LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO







DOWNLOADABLE TOUR





ur tour has been developed so that you may learn more about the Cuneo Mansion and Gardens and provide you with a valuable tool to prepare for your onsite visit. The online tour presents only the highlights of the architecture and collections.

You will not want to miss the real-life experience of touring the Mansion with one of our trained docents as they bring this historic property alive for you and as you explore on your own the pastoral grounds of the estate. The history of the Insull and Cuneo families, their entrepreneurship, the success story of immigrant families, the environment they built, art history, and the development of Lake County, Illinois, are all part of the onsite tour.

We suggest you use the online tour to heighten your onsite experience. Be sure to share the tour with friends; in fact, bring them along with you when you visit.

This is your first step—a step into a time of gracious and elegant living that will take your breath away.

KEVIN GINTY General Manager



t a time when industry was booming and city populations were exploding with an influx of laborers, the country estate became a sign of prosperity. Wealthy businessmen chose sites for homes far enough away to escape from the bustle and filth of the city but close enough to allow easy access to the business center.



In 1914, Samuel Insull (left), British personal secretary to Thomas Edison and subsequently the founder of Commonwealth-Edison, broke ground for his

mansion in Lake County, Illinois, about 30 miles north from Chicago. The mansion was completed in 1916, and with that the Insulls joined such notable families as the

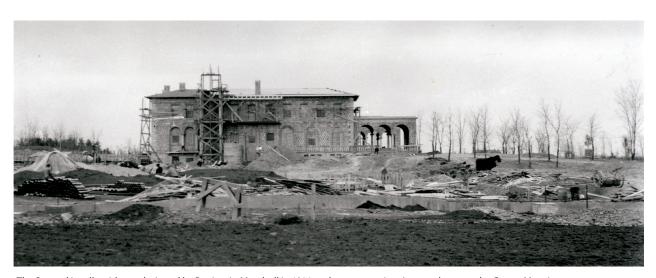
Armours, Swifts, Medills, and McCormicks as new Lake County residents.

Samuel Insull lost his fortune in the Great Depression. As a result, this estate stood vacant from 1932 to 1937, when John F. Cuneo, the son of an Italian immigrant and a self-made entrepreneur, purchased the home and 100 acres of land. Mr. Cuneo—the founder of the Cuneo Press—later established the Hawthorn Mellody Dairy Farm on his land, which became a fixture in the Libertyville community and well known later as a family attraction. It was in this grand setting of privilege that Julia Sheperd Cuneo and John Cuneo Sr. raised their children, John Jr. and Consuela. There have been only two owners of the mansion and as such, the contents of the mansion are true to the period in which the Cuneo family lived. Julia Shepherd Cuneo continued to occupy the home from the time her husband died in 1977 until 1990. The man-



John Jr. and Consuela Cuneo, lifelong animal lovers, on the front step of the Cuneo mansion

sion opened as a historic house museum in 1991 and the furnishings, artwork, and collections displayed in the mansion all belonged to the Cuneo family with a few significant pieces purchased from the Insull estate.



 $The \ Samuel \ In sull \ residence \ designed \ by \ Benjamin \ Marshall \ in \ 1914 \ under \ construction. \ Later \ to \ become \ the \ Cuneo \ Mansion.$



The Cuneo backyard gardens and pool

The story of the Cuneo family (and to a lesser extent, the Insull family) is told through the extensive material collections housed in the mansion, but the mansion points to several larger possible stories as well. As you walk through the home, or visually travel online, imagine what considerations would influence the two prominent Chicago businessmen to choose a home that was many hours from the city; imagine what life would be like for the domestic servants in this expansive home, the gardeners and groundskeepers, stablemen, and chauffeurs who looked after 100 acres of land; and imagine how different this home would be without the electricity that Insull's company had provided to the area.

As you first drive onto the grounds of the estate from Milwaukee Avenue, imagine that John Cuneo Sr. owned all the surrounding property from Town Line Road on both sides of Milwaukee Avenue, so that the mansion when it was first built was surrounded by woods and streams. You can still see some of that manicured ruralness today as the winding entry drive takes you passed ponds and pastures and gardens and you envision the antique carriages and automobiles parked in front of the mansion awaiting their owners. Today, wedding parties





arrive in their own carriages to begin a festive celebration. In 2011, a new events pavilion was built to allow for meetings, corporate and community events, and spectacular weddings that rival anything that Hollywood would do.

The important landscape architect Jens Jensen designed the gardens and much of the grounds on this estate for the Insulls in 1916. The gardens have been modified many times throughout the mansion's history, but the most notable change was Mr. Cuneo's addition of sculptures and statuaries to replicate an Italian villa setting. Jensen was noted for his use of indigenous plants and the original east lawn was intended to be prairie-like. Jensen's original plans for the estate called for a decorative reflecting pool nestled among rose bushes just west of the house.

Samuel Insull included this in the garden plans for his wife, Gladys Wallis, a former stage actress who used this outdoor stage area to entertain friends and guests. A swimming pool was added to the west lawn and the pool house added in the 1960s. When John Cuneo Sr. purchased the house in 1937, the estate comprised 100 acres of land including these gardens. Over the years the front great lawn of the house went from prairie grass to golf course to manicured lawn. Today, visitors may walk freely throughout the grounds and enjoy the change of seasons and the surprise of coming upon a small fountain or sculpture. The contrast of the more formal gardens and long swath of an "allee" of statuary so European in its look, to the meandering wooded paths is striking.



INSIDE THE MANSION The first floor







hen you step into the foyer, you immediately see the floor-to-ceiling stone urns flanking each side and the

bronze bust of John Cuneo Sr. Beyond the reception area, you begin your tour at the very center of the house. From this point, it is easiest to see Samuel Insull's inspiration for this Italianate home. During his travels to Italy, Insull so admired the Mediterranean villas that he wanted to emulate their style on the Illinois prairie. The architect, Benjamin Marshall, was influenced by the neoclassicism of the Columbian World's Fair and had worked extensively on lavish hotels and theaters in Chicago.

In a true Italian villa this large room would have been an open courtyard subject to weather. In the mansion,



however, the skylight and cloth canopy (left) protected the furnishings from rain, snow, and sunlight. Despite the differences between Mediterranean and Midwestern

climates, Insull attempted to preserve the outdoor feeling. A cistern—which was moved to the terrace area between the breakfast room and the ballroom—originally stood at the center of the Great Hall. The carved stone frieze beneath the balcony railing and the painted coffered ceilings on the balcony walkway are also reminiscent of Old World European architecture and design. The skylight, the wrought iron grating over the windows,

and the plaza-like arcade in the lower court also contribute to the open-air courtyard feeling. Originally, on a fine day or evening, the panels of glass overhead could be retracted to complete the atrium effect, but the skylight leaked and John Cuneo Sr. had it permanently sealed so they could safely place valuable furnishings in the Great Hall.

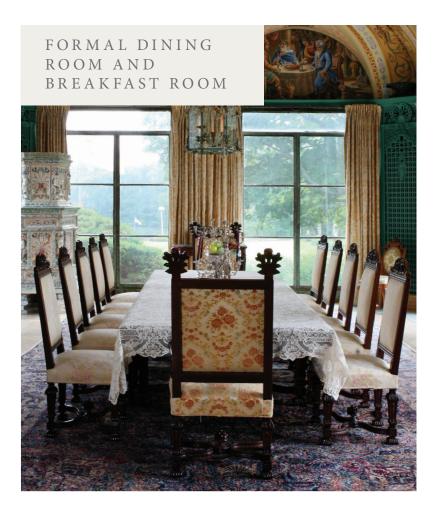
Glancing at the walls of the Great Hall, you see what appear to be quarried limestone blocks, but the walls are really poured concrete with

a plaster finish and painted lines to resemble mortar layers.

At the interior west elevation you will see one of the first private home passenger elevators operating in Lake County. What else would we expect of Thomas Insull, who made sure the mansion was state of the art! The delicate wrought iron grill work on the front of the elevator is a work of art in itself with its depiction of birds and foliage.

The Grand Hall is the perfect setting for the many works of fine and decorative art on display. The Italian trestle-style table that dominates the center of the hall has an olive wood top with a walnut base carved in a Mannerist style depicting mythological figures. In a style dating from around 1590, the table, as well as the German suit of armor by the staircase, was a gift from William Randolph Hearst, the famous newspaper and magazine publisher, business associate, and friend of John Cuneo Sr. Also take note of the several cassoni— or decorative chests along the walls and stairs. Often mistaken by guests for coffins (as indeed cassoni were often modeled after), these were used to transport the linens of an Italian Renaissance bride to her new home. The painted side panels usually displayed scenes from mythology, but could be customized by local artists to memorialize a scene from the family history or from the wedding day itself.





in Corsica by candlelight. Above the fireplace, you will find a portrait of the famed English portrait artist Joshua Reynolds.

Beyond the formal dining room lies the breakfast room. This room was constructed with glass doors on three sides so that it could be almost completely opened to let in the sun from the southern sky. The elaborate piece in the southeast corner of the room is an early to mid-19th century ceramic tile furnace from northern Europe, one of two similar furnaces owned by the Cuneos and used decoratively. Though it may have been used to heat palatial homes by previous owners, the original heating system in this house rendered it purely decorative. Behind the grates in each corner of the room, radiators produced heat to counter the cold let in by the walls of glass.

Mr. Cuneo hired Chicago artist John Mallin (below) to paint the ceilings and lunette murals for several rooms in the house, including this one. Accustomed to painting for elaborate churches, Mallin was well suited for the task. His murals of gardens from famous Italian villas pay homage to the pastoral landscaping work Jens Jensen did for the estate grounds.

ften the Cuneos entertained large parties of guests in these rooms.

Imagine trying to hold a conversation from one end of the room to the other when the tables in these two rooms were put together to accommodate 75 people. Mr. and Mrs.

Cuneo had a set of telephones so they could communicate from the heads of the extended tables. The aptly named formal

dining room, with its tall, upholstered chairs, painted ceiling, and large fireplace, was the perfect location for dinner parties. In pleasant weather, the glass doors on the west wall allowed guests easy passage onto the terrace and into the gardens to view the setting sun.

Adding to its grandeur and opulence, four gilded lamps light each corner of the room. These candelabras are thought to have illuminated the palace of Napoleon





INSIDE THE MANSION The first floor





he kitchen was refurbished in the 1950s to include the stainless steel countertops and center island. While it is no longer used for cooking, all of the family's meals were prepared here before they were taken across the hall to the dining or breakfast rooms. Because the kitchen was on the same level as the dining room the need for a dumbwaiter was eliminated. Instead, precautions were taken to eliminate the extra noise that inevitably arose from such close proximity to the kitchen. The kitchen door would remain shut whenever possible, and food would be passed through a small window from the main kitchen to the warming kitchen (now the Mansion Gift Shop) where plates were kept warm in small cabinets by a low-powered light bulbs. On view in the kitchen you will see a mannequin dressed in the traditional work clothes of a domestic help. The mansion collection of period costumes includes clothing worn by the servants.

In the warming kitchen we find the original "enunciator panel," or call box. Whenever a call button was pressed from any room in the house, a small white disc would drop into an open circle denoting which room required assistance. The names were never changed on the call box and the master bedroom still lists Mr. Insull as the occupant. A small receiver and microphone hang from the bottom of this panel and allow servants to communicate between floors to coordinate service. The family's fine silver collection—now prominently displayed in John Jr.'s room on the second floor—was once stored in the vault off the warming kitchen.

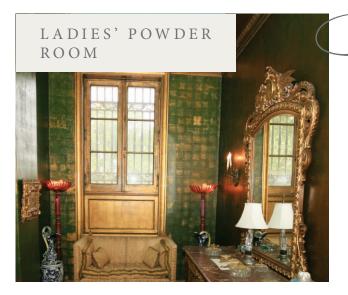
BUTLER'S PANTRY

he butler's pantry, directly across the hall from the warming kitchen, was conveniently placed to allow the butler to examine meals as they passed from the kitchen to the dining

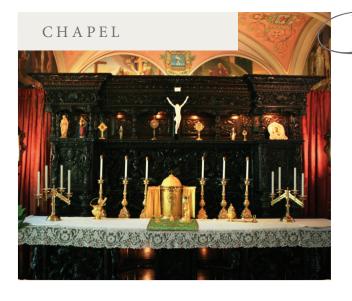
room. This room also served as a place to store delicate stemware and today displays a collection of American and European art glass. The room also contains a florist's refrigerator for cut flowers and a functional soda fountain. The double doors to the left of this room lead directly to the dining room.



INSIDE THE MANSION The first floor



he intimate, gilded outer room provides an escape for women during formal events. Here they could sit comfortably and privately talk while freshening up at the vanity. The inner door leads to one of the mansion's 10 bathrooms with walls decorated in gold leaf. The mirrors in this bathroom are backed with gold leaf instead of silver to give a softer, more flattering reflection. Imagine the wonderful conversations that took place in this room among the glamorous women who came to dinner. Even the toilets are decorated to maintain the aesthetic value of this private room. A Louis XVI "throne-style" wicker chair hides unsightly plumbing and provides extra comfort.



his room originally served as a sunroom while the Insull family occupied the home. The room was much more sparsely furnished and plainly decorated in that time, but the architectural features perfectly translated into the Cuneos' private Chapel. The family hired local muralist John Mallin to paint the vaulted ceiling and the stations of the cross which were installed in the lunettes above each window. Mallin also designed the stained glass windows specifically for this home. If you look to the second window left of the altar, you will find a depiction of John Jr. and Consuela Cuneo protected by a guardian angel. While the Cuneos regularly attended church in Libertyville, they did hold mass for special occasions or holidays within the home. The family obtained papal permission to consecrate the Chapel by Chicago's Cardinal Stritch. The unusual privilege of having a consecrated chapel in a private residence was solidified at the dedication mass on July 8, 1941. The organ in the corner is a unique 1920s player organ and the large, elaborately carved 18th century settle in the corner has a canopy top typical of the period to retain warmth for the sitter.





he intricate molded plaster ceiling as you enter the salon is period to the time of the Insulls. The ceilings in the dining and breakfast rooms matched the salon before the Cuneos hired John Mallin to work in the house. The salon boasts the largest fireplace in the house as well as some of its most unusual furniture. Notice the exotic settee and matching chairs each with arms that can be raised or lowered to control temperature. The wings, when locked in their upright position, trap heat around the person sitting in the chair. When lowered, they allow for a breeze to pass across the arms. In the 17th century homes for which these kinds of chairs were designed, any method of temperature regulation was important. The 18th century tapestry in this room depicts the Coronation of Charlemagne

and is one of the two largest tapestries of the many hanging throughout the house. Tapestries were, again, one more way of keeping heat from escaping from cold, stone European castles and manors.

In the salon you will find the 19th c. Steinway, Rococo piano (right) that Mrs. Cuneo received from her mother. Its gilded wood casing painted with vines and flowers is embellished with medallion portraits of famous European composers.

Benjamin Marshall designed the ballroom with three walls made entirely of glass to maximize natural light in the room and the Cuneos added a large Venetian glass chandelier to provide additional ambient light. Looking west through the windows, you can see the decorative cistern that stood at the center of the Great Hall in Insull's time.



Behind the decorative grille work in the corners of the ballroom, are large steam pipes connected to large boilers in the basement to heat the home. The center piece of the room is the *pietre-dura* table made of delicate marble inlays on a gilded carved based.





he Cuneo family used the library as their primary gathering place, what today we would call a family room. Mrs. Cuneo used this room to watch television when she lived in the mansion after her husband's death. Some of the books that line the walls of the library include products of the Cuneo press, which, before it expanded to magazine and newspaper printing, specialized in binding fine gift books and bibles.

Another excellent Steinway piano from the 1920s has a prominent place in the room with the piano lid covered in silver framed photographs of the Cuneo family. A delicate light comes through the small leaded glass roundels that make up the floor-to-ceiling windows.

In front of the bookshelves, stands the Cuneos' partner desk. Its double depth allowed Mr. and Mrs. Cuneo to sit across from each other while still maintaining their own workspaces. Two miniature chairs near the fireplace are not children's chairs, but are actually samples from furniture designers. A portrait of John Cuneo Sr.'s father, Frank Cuneo, hangs above the fireplace. Originally the windows on the north end of the room would have looked on to a natatorium (indoor pool right), which was subsequently removed in 2010 to build the new Cuneo Pavilion addition.

As you leave the family room and go to the ship's room notice the gold-leafed wall in the small passage leading to the Pavilion.







included one room that looked entirely different than the rest of the house in his designs, and the ship's room provides just that escape from this traditional Italianate home. Presumably, the linen fold wall paneling was taken from the captain's quarters of a 17th century ship. While most of these panels open to reveal storage and shelving, one door encloses a private telephone booth. Both Samuel Insull and John Cuneo Sr. used this room as their private study. In the far left corner of the room, you will see a Middle Eastern harem screen whose original purpose was to conceal the women of a harem from the

enjamin Marshall often

view of men. An elaborate piece of decorative art, it was sometimes used as a confessional by Mr. Cuneo. The leaded glass windows (right) feature small roundels designed with coats of arms.

There is a large door that opens to the back staircase allowing employees from Hawthorn Mellody Farms or workers on the estate to come directly into the mansion to meet with Mr. Cuneo. The wonderful story of Hawthorn Mellody Farms, its innovative dairy and petting zoo housed right on the Cuneo property, is one that need is own history page, but Chicagoans remember it fondly as a place to go for a lively family outing and maybe seeing a movie star or two.





INSIDE THE MANSION The second floor





The second floor





efore we climb the grand stone staircase, you'll notice how the dramatic sweep of the stairs is as a backdrop for the

family to descend to the main floor. An unseen servant's stairs was also used, but this wonderful staircase serves also to display a richly embroidered gold and silver thread tapestry and Renaissance paint-

ings. The stairs would have originally been covered with a carpet.

At the top of the second floor, take a moment to look down onto the main floor and up toward the skylight. Directly to your left is a latticed door that leads to the rooms of the household staff. This area is currently closed to the public and now houses Loyola staff offices.





The second floor





ive portraits of Cuneo family ancestors hang on the wall (see image on the previous page).

The second and third portraits are of Catherine Logamarcino and Giovanni (John B.) Cuneo, the greatgrandparents of John Cuneo Sr. After emigrating from Genoa in 1857, they owned a small farm and grocery store in Chicago and raised three sons, Andrew, Lawrence, and youngest son Frank, the father of John Cuneo Sr. All three sons rose to prominence in Chicago and were active in civic affairs, the Catholic Church, and the Italian-American business and social community.

From the loggia, you have a better view of the skylight over the Grand Hall. The original glass panels with their blue metal framework were electrically retractable until the Cuneos added the glass structure above these panels before moving into the home in 1937.

Left: John Cuneo Sr., Frank Cuneo, and John Cuneo Jr.



n daughter Consuela Cuneo's bedroom hangs a lovely portrait of Consuela as an adult with her own daughter, Katherine (left). This more girlish and feminine room marks the beginning of the family suite; from here on, the family could walk between rooms without entering the balcony hallway. Next to the bed, a long rope hides the electric call button that would notify servants when Consuela needed assistance. The door in the far right corner opens to Mrs. Cuneo's bathroom.



The second floor





osephine Shepherd, the sister of Mrs. Julia Shepherd Cuneo (right), never

married. She lived with the Cuneo family and was very active in running the household from day to day. You can see her lovely portrait above the fireplace in a dress very much like the one on display. This



bedroom was reserved for her guests. The gilt-wood cabinet in the corner was made from a converted 18th-century sedan chair (left) originally used by wealthy aristocrats to travel short distances without dirtying their shoes or clothing in the filth that covered city streets. Servants inserted poles through the brackets, which are still visible on either side of the chair, in order to carry it from place to place.

Throughout the house, you'll notice how much shorter the bedsteads are than by today's standard. While some may suggest that people were simply shorter in previous times, the shorter size also points to a prevalent belief that being propped up on pillows rather than lying flat would prevent sickness. This also accounts for the extra height of the headboards. In keeping with the opulence of this home, each bedroom in the mansion has a private bathroom and closets with built in drawers.



he second guest bedroom once functioned as the nursery for the Cuneo children while they were still under the care of a nanny.

The door leading directly to the nanny's quarters is hidden behind the folding Chinese screen inlaid with mother-of-pearl, ivory, and other stones. Photographs on the walls show Mrs. Cuneo and her sister Josephine Shepherd with their mother. After John Jr. and Consuela moved into their own rooms, this room provided the Cuneo guests with a view of the pool and gardens to the west. In Mrs. Cuneo's later years, Consuela's daughter, Katherine, used this room during visits.





n the door of this room we are reminded by the Hawthorn Mellody Farm door knocker in the shape of a riding boot spur that this was originally John Cuneo's Jr.'s bedroom. The room is now used to display the family's extensive silver collection. The center display case contains settings from the James Deere (John Deere farm equipment) estate in Florida. These pieces with the D monogram are actually sterling silver covered in gold plate. Atop many of the cases are trophies won by John Jr., who excelled at equestrian sports and dressage events at horse shows (right). As a part of his life as a gentleman farmer, Mr. Cuneo Sr. bred Hackney ponies. He used these horses to draw antique carriages and sleighs from

his collection on his regular rides through the estate's expansive grounds.

Much like the breakfast room and the ballroom on the first floor, this room and Mrs. Cuneo's bedroom are architectural parallels. One very important difference distinguishes the sleeping porches: While Mrs. Cuneo's balcony remains open, John Jr.'s has been enclosed with decorative wrought iron bars. Photographs from Insull's time period reveal that these protective bars were added during the Cuneos' ownership, perhaps following the Lindbergh baby kidnapping in 1932. The son's bedroom is also protected by a heavy wooden door to the balcony hallway, which was, at one time, accessible to the open skylight.



John and Herta Cuneo riding the Cuneo show horses



The second floor





f you were a woman of this era, it would be heaven to have a bathroom like this, with gilded walls and shower, built-in closets, and vanity. The couture clothes in the closets range from evening dresses and furs, to sporting outfits, and daytime dresses. Mrs. Cuneo had a favorite dress maker and her outfits were designed in rich brocades and silks. If we open the shoe closet, rows of shoes neatly arranged on racks show the change in fashion footwear over the years.

The actual toilet area, like the one in the guest bathroom on the main floor, is separated into a small room for ultimate privacy.



r. and Mrs. Cuneo each had their own separate bedrooms—the height of fashion and decorum for a family of means in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Mrs. Julia Shepherd Cuneo was the last occupant of the mansion,

and many of her personal items as well as a fabulous costume collection spanning 50 years of fashion remain in her suite. French doors on the south wall open to a sleeping porch above the ballroom. Her bedroom set is characterized by a mosaic pattern of inlaid pale wood and ivory. This marquetry furniture set includes the sleigh bed, desk, and dresser. Mrs. Cuneo used the outer room as her sitting room, a private space to write letters or read. Characteristic of the leisurely life of the women in this affluent social class, is the chaise longue covered in silk upholstery with a delicate lace throw.

Waking up in the morning was to be done in stages, not too abruptly, so that one got out of bed and moved to the chaise for morning coffee service.

Mrs. Cuneo's sitting room connects to her husband's room. A fine portrait of John Cuneo Sr. hangs proudly on the wall.

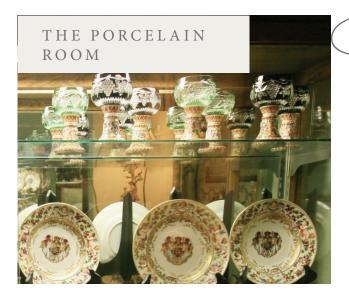


The second floor





r. Cuneo's bedroom contains the furnishings original to the house when Samuel Insull lived here. The canopied bed with serpentine posts was purchased at auction in 1937 following Insull's demise from power—the bed's matching armoire is located in the ship's room downstairs. Mr. Cuneo, a devout Catholic, surrounded himself with objects of devotion and commemoration. A motherof-pearl relief carving of the Last Supper hangs above the headboard of the bed, a signed photograph of Albert Cardinal Meyer hangs near the south windows, a *prie-dieu* kneeler stands at the foot of the bed, and framed commendations from the Roman Catholic Church decorate the small cabinet to the right of the door. The cabinet holds awards from various charitable and community organizations to which Mr. Cuneo belonged. This master bedroom maximizes the feeling of a country estate away from the business and rush of the city. The south wall, almost entirely windows, overlooked acres of land as well as the statuary that Mr. Cuneo added to the gardens.



his room now displays the extensive collection of highly recognized Capodimonte porcelain. Many of these colorful and elaborately designed pieces date from the 19th century and depict the coats of arms of wealthy Italian families. A unique lipstick carousel music box is a highlight of the

collection and in the center of the room stands a table that may have been used to collect calling cards. The table has enameled case portraits (right) of 15 women of the French court surrounding a medallion of Madame Récamier, the hostess of a salon of high reputation at the time of Napoleon. You will notice another element of



pre-air conditioning temperature regulation. Not just for decoration, the wood slat doors closed to provide privacy while still allowing air to circulate between open win-

dows and the opened sun roof.



icture yourself as a small child having full run of this gigantic home and grounds from the attic to basement, from the original greenhouse to the stables and garage, through the 100 acres of field, woods, gardens, and ponds. What a lovely imaginative childhood you would have had.

Tours and new plans are being developed and to present rotating exhibitions on the history of the Insull and Cuneo families and the life and times in which they lived. The first exhibition to open in 2013 is the re-installation of the history of Hawthorn Mellody Farms Dairy.

Today, as we try to fill in many of the gaps of how life was led in these wonderful years, we are thankful to John Cuneo Jr. to have the benefit of his memories and anecdotes so generously shared with us through interviews with faculty and students in our Loyola University Public History Department.

If you have enjoyed this online tour of the Cuneo Mansion and Gardens, we know you will enjoy your on-site visit, since we have presented only a small portion of the fascinating stories that await you when you take a guided tour.



LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO CUNEO MANSION AND GARDENS

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