

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If 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.

1. Name of Property

historic name Hill, Dr. George E., House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 800 Indianola Drive not for publication

city or town Merritt Island vicinity

state Florida code FL county Brevard code 009 zip code 32953

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Suzanne P. Walker/Deputy SHPO 7/7/93
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Delon Byer

Entered in the National Register

Date of Action

8/12/93

Name of Property

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: vernacular

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls Wood/weatherboard

roof metal

other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Exploration/settlement

Architecture

Period of Significance

1890-1943

Significant Dates

1890

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Hill, Dr. George E., House
Name of Property

Brevard Co., Florida
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	117	527500	3140900
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert Bennett, Jr./Sherry Piland, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date July 1993

street & number R.A. Gray Bldg., 500 S. Bronough telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name _____

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.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****DR. GEORGE E. HILL HOUSE
MERRITT ISLAND, BREVARD CO., FL.**Section number 7 Page 1**SUMMARY**

The Dr. George E. Hill House is located at 800 Indianola Drive in the unincorporated village of Indianola, on Merritt Island, in Brevard County, Florida. Constructed in 1890 by local carpenters, the house is Merritt Island's most elaborately ornamented example of vernacular architecture. The two-story wood frame residence has a T-shape plan and an addition that extends to the north. The exterior walls are covered with weatherboard. The cross-gable roof is sheathed with metal. The house rests on a foundation of brick piers, spaced evenly at eight foot intervals. The building retains its architectural integrity to a high degree.

Setting

The Hill House is sited on a one-acre parcel in Indianola, a village on the west side of Merritt Island, atop a thirty-foot bluff beside the Indian River. The house is the largest in a cluster of historic residential buildings that comprise the Indianola community. The property is bound on the north and east by undeveloped land, to the west by the Indian River, and to the south by a two-story wood frame residence. The building sits back approximately 85 feet from the river. The property also includes a c. 1900 garage, and a cistern built about 1890. A dock, constructed about 1921 (now in ruin), extended approximately 937 feet into the Indian River directly in front of the house. Vegetation in the form of palm, pine, scrub oak, and citrus trees augments the natural beauty of the landscape.

Exterior Description

The Hill House has a T-shaped plan, comprised of two main segments: a rectangular block with a side gable roof and a block that extends to the east, with a cross-gable. The main facade of the house faces west and the primary entrance is centrally located on the original portion of the house (photo. 1). A paneled double entrance door with rectangular lights provides the main access to the house (photo. 2). A veranda, enclosed with screening, extends across the west facade, along the south elevation, and turns the corner to extend a short way on the east elevation. The low hip roof of the veranda is supported by chamfered wooden posts. A tiered balcony projects over the main entrance and features a carved balustrade, ornamental spandrels,

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MERRITT ISLAND, BREVARD CO., FL.**Section number 7 Page 2

a decorative gable truss, and ornamental wood shingles (photo. 3). Fenestration consists of 2/2 double-hung sash windows. A 1981 addition extends the main facade to the north. This one-story segment has a gable roof. A hyphen, visible from the rear of the house, connects this addition to the northwest corner of the veranda and provides access to the addition (photo. 4). The addition also has an entrance on the east facade. It is fenestrated with 6/6 double hung sash windows. The weatherboard siding and wood shingle treatment of the gable ends is architecturally compatible with the original house.

The gable ends formed by the cross-gable roof are sheathed with decorative wood shingles. Each is also decorated with a decorative carved truss. The south gable wall has a false window with an arched top (photo. 5). A brick chimney with a corbelled cap is located over the south gable extension. A louvered panel is placed in the east gable wall.

In 1951 a single story, hip roof addition was placed on the east elevation (photo. 6). This addition has a entrance door at both the north and south ends

Fenestration is provided by a variety of windows (photo. 7). The original windows appear to have been rectangular, 2/2, double hung sash. These are present on the second floor. There are several replacement windows on both the first and second stories consisting of 1/1 and 6/6 windows that are shorter than the original windows.

Interior Description

The first floor interior features wide pinewood flooring, plaster walls, and twelve-foot ceilings. Entry from the main entrance is into a small rectangular foyer. A large living room takes up the entire west wing of the first story (photo. 8). Fireplaces, located at each end of the room, have decorative wooden mantles. An office and a bathroom are located in the enclosed veranda at the north end of the living room. A staircase (photo. 9) functions as a partition between the living room and the dining room (photo. 10). The kitchen, located east of the dining room, contains a winding staircase to the second story (photo. 11). The addition at the east end of the house contains laundry facilities. The addition on the north, contains a bedroom and bathroom.

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DR. GEORGE E. HILL HOUSE
MERRITT ISLAND, BREVARD CO., FL.

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The second floor contains five bedrooms and one bathroom. The west portion of the house contains three bedrooms, two of which have small fireplaces. The east rooms of the second story are accessed by a hallway which contains a large storage closet. The second floor interior is finished with plaster, paneled doors, and pine flooring.

Outbuildings

A one-story frame garage, located immediately east of the house, was constructed c. 1900. It has a metal gable roof and drop siding exterior wall fabric and rests on brick pier foundation supports (photo. 12). A more recent carport extends from its south wall. Immediately north of the garage building is a below-grade concrete cistern that was built about 1890.

Alterations:

In addition to the additions mentioned above, the only alterations to the house are as follows:

- 1) partial enclosure of the veranda in the early 1940s to create an office.
- 2) installation of an upstairs bathroom in the 1940s and alteration to the windows.
- 3) modernization of the kitchen and replacement of kitchen windows in the late 1940s with aluminum frame windows.
- 4) replacement of windows in master bedroom with aluminum frame windows.

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Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 1**DR. GEORGE E. HILL HOUSE
MERRITT ISLAND, BREVARD CO.,
FL.****SUMMARY**

The Dr. George E. Hill House is significant under National Register Criteria A and C, at the local level. Built as a winter hunting refuge for Dr. Hill, a Scranton, Pennsylvania dentist, the house satisfies Criterion A for its association with Florida's emergence as a winter retreat for wealthy northerners during the late nineteenth century. It is also significant for the role the Hill family played in the development of Indianola. To Indianola residents, the house represented an important link with the mainland because of its 937-foot dock (in ruin), which provided deep-water access for passenger and freight vessels.

The house, designed by Dr. Hill and his son Charles, was constructed in 1890 by a group of local carpenters, and occupied by members of the Hill family for over eighty years. Significant under Criterion C, the Hill House is Merritt Island's most elaborately detailed example of vernacular architecture. Its T-shape plan, decorative wood shingle detailing, gable end trusses, veranda and tiered balcony with carved spandrels, portray the high level of craftsmanship associated with the period.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT**The Founding and Development of Indianola 1868-1890**

During the late-nineteenth century Merritt Island consisted of a number of small, isolated settlements. The inhabitants of the island lived on homesteaded tracts as farmers. Merritt Island eventually became a productive citrus growing area. Among the first settlers were John R. Field, a Baptist preacher from Georgia and his brother, Samuel J. Field. In 1868 the Field brothers founded the settlement of Indianola. By 1897 the community had a church, school, store, several boarding houses, a club house or dancing hall, a dairy farm, and several groves. Like others who pioneered Merritt Island, Indianola citizens experimented with citrus, sugar cane, tobacco, and vegetable growing. Samuel Field's homestead, occupying 151 acres, was conveyed via patent through the United States Federal Land Office

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DR. GEORGE E. HILL HOUSE
MERRITT ISLAND, BREVARD CO.,
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about 1880. Field's homestead, which encompassed the village of Indianola, contained the most concentrated group of buildings in north Merritt Island. During the late-nineteenth century, Fields built several homes for family members and one for himself. In 1881, Field sold a fifteen acre tract of his homestead. This property subsequently changed hands several times before Dr. George E. Hill purchased it in 1890.

The Dr. George E. Hill House 1890-1942

Dr. Hill had considered purchasing property in Lake Worth but abandoned those plans and on May 26, 1890 purchased a fifteen acre tract in Indianola from Freeman S. and Susan M. Hodges of Putnam County, Florida at a cost of \$2,000. In a memoir written in 1920, Dr. Hill made the following observation about his introduction to Indianola in 1890:

I landed at Indianola, found John and Sam Field there to greet me. I had an option on fifteen acres from the Hodge Brothers of Counsel Bluffs. The front looked like a wilderness. They told me seven families comprised Indianola. It was beautiful there. I bought and built. . . . Them were happy days - the climate, the birds, the wild duck.

The tract soon became the site of Hill's new winter hunting and fishing home, which he and his son designed and Indianola residents helped build. Another short passage from the memoir reads:

Had to float the lumber from Titusville and men carried it on their shoulders up the bank to build our house, which John and Mary MacDonald and John Miott, St. Clair Nesbit, Jim Mitchell and Sam Grant built.

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Because Indianola had no hotel, Hill built his house large enough to accommodate guests that he invited from Pennsylvania. Several of these guests, impressed with Merritt Island as a vacation refuge, purchased small riverfront tracts from local residents, and over the years, built frame cottages.

Hill, a native of Schenectady, New York, served in the Union Army as a drummer during the Civil War. Immediately after the war he married his wife Celia and attended dentistry school in Philadelphia. With money earned through his dentistry practice, Hill financed a second business that involved helping young dental graduates start private clinics throughout Pennsylvania. Those business endeavors enabled Hill to live an affluent life in Scranton, Pennsylvania, while having ample time to visit his Merritt Island refuge during the winter season, often remaining there for eight to nine months out of a year.

About 1910, St. Clair Nesbitt, an Indianola resident, became a widower when his wife died during childbirth. Unable to properly care for his infant son, Nesbitt allowed Charles Hill and his wife to adopt the boy, whom they named Robert. In exchange for the child, Hill built a two-story house on his property for St. Clair Nesbitt and established a citrus enterprise on the remainder of the 15.5 acre tract that Nesbitt was responsible for. That series of events created a third generation of Hills that occupied the house until the late 1980s.

During the 1920s Indianola was still an isolated settlement, most easily accessed by water. To mitigate that hardship, Charles Hill in 1921 financed an addition to his existing dock. With that addition the dock extended 937 feet into the Indian River in front of his house. The dock soon became a necessity for sustaining the community. It provided deep water access for boats that delivered visitors, freight, and mail, and transported citrus from the Indianola packing house.

In 1928, Robert Hill, the adopted son of Charles Hill, married and took up permanent residence in his father's Indianola house. Robert Hill, who graduated from the University of Florida in 1932, managed the citrus enterprise, which by 1928 included a

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MERRITT ISLAND, BREVARD CO.,
FL.**

second grove containing about 50 acres. He was a founder of the Men's Citrus Cooperative, a group of Merritt Island and mainland growers who agreed not to sell to J.J. Parish Groves, a rival in the area's citrus industry. Robert Hill and his wife Ameilia gained sole ownership of the property in 1951 on the death of Charles Hill. After Robert Hill's death, his wife Amelia resided in the house until she sold it in 1989.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Vernacular architecture is designed and constructed by lay builders who drew upon traditional building techniques and contemporary stylistic preferences for their inspiration. These vernacular structures often reflect a local adaptation to landscape, climate, and cultural patterns. Nineteenth century industrialization made it possible to standardize and mass produce building elements and to disseminate them across the country, so that vernacular architectural embraces a diversity of folk and mass-produced building forms. Primary consideration was given to providing functional and comfortable spaces for the owners. Decorative features were often applied liberally, exhibiting stylistic references without in and of themselves constituting a style of architecture.

Frame vernacular buildings on Merritt Island are typically one or two stories in height, with frame structural systems and brick pier foundations. Plans vary but often the design is intended to maximize cross-ventilation. Roofs are frequently gable or hip, steeply pitched to accommodate attic space. Horizontal drop siding and weatherboard are the most common exterior wall surface materials. Wood shingles were often used to cover the roofs, but they have nearly always been replaced by composition shingles or 3-V metal sheeting. Porches, most commonly simple entrance or end porches, are common features. Windows are generally double-hung sash with multi-pane glazing and doors contain recessed wood panels. Exterior decoration is usually sparse and limited to ornamental woodwork.

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

A survey of Merritt Island, undertaken in 1991, identified 130 buildings as contributing to the historic fabric of the island. The earliest buildings were constructed in the decade between 1880 and 1890. Nineteen of the surviving residences (14% of the total) were constructed during this period and the majority of these were identified as vernacular structures. The Dr. George Hill residence is an excellent representative of these early Merritt Island residences. It is one of the largest, because it was specifically built to accommodate guests, and it is among the most sophisticated in terms of craftsmanship, and architectural detail and ornament, revealed through its wood shingles, gable end trusses, and tiered balcony with carved spandrels.

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**DR. GEORGE E. HILL HOUSE
MERRITT ISLAND, BREVARD CO.,
FL.**

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bennett, Robert, Interview with Jane Powell Yon, September 1992.

Brevard Abstract of Title Co. "An Abstract of Title for F.S. Hodges to a parcel of 15 acres believed to be a part of Lot 3 of Sec 15 in T 24 South of Range 36 East" n.p. Titusville, Florida, 1889.

Hill, Dr. George. Manuscript, personal memoirs, c. 1920.

Historic Property Associates, Inc. "Historic Properties Survey of Merritt Island, Florida" n.p. St. Augustine, 1990.

Vertical file, "Merritt's Island", Florida Room, Florida State Library, Tallahassee, Fl.

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**DR. GEORGE E. HILL HOUSE
MERRITT ISLAND, BREVARD CO., FL.**

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description:

A parcel of land lying in Section 15, Township 24 South, Range 36 East, Brevard County, Florida: Commence at the Southeast corner of Government Lot 3 of said Section 15, and run N.00 degrees 18'29"E., along the East line of said Government Lot 3, a distance of 515.34 feet to a point on the centerline of Indianola Drive (a prescriptive right of way); thence S.89 degrees 20'00"W., along said centerline, a distance of 502.02 feet to the point of beginning; thence continue S.89 degrees 20'00" W., along said centerline, a distance of 77.09 feet; thence N.10 degrees 20'47"W., a distance of 120.81 feet; thence S.89 degrees degrees 20'00"W., parallel to said centerline, a distance of 228 feet, more or less and into the waters of the Indian River; thence return to the point of beginning and run N.00 degrees 18'29"E., parallel to said East line, a distance of 234.07 feet; thence S.89 degrees 20'00"W., parallel to said centerline, a distance of 334 feet more or less to and into the waters of the Indian River; thence Southerly, meandering said waters to an intersection with the third course of this description; containing 1/11 acres, more or less.

Subject to the right of way of Indianola Drive and subject to all other easements and rights of way of record.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary, indicated by a dotted line on the accompanying site plan map, includes the structures and grounds that have been historically associated with the George E. Hill property.

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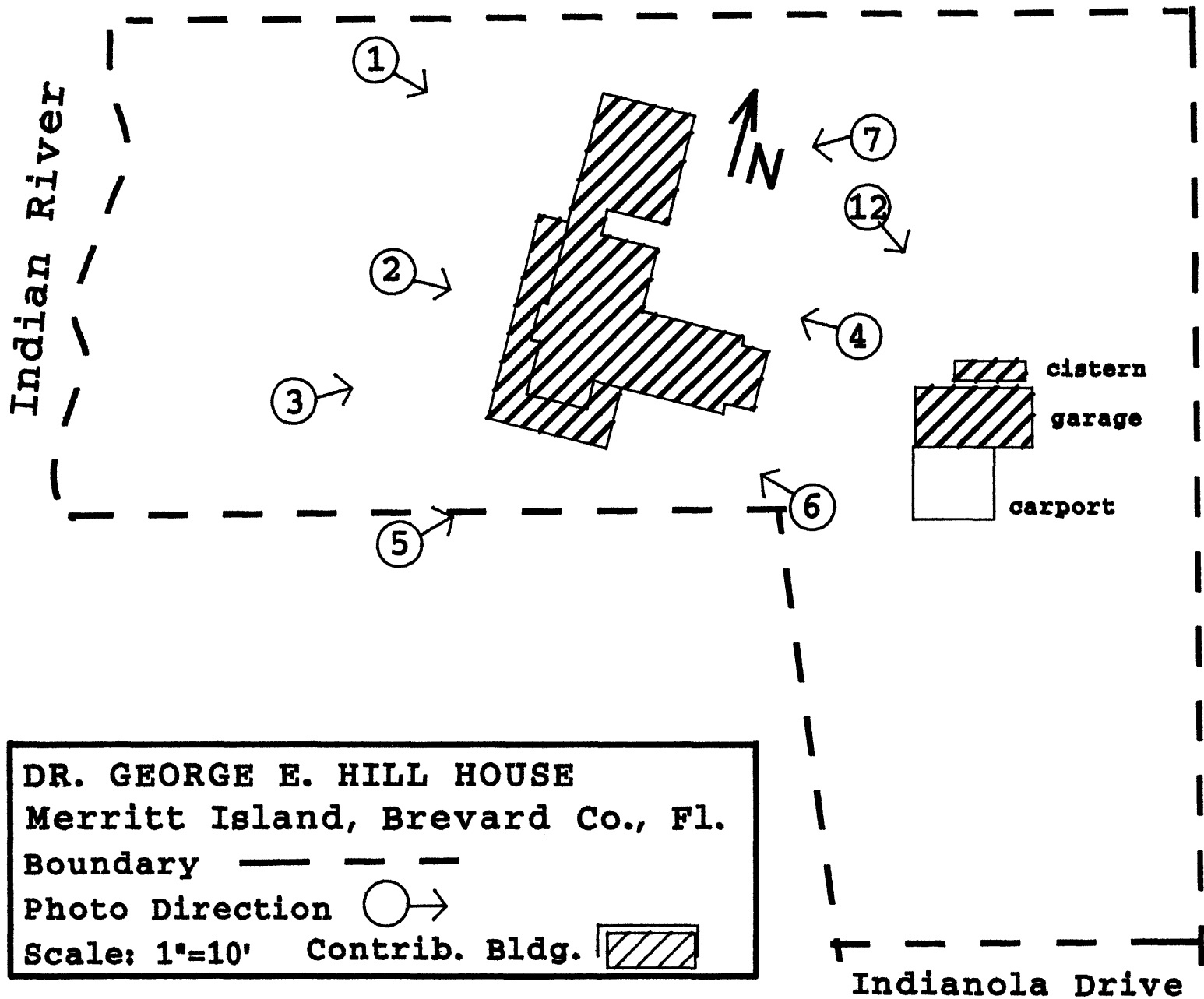
Section number Photo Page 1

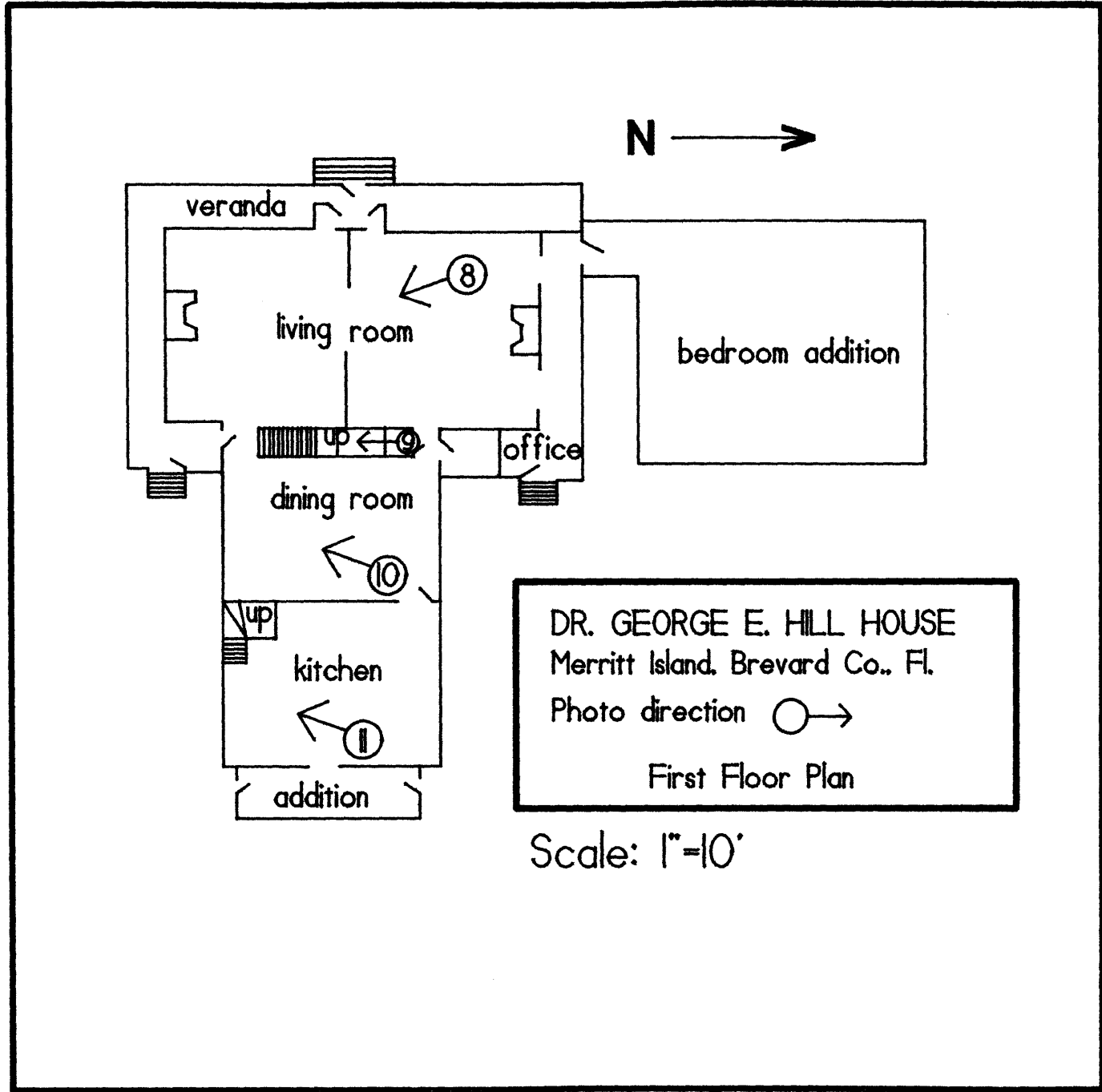
DR. GEORGE E. HILL HOUSE
MERRITT ISLAND, BREVARD CO.,
FL.

1. Dr. George E. Hill House
2. Merritt Island, Florida
3. Robert Bennett
4. 1992
5. Historic Property Associates
6. West elevation, looking east
7. Photo No. 1 Of 12

Numbers 1-5 are the same for the remaining photographs.

6. Detail, main entrance, west elevation. View looking northeast
7. Photo No. 2 of 12
6. Looking northeast at balcony detail on west elevation
7. Photo No. 3 of 12
6. Looking east at west elevation
7. Photo No. 4 of 12
6. Detail, gable end, south elevation. View looking northwest
7. Photo No. 5 of 12
6. Looking northwest at south elevation
7. Photo No. 6 of 12
6. Looking southwest at north elevation
7. Photo No. 7 of 12
6. Interior detail, first story living room, looking south.
7. Photo No. 8 Of 12
6. Detail, first story main staircase, view looking south.
7. Photo No. 9 Of 12
6. Interior detail, dining room, looking southwest.
7. Photo No. 10 Of 12
6. Interior detail, kitchen staircase, looking southwest.
7. Photo No. 11 Of 12
6. Looking southeast at garage and cistern
7. Photo No. 12 of 12





N →

veranda

living room

8

bedroom addition

office

dining room

10

kitchen

up

addition

DR. GEORGE E. HILL HOUSE
Merritt Island, Brevard Co., Fl.

Photo direction ○ →

First Floor Plan

Scale: 1"=10'

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Hill, Dr. George E., House Brevard County, FLORIDA
93000819

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVED

Greg M. Lapsley 3/31/94

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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MAR 15 1994

**NATIONAL
REGISTER**

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Dr. G. E. Hill House
Merritt Island, Brevard County, Fl.

Subsequent to the listing of the Dr. G. E. Hill House in the National Register in August, 1993, properties along Indianola Drive have been officially renumbered. Consequently, the street address for the Hill House has been changed to 870 Indianola Drive.

Records on file in the State Historic Preservation Office have been amended to reflect this change of address.