

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **OCT 5 1987**

date entered

NOV 19 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic MILTON HISTORIC DISTRICT

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Runs along US 90 adjacent to Blackwater River n/a not for publication

city, town MILTON n/a vicinity of

state FLORIDA code 012 county SANTA ROSA code 113

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial |
| | <u>N/A</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name MULTIPLE

street & number See attached list of addresses

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Santa Rosa County Courthouse

street & number 801 Caroline Street Southeast

city, town Milton state Florida 32570

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Milton/Bagdad Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records Florida Department of State, Division of Historic Resources

city, town Tallahassee, state Florida 32399-0250

7. Description

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Milton developed as the county seat of a rural area dependent on farm crops and lumbermills from 1840 to 1930. Both relied on the Blackwater River for transportation of their products, hence the importance of the waterfront. The town grew along Willing Street, between the river and courthouse square, and was well established by 1876 when the "new" courthouse was built. Buildings that burned in 1909 and 1911 were usually rebuilt on the same plans. The district encompasses the business section and therefore includes several non-residential buildings such as the Graded School, Exchange Hotel and Imogene Theater; all were built in the Renaissance Revival Style. Also included are the Masonic Hall, train depot and two churches. The houses reflect a wide range of styles including fine examples of Colonial Revival, Carpenter Gothic, and Craftsman Bungalow. Most prevalent is the frame vernacular, often with Greek Revival and/or Italianate details. There are also unusual examples of Folk Victorian and Gulf Coast Cottage with Gothic details. Old photos show many fine wood homes, each with its picket fence, but some of these burned recently. It is in these lots that the few intrusive homes have been built, since the area had reached its maximum density by 1930.

Milton was built at the upper navigable limit of the Blackwater River. In its early days it was a port of entry and large three-masted schooners sailed up the river to load cotton and lumber. The main businesses, the Chaffin Lumbermill and Hoodless Shipyard, were located along the waterfront, the former just north, the latter just south, of the proposed district. Nothing remains of these once busy sites but undergrowth.

No one knows the origin of the town's layout or names of the streets. The original streets ran parallel and perpendicular to the river, except for Berryhill, which ran along Collins Mill Creek. Berryhill forms the historic district's northern boundary and the river the eastern one. The western border is Canal Street which is set on a true north-south axis, as are all streets west of it and north of Berryhill. However, it is interesting to note these north-south streets still do not synchronize with those north of Berryhill, most likely indicating a later development. The southern boundary runs irregularly along the railroad tracks in such a way as to minimize intrusive structures. The courthouse and Willing Street are still the center of business activity, but the remaining area consists of quiet residential streets.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> social/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

Specific dates c. 1855 - 1930s **Builder/Architect** n/a

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Milton Historic District is being nominated for the National Register under criteria A and C because of its local significance. Milton developed as an agricultural and lumbering center in the territorial period. By the 1850s, it was the county seat of the most industrialized county in Florida -- Santa Rosa. Its lumber, bricks and ships made enormous contributions to the growth of Florida. The town continued to prosper until the Great Depression of this century. Its architecture reflects the prosperity of the first hundred years of Americans in Florida and very few of the buildings constructed in that era have been significantly altered. The district includes the downtown business section as well as residential areas. Many of the commercial structures were built in the Renaissance Revival style popular in the first two decades of this century. The residential portion of the housing stock includes good examples of "high" style homes and many fine varieties of frame vernacular designs.

According to local tradition, the earliest settlement in the Milton vicinity occurred at the terminus of an Indian trade route on the Blackwater River. Smugglers purportedly utilized the landing, called "Hard Scrabble" or "Scratch Ankle," during the Second Spanish period to avoid customs officials in Pensacola.¹ Much of this story is undoubtedly apocryphal, and the colorful name "Scratch Ankle" is almost certainly of recent origin.

The first recorded settlement in the Milton vicinity occurred in 1817, when Juan de la Rúa, the 27-year-old son of the overseer of royal works for Pensacola, received a grant of 800 arpents of land from the Spanish royal governor Jose Masot. The land located on the "Black and Clearwater Creeks" was surveyed in December, 1818 and was reported to be cleared and cultivated from 1817 to 1819.² Juan de la Rúa, who was later elected mayor of Pensacola in 1822, probably utilized the land for pasturage.³ One source indicates that de la Rúa attempted to establish a saw mill on this site, but was frustrated by labor shortages.⁴ The tract was located on Pond Creek, immediately west of what is now Milton. In 1828, Joseph Forsyth, an energetic young entrepreneur from New Orleans, purchased the land from de la Rúa.⁵

Forsyth's arrival coincided with the arrival of other American settlers and entrepreneurs in the vicinity of the Blackwater River. American settlers

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 140

Quadrangle name Milton South

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is outlined in yellow on the enclosed City of Milton Downtown Redevelopment Map. The boundaries include all structures within the city limits built between 1855 and the 1930s.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betty S. Potter and Lea Wolfe, Ph.D., Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation

date September 1987

street & number Florida Dept. of State

telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee

state Florida 32399-0250

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/24/87

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date 11/12/87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The original courthouse was built on Berryhill Street on the present site of Berryhill School. It burned in 1869, thus destroying all Milton records prior to this time. Located next door to the courthouse was the Santa Rosa Academy for grades 1-12. This land had been purchased from John Hunt in 1847. Most of the older houses are along Berryhill. Its eastern terminus, at the water's edge, was the location of the old ferry.

Folk Victorian style homes were popular from the 1870s until the first decade of the twentieth century. Defined by decorative wooden detailing placed on simple house forms, the houses had symmetrical facades. The detailing was usually inspired by Italianate, Queen Anne or Gothic Revival sources. Folk Victorian houses were spread by the growth of railroads in America. Pre-cut detailing was then cheap and available. Local carpenters tacked on this "new" trim to "old" familiar house forms. In Milton, center of some of the largest lumber mills of the era, many wood vernacular homes have extensive decorative features.

The Milligan-Whitmire House, built by one of the mill owners around 1872, exemplifies the Folk Victorian style, and is the best example of extensive applied millwork in Milton. It has a raised double panel Italianate door, Greek Revival doorway, scroll-work balustrades and Gothic-inspired front gable and gablets. The exterior has been kept in excellent condition; the second floor has been made into a separate, but unobtrusive, apartment.

Built ten years later, the Chadwick-Hartsell House is unusual because of its pointed front facade. It resembles a riverboat, and is an excellent example of frame vernacular architecture with applied high style elements. It features a Greek Revival doorway and sidelights, and both scroll and turned saw elements on the porch and balustrade.

Oak and Pine Streets were also popular residential locations. The oldest documented house in Milton, the McDougal House, is sited here. It was known to have been in existence in 1866, but was possibly built a few years earlier. It remained in the same family until 1951 when it was donated to the Episcopal Church for use as a rectory -- the occupation of its original owner. Built in the Gulf Coast Cottage design, it has remained virtually unchanged except for the removal of the Chippendale balustrade on the front porch.

The Gulf Coast Cottage style developed in the 19th century from earlier Creole adaptations to French architecture. They were built all along the Gulf Coast from Florida to East Texas. Always raised above the ground, usually on brick piers, the elevation allowed air to circulate underneath the structures.

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Another prominent aspect of the style was the porch or open gallery which ran along either the front facade or several sides of the house. It connected rooms and eliminated interior corridors. The porch or open gallery was recessed within the total block of the house. This made the porches integral parts of the house, adding volume to interior space and making the form more visually interesting. The main roof truss weight was carried by the gallery columns. Roofs were usually pyramidal hips. The roof style was very efficient for the heavy annual rainfall and sunlight of the Gulf Coast.

The Gulf Coast Cottage was very popular in Milton, but often greatly modified or embellished. The Ollinger-Cobb House is a fine example of this. It has many Gothic details and a tower and several bays that were added in later years. It was built by Joseph Ollinger, an important entrepreneur and builder of the first floating dry dock in the Milton-Pensacola area. Both it and the McDougal home are on the National Register.

Because the historic district encompasses the original town area, many non-residential buildings are included. The oldest of these is St. Mary's Episcopal Church built in 1878. It, too, is on the National Register. At the time it was built, John Young served as Bishop of Florida and was known to take great personal interest in the construction of churches and was also known to favor the Carpenter Gothic style, of which St. Mary's is a good example. It is a simple wood frame building with a Latin cross floor plan. The board-and-batten structure is built on a brick foundation. The white church has wood trim "eyebrows" over its gothic arched lancet windows. Additional wood trim is located along the gabled roof line and porch. It has retained the same basic appearance as when it was built. In recent years a copy of the original free-standing bell tower has been built at the rear of the church.

The Masonic Hall was built in May of 1855. It was moved farther north, just off Canal, in 1915 when the Graded School was built on its lot. It is a fine example of late Greek Revival architecture with its two-story columns and pedimented gable. The Greek Revival style building enjoyed great popularity in America during the first half of the 19th century, in part because of a shift away from British influence, but also because of renewed interest in things Greek due to both early archaeological digs in Greece and sympathy for the Greek Revolution (1821-1830). Identified by low pitched hip or gable roofs, cornice lines, and porches with square or rounded columns, Greek Revival houses usually had elaborate front doors surrounded by sidelights and transom lights. The Greek Revival style remained popular in Milton long after

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its decline elsewhere. Like St. Mary's, the Masonic Hall has been in continuous use since its construction.

Near the southern end of Canal Street, along the railroad tracks, is the 1909 Depot. This was the second depot built on this site, the first one having burned in 1907. Very quaint with its red tile roof, the building is typical of the wood vernacular, combination freight and passenger, stations that were constructed to serve small communities. It consisted of separate waiting rooms for Blacks and Whites, a ticket and stationmaster's office, baggage and freight rooms. It had fallen into great disrepair when the Santa Rosa Historical Society purchased it from the railroad in 1974. Since then they have completely restored the depot to its original condition, with its original colors of gray, olive green and white. It currently serves as headquarters for the Society.

The business district along Willing Street was well established by 1876 when the "new" courthouse was built on the corner of courthouse square, facing Willing Street. To the south of it was a "matching" two-story brick jail, also facing the main street. As Willing Street became completely built up by 1910, the only nearby area for expansion was Grace Street, north of the courthouse. It was here that the Imogene Theater was built in 1913 and the Exchange Hotel on the northwest corner in 1914. Both were designed in the Renaissance Revival style by S.F. Fulghum, a Pensacola architect well-known for his public buildings.

The Renaissance Revival or Italianate style structures arrived late in the South. Little building took place in the area outside of new commercial cities such as Atlanta, because of the Civil War, Reconstruction and the 1870s depression. Even though Renaissance Revival went out of style elsewhere in the 1880s, it became popular in North Florida in the early part of the 20th century for commercial buildings. Usually two or three stories, with low-pitched roofs and wide eaves, the structures were constructed of brick. They feature tall narrow windows that are arched and sometimes have elaborated crowns.

The Imogene, originally the Opera House and then the Milton Auditorium, is a solid building, constructed with three-brick-thick walls and a five-inch-thick steel and concrete second floor. From its Flemish bond facade dotted with airy eight-foot-high windows to its oversized marble cornerstones "supporting" four brick pilasters topped by marble "diamonds," it was an impressive building, and is still the tallest structure in town. The

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downstairs served as the post office and a furniture store, while the second floor housed the theater. A wrap-around balcony comprised the third story.

The similarity of the Exchange Hotel, originally built as the telephone exchange but never used as such, is not chance. The owner, Mr. Charles Sudmall, was so impressed with the Imogene that he asked the architect to design a similar edifice for him. Like the theater, the hotel has four brick pilasters, two stories high. They support a white concrete architrave, brick frieze, and denticulated cornice. The entrances of both structures are recessed double doors with fanlight transoms. Both are being restored, after becoming condemned derelicts. The theater had been unused for forty years and many Miltonians did not even know it existed. The Historical Society recently purchased it and is in the process of restoring it according to the Secretary of the Interior's standards, under the supervision of the Florida Department of State.

A third public building built in the Renaissance Revival style is the Santa Rosa Graded School on Canal Street. Built in 1915, it served grades 1-12 until Berryhill School was built (in the Mission Revival style) in 1925. At this time the building became the high school, but was abandoned in the 1950's when the current high school was built. It saw new life as a junior college campus in the 1960s and 1970s, and now serves as the administrative center for the school system.

These three buildings represented the heightened interest in brick construction after the fires of 1909 and 1911. The first one destroyed the river side of Willing Street for half a block north of the courthouse. The latter damaged only two buildings in the middle of this block due to the timely arrival of the Bagdad Lumber Company's fireboat. Not until 1916 did Milton have a fire truck. Most of the buildings were rebuilt in brick, most notably the Milton Drug Store, which still has the same marble soda fountain featured in early photographs. It is a Milton landmark that has been in continuous existence in that location since before 1895.

In the early years the area south of the courthouse apparently housed the Black population. The 1895 map shows "shanties" and "tenements" clustered around the Black Knights of Pythias Hall. This tin building was moved west of Canal Street by 1910, where the Blacks concentrated around the Mount Pilgrim Baptist Church. This area never really developed after that except for a store or two. Nevertheless, the growth of the town past Willing Street was demonstrated by the change in the courthouse location in 1926. The current

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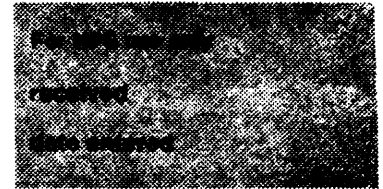
building was built centered on the square, facing Grace Street (Highway 90), but with doors on all four sides.

What empty lots were left in town were filled up in the 1920s with Bungalow style houses. Milton has several good examples of this style with its multiple gables featuring exposed rafters, ridgebeam and tie beam and battered or tapered porch posts. The largest such house is the Faircloth-Parker house on Santa Rosa Street; a brick two-story version is the Collins-Mitchem house on Berryhill. Many vernacular homes were built with bungaloid features. Next door to the Faircloth home is Milton's only example of a Spanish Colonial Revival house built by Mr. Faircloth in 1925 for his son. It is interesting to note that Mr. Faircloth also built a house for his daughter in back of his own, and that both of these houses are occupied today by the son and daughter of the current owner of the Faircloth home.

A few newer homes have been added, usually in spots where the previous dwelling had burned -- an all-too-frequent occurrence. One thing did change in the twenties -- no more fences. Prior to the 1915 cow law, forbidding the free run of farm animals, every house had its wood picket or iron fence. Cow grates are still visible in several driveways today. Alterations to the houses have consisted mainly of closing in porches or parts of them. Very few homes have been radically changed.

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MILTON HISTORIC DISTRICT
BUILDING INVENTORY

Status Code: C = Contributing
N = Non-contributing

| <u>ADDRESS</u> | <u>STATUS</u> |
|---|---------------|
| <u>BERRYHILL STREET</u> from junction of Broad and Willing Streets west to RRX: | |
| 102 | C |
| 104 | C |
| 105 | C |
| 202 | C |
| 206 | C |
| 208 | C |
| (Alabama Street intersects) | |
| 300 | N |
| 302 | C |
| 303 | C |
| 304 | C |
| 306 | C |
| 308 | C |
| 401 | C |
| 406 | C |

MARGARET STREET from Canal Street west to RRX (north side only):

| | |
|-----|---|
| 102 | C |
| 104 | C |
| 106 | C |
| 206 | C |
| 302 | N |

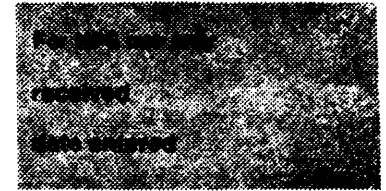
ELM STREET — no structures

CAROLINE STREET from Canal Street east to River:

| | |
|-----|---|
| 502 | N |
| 503 | N |

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(Escambia Street intersects)

| | |
|-----|---|
| 600 | N |
| 601 | C |
| 603 | N |
| 604 | N |

(Santa Rosa Street intersects)

| | |
|----------|---|
| 701, 703 | N |
| 705 A, B | N |

(Elmira Street intersects)

| | |
|----------|---|
| 800 | C |
| 801 | C |
| 802, 804 | C |
| 808 | C |
| 810, 812 | C |

OAK STREET from Canal Street northeast to Elmira Street:

| | |
|-----|---|
| 101 | N |
| 103 | C |
| 104 | C |
| 201 | N |
| 202 | C |
| 203 | C |
| 204 | N |
| 301 | C |
| 302 | C |
| 304 | C |

(Santa Rosa Street intersects)

| | |
|-----|---|
| 400 | C |
| 401 | C |
| 406 | C |
| 500 | N |

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PINE STREET from Canal Street northeast to Escambia Street:

| | |
|-----|---|
| 202 | C |
| 204 | C |
| 301 | C |
| 302 | C |
| 402 | C |
| 403 | C |
| 404 | C |

HILL STREET from Canal Street northeast to Escambia:

| | |
|-----|---|
| 210 | N |
| 301 | C |

MARY STREET from Berryhill Street south to Margaret Street:

| | |
|-----|---|
| 98 | C |
| 100 | C |
| 106 | C |
| 108 | C |
| 110 | C |
| 112 | C |
| 114 | C |

CANAL STREET from Berryhill Street south to Filmore Street:

| | |
|---------|---|
| 102 | N |
| 102 1/2 | N |
| 104 | C |
| 106 | C |
| 108 | C |
| 109 | N |
| 204 | N |
| 206 | C |
| 208 | C |
| 302 | C |

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(Caroline Street intersects)

| | |
|---------|---|
| 501 | N |
| 504 | C |
| 508 | N |
| 510 | N |
| 600 | C |
| 600 1/2 | N |
| 603 | C |
| 604 | C |
| 606 | C |
| 608 | C |
| 610 | C |
| 612 | C |

FILMORE STREET from Canal Street southeast to RRX:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| 102 | C |
| 104 | C |
| 106 | C |
| Coca Cola Warehouse | C |

HENRY STREET from Canal Street southeast to RRX:

| | |
|-----|---|
| 102 | C |
| 105 | N |
| 107 | C |
| 201 | C |
| 202 | C |
| 206 | C |

COMBS STREET from Canal Street southeast to RRX:

| | |
|-----|---|
| 105 | C |
| 106 | N |
| 206 | C |

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WALTON STREET from Canal Street southeast to Hill Street:

| | |
|-----|---|
| 105 | C |
| 107 | C |
| 206 | N |

PIKE STREET from Canal Street southeast to Hill Street:

| | |
|-----|---|
| 101 | C |
| 202 | C |
| 105 | N |
| 203 | N |
| 215 | C |
| 248 | C |
| 208 | C |

ESCAMBIA STREET from Canal Street southeast to Hill Street:

| | |
|-----|---|
| 100 | C |
| 202 | N |
| 204 | N |

(Oak Street intersects)

| | |
|-----|---|
| 300 | N |
| 301 | C |
| 302 | N |
| 303 | C |
| 304 | N |

SANTA ROSA STREET from Canal Street southeast to Pine Street:

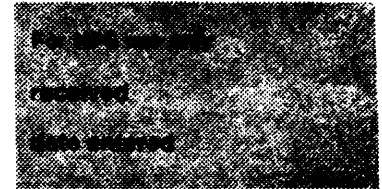
| | |
|-----|---|
| 200 | C |
| 201 | N |
| 205 | C |
| 206 | C |

(Caroline Street intersects)

| | |
|--------------|---|
| 302, 302 1/2 | N |
| 306 | C |
| 402 | C |

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ELMIRA STREET from Berryhill Street southeast to Pine Street:

| | |
|-----|---|
| 104 | N |
| 105 | C |
| 106 | C |
| 107 | N |
| 200 | N |
| 204 | N |
| 205 | C |
| 207 | C |

(Caroline Street intersects)

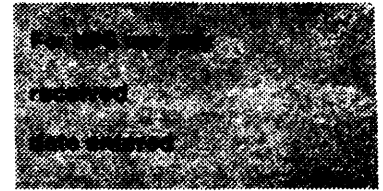
| | |
|----------|---|
| 302 | C |
| 304, 306 | N |
| 303 | C |
| 404 | C |
| 410 | N |

WILLING STREET from junction of Broad and Berryhill Streets south to Pine Street:

| | |
|----------|---|
| 101 | C |
| 102 | C |
| 103 | N |
| 104 | C |
| 105 | N |
| 107 | C |
| 108 | C |
| 109 | N |
| 110 | C |
| 111, 113 | N |
| 112 | C |
| 116, 118 | C |
| 117 | C |
| 120 | C |
| 122 | C |
| 124-A, B | C |
| 128 | C |

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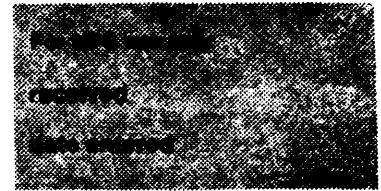


Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 13

(Caroline Street intersects)

| | |
|-----|---|
| 200 | C |
| 202 | C |
| 204 | C |
| 206 | N |
| 210 | C |
| 212 | C |
| 214 | C |
| 311 | C |

| | |
|------------------|------------|
| Contributing | 117 |
| Non-contributing | 45 |
| Total | <u>162</u> |

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began moving into the Escambia River valley and other rich agricultural lands in West Florida following Andrew Jackson's first two incursions into the Spanish Colony. By 1820 American farms were well established on both sides of the Escambia River.⁶ Many of these settlers originated in North Carolina, and had migrated through Georgia and into southern Alabama in search of land. With the purchase of Florida by the United States in 1821, the steady flow of farmers, land speculators and frontier lawyers into West Florida accelerated. Development of the area was spurred by the construction of Fort Barrancas and Fort Pickens in 1828 and the need for millions of bricks. Many of these were supplied by the brick yards of Jackson Morton, about two miles north of Milton, and of John Hunt, two miles south.

Several important economic advantages stimulated the growth of the new community. Because the Blackwater River is still wide and deep at this point, deep-draft sailing vessels could be accommodated. Its location also made it the closest market for many of the small farms scattered throughout what was then eastern Escambia County as well as for parts of southern Alabama. In December, 1843, the Pensacola Gazette reported:

There are few places which at this time afford so favorable an opening for a profitable mercantile business, on a small scale, as the town of Milton....It is nearly at the head of schooner navigation on the Blackwater, and is the natural mart for the business of five or six counties in the state of Alabama...The trade from them ...consists in cotton, hides, beeswax, poultry, etc...these articles are brought to market in comparatively small quantities, and those who bring them, instead of expecting to be paid in money, take back a full equivalent in dry goods, iron, salt, etc.... It is estimated that between the 12th and 23rd inst. more than fifty wagons and carts came to Milton, each having from one to four bales of cotton and a considerable amount of other articles of produce above named.

In addition to its advantageous location as a natural marketplace, Milton enjoyed access to a seemingly inexhaustible supply of lumber. The arrival of an enthusiastic band of entrepreneurs provided the impetus for exploiting this resource. Forsyth was among the first to successfully establish a saw mill by building a dam on Pond Creek and erecting a water-powered mill shortly after purchasing the site from Juan de la Rúa. He was handicapped by the poor siting of the "Arcadia" mill, by a shortage of working capital, and by labor shortages caused by the Seminole Wars. In 1830, he entered into a partnership with Andrew P. and Ezekiel E. Simpson, two brothers from North Carolina who had operated a saw mill for naval contracts at

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Woodbine. The Simpsons solved the problem of Forsyth's shortage of funds, and by utilizing slave labor, they ended the shortage of available workers.⁹ By 1835, Forsyth and Simpson had two saws operating. The mill location, however, still posed the problem of overland transportation of the sawn lumber. Forsyth's brother, Joseph, E.E. Simpson and Timothy Twitchell incorporated the Pond Creek and Blackwater Canal Company to solve the transportation problem. Apparently the feasibility of constructing a canal proved daunting, because in 1838 the firm changed its name to the Arcadia Railroad Company.¹⁰ A horse-drawn tramway was constructed between Arcadia and the Blackwater River. Eventually this solution proved as impractical as the proposed canal, and by 1842 Forsyth and Simpson moved their saw mill operations to Bagdad and switched to steam power.¹¹

Other saw mills operating in the vicinity of Milton included that of John Hunt on the east bank of the Blackwater. Hunt operated a brickyard as well as two gangs of steam-powered saws. Hunt sold his operation to Criglar, Batchelder and Company in 1849. During the 1850's the firm diversified its operations, manufacturing laths, shingles, sashes, doors, blinds, and mouldings.¹² Two other businessmen important to the development of Milton who began their careers in the ante-bellum lumber industry were William J. Keyser and James A. Chaffin. Chaffin moved from Georgia to Milton in 1852 and engaged in saw milling.¹³ He also opened a mercantile business. Keyser started out in business as the partner of mill owner Alexander McVoy. He soon went into business for himself as a shipping and receiving agent. Keyser eventually acquired a great deal of property along Milton's waterfront.

Lumber was not the only industry which stimulated Milton's early growth. The Arcadia Manufacturing Company, established in 1835 to manufacture cotton cloth, utilizing slave labor, was located near Forsyth and Simpson's Arcadia Mill.¹⁴ Timothy Twitchell's Arcadia Pail Factory could turn foot-long blocks of wood into a half-dozen juniper pails in a half-hour.¹⁵ Three shipyards operated in Milton by 1851, servicing the lumber, schooners and steam ships which plied the Blackwater River.¹⁶

The growth of Milton was rapid. In 1842 the territorial legislature created Santa Rosa County from parts of Escambia and Walton Counties. The following year Santa Rosa County voters chose Milton as the county seat and the site for the County and Superior Courts. Finally, by an act approved on February 23, 1844, the legislature incorporated the town of Milton, with William H. Johnson, Richard Vaughn, William Mack, Charles A. Tweed, W.W. Harrison, and Thomas J. Gardiner serving as the first town wardens.¹⁷ Early in 1845, the citizens of Milton held public meetings in support of establishing Milton as a port of entry, which was soon accomplished. Direct

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steam packet service to New Orleans was available by 1848 aboard Forsyth and Simpson's steamer "General Hamer," while news of the world's events was supplied by J.W. Dorr's Milton Courier.¹⁸ On the eve of the Civil War, Milton was Florida's seventh largest community with a population of 1,815, seventy-seven percent of which was White. The town boasted "three confectionaries...one blacksmith shop, one bakery and two large and commodious hotels...two schools of high standing and character...a division of the Sons of Temperance [sic] in a prosperous condition and a Lodge and Chapter of Ancient York Masons."¹⁹

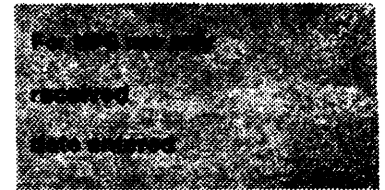
The outbreak of the Civil War proved to be a devastating blow to Milton and its industrial base. Though Milton's location, far away from the principle areas of fighting, made it appear secure, it was doomed to suffer the same fate as Pensacola. Both towns were dependent on waterborne transportation through Pensacola Bay. Federal forces occupying Fort Pickens held Milton and Pensacola in a stranglehold. Though Milton's industrial resources were of vital importance to the nascent Confederate nation, they were virtually useless since no adequate overland transportation served the area. In spite of Confederate naval contracts with the Ollinger and Bruce shipyard to construct two gunboats, the army concluded by March 1862 that Pensacola and the surrounding area were indefensible. As Confederate forces withdrew, they burned everything which might be of value to Union troops, including sawmills, brick plants, and shipyards.²⁰ Milton survived the remainder of the war in relative peace, with only an occasional skirmish interrupting the quiet. When Union troops did appear, it was frequently to rescue Unionist citizens from the depredations of angry Confederates.

The Civil War and Reconstruction hampered Milton's prosperity and growth. The population of the town declined by 13.5% between 1860 and 1870.²¹ Several industrial operations important to Milton before the war, such as Criglar, Batchelder and Company, and the Arcadia Manufacturing Company, were never rebuilt. Others, like the Ollinger and Bruce shipyard, moved to a different location. For nearly three decades following the war, Pensacola drained the best talent from Milton's business community. It is little wonder that Milton was described as "a little place of no particular importance," and as a "small, drowsy-looking... old fashioned...(town)."²²

In spite of such setbacks, Milton remained an important center for the production of lumber. James A. Chaffin returned in 1870 to rebuild his sawmill. The new manufacturing plant could cut 40,000 feet of inch boards a day.²³ By 1887, a correspondent for the Gospel Advocate reported that the mill's capacity had been improved to 63,000 feet per day, and that sawyers were paid as much as \$4.00 per day.²⁴ Milton's fortunes were also closely

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tioned to those of Bagdad. The two communities were separated by only a mile, and many of Milton's citizens found employment in the E.E. Simpson, and later the Stearns and Culver, mills. The vast, seemingly inexhaustible supply of timber attracted even more entrepreneurs and a large mill was established at Bay Point in the 1880's, providing still greater employment opportunities.

The prosperity of the area was given a further boost by the completion of the P&A Railroad in 1883. A Pensacola Commercial reporter remarked after a visit that "Milton did need a first-class hotel to go with its natural museum and library", but recommended the picturesque trail trip to his readers.²⁵

An 1895 map and an 1896 newspaper show Milton to be a small town of approximately 1500 people centered around a courthouse square, a two-story courthouse and adjacent jail.²⁶ The downtown area was already assuming the structure and facade it has maintained to this day, with some additions and deletions (due mainly to the 1909 and 1911 fires). Along the waterfront were the two main businesses: the Hoodless Shipyard and the Chaffin Mill which employed "an army of men." The paper stated that "for miles on each side of the river is stacked lumber ready for shipment to foreign ports and their weekly and monthly payroll is something enormous. This firm is one of the foremost in all that pertains to progress and enterprise and there is no measure of public good advocated that they are not in the front ranks of its promotion."²⁷

On the outer edge of the town were the Spencer Collins mill and the Davidson steam-operated grist mill. The town also boasted of an ice factory, four churches, three boarding houses, four blacksmiths, a Masonic Hall, three newspapers and a variety of stores and professional offices. The Black population had their own Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church and Knights of Pythias Hall. Communication with the outside world was maintained through the telephone, two sloops, and a steamer that made daily trips to Pensacola. There was, however, no municipal water system or fire department.

By 1910 the population had doubled and the town map now took five pages instead of one.²⁸ A planing mill and cotton gin had been added and a new train depot built. A 1913 newspaper called Milton "the busiest place in the entire state of Florida....It is doubtful if there is a city in the state of anything like our population that is doing as much improvement and development is in Milton."²⁹ It was referring to the new town waterworks, sewer system, fire department and electric lighting. The Milton Auditorium Theater (Imogene Theater) that was capable of seating 800 had also just been completed. It featured a Lyceum series in addition to moving pictures, dances and other community events. Work was also progressing on a large brick building that

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was to house the telephone exchange (Exchange Hotel) and "a number of new residences."³⁰

Within the next three years a large two-story brick school would be built and the Blackwater Bridge erected. (This would be destroyed by the September 1917 hurricane.) The newspapers of this era are full of community activities such as picnics, barbecues, political rallies, jousting tournaments and Mardi Gras celebrations that were often attended by as many as 3500 people. When World War I was declared, Milton responded by forming "Company K." Its medical corps and National Guard unit were already mobilized.

The prosperity continued into the 1920s. A bridge over the Escambia River was finally constructed and a new courthouse and jail were built. However, the beginning of the end was foreseen by the Milton Gazette which editorialized in 1920, "our limited forests have been ruthlessly cut away and little or no effort made to reforest these denuded areas..."³¹ The inevitable depletion of the timberland that had kept so many Milton-Bagdad businesses flourishing brought an abrupt end to Milton's progress, and was followed quickly by the world-wide Depression.

Once again the numerous small farms and rural nature of the town itself sustained many families just as they had after the Civil War. The establishment of Whiting Field in 1942-43 (and with it a German prisoner of war camp) brought an influx of people and purpose into the town. The population swelled so dramatically that the townspeople were asked to open their spare bedrooms and garages to house the incoming soldiers and their families. This started the population growth that has continued to this day. Increasing developmental pressures spawned by this growth underscore the need for effective preservation planning.

Wooden residential buildings constructed in a variety of high style and vernacular forms characterize Milton. The majority are single-story and of modest scale; however, a number of two-story houses can be found on Berryhill Street. Several fine examples of the Bungalow style can also be found scattered about Milton. The primary concentration of commercial buildings in Milton lines the courthouse square and Willing Street. Most of Milton's buildings, both residential and commercial, were contractor designed, though little information has yet been uncovered regarding the early building trade in Santa Rosa county. A handful of important commercial and governmental buildings were designed by Pensacola architects. These include Walker Willis' Imogene Theater (1913), Exchange Hotel (1914), the Santa Rosa Graded School (1916), and Chandler C. Yonge's Santa Rosa County Courthouse (1926). All of Willis' designs were subsequently constructed by the S.F. Fulghum Construction

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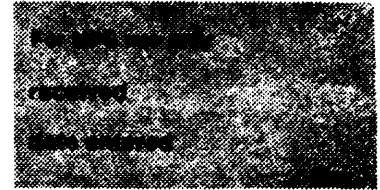


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Company of Pensacola. Among Willis' better known designs in Pensacola are the 1922 addition to the San Carlos Hotel, the Mirador Apartments, the State Board of Health Laboratory, and the P.K. Yonge School. Chandler C. Yonge was well known for his design of government buildings. In addition to the Santa Rosa County Courthouse, he planned courthouses for Holmes and Walton Counties, as well as the Federal Courthouse in Pensacola.

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ENDNOTES

¹ M. Luther King, History of Santa Rosa County: A King's County (n.p., 1972), p. 27. M. Luther King was a Santa Rosa County educator whose history was published by his widow after his death. King points out that the origins of the name Milton are unclear. Benjamin Franklin Riley states that the town is named after Dr. Milton Amos. See Benjamin Franklin Riley, History of Conecuh County, Alabama (Columbus, GA: Thomas Gilbert, 1881): 185. King also advances the theory that the town is named for Florida's Civil War governor, John Milton. See King, History of Santa Rosa County, p. 37. Neither of these theories is likely, however, since the town was certainly named by 1842 at the latest. See Acts and Resolutions of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida 20th Session (Tallahassee: C.E. Bartlett, printer, 1842), Act Number 1. The most likely explanation of the town's name is found in W. Stanley Hoole, ed., Florida Territory in 1844: The Diary of Master Edward C. Anderson, (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1977): 50. Anderson states that on August 13, 1844, he "...stood up Santa Rosa Bay into the Blackwater River...and came to off Milltown."

² Asbury Dickens and James C. Allen, eds. American State Papers: Documents of the Congress of the United States in Relation to Public Lands, Vol. IV, (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1859): 81. For additional information on Juan de la Rúa and his family, see Jack D.L. Holmes, "Pensacola Settlers, 1781-1821," (Typewritten, manuscript on file at Historic Pensacola Preservation Board, 1970): 64-65. Two grants of land in the vicinity of Milton were made during the British period (1763-1781), but it is uncertain whether either was actually settled. See Clinton N. Howard, The British Development of West Florida 1763-1769, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1947): 15-16.

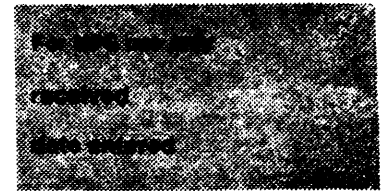
³ Dickens and Allen, American State Papers IV, p. 183.

⁴ King, History of Santa Rosa County, p. 28. Unfortunately, King's book has no footnotes or sources, so it is not known where he got this information.

⁵ King, History of Santa Rosa County, p. 28. Santa Rosa County Deed Record A-1, p. 13 and A-21, p. 609.

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⁶ Lucius Ellsworth and Linda Ellsworth, Pensacola: The Deep Water City (Tulsa: Continental Heritage Press, 1982): 32. William S. Coker and G. Douglas Inglis, The Spanish Censuses of Pensacola, 1784-1820: A Genealogical Guide to Spanish Pensacola, (Pensacola: The Perdido Bay Press, 1980): 127.

⁷ Pensacola Gazette, December 30, 1843.

⁸ A. Stuart Campbell, Studies in the Forestry Resources of Florida: The Lumber Industry, (Gainesville: University of Florida, 1932): 50. King, History of Santa Rosa County, p. 28. Both Campbell and King apparently utilized the same source, which neither gave credit. The common source was an unpublished manuscript history of Bagdad by C.H. Overman written just before the Bagdad Land and Lumber Company closed its mills in 1939. Overman was an official of the company, and was descended from Benjamin Overman, the millwright for Forsyth and Simpson. See C.H. Overman, "History of Bagdad," (Typewritten manuscript on file at Historic Pensacola Preservation Board, n.d. [c. 1939]).

⁹ Campbell, Studies in Forestry Resources, p. 50; King, History of Santa Rosa County, p. 28. For information on the Simpsons' operation at Woodbine, see Occie Clubbs, "Pensacola in Retrospect: 1870-1890." Florida Historical Quarterly 37 (January-April, 1959): 377.

¹⁰ Acts of the Governor and Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida 13th Session. (Tallahassee: William Wilson, printer, 1835). Also Acts of the Governor...Florida 16th Session (Tallahassee, William Wilson, 1838).

¹¹ Overman, "History of Bagdad." Campbell, Studies in Forestry Resources, p. 51.

¹² John A. Eisterhold, "Lumber and Trade in Pensacola and West Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly 51 (January 1973): 275-277.

¹³ Rowland H. Rerick, Memoirs of Florida Vol. I, (Atlanta: Southern Historic Association, 1902): 477-478.

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14 The firm was incorporated as the Escambia Manufacturing Company, with Joseph Forsyth, A.P. Simpson, Ezekiel E. Simpson, George Willis, and Henry Ahrens comprising its first board of directors. The firm later changed its name to the Arcadia Manufacturing Company. Acts of the Governor and Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, 13th Session (Tallahassee: William Wilson, printer, 1835). Overman, "History of Bagdad."

15 Eisterhold, "Lumber and Trade," p. 273.

16 Pensacola Gazette, June 28, 1851.

17 Acts and Resolutions of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, 22nd Session (Tallahassee: C.E. Bartlett, 1844).

18 Pensacola Gazette, January 18, 1845; December 16, 1848; February 25, 1854.

19 Pensacola Gazette, June 28, 1851. Virginia Parks, Alan Rick, and Norman Simons, Pensacola in the Civil War, (Pensacola: Pensacola Historical Society, 1978): 30. The population of Santa Rosa County increased rapidly between 1850 and 1860, and threatened to surpass that of neighboring Escambia County. By 1860, 4,048 whites, 61 free blacks, and 1,371 slaves made up the population of Santa Rosa County. In comparison, the 1860 population of Escambia County consisted of 3,654 whites, 153 free blacks and 1,961 slaves. J.D.B. DeBow, compiler, Statistical View of the United States, (Washington: Beverly Tucker, senate printer, 1854). J.C.G. Kennedy, Preliminary Report on the Eighth Census, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1862).

20 War of the Rebellion, Series I, Vol. VI, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1882): 859-860. Also see Thomas Johnson Papers, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida, Pensacola, FL. William Ollinger and Martin Bruce later sued the Confederate Government for \$11,000 damages to their shipyard and floating dry dock. It is doubtful that they recovered any damages.

21 Francis A. Walker, A Compendium of the Ninth Census, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1872).

22 J.C. Hoadley, ed., Memorial of Henry Sandford Gansevoort, (Boston: Rand, Avery and Co., 1875): 242-243.

23 Rerick, Memoirs of Florida, 477.

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- 24 Gospel Advocate, December 21, 1887.
- 25 Pensacola Commercial, February 6, 1883.
- 26 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1895.
- 27 Milton Journal, December 22, 1896.
- 28 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1903, 1910, 1917, 1926.
- 29 Milton Gazette, September 25, 1913.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Milton Gazette, September 10, 1920, quoted in Scott, Santa Rosa County, p. 31.

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