



A Touch of Old England

Early in the 1900s, George A. and Viola Burden developed a “gentleman’s farm” near Dubuque. Their 60 acres of bluffland allowed the Burdens to raise their three daughters in an idyllic country setting while Mr. Burden commuted daily to downtown Dubuque to a job in banking and real estate.

Popular during the first three decades of the 20th century, a gentleman’s farm was not intended to make money. Rather, it offered pastoral ambiance and a lifestyle that sometimes included thoroughbred horses, registered cattle, and purebred hogs. The Burdens kept cows, chickens, and workhorses. Today we’d call it a hobby farm.



Believed to be the last example of an intact English gentleman’s farm in the state of Iowa, the Burdens’ Four Mounds home was honored recently with the Golden Silo Award for outstanding preservation in agriculture by Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area. Visitors to Four Mounds enjoy bluffland vistas, hiking trails, historic gardens, woodlands, and prairie and oak savanna. A 1908 Arts and Crafts-style mansion is the centerpiece of the 17 buildings that make up the estate, which also serves as a conference center. — *C.B.*

The farm is open to the public. To learn more about Four Mounds and other 2009 Golden Silo Award winners, visit <http://fourmounds.org> and www.silosandsmokestacks.org.