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National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

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This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

☒ New Submission ☐ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Citrus Industry Resources of Theodore Strawn, Inc.

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Development of the Citrus Industry in DeLeon Springs, c. 1872-1942

C. Form Prepared by

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date July 20, 1993

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Suzanne P. Walker / Deputy SHPO
Signature and title of certifying official

8/3/93
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Patricia Adams
Signature of the Keeper

9/13/93
Date of Action

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

| | Page Numbers |
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| E. Statement of Historic Contexts (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.) | 1 - 4 |
| F. Associated Property Types (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.) | 1, 2 |
| G. Geographical Data | 1 |
| H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods (Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.) | 1, 2 |
| I. Major Bibliographical References (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.) | 1, 2 |

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 to amend existing 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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section number E Page 1

Historic Contexts

Section E: Statement Of Historic Contexts

Development of the Citrus Industry in DeLeon Springs, c. 1872-1942

DeLeon Springs is an unincorporated community of approximately 1,600 residents located along U.S. Highway 17 (State Road 15) just five miles north of the city of DeLand. The area occupied by the present community had been occupied off and on by settlers of European origins since the late 17th century and had gained the place name of "Spring Garden" less than a decade after Florida was acquired from Spain in 1821. In 1872, a native of New York named George Norris acquired a large tract of land in the vicinity and began to develop it. He built a saw mill and grist mill, set out orange groves, and in 1877 platted the town of Spring Garden. Other settlers soon followed Norris, and began to develop their own citrus groves. Spring Garden soon acquired a scattering of houses and stores. The improvements that Norris had made to the area were noted by an author named George Barbour who published a guide to the state of Florida in 1884. Barbour described Spring Garden as a "pretty little hamlet," having a cozy hotel and a number of houses.

When the residents of Spring Garden requested the U.S. government to provide their community with a post office in 1885, they discovered that another Florida town was already officially known as Garden Spring, so they changed the name of the settlement to DeLeon Springs, which was also the name of the nearby natural springs. The following year, construction on the Jacksonville, Tampa, and Key West Railroad had reached DeLeon Springs. The line would link major cities on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of Florida and sparked the creation of the a number of other neighboring settlements, including Barberville, DeLand, and Glenwood. The population of DeLeon Springs was approximately 250 when the town was incorporated in 1889.

Several subdivisions were added to the original town plat before the end of the 1880s. These included Beardsley's Map of DeLeon Springs (1886) and Odom's Subdivision (1888). In 1889, several local developers organized the DeLeon Springs Company, and platted the DeLeon Springs Subdivision, a large plat that extended for several miles along the railroad tracks east of the natural spring from which the town got its present name. To attract tourists and settlers, the company published brochures and flyers advertising local accommodations and numerous

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homesites with existing orange groves. A hotel and pavilion were built overlooking the spring and a nearby railroad depot allowed visitors a short walk to accommodations and the spring.

Citrus growing drove the economy of DeLeon Springs and many other Florida communities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dreams of fortunes to be made in raising oranges enticed new settlers to establish groves both large and small in the central region of the state. For more than a decade, Florida enjoyed winters without major freezes and the hundreds of groves produced large quantities of fruit for sale in northern U.S. markets and overseas. By 1889, more than 38,000 acres of orange trees were under cultivation in the state and over 3 million boxes of citrus were shipped to eager customers. Volusia County ranked second statewide in citrus production with nearly 400,000 boxes of oranges shipped from the county that year.

Sudden disastrous freezes in the winter of 1894-1895 destroyed many groves and seriously curtailed citrus production in Florida for several years. During the 1893-1894 season, the state had nearly 3 million bearing orange trees, which produced over 5 million boxes. Only about 90,000 trees survived the freeze, and fruit shipments statewide fell to 150,000 boxes in the 1895-1896 season. Citrus growing in the northern third of the state was abandoned entirely, and many groves in the central and southern regions of Florida were abandoned. Small communities that had sprung up around the growing of oranges and grapefruit, especially along the new railroad lines, vanished off the map.

The freezes destroyed the economy of DeLeon Springs. Many local citrus farmers abandoned their groves, causing the population of the community to drop to nearly half what it had been in 1889. The community became unincorporated in 1895. The residents who remained, however, replanted groves and within a decade the citrus industry had almost fully recovered.

In 1909, the Florida Citrus Exchange was formed as a statewide organization established to assist the marketing of citrus and the regulation of transportation rates. Several growers in DeLeon Springs were among the organizers of the exchange. Earlier attempts to organize growers--the Florida Fruit Exchange, organized in 1884, and the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, established a decade later--had met untimely ends resulting from the mid-1890s freezes. By 1910,

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Florida's citrus industry production nearly totaled levels achieved in the early 1890s. That year, 4.8 million boxes of oranges were shipped from the state and Volusia County growers shipped nearly 350,000 boxes, which ranked the county fifth in statewide citrus production.

The community of DeLeon Springs had almost fully rebounded by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. The replanted citrus groves had fully matured, and new stands of trees had been planted as well. The town had over 200 residents and contained a number of dwellings and stores, plus a brick yard and a sawmill. In 1915, the approximately 1,000 acres of groves in the vicinity of DeLeon Springs produced over 50,000 boxes of citrus. The community was once again incorporated in 1918 but returned to an unincorporated status just two years later.

DeLeon Springs continued to grow during the 1920s and local developers created several new subdivisions and hoped to lure new residents to the community by promoting the nearby natural spring as a health spa and tourist attraction. Improvements to the spring included construction of a concrete retaining wall and spillways, and a hotel and boathouse were also built. By 1925, the town could boast of having both an electric power plant and a community water system. U.S. Highway 17 was rerouted and paved through DeLeon Springs, and a quarter horse race track was built at nearby Spring Garden Ranch. All of these improvements did attract winter visitors and some new permanent residents, but the economy of DeLeon Springs remained rooted in the citrus industry.

Like the rest of the nation, the Great Depression of the 1930s had a damaging effect on the economy of DeLeon Springs. Local businesses went bankrupt; citrus packing houses closed, and a number of growers were forced to sell their groves. The economy remained stagnant and growth of community did not resume until after the end of World War II. Some residents of the area gained employment in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), an emergency agency established under the New Deal to create rural jobs and protect the nation's natural resources. Numerous CCC camps were set up in central Florida to begin an extensive reforestation program. One result of that effort was the creation of the Ocala National Forest, a vast tract of woodland located about twenty miles west of DeLeon Springs.

Today DeLeon Springs is still a largely agricultural community whose economy is based on citrus, the timber industry, and cattle ranching. Residents of the unincorporated town also

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depend in part upon income from tourists traveling along U.S.
Highway 17 between the cities of Ocala and Daytona Beach.
Hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities also attract
visitors to the area.

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Property Types

Section F: Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type: Citrus Industry Resources
Associated with Theodore Strawn, Inc.

II. Description:

The citrus industry resources associated with Theodore Strawn, Inc. in DeLeon Springs are found in the three following districts: 1) the Strawn Historic Agricultural District, 2) the Strawn Historic Citrus Packing House District, and 3) Strawn Historic Sawmill District. The resources in these districts include a citrus packing house, blacksmith shop, office building, machinery house, barns, worker dwellings, and a variety of other structures related to the growing and processing of citrus products. All of these resources are vernacular buildings or structures constructed between c. 1915 and 1941. The buildings range in height from one to two and a half stories and are wood or metal frame structures with wood or metal exterior siding. Most of the buildings are rectangular in plan and rest on masonry pier or wall foundations. Interior spaces are primarily functional, serving to house processing machinery, to store equipment, tools, fuel and grain, or to shelter farm animals and vehicles. Dwellings associated with company operations were intended for seasonal use and were purely utilitarian in design. Simple stoops and entrances provide access to the interior spaces and fenestration is typically regular, comprising double hung sash, pivot, and hopper window types that display a variety of light configurations. Other structures associated with Theodore Strawn, Inc. include a brick well, water tower, storage tanks, and miscellaneous minor structures. Equipment of importance includes that associated with the sorting and packing of citrus products and the sawing and planing of lumber.

III. Significance:

The historic buildings and structures associated with the Strawn company are significant at the local level under National Register criterion A in the areas of agriculture, community planning and development, and industry. They are all associated with the development of the citrus industry in DeLeon Springs and Central Florida. The buildings and structures comprise three separate districts, all of which are related to the operations of a single family operation. The very existence of such a complete complex of resources related to a particular historic agricultural and industrial enterprise is unusual in Florida.

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Property Types

The conversion of agricultural lands to other uses or the loss of historic resources through attrition or their replacement with modern facilities is commonplace throughout the state.

IV. Registration Requirements:

For buildings and structures to be eligible for nomination under this property type they must directly or indirectly have served to support the historic agriculture and industrial operations of the Theodore Stawn Company and must have been constructed during the historic period discussed in Section E. Each of the districts nominated under this property type should possess a concentration of relatively well preserved historic resources. Buildings and other resources considered contributing to the significance of the districts should retain their over all historical physical integrity and appearance.

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Section G: Geographical Data

The resources associated with Theodore Strawn, Inc. that are eligible for nomination under this cover are all found within the community of DeLeon Springs or its immediate vicinity. The geographical limits of the area in which eligible properties may be located are defined by the boundary of Township 16 South on the north, the boundary of Range 29 East on the east, the town limits of the community of Glenwood on the south, and the Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge on the west.

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Survey & Identification Methods

Section H: Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Surveys of the DeLeon Springs area were conducted in 1989 and 1992 as part of a comprehensive survey of historic buildings in Volusia County. The surveys resulted in the documentation of 165 buildings and structures associated with the history of DeLeon Springs.

The survey was conducted by the Volusia County Planning and Zoning Department, using a variety of documentary sources, including historical maps. All buildings constructed before 1942 were recorded in the surveys. The survey team photographed each property, recorded its location on a base map or U.S. Geological Survey map, and included its architectural description and legal description as part of the basic inventory data.

The county planning agency then contracted with Historic Property Associates, Inc. to further research the properties and complete Florida Master Site Files on those that had been identified by the survey. Historic Property Associates conducted additional documentary research on the properties and on the historical development of DeLeon Springs to determine what role the resources had played in the development of the community. The researchers also focused on those personalities and events that may have been significant during the periods of historical development of DeLeon Springs and Volusia County. The properties were analyzed by theme, period of development, and geographical concentration, and criteria were formulated for evaluating their significance in the context of the history of Volusia County. Documents used for historical research were found at a number of locations, including the Halifax Historical Society (Daytona Beach), Stetson University Library (DeLand), P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida (Gainesville), and the Volusia County Courthouse (DeLand). The researchers also conducted numerous interviews with persons having first or second hand knowledge about events or places relevant to the survey.

The research resulted in the production of preliminary and final historical reports on the results of the investigation and in the production of Florida Master Site File Forms on which physical and historical data for each resource were recorded. The reports also made recommendations for the nomination of individual properties or districts in the vicinity of DeLeon Springs to the National Register of Historic Places.

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Survey and Identification Methods

It was decided during the second survey (1992) to conduct further research on the significance of the properties of Theodore Strawn, Inc., one of the most important citrus growers in the area of DeLeon Springs and Volusia County. The research led to the decision that a multiple property cover nomination should be prepared for resources of the Strawn Company found in three districts in the vicinity of DeLeon Springs. Scale maps of each district were prepared and numerous photographs taken to support the written nomination proposals.

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Section number I Page 1 Bibliography

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