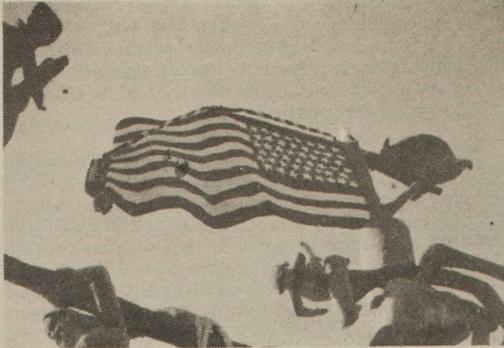


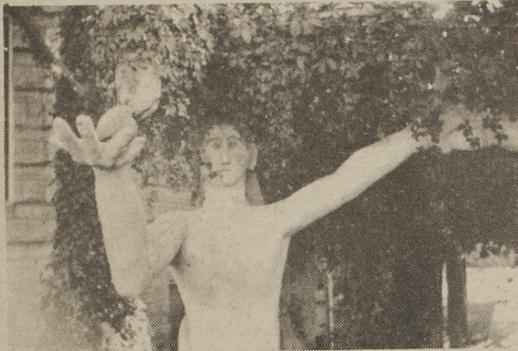


By David Hann

Lucas, Kansas is approximately 45 miles due South of the Geographical Center of the Continental United States. Paradise lies 15 miles West, on State Highway 18. Highway 232, North from Interstate 70 leads into Lucas. Most travelers zoom down Interstate 70 oblivious to road signs pointing to places other than the next Stuckey's Pecan Parlor. One road sign advertises "Rock City, a geological wonder." There are no relics of cave men or dinosaur bones at Rock City, as is implied by the sign which shows a smiling brontosaurus and puzzled-looking Neanderthal just a clump of grey, roundish boulders resembling giant clams.



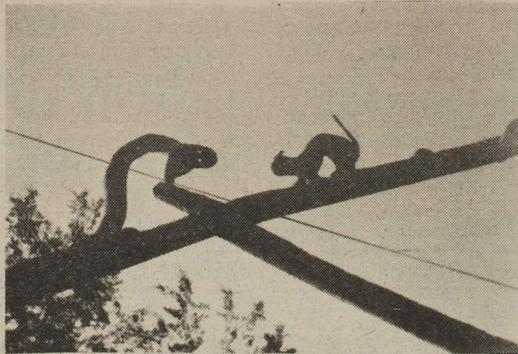
The next highway sign mentions the Garden of Eden. This Garden of Eden was built by Samuel P. Dinsmoor from Portland Cement. The 64 year-old Dinsmoor began working on his Eden about 1905 and continued until his death in 1929. Dinsmoor liked visitors and entertained them with his particular brand of religion and politics laced with humor and a touch of cynicism. The Garden is surrounded by cement figures taken from the pages of Genesis and Dinsmoor's interpretation of the Bible. Eve extends her hand toward the sidewalk, a concrete apple in her open palm. Her other hand joins Adam's. Their arms form an arch through which visitors may pass into the Garden of Eden.



The First Woman and First Man welcome visitors, but above and beyond them Satan waits. His pitchfork points at a child that fell from one of the storks. Since there was "darkness over the land" according to Moses, storks carried babies under their wings and had lights in their mouths to see. Dinsmoor saw no conflict in mixing 20th century technology with Biblical tradition. Violence was part of Biblical tradition as well as Dinsmoor's own experience. He was a Civil War veteran of 18 battles. Cain flees the scene of Abel's murder into the Land of Nod to Dinsmoor, and he has Cain turning the corner from paradise into the post-civil war era of political corruption.



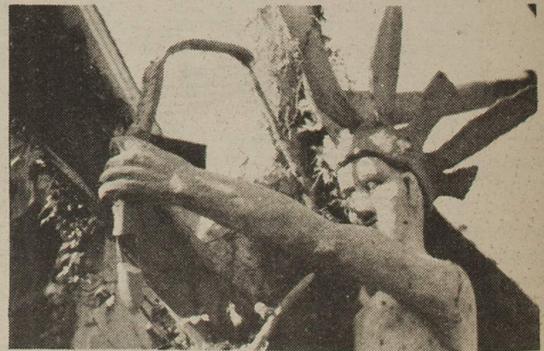
It was a dog-eat-dog world and Dinsmoor's concrete figures pursue and attack one another. A cat arches its back at a concrete serpent which has a light bulb in its gaping jaws. The Goddess of Liberty thrusts a spear into the head of the trusts. A cement soldier sights along his rifle at an Indian. The tentacles of the trusts reach into the soldier's haversack and around the waist of a woman depicted as a camp-follower. A Doctor, Lawyer, Preacher, and Banker surround Labor Crucified. Dinsmoor felt these four represented the forces opposing and enslaving the working class. Later in the piece a man and woman saw the limb that the trusts rest upon. The saw is labeled **BALLOTS**. Since there is no path leading from this world into another, as there was in Eden, Dinsmoor may have felt compelled to resolve the conflict between Business and Labor in that fashion.



The flag was being used by dishonest businessmen and corrupt politicians for their own selfish motives. Dinsmoor felt the flag protected capital better than it did humanity. "It drafted the boys but asked the money to volunteer," he wrote. He felt the flag's rightful use was as a symbol of liberty and therefore should be flown in all weather, day and night. Dinsmoor's two cement flags, ripples frozen in place, have flown for over 70 years. One swings on ball bearings above the entrance to the Cabin Home. The other hangs over his mausoleum. Dinsmoor's sense of humor carried into his views on Death and the Hereafter. He fashioned a cement angel to wisk him to Heaven. He also made a cement water jug to take along just in case he had to go below come resurrection morn. Dinsmoor stated he was well prepared for "the good old orthodox future."



The Garden of Eden is worth a few hours drive West from Lawrence. "There is nothing else quite like it," as we all have said about one place or another. Adam and Eve got into the Garden of Eden free of charge and visitors can see most of the cement sculptures from the sidewalk. A dollar entitles the visitor to the Grand Tour - the mausoleum, grounds, and beautifully done interior of the Cabin Home. And there are no rules concerning what may be eaten.



# LEDO

By Jacob Flake

This story proves that horror exists in the disguise of banality, that banality is often cloaked in blandness. The subject: an interview for a job in a small town, at a small town junior college in Western Kansas. The subject guarantees an abundance of stereotypes. Remember *In Cold Blood*? It had all the cliches going, isolated individuals, violence, creeps croaking a healthy, Bible Belt family. Or have you heard about the cows with their rear ends chainsawed off? Western Kansas again. Something creepy out there. My story

is warm milk beside these examples. No murder. No violence. At least of the physically brutal type. But it is shoddy with stereotypes.

From Lawrence to the town I will call Ledo is a 3 hour drive. We arrive (my wife and I) at 6 Sunday night. Next morning is the interview. I teach English, they're hiring. I've written scores of letters, to bunches of institutions. No jobs around, so I should be happy to be interviewed at all, but I'm scared off by all those weird images of backwater Kansas. Driving into town we spot a big

Gibson's Discount tucked in a shopping center. Ugh. There it is, the juco, an anthill of buildings enthroned on asphalt. Ugh, ugh.

Wheat all around, everywhere. Bell telephone and Eisenhower's interstate save this place from utter isolation. The sun is a nickle in a hard sky. There are 8 trees in town and they're all on main street. You know Kansas is flat and wheat in the west--but you didn't know that so much green wheat could look so awful under so much unsheltered light.