



# Ogle County Community Guide



OGLE COUNTY  
**LIFE**  
ROCK VALLEY SHOPPER

Monday, May 12, 2025 ▪ Section C

ROCHELLE  
**News-Leader**

Sunday, May 11, 2025 ▪ Section 3



# ROCHELLE

**ROCHELLE** — Rochelle is a thriving Midwestern community offering an experience for all tastes — from relaxation to exhilaration — with that hometown feel. Rochelle is bustling with activity in the summer months with a monthly Outdoor Market, Concerts & Movies in the parks, golf, swimming, hiking and more.

Fall continues to bring our Outdoor Market, the Annual 30 Men Who Cook event, Homecoming celebrations, and of course Hub Football. The beauty of fall brings Hay Day, a trail of decorated hay bales throughout our community. A Classic Downtown Christmas is celebrated in December with a fully lit parade and bustling Downtown. Spring boasts the Vince Carney Community The-

ater's Spring production, our annual Irish Hooley, a community-wide Easter egg hunt, and our Cinco de Mayo celebration.

Our newest Downtown addition, Kennay Farms Distilling offers a bit of history along with tastes of the country with craft beer and spirits and the educational tour experience.

Chicagoland Skydiving Center is jumping with activity year-round from skydiving spring thru fall and the addition of the Flight Deck Bar and Grill, open year-round. Located on either side of the BNSF and Union Pacific Railroad tracks, Rochelle's Railroad Park is a sight to see for railfans. The park features a gift shop and a gazebo for train-spotting.

Take a stroll through our historic downtown and visit the 1918 Stan-

dard Oil Filling Station and the Flagg Township Historical Museum. Rochelle is the childhood home of actress Joan Allen. Ms. Allen attended Rochelle Township High School as a teen where she was nominated "Most Likely to Succeed." As a three-time Oscar nominee and Tony award winner, she has done just that. Rochelle makes the perfect film location for large-scale movie production.

"A Thousand Acres," starring Michelle Pfeiffer was filmed throughout Downtown and in the country surrounding the community. More recently the movie "At Any Price" was filmed Downtown Rochelle featuring the iconic Hub Theater as a backdrop. The movie starred Zac Efron and Dennis Quaid.

## Come To Rochelle's 28th Annual



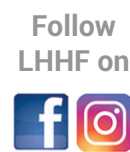
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# OREGON

**OREGON** — Nestled on the banks of the scenic Rock River, there lies a small Illinois town that welcomes its residents and visitors to Uncover Oregon. Our land's deep history and scenery earned the town its name "Oregon" which translates to "River of the West" by the Potawatomi and Winnebago Indian Tribes.

Oregon's roots are captured today with one of its most prized landmarks—the 'Blackhawk Statue'—which overlooks the Rock River Valley just north of our charming town. Originally named The Eternal Indian, Black Hawk Statue is dedicated to the chief of the Sauk Indian tribe and connects Oregon not only to the Indian Tribes that founded our land but also to the scenic landscape that our area surrounds.

Today, the Oregon area has taken on a new life. Our outdoor recreation, arts, festivals, and unique local businesses captivate a small piece of what makes the Oregon Area inviting for everyone. While embracing our small town charm and unique history, the people of Oregon pride themselves on creating a welcoming, inclusive, and thriving future as the heart of our surrounding area.

One of the town's more interesting clubs is the Blackhawk Model Railroad Club, located on the second floor of Conover Square, featuring an interesting array of model trains and people who collect them. Conover Square, an old converted piano factory, has a num-



ber of restaurants, stores, antiques and even a city museum.

While maintaining a number of parks, the Oregon Park District also offers a variety of other activities, ranging from a kayak club to a farmers' market. Besides the art gallery at the Oregon Public Library, there are 15 outdoor sculptures comprising the "Oregon Sculpture Trail." The trail includes many of sculptor Laredo Taft's works, including Blackhawk Statue, which overlooks the Rock River at Lowden State Park south of town, and The Soldiers' Monument on the courthouse lawn. Local sculptor Jeff Adams also has a number of works on the trail.

Oregon has a very unique history. The first European to visit the land was pioneer John Phelps. Phelps first visited the area in 1829 and returned in 1833 hoping to find a suitable site to settle. By Dec. 4, 1838, due in large part to the efforts of Phelps and his brothers B.T. Phelps and G.W. Phelps, the land was claimed, subdivided and certified by the Ogle County clerk as Oregon

City.

In 1839, Oregon City was renamed Florence after a visitor compared the scenic beauty of the Rock River to the Italian city of the same name. Florence was used for only about three years when the city opted to revert to its original name, sans the word "city," in 1843.

The city of Oregon was first organized under an act of the Illinois General Assembly which was approved on April 1, 1869. By the 1870s the town of Oregon and nearby area was home to around 2,000 people. On March 29, 1873 the city was reorganized because of an act of the Illinois legislature which allowed municipalities to incorporate as cities and villages.

The Ogle County Courthouse was built in 1891. Sculptor Lorado Taft designed and erected a 50-foot-tall (15m) statue on a bluff overlooking the Rock River valley just north of the city. Originally named The Eternal Indian, it is now known as the "Black Hawk" Statue after the chief of the Sauk Indian tribe that once inhabited the area.



# MT. MORRIS

**MT. MORRIS** — Mention the Fourth of July and most local residents immediately think of Mt. Morris. And with good reason. Besides hosting the largest Fourth of July celebration in Ogle County, this little village of 3,000 is home to the Illinois State Freedom Bell, which was officially dedicated in 1963.

Mt. Morris is also a musical haven. No summer in Mt. Morris would be complete without the weekly Kable News band concerts, which have been held every Wednesday night during the summer for the past 119 years. A pie and ice cream social is always held an hour before.

Although not nearly as old, another equally popular feature is the Friday Night Concerts, also held in the downtown band shell on the campus lawn, at Front and Wesley, just two blocks south of Illinois Route 64. Friday night concerts provide local talent the opportunity to come to the stage and present a fun evening for the community. Each Friday evening, local organizations provide food, groups and organizations also provide concessions of their own offering sandwiches and more.

Friday nights also feature the Community Farmer's Market with locally grown produce

and homemade items. Visit the Union Savings parking lot at the corner of Wesley Avenue and Illinois Route 64 through the last Friday in October.

Another big attraction is the fourth annual U.S. National Straw Sculpting competition in August on the historic Mt. Morris campus. Based on a similar competition in a small town in Germany, local artist Fran Volz said the competition is open to everyone.

And music is in the air the second Saturday of June for PorchFest. PorchFest features a variety of musical performances on — you guessed it — local porches! Music runs through the town.



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# BYRON

**BYRON** — The City of Byron welcomes you to the community on the "Gateway to the Rock River Valley". Byron is a modern urban community with a friendly rural character. Byron is attractive to new businesses and residents because of its proximity to all that big cities have to offer but maintains its small-town feel.

The City of Byron was incorporated in 1878, although the town officially commemorates its founding in 1835, the year in which Jared Sanford stopped to stake a claim on his way to Midway (now Rockford). Byron is a historic city and quaint tourist destination which is showcased by the beautiful Rock River. Byron boasts a wonderful natural setting with numerous recreational venues, such as the Byron Forest Preserve, Byron Park District and the Byron Museum of history.

We are known for our award-winning golf course, beautiful riverfront, and excellent schools. We are located in northern Illinois along the Rock River, 88 miles west of Chicago and 12

miles south of Rockford. With its surrounding beauty and friendly people, Byron is a wonderful place to live and work.

Several notable individuals have called Byron their home, among them Troy Drake, offensive tackle with the Washington Redskins and Philadelphia Eagles; Wilson Irvine, painter; and more recently, Sean Considine, safety with the Baltimore Ravens, Philadelphia Eagles, Arizona Cardinals and Jacksonville Jaguars.

Byron boasts three schools (Mary Morgan Elementary School, Byron Middle School and Byron High School) with an enrollment of approximately 1,500 students. The high school placed fourth in the Illinois State Finals Academic Challenge in 2001.

The Jarrett Prairie Center Museum opened in the fall of 2016 that features exhibits and hands-on experiences for visitors. Requiring two and a half years to complete, the museum is free to the public seven days a week. Private venues may be scheduled at the facility.

The nearby and readily accessible Rock River

provides boating and skiing opportunities, fishing, and other water activities and for those who are exercise minded, a beautifully maintained bike path that makes its way along the river as well as other scenic areas.

The annual ByronFest celebration is held each summer and features music and food along with rides the whole family can enjoy. Byron Civic Theatre is an additional local gem, and is in its 27th season with the organization presenting several productions a year using local and area talent in the cast and crew.

Racing enthusiasts will find lots to cheer on at Byron Dragway dubbed the "Playground of Power." The quarter-mile strip was constructed in the 1960s as a four-lane track, however, that was discontinued after a number of years.

Downtown Byron hosts a number of business establishments and food is available at every turn from fast food to sit-down and stay awhile restaurants with menus featuring a host of choices.

Byron is a city of diversity, friendly folks, and entertainment choices.



# HILLCREST

**HILLCREST** — The Village of Hillcrest is a small community in north-central Illinois, located in eastern Ogle County, near the intersections of Interstate 39 and Interstate 88. Incorporated in 1958, we are a small rural, agricultural community.

Hillcrest is the ideal manufacturing location with close proximity to major cities. The village is 1 mile north of Rochelle, 30 minutes south of Rockford and 90 minutes west of the City of Chicago.

Nearby educational institutions include Kishwaukee Community College, Highland Community College and Northern Illinois University. Recreational activities are unlimited, with the Rock River, Castle Rock State Park and White Pines State Park nearby and Lake Michigan only two hours away.

Area entertainment includes major music and sporting events at the Rockford Metro Centre and the Northern Illinois University Convocation Center, both within 30 minutes. It is about as much of a hill as one will see in this part of Ogle County.



So the little village nestled between park land and agricultural acres, and shaded with a plentiful variety of trees, can claim the name as a legitimate description of its being. Like most communities, the name it now bears is not its first.

Hillcrest, formed in the early 1950s, was originally known as the Bogue Addition, after the prominent Rochelle physician, Dr. Arthur Bogue, who owned the farmhouse on top of the "hill" and started development of the location.

The community was first incorporated as a means to control the propagation of house trailers, which many residents thought should be kept to

a minimum.

Bogue, now deceased, is remembered by former patients as a Clark Gable look alike (perhaps it was the mustache) who specialized in appendectomies and favored large cars. His vehicles were referred to as "Appendix Pullmans" by associates, recalls Rochelle resident Faye Archer.

Bogue didn't care for the title Bogue Addition, said the first Village President Thurman Holt. The doctor soon renamed the community Hillcrest; however, that turned out to be a difficult operation to undertake. Like reputations a name once given is hard to dispose of.



# CRESTON

**CRESTON** — Established in 1856, the Village of Creston, located approximately 80 miles west of Chicago and 30 miles south of Rockford, Illinois along historic Lincoln Highway.

With a thriving agricultural base, the village is home to a notable K-8 public school, an outstanding library, park district and active community organizations. The annual Creston Booster Days is known throughout the region as one of the top, small-town festivals.

Walk across the wood-

en floor at Headon's Fine Meats and Catering and you are instantly surrounded. First, by an intoxicating aroma, and secondly by an old-world charm. Headon's is located at 103 N. Main St. in Creston, and a big draw to town.

In fact, customers come from miles around, not just when they're celebrating a special occasion but for their everyday needs. Family-run since 1970, Headon's is famous for its wide variety of fresh meats, including roast beef, pork, steaks, poultry, sausage and ground meat,

as well as its deli and catering services.

For antique lovers, there's Roadhouse Antiques, located right on Illinois Route 38. Creston's proximity to both I-88 and I-39 interstate highways provide easy access between our idyllic rural community and a host of dynamic urban amenities. Creston is just minutes away from Kishwaukee Community College and Northern Illinois University. Creston is a great place for families and businesses.

The village motto is "Come grow with us!"



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# STILLMAN VALLEY

**STILLMAN VALLEY** — In northern Illinois, mention of the village of Stillman Valley first recalls a winning and competitive football team, but there is a lot more to this community to talk about. There are annual clean up days and local festivals that include vintage auto shows.

One of the most popular is the Stillman Valley Fall Festival. Stillman Valley is served by a rail link and local grain elevators, as well as several businesses and eating establishments.

If garage sales are to

your liking, Stillman Valley is your destination with annual village-wide offerings. Plan now to attend next year's sales events that are published ahead of time with flyers and posters throughout the community.

Stillman Valley is located south of Rockford, just nine miles west of Illinois Route 251 on Illinois Route 72. Stillman Valley was founded in North Central Illinois in 1875. It is named after the creek that runs through it. The creek itself was named after Major Stillman of the



US Army who fought in the first battle of the Blackhawk War on May 13, 1832.

A large memorial to this battle is located in Stillman Valley. It reads: "Here, on May 14, 1832, the first engagement of

the Black Hawk War took place. When 275 Illinois militiamen under Maj. Isaiah Stillman were put to flight by Black Hawk and his warriors." The Monument is located South of Route 72 on the east side of the village.

Stillman Valley lies in a broad valley in the Rock River basin. Due to the presence of two major railroad lines, Stillman Valley prospered throughout much of its history. Farmers in surrounding areas would come to

Stillman to transport their grain for eventual shipment by rail to other areas. Stillman Valley still has grain elevators and one rail link. Many of its residents commute to nearby Rockford for employment and shopping.

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# FORRESTON

**FORRESTON** — Forreston is located approximately 12 miles south of Freeport and 20 miles north of Dixon which provides for diverse shopping, attractions, theaters, and recreational opportunities. Forreston is located in a rich agricultural area. It has lovely old store front businesses, good schools, and affordable housing.

One of the village's focal points is Casey's, formerly The Depot, a convenience store which awaits any and all who come in each day to meet, greet, and talk about everything from national politics to the local farmer who just managed to get his crops in after a lengthy and unpredictable spring season. The building was originally a Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy train depot but was re-purposed and redesigned for commercial use in 2006.

Stop downtown and shop for what you need. Stores are filled with everyday merchandise including tools, gardening equipment, electrical and plumbing supplies,



and much more, including a gift section.

The Forreston Valley School District's mission is to provide the highest quality education by creating life-long learners through comprehensive academic, athletic, cultural, and extra-curricular opportunities for the children of our community. No matter what the season, there is always something going on in the Village of Forreston. Keeping our residents informed of scheduled events and local happenings is important.

Come visit your local

library. A quiet place to study, relax, work or simply escape in a good book. It's fun, the old fashioned way. For more information, visit the Forreston Public Library at their web site <http://forrestonlibrary.org>.

Whether you have a minor injury, common cold or need surgery, the Village of Forreston is happy to provide you with contact information for doctors and nearby medical facilities located in town or nearby neighboring communities. Facilities include the FHN Forreston Medical Center and Forreston Dental.



# LEAF RIVER

**LEAF RIVER**—Leaf River is located approximately 10 miles west of Byron in western Ogle County and represents small town America well.

It is surrounded by corn fields on each side, and most of its residents drive some distance to work each day, but this doesn't mean that the town is isolated. There are a couple gathering places downtown, a post office, a grain elevator, a

village hall and even an American flag drop off receptacle just off Main Street for the proper disposal and recycling of deteriorated American flags.

The first weekend of June typically finds area residents celebrating Leaf River Daze Festival. There is plenty of food, a vintage tractor and classic auto show, activities for kids as well as a craft fair at the Historical Museum

on Illinois Route 72.

A multi-cultural Camp Kupugani also serves the community and is located at White Eagle Camp. The United Methodist Church is a worship center along Illinois Route 72 and welcomes one and all to their services.

Leaf River is a great part of the north central Illinois area, and will continue to be there for residents and visitors for decades to come.

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# POLO

**POLO** — Polo is a rural city in Ogle County located in the northwest corner of Illinois — just 5 miles west of the beautiful White Pines State Park! Population is approximately 2,500. The schools are superior, people are friendly and it is a safe community to live in.

There are restaurants, parks, medical facilities, a library, a professional police department, a volunteer fire department, and many places of worship. Polo is home to a long list of community organizations that offer a number of events that take place throughout the year.

We are centrally located so you can travel one hour in any direction to

reap the benefits of larger metropolitan areas, yet distant enough to enjoy the charming and tranquil surroundings. Become a part, in residence or in business, to discover the benefits of calling Polo your community.

During the summer, the Polo Swimming Pool is arguably the most popular place in town. The pool also offers swimming lessons and is available for private parties. Besides the pool, Polo is known for its quality parks, including Millar Deuth Park, Polo Community Park and Louise D. Quick Park. An attraction for kids is Birdland Skate Park. The park offers skaters a variety of jumps and challenges.

The Polo Public Library offers a summer reading program, free computer classes and a number of other activities for all ages living up to its motto of “More than books.” For the older crowd, the Polo Senior Center has classes and other activities and programs.

For history buffs, the Polo Historical Society Museum has a plethora of material, including the town’s involvement in the Underground Railroad. There’s also the 1878 Henry School, the 1870 Buffalo Lime Kiln, Galena Trail Road and the Aplington House.

Something that will delight all ages is the Polo Community Theatre, which offers a variety of plays throughout the year, including a local talent show. A few miles north



of town in a big red barn is the Barnacopia Farm Museum. Among the things you will see are

a 1950s view of Mason Street, a full collection of the New Generation series John Deere tractors,

a bright red 1963 Impala, a reproduction drive-in theater, a game room and much more.



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# CHANA

**CHANA** — The small village of Chana possesses heart, passion and community spirit. Located approximately 3 miles south of Illinois Route 64, Chana and its residents don't minimize their presence in the central Midwest.

Cornett's Chana Tap is a local meet and greet. Stay awhile and have a world class burger and the brew of your choice to go with it. Live music is provided from time to time at the venue located

in the center of Chana.

Down the street is the Chana United Methodist Church, pastored by The Rev. Matthew J. Smith. This thriving congregation has a slate of annual events to keep everyone busy and ministered to as well. This year's chicken and noodle supper drew hundreds to the area, and a glance at the church's calendar shows something going on for all ages and interests. You're always welcome at Chana United Methodist.

The Chana Education Center, located just north of the city park, is a specialized education facility. According to its website, "The OCEC and Chana Education Center firmly believe that effective counseling is a critical component in an overall program for at risk students."

The Chana Education Center implements a program to address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of our students. We have named the program "Empowerment Skills" to keep in line with the Chana Education Center mission statement.



# DAVIS JUNCTION

**DAVIS JUNCTION** — Approximately 2,500 people call Davis Junction their home and are delighted to be part of this historic community that goes back more than a century, founded by Jeremiah Davis in 1865. He was also a pioneer in railroading, came to the area from central Wisconsin and helped develop the Pacific Railroad that was progressing through the area.

Mainline tracks coming and going to Rockford intersected with east- and westbound traffic at a literal crossroads, hence the name Davis Junction.

These days, one train a day heads south toward Holcomb, and into the Rochelle community near Flagg Center, however, east and westbound traffic toward Chicago is still



brisk.

There are several eating establishments in the area, some within the city limits, other choices may be found at the intersection of Illinois Route 251 and 72, 2 miles to the east. There is a small strip mall at this intersection as well, providing health care through Swedish American Medical Group, and other amenities. At the west edge of the village is a recently added Dollar General store, bringing local shopping convenience to the community.

One of the most im-

pressive areas of Davis Junction is found at the Veterans Memorial located on Moody Avenue one block north of Illinois Route 72. Installed in 2014, it was designed by Richard Cody Janes who also created the sculptures of servicemen. The memorial was later updated to list the names of those who were lost during the Vietnam War.

The housing industry has blossomed in Davis Junction with the development of Ogle Crossings subdivision, site of dozens of new homes and the local community park.



# GRAND DETOUR

**GRAND DETOUR** — Walking through the white wooden gates at the John Deere Historical Site in Grand Detour is like stepping into another world, one that doesn't exist anymore. In fact, the late, great Orson Welles probably put it best when he said: "Grand Detour is like a lost world, one of those Eden's you get thrown out of."

Welles spent boyhood summers at a hotel his father once ran in Grand Detour, which is located

between Oregon and Dixon on Illinois Route 251 on the southern edge of Ogle County.

"It was kind of a forgotten place," he said.

Although it is no longer there, Welles reportedly snuck into a local dance hall where he practiced the latest dance moves by the light of the moon.

A quaint, rustic little village of stately homes and lingering trees, Grand Detour sits right next to the Rock River. Besides a scenic view, there are

places to fish, boat, camp or just enjoy a leisurely picnic.

By far, the biggest attraction in town is the John Deere Historical Site, where the noted blacksmith invented the first self-scouring steel plow, which revolutionized the farming industry.

Stroll the site's lush, green lawn, you can explore Deere's blacksmith shop, which features regular demonstrations, his family home, a luscious garden, a gift shop and much more.



# CASTLE ROCK STATE PARK

**OREGON** — Illinois tribes of native Americans inhabited the region until 1730 when the Sauk and the Fox tribes, who were being forced westward by the colonists, invaded and inhabited the region. The Native Americans called the river in the new territory "Sinnissippi," meaning "rocky waters."

In the early 1800s, the native Americans were again forced westward into Iowa. In 1831, Blackhawk, the Sauk chief, led his people in a series of raids back into Illinois to reclaim their ancestral lands. The battles that followed were known

as the Blackhawk Indian wars. Chief Blackhawk was captured in 1832 and ordered to a reservation.

The Castle Rock area was settled by New Englanders early in the 19th century. This area was proposed as a state park in 1921 by the "Friends of Our Native Landscape," who acquired some of the land they described as "a unique wilderness remnant of great natural beauty and scientific interest." In 1964, the Natural Lands Institute, a non-profit natural lands preservation group, conducted a public fundraising campaign to preserve part

of the Castle Rock area.

Castle Rock was recognized in Illinois as an outstanding area of major scientific importance in 1965. It was established as a project area, and land acquisition by the State of Illinois started in 1970.

At the present time, Castle Rock consists of approximately 2,000 acres, 710 of which are designated as an Illinois Nature Preserve. The site was dedicated as a state park in 1978.

The basis for the acquisition of Castle Rock State Park is the protection of natural resources unique

to Illinois. A thin layer of glacial till covers this region and several distinctive plant species, remnants of the native forest and prairie, still exist. In one valley, 27 different types of ferns have been identified. The park is one of the largest significant natural areas in the northern part of Illinois.

Most of the outstanding natural features are located in the dedicated Nature Preserve which is protected by state law. Use of the 710-acre preserve is restricted to scientific study and limited interpretation activities.

The planned development of Castle Rock centers around the Nature Preserve. All development is limited by soil types. Soil types consist of silt loams and fine, sandy loams which are connected with the general high degree of slopes, which help to limit



use and development at Castle Rock. These soils are subject to severe erosion under heavy use.

Castle Rock is a large sandstone butte situated between the Rock River and Ill. Rt. 2. The rock is made up of St. Peter sandstone. In only a few places in Illinois does St. Peter sandstone come to the surface, even though it underlies practically the entire state.

Castle Rock State Park is

located along the west bank of the Rock River in Ogle County, three miles south of Oregon, on Ill. Rt. 2. The park is centrally located in the Rock River Hills region of Illinois, and its rolling topography is drained by the Rock River. The park is representative of the Rock River Hills area with rock formations, ravines and unique northern plant associations. A sandstone bluff, adjacent to the river, has given the park its name.

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# WHITE PINES FOREST STATE PARK

**MT. MORRIS** — Located in the heart of the Rock River valley, the 385-acre White Pines Forest State Park is the south boundary of the historic Chicago-Iowa Trail. Today, the park is perfect for family getaways to enjoy hiking, fishing, camping and picnicking. With serene, picturesque beauty, and modern lodge facilities amidst a beautiful forest, there is no better place to retreat from the everyday routine than the open spaces at White Pines.

Along the meandering banks of Spring and Pine creeks, this scenic haven has magnificent trees that share moss-covered cliffs, strung with trailing vines. In season, colorful beds

of blossoming trout lilies, solomons seals, bloodroot, blue-eyed grass, spring beauty and hepatica are everywhere.

Among the park's most interesting features are the concrete fords that span the creeks, allowing visitors to drive through the flowing streams, with an accessible path leading to the stream bank for wildlife watching and fishing.

White Pines Lodge, originally constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, has modern amenities. There are 13 one-room cabins, 2 cabins with 4 rooms, and 1 cabin with 2 rooms, for a total of 23 guestrooms. The White Pines Lodge Restaurant features homemade

delicacies, banquet facilities, and a dinner theater.

White Pines Forest State Park has seasonal archery and firearm deer hunting and, when snow covers the ground, cross country skiing trails.

White Pines Forest lies in the heart of Black Hawk Indian country and is rich in historic accounts of the warriors who resisted the efforts of settlers to drive them from the beloved Rock River valley. Eventually, however, the Black Hawk War forced them out and Warrior Black Hawk himself was sent into exile in the custody of his rival, Keokuk.

When early settlers arrived, they found this 700-acre forest of untouched



pine extending for 1/4 mile along the east bank of Pine Creek.

With a view to preserving one of Illinois' last stands of native white pines

and one of the southernmost stands of white pines in the United States, a movement was started in the early part of the 20th Century to set the area aside as a state park.

Through efforts of Ogle County nature lovers, a bill appropriating \$30,000 for purchase of land was passed by the legislature in 1903, but the measure was vetoed.

# LOWDEN STATE PARK

**OREGON** — One of the most picturesque sites along the Rock River is just north of Oregon in Ogle County. Legend has it that Chief Black Hawk, as he left the area after the Black Hawk War, talked of the beauty of the area and admonished his captors to care for the land as he and his people had.

Lowden State Park was established to care for the land and allow visitors to share in the beauty as well. The park serves as a memorial to Gov. Frank O. Lowden, who served Illinois during World War I.

Just north of Oregon, the bluffs are graced with

a majestic image of an American Indian gazing over the Rock River Valley. This is no ordinary statue. It is a 50 foot, concrete-reinforced wonder that is awe-inspiring. A tribute to all Native Americans, but more commonly associated with Chief Black Hawk, the statue was designed by sculptor Lorado Taft.

You can enjoy many wonderful views of the Rock River from the park, but the best view of the statue is from IL Rt. 2. While the setting sun seems to bring the statue to life, it is a spectacular view any time of the day and during all seasons. A restoration

and preservation project involving the statue is currently underway.

Lorado Taft, who created the 50-foot statue as a tribute to Native Americans, is said to have thought of the figure one evening as he and other members of the Eagles' Nest colony stood gazing at the view from the bluffs. According to a story attributed to Taft, he and his colleagues tended to stand with their arms folded over their chests. The pose made him think of the Native Americans who were so reverent of the beauty of nature and who probably had enjoyed the same view.

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