

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



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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 MERIDIAN ROAD

other names/site number FMSF#LE5962

2. Location

street & number linear resource roughly John Hancock Dr. to Georgia State line N/A not for publication

city or town Tallahassee N/A vicinity

state Florida code FL county Leon code 073 zip code na

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.)

Barbara C. Mattick / DSHPO 1/30/2013
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

Elson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

3-30-13
Date of Action

Meridian Road
Name of Property

Leon 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	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	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)

TRANSPORTATION/

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A
walls _____

roof _____
other _____

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1824-1938

Significant Dates

1824
1916
1938

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Clements, Benjamin (surveyor)

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

Meridian Road
Name of Property

Leon Co., FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 34.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	6	7	6	1	5	4	0	3	3	7	6	8	2	0
	Zone		Easting			Northing									
2	1	6	7	6	1	3	0	0	3	2	8	5	2	2	0

3	1	6	7	5	9	1	2	0	3	3	8	8	7	2	0
	Zone		Easting			Northing									
4	1	6	7	6	3	0	8	0	3	3	9	7	6	2	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 Koslow, Jennifer/Robert O. Jones, Historic Preservationist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date February 2013

street & number 500 South 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 Leon County Board of County Commissioners attn: Mary Jean Yarbrough

street & number 301 South Monroe Street telephone 850-606-5302

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32301

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
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 **MERIDIAN ROAD, LEON COUNTY,
FLORIDA**

SUMMARY

Meridian Road is located in the City of Tallahassee, and in Leon County, Florida. It extends from the Prime Meridian Marker, for which it is named, northward to the Georgia line, and southward into the city. The nominated portion of Meridian Road, currently County Road 155, is a 14.5 mile stretch of road that extends from directly north of the John Hancock Drive intersection with Meridian Road, to the Georgia state line. This section is the northern part of a 20 mile road that served as a major conduit between the rural regions of Leon County and the City of Tallahassee during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The road still follows the route laid out by surveyor Benjamin Clements in 1824. Measuring on average twenty feet wide, Meridian is a two-vehicle wide road without a shoulder. There are four intersections where for safety reasons, the county made minor modern adjustments (low cement curbs and turning lanes). The same reasons prompted the county to add cement barriers and steel guard rails along a small bridge on the western edge of Lake Iamonia. In addition, in keeping with transportation developments of the twentieth century, the county resurfaced the original dirt road with sand-clay ca.1916 and then with asphalt in ca.1938. The road is protected from major alterations and intrusions by a local ordinance, and the road's historic character is maintained to a high degree.

SETTING

The Territorial Government of Florida established the Prime Meridian Marker in the southeast corner of the original town plan. The Meridian Marker served as the beginning of land surveys of the new territory from which township, range, and sections were plotted. The north/south meridian became a route for a road through the new community, running due north and south. The southern road runs through the city for roughly three and half miles, beginning two blocks south of the marker, beginning at Oakland Street and running just south of Tram Road (Highway 259). The northern Meridian road runs roughly twenty miles, and begins one block north of the marker at Gaines Street, and runs to the Georgia line, with a break of about one-half mile around Thomasville Road. Within the city, the road is three lanes or more and includes concrete curbs. Sidewalks, utility poles, traffic lights and road intersections are common (Photo #1). The dominance of three lanes with curbs ends north of an overpass over the I-10 Interstate Highway.

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The National Register nominated portion of Meridian Road extends through a rural area in northern Leon County. Typical of a rural region associated with an urban area, there are a few residences situated between farms and large swaths of undeveloped land. The area is part of a region often referred to as the Red Hills, which is known for its red-clay soil. In the nineteenth century, this rich soil attracted settlers because it supported the agricultural production of cotton. Several of the largest plantations in Leon County either sat adjacent or straddled the road. In addition to the soil, several large lakes and rolling hills provided additional incentives to move to the region. In this case, Lake Iamonia is adjacent to a section of Meridian Road. The road provided a conduit to Tallahassee and, beyond the town, to the port at St. Marks, which sits only twenty miles south of Tallahassee.

Directly north of the I-10 overpass is Lakeshore Drive, Lexington Road, and John Hancock Drive. All enter Meridian Road from the west. The National Register nominated portion of Meridian Road begins at the northern turn-lane onto John Hancock Drive, where the road narrows to two lanes (Photo #2). Meridian Road is characterized as a two lane rural road without curbs, with grass shoulders or no shoulders, and nearly continuous trees and overgrowth lining the route. The road rises with elevation changes in the terrain, and red clay embankments are often present along the edges where the road had been worn down by early use and initial early twentieth-century grading prior to surfacing. Many mature trees line the route and their branches extend over the road creating a canopy in areas. A local protective ordinance for Meridian Road, and eight other historic roadways known as Canopy Roads, which has its own city and county governments' management plan. Where the north/south route intersects Spring Pond at 3.7 miles, the road curves around this water body. From this point northward the route bends and curves around other water bodies, most particularly Lake Iomonia. At 14.5 miles the road meets the Georgia State line where the road surface changes, trees no longer line the road, and a Grady County sign indicates one has entered Georgia.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Measuring on average twenty feet wide, Meridian is a two-vehicle wide road without a shoulder. There are five intersections where the county for safety reasons has added low cement curbs and turning lanes. Safety concerns also prompted the county to add cement railings and steel guard rails along two small bridges at the western edge of Lake Iamonia. In addition, in keeping with transportation developments of the twentieth century, the

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county resurfaced the original dirt road with sand-clay in ca.1916, and then asphalt in ca.1938.

Sand-clay roads were commonplace in early twentieth century Florida because the materials for their construction were easily accessible. Sand-clay roads were a combination of "fine grained clay mixed in proper proportion with coarse, angular quartz." The exact mixture depended upon determining the "amount of water necessary to fill the interstices of the sand."¹ In addition, the high percentage of iron compounds in the clay often gave these roads a red or yellowish color.² In general, these roads varied between 9 to 30 feet in width, 6 to 14 inches thick at the road's center, and 2 to 10 inches at the edges.³ A 1910, description stated, "roads of the northern half of Leon County have a natural sand-clay foundation and are built at little expense other than that of grading."⁴

Meridian Road begins at the northern turn-lane onto John Hancock Drive where the road narrows to two lanes (Photo #2). The road continues due north for .65 miles to the intersection of Timberlane Road where there are a traffic light and turning third-lanes. At 1 mile, Meridian Road intersects with Rhoden Cove Road and a residential development, but there is no turn lane (Photo #3). At 1.65, miles there is the intersection of Maclay Road where there are a traffic light and turning third-lanes (Photo #4). Meridian continues to run due north, and at 3.5 miles there is the intersection of Ox Bottom Road where there are a traffic light and turning third laned (Photo #5). At 4.4 miles there is an entrance to Hawks Rise Elementary School to the east, but the road remains two lanes (Photo #6). Meridian Road is aligned due north until it approaches Holley Pond, and at this point it begins to curve (Photo #7). From this point north to the Georgia state line, the road had numerous curves, keeping to high ground around water bodies Carr Lake, Mallard Pond, and big Lake Iamonia. Driveways to individual homes are scattered along the highway, and several entrances to residential sub-divisions intersect Meridian Road. One of these entrances is to Summerbrook at the 5.25 mile point and directly to the east of Holly Pond (Photo #8). At this point the road remains two laned but the shoulder areas on the east are paved, providing a broadly curved access to the sub-division. North of this sub-division

¹ E.H. Sellards, "Roads and Road Materials of Florida," Florida State Geological Survey, Bulletin No. 2 (May, 1911): 13.

² Ibid, 13.

³ Ibid, 17.

⁴ Ibid, 23.

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entrance, red clay earth embankments are present along the roadway (Photo #9) at 5.75 miles. At 6.25 miles is the intersection of Bannerman Road with a traffic light and turning third-lanes (Photo #10). North of Bannerman Road the rural character of the road is even more apparent, with frequent curves, red clay embankments, and the tree canopy (Photo #11, at 7.75 miles). Near the southwest tip of Lake Iamonia are two short bridges over marshy wetlands (Photo #12). Views of the lake are occasionally visible to the east for a couple of miles. This area around the northwest corner of the lake was extensive cotton growing plantation land prior to the Civil War. Several fence lined spacious lawns now mark individual dwellings in this area. A photo taken at the 12-mile point adjacent to Ginny Lane shows the gently curving, tree lined road (Photo #13). Approximately 2 ½ miles to the north is the Georgia state line (Photo #14).

NON-HISTORIC ELEMENTS

There are four intersections (Timberlane Road, Maclay Road, Ox Bottom Road, and Bannerman Road) where the county has made minor modifications to Meridian Road. In each case, low cement curbs have been placed at the corners of the intersections. In addition, in the cases of Maclay, Ox Bottom, and Bannerman, the county widened the road to accommodate a turning lane on one side of the road and. In the case of Timberlane, the county placed turning lanes for traffic flowing north and south, allowing for three vehicles to fit on the roadway at the intersection.

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SUMMARY

Meridian Road is nominated to the National Register for significance on the local level under criterion A in the area of Transportation. Meridian Road is associated with the growth and development of Leon County, Florida, which for a time in the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, was the center of cotton production in the state. The road served as one of the major local conduits to move agricultural products from the county's plantations and farms to market in the capital city of Tallahassee and to shipping points on the Gulf of Mexico. In 1824, as a new territory of the United States, a Prime Meridian Marker was placed at the southeast corner of Tallahassee, from which all land surveys in Florida derive their origin. Originating at the Meridian Marker, Benjamin Clements surveyed the longitudinal north/south Meridian Road in 1824. This was one of the first roads surveyed in Florida. This major thoroughfare continues to connect the rural areas of Leon County to the City of Tallahassee.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT OF FLORIDA ROADS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF
LEON COUNTY**

When Florida became a U.S. territory in 1821, the federal government quickly authorized a series of land surveys. Mapping the area into measurements of longitude and latitude served as the legal foundation for property rights in the new territory. However, few roads were surveyed as part of this process.¹ Nonetheless, Congress recognized the importance of roads when it appropriated \$23,000 for the construction of a highway to extend from St. Augustine to Pensacola, which traveled the same path that was laid out by Spain's Camino Real, ("Old Spanish Trail") for purposes of military defense and commerce.² In developing this St. Augustine-to-Pensacola road, the Quartermaster General informed his assistant, Daniel E. Burch, that the road needed to be wide enough to facilitate "the movement of carriages, carts, wagons, &c," to allow people and goods to travel along the route.³ Burch

¹ Joe Knetsch, "Road Builders of Early Leon County," The Tallahassee Genealogist Vol. XIV, No. 2 (May, 1995): 19.

² W.T. Cash, The Story of Florida (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1938): 266.

³ The Quartermaster General to Daniel E. Burch, April 12, 1824, in Clarence Carter, The Territorial Papers of Florida 1821 to 1824, Volume 22 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1958): 924.

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limited the road's width to the size of a single wagon. He did this because he believed it would allow shade to cover the route, which he thought was "most proper for a Southern climate," without impeding ease of travel.⁴

The area now known as Leon County sat as the mid-point of the route connecting St. Augustine and Pensacola. For this reason, the location that became the town of Tallahassee was chosen to be the territory's capital. Not coincidentally, Tallahassee was also established as the site of the territory's meridian marker, from which all land surveys in Florida derived their origin. Benjamin Clements surveyed this region in 1824. Based on his surveys, Meridian Road came into being, and legal deeds for properties sold were created.

Until the twentieth century, Florida's economic development and population growth was concentrated in its northern regions. The first accounting took place in 1825, when the state legislature called for a census based on the receipt of property tax returns, and the following year it attempted another census based upon election returns. The first study showed that 996 people lived in Leon County.⁵ The second study suggested that 6,895 people lived in the county, which amounted to twenty percent of Florida's total population.⁶ Although historians have remarked on the dubious methods used for these enumerations, at least one has argued that "it is exceedingly unlikely that data for a closer estimate will ever come to light, so this approximation is of permanent value."⁷ While not without its own methodological problems, the 1830 U.S. Census provided a more accurate accounting; it counted 34,730 people living in Florida, of which 6,494 lived in Leon County, which accounted for almost nineteen percent of Florida's population.⁸ Leon County continued to be the most populated area of settlement in Florida until 1870, after which it slowly dropped in the rankings down to sixteen in 1920.⁹ Leon County's ranking was tied to cotton production.

⁴ Estimate for Opening Road, in Carter, *The Territorial Papers of Florida 1821 to 1824*, 608-609.

⁵ Dorothy Dodd, "The Florida Census of 1825," *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (1943): 34-40.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Dodd, "The Florida Census of 1825," 40.

⁸ "Historical Census Counts for Florida and Its Counties 1830 through 2000," http://www.bebr.ufl.edu/files/Hist_Census_Counties_2.pdf

⁹ Ibid.

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While Florida supplied less than two percent of the nation's total production of cotton, the crop was significant in setting up the particular socio-economic dynamics in the state of Florida.¹⁰ Historian Michael Gannon has estimated that the counties surrounding Tallahassee, the heart of "Middle Florida," produced eighty percent of the total cotton crop harvested in 1840, which helps to explain the region's political dominance.¹¹ According to the 1850 U.S. Census, for which this data was first systematically gathered, Leon County produced 16,107 bales of ginned cotton, which amounted to approximately thirty-six percent of the state's production of this valuable agricultural commodity.¹² The U.S. Census calculated the total cash value of the farms in Leon County to be \$1,751,959, which amounted to approximately twenty-eight percent of the total cash value of farms in the state.¹³

Cotton farming remained a staple activity in northern Florida into the twentieth century, albeit an increasingly less profitable one as new industries of citrus, lumber, turpentine, and tourism began to change the dynamics of the state's economy. The boll weevil's appearance in Florida in 1916 had a dramatic impact. Florida's Department of Agriculture estimated that farmer's income in Leon County would decrease in that single year by a "quarter of a million [dollars]."¹⁴ By 1917, there was much discussion about how to protect farmers of Leon County "against the ravages of the boll weevil."¹⁵ Dexter M. Lowry, "manager of the Florida Cotton Oil Company," ordered cotton seed early so that it could be grown and harvested before the organism made its devastating impact.¹⁶ Other articles in the local newspaper told farmers how they might outwit the boll weevil.¹⁷ Despite

¹⁰ For more on the dynamics of power and cotton see Edward Baptist, "The Migration of Planters to Antebellum Florida: Kinship and Power," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 62, no. 3 (1996): 527-554.

¹¹ Gannon, *A New History of Florida*, 213-214. See also U.S. Bureau of Census, *Compendium of the Sixth Census, Florida: Recapitulation of the Aggregate Value and Produce and Number of Persons, Employed in Mines, Agriculture, Commerce, Manufactures &c. by Counties* (1840), 336.

¹² U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Florida: Table XI Agriculture-Farms and Implements, Stocks, Products &c.* (1850), 408.

¹³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Florida: Table XI Agriculture-Farms and Implements, Stocks, Products &c.* (1850), 407.

¹⁴ Florida Department of Agriculture, *Quarterly Bulletin of the Department of Agriculture*, Volume 26, No. 4 (October, 1916) 17.

¹⁵ *Tallahassee Democrat*, January 9, 1917.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ "How to Avoid the Boll Weevil," *Tallahassee Democrat*, July 20, 1917.

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efforts to thwart the insects, cotton production was never the same. Economic and population growth throughout the twentieth century in Florida shifted south.

The late 1900s and 1910s were important years in Florida's transportation system. Advocates for improving the quality of the roads to attract new consumers and businesses began a public movement in late 1900s. In 1908, there was a push to have the state legislature adopt a bill to establish a system of state highways. If passed, it would have set up a Board of State Road Commissioners and a State Highway Commissioner to oversee management and construction of state roads. It would have also provided money to counties to create connector roads to the state system and funds for the laying of hard surface to roads that the Board designated as part of the system.¹⁸ Although it failed, a few Floridians continued to press forward with their goal to transform Florida's highways.

After 1911, Floridians began to lay a number of highways with brick, which facilitated tourist travel.¹⁹ As the New York Times noted, the rise of the automobile provided impetus for improving roads: "A.A. Coult, Secretary of the Florida Development Association, sa[id] that the spread of knowledge about Florida's good roads can more than double the number of automobile tourists in one season." Still, Coult noted the continued importance of roads for agricultural commerce: "in Florida, a regular schedule is maintained by motor trucks, which gather up the products of the farmer along the highways and carry them direct to the city consumer."²⁰ After the federal government passed the Post Office Appropriations Act in 1912, which opened up funds to states for the construction of highways, support for a statewide system finally gained traction.²¹ In 1915, Governor Park Trammell authorized the first Florida State Road Department. A year later, Congress passed the Federal Aid Road Act, which required states to maintain a state road department as a requirement for making use of federal funds. As a result, the position of Florida's department was solidified.²² Nonetheless, the state did not provide funds for new road

¹⁸ "Let Florida Have Good Roads," Tallahsee Democrat May 22, 1908.

¹⁹ Walter S. Marder, "Pleasing the Eye: Brick Paving and the Dixie Highway in the Sunshine State," in Claudette Stager, Looking Beyond the Highway: Dixie Roads and Culture (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 2006) 58.

²⁰ "Vast Expenditures on Southern Roads," New York Times, April 25, 1920.

²¹ Marder, "Pleasing the Eye," 56.

²² Marder, "Pleasing the Eye," 59.

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construction. Instead, each county had to issue bonds.²³ Despite this barrier, 1,902 of the 3,509 miles in the state of Florida had been “surfaced” by the end of 1923.²⁴

As noted by the local Tallahassee paper in 1908, “the roads are at all times thronged with wagons hauling seed cotton to the public gins.”²⁵ The newspaper also noted, “picking cotton, having it ginned, cutting hay and gathering corn is the occupation of the passing world around here.”²⁶ Consequently, the condition of the roads was a primary concern to local residents. Leon County did not necessarily wait for state funding to surface its roads. National trade journals of engineering reported that the “the citizens of Leon County [were] clamoring for good roads and much agitation [wa]s being given the idea of bonding the county for the purpose of raising the funds for extensive improvements along that line.”²⁷ A 1910 report on Leon County’s roadways noted that the roads in the northern half of Leon County “have a natural sand-clay foundation and [were] built at little expense other than grading.” The report estimated the average price ranged from \$100 to \$500 per mile. In a further effort to keep prices low, the county used prison convicts as laborers. Still, the County levied a 3-mill tax to pay for grading in 1911.²⁸

In 1921, the Florida legislature directed the state’s road department to focus funding on main trunk lines running north, south, east, and west through the state.²⁹ During the 1930s, Florida made use of federal funds to pave many of its roads with asphalt and concrete. These materials increasingly replaced sand-clay and the process of production for them was mechanized.

²³ Marder, “Pleasing the Eye,” 58-59

²⁴ “Many Florida Roads Repaired,” *The Miami News*, September 14, 1925.

²⁵ “Iamonia and State Line News,” *Tallahassee Democrat*, September 18, 1908.

²⁶ “Iamonia and State Line News,” *Tallahassee Democrat*, September 4, 1908.

²⁷ “Street Improvements” *Municipal Journal and Engineer*, Vol. XXVII, No. 3 (July, 1909): 106.

²⁸ Richard Godden, *Southern Poverty Between the Wars 1918-1939* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 99.

²⁹ “Florida Leading South in Highway Construction,” *Florida Highways*, Vol. III, No. 12 (December, 1926): 2.

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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Meridian Road route was one of the first surveyed in the state. Robert Butler, the Surveyor General for the new Territory of Florida, assigned Benjamin Clements the job of laying out the Prime Meridian, which served as the starting point for legal property divisions, and divided Florida east and west. Known for his "correctness and integrity," Clements has been described as "one of the most important surveyors in the history of Florida."³⁰ Clements came to Florida with previous experience. He had surveyed parts of Alabama between 1817 and 1823.³¹ His appointment was also based on his personal connection to Andrew Jackson. Jackson, the initial Territorial Governor of Florida, recommended Clements to Butler and Butler was a personal friend of Jackson's.

In November of 1824, Benjamin Clements received a federal commission to survey the path that became Meridian Road. He was charged with surveying the area "commencing on the South East corner of the Quarter Section selected for the seat of the Lieutenant Governor of Florida and extending the Meridian North to the Georgia Line, and South to the Gulf of Mexico, thence to Section Township 1 Range 1 South and East as the completion of which, will from the beginning corner aforesaid, extend the Basis Parallel West to the Perdido."³² He had three months to do this or forfeit the \$1,000 dollars he was promised as pay (roughly \$23,000 in today's relative worth.)³³

Meridian Road served as a primary route in Leon County for transporting agricultural produce to market during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The surveying and construction of most roads in Leon County began after individuals in the community signed and presented a petition to the County Court "praying for a public road."³⁴ After consideration and acceptance, the Court appointed overseers and commissioners to the

³⁰ Joe Knetsch, *Faces on the Frontier: Florida Surveyors and Developers in the 19th Century* (Cocoa, Florida: The Florida Historical Society Press, 2006): 119-120.

³¹ Knetsch, *Faces on the Frontier*, 120.

³² Articles of Agreement Benjamin Clements dated November 16, 1824, Title and Lands Record Section, Archives of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Tallahassee, Florida.

³³ Knetsch, *Faces on the Frontier*, 122.

³⁴ Leon County, Florida, Court Minutes, 1825-1833 (Tallahassee County Court), 55. State Library and Archives of Florida, Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida, hereinafter SLAF.

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surveying and construction of the new roads.³⁵ The minutes list the various men assigned to these positions. The roads constructed during this time, however, do not have specific names. Instead, the roads were designated according to the towns, cities, or landmarks they connected.

Although surveyed by Clements, Meridian Road was not formally constructed until a few years later. Meridian Road provided a dirt highway necessary for moving goods, especially cotton, from the Georgia border to the port at St. Marks. In 1826, local residents were ordered to lay a road from the Georgia Line over the nearest and best ground to St. Marks.³⁶ Eight months later, those charged with this task reported that the best route ran down the west side of Mickosookey Lake.³⁷ On June 12, 1827, those appointed with the task "reported that they had performed the duty and marked out the following described road from the Georgia line where the Coffee road intersects and pursued [sic] a southwest direction to the [illegible] on the Tamonia from thence a south east direction to a mill below crooked creek thence a southwest course to the Meridian line to Whiteheads plantations thence down the saw line by Hackleys plantations to the north end of Monroe Street Tallahassee."³⁸

Once established, the road served as a major artery for moving agricultural products. After its construction, archival documentation about Meridian Road only appears when residents noted problems with its condition. Prior to the 1910s, it was unpaved, leaving its usability subject to weather conditions. Sometimes passage upon it was perilous as noted by the local newspaper:

The rainy weather continues and the public roads have, in some places, become dangerous, if not impassable. For example, that part of the road which runs from Iamonia to Meridian, comprehended by T.P. Strickland's store and the Van Brunt place, is in places boggy and dangerous. Cannot the 'powers that be' have the public roads at least repaired? It would pay in the run of twelve months, as we look at it. Besides we country folks will come to town more frequently if the roads are

³⁵ Knetsch, "Road Builders of Early Leon County," 21.

³⁶ Tuesday March 7, 1826, p. 7, Leon County Court Minutes, SLAF

³⁷ Wednesday March 8, 1826, p. 24-25, Leon County Court Minutes, SLAF

³⁸ Tuesday June 12, 1827, p. 42, Leon County Court Minutes, SLAF

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kept in order.³⁹

The newspaper argued that improving the roads was a matter both of public safety and of economic benefit to the entire community. The paper continued to make this argument by reporting two weeks later about Tommie Harvin's experience. Reportedly, he became "bogged down in crossing the Iamonia slough on the Meridian road and before he could extricate his wagon from the mud was compelled to roll his barrels of syrup out of the wagon, through the mud to dry land, and after pulling the wagon out, re-load his syrup."⁴⁰

The condition of the road impaired the movement of agricultural product to market. These tales provoked Leon County commissioners to hold a special session to consider improving the roads.⁴¹ The Tallahassee Democrat cited several spots on Meridian in need of amelioration: "the bottom of Ronald's Hill near Lake Jackson" and "the approach at both ends to bridges over Iamonia's Slough."⁴² Whether the commissioners acted upon these suggestions is unclear. The general issue of road conditions, however, were about to cease being only local concerns.

In 1916, Leon County Commissioners seized the opportunity to secure newly available funds to resurface a number of roads, Meridian being one of them. The commissioners took bids in October of 1916 for reconstructing Meridian Road, Spring Hill Road, Centerville and Sunny Hill Road, Miccosukie [sic] Road, Buck Lake Road, Wadesboro Road, Quincy Road and Woodville Road. The bids called for estimates to include excavation, laying sand clay, gravel, or broken stone, and putting in drains.⁴³ Using sand-clay to surface the road was the most common strategy in Florida.⁴⁴ In looking at the data from 1909, all improved roads in Leon County had been covered with sand-clay (150 out of total of 450 miles of public roads).⁴⁵ The 1916 bid called for 5 miles of gravel and 55

³⁹ "Iamonia and State Line News," Tallahassee Democrat, January 10, 1908.

⁴⁰ "Iamonia and State Line News," Tallahassee Democrat, January 24, 1908.

⁴¹ Tallahassee Democrat, March 20, 1908.

⁴² "Good County Roads," Tallahassee Democrat, April 3, 1908.

⁴³ "Road Construction, Leon County Florida," Engineering and Contracting, Vol., XLVI, no. 14, (October 4, 1916): 36.

⁴⁴ J.E. Pennybacker, Jr. "Mileage and Cost of Public Roads in the United States in 1909: Florida," (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Public Roads-Bulletin No. 41, Washington: GPO, 1912): 16.

⁴⁵ Pennybacker, Jr. "Mileage and Cost of Public Roads in the United States in 1909: Florida," 52.

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miles of sand clay road, 14' to 16' wide. More than likely, Meridian was paved in sand clay.

Meridian Road was not immediately included in the state's new highway system that was designated by the Legislature in 1921.⁴⁶ Meridian Road received designation as a state road when the state legislature renumbered the state road system in 1941.⁴⁷ In April of 1938, state road department commissioners A. Pichard and C.M. Ausley of Leon County requested that the department provide funds to pave "Meridian Road north of Tallahassee."⁴⁸ It was placed on their list of approved projects, which would be undertaken if and when funds were available.⁴⁹ Without further documentation, 1938 is regarded as the approximate date of the asphalt surfacing. Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, Meridian would be paved and repaved with asphalt; the last time the county did so was in 2007.⁵⁰

Today, Meridian Road is one of Leon County's designated canopy roads. Leon County, together with the city of Tallahassee, works to create, maintain, manage, and preserve these historic resources. By doing so, the historic integrity of Meridian Road, as a rural highway that connects the county and city remains intact.

⁴⁶ "Florida's Road System," *Florida Highways*, Vol. I, No. 1, (December 1923): 21.

⁴⁷ "New State Road Numbers," *Florida Highways*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (January, 1947): 30.

⁴⁸ *Florida Public Works*, Volume 15, No. 3 (April 1938): 51.

⁴⁹ *Florida Public Works*, Volume 15, No. 3 (April 1938): 57.

⁵⁰ Phone conversation between Jennifer Koslow and Jim Cuiture, Leon County Office of Public Works, April 21, 2009.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

County Road 155, North Meridian Road, and the roads right-of-way is owned by Leon County, with two small portions owned by the City of Tallahassee. The length of the designated road is approximately 14.25 miles, and the width of the road and its right-of-way varies but averages 20 feet wide. Approximately 34.5 acres.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The designated National Register boundary is historically associated with Meridian Road.

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Section number Photos Page 1 **MERIDIAN ROAD, LEON COUNTY,
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PHOTOGRAPHIC LIST

1. Meridian Road, no address
2. Leon County, Florida
3. Katherine Peterson
4. November 2012
5. Meridian Road & Glenview Road, in town, non-contributing, looking north
6. Photo #1 of 14

All photographs have the same information for items 1-4.

5. Meridian Road & Lexington Road, southern boundary of National Register nomination, looking north
6. Photo #2 of 14
5. Meridian Road & Rhoden Cove Road, looking north
6. Photo #3 of 14
5. Meridian Road & Maclay Road intersection, looking north
6. Photo #4 of 14
5. Meridian Road & Ox Bottom Road intersection, looking north
6. Photo #5 of 14
5. Meridian Road & entrance to Hawks Rise School, looking north
6. Photo #6 of 14
5. Meridian Road & curve by Holly Pond, looking north
6. Photo #7 of 14
5. Meridian Road & Summerbrook subdivision entrance, looking north
6. Photo #8 of 14

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5. Clay embankments on Meridian Road north of Oak Grove Plantation Road, looking north

6. Photo #9 of 14

5. Meridian Road & Bannerman Road intersection, looking north

6. Photo #10 of 14

5. Bridge at western edge of Lake Iamonia, looking north

6. Photo #11 of 14

5. Meridian Road's curve and embankments, looking north

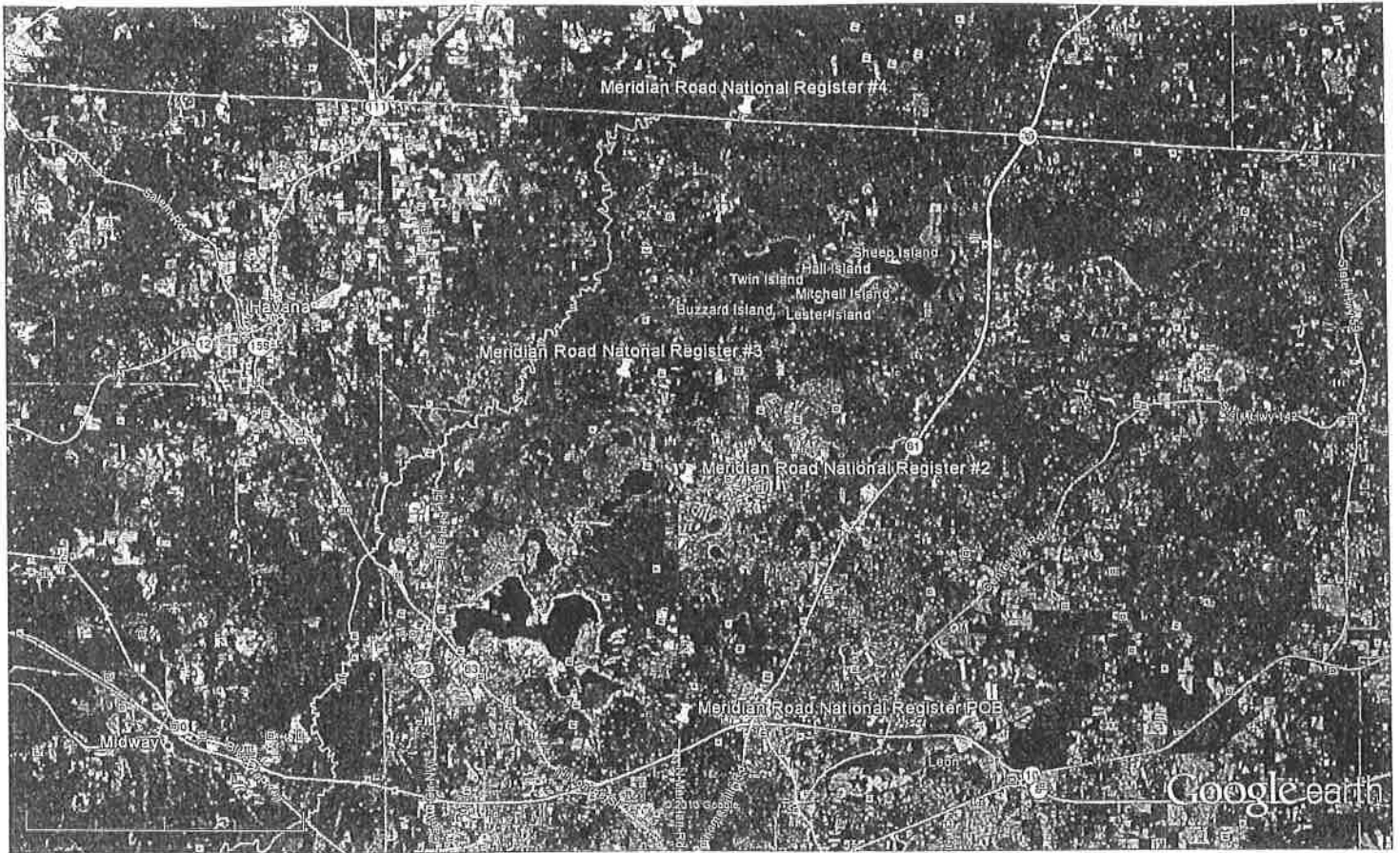
6. Photo #12 of 14

5. Meridian Road & Ginny Lane, looking north

6. Photo #13 of 14

5. Meridian Road at the Georgia State Line, looking north

6. Photo #14 of 14



Google earth



MERIDIAN ROAD NATIONAL REGISTER

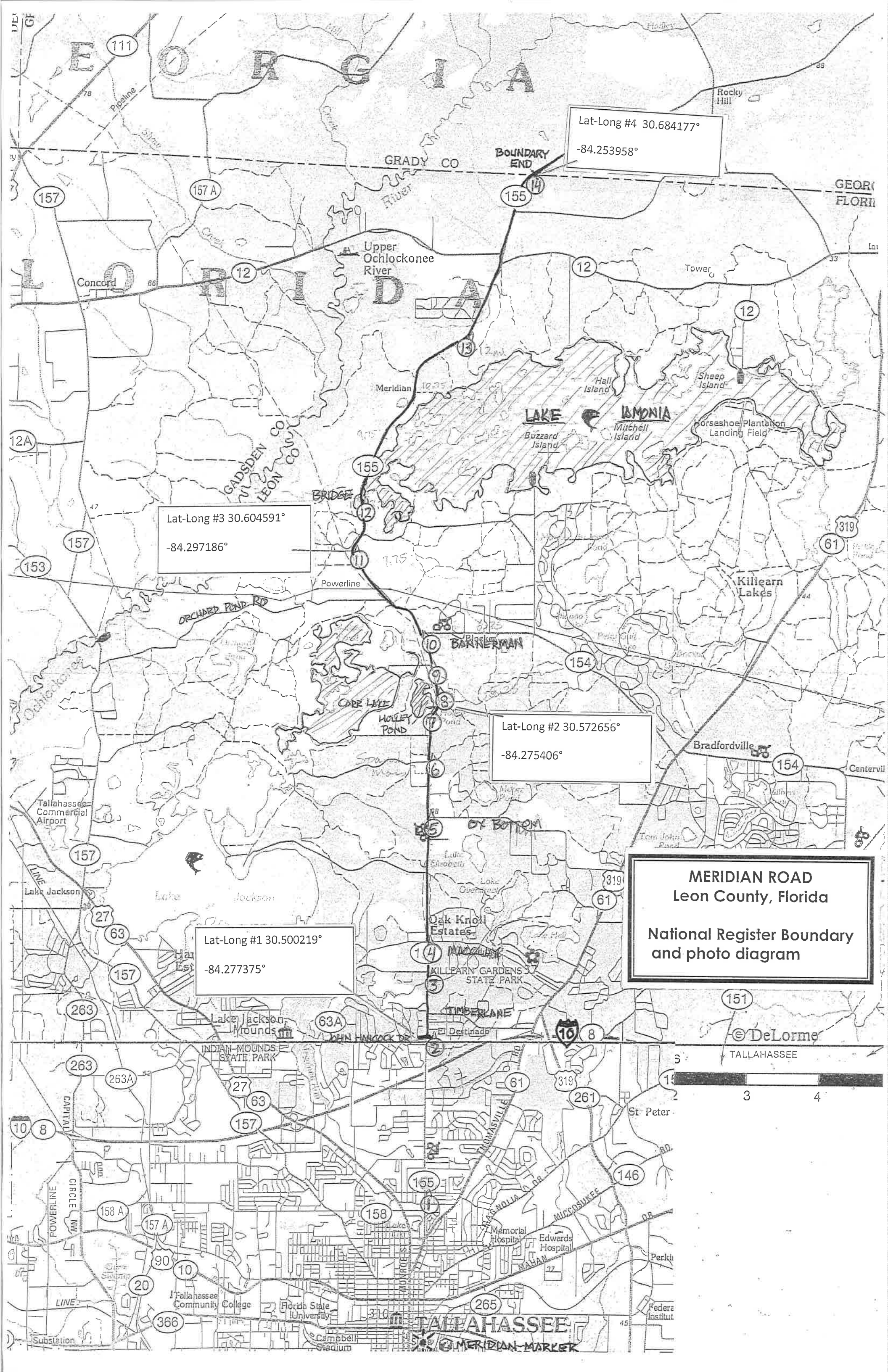
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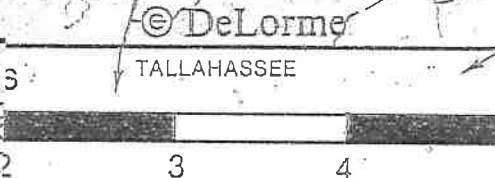
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-84.297186°

Lat-Long #2 30.572656°
-84.275406°

Lat-Long #1 30.500219°
-84.277375°

MERIDIAN ROAD
Leon County, Florida
National Register Boundary
and photo diagram



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TALLAHASSEE



Glenview Dr



SPEED
LIMIT
45





















NO
FISHING
FROM
BRIDGE





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Meridian Road

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: FLORIDA, Leon

DATE RECEIVED: 2/01/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/05/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/20/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/20/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000081

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 3-20-13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor

KEN DETZNER
Secretary of State



January 30, 2013

Ms. Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
Department of Interior
1201 Eye Street, N.W., 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed are the nomination and additional materials (nomination form, continuation sheets, site plan, Google map coordinates, color digital images and disk) for the submission of

Meridian Road, Leon County, Florida

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

Sincerely,

Barbara E. Mattick, Ph.D.
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
for Survey & Registration

Enclosures

DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

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