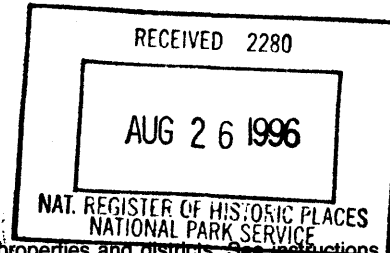


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 *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 Heitman, Gilmer, House

other names/site number Site # LL0614

2. Location

street & number 2581 First Street  not for publication

city or town Fort Myers  vicinity

state Florida code FL county Lee code 071 zip code 33901

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 8/21/96  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources  
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

Edson A. Ball 9-26-96  
Date of Action

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	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Historic Resources of Lee County,  
1881-1945

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)

LATE VICTORIAN/ Queen Anne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other

Narrative Description

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1908-1946

**Significant Dates**

1908

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Heitman, Gilmer, Sr.

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown/ Unknown

**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:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Heitman, Gilmer, House  
Name of Property

Lee Co., Florida  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	1	7
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4	1	4	1	4	0
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2	9	4	7	6	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3 

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Zone Easting Northing

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 Victoria (Mikki) Hartig / Sherry Piland, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date August 1996

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

city or town Tallahassee state Fl. 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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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HEITMAN, GILMER, HOUSE  
FORT MYERS, LEE CO., FL.

Section number 7 Page 1

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The Gilmer Heitman House, located at 2581 First Street in Ft. Myers, is a stately 5,300 square foot, two and one-half story, Queen Anne style residence, completed in 1908. Its modified rectangular plan is dominated by a composition shingle, hip roof broken by secondary roof structures, including two dormers and a chimney. The house rests on a foundation of brick piers. A pierced brick perimeter wall runs between the piers at the foundation level. The chimney, centrally located on the west slope, has a corbelled brick cap. The walls are finished with weatherboard. The house provides an excellent representation of the scale and style of architecture selected by Ft. Myers' most prominent businessmen and civic leaders for use in the construction of their personal residences, in the early part of the 20th Century. The Heitman House contributes to the **Historic Resources of Lee County, Florida, 1881-1945**, multiple property group under property type F.1, **Residential Buildings**.

## SETTING

The Gilmer Heitman House sits back approximately fifty feet from First Street. The landscaped lawn is punctuated by stately Royal Palms. A broad, brick walk leads from the sidewalk to the house.

The rear of the house overlooks the Caloosahatchee River (Photo 1). The Edison Bridge crosses the river just to the east of the Heitman House (Photo 16). A contemporary brick walk, centered and aligned perpendicular to the home, leads from the rear of the house to a contemporary wood dock extending into the river.

## EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The main facade of the Heitman House faces south (Photo 2). A two-story, pedimented, projecting entrance bay is centrally located on this facade. The primary entrance consists of paired wood doors with glass panels, surmounted by a transom. Three large double-hung sash windows are centered above the main doorway at the second level, providing access to the porch deck via the windows (Photo 3). This deck has a balustrade consisting

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**HEITMAN, GILMER, HOUSE  
FORT MYERS, LEE CO., FL.**

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of turned spindles between square wood posts. The pedimented entrance bay contains a louvered vent in the peak of the gable.

The first floor porch, approximately ten feet in depth, extends almost entirely around the house. It has a shallow-pitched hip roof with a denticulated molding at the top of the fascia (Photo 4). Paired Ionic columns, resting on brick piers, support the porch roof (Photo 5). Wood windows are regularly spaced on both the first and second floors. Throughout the house they generally are double-hung sash, with diamond pattern top sashes.

The southeast corner of the porch curves outward, accommodating a two-story bay window that terminates in a bracketed eave projecting over the denticulated fascia (Photo 6). The bay is surmounted by a balustrade like that over the main entrance. A small gabled dormer is centrally located on the east roof slope.

Double wood doors with a transom and side lights are centrally located on the rear (north) elevation (Photo 7). These entrances are sheltered by the porch that extends across most of this elevation. West of the central doorway is another transom door, flanked by double-hung sash windows, leading to the library. A group of three wood casement windows is centrally located on the second floor of this elevation. Just east of these windows is a projecting sleeping porch with a shed roof. Originally screened, the porch openings are now filled with glass. A gabled dormer is centrally located on the north roof slope, fenestrated with paired, 1/1, wood, double hung sash windows.

The porch connects at the east end of the rear (north) elevation with the off-set, one-story, kitchen block (Photo 8). A short breezeway originally linked the house and the kitchen block. The breezeway was enclosed in 1994. The enclosure of the breezeway shares the characteristics of design and material with the main building. Originally, a small, corbelled brick chimney pierced the east facing gable of the hip roofed structure. The chimney was removed in 1994 and replaced with a wood-sided chimney cap. Projecting from the east wall of the kitchen block is an attached, small, frame, shed-like structure with a gable roof that at one time housed the steam heat furnace.

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**HEITMAN, GILMER, HOUSE  
FORT MYERS, LEE CO., FL.**

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**INTERIOR DESCRIPTION**

The most significant interior feature of the fourteen room house is its woodwork, including classically influenced columns, paneled dados, paneled ceilings, window moldings, baseboards, and the four ornate wooden fireplace surrounds and mantles with tile hearths.

The interior is designed to provide a dramatic view from the primary (south) entrance, through the house, to the river (Photo 9). The front half of the first floor consists of a long parlor, extending the width of the house (Photo 10). A stairway to the second floor is located at the west end of this room (Photo 11). The rear half of the first floor contains a library and a dining room (Photo 12). A back-to-back fireplace at the west end of the parlor (Photo 11) also services the library (Photo 13). The dining room is accessed from the central hall, the parlor, and the kitchen.

The second floor contains four bedrooms (Photos 14 and 15), a bath, and a sleeping porch. The attic contains four storage rooms.

In 1993 and 1994, the Gilmer Heitman House was substantially rehabilitated by its present owner, retaining its original architectural integrity. It is presently in excellent physical condition.

**NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDING**

The original two-story garage/apartment was demolished in 1994, because it was extremely deteriorated. It is believed that this structure was constructed later than the house, although its date is unknown. It was replaced with a new frame, garage/apartment that replicates many of the design features of the house. At the same time, a covered brick walkway was created to link the garage with the kitchen block (Photos 16 and 17).

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1HEITMAN, GILMER, HOUSE  
FORT MYERS, LEE CO., FL.

The residence at 2577 First Street, Fort Myers, Florida was built for Gilmer Heitman, Sr., a prominent early Ft. Myers businessman and civic leader. Completed in 1908, the Heitman House fulfills Criterion B and C at the local level for listing in the National Register for Historic Places. Under Criterion B, the house is significant as the home of Gilmer Heitman, who played an important role in the commercial development of Fort Myers. Under Criterion C, the house is a significant local example of the Queen Anne style and is one of the largest and most elaborate early 20th Century residences in Fort Myers. The house is consistent with national and state-wide trends in architecture, and has maintained a high level of architectural integrity. It contributes to the Historic Resources of Lee County, Florida, 1881-1945 multiple property group under historic context II, Agricultural and Industrial Expansion, 1896-1918 and associated property type F.1, Residential Buildings.

## HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

During the period 1896-1918, Lee County underwent significant growth and development. Growth in tourism, citrus production, and other agricultural pursuits sparked a building boom that resulted in the construction of a number of fine residences, commercial buildings, and numerous improvements in Fort Myers' infrastructure. Improved roads and railroad facilities facilitated the export of locally produced goods and made the county more accessible to visitors. As a result, Fort Myers' population expanded from 943 in 1900, to 3,678 in 1920.

One of those drawn to Fort Myers by the agricultural and industrial expansion was Harvie E. Heitman. Heitman arrived from Lexington, North Carolina in 1888, to work in his great-uncle's general store. After the business went bankrupt in 1893, he worked in Key West for almost a year before returning to Ft. Myers to open his own small general store. In 1896, Harvie Heitman was joined in the business by his younger brother, Gilmer McCrary Heitman. The two brothers continued in many partnerships together until Harvie's death 25 years later.

Gilmer Heitman was born in 1881 in Lexington, North Carolina, and attended Lexington public schools. One of his first ventures, upon arriving in Ft. Myers, involved the purchase and development of a citrus grove, which he later sold at a large



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FORT MYERS, LEE CO., FL.

profit. Shortly thereafter, Heitman, only eighteen years old, realized that a need existed in Lee County for local telephone service. He invested his citrus grove profits in establishing Lee County's first telephone service, and in January 1900, obtained a franchise from the County Commission to maintain telephone service throughout the county. He opened the telephone exchange on the second floor of his new commercial building, the Heitman Building (extant), at First and Jackson. He continued to maintain ownership of the Lee County Telephone Company until 1924.

Once his telephone service was established, Gilmer Heitman left Ft. Myers to complete his education, taking a business course at the Sullivan-Crichton Business College in Atlanta, Georgia. After graduation, he returned to Ft. Myers and became involved in numerous other business ventures. He established the Mutual Realty Company and Home Insurance Company, was instrumental in constructing a new post office, and was involved in the development of many subdivisions between Ft. Myers and Tice, Florida. He is credited with developing the town of Bonita Springs and the construction of the Bonita Hotel. He opened the Heitman Clothing Company and had a financial interest in a hardware business, the Heitman-Evans Company. He became Vice President and a Director of the Bank of Fort Myers & Trust Company. Heitman's business activities also included the management of the Royal Palm Hotel in Ft. Myers. Over the years, Heitman undertook several other business enterprises, including ownership of a cattle ranch and operation of a packing house. He also acquired the South Florida Ford automobile agency.

On June 18, 1908, Heitman married Nina Alice Travers, the sister of one of his closest friend, Englishman Mark Travers. Following the death of his parents, Travers had been appointed guardian of his six year old sister, Nina. She remained in England for her education, but when she was eighteen, she joined her brother in the United States. Her marriage to Gilmer Heitman was considered the social highlight of the season in Ft. Myers.

Heitman began construction of a home on First Street, near the downtown area, in late 1907 or early 1908. Designed by an unidentified Tampa architect, the house incorporated the latest in improvements and was considered ahead of its time. The Heitmans moved into the fourteen-room house in 1908, when they returned from their honeymoon. Although their home was well

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FORT MYERS, LEE CO., FL.

suited for entertainment, they lived a quiet life. Heitman's business activities left little time for social activities. Mrs. Heitman entertained friends for lunch or tea and was active in the Episcopal Church. The Heitmans had two children, Gilmer Jr. and Dorothy. Their father was very family oriented and spent all his available time with his wife and children, including them in all his travels - even a tour of Europe. In the fall of 1908, Gilmer Heitman purchased the first automobile brought to Ft. Myers.

While Heitman did suffer some financial setbacks during the Depression, he was, in time, able to meet all his obligations while concentrating on reviving his business interests. In 1935, Heitman formed the Franklin Arms Hotel Company and purchased the historic Franklin Arms Hotel (Fort Myers Downtown Commercial District, NR 1990). In the early 1940s, Heitman served as a director of the Lee County Bank, which had been organized in 1934, and as a director of the Lee County Chamber of Commerce. In addition, he was an officer in the Ft. Myers Rotary Club, and was President of the Caloosa Grove and Improvement Company and West Coast Land Company.

Gilmer Heitman, Jr., followed his father's footsteps and became active in the Fort Myers business community. He served as trustee of his father's estate. Gilmer Heitman, Jr. and his family took up residency in the house after the elder Heitman died in 1960. The house remained in family ownership until 1993. The Heitman family played a significant role in the business, community, and civic affairs of early Ft. Myers. Gilmer, Sr. was honored for his contributions to the city and county by the naming of Heitman Street in downtown Ft. Myers.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Gilmer Heitman House is one of only three surviving, stately early-twentieth century residences that once lined the Caloosahatchee riverfront near the city's commercial core. It is an excellent example of the Queen Anne Style, which was the predominant style of choice for large-scale residences in Ft. Myers between 1890 and 1910. The building is virtually unaltered and is well-preserved and maintained.

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Continuation Sheet**

HEITMAN, GILMER, HOUSE  
FORT MYERS, LEE CO., FL.

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Dovell, Junius. Florida: Historic, Dramatic, and Contemporary.  
New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1952.

"Duel Sets Heitman's Course." Fort Myers News-Press, 25 April  
1970.

Godown, Marion B. "Ahead of its Time." Fort Myers News-Press,  
15 January 1978.

\_\_\_\_\_, and Rawchurch, Alberta. Yesterday's Fort Myers.  
Miami: E. A. Seemann Publishing, 1975.

Grismer, Karl H. The Story of Fort Myers. St. Petersburg:  
St. Petersburg Printing Company, 1949.

**Interview (by Mikki Hartig):**

Anderson, Carlamae, owner of property, June 1995.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**HEITMAN, GILMER, HOUSE  
FORT MYERS, LEE CO., FL.**

Section number Photo Page 1

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1. Gilmer Heitman House, 2577 First Street
2. Ft. Myers, Lee County, Florida
3. Mikki Hartig
4. June, 1995
5. Historical and Architectural Research Services, 3708 Flores Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34239
6. View looking north from rear of house toward Caloosahatchee River
7. Photo 1 of 17

Items 1-5 are identical for all of the remaining photos.

6. Main (south) facade, view looking north
7. Photo 2 of 17
  
6. Detail, main (south) facade entrance, view looking north
7. Photo 3 of 17
  
6. Detail, main (south) facade porch, view looking northwest
7. Photo 4 of 17
  
6. Detail, main (south) facade porch, view looking northeast
7. Photo 5 of 17
  
6. Main (south) facade on left, east elevation on right; view looking northwest
7. Photo 6 of 17
  
6. North (rear) elevation, view looking south
7. Photo 7 of 17
  
6. Detail, north (rear) elevation, looking toward kitchen and covered walkway; view looking southeast
7. Photo 8 of 17
  
6. Interior detail, main entrance doors; view looking south
7. Photo 9 of 17
  
6. Interior detail, view of parlor from stairway; view looking east
7. Photo 10 of 17

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**HEITMAN, GILMER, HOUSE  
FORT MYERS, LEE CO., FL.**

Section number Photo Page 2

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- 6. Interior detail, dining room; view looking north
- 7. Photo 11 of 17
  
- 6. Interior detail, west end of parlor and stairway; view looking northwest
- 7. Photo 12 of 17
  
- 6. Interior detail, library fireplace; view looking south
- 7. Photo 13 of 17
  
- 6. Interior detail, second floor, northwest bedroom; view looking northwest
- 7. Photo 14 of 17
  
- 6. Interior detail, second floor, southeast bedroom; view looking southeast
- 7. Photo 15 of 17
  
- 6. Detail, garage/apartment, south elevation; view looking north
- 7. Photo 16 of 17
  
- 6. Detail, garage/apartment, south elevation on right, west elevation on left; view looking northeast
- 7. Photo 17 of 17

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# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**HEITMAN, GILMER, HOUSE  
FORT MYERS, LEE CO., FL.**

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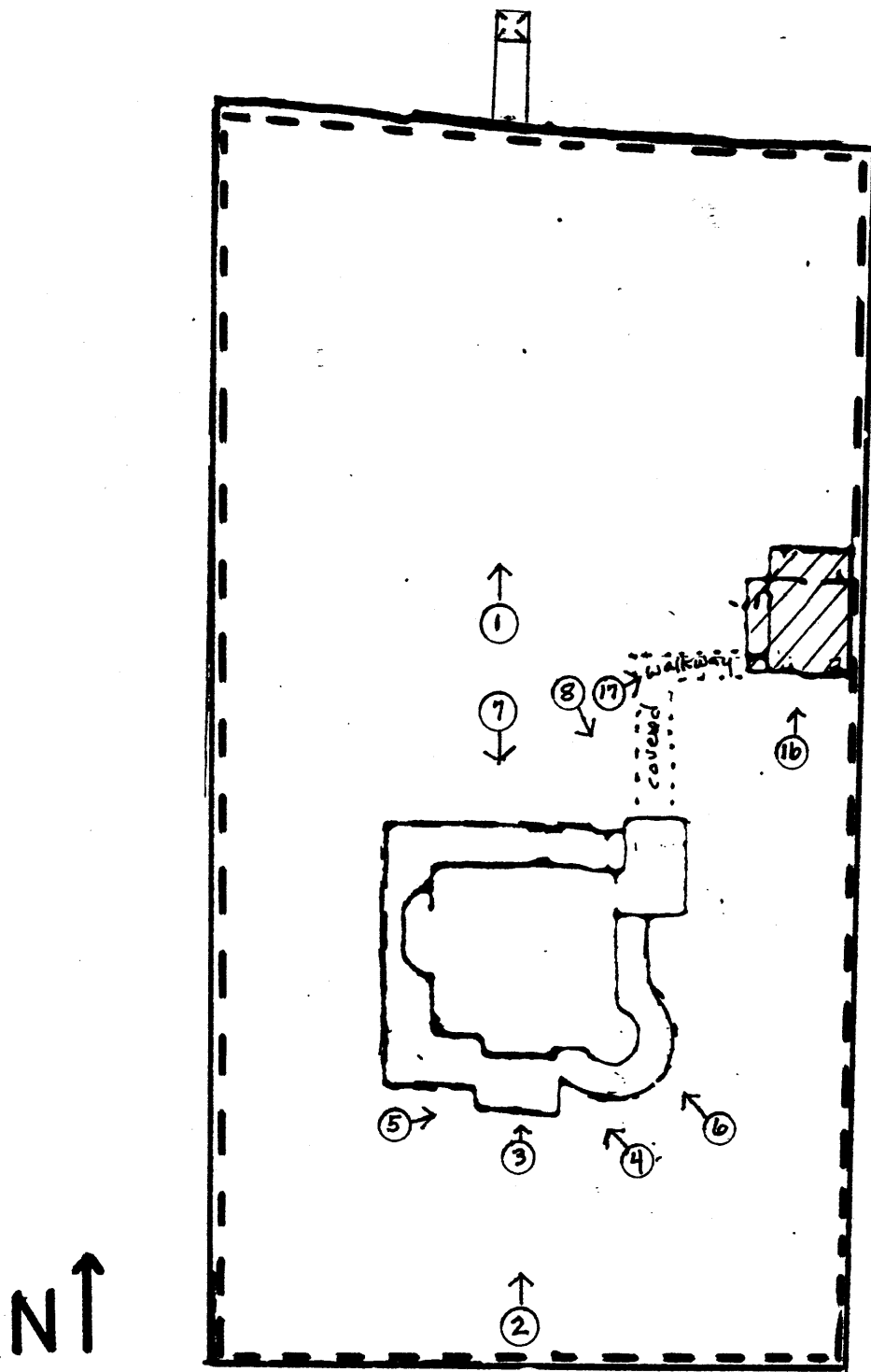
## **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

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 the entire parcel historically associated with the Gilmer Heitman House.

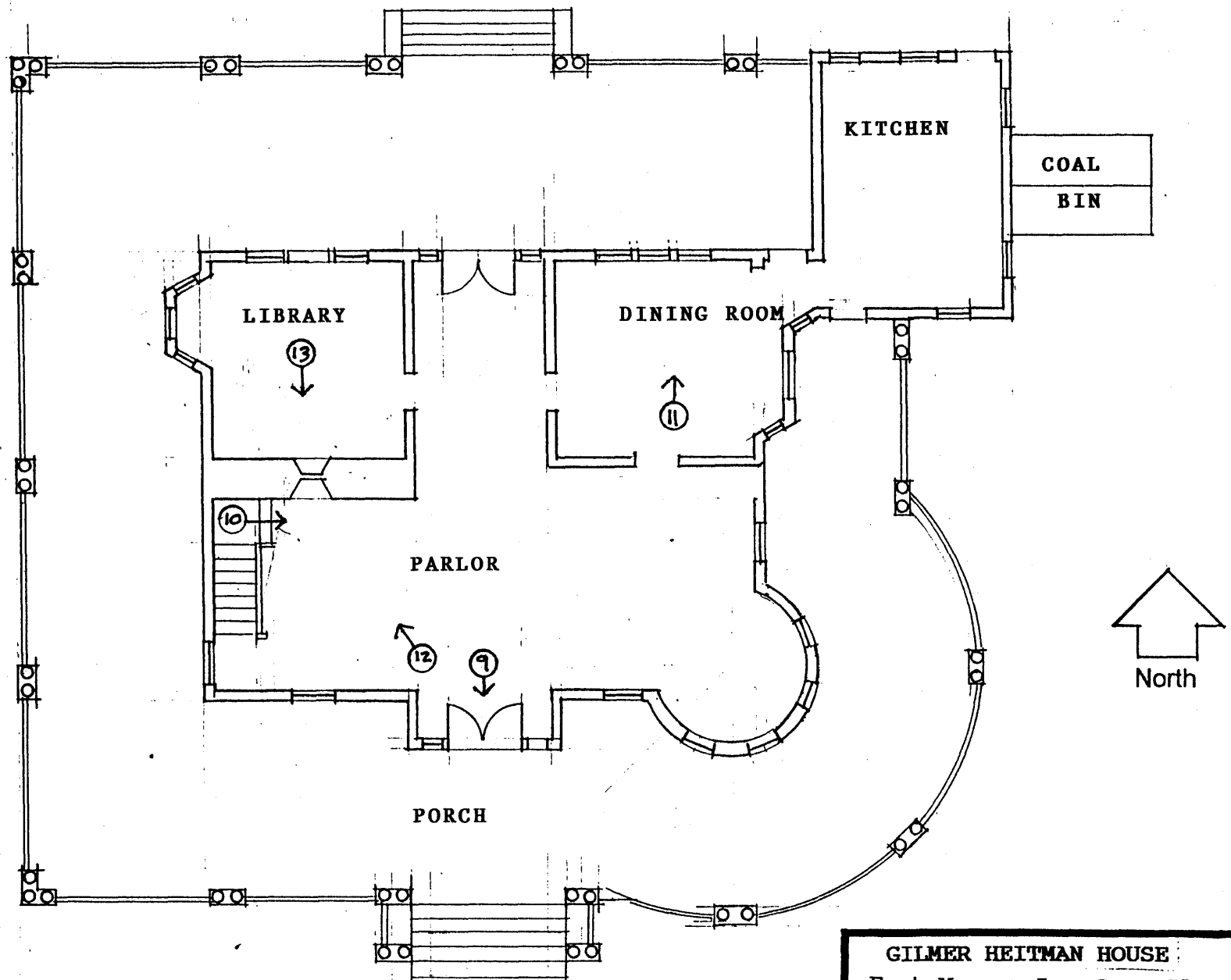
Caloosahatchee River



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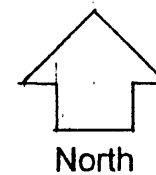
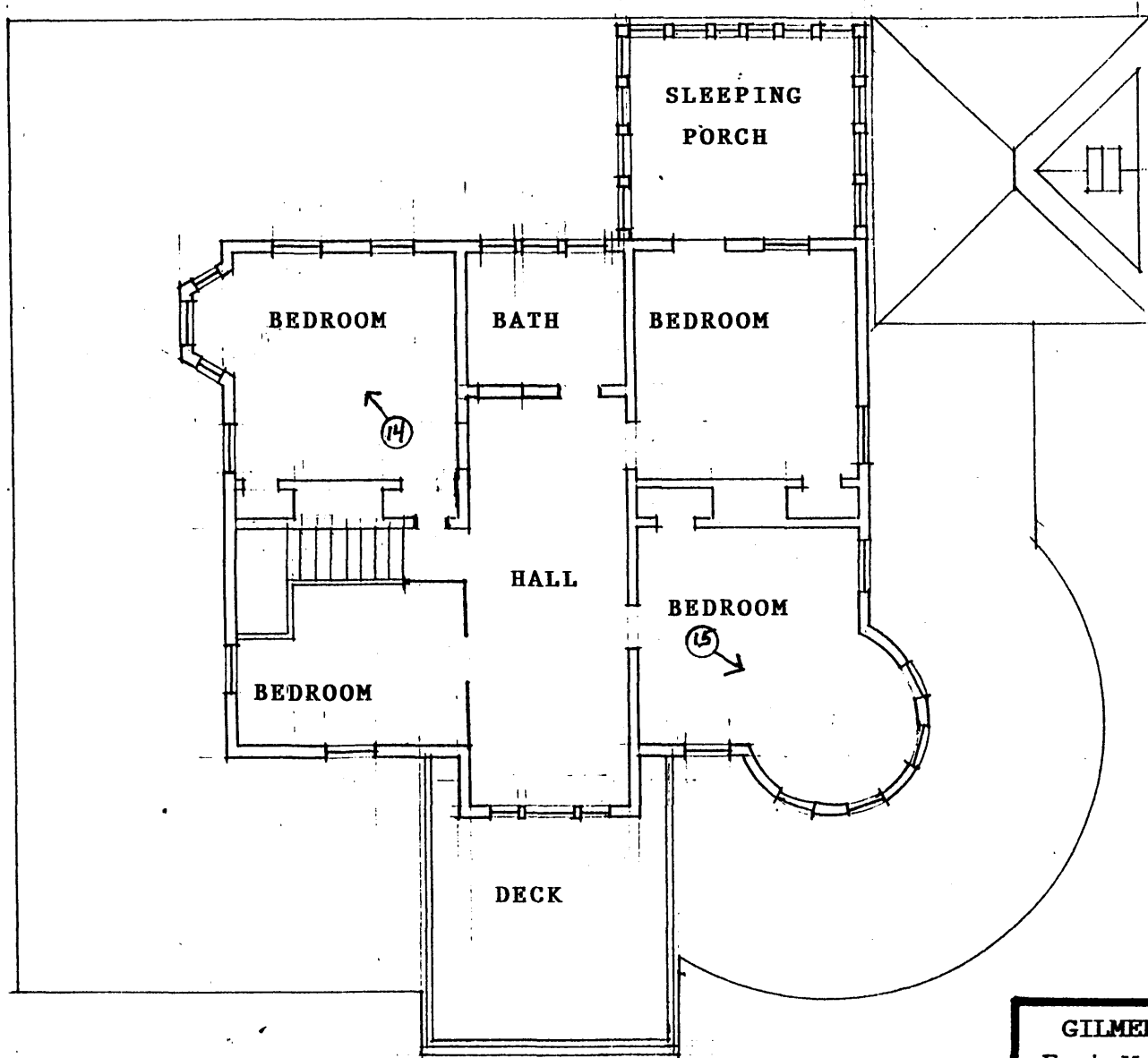
First Street


GILMER HEITMAN HOUSE  
Fort Myers, Lee Co., Fl.  
Site Plan  
Boundary - - - - -  
Approx. Scale: 0.5" = 23'  
Contributing Building □  
Non-Contributing Building ▨  
Photo Direction ○ →



**GILMER HEITMAN HOUSE**  
 Fort Myers, Lee Co., Fl.  
 First Floor Plan  
 Photo Direction ○→  
 Approx. Scale: 3/16" = 1'





**GILMER HEITMAN HOUSE**  
Fort Myers, Lee Co., Fl.  
Second Floor Plan  
Photo Direction   
Approx. Scale:  $\frac{3}{16}'' = 1'$