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## house built to last for centuries

Hampton Dunn

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# Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



## THE HOUSE BUILT TO LAST FOR CENTURIES

By HAMPTON DUNN

MIAMI --- William Jennings Bryan was the best salesman a town ever had.

Coral Gables paid the great orator and thrice candidate for President of the United States \$50,000 a year to stand beside the Venetian Pool and make such claims as this: "You can wake up in the morning and tell the biggest lie you can think of about the future of Coral Gables --- and before you go to bed at night, you will be ashamed of your modesty."

But Bryan himself lived in Miami, several miles away from the boom-town city of Coral Gables. As early Miamians go, he was virtually a pioneer, having built a fine mansion at 3115 Brickell Ave. (photo) in 1911. This, of course, was many years before Coral Gables was ever dreamed of. And it was five years before James Deering built the magnificent Vizcaya on land adjacent to Bryan's place.

The statesman called his place Villa Serena. It's a trio-story house of Spanish type architecture, with all sorts of living space in it, including five bedrooms. All the big names used to visit the Bryans in Miami, including President Warren G. Harding.

Mrs. Bryan said she looked around Tampa and Orlando and elsewhere before she discovered Miami and the lovely homesite in what was then known as Brickell's Hammock.

Mrs. Bryan told about the solid concrete structure with steel rods, when she wrote in 1931 that "Mr. Bryan said he would build there a house that would last for centuries." She was proud that the house just before that has survived two ferocious hurricanes that had struck Miami in the 1920's.

The Bryans bought the tract of land on Biscayne Bay for \$30,000. When it last changed hands in 1971, it brought \$275,000.

