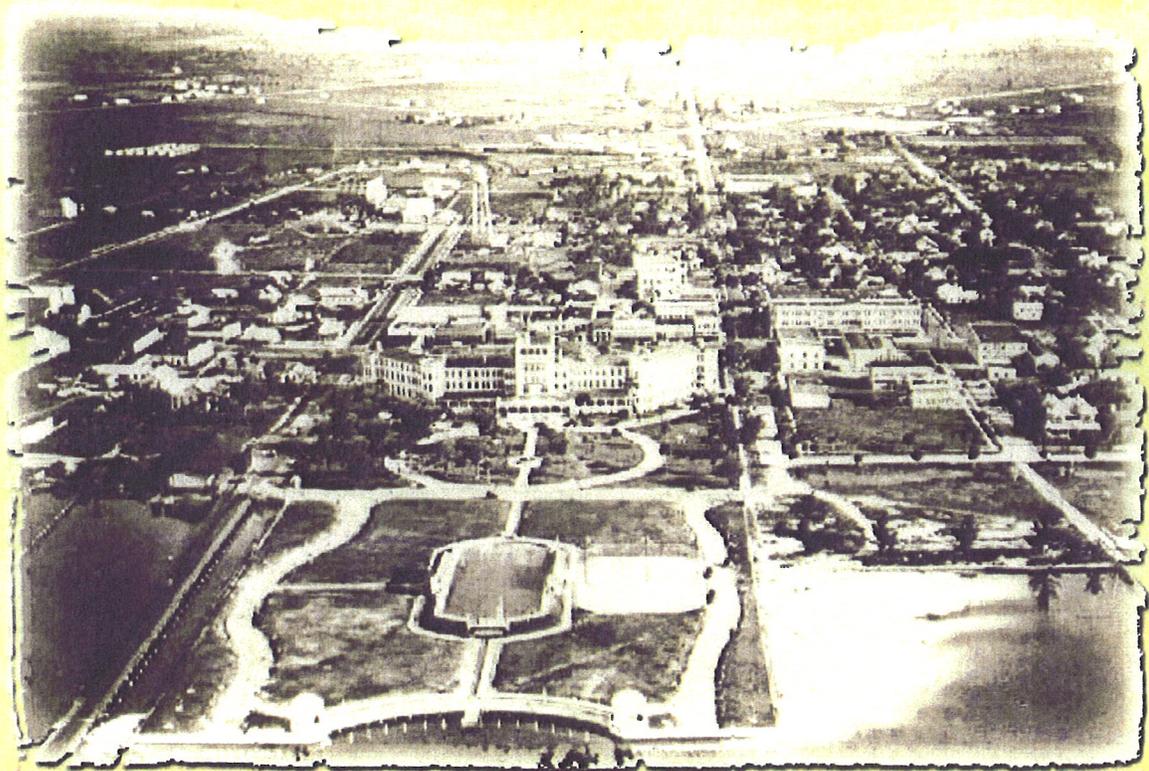




City of Punta Gorda Historic Resources Survey 2002-2003



Grant No. F0220
April 2003

prepared by



LAND DESIGN INNOVATIONS
INCORPORATED

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Winter Park, Florida 32789
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CITY OF PUNTA GORDA

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY 2002-2003

Grant No. F0220

June 2003

Prepared For:

City of Punta Gorda Community Development Department
326 West Marion Street
Punta Gorda, FL 33950

Prepared By:

Land Design Innovations, Inc
140 North Orlando Avenue, Suite 295
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Special Assistance

The City retained Land Design Innovations, Inc. (LDI) to conduct the surveys and reports. David C. Hilston, Chief Planner, Department of Community Development was the grant coordinator and principal contact person for this project.

Special thanks are extended to all the community residents that attended the community workshops, provided valuable information, and shared facts about their neighborhoods. Some of them include: Mr. John Allen, Dr. Martha Bireda, Rev. Carl F. Brooks, who assisted in the preparation of the history report regarding the African-American contributions to the City's history; Mr. Vernon Peeples, Mr. Lindsey Williams, Mr. Michael Haymans, and Mr. John Goulding, who provided information about the linkages between the City's history and the fishing camps in the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary; and to all the residents who attended the community workshops and answered calls for input.

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Punta Gorda applied for, and received, a grant from the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources to conduct an update to a previously conducted survey of historic properties located within the Community Redevelopment Area, and to develop design guidelines for the National Historic District. The historic resource survey and guidelines are a key component of a broader community redevelopment effort being conducted by the City. Map 1 shows the location of the survey area and Map 2 show the National Register and local historic districts.

The City of Punta Gorda hired Land Design Innovations, Inc. (LDI) to conduct three projects as follows:

- A historic structures survey of the City's Eastside (Trabue-Woods) neighborhood, a predominantly African-American neighborhood.
- An update of the 1987 historical resource survey, which may result in the need to expand the historic district boundaries.
- Design Guidelines for Punta Gorda's Historic Districts.

LDI conducted the historic structures surveys between November 2002 and June 2003. This report describes the methods and results of the survey. Attachments A, B, C, D and E contain the Florida Master Site File (FMSF) forms completed by LDI.

As noted above, the purpose of the survey update was to revisit the boundaries of the current local historic districts and determine the need to expand them, and also to set parameters for Design Guidelines to be applied to all properties within the City's Historic Districts. Attachment F contains the Design Guidelines.

This report includes four sections. Section 1 contains the methodology used for the surveys; Section 2 shows a historical overview of the City of Punta Gorda, including acknowledgement of African-American contributions to the City's history and the linkages between the City's history and the fishing camps on the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary; Section 3 contains a summary of the survey results; and Section 4 contains recommendations for amendments to the City's historic preservation ordinance and district boundaries.

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SURVEY AREA

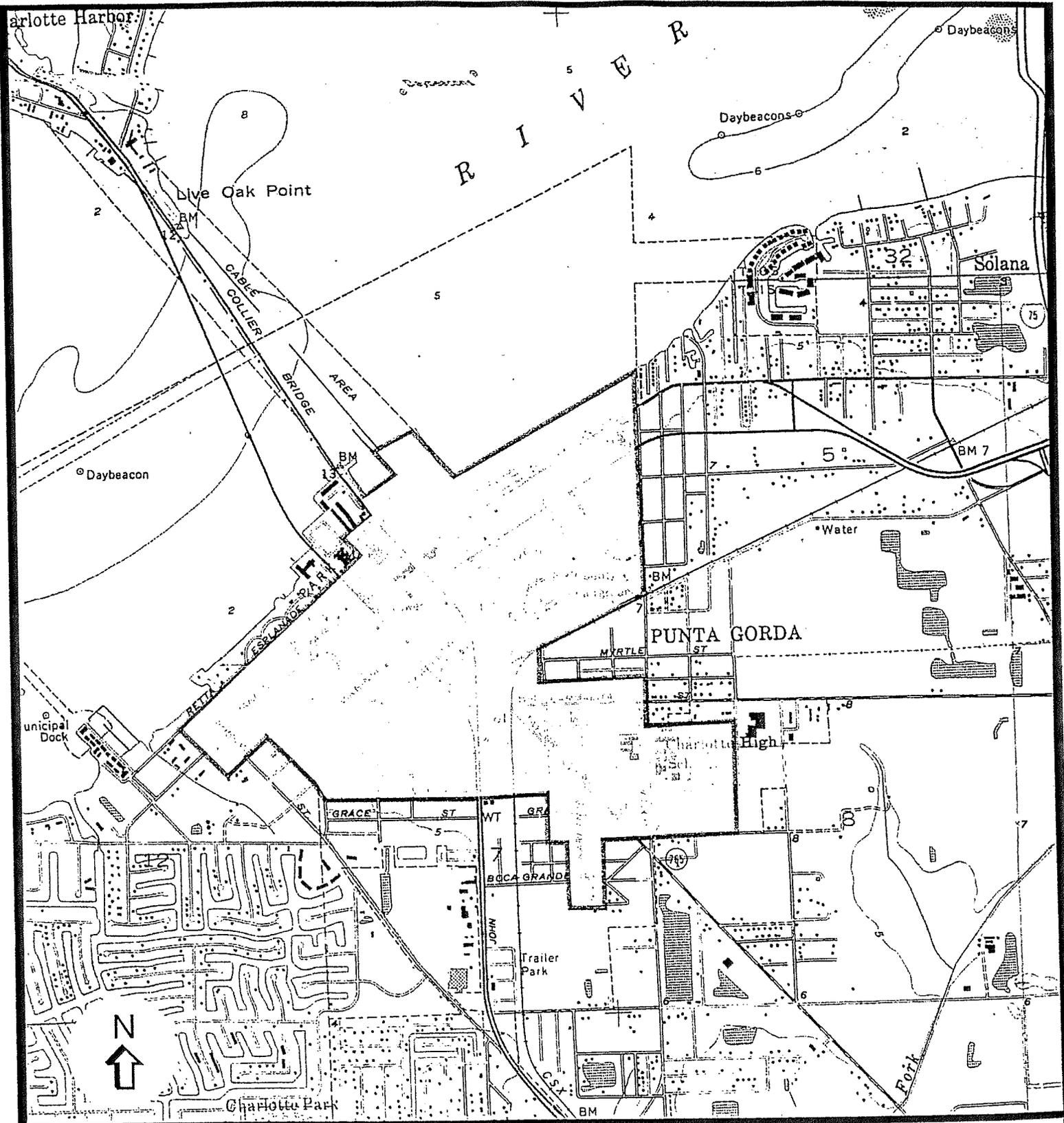
The City of Punta Gorda is the only incorporated city in Charlotte County, and is currently more than 14 square miles with slightly more than 16,000 residents. It is located on the south shore of the Peace River.

As noted in the History section, the City of Punta Gorda is rich in history that dates back over 400 years. The City is very eager to continue documenting those vestiges from the past, which will in turn aid in the preservation and rehabilitation of historical and architectural resources that show the past development history of the area.

Most of the significant architectural and historical resources of the City are concentrated in the heart of the City, which includes three distinct neighborhoods: the commercial area (which includes the local commercial historic district), the Trabue-Woods neighborhood (known also as the Eastside neighborhood), and the residential area east of US Highway 41 (which includes both the National Historic District and the local residential historic district). LDI surveyed all three areas.

The survey area covers approximately 680 acres, and over 1200 parcels/lots. The entire area was investigated. Map 1 shows the boundaries of the survey area. The next section describes the methodology used to determine the boundaries of the study area.

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Source: USGS Punta Gorda, FL 1957. Photorevised 1987. Scale 1:24,000

MAP 1: Survey Location Map



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PREVIOUS SURVEYS

Several surveys have been conducted in the Punta Gorda area. They include:

Survey Number	Title	Date
53	An Archaeological and Historical Survey and Assessment of the Punta Gorda Isles Section 15 Tract in Charlotte County, Florida	1975
394	Cultural Resource Survey of the Punta Gorda Wastewater Lane Application Site	1979
620	Archaeological Reconnaissance of City of Punta Gorda's Proposed Force main Route	1982
1519	Punta Gorda Historic and Architectural Survey	1987
2798	Cultural Resource Assessment Survey of the Punta Gorda weigh-in Motion Enforcement Station on I-75	1991
6280	Punta Gorda Multiple Property Group	1990

The 1987 Survey was performed by Florida Preservation Services with grant funding from the State in the amount of \$9,000.00. At that time, a total of 252 structures were catalogued. Two potential National Historic Districts were identified as eligible for listing. The survey identified a wide range of buildings dating from 1893 through the 1930s. Many were examples of a significant style reflecting the historical development patterns of the community. Four properties were identified as eligible for individual designation in the National Register: The Charlotte High School, A.C.L. Depot, the Hector House, and the Smith Arcade. Two were identified as properties deserving local landmark status: The Cleveland Home and the Charlotte Herald Building. Sixty-one properties were subsequently nominated for the National Register, and eight are now listed in the National Register of Historic Properties.

In 1988, the National Register Historic District was created. The City has also designated two local historic districts which overlap the National Historic District: The residential historic district and the commercial historic district. Figure 1 shows the properties surveyed in 1987, and Map 2 shows the current historic districts in the City.

As part of the 1987 survey, a historic preservation plan was prepared. That report provided the major goals and recommendations for preservation in the community.

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City of Punta Gorda, Florida
 2002-2003 Architectural Resources Survey

Figure 1. List of Previously Surveyed Properties (Survey# 1519) **STAFF TO FILL OUT YR & STYLE**

FMSF#	ADDRESS	YEAR	STATUS	STYLE
CH00096	313 E Ann St			
CH00097	321 E Ann St			
CH00098	401 E Ann St		DEM	
CH00099	438 Ann St			
CH00100	319 Allen St			
CH00101	401 Allen St		DEM	
CH00102	208 Berry St		C	
CH00103	362 Berry St		NC	
CH00104	415 Boca Grande			
CH00105	309 Burland Sr			
CH00106	329 Burland St			
CH00107	300 Carmalita St			
CH00108	302 Carmalita St			
CH00109	415 Carmalita St			
CH00110	621 E Charlotte Av			
CH00111	122 E Charlotte	1930		MOD
CH00112	526 E Charlotte	1925		
CH00113	120 Chasteen			
CH00114	117 Chasteen St		C	
CH00115	354 Cochran		DEM	
CH00117	313 Cross St			

FMSF#	ADDRESS	YEAR	STATUS	STYLE
CH00118	124 Cross St		NC	
CH00119	231 Cross St		C	
CH00120	111 Cross St		DEM	
CH00121	105 Cross St		DEM	
CH00122	208 Cross St			
CH00123	219 Cross St		C	
CH00124	223 Cross St		DEM	
CH00125	220 Cross St		DEM	
CH00126	228 Cross St		DEM	
CH00127	260 W Olympia Av		C	
CH00128	301 Cross St		DEM	
CH00129	305 Cross St		DEM	
CH00130	333 Cross St		DEM	
CH00131	401 Cross St		C	
CH00132	402 Cross St		C	
CH00133	410 Cross St		DEM	
CH00134	421 Cross St		DEM	
CH00135	421B Cross St		DEM	
CH00136	421C Cross St		DEM	
CH00137	109 Durrance St		NC	
CH00138	117 Durrance St		C	

City of Punta Gorda, Florida
2002-2003 Architectural Resources Survey

FMSF#	ADDRESS	YEAR	STATUS	STYLE
CH00139	118 Durrance St		C	
CH00140	301 Durrance St		NC	
CH00141	212 Durrance St		C	
CH00142	213 Durrance St		C	
CH00143	221 Durrance St		C	
CH00144	233 Durrance St		C	
CH00145	225 Durrance St		C	
CH00146	312 Durrance St		C	
CH00147	109 Dolly St		C	
CH00148	121 Dolly St		NC	
CH00149	902 Elizabeth St			
CH00150	1104 Elizabeth St			
CH00151	319 Fitzhugh St			
CH00152	110 Gilchrist St		C	
CH00153	115 Gilchrist St		C	
CH00154	359 Gill St		NC	
CH00155	115 Gill St		C	
CH00156	108 Gill St		C	
CH00157	116 Gill St		C	
CH00158	122 Gill St		C	
CH00159	123 Gill St		C	
CH00160	209 Gill St		DEM	

FMSF#	ADDRESS	YEAR	STATUS	STYLE
CH00161	212 Gill St		C	
CH00162	214 Gill St		C	
CH00163	224 Gill St		C	
CH00164	360 Gill St		NC	
CH00165	502 W Marion Av		C	
CH00166	509 Gill St			
CH00167	512 Cross St			
CH00168	410 Gill St		C	
CH00169	331 Goldstein St		C	
CH00170	231 Goldstein St		C	
CH00171	210 Goldstein St		C	
CH00172	212 Goldstein St		C	
CH00173	215 Goldstein St		C	
CH00174	219 Goldstein St		C	
CH00175	220 Goldstein St		C	
CH00176	302 Goldstein St		C	
CH00177	327 Goldstein		DEM	
CH00178	311 Goldstein St		C	
CH00179	314 Goldstein St			
CH00180	316 Goldstein St		C	
CH00181	324 Goldstein St		C	
CH00182	229 Goldstein St		C	

City of Punta Gorda, Florida
 2002-2003 Architectural Resources Survey

FMSF#	ADDRESS	YEAR	STATUS	STYLE
CH00183	326 Goldstein		C	
CH00184	639 Hargreaves Av			
CH00185	110 Harvey St		C	
CH00186	116 Harvey St		DEM	
CH00187	124 Harvey St		DEM	
CH00188	210 Harvey St		NC	
CH00189	211 Harvey St		C	
CH00190	216 Harvey St		C	
CH00191	222 Harvey St			
CH00192	224 Harvey St		NC	
CH00193	228 Harvey St		NC	
CH00194	232 Harvey St		NC	
CH00195	227 Harvey St		NC	
CH00196	233 Harvey St		NC	
CH00197	320 Harvey St		C	
CH00198	327 Harvey St		C	
CH00199	128 Herald Ct			
CH00200	213 King St			
CH00201	408 King St			
CH00202	109 McGregor St		C	
CH00203	113 McGregor St		C	
CH00204	124 McGregor St		C	

FMSF#	ADDRESS	YEAR	STATUS	STYLE
CH00205	216 McGregor St		C	
CH00206	233 McKenzie St			
CH00207	105 McKenzie St		DEM	
CH00208	109 McKenzie St			
CH00209	119 McKenzie St			
CH00210	121 McKenzie St		DEM	
CH00211	122 McKenzie St			
CH00212	120 McKenzie St			
CH00213	116 McKenzie St			
CH00214	--- E Marion Av			
CH00215	--- E Marion Av			
CH00216	145 E Marion Av			
CH00217	--- E Marion Av			
CH00218	121 E Marion Av			
CH00219	108 E Marion Av			
CH00220	141 E Marion Av			
CH00221	512 E Marion Av			
CH00222	616 E Marion Av			
CH00223	716 E Marion Av			
CH00224	326 W Marion Av		C	
CH00225	145 W Marion Av			
CH00226	264 W Marion Av		NC	

City of Punta Gorda, Florida
 2002-2003 Architectural Resources Survey

FMSF#	ADDRESS	YEAR	STATUS	STYLE
CH00227	139 W Marion Av			
CH00228	507 W Marion Av		C	
CH00229	135 W Marion Av			
CH00230	133 W Marion Av			
CH00231	111 E Marion Av			
CH00232	117 W Marion Av			
CH00233	119 W Marion Av			
CH00234	123 W Marion Av			
CH00234	127 W Marion Av			
CH00235	141 W Marion Av			
CH00236	149 W Marion Av			
CH00237	208 W Marion Av		NC	
CH00238	212 W Marion Av		NC	
CH00239	252 W Marion Av		NC	
CH00240	258 W Marion Av		NC	
CH00241	363 W Marion Av		C	
CH00242	361 W Marion Av		C	
CH00243	357 W Marion Av		NC	
CH00244	415 W Marion Av		C	
CH00245	412 W Marion Av		C	
CH00246	451 W Marion Av		C	
CH00247	457 W Marion Av		C	

FMSF#	ADDRESS	YEAR	STATUS	STYLE
CH00248	461 W Marion Av		C	
CH00249	508 W Marion Av		C	
CH00250	520 W Marion Av		DEM	
CH00251	554 W Marion Av		C	
CH00252	566 W Marion Av		C	
CH00253	604 W Marion Av		C	
CH00254	620 W Marion Av		C	
CH00255	634 W Marion Av		C	
CH00256	703 W Marion Av		NC	
CH00257	705 W Marion Av		NC	
CH00258	706 W Marion Av		C	
CH00259	711 W Marion Av		C	
CH00260	715 W Marion Av		C	
CH00261	717 W Marion Av		C	
CH00262	817 W Marion Av			
CH00263	911 W Marion Av			
CH00264	756 W Marion Av		C	
CH00265	760 W Marion Av			
CH00266	252 Mary St		DEM	
CH00267	253 Mary St		DEM	
CH00268	504 Mary St			
CH00269	--- Nesbit St			

City of Punta Gorda, Florida
2002-2003 Architectural Resources Survey

FMSF#	ADDRESS	YEAR	STATUS	STYLE
CH00270	1 Nesbit St			
CH00271	--- Old PG Park - Hotel Fountain			
CH00272	501 E Olympia Av			
CH00273	260 E Olympia Av			
CH00274	520 E Olympia Av			
CH00275	407 E Olympia Av			
CH00276	421 E Olympia Av			
CH00277	604 E Olympia Av		DEM	
CH00278	638 E Olympia Av		DEM	
CH00279	615 E Olympia Av		DEM	
CH00280	716 E Olympia Av		DEM	
CH00281	116 W Olympia Av		NC	
CH00282	212 W Olympia Av		DEM	
CH00283	209 W Olympia Av		C	
CH00284	215 W Olympia Av		NC	
CH00285	259 W Olympia Av		DEM	
CH00286	364 W Olympia Av		C	
CH00287	603 W Olympia Av		C	
CH00288	724 W Olympia Av		C	
CH00289	509 W Palm Av		C	
CH00290	513 W Palm Av		C	
CH00291	607 W Palm Av		C	

FMSF#	ADDRESS	YEAR	STATUS	STYLE
CH00292	501 Retta Esplanade		C	
CH00293	301 Retta Esplanade		DEM	
CH00294	321 Retta Esplanade		C	
CH00295	401 Retta Esplanade		C	
CH00296	413 Retta Esplanade		C	
CH00297	451 Retta Esplanade		C	
CH00298	455 Retta Esplanade		C	
CH00299	459 Retta Esplanade		C	
CH00300	509 Retta Esplanade		C	
CH00301	551 Retta Esplanade		C	
CH00302	565 Retta Esplanade		C	
CH00303	601 Retta Esplanade		C	
CH00304	613 Retta Esplanade		C	
CH00305	621 Retta Esplanade		C	
CH00306	507 Showalter Av		DEM	
CH00307	604 Showalter Av		DEM	
CH00309	118 Sullivan St		NC	
CH00310	--- Sullivan St			
CH00311	112 Sullivan St		NC	
CH00312	219 Sullivan St		C	
CH00313	225 Sullivan St		C	
CH00314	231 Sullivan St		C	

City of Punta Gorda, Florida
 2002-2003 Architectural Resources Survey

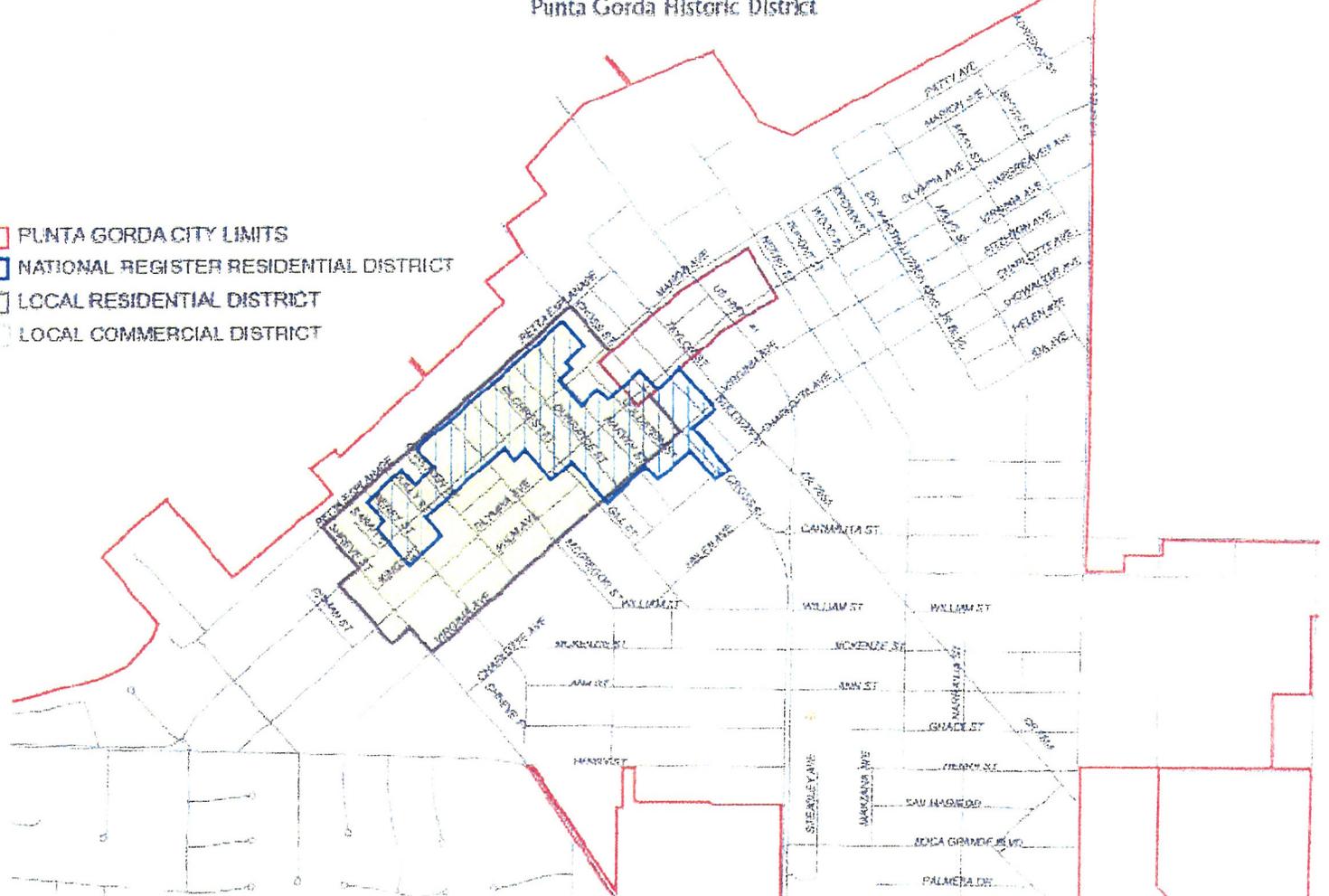
FMSF#	ADDRESS	YEAR	STATUS	STYLE
CH00315	301 Sullivan St		DEM	
CH00316	308 Sullivan St		C	
CH00317	312 Sullivan St		C	
CH00318	331 Sullivan St		C	
CH00319	322 Sullivan St		DEM	
CH00320	403 Sullivan St		C	
CH00321	408 Sullivan St		DEM	
CH00322	118 W Olympia Av		NC	
CH00323	210 Taylor St			
CH00324	216 Taylor St			
CH00325	233 Taylor St		DEM	
CH00326	307 Taylor St		C	
CH00327	311 Taylor St		C	
CH00328	315 Taylor St		C	
CH00329	321 Taylor St		C	
CH00330	1009 Taylor St			
CH00331	1226 Taylor St		DEM	
CH00332	1301 Taylor Rd			
CH00333	1303 Taylor Rd			

FMSF#	ADDRESS	YEAR	STATUS	STYLE
CH00334	1307 Taylor St		DEM	
CH00335	1501 Taylor Rd		DEM	
CH00336	607 Trabue St		C	
CH00337	609 Trabue St		C	
CH00338	613 Trabue Av		C	
CH00339	626 Trabue St		NC	
CH00340	317 W Virginia Av		C	
CH00341	524 W Virginia Av		C	
CH00342	715 W Virginia Av			
CH00343	215 William St			
CH00344	301 William St			
CH00345	335 William St			
CH00346	502 King St			
CH00440	806 Carmalita			
CH00443	1250 Cooper St			
CH00445	2330 Shore Dr			
CH00447	408 Tamiami Tr			

Source: Department of State, Division of Historic Resources. May 2003. City of Punta Gorda Planning Department.

Punta Gorda Historic District

- PUNTA GORDA CITY LIMITS
- NATIONAL REGISTER RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
- LOCAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
- LOCAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT



Source: Land Design Innovations, Inc., December 2002

Map is for graphic representation purposes only; actual data must be verified by City staff.

Map 2: Historic Districts



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2002-2003 HISTORIC PROPERTIES SURVEY

Boundaries

The survey area boundaries were determined based on several factors: The boundaries of current local and national historic districts; the boundaries of the Community Redevelopment Area; and the concentration of structures estimated to meet the survey criteria.

The National Register Historic District boundaries are irregular. It is generally bound by Berry Street on the southwest, West Retta Esplanade on the northwest, Taylor Street on the northeast, and West Marion Avenue and West Charlotte Avenue on the southeast (see Map 2). The local residential and commercial districts extend those boundaries to Shreve Street on the southwest, West Virginia Avenue on the southeast, and Taylor and Nesbit Streets on the northeast. Considering that the previous survey was conducted sixteen years ago, the City saw the need to re-survey the area to catalog those properties that have become 50 years old since then. Also, based on visual reconnaissance, it was estimated that several of the structures just outside the historic district boundaries were built more than 50 years ago. Therefore, the boundaries were extended further to the south to Ann Street, and as far east as Cooper Street.

The City has been working for several years now on a Community Redevelopment Plan. The Plan contains area-wide planning strategies, along with additional planning and design proposals for two key focal areas: The Trabue-Woods residential neighborhood, and the central retail district. The plan stresses the importance of preserving and enhancing historic character of the areas, and preserving and rehabilitating historic structures. The Trabue-Woods neighborhood has experienced significant stress over the years, due to a variety of social, economic and land use changes. In addition, structural deterioration of many units has reached the critical point. The redevelopment plan intends to provide support to the neighborhood and to stabilize and improve its residential character. However, as the City's community redevelopment effort moves forward, pressure to demolish deteriorating structures will mount. The significance of eligible structures and sites needed to be documented in order to establish a program of appropriate rehabilitation and restoration.

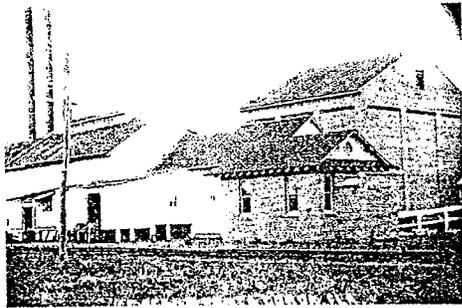
Methodology

The City worked with Land Design Innovations, Inc. establishing the preliminary boundaries of the survey area based on the age of the structures in the area. Once the area was established, LDI obtained a list of those properties that had already been surveyed in the past (see Figure 1). Then using Charlotte County's Property Appraiser records, LDI was able to identify all the structures that were built prior to 1953 (there are a few structures that would have been surveyed in 1987, but for unknown reasons they were not surveyed at that time). LDI identified more than 120 structures to be surveyed. However, some of these structures have been demolished or moved, bringing the number down to 117.

LDI used Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps to depict the location of the structures that had been surveyed in 1987, and those properties that needed to be surveyed. LDI obtained complete tax records for those structures to be surveyed, and preceded to do the field surveys.

City of Punta Gorda, Florida

2002-2003 Architectural Resources Survey



Several ice factories were located in Punta Gorda. Col. Isaac Trabue built one in 1891, with a capacity of 15 tons. It operated only during the mullet fishing season, making shipment of fresh fish possible to northern markets. The factory was forced out of business in 1897, when Florida Southern Railway removed its tracks to the plant following a dispute over rates. In 1895, Lorenzo T. Blocksom, president of the Blocksom & Lewis wholesale fish company, organized the Punta Gorda Ice and Power Co. The steam-electric plant, with a capacity of 25 tons, operated throughout the year and sold

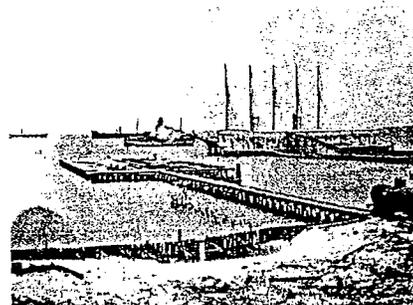
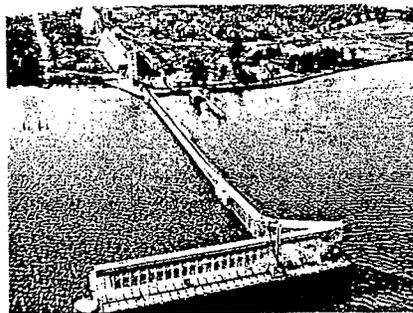
electricity to residents at night. With a dependable source of ice, over a half-dozen wholesale fish dealers located in Punta Gorda and recruited fishermen from Georgia and the Carolinas.

In 1902, Philadelphia financiers formed the Consolidated Ice, Manufacturing, Refrigeration and Fish Co. in Punta Gorda. It was a huge four-story structure, the largest in Florida. A test run of 96 tons of ice was produced, but the company went bankrupt before any fish were processed. The abandoned building was demolished in 1914 as it was determined to be a safety hazard.

In 1915, the municipal dock and fish wholesale houses were badly damaged by fire. Then, in 1927, at the request of Barron Collier, the municipal railroad dock at King Street was demolished and a new municipal dock built at Maude Street. The Ice House railroad spur was re-laid to the dock. However, another fire in 1939 burned the municipal dock. At the time, the West Coast Fish Company, the Punta Gorda Fish Company, and the Rose Fish Company occupied the dock. Only Punta Gorda Fish Company survived, and bought out the remaining assets of the other fish companies and worked from the dock until 1977, when it ceased operations.

During WWII, more than 200 fishermen were affiliated with the Punta Gorda Fish Company, and would bring their catches to the dock to be iced down and shipped north. Until 1959, run boats left the dock to deliver ice and supplies and to pick up fish from many ice houses. These boats would also deliver freight, mail, fuel, ice, groceries, building materials, and even trucks and fertilizer to stations up and down the harbor. The need for the fish camps (ice houses) diminished greatly with the supply of refrigerated trucks and boats. The camps are now used for recreation purposes.

Commercial fishing remained important to Punta Gorda's economy until the end of WWII. In 1977, the City leased the municipal dock to radio personality Earl Nightingale for the development of Fishermen's Village consisting of restaurants, shops, timeshares and a marina.



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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A total of 117 structures were surveyed for this update. They are listed in Table 2 by survey site. The table shows the Florida Master Site File number as well as the recorder number. Of those properties surveyed, there were ninety-two (92) residential structures (86 single-family, 2 duplexes, and 4 multi-family), one (1) mixed-use building, seventeen (17) commercial uses, (4) four office buildings, one (1) industrial use, one (1) institutional use, and one (1) storage building. All the properties surveyed are new to the Florida Master Site files. None of the previously recorded structures were re-surveyed. The City of Punta Gorda Planning Department has kept a copy of each master site file sent to the State, and is the repository of photographic negatives of all the pictures submitted to the State Division of Historical Resources.

The period of historical and architectural significance for the survey area covers all properties built between 1937 and 1953. The dates correspond to the fact that all properties built before 1937 would have been surveyed as part of the 1987 survey. Although a few of the properties surveyed this time were built prior to 1937, but for some reason were not surveyed in 1987.

Architectural Significance

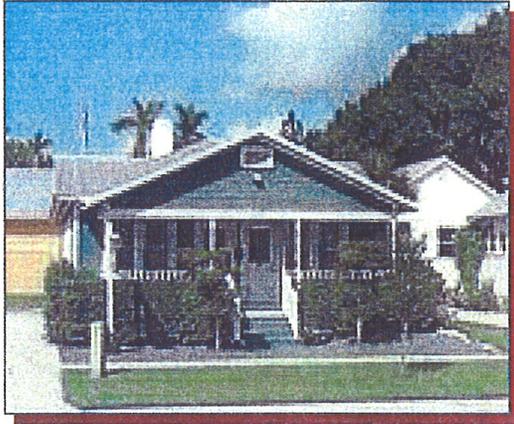
Although there were a few buildings showing the influence of national styles, most of them fall under the Frame or Masonry Vernacular styles. Given the fact that most of the buildings surveyed were constructed in the late forties and early fifties, a few buildings were identified as falling under more recent architectural styles such as Minimal Traditional, Ranch, and Modern Commercial. Of the 117 properties surveyed, forty-four (44) were constructed in the Frame Vernacular style and twenty-seven (27) in the Masonry Vernacular style. Other styles represented include: fourteen (14) traditional commercial, three (3) Georgian Revival, one (1) Neo-Classical Revival, and twenty-eight (28) Modern (Minimal Traditional, Contemporary, and Ranch). Some of the structures exhibit a combination of styles, due to additions and renovations conducted in the past.

Of those properties surveyed, forty-three (43) were determined to be contributing, and seventy-four (74) non-contributing. The main reason for the low figure of contributing buildings is due to the amount of hybrid styles found, and the fact that a majority of the buildings have been modified to some extent.

There was not a particular area of concentration of structures. The properties surveyed were interspersed with those properties surveyed in 1987. The structures surveyed still preserved the development patterns observed in 1987. Small lots with relatively small houses built close together, with the exception of a few houses are being expanded in size, taking advantage of the larger lots. The same was observed in the commercial area. With the exception of a few sites, the buildings are still placed up to the property line, with parking placed in the rear.

The following pages contain a series of pictures showing representative examples of each of the architectural styles found in the City of Punta Gorda. Detailed descriptions and characteristics of each style are found in the *City of Punta Gorda Historic District Design Guidelines* report.

Frame Vernacular



315 Taylor Street



457 West Marion Avenue

Most of the structures in Punta Gorda are either Frame or Masonry Vernacular. Vernacular architecture refers to a regional or “folk” architecture, built with local materials and local labor, without formal plans, and for the most economical price at the time. Vernacular, while considered a style, is defined by its not belonging to any particular formal architectural style.

There are several types of Frame Vernacular homes in Punta Gorda. Some have one story, others have two; some have front gable roof, others have side-gable or cross gable. Over the years, modifications have been made resulting in a variety of decorative features that make each home unique.

Most Vernacular homes in Florida are narrow, two-story houses with relatively steep roof pitches. A variation of this form is the “*Shotgun*” house, a narrow gable-front dwelling, one room wide, built approximately from 1880 to 1930. This style was easily accommodated into narrow urban lots.

Another vernacular style unique to Punta Gorda is the “*Fisherman Cottage*”, a home type popular with poor fishermen. It was built in large numbers during the first years of settlement when housing was in short supply. The construction was essentially a large box with a shingle roof. Vertical boards nailed to a simple platform constituted the outside and inside wall surfaces as well as support for the ceiling and roof. Two men with hand tools, standard length lumber, and mill-assembled windows could erect a two-room cottage from “dark to dark” – that is, from dawn to nightfall. For this reason, these structures were known as “dark to dark” houses. Porches and more rooms were usually added later¹².

¹² The Punta Gorda Preservation Manual, Punta Gorda Revitalization Committee and Historic Advisory Board, July 1991.

Masonry Vernacular



1215 Lemon Street



220 Durrance St.

The Masonry Vernacular home, like the Frame Vernacular does not follow a particular style. Unlike the Frame vernacular, this type was built using concrete blocks as the main structural support, and stucco for the exterior fabric.

Before the Civil War, masonry construction was far less popular in Florida than wood framing. Brick was not readily available because of a scarcity of clay in the state and poor transportation facilities. Following the Civil War, brick became more readily available, as rail networks were extended to Florida. After 1900, brick was increasingly used on a variety of buildings, including private residences, apartments, schools and government buildings. In the 1920s, two new masonry materials, hollow tile and concrete block, became widely used. These new materials were as strong as fired brick, but were lighter and cheaper. In later years, concrete block replaced brick as a structural material.

In the early decades of the century, wood frame houses were sometimes disguised as masonry by applying stucco cladding over the wooden studs. Also, some masonry vernacular homes have recently been covered with wood or vinyl siding.

The Frame and Masonry Vernacular are very similar in terms of massing and proportions. The main difference between the two is the use of exterior materials, and the foundation treatment (the Masonry Vernacular lacks the crawlspace commonly found in Frame Vernacular homes).

Folk Victorian



210 Goldstein Street



311 Goldstein Street

The spread of the Folk Victorian style was possible due to the railroad. Heavy woodworking machinery was made accessible at local trade centers, where they produced inexpensive Victorian detailing. Pre-cut details were also easier to obtain. In most cases, the trims and detailing were applied to existing Vernacular houses.

The identifying features of the style include porches with spindle-work detailing (turned spindles and lace-like spandrels or flat jigsaw cut trim appended to Vernacular forms; symmetrical facades (except wing subtype); and cornice-line brackets.

Craftsman



520 E. Olympia Avenue

The Craftsman Style was the popular style for smaller houses being built throughout the Country during the period from 1905 to 1920. The style originated in California but quickly spread throughout the Country by pattern books and popular magazines. The style faded from favor after the mid-1920s, and few were built in the 1930s. The one-story vernacular examples are often called simply bungalows.

Queen Ann Revival



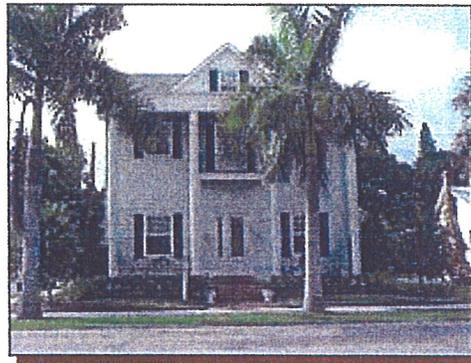
565 Retta Esplanade



401 Retta Esplanade

Rapid industrialization and the expansion of the railroad in the late 1800s led to dramatic changes in American house design and construction. The balloon frame rapidly replaced heavy timber framing as the standard building technique. This, in turn, freed houses from the traditional box-like shapes. In addition, growing industrialization permitted many complex housing components, such as doors, windows, roofing, siding, and decorative detailing to be mass produced in large factories and shipped throughout the Country for relatively low cost on the expanding rail network. In Punta Gorda, the remaining Victorian homes consist of Queen Anne, Shingle, and Folk Victorian houses. The Folk Victorian is a fancier version of the Frame Vernacular, with similar massing and roof forms. The Folk Victorian style was described under the Frame Vernacular Style.

Colonial/Georgian Revival



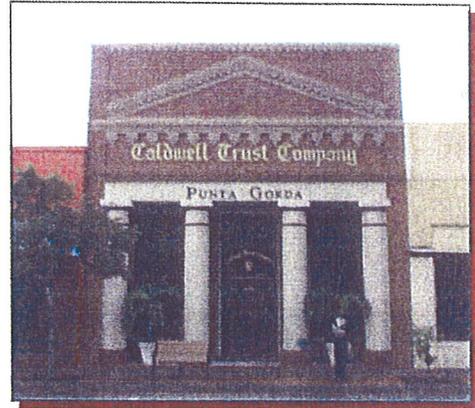
451 Retta Esplanade

Some of the elements of the Colonial Revival, such as entry, cornice, and windows are adapted from Georgian and other earlier period styles to embellish these modest, yet elegant homes.

Neo-Classical Revival



326 West Marion Avenue



133 W. Marion Avenue

The style was common during the first half of the 20th century. During the 1920s, the style was overshadowed by other Eclectic styles.

Typical features of this style include full-height porches with classical columns; Ionic or Corinthian capitals; symmetrical facades; centered entrance.

Mission Style



118 Sullivan Street



501 E. Olympia Avenue



1009 Taylor Street

Although not as common as the classical styles, scattered examples were built in the early 20th century throughout the country. The Mission style was normally associated with a wide variety of buildings including churches, train stations, government buildings, and some private residences.

Modern Style



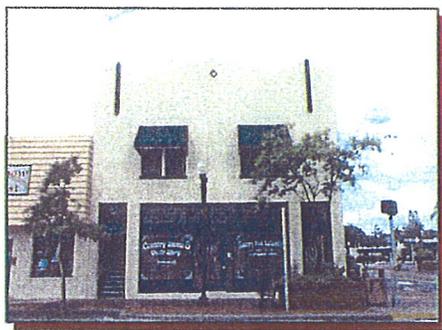
635 W. Marion Avenue



805 Retta Esplanade

Not much construction of residential homes occurred during the depression. When construction resumed in 1946, modern styles were preferred over the classical styles. The earliest Modern style used was the Minimal Traditional, a simplified form loosely based on the Tudor style of the 1920s and 1930s. Predominant features included dominant front gable and massive chimneys. The high-pitched roofs were lowered and the facades were simplified by omitting most of the detailing. By the early 1950s, this style started being replaced by the Ranch style, which dominated American domestic building through the 1960s and is still popular in many parts of the country. Ranch houses are one-story houses with very low-pitched roofs and broad, rambling facades. Some lack decorative detailing, but most have decorative shutters, porch-roof supports, and other detailing, loosely based on colonial precedents.

Commercial Style



149 West Marion Avenue



208 West Marion Avenue

The design of commercial buildings in Florida mirrored national trends. The distinctive style developed during the mid-nineteenth century. These buildings housed a variety of uses, including offices, banks, hotels, and theaters, but the most common use was retail stores. Commercial buildings built between the mid-1850s and the 1940 were constructed close to the street, in close proximity to one another, and covered most of the lot. Commercial buildings were normally organized into distinct sections or zones, commonly containing one or two stories.

National Register of Historic Places

One purpose of this survey was to identify properties and concentrations of buildings that might be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is a federal program with established criteria for evaluating the significance of buildings, sites and structures. There are eight properties in the City of Punta Gorda currently listed on the National Register. No additional structures within the area surveyed were identified as meeting the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic Districts

National District Boundaries:

It is recommended that the City apply to expand the National Register District boundaries to include the properties located in the area between Marion and Virginia Avenue, and Berry Street and Cross Street (19 of them were surveyed in 1987), including the few properties on the south side of Virginia Avenue between McGregor and Cross Street. Map 5 shows the existing and proposed boundaries.

Local District Boundaries:

It is recommended that the Commercial district boundaries be expanded to the east to include 207 and 211 East Marion Avenue, and 222 Nesbit Street; and north and south along US 41 to include 115, 130 and 140 Tamiami Trail, 111 and 115 West Olympia Avenue (see Map 6).

The local residential district should be amended to include the properties between Virginia Avenue and Charlotte Avenue. Although several properties in the area of Williams and McKenzie Street were surveyed, there is not enough concentration of historic structures to warrant a local district designation in that area (see Map 7).

Trabue-Woods Neighborhood:

No district designation is recommended at this time for "Site 1", the Trabue-Woods neighborhood. However, the City should consider an overlay zoning district and design standards to ensure that new development is consistent with the traditional pattern (see Map 8). As more and more structures become deteriorated and more lots become vacant, it will be necessary to implement development standards that would help preserve the lot size, structure height, and architectural character.

Most of the buildings in the survey area have undergone some type of alteration. The most common alteration has been enclosing of the porches, either with screen enclosures or with walls and windows, followed by replacement windows and exterior materials. However, most have retained the original configuration, massing and scale, making it easier to potentially restore to the original design and materials.

The City is in the process of adopting design guidelines for the National and Local historic districts. The application of these guidelines to new development and alterations will ensure that the character of the area is enhanced and maintained.

Future City Actions:

The City is currently in the process of rewriting the Land Development Requirements, including relocating Section 26-9(12), Punta Gorda Historical Preservation Ordinance, to new Article 13 of the LDR, Historic Preservation. In this re-write, the City shall consider the following:

- Clearly state the purpose indicating social, economic and aesthetic benefits of historic preservation regulations.
- Include clear processes and procedures for designating local historic landmarks and districts.
- Establish a 180-day waiting period for demolition permits to prevent premature demolition of landmarks and contributing structures.
- Adopt the Historic District Design Guidelines and establish authority and review procedures.
- Consider establishing a building maintenance checklist for use by Code Enforcement staff to avoid structures deteriorating to the point where demolition is a necessity.
- Establish procedures for various development applications for sites within the historic districts. Determine which modifications, in addition to new construction, need to be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Board (signs, fences, replacement of windows, doors, materials, etc).

Other activities not related to the Land Development Regulations include:

- Consider establishing economic incentives for preservation, including local programs such as façade improvement grants.
- Consider designation as Main Street. This program brings together community leaders, elected officials, municipal staff, the Chamber of Commerce, residents, and downtown business owners to coordinate and promote downtown businesses and activities.
- Promote awareness of City history. Continue offering historic district tours, install interpretive markers, and involve students on preservation activities and projects.
- Educate the public on the need for historic preservation.
- Establish design guidelines for the Trabue-Woods neighborhood to promote the preservation of the character of the area (lot size, scale, architecture, etc.).
- Perform an archaeological survey to identify cultural resources in need of a local preservation program.
- Update the architectural surveys conducted in 1987 to reflect more current conditions (change in ownership, demolitions, additions, etc.).

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City of Punta Gorda, Florida
 2002-2003 Architectural Resources Survey

Figure 2. 2002-2003 Survey Sites

TAX ID	ADDRESS	FMSF#	REC. #	YR. BUILT	STYLE	CONTR.
SITE 1						
01074760000008	156 Booth St	8CH00516	1001	c.1953	FV	NC
01076140000001	503 E Charlotte Av	8CH00517	1002	c.1928	FV	NC
00920800001009	414 Dupont St	8CH00518	1003	c.1940	FV	NC
00920800000000	418 Dupont St	8CH00519	1004	c.1950	MV	NC
00920960000002	318 Fitzhugh Av	8CH00520	1005	c.1950	MV	C
01075620000003	514 Fitzhugh Av	8CH00521	1006	c.1933	FV	NC
01075790000004	610 Fitzhugh Av	8CH00522	1007	c.1948	FV	C
01015090000002	434 Ida Av	8CH00523	1008	c.1953	MV	NC
00917310000005	207 E Marion Av	8CH00524	1009	c.1948	COM	C
00917300000006	211 E Marion Av	8CH00525	1010	c.1946	COM	C
01074930000007	522 E Marion Av	8CH00526	1011	c.1925	GR	C
00917900000003	358 Martin Luther King Blvd	8CH00527	1012	c.1935	MV	C
01075790000004	410 Mary St	8CH00528	1013	c.1933	FV	C
01014940000009	561 Mary St	8CH00529	1014	c.1925	FV	NC
01015300000005	650 Mary St	8CH00530	1015	c.1945	MOD	NC
01015270000000	653 Mary St	8CH00531	1016	c.1930	FV	C
00917330001002	222 Nesbit St	8CH00532	1017	c.1949	MOD	NC
01075450000005	515 E Olympia Av	8CH00533	1018	c.1940	MV	C
01014980000005	521 Showalter St	8CH00534	1019	c.1945	MV	NC
00920880000002	327 E Virginia Av	8CH00535	1020	c.1950	MV	NC
01075800000001	619 E Virginia Av	8CH00536	1021	c.1951	FV	NC
01075820000009	629 E Virginia Av	8CH00537	1022	c.1932	FV	NC
01075830000008	635 E Virginia Av	8CH00538	1023	c.1952	MV	C
01075870000004	705 E Virginia Av	8CH00539	1024	c.1952	FV	NC
SITE 2						
00920400000009	362 W Charlotte Av	8CH00540	2001	c.1952	MT	C
00916360000001	207 Cross St	8CH00541	2002	c.1927	MV	NC
00918620000006	324 Cross St	8CH00542	2003	c.1950	MOD	NC
00916320000005	220 Durrance St	8CH00543	2004	c.1947	MV	C

City of Punta Gorda, Florida
2002-2003 Architectural Resources Survey

TAX ID	ADDRESS	FMSF#	REC. #	YR. BUILT	STYLE	CONTR.
00918970000005	319 Durrance St	8CH00544	2005	c.1935	FV	C
00918950000007	328 Durrance St	8CH00545	2006	c.1946	FV	NC
00919000000000	302 Gill St	8CH00546	2007	c.1952	RAN	C
00919010000009	310 Gill St	8CH00547	2008	c.1950	MT	NC
00919020000008	314 Gill St	8CH00548	2009	c.1952	MT	C
00918790001006	305 Goldstein St	8CH00549	2010	c.1947	MT	NC
00920230000000	411 Harvey St	8CH00550	2011	c.1920	FV	C
00920380000003	420 Harvey St	8CH00551	2012	c.1952	RAN	C
00920390000002	426 Harvey St	8CH00552	2013	c.1952	MT	C
00917020000000	105 W Marion Av	8CH00553	2014	c.1952	COM	C
00916340000003	301 W Marion Av	8CH00554	2015	c.1926	MOD	NC
00914160000007	306 W Marion Av	8CH00555	2016	c.1945	COM	NC
00914160000007	312 W Marion Av	8CH00556	2017	c.1920	COM	NC
00914400000007	460 W Marion Av	8CH00557	2018	c.1940	RAN	C
00921390000001	525 Nesbit St	8CH00558	2019	c.1937	FV	NC
00918360000009	111 W Olympia Av	8CH00559	2020	c.1952	MV	NC
00918380000007	115 W Olympia Av	8CH00560	2021	c.1951	MOD	NC
00918790000007	361 W Olympia Av	8CH00561	2022	c.1951	MT	C
00918920000000	403 W Olympia Av	8CH00562	2023	c.1941	FV	C
00918930000009	413 W Olympia Av	8CH00563	2024	c.1941	FV	C
00916300000007	420 W Olympia Av	8CH00564	2025	c.1928	FV	C
00913630000000	123 E Retta Esplanade	8CH00565	2026	c.1950	COM	NC
00913630000000	123 H E Retta Esplanade	8CH00566	2027	c.1953	MV	NC
00913760000005	115 Tamiami Tr	8CH00567	2028	c.1926	COM	NC
00913680000005	130 Tamiami Tr	8CH00568	2029	c.1947	COM	NC
00913690000004	140 Tamiami Tr	8CH00569	2030	c.1936	COM	C
00917090000003	220 Tamiami Tr	8CH00570	2031	c.1947	MV	NC
00917110000009	236 Tamiami Tr	8CH00571	2032	c.1949	COM	C
00914080000007	115 Taylor St	8CH00572	2033	c.1950	COM	NC
00920370000004	329 W Virginia Av	8CH00573	2034	c.1948	MT	C
00920180000007	409 W Virginia Av	8CH00574	2035	c.1930	GR	C

City of Punta Gorda, Florida
2002-2003 Architectural Resources Survey

TAX ID	ADDRESS	FMSF#	REC. #	YR. BUILT	STYLE	CONTR.
00920170000008	451 W Virginia Av	8CH00575	2036	c.1950	FV	C
00920160000009	457 W Virginia Av	8CH00576	2037	c.1945	FV	C
SITE 3						
00923600000001	434 W Ann St	8CH00577	3001	c.1930	FV	NC
00915020000002	124 Berry St	8CH00578	3002	c.1930	MOD	NC
00915020000501	126 Berry St	8CH00579	3003	c.1952	MV	NC
00914910000005	111 Chasteen St	8CH00580	3004	c.1951	MT	NC
00919530000006	351 Chasteen St	8CH00581	3005	c.1940	FV	C
00919540000005	359 Chasteen St	8CH00582	3006	c.1951	MOD	NC
00914960000000	122 Dolly St	8CH00583	3007	c.1947	FV	C
00919110000007	311 Gill St	8CH00584	3008	c.1949	MT	NC
00920060000001	403 Gill St	8CH00585	3009	c.1940	GR	NC
00923510000002	1215 Lemon St	8CH00586	3010	c.1947	MV	C
00916020000001	513 W Marion Av	8CH00587	3011	c.1947	MV	NC
00915850000002	615 W Marion Av	8CH00588	3012	c.1950	FV	NC
00915820000005	635 W Marion Av	8CH00589	3013	c.1948	MT	NC
00914550000009	114 McGregor St	8CH00590	3014	c.1940	FV	C
00916080000005	260 McGregor St	8CH00591	3015	c.1927	FV	C
00921690000004	503 McGregor St	8CH00592	3016	c.1945	FV	NC
00923500000003	312 W McKenzie St	8CH00593	3017	c.1945	FV	NC
00923480000008	360 W McKenzie St	8CH00594	3018	c.1901	NCR	C
00919060000004	509 W Olympia Av	8CH00595	3019	c.1951	MT	C
00919040000006	519 W Olympia Av	8CH00596	3020	c.1948	MT	NC
00915970000008	608 W Olympia Av	8CH00597	3021	c.1950	FV	C
00919300000004	611 W Olympia Av	8CH00598	3022	c.1926	FV	NC
00915690000002	702 W Olympia Av	8CH00599	3023	c.1941	FV	C
00919440000008	703 W Olympia Av	8CH00600	3024	c.1940	RAN	NC
00915710000008	708 W Olympia Av	8CH00601	3025	c.1947	MV	NC
00919420000000	717 W Olympia Av	8CH00602	3026	c.1947	MV	NC
00919090000001	524 W Palm Av	8CH00603	3027	c.1952	MV	NC
00919290000007	619 W Palm Av	8CH00604	3028	c.1948	FV	NC

City of Punta Gorda, Florida
2002-2003 Architectural Resources Survey

TAX ID	ADDRESS	FMSF#	REC. #	YR. BUILT	STYLE	CONTR.
00919230000003	620 W Palm Av	8CH00605	3029	c.1948	MV	NC
00919460000006	722 W Palm Av	8CH00606	3030	c.1948	MV	NC
00919450000007	724 W Palm Av	8CH00607	3031	c.1948	MOD	NC
00915110000001	805 Retta Esplanade	8CH00608	3032	c.1950	MOD	NC
00919400000002	610 W Virginia Av	8CH00609	3033	c.1942	FV	NC
SITE 4						
00923380001009	1210 Lemon St	8CH00610	4001	c.1931	FV	C
00923280000002	110 Mckenzie St	8CH00612*	4003**	c.1947	FV	NC
00923670000004	233 W Mckenzie St	8CH00613	4004	c.1935	FV	NC
00923390000009	1213 Orange St	8CH00614	4005	c.1925	FV	C
00923260000004	1202 Tamiami Tr	8CH00615	4006	c.1945	COM	NC
00923270000003	1228 Tamiami Tr	8CH00616	4007	c.1951	COM	NC
00923710000008	1305 Tamiami Tr	8CH00617	4008	c.1952	COM	NC
00923350000003	213 W William St	8CH00618	4009	c.1946	FV	NC
SITE 5						
00923110000001	323 Allen St	8CH00620*	5001	c.1930	FV	NC
00923100000002	329 Allen St	8CH00621	5002	c.1935	FV	NC
00924140000007	325 E Ann St	8CH00622	5003	c.1942	MT	NC
00922510000003	332 Carmalita St	8CH00623	5004	c.1932	MT	NC
00922840000004	401 Carmalita St	8CH00624	5005	c.1938	FV	NC
00922850000003	405 Carmalita St	8CH00625	5006	c.1935	FV	NC
00922880000000	431 Carmalita St	8CH00626	5007	c.1945	MV	NC
00922760000004	509 Carmalita St	8CH00627	5008	c.1948	MV	NC
00922770000003	521 Carmalita St	8CH00628	5009	c.1948	MV	C
00924190000002	322 Grace St	8CH00629	5010	c.1925	FV	C
00924670000003	1503 Narranja St	8CH00630	5011	c.1935	MT	NC
00868210000006	1601 Narranja St	8CH00631	5012	c.1949	FV	NC
00923190000003	1245 Taylor St	8CH00632	5013	c.1949	MV	NC
00924120000009	1423 Taylor St	8CH00611	5014	c.1948	MV	NC
00924780000000	1521 Taylor St	8CH00619	5015	c.1937	MV	NC

* CH00611 and 619 under Site 5.

** Recorder Number 4002 not used.

City of Punta Gorda, Florida
2002-2003 Architectural Resources Survey

STYLES:

FV – Frame Vernacular	44
MV – Masonry Vernacular	27
GR – Georgian Revival	3
NCR – Neo-Classical Revival	1
MOD – Modern	9
MT – Minimal Traditional	15
RAN – Ranch	4
COMM – Commercial	14

C=contributing	43
NC=Non-contributing	74

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Source: USGS Punta Gorda, FL 1957 Photorevised 1987. Scale 1:24,000

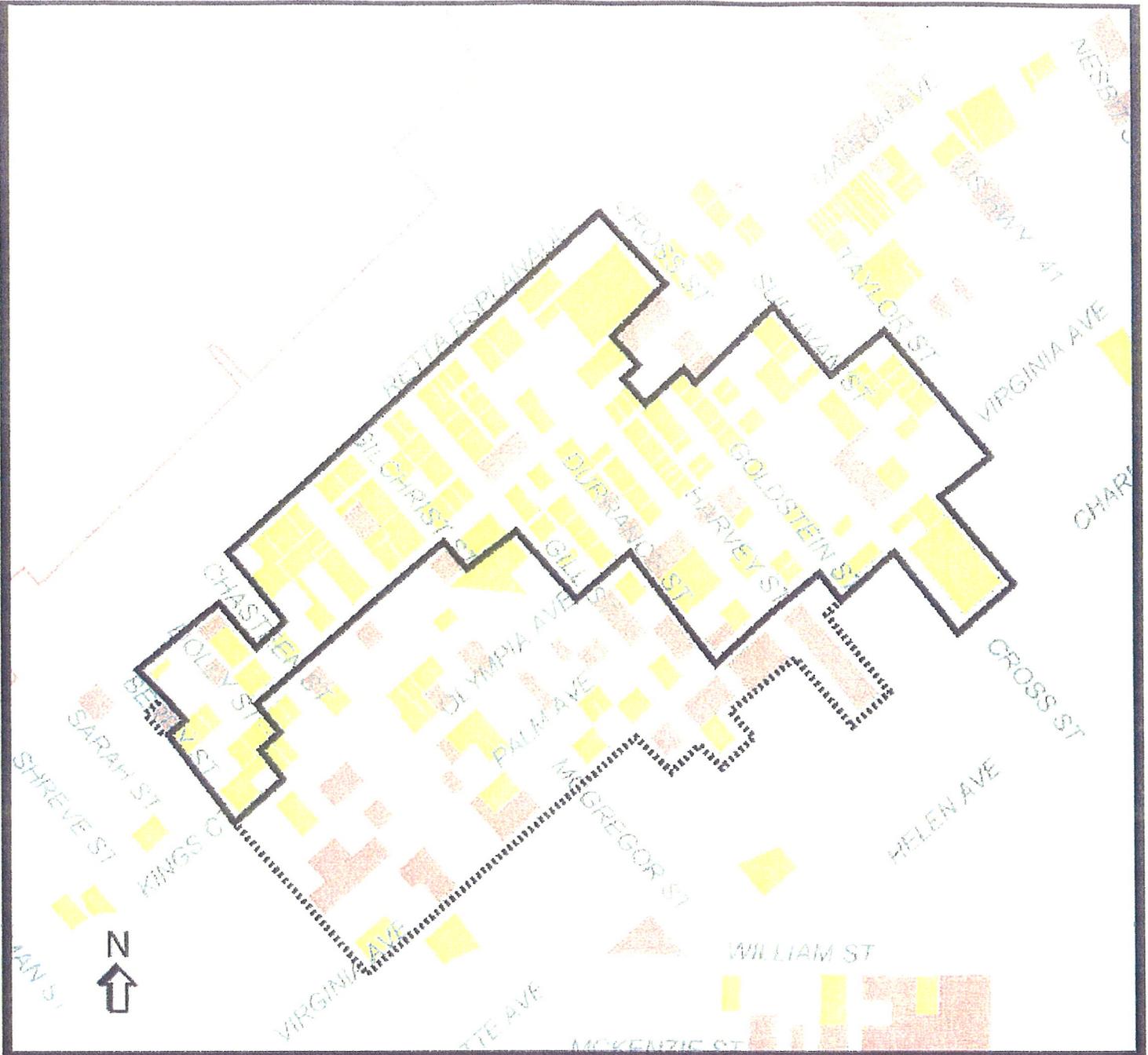
- Surveyed in 1987
- Surveyed in 2002-2003

MAP 4: Surveyed Sites

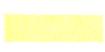


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Incorporated

140 North Orlando Avenue, Suite 295
Winter Park Florida 32789
Phone: 407-975-1273
Fax: 407-975-1278
www.landbiz.com



Source: USGS Punta Gorda, FL 1957. Photorevised 1987. Scale 1:24,000

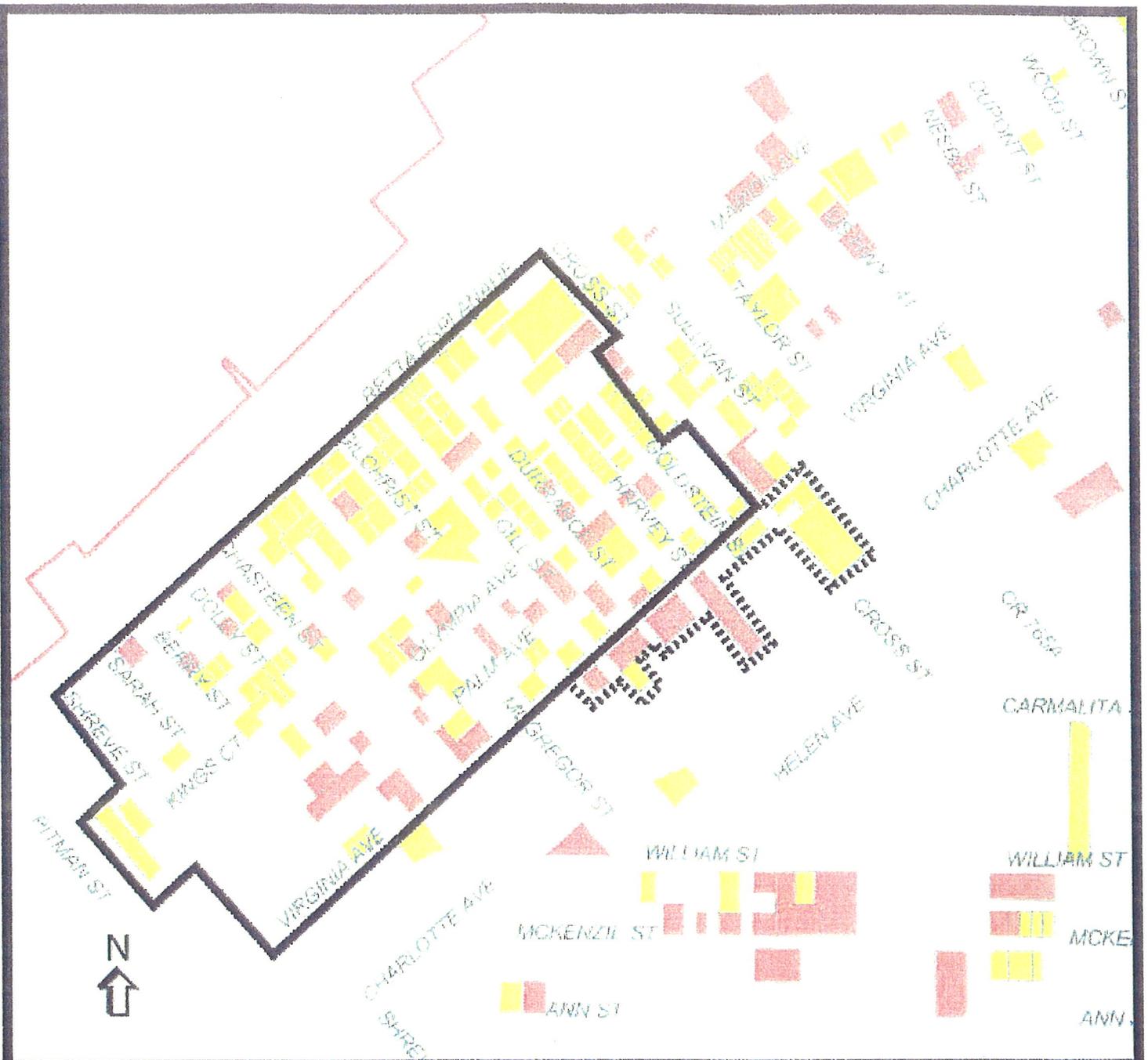
-  Current District Boundaries
-  Proposed Boundary Expansion
-  Surveyed in 1987
-  Surveyed in 2002-2003

MAP 5: National Historic District- Proposed Boundary Expansion



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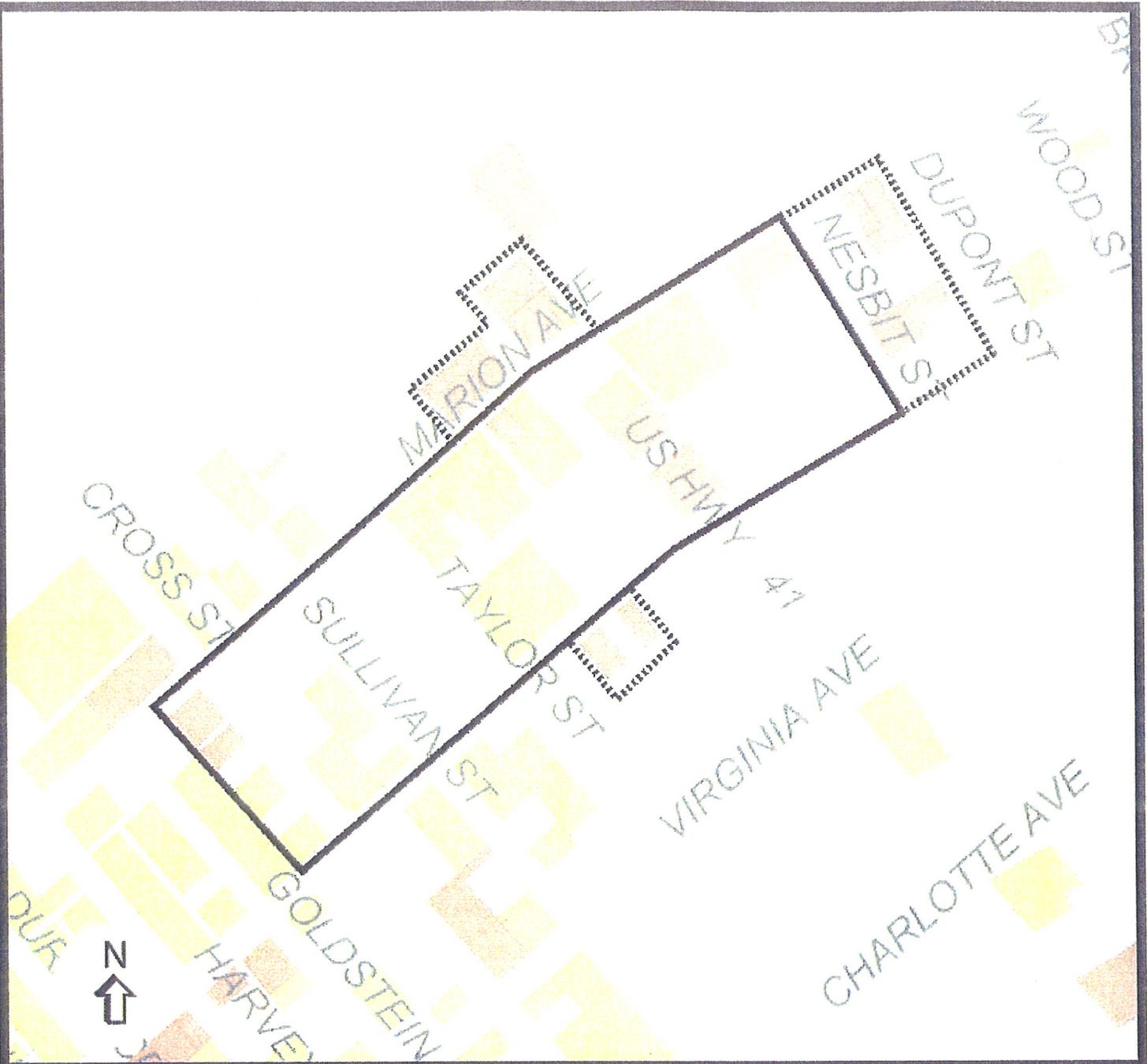
-  Current District Boundaries
-  Proposed Boundary Expansion
-  Surveyed in 1987
-  Surveyed in 2002-2003

MAP 6: Local Residential Historic District-Proposed Boundary Expansion

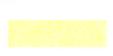


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Source: USGS Punta Gorda, FL 1957 Photorevised 1987. Scale 1:24,000

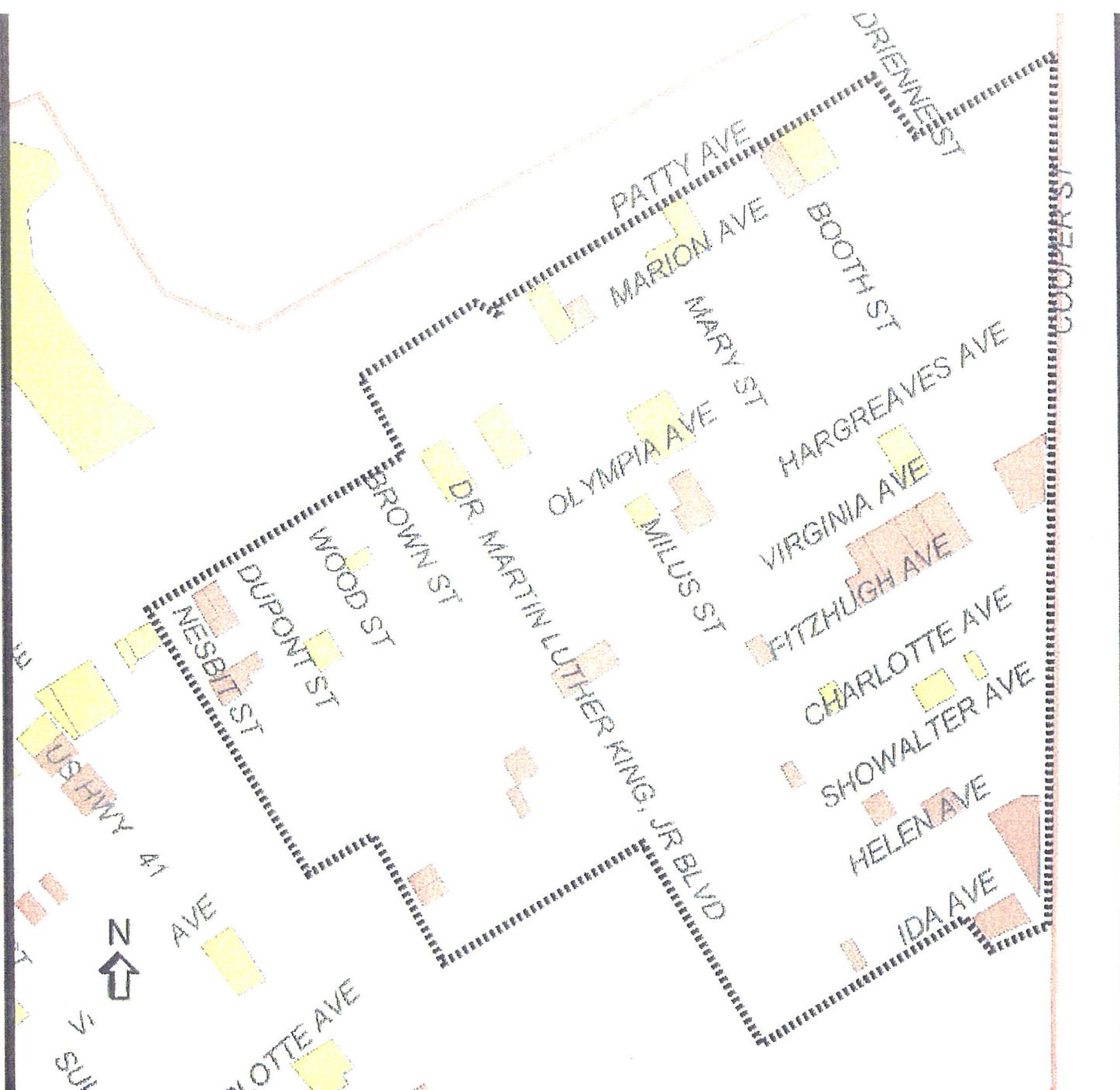
-  Current District Boundaries
-  Proposed Boundary Expansion
-  Surveyed in 1987
-  Surveyed in 2002-2003

MAP 7: Local Commercial
Historic District-
Proposed Boundary
Expansion



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Source: USGS Punta Gorda, FL 1957, Photorevised 1987. Scale 1:24,000

-  Current District Boundaries
-  Proposed Boundary Expansion
-  Surveyed in 1987
-  Surveyed in 2002-2003

MAP 8 : Proposed Trabue Woods Overlay District



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- Mike Haymans
- Vernon Peeples

City of Punta Gorda, Florida 2002-2003 Architectural Resources Survey

The methodology used for surveying historic resources within the Trabue-Woods neighborhood and the National Register Historic district and surrounding areas followed the methodology required by the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources.

The criteria for listing a property on the Florida Master Site File are that it be adequately documented and normally that it be at least 50 years old. Therefore, entry of a property on the Site File does not necessarily imply that it is especially significant historically.

Eligibility for listing in the local register was evaluated based on the National Register Criteria, which in addition to age (50 years old) include:

Criterion A. The property or structure is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Criterion B. The property is associated with the lives and persons significant in our past.

Criterion C. The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

Criterion D. The property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Field Surveys

Considering the limitations of the Smart Form software, LDI decided to split the survey area into "Sites" so that individual Smart Files would not exceed the 40-survey maximum allowed. Site 1 consisted of the Trabue-Woods neighborhood, including the medical area along Marion Avenue. Site 2 included the central business area and a portion of the National Register Historic District. Site 3 included the west end of the National District and the west half of the local residential historic district. Site 4 included the area south of the historic districts, and Site 5 the area east of US 41, south of the railroad right-of-way. Map 3 shows the five sites identified by LDI.

LDI conducted the survey in several phases, between November 2002 and March 2003. As the properties were surveyed, Master Site File forms were filed out by hand, and photographs were taken. LDI used field observations, some resident interviews, and tax records to fill out the forms. Subsequently, the information for each file was entered into the Smart File Forms, and the photographs were matched and labeled.

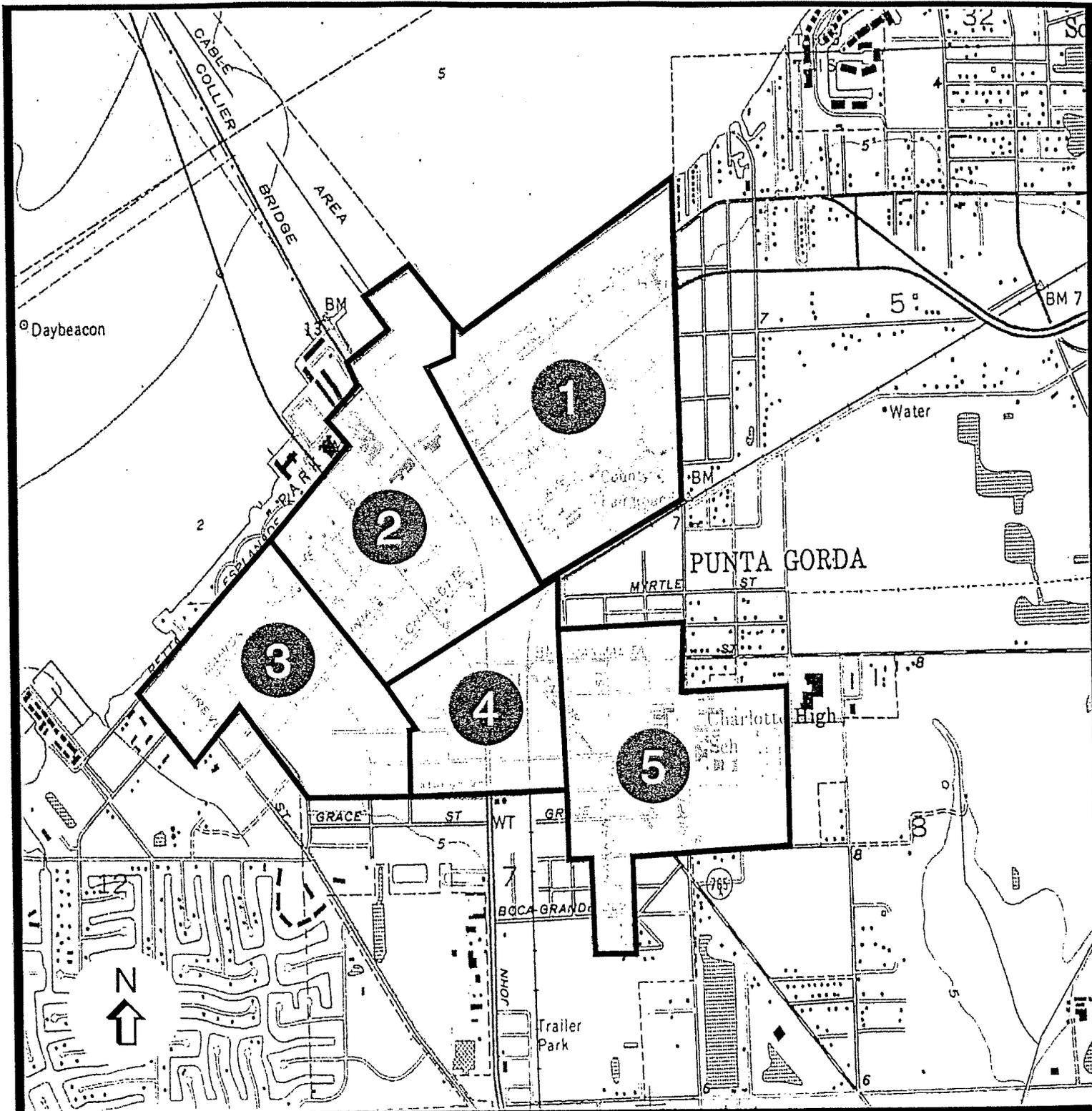
Historical Overview

The 1987 survey contained an extensive narrative on the past history of the City of Punta Gorda. The history section in this report concentrates on a chronological account of major historical events that influenced the development of the City over the years. Also, two new sections are being provided highlighting two major issues in the history of the City: The linkages of the fishing camps in the Charlotte Harbor National Estuarine System and the City; and contributions of the African-American community to the development of the City.

City of Punta Gorda, Florida
2002-2003 Architectural Resources Survey

The Bibliography section lists all the resources used for the preparation of this project. In addition to the books and reports mentioned, LDI and City staff organized a series of workshops to obtain resident input and comments. Also, key residents were contacted individually for information. These personal interviews with early residents of Punta Gorda yielded invaluable information about personal recollections of lifestyles, town layout and local history. Three well-known local historians live in the vicinity of the survey area: Mr. Vernon Peeples, Mr. U.S. Cleveland, and Mr. Lindsey Williams.

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Source: USGS Punta Gorda, FL 1957. Photorevised 1987. Scale 1:24,000

MAP 3: 2002-03 Survey Sites

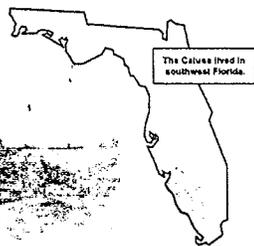


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CITY OF PUNTA GORDA CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

Punta Gorda is the only incorporated city in Charlotte County, and is more than 14 square miles with slightly more than 16,000 residents. The City of Punta Gorda is rich in history that dates back over 400 years. This report summarizes important events in the City history. Sources used for this report are listed under Bibliography.



The Calusa Tribe

It is thought that the first human occupants of South Florida were the Calusa, a resilient and highly structured society that established communities on the barrier islands of the Gulf Coast, particularly on Pine, Marco, Sanibel, and Captiva. They also built an inland community, called Mayaimi, located at the edge of Lake Okeechobee, largely as a trading center for interaction with the Tekesta who lived along the Atlantic Coast. The Calusa were the southernmost tribe of natives living along the peninsula's western shores.

The Calusa and other native groups traveled along the Gulf Coast and to the Caribbean islands in huge dugout craft, made of cypress. These boats held as many as forty men, carrying trade goods, plants, animals, and tools for building their unique community structures. While the northern groups lived in enclosed structures, the Calusa built chickees, open-sided buildings perched on stilts above the land or water, protecting the communities from high tides and flooding by torrential rainfall. Chickees had no walls, permitting breezes to flow through, as a mosquito and gnat prevention measure.

Like the other groups, the Calusa celebrated during feast periods with elaborate ceremonies and much dancing. Artisans carved clan masks denoting the spirits of birds and animals, including wolves, deer, cats, turtles, and bears, among others. Finely detailed and highly colored cypress figurines were carved, representing animals and half-animal, half-human totemic creatures. Wooden and sandstone plaques were carved, with images of animals, birds, insects, and human body parts. From looking at these remarkable pieces of art, one can grasp the intense relationship with Nature shared by the Calusa. Artifacts from the pre-Spanish period are found in several museums in southwestern Florida, including the Charlotte County Historical Center, and the Museum of the Islands in Bokeelia on Pine Island.

The Calusa were about 20,000 strong when Ponce de Leon arrived from Spain in 1513 and claimed (and named) La Florida. They were more sophisticated in their culture and structured society than the other native groups, establishing permanent towns and living by means other than agriculture. With the Europeans came physical abuse, plus diseases formerly unknown to the native groups. During the seventeenth century, the native population was almost totally decimated by typhus, measles, yellow fever, and smallpox.

City of Punta Gorda, Florida 2002-2003 Architectural Resources Survey

When de Leon arrived, Florida natives numbered more than 100,000. In less than 20 years, the total native population had fallen to less than 11,000, and most of those lived in the northern part of the peninsula, as members of the Creek Federation. By the time the pestilences, Indian wars, and deportation of natives to reservations in Arkansas were over, there were no more than 70 Calusa remaining in their Everglades sanctuary: less than 1.5 percent of the number of Calusa living in southern Florida when the Spaniards began colonization. Soon there were none.

Following the final truce in the war between the United States and the Florida native people, the remaining members of the formerly independent groups of the Central Florida Creek Federation were merged by the white conquerors into one tribal group, becoming known as Seminoles.

The Conquistadors



Prior to the nineteenth Century, the Calusa Indians were the main tribe living in Southwest Florida, along with the native Cubans who came to the area to fish. In 1513, the explorer Ponce de Leon first arrived in the Charlotte Harbor area from his Puerto Rico plantation, starting his exploration of Florida's east and west coasts. It is believed that Ponce de Leon entered the Charlotte Harbor complex probably at Captiva Pass, and anchored in Pine Island Sound. He stayed there for three weeks.

Ponce de Leon returned to Florida in 1521, a century before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, and attempted to establish a colony, believed to be in Pine Island. After six weeks of labor to build a fort and church, the expedition was attacked by Calusa aborigines. Ponce was wounded in the thigh by an arrow, and gangrene set in. The entire colony returned in haste to Havana, where Ponce died of his wound.

In 1539 DeSoto explored this area. The American mainland was opened for European settlement by the Hernando DeSoto expedition of 1539-42. Chronicles of survivors and research of 16th-century ship drafts by *Sun-Herald* historian-columnist Lindsey Williams indicate the explorer landed at Live Oak Point on the north shore of Charlotte Harbor. The official Florida DeSoto Trail Commission has acknowledged that the Charlotte Harbor landing is as feasible as any other -- pending archaeological proof.

The Spanish explorer Pedro Menendez D'Aviles, who established the first American colony at St. Augustine, Florida, in 1565, built a mission-fort named San Antonio somewhere in the Charlotte Harbor complex the following year. After two years of alternate cooperation and bloody warfare between the Spaniards and the Calusa, Menendez abandoned his efforts to pacify the fierce Indians of southern Florida.

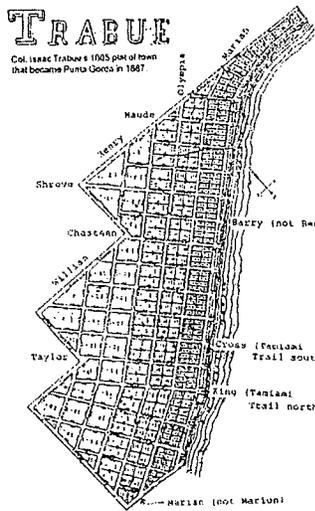
Commercial trade between Charlotte Harbor and Cuba began early, and, by 1769, the Caldez family resided on Useppa Island. Fish were caught in quantity, sun-cured, and transported to the Cuban market. Spanish fishing ranchos were located at perhaps a dozen island settlements in the Charlotte Harbor area.

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As the Seminoles were forced south, pressure and conflict began to build. By 1800, they had established villages as far south as the Caloosahatchee. Three Seminole Wars followed and forts were established at Punta Rassa, Fort Myers, and Fort Ogden. In the Third Seminole War, 1855-1858, fortifications were added at Fort Winder and Camp Whipple. During this period a man named Kennedy, from Tampa, established a trading post at Charlotte Harbor. It was burned by the Seminoles and the road is still known as the Burnt Store Road.

During the 1860s, settlements in the Punta Gorda area were sparse. Punta Gorda was a small cattle port. One of the first settlers was James Madison Lanier, who in December of 1882 purchased 30 acres from the Florida Internal Improvement Fund (per Lindsey Williams). Lanier, who traded furs with the Indians and fishermen, built a crude cabin on the shore near where the Best Western is now located.

The Town of Trabue



In 1882, Colonel Isaac Trabue of Kentucky visited the south shore of the Peace River. Colonel Trabue bought 30 acres of land and the cabin from Lanier and brought his wife, Virginia Taylor Trabue to the area. Subsequently, Trabue returned to Kentucky.

In 1884, a young surveyor, Kelley B. Harvey, worked in the area to layout streets and blocks according to his instructions from developer Isaac Trabue. He designated all the waterfront to be public parks, the streets were not to run north/south, but to meander with the Peace River and the streets were to be named in honor of members of the Trabue family.

In 1885, Col. Isaac Trabue came back from Kentucky, settled in the area and developed a plan to establish a city in his own name. On February 24, 1885, the subdivision called "The Town of Trabue" was recorded. The name was never well accepted.

Trabue purchased hundreds of waterfront acres to promote the coming of the Florida Southern Railway. In a relatively short period of time after settling in, Trabue persuaded Henry Plant to extend the rails of the Southern Florida Railway across the river to Trabue. The deal was based on giving Mr. Plant 15 of the original 30 acres.

In the spring of 1886, Col. Trabue built the "Trabue Land Sales Office". The building was later used as the first Post Office. The building is now the oldest standing building in the City. It has been restored and was relocated to the Punta Gorda History Park on Shreve Street. On display in the building are photos of the early days of Punta Gorda, the administrative offices of the Peace River Center for Writers, and other historic items.

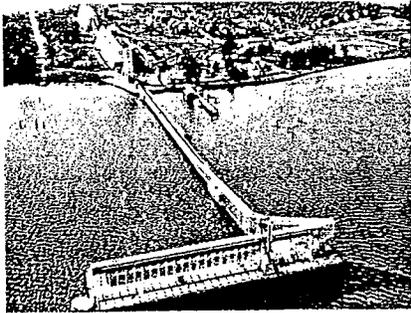
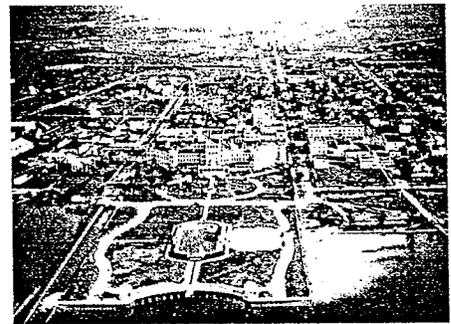


The Railroad



The first rail service to Trabue was established via the Florida Southern Railway, which reached the Town of Trabue in June 1886. Florida Southern was seeking a suitable connection to the Morgan Steamship Line between New Orleans and Havana, Cuba. Trabue was now the southern terminus of the railroad. This brought settlers, merchants, the commercial fishing industry, wealthy and influential winter guests, cattle shipping, a resort hotel, churches, schools, warehouses, refugees from justice, and opportunists. The Florida Southern Railway built a "long dock" -- almost a mile in length -- to reach a channel deep enough for the Morgan side-wheel ships. This 4200-foot dock was called Punta Gorda, for the point from which it projected into the bay. The railway company also built a large (150-room) resort hotel, also named Punta Gorda, which was frequented by wealthy winter visitors.

The first depot, a one-room frame building, was located south of town at the site of the present depot. It was abandoned within a few years for a large depot downtown across from the Hotel Punta Gorda and adjacent to a dock for wholesale fish packing houses. A spur from the main line ran down the middle of King Street (U.S. 41 north, Tamiami Trail) to accommodate private rail cars of hotel guests.

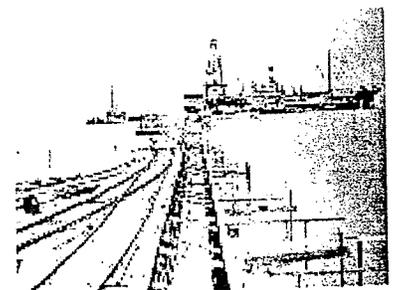


The City of Punta Gorda

By 1887, there was a bitter dispute going on between Mr. Trabue and Mr. Plant over the development of the Town. Thirty-four men (four African-Americans), gathered in Tom Hector's poolroom, objected to Col. Trabue's efforts to control the town's destiny and renamed the town "Punta Gorda." The Spanish translation means roughly, "Fat Point" or "Broad Point" based on the broad point of land that juts out into Charlotte Harbor. The same men then traveled by foot to the county seat to sign the notice of intent to incorporate.

When the town name was changed to Punta Gorda, the dock was renamed "Long Dock". It not only held fish houses, but had a bank and a post office. Rails to the dock crossed the shoreline about 300 feet west of the present Isles Yacht Club. The dock was abandoned by the railroad in 1897 and allowed to go to ruin.

Punta Gorda might have developed in a similar manner as Tampa. However, Henry Bradley Plant made certain that did not happen. He built his South Florida Railroad to Tampa in 1883, and gained control of the Florida Southern Railway soon after the completion of the tracks to Punta Gorda in 1886. Mr. Plant decided that Florida's West Coast should have only one deep water port, and he already had financially committed to Tampa. He went a step further in 1897 when



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he ordered the removal of the rails on the Long Dock at Punta Gorda, thus severing Punta Gorda's railroad connection to deep water.

Punta Gorda was a major port for shipment of cattle to Cuba between the years 1890-1910. The shipments went out from the dock that is now the site of Fishermen's Village.

In 1891, a group of Philadelphia financiers headed by Col. Trabue organized the Consolidated Ice Manufacturing, Refrigeration and Fish Company to make shipment of fresh fish practical to northern states, thereby revolutionizing the fish industry. By 1897, more than 230 people worked the offshore fisheries. Gill netting for mullet was the most profitable activity. Spanish mackerel, oysters, and channel bass were also harvested in quantity.

Citrus and farming, and cattle ranching were other primary sources of income for people living in Punta Gorda. Pineapple was at one time an important south Florida crop. They were cultivated in the Charlotte Harbor area as early as 1881. By 1890, C.G. Davis had a small pinery in Punta Gorda. By 1900, there were about forty pineries in Punta Gorda. The pineries ranged in size from 1 to 5 acres.¹ Pineapples from Punta Gorda were shipped all over the country

While cigar making was not the major industry in Punta Gorda, it played a role in the development of the community from the 1880s to the 1920s. The Punta Gorda Cigar Manufacturing Company was incorporated in 1905. In 1907, the company made 350,000 cigars. By 1913, the company had outgrown its facilities and constructed a new factory. In December of that year it was destroyed by fire.

In 1893, Punta Gorda's longest-lived newspaper, The Herald, was established.



In 1900, Mr. August Freeman became the first elected Mayor of Punta Gorda.

In 1905 a great fire destroyed most of downtown Punta Gorda. The Council ordered all new business structures to be constructed with brick or concrete. Tin roofs became popular throughout the town. The area east of Punta Gorda opened to homesteading. The Villages of Bermont, Sparkman and Birdville are established.

In 1908, Punta Gorda installed central water system and kerosene engine-electric generator for streetlights.

In 1914, the Hotel Punta Gorda closed.

In 1914, the City of Punta Gorda created a waterfront park, when a seawall was constructed and backfilled to make lots for proposed luxury homes. After discovering a clause dedicating the waterfront - out to the navigable channel - for parks in Trabue's 1885 town plat, the City bought back the lots that had been sold and landscaped the park. In 1950, the park was named for Albert W. Gilchrist, one of Punta Gorda's original developers and governor of Florida from 1909 to 1913.

In 1916, work began on Charlotte Harbor Bridge, the first bridge across the Peace River to Punta Gorda. It was finished in June 1921, revolutionizing transportation within Charlotte County. Prior to the completion of the bridge, the only way across the harbor was by boat.

¹ Punta Gorda and the Charlotte Harbor Area - A Pictorial History.

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The first bridge across Charlotte Harbor opened July 4, 1921. That same year Charlotte County was established when DeSoto County was divided into five separate counties. There was a flood that same year. In 1922, Punta Gorda was voted the permanent County Seat.



Land Boom

During the Florida Land Boom of the 1920's, many new buildings sprang up in Punta Gorda. At least half of them were for real estate offices. Probably the biggest landholders in Charlotte County were Jesse Sandlin and Josh Mizell.

Some of the key structures built in the twenties include City Hall, which was built in 1926 on land deeded to the City by Virginia Trabue, wife of Col. Isaac Trabue; Punta Gorda's third train depot, the Atlantic Coast Line Depot, built in 1928, meeting the demands of increased tourist and industrial traffic; the Smith Arcade, which was the first shopping center in the County; and, the Woman's Club, built in 1926.

Land transactions and construction increased daily during the early years of the 1920s. By 1926, as throughout Florida, the Boom had reached its peak. The January 1, 1926 Punta Gorda Herald headline stated "Punta Gorda Experiences Era of Startling Growth . . . So-called Florida Boom Transforms City from Quiet Fishing Village to Small Metropolis Full of Activity."² Along with fishing and tourism, agriculture was cited for its importance in the cultivation of pineapples, citrus, cucumbers, peppers, eggplants and tomatoes. A large packing house was located next to the railroad near the lumber yard.

The Charlotte Bay Hotel was built in 1925 on the southwest corner of Marion Avenue and Taylor Street. It was the City's main commercial hotel. It not only attracted seasonal visitors, but also served as the winter home of the Baltimore Orioles in 1926.

In 1926, Punta Gorda installed brick streets. That same year, Henry Smith, a Punta Gorda baker and proprietor of the Bayview Hotel, built the first shopping arcade with a half-dozen shops and the post office fronting on a central corridor. He lost everything during the Great Depression a few years later. The Smith Arcade has been restored and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Woman's Club was created in 1926 through the consolidation of the Fortnightly Club, the Married Ladies Social Club and the Woman's Civic Association. A masonry building on Sullivan Street was constructed in 1926. The building had an assembly hall and replaced the school as the community meeting place of Punta Gorda.

The construction of the City Hall was a major project completed in 1926. The building was designed by H. R. Stamm, designer of many Collier buildings as well as residences in Punta Gorda. The City undertook many other improvements during this period. Six blocks of waterfront streets were paved and many other improvements were installed. The Charlotte High School was constructed on Cooper Street in 1926.

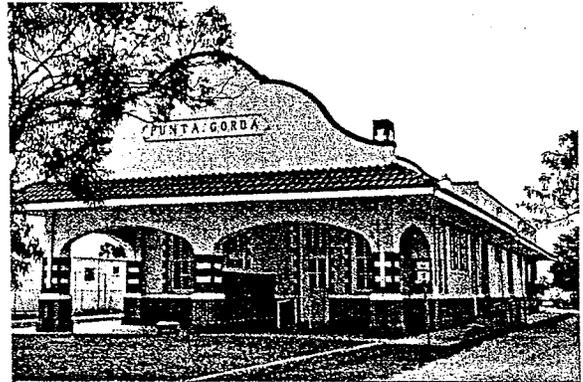
Mr. Barron Collier, a New York City tycoon of streetcar advertising who also built Tamiami Trail across the Everglades at his own expense, bought and modernized the Punta Gorda hotel in 1928, and changed

² Punta Gorda Herald, January 1, 1926.

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its name to Hotel Charlotte Harbor. The hotel was noted for its huge swimming pool, tennis courts and private pier.

The Atlantic Coast Line (ACL), successor to Florida Southern, built a beautiful new depot at the original depot location along the main line that had been extended to Fort Myers in 1904. ACL built six masonry tile-roof depots in then-popular Spanish style from the same blueprint. Only the ones at Punta Gorda and Bartow have survived. The Punta Gorda depot is in excellent condition, having been partially renovated by Mr. Babcock after buying it from ACL, which ceased operations in 1971.



In 1929, work began on a replacement bridge between Punta Gorda and Charlotte Harbor, promoted by Barron G. Collier. The Barron Collier Bridge opened on July 4, 1931.

In 1942, construction began on the Punta Gorda Army Airfield (today's Charlotte County Airport) in October. The first soldiers arrived for training in November 1943. There were sixty-one buildings; 268 hutments; and three runways, 150 feet by 5,000 feet. Two units were stationed at the field, the 502nd Fighter-Bomber Squadron and the 490th Fighter Squadron. The Airfield, which trained fighter pilots sending them directly overseas, was owned by Charlotte County and leased to the Army for one dollar a year. It was built by the Civil Aeronautics Administration and was deactivated on August 30, 1945³.

After The Wars



Nature did not always cooperate with Florida's tropical image, used by real estate companies to attract northerners to the area. The 1921 hurricane, which was centered in Tampa, caused 2-4 feet of flooding in downtown Punta Gorda. The 1926 hurricane damaged or destroyed a number of buildings in the County and resulted in two deaths. As the storm approached, it blew all the water out of upper Charlotte Harbor. Then, as the storm passed, it blew the water back in to the harbor, causing flooding in Punta Gorda and Charlotte Harbor communities.

The City's early loss contributed to its later growth and development. After World War II, real estate developers discovered large tracts of relatively cheap land in Charlotte County. The harbor was essentially the same as when first discovered by Ponce de Leon. Thus, people from the North that were planning retirement were attracted to a warm climate, a tropical setting, fishing, and home sites at affordable prices and easy terms.

Large subdivisions were platted and built. However, the core of Punta Gorda, the historic center of the community remained relatively intact, as new development spread around its perimeters.

³ Peebles, Vernon, Punta Gorda and the Charlotte Harbor Area – A Pictorial History

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After 7-years of fundraising by the Rotary Club, the Charlotte Hospital opened in August 1947 as a 12-bed facility with emergency room, x-ray, and laboratory. Two years later, the hospital was expanded to twenty-five beds. In 1959, the hospital changed its name to Charlotte Community Hospital, and in 1966 it expanded to 148 beds and the name was changed to Charlotte Regional Medical Center.

After World War II, the Army abandoned the Punta Gorda Army Airforce Base and it reverted to Charlotte County. The buildings were sold as surplus. The County decided to retain the field for an airport, which is now used extensively by private aviation and has been developed as an industrial park⁴.

During the mid 1950's, four men of varying backgrounds, Al Johns, Bud Cole, Sam Burchers and Bob Barbee, began developing land on the east coast near Ft. Lauderdale. In 1957, they were at a meeting with James Buchanan, then Chairman of the Board of General Development Corporation, where plans for Charlotte Harbor were unrolled. Al and Bob were curious and took a sight seeing trip by plane and promptly fell in love with Punta Gorda. Later that year, the four men bought 550 acres from Gerald Moody and George Sanders. On the last day of the year, the title of the property was transferred to Punta Gorda Isles, Inc (PGI). In early 1958, an office had been built on US 41 in Charlotte Harbor and prospective buyers were taken by boat to view the future Punta Gorda Isles.

Sales were slow the first two years, but by the early 60's, the future course of PGI was set. At the end of 1960 there were 30 homes. In 1962, the Punta Gorda Civic Association was formed and Peter Bontsema was the first President.

In 1959, the Hotel Charlotte Harbor was destroyed by fire. It is now the site of the Punta Gorda Mall. The Punta Gorda Historical Mural Society (PGHMS) had its first mural painted on the mall's walls.

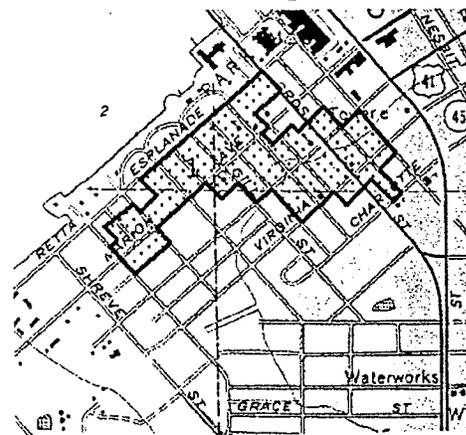
By 1968, land purchases by Punta Gorda Isles Inc. totaled approximately 2,300 acres. In December, 1968, PGI announced plans to build a new golf course section and in January 1969, they purchased an additional 509 acres. The company reported record sales and additional land acquisitions were made. The City later annexed the additional lands.

Sales within PGI were slow at first, but picked up as the economy grew. Through the 80's and early 90's sales tended to match the economic times. The current growth spurt can be traced back to 1996 when in a growing economy, Punta Gorda was named by Money Magazine as the "Second best place to live in America", and the "Number 1 small place to live in America".

In 1976, the Albert W. Gilchrist Bridge was completed as the southbound span between Port Charlotte and Punta Gorda.

In 1983, the Barron Collier Bridge was replaced by a new span. Remains of the old bridge were deposited in Charlotte Harbor to form a fishing reef. By this time, the long dock, which extended 4000 feet into Charlotte Harbor and was the terminus of the Florida Southern Railway, was also gone.

Historically, development followed the shoreline of Charlotte Harbor, Peace River, Myakka River, Lemon Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. Later development occurred along the major arterial highways, especially U.S. 41.



⁴ Peeples, Vernon, Punta Gorda and the Charlotte Harbor Area – A Pictorial History

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In 1985, the A.C. Freeman house, which was built in 1904, was moved and restored by volunteers. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987.

In 1991, the oldest residential and business area of Punta Gorda was declared a National Historic District by the US Department of the Interior and listed on the National Register.

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HISTORY OF PUNTA GORDA

African Americans have made significant contributions to Florida's history. Punta Gorda's history shows that the influence of the African-American community dates back to the post-Civil War reconstruction period. This section describes the contributions of African-American citizens to the history of Punta Gorda.

The Florida Black Heritage Trail, produced by the John G. Riley Center/Museum for African-American History and Culture and financed in part by a grant from the Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, features important places, people and events that reflect the impact of African Americans to Florida's heritage. The new, 34-page *Florida Black Heritage Trail* contains descriptions of more than 200 places important to the history of Florida, profiles of noteworthy African Americans, and a guide to festivals throughout the state. It also includes four self-guided driving tours and features vivid color photographs. The publication lists the Baker Elementary School in Punta Gorda, and spotlights both Mr. George Brown and Mr. Benjamin Baker.

The first African Americans came to Punta Gorda with a team of surveyors and foremen organized by Albert Gilchrist, who was working on the establishment of the Florida Southern Railway in Punta Gorda. These five workers settled down in Punta Gorda when the job was finished in 1886. Among them were Daniel C. Smith, Sam Kennedy, Graham, Fuller and Ransom⁵. Kennedy bought a lot and, as property owner, signed the articles of incorporation for Punta Gorda on December 3, 1887. Other Blacks who signed the charter were Elihu Justice, E. C. Jackson and O. B. Armstrong. Dan Smith accompanied the all-night trek to deliver the ballots authorizing incorporation. However, he had not yet registered to vote and consequently was not one of the 34 men who signed the incorporation petition.

The Herald reported in 1935 that Punta Gorda and environs had 656 African-Americans and 1,950 whites. Charlotte County as a whole had 740 blacks and 3,050 whites.

The Punta Gorda Train Depot houses an exhibit featuring the history and culture of African-Americans in Punta Gorda and Charlotte County. The exhibit is located within the "colored" waiting room, and it is called the Bernice A. Russell Colored Waiting Room Museum.



Dan C. Smith

Smith was the second African-American, after Kennedy, to buy land at Punta Gorda. According to deed records in the Arcadia courthouse, Kennedy bought Lot 81, Block 5, of the Ridgeland Addition, east of Milus Street, from Gilchrist in 1887. Smith, then a bachelor, in October 1887 bought Lot 26, Block 70 (now the east side of Dunlop Street), with Isaac Howard (another African-American who settled in Punta Gorda at that time). They bought the land from the Florida Commercial Company, real estate division of Florida Southern Railway. Smith sold

⁵ Our Fascinating Past: The Early Years.

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his part to Howard the following year.

Smith bought a small tract on Burnt Store Road south of Punta Gorda in 1889 from Gilchrist for \$62. There, Smith planted a grove of orange trees and built a home for his bride Louisa. They had five children: Philip, Sarah, Hannah, Sadie, and Daniel Jr. The latter became a well-known carpenter at Punta Gorda.

Dan Smith organized the first religious services for African-Americans in the Town of Trabue, shortly after the first train arrived in July 1886⁶. Smith was a trustee of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, now Bethel A.M.E., which built its first sanctuary in 1889 on land donated by Isaac Trabue. Smith also participated in the construction of the Church. In addition, Smith donated money and labor for other civic projects.

General Gilchrist, a prominent civic leader much interested in advancing education for all Punta Gorda children, appointed **Dan Smith** to the DeSoto County board of education, which included what is now Charlotte County. Gilchrist sent Mr. Smith to an educator's convention at New Orleans to find a black teacher. There Mr. Smith met **Benjamin Joshua Baker**, a 31-year-old bachelor, and talked him into coming to Punta Gorda. A two-room wood-frame 'colored school' was built on East Marion Avenue 'near the beach' at the foot of Cooper Street⁷.



George Brown

An African-American⁸ resident of Cleveland, Florida, was the owner and operator of the biggest shipyard in the area, the Cleveland Steam Marine Ways, which was built in 1916. The marine railway, which was located on the river by Cleveland (now "Palms & Pines") east of Punta Gorda, was the largest in southwest Florida and could handle the largest ships using Charlotte Harbor Bay or Peace River (Byron L. Rhodes, *Punta Gorda Remembered*). Mr. Brown repaired boats of any size, including pleasure yachts, sail or power. The Cleveland Steam Marine Ways served as storage for yachts owned by local and winter residents. George Brown was instrumental in the advance of civil rights in Charlotte County.

George Brown was also a landowner. In 1896, he purchased a piece of land from Capt. Albert F. Dewey of Punta Gorda (owner of the Charlotte Harbor Lighterage Co.). Over the years, Brown added adjacent parcels, which he sold for \$25,000 to the newly formed Charlotte County in 1927. That land later became the site of the Charlotte County courthouse.

In 1897, Brown bought the equipment of a small Punta Gorda boat yard on Retta Esplanade from another African-American, Peter W. Miller. Then, they jointly purchased a lot at Cleveland. That is when he took up the trade that made him prosperous. The little Brown & Miller shipyard in Cleveland did well by building barges for Capt. Dewey.

⁶ Our Fascinating Past: The Early Years.

⁷ Our Fascinating Past: The Early Years.

⁸ According to Lindsey Williams, Mr. Brown was a mulatto but was considered African-American in the community.

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At the turn of the century, larger deposits of phosphate were discovered at Mulberry. Shipments from Charlotte harbor began to dwindle. In 1911, Brown bought the other three acres adjacent to his barge plant, and Miller's half in 1915. Ten months later, he bought 10 acres immediately southwest of the yard for a new and larger facility. By mid-1916, Brown launched the Cleveland Marine Steam Ways capable of handling larger vessels.

Brown bought many investment properties in Punta Gorda. Brown donated land in 1921 for the all-black Masonic Tuscan Lodge 92 in Punta Gorda at the southwest corner of Marion and Nesbit streets. As a man of means, Brown bought one of the first automobiles, player pianos and radios in the area. Mr. Brown operated the Steam Ways until 1945 when he retired. In later years, his younger sister, Marie, managed his business as well as the personal affairs of both Brown and his wife. He died Nov. 18, 1951, at age 83 after a two-month illness.



Robert Meacham

Black slaves prior to the Civil War were prohibited from learning to read and write. An exception was Mr. Robert Meacham. He was Punta Gorda's Black postmaster from 1890 to 1892 and a former state senator. Mr Meacham was the illegitimate son of a slave mother and Banks Meacham, a white plantation owner, physician and Florida state senator for Gadsden County. Such liaisons were not unusual in those days, and the child was readily acknowledged by his father. Because of this, young Robert was taught to read and write. He went about the plantation of his white owner-father freely. Secretly, by candlelight, he taught many of the slaves also to read and write.

Immediately after the war, during which his father died, Robert Meacham became active in the African Methodist Episcopal church and was ordained a minister in 1866. Assigned to Monticello, Jefferson County, he built an A.M.E. church and 'freedmen's' school. Meacham's activities on behalf of freed slaves brought death threats against him and an unsuccessful assassination attempt, but he persisted. The U.S. Congress in 1877 enfranchised male 21-year old Blacks. Inasmuch as Jefferson County was 64 percent Black, Meacham was easily elected to the State Senate as a Republican.

Col. Trabue, the town founder, was given the privilege of nominating the local postmaster following the election of Republican President Benjamin Harrison, who took office in March 1889. Col. Trabue nominated Meacham, who assumed his position on January 24, 1890. Town residents were upset at first by the appointment of a Black to such a prestigious patronage job. According to historian Vernon Peeples, folks at first boycotted the post office, preferring to drop letters with the postal agent aboard a railway mail car parked several hours each day at the Punta Gorda terminal. However, stamps could be purchased only from Meacham. Before long, residents came to respect him.

Lindsey Williams notes in his book, *Our Fascinating Past, Charlotte County -- The Early Years*, that Meacham gave up the postmastership in March of 1892 for unknown reasons. Three years later the four postmasters of Punta Gorda from 1889 to 1895, including Meacham, were sued by Democratic U.S. Attorney Frank Clark for defaults of bonds. The amount involved was a piddling \$280.67 for a minor accounting practice.



Benjamin Joshua Baker

Another African-American citizen who also contributed to the advance of civil rights in Charlotte County was **Benjamin Joshua Baker**.

As previously noted, General Gilchrist was very interested in advancing education for all Punta Gorda children. He sent Mr. Dan Smith, who was a member of the DeSoto County board of education, to an educator's convention at New Orleans to find a black teacher. Mr. Smith met **Benjamin Joshua Baker**, a 31 year old bachelor, and talked him into coming to Punta Gorda.

Initially, a two-room wood-frame 'colored school' was built on East Marion Avenue 'near the beach' at the foot of Cooper Street⁹. After a few years, enrollment outgrew the original school, and a four-room building was constructed at the southeast corner of Mary Street and Showalter Avenue streets, now the playground of the Cooper Street Recreation Center. It was called 'Baker's Academy.'

Mr. Baker lived in a small cottage on Nesbit Street just north of Charlotte Avenue... As Mr. Baker got older, the workload started to affect his health. He had a nervous breakdown in 1940, causing the school board to retire him at age 68. This change seriously affected Mr. Baker. He died two years later. Three months after his death, a new school for Black children was opened on Charlotte Avenue a block away from Baker's home. It was named Baker Elementary School in his honor. The new school continued as a segregated facility teaching grades one through seven. Black senior-grades were bused to Dunbar High School in Fort Myers until Charlotte County schools were integrated in 1964. Baker Elementary then concentrated on Head Start and pre-school development classes.



John Allen

Mr. Allen is a Charlotte County native. He served four years in the US Air force from 1951-1955, and participated in a tour of duty in Korea during the Korean Conflict. Mr. Allen earned Commendation for Excellence in Performance of Duties. When he returned to Punta Gorda, he cared for his ill mother and worked either as a construction worker or a stockroom clerk.

Mr. Allen is a dedicated community servant and civil rights advocate. With Booker T. Haynes, Sr., Mr. Allen organized a voter registration drive to change the black voters to democrats to sign up new voters. He also actively participated in the process of integration of Charlotte County Schools.

In 1971, Mr. Allen, helped to found an NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) chapter in Punta Gorda. He served as president for 10 years, and was able to make progress in the areas of employment, education and recreation including the hiring of the first black full-time police

⁹ Our Fascinating Past, Charlotte County – The Early Years

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officers. Mr. Allen was instrumental in causing Charlotte County, the City of Punta Gorda, and area businesses to hire African-Americans in other than menial labor.

Mr. Allen served on various ad hoc committees aimed at opening communication between the minority community and local officials. He served on the Minority Advisory Committee, which was formed to address the housing situation for minorities and resulted in building the housing project; the Advisory Committee for the distribution of block grant funds; and the Bicentennial Steering Committee (appointed by then Lt. Gov. Tom Adams). Mr. Allen serves on the Historical Board and is a board member of the Bernice A. Russell Community Development Corporation. He also was an active participant in the development of the City's redevelopment master plan in 2000.

Mr. Allen recalls the times when his younger sister had to take a bus to Ft. Myers so she could finish her high school education. He also recalled blacks living on Boca Grande who had to be ferried to Placida, where they would take the bus to high school in Ft. Myers. At the time, Charlotte County was seen by blacks, including Mr. Allen, as having more "freedom" than Sarasota, Lee or Desoto counties. Mr. Allen said he thinks that was because of the black business district on east Punta Gorda. Blacks had their own bars and clubs, which the white men could frequent. However, blacks were not welcomed in downtown. Unlike other minority communities in the South at the time, Mr. Allen said most Punta Gorda blacks owned their homes.

Bernice Andrews Russell



Bernice Andrews Russell

Mrs. Russell was born in Marianna, Florida, and reared in Punta Gorda. She attended and graduated from Baker Academy and graduated from high school in Ocala at Howard Academy. Mrs. Russell, an activist by choice, worked for school integration. She was also the historian for the local African-American community. Mrs. Russell was the descendant of one of the first African-American families to settle in Punta Gorda – James and Queen Andrews. Mr. Andrews was a fireman at the old Ice Plant, and Queen (Evans) was the sister of Louisa Evans, who was married to pioneer Dan Smith.

Over the years, she participated in various boards and committees, such as the Punta Gorda Housing Authority, the Sacred Heart Church, the Democratic Executive Board, the St. Vincent De Paul Conference, the Guild of Our Lady, the Board of Directors of New Operation Cooper St, the Nurturing Committee of Habitat for Humanity, the Woman's Coalition of Southwest Florida, the D. N. McQueen Post #103 auxiliary, the Charlotte County NAACP branch, and the Historic Preservation Board. Mrs. Russell has received numerous recognition awards for her community service. The Bernice A. Russell Center, Inc. was established in June 2002, to honor her memory and continue the work begun by Mrs. Russell.

Other Influential Figures in the City

Martha R. Bireda, PhD. Dr. Bireda is the daughter of Bernice Russell and the Executive Director of the Bernice A. Russell Center, Inc. A former student at Baker Academy, Dr. Bireda has a PhD in

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Counselor Education from the University of Florida. Dr. Brieda is a staff consultant with the Southwestern Equity Center in Miami, and president of Diversity Training Associates, Inc. in Tampa, FL. Also an author, Dr. Bireda published her 1st book in 1990. Dr. Bireda organized a museum honoring Russell and other black leaders on the city's east side.

Capt. Alecia Bolling. Daughter of Punta Gorda resident Mrs. Mercedes Williams, Ms. Bolling served in the US Army's intelligence service in Stuttgart, Germany. She is a graduate of the University of Florida.

The Baily Brothers. Six of the Bailey brothers - Maurice, Berlin, Harding, Paul, Arthur, and Charles, served at the same time, all with distinction, during World War II and represented all branches of the military. The 7th brother, Carl, served in the Korean Conflict.

Isaac Thomas. Isaac Thomas was a local religious leader and community activist who, along with his wife, helped organize educational and recreational opportunities for black youth. He led the first group of black students, including his son, C.A. "Isaac" Thomas, to the school. His son now runs the New Operation Cooper Street community center, where black children are tutored by volunteers in a successful after-school and summer program.

Tammy Fulton. Ms. Fulton was the first Black and only person to represent Punta Gorda and Charlotte County in the Olympics. Ms. Fulton lived on Helen Street as child. Tammy Fulton's grandparents lived on Dupont.

John Murphy. First Black man elected to Council and first Black Vice-Mayor.

Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard

Martin Luther King Street, originally called Cochran St., was the primary commercial street in the Trabue-Woods neighborhood and housed several businesses owned by African-Americans. "To ride down Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard now, one could not imagine that this thoroughfare was once a busy business and social center to which African-Americans came on weekends from towns such as Fort Myers, Naples, Arcadia, Venice, and Sarasota."¹⁰ According to John Allen, members of the City's white community would also come to Cochran Street for the music and other entertainment that could be enjoyed in the clubs.

It is believed that Mr. George Brown named the street. It is also believed that Helen, Mary, and Virginia Streets were named after his girlfriends. The black community used to occupy the area between Marion & Olympia but after the land boom of the twenties, it moved farther from the water's edge.

The street was a location for barbershops, cafes, clubs, a pool hall and other businesses. Some of the businesses in the area included:

- Venetian Blind Store - owned by Renalda Ward
- Café & Pool Room - owned by Isaac Thomas & operated by his wife.

¹⁰ Martha Bireda, "Bernice Andrews Russell: Punta Gorda's African American Historian" article published in "Historic Charlotte County, A Graphic Pictorial History of Charlotte County and Its People"

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- Cleaners – owned by Mr. Chambers
- Barber Shop – operated by Nick Long
- Ray Wild Grocery Store – not owned by an African American person, but employed some
- Mable Bailey Beauty Salon on Virginia St.
- Margaret Johnson Beauty Salon on Cochran St.
- The strip mall on Cochran Street was built & owned by Peter Andrews' family. Peter Andrews came with the group that laid out the railway, and used to work at Charlotte Harbor Hotel.
- Zola Smith operated a Café in the strip mall (Cochran between Fitzhugh & Virginia)
- Darris Boone- Café
- Wilmer Gollman owned a bar/Café & Skating Rink across the street from the strip mall. They both operated in one building. However, the skating rink had a removable wooden floor and operated only in the winter. Gollman later bought Peter Andrews Strip Mall.
- Drugstore
- Busy Bee Restaurant
- Rooming House Hotel- Carrie Washington
- Gas Station
- Pressing Room Cleaners – owned by Ms. Walker
- Abe Coleman Sr. - 1st barber in town
- Pauline Coleman- Johnson - She was 1st beautician (had white customers also)
- Tom Coleman (Pauline's husband) – Community leader
- Grocery store on Olympia (now a gas station) was owned by O.B. Armstrong (Legislator)
- Ward's Bar

The City Council changed Cochran Street to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in 1995. John Allen credited the efforts of Bernice Russell for the change, after she lobbied City Hall for several years. It was more than just a name change for those who still live in the community, Allen said, since King has become symbolically linked to the Civil Rights movement¹¹. While the name symbolizes the achievements of King and the Civil Rights movement, the street now is a shadow of what it was, with commercial buildings along it standing empty. The African-American community looks forward to seeing Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard revitalized.

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¹¹ Sun-Herald Article (1/20/2003)

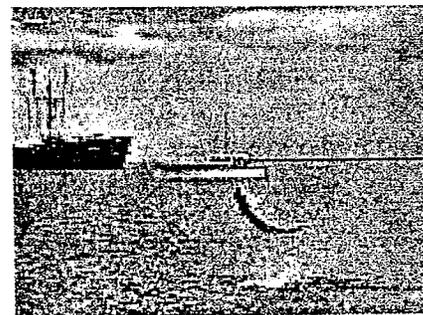
FISHING CAMPS WITHIN THE CHARLOTTE HARBOR NATIONAL ESTUARY



Charlotte Harbor is Florida's second largest estuarine system. The Harbor played an important role in the development history of Punta Gorda, especially during those years when fishing was the main industry in the area.

Until the railroad was built to Tampa in 1883, commercial fishing on the west coast of Florida was primarily a Cuban industry. Fish were caught in quantity, sun-cured, and transported to the Cuban market. Spanish fishing ranchoes were located at perhaps a dozen island settlements in the Charlotte Harbor area. The railroad's arrival in Tampa altered, but did not completely stop, the nature of the business. Cuban fishermen continued to visit the area as late as the 1920s.

Commercial fishing was the most important industry in Punta Gorda from 1886 until the early 1950's. As noted in Vernon Peeples' *Punta Gorda and the Charlotte Harbor Area – A Pictorial History*, Punta Gorda became a seaport in 1886 with the completion of the railroad and the construction of the Long Dock. This forty-two hundred foot pier extended to a water depth of twelve feet, and for the next eleven years was the heart of Punta Gorda's commerce. In addition to being the commercial seafood center, it was the port for steamers connecting with the railroad.



During the 1890s the long dock also accommodated the shipment of thousands of tons of pebble phosphate freighted from points north of the Peace River to the Punta Gorda dock for transshipment. Vigorous efforts by the phosphate companies to improve the channels into Punta Gorda were never satisfactorily met and other forces drew the companies to select Gasparilla as the point of shipment as it was situated on a sixty-foot deep harbor with direct access to the Gulf of Mexico.

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The waters of Charlotte Harbor Bay produced thousands of tons of commercial fish of every variety. Naturally, with all those fish, there were also a lot of fish companies. By 1897 more than 230 people worked the offshore fisheries. Gill netting for mullet was the most profitable activity. Spanish mackerel, oysters, and channel bass were also harvested in quantity. The ice plant, constructed in the early 1890s, was the core of the fishing industry.

In 1897, the railroad dock at the foot of King Street was built and the Long Dock was abandoned. The Railroad Wharf, at the foot of King Street in Punta Gorda, was used by the seafood industry from 1897 until 1928, when it was forced to move by the construction of the Barron Collier Bridge. The wharf was the location of the various wholesale fish dealers, including the Punta Gorda Fish Co.; the West Coast Fish Co.; the Chadwick Brothers, the Everglades Fish and Ice Company; and a small operation owned by J. C. Lewis. The West Coast Fish Company, owned by Thomas C. Crossland, had all their skiffs, scows, lighters and ice houses painted yellow. Each company had its own fishing crews of various sizes. They used stop nets, gill nets and beach seines in different types of operations.

Large boats, owned by the various companies operating out of Punta Gorda, traveled up and down the coast hauling ice; freight, gasoline and oil; and passengers. They would pick up the fish at the ice houses and bring them back to the fish companies in Punta Gorda. Byron L. Rhode writes in his book *Punta Gorda Remembered*, "Early in the mornings on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, you could look out on the bay and see the various Run Boats leaving from all the fish companies on their runs up and down the coast. Then in the early afternoons on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, you could see them returning to dock with loads of people and freight, as well as tons of fish. Each would bring in twenty to sixty thousand pounds of fish. You could go down to the docks and watch them unloading, then packing the fish for shipment in box cars. The refrigerated cars had ice compartments at each end, but the fish were also packed in layers of ice. With big scoops like snow shovels, they would shovel in a layer of ice, a layer of fish, another layer of ice, etc. until there was forty or fifty thousand pounds of fish in each car."

According to Mr. Rhode, during the "Boom," Mr. Thomas C. Crossland decided to build some "Pound Nets" or fish traps out in the Gulf. It is believed that they had to be installed over twelve miles offshore. He had seen them used off the Virginia and Carolina coast and thought they would work in this area also. He spent a lot of time studying the tides, schools of fish, and currents. An ice house was built where the pound nets were installed, to store the fish taken out of the trap. The run boat would go from Punta Gorda to the ice house twice a week, bringing ice for the fish and supplies for the fishermen. The men stayed on the Cape and would go out every day to raise the net and collect the fish. The 1926 hurricane wiped out the whole operation.

Several fish camps were built within Charlotte Harbor by the fish companies. They were built on stilts or floating and were used as outposts for the fishermen, and to store ice to transport the fish to the fish companies. Some of them could be unhooked from the pylons during low tide, and taken elsewhere. The fishermen would follow the fish. The fish camps have been destroyed and rebuilt many times.

There are still four of them within Charlotte County, and about 7 or 8 in Lee County. Ten of them are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The closest to Punta Gorda is probably on Bull Bay, approximately 15 miles away. The owner of one of the fish camps that still exists is *Joe Goulding*. Both of his grandfathers were fishermen who migrated from North Carolina.

