

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Carlton, Albert, Estate
other names/site number Carlton-Underwood Estate

2. Location

street & number 302 East Bay Street N/A not for publication
city, town Wauchula N/A vicinity
state Florida code FL county Hardee code 049 zip code 33873

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u>1</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>5</u>	<u>3</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Suzanne P. Walker (Deputy SHPO) 8/9/91
Signature of certifying official Florida State Historic Preservation Date
Florida Division of Historical Resources Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Patrick Andrews 10/3/91

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
AGRICULTURE/agricultural field

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
AGRICULTURE/agricultural field

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals:
Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls wood

roof asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The Albert Carlton Estate is a 31 acre, L-shaped parcel of land located at 302 East Bay Street in the town of Wauchula, Hardee County, Florida. Owned by members of the Albert Carlton family since 1903, the property contains five contributing historical resources: four buildings and one site comprised of the 26-acre orange grove. Three non-contributing resources, two buildings and a structure, are also located on the property.

DESCRIPTION

LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The town of Wauchula is set on a triangular piece of land which gently rises above the bottomland forests of the Peace River to the east and Thompson Branch to the west. The town was sparsely settled until the late 1880s when the Florida Southern Railway laid tracks through the area. Settlers were attracted to Wauchula because of the availability of inexpensive farm land. Vegetables, citrus, and cattle were major sources of income for the local population by 1900.

Located in the southeast section of town, the Albert Carlton Estate was laid out as the main residence of Albert Carlton (1845-1925) and his wife, Martha McEwen Carlton. When Carlton bought the parcel in 1903, it already had a six acre orange grove on the property. (Photo 1) By the time of his death in 1925, he had constructed a family residence, a barn and several small rental houses on the northwest section of the property. In addition, he had expanded the orange grove another 20 acres south of the main house.

The property remains in the same basic configuration that Albert Carlton laid out over 66 years ago. (See plot plan.) The main house and outbuildings occupy approximately five acres in the northwest corner of the property. A driveway approaches the main house from Bay Street. The barn and other outbuildings form a semi-circle around the south, west, and north sides of the main house. Large oak trees separate the buildings. The remainder of the property is planted in orange trees.

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A dirt road, starting at Bay Street, roughly parallels the railroad tracks on the western boundary of the property. It branches off to the east behind the main house, dividing the northern 11 acres of the property from the other 20 acres, and ends at the eastern property line. The orange trees are set in straight rows which run west to east, the original configuration of the grove. The average age of the trees is estimated to be over 70 years, although the replacement of weak and unproductive trees is an ongoing part of citrus cultivation. (Photos 2 and 3)

The rural landscape design of the Albert Carlton Estate reflects its historic use as a residence and as a productive citrus grove. The 26 acre grove remains in commercial cultivation. The five acre northwest section of the estate, the functional center of the property, is still dominated by the main house (non-contributing). In 1946, the facade of the main house was extensively altered and azalea and camellia bushes were planted throughout the yard. One of the old workers' residences was replaced with a duplex (non-contributing) in 1979, and several years later a brick structure (non-contributing) was constructed around the original well. Two arms have recently been added to the original driveway, one leading to the garage and one to the west side of the main house. These changes are minor, however, since the overall historic rural landscape of the property has been maintained.

STRUCTURAL RESOURCES

As a historic orange grove and residence, the Albert Carlton Estate expresses a distinct relationship between the landscape and the structural elements. This is manifested in the organization of the property: the location of the main house and the surrounding buildings, the grove, the driveway and the unpaved road connecting them all.

The Albert Carlton House, a non-contributing resource, is the organizational center of the estate. Built in 1903 by Albert Carlton, it was originally a two and a half story Queen Anne style building. Covered in white clapboard, it featured two towers that rose above the wood shingled roof line and a veranda that wrapped around the north and west elevations. In 1946, due to extensive hurricane damage and massive deterioration in the

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building's twin towers, the roofline was altered. The twin towers were removed and the main facade was adapted to the Neo-Colonial Revival style. (Photo 11) Three rooms were added to the house in 1987, a small one to the east facade and two others to the back. Otherwise, the main block and the interior of the 1903 building remain essentially intact.

The three old rental houses (photos 6, 7, and 9) and the barn (photos 4 and 5), all contributing resources, date from approximately 1903 to 1905 and are frame vernacular in style.

Two additional non-contributing resources are located on the property. One is a concrete block rental duplex. (Photo 8) Built in 1979, it is located on the site of an old rental house which was torn down in the 1970s. The other non-contributing structure, a pump house for a well, is located behind the main house. (Photo 10)

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE
EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

Period of Significance
1903-1925

Significant Dates
1903

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

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SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The Albert Carlton Estate is a 31 acre, L-shaped citrus farmstead located at 302 East Bay Street in Wauchula, Florida. It is significant under Criterion A in the areas of agriculture and exploration/settlement as an intact surviving example of an early 20th century orange grove and residence in southwest Florida.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Hardee County

The area surrounding present day Wauchula was sparsely populated before the Civil War by Seminole Indians and a few white settlers. Survey maps from 1854 and 1855 show only 11 white families living in what is now Hardee County. During the Third Seminole War (1855-1858), the U. S. Army established an outpost, Fort Hartsuff, in the vicinity of present day Wauchula. The army abandoned the fort at the end of the war, but settlers continued to refer to the area as Fort Hartsuff.

Eli English, a white settler, moved to Fort Hartsuff in 1874 and opened a store, and for several years thereafter the small community of homesteads was known as English. In 1886, the Florida Southern Railway Company laid its tracks through English and renamed the tiny settlement Wauchula. According to local residents, Wauchula is a corruption of a Miccosukee Indian word which means "call of the Sandhill Crane". Located between Ft. Myers to the south and Lakeland to the north, Wauchula became a familiar landmark for rail passengers traveling through the area.

With the railroad, local farmers could ship larger quantities of crops, such as vegetables, citrus, and beef, faster and farther than had been previously possible. The area quickly swelled with new settlers who had heard of cheap, productive land for sale along the rail line. The growth of Wauchula from a small village to an agricultural center was swift. By 1888, the town had five general merchandise stores, a U.S. post office, a drug store, a hotel, a shoemaker's shop, and a doctor's office in addition to a public school. That same year, a Tampa newspaper reported: "Rich lands are in great abundance on the east and west of town,

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interspersed with orange groves so numerous and well-developed as to constitute the chief basis for wealth, present and prospective."

Cheap farmland coupled with packing and rail facilities continued to lure settlers to the region. By 1905 Wauchula had a population of 1,404, up from 499 in 1900 and 177 in 1890. The growth of the town and the local economy continued to depend on agriculture. Land was valued in terms of the vegetables, citrus, and cattle it could support. In 1902, the same year the town was incorporated, 60,000 crates of oranges and 8,000 crates of vegetables were shipped out of the railroad station in Wauchula. Two years later, 72,000 crates of oranges were shipped and 75,000 crates of vegetables. The local Fruit and Vegetable Growers Union was formed in 1903 to aid farmers in cultivating and selling produce.

In 1911, a group of northern investors sent representatives to the Peace River Valley to buy up large tracts of land to develop and sell as farms. The Wauchula Development Company, as the group called itself, built a hotel a few miles west of Wauchula for prospective buyers who were given a free trip to see the land. Land was sold at \$50.00 an acre, with terms of \$1.00 down per acre and \$1.00 per acre due each month, tax free, until payment was complete. A 20 percent discount was given to those who could pay in cash.

The Wauchula Development Company bought the Wauchula Manufacturing and Timber Company in 1917. Among the assets acquired in the deal were an electric light plant, ice plants, a crate factory, parts of a railroad line, and 54,000 acres of land. The Wauchula Development and Manufacturing Company was created by the merger. The new company began to develop 5,000 acres of land in 1921, one of the largest land development projects in Florida at that time. From offices in Cleveland, Detroit, Philadelphia, and various other northern cities, the company offered deals to build homes and set out citrus groves and stock farms on the tracts of land being sold. Like other land development schemes promoted at the beginning of the Florida Land Boom (c. 1924-1926), the project attracted many new residents to the state.

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Wauchula, like much of Florida, prospered throughout most of the 1920s. The 1925 Florida State Gazetteer and Business Directory reported that Wauchula had a population of 2,500 and was the county seat of Hardee County. In addition, the town had two churches, saw mills, a public school, a concrete factory, electric light and ice plants, three banks, hotels, and two daily newspapers along with rail, telegraph, and telephone services.

The prosperity of the Florida Land Boom ended in the late 1920s. Land values dropped and financial institutions failed, two major events which sent the state into an economic depression. Many farmers and businessmen went bankrupt as a result. In addition, fever ticks appeared on herds of cattle across the state and many cattlemen sold out their stock at a loss. The hurricane of 1926 severely damaged Florida's citrus crop, which was further threatened by the Mediterranean fruit fly in 1929. These setbacks caused more banks to fail and sent the economy into a tailspin. Recovery was slow throughout the 1930s. It was not until World War II, when government demand for agricultural products increased dramatically, that the state's economy began to expand again.

Wauchula experienced the same economic problems following the deflation of land values in 1926. The local economy was restored following World War II, and the town continues to be an agricultural center for citrus, vegetable, and cattle interests. Few of the early citrus farmsteads in the area survived intact in family ownership. Some were abandoned or sold off piecemeal for residential or industrial development or other agricultural use. Others have been taken under corporate or absentee owner management.

Citrus Industry in Florida

Oranges were probably first cultivated in Florida by the Spanish who settled at St. Augustine in 1565. There oranges were shared with local Indians who carried the fruit back to their villages. Two hundred years later, William Bartram noted in his travel log of 1773-1774 the large areas of wild orange trees throughout north Florida, particularly along the St. Johns River. The fruit gained economic importance during the short period Britain controlled Florida from 1763 to 1783. Recognized for their role in the prevention of scurvy, oranges were purchased from St.

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Augustine by the British Navy. Large scale commercial cultivation of citrus did not begin until after Spain had regained control of Florida and ceded it to the United States in 1821. Most groves were established in north Florida along the St. Johns River where boat travel provided transportation to markets. The industry suffered a setback around 1840 when groves were damaged by the parasite long scale. By 1870, the pest had disappeared and growers began cultivating sweet stock oranges from seedlings or budding them from wild orange trees, which were usually the sour stock variety.

The opening of railroad lines in central and south Florida during the 1880s encouraged the planting of groves further down the peninsula. Slowly groves were planted and packing houses built around the small settlements along the tracks. In 1894, citrus comprised one third of the total value of all agricultural products in Florida, which made it the leading crop. The industry was dealt a serious setback during the Great Freeze of 1894-1895 which destroyed orange crops all over the state. By 1896, the number of orange trees in cultivation statewide had dropped to 88,355, down from 2.6 million in 1886. The groves in north Florida, hit hardest by the freeze, were largely abandoned. Groves in south and south central Florida were less affected by the Great Freeze, a fact which set off a new boom in citrus growing in those parts of the state.

While some early grove plantations were more extensive, the small independently owned citrus homestead of 20 to 40 acres became common as the population of rural areas of the state expanded. This pattern was encouraged during the early 20th century by the promotion and sales practices of land companies and the establishment of marketing organizations such as the Fruit and Vegetable Growers Union.

The center of Florida's citrus industry remains in the central and southern parts of the state. Since the 1940s, the industry has evolved from small family farms to large corporate operations. Today, over three quarters of Florida's orange crop is made into frozen concentrate, which was developed for the U.S. military during World War II. The cultivation, processing, and sale of citrus products continues to play a major role in the state's economy.

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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Business Interests of Albert Carlton

In 1902, Albert Carlton, a local orange grower and cattleman, opened the Wauchula Hardware Company with his son Charles. Located in downtown Wauchula on the southwest corner of Main Street and 5th Avenue, the store supplied local farmers with plows, gardening equipment, buggies, and other items. The store was also a meeting place for the town's populace. Wauchula's 27 legal voters met at the Carltons' hardware store on September 29, 1902 and voted unanimously to incorporate the town.

Albert and Charles opened Wauchula's first bank in 1904, the Carlton and Carlton Bank, in a corner of the hardware store. Albert served as president and Charles as cashier. Five years later, the original hardware store building was moved and a two story, sand cast block building was constructed for the bank, with room for the hardware store on the first floor. In 1913, the bank relocated to the Carlton Building on 5th Avenue. It obtained a federal charter in 1915 and changed its name to the Carlton National Bank. In 1929, the same year Albert's son Doyle was elected governor of Florida, the bank closed permanently due to financial problems.

Albert Carlton purchased other pieces of real estate in Wauchula before 1925, the year he died. These investments included several rental homes, a citrus packing house, the Peace River Hotel on Main Street, and fifty acres of land on Bay Street where he built a residence in 1903. In addition, he continued to maintain the cattle ranch and citrus grove on the land he homesteaded in 1868 west of town.

Albert Carlton Estate on Bay Street in Wauchula

One of Hardee County's first white settlers, Albert Carlton established a homestead on 120 acres of land west of Wauchula in 1868. In January of 1903, Albert purchased 50 acres of undeveloped land in Wauchula from Eli English for a residence and orange grove. Carlton gave 19 acres of the parcel to his children, but set aside the remaining 31 acres for his estate. Located in the southeast section of Wauchula, the land already

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had approximately six acres of orange trees planted on it. The following May, construction of the Carlton residence began on the northwest section of the property. The house was completed at a cost of \$3000. A two story, Queen Ann style building, it had ten rooms and was covered in white clapboard. Twin towers rose above the wood shingled roof line and a veranda wrapped around the north and west elevations. Behind the main house, a barn was built. Several small houses were also constructed, which along with the barn formed a semi-circle around the main house on the north, west, and south sides. The smaller houses were usually rented out to grove workers or other local people.

Between 1903 and 1925, the year of his death, Albert Carlton expanded the orange grove on his Bay Street estate in Wauchula to approximately 26 acres. The property increased Carlton's investment in the prospering citrus industry in south Florida and, as the site of his main residence, allowed him to live in town near his bank and hardware store.

In 1903 a seedless orange was discovered in a grove on the 1868 Carlton homestead west of town. The fruit, known as Carlton's Seedless, was marketed commercially under the name "Fancy Golden Bright" and seedlings were set out in the Bay Street grove. Herbert J. Webber of the University of California examined Carlton's Seedless during the 1940s and ruled that it was identical to the orange known as Conner's Seedless, which was discovered in a grove in Glenwood, Volusia County, Florida. Several of the seedless trees still grow on the Albert Carlton Estate on Bay Street but the variety "Fancy Golden Bright" is no longer marketed.

The Albert Carlton Estate is an intact example of an early 20th century orange grove and residence. Aside from the change in the facade of the main house in 1946, the estate has changed little. It maintains its original configuration and purpose as a residence and commercially productive orange grove. Consequently, the property offers insight into how an early 20th century grove was developed and maintained. The orange grove maintains its original configuration, with rows running west-east. Over the years unproductive trees have been replaced by new trees, a necessity in keeping the grove profitable. However, most of the trees are 70 years or older. The dirt road through the property shows how larger vehicles such as wagons and trucks

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reached the trees to transport picked fruit out of the grove. The concentration of the residential buildings and the barn in the northwest portion of the property reveals how the Carltons organized the property to fulfill its dual purpose as a residence and a grove.

The Albert Carlton Estate is significant as one of the orange groves developed in south Florida during the boom in citrus growing which followed the Great Freeze of 1894-1895. The organization and layout of the contributing resources on the property continue to reflect its use during the period of historic significance (1903-1925) as a family residence and orange grove.

In 1990, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services of the State of Florida recognized the Carlton Estate as agricultural land that has been owned and cultivated by members of one family for over a century. The current owner, Mr. Thomas Carlton Underwood was awarded a Florida Century Pioneer Farm Family certificate. Mr. Underwood is a direct descendent of Albert Carlton, who purchased the property from his uncle, Eli English, in 1903. English bought the land in 1881.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of Individual listing (36 CFR 67) 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____
Bureau of Historic Preservation

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 31 (approximately)

UTM References

A

1	7
---	---

4	2	0	0
---	---	---	---

3	0	4	6	8	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Zone Easting Northing

C

1	7
---	---

4	2	0	2	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	0	4	6	7	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B

1	7
---	---

4	2	0	2	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	0	4	6	9	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Zone Easting Northing

D

1	7
---	---

4	2	0	4	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	0	4	6	7	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

That part of SW 1/4 of SW 1/4 of SW 1/4 of Section 3, Township 34 South, Range 25 East, lying South of Bay Street; AND N 1/2 of NW 1/4 of NW 1/4 of Section 10, Township 34 South, Range 25 East; AND All of fractional Block 42 of Original Survey of the City of Wauchula, Florida

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire 31 acre parcel that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Tulie W. Taylor, Historic Sites Specialist Spessard Stone, Amateur
 organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date February 28, 1991 Historian
 street & number 500 S. Bronough St. telephone (904) 487-2333
 city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32309

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Carlton Estate

UTM REFERENCES

	Zone	Easting	Northing
E.	17	420450	3046500
F.	17	420120	3046510

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PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Carlton, Albert, Estate; 302 East Bay Street
2. Wauchula, Florida
3. Tulie W. Taylor
4. April 1991
5. Bureau of Historic Preservation, 500 South Bronough St., Tallahassee, Florida
6. View of citrus grove, camera facing northwest
7. 1 of 11

Items 1-5 are the same for photographs 1-10.

6. View of citrus grove showing young orange trees next to older ones, camera facing southwest
7. 2 of 11
6. View of citrus grove showing new setting of seedling orange tree, camera facing southwest
7. 3 of 11
6. View of southwest facade of barn, camera facing northeast
7. 4 of 11
6. View of southeast facade of barn, camera facing northwest
7. 5 of 11
6. Front facade of old rental house #2 which faces railroad tracks, camera facing southeast
7. 6 of 11
6. Front facade of old rental house #3 which faces Bay Street, camera facing southeast
7. 7 of 11
6. Front facade of duplex, camera facing southeast
7. 8 of 11
6. Front of old rental house #1, camera facing northeast
7. 9 of 11

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6. Site of original well, camera facing north
7. 10 of 11

1. Carlton, Albert, Estate; 302 East Bay Street
2. Wauchula, Florida
3. Thomas C. Underwood
4. Fall 1989
5. 302 East Bay Street, Wauchula, Florida
6. Northwest elevation (front) of main house, camera facing southeast
7. 11 of 11

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Plan

Carlton Estate

List of resources identified on the plot plan of the Carlton Estate

- A. Citrus grove
- B. Main house (non-contributing)
- C. Site of old well (non-contributing)
- D. Old rental house #1
- E. Barn
- F. Old rental house #2
- G. Duplex (non-contributing)
- H. Old rental house #3

