

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received DEC 5 1985  
date entered JAN 6 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Porcher House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 434 Delannoy Avenue \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Cocoa \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of

state Florida code county Brevard code

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name City of Cocoa

street & number P. O. Box 1750

city, town Cocoa \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Florida

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Brevard County Courthouse

street & number 400 South Street

city, town Titusville \_\_\_\_\_ state Florida

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes  no

date \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The E. P. Porcher House, the grandest home in Cocoa at the time of its construction in 1916, is a unique example of twentieth century classic revival influence interpreted in local coquina rock. This indigenous material was used in the interior fireplaces, the original garden wall, and in the random pattern of the facade. The ingenuity of Porcher, a pioneer in the citrus industry and author of several inventions for handling citrus, is evident in the integration of extensive verandahs, cross ventilation, and wide overhangs in response to the Florida climate and to the site on the Indian River. Situated at the south edge of Cocoa Village, an early twentieth century retail district, the E. P. Porcher House is a visual comment on the history of Cocoa and the citrus industry.

The E. P. Porcher House is a unique example of twentieth century class revival influence interpreted in the indigenous materials of Florida's east coast. One of the grandest properties in Cocoa in the early nineteen hundreds, it has a veneer of local coquina rock laid in a random pattern. This noteworthy material is detailed with flat arches at the window heads. A feature of particular interest is the integration of playing card symbols into the coquina around the entry.

The facade (west elevation) is comprised of seven bays; the center three bays are encompassed by a two-story semicircular portico with four fluted Ionic columns. A gallery originally edged the portico. A wrought iron balcony projects from a second-story door above the entrance; a fan light and side lights frame the entry door. Typical windows are nine over one single-hung wood sash, with triple windows on the main floor facade. Five unit fixed casement windows are located at the north and south elevations, with an altered opening of similar proportion at the east elevation.

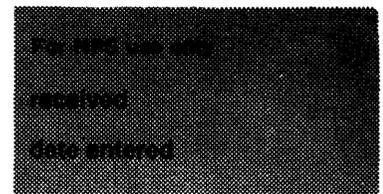
Dormers with triple windows project from each face of the hipped roof with bracketed eaves; the roof terminates with a flat section, which was originally bordered by a gallery. Three coquina chimneys project from the fireplaces and from the kitchen and penetrate the north, east, and west roof slopes. The roof framing consists of 2" x 6" rafters, hip jacks, and a flat gallery section; roofing is modern asphalt shingle.

The square plan is extended by a two-story enclosed verandah which wraps from the south to east elevations. The foundation is coquina rock; the floor of the partial basement is concrete slab on grade. The exterior walls are 2" x 4" wood stud with 4" coquina stone facing on wood sheathing. The floor framing of the first, second, and attic floors is wood joist with diagonal sheathing and wood strip flooring.

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The large entry foyer is dominated by a central staircase and coquina fireplace with ashlar base and random rock overmantle. Panelled wainscoting at mantle height extends through the foyer and throughout the dining room to the east. The dining room features a coquina fireplace of random pattern with double mantel and keystone, two-way boxed beams, and a panelled niche. Operable double pocket doors lead from the foyer to the south parlor. Two-way boxed beams convey the effect of square coffers in the parlor.

To the north of the foyer is a study with integral bookcases and coquina fireplace. Adjacent to the study is the secondary entry from the former porte-cochere. A service stair leads from the butler's pantry to the second floor, and to the partial basement. The second floor plan includes six bedrooms, two with coquina fireplaces. The three tiled bathrooms are located between pairs of bedrooms. A service stair beyond the central staircase leads to the finished attic with additional sleeping spaces lighted by the dormer windows.

Typical interior walls are finished in plaster on wood lath with painted wood crown mold, window and door trim, and 9" base moldings. Doors are painted wood, panelled stile and rail. Cast iron grilles for the central heating system are noteworthy.

Interior alterations have been generally superficial with the exception of the extension of the upper foyer which diminished the stairwell. A chandelier was suspended in this open space. An elevator, no longer in place, had been installed for Mrs. Porcher in the early 1930s.

The south and east rooms of the first and second floors open onto the wrapping verandah. An early photograph of the facade illustrates an apparently open verandah with Tuscan columns at the first level. One of these columns remains on the southeast verandah. Another early photograph of the east elevation shows casement sash on the lower level. Both photographs depict square glazed sliding sash, which remains in place, on the upper level of the verandah, originally used as a sleeping porch. An early alteration of the verandah roof extended the overhang necessitating strut supports; a similar overhang was added to the first level verandah. Later alterations enclosed the lower level verandah with wood framing, siding, and metal frame awning windows. Minor changes in the south and east fenestration correspond to the enclosure of the verandah.

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A porte-cochere with Tuscan columns on coquina pedestals and a gallery roof deck was located at the north elevation. The porte-cochere was removed to accommodate the access drive to the adjacent city library in 1964.

A crenellated coquina wall defined the front edge of the property. Numerous palm trees and other landscape elements were significant to the site. The landscaping extended to the private boat dock on the Indian River at the east edge of the site. Some activities of the citrus business may have taken place in the vicinity to the northeast of the site. A swimming pool, now covered by paving, was added at the southeast. A parking lot and public street now separate the structure from the Indian River edge.

The site has a visual orientation to the Indian River. Bounded on the south by St. Marks Church and on the north by the Cocoa City Library, the site is approximately 100' in width. The facade of the Porcher House is set back from the curbline of Delannoy Avenue approximately 100' and, from that point, the curbline of Riveredge Drive measures 235' to the east. To the northwest of the site is the remaining early twentieth century retail district of Cocoa Village.

The ingenuity of E. P. Porcher, pioneer in the citrus industry and author of several inventions for handling citrus, is evident in the adaptation of this residence to the Florida climate and to the site on the Indian River. The indigenous coquina rock, the local expression of the classic revival style, the quality of construction, and the importance of the site establish the significance of the Porcher House to Cocoa, to Florida's citrus industry, and to architectural history.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1916 **Builder/Architect** unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The E. P. Porcher House was built in 1916 for Edward Postel Porcher, one of the largest individual growers of Indian River citrus fruit in the early twentieth century, as well as the inventor of patented citrus handling equipment, and an organizer and leader of the citrus growers' associations. Significant architecturally as an example of the classic revival style adapted to Florida's climate and local materials, the Porcher House stands as a visual record of the heritage of Cocoa, the development of Florida, and the history of the citrus industry.

President of the extensive Deerfield Groves, Edward Postell Porcher was one of the largest individual growers of Indian River fruit in Brevard County.<sup>1</sup> He was the organizer and leader of two groups, Indian River Orange Growers' Association and The Indian River and Lake Worth Pineapple Growers' Association.<sup>2</sup> The goals of these organizations included uniformity of prices, improvements in the selection and packing of fruit, national recognition of standards of brands, and profitable returns.

Porcher's contribution to the development of Florida and to the citrus industry ranges far beyond his prominence as a pioneer citrus grower. He was "the first citrus grower to wash and stamp his fruit... inventor of the first fruit stamping machine ... inventor and held basic patents for the first clamp truck for handling packed boxes of fruit in packing houses."<sup>3</sup> He was the first to inoculate citrus trees with sulphate copper to overcome fungus disease of the sap.<sup>4</sup> His success in the citrus industry was attributed to his policy of "the strictest attention to the business in hand, whatever it may be, and in orange growing the highest intelligence applied and the finest possible finished product turned out, and the standards of the grade kept up."<sup>5</sup>

A sportsman as well as an ingenious businessman, Porcher helped to establish the first golf course in Cocoa and also was a member of the Chevy Chase Country Club, the Halifax River Yacht Club, the Indian River Yacht Club, and the Florida Yacht Club in Jacksonville. He sailed his own boat, the Falcon, was an expert trapshooter,<sup>6</sup> and was involved in the early speedboat racing on the Indian River.

See Continuation Sheet 2

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet No. 3

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Cocoa

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 17 526900 3137220  
Zone Easting Northing

B                    
Zone Easting Northing

C                  

D                  

E                  

F                  

G                  

H                  

Verbal boundary description and justification North half of lot 9 and all of lot 8 of Dellanoy's Addition to Cocoa, Block A, Plat Book 1. Township 245, Range 36E, Section 33, Quarter Section NE, 1/4 1/4 Section SW.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Tate/Diana Primelles

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date

street & number The Capitol telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  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 *George W. Perry*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date November 26, 1985

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the    date 1-6-86  
National Register

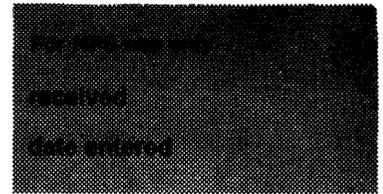
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:    date

Chief of Registration

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Porcher was descended from a South Carolina Huguenot family. "The original American settler was Isaac Porcher de Richebourg of St. Severe, France, who, with his brother Philip, came to South Carolina in 1680." Born in Greenville, South Carolina, in 1861, Edward Porcher attended military school and later studied insurance law. He wrote fire insurance policies in Atlanta and Chicago, and later pursued an interest in silver mining in Mexico, prior to his move to Florida in 1884.<sup>8</sup>

In 1885, Porcher and his bride, Byrnina Mona Peck, of Atlanta moved to Florida to live in rugged quarters in the groves until completion of their first home in Courtenay. A drawing by Mrs. Porcher illustrates this residence, which was noted for hospitality.<sup>9</sup> Mrs. Porcher was the daughter of William Henry Peck - Georgia's most prolific writer, the author of 74 best seller historic novels, editor, and college president.<sup>10</sup> Family history indicates that Mrs. Porcher was influential in the design of the Porcher House in Cocoa. Her close working relationship with the contractor inspired the club, diamond, heart, and spade designs which were subtly integrated into the coquina of the portico, a gesture to her interest in card games.

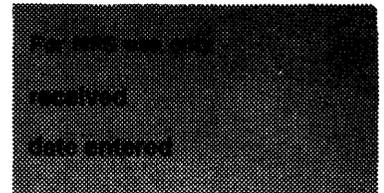
The E. P. Porcher House first appears on the 1919 Sanborn Map of Cocoa; the 1915 Sanborn Map shows a vacant lot.<sup>11</sup> Porcher's personal diary notes that on October 31, 1916, he "moved in to sleep for first time."<sup>12</sup>

Upon Edward Postell Porcher's death in 1939 at age 78, his citrus holdings and estate passed to his son, Arthur G. Porcher. The following month, Arthur died in an automobile accident. With no provision for passing the estate to either of the two Porcher daughters, the house was vacant for two years before it was purchased by Gordon Chipman, who converted it to a hotel.<sup>13</sup> In 1945, the City of Cocoa purchased this and the adjacent property, converting the former residence to the Cocoa City Hall.<sup>14</sup> From 1969-1972, the building functioned as a home for orphaned boys, known as Aquarius Hall. Since that time, the E. P. Porcher House has been vacant.

The Porcher House is significant as a tangible symbol of the history of Cocoa and of the pioneers of the citrus industry in Florida. The building is significant architecturally for its interpretation of the classic revival style in local coquina rock, its notable site on the Indian River at the edge of Cocoa Village, and as an adaptation to Florida's climate and life style.

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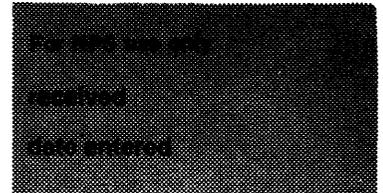
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FOOTNOTES:

1. "Pioneer Citrus Grower Died in the City Monday," Cocoa Tribune, June 22, 1939.
2. Florida Historical Society, Makers of America: Florida Edition, Volume 1. Atlanta: A. B. Caldwell, 1901, pp. 332-3.
3. Op Cit, Cocoa Tribune, June 22, 1939.
4. Op Cit, Florida Historical Society, p. 333.
5. Ibid, p. 331.
6. Op Cit, Cocoa Tribune, June 22, 1939.
7. Op Cit, Florida Historical Society, p. 331
8. Ibid.
9. "Beautiful Merritt's Isle," Florida Star, Titusville, Fl., Nov. 22, 1888, reprinted in Cocoa Tribune, July 20, 1950.
10. "Know Your Georgia," Atlanta Constitution, Sept. 21, 1951.
11. Sanborn Insurance Company, Sanborn Insurance Maps of Cocoa, New York: 1915 and 1919.
12. E. P. Porcher Diary, Porcher Family Records, Cocoa, Florida.
13. Public Records of Brevard County, Deed Books 345 and 286.
14. Ibid.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

"Beautiful Merritt's Isle," Florida Star, Titusville, Fl., Nov. 22, 1888, Reprinted in Cocoa Tribune, July 20, 1950.

Brevard County Deed Books, 418, p. 345 and 286, p. 140, 400 South Street, Titusville, Fl.

"Edward P. Porcher," Florida Dramatic Contemporary Family and Personal History, Vol. IV, 1952, pp. 836-7.

E. P. Porcher Diary, Porcher Family Records, Cocoa, Fl.

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"History of Merritt Island," Part IV, Orlando Sentinel Star, Orlando, Fl., May 27, 1951.

Huguenot Society of South Carolina, Transactions, No. 81, Charleston: Huguenot Society, 1976.

"Know Your Georgia," Atlanta Constitution, September 21, 1951.

"Pioneer Citrus Grower Died in the City Monday," Cocoa Tribune, June 22, 1939.

Sanborn Insurance Company, Sanborn Insurance Maps of Cocoa 1915 and 1919, New York.