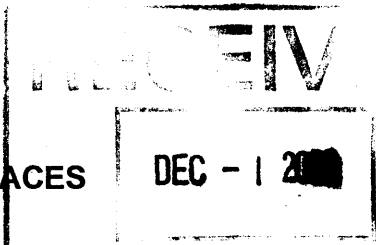


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1594

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 any 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 shown in 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 BROWN, LAWRENCE HOUSE

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 470 Second Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Bartow N/A vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Polk code 105 zip code 33830

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.)

Janet Snyder Matthews 11/21/2000
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
State or 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
 - See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall 1-4-01
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Brown, Lawrence House
Name of Property

Polk Co., FL
County and State

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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

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

Historic Architectural Resources of Bartow

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RESIDENCE: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Frame Vernacular

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK, WOOD
walls WOOD
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

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 36) 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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ARCHITECTURE

ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK

Period of Significance

1892-1941

Significant Dates

1892

1894

Significant Person

Brown, Lawrence B.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Brown, Lawrence

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

Brown, Lawrence House
Name of Property

Polk Co., FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 7	4 1 7 9 0 0	3 0 8 5 5 0 0
	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 Sidney Johnston

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date November 2000

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 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 Neighborhood Improvement Corporation of Bartow, Inc. attn: Clifton Lewis

street & number 790 Waldron Avenue telephone 941-534-0100

city or town Bartow state FL zip code 33830

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 amend 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**

Section number 7 Page 1

**BROWN, LAWRENCE HOUSE, BARTOW,
POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA**

SUMMARY

The Lawrence Bernard Brown House is located at 470 Second Avenue, Bartow, Polk County, Florida. The two-story frame vernacular residence has an irregular cross-gable plan, metal roof surfacing, corbeled brick chimneys, and a tiered veranda. The foundation is brick and tree-trunk piers. The exterior has horizontal drop siding, patterned wood shingles, and fenestration is regular, with double-hung sash windows, including various shapes and muntin arrangements. The character of this vernacular form is enhanced by leaded glass transoms, and picturesque millwork, including barge boards, turned posts, spindle work, scrollsaw cut balusters, variegated wood shingles, and a Palladian window. The house is nominated to the National Register under the multiple property cover for Historic Architectural Resources of Bartow, under the F.1 property type.

SETTING

The Brown House occupies parts of lots one, two, and three of Brown's Addition to Bartow. The lots and surrounding neighborhood are flat land with scattered mature trees, lawns and house shrubbery, and paved streets. Several small dwellings stand to the east, south, and north, and to the west is the former site of the ACL mainline tracks. Wabash Avenue lies to the south and Stanford Avenue to the north. Main Street extends several additional blocks north, and the heart of Bartow's downtown historic district (NR 1992) stands to the west about ten blocks. The eastern edge of the South Bartow Historic District (NR 1992) lies three blocks west.

Polk County is centrally located within Florida's peninsula, forty miles east of Tampa and sixty miles southwest of Orlando. Bartow serves as the county seat of government. Bartow is the county's third largest municipality with approximately 15,000 residents. Located The headwaters of the Peace River radiate to the east of the city. The primary thoroughfares are east/west State Road 60, and north/south U.S. Highway 17/98. Bartow historically served as a rail center for the Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line companies, and was in the center of Florida's citrus and phosphate industries. Most rail lines have been closed. A historic building survey conducted in 1991 identified 551 buildings in Bartow, of which only thirty-four were recorded as dating from the nineteenth century.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Exterior

Each elevation displays a prominent cross gable embellished with ornamental wood products. The exterior is surfaced with horizontal drop siding, and shingles within the gables. The southeast corner of the dwelling and interior points of the foundation system retains tree trunk piers. Fenestration is irregular and most windows contain 2/2 and 1/1 double-hung wooden sashes. Several more elaborate muntin patterns and leaded glass panels are within the main façade and the paladin window.

The main (west) facade (Photos #1&2) has a two-story cross gable projecting from the south side of the elevation. A two-story veranda with hip roof and supported by turned posts, wraps around the elevation's three

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**BROWN, LAWRENCE HOUSE, BARTOW,
POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA**

walls. Under the porch roof soffit are scroll sawn wooden ornaments with spindles. The front-facing gable contains a louvered vent, and is finished with fishscale and square cut wood shingles. A leaded glass panel was originally where the louver is located. A duplicate panel is being fabricated to replace the louver. The fascia is trimmed with jigsaw cut bargeboards which include spindles and curvilinear patterns. The gable extension has a large fixed light with leaded panel transom in the first story. The second story has a group of three, double-hung window sashes. All have single lights in the bottom. The center sash has a diamond pattern within the muntins, and the flanking sashes have elongated muntins with triangular ends. Swags in relief adorn the window heads on the window grouping. Flat scroll-sawn balusters with handrails and post brackets are currently being restored for re-installation on the veranda. The front entrance, located in the west wall of the main block, is flanked with sidelights and a transom. An entrance directly above on the second-floor of the veranda has sidelights as well (Photo #3). Two additional doorways, on the first and second floors of the gable extension's north wall, open onto the veranda. To the north of the main entrance is a single window on each story.

The north elevation (Photos #4&5) has a gable end with 1/1 sash on the first story, 2/2 sash on the second story, and fishscale, sawtooth, and square cut wood shingles, and a louvered vent within the gable. The gable fascia is trimmed with a wave pattern sawn ornamentation. The wall of the east extension contains a pairing of small 1/1 sash on the first story, and 2/2 on the second story. To the north is visible the side of the veranda and west gable extension. Also visible are two chimneys piercing the roof ridges of the west and east gable extensions, fabricated in multi-colored bricks.

The east (rear) elevation (Photos #6&7) has a gable extension on the north side, and a one-story room with hip roof within the "L." A shed roofed open porch with three square posts extends from this room. The gable extension has a single window on each story, and the gable's fascia board is trimmed with the most fanciful sawn and spindle adornment on the house. Fishscale and square cut wood shingles and a louvered attic vent finish the gable end. A single rear door is accessed from the porch which is accessed by two steps on the north side. Three windows are present within the "L" of the second story.

The south elevation (Photos #6,8 &9) has the gable end of the main block in the center, flanked by the western extension and one story room to the east. The gable end has a single window in each story, and patterned wood shingles and a Palladian window are within the gable. The window has a keystone and fanlight in the central, top panel. Leaded glass panels that originally filled the openings are being replicated. The gable fascia is trimmed with a wave pattern sawn ornamentation.

Interior

The residence has two floors, and approximately fifteen hundred interior square feet of floor space. The floors are wooden, and the ten foot ceilings are tongue and groove boards. Vertical wainscot trimmed with toe and chair moldings is in the hallway and all of the rooms with the exception of the kitchen and bathroom. The walls in the parlor are plaster, and non-historic fiberboard in the remainder of the rooms. The house retains four-panel wooden doors with decorative hinges used on the façade. The main, west entrance opens into the central hall (Photo #10). To the south of the hall are a bedroom (Photo #11) and parlor (Photo #12). To the

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**BROWN, LAWRENCE HOUSE, BARTOW,
POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA**

north of the hall is the living room (Photo #13). In the living and bedroom, one by eight horizontal board walls are covered with wall paper and non-historic fiberboard. The front parlor's walls are lath and plaster. The bedroom and parlor have fireplaces with wooden mantles finished with decorative moldings and mirrors. A bathroom (Photo #14) and kitchen (Photo #15), separated by the rear hall (Photo #16), occupy the eastern spaces on the first floor. To the north of the front entrance is a staircase built with a half-turn with winders. The primary newel-post and the newel-post at the upper winder are similar in design, with heavily ornamented square shafts and caps. The newel-posts on the second floor have rounded shafts and caps with little ornamentation (Photo #17). The balusters are turned. The staircase's stringer is embellished with a running, or wave, molding, similar in design to the gable-end barge boards.

The second floor displays the original Z-plan of the dwelling with a central hallway dividing the living spaces. Four doors open from the hall, three of those into adjacent rooms (Photos #17-20), and one onto the veranda. The bedrooms are along the north elevation; and the space to the south of the hall. The bedroom to the south has a door that opens onto the veranda. The fireplace mantle in the south room is similar in design to those located on the first floor. The mantle in the southeast room has brackets under the primary shelf, and is devoid of the decorative moldings used to embellish the other three mantles in the dwelling.

Alterations

The alterations to the building appear to date from the historic period. Tree trunks appear to have served as the original pier foundation system; many piers along the exterior walls were replaced c.1925, with bricks. Built about 1910, a one-story hip-roof extension projects at the southeast corner, and provided space for a bathroom. The shed-roof porch at the rear elevation was built about 1950.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 8 Page 1 **BROWN, LAWRENCE HOUSE, BARTOW,
POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA**

SUMMARY

The Lawrence Bernard Brown House is nominated to the National Register for its significance at the local level under Criteria A and C in the areas of Architecture, Community Planning/Development and Ethnic Heritage: Black, and Criterion B for its association with Brown. The house was built by, and was home to Lawrence Brown, who contributed to the development of Bartow's east side African-American community. The house was completed in 1892 on property that Brown sub-divided in 1894. A carpenter, Brown purchased numerous lots elsewhere in Bartow, and built several houses in the city during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The residence on Second Avenue was the largest of those, and served as his home between the 1890s and his death in 1941. The house is one of the largest historic dwellings in East Bartow's African-American community, and the residence is an excellent and unusual example of frame vernacular construction. Heavily ornamented, the house is embellished with intricately crafted millwork, and several window muntin arrangements. The building is nominated under the Historic Architectural Resources of Bartow Multiple Property Submission under all historic associated contexts and the F.1 property type.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the 1880s and 1890s, Bartow experienced a construction boom that spread throughout the city. The Original Survey of Bartow, laid out in 1866, established an eighteen-block plan of development, but left large tracts around the nascent downtown unplatted. Encouraged by the arrival of the railroad and the hope of economic prosperity from citrus cultivation, property owners and developers created forty-one subdivisions between 1883 and 1894. In 1885, the population reached four hundred, and, by then, building construction had resulted in two churches, four general stores, and twenty-five residences. Commercial development centered around the courthouse square, and Main Street and Broadway Avenue. Residences dotted the surrounding landscape. By 1890, the population of Bartow had nearly trebled to 1,386. In 1895, Bartow was ranked as the thirteenth largest city in Florida.¹

African-American slaves had cultivated fields on farms and plantations around Bartow in the late antebellum period. During Reconstruction, African-Americans settled on former plantation lands west of Bartow. Although regulators sought to push Blacks out of the Peace River region, many African-Americans endured, and then were joined by African-American railroad laborers who helped build rail systems deep into the Florida peninsula during the 1880s. Other Black settlers arrived after the railroad workers to organize and build the community of East Bartow.²

Born a slave in Alachua County in 1858, Lawrence Bernard Brown was part of this latter, larger settlement pattern in Bartow's history. The son of Peter Brown, a minister, Lawrence Brown first migrated

¹Sidney Johnston, "Historic Properties Survey of the City of Bartow," (unpub. mss., St. Augustine, 1990), 8-10, 25-26.

²Canter Brown, Jr., *Florida's Peace River Frontier* (Orlando: University of Central Florida Press, 1991), 68, 91, 97, 177-181, 240, 262.

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**BROWN, LAWRENCE HOUSE, BARTOW,
POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA**

from his native Alachua County about 1882 to Spring Garden, the original name of Glenwood, in Volusia County, Florida. There he and his wife, Elizabeth, acquired property and built a house which stood adjacent to the home of Charles DeLano, a politician who served in the state senate during the 1880s. An adjacent road, Lawrence Street, was named for him. Brown also brought to Glenwood his widowed mother, Catherine Brown, who purchased a house nearby. An enumerator collecting statistics for the state census of 1885 listed two boarders residing with the Browns. That same year, 1885, the railroad connected Volusia County with Polk County and Bartow, where Brown chose to visit and relocate with his mother sometime shortly thereafter. Two railroads had entered Bartow, both of which later became part of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad system. The first of those, the Florida Southern Railroad, arrived in Bartow in January 1885, and the South Florida Railroad completed its line into the city in September 1885. The two systems linked the Polk County seat of government with Gainesville and Lake City to the north, and Orlando and Jacksonville to the northeast. To the south the railroad established a terminus at Punta Gorda, and, later, Fort Myers.³ After moving to Bartow, Lawrence and his mother held onto their Volusia County properties, and sold the last of those tracts in 1910.⁴ For reasons unknown, Elizabeth Brown was no longer with Lawrence, and about 1890, Brown married again to Annabelle Burnette.

SIGNIFICANCE

In May 1892, Brown acquired his first real estate in Bartow, a two-acre site on Second Avenue, where he built his house. He purchased the property from another early East Bartow settler, Louis N. Milam, for \$155.00. Born in 1859 in Indiana, Milam had immigrated to Bartow about 1883, and bought his first real estate in 1884. Milam later sold Brown additional land in Bartow.⁵

Brown selected the Second Avenue site for his home, in part, because the property lay in close proximity to Main Street, and, in part, because the railroad tracks and a passenger station stood nearby. Two years later, Brown created a subdivision out of the tract (see illustration of 1894 plat). The linear subdivision consisted of eight lots on the east side of Second Avenue between Stanford and Wabash Avenues. Each lot measured 1.05 chains, or approximately seventy feet, in width, and 156 feet deep; the northernmost lot was slightly wider, measuring seventy-three feet. By then, a Horace Lee had opened a subdivision abutting Brown's property on the east, adding more parcels to the emergent African-American community of East Bartow. Farther south, the South Florida Railroad Addition to Bartow radiated east from the railroad tracks to provide

³Brown, *Peace River*, 266-270.

⁴Florida State Census, 1885, Spring Garden precinct; Book J, p. 112-114, Deed Book 44, p. 25, Deed Book 56, p. 120, Deed Book 229, p. 241, 1892 tax roll, Volusia County Courthouse, DeLand, FL.

⁵Deed Book 44, p. 100, Deed Book 46, p. 388, Deed Book 73, p. 422-423, Polk County Courthouse, Bartow, FL. Family tradition asserts that the house was constructed in 1884. A thorough review of legal instruments at Polk County Courthouse, both tax rolls and deeds, indicate that Brown did not acquire the property until 1892. It is highly unlikely that Brown would have built his personal residence on property he did not own.

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Section number 8 Page 3

BROWN, LAWRENCE HOUSE, BARTOW,
POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA

about sixteen blocks for development of the African-American community. Brown's subdivision lay at the northwestern edge of what would become one of Polk County's largest ethnic neighborhoods--East Bartow.⁶

East Bartow's African-American community began to grow significantly about 1905, in part, because of a booming phosphate economy and a revitalized citrus industry that sparked development throughout Florida. The East Bartow African-American neighborhood extended between Second and Tenth Avenues and from Parker to Bay Streets. In addition to teachers and physicians, the area supported laborers who worked for the citrus, phosphate, and railroad industries. By 1917, a public school named Union Academy, a fraternal lodge, general stores, and numerous residences had been built. Northeast of Lawrence Brown's house stood the chapel of Burket Primitive Baptist Church, and to the south Standard Oil Company, Gulf Refining Company, and the Texas Company built commercial fuel operations.⁷

Lawrence Brown profited from East Bartow's growth. Between 1895 and 1908, he sold all of the lots in Brown's Addition, and, by 1917, nine dwellings stood in the subdivision. Early property and home owners included Frank Penick, William Randolph, and Charlie Williams. Brown built several of the houses in his subdivision and elsewhere in Bartow. His real estate holdings included several lots in the South Florida Railroad Addition, one of which he purchased from prominent Bartow merchant Harry M. Wear. On some lots he built dwellings for rental income; others, such as lots two and three, block six of W.R. Varn's Addition to Bartow, he sold to L. Z. Tate, a local contractor who built his own rental dwellings. By 1940, Brown held nearly twenty-five pieces of real estate in Bartow, and several others in Lake Wales. Dwellings occupied some of those lots, from which he derived rental income. Generous with his wealth, Brown contributed about one-quarter of his rental income to Mt. Gilboa Baptist Church, which stood at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Laurel Street. He served as clerk of the church, and encouraged the congregation with his generosity.⁸

Census enumerators and directory compilers attributed Brown with various occupations, including book agent, cabinet maker, furniture repair, odd jobs, and umbrella repair. Sanborn Company maps indicate that a furniture repair shop (demolished) occupied the front of the lot directly northwest of the house. The raised rectangle of land is still clearly evident on the property. In the shop Brown practiced his main trade as cabinetmaker. There he also made parasols and silvered mirrors. Brown identified most closely with his work as an agent and distributor of Bibles, and was remembered by his daughter Lavinia Catherine Brown Thomas, as a Bible salesman and carpenter. Upon his death, the *Polk County Record* recalled Lawrence Brown as "one of the first colored settlers to reside in Bartow. He was well known in Bartow, having operated a furniture store for many years and owned a considerable amount of property in the colored East side section...."⁹

⁶Deed Book 47, p. 202, Polk County Courthouse.

⁷Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Map of Bartow, Polk County, Florida* (New York: Sanborn Company, 1911, 1917).

⁸Deed Book 73, p. 422-423, Deed Book 84, p. 372, 373, Polk County Courthouse; Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Map of Bartow*, 1917.

⁹*Polk County Record*, 17 January 1941; G. Beede, comp., *Directory of Polk County* (Mulberry: Mulberry Publishing Company, 1913), 26; R.L. Polk, *Bartow City Directory* (Jacksonville: Polk Company, 1922), 305; R.L. Polk, *Bartow City Directory* (Jacksonville: Polk Company, 1925), 32; R.L. Polk, *Bartow City Directory* (Jacksonville: Polk Company, 1928), 39; Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census, 1920, Population Schedules, Polk County, FL, precinct number 3; Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth

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Section number 8 Page 4 **BROWN, LAWRENCE HOUSE, BARTOW,
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Annabelle Brown died in the mid-1930s, and Lawrence Brown passed away on 16 January 1941. His estate was valued at nearly eighteen thousand dollars, with his real estate holdings alone valued at nearly ten thousand dollars. By then, Brown had set aside an additional three thousand dollars for the education of five of his youngest children, two of whom, Lawrence Clifford Brown and Annie Bell Brown, were then attending Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University. Following Brown's death, his daughter Lavinia Thomas, who then lived in Winter Haven, returned to Bartow. She lived in her childhood home until her death in 1989. The Neighborhood Improvement Corporation of Bartow, Inc. acquired the property in 1999, in part with funds from the Florida Department of State, Bureau of Historic Preservation. The non-profit corporation has restored the historic dwelling.¹⁰

Architectural Significance

The Brown House is an excellent example of frame vernacular construction in late nineteenth century Florida. The house has irregular massing with projecting cross gables. Built with a "Z" footprint, all rooms on both floors were arranged off of central halls. The ca.1910 one-story hip extension on the first floor conveys the impression the house was built with a modified "L"-plan. The use of wooden stump piers, a pioneer practice, contrasts with the sophisticated wooden millwork and craftsmanship that characterizes the rest of the house.

A break from the formal symmetry of house design in the early nineteenth century, irregularly massed dwellings were not folk derived, but instead were promoted by architects and builders in plan books, eventually becoming a popular building type in the late nineteenth century. Towns that grew vigorously in the late nineteenth century because of an improved railroad network required substantial numbers of dwellings. Irregularly-massed dwellings, especially those displaying L shapes, became a popular house form, reflecting the predilections of home owners and builders.¹¹

Lawrence Brown, an African-American carpenter who learned his craft during the Reconstruction period, built the house in 1892 using design and construction patterns familiar to him. The common character of this well-executed, but traditional wood frame dwelling is obscured by unique nineteenth century picturesque mill work, including barge boards, leaded glass transoms, Queen Anne sashes, turned posts, spindle work, scrollsawn balusters, variegated wood shingles, and a Palladian window, offering an encyclopedia of nineteenth century detailing. The Brown House transcends the traditional association of African-Americans relying on Shotgun-style architecture to build their communities. Uncharacteristic in its Z plan and heavily adorned, the

Census, 1910, Population Schedules, Polk County, FL, precinct number 3; Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census, 1900, Population Schedules, Polk County, FL, precinct number 3; Lavinia Catherine Brown Thomas, "Historical Facts About My Paternal and Maternal Grassroots," unpub. mss., Bartow, c. 1988, 1-4.

¹⁰Martha Sawyer, "Brown Home Is One of Polk's Oldest Historic Houses," *Polk County Historical Quarterly* 19 (March 1993), 1-3; Lawrence B. Brown, Probate File 9141, Polk County Courthouse.

¹¹John Jakle, Robert Bastian, and Douglas Meyer, *Common Houses in America's Small Towns: The Atlantic Seaboard to the Mississippi Valley* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 153-154, 161-163.

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**BROWN, LAWRENCE HOUSE, BARTOW,
POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA**

house contributes a sense of time, place, and historical development through its ambiance, linkage, and character to the historic built fabric of Bartow.

The dwelling displays a superior level of craftsmanship, and retains its late-nineteenth-century character and integrity to a high degree. The owner, Neighborhood Improvement Corporation of Bartow, Inc., is currently rehabilitating the resource.

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**BROWN, LAWRENCE HOUSE, BARTOW,
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- Polk County Courthouse, Bartow, FL.
- Lawrence B. Brown Probate File 9141; Deed Book 44, p. 100; Deed Book 46, p. 388; Deed Book 73, p. 422-423; Deed Book 84, p. 372, 373; Tax Rolls, 1890-1895.
- Polk County Record, 17 January 1941.
- Polk, R.L. Bartow City Directory. Jacksonville: Polk Company, 1922, 1925, 1928.
- Sanborn Map Company. Fire Insurance Map of Bartow, Polk County, Florida. New York: Sanborn Company, 1911, 1917, 1924.
- Sawyer, Martha. "Brown Home Is One of Polk's Oldest Historic Houses." Polk County Historical Quarterly 19 (March 1993):1-3.
- Thomas, Lavinia Catherine Brown. "Historical Facts About My Paternal and Maternal Grassroots." unpub. mss. Bartow, c. 1988.
- Volusia County Courthouse, DeLand, FL.
- Deed Book J, p. 112-114; Deed Book 44, p. 25; Deed Book 47, p. 202; Deed Book 56, p. 120; Deed Book 229, p. 241; Tax Roll, 1892.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 1

**LAWRENCE BROWN HOUSE, BARTOW,
POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA**

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The building occupies the E ½ of Lot 1, less the south 54.30 feet of the West 34.62 feet thereof; AND Lot 2, Less the South 32.17 feet of the West ½ thereof; AND Lot 3, less North 30.7 feet in Brown's Addition to Bartow.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary contains the above-described legal reference, and encloses approximately one-half acre of property historically associated with the Brown House.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Photos _____ Page 1

**BROWN, LAWRENCE HOUSE, BARTOW,
POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA**

PHOTOGRAPHIC LIST

1. Lawrence Bernard Brown House, 470 Second Avenue, Bartow
2. Polk County, Florida
3. Sidney Johnston
4. 2000
5. Johnston
6. View showing front (west) facade, facing east
7. Photo #1 of 20

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

6. Detail view showing front-facing gable, facing east
7. Photograph number 2 of 20

6. Detail view showing veranda, facing southeast
7. Photograph number 3 of 20

6. View showing north elevation, facing south
7. Photograph number 4 of 20

6. Detail view showing projecting gable end of north elevation, facing south
7. Photograph number 5 of 20

6. Oblique view showing east (rear) and south elevations, facing northwest
7. Photograph number 6 of 20

6. Detail view showing projecting gable end of rear (east) elevation, facing west
7. Photograph number 7 of 20

6. Oblique view showing south elevation and front (west) facade, facing northeast
7. Photograph number 8 of 20

6. Detail view showing projecting gable end of south elevation, facing north
7. Photograph number 9 of 20

6. View showing entrance hall and staircase, facing east
7. Photograph number 10 of 20

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Photos _____ Page 2

**BROWN, LAWRENCE HOUSE, BARTOW,
POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA**

6. View showing grandmother's bedroom, facing west
7. Photograph number 11 of 20

6. View showing parlor, facing east
7. Photograph number 12 of 20

6. View showing living room, facing southeast
7. Photograph number 13 of 20

6. View showing bathroom, facing northeast
7. Photograph number 14 of 20

6. View showing kitchen, facing southwest
7. Photograph number 15 of 20

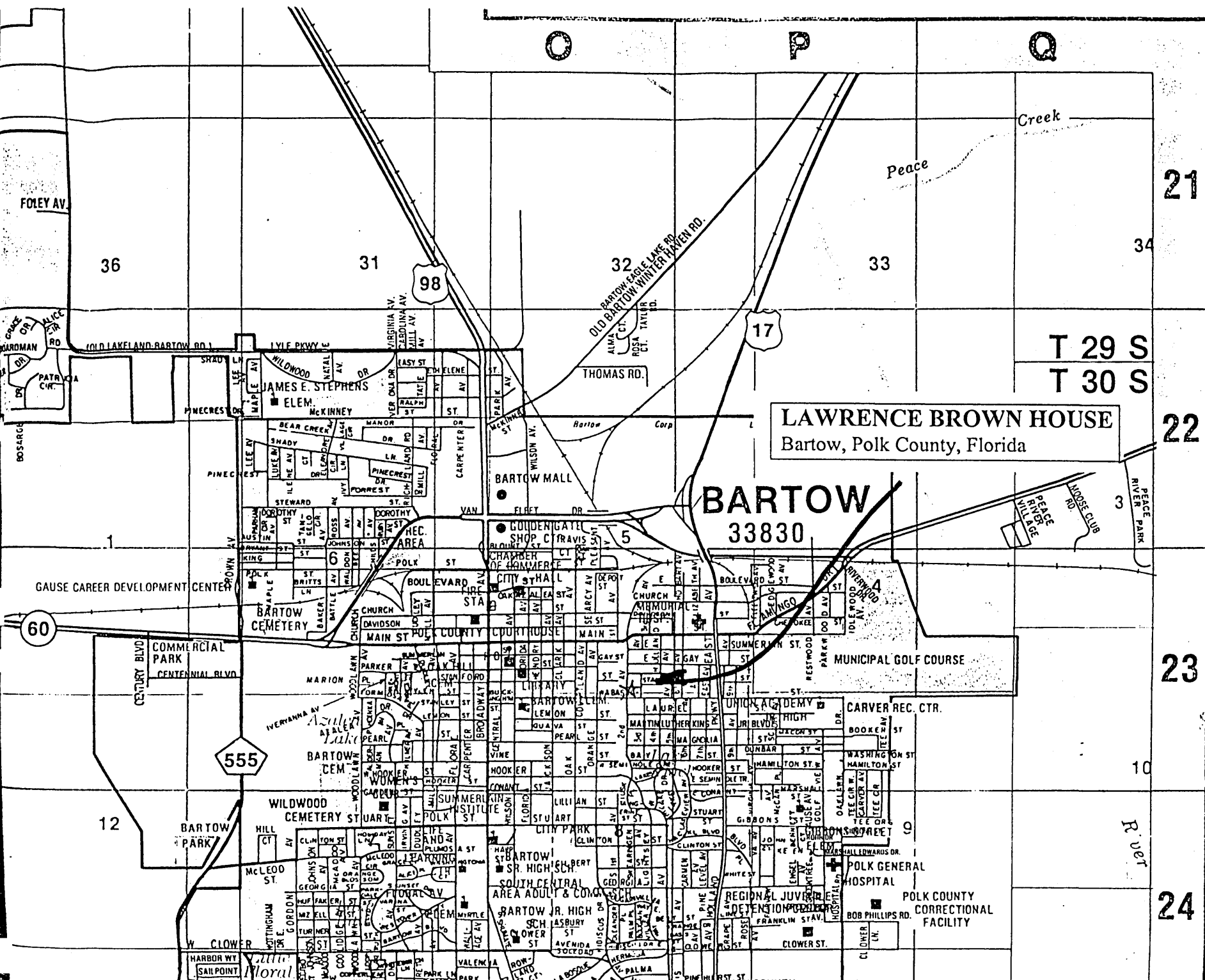
6. View showing rear hall, facing west
7. Photograph number 16 of 20

6. View showing second-floor hall, facing west
7. Photograph number 17 of 20

6. View showing father's bedroom, facing southwest
7. Photograph number 18 of 20

6. View showing mother's bedroom, facing west
7. Photograph number 19 of 20

6. View showing girl's bedroom, facing southeast
7. Photograph number 20 of 20



LAWRENCE BROWN HOUSE
Bartow, Polk County, Florida

BARTOW
33830

21

22

23

24

Creek

Peace

River

98

17

60

555

36

31

32

33

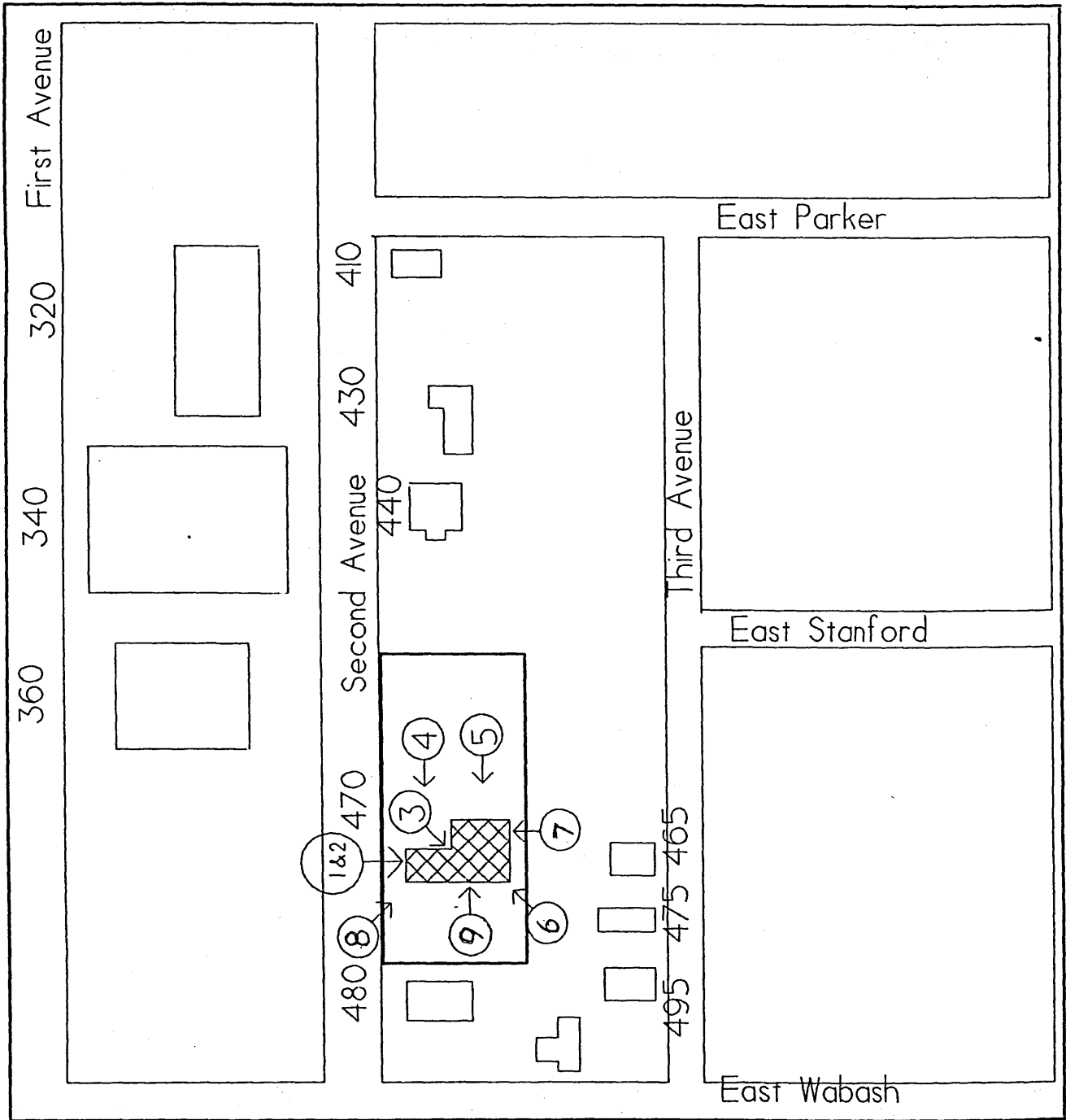
34

T 29 S

T 30 S

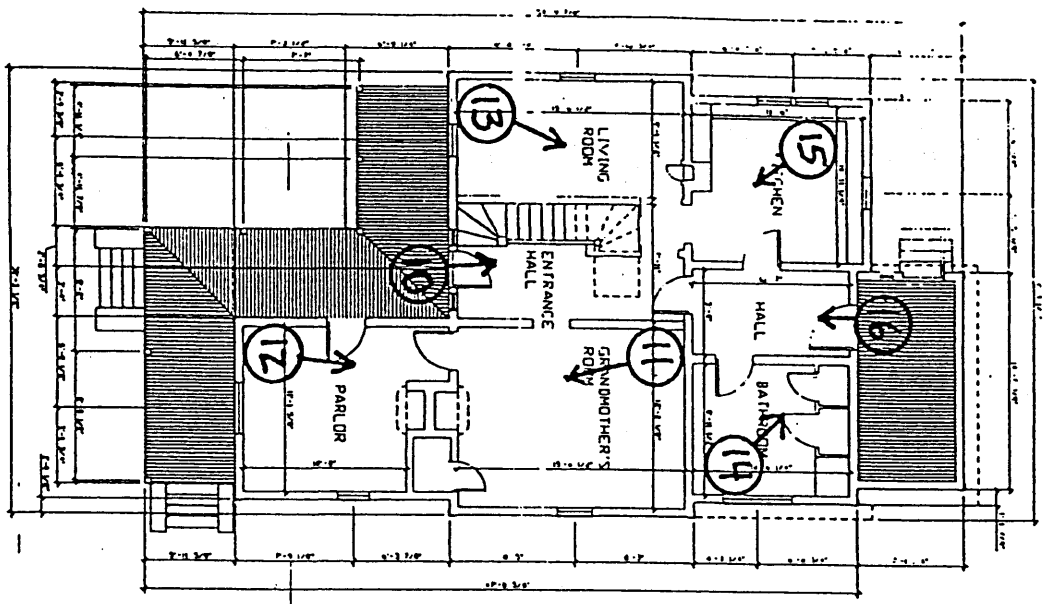
12

10

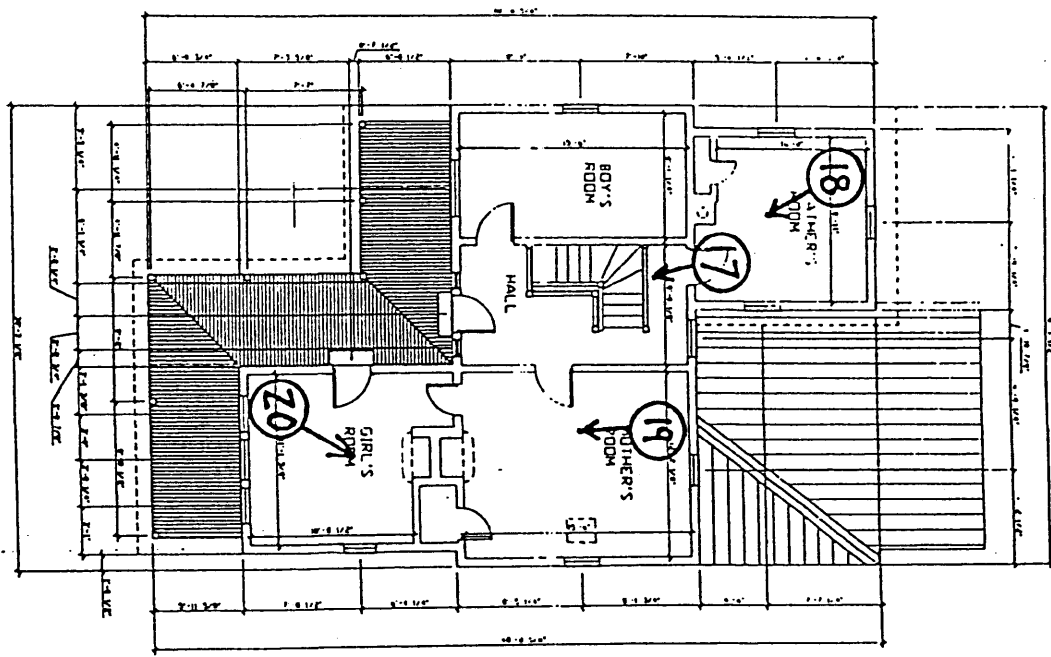


LAWRENCE BROWN HOUSE
 Bartow, Polk Co., Florida
 Site Plan & Boundary Map





First Floor



Second Floor

LAWRENCE BROWN HOUSE
 Bartow, Polk Co., Florida
 Floor Plan



the corporate seal of the said company and that the same was affixed by him to the said instrument by order of the Board of Directors of said Company.

In Witness Whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my Notarial seal on the day and year first above written.

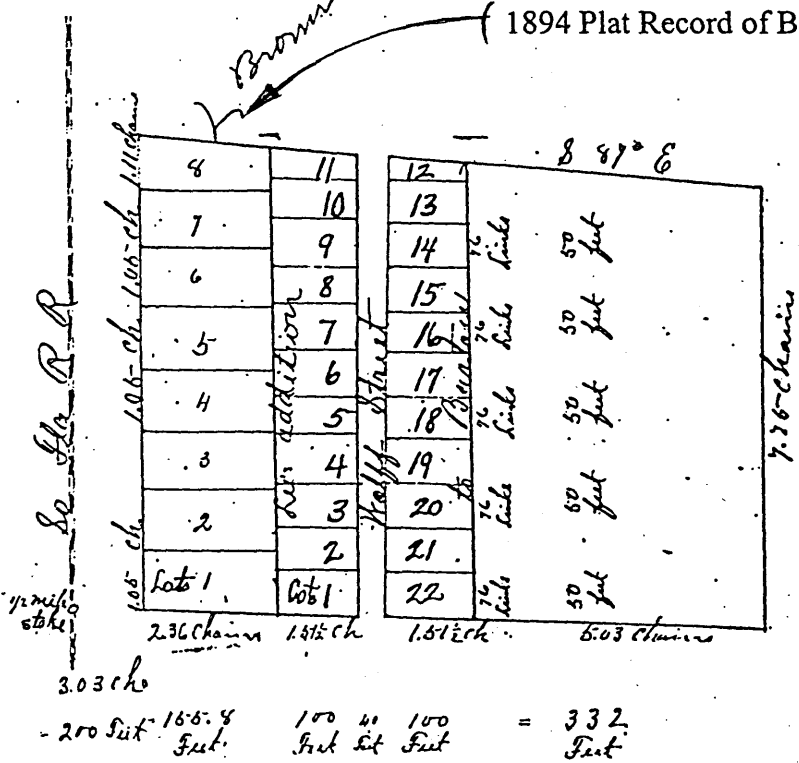
Frank E. Dowdy
Notary Public

Filed Sept 1-1894
W. H. Johnson Clerk
Rep. J. B. Johnson DC

Plat Certificate to
Morace Lee (decd)
Lee's Add.

LAWRENCE BROWN HOUSE
Bartow, Polk County, Florida

1894 Plat Record of Brown's Sub-Division



Lee's Add. to Bartow.
Mentioned Red in Lots

Francis A. Wolff
County Surveyor

State of Florida
County of Polk
August, 9-1894
This is to certify that I surveyed and staked off the following described lots as delineated and described in the accompanying Plat, lying East of the Brown tract