

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**  
RECEIVED **OCT 10 1979**  
DATE ENTERED **DEC 26 1979**

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

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Belleview-Biltmore Hotel

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

*OH FL 697*

STREET & NUMBER Belleview-Biltmore Hotel

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
6th

CITY, TOWN Clearwater

--- VICINITY OF

STATE Florida 33517

CODE  
12

COUNTY CODE  
Pinellas 103

**CLASSIFICATION**

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

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Bernard Pownell, et al.

STREET & NUMBER Belleview-Biltmore Hotel

CITY, TOWN Clearwater

--- VICINITY OF

STATE  
Florida 33517

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ET Pinellas County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Clearwater

STATE  
Florida

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

--- FEDERAL --- STATE --- COUNTY --- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

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

The Belleview-Biltmore Hotel is a 4½-story building consisting of three principal sections arranged in a fan-like relationship to one another. Each of the multi-story sections is long and narrow in its proportions. The axis of the original structure, which was completed in 1897, and its 1905 addition is east-west. The west end of the hotel overlooks Clearwater Harbor. The 1914 and 1925 additions are both oriented north-south.

Each section is approximately 400 feet in length. The so-called "east wing," constructed in 1914, joins the older sections on the east end but turns at a right angle and extends north for most of its length. The "south wing," constructed in 1925, extends from the south elevation of the 1905 addition.

Each of the sections is 4½ stories. There are also two further additions on the north of the 1897 and 1905 sections. These are both of one story. They contain the kitchen, main dining room, and a lounge. The additions appear to date after 1925.

The main floor of the 1897 and 1905 portions of the hotel contains the lobby, the business offices, and some of the entertainment facilities. The upper floors of these sections and all floors of the 1914 and 1925 additions contain guest rooms.

The visually complex hotel structure can not be easily classified under a particular style. However, its exterior has some of the characteristics of the Shingle Style. This term is usually applied to a type of residential structure that appeared in New England in the 1880's. Usually, but not always, houses of this style have exterior walls sheathed in a uniform covering of shingles. The hotel has historically been covered by weatherboard siding. In 1976, the exterior was covered with aluminum siding which visually approximates the original wood siding.

The large structure does feature the moderately pitched roof with intersecting gables, the broad verandas, the clear division of stories, and the combination of round - and square - headed windows characteristic of Shingle Style architecture.

The simple rough symmetry of the original building, however, was lost in the size and complexity of the later additions. Some attempt was made to retain the original stylistic flavor through the use of the same materials and exterior details.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES +1896

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Francis J. Kinnard (Tampa) (Arch.)  
Michael J. Miller (Tampa) (Builder)

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Belleview-Biltmore Hotel, in its present form, is significant as the largest wood frame building in the State of Florida. Construction of the Hotel also entailed the establishment of the town of Belleair, Florida. The Belleview-Biltmore was constructed for Henry Bradley Plant, who was one of the developers of one of Florida's major railroad systems in the late nineteenth century.

Henry Bradley Plant (1819-1899) was born in Connecticut but spent much of his adult life in Georgia, where he managed a freight shipping business.<sup>1</sup> In 1879, Plant turned his attention to Florida. He began acquiring interests in railroads, hotels, real estate, and telegraph and steamship lines, all of which he organized into the Plant Investment Company.<sup>2</sup> The railroad system which he created in the next two decades offered fast freight and passenger service and connected Florida's rich agricultural heartland with the nation's large population centers. This assured reliable transport for the citrus and vegetable production of central Florida. Also, it made possible the future development of Florida real estate in which Plant had invested heavily.<sup>3</sup>

In order to capitalize on the increased tourist traffic in Florida, the Plant Investment Company began to build hotels and purchase existing ones. In 1888, Plant initiated construction of the Tampa Bay Hotel; this project was completed in 1891. In 1896, the same year that construction began on the Belleview-Biltmore Hotel, Plant bought existing hotels in Ocala, Kissimmee, Winter Park and Punta Gorda. Each of these communities was served by Plant's rail lines.<sup>4</sup>

In 1895, Plant leased the Orange Belt Railway, a line which connected St. Petersburg and Sanford, Florida. He changed the name of the line to the Sanford and St. Petersburg Railway and eventually absorbed it into the Plant system.<sup>5</sup> Because the railway had not proven profitable in carrying passengers and citrus, Plant decided to build a hotel between St. Petersburg and Clearwater, Florida, to

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than four (4)

UTM REFERENCES

A 

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

B 

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

W. Carl Shiver Historic Sites Specialist

ORGANIZATION

Florida Division of Archives, History & Records Management

DATE

7-20-79

STREET & NUMBER

The Capitol

TELEPHONE

(904) 487-2333

CITY OR TOWN

Tallahassee

STATE

Florida

32301

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE XXX

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



9/26/79

TITLE Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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



DATE

12/26/79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:   
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12/19/79

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

encourage tourist traffic. The site selected by Plant, about a mile and a half south of the town of Clearwater, seemed favorable because it occupied an area of hills overlooking Clearwater Harbor that featured several reliable fresh-water springs.<sup>6</sup>

Plant hired the architectural firm of Miller and Kinnard, of nearby Tampa, to design and construct the hotel.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, he had an associate, J. W. Newman, survey the land surrounding the hotel site and lay out a new community to be called Belleair.<sup>8</sup>

Of the three men hired by Plant for these tasks, no further information is available about Michael J. Miller and J. W. Newman. Francis J. Kinnard came to the United States in 1886. He practiced architecture in Orlando, Florida until 1895 when he moved to Tampa.<sup>9</sup> He opened an office with Michael J. Miller which is recorded in the Tampa city directories for 1903 and 1909.

Construction of the Belleview-Biltmore (then called the Belleview) was begun in 1896 and was completed in time for the season opening in January, 1897.<sup>10</sup> Plant died in 1899, but the hotel remained in the hands of his heirs until 1919. During that time it was twice enlarged, first in 1905<sup>11</sup> and again in 1914.<sup>12</sup> Miller and Kinnard were apparently responsible for the enlargement.<sup>13</sup>

In 1919, the hotel was sold to the Biltmore Corporation and "Biltmore" became a permanent part of the hotel's name. The financial crash of 1929 brought about the collapse of the Biltmore chain, and the hotel passed to other owners.<sup>14</sup>

The hotel was again enlarged in 1925, while it was part of the Biltmore chain. The architect for this addition was James H. Ritchie, at that time a staff architect for the Biltmore Corporation.<sup>15</sup>

Except for the period 1943-1944 when the Belleview-Biltmore was leased by the U. S. Army Air Corps as an auxilliary barracks, it has operated continuously as a winter season hotel since 1897. The Belleview-Biltmore was returned to civilian control in 1944 but did not reopen for business until 1947.<sup>16</sup>

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The impact of the Belleview-Biltmore on the growth and economic development of Belleair is difficult to assess directly. Local tradition, however, associates several residential structures in Belleair with its construction and operation. Among those is the Louis Ducros House, which has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Louis Ducros was one of the first permanent residents of Belleair and was employed by the hotel as a photographer.<sup>17</sup>

There are also other structures located within the area of the original town of Belleair that appear to have been constructed during the period of the hotel's most significant development, 1896-1925. At least some of these, which are mainly residential structures, appear to be associated with the seasonal operation of the Belleview-Biltmore. The gathering of information on these buildings is in progress.

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<sup>1</sup>Dudley S. Johnson, "Henry Bradley Plant and Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly, XLV, No. 2 (August, 1966), pp. 118-131.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 124

<sup>5</sup>Karl H. Grismer, History of St. Petersburg, Florida (St. Petersburg, Fl.: The Tourist News Publishing Company, 1924), p. 50.

<sup>6</sup>Tampa Weekly Tribune, August 27, 1896.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.; Map of Belleair, Florida, Surveyed and Subdivided  
by J. W. Newman, 1896.

<sup>9</sup>Ernest J. Robinson, History of Hillsborough County, Florida  
(St. Augustine, Fl.: The Record Company, 1928), p. 291.

<sup>10</sup>St. Petersburg Times, January 29, 1964.

<sup>11</sup>"Bellevue Hotel from Alligator Lake," postcard photograph,  
1905. Located in the Strozier Library Photographic Archives,  
Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida.

<sup>12</sup>Clearwater News, December 17, 1914.

<sup>13</sup>"Facts about the Bellevue-Biltmore," (Clearwater, Fl.:  
Clearwater Chamber of Commerce, n.d.).

<sup>14</sup>"Bellevue-Biltmore 1976, America's Bicentennial, Bellevue-  
Biltmore's 80th," Promotional Brochure.

<sup>15</sup>"Facts about the Bellevue-Biltmore!"

<sup>16</sup>"Bellevue-Biltmore."

<sup>17</sup>"Facts about the Bellevue-Biltmore."

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 1

"Bellevue-Biltmore 1976, America's Bicentennial, Bellevue-Biltmore's 80th," Promotional Brochure.

"Bellevue-Biltmore from Alligator Lake," postcard photograph, 1905. Located in the Photographic Archives, Strozier Library, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida.

Clearwater News, December 17, 1914.

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Robinson, Ernest J. History of Hillsborough County, Florida. St. Augustine, Florida: The Record Company, 1928.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE 1

Beginning 10 feet north of the NW corner of the porte cochere of the main entrance of the Belleview-Biltmore Hotel, proceed east 55 feet approximately, then turn at a right angle and proceed north 55 feet, then turn at a right angle and proceed east 300 feet, then turn at a right angle and proceed north 160 feet, then turn at a right angle and proceed east 100 feet, then turn at a right angle and proceed south 460 feet, then turn at a right angle and proceed west 155 feet, then turn at a right angle and proceed south 305 feet, then turn at a right angle and proceed west 120 feet, then turn at a right angle and proceed north 230 feet, then turn at a right angle and proceed west 150 feet, then turn at a right angle and proceed north 70 feet, then turn at a right angle and proceed west 240 feet, then turn at a right angle and proceed north 160 feet, then turn at a right angle and proceed east 105 feet, then turn at a right angle and proceed north 80 feet, then turn at a right angle and proceed east approximately 50 feet to the point of beginning.