NPS Form 10-900 (Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructional properties and propert

| 1. Name of Property | | | | |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| nistoric namePIERCE | , THOMAS R., HO | USE | | |
| ther names/site number | Pierce Hotel | | | |
| . Location | | | | |
| treet & number 202 W | . Noble Avenue | | n/3 | not for publication |
| ity or townBush | nell | | r | 1/a vicinity |
| tate <u>Florida</u> | code <u>FL</u> cod | unty <u>Sumter</u> | code <u>261</u> | zip code <u>33513</u> |
| State/Federal Agency C | ertification | | | |
| nationally statewide | at the National Register criterion of the National | leputy SHP | ments.) | |
| State of Federal agency and | d bureau meets does not meet | Officer, Divisi | on of Historical | <u>Reso</u> urces |
| In my opinion, the property | □ meets □ does not meet | Officer, Divisi | on of Historical | <u>Reso</u> urces |
| In my opinion, the property comments.) | □ meets □ does not meet | Officer, Division of the National Register criterian | on of Historical | <u>Reso</u> urces |
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| In my opinion, the property comments.) Signature of certifying official State or Federal agency and National Park Service Concreby certify that the property is entered in the National Re | meets does not meet al/Title d bureau Certification s: gister. | Officer, Division of the National Register criterian | a. (See continuation she | et for additional Date of Action |
| In my opinion, the property comments.) Signature of certifying official State or Federal agency and National Park Service Concreby pertify that the property is | meets does not meet al/Title d bureau certification gister. sheet. | the National Register criter Date Signature of the Keep | a. (See continuation she | et for additional Date of Action |
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| 5. Classification | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---------------------|
| Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply) | Category of Property (Check only one box) | Number of Res (Do not include pre | sources within Proportionally listed resources in | erty the count.) |
| <u>x</u> ∟ private | □x building(s) | Contributing | Noncontributing | |
| ☐ public-local☐ public-State | ☐ district ☐ site | | 0 | buildings |
| □ public-State □ public-Federal | □ structure | 0 | 0 | sites |
| | □ object | 0 | 0 | structure: |
| | | 0 | 0 | objects |
| | | 1 | 0 | Total |
| Name of related multiple p (Enter "N/A" if property is not part | property listing of a multiple property listing.) | Number of cor in the National | ntributing resources Register | previously listed |
| N/A | | 0 | | |
| 6. Function or Use | | | | |
| Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) | | Current Function (Enter categories from | | |
| DOMESTIC/ Single | <u>Dwelling</u> | DOMESTIC | / Single Dwel | lling |
| Hotel | | Hotel | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| 7. Description | | | | |
| Architectural Classification | | Materials | | |
| (Enter categories from instructions) | | (Enter categories from instructions) | | |
| Vernacular | | foundation <u>sto</u> | ne pier; bri | k pier |
| | | walls <u>WOOD/ clapboard</u> | | |
| | | | | **** |
| | | roof <u>METAL</u> | ··· | |
| | | 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.) | Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) COMMERCE |
| A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. | ARCHITECTURE |
| ☐ 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. | Period of Significance |
| 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.) | Significant Dates |
| Property is: | 1926-27 |
| □ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. | |
| ☐ B removed from its original location. | Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A |
| ☐ C a birthplace or grave. | Outhwell Affiliation |
| □ D a cemetery. | Cultural Affiliation N/A |
| ☐ 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. | Architect/Builder Unknown/Unknown |
| Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets. | .) |
| 9. Major Bibliographical References | |
| Bibilography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on o | ne or more continuation sheets.) |
| Previous documentation on file (NPS): | Primary location of additional data: |
| □ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) 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 | ☑ State Historic Preservation Office ☐ Other State agency ☐ Federal agency ☐ Local government ☐ University ☐ Other Name of repository: |
| # recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # | |

County and State

| 10. Geographical Data |
|--|
| 10. Geographical Sata |
| Acreage of Property <u>less than one acre</u> |
| UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.) |
| 1 1 7 3 9 1 2 0 0 3 1 7 1 2 1 0 3 Zone Easting Northing 2 |
| 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 Sherry Piland, Historic Sites Specialist |
| organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date December 1995 |
| street & numberR.A. Gray Bldg., 500 S. Bronough telephone (904) 487-2333 |
| city or town state state 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 |
| street & number telephone |
| city or town state zip code |

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 to amend existing 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.

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The Thomas R. Pierce House is located at 202 West Noble Avenue in Bushnell, Florida. The two-story, frame residence has a two-tier veranda. The house rests on a stone pier foundation; the brick piers of the veranda are mortared to large stones at the ground level. The exterior of the house is finished in pine clapboard with some novelty siding. The cross-gable roof is galvanized metal, placed over the original cypress shingles. house has an irregular plan.

SETTING

The Pierce House occupies a lot measuring 166 feet by 200 feet, at the northwest corner of Noble Avenue and Broad Street. Noble Avenue is a major east/west thoroughfare through the center of Bushnell. A white picket fence borders the property on three sides, replacing a iron fence that was donated to the war effort in the early 1940s. The house sits back approximately forty feet from the property line. The grounds are landscaped with azaleas, water tupelo, camphor, and magnolia trees. Oak trees on the property were destroyed in a hurricane in the 1930s. Other residences are located to the north, south, east, and west of this house.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The main facade of the Pierce House faces south onto Noble Avenue (Photo 1). A two-tiered porch extends across the facade and curves to continue along the east elevation. The veranda has boxed piers and a simple railed balustrade, a wood floor, and beaded board ceiling.

The west end of the main facade terminates in a two-story, three-sided bay with a conical roof (Photo 2). Windows in this bay are wood, 2/2, double hung sash. Identical windows are used on the east and west elevations.

The double entrance door with glazed upper panels is located at the west end of the porch (Photos 3 and 4). Secondary entrances from the veranda into the house are located on the east facade, leading into the parlor, and at the north end, leading into a room that today is used as an antique shop. A double

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glass-paneled door has been added to the north end of the second story veranda (Photo 5).

A one-story, shed roofed porch originally extended across the rear (north) elevation of the house. The one-story kitchen was originally a separate structure, connected to the house by a breezeway. However, the breezeway was enclosed by 1926. The 1926 Sanborn map shows a one-story, L-shaped porch across the rear (north) elevation and along the east wall of the original kitchen. The position of the porch along the kitchen wall is still revealed by a break in the roof line (Photo 6). French windows with an over-sized fanlight transom and a multipaned door have recently been added to the north elevation of the kitchen wing. The porch across the rear elevation of the house is enclosed. The porch and second floor have hinged, 9-light windows.

The west elevation of the house clearly shows the original two-story portion of the structure, the one-story enclosed breezeway, and the one-story kitchen structure (Photo 7). A door has been added to the west elevation, at the north end of the original section of the house. Two rectangular, 2/2, double hung sash windows are located in the section of the west elevation that formerly was the breezeway. Multipaned French doors have been placed on the west elevation of what was the original kitchen section, replacing a single door. A low wood deck was recently constructed along the north end of this elevation, with access from the new doors (Photo 8).

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

This house was designed with eight-foot wide center hallways on both the first and second floors (Photos 9 and 10). The stairway has a simple rail baluster and an ornamental newel post (Photo 11). On the first floor, the hall is flanked by double parlors on one side, and by a living room and dining room on the other side. On the second floor, two bedrooms were placed on each side of the hallway. Back-to-back fireplaces were located between the parlors, and between the east bedrooms on the second floor (Photo 12).

The interior is finished with heart pine, tongue and groove floors, beaded board walls and ceilings (Photo 13). Ceiling

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height in the parlors, living room, and dining room is 11'6". The upstairs ceilings have a height of 9'6".

ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS

Historical Society confirm that the Pierce house has undergone some modifications. A photograph that probably dates between 1900 and 1910, shows that the shed roof of the veranda was originally supported by slender wood posts (Print 1). Instead of a baluster, a simple cross-bar served as a railing between the posts. By around 1927, the floor of the upper tier of the veranda was lowered and the shed roof was modified with much less of an angle to permit more light to enter the upstairs bedrooms. In addition, a railed balustrade was added, the second tier was made deeper, and the porch posts were boxed in (Print 2). It is not known when the metal roof was installed over the original cypress shingles.

A breezeway that connected a free-standing kitchen building to the house was enclosed, and portions of the veranda on the north (rear) elevation of the house were enclosed, probably around 1926.

The house underwent a major restoration in 1990-1994. During this project, in addition to modifications already described, one of the upstairs bedrooms was converted into a large bathroom; several doors were relocated; and a marble facing was added to one of the fireplaces on the first floor. The general floor plan and architectural character of the interior was retained.

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PIERCE, THOMAS R., HOUSE BUSHNELL, SUMTER CO., FL.

The Thomas R. Pierce House in Bushnell, Florida, was built around 1888. It meets Criteria A and C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, in the areas of Commerce and Architecture. The Pierce House was one of Bushnell's early boarding houses, accommodating salesmen visiting the area to purchase produce. It continued to be used as a boarding house until the 1950s. The Pierce House is also a significant example of local vernacular architecture.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Some settlement of the area that became Sumter County began in the mid-1840s, was spurred by the Armed Occupation Act of 1842 which granted tracts of land as an incentive to settlement. The area consisted of gently undulating topography. A number of lakes and freshwater streams were in the region. Timber was mostly pine with scattered hardwood hammocks.

Sumter County was created out of the southern portion of Marion County in 1853. The Withlacoochee River, which provided excellent water transportation to the west coast, formed more than half of the western boundary. Adamsville was named the county seat. However, an election held in 1858 moved it to Sumterville.

The population in the isolated county was sparse. By the 1860s, the northern part of the county had a density of only 2-6 people per square mile; the southern part of the county had 2 or less. In 1853, a stage line was opened from Jacksonville to Tampa and for many years this was the county's sole link with the outside world. Most county residents obtained their supplies from Silver Springs, where provisions were brought by boat from Jacksonville.

An increase in population in Sumter County was not appreciable until the coming of the railroads in the 1880s. By the turn of the century, the Seaboard Airline and the Atlantic Coast rail lines traversed the county in all directions. This brought in new residents and provided the county the means to ship produce to northern markets. By 1890, Sumter County had a population of 5363, and by 1900, it had grown to 6,187.

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Although citrus was grown in Sumter County, after the devastating freezes of 1894-95, truck farming became the major agricultural enterprise. Sumter County became one of the largest growing and shipping points at turn of century, especially of vegetables. As the county grew the number of hotels increased. In addition, some residents with large homes used them as boarding houses. The number of hotel rooms in the county grew from 117 in 1916-17, to 404 in 1928-29.

An early settler in Sumter County was Granville Beville, who relocated from Georgia and settled near Center Hill. In 1857 he was operating a grist mill. He also farmed on a large scale and had a steam-operated cotton gin. In 1866, Beville opened a mercantile business in the Center Hill area. Granville Beville once owned all of what became the community of Bushnell and the large Beville family remained prominent in the community.

Bushnell was first settled in 1870, but was not named until 1884. A syndicate of foreign capitalists, represented by Sir Edward J. Reed of England, consolidated several early Florida railroads which were incorporated as the Florida Railway and Navigation Company in 1884. The previous year a rail line had been established between Jacksonville to Panasoffkee. In 1884, the Florida Railway and Navigation Company extended the line from Panasoffkee to Bushnell. The chief engineer of the Company was John W. Bushnell, and the town of Bushnell was named in his honor. The Florida Railway and Navigation Company experienced financial difficulties and by 1900, after a period of receivership, was taken over by the Seaboard Airline Railway.

The growth of Bushnell was made possible by its railroad connection. In 1886, the population of Bushnell reached thirty. The village had a hotel, a store, post office, and a syrup mill. By 1911, with a population of 100, the town was incorporated and became the county seat. The community had become a shipping point for winter vegetables, citrus fruit, and dairy and poultry products. Although the population was still at 100 in 1918, the town did have four hotels, catering primarily to traveling produce merchants. The prosperity brought on by the Florida land boom of the early 1920s made it possible for Bushnell to acquire

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PIERCE, THOMAS R., HOUSE BUSHNELL, SUMTER CO., FL.

electricity and a water system by 1927. The population had grown to almost 600 by 1939.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Around 1888, Thomas R. Pierce built a large frame house in the heart of Bushnell, on one of the primary streets, Noble Avenue, and approximately two blocks from the railroad station. Little is known about Thomas Pierce or his wife, Fannie. Pierce was born in 1849. At the time he purchased a lot in Bushnell in 1886, he was described as a resident of Lee County, Alabama. Surviving documents from 1890, 1892 and 1893, reveal that Pierce was a produce grower and shipper. He sold produce, including cantaloupes, oranges, cucumbers, beans, and squash to commission merchants in Cleveland, New York, and Tampa.

According to deed records, in 1885, Pierce purchased two lots at the northwest corner of Noble and Broad Streets, for \$500. In July of 1888, he took out a mortgage from J. A. Gough, presumably to begin construction of his house.

The Florida Gazetteer of 1911 lists a hotel in Bushnell, operated by S. K. Pierce. No other Pierce is listed, so possibly this is an error in spelling and the Pierce home was being used as a boarding house by this date.

Thomas Pierce died in 1913, and was survived by his wife Fannie, and their daughters, Gertrude and Erine, and their sons, George and S. Rutledge. At the time of his death, in addition to his property in Bushnell, Pierce also owned land just north of Bushnell (probably his farm), and property in Cayo Costa, Lee County.

The Florida Gazetteer of 1918 lists four hotels in Bushnell, including the Beville House (at Main Street and Noble Avenue), operated by Mrs. Claiborne Beville (Mary), and the Pierce Hotel, operated by Mrs. T. R. Pierce. According to family history, Mrs. Beville and Mrs. Pierce met the daily train as it arrived in Bushnell, rivaling each other in procuring customers for their respective boarding houses. The Pierce House was well known to travelers for its hospitality and cuisine.

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In March 1922, the Beville House was destroyed by fire. The following June, Mary's daughter-in-law, Anna Beville purchased the Pierce House and continued to operate it as a boarding house until 1955. Anna Beville lived in the house until her death in 1963, and the house remained in the ownership of the Beville family until 1977. The Pierce House is the only historic hotel or boarding house from this period remaining in Bushnell.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Vernacular architecture embraces a diversity of folk and mass-produced building forms that were transmitted by memory or by pattern book. Nineteenth-century industrialism facilitated the dissemination of standardized, manufactured building elements. Vernacular buildings were designed and constructed by lay builders who drew upon traditional building techniques and contemporary stylistic preferences for their inspiration. These vernacular structures can be amalgams of building traditions and style, or may reflect the personality of the builder. Primary consideration was given to providing functional and comfortable spaces for the owners. Frequently, vernacular buildings reflect a local adaptation to landscape, climate, and cultural patterns. Decorative features were often applied liberally, exhibiting stylistic references without in and of themselves constituting a style of architecture.

Contributing residential vernacular buildings vary in scale, setting, and design. Most are one or two stories, many feature large porches, and a few are set on large lots with a substantial setback. Most display gable or hip roofs, and although original roof surfaces include either wood or metal shingles, or metal 3-V crimp sheeting, many roofs have been replaced by composition shingles. Corbeled brick chimneys and a variety of dormer types are used. Building plans often show varied, irregular footprints. Clapboard, patterned wood shingles, and board-and-batten serve as common exterior wall fabrics. Brick piers serve as the foundation for most buildings and some rest on continuous brick foundations.

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Thomas R. Pierce house is an outstanding example of vernacular architecture in Sumter County. The large size of the house allowed it to function as the family home of Thomas and Fannie Pierce, and their four children. The house was large enough that guests could also be accommodated, so it was easily adapted to use as a boarding house, providing additional income for the family. As a bed and breakfast, it continues to have a similar function today.

Although the two-tier veranda has undergone some modifications over the years, and the free-standing kitchen was connected to the main body of the house around 1926, the Pierce House has been remarkably unchanged otherwise. The interior floor plan remains intact and continues to reflect the ca. 1888 period of construction. The large number of windows and the extensive two-tier veranda are features that are particularly appropriate for the warm Florida climate. These features, and the eight-foot wide center hall assure ample light and adequate circulation of air.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Begin at the Southeast Corner of Block 51, New Plat of Bushnell. Run North 200 feet, West 166 feet, South 200 feet, then East 166 feet to Point of Beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Thomas R. Pierce House.

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- 1. Thomas R. Pierce House, 202 West Noble Avenue
- 2. Bushnell, Sumter County, Florida
- 3. Barbl Pownall
- 4. November 1994
- 5. 202 West Noble Avenue, Bushnell, Fl.
- 6. Main (south) facade, view looking northeast
- 7. 1 of 13

Items 1-5 are the same for the remaining photographs

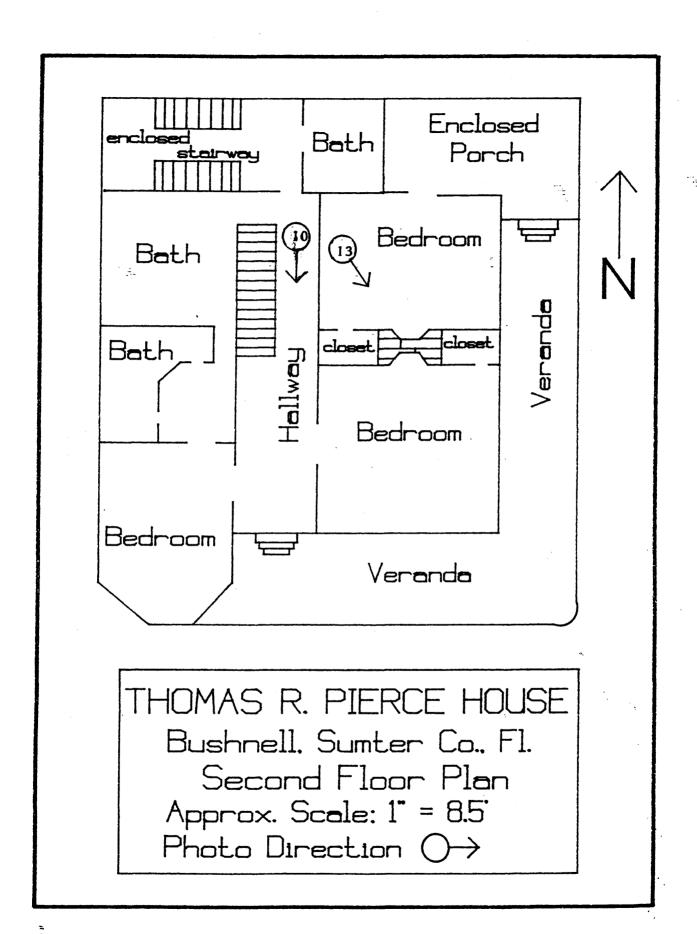
- 6. Detail, main (south) facade; view looking north
- 7. 2 of 13
- 6. Main (south) facade on left, east elevation on right; view looking northwest
- 7. 3 of 13
- 6. Main (south) facade, view looking north
- 7. 4 of 13
- 6. Second story veranda, view lookikng north
- 7. 5 of 13
- 6. Rear (north) elevation, view looking southwest
- 7. 6 of 13
- 6. West elevation, view looking east
- 7. 7 of 13
- West elevation, view looking slightly southeast
- 7. 8 of 13
- 6. Interior detail, first floor hall, view looking south
- 7. 9 of 13
- 6. Interior detail, second floor hall, view looking south
- 7. 10 of 13
- Interior detail, stairway, first floor; view looking northwest
- 7. 11 of 13

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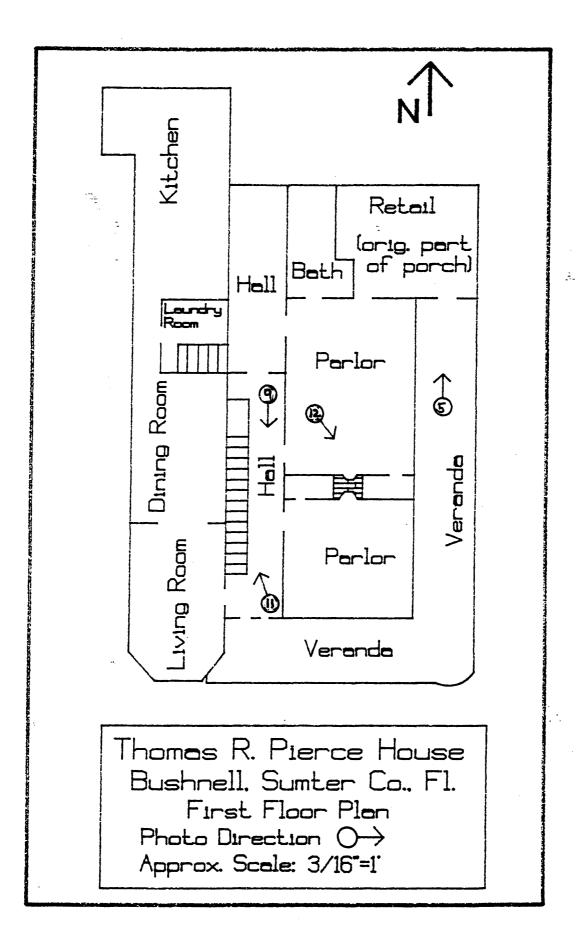
PIERCE, THOMAS R., HOUSE BUSHNELL, SUMTER CO., FL.

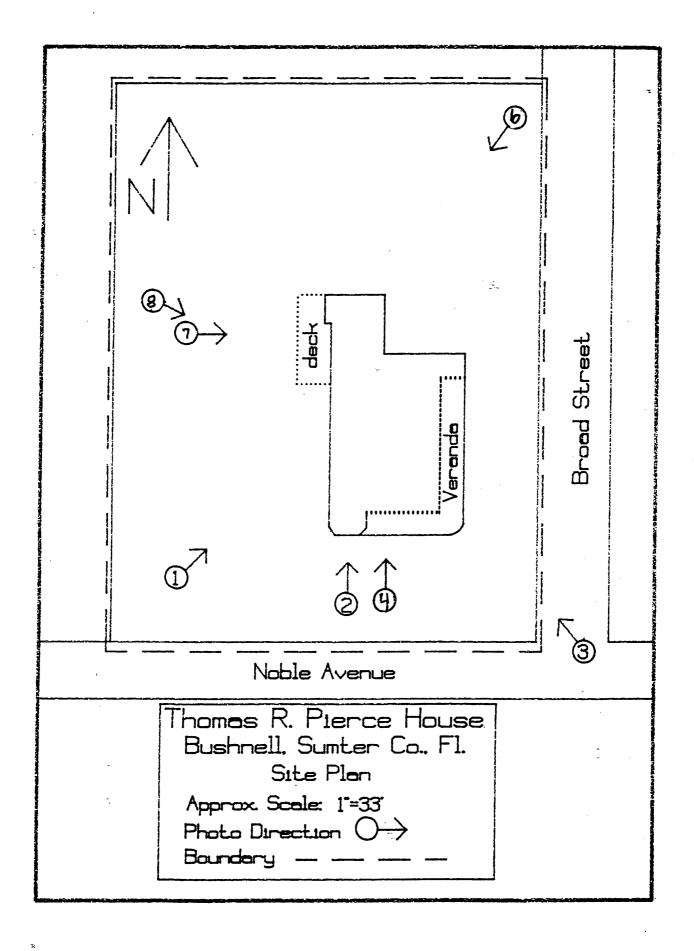
- 6. Interior detail, fireplace, first floor parlor; view looking southeast
- 7. 12 of 13
- Interior detail, northeast bedroom, second floor; view looking southeast
- 7. 13 of 13



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PRINT 1



PRINT 2