

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Reidentification/CO Amendments

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED **APR 18 1980**

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Caples'-Ringlings' Estates Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

John Ringling Estate, Charles Ringling Estate, Ralph Caples Estate

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

5315, 5609, and 5949 Bayshore Road

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Sarasota

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Florida

12

Sarasota

115

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH State	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

See Continuation Sheet

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Sarasota County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

101 South Washington Boulevard

CITY, TOWN

Sarasota

STATE

Florida

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Sarasota Survey

DATE

1977

\_\_\_ FEDERAL  STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Florida Division of Archives, History and Records Management

CITY, TOWN

Tallahassee

STATE

Florida

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Caples'-Ringlings' Estates Historic District is composed of the contiguous, former estates of three of Sarasota's most prominent citizens: Ralph Caples, John Ringling, and Charles Ringling. Located in the northernmost section of the city of Sarasota, Florida, the district covers a total land area of approximately 150 acres. The district's western boundary is formed by the shoreline of Sarasota Bay; the eastern boundary by North Tamiami Trail; the northern boundary by the northern property line (city limit boundary) of the Charles Ringling Estate; and the southern boundary by the southern property line of the Ralph Caples Estate.

The district boundaries do not precisely correspond to the original estates' boundaries because of the inclusion of additional land acquired by the present owner, the State of Florida. The addition is a triangular section of undeveloped land, and presently serves as a buffer between the former estates and North Tamiami Trail. It does not detract from the character of the district.

Excluding the service road and paths that relate to the individual estates, the district is traversed by only one major public road, Bayshore Road. Bayshore Road bisects the district, separating the original estates' grounds from the undeveloped addition. Entrances to each estate are located along the western right-of-way of Bayshore Road, and a masonry wall running the length of all three estates marks their original eastern boundaries.

Each estate contains a main residence and several outbuildings, such as storage sheds, servants' quarters, guest houses, and other utility buildings. The residences are all oriented towards Sarasota Bay and are positioned almost at the edge of the shoreline. A masonry seawall runs the length of the shoreline of all three estates.

The Caples' Estate is the smallest and southernmost estate in the district. Entrance to the estate is through a simple iron gate with masonry gateposts. (Map Reference 27). A gravel road leads to the main house. Lush plantings along the original north and south property lines separate the estate from its neighbors. The Caples' Estate has only three structures, the Caples' residence, a garage and guest house (M.R. 23 & 24), and a storage shed. Although presently used by New College as a science building, the residence and outbuildings have undergone minor alterations since they were constructed in the late 1920's. The storage shed, however, is in a serious state of deterioration, the roof having collapsed.

The buildings on the Caples' Estate are in the Mediterranean Revival Style, and exhibit architectural characteristics indicative of the style, e.g. picturesque massing, red tiled roofs, and stuccoed exteriors. The main two-story residence is U-shaped with the open courtyard/patio facing the bay and a service wing extending at an angle from the northeast corner. The building has a tiled hip roof. Fenestration is regular and is composed of trefoil arched and square-headed windows. An open L-shaped arcaded loggia runs along the west (bay) and south side of the courtyard. The interior of the Caples' house has two living rooms, a dining room (with coved ceiling), a sun porch, four bedrooms, and four baths.

Immediately to the east of the residence is a two-story stuccoed masonry garage and apartment. This building is connected to the residence by a masonry wall. The

(See Continuation Sheet)



# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

**UTM NOT VERIFIED  
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 150 acres apx.

QUADRANGLE NAME USGS Bradenton

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	7	3	4	5	1	7	0	3	0	3	0	0	1	0
ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING									

B 

1	7	3	4	5	8	1	0	3	0	3	0	0	1	0
ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING									

C 

1	7	3	4	5	8	1	0	3	0	2	9	9	1	0
ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING									

D 

1	7	3	4	5	9	4	0	3	0	3	0	9	1	0
ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING									

E 

1	7	3	4	6	0	1	0	3	0	2	9	4	1	0
ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING									

F 

1	7	3	4	6	0	1	0	3	0	2	9	3	1	0
ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING									

G 

1	7	3	4	6	0	1	0	3	0	2	9	3	1	5
ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING									

H 

1	7	3	4	5	9	1	0	3	0	2	9	3	1	0
ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING									

 (Cont.)

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See Continuation Sheet)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N.A.			

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N.A.			

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Rolla L. Queen, Historic Sites Specialist

ORGANIZATION

Florida Division of Archives, History and Records Management

STREET & NUMBER

The Capitol

CITY OR TOWN

Tallahassee

DATE

October 16, 1980

TELEPHONE

(904) 487-2333

STATE

Florida

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

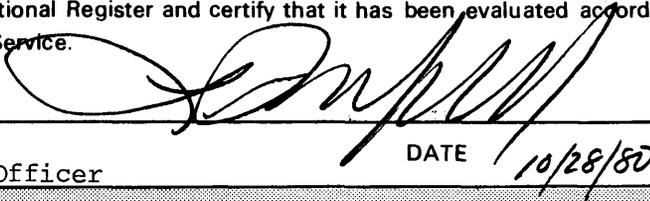
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

10/28/80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Entered in the  
National Register

DATE

12/15/82

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED 00718 1980  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET 1 ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 1

---

Georgia M. Sponseller  
520 East Herrick Ave.  
Wellington, Ohio 44090

Nina B. Lewis  
572 58th Street  
Sarasota, Florida 33580

P. L. & Hope P. Salvatori  
540 58th Street  
Sarasota, Florida 33580

Amy B. Lane  
524 58th Street  
Sarasota, Florida 33580

Bruce N. Balk  
290 Coconut Avenue  
Sarasota, Florida

A. R. & Anne E. McFayden  
436 58th Street  
Sarasota, Florida 33580

Robert C. & Irene B. Bon Seigneur  
c/o Charles Harra, New College  
5700 N. Tamiami Trail  
Sarasota, Florida 33580

Trustees of Internal Improvement Trust  
Fund  
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard  
Tallahassee, Florida 32303

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

007 18 1980

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET 2 ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

three bay garage also has a tiled, hip roof. Fenestration is regular and is composed of square headed windows. The car bays are arcaded. A small two-bay stuccoed masonry storage shed stands to the west of the garage.

The John Ringling Estate, located immediately north of the Ralph Caples' Estate, is composed of the John Ringling Residence (M.R. 9), a guest house (M.R. 10), the Circus Museum, (M.R. 12), a pavilion and snackbar (M.R. 13), two rose gardens, (M.R. 17 & 14), the entrance gatehouse (M.R. 22), and the John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Art. There are two main entrances to the estate. The southern entrance provides access to the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. The northern entrance provides the main access to the residence and Circus Museum.

The southern half of the John Ringling estate contains the grounds for the John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Art (M.R. 20). This includes the two-story U-shaped museum building open to the bay and a mall which extends along the formally landscaped courtyard to the bay. The mall includes a fountain located midway between the museum and the bay. At the bay-end of the mall is a semi-circular concrete slab to exhibit sculpture, however, it was designed originally to be a waterfront orchestra stand.

The Italian Renaissance Style Museum building is finished in stucco with major architectural emphasis placed on the recessed three-bay rusticated arcaded loggia at the entrance and a balustrade with interspersed statuary surmounting the roof. The entrance block of the museum has a second story hipped roof which is set back from the balustraded parapet. The courtyard of the museum has a continuous arcaded gallery with a variety of antique columns and surrounds and a formally landscaped and terraced garden which has stone balustrades, sculpture, paved walks and clipped hedges. An addition for administrative offices was added in the 1970's to the south wing. Adjacent to the north wing is a building that houses the Asolo Theatre.

The northern half of the John Ringling Estate contains the original residential buildings and the Circus Museum. Access to this area is by a curving drive that begins at a Venetian Gothic style gatehouse along Bayshore Road (M.R. 22). The Circus Museum (M.R. 12), is located midway between the residence and the gate. The snack bar pavillion (M.R. 13), built around 1965, is positioned opposite the Circus Museum.

The residential complex consists of the Ringling residence, a guest house, a private garden and a rose garden. Architecturally, the buildings exhibit a Venetian Gothic influence. The residence itself (M.R. 9), is positioned immediately adjacent to the bay. Its massing is irregular, but basically affords the appearance of a central pavilion with flanking wings. The building varies from one story to four stories. A variety of roof types are incorporated, including a tiled roof, a crested parapet, and a balustraded flat roof. The building is finished in stucco and employs polychromatic glazed terra-cotta for ornamentation, such as window surrounds, quoins,

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED NOV 18 1980
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

3

ITEM NUMBER

7

PAGE

2

finials, balustrades, and balconets. Fenestration is regular and composed of ogee, ogival, and trefoil arches. The bay (west) facade of the central section of the building was designed to resemble the facade of the Palazzo Ducale in Venice, Italy. It is composed of five pointed arches which frame french doors on the first story, and ten glazed ogee arches interspersed with quatrefoils on the second story. All glazing was tinted with colored glass.

The residence has thirty rooms, most of which are oriented around the Great Hall. The two-story Great Hall features an Aeolian-Skinner organ and a coffered pecky-cypress ceiling. The coffers have tinted glass creating a skylight. Additional rooms include a ballroom, solarium, breakfast room, dining room, bar, living quarters, guest bedrooms, a children's playroom and an elevator.

The residence overlooks an 8,000 square foot balustraded terrace which includes a waterfront dock. A private garden (M.R. 14), is located to the north of the residence while the main rose garden (M.R. 17), is east of the residence. A parking lot is positioned between the residence and the rose garden. Along the northern boundary of the estate between the private garden and guest house is a Butler building (M.R. 11), which serves as a repair shop. With the exception of the modern buildings (Circus Museum, snack bar, Asolo Theatre and Administration Building), the John Ringling Estate has undergone little alteration since its development in the 1920's. A swimming pool immediately east of the residence has been filled. However, the residential structures and museum maintain their integrity.

The northernmost estate is the Charles Ringling Estate and presently serves as the New College Campus of the University of South Florida in Sarasota. All buildings on the Estate are used for college administration and activities. Entrance to the estate is through an Italian Renaissance style arched gateway (M.R. 15), and along a drive which leads directly to the Charles Ringling House (M.R. 1). The eastern half of the estate contains several modern dormitories and other college buildings (M.R. 7 & 8). South of the dormitories is a three-acre, privately owned residential section which has six residences built since the 1940's (M.R. 6). This area was sold for private development in the 1950's. One other private residence is located at the northwest corner of the estate.

The Estate has two central buildings, the Charles Ringling House (M.R. 1), and the Hester Ringling Sanford House (M.R. 2). These are located along the waterfront and are connected by an arcade. The residences were served by several outbuildings: the carriage house (M.R. 3), northeast of the Charles Ringling House; the groundskeeper's house (M.R. 4), directly west of the residence; and the barn (M.R. 5), which is located at the center of the estate. All buildings, except the wood frame barn, exhibit Mediterranean influence in their style.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED 007/18 1980
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET 4 ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

The Charles Ringling House was designed in the Italian Renaissance style. The two-story U-shaped building originally had a raised terrace open to the bay. Extending from the east facade is a centrally located porte cochere. The building and porte cochere are surmounted by a balustraded parapet. The entire building is veneered in Pink Etowah marble. The fenestration includes both arched and square headed windows.

The interior of the residence has twenty rooms, including a large music room, a large entrance and stair hall, living quarters, billiard room, office space, servants' quarters, and a basement. The rooms remain intact, although the building presently serves as the college library. A curved marble staircase located at the north end of the entrance hall provides access to the second floor bedroom. The music room contains an Aeolian-Skinner organ. The residence has had one major alteration. The raised patio created by the wings on the west elevation was enclosed to create additional space for the library.

The Hester Ringling Sanford House, located to the south of the Charles Ringling House, was designed in the Mediterranean Revival style. The building has a two-story central block with flanking three-story wings. The building has a tiled, hip roof and is finished in stucco. The entrance on the east facade is through a five-bay arcaded loggia. Fenestration is regular and is composed of both square and round-headed windows. The interior of the Sanford House has twenty-two rooms, including a formal reception area, dining room, living quarters, and basement. Changes to the original building of the Charles Ringling estate have been minor, except for the enclosure of the patio of the Ringling House.

The district as a whole has undergone some alterations as a result of the new uses of the three properties. However, because of the extent of the original properties, construction of additional buildings or other facilities have been largely restricted to the eastern areas, therefore leaving the original estates' residences and their immediate environs intact.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED 007/18 1980
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

5

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

1

people. The east coast of Florida is most often associated with the boom and the landscape is dotted with boomtime Mediterranean architecture and remnants of planned communities that have become reminders of fantasies unfulfilled.

On the west coast of Florida, the City of Sarasota was no less susceptible and no less extravagant as it became intoxicated by the excitement and promise of the real estate boom. In this Gulf coast community, many of the most prominent citizens became involved in the intense speculation in real estate development. One of the residents was Ralph Caples, who from the beginning envisioned the promise that Sarasota held for development and developers. But perhaps most important to Sarasota's development were Caples' friends, John and Charles Ringling, part owners of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Combined Shows. According to one Ringling biographer, "In Sarasota the boom became a John Ringling production and he led the grand march. He and his friends bought lots and acreage, and planned eye-popping projects".<sup>1</sup> Caples and the Ringlings had a tremendous impact on Sarasota. Their importance is evident today in the many buildings and developments that endure from that period.

Prior to 1900, Sarasota's development was limited primarily to settlement by homesteaders and fishermen. An attempt at creating a Scottish immigrant community in Sarasota during the 1880's met with little success.<sup>2</sup> By 1895, Sarasota's population had grown to almost 200 and the city was oriented commercially towards fishing and fruit growing.<sup>3</sup> The major limitation to Sarasota's growth during this period was the absence of railroad access to the larger population and commercial centers of the north.<sup>4</sup>

The arrival of Ralph Caples in Sarasota in 1899 on a delayed honeymoon provided the transition for the growth and development of Sarasota. At that time, he was a city passenger agent for the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad Company. Caples liked Sarasota and was well aware of its potential. He also recognized the importance that a railroad would have to the city. Railroad lines extended only as far south as Tampa, so Caples embarked on a plan to make railroad access to Sarasota a reality. Along with T. C. Taliaferro, President of the First National Bank of Tampa, Caples formed the Florida West Coast Railroad Company. The project was intended to be a highly kept secret, but the Seaboard Airline Railroad discovered Caples' plan. Suspicious of competition, the Seaboard rapidly began construction of its own line to Sarasota. Consequently, Caples abandoned his own plans. Nevertheless, Sarasota did acquire early railroad access to the north.<sup>5</sup> Reaction was immediate; the town began to grow and real estate prices began to rise. Sarasota began to develop an identity as a winter tourist haven and the citizens envisioned the city becoming "one of the most famed tourist towns in the world."<sup>6</sup>

Caples joined the New York Central Railroad in 1905 and became its general agent in 1913. In 1913 he built the Caples Building in downtown Sarasota.<sup>7</sup> He continued

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED *ADV* 18 1980  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

6

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

2

his involvement in Sarasota's development by investing in Sarasota real estate. For several years after his arrival, Sarasota was his winter home.

If Caples' first major contribution to Sarasota was to provide the impetus for the extension of the railroad to Sarastoa, his second major contribution was to persuade John and Charles Ringling to come to Sarasota and eventually make it their home and winter circus headquarters. The Ringlings were well aware of Sarasota's existence before 1900. A friend, Charles N. Thompson of the Sells-Forepaugh Circus had been convinced by several acquaintances who had invested in Sarasota real estate that he too should buy land in Sarasota.<sup>8</sup> Thompson purchased 154 acres along Sarasota Bay in 1895, subdivided the land, and offered the lots for sale. W. H. English of the Wallace Brothers Circus purchased one of the first lots.<sup>9</sup>

The Ringlings were close friends of Thompson and he endeavored for several years to convince them that they should come to Sarasota. Thompson and Caples recognized the potential impact that the Ringling name could have on Sarasota's development. By 1911, they had convinced the Ringlings to come to Sarasota and in January, 1912, John Ringling purchased the Thompson home from Ralph Caples (Caples had purchased the home from Thompson three months earlier). John then persuaded Charles Ringling to purchase the adjacent property.<sup>10</sup> With the acquisition of this property, the Ringlings' permanent association with the city of Sarasota began.

John and Charles Ringling were the sons of an immigrant German harness maker, August Rungeling (later changed to Ringling). Five of August Ringling's seven sons (Al, Otto, Alf T., Charles, and John) combined their talents and formed the Ringling Brothers Classic and Comic Concert Company in the early 1880's.<sup>11</sup> Each brother performed in the show, which included a variety of music and comedy skits. Charles served as the "interpolator". John Ringling gained notoriety as a comedian in the show and was billed as the "Emperor of Dutch Comedians".<sup>12</sup>

The show slowly expanded as they played the auditoriums and lodge halls of small midwestern towns. The show really began to grow, however, with the expansion of the show into a circus, including a wagon caravan, show tents and wild animal acts. To promote their show, the Ringling brothers combined their acts with a well known circus man, Yankee Robinson. Although Robinson was old, his name was respected and it added credibility to the show. The show was billed as the "Yankee Robinson and Ringling Brothers Great Double Shows, Circus, and Caravan".<sup>13</sup>

On its way to becoming the "Greatest Show on Earth", the Ringlings' expanding show and circus would undergo several name changes. In 1890, it was called "The Ringling Brothers United Monster Shows, Great Triple Circus, Museum, Menagerie, Roman Hippodrome, and Universal World's Exhibition".<sup>14</sup> As new acts and personnel were added to the show, the brothers ceased performing and became involved in the overall management and operation of the business. John became the advance man while Charles

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED <b>NOV 18 1980</b>
DATE ENTERED

**CONTINUATION SHEET**      7                      ITEM NUMBER      8                      PAGE      3

handled personnel relations.<sup>15</sup>

Competition with other circuses was keen, but after 1900, the Ringling Brothers had become the dominant circus in the United States. Soon after the turn of the century, they acquired half ownership in the Forepaugh-Sells circus. The remaining half was owned by James Bailey. After the death of Bailey in 1906, John Ringling acquired Bailey's half and in 1907, successfully acquired the leading circus rival, The Barnum and Bailey Circus. The shows operated separately until 1919, when their merger resulted in the "Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Combined Circus".<sup>16</sup>

After the death of Alf T. in 1919, John and Charles were the only remaining Ringling brothers. John now acted solely as the front man and Charles provided for the daily operation of the circus. Their personalities were quite different. John was a showman, boisterous and flamboyant; Charles was compassionate and conservative in temperament. Charles envied the "larger than life" role that John had created for himself. The brothers often found themselves competing, neither wanting to be upstaged by the other.<sup>17</sup>

Both John and Charles began to invest heavily in Sarasota real estate soon after their arrival in 1911 and it is certain that their rivalry was not unhealthy for Sarasota's development. When Charles built a hotel (The Terrace), John planned the Ritz-Carlton on Longboat Key. John also bought the El Vernona Hotel (he changed the name to the John Ringling Towers). When John purchased a yacht and named it Zalophus, Charles bought a bigger yacht and called it Symphonia. When John became president of the Bank of Sarasota, Charles opened his own Ringling Trust and Savings Bank.<sup>18</sup> Aside from their rivalry, both expressed a sincere interest in Sarasota's development and prosperity, taking an active role in business and community affairs. At the height of the real estate boom, Charles Ringling's Sarasota interests included, in addition to his bank and hotel, his real estate development company, which he named, characteristically, The Charles Ringling Company. John Ringling was involved in the Sarasota Oil Company, the Ringling Isles Real Estate Development Company, the St. Armands-Lido Realty Corporation, and the Trust Company of Sarasota. He also constructed the Ringling Causeway, which linked Sarasota with the St. Armands Key development, and later donated the \$700,000 bridge to the city.<sup>19</sup> Together, John and Charles Ringling's activities permeated all aspects of Sarasota's economic, political, and social development. In his biography of the Ringlings, Gene Plowden wrote that "John and Charles fell in love with the State and helped it grow and prosper...Their activities rivaled and at times eclipsed those of busy land promoters and their very presence provided a tonic and inspiration to others".<sup>20</sup>

The legacy that John and Charles Ringling left to Sarasota had no greater symbol than the manifestation of their rivalry in their adjoining estates. Construction on the Charles Ringling residence began in 1924, soon after Charles heard that John was planning to build a palatial Venetian style residence. The Italian Renaissance

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED <i>06/18</i> 1980
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET 8 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

style palace that Charles constructed replaced the frame house that had been his home since he arrived in Sarasota more than a decade earlier. The new residence became the centerpiece of his forty acre estate, which included an adjoining residence for his daughter, a carriage house, servants' quarters, a craft shop, a small golf course, and a barn, as well as other storage and farm buildings.<sup>21</sup>

The residence was completed in 1926 at a cost of \$880,000. It was designed by Alfred Clas of Clas, Shepherd, and Clas of Milwaukee, and was built by Eisenberg of Wisconsin. Eisenberg brought his workers with him from Wisconsin and they resided on the grounds for the duration of the construction of the residence.<sup>22</sup> Clas also designed the residence of Ringling's daughter Hester, which was connected to the Ringling residence by a covered arcade.

The Architect, Alfred Clas, had become well known in Wisconsin through his partnership with George Ferry. The firm of Ferry and Clas was active from 1890-1913. After 1921, Clas formed a partnership with his son Ruben and another architect. The firm was called Clas, Shepherd and Clas. Alfred Clas' notable contributions to architecture were the Milwaukee Auditorium, Public Library, and Museum, the Plankinton Hotel and the Tripoli Temple. He also designed the building for the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in Madison (listed on the National Register) and served as an advisor to the State of Wisconsin in the construction of its capitol building at Madison.<sup>23</sup>

The residence that Alfred Clas designed for Charles Ringling was veneered entirely in Pink Etowah Marble from Georgia. The two story structure was arranged around the three sides of a patio, which was open on the west to the bay. The main entrance was served by a porte cochere. Both the main structure and porte-cochere were surmounted by a balustrade. Fenestration combined both arched head and squarehead windows. The residence had twenty rooms, including a billiard room and a 30'x60' music room. Charles and his wife Edith enjoyed music and were musically inclined. He played the violin and she played the cello. The music room was planned to provide good acoustics for performances. It was panelled in Walnut and had teak flooring. The room also housed the console of an Aeolian-Skinner organ, which cost approximately \$40,000.<sup>24</sup> The 58'x30' living room was dominated by a curved marble staircase which ascended to the second floor. Other rooms in the Ringling residence included servants' quarters, a basement, and Ringling's office and living quarters.

The Charles Ringling Mansion was connected to his daughter's residence by a covered arcade, finished with the same marble veneer. The Mediterranean Revival Style of the building was popular in Florida during the 1920's, and the building contained many of the familiar elements associated with that style. The two story residence had a hipped, red-clay tile roof<sup>25</sup> and a stuccoed exterior. The bayside (west) facade was composed of a two-story central block, which contained the living room, flanked by two three-story towers with hipped, tile roofs. The main entrance

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED <b>ADY</b> 8 1980
DATE ENTERED

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

9

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

5

was positioned in the east facade. This facade featured a five-bay arcaded loggia. Fenestration was composed of both arched and square headed windows. The residence had twenty-two rooms, including a formal reception area, living room, dining room and partial basement.

Entrance to Charles Ringling's impressive estate was made by road through an elaborate masonry arch, in character with the overall Mediterranean style of the estate. The eastern boundary was framed by a masonry wall (this wall also runs the length of the eastern boundary of the Ralph Caples and John Ringling Estates) while Sarasota Bay formed the western boundary. A seawall was constructed that continued south the outer length of the bayfront of both John Ringling's and Ralph Caples' properties. According to Charles Lancaster (Hester Ringling's son), the Estate was somewhat self sufficient at this time, with cattle, a truck farm and an orange grove on the premises.<sup>26</sup>

In 1926 Charles Ringling died, having resided in his new mansion for only six months. It continued to be occupied by his widow, Edith, until her death in 1953. The years between the death of Charles and the death of Edith Ringling were difficult. After the stock market crashed in 1929, Mrs. Ringling felt a moral obligation to repay dollar for dollar all of the claims of depositors against the Ringling Bank and Trust Company. She also felt an obligation to satisfy claims against the circus that resulted from the disastrous fire of 1944 in Hartford, Connecticut, which killed 168 people.<sup>27</sup>

After Edith Ringling's death, the property was inherited by her children, Hester Ringling Sanford and Robert Ringling. In 1958, financial difficulties forced Mrs. Sanford to sell about three acres of the estate for private development (along what is now 58th Street). In 1958 Gerald Collins, a former legislator, bought the Ringling Residence for \$200,000. He in turn sold the house and grounds to Fred S. Wynam for \$300,000. In 1962, New College of Sarasota acquired the Charles Ringling residence and estate from the Wynams for \$400,000.<sup>28</sup> Since that time, the estate has become the New College campus, and Ringlings' residence serves as the library. The only major alteration has been the enclosure of the patio of the Charles Ringling residence to create greater space for the library. Several college buildings have been added to the grounds of the estate, but its overall architectural integrity remains intact.

While Charles Ringling was constructing his palatial residence in 1926, John and Mabel were fulfilling their own architectural fantasy a few hundred feet south. Their fantasy was to create a Venetian palace on the shores of Sarasota Bay. For many years, the Ringlings had traveled widely throughout Europe in search of new acts and talent for the circus. Their travels eventually led them to Venice, and in Venice they became captivated by the splendor of Venetian Gothic architecture. Returning from Venice in 1923, Mabel Ringling brought a portfolio of sketches of Venetian Gothic details that she had commissioned for the purpose of affording an American architect some idea of the character that the house she wished to build in Sarasota should

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED <b>BOY</b> 18 1980
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET 10 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 6

have.<sup>29</sup> She first approached architect Thomas Martin, who had designed "The Oaks" in Sarasota for Mrs. Potter Palmer of Chicago. Martin developed several preliminary designs, but was unable to obtain such specifics as cost and scale from the Ringlings. Frustrated, he turned the project over to his son, Frank Martin. Mabel had indicated that she desired a building that combined the facade of Palazzo Ducale in Venice (Doge's Palace) and the tower of the Madison Square Garden, designed by Stanford White. Although both Martins tried to talk her out of the tower, they eventually produced preliminary sketches of a palace that they estimated would cost \$450,000.<sup>30</sup> John Ringling found this cost excessive. The project temporarily floundered, so the Martins decided not to continue their involvement.

The Ringlings then consulted New York architect Dwight James Baum. Baum was most noted for his design of country homes in the Colonial, Tudor, French, and Gothic styles, and had received the Medal of Honor of the Architectural League of New York for his work.<sup>31</sup> While in Sarasota, Baum designed many buildings for the boom-happy town. To his credit are the Sarasota County Courthouse, the El Vernona Hotel (now the John Ringling Towers), several houses on St. Armands Key, and the Casa Bona apartment building (Belle Haven).<sup>32</sup> He also helped develop Riverdale-on-Hudson, an affluent New York community and was the architectural consultant for Syracuse University, as well as Clarkson, Hartwick, Middleburg, and Wells Colleges, designing many of the buildings on those campuses.<sup>33</sup> However, Baum received his greatest acclaim as the architect for the Sarasota residence of John Ringling.

Baum is said to have attempted to persuade Ringling to build a "proper Georgian Mansion" instead of a Venetian palace. He met with little success. He did succeed however, in convincing Mabel to agree to a smaller version of the Madison Square Garden Tower that she admired.<sup>34</sup> During construction of the residence, plans were changed or modified time after time as Baum attempted to provide the Ducal Palace-Madison Square Garden Tower combination the Ringlings desired. The finished product was a building that Henry Ringling North, nephew of John Ringling, later apologetically described with all its excesses as:

...neither ugly nor vulgar. It was so riotously, exuberantly, gorgeously fantastic, so far out of the world of normality, that it surpassed the ordinary criteria for such things and emerged a thing of style and beauty by its magnificent indifference to all the so-called canons of good taste. It was in fact, the epitome of its owner.<sup>35</sup>

John Ringling named his Venetian palace Ca'd'Zan. It translated from the Venetian dialect to mean "House of John".

Ca'd'Zan was an intriguing blend of polychromatic terra-cotta and Saracenic arches. Irregular in massing and plan, the building rose from one-story (solarium)

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED **NOV 18 1980**

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

11

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

7

to four stories (tower). The residence contained thirty rooms, most of which were oriented around the Great Hall, which was two stories in height. The Great Hall was the focal point for all social activity in the residence. The coffered ceiling of the Great Hall was pecky cypress, and each coffer had a tinted glass panel which formed a skylight. The ceiling was decoratively painted by muralist Robert Webb, who decorated several other rooms in the mansion and also rooms in the El Vernona Hotel. Ringling had a \$50,000 Aeolion-Skinner organ installed in the Great Hall to provide for the musical entertainment of the many guests who attended the social functions at the palace.<sup>36</sup> In addition to the Great Hall, the residence had a ballroom, solarium, breakfast room, dining room, bar, living quarters and guest bedrooms, an elevator, and a children's playroom. The bar was once a part of the Cicardi Winter Palace in St. Louis, Missouri Ringling purchased it and had it incorporated into the residence. The children's game room had a low ceiling, which was painted with Venetian carnival scenes by the Hungarian Artist, Willy Pogamy.<sup>37</sup>

The plan of the building was best described as a central projecting block with flanking wings. The exterior of the residence was composed of a variety of architectural elements. The facade of the central block was composed of five pointed arches which framed french doors (first floor), and ten glazed ogee arches with interspersed quatrefoils. All glazing was tinted. The plans originally called for the section to be a scaled-down replica of the Venetian Ducal palace, with loggia and gallery. This loggia and gallery were eliminated however, and only a "superficial stencil" of the Doge's palace was constructed.<sup>38</sup> The original ogee arch motifs were repeated throughout the structure. A variety of roof styles were employed including a tiled hipped roof, a crested parapet, and a flat roof with balustrade.

The entire structure had a commanding view of Sarasota Bay, and dominated an 8,000 square foot marble terrace which was enclosed by a terra-cotta balustrade. A stairway descended to the dock where John Ringling kept his yacht Zalophus and Mabel moored an authentic Venetian gondola.

The residence became a showplace for John and Mabel Ringling, and they used their palace extensively to entertain many of the world's financiers and celebrities. The cost for this entertainment centerpiece of the Ringling Estate has been placed at \$1,000,000 for the fabric, \$250,000 for the seawall and swimming pool, and \$400,000 for the furnishings.<sup>39</sup>

Visitors received their first taste of the Ringling's showplace at the entrance and gatehouse, which was designed in the same fashion as the residence. The drive from the entrance to the residence was dotted with statuary (putti). The putti and a circular rose garden provided diversion along the path to the residence (Mabel also kept a smaller, private garden north of the residence). Immediately before entering the driveway circle of the residence, guests passed a one story ground's keepers house

(See Continuation Sheet)

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED NOV 18 1980  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET 12 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 8

designed with a simple treatment of the Venetian Gothic style.

The other major structure that John Ringling built on his estate was a museum designed to house his substantial art collection. This museum, named the John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Art, was intended to be John Ringling's gift to the people of Sarasota and the State of Florida.<sup>40</sup> John Ringling had amassed a great number of paintings, purchased while he was traveling through Europe searching for new circus acts, and he had become a self-educated connoisseur of Baroque art.<sup>41</sup> With the services of art expert Julius Bohler, Ringling began to purchase art work in the 1920's, at first to use as embellishment for his many real estate developments, and later as a conscious attempt to do something philanthropic for Sarasota. Eventually, Ringling acquired more than five hundred examples of Baroque art.<sup>42</sup>

To design the museum to house these masterpieces, Ringling turned to John Henry Phillips, a New York architect. Phillips had participated in designing the Metropolitan Museum of Art and was familiar with museum planning. Phillips was responsible for all elements of the Ringling museum's design, including the landscaping of the gardens and grounds.

The museum was designed around three sides of a courtyard, the fourth side (west) was open to the bay. It embodied the Italian Renaissance style, although its major features were confined to the entrance (east) facade, with rusticated arched doorways, the courtyard, and interior of the building.

Although the museum was designed to house Ringling's art collection, the building itself incorporated many antique columns, doorways, cartouches, and statuary that Ringling brought from Europe. Phillips wrote in 1938 that "It was an unusual coincidence that Mr. Ringling was able to get these priceless works of art into the country from Italy. In fact I am sure that no one could do it under the Mussolini regime".<sup>43</sup>

The courtyard is dominated by a giant bronze replica of Michaelangelo's "David". Westward from the courtyard, Phillips had planned a mall, with fountains, lawns, and other landscaped vegetation. However, the sudden reverse in Ringling's business affairs, (a result of the bust and ensuing depression) prevented full realization of these plans.<sup>44</sup>

The museum was completed in 1929 at a cost of \$1,500,000. That same year brought the death of Mabel Ringling. After Mabel's death, John Ringling's luck seemed to turn against him. His health began to deteriorate, in 1932 he was forced out of his commanding position as head of the circus through the complicated legal maneuvers of his friends and relatives.<sup>45</sup> Many of his real estate developments and dreams had been shattered by the collapse of the real estate and stock market in the 1920's. By the mid 1930's, he was on the brink of bankruptcy, which would have forced him to liquidate his vast holdings and more importantly, his art collection. Selling the

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED <b>NOV 18 1980</b>
DATE ENTERED

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET 13 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 9

collection would have ameliorated his economic problems. However, he had indicated his intention to bequeath the museum and palace to the state upon his death, and adamantly refused to sell even one painting.<sup>46</sup>

Ringling died December 9, 1936, five days before a court ordered special sale of his palace and real estate holdings was to be conducted in order to satisfy several debts. According to the stipulations of Ringling's will, the State of Florida received the estate.<sup>47</sup> The State of Florida was hesitant about accepting the gift because of the complicated financial problems and liens against the estate. The federal government itself held an income tax claim of \$13,000,000. It took ten years to liquidate the estate and settle all the outstanding claims before the State of Florida could obtain clear legal title in May, 1946.<sup>48</sup> According to the conditions of John Ringling's will, the State has maintained the estate as a museum for Baroque and Venetian art, and has since added a museum for the circus.

At the same time John and Charles Ringling began construction on their palatial estates, Ralph Caples also decided to replace the frame house that had been his residence since he had purchased the property from W. H. English in 1901. Caples's residence was smaller in scale and less elaborate than the palaces of his friend's immediately to the north, however the Mediterranean Revival structure was no less impressive.

Alfred Clas, who designed the Charles Ringling mansion, was reported to have designed the Caples residence also.<sup>49</sup> The Caples residence was similar in plan to the Charles Ringling residence and the John and Mabel Ringling Museum. Designed around three sides of a patio which opened to the bay, the two-story stuccoed masonry building contained two living rooms, a dining room, a sun porch, four bedrooms and four baths. The dining room rose a full two-stories and had a coved ceiling.

The exterior exhibited many elements of the Mediterranean Revival style, including arched and square headed windows, and the familiar red tile hipped roof. The roof tiles were given to Caples by John Ringling and supposedly came from a building which had been demolished in Spain.

Immediately to the east of the residence and connected to it by a masonry wall was a two-story garage and apartment, also exhibiting Mediterranean Revival characteristics. A two-bay, one-story storage house stood east of the garage. The estate remained in the possession of the Caples family until the death of Mrs. Ralph Caples in 1971. Ralph Caples had died in 1949. Upon Mrs. Caples' death, the property was bequeathed to New College and presently serves as an environmental studies center.<sup>50</sup>

Throughout their lives, the Caples were active in the social, political and economic affairs of Sarasota. Caples advanced money to the city to create a water-

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED **ADV** 18 1980  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET 14

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 10

front park in 1937. He served as director of the Chamber of Commerce in 1925-1926 and 1933. Caples also devoted the land for the city's first municipal airport in 1929. More importantly, he was instrumental in convincing the Ringlings to move the winter headquarters for the circus from Bridgeport, Connecticut to Sarasota in 1927. This he accomplished by "forgetting" a \$16,000 note on the property that he provided as the new home for the circus.<sup>51</sup>

The Caples'-Ringlings' Estates Historic District is composed of the contiguous estates of John Ringling, Charles Ringling, and Ralph Caples. The physical connection of their estates is symbolic of the personal and professional relationships of these men. The estates physically perpetuate their legacies and attest to their significance in the history of Sarasota.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Gene Plowden, Those Amazing Ringlings and Their Circus. (Caldwell, Ohio: Caxton Printers, 1967), p. 151.

<sup>2</sup>Florida Department of State, Historical, Architectural, and Archaeological Survey of Sarasota, Florida by Elizabeth B. Monroe, Sharon Wells, and Marion Almy. (unpublished manuscript, 1977)

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Karl Grismer, The Story of Sarasota (Sarasota, Florida: M.E. Russell, 1940), p. 134.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 133-134.

<sup>6</sup>Florida Department of State, Survey of Sarasota; Sarasota Times, 1913.

<sup>7</sup>Grismer, p. 307, 308; Plowden, p. 151, 144; Caples later became a confidential representative of John Willys of the Willys - Overland Automobile Company and during the 1920 Presidential Campaign was in charge of Warren Hardings campaign Train. In 1919 he became director of the Remington Advertising Company of Chicago, and in 1921 bought the firm and changed the name to The Caples Company.

<sup>8</sup>Grismer, p. 169; Plowden, p. 137; Henry Ringling North and Alden Hatch, The Circus Kings, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1960), p. 164.

<sup>9</sup>Grismer, p. 169; Plowden, p. 137.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED **ADP** 18 1980  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET 15 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 11

<sup>10</sup> Manatee County Records, Manatee County Courthouse, Bradenton, Florida. Mortgage Book P, p. 191; Deed Book 33, p. 9; Deed Book 27, p. 323; Deed Book 35, p. 17; Deed Book 29, p. 562; Deed Book 29, p. 543.

<sup>11</sup> Plowden, p. 30; Kenneth Mathews and Robert McDevitt, The Unlikely Legacy, (Sarasota: Aaron Publishers, 1979), p. 14.

<sup>12</sup> Plowden, pp. 31-33; Mathews and McDevitt, p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> Plowden, p. 45; Other names were "Ringling Brothers Carnival of Fun", "Ringling Brothers Great Double Shows, Circus, Caravan and Trained Animal Exposition", "Ringling Brothers United Monster Shows, Great Double Circus, Royal European Menagerie, Museum, Caravan and Congress of Trained Animals", and "Ringling Brothers World's Greatest Railroad Shows, Real Roman Hippodrome, Three Ring Circus and Elevated Stages; Millionaire Menagerie, Museum and Aquarium, Spectacular Tournament, Production of Caesar's Triumphal Entry into Rome".

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 86, 100; Mathews and McDevitt, p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> Plowden, p. 135; Mathews and McDevitt, pp. 19-24; North and Hatch, pp. 194-196.

<sup>18</sup> North and Hatch, p. 195.

<sup>19</sup> Sarasota County Records, Sarasota County Courthouse, Sarasota, Florida. Probate Records File 334A, File 907.

<sup>20</sup> Plowden, pp. 139-140.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Charles and Alice Lancaster by Jackie Fauls, April 23, 1979. Transcript on File at the Florida Division of Archives, History and Records Management, Tallahassee, Florida.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid; "Mrs. Charles Ringling Residence at Indian Beach, Florida" in Through the Ages, Vol. 8 (4) (August, 1930), p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography: Volume 34. New York: James T. White & Co., 1948), p. 100.

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED NOV 18 1980
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET 16 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 12

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Lancasters; St. Petersburg Times (St. Petersburg, Florida), July 24, 1961; "Through the Ages", pp. 3-10; Sarasota Herald Tribune, (Sarasota, Florida), December 15, 1926.

<sup>25</sup> The tiles for this roof were given to Charles Ringling by John Ringling. They had been shipped via Cuba from Spain and reportedly taken from a large building that was being demolished in Spain. These tiles were also used by Ralph Caples.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Lancasters.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid; Plowden, pp. 281-285; North and Hatch, pp. 326-331.

<sup>28</sup> Sarasota Herald Tribune (Sarasota, Florida), June 18, 1961; "Interview with Lancasters."

<sup>29</sup> James T. Maher, The Twilight of Splendor (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1975), p. 105.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 107-112.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 112, 113; Robert Raynor, Dwight James Baum: Architect 1886-1939. (Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Florida at Gainesville, 1976), pp. 60-95.

<sup>32</sup> Raynor, pp. 60-95.

<sup>33</sup> The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, Volume 29. (New York: James T. White and Company, 1941), p. 302; Who Was Who in America: Volume 1, 1897-1942, (Chicago: A. N. Marquis Company, 1942), p. 70.

<sup>34</sup> Maher, p. 118.

<sup>35</sup> North and Hatch, p. 201.

<sup>36</sup> Maher, p. 135.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 132; North and Hatch, p. 200.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>39</sup> Maher, p. 397; John Ringling North estimated the cost to be \$1,650,000 and this figure has been widely accepted. Maher, however, argued that this figure might be misleading given the following information. 1) Ringling thought the \$465,000 cost quoted by Martin excessive. 2) Terra-cotta cost one-tenth that of dressed and carved

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED <i>ADW</i> 18 1980
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET 17 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 13

stone, which the terra-cotta was made to resemble. 3) Ringling ignored Baum's fee. Their estates later settled for \$20,000, which would not reflect a \$1,650,000 project. 4) Experts have pointed out that "staff, a stucco used in temporary work, was used in some parts of Ca'd'Zan's exterior. 5) The palace fabric was reinforced concrete, which would not lead to a \$1,000,000 cost. Maher concluded that the palace could have cost a great deal less than \$1,000,000, perhaps even less than Martin's \$465,000 figure.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 119; Sarasota County Records, Probate File No. 907. John Ringling stipulated in his will that the "residence by joined to and became a part of the John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Art and be used for the general purpose of hanging Venetian paintings, thereby becoming a museum of Venetian Art."; North and Hatch, p. 214.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., North and Hatch, pp. 212-214.

<sup>42</sup> Maher, pp. 120-121.

<sup>43</sup> John Phillips to Johnce McQuirk in a letter dated January 4, 1938. McQuirk had been assigned the task of interviewing and appraising the John Ringling Estate.

<sup>44</sup> Frank Cordner, "The Original Building of The John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Art" in The Florida Architect (September/October, 1970), p. 10.

<sup>45</sup> North and Hatch, p. 224; Maher, pp. 139-140.

<sup>46</sup> Sarasota County Records, Probate File No. 907. North and Hatch, p. 214.

<sup>47</sup> Maher, p. 141; North and Hatch, p. 238.

<sup>48</sup> Sarasota County Records, Deed Books, Sarasota County Courthouse, Sarasota, Florida. Deed No. 8, #1-10.

<sup>49</sup> "Interview with Lancasters".

<sup>50</sup> Sarasota Herald Tribune, November 29, 1964.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Grismer, pp. 234, 245, 249, 273.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED **NOV 18 1980**  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET 18 ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

"Mrs. Charles Ringling Residence at Indian Beach, Florida". in Through the Ages.  
8 (4) (August, 1930) pp. 3-9.

North, Henry Ringling and Alden Hatch. The Circus Kings. Garden City, New York:  
Doubleday and Company, 1960.

The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography. Volume 29. New York: James T. White  
& Company, 1941.

The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography. Volume 34. New York: James T. White,  
1948.

Plowden, Gene. Those Amazing Ringlings and Their Circus. Caldwell, Ohio: Caxton Printers,  
1967.

Raynor, Robert. "Dwight James Baum: Architect". Unpublished Master's Thesis. University  
of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 1976.

St. Petersburg Times (St. Petersburg, Florida) July 24, 1961.

Sarasota County Records, Sarasota County, Florida. Probate Record File No. 334, No. 907;  
Deed No. 8, 1-10; Probate Record File No. 526, File No. 2373.

Sarasota Herald Tribune (Sarasota, Florida) December 15, 1926; June 18, 1961; November  
29, 1964; May 4, 1958; September 9, 1966; October 4, 1925; April 22, 1959; February  
23, 1958; October 26, 1925.

Sarasota Times (Sarasota, Florida) 1913.

Who was Who in America, Volume 1: 1897-1942. Chicago : A.N. Marquis Company, 1942.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED **NOV 18 1980**  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET 19                      ITEM NUMBER 10                      PAGE 1

---

	<u>ZONE</u>	<u>EASTING</u>	<u>NORTHING</u>
I.	17	345960	3029360
J	17	345910	3029360
K	17	345910	3029350
L	17	345850	3029350
M	17	345850	3029360
N	17	345820	3029360
O	17	345820	3029300
P	17	345410	3029300
Q	17	345300	3029290

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED <b>001/18 1987</b>
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET 20 ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Begin at a point (Point A) which is the intersection of the low tide mark at the shoreline of Sarasota Bay and a line 400 feet North and parallel to the North line of Southeast quarter of the Northeast quarter of Section 2, Range 17 East, Township 36 South.

EAST Thence EAST along said line, which also forms the Northern Sarasota City limit boundary, to the East right-of-way line of Bayshore Drive (Point B).

SOUTH Thence SOUTH along said right-of-way line 250 feet (Point C).

EAST Thence EAST along a line approximately 129 feet North and parallel to the North line of the Southeast quarter of the Northwest quarter of Section 1, Township 36 South, Range 17 East, to the East right-of-way line of North Tamiami Trail (U.S. Highway 41) (Point D).

SOUTHERLY Thence in a SOUTHERLY direction along the East right-of-way line of North Tamiami Trail to a point (Point E) which is approximately 280 feet South of the South line of the Southeast quarter of the Northwest quarter of Section 1, Township 36 South, Range 17 East.

SOUTHWESTERLY Thence in a SOUTHWESTERLY direction 300 feet more or less along a line which is the North right-of-way line of Beverly Drive (Point F).

NORTHWESTERLY Thence in a NORTHWESTERLY direction 140 feet more or less along the property line between said lots 1 & 11, 2 & 11, and 2 & 12 of Block G, Indian Beach Subdivision, to a point (Point G) where said lots 2, 3, and 12 intersect.

SOUTHWESTERLY Thence in a SOUTHWESTERLY direction along the property line between said lots 2 and 3 approximately 190 feet to a point (Point H) where the extension of the said property line intersects the West right-of-way line of Stevens Drive.

NORTHWESTERLY Thence in a NORTHWESTERLY direction along an arc which forms the West right-of-way line of Stevens Drive approximately 200 feet (Point I).

WEST Thence WEST approximately 40 feet to the East right-of-way line of Winchester Drive (Point J).

SOUTH Thence SOUTH along the East right-of-way line of Winchester Drive

(See Continuation Sheet)

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED <b>ADP</b> 18 1980
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

21

ITEM NUMBER

10

PAGE

2

approximately 35 feet to a point (Point K) which is the intersection of the East right-of-way line of Winchester Drive and the extension of a line which forms the boundary between said lots 15 and 16, Block I, Indian Beach Subdivision.

WEST

Thence WEST approximately 180 feet along the line which forms the boundary between lots 15 and 16 to a point (Point L) which is the intersection of said lots 5, 6, 15, and 16 of Block I, Indian Beach Subdivision.

NORTH

Thence NORTH along the boundary between lots 6 and 16, Block I, approximately 30 feet (Point M).

WEST

Thence WEST 123 feet more or less along a line which bisects lot 5, Block I, to the East right-of-way line of Eastchester Drive (Point N).

SOUTH

Thence SOUTH approximately 350 feet along a line which is parallel to the East line of the Northwest quarter of the Southwest quarter of Section 1, Township 36 South, Range 17 East, which is also the East right-of-way line of Eastchester Drive to a point (Point O), said point being the intersection of the above described line and a line which is the extension of the boundary line between Shell Beach Subdivision and Sapphire Shores Subdivision.

WEST

Thence WEST along said dividing line between Shell Beach Subdivision and Sapphire Shores Subdivision to a point (Point P) which is the low tide mark on the Shoreline of Sarasota Bay.

NORTHERLY

Thence in a NORTHERLY direction along the Shoreline of Sarasota Bay to the Point of Beginning (Point A).

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED **NOV 18 1980**  
DATE ENTERED

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET 22

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

MAP REFERENCE	PHOTO REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
1	29, 30, 31, 32	Charles Ringling Residence	C*
2	32, 33, 34	Hester Sanford Residence	C
3	Not Pictured	Carriage House	C
4	Not Pictured	Grounds Keepers House	C
5	35	Barn	C
6	38, 39	Private Residential Structures	NC
7	37	New College Dormitories	NC
8	Not Pictured	Natural Science Buildings, New College	NC
9	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 7, 8, 9	John Ringling Residence (Ca'd'Zan)	C
10	16	Guest House	C
11	22	Auto Repair and Storage Facility	NC
12	20	Circus Museum	NC
13	19	Pavillion/Snackbar	NC
14	Not Pictured	Mabel Ringling's Private Garden	C
15	36	Entrance Arch and wall for Charles Ringling Estate	C
16	1, 2, 3	Ringling Estate Seawall	C
17	18	Rose Garden	C
18	11, 23**	Mall, including fountain	C

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED **NOV 18 1980**  
DATE ENTERED

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET 23

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

MAP REFERENCE	PHOTO REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
19	11, 21	Asolo Theatre	NC
20	11, 12, 13, 14	John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Art	C
21	11, 15	Administrative Addition to the Ringling Museum	NC
22	10	Entrance, Gatehouse, and wall for John Ringling Estate	C
23	24, 25	Ralph Caples Residence	C
24	26, 27	Garage and Storage Shed for Ralph Caples Estate	C
25	11	Entrance Arch and wall for the Ringling Museum	C
26	17	Pumphouse	C
27	28	Entrance and wall for the Ralph Caples Estate	C

\*C= Contributing structure to the district

NC= Non-contributing structure to the district

No attempt is made on this map to distinguish altered, contributing structures from the unaltered. The criteria for contributing and non-contributing structures differentiated only between those buildings that were historically related to the estates and those structures built after Caples and the Ringlings no longer owned the property.

\*\* The concrete semi-circle and modern sculpture are later additions to the grounds and should be considered non-contributing.

Bayshore Gardens

Trailer Estates

Sarasota Bay Country Club

Whitfield Estates

Ballentine Manor

Tallevast

Matoaka

Caples'-Ringlings' Estates Historic District  
Sarasota, Florida

- UTM References:
- A 17/345170/3030000
  - B 17/345820/3030000
  - C 17/345820/3029920
  - D 17/345940/3039920
  - E 17/346080/3029400
  - F 17/346020/3029320
  - G 17/346000/3029345
  - H 17/345970/3029340
  - I 17/345960/3029360
  - J 17/345910/3029360
  - K 17/345910/3029350
  - L 17/345850/3029350
  - M 17/345850/3029360
  - N 17/345820/3029360
  - O 17/345820/3029300
  - P 17/345410/3029300
  - Q 17/345300/3029290

MANATEE CO  
SARASOTA CO

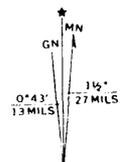
MANATEE CO  
SARASOTA CO

Stephens Pt.

SCALE 1:24000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET  
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL  
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET - DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 2.3 FEET



Heavy duty  
Medium duty

SEASIDE RAY

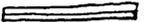


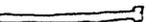
### CAPLES' - RINGLINGS' ESTATES HISTORIC DISTRICT

Contributing Structures 

Non-Contributing Structures 

1 inch = 200 feet

Seawall 

Masonry Wall 

District Boundary 

58th Street

BAYSHORE ROAD

P

N  
M  
L  
K  
J  
I