DOWNTOWN OCALA
HISTORIC WALKING TOUR

OCALA FIRE BELL
296 SE BROADWAY STREET, OCALA FL 34471

For more than 80 years, the Ocala Fire Bell was a part of Ocala's first firehouse, which stood where the city's current parking garage is located. The bell was originally dedicated on July 4, 1889. It weighed 1,615 pounds and cost $5,000 to forge. Before the bell cracked, it rang on a multitude of occasions. Of course, the bell's ring signaled that there was a fire. But it also rang both in celebration of important events and in mourning after the deaths of prominent citizens. Additionally, he bell was also the city's lunch bell and the signal of the start and end of each business day. It was a highly important feature of downtown Ocala.

Some stories say that the bell cracked after being exuberantly rung following Germany's defeat in World War II. Other stories date the bell's cracking as recently as 1964. Regardless of when it cracked, it hung in the Fire Station Bell Tower from 1889 until the Firehouse was razed in 1968. The city chose to lend the bell to Holy Faith Episcopal Church in Dunnellon rather than electing to open it to public sale. This decision likely saved the bell from the scrap heap, preserving one of Ocala's most historic treasures. After 40 years of display at the Holy Faith Episcopal Church in Dunnellon, FL, the city regained possession of the bell and returned it to its historic home in Downtown Ocala.

Bell Hung in the Ocala Fire Station c.1905

Bell Being Re-Installed Downtown