

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

For NPS use only

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

received FEB 4 1986

date entered 3-6-86

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

1. Name

historic Woman's Club of Palmetto

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 910 6th Street West

N/A not for publication

city, town Palmetto

N/A vicinity of

state Florida

code 12

county Manatee

code 081

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input 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
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Woman's club

4. Owner of Property

name Woman's Club of Palmetto

street & number 6506 28th Avenue East

city, town Palmetto

N/A vicinity of

state Florida

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Manatee County Courthouse

street & number 1115 Manatee Avenue West

city, town Bradenton

state Florida

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Architectural and Historical
Survey of Palmetto

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1985

federal state county local

depository for survey records Division of Archives, History and Records Management

city, town Tallahassee

state Florida

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

Constructed in 1930, the Woman's Club of Palmetto is a one and two-story rectangular building of concrete block and stucco construction. The modest Mediterranean Revival style building is distinguished by a sectional mansard roof covered by clay barrel tiles, a four-bay arcade on its west elevation and four-bay porte cochere on its south elevation. There is also a semi-circular projection with a simple porch on the east elevation of the building. Major alterations include the replacement of original double hung windows with contemporary metal awning windows, the addition of wrought iron grillwork in the west elevation arcade and the replacement of the original clay barrel tiles with similar replicants. The porte cochere is also a later addition. The interior of the building consists primarily of a two-story meeting hall. The building is located in the southwest corner of City Park in a residential section of Palmetto.

The Woman's Club of Palmetto is a concrete block and stucco building covered by a flat roof and a series of sectional mansard roofs. The building is dominated by the two-story mass of its central meeting hall and a wide porte cochere located on its south elevation. The building suggests the influence of the Mediterranean Revival style through its barrel tile mansard roofs, and round-arched east arcade. The reference to the Mediterranean Revival style was continued in the round-arched porte cochere addition (1962) and the addition of wrought iron grillwork in the east arcade (1978). Original windows were double hung wood sash but have been replaced with contemporary metal awning windows. Four original round-headed windows survive above the French doors of the east arcade. Two round-headed clearstory windows also appear on the east elevation. The arcaded west entrance of the building originally served as its main entrance, although the addition of the south porte cochere now gives the building two entrances. The east arcade originally included two French doors flanked by a pair of windows on both sides. These windows were converted into French doors matching the originals in 1962.

The interior of the building consists largely of a two-story central meeting hall. Originally a stage was located at the south wall of the hall but was removed following the addition of the porte cochere. The room includes a fireplace with a simple mantel and a round-arched opening at its east wall. The flooring is yellow pine. A kitchen (completely modernized) occupies the northeast corner of the building and a sunroom/dining room is located in the semi-circular projection on the east side of the building.

Contributing resources:

1 Building

Non-contributing resources:

0

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input 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 1930

Builder/Architect J. A. Smith/Fred Kermodé

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Woman's Club of Palmetto is significant in the areas of architecture and social and humanitarian associations at the level of local significance. Since its inception in 1900, the Woman's Club of Palmetto, formerly the Village Improvement Association, has played a major role in the cultural, social and civic history of Palmetto. The 1930 Mediterranean Revival styled building was for many years the only public facility north of the Manatee River large enough to accommodate the many diversified needs of Palmetto. Although the building has been altered, it continues to possess sufficient architectural and historic significance through its association with the Woman's Club organization to be eligible for nomination to the National Register.

Since its inception in 1900, the Woman's Club of Palmetto, formerly the Village Improvement Association, has played a major role in the cultural, social, and civic history of Palmetto. Located on the north bank of the Manatee River, Palmetto was not much larger than a village, with a population of 650, when it obtained its town charter July 1, 1897. Although a political base had been established as early as 1893, there was no cultural or civic movement afoot, with the exception of sanitation. Streets were unpaved and cows and horses wondered about unrestrained.

On March 30, 1900, the women of the community banded together to form a Village Improvement Association. Many of these women were members of pioneer Palmetto families, and as such, were instrumental in developing and maintaining close ties with elected officials. In essence, they became an extension of City Hall. Membership dues were then \$1.40.

The women went to work painting ten large barrels for trash and placing them on street corners and at the Post Office. They installed hitching posts on Main Street (10th Avenue) for horses, paying half the cost. They also petitioned City Council to dig a well on the school grounds so they might landscape the property. The women were also instrumental in enlisting the help of fellow townsmen to help clean up the "old" Palmetto Cemetery which had gone virtually unattended for many years following a yellow fever outbreak in 1888. In addition to beautification, the Village Improvement Association was deeply concerned with education and social welfare in Palmetto and planted the seeds for Manatee County's first Carnegie Library. In 1900, the Village Improvement Association rented a room over a grocery store on Main Street and furnished it with books and games so that "young men and boys might have a place to spend pleasant evenings instead of going to harmful places."

See Continuation Sheet No. 1

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than 1

Quadrangle name Palmetto

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	1	7
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 Zone

3	4	4	4	7	1	0
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 Easting

3	1	0	4	4	4	5	1	0
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 Northing

B

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 Zone

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 Easting

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing

C

--	--	--

 Zone

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Easting

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing

D

--	--	--

 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

E

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

F

--	--	--

 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

G

--	--	--

 Zone

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 Easting

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing

H

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 8, Block B Lamb's Plat of Palmetto. This property includes all significant resources associated with the Woman's Club of Palmetto.

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

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
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state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gini Berry, Michael Zimny, /Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation and Records Management date January 1986

street & number The Capitol telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida

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 *George W. Kemp*

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date Jan. 24, 1986

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

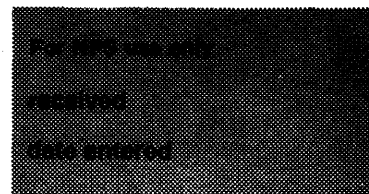
James M. McPherson date 3/6/86
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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The town of Palmetto continued to grow and in 1904, the Village Improvement Association donated \$100 to construct a sidewalk the length of Main Street from the Manatee River to the Seaboard Airline Depot. Later that same year, the City passed an ordinance to issue bonds for sidewalks, street improvements, water works, and fire protection.

In 1905, the Village Improvement Association became known as the Village Improvement and Library Association and donated \$500 that year for books. Ladies of the VIA served as volunteer workers. The Palmetto Library Association was formed in 1912, with control vested in a Board of Directors consisting of "three members appointed by the Town Council and three members appointed by the Village Improvement Association." In 1913, the Library Association petitioned City Council to obtain a grant from the Carnegie Foundation in New York City for a larger facility. A Carnegie Library, located on 10th Avenue in Palmetto, was subsequently constructed in 1914.

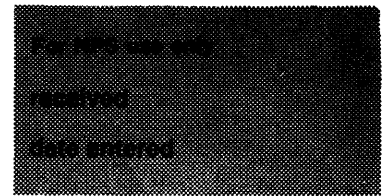
The first president of the VIA was Mrs. Julius (Lillie Mason) Lamb. Mrs. Lamb was the daughter-in-law of Samuel Sparks Lamb, whom historians consider the "Father of Palmetto." A former postmaster in Alabama, "Miss Lillie," as she was known by her peers, arrived in Palmetto by steamer in 1894 and became a school teacher. "Miss Lillie" was typical of the young, unmarried woman, many of them school teachers, who came to Palmetto between 1890 and 1900, dates paralleling the early stages of development in the vegetable and citrus industry north of the Manatee River. Over the years, Mrs. Lamb was recognized numerous times for her community and church involvement. She continued to be an active participant in Woman's Club affairs until 1960.

The VIA's first officers were all wives of prominent, pioneer citizens. In addition to Mrs. Lamb, officers were Mrs. W. M. Rowlett, Mrs. F. D. Waite, Mrs. J. K. Parrish, Mrs. Robert Willis, Mrs. Benjamin Murphy, and Mrs. M. B. Harrison, wife of Palmetto's first doctor. Mr. Willis served as mayor of Palmetto from 1895 to 1897, the year the town received its charter.

Although the original charter for the Woman's Club is dated May 29, 1916, January 27, 1915 was the first regular meeting after organization. The women also adopted the same meeting time as the Library Association so there would be no conflict. Mrs. Lamb and Mrs. Waite served as the new organization's first two presidents. Six departments were organized for club work: library, educational, civic, ways and means, music, and social. By the end of that first year, the women had formed committees in order to maintain streets, the hotel and municipal grounds, parks, the cemetery, and the Seaboard Station.

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It is unknown whether the Cemetery Committee oversaw the maintenance of both the "old" and the "new" cemeteries as the "old" cemetery had been condemned in 1910. Although not formally recognized in the Club Yearbook, the minutes indicate the women would also continue to maintain the school building and the grounds. In 1915, the women worked with the Board of Trade to buy and plant trees throughout the City; six years later, in 1921, they would plant an additional 1,103 trees and shrubs. The Civics Department was also active, urging citizens through the Palmetto News to set garages back from the street and remove unsightly fences, a job handled today by an experienced code enforcement officer.

During the First World War, the years 1918 and 1919 were devoted to learning and, in turn, educating the public about those countries which were at war. The Woman's Club organized a War Garden, and established a Relief Committee to aid local needy families and furnish clothing to soldiers, "'who have no near relatives'." Also, the purchase of two Liberty Bonds became the nucleus for the Clubhouse Building Fund. Money for those and other projects was raised through numerous moonlight and dinner cruises, a Peter Pan Minstrel Show, chicken suppers, cake sales, and movie benefits. One-third of all earnings was donated to the Red Cross.

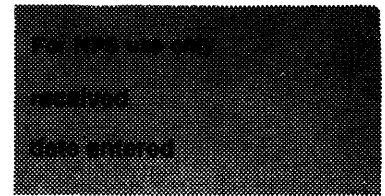
In 1919, the Club supported the "Dipping Vat Law," and cooperated with the Florida Federation of Woman's Clubs in asking the legislature to vote for Woman's Suffrage. They also circulated a petition locally in favor of the Compulsory Education Law. In addition, the women paid for lumber and materials to construct a bandstand in City Park (Lamb Park), expended funds for Palmetto's two public tennis courts, also located in the park, bought 300 books for the school library, and sought City Council's help in paving and widening Main Street to its present four lanes. The women were also way ahead of their time when they formed a Committee on Human Interests and began a campaign to eliminate animal and child abuse.

In May, 1920, the W. C. T. U. urged the Woman's Club to install a Domestic Science Course in the public school, an indication that the Woman's Club had a good of input with regard to school administrative duties and course selection. Since 1915, school teachers have been designated Honorary Members of the Club.

In 1921, the women petitioned State Senators and Representatives again urging tick eradication. They hosted the first of many Palmetto High School Junior-Senior banquet, a tradition that would continue into the late 1940's. The women also supported plans, and worked to acquire Manatee County's first hospital.

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Mrs. S. N. Davis was President of the Woman's Club in 1919. Her daughter, Ruth, received a college degree in Theatre Arts and became a professional dancer in New York City. She returned to Palmetto, joined the Woman's Club, and, around 1927, with the club's help, began staging expertly choreographed shows, training and utilizing local talent. Ruth (Davis) Rousseau has been credited as the principal organizer of Manatee County's first amateur theatrical troupe, which is known today as the Manatee County Players.

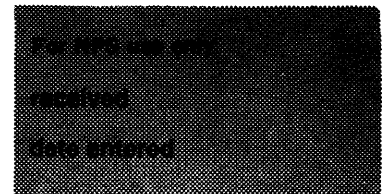
In 1928, Mrs. B. F. Mount, Chairman of the Club's Home Economics Department, organized a canning kitchen in the basement of the Carnegie Library, with the cooperation of Manatee County's third Agricultural Agent, Ed Ayers, who also holds the distinction of being the State of Florida's first Entomologist. The women of the club worked all of that summer preparing food for redistribution to county farmers. However, the women kept a percentage of what they canned, and this food found its way to the tables of the area's destitute. Until 1930, the women also sponsored five needy Palmetto school children. Mrs. Mount's husband was Palmetto's twenty-first Mayor in 1930-1935. The women of the club were also instrumental in organizing other women throughout the county in the formation of a Garden Club. In 1929, the Manatee River Garden Club was established and Honorary Memberships were bestowed upon organizers Mrs. J. B. Davidson and Mrs. J. Pope Marllee, Sr., from the Palmetto Woman's Club. Mrs. Marllee was Club President from 1924 to 1926, while her husband was Mayor of Palmetto from 1928 to 1929.

In 1921, an appeal was made to the Presbyterian Church for their two lots on sixth Street in Lamb Park as an appropriate site for a clubhouse. The Presbyterians wanted \$1,000 for the property but settled for \$800 cash and up to \$350 to relocate their church, constructed in 1901. To raise money, the Woman's Club hosted a yearly "Follies" from 1925 to 1928. These productions, termed "extravaganzas," were extremely popular throughout the area and one year performers came all the way from New York City to participate.

Sometime between 1922 and 1926, the Woman's Club loaned the Palmetto First Baptist Church \$5,000 to complete construction on their new church. Although club minutes are missing from October, 1921, through 1927, it was decided in 1928 to call in the loan and use that money as the down payment for the new clubhouse. Up until this time, the women had met either in the second floor auditorium of Palmetto's wooden City Hall on the southwest corner of sixth Street and 10th Avenue, or in the basement of the brick Carnegie Library, located next door on 10th Avenue.

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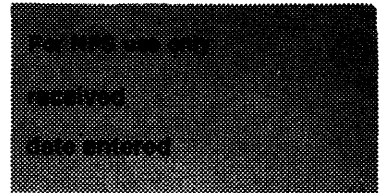
In January, 1929, Mrs. Fred Kermode, Club President, 1926-27, became Chairman of the Building Committee. Her husband was commissioned to design the new clubhouse. Fred Kermode is thought to have been Palmetto's first architect. He was born in Pio, on the Isle of Man, December 10, 1882. He emigrated to the United States as a boy and lived with his family in Cleveland, Ohio. In the Spring of 1906, he received a Certificate in Architecture from Mechanics Institute, a forerunner of the Rochester Institute of Technology. Kermode designed several warehouses and at least 15 residences and commercial buildings in Palmetto. Original architectural plans for several of these structures, including the Woman's Club, have been preserved by his daughter-in-law, Kathryn Kermode, also a club member.

The Woman's Club was constructed in 1930 during the depths of the Depression. It was Kermode's responsibility to design a building costing somewhere around \$10,000, but which would also be attractive and functional. When completed, the building, constructed by J. A. Smith, cost \$10,518. A notable example of Mediterranean Revival architecture, the clubhouse was deemed attractive enough to be featured on at least one county tourist brochure and stands today as a lasting tribute to those women, from 1900 to 1930, who gave so much to improve the quality of life, not only in Palmetto, but throughout Manatee County.

The first meeting in the new clubhouse was held on October 8, 1930. When the clubhouse was built, it was the only structure north of the Manatee River able to accommodate the many diversified needs of a growing community. In the early years, after 1930, and in addition to the women's regular club activities, the clubhouse served essentially as a community civic center operated and maintained by the women. The Businessmen's Club, Kiwanis, and Rotarians all met at the club at one time or another, their lunches prepared and served by the club women. Also, weddings, receptions, high school banquets and proms, were held here. The Palmetto High School band used to practice inside the club, and hold concerts on the Park grounds outside. Friday night youth dances were very popular. The St. Barbara's Greek Orthodox, St. Mary's Episcopal and Holy Cross Catholic Churches all held services in the building until their respective churches could be constructed. The Junior Women's Club was formed in 1944, and so was the Little Women. In 1968, the building served as the headquarters for the city's centennial celebration. Today, both the building and the Woman's Club continue to play an integral role in the educational, cultural, civic, humanitarian and religious interests of the city of Palmetto.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Woman's Club Minutes, 1915-50. On file with Woman's Club of Palmetto.

Woman's Club Scrapbooks, 1951-65. On file with Woman's Club of Palmetto.

Woman's Club Yearbooks, 1915-75. On file with Woman's Club of Palmetto.

7TH ST.

10TH AV. (MAIN)

(E. OAK)

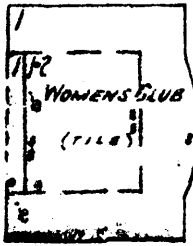
6

9TH AV.

C I T Y P A R K
B

(CENTRAL)

5TH ST. DR.



(E. PINE)

