

The Spanish River Papers

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..... as his inimitable brother declares, Addison Mizner "saved this beautiful area from Middle West Queene Anne houses and stark New England Architecture," which entitles him to one of the front seats in the Florida halls of fame.

Kenneth Ballinger, Boomerang
The Miami Herald, 1936

A report to the membership of

Boca Raton Historical Society, Inc.

P. O. Box 1113, Boca Raton, Florida 33432

from Mrs. Dorn Lee Redd, Mrs. Russell W. Fisher

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BOOMERANG, Kenneth Ballinger
A Story of the 1925 Florida Land Boom As It Set the Stage for Today
Chapter 27

Measured in terms of hope, the crash of the dream city of Addison Mizner's Boca Raton was perhaps the greatest tragedy of the 1925 Florida boom.

..... Only one of the incredible Mizners would have laid out Boca Raton. Had he started a year before, we might have had another Coral Gables, but unfortunately Boca Raton went on the market in June, 1925, sold \$9,000,000 in lots in as many weeks, and gently subsided before the great Ritz-Carlton Hotel could be built, or the dozens of millionaire stockholders could begin to line its Camino Real with their estates.

..... Addison Mizner came to Florida in 1918, after association with Stanford White in New York, and was famous in his own right long before the boom. Seeing others make whole cities out of their dreams, he became restless and in April, 1925 bought two miles of ocean front and 16,000 acres back of what was then Boca Ratone. The "e" was soon dropped. Associated with him were many of the best names in Palm Beach, England or Paris. Chairman of the board of directors of the Mizner Development was T. Coleman du Pont, United States Senator from Delaware, Jesse Livermore, famous Wall Street operator, was chairman of the finance committee. The youngest Mizner, Wilson, world-famous wit and author, pitched in as secretary-treasurer and chief ballyhoo artist.

"Pioneering with men of affairs" was the Mizner motto, carried in a series of advertisements which truly were classics of the boom. While Addison was tracing out the Utopia, his brother Wilson "stood toe to toe with the loudest liars available and outpredicted them", as he declares in his biographical recitals of Florida days. "It was good fun while it lasted," he adds. "I learned with thousands of others that braying alone will make an ass hoarse."

..... In August construction was started on the Cloister and in September Mizner let \$7,000,000 in contracts for the Boca Raton Ritz-Carlton hotel he had designed, and for a bridge over the East Coast canal to connect the seashore with the 160-foot wide Camino Real stretching six miles across the Dixie Highway and into the Everglades.

..... "Right up to January, 1926, it was only necessary to point carelessly to a mudhole and tell a prospect that there was his fortune," goes on this veteran of a thousand fortune hunts. "He could not deny it and even the salesman was in deadly fear that he spoke the truth. For Florida had something to sell, at that. Something priceless, however scandalous the actual sound of prices might have been after various acts of God and man placed a cosmic pin into one of the most perfectly gassed realty balloons of all time."

The work of Addison Mizner in Palm Beach is timeless and unique. That he could not rear even loftier mansions in Boca Raton and give to the world that further expression of his great mind is truly a tragedy of the boom.

Origin of Article unknown
Boca Raton Hotel and Club scrapbook

MIZNER GIVES BIG MATERIAL ORDER FOR BOCA RATON

One of the most important and certainly the largest requisition ever rendered in the state of Florida, was that which the construction department of the Mizner Development Corporation handed in yesterday for use in the materialization of the development plans at Boca Raton. The requisition called for delivery as soon as the various commodities were procurable and could be brought to Boca Raton from manufacturing centers.

The requisition called for: 175,000 pieces hollow tile, 6,000,000 feet of lumber, 5,700 tons structural steel, 19,000 tons crushed rock, 35,000 tons concrete, 14,000 pounds nails, 2,000,000 cubic feet flagging, 47,000 feet sewer pipe, 500,000 bricks, 59,000 pieces roofing tile, 7,000 tons lime, 2,100 tons decorative wrought iron, 23,000 pieces floor tile, 100,000 cubic feet roofing felt, 2,000 tons reinforcing steel, 700,000 feet mill work lumber (sash doors and blinds), 1,000,000 wood lathes, 600,000 metal lathes, 21,000 tons asphalt, 40,000 tons plaster, 51,000 feet electric conduits, 11,000 tons plumbing pipe, 209 plumbing equipments complete, 100 bath tubs (porcelain), 3 passenger elevators, 4 freight elevators, 7,000 palmetto trees, 14,000 pieces bathroom tiling.

And this does not include requirements soon to be demanded for the construction of fifty-eight dwellings already contracted for by the Dwight P. Robinson Company and which are to be ready for occupancy at different periods of the season up to March 1, 1926. More than seven hundred employees are now on the payroll of the Mizner Development Corporation and Addison Mizner, president of the concern and directing genius of Boca Raton, is in New York engaging twenty-five additional draughtsmen and numerous architectural specialists.

Hollow tile is now being put in place on the Cloister Hotel on Lake Boca Raton and it should be ready for occupancy before January 1.

Twenty one states in the Union will furnish materials to Boca Raton on its present building plans which further supports the statement that Florida's prosperity is the prosperity of the nation.

The Herald, Miami, Florida, Tuesday, February 9, 1926
Boca Raton Hotel and Club scrapbook

CLOISTER INN IS OPENED

Mizner Development Company's New Hotel Overlooking Lake Boca Raton Completed in Six Months From Beginning of Work: Tom Taggart Among First Day's Registrants.

Boca Raton, Fla., Feb. 8 - The Mizner Development Company, Saturday, opened the Ritz-Carlton Cloister Inn.

The building was designed by Addison Mizner along Spanish lines, the architectural theme going back to the Moorish occupation, adapted to more recent ornamentation and modern appliances and furnishings.

A feature of the inn is the rapidity with which it was built. About 22 weeks ago the site of the structure was tropical wilderness. The Dwight P. Robinson Company built the Cloister.

The Cloister faces to the east expanse of Lake Boca Raton, to which yachts and other craft will come from the ocean through Boca Raton Inlet. To the north, in the lake, is the island on which Mr. Mizner is to build his Florida home.

South of the Cloister runs the Caminoreal, which is to be the main boulevard of Boca Raton. To the west, a short distance away, is the golf course. To the south, across the Caminoreal, is the site of the Boca Raton radio station. One may look in all directions and see a profuse growth of tropical verdure, royal palms, the Australian pine, poinsettia and hibiscus trees.

Many obstacles were met in building the Cloister. Its setting was an expanse of palms and vegetation almost impassable, demanding the placing of an elaborate foundation.

The first step of the contractors was to install their own plant, apparatus, engineers and working crews on the ground. The spot one day was untroubled wilderness; the next day it was a place of activity for hundreds of workers, some of them waist deep in water.

What had previously been morass and jungle growth was replaced by solid concrete. As rapidly as possible the working crews were increased in numbers and the construction increased in speed. When six months had passed the designer of the cloister could view the completed work.

The tower that is the central feature of the building is modeled after the famous Giralda of Seville. It has a room on top where a view of the ocean and lake may be had. The decoration of the interior of the building is under the supervision of Mr. Mizner. Objects of art that he has gathered are displayed.

Austerity is the keynote of design and decoration of the Cloister. Guests enter through a portal spanned by a Romanesque stone arch of large proportions, and pass through the great Spanish door into a lobby 40 feet square. Rough, snow white plaster walls run up in unbroken severity to the ceiling two stories above. On two sides is a balcony around the second floor.

Topping the balustrade and leading up the stairway is a worn and ancient hand rail. In the center of the lobby, a lantern hangs from the ceiling, casting a golden glow on the heavy hand-carved beams above and red tiled floor below.

The lounge room projects over Lake Boca Raton. The blues and greens of the tropical waters are reflected in the stained glass windows. The lounge leads into the cloisters through whose arches, of the early Gothic period, one looks out over the lake. The columns of the cloisters are unusual in design, having fantastic capitals wrought with crude figures and animals, mounted on slender pillars, the whole supporting a low-swung, arched ceiling.

The dining hall opens from the thirteenth century loggia with its beamed roof resting on giant columns. Forty by 80 feet, and 35 feet in height, this hall was inspired by a fifteenth century hospital in Catalonia.

Ranging along the walls of the dining hall are Spanish hand-basins, stationary washstands of ancient times which diners utilized much as finger bowls are used today. The atmosphere of the old hospital is preserved in the five arched bays, supporting a ceiling of beams and sappling poles. High on the walls are small round stained glass windows set with sparkling green and yellow glass. At each end of the hall are rose windows which, with the red tiled floors, give supporting warmth to the soft biscuit tones of the walls.

Guest rooms of the Cloister are monastic in treatment. Painted Spanish furnishings against tinted walls create a restful retreat for the occupants of the rooms. Each room and suite of the Cloister is furnished differently. A number of the rooms have private elevators.

The great veranda of the Cloister is an outstanding feature with its view of tropical Florida at its best with lake and land included in the landscape. A number of royal palm trees actually grow under the roof of the veranda. It was necessary to clear a number of these away when the building was started but it was ordered that certain of them be allowed to remain where they had always been. And there they will stand as beauty touches to the new hotel.

Many of the furnishings at the Cloister are antiques and art objects contributed from Mr. Mizner's collection. Most of the furniture, ornamental pottery and kindred equipment was turned out by his West Palm Beach plant.

Developers of the Cloister concentrated on the task of beautifying Lake Boca Raton. Dredges removed trees and ledges to make a smooth, unbroken surface, the rich silt from the bottom of the lake being transferred to the mainland to enrich the soil. With a cement plant at work on the property, great slabs of granite like material were turned out to bulkhead the four mile circumference of the lake. As rapidly as possible these were put in place and now show a completed job. The only solid surface to remain on the bosom of the lake will be the small island where Mr. Mizner will build his home.

Plans were made for widening and deepening the inlet leading from the ocean to Lake Boca Raton. This work, which will cost \$500,000 now is well under way, and when finished will allow for the sailing of the largest pleasure yachts from the Atlantic through the inlet into Lake Boca Raton where the craft may anchor and discharge passengers from the yachts' decks to the hotel veranda. While the lake will serve as yacht basin, it will also be a riding course for sail boats, motor boats, Venetian gondolas and other craft the 12-foot depth will accommodate.

There is not one bond or mortgage on the finished hostelry. It is absolutely unencumbered. From the first detail of lake foundation and land clearing to the last bit of equipment, it was financed and built by the Mizner Development Corporation, which organization is the sole owner of the clear and free property.

A partial list of those present at the Cloister opening includes: Mr. and Mrs. E. T. Stotesbury, Mrs. James H. Kidder and party of six; Mr. and Mrs. H. Seligman, Major and Mrs. Barclay Warburton and party of eight; Thomas Taggart, Capt. and Mrs. J. J. O'Brien; Mr. and Mrs. Sailing Baruch, Mr. and Mrs. George Rasmussen, Mr. and Mrs. L. B. Southerland, Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Odmann, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Case.

The Countess Salm von Hoogstraeten was the guest of Walter Ogden, Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Cosden and guests of Lytle Hull, Mr. and Mrs. Harry L. Blits, Mr. and Mrs. E. Edward Rush, Addison Mizner and party of 20, Mr. and Mrs.

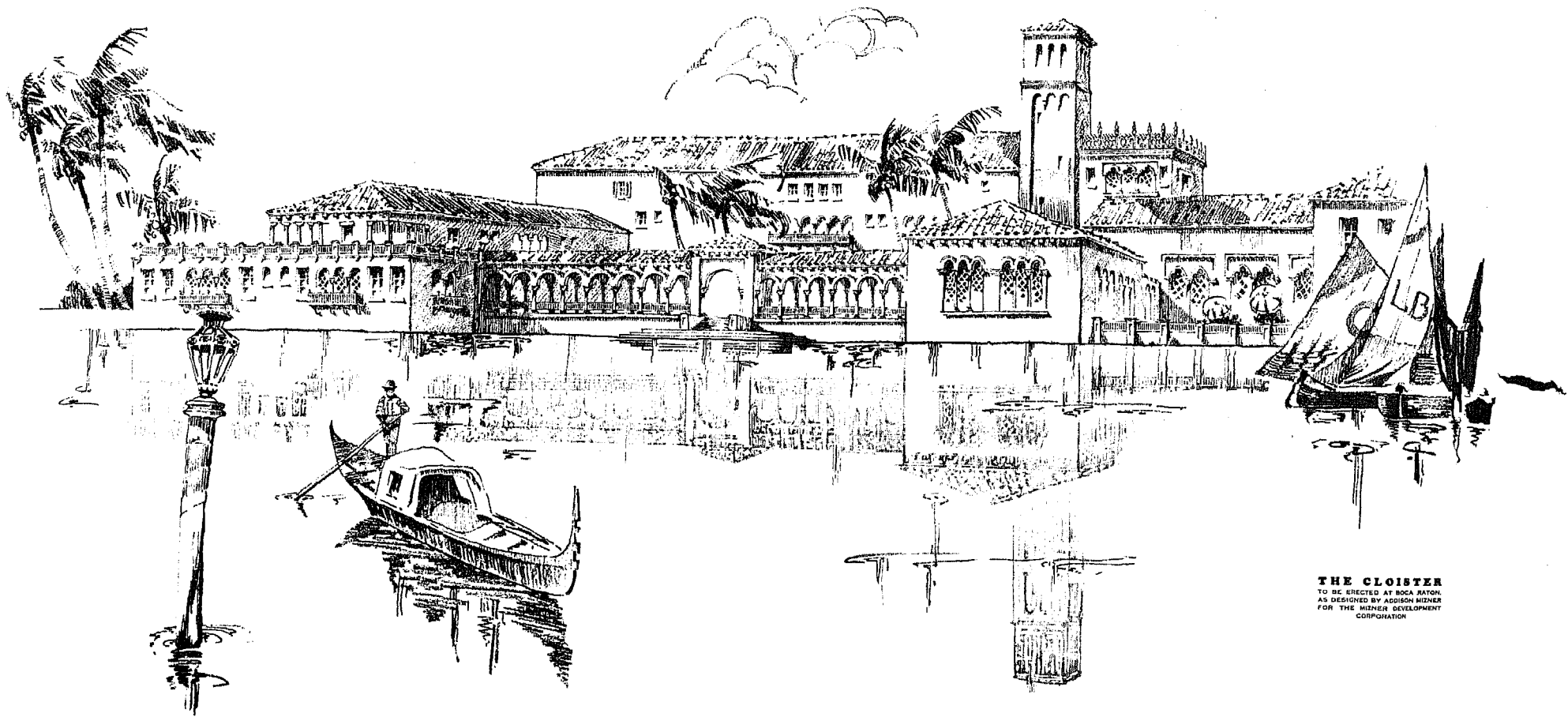
Harry Reichenback and party, including Capt. Peter Quare, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Fuge, Mr. and Mrs. Archie Raynor and William Pickford.

Miss Mary Borun Warburton and Party of ten, E. F. Albee and party. Marcus Loew and party, Misses Eleanor and Charlotte Chase, Alexander Revell, Al Jolson, Lee Shubert, William J. Magerine, J. Hornblow Druitt, Raymond Orteig, Samuel Litmand party of eight.

Ambassador Alexander Moore, Kathleen Norris, Nina Wilcox Putnam, Mrs. Vincent Astor, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Somers Roche, Mrs. Irene Castle McLaughlin, Muriel McCormack, Princess Ghirka, Theodore Dreiser, Mr. and Mrs. L. B. Southerland.



Interior, Cloister Inn
Archives, Boca Raton Historical Society



THE CLOISTER
TO BE ERECTED AT BOCA RATON,
AS DESIGNED BY ADDISON MIZNER
FOR THE MIZNER DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION

*Sketch of Cloisters Inn
to Mayor Brown
Signed by Addison Mizner.
Archives, Boca Raton Historical Society.*

Origin of article unknown
Boca Raton Hotel and Club Scrapbook

RITZ HISTORY TRACED TO FOREIGN CAPITALS

Oldest of Great Continental Systems Now Represented in Newest Resort

The advent of the oldest and most famous of all continental hotel systems to America's newest state and that state's newest city was signalized with the opening of the Ritz-Carlton Cloister at Boca Raton, Saturday night.

Another hotel representing the ultimate in hotel service and luxurious equipment was added to the famous system, carrying out the high type of catering for which that hotel is so justly famous.

Mr. Gustave Tott, the resident director of the Ritz-Carlton Cloister came to Boca Raton directly from the Atlantic City Ritz-Carlton where he was manager. It was under Mr. Tott's direction that the opening night passed so faultlessly. To illustrate how perfectly this was achieved, during the entire dinner served to 350 people, there was not a spoon dropped or a plate niched. Waiters tiptoed through the dining room, swiftly, silently, always correct

The Miami Herald, February 21, 1926
Boca Raton Hotel and Club Scrapbook

There was an interesting if not amusing incident in connection with the recent opening of the Cloister. With the hotel itself finished, still it was only by dint of strenuous activities that the countless detail of equipment were rushed to Boca Raton and installed. Not until two hours before the time set for serving dinner did the last of the great electric cooking ranges reach the Cloister.

Without sufficient time to install and connect up the ranges, the hotel people for a brief time were in a quandary. Mr. Tott, however, was equal to the emergency. He got his electrical staff quickly on the job, had cables urn connecting up the ranges, which were kept on the trucks that had brought them, and in a short time the cooking equipment was ready and going. With the ranges out of doors and still on the trucks, a considerable part of the first meal served at the Cloister was cooked.

The News, Saturday, February 27
Boca Raton Hotel and Club Scrapbook

OCEAN BEACH AT BOCA RATON IS SECOND LIDO

Seaside Being Developed Into Rendezvous for Resort Residents
(Special to Miami Daily News)

Boca Raton, Feb. 27 - Almost unheralded and without public announcement, the ocean beach at Boca Raton has been equipped and established by the Mizner Development Corp. as one of the popular rendezvous of the Florida East coast. For more than a month construction activities have been centered there with the result that the beach has been transformed into a second Lido, world famous resort at Venice.

Designed by Addison Mizner, it has been the purpose to create in America a replica of beach attractions that have contributed to the fame and popularity of continental Europe's greatest resorts. Installed on the Boca Raton beach today are Spanish cabanas or bath houses that are riotously colorful and are the last work in completeness of equipment. The interiors are decorated with vivid hangings and contain many features for comfort and convenience.

It was following the opening of the Ritz-Carlton Cloister Inn that these cabanas were rushed to completion. Since they were placed in commission the beach has been the rendezvous daily for hundreds of bathers as well as for those who come, modishly clad, to enjoy the sunshine and ocean breezes. Each evening also sees numerous moonlight beach parties. By arrangement with the Cloister management luncheons, teas and even more substantial meals are served to the beach patrons.

The site on which the cabanas stand is known as the Mizner section of the Ritz-Carlton beach. It is here that the \$6,000,000 Boca Raton Ritz-Carlton hotel is to be erected. The management will arrange to lease the bath houses to guests for the entire season. Life guards and swimming instructors are located on the beach. This provides an opportunity for those who desire better to equip themselves for the sport to be had in the water.



BUBBLE BOATING AT BOCA RATON

Photo shows Mrs. Earl Leiderman, formerly Miss Alaska, as she appeared at now famous winter resort coming in out of the surf on her bubble boat.

Boca Raton Hotel and Club Scrapbook

MIZNER CENTERS EFFORTS ON ALL STATE INTERESTS

Developer Regards Florida's Critics as Harmless and Amusing

Boca Raton, Feb. 10 - the Mizner Corp. in conducting its extensive advertising and publicity campaign at the various and important centers of the country, is making Florida the great theme with Boca Raton as one of the vital incidents. It is the belief of Addison Mizner that a commonwealth embracing health, charm and utility within the greater parts of its boundaries, if not in its entirety, is a finer offering and more satisfactory reality than would be the most picturesque and fruitful oasis in a vast desert.

Mr. Mizner takes the attitude that a straightforward, accurate presentation of Florida's attractions and advantages is the best guide to the roadway of progress for this state. So far as the so-called Florida critics are concerned, he regards them as a joke.

"Where are these Florida critics we hear so much about?" asked Mr. Mizner. "Maybe I haven't seen them because I do not often visit zoos or menageries. But if any of them are at large without a keeper, let them rave. All they need is a little rope. They will hang themselves."

"It might be found that these persons who speak ill of Florida are those who came here and flopped when it came to playing the man's game. And there may be others who have not been able to scare up enough cash to make the grade and reach here. Why pay any attention to them? I have never heard of a battleship being damaged by a pea-shooter.

"I believe that we should work here as a unit to exploit the glories of Florida and profit by adding all we can to the wealth that nature has provided. After all, the one great big asset we have here is the climate that we know is the finest in the world. We are taking that as the basis for painting some wonderful pictures we call cities. My ambition is to see Florida a great gallery with many of these masterpieces, not a few. To achieve this result, we work together and in helping others who are worthy, we are helping ourselves.

"There may be some little fellows on shaky ground or who have gold bricks up their sleeves ready to sell. They may succeed for a time in hitching onto the kite of some really fine and substantial undertaking. Why worry about them? They will pass out of the picture in due course of time. What should concern us most is Florida, a greater Florida, destined to be the peerless state in the greatest country in the world. That is the belief, the policy of our organization and the course we shall pursue in our messages sent from Boca Raton."

Mr. Mizner added that he believed the surest way to win confidence and gain success is to take the public into one's confidence.

"We welcome publicity in our affairs," he said. "We are building with our own money, we don't owe anyone a dollar and what we have is unencumbered. Every quarter we issue a full explicit statement of our affairs. This speaks for itself. It sells Boca Raton owners as well as prospective buyers just where we

stand. That we regard as the best possible advertisement for Boca Raton. But in all things, we mean never to lose sight of the fact that Boca Raton is just one part of Florida."

*The Historical Society wishes to thank
the Boca Raton Hotel and Club
for its generous cooperation in preparing
the material for this Paper.*

