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

		word processor, or computer, to compute all items.
1. Name of Property	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
historic name <u>CASA RIO</u>	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
other names/site numberstribl	ey, S. W., House; S	Site # LL0285
2. Location		
street & number <u>2424 McGreg</u> o	r Boulevard	
city or town <u>Fort Myers</u>		n /a vicinity
state <u>Florida</u> code _	FI_ county <u>Lee</u>	code <u>0.7.1</u> zip code <u>3.39.17</u>
3. State/Federal Agency Certification		
Historic Places and meets the procedural and meets does not meet the National Reconstruction of the National Reconstruction	pets the documentation standards for record professional requirements set forth in register criteria. I recommend that this page continuation sheet for additional cordinate Deputy SHO 9 Date Ervation Office, Division	gistering properties in the National Register of a 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property roperty be considered significant mments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title	Date	
State or Federal agency and bureau		
	A .	
4. National Park Service Certification I hereby certify that the property is:	O/ Gignature of the Kee	Date of Action
entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.	Colson H	Beal 18.24.96
 ☐ determined eligible for the National Register ☐ See continuation sheet. 		, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
determined not eligible for the National Register.		
removed from the National Register.		
other, (explain:)		

Name of Property	, succession and	County and	State	a
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 Proper viously listed resources in t	r ty he count.)
🗵 private 💥 💆 😘	□Xbuilding(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing	
☐ public-local☐ public-State	□ district ⊡^∕sile	1	0	buildings
□ public-State □ public-Federal	☐ structure	0	0	sites
·	□ object	2	0	structures
		0	0	objects
		3	0	Total
Name of related multiple poster "N/A" if property is not part	roperty listing of a multiple property listing.)	Number of con in the National	tributing resources p Register	reviously listed
Historic Resource	es of Lee County, 18	81-1945.	0	
6. Function or Use				
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current Functions (Enter categories from		
DOMESTIC/ Single Dwelling		DOMESTIC/ S	ingle Dwellin	g
			× 11 × 12 × 12 × 12 × 12 × 12 × 12 × 12	
7. Description				
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)		Materials (Enter categories from	instructions)	
	CENTURY REVIVALS/	foundation	Sauciente ———	
Mission/Spanish	Colonial Revival	wallsStucco		
		<u>-</u>	X-11-	
		roof <u>Cerami</u>	c tile	
		other		

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

8. St	tatement of Significance	
(Mark	icable National Register Criteria "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property tional Register listing.)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
□ A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	Architecture
□В	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	
□X 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.	
	ria Considerations "x" in all the boxes that apply.)	Significant Dates
Prope	erty is:	
	owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	
□В	removed from its original location.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
\Box C	a birthplace or grave.	
□ D	a cemetery.	Cultural Affiliation N/A
	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 Arch: Van Ryn, Henry and de Gelleke Gerrit
	ntive Statement of Significance in the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)	Blder: Unknown
9. M	ajor Bibliographical References	
Bibile (Cite the	ography ne books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one	or more continuation sheets.)
Previ	ous 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 #	X 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	
Acreage of Property Approx. 2.3 acres	
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)	
1 1 7 4 1 2 2 8 0 2 9 4 5 9 6 0 Zone Easting Northing 2 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	Zone Easting Northing See continuation sheet
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)	2 330 Sammanon Shoot
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)	
11. Form Prepared By	
name/title Victoria (Mikki) Hartig/ Sherry Pil	and, Historic Sites Specialist
organization <u>Bureau of Historic Preservation</u>	dateAugust 1996
street & number R.A. Gray Bldg., 500 S. Bronou	gh telephone (904) 487-2333
city or town s	tate <u>Florida</u> zip code <u>32399-0250</u>
Additional Documentation	
Submit the following items with the completed form:	
Continuation Sheets	
Maps	
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the prope	rty's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having la	rge acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs	
Representative black and white photographs of the proper	rty.
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 towns	tate 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.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CASA RIO, FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FL.

Section number	·7	Page	1
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Casa Rio, 2424 McGregor Boulevard, Fort Myers, Florida, was completed ca. 1926. The two-story, masonry Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style home has an H-shaped plan, modified by a one-story veranda that extends across the rear elevation. The house rests on a raised concrete foundation. The exterior walls are finished in stucco. Fenestration throughout the house is provided by 6/6 and 1/1, double hung, wood sash windows. The windows are grouped, paired, or placed in singular arrangements. The complex, cross-gable roof is surfaced with clay pantiles. The projecting eaves are bracketed with wood. Stucco chimneys with gable tile caps are located near the northeast and southwest ends of the main roof ridge. The house is virtually unaltered and retains its original plan and architectural integrity. Casa Rio contributes to the Historic Resources of Lee County, Florida, multiple property group under property type F.1, Residential Buildings.

Setting

Casa Rio is located approximately 1/3 mile south of the central business core of Fort Myers. The house is just to the south of the Thomas Alva Edison Winter Estate (NR 1991) and the Henry Ford Estate (NR 1988). On the northernmost property line, a low coral stone wall, believed to be of early construction, separates the Casa Rio property from the adjoining Ford Estate.

Casa Rio sits back approximately 400 feet from McGregor Boulevard. McGregor Boulevard, known colloquially as the Avenue of the Palms for the royal palms that line both sides of the boulevard, was designated a state historic highway by an act of the Florida legislature in 1975. A long paved driveway, flanked by majestic royal palms, leads to the home and circles in front of the centered entry. Also on the grounds are two large banyan trees, similar to those seen on the Edison Estate, and more than 30 fruit-bearing trees, including grapefruit, lime and mango.

The rear of the house overlooks the Caloosahatchee River and is sited approximately 180 feet from the original 265-foot, contributing, concrete seawall along the east bank of the river (see Print 1). The seawall is interrupted toward its northern terminus, forming a circular boat basin, constructed concurrent with the seawall (Photo 1). A contemporary wood boat dock extends out from the bank of the Caloosahatchee River at the southern edge of the parcel, outside the boundaries of the nomination.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CASA RIO, FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FL.

Section number ____7 Page ____2

Originally, the Casa Rio property encompassed 4+ acres and, in addition to the house, also contained a large two-story garage/servants' quarters building. In the 1950s, the property was subdivided and approximately 1.75 acres containing the garage building was sold. The property today consists of approximately 2.3 acres.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The main (southeast) facade of Casa Rio is oriented toward McGregor Boulevard (Photo 2). The H-shaped plan of the house is expressed by two-story projecting wings which terminate in front-facing curvilinear gabled parapets (Photo 3). Recessed arched openings in the gable end walls contain louvered attic vents. A one-story, arcaded porch extends between the gabled projections and is accessed by a low flight of steps. Only the center section of the porch is roofed. It is flat and shelters the main entrance, which is a batten door with wrought iron, strap hinges (Photo 4). A secondary entrance is located on the facade of the easternmost wing, providing direct access into a kitchen (Photo 5).

The rear (northwest) elevation features a one-story, arcaded veranda that extends partially along the southwest and northeast elevations (Photo 6). Arched entrances to this veranda are located at each end of the main (southeast) facade and at the center of the rear elevation. The flat roof of the veranda, concealed behind a parapet, functions as a second story deck (Photo 7). The arched openings of the veranda are filled with screen. Projecting off the eastern end of the rear elevation is a contributing, concrete swimming pool, erected in the early 1930s. A metal screen cage was added over the pool ca. 1972 (Photo 8).

The southwest elevation features two gabled dormers. A small balconet on the second floor is accessed by French doors (Photo 9). It has a simple, railed balustrade.

Attached to the northeast elevation of the house is a simple, rectangular, one-story, frame garage (Photos 2 and 5). The garage, erected in the 1950s, has a flat roof and an overhead garage door.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CASA RIO, FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FL.

Section number _____7 Page ___3

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The interior of the approximately 5,000 square foot house retains its original detail and decorative elements, including the original window and door hardware, and crystal interior door knobs. The house contains a living room, dining room, upstairs and downstairs kitchens, five bedrooms, seven original tile fireplaces, and four and one-half bathrooms. The original floor plan has been maintained.

Most of the walls are plaster. In many rooms the pine flooring was installed using a cross-sawn technique, and there are no visible knot-holes. Ceilings are 10 feet high. Copper insulation around the doorways and windows, and the elevation of the house on a raised foundation offered the best in comfort control for the times.

The main entrance in the house leads into a large living room, with a fireplace at the southwest end. The fireplace is flanked by recessed arched niches, and a recessed segmental arched niche is above the mantel (Photo 10). Just beyond the fireplace is the main staircase leading to the second floor (Photo 11). Southeast of the staircase, on the first floor, is a bedroom; northwest of the staircase is a library. A fireplace in the northeast corner of the library connects into the living room chimney stack.

The kitchen and dining room are northeast of the living room. A segmental arched doorway, flanked by built-in china cabinets, leads from the living room into the dining room (Photo 12). The dining room also has a fireplace.

A secondary exterior entrance, at the east end of the southeast facade, leads into the kitchen. Just within this entrance is a second staircase, leading to the second floor.

The southwest wing of the second floor contains two bedrooms. Two more bedrooms are located in the northeast wing. Between the two wings is a bath, and a combined kitchen and laundry room. Extending between the two wings at the rear (northwest) of the house is a large sun room (Photo 13).

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CASA RIO, FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FL.

Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

Casa Rio, Ft. Myers, Florida, is locally significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style architecture and as a unique work by the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, architectural firm of Van Ryn and de Gelleke. It contributes to the Historic Resources of Lee County, 1881-1945, multiple property group under Historic Context III: The Florida Land Boom, 1919-1927, and under Property Type F.1, Residential Buildings.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

During the 1920s, a speculative real estate boom affected most communities in Florida. Lured by the Florida legislature's prohibition of both income and inheritance taxes, many wealthy investors arrived in Florida. Business buildings, schools, and hundreds of houses were constructed in all parts of Ft. Myers during the mid-1920s.

The original owner of Casa Rio was C. W. Stribley, a wealthy paper manufacturer. Born in Indiana in 1868, Stribley received only a sixth grade education before entering the work force. first worked in railroad-telegraphy, and then in the timber industry. In 1897, he went to Kaukauna, Wisconsin, and became associated the Thilmany Pulp & Paper Company. Because of his great energy and his tireless promotion of new products, he was soon made manager. In 1901, Stribley was elected director of the Thilmany Pulp & Paper Company, and a short time later he was made treasurer, a position he held for 32 years. Stribley was recognized as an innovator and mechanical genius. He initiated Thilmany's first safety measures and inspired major changes in energy use, changing manufacturing from water to steam power and bringing electricity to the mill to provide a reliable source of energy. Stribley is credited with the perfection of wax paper and superior water marking. Stribley also assisted in founding the Longview Fibre Company in Washington.

Through his business dealings, Stribley met inventor Thomas Edison, who invited him for a visit to his winter home in Ft. Myers, adjacent to the winter home of Henry Ford. Stribley first visited Fort Myers about 1923. He was apparently impressed by his visit, for he selected and purchased a four-acre site in

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CASA RIO, FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FL.

Section number ____8 Page __2___

close proximity to the Edison and Ford properties. He then made plans to construct a substantial home which he named Casa Rio for its location on the Caloosahatchee River. Stribley paid \$17,036 for the property, documented by his surviving detailed financial records. One of Stribley's closest friends, pioneer boat builder J. L. Lofton, built a stream dredge and named it after Stribley. The boat was used to pump fill from the Caloosahatchee River for the Stribley home site.

In 1923, Stribley selected the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, architectural firm of Van Ryn and de Gelleke to design his Florida house. He had used the firm in 1910 for the design of his principal residence in Kaukauna, Wisconsin (which later became his summer home). Stribley's detailed financial records show that the architectural fees totaled \$3,577. By January 1, 1925 the property was cleared and filled, taxes paid, and a 674-foot artesian well dug. At that point, Stribley's total costs had reached \$53,947. Although the exact date of completion is not known, by the time the Stribleys took up occupancy in the house in 1928, costs had escalated to \$171,968 including \$9,000 for the seawall alone.

Much attention was paid to landscaping the property. Stribley sent some of his employees to South America to collect various types of sub-tropical plantings for use on his property and on that of his neighbor and friend, Thomas Edison. In addition, Stribley's Samoan gardener, Mr. Peace, oversaw with great care the cultivation of many of his native land's plants.

Stribley and his wife spent their winters in Ft. Myers for many years. Both were active in many community organizations, including the Masons, Boy Scouts, the Methodist Church, and the original development of the community hospital, Lee Memorial Hospital. Mrs. Stribley and Mrs. Edison laid the foundation for Ft. Myers' first garden club.

Although the Stribleys had no children of their own, they raised their orphaned niece from the age of three. Her son later recalled that while his great-uncle was a mechanical genius, he never learned to drive, and adopted the premise, "if you can afford a car, you can afford a chauffeur."

Mrs. Stribley died in the 1930s. Mr. Stribley continued to bring his nieces and nephews to Casa Rio for the winter until his

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CASA RIO, FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FL.

Section number 8 Page 3

own death in 1941. In the settlement of his estate, Casa Rio was sold for \$25,000 to Vercil Senseman, a longtime Ft. Myers resident.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Casa Rio, constructed in 1925, has architectural significance as an exemplary local example of the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style. In addition, it is the work of master architects Van Ryn and de Gelleke, principals in one of the most prominent architectural firms in Wisconsin from the late 1890s to the mid-1930s. The house retains its architectural integrity to a high degree.

Van Ryn and de Gelleke, Architects

The Milwaukee architectural firm of Van Ryn and de Gelleke specialized in institutional design, with the Lincoln County Courthouse, Merrill, Wisconsin (NR 1978); the Milwaukee-Downer College Quad, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (NR 1974); and the Milwaukee County Dispensary and Emergency Hospital, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (NR 1985) to its credit. The firm also designed numerous residential structures including the Cyrus Yawkey House in Wausau, Wisconsin (NR 1974).

Henry J. Van Ryn was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1864. After a period of study with architect C. A. Gomber, and employment with architects James Douglas and Edward T. Mix, he formed a partnership in 1885 with Robert G. Kirsch. Kirsch and Van Ryn published several books in their short-lived partnership, including Carpenter Joiner's Handbook, Model Houses & Cottages, or Hints on Economical House Building, and a revised edition of Specifications. Van Ryn worked independently for a time before going into partnership with Charles Lesser and Frank Andree in 1889.

Gerrit J. de Gelleke was also a Milwaukee native. He studied architecture under Van Ryn in the firm of Van Ryn and Lesser. In 1895, at the age of 23, de Gelleke registered as a student of architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. Upon graduation two years later, he returned to Milwaukee, where he entered into a partnership with Van Ryn. The firm was designated

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CASA RIO, FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FL.

Section	number	8	Page	4
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the Milwaukee School Board Architects in 1905, and was responsible for the design of all of Milwaukee's school buildings between 1912 and 1925. In 1920, the firm was awarded first prize in a national design competition for the Milwaukee County General Hospital. By that time, Van Ryn had become the firm's administrator and de Gelleke the designer.

At the onset of the depression, Van Ryn and de Gelleke continued to employ a full staff. However, their architectural commissions progressively declined. The partnership was eventually dissolved in 1937, and both architects returned to solo practice. Much of their work produced by the firm of Van Ryn and de Gelleke was in the Romanesque Revival style. The Mediterranean Revival style of the Casa Rio is, therefore, a major variation in their work. It is also the only known design by the firm in Florida.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CASA RIO, FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FL.

Section numbe	r <u> </u>	Page	1
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- Board, Prudy Taylor, and Colcord, Esther B. <u>Pages From the Past</u>. Norfolk, Virginia: Donning Company, 1990.
- Bremer, William W. and Lyon, Holly J. "A Little Ways Ahead:" The Centennial History of Thilmany Pulp & Paper Company, Kaukauna, Wisconsin: Graphic Communications Center, 1983.
- Gregory, John G. <u>History of Milwaukee</u>. Chicago: S. J. Publishing, 1931.
- Grismer, Karl H. <u>The Story of Fort Myers</u>. St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Printing Company, 1949.
- Scott, Velma, current owner of Casa Rio. Interviews by Mikki Hartig, June and August 1995.
- Stribley, C. W. Construction accounting ledger, entries dated from 1920 to 1928, original in possession of Velma Scott, Ft. Myers, Florida.
- Stansbury, Karl E. A History of Thilmany Pulp and Paper Company,

 "A Measure of Success." Kaukauna, Wisconsin: Thilmany Pulp
 and Paper Company, 1977.
- The First Seventy Years: A Chronology of
 Thilmany Pulp & Paper Company, 1883-1953. Kaukauna,
 Wisconsin: Tilmany Pulp and Paper Company, 1953.
- State of Wisconsin Historical Society, Wisconsin Architectural Archive, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- Henry J. Van Ryn, a legacy of public & commercial buildings in Central Wisconsin, "The Designs of Henry J. Van Ryn, Architect."
- Intensive Survey Report, Wausau, Wisconsin, May 1984.
- Aucutt, Donald M. <u>Van Ryn, Architect in Central Wisconsin at</u>
 <u>Century's Turn</u>. Central/Northwoods Wisconsin Architectural
 Museum, 1992.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

		CASA RIU, FORT MEYERS,
Section number10	Page1	LEE COUNTY, FL.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Parcel number 23-44-24-P4-00017-0010, as recorded in the office of the Lee County Property Appraiser.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property, as shown on the site plan, includes all the remaining property that was historically associated with the Casa Rio. A parcel of approximately 1.75 acres along the southwestern side of the property was subdivided in the 1950s and is not included in this nomination.

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United States Department of the InteriorNational Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section	number	Photo	Page	1
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CASA RIO, FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FL.

- 1. Casa Rio, 2424 McGregor Boulevard
- 2. Fort Myers, Lee County, Florida
- 3. Mikki Hartig
- 4. March 1995
- 5. Historical and Architectural Research Services, 3708 Flores Avenue, Sarasota, Fl.
- 6. Boat basin and Caloosahatchee River; view looking north
- 7. Photo 1 of 13

The information for Items 1 through 5 is identical for the following photographs:

- 6. Main (southeast) facade, view looking northwest
- 7. Photo 2 of 13
- 6. Main (southeast) facade, view looking north
- 7. Photo 3 of 13
- 6. Detail, main entrance door; view looking northwest
- 7. Photo 4 of 13
- 6. Main (southeast) facade on left, northeast elevation on right; view looking west
- 7. Photo 5 of 13
- 6. Rear (northwest) elevation on left, southwest elevation on right; view looking east
- 7. Photo 6 of 13
- 6. Detail, second story deck, rear (northwest) elevation; view looking northeast
- 7. Photo 7 of 13
- 6. Rear (northwest) elevation, with swimming pool at extreme left; view looking east
- 7. Photo 8 of 13
- 6. Detail, southwest elevation; view looking northeast
- 7. Photo 9 of 13
- 6. Interior detail, living room, view looking west
- 7. Photo 10 of 13

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CASA RIO, FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FL.

Section number Photo Page 2

- 6. Interior detail, stairway leading from living room to second floor; view looking southwest
- 7. Photo 11 of 13
- 6. Interior detail, northeast end of living room, looking into dining room; view looking northeast
- 7. Photo 12 of 13
- 6. Interior detail, second floor sun room, view looking southwest
- 7. Photo 13 of 13

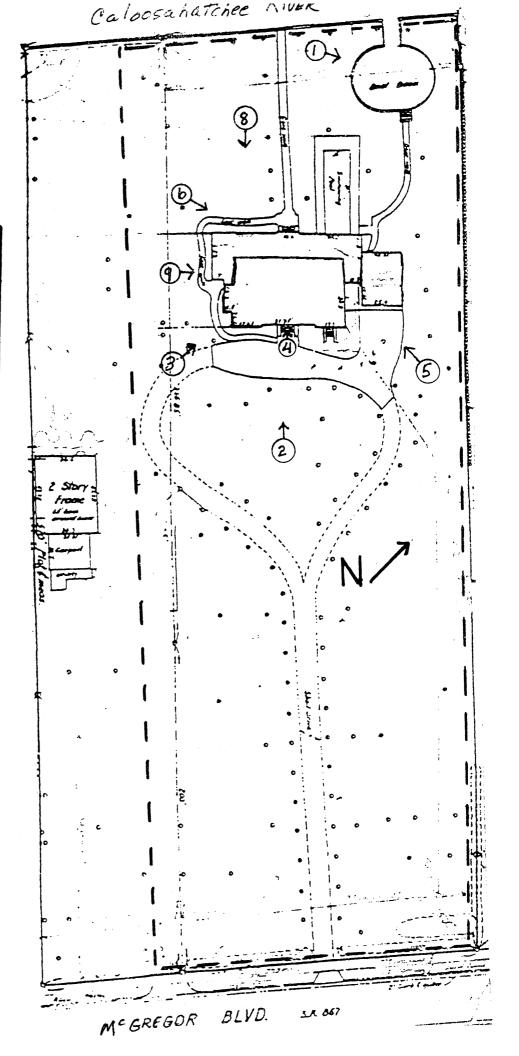
CASA RIO

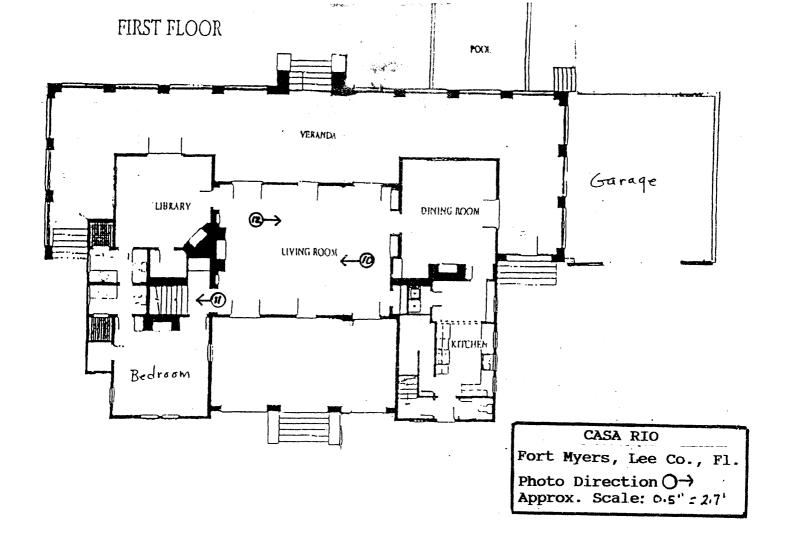
Fort Myers, Lee Co., Fl.

Boundary — — —

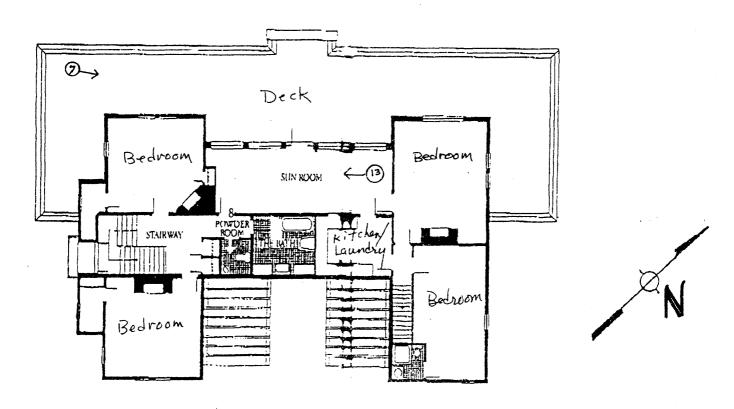
Approx. Scale; 0.5"=20'

Photo Direction —





SECOND FLOOR





Original in possession of Velma Scot