

# THE SANCTUARY AND SINGING TOWER



MOVNTAIN LAKE  
FLORIDA

83

*THIS SINGING TOWER  
WITH ITS ADJACENT SANCTUARY  
WAS DEDICATED  
AND PRESENTED FOR VISITATION  
TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE  
BY CALVIN COOLIDGE  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES  
FEBRUARY THE FIRST  
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINE*



will make a covenant  
of peace with them and  
set my sanctuary in the  
midst of them for evermore.

EZEKIEL XXXVIII. 26

## A PERSONAL FOREWORD

*The inspiration for The Sanctuary and The Tower came of that stuff of which dreams are made. The two combined a dream to carry on the work of my grandfather, who, a hundred years ago transformed a grim desert island in the North Sea, ten miles from the Netherlands mainland, into a bower of green verdure and trees to which came the birds which made the island famed.*

*But an inspiration is of little value if it is not carried into realization, and I was fortunate to enlist the deep interest and sympathetic cooperation of two men who are responsible for what the visitor sees: Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted for the Sanctuary and Milton B. Medary for the Tower. Naturally, I could not have obtained two men more thoroughly fitted to give me what I wanted to present to the American people for visitation, and what has been so often called "The Taj Mahal of America"—a spot which would reach out in its beauty through the plantings, through the flowers, through the birds, through the superbly beautiful architecture of the Tower, through the music of the bells, to the people and fill their souls with the quiet, the repose, the influence of the beautiful, as they could see and enjoy it in the Sanctuary and through the Tower.*

*And incidentally it gave me a wonderful opportunity to follow and carry out the injunction of my grandmother to her children and grandchildren: "Wherever your lives may be cast, make you the world a bit more beautiful and better because you have lived in it."*

*That is the basis upon which the Sanctuary and the Tower rests.*

*Edward W. Bok*



CREATED to provide a retreat of natural beauty for the human, a refuge for birds, and a place for the study of southern planting and bird life, the Sanctuary was designed and executed by Frederick Law Olmsted.

It has an area of forty-eight acres and entirely comprises Iron Mountain. This is three hundred and twenty-four feet above sea level and is the highest point of land in Florida according to the United States Geological Survey. It is also the highest land within sixty miles of the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico, between Washington and the Rio Grande. Fourteen lakes are visible from the plateau and thirty-six can be seen from the top of the tower. This height emphasizes the tradition that Iron Mountain was the ancient sacrificial ground for the Indians of Florida, who after wailing at Lake Wailes (now Lake Wales) sought its purifying heights. Legend claims that each spring they met here to worship the Rising Sun, and to express in the Dance of Green Corn, the joy of the new planting and the mating of Maid and Brave.

Except the original pines, practically all the planting has been introduced into the Sanctuary since June 1923. This includes over 1000 live oaks, 8000 azaleas, 100 Sabal palms, 300 magnolias, over 500 gordonias, and some 10,000 Sword and Boston ferns. Over one-half of the plants have been collected from the wilds, most of them within a radius of twenty miles of the Sanctuary itself. These contribute greatly to the desired natural effect of Florida hammock scenery.

Some of the more important exotic plants are, the Azalea Indica, several kinds of acacia, Cattley guava, duranta, flame vine, white bauhinia, primrose jasmine, Sabal havanensis, and cymbidium, a genus of interesting terrestrial orchids native to the mountains of tropical Asia. The wrought-iron crows fixed throughout the Sanctuary indicate its distances, 67 miles from the Atlantic ocean; 74 miles from the Gulf of Mexico; 163 miles from Jacksonville; 228 miles from Key West.

Whether the visitor wanders up the Foot-Path, pausing to hear the nightingales sing, or lingers on the Sunset Plateau, in the Easter Glade, or the Garden of Resurrection leading to the Oak Grove, or yet again, tarries beside the pool mirroring the deep pink shadow of the Tower, while the Carillon sounds its glorious melody, he is invited to seek the spirit of those ancient sanctuaries where not man alone found refuge, but also "the little brothers of the air" were secure and all animal life was sacred.

In the early Druid Sanctuaries of England the pilgrim had first to purge himself of fear or unrest by a study of nature. So the modern pilgrim may here seek sanctuary from the hurried spirit of this age, and find his true self again in a world made better and more beautiful by one who had that service laid upon him for the welfare of his fellow men.

*“I come here to find myself. It is so easy to get lost  
in the world.”*

*John Burroughs.*



*THE FOOT-PATH LEADING TO THE SANCTUARY  
FOR HUMANS AND FOR BIRDS*



ARMONY with the spirit of the Carillon as well as its practical requirements, and the beauty of the surrounding Sanctuary, these have been the inspiration of the Singing Tower. In its majestic simplicity and true singing quality, the Tower stands for all time a fitting tribute to a great ideal expressed through the genius of its architect, Milton B. Medary, D. A. E., P. P. A. I. A. While it partakes of the traditions of the great Singing Towers of ancient and medieval times, nevertheless a unique use of native materials, the influence of Florida's tropical coloring, its bird life and planting, characterize the Tower as a historic structure, racially American.

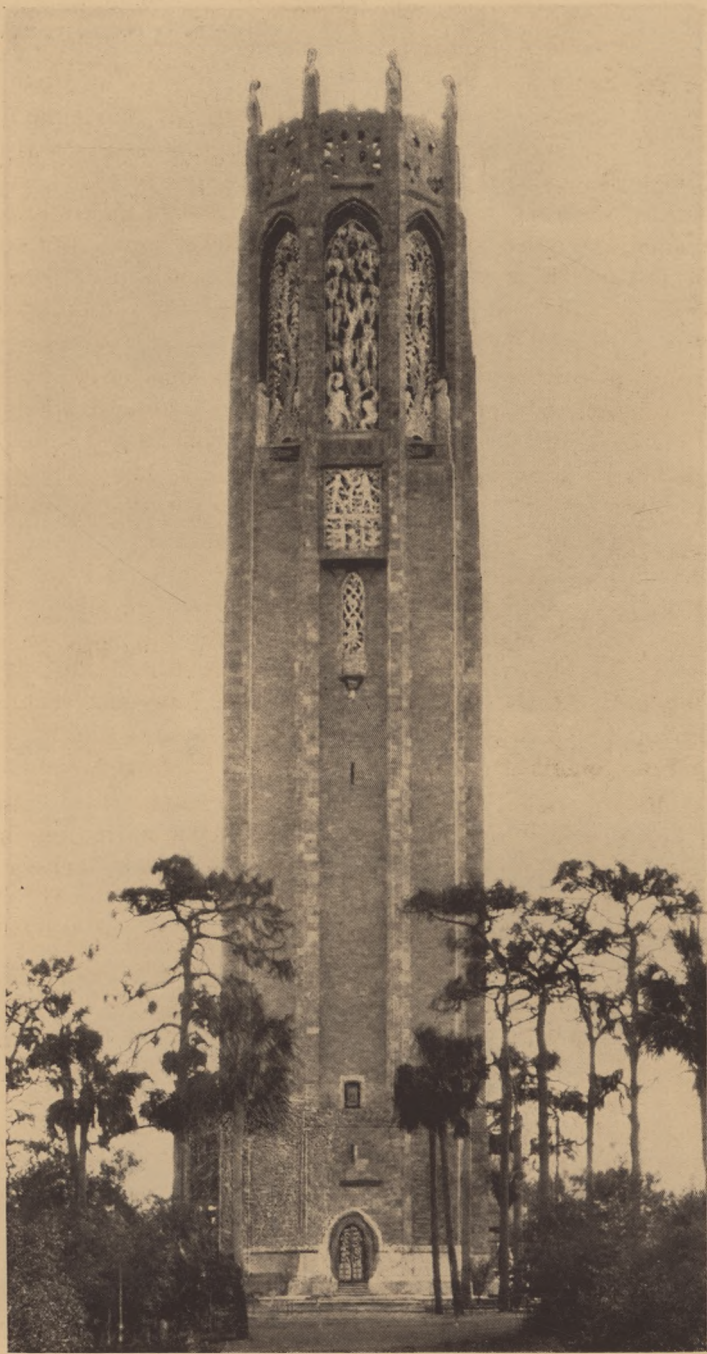
From the profile of the bells cut into its square base, 51 feet wide, the Tower rises through a gradually changing outline to a height of 205 feet 2 inches, where its octagonal summit is but 37 feet wide. This is crowned by panels of roses and palms. The eight buttresses are pointed by symbolic herons, each of the four males carrying a fish in its beak and the alternating females feeding their young.

The Tower weighs 5500 tons and is anchored to a reinforced concrete mat supported by 160 reinforced concrete piles. Whenever possible southern materials have been used in the construction of the Tower by the builders, Horace H. Burrell & Son. The grey Creole and the pink Etowah marble are from the Tate quarries of Georgia. The coquina rock was excavated at Daytona and is similar to that first used by the Spaniards in building the fort at St. Augustine.

Besides the Bell Chamber, the Tower contains two copper steel tanks with a capacity of 30,000 gallons, used for watering the Sanctuary. The entire ground floor has been reserved as a single, high-vaulted hall lined with Etowah marble and appointed as a study for Mr. Bok, with many features, like the carved mantel, of distinguished beauty.

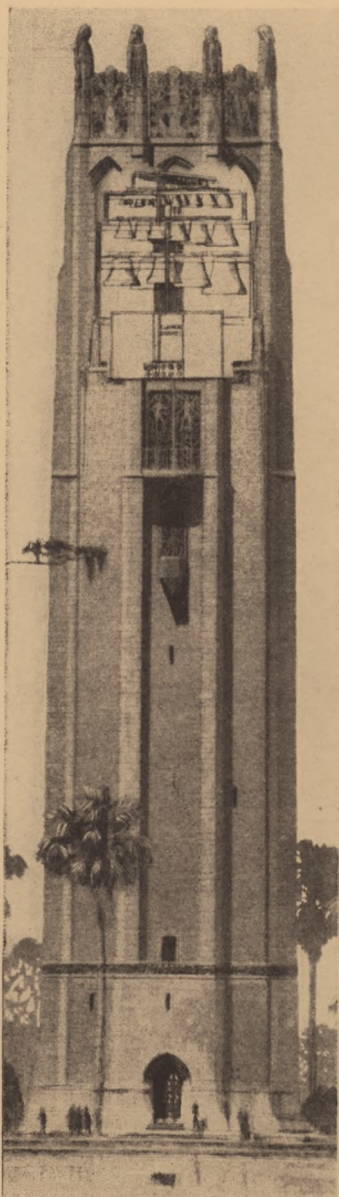
The spirit of the Sanctuary is legended by the sculptor, Lee O. Lawrie, in the marble grilles of the east and west windows of the Tower Hall. These show traceries of a man sowing a garden, and of a boy feeding cranes, peacocks, and flamingoes. Instead of the usual Gothic gargoyles, conventionalized birds are profusely used in the carvings of the Tower. Massive eagles with folded wings terminate the upper balconies and are flanked by panels of doves carrying laurel or oak as tokens of peace and strength. The frieze encircling the Tower above the North Door depicts pelicans, herons, and the fabled characters of the goose, stork and fox, the hare and tortoise.

The brilliance of Florida sunshine and tropical planting are harmonized in the lancet windows by J. Dulles Allen. Highly colored faience depicts the rise of life from its undersea forms, like the jelly fish, through flowers and birds to the figures of Adam and Eve in the central ceramics, showing man's dominion over all creation.



*THE SINGING TOWER*





THE Sanctuary Bells comprise the finest and largest carillon yet made. It consists of sixty-one bells whose scale is entirely chromatic from the largest bell note which is E flat. The lowest semi-tone bell is omitted and the highest octave of thirteen bells is duplicated. The Carillon was cast and installed by John Taylor and Company of Loughborough, England, and is tuned on the Taylor "True Harmonic System."

The position of the Carillon in the Tower is shown in the accompanying illustration. The bells hang in rows on four levels, graduating in weight from the largest of approximately 24,000 pounds to the smallest of 16 pounds. Their aggregate weight is 123,124 pounds. The metal of which they are cast is an alloy of Best Selected Copper and English Block Tin. Carillon bells, in distinction to Chimes, are stationary and do not swing when played. The clappers hang from the inside of the bells, as usual, but are moved by a system of levers connected with the clavier which is played by the carillonneur in a room below the bells.

The best effects of the Carillon are obtained at a position of some two hundred yards from the Tower. The southern and western slopes of the Sanctuary are particularly recommended. As the sound waves come through the lowest windows, they are not carried clearly to the base of the Tower, but spread outwards as the distance increases. At the proper listening place, the music seems to sing out from

the upper structure, as if the tower itself had burst into song. Hence the traditional name, Singing Tower.

*The dedication of the Carillon is inscribed on the Tenor Bell.*

*This Carillon  
Is A Tribute of Affection  
From Edward William Bok  
To His Grandparents: Lovers of Beauty  
Nineteen Hundred and Twenty Six*



**A**NTON  
BRES,  
Bellmas-  
ter of the  
Sanctuary

Bells is acknowledged as the master carillonneur of the world. Not only for his superb virtuosity, but for the rare spiritual quality of his playing, it has been said, "Anton Brees casts a soul into the Carillon."

Born at Antwerp, Belgium, Laureate of the Royal Flemish Conservatory, he received his education as carillonneur under his father, Gustaaf Brees, organist of the Cathedral for the past forty-seven years, and now the city carillonneur.

Anton Brees is the pioneer carillonneur of America, all of whose important carillons he has opened since 1924. Mr. E. Denison Taylor,

the founder of the Sanctuary Bells, has written, "Bells the people in America had heard before your visit, but never till then the music of them. It was as if for years one had known the human voice in talking only, and then suddenly, and for the first time, heard the beautiful tones of a glorious singer."

*The Sanctuary Bells will play for a half hour each afternoon at 4 o'clock until April 30th, 1929, with an extra recital each Sunday at 12:30 noon. Special recitals will be given at 12:30 o'clock noon on the following days:*

*General Robert E. Lee's Birthday, January 19  
Family Birthday, January 25  
Abraham Lincoln's Birthday, February 12  
George Washington's Birthday, February 22  
Family Birthday, February 25  
Family Birthday, April 14  
Easter Morning Service, March 31*



*Anton Brees Playing the Sanctuary Bells*



SITUATED in the center of Florida, the Sanctuary is a natural halt for native as well as migratory birds passing North and South or crossing the Highlands from the Atlantic to the Gulf of Mexico. As Florida is also the terminal of the great Alleghanian flight tract, many of these birds will nest in the Sanctuary once they are sure of protection, thus saving the lives of thousands in their arduous bi-annual migration. Insectivorous birds are particularly encouraged as they should be everywhere for their invaluable help to the agriculture of each state.

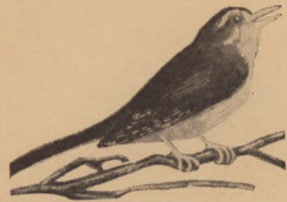
The Sanctuary has more than doubled the amount of its wild birds each year. Besides the widely varied foliage which offers shelter to birds of differing needs, thousands of bushes have been planted to supply them with berry food, such as *Ilex Glabra*, *Ilex Vomitoria*, *Duranta*, and *Elaeagnus Umbalata*. Many bird



*Mocking Birds*

baths give the shallow drinking places necessary to migratory birds.

The Nightingales in the aviaries have been brought from England as an experiment to establish them in this country. Only the cocks sing, and these are in full song between February and May, except about midday. This rare photograph of a nightingale when actually singing was taken in the Sanctuary.



*A Nightingale*



It is hoped to induce the Flamingo to settle again in Florida, his native habitat, from which he was driven by the hunter and plumage seeker. The Scarlet Flamingoes (*Phoenicopteridae ruber*) are native to Andros Island and Cuba where they may become extinct. The white Flamingoes are from South America.



## *THE EASTER GLADE*

*A Sunrise Service is held here each Easter Morning to which the public is invited*



ANY details of the Tower Hall are masterpieces needing individual appreciation.

Carved above the massive fireplace a map shows the Tower in its geographical location, with a flamingo at its base, and further below an alligator, Neptune with his sea horses, the compass and the prevailing wind. To the east a fleet of ships brings seekers to the Sanctuary from other lands. The main lintel of the fireplace is carved full length with a frieze of two men striking an octave of bells, while groups of old and young listen to the melody. The vaulted ribs of the vast ceiling are gathered into a central boss symbolic of Florida.



THE GREAT NORTH DOOR depicts in yellow brass repousse, as in a golden blaze, the six days of creation recorded in Genesis. Like the bridge railings, the moat gates, and all the wrought iron work of the Tower, each detail shows the distinguished execution of Samuel Yellin.

THE SUNDIAL carved on the South wall of the Tower indicates the latitude and longitude of Iron Mountain. It is known as an Erect Declining Dial as it stands vertically at an exact right angle with the surface of the earth at latitude 27 degrees, 56 minutes, 10 seconds, and does not face directly South but is tilted towards the East with a declination of 4 degrees, 20 minutes. The table at its base gives the difference between sun and clock time for each day in this latitude. The curved lines crossing the dial give the dates of the months. A projection on the gnomon casts a shadow which follows these lines on the dates given. Hours are shown with full lines, half hours with short lines.





*THE GREAT NORTH DOOR*



MAJOR H. M. NORNABELL, DIRECTOR  
THE MOUNTAIN LAKE SANCTUARY AND SINGING TOWER

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