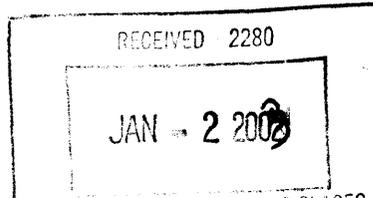


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If 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 from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Caldwell Home Place

other names/site number Myer General Store; The Home Place; Judge John H. Caldwell Winter Home/HN00303

2. Location

street & number 160 Curry Street N/A not for publication

city or town LaBelle N/A vicinity

state Florida code FL county Hendry code 051 zip code 33935

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.)

Barbara C. Mattick / DSHPO 12-20-02
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) _____

(by) Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Nash D. Pope 2/13/03

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	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
1	2	total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Historic & Architectural Resources of LaBell, Hendry Co., FL

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/General Store

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

FRAME VERNACULAR

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation WOOD PILINGS

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c. 1907-1936

Significant Dates

1919

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

UNKNOWN

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

#

Caldwell Home Place
Name of Property

Hendry, Florida
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.4 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 7	4 5 6 1 3 0	2 9 6 0 5 4 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 Mikki Hartig, Consultant; Gary V. Goodwin, Historic Preservation Planner

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date December, 2002

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333

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 Craig Caldwell

street & number 1441 Holston Drive telephone (423) 764-6961

city or town Bristol state Tennessee zip code 37620-4151

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.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

**CALDWELL HOME PLACE
LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida**

Summary

The Caldwell Home Place is located at 160 Curry Street in LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida. As originally constructed in c.1896, the building stood on the banks of the Caloosahatchee River to serve as a store with a mail drop and supply station for the sparsely populated LaBelle community. It is believed that the building also served as LaBelle's first postal station, established in 1898. In 1906, it was moved a short distance to the south and east of its original site, to the center of the owner's property to protect it from the frequent flooding of the river. Subsequently, it was converted to residential use in c.1907 and fondly named "The Home Place" by the family that continues to own the property. Remodeling at that time included the addition of a kitchen and dining room. Further expansion took place within a few years with the addition of large porches and a few more rooms. The building is one of the two oldest known structures still standing in Hendry County, the other being, the John Hall House, an extremely modified residential structure completed in c.1893, but moved to its site in LaBelle in 1926 from Caloosa, Florida. There is also a noncontributing smaller secondary residential structure that was completed in c.1909 but modified in the 1950s. Additionally, a frame carport was built on the site in 1992.

Setting

The Caldwell Home Place and its historically associated secondary structure occupy a fenced site at 160 Curry Street between Hampton Avenue and Campbell Street in the north central part of the City of LaBelle. Curry Street runs east to west. The main residential structure is set back approximately 100 feet from the road. A non-historic wood fence encloses the property.

Large clumps of bamboo are on the grounds which grew from cuttings said to have been brought there by Harvey Firestone, founder of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, on one of the trips the trio of Thomas Alva Edison, Henry Ford, and Firestone made to visit LaBelle. The surrounding building stock consists primarily of modern single family residences.

Physical Description

Exterior

The main house of the Caldwell Home Place is an early example of Frame Vernacular construction. It displays an "L" shaped plan, which consists of a front facing gable roof with a larger cross-gable extension (Photo 8). The house is of wood frame construction with exterior walls of wood board-and-batten and shiplap siding. Deep-hipped roof structures that extend beyond the main roof cover the wrap-around porches. Wide wood stairs with simple wood railing and balustrades access the porch on the main (south) façade, where there are two entrances (Photo 9). All roof planes are surfaced in 5v metal crimp, and exposed rafter tails extend under the wide eaves. Wood pilings support the structure. The primary entrance is set back to the west within the screened section of the

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**CALDWELL HOME PLACE
LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida**

southwest porch (Photo 10). Two other secondary entrances are located on the south elevation. A wood lattice foundation skirt extends around the perimeter at the base of the house.

A deep, open, elevated porch with wood flooring (Photo 13) extends along the north, east, and south and partially along the west elevations. Square and chamfered wood posts support the hip roof above the porch. Three secondary entrance doors, dating from c.1907 access the porch on the east (Photo 14). On the west elevation, a section of the porch is screened with light wood framing. North of the screened section of the south porch is an enclosed section. Within this space, an historic mail slot can be seen which has been preserved over the years. Simple wood balustrades (Photo 15) bind the north, east, and south porches. The written notations on the exterior wall under the roof of the east porch are noteworthy. These markings record the names and height and dates recorded of five generations of the family that has owned the property since 1907 (Photo 16). In addition, the names, height, and visitation dates of many visitors to the house over time have been inscribed on the wall and preserved unpainted over the years.

Fenestration is irregular on all elevations of the house and consists of varied types of window styles, the large majority of which are original to the house or date from very early modifications. Window types include: 1/1, 2/2, and 4/4 wood double hung sash, and 4/4 wood sliders, all placed independently. A few 1/1 single hung sash windows, hung in a ribbon pattern, are along the west elevation where a section of the west porch has been enclosed.

Interior

The interior of the main house retains its original character and configuration to a high degree, although there have been some modifications to the original floor plan since it was converted to residential use c.1907. These changes were all completed in the first part of the century. The house contains a living room, dining room, four bedrooms, kitchen, two baths, and a Florida room that was created from an original section of the west porch. Interior walls and ceilings are a combination of board-and-batten, beadboard and sheets of wood. Original heart pine floors remain throughout the house.

Many of the furnishings in the house were brought to the site in the early part of the century. The owner at that time had a carload of furnishings sent from Tennessee by rail to Fort Myers and up the river on a steamboat. There are brass beds, an early Murphy bed concealed behind a chest of drawers, dresser sets, chamber pots, brass kerosene lanterns, and a rocking horse used in the house by earlier generations of the Caldwell family. One of the most prized pieces of furniture in the house is a large Circassian walnut and crotch mahogany bed with hand carved posts and finials.

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Section number 7 Page 3

**CALDWELL HOME PLACE
LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida**

Alterations

Although the building has undergone alterations and received some additions, virtually all were completed in the early part of the century. The house was first modified in c.1907 when the original building was converted from use as a store into a vacation home (Photos 1, 3, and 5). At that time or shortly thereafter, additions were completed that included a kitchen and dining room. In 1919, the south porch was added, and in c.1940, a small bathroom addition was placed on the west end of the north porch, perhaps at that time the cisterns were removed. The only other exterior alterations over the last 90 years were additions of porch balustrade (date unknown), the screening of the west porch in c.1956, and the enclosure of a section of that same porch in 1990-1991.

Noncontributing Historic Outbuilding

A smaller one-story residential building with an "L" shaped plan, completed in c.1908 and presently used as a guest house, is located south of the main house (Photos 4, and 17-19). It was originally referred to as "George's Place" and later, as "Robin's Nest." The building is of frame construction with exterior walls of board-and-batten resting on wood piers. Gable roofs cover the main block and a secondary block on the south, whereas, an additional secondary block on the north has a shed roof. All roof planes are surfaced in 5v metal crimp. Fenestration on all elevations is irregular, consisting of wood 1/1 and 2/2 double hung sash windows, most placed in pairs. Alterations to this secondary structure include the late 1950s enclosure and alteration of the original full-width shed roof front entrance porch. This modification included the conversion of the shed roof covering the porch into a front facing gable roof (Photo 17). The interior of the structure retains its original board-and-batten walls and heart pine flooring.

Noncontributing Detached Carport

Southeast of the main house is an 18' x 18' 6-bay contemporary wood frame carport erected in 1991. It has a gable roof supported by square wood posts and a solid poured concrete slab (Photo 20).

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Section number PHOTOS Page 1

**CALDWELL HOME PLACE
LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida**

PHOTO INVENTORY

1. Frierson's Store
2. Original site, on the banks of the Caloosahatchee River in LaBelle
3. 1905
4. Unknown
5. Craig Caldwell, 160 Curry Street, LaBelle, FL
6. Rear north elevation, camera facing south
7. Photo 1 of 20

1. Caldwell Home Place Main House
2. 160 Curry Street, Labelle, FL
3. 1907
4. Unknown
5. Craig Caldwell, 160 Curry Street, LaBelle, FL
6. South and east elevations, camera facing northwest
7. Photo 2 of 20

1. Caldwell Home Place Main House
2. 160 Curry Street, LaBelle, FL
3. 1908
4. Unknown
5. Craig Caldwell, 160 Curry Street, LaBelle, FL
6. South elevation, camera facing N
7. Photo 3 of 20

1. "George's Place" on Caldwell Place property
2. 160 Curry Street, LaBelle, FL
3. 1915
4. Unknown
5. Craig Caldwell, 160 Curry Street, LaBelle, FL
6. South elevation, camera facing north
7. Photo 4 of 20

1. Caldwell Home Place, Main House
2. 160 Curry Street, LaBelle, FL
3. c.1910
4. Unknown

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**CALDWELL HOME PLACE
LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida**

-
5. Craig Caldwell, 160 Curry Street, LaBelle, FL
 6. South and east elevations, camera facing northwest
 7. Photo 5 of 20

1. Caldwell Home Place Main House
2. 160 Curry Street, LaBelle, FL
3. April, 2000
4. Mikki Hartig
5. Historical & Architectural Research Services, 3708 Flores Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34239
6. South elevation and "George's Place" in the foreground, camera facing north
7. Photo 6 of 20

Items 1-5 are the same for the following photographs:

6. East elevation, with "George's Place" in the foreground, camera facing north
7. Photo 7 of 20

6. Primary, south facade, camera facing north
7. Photo 8 of 20

6. Primary, south facade and partial E elevation, camera facing slightly northwest
7. Photo 9 of 20

6. West elevation and partial south facade, camera facing northeast
7. Photo 10 of 20

6. West elevation and partial south facade, camera facing northeast
7. Photo 11 of 20

6. Rear, north elevation, camera facing south
7. Photo 12 of 20

6. Rear, north elevation, camera facing slightly northwest
7. Photo 13 of 20

6. East porch and elevation, camera facing south
7. Photo 14 of 20

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**CALDWELL HOME PLACE
LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida**

- 6. North porch, camera facing east
- 7. Photo 15 of 20

- 6. Visitor markings on east porch, camera facing west
- 7. Photo 16 of 20

- 6. "George's Place" on property, camera facing northeast
- 7. Photo 17 of 20

- 6. "George's Place" on property, camera facing southeast
- 7. Photo 18 of 20

- 6. "George's Place" on property, camera facing south
- 7. Photo 19 of 20

- 6. Detached contemporary carport, camera facing east
- 7. Photo 20 of 20

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Section number 8 Page 1

**CALDWELL HOME PLACE
LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida**

SUMMARY

The Caldwell Place at 160 Curry Street in LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida, is significant at the local level under Criteria A and C in the areas of Entertainment/Recreation, and Architecture. The main house on the Caldwell property is one of LaBelle's most historically significant buildings because of its association with the early settlement of the city of LaBelle. The building served the community of LaBelle as an early general store and local mail drop beginning approximately the same year as the town was founded. The building was constructed c. 1895 or 1896 in an area that had been platted by Captain Frances Hendry as the Town of LaBelle in 1895. The period of significance begins, however, when the building was moved c. 1907 and was used exclusively as a residence and sportsman camp by John H. Caldwell and his descendants. The period of significance ended in 1936, the year John H. Caldwell died. Under Criterion C, the building is architecturally significant as an excellent example of early Frame Vernacular construction and utilizes local building materials and methods of construction. It is one of the oldest documented structures standing in Hendry County and retains much of its simple early plan and architectural integrity. The house contributes to the Historic and Architectural Resources of LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida, multiple property group under Historic Context I, The Early Development of LaBelle, c.1870-1921. Type F.1, Residential Buildings.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The original owner of the Caldwell House was reportedly Frederick Myer, who constructed the building to be used as a general store and mail drop. Myer purchased the property from the State Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund on May 9, 1888, but apparently did nothing to improve the property until around 1895, when use of the site as a mail drop to serve the sparse rural population of the area has been documented. Biographical information on Myer and his operation of the store and the mail drop has not come to light.

The U.S. Post Office closest to LaBelle was established at the nearby settlement of Fort Thompson in June, 1884. LaBelle would not have its own U.S. post office until March 21, 1898, and no site in LaBelle other than the Myer Store was known to have been used as a post office during that period. On June 29, 1903, Myer sold his property to William B. Crews. Although a number of persons with the surname Crews are recorded as having settled in the area between the 1880s and 1905, no record of a William B. Crews as a resident of LaBelle or Hendry County has been found. On September 5, 1905, Crews sold the property to area pioneer Taylor Frierson.

Taylor Frierson was the son of another area storekeeper, Major Aaron Frierson, a veteran of the Civil War and a native of South Carolina. Aaron Frierson arrived in Fort Myers, Florida, west of the LaBelle area, in 1874 and went into business with Marion Hendry. Together, they established a store in the heart of downtown Fort Myers under the firm name of Frierson and Hendry. Shortly thereafter, Aaron Frierson purchased a downtown home site and constructed a concrete house. Two of Frierson's daughters married sons of Captain Frances A. Hendry, for whom Hendry County is named. Major Frierson's son, Taylor, became the proprietor of the Frierson House, a Fort

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**CALDWELL HOME PLACE
LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida**

Myers lodging house during the 1880s. In 1887, he served as a councilman of the Town of Fort Myers. He owned a citrus grove near Buckingham, Florida, and in 1904, went into business with James Hendry, another son of Captain Francis Hendry. Taylor Frierson owned large herds of cattle, pastures, and groves at Fort Thompson, just east of LaBelle.

Whether or not Taylor Frierson actually operated the store in LaBelle himself is unknown; however, his son, Henry T. Frierson, did serve as postmaster in LaBelle in 1905. He may have handled both the operations of the store and post office owned by his father for a short period of time. Following Henry Frierson's service, as postmaster, George Hendry, a son of Captain Hendry, was appointed postmaster. Taylor Frierson and his wife, Anna Dagenhard, whom he married in 1877, were founding members of LaBelle Methodist Church beginning in 1904. Although Taylor Frierson probably resided in Fort Myers until the turn of the twentieth century, it appears that he did live in LaBelle for at least a few years during the early 1900s. This is based upon his involvement in helping found the local Methodist the church and his need to oversee his large cattle operation at nearby Fort Thompson, which he had purchased in 1904. Frierson eventually sold his holdings in the cattle business to Everett Goodno, who is considered the founder of LaBelle. Taylor Frierson died May 23, 1925. His widow, Anna, died in Fort Myers, Florida, in November of 1931.

John H. Caldwell, a banker and county judge from Bristol, Tennessee, began coming to the Tampa area in Florida in 1892 for hunting trips. Caldwell was born in east Tennessee in 1856. His father was a Presbyterian minister, who had served as a military missionary in the Civil War. John H. Caldwell attended King College in Bristol before obtaining a law degree from Tennessee University (today's University of Tennessee). Subsequently, he established a law practice in Bristol.

Beginning around 1895, John Caldwell began staying at the Everett Goodno ranch near Fort Thompson during his visits to the area for hunting. He became acquainted with Taylor Frierson and, after several seasons, he began to stay with Frierson in the small community of LaBelle. The judge was captivated by the beauty of region and by its excellent hunting. Each year for more than the next ten years, he made arrangements to stay with friends in LaBelle. He began bringing his family to the community about 1898. Influenced by his family's liking for Florida and enthusiasm for more and more extended visits, Caldwell wanted to set up a hunting camp. In 1907, he purchased from Taylor Frierson the parcel of property on which stood the building that had been used for a general store and community mail drop. After buying the property, Judge Caldwell had the structure moved away from the bank of the river to protect it from potential flooding. Caldwell also soon oversaw the addition of porches and rooms.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

In 1907, the Caldwells traveled to their newly renovated winter home which they lovingly called "The Home Place." A railroad freight car was used to transport furnishings and hounds from Tennessee to Punta Gorda. Then,

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Section number 8 Page 3

**CALDWELL HOME PLACE
LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida**

everything was transported by wagon 24 miles to the Caloosahatchee River, where the family and their belongings were placed aboard a ferry to Fort Myers. There they boarded the riverboat *Gray Eagle*, for the balance of the trip to LaBelle. Accompanying the Caldwell family on their trip were close relatives and a retinue of servants that included grooms, maids, a governess, cook, and a personal physician to insure the physical needs of the family. After several years, the Caldwell family had grown to include six children, and more space was needed at their LaBelle residence. Another addition was built onto the converted store building, and by 1919, a fine board-and-batten house surrounded the earlier structure. The house included a spacious parlor, a peaked attic, and several bedrooms. All except one room, reserved for the family's young ladies, had doors that opened on to the wide veranda. A separate frame building, sited closer to Curry Street, housed the servants.

Although Judge Caldwell only resided in LaBelle for a part of each year, he actively participated in the town's civic and community affairs. In the early 1920s, he traveled to Tallahassee with prominent local citizens to help lobby for the creation of Hendry County from the much larger Lee County. In 1925, when plans to erect a courthouse for Hendry County were made, Caldwell became one of the donors of the land on which the courthouse was erected. He also made investments in the area. In 1928, he commissioned the construction of a commercial building on Main Street in downtown LaBelle.

Over the years, many prominent persons and friends of Judge Caldwell joined him in LaBelle and took hunting trips with him to the Everglades where they would stay a month at a time. Tents sheltered them from weather and insects. Servants who would cook and tend to the horses and dogs attended the group. They would return to LaBelle for supplies. The wives of visiting sportsmen usually remained as guests of Mrs. Caldwell in the house at LaBelle.

In 1907 or 1908, the compound was expanded with the arrival of George Caldwell, the judge's brother. George was afflicted with a serious respiratory ailment. During the Civil War, he had served as a chaplain in the Confederate army and afterward became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Bristol, Tennessee. For his brother's privacy and comfort, Judge Caldwell built on the front lawn of the property a small cottage, which was referred to by all as "George's Place." George Caldwell died in 1909 but the cottage still stands, somewhat altered in 1930 and again modified in the 1950s. The family now calls the small dwelling the "Robins Nest."

The Caldwell children spent lazy afternoons on their own boat, the *Lillian*. They fished, swam, and frolicked with an ever-present horde of friends. Their education was delegated to an efficient governess and classes at home left more time for play. Shopping sprees were taken by sternwheeler to Fort Myers. Laundry was boated to a laundress a few miles away every Monday and picked up on Friday, pressed, mended, and ready for the linen closet.

As Judge Caldwell grew older, his sons accompanied him on the hunting trips he enjoyed up until his death at age 79 in 1936. His wife, Melinda, had predeceased him in 1926. After the Judge's death, his children continued to visit the LaBelle home but later agreed it was best to sell the property. They agreed that Judge Caldwell's son,

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**CALDWELL HOME PLACE
LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida**

Joseph, a lawyer and judge, should handle the sale of the property. Yet, every time a prospective buyer showed a genuine interest in purchasing the property, Joseph would find a way avoid selling it. His wife, Virginia, advised him to either give up the place or buy it himself. "Will you live in it if I do?" he asked. Virginia reportedly replied, "It will bring me much happiness." In 1956, they bought out the other family members' interests.

In the beginning, Joseph and Virginia were able to spend only four months of each year at the LaBelle property. After their son, Joseph, Jr., graduated with a law degree from the University of Tennessee, they were able to stay for longer periods. Joseph Jr. joined his father's law firm, and was allowed to sit as a part time replacement for his father as a county judge in Sullivan County in Tennessee. In 1963, Joseph Caldwell, Sr., died in Blountville, Tennessee. Following his death, Virginia Caldwell continued winter visits to LaBelle, at times joined by her children and grandchildren. She continued to travel to LaBelle and open up the house each year until 1987. She died in 1999, but prior to her death, Craig Caldwell, the Judge's grandson, had purchased the "Home Place."

The house remains in the Caldwell family under Craig Caldwell's ownership. He, his children, and grandchildren often visit the house and take pride and pleasure in maintaining the home and intend to keep the property in the family for many more years to come.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Frame Vernacular style of residential architecture in Florida refers to the common wood frame construction technique employed by lay or self-taught builders. Before the Civil War, residents relied upon local materials and their own methods and designs to construct buildings. The Industrial Revolution permitted standardization of building materials and parts and exerted a pervasive influence over vernacular house design. Popular magazines helped to make architectural trends universal throughout the country. The railroad provided cheap and efficient transportation for manufactured building materials. Ultimately, individual builders had access to a myriad of finished architectural products from which to create their own designs.

Frame Vernacular houses are typically one or two stories in height, with wood balloon frame structural systems and brick pier foundations. Plans are generally rectangular, though L-shaped plans were often used to maximize cross-ventilation. Gable or hip roofs usually have steep pitches that accommodate attic space. Horizontal drop siding and weatherboard are the most common exterior wall surface materials. Wood shingles were often used to cover the roofs, but they have nearly always been replaced by composition shingle. Porches, most commonly simple entrances or end porches, are common features of the style. Fenestration is regular, but not always symmetrical. Windows are generally double-hung sashes with multi-pane glazing and doors contain recessed wood panels. Exterior decoration is sparse and limited to ornamental woodwork.

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**CALDWELL HOME PLACE
LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida**

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Caldwell Home Place is one of the two oldest known structures still standing in Hendry County. The residence is an early example of Frame Vernacular construction. It displays an "L" shaped plan, which consists of a front facing gable roof with a larger cross-gable extension. The house is of wood frame construction with exterior walls of wood board-and-batten and shiplap siding. Deep-hipped roof structures that extend beyond the main roof cover the wrap-around porches. Fenestration is irregular on all elevations of the house and consists of varied types of window styles. Window types include: 1/1, 2/2, and 4/4 wood double hung sash, and 4/4 wood sliders, all placed independently. A few 1/1 single hung sash windows, hung in a ribbon pattern, are along the west elevation.

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

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**CALDWELL HOME PLACE
LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida**

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

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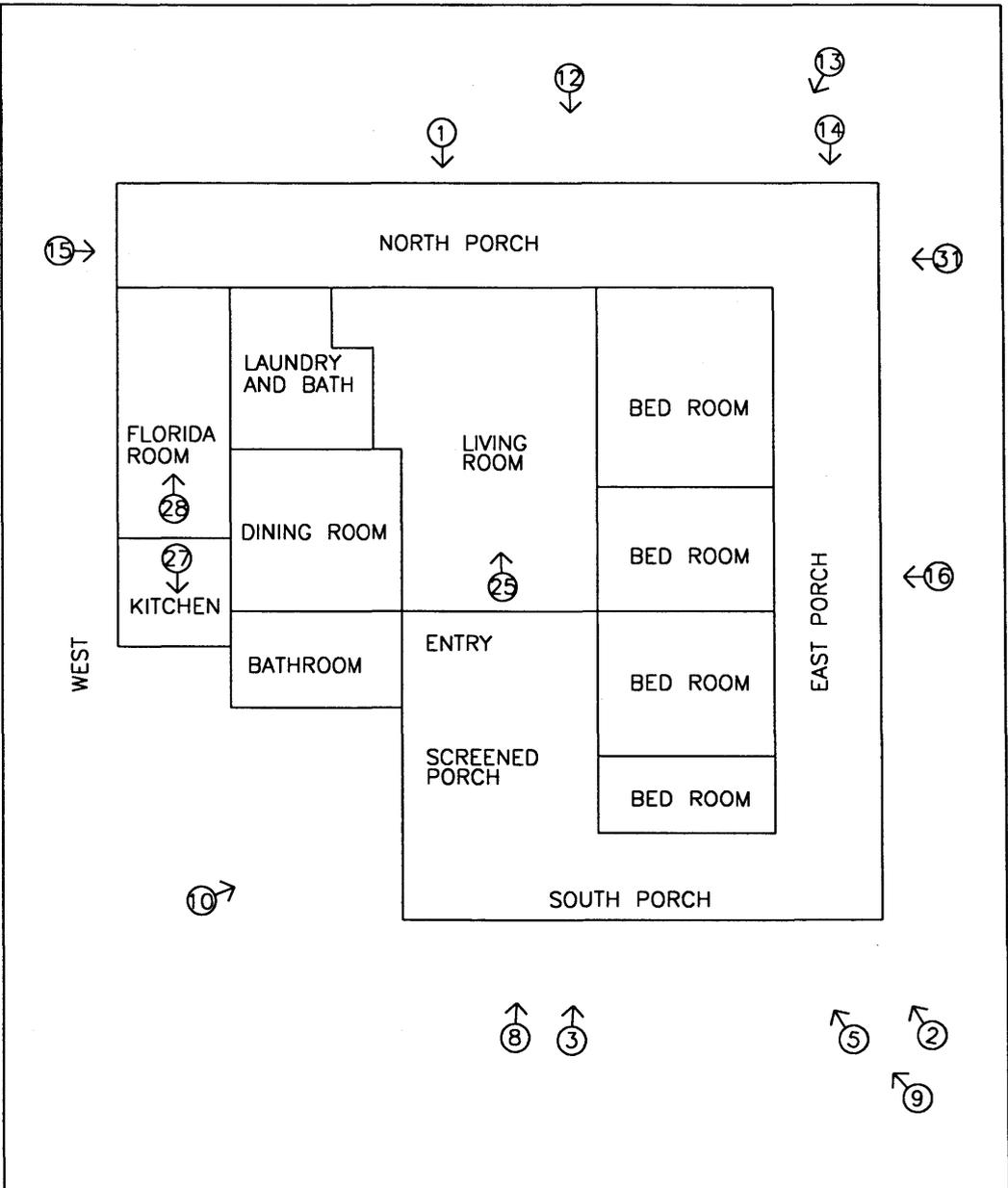
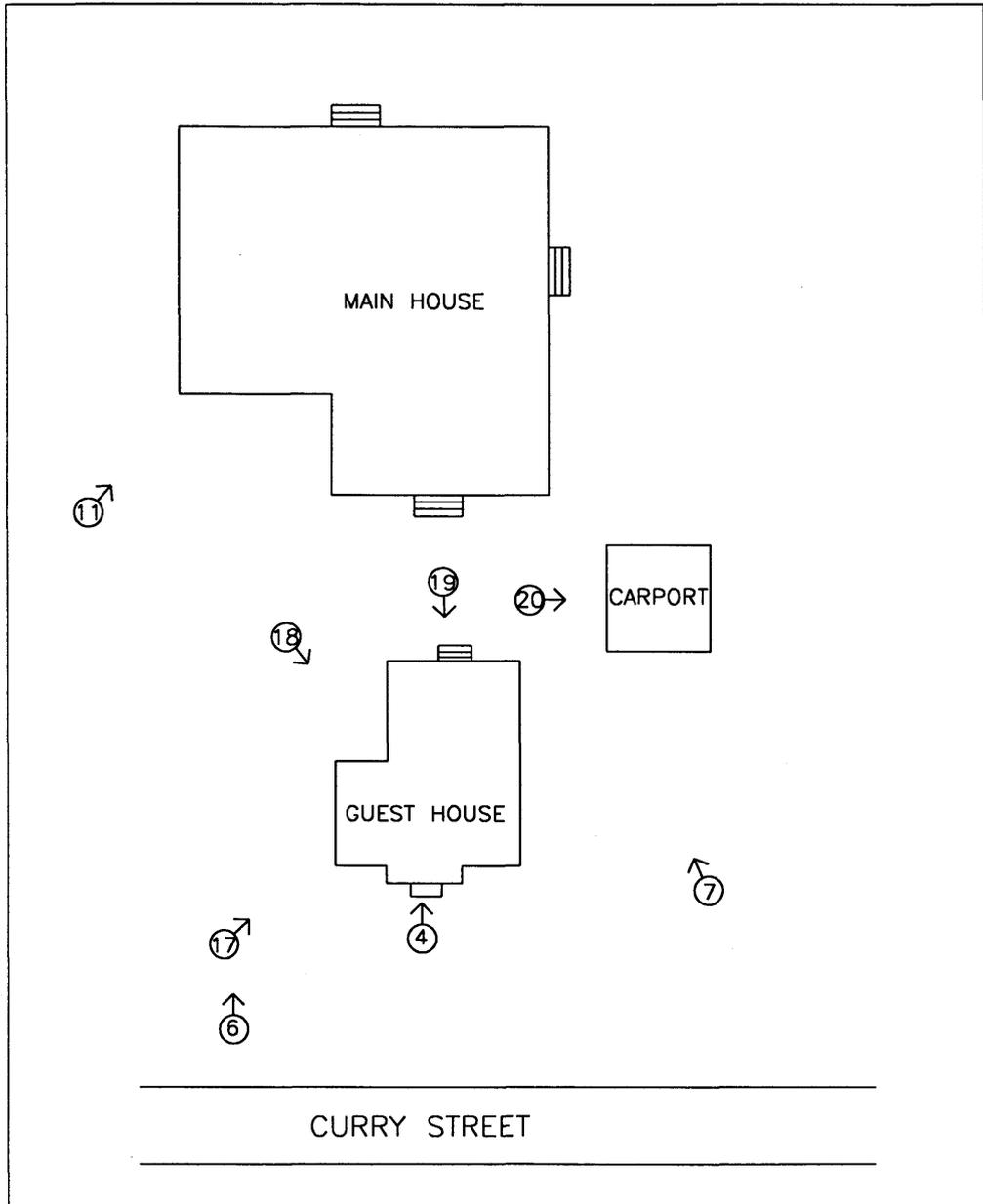
**CALDWELL HOME PLACE
LaBelle, Hendry County, Florida**

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Begin 755 Ft S & 830 FT W of NE COR GL 3-W 120 Ft-N to Center of Old River Bed, E
Along River to Point of Beginning- S to Point of Beginning, Plat of LaBelle

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries include all of the property historically associated with the Caldwell Home Place.



CALDWELL HOUSE
LABELLE (HENDRY COUNTY), FLORIDA

SITE PLAN

CALDWELL HOUSE
LABELLE (HENDRY COUNTY), FLORIDA

FLOOR PLAN