UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NP				

RECEIVED

JUN 5 1980 DATE ENTERED AUG

\_\_MILITARY

STATE

\_\_OTHER:

1 1980

	SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
	TYPE ALL ENTRIES COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS
1 NAME	

Palm Beach Winter Club	D		
AND/OR COMMON			· · · ·
LOCATION U.S. 1			
STREET & NUMBER			
951 U.S. Highway #1		NOT FOR PUBLICATION	
ITY, TOWN		CONGRESSIONAL DIST	RICT
North Palm Beach	VICINITY OF	10 or 11	
	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
	12	Palm Beach	099

# **ULASSIFIUA IIUN**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESE	ENTUSE
DISTRICT	XPUBLIC		AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
X_BUILDING(S)	PRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	вотн	<b>WORK IN PROGRESS</b>	EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDENCE
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	YES: RESTRICTED	X_GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	X_YES: UNRESTRICTED	_INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATION

\_\_NO

### OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME	
Village of North Palm Beach	
STREET & NUMBER	
Village Hall, 501 U.S. #1	
CITY, TOWN	STATE
North Palm Beach VICINITY OF	Florida
LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION	
COURTHOUSE. REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Palm Beach County Courthous	se
STREET & NUMBER	· / · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
CITY, TOWN	STATE
West Palm Beach	Florida
<b>6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SUR</b>	VEYS
TÎTLE	
DATE	
	FEDERALSTATECOUNTYLOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR	
SURVEY RECORDS	

CITY, TOWN

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONE	DITION	CHECK ONE	CHECK O	NE
EXCELLENT GOOD FAIR	<u>X</u> DETERIORATED RUINS UNEXPOSED	UNALTERED	X_ORIGINAL : MOVED	SITE DATE

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Designed in the Mediterranean Revival Architectural style, the West Palm Beach Winter Club building is surrounded by foliage and trees in an otherwise barren location. It faces a major divided highway and commercial structures to the east and is separated from a residential area to the west by the vast open expanse of the former club's golf course. The grounds of the Winter Club consist of the clubhouse, a newly constructed recreation facility and swimming pool, and the golf course. The entire complex is owned by the Village of North Palm Beach, which acquired the property in 1962 and later built the pool and recreational facility. The clubhouse has served the community since 1962 in various capacities, housing a library, crafts and arts workshops, and offices. This is the only part of the original facility included in the nomination.

The clubhouse has a gabled one-story central block flanked with symmetrical three-story, low-pitched hipped roof towers. Prior to major renovation in 1935, a two-story flat roofed block projected from the southwest corner of the building, and served as a sundeck. Access to this deck was made from the third floor of the south tower. The block section still stands, although it is presently partially hidden by a two-story hipped roof addition, which was attached along the west side of the block in 1935. The building is of frame construction, has a barrel tile roof, and is finished in stucco.

The north tower has a semi-otagonal stair-bay projecting from the north side and a chimney located in the interior south face. The chimney is topped by a gabled barrel-tile hood. Fenestration on both towers is irregular, consisting of both typical square-headed double hung sash and round-headed windows.

The central block is one-story with a raised basement. The main (east) facade has a five bay arcaded loggia with heavy wood beam roof, chamfered columns, and balustrade. Each bay of the loggia has a corresponding paired window in the recessed wall; the central bay has French doors. Until 1935, all bays of the loggia had corresponding French doors with fanlights. At that time, the fanlights were filled and stuccoed and the doors were converted to windows.

The west entrance also exhibited a five bay facade, having a central French door and paired windows with fanlights. As with the main entrance, the arches of the windows and doors were later filled and stuccoed. The window spandrels of the west facade, prior to the 1935 changes, had an applied terra cotta balustrade motif, which no longer exists. Large wood brackets support the deep projecting eaves of the gabled roof along the west facade of the building. In 1935, a twostory section was constructed along the southwest side of the block section. A narrow belt course delineates the second story floor line. Window placement is largely regular. Both north and south entrances have French doors with gabled barrel-tile hoods. A simple exterior chimney is located on the west face of the addition.

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The two-story flat roof block section was highlighted by a semi-circular door which featured an archivolt of radiating voussoirs. Fenestration was irregular, having square and small round-headed windows. Vigas delineated a parapet which enclosed a sundeck. The sundeck is still accessible and usable.

Most of the clubhouse windows now have exterior blinds, which replaced the canvas awnings that existed on the 1935 building.

Presently, the building contains forty rooms, including fifteen bedrooms and nine bathrooms. The current function of these rooms has been altered significantly from their 1935 or earlier purpose. Much of the building stands vacant.

Originally, the north tower had a kitchen and service area, alone with lockers and showers on the first floor. Servants quarters were located on the top two floors, each with separate bathing and kitchen facilities. Servant's access was through a carriage or garage shed at the basement level of the tower.

The central block area contained a large public space which served as both a dining room and ballroom. This area has been partitioned, creating two smaller rooms used for both arts and crafts classes and ballet instruction. This main section also had a half basement which ran the length of central block. The basement served for storage and had lockers for persons using the facility.

The south tower contained the owner's living quarters, including kitchen, bedrooms, and bathrooms. The 1935 Oakes addition provided the owner's quarters with a large living room, complete with a terra cotta ornamented fireplace.

The clubhouse interior walls are plaster, and accoustical tile panel ceilings in many rooms conceal the original wood ceilings. Bedroom flooring is wood, while terrazzo is found in the central block. Much of the original ornamentation has either been removed, covered, or painted over.

The clubhouse once boasted a patio-garden area behind the west (rear) side of the building. The once expansive grounds have been consumed by the construction of a recreation complex and olympic size pool. Presently, due to code violations, much of the building is unused, and has suffered from exposure, deterioration, and inadequate maintenance.

## **8** SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AF	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
PREHISTORIC 1400-1499 1500-1599 1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899 X1900-	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC AGRICULTURE XARCHITECTURE ART COMMERCE COMMUNICATIONS	COMMUNITY PLANNING CONSERVATION ECONOMICS EDUCATION ENGINEERING EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT INDUSTRY	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE LAW LITERATURE MILITARY MUSIC PHILOSOPHY POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	RELIGION SCIENCE SCULPTURE SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN THEATER TRANSPORTATION XOTHER (SPECIFY) Recreational
SPECIFIC DAT	r <b>es</b> +1926	BUILDER/ARCH	HITECT Louis de Puys	eger

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Palm Beach Winter Club is significant for its architectural merit and for its association with Paris Singer and Harry Kelsey in the development of the Palm Beach-Lake Park area. It also derives significance as the home of Sir Harry Oakes, a multimillionaire whose fortune was amassed following the discovery of gold at Kirkland Lake, Canada, in 1910.

The Mediterranean Revival style clubhouse, designed by the French architect Louis de Puyseger, was completed in November, 1926. Construction of the four story building, costing \$500,000, was financed by Harry Kelsey's East Coast Finance Company. Harry Kelsey was a real estate developer, whose major development, Kelsey City, has become present day Lake Park.

In 1923, Kelsey, along with Paris Singer, owner of the Everglades Club in Palm Beach and an heir to the Singer Sewing Machine fortune, began plans to develop the clubhouse and golf course two miles north of Kelsey City. A five story building and eighteen-hole golf course were originally planned with projected future development for a basin for power boats and seaplanes directly in front of the clubhouse. (Singer had hoped to have the guests of his proposed nearby Blue Heron Hotel use the Winter Club facilities and golf course.<sup>2</sup> The Blue Heron Hotel, designed by Addison Mizner, was located across the intracoastal waterway on Singer Island. The Blue Heron was never completed, having suffered severe damage from the 1928 hurricane while under construction.)<sup>3</sup> Kelsey intended to use the clubhouse as the focal point in his plans to attract prospective real estate investors, to the Kelsey City development.<sup>4</sup>

The Winter Club building was located on a site Kelsey had created by pumping sand from Lake Worth. In the last two months before the clubhouse was opened to the public, much work was undertaken to complete it and the grounds. Twenty carloads of Ojus Marl and topsoil were placed on the golf course; a Chicago golf pro was hired, and the kitchen was staffed. U.S. Highway #1 from Jupiter south to the clubhouse was also completed at the same time.5

The clubhouse opened on January 9, 1927, and the grand opening celebration lasted for three days, during which time many Palm Beach socialities drove to the club or sailed up Lake Worth (intracoastal waterway) in their yachts. Kelsey gave many of his guests a tour of the clubhouse which included everything from the upper floor bedrooms to the basement locker rooms. He is said to have explained to visiting French and Italian ladies how wood worms were trained to chew holes in the wood of the ceilings and doors to make "pecky cypress."<sup>6</sup> The golf course was visited by golf pros, guests and West Palm Beach residents. No golf fees were

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# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See continuation sheet)

10GEOGRAPHIC		ACREAGE N	DT VERIFIED
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED		- UTM NOT	VEDICICN
QUADRANGLE NAME	Riveria Beach Revised	1946 (PR 1967) QUAD	RANGLE SCALL 7.5 min.
	1210 21961731410 NORTHING	B ZONE EASTING	
		FL I LI L	
GLI		нЦ 111	
VERBAL BOUNDARY D	ESCRIPTION		
	(See contin	uation sheet)	
LIST ALL STATES	S AND COUNTIES FOR PROPER	TIES OVERLAPPING STATE O	R COUNTY BOUNDARIES
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Records Street & NUMBER	Division of Archives, Management		теlephone (904) 487–2333
The Capi	ltol		(904) 487-2333
CITY OR TOWN Tallahas			STATE
12 STATE HISTO	RIC PRESERVATIO EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF	F THIS PROPERTY WITHIN TH	
hereby nominate this prope		Register and certify that it has	Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I s been evaluated according to the
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVAT		- Sem/4	
TITLE State Hist	coric Preservation Offi	icer	DATE 5/15/80
OR NPS USE ONLY	T THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED		
for Selen 1	g &da		DATE 84/80
ATTEST KEEPER OF THE NAT	TIONAL REGISTER		DATE 7/31/80
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GPO 921-803

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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charged during the three day event.

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Stylistically the clubhouse is in keeping with the Mediterranean character established in Palm Beach and other parts of South Florida, by architects such as Addison Mizner, in the 1920's. The clubhouse has such characteristic features as a red barrel tile roof and stuccoed exterior. Irregular in plan, the building consists of a large central block with flanking towers and a two-story addition (1935), which projects from, and partially obscures, a two-story flat roofed block. The north tower functioned as kitchen, servants quarters, and shower and locker facility for the club's guests. The large open central block served as a combined dining and ballroom area. A half basement ran the length of the central block. The south tower provided sleeping quarters for the owner, with separate kitchen facilities and bathrooms. The 1935 addition acted as a large living room accessible from the south tower of the clubhouse.

The success of the grand opening was short lived. The economic hardship created by the land bust in the mid 1920's, combined with a disastrous hurricane in 1928, left the club partially destroyed, economically and physically. The final blow came with the onset of the depression in 1929. The depression ruined Harry Kelsey and the East Coast Finance Company, owners of the Winter Club, and he declared bankruptcy. During the depression, the Winter Club was operated at a loss by a variety of owners. Rather than maintain it at great expense, the building sat vacant and the grounds became overgrown.

During this time, Palm Beach acquired new residents, Harry Oakes and family At the advice of his attorney Walter Foskett, Oakes, through his Tesden Corporation, purchased tax-certificates from the State of Florida on approximately eighty percent of the Kelsey City property, including the Winter Club and most of the land now known as North Palm Beach.<sup>8</sup> Harry Oakes, born in Sangerville, Maine, around 1875, was an introspective man who often dreamed and spoke of the great fortune he would one-day make. Aroused by news of gold discoveries in the Yukon Territory, he left the Syracuse Medical College in search of gold in Canada. In 1910, he made his first important strike at Kirkland Lake, and soon had become one of the richest men in the world.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1920's, he renounced his American citizenship and became a resident of Canada. Frustrated in his attempt to become a Senator in the Canadian parliament as a result of election losses by his Conservative Party, and unhappy with a Canadian income tax rate of eighty-five percent, Oakes returned to the United States, making his home in Palm Beach.10

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Oakes acquired the Winter Club building in 1935 to serve as his home. The Oakes family thought that maintaining their residence in the building would afford the club prestige. Oakes added to the two-story south wing and made several alterations to the building and grounds to accommodate his family. He added a bridle path and stable for polo ponies to the grounds by relocating some of the golf course fairways.<sup>11</sup>

While at Palm Beach, Oakes met Harold Christie, a real estate promoter from Nassau, The Bahamas. Christie, after learning of Oakes' distress with the Canadian government, convinced Oakes to become a Bahamian resident. The Bahamas did not impose income taxes, death duties or inheritance taxes. Had Oakes died a resident of Canada, his estate would have been assessed at a rate exceeding 90%.12

Oakes moved to the Bahamas, and while there, received the title "baronet." He was knighted by King George VI for his philanthropy in regard to St. George's Hospital in London. In 1943, Sir Harry Oakes was mysteriously murdered while asleep in his Bahamian residence. The murder is still unsolved and has been the subject of continous controversy and historical research.13

The Winter Club subsequently passed from the Tesden Corporation into the possession of industrialist Ralph Stolkin in 1954, and later to insurance millionaire, John D. McArthur. The Ross Brothers, golf course and club developers, purchased the property for \$9,000,000 in 1957.<sup>14</sup> The Village of North Palm Beach acquired the building in 1962 and added an adjacent recreation facility and olympic size pool near the west side of the clubhouse.

The Winter Club has served the community since 1962 as a library, recreation center, and offices. As one of the first structures built in what is now known as the Lake Park-North Palm Beach area, the Palm Beach Winter Club is advertised locally as the oldest mansion on or around the Village of North Palm Beach.

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<sup>1</sup>Stuart B. McIver, <u>Yesterday's Palm Beach</u>. (Miami: E.A. Seemann Publishing, 1976), p. 92. (Photo Caption).

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Charles Branch by Martha Nadelman, May 1979. (Copy on file in the Village of North Palm Beach Library).

<sup>3</sup>McIver, p. 94; Branch Inverview.

<sup>4</sup>Branch Interview.

<sup>5</sup>Branch Interview.

<sup>6</sup>Branch Interview.

<sup>7</sup><u>Palm Beach County Records</u>. Warranty Deed, Book No. 512, p. 276; Branch Interview.

<sup>8</sup>Marshall Houts, <u>Kings X: Common Law and the Death of Sir Henry Oakes</u>. (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1972), p. 3.

9 Houts, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup><u>Palm Beach County Records</u>. Warranty Deed, Book No. 512, p. 276.

<sup>11</sup> Houts, p. 11.

12 Houts, p. 13.

13

See Houts' Kings X.

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Palm Beach County Records. Warranty Deed, Book No. 1039, p. 205; No. 1052, p. 541; No. 1076, p. 634; No. 1114, p. 72; No. 1114, p. 281; Official Record Book, 31, p. 682; No. 72, p. 340; No. 720, p. 199.

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- Branch, Charles. Interview by Martha Nadelman. May 1979. (Copy on file in the Village of North Palm Beach Library).
- Houts, Marshall. <u>Kings X: Common Law and the Death of Sir Harry Oakes</u>. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1972.

McIver, Stuart B. Yesterday's Palm Beach. Miami: E.A. Seemann Publishing, 1976.

Palm Beach County Records. Book Nos. 512, 1039, 1052, 1076, 1114; Official Record Book Nos. 31, 72, 720.

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Commencing at the intersection of the centerline of Yacht Club Drive with the centerline of U.S. Highway No. 1, as shown on plat of marina addition to Village of North Palm Beach, according to the plat thereof recorded in Plat Book 27, Page 98, Public Records of Palm Beach County, Florida; run thence south 82° - 50' -05" west along the westerly extension of the centerline of said Yacht Club Drive, a distance of 60.00 feet to a point in the westerly right of way line of U.S. Highway No. 1 (all bearings mentioned herein refer to said Plat Book 27, Page 98); thence northerly along the west right of way of U.S. No. 1, being in the arc of a curve concave easterly, having a radius of 2924.93 feet, subtending a central angle of 1° - 17' - 34", a distance of 66.00 feet; thence south 84° - 07' - 39" west, a distance of 62.00 feet to the point of beginning of the herein described parcel; thence south 28°- 52' - 00" west, a distance of 220.00 feet; thence south 86° - 52' - 00" west, a distance of 24.00 feet; thence westerly along the arc of said curve, subtending a central angle of 27° - 44' - 10", a distance of 91.01 feet; thence north 28° - 52' - 00" east, a distance of 370.73 feet to a point in the arc of a curve concave southerly, having a radius of 50.00 feet; local tangent passing through said point bears south 75° - 50' - 46" west; thence southeasterly along the arc of said curve, subtending a central angle of 74° - 42' - 46", a distance of 65.00 feet to the end of said curve; thence south 1° - 08' -00" east. a distance of 100.00 feet to the point of beginning.



