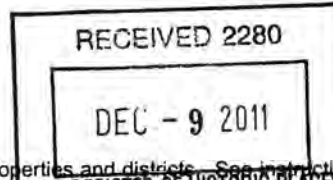


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



1029

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 either the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, check "N/A." 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 BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE

other names/site number Villa Serena, FMSF#DA01775

2. Location

street & number 3115 Brickell Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Miami N/A vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Miami-Dade code 025 zip code 33129

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 11/30/2011
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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) _____

for
Edsen H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

1-20-12

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	
2	1	buildings
0	0	sites
4	1	structures
0	0	objects
6	2	total

Name of related multiple property listings

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC/Garage Apartment

DOMESTIC/Secondary Structure

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC/Garage Apartment

DOMESTIC/Secondary Structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals/Mediterranean Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stucco

walls Stucco

roof Clay Tile

other Stone: Oolitic Limestone

Metal: Wrought Iron

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The William Jennings Bryan House, constructed in 1913, is a two-story, Mediterranean Revival residence, built of reinforced concrete, faced in smooth stucco. Built on a two-acre plot of land, the house has a U-shaped ground plan, four two-story corner towers, arranged in symmetrical wings around a central courtyard. The towers have low pitched hip roofs covered in green Ludovici clay tiles that replicate the original roof tiles. Flat roofs cover the areas between the towers. The wall fronting the central courtyard of the house has an arched opening with a heavy wood panel Spanish style door. The west end of the main house is nestled in a hardwood hammock facing Brickell Avenue. At the east end of the property, the house faces Biscayne Bay, where the property abruptly drops twelve feet down a limestone bluff to the water's edge. Access between the upper and lower levels of the property is gained by contributing steps carved from the native limestone. Located north of the main house is small contributing utility building that was originally used as a pump house. Other contributing resources include a rubble oolitic limestone wall and wrought iron vehicle entrance gate found on Brickell Avenue and a stucco covered garden wall with small wrought iron gates that divide the east and west halves of the property. Found in the northwest quadrant of the property is a noncontributing garage apartment that was constructed c. 1933-1934. The modern seawall located at the east of the property is also a noncontributing resource.

The interior of the house has a central main hall on the ground floor, with wings containing the kitchen to the left and two smaller rooms to the right. The second floor, which is accessed by symmetrical staircases from the small entrance foyer, has a central main hall, with a wing to the right containing two bedrooms and a bathroom and a master bedroom and bathroom suite on the left wing. Multi-colored glazed ceramic floor tiles are a significant interior feature on all public spaces of the ground level of the house. The exterior of the Bryan house has largely retained its appearance from the days when William Jennings Bryan and his wife owned and lived on the property.

Restoration work completed in 2011 has returned most of the original materials, features and details to their c. 1924 appearance, allowing for minor interior changes to accommodate modern functional requirements. Structural elements have been reinforced and new mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems have been installed, including air conditioning with minimal disruption to the original fabric.

SETTING

The William Jennings Bryan House (Photos 1-2) is among the last of the remaining waterfront mansions that once lined Miami's Brickell Avenue in the early days of the twentieth century, when the area was known as "Millionaires' Row." Most of the early mansions along this once stately street have been replaced by high rise office, hotel, and residential condominium buildings. The Bryan House has survived among a handful of multimillion dollar single family residences facing Biscayne Bay at the southern end of the street, two

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DESCRIPTION

properties to the north of Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, and four properties to the south of Alice Wainwright Park. The house was built within a hardwood hammock that once lined the shoreline from the mouth of the Miami River to Coconut Grove. The Bryan property is one of the few areas within present-day limits of the city of Miami where portions of this hammock still exist (Photos 3-4).

The house sits atop one of the remaining portions of the Atlantic Coastal Ridge, a limestone bluff geological formation millions of years old that once delineated the shoreline (Photo 5). The bluff abruptly drops approximately twelve feet from the house elevation to a grassy area at the water's edge. A contributing wall with stone steps at the north and south ends of the property provide access between upper and lower grounds (Photos 6-7). The wall was constructed in 1913 out of coursed limestone rocks, as were the sidewalls of the steps. The steps themselves were carved from the native limestone of the cliff and surfaced with flagstones of the same material. The wall is supported on the face of the cliff by a revetment of coursed rubble limestone rocks (Photos 5 and 31-32). The east end of the property was originally protected from the waters of Biscayne Bay by a seawall (Photo 8) built by William Jennings Bryan.¹ The seawall and wooden dock have been upgraded and modified several times over the years. The previous seawall and dock were seriously damaged and partially collapsed as a result of Hurricane Wilma in 2005 and has been rebuilt and refaced in oolitic limestone as part of the recently completed restoration work. It does not contribute to the significance (Photos 9-10).

The property has a 200 foot frontage along Brickell Avenue marked by a three foot high oolitic limestone wall also built by William Jennings Bryan. The wall is pierced by a centrally located wrought iron gate which serves as main entrance to the estate (Photo 11). A driveway constructed through the hammock which Mr. Bryan once called "the jungle" curves around to the front of the house. Although most of the native species of the hammock have disappeared over the years, replaced by invasive exotic vegetation, the specimens that remain have been replenished with new native species as part of the recently completed landscape restoration plan. Among the most notable trees on the property there is a magnificent Kapok tree, whose roots line the entrance driveway, several fully mature Oak and Gumbo Limbo trees, and an enormous Banyan tree located next to the garage and guest house structure (Photo 12). There is a garden wall perpendicular to the north and south elevations of the main house. The wall is approximately six feet tall, with stucco covered masonry infill panels with concave curved tops that span between square masonry piers. The wall is pierced by wrought iron gates that give access to the bay side of the property (Photos 13-14).

¹ "Bryan Home Is Nearly Completed," Miami Daily Metropolis, April 11, 1913.

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BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
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DESCRIPTION

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Main House Exterior

The main house (Photo 15) is a two-story structure, built of reinforced, poured concrete, faced with smooth stucco. The 1913 date of construction of the Mediterranean Revival style residence would classify it as a very early example of the style in South Florida. The house is described in a 1913 newspaper article as patterned after an old Spanish castle.² Built on a U-shaped plan, the house has four two-story corner towers, arranged in two symmetrical wings around a central courtyard. Low pitched hip roofs cap the four towers. Roofs were originally covered in green Ludovici tiles, which were later replaced with red barrel tiles. Color postcards produced in the early years after construction of the house differ in their depiction of the original roof color, some showing it red, others showing it green (Photos 16-17). A 1931 newspaper article describes the roof as a "pale green Cuban tile roofs."³ Archaeological excavations in several locations around the house have uncovered evidence further support that the original roof tiles as being green. As part of the 2011 restoration work, the red barrel clay tile roofs were replaced with copies of the original green Ludovici tiles. The corner towers contain bedrooms on the second floor and are joined by flat roof connections that house bathrooms and closets on both wings. Hip roofs over the corner towers have broad overhangs with exposed rafter tails, contributing to the overall horizontal, low slung proportions of the house and accentuating the tower configuration. Three chimneys project over the roof lines—two at both ends of the main hall facing the bay, the third projecting over the kitchen. The chimneys (Photo 18) are capped with a detail resembling a two-story bird house, with an open basket weave design and a hip roof similar to the one over the four corner towers of the house.

The west elevation of the house has a central one-story wall that gives access to the entrance courtyard, flanked by the two-story symmetrical wings with corner towers. These wings have two sets of double-hung 1/1-light wood sash windows with flat transoms, original wrought iron grilles, and projecting masonry sills on the ground floor. On the second floor the same type windows are arranged in groups of four across the front elevation and along the two side elevations. These window groups, which rest on projecting masonry sills, along with the projecting roof overhangs, further define the corner tower configuration. Windows throughout the house were replaced in 2011 with impact resistant units that replicate the original windows, replacing the 6/6-light units that had been installed during a previous renovation (Photos 1, 15).

The entrance courtyard, centrally located on the west elevation, is enclosed by a one-story wall flush with the front plane of the house and accessed by an arched doorway with a double-leaf wood door with heavy Spanish styled hardware (Photo 19). Pairs of thin, vertical openings pierce the front courtyard wall on either side of the

² Ibid.

³ "Mrs. W.J. Matheson Buys Villa Serena from Bryan Estate," The Miami Herald, April 2, 1931.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 4

BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
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DESCRIPTION

arched doorway. The courtyard had undergone minor alterations over the years. Details, such as the central fountain, corner planters, and original stone pavers had been removed (Photo 20). The 2011 restoration has replaced all these elements based on available historical photographs (Photos 21-22).

Across the courtyard, the main entrance to the house is punctuated by a centrally located double wood and glass door. This door was installed as part of the 2011 restoration as an accurate reproduction of the original one, removing the modern door that had been installed as part of an earlier renovation (Photo 23). Flanking the central doorway are two sets of small, vertical windows that step up to reflect the symmetrically placed interior staircases. Above the main doorway, on the second story, is a balcony supported on masonry brackets, with a wrought iron railing and a wood and glass door. Above this doorway is a shed hood supported on wood brackets (Photo 24). The courtyard's front wall is capped by a stepped parapet. On both sides of the courtyard the symmetrical wings repeat the groups of four windows on the second story also found on the street elevation. The bay side or east elevation exhibits a symmetrical composition similar to one on the street elevation. On this side of the house, rather than the one-story wall of the entrance courtyard on the west elevation, a central two-story plane with a stepped parapet pierced at the center is flanked by the two story-wings (Photo 25). Second-story windows are arranged in groups of four on the east elevation only, rather than continuing the same arrangement on all three exposed sides, as on the west towers.

The bay side elevation, originally considered the front of the residence, shows the historical evolution of house during William Jennings Bryan's years. When originally built in 1913, the bay side elevation of the house had two-story symmetrical wings joined by a one-story connection that contained the main hall on the first floor, a rooftop garden on the flat roof above, and pergolas at the ground level in front of the symmetrical wings (Photos 26-27). Second-story bedrooms in the corner towers opened out to the garden, which was sheltered behind a stepped parapet with decorative piercing at the center. In this garden the Bryans grew flowering plants and radishes, Bryan's favorite vegetable, according to many printed accounts of the time.⁴ In 1920, when the Bryans decided to make Miami their permanent home, the pergolas were roofed and screened-in, converting them into enclosed porches that were used as a breakfast room and a sun parlor.⁵ They also enclosed the roof garden, turning the new second-story space into a library and study (Photo 28-29).⁶ The pierced parapet detail that capped the original one-story central connector of the house was reproduced at the top of the new second-story library space. The shed hood over the ground floor entrance was also replaced with a projecting balcony replicating the one over the street-side elevation entrance.

When William F. Cheek purchased the property in 1933, it was reported that he was going to make extensive improvements to the property, but no specific details were given on what they might include. A 1934

⁴ William Jennings Bryan, *In His Image* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1922), p. 17

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ "Diary of Visit Bryan Home," *The Miami Herald*, December 27, 1920.

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BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
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DESCRIPTION

photograph shows that the screened porches had been enclosed with multiple light casement windows (Photos 30-31). The renovations undertaken by Cheek also included the removal of the elevator tower on the main house and the construction of the two-story garage apartment northwest of the main house. As part of the 2011 restoration work, the casement windows on the sun porches were removed and replaced with French doors that reproduce the three part composition and detailing of the 1920 screened porches (Photo 32).

The north and south side elevations are fairly simple in design and ornamentation. The corner hip roofs are separated by a central flat roof portion. Windows continue the boldly projecting sill motif of the two main elevations. A garden wall intersects both side elevations at right angles approximately one third of the way from the west end at ground level (Photos 33-34).

Main House Interior

Upon entering the house from the west, interior staircases flank the centrally located small foyer which leads into the main hall. The staircases that once led to the rooftop garden and gave access to the four corner bedrooms have colorful Cuban tile risers and black marble treads (Photo 35). Once inside, multicolor Cuban tile floors are the most salient feature of the ground floor's main hall and sun porches (Photos 36-38). These floor tiles were personally selected by Mrs. Bryan during a visit to Cuba while the house was under construction.⁷

The main hall is punctuated by white marble fireplaces at both ends, brought in from an old mansion in Washington, D.C., that had been condemned and razed by the Government, according to Mrs. Bryan's personal accounts (Photo 39).⁸ East of the main hall, French doors on the sun porches provide excellent outdoor views of Biscayne Bay (Photo 40).

Proceeding west from the main hall's north end, where the dining room originally was located, was the kitchen and a small bedroom and bathroom probably used as servants' quarters. The kitchen had been completely gutted by a previous owner and there is no available documentation as to its original or subsequent appearance. The new kitchen has been redesigned using materials and finishes appropriate to the period and character of the house (Photos 41-42). Proceeding west from the south end of the main hall, where the sitting room originally was located, is an anteroom, followed by a small bathroom and additional bedroom. These last two spaces were originally occupied by a garage with wooden doors opening to the south side of the house, as seen in an early postcard (Photo 43). This garage space was altered for use as additional bedroom and bathroom at the time when the separate garage and guest apartment structure was built c. 1934.

⁷ Mary Baird Bryan, Unpublished Personal Account, c.1929, Arva Moore Parks' Collection.

⁸ Ibid.

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BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
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DESCRIPTION

Upstairs, a main central hall, occupying the space originally dedicated to the rooftop garden and later enclosed and converted to the Bryan library, now serves as the master bedroom/bathroom suite, which extends along the entire north wing (Photos 44-47). Bedrooms, bathrooms and closets occupy the four corner towers on the second floor. The two bedrooms facing the bay on each side of the central master suite have their own fireplaces. The northeast bedroom has its original marble fireplace. The bedroom on the southeast corner had been altered by the addition of a closet and larger bathroom as part of an earlier renovation, and the original fireplace had been replaced with a smaller one. All these alterations were reversed during the 2011 restoration, the closet and bathroom additions were removed and an exact replica of the original fireplace was installed (Photos 48-49).

Outbuildings

Outbuildings consist of a small one-story utility building found north of the main house and a two-story, three-car garage with guest quarters upstairs, located at the northwest corner of the property (Photo 50). The former pump house, constructed at the same time as the main house, is covered in stucco and has a hip roof covered in green Ludovici tiles like the main house (Photos 51-52). The garage apartment was constructed c.1933-1934, after the property was purchased by William Cheek (Photo 53). The garage apartment has a hip roof, multi-paned casement and double-hung sash windows that replicate the original units, all installed during the 2011 restoration, and three sets of large roll-up wood garage doors (Photos 54-55). Upstairs there is a two bedroom, one bath apartment. The apartment has been completely renovated, retaining its original features such as hardwood floors and arched openings between the various rooms.(Photos 56-61).

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)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1913-1924

Significant Dates

1913

1920

1924

Significant Person

Bryan, William Jennings

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Arch: Unknown

Blder: Swanson, Roy

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 1

BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The William Jennings Bryan House is significant at the local level under Criteria B and C in the areas of Architecture and Social History as the Miami home of William Jennings Bryan, one of the most important figures in early twentieth century national politics and as one of the last remaining stately mansions that once lined Miami's bay front, and as a fine example of early Mediterranean Revival architecture in Miami. The property meets Criterion A for William Jennings Bryan's association with the promotion of the city of Miami as a prime tourist destination, the promotion of the city of Coral Gables, and the founding of the University of Miami. Under Criterion C, the residence is an excellent early example of Mediterranean Revival residential architecture in the city of Miami. It is also an early example of the use of reinforced concrete residential construction, and demonstrates craftsmanship and attention to detail and the use of fine materials such as custom-made Cuban floor tiles, green Ludovici roof tiles and wrought iron grilles brought from Cuba.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The European settlement of the Miami began when a group of 30 men led by Brother Francisco Villareal was sent by then Governor of Florida Pedro Menendez de Aviles to establish a Spanish mission in 1567, in what was then called Tequesta, the name which Juan Ponce de Leon gave to the Miami area when he sailed into Biscayne Bay in 1513, only three months after discovering Florida.⁹ The mission only lasted three years, but in 1743 the Spanish made a second attempt at establishing a mission in Miami, which they called Pueblo de Santa Maria de Loreto, but this one also failed, when the formerly cooperative relationship with the local Indians turned conflictive and the Spanish Crown did not provide the much needed financial support to keep the mission alive.¹⁰

In 1821 Florida became a territory of the United States, and settlers such as the Egan and Lewis families received land grants or donations from the U.S. Government in the Miami area. It was during this time that the Miami River came to be known by its present name, later giving name to the city of Miami. Although these donations were extensive, these and a few other pioneer families built their dwellings in relatively close proximity to the area known as the "Punch Bowl," near where almost a hundred years later William Jennings Bryan would build his home, Villa Serena.¹¹

The next event to have a significant impact on the future birth of the city of Miami was the establishment of Fort Dallas by the U.S. Army on the north bank of the Miami River in 1837. The fort was built on land previously occupied by Richard Fitzpatrick's plantation, which he had purchased from the original grant holder,

⁹ Arva Moore Parks, *The New Miami: The Magic City*, (Miami, Florida: Community Media, 2008), p. 4.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 12.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 24.

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SIGNIFICANCE

James Egan. The fort, intended as a stronghold during the Seminole Wars, was occupied and abandoned several times during these wars.¹² In 1842, the U.S. Army left the fort once again and the land was opened for settlement under the Armed Occupation Act, which offered 160 acres to anyone who agreed to clear, plant, and live on the land for five years.¹³ Several families settled along the banks of the Miami River at this time, including William F. English, who bought Fitzpatrick's former plantation holdings. English platted the Village of Miami on the south bank of the Miami River in 1843. This was the first formalized settlement carrying the name of Miami on the same site that fifty years later would be officially incorporated as the city of Miami.¹⁴ But by the end of the Third Seminole War in 1858, the hostilities had taken their toll on the small settlement, and the Village of Miami gradually dwindled away.

Present-day Miami was the brainchild of two influential entrepreneurs who saw the area's potential and embarked on a development venture that resulted in the creation of a new city almost overnight. These two remarkable individuals were Julia Tuttle and Henry M. Flagler. Julia Tuttle first came to the Miami area in 1875 to visit her father, Ephraim Sturtevant, who had homesteaded in the area presently known as Miami Shores. Mrs. Tuttle came from a well-established family, her husband a wealthy industrialist in Cleveland. Following her husband's and mother's death, she took her inheritance, moved to what would become Miami, and bought property along the north bank of the Miami River in 1891. Mrs. Tuttle had a dream of seeing this southern frontier become a prosperous town. She tried to convince Henry B. Plant, who had brought his railroad to Tampa in 1883, to extend his line into Miami, but Plant had declined. Not easily defeated, she turned her attention elsewhere.¹⁵

Henry M. Flagler, along with John D. Rockefeller and Samuel Andrews, had founded Standard Oil and through this venture had become one of the wealthiest men of his time. In 1881, while on his honeymoon with his second wife in St. Augustine, Flagler decided to embark on a lucrative enterprise that would eventually forever change the face and character of Florida's east coast. In 1885, Flagler built the Ponce de Leon Hotel in St. Augustine and began work on the southern expansion of the narrow gauge railroad which until then terminated in Jacksonville. Through Flagler's actions, St. Augustine and the Ponce de Leon Hotel became a luxury vacation destination for the wealthy who traveled in private railroad cars.¹⁶

Flagler saw the business potential behind expanding his railroad line into other similarly attractive locations along the east coast of Florida, and building luxury hotels that would become centers for tourism at those locations. His vision also included establishing new settlements that would thrive around these newly created

¹² Arva Moore Parks, "Where the River Found the Bay. Historical Study of the Granada Site", (Miami, Florida, July 1979).

¹³ Arva Moore Parks, The New Miami: The Magic City, p. 33.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 78-81.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 8 Page 3 BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
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SIGNIFICANCE

tourist industry centers practically overnight. By 1893, he was extending his railroad into Palm Beach and building the Royal Poinciana Hotel, which would later become the Breakers and significantly contribute to the development of nearby Palm Beach and West Palm Beach.

Aware of Flagler's business ventures in Florida, as his railroad and hotels extended further south into the state, Julia Tuttle began a letter-writing campaign to convince him to make Miami the next target of his expanding empire. After a devastating freeze that destroyed the Florida citrus crop during the winter of 1894-1895, Julia Tuttle seized the opportunity to contact Flagler again, this time reportedly sending him an orange blossom to prove that the freeze had not affected South Florida. During the summer of 1895, Flagler visited Tuttle in Coconut Grove and agreed to extend the railroad to Miami, build a luxury hotel at its terminus and lay out a town around it, in exchange for which she gave him 300 acres of her land holdings.¹⁷ Tuttle's land donation to Flagler included prime property facing the river and the bay, but she kept title to 200 acres in what would later be the central business district of the newly founded city.

With the wheels in motion, development happened at a rapid pace. On April 13, 1896, the first train rolled into the bustling new town, now counting some 300 inhabitants, most of them working on Flagler's construction ventures. Soon after, construction began on Flagler's grand Royal Palm Hotel. By then the new city had its own newspaper, The Miami Metropolis; its first bank, the Bank of Bay Biscayne; and its first doctor's office, opened by pioneer Dr. James M. Jackson. Julia Tuttle had laid out Miami's first commercial street, Avenue D, and had built a large wood frame hotel, the Hotel Miami, which catered mostly to the workers who were building the Royal Palm Hotel. On July 28, 1896, the City of Miami was officially incorporated, with 344 voters signing the incorporation papers. Over half of the signers were black men working on Flagler's hotel construction.¹⁸

On January 17, 1897, the Royal Palm Hotel was inaugurated, paving the way for Miami's rapid development. The hotel boasted 350 elegantly appointed guest rooms, luxury dining rooms, lush tropical landscaping, electric lights, elevators, a large swimming pool and even a clock-shaped golf course. By 1906 the Halcyon Hotel joined the competition for luxury tourist accommodations, and a series of smaller hotels joined the ranks. As already proven in St. Augustine and Palm Beach, the combination of easy access by railroad transportation and luxury accommodations made Miami a desirable visitor destination.

With the increase in tourism came a demand for both a construction and a service industry labor force. This in turn resulted in the need for more commercial establishments and permanent housing. Immediately northwest of the railroad tracks Flagler laid out an area called "Colored Town" for the black population from the southern United States and from the Bahamas that had come to settle in Miami, following the newly created work opportunities. The area immediately to the north of the city became known as North Miami, and included liquor

¹⁷ Parks, p. 82.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 84-86.

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Section number 8 Page 4 BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
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sales, saloons and other questionable establishments that were strictly prohibited within the city limits. Construction of bridges across the Miami River at the end of Avenue D (present-day Miami Avenue) in 1903 and at the foot of 12th Street (present-day Flagler Street) in 1905 opened the potential for development south and west of the city limits. Most of the land west of the river was owned at the time by the Tatum brothers, whose early middle class residential developments spurred considerable construction activity in subdivisions such as Riverside and Lawrence Estates.

The land south of the river was owned by the Brickell family. William and Mary Brickell were pioneer settlers who had arrived in the area in 1870, purchased land from the earlier Egan and Lewis Donations south of the Miami River, and began trading with the Indians. By 1881, the Brickells expanded their business and built a larger trading post at the mouth of the river, where they also built their home.¹⁹ Upon Flagler's arrival, the Brickells were able to negotiate construction of a bridge across the river, connecting their property to the south with the newly created city of Miami. In exchange, the Brickells gave considerable land donations to Henry Flagler.²⁰ While William Brickell was primarily in charge of running the successful trading post, it was Mary Brickell who ran the family's real estate business.

In 1905, the Brickell Addition to Miami was platted south of the river, consisting of large estate-sized lots fronting on Brickell Avenue.²¹ Soon after, large private residences were being built along the bayfront, taking advantage of the beautiful views, close proximity to the emerging city and to its main modes of transportation, the bay and the railroad. Brickell Avenue became known as "Millionaire's Row," attracting "...the very cream of the population from nearly all the states in the Union."²² Louis Comfort Tiffany, James Deering, Carl Fisher and William Jennings Bryan were among the prominent citizens who built their winter homes along Brickell Avenue. The William Jennings Bryan House was among the most fashionable, stately homes that lined Miami's bay front in the early years of the twentieth century. The house was built at the southern end of Brickell Avenue, in what was then considered the countryside. The Bryans named their property Villa Serena because it was to be a place to rest, a winter home to get away from the turmoil of his political life.

¹⁹ Arva Moore Parks, History of the Briggs-Morley Property and Residence (1824-1968) 1581 Brickell Avenue, (St. Augustine, Florida: Dobbs Brothers Library Binding Company, June 1975).

²⁰ Arva Moore Parks, The New Miami: The Magic City, p. 82.

²¹ Plat Book B, Page 41, Miami-Dade County, Florida, County Land Division, Plat Books.

²² C.H. Ward, The Lure of the Southland, (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: J. Horace McFarland Company, 1915), p. 35.

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William Jennings Bryan's Significance at the National Level

William Jennings Bryan was a brilliant orator and statesman, considered by many as one of the greatest speakers of the twentieth century. A two-time Democratic Congressman from Lincoln, Nebraska, he was nominated for U.S. President in 1896, 1900 and 1908. He served as Secretary of State under President Woodrow Wilson from 1913 until 1915, when he resigned in disagreement with President Wilson's policies that led to the U.S. involvement in World War I. It was still at the height of his political career that the Bryans built a winter home in Miami in 1913, which they named Villa Serena. Following his retirement from national politics, the Bryans made Villa Serena their permanent place of residence. In addition to his prominent role in national politics, Mr. Bryan made a significant contribution to the development of Miami while residing at Villa Serena, touting the virtues of south Florida, promoting tourism and the development of Coral Gables and contributing to the founding of the University of Miami.

William Jennings Bryan was born in Salem, Illinois, in 1860, to Silas and Mary Bryan. His father was a lawyer and Illinois State Senator, later elected as State Circuit Judge. He was raised a Baptist by his mother and home-schooled until the age of 10. At age 14 he became a Presbyterian and his religious fervor greatly influenced his life-long career as an orator and politician. He studied law at Union Law College in Chicago, where he met and later married Mary Elizabeth Baird in 1884. Mary also became a lawyer and collaborated in his speech-writing throughout his life.²³ The Bryans moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1887, and he was elected a Nebraska U.S. Congressman in 1890 and in 1892. The Bryans' home in Lincoln, built in 1902, named "Fairview," was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1963.

Bryan was nominated as the Democratic presidential candidate three times. In 1896 he got the Democratic Party's presidential nomination at the age of 36, the youngest presidential nominee in American history. He lost the presidential election to William McKinley. Nominated again in 1900, he lost to President McKinley for a second time. In 1908 he was nominated by the Democratic Party by a wide margin, but lost the presidential election again, this time to William Howard Taft, by the widest margin ever.

He was considered by many a Populist, championing the cause of the common citizen and criticizing the influence of the wealthy on government and politics, but he was always first and foremost a Democrat. His political views earned him the nickname "the Great Commoner." In 1901, he founded a weekly publication named "The Commoner," which ran for twenty-two years and circulated throughout the United States. He

²³ Genevieve Forbes Herrick and John Origen Herrick, The Life of William Jennings Bryan, (Chicago: Grover C. Buxton, 1925), p. 52-59.

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explained the moniker by saying, "we're all, or nearly all, in the same class."²⁴ He had firm beliefs, based on his strong religious views, and spoke fervently and eloquently on his convictions, whether moral, religious or political. His passionate speeches were legendary, among the best known being "The Cross of Gold" delivered during the 1896 Democratic National Convention, and his best known work, "The Prince of Peace," delivered during his years in the Chautauqua speaking circuit.²⁵ His brilliant oratory skills may not have gotten him to the White House, but they certainly enabled him to achieve, by today's standards, celebrity status among the masses.

Bryan was an anti-imperialist. During a speech called "The Paralyzing Influence of Imperialism," given during the Democratic National Convention of 1900, he asked the rhetorical question as to what gave the United States the right to overpower people of another country just for a military base, referring to the proposed annexation of the Philippines following the Spanish-American War. Later he said: "The nation is of age and it can do what it pleases...it can employ force instead of reason; it can substitute might for right; it can conquer weaker people; it can exploit their lands, appropriate their property and kill their people, but it cannot repeal the moral law or escape the punishment decreed for the violation of human rights."²⁶

He was a pacifist. In one of his many notable quotes against war he declared: "To know war we must visit the battle field of carnage where men face each other...see not only the dead and mangled and wounded but must go into the homes from which the soldiers came, for the burden falls not so heavily upon those who die as upon those who live. The soldier's agony is only for a moment and his glory endures forever, but the real burden is upon the mothers of fatherless children."²⁷

He was a strong supporter of Prohibition, speaking often on the evils of alcohol and gambling. In 1919 he was named chairman of the prohibition enforcement campaign for the state of Florida.²⁸ Most importantly, he opposed Darwin's Theory of Evolution, and became an impassioned advocate for teaching only the Biblical version of the Creation of Man at public schools. Of all the causes Bryan espoused over his long political and oratorical career, it was his involvement with Creationism for which he will be best remembered in history. He was, in fact, instrumental in Tennessee's adoption of the Butler Act in 1925, which prohibited teaching the Theory of Evolution in public schools.

One of the best known episodes of Bryan's brilliant, colorful career came toward the end of his life when as a fervent opponent of Darwinism he served as prosecutor during the famous 1925 Scopes Trial in Tennessee.

²⁴ Genevieve Forbes Herrick, p. 196, 202.

²⁵ Genevieve Forbes Herrick, p. 115, 255.

²⁶ William Jennings Bryan, "Imperialism" (Speech delivered in response to the Notification Committee of the 1900 Democratic National Convention, Kansas City, August 8, 1900).

²⁷ "Peace Not in Armament but Love Is the Basis of Amity Says Mr. Bryan," Miami Daily Metropolis, November 23, 1914.

²⁸ "William Jennings Bryan to Enforce Prohibition in Florida," The Miami Metropolis, November 28, 1919.

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Upon passage of the Butler Act, the American Civil Liberties Union decided to test it by having teacher John Scopes intentionally violate the law by teaching the Theory of Evolution in his classroom. The trial pitted Bryan as prosecutor against Clarence Darrow, who defended John Scopes. Bryan won the case, Scopes was found guilty, although the State Supreme Court later reversed the decision and Scopes went free. In a strange twist of fate, William Jennings Bryan died five days after the trial ended.

Mary Baird Bryan Side-by-Side.

In an age when women were relegated to the domestic roles of the family, Mary Baird Bryan was a strong, visible influence in William Jennings Bryan's personal and political life. In a statement made during his 1896 presidential campaign, she said: "But my idea of marriage was then and still is that the wife, to be the husband's companion, must be his intellectual as well as moral complement."²⁹

Mary Elizabeth Baird was born to a wealthy family in Perry, Illinois. She met William in 1879 when he visited the Jacksonville Female Seminary, where she was a student and while he was in his junior year at Illinois College, preparing to enter Union College of Law. She described their first encounter: "He entered the room with several other students, was taller than the rest, and attracted my attention at once."³⁰ They married in 1884 and had three children, Ruth Bryan Owen, who would become Florida's first U.S. Congresswoman; William Jennings, Jr.; and Grace. Throughout their marriage, she took care of all the traditional domestic chores, served as his secretary, coached him on his speech delivery, participated in all the social and political activities that their public lives required, and wrote his biography upon his death.

She followed her husband's footsteps and became a lawyer, being admitted to the bar by the Nebraska Supreme Court in 1888. "My father used to say the reason I studied law and was admitted to the bar was that I didn't want Mr. Bryan to know anything that I didn't know."³¹ She stood beside him on the rear platform of the train from which he campaigned during his 1896 presidential candidacy, often was by his side during his many speeches and accompanied him during his trip around the world, all three children in tow. She was immensely popular. A 1913 newspaper article says that "...her autograph, to her entire amazement, being quite as much in demand as was her husband's."³²

²⁹ Herrick, p. 226.

³⁰ Herrick, p. 52-55.

³¹ Herrick, p. 226.

³² "Bryan's Best Helper Is His Wife," *The Miami Metropolis*, October 7, 1913.

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The Bryans in Miami

William Jennings Bryan paid his first visit to Miami on Christmas Day, 1909. The newspaper reported that "The subject of Colonel Bryan's lecture here will be The Prince of Peace, declared to be one of the greatest masterpieces of this great orator."³³ Miami took an instant liking to Bryan. A Miami Daily Metropolis article dated April 30, 1912, describes his first public speech in Miami during a city Election Day, when voting was suspended for one hour so people could go hear him speak. The newspaper further states that almost everyone in Miami attended his speech. Large crowds were expected every time Bryan spoke. A speech at Trinity Methodist Church in 1915 grew so large that it had to be moved to the city auditorium.³⁴ A few nights later, a speech on temperance, one of Bryan's favorite subjects, drew a crowd of over 5,000 people at Royal Palm Park (Photo 62).³⁵

By 1912, the Bryans were already spending winter time in Miami. The newspaper reports that "The great Commoner fell completely in love with Miami on his first visit here two years ago at Christmas time."³⁶ He is quoted in the newspaper, explaining why they decided to make Miami their winter home: "Miami is the most southerly city, and from long study of the climate charts we found that your climate here is ideal the year around."³⁷ A newspaper article which proclaimed him "Miami's Most Distinguished Citizen" described his arrival in November 1912, and how the crowds made way for the passage of his automobile as it paraded all the way from the train station to his new temporary residence.³⁸

In May, 1912, the Bryans purchased the bay front property upon which they would build Villa Serena.³⁹ Mrs. Bryan was responsible for selecting the new property. In a personal account written by Mrs. Bryan in 1931 she relates her 1912 visit to Miami during which she discovers the Villa Serena property: "One morning early I stepped from the train at Miami, then a small village...As soon as I breathed the balmy air of Miami I knew this was the place and began to investigate. For the first and only time in my life I took a sightseeing bus, which ran out through what was then known as Brickell's Hammock, and saw that part of the jungle which is now Villa Serena...Other places nearer town and farther out had outcroppings...but there are none that are perfect or have the natural beauty of this cliff, so I had that part surveyed and purchased it."⁴⁰ While Villa Serena was being built, the Bryans temporarily lived in several locations, first a residence located at the mouth of the Miami River

³³ "Christmas Day Here Will Be a Busy One. William J. Bryan to Deliver a Lecture," The Miami Metropolis, December 24, 1909.

³⁴ "Mr. Bryan Draws Lessons from the War in Europe for the American Nation," Miami Daily Metropolis, December 13, 1915.

³⁵ "Bryan Speaks Sunday in Royal Palm Park on Temperance Topic," Miami Daily Metropolis, December 17, 1915.

³⁶ "Mr. Bryan and Mrs. Bryan Will Arrive Early Next Week," The Miami Metropolis, November 4, 1912.

³⁷ "Miami as a Home for Mr. W.J. Bryan," The Miami Metropolis, December 6, 1912.

³⁸ "Mr. and Mrs. Bryan Arrive in Miami to Make this City Their Future Home," The Miami Metropolis, November 29, 1912.

³⁹ Warranty Deed, May 3, 1912, Deed Book 77, Page 552, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County.

⁴⁰ Mary Baird Bryan, Unpublished Personal Account, c.1929, Arva Moore Parks' Collection.

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overlooking the Royal Palm Hotel, and after they occupied quarters on Brickell Avenue and then Twentieth Street (present day Eight Street).⁴¹

Life at Villa Serena

On March 5, 1913, William Jennings Bryan was named Secretary of State under the newly inaugurated President Wilson administration. His rise to the Cabinet post coincided with the construction of the Bryan winter home in Miami—Villa Serena. A newspaper article dated January 29, 1913, proclaims that “Work will begin at once upon the construction of the new winter home of Hon. William Jennings Bryan.”⁴² The article goes on to indicate a completion date of July 1st that same year. Construction, however, was not completed on time, mostly due to a delay in receiving the custom-made floor tiles imported from Cuba.

The Bryans arrived in Miami to see their newly finished winter home on December 21, 1913. Mrs. Bryan had come to Miami to inspect the work during the year, but for Mr. Bryan it was his first visit since construction began. His new responsibilities as Secretary of State had kept him busy in Washington, D.C., where the family had been residing.⁴³ Upon arrival, he told the members of the press who were present that they had come for “a complete rest, to get away from interviewers and politicians for a few days.”⁴⁴ His brief statement explains the origin for the name “Villa Serena,” a serene place to escape from the rapid pace and intensity of his life in Washington.

The Villa Serena property was acquired from Mary Brickell in March, 1912 by W.S. Jennings, cousin of Mr. Bryan and former Governor of Florida, who held the property for two months until the purchase by Bryan was officially recorded.⁴⁵ The Bryans’ neighbors were J.L. Billingsley, Vice President and Counsel for Florida Fruit Land Company, and W.S. Jennings. Mrs. Bryan was very much involved in the purchase, design, construction and decoration of the house. She was directly involved in selecting the Cuban floor tiles which she describes, “...anyone who has an eye for color will fail to find in this tile the crude yellows and reds that are so apt to creep into Spanish work. We selected the colors ourselves at the factory.”⁴⁶ Newspaper accounts also describe Mrs. Bryan’s touch in the art and decorations in the house, including bronzes from Russia and France, jade and silver vases from Japan, mahogany furniture from Jamaica and silver serving pieces from Peru.

⁴¹ “Miami as a Home for Mr. W.J. Bryan.”

⁴² “Mr. Bryan Lets Contract for Immediate Erection of Home,” Miami Daily Metropolis, January 29, 1913.

⁴³ “Bryans Will Spend Holidays in Their Winter Home in Miami. Leave Washington Tomorrow,” The Miami Metropolis, December 19, 1913.

⁴⁴ “Bryans Will Spend”

⁴⁵ Warranty Deed, March 18, 1912, Deed Book 84, Page 392, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County.

⁴⁶ Mary Baird Bryan Personal Account.

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Bryan was also directly involved during the early days of construction at Villa Serena. He bought an axe and personally participated in clearing a path through the hardwood hammock, then described as "the jungle". When asked whether he intended to do the cutting himself, he replied: "Yes, I am going to work. That is what I came here for, to work and to rest."⁴⁷

The Bryans entertained extensively at Villa Serena. Their guests included President Warren G. Harding (1921-1923); future Vice-President Charles D. Dawes (1925-1929); Greece's Premier Eleutherios Venizelos (1910-1915); John Wanamaker of department store fame; Dr. Anna Shaw, ordained minister and orator on temperance and woman's suffrage; and many other political, religious and influential figures of their day (Photo 63). The refreshments "de rigueur" were grape juice and fruit punch, as the Bryans were fervent prohibitionists and no alcohol was ever consumed at their home. But not all guests were renowned politicians and personalities. The Bryans were highly popular with local residents and visitors alike. In fact they held open houses at Villa Serena on Friday afternoons, sometimes attracting in excess of five hundred guests.⁴⁸

In June, 1915, William Jennings Bryan resigned as Secretary of State under President Wilson. It is said that there were many points of disagreement between the two men, but the most serious was Bryan's opposition to President Wilson's policies that eventually led to the United States' involvement in World War I. Soon after, he began to spend more time between Villa Serena and his home in the mountains near Asheville, North Carolina. Meanwhile, the Bryans reportedly started dismantling Fairview (their home in Lincoln, Nebraska) and shipping its furnishings and library to their North Carolina and Miami homes.⁴⁹

By late 1920, the Bryans had made Villa Serena their permanent home, according to articles in The Miami Herald dated November 23, 1920 and December 27, 1920. A centrally located rooftop garden on the bay side was enclosed and converted into a library and study, lined with shelves holding his extensive book collection. The desk and chair that he used in Washington, D.C., while he was Secretary of State were brought in. It was during this remodeling that the open pergolas facing the bay on the ground floor were enclosed as screened-in porches (See additional details under "Narrative Description").

But the Bryans' days at Villa Serena were numbered. Mrs. Bryan was in poor health and required the use of a wheelchair to get around. An elevator was installed on the north exterior elevation of the house, as seen in a 1934 photograph (Photo 64). The elevator tower was removed by William F. Cheek after he purchased the property in 1933. But even with that addition, the two-story home with upstairs bedrooms was no longer practical for the Bryan family. In a 1924 newspaper article, Bryan stated that the family was buying a new property in Coconut Grove, which would be named "Marymont." He explained that the move was due to his

⁴⁷ "Miami as a Home for Mr. W.J. Bryan."

⁴⁸ "Villa Serena, the W.J. Bryan Home, Was Opened to Visitors Yesterday," The Miami Metropolis, January 15, 1916.

⁴⁹ "W.J. Bryan Is Moving Away from Lincoln," The Miami Herald, November 24, 1916.

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wife's health, the increasing cost of interests, taxes and maintenance on Villa Serena, and because the new residence was almost directly across the street from their daughter Ruth Bryan Owen.⁵⁰ A November 13, 1924 article in the Miami Daily News and Metropolis announced that Mr. Bryan has offered to sell Villa Serena to the City of Miami to be used to entertain distinguished guests. He quoted the real estate value of the property at \$250,000 and said that he would accept payment in city bonds.

William Jennings Bryan died on July 26, 1925, five days after the end of the Scopes trial. The day before his death he had made a train trip to Winchester, Tennessee. During this day trip, it was estimated that he covered 200 miles and spoke to over 50,000 people. The next day he took a nap after a hearty lunch and never woke up. It is believed that he died of a heart attack. His body, transported to Washington, D.C., lay in state at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, where it was estimated that 2000 mourners per hour filed by his casket to pay their respects. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.⁵¹

Bryan's Contributions to Miami

William Jennings Bryan's national political career was on the decline during his years of residence in Miami, but not his popularity and influence. Mr. Bryan lectured extensively around the country and was well paid for his services as orator and proponent of the causes that he had espoused through his brilliant career. In spite of his extensive travels while on the lecture circuit, he concentrated much of his time and effort during this period on promoting Miami, and had a significant impact on the development of the area.

He was a strong supporter and believer in the future of Miami. In a Miami Herald interview titled "William Jennings Bryan, Now Miamian, Tells The Herald of Magic City's Wonderful Future" dated November 23, 1920, he says, "I have increasing faith in Miami. The city possesses a very unusual combination of advantages. Its most important asset is its climate." He goes on to say "I expect Miami to become the second city in the state in ten years and the first in twenty years." In the same article he advocated a stronger advertising campaign for Miami: "We came from Asheville, N.C., by automobile and while we saw an occasional Miami sign the city is not as well advertised as Orlando and Tampa. The phenomenal growth of Miami gives a legitimate basis for advertising that ought not to be overlooked." He goes further to support city purchase of the bay front for a park and for construction of an auditorium, stating that "Miami will some day become the favorite place for winter conventions and meetings designed to draw the people of the United States and Latin America."

Bryan played a very important role in promoting tourism in Miami in his own special way. His involvement in teaching Sunday School Class goes back to his early visits to Miami in 1912 when, after attending services at

⁵⁰ "Bryan to Make Home at Grove," Miami Daily News and Metropolis, July 29, 1924.

⁵¹ Herrick, p. 381, 382.

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the First Presbyterian Church, he was asked to teach the church's adult Bible class.⁵² The following winter, Dr. H. George Cooley, a teacher at the church, organized a Sunday School class especially geared to the seasonal tourists and asked Mr. Bryan to teach it. Mr. Bryan agreed and the class was an instant success.

Because of his appointment as Secretary of State under President Wilson's administration, Bryan had limited time for the Tourist Bible Class in the beginning, but he saw in it the potential to attract winter visitors through his great oratory skills. By the 1915-16 winter season, the Presbyterian Church could no longer accommodate the crowds and moved the Bible Class outdoors to Royal Palm Park.⁵³ The next day 500 people showed up to hear Bryan speak from the bandstand. Following his resignation from President Wilson's Cabinet, Bryan was able to spend more time in Miami and put more effort into the Bible Class. The crowds continued to grow every winter season and the Sunday morning Tourist Bible Class attracted thousands of visitors who came to see and hear Bryan preach in true rock-star fashion for his day and age. Bryan's outdoor Bible Class became famous throughout the United States and brought another tourist dimension to Miami, outside of the obvious lure of warm climate and sandy beaches.

Bryan As Promoter of Coral Gables

Bryan's other significant role in promoting Miami came toward the end of his life when he became associated with George E. Merrick, developer of Coral Gables. In a January 1, 1925, advertisement in the Miami News, Merrick announced that he had contracted with Bryan to deliver daily lectures at the Venetian Pool extolling the virtues of Florida and its climate. The advertisement stated that Bryan would not sell land but as "Florida's and Miami's first citizen" would be "giving his views on Florida and its development."⁵⁴ Merrick contracted to pay Bryan \$100,000.00 per year, half in cash, the other half in real property that Bryan could dispose of at his discretion. Other reports claim that Bryan was paid at the rate of \$250.00 per hour for his lectures, a considerable sum at that time.⁵⁵

Bryan's lectures were usually delivered from a runway or platform floating in the middle of the Venetian Pool in Coral Gables. His audience of prospective buyers had been picked up by Merrick's bus fleet, driven through the different residential development areas, then wined and dined in the recently opened Coral Gables Country Club.⁵⁶ Other times, the lectures were delivered in satellite offices that Merrick had set up in other major cities around the country.⁵⁷

⁵² Howard Glenn McKenzie, "William Jennings Bryan in Miami, 1915-1925." (Master's Thesis. University of Miami, 1956), p. 73.

⁵³ The Miami Metropolis, January 22, 1916.

⁵⁴ "Hon. William Jennings Bryan to Lecture Daily at Venetian Casino, Coral Gables on Florida and Miami," Miami Daily News and Metropolis, January 1, 1925.

⁵⁵ Howard Glenn McKenzie, p. 99.

⁵⁶ McKenzie, p. 99.

⁵⁷ McKenzie, p. 98.

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Bryan was strongly criticized by some for commercializing his name and image during this episode of his life. Others, however, acknowledged that he was well removed from the national political scene by that time and that whether he charged for delivering lectures on temperance, religion, politics or real estate sales, it was his own business. One thing was clear—the rapid development of Miami into the first city in the state of Florida was more than Bryan’s prophecy. It was significantly the result of the fire, eloquence and power of persuasion of his spoken word.

Bryan’s Contribution to the Founding of the University of Miami

Bryan was also instrumental in the creation of the University of Miami. As early as 1916, Bryan was advocating the establishment of a “Pan American College of Commerce” that would serve students from North and South America. He was invited to participate in a committee organized by the Miami Chamber of Commerce to formulate plans to establish such an institution by taking over the existing Southern Business College and raising \$25,000 as a start for the proposed international school.⁵⁸ These plans did not materialize, but he kept the idea alive.

In an article that appeared in The Miami Herald in November 1920, Bryan advocated that Miami should serve as a center for relations with Latin America. He further stated that Miami should appeal to the State Legislature for the establishment of a college that would offer special courses of interest and benefit to students from the United States and Latin America. He envisioned offering special courses in Spanish that would attract students from Cuba and Central America. These students “could learn the methods of American civilization and government from teachers thoroughly familiar with the language of those countries.”⁵⁹ In the same article he declared the need for such a college in Miami because of the city’s close proximity to Latin America as opposed to the University of Florida’s location in Gainesville, over 300 miles away. He viewed the creation of this new school as a great attraction to tourists and winter residents who would have an institution of higher learning for their older children. He pledged to do everything in his power towards the establishment of such an institution.

At the height of Miami’s real estate boom, the idea of establishing a university in Miami gained considerable momentum. By early 1925, a group of prominent citizens led by Judge William E. Walsh, William Jennings Bryan, his daughter Ruth Bryan Owen, and the founder and developer of Coral Gables George Merrick, had raised \$50,000.00, purchased forty acres of land and applied for a charter to establish the school. On April 8, 1925, H.F. Atkinson, Judge of the Dade County Circuit Court, granted the University of Miami charter.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ “Bryan Favors Plan for Big Educational Institution in This City,” Miami Daily Metropolis, February 3, 1916.

⁵⁹ “William Jennings Bryan, Now Miamian, Tells The Herald of Magic City’s Wonderful Future,” The Miami Herald, November 23, 1920.

⁶⁰ Howard Glenn McKenzie, p. 107.

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Following the granting of the charter and initial land purchase, George Merrick appeared before the recently established Board of Regents and offered them 160 acres of land in Coral Gables and a \$5,000,000 donation toward the founding of the school. The donation was approved by the Board and, soon after, construction of the University of Miami started. Judge Walsh was named President, Ruth Bryan Owen was Vice-President, and Frederic Zeigen was Secretary-Treasurer. During the ceremonies held February 4, 1926, to lay the university's cornerstone, Bryan was posthumously recognized by University President Walsh as the first person to envision the creation of the school.⁶¹

Villa Serena after the Bryans

Following Bryan's death, the Villa Serena property was purchased in 1928 by Samuel E. Carver, a real estate dealer, general contractor and builder from Philadelphia.⁶² Carver retired from his business and came to settle in Miami. The purchase price was reportedly between \$175,000 and \$250,000. However, Mr. Carver's name only appears in the Polk's Miami City Directory from 1926 until 1928. Following the downturn in Miami's economy due to the 1926 hurricane, subsequent real estate bust and 1929 Stock Market Crash, Mr. Carver was unable to make payments and the property reverted to the Bryan estate executors in 1933.⁶³

In 1931 The Miami Herald reported that Villa Serena was sold to Mrs. Harriet Torrey Matheson, widow of William J. Matheson and mother of Hugh and Malcolm Matheson. The Mathesons were among the wealthiest, most influential early families in Miami. William J. Matheson made a fortune in the chemical industry, as founder and owner of Allied Chemical and Dye Company. He owned extensive property in Miami, including the northern two thirds of Key Biscayne, where he had a 1700-acre coconut plantation managed by his son Hugh. William J. Matheson died in 1930. Mrs. Matheson's purchase price for Villa Serena in 1931 was reported at \$65,000 in the newspaper article, a sharp decline from the previous sale of the property, an obvious sign of the economic picture at the height of the Depression. However, other than the newspaper account of Mrs. Matheson's purchase of Villa Serena, a search of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County reveals that there was no official recordation of such a transaction.

Shortly before her death in January 1930, Mrs. Bryan had written a personal account of Villa Serena for the use of real estate agents who were trying to sell the property. In her last words on this account she writes: "I am now alone. If Mr. Bryan were living, I am sure that he and I would not pass this ideal home on to anyone, but with him gone and I a cripple I cannot keep it and am hoping that some one will feel the charm and understand the beauty of this home and take it for their own."⁶⁴

⁶¹ McKenzie, p. 104.

⁶² Warranty Deed, March 17, 1928, Deed Book 197, Page 384, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County.

⁶³ Special Warranty Deed, April 20, 1933, Deed Book 1521, Page 171, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County.

⁶⁴ Mary Baird Bryan Personal Account.

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In a February 12, 1933 real estate classified ad in The Miami Herald, Villa Serena is once again offered for sale, this time for \$35,000. William F. Cheek purchased the property in April, 1933 for \$30,000.⁶⁵ William Cheek was the grandson of Joel Maxwell, co-founder of Maxwell House Coffee. His grandfather built a reputation for his coffee at his Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee. William and his brothers were responsible for expanding the business on a national scale. William was manager of the Richmond plant until his retirement and relocation to Miami. He lived at Villa Serena until his death in 1970.⁶⁶ Gaspar Nagymihaly bought Villa Serena in 1971. Mr. Nagymihaly, a general contractor and builder in Miami, paid \$275,000 for the property.⁶⁷ He and his family stayed on the property until 2007.

In 2007 Villa Serena was back on the market, this time listed for \$12.9 million. An undisclosed buyer whose intentions were to tear down the house, backed out of the purchase contract when the City of Miami moved to designate the property as a local historic site. Villa Serena was officially designated a local historic site on December 2007 by the City of Miami Historic and Environmental Preservation Board.

Ms. Adrienne Arsht purchased Villa Serena in December 2007 with the intention of restoring it and using it as part of her private residence, located on the lot immediately to the north. Ms. Arsht is an attorney and former Chairman of Total Bank, which she sold in 2007. From a distinguished family in Delaware, her mother was the first female judge in that state, her father a prominent attorney in Wilmington.⁶⁸ Ms. Arsht is a well recognized philanthropist in Miami. In January 2008, Miami's Carnival Center for the Performing Arts was renamed the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts after her generous \$30 million donation rescued the Center from financial struggles since its opening in October 2006.

Today Villa Serena faces a bright future. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects completed extensive restoration of the property in 2011, including a return to the original green Ludovici tile roof, replacing all windows with impact resistant reproductions of the historic windows and updating all mechanical, electrical, plumbing and air conditioning systems. The landscape plan preserved the native species on the site, and restored the hardwood hammock on the street side of the property. The seawall, mostly destroyed by recent hurricanes, was reconstructed and faced with oolitic limestone to match the historic appearance, and the original wrought iron gates were fully restored.

⁶⁵ "Villa Serena Is Sold to Cheek for \$30,000." The Miami Herald, April 21, 1933.

⁶⁶ "Clubman William F. Cheek, 87," Obituary, The Miami Herald, September 1970.

⁶⁷ "Historic Miami Villa Serena Estate Is Sold for \$275,000." The Miami Herald, February 14, 1971.

⁶⁸ Charles Flowers, South Florida CEO. Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Group, 2008s

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Villa Serena is one of the few remaining waterfront mansions that once lined Brickell Avenue, in the area of Miami known during the early twentieth century as Millionaire's Row. The property itself is significant for its spectacular setting, occupying 200 feet of water front. The house is built on a limestone bluff that drops dramatically twelve feet to the water's edge of Biscayne Bay.

Villa Serena is an early example of the Mediterranean Revival style so popular in South Florida during the 1920s, although it predates the accepted beginnings of the style in the Miami area. Other structures built shortly after Villa Serena, such as the Miami City Hospital, built in 1915, and the Miami Beach Municipal Golf Course Building, built in 1916, both designed by renowned local architect August Geiger, exhibit features generally classified as being in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Villa Vizcaya, the Italian Renaissance-inspired palace and gardens built by James Deering of International Harvester fame only three doors down from Villa Serena, was built during the same time period, between 1913 and 1916. But even Vizcaya is not considered a true example of Mediterranean Revival architecture, but rather a precursor of the style, the fantasy indulgence of its owner, inspired by his travels in Italy and along the Mediterranean Coast.

Villa Serena is somewhat more subdued in stylistic features and details than the typical Mediterranean Revival houses of the 1920s, lacking the greater articulation of volumes, applied exterior ornamentation, arched openings, loggias and colonnades that are generally associated with the style. It nevertheless employs many of the typical elements of the style, such as a central courtyard, a single arched opening leading into the courtyard, corner towers, tiled hip roofs and wrought iron grilles on windows and gates. The stylistic associations, whether accidental or intuitive, do not appear to be scholarly. The visual effect is simple, relaxed, serene, as the Villa Serena name implies, true to its intended purpose as a winter home to get away from the family's otherwise hectic life.

The house is in tune with its natural environment, its site literally carved out of the hardwood hammock that the Bryans repeatedly referred to as "the jungle," which they admired for its untouched beauty and preserved at the west end of the property. More important is the building's orientation, with the main spaces opening to the bay, which they considered the front of the house, and the arrangement of windows on the second floor corner towers in groups of four in cross ventilation patterns. The west entrance courtyard and the second floor rooftop garden overlooking the bay and nestled between the towers were certainly excellent pre-air conditioning devices to channel the breezes into the interior spaces. The original rooftop garden, which the Bryans enclosed as part of the 1920s remodeling, was way ahead of its time, more in keeping with today's much-touted green designs.

The architect for Villa Serena is not known. Mr. Bryan reportedly drew up the first draft of the house plan, which was then "elaborated by an architect", according to a December 26, 1913 article in The Miami

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Metropolis.⁶⁹ Another newspaper article, dated April 11, 1913, states that Mrs. Bryan was responsible for drawing up the plans.⁷⁰ Although that same article claims that the inspiration came from a Spanish castle, Villa Serena is remarkably similar to Four Way Lodge, the Coconut Grove home of Arthur Curtis James, built three years earlier (Photo 65). Yet another newspaper article, dated January 14, 1915, claims that "Secretary Bryan designed the structure himself."⁷¹ But another article published in Architectural Record in May 1914 claims that Villa Serena's builder, J. Roy Swanson, copied architect Robert W. Gardner's design for Four Way Lodge.⁷² This last version seems the most plausible source of inspiration for the design.

What is clear is that the Bryans built the house to last. In response to the area's propensity for hurricanes, Villa Serena was built of poured reinforced concrete. This type of construction was unusual for single family residences of this early date, not just in South Florida but throughout the United States. Villa Serena and its counterpart Four Way Lodge are, in fact, the first known examples of reinforced concrete structures built in Miami. Except for doors, windows and the roof structure, the house has a minimal amount of wood, part of Mr. Bryan's attempt to make the construction not just hurricane-proof but also fire-proof.

The other feature of the house that sets it apart from all others of its vintage is the Cuban tile floors. Mrs. Bryan relates in her previously cited personal account that she and her husband hand-picked the colors in a tile factory in Cuba. The strikingly beautiful tiles are located in the main public spaces of the ground floor, namely the living room, dining room and the two sun porches and on the risers of twin staircases leading to the second floor.

The tile floor design concept of the main floor was inspired by stately Cuban houses of the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The floors were designed to imitate place rugs, with a solid color border next to the wall, followed by a decorative pattern border along the perimeter of the room, framing a highly decorated central area. The neutral outer border provides the transition between rooms, as each room generally carried a different design. Each individual tile was designed in geometric and floral patterns, oftentimes several tiles combined to make a pattern which would be repeated throughout the space.

⁶⁹ "Mr. and Mrs. Bryan Come to Spend the Holidays in Miami," The Miami Metropolis, December 26, 1913.

⁷⁰ "Bryan Home Is Nearly Completed," Miami Daily Metropolis, April 11, 1913.

⁷¹ "Miami—The Concrete City," The Miami Metropolis, January 14, 1915.

⁷² "Architectural Piracy. A Flagrant Case of Plagiarism," The Architectural Record, Volume XXXV, May, 1914.

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Cuban tiles are more technically called hydraulic tiles and differ from ceramic tiles in that they are not fired. A metal mold provides the design pattern. Into the mold are poured three layers of wet cement. The first layer has the color pigment. The second layer is of light textured cement. The third layer contains thicker textured cement. After the cement is poured, the metal mold is removed. The tile is then air-dried approximately 28 days.⁷³

Villa Serena has lived up to William Jennings Bryan's expectations to build a house that would last for centuries, surviving multiple owners and hurricanes virtually unscathed. Alterations have been relatively minor. The most significant alterations, enclosing the bay front rooftop garden and pergolas, both took place in 1920, during the Bryans' tenure at the house. Both have acquired historical significance, because of their age and because they mark the historical event where the Bryans decided to make Villa Serena their permanent home. The overall structure of the house is solid, and the restoration completed in 2011 addressed all necessary repairs. This valuable property has been restored to its former splendor while bringing it up to modern standards of comfort and utility, ready to serve for many years to come as a reminder of a golden age in Miami's history that has now been all but lost.

⁷³ Elsa Suarez Alfonso, Unpublished Personal Account, June 6, 2008.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
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- "Villa Serena Is Sold to Cheek for \$30,000." The Miami Herald, April 21, 1933.
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- "Villa Serena, the W.J. Bryan Home, Was Opened to Visitors Yesterday," The Miami Metropolis, January 15, 1916.
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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Warranty Deed, March 18, 1912, Deed Book 84, Page 392, of the Public Records of Miami-Dade County.
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BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
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10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property 2**UTM References**

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	5	7	9	4	4	0	2	8	4	7	6	8	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 Byname/title Ivan A. Rodriguez/W. Carl Shiver, Historic Preservationistorganization Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation date October 2011street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333city 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 Adrienne Arshtstreet & number 3031 Brickell Avenue telephone (305) 858-5251city or town Miami state Florida zip code 33129**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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

LOTS 102 & 103, BLK B, FLAGLER, AS PER PLAT THEREOF, MADE BY MARY BRICKELL, BUT NOT RECORDED IN THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF MIAMI-DADE CUNTY, FLORIDA; ALSO KNOWN AS VILLA SERENA

Commencing at the Southwesterly corner of Lot 63, Block B, according to a Plat of a part of Polly Lewis and Jonathan Lewis Donation as recorded on Page 96, Block B, of Plats in the office of Clerk of the Circuit Court of Miami, in Dade County, Florida:

Thence running Southwesterly along the Southeasterly line of Brickell Avenue produced as said Brickell Avenue is shown on said plat, 3800 feet for the Point of Beginning of the tract of land hereinafter described; thence Southwesterly along the said line of said Brickell Avenue produced, 200 feet; thence in a Southeasterly direction along a line perpendicular to the said Southeasterly boundary line of Brickell Avenue produced. (This line running Southeasterly being the Southwesterly boundary of the tract being described) to the waters on the West shore of Biscayne Bay; thence following the waters of Biscayne Bay Northeasterly meandering the shore of said bay, 200 feet, more or less to a point on a parallel to and distant 200 feet, from the Southwesterly boundary of this tract, thence Northwesterly to the Point of Beginning. TOGETHER WITH all the riparian rights and privileges appertaining thereto.

Said lands being otherwise described as Lots 102 and 103, of Block B, FLAGLER, as per Plat thereof, made by Mary Brickell, but not recorded in the Public Records of Miami-Dade County, Florida; also known as "Villa Serena".

Boundary Justification

The above boundary description contains all of the historic resources associated with the William Jennings Bryan House, also known as Villa Serena, constructed in 1913 and occupied by the Bryans until 1924.

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LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Villa Serena. 3115 Brickell Avenue
2. Miami, Miami-Dade County
3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Main entrance view. Camera facing southeast
7. Photo 1 of 65

Items 1-2 are the same for the remainder of the photographs.

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Bay side view. Camera facing northwest
7. Photo 2 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Entrance view through hammock. Camera facing southwest
7. Photo 3 of 65

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. View of hammock. Camera facing south
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3. Moris Moreno
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5. Photographer's files
6. View of bay side bluff. Camera facing northwest
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5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Stairs on north side of bluff. Camera facing northeast
7. Photo 6 of 65

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
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5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Stairs on south side of bluff. Camera facing southeast
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3. Ivan A. Rodriguez, R.J. Heisenbottle Architects, P.A.
4. March 26, 2008
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Seawall and dock before restoration. Camera facing southeast
7. Photo 8 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Seawall and dock after restoration. Camera facing southeast
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3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Seawall and dock with bluff in foreground from second floor balcony. Camera facing east
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3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Main entrance gate from Brickell Avenue. Camera facing east
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5. Photographer's files
6. Entrance driveway through hammock with Kapok and Banyan trees. Camera facing southwest
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3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. North garden wall. Camera facing northeast
7. Photo 13 of 65

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. South garden wall. Camera facing east
7. Photo 14 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Main entrance view. Camera facing southeast
7. Photo 15 of 65

3. Unknown
4. Circa 1920
5. Arva Moore Parks' Private Collection
6. Historic postcard showing red roof
7. Photo 16 of 65

3. Unknown
4. Circa 1920
5. Arva Moore Parks' private collection
6. Historic postcard showing green roof
7. Photo 17 of 65

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3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Roof overhang and chimney detail. Camera facing northeast
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3. Moris Moreno
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6. Main entrance detail. Camera facing southeast
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3. Gleason Waite Romer
4. 1930
5. Miami-Dade Public Library
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3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
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6. Entrance courtyard. Camera facing east
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3. Moris Moreno
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5. Photographer's files
6. Main entrance doorway. Camera facing south
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3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Second floor balcony detail above main entrance. Camera facing south
7. Photo 24 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. East elevation, Camera facing west
7. Photo 25 of 65

3. Claude C. Matlack
4. 1919
5. HistoryMiami
6. Bay view showing rooftop garden and open pergolas. Camera facing northwest
7. Photo 26 of 65

3. J.N. Chamberlain
4. 1921
5. Arva Moore Parks' private collection
6. Bay view showing recently enclosed rooftop garden and screened-in pergolas. Camera facing southwest
7. Photo 27 of 65

3. W.A. Fishbaugh
4. 1922
5. HistoryMiami
6. Bay view showing enclosed rooftop garden and screened-in pergolas. Camera facing west
7. Photo 28 of 65

3. Gleason Waite Romer
4. 1934
5. Miami-Dade Public Library
6. Bay view showing sun porch enclosures. Camera facing northwest
7. Photo 29 of 65

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Page 6

BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

3. Gleason Waite Romer
4. 1934
5. Miami-Dade Public Library
6. Bay view showing sun porch enclosures. Camera facing west
7. Photo 30 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. East elevation with bluff after restoration. Camera facing west
7. Photo 31 of 65

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. View of north elevation. Camera facing southwest
7. Photo 32 of 65

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. View of south elevation. Camera facing north
7. Photo 33 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Entrance staircase. Camera facing south
7. Photo 34 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Main hall floor tiles. Camera facing north
7. Photo 35 of 65

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Page 7

BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Main hall and sun porch floor tiles. Camera facing southeast
7. Photo 37 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Sun porch details. Camera facing south
7. Photo 38 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Main hall fireplace and tile details. Camera facing southeast
7. Photo 39 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Sun porch with views of the bay. Camera facing east
7. Photo 40 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Kitchen. Camera facing northwest
7. Photo 41 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Kitchen. Camera facing west
7. Photo 42 of 65

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Page 8

BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

3. Unknown
4. Circa 1920
5. Arva Moore Parks' private collection
6. Historic postcard showing wood doors of original garage on right side of the house
7. Photo 43 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Second floor master bedroom suite. Camera facing south
7. Photo 44 of 65

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Bay view from inside master bedroom. Camera facing east
7. Photo 45 of 65

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Courtyard entrance view from inside master bedroom. Camera facing west
7. Photo 46 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Second floor master bathroom. Camera facing west
7. Photo 47 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Second floor bedroom with fireplace. Camera facing southeast
7. Photo 48 of 65

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Page 9

BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Second floor bedroom with ceiling detail. Camera facing west
7. Photo 49 of 65

3. Moris Moreno
4. November 23, 2010
5. Photographer's files
6. Main house on right; pump house immediately behind; guest house and garage far left. Camera facing north
7. Photo 50 of 65

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Pump house. Camera facing northwest
7. Photo 51 of 65

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Pump house with main house in foreground. Camera facing northwest
7. Photo 52 of 65

3. Gleason Waite Romer
4. May 23, 1934
5. Miami-Dade Public Library
6. Guest house and garage soon after completion. Camera facing north
7. Photo 53 of 6

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Guest house and garage. Camera facing north
7. Photo 54 of 65

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Page 10

BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Guest house and garage. Camera facing west
7. Photo 55 of 65

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Guest house and garage living room space. Camera facing northeast
7. Photo 56 of 65

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Guest house and garage dining room space. Camera facing northeast
7. Photo 57 of 65

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Guest house and garage kitchen. Camera facing north
7. Photo 58 of 65

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Guest house and garage bedroom. Camera facing southwest
7. Photo 59 of 65

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Guest house and garage bathroom. Camera facing southeast
7. Photo 60 of 65

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Page 11

BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

3. Ivan A. Rodriguez
4. January 13, 2011
5. R.J. Heisenbottle Architects
6. Guest house and garage bathroom. Camera facing west
7. Photo 61 of 65

3. W.A. Fishbaugh
4. 1921
5. HistoryMiami
6. Crowds at Bryan's Bible Class at Royal Palm Park
7. Photo 62 of 65

3. Claude C. Matlack
4. 1921
5. HistoryMiami
6. Gathering at Villa Serena. Camera facing northwest
7. Photo 63 of 65

3. Gleason Waite Romer
4. 1930
5. Miami-Dade Public Library
6. Bay view showing elevator shaft
7. Photo 64 of 65

1. Four Way Lodge
3. Unknown
4. Circa 1911
5. Arva Moore Parks' private collection
6. Early photo showing similarities of Four Way Lodge and Villa Serena
7. Photo 65 of 65

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Bryan, William Jennings, House

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: FLORIDA, Dade

DATE RECEIVED: 12/09/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/05/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/20/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/24/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11001029

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 1.20.12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

1/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

2165



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

3/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO, FL
4/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

5/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

6/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

7165



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGHOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

8/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

905



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

10/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI - DADE CO., FL

11/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

12/05



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

B/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENWINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

14/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENWINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

15/65

Wm. Jennings Bryan's
New Residence,
Miami, Fla.



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI - D~~ADE~~ CO., FL

16/65



1499 VILLA SERENA WINTER HOME OF WM. JENNINGS BRYAN, MIAMI, FLA.

BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

17/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

18/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

19/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

20165



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

21/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

22/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

23/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENWINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

24/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

25/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

20165



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

27/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

28/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENWINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

29/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGSHOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

30/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE Co., FL

31/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

32/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

33/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNING'S HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

34/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE Co, FL

35/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

36/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOKE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

37/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI - DADE CO., FL

3/25/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

3A/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

40/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

4/1/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS. HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

42/65

SERENA VILLA, RESIDENCE OF WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN, MIAMI, FLA.



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGSHOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO, FL
43/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

44/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

45/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

46/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADIE CO., FL

47/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

48/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

49/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

50/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

51/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO, FL
52/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

53/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HORSE

MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

54/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

55165



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

56/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

57165



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

58/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI - DADE CO., FL

59165



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

60/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO., FL

6/1/65



© 1921 BY W. A. FISHBAUGH
152 E. FLAGLER ST. MIAMI, FLA.

BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI - DADE CO., FL

62 165



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE
MIAMI - DADE CO, FL

63/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO, FL

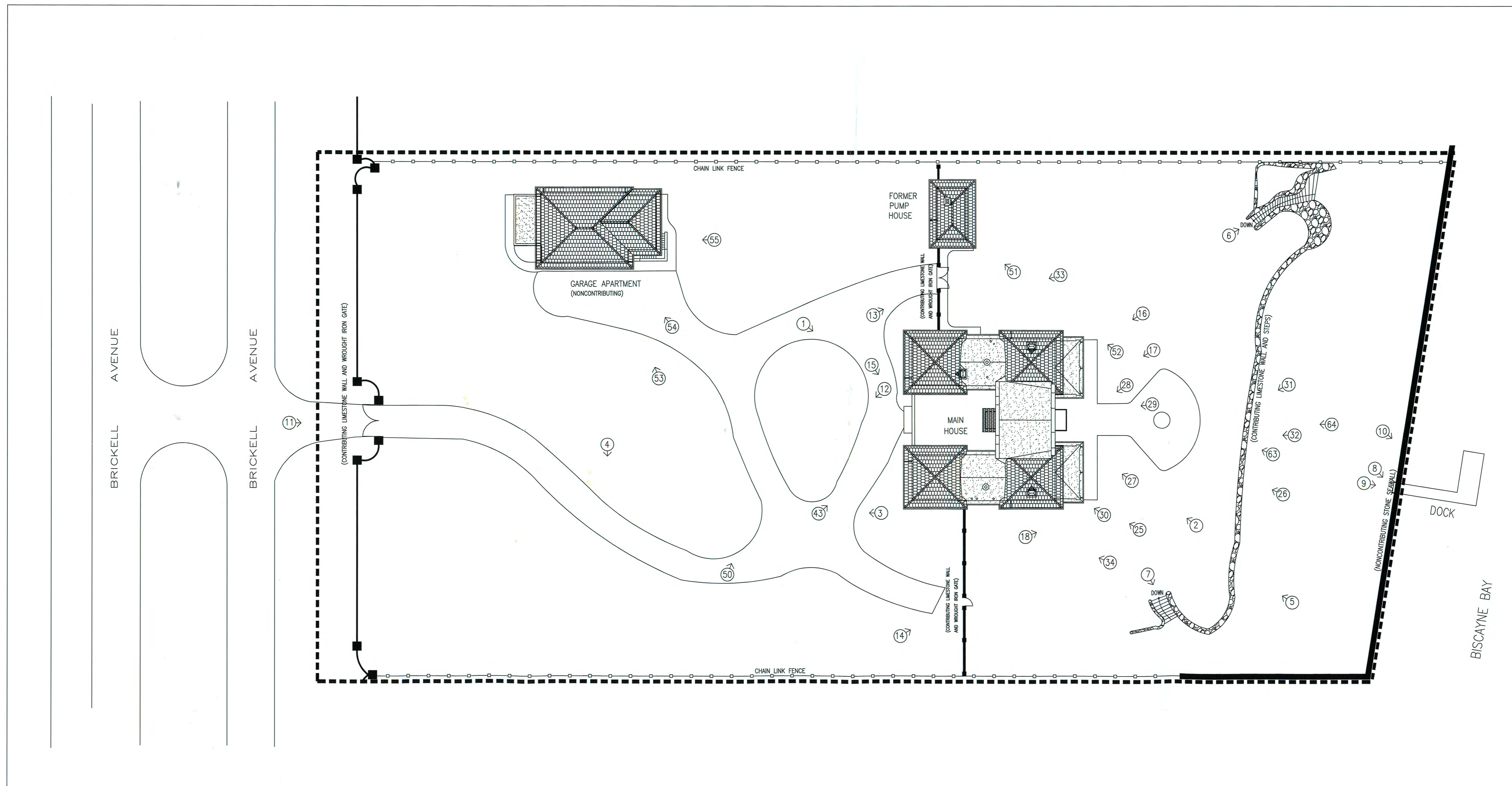
64/65



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS HOUSE

MIAMI-DADE CO. FL

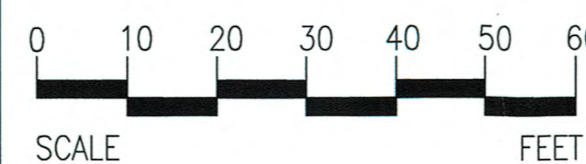
65/65



HISTORIC BOUNDARY - - - - -

PHOTO NUMBERS ◀55

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN HOUSE (VILLA SERENA)
 3115 BRICKELL AVENUE
 MIAMI (MIAMI-DADE COUNTY) FLORIDA 33129



THE ORIGINAL SITE AND FLOOR PLANS WERE DRAWN BY R.J. HEISENBOTTE ARCHITECTS USING AUTOCAD AND REVISED BY THE STAFF OF THE FLORIDA BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION USING THE SAME PROGRAM. THE ORIGINAL VISUAL FORMAT WAS LARGELY MAINTAINED, BUT CHANGES WERE MADE TO THE HATCH PATTERNS AND THE SIZES OF THE TEXT TO MAKE THEM MORE LEGIBLE. CHANGES WERE ALSO MADE TO THE LEGEND AND TITLE BLOCK TO MEET THE STANDARDS OF THE FLORIDA BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

REVISED BY W. CARL SHIVER
 REVISED DATE NOVEMBER 2011
 FLORIDA BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 P.A. GRAY BUILDING
 500 SOUTH BRUNNEN STREET
 TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0250
 PHONE NUMBER (850) 245-6333
 TOLL FREE NUMBER 1-800-7278
 FAX NUMBER (850) 245-6437

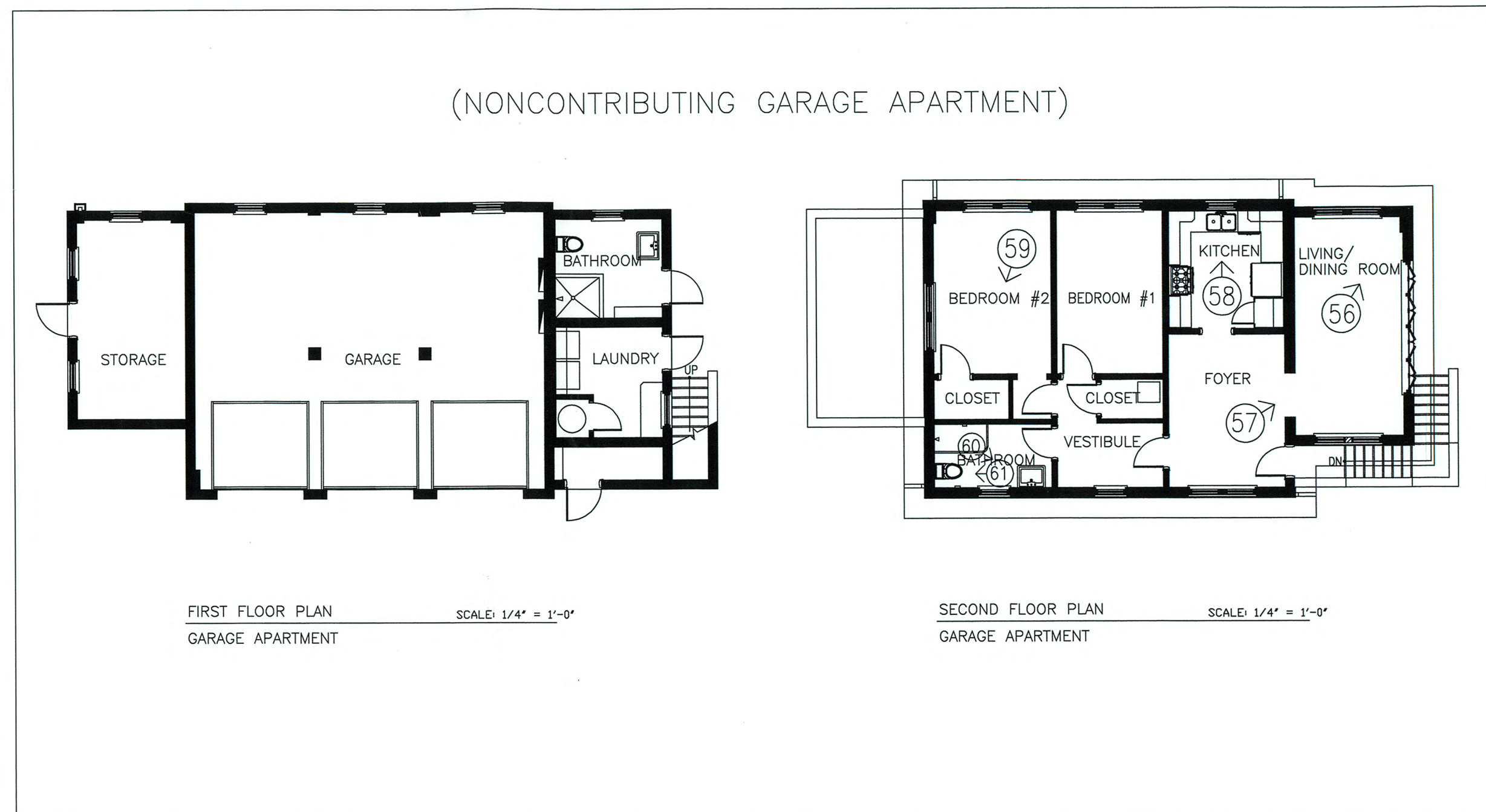
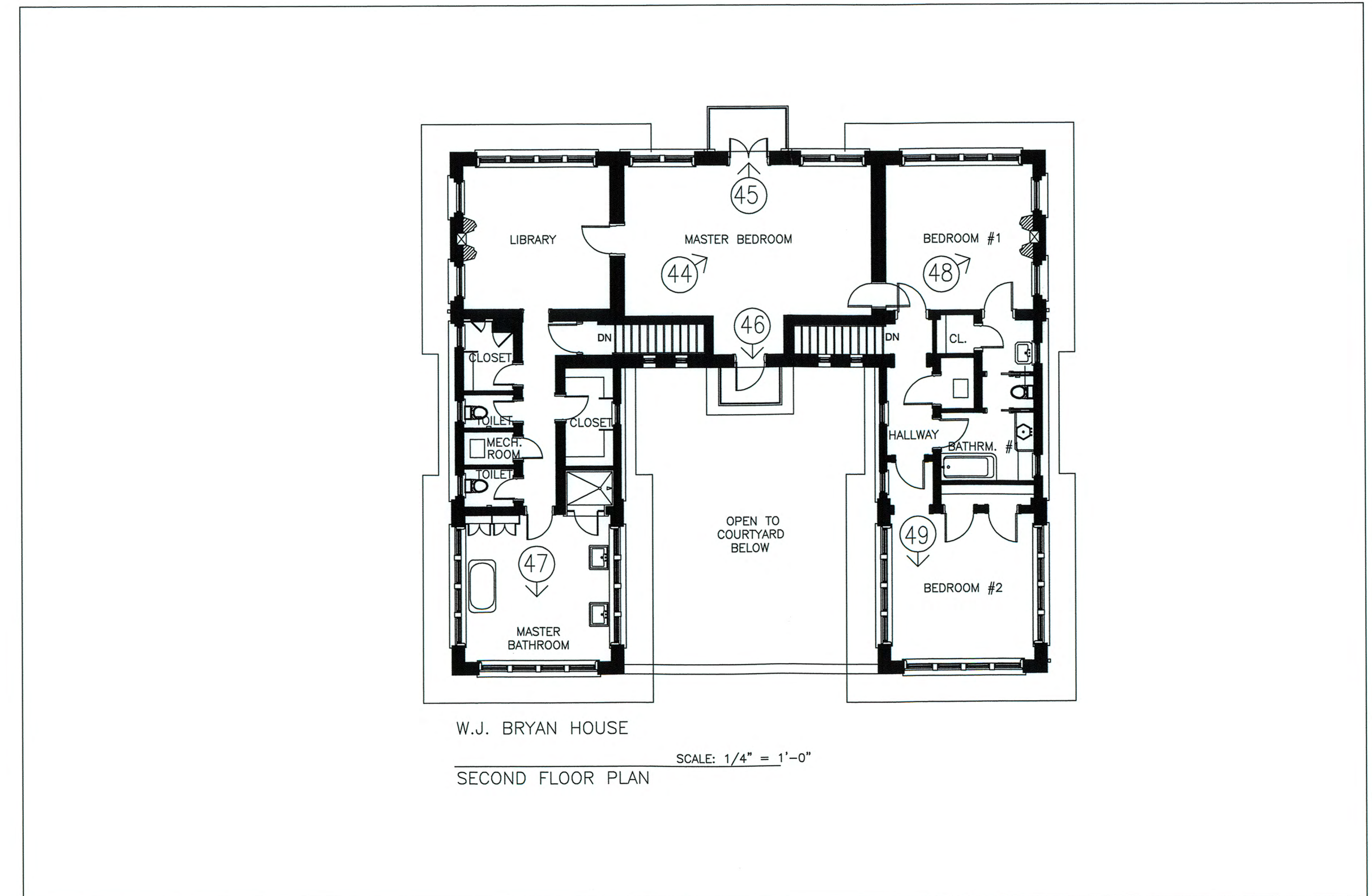
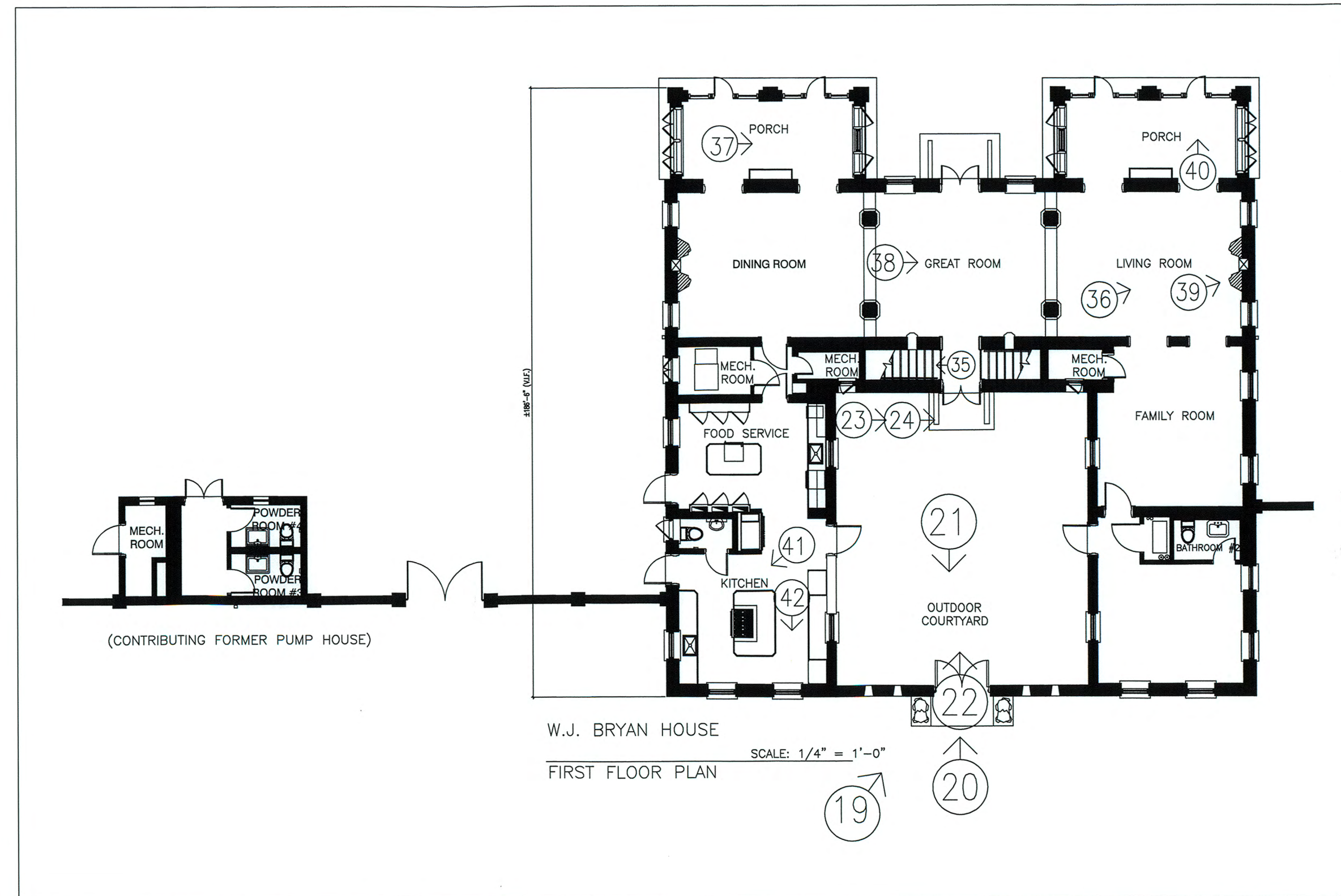
DATE: DECEMBER 2010

MAP DRAWN BY:
 Maria Elena Carvajal
 R.J. HEISENBOTTE ARCHITECTS, P.A.

SHEET #1

PHONE: 305.446.7799 FAX: 305.446.9275

R.J. HEISENBOTTE ARCHITECTS, P.A. 2199 PONCE DE LEON BLV, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA 33134



WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN HOUSE (VILLA SERENA)
3115 BRICKELL AVENUE
MIAMI (MIAMI-DADE COUNTY) FLORIDA 33129



SCALE
SEE INDIVIDUAL PLANS

THE ORIGINAL SITE AND FLOOR PLANS WERE DRAWN BY R.J. HEISENBOTTE ARCHITECTS USING AUTOCAD AND REVISED BY THE STAFF OF THE FLORIDA BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION USING THE SAME PROGRAM. THE ORIGINAL VISUAL FORMAT WAS LARGELY MAINTAINED, BUT CHANGES WERE MADE TO THE HATCH PATTERNS AND THE SIZES OF THE TEXT TO MAKE THEM MORE LEGIBLE. CHANGES WERE ALSO MADE TO THE LEGEND AND TITLE BLOCK TO MEET THE STANDARDS OF THE FLORIDA BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

REVISED BY W. CARL SHIVER
REVISED DATE NOVEMBER 2011
FLORIDA BUREAU OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
R.A. GRAY BUILDING
500 SOUTH BRUNNEN STREET
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0250
PHONE NUMBER (850) 245-6333
TOLL FREE NUMBER 1-800-7278
FAX NUMBER (850) 245-6437

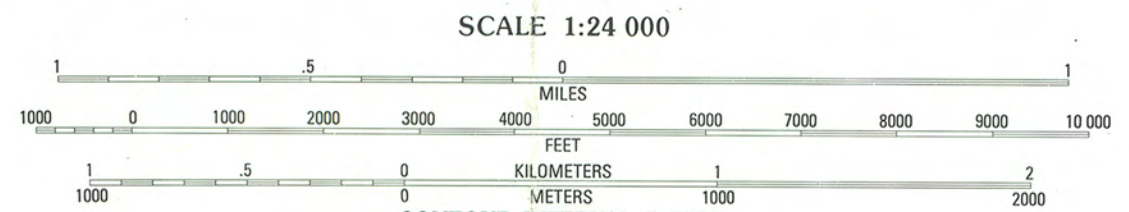
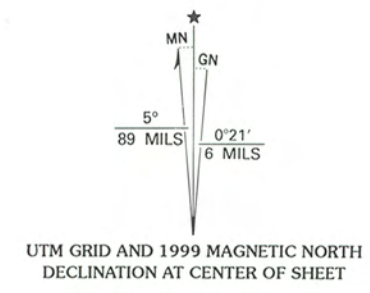
DATE: DECEMBER 2010
MAP DRAWN BY:
Maria Elena Carvajal
R.J. HEISENBOTTE ARCHITECTS, P.A.
PHONE: 305.446.7799 FAX: 305.446.9275
R.J. HEISENBOTTE ARCHITECTS, P.A. 2199 PONCE DE LEON BLV, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA 33134

SHEET #2



BRYAN, WILLIAM JENNINGS, HOUSE
 MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FL
 Zone Easting Northing
 579440 Flat 2847680

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
 Derived from imagery taken 1986 and other sources. Photomapped using imagery taken 1994; no major culture or drainage changes observed. PLSS and survey control current as of 1987
 Boundaries, other than corporate, verified 1999
 North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 10 000-foot ticks. Florida coordinate system, east zone (transverse Mercator)
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 17
 North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software
 Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS charts 11465 (1984)
 This information is not intended for navigational purposes
 There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route
	County Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Kurt S. Browning

Secretary of State

DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

December 1, 2011

Ms. Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
Department of Interior
1201 Eye Street, N.W., 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed are the nomination and additional materials for the

William Jennings Bryan House, Miami, Miami-Dade County, Florida

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (850) 245-6364 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Barbara E. Mattick

Barbara E. Mattick, Ph.D.
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
for Survey & Registration

Enclosures

500 S. Bronough Street • Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250 • <http://www.flheritage.com>

Director's Office
(850) 245-6300 • FAX: 245-6436

Archaeological Research
(850) 245-6444 • FAX: 245-6436

Historic Preservation
(850) 245-6333 • FAX: 245-6437