



The 1920 home of **Lee L. & Sadie Woodard**, located at 825 West Oliver Street along the Shiawassee River, remained in the family for over 50 years until Sadie's death at the age of 91 in 1978. Lee, who died in 1947, was Fred's younger brother and served as the wood furniture designer and plant manager of the Woodard Furniture Company. **800SQI**

In 1934, at a critical point in their family history, in the midst of the Great Depression, Woodard ventured into the metal furniture market. By 1938, Lee and his three sons, **Joseph, Russell and Lyman II**, purchased a portion of the land and buildings of the Woodard Furniture Company on South Elm Street and focused solely on the design and manufacture of metal furniture, forgoing the wood furniture, which remained with other Woodard family members.



In 1940 father and sons introduced the Vintage and Orleans wrought iron furniture designs.

The Orleans design is in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC, chosen for having been the longest-running Woodard design. The simple oak leaf and acorn motif, in addition to the graceful Cabriole legs, identify this design which was one of Woodard's best sellers for decades.



By the 1960s Woodard was considered the premier American manufacturer of quality casual furniture. Because there were no prospective heirs to carry on the family business, in 1969 the company was sold to Wickes Corporation. After 156 years, Woodard is still manufacturing furniture, the oldest company still in existence in Owosso today.



In 1978 the Arnold Palmer collection of contemporary casual furniture was introduced. Palmer visited Owosso and played golf at the Owosso Country Club with employees from the factory. **Dolly Woodard**, widow of **Joseph Woodard**, who died in 1971, is pictured with **Winnie and Arnold Palmer** on her West Oliver Street patio.

“One spring afternoon when I was in the fourth grade my father walked into my classroom with a solemn face and asked the perplexed teacher if I could be excused. As soon as I was in the hall, I asked my father what was the matter, but he did not reply for we had reached the classroom of one of my brothers. After getting him excused and starting down the hall again, I asked, “What's the matter?”

He replied, “Just as quick as I can get your other brother out of school I'll tell you.” That did not take long and soon we were all asking, “What's the matter?” When we were outside the school and he was sure that none of the teachers could hear him he said, “Just look at this wonderful day. It is too good to be in school. I thought you'd like to go fishing.” Well, he thought right. As a matter of fact, I believe the rest of my school life was a little easier because I knew my father understood.”



— **Russell Woodard, 1954**