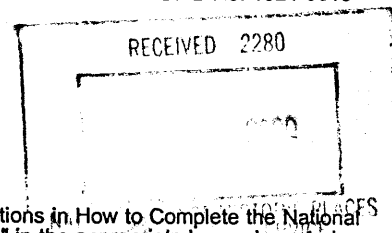


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

470



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name RIBAUT INN CLUB

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Ft. George Road N/A not for publication

city or town Jacksonville vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Duval code 031 zip code 32226

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Janet Snyder Harrison 3/28/2000
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) _____

Edson H. Beall 5-11-00
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Ribault Inn Club
Name of Property

Duval Co., FL
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
0	1	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
4	1	total

Name of related multiple property listings
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

"N/A"

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: clubhouse

RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility, outdoor recreation

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACATION/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:

Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1928-1943

Significant Dates

1928

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Fatio, Maurice and Greeley, Mellon C. -architects

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of Repository

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property approx. 24

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	4	5	9	8	0	0	3	3	6	6	2	0	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
2	1	7	4	5	9	3	2	0	3	3	6	6	1	0	0

3	1	7	4	5	9	0	0	0	3	3	6	5	7	6	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4	1	7	4	5	8	8	2	0	3	3	6	5	8	0	0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kate Boruff/Leslee Keys/Robert O. Jones, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date March 1999

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Internal Improvement Trust Fund c/o Div. of State Lands

street & number 578-A South Appleyard Drive telephone 850-488-5090

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32304

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

**RIBAULT INN CLUB, FT. GEORGE ISLAND,
DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA**

SUMMARY

The Ribault Inn Club is located on Ft. George Island, in Duval County, Florida. The building is both two and one-story, and brick and frame construction. It is a Colonial Revival Style clubhouse with complex gable roofs, and was built in 1928. The nomination includes a caddy house, tennis court, pump house, and surrounding historic landscape areas that retain historic view sheds and setting. The club is located on a prehistoric shell midden, which is considered a non-contributing resource for this nomination. The property is owned by the State of Florida and managed by Department of Environmental Protection, Florida State Parks.

SETTING

Archeological evidence of Native-American habitation has been recorded over much of Ft. George Island (see archeological map). The property on which the nomination is located has been given the Florida Master Site File #DU76, and is called the Ribault Club Midden Site. The National Register boundary roughly coincides with a broad distribution of a shell midden. An elevated and leveled, high point of the midden to the east of the clubhouse was a golf green. Broken pottery dating to the St. John's Period (AD 500), and the Late Archaic Period (2500-1000 BC) has been found among the shell (Dickinson p.6-26). It is anticipated that this site as well as several others on the island will receive more extensive exploration and analysis while under state custody. Further research may show that it is eligible for listing in the National Register for its potential to yield information.

Ribault has a rural location less than one hundred yards from the Ft. George River that flows into the Atlantic Ocean a mile to the east. Most of the island is approximately 10 feet above sea level, and surrounded by marsh. The island is largely covered with mature oak, palm, and magnolia trees. The setting of the clubhouse is open lawn with scattered mature trees (Photo #1). A group of palms directly east of the clubhouse extended toward the beach forming an approach alley for those members arriving by yacht (Photo #2). An unpaved loop drive approaches the west entrance, and an unpaved road runs east/west north of the clubhouse ending at the water's edge.

A portion of the historic property around the club is included within the nomination to recognize the historic setting of the property. The property designated for the nomination includes approximately 24 acres. The primary entrance approach to the club was along the Ft. George Road which provided a view across the tidal marsh to the east, and the clearing for a golf course fairway along the west. The lawn to the east of the clubhouse overlooks the St. George River, and contains a midden/golf green. An east/west dirt road runs north of the clubhouse, ending at the water. This was the location where yachts were disembarked. North of the dirt road is a grassy area and tree line overlooking an inlet, and the location of the wooden guest lodge, now a ruin. The dirt road branches off the paved Ribault Road that runs north to the west of the inlet. Northwest of the clubhouse is the intersection of Ft. George Road and Ribault Road. This land west to the Caddy House is largely open from its use as a golf course, and provided the immediate setting for the Caddy House.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2

**RIBAULT INN CLUB, FT. GEORGE ISLAND,
DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA**

A historic and 1960s golf course exists mostly to the west of the clubhouse. DEP has decided to allow the course to return to native growth due to the adverse impact the course has on the quantity of quality of drinkable water on the island. Only the open areas surrounding the clubhouse will be considered for mowing.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Exterior

The Ribault Clubhouse is a two-story Colonial Revival seasonal resort. The main (west) facade faces west onto Fort George Road. The other principal elevation fronts east to the Fort George Inlet, Little Talbot Island and the Atlantic Ocean. The 19,000 square-foot facility is a freely interpreted H-shaped building. The central brick two-story unit is 60 feet wide and 45 feet deep and is laid in common bond brick. It was whitewashed originally. The building has clapboard wing extensions on the north and south of the central brick structure. The steeply pitched side gable roof features a molded box cornice and returns.

The west façade of the central unit consists of five bays with a center bay topped by a front facing cross gable (Photo #3). The centrally located main entrance has a flat-roofed portico with a simple entablature and square wooden column supports (Photos #4&5). The entrance consists of a rectangular, single door flanked by pilasters and topped by a fanlight. There are full height sidelights. The ground floor windows are taller and wider than those on the second story. They are 16/16 double-hung wooden sash, with flat lintels, exposed brick sills and shutters. The first floor shutters have been removed. Single pane, wood sash, 6/6 double hung windows are throughout the second story of the central unit, with shutters remaining on the west façade.

The east façade's dominant feature is a one-story shed-roofed porch supported by square brick columns that divide the space into five bays (Photo #6). One-story extensions on both sides of the main block connect it with symmetrical one-story brick wings, which have front (east) facing gable roofs that match the slope of the central unit (Photos #7&8). The gable ends feature round louvered vents with decorative brick and keystone surrounds. A series of arched openings with brick and keystone surrounds pierces the walls of the wings. The openings contain paired French doors topped by fanlights. Four such doors are found along the north, east and south elevations of these wings (the exterior sides of the building), two on the interior sides, and three facing east on the gable ends of the wings.

The clapboard exterior, one to one-and-a-half story wood frame north and south wings do not match, but date from the original 1928 construction. The wings extend from the northwest and southwest corners of the brick building (Photo #9). Both are irregular in plan and have front-facing gable roofs with cross-gable extensions. The northwest extension is a long, one-room wide structure with a further cross-gable extension near its western end (Photos #10&11). An open sided shelter for golf carts was attached to the west end of the north wing during the non-historic period. The southwest wing has a modified L-shaped plan, and its roof is pierced by a series of gable dormers with single 6/6 double hung sash windows (Photo #12). A small gabled entrance porch extends from this southwest unit. All roofing material is asphalt shingles.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 3

**RIBAULT INN CLUB, FT. GEORGE ISLAND,
DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA**

Interior

First Floor

The west entrance leads to a foyer (Photo #13) that opens to a hall that runs the width of the central block, and to a central hall that runs to the east. To the north and south are corridors with herringbone pattern brick floors that extend to the adjacent wings. These corridors are lined on the west by eighteen-light French doors, interrupted by brick columns (Photo #14). All walls and ceilings are plaster. The floors are concrete throughout, covered with terrazzo in the formal rooms, brick in the corridors, and tile on the porch areas. Flanking the hall is a stairwell to the south (Photo #15), and a parlor to the north. South of the stairwell are management offices, a closet and small toilet. The first floor parlor, called the Blue Room, was generally used for card playing. There is a faded mural on the west wall (Photo #16) (Florida Times-Union, 1928).

The brick northeast wing of the building served as the ballroom/lounge (Photos #17&18). It features a fireplace with a ceramic tile and wood surround on the north wall, a covered ceiling, and an original wrought iron chandelier with electric candles and drop pendants. The brick southeast wing contains the dining area with the main dining room, a dining porch, and two private dining rooms (Photo #20).

The frame southwest extension, accessed through the west door entry, housed the first floor kitchen facilities and the second floor servants and staff rooms. The frame northwest wing houses seven guest bedrooms, locker and dressing rooms, and a bar. A cellar underneath that section held a furnace for hot water.

Second Floor

A two-flight centrally located staircase with square newel post and square balusters accesses the second floor. A narrow, central hallway accesses the seven guestrooms. The guest bedrooms have attached bathrooms. The room's walls and ceilings are unadorned plaster. The original wooden door and window casings, base moldings, and pine floor remain.

The December 2, 1928, Florida Times-Union news article covered the opening of the clubhouse. The décor of the parlor on the left side of the foyer was suggestive of the Gay Nineties according to the reporter. The ballroom had Colonial yellow walls, and gold brocaded draperies forming a perfect setting for the authentic pieces of antique furniture upholstered in blue velvet. The article continues, "the large lounge is beautifully decorated in a color scheme of burnt orange and green, with tied back draperies of flowered glazed chintz against a green background. The soft thick rug is of orange colored velvet and harmonizes artistically with the upholstery on the furniture and green walls. A private dining room and the main dining room have the same green walls as the hall and the furniture there is of polished maple."

The Ribault Clubhouse suffered two fires, one in 1935, for which repairs were made, and a second fifty years later. No repairs were made after the 1985 fire, which occurred in the cross gable northwest wing.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 4

**RIBAULT INN CLUB, FT. GEORGE ISLAND,
DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA**

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Ribault Clubhouse Caddy House was built in 1928. It is a small one-story, frame house, built on concrete piers with horizontal siding, a cross hip roof, and 6/6, double-hung wooden sashes in the windows (Photo #21). The building served as residence for a short time of golf professional Bobby Matthews, and has been a course maintenance and storage center ever since (Stowell, p.114&A-11).

Pump House was built in 1928 to the south of the Clubhouse. The small, rectangular frame building has horizontal siding and a hip roof (Photo #22). It sheltered the water pump for the main building, and a generator during the early years.

Tennis Court is a structure built in 1928. It consists of two playing courts surfaced with orange clay (Photo #23). There are four steel net supports, two for each court. Located between the middle two supports is a fifth steel post, which served as a water drinking fountain.

The Lodge Historic Site is currently a ruin (Photo #24). Built in 1929 to meet an increasing demand for accommodations, some club members financed construction of a guesthouse, the lodge. Situated a few hundred feet north of the clubhouse and overlooking the yacht basin, the wood-frame lodge contained a living room and twelve bedrooms, each with a private bath. Unfortunately, the modest Colonial Revival building suffered a severe fire in 1956, was not rebuilt, and the structure has collapsed (Stowell, p.113). The ruin of the guesthouse is a contributing site, however, for its presence is indicative of the popularity of the early club and the need for expanded accommodations.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 1

**RIBAULT INN CLUB, FT. GEORGE ISLAND,
DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA**

SUMMARY

The Ribault Clubhouse is nominated to the National Register for its significance on the local level under Criteria A and C in the areas of Recreation and Architecture. The club was one of the outstanding exclusive resorts for wealthy northerners established along Florida's East Coast in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Maurice Fatio, who gained prominence as a popular Florida architect during the 1920s land boom, designed the clubhouse.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Fort George Island has had human settlement for at least three thousand years. The Timucuan Indians fished and harvested oysters, leaving a record through the huge shell middens and other archeological remains found on the island (Wood, p.110-111).

In the Colonial Period, the location of the island was strategically important in the struggle between France, Spain and England to control land in the New World. In 1562 Jean Ribault, a French Huguenot, discovered the St. Johns River and established Fort Charles on the island. By 1587 the Spanish, via St. Augustine in 1565, had reasserted their presence in the region and established San Juan del Puerto mission on the island. The mission stood until 1702 when British Governor James Moore of South Carolina destroyed it. General James Oglethorpe built Fort St. George in 1736, perhaps on top of the island's Mt. Cornelia, although no evidence remains (Barnett, p.1.3).

Beginning in 1791, Zephaniah Kingsley established a plantation on the island which was active until 1854. Kingsley built a complex of tabby farm buildings surrounding a frame plantation house on Fort George Island. As private property, it was used for timbering and agriculture. Currently, the National Park Service operates Kingsley Plantation as an interpretive site at the northern end of the island, and the State of Florida operates the Fort George Island State Cultural Site, of which the Ribault Clubhouse and grounds are a part (Wood, p.110).

From 1870-1945, Fort George Island prospered from development of a railroad line with a hub in Jacksonville, excursion steamboat trips, and later, construction of highways. Tourism and citrus production became two of the dominant industries along the St. Johns River during the Reconstruction Era. Steamboats brought in visitors and settlers and carried out fruit to northern markets. By the 1870s, many Northerners ventured south into Florida, attracted by the promise of refuge from harsh winters. In 1869, John F. Rollins and Richard Ayer purchased Fort George Island to develop it for recreational purposes and for the promise of cultivating Florida citrus. Rollins was a native of New Hampshire and a Union veteran of the Civil War. In 1874, Rollins and Ayer began to sell parcels of the island as vacation retreats to wealthy Northerners, and in 1875 they built the two-and-a-half story Fort George Hotel on the site of the present Ribault Clubhouse. The Fort George Hotel hosted Northerners coming south to winter in the warm climate and to participate in outdoor activities. Initially, the hotel accommodated sixty guests and, in 1886, an expansion provided a total of 200 rooms.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 8 Page 2 **RIBAULT INN CLUB, FT. GEORGE ISLAND,
DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA**

This chapter in the history of Fort George Island corresponds to that of the barrier islands further north. For roughly fifty years, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century wealthy businessmen and their families created retreats away from their city addresses. These were weekend or seasonal havens made possible in large part by the extension of rail lines southward by such magnates as Henry Flagler. On Sapelo Island, tobacco giant R. J. Reynolds found refuge; Cumberland Island became home to members of the Carnegie family; and on Jekyll Island, numerous families built cottages near the elaborate Queen Anne-styled Jekyll Island Club. At the turn of the twentieth century, on a less extravagant scale, the second layer of the wealthy traveled further south to the Florida Keys and established the Anglers Club.

Several major blows to recreational development affected future investment on Fort George Island in the 1880s. The yellow fever epidemic of 1888 deterred tourism to Jacksonville and the Island. Later the same year, the Fort George Hotel, which was of frame construction, burned to the ground. It was not rebuilt. Citrus production ended a few years later when a freeze in 1895 eradicated north Florida's crop. For the next three decades little or no development occurred, although several wealthy northern families continued to winter on the island (Barnett, p.1.10).

During the 1920s, Fort George Island was part of the real estate development that engulfed Florida. In 1923 retired Rear Admiral Victor Blue, a decorated hero of the Spanish American War and member of the Army and Navy Club of Washington, organized The Army and Navy Club of Jacksonville, the first club for people of wealth and substance. A companion recreational development group to the Army and Navy Club was the Fort George Corporation, also chartered in 1923. The corporation purchased 208 acres of the former Kingsley Plantation and leased it back to the club. Most of the land was subdivided with hopes of selling individual vacation lots. In 1926 the Army and Navy Club changed their name to the Fort George Club. They used the Kingsley Plantation House for several years while a new clubhouse was under construction.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Rear Admiral Blue sent a letter to Stevens Heckscher, of Philadelphia, providing him with financial arguments to encourage Dr. Edward M. L'Engle, a socially prominent Jacksonville physician and others, to invest in the Ribault Club. These arguments are based on the 150% return on investment member/stock holders in the Fort George Corporation had received within the first three years of its existence. Blue said,

Considering the Ribault as an investment only, there is nothing equal to it anywhere. It is like finding money . . . The success of the Fort George Corporation was made before there was any thought of a hard surfaced boulevard connecting Fort George Island with Jacksonville. Within a month or two that highway will be an accomplished fact. How much more successful should the Ribault undertaking be?

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 3 **RIBAULT INN CLUB, FT. GEORGE ISLAND,
DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA**

Heckscher Drive was completed by August Heckscher in 1926 as a privately owned toll road between U.S. 1 and the mouth of the St. Johns River (Stowell, p.99). Based on the success of The Army and Navy Club in attracting membership, and the completion of the road, the Ribault Club was established in 1927 on the old Fort George Hotel site on the eastern side of Fort George Island.

The Ribault Club founders hoped the club would draw southern guests during the summer and northern visitors during the winter. The Ribault Inn Club, Inc. venture epitomized the Florida Boom mentality of the 1920s. Many prominent community leaders from Jacksonville were part of the invitation committee including: physician Dr. Edward M. L'Engle; lumber company president Marc L. Fleishel, banker Don M. Barnett; Avondale real estate developer James R. Stockton; insurance agent Milton E. Bacon; all of whom had prospered from the Boom. The club prospectus said that membership provided unusual recreational advantages and unquestioned financial profits.

The Ribault Clubhouse, built in 1928, was promoted as an exclusive playground to bring together many of the most wealthy and socially prominent men in the United States. An early roster of the Ribault Club's members showed eighty-nine members from Philadelphia, sixty-six from Jacksonville, twenty-two from New York, nine from Pittsburgh, nine from Wilmington, Delaware, three from Boston, three from Fort George Island and a few from other northern locales.

Prominent among the Ribault Club's out-of-town members and guests during the 1928 opening season were:

W. D. Baldwin, chairman of the Board of Otis Elevator Co., New York;
Donaldson Brown, vice president of General Motors Corp., New York;
Alfred I. du Pont, capitalist, Wilmington, Delaware;
Lammot du Pont, president of E. I. du Pont De Nemours Co., Wilmington, Delaware;
Abbot Goodhue, president of the Bank of Manhattan, New York;
Stevens Heckscher, attorney, Philadelphia;
Frederick Jordan, official of Brill and Co., a street car manufacturer, Philadelphia;
Atwater Kent, radio manufacturer, Philadelphia;
Nettleton Neff, capitalist, Chicago;
H. H. Westinghouse, president of the Westinghouse Co., New York;
J. K. Lilly, board of directors, Eli Lilly Co., Indianapolis (Stowell, p.98,99)

Jacksonville members included virtually every family of business prominence. A. G. and W. E. Cummer, whose timber, phosphate mines and railroad helped make them the largest private landowner in Florida with over 500,000 acres. Telfair Stockton, one of the largest and most prominent real estate developers in Florida, and his son James R. Stockton were members. Don Barnett of Barnett Bank; Leon Cheek of the Cheek-Neal Coffee Company (Maxwell House); Edward W. Lane of Atlantic Bank; and Claude Nolan, auto dealer, were just a few of the dozens of prominent citizens who were members of the Ribault Club (Wood, p.117,148,150,178,276,277).

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 4 **RIBAULT INN CLUB, FT. GEORGE ISLAND,
DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA**

The ability of the Jacksonville invitation committee to attract northern members to the club from the social and economic classes described in their promotional literature spoke well of Jacksonville's established importance as a leading Florida economic and financial center. By 1927 the Great Florida Boom had collapsed, but the northeastern part of the state had escaped much of the speculative excess that led to financial ruin in the southeastern part of Florida. The nation as a whole remained in strong economic health in 1927 and people of wealth could still afford winter playgrounds (Barnett, p.1.13).

According to its marketing brochures, the Ribault Club designated 125 acres for construction of a golf course, tennis courts, a polo field (which was never built), bathing pavilion, a main lodge and cottage sites. The organization looked to profit from the sale of its remaining acreage as vacation home sites. A grand opening was held on December 1, 1928. Many guests arrived aboard yachts which moored in the inlet. The guests played golf at the newly-completed nine-hole golf course or tennis on one of the two clay courts located on the south side of the clubhouse, fished, picnicked on Little Talbot Island's Atlantic Ocean beach, and bird watched on Fort George Island. The Florida Times-Union newspaper covered the gala opening and proclaimed the event, to have been unsurpassed in brilliance and social interest in Jacksonville and throughout the State of Florida.

The Club's season was mid-October until the end of March, although this varied year to year depending upon the number of bookings by members and guests. Some members were attracted by the club's comparative informality compared to other clubs. Promotional literature stated that "a comment has frequently been made that the Ribault Club is like a large house party. Everyone who has visited the Club is impressed with the hospitality and the absence of the usual club formalities" (Stowell, p.99,103).

The Ribault Inn Club, however, opened at an inauspicious time for enduring success. Two years before its opening, the Florida land boom had begun its collapse, preceding the rest of the nation into the Great Depression. In the wake of the stock market crash of October 1929, an economic pall settled over the entire country. The financial consequences eventually made themselves felt in every part of society. The club operated without financial difficulty until the 1934-1935 season, when membership declined significantly. The Ribault Club had already felt the loss of attendance resulting from competing clubs farther south along Florida's coastlines. The officers and a handful of members personally underwrote losses for a number of years, but abandoned further support and closed down operations in 1942. World War II provided the final blow to the Ribault Club.

In 1946 a partnership of Jacksonville businessmen, called the Fort George Island Company, purchased the property. The clubhouse and golf course reopened in 1955 when Jacksonville businessman Paul E. Reinhold attempted to initiate high-density development on the grounds. Island residents opposed the development plans, so in 1985, after holding the property for thirty years, Reinhold sold his interest to Fairfield Communities. They in turn proposed homes surrounding the revived golf course. Local opposition remained active, and focused on the environmental impact to the island. In 1989 Fairfield sold the Ribault property and clubhouse to the State of Florida. The City of Jacksonville operated the golf course for several seasons. Through a management lease with the Department of Environmental Protection, the property is now operated as part of the Talbot Islands Park (Barnett, p.1.21).

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 5 **RIBAULT INN CLUB, FT. GEORGE ISLAND,
DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA**

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Ribault Clubhouse is designed in the Colonial Revival Style introduced at the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876. The style was popularized by the firm of McKim Mead & White beginning in 1885 with houses they designed for wealthy clients in Newport, Rhode Island, Boston and New York. Their Germantown Cricket Club (1890) is notable as an example of brick colonialism of the simpler kind. Most buildings in the style are symmetrical with side gable or hip roofs. The main façade focuses on the main, centrally located entrance, and windows are balanced with multi-light wooden sashes. The main doors are often accented by sidelights, fan transoms, a gabled roof supported by slender columns. The addition of centered front gables are rare and a high-style element (Wiffen, p.160, McAlester, p.122).

The Ribault Clubhouse reflects the Colonial Revival Style in its form and details. The main block of the building is a two-story rectangle with side gable roof. It has a centered gable added to its side-gabled roof and boxed eaves. This centered gable mimics high-style Georgian or Adam prototypes. The (west) façade has a flat roofed portico supported by pilasters and columns, and a fan-light over the front door. Symmetrical chimneys and multi-paned double hung window sash throughout further identify the style. The windows are primarily 12/12 wooden sashes in the main building. The main rectangular block is a brick veneer over a balloon frame. The main building of the Ribault Clubhouse emulated the predominantly brick Adam Style in material which was preferred for residential construction throughout the country because of more strictly enforced fire ordinances. The frame north and south wings give the appearance of a rambling colonial plantation house, and of being later additions, though they were a part of the original construction. The two brick east wings with fanlights over French doors admit the ocean breeze, an adaptive design at a time before air conditioning. Two Jacksonville newspapers in 1928 estimated that construction costs for the Ribault Clubhouse to be between \$85,000 and \$100,000. One of the articles described the building as "Modeled on early colonial farmhouse lines" (Palm Beach Post).

There has been some uncertainty about the roles played by architects Maurice Fatio and Mellen C. Greeley in the design and construction of the Ribault Clubhouse. Consensus is that Fatio of West Palm Beach received the contract and designed the club, and that Greeley of Jacksonville was the supervisory architect.

Maurice Fatio, Architect

Maurice Fatio (1897-1943) was born in Switzerland and educated at the University of Zurich. In 1920 he arrived in New York, where he established an architectural partnership with William A. Treanor. In 1925 they opened a branch of Treanor & Fatio in Palm Beach. The Florida land boom had reached the height of activity about this time. In entering the Palm Beach market, the firm competed with Addison Mizner, an exponent of Mediterranean designs who set the style for the region. As part of the international social set, Fatio was able to establish his firm quickly with a respectable number of commissions. Excerpts from his correspondence points this out:

February 2, 1927, "I am in Jacksonville to discuss the project

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for a new club, which would include the clubhouse and about twenty houses for the members.”

March 11, 1927, “I am invited out every night, and the social side of my life is as important for my business as are my office hours...My friends are trying to get all the work possible for me, and I must admit that I have more orders than all the other architects combined” (Fatio, p.56).

Fatio created a presentation design showing the clubhouse from the east elevation as it exists today. In the next few years Fatio designed a series of Mediterranean-style houses for the wealthy and prominent people who made Palm Beach a winter home. Like Mizner, Fatio arranged the space in a large residence around patios and provided spacious reception rooms. Fatio’s practice in Florida remained busy through the early 1930s.

A Palm Beach Post article dated December 4, 1927 noted several buildings and residences Treanor and Fatio built in Palm Beach, including The Gulf Stream Title and Mortgage Guaranty Company, the First National Bank in Palm Beach, and the Palm Beach Company. Residences included those of Judge A. G. Hartridge, J. S. Phipps, H. C. Phipps, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Barkhausen, Mr. and Mrs. Emil J. Stehli, Mr. and Mrs. Joel W. Massie, Mr. L. A. Corya, Mr. John Sanford, and Mr. and Mrs. Adam G. Thomson. The article concluded with: “In addition to the above is the new country club for the Ribault Inn Club at Jacksonville, Florida.” Fatio was an original 1928 member of the Ribault Club, listed with a New York address.

Mellen C. Greeley (1880-1981), regarded as the Dean of Jacksonville Architects, was born and spent his entire life in Jacksonville. His father, J. C. Greeley, was mayor of the city. Mellen Greeley apprenticed to J. H. W. Hawkins of Jacksonville before setting up his own practice in 1909. Greeley took a leading role in the formation of the Florida Board of Architecture and served as its secretary from 1923 until 1955. His works are located throughout northeast Florida. Prominent projects include Jacksonville’s Stanton High School (1917) (NR 1983); Springfield Presbyterian Church (1922-1923), contributing to the Springfield National Register District; Church of the Good Shepherd (1930) and The Woman’s Club (1927) (NR 1992); both contributing to the National Register Jacksonville Riverside neighborhood. Greeley designed the 1935 restructuring of Government House in St. Augustine. Residential commissions include Telfair and James Stockton’s adjacent Avondale homes, and with Roy Benjamin, the Hartmore and Fenimore Apartment buildings. Greeley partnered with Benjamin on numerous projects after World War I, including a commission with the Olmsted Brothers for Memorial Park, the city’s tribute to its participants in that war (Wood, p.10,117,138,153,154,161,170).

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**RIBAUT INN CLUB, FT. GEORGE ISLAND,
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the Ribault Clubhouse and its historic setting is an approximately 24 acre portion of a larger 230 acre tract owned by the State of Florida (see scaled map). The State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks, leased the property from the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of the State of Florida. The eastern and southern boundary coincides with the state owned boundary. The western and a portion of the northern boundary is arbitrary in relation to geographic features.

Begin at the northeast point of state owned land, at water's edge of the Ft. George River, immediately east of the historic boat landing, and proceed southwesterly along the property line. The southerly portion of this boundary lies approximately 25 feet east of the Ft. George Road. The state boundary turns west northwesterly, crosses Ft. George Road, and continues approximately 500 feet along the unpaved access road until it turns in a southerly direction. At this point the boundary turns northeasterly approximately 1600 feet to a point west of the Caddy House and approximately 175 feet west of the western edge of Ft. George Road. At this point the boundary turns northerly and runs approximately 300 feet to the northern edge of Ft. George Road, adjacent to the large oak tree and magnolia tree located there. That point is approximately 300 feet northwest of the fork in Ft. George Road. From that point run easterly approximately 500 feet, crossing Ribault Road, to the water's edge. From this point run in an easterly direction along the water's edge, known as the Basin, which corresponds with the state owned boundary to the point of beginning, to the east of the boat landing.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The property nominated to the National Register is a portion of a larger property historically associated with Ribault Inn Club. The boundary for the nomination includes the Clubhouse, outlying buildings and structure that retain their integrity, and the landscape features that embody the character of the setting. This setting includes the property north to the Basin where the Lodge and the boat landing are located; the east lawn to the Ft. George River; the approach road and its view shed across the Tidal Marsh to the east, and the golf fairway open spaces to the tree line to the west; and the golf course greens and tees around the Caddy House and fork in Ft. George Road.

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**RIBAUT INN CLUB, FT. GEORGE ISLAND,
DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA**

PHOTOGRAPHIC LIST

1. Ribault Inn Club, Ft. George Road, Ft. George
2. Duval County, Florida
3. Katherine Boruff
4. Dept. of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks
5. 1999
6. West façade, looking east
7. Photo #1 of 24

Items 1 through 5 are the same for the following photographs.

6. East elevation and lawn, looking west
7. Photo #2 of 24

6. West façade, looking east
7. Photo #3 of 24

6. West façade, looking north
7. Photo #4 of 24

6. West porch, looking northeast
7. Photo #5 of 24

6. East elevation, looking northwest
7. Photo #6 of 24

6. East elevation, connection to south wings, looking southeast
7. Photo #7 of 24

6. South wings including brick wing, looking northeast
7. Photo #8 of 24

6. West elevation, connection to south wings, looking southwest
7. Photo #9 of 24

6. West elevation showing northwest wing, looking northeast
7. Photo #10 of 24

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Section number Photos Page 2 **RIBAULT INN CLUB, FT. GEORGE ISLAND,
DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA**

- 6. South elevation of northwest wing, looking north
- 7. Photo #11 of 24

- 6. South elevation of southwest wing, looking northeast
- 7. Photo #12 of 24

- 6. Interior of main west entrance and foyer, looking west
- 7. Photo #13 of 24

- 6. West hall connection to north wings, looking south
- 7. Photo #14 of 24

- 6. Stairway, looking south
- 7. Photo #15 of 24

- 6. Mural in parlor, looking west
- 7. Photo #16 of 24

- 6. Ballroom/lounge, looking east
- 7. Photo #17 of 24

- 6. Ballroom/lounge, looking northeast
- 7. Photo #18 of 24

- 6. Dining room, looking south
- 7. Photo #19 of 24

- 6. Kitchen shelves, looking east
- 7. Photo #20 of 24

- 6. Caddy house, looking west
- 7. Photo #21 of 24

- 6. Pump house, looking northwest
- 7. Photo #22 of 24

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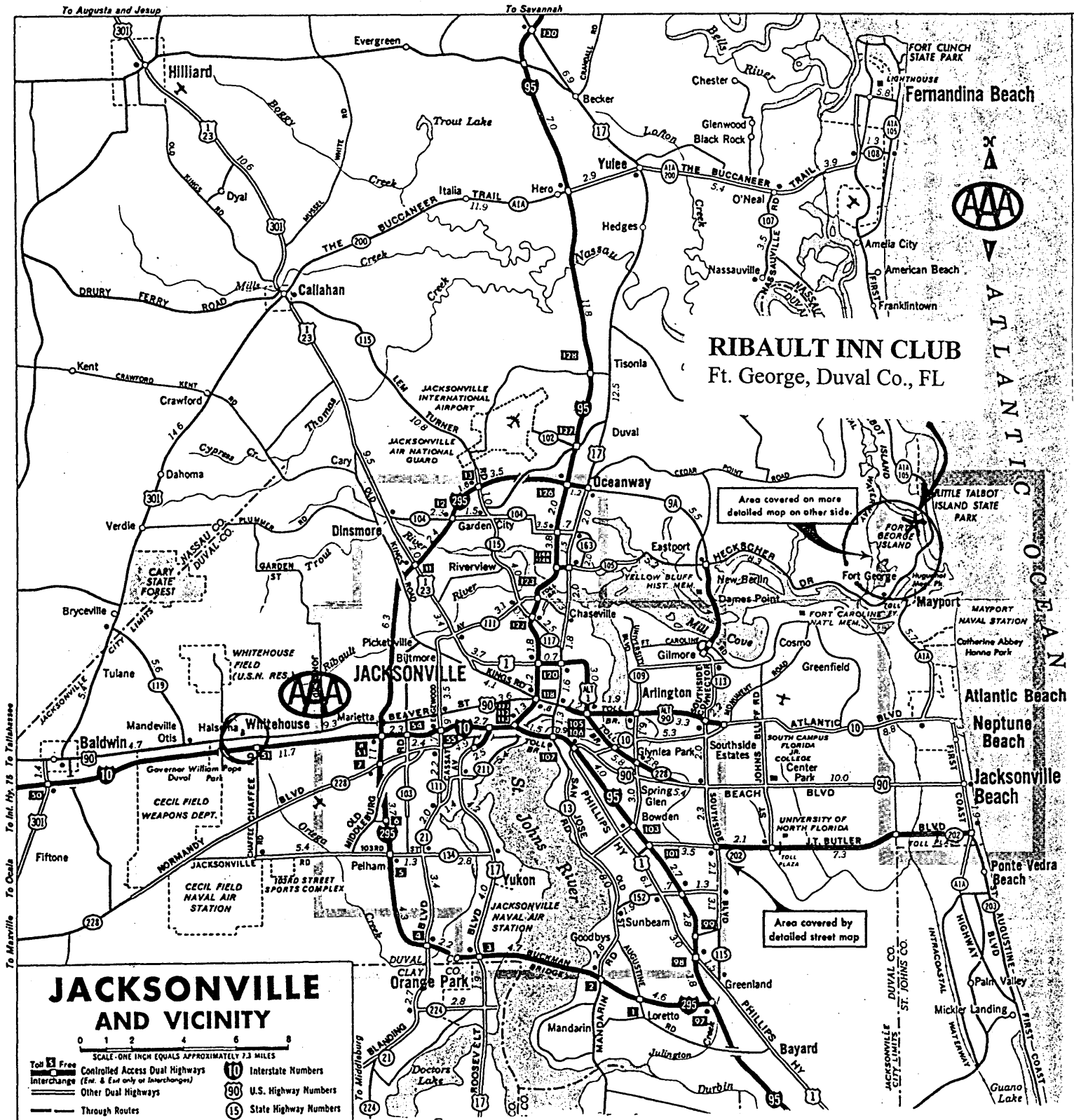
**RIBAULT INN CLUB, FT. GEORGE ISLAND,
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6. Tennis court, looking southwest

7. Photo #23 of 24

6. Lodge ruin, looking north

7. Photo #24 of 24



RIBAULT INN CLUB
 Ft. George, Duval Co., FL

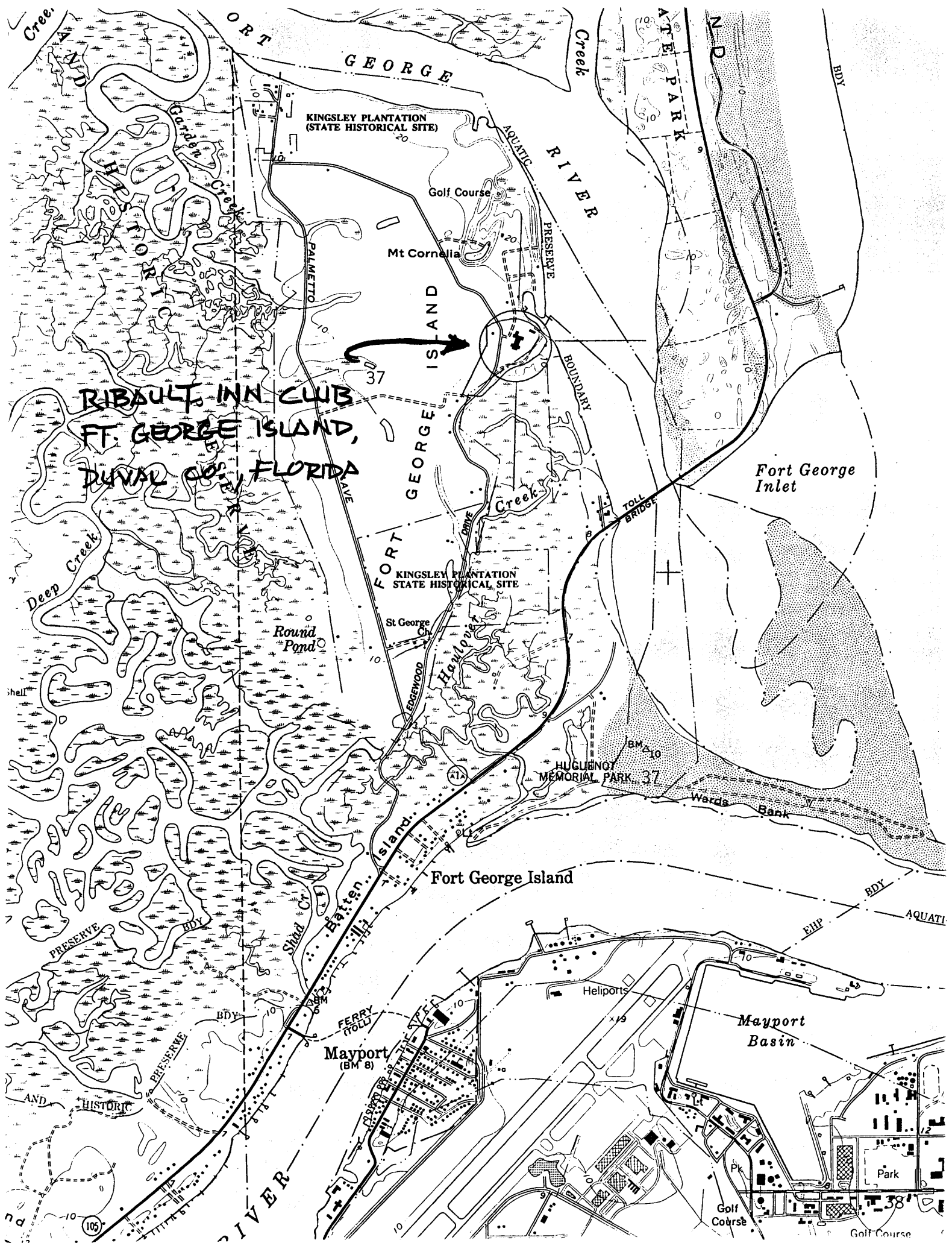
Area covered on more detailed map on other side.

Area covered by detailed street map

JACKSONVILLE AND VICINITY

SCALE: ONE INCH EQUALS APPROXIMATELY 2.5 MILES

- Toll Free Interchange
- Controlled Access Dual Highways (Ent. & Exit only of Interchanges)
- Other Dual Highways
- Through Routes
- Interstate Numbers
- U.S. Highway Numbers
- State Highway Numbers



**RIBAULT INN CLUB
FT. GEORGE ISLAND,
DUVAL CO., FLORIDA**

KINGSLEY PLANTATION
(STATE HISTORICAL SITE)

Golf Course

Mt Cornelia

FORT GEORGE ISLAND

KINGSLEY PLANTATION
STATE HISTORICAL SITE

St George

HUGUENOT
MEMORIAL PARK 37

Fort George Island

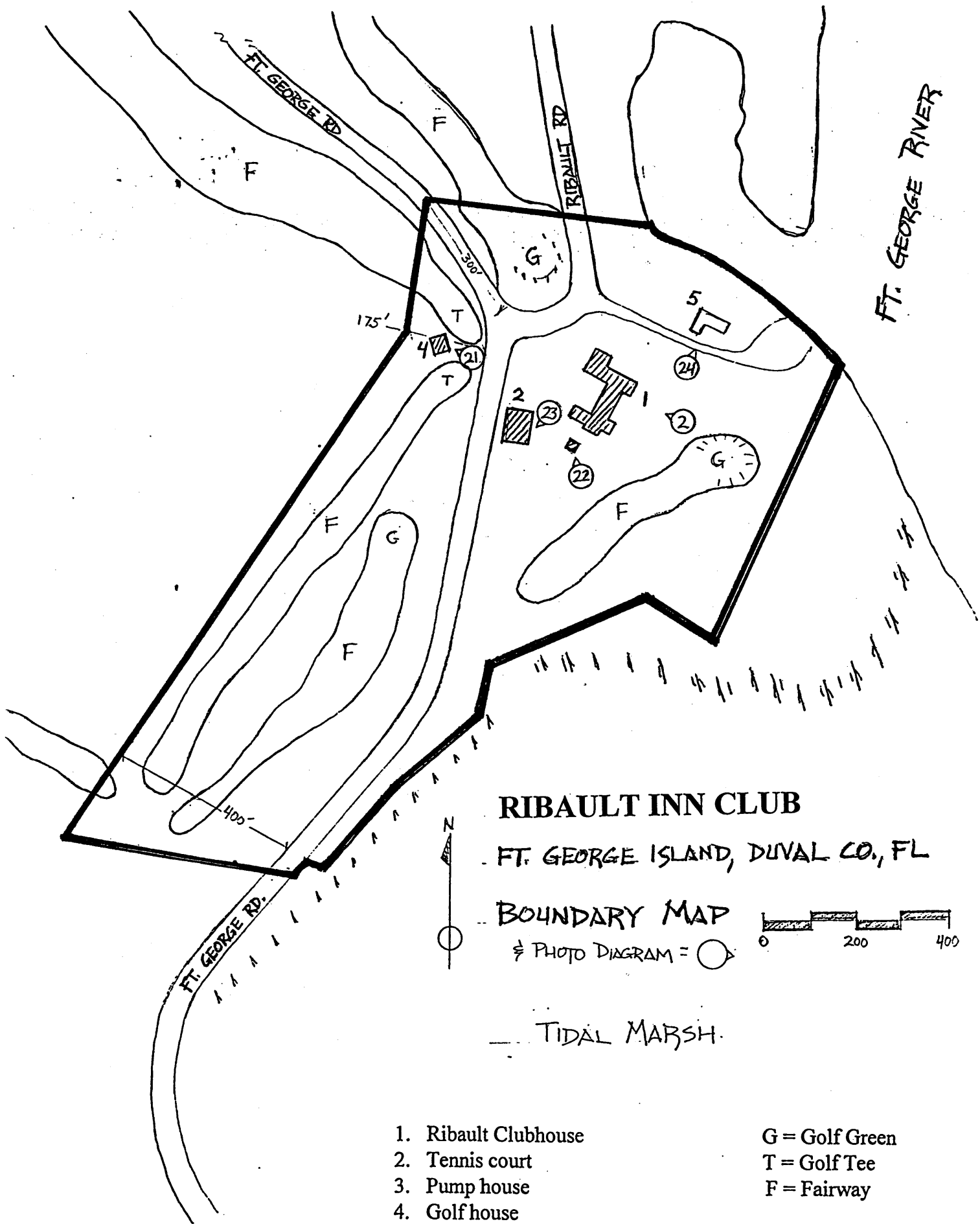
Mayport
(BM 8)

Mayport
Basin

Golf Course

Park

Golf Course

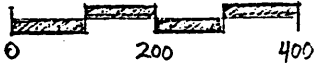


RIBAUT INN CLUB

FT. GEORGE ISLAND, DUVAL CO., FL

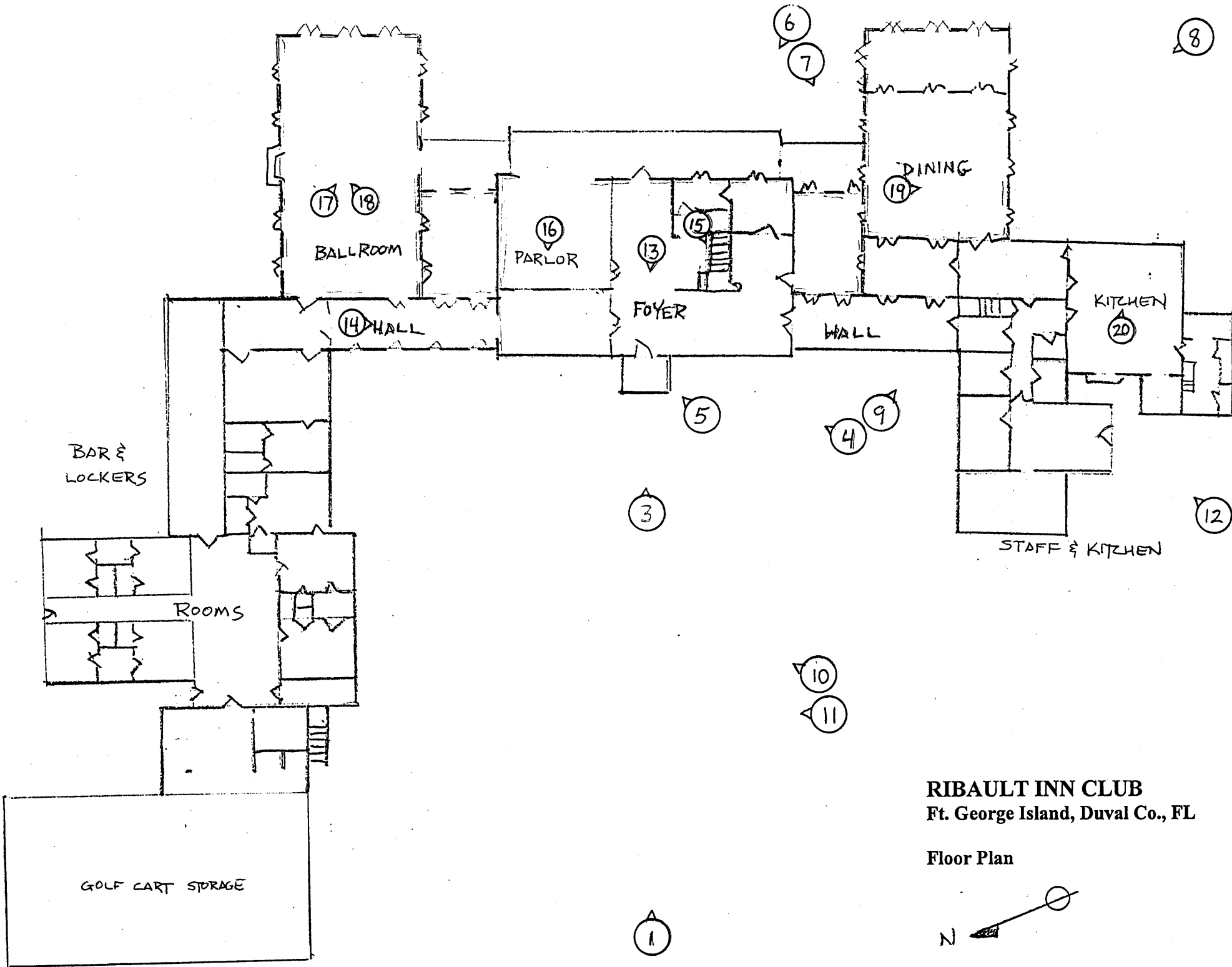
BOUNDARY MAP

≠ PHOTO DIAGRAM = ○



--- TIDAL MARSH.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Ribault Clubhouse | G = Golf Green |
| 2. Tennis court | T = Golf Tee |
| 3. Pump house | F = Fairway |
| 4. Golf house | |
| 5. Lodge (ruin, non-contributing) | |



RIBAULT INN CLUB
 Ft. George Island, Duval Co., FL

Floor Plan



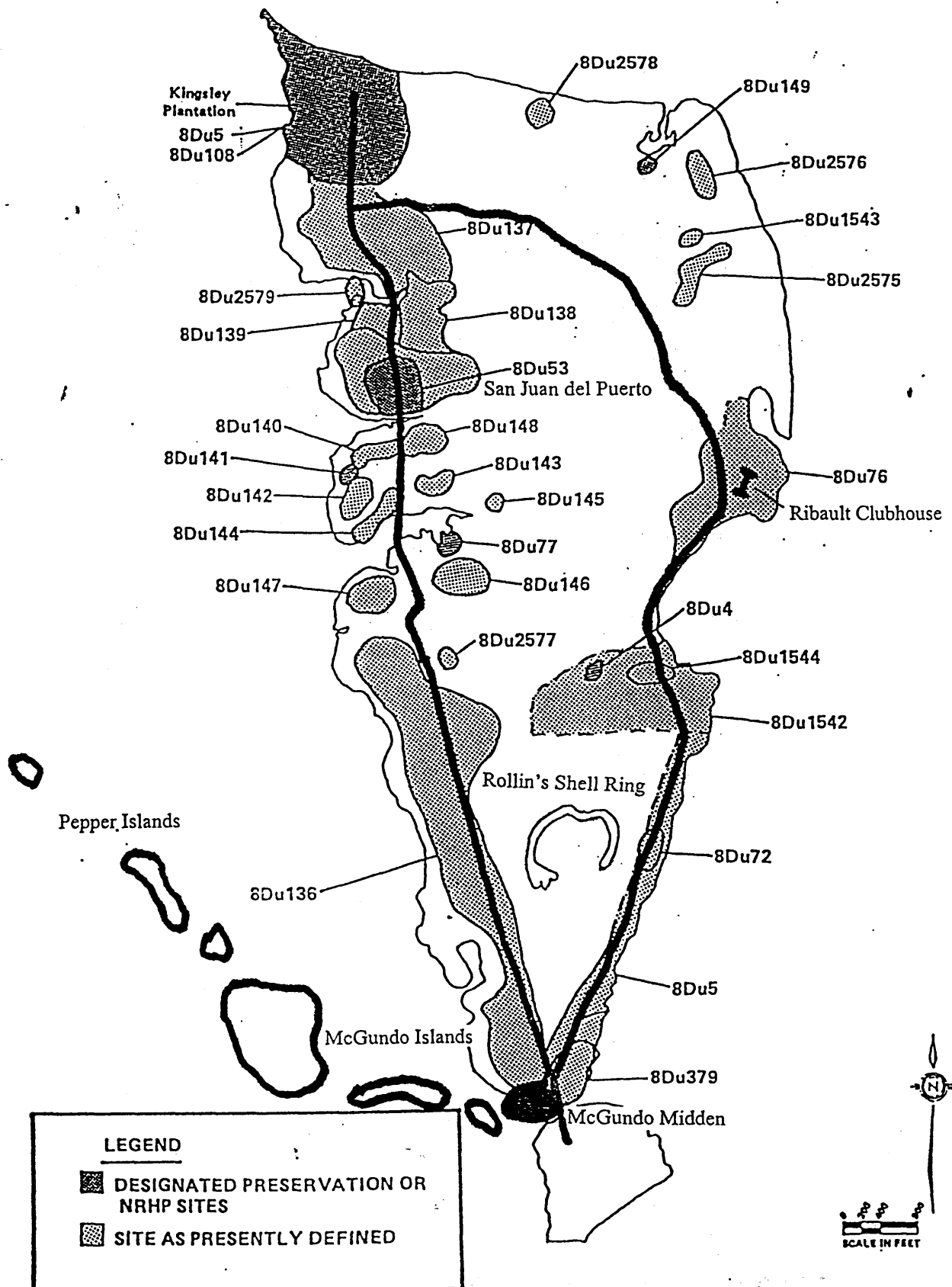
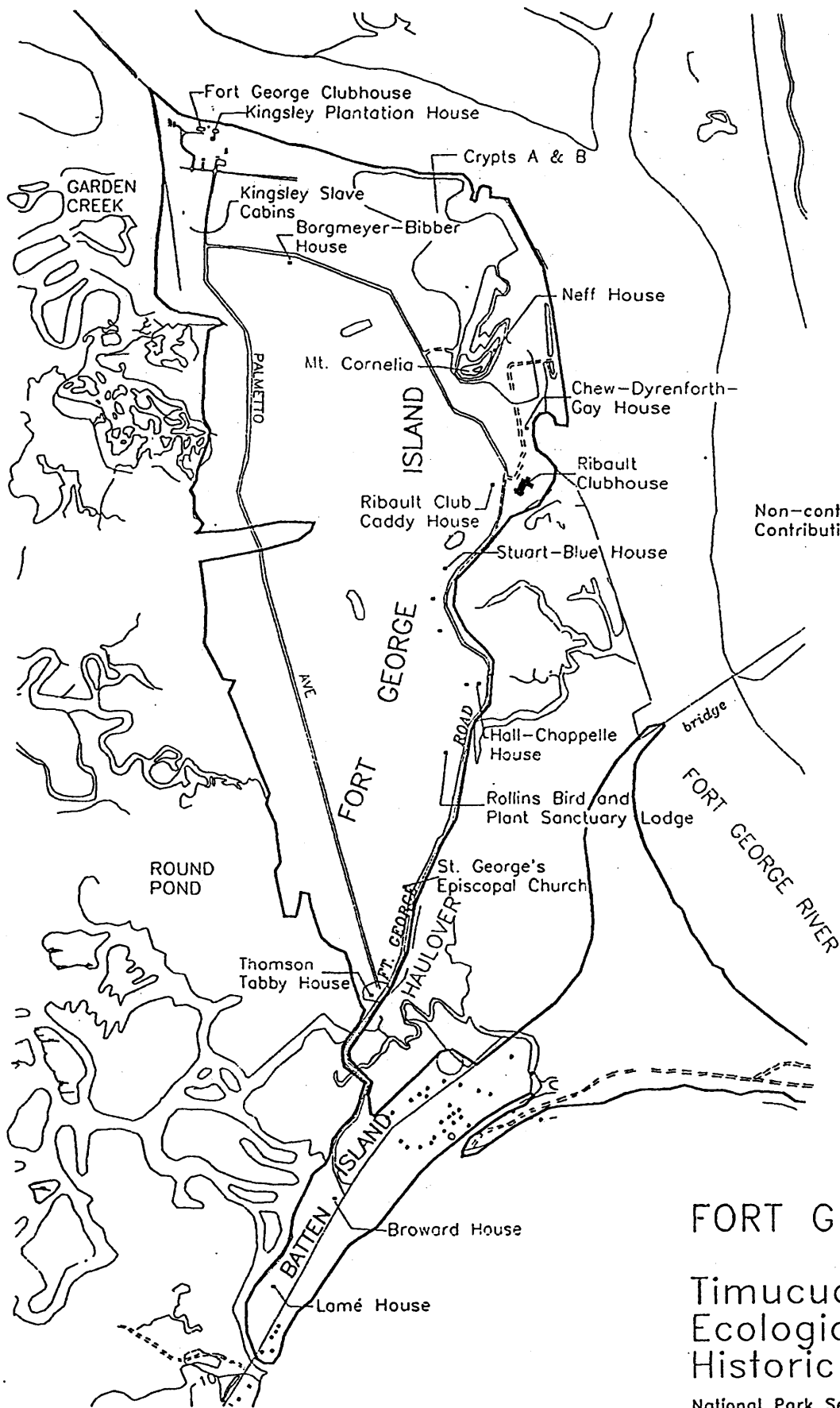


FIGURE 2-1. Presently Known Sites on Fort George Island, Jacksonville, Florida
 SOURCE: WAR 1986.



LEGEND

Non-contributing Resources
Contributing Resources

bridge
House



North

Drawing not to scale

FORT GEORGE ISLAND

Timucuan
Ecological and
Historic Preserve

National Park Service
United States Department of the Interior
January 1996