



MP-1738

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sopchoppy Depot

other names/site number WA00722

2. Location

street & number 34 Rose Street not for publication

city or town Sopchoppy vicinity

state Florida code FL county Wakulla code 129 zip code 32358

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Alissa Lotane, Deputy SHPO 8/30/17
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
 - See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) _____

Joe Salt
Signature of the Keeper

10.12.2017
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	total

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

Florida's Historic Railroad Resources MPS

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

FRAME VERNACULAR

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Wood

roof Wood

other _____

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

ca. 1894-1946

Significant Dates

ca. 1894

1946

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Carrabelle, Tallahassee, and Georgia Railroad

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

Sopchoppy Depot
Name of Property

Wakulla County, FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 10

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	6	7	4	1	8	9	9	3	3	2	8	2	4	4
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Andrew Waber, Historic Preservationist

organization Florida Division of Historical Resources date June 2017

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6430

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32399

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Sopchoppy

street & number PO Box 1219 telephone (850) 962-4611

city or town Sopchoppy state FL zip code 32358

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL

SUMMARY

The Sopchoppy Depot is a historic railroad warehouse and depot located within the historic downtown of Sopchoppy, Florida. The nomination consists of two buildings, the historic depot building and a non-contributing bathroom building. The depot is a simple single-story wood frame building with a prominent elevated wood wraparound porch with an independent wood shingle roof. The fenestration is primarily composed of 4/4 double hung sash windows. The wood platform extending around the building rests on wood pier foundations while the main building rests on concrete block and wood foundations. There is a non-historic glass double door on the east elevation of the building and fixed glass windows on the west. On the north side of the west elevation, there two single wood doors flanking a 4/4 double hung sash window. These doors served as the historic main entry into the depot for African Americans. On the east elevation is a rectangular protrusion with five 4/4 double hung sash windows. This was the historic station manager's office. The interior of the building consists of two plain, open spaces with wood flooring, walls, and ceiling. The south end of the building, which was historically the warehouse utilized for freight service, is now used as the main display room of the museum. On the north end of the interior is the section of the depot historically used for passenger service. This would have originally been divided into three rooms, but is now just one single open space. Despite these changes, the building retains sufficient integrity to qualify for listing in the National Register. The non-historic bathroom building is set to the rear of the depot and is completely detached.

SETTING

The Sopchoppy Depot is located in Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, Florida, in the area of Florida known as the Big Bend region. The closest major city is Tallahassee, the capital of the state of Florida, which is located roughly 38 miles to the north. The town of Sopchoppy is adjacent to the Sopchoppy River, which runs to the west of the town. The town itself has a population of a little under 500 people. The depot is located within the small historic downtown, which is based around the intersection of Rose Street and Municipal Avenue. The immediate vicinity of the depot is mixed commercial and municipal, with the town hall located across Railroad Avenue from the depot. The depot sits on a larger plot of land which is used for public gatherings, including the annual Worm Gruntin' Festival.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Exterior

The Sopchoppy Depot is a one-story wood frame building with a prominent wraparound porch inset within the main roof on side elevations and an independent wood shingle roof extending on the gable ends. The building

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL

rests on concrete block and wood pier foundations. A non-historic metal guardrail connected via wood posts surrounds the entry platform.

South Elevation

The south elevation of the building is a plain gable end with no windows and minimal elaborations (Photo 1). The primary access point on this elevation is a simple wood stoop with metal handrails. There is a sign that reads "Sopchoppy" in the gable end above the porch roof.

East Elevation

On the east elevation are three entrances: a glass door on the south end and two wood doors on the north end. The glass door serves as the current main entrance into the building (Photos 2-3). It is set within the historic opening used for freight service and opens into the warehouse section of the depot. The two wood paneled doors on the north end of the elevation functioned historically as the main entry point for African American passengers, with the doors providing access to the colored waiting rooms. Both doors flank a single 4/4 double hung sash window. Also visible on this elevation is a small stoop and the end of the handicapped ramp which begins on the rear elevation.

North (Rear) Elevation

The north (rear) elevation of the building is a simple gable end with an independent wood shingle porch roof and two 4/4 double hung sash windows (Photo 4). The side of the building faces the non-historic bathroom building. There is a small handicapped parking lot on the north end of the depot, which leads to the handicapped ramp that begins on the north elevation and wraps around to the main entrance on the east side.

West Elevation

The west elevation of the building features a prominent 4-light fixed glass window infilling the historic opening used for freight service (Photos 4-5). There is a rectangular protrusion from the building with five 4/4 double hung sash windows, which was historically used as the ticket manager's office. On the far north side of this elevation is a single wood paneled door, which was historically used as the main entrance into the station for white passengers and depot personnel.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 3 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL

Interior

The interior of the building is plain, with wood floors, wood walls, and wood ceilings. The historic freight warehouse section of the building retains much of its integrity (Photos 6-9). A utility closet was installed on the northeast corner of this space. Aside from this, it remains a large, single open space. Although the spaces for the freight doors have been infilled with non-historic fixed glass windows and doors, the sliding freight doors remain in place and are still functional. As there are no historic windows in this portion of the building, the glass was added to provide natural lighting into the room and also protect the sliding doors from over usage. There are ceiling lights and ceiling fans installed in this room. This space currently holds museum exhibits and display cases which are all removable.

In the north end of the building is the historic passenger section and station office (Photos 10-12). Like the freight section, this space is a single open space with wood floors, walls, and ceiling. The historic 4/4 double hung sash windows are all located within the passenger section as are three wood doors. The interior of this section has undergone the most changes, as this was once three rooms, with a space for white and colored passengers and a space for the station office separated by partition walls. The rectangular protrusion found on the west end of the room was used as part of the station office.

Alterations

This building has undergone a number of changes over the course of its history. After it closed as a depot in 1948, the building was converted into a commercial building and later a storage building and fell into disrepair. Sometime during the period of significance, a metal roof was placed over the original wood shingles. The platform around the building was removed and a small one-story wood frame addition was placed onto the front, obscuring the original south elevation of the depot. A portion of the original south wall of the building was cut away after the addition was added. These changes have been reversed, and the building roof and south elevation accurately reflect their historic appearance. The platform around the building was rebuilt with metal guardrails and a handicapped ramp. The original wood foundations under the passenger section of the depot was saved but were replaced on all other sides by concrete block. The interior of the building saw some significant restoration work, with new wood flooring, walls, and utility closet added. The historic freight door openings on the east and west elevations have been infilled. A fixed four-light window was placed on the west elevation and a glass door and fixed windows placed on the east elevation, which serves as the current main public entrance to the building. These changes were made to help seal the building for the purposes of air conditioning and heating. The walls in the passenger section of the building which historically separated the white and colored waiting rooms and the station office have been removed. The wall separating the freight section from the passenger section remains. Although there have been vents added to the roof, no drop ceilings were added and the roof remains the same height as it was historically.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 4 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL

Non-Contributing Resource

As part of the restoration of the depot and its conversion into a public museum, a single story bathroom building was constructed to the north (Photo 13). This wood frame building features a pyramidal roof and two separate bathroom facilities for men and women. It is not physically connected to the depot and does not overwhelm the historic building. It is conserved non-contributing due to age. It was built in the same location as the historic outhouses.

Integrity

Despite the changes that have taken place, the depot building retains enough integrity to qualify for listing in the National Register. The building is still located in its original location, and aside from the removal of the railroad, the surroundings remain relatively the same. Hence, it retains its integrity of location, association, and setting. Despite the infill of the historic freight doors, the sliding doors were retained, no historic fabric was removed in the emplacement of the glass, and the changes are reversible. On the interior, the flooring and the walls were replaced and a drop ceiling added with wood similar in appearance to the historic wood used in the building. The biggest change with the interior was the removal of the walls separating the white and colored waiting rooms and the station office. Despite this, the freight storage area, which comprises the majority of the building's floor space, remains largely a single open space, the main wall separating the freight and passenger areas remain in place, and the rectangular protrusion used for the station office remains in place. The window openings and the three doors also remain in place in the passenger area. This building retains sufficient integrity of design, materials, feeling, and workmanship.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 5 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL

Summary

The Sopchoppy Depot is being listed under Criterion A at the local level in the areas of Transportation and Community Planning and Development. The period of significance extends from circa 1894 to 1946, when the rail line between Tallahassee and Carrabelle ceased activity. Originally constructed as a stop along the Carrabelle, Tallahassee, and Georgia Railroad (CT&G), the Sopchoppy Depot served as the centerpiece of the town laid out by John C. Hodge. The preexisting settlement of Sopchoppy, originally on the west bank of the Sopchoppy River, moved across the river to be closer to the railroad. The depot served as both a passenger station and a freight depot. It was later a stop on the Georgia, Florida, and Alabama Railroad from 1906 to 1927. The Seaboard Airline Railway (SAL) operated this line from 1927 until 1946. The depot also played a pivotal role in the development of nearby Panacea, as a small mule-drawn tram line was built from the depot to the Panacea Mineral Springs Hotel, which was a locally significant health resort. During World War II, the depot saw major activity as thousands of soldiers stationed at Camp Gordon Johnston near Carrabelle passed through Sopchoppy. After the SAL ceased operations on the line in 1946, the depot no longer remained in active use. It is the last surviving depot on the Tallahassee to Carrabelle railroad line. Despite the changes that have taken place to the building since then, it retains sufficient integrity to qualify for listing in the National Register.

The Sopchoppy Depot contributes to the Florida's Historic Railway Resources MPS under Associated Historic Contexts: Disston Era Expansion and Consolidation, 1881-1903; Progressive Era and World War I, 1904-1920; Florida Land Boom, 1921-1928; Great Depression, 1929-1941; and World War II and the End of the Steam Era, 1942-1949. It also contributes under Associated Property Type F.1 Railroad Stations and Office Buildings.

Historical Context

History of Sopchoppy

The village of Sopchoppy was first settled in the 1840s, shortly after the Second Seminole War. It had its own voting precinct during the first statewide elections held in 1845, with 17 voters primarily supporting the Democratic Party.¹ By 1848, the area was sufficiently settled for Sopchoppy to receive its own post office. John W. Adams, who ran a plantation and was one of the largest slave owners in the county, was named as the first postmaster. It was mostly a farming community that relied on the towns of Greenough and Newport for their supplies. At this time, Sopchoppy was located on the west side of the Sopchoppy River. Although there were a few small plantations in the area such as the one ran by Adams, the majority of the white population of

¹ State of Florida, Wakulla County, Sopchoppy Precinct Voter List (1845), Florida Memory Project, State Archives of Florida, <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/271171?id=1>.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 6 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL

Sopchoppy were small yeoman farmers who owned fewer than ten slaves. In 1850, there were a little over 70 white inhabitants and a little over 30 enslaved African Americans in the Sopchoppy census district.²

Prior to the Civil War, Wakulla County was largely dominated by the port towns of St. Marks, Port Leon, and Newport, and by the Tallahassee Railroad, which connected the city of Tallahassee to St. Marks and Port Leon. Farmers and planters in the Sopchoppy area used these ports to transport their goods to markets. The economic crises of the 1840s and the construction of more reliable rail transportation elsewhere the bypassed the area led to a sharp decline, however. By the start of the Civil War, St. Marks and Newport were the only port towns still standing. Newport, however, was in decline at this time. As the southern rail systems were in shambles immediately after the war, St. Marks actually experienced a brief period of relative prosperity in the 1860s. The reestablishment and expansion of rail lines elsewhere coupled with a disastrous fire in 1868, however, sent the town into decline. By the 1880s, Crawfordville and Sopchoppy surpassed St. Marks in total population.³

During the period after the Civil War, especially by the 1870s, the naval stores and lumber industries became major factors in the local economy and the interior saw some development. By 1886, the population of Sopchoppy had a little over 140 residents as well as two general stores, a gristmill, and a sawmill.⁴

Historical Significance

Carrabelle, Tallahassee, and Georgia Railroad

The potential of the interior of Wakulla County attracted the attention of the railroad companies. In 1883, the Thomasville, Tallahassee, & Gulf Railroad received a charter from the state of Florida to begin construction of a rail line connecting Carrabelle to Tallahassee. Construction began from Carrabelle but stopped when the rail line reached the Sopchoppy River. Unable to secure funding for a bridge, the company foundered for several years until 1891, when it was absorbed into the newly founded Carrabelle, Tallahassee, and Gulf (CT&G) Railroad. The CT&G, which was primarily owned by thread maker William Clark, received much of its funding via Scottish bond sales. The CT&G was formed through the Florida & Georgia Investment Company, which owned vast tracts of pine land that provided wood needed for the spools used by the Clark Thread Mills. The CT&G constructed a bridge across the Sopchoppy River, eventually connecting Carrabelle to Tallahassee in October 1893. The CT&G also operated a steamship service from Carrabelle to Apalachicola. In an effort to

² Elizabeth F. Smith, ed., "Sopchoppy in 1850," *Magnolia Monthly*, vol. V, no. 2 (Feb 1967), n.p.; 1850 U.S. Census Population Schedule, Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, FL; 1850 U.S. Census Slave Register, Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, FL.

³ Florida Roberts, "Early Sophcopy," *Magnolia Monthly* Vol. IV, No. 5 (May 1966), n.p.; Smith, ed., "Sopchoppy in 1850," n.p.; National Register of Historic Places, Bo Lynn's Grocery, St. Marks, Wakulla County, FL, SG100000643.

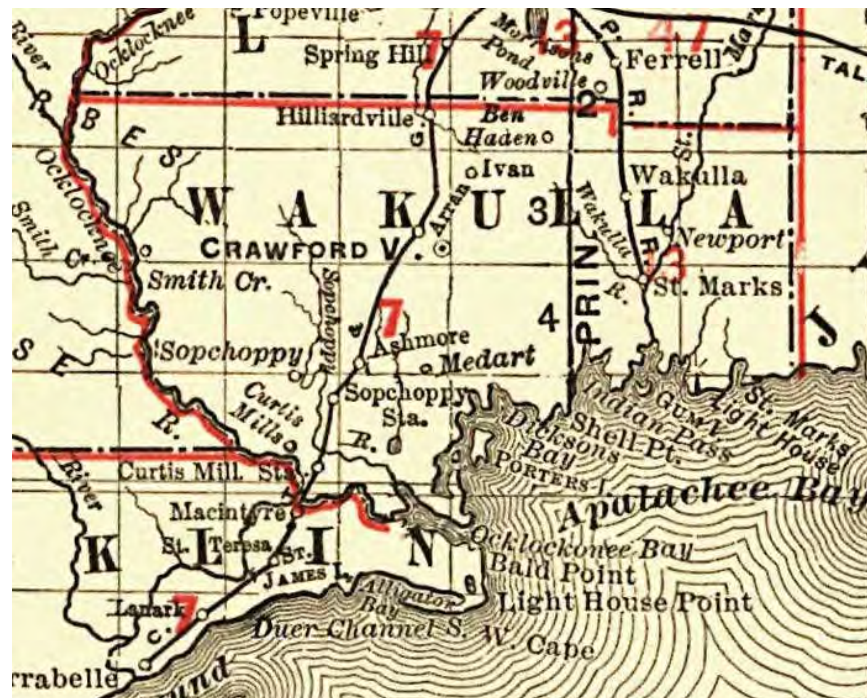
⁴ John R. Richards, Compiler, *Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (New York: Southern Publishing Company, 1886), p. 411.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 7 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL

capitalize on the new railroad and the coastal location, the retirement community of Lanark was established. The centerpiece of this community was the Lanark Inn, which became a major local tourist destination and drew passenger traffic to the railroad.⁵



In this map dated circa 1898, the original location of Sopchoppy and the newly established Sopchoppy Station are still visible.

The construction of the CT&G had a profound impact upon the history of Sopchoppy. Instead of passing through the existing location of Sopchoppy, the railroad company decided to cross the Sopchoppy River at a point further south, before heading north towards Tallahassee. To service the people of Sopchoppy and draw potential development revenue, the company selected a spot on the opposite side of the river, which it named Sopchoppy Station. The line was built out to Sopchoppy Station by 1892, and was in full operation by the time the line was completed to Tallahassee the following year. The CT&G set out platting the new town around the depot and it drew people not only from Sopchoppy, but also the surrounding area. John C. Hodge, an official

⁵ Gregg Turner, *A Short History of Florida Railroads* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003); Historic Florida Consulting, LLC, *Carrabelle Historic Preservation Survey and Plan*, 40-41.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 8 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL

with the CT&G, played a prominent role in the planning of the new town. Although the population quickly diminished, the original Sopchoppy lingered on for a few more years.⁶

In 1899, a major hurricane struck the Big Bend region, which caused significant damage to the area. The CT&G sustained significant damage, with the port terminal in Carrabelle destroyed along with 400,000 board feet of lumber and 50,000 barrels of rosin. The railroad towns of Carrabelle, Lanark, and McIntyre were nearly completely destroyed. Among the casualties was the Lanark Inn, which was later rebuilt. The hurricane also marked a permanent turning point in Sopchoppy as well, as the flooding from the river wiped out the remnants of the original settlement on the west side of the river. Rather than rebuild, the survivors decided to relocate across the river to Sopchoppy Station. By 1900, the original town ceased to exist and Sopchoppy Station was renamed Sopchoppy.⁷

Although the exact date of the current depot's construction remains unknown, it was certainly built by the time the Panacea tram line was in operation between 1901 and 1912. According to local informants, the building was constructed circa 1894.⁸ Edward Lawhon, a longtime resident who moved to Sopchoppy around 1905, mentioned that the depot was there when his family first arrived. The new town quickly grew around the railroad depot. The first large general store was built by Andrew Roberts. In 1897, H.D. Landers erected a large two-story wood residence in the town. One of the first major social events to take place in the new Sopchoppy occurred in August 1898, when the town hosted a ten-day evangelical tent meeting led by the Rev. A.J. Quattlebaum. A little over 50 people were "converted or reclaimed" at the gathering, a number of whom likely arrived via the new railroad.⁹ By the early 20th century, the town also had a newspaper, the *Argus*, a hotel, and a small bank in addition to turpentine stills and a lumber yard. Perhaps the most famous resident of Sopchoppy was B.K. Roberts, a prominent attorney and judge who served as Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court. His father Thomas Roberts served for a brief tenure as the depot agent of Sopchoppy.¹⁰ In 1905, the city of Sopchoppy was formally incorporated. Among the early mayors of the town were Dr. Charles S. Claridy and Luther Burbank. The town did not remain incorporated for long, however, and was soon unincorporated.¹¹

⁶ Russell Tedder, "Seaboard's Bainbridge and Richland Subdivisions: Part I", *Lines South*, vol. 28, No. 2 (2nd Quarter 2011), 7-9.

⁷ Elizabeth F. Smith, ed., "John Manning Roberts of Sopchoppy," *The Magnolia Monthly* vol. IX, No. 10 (Oct. 1971), n.p.; Tedder, "Seaboard's Bainbridge and Richland Subdivisions," p. 8.

⁸ Nelson Martin Interview, July 2017.

⁹ *Gulf Coast Breeze*, "The Tent Meeting," 19 Aug 1898.

¹⁰ Roberts, "Early Sopchoppy," n.p.; *Gulf Coast Breeze*, "An Excursion," 17 December 1897.

¹¹ *Pensacola Journal*, "Wife of the Mayor of Sopchoppy Dies," 8 Oct 1908; *Suwannee Democrat*, "State News," 28 May 1909; Ed Lawhon Interview by Mays Leroy Gray, 7 July 1998, p. 12.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 9 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL



Image of passengers boarding Panacea to Sopchoppy Tram. This is the oldest known photograph of the Sopchoppy Depot.
(source: Florida Memory Project)

Panacea Tram Line

In 1901, regular tram service between Panacea and Sopchoppy commenced. The town of Panacea, with its mineral springs, was founded in the 1890s as a health resort. The Panacea Mineral Springs Hotel became a local tourist destination that fueled the development of the town around it. By 1900, there was regular hack service between the hotel and the depot. Hoping to draw more tourists into the area, some enterprising people built the mule-drawn tram between the two towns. Although it was an improvement over the older sand roads, it was still slow and tedious, taking over two hours for a single run. In 1908, the Panacea Railroad and Land Company was formed to construct a railway between Sopchoppy and Panacea but this proposed line never materialized.¹² In 1912, the tram service was discontinued.¹³

¹² *Weekly True Democrat*, "Railroad to Panacea," 18 Dec 1908.

¹³ Nelson Martin, "Sopchoppy Depot," p. 2-3 [unpublished manuscript].

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 10 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL

Georgia, Florida and Alabama Railroad

In 1906, the CT&G was acquired by the Georgia, Florida & Alabama (GF&A) Railroad and the station at Sopchoppy became a stop on the new line. The GF&A was originally founded as the Georgia Pine Railway by Jesse Parker Williams in 1895. From its beginnings, the GF&A, much like the CT&G, was built as a lumber road. Williams made his fortune as a naval stores merchant, which he relayed into timber land investments and the railroad was constructed to provide a means for getting his lumber to market. The track originally ran from Arlington, Georgia, to West Bainbridge, Georgia. This provided him with connections to the Atlantic Coast Line and Central of Georgia railroads as well as connections to the steamboats operating on the Flint, Chattahoochee, and Apalachicola rivers. The new line, which was renamed the GF&A Railroad in 1901, thrived and soon expanded to Tallahassee by 1902. By 1906, the GF&A acquired the CT&G. That same year, the GF&A also built a branch line from Havana to Quincy, Florida, taking advantage of the highly profitable shade tobacco industry and fuller's earth mining emerging in the area. The railroad also became a major cutoff for express freight upon its completion to Richland in 1910, connecting the major east-west Seaboard Airline Railroad lines between Savannah and Montgomery and Jacksonville and Tallahassee (later Pensacola).¹⁴

By the time the GF&A arrived in Sopchoppy in 1906, there were 200 people residing in the town. As a testament to the importance of timber interests, there were at least three lumber and naval stores companies operating offices out of Sopchoppy.¹⁵ By 1918, the city's population grew to 300 people.¹⁶

The depot was an important center of the community throughout its long period of affiliation with the railroads. In addition to serving as the passenger station and freight depot for loading and unloading passing railcars, the depot agent also operated a telegraph service for the community. The building's wood shingle roof made it very susceptible to catching on fire, especially from passing locomotives. To combat this, fire buckets were fastened to all four corners of the building. This came in handy in 1916, when quick action from local citizens saved the building from burning to the ground after a portion of the roof caught fire. There were two outhouses constructed on the property, which were built for railroad customers but in effect became de facto public restrooms for the community. However, as the smell grew to be unbearable, two local citizens marched out of a city hall meeting and set fire to the buildings with the blessing of the depot agent. Although a railroad agent was summoned to investigate, no charges were ever brought for the incident. The depot survived another close call in 1929, when the nearby J.R. Lawhon Store burned to the ground. By the 1920s, as the GF&A switched to the use of larger 2-10-0 "decapod" steam engines, the roof of the depot was cut back to make room for the large

¹⁴ Tedder, "Seaboard's Bainbridge and Richland Subdivisions," p. 11-13.

¹⁵ R.L. Polk and Company, *Florida Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Jacksonville, FL: R.L. Polk and Company, 1907), 388.

¹⁶ R.L. Polk and Company, *Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Jacksonville, FL: R.L. Polk and Company, 1918), 405-406.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 11 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL

engines. Later on during its usage as a depot, the wood shingle roof was replaced by a metal roof due in part to leakage problems and the possibility of fire hazards.¹⁷

In 1927, the Seaboard Airline Railroad (SAL) assumed control of the GF&A, working out an agreement in which the SAL bought a controlling interest in GF&A stock and leased the line for 99 years. With the onset of the Great Depression and the decline of the lumber industry, however, the SAL had second thoughts about the viability of this line. They tried as early as 1933 to disengage themselves from the lease but were unsuccessful. The SAL continued regular passenger and freight service on the Carrabelle line until 1942, when the SAL sold the line to the United States Army in preparation for World War II. Although the United States government contracted the SAL to operate the line, train crews were under strict supervision of Army personnel throughout the war. During the war, thousands of soldiers and civilian contractors came through Sopchoppy along the railroad towards Camp Gordon Johnston, which was established by the Army as an amphibious assault training facility. Over 250,000 soldiers were trained at this base during the war, many of whom would later take part in the D-Day invasion. In an effort to improve morale, the Army allowed for regular passenger service, which gave soldiers an opportunity to visit places along the rail line, including Tallahassee. Following the end of the war in 1946, the line from Tallahassee to Carrabelle ceased operations.¹⁸

After it ceased operations as a depot, the building went through several different private uses, including as a store, a woodshop, and a storage facility. During this period, the original wood platform around the building was removed, a prominent one-story addition was added onto the front, and much of the interior flooring was replaced with poured concrete. By the 1990s, the building fell into disrepair and a local movement began to both save and restore the building. In 1993, thanks in part to a federal grant administered by the Florida Department of Transportation, the building was acquired by the city of Sopchoppy. The decision was made early on to restore the building back to its original appearance. The addition onto the front was removed and portions of the south wall were essentially reconstructed using similar pine wood that would have originally been used. The platform was also reconstructed. The wood flooring, walls and ceiling throughout the interior of the building needed replacement. Perhaps the biggest change to the interior is the passenger station portion, where what was once three walls separating the station manager's office and the white and colored waiting rooms have been removed. This was done since the walls were in dilapidated condition and the decision was made to open up the space.

¹⁷ Edward Lawhon Interview by Mays Leroy Gray, 7 July 1998, 7-8, 11; Nelson Martin, "The Sopchoppy Depot," p. 2.

¹⁸ Tedder, "Seaboard's Bainbridge and Richland Subdivisions: Part II," *Lines South*, vol. 28, no. 3 (3rd Quarter 2011), 16-20.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 13 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 14 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 15 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary encompasses a portion of Lot Number 12-5S-03W-000-00722-001 in the Wakulla County Property Appraiser's records. Starting at the lot line on the northeast intersection of Railroad Avenue and Rose Street, the boundary extends along the east side of Railroad Avenue to the north parcel boundary. From there, the boundary runs east along the north parcel boundary to the northeast corner of the parcel. From this point, the boundary runs south along the east parcel boundary to Rose Street. The boundary then runs west along the north side of Rose Street to the Point of Beginning. See GIS map for more details.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the property historically associated with the Sopchoppy Depot.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number Photos Page 16 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL

Photographic References

1. Sopchoppy Depot
2. Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, Florida
3. Andrew Waber
4. November 2016
5. Florida Division of Historical Resources
6. View of main (south) façade, facing northeast
7. Photo 1 of 13

Numbers 1-5 are the same for the following photographs, except where noted:

6. View of east elevation, facing north
7. Photo 2 of 13

4. June 2017
6. Exterior view of historic colored entrance, facing north
7. Photo 3 of 13

4. June 2017
6. View of rear (north) elevation, facing southwest
7. Photo 4 of 13

6. View of west elevation, facing northeast
7. Photo 5 of 13

4. June 2017
6. Interior view of north side of historic freight section, facing northeast
7. Photo 6 of 13

4. June 2017
6. View of utility closet, facing northeast
7. Photo 7 of 13

6. Interior view of main entrance with rolling doors closed, facing southwest
7. Photo 8 of 13

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Photos _____ Page 17 SOPCHOPPY DEPOT
SOPCHOPPY, WAKULLA COUNTY, FL

4. June 2017

6. Interior view of west side of historic freight section, facing northeast

7. Photo 9 of 13

4. June 2017

6. Interior view of historic colored waiting room entrance, facing southeast

7. Photo 10 of 13

4. June 2017

6. View of historic station manager's office, facing northwest

7. Photo 11 of 13

4. June 2017

6. View of historic white waiting room entrance, facing northwest

7. Photo 12 of 13

4. June 2017

6. View of non-historic bathroom building, facing northeast

7. Photo 13 of 13

Sopchoppy Depot Exterior Photo Key

34 Rose Street
Sopchoppy, Wakulla Co., FL

UTM:
16R 741899 3328244

Datum: WGS84

Date: 7/14/2017

1:500



0 20 40 80 Feet

0 5 10 20 Meters

Basemap Source: Source: Esri,
DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar
Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS,
USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping,
Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo,
and the GIS User Community




Sopchoppy Depot

34 Rose Street
Sopchoppy, Wakulla Co., FL

UTM:
16R 741899 3328244

Datum: WGS84

Legend

 Proposed National Register Boundary

Date: 6/13/2017

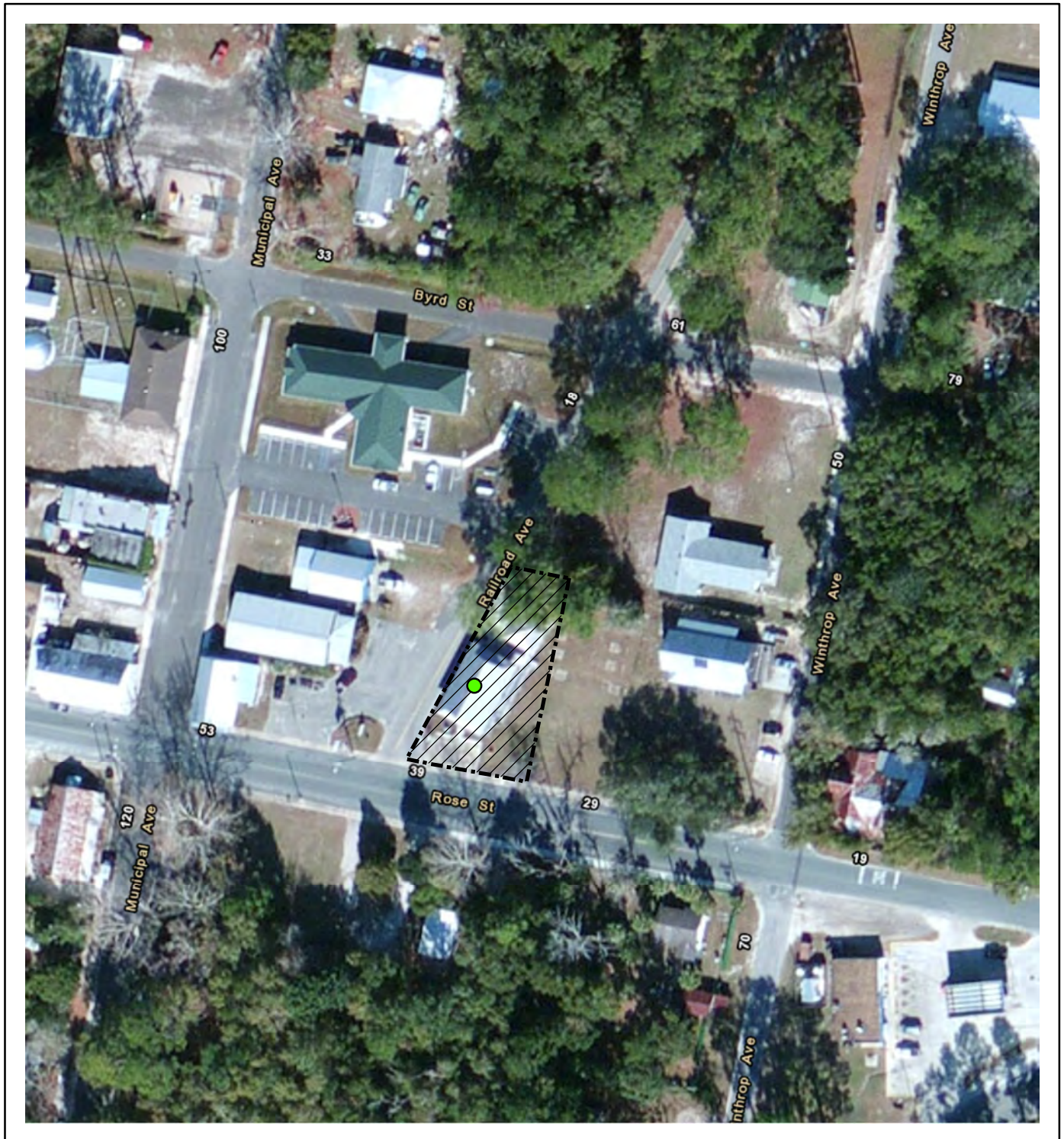
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0 62.5 125 250
Feet

0 15 30 60
Meters

Basemap Source: Source: Esri,
DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar
Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS,
USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping,
Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo,
and the GIS User Community




Sopchoppy Depot

34 Rose Street
Sopchoppy, Wakulla Co., FL

UTM:
16R 741899 3328244

Datum: WGS84

Legend

 Proposed National Register Boundary

Date: 7/14/2017

1:10,000



0 425 850 1,700
Feet

0 105 210 420
Meters

Basemap Source: Source: Esri,
DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar
Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS,
USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping,
Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo,
and the GIS User Community




Sopchoppy Depot

34 Rose Street
Sopchoppy, Wakulla Co., FL

UTM:
16R 741899 3328244

Datum: WGS84

Legend

 Proposed National Register Boundary

Date: 7/14/2017

N

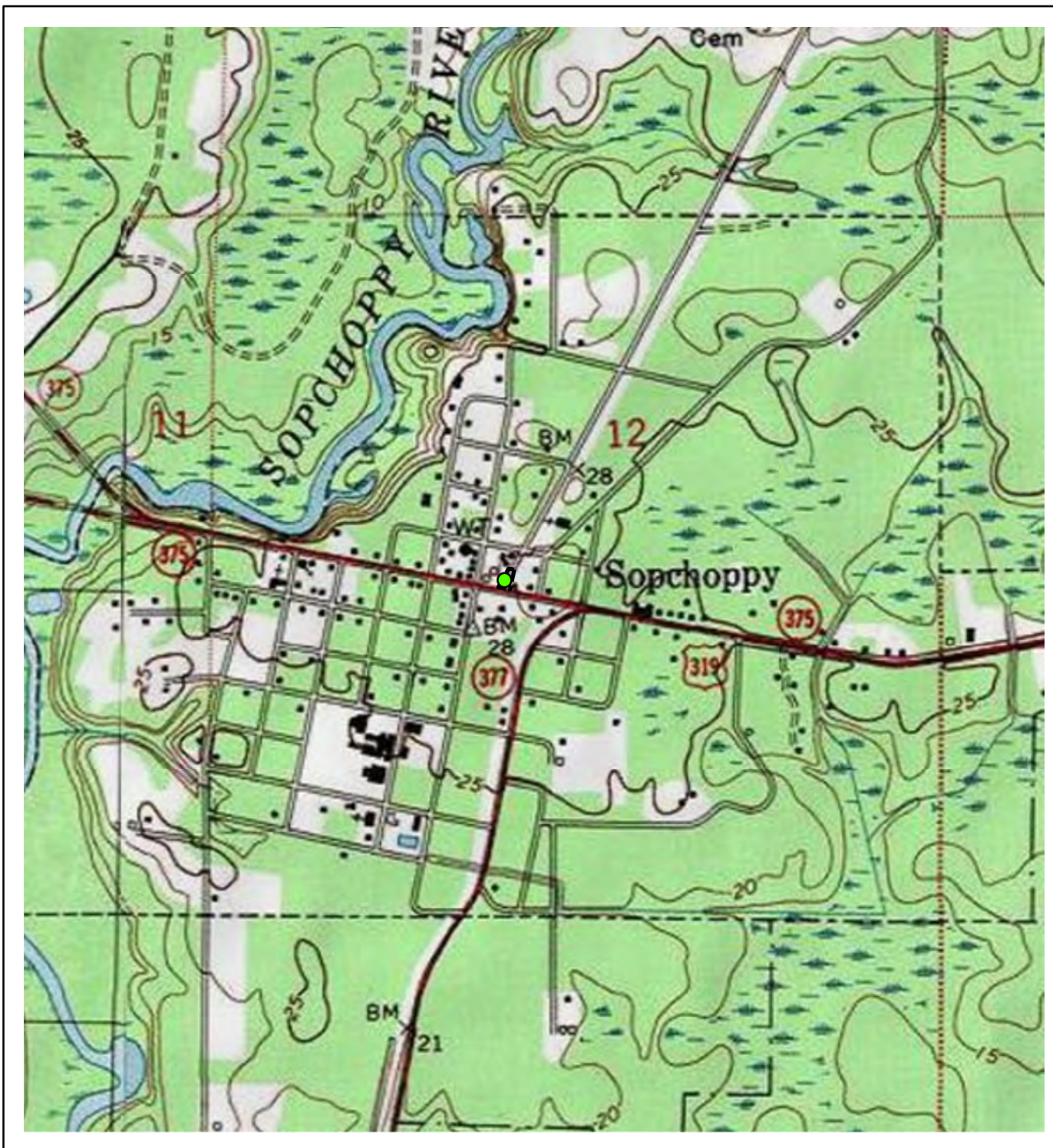
1:15,551



0 650 1,300 2,600 Feet

0 162.5 325 650 Meters

Basemap Source: Source: Esri,
DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar
Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS,
USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping,
Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo,
and the GIS User Community



SOPCHOPPY

GET ON BOARD !!
Please Support The
Depot Museum
& Welcome Center
Order Your Engraved Bricks Today!
Order form @ Sopchoppy City Hall Website
Sopchoppy.org

34



TOPCHOPPY

34

SIRUP

SIRUP





Handicapped
Parking



1010

SOPCHOPPY

GET ON BOARD!!
Please Support The
Depot Museum
& Welcome Center
Order Your Engraved Soups, T-shirts,
Cups from @ Sopchoppy, Ga. on the Beach
Sopchoppy.org



Sampson Roddenberry runs out from Nopchappy to Carrabelle in one night



The Wharf





1909 'Sopchoppy Argus' Newspaper





RIVER FISHING



1903 "Sapchogy Argus" Newspaper



QUITE
JUST
WIDE

EXIT



EXIT





NOTE
The typewriter and desk in this room are for the use of the
visitors. The typewriter is a vintage model and is not
recommended for heavy use. The desk is a simple wooden
table and is not designed for heavy use. Please use these
facilities responsibly and do not damage them. Thank you.

EXIT

To The Train





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 8/31/2017 Date of Pending List: 9/22/2017 Date of 16th Day: 10/10/2017 Date of 45th Day: 10/16/2017 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 10/12/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor

KEN DETZNER
Secretary of State

August 30, 2017

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief,
National Register of Historic Places
Mail Stop 7228
1849 C St, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Sopchoppy Depot (FMSF#: 8WA00722), in Wakulla County**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The related materials (digital images, maps, and site plan) are included.

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

Sincerely,

Ruben A. Acosta
Supervisor, Survey & Registration
Bureau of Historic Preservation

RAA/raa

Enclosures