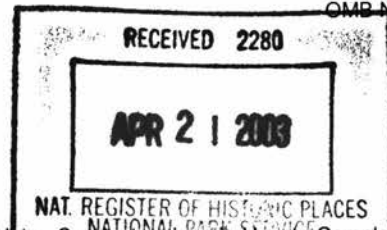


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 PORT THEATRE

other names/site number FMSF #GU135

2. Location

street & number 314 Reid Avenue N/A  not for publication

city or town Port St. Joe N/A  vicinity

state Florida code FL county Gulf code 045 zip code 32456

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.)

Janet Snyder Matthews April 17, 2003  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

for  
Edson B. Beall Signature of the Keeper  
6-5-03 Date of Action

Port Theatre  
Name of Property

Gulf Co., FL  
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
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

"N/A"

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE: theater  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store, auction house  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK  
walls BRICK  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof METAL  
other STUCCO  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 **PORT THEATRE, PORT ST. JOE, GULF  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**SUMMARY**

The Port Theatre is located on 314 Reid Avenue, in Port St. Joe, Gulf County, Florida. The 1938 theatre has an "L" footprint, and contains a manager's apartment. The entry facade was built in the Art Deco Style. A large 45'x 120', three story height, rectangular portion of the building is located along the western border of the property, and makes a connection to Reid Avenue with the 21'x 45', two story "L." The Port Theatre has a continuous concrete slab foundation with brick exterior walls around a steel frame, and a metal standing seam roof supported by steel girders and trusses. The building's major alteration was an addition of a concrete platform in the north central portion of the auditorium in 1985, and the change in bathroom location in 1999. The theatre was severely damaged by hurricanes in 1985 and 1995.

**SETTING**

Highway 98 runs parallel to Reid Avenue, one block West of the Port Theatre. Highway 98 is a main thoroughfare that generally follows the Gulf of Mexico's coastline along Florida's panhandle. Reid Avenue is the main street and historic commercial center of downtown Port St. Joe. The Port Theatre is located at the center of Reid Avenue. The neighborhood is predominantly made up of retail, service shops, and restaurants. The Port Theatre is also located less than two blocks from Highway 71, which is the secondary major arterial highway that runs inland and north. The theatre was built with the main block on the west half of property lots, with the east half open along Reid Avenue except for the narrow entry "L." By the 1940s a Reid Avenue business had built up to the wall on the north side, and there were two shops built at the southwest corner of the east elevation (see Sanborn map). By the 1970s the space to the south of the entrance was partially filled with a one-story commercial building.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**Exterior**

The front/east entry faces Reid Avenue, with a recessed entry at the first story, and an extended metal marquee with metal and neon "PORT" sign (Photos #1&2). A vertical metal sign with the neon word "THEATRE," is attached to the center of the upper elevation. The elevation has a five part sculpted parapet. The edges of the elevation are textured with vertical, rounded fluting that rises from the sidewalk to the parapet. Green tile flooring and stucco walls and ceiling comprise the recessed entry with two sets of double-doors (Photo #3). Each of the double wooden doors has a semi-circular large piece of glass. The original ticket booth used to be located just inside the recess. The booth has been removed, but its metal safe and brick foundation are still present. To the north of the entry is a single door to a steep stairway that leads to the balcony. During the era of segregation this was the entrance for black patrons. This stairway also led the manager's second floor apartment. The east elevation of the main rectangular block of the building is a solid three story brick wall with four pilasters running the height of the elevation.

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Section number 7 Page 2 **PORT THEATRE, PORT ST. JOE, GULF  
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The northern elevation of the building's "L" adjoins the wall of a store to the north that rises one story (Photos #1&4). The upper portion of the two-story elevation has four windows. The three-story portion has four windows at the second story level, and three windows on the third story level. The two-story roofline has a single stepped-parapet, and the three-story roofline has a parapet with two steps.

The west elevation has one window at the second story level near the north corner (Photo #4). The large words "Port Theatre" are outlined in white paint on the broad brick elevation (Photo #5). There are three double metal doors on the ground level that lead out from the auditorium into the alley (Photo #6). One of those sets of doors is no longer functional as a door since a handicapped bathroom was installed in the area leading to the door. There is one set of double metal doors at the south corner, at stage level, for unloading to the stage (Photo #7). Above these stage doors there is a large opening at a second floor level that previously contained several generations of air conditioning systems. Currently there is a glass door and small platform rebuilt where it had supported the air conditioning unit.

The south elevation of the main rectangular block has a stepped parapet like the north elevation, and two pilasters run the height of the elevation (Photo #7). The two-story "L" that extends to Reid Avenue has four windows in the second floor level. A one-story retail store located in the bend of the "L" shaped theatre building adjoins the wall of the two-story portion.

**Interior**

The floors are concrete, and the ceilings are open to the rafters. Originally there were pressboard ceilings, but they were ruined by hurricanes. The main doors opens into the reception area that has a rising inclined floor (Photo #8). The original white wood wall covering and broad fluted molding remains. The ceiling joists, most of which are original, are exposed to view. This portion of the building was the least damaged by the hurricanes. The inclined floor becomes level at the junction with the main block of the building. Damaged linoleum tiles remain across this elevated area of floor (Photo #9). In the northwest corner is a stairway that makes a quarter turn to the second floor (Photo #10). The stairs and its wall are original. Under the stairs is a new bathroom. Bathrooms originally existed on the second floor. The elevated floor served as a lobby to the main auditorium area of the theatre. A short wooden wall separates the two, but historically a full wall with a viewing window divided the two areas. The auditorium is an open space that rises three stories. The floor into the auditorium is a slanted, declining floor, with two aisles that provide circulation between three areas of seating (Photo #11). A raised concrete pad occupies the center aisle space a short way into the auditorium. The slanted floor becomes level approximately at the halfway point. Steel scaffolding and rigging for the stage and curtains is suspended between the east and west walls above the location where the wooden stage used to be (Photo #12). Portions of decorative paneling remain on the east wall of the auditorium space (Photo #13). Three sets of metal doors in the west wall exit into an alleyway.

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The second floor, accessed from the northwest corner stairs and Reid Avenue side entrance (segregated) stairs, has been reconstructed. This level exists only at the north end of the auditorium. Historically a short rise of steps accessed a balcony, but the balcony has not been rebuilt. Steps rise to a projection room that extends into the space at the third story level. It is made of firebrick framed by lengths of steel (Photo #14). Various projection holes are in its south wall. From the second level there is access through a door into the apartment above the "L." The apartment is a great-room with living, dining, bedroom and kitchen. The space has been rebuilt with the kitchen space retained against the west wall. A bath is in the northeast corner, rather than as originally located in the center of the room. A large closet spans the east end.

The Port Theatre features Art Deco design elements on its main facade, making it the most high style building on the Reid Avenue commercial strip. The acoustics within the three-story auditorium space is exceptional. A spoken voice at the south, stage end of the auditorium, can be clearly heard at the north end, rear.

**ALTERATIONS**

In an effort to reestablish the movie theatre, in 1985, the raised concrete platform was built in the north end of the auditorium. It was intended to be a projection room for a double theatre. That same year Hurricane Kate blew off the roofing material. Water damage began and continued until 1995. Without a viable roof, most interior porous materials rotted. In 1995 a new owner began removing the collapsed and rotting material, and the remaining roof materials were removed. While the building was exposed, Hurricane Opal struck, dumping tons of water into the building. In 1996, a standing seam metal roof was installed. Pictures were taken of everything before tearing anything down. The damage was so extensive that anything that could be saved was salvaged. The plaster-walled ticket booth began to collapse and was removed. The first floor of the "L" received less water damage than any other part of the building. New bathrooms, second floor level, and apartment were rebuilt. All primary historic spaces were retained, and the level of the second floor was reproduced.

Despite the extensive damage to the building and need for repairs, the building retains its integrity to a remarkable degree. Most of historic materials and theatre special arrangements have been retained. The Art Deco Style treatment of the façade is largely intact, and still maintains a distinct and significant presence on the main commercial thoroughfare of Port St. Joe.

**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)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

**Period of Significance**

1938-1953

**Significant Dates**

1938

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

R.N. McEachren Construction, Builder

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of Repository

# \_\_\_\_\_

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Section number 8 Page 1 **PORT THEATRE, PORT ST. JOE, GULF  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**SUMMARY**

The Port Theatre is nominated to the National Register for its significance at the local level under criterion A in the area of Entertainment. The period of significance is 1938-1953. The theatre hosted movies, plays, concerts, traveling vaudeville, and other events. The first and only theatre in the city, the Port in many ways served as a community center.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Old St. Joseph was founded in 1835 and experienced fast growth as a city. There was an influx of wealthy planters, merchants and businessmen. The most notable event in the early town's history was the 1838 convening of the Florida Territory's constitutional convention. To qualify for statehood, the territory had to adopt a constitution. Statehood was granted in 1845 (Gannon 1993; 37). The city's growth was short lived however, for in July and August of 1841, yellow fever was brought to the port by a ship from the West Indies. It killed much of the population, and spread it to other communities in the region. Later that year, a devastating hurricane and resulting tidal wave all but finished the destruction of the population and the area was abandoned for generations. In 1904 people once again began to migrate to Port St. Joe. The railroad came in 1909, which helped to bring more growth. Early Port St. Joe was known for being an enjoyable town with a waterfront board-walk, dance hall, and merry-go-round. Located on the beach, many came for long walks, picnicking, fishing, and boating. In 1923, Reid Avenue, the main commercial thoroughfare named for Robert Raymond Reid, who was the chairman of the 1838 constitution convention, became important enough to merit streetlights. This was a dramatic event in a community that had no electricity only four years earlier.

The port city was particularly known for the forestry products of the region, and the St. Joe Paper Company built a paper mill on the edge of the bay in 1938. The mill was an economic boost to the city, providing 750 jobs in the midst of the Great Depression. Within this period of local economic optimism and expansion, the Martin Theatre Company chose to build a theatre in the city. This also coincided with preparations for a celebration of the centennial of the 1838 constitution convention. By 1940, the population of Port St. Joe was 2,400.

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The first edition of The Star, the local newspaper, dated October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1937, carried an article about the planning for a large theatre in Port St. Joe. The article stated "The structure, which will be 45 by 120 feet will be erected on four lots adjoining the Miles Ten Cent store and will be of steel and brick construction." On Christmas Eve,

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1937, The Star reported, "Work Begins on Ritz Theatre." The article reads:

After considerable delay, work started this week on the new theatre building for Martin and Davis on Third Avenue adjoining the Miles Hurlbut block of buildings. A shed for storage of tools and cement has been constructed and the huge steel roof beams and a carload of gravel are on the ground, with another car of gravel and two cars of cement on the railroad siding waiting to be unloaded. The Theatre proper will be 120 by 45 feet with a 22 by 44 foot foyer extending to the sidewalk. It will contain a stage 16 ½ x 35 feet, which will be large enough to accommodate large road shows. Seating capacity will be main floor 758; white balcony 132; colored balcony 134; total 1,024. Restrooms will be provided for both white and colored and a modern apartment is incorporated in the building for the use of the theatre manager. Name of the new theatre will be the 'Ritz' in accordance with the majority of the playhouses operated in the Martin and Davis chain. The front of the structure will be of the latest modernistic design and will be outlined with neon tubing, similar to the theatre in Panama City (Star,:Dec.24,1937).  
[The theatre never was named the "Ritz."]

According to the 1940 Sanborn Map, the building had automatic sprinklers near the fireproof projection booth.

L. C. Thompson, the foreman of the R. N. McEachren Construction Company, which handled all of the work for Martin and Davis, was in charge of the theatre construction. He enforced Mr. Martin's objection to paying laborers 25 cents hour. Martin said 15 cents was enough and he would not pay over 20 cents. Martin instructed Thompson to "Stop all work, place all material in the storage shed, nail up the door and pay all bills," if labor could not be secured for 20 cents an hour. Interestingly, on October 24<sup>th</sup> of 1938, a minimum wage law went into effect. It required that 25 cents an hour be paid for an interstate industry, and included provisions for time and a half over 44 hours.

During the period of early construction, Bill Turner, the first manager of the theatre, conducted the enterprise as an outdoor theatre on Third Street. It was called the Port Theatre. The theatre resembled a stockade because of a high fence. The seats were wooden benches with backs attached (Parker). R.E. Martin secured a 90-day permit for this activity. There were delays to the construction, and residents made complaints to City Commissioners for patrons who had gotten colds and pneumonia after attending the open-air theatre. Mayor Joe Sharit notified Theatre owners the open-air theatre would be closed until the weather warmed, unless work on the theatre building started immediately. This brought results and the pouring of the foundation was started. Work again stopped due to wage disputes, and commissioners decided to declare the open-air theatre a public menace to the community's health. Eventually, these disputes were overcome and the construction was completed.



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Section number 8 Page 3 **PORT THEATRE, PORT ST. JOE, GULF  
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On June 20, 1938, the Port Theatre opened at 3 p.m. for its first movie. Admission was 10 cents and 25 cents for the lower floor, and 10 cents and 15 cents for balcony seats. The theatre opened with Rudy Vallee and Rosemary Lane in "Gold Diggers in Paris." From the beginning a wide variety of presentations took place at the theatre. Immediately production was begun for a stage show (Star, 10 June 1938). The show was called "Follies Tropical" and had a cast of 35 persons, including Joe Penner and Kay Sutton. The Port was also used in imaginative ways to counter the ravages of the Depression. On August 13, a "Lucky Buck" Auction was held in the theatre with manager Bill Turner as the auctioneer. The intent was for local merchants to donate an item or two for the auction. In return their store would be given "lucky bucks" to award customers who either spent money or paid on back accounts due. For every dollar spent, ten "bucks" were given. After the auction, the Star reported that a total of \$162,210 in lucky bucks was spent at the auction. On August of 1938 free admission was given to anyone under 12 who presented a 1938-1939 mail order catalog at the door of the theatre. It encouraged customers to throw out mail order catalogs and buy from local merchants.

On September 30, 1938, the original manager, Bill Turner, resigned his position. Roy Williams was the second manager. On November 4, 1938, Williams presented a special show, "Sons of the Legion" with 30% of all tickets sold by Gulf County Post #116, American Legion, were given to the post. Ben Rivers was the third manager from 1942 until 1946, and was civic minded and youth oriented. Manager Norris McCollum followed Ben Rivers' tenure. In 1952, J. Ohlinger became the new manager having worked for the Martin Theatres for years. By December of 1952, Paul V. Player was the manager.

During World War II, soldiers whose ships were docked at the port attended the movies, and community events were held to promote the war effort. In 1941, admission was free for defense corps members. Also in that year, Grandpappy's Pine Ridge Revue performed on the stage and featured the Arkansas Hot Shots. In 1942 a "Barn Dance" and show was hosted with admission prices ranged from 11 cents to 46 cents for children and adults. In October an all-local amateur contest was held, and a "Halloween Spook Show" (Star, June 26, 1942; Oct. 29; Oct.30). That year a Christmas party for children was given, sponsored by the Kiwanis, Rotary, and Pilot clubs. Prior to Christmas the next year an event called a Toy Matinee was held. Any child bringing a new or used toy was admitted free to the movies. The Boy Scouts had 4 days to paint and repair any donated toys that were then given away on Christmas morning from the theatre stage (Dec.18, 1942; Dec.20, 1943).

In February 1943 a sensational "March of Time" film played at the Port Theatre. This was "filmed on the Russian front by 160 cameramen of whom 30 were killed taking the pictures. It shows authentic scenes in the air, in the trenches and on the water" (Star, 24 February 1943). A Red Cross Drive was conducted at the theatre as part of a nation-wide effort to raise funds for the Red Cross (Star, April 2, 1943). The paper also announced another event, "Jamboree to Sell War Stamps to be Held at Theatre." Admission was to be by Purchase of War Bond Stamps "to meet quota" for War Bond purchases. Fifteen Panama City Tyndall Field Orchestra members played on the stage for 40 minutes before the movie "Great Guns" was played. Port St. Joe Pilot Club and 18 cooperating businesses were helping to make the "War Stamp Jamboree" possible. Adult tickets were \$1.00

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Section number 8 Page 4 **PORT THEATRE, PORT ST. JOE, GULF  
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and children 50 cents. The patrons were allowed to keep their stamps so, in effect, they were seeing the show for free. The Star later reported that the area was awarded a Certificate of Merit from the U.S. Treasury, Department for War Savings Program. Other events during the war years included a Women Army Corps recruiting presentation, and a ladies group's fashion show. A regional "All Star High School Band," including students from Port St. Joe, presented a concert, as did Ozzie Nelson & his Orchestra. The high school theatre program put on the musical, "Next of Kin." Such diversity of public presentations continued following the war.

The theatre closed in 1967 with the last movie shown at the Port Theatre being James Bond's "Thunderball." The Port Theatre stood empty for nearly thirty years. The City of Port St. Joe applied to obtain grant money to restore the building, but because they did not own the building their request was denied. Private owners, Bill Lyles and William Crawford began renovating it into a twin theatre, but Hurricane Kate in 1985 severely damaged the roof and the building was boarded up. Current owners, Wade and Paula Clark purchased the building in 1995 and have begun restoring it while retaining the integrity of the original materials whenever possible. The Port Theatre, used for entertainment, fund raising, and patriotic drives, was the center of community life during the Great Depression and World War II, two of the most critical periods in the history of Port St. Joe and the nation.

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Chambers, Ruth Coe, The Chinaberry Album, Mercury House, Inc, San Francisco, 1988.

Monsos, Mike, A Preservation and Restoration Handbook for Theatres, (thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Utah for Master of Science, Graduate School of Architecture, April 1999.

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Porter, Louise M., The Lives of St. Joseph, Great American Publishing Co., Chattanooga, TN 1975.

The Star newspaper, October 29, 1937, Number 1, Volume 1, front page. Also various editions of The Star from 1937 through Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, 1953.

State Library of Florida, Photo Archives, "Port St. Joe, Street Scene," 1940s.

Wall, Joseph Frazier, Alfred I. DuPont The Man and His Family, Oxford University Press, Inc., Oxford, 1990.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	6	6	6	3	9	4	0	3	2	9	9	1	4	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Wade, Paula/Robert O. Jones, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date April 2003

street & number 500 S. Bronough Street telephone 850-245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Wade and Paula Ward

street & number 314 Reid Avenue telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Port St. Joe state FL zip code 32456

**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.

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Section number 10 Page 1 **PORT THEATRE, PORT ST. JOE, GULF  
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**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**PARCEL I:**

North 21 feet of Lot 14 of Block 15, and the West 45 feet of the South 9 feet of Lot 14, of Block 15, and the West 45 feet of Lot 16, Block 15, of the City of Port St. Joe, Florida, according to the recorded plat of said City as filed in the Public Records of Gulf County, Florida; said land being further described as follows, to wit: A tract, piece or parcel of land 21 feet by 90 feet off of said Lot 14 in said Block 15, said 21 feet fronting on Reid Avenue of the City of Port St. Joe, Florida, and extending back a distance of 90 feet from said Reid Avenue to an alley running through said Block 15, being in the North and/or Northwest part of said Lot 14 in said Block 15; also, a piece or parcel of land 9 feet by 45 feet off of said Lot 14, in said Block 15, said 9 feet fronting on an alley running through said Block 15, and extending back from said alley a distance of 45 feet, being in the South and/or Southwest part of said Lot 14, in said Block 15; and also a piece or parcel of land 30 feet by 45 feet off said Lot 16, in Block 15, said 30 feet fronting on an alley running through said Block 15 and extending back from said alley a distance of 45 feet, being in the West and/or Northwest part of said Lot 16, in said Block 15, all said land being in Block 15 of the City of Port St. Joe, Florida, according to the recorded plat of said City as filed in the Public Records of Gulf County, Florida.

**PARCEL II:**

West (back) 45 feet of Lot 18 and West (back) 45 feet of Lot 20, Block 15, of the City of Port St. Joe, Florida, according to Plat thereof recorded among the Public Records of Gulf County, Florida, said land being further described as a lot 60 feet by 45 feet, said 60 feet fronting on an alley running through said Block 15, and extending back a distance of 45 feet from said alley in said Block 15 and being a part of the West and/or Northwest part of said Lots 18 and 20, said Block 15, according to plat thereof recorded among the Public Records of Gulf County, Florida.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary encompasses the property historically associated with the Port Theatre.

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National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number      Photo      Page   1   **PORT THEATRE, PORT ST. JOE, GULF  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**PHOTOGRAPHIC LIST**

1. Port Theatre, 314 Reid Avenue, Post St. Joe
2. Gulf County, Florida
3. Gabriel and River Clark
4. 8 x 10s March, 2001  
5 x 7s June, 2002
5. Port Theatre
6. East, main facade from Reid Avenue, looking west
7. Photo #1 of 14

Items 1 through 5 are the same for the following photographs.

6. East elevation marquee, looking west
7. Photo #2 of 14
  
6. Main doors, looking west
7. Photo #3 of 14
  
6. Northwest corner showing north and west elevations, looking southeast
7. Photo #4 of 14
  
6. Detail of painted sign on west elevation, looking east
7. Photo #5 of 14
  
6. West elevation metal doors, looking east
7. Photo #6 of 14
  
6. Southwest corner showing west and south elevations, looking east
7. Photo #7 of 14
  
6. Interior of entrance area, looking east
7. Photo #8 of 14
  
6. Raised area of lobby and corner stairway, looking west
7. Photo #9 of 14

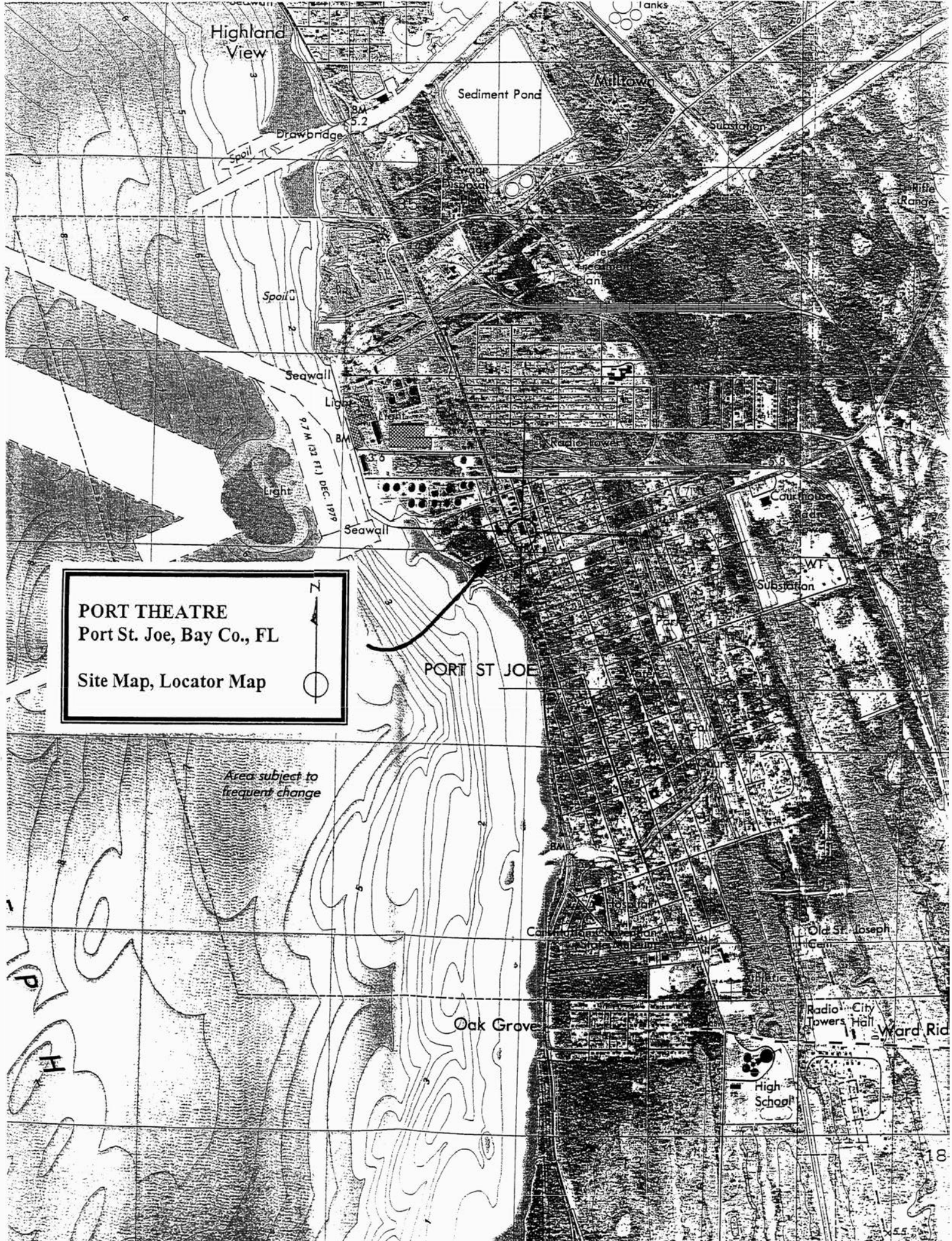
**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Photo \_\_\_\_\_ Page 2 **PORT THEATRE, PORT ST. JOE, GULF  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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- 6. Interior stairway from Reid Avenue entrance, looking east
- 7. Photo #10 of 14
  
- 6. Interior of theatre auditorium area showing steel beams for balcony, looking north
- 7. Photo #11 of 14
  
- 6. South end of auditorium area showing steel stage rigging, looking south
- 7. Photo #12 of 14
  
- 6. East interior wall of auditorium area showing paneling ruminants, looking southeast
- 7. Photo #13 of 14
  
- 6. Projection room, looking north
- 7. Photo #14 of 14



Highland View

Sediment Pond

Milltown

Drawbridge

Substation

Spoil

Swage disposal

Rifle Range

Spoil

Seawall

Light

Light

Seawall

Radio tower

Courthouse

Substation

**PORT THEATRE**  
Port St. Joe, Bay Co., FL  
Site Map, Locator Map



PORT ST JOE

*Area subject to frequent change*

Carroll County Courthouse

Old St. Joseph

Oak Grove

High School

Radio City Towers Hall

Ward Rd







**PORT THEATRE, Port St. Joe, Gulf Co., Florida**

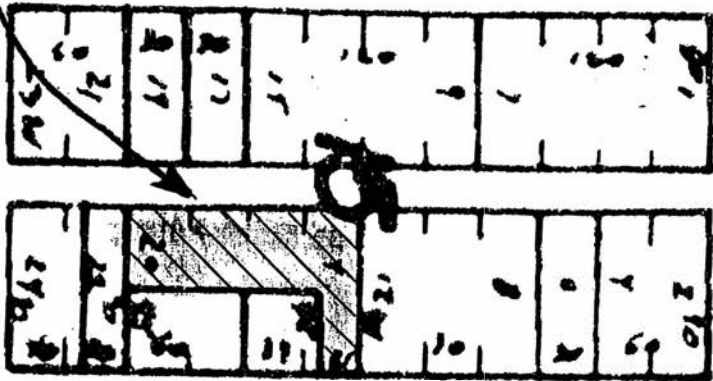
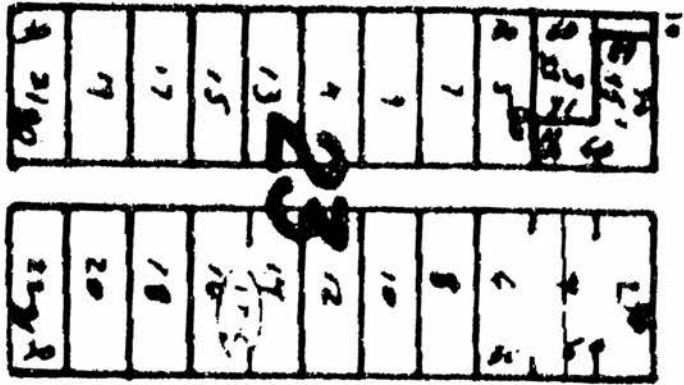
**Street scene with theatre, 1940s  
State of Florida, Photo Archives**

PORT THEATRE  
Port St. Joe, Bay Co., FL  
Site Map



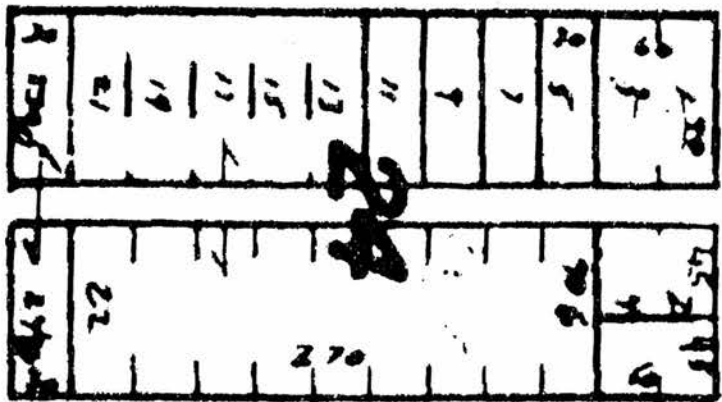
— HWY 98

to Panama City



REID

AVE.

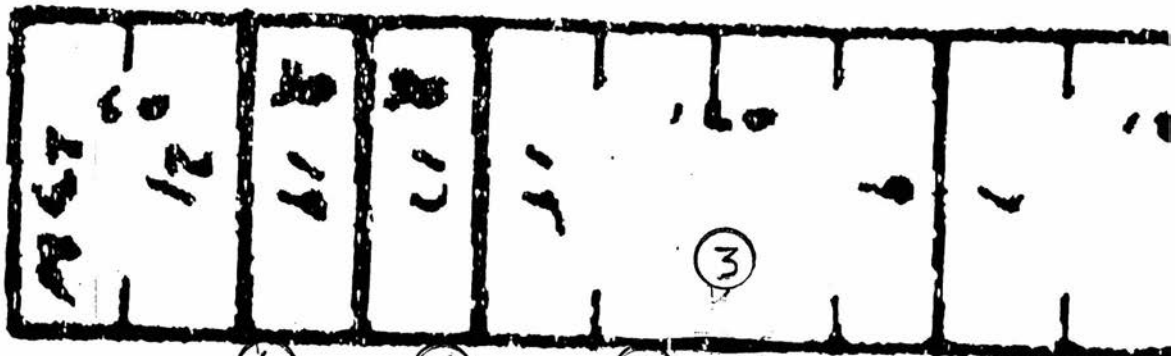


WILLIAMS

AVE.

UY 98

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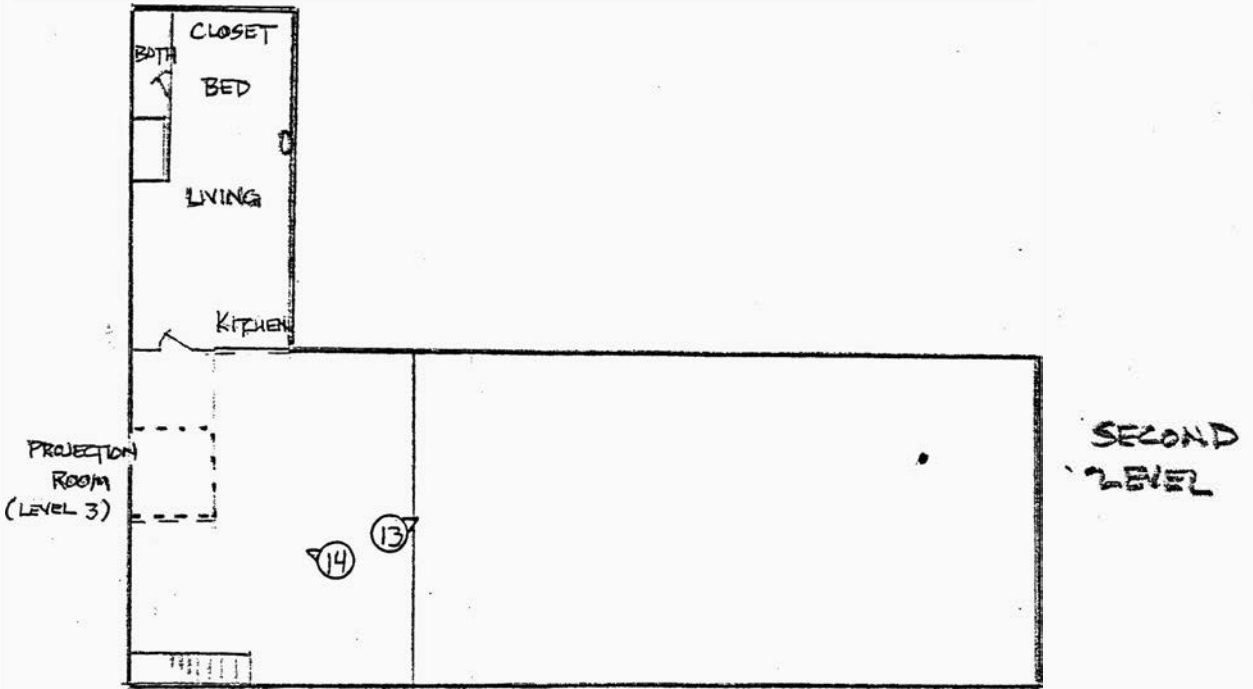
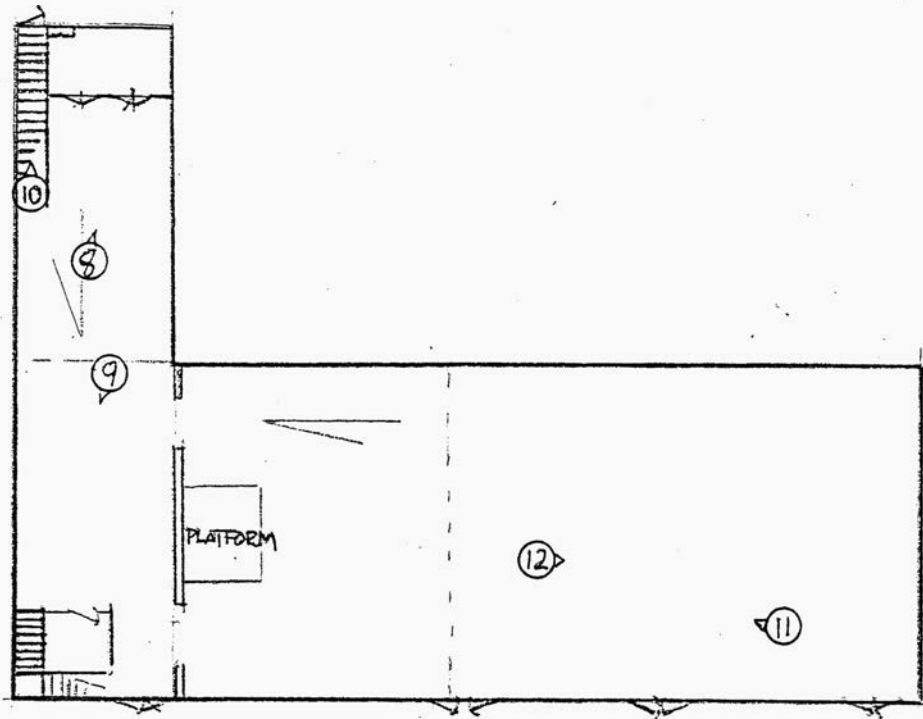


RE

PORT THEATRE  
 Port St. Joe, Bay Co., FL  
 Site Map, Photo Diagram

AVE.





PORT THEATRE, PORT ST JOE,  
 GULF COUNTY, FLORIDA

Floor Plan & Photo Diagram

VIDEO MERCHANT

Ship Your Packages  
Here via UPS

VCR  
REPAIR

Video

PORT

Antique Mall  
OPEN TUES THRU SAT  
AUCTION Friday 7pm

Antique Mall  
OPEN TUES THRU SAT  
AUCTION Friday 7pm

OPEN

719  
Antique Mall  
AUCTIONS  
Fri 5pm-8pm  
Sat 10am-5pm

Antique Mall  
AUCTIONS  
Fri 5pm-8pm  
Sat 10am-5pm



POTTY THEATRE, POST ST JOE, GOLF CO., FL #1



THEATRE

PORT

Antique Mall  
OPEN  
AUCTION every Friday 7pm

Antique Mall  
AUCTION every Friday 7pm



OPEN  
Video  
Merchant  
SERVICE  
RENTALS

OPEN

FRIDAY 7pm

Antique Mall  
AUCTION every Friday 7pm



PORT TUESDAY, PORT ST JOE, GULF CO., FL

#2



FR  
800-4  
WADE  
229-

PORT THEATRE, PORT ST JOE, GULF CO, FL #3



PORT  
THEATRE

DAIRY FRESH

PORT TWENTY, PORT ST JOE, GULF CO, FL # 4

A black and white photograph of a brick building facade. The building is made of dark bricks. On the left side, there is a small, dark window. The central part of the image features a large, faded sign with the words "PORT" and "THEATRE" stacked vertically. The letters are light-colored and appear to be painted or stenciled onto the brick. The sign is somewhat weathered and less legible due to fading. The overall scene is captured from a low angle, looking up at the building.

PORT  
THEATRE

PORT TUESDAY, PORT ST JOE, GULF CO, FL #5





PORT TUESDAY, PORT ST JOE, GULF CO, FL #6



RE

Antique Mall  
OPEN TUES THRU SAT  
AUCTION Friday 7pm

AU  
FR

FORD

PORT THEATRE, PORT ST JOE, GULF CO., FL #7



PORT TWENTEE, PORT ST JOE, GOLF CO, FL #8



PORT YUENYUÉ, PORT ST JOE, GULF CO, FL

#9

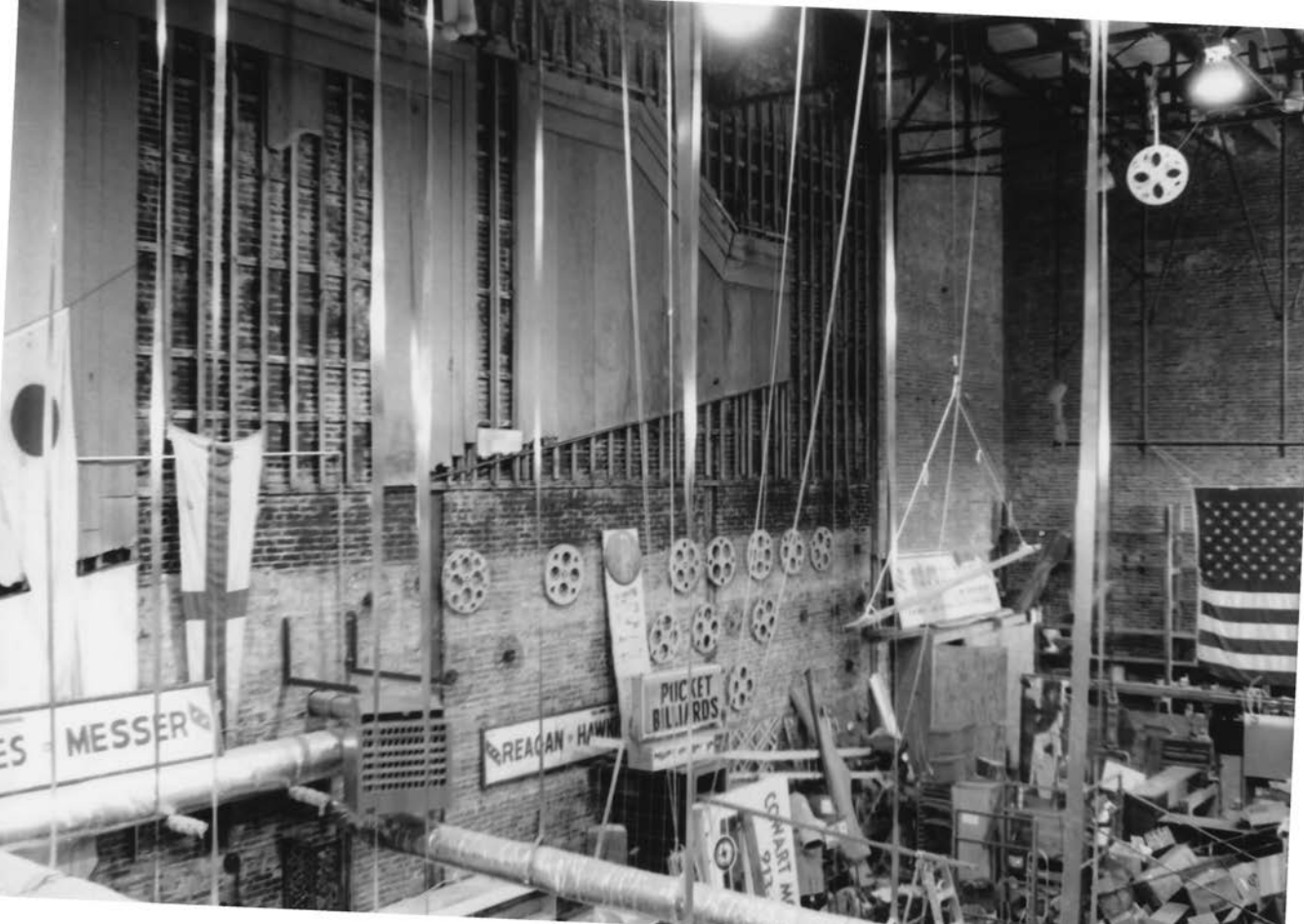




PORT THEATRE, PORT ST JOE, GULF CO. FL  
#10



PORT TUENTRE, PORT ST JOE, GULF CO, FL #11



ES MESSER

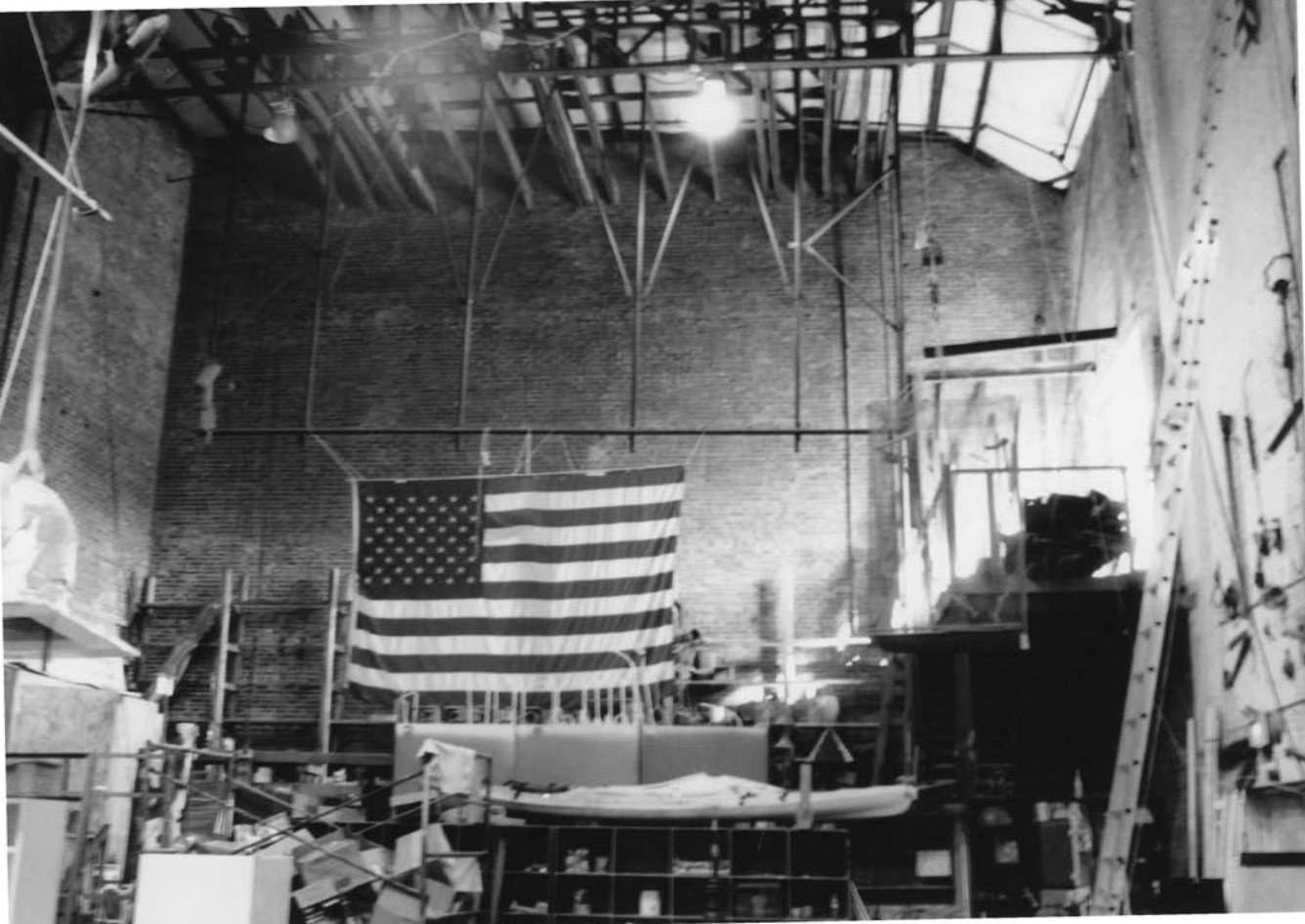
REAGAN HAWAII

PICTET BILLARDS

SMART M



PORT THEATRE, PORT ST JOE, GULF CO, FL #12

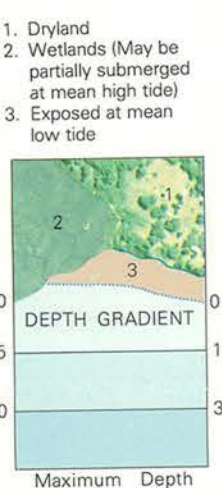


PORT THEATRE, PORT ST JOE, GULF CO, FL #13

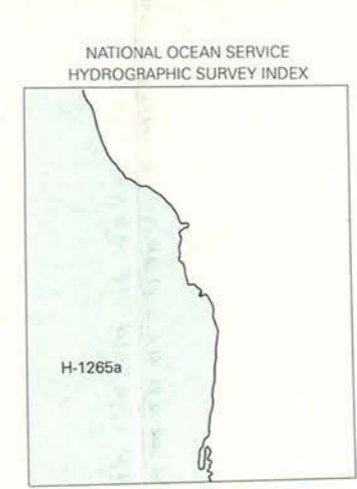
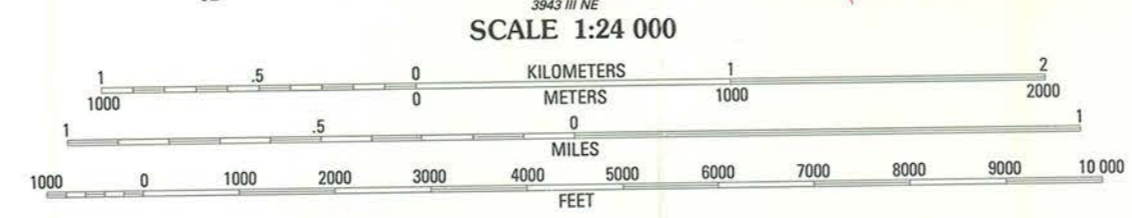
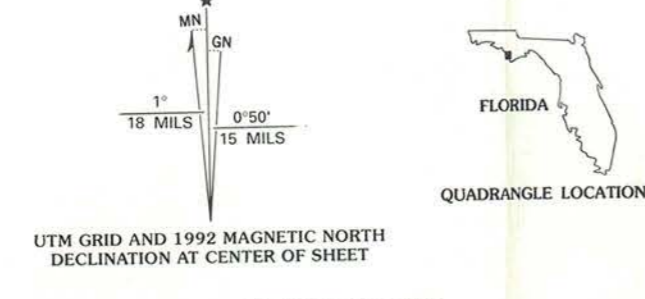




PORT TWENTRE, PORT ST JOE, GOLF CO, FL # 14



Produced by the United States Geological Survey and the National Ocean Service  
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA  
Orthophotomaps prepared from aerial photographs taken January 10, 1976. Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken January 1975. Field checked 1976. Map edited 1982.  
Bathymetry compiled by the National Ocean Service from tide-coordinated hydrographic surveys for navigational purposes. Mean low water (dotted line) and mean high water (solid line) compiled by NOS from tide-coordinated aerial photographs. Apparent shoreline (outer edge of vegetation) shown by photomicroscopy.  
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Florida coordinate system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic).  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 16 1927 North American Datum  
The difference between 1927 North American Datum and North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) for 7.5-minute intersections is given in USGS Bulletin 1875. The NAD 83 is shown by dashed corner ticks.  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map.  
Photorevised from 1990 source; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Boundaries revised and names verified 1992.



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface ——— Light-duty road, hard or improved surface ———  
Secondary highway, hard surface ——— Unimproved road ———  
Trails ———

Interstate Route U. S. Route State Route

CONTOUR INTERVAL 2 METERS  
SUPPLEMENTARY CONTOUR INTERVAL 1 METER  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER  
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER  
BATHYMETRIC CONTOUR INTERVAL 1 METER WITH SUPPLEMENTARY 0.5 METER CONTOURS—DATUM IS MEAN LOWER LOW WATER  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE  
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 0.4 METER

BASE MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
BATHYMETRIC SURVEY DATA COMPLIES WITH INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC ORGANIZATION (IHO) SPECIAL PUBLICATION 44 ACCURACY STANDARDS AND/OR STANDARDS USED AT THE DATE OF THE SURVEY  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
AND NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20852  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

PORT ST. JOE, FLA.  
29085-G3-TB-024  
1982  
MINOR REVISION 1992  
DMA 3943 IV SE-SERIES 98470

PORT THEATRE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Port Theatre  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: FLORIDA, Gulf

DATE RECEIVED: 4/21/03 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/16/03  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/01/03 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/05/03  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 03000508

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 6-6-03 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the  
National Register

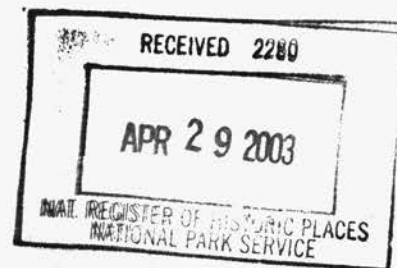
RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

**Ralph J. Rooney**  
3984 Holin Lane  
North Port, Florida 34287  
email flt160@yahoo.com  
(941) 423-2949



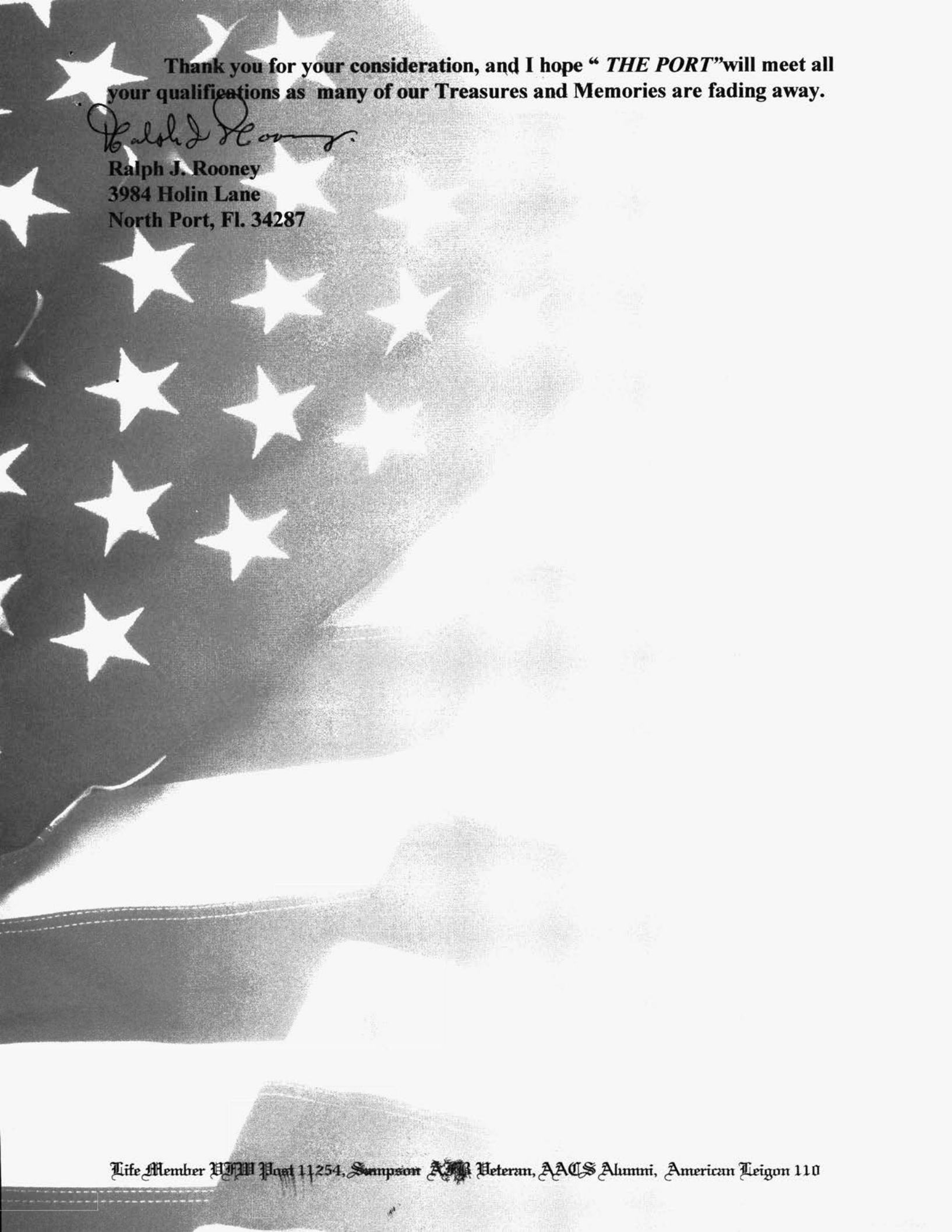
21 April 2003

**Keeper, National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Services  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849C Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240**

Dear Sir;

I am writing on behalf of "The Port Theater" Port St. Joe, Florida which is in nomination for the National Register of Historic Places. As a member of the U.S. Air Force stationed at Cape San Blas, Port St Joe Florida during the 1953 to 1955 period. I attended the "Port" many times, seeing my first 3 D movie there. It holds many fond memories for me. I remember being in the service at that time and usually short of funds, having only enough money to pay for our girlfriends tickets and perhaps a *Coke* after the show. The manager would often turn his back so we could *sneak in* after the box office closed. . Although I do not live in Port St Joe, the Port Theater a landmark. I will always remember the good times and the people that were so kind to us as we were far from our homes.

I know I have not contributed to the Historical Facts or values as why it should be awarded this Honor, but as something that is part of America's fifties scene, and the place of entertainment before the television invasion. I believe it deserves its place of Honor.

A black and white photograph of an American flag, showing the stars and stripes, serves as the background for the text.

Thank you for your consideration, and I hope “*THE PORT*” will meet all your qualifications as many of our Treasures and Memories are fading away.

*Ralph J. Rooney*

Ralph J. Rooney  
3984 Holin Lane  
North Port, Fl. 34287

April 21, 2003

619 South Hwy 22-A  
Panama City FL 32404-6825

Keeper, National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

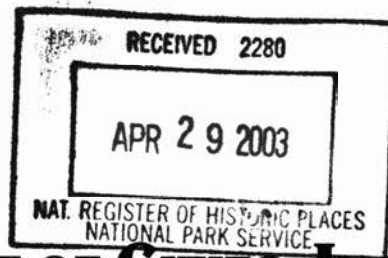


Dear Sir/Madam

This letter is written to urge you to favorably consider the nomination of the Port St. Joe, Florida, Theater to the National Register of Historic Places.

I was very happy to hear that the application has been approved on the state level, so now it's up to your committee to add this very worthy building to the Register! Please know that while I presently live in Panama City, my family ties lie in Port St Joe, and the Theater is the focal point of Reid Street, Port St Joe, Florida.

  
CLIFFORD R. PRESTON



## FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC.

301 South Bronough Street, Suite 300 ♦ P.O. Box 1757 ♦ Tallahassee, FL 32302-1757  
(850) 222-9684 ♦ Suncom 278-5331 ♦ Fax (850) 222-3806 ♦ Web site: [www.flcities.com](http://www.flcities.com)

April 22, 2003

Keeper, National Register of Historic Places  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

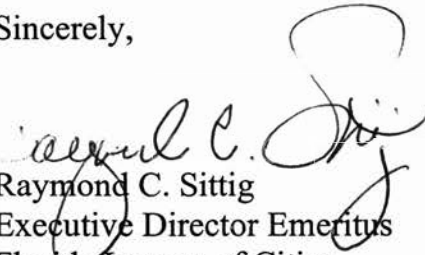
Dear Sir/Madam:

I am most pleased to add our support for designating the old Port Theater in Port St. Joe, Florida to the National Register of Historic Places.

For the past several years we have watched with amazement as Wade and Paula Clark have transformed this old derelict into a rehabilitated and useable structure – always with an acute sense of the historic value of this building to the citizens and visitors to our community.

We are hopeful that your evaluations will recognize the significant efforts put forth on this project and the equally significant renovation results. We encourage and strongly support the designation of the Port Theater to the National Register. Thank you for your consideration of the nomination.

Sincerely,



Raymond C. Sittig  
Executive Director Emeritus  
Florida League of Cities  
Business: 301 Reid Avenue  
Port St. Joe, FL 32456  
Home: 3529 Castlebar Circle  
Tallahassee, FL 32309

Cc: Fran Mainella, Director, National Park Service  
Wade & Paula Clark

- Tiller

April 21, 2003

Keeper, National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Ref: Port Theatre – Port St. Joe, FL

Dear Sirs:

I live in the small town of Port St. Joe, FL and realize that the preservation of history in this area is so very important. Our town received many devastating blows that erased our historical sites and we must keep the ones now remaining.

Pride in the restoration that has been made to our Port Theatre by the Clark's in recent years should not go unnoticed and to have the building on the National Register of Historic Places will be beneficial to the city's tourist attractions and the local historical interests.

I hope you see the value in adding our site to the Register.

Sincerely,



Bobbi Ann Seward

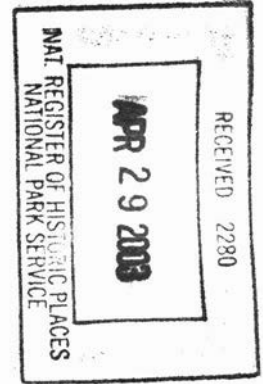
003683A  
4/09/03 (R)



**Ruth Coe Chambers**  
**2028 Marye Brant Loop N.**  
**Neptune Beach, FL 32266**

RuthCChambers@aol.com

April 23, 2003



Keeper, National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
U. S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Keeper of National Register of Historic Places:

This letter is written in support of the nomination of the Port Theatre to the National Register of Historic Places.

When I was growing up in Port St. Joe, Florida, in the 40's, the Port Theatre was lovingly known as "the show." It was woven into the fabric of our town and was an important part of all our lives. In many instances, it was our only social outlet and brought us news and influence from places beyond our immediate surroundings. At that time we had only the radio and "the show." We didn't even have a library.

In 1988 I sought to immortalize this beloved vessel of so many memories in my novel, *The Chinaberry Album*. Port St. Joe has changed drastically since I was a child and many buildings I loved no longer exist. Even though the Port Theater has been stripped of the grandeur it held for me as a child, I am thankful it is still standing, and I never go home that I don't go there and pause for a moment remembering. Remembering . . . the soldiers and sailors in World War II who crowded its lobbies, the movies, the news of the war, local entertainment, the magic show I saw there, and the famous people who graced its stage and brushed past its beautiful velvet curtains.

I think that it is a fitting tribute to the Theatre that the current owners, who were not a part of the early history of this building, have made the effort to save the structure and have it listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Clarks have put a lot of time into this project, and I will always be grateful to them for trying to safeguard a place so dear to the hearts and minds of the people who live and lived in Port St. Joe.

Sincerely,

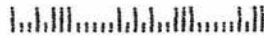
  
Ruth Coe Chambers



Herman Jones  
 254 Gulf St.  
 Port St Joe, FL 32456

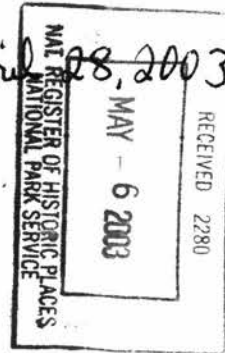


Keeper, National Register of Historic Places  
 National Park Service  
 U.S. Department of the Interior  
 1849 C Street, N.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20240



Re: Old Port Theatre  
 314 Reid Ave.  
 Port St. Joe, Fl. 32456

April 28, 2003



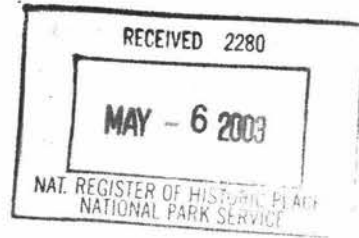
Dear Keeper,

We are requesting you place the Port Theatre on the National Register of Historic Places. Gulf County has very few old business buildings. Unfortunately, we are going through a sudden building boom with the local paper mill closing and selling off its lands. This boom will be reflected in new businesses, hence new buildings.

Sincerely,  
 Pamela M. Jones

re: Port Theatre  
Port St Joe, FL

Dear Sir,



Please add The Port Theatre to the list of National Historic Bldgs.

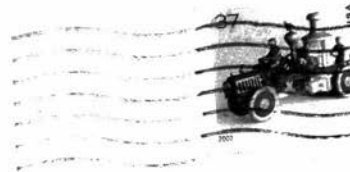
Beck Martine

613 Mawick Rd

FSO-229-9369

Carile to AYAT @ Yahoo.  
com

B Mortimer  
613 Marvin  
PSt Joe FL 32456



Keiper, Nat. Dep. of Historic  
Places  
Nat Park Soc  
US Dept Int  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington DC 20540

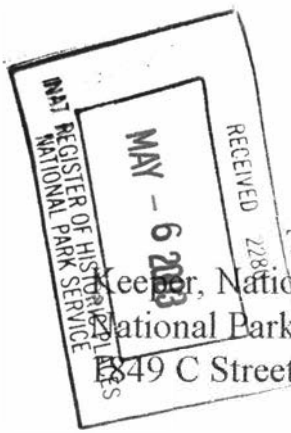


**Elizabeth Mortimer**  
Kayak & Other Adventures

613 Marvin Ave.  
Port St. Joe, Florida 32456  
[www.AngelFire.com/ak2/CaribKayak.com](http://www.AngelFire.com/ak2/CaribKayak.com)

Home: (850) 229-9369  
Cell: (407) 257-7493

[CaribKayak@aol.com](mailto:CaribKayak@aol.com)  
[CaribKayak@yahoo.com](mailto:CaribKayak@yahoo.com)



BRENDA BAILEY REINHART

142 Bailey Road, Wewahitchka, Florida 32465-5332

Telephone (850) 639-3690. email: "frank.brenda@juno.com"

Keeper, National Register of Historic Places

April 27, 2003

National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

1349 C Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240

I feel strongly that the Port Theatre in Port Saint Joe, Gulf County, Florida, deserves to be included in the National Register of Historic Places, and support the nomination because of the extremely important historical significance and merit of this structure.

My family and I have many happy memories of times spent at the Port Theatre during the years 1946 to 1948. It seemed a fascinating place. Inside the magic was always there on the screen, helped by the theater's tilted floor and descending rows of seats. I returned to the building in 1995, and the marquee entrance, doorway, slanted floor and decorated ceiling and walls brought back a flood of remembrance. When I was seven years old, in 1947, my mother, brother and I shopped in Port Saint Joe, while my father went to see "Dracula", starring Bela Lugosi, at the Port Theatre. We were ready to go home to Beacon Hill, so my mother asked me to go into the theater and find my father. I explained the situation to the lady at the ticket window, which seemed so high up then, and was told to go in. I hadn't paid for a ticket, so I didn't look at the screen, but kept my eyes on the slanted floor and walls, scanning rows as my eyes slowly adjusted to the dim theater interior. After searching the back seats, I worked my way slowly forward. Suddenly, the scene on the screen flickered and changed, attracting my attention to a sudden close up of Mr Lugosi's mesmerizing eyes. He was hypnotizing a flower seller on a street corner in London. I was almost hypnotized as well, but found my father and we walked out together. He and I sometimes hitchhiked to Port Saint Joe to see films at the Port Theatre. We saw "Red River" and "Treasure of the Sierra Madre" there in 1948 - both four star classics. I recall my mother telling me in 1947 about another classic they saw at the Port Theatre, "The Voice of the Turtle". I asked the meaning of the title, since turtles don't have a voice, and learned it's a Bible quotation about "voice of the turtle dove", another thing altogether.

Sincerely,

*Brenda Bailey Reinhart*

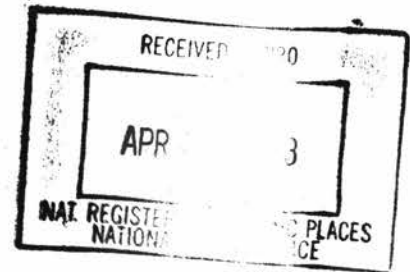
Brenda Bailey Reinhart

Marcia Malamphy  
4006 E. 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Panama City, FL 32404

24 April 2003

Reference: Old Port St. Joe Theatre

Keeper, National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240



Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to you in support of the old Port St Joe Theatre's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. My husband and I have lived in Panama City Florida since 1975 when we moved here from Taiwan while my husband was in the Air Force. Sadly, we only discovered the St Joe Theatre about 5 years ago when some friends invited us to an auction. While we enjoyed the auction, we were more captivated with the charm of the old theatre and fascinated with its structure and history.

During the last five years, we have visited the theatre almost weekly. Many times I have taken co-workers from Tyndall AFB for lunch and a visit to see the theatre. Without exception, each one has expressed the same fascination that we have with the theatre. Everyone is awed at this great old theatre nestled in the quaint little coastal town of Port St. Joe, Florida. Many, like us, have lived here for years and were not aware of this treasured Gulf Coast gem. What a treat it is for all who find it.

Until recently, I assumed that the St. Joe theatre was registered as a historical site. I urge you to give this old historic theatre its rightful recognition in the National Register of Historical Places.

Respectfully,

*Marcia G. Malamphy*

Marcia G. Malamphy