

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1010

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 Nelson & Company Historic District

other names/site number /SE1771

2. Location

street & number 110-166 East Broadway Street & 30-110 Station Street N/A  not for publication

city or town Oviedo N/A  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Seminole code 117 zip code 32762

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 7/31/2001  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida 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) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Entered in the  
National Register

9/20/01

**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	
4	5	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
4	6	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)

AGRICULTURE/citrus packing house

INDUSTRY/fertilizer manufacturing facility

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

WORK IN PROGRESS

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Metal panels

\_\_\_\_\_

roof Metal panels

other Wood & glass: Windows

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A, B, C, D, E, F, G with checkboxes and descriptions.

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):

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, designated landmark, recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey, recorded by Historic American Engineering Record.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1886-1951

Significant Dates

1886

1947

Significant Person

Wheeler, Benjamin Franklin, Sr.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State Agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of Repository

#

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately eight acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	4	7	9	6	8	0	3	1	7	1	2	6	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
2	1	7	4	7	9	8	4	0	3	1	7	1	2	6	0

3	1	7	4	7	9	8	4	0	3	1	7	1	1	4	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4	1	7	4	7	9	6	8	0	3	1	7	1	0	4	0

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 Sidney Johnston, Consultant; Gary V. Goodwin, Historic Preservation Planner

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date July, 2001

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name Nelson & Company

street & number Post Office Box 620789 telephone (407) 365-6631

city or town Oviedo state Florida zip code 32762-0789

**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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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number 7 Page 1

**NELSON & COMPANY HISTORIC DISTRICT  
Oviedo, Seminole County, Florida**

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**Summary**

The Nelson & Company Historic District occupies approximately eight acres at the southeast corner of the intersection of Broadway Street and Station Street in downtown Oviedo (Seminole County), Florida. The district contains four contributing resources and six non-contributing resources. A citrus packinghouse and fertilizer manufacturing plant are the dominant buildings, and are among the largest historic buildings in the City of Oviedo. Both are industrial vernacular designs. The citrus packinghouse rises the equivalent of three stories and is fabricated with a wood balloon structural system sheathed with metal panels. The building has a steeply pitched gable roof with a distinctive off-ridge ventilator or monitor. Assembled with a steel structural frame, the fertilizer plant has gable extensions and shafts projecting from various angles through the roof and two elevations, enhancing the building's industrial appearance. Two additional small frame vernacular buildings contribute to the district. The non-contributing resources rise one story, and display small footprints. They do not disrupt the district's historic ambiance. The district contributes to the sense of time, place, and historical development through its location and the design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association of its buildings. It provides an important agricultural, architectural, and industrial link to the heritage of Oviedo. Displaying a superior level of craftsmanship, the buildings retain their historic character to a high degree.

**Setting**

Oviedo is located in Seminole County, Florida. The city lies about eleven miles northeast of Winter Park, and Sanford, the seat of government of Seminole County, lies fifteen miles to the northwest. Lake Jessup, one of the chain of lakes forming the upper St. Johns River, lies about two miles north. The population of Seminole County is nearly 350,000, and the City of Oviedo, one of the smallest of the county's municipalities, contains 22,000 residents. The primary corridors consist of State Roads 419, 426, and 434, which converge in Oviedo's downtown. The Green Belt, a toll by-pass through eastern Orange and Seminole Counties, lies on the western border of Oviedo. Railroad tracks historically ran through the city, but have been dismantled.

The historic district occupies a site between Broadway Street (State Road 419), Station Street, and the former Seaboard AirLine Railway tracks in downtown Oviedo. This agricultural and industrial site has been an Oviedo landmark for over a century. The district boundary has an irregular shape, governed in part by railroad tracks that historically converged at the site. Several older commercial buildings stand farther west along Broadway Avenue. The old city hall and fire station are located to the west, facing Central Avenue (State Road 434). Commercial buildings of relatively recent origin lie to the north, and undeveloped property lies to the east and south.

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Oviedo, Seminole County, Florida**

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**Contributing Resources**

Citrus Packing House

Standing at 30 Station Street, the 1886 citrus packing house (photographs 1, 2) is centrally located in the historic district. It displays a distinctive roof comprised of two shed roofs on intersecting planes separated by clerestory windows (see photos). The roof and sidewalls are sheathed with crimped metal panels. Fenestration is asymmetrical and irregular with four-light hopper window opening along the monitor and six-over-six-light double-hung sash windows and six-light hopper windows provide ventilation and interior natural lighting on the exterior walls. To assist with ventilation, fans protected by louvers are mounted high on the walls along the northwest and southeast elevations. The building, supported by a brick pier foundation system contains nearly 12,000 square feet of interior floor space. A narrow corridor (photograph 8) separates an adjacent building at 50 Station Street from the historic citrus packinghouse. A small flat-roof hyphen provides access between the buildings at the south corner.

Alterations

A loading dock with a shed roof (photograph 1), built about 1970, projects from the northwest elevation of the citrus packing house. The construction of the covered loading dock did not create any new piercing in the original walls of the citrus packinghouse, or destroy the integrity of those walls. Instead, metal flashing installed between the citrus packinghouse and steel structural supports of the loading dock protects movement between the two areas. A gable extension (photographs 2, 3, 4) built about 1933 projects at the southeast elevation of the citrus packinghouse. Built in the 1960s, a small flat extension assembled with concrete blocks stands at the southwest elevation of the citrus packinghouse (photographs 4, 5). The alterations to the building do not compromise its architectural integrity, historic ambiance, or character. Because of the low profile of the additions and their industrial character, the additions are differentiated but compatible with the original building.

Fertilizer Manufacturing Plant

Easily the largest building in the district, the fertilizer manufacturing plant (photographs 12, 13) was assembled with a steel skeletal frame in 1947. Standing near the rear boundary of the district, the building roughly faces northwest and displays irregular massing and rises the equivalent of four stories. A series of parallel gable roofs cover the southwest part of the building, and another gable extension projects toward the north. At the juncture of these gable extensions, near the middle of the building, several shafts of various sizes and shapes project upward, terminating with gable roofs. Smaller shed roof extensions protrude from the west and north elevations of the building. Corrugated and crimp metal panels serve as the exterior wall fabric, although corrosion has deteriorated some of the wall fabric on the vertical shafts. Delivery doors open along the northeast and south

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**NELSON & COMPANY HISTORIC DISTRICT  
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elevations, respectively, and louvered ventilators pierce various wall surfaces near the roofline. The building rests on a poured concrete basement, where chemicals were stored and fertilizer manufactured.

Alterations

Three relatively small additions have been built onto the plant. The first, built about 1951 for storage purposes, is a one-story gable roof extension at the west elevation of the building (photograph 13). In front of this addition, or to the north, lies a one-story wood-frame shed-roof addition built about 1960 to accommodate restrooms. Plywood serves as the exterior wall fabric, and delivery doors provide access into the interior. A third addition, built about 1955, stands near the northeast corner of the building. Constructed for storage of bulk fertilizer, it has a shed roof and metal paneled walls.

Vehicle Shed

Assembled in the early-1940s, the building at 60 Station Street (photograph 18) displays a shed roof and side walls supported by wooden posts. Corrugated and crimp metal panels enclosed the roof and three elevations. Vehicle and materials storage is accessed from the unenclosed east elevation.

Fertilizer Office Building

The original fertilizer office building stands at 162 East Broadway Street, south of the packing house and west of the fertilizer manufacturing plant (photographs 14, 15). Built about 1940, the building displays a front-facing gable roof with broad eaves. A brick chimney rises along the north elevation, where a shed roof protects an entrance porch. The exterior walls are finished with crimp metal panel sheets and wood board-and-batten siding. Fenestration is irregular, consisting of four-light casement windows, one-over-one double-hung sash windows, and two-over-two double-hung sash windows. The building retains its historic architectural integrity to a high degree.

**Non-Contributing Resources**

A one-story office building at 110 East Broadway Street (photographs 9, 10) was constructed in 1930 as an automobile garage. Over time, the building was modified and enlarged, first in 1934 to provide room for a hardware store, an office in 1937, and then, about 1950, an additional office was added. A small addition was added at the rear elevation in the late-1970s. Subsequent modifications included the installation of a pent roof, replacement metal windows, and the enclosure of several storefronts.

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A storage building at 180 East Broadway Street (photograph 11) displays a gable roof and exterior walls clad in metal panel sheeting. Assembled in the late-1950s, the building displays a shed extension that projects from the rear elevation.

A metal building containing approximately 9,000 square feet of interior floor space stands at 50 Station Street (photographs 4, 6). Assembled about 1968, the building displays a shallow-pitched gable. Vehicle bays punctuate the northwest and southwest elevations. The building was constructed to serve as the coloring room for the citrus packing operation, and was built with a concrete floor to accommodate forklifts.

A building at 160 East Broadway Street (photograph 15) displays a shallow-pitched gable roof and an entrance incised within the body of the building. Built on a concrete foundation about 1970, it is separated from an adjacent contributing building to the east (162 East Broadway Street) by narrow corridor, obscured from view by metal sheathing.

A water tank and tower (photograph 16) fabricated in 1915 by the Chicago Bridge & Iron Works Company was moved into the district in the early-1960s to provide fire protection for the surrounding buildings. Because the structure was moved into the district outside the period of significance, the water tank and tower is non-contributing.

A building at 100-110 Station Street (photograph 17) displays a side-facing gable roof, concrete block walls, and six vehicle bays. Constructed in the late-1970s, the building was used to service fruit trailers, fertilizer bulk haulers, and other harvesting equipment.



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**Contributing Resources**

East Broadway Street	Function	Date
162	Fertilizer Office Building	1940
166	Fertilizer Manufacturing Plant	1947

Station Street

30	Citrus Packing House	1886
60	Vehicle Shed	early 1940s

**Non-Contributing Resources**

Water tower 1915 (moved to site in early 1960s)

East Broadway Street

110	Office Building	1930 (altered)
160	Auxiliary Building	1970
180	Storage Building	late 1950s

Station Street

50	Coloring Room Building	1968
100-110	Heavy Equipment Building	late 1970s

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**NELSON & COMPANY HISTORIC DISTRICT  
Oviedo, Seminole County, Florida**

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**Summary**

The Nelson & Company Historic District fulfills criteria A, B, and C at the local level in the areas of agriculture, architecture, commerce, and industry for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Under Criterion A, the development of the district is tied closely to the history of Oviedo, and contributes to the history of Seminole County's citrus and manufacturing industries. The district is also tied closely to the history of the state's citrus industry, and the organized processing and marketing of Florida citrus. The district also has significance under Criterion B for its association with Benjamin Franklin Wheeler, Sr. Born in Dade City, Florida, in 1878, Wheeler arrived in Oviedo in 1889, and in 1908 helped organize Nelson & Company, the successor of Nelson Bros. Company, which had been established in 1886. As a company partner (1908-1923) and then as president (1923-1954), Wheeler was responsible for the development of the buildings and the operation of the company. In 1923, he incorporated Nelson & Company, and founded the Wheeler Fertilizer Company in 1934. Built in 1886, the packinghouse was expanded over time. The company marketed its citrus products under the "Ben Franklin," "Maple Leaf," "Moon Beam," and "White Rose" brands. A fertilizer manufacturing plant also contributes to the district. Built in the early-1930s, the original wood-frame fertilizer building burned in 1947, and a steel-skeletal-frame building was completed later that year. At the height of production, the company manufactured 29,000 tons of fertilizer annually. It manufactured fertilizers using cottonseed meal, nitrogen, phosphate, potash, and other organic materials. The district also possesses significance under Criterion C. Derived from industrial vernacular influences, two of the contributing buildings were designed to serve the specific functions of processing fruit and manufacturing fertilizer, respectively. The buildings have significance as Oviedo's largest historic agriculture-related and industrial resources. Each exhibits a distinctive industrial appearance. Fabricated with a wood balloon frame and sheathed with corrugated metal panels, the packinghouse has a distinctive roof comprised of two shed roofs on intersecting planes separated by clerestory windows. Assembled with a steel skeletal frame, the fertilizer plant sprawls across the rear of the property and displays a series of tall vertical shafts and projecting gable extensions. The district possesses a small concentration, linkage, and continuity of buildings united historically and by physical development in an industrial setting. The buildings within the district are consistent with national and statewide trends in architecture.

**Historical Context**

Seminole County, organized in 1913, contains a number of communities with a nineteenth century heritage. One of the oldest of those is Oviedo, which was founded in the 1870s southeast of Sanford near Lake Jessup, a tributary of the St. Johns River. Although permanent settlement began in the 1850s, the formal naming and organization of the village occurred in 1879, when postmaster Andrew Aulin selected Oviedo from the name of the capital city of the Spanish province of Asturias. In 1886, Aulin platted a plan of development for Oviedo. Agriculture, especially citrus, became a mainstay of the economy. The lure of riches from agricultural harvests encouraged two railroads to extend tracks into the village in the 1890s. New homesteads and farms appeared,

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but freezes in December 1894 and February 1895 destroyed thousands of citrus trees statewide. Still, farmers replanted citrus groves and truck farms. Celery was introduced after the devastating freezes, and the first rail cars filled with the vegetable were shipped from neighboring Sanford in 1898. In 1908 alone, over one thousand rail cars packed with celery were shipped from Sanford to northern markets. Oviedo remained a rural agricultural village with the population increasing from 293 in 1900 to 488 a decade later.

Growth sparked the creation of Seminole County in 1913, and Sanford was designated the seat of county government. In Oviedo, a woman's club was organized in 1906, and business leaders organized a board of trade in 1911. The following year, the Bank of Oviedo was established. Most businesses, churches, and civic organizations developed in the small commercial center, which was largely destroyed by fire in 1914. In 1913, the Black Hammock Drainage District was formed to transform wetlands into agricultural fields. Nelson & Company and the Oviedo Citrus Growers Association handled most fruit packing in the town. In 1915 alone, Oviedo's farmers shipped over sixty thousand boxes of citrus by rail. Growers with large citrus groves included J. H. Lee, H. B. McCall, S. Nelson, and B. F. Wheeler. Farmers J. F. Dorny, N. F. Legette, and S. C. Partin planted potatoes and tomatoes. Citrus and vegetable packinghouses appeared along railroad sidings, and small neighborhoods radiated around the downtown. Following a particularly heavy freeze in February 1917, some Oviedo farmers began cultivating celery to help offset losses from their frozen fruit. The quick cash crop enabled some to expand their grove holdings, and other farmers increasingly turned to the "green gold" for a primary source of income. Within the span of a decade, Seminole County accounted for 3,700 acres planted in celery, more than one-half of the celery cultivated in the state. Citrus remained an important crop. In 1919, Seminole County farmers shipped 200,000 boxes of oranges, and nearly 112,000 trees had been planted.

During the Florida land boom of the 1920s, Seminole County experienced substantial growth. In 1920, the census bureau counted 685 residents in Oviedo, and the county's population reached 14,738 in 1925. That year, Oviedo's residents incorporated the Town of Oviedo, and several new subdivisions opened previously undeveloped property. A new brick school was completed in 1922, and by 1930 the town had become the second largest community in Seminole County. Between 1922 and 1927, nearly ten miles of roads had been paved in the vicinity of Oviedo. The number of farms countywide increased from 573 to 810 between 1920 and 1925 with grove and farmlands reaching 13,020 acres in 1927. Oviedo's dependency on agriculture insulated some residents from the worst effects of the collapsing land boom, and, in 1930, Oviedo's population reached 1,042. In 1929, the sale of celery alone brought nearly three million dollars in revenue to Seminole County farmers.

Seminole County's development lurched to a stop as the air seeped out of the land boom, and then, in October 1929, the stock market began a downward spiral, leading into the Great Depression. The financial panic delivered its full impact in the early-1930s. By 1933, numerous Florida banks had failed. Deposits and investments fell and annual incomes declined. Hundreds of properties went into foreclosure and several banks failed in Seminole County. Moderate growth persisted, however, largely because of the citrus industry.

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Oviedo, Seminole County, Florida**

Seminole County residents enjoyed a relatively diversified economy and the population continued to climb, reaching 18,735 in 1930. Bumper vegetable and citrus harvests helped buoy the economy, and encouraged businessman B. F. Wheeler to establish a fertilizer plant in Oviedo. Farmers and associations annually shipped about 228,000 boxes of oranges at the beginning of the decade, and nearly 4,100 acres of citrus trees were cultivated throughout the county. Celery sales also boomed, and, in 1937 alone, approximately 3,325,000 crates of celery were shipped out of Florida, most from Seminole County farms. Financial assistance from the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a New Deal program implemented by the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, helped construct several facilities in Seminole County, such as the Sanford Armory and Big Tree Park. In 1940, the census enumerated 1,356 people in Oviedo.

During the 1940s, the county's population continued to rise, reaching 24,560 in 1945. NAS Sanford opened during World War II to train Navy pilots. Many servicemen stationed in Florida during the war returned with their families at its close to take up residence. The state also began to attract a growing number of retirees from the North and Midwest. Relatively inexpensive housing and low property taxes appealed to retired Americans who relied on a fixed income. In 1946, the Citizens Bank of Oviedo opened, and a new fertilizer plant was completed the next year. At mid-decade, a new city hall was built, and agribusiness and commercial growers began to replace family farms.

Over the following decades, the state's growth accelerated. Although much of Seminole County shared in the growth, Oviedo retained its rural ambiance, hardly touched by development pressures and population growth. In 1970, the town's population stood at 1,926, but the neighboring cities of Altamonte Springs and Sanford experienced explosive growth. In the mid-1980s, freezes devastated central Florida's citrus groves. A few determined companies and individuals replanted, but most growers either sold out or pushed farther south in search of warmer, more predictable weather patterns. In the aftermath of the freezes, some Seminole County groves yielded to commercial and residential developments. Finally, in the last quarter of the twentieth century, Oviedo began to experience significant growth, and in 1990 the census bureau counted 15,722 residents.

**Historical Significance**

Nelson & Company was founded in Oviedo in 1886 by brothers Gus and Steen Nelson. Natives of Sweden, the brothers immigrated to America in 1870 and arrived in Oviedo in 1875. They planted their first citrus groves in 1877, and in 1880 their tangerines brought \$10.00 per box at the New York market. Then, in 1886, the brothers built a large wood-frame packinghouse, and organized a partnership known as Nelson Brothers Packing Company. They began packing their own citrus and that of some area growers using the crate label "Pride of Oviedo," which displayed an eagle in the center. The business enjoyed near a decade of success, but the winter freeze of 1894-1895 destroyed most of their citrus trees, and, apparently, ended the partnership several years later.

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Steen Nelson replanted some of his groves, and in 1908 reorganized the business into Nelson & Company. His new partners were railroad conductor W. H. Browning and station agent Benjamin Franklin Wheeler, Sr. An astute businessman, Wheeler possessed a keen sense of seizing opportunities to expand the business, introduced new machinery associated with technological advancements, and developed new products and services. In 1913, he bought out Browning's stake in the company, and, with Nelson, expanded the packing house in 1916 (photographs 2, 7). Then, in 1922, he purchased Steen Nelson's share, and became sole owner of Nelson & Company. In October 1923, B. F. Wheeler, Sr., Robert L. Wheeler, and Thaddeus L. Lingo incorporated the company, retaining the original name, in part, to preserve the loyal customer base and name recognition developed over the past four decades. The Wheelers and Lingo created a stock corporation with two hundred fifty shares valued at one hundred dollars each. To insure control of the corporation at its inception, B. F. Wheeler, Sr. owned 248 shares of the company and held the post of president, which he retained until his death in the mid-1950s. Lingo was the corporate secretary and treasurer, and served as the office manager through World War II; Robert Wheeler was the packinghouse manager and vice-president of the corporation.

Contractor L. B. Moore supervised the enlargement of the packinghouse in 1916 and again in 1933. Born in 1878, Louis Bundy Moore learned the construction business in his hometown of Asheville, North Carolina. He arrived in Oviedo in 1911, where he assembled several buildings, including the Hunt Brothers Building and a hotel for D. C. Marshall. Moore also invested in several pieces of property in Oviedo, but sold most of those before moving to Orlando in 1920. He remained in Orlando the rest of his life, operating a contracting business first on Livingston Avenue, then Woodward Avenue, and finally on Michigan Avenue. Most of Moore's Orlando projects were residences. Among his significant contracts was the John P. Musselwhite House, built about 1925 on Summerlin Avenue (demolished).

In 1916, Nelson & Company introduced modern technology developed by the L. B. Skinner Company of Dunedin into the packinghouse. A native of Wisconsin, Lee Bronson Skinner moved to Florida in 1883, and constructed his first citrus packinghouse in Tampa in 1900. In 1909, he organized the Skinner Manufacturing Company, one of Florida's first fruit packing equipment businesses. Incorporated in 1913, the company's earliest equipment was the "Skinner washer," which was used in dozens of citrus packinghouses to help prepare fruit for market. The use of the equipment by Nelson & Company is an early example of the technology being integrated into a Florida citrus packinghouse.

The need for an enlarged packinghouse indicates the company's growth and recovery after the 1894/1895 freezes. Wheeler had purchased his first citrus grove in 1898, a grove destroyed and then replanted after that devastating winter. He pruned and budded trees, and planted rootstock. His success at nursing the grove to health, and harvesting fruit from it, led him to plant more trees and invest in the Oviedo citrus packing company. In October 1909, he helped organize the Oviedo Citrus Growers Association, which they created and organized in connection with and under the Florida Citrus Exchange system. Steadily gaining success as a grower and packer, Wheeler by 1915 maintained thirty acres in citrus, which yielded 5,000 boxes of fruit. That

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year, Steen Nelson harvested two thousand boxes of fruit from an eighteen-acre grove. In all, in 1915 approximately fifty-nine thousand boxes of fruit were processed in the company's packinghouse and shipped to northern markets by the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. Later, about 1925, Nelson & Company joined the FCE, but maintained its membership with the statewide organization only two years because Wheeler could not tolerate what he believed to be the FCE's poor marketing practices.

Nelson & Company applied various labels to its citrus crates to identify its products. Since the 1880s, the nation's citrus growers and packers had used crate labels to establish brand name recognition with consumers. As groves expanded and fruit sales became more competitive, Florida's growers adopted labels as part of their marketing strategy. Displaying colorful decorative art, the labels generally targeted a popular theme: animals, flowers, humor, patriotism, royalty, songs, and various exotic subjects.

Picturesque labels developed for Nelson & Company exhibited themes in nature and heritage. Early on, the Nelson brothers had used the "Pride of Oviedo" label to market their fruit. It was replaced by the "White Rose" label, which predates the date of incorporation (1923), and probably also extends into the late nineteenth century. The "Moon Beam" label appeared in the mid-1920s. The artwork was reminiscent of beautiful hammock grove lands around Oviedo, and identified the company's grade two citrus. A popular Florida citrus label, Moon Beam was reproduced on the cover of *Citrus Growing in Florida*, a University of Florida Presses publication in its fourth edition (1999). Citrus products bearing the labels of Nelson & Company were marketed along the eastern seaboard, especially Baltimore, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Two other labels identified Nelson & Company fruit shipped into Canada. The first of those, the "Ben Franklin" label was developed about 1935 to memorialize the American statesmen, the given name of the company's president, and mark the company's top grade fruit shipped to Toronto. The "Maple Leaf" label appeared about 1940 to market grade two products in Canada. Competition among citrus packers for customer recognition reached feverish proportions during the Great Depression, compelling the Florida Citrus Commission to register crate labels in 1937. By then, the "White Rose," "Maple Leaf," "Moon Beam," and "Ben Franklin" were well-established trademarks of Nelson & Company.

Under the direction of B. F. Wheeler, Sr., the company cleared and set its own groves. Wheeler also periodically expanded his personal holdings. Although Nelson & Company purchased a few established groves, most often it acquired undeveloped land, which the company cleared and set with seedling oranges. A keen observer of Florida's winter weather patterns, Wheeler generally selected property for a grove along the south shore of a lake, which he believed represented the best land for citrus trees to withstand freezing conditions. Devastating freezes in 1894-1895 and 1917 contributed to his understanding of the location for setting out groves. The freeze of February 1917 provided further impetus for Wheeler to diversify the company's interests. First, the company planted celery as a cash crop, and then constructed a building on East Broadway Avenue in downtown Oviedo to house a shop and tool room that later was converted into a hardware store and then an office.

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At its peak, the combined grove holdings of Nelson & Company and B. F. Wheeler, Sr. amounted to nearly 2,000 acres extending between Orange, Seminole, and Volusia Counties. Most groves stood within a ten-mile radius of the Oviedo packinghouse. Wheeler initially planted seedling orange trees, and, in the 1920s, began planting Hart's Late Valencia sweet oranges and Dancy tangerines, another old variety first planted in Orange Mills, Florida, in 1871 by Colonel George L. Dancy. By the mid-1940s, Nelson & Company had developed a reputation of being the second largest shipper of Orlando tangelos in Florida second only to the Lake Region Packing Association.

About 1935, the company planted groves with Orlando tangelos, a variety propagated in 1931 by budding Duncan grapefruit with the Dancy tangerine. This was the first occasion in which a commercial cultivator and packer set groves of the new variety in Orange and Seminole Counties. The company also budded Navel and Valencia varieties onto Cleo and Sour Orange rootstocks. Wheeler's experimentation with new citrus varieties helped Nelson & Company lengthen its harvest season, spread the workload at the packinghouse over a longer period, and avoid placing the fortunes of the company on any one variety of fruit. Although the business primarily packed fruit harvested from its own groves, it also purchased the fruit from other growers' trees. In those cases, a company crew picked and hauled the harvest to the packinghouse. Nelson & Company initially used mules and wagons to haul its fruit from grove to packinghouse, replacing the mules with trucks and tractors in the 1920s. In 1939, the company pruned trees with hedging machines, the first large-scale citrus operation to use mechanical pruning equipment in Seminole and Orange Counties.

In the early-1930s, Wheeler began using fertilizers to strengthen his citrus trees and increase fruit yields. Initially, he purchased two hundred-pound bags of fertilizer from a company in Jacksonville, storing the overage in a warehouse. Soon, area farmers became aware of his holdings, and he began selling them the excess. He experimented with various chemicals to manufacture his own fertilizer. He applied dolomite lime on his groves to elevate the level of magnesium in the soil, a necessary element for healthy trees and robust fruit. About 1931, he hired Harry Hasson, a chemist who had worked for Swift & Company of Chicago. Hasson formulated blends for specific plant uses predicated on the type of soil, vegetable, or the size of a citrus tree. About 1933, the company constructed a wood-frame fertilizer manufacturing plant to mix cottonseed meal, nitrogen, phosphate, potash, and other organic materials. A small warehouse (photograph 18) and office building (photograph 14) were also constructed in the early-1940s. He manufactured fertilizers through the "Wheelco" name, a subsidiary of Nelson & Company. In 1947, following a spectacular fire, the company rebuilt the plant using a steel-skeletal frame (photographs 12, 13), and, in 1952, at its height of production, Wheelco manufactured 29,000 tons of fertilizers.

Nelson & Company's combined operations of citrus packing and fertilizer manufacturing provided numerous jobs in Oviedo and Seminole County. In the 1930s, the company employed about twenty-five full-time citrus workers, and added nearly two hundred additional laborers during the harvest season of October to June. The

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fertilizer plant maintained a work force of nearly sixty-five employees. By the early-1950s, the company maintained a permanent staff of twenty-five, and a seasonal force of nearly two hundred fifty employees.

Nelson & Company became recognized throughout the state for its contributions in the citrus industry. In the late-1940s and 1950s, Wheeler helped organize the Florida Citrus Mutual in Lakeland, and encouraged local growers to join the statewide grower exchange that has become the chief advocate for Florida's citrus growers. In 1997, Benjamin Franklin Wheeler, Sr. was inducted into the Florida Citrus Hall of Fame.

**Architectural Context**

Industrial Vernacular

The term "industrial vernacular" applies to buildings that display no formal style of architecture and characterizes buildings constructed for explicit industrial applications. No single building type exists in a greater profusion of scales, styles, shapes, materials, and other variables than industrial structures. The most prevalent type of industrial building is the nonspecific factory, repair facility, or warehouse. Steel framing and reinforced concrete were typically utilized, depending on resources and desired strength. Factory owners designed industrial buildings until the mid-nineteenth century, when architects and specialty firms began designing pre-manufactured buildings for industrial applications. Generally, by the late-nineteenth century, steel framing was used in industrial buildings because I-beams could support far more weight than traditional wood beams. The steel skeletal framework was often revealed as a feature in the facade. The most important specialist in vernacular factory design was Albert Kahn of Detroit, whose 1905 Packard Number 10 building helped initiate a new era of industrial designs.

The design of industrial vernacular buildings, generally simple in plan and modest in detailing, was often inspired from the pragmatic, functional needs of a client. In Florida, industrial buildings served many purposes. The citrus, fertilizer, and railroad industries regularly produced, processed, repaired, or stored products within industrial buildings. Metal buildings displaying arched roof forms became popular in the 1920s, and led to the development semicylindrical Quonset type for industrial and military applications. Many of the same components refined for use in industrial buildings--steel curtain walls with concrete panels, wire-glass windows, and simple, functional designs--were well-suited to large repair and assembly buildings developed for the military. During the Great Depression, the Public Works Administration (PWA) helped finance the development of large hangers built of steel skeletal frames and reinforced concrete walls.

Typically rising between one and three stories, industrial buildings display a flat, gable, or curvilinear roof with brick, stucco, wood drop siding, or metal panel exterior wall fabrics, depending on the application. Some roof types and wall fabrics are used in combination. Ventilators or ridge monitors pierce the roof, and fenestration often consists of either ribbons of double-hung sashes or fixed windows with pivot inserts filled with industrial



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wire glazing. Distinctive broad eaves protect loading docks. Most buildings exhibit a simple design devoid of ornamentation.

Frame Vernacular

The term "frame vernacular" describes buildings that display no formal style of architecture and is defined as the common framing construction technique of lay or self taught builders. Frame vernacular buildings developed for an industrial purpose generally rise one to two stories and display gable, hip, or flat roofs often obscured by a parapet. Some vernacular buildings developed to provide a storage function are often little more than simple pole barns with a shed roof. Constructed with a wood balloon or braced framework, most buildings have a rectangular or irregular plan. Wood products in the form of clapboard drop siding, wood shingles, or weatherboard, or metal products, such as V-crimp and corrugated panels, serves as exterior wall fabrics. Exterior decoration is minimal, although brackets are often mounted under the eaves, and purlins may extend out under the gable ends of the roof. Paneled wood doors, some with divided lights, provide access into the interior, sometimes from a simple entrance porch. Fenestration is often irregular and asymmetrical consisting of double-hung sash, casement, pivot, or hopper style windows. Foundations often consist of either a system of brick piers or continuous concrete blocks.

**Architectural Significance**

The Nelson & Company Historic District contains four contributing buildings, two of them significant landmarks in Oviedo. Derived from industrial vernacular influences, the citrus packinghouse is the largest historic agriculture-related building in the city. Assembled with a brick pier foundation system that supports a wood balloon framework, the building displays traditional industrial characteristics, including clerestory windows and metal panel exterior wall sheathing. The largest historic manufacturing building in the city, a large fertilizer plant also contributes to the district. The caustic nature of cottonseed meal, nitrogen, phosphate, potash, and other organic materials used to manufacture fertilizers have eroded some of the original exterior wall fabric and steel-skeletal framework. Still, the buildings retain their historic architectural integrity and character to a high degree, and are significant because they convey the agricultural and industrial heritage of the City of Oviedo.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The property boundary is defined by sec 15 twp 21s rge 31e ne 1/4 of nw 1/4 lying e of Station St. & between two branches SCL RR (less Aulin's Plan); lots 1 to 8 + 39.9 ft vacated street on n block F A. Aulin's Plan of Oviedo (PB 1 PG 44); lots 1 to 6 & 30 ft vacated street on north Block A A. Aulin's Plan of Oviedo; and all block B A. Aulin's Plan of Oviedo (PB 1 PG 44)

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary encloses property historically associated with the packing house and fertilizer plant of Nelson & Company. The boundary is defined by adjacent railroad and street systems, and by legal lot and block lines of the Aulin's Plan of Oviedo.

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1. 30 Station Street, Nelson & Company Historic District
2. Oviedo (Seminole County), Florida
3. Sidney Johnston/Jodi Rubin
4. 2000
5. Historian, DeLand, FL
6. Oblique view showing front northeast and northwest elevations, facing southwest
7. Photograph number 1 of 18

Numbers 2-5 are the same for the remaining photographs.

1. 30 Station Street
6. Oblique view showing northeast elevation, facing northwest
7. Photograph number 2 of 18

1. 30 Station Street
6. View showing southeast elevation, facing north
7. Photograph number 3 of 18

1. 30 & 50 Station Street
6. View showing southeast elevations, facing northwest
7. Photograph number 4 of 18

1. 30 & 50 Station Street
6. View showing southwest elevation, facing northeast
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1. 30 & 50 Station Street
6. View showing northwest elevation, facing southeast
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6. View showing northwest elevation, facing southeast
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1. 30 & 50 Station Street

6. Detail view spacing between buildings, facing southeast

7. Photograph number 8 of 18

1. 110 East Broadway Street

6. View showing front (north) facade, facing southwest

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1. 110 East Broadway Street

6. View showing west elevation, facing east

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1. 180 East Broadway Street

6. Oblique view showing north & west elevations, facing southeast

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1. 166 East Broadway Street

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1. 166 East Broadway Street

6. View showing northwest elevation, facing southeast

7. Photograph number 13 of 18

1. 162 East Broadway Street

6. View east & north elevations, facing south

7. Photograph number 14 of 18

1. 160 (on left, noncontributing) & 162 (on right, contributing) East Broadway Street

6. View showing north & west elevations, facing southeast

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1. Water tower & tank

6. View showing sun porch, facing south

7. Photograph number 16 of 18

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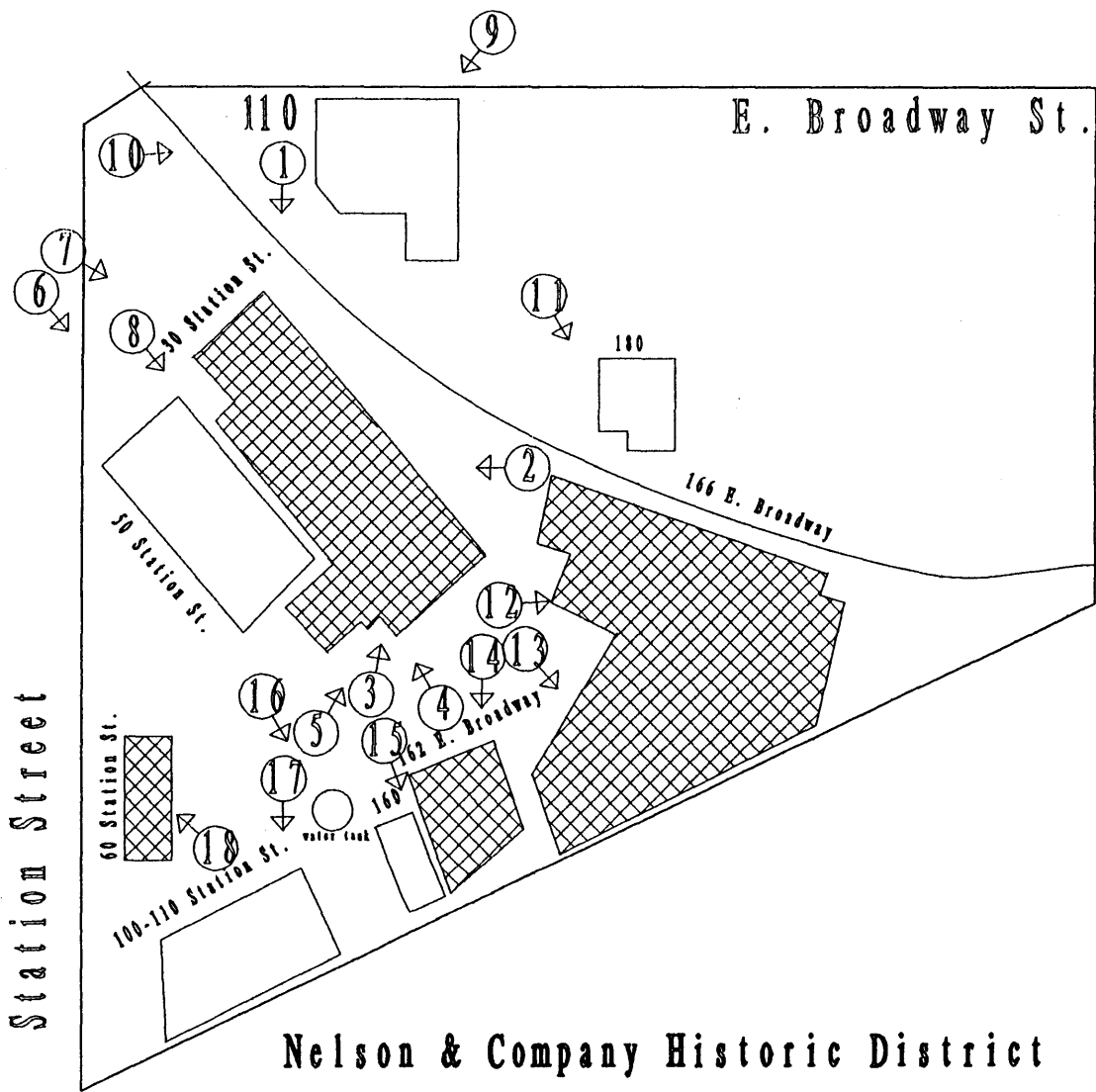
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1. 100-110 Station Street
6. View showing north elevation, facing northwest
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1. 60 Station Street
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Nelson & Company Historic District  
Photograph key





Nelson & Company Historic District  
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