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Hampton Dunn
OLD LANDMARK WATER TOWER AN IMPOSING SIGHT

By HAMPTON DUNN

TAMPA --- Motorists arriving in Tampa on Interstate 75 or two other main arteries, Nebraska Ave. or Florida Ave., are greeted by the imposing sight of an old water tower as they cross Hillsborough River at the north end of town.

This is a landmark from the Florida boom days. Old-timers in the Sulphur Springs community say the stairs inside are a little creaky and old but the structure itself is as sound and solid as the day it was built back in the 1920s.

Shooting 225 feet into the air, the tower still operates. Clear artesian water is pumped from the spring beneath her base to the top of the tower where it is stored in a 125,000 gallon tank and distributed to a number of business houses in the vicinity.

A colorful developer, Joe Cy Richardson, built the shaft in 1927. The story goes that the tower was divided at certain levels into seven rooms and it was planned to use these as facilities for the entertainment of winter visitors. But it has only served as a water tower.

There’s a four-foot platform at the top, and those who have had an opportunity to scan the horizon from this vantage point say it offers a fascinating view of the area for miles around.

From time to time, civic leaders urge use of the old landmark for some sort of tourist attraction, possibly as a picnic park and scenic tower. But the city fathers and the owners of the property have never gotten together.