



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 NPS Form 10-900a for instructions. 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 BABCOCK, CLARENCE L. HOUSE

other names/site number Boyle, Dr. Harlowe House

2. Location

street & number 25537 Shore Drive N/A not for publication

city or town Punta Gorda N/A vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Charlotte code 015 zip code 33950

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.)

Barbara C. Mattick / DSHPO 1/7/2009
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Florida Division of Historical Resources
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) _____

Robert H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action
2-25-09

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	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
3	1	objects
5	1	total

Name of related multiple property listings

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

HEALTH CARE/Medical Business/Office

COMMERCE/TRADE/Business/Office

DOMESTIC/Secondary Structure/Garage Apartment

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN

MOVEMENTS/Craftsman Bungalow

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stucco

walls Stucco

roof Asphalt Shingle

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)

AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance

1929-1949

Significant Dates

1929

Significant Person

Babcock, Clarence L.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Arch: Unknown

Blder: Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

#

BABCOCK, CLARENCE L. HOUSE
Name of Property

Charlotte Co., FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	3	9	8	2	6	0	2	9	8	1	0	0	0
	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 Mikki Hartig, Consultant/Carl Shiver, Historic Preservationist

organization Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation date December 2008

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

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 MCCO Co., c/o Robert N. McQueen

street & number Post Office Box 511305 telephone (941) 639-1923

city or town Punta Gorda state Florida zip code 33951

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 BABCOCK, CLARENCE L. HOUSE
PUNTA GORDA, CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The Clarence L. Babcock House, located at 25537 Shore Drive in Punta Gorda, Florida, is a one-and-a-half story Craftsman Bungalow style residence constructed c.1920. The house is a large example of its style and is constructed of stucco over wood frame and rests on concrete block piers. A cross gable-on hip roof covers the main block of the house. A full-width enclosed front entrance porch, covered by an extension of the hip roof, dominates the primary facade. A contributing c.1925 two-story vernacular style detached garage apartment is found at the rear of the property, and three contributing historic street lights dating from the 1920s mark the perimeter of the property on Shore Drive and Howard Street. The house and garage apartment were damaged by Hurricane Charley in August, 2004. A renovation of the house following the storm required following Federal Emergency Management Agency guidelines for the repair work on the main residence; however, the building still retains many of the architectural characteristics of the Craftsman style present when Clarence Babcock lived there. The garage apartment remains in its post-hurricane condition. Also found on the property is a noncontributing aluminum historic marker erected on March 14, 2007, to commemorate the creation of the Howard Homestead/Solana Plat in which the Babcock House is located.

SETTING

The Babcock House is located on the southwest coast of Florida in an unincorporated area of Charlotte County, Florida, approximately 1.25 miles east Punta Gorda, the nearest incorporated city. The house is found within the Solana Subdivision on Lot 1, Block 5. The site is north of Marion Avenue, a main east to west corridor that bisects the center of downtown Punta Gorda. The Peace River is located to the north of the building lots on the north side of Shore Drive, and is visible from the Babcock House property.

Shore Drive is a residential street containing only a few buildings. Most of which are modest post-World War II homes. Some of the homes dating from the post-war era have been demolished over time or lost through hurricane damage. One nearby structure, the Villa Bianca, constructed c. 1925, located on the north side of the street fronting the Peace River, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990. Also, opposite the Babcock House, at 25538 Shore Drive, is the historic Eagles Nest estate constructed in 1911 as the home of a wealthy northerner, John Morrison. Beginning in 1934, it became an exclusive fishing and hunting lodge for more than 30 years, with cottages on the site for use by visiting sportsmen. The property has been used as an Elk's Club for approximately the last 25 years.

With the exception of the Elk's Club, the subdivision is entirely residential, with only about a half dozen homes dating from before World War II, some in deteriorated condition. The Babcock House is much larger and much more finely detailed than any of the other pre-war homes, except for the Villa Bianca. The others are simple Frame Vernacular buildings.

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BABCOCK, CLARENCE L. HOUSE
PUNTA GORDA, CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

Exterior

The Babcock House occupies a corner 200 x 200-foot lot that features only sparse vegetation (Photo 1). The house is set back 25 feet from Shore Drive and 20 feet from Howard Avenue which runs along the east side of the house. The Babcock House is one-and-a-half stories in height with wide roof overhangs. The primary facade of the house is oriented to the north. Construction is wood frame covered by stucco resting on concrete block piers. Contemporary wood trellis foundation skirting is found between the piers. The main block of the house at street level has a square plan. At the second story level on the main street facade one finds a large dormer covered by a front-facing gable roof which is a portion of the larger cross-gable on hip roof covering three other second story dormers on different elevations. All of the roof sections are surfaced with asphalt shingles. A pair of 1/1-light double-hung sash windows are found in the front of the dormer. The nearly symmetrical cross gable-on hip roof of the Babcock House is unusual for Craftsman Bungalow houses. Less than ten percent of Craftsman homes, equally divided between one-and-two story examples, are covered by hip roofs.¹

Concrete steps with capped stuccoed walls at either side ascend to the primary entrance of the house located in the full-width enclosed porch. Battered stucco piers support the porch roof. Stuccoed knee walls extend between the piers. A series of 1/1-light double-hung windows are found in a ribbon pattern above the knee walls along the primary facade and along the east elevation (Photo 2), whereas, the end wall of the porch on the west has a single pair of matching windows (Photo 3). The enclosed porch continues to the east to form an ell (Photo 4) containing five window bays on the east elevation and two bays on the south. The west elevation includes a stuccoed chimney that rises above the second story (Photo 5). Flanking the chimney on the first story are paired 3-light wood casement windows. Further south, along the same elevation, is a secondary entrance to the house (Photo 6). A concrete slab entrance porch, with a metal railing with simple balustrades, accesses the entrance. A shed roof projection covers the porch. An original wood door provides access to the house. Paired 1/1-light windows are found south of the door looking onto the porch. Still further south along the same elevation, is a single 1/1-light window. Above the porch on the second story are two more 1/1-light windows found in the front of the dormer.

The first level of the south (rear) elevation is dominated by a full-width service porch covered by a shed roof (Photo 7). The porch is enclosed with windows matching those on the remainder of the house. Windows are closely placed along the main wall east of a secondary entrance door. The house is entered via a one-bay uncovered stoop featuring clay tile covered concrete steps flanked by simple metal balustrades. The stoop is flanked by narrow 1/1-light double-hung sash windows. Non-historic "carriage lamp" light fixtures also flank

¹ Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York: Alfred A. Knoph, 1984), p. 453.

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BABCOCK, CLARENCE L. HOUSE
PUNTA GORDA, CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

the wood and glass panel entrance door. At the second level, of this elevation, is a sleeping porch that projects from the original dormer, a c.1925 addition.² The rear porch is covered by a shed roof.

Interior

The interior has not been altered except for the enclosure of the front and rear porches for additional living space. The original floor plan includes a living room (Photo 8), dining room (Photo 9), kitchen, office (Photo 10), a stair hallway (Photo 11), and a single downstairs bathroom. The front entrance porch (Photos 12-13) has bead board wall cladding which is also used for the ceiling treatment. All of the original interior wood panel doors, French doors, trim work, and the most of original door hardware remain intact. Floors throughout the house are heart pine. The living room retains an original brick fireplace, although the mantle and surrounding shelving and storage are 2006 additions. A wide arched opening (Photo 14) separates the living room from the dining room. Paired French doors separate the living room from what was originally a physician's office for Dr. Harlowe Boyle, a previous owner of the house. The single downstairs bathroom at the rear of the house is accessed from this room via a short hall. The kitchen is accessed from the west side of the dining room and the rear service porch from kitchen on the south. The stairs accessing the second floor are original as well as the handrail and simple wood balustrades. Upstairs there is a large central square hall (Photo 15), three bedrooms (Photo 16), a "sleeping porch," (Photo 17), and one bathroom (photo 18).

Alterations

The exterior of the house retains its original plan and materials excepting total window replacement, after Hurricane Charley in 2004, and the enclosure of the front entrance porch in 2006. The vinyl clad hurricane high impact replacement windows match the original windows, in configuration, size, and location on the main body of the house. Matching windows were used in the enclosure of the front porch. The house retains its original floor plan. The kitchen and baths have been updated over the years.

Detached Garage

A contributing c.1925 garage apartment (Photos 19-20), that was severely damaged by Hurricane Charley in August, 2004, is found to the rear of the main house. It is two-stories in height and has a one-story covered carport extension on the main facade. It is a stuccoed wood frame vernacular building that rests on a concrete slab foundation. The building has a rectangular plan and is missing its flat roof which was blown away by the hurricane. The attached carport has a flat metal roof supported by square metal posts that rest on a concrete slab. The garage has two original wooden vehicle doors that are hinged to swing open. Two 6/6-light double-hung sash windows overlook the roof of the carport from the second story. These are the only windows in the

² Samuel Campbell III, grandson of Clarence Babcock, telephone conference with Mikki Hartig, February 2, 2007.

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BABCOCK, CLARENCE L. HOUSE
PUNTA GORDA, CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

building that still retain their window sashes. A doorway providing access to stairs leading to the second floor apartment is found at the southwest corner of the building. The second floor contains three rooms. Original pine flooring and plaster walls still survive.

Other Site Features

Also found on the property are also three contributing street lights that date from c. 1925 (Photos 7, 21-22) that were installed as part of the development of the never completed Solana Subdivision, but were present when Clarence Babcock lived there. The light standards are maintained by the present owner of the Clarence L. Babcock property. Also found on the property is a noncontributing cast aluminum historic marker (Photos 22-23) commemorating the creation of the "Howard Homestead/Solana Plat." Application for the marker was approved by the Charlotte County Historical Advisory Committee on March 14, 2007. The marker, sponsored by Robert "Bucky" McQueen, was erected by the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners in a ceremony on October 17, 2007. The marker was paid for by Charlotte County Historical Center, a division of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department in Charlotte County government.³

The Historical Marker on the site reads:

Frederick William Howard of Kinderhook, New York, first settled near this site in November 1873. After their marriage, Frederick and his wife Anna established residence here in January 1874, along with their two nephews. Frederick hired men and an ox team from Bartow to help clear the land and build a log cabin with a separate log kitchen. By April 1875, Frederick's brother Jarvis, wife Brenda, and their sons joined them to homestead contiguous land, remaining here until returning to New York in August 1877.

The Howard brothers, who were veterans of the Union Army, grew oranges and vegetables while homesteading their lands. Jarvis kept a journal during his residence which is a unique historical record of life in the Charlotte Harbor area in the 1870s. He noted the Seminoles passing in their dugouts on the Peace River, lack of medical care, irregular mail service, lack of regular news, changeable weather, fantastic fishing, local politics, millions of mosquitoes, and he described individual people who lived in the area.

After the arrival of the railroad in Punta Gorda, Frederick successfully proved his homestead claim and recorded his land as the Solana Plat on November 22, 1889. Howard then sold lots to individuals, many of whom were wealthy friends and family from New York. Over time the name Solana became "Solona" in the local vernacular.

³ Charlotte County Historical Center, Historical Marker Program, <http://charlottecountyfl.com/Historical/historicalmarkers.asp>.

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Section number 10 Page 1

BABCOCK, CLARENCE L. HOUSE
PUNTA GORDA, CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 1, Block 5, Solana Subdivision, Charlotte County, Florida.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel presently associated with the historic Clarence L. Babcock House, the detached garage apartment and the two historic street lights.

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BABCOCK, CLARENCE L. HOUSE
PUNTA GORDA, CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo Inventory

1. Babcock, Clarence L. House
2. 25537 Shore Drive, Punta Gorda, Florida.
3. Mikki Hartig, Historical & Architectural Research Services, 2337 19th St. Sarasota, FL
4. February 2007
5. N/A
6. Main (Northwest) Facade, Looking Southeast
7. Photo 1 of 23

Items 1-5 are the same for photos 1-23.

6. Main (Northwest) Facade and Northeast Elevation, Looking Southwest
7. Photo 2 of 23

6. Southwest Elevation, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 3 of 23

6. Northeast Elevation, Looking Northwest
7. Photo 4 of 23

6. Main (Northwest) Facade and Southwest Elevation, Looking Southeast
7. Photo 5 of 23

6. Southwest Elevation, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 6 of 23

6. Southeast Elevation with Historic Street Lamp in Foreground, Looking Northwest
7. Photo 7 of 23

6. Interior, Living Room, Looking Southwest
7. Photo 8 of 23

6. Interior, Dining Room, Looking Northwest toward Living Room
7. Photo 9 of 23

6. Office, Looking Northwest
7. Photo 10 of 23

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BABCOCK, CLARENCE L. HOUSE
PUNTA GORDA, CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

6. First Floor Stairs, Looking Southeast

7. Photo 11 of 23

6. Enclosed Front Porch, Looking Southwest

7. Photo 12 of 23

6. Enclosed Front Porch, Looking Southwest

7. Photo 13 of 23

6. Living Room, Looking Southeast toward Dining Room

7. Photo 14 of 23

6. Second Floor Hall, Looking Southwest toward Stairs

7. Photo 15 of 23

6. Second Floor Bedroom, Looking Northwest

7. Photo 16 of 23

6. Second Floor Sleeping Porch, Looking Southeast

7. Photo 17 of 23

6. Second Floor Bathroom, Looking Northeast

7. Photo 18 of 23

6. Garage Apartment, Northeast and Southeast Elevations, Looking Northwest

7. Photo 19 of 23

6. Garage Apartment, Northeast and Northwest Elevations, Looking Southwest

7. Photo 20 of 23

6. View of Southwest Street Lamp, Looking Northeast

7. Photo 21 of 23

6. View of the Northeast Street Lamp and Historic Marker, Looking West

7. Photo 22 of 23

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Section number 8 Page 1 BABCOCK, CLARENCE L. HOUSE
PUNTA GORDA, CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The Clarence L. Babcock House is significant at the local level under Criterion B in the area Agriculture as the residence of Clarence L. Babcock who was responsible for the development of major lumber and cattle ranching interests in Florida during the first half of the 20th century. He and his brothers, Frederick and Oscar, founded the Babcock Lumber Company in 1898 which grew into a world-wide profitable commercial lumber enterprise. The company's resources were comprised of saw mills, planing mills, lumber camps, railroads and a tremendous amount of timber land in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida. In the early 1900s, Babcock was the largest producer of hardwood lumber in the world. Clarence ran the lumber company's operations in Florida and became a permanent resident in 1924, purchasing in 1929 the house in Punta Gorda that he lived in until his death in 1949. In the early 1940s, Edward and Clarence Babcock established the Babcock Crescent B Ranch in Charlotte County, raising free-range beef cattle. The ranch is still in existence today. Although Clarence Babcock resided for a time in the communities of other states where he managed the family lumber operations, none of the houses in which he lived were considered permanent residences and none has survived.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In 1866, a sawmill was constructed in what is now downtown Punta Gorda; it was the only sawmill south of the city of Tampa at that time. The Peace River and Charlotte Harbor played a vital role in the lives of both town and rural residents for the delivery of necessary goods, and as a means of transporting cattle and fish which were the main livelihoods of most of the early settlers of the region. Further development of Charlotte County began in 1881 when Hamilton Disston bought four million acres of "swamp and overflowed lands" in south Florida. He sold the land around Charlotte Harbor to an Englishman, Sir Edward Reed (1830-1906), who authorized John Cross to advertise the sale of cheap land in northern newspapers. In 1883, Colonel Isaac Trabue of Louisville, Kentucky, responded to the ad and bought land for a town he named Trabue, today's Punta Gorda. A block was set aside for cultivation of pineapples, lemons and oranges which were sold to pay for gold medals for the winners of the annual Trabue chess tournament. Cattle, timber, and phosphate mining became major industries in the area. Punta Gorda became known as the pineapple capital of the United States.⁴

The South Florida Railroad reached the area in 1886, and in 1887, just 12 years after the first settlers trekked to Charlotte Harbor, 34 men, 4 of whom were African-American, met at Hector's Billiard Parlor and Drugstore to discuss incorporation. Once Punta Gorda was officially incorporated, mayoral elections took place and a council was formed. Four of the five council members elected were not American citizens; the remaining councilman was a native of Florida, Albert Gilchrist. In 1890, the first postmaster of Punta Gorda was

⁴ Punta Gorda, Florida, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punta_Gorda,_Florida

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Section number 8 Page 2 BABCOCK, CLARENCE L. HOUSE
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SIGNIFICANCE

appointed. When the founders incorporated the community with the name Punta Gorda instead of Trabue, the initial founder of the settlement was offended and returned to his home in Kentucky.⁵

The 1920s brought many new residents to Florida, and land prices escalated as an unparalleled growth in population and construction took place. Charlotte County was established as an independent county in 1921. With the advent of the Florida Real Estate Boom in the early 1920s, the majority of new construction took place within incorporated areas in and around the central business district of Punta Gorda. The town was positively impacted by development. Rural areas, for the most part, changed little with large tracts of land, first purchased by founding and pioneer families, continuing to be held by their descendants. The descendants also prospered from the boom by an enlarged market and increased demand for their crops and livestock. The boom began to collapse after 1925, and the stock market crash in the fall of 1929 signaled there would be no swift recovery. Many who had recently come to the area suffered financial losses and local banks and residents also felt the impact of the Depression years of the 1930s. Those involved in more urban businesses were most affected. Rural residents were in a better financial position and more self-sustaining, having their crops and livestock to feed their families or to use in trade for other goods or services. Charlotte County would not experience any real substantial growth again until after World War II, when the large land development companies began selling lots to future retirees.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE—CLARENCE BABCOCK AND THE BABCOCK COMPANIES

In 1887, the Edward V. Babcock and Company lumber business was formed by brothers Edward Vose Babcock (1864-1948) and Frederick Raymond Babcock (1865-1927).⁶ According to contemporary reports, it was a success from the first day of business.⁷ The company grew from its inception into an enormous business enterprise, and Edward and Frederick were joined in the venture by two other brothers, Oscar Holmes Babcock (1869-1938), and Clarence Lee Babcock (1871-1949).⁸ The Babcocks' first undertaking in the lumber industry was the establishment in 1895 of a sawmill at Waverly, West Virginia. It was operated by Clarence Babcock and operated until the latter part of 1897, when it was closed for the lack of available timber resources.⁹

In 1898, the brothers formed the Babcock Lumber Company. Edward was made president and his brother Fred secretary and treasurer, while Clarence and Oscar were stockholders actively identified with the business. Later, both Clarence and Oscar Babcock also became directors of the company, along with W.W. Potter and

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "Babcock Lumber Company, History," <http://www.babcocklumber.com/>.

⁷ Benjamin F.G. Kline, Jr. "Stemwinders" in *The Laurel Highlands, The Logging Railroads of South-western Pennsylvania*. (Williamsport, PA: Lycoming Publishing Co., 1973), p. 1303.

⁸ U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Population, Charlotte County, Florida.

⁹ "Babcock Lumber Company, History," <http://www.babcocklumber.com/>.

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BABCOCK, CLARENCE L. HOUSE
PUNTA GORDA, CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

W.W. Reilly.¹⁰ That year the company purchased 6,415 acres of forest land. About three years after the company was formed, it branched out by purchasing James Curry & Son of Arrow, Pennsylvania, which comprised saw mills, planing mills, lumber camps, railroads and a tremendous amount of timber land which was added to the company's existing holdings of 7,000 acres in Ashtola, Pennsylvania. They closed the West Virginia operation and shipped the equipment to the new location. Additional land was acquired, giving the Babcocks 45,000 acres of Pennsylvania timber land.

The harvesting of hemlock, large stands of which were found in Pennsylvania, and of hardwoods suitable for producing lumber, was one of the major operations of the company. The Babcocks installed temporary log sluices to carry logs to Shade Creek, which was dammed to create a log pond near the saw mill where lumber was loaded onto railroad cars for shipment to various markets. The company built a town called Ashtola, the site of which today is marked as New Ashtola, differentiated from the location of Old Ashtola. Ashtola eventually included the adjoining "City of Germany" or Germantown, as it is now known. The company employed over 400 workers, and the town included 60 homes, a boarding house, livery stable, ice house, blacksmith shop, locomotive shop, a general store, a church and a school. The company invested more than \$600,000 in the enterprise and owned or controlled more standing virgin timber than any other firm in southwestern Pennsylvania at the time.

Directly across the street from the Ashtola mill was the home of Clarence Babcock. He played a major part in the daily operations of the mill. Edward Babcock stayed at the company lodge when visiting the site.¹¹ The company office remained in Pittsburgh under the management of Fred, assisted by his brother, Oscar. Both lived in Pittsburgh. Clarence Babcock was the general manager of the operation overseeing the mill and the yards and the only Babcock to maintain a permanent residence at Ashtola.

The Babcocks went into the yellow pine fields of the South and in April 1902, and formed the Babcock Brothers Lumber Company in Georgia. Thirty-three thousand acres of longleaf pine timber were acquired. With the saw mills, planing mills and experienced labor, the brothers started the town of Babcock which was given a charter by the Georgia legislature. At its height, the town of Babcock had churches, a school, a Masonic hall, electricity, water works and other modern conveniences. The company owned all the buildings.¹² The Babcock Brothers Lumber Company also developed large turpentine stills on their Georgia property and built machine shops, repair shops and constructed miles of rail line for logging and shipping. Today, nothing remains of the once thriving community except a crossroads near Colquitt, Georgia.

¹⁰ Frank Paul Alcamo, The Windber Story: A 20th Century Model Pennsylvania Coal Town (Windber, PA: Frank Paul Alcamo Pub., 1983), p. 25

¹¹ Ibid., pg. 1306.

¹² American Lumberman Magazine, (Chicago: American Lumberman, Vol. 29, February 15, 1908), p. 37.

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The company next expanded into West Virginia, and into eastern Tennessee. The Babcock Lumber & Boom Company in Davis, West Virginia began operation and the Tellico River Lumber Company at Tellico Plains, Tennessee, was formed in 1905. These plants, together with the Babcock Lumber and Land Company (formed in 1907 in Maryville, Tennessee) operated more than one-quarter million acres in the Smokey Mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina. The Maryville plant was considered the most modern of its kind and lumberman from all over the world came to see it and declared it a model operation. The four brothers put all their energy into the enterprise and it continued to grow extensively. They continued their lumber operation in Pennsylvania until 1913. Production ceased because of the decline of available lumber locally.¹³

In 1914, Edward Babcock and his brother Clarence came to Punta Gorda to hunt and fish, something they both enjoyed. Impressed by the large stands of forest in the area, they began looking at property to buy. In 1918, the Babcock interests purchased the largest single tract of virgin long leaf Yellow Pine in the United States, located in Charlotte and Lee counties, Florida. On December 13, 1918, they formed a company called Babcock-Carrier with Cassius Carrier, a local lumber scout and cattleman, who helped the Babcocks locate and purchase the property, part of which later became part of the Babcock Ranch. The Company bought two townships east of Punta Gorda, purchases that totaled 91,000 acres. They planned on using the land for longleaf pine and cypress logging operations.

Clarence Babcock was a member of the Board of Directors of the Babcock-Carrier Company and moved to Florida in 1924 to manage the family's Florida timber operations. All other members of the Board of Directors remained in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Throughout his adult life, Clarence Babcock had handled the day to day management of the various lumber operations for the family in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Tennessee and Georgia. When those operations closed, he turned his attention to the family's Florida holdings.

After 1930, lumber production in the entire state dwindled rapidly as the big companies were running out of readily available virgin timber. Most lumber operations practiced "cut out and get out" timbering practices that did not provide for a lasting, or sustainable supply of timber in Florida. These lumbermen saw the vast acreage of forests and assumed that there were plenty of trees to last their lifetime, but by 1937, the 19.2 million acres of pine forests that Florida had in 1870 had dwindled to only 7.5 million acres. Lumber mills closed down, towns were deserted, and the land became barren and non-productive.¹⁴ With this taking place, the Babcock-Carrier Company began to switch some of its business focus from the lumber business to cattle raising.

In the early 1940s, Babcock Florida began purchasing cattle. The company realized that, with the decline in timber resources, cattle ranching and breeding was the only immediate economic viable future use of their large

¹³ Alcamo, p. 37.

¹⁴ "History of Florida's Forests," http://www.fl-dof.com/publications/ffa_intro_forestry/IntroForestry_Part1.pdf.

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land holdings. Clarence Babcock took over the cattle management duties of the ranch which would be his primary focus until his death, and he also continued to oversee the remainder of the lumbering operations.¹⁵

Clarence L. Babcock Biography

Clarence Babcock was born in Fulton, New York on October 10, 1871. His father was Leaman B. Babcock (b.1833) and his mother was Harriett (nee Vose) Babcock (b.1837).¹⁶ Clarence became the general manager of the Ashtola, Pennsylvania, lumber operations and was responsible for the supervision of all of the mills in Pennsylvania and shared with his elder brother, Edward, the management of lumber operations in West Virginia.¹⁷ He also served as the company and community notary public, from which he gained the nickname "Squire."¹⁸ In 1897, he married Alta Porter (b. 1878) of Mexico, New York. They had two children, Robert (b. 1900) and Harriet (b. 1906). Clarence Babcock became vice president of Babcock Lumber Company and general manager of the company's sawmill and logging operations in Ashtola, Pennsylvania, and many points in the South, including Davis, West Virginia;¹⁹ Babcock, Georgia; and Tellico Plains and Alcoa, Tennessee.²⁰ He was the first mayor of Alcoa, and a portion of the City of Alcoa stands on the original site of the former Babcock mill operation.²¹

In 1924, he moved from Alcoa, Tennessee, to Charlotte County, Florida, a move brought on by an increased demand for Florida lumber by the Florida Land Boom of the 1920s. He served as the general manager of the family's interests in large timber and cattle operations of the Babcock Florida Company in Florida. He was the only one of the founding brothers of the Babcock lumber business to permanently reside in Florida and played a large role in the managing the family business interests in the state until his death in 1949. It appears that he resided on what was later the Babcock Ranch property until he purchased his Punta Gorda home in 1929. The house had been built in 1920 or 1921 for Harlowe Boyle and his wife, Alice, who had purchased the property in 1912.²² The Boyles owned the property until June 30, 1924, when it was sold to Jack Wilson,²³ who deeded the property to Loula B. Sikes on July 13, 1925.²⁴ On September 5, 1929, Loula Sikes sold the property to Clarence L. Babcock²⁵ who made the house his permanent residence until his death in 1949.

¹⁵ Boland Slater, Babcock Ranch, employee, since 1928, telephone interview with Mikki Hartig, on May 15, 2008.

¹⁶ Who's Who In America, (Chicago: A.N. Marquis Company, 1926-1927), p.196.

¹⁷ American Lumberman, February 15, 1908.

¹⁸ Frank Paul Alcamo, The Windber Story, p. 37.

¹⁹ "West Virginia Lumberman and National Wholesaler", E.V. Babcock and Company, October 25, 1901.

²⁰ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 14th Census of the United States, Population, Knox Tennessee, 1920.

²¹ City of Alcoa, "Residents," <http://www.cityofalcoa-tn.gov/residents>; Punta Gorda Herald, July 9, 1949.

²² Deed Book, 82, Page 314, Public Records of DeSoto County, Florida.

²³ Deed Book 3, Page 343, Public Records of Charlotte County.

²⁴ Deed Book 9, Page 164, Public Records of Charlotte County, Florida.

²⁵ Deed No. 18390, Deed Book 33, Page 383, Public Records of Charlotte County, Florida.

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The 1930 federal census lists Babcock as residing in Charlotte County, Florida, with his wife Alta and working as a timber manager.²⁶ Clarence maintained management of the company from an office in his home, but visited the ranch often. He was also active in local community affairs and was a Mason.²⁷ He served on the Barron G. Collier Bridge dedication committee in the effort to construct the area's second bridge over the Peace River.²⁸ The bridge was dedicated, with Clarence Babcock in attendance, on October 4, 1931.²⁹

Alta Babcock died sometime after 1930. According to his grandson, Samuel Campbell, Clarence married Jane Farquhar immediately after World War II. No biographical information is available on his second wife. Clarence Babcock died at home on July 2, 1949. He was the last surviving brother of the three founders who ran the Babcock lumber operations. He was survived by his widow, his daughter, Harriett Babcock Campbell, and his son, Robert, and four grandchildren.³⁰ He is buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Knoxville, Tennessee.

²⁶ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 15th Census of the United States, Population, Charlotte County, Florida, 1930.

²⁷ Peeples, Vernon, local historian and owner, interview with Mikki Hartig, May 8, 2008; Punta Gorda Herald, July 7, 1949.

²⁸ Lindsay Williams, Our Fascinating Past: Charlotte Harbor the Later Years (Punta Gorda: Charlotte Harbor Area Historical Society, 1996), pg. 329.

²⁹ Peeples interview.

³⁰ Punta Gorda Herald, July 7, 1949.

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