

HELEN KELLER



WORLD FAMOUS
IVY GREEN
IN TUSCUMBIA, AL

In 1954, through the efforts of the Helen Keller Foundation Board and the State of Alabama, Ivy Green was made a permanent shrine and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Ivy Green is located two miles off U.S. Hwys. 72 and 43 in Tuscumbia, Alabama.

HOURS

Monday-Saturday
8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
School groups welcome
Closed most holidays



ADMISSION

Small admission charged. Discounts given for seniors and military personnel. Group rates available for 20 or more. Please visit our website for rates and updates.

GPS COORDINATE

34° 44' 16.86"N
87° 42' 22.42"W

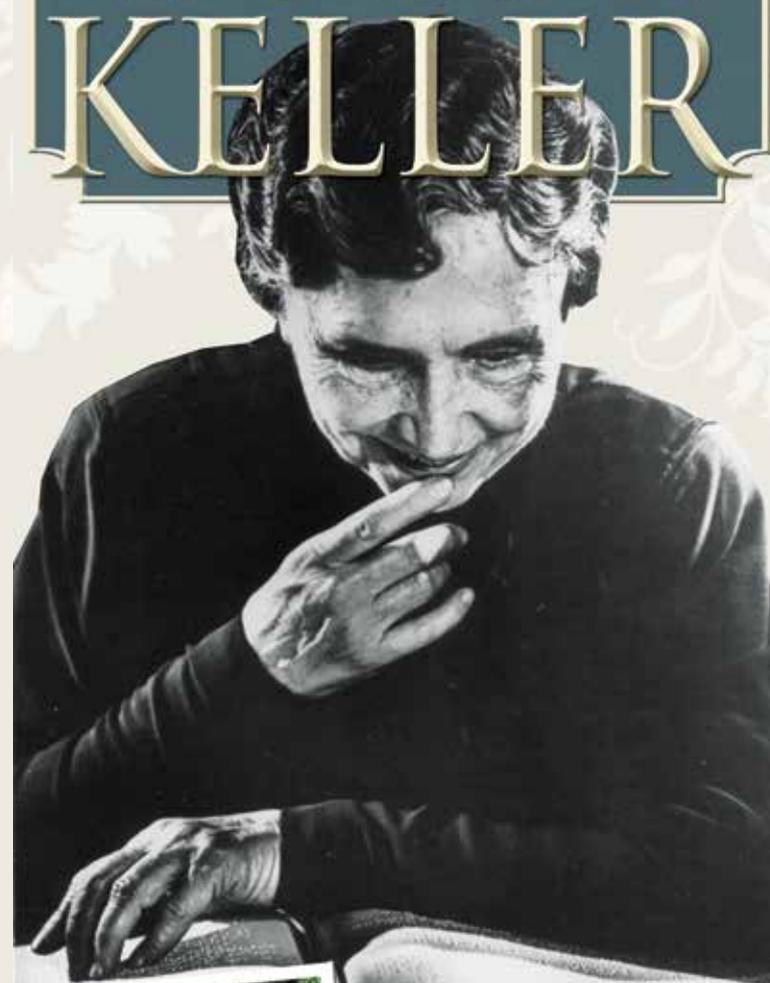
CONTACT

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helenkellerbirthplace.org



Sweet Home
Alabama
Alabama.travel

HELEN KELLER



TUSCUMBIA, ALABAMA

'AMERICA'S FIRST LADY OF COURAGE'

At a plain, black well pump in the small southern town of Tuscumbia, Alabama, one of the world's great miracles took place. It began one bright, spring day in 1887. Puffy white clouds floated overhead on a background of blue, while birds fluttered



through oaks and maples and flowers burst forth from the fertile soil in an array of colors - all unheard and unseen by a pretty girl of seven.

Standing at the side of the totally blind and deaf Helen Keller was a young woman, Anne Sullivan. Miss Sullivan was steadily pumping cool water into one of the girl's hands while repeatedly tapping out an alphabet code of five letters in the other - first slowly, then rapidly. The scene was repeated again and again as the young Helen painstakingly struggled to break her world of silence.

Suddenly the signals crossed Helen's consciousness with a meaning. She knew that "w-a-t-e-r" meant the cool something flowing over her hand. Darkness began to melt from her mind like so much ice left out on that sunny March day. By nightfall, Helen had learned 30 words.

Helen Adams Keller was born a healthy child on June 27, 1880, to Captain Arthur H. and Kate Adams Keller of



Tuscumbia. At the tender age of 19 months, she was stricken with a severe illness which left her blind and deaf.

At the age of six, the half-wild, deaf and blind girl was taken by her parents to see Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Because of this visit, Helen was united with her teacher Anne Mansfield Sullivan on March 3, 1887. After Helen's miraculous breakthrough at the simple well pump, she proved so gifted that she soon learned the finger-tip alphabet and shortly afterward to write. By the end of August, in six short months, she knew 625 words.

By age 10, Helen had mastered Braille as well as the manual alphabet and even learned to use the typewriter. By the time she was 16, Helen could speak well enough to go to preparatory school and college. In 1904, she was graduated 'cum laude' from Radcliffe College. The teacher stayed with her through those years, interpreting lectures and class discussions to her.

Helen Keller, the little girl, became one of history's remarkable women. She dedicated her life to improving the conditions of the blind and deafblind around the world, lecturing in more than 25 countries on the five major continents. Wherever she appeared, she brought new courage to millions of blind people.

Her teacher, Anne Sullivan is remembered as "the Miracle Worker" for her lifetime dedication, patience and love to a half-wild, southern child trapped in a world of darkness.

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Cover Photo © 1948 Yousuf Karsh

Located on a 640-acre tract in historic Tuscumbia, Ivy Green was built in 1820 (one year after Alabama became a state) by David and Mary Fairfax Moore Keller, grandparents of Helen Keller. The simple, white clapboard home is designed in typical Southern architecture. Having survived untouched through the ravages of the Civil War, Ivy Green is maintained to the smallest detail in its original state. Particular pride is taken in the estate's surrounding buildings, well manicured landscape and colorful gardens.

Since 1954, Helen Keller's birthplace has been a permanent shrine to the "miracle" that occurred in a blind and deaf, seven-year-old girl's life. At that time

"I believe that life is given to us so we may grow in love, and I believe that God is in me as the sun is in the color and fragrance of a flower - The Light is my darkness, The Voice is my silence."



Ivy Green was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The main house is of Virginia cottage construction, with four large rooms on the first floor bisected by a wide hall. Each room boasts an individual fireplace. Upstairs are three rooms connected by a hall.

The old "whistle path" carries the visitor to the outdoor kitchen from the main home. Sprinkled around the estate are the Lion's Club International Memorial Fountain, the "Clearing" and herb gardens, the ice house and gift shop.

Helen Keller's birthplace cottage is situated east of the main house and consists of a large room with a lovely bay window and play room. Originally, the small "annex" was an office for keeping the plantation books.

After the death of his first wife in 1877, Captain Arthur H. Keller remarried and brought his wife, Kate Adams, home to Ivy Green. At that time, the office had been refurnished and fitted for them as a bridal suite. Later, the cottage would serve as living quarters for Helen and her teacher, Anne Sullivan.

The homes and museum rooms are decorated with much of the original furniture of the Keller family. Each is highlighted by hundreds of Miss Keller's personal mementos, books and gifts from her lifetime of travel and lectures in 25 countries for the betterment of the world's blind and deafblind.

Of particular note is her complete library of Braille books and her original Braille typewriter.

The actual well pump where Helen's spirit was set free remains in its original location, between the main house and the birthplace cottage. The entire estate is nestled under a cooling canopy of English boxwood (over 150 years old), magnolia, mimosa, and other trees, accented by roses, honeysuckle, smilax and an abundance of English Ivy (for which the estate receives its name).



WILLIAM GIBSON'S "THE MIRACLE WORKER"

Performed on an outdoor stage at Ivy Green, weekends in June through mid-July. A nationally recognized production with authentic sets and costumes. (256) 383-4066, or helenkellerbirthplace.org

HELEN KELLER FESTIVAL

Four days of events held in Tuscumbia to commemorate the lifetime of the town's world renowned native, Helen Keller. The celebration includes a parade, stage entertainment, a fine art and craft show, tours of historic sites, athletic events and more. Free admission. www.helenkellerfestival.com

In 2003, the Alabama state Quarter was the 22nd to be released in the U.S. Mint's 50 State Quarters™ Program. The design centers around the slogan "Spirit of Courage" and features Helen Keller reading a book in Braille. Keller's name is also reproduced in Braille. She is framed by Southern Longleaf Pine branches (Alabama's official state tree) and Camellias (Alabama's official state flower).

STATE QUARTER