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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Ala. Historical Commission

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Leatherbury, George, House other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Shell Belt Rd. NW corner of Kennedy city, town Coden state Alabama code AL county Mobile code 097 zip code 36523

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public and building/site/structure/object, and counts for contributing/non-contributing resources.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office) Date 5-7-90

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official Date

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register. determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:). Entered in the national register. Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 6/14/90

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)Other: Bay house

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Wood

walls Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The George Leatherbury House is located across Shell Belt Road on the north shore of Portersville Bay. It is set back from the road on high wooden pilings to protect the house from the periodic floodings which occur. Over seventy feet long and raised high, the building produces a feeling of massiveness with its low hipped, asphalt shingled roof which kicks off over the double story porches.

These porches wrap around to the right on both floors with the final bays on the right side being enclosed. On the first floor the last porch bay has been infilled. The porches have 2x4 rails and are presently screened. The screen structure obscures the simple crowns of the boxed columns as viewed from the street though they are visible from the porch. The first floor porch has a beaded board ceiling and the second is open with exposed rafters. The rafter ends under the eaves have been cut for a decorative effect.

The right (east) side shows the screened porch with end bays and the above mentioned enclosed porch bay. The end bays have 6/6 windows and may have been open; they wrap around to connect with the rear porch. The left (west) side has two bays (6/6 windows) under the main roof, one on each floor to either side of the double shouldered, sloped, two story, exterior end chimney. The porch bay to the front is under the kickoff roof and the bay to the rear is under a shed roof. This last bay also contains a single 6/6 window on each floor, but of a smaller size than those under the main roof.

The rear shows modifications through time. When the present owner's parents purchased the house in the 1940s, they enclosed the rear inset porch. Fourteen windows on the second floor and thirteen windows and a door on the first floor ribbon across the enclosure. Short and wide of six panes, the upper windows are casements and the lower ones slide up into the wall. A large, blind, inset gabled dormer is roughly centered on the rear. At its juncture the shed roof to the west becomes a kickoff on the east. It is possible that the bays at either end were enclosed after the initial construction period.

Behind the screen porch on the front are centered, pocket doors of 18 lights over a panel, set slightly forward of the main plane of the house. To either side are paneled doors with 2/2/2 windows flanking each side of the doors. This same triple bay arrangement (window-door-window) is seen in the middle and right bays on the second floor. The left bay contains a door with just a single window.

See continuation sheet

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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The first floor paneled doors have single light transoms. The right side contains two 2/2/2 windows on each floor.

Each floor holds three major rooms. The first floor walls and ceilings were of beaded board (now sheetrocked) with simple crown mouldings, high baseboards, simple mantels on corbeled bricks, and concentrically laid pine floors. The central room contains the single landing staircase, with paneled rectangular newels and turned balusters. Storage seats were built along the stair and adjacent to the fireplace. A bath is off the rear of the west bedroom. The enclosed porch is currently accessed through the center and east rooms. The rear east is presently used as the kitchen.

The second story is simpler in decoration and detail but with the same room arrangement. The rear inset porch has bathrooms to either end and there are bedrooms on either end of the main block accessing them. The stair leads to a small hall which leads onto the the enclosed porch and the west bedroom; it also opens to the south into the central bedroom. The hall and central bedroom were probably one large open room originally. Each room has multiple entrances onto the front porch through either doorways or 2/2/2 windows. These rooms were also of beaded board but have been sheetrocked or paneled and have had acoustic tile ceilings installed.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1912

Significant Dates

1912

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

CRITERION C: ARCHITECTURE

The George Leatherbury House is the best example of the bay house on the Portersville Bay in Mobile County. An important regional type generally built as summer homes, bay houses dotted both sides of Mobile Bay as well as the north shore of Portersville Bay. Characterized by extensive galleries, large rooms, and multiple windows and doors, this early twentieth century home is the inheritor of the bay house tradition which dates back to the mid-nineteenth century.

As a turn of the century resort community, Coden had a number of bay houses and guest houses built to accommodate seasonal visitors. Few of these houses survive due to their size with requisite upkeep, fires, and the hurricanes which have battered the coast. The Leatherbury House retains the essential integrity of the bay house, which the three nearby coast homes lack (one has been sided and has had the front porch partially enclosed; another has been altered for apartments; and the third is Neo-Classical in design, without the characteristics of the bay house). The only other known bay house in Mobile County are on the western shore of Mobile Bay on Mon Louis Island: the Austin House is on the National Register and the other has not been nominated due to interior alterations.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Leatherbury, Charlie. Telephone interview by Devereaux Bemis. July 16, 1989.
Mobile City Directories: 1910, 1915, & 1920. Mobile Public Library. Mobile, Alabama.
Mobile County Probate Records. Mobile County Courthouse. Mobile, Alabama.
Mobile County Tax Records. Mobile County Courthouse. Mobile, Alabama.
United States Census Records: 1910. Mobile Public Library. Mobile, Alabama.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA
 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:
 State historic preservation office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Specify repository:
Mobile Historic Development Commission

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 3.6 acres

UTM References

A

1	6	3	7	9	7	9	0	3	3	6	1	3	4	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

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B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 1-7, inclusive, of Kennedy's Subdivision, as recorded in the Probate records of Mobile County.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The land described above has historically been associated with the house and is currently part of the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Devereaux Bemis/Architectural Historian; Steven Kay/AHC Reviewer
organization Mobile Historic Development Commission date July 16, 1989
street & number P. O. Box 1827 telephone (205)438-7281
city or town Mobile state Alabama zip code 36633-1827

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Historic Context

The City of Mobile had existed primarily as a port since its inception in the 18th century. With development occurring throughout Alabama in the 19th century, its importance, particularly as a cotton port, also increased. In the latter part of the century, cotton was replaced by exports of timber products and imports of various goods.

From the beginning of the 20th century to World War I, the port and those who dealt in the port commodities prospered. Many of the commodity dealers (cotton factors, lumber brokers, etc.) constructed fine homes as befitting their wealth. Government Street became the premier residential street in the City.

At the same time, the shore became the vacation spot for many Mobilians escaping the summer heat in the City. The Eastern Shore of Mobile Bay had been a popular area since the early nineteenth century. The western shore was not as developed, but private homes often hosted friends and family for weeks at a time. The Bay Shore Line (railroad spur) opened up the southern part of the County.

The development of Coden along the bayou spurred development along the shore as a whole. Guest houses, hotels and private homes were constructed as retreats for the city-bound Mobilian. All have disappeared except for a few isolated structures.

George Leatherbury was one of the men who prospered from the timber industry and the activities of the port. In 1910, he was president and co-owner of Leatherbury and White, a lumber brokerage firm at 100 St. Francis and he owned a lumber mill in Bexley, Mississippi. He lived in one of the large Government Street houses located near the western boundaries of the City.

That same year Leatherbury purchased three large lots on Portersville Bay. In 1912, his tax assessment jumped by \$800 and by 1914 had increased another \$1300, indicating completion of the house.

During the 1916 hurricane, the house was knocked off its foundations. In order to secure and protect the building from future storms, Mr. Leatherbury raised it high on heavy wood pilings with heavy bracing. At some point the large rear wing, which served as the kitchen/dining room with children's dormitory above, was demolished.

The house was occupied by the Leatherburys from June 1 to October 1 each year. The entire family including the twelve children spent all summer there. In addition to the house, there was a barn, a garage and a chicken coop in the rear. To the front was a wharf with a pier at the end, two bath houses (one for adults and one for children) and a large house at the beginning of the wharf. The family often entertained friends so that activity was constant all summer.

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In 1918 Mr. Leatherbury suffered a major financial loss when three schooners loaded with his lumber disappeared at sea. He was forced to sell the property in Coden but maintained the Government Street home. That large house remained in the family until the late 1940s when it was sold and subsequently demolished.

Coden itself fell on hard times as the transportation system which helped it develop, improved to allow vacationers to travel to more distant spots. The automobile provided for domestic travel as the great ocean liners carried the upper middle class to Europe. Long term resorts faded as vacationers demanded to be entertained. Coden changed as visitors favored other areas and Mobilians went farther afield.

Integrity

The Leatherbury house at Coden has changed through time but retains its essential integrity. The most significant change has been the loss of the rear wing but this has little effect on the appearance of the house. Mr. Charles Leatherbury who spent his youth at the house as the ninth of twelve children remembered the house as being screened during his father's ownership. The only other significant change has been the covering of the original interior wall materials. The massing, exterior appearance and basic floor plan all remain.

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Section number photo-
graphs Page 1

Leatherbury House

1. Leatherbury, George, House
2. Coden, Mobile County, Alabama
3. Devereaux Bemis, photographer
4. July 7, 1989
5. MHDC Negative File--MCRS Roll #144

Photo # View (Frame #)

1. Facade, Camera facing N (23)
2. General view of E side, Camera facing NW (24)
3. W elevation, Camera facing E (26)
4. Rear, Camera facing (27)
5. E bays of facade, Camera facing NE (2)
6. Second floor front porch, Camera facing NE (20)
7. First floor east room (dining room), Camera facing N (3)
8. Central room on first floor, Camera facing S (7)
9. Stairway, First floor center room, Camera facing W (5)
10. Second floor, East room, Camera facing E (17)