

The Secrets of Hidden Lake Script

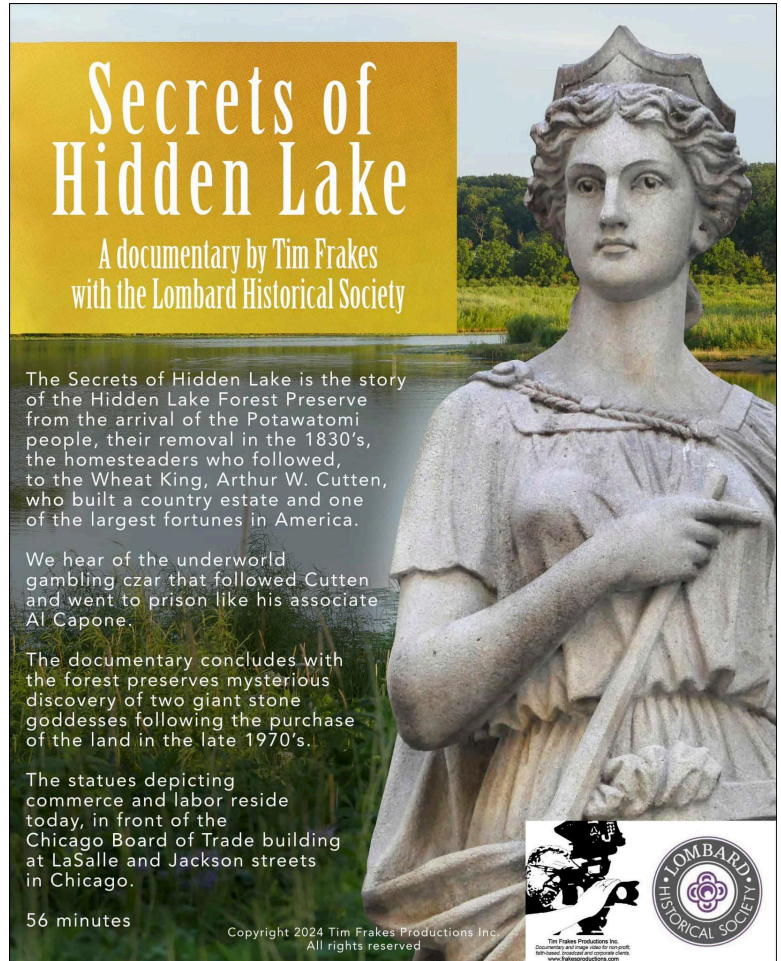
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1. Narrator:

Hi, I'm Tim Frakes. For 30 years, my family and I have lived across the road from the DuPage County Forest Preserves Hidden Lake. I've trekked nearly every square inch and on my walks, I became curious about the people who lived here in the past, the indigenous people, the homesteaders, the weak king, and a gambling czar. The more I learned about their stories, the more I began to appreciate this sacred public trust, and I hope you will, too.

2. Scott Kobal:

Hi, my name is Scott Koble, and I'm the plant ecologist with the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. The Forest Preserves first started in Cook County in 1913, really to protect open space and the natural resources for the residents of the counties. And DuPage County followed suit shortly after in 1915, and now we have over 26,000 acres. Hidden Lake is the history of this county when people wanna go see what did a prairie, what did a woodland, what did a native wetland look like in this area? These are really the last little vestiges of what this county looked like, you know, prior to European settlement. So they are sacred.



Framed map by Albert F. Scharf titled Indian Trails and Villages of Chicago and of Cook Counties (1804).

3. Narrator:

Carefully stored in large wooden drawers at the Abakanowicz Research Center at the Chicago History Museum rests a series of large linen maps published around 1900 by a German born Chicagoan Albert F. Scharf. The detailed hand drawn maps carefully marked the locations of indigenous villages throughout northeastern Illinois. Also detailed are the locations of important trails, often mirroring the routes of present day highways like Illinois, route 56, also known

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as Butterfield Road. The map clearly illustrates a large Potawatomi village at the intersection of what is now Butterfield Road and Route 53 Hidden Lake.

4. Blake Norton:

My name is Blake Norton. I'm the curator for the Citizen Potawatomi Cultural Heritage Center here in Shawnee, Oklahoma. The Potawatomi today are a vibrant, a progressive and very innovative community that has extremely important positive impacts on a local, state and national level. The name Potawatomi really pays homage to the Three Fires, Confederacy itself for what it means to be Nishnabic. Nishinabic being a larger cultural and spiritual confederacy or group belonging to the Ojibwe, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi.

5. Blake Norton:

So the Ojibwe were the first to break off the eldest brother. Their name means keepers of the medicine. The next would've been the Odawa who would've broken off. They're considered the middle brother or understood to be keepers of the trade. And then the Potawatomi are the youngest brother, and they're the last to break off, the last, to create their own unique cultural fire as a people.



Blake Norton, Curator of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center in Shawnee, Oklahoma

6. Blake Norton:

So they're known as people of the fire, but that fire itself pays homage to that centralized, unique Nishinabic fire, and that when it's lit, it's supposed to connect all three groups together. The Ojibwe went north and further, west the

Odawa sort of stayed in that northern central area, and the Potawatomi sort of worked their way all the way around the lakes and started to occupy Illinois in that DuPage County area.

7. Narrator:

The Potawatomi who lived in and around Hidden Lake were relative newcomers replacing a large confederation of tribes called the Illiniwik, who lived here before them. The Potawatomi arrived in Illinois, essentially as refugees in the 17th century, driven by the Iroquois, who in turn were being pressed by newly arrived Europeans. By the time a French trapper named Duphaze, later Anglicized to DuPage began working in the early 1800's along the east and west branches of the rivers, which were to bear his name. The

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Potawatomi people were well established at a place they called Round Meadow or Hidden Lake.

8. George Godfrey:

I am George Godfrey. My mother was one of the descendants of the first families to go down from Kansas into Oklahoma. And, consequently I became enrolled with the Citizen Potawatomi, which is now known as the Citizen Potawatomi Nation in Shawnee, Oklahoma. So the Potawatomi and especially Northeastern Illinois, relied on the land for their food. They relied on the land for their lodging. They relied upon the land for their, you know, just everything.

9. Narrator:

Today, there are no obvious reminders of the Potawatomi people who lived in and around Hidden Lake. Pottowatomi, often gathered in small groups and moved from camp to camp throughout the year, hunting, fishing, planting, and harvesting in a perpetual cycle like the Illini before them, and the homesteaders who came after discovering evidence of their existence takes some effort. For example, we do know what the Pottowatomi looked like. A vivid eyewitness visual record of the Pottowatomi people prior to removal from the Great Lakes region survives today in 1837, British-born artist, George Winter, made a series of drawings and paintings of daily Potawatomi life in villages in what is now north central Indiana.

10. George Godfrey:

George Winter was an English artist who had heard that the Potawatomi were going. He moved to Logansport, Indiana and he made his presence known at various, treaties and where people were being brought in, and he got permission from some of the

11. George Godfrey:

Potawatomi for them to sit down and let him sketch them. And so he made records of all of their types of clothing that they had, the colors and so forth. And so when he went back then to his studio, he put it into colors.

12. Narrator:

As winter's sketches clearly illustrate with depictions of frock coats, top hats and crucifixes, the Potawatomi tended to adapt and assimilate the culture and religion of the French, English and Americans around them. So why did the Potawatomi leave Hidden Lake? The removal of native peoples from Northern Illinois is sad and complicated. A combination of unsuccessful political alliances, warfare between competing European and American interests, shady land deals, cultural assimilation, disease, and ultimately forced removal resulted in the apparent disappearance of Potawatomi and other native peoples from northern Illinois by the 1830s.

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13. Blake Norton:

Well, during the early 19th century, things became tumultuous, one, because of the war of 1812 and the after effects of that, but also extreme assimilation and inculturation practices, that were implemented by the United States. As the evolution of treaty making continued, it went from peace treaties to reservation treaties. So as the American government began to push in and colonize more of the, the western side of Lake Michigan, they began to acquire large tracts of lands, which at that point, they had to consolidate tribal members in those autonomous villages into singular reserves, which would have been controlled by a village headman. That then evolved more into removal treaties. So after the passage of the 1830 Removal Act, there were large regional treaties that were created to remove Potawatomi out of those areas that were set for colonization.

14. Narrator:

In 1836, just three years after the 1833 Treaty of Chicago, which required the Ojibwe Ottawa and Potawatomi tribes to seed their lands in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan, and move west of the Mississippi River, Perus and Electa Barney arrived at DuPage County in 1836 from Guilford, Vermont, where they built and operated a sawmill on the East Branch of the DuPage River.

15. Allison Costanzo

My name is Allison Costanzo, executive director of the Lumbar Historical Society, Babcock's Grove, which would later become in 1869 Lombard, Illinois was named after Ralph and Morgan Babcock, who were the first settlers.

16. Allison Costanzo

Shortly after that, you would have Nathaniel and Luther Morton. The Babcock Brothers didn't stay here, they were here for a very short time, but the Mortons, Nathaniel and Luther, they would settle here, and then their sister, Electa and her husband Perus Barney came. They start looking for a piece of property, and ideally, you would want something with Woodlands forest water, you know, all the things that you need to survive. And because Perus was a carpenter and he wanted to open a mill, something with lush forest would've been an ideal situation for him to start his business, but also to build his home.

17. Narrator:

The ancient hardwood forest growing on the southern end of what is now Hidden Lake and the Morton Arboretum was claimed by homesteader Sherman King in 1832 and became known as King's Grove. According to Richard A. Thompson's 1980 history around the arboretum, the Potawatomi burned prairie. Each year flushing out wild game from the grass which often grew taller than a person's head. The controlled burns allowed them to easily harvest buffalo, deer and elk. Those perennial fires prevented the spread of forests fanned by the prevailing westerly winds. The fires burned to the east branch of the DuPage River, which served as a natural firebreak. Thus, the older forest

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with its dense maple and oak groves survived on the east side of the river, making the land valuable for timber hungry homesteaders buying lumber from Ferris Barney.

18. Narrator:

The area around what is now Hidden Lake was remote in the 1830s, the first homesteaders like the Barneys and their neighbors, the Hatch Brothers, Theron Parsons, Samuel Davis, Moses, Stacey, Sherman King, and Bailey Hobson tended to select the best locations adjacent to timber and water as the threat of hostile interactions with native peoples receded. A new threat arose, claim jumpers and land speculators. Under law, settlers could claim as many acres as he could care for and reserve them until the land went on sale, at which time he would be given the first chance to buy. As newcomers arrived, disputes over who owned what could turn violent.

19. Narrator:

In the 1857 Richmond and Valette history of DuPage County, the author writes, “many bloody combats occurred between belligerent parties, one being usually the first claimant, the other one who had jumped the claim.”

20. Narrator:

In response, Barney Morton and Stacey formed a local precinct of the DuPage Society for Mutual Protection, in 1839. “We do hereby form ourselves into a society to be called the DuPage County Society for mutual protection, that we will make use of all honorable means to protect the inhabitants in their claims and boundaries. When the government survey does not agree with the present lines or lines which may hereafter be agreed upon.”

21. Narrator:

Violence could also erupt in more traditional ways. In 1869, Chauncey Bailey, a homesteader along the east branch of the DuPage River shot and killed James Laird, when Bailey came upon Laird and his wife Sarah, in the act of adultery. After shooting him, Bailey declared, “Now you're done with it.” A Naperville jury later acquitted Bailey, calling it “a crime of passion.” Eventually, the neighbors formed a new community.

22. Narrator:

Legend has it that homesteader Samuel Davis, a millwright from Oneida County, New York, settled with his family on the north side of Butterfield Road and had such a dictatorial temperament that he was nicknamed Napoleon Bonaparte. The name stuck, and eventually became a small community with a creamery, a store, a school, and a post office run by Perus Barney.

23. Narrator:

In the decades after the arrival of the first homesteaders, the property ownership in and around Hidden Lake changed hands many times. Maps from the 1850s show names like Mertz, Lacey Puffer, Blogett, Dodge, and Yackley. By the 1870s, Joseph Yackley owned

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much of what is now Hidden Lake. A native of the Alsace region of what is now the French-German border area. Yackley's family moved to DuPage County in 1843. A few years later, young Joseph joined a group of friends swept up in the California gold rush.

24. Joseph Yackley:

Well, we started in digging, but we selected the wrong spot. For after all our hard work and the time we put in on it, we came out on smooth rock. Although above us and below us, they took out millions. - Joseph Yackley,

25. Narrator:

After sewing his wild oats Yackley returned to DuPage County and married Magdalena Baumeister, who lived on a farm on Butterfield Road near the Bonaparte School, where they lived and farmed until 1883.

26. Narrator:

During this period, Kings Grove was divided into wood lots belonging to people named Brown, Baker, Schultz, Barber, Hatch, and many more. As rustic pioneer cabins were replaced by sophisticated farm estates, the need for locally grown lumber diminished and the King's Grove area of Hidden Lake survived the axe of development. A later example of a large DuPage county estate was Canadian-born livestock breeder, Thomas Stanton's Sittyton Grove, located on the current site of the Butterfield Park District, and Lombard golf course. Stanton raised prized bulls and hogs in the early decades of the 20th century. The breeding operation pivoted in later years and became known as the popular Sittyton Riding Academy where visitors could learn to ride a horse during the dawn of the automobile age. The academy stables burned to the ground in 1928.

27. Narrator:

Another survivor from the period is the wrought iron bow string pony truss bridge, built by the King Iron Bridge Manufacturing company of Cleveland, Ohio. In the 1870s, the bridge spanning the east branch of the DuPage River was bypassed when Illinois Route 53 was built in the 1920s and the structure survived, making it the oldest bridge in DuPage County, and now a fully restored DuPage County Forest Preserve Landmark.

28. Narrator:

Arthur W. Cutten was one of two men who could make money faster than anyone else in the 1920s. Neither of them was born in Chicago, but both of them made their fortunes here. One was Arthur Cutten, whose business was the grain trade. The other was Al Capone, whose business was what you could make out of grain.

29. Narrator:

Arthur W. Cutten was born in 1870 in Guelph, Ontario, the son of a local attorney, and the second of nine children. Cutten decided to leave Canada in 1890 and find work while pursuing his passion for the game of baseball. At least that's what he told his biographer years later. But there may have been a more personal and darker reason that

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prompted Cutten to leave Guelph and head for Chicago.

30. Robert Stephens:

The Guelph Banking Company, which his father owned, went bankrupt. And that was a shocker for the local residents. He had to resign as an alderman. He had to sell his business, the banking company. He had to sell his personal home, and he was in disgrace and shamed in the community. That's a generational memory when someone loses that kind of money. So our young Arthur felt, I think, one of the motivations was he wanted to get away, make his fortune and redeem the family name.

31. Dennis Johnson:

Arthur Cutten arrived in Chicago in 1890. He was 20 years old. He noticed the smell. He knew there were stock yards there. To him it was the smell of money. He got a job in a hardware store that paid very poorly for a year and eventually got a job working in the supplies and provisions business with a man named Stanford White, who was an Englishman from Liverpool, who was in the grain trade. Arthur worked for him in the office as a clerk for five years before White, who was his mentor, essentially finally fronted him enough money to buy a seat on the Chicago Board of Trade.

32. James Barnett:

The Chicago Board of Trade dates back to the 19th century. It originally existed to buy and sell grain. It's particularly grain futures, which is the ability to take control to either buy or sell this grain at a future date. The Board of Trade, it's mostly grain. It started off, the big ones, early were wheat and oats and corn. There's contracts that don't even exist anymore like Rye.

33. Dennis Johnson:

Arthur Cutten became a trader, a day trader to start with, with a job with A.S. White did White's buying and selling on the Chicago Board of Trade because White needed somebody with a seat in order to do the work that needed to be done. Arthur Cutten had lots of extra time to become a day trader or a scalper, as they said.

34. Narrator:

Years later, Cutten wrote, "I saw the great ones of the wheat pit after I had seen them. Neither baseball careers nor bugle calls, nor anything else had so much power to stir my mind and emotions." - Arthur Cutten.

35. Dennis Johnson:

And within 10 years of borrowing \$600 from A.S. White, he quit his job with White and went into the business of, plunging as they often would call it, for him himself, and started raking in the money. I'm sure he was a millionaire by 1912.

36. Narrator:

In 1912, the RMS Titanic sank in the early morning hours of April 15 off the coast of

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Newfoundland. Fenway Park in Boston officially opened. Explorer Robert Scott's Terra Nova Expedition reached the South Pole only to find that Roald Amundsen had preceded them by 34 days. The expedition ended in disaster with the death of Scott and five members of his party on their return.

37. Narrator:

And Arthur Cutten purchased 800 acres in DuPage County along Butterfield Road, adjacent to his friend and neighbor, Joy Morton. Nearly a decade later, Cutten sold over 200 acres to Morton for a mere \$10 to help establish the Morton Arboretum.

38. Narrator:

Over time, Cutten and his wife Maude built a large lavish estate on the property he called Sunny Acres.

39. Dennis Johnson:

Arthur Cutten always described himself as a cash grain merchant and a dirt farmer 'cause he had a farm. Sunny Acres Farm was a place to get away from it all. Having spent a couple of decades in the, business of the commodities trade, 20 years later, he had his farm in the country

40. Arthur Cutten:

During the war, Mrs. Cutten and I built a home on the farm I had bought in 1912, and as soon as it was completed, we moved in. I have become comfortably oriented there as ever I was in the wheat pit.

41. Narrator:

Cutten's description of Sunny Acres included sheep baying where the orchard fence skirts the lawn, a Holstein bull with his harem. Horses, swine ducks, chickens and cattle.

42. Arthur Cutten:

"Their perfumes", Cutten wrote, "give me something that must have been important to my ancestors. For it throbs in my blood." After a quarter of a century of living in boarding houses and hotels, I had to learn from my friend and neighbor, Joy Morton; Love of home is primary patriotism."

43. Narrator:

One of the legends surrounding Hidden Lake is who served as the architect for Sunny Acres. A common misconception is that renowned Oak Park architect, Frank Lloyd Wright designed it. Which is partially true.

44. Dennis Johnson:

The house that Arthur Cutten built could have been designed by this man. Instead, Frank Lloyd Wright did not supervise the building of Arthur Hutton's house, but that didn't stop him from publishing his designs for it. As far as Frank Lloyd Wright was concerned,

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this was his house and it was special to Frank Lloyd Wright because he was designing it at exactly the same time that he was designing Taliesin, his own house in Wisconsin.

45. Dennis Johnson:

The big question is not why the Cutten's eventually fired Frank Lloyd Wright. The big question is why did they hire him in the first place? Were Arthur Cutten and Frank Lloyd Wright friends? They were men of a similar age. And we know that Frank Lloyd Wright had an office in the Rookery in the 1890s, and that was just at the time when Arthur Cutten was a busy trader on the Chicago Board of Trade. The dream house was going to be designed by a dream architect. Though, Arthur Cutten also knew how to draw up a budget. By the time he saw the second set of drawings, he knew that he had to say goodbye to Mr. Wright because it would cost too much. When the Cutten's decided not to build a Frank Lloyd Wright house, Frank Lloyd Wright provided them with another architect to pick up the project. And that was Norman Bridges who had an office in the same building as Frank Lloyd Wright at that time.

46. Narrator:

By 1922, Arthur W. Cutten had established himself as one of the wealthiest people in America. The Associated Press declared Cutten, the kingpin of wheat, buying 1 million bushels every day. The success also came with scrutiny. In 1915 with the war in Europe raging and the United States still neutral, New York regulators launched an investigation into the soaring cost of wheat and bread, calling Cutten and several top commodities traders to testify. Cutten declined telegraphing officials that he had no knowledge of the matter under investigation.

47. Dennis Johnson:

In March of 1922, Arthur came home by train from a day at the Board of Trade. His brother Harry was visiting from Canada, and they sat down to dinner and suddenly five men burst into the house and with guns, they were armed swearing, lining people up against the wall. And basically what they wanted was for Arthur Cutten to open the bank vault in the basement of the house, a fireproof wine cellar. Just what you need. It was something that people knew Arthur Cutten had, including one character whose name was Joe Vormontag, who was a teenager, but who had worked at the Cutten House briefly, and he assumed there might be money there. But this was the middle of prohibition at a big load of whiskey and champagne and all sorts of expensive stuff would be just the ticket.

48. Narrator:

After clearing the vault of its liquor, alcohol that Cutten later claimed had been acquired prior to prohibition, the robbers stripped Maude Cutten of a necklace, a diamond ring, and bundled the silverware into a tablecloth. They then forced Cutten, his wife, and the staff into the vault, locked the door and made their getaway.

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49. Narrator:

Fortunately for Cutten, John Johnson, the family butler, who was also locked inside the airtight vault, managed to open the locking mechanism from inside the compartment.

50. Dennis Johnson:

What kind of a man has a bank vault in his basement? What kind of a man employs a butler who knows how to get out of a bank vault after you've been locked inside? It had a little ruler, a little metal ruler, and he unscrewed screws, took the metal sheeting off the back of the door, popped the bolts and got them out. John Johnson and a couple of other guys loaded with a shotgun went chasing after. Knowing the territory, much better than the robbers, caught up to them and opened fire.

51. Narrator:

After riddling the getaway truck with buckshot, two of the robbers disappeared into a cornfield leaving the stolen goods behind Otto Tempera and Joseph Vormontaag were soon captured in Chicago,

52. Dennis Johnson:

And you can see pictures of the robbers. One of them is definitely bandaged around the head because obviously he got buckshot in the face. Arthur Cutten was furious and he said to the press, these men broke into my home, they swore at my wife, and if it takes me the rest of my life and it costs me every penny I have, I will get every one of those men behind bars.

53. Narrator:

Within days, Vormontaag, and six of his associates were in custody confessing that the original plan was to kidnap Cutten and hold him for ransom. When his chauffeur picked him up in Elmhurst at the Aurora and Elgin train station, the plan failed when Cutten's car turned out to be too fast and the would-be kidnappers slid off the road and into a ditch along Butterfield Road. Apparently Cutten was unaware of the attempted kidnapping and returned to Sunny acres for dinner with the robbers close behind.

54. Narrator:

With Seven of the nine accomplices in custody cut and turned to a man he knew to have ties to the underworld. Chicago Tribune, crime reporter Jake Lingle.

55. Dennis Johnson:

Jake Lingle knew everybody in town, including Al Capone. He wore a belt buckle that was a personal gift from Al Capon and privately Jake Lingle worked for Arthur Cutten to find where the last two men that he couldn't find had gone

56. Narrator:

In 1930 with Lingle's help, all nine assailants were brought to justice. On April 30, Charles Simon Rosenberg was sentenced. Cutten attended the hearing at the Wheaton

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Courthouse, supported by his wife Maude, and his friend and neighbor, Joy Martin. Then on June 9th, 1930, Cutten met again with Jake Lingle in his office following the grand opening of the brand new 44 story, Chicago Board of Trade Building at La Salle and Jackson Streets. After the meeting, Lingle headed for the racetrack, but was gunned down in a pedestrian tunnel beneath Michigan Avenue. The sensational murder was headline news until reports surfaced of linguals ties to the underworld that revealed income far beyond the means of his meager journalist salary.

57. Robert Stephens:

There were a lot of farm votes in 1922 and 1923, and the farmers were upset that the traders on the exchange were manipulating prices and taking their, their crop, profits away from them. So they started to create a legislation, the Grain Futures Act that came in in 1922, so suddenly Cutten is confronted with a bureaucracy and a government legislation that he doesn't like. They're asking him to report his trades. They're monitoring how much business he's doing. He was furious with that and those factors combined with him saying, wow, I'm gonna look for another place.

58. Narrator:

In 1926, Cutten focused on Wall Street trading more in stocks than grain. In three years, he amassed an estimated \$100 million fortune through a secretive system of synchronized trading pools, buying and selling stocks like Montgomery Ward, Sinclair Oil, and RCA.

59. Robert Stephens:

He got his eye on New York. He had done a little bit of trading there in the past, but not a lot, and now it became his major playground. His interest was to make a killing in the markets and he was brutal. He would do anything to put the dollar signs up on the scoreboard as much as possible because there were no laws at the time. There were, it may have been unethical, people may have considered it not correct, but there were no rules prohibiting it from making a killing

60. Dennis Johnson:

Arthur Cut and all his pools of investors who were probably responsible for a quarter of the trading that was done at the New York Stock Exchange every day.

61. Narrator:

The Wall Street crash of 1929 became a reality in September when share prices on the New York Stock Exchange collapsed. Between October 24 and October 29, the largest sell off of shares in US history occurred with some 16 million shares traded in a single day.

62. Narrator:

Thousands of individual investors were wiped out. Banks failed, businesses closed, and

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the economic fallout eventually triggered a worldwide great depression. Wealthy stock and commodity speculators like Arthur Cutten once admired, were now vilified.

63. Narrator:

The United States government went after Cutten on two fronts. Following the crash, Cutten had returned to the Chicago grain pits where he began short selling commodities profiting as grain prices fell, family farms suffered and farm workers rebelled. In April, 1934, he was charged under the Grain Futures Act as the government sought to ban him from the grain pits. The case went all the way to the United States Supreme Court, where Cutten eventually won.

64. Narrator:

In May of that year, more bad news as his friend and neighbor Joy Morton died suddenly after suffering a heart attack at his home next to Sunny Acres. And in 1933, the government launched the Pecora investigation and Cutten was subpoenaed to testify before the Senate Committee on Banking and currency.

65. Robert Stephens:



The gates to Arthur Cutten's Sunny Acres, December 2024, appear closer to what they would have looked like in the 1930s following the recent start of the IDOT Butterfield Road/ Rt. 53 improvements adjacent to the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County's Hidden Lake.

After the great crash in 1929, there were several probes into what Cutten had been and was doing. There was an attempt to take his trading privileges away, on the Chicago Board of Trade. There was a probe into him evading income taxes, and there was also a probe by a US Senate committee that was looking at the big banks and the individuals who were trading on the market in terms of the corruption that was involved in those practices. The Senate Committee hired a lawyer in New York by the name of Ferdinand Pecora, and he led the US Senate probe into a number of individuals like Arthur Cutten. Although there were no immediate implications for Cutten himself, it resulted in him coming under increasing scrutiny, which

eventually drained him. And you can definitely see a progression of weariness, to the end where he is basically in bed unable to trade anymore.

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66. Narrator:

With an assortment of new legal battles. Cutten's health continued to decline. In June, 1936, he moved into the swanky Edgewater Beach Hotel where he died on June 24th, 1936, a few weeks short of his 66th birthday. In the end, Cutten's estate declared a mere \$350,000. A figure the IRS found unlikely.

67. Robert Stephens:

They had launched an indictment a few weeks before his death seeking 1.2 million in back taxes for the years 1929, 30 and 33. Their efforts ultimately turned up a mere \$333,000, and it took them 12 years to collect.

68. Narrator:

What became of the rest of Arthur Cutten's fortune remains a mystery. Around this time, the Army Corps of Engineers, following a survey by Wheaton engineer Arthur L. Webster began a process of dredging the East Branch of the DuPage River, converting the original course of the stream into straight lines in an effort to maximize farm output. Sunny Acres was sold by Maude Cutten in 1937 for \$145,000 in cash to a gambler and known associate of Al Capone.

69. Narrator:

Hidden Lakes' Sunny Acres had two primary owners. Neither of them wanted attention. Arthur Cutten was withdrawn by nature and had good reason to shy away from the prying eyes of the public after his home was robbed. William R. Big Bill Johnson, the man who bought Sunny Acres after Arthur Cutten's death in 1936, had other reasons for wanting privacy. Johnson was a politically connected gambler with ties to organized crime that eventually led to his conviction and incarceration.

70. Narrator:

Johnson began life as an Express Wagon driver and early on showed a deft left hand with a pair of dice. Johnson became so skilled at games of chance that he eventually had enough money to buy a controlling interest in the Lawndale Kennel Club, a Greyhound race track on Chicago's west side. Johnson's business partner Edward J. (Easy Eddie) O'Hare was gunned down in a mob hit November 8th, 1939, while driving his Lincoln Zephyr Coop after becoming a key witness at the 1931 trial that sent Al Capone to prison. Easy Eddie's name lives on. His son Edward "Butch" O'Hare became the first naval aviator recipient of the Medal of Honor in World War II. And Chicago's Orchard Field was named in his honor, O'Hare International Airport.

71. Narrator:

Big Bill Johnson was described as a tall man with a florid face. In addition to the dog tracks, he also controlled a string of gambling houses in and around Chicago with names like the Horseshoe Club, the Casino Club, the Devlin, and the Bon Air. Four years after Johnson purchased Sunny Acres, he found himself in federal court, charged with conspiring to evade \$1.8 million in taxes. Flexing his political clout. Johnson was

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represented by former Illinois Supreme Court Justice and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Floyd E. Thompson.

72. Narrator:

The reported court trial transcript recounts the interchange between Assistant US attorney Earl C. Hurley and Johnson's former attorney William Goldstein, who served as Bagman for the purchase of Sunny Acres. The prosecutor asked, "Did you arrange for the purchase of 773 acres known as Sunny Acres Farm in DuPage County?" Goldstein replied, "Yes, after some negotiations." "What was the amount?" Hurley asked Goldstein. "It was \$145,000," Goldstein replied.

73. Narrator:

Goldstein went on to explain that he delivered the money in a large paper wrapper that took two hours to count in denominations of 5, 10, 20, and \$50 bills. In the end, Johnson was convicted of tax evasion after arguing unsuccessfully that his associates owned his gambling joints and that he was only the landlord. Johnson delayed going to prison for five years with a series of intricate legal maneuvers that took his case to the United States Supreme Court three times. Eventually, he spent 32 months in a Terre Haute, Indiana Federal prison and was paroled.

74. Narrator:

In December, 1948, Johnson returned to Sunny Acres and never returned to the gambling business. In a bizarre twist, Johnson received a 1952 Christmas Eve Presidential pardon from Harry Truman restoring his citizenship and voting rights. The reason for the pardon remains a mystery.

75. Narrator:

Big Bill Johnson lived on his farm for the rest of his life after prison, he continued to operate his farm, which included dairy cows. The large tract of virgin hardwood trees was also a great place for local boys to hunt squirrels.

76. Donald Barg:

Big Bill Johnson was a landowner, a big landowner. We never met him personally, but we'd sneak into his property by riding down Finlay Road and we'd sneak in early in the morning. We were going squirrel hunting because his land butted up against the Morton's Arboretum. It was like being in the North Woods, that area back there. There's beautiful trees and gorgeous sunrises. In the morning, I had a .410 shotgun and I would try to kill some of these squirrels and they were so damn high my shot would run, not affect them at all. It was "good times."

77. Narrator:

Johnson also returned to running the large and popular Bon Air later called the Chevy Chase Country Club in Wheeling Illinois until he died in 1962. Predictably, his estate was fought over by relatives. Slowly, sunny acres fell into disrepair; the land around

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what is now Hidden Lake Forest Preserve continued to be farmed until the demand for affordable housing for returning World War II GI's was met by real estate developers like Jack Hoffman and his Hoffman Rosner homes who began to gobble up sections on the west and north sides of Hidden Lake. But one farm held on.

78. Tim Johnson:

My name is Tim Johnson. We moved to Butterfield Estates in about 1963. I was about four years old from Wisconsin, and we just happened. My dad purchased a house that was directly across from the entrance of the Arthur Cutten Mansion, and it was just kind of a mystery all the time, what really what it was and, and who lived there and why it was there. And I was always interested in farming because my relatives were dairy farmers. I wanted to learn as much as I could, even though Glen Bar East offered nothing in agriculture at all. I got a job on Smitty's Farm, which was leased from the Johnsons to Smits, Alfred and Menlo Smits, and they were Dutch and they were truck farmers. And then during the summer we, I, I was hired by them to be a field worker and so we picked a lot of sweet corn to sell and the place was busy on Saturdays. They raised just about everything. It was along the DuPage River and usually that's really a rich loamy, high in ion exchange capability. Holds moisture good. It had a little clay content. And that was just some of the most beautiful farmland to raise vegetables on. It was well drained 'cause we used to take his pickups all over and, and, ride on the back and, drop us off of the field with some bushel baskets and they would say, "Pick it out boys", you know, and they were good people. They were really good.

79. Narrator:

The DuPage County Forest Preserve was formed in 1915. By the mid 1970s, rapid development fueled an urgency to acquire and hold lands containing forests, prairies, wetlands, and plant communities. The Johnson Farm at the corner of Butterfield Road and Route 53 with its ancient hardwood grove bisected by the East Branch of the DuPage River was ideal. The heirs to the Johnson Estate had other plans that included cutting down the trees, rezoning the property, and selling to developers for up to a reported \$40,000 an acre.

80. Narrator:

In 1976, when DuPage County Forest Preserve President, Frank Bellinger learned that the Johnson heirs had begun to cut down hardwood trees in an apparent attempt to improve the marketability of the land. The forest preserve offered to purchase the property. They also got a judge to order an injunction preventing further destruction. In 1978, a jury set the price of the Johnson Farm at 7.5 million higher than the 6 million offered by the Forest preserve, but less than the 12 million demanded by the Johnson family. In the end, the land we now call Hidden Lake became public, preserved for all to enjoy.

81. Scott Kobal:

Hidden Lake purchases were between 1977 and 1978. The fact that it had a remnant

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woodland and it was very valuable, it adjoins the Morton Arboretum. It was part of the King's Grove area. So that's one of the remnant groves of trees in the county that the settlers found when they came here. So it was a very rich area.

82. Narrator:

After the purchase of the Johnson Farm, the DuPage County Forest Preserve commissioned Oak Park architect Robert A. Bell to assess the property, including Sunny Acres, the Farm Manager's house, the barns and other buildings.

83. Narrator:

The preliminary report concluded that the buildings comprised a historical landmark of significant social and architectural merit to be nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. When reality set in the Forest preserve decided that managing and maintaining historic buildings was outside their core mission, items from sunny acres including light fixtures, doors, windows, and other items were auctioned off and all of the buildings were demolished.



Forest Preserve District of DuPage County staff, excavating the two stone goddesses from the property of the newly acquired Hidden Lake Forest Preserve, cir, 1980.

84. Scott Kobal:

The Forest Reserve District for a while thought, "Well, maybe we'll make this our new headquarters?" But, with any old building, trying to retrofit it into today's standards, it's not financially practical.

85. Narrator:

It was during this period that two giant stone goddesses were discovered, buried in the grass near the main house.

86. Narrator:

At the time their origin was unknown. The answer to the riddle was hiding in plain sight. On the first page of Arthur Cutten's 1933 ghost written autobiography, the story of a speculator recalling the 1929 demolition of the original 1883 Chicago Board of Trade Building at Lassalle and Jackson Streets in Chicago, Cutten wrote, "When they decided to tear it down at last to make way for a much more magnificent and efficient structure, I

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sought for souvenirs that would in time to come, enable me to preserve the precious past.”

87. Narrator:

And so it was that Arthur Cutten, the Wheat King, arranged to have the two, 11 foot high, eight ton, mid Victorian statues representing industry and agriculture transported by rail out to Sunny Acres where his wife Maude greeted them with a stony reception. Resulting in the statues lying prone and hidden by Hollyhocs, until Forest Preserve employees found them. 60 years later. The goddesses were excavated, loaded on a truck and taken to the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County's new Danada Headquarters on Naperville Road.

88. Narrator:

Once officials determined the statue's origin, they were returned to the Chicago Board of



The two, 11 foot high eight ton, mid Victorian statues representing industry and agriculture where they now reside at the corner of LaSalle and Jackson Streets in the courtyard of the Chicago Board of Trade in Chicago.

Trade, where they now reside prominently in the courtyard at the corner of La Salle and Jackson Streets. Today, Hidden Lake Forest Preserve features two main lakes, Eagle Lake on the southeast section of the preserve, along the east branch of the DuPage and Round Meadow Lake on the northeast section. The actual Hidden Lake is more of a

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glacial depression hidden in the Kings Grove area. On the southeast section of the Forest Preserve. Eagle Lake got its name due to its resemblance of a bird in flight when observed from the air. Round Meadow Lake is a reference to the area's name during the late Potawatomi period as homesteaders replaced them.

89. Narrator:

Round Meadow Lake was created as a source of landfill During construction of I-355 in the 1990s, the Illinois Toll Authority needed the top soil and the forest preserve got a lake. It was soil that developed over centuries. Habitat for countless generations of prairie grass insects, birds migrating herds of bison and other creatures. The land also served untold generations of native peoples homesteaders who followed them and is now preserved for all to enjoy and hold in sacred trust for future generations.

90. Scott Kobal:

Thankfully, people in the past had the foresight to put these lands under protection and buy them, and, and now they're here for us in perpetuity so we can enjoy them.

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