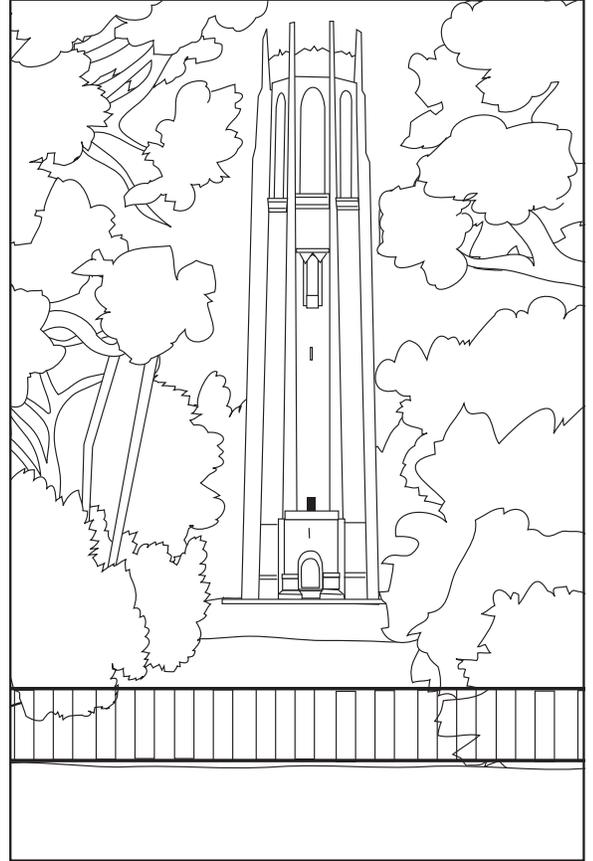


## Florida's Historic Attractions

Florida has attractions that preserve, highlight, and share Florida's history. These historic attractions are located throughout the state and include the homes of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Thomas Edison, and Henry Ford, Bok Tower, and Mel Fisher's Treasure Exhibit.

Pulitzer Prize-winning Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings did most of her writing while living in Florida. Her home has been restored to its original condition, and it is now a state historic site. It includes chickens in the yard and vegetables growing in the garden. One of her most famous works, *The Yearling*, was written when she lived in Cross Creek, a small, quiet town located south of Gainesville.

Lake Wales is home to Bok Tower, which stands on the highest point in the state. Built in 1929, the tower and its 128-acre gardens were donated to the state by Edward W. Bok, a publisher and writer. This estate was designed by the same man who developed New York's Central Park (Frederick Olmsted, Jr.). Bells chime throughout the day to provide a musical enhancement to the gardens and the



**The Bok Singing Tower is a famous landmark in central Florida.**



**Marjorie Rawlings wrote her popular books on this porch in Cross Creek, Florida.**

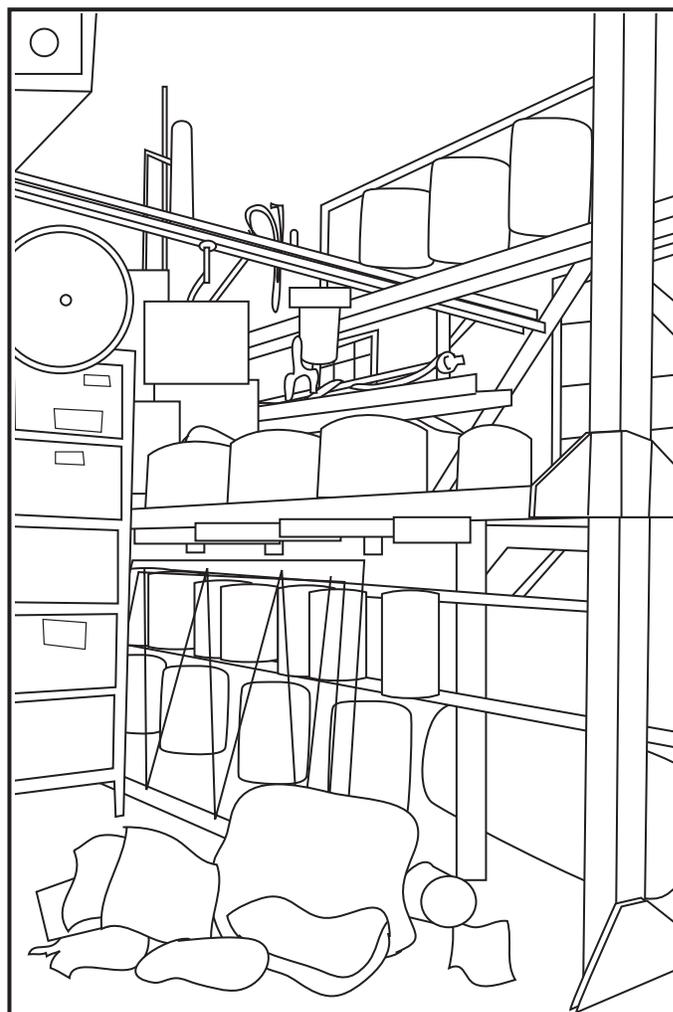
wildlife, which are abundant. Bok Tower, also called the Singing Tower, is built of marble and coquina shells. It has extensive stonework with massive bronze doors that overlook a long reflecting pool.

The Edison and Ford Winter Homes, in Fort Myers, are a tribute to two of America's greatest inventors. The former homes of Edison and Ford contain outstanding examples of these men's work. In Thomas Edison's laboratory, visitors can see where he conducted experiments, which included the investigation of synthetic rubber. Many of his inventions, including his famous filament light bulbs, are located in the museum. There is also a tour of Edison's home. The home was shipped to Fort Myers from New England and contains a completely original interior. Visitors can also see Edison's concrete swimming pool, which was one of the first to be built in Florida. Edison and his guests would enjoy this pool and the surrounding grounds, which contain many kinds of plants and trees collected throughout Edison's travels around the world. Edison used plants and trees for experimenting with filaments to develop long-life light bulbs.

Adjoining this estate is the home of Henry Ford, a great friend of Edison's. This home also reminds visitors of the past as its interior is furnished in a 1920s style. Many of Ford's automobiles are on display. The estate is named Mangoes after its many mango trees. A visit takes guests not only on a wonderful agricultural tour, but also back in time.

On Key West, Mel Fisher's Treasure Exhibit appeals to the treasure hunter in us. This exhibit showcases Fisher's search for underwater treasure left behind by a 1622 sunken Spanish fleet. Displays of recovered artifacts and gold pieces astound visitors. A video provides a brief history of Fisher's expeditions and his personal thoughts about treasure hunting.

With such outstanding attractions available in Florida, visitors can get a look at Florida residents' contributions from the past, given to enhance the future.



**Thomas Edison had a laboratory at his winter home in Fort Myers.**