

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

E. W. Marland Mansion

AND/OR COMMON

E. W. Marland Mansion

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

901 Monument Road

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

6

CITY, TOWN

Ponca City

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Oklahoma

\_\_ VICINITY OF

CODE

40

COUNTY

Kay

CODE

071

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

### CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

### OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

### STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

### PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple (See continuation sheet.)

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Kay County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Newkirk

STATE

Oklahoma

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Oklahoma Historical Society Special Marland Mansion Survey;  
National Register of Historic Places

DATE

1972; 1972

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Oklahoma Historical Society; National Register of Historic

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City; Washington

STATE

Oklahoma; D.C.

Places.

478

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

From 1928 until 1941, this mansion and estate, situated on a small hilltop in a residential area near the northeast edge of Ponca City, served as E. W. Marland's principal place of residence. The three-story native stone mansion, designed by John Duncan Forsyth, was modeled after the Davanzatti Palace in Florence, Italy, while the grounds and outbuildings were patterned after Hampton Court in England and the Palace of Versailles in France. Despite the fact that the mansion and estate later headquartered a religious order, it has changed little and still looks much as it did when Marland lived here. Although an earlier and much smaller mansion, a somewhat altered Marland Oil Company office building, and several other structures associated with Marland are extant in Ponca City, the mansion and estate enjoys the longest and closest association with him.

When E. W. Marland first came to Ponca City in 1908, apparently he lived for a time at the 101 Ranch, which was already famous for its traveling wild west shows. Later he resided in the old Arcade Hotel, and after Mrs. Marland joined him, they resided in a house near Broadway and Central, not far from the offices of the Marland Oil Company. In 1915, Marland built a mansion for his family at 1000 East Grand Avenue, and they lived here until the larger mansion and estate was completed in 1928. The East Grand house is still extant and is presently used as a city cultural center and museum. Before his ouster from the control of his company in 1928, Marland constructed a series of adobe-style buildings (designed by the versatile John Duncan Forsyth) for what he hoped would become a training school for Marland employees and others who wanted to learn more about the oil business. Later, these structures were sold to a military academy, and presently, they are used as a private grade school. The present Continental Oil Company Headquarters Building was constructed by Marland as well. It is somewhat altered, and probably the only feature dating from the Marland era is the 1928 board room. Designed by the peripatetic John Duncan Forsyth, the room features walnut paneling and English lime wood ornamental carvings which depict oil industry implements and the flowers of the Southwest.

As E. W. Marland's wealth grew in the early 1920's he began to dream of building a larger and more magnificent home on a 2,500 acre tract he owned northeast of Ponca City. Originally he had planned to build a house that combined

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# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1925-41

BUILDER/ARCHITECT John Duncan Forsyth

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Few individuals have contributed as much to the development of any single industry as Ernest Whitworth Marland did to the development of the American petroleum industry. Between 1910 and 1920 he became the Nation's most successful wild-catter, and afterward he transformed the Marland Oil Company into a fully integrated operation. By the mid-1920's, Marland's creation, says his biographer John S. Ezell, "was the largest independent oil company, controlling one-tenth of the world's supply and worth between eighty-five and one hundred million dollars."<sup>1</sup> Because of its position in the oil industry, the Marland Company, according to John Joseph Mathews, author of the only full-scale Marland biography, held "the balance of power between two of the world's largest oil companies, the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey and the Royal Dutch Shell Oil Company of London and Amsterdam, Holland."<sup>2</sup>

Marland also pioneered in applying scientific principles to the search for oil. The research division he organized, says a recently published history of the Continental Oil Company, was "the first to be established by any oil company."<sup>3</sup> According to Edgar W. Owen, perhaps the leading expert on the history of petroleum exploration, between 1918 and 1928 "the Marland participation in the advance of petroleum exploration was more notable than that of many larger corporations."<sup>4</sup> In fact, by 1926, says Owen, "Marland had the strongest geophysical department and one of the largest and most experienced geological organizations in the oil industry."<sup>5</sup>

(continued)

<sup>1</sup>John S. Ezell, "Ernest Whitworth Marland," Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement Three (New York, 1973), 505.

<sup>2</sup>John Joseph Mathews, Life and Death of an Oilman: The Career of E. W. Marland (Norman, 1951), 165.

<sup>3</sup>Continental Oil Company, Conoco: The First One Hundred Years (New York, 1975), 100.

<sup>4</sup>Edgar W. Owen, Trek of the Oil Finders: A History of Exploration for Petroleum (Tulsa, 1975), 539.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 508.

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# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See continuation sheet.)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY circa 34 acres

UTM REFERENCES

E 1.4 16.7.3 1.2.0 4.0 16.4 18.3.0

A 1.4 16.7.3 1.2.0 4.0 16.5 13.0.0

B 1.4 16.7.3 4.6.0 4.0 16.5 13.4.0

C 1.4 16.7.3 4.6.0 4.0 16.4 19.6.0

D 1.4 16.7.3 3.6.0 4.0 16.4 18.2.0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See last page of description.)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ralph J. Christian, Historian, Historic Landmarks Project

ORGANIZATION

DATE

American Association for State and Local History June 1977

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1400 Eighth Avenue South

615/242-5583

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Nashville,

Tennessee 37203

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

500

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET Marland Mansion ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

Spanish Colonial and Pueblo Indian architecture but for some unknown reason changed his mind and decided to build a replica of Florence's Davanzatti Palace and model his grounds after Hampton Court and Versailles. He hired John Duncan Forsyth as principal architect, and Forsyth in turn hired artists, sculptors, decorators, and artisans from around the world for the project. Between 1925 and 1928, Marland spent approximately \$2.5 million on his dream home. When finally completed in 1928, it contained a large swimming pool, five lakes, a game refuge, stables, gatehouses, a ledge, a garage, art gallery and studios, boathouse, a 9-hole golf course, and polo grounds.

In 1929 Marland, only a few months after his ouster from Marland Oil Company, organized Marland Estate, Inc., a holding company, and turned over to it all his private landholdings except the mansion and 37 surrounding acres. Although Marland had intended to use this firm to make a comeback in the oil business, he failed, and by 1931 almost all he had left was the mansion with its 37 acres. Although he could barely afford to maintain the mansion, he continued to reside here, and during the 1930's it served as a campaign headquarters for his congressional, gubernatorial, and senate campaigns.

After Marland left the governorship in 1939, he found it increasingly difficult to maintain the mansion and estate, and so he decided to sell it. In May, 1941, he sold it and the adjacent acreage to the Carmelite Fathers for \$66,000. At this juncture Marland moved into the artist's studio and guest house where he died a few months later.

In 1948 the Carmelites sold the mansion and estate to the Felician Sisters for \$50,000. They renamed it Assumption Villa, established a high school here, and made it the mother-house for their seventh American province. Also, they constructed a high school building, a dormitory, a chapel, and an administration building on the grounds. By late 1974, however, the Felicians had decided to leave Ponca City and placed the property up for sale. At this juncture there was much sentiment for public ownership, and in September, 1975, the citizenry voted to impose a one-cent sales tax to finance its purchase. Eventually the city paid \$1,435,000 for the mansion and estate with the Continental Oil Company paying \$717,500 of the purchase price.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Marland Mansion ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE TWO

Mansion. This westward-facing, irregularly-shaped, three-story house is constructed primarily of light-colored stone quarried nearby. The edifice has concrete foundations, features a partial basement, and measures approximately 78 by 184 feet. The exterior walls feature rubble-squared stone set in concrete and are decorated with carved figures, decorated balconies, and exterior stairways. The structure is capped with an overhanging hipped roof covered with red tile and features stone corbeling along the roofline. The roof is pierced by two centrally located joined chimneys featuring gabled, red tile roofs, and situated on either side of the front (west) and rear (east) facades. At one time, an outside end chimney was situated on the north side of the house towards the rear. The portion projecting above the roof was destroyed in a storm, however, and it was never rebuilt.

Window treatment varies. Most first and second floor windows are set in huge rounded arches and present something of an arcaded effect while third floor windows are generally set in rectangular-shaped surrounds. All windows and doors have black-painted metal frames which in conjunction with the wrought iron grill work on windows, doors, and balconies presents an effective contrast to the light-colored stone walls and red tile roof. The main entrance on the front (west) facade is flanked by an arched and buttressed porte cochère constructed of stone similar to that of the house. The house is entered through arched, 11-panel, double wood doors custom-made by the William H. Jackson Company of New York. These doors open into a 7-by-12-foot vestibule which features a fanlight and wrought iron double doors which in turn provide entry into the 23-by-29-foot entrance hall.

Inside, a central hall plan is generally followed. Because the house was built into the side of a hill, the main entrance is actually on the second floor. This second floor area features a formal entry hall flanked by open stairways on either side. This hallway continues down a flight of steps and ends in the ballroom which has a ceiling featuring \$80,000 worth of gold leaf (1928 price) and Waterford Crystal Chandeliers with sterling silver bases imported from Ireland at a cost of \$15,000 each. To the left on the second floor is the formal dining room with hand-cut wall panels of English

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Pollard Oak cut by special permission from the royal forests; an octagon-shaped breakfast room; a pantry with original dishwasher and refrigerator; and a salon with a ceiling hand-painted by the Italian artist Vincent Margliotti. To the left on the first floor are the reception room, a cloak room, and the living room whose south arched entrance was often used to admit guests for parties.

The third floor was devoted primarily to family living quarters and guest rooms. On the left side are four guest bedrooms, the pantry dumbwaiter, and Marland's library, which served as his private study as well. On the right side are his son George's living quarters which consisted of a bedroom, dressing room, and bath; Mrs. Marland's bed room, closet, dressing room, and bath; and Marland's English Tudor style bedroom with its five-tumbler safe as well as his bath and dressing room.

The first floor area was used for informal dining and recreational purposes. On the left side are the servant's dining room; a Dutch kitchen with hand-carved cabinets and carved and decorated oak doors; a machinery room; a boiler room; a card room which Marland used for his famous poker games; and a hunt kitchen where hunters could prepare the game they had killed on the Marland preserve. On the right side are two rooms which served as servants' quarters; men's and women's restrooms; and a handball and exercise court. Directly east of both these areas are two 30-by-58-foot lounge rooms, known as the inner and outer lounge respectively. The inner lounge features a ceiling-wall mural, executed by Vincent Margliotti, which depicts the history of Kay County and Oklahoma from the Indian era to the discovery of oil by Marland. The outer lounge also features a decorative ceiling by Margliotti. Originally, this lounge area opened onto an olympic size swimming pool which has since been filled in.

Although some interior changes have been made to the house over the years, they are relatively minor. Recently, the city has launched a concerted effort to regain the mansion's original furnishings and at present has about 25 pieces formerly owned by Marland. Generally the exterior of the house is unchanged with the exception of a small stone-covered passageway constructed at a later date to link the mansion with the Felician dormitory and administration building.

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Original Outbuildings. A number of the estate's original outbuildings are still extant. These include the 1 1/2-story gatehouse; the studio and guest house where Marland spent his last months and which features timbers from his first oil rig; the garage, a portion of which has been converted into a residence for Marland's widow; the stables, whose interiors have been gutted and which now serve as a private residence; the boathouse; and a gazebo. Most of these structures are constructed of the same type stone, have red tile roofs, and share many of the same design characteristics as the mansion. Most are well-maintained and in good condition. In addition to these structures much of the estate's stone wall is still standing and appears to be in good repair. Only one of Marland's lakes remains, however, and his game preserve, golf course, and polo grounds disappeared many years ago to make way for a modern subdivision.

Other Structures. Not far from the mansion are several post-Marland structures that do not contribute to its national significance. Directly south of the mansion are the administration building and a dormitory constructed by the Felicians and connected to it by a covered passageway. South of the administration building is the chapel constructed by the Felicians. A short distance west of the mansion is Angela Hall, another structure of Felician origin. The design and construction of these buildings is compatible with the mansion, and so they do not represent a significant intrusion.

Boundary Justification. The boundary described below contains approximately 34 acres and includes the Marland Mansion and those structures and outbuildings dating from the years when he lived on the estate.

Boundary Description. As described in Ponca City municipal records and indicated in red on the accompanying maps [(1) U.S.G.S. 7.5' Series, Oklahoma, Ponca City Quad., 1968; and (2) Marland Mansion and Estate-AASLH Sketch Map, 1976], a line "Commencing at the Southwest corner of Section 23, Township 26 North, Range 2 East, Indian Meridian, Kay County, Oklahoma, said point being a brass cap; thence East along the South line of said Section 23 a distance of 286.0; thence North 32° 01' East a distance of 2549.7' to a 1/2" iron pin, said point

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CONTINUATION SHEET Marland Mansion TEM NUMBER 7 PAGE five

being the true point of beginning; thence South 47° 01' East a distance of 61.8' to the center of an existing stone pillar; thence South 86° 17' East along the South side of an existing stone wall a distance of 702.0 to a 3/4" iron pipe; thence North 28° 20' East a distance of 563.1' to a 3/4" iron pipe being on the Quarter Section line of said Section 23; thence North 0° 21' East along the Quarter Section line of said Section 23 a distance of 1129.2' to a 4" steel corner post; thence South 88° 56' West a distance of 304.5' to a 4" iron pipe; thence South 36° 46' West a distance of 60.7' to a railroad spike; thence South 86° 22' West a distance of 84.2' to a 3/4" iron pipe; thence North 62° 46' West a distance of 101.15' to a 3/4" iron pipe; thence South 0° 10' West a distance of 72.9' to a 1 1/2" iron pipe; thence in a southwesterly direction along the high water mark of an existing lake a distance of 690+ to a 1/2" iron pin; thence in a westerly direction a distance of 137.9+ to a 3/4" iron pipe, being on the East Right-of-Way line of Monument Road; thence South 3° 30' West along the East Right-of-Way line of Monument Road, said line also being the West side of an existing stone wall, a distance of 825.6' to the corners of an existing building; thence North 86° 30' West along the North side of an existing stone wall a distance of 16.5' to the corner of an existing building; thence south 3° 30' West along the West side of an existing stone wall a distance of 18' to the corner of an existing building; thence North 86° 30' West along the North side of an existing stone wall a distance of 18' to the corner of an existing building; thence South 3° 30' West along the west side of an existing stone wall a distance of 99.6' to the center of an existing stone pillar; thence South 47° 01' East a distance of 61.8' to the true point of beginning, containing 31.61 acres more or less;" plus, a line beginning at a 3/4 inch iron pipe on the east right-of-way line of Monument Road and extending northward approximately 615 feet along the east right-of-way of Monument Road to the south right-of-way of Christmas Tree Lane; thence, eastward approximately 320 feet along the south right-of-way of Christmas Tree Lane to a 3/4 inch iron pipe; thence, South 0°10' West a distance of 72.9 feet to a 1 1/2 inch iron pipe; thence, in a southwesterly direction along the high water mark of an existing lake a distance of approximately 690 feet to a 1/2 inch iron pin; thence, in a westerly direction approximately 137.9 feet to the 3/4 inch iron pipe that marks the point of beginning.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Marland Mansion TEM NUMBER 8 PAGE one

Furthermore, in 1935, Marland, according to Ezell, was "a prime mover in creation of the Interstate Oil Compact" to conserve petroleum.<sup>6</sup> Thus, Marland, says historian Ruth S. Knowles, "skillfully brought about agreements from which grew an organization supported by twenty-one states. Never again would wasteful boom-field practices dissipate the nation's oil resources."<sup>7</sup>

From 1928 until 1941, this mansion and estate, situated on a small hilltop in a residential area near the northeast edge of Ponca City, served as E. W. Marland's principal place of residence. The three-story native stone mansion, designed by John Duncan Forsyth, was modeled after the Davanzatti Palace in Florence, Italy, while the grounds and outbuildings were patterned after Hampton Court in England and the Palace of Versailles in France. Despite the fact that the mansion and estate later headquartered a religious order, it has changed little (except for the unintrusive erection of a chapel, dormitory, and administrative building rear of the mansion) and still looks much as it did when Marland lived here. Although an earlier and much smaller mansion, a somewhat altered Marland Oil Company office building, and several other structures associated with Marland are extant in Ponca City, this residence enjoys the longest and closest association with him.

History

Ernest Whitworth Marland was born May 8, 1874, in Pittsburg, Pa., to Alfred and Sarah M. Marland, both of whom were of English origin. Alfred Marland, deeply sympathetic to the Southern cause, had come to the United States in 1862 to fight for the Confederacy. His military service was brief, however, and apparently he became disenchanted with the South, because by 1864, he was living in Pittsburg. He invented an improved iron band for baling cotton, began to manufacture it,

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<sup>6</sup>Ezell, "Ernest Whitworth Marland," Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement Three, 506.

<sup>7</sup>Ruth S. Knowles, The Greatest Gamblers: The Epic of American Oil Exploration (New York, 1959), 247.

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and soon accumulated a considerable fortune. Because Ernest was his only son, Alfred pampered him and tried to raise him as a gentleman in the English sense of the term. Convinced that Ernest would someday be either Chief Justice or a great military leader, his father closely supervised his education. For a few years, the whole family lived in Rugby, Tenn., so that he could attend Sir Thomas Hughes's Arnold School which was patterned after the English boarding schools. In 1882, however, Ernest's parents became disillusioned with Hughes and the school, and they returned to Pittsburg where he entered Park Institute.

After graduating from Park Institute in 1891, Ernest sought to enter West Point but failed the physical examination. He then entered the law school at the University of Michigan where he distinguished himself more for his poker playing than as a student of jurisprudence. After receiving his law degree in 1893, he returned home to discover that his father's business had failed and that most of the family fortune had vanished. Marland then went to work in a Pittsburg law office, performing mostly clerical duties because he was still too young to be admitted to the bar.

In 1895 Marland opened his own law office. Soon he attracted the attention of promoters James M. Guffey and John H. Galey who hired him to appraise and handle legal details for coal lands they had leased. Within a short time, Marland himself began to lease coal properties on his own, establishing first the Pittsburg Securities and Guaranty Company and later the Pittsburg and West Virginia Coal Company. Convinced that geology would enable him to uncover hitherto neglected coal deposits, he began an intensive program of self-education in the subject.

By 1906 Marland's studies had led him to conclude that substantial untapped coal deposits existed in the panhandle of West Virginia near the Ohio border. He moved to Arroyo, W. Va., and began to core for what he hoped would be a rich deposit. Instead of finding coal, however, his drilling crew struck oil, bringing in what came to be known as the Congo field. Soon he drilled several other oil and gas wells and accumulated a fortune estimated at \$1 million. Almost immediately, however, he lost everything he owned in the Panic of 1907 and was reduced to living on funds borrowed from friends.

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Late in 1908 Marland, after hearing about the new oil fields in Oklahoma, raised enough money to finance a drilling venture in that state. After his arrival, he and George Miller, co-owner of the famous 101 Ranch, formed the 101 Ranch Oil Company to drill on the ranch property. Although Marland found only gas wells, he refused to be discouraged. In 1911, after getting additional capital from W. H. McFadden, a former executive with Carnegie Steel, he brought in his first gusher.

For the next few years, Marland's oil exploration operations were phenomenally successful. He brought in eight rich fields in Oklahoma alone and several in adjacent States as well. By 1920 he had obtained leases in Central America and had begun to explore for oil in several other areas of the globe. Much of Marland's success was due to his application of scientific principles to the search for oil. His Marland Oil Company was the first in the industry to establish a research division, and it pioneered in the use of core drilling and the seismograph to look for oil. According to Owen, between 1918 and 1928, "the Marland participation in the advance of petroleum exploration was more notable than that of many larger corporations."<sup>8</sup> In fact, by 1926, says Owen, "Marland had the strongest geophysical department and one of the largest and most experienced geological organizations in the oil industry."<sup>9</sup>

In 1920 Marland transformed the Marland Oil Company into a fully integrated operation, and very quickly, says Mathews, "the red-triangle symbol," which he adopted as his logo, "and the name Marland became known over the country."<sup>10</sup> By the mid-1920's, this firm, according to Ezell, "was the largest independent oil company, controlling one-tenth of the world's supply and worth between eighty-five and one hundred million dollars."<sup>11</sup> Soon, says Mathews, Marland

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<sup>8</sup>Owen, Trek of the Oil Finders, 539.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 508.

<sup>10</sup>Mathews, Life and Death of an Oilman, 165.

<sup>11</sup>Ezell, "Ernest Whitworth Marland," Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement Three, 505.

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"held the balance of power between two of the world's largest oil companies, the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey and the Royal Dutch Shell Oil Company of London and Amsterdam, Holland."<sup>12</sup>

At this juncture, Marland, who had always spent his money freely, began to spend as if his resources were limitless. Not only did he pour huge sums into expanding his oil company but he built schools, churches, and playgrounds for Ponca City; gave his employees good salaries, insurance policies, and other amenities; and commissioned Bryant Baker's famous statue of "The Pioneer Woman" as a gift to the people of Oklahoma. For his own family, he constructed a palatial mansion, and a private railway car, purchased a luxurious yacht, and acquired a plantation in Mississippi.

Marland's astronomical expenditures eventually forced him to seek outside assistance. In 1923, he borrowed \$12 million from J. P. Morgan and Company and placed Morgan men on his board of directors. Gradually, the Morgan interests increased their influence, and "as the Morgan interest rose," says historian George B. Tindall, "Marland's influence waned."<sup>13</sup> When the price of oil dropped in 1927 and 1928 and Marland refused to retrench or economize, they assumed control of the company. Shortly after Marland resigned in 1928, they merged his company with another Morgan-controlled firm, the Continental Oil Company, dropping Marland's name entirely but using his triangle-shaped logo.

After losing his oil company and with it much of his personal fortune, Marland tried to start anew. He organized several new oil companies, but they found little oil. Marland next turned to politics. In 1932 he was elected to Congress where he became a staunch supporter of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal. Two years later, running on a platform of bringing the New Deal to Oklahoma, he won election as Governor of the State. Marland advocated a broad-ranging

(continued)

<sup>12</sup>Mathews, Life and Death of an Oilman, 165.

<sup>13</sup>George B. Tindall, The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945 (Baton Rouge, 1967), 94.

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program of reform but managed to have only a small portion of it enacted. He did get the legislature to approve, however, his proposals for old-age pensions, homestead exemptions, unemployment insurance, a wage and hour law, a highway patrol, a State planning board, and State aid to weak schools.

Marland's most significant achievement in the 1930's was the establishment in 1935 of the Interstate Oil Compact, whose primary purpose was to conserve petroleum. Thus Marland, says Knowles, "skillfully brought about agreements from which grew an organization supported by twenty-one states. Never again would wasteful boom-field practices dissipate the nation's oil resources."<sup>14</sup>

In 1936 and again in 1938 Marland tried to win the Democratic nomination for U.S. Senator but failed. In 1940 he ran for Congress again, but illness and financial problems hampered his campaign, and he lost the nomination. On October 3, 1941, Marland died in Ponca City at the age of 67.

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**Mansion:**  
Owner: City of Ponca  
Dr. John R. Robinson, Mayor  
516 East Grand Boulevard  
Ponca City, Oklahoma

**Stables:**  
Owner: Charles Thompson  
1720 Christmas Tree  
Lane  
Ponca City, Okla.

**Garage:**  
Owner: Mrs. E. W. Marland  
c/o Marland Mansion and Estate  
901 Monument Road  
Ponca City, Oklahoma

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<sup>14</sup>Knowles, The Greatest Gamblers, 247.

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