

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received NOV 7 1985  
date entered DEC 12 1985

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

1. Name

historic El Retiro

and/or common Encierro

2. Location

street & number Mountain Lake not for publication

city, town x vicinity of Lake Wales

state Florida code 12 county Polk code 105

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: foundation use

4. Owner of Property

name The American Foundation

street & number Post Office Box 3810

city, town Lake Wales vicinity of state Florida

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Polk County Courthouse

street & number East Main Street and Broadway

city, town Bartow state Florida

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes X no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Pinewood is an excellent, relatively unaltered example of Mediterranean Revival architecture. The two-story home is constructed of structural clay tile and finished with stucco. The low pitched, gable roof is surfaced with clay barrel tiles. Window and entrance surrounds are cast stone, and wrought iron balconies accent the tower and projecting pavillion. The interior displays chamfered beams, carved woodwork, and colorful painted tile typical of the Mediterranean Revival style. The prestigious Olmsted Brothers firm of Brookline, Massachusetts, gave special attention to the site plan and landscaping. Pinewood is one of many estates built in the exclusive Mountain Lake residential development north of Lake Wales, Florida. The house and grounds are relatively unaltered from the original appearance in 1932 when the estate was completed.

The Mediterranean Revival style house consists of one-and two-story elements assembled in an asymmetrical manner. The two-story main block of the house rests on a north-northeast axis and has a strong horizontal emphasis. The horizontal massing is interrupted by the placement of towers, projecting ells, and single story, screened porches. The house is constructed of structural clay tile finished with stucco and trimmed with cast stone. Low pitched, gable roofs cover portions of the structure that are one and a half to two stories in height with the exception of conical roofs on the two towers. The single story portions have shed roofs. All of the roofs are surfaced with semi-circular barrel tile laid in alternating concave and convex rows. Three rectangular stuccoed interior chimneys are located along the ridge of the gable roof on the main block. The exterior doors have glazed panels, are made of wood, and are single hinged, french or "pocket". The windows are all wooden casement with two, three, or four lights per case. Many of the second story windows are shuttered and the windows on the principle facades have cast stone and wrought iron ornamentation.

The principal facades of the building are located on the east and west elevations of the main block. A simulated watertable, achieved through a change in the color of stucco, runs the width of the main block. A simple curved moulding, partially concealed by an extensive network of rain gutters, serves as a cornice and parallels the unexposed eaves of the two story portion of the structure.

The western facade faces the grand vista and can be seen by those approaching the estate. Attached to the southern end of the main block is a one and a half story block from which a porch with brick piers and cast stone columns project. Incorporated into the north end is a two-story tower with a two-story ell projecting at an 120° angle from the facade. Continuing this angle is an attached porch constructed of

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1930-1932      **Builder/Architect** G. A. Miller/Charles R. Wait

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Pinewood was one of the last Mediterranean Revival style estates built before the Great Depression threatened Florida's boom-time confidence. The Mountain Lake residential community was intended as a refuge of the highest quality for business entrepreneurs, inventors, and power brokers of the Golden Age. Pinewood personified that image. C. W. Buck, vice president of Bethlehem Steele, obtained the services of Olmsted Brothers for the creation of Pinewood, the firm's last major project before moving their Florida office to Palm Beach in 1932. Olmsted Brothers, in keeping with the philosophy of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., stressed cooperation between landscape architect, owner, architect and builder so that neither the landscape nor the structure would dominate to achieve a final result of environmental harmony. Architect Charles Wait's elegant design was expertly built by G. A. Miller, a builder well versed in the Mediterranean style. The building is significant architecturally as virtually unaltered classic example of the Mediterranean style as well as for its well designed setting.

In May of 1914 New Yorker Fredrick Ruth purchased Iron Mountain and Buck Lake near the fledgling town of Lake Wales, Florida, at that time no more than a hotel and three businesses clustered around the railroad station. Ruth and his associates joined E. C. Stuart and G. V. Tillman of the Lake Wales Land Company to establish the Mountain Lake Corporation.<sup>1</sup> Ruth envisioned the property cleared and planted in citrus, with a portion reserved for the construction of a highly restricted residential area. He was influenced by where he had been reared, Baltimore's Roland Park. Edward Bouton had handled the development of Roland Park and was one of the first U. S. developers to place landscape and construction restrictions on a development. A committee of architects insured that new designs would be compatible with the other houses in the neighborhood. Ruth contacted Bouton for advice and also hired Roland Park's landscape architect, Fredrick Law Olmsted, Jr., to act as the landscape architect for the Mountain Lake Corporation development.

Fredrick Law Olmsted, Jr., (1885-1957), completed the plan for Mountain Lake in 1916. The block, lot and grove designations remain virtually the same today.<sup>3</sup> Olmsted's earlier projects included the Biltmore Arboretum, the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, the Brooklyn Botanical Garden, and Mountain Lake Sanctuary. Appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt, he had served as a member of the Senate Park Commission in 1901 with Burnham, McKim and Saint Gaudins to restore and develop the century-old plans of L'Enfant for Washington.<sup>4</sup> Olmsted was instrumental in the establishment and formal training of landscape architects<sup>5</sup> in the

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(See continuation sheet)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 7.59 acres

Quadrangle name Lake Wales

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	1	7
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 Zone 

4	4	3	9	8	10
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 Easting 

3	10	9	10	2	6	10
---	----	---	----	---	---	----

 Northing

B 

--	--	--

 Zone 

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

 Easting 

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

 Northing

C 

--	--	--

 Zone 

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

 Easting 

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

 Northing

D 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

E 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

F 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

G 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

H 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 5, Block 6, Mountain Lake Corporation, Polk County, Florida, as recorded in Deed Book 943, page 9.

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

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

name/title Julie Adams Scofield/Diana Primelles

organization Department of State  
Bureau of Historic Preservation date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number The Capitol telephone 904-487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *George W. Perry*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date October 28, 1985

### For NPS use only

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

*Amy Schladt* date 12/12/85  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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beveled columns and decorative timbers. A frontispiece and voussoir of cast stone adorns the arched entrance located in the center of the main block. The frontispiece is embellished with a cast stone coat-of-arms and is flanked by decorative vents to each side. Two other entrances and two wrought iron balconets with awning frames are located on this facade.

The eastern facade is oriented to the garden patio and is seen at close range by those entering the house. The formal entrance is through an ell projecting at a right angle from the north end of the facade. The entranceway is an open portal leading into a tiled vestibule. The portal is embraced by an angular, molded door surround of cast stone. A secondary shuttered entrance leading to the morning room is located immediately to the left. A large, stationary window with six lights is located in the southern wall of the ell. Access to the patio and garden from the house is provided by an arched entrance directly opposite the arched entrance of the western facade. The recessed cast stone surround of this entrance is surmounted by an extension of the simulated watertable. A brick porch projects out from the living room at the south end of the facade adjacent to a tower that serves as a private stairway from the living room to the master bedroom upstairs. Two arcaded windows serving the master bedroom are located in a projecting bay braced by a molded abutment.

A two-story service wing projects from the north end of this facade at an angle of 120°. A two-story block containing a three-bay garage is attached to the service wing by an elbowed hyphen. Access to the hyphen from the service wing is provided through a single story, arched breezeway. An efficiency apartment is located above the garage and contains two bedrooms, one bath, a kitchen, and living room. The hyphen is fronted to the west by a porch that provides sheltered passage from the garage to the service wing. The arched double doors of the garage display ornate wrought iron hinges and are flanked by two ornate wrought iron lighting fixtures. Attached to the north side of the garage is a tool shed bearing a half-arched batten door with a single, half-arched glazed panel in it.

Throughout the main living area are plaster walls, octagonal columns, and chamfered beams. Some of the beams have been "antiqued" by the application of an acidic solution and others have a simulated "hand'hewn" finish. Colorful painted tiles (probably of Florida origin) serve as trim on indoor as well as outdoor surfaces. The entrance hall, foyer, and alcove have a wainscotting and trim of this elaborate painted tile work. The alcove fireplace and inglenook are decorated with tile also. The other fireplaces are cast stone with classical ornamentation.

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The fine crafted woodwork is displayed in cabinets, bookshelves, and massive inlaid and carved doors. Windows have smooth, arched plaster surrounds with carved interior shutters. The floors on the first floor of the main block are paved with tile. The alcove and second story floors are oak. The servants' quarters are constructed with plaster walls and oak floors, and are relatively bare of ornamentation. Colored porcelain fixtures and painted tile work are found in the private baths. The basement of the structure is finished with masonry walls and a plaster ceiling. Contained within the basement are the heating plant and a walk-in safe.

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.'s original plan for the Mountain Lake development stressed "the preservation of an informal, natural-appearing landscape centering on the lake."1 The individuality of the residence site and the topography of the individual lot were integral to the initial concept. The main criteria used in determining the site plan for Pinewood was to locate an angle that would offer the finest vista of the grounds and distant surroundings.

The landscaping at Pinewood deliberately compliments the interior spaces of the residence. The enclosed patio-garden with a rock-lined grotta and Spanish tiled fountain enhances the picturesque details of the eastern facade of the building. The arched "loggia" allows light and air to pass through the structure. The eye is then drawn west beyond the sloping front lawn to the man-made pool shaded by large oaks draped with Spanish moss. In the distance are pines and extensive orange groves.

Other landscape elements include a brick wall screening the service area from the western facade. At the far end of the terrace is a Chinese gate screen. The screen is made from a short wall with a large octagonal opening backed by a second, solid wall. Landscape architect W. L. Phillips stated in a letter to Pinewood's original owner, C. Austin Buck, that this form of gate screen "is used in China to keep out evil spirits who can only travel in a straight line so a simple detour is enough to keep them out."2 The oriental theme is reflected also in the construction of the dining room porch opposite the gate screen. An oversized wooden lintel rests on two chamfered cast stone columns. The lintel has an oriental motif carved at either end.

A number of plants and oversized earthenware jars are placed at the entrances and at various locations in the landscape. A wealth of plantings, many set during landscaping operations in the 1920's and 1930's, still exist.

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FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>John Caldwell, A History, Mountain Lake Corporation, 1984, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup>Letter: William L. Phillips to C. Austin Buck; on file at Bok Tower Gardens, Lake Wales, Florida, 8 September 1930.

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United States. Olmsted further developed the leadership that his father had established in the field of landscape architecture. Their work has recently been recognized as nationally significant by the Olmsted Heritage Landscapes Act.

The construction of the winter resort began in 1916, starting with the golf course and clubhouse.<sup>6</sup> Olmsted designed the clubhouse himself and delegated drafting duties to a member of his staff, Charles R. Wait. At that time, the Olmsted Brothers' firm combined landscape architecture with architecture; Olmsted himself designed four houses at Mountain Lake, including his own.<sup>7</sup> After 1917, the firm restricted itself to landscape architecture. The guest house, known as the Colony House, was designed by Wait in 1921 while he was associated with the Massachusetts firm Parsons, Wait and Godell.<sup>8</sup>

C. W. Buck, vice president of Bethlehem Steel, purchased property from the Mountain Lake Corporation in 1929, delegating charge of the landscaping and siting to William Lyman Phillips, a representative of Olmsted Brothers.<sup>9</sup> Phillips requested that Charles Wait collaborate on the preliminary studies for the residence. Charles Wait, Pinewood's architect, designed other homes in addition to the Colony House and was considered by Phillips "...more likely to take a liberal and more cooperative attitude than any other architects who were doing work in Mountain Lake." This reference noted that other buildings were constructed hurriedly without the benefit of collaboration between owner, architect, and landscape architect.<sup>10</sup>

G. A. Miller began construction of the Buck Estate, originally called "El Retiro", in 1930.<sup>11</sup> The project was completed in 1932, near the end of heyday of the popular Mediterranean Revival style in Florida. Miller was Mountain Lake Corporation's first contractor and had been hired by Ruth in 1915.<sup>12</sup> By 1932, Miller was credited with the construction of several nationally significant structures that have been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, including two Mediterranean Revival style hotels the Vinoy Park and the Soreno Hotel in St. Petersburg; the Floridian Hotel, the Wallace S. Building, the Peninsular Telephone Building, and the Kress Building in downtown Tampa, and seventeen other Kress buildings throughout Florida and the United States. Local examples of his work include the packing house for the Lake Wales Citrus Growers' Association and the Lakeview Hotel.<sup>13</sup>

Two of Buck's sons, Louis and Robert, acquired the estate in 1937. Esther Slater Kerrigan later purchased the estate in 1947. She renamed the property "Encierro" and spent winters there until her death in 1951. In 1952 William Woodward Keen of Charleston, South Carolina, bought the



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property, naming it "Keenwood". In 1970 ownership was transferred from the Keen family to the American Foundation and it was named "Pinewood". The American Foundation is the present owner.<sup>14</sup>

Pinewood and the other estates at Mountain Lake were virtually untouched by the various catastrophes which struck the Florida real estate business. Mountain Lake Corporation was spared from failure because, unlike other developments characteristic of early 20th century Florida it was built in a relatively isolated region which still remains primarily agrarian. The agricultural base stabilized the community's economy since the area's prosperity solely did not rely on building construction and land sales. Citrus groves in Mountain Lake and throughout Polk County weathered only very mild freezes, and were not plagued by the Mediterranean fruitfly in the late 1920's as were other groves. The diversification which the Mountain Lake Corporation enjoyed through its participation in the citrus industry prevented its suffering the fate of other boomtime Florida development corporations.

Olmsted's Mountain Lake plan was fully developed by the firm. In 1952, the development was reviewed by E. C. Whiting and William Lyman Phillips of Olmsted Brothers, who verified the faithfulness of the plan's execution and recommended revisions that would preserve the fundamental values which Olmsted had prescribed for the Mountain Lake development.

There has been little incompatible new construction although a changing economy has meant that many of Mountain Lake's larger residences have been subdivided for use as condominiums. Pinewood, however, remains intact, its grounds and structure virtually unchanged since it was constructed in 1932.

<sup>1</sup>Thomas DeC. Ruth, "Mountain Lake January 18, 1915--January 18, 1975," 1975.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>John Caldwell, A History, Mountain Lake Corporation, 1984.

<sup>4</sup>W. L. Phillips and E. C. Whitney, "Frederick Law Olmsted--1870--1957, Appreciation of the Man and his Achievements," Landscape Architecture, April, 1958.

<sup>5</sup>Laura Wood Roper, FLO, A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted, 1973, p. 475.

<sup>6</sup>Op. Cit. 1

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<sup>7</sup>Op. Cit. 3

<sup>8</sup>Op. Cit. 3

<sup>9</sup>Letter: William L. Phillips to C. Austin Buck; on file at Bok Tower Gardens, Lake Wales, Florida, 5 June 1929.

<sup>10</sup>Letter: William L. Phillips to C. Austin Buck; on file at Bok Tower Gardens, Lake Wales, Florida, 13 December 1931.

<sup>11</sup>"G. A. Miller Nationally Known Builder," Lake Wales Highlander, 19 January 1932, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>Op. Cit. 3

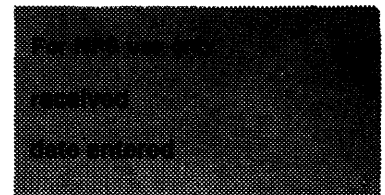
<sup>13</sup>Op. Cit. 3

<sup>14</sup>Letter: Marie C. Kirch to Mrs. Curtis Bok; on file at Bok Tower Gardens, Lake Wales, Florida, 4 August 1970.

<sup>15</sup>John Caldwell, A History, Mountain Lake Corporation, 1984, p. 122.

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