henry Ford, Edsel Ford, and our very own Davis and Hazle Buck Ewing.

Jensen immigrated to America from Denmark at the age of 24, leaving behind the opportunity to take over his family farm. He arrived to the States in 1884, bringing with him his young bride and a dream of opportunity, as did many other immigrants during this time.

Jensen began his career as a laborer for the Chicago Park District. His passion for the

natural landscape and the symbolic freedom that it represented led Jensen to pursue mentorship and advancement in the Chicago Park System. He rose through the ranks, starting out as a landscape designer, and eventually becoming the General Superintendent of the West Park System. In this management position, he made major renovations to Garfield, Douglas, and Humboldt Parks, and created Columbus Park from scratch, which was no minor feat. Jensen left Chicago's park system in 1920, and at age 60, started his own landscape design practice.

Jensen's Work at Ewing Manor In 1931 and 1932, Jensen created a beautiful landscape plan for the Ewings. The original plans remain in the Ewing Archives, beautifully hand-drawn and signed by their maker. The archives also contain personal letters from Jensen, handwritten on his embossed stationary from "The Clearing" ("The Clearing" was the site of Jensen's home in rural Wisconsin, as well as the school of the same name that he started to educate aspiring landscape designers).

Jensen was a man who saw his landscape designs as artistic creations, and he didn't like to have his designs critiqued or changed. One of Jensen's letters to the Ewings conveys his amusement upon his receipt of a packet of clipped photographs sent to him by the house's architect, offering Jensen advice on how to use the plants in the clippings to design the landscape to compliment the home's architecture. Jensen proceeded to point out in his letter to the Ewings the flaws in the architect's

recommendations. He stated that he would be returning the packet of clippings to the architect, and stated that, "I am only too willing to work together with your architect, but I am the gardener – not him".

A separate letter to Davis Ewing expressed Jensen's displeasure on seeing that some of the plants in his original design had been substituted with other specimens. In his note, Jensen compared landscape design to musical composition, stating that the modified planting "deprives you of what is commonly talked about as art, as far as the out-of-doors is concerned". He continued by saying that, "Your present border represents horticulture, -- a science, but not an art". Jensen's final line in the letter was that he hoped it would be possible for Davis to change the plantings back to his original design.

Though Jensen's strong personality and viewpoints led to direct words with his clients sometimes, most of his communications to the Ewings were light, offering suggestions on specific plantings, or discussing his conservation efforts throughout the Midwest. A letter from Jensen years after his Ewing Manor plans were created shows a continued relationship with Mrs. Ewing, containing an invitation for her to come to his home in Wisconsin for a visit.

While commonly referred to as Ewing Manor in our community, the name that was originally given to the home was actually "Sunset Hill". This name stems from one of Jensen's trademark landscape design features that is present at Ewing Manor: curving east and west paths that enable views of the sunrise and the sunset.

When the Ewings and a local business partner decided to release some of the property west of their home to create an exclusive subdivision, they hired Jensen to create a plan for the road and landscape lining it. Jensen submitted a design plan containing a winding road (now called Sunset Road), separating 9 large lots with clusters of trees and foliage along the way. All prospective purchasers of these lots were interviewed personally by Hazle before she would agree to sell the land to them, and one of the first questions she would ask them was if they purchased the land, would she still be able to ride her horses on the property. Those lots were all purchased and eventually subdivided by their subsequent owners. Where there were originally 9 large lots in Jensen's plan, there are now around 40 smaller ones. The original subdivision plan, hand colored and signed by Jensen, is framed and hanging in the Gold Room of Ewing Manor. - *By Tara Henry*



[We could use your assistance! The Old House Society is inviting you to help make our organization better by answering a short survey. OHS appreciates your feedback and wants to make your experience with the organization valuable. Click on this message to access the survey, and thanks for sharing your thoughts! Your feedback is important to us!](#)

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[Your membership supports our goal of promoting and preserving buildings, landscapes, and neighborhoods more than 50 years old, and the communities and heritage they foster. Benefits include:](#)

- 10% discount on parts, materials, and supplies at the Architectural Warehouse
- Invitations to social events, lectures, and educational opportunities
- Information on upcoming OHS home tours
- The satisfying feeling that you're helping the operations of a not-for-profit organization passionate about supporting our old home community!

[Membership Levels: \\$25 \(Student and Retiree\); \\$35 \(Individual\) \\$50 \(Family\)](#)