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Bok made world more beautiful and better

Hampton Dunn

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



BOK MADE WORLD MORE BEAUTIFUL AND BETTER

By HAMPTON DUNN

LAKE WALES --- Edward W. Bok's grandfather chased away pirates from a grim island in the North Sea, turned it into "a bower of green verdure and trees" to which came the bards and they made it famous forever as "The Island of the Nightengales."

The grandfather raised trees and the grandmother raised children. She also raised the sights for the offspring with such admonition as: "Make you the world a bit better and more beautiful because you have lived in it."

At the age of six, the little Dutch boy was brought to America. As a youngster, he scrubbed windows at 50¢ a week to aid his struggling family. He rose to become one of the country's leading journalists, as the crusading editor of The Ladies Home Journal and other capacities. In 1920 he wrote his autobiography, "The Americanization of Edward Bok," which won the Pulitzer Prize.

Bok was grateful to a nation where he made his mark. He found here in the highlands of Florida a spot to establish a Sanctuary "for humans and birds." And then he built the Singing Tower, a magnificent structure atop the highest hill in Florida. The 205-foot tower was designed by architect Milton B. Medary, while the landscape artist was Fredrick Law Olmsted. Bok's good friend, President Calvin Coolidge dedicated the tower on Feb. 1, 1929. It's often called "America's Taj Mahal."

The Tower, a conception not a copy, rates with two other great works---the Nebraska State Capitol and the Kansas City Liberty Memorial. Those structures caught and expressed the spirit of the prairie, while Bok's Tower rings out the spirit of tropical Florida. The noted editor is buried beneath the law at the foot of the tower.

