

Crab Tree Farm I

Crab Tree Farm is north of Chicago, on the shores of Lake Michigan. Most of the farm buildings date from 1910–12, while a colonial style house, overlooking the lake, was built to designs by David Adler in 1927. It is still a working farm, owned by John Bryan since 1985, and home to his remarkable collection of English and American furniture and decorative arts. While the lakeside house contains the outstanding 16th, 17th and 18th century collections (see below), the farm buildings are devoted to the Arts and Crafts Movement.

In 1993 Bryan built the Ellis House to designs published in 1903 by Arts and Crafts architect Harvey Ellis. Today this is furnished throughout with English and American furniture, textiles, silverware, lighting and other decorative arts, mostly by the most notable Arts and Crafts designers



Fig. 5 C. F. A. Voysey furniture and Benson lighting in the Ellis House

including Morris, Voysey, Gimson, Barnsley, Mackintosh, Stickley, Benson, Dresser and Powell. The textiles include items by Alexander Morton in Ayrshire and Donald Brothers of Dundee. Two desks attracted us; one of 1903 in oak, pewter and copper in the master bedroom, and the Chalet desk and chair, 1900–03, in the maid's room; this was so economical in its use of space and, in a contemporary touch, it apparently had a basket fitted on the bottom shelf.

In the adjacent farm buildings and barns Bryan has recreated interiors to designs by Gustav Stickley published in *The Craftsman* magazine between 1901 and 1916. These rooms are largely furnished with Stickley pieces, simple, sturdy and almost invariably in oak, complemented by rugs, textiles, pottery, metalware and other items by American and European designers, as well as Native American textiles and basketry. Taken together this is probably the most comprehensive and high-quality private collection of Arts and Crafts material anywhere.

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