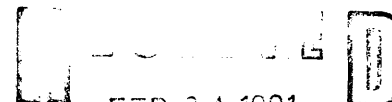


United States Department of the Interior National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Historic District other names/site number Town of Cassadaga

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet city, town Cassadaga state Florida code FL county Volusia code 127 zip code 32706

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: [X] private, [] public-local, [] public-State, [] public-Federal. Category of Property: [] building(s), [X] district, [] site, [] structure, [] object. Number of Resources within Property: Contributing (65), Noncontributing (13), Total (78). Name of related multiple property listing: Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 13

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 80. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: Suzanne P. Walker (deputy), Date: 1/29/91, State or Federal agency and bureau: State Historic Preservation Officer, Bureau of Historic Preservation

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: Date: State or Federal agency and bureau:

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is: [X] entered in the National Register. [] See continuation sheet. [] determined eligible for the National Register. [] See continuation sheet. [] determined not eligible for the National Register. [] removed from the National Register. [] other, (explain:). Entered in the National Register: Signature of the Keeper: Date of Action: 3/14/91

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

ResidentialReligiousCommercial

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

ResidentialReligiousCommercial

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

No Style/Wood Frame VernacularMediterranean Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brickwalls WoodBrickroof Asphalt, Asbestosother Wood: Porch

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Exploration/Settlement

Religion

Significant Person

N/A

Period of Significance

1895-1938

Architect/Builder

Various

Significant Dates

1895

1902

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 24 apprx.

UTM References

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title W. Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist
 organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date 1/16/91
 street & number 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333
 city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 3299-0250

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Description

Summary

The Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Historic District comprises 78 buildings and two contributing objects in the community of Cassadaga, Florida. The contributing structures include 48 residences, 11 outbuildings, two commercial buildings, two apartment buildings, and two structures that serve religious functions. There are two contributing objects; these are the pillars that flank the entrance to the community. Thirteen buildings found in the twenty-four acre district are noncontributing. Of these, seven are outbuildings. Most of the buildings in the district are simple wood frame residences, ranging from one to two and a half stories in height. Two buildings in the district show the influence of the Mediterranean Revival style. Among the important non-residential buildings in the district are the Colby Memorial Temple and the Cassadaga Hotel. Although some of the contributing buildings have been altered over the years, they retain sufficient architectural integrity to be counted as historic resources.

Present and Original Physical Appearance

The town of Cassadaga is located in east central Florida, approximately thirty miles north of Orlando and twenty miles southwest of Daytona Beach. The unincorporated community lies immediately south of the town of Lake Helen, in a largely rural section of southwest Volusia County. The historic district takes in all or parts of thirteen city blocks. It is roughly bounded by Cassadaga Road on the north, Lake Street on the south, Marion Street and Lake Colby on the east, and Chauncey Street on the west. Those boundaries encompass the extent of historic development within the area originally subdivided by the Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Campmeeting Association in 1895. Although most of the streets are paved, Lincoln and McKinley streets, and part of Bond Street, are simple dirt lanes. Lack of development provides visual breaks in the continuity of buildings in several places. An open landscaped area containing the Caesar Forman Healing Center is located immediately north of Colby Temple.

The historic development of Cassadaga's district spans the period from circa 1895, when the first buildings were erected in Cassadaga to circa 1938 when expansion of the community ceased prior to World War II. The town of Cassadaga is located on a portion of the land homesteaded in the 1870s by George P. Colby,

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Description

the principal founder of the community. The 1895 plat of Cassadaga featured curvilinear streets and large parks and green spaces. This plan, however, was never implemented, and in 1902 a new plat was produced that established the present town plan of Cassadaga. The city blocks and streets were laid out in a grid pattern, providing additional building lots and reducing the amount of park land. All of the buildings in the historic district are encompassed by the 1902 plat.

Buildings located in the district date from two sub-periods within the overall period of significance: 1895-1915 and 1920-1938, apparently no construction having taken place between 1916 and 1919. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Cassadaga indicate that many of the first buildings in Cassadaga were erected along Stevens and Marion streets, perhaps due to the high elevation of the land in those areas and the proximity to Lake Colby.

The majority of the buildings in the district are wood frame vernacular residences constructed using local labor and materials. Two substantial masonry buildings in the district are the Colby Memorial Temple and the Cassadaga Hotel, both of which show Mediterranean Revival style influences. These buildings are constructed of brick finished with stucco. A few residences have minor details typical of bungalows or Colonial Revival style structures, but the district contains no "high style" residential architecture. The scale of construction in the district is small, no buildings being greater than two and a half stories in height.

The houses in the district are typically one or two stories in height and are balloon frame structures sheathed in weatherboard or drop siding. The ground plan is normally rectangular or L-shaped, and most structures rest on brick pier foundations. Gable and hip roofs are common, as are porches which are usually found on the main facade. Original fenestration consists mainly of either 1/1 or 2/2 light double hung wood sash windows; however, a number of structures have lost at least some of their original windows. The replacements include a variety of modern types, including metal frame louvered or awning windows and aluminum frame sliding windows. Exterior decoration on most houses is sparse and limited to ornamental millwork on the porches.

Two of the oldest buildings in Cassadaga are Harmony Hall (Photo 1) at 1150 Stevens Street, constructed circa 1895 and

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Description

Brigham Hall (Photo 2) at 1145 Stevens Street, constructed circa 1898. These two and a half story wood frame vernacular buildings were erected as boarding houses by the Cassadaga Campmeeting Association to accommodate winter guests; both buildings still serve that function. The "Pavilion" (Photo 5) at 1112 Stevens Street was constructed in 1904 and served as the campmeeting association's headquarters. This building replaced an earlier structure that had been erected in 1895. Now called the Andrew Jackson Davis Building, the structure presently contains the association's business office and a bookstore.

A number of residences were constructed between 1895 and 1901. Among these is the Thatcher House (Photo 3) at 1270 Stevens Street, perhaps the largest dwelling in the district. This building has suffered some inappropriate modifications but still retains much of its original integrity. One of the best preserved houses in the district is the one at 1240 Stevens Street (Photo 4), constructed circa 1902. The residence features an irregular Queen Anne plan and retains its original siding, windows, porches, and decorative elements.

Thirty-three houses in Cassadaga were constructed between 1895 and 1915, and residential construction occurring between 1902 and 1915 filled in lots along Chauncey, Seneca, and McKinley streets (Photo 6). Among the dwellings constructed during that period were the residences located at 475 and 485 Seneca Street, 1168 Marion Street, and 1164 Stevens Street. The building at 475 Seneca Street (Photo 7) is representative of smaller residences constructed in Cassadaga during this period.

Only ten extant buildings were constructed during the 1920s; however, among these were two of Cassadaga's most significant resources. One of these was the Mediterranean Revival style Colby Memorial Temple (Photo 9) at 1250 Stevens Street, one of the more striking buildings in the district. Construction of the building was financed by the campmeeting association in 1923, and replaced an 1895 wood frame auditorium that had occupied same site. Religious services and a variety of programs were held in the temple each winter. The construction date of 1923 is cast in stucco on the main facade of the building.

Another significant Cassadaga landmark erected in the 1920s was the Cassadaga Hotel (Photos 11, 12) at 355 Cassadaga Road. A Mediterranean Revival style building like the Colby Memorial Temple, this facility was constructed in 1927 to replace a

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Description

nineteenth century hotel occupying the same site that had burned in 1926. The only octagonal plan structure in the district is the former gazebo located immediately north of Colby Temple, now used as the Caesar Forman Healing Center (photo 10). Constructed about 1925, the building was originally a typical open gazebo but was later enclosed with plywood siding and given a door and awning windows.

Of the houses constructed in the 1920s, only two exhibit any readily identifiable stylistic characteristics. One of these is the residence at 1214 Stevens Street (Photo 13). Constructed in 1928, it is the sole Colonial Revival style building in the district and one of few masonry buildings in Cassadaga. The house at 1228 Bond Street (Photo 14) has some features typical of bungalow construction, being limited mainly to the front porch which has a gently sloping gable roof, square posts, and a knee wall balustrade. Thirteen wood frame vernacular residences were constructed between 1930 and 1938. These houses were generally smaller in size than those constructed prior to 1915. The building at 1148 McKinley Street is representative of those dwellings (photo 15).

Objects

In 1910, the front entrance of the community was moved from Marion to Stevens Street, and in 1928, the Jacob Lumber Company erected brick pillars with stucco surfacing at the entrance to Cassadaga (photo 5). Standing approximately ten feet in height, the pillars feature square bases capped by cylindrical urns that contain lights. The only contributing objects in the district, the pillars replaced an entrance gate that had been erected at the same location in 1910.

Noncontributing Buildings

The thirteen noncontributing structures in the historic district include three houses constructed during the period of significance that have lost their physical integrity through extensive alterations. The house at 1176 Chauncey Street (Photo 8), constructed circa 1915, is one of these. The other noncontributing buildings were erected after the period of significance and do not conform to the overall character of the historic building stock.

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Description

Conclusion

When constructed, the historic buildings of Cassadaga were well integrated, as expressed by their scale, materials, paint colors, proportions, and architectural features. Alterations have changed a number of those features, and several single family dwellings have been converted into apartments. In some cases buildings have had their original wood shingle or drop siding exterior wall fabric replaced by aluminum siding, asbestos shingles, or some other modern material. The wood and pressed metal shingles that originally covered the roofs of most buildings have been replaced with composition and asphalt shingles. In some cases, porches have been either enclosed or altered, resulting in the loss of some original architectural features. The replacement of original sash windows with awning or jalousie types has been another unsympathetic treatment of some buildings. Furthermore, a number of older buildings were demolished to make way for new construction, and some resources were lost due to destruction by fire. Nevertheless, the Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Historic District retains much of its integrity and ambience.

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Photographs

1. Harmony Hall, 1150 Stevens Street, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Main (East) Facade, Facing Southwest
 7. Photo No. 1 of 17
-
1. Brigham Hall, 1145 Stevens Street, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Main (West) Facade, Facing Northeast
 7. Photo No. 2 of 17
-
1. Thatcher House, 1270 Stevens Street, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Main (East) Facade, Facing Northwest
 7. Photo No. 3 of 17
-
1. 1240 Stevens Street, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Main (East) Facade, Facing West
 7. Photo No. 4 of 17
-
1. A.J. Davis Bldg., 1112 Stevens Street, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Main (East) Facade and North Elevation, Facing Southwest
 7. Photo No. 5 of 17
-
1. Streetscape, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen "
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Mckinley Street from Senaca, Facing North
 7. Photo No. 6 of 17

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Photographs

1. 475 Seneca Street, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Main (South) Facade, Facing Northeast
 7. Photo No. 7 of 17
-
1. 1176 Chauncey Street, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Main (East) Facade and North Elevation, Facing Southwest
 7. Photo No. 8 of 17
-
1. Colby Memorial Temple, 1250 Stevens Street, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Main (North) Facade, Facing Southeast
 7. Photo No. 9 of 17
-
1. Gazebo, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Main (South), Facing Northeast
 7. Photo No. 10 of 17
-
1. Cassadaga Hotel, 355 Cassadaga Road, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Main (North) Facade, Facing South
 7. Photo No. 11 of 17
-
1. Cassadaga Hotel, 355 Cassadaga Road, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Main (North) Facade, Facing Southwest
 7. Photo No. 12 of 17

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Photographs

1. 1214 Stevens Street, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Main (East) Facade, Facing West
 7. Photo No. 13 of 17
-
1. 1228 Bond Street, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Main (East) Facade, Facing West
 7. Photo No. 14 of 17
-
1. 1148 Mckinley Street, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Main (East) Facade, Facing West
 7. Photo No. 15 of 17
-
1. 471 Cassadaga Road, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. North Elevation, Facing South
 7. Photo No. 16 of 17
-
1. Lake Colby and Seneca Park, Cassadaga Historic District
 2. Cassadaga (Volusia County), FL
 3. Stephen Olausen
 4. 1989
 5. Historic Property Associates
 6. Lake Colby and Seneca Park, Facing East
 7. Photo No. 17 of 17

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Resource List

List of Contributing Resources

| <u>Address</u> | <u>Historic Name</u> | <u>Function</u> | <u>Date</u> |
|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| <u>Bond Street</u> | | | |
| 1222 | | Residential | c. 1930 |
| 1228 | | Residential | c. 1930 |
| 1270 | | Residential | c. 1930 |
| <u>Cassadaga Road</u> | | | |
| 355 | Cassadaga Hotel | Commercial | 1927 |
| 555 | | Residential | c. 1935 |
| <u>Chauncey Street</u> | | | |
| 1112 | | Residential | c. 1935 |
| 1115 | | Residential | c. 1935 |
| 1122 | | Residential | c. 1935 |
| 1150 | | Residential | c. 1935 |
| 1155 | | Residential | c. 1930 |
| 1166 | | Residential | c. 1925 |
| 1213 | | Residential | c. 1910 |
| 1243 | | Residential | c. 1915 |
| 1246 | | Residential | c. 1920 |
| 1246 (rear) | | Outbuilding | c. 1920 |
| 1268 | | Residential | c. 1905 |
| 1268 (rear) | | Outbuilding | c. 1905 |
| 1273 | | Residential | c. 1915 |
| 1276 | | Residential | c. 1910 |
| <u>Clark Street</u> | | | |
| 421 | | Residential | c. 1910 |
| <u>Lake Street</u> | | | |
| 447 | | Residential | c. 1900 |
| 479 | | Residential | c. 1915 |
| 533 | | Residential | c. 1910 |
| 533 (side) | | Outbuilding | c. 1910 |
| 553 | | Residential | c. 1938 |

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Resource List

Lincoln Street

1170 Residential c. 1910

Marion Street

1158 Residential c. 1898
1160 Residential c. 1898
1164 Residential c. 1900
1168 Residential c. 1910

McKinley Street

1124 Residential c. 1920
1124 (rear) Outbuilding c. 1920
1138 Residential c. 1910
1148 Residential c. 1930
1148 (rear) Outbuilding c. 1930
1158 Residential c. 1930
1170 Residential c. 1925

Palmer Street

490 Residential c. 1910
490 (rear) Outbuilding c. 1910

Seneca Street

426 Residential c. 1910
444 Residential c. 1915
444 (rear) Outbuilding c. 1915
455 Residential c. 1930
475 Residential c. 1910
475 (rear) Outbuilding c. 1910
485 Residential c. 1910
485 (rear) Outbuilding c. 1910

Stevens Street

**** Entrance Pillars Object 1928
1112 A.J. Davis Bldg. Commercial 1904
1130 Residential c. 1910
1145 Brigham Hall Apartment c. 1898
1150 Harmony Hall Apartment c. 1895
1161 Residential c. 1900

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Resource List

Stevens Street (cont.)

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------|
| 1164 | | Residential | c. 1900 |
| 1172 | | Residential | c. 1900 |
| 1172 (rear) | | Outbuilding | c. 1900 |
| 1175 | | Residential | c. 1900 |
| 1180 | | Residential | c. 1900 |
| 1180 (rear) | | Outbuilding | c. 1900 |
| 1188 | | Residential | c. 1900 |
| 1214 | | Residential | c. 1928 |
| 1240 | | Residential | c. 1900 |
| 1250 | Colby Memorial Temple | Religion | 1923 |
| 12501/2 | Forman Healing Center | Religion | c. 1925 |
| 1270 | Thatcher House | Residential | c. 1900 |
| 1284 | | Residential | c. 1900 |

List of Noncontributing Resources

| <u>Address</u> | <u>Function</u> | <u>Date</u> |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| <u>Cassadaga Road</u> | | |
| 471 | Residential | c. 1980 |
| <u>Chauncey Street</u> | | |
| 1150 (rear) | Outbuilding | Unknown |
| 1166 (rear) | Outbuilding | Unknown |
| 1176 | Residential | c. 1915 |
| 1176 (rear) | Outbuilding | Unknown |
| 1180 | Residential | c. 1920 |
| 1180 (rear) | Outbuilding | Unknown |
| <u>Lake Street</u> | | |
| 536 | Residential | c. 1970 |
| <u>McKinley Street</u> | | |
| 1138 (rear) | Outbuilding | Unknown |
| 1112 | Residential | c. 1930 |
| <u>Stevens Street</u> | | |
| 1214 (rear) | Outbuilding | Unknown |

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Resource list

Stevens Street (cont.)

| | | |
|-------------|-------------|---------|
| 1252 | Residential | c. 1961 |
| 1252 (rear) | Outbuilding | Unknown |

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Significance

Summary

The Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Historic District fulfills criterion A for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It has significance in the areas of exploration/settlement and religion. The historic district is associated with events surrounding the development of the town of Cassadaga during the period 1895 to 1938, when Cassadaga grew from a small winter vacation campsite in the Florida wilderness to a mature permanent community. Cassadaga was founded as a religious community by the Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Campmeeting Association, formed in 1894 to provide a permanent campsite in the South where Spiritualists from across the nation could come to vacation and worship. In the early 1900s, Cassadaga became the second largest Spiritualist center in the United States, ranking just below the affiliation's headquarters in the state of New York. Spiritualism served as the motivating force around which the community developed, and the community remains a Spiritualist center today.

Historical Context"Development of Cassadaga: 1894-1939"

The unincorporated town of Cassadaga, a Spiritualist community, is governed by a board of trustees. The community serves as the southern retreat for practitioners of the Spiritualist religion. As established in the original charter, only Spiritualists approved by the board of trustees are allowed to live in Cassadaga. Since its founding in 1894, the association has owned all property in the community, only leasing lots to Spiritualists for the construction of buildings there. Recently, the association made a single exception and sold the property on which the Cassadaga Hotel is located to the building's owner. The local economy is based on seasonal tourism in connection with lectures, psychic counseling, faith healing and worship services.

The town of Cassadaga was founded in the late nineteenth century by George P. Colby, who was one of the community's leaders during its early formative years. Born in 1848, Colby came to the area in 1875 and in 1879 began to farm a 150 acre homestead located on the present site of Cassadaga. Colby was a

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Significance

Spiritualist and led a Spartan life, cultivating subsistence crops and planting a few citrus trees. Other Spiritualists also began to settle in the area forming the nucleus of a small religious community.

Colby and his neighbors belonged to the American Spiritualist Association, an organization that seeks to communicate with spirits and encourage people to develop their psychic abilities. The movement was founded in the 1840s with the establishment of the Cassadaga community in Chautauqua County, New York. That community became the national headquarters of the movement, which quickly spread over the Northeast and then was carried west through the Ohio River Valley, finally reaching even the Far West. By 1855, Spiritualism claimed two million members. In the South, the religion developed more slowly, in part because the Spiritualists opposed slavery.

After the Civil War, however, Spritualists began settling in the South in larger numbers, making inroads into Texas, Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida during the 1870s and 1880s. In the 1890s, groups of Spiritualists began searching for a site in Florida where they could establish a resort community where Spiritualists from across the country could congregate during the winter. In 1893 George Rowley attempted to found a community at DeLeon Springs, but the effort failed due to Rowley's inability to convince a sufficient number of Spiritualists to purchase property there. Following the collapse of this effort, George Colby met in his home with Marion Skidmore, a prominent Spiritualist and a board member of the Cassadaga Camp in New York. Colby offered his property as the site for a southern Spiritualist camp. Skidmore became interested in Colby's land, and contacted other Spiritualists about Colby's offer. In March of 1894, that small group of Spiritualists organized themselves as the Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Campmeeting Association, and the Florida community was born.

The Spiritualists were only one of a variety of religious groups to establish Florida communities in the late nineteenth century. Florida appealed to many people because of its relatively untouched landscape and its cheap land. Florida appealed to religious practitioners as a tropical "Garden of Eden" where they could freely express themselves and develop communities dedicated to their ideals. In 1894, the Shakers installed a branch at Narcossee in Osceola County, and the

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Significance

Koreshan Unity settlement near Fort Myers was established the same year. Unlike the Spiritualist community of Cassadaga, however, the Koreshan and Shaker settlements failed to survive, owing in part to the utopian goals of the organizations' members. Cassadaga is one of few religious communities founded in Florida during the 1890s to remain in existence to the present day.

In March 1894, the Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Campmeeting Association drafted a charter and formed a stock company. The community was named "Cassadaga" in honor of the Spiritualist headquarters in New York, but was not directly associated with the national Spiritualist organization. A board of directors was elected, and in 1895 George Colby sold the association approximately thirty-five acres of his property for \$3,000. In July 1895, the board amended its charter to provide that the association would maintain ownership of all real estate within the development. The residents of the community would be offered ninety-nine year leases to the lots and could construct buildings on them, but the land would remain the property of the association. The campmeeting grounds were surveyed and platted, and in March 1896, the first Cassadaga plat was filed at the Volusia County courthouse.

Cassadaga became an important national Spiritualist center. Beginning in 1894, the association sponsored annual winter conventions at which Spiritualists from across the country met to discuss Spiritualist philosophy, participate in seances, and listen to lectures and speeches by notable Spiritualist leaders. They also came to enjoy picnics, dances, and the mild Florida climate. Cassadaga quickly became the national winter resort for Spiritualists, and the seasonal population often grew to more than 100 people. The approximately twenty permanent residents usually rented rooms to winter visitors. Cassadaga soon became the second largest Spiritualist center in the United States, ranking just behind its namesake in New York.

A post office was established at Cassadaga in 1910. By 1915, there were approximately forty buildings in the community. The number of winter visitors that year totaled about 250, but the town still had only about 25 permanent residents. The majority of the residences, therefore, were seasonal homes that remained unoccupied for much of the year. Following World War I Florida entered a period of rapid population growth and urban development known as the Florida land boom. The boom had its beginnings in Miami and spread quickly to other areas of the

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state, reaching its height about 1925. The impact of the boom, however, was not felt in Cassadaga, where building construction actually slowed. Still, several of the community's largest buildings were erected during the 1920s. One of these was Colby Memorial Temple (Photo 9), a Mediterranean Revival style auditorium erected in 1923 to replace a nineteenth century facility. The structure was erected at a cost of \$8,200 and was used during the annual meetings sponsored by the Spiritualist association.

In 1926, construction began of the Cassadaga Hotel (Photos 11, 12) to replace a building erected at the turn of the century that had burned. A bond issue totaling \$29,400 was approved by the association for the construction of the new hotel, which was completed in 1927. Like the Colby Memorial Temple, the new hotel exhibited characteristics of the Mediterranean Revival style. The stuccoed brick pillars (Photo 5) that mark the entrance to the Cassadaga community were constructed in 1928. In the same year the DeLand News reported that sixty homes were located in the Cassadaga.

The onset of the Great Depression in 1929 brought difficult economic conditions to Cassadaga. Annual meeting attendance fell, and little further residential construction occurred. Between 1930 and 1940 only eleven small, wood frame residences were erected in the community. The dramatic decline in winter visitors was reflected in the Spiritualist programs published during the 1930s. These contained only two to four pages instead of the fifteen to thirty pages boasted by publications produced during the period 1910 to 1927. In an attempt to revive interest in the community, the local Spiritualist association published a local newspaper, the Cassadagan, which was issued each year between January and March. The newspaper, however, was short-lived and had little success in attracting winter visitors to Cassadaga. By the beginning of World War II development in Cassadaga had come to an end.

Areas of Significance

The Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Historic District is significant under criterion A in the areas of Exploration/Settlement and Religion. It was founded in the Florida wilderness as a new community dedicated to serve the religious, social, and recreational needs of its inhabitants and seasonal visitors. It is one of the few such communities founded

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in Florida during the late nineteenth century to survive into the modern era, and today it continues to fulfill its historical function by serving as a religious community for Spiritualists in the South. The contributing buildings in the district reflect the historical development of the town and retain their original functions. The period of historic development in Cassadaga extends from 1895 to 1939.

With a few notable exceptions, the buildings in the community are wood frame vernacular residence, and the general ambience of Cassadaga remains that of a small, seasonal resort town, even though today most of the houses are occupied by permanent residents. Substantial residential buildings were constructed on real estate leased to residents by the local board of the Spiritualist association, a relationship between property and building owners that is unusual in Florida and which has persisted for nearly a century.

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The boundary of the Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Historic District (see enclosed map) closely follows the historic legal boundary established by the association. The boundary begins at the northeast corner of the property line of the association, near the southeast corner of the intersection of Cassadaga Road and Marion Street. From that point the boundary runs south for approximately 1150 feet along Marion Street, taking in part of Lake Colby and ending at the southeast corner of Government Lot 2, Section S, which is the historic southeast corner of the community. Following the historic boundary, it cuts west and runs approximately 743 feet, taking in properties at 447, 478, 535, and 553 Lake Avenue. The boundary turns north at Butler Avenue, a historic platted street that remains undeveloped. That undeveloped street represents the extent of development in the community. Running north along Butler Avenue for approximately 1150 feet, the boundary takes in properties at 553 Lake Avenue and 555 Cassadaga Road. The boundary then turns east at 555 Cassadaga Road and runs five blocks (approximately 745 feet), following the historic boundary to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses all of the extant historic resources associated with the Cassadaga Spiritualist community. The north, east, and south boundaries of the district follow the historic legal boundary of the association. The western boundary, which follows an undeveloped historic platted street (Butler Avenue), represents the extent of development within the community. To the east and west of the proposed district the number and quality of historic buildings diminishes dramatically. To the north and south, clusters of early-twentieth-century buildings mixed with newer construction are evident. Some of those buildings possess architectural merit. They do not, however, fall under the special lease/ownership relationship between property and buildings in Cassadaga that makes buildings in the proposed district distinct and significant.