



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Shell Hammock Landing

other names/site number FMSF# PO7126

2. Location

street & number 3800 Shell Hammock ☐ not for publication

city or town Lake Wales ☒ vicinity

state Florida code FL county Polk code 105 zip code 33898

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.)

Missy Lotane
Signature of certifying official/Title

6/18/19
Date

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

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

[Signature]

8.26.2019

Shell Hammock Landing
Name of Property

Polk County, Florida
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ buildings
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	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)

TRANSPORTATION/Water-related

DOMESTIC/Hotel

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Florida Cracker

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Wood

walls Wood

roof Tin

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)

ARCHITECTURE

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1881-1925

Significant Dates

1881

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

Shell Hammock Landing
Name of Property

Polk County, Florida
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.5 Acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	4	6	2	3	2	5	3	0	9	6	0	8	6
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 Max Adriel Imberman, Historic Preservationist

organization Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation date April 2019

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Clear and descriptive photographs under separate cover. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Each photograph must be numbered in the order they are referenced in the manuscript, and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log.

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 George B. Macnamara

street & number 3800 Shell Hammock telephone

city or town Lake Wales state Florida zip code 33898

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 SheetSection number 7 Page 1Shell Hammock Landing

Name of Property

Polk County, Florida

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

SUMMARY

Shell Hammock Landing contains two resources - an 1881 Florida Cracker two-story building, now used as a house but originally constructed as a waypoint for Kissimmee River steamboat passengers, and the ruined remains of the steamboat dock built to serve the many steamboats which stopped at Shell Hammock from the 1880s to the 1920s. Both of these resources retain integrity for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, providing a tangible connection to a long-passed era in Central Florida History, a time before trains and automobiles rendered the steamboat obsolete as a means of transportation.

SETTING

Shell Hammock Landing is the southeastern section of a large property in eastern Polk County, Florida. It is located within a largely-rural area, with the closest city being Lake Wales over 12 miles to the southwest. The resources contained within this nomination are part of a larger Shell Hammock Property, which is approximately 300 acres in size. The property is located along an oxbow of the original course of the Kissimmee River, which was canalized since the end of the period of significance. The surviving oxbow provides a visual sense of place which captures the site's original use as a steamboat stop, even if the river upon which the steamboats traveled has been rerouted. Shell Hammock Landing is located north of Lake Kissimmee State Park, and south of Lake Hatchineha. On the greater Shell Hammock property, to the north of the Shell Hammock Landing site, is a prehistoric shell midden, which is not included within the boundary of the Shell Hammock Landing nomination. Surrounding of the Shell Hammock Landing boundaries is a collection of newer buildings, including farmhouses, barns, mobile homes, and an artesian well. Shell Hammock Landing retains integrity of setting due to its relatively remote status and due to its maintained connection and proximity with the Kissimmee River.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Shell Hammock Landing contains two contributing resources, an 1881 two-story Florida Cracker main house and a contemporary steamboat dock built along the historic oxbow path of the Kissimmee River.

Main House Exterior

The main house at Shell Hammock landing has the definitive features of the Florida Cracker style, being of wood-frame construction with covered wrap-around porches on both the first and second stories of the building. It has a tin side-gable roof covering the bulk of the building's historic section. Its front façade is its southern side, facing the historic oxbow of Kissimmee River which is still existent. The main house historically served as a resting place for steamboat travelers of the Kissimmee River, as

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Shell Hammock Landing

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Shell Hammock was an early stop along the southward path of the river. The building still communicates that use, despite having being converted into a single-family home. The 1984 additions to the house expanded the first floor along the entire northern rear elevation and added a narrow second story section to the center of that floor. The eastern and western one-story segments of the additions have shed roofs sloping away from the walls of the original section to the northern end of the expanded building. The central two-story part of the additions added an additional gable facing north.

The southern façade of the main house at Shell Hammock Landing (Photo 1) traditionally served as a welcoming point for Kissimmee River steamboat travelers taking a short rest or staying the night at Shell Hammock. It faced the dock to the southeast, which still exists in a ruined state. The house is raised off of the ground and features a wrap-around porch and a second-floor balcony, which both extend to the eastern façade of the building. The southern façade is divided into three symmetrical bays, with each bay having a centralized fenestration on each floor. The center of the façade on both floors features a doorway, and the left and right bays have a window. The symmetry is disrupted by an added window on the first floor's left bay, just to the right of the original window. Despite this added window, the original alignment of windows is still clear and visible. The second floor porch has a wooden railing which wraps around the building with the porch.

The eastern façade of the main house (Photo 2) completes the wrap-around porch which began on the southern façade. Like the front of the house, this façade is also divided into two bays. The design of the porch and balcony on this façade of the building matches that of the southern façade, including the use of a wooden railing on the second floor. The original section of the building has two bays defined by windows, with the first and second floors having matching fenestration. The addition at the northeast corner of the building's first floor is accessible via a doorway on a wall emerging perpendicular from the northeast corner of the original section of the house. That addition has a single small square window. The roof on this façade displays one of the two side gables on the building.

The northern façade of the main house (Photo 3) is dominated by the 1984 additions. The original extent of the building is visible on the second floor's eastern and western sides on this façade, but everything projecting outward from that is an addition. Both the western and eastern segments of the addition have tin shed roofing sloping downward from the window level of the original section of the house's second floor. The second floor addition, which projects outward slightly further than the other parts of the addition, has a gabled roof. The windows along this elevation are different in size and shape, fitting the assorted needs of the rooms on this part of the house, with a kitchen, bathroom, and laundry room being their usage types.

The western façade of the main house (Photo 4) displays the contrast between the historic and added sections of the house. The northern side of this façade is the house's kitchen, defined by its shed roof

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Shell Hammock Landing

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sloping downward from the window level of the second floor. The kitchen is accessible via a doorway reached via a small staircase with wooden railings on each side. The section of the western façade with the original section of the house has three bays. The left and right bays match the design of the other elevations with matching windows (though the left fenestration on the first floor has a small air conditioning unit installed in it). The central bay is defined by a brick chimney, a non-original addition to the building.

Main House Interior

The entrance of the house leads into a living room/dining room (Photo 5), which was originally the main public area of the building. The large carpeted room makes up the majority of the first floor of the building, with interior doorways leading into two other parts of the house, a kitchen in the northwest, and a central doorway (originally the back door of the house) leading into a hallway with a pantry and bathroom, as well as an entrance to the laundry room. A staircase is placed at the back-right end of the room, ascending parallel to the northern wall of the room to the second floor. A fireplace is at the western end of this room.

The kitchen (Photo 6) is in a portion of the rear addition to the house. The kitchen cabinets were made from the rescued pine floor of the old Lake Wales Post Office. The original house had an outdoor kitchen and no bathroom, so this part of the building was added to make it livable. The hallway emerging from the center of the living room (Photo 7) has doorways leading into the bathroom and laundry room, as well as hosting the pantry.

The staircase (Photo 8) consists of the original 14 steps of the house's 1881 design, but was repositioned along the northern wall of the living room in the 1940s. The second floor of the house (Photo 9) primarily consists of two bedrooms (Photo 10 and 11), much as it did in the historic period. The second-floor addition contains a bathroom and closet.

Dock

The historic dock is located along the oxbow branching from the canalized Kissimmee River. It is separated from the main house by approximately 250 feet of open field (Photo 12). The main house is placed in a direct path from the dock, as it would have been the place visitors were expected to go first in the historic period. The dock (Photo 13) is currently in a ruined state, with only its pilings and railings remaining. It is located behind a barbed wire fence for protection. The dock is visually obscured by the growth of cypress trees and grass, but the remaining pilings and railings, as well as the dock's integrity

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Shell Hammock Landing

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N/A

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of location, allow for study of the dock to determine its size. The dock was approximated to be 35 feet long and 20 feet deep.¹

ALTERATIONS

Shell Hammock Landing, with its house and dock constructed in 1881, has experienced alterations since the end of the period of significance in 1921. Because the house was not designed as a permanent home, initially used as a temporary resting point for travelers along the Kissimmee River, it was not initially constructed with the amenities that would have been normal for a multi-story residence at the time or since.

The original interior layout of the house had a large entrance hall and living room with a central staircase to the second floor. There were four bedrooms in the house, with two on the ground floor and two on the second floor, with a wrap-around porch on both levels. Since the end of the period of significance, the house was reconfigured due to improvements in technology and the need for modernized domestic infrastructure. The house was expanded in 1984 to accommodate these changes, with an addition built along the northern edge of the building, containing a kitchen, bathroom, and laundry room on the first floor, and a bathroom and expanded bedroom space on the second floor. The largest internal change was the repositioning of the staircase by a hunting group in the 1940s. Instead of ascending directly in front of the main entrance, the staircase is now perpendicular to the entrance in the northeast section of the house's main room. A fireplace was also added along the house's western wall, with a brick chimney accommodating it. The house does maintain its original large entry room, with a shared living room and dining space comprising the majority of the first floor. The majority of these changes were necessary for the building to be used as a home.

The exterior of the building retains integrity, despite the addition to the rear and a window added to the west side of the front façade. It bears an uncanny resemblance to its historic appearance from 19th century photographs. The roof maintains its historic shape, angle, and material type, but the actual metal of the roofline has been replaced over time as necessary. The dock is in a ruinous state, with only its original piers remaining. Even though the dock can no longer be walked upon, it retains integrity of setting and location, allowing the visitor to get the sense of its relation to the house which was designed to accompany it.

¹ Susan C. Macnamara, Explanatory Note Accompanying Preliminary Site Information Questionnaire, March 15, 2018.

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Name of Property

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N/A

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INTEGRITY

Shell Hammock Landing has retained integrity for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It retains integrity of location and setting, having not moved and with its surroundings being recognizable to the historic period of significance. It retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, despite the expansions and interior alterations it has experienced. The main house is still recognizable as Florida Cracker architecture and is not significantly changed from its original form, especially from the outside. The historic dock is in an unusable and ruinous state, but still communicates original purpose. Shell Hammock Landing also retains integrity of feeling and association, with the connections to its significance in transportation and architecture still tangible in its current state.

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Shell Hammock Landing

Name of Property

Polk County, Florida

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

SUMMARY

Shell Hammock Landing is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Transportation and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Built in 1881, at the height of popularity of steamboat travel down the Kissimmee River, the house at Shell Hammock served as a resting point for travelers undergoing the exhausting journey up and down the river. Its original owner, Charles Franklin McQuaig, was very active in clearing out the Kissimmee River allowing easier, faster, and safer steamboat travel. It is the last remaining steamboat stop along the river, and still maintains its original dock, albeit in a ruined state. The main house at Shell Hammock Landing is also significant as a large and elaborate local example of the Florida Cracker style of architecture, featuring the wood material and original design principles which define Florida Cracker buildings, including ample porches and coverings to facilitate coolness and airflow in a pre-air conditioning 19th century Florida. The period of significance for Shell Hammock Landing is 1881-1921, years in which the house and its associated dock were used as a popular stopping point for steamboat trips down the Kissimmee River.

HISTORIC CONTEXTSteamboating History of the Kissimmee River

Although Florida became the 27th state in the United States in 1845, the vast majority of its nascent population lived in the northern section of the state, with much of Central and South Florida being comprised of swampland. An 1841 act of Congress granted each newly-admitted state 500,000 acres of public land in order to ensure that these states would have ample publicly-owned area in which to pursue development for the broader public benefit. An 1850 law specifically gave Florida's government ownership of all unclaimed swampland, as long as the lands were eventually cleared for development through the use of levees and drains. The state of Florida, which was dominated by undeveloped swamp, benefitted from these laws, acquiring about fifteen million acres for distribution to individuals or agencies equipped to develop the difficult terrain.² In 1855 the lands acquired by the state through the acts of Congress previously mentioned were coalesced into an agency called the Internal Improvement Fund of the State of Florida, which was managed by the state governor and four other high-ranking state officials. The fund was intended to serve as a vessel by which the state's development could be encouraged and guided by Florida's leadership, but limitations on state spending made it difficult for Florida's early governors to truly capitalize upon the opportunity.

Within twenty years of its formation, the Internal Improvement Fund had gone bankrupt. The state of Florida had used its extensive landholdings as collateral for bonds to encourage the development of

² T. Frederick Davis, "The Disston Land Purchase," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* (Vol. 17, No. 3, January 1939), 203.

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Shell Hammock Landing

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railroads throughout the state. When many of these ventures failed, the state could not capitalize on its investments, and was sued by a bondholder in federal court, leading to the Internal Improvement Fund being unable to sell any of its land until its debt was cleared.³ Because the state was legally barred from using public money to pay off the debt held by its Internal Improvement Fund, the millions of acres of lands held by the fund were frozen in its possession, with very little opportunity to profit. By 1877, the fund had accrued a million dollars in debt to its bondholders and Florida was forced into foreclosure on millions of acres of land throughout the state.⁴ The legal limitations upon how the land could be used also made the proposition of private acquisition more risky, as the purchaser would need to have access to the tools for development in addition to a heavy bankroll.

Hamilton Disston turned out to be a man willing and able to take on the responsibility of developing vast swathes of Florida. A developer who would take on four million acres of publicly-owned Florida swampland, Disston was the son of Philadelphia industrialist Henry Disston. His father was an English-American who founded the Disston Saw Works, a renowned maker of sawblades.⁵ Hamilton, born in 1844, came of age working in his father's immensely-successful company. When Disston reached the age of 21, his father embraced him as a leader of the company, and he inherited it at age 34, when his father died in 1878. Profoundly ambitious, Disston sought to expand his company but left most of the management work up to his brothers. Disston's role was primarily performative, due to his charisma.⁶ Disston, usually very disengaged from the day-to-day business of the company for which he served as president, enjoyed spending time in Florida, much like many of his Northern industrialist contemporaries. It is popularly believed that Disston's first trip to Florida was a fishing expedition in 1877, and he very quickly gauged the state as a place with ample opportunity for profitable investment, if someone with the ability to dredge and manage the swampy lands were to come along.⁷

While railroads would eventually win out as the main method of travel throughout the state of Florida by the end of the nineteenth century, establishing rail lines was a massive logistical and industrial effort. Steamboats proved to be an attractive measure to reach the center of the state, which did not receive rail access as quickly as the coasts. Despite the comparative ease, the practice of steamboat travel did not emerge without a great deal of effort. The difficulty of establishing steamboat travel along some of Florida's rivers, including the Kissimmee, came from the large amount of growth and foliage present in them, which blocked visibility and mobility. Florida's rivers often passed through dense plant life, and

³ Thomas Graham, "The First Developers," *The History of Florida*, edited by Michael Gannon, University Press of Florida (2013) 277.

⁴ T. Frederick Davis, "The Disston Land Purchase," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* (Vol. 17, No. 3, January 1939), 203-204.

⁵ Bob Bass, *When Steamboats Reign in Florida*, University Press of Florida (2008), 21.

⁶ Bob Bass, *When Steamboats Reign in Florida*, University Press of Florida (2008), 23.

⁷ Joe Knetsch, "Hamilton Disston and the Development of Florida," *Sunland Tribune*, Vol. 24, Article 3, Page 5.

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Shell Hammock Landing

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

the environment had not naturally developed to support easy and safe boat travel. Charles Franklin McQuaig, a George native who moved to Central Florida in 1871 in search of success in the citrus industry, made it his mission to increase the navigability of the Kissimmee River.⁸ He had moved to Orlando and joined the steamboat trade within two years of arriving in Florida, focusing on the Kissimmee. He spent six years leading tours down the river, as well as clearing the obstructions which had grown over time. McQuaig developed ways to ensure that boats could travel in suboptimal water level conditions, determining that land and water could combine to ease the travel of boats.⁹ By the end of his work on the river, he had opened up the river for steamboat travel from its source to Lake Okeechobee over 70 miles to the south. McQuaig built the house and dock at Shell Hammock to facilitate his steamboating business, serving as a stopping point for his boats and tours.¹⁰

While McQuaig did a great deal to set the tone and make it possible for steamboats to traverse the Kissimmee River, Hamilton Disston's impact upon the river was as great. Within two years of his first arrival in Florida, Disston had partnered with a group of investors from Philadelphia and Florida to form the Atlantic and Gulf Coast Canal and Okeechobee Land Company, which began negotiations with the Internal Improvement Fund to acquire land for development. In May 1881, Florida's Governor William B. Bloxham traveled to Philadelphia to close a deal with Disston, finalizing the agreement for Disston's company to purchase four million acres of South Florida land at twenty-five cents an acre, at that time believed to be the largest purchase of land by a single person in world history.¹¹ With this payment, the Internal Improvement Fund of Florida was able to pay off its voluminous debts, and Disston was given a large amount of land with which to pursue the opportunities he had visualized years earlier.

Disston's endeavors with the massive amount of land he had acquired from the state of Florida were complex, if not entirely profitable. Disston sold half of his Florida holdings, two million acres, to an Englishman named Edward James Reed at a profit.¹² He also drained and dredged much of the land in Central Florida, allowing for future economic development in the area by other individuals and groups. To clear water from lands which were being covered with water from Kissimmee River overflow, he funded the construction of canals along the Kissimmee, directing the river's flow into various lakes along the river's path. The clearing of the land enabled easier farming, and the taming of the river further eased the development of steamboat travel. The increased desirability of land along the Kissimmee River also increased the attractiveness of Central Florida as a destination for the steamboat

⁸ Henry S. Marks, *Who Was Who in Florida?*, The Strode Publishers (1973), 181.

⁹ Michael Reneer and James M. Denham, (2018) "'Letter from Okeechobee' 1880s Editorial of Gabriel Cuning to Bartow Informant and Tampa Sunland Tribune," *Sunland Tribune*: Vol. 29 , Article 4, Page 26.

¹⁰ "Charles Franklin McQuaig," Findagrave.com, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/21502290/charles-franklin-mcquaig>, Accessed April 16, 2019.

¹¹ Joe Knetsch, "Hamilton Disston and the Development of Florida," *Sunland Tribune*, Vol. 24, Article 3, Page 7.

¹² Bob Bass, *When Steamboats Reigned in Florida*, University Press of Florida (2008), 31.

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Shell Hammock Landing

Name of Property

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County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

travel, a beneficial synergy which over time transformed the region.¹³ While Disston's work in Florida left the state, especially Central Florida, more amenable to future development, he was severely indebted by the endeavor. He died in 1896.

Steamboat travel on the Kissimmee River predated Disston's presence in the state and it continued after his death. The community surrounding Kissimmee steamship travel was close-knit, with many of the captains assuming legendary status locally due to the difficulty of traversing the river, even after the work McQuaig and Disston put in to make it more easily navigable. Clay Johnson was perhaps the most notable of these captains, piloting boats down the river from the 1880s to the 1920s. He owned and operated the steamship *Roseada*, named after his two daughters. The *Roseada* traveled to Shell Hammock often, and sank at the dock in Kissimmee in 1928. Dozens of steamships ran the Kissimmee River route during the period before the railroad reached the communities they served. Some traveled the river for decades, and others ran aground or went out of commission very quickly. Some of the boats changed names and owners frequently. Some of the boats ran the entire route from Kissimmee to Lake Okeechobee, and others stayed in particular sections of the river.¹⁴

Steamboat travel down the Kissimmee River was arduous and complicated. Historian Bob Bass, whose family was involved in nineteenth and twentieth-century steamboating, wrote that "the route down the Kissimmee was long and hazardous. After the boats left Kissimmee, it took about five days to run the river to Ft. Basinger and back. By road the trip was a distance of eighty miles, but by steamboat it was 162 miles and sometimes nearly 175."¹⁵ While the route ran from Kissimmee to Lake Okeechobee, there were over a dozen stops along the way, each generally separated by an average of around 10 miles. Shell Hammock was the second stop along the river, twenty-five miles from the starting point in Kissimmee.¹⁶ An early stop along the trip, Shell Hammock was well-known and significant to the Kissimmee River steamboat community.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Shell Hammock Landing is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Transportation because of its status as a surviving steamboat stop along the historic Kissimmee River. Charles Franklin McQuaig purchased the property upon which Shell Hammock Landing is built in 1881, from Ingram Fletcher, who in the 1890s would serve as Orlando's postmaster. He named the property Shell Hammock, due to the pre-historic shell middens located on the property to the northwest of the Shell

¹³ "Hamilton Disston: The Man Who Reshaped Florida," Historyengine.richmond.edu, <https://historyengine.richmond.edu/episodes/view/6142>, Accessed April 16, 2019.

¹⁴ Bob Bass, *When Steamboats Reigned in Florida*, University Press of Florida (2008), 33-41.

¹⁵ Bob Bass, *When Steamboats Reigned in Florida*, University Press of Florida (2008), 45.

¹⁶ Bob Bass, *When Steamboats Reigned in Florida*, University Press of Florida (2008), 46.

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Shell Hammock Landing

Name of Property

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Hammock Landing National Register site boundaries. McQuaig intended the Shell Hammock Landing site to be a staging ground for his growing Kissimmee River steamboat tour business. He built the still-standing Florida Cracker main house at Shell Hammock Landing to serve as a resting house for travelers and to serve as a focal point for local entertainment opportunities, which primarily consisted of hunting and fishing at the time. At the time, the steamboat stop was known as McQuaig Landing. From the outset in 1881, Shell Hammock Landing was used as a lodging. The house was used by Hamilton Disston's workers as they reconfigured the Kissimmee River as part of his larger endeavors.¹⁷

In the first decades after the house at Shell Hammock Landing was built, the site was frequently referenced as a stopping point along the Kissimmee River by travelers (Figure 1 and 2). It was very dangerous to travel the Kissimmee River after dark, as it was twisted and curving. Historian Edward A. Mueller in 1966 described the 19th-century Kissimmee River as "a snake's dream of heaven, being a crooked combination of narrow channels, sharp bends, cut-offs, dead rivers, and zig-zags in confounding numbers. Anything larger than a rowboat had pretty tough going."¹⁸ One significant traveler who mentioned Shell Hammock in his stories of the Kissimmee River was Kirk Munroe, the noted nineteenth century adventure writer. In 1881-1882, just as Hamilton Disston was beginning the arduous process of reshaping the Kissimmee River, and McQuaig had just built his resting house at Shell Hammock Landing, Munroe embarked on a journey throughout Central and South Florida's waterways on a decked sailing canoe. Drawn by the collision of untamed land and industrial effort, Munroe sailed up and down many of the state's rivers, experiencing the changing trends in Florida life, just as the state was going through perhaps one of its most dramatic transformations.¹⁹

Munroe's journal from February 25, 1882 recounts a day of arduous travel northward, going against the flow of the Kissimmee River. He started that day at Camp Hammock, now part of the KICCO Wildlife Management Area in Polk County. Munroe traveled upstream through Lake Kissimmee, Lake Hatchenaka, and Lake Cypress. Toward the end of the day, he reached Shell Hammock Landing, which he referred to as McQuaig Hammock. Munroe describes his "trade with Tom Tiger and half a dozen Indians" at Shell Hammock.²⁰ Tom Tiger, or Tuestenugee, was a notable Seminole leader who was well-known by white settlers for his ability to speak English and his propensity to trade, as Munroe experienced.²¹ Munroe did not commit very much description of Shell Hammock's earliest days to his

¹⁷ Susan C. Macnamara, "Historical Significance of Shell Hammock," received by the Florida State Historic Preservation Office in 2018.

¹⁸ Edward A. Mueller, "Kissimmee Steamboating," *Tequesta*, 1966, 68.

¹⁹ Irving A. Leonard, "A Lost "Psyche": Kirk Munroe's Log of a 1,600 Mile Canoe Cruise in Florida Waters, 1881-1882," *Tequesta*, 1968, 63-66.

²⁰ Irving A. Leonard, "A Lost "Psyche": Kirk Munroe's Log of a 1,600 Mile Canoe Cruise in Florida Waters, 1881-1882," *Tequesta*, 1968, 86-87.

²¹ Hester O'Leary, "Florida's Most Respected Seminole: Tom Tiger," *The Orlando Sentinel*, December 10, 1989.

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Shell Hammock Landing

Name of Property

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journal, but it is clear that it was significant, as it served as a spot where Munroe felt comfortable taking a short rest, and was a place where he could quickly trade with the Seminoles.

Charles Franklin McQuaig owned Shell Hammock from 1881-1896, and in those years it was a frequently-used resting point for Kissimmee River travelers. In 1896, he sold the property to Presley E. Bisland, a New York resident who is believed to have been a tourist, presumably one struck by the financial potential of a scenic steamboat stop along one of the state of Florida's more heavily-traveled rivers.²² In 1901, Bisland sold Shell Hammock to George Bryan Tatman, an Ohio native who maintained the site's use as a steamboat resting stop, and also further encouraged the use of the site by hunters and tourists. He also converted it into his primary residence while continuing its older uses, changing its name to Shell Hammock from McQuaig Landing.²³ Tatman's family continued its ownership of Shell Hammock in succeeding generations, with the current owner of the property being his great-great grandson.

By the turn of the century, the house at Shell Hammock Landing was well-established as a popular location both for locals and visitors, a distinction which Tatman actively encouraged. An article written in July 1902 by a traveler named William A. Bruette detailed his experiences on a trip on the steamer Bassinger down the Kissimmee River. He lavished a particularly large amount of detail on Shell Hammock as one of his stops. Bruette wrote that Shell Hammock was

a tract of high land covered with giant spreading oaks overhanging the river, here about forty yards wide, and extending down the river for more than a mile, to Gardner, another landing place on the river. A hotel has lately been opened for the benefit of tourists and sportsmen, as the river is famous for its fishing, and quail, ducks, and snipe are plentiful in the season, and there is an occasional chance shot to be had at deer or turkey. Both these places are exceedingly picturesque, great moss-festooned oaks overhanging the deep running river, and palm trees and palmettos lend a tropical appearance. As the distance from Kissimmee is only twenty-five miles by water, it has become a very favorite picnic ground for the people of the town, who often take advantage of moonlight nights to make a delightful day's outing. It is also the landing place for a large cattle district, and the quantity of grain shows that a considerable number of people must be engaged in the stock industry.²⁴

²² Susan C. Macnamara, "Historical Significance of Shell Hammock," received by the Florida State Historic Preservation Office in 2018.

²³ Susan C. Macnamara, Explanatory Note Accompanying Preliminary Site Information Questionnaire, March 15, 2018.

²⁴ William A. Bruette, "The Fascinating Kissimmee," *Forest and Stream*, (Volume 59, July, 1902), 445-446.

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Bruette's description, written in the context of a journey from Kissimmee to Lake Okeechobee at the dawn of the twentieth century, illustrates the significance of Shell Hammock Landing at the time. It served as a place for rest, and as a staging ground for naturalist adventures although (the description of the building as a hotel in the narrative is inaccurate). It was a site where visitors could hunt and fish. It was a place to where locals could make a day trip, or more far-away visitors could stay for an extended period of time. It was a spot where goods were loaded and unloaded from visiting ships. In a short section of a longer account of a trip down the Kissimmee River, Bruette expressed the multiple angles through which the significance of Shell Hammock Landing could be viewed.

Shell Hammock was an important stop along the Kissimmee river steamboat path through the entire golden era of Florida steamboating. By the early 1920s, steamboats as a popular means of transportation in Florida had fallen out of fashion, with increasing rail availability and private automobile ownership providing attractive alternatives. Afterwards, Shell Hammock Landing was left as a privately-owned dock accompanied by a privately-owned house, beloved for the successive generations of Tatman's descendants and their families.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXTFlorida Cracker Architecture

The Florida Cracker style is a vernacular representation of the state's 19th century development. They demonstrate an organic response to the needs of settlers in a tropical climate, as well as the materials offered by the Florida environment. Florida Cracker houses, large or small, show the way in which Floridians in the early years of American statehood adapted their lives to an environment which was often not as easily hospitable as that of the places from where they came.

Florida Cracker architecture is always constructed of wood. The state's ample forests during the period of settlement provided a much-more-than-adequate supply of materials for the construction of homes of various sizes, with cypress, hardwood, and pine being common throughout Florida.. The houses will generally have board-and-batten wooden siding. Many Florida Cracker houses also feature clay or brick chimneys.²⁵

Florida's climate also was a key driver for the elements which would come to define the style called Florida Cracker. With the state being hot for most of the year, and not getting very cold during the

²⁵ Dorinda K. M. Blackey, "Defining Vernacular through the Florida Vernacular – the Cracker House," Institutional Repository at the University of Florida, Accessible at <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00103303/00001>. Accessed March 14, 2019, Page 5.

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Shell Hammock Landing

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winter, the mitigation of heat was the primary goal of Florida Cracker design. Porches and overhangs provided shade, allowing residents of a Florida Cracker house to spend significant time outdoors more comfortably. In addition, Florida Cracker houses were designed to encourage cross-ventilation, with a large number of windows and breezeways to allow air and breeze to flow through them. A common synergistic element of Florida Cracker design which took extra advantage of Florida's rainy climate was that the overhangs and porches on a house, by covering windows, allowed windows to be open during rainstorms, letting the cooler air flow into the home even during inclement weather.²⁶ With many Florida Cracker houses built in the period before air conditioning was invented, such considerations were crucial to their design as livable homes.

Florida Cracker house design is also a reflection of the types of technology readily available at the time and place of their construction. With many of the Florida Cracker homes in the state having been built in areas on the frontier moreso than in developed cities, settlers who built them did not have access to the types of amenities that would have been more feasible in other areas. In design, the houses usually began quite simply, often having a side gable roof built at a 12 in 12 pitch, a shape which also encouraged airflow. The roofs were also usually built of wood or metal sheathing. Florida Cracker homes also usually did not include built-in bathrooms or kitchens, with most that survived into the present featuring those rooms as additions.²⁷ Very few Florida Cracker homes retain their exact original appearance, as the residents would have added to and improved them over time, as materials and technologies became more readily available to homeowners in various Florida environments.

Florida Cracker homes ranged in size and complexity, serving settlers ranging from homesteaders building their first single-pen one-room porched shelter to plantation owners who constructed two-floor homes with multiple sets of porches. As examples of a vernacular style, Florida Cracker owners were not making design decisions based upon a pre-defined set of rules, but moreso building a home which fit the needs of its owner. The key features of Florida Cracker buildings are their porches and coverings, wood construction, and high-pitched gabled roof, features which reflected the realities of Florida living in the pre-air-conditioning era.²⁸

²⁶ Dorinda K. M. Blackey, "Defining Vernacular through the Florida Vernacular – the Cracker House," Institutional Repository at the University of Florida, Accessible at <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00103303/00001>. Accessed March 14, 2019, Page 5-6.

²⁷ Dorinda K. M. Blackey, "Defining Vernacular through the Florida Vernacular – the Cracker House," Institutional Repository at the University of Florida, Accessible at <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00103303/00001>. Accessed March 14, 2019, Page 6-7.

²⁸ Ronald W. Haase, *Classic Cracker: Florida's Wood-Frame Vernacular Architecture*, Pineapple Press, Inc., 1992, 19-23.

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Name of Property

Polk County, Florida

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The main house at Shell Hammock Landing is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an example of Florida Cracker architecture as applied to a building which was meant to be an attractive resting house along a popular trade and travel route. While the building has been expanded, altered, and reconfigured, it maintains its status as a recognizable example of Florida Cracker architecture. Featuring the majority of the vernacular features which define the style, including wood-frame construction and a covered porch, as well as a gabled roof, the main house at Shell Hammock Landing is a well-preserved and visually striking exhibition of the Florida Cracker style.

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Section number 9 Page 15

Shell Hammock Landing

Name of Property

Polk County, Florida

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Section number 9 Page 16

Shell Hammock Landing

Name of Property

Polk County, Florida

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Name of Property

Polk County, Florida

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of Shell Hammock Landing begins 50 feet west of the northwest corner of the main house, extends 150 feet northeast past the main house, heads southeast 300 feet to the Kissimmee River oxbow waterline, extends southwest 150 feet along the waterline, including the historic ruined dock, extends northwest 300 feet, then extends 400 feet northwest to connect with the origin of the boundary 50 feet west of the northwest corner of the main house.

Boundary Justification

This boundary contains all historic resources associated with Shell Hammock Landing.

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Shell Hammock Landing

Name of Property

Polk County, Florida

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Additional Documentation (Figures, plans, historic photos)

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Shell Hammock Landing

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



This is the oldest known photograph of Shell Hammock taken before the turn of the century. Note the two gentlemen on the lower porch and the two ladies on the upper left corner of the upper porch. The kitchen is separate from the main house and is located to the left of the house. The exterior of the house has remained the same except for a second window on the lower left facade.



This photo was taken around 1901 when Shell Hammock was purchased by George Bryan Tatman, great-great grandfather of the current owner, George Macnamara. The woman in the photo is George Tatman's wife, Emily Gano Tatman.

Figure 1: Historic photographs of the main house at Shell Hammock Landing dating back to the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. Source: Susan Macnamara

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National Park Service

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Shell Hammock Landing

Name of Property

Polk County, Florida

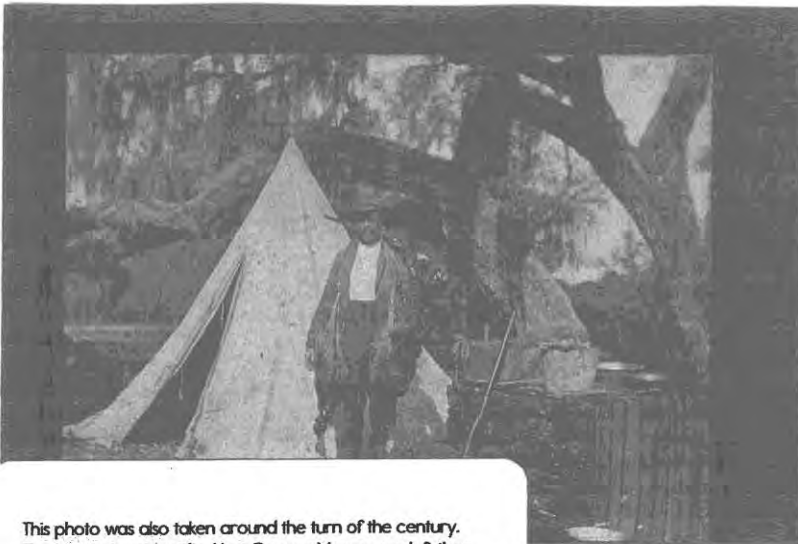
County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



This is one of a series of photographs taken at Shell Hammock around the turn of the century. The gentleman on the left is George Bryan Tatman, owner of Shell Hammock. This man in the center is only identified as "Duncan." The man on the right is unidentified. We believe they were invited to Shell Hammock for some serious hunting.



This photo was also taken around the turn of the century. The hunter is unidentified but George Macnamara's father Roger, always swore it was former president Theodore Roosevelt who hunted in Florida on several occasions. The entire Kissimmee River basin was described as a "sportsman's paradise." That is as true today as it was over one hundred years ago.

Figure 2: Photographs of early 20th century visitors to Shell Hammock Landing. Source: Susan Macnamara

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National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**
Continuation SheetSection number Photos Page 21 Shell Hammock Landing

Name of Property

Polk County, Florida

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered in the order they are referenced in the manuscript, and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log.

Property Name: Shell Hammock LandingCity or Vicinity: Lake WalesCounty: PolkState: FLPhotographer: Sue MacnamaraDate Photographed: September 2018**Description of photograph(s) and number, including description of view indicating direction of camera:**

1. Southern façade, facing north
2. Eastern façade, facing west
3. Northern façade, facing southeast
4. Western façade, facing east
5. Living room, facing north (April 2019)
6. Kitchen, facing northwest (April 2019)
7. Hallway, facing east (April 2019)
8. Staircase from first floor, facing west (April 2019)
9. Second floor, facing east (April 2019)
10. West bedroom, facing west (April 2019)
11. East bedroom, facing east (April 2019)
12. View from house toward dock, facing southeast
13. Dock, facing southeast

Shell Hammock Landing

3800 Shell Hammock
Lake Wales, Polk County
Florida 33898

Lat./Long. Coordinates:
27.988277, -81.381907

UTM:
17R 462325 3096086

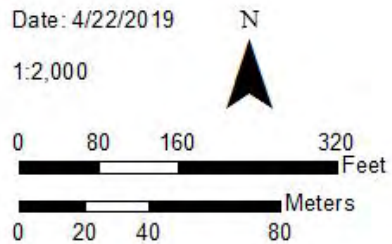
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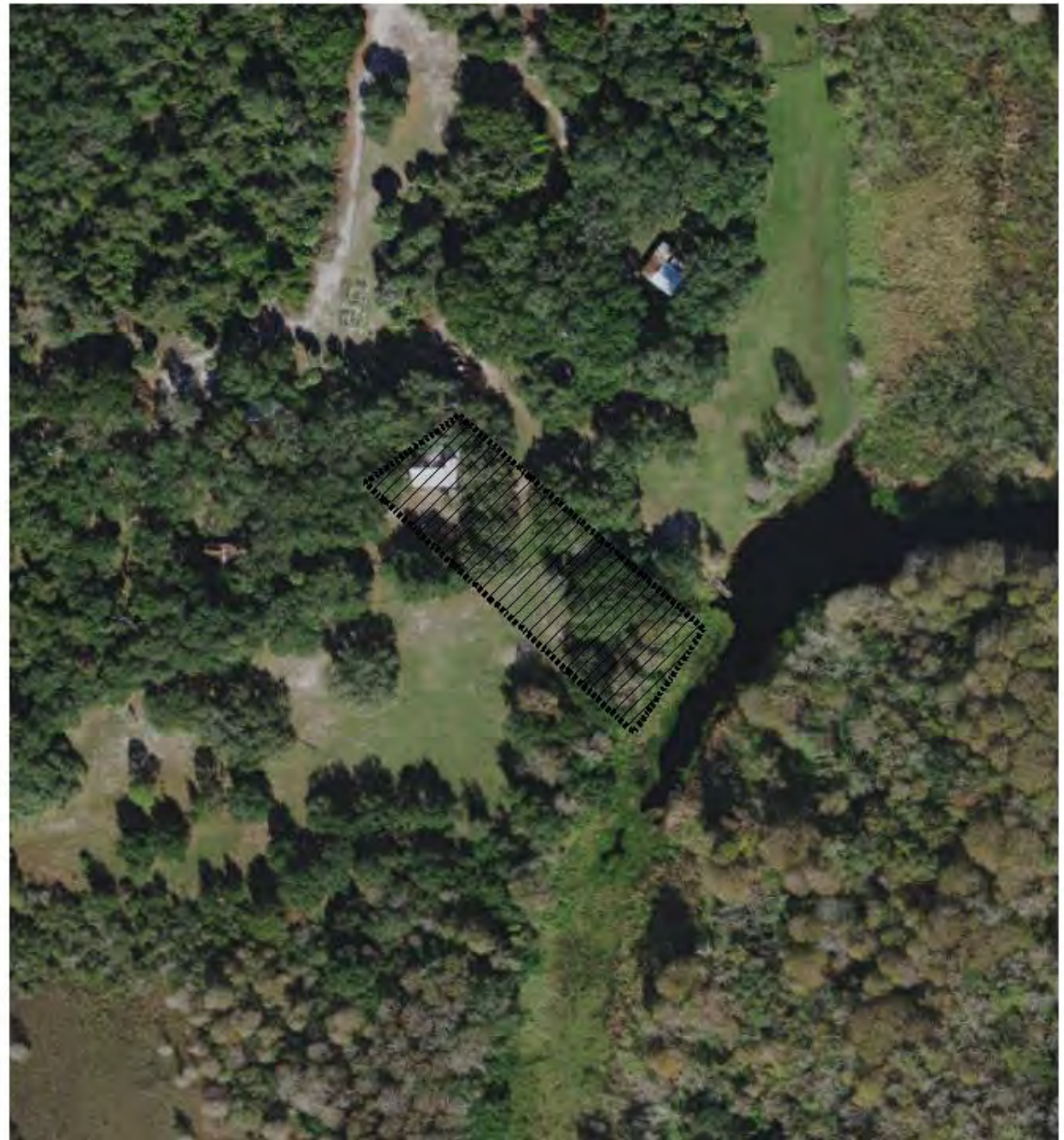
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Date: 4/22/2019

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



Shell Hammock Landing

3800 Shell Hammock
Lake Wales, Polk County
Florida 33898

Lat./Long. Coordinates:
27.988277, -81.381907

UTM:
17R 462325 3096086

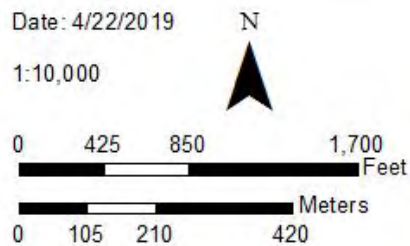
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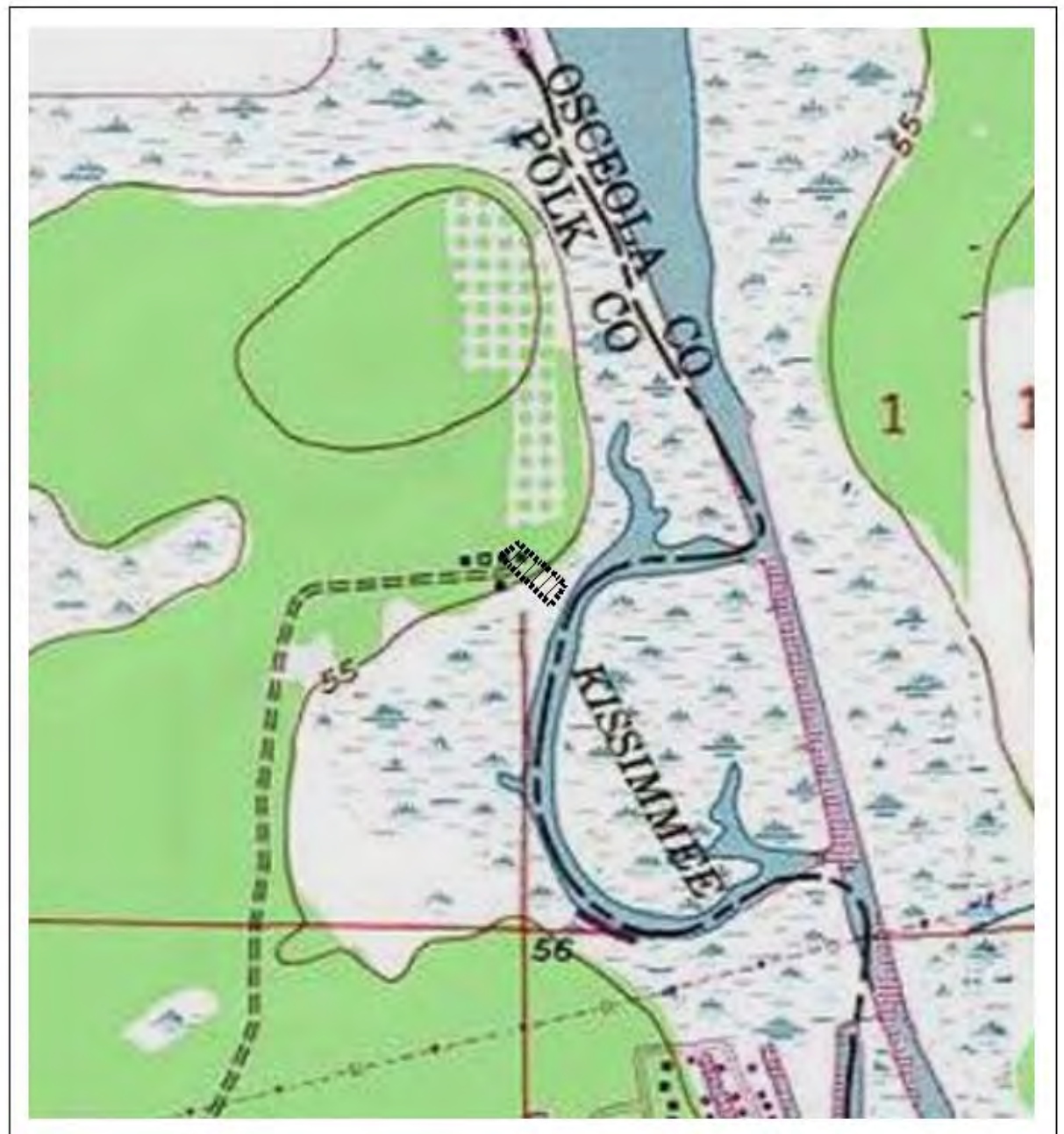
 Proposed NR Boundary

Date: 4/22/2019

1:10,000



Basemap Source: 2013 National
Geographic Society, i-cubed





























UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Shell Hammock Landing

Multiple Name:

State & County: FLORIDA, Polk

Date Received: 7/23/2019 Date of Pending List: 8/9/2019 Date of 16th Day: 8/26/2019 Date of 45th Day: 9/6/2019 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: SG100004350

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review:

☒ Accept ☐ Return ☐ Reject 8/26/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: Built as a way station for steamboats along the Kississimmi River, the property served as a central shipping point as well, and as a rustic hotel for hunters and sportsmen. The board and batten sided, two story house is also a good vernacular example of folk housing, a single pile, hall and parlor type house known locally as a "cracker house". Despite some later alterations to the rear, the house still exhibits the distinctive characteristics of the type.

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept / A & C

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

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

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



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

RON DESANTIS
Governor

LAUREL M. LEE
Secretary of State



July 19, 2019

Dr. Julie Earnstein, Deputy Keeper and Chief,
National Register of Historic Places
Mail Stop 7228
1849 C St, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Dr. Earnstein:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for **Shell Hammock Landing (FMSF#: 8PO07126) in Polk County**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The related materials (digital images, maps, and site plan) are included.

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

Sincerely,

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

RAA/raa

Enclosures