

# The Historical Development of St. Johns County, Florida, with the Development Patterns and Periods of Building Construction

Excerpted from:

Johnston, Sidney, 2001, *Historic Properties Survey of St. Johns County*, Florida. Environmental Services, Inc., Jacksonville

Commissioned by the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners.

#### IV. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY

##### Context

One of Florida's oldest political jurisdictions, St. Johns County is associated with the nation's oldest city, St. Augustine. Development in the county differed from growth patterns evident at the Ancient City. Widely dispersed, settlement and development was heaviest along the St. Johns River, the Atlantic Ocean, and in close proximity to St. Augustine. During the first Spanish period, the Spanish Crown built fortifications at Fort Diego, Fort Picolata, Fort Tocoli, and a guardhouse at Twenty Mile. Later, in the 1760s, the British Crown sparked development by awarding large land grants. The English also opened one of Florida's first public roads, the King's Road, which ran from New Smyrna Beach, through the present-day county, and north into Georgia. In-migration of Minorcan refugees from a failed settlement at New Smyrna forever changed the cultural landscape of the region. Sustaining the policy adopted by the British Crown, Spanish authorities awarded land grants to settlers after Spain resumed its control of Florida in 1784. Following decades of intrigue and a short-lived rebellion, the United States government acquired Florida in 1821. The Territorial Legislature created St. Johns County and assigned St. Augustine as the seat of government. Small riverside settlements appeared along the St. Johns River, and at Tocoli the St. Johns Railway was completed into St. Augustine in 1859. During the Civil War, Union troops occupied St. Augustine, and gunboats patrolled the St. Johns River. Following the war, new settlements with churches and schools appeared in rural areas. In the 1880s, as St. Augustine experienced significant growth upon the arrival of Henry Flagler, some population gains were made in coastal, river, and interior regions of the county. The introduction of railroad lines helped spur growth in the rural villages of Elkton, Hastings, and Spuds. River settlements at Fruit Cove, Orangedale, Picolata, Racy Point, Remington Park, Riverdale, and Switzerland also experienced slow, steady growth. A few wealthy seasonal visitors developed river estates, and others fashioned seaside resorts at Crescent Beach and Summer Haven. Many settlers cultivated citrus until hard freezes in the mid-1890s pushed Florida's citrus belt farther south. African-American settlers formed communities at Armstrong, Elkton, Fruit Cove, and Hastings. Designated as New Augustine, a large ethnic community emerged west of St. Augustine, and soon became known as West Augustine. By 1910, over thirteen thousand people resided in the county, with nearly five thousand of those spread throughout the villages and settlements of the unincorporated county. Land owners and developers platted numerous subdivisions during the 1920s land boom, but the county retained much of its rural character. In the 1930s, turpentine and naval stores, long a significant part of Florida's economy, contributed to the county's economy. Ponte Vedra Beach emerged as an exclusive seaside village in the Great Depression, when most other communities continued to depend on agriculture. Improvements to the Intracoastal Waterway opened new home sites in Palm Valley. During World War II, small airfields at St. Augustine and Switzerland supported Navy pilots training at naval air stations at Green Cove Springs and Jacksonville. In cooperation with some St. Johns County rural landowners and timber companies, the Florida Forest Service began installing fire watchtowers in the late-1940s. Development since World War II has increased with each passing decade. Suburban development from neighboring Orange Park and Jacksonville has begun to impact largely rural northern St. Johns County. Some scenic undeveloped vistas along the St. Johns River have yielded to housing developments. Demolition and dramatic expansion of many older residences has significantly altered the historic ambiance and character of other areas, such as Ponte Vedra Beach. Developments such as Nocatee and World Golf

Villages represent new trends and challenges to the preservation of St. Johns County's rural heritage and historic character.

### **Colonial Periods, 1516-1821**

St. Johns County, one of the oldest political jurisdictions in the state, derives its name from Florida's longest river. Called various names since its discovery by the French Huguenot explorer, Jean Ribault, the St. Johns River initially was designated as the River May. This name fell three years later when Pedro Menendez removed the French colony that settled near its mouth. Between the sixteenth and early-eighteenth centuries, the river was referred to by such names as the Fresh Water (Rio Dulce), Picolata, River of Currents (Rio Corrientes), San Mateo, and Toco. About 1720, the appellation San Juan appeared on a map, probably derived from the mission of San Juan del Puerto. Named for St. John the Baptist, the mission had been established on Fort George Island about 1590. The British Anglicized San Juan to St. John's about 1765, a name that has remained unchanged except for the elimination of the apostrophe.<sup>1</sup>

Between the sixteenth century and the 1760s, the Spanish Crown experienced significant difficulties developing Florida into more than a military outpost. It encouraged settlers to develop farmsteads outside of St. Augustine, but attacks by Native Americans and Colonial southerners to the north hampered growth. In 1702, the Spanish erected a series of fortifications to protect St. Augustine. Later, additional forts were installed to broaden their line of defense. Several of those were located within the present county jurisdiction, including Fort Matanzas, Fort Picolata, and Fort San Diego. Work on those fortifications began in the late-seventeenth century, and improvements were made during the eighteenth century. Of those fortifications, only Fort Matanzas remains (Figure 2). Several missions were also developed during the interval, including La Natividad de Nuestra Senora Tolomato near the North River, and Santa Cruz, which stood about nine miles north of St. Augustine. By 1703, nearly eight missions stood within the county's present-day limits.<sup>2</sup>

Between 1655 and 1702, Spanish settlers carved ranches out of the wilderness along the St. Johns River and the Diego Plains. Spanish governors issued land grants to encourage settlement of the region and create a diverse economy. Grants of the period included Aramasaca (near Switzerland and Julington Creek); Diego Plains; La Baria (east of Picolata); Palica (near the Matanzas River and Moses Creek); Picolata (astride Six Mile Creek and St. Johns River); San Onofre y Piririgirigua (near Deep Creek); and Toco (between Deep Creek and Toco Creek). Fifteen relatively small ranches dotted the present-day Guana area.<sup>3</sup> The boundaries of some of these grants can be seen today on USGS quadrangle maps.

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<sup>1</sup>William R. Adams, Valerie Bell, and Paul Weaver, "Historic Properties Survey of St. Johns County," St. Augustine, Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board, 1985, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Adams, Bell, and Weaver, "St. Johns County," 17, 20.

<sup>3</sup>Adams, Bell, and Weaver, "St. Johns County," 18, 22.

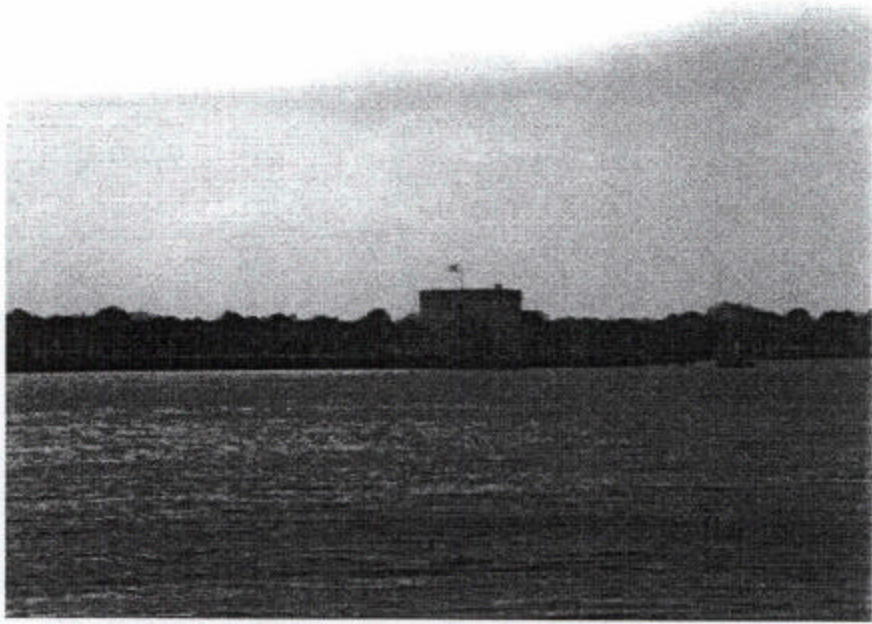


Figure 2: Fort Mantazas

Farmers and ranchers cleared land for cattle and citrus. But, the growth of English colonies to the north and forays by those settlers and militia into Florida destabilized the nascent agricultural economy and mission system. In 1702, Governor John Moore of South Carolina attacked St. Augustine, and burned the city. Later, in 1740, James Oglethorpe led his Georgia troops into Florida. Oglethorpe captured Fort San Diego and Fort Picolata, using the former as his Florida headquarters. In 1743, he again invaded Florida, again capturing Fort San Diego, but burning it upon his departure. Although Oglethorpe's troops had destroyed Fort Picolata in 1739, the Spanish rebuilt it in 1755, this time with coquina. Still, the incursions by the English dampened further expansion of the land grant system, and the nascent economy based on cattle ranching and citrus languished.<sup>4</sup>

In 1763, the Spanish Crown, for its part in backing the defeated French in the Seven Year's War, was required to surrender Florida to England. The British Crown appointed James Grant as governor of East Florida with a dividing line established between East Florida and West Florida at the Apalachicola River. St. Augustine became the provincial capital of East Florida. In 1765, Indian leaders and Crown officials met at Picolata, where they agreed to limit English expansion to the northeastern part of the province. The British invalidated the earlier Spanish land grants, and implemented a liberal land grant system. British accounts, including those of William Bartram, indicated that huge citrus groves sprinkled the banks of the St. Johns River and near St. Augustine. Within several years, Grant's Villa, the governor's plantation, became a model plantation producing indigo and functioning like a modern agricultural experiment station.<sup>5</sup>

The British had found Florida with few remaining European settlers, for more than 3,000 people left with the evacuating Spanish. Without colonists, the English government realized its plans for developing the province were threatened. Consequently, Grant and the British Crown launched a vigorous public relations and land grant program designed to encourage settlers and development. The program enjoyed some success, for between 1764 and 1770, approximately three million acres of grants were issued by the Crown in East Florida alone. But, only sixteen of those were settled by the outbreak of the American Revolution. Products and crops from those plantations included indigo for dyes, naval stores for pitch and turpentine, and a variety of agricultural harvests, such as corn and rice.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Adams, Bell, and Weaver, "St. Johns County," 18, 22; Cecile-Marie Sastre, "Picolata on the St. Johns: A Preliminary Study," *El Escribano* 32 (1995), 26-29, 32, 35.

<sup>5</sup>Michael Gannon, *Florida: A Short History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 18; Frances Harper, ed., *The Travels of William Bartram* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), 118; Daniel Schafer, "Settling a Colony Over a Bottle of Claret: Early Plantation Development in British East Florida," *El Escribano* 19 (1982), 49-50; George Rogers, "The East Florida Society of London, 1766-1767," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 54 (April 1976), 479. Other sources indicate that the British Crown awarded 114 grants amounting to 1,400,000 acres by the eve of the American Revolution. See Wilbur Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida* 2 vols. (DeLand: Florida State Historical Society, 1929), 1: 68; Charles Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province, 1763-1784* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1943), 21-26, 53-55, 61.

<sup>6</sup>Harper, ed., *The Travels of William Bartram*, 118; Epaminondes Panagopoulos, *New Smyrna: An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966), 10, 94-95; Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 431-434, 451-452; Rogers, "The East Florida Society of London, 1766-1767," 479. Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida*, 1: 68; Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province, 1763-1784*, 21-26, 53-55, 61.

Some plantations, however, were dismal failures, such as William Bartram's on the St. Johns River. Charleston luminary Henry Laurens believed that Bartram's plantation was "the least agreeable of all the places that I have seen." Laurens found that the waters of the cove adjacent to Bartram's plantation (Little Florence Cove), were almost "stagnated, exceedingly foul & absolutely stank when stirred up by our Oars." Bartram's plantation stood near the foot of Florence Cove Road, south of the Shands Bridge. When Bartram returned to Florida as a naturalist in 1774 to record his impressions of the American southeast, he made no mention of his former plantation. Other plantations along the river during the British period included Cypress Grove and Hope plantations near Six Mile Creek.<sup>7</sup>

Grant encouraged settlement by establishing roads. By December 1767, the alignment for a road had been surveyed between St. Augustine and Mosquito Inlet to the south. Completed from the provincial capital to the Matanzas swamp by 1772, the road was opened to Mosquito Inlet in late-1774, and later into South Georgia. The Reverend John Forbes praised the effort, stating that "the road really may with propriety be called the King's Highway: it forms a wide beautiful avenue, not a stump or tree to be found." Twenty Mile House along the King's Road north of St. Augustine became an important communication system and security post in East Florida. Although few physical remains are evident at Twenty Mile, the site remains an important place name in northern St. Johns County. Later called by historians "Florida's First Highway," the King's Road encouraged some British investors and settlers to organize plantations near its alignment.<sup>8</sup>

One enterprising entrepreneur who enthusiastically embraced England's colonization plan was Andrew Turnbull, a Scottish physician. Governor Grant, himself a Highlander, encouraged Scottish investment in East Florida and urged Turnbull to develop a site at Mosquito Inlet at present-day New Smyrna Beach. In 1768, Turnbull set sail for New Smyrna with 1,403 colonists of Corsican, Greek, Italian, and Minorcan descent, which Governor Grant believed was the largest importation of European inhabitants ever brought into America at one time. Although indentured for a period of six to ten years, the settlers were intrigued with the prospects of a life of freedom, security, and peace in a sunny land of orange groves, religious toleration, and gentle breezes. Instead, they encountered a reality of excessive heat, mosquitoes, and a jungle-like climate.<sup>9</sup>

Turnbull failed to provide sufficient food and housing to accommodate the settlers, which set the stage for the eventual collapse of the colony. Only 1,255 settlers survived the Atlantic voyage, and, by 1770, over half were dead. An unsettled political and economic environment associated with the American Revolution exacerbated the unstable footing of the colony. The end came quickly. During May and June of 1777, most of the colonists migrated north to St. Augustine. In January 1778, six months after abandoning the colony, only 419 colonists remained alive, 128 of whom were children

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<sup>7</sup>Daniel Schafer, "'The forlorn state of poor Billy Bartram': Locating the St. Johns River Plantation of William Bartram," *El Escribano* 32 (1995), 1-11.

<sup>8</sup>Charles Coombs, "The Old King's Road of British East Florida," *El Escribano* 12 (1975), 37-74; William R. Adams, Daniel Schafer, Robert Steinbach, Paul Weaver, "The King's Road: Florida's First Highway," unpub. mss. St. Augustine, 1997, 1-2.

<sup>9</sup>Patricia Griffin, "Mullet on the Beach: The Minorcans of Florida, 1768-1788," *El Escribano* 27 (1990), 51-54; Panagopoulos, *New Smyrna*, 67.

born at New Smyrna. Still, the migration of southern European peoples to St. Augustine, especially the Minorcans, forever changed the landscape of St. Johns County. Names associated with the failed colonial experiment and subsequent relocation to St. Augustine--names like Capo, Genovar, Pacetti, Friay, Pellicer, Pomar, and Segui --later played important roles in the development of St. Johns County, and are still commonplace. Others, such as Cavedo, Cocifaci, and Genopoly, have largely vanished from present-day parlance, but remain on early recorded deeds and plats of rural St. Johns County testifying to their activities in the development of the county in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout the American Revolution, the royal province of East Florida remained conspicuously loyal to the Crown. East Floridians realized that the amount of money expended in the province by the British government greatly exceeded the taxes they paid. They also needed the protection of the Crown. Residents of the sparsely settled region could not afford to protect themselves from Indians. In addition, African-American inhabitants outnumbered whites two-to-one, and an exposed coastline, vulnerable to French and Spanish warships, also demanded security measures. The presence of the British Army irritated colonists in heavily populated areas to the north, but in Florida their presence gave residents a sense of well-being. Many Loyalists from Charleston and Savannah fled to Florida during the conflict to avoid persecution by patriots. The population of East Florida increased from three thousand in 1776 to nearly seventeen thousand by 1784. But, many of those Loyalists and settlers abandoned the colony in the latter year, when the British Crown returned Florida to Spain as part of its agreement outlined in the Treaty of Paris, which ended the American Revolution.<sup>11</sup>

Development in East Florida slowed following the transfer of Florida to Spain in 1784. To promote settlement, the Spanish Crown emulated British policy by improving roads and awarding large land grants. In 1787, after Spanish engineers found the Twenty Mile House in disrepair, the Crown ordered its reconstruction, and the facility remained in service through at least 1804. In 1790, the Crown issued a royal order that opened East Florida to all English speaking settlers professing the Roman Catholic faith. Among the few requirements for land ownership leading to the establishment of a farm or plantation included evidence of financial resources and the swearing of an oath of allegiance to Spain. Contrary to official policy elsewhere in the Spanish empire, the Crown permitted non-Catholics to settle and receive land grants in Florida. Still, military conflict became endemic in the colony in the 1790s, in part, because of the economic and social unrest prevailing throughout Europe that persisted between the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>12</sup>

The Spanish Crown granted many tracts in the St. Johns County area. Most radiated out from the St. Augustine vicinity, but others sprinkled the Atlantic coast and the banks of the St. Johns River. One of the most respected names in East Florida was Francisco Sanchez. The planter had arrived during

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<sup>10</sup>Griffin, "Mullet," 198; Panagopoulos, *New Smyrna*, 10-11, 45, 57-58, 174; Philip Rasico, *The Minorcans of Florida* (New Smyrna, 1992), 1-5.

<sup>11</sup>Samuel Proctor, ed., *Eighteenth Century Florida: The Impact of the American Revolution* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1978), 1-7.

<sup>12</sup>Helen Tanner, *Zespedes in East Florida, 1784-1790* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1963), 13-36; Janice Miller, "Juan Nepomuceno de Quesada, Spanish Governor of East Florida, 1790-1795," Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1974, 1-10.

the first Spanish period, and married into the influential Diego Espinosa family, which owned a large cattle ranch north of St. Augustine. Sanchez successfully retained his holdings during the English period. He lived about two-and-one-half miles west of St. Augustine astride the road to the St. Johns River. His holdings included a one-thousand-acre farm, forty horses, and nearly nine hundred cattle. On another ranch at the Diego Plains, Sanchez maintained a prize herd of cattle. Representative of the strife in Florida during the transition from British to Spanish rule, in the 1780s four hundred of Sanchez's cattle were slaughtered by the outlaw Daniel McGirt. After McGirt's attack, Sanchez came to recognize that neither the English authorities nor Spanish Crown controlled Florida. Pragmatic and savvy, Sanchez realized that the marauder McGirt was one of the most effective power brokers in East Florida. For a brief period, Sanchez and McGirt collaborated to ship stolen slaves and cattle to Cuba.<sup>13</sup>

In the 1790s, Daniel McGirt returned to Florida, and prevailed upon the Spanish Crown to grant him lands on the Nassau River, in exchange for lands he had formerly owned on the St. Johns River. Notwithstanding McGirt's reputation as an American citizen and bandit, it appears that he and his family were among the early landholders in East Florida during the second Spanish period. The Spanish Crown agreed that James McGirt was "an old settler in 1792," when Governor Quesada awarded him a three-hundred-acre grant that formerly belonged to British Governor James Grant and two hundred acres near Guano Creek. The elder McGirt cultivated a plantation near New Switzerland on the St. Johns River until 1795, and then moved to a new plantation near Fernandina. As late as 1798, the Spanish Crown granted Daniel McGirt approval to settle on lands his father had owned. Within several years, however, McGirt moved to South Carolina, and died there about 1805.<sup>14</sup>

Other settlers who cultivated plantations in rural areas outside of St. Augustine included Brian Langley, a native of North Carolina. Langley settled in Florida during the British era and found work in St. Augustine as a translator for the Spanish government. In addition to eight horses, fifteen slaves, and a house with an attached shop, Langley owned three hundred fifty acres astride the St. Johns River, about twelve miles upstream of Picolata.<sup>15</sup>

Among the most prominent and celebrated of the planters along the St. Johns River was Francis Philip Fatio, a wealthy soldier-planter from Switzerland. Fatio arrived in Florida in 1771, and established a plantation which he named Newcastle on the lower St. Johns River. William Bartram stopped at this plantation (near present-day Fort Caroline Club), remarking about the grapes, indigo, lemons, and oranges cultivated by Fatio. Several years later, the Swiss immigrant obtained a ten

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<sup>13</sup>Ann Henderson, and Gary Mormino, ed., *Spanish Pathways in Florida: 1492-1992* (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 1991), 172, 174; Abel Poitrineau, "Demography and the Political Destiny of Florida During the Second Spanish Period," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 66 (April 1988), 423.

<sup>14</sup>Asbury Dinkins and John Forney, comp., *American State Papers* (Washington, D. C.: Gales & Seaton, 1860), 5:82, 6:81-82, 90; Richard Murdoch, *The Georgia-Florida Frontier, 1793-1796* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), 133-135, 176; Works Progress Administration, *Spanish Land Grants in Florida*, 5 vols. (Tallahassee: Works Progress Administration, 1940), 1:219, 4:95-96.

<sup>15</sup>Poitrineau, "Second Spanish Period," 423.

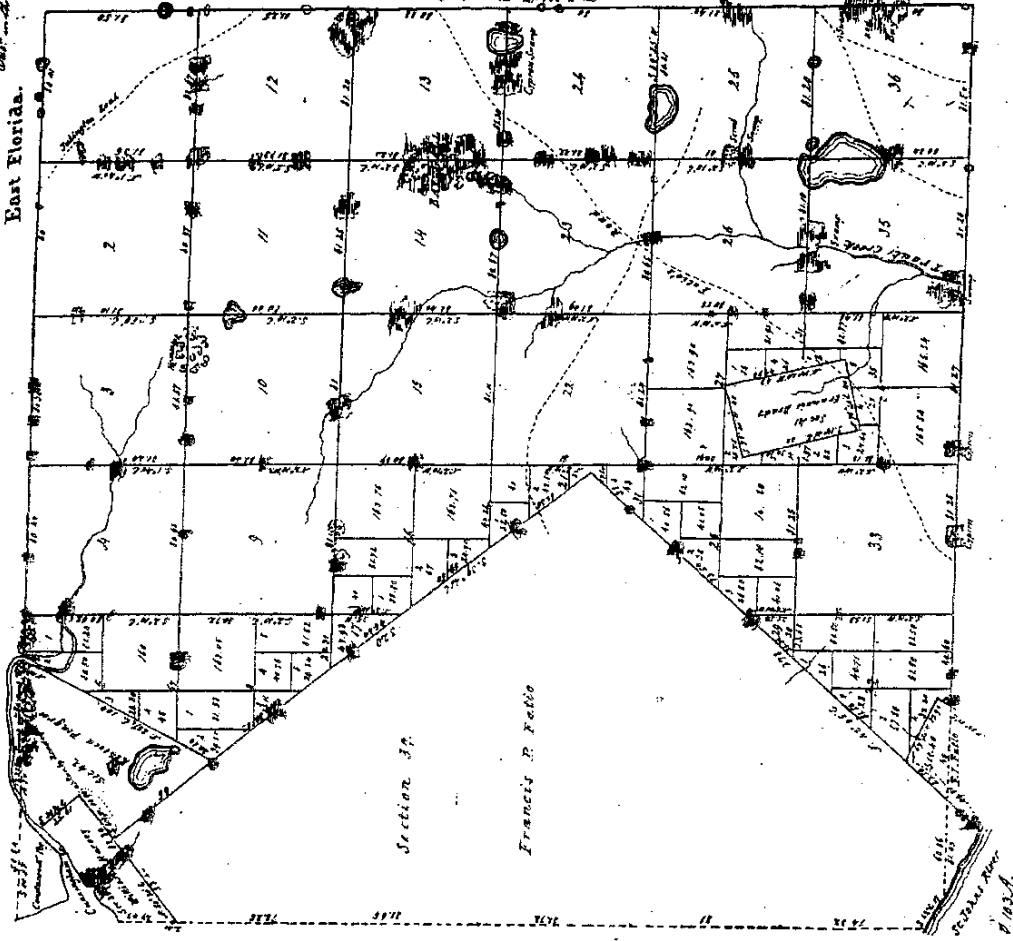




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T. 5. S. R. 27. E.

East Florida.



Traverse of  
Cassimere Creek  
by  
H. Washington 1814

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Station	Bearing	Distance
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Figure 3b: Fatio's Grant, Township 5, Range 27, 1850

thousand acre grant farther upriver, which he developed into the plantation "New Switzerland." He spent most of his time at New Switzerland, which had a riverfront presence of nearly twelve miles (Figure 3). Too deeply invested in Florida to relocate, Fatio remained there after England ceded Florida to Spain. In 1785, impressed with Fatio's plantation, resilience, and advice on how to encourage settlement, the Spanish governor, Vincente Manuel de Zespedes, placed a guard at Fatio's hacienda to protect the riverside plantation from marauders. After conducting a brief tour, Zespedes found East Florida an abandoned colony in the 1780s, and worked hard to protect Fatio's plantation, which he recorded as the only such place left along the St. Johns River following the British evacuation of East Florida.<sup>16</sup>

Fatio first planted cotton in 1793, and three years later produced nearly twenty thousand pounds of the crop. He also cultivated oranges, and cattle ranged over his holdings. By 1801, Fatio maintained five houses in St. Augustine and two country homes. Other buildings included two storehouses, two horse barns, five work sheds, and twenty-seven slave cabins. In all, Fatio had developed forty-three buildings by the time Thomas Jefferson became president of the United States. Fatio died in 1811, never having converted to Catholicism. Because of his religious beliefs, the Spanish authorities refused to bury his remains next to his wife in St. Augustine. Consequently, his body was interred at his New Switzerland plantation. The following year, marauders burned the estate, including a twelve hundred volume library, and slaughtered 106 sheep, sixty cattle, and fifty pigs. Rebuilt by Fatio's descendants, the plantation house was burned again, this time in January 1836, when Seminoles rampaged through northeast Florida. Three thousand orange trees, one of the last vestiges of the New Switzerland plantation, were killed by a devastating freeze in the mid-1830s.<sup>17</sup>

Dozens of settlers maintained riverside holdings during the second Spanish period, including Moses Bowden, Elizabeth Cain, Alexander Creighton, Samuel Fairbanks, Francis J. Fatio, Sarah Faulk, William Harvey, Raymond Henderson, Isaac Sasportas, and Madelina Solana. Near Picolata, John Huertas, James Riz, and E. M. Wanton held large grants. The road extending from Picolata to St. Augustine meandered through the holdings of Riz and Wanton, which also included wharfs that projected into the river.<sup>18</sup>

North of St. Augustine, a cluster of Minorcan settlers were awarded land grants. Peter Cosifacio, a Minorcan from the New Smyrna colony, received a two thousand acre grant one mile north of the Twenty Mile House. Lazaro Ortega's four-hundred-fifty-acre grant lay astride the San Diego Road near Santa Lucia. Joseph Espinosa claimed his family's former lands in the Diego Plains, which had been lost through the change in possession from England to Spain. His one hundred twenty-six acres included the apparent site of Fort San Diego near Palm Valley. Francis Medicis received a land

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<sup>16</sup>William Willis, "A Swiss Settler in East Florida: A Letter of Francis Philip Fatio," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 64 (October 1985), 174-188.

<sup>17</sup>Willis, "A Letter of Francis Philip Fatio," 174-188; Works Progress Administration, *Spanish Land Grants in Florida*, 3: 122, 4: 95.

<sup>18</sup>See various township plats held at Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse, St. Augustine, FL. Plats used for this discussion include Township 4 South, Range 26 East; Township 5 South, Range 26 East; Township 6 South, Range 27 East; Township 7 South, Range 27 East; Township 8 South, Range 27 East.

grant west of the Santa Lucia beaches. In Cabbage Swamp near the head of the North River, Robert Andreu obtained a headrights grants of five hundred acres. Possessing a two-thousand-acre grant adjacent to San Diego Road and Deep Creek, Roque Leonardy assembled several masonry buildings and a landing on the south bank of Deep Creek, but abandoned the plantation because of Indian raids in 1800, and then lost his entire investment in 1812.<sup>19</sup>

The sprawling grant of Antonio Huertas near Mill Creek contained nearly eleven thousand acres, one of the largest awarded by the Spanish Crown in present-day St. Johns County (Figure 4). Previously, the prominent trading partnership, Panton, Leslie & Company had owned the property, but relinquished it. Opposite of Picolata, on the west bank of the St. Johns River, the company in 1793 opened a store near an old Spanish fort, San Francisco de Pupo, but did not establish a presence along the east bank. One of the few grants in the center of the county, the Huertas grant took in much of the headwaters of Mill Creek, and extended southwestward to Six Mile Creek, providing him with a connection to the St. Johns River. The Spanish Crown awarded him the land in 1813, ostensibly for cattle grazing range, but also, in part, as repayment for his losses in the 1812 war. Clear waters and good pasturage encouraged other people to obtain nearby lands. Grants intersecting Huertas's holdings included Andres Pacetti, whose lands were cut out of the center of Huertas's holdings, and the renowned Fort George Island planter Zephaniah Kingsley, whose lands included the headwaters of Mill Creek and projected deeply into the Huertas grant. Closer to St. Augustine, Antonio Huertas owned several hundred additional acres, land that later became known as West Augustine.<sup>20</sup>

South of St. Augustine, Joseph Hernandez, a native of the Ancient City, obtained several grants. Hernandez gained much of his early wealth about 1805, when he married Ana Maria Hill, the widow of a prominent planter. Through marriage, he acquired a plantation of thirty-two hundred acres, and, through his staunch defense of the Spanish Crown, was rewarded for his service and loyalty with several thousand additional acres along the Matanzas River. At one of his Matanzas River plantations, "Mala Compra," (in today's Flagler County) he cultivated Sea Island cotton and built a warehouse at a cost of three thousand dollars. Farther south, at Old Chimnies plantation, near modern-day Holly Hill, he planted one hundred acres in cotton. He cultivated sugarcane at his St. Joseph plantation, and about 1817 acquired Belle Vista plantation from John Moultrie. In 1821, Hernandez launched a promising political career, and was appointed the territory's first Congressional delegate. In 1824 and 1825, voters elected him to the Territorial Council, and he served as president in the latter year. Throughout his career, Hernandez promoted settlement along the Matanzas River, which became the northern arm of Florida's sugarcane plantation system. Hernandez later served as a brigadier general in the second Seminole war.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Brent Handley, Greg Smith, and Susan Parker, "An Intensive Cultural Resource Assessment Survey of the Nocatee Tract, Duval and St. Johns Counties, Florida," unpub. mss., Jacksonville, 2000, 39-41.

<sup>20</sup>Dinkins and Forney, *American State Papers*, 4:671-672; Township 6 South, Range 28 East, 1853; Township 7 South, Range 28 East, 1853; Township 7 South, Range 29 East, 1850; William Coker and Thomas Watson *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands: Panton, Leslie & Company and John Forbes & Company, 1783-1847* (Pensacola: University of West Florida Press, 1986), 32.

<sup>21</sup>Rowland Rerick, ed., *Memoirs of Florida*, 2 vols. (Atlanta: Southern Historical Association, 1902), 1: 149; John Phelps *The People of Lawmaking in Florida, 1822-1991* (Tallahassee: Florida House of Representatives, 1991), 45; Junius Dovel *Florida: Historic, Dramatic, Contemporary*, 4 vols. (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1952), 1: 227, 247, 249, 329; Clarence Carter, comp. *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, 45 vols. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1956), 22:940-941; Works Progress Administration, *Spanish Land Grants in Florida*, 3: 247-248.



Despite the large number of land grants, East Florida experienced relatively little permanent plantation development, or maritime commerce under Spanish rule. By implementing a liberal land grant policy, the Spanish Crown had anticipated development of wilderness areas. Yet, many settlers were Protestants of English descent who preferred annexation into the United States rather than submitting to Spanish authorities. That sentiment coupled with the frontier nature of the province and a general atmosphere of lawlessness eventually weakened Spain's provincial hold, and encouraged organized attacks from south Georgia in 1795, 1812, and 1817. Throughout much of the second Spanish period, East Florida was the focus of numerous international intrigues and several small scale armed conflicts. In 1819, an English traveler stated that little commercial activity occurred in St. Augustine itself, much less the outlying region. Instead, the city presented itself as a garrison with most people working in the service of the Crown.<sup>22</sup>

During the Patriot Rebellion of 1812, United States forces invaded East Florida under the command of General George Mathews. Some of the attacking force spilled south of Fernandina and the St. Marys River region, such as the burning of the Fatio plantation at New Switzerland. In present-day St. Johns County, a contingent of Army troops advanced on St. Augustine, and assembled a blockhouse and supply depot on Davis Creek in 1812. Only an ambush by Seminoles and free blacks compelled the American forces to withdraw, ending the threat to the city. Still, during the 1812 conflict, many buildings were destroyed outside the walls of St. Augustine, the rural plantations plundered, and the livestock slaughtered or driven off.<sup>23</sup>

During this era of unrest, the Floridas presented the United States government with several challenges. First, the area provided a haven for runaway slaves and Seminoles involved in armed conflicts with settlers residing in south Georgia and Alabama. East Florida, in particular, provided a setting for contraband trade and slave smuggling, both of which contravened American policy and law. The vast, largely undeveloped area tempted the expansionist government, and private land speculators lobbied in Washington for its acquisition. Finally, due to its strategic geographic location, some political leaders believed that Spanish Florida threatened the nation's security. The area could serve as a base for attacking the United States if acquired by a foreign power, particularly England. When Andrew Jackson invaded Florida in 1818 as part of the first Seminole War, it became clear that Spain no longer could control Florida. In 1819, mounting pressure from the United States forced the signing of the Adams-Onis Treaty. Diplomatic delays postponed transfer of power until 1821.<sup>24</sup>

### **Antebellum Period (1821-1860)**

In 1821, the United States government created the Territory of Florida and named Andrew Jackson military governor. Jackson initiated the Americanization of Florida, naming Tallahassee the seat of the territorial government and providing for county courts and trials by jury. With the change of

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<sup>22</sup>Poitrineau, "Second Spanish Period," 442-443.

<sup>23</sup>Murdoch, *Georgia-Florida Frontier*, Rembert Patrick, *Florida Fiasco: Rampant Rebels on the Georgia-Florida Border* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1954), 302.

<sup>24</sup>Dovell, *Florida*, 1: 169-170.

flags, St. Augustine lost its political influence as capital of the province of East Florida, and instead became the seat of government for St. Johns County. Jackson created Escambia and St. Johns Counties as the first pair of county jurisdictions. He named each after significant waterways that ran in proximity to the respective seats of government assigned to administer those jurisdictions.<sup>25</sup>

St. Johns County initially encompassed all of Florida east of the Suwannee River. The expansive county jurisdiction rapidly diminished in size, first, in 1822 with the creation of Duval County, and, again, in 1823, when Monroe County was carved out of the region south of Lake Okeechobee. The Territorial Legislature further reduced the county's size in 1824 with the creation of Alachua and Mosquito Counties. By then, St. Johns County had largely assumed its present-day geographical boundaries, with a few notable exceptions. Subsequent redivisions that created Marion County (1845), Putnam County (1849), and Clay County (1858) resulted in slight boundary modifications. The creation of Flagler County in 1917 was the last change in the county's geographical jurisdiction, and the most significant since the early antebellum period.<sup>26</sup>

In 1823, on the heels of America's annexation of Florida, the United States established a formal treaty outlining a reservation for the Seminoles. Signed south of St. Augustine on the banks of Moultrie Creek, the treaty reserved four million acres for the Seminoles. Despite the reservation, which extended across the interior region of the peninsula, new settlers poured into Florida. Most people found great opportunities in the under populated and undeveloped territory, although poor roads and an unhealthy climate plagued by swarms of mosquitoes limited development. Still, parts of St. Johns County experienced development, and, in 1825, state census enumerators inventoried five thousand people in East Florida. During the Territorial period (1821-1845), the U. S. Army constructed about 250 forts, which helped influence settlement patterns.<sup>27</sup>

Some planters made extensive use of wetlands or hammocks to cultivate sugar cane and citrus. Lands south of St. Augustine contributed to a string of sugar cane plantations, and lands near the St. Johns River contained soils suitable for the cultivation of various crops. Large tracts could be purchased at reasonable prices from private individuals or through the Federal government. Once this information was disseminated throughout the South prospective planters filtered into the coastal and river regions of the county to establish plantations. Other settlers pushed inland toward the various branches and creeks that laced the landscape. One of those families, the Rogeros, developed a farmstead near Moccasin Branch. Assembled about 1831, the house still stands west of Huff Road in Elkton, one of few extant antebellum dwellings in unincorporated St. Johns County (Figure 5). Commercial citrus production, a part of the economy since the early colonial period, proved moderately successful until a devastating freeze destroyed the groves in 1835.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Allen Morris, *Florida Handbook* (Tallahassee: Peninsular Press, 1986), 400; Works Progress Administration, "Creation of Florida Counties, 1820 to 1936," Tallahassee: Works Progress Administration, 1936.

<sup>26</sup>Morris, *Florida Handbook*, 400; Works Progress Administration, "Creation of Florida Counties, 1820 to 1936," Tallahassee: Works Progress Administration, 1936.

<sup>27</sup>Charlton Tebeau, *A History of Florida* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971), 134; Thomas Graham, *The Awakening of St. Augustine* (St. Augustine: Flagler College Press, 1978), 36-39; Ernest Dibble, "Giveaway Forts: Territorial Forts and the Settlement of Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 78 (Fall 1999), 209.

<sup>28</sup>Tebeau, *Florida*, 134; Graham, *St. Augustine*, Patricia Griffin, informant, 2001.

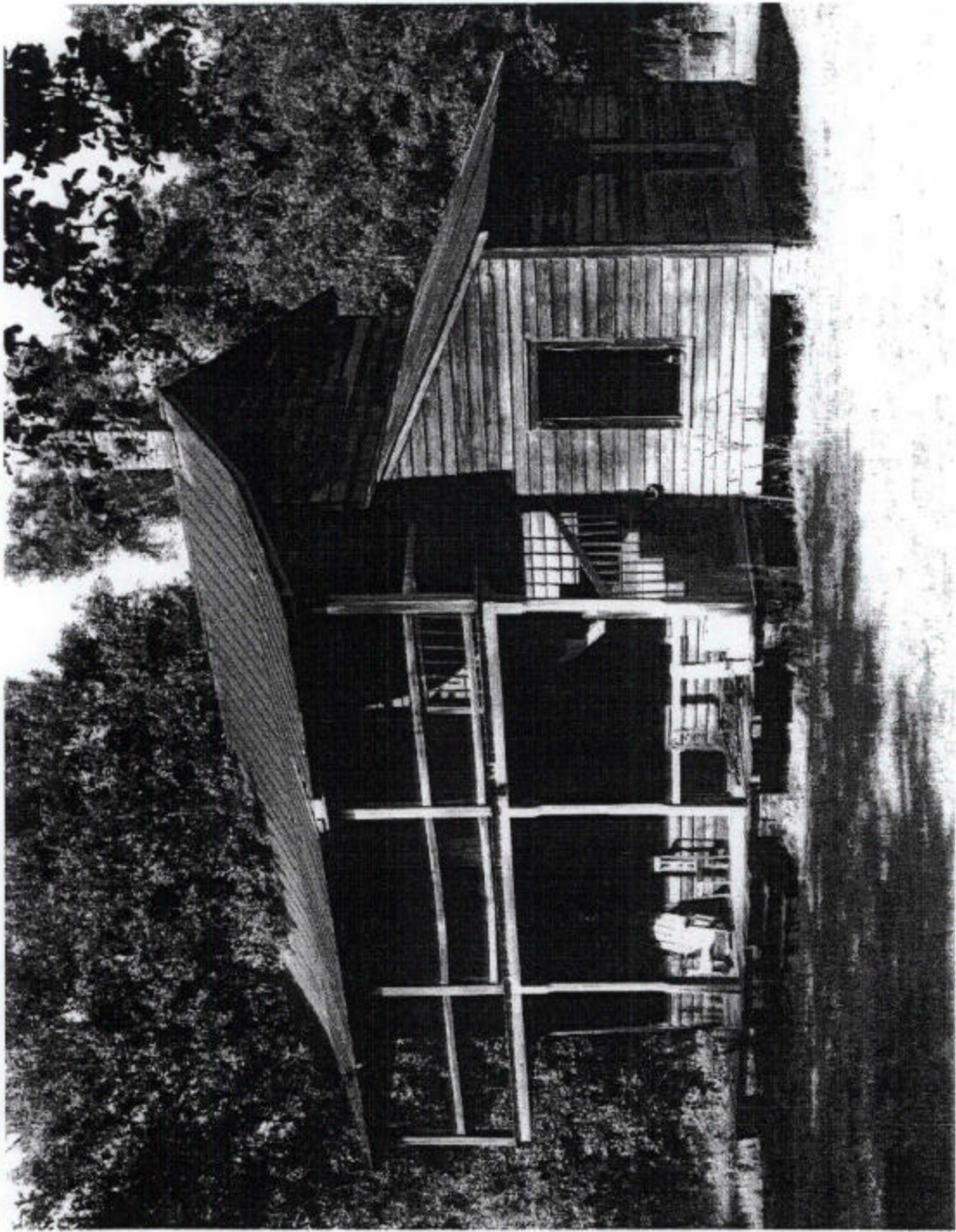


Figure 5: Rogero-Triay House, c. 1831



Conflict between Seminoles and settlers brought an end to the era of agricultural development and prosperity. Settlers infringed on Seminole reservation lands, and Indians attacked farmsteads and settlements. Seminole raiders stole slaves from St. Johns County farmers in 1814, and in 1825 Minorcan farmers and Indians exchanged gunfire at Cabbage Swamp north of St. Augustine. Then, in the mid-1830s, the growing friction and hostility between settlers and Seminoles culminated in the bloody second Seminole war. Many thriving plantations, along with smaller farms, fell victim to Seminole attacks and were burned to the ground. The warfare, which lasted from 1835 to 1842, raged throughout much of Florida, with engagements ranging from near Jacksonville, west to the Suwannee River, and south to Lake Okeechobee. Skirmishes and massacres occurred in St. Johns County. Fort Harney and Fort Hanson were assembled south of St. Augustine, and the Army built Fort Peyton near Moultrie Creek. Fort Wade stood eighteen miles up the North River, and Fort Weedman occupied a site astride the road to Picolata. At the riverside settlement, the U. S. Army established a supply depot and hospital. Most of these forts were temporary installations, rather than permanent fortifications.<sup>29</sup>

Despite their widespread forays, perhaps the Seminoles were most destructive along the Matanzas River, the northern arm of Florida's sugar cane plantations. In February 1836, *Niles' Weekly Register* provided a terrifying, if hyperbolic, account that "The whole of the country south of St. Augustine has been laid waste during the past week, and not a building of any value left standing. There is not a single house now remaining, between this city and Cape Florida, a distance of 250 miles, *all, all have been burnt to the ground.*"<sup>30</sup>

The most notorious treachery of the second Seminole war occurred in St. Johns County in 1837. At a truce to discuss settlement of the conflict, troops led by General Joseph Hernandez seized the famed Seminole leader Osceola and seventy-one warriors. The national press later vilified Hernandez's superior, General Thomas Jesup, for the treachery. Briefly imprisoned at the Castillo in St. Augustine, Osceola was later transferred to Fort Moultrie in South Carolina, where he died.<sup>31</sup>

Federal troops gradually pushed the Seminoles farther south, but never completely routed them. As late as 1840, Seminoles raided into the northeast. They massacred a theatrical troupe traveling between Picolata and St. Augustine, and then attacked plantations along the North River. In 1842, as the war ground to a halt, it was apparent that it had brought some benefits. Land was cleared, roads constructed, and fortifications built. The government also stimulated a demand for land with a promise of a grant of land to any volunteer over eighteen who enlisted to fight the Seminoles. Enacted in 1842, the Armed Occupation Act encouraged settlement by granting a 160-acre homestead tract to a head of any family who maintained five years' residence in the former battle zone and would resist Indian raids. The legislation promoted development throughout the peninsula.

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<sup>29</sup>John Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967), 28, 47, 59, 150-151, 197, 250, 279; Sastre, "Picolata," 47-49.

<sup>30</sup>*Niles' Weekly Register*, 27 February 1836.

<sup>31</sup>Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, 215-216; Graham, *St. Augustine*, 41-42; William Adams and Paul Weaver, *Historic Places of St. Augustine and St. Johns County* (St. Augustine: Southern Heritage Press, 1993), 73.

But, because the grant lands lay south of a line just north of Palatka, most of St. Johns County did not directly benefit from the policy. Indeed, only three hundred seventy land patents were issued from the St. Augustine land office.<sup>32</sup>

During the war, some St. Augustine commercial establishments enjoyed a brief boom in trade because of the military presence. But the land development and speculative seasons were short-lived. When Federal troops pulled out of Florida, the temporary boom collapsed. In other settled regions of the county, the war proved disastrous. The sugarcane plantations along the Matanzas River lay in ruins, and on many other plantations the cultivation of crops had been disrupted as settlers abandoned their fields and fled to St. Augustine. The Seminoles also freed slaves, a major source of wealth and labor in the territory. Events beyond the war further dampened hopes for revitalization of the economy. A freeze in 1835 and an outbreak of citrus scale devastated the cultivation of oranges. Prior to the freeze, an expansive grove extended from one end of St. Augustine to the other, and other groves sprinkled the countryside. At the national level, the Panic of 1837 created a nationwide financial crisis. Many banks, including the Southern Life Insurance and Trust Company in St. Augustine, suspended payments. In 1845, three years after the close of the Seminole war, Florida was admitted to the Union in 1845 as a southern slave state, but statehood brought little hope to revitalize the economy. Tallahassee became the state capitol, and sent to Congress its first senators, David Levy Yulee and James D. Westcott.<sup>33</sup>

Based on a plantation system of cotton and tobacco as cash crops, St. Johns County's antebellum economy languished in the decade prior to the Civil War. Containing relatively sandy, infertile soils, the county did not experience the extensive plantation systems that developed in Middle and West Florida. By 1860, the county contained only three plantations with more than thirty slaves. Instead, the county's agriculture economy was based on small plantations and subsistence farms. The slavery issue dominated state and national politics during the 1850s. Substantial settlement occurred elsewhere in the peninsula during the period, leading to the creation of thirty-seven counties by 1860.<sup>34</sup>

Residents of St. Johns County were introduced to the railroad during the antebellum period. The new technology had a profound influence on the development of Florida, helping to advance the state from a wilderness into one of the leading tourist and agricultural regions of the country. Florida's rail system, like that of many other states in the American South, began to take form in the antebellum period. Private companies with some state support developed small lines, generally without connections to larger trunk lines. Later, growth accelerated to a feverish pace and large corporations consolidated those holdings. The long narrow form of the state, with its wetlands and rivers,

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<sup>32</sup>Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, 250, 314; Graham, *St. Augustine*, 41-42; Adams and Weaver, *Historic Places of St. Augustine and St. Johns County*, 89; *St. Augustine News*, 29 May, 5 June 1840.

<sup>33</sup>Graham, *St. Augustine*, 35-36, 54; John Attaway, *A History of Florida Citrus Freezes* (Lake Alfred: Florida Science Source, 1997), 5-6.

<sup>34</sup>Julia Smith, *Slavery and Plantation Growth in Antebellum Florida* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1973), 19; Sam Hilliard, *Atlas of Antebellum Southern Agriculture* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 31-77; Works Progress Administration, "Creation of Counties in Florida, 1820-1936."

challenged companies in their effort to construct and update roadbeds and bridges. By 1890, a network of rails funneled settlers deep into the peninsula, and the cities of Jacksonville, Pensacola, and Tampa emerged as important ports. Soon freight cars were bound for northern markets filled with citrus and other agricultural products. Repair shops and division headquarters provided jobs in numerous cities. The railroad in many practical ways created an easier way of life and stimulated the Florida economy.<sup>35</sup>

Numerous railroad charters were granted in antebellum Florida, but only twelve companies constructed tracks, most of those relatively short runs limited to the northern one-third of the state. Most of Florida's earliest railroad companies were private enterprises, reflecting a larger national mindset of resisting public involvement in the nascent industry. Most southern businessmen built their transportation systems Colonial-style: that is, the networks bound plantation districts to ports, generally bypassing the upcountry. And although southern states had a higher percentage of state-sponsored railroads than northern states, most states had no general program of internal improvements. Some states had small blocks of representatives who lobbied for state support of rail systems, but preservation of the slavery system by the landed gentry retarded interest in town building and the creation of a transportation network.<sup>36</sup>

Early lines appeared in the 1830s with twenty eight hundred miles constructed primarily in the Northeastern U.S. by 1840, after which the nation's first great railroad boom surged forward. Nationwide track mileage increased from nine thousand miles in 1850 to thirty thousand miles a decade later. Florida was a virtual wilderness during the period, and remained on the fringes of early railroad activity. It possessed no significant trunk line that contributed to a regional network.<sup>37</sup>

The state's internal improvement land grant system emerged in the 1840s. The first internal improvement monies for the construction of canals, railroads, and roads became available in 1841, when the United States government granted the territorial government five hundred thousand acres to be sold and the proceeds applied to internal improvements. Nearly a decade later, the Federal government conveyed most of the remaining wetlands to the state legislature, once again for use in internal improvements. These vast tracts became a source of land and dollars from which the state government could encourage the construction of transportation systems.<sup>38</sup>

In 1854, the Florida Legislature enacted the Internal Improvement Act, which permitted rail companies to defray some of their construction costs by issuing bonds amounting to ten thousand dollars per mile along a proposed route. Established in 1855, a board of trustees of the Internal

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<sup>35</sup>Gabriel Kolko, *Railroad and Regulation, 1877-1916* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 1, 7; Alfred Chandler, comp., *The Railroads: The Nation's First Big Business* (New York, Chicago, and Burlingame: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965), 9.

<sup>36</sup>Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1986), 22-24.

<sup>37</sup>Chandler, *Railroads*, 3, 13.

<sup>38</sup>Dudley Johnson, "The Florida Railroad After The Civil War," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 47 (January 1969), 292-293.

Improvement Fund (IIF) issued bonds only after a company had graded and furnished ties for a ten-mile section. Additional securities could be issued for bridges, rolling stock, and trestles. The state's guaranty of the principal and interest of seven percent also proved attractive. A company had only to construct its roadbed along an alignment set out by the state engineer and conform to a five-foot gauge roadbed with at least sixty-pound rails. The subsidy, while significant in setting a precedent for future assistance, represented a small step. Florida's antebellum state government ranked among the most tight-fisted of all southern states in railroad building assistance.<sup>39</sup>

Still, the Internal Improvement Act promoted the formation of railroad companies and construction. One of the earliest railroads in the state, the Tallahassee Railroad, was completed in 1836 between the state capital and St. Marks in Wakulla County. That year, investors in St. Johns County organized the St. Augustine and Picolata Rail Road Company, but the Seminole war derailed their plans. Incorporated in December 1858 with John Westcott as president, the St. Johns Railway Company completed in 1859 a fifteen-mile route between St. Augustine and Toccoi, a small settlement south of Picolata on the St. Johns River. In August 1859, Toccoi resident Richard Floyd deeded the company property for a depot, and farther inland Francis Ferrira and John Hanson conveyed eight hundred foot rights-of-way for the alignment to extend through their respective properties (Figure 6). A promoter of internal improvements, Westcott took advantage of the land grant system to build the railroad. Still, the initial system relied on wooden rails and small coaches drawn by horses or mules. Then, in late-1860, the company remedied its unreliable livestock, which often laid down to rest on the rails, by regrading the roadbed, installing iron rails, and purchasing a steam locomotive and cars. At the close of the antebellum period, Florida had a mere three hundred twenty-seven miles of serviceable track, the third smallest track mileage of any southern state. Still, residents of St. Augustine, the hamlet of Toccoi, and some of St. Johns County's farmers along the alignment of the St. Johns Railway benefited from this early transportation system.<sup>40</sup>

### **Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861-1877**

The third state to secede from the Union, Florida joined the Confederate States of America in January 1861. Within months of that action, the Confederate government requested that Florida supply five thousand troops. Many male residents abandoned their farms to join the army, leaving the rural economy almost immediately bankrupt. Federal steamships patrolled the coastline, and Navy gunboats sailed into St. Augustine harbor in 1862 to accept the surrender of the city by civilian authorities. Union troops made no effort to extend their control beyond the town's limits, in part, because the region east of the St. Johns River became known as "Lincoln's congressional district in

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<sup>39</sup>Johnson, "Florida Railroad After the Civil War," 293; George Pettengill, "The Story of the Florida Railroads, 1834-1903," *Railway and Locomotive Historical Society* 86 (July 1952), 20; John Stover, *Railroads of the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 32.

<sup>40</sup>Pettengill, "Florida Railroads," 26-27, 102; Stover, *Railroads of the South, 1865-1900*, 5; Robert Black, *The Railroads of the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1952), 208-209; Pettengill (p. 27-28) cites 433 miles of operational track in 1861, including some rather insignificant shortlines not accounted for by Black. Also see Sastre, "Picolata," 47; Seth Bramson, *Speedway to Sunshine: The Story of the Florida East Coast Railway* (Ontario: Boston Mills Press, 1984), 17-19; Deed Book Q, p. 184, 186, 193, 194, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; Greville Bathe, *The St. Johns Railroad, 1858 to 1895, A Commemorative History of a Pioneer Railroad* (St. Augustine, 1958), 26-27, 58.

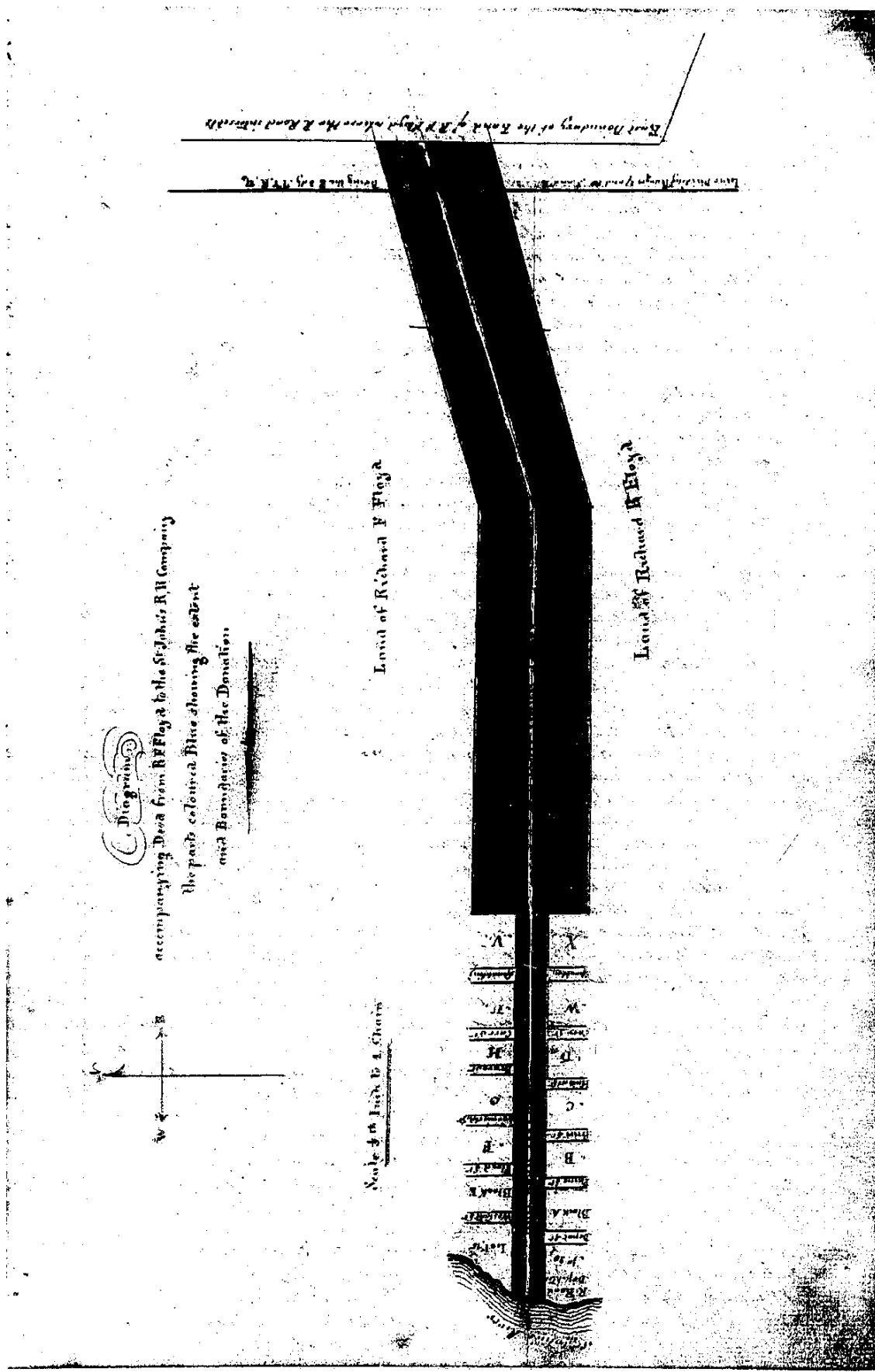


Figure 6: Rights-of-way of St. Johns Railroad Company at Toccoi, 1859

East Florida." Still, Union gunboats sailed the length of the St. Johns River, and destroyed boats to help prevent Confederates from crossing to the east bank of the river. Governor John Milton wrote Confederate President Jefferson Davis that he was ready to declare martial law in the region east of the St. Johns River because so many of its citizens were too willing to submit to Union authority. Blacks and white Unionists thwarted several attempts by Confederates to ambush Federal troops along the river. Residents on the east side of the St. Johns River became popularly known by Union troops as "Florida Yankees".<sup>41</sup>

The area between the mouth of the St. Johns River, Jacksonville, Picolata, and St. Augustine remained avowedly Unionist during the conflict, and few rebel spies or troops entered the area. Despite those Unionist leanings, Federal gunboats and troops burned the Tocoï depot of the St. Johns Railway in March 1862, destroyed the locomotive and rolling stock, and dismantled much of the roadbed. At Picolata, the Union forces installed a light artillery battery garrison in early-1862. The riverport became an important location for protecting St. Augustine and from which to launch forays upriver. Still, the hamlet offered few accommodations. One Union soldier recorded that Picolata "boasted two houses and a wharf, and not another building within half a mile." Union troops requisitioned cattle from area ranches and oranges from citrus groves. In February 1865, Confederate cavalry officer J. J. Dickison conducted a raid near Picolata, which by then supported four hundred troops. Dickison captured about forty men, but his insufficient force prevented him from proceeding inland to St. Augustine.<sup>42</sup>

Citizens of the county welcomed the end of the war and the opportunity to return to a normal life. The end of the Civil War, however, brought with it an impoverished economy and difficult times for the average person. Statewide property values had decreased by nearly one-half from an estimated value in 1860 of forty-seven million to about twenty-five million in 1865. Nearly twenty-two million dollars was lost in the form of emancipated slaves. The unsettled economy persisted. The Freedman's Bureau established a school for blacks at St. Augustine, and St. Johns County contained one of the highest concentrations of homestead filings during the early-Reconstruction era.<sup>43</sup>

Florida entered its golden age of steamboating following the Civil War. The first steamboat navigated the St. Johns River bar and inlet in 1829, and regular service was initiated in 1831, when the *George Washington* made trips between Savannah, Jacksonville, and Picolata. About 1845, the Savannah Line initiated steamboat service between Savannah and Jacksonville. By 1851, the *Gaston*, *Magnolia*, *Ocmulgee*, *St. Matthews*, and *Welaka* plied the waters between the port cities and along the St. Johns River. In 1860, the schooner *J. B. Bleeker* had navigated the river to Tocoï, where it delivered railroad tracks, spikes, and rolling stock for the nascent St. Johns Railway, an ironic harbinger that would spell the end of the steamboat era within several decades. Picolata enjoyed a brief existence as a resort village with steamboats delivering passengers to the Picolata Hotel. In

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<sup>41</sup>George Buker, "St. Augustine and the Union Blockade," *El Escribano* 23 (1986), 3-9, 18.

<sup>42</sup>Buker, "St. Augustine and the Union Blockade," 13-15; Sastre, "Picolata," 53-56.

<sup>43</sup>Jerrell Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction, 1863-1877* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1974), 15, 35, 73, 134.

1866, Hubbard Hart initiated his Hart Lines Company, and the *Kate* and *Dictator* operated between Palatka and Charleston, and serviced Picolata and other hamlets astride the St. Johns River. In the late-1860s, James Tucker of Fernandina operated the *Sylvan Shore* between Savannah and Picolata.<sup>44</sup>

The St. Johns Railway was reconstructed between Tocoí and St. Augustine in 1866, and sold four years later to William Astor, the New York millionaire. A new locomotive, rolling stock, passenger cars, and an improved roadbed gave Tocoí an edge over the older river village of Picolata. Interestingly, the St. Johns Railway was the first in Florida to adopt the standard-gauge rail system of four feet, eight-and-one-half inches, which became the nationwide standard in 1886. One of the early laborers on the shortline was Utley J. White, who arrived in 1872. As master of transportation, he managed twenty-four horses and mules until 1873, when the roadbed was dismantled and reset to standard gauge. Later, in 1881, White organized his own railroad company, the St. Johns & Halifax Railway, which built a line between East Palatka and Daytona. In partnership with W. B. Barnett and S. I. Wales, he built twelve miles of line, and then sold the venture to S. V. White of New York, who completed the line to Daytona and sold it to Henry Flagler in the late-1880s.<sup>45</sup>

In 1867, Episcopal priest Thomas Morton sketched Picolata as little more than a dock with several buildings. By 1872, the disparity between the Picolata and Tocoí river ports was clear to a reporter from the *Washington Daily Patriot*, who mused that Picolata was "a town and a fort in the old Spanish days, some hundred years ago now a half decayed pier, with an unimposing building in the background." Tocoí had come into its own, at least for the time, because the railroad provided quicker more modern transportation service than the stage from Picolata. During that era, most visitors came into St. Augustine via St. Johns River steamer and railroad because of the unpredictable harbor channel at the Ancient City. All too soon, however, both Tocoí and its shortline railroad, and the steamers along the St. Johns River, would fall into disuse, yielding to the superior service offered by Henry Flagler's mainline railroad.<sup>46</sup>

But, for now, the increased riverboat traffic compelled the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to examine and deepen the St. Johns Bar at Mayport, and then improve some of the navigation channels of the river. One early chart, published in 1884, depicted the river between Hibernia and Racy Point (Figure 7). Roads laced the terrain adjacent to the riverbanks, and farms and homesteads dotted the countryside. Hogarth's Landing, New Switzerland, Popo Point, Remington Park, and Sowell's Cove each showed signs of improvements. Published four years later, another chart, depicted the river between Tocoí and San Mateo, where development and farms were more modest than points farther downriver. Railroad tracks supported by a dock and wharf projected into the river at Tocoí, and

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<sup>44</sup>Sastre, "Picolata," 46; George Buker, *Jacksonville, Riverport-Seaport* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 46; Wayne Wood, *Jacksonville's Architectural Heritage* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1989), 327; Shofner, *Florida in the Era of Reconstruction*, 119.

<sup>45</sup>Bramson, *Florida East Coast Railway*, 24; Sastre, "Picolata," 56; Shofner, *Florida in the Era of Reconstruction*, 121; Dudley Johnson, "The Railroads of Florida, 1865-1900," Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1965, 186, 190; George Chapin, *Florida: Past, Present and Future*, 2 vols. (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1914), 2:140-144; Pettengill, "Florida Railroads," 103.

<sup>46</sup>Bramson, *Florida East Coast Railway*, 17; Sastre, "Picolata," 56; Shofner, *Florida in the Era of Reconstruction*, 121; Thomas Graham, "St. Augustine, 1867: Drawings by Henry J. Morton," *El Escribano* 33 (1996), 98; Johnson, "Railroads of Florida," 186.

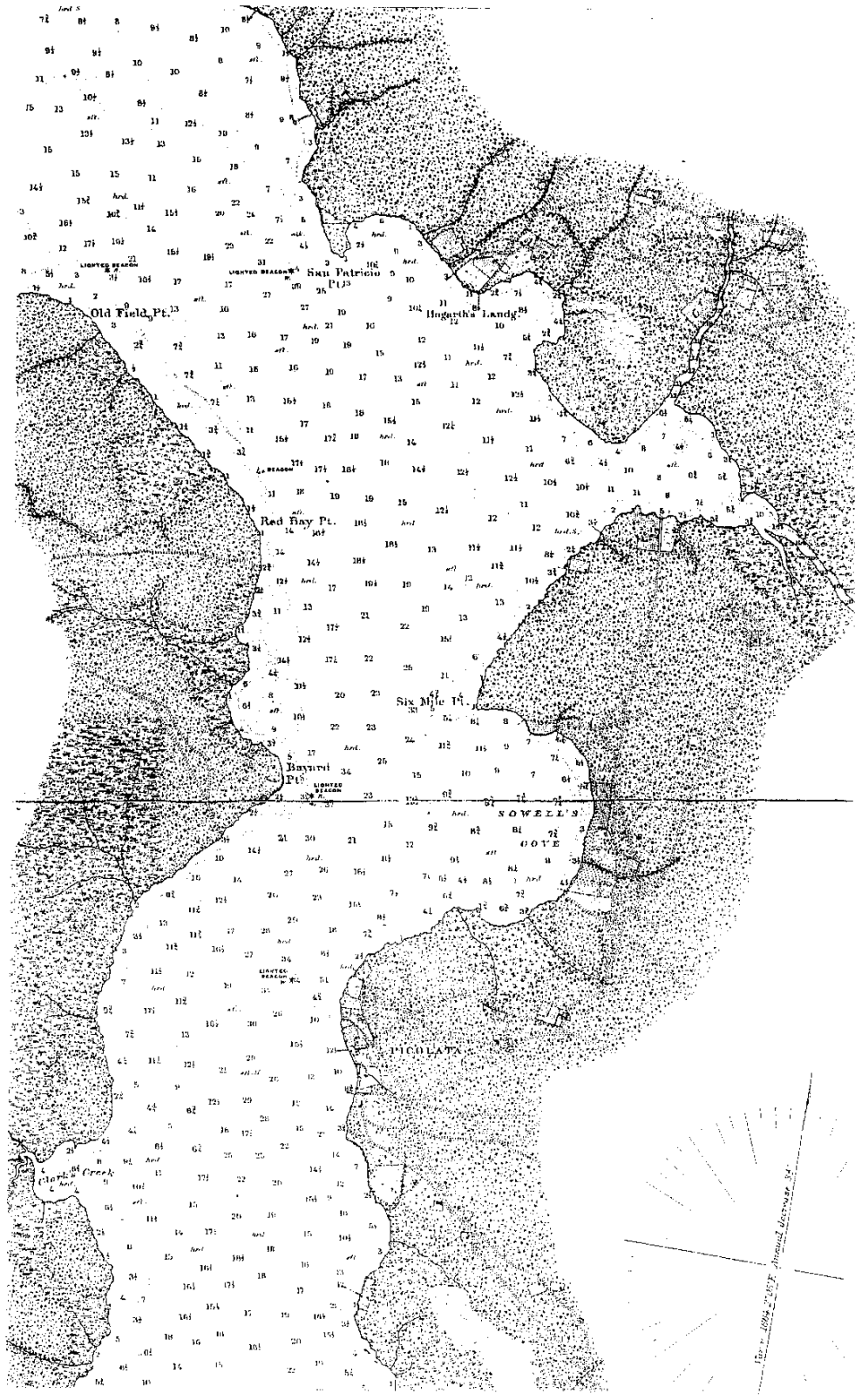


Figure 7: St. Johns River from Hibernia to Racy Point, 1884



several farms with cleared fields stood along the riverbank. Between Tocol and Federal Point, a few citrus groves sprinkled the riverbanks and several roads extended into the backcountry, but no buildings were depicted.<sup>47</sup>

Enthusiastic settlers began to pour into river settlements, dividing large tracts for farming and residential development. Switzerland became an especially attractive site. In 1880, Susannah Scott divided her substantial holdings along the St. Johns River south of Mill Creek into numerous lots (Figure 8). By then, several dwellings dotted the banks of the river at Switzerland, and settlers had cleared fields and planted groves. Farther south, near Remington Park, a colorful map prepared in 1873 depicted the holdings of William Hallows, J. E. Peck, and the heirs of Fatio. The Hallows family of Canterbury, England and Dublin, Ireland had acquired riverfront property in the mid-nineteenth century, and began dividing it during Reconstruction. By 1873, the Alberta and Claremont residences occupied sites at Popo Point and Remington Park (Figure 9).<sup>48</sup> Improved river traffic and roads encouraged settlers to push into southwest regions of the county. Near Mill Creek and Moccasin Branch, the Catholic diocese established parishes to serve some of the religious and educational needs of settlers. The diocese established parishes along each waterway in 1875, and churches were built by Stephen Langlade, native of France, a skilled carpenter, and a Jesuit priest. At the behest of Bishop Pierre Verot, Langlade had arrived in Florida in 1871, and soon began forming parishes in the wilderness areas west of St. Augustine. Near Mill Creek, Langlade built in 1875 the Church of St. Leopold, which was moved to Bakersville in 1902. Farther south at Moccasin Branch, he built a small wood frame church in 1875 at St. Ambrose parish. This second parish flourished, and within two decades Langlade had built a rectory, school, and convent. In 1907, he replaced the small chapel with a larger sanctuary (Figure 10), and began constructing a second convent after the original edifice burned in 1917. Langlade served as parish priest until his death in 1920.<sup>49</sup>

Farther south, development began near Holy Branch in the early-1880s. Largely Minorcan in its origins, the heritage of the area is mainly derived from small family farms. John Henry Sanchez was among the early settlers. He acquired property along the branch in 1879, and built a house about 1883. Over time, he expanded the farmstead, adding to the dwelling late in the nineteenth century, and expanding the farm to include potato fields and various truck crops. By 1915, his outbuildings included a barn, corn crib, garage, kitchen, and a smoke house. Nearby, a post office opened under the designation of Holy Branch in 1886. F. E. Rogero, the postmaster at Racy Point, indicated that approximately 550 people would be served by the new post office, which was scheduled to be constructed sixty feet from the Holy Branch depot of the St. Augustine & Palatka Railway. But, within less than a year, the office was relocated to the neighboring African-American community of Armstrong. Indicative of the lightly settled region, nearly twenty-five years passed before a second post

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<sup>47</sup>U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, *St. Johns River, Florida From Hibernia to Racy Point* (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1884; U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, *St. Johns River, Florida From Tocol to San Mateo* (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1888.

<sup>48</sup>Deed Book U, p. 233, Deed Book Y, p. 400, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>49</sup>*The Branches: Springs of Loving Water, One Hundred Years of a Florida Parish, 1875-1975* (St. Augustine: Catholic Diocese, 1975), 21-23, 31, 46; Father Thomas O'Donovan, *St. Ambrose Parish, Elkton, Florida* (Elkton: St. Ambrose Parish, 1950), 23; *St. Augustine Record*, 1 February 1953, 6 February 1975.



Land in St. Johns County.

See 44, 75, 76, 26, 54, 55 and  
See 39, 75, 76, 27, 54, 55

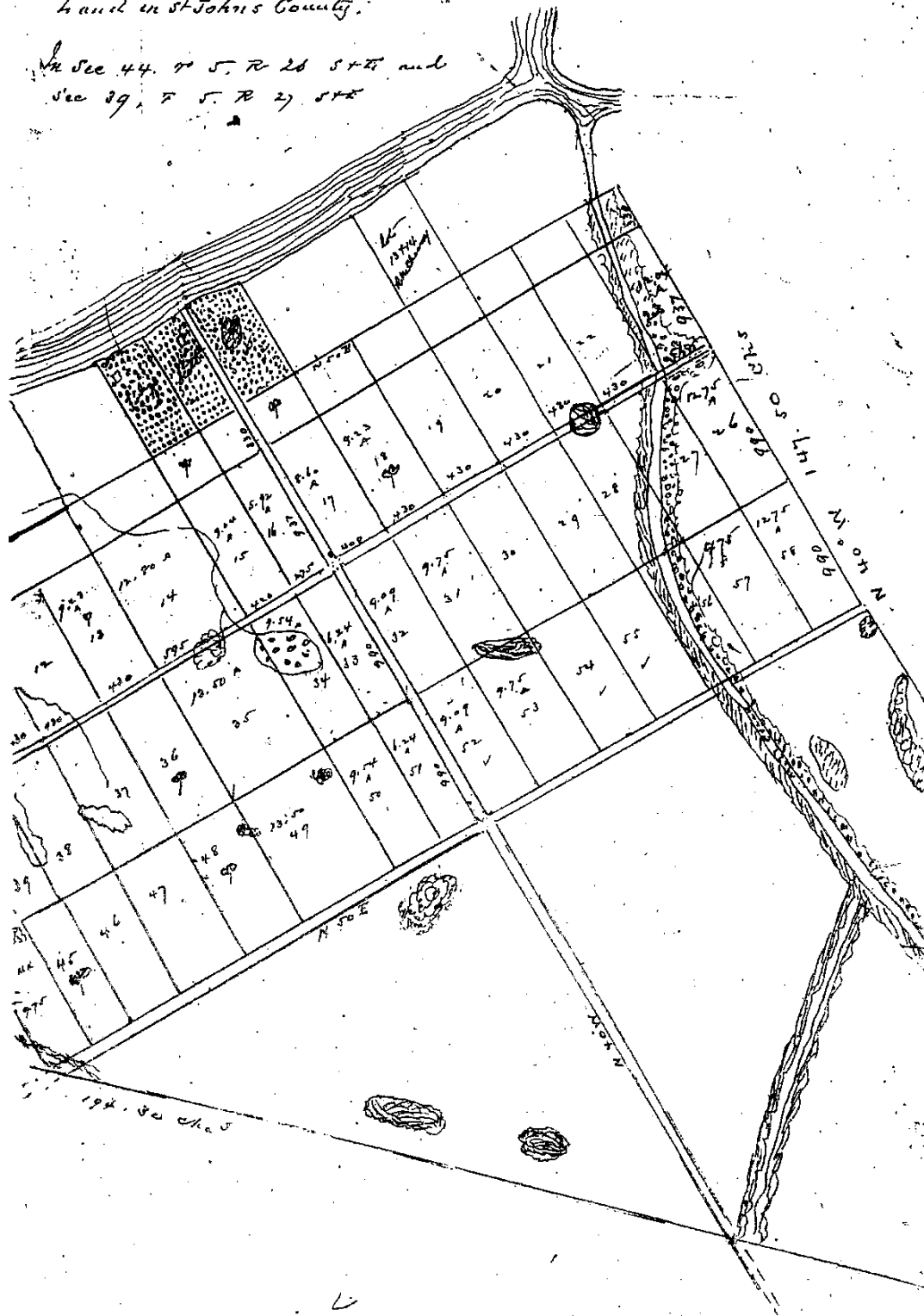


Figure 8b: Scott's Land at Switzerland, 1880

Signed Sealed and delivered by the  
above named Thomas Vaughan  
and Agnes Coleman Vaughan  
in the presence of  
W<sup>m</sup> Alex. Cooke Hallows

*W. M. Maguire*

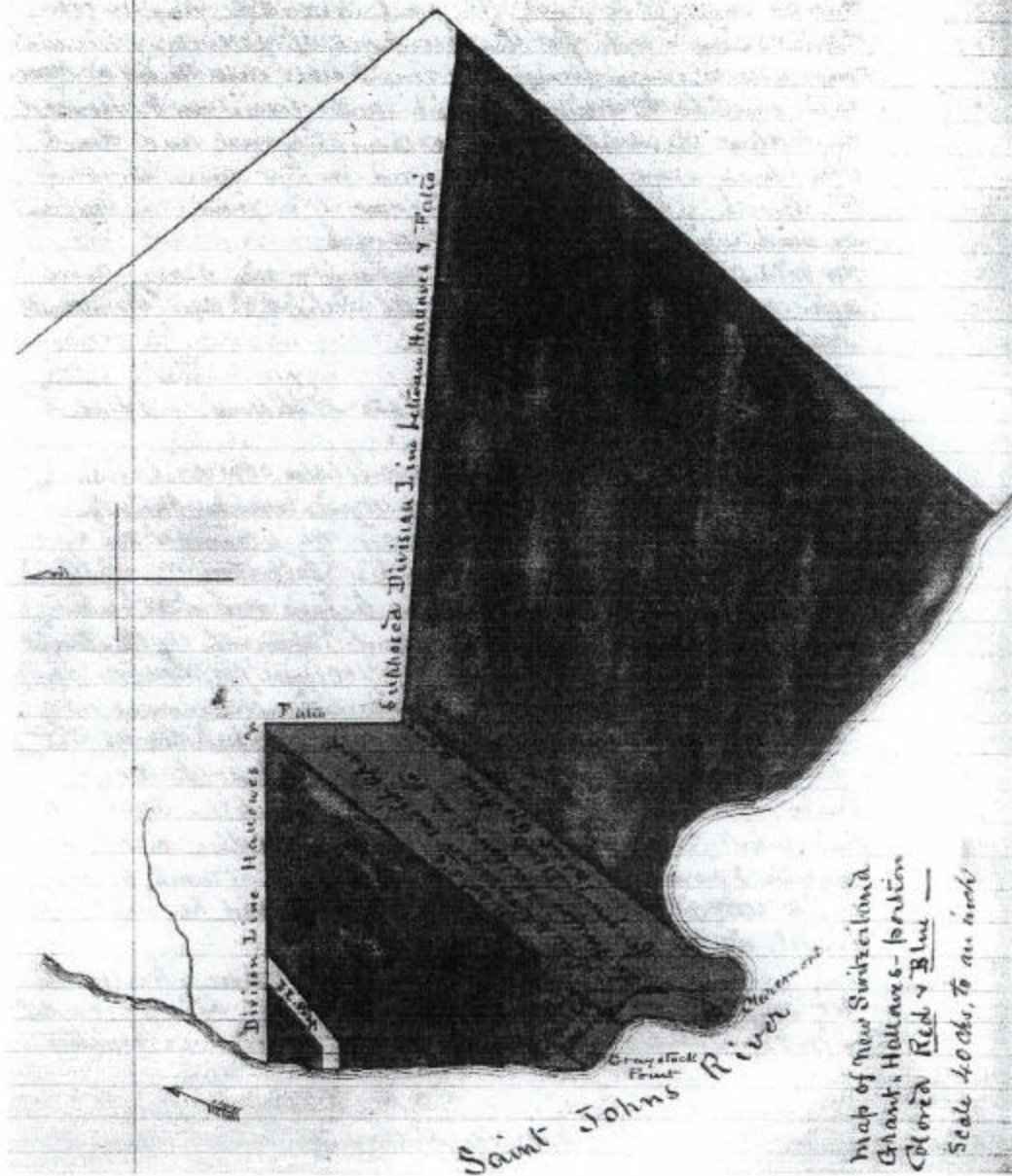


Figure 9: Fatio/Hallows Lands at Switzerland, c. 1875

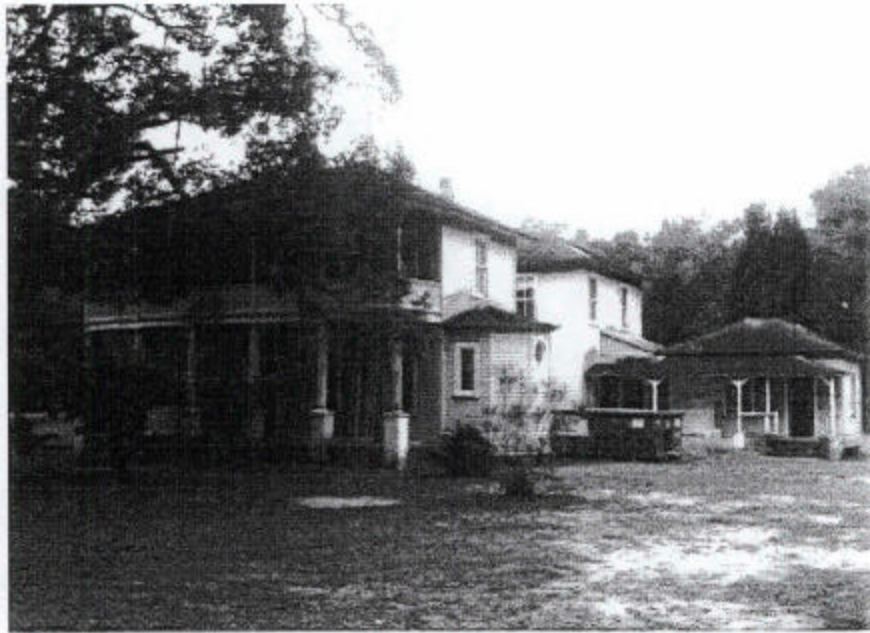


Figure 10: St. Ambrose Chapel (1907) and Convent (1920)

office opened at Holy Branch. But, this time the community was called Spuds, a name change that announced the emergent significance of southwestern St. Johns County's potato culture.<sup>50</sup>

One of the county's oldest African-American settlements was organized north of Spuds during the era. Known variously as Armstrong and Cokesbury, the settlement was established about 1886 as a saw mill community. The name Armstrong coincided with the extension of railroad tracks through southwestern St. Johns County. Settlement proceeded informally around the saw mill until 1911, when a town plan was laid out. Guiding development north and west of the railroad tracks, the plan was extended in 1912 and 1921. The name Armstrong was temporarily dropped in favor of Cokesbury about 1915, but reverted to Armstrong in the 1920s. Early families settling Armstrong included the Brooks, Smiths, and Lawrences. A school was built in the early twentieth century (Figure 11). Baptists organized a church in 1909, and Reverend C. E. Cook led the faithful of St. Mary's African Methodist Episcopal Church to rebuild their sanctuary in 1925.<sup>51</sup>

Despite its relative isolation, nineteenth-century Florida attracted vacationing northerners, some seeking investment opportunities and prompting a flurry of Florida guidebooks. Medical doctors composed many of these guides, most of which furnished a glimpse of activities taking place along the St. Johns River. Philadelphia physician and medical journal editor Daniel Brinton (Figure 12) published one of the first in 1869, *A Guide-Book of Florida and the South for Tourists, Invalids and Emigrants*. He recommended that persons wishing to visit Florida's east coast to camp and hunt hire an open boat, guide, and tent at Jacksonville, and sail to Enterprise by the St. Johns River on a steamer. Brinton advised those travelers to stopping at Picolata to lodge with T. F. Bridier. He cautioned that there was no hotel in the village, and Bridier's accommodations were "poor and insufficient." On a brighter note, Brinton found a second stage line had recently opened between Picolata and St. Augustine, reducing fares to a competitive rate of \$1.00, down from \$3.00. The stage ride, however, had an unpleasant effect on many passengers, who passed through sandy soils, thick scrub palmetto forests, and only twelve houses on the eighteen-mile trip. Some travelers arrived exhausted, only to find a miserable ferryboat that conveyed them across the San Sebastian River into St. Augustine. One riverboat traveler, D. R. Mitchell, remarked that investors planned to install a resort hotel at Remington Park, but little came of the effort. Joseph Remington of Providence, Rhode Island, made a significant investment near Popo Point (Figure 13). A post office opened at Remington Park in 1872, but closed and moved to Magnolia on the west side of the St. Johns River in the 1880s. The postal name was resurrected in the early-1890s, but again buried in 1902, this time when the postal service transferred the mails to nearby Orangedale.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Marsha Chance, "A Preliminary Historic Evaluation of the Community of Spuds, St. Johns County, Florida," Tallahassee, 1991, p. 6-9; Alford Bradbury and E. Story Hallock, *A Chronology of Florida Post Offices* (Vero Beach: Florida Federation of Stamp Clubs, 1962), 39, 79; Location of Post Offices, Florida, 1821-1950, National Archives microfilm series M1126 at State Library of Florida, Tallahassee, FL.

<sup>51</sup>Chance, "Spuds," p. 14; Bradbury and Hallock, *Florida Post Offices*, 3; Plat Book 1, p. 180, Plat Book 2, p. 14, 70, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; the cornerstones of the churches indicate some of the activities of the respective congregations.

<sup>52</sup>Daniel Brinton, *A Guide-Book of Florida and the South for Tourists, Invalids and Emigrants* (Philadelphia: George MacClean, 1869), 61-62, 79-80; Bill Belleville, *River of Lakes: A Journey on Florida's St. Johns River* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 165; Bradbury and Hallock, *Florida Post Offices*, 70.

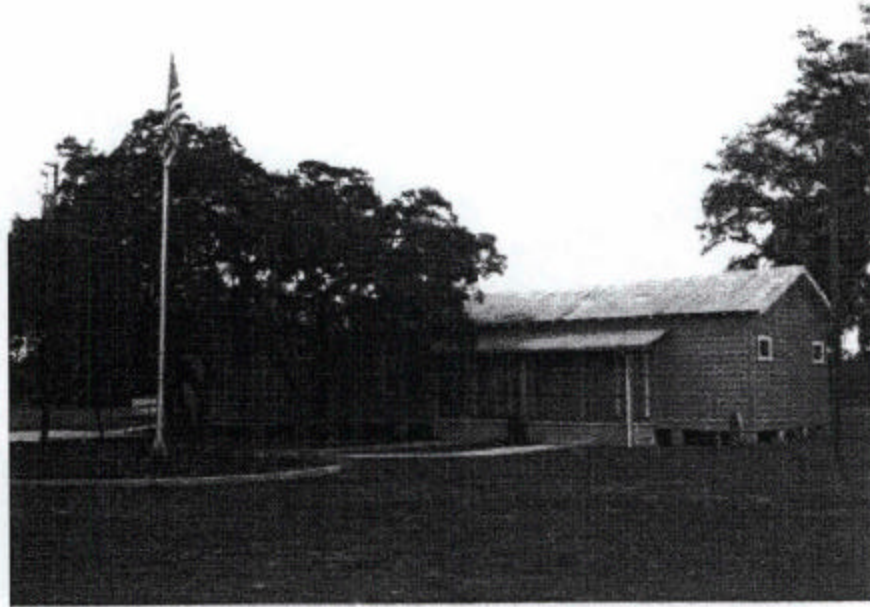


Figure 11: Armstrong School, c. 1925





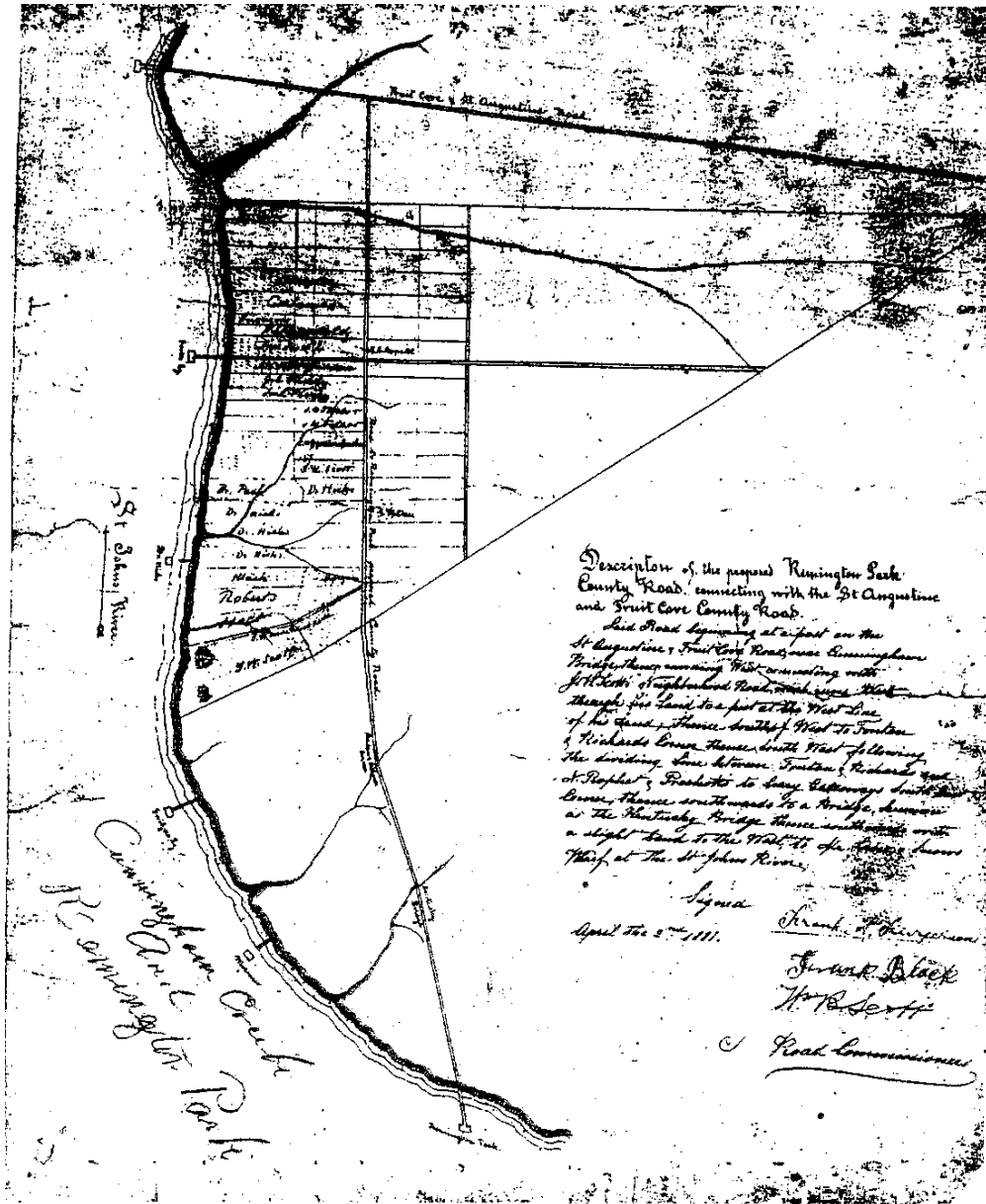


Figure 13: Remington Park, 1881

Poet laureate Sidney Lanier, daunted by a difficult route along the Indian River, sailed the St. Johns River and other, more accessible inland waterways in the 1870s. In his *Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, and History* (1875) Lanier identified Hogarth's Landing, Tocoï, and Picolata as places names in St. Johns County. Providing little of substance about the county's benefits, Lanier poetically presaged the onslaught of tourists who would flock to Florida over the following decades. He found the "waters full of fish in great variety; the woods abound in deer and other game; and the whole land amounts to perpetual invitation to the overworked, the invalid, the air-poisoned, the nervously prostrate people, to come down with yacht and tent, with rod and gun, and rebuild brain, muscle, and nerve."<sup>53</sup>

Within a decade of Lanier's treatise, Chicago newspaper journalist George Barbour had published a series of guide books of the state, derived, in part, from his observations while on tour in 1879 with General Ulysses Grant, and, in part, from a subsequent tour with state commissioner of immigration Seth French. Barbour traveled the length of the St. Johns River, and in his *Florida For Tourists, Invalids, and Settlers*, revealed that one farmer at Picolata had manufactured from two acres forty barrels of sugar and five hundred gallons of cane syrup. Tocoï he found "entirely uninteresting, merely a railway-depot, with freight-warehouse, car-shed, water-tank, and two small dwellings." A moss curing and packing house, which shipped its product for manufacturing mattresses, stood nearby. A second edition by Barbour, released in 1884, found little else of interest among St. Johns County's river ports.<sup>54</sup>

Cincinnati physician James Henshall traveled throughout Florida in a private schooner in 1879 and 1882, recording his experiences in *Camping and Cruising in Florida* (1884). His narrative, derived from an extensive journal, offers an unparalleled look at the Indian River and other waterways of south and east Florida at the close of the Reconstruction era and on the eve of permanent settlement of the region. He forsook descriptions of the St. Johns River, however, noting that it had been described numerous times in earlier accounts. Of the river, he noted that "many charming villas and cosy cottages adorn the lower St. Johns, with an occasional hotel or winter resort."<sup>55</sup>

New York compiler Wanton Webb produced one of the state's early gazetteers. He recorded that Racey Point had been settled in 1879 by Geiger and Patterson, partners engaged in a lumber company. Patterson also operated the post office, which opened in 1879. By 1885, H. H. Floyd and T. T. Russell had planted citrus groves near Racey Point. Orange groves also dotted the landscape at Orangedale, which had been settled before the Civil War. Early settlers included George Powers, who served in the Florida Senate during the early-1880s. Farmers planting citrus included Henry Hewson, Robert Mickler, and Willard Patterson. Stephen Ferris operated a store, and from his wharf steamboats loaded citrus and vegetables harvested from the surrounding region. A post office was established at Orangedale in 1868, but soon moved to nearby Hogarth's Landing in Florence Cove.

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<sup>53</sup>Sidney Lanier, *Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, and History* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1875), 125-136.

<sup>54</sup>George Barbour, *Florida for Tourists, Invalids, and Settlers* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1882), 111-113; George Barbour, *Florida for Tourists, Invalids, and Settlers* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1884).

<sup>55</sup>James Henshall, *Camping and Cruising in Florida* (Cincinnati: Robert Clark & Company, 1884), 9-10, 112.

Installed again in 1882, the Orangedale post office survived until the Great Depression, when it was transferred to Green Cove Springs.<sup>56</sup>

The Fruit Cove settlement was named in 1871 by Theophilus W. Moore, a native of North Carolina. Six years later, the postal service established an office at the village, which, by 1885, contained nearly forty families. A Methodist pastor, Moore published *Treatise and Handbook on Orange Culture in Florida* in 1877. He eventually published four editions of the volume, expanding the last to cover oranges in California and Louisiana, as well as those cultivated in Florida. Moore also wrote *A Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount*, served as a trustee of Emory College in Georgia, and later was president of Leesburg College in Leesburg, Florida. At Fruit Cove, Moore maintained a prize citrus grove near the banks of Julington Creek. His son, Theodore Moore, moved to Dade County in 1902, where he developed extensive pineapple fields and citrus groves. He became regarded by many farmers as Florida's "Pineapple King."<sup>57</sup>

The publication of travel guides during the 1870s and 1880s lured numerous visitors and settlers to Florida. A young, aspiring composer, Frederick Delius was among a relatively few Europeans who visited St. Johns County and remained a brief time. A native of England, Delius began studying music against the advice of his father, who sent him in 1884 to Florida. Delius occupied a four-room dwelling at Solano Grove, where he was to supervise an orange grove. Delius' venture along the St. Johns River was associated with Florida's English colony movement of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The movement gained impetus in the 1880s when British investors and London land agents published hyperbolic pamphlets and placed advertisements in newspapers about Florida's salubrious climate and the fabulous wealth available through the cultivation of citrus. Central Florida especially became a popular site for immigrants who settled Acton and Lakeland in Polk County; Conway and Orlando in Orange County; and Narcoossee in Osceola County. The English colonies grew in numbers until the 1890s freezes, when many settlers lost their investments and either returned to England, or moved farther south into the Florida peninsula. Delius' venture at Solano Grove fits that pattern, with the notable twist that he spent little time tending to orange trees, and instead launched his musical career along the river. A failure as a citrus farmer, Delius was deeply inspired by the serene orange grove and majestic river, and the rhythmic tunes of his African-American neighbors. He published *Zum Carneval* in Jacksonville in 1885, but in 1886 returned to Europe where he studied music under Beecham and Grieg. Reminiscent of the mystery he experienced at Solano Grove, Delius' *Florida Suite* appeared several years later, conveying musically his impressions of Florida's wild life, forests, people, and St. Johns River. He later recorded that "In Florida, through sitting and gazing at nature, I gradually learnt the way in which I should eventually find myself." Abandoned and neglected, Delius' Florida home was rescued in 1960 and moved to the campus of the Jacksonville University. A bronze marker installed in 1992 marks the site of Delius' dwelling near Meldrim Park (figure).<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Wanton Webb, comp., *Webb's Historical, Industrial and Biographical Florida* (New York: W. S. Webb & Company, 1885) 97; Bradbury and Hallock, *Florida Post Offices*, 29, 62.

<sup>57</sup>Webb, *Florida*, 97; Bradbury and Hallock, *Florida Post Offices*, 31; Chapin, *Florida*, 2: 488; E. V. Blackman, *Miami and Dade County, Florida* (Washington, D.C.: Victor Rainbolt, 1921), 244-245; T. W. Moore, *Treatise and Handbook on Orange Culture in Florida* (Jacksonville: Florida Sun & Press, 1877).

Despite the large number of travel guides published about Florida, few writers captured in prose the hardships endured by Florida's early settlers. Agriculture remained the primary occupation of St. Johns County's residents during Reconstruction and the late nineteenth century. In general, when compared with other Florida counties, St. Johns County ranked average in its agricultural production levels. By 1880, the county fell below Alachua, Columbia, Duval, and Nassau Counties in the numbers saw mills, turpentine operations, and other types of farming industries and manufacturing. Subsistence farming with a small supplementary cash crop characterized the common yield. Cattle raising, orange and citrus production, and cotton ginning were other activities by which residents earned a living. At the close of the Reconstruction era, most of St. Johns County remained unsettled, covered by vast tracts of pine forests. Areas cleared of their forest included the relatively few homesteads that dotted the landscape, lands adjacent to creeks and rivers, and the alignment of the St. Johns Railway. The expansion of Florida's rail system in the following decades opened new opportunities for settlers and investors alike to establish farms and harvest the region's natural resources.<sup>58</sup>

### **Flagler Years and the Progressive Era, 1885-1919**

One of the grandest visions in railroad building in late nineteenth century Florida was implemented by Henry Flagler, a former business partner of John D. Rockefeller. Flagler's influence on the development of the east coast of Florida cannot be overstated. The railroad in many practical ways created an easier way of life and stimulated the economy. Linking Florida's lower east coast to the nation by rail, Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) became popular with wealthy visitors, who made annual vacation treks to Florida. The railroad also furnished a transportation route on which farmers could transport crops more quickly to market than by steamboat.<sup>59</sup>

The oil baron first visited Florida in 1883, vacationing in St. Augustine. The Ancient City, long a winter mecca for the infirm, intrigued Flagler who determined to make it a tourist destination, the "Newport of the South." As he developed the Ponce de Leon, a magnificent Gilded Age hotel, Flagler transformed St. Augustine's downtown. In clearing sites for his hotels, he removed some older buildings to adjacent parts of town. The Sunny Side House occupied the block where the Ponce de Leon would be constructed. Built in 1876 by Thomas House, a prominent builder, part of the complex was later relocated to the African-American suburb of New Augustine in 1887. Located at 525 West King Street, the house would later be occupied by Dr. Horace Lindsey and later the Moses Demps family.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>John Richards, comp., *Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (New York, 1886), 72; Barbour, *Florida For Tourists, Invalids, and Settlers*, 119; Bureau of the Census, Tenth Census, 1880, *Report on the Manufactures of the United States* (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1883), 206-207; Bureau of the Census, *Report on the Forests of North America* (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1884), 523.

<sup>59</sup>Pettengill, *Florida Railroads*, 106; Johnson, "The Railroads of Florida," 200; Bramson, *Florida East Coast Railway*, 27-28, 49-50.

<sup>60</sup>Edward Akin, *Flagler: Rockefeller Partner & Florida Baron* (Kent and London: Kent State University Press, 1988), 114-115, 134-138; T. Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity* (DeLand: Florida Historical Society, 1925), 349-351; Deed Book 103, p. 591, 1932, 1940 tax rolls, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; Florida Site File 8SJ1078, Bureau of Archaeological Research, Tallahassee, FL.

Flagler also searched for a means to improve the relatively poor transportation network of the region. Years of business experience dominating competitors and searching for new markets prompted him to expand Florida's anemic transportation system. He planned an efficient rail system to bring tourists to Florida, not unlike the network he had used in the Northeast and Midwest to carry oil from fields to refineries.<sup>61</sup>

Expansion of the rail system into St. Augustine had begun in the early-1880s at Jacksonville, which in the late nineteenth century became Florida's major rail center. In addition to the existing Florida, Atlantic, and Gulf Central line, two new railroads - the Fernandina and Jacksonville, and Henry Plant's Savannah, Florida & Western - served the gateway city by 1881. All of those lines, however, either terminated at Jacksonville or ran west toward Lake City. The need for tracks running south prompted construction of the Jacksonville, St. Augustine and Halifax River Railroad (JStA&HR). The charter for the narrow gauge railroad was granted in February 1881, and the line reached its southern terminus at St. Augustine in 1883.<sup>62</sup>

In 1885, Flagler implemented the ambitious plan by purchasing a controlling interest in the JStA&HR. In 1885, the St. Augustine & Palatka Railway assembled tracks between Toco Junction and East Palatka. Built at a cost of \$240,000, the line was operated by the St. Johns Railway when it opened in 1886. The St. Johns and Halifax River Railroad had been organized in 1881, and built tracks from East Palatka into Volusia County. By 1889, Flagler had acquired these short lines, which, in St. Johns County, provided his railroad with two approaches to the St. Johns River, one terminating at Toco, the other into East Palatka. The latter soon became the more significant, serving as the mainline south of St. Augustine, and Flagler ended service along the St. Johns Railway in 1894. But, to Flagler's chagrin, the only point where a traveler heading to St. Augustine had to switch trains was at Jacksonville, where they boarded a ferry to cross the river for the final leg of their journey. This prompted him to construct a steel railroad bridge across the St. Johns River, a center pivot swing structure completed in 1890 at a cost of one million dollars. The bridge brought Flagler's railroad into downtown Jacksonville. Flagler then embraced a vision of extending a railroad the length of the peninsula. He extended rails into New Smyrna Beach in 1892 and reached Miami in 1896. Completed to Key West in 1912, the FEC played a major role in the development of towns and farming communities on Florida's east coast.<sup>63</sup>

Flagler's line between Toco Junction and Palatka also opened areas of rural St. Johns County where little development had previously occurred. Several farming communities, including Armstrong, Elkton, Hastings, and Spuds expanded, in part, because of Flagler's railroad. Hastings, the largest of those, was organized about 1890. Earlier, Charles Merrifield had purchased large tracts in the area,

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<sup>61</sup>Akin, *Flagler*, 114-115, 134-138; Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida*, 349-351.

<sup>62</sup>Herbert Doherty, Jr., "Jacksonville as a Nineteenth-Century Railroad Center," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 58 (April 1980), 373-386.

<sup>63</sup>Akin, *Flagler*, 114-115, 134-138; Johnson, "Florida Railroads," 190-191; Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida*, 349-351; Pettengill, "Florida Railroads," 102-103; Bramson, *Florida East Coast Railway*, 18, 21, 24.

and built his homestead and planted citrus groves. He platted the Merrifield subdivision in 1886, but found the fertile lands adjacent to the St. Johns River were subject to flooding. Another investor and railroad builder, Utley J. White dredged a canal from his farmlands near the Merrifield railroad depot of the St. Augustine & Palatka Railway, and planted crops, demonstrating that vegetables could be cultivated in the region.<sup>64</sup>

After Flagler acquired the railroad that extended through southwest St. Johns County, he sent his cousin, Thomas H. Hastings to develop an experimental farm near the Merrifield tract. Initially named Prairie Garden, this area soon became known as Hastings Farms, and the postal service opened an office at Hastings in October 1891. The name Prairie Garden, apparently, was derived from an earlier reference to Rose Prairie, a subdivision near Hastings opened by Park Terrell in 1889. By 1902, Hastings Farm contained a cottage, gardener's cottage, barn, warehouse, and three tenements. Farmhouses radiated out from the experimental farm and town. In 1909, Hastings farms produced one million dollars in various crops, primarily Irish potatoes. The potato-growing tradition of Hastings dates from this era, and it emerged as an agricultural center in southwest St. Johns County. Investors organized the Hastings Development Company, and elected Charles A. DuPont president. In the early-twentieth century, the company platted several subdivisions to provide new building lots north of the nascent downtown for an African-American community.<sup>65</sup>

Flagler promoted the Hastings village as a farming community, in part, so fresh vegetables could be produced for guests staying at his fashionable hotels in St. Augustine, and, in part, to provide income for his railroad to transport crops to market. During the era, Flagler organized several land companies, developed experiment at farms in Dade County and West Palm Beach, and experimented with town building at Dania, Hallandale, and White City. Through the *Florida East Coast Homeseeker*, a newspaper issued by Flagler's land companies, Flagler disseminated information about Florida's agriculture, coastal communities, and mild weather. Hastings was the earliest, if not the first, of Flagler's experimental farms and towns.<sup>66</sup>

Substantial growth in the county's agricultural heritage stems from the Flagler era. In 1889, census enumerators counted five hundred ten farms in St. Johns County, the majority of those under fifty acres. Only two farms contained over one thousand acres. In 1890, farmers harvested fifty-one thousand bushels of sweet potatoes from three hundred fifty-seven acres. Only twenty-five acres were then planted in Irish potatoes, yielding twelve hundred bushels. By 1895, cultivated lands in the county amounted to forty-six hundred acres, and nearly ten thousand head of cattle roamed the county's pastures and woods.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Deed Book KK, p. 388, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>65</sup>Allen Morris, *Florida Place Names* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1974), 71; Bradbury and Hallock, *Florida Post Offices*, 37; Site File 8SJ2593, Florida Site File, Division of Historical Resources, Tallahassee, FL; Adams and Weaver, *St. Augustine and St. Johns County*, 76; Akin, *Flagler*, 186; Plat Book 1, p. 47, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>66</sup>Akin, *Flagler*, 184-187.

<sup>67</sup>Bureau of the Census, Tenth Census, 1880, *Manufactures of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1883), 206-207; Bureau of the Census, Eleventh Census, 1890, *Statistics of Agriculture of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1895), 128, 202, 280, 464.

Potatoes became a crop of choice for many of the county's farmers, especially after devastating freezes touched Florida in the mid-1890s. In the early morning hours of 29 December 1894 temperatures dipped throughout Florida and reached nineteen degrees in Rockledge. At St. Augustine, the temperature dipped to sixteen degrees. Another report indicated that "A line drawn from Manatee to Titusville would mark the southern limit of temperatures below twenty degrees." The cold ruined many vegetable fields and defoliated some citrus trees, causing most trees to drop their fruit. A warm interval followed, which promoted the flow of tree sap. Then, on the morning of 8 February 1895, temperatures again dipped well below freezing. Farther inland and farther south, at DeLand, one grower reported citrus trees split asunder with a sound resembling cracking walnuts. Even in Key West residents reported a light frost. The second cold blast killed thousands of citrus trees throughout the state. Mature Florida orange trees in 1893 numbered about three million; by late 1895, that figure had declined to fewer than ninety thousand. The 1893-1894 season had generated two million five hundred thousand boxes of fruit; the following year orange trees yielded only one hundred fifty thousand boxes of fruit.<sup>68</sup>

Some St. Johns County farmers replanted their groves, but a subsequent freeze in February 1899 wiped out much of their efforts. One resident at Mandarin reported ice forming in the St. Johns River in the 1899 freeze. Apocryphal stories of farmers abandoning their homesteads and barns near Jacksonville and Palatka to begin afresh in south Florida probably applied to some farmers in St. Johns County. Others adapted to the conditions and found new crops. Indicative of the diminished status of the citrus industry in the county, area farmers packed only thirteen thousand boxes of oranges in 1919. By the mid-1920s, some packing houses in Orange and Polk Counties harvested more fruit in one week than all of the farms in St. Johns County during the entire harvest season.<sup>69</sup>

Potatoes, then, became a preferred crop because of the freezes, and, in part, because of increasing demand as Florida's population surged forward. Henry Flagler had acquired large tracts in the area that became Hastings, and to educate and encourage farmers he established a model, or experimental, farm. Because of the mild climate, potatoes produced in Hastings were harvested for market well in advance of those in more northern regions. Most farmers harvested several crops each season. In 1890, St. Johns County's farmers cultivated far more sweet potatoes (51,492 bushels) than Irish potatoes (1,202 bushels). Only twenty-five acres of the latter were planted that year. By 1902, the Hastings and Elkton area supported one hundred thirty-five acres of Irish potatoes, and cultivation of the tuber accelerated rapidly over the following decade. In 1909, St. Johns County farmers planted thirty-five hundred acres in potatoes, from which they harvested four hundred fifty-six thousand bushels. By 1914, in Elkton and Hastings alone, nearly nine thousand acres had been cleared and planted in Irish potatoes. Between 1890 and 1910, the Hastings census district grew dramatically, expanding tenfold from 220 to 2,053 people. In 1909, residents incorporated the Town of Hastings, which boasted 399 citizens in 1910.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>John Attaway, *A History of Florida Citrus Freezes* (Lake Alfred: Florida Science Source, Inc., 1997), 2937; *Jacksonville Florida Times Union*, 9 February 1895.

<sup>69</sup>Attaway, *Florida Citrus Freezes*, 34, 43-44; Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census, 1920, *Agriculture* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1922), 378-379.

<sup>70</sup>Sidney Martin, *Florida's Flagler* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1949), 133; *St. Augustine Record*, 4 June 1950; Chapin, *Florida*, 2:696; Bureau of the Census, Eleventh Census, 1890, *Agriculture* (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1895), 128; Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census, 1910, *Agriculture* (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1913), 309; Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census, 1910, *Population*, 309.

One of the leading farmers and businessmen promoting southwest St. Johns County's agricultural development was Charles DuPont, a native son of St. Augustine. DuPont's father, Cornelius DuPont, a St. Augustine planter, had established DuPont's Landing, the predecessor of Federal Point, on the St. Johns River in the 1850s. He constructed a dwelling about 1859 at Federal Point, which later became part of the Groveland Hotel (NR 1996). About 1896, a son, Charles DuPont, worked as a land agent for the Model Land Company, one of Henry Flagler's subsidiaries. He also established a sawmill south of St. Augustine, at the village that became known as DuPont. He formed a partnership with James L. Middleton, and, through his contacts with the railroad company, acquired property and timber leases to cut timber for the FEC. About 1906, DuPont moved to Hastings, and purchased a home and farm. In 1910, he incorporated the Hastings Development Company with J. F. Lambert and I. I. Moody of Bunnell, and G. W. Waller of Hastings. DuPont served as the company's president and general manager, opening real estate for residential development. Surveyor R. M. Burt laid out one of the company's largest developments in 1913, a twenty-five block area north of Hastings' downtown, which formed the basis for the community's African-American neighborhood. DuPont was among the first to introduce potato culture on a large scale at Elkton, purchasing land from the railroad company, dredging a three-mile canal, and clearing the land. By 1914, he had sold his Elkton properties to Bartolo Genovar.<sup>71</sup>

Genovar's family had arrived in St. Augustine during the second Spanish era. A native of St. Augustine, Genovar worked on St. Johns River steamboats following the Civil War, and then operated a general merchandise store. In 1873, he organized a steamship line, which carried passengers and freight between St. Augustine and New York City. At St. Augustine, he worked as vice-president of the Commercial Bank, and served on the board of county commissioners. His other capital ventures included phosphate mining in Polk County, citrus, and real estate. Following the 1890s freezes, he sold his general store, gave up on citrus, and turned to planting potatoes at Elkton, which he named about 1906. That year, Genovar laid out a town plan of Elkton that extended several blocks west of the FEC depot. Constructed about 1906, the FEC expanded the Elkton depot (Figure 14) in 1916 and 1918, first adding a freight room, and then widening the entire building to keep up with increasing shipments. From his office and home in St. Augustine, Genovar promoted Elkton as a potato district rivaling Hastings. Surveyor A. A. Dooley expanded the town plan for the growing village in 1909, providing nine blocks with lots for residential buildings. But, by 1914 Genovar had sold his Elkton interests, and turned to developing pecans in Duval County.<sup>72</sup>

Another influential businessman of the era was G. W. Waller, who first visited Hastings in 1907. A produce merchant from Philadelphia, Waller left the wholesale business of the northeast for the farmlands of St. Johns County in 1909. He bought a farm and became general manager of the Hastings-Elkton Potato Exchange. With his past commercial experience and contacts, he marketed potatoes throughout the country. Later, Waller serving on the Hastings town council, and helped incorporate the Hastings Development Company and served as its treasurer, chairman of the East Hastings Terminal Company, and president of the Hastings Board of Trade. In 1925, Waller opened a subdivision in the Hastings African-American neighborhood north of the town limits.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>71</sup>Chapin, *Florida*, 2: 695-696, Charter Book 1, p. 261, Plat Book 2, p. 8, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>72</sup>Chapin, *Florida*, 2: 695-696; Plat Book 1, p. 129, 154, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County; Florida East Coast Railway Valuation Sheets, SAHS.

<sup>73</sup>Chapin, *Florida*, 2:422-426; Plat Book 3, p. 74, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.



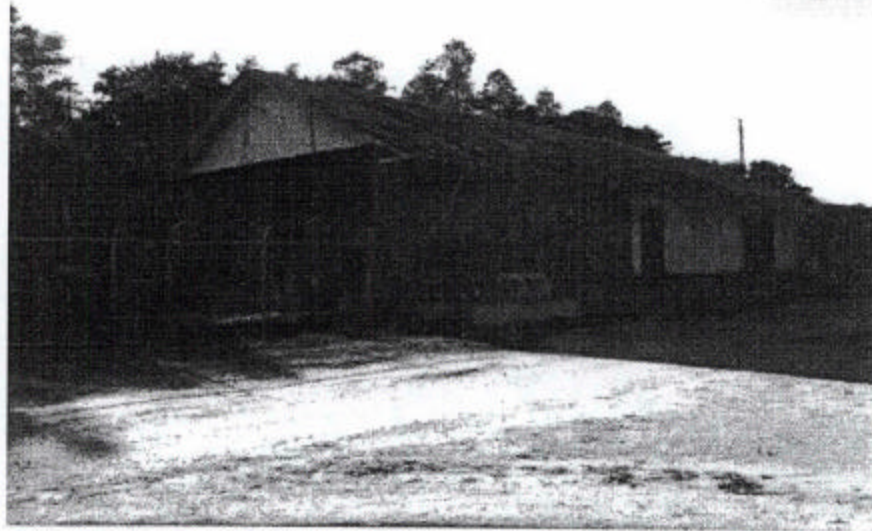


Figure 14: Elkton FEC Depot, c. 1906

James Masters harvested much of the timber standing at Elkton. His father, Bartolo Masters, had farmed in the Elkton region during the antebellum period, harvesting fruits and vegetables, and selling them in their general store. James Masters planted fruit trees, and raised stock. By 1914, he owned five hundred acres with thirty acres cultivated in various crops. He developed a seasonal cottage on Anastasia Island, and served on the Board of County Commissioners.<sup>74</sup>

Born near Hastings, James L. Middleton lost his citrus groves in the mid-1890s, and then worked with Charles DuPont, forming the partnership of DuPont & Middleton. They operated two sawmills, primarily cutting timber for the FEC. In 1904, he left the partnership, and farmed at Hastings for two years. Then he moved to Elkton, worked in a general store, but also began farming again. He acquired one hundred twenty acres near the Elkton FEC depot, cleared fifty acres, and planted crops. By the time Bartolo Genovar laid out the Elkton town plan, Middleton already owned several lots west of the FEC depot. By 1914, his Fairview Farm included one hundred acres planted in potatoes, and, because of effective crop rotation, he harvested corn, hay, and potatoes each season. His livestock consisted, in part, of pedigree Poland China hogs.<sup>75</sup>

E. G. Middleton, a native of England, arrived in Hastings in 1905. He briefly worked with his brother in a general store, and then became manager of the farm. In 1910, he purchased sixty-five acres of undeveloped land three miles south of Hastings. He began clearing land and assembled a dwelling and barns, which he named Pleasant View Farm. By 1913, he had cleared fifty-two acres, which he planted in potatoes each season.<sup>76</sup>

During the era, much of the architecture of Elkton, and indeed most buildings in unincorporated St. Johns County, was derived from or influenced by architectural guidebooks, popular magazines, and from the working out of plans on the site by homeowner and builder. This organic process applied the sum knowledge of a builder's and homeowner's collective experiences of dwellings translated into a new home based around an old form. Most carpenters employed the balloon framing technique to assemble dwellings, a method of construction introduced in Chicago in the 1830s that rapidly replaced the age-old, time-consuming post-and-beam system of mortise-and-tenon joinery. Predicated largely on an economy of scale, the majority of the county's early home builders eschewed the pretentious for the vernacular. Built and laid out from concepts of organizing rural farm landscapes around dwellings, barns, and outbuildings, many farmers relied upon contemporary concepts of the progressive agriculturist's vernacular and rural planning. Elkton and Hastings, especially, embody this process, and retain important late nineteenth and early twentieth century farmsteads and landscapes complete with dwellings, barns, outbuildings, and extensive fields.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Chapin, *Florida*, 2:620-622.

<sup>75</sup>Chapin, *Florida*, 2:636; Plat Book 1, p. 129, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>76</sup>Chapin, *Florida*, 2:407.

<sup>77</sup>John Jakle, Robert Bastian, and Douglas Meyer, *Common Houses in America's Small Towns: The Atlantic Seaboard to the Mississippi Valley* (Athens and London: University of Georgia, 1989), 140-141, 143-144, 163-164; Sally McMurry, *Families & Farmhouses in 19th Century America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 25-48, 209-219.

Contributing to the county's diverse vernacular architectural genre, some dwellings were ordered and assembled from mail order catalog companies. One example of this interesting tradition is the dwelling at 5775 Scoville Road in Elkton, a home ordered from Sears, Roebuck & Company (Figure 15). It bears a strong resemblance to the "Avondale" model, a ready-to-assemble house kit offered by Sears, between 1911 and 1922. Although a number of companies sold house kits as early as the 1890s, ready-to-assemble homes gained in popularity after 1910. Between 1908 and 1925, Sears alone produced more than 30,000 homes, which were built throughout many areas of the United States. Over a period of three decades, Montgomery Ward, Hodgson Company, and Aladdin Homes also produced thousands of house kits, which ranged in price from \$500 to \$5,000 and displayed a variety of styles, including Bungalow, Colonial Revival, Classical Revival, Mission, Queen Anne, and Tudor Revival. A good example of the Bungalow style, the Avondale model in Elkton was assembled about 1912 by George W. Scoville. A native of Omaha, Nebraska, Scoville moved to Elkton about 1908, purchased nearly 100 acres from James C. Middleton in 1909, and began developing his farmstead.<sup>78</sup>

More agricultural investments in St. Johns County came from entrepreneur Utley White. About 1886, White plunged some of his profits from selling the St. Johns & Halifax Railway to Henry Flagler into twenty-six thousand acres at Hastings, where he dredged ditches and cleared land. For two years, he cultivated rice on three hundred fifty acres near the St. Johns River. But, after hail destroyed his fields, White turned to potatoes. He also developed real estate, opening White's subdivision in 1899. The farm and residential tracts radiated to the west and south of Hastings downtown; on some of the western tracts, a small African-American neighborhood emerged. White also made huge investments in timberlands near Haw Creek in present-day Flagler County. There he built two sawmills and eighteen miles of logging railroads. By 1912, White had retired, and had built a mansion on Anastasia Island.<sup>79</sup>

One of the largest agricultural investments of the 1890s in southwest St. Johns County came from the Wetumpka Fruit Company. Organized in Boston, Massachusetts, the company acquired hundreds of acres south of Hastings. Florida managers of the company included George W. Leonard, who arrived in 1881 in Marion County, but moved to Hastings in 1895. Leonard supervised the company's thirteen hundred acre farm south of Hastings. In 1905, his son, George V. Leonard, assumed management of the farm, and planted forty acres in citrus two miles south of the town. Surveyor James Harvey laid out Leonard's subdivision of the Wetumpka Fruit Company lands in 1906, providing large farming tracts and canals for drainage. In 1914, the company shipped thirty rail cars of grapefruit, oranges, and tangerines, and a variety of truck crops from fields on one hundred forty five acres. By the early-1930s, the company maintained a grove amounting to three hundred thirty eight acres, one of the largest citrus holdings in St. Johns County.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Katherine Stevenson and H. Ward Jandl, *Houses By Mail: A Guide to Houses From Sears, Roebuck & Company* (Washington: Preservation Press, 1986), 19-35, 242; Deed Book 15, p. 159, Deed Book 49, p. 72, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>79</sup>Chapin, *Florida*, 2:140-143; Plat Book 1, p. 99, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>80</sup>Chapin, *Florida*, 2:121-122; Plat Book 1, p. 120, 1932 Tax Roll, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.



Figure 15: Sears, Roebuck & Company's "Avondale" at Elkton, c. 1912

East of Hastings, Thomas R. Byrd held property along the wetlands of Deep Creek. A native of Leon County, Florida, Byrd worked at a sawmill in Jacksonville and on a farm in Volusia County before arriving in Hastings in 1886. He organized a large farm, established sawmills, and purchased five hundred acres of pine forest to turpentine. He helped organize the Hastings Development Company, holding the position of vice president and establishing a community named after him near Deep Creek. In 1905, the postal service opened an office at Byrd, but closed the facility in 1916. A small African-American settlement named Silver Hill emerged east of the Byrd community. In 1905, Byrd conveyed a parcel to the congregation of Mt. Olive Baptist Church, and in 1911 another parcel to the county's board of public instruction for a school. Byrd's public service included two terms on the Board of County Commissioners.<sup>81</sup>

Many of St. Johns County's residents were farmers over several generations. About 1910, Edward Pellicer developed a forty acre potato farm southeast of Hastings. His grandfather, Frank Pellicer, a native of France, had arrived in New Smyrna with the Turnbull colony in the 1760s. Later, Frank Pellicer supervised the Bulow Plantation in Volusia County, and then, after the second Seminole war, returned to St. Johns County to help manage General Joseph Hernandez's plantation. His father, James Pellicer, had owned a plantation near the headwaters of the Matanzas River during the antebellum period. Edward Pellicer would continue the family tradition of farming, setting out potato fields near Hastings during the early twentieth century.<sup>82</sup>

In dramatic contrast to the agricultural regions of Elkton and Hastings, the resort communities of Summer Haven and Crescent Beach emerged on the Atlantic seaboard in the late-nineteenth century. During the era, beach cottage communities formed along Florida's coastline, where seasonal residents retreated to enjoy cool breezes in relative seclusion. Like many of Florida's oceanfront sites, Matanzas Inlet attracted settlers and visitors from northern climates. In the 1880s, Jesse Burton, Albert Graves, and John Harp created the development on the south shore of Matanzas Inlet. Burton's wife, Genevieve Burton, suggested the name Summer Haven. In 1893, on the initial application for a post office, E. G. Rathbone proposed naming the village Burton, but at Burton's insistence, scratched through the name, replacing it with Summer Haven.<sup>83</sup>

James J. Harvey laid out the Summer Haven subdivision in 1886 with seventy-six lots stretching along the barrier island. By 1890, the partners had sold nearly twenty lots and the community consisted of simple cottages, a boarding house, and a general store. Private yachts or fishing boats from St. Augustine provided transportation between the barrier island and the mainland. But, in 1893, after storms and fires destroyed much of the colony, many residents abandoned the seaside retreat. By then, railroads had extended lines deep into the Florida peninsula, opening new vacation sites with relatively easy transportation. Indicative of the pattern of development at Summer Haven,

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<sup>81</sup>Bradbury and Hallock, *Florida Post Offices*, 12; Chapin, *Florida*, 2: 731; Deed Book 10, p. 306, Deed Book 22, p. 302, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>82</sup>Chapin, *Florida*, 2:553-554.

<sup>83</sup>Deed Book Z, p. 562, Deed Book HH, p. 603, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; Graham, *St. Augustine*, 62-63; Bradbury and Hallock, *Florida Post Offices*, 81; Jessica Burton letter, St. Johns County Miscellaneous File, SAHS; Location of Post Offices, Florida, 1821-1950, National Archives microfilm series M1126.

the United States postal service opened an office at the retreat in October 1893, closed it in June 1895, and resumed service in 1907.<sup>84</sup>

In the late-1890s, T. A. and Mary C. Mellon consolidated many of these holdings to make a family retreat. A nephew of Andrew Mellon, financier and United States Secretary of the Treasury, Thomas A. Mellon founded the Mellon-Stuart Company, a prominent engineering company in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Cottages known as the "Lodge" and "The Hut" already occupied the site when the Mellons arrived (Figure 16). A subsequent revision of the village plan was devised in 1903 to help guide future development. Soon other wealthy seasonal visitors acquired property and built seaside cottages at Summer Haven, including the Calhouns, Collettes, Hilliards, and John J. Vertrees, the latter a judge from Davidson County, Tennessee. Not all property owners were out-of-state seasonal residents. In 1913, V. E. and Emma Shwab sold their Summer Haven property to George Graham of nearby Crescent City. In 1905, the sloop, *George W. Corbett*, provided access to Summer Haven on Sunday afternoons, leaving the docks of St. Augustine early in the morning and returning late in the afternoon.<sup>85</sup>

Crescent Beach also derives its heritage as a seaside retreat. In 1903, James C. Middleton acquired from the Federal government much of the property around which the village developed. A post office opened in 1904, and Middleton laid out a town plan in 1912. Early property owners included William and Anna Barnes, Francis Caruthers, W. C. Middleton, Harold Pomar, and James H. Yelvington (Figure 17). William A. Cubbedge arrived, invested in property, and helped Middleton develop real estate after Middleton became ill. The main streets of Crescent Beach were named for the three primary developers and property owners: Cubbedge, Middleton, and Pomar. In 1926, a bridge spanned the Matanzas River, connecting Crescent Beach with Crescent City, Hastings, and other interior communities.<sup>86</sup>

In contrast to the farm districts and resort communities, the St. Augustine suburb of New Augustine, later known as West Augustine, took form as a large residential development. During the British period, the area had been a plantation of John Forbes, an Anglican minister. Known as Mount Forbes, the family plantation stood southwest of Oyster Creek. In 1785, the Spanish governor divided the tract into four grants. The largest of those was granted to Francisco and Juan Triay, Minorcan farmers. Other grantees included Jose Burgo who developed orange groves and a plantation on the property between 1794 and 1822. The Crown awarded another tract to Antonio Huertas in 1791. In 1837, the property was acquired by Francis L. Dancy, mayor of St. Augustine (1838-1840) and a member of the Legislative Council (1842). In 1870, he sold a portion north of King Street to John F. Whitney, founder of the *St. Augustine Press* and a relative of inventor Eli

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<sup>84</sup>Deed Book Z, p. 562, Deed Book HH, p. 603, Plat Book 1, p. 155, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; Graham, *St. Augustine*, 62-63; Bradbury and Hallock, *Florida Post Offices*, 81; Jessica Burton letter, St. Johns County Miscellaneous File, SAHS.

<sup>85</sup>Plat Book 1, p. 124, Deed Book 22, p. 320, Deed Book 39, p. 424, Deed Book 52, p. 382, OR 126, p. 516, 519, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; *St. Augustine Record*, 15 August 1905; *New York Times*, 17 April 1948.

<sup>86</sup>Plat Book 1, p. 177, Plat Book 2, p. 58, Plat Book 4, p. 27, Deed Book 14, p. 301, Deed Book 15, p. 144A, Deed Book 27, p. 565, 616, Deed Book 37, p. 418, Deed Book 113, p. 66, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; *St. Augustine Record-Compass*, 30 January-5 February 1992; Bradbury and Hallock, *Florida Post Offices*, 19.



Figure 16: The Lodge at Summer Haven, c. 1895



Figure 17: Barnes' Property at Crescent Beach, 1919



Whitney. Whitney subdivided his holdings in 1874. That same year, the east one-half of the Antonios Huertas grant was divided into twenty-seven blocks. Then, in 1878, Dancy who by then lived in Orange Mills, Florida, laid out the Dancy Tract. Occupying several hundred acres, the subdivision consisted of one hundred eighteen blocks, each divided into six lots. Whitney's Ravenswood languished into the early-twentieth century, and later was redivided nine times between 1888 and 1926. The Dancy Tract also experienced subsequent redivision, and became the basis for St. Johns County's largest African-American community. These two tracts--Dancy and Ravenswood--set out a plan of development for the area known as New Augustine, and later, West Augustine.<sup>87</sup>

Subsequent property acquired from Dancy and then carved into relatively small subdivisions included Clark's Addition (1887), McLaughlin's Addition (1888), Lincoln Park (1914), F. N. Holmes (1915), and College Park (1918). Among the largest of those, Clark's Addition created one hundred seventeen blocks south of King Street and west of Nassau and Duval Streets. Each block contained twenty-four lots, creating eighteen hundred building sites. An ambitious plan for development, the subdivision attracted few developers or homeowners, and many of the planned roads were never constructed. Still, some houses and buildings appeared in the late nineteenth century and opening decades of the twentieth, primarily in the northernmost area near King Street. At its western edge, Clark's Addition was bounded by the FEC tracks, which separated it from the later College Park Addition of the 1920s.<sup>88</sup>

Early churches of West Augustine included St. Luke's A. M. E. Church, established in 1888; St. James Baptist Church, organized in April 1898; and Dawson Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal, which was founded in 1908. Growth in West Augustine compelled St. Johns County's Board of Public Instruction to acquire land for new schools. In 1893, the board purchased a one-acre site on McLaughlin Street, and within fifteen years several wood-frame schools had been constructed (Figure 18). Between 1890 and 1910, West Augustine grew from a settlement of 555 residents into a small town of nearly 1,300 people. Growth in West Augustine accelerated in the early decades of the twentieth century, and in 1922 that portion of the suburb east of Whitney Street was incorporated into the City of St. Augustine. Still, the area outside the city limits experienced growth, and several new residential subdivisions were opened in the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>89</sup>

The construction of the Dixie Highway was among the most significant developments in St. Johns County in the decade before the Great War. During the interval, several Florida counties, including Polk and St. Johns, expanded their road systems. Although Florida's Good Road Association movement had been active since the late 1890s, it was not until 1915 that the movement gained momentum at the state level, leading to the creation of the Florida State Automobile Association in Orlando in 1917. St. Johns County was part of this early groundswell of activity to create paved roads that would encourage visitors to tour the state by vehicle.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>87</sup>*American State Papers*, 3:708; Webb, *Florida*, 200; Plat Book 1, p. 1, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County; Chapin, *Florida*, 2:431-432.

<sup>88</sup>Deed Book NN, p. 486, Plat Book 1, p. 77, 98, 107, Plat Book 2, p. 24, 55, Clerk of Courts, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>89</sup>Deed Book VV, p. 418, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; several of West Augustine's churches have date stones and cornerstones that reveal their history of organization and buildings.

<sup>90</sup>Baynard Kendrick, *Florida Trails to Turnpikes* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1964), 57; Harry Cutler, *History of Florida: Past and Present*, 3 vols., (Chicago and New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1923), 1: 437.



Figure 18: Old Public School No. 6, West St. Augustine, c. 1895

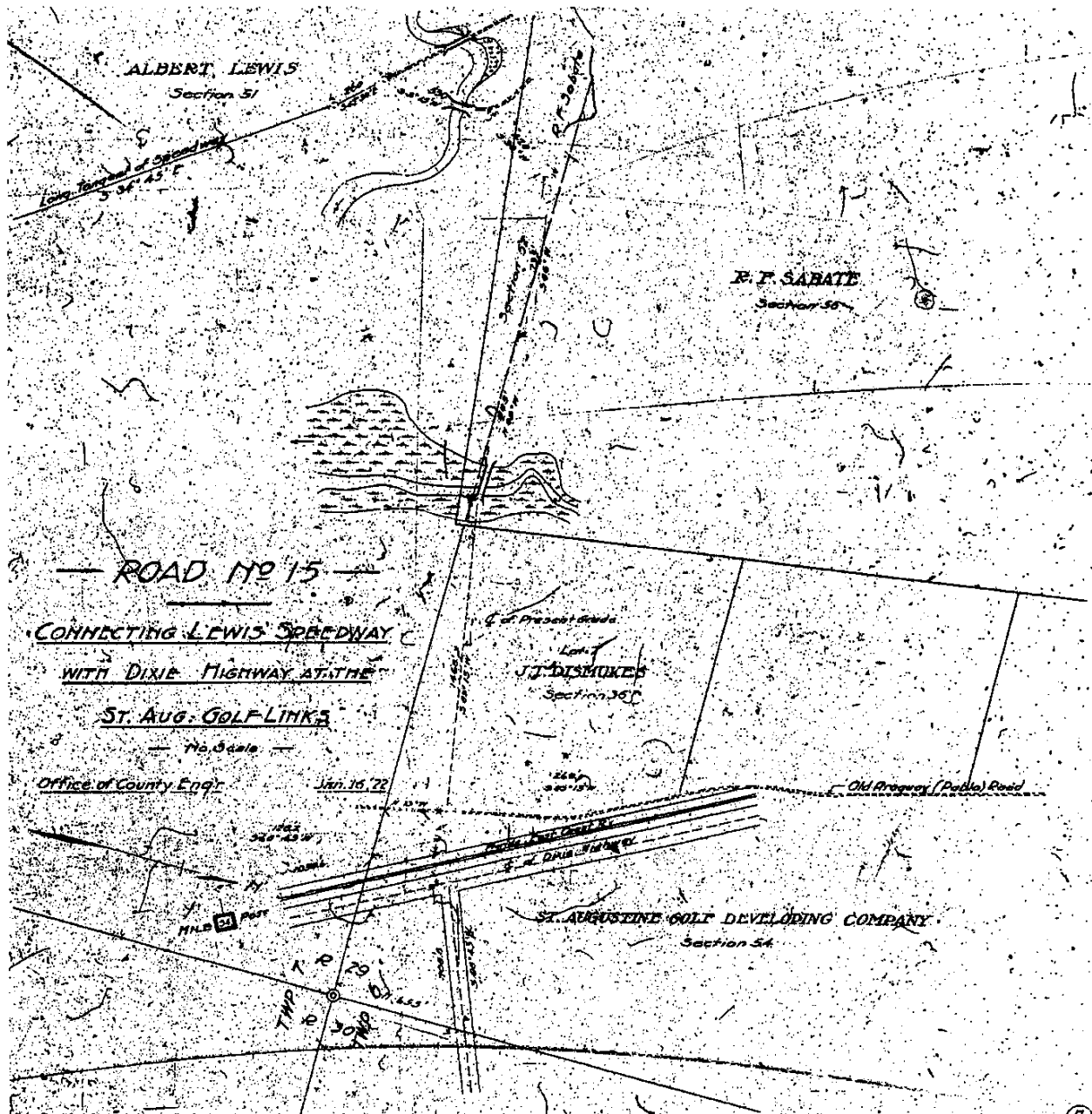


Figure 19: Dixie Highway & Lewis Speedway, 1992

Completed in 1916, the original Dixie Highway between the Duval County/St. Johns County line and Bunnell, via St. Augustine and Hastings, was the first brick paved highway on Florida's east coast to extend through an entire county. Brick construction of the road began in 1914 at Durbin by the Wilson Construction Company and J. B. McCrary Engineering Company of Atlanta. Other stretches of the highway were built by the Bryson Construction Company. The highway's alignment through Elkton included two dangerous right-angle turns. Still, the nine-foot wide roadway with concrete curbs was completed near Hastings on 4 March 1916. Flush with pride over their achievement, St. Johns County's residents marked the northern county line with an arch that spanned the highway announcing to motorists that they had arrived in St. Johns County. Farther north, Duval County's portion of the highway remained dirt. But, following the completion of the highway through St. Johns County and the discussion about marking the boundary with an arch, the county commissioners of Duval County began paving the highway with shell. Various stretches of brick-paved roadway and even older bridges still exist in the county. One lies near the outskirts of Palatka and parallel to present-day State Road 207. Another stretch with a small concrete bridge stands near Durbin Creek in close proximity to the Duval County/St. Johns County line.<sup>91</sup>

The new road system greatly facilitated travel and communication with neighboring counties, and encouraged development in Elkton, Hastings, and Spuds. Significant growth in southern St. Johns County resulted in the Florida Legislature creating Flagler County in 1917. Named for Henry Flagler, one of Florida's railroad barons, the new political jurisdiction was formed from parts of St. Johns County and Volusia County. Bunnell, an agricultural center founded southeast of Hastings in the 1890s, was named the seat of local government.<sup>92</sup>

Generally, after 1916 the building trades declined as the United States turned its energies toward assisting the allied forces in World War I. Federal government restrictions on the construction industry reduced house building, causing a postwar housing shortage whose effects were aggravated by rising material costs. Still, the period between the 1890 and World War I brought expansion to St. Johns County as residents and companies engaged in town building, carving farm districts out of various regions, and establishing small resort towns along the coastline. A large African-American community in West Augustine and another smaller settlement at Armstrong took shape and matured. The county's location south of Jacksonville, serviced by a superior railroad, and gently rolling terrain presented an attractive site for settlers. Infrastructural improvements in the form of railroads and paved roads laid a solid foundation for growth when development resumed in the 1920s.<sup>93</sup>

### **Boom and Bust, 1919-1928**

In the decade following World War I, the nation entered a period of rapid economic expansion. The population of Florida increased from 968,470 to 1,468,211 and thirteen new counties were

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<sup>91</sup>Kendrick, *Florida Trails to Turnpikes*, 56-57, 65; *St. Augustine Record*, 1, 19 February 1916, 28 June 1964, 5 November 1977.

<sup>92</sup>Kendrick, *Florida Trails to Turnpikes*, 56-57, 65; *St. Augustine Record*, 28 June 1964, 5 November 1977.

<sup>93</sup>Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the American Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1981), 194-195; Weyerhaeuser Forest Products, *Your Future Home: Architect-Designed Houses of the Early 1920s* (Washington: American Institute of Architects, 1992), v.

organized. Improved transportation networks facilitated travel by automobile and railroad. By 1927, six thousand miles of railroad tracks crisscrossed the state, and sixteen hundred miles of roadways supported vehicular travel. In early-1925, twenty-five passenger trains arrived daily in Jacksonville, carrying over six hundred thousand passengers to Florida destinations. Jacksonville's chamber of commerce also reported that one hundred fifty thousand out-of-state automobiles passed through the city that season. In 1924, the Florida Legislature issued an open invitation to wealthy investors with the enactment of a constitutional amendment prohibiting either income or inheritance taxes. The resulting capital influx accelerated an already well-developed surge of land purchases. Real estate sales mushroomed, quickly overinflating property values. Although the boom had its genesis in south Florida, in virtually every city and town new subdivisions were platted and lots sold and resold for quick profits.<sup>94</sup>

In St. Johns County, the population increased from thirteen thousand people to nearly nineteen thousand. But, the City of St. Augustine enjoyed most of this growth, if census enumerators tallying residents and subdivision recordings serve as accurate indicators. In the city, new subdivisions were platted, and houses infilled many lots left vacant during earlier periods of development. Some of this enthusiasm spilled across the San Sebastian River and elsewhere in the St. Augustine vicinity. Property owners and developers opened subdivisions named Araquay Park, Augustine Heights, Masters', Parque Aviles, Pomar's, Ponce de Leon Heights, Schaler's, Woodlawn, and countless other developments outside the city limits. Frank Stephens and A. E. Pilgrim organized the Santa Rosa Corporation, and hired landscape architect G. F. Young of Tampa and St. Petersburg to lay out the Santa Rosa subdivision, which they named "A Residential Masterpiece" along Masters Drive. The design of both Araquay Park and Santa Rosa subdivisions exhibited characteristics of the City Beautiful movement--curvilinear streets, irregular lots, and small parks. Many of the county's most fashionable boom-time houses were built in these two subdivisions. On Anastasia Island south of the city limits, Menendez Park subdivision opened in 1924. The plat radiated across twenty nine blocks, taking in the old Spanish chimney and well, where stone cutters had harvested coquina for the Castillo in the seventeenth century. Old Beach Road meandered through its contours.<sup>95</sup>

North of the city, C. M. White of Jacksonville opened Woodland Heights along the Dixie Highway in 1925. Reorganizing the earlier and undeveloped St. Once Village Town Site of 1916, the new subdivision consisted of ninety-two blocks. The Jacksonville Real Estate Company handled sales. Although the company sold and resold many lots, relatively few buildings were constructed. The same theme began to play out over and over again throughout the county. At Hilden, the Federal Corporation of Jacksonville laid out an eighty-nine block town plan that straddled the Dixie Highway and the newer State Highway 4 (today's U.S. 1). Hundreds of lots measuring 100' x 25' intrigued buyers but few prospective homeowners. At Tocoí, the Michigan-Florida Land Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan, prepared an eighteen-block subdivision with thirty-two lots each, but their expectations of home builders flocking to the river community outran the reality of the overheated real estate market.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>94</sup>Charlton Tebeau, *A History of Florida* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971), 377-79, 382; David Nolan, *Fifty Feet in Paradise: The Booming of Florida* (New York, 1984), 148-207.

<sup>95</sup>Plat Book 3, p. 66, 103, 145-149, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>96</sup>Plat Book 2, p. 38, Plat Book 3, p. 59, 63, 67, 78, 108-109, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.

F. F. Shore, George F. Grey, and C. B. Mier of Rutland, Vermont organized the Vermont-Florida Realty Company in 1925. Southwest of St. Augustine, the company platted the Vermont Heights real estate development on State Road 207. Spreading across several hundred acres, the subdivision featured a rectilinear grid of streets that defined several parks and hundred of residential building lots. The developers named most streets for the states of New England, and placed various restrictive clauses in deeds, which defined building setbacks, requirements of fireproof roofs, exclusions of black property holders, and no commercial liquor sales from any property. The company made some of its early sales to speculators and prospective home owners from Vermont. B. B. Perkins and John Rashaw of St. Albans, Vermont, and M. B. Kelly of Lake Bomoseen, Vermont acquired several lots in 1926. Despite those early land sales, the hopes of the developers remained largely unfulfilled, and by the early-1930s the Vermont-Florida Realty Company held most of the property. Shore, Grey, and Mier each built seasonal dwellings on New Hampshire Avenue. One apocryphal story comes from a long-time resident, who recounted that one of the developers, in an effort to salvage his flagging share of the development, auctioned off the parks in the subdivision without the consent of his partners, then committed suicide after they discovered the fraud.<sup>97</sup>

Crescent Beach expanded with several new subdivisions. Elsewhere in southeast St. Johns County, developers opened the Boy's Work, Inc., Matanzas Inlet Beach, and Surfcrest subdivisions. Even Hastings shed some its agricultural character as its downtown expanded with new brick buildings. But there, the population fell from 761 to 673 in the decade of the land boom. Relatively small subdivisions opened by G. W. Waller and L. S. Killingworth in Hastings' African American community nearly filled with small wood-frame dwellings and buildings. Extensive fields and a rural agricultural landscape characterized much of southwest St. Johns County, and rural forests many other regions of the county. Yet, even tiny Yelvington became caught in the real estate fever. Organized about 1899 as a whistle stop along the FEC tracks, the Yelvington community consisted of farmers and railroad laborers. In 1921, the FEC assembled two labor houses at the settlement. Yelvington Heights opened in September 1925 with twenty-six blocks that remained largely unsold and vacant during the 1920s.<sup>98</sup>

St. Johns County's farm economy underwent reorganization and consolidation, but agriculture remained an important source of income. The number of farms in the county steadily decreased during the decade from 402 in 1920 to 381 in 1925, and fell to 348 in 1930. Only six percent of the county's lands accounted for farms, fields, and groves, and the average size of farm steadily diminished in size between 1920 and 1925 from 118 acres to seventy four acres. Most farms were owner-operated, but a few were operated by managers, tenants, and even sharecroppers. Twenty-four African American owners and managers operated farms in 1925, compared with only fifteen black tenants and sharecroppers. By then, African Americans were farming 750 acres of land throughout the county.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>Plat Book 3, p. 77, 110, Deed Book 72, p. 477, Deed Book 79, p. 183, 230, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; Virginia Riley, informant, 2000.

<sup>98</sup>Plat Book 3, p. 13, 74, 82, 92, 150, Plat Book 4, p. 27, 62, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>99</sup>Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census, 1930, *Agriculture* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1932), 671, 677.

Southwest St. Johns County had already become a center of potato growing. In 1929, county farms reported a bumper harvest of 1,126,863 bushels of Irish potatoes. Neighboring Putnam County fell behind a distant second that year, reporting 427,000 bushels. Farmers planted various truck crops, including cabbage, celery, corn, cucumbers, and peas. Some farms grew the traditional southern crops of cotton and tobacco for home consumption, but commercial growers only reported eleven acres of cotton in 1924, and no tobacco production during the decade. Indicative of St. Johns County's agricultural growth, in 1923 the University of Florida established the Hastings Potato Investigations Laboratory (Figure 20). For several years, the research facility was installed in rented buildings. Then, in 1927, the Hastings Potato Growers Association donated land, and the University of Florida developed a laboratory building, greenhouse, and storage buildings on East St. Johns Avenue. Hastings enjoyed substantial growth during the boom with the population increasing from 673 in 1920 to 1,035 in 1930.<sup>100</sup>

In 1930, the county claimed 348 farms and 23,000 acres of farmlands. Elkton and Hastings alone accounted for 255 farms supported by 17,000 acres. But, because of crop failures, fallow fields, and large tracts of uncleared woodlands contained within farms, only 11,000 acres produced crops. Farms lightly sprinkled other regions of the county. Outside of Elkton and Hastings, the Fruit Cove and Moultrie census districts boasted the largest number of farms. At Fruit Cove, twenty-three farms boasted 229 acres in cultivated lands. That year, Fruit Cove's farmlands and buildings accounted for an investment of \$161,100, and \$4,000 in implements. Moultrie claimed twenty-four farms with 496 acres planted in crops, and nearly \$210,000 worth of buildings, farmlands, and implements. Both regions contained vast stretches of woodlands, nearly 900 acres each, which stood uncleared as farmers adapted to changes in the 1920s and 1930s economy. Palm Valley supported ten farms, and the Sampson settlement only seven farms. Combined those areas supported fewer than 100 acres in cultivated crops in the late-1920s, and the investment in buildings and land represented less than \$25,000. Nine farms sprinkled the landscape around Bakersville. In 1930, Matanzas and Trout Creek farms together accounted for only nine of the 348 farms that contributed to St. Johns County's agriculture economy.<sup>101</sup> Accounting for only six farms and about fifty acres of farmlands, the Matanzas census district comprised a relatively small section of southeast St. Johns County, including Crescent Beach and Summer Haven. Presumably, most of those farms sprinkled the mainland, radiating out from State Road 206 and U. S. 1 South.

St. Johns County's African-American communities demonstrated strong growth patterns, especially in West Augustine. Building construction spread throughout several neighborhoods. New subdivisions were opened by J. A. Atcheson, James and Joseph Colee, F. M. Clark, and John Luke of the Osceola Acres Corporation. Heavily developed portions of the growing community included the Clark, Colee, and Lincoln Park subdivisions, which radiated off King Street west of Moultrie Junction. Near the western edge of the community, the Florida Home & Investment Company had opened the College Park subdivision in 1917. The company's president, M. F. McCleary, promoted the development, playing off the name of the recently developed Florida Normal & Industrial

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<sup>100</sup>Pete Weingartner, "Information Packet for North Florida Potato Tour," Hastings: Chipping Potato Seminar, 1999, n.p.; Bureau of the Census, *Agriculture, 1930*, 2: 671, 677, 701, 707.

<sup>101</sup>Bureau of the Census, *Agriculture, 1930*, 1:101.



Figure 20: Hastings Research and Education Center, 1927



Institute. The subdivision included parks, circular drives, a sawmill site, and access to both Tocol Road and the FEC tracks. Adjacent to the institute, the subdivision attracted investors, some of whom constructed dwellings and commercial buildings. Organized by Abraham Lincoln Lewis and W. H. Lee, the African American Corporation of Duval County also opened several large developments in West Augustine. A native of Florida, Lewis worked as a mill machinist in Jacksonville, and helped found the Afro-American Industrial and Benefit Association about 1901. By the 1930s, he had built the life insurance business into one of the largest black-owned companies in Florida.<sup>102</sup>

King Street maintained its character as the commercial hub of West Augustine, and carpenters assembled dwellings in residential neighborhoods that spread into the surrounding blocks. Residents organized new churches and rebuilt older sanctuaries. Led by the Reverend F. P. Griggs and trustees S. Moore, A. C. Centers, and Fred Harrell, the congregation of Dawson Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church replaced its aging sanctuary in 1923. The S. D. W. Smith Lodge No. 481 organized in 1925, and met in various buildings until the lodge constructed a large meeting hall nearly two decades later on West King Street.<sup>103</sup>

Civil engineer Goold T. Butler laid out many of the subdivisions in West Augustine and throughout boomtime St. Johns County. A native of New York, Butler was educated in civil engineering at the Pennsylvania Military Academy. After moving to Jacksonville in 1878, he helped lay out the alignment of the Green Cove Springs & Melrose Railway, and sections of the Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West Railway. In 1898, Henry Flagler hired Butler as chief engineer of the Florida East Coast Hotel System, a position he held until 1912, when he opened a private practice in St. Augustine. A member of the American Association of Engineers and the Florida Engineering Society, Butler served as St. Johns County's chief engineer, and was also chief engineer of several development companies, including E. L. Barnett, Inc. of New York City and the Fountain of Youth Hotel Company of St. Augustine. Between 1910 and 1930, Butler surveyed numerous subdivisions in St. Johns County, including Colee, Florida Home & Investment Company, and Niroc Heights in West Augustine.<sup>104</sup>

Perhaps the most significant undertaking in unincorporated St. Johns County during the 1920s was the expansion of the Florida Normal & Industrial Institute in West Augustine. The roots of the institute included the Florida Baptist Institute in Live Oak (1879) and Jacksonville's Florida Baptist Academy (1892). In 1917, through the encouragement of the St. Augustine Chamber of Commerce, the president of the academy, Nathan W. Collier, made plans to relocate to St. Augustine. The institute purchased property in West Augustine that had been inhabited by African Americans since the British period. Located west of Holmes Boulevard, the tract had been occupied by John Hanson

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<sup>102</sup>Plat Book 3, p. 22, 47, Plat Book 4, p. 28, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; Wood, *Jacksonville's Architectural Heritage*, 370.

<sup>103</sup>Dawson Chapel cornerstone; Lodge No. 481 cornerstone; Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Map of St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida* (New York: Sanborn Company, 1946).

<sup>104</sup>Cutler, *Florida*, 2:118.

who operated a plantation there, enduring attacks by Seminoles in the 1830s. By the 1840s, several major roads passed near the site: one connecting Fort Peyton and Picolata, and another from St. Augustine to Fort Hanson near Moccasin Branch. J. R. Parrott of the FEC acquired the property in 1898, and then conveyed it to Fountain N. Holmes in 1910. Expanding his Ponce De Leon Dairy only briefly onto the property, Holmes sold the tract to the institute in 1917, which opened classes at the West Augustine site in October 1918.<sup>105</sup>

A campus plan guided the development of buildings, fields, and training facilities on both sides of King Street. Near the southeast corner of the campus, the FEC built a wood frame hip-roof shed at College Park station. Dr. Andrew Anderson gave ten thousand dollars for the construction of the first temporary, wood frame buildings, and Mrs. Marion Leavitt of Janesville, Wisconsin contributed additional donations. Plans accelerated in October 1924, when the school incorporated and adopted the name of Florida Normal & Industrial Institute. Among the purposes of its charter, the directors outlined the "maintenance of an institution of learning under Christian auspices for the education of colored young men, women, and children." The charter also directed that a majority of the board of trustees "shall be members of a Baptist Church in good and regular standing." Established on the precepts of Booker T. Washington through an emphasis on accommodation, hard work, service, and technical education, the institute had graduated several hundred students by the end of its third decade. Incorporators in 1924 included various ministers, educators, and even a military general. Prominent St. Augustine leaders included philanthropist Andrew Anderson, James E. Ingraham of the FEC, and F. N. Holmes. Most of the incorporators lived in Florida, as widespread as Fort Lauderdale, Miami, and Tampa, but several listed out-of-state residences, such as Lansing, Michigan; New York City; and Philadelphia.<sup>106</sup>

By 1923, various wood-frame buildings sprinkled the site, including dairy barns and silos, an arts and crafts building, a boy's dormitory, manual training shop, and a sawmill. Part of the impetus for incorporating, the institute embarked on an ambitious \$500,000 building program in 1924. That year, the institute completed its first permanent, masonry building, Anderson Hall (Figure 21). The institute occupied Pickford Hall in 1925, and dedicated two three-story dormitories, Bacon Hall and Fisher Hall, in 1927. Prominent developer August Heckscher of New York City provided resources to construct a gymnasium and swimming pool in 1931, and Mrs. George Coleman and Katherine Westfall contributed funding for a dining hall in 1937, the same year a library was developed. Also built during the 1930s, a tripartite structure, named the A. L. Lewis Arch, marked the entrance into the institute along King Street. In 1935, the directors hired H. J. Stockmans, a landscape architect from Ormond Beach, to redesign the campus to include discrete fields set aside for the growing of bulbs, sugar cane, vegetables, and various nursery plants. West of the existing buildings, Stockmans placed curvilinear walks within a formal gardens. The institute completed the N. W. Collier Trade Building in 1941, one of the last facilities constructed before World War II.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup>Works Progress Administration, *Spanish Land Grants in Florida*, 3: Claim E4, 5: Claim T11; Deed Book L, p. 98, Deed Book M, p. 327, Deed Book O, p. 620, Deed Book 36, p. 217, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; Florida Normal & Industrial Institute, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report* (St. Augustine: Florida Normal & Industrial Institute, 1923), 1-2.

<sup>106</sup>Charter Book 3, p. 261, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; Florida Normal & Industrial Institute, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report*, 2.

<sup>107</sup>Florida Normal & Industrial Institute, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report*, 3-5, 9, 12, 16; Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Map of St. Augustine*, 1930, 1946.



Figure 21a: Florida Normal & Industrial Institute, 1930.

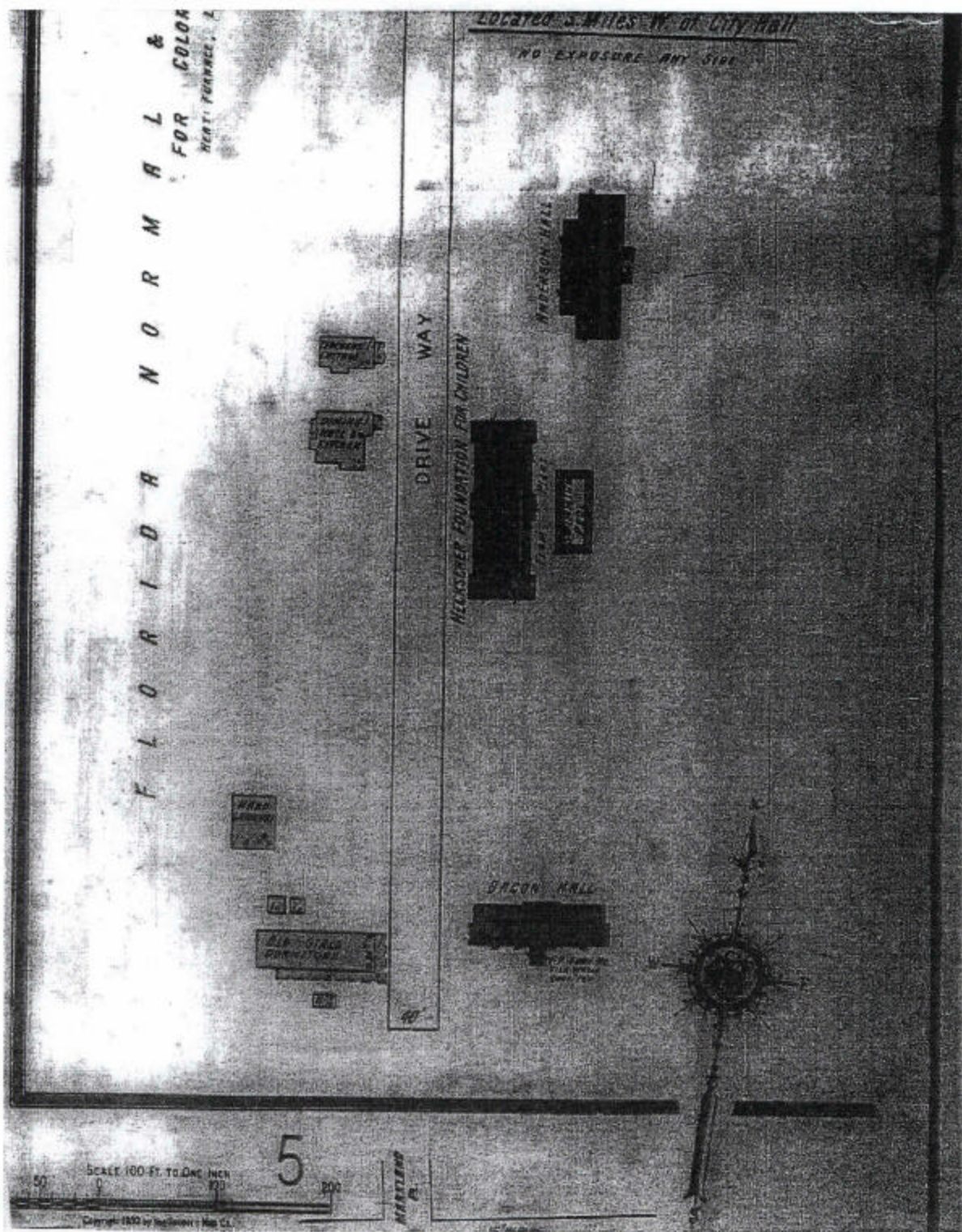


Figure 21b: Florida Normal & Industrial Institute, 1930.

For decades, many of West Augustine's black families worked for the FEC, which double-tracked its mainline between Jacksonville and Miami in the mid-1920s. Increased rail traffic along Florida's east coast made necessary the expansion, which included realigning the tracks south of St. Augustine, bypassing Palatka and using a more eastern route into Bunnell. Shortening the line by twenty miles, the new mainline cutoff ran through West Augustine, where it became known as Moultrie Junction. To the south, the FEC built two new bridges and extended a siding at Elkton. It also expanded the depot at Spuds in 1927. But, elsewhere the FEC abandoned its siding at Sampson, and retired a telegraph office at Durbin. Large projects at St. Augustine included constructing a new office building. The FEC also added twenty new locomotives and cabooses, several hundred box, rock, and ballast cars to its roster. Although new depots appeared in numerous south Florida communities, the FEC made few improvements to most buildings in the unincorporated areas of St. Johns County. Near the height of the boom, the FEC regularly shuttled eighteen passenger trains between Jacksonville and Miami in a twenty-four hour period. The "Dixie Flyer," "Key West Express," and "Everglades Limited" were picturesque names adopted by the company for its crack trains.<sup>108</sup>

The air began to seep out of Florida's speculative land bubble in late 1925. Statewide bank deposits reached \$875 million in 1925, but then began to decline. In August the FEC announced an embargo on freight shipments to south Florida, where ports and rail terminals became clogged with unused building supplies. Bankers and businessmen throughout the nation complained about transfers of money to Florida. As the collapse unfolded and construction slowed, it became clear that many subdivisions would remain undeveloped and become bankrupt. Banks collapsed, were reorganized, and then failed again. Many investors lost faith in the state's economic future. As construction tapered off, devastating hurricanes in 1926 and 1928 flooded several south Florida communities, swept buildings off foundations, and killed thousands of people, providing a sad closing chapter to the land speculation fever gone bust. Although both storms entered the peninsula in south Florida, the aftermath of the storms reverberated throughout the state, and temporarily altered Florida's east coast vacationland image to that of a wasteland of wind-swept beaches. Although many people of St. Johns County suffered financial reverses from the collapse of the boom, the misfortunes of some became windfalls for others. Sagging property values and foreclosed properties attracted investors fortunate enough to have retained some level of wealth after the Depression began. Within a decade of the land bust, renewed construction in Vero Beach promised jobs and revitalized growth, and St. Johns County would build on its substantial reputation.<sup>109</sup>

## Great Depression and World War II, 1929-1945

Many of St. Johns County's home owners and developers were still reeling from the collapse of the land boom when, in October 1929, the stock market began its downward spiral into the Great Depression. The financial panic delivered its full impact in the early-1930s. By 1933 numerous Florida banks had failed. Deposits and investments fell and annual incomes declined. Growth

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<sup>108</sup>Lake Worth Herald, 5 March 1924; Stuart News, 6 March 1924; Bramson, *Florida East Coast Railway*, 102; Florida East Coast Railway Valuations, St. Augustine Historical Society.

<sup>109</sup>Tebeau, *Florida*, 385-87; William Frazer and John J. Guthrie, *The Florida Land Boom: Speculation, Money, and the Banks* (Westport and London: Quorum Books, 1995), 115-166; *Stuart News*, July 24, 1926, March 18, June 1, November 30, 1927.

flagged, and the county's population inched upwards from 18,676 residents in 1930 to 20,012 a decade later. Small gains were made in rural regions. In 1930, only sixty-three people resided in the Palm Valley district. Ten years later, nearly 350 people lived there, in part, because of the opening of the fashionable Ponte Vedra Beach resort and improvements along the Intracoastal Waterway. Still, much of Palm Valley remained an unbroken wilderness, and during the years of prohibition Palm Valley became a moonshine distilling center, known for its prized palmetto berry spirits. At Sampson, the population climbed from fifty to 187, and the Depression-era population at Fruit Cove grew from 204 to 240. Late in the decade, M. H. and Mary Bishop opened several units of Bishop Estates subdivision for development along the south bank of Julington Creek. Perhaps the most significant growth occurred at Bakersville, however, which witnessed a population influx of over three hundred people during the decade. In all, Bakersville, Fruit Cove, and Trout Creek settlements accounted for about five hundred people in 1930; by 1940, over one thousand people lived in those communities.<sup>110</sup>

Still largely a rural county, St. Johns County lost some of its agricultural characteristics in the 1930s. The trend began earlier in the twentieth century, persisted during the Great Depression, and accelerated after World War II. The population of St. Augustine stood at 12,111 in 1930 with settlements and communities elsewhere in the county accounting for about 6,000 people. A decade later, while sixteen hundred people lived on farms, approximately thirty-five hundred people were rural non-farm residents. In 1940, the county's forestry and logging industries supplied jobs to fewer than five hundred people.<sup>111</sup>

During this period demands to help protect heavily forested regions of the county resulted in new fire detection infrastructure. The Florida Forest Service, in association with property owners and timber companies, began installing fire lookout, or watch, towers. Publications on the destructive nature of forest fires in Florida had appeared as early as 1926, complete with various recommendations for preventative measures. In the 1930s, the Department of the Interior began using watchtowers to protect forested lands in national parks. Often employing towers displaying rustic, timber-framed architectural features that blended with the surrounding landscape, the National Park Service often used steel towers in relatively flat regions. In cooperation with private landholders and the Federal government, the Florida Forest and Park Service implemented a program of fire towers in Florida. By 1939, several hundred of the structures helped protect the state's forest reserves. Although towers stood in forests in adjacent Clay, Duval, Flagler, and Volusia Counties, no structures were erected in St. Johns County until the 1940s.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup>Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census, 1930, *Population*, 213; Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census, 1940, *Population* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942), 2: 112; Allen Morris, *Florida Handbook* (Tallahassee: Peninsular Publishing Company, 1949), 249; Tebeau, *Florida*, 394-401; Works Progress Administration, *Florida*, 339; Plat Book 5, p. 33, 38, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>111</sup>Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census, 1930, *Population*, 213; Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census, 1940, *Population*, 2: 68, 86, 112.

<sup>112</sup>Florida Forest and Park Service, "Forestry in Florida," Tallahassee, 1938; Albert Good, *Park and Recreation Structures*, 3 Parts, (Washington, D. C.: Department of the Interior, 1938), 1: 155-157; Baynard Kendrick, "Florida's Perpetual Forests," unpub. mss., Leesburg, c. 1967, 240.

Generally located about twenty miles apart on high ridges or knolls, the steel towers in St. Johns County were fabricated by the Aermotor Company of Chicago, Illinois (Figure 22). The process began about 1940, when area property owners conveyed a small tract to the Florida Board of Forestry and Parks at Durbin. At Bakersville, the state board obtained property in 1947, and at DuPont Center, Rayonier Corporation conveyed property to the state board in 1948. Incorporated in 1937, Rayonier became one of the world's largest producers of pulp, rayon, and printing papers. By 1950, the company held nearly 200,000 acres of forested lands in Florida and Georgia, and its Fernandina plant was the largest in its system. By 1952, the Florida Forest Service had installed steel-frame watchtowers at Bakersville, DuPont Center, and Durbin to help protect the county's forested lands.<sup>113</sup>

The forested regions of the county attracted lumber and turpentine companies. In Florida, the use of pine tree sap, called "naval stores" since the seventeenth century for its use as a caulk to seal seams of wooden ships, dates to the first Spanish period. Spanish settlers had chipped trees to obtain sap for various uses. Naval stores extraction increased during the English period (1764-1783), but slowed with the return of Florida to Spain following the American Revolution. Florida ranked fourth in the nation in the production of naval stores by 1850. In the 1880s, the railroad brought settlers and investors who perceived a great wealth in the natural resources of the state. Turpentine harvesting gained momentum in the 1890s. By 1900, Florida's naval stores industry, valued at \$7,794,101, accounted for nearly thirty-two percent of the nation's production. Between 1905 and 1923, Florida ranked first in the nation in naval stores output. By 1938, the state stood in second place in production, falling slightly behind Georgia, but still produced nearly twenty percent of naval stores worldwide. By then, Florida's forest wealth had been depleted to one-quarter its volume from a century earlier.<sup>114</sup>

During the early twentieth century, turpentine camps varied in size depending on the resources of the company. Most consisted of a fire still, spirit shed and glue pot, rosin yard, blacksmith and cooperage shed, cup-cleaning vat, barn and wagon shed, and living quarters for the manager and workers. During a season, an average camp would harvest about 50,000 trees, or 2,500 acres, typically utilizing trees with a diameter greater than nine inches. In sparse forests, one worker could manage upwards of ten acres. The Florida Naval Stores and Commission Company of Jacksonville, perhaps the largest and earliest naval stores enterprise in the state, was organized in 1899. By 1902, the company owned 250,000 acres of timber, and handled naval stores processed from an additional 1,000,000 acres controlled by other Florida operators. The firm employed 5,000 men who worked in a yard capable of containing 100,000 barrels of resin, 10,000 barrels of turpentine, and two storage tanks of 10,000 gallons each.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup>Deed Book 125, p. 267, 270, Deed Book 165, p. 432, Deed Book 178, p. 49, 148, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; Good, *Park and Recreation Structures*, 1: 155-157; Kendrick, "Florida's Perpetual Forests," 240; Mike Kypers, informant, 2000.

<sup>114</sup>Works Progress Administration, *Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), 88, 377-378; Rerick, *Memoirs of Florida*, 2: 316; Robert Lauriault, "From Can't To Can't: The North Florida Turpentine Camp, 1900-1950," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 67 (January 1989), 310-328.

<sup>115</sup>Works Progress Administration, *Florida*, 88, 377-378; Rerick, *Florida*, 2: 316.

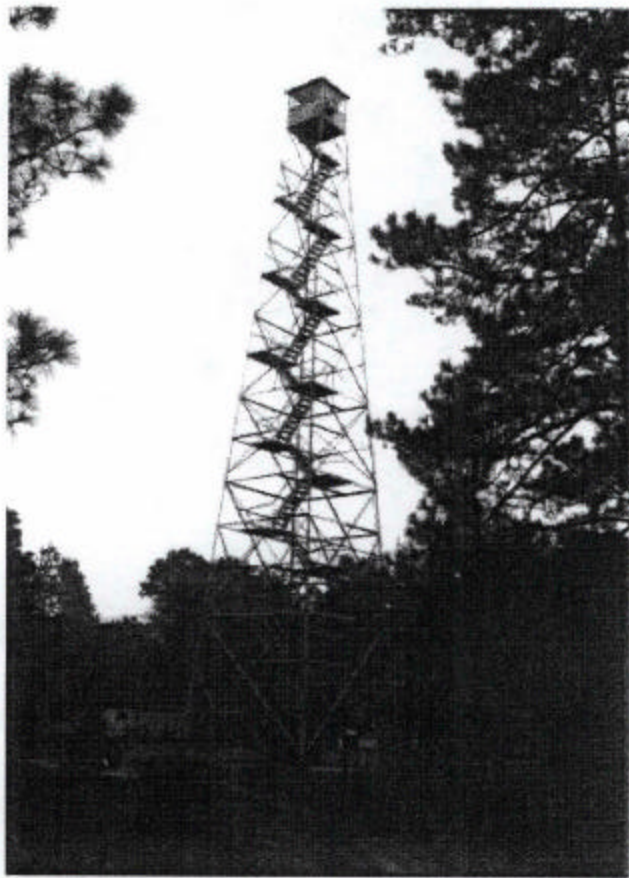


Figure 22: Durbin Fire Tower, c. 1950



Turpentine camps generally were centrally located within a forest owned or leased by a company to facilitate transportation of the sap to the still. Each tract was assessed in a preliminary survey, when a "woods rider" marked suitable trees with an axe smoothing the bark several feet above the ground. A "chipper" would hew three to five slashes about 3/4" deep into each tree some three to four feet from the roots. Below this "face" were set metal gutters and clay or galvanized iron cups. As the cups filled with the resinous sap, generally once per month, they were emptied, or "dipped," into metal buckets, which, in turn were emptied into fifty-five gallon barrels. The face on each tree was gradually lengthened to extract more sap, and the tree eventually bled to death. After the trees yielded most of their sap, lumber companies harvested them for their lumber.<sup>116</sup>

The still typically consisted of a cooper kettle with a removable lid, built into a brick firebox. Sap was poured into the kettle, which ranged in size between six-barrel or ten-barrel quantities with one barrel containing fifty-five gallons. Water was added to the sap, which then was heated. The turpentine would begin to vaporize at 212 degrees Fahrenheit, rising into a hollow arm attached to the kettle lid. As part of the distillation process, the vapor traveled through a cooper worm submerged in a tank of cold water with the resulting liquid discharged into a separator barrel, which collected the condensed spirits of turpentine. Rosin, a by-product, remained in the kettle after the sap-boiling process was complete. The turpentine was generally packed into steel drums and the rosin in wood barrels for shipment to market, the largest of which in Florida included Apalachicola, Jacksonville, and Pensacola. Until the advent of new synthetics and improved chemicals in the middle of the twentieth century, naval stores were important products in the manufacturing of ink, leather dressings, paint, paper, pharmaceutical preparations, soap, and varnish. Rosin products continue to have applications in baseball for the pitcher's hand, in dance on the soles of slippers, and in music on the strings of instruments.<sup>117</sup>

In St. Johns County, relatively small turpentine operations dotted the central and western regions. The Julia turpentine operation occupied a site northeast of Orangedale on County Road 210 West. Apparently, started about 1898 as Pinehurst, the Julia still stood on forested lands bracketed by property owned or leased by the Peninsular Naval Stores Company and Halsema Manufacturing Company. By 1930, the Julia still and camp consisted of a commissary store, several dwellings, and a still. A larger operation at Meldrim Park had its genesis in the 1890s closer to St. Augustine. A native of Georgia, James Meldrim arrived about 1890, and helped organize the Glimpse of Glory turpentine settlement on State Road 16. Within several decades, the initial Glimpse of Glory operation had been expanded into the area that became Vermont Heights. But soon, the settlement outlived its usefulness, and the Meldrims pushed deeper into more heavily-forested regions of the county. In 1934, Joseph S. Meldrim, in association with T. J. Kemp of Ocala and J. A. Rowand, acquired property in the Don Manuel Crespo grant south of Picolata. In 1937, Joseph Meldrim moved from Glimpse of Glory to the new camp at Meldrim Park. The company assembled most of its buildings from cypress harvested from the land (Figure 23). Included in the turpentine camp was a barn, church, commissary, foreman cabin, and about twenty dwellings. Over time, the turpentine operation expanded with the company acquiring and leasing adjacent forested lands. Mules and

<sup>116</sup>Works Progress Administration, *Florida*, 378.

<sup>117</sup>Works Progress Administration, *Florida*, 378; Lauriault, "North Florida Turpentine Camp," 314.



Figure 23: Merldrim Park Turpentine Camp, c. 1937

wagons carried laborers on daily treks into the forests and to the still site. The Meldrims closed their business in 1990, but the Meldrim Park Turpentine Camp stands as one of the most complete historic turpentine camps in Florida.<sup>118</sup>

Improved highways and automobiles brought increased numbers of tourists to Florida during the Great Depression. Sophisticated advertising programs in various cities of south Florida continued to lure tourists to the Sunshine State. Tourism helped to lift Miami from the depression in the late-1930s, and the industry spilled across the peninsula, and especially the east coast. But, St. Augustine's tourist market seemed to struggle to make ends meet. The Ponce de Leon Hotel reduced expenses by firing staff, but continued to lose money. Still, tourists flocked to Florida. Since the nineteenth century, tourism had been an important part of the state's economy. Then, steamboats and railroads brought most tourists, the majority of them wealthy northerners. In the 1920s, the automobile created social changes, providing vehicular access to a different class of tourist. Once a winter resort for the wealthy, Florida became a mecca for middle class families packed in automobiles. Better roads in the 1920s and 1930s encouraged still more visitors, and federal laws governing hours in the workplace and vacation time for middle class laborers in the Great Depression created a larger annual market of seasonal tourists.<sup>119</sup>

In St. Johns County, several property owners developed tourist courts to accommodate seasonal visitors on annual treks to south Florida. Most stood along U. S. Highway 1. Near Araquay Park, the Autobahn Motor Court was developed by E. B. and Josie Peterson of Putnam County, and then B. J. and Bess Bolka of South Bend, Indiana (Figure 24). The property had been opened as part of the Jackson Park subdivision in 1926, but remained vacant until the mid-1930s. Late in the depression decade, small wood frame duplexes arranged in a U shape with a central office and manager's residence were built at 4560 U. S. 1 North. Several additional tourist courts were built inside the city limits of St. Augustine and astride U.S. 1 South near Moultrie Creek. Among the largest tourist courts of the 1930s and 1940s was the Windswept Motel, located at 5375 State Road A1A near Butler Beach.<sup>120</sup>

Butler Beach, located about eight miles south of St. Augustine on Anastasia Island, was developed by African-American businessman Frank B. Butler. In 1927, Butler acquired property between the Atlantic Ocean and Matanzas River, and opened a beach for African Americans. Butler's other investments included the Palace Market and College Park Realty Company in St. Augustine. Through the era of segregation, Butler Beach was the only beach accessible to blacks between American Beach near Fernandina and Bethune Beach in southeast Volusia County. At Butler Beach, black life guards and mounted horse patrols helped protect bathers.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>118</sup>Mrs. Joe Meldrim, informant, 2000; Deed Book 106, p. 31, Deed Book 118, p. 125, 128, Deed Book 150, p. 460, Plat Book 4, p. 67, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; Bradbury and Hallock, *Florida Post Offices*, 43, 67.

<sup>119</sup>Thomas Graham, "Flagler's Magnificent Hotel Ponce de Leon," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 54 (July 1975), 1-17; Paul S. George, "Passage to New Eden: Tourism in Miami from Flagler Through Everest G. Sewell," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 59 (April 1981), 440-463; Ruthmary Bauer, "Sarasota: Hardship and Tourism in the 1930s," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 76 (Fall 1997), 135-151; Gary Mormino, "Broadside and Roadsides: A History of Florida Tourism," unpub. mss, University of South Florida, 1987, p. 6-12.

<sup>120</sup>Deed Book 116, p. 105, Deed Book 125, p. 46, 1932 tax roll, 1940 tax roll, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>121</sup>Maxine Jones and Kevin McCarthy, *African Americans in Florida* (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 1993), 169-170; Gary Goodwin, Suzanne Walker, and Jim Walker, *Florida Black Heritage Trail* (Tallahassee: Division of Historical Resources, 1994), 4, 16.



Figure 24: Autobahn Motor Court, c. 1937

Wealthy Americans sought resort communities in Florida even during the Great Depression. If Araquay Park and Santa Rosa had been the fashionable subdivisions of St. Johns County in the 1920s, then Ponte Vedra Beach became the exclusive seaside community of the 1930s and the post World War II interval. Spreading along the shore of the Atlantic Ocean south of the Jacksonville Beaches, the area had been opened for development in the 1880s by the San Pablo & Diego Beach Company. Platted in 1886, the plan of Diego Beach consisted of thirty blocks. But, the company sold little of its property and most lots remained vacant. By 1917, the company had given up, and conveyed most of its remaining property to Buckman & Pritchard, Inc., a Jacksonville real estate company.<sup>122</sup>

A native of Florida, Courtland Buckman completed his education in Jacksonville, and then became a deputy clerk in the county clerk's office. In the wake of the devastating fire of 1901, Buckman determined to operate his own real estate business. Specializing in fire insurance, mortgage loans, and real estate, Buckman emerged as a prominent businessman, serving on the real estate and insurance committee of the Jacksonville Board of Trade and as a director of the Florida National Bank. His social activities included memberships in the Seminole, Timuquan, and Florida country clubs, and the prestigious Florida Yacht Club, serving as commodore of the latter between 1908 and 1911. About 1916, Buckman reorganized his real estate business, forming a partnership with Alfred C. Ulmer of Jacksonville and renaming the firm "Buckman and Ulmer." The partners enjoyed a long association, which extended into the 1950s.<sup>123</sup>

During the 1920s, Courtland Buckman expanded his business and social associations, which by then included the Boy's Home Association of Jacksonville for which he served as president. In 1922, he helped to incorporate and later held the post of president of Fifty Associates of Jacksonville, an organization to assist small real estate investors. Buckman speculated in the frenzied real estate market of the 1920s, financing the construction of a commercial building on West Monroe Street. Designed by the prominent architectural firm of Marsh & Saxelbye, the building was completed in 1925, after which Buckman turned to the architects to draft the plans for a new residence in Arlington.<sup>124</sup>

Buckman's success in Jacksonville real estate spilled over into St. Johns County. In 1916, on the eve of acquiring the beach front property in St. Johns County, Buckman incorporated the Tide Water Development Company, but then changed the name to Buckman & Pritchard, Inc. Soon after Buckman acquired the undeveloped property, two Harvard University chemical engineers found that the sands along that stretch of beach contained several valuable minerals. About 1917, Buckman sold the mineral rights to the National Lead Company, and a plant was built to extract aluminum silicate, monasite, and zircon from the sand. During World War I, the Federal government took over the

<sup>122</sup>Deed Book 39, p. 504, 507, 510, Deed Book GG, p. 516, Plat Book 1, p. 49, 1932, 1940 tax rolls, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>123</sup>Chapman, *Florida*, 2: 28; Rerick, *Memoirs of Florida*, 1: 461-463; *Jacksonville Florida Times Union*, 6 February 1908; Charles Smith, comp., *Jacksonville Board of Trade* (Jacksonville: Garrett Printing Company, 1902), 9-10.

<sup>124</sup>*Jacksonville Florida Times Union*, 1 January, 31 March 1921, 24 June 1922, 17, 25 June 1925, 12 November 1927, 2 October 1952; Wood, *Jacksonville's Architectural Heritage*, 80.

operation to help produce munitions. After the conflict, the plant was returned to the civilian owners. The postal service opened a branch office known as Mineral City in 1919.<sup>125</sup>

Organized in 1891, the National Lead Company became one of the largest producers of shells and ammunition, architectural building products, printer's materials, paint oxides, and various other lead products in the world. In 1922, through a subsidiary, the Titanium Alloy Manufacturing Company, the National Lead Company acquired seventeen miles of beachfront property and the corporate affairs of Buckman & Pritchard, Inc. But, about a decade later, the State of Florida issued an injunction against the company because it was destroying the beach, which the court ruled was a public highway. Consequently, the National Lead Company closed its operations, and soon plans began for the development of a seaside community. A two-story inn was constructed in 1928, and the operations of Buckman & Pritchard, Inc. were taken over by William F. Meredith and Joseph D. Meredith, who reorganized the corporation in 1934 as the Ponte Vedra Company. A native of New Jersey, William Meredith graduated from Princeton University, and worked several years in his father's brokerage firm. Then, in 1906, he organized the Titanium Alloy Manufacturing Company and later the Titanium Pigment Company in Niagara Falls, New York, both of which were absorbed into the National Lead Company in the 1920s. In addition to their guiding operations at the National Lead Company, the Merediths served as the president and secretary of the Ponte Vedra Company, respectively, during its genesis during the Great Depression. In December 1942, the National Lead Company sold its remaining holdings at Ponte Vedra Beach to the Ponte Vedra Company.<sup>126</sup>

To develop a golf course, the Ponte Vedra Company hired golf course architect Herbert Strong, a native of the British Isles who immigrated to the United States in 1905. Part of the early-twentieth century British invasion of golf talent into the United States, Strong emerged among the top golf course architects in America by the 1930s. Exclusive courses designed by Strong included Canterbury County Club in Cleveland, Ohio; Metropolis Golf Club in New York; and Club Laval Sur Le Lac in Montreal. Strong generally conducted his own surveying and remained on site to supervise development of the course. A charter member of the Professional Golfer's Association (PGA), Strong lost a small fortune during the 1930s and died in relative obscurity in 1944. His Ponte Vedra Golf Course stands among only about two hundred golf courses developed in America between 1932 and 1952, an interval characterized as a period of neglect of golf course design and golf in general. The Ponte Vedra golf course was altered in 1947, when the company hired Robert Trent Jones to redesign sections of the course to help soften some of the original severity of Strong's design. Then, in the 1970s, Joseph Lee, a golf course architect from Oviedo, Florida, redesigned the lagoon course.<sup>127</sup> Again, in 1999-2001, the golf course was redesigned, along with an expansion of the Ponte Vedra Inn and Club.

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<sup>125</sup>Charter Book 4, p. 1, Deed Book 107, p. 119, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; Charter Book 8, p. 611, Charter Book 9, p. 602, Clerk of Court, Duval County Courthouse, Jacksonville, FL; Bradbury and Hallock *Florida Post Offices*, 54, 68; Works Progress Administration, *Florida*, 338.

<sup>126</sup>Deed Book 107, p. 119, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; Works Progress Administration, *Florida*, 338; *New York Times*, 30 September, 1 October 1943; John Porter, ed., *Moody's Manual of Investments* (New York: Moody's Investors Service, 1943), 2601.

<sup>127</sup>Deed Book 107, p. 119, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; Bradbury and Hallock, *Florida Post Offices*, 54, 68; Geoffrey Cornish and Ronald Whitten, *The Golf Course* (Leicester: Windward Press, 1981), 71, 77, 88, 193-194, 215.

The golf course spread across the landscape, creating irregular lines for the development pattern. Radiating between Ponte Vedra Boulevard and San Juan Drive, the arrangement of the tees, fairways, and greens, and the curvilinear street pattern defined building lots created for residences. Rather than opening one large development around the golf course and other man-made and natural features, the Ponte Vedra Company platted many relatively small subdivisions along the beach and adjacent properties. The fashionable seaside resort displaying irregular lots and curvilinear streets began to attract the attention of many wealthy Florida residents and seasonal tourists seeking an exclusive community.<sup>128</sup>

Early buildings developed by the Ponte Vedra Company included the manager's cottage, completed about 1934 at 423 Ponte Vedra Boulevard. In 1935, the company sold the property to Asheleigh S. and Nathalie Moses of Millstone, New Jersey. An early investor of the Ponte Vedra Company, A. S. Moses served on the first board of directors (Figure 25). Other early property holders and home owners included Jessie Ball, Vance Dykers, Wambolt Paulk, Paul E. Reinhold, Carl Swisher, and Russell Wells. A native of Pennsylvania, Reinhold had developed several successful dairies near Pittsburg before moving to Jacksonville in 1932. There he established Foremost Dairies, Inc., which by 1950 extended throughout the South and into parts of the Northeast. Another prominent Jacksonville businessman, Carl Swisher, a son of cigar manufacturer John H. Swisher, maintained a seasonal residence at Ponte Vedra in the late-1930s. By then, Swisher had developed an estate in Jacksonville's San Marco neighborhood along the St. Johns River. Swisher had hired the architectural firm of Marsh & Saxelbye to prepare the plans for his estate, and probably turned to the firm again for his Ponte Vedra Beach home.<sup>129</sup>

Prominent realtor Joseph W. Davin also developed a house at Ponte Vedra Beach in the late-1930s. A native of New Jersey, Davin graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York in 1923, and moved to Jacksonville in 1924, where he worked for civil engineer Robert Angas. In 1929, he became a sales agent for Telfair Stockton & Company, and in the early-1930s became head of the company's building and development operations. In 1937, he formed the real estate company Whatley, Davin & Company with Brown L. Whatley, which in 1946 merged with Telfair Stockton & Company to form Stockton, Whatley, Davin & Company. Maintaining offices in Jacksonville, Miami, Pensacola, and St. Petersburg, by the early-1950s the company had emerged as one of the largest real estate, mortgage, and development enterprises in Florida.<sup>130</sup>

Organized in 1910, Telfair Stockton & Company opened some of Jacksonville's most exclusive subdivisions of the early twentieth century, including Avondale, San Marco, and Villa Alexandria. The company also manufactured bricks and hollow tiles for construction, and organized the Better Homes Company. In 1932, following the death of Telfair Stockton, James R. Stockton became company president. In association with Whatley, James Stockton organized Colonial Homes, Inc., a construction and development company that developed several homes in Ponte Vedra Beach on

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<sup>128</sup>Plat Book 5, p. 6, 7, 8, 24-25, 32, 48, 53, Plat Book 7, p. 21, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>129</sup>Junius Dovell, *Florida: Historic, Dramatic, Contemporary* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1952), 4:894-895; Deed Book 107, p. 497, 582, Charter Book 4, p. 1, St. Johns County Courthouse.

<sup>130</sup>Dovell, *Florida*, 3:200.



Figure 25: Former Ponte Vedra Company's Manager's Cottage



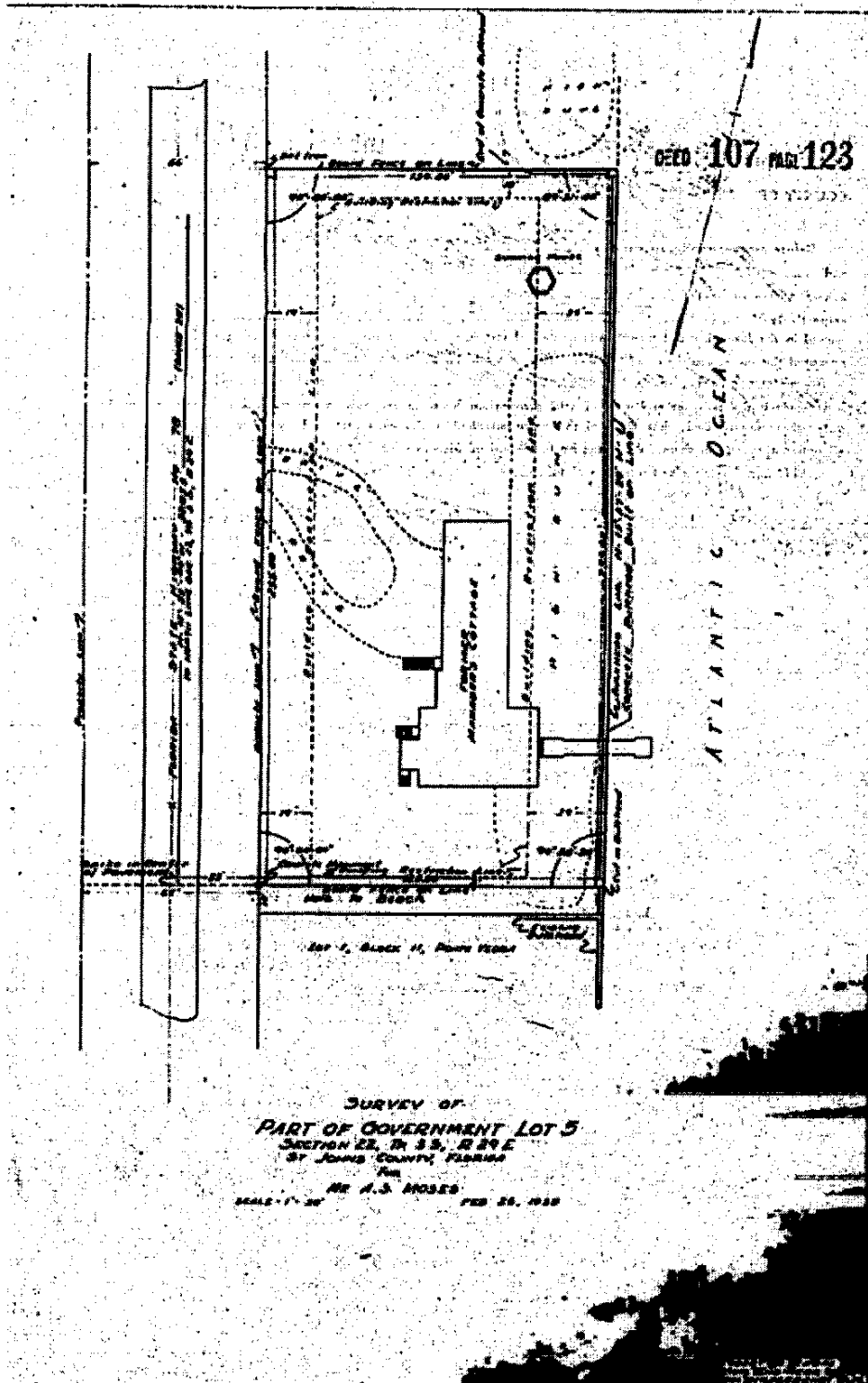


Figure 25b: Former Ponte Vedra Company's Manager's Cottage Deed, 1935.

speculation and for prospective homeowners. In the late-1930s, Colonial Homes, Inc. developed numerous dwellings in Jacksonville, most often turning to Marsh & Saxelbye to prepare the plans for those houses. The development company opened several subdivisions at Ponte Vedra Beach in the late-1940s, and, by the early-1960s, Joseph Davin had become president of the Ponte Vedra Company. In the post-World War II era, Stockton, Whatley, Davin & Company was a primary developer and guiding force in the development of Ponte Vedra Beach.<sup>131</sup>

Organized in 1914, the architecture firm Marsh & Saxelbye emerged as a primary force in the development of downtown Jacksonville in the 1920s. Harold Saxelbye, a British native and graduate of England's Royal Institute of Architects, initially apprenticed in the City of Hull, England, and then immigrated to the United States in 1904 and worked for various New York City firms. In 1913, he moved to Jacksonville. The sixtieth registered architect in Florida, Saxelbye's first major commission was the eleven-story Mason Hotel. William Mulford Marsh, a Jacksonville native, began his career as a construction laborer for the O. P. Woodcock Company. After studying architecture through correspondence courses, Marsh became registered to practice his craft in Florida, the thirty-fourth member listed in the register of the Florida State Board of Architects. He established a firm in 1912, and executed the plans for several notable schools exhibiting the influences of the Prairie style in Jacksonville's downtown. Within a decade of organizing their company, Marsh & Saxelbye had gained a reputation as one of the best design firms in the city. That reputation increased after an article in *Architecture and Design* showcased the partner's work.<sup>132</sup>

Though Marsh & Saxelbye initially focused on designing small commercial and residential buildings, the company quickly adapted its focus to large commercial, industrial, and educational designs. Their residential commissions displayed popular revival styles of the period, including those from the Colonial, Classical, Mediterranean, and Tudor genres. A talented, gifted, and energetic team, Marsh & Saxelbye designed numerous buildings in Jacksonville during the 1920s and 1930s. Notable projects include the Levy-Wolf Building, Jacksonville Police Headquarters, Cummer Gallery, Woman's Club, Mayflower and George Washington hotels, Hildebrandt Building, Western Union Building, Landon High School, Hope Haven Hospital, and several apartment buildings in the Riverside Historic District. The firm also designed an inn at the fashionable seaside community of Ponte Vedra Beach, the Bolles Military School in San Jose, the Alfred I. DuPont estate at Epping Forest, and the Alfred I. DuPont Building in Miami. The company also drafted the plans for numerous historic dwellings in the San Jose and Epping Forest subdivisions, both of the which have been listed in the NRHP.<sup>133</sup>

Marsh & Saxelbye's work for the Federal government began in 1939, when the firm undertook planning nine bachelor officer's quarters, a storehouse, a dispensary, and the commanding officer's residence at Jacksonville Naval Air Station. In 1940, the company delivered site plans and

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<sup>131</sup>Deed Book 107, p. 564, Deed Book 108, p. 4, 9, 258, Plat Book 7, p. 11-13, St. Johns County Courthouse; Wood, *Jacksonville's Architectural Heritage*, 117.

<sup>132</sup>Dovell, *Florida*, 3: 232-233.

<sup>133</sup>Dovell, *Florida*, 3: 232-233; Wood, *Jacksonville*, 6, 11-13, 34-81.

construction drawings for the senior officers quarters at the station. The hospital complex, a major base component, was commissioned in July 1941. The hospital complex grew throughout the war as additional buildings arose and improvements were added to existing facilities. In all, Marsh & Saxelbye designed nearly twenty-five buildings at Jacksonville NAS, and may have drafted plans for buildings at other naval installations in Florida.<sup>134</sup>

Although Ponte Vedra Beach was one of Florida's Depression-era success stories, developments unfolding just to the west, along the Intracoastal Waterway, were intimately tied to one of the oldest themes in Florida history--improving the state's waterways. Early navigators had charted and braved shifting inlets and shallow channels to sail the state's lagoons and rivers. Well into the twentieth century, inland navigation along Florida's east coast existed in a broken series of lagoons, haulovers, and inlets. Although east coast politicians, businessmen, and settlers lobbied for the creation of a protected inland channel for shipping, many federal engineers believed most of the projects were too costly for the proposed benefits. Waterway improvements became an issue equal in significance to highway construction, because the wealthiest seasonal tourists arrived by private yacht. They represented a substantial source of income for many communities, and some believed that river channel and inlet improvements, like highway construction, would encourage tourism, boating, and fishing. Consequently, after successful lobbying by residents and government officials, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers renewed its activities to improve an Intracoastal Waterway along the state's east coast in the 1920s and 1930s.

The waterway improvement activities began in earnest in the 1880s, when the Florida Coast Line Canal & Transportation Company (FCLC&TC) was organized in response to the needs of residents and, perhaps of more significance, grants of land in exchange for dredging work. The company devised a plan and reached an agreement with the state, which stipulated that the FCLC&TC would receive 3,840 acres of public lands for each mile of canal constructed. Dredging began in 1883, and by 1890 the company's general manager, George F. Miles, reported that most of the system had a channel five feet deep and fifty feet in width at mean low water. The work earned the business over a half a million acres in granted lands. Although the company met the minimum threshold of its agreement, periodic examinations and surveys by the Corps of Engineers revealed many cut and shoaling deficiencies; inland navigation along Florida's east coast improved only marginally. In 1894, the federal government reluctantly assumed control of the channel for a seventy-seven mile stretch of the Indian River between Goat Creek in Brevard County and Jupiter Inlet.<sup>135</sup>

The FCLC&TC completed the final phase in construction of the waterway in 1912 at a cost of \$3,504,635. Extending three hundred sixty miles from the mouth of the St. Johns River to Biscayne Bay, the channel suffered from irregular maintenance, which hampered navigation even for relatively small vessels. Irregular maintenance hampered navigation, which could be accomplished safely only

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<sup>134</sup>Building Plans; Marsh & Saxelbye Design Plans.

<sup>135</sup>U. S. Congress, "Canal on the Indian River, 1895," 54th Congress, 1st Session, Document No. 51, 1-5; U. S. Congress, House, "Florida East Coast Canal, 1918," 65th Congress, 2d Session, Document No. 1147, 2-3; U. S. Congress, House, "Indian and Halifax Rivers, Fla., 1918," 65th Congress, 3d Session, Document No. 1570, 2-3, 6; Chief of Engineers, *War Department Annual Reports, 1908* 9 vols. (Washington, D.C: GPO, 1908), 5: 352; Dovell, *Florida*, 2: 786-788; Akin, *Flagler*, 177.

in small vessels at high tide. The Corps' Colonel William Craighill recommended the federal government improve the waterway only after the FCLC&TC relinquished its rights and privileges to the route. He noted that the *St. Lucie*, a one-hundred-twenty-foot-long steamer weighing one hundred sixty-five tons and capable of carrying one hundred thirty passengers, had difficulty navigating several rivers. Passengers experienced delays because the ship often became grounded.<sup>136</sup>

It soon became clear that the nascent waterway provided few tangible benefits to businesses and residents along Florida's east coast. One report, prepared in 1918, indicated that although the shorelines and inland areas of the state's east coast counties contained one-third of the valuation of the state and eighteen percent of the state's land mass, only two percent of the area then supported crops or developments. Even more discouraging, Major-General W. M. Black reported that "the existing Florida East Coast canal is too narrow and too shoal, even where maintained to full-project dimensions, to form an economical and efficient water route." Only four commercial boats used the waterway between Jacksonville and Daytona Beach, each drawing approximately four feet of water and weighing fewer than one hundred tons. Greater in number were smaller pleasure craft, which in 1918 amounted to nearly three hundred yachts carrying seasonal tourists who made annual pilgrimages along the waterway.<sup>137</sup>

In 1910 and again in 1916 the canal company failed to negotiate transferring the waterway maintenance to the federal government. The parties finally reached an agreement in 1927, when the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) was organized with authorization to purchase the waterway for the federal government. Composed of commissioners from the state's eleven east coast counties, FIND issued bonds and transferred the rights-of-way to the federal government in 1929. Renewed dredging resulted in the improvement of a continuous channel between Jacksonville and Miami of one hundred feet wide by eight feet deep in 1935. Part of this improvement program included construction of the Palm Valley Bridge in St. Johns County (Figure 26). About 1934, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers dismantled an aging wood bridge erected by the FCLC&TC and built a temporary pontoon structure. In 1937, the federal government hired the George Auchter Company of Jacksonville to build a new steel-and-concrete double-leaf bascule structure at Palm Valley. The only bridge in Florida operated and maintained by the Corps of Engineers, the structure is scheduled for replacement and demolition.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup>Dovell, *Florida*, 2: 786-788; U. S. Congress, House, "Survey of the Indian River, Florida, 1890," 51st Congress, 2d Session, Doc. 168, p. 1-5; U. S. Congress, House, "Florida East Coast Canal, 1918," 65th Congress, 2d Session, Doc. 1147; U. S. Congress, House, "Intracoastal Waterway From Jacksonville, Fla. to Miami, Fla., 1926," 69th Congress, 2d Session, Doc. 586, 4, 10-11, 14, 80-81.

<sup>137</sup>U.S. Congress, "Indian and Halifax Rivers, 1918," 65th Congress, 3d Session, Doc. 1570, 2, 7; U.S. Congress, House, "Intracoastal Waterway From Jacksonville, Fla. to Miami, Fla., 1926," 69th Congress, 2d Session, Doc. 586, 81.

<sup>138</sup>W. T. Cash, *The Story of Florida*, 4 vols., (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1938), 4: 593; Dovell, *Florida*, 2: 786-788; George Buker, "A History of the Jacksonville District, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1821-1875," Jacksonville: Corps of Engineers, 1975, p. 122-123; U. S. Congress, House, "Intracoastal Waterway From Jacksonville, Fla. to Miami, Fla., 1926," 69th Congress, 2d Session, Doc. 586, p. 90; U. S. Congress, House, "Intracoastal Waterway, Jacksonville to Miami, Fla., 1957," 85th Congress, 1st Session, Doc. 222, p. 3.



Figure 26: Palm Valley Bridge, 1937

Corps reports reveal little usage of the waterway in the decade before 1920, but increased numbers of watercraft in the land boom and Great Depression. During World War I, nearly twenty thousand dollars of commercial goods were transported along the North River section of the waterway, and in 1922 over fifteen hundred vessels plied that section of the route. Half of those were freight and passenger boats, but pleasure yachts and launches accounted for nearly five hundred additional craft. In November 1923 alone, nearly three hundred vessels sailed the North River, but only twelve of those were barges. In the 1930s, pleasure craft began to dominate the waterway. Indicative of new growth at Palm Valley and the emerging pleasure craft culture, developers opened several subdivisions along the Intracoastal Waterway. Organized in Maricopa County, Arizona, the Palm Valley Beach Development Corporation had attempted developing the area in 1926, but made little progress. Then, in 1942, the Guaranty Loan and Investment Company opened the East Coast Canal Estates and Palm Valley Gardens. A. P. Farr and E. B. Hubbard were the president and secretary, respectively, of the investment company, which, with those subdivisions, opened hundreds of lots along the waterway for development.<sup>139</sup>

The Federal government stopped common-carrier freight service on the waterway during World War II, a crippling blow to an industry that failed to resume river traffic following the conflict. By the close of World War II, over two thousand yachts annually passed the Palm Valley Bridge. A decade later, over ten thousand small boats were registered with the U. S. Coast Guard in Florida's eleven coastal counties, and nearly three thousand small boats passed the Palm Valley Bridge in 1954. By then, Florida's Intracoastal Waterway supported nearly ten thousand recreational craft and a handful of contract commercial shippers. New projects to dredge the channel to twelve feet and widen it to one hundred twenty-five feet were unveiled in the 1950s. By then, thirteen million dollars had been expended to improve the waterway's channels.<sup>140</sup>

The builder of the Palm Valley Bridge, George D. Auchter, played an important role developing the northeast Florida landscape in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Organized in Jacksonville about 1920, the Auchter Construction Company specialized in commercial architecture and road construction projects. In the early-1930s, Auchter built the Crane Company and Western Union Telegraph buildings in Jacksonville. Between 1923 and 1942, the company's road construction projects amounted to over two million dollars, most of those in northeast Florida. Its largest year came in 1937, when the company constructed nearly eight hundred thousand dollars worth of road systems, including the Palm Valley Bridge. In July 1940, the Navy Department announced that a giant contract at Jacksonville Naval Air Station amounting to nearly thirteen million dollars had been awarded to three firms, including the Auchter Company. In addition to its other military projects, the company assembled the Navy's officers' quarters along the St. Johns River. The company also constructed many World War II-era buildings at Mayport Naval Station. Another large war-time

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<sup>139</sup>Plat Book 5, p. 63, 65, Clerk of Court, St. Johns County Courthouse; U. S. Congress, House, "Intracoastal Waterway From Jacksonville, Fla. to Miami, Fla., 1926," 69th Congress, 2d Session, Doc. 586, p. 17, 91;

<sup>140</sup>U. S. Congress, House, "Intracoastal Waterway From Jacksonville, Fla. to Miami, Fla., 1926," 69th Congress, 2d Session, Doc. 586, p. 17, 91; U. S. Congress, House, "Intracoastal Waterway, Jacksonville to Miami, Fla., 1957," 85th Congress, 1st Session, Doc. 222, p. 3, 7, 12; Cash, *Florida*, 4: 593; Dovell, *Florida*, 2: 786-788.

project was the Merrill-Stevens Company dry docks in Jacksonville, a million dollar facility reputed to be the largest in the South when completed in February 1943.<sup>141</sup>

Florida played a significant role in World War II, arguably the pivotal event in the twentieth century history of the United States. The war lifted the American economy out of the depression, and changed the face of Florida's landscape beginning in the late-1930s, when the War Department expanded some existing facilities and began construction of several large installations. Increased development occurred after Germany attacked Poland, and Congress raised spending levels to new heights after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. By 1945, the United States had allocated more resources to the war effort and supported more construction projects than anytime in its history. Florida supported a significant amount of that military construction and activity.<sup>142</sup>

A flood of wartime projects brought a brief era of prosperity to the nation. By 1943, about sixty primary military installations occupied sites in Florida, along with dozens of smaller support facilities. The Navy constructed one of America's largest naval air stations at Jacksonville, and auxiliary fields dotted the surrounding countryside. The City of St. Augustine's municipal airport served as an outlying field, and grass aircraft strips used by the Navy for emergency landings at Switzerland (Figure 27) led to the designation of Bombing Range Road for current-day Greenbriar Road. By 1942, the St. Augustine Field consisted of 276 acres, and the larger Switzerland outlying field contained over eleven hundred acres in 1943. Although no major military installation was developed in St. Johns County during the war, these secondary air fields played an important role in the training of pilots. Watch towers dotted the coastline, traditionally placed about every ten miles apart.<sup>143</sup>

During the war, Florida Normal & Industrial Institute in West Augustine took on renewed significance when the U. S. Army assigned it as the only Signal Corps training school in the nation for African Americans. But, soon after the students occupied the campus, reports of poor cafeteria food and overcrowded dormitories provoked protests from Zora Neale Hurston. She wrote Walter White of the NAACP, lamenting that, rather than Fish, Hampton, or Tuskegee, "one of the most insignificant schools in the world" had been selected to house and train black troops. Eventually, Hurston turned a local dispute in St. Augustine over food and housing into an indictment that reached the highest levels of the War Department. In the process, she alienated herself from the "puffessahs, principals, presidents and potentates" in what she penned "Negro begging joints." Hurston not only objected to the poor conditions she found at the institute, but in principal opposed the Signal Corps at St. Augustine, and even the Air Corps' program at Tuskegee, Alabama, in part, because she believed they reinforced racism and segregation. Still, her objections helped sparked better conditions at the West Augustine institute, and eventually the Army's training program for

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<sup>141</sup>Buker, *Jacksonville, Riverport-Seaport*, 150; Kendrick, *Florida Trails to Turnpikes*, 254; *Jacksonville Florida Times Union*, 16 February 1940; Wood, *Jacksonville Architectural Heritage*, 71, 93.

<sup>142</sup>Michael Gannon, ed., *The New History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 323-324.

<sup>143</sup>M. L. Shettle, *United States Naval Air Stations of World War II*, 2 vols., (Bowersville: Schaertel Publishing Company, 1995), 1:91; David Ramsey, "Military Installations in Florida During World War II," unpublished typescript, Gainesville, 1975, n. p.; Robert Angas Papers, Military Installation Collection, Box 1, file 35, Box 3, Files 58, 65, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History.

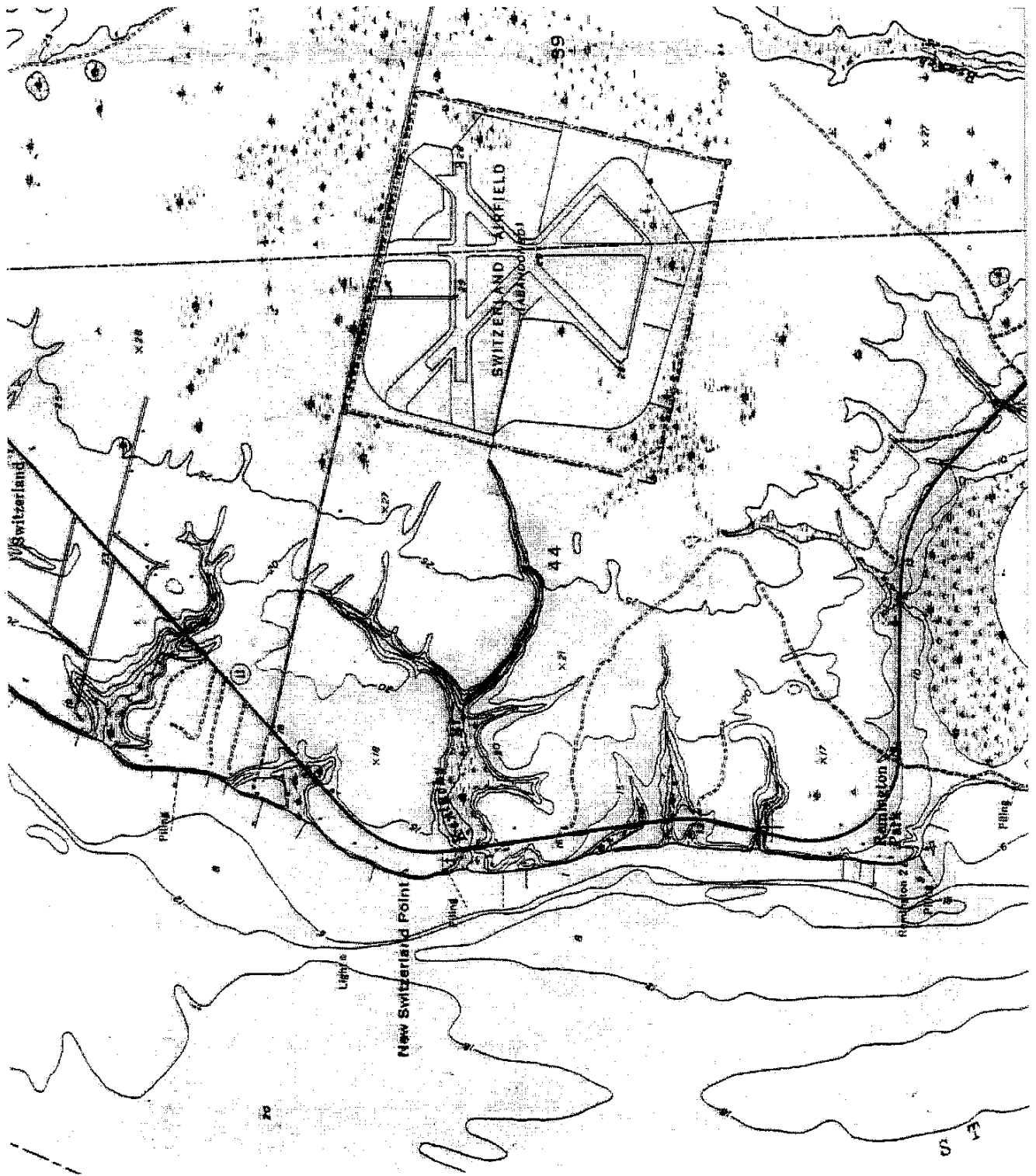


Figure 27: Switzerland Outlying Field, c. 1944.



blacks at St. Augustine was accorded among the highest ratings in the country. Florida Normal and Industrial greatly improved its physical plant, and emerged from the war an improved center of higher education. Its president, William Gray, was hired to lead Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University in 1944.<sup>144</sup>

For a brief interval during the war, Hurston lived in West Augustine. She taught creative writing at the Normal Institute, but concentrated on editing and revising *Dust Tracks on a Road*, which J. B. Lippincott published in 1943. She had first visited St. Augustine, marrying Herbert Sheen there in May 1927. Sponsored by Columbia University's anthropology department, Hurston's folklore work in central Florida began that year. She collected much of her material at Eatonville and in Polk County, Florida, and briefly stayed in St. Augustine to marry and honeymoon, and, perhaps, collect folklore in West Augustine and St. Johns County. From her study, she wrote "Cudjo's Own Story of the Last African Slaver," in the *Journal of Negro History* (1927). Using her valuable collection of stories and gift for narration, Hurston launched her career as a novelist. In 1942, after writing *Dust Tracks* in California, she returned to St. Augustine "because it was a quiet place to sit down and write." She taught part-time at the Normal Institute, and established a friendship with Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. But, her severe criticism of Gray and the institute marked a new stage in Hurston's isolation and estrangement from the leaders of America's mainstream of the black intellectual community. In early-1943, she left St. Augustine for Daytona Beach.<sup>145</sup>

During the war, the U. S. Coast Guard played an important role guarding the state's coastline and rescuing sailors from ships in distress and those sunk by German U-boats. In 1942, submarines sank twenty-four merchant ships off Florida's Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Destruction of sixteen of those vessels occurred in Atlantic waters in the period of February and May of 1942 between Cape Canaveral and Boca Raton. Some of the destruction occurred within several miles of the coast, presenting unsettling spectacles of wartime conditions at home to residents and visitors alike. During the period, personnel based at Coast Guard stations rescued five hundred sailors from Florida's waters. Increased naval action and aircraft patrols from area naval air stations and air fields helped drive the submarines from Florida's shoreline.<sup>146</sup>

In 1942, German submarines delivered saboteurs onto America's beaches, the first invasion of the continental United States by military forces since the War of 1812. One group of four spies landed on Long Island, New York, and four other Germans landed at Ponte Vedra Beach. Known as Operation Pastorius for Franz Daniel Pastorius, America's first German immigrant, the German spies

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<sup>144</sup>Gordon Patterson, "Hurston Goes To War: The Army Signal Corps in Saint Augustine," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 74 (Fall 1995), 166-183.

<sup>145</sup>Patterson, "Hurston Goes To War," 166; Lillie Howard, *Zora Neale Hurston* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980), 17; Robert Hemenway, *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography* (Urbana, Chicago, and London: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 84, 295-296.

<sup>146</sup>Julius Furer, *Administration of the Navy Department in World War II* (Washington, D. C.: Naval History Division, 1959), 598-611; Malcolm Willoughby, *The U. S. Coast Guard in World War II* (New York: Arno Press, 1980); Gannon, *The New History of Florida*, 326-327; Eliot Kleinberg, *War in Paradise: Stories of World War II in Florida* (Melbourne: Florida Historical Society Press, 1999), 34.

in Florida buried their supplies on the beach. Those supplies included over seventy thousand dollars and boxes of explosives and incendiary and detonation devices. After landing at Ponte Vedra on the morning of June 17, 1942, they walked to Jacksonville Beach, where they boarded a bus for Jacksonville. Eventually, two of the agents traveled to New York, and two others to Chicago.<sup>147</sup>

The espionage team was given orders for an ambitious schedule of sabotage, including the destruction of factories and power plants, and disrupting railroads in Alabama, Illinois, Missouri, New Jersey, and New York. But, before they could establish themselves and set any explosives, the New York team betrayed the operation. The four spies who landed in Florida were captured at Chicago and New York in June 1942. After their arrest, trial, and conviction they were executed. Subsequent reports of other German infiltrators remained unsubstantiated. Nevertheless, the sight of merchant marine ships sinking along the coast and reports of German saboteurs and spies made most Floridians uneasy during the early years of the war. The mobilization of air fields, camps, and naval stations went far to alleviate those concerns.<sup>148</sup>

Following the war, St. Johns County began to attract new development, especially on its beaches. At Vilano Beach, building contractor C. Turcella of New Jersey completed the Blue Ocean Motel in 1951. The ten unit motel stood near the intersection of State Road A1A and Vilano Road. A shortened version of the Latin word for new town, Vilano had been named Point Quartel on colonial maps. The Spanish assembled a watchtower there, and later various land grants dotted the peninsula. A burial site for Native Americans who died while incarcerated at the Castillo, Vilano attracted developer August Heckscher, who built the Grand Vilano Casino in 1926. Heckscher's Florida investments centered at Mountain Lake in Polk County, but extended into other regions of Florida. At Fort George Island, he purchased substantial property and built a private toll road to connect the island with the mainland. Eventually swept out to sea by tidal erosion, Heckscher's Vilano Beach enterprise was among his largest investments outside of Polk County.<sup>149</sup>

Vilano Beach also became a seasonal home for author Sinclair Lewis. After working as an editor for the *New Haven Journal & Courier* and various publishing companies, Lewis launched his career as a free-lance writer about 1913. He published *Our Mr. Wrenn* in 1914 and *Trail of the Hawk* in 1915. In the early months of 1916, he visited Vilano Beach, and rented a cottage on Surfside Avenue. Lewis's prolific writings during these early years included *The Innocents* (1917), *Free Air* (1919), and *Main Street* (1920), the latter his first successful novel. His books enjoyed a tremendous circulation, and helped influence American literature. In 1926, he rejected the Pulitzer Prize for his novel *Mantrap*, but accepted the nomination in 1930, becoming the first American to receive the distinguished prize. A native of Minnesota, Lewis frequented Vilano Beach until his death in 1951.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>147</sup>Leon Prior, "Nazi Invasion of Florida!" *Florida Historical Quarterly* 49 (October 1970), 129-139.

<sup>148</sup>Kleinberg, *War in Paradise*, 34; Prior, "Nazi Invasion of Florida!," 129-139.

<sup>149</sup>*St. Augustine Record*, 6 May 1951; *New York Times*, 27 April 1941; Wood, *Jacksonville's Architectural Heritage*, 311; William R. Adams, *Historic Lake Wales* (St. Augustine: Southern Heritage Press, 1992), 25; Cecile-Marie Sastre, "Vilano has a history!," pamphlet, c. 1999.

<sup>150</sup>*New York Times*, 11 January 1951; David Nolan, *The Houses of St. Augustine* (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 1995), 65; A. N. Marquis, comp., *Who's Who in American* (Chicago: A. N. Marquis Company, 1950), 1621.

Sustained by a small permanent population augmented by seasonal visitors like Lewis, Vilano Beach attracted new development following World War II. Some of the dwellings for tourists and residents alike were dismantled from neighboring military installations, such as Green Cove Springs Naval Auxiliary Air Station. Moved to Vilano Beach in the late-1940s and early-1950s, these small wood frame dwellings contributed to the cottages and motor courts that already dotted the county's major roads. Even in the late-1930s, Vilano Beach had been identified by its clustering of cottages for summer visitors. One of those, Rees' Seashore Motel Cottages allegedly served as lodging for a German spy during the war.<sup>151</sup>

### **Late Twentieth Century**

The physical development of most Florida cities stalled during World War II, and resumed with renewed vigor in the late-1940s as the state entered another period of growth. Many veterans who had served on the numerous military bases in Florida during the war returned at its close to seek permanent residence. St. Johns County experienced only modest growth in the few decades following the war. Between 1945 and 1970, the population increased from 21,596 to 30,727. But, in the following decade, the population rose by nearly seventy percent, most of that in rural, or at least, unincorporated areas. Improvements to the road system often destroyed older buildings and left abandoned sections of the older Dixie Highway. New residential neighborhoods developed. Growth accelerated to new heights in the closing decades of the twentieth century, surpassing even the frenzied years of the Florida land boom. In this new economy, however, many people who came built houses and remained permanently. By 1990, St. Johns County's population boom reached full-swing, reaching 83,829, nearly tripled its 1970 mark. In the final decade of the twentieth century, the population topped 100,000. The cities of St. Augustine and St. Augustine Beach and the Town of Hastings experienced some of this population increase, but combined accounted for fewer than 20,000 residents at century's end. Indeed, the City of St. Augustine experienced a decline of 3,000 residents between 1960 and 1980, while the population of St. Augustine Beach increased from 396 to 1,289 during the same interval.<sup>152</sup>

In the process of growth, or at least change, many older buildings have fallen victim to the wrecking ball to make way for newer, larger buildings. The post-World War II experience of St. Johns County is similar to that of many American cities: increasing number of automobiles and asphalt, an expanding highway system, the gradual erosion of the commercial districts, and new construction along major thoroughfares and highways. The recent development of the World Golf Village, and increased growth in Clay and Duval Counties has spilled over into northern St. Johns County, and will measurably contribute to the county's population increases in the early twenty-first century.

Sensitive to the losses of historic resources throughout the state, the Florida Legislature passed the Growth Management Act in 1985, bolstering a 1972 law, to aid municipal and county governments in their challenge to keep pace with growth and to help preserve precious historic resources.

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<sup>151</sup>Works Progress Administration, *Florida*, 339; Joyce Myers, James Weigle, informants, 2000.

<sup>152</sup>Bureau of the Census, Seventeenth Census, 1950, *Population*, 10-13; Allen Morris, *Florida Handbook* (Tallahassee: Rose Printing Company, 1949), 251; Allen Morris, *Florida Handbook* (Tallahassee: Peninsular Publishing, 1985), 549-551, 557.

Communities throughout northeast Florida, aware of their cultural heritage, are taking steps to preserve what remains of their architectural heritage. The Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board initiated the first comprehensive survey of a Florida city in 1972. The County of St. Johns followed with a survey of the unincorporated areas in 1985. Since then, numerous surveys have been conducted in surrounding areas, including urban neighborhoods in the City of Jacksonville, the Town of Orange Park, the City of Green Cove Springs, and unincorporated Clay County. Listings in the National Register of Historic Places of historic districts and landmark buildings in Green Cove Springs, Jacksonville, Orange Park, and Penney Farms resulted from those surveys. Providing recognition and limited protection to individual buildings and contributing properties located in districts, listing in the National Register also provides tax credits to property owners of income-producing buildings who restore their properties under federal guidelines.

This latest survey of unincorporated St. Johns County represents an important continuum in the systematic documentation of Florida's historic buildings. It is hoped that this survey serves as an impetus to list some of the historic resources in unincorporated St. Johns County in the National Register, and that it conveys the urgency of implementing measures to protect some of the county's most significant historic resources with historic preservation landmark designations.

## Historic Development Patterns and Periods of Building Construction

The development of historic buildings in St. Johns County, as depicted in Table 1, is grouped into five periods of development, extending between c. 1866-1954. Even though St. Johns County has a rich history that extends into the sixteenth century, only two standing structures remain from the eighteenth century and early-nineteenth century and do not lend themselves to grouping within meaningful historic periods. Consequently, the county's older buildings have been grouped into periods beginning with the Reconstruction era. Approximately ninety percent of the county's older buildings date from the twentieth century, and a plurality of those were erected during the Great Depression. This organization of resources into periods associated by development is more meaningful than simply classifying buildings by decade. The periodization strategy associates buildings within their larger contexts and with events that effected the development of the county and state. These periods provide an useful context for assessing the county's historic architectural resources.

<b>TABLE 1: DATE OF CONSTRUCTION BY HISTORIC PERIOD</b>		
<b>Period of Construction</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1742	1	nil
c. 1831	1	nil
Late 19th century, 1866-1895	29	2
Progressive Era, 1896-1919	77	7
Land Boom, 1920-1928	243	22
Great Depression, 1929-1941	410	37
WW2 & Aftermath, 1942-1954	365	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,126</b>	<b>100</b>

Two buildings, Fort Matanzas and the Rogero-Triay House, are the last two extant resources from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Both resources were constructed in rural, undeveloped regions. Built on an island and now protected by federal lands that surround the property, the fort retains much of its historic physical context, which begins in the 1740s, when it was constructed. In contrast, the Rogero-Triay House stands adjacent to a modern premanufactured home, and has lost much of its physical historical context. Its context begins in the 1830s, when the Rogero family began its construction. The historical contexts for these two resources represent important historical events, trends, and patterns of development in St. Johns County's history. But, other resources that once contributed to these contexts have been demolished or have deteriorated into archaeological sites. Consequently, because these two buildings do not have an interrelationship with other extant historic resources in an unbroken pattern of historic development, the periods of historical development for table 1 begins with the late-nineteenth century.

The first period associated with appreciable numbers of historic standing structures begins with the late nineteenth century (1866-1895), when scattered farms dotted the shores of the various branch, creek, and river systems of the county. Settlements appeared at Hastings, Picolata, Summer Haven, Tocoï, and West Augustine. Travel writers introduced the nation's readers to the region. Increased steamboat traffic and the introduction of the railroad spurred growth, but severe freezes in the mid-1890s temporarily dampened further development. During the survey, twenty-nine buildings, or two percent of the resources inventoried, were documented from this period.

A second period, the Progressive era, is roughly defined by the years 1896 to 1919. Largely associated with reforms in education and labor, and sparked by large reclamation efforts in south Florida, the era witnessed the opening of large farms and town plans in St. Johns County. The nascent communities of Elkton and Riverdale formed during the period, the neighborhoods adjacent to the Town of Hastings; those comprising West Augustine enjoyed substantial growth; and the turpentine industry promoted growth at several African American settlements. Buildings associated with the period amount to seventy-seven, or seven percent, of the total documented.

A significant amount of construction occurred during the Florida land boom, when 243 buildings, or twenty-two percent of the total, were built. Typical of many Florida counties during the 1920s, St. Johns County experienced explosive development during the land boom. One of the largest developments of the era was the expansion of Florida Normal & Industrial Institute in West Augustine. By-passing East Palatka, a new alignment by the Florida East Coast Railway south out of St. Augustine to Bunnell brought new jobs and development to the region. The completion of the Dixie Highway throughout Florida brought increasing number of tourists. Some visitors established new settlements, such as Vermont Heights. The collapse of the boom resulted in Florida entering a period of economic decline several years before the rest of the nation.

The Depression/New Deal era of development extends between 1929 and 1941. During the period, 410 buildings, or thirty-seven percent of the total, were constructed. Most of that development occurred late in the decade. Although many buildings were relatively small wood frame dwellings built in agricultural settlements, some of these buildings are associated with development at Ponte Vedra Beach, and with the opening of subdivisions along the Intracoastal Waterway in Palm Valley. New building forms and styles, such as Minimal Traditional, Monterey Revival, and Ranch, precursors of modern residential forms, appeared during the late 1930s and gained popularity in the 1940s.

The last period of development extends between 1941 and the early-1950s. During World War II, relatively few buildings were constructed. Because no major military installation stood within St. Johns County during World War II, construction tapered off in the early-1940s. A few of the buildings documented in the unincorporated county from World War II were later moved into the county from neighboring military installations. In the aftermath of the war, housing starts and development increased, and accelerated in the early-1950s. During the survey, 362 buildings were recorded from the 1941-1954 interval. The vast majority of those were relatively small dwellings fabricated with cinder blocks and displaying few notable architectural features.

## Functions and Condition of Buildings

As depicted in Table 2, 1,026 properties, or ninety-one percent of the buildings included in the survey, were originally constructed for residential purposes. The number includes residential buildings of various types, including dwellings, duplexes, apartment buildings, and parsonages. Buildings that initially served a commercially-related function total fifty-one, or five percent, of the total. All other functions combined are represented by forty-nine buildings, or approximately five percent of the total resources inventoried. Those uses include agriculture, community center, church, commissary, convent, depot, fish camp, fortification, lodge, meeting hall, military, motel, motor court, office, parish hall, post office, school, and visitor's center. Although relatively few buildings contribute to this collection, these buildings have a distinctive presence and help convey historic ambiance and a unique sense of place in St. Johns County.

Integrity of function is an important consideration for determining the significance of a historic property. A building that retains its original function is more likely to meet the requirements for listing in the NRHP than one that has been altered for a use that differs from its original function. A comparison of original use with present use data in Table 2 indicates that there has been some change over time to the original historic functions of the buildings surveyed. Especially apparent is the disparity between the numbers of dwellings in the original and present use columns. While some of those dwellings now serve a commercial or office function, many more lie vacant. Many of the buildings listed as vacant are in a deteriorated or ruinous condition. Adaptive use conversions include some relocations and rehabilitations, such as two railroad depots on U. S. 1 North, which contain a child care facility and professional offices. Military buildings from outside the county were brought to Vilano Beach following World War II, where they now serve a residential function. Some motor courts, built astride State Road A1A and U.S. Highway 1 in the late-1930s and 1940s, serve as apartments. Other motor courts have been partially demolished and the remaining buildings adapted for commercial purposes, and another motor court near Butler Beach stands vacant.

Table 3 depicts the consultant's evaluation of the condition of the historic building stock in St. Johns County. A building that is in either good or excellent condition is more apt to be given consideration for listing in the NRHP than a building evaluated as either fair, deteriorated, or ruinous. Condition is a subjective evaluation based on visual inspection from a street or right-of-way. No attempt was made to examine the interior of buildings, test structural integrity, or closely inspect the foundation areas for deterioration and insect infestation. Consequently, some buildings evaluated as "good" may upon further inspection be found in a "fair," or even "deteriorated" condition, and some of those labeled as fair may indeed possess substantial integrity of wall framing with only inconsequential exterior fabric deterioration.

**TABLE 2: FUNCTIONS AND USES OF BUILDINGS**

<b>TABLE 2: FUNCTIONS AND USES OF BUILDINGS</b>				
<b>ORIGINAL USE</b>			<b>PRESENT USE</b>	
<b>FUNCTIONS</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Residence	1,026	91	972	87
Commerce	51	5	32	3
Agriculture	11	1	9	1
Meeting hall	7	nil	6	nil
Office	5	nil	11	1
Military	5	nil	0	--
School	5	nil	1	nil
Motor court	4	nil	0	--
Depot	3	nil	0	--
Commissary	1	nil	0	--
Comm. center	1	nil	2	nil
Convent	1	nil	1	nil
Fish camp	1	nil	1	nil
Fortification	1	nil	1	nil
Motel	1	nil	1	nil
Parish hall	1	nil	1	nil
Post office	1	nil	0	--
vacant	0	--	81	7
Visitor's center	1	nil	1	nil
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,126</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,126</b>	<b>100</b>



<b>TABLE 3: CONDITION OF BUILDINGS</b>		
<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
EXCELLENT	102	10
GOOD	328	29
FAIR	519	46
DETERIORATED	130	11
RUINOUS	47	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,126</b>	<b>100</b>

As revealed in Table 3, the historic building stock of St. Johns County possesses only a fair degree of integrity. Of the sites surveyed, 430 buildings, or thirty-nine percent of the total, were recorded as being in either excellent or good condition. A plurality of the buildings, totaling 519 or forty-six percent, were listed as fair. Deteriorated and ruinous buildings accounted for 177 buildings, or fifteen percent, of the total inventoried.

### **Historic Architectural Styles**

The buildings surveyed in St. Johns County represent a large cluster of cultural resources. Exhibiting a wide range of forms and architectural styles, those buildings, with few exceptions, were designed and constructed by lay builders who drew upon traditional building techniques and contemporary stylistic preferences for their inspiration. Primary consideration was given to providing functional spaces for the owners. Decorative features were generally of secondary importance.

The styles on which the builders based their designs were popular throughout the United States. After the Civil War architectural pattern books promoting various residential designs were made available to a wide audience. That trend, combined with the mass production of architectural building components and improved means for their transportation, made it possible for a builder in Maine to construct nearly the same house as a builder in California.

Stylistically, about ninety percent of the historic buildings in the county exhibit so-called "vernacular" influences derived from common cultural traditions in architecture. Vernacular buildings display little of the popular, formal architectural influences available to architects and builders during the period in which those buildings were constructed. Rather than conveying a particular style of architecture, vernacular buildings are best categorized in terms of building forms. For wood frame vernacular dwellings architectural historians commonly employ various nomenclature, such as composite, double-pile, single-pile, dog-trot, I-house, irregularly massed, saddlebag, and several other terms. At best, the designations are largely subjective, and all too often buildings are a blend of vernacular forms rather than attributable to one specific pattern.

Of the 1,123 buildings recorded, seventy percent, or 791, were categorized as frame vernacular; nineteen percent, or 213, as masonry vernacular; and five additional buildings as industrial vernacular (Table 4). Accounting for forty-six buildings, or four percent of the total, the Bungalow style was the most common high-style design employed on dwellings. The Colonial Revival style accounts for thirty-three, or three percent, of the buildings, and twenty-two buildings display the influences of the Mediterranean Revival style. Stylistic influences applied to sixteen other buildings, with no more than five found in any particular style, include Classical Revival, Minimal Traditional, Monterey Revival, Prairie, Ranch, Rustic, Shotgun, and Split Level.

<b>TABLE 4: HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL STYLES OF BUILDINGS</b>		
<b>STYLE</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Frame vernacular	791	70
Masonry vernacular	213	19
Bungalow	46	4
Colonial Revival	33	3
Mediterranean Revival	22	2
Industrial Vernacular	5	nil
Monterey	5	nil
Shotgun	5	nil
Classical Revival	1	nil
Minimal Traditional	1	nil
Prairie	1	nil
Ranch	1	nil
Rustic	1	nil
Split Level	1	nil
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,126</b>	<b>100</b>

## *Frame Vernacular*

The term, "frame vernacular," the prevalent style of residential architecture in Florida, refers to the common wood frame construction technique employed by lay or self-taught builders. The term does not, however, imply inferior or mundane architecture. Buildings characterized as vernacular lend themselves to categorization by building form associated with a particular era, function, or region of the country, rather than classification within a particular genre of formal architecture. The Oxford English Dictionary defines vernacular architecture as "native or peculiar to a particular country or locality...concerned with ordinary domestic and functional buildings rather than the essentially monumental."

Vernacular building forms changed with the Industrial Revolution, which brought about the standardization of construction parts and materials, and exerted a pervasive influence over vernacular house design. Popular magazines helped to disseminate information about architectural trends throughout the country. The railroad provided affordable and efficient transportation for manufactured building materials. Ultimately, individual builders had access to a myriad of finish architectural products from which to create their own designs.

In St. Johns County, like many other areas of Florida, frame vernacular buildings are typically one or two stories in height, with a balloon or platform frame structural system constructed of pine or cypress. They display a variety of footprints and forms including double or single-piles, I-house, irregularly massed, and saddlebag. The double-pile classification defines dwellings two rooms deep, and single-pile smaller houses only one room in depth. Part of double-pile conventions, an I-house plan is based on a central hall and staircase dividing the living spaces. Irregularly massed houses typically display either a composite, cross plan, L-plan, T-plan, or upright-and-wing form. Displaying a side-facing gable roof with a living space one room deep and two rooms wide, the saddlebag cottage often defines housing in African-American neighborhoods in the South.

Most plans of frame vernacular dwellings maximize cross-ventilation. Early versions of the style have gable roofs steeply pitched to accommodate an attic. Horizontal clapboards, drop siding, or weatherboard, or wood shingles are common exterior wall fabrics. Those exterior wall products are often found in combination, especially on large well-executed examples. Often employed as original roof surfacing materials, crimped metal panels, or wood or decorative pressed metal shingles have nearly always been replaced by composition shingles. The facade is often placed on the gable end, making the height of the facade greater than its width. Porches are also a common feature and include one and two-story end porches and sometimes verandas. Fenestration in the form of windows is often regular, but not always symmetrical. Windows are generally double-hung sash with multi-pane glazing. Decoration, generally limited to ornamental woodwork, can include a variety of patterned shingles, turned porch columns, balustrades, and spindles, knee braces and purlins mounted under the eaves, and exposed rafter ends.

During the Great Depression, frame vernacular construction remained an important influence on the architecture of the county. Those buildings, primarily dwellings, reflected a trend toward simplicity. Residences are smaller with more shallow-pitched roof lines than those of the previous decades, and usually rise only one story in height. The decrease in size of the private residence is largely a

reflection of the diminishing size of the American family. Another influence on residential design was the proliferation of the automobile, which resulted in the addition of garages, carports, and porte cocheres.

Examples of the frame vernacular form abound in various designs and sizes in St. Johns County. Among the most prevalent is the relatively small one-story example, such as the house at 133 McLaughlin Street in West Augustine (Figure 28). The dwelling has a front-facing gable roof, a wood balloon frame finished with wood drop siding and corner boards, and double-hung sash windows. A shed-roof supported by wood posts protects the front porch, and concrete piers support the dwelling.

A larger example of frame vernacular architecture stands at 850 1st Street in West Augustine (Figure 29). The one-and-one-half-story dwelling has a hip roof pierced by a brick chimney, and a wood balloon frame covered by wood drop siding and finished with corner boards. Dwellings with a half-story often contain a second floor for living spaces, but without a full-height ceiling. Instead, ceilings and walls are canted to accommodate the roof pitch, leaving little room for an attic. An enclosed porch with a hip roof projects from the front, or south, facade, and shed extensions project from the rear and east elevations. Fenestration is irregular and asymmetrical, consisting of six-over-six-light double-hung sash windows, four-over-four-light double-hung sash windows, and six-light hopper windows.

A large example of frame vernacular architecture in West Augustine stands at 791 West King Street (Figure 30). The two-story dwelling has a front-facing gable roof surfaced with metal crimp panels. A tiered porch with a hip roof projects from the front, or north facade. Herring-bone style brick work adorns the first story of the porch, and the second story remains open. Textured stucco serves as the exterior wall fabric, and fenestration consists of three-over-one-light and one-over-one-light double-hung sash windows.

The Old Public School No. 6 at 405 McLaughlin Street (Figure 31) is another good example of the frame vernacular genre. It has a hip roof surfaced with metal crimp panels pierced by a brick chimney. A wood balloon frame is finished with drop siding, and two small porches project from the front, or east, facade. The original fenestration has been modified, and includes metal sash windows with the original openings infilled to accommodate small windows. A system of brick piers supports the building.

The house at 5935 Middleton Road in Elkton displays some unusual characteristics not found on many examples of frame vernacular architecture in the county (Figure 32). It has a front-facing gable roof surfaced with metal crimp panels, and a tiered porch with a hip roof, carved wood posts, brackets, balustrades, and spindles. The first story of the porch expands across the south elevation to form a veranda. The wood balloon frame is finished with weatherboard and wood shingles. Fenestration includes two-over-two-light double-hung sash windows. The foundation system consists of brick piers.

Various barns and agricultural-related resources executed in the frame vernacular tradition dot the landscape of southwest St. Johns County (Figure 33). A number of examples stand in the Elkton and



Figure 28: Frame Vernacular, 791 King Street, West Augustine

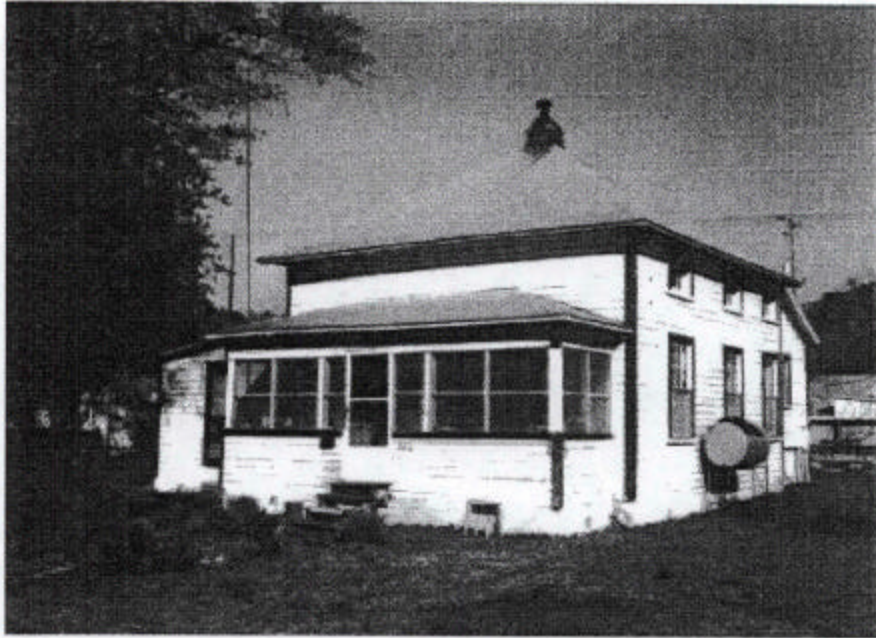


Figure 29: Frame Vernacular, 850 1<sup>st</sup> Street, West Augustine



Figure 30: Frame Vernacular, 791 King Street, West Augustine



Figure 31: Frame Vernacular, 405 McLaughlin Street, West Augustine





Figure 32: Frame Vernacular, 5935 Middleton Road, Elkton



Figure 33: Frame Vernacular, 5925 Leonard Road, Hastings

Hastings vicinity. Several are located at 5925 Leonard Road in Hastings. They display gable roofs surfaced with crimp metal panels, drop siding exterior wall fabric, small shed roofs that protect entrances, and masonry pier foundation systems. Most of these buildings are located adjacent to fields, and serve an agricultural packaging or storage function.

Several churches recorded in the county are also derived from frame vernacular traditions (Figure 34). A well-preserved model, Grace Bible Church, is located at 480 Wildwood Drive near Moultrie Creek. The sanctuary has a front-facing gable roof with crimp metal panel surfacing, and a distinctive gable-roof, louvered belcote surmounted on the west roof ridge. A boxed, or enclosed, eave line is held closely to the wall surfaces. Supported by wood posts, a small entrance porch with a gable roof and closing pent roof that forms a tympanum projects from the front, or west, facade. Clapboards and corner boards project the wood balloon framework, and fenestration consists of six-over-six-light double-hung sash windows. A brick pier foundation system supports the church building.

### *Masonry Vernacular*

Buildings of masonry vernacular construction amount to 213 in number and represent nineteen percent of the historic building stock in the county. That percentage is divided between residential and commercial buildings. The term masonry vernacular applies to buildings that display no formal style of architecture and is defined as the common masonry construction techniques of lay or self taught builders. In the eighteenth century, vernacular designs were local in nature, transmitted by word of mouth or by demonstration, and relying heavily upon native building materials. In the early nineteenth century, masonry vernacular commercial buildings emerged as a distinct building type, due largely to the rapid growth of commerce and manufacturing associated with the Industrial Revolution. During the period, mass manufacturers exerted a pervasive influence over vernacular building design. Trade and architectural journals and popular magazines, which featured standardized manufactured building components, flooded building and consumer markets and helpe



Figure 34: Frame Vernacular, 480 Wildwood Drive, Moultrie Creek

hollow tile became commonly used in structural systems. During the 1930s, the International and Modernistic styles influenced vernacular design, and reinforced concrete construction techniques became more frequently used to produce a variety of forms. Following World War II, concrete block became a popular masonry building material.

Built about 1950, the one-story commercial building at 712 West King Street in West Augustine is a good example of masonry vernacular architecture (Figure 35). A composite of brick and concrete construction, the building displays a flat, built-up roof obscured by a stepped parapet with coping. A louvered vent pierces the center of the parapet. Fenestration is irregular and asymmetrical, consisting of fixed and one-over-one-light double-hung sash windows. Metal awnings shade the fenestration along the front, or south, facade, and paneled wood doors provide access into the interior.

A large example of masonry vernacular architecture stands at 545 West King Street in West Augustine (Figure 36). Built in 1947 as a lodge, or meeting hall, the building rises three stories, has a flat, built-up roof system, and displays a straight, unadorned parapet. Narrow belt courses define the first story, visually separating it from the second and third stories. Concrete blocks and textured stucco serve as the exterior wall fabrics. The fenestration is symmetrical, but irregular. The original windows have been replaced with metal awning and sash treatments. A cornerstone at the base of the northeast elevation of the building outlines some of the history of the S. D. W. Smith Lodge No. 481. Dated 1947, the cornerstone was carved by Horace R. Leapheart. Datestones and cornerstones attached to many African-American churches and public buildings in St. Johns County carry important historical information, and most are signed by the carver, an important cultural and architectural feature.

The masonry vernacular form also accounts for many dwellings in St. Johns County. Masonry dwellings predating 1920 in Florida were often assembled with brick, but a number of older examples feature rough-faced cast block construction. Similar to trends in commercial architecture, the designs of dwellings in the 1920s and 1930s were often influenced by popular Spanish and Art Deco designs of the period. The main masonry building materials during the period were hollow tiles surfaced with textured stucco and brick. Low-cost concrete blocks and cinder blocks were introduced into the building trades during the Great Depression, and had a profound effect on construction following World War II, when they became a primary material used to develop Florida's residential suburbs. Most have shallow pitched roofs and cinder block walls. Some display stucco exterior stylized with horizontal bands, glass blocks, and decorative bricks, tiles, and attic vents.

The dwelling at the north end of Hastings is a good example of masonry vernacular influences applied to a home (Figure 37). Built in 1944 at 807 North Main Street, the house has a front-facing gable roof, a brick chimney, and an entrance porch with a gable roof, wood columns, and concrete block stem walls. Concrete blocks serve as the structural system and exterior wall fabric, and pairs of double-hung sash windows admit natural lighting into the interior.

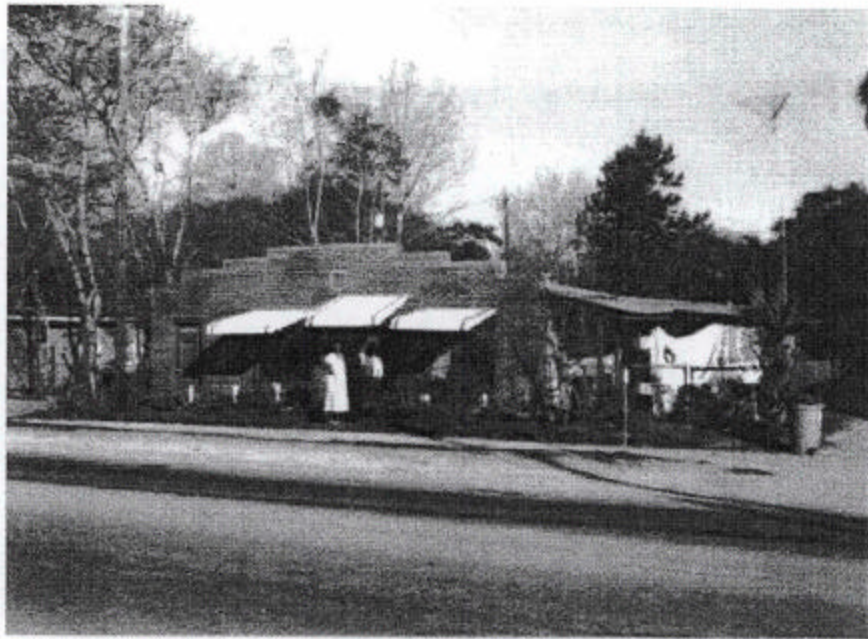


Figure 35: Masonry Vernacular, 712 King Street, West Augustine

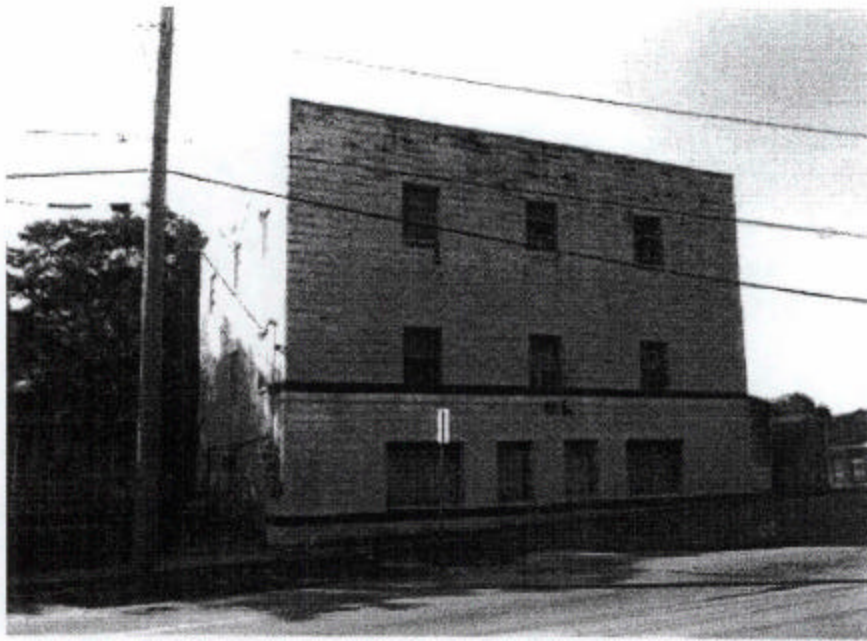


Figure 36: Masonry Vernacular, 545 King Street, West Augustine



Figure 37: Masonry Vernacular, 807 North Main Street, Hastings



## *Bungalow*

The Bungalow was a popular residential building design in Florida during the first three decades of the twentieth century. The name was derived from the Bengalese "bangla" or "banggolo," an indigenous peasant hut that was later developed for use by the British in India during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The name and general characteristics of the style derives its origins from the Far East, including India and the Orient, which had a profound influence on the style. Japanese construction techniques exhibited at the California Mid-Winter Exposition of 1894 emphasized the interplay of angles and planes and extensive display of structural members that became integral components of the style.

The earliest American dwellings consciously labeled as "Bungalow" appeared in California and New England in the 1890s. They generally were large residences designed by architects, and those buildings were often referred to as "Craftsman" designs. By 1910, publications like *Bungalow Magazine* and *The Craftsman* flooded the building market with plans for relatively inexpensive models. Articles appeared in these magazines about economical use of space, interior decoration, and landscaping. About 1911, modest versions of the style were adapted for ready-to-assemble house kits, which were offered by mail order companies, such as Sears, Roebuck and Company and Alladin Homes. This scaled down version of the style became pervasive throughout Florida during the early twentieth century.

The most prominent characteristic of the Bungalow is its lack of height. With rare exceptions the Bungalow is a one or one-and-one-half-story building with a shallow-pitch roof. On larger examples, monitors were employed to create more space and provide additional interior lighting. The typical Bungalow has at least two rooms across the main facade, again emphasizing horizontality at the expense of height. The porch, an integral part of a Bungalow, generally complements the main block. Often the massive masonry piers on which the porch rested were continued above the sill line and served as part of the porch balustrade. The piers were surmounted by short wood columns upon which the porch roofing members rested.

The vast majority of Bungalows were of wood frame construction. This was due to the availability of wood and the desire for cheap housing. The choice of exterior sheathing materials varied. In New England and the mid-Atlantic areas, log and wood shingles were used frequently, while in the South wood shingle, weatherboard, drop siding, and stucco were popular. Fenestration was consciously asymmetrical, with the exception of two small windows flanking the exterior chimney. Double-hung sash windows were frequently hung in groups of two or three, with the upper sash commonly divided into several vertical panes. The main entrance, invariably off-center in the facade, opened directly into the living room, which itself was a new feature. The formal parlor of the nineteenth century largely disappeared with the twentieth century introduction of a less formal lifestyle. A consistent feature of the living room was the fireplace, usually of brick or cobble with a rustic mantel shelf and flanking bookcases. Associated with the fireplace was the inglenook, with beamed ceilings, built-in furnishings, and wainscoting decorating the interiors.

Forty-six buildings exhibiting characteristics of the Bungalow style were recorded in St. Johns County. A good example of the style stands at 4721 Avenue B in the Araquay Park vicinity (Figure 38). The one-and-one-half-story wood frame dwelling has a side-facing gable roof pierced by a gable dormer and a brick chimney. A shed roof protects a partially enclosed front porch, and a square bay with a shed roof projects from the south elevation. Wood drop siding covers the balloon framework. Fenestration includes one-over-one double-hung sash windows.

### *Colonial Revival*

The Colonial Revival style, accounting for thirty-three buildings in the county, was among the dominant building forms in American residential architecture during the first half of the twentieth century. In Florida, however, the popularity of the style was eclipsed by the Bungalow and Mediterranean Revival styles. The term "Colonial Revival" refers to a rebirth of interest in the early English and Dutch houses of the Atlantic Seaboard. The Georgian and Adam styles were the backbone of the revival, which also drew upon Post-medieval English and Dutch Colonial architecture for references.

The Colonial Revival style was introduced at the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876. The centennial of the Declaration of Independence sparked renewed interest in the architecture of the colonial period. Many of the buildings designed for the Exposition were based on historically significant colonial designs. Publicity on the Exposition occurred simultaneously with efforts made by national organizations to preserve Old South Church in Boston and Mount Vernon. Later, a series of articles focusing on eighteenth-century American architecture appeared in *American Architect* and *Harpers*, helping to make the Colonial Revival style popular across the country.

The typical Colonial Revival house in Florida is an eclectic mixture of several colonial designs rather than a direct copy of a single style. The style began to appear in the state in the late 1880s and continues to be built in modified forms today. Some of the identifying characteristics of Colonial Revival architecture include a two-story symmetrical facade with gable, hip, or gambrel roofs; an accentuated door, normally with a fanlight pediment, or crown and pilaster surrounds; simple entry porches supported by columns; and double-hung sash windows set in pairs, usually with multi-pane glazing in each sash.

The dwelling at 350 Ponte Vedra Boulevard displays the influences of the Colonial Revival style (Figure 39). It has a side-facing gable roof with symmetrical flat extensions projecting at the side elevations. Roof-line balustrades adorn the extensions. The main body of the dwelling exhibits contrasting brick-and-wood exterior walls, although the original wood fabric has been covered with vinyl siding. A central entrance is accented with a shallow Colonial surround and molding. Fenestration is regular and symmetrical with eight-over-eight double-hung sash windows. An octagonal oculus adorns the center of the second-story facade.



Figure 38: Bungalow Style, 4721 Avenue B, Araquay Park Vicinity



Figure 39: Colonial Revival Style, 350 Ponte Vedra Boulevard, Ponte Vedra Beach

### *Mediterranean Revival*

Conspicuous in the Araquay Park vicinity and several other areas of the county, the Mediterranean Revival style accounts for twenty-two buildings, or two percent, of those included in the survey. Typically, Mediterranean Revival style buildings represent a significant percentage of the historic building stock in surveys of Florida cities, often ranging between five and twenty percent, depending on the geographic locale of the city in the state. South Florida communities typically have a higher percentage of Mediterranean Revival buildings than communities in central, north, or west Florida. Thus, the frequency of the Mediterranean Revival style in St. Johns County roughly conforms with established trends.

Mediterranean Revival is an eclectic style containing architectural elements with Spanish or Mid-eastern precedents. Found in those states that have a Spanish colonial heritage, Mediterranean Revival broadly defines the Mission, Moorish, Turkish, Byzantine, and Spanish Eclectic revival styles which became popular in the Southwest and Florida. The influence of those Mediterranean styles found expression through a detailed study in 1915 of Latin American architecture made by Bertram Goodhue at the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. That exhibit prominently featured the rich Spanish architectural variety of South America. Encouraged by the publicity afforded the exposition, other architects began to look directly to Spain and elsewhere in the Mediterranean basin, where they found still more interesting building traditions.

Mediterranean Revival buildings in Florida display considerable Spanish influence. The style was popular during the 1920s, and its use continued after the collapse of the boom and in the 1930s. It was adapted for a variety of building types ranging from grandiose tourist hotels to two-room residences. The popularity of the style became widespread, and many commercial and residential buildings underwent renovation in the 1920s to reflect the Mediterranean influence. Identifying features of the style include flat or hip roofs, usually with some form of parapet; ceramic tile roof surfacing; stuccoed facades; entrance porches, commonly with arched openings supported by square columns; casement and double-hung sash windows; and ceramic tile decorations.

A good example of the Mediterranean Revival style stands at 305 Indian Bend in the Araquay Park neighborhood (Figure 40). The two-story residence has a flat, built-up roof system obscured by parapets, and textured stucco exterior wall fabric. The parapet system is accented by projecting piers at the northeast and southwest elevations, and distinctive curvilinear forms, reminiscent of a tower, at the northwest elevation. A small pent eave extends from the parapet at the northeast elevation, and a wing wall and one-story flat extension contribute ambiance at the east and south elevations, respectively. Fenestration is irregular and asymmetrical, consisting of six-over-six-light, six-over-one-light, and one-over-one-light double-hung sash windows, and eight-light casement windows. Some windows are installed within arched openings, others in rectangular piercings. A balconet protecting French doors on the second story and pent roofs surfaced with ceramic barrel tiles contribute character and ambiance. Inset at the northwest elevation, the front entrance is enhanced by a molded surround.

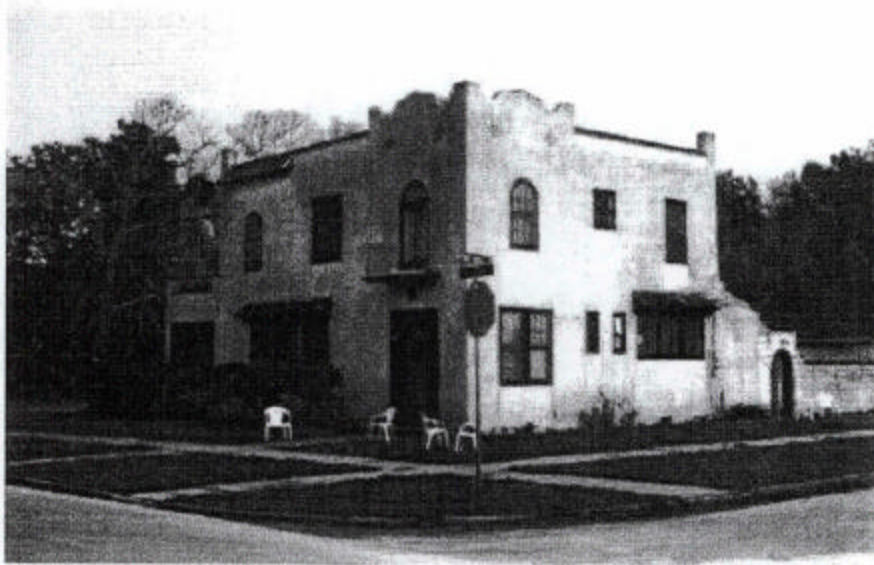


Figure 40: Mediterranean Revival Style, 305 Indian Bend, Araquay Park Vicinity

## Styles Represented By Five or Fewer Buildings

### *Classical Revival*

One building with Classical Revival influences was inventoried in the Ponte Vedra vicinity during the survey. The Classical Revival style evolved from an interest in the architecture of ancient Greek and Roman cultures. The first period of interest in Classical models in the United States dates from the colonial and national periods, which extended between the 1770s and 1850s. A second revival was spurred by the World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893. Many of the best known architects of the day designed buildings for the Exposition based on classical precedents. Examples varied from monumental copies of Greek temples to smaller models that drew heavily from designs of Adam, Georgian, and early Classical Revival residences erected in the early nineteenth century. The Exposition, which drew large crowds, helped make the style fashionable again. In Florida, Classical Revival became a popular design for commercial and government buildings. The application of the style to residences is less common

Characteristics of the style include a symmetrical facade dominated by a full height porch with classical columns, typically with Ionic or Corinthian capitals. Most examples rise more than one story and residences often display a central-block-and-symmetrical-extension plan. Balustrades or "widow walks" often adorn roof lines. Gable or hip roofs pierced with dormers and chimneys are finished with cornice returns or boxed eaves, and frequently dentils or modillions set in a wide frieze band surround the building. Doorways feature decorative pediments or transoms and sidelights, and double-hung sash windows, usually with six or nine panes per sash, provide natural interior lighting.

### *Industrial Vernacular*

Five buildings, most of those in Elkton and Hastings, are derived from industrial vernacular influences. The term, industrial vernacular, characterizes buildings constructed for explicit commercial and industrial applications that display no formal style of architecture. No single building type exists in a greater profusion of scales, styles, shapes, materials, and other variables than industrial structures. The most prevalent type of industrial building is the nonspecific factory of one or more stories. Steel framing and reinforced concrete were typically utilized, depending on resources and desired strength. Industrial buildings were designed by factory owners until the mid-nineteenth century, when architects and specialty firms began designing pre-manufactured buildings for industrial applications. Generally, by the late-nineteenth century, steel framing was used in industrial buildings because I-beams could support far more weight than traditional wood beams. In Florida and the South, however, steel framing was not utilized with any frequency until the turn of the century because of high transportation costs and the availability of wood.

Steel skeletal framing was often revealed as an architectural feature in the facade. Industrial buildings were typically designed by factory owners until the mid-nineteenth century, when architects and specialty firms emerged that designed and pre-manufactured industrial buildings. The most important specialist in concrete factory design was Albert Kahn of Detroit, whose 1905 Packard Number 10 building helped initiate a new era of industrial designs.

The design of Industrial Vernacular buildings, generally simple in plan and modest in detailing, was often inspired from pragmatic, functional needs of a client. In Florida, industrial buildings served many purposes. The citrus, fertilizer, and railroad industries regularly produced, processed, repaired, or stored products within industrial buildings. The airplane industry and military began using industrial architectural forms to house and repair aircraft during World War One. Many of the same components refined for use in industrial buildings--steel curtain walls with concrete panels, wire-glass windows, and simple, functional designs--were well-suited to large repair and assembly buildings developed for the military. During the Great Depression, the Public Works Administration (PWA) helped finance the development of large airfields, including hangars built of steel skeletal frames and reinforced concrete walls, a technology used for several decades. In the 1940s, metal buildings displaying the unusual semicylindrical Quonset form became popular for industrial and military applications.

### *Minimal Traditional*

One model of the Minimal Traditional style was documented in St. Johns County. The style appeared in the mid-1930s, at the height of the Great Depression, as a relatively low-cost alternative to its high-style predecessors. Most models are relatively small one-story dwellings with gable or hip roofs and sparse architectural detailing. Common attributes of the style include moderate roof slopes and eaves that display little overhang. Some models display dentils along a narrow frieze. Entrances often convey vague Colonial or Tudor influences, and front-facing gable extensions and large end, exterior chimney stacks often appear in combination.

In Florida, Minimal Traditional architecture gained some popularity in the mid-1930s in larger cities, such as Jacksonville, Miami, Orlando, and Tampa. Architects turned to the style to help address housing needs in a constricted economy, and deal with the excesses associated with house designs of the 1920s. Architectural journals and popular magazines helped disseminate the form. The style was found to be well-suited to suburban tract-house developments, which appeared in the late 1930s and 1940s, and remained a popular building form throughout the United States into the 1950s.

### *Monterey Revival*

Five dwellings in St. Johns County were recorded with Monterey Revival stylistic influences. All of those are located in Ponte Vedra Beach. The Monterey Revival style, a fusion of revival styles taken from New England, the South, and the Southwest, emerged in California in the 1830s. During the second quarter of the twentieth century, the style enjoyed a brief renaissance, primarily in regions claiming a Spanish Colonial heritage. The resulting designs were two-story dwellings of Spanish Eclectic and Colonial Revival detailing. Early examples of Monterey Revival, built between 1925 and 1935, tended to portray Spanish detailing; those buildings from the 1940s and 1950s typically emphasized English Colonial influences. Scattered examples of the style were constructed across America's suburbs during the second quarter of the twentieth century.

In Florida, the Monterey Revival style never gained wide popularity. The style, principally applied to residential housing, never made a significant contribution to hotel or commercial building trends. The distinctive features included a low-pitched gable roof, a cross-gable, and a second story balcony,



usually cantilevered and integrated within the principal roof. Construction materials included wood shingles, brick, tile, stucco, and weatherboard. The first and second stories generally had different materials, wood over brick the most common application. Door and window surrounds often reflected Territorial examples of Spanish Colonial antecedents. Cast iron applications for balcony columns led to a further variant, called Creole French.

The residence at 340 Ponte Vedra Boulevard displays traditional Monterey Revival influences. The two-story dwelling has a side-facing gable roof plan with a projecting cross-gable and symmetrical gable extensions. Integrated within the primary roof, a cantilevered balcony abuts the cross-gable and is adorned with wrought-iron columns and balustrades. Brick serves as the exterior wall fabric, and fenestration is asymmetrical and irregular with eight-over-eight, six-over-six, and four-over-four-light double-hung sash windows. Brick chimneys bracket the principal two-story portion of the house, and traditional moldings accent the entrance.

#### *Prairie*

One building in St. Johns County was recorded with Prairie style influences. The Prairie style, one of few indigenous American architectural forms, was developed by a creative association of Chicago architects. The style was mastered by Frank Lloyd Wright whose Winslow House, constructed in 1893, was perhaps the first residence completed in the style. The heaviest concentrations of Prairie style buildings are located in the Midwest. Although pattern books helped to distribute vernacular forms of the style throughout the country, the Prairie style was a short-lived architectural form with its popularity rising and falling from favor between 1895 and World War I.

In Florida, the Prairie style never gained wide acceptance. The style was eclipsed by revival styles of the American colonial period and from Europe and the Mediterranean basin, which gained popularity and flourished during the land boom of the 1920s, one of Florida's most significant periods of development. Perhaps the largest collection of buildings designed in the previous style in Florida are located in Jacksonville, where architects widely applied the style to buildings constructed there following a devastating fire in 1901.

Distinctive features of the Prairie style include a two-story design, often with a bold interplay of horizontal planes against a vertical block and secondary vertical details. Low-pitched gable, flat, or hip roofs with boxed eaves often contrast with dormers, massive chimneys, and horizontal ribbons of windows, often treated with leaded glass. Cantilevered overhangs, one-story porches, porte cocheres, or extensions with massive column supports are secondary features. Brick, stucco, tile, or rough face cast stone exterior wall fabrics often appear in combination with wood. Classical, Mission, or Italian Renaissance influences, such as tiled roofs or cornice line brackets, are prominent in some models.

#### *Ranch*

One building in the county displays features of the Ranch style, which originated in California during the mid-1930s. The style ultimately emerged as a dominant building form for suburban residences between the mid-1940s and the 1960s. Widespread application of the style gained impetus from an increasing dependence of Americans on the automobile during the post-World War II period. Before the war, Americans lived near their places of work or to trolley lines. After the war,

the affordability of automobiles and increased wealth enabled Americans to move away from congested cities to suburbs that offered the comparatively large building lots necessary to accommodate "rambling" Ranch houses.

Ranch architecture, loosely based on Spanish Colonial precedents and sometimes displaying influences of the Craftsman or Prairie styles, typically displays a long one-story block with a low-pitched gable roof set parallel to the street. Secondary gables or hip extensions are common and often contain a built-in garage. Few models display porches, but courtyards or patios often appear along the rear elevation. Brick served as a common wall construction material in early examples, but later versions of the style often adopted wood framing. Adornment is sparse, sometimes including wrought-iron railings or wood purlins. Ribbon and picture windows typically punctuate the facade and usually include sash and awning treatments.

### *Rustic*

One building at Fort Matanzas National Monument is attributed to rustic architectural influences. The National Park Service (NPS) is generally credited with developing the rustic architectural motif. The style became one of the significant characteristics of the NPS during the Great Depression. Applied to buildings, bridges, signs, and other structures in national parks, the rustic style derived its roots from contemporary needs and traditional American values. Drawing from colonial and early-American antecedents, Depression-era rustic buildings largely reflected folk and rural precedents. The style assumed various forms and materials, depending upon the architect, regional contexts, availability of materials, local economics, and personnel. Hewn lumber, stone, and brick constituted the primary building materials. Architectural features included gable roofs, log or square hew timbers chinked with composite mortars, post-and-girt construction, extensive porches with exposed materials, stone chimneys, exposed rafter ends, projecting purlins, gable-end trusses, and articulated foundation systems.

The NPS issued several publications during the 1930s documenting the extent and variety of buildings, structures, and objects constructed in both national and state parks. Albert H. Good, an architectural consultant to the NPS, authored two series, which helped standardize future park development and building construction. Providing a permanent visual record of rustic architecture, Good's volumes helped codify an important part of the Great Depression ethos--make do, or do without. Most rustic buildings in America's Depression-era parks were constructed, in part, by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). To provide young men with jobs, the CCC, one of the New Deal "alphabet programs," was developed by the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The CCC taught enrollees land development practices and building techniques. Rustic architecture, as it was applied to America's parks and forests, demonstrated a respect for nature, a flexible blending of buildings in various regions, including mountains, plains, rolling hills, woodlands, and wetlands. The use of native materials in the construction of buildings suggested a sensitivity to the balance between man and nature, with adherence to stringent economic demands brought on by the Depression.

A good example of rustic architecture is located at Fort Matanzas National Monument (Figure 41). Built in 1936, the visitor's center rises two stories and is protected by a hip roof surfaced with wood shingles. Further evidence of the use of native materials are contrasting coquina and drop siding employed for the exterior wall fabrics. Fenestration is irregular and asymmetrical with six-over-six-light and one-over-one-light double-hung sash windows, and four-light hopper windows. A central arch on the first story forms a tunnel through the building, and provides access into the visitor's center on the first story, and the boat dock on the Matanzas River.

### *Shotgun*

Five dwellings in the county's African-American communities exhibit characteristics derived from the Shotgun style. Between the 1870s and the 1940s, the Shotgun was a common residential vernacular form in many African-American neighborhoods in the South. Part of the heritage of the American South, the Shotgun design, with its familiar slender profile, has been historically linked to the region by cultural geographers and folklorists, some of whom report its roots as distant as Haiti, the West Indies, and even Africa. Displaying a linear interior room pattern, the house type appeared in larger cities, such as Charleston, Key West, New Orleans, and Savannah, in the period of Reconstruction.

Both African-American residents and builders, and white developers embraced the Shotgun form to develop subdivisions and housing in urban ethnic neighborhoods. Inexpensive to construct on narrow lots, the form gained popularity with Freedmen in villages and towns of the lower Mississippi River valley and the Gulf Coast, and, eventually, throughout the South.

The term, Shotgun, was allegedly applied to the house form by southern whites, who claimed that a person could discharge a shotgun through the dwelling without damaging the walls. The typical Shotgun house displays a slender profile with a front-facing gable roof, porch that extends across the facade, and wood clapboard siding. Carved beams or wood posts often support shed roofs shading porches. The facade generally displays an offset entrance and a single or pair of double-hung sash windows. Some models have a single central door. Most are built with a wood balloon frame, although a few are executed in brick or finished with stucco. Applied embellishment typically appears on the porch and includes turned posts, jigsaw-cut brackets, and spindles. Wood shingles in variegated patterns often finish the walls of the gable ends. Many dwellings are literally constructed high off the ground, with the foundation piers sometimes rising five feet in height, which lends more presence to the dwelling and helps prevent interior rooms from flooding in low lying areas.

### *Split Level*

One modest example of the Split Level style was recorded during the survey. Architects created the Split Level style as a multi-story version of the Ranch style, which gained popularity in the 1940s and 1950s. Early Ranch and Split Level models that appeared in the 1930s were typically small, modest versions. Widespread application emerged with the increasing dependence of Americans on the automobile during the post-World War II period. Prior to the war, many Americans lived in or adjacent to the areas in which they worked. Because land was at a premium in those areas houses generally were constructed on relatively small, narrow lots. The increased mobility afforded by the



Figure 41: Rustic Style, Visitor's Center, 1937, Matanzas National Monument

automobile enabled many people to move away from congested cities to suburbs where comparatively large building lots could accommodate larger houses. The style was most popular in the suburbs of the Northeast and Midwest, with fewer examples constructed in western and southern states.

Split Level homes retain the horizontality and the low-pitched roof with over-hanging eaves typical of the Ranch style, but include a two-story block to increase interior living space. A built-in garage is often placed on the ground floor of the two-story extension. A wide range of exterior wall fabrics are used, such as brick, concrete block, and wood siding often applied to a single model. Decoration is sparse and usually confined to vague Colonial precedents.

## **Structures**

Seven structures were recorded during the course of the survey. They consist of three fire towers, two bridges, one entrance gate, and one mausoleum.

### *Fire Tower*

Fire towers serve in the first line of defense in the detection of fires in Florida's forests and parks. Generally constructed in the shape of a tall obelisk, fire towers represent a type of industrial vernacular architecture designed for the expressed purpose of providing a sheltered structure for lookouts. Erected as a series of connected steel members with no exterior wall fabric, the steel skeletal framework supports a winding dog-leg stair system and lookout quarters with a hip roof, steel stem walls, and sliding or pivot windows. The structures were generally assembled horizontally, then pulled upright into place by a series of pulleys, cables, and vehicles.

The U. S. Forest Service and the National Park Service assembled various types of fire towers and lookouts throughout the country during the Great Depression. Those built in mountainous regions often resembled a dwelling fabricated using rustic architectural influences, but on flat terrain steel skeletal frameworks with a small quarters were the predominate type of structure. In Florida, the Board of Forestry and Parks built over one hundred fire towers throughout the state's forests and parks during the Great Depression. In 1937 alone, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) assembled sixteen fire towers in various forests and parks. The program of fire detection accelerated after World War II, when lumber companies and residents in rural, forested regions, in association with the State of Florida, installed still more fire towers.

Located at Bakersville, Durbin, and DuPont Center, the three fire towers in St. Johns County display similar characteristics (Figure 22). Each rises approximately one hundred twenty feet in height, and consists of poured concrete piers that anchor a tapered steel skeletal framework. The framework supports a winding dog-leg stair system that leads to a square lookout room fabricated with a hip roof, steel stem wall, and pivot windows with wire glass.

## *Bridges*

Constructed to span roadways, railroads, rivers, ravines, and other man-made and natural features, bridges connect two points at a height above the intervening ground or water, allowing passage beneath. The primary forms of bridges include girder bridges, which rest on supports at either end; arch bridges borne on arches or vaults and often forming aqueducts or viaducts; suspension bridges with the framework hung from high masts; cantilever bridges; and several types of movable bridges. Construction materials for bridges range from wood and rope for simple suspension spans designed for pedestrians in rural sites to reinforced concrete and steel employed to accommodate vehicular traffic. The earliest surviving bridge of any length, the Martorell Bridge in Spain, dates to 220 B.C.

The development of the railroad in the nineteenth century led to greater sophistication in bridge design and construction. Three broadly defined types of railroad bridges emerged in the process: girder, trestle, and truss structures. Scientifically crafted bridges date to 1840, when William Howe patented a truss design, and brothers Caleb and Thomas Pratt produced another in 1844. Wendel Bollman's truss and that of Albert Fink became the first all-iron designs used throughout a single railroad system, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.

After the Civil War, bridge companies proliferated, and contributed to the standardization of design and construction methods. Various types of truss bridges supported rail systems, including bowstring, camelback, Gardner, Howe, K-truss, Pratt, and Stearns. Girder bridges displayed simple designs constructed with lateral and web plates. Railroads used girder and truss type bridges in both fixed and movable applications. Movable bridges developed into three subcategories: bascule, lift, and swing. Railroads found girder bridges the most stable and solid type of structure for spans, especially where movability was important. Girder bridges could withstand fast-moving, heavy trains better than trusses. An extensive amount of material was required to fabricate girder bridges, however, often compelling railroads to build less expensive truss bridges. Improved bridge design and heavier trains prompted the replacement of older structures.

The advent of the automobile in the twentieth century spurred further refinements in bridge design and construction. Established in 1915, the State Road Department (now Florida Department of Transportation) initially relied on wood frame bridges to support vehicular traffic, but turned to reinforced concrete structures in the 1920s. Movable spans, especially bascule and steel-frame vertical lift bridges, were necessary over major waterways in large cities, such as Jacksonville, Miami, and Tampa. But, some notable bridges were also assembled in smaller cities, such as the Bridge of Lions in St. Augustine.

Two bridges were recorded during the survey. The Palm Valley Bridge was a reinforced concrete bridge with double-bascule leaves and a tender's station attached to the south elevation. The steel-frame bascules supported a wood-plank roadbed, one of few such bridge roadbeds left in Florida. Increasing traffic along Palm Valley Road and the Intracoastal Waterway has compelled replacement of the bridge, which was completed in 1937. The bridge was removed by the W.S. Army Corps of Engineers while this survey was in progress. A memorandum of agreement reached in 2000 between the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U. S. Coast Guard, and the Florida State Historic Preservation Office provides for Level II Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation to mitigate the

adverse impacts to the historic property from the construction activities, and agrees to the eventual destruction of the bridge. Part of the Dixie Highway, the Durbin Creek Bridge is a fixed, reinforced concrete structure. Poured concrete stem walls and flat road bed form an overpass across Durbin Creek. It lies abandoned in northern St. Johns County, along with adjacent portions of the brick-paved Dixie Highway.

An entrance gate at the southwest corner of Holmes Boulevard and King Street marks the former site of the Florida Normal & Industrial Institute. The structure displays influences of the Mediterranean Revival style with a hip roof surfaced in ceramic barrel tiles, shell-dash stucco exterior wall fabric, and tall arched piercings. The structure has an irregular, tripartite form with a tall central block placed at a forty-five degree oblique to the intersection, and projecting wings set at an acute angle from the main block.

Another distinctive structure in the county is the chapel and mausoleum in San Lorenzo Cemetery on U. S. 1 South. Displaying Mission style influences, it has a cruciform shape, octagonal dome with a gable roof system terminating in shaped parapets adorned by crucifixes. Rough-hewn granite walls serve as the exterior wall fabric. Fixed and metal sash windows punctuate the walls, and statuary of St. Pius V and St. Francis Borcia adorn the arched entrance, steps, and on the west elevation.

### **Summary**

A majority of historic buildings in St. Johns County are of vernacular design and construction. Constituting approximately ninety percent of the county's older buildings, these vernacular forms--wood frame, industrial, and masonry--represent an important part of the county's heritage. Many are small wood-frame dwellings, but others are churches, depots, schools, and agriculture-related. Consequently, efforts should be made to preserve these diverse and unusual forms.

In addition, because the county contains relatively few examples of formally executed architecture, the county should pay close attention to further modification and demolition of these buildings. The presence of buildings constructed in the traditions of Bungalow/Craftsman, Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, Mediterranean Revival, Minimal Traditional, Monterey, Prairie, Ranch, Rustic, Shotgun, and Split Level indicates an awareness over time by residents and builders of the significance of erecting buildings that reflect specific historical and architectural associations. The county's historic buildings, important architectural and cultural links to the heritage of St. Augustine and St. Johns County, are well worth preserving, for they are among the few visual resources linking old and new as the county enters the twenty-first century.

Because St. Johns County contains over one thousand older buildings, it may be easy for residents to develop a false sense of permanency about their county's architectural heritage. It should be noted that many Florida communities have lost much of their historic fabric in the course of a few decades. Without protective measures, St. Johns County's historic architecture can also fall victim to further alteration, deterioration, or demolition. Important architectural links to the heritage of St. Johns County, the buildings contribute to the county's sense of time, place, and historical development through their location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Options available for the preservation of the county's historic architecture can be found in the Recommendations section of this report.

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