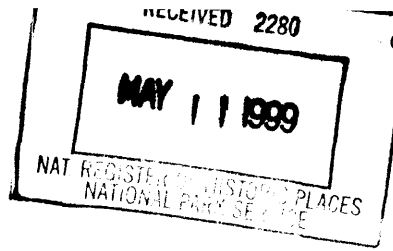


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



694

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 PALATKA RAVINE GARDENS HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number Ravine State Gardens FMSF# PU91

2. Location

street & number 1600 Twigg St. N/A not for publication

city or town Palatka N/A vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Putnam code 107 zip code 32178

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.)

George W. Perry 4/30/99
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) _____

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

6/10/99
Date of Action

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	
2	6	buildings
1	0	sites
6	0	structures
0	0	objects
9	6	total

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

"N/A"

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE: outdoor recreation

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE: outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: wood vernacular

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls WOOD
roof ASPHALT
other STONE

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)

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1933-1949

Significant Dates

1933

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Forester, Richard/WPA

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 57

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

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

3	1	7	4	3	7	8	4	0	3	2	7	7	8	2	0
	Zone	Easting		Northing											
4	1	7	4	3	7	3	6	0	3	2	7	8	6	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 Lucy Wayne/Robert O. Jones, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date April 1999

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 Internal Improvement Trust Fund, Florida Division of State Lands (site contact Bob Rundle)

street & number 3900 Commonwealth Blvd. telephone 904-329-3721

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32303

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section number 7 Page 1 **PALATKA RAVINE GARDENS HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PALATKA, PUTNAM CO., FL**

SUMMARY

The Palatka Ravine Gardens Historic District is located in the City of Palatka, Putnam County, Florida. The gardens are a cultural landscape on 57 acres, and are built to encompass two natural, steep ravines created by water flows beneath the ridges flanking the west bank of the St. Johns River. Built by the City of Palatka from 1933 through 1939 under New Deal, Works Progress Administration programs, the gardens include extensive ornamental plantings, pools, paths and roads, formal structured gardens, an outdoor amphitheater, an obelisk, two suspension foot bridges, two historic buildings, and 6 non-historic buildings. In 1972 the Gardens became a part of the Florida State Park System as Ravine State Gardens.

SETTING

At the time of development, the gardens were on the outskirts of the city with scattered houses to the west. The ravines were largely undisturbed before development. Research suggests that the ravine stream bed vegetation would have been mosses, woody plants, as well as Redbay, Sweetbay, Dahoon Holly and Agarista. Lower slope tree species probably included the same, in addition to native azaleas, possumhaw, dog hobble and needlepalm. The upper slopes had dogwood, magnolias, American holly, and witchhazel occurring under a dense understory of hardwoods such as sweetgum, laurel oaks and live oaks.

The park is presently bordered on the north and east by a residential neighborhood, the Azalea Bowl baseball complex, Forester Field little league field, and an electrical substation. The residential neighborhood to the west developed in the 1950's and 60's. To the south is a city owned historic golf course, already present at the time the gardens were developed. To the east are railroad tracks and the City Water Works building. The high ground that encompasses the ravines forms a bluff at the east end of the gardens, and drops to lower, marsh and wetlands which border the St. Johns River.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Palatka Ravine Gardens consists of two steephead ravines that slope down to the Whitewater Branch, a spring-fed stream which flows east into the St. Johns River. The elevation is 75 feet above sea level at the top of the northern branch of the ravine. Today the vegetation in Palatka

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Ravine Gardens is a mix of native species, and ornamentals introduced during the 1930's. The original landscape design is more intact in the northern branch and main entry area. The southern ravine was deliberately not as developed, and served as the city's water source. The ornamental plantings consist of azaleas, date palms, camellias, and crepe myrtle.

Adjacent to Twigg Street, north of the entrance station, is public parking. A paved road enters the garden and accesses a civic center building. A narrow road, now restricted to cars, continues around the perimeter for 1.8 miles of the gardens keeping to the higher elevation. Hiking trails, picnic benches, and rest areas are throughout the gardens. There are retaining walls of brick and stone. The streams have been shaped, concrete and metal pipes installed, and a spillway and collection pools created within both ravines. A small lime rock fountain is on the slope in the southwest corner of the north ravine.

The Entrance Station is a 1934 building (Photo #1). A second of these stations is shown on the 1933 plan, but two lime rock columns suitable for a small gate are located on the east side of the entrance area. The building rests on a continuous concrete foundation, and is a small central, square cypress building with massive flanking lime rock columns, all under a side-gable roof with four gable dormers. The central building is sided with pecky cypress half-log boards, and has corner posts to give a log cabin appearance. The eaves of the cypress shingle-over-plank roof has the same half-log siding. A bathroom was added to the interior, but the building's architectural integrity remains to a high degree.

The Court of States is the most prominent element of the garden to visitors entering by the Entrance Station (Photo #2). It has two rows of paired lime rock pillars topped by pipes and fence wire which form a trellis for vines. The pipes replaced original cypress logs which deteriorated. Initially built as 48 pairs of columns, (one for each of the contiguous states in the United States), two additional pairs were added after Hawaii and Alaska became states. Flags from each state are flown between the stone columns. Three central planters had originally been fountains. Rows of palm trees are located to the exterior of the columns. Holly bush topiaries originally lined the spaces between the columns. The outer limit of the Court is defined by a low lime rock wall which forms a half circle at the north end with a stairway to the Roosevelt Obelisk, and another at the south end with an opening to the driveway.

The Roosevelt Obelisk was completed in 1935 and dedicated in 1936 (Photo #3). The obelisk was financed by the workers at the gardens and the people of Palatka in appreciation for the Roosevelt administration's

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DISTRICT, PALATKA, PUTNAM CO., FL

efforts to speed recovery from the Depression. The obelisk is on a low terrace at the north end of the Court of States. The 70-foot wide half circle terrace has four curving stone steps elevating it above the level of the Court of States. Three concrete and lime rock benches are placed on either side of the obelisk, and a flagpole is between the obelisk and the steps. A hedge behind the obelisk repeats the half circle curve of the terrace.

The 65-foot high obelisk with 7 foot wide base, rests on a continuous concrete foundation, and is faced with lime rock and has concrete block quoins on the corners. The obelisk was originally topped with an aluminum cap and lights, and small triangular openings near the peak could have contained the lights.

The Administration Building for the gardens was built in 1934, and is presently used by the local Garden Club (Photo #4). The building's design was taken from the "Cypress Building" at the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition. The building was originally located on the south end of the Court of States, but was moved to the east side of the Court when the Civic Center was erected in its place in 1956. The Administration Building is the most architecturally significant within the gardens, and its level of architectural integrity is very high.

The Administration Building is built of cypress with post and beam construction in a cruciform plan with a cross gable roof. The roof has exposed rafter ends, and current asphalt shingles replaced original cypress shingles. The exterior is sided with half-round pecky cypress boards, and the corners have large round posts (Photo #5). The main gables have large bird houses at the peaks. A full-width porch extends across the main facade, and a non-historic access ramp is located on the north. The main facade contains two sets of double doors with four-pane lights. Single doors with four-pane lights provide access to the wings. Paired 6-pane casement windows are located on all of the other main walls. The building originally stood on lime rock piers; when it was moved, these were replaced with concrete block piers. The center of the building contains a massive lime rock fireplace and chimney (Photo #6). All of the interior surfaces are cypress and pecky cypress, as is some of the original furniture. The building is open to the roof with exposed rafters, some of which are decoratively carved.

A historic marker is near the southwest corner of the building. It marks the trail of the explorer, John Bertram, and was placed by the National Council of Garden Clubs.

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The Azalea Fountain and Terraces built in 1934, is a planter garden surrounded by four pairs of stone columns, and a series of terraces stepping down into the ravine. The upper terrace originally had a clay drive that circled a rubble lime rock fountain, went behind the Administration Building. Four pairs of lime rock columns were on the periphery of the circle. After the Civic Center was built, the drive became a brick sidewalk, the fountain container became a planter, and hedges were planted (Photo #7). The basic form, stone columns, and fountain mechanism and container remain.

Concrete stairs on either side of the terrace lead down to a terrace landing in front of a lime rock wall with a niche (Photo #8). Another set of six stairs leads down to the walled second terrace which is planted with azaleas (Photo #9). The symmetrical form of the terraces changes at this level and becomes irregular on the next terrace, following the natural terrain. A central set of stairs between two lime rock columns leads down to the third terrace which contains a lime rock fountain in the northeast corner. Two stairs provide access to the fourth terrace. The fourth terrace is smaller, and a path leads to the north ravine and suspension bridge. A central set of steps provides access to a semicircular terrace overlooking the ravines. This garden and terraced ridge is the landscaped core of the Ravine Gardens, and the juncture between the formalized garden and natural landscape.

The Amphitheater with stage was developed in 1939 at the junction of the branches of the streams in response to the needs of an annual Azalea Festival. The stage was constructed on the old 8th tee of the adjacent municipal golf course. The stage, and the terraced seating directly to its west, are known as the Amphitheater, and are separated by the paved road (Photo #10). The seating area consists of eight arched terraces delineated by low unmortared lime rock walls leading uphill to the adjacent golf course (Photo #11). The terraces conform to the natural slope of the ravines. The terraced stage is also delineated with lime rock walls in three levels with steps at the center of the east and west sides. The back of the stage drops off into the ravines below, and stairs are located on either side (Photo #12).

Archeological testing was conducted in 1998 within the amphitheater seating area due to evidence of Native-American occupation, and historic documentation of Civil War Period activities. No diagnostic material was discovered.

There are two pedestrian wooden suspension bridges within the gardens. There originally were three, one at the base of the terraces, and two

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adjacent to the junction of the ravines. The central bridge, at the northern junction is gone. The suspension bridges have steel cables suspended from tall concrete masts at either end, and lime rock anchors for the cables (Photo #13). Roughly every twenty years the wooden material has needed to be replaced, and the last replication was in 1998. The concrete end supports for the third bridge remain. The bridges were designed to span land rather than the water of the Branch (Photo #14). At the location of each bridge, the Branch was channeled underground while the area under the bridges was filled.

Originally a two-story log and stone lodge was built west of the current Civic Center. Its decayed condition and termite infestation prompted the Park System to take it down when they took ownership in 1972.

Originally a large waterwheel was located downstream from the northern bridge. Currently only portions of the concrete support for the wheel are visible. The portion of the Branch between the two bridges retains the best preserved examples of the original lakes designed by landscape architect Richard Forester.

At the eastern juncture of the two branches spillways and ponds were constructed (Photos #15&16). Beyond the south ravine suspension bridge the lower portion of the ravine has become overgrown but the trails are retained (Photo #17).

NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

The Swimming Pool Building and pool were constructed in 1956 (Photo #18). The pool is now filled and paved over, but the building remains in use as meeting space. Although the building is within the park boundary, it is owned by the city. The one-story concrete block building has an elevated, and slightly projecting central bay forming an entry with glass doors and surrounds. The flanking wings of the unadorned facade have clerestory windows.

The Civic Center was built in 1956 (Photo #19). The one story concrete block structure consists of two sections divided by a breezeway. The smaller east section contains Park Service offices and rest rooms. The west section is a multipurpose meeting room and auditorium with fixed glass windows across the north, main facade, and a wall of plate glass windows overlooking the ravines on the south.

A one-story, concrete block ranger residence was built at the western end of the north ravine in the 1970s (Photo #20). Directly west of the

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Civic Center are three non-historic small shop and service/maintenance shelters (Photos #21-23).

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**PALATKA RAVINE GARDENS HISTORIC
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SUMMARY

The Palatka Ravine Gardens is significant on the local level under Criteria A and C in the areas of Landscape Architecture, Architecture, and Entertainment/Recreation. Begun during the Great Depression in 1933 as a New Deal Works Progress Administration project, the intention was to stimulate an economic recovery of the City of Palatka by developing tourism in the region. The program was successful in providing a recreational facility and promoting tourism. The gardens, an outstanding example of a planned public landscape, were one of the most unusual New Deal park projects in Florida. The gardens were designed by Richard Forester. The buildings, structures and objects are excellent examples of vernacular design in architecture, and engineering typical of the national trend of New Deal public construction in what has been termed a Rustic form of building.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Native-Americans lived in the Whitewater Branch area as early as 3000 BC. Early American settlers to the Palatka area encountered native inhabitants, and an Indian trail crossed the branch where the Palatka Water Works is located. The town was settled in 1823, shortly after Spain ceded Florida to the United States. The St. Johns River was the natural route of travel and Palatka was a natural port and early trading center. The Seminole Wars interrupted development of the commercial town for only a short while. The town became the seat of government for Putnam County in 1849, and was incorporated in 1853. During the Civil War, Palatka was abandoned by the Confederates early in the war due to threats from the Union for control of the river. Union troops on several occasions occupied the city, and occasionally Confederates occupied the high ground adjacent to the ravines to observe and harass the Federals. A Union cannon ball, found within the ravines has been on display in the public library, and bullets have been found on the high ground north and south of the ravines' confluence.

The 30 years following 1865 have been termed the "Golden Age of Palatka." The arrival of the railroad to the town in the 1880s provided competition to the river boats. In 1886 a city waterworks which drew upon the streams within the ravines was established. In 1893 the Wilson Cypress

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Lumber Company was formed, becoming the largest employer in the city. Citrus cultivation, lumber and naval stores formed the basis of the economy.

Neighborhoods began to expand and Florida's land boom of the 1920s resulted in new brick commercial buildings through the downtown. Construction within the Palatka Heights residential neighborhood west of the ravine increased in the 1920s. In 1924, the Heights were annexed by the City of Palatka. The City also acquired the privately owned Water Works, which included the ravines and branch, as well as land between and to the south of the ravines. Soon after, the City developed the municipal golf course which is located between the two branches and to the south of Ravine State Gardens. Memorial Bridge across the St. Johns River was dedicated in 1927. In 1930, philanthropist James Mellon built the public Larimer Memorial Library.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

A picturesque form of vernacular construction referred to as the "rustic" or "Adirondack" Style developed from 1870s to the 1930s. Built in rural areas using local craftsmen and local materials, i.e., logs and stones, the buildings were primarily for lodges and seasonal use. The approach was convenient in that materials were local and buildings required little maintenance. Ornament relied on irregularities of stone and wood, incorporating un-peeled bark logs and branch-work patterns. Beginning in 1916, the National Park Service began using this form of construction for lodges and camps within public parks. Landscape architects became familiar with designing these vernacular forms. Works Progress Administration projects conducted during the Great Depression continued this format of organization and construction. In Florida, cypress, pine and palm logs, and limestone were common building materials.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

By 1933, Palatka was severely affected by the Great Depression. A local paving contractor, Thomas Byrd Gillespie, was a member of a three-person county committee appointed by the Governor to use federal relief money for public works employment. In later years Gillespie would say, "I had always seen the ravine gardens out there and could picture how

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beautiful it might look if you had there plants that would bloom all over the sides of the hills and so forth." He recognized that tourism was becoming an important economic force in Florida, and he proposed developing the north ravine into an azalea garden in hopes it would motivate local citizens to put plantings into both large ravines. Using his own funds, he paid landscape architect Richard Forester from Jacksonville, to develop this initial phase. Forester would later serve as the city manager for Palatka in the late 1930s. Once the planting was completed, Gillespie went to the city with his idea.

The Palatka Daily News reported that the plan for the ravines was "enthusiastically received" at the commission meeting. A committee was formed to proceed with the planned improvements. Committee members consisted of prominent local citizens: Mrs. J. H. Yelverton, Mrs. H. C. Richard, Mrs. J. W. Hilliard, Mrs. H. M. Fearnside, T. B. Gillespie, Col. A. B. Kratz, J. L. Waits, H. F. Underwood, J. G. Spencer, Mayor Walter McNally and City Manager R. M. Ingram. Azaleas were chosen as the predominant flower of the proposed gardens because of their brilliance, and because they bloom during the tourist season from December to May.

New Deal employees under Col. Kratz had already been clearing in the ravines, but he immediately put them to work in preparation for planting. The Colonel also assured the mayor that the project would not affect the city's water supply. The Colonel also agreed to make a map of the ravines for the landscape architect. It was recognized that the project ultimately "would require the building of pathways and roads all about the ravines that the blooms might be viewed as well as the building of vantage points on the hillsides. The removal of dead or dying trees and the thinning out of the growths in spots would also be necessary."

By the end of March, a Civil Works Administration (CWA) allotment of \$161,785 had been made for the proposed ravines project and work began using Federal Emergency Relief Agency (FERA) workers. Forester's plan was presented in April, calling "for construction of an administration building, concessions building, entrance station, limestone fountain, and gardens, restoration of the mill suspension bridges, the building of dams, rustic benches, and a sprinkler system, terracing and construction of retaining walls, and improvement of existing roads." Development of the adjoining Forester Park athletic facilities was included in the plan.

In addition to azaleas, the ravine was also to be planted with petunias, oleanders, roses, hibiscus, Japanese magnolias, wild plums,

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dogwoods, bougainvillea, and flame vines. The local committee bought the entire stock of the Winter Garden Ornamental Nursery which contained 40,000 azaleas and many other subtropical flowers and plants.

The Gardens were officially opened on the 4th of July, 1933. By the end of 1933, the ravine activities had become so extensive that CWA administrative offices sent Julius F. Stone to Florida "to discern what was being done with 40,000 azaleas." Stone promptly recommended greater financial support, and became one of the Garden's most enthusiastic supporters." On November 25, the CWA announced that the Gardens would receive an additional \$150,000 allotment to continue the project. Two days later 300 men were at work on the project.

The funds were apparently not immediately available, for by the end of 1933, the City was again petitioning FERA for additional funds for materials and labor. The continuing work included placement of 1,250 cubic yards of lime rock from Gainesville (valued at \$5,000) as retaining walls, brick retention walls and gullies, palmetto log terraces in inaccessible areas, concrete steps leading from the road to the branch, and fences to deter golfers from chasing balls hit into the ravines and damaging the slopes.

In January of 1934, Forester reported that there would be 95,000 azaleas and 200,000 miscellaneous plants in the Gardens by February 15. This would include over 11,000 palms, some very large. The plants were placed in 36,000 cubic yards of muck trucked into the Ravines for planting beds. A pamphlet distributed in Palatka at this time described the "Palatka Azalea Ravine Gardens" as "The Nation's Outstanding CWA Project" at a "Cost to Date" of \$250,000, and "A New Wonder of the World." The pamphlet described the gardens as the largest single collection of azaleas in the world, 95,000, including 64 of the known 72 varieties, all that will live in an outdoor climate. There were 11,000 palms and more than 200,000 other tropical plants. The Administration building was built from the original plans of the Cypress Building at the World's Fair at Chicago and was constructed entirely of Florida cypress. The formal garden on the second terrace contained a specimen of every variety of azalea in the Gardens, correctly labeled for the education of garden enthusiasts. Here was also the largest known azalea plant, with a 45 foot spread.

The reported expenditure by this date was the original \$161,785, which covered the labor costs for clearing and planting, purchase of nursery stock, completion of the azalea fountain and garden areas, development of

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the series of lakes, and construction of the entrance station and administration building. It was reported that \$9,000 of this money was contributed by the City or local organizations.

But by May, 1934, the project suffered from a shortage of funds. Forester announced that the Gardens would close until December 1, which coincided with the end of the azalea season. He wrote the curtailed finances "makes it impossible for guards to be employed Sundays and extensive construction and plantings are being done during the week." This construction included surfacing the roads, lining the water pockets, installation of drainage tile, and planting of summer flowering plants, including 2000 Japanese magnolias. Three days after Forester's announcement, FERA administrator Julius Stone approved further expenditure of \$12,000 for material purchases, including the Japanese magnolias, \$1,800 for rock for the terraces, and \$1,000 for sprinkler pipe. During this phase of construction, the Court of States was taking shape, including solicitation of state flags from across the nation.

At the end of 1934, when the Gardens were again opened to the public, FERA felt that the completion of the Court of States signified that the project was finished. The Gardens had largely reached their final form which included the entry station, administration building, Azalea Fountain and terraces, water wheel, lakes and plantings, and the Court of States was nearing completion. Formal opening of the Gardens and the initial flying of the flags in the Court was scheduled for February 17, 1935. In mid-March the Roosevelt Memorial obelisk was completed, although beacon lights had not been installed on the top. In March, 1935, FERA estimated that the Gardens were 77 percent complete, with the remaining tasks being the completion of the obelisk, finishing the parking area, and completing the rookery near the Administration building, as well as caring for the plants and shrubs already set out.

Although officially completed as far as FERA was concerned, development of the Gardens continued throughout 1935. The first of the suspension bridges was completed in March, 1935, as was a lunch room operated by the Girl Scouts in a thatched building at the entry. The June report stated that piping had been delivered for an irrigation system and installation was in progress. In September, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) announced that \$56,000 was being allocated to the Gardens. The WPA had taken over the FERA projects in 1935, and reported that since March, 1934, \$22,623 had been spent on the Gardens, with \$1,750

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of that from the community. Some of this local funding no doubt came from sale of souvenirs at the Gardens, including Azalea and Orange Blossom perfumes.

During 1936, the WPA allotted additional funding for the Gardens to support a superintendent, two foremen and 49 laborers. Later in the same year, 50 additional employees were added, plus a head guide, two assistants and hostesses for the concession building. Presumably the WPA funding also supported the addition of 250,000 subtropical shrubs and flowers to the slopes, including more azaleas, 20,000 petunias, and 1,000 Easter lilies.

It is assumed that some of the WPA supported labor also went to construction activities at the golf course, Water Works, and the Azalea Bowl, a baseball facility. The Azalea Bowl was part of the same civic project as the Gardens. It was known for being an attractive field with an ideal layout. It had an infield sodded with carpet grass and concrete dugouts for both teams. The official home team was even named the "Azaleas." Today the ball field is still under City management.

In 1937, Ravine Gardens was called the "Nation's Outstanding CWA Project." In 1938 the gardens were officially opened year-round with reduced rates during the summer. The sprinkler system was completed, and the annual Azalea Festival was inaugurated. The following year brought another spurt of development with the WPA providing another \$25,200, while the City provided \$15,500. The amphitheater was constructed and there were continued stabilization efforts along the ravines. The amphitheater was designed to accommodate the enthusiastic response to a new Azalea Festival and its beauty pageant. The Azalea Festival was sponsored by the Junior Chamber Commerce and was attended by thousands.

World War II brought an end to the WPA, as well as to construction in the gardens, although routine maintenance continued. After the War, the Azalea Festival continued, as did the city's promotion of the gardens through tourist brochures. In January 1970, the Gardens, including the Civic Center, were deeded to the Florida Internal Improvement Trust Fund and added to the Florida Park Service system. The gardens continue to have a positive economic and tourism impact on Palatka. There were 99,858 visitors to the Gardens in 1996-1997.

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Administration Building is an excellent example of rustic vernacular design common to WPA parks projects. The building's design was taken from the "Cypress Building" at the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition. Its half round cypress board exterior, vertical log corners, attached bird houses, open, gable covered porch, exposed rafters and beams, and massive rubble fireplace, embodies rustic vernacular construction. The Entrance Station with its broad eaves, rustic stone and wood exterior is an excellent example of rustic vernacular construction. The Azalea Fountain and Terraces with its rubble limestone columns, and walls are excellent examples of rustic stone landscape features. The stone columns of the Court of States, and stone Roosevelt Obelisk continue the rustic stonework motif for the gardens.

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Attendance at Gardens," March 16, 1935.

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_____. "Open Lunch Room At Ravine Gate," March 9, 1935.

_____. "Turns Ravines Into Reservoir To Swell Total,"
May 3, 1939.

_____. "Work Commenced On Amphitheater At Local
Garden," April 8, 1939.

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**PALATKA RAVINE GARDENS HISTORIC
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

57 acres, see scaled map.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary encompasses the property historically associated with the Palatka Ravine Gardens.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC INVENTORY

1. Palatka Ravine Gardens, 1600 Twigg St., Palatka
2. Putnam County, Florida
3. Southarc, Inc.
4. 1998
5. Florida Park Service, Karen Brillante (407) 884-2000
6. Entrance Station, north facade, looking south
7. Photo #1 of 23

Items 1-5 are the same for the following photos.

6. Court of States, looking north
7. Photo #2 of 23

6. Roosevelt Obelisk, looking north
7. Photo #3 of 23

6. Administration Building, west facade, looking east
7. Photo #4 of 23

6. Administration Building, looking southwest
7. Photo #5 of 23

6. Administration Building hearth, looking south
7. Photo #6 of 23

6. Azalea Fountain garden, looking northwest
7. Photo #7 of 23

6. First terrace, looking northwest
7. Photo #8 of 23

6. Second terrace, looking northwest
7. Photo #9 of 23

6. Amphitheater stage, looking east
7. Photo #10 of 23

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6. Amphitheater terraces, looking northwest

7. Photo #11 of 23

6. Stairs beside stage leading to south branch suspension bridge, looking southeast

7. Photo #12 of 23

6. Suspension bridge, south branch, looking southeast

7. Photo #13 of 23

6. Suspension bridge, north branch, looking northeast

7. Photo #14 of 23

6. Spillway at confluence of branches, looking northwest

7. Photo #15 of 23

6. Confluence of ravines, looking southwest

7. Photo #16 of 23

6. South ravine seen from bridge, looking southwest

7. Photo #17 of 23

6. Swimming Pool building, looking west

7. Photo #18 of 23

6. Civic Center, looking south

7. Photo #19 of 23

6. Non-contributing ranger residence, looking east

7. Photo #20 of 23

6. Non-contributing shop, looking north

7. Photo #21 of 23

6. Non-contributing shop, looking north

7. Photo #22 of 23

6. Non-contributing shop, looking south

7. Photo #23 of 23

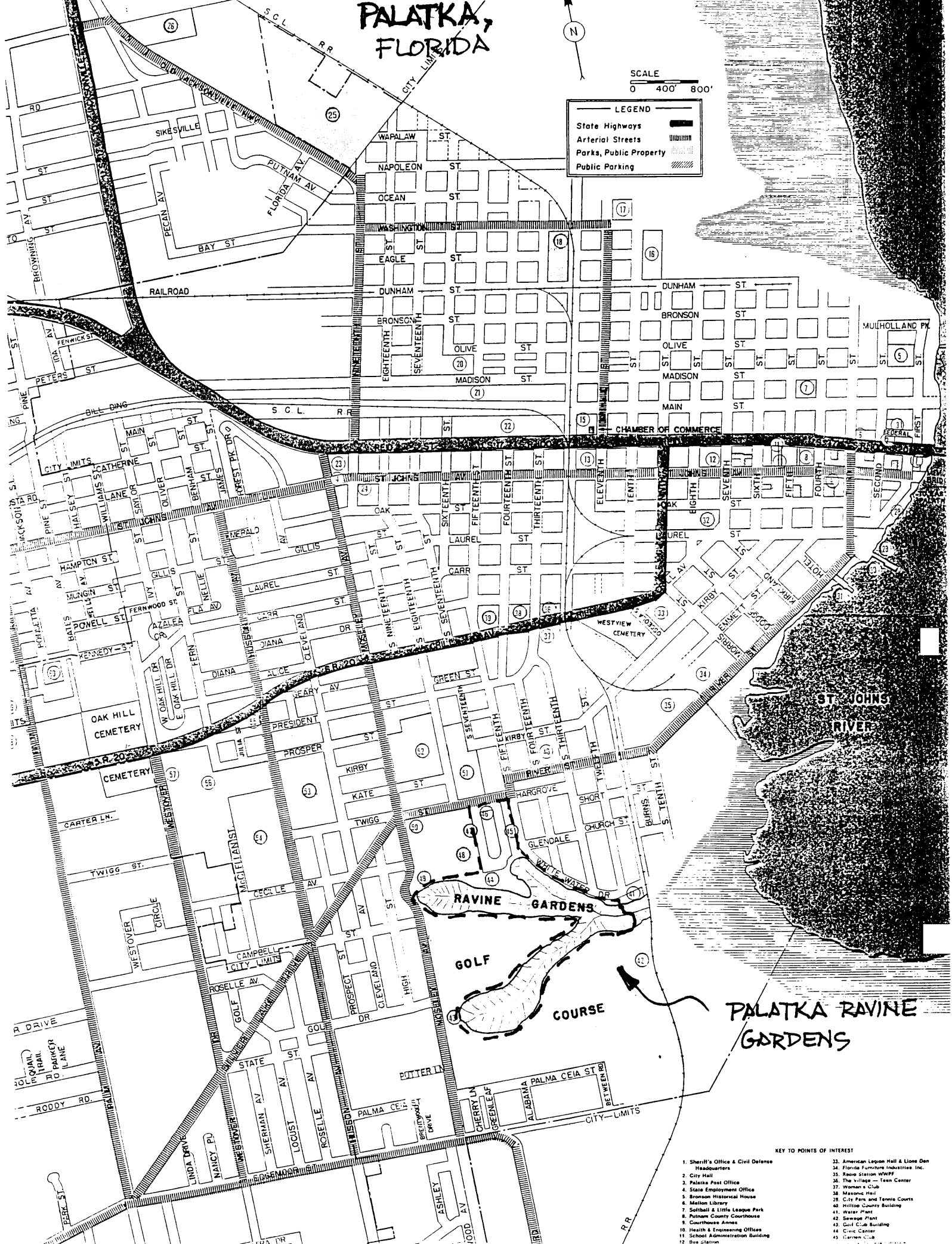
PALATKA, FLORIDA



SCALE
0 400' 800'

LEGEND

- State Highways
- Arterial Streets
- Parks, Public Property
- Public Parking



PALATKA RAVINE GARDENS

- KEY TO POINTS OF INTEREST**
- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Sheriff's Office & Civil Defense Headquarters | 33. American Legion Hall & Lions Den |
| 2. City Hall | 34. Florida Furniture Industries, Inc. |
| 3. Palatka Post Office | 35. Rouse Station WWPP |
| 4. State Employment Office | 36. The Village - Teen Center |
| 5. Bronson Historical House | 37. Women's Club |
| 6. Mellon Library | 38. Masonic Hall |
| 7. Saitball & Little League Park | 39. City Park and Tennis Courts |
| 8. Putnam County Courthouse | 40. Hilltop County Building |
| 9. Courthouse Annex | 41. Water Plant |
| 10. Health & Engineering Offices | 42. Sewage Plant |
| 11. School Administration Building | 43. Golf Club Building |
| 12. Bus Station | 44. Civic Center |
| | 45. Garden Club |