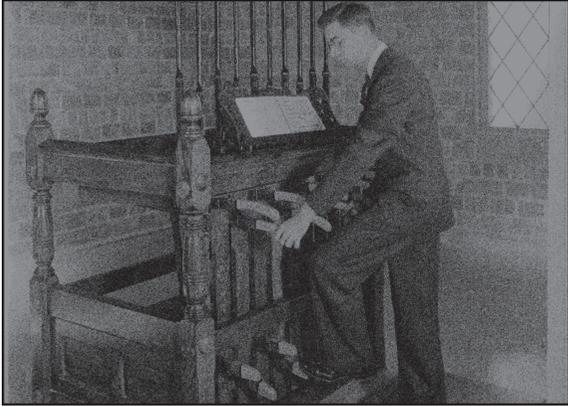




IMMANUEL BIBLE FOUNDATION



*Left: James Winn operating the bell chime console*

*Center: Van Leer Memorial Bell Tower*

*Above: Margaret Van Leer devoted her later years to the preservation of sacred music and the mentoring of local children through clubs, field trips, and local educational activities.*

# Van Leer's Broadview Mansion

The Van Leer Mansion was built at 1301 S. Fell in 1906 for Bird Calliday Van Leer and his wife, Margaret Van Leer (nee Langstaff).

Van Leer made his money as a hardware merchant and partner in the firm of Keiser and Van Leer in Downtown Bloomington. Mr. Van Leer died in 1933, and in 1936, his widow Margaret initiated construction of the adjacent campanile (bell tower). The tower was completed in 1939. Upon her death in 1949, Margaret endowed the property to the Immanuel Bible Foundation, which has owned and operated the entire com-

plex of buildings and grounds to the present. In 2014 the Town of Normal entered into an agreement with the Foundation to assist with maintenance of the property.

The architect of the mansion was Paul O. Moratz, and the style of the mansion is a mixture of Colonial, Italianate, and Craftsman elements. The porte cochere was perhaps the last such feature of the horse-and-carriage era constructed in Normal. In 1906 the mansion was situated on about five acres of land, called Broadview, and was considered a semi-rural estate.

The interior of the home contains most of the original features, including woodwork, hardwood floors, built-in furniture, fireplaces, leaded windows, and copper gutters. From 1936 through the early 1940s, Margaret remodeled portions of the home, including the addition of the sun porch.

In designing the 110-foot-tall Van Leer Memorial Chime Tower (campanile), the architects – Schaeffer and Hooton of Bloomington – accurately replicated the northern Italian Romanesque architectural style. The exterior of the tower includes tapestry brick trimmed with Cold Springs granite. Spiral stairs lead to the copper cupola, which formerly housed 10 bells. The hand-ringing console remains on the second level. The bells were made and installed by the Meneely Bell Co. of Troy, NY, one of the oldest bell manufacturers in the United States. The bells were removed in 1979 and replaced with an audio system.



*Left: Van Leer's Broadview Mansion, 1301 S. Fell*