

1734

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 19 1989

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 Pass-a-Grille Historic District  
other names/site number Old City of Pass-a-Grille

2. Location

street & number Roughly 12th Avenue to 4th Avenue N/A  not for publication  
city, town St. Petersburg Beach N/A  vicinity  
state Florida code FL county Pinellas code 103 zip code 33706

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>97</u>	<u>18</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>97</u>	<u>18</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.

[Signature] 9/14/89  
Signature of certifying official Date  
State Historic Preservation 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. Entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet. [Signature] 10/19/89  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single DwellingDomestic/Multiple DwellingCommerce/Trade/Specialty StoreCommerce/Trade/Professional

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single DwellingDomestic/Multiple DwellingCommerce/Trade/General StoreCommerce/Trade/Professional

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

No Style/Wood Frame VernacularNo Style/Masonry Vernacular

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick/Pierwalls Wood/Drop Siding; Asbestos/Shingle;Aluminum/Simulated Weatherboardroof Asbestos/Shingleother Wood/Porch

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**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)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Exploration/Settlement

1900-1922

1905

Entertainment/Recreation

\_\_\_\_\_

1911

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1922

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

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

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 40 apprx. \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References

A 

1	7
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3	2	8	5	2	0
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3	0	6	4	0	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
Zone Easting Northing

C 

1	7
---	---

3	2	8	8	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

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

B 

1	7
---	---

3	2	8	8	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

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

  
Zone Easting Northing

D 

1	7
---	---

3	2	8	5	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

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

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See Continuation Sheet

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See Continuation Sheet

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist; Gladys Cook, Fla. Pres. Services  
organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date 9-7-89  
street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333  
city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

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Description

Summary Physical Description

The Pass-a-Grille Historic District comprises mainly wood frame vernacular residences and one commercial street located in portions of a area ten blocks long and one block wide located at the southern end of Long Key in Pinellas County. The one and two-story houses, and two story masonry vernacular commercial buildings generally reflect the construction techniques and building types characteristic of the period ca. 1890 to 1920. The district also contains one former church and several small apartment buildings and hotels that contribute to the character of the district. Nearly all of the buildings have been altered to some degree, involving the enclosing of porches or changes in exterior siding. However, the majority of the buildings in the district retain those characteristics that reflect their original period of development.

Supporting Narrative

Once an isolated and separately incorporated community, Pass-a-Grille is now a part of the City of St. Petersburg Beach (population approximately 10,000), which now occupies all of the island of Long Key. Long Key is a barrier island located west of the Pinellas Peninsula in Pinellas County and lies near the end of that chain of islands that stretch almost the entire length of the coast of the county. The island is bounded on the west by the Gulf of Mexico and on the east by Boca Ciega Bay. Access is gained from the mainland by bridges across the bay and others that link Long Key with its neighboring islands to the north and south. The island is flat and sandy, its most significant feature being the Gulf beaches that have historically attracted visitors to the area. That portion of St. Petersburg Beach north of Pass-a-Grille is marked by a mixture of large hotels, motels, restaurants, and recent residential structures. There are also marinas and boating slips associated with nearby residential developments.

The historic district contains a gridwork of paved streets and unpaved alleys bounded by Pass-a-Grille Way and Gulf Way, actually a continuous north-south thoroughfare that parallels the coastline of the southern tip of Long Key. Pass-a-Grille Way runs along Boca Ciega Bay, while Gulf Way overlooks the Gulf of Mexico. Gulf Way is the wider of the two streets, as both sides provide metered parking spaces for the general public. All vehicular parking in Pass-a-Grille is by meter or permit only. The beach is also

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Description

bordered by a promenade, but the bay has a sidewalk running along a continuous seawall.

No private buildings occupy the beach or bayfront south of 13th Avenue except for a concession building that stands on the site of the old Pass-a-Grille Beach Hotel at 10th Avenue and the bait and tackle shop at the Merry Pier at 8th Avenue. The pier itself is a descendant of the original Merry Pier constructed on this site in 1902. It was at Joseph E. Merry's Pier that passenger and delivery boats moored at Pass-a-Grille to bring in supplies for the island's inhabitants and to discharge hundreds of bathers and picnickers, who would walk down 8th Avenue to a bathhouse on the beach to rent bathing suits, towels, umbrellas, and other recreational gear.

The east-west streets running between the Gulf and Bay are lined with wood frame houses, and an occasional masonry residence, that were built by a varied group of seasonal visitors and hardy permanent residents. Other small houses, and apartment garages, are found along the small, shell-covered, alleyways found at the rear of the main houses. The historic residences are mainly simple structures with rectangular or ell plans, set on low brick pier foundations. Gable, cross-gable, and hip roofs are common, and houses with original siding feature weatherboard, drop siding, and wood shingles--or combinations of the three. A number of residences are also stuccoed. Another material one occasionally encounters in the district is rusticated concrete. In many cases the original wood siding has been replaced with asbestos shingle or aluminum siding.

House plans and details strongly reflect the bungalow influence, but there are few true bungalows in the district. Original window types include double hung sashes with 1/1, 4/1, 4/4, and 6/6. In a number of instances these have been replaced with aluminum awning or metal sash windows. Front porches, which were originally open and screened to keep out mosquitoes, have in most cases been enclosed to take advantage of air conditioning. In most cases, however, these alterations are reversible or, at least, are not so serious as to obliterate the historic lines and character of the houses. In some cases, though, alterations have been serious enough to render older structures non-contributing.

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Description

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The district includes one small park, lying between 9th and 10th avenues and bounded by Pass-a-Grille Way and Gulf Way. The park is the only large public green space in the district and contains a small shuffleboard court and small concrete block building used as a concession stand. Neither the court nor the building are historic features of the district.

The Gulf Way boundary of the historic district is much more fragmented than the Pass-a-Grille side. This is partly because Gulf Way was not constructed until the mid-1920s and residential construction on the beach was somewhat irregular and sparse because of lack of access. Also, storms and weathering have caused the loss of some buildings (not including the Pass-a-Grille Beach Hotel) but not many. Building construction south of 4th Avenue during the historic period was also rather scant, and some houses have been lost to a variety of causes. Overall, the present boundaries of the historic district represent the geographical extent of the built environment during the period 1900-1922.

The historic district contains 97 contributing buildings and 18 noncontributing building, or 84 percent contributing and 16 percent noncontributing.

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Description

Contributing Resources List

Gulf Way

309

401

504

605

1003

1005

1009

1101

1107

1201

1201( rear)

1205

Pass-a-Grille Way

308

308 (rear)

400

402

402 (rear)

404

404 (rear)

406 (rear)

408

408 (rear)

504

600

602

Pass-a-Grille Way (cont.)

612

614

700

702

804

808

1002

1004

4th Avenue

107 (rear)

108

109

110

112

5th Avenue

102

102 (rear)

103

104

104 (rear)

106

106 (rear)

107

108

108 (rear)

109



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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 5 DescriptionContributing Resources List (cont.)6th Avenue100  
101  
102  
104  
105  
106  
107  
107 (rear)  
108  
1097th Avenue101A  
101B  
102  
103  
103 (rear)  
104  
104 (rear)  
105  
106-A (rear)  
106-B (rear)  
1118th Avenue102  
102 (rear)  
104  
103-105  
105 (rear)  
107  
107 (rear)9th Avenue102  
102-A  
102-B10th Avenue101  
101 (rear)  
103  
105  
105 (rear)  
107  
107 (rear)  
111  
111 (rear)  
113  
115  
115 (rear)11th Avenue109  
109 (rear)  
111  
111 (rear)  
113 (rear)

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Description

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Noncontributing Resources List

Gulf Way

1007

1103

1105

9th Avenue

107

10th Avenue

---

Pass-a-Grille Way

406

500

608

800

1000

11th Avenue

113

4th Avenue

105

107

111

113

5th Avenue

101

6th Avenue

103

7th Avenue

106

109

8th Avenue

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 7 DescriptionList of Photographs

Note: Except for photographs 48-52, the information in sections 2-5 are the same for all photos as in the first entry and, therefore, is not repeated.

1. 808 Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
  2. St. Petersburg Beach (Pinellas County), FL
  3. Carl Shiver
  4. 1989
  5. Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation
  6. View Looking Southwest
  7. Photo No. 1 of 53
- 
1. 800 Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
  6. View Looking Southwest
  7. Photo No. 2 of 53
- 
1. Merry Pier, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
  6. View Looking South
  7. Photo No. 3 of 53
- 
1. South Side of 8th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
  6. View Looking West
  7. Photo No. 4 of 53
- 
1. North Side of 8th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
  6. View Looking West
  7. Photo No. 5 of 53
- 
1. 702 Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
  6. View Looking Southwest
  7. Photo No. 6 of 53
- 
1. 106 7th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
  6. View Looking Southwest
  7. Photo No. 7 of 53
- 
1. 111 7th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
  6. View Looking Northwest
  7. Photo No. 8 of 53

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1. 612 Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking West
7. Photo No. 9 of 53
  
1. 602 Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking West
7. Photo No. 10 of 53
  
1. 504 Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Southwest
7. Photo No. 11 of 53
  
1. 103 6th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Northwest
7. Photo No. 12 of 53
  
1. 600 Pass-a-Grille Way & 101 6th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Northeast
7. Photo No. 13 of 53
  
1. 500 Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Southwest
7. Photo No. 14 of 53
  
1. 408 Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Southwest
7. Photo No. 15 of 53
  
1. 101 5th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Northwest
7. Photo No. 16 of 53
  
1. 106 5th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Southwest
7. Photo No. 17 of 53
  
1. 107-109 5th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Northwest
7. Photo No. 18 of 53

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List of Photographs (cont.)

1. 406 Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Southwest
7. Photo No. 19 of 53
  
1. 400 Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking West
7. Photo No. 20 of 53
  
1. 102-106 4th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Southwest
7. Photo No. 21 of 53
  
1. 112 4th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking South
7. Photo No. 22 of 53
  
1. 401 Gulf Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking East
7. Photo No. 23 of 53
  
1. 403 Gulf Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Northeast
7. Photo No. 24 of 53
  
1. Beach Promenade along Gulf Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking North
7. Photo No. 25 of 53
  
1. 5th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking East from Gulf Way
7. Photo No. 26 of 53
  
1. 601-605 Gulf Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Southeast
7. Photo No. 27 of 53
  
1. 115 10th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking North
7. Photo No. 28 of 53

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Description

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List of Photographs (cont.)

1. 109 10th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking North
7. Photo No. 29 of 53
  
1. 102 9th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking South
7. Photo No. 30 of 53
  
1. City Park, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking North from 9th Avenue
7. Photo No. 31 of 53
  
1. City Park, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Northwest from 9th Avenue
7. Photo No. 32 of 53
  
1. 1001 Gulf Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Northeast
7. Photo No. 33 of 53
  
1. 1101 Gulf Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Northeast
7. Photo No. 34 of 53
  
1. South Side of 11th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking East from Gulf Way
7. Photo No. 35 of 53
  
1. 111 11th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Northeast
7. Photo No. 36 of 53
  
1. 101 11th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Northwest
7. Photo No. 37 of 53
  
1. 1010 Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking West
7. Photo No. 38 of 53

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List of Photographs (cont.)

1. 1002-1004 Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Southwest
7. Photo No. 39 of 53
  
1. Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking South from 11th Avenue
7. Photo No. 40 of 53
  
1. 1000 Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking West
7. Photo No. 41 of 53
  
1. 10th Avenue at the City Park, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Southwest from Pass-a-Grille Way
7. Photo No. 42 of 53
  
1. 7th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Southwest from Pass-a-Grille Way
7. Photo No. 43 of 53
  
1. Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Southwest from 7th Avenue Pier
7. Photo No. 44 of 53
  
1. 6th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Southwest from Pass-a-Grille Way
7. Photo No. 45 of 53
  
1. 5th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Southwest from Pass-a-Grille Way
7. Photo No. 46 of 53
  
1. 4th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking Southwest from Pass-a-Grille Way
7. Photo No. 47 of 53
  
1. Pass-a-Grille Way, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
6. View Looking North from 4th Avenue
7. Photo No. 48 of 53

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1. Old Pass-a-Grille Church, 115 10th Avenue, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
  2. St. Petersburg Beach (Pinellas County), FL
  3. Unknown
  4. ca. 1950
  5. Pinellas County Historical Museum
  6. View Looking Northeast
  7. Photo No. 49 of 53
- 
1. Flowing Well, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
  2. St. Petersburg Beach (Pinellas County), FL
  3. Unknown
  4. ca. 1911
  5. Pinellas County Historical Museum
  6. View Looking North
  7. Photo No. 50 of 53
- 
1. Pass-a-Grille Casino, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
  2. St. Petersburg Beach, Florida
  3. Unknown
  4. ca. 1922 (destroyed)
  5. Pinellas County Historical Museum
  6. View Looking Northwest
  7. Photo No. 51 of 53
- 
1. Beachcombers on the Gulf of Mexico, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
  2. St. Petersburg Beach (Pinellas County), FL
  3. Unknown
  4. ca. 1911
  5. Pinellas County Historical Museum
  6. View Looking Northwest
  7. Photo No. 52 of 53
- 
1. Aerial View of Pass-a-Grille, Pass-a-Grille Historic District
  2. St. Petersburg Beach, (Pinellas County), Florida
  3. Unknown
  4. ca. 1927
  5. Florida Preservation Services
  6. View of area between 11th Avenue & 12th Avenue, Looking Southwest
  7. Photo No. 53 of 53



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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1 SignificanceSummary Statement of Significance

The Pass-a-Grille Historic District is significant under criterion A in the areas of exploration/settlement and entertainment/recreation for being the first incorporated town established on the barrier islands overlooking the Gulf of Mexico in Pinellas County and for being the first popular beach resort community in that area. The mainly residential historic district still retains its sense of place and period of development, even though today it is part of the much larger City of St. Petersburg Beach and the Tampa Bay metropolitan area. The mainly wood frame residential buildings that form the small district located on the southern tip of Long Key reflect a period of development from approximately 1900 to 1922.

Historical Context

Although the Spanish began to explore the area that now forms Pinellas County in the sixteenth century, they found little to attract their interest beyond making accurate charts of the Gulf coast, noting the bays and inlets that could shelter ships during storms, and recording the occasional sources of fresh water, fish, and wild game with which to renew their provisions during an extended voyage. Neither the Spanish nor the British established any permanent settlements along this part of the Gulf during the Colonial Period of Florida history. Even when Florida became a territory of the United States in 1821, little attempt was made to settle the area or develop any of its resources. The first homestead recorded during the Territorial Period was established by Odet Philippe in 1832 in the vicinity of what is now the town of Safety Harbor, located on Old Tampa Bay about twenty miles northeast of Pass-a-Grille. More pioneers began to drift into the area after 1840, but there were still only fifty families living in the whole of the Pinellas Peninsula at the beginning of the Civil War.

Clearwater became the first official community in the peninsula when a post office was established there in 1859. Nearby Dunedin developed as a trading post, but both communities were only tiny frontier settlements. The only roads in the area were animal trails and the ruined military roads that had been blazed through the wilderness nearly twenty years earlier during the Seminole Indian Wars (1835-1842). Much needed supplies and marketable goods

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Significance

were brought in and shipped out via sailing ships that operated between Cedar Key and Clearwater Harbor. Farming was the principal business in the area. Early products were cotton, vegetables, and citrus.

Because of transportation problems, the early settlements on the Pinellas Peninsula--in what was then the western part of Hillsborough County--were closely allied with Tampa. Except for Clearwater Harbor, there were no ports on the Gulf, and the lack of roads made the present-day St. Petersburg area one of the most remote in the peninsula. Prior to the development of the railroad, many pioneers relied almost entirely on boats from Tampa to bring in their mail and all the necessities of life.

With the arrival of the railroad in St. Petersburg on June 8, 1888, the stage was set for rapid development of what had been largely wilderness. The two men chiefly responsible for constructing the rail line and laying the foundations of the city of St. Petersburg were John C. Williams, a wealthy merchant from Detroit, Michigan, and Peter Demens, a Russian emigrant. Williams owned considerable acreage in the lower Pinellas Peninsula on which he was determined to develop a city, and Demens was instrumental in organizing the "Orange Belt Railroad Company," which would provide the transportation required to open the area to settlement. The railroad began in Sanford, a Central Florida city used by the state's early major railroads as a switching point, and terminated in the newly-founded city of St. Petersburg, named in honor of Demens' native city in Russia. The railroad company, however, incurred enormous debts in constructing the line, and in 1895 it was sold to Henry Bradley Plant and renamed the Sanford and St. Petersburg Railroad.

Henry B. Plant was one of Florida's two major railroad developers in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The other was Henry Flagler. Between them the two men created the greater part of the network that ultimately became the state's rail system. Their rails extended the length of Florida on both coasts and crisscrossed the interior of the state. Their companies fostered the development of new agricultural lands, established new towns, and built resort hotels to accommodate the tourists and new settlers that flocked to areas that previously had been inaccessible wilderness. The period between 1880 and 1900, when the impact of this new railroad construction was most strongly

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Significance

felt, saw a dramatic increase in the population of Florida, especially in the coastal areas.

Growth inevitably followed the coming of the railroad to the Pinellas Peninsula. New towns were established, and old ones expanded. Tarpon Springs, Palm Harbor, Ozona, Dunedin, Clearwater, Largo, Safety Harbor, and St. Petersburg were among the more significant of the new and expanding communities. Hotels were constructed to accommodate tourists who arrived by railroad to enjoy the mild winter climate. Henry B. Plant founded the town of Belleair, located between Clearwater and St. Petersburg, and built the fabulous Belleview-Biltmore Hotel (N.R. 12/26/79), an enormous wood frame structure still in operation today.

Little thought had been given during this period to the development of the barrier islands on either Florida coast. They were accessible only by boat, and there was little economic incentive to establish permanent communities on these narrow islands, as the shifting sand dunes were considered unsuitable for agriculture and ocean bathing was still a novelty. Tourist communities on the east coast, such as St. Augustine, Daytona, Ormond, and New Smyrna, were located on the mainland. Tourists made occasional excursions to the beaches for picnics and to walk along the shore beach, but most of the islands were still wilderness and inhabited by wild game and, more importantly, swarms of biting insects that inhabited stagnant puddles of rainwater and shallow tidal pools. Only in the more moderate periods of the winter months, after a hard frost had killed off the mosquitoes, sand flies, and other pests were the beaches of the barrier islands truly pleasant places to visit.

Until recently, the barrier islands of the west coast were even less visited than those of the east, for the western coastline in general has had less population. Much of the western coastline of Florida still remains sparsely inhabited, except for that stretch of Central Florida extending from Pasco County to Sarasota County and a portion of the western panhandle. It is little wonder, therefore, that the town of Pass-a-Grille did not begin to develop until the first years of the twentieth century and had little competition from other ocean-front communities, most of which only appeared decades later.

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The town of Pass-a-Grille is located on the southernmost tip of Long Key, a barrier island separated from the mainland by Boca Ciega Bay. The name of the town is derived from the nearby inlet to the bay, and is probably a corruption of the French name "La Passe aux Grillards," or "Pass of the Grillers." The name is said to refer to the fishermen and turtlers who used the southern tip of the island to broil--hence grill--their catch taken from the nearby waters. In any case, the 1841 government survey map of the Florida coast recorded the pass as "Pass-aux-Grillards." Through constant use the name was shortened to its present form.

Settlement of the town site began in 1884 when Zephaniah Phillips, a native of Illinois, established a homestead near the southern end of Long Key. Phillips had moved with his family to Waldo, Florida for his health and was directed by friends to the Pinellas Peninsula. He lived for a time in the new town of St. Petersburg, but after visiting Long Key, he was so taken by the beauty of the area that he decided to make the island his permanent home. The property at that time was remote from any settlement and could be reached only by boat, a trip from St. Petersburg or Clearwater that took the better part of a day. His homestead occupied about 79 acres from the inlet to Boca Ciega Bay to a point now located near 23rd Avenue. By 1886, Phillips had built a house (no longer extant), the materials for which had been brought in by schooner from Pensacola.

In 1892, Captain Phillips sold the south forty acres of his land to Dr. Gustave P. Gehring of Washington, D.C. Spurred by a report lauding the "healthful climate of the Pinellas Peninsula" that had been presented at the April, 1885 convention of the American Medical Association in New Orleans, Gehring planned to build a sanitarium and hotel on the island overlooking the deep Gulf of Mexico where invalids could recover their health. Gehring, however, could not find financial backing for his project and he sold the property to new land developers for \$1,000. These were Roy S. Hanna, an important individual in the early development of St. Petersburg and Selwyn R. Morey, a resident of Tampa. The men platted the tract and recorded it in 1895 as "Morey's Beach." The plat showed 12 and a half blocks, with 12 streets running east and west, and Florida Avenue (now Pass-a-Grille Way) extending north and south along Boca Ciega Bay. There was no street paralleling the Gulf. One block was set aside as a city park. However, local residents continued to call the development Pass-a-Grille, and the

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town was eventually incorporated under that name. Initial efforts to sell the lots were unsuccessful but a few buildings began to appear on the town site at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Two houses were erected in the late 1890s. One of these was a five room cottage built at 110 8th Avenue by a house painter named Scepter Patrick. Another was erected in the vicinity of 5th Avenue just before 1900. Neither structure survives. The house Patrick had built was purchased in 1900 by George Lizotte, who remodelled it into a ten room hotel called the "Bonhomie." This structure was replaced in 1911 by a much larger wood frame building called the "Lizotte Hotel," which served patrons until 1918 when it burned. The hotel specialized in seafood dinners and was a center of social life in Pass-a-Grille until its destruction.

By 1901, there were about seven houses in Pass-a-Grille. One of these was the residence of Captain Ransom Miles, which initially stood in the 700 block of Pass-a-Grille Way. It was later moved to 102 5th Avenue where it stands today. George S. Granger's vacation home at 102 7th Avenue was built during this period. Granger, a railroad man from Waldo, also constructed another home at 106 7th Avenue. Joseph E. Merry built the town's first store in 1902. It stood on the end of a dock at 8th Avenue and Pass-a-Grille Way where the modern Merry Pier Bait and Tackle Shop is located. Originally Merry sold bait and tools and rented fishing boats to anglers, but soon added groceries. In 1911, Merry moved his store to a new building at 107 8th Avenue. The Merry store also housed the Pass-a-Grille post office.

E.C. Kittredge and his wife Laura from Barre, Vermont, built cottages in 1903 at 103 and 105 8th Avenue. Both were eventually moved, one to 103 10th Avenue and the other to 1803 Pass-a-Grille Way. Alphonso L. Thayer, self-described in his ad in the St. Petersburg city directory as a "dealer in Florida shells and curios," built a two story house in 1906 at the north corner of 10th Avenue and Pass-a-Grille Way. Today it is used as an art studio.

Several homes were built in 1907. William R. Bell, a Cincinnati contractor, built a brick home overlooking the beach at 1005 Gulf Way. Mrs. Phoebe Gough and Miss Abigail Michael Abouth, two sisters also from Cincinnati, constructed a summer cottage at 111 4th Avenue. An early home was "Darkinel", built sometime after

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1908 by Miss Jennie Darnell and Miss Elizabeth Kincaid, both of Tennessee. Their cottage is located at 109 6th Avenue. Judge L.S. Schwerdtfeger built a bayfront home at 808 Pass-a-Grille Way in 1908. The judge was a native of Lincoln, Illinois, and one of the leaders in the move to incorporate Pass-a-Grille as a municipality. Tampa businessman Calvin Barnard's summer home at 605 Gulf Way was an early concrete block building. During the winter of 1908-1909, the blocks were cast on-site.

As Pass-a-Grille became a favorite pleasure spot for winter tourists, bathers, and excursionists from Tampa and St. Petersburg, Lizotte's hotel began to receive competition as new hotels were constructed. The "La Plaza" opened in 1906 and was built on a tract of land extending from 23rd Avenue to 25th Avenue. Old photographs show a square, wood frame building, decorated with a lacy millwork and surrounded by verandas. Before the La Plaza Hotel was completed no building had been erected north of 10th Avenue. The construction of a hotel nearly a mile north of town was a gamble on the future development of Pass-a-Grille. Later the facility was enlarged and renamed the Pass-a-Grille Beach Hotel. Until the Don CeSar Hotel (N.R. 4/3/75), located at 3400 Gulf Boulevard on the southern edge of the city of St. Petersburg Beach, came along 22 years later, the Pass-a-Grille Beach Hotel was the grandest hostelry on the Gulf beaches.

In 1907, Pass-a-Grille's third hotel, the Mason House, opened at 102 8th Avenue. Two more, the Buckeye at 109 8th Avenue and the Singlehurst at 408 Gulf Way, opened in 1912. All of these facilities were little more than small rooming houses. The Singlehurst, for instance, had only twelve sleeping rooms. None of these structures is extant.

Although there were still few permanent residents on the island during the first decade of the twentieth century, a post office was established in 1905, with Lizotte's wife appointed as postmaster. Getting to Pass-a-Grille in the early days was arduous but was made less difficult in 1905 when the St. Petersburg and Gulf Electric Railroad extended its tracks from Ninth Street and Central Avenue in St. Petersburg to Gulfport--a small community opposite Pass-a-Grille on Boca Ciega Bay--where a shallow draft steam launch, the Althea, took passengers the rest of the way to Pass-a-Grille. The seventy foot boat could carry about fifty passengers and made three trips a day that were coordinated with

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the trolley line schedule. The entire trip took about an hour. The fare from St. Petersburg to the dock was ten cents each way.

The trolley-boat line in Gulfport had competition from steamboat companies in both Tampa and St. Petersburg before the completion of the McAdoo bridge across Boca Ciega Bay in 1919, and the Gandy Bridge across Old Tampa Bay in 1922, made the Gulf Beaches accessible by automobile. For a time, however, the rivalry between the two largest shipping companies ferrying passengers and freight to Merry's pier in Pass-a-Grille was fierce, with the lines slashing fares and freight rates to drive each other out of business. The "war" lasted from 1908 to 1909, when it was ended by the consolidation of the companies into the St. Petersburg Transportation Company, later renamed the Favorite Line. The boats of the new shipping line, which included the side wheelers H.B. Plant and Manatee, served all of the communities in the Tampa Bay area having port facilities, with regularly scheduled stops in St. Petersburg, Pass-a-Grille, Tampa, and Bradenton.

Pass-a-Grille was incorporated in 1911. Its charter provided that any American citizen owning property in the community might vote in all local elections without relinquishing voting privileges elsewhere, thus offering protection to absentee land owners. A city commission was elected in January, and in April the first municipal ordinances were enacted. Lots and streets were to be filled to uniform height, setback lines were prescribed, and building permit fees were established. At the time of incorporation there were 15 to 20 houses in Pass-a-Grille, four or five stores (all on 8th Avenue), a restaurant, and three hotels. On May 23, 1911, the town became part of newly formed Pinellas County, which had been carved out of the western part of Hillsborough County.

On November 17, 1913, local voters approved a public improvement bond issue of \$11,000 to fill and pave streets and to construct a waterworks. Until the construction of a city water system, the town's residents obtained their drinking water from rainwater collected in cisterns and from the flow of a natural spring located in the vicinity of 6th Avenue. Water mains were sunk in the sandy soil and were fed by a 10,000 gallon wooden water tower that stood in the park between 9th and 10th avenues.

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The town's electrical system was installed in 1914, but was subject to failure, and residents continued to keep an ample supply of candles and kerosene lamps to provide their homes with light when the electricity went out. In any case, the electrical plant was shut down each night at 10 o'clock. The city of Pass-a-Grille began to receive more reliable service when it became part of the Florida Power Corporation system in the late 1920s.

The first church in Pass-a-Grille was not constructed until 1917. Most townspeople and visitors to the community were church-goers, and it is surprising that no formal services were held on the island until 1913 when people began to meet in the home of one of the residents. Soon it became apparent to the town's citizens that the community needed a permanent church, and in March, 1914, a board of trustees was formed for the Union Church of Pass-a-Grille. It was two years, however, before the building committee selected the lot at 115 10th Avenue where the church now stands. The building was completed in 1917.

The church was non-denominational until 1949 when its members voted to join the Congregational Church. The church was abandoned as being too small in 1959 when the congregation moved into its new sanctuary on the north side of 16th Avenue. In 1961, the old church was purchased by Joan Haley who now uses it as a private residence. She has lovingly preserved most of its original features, and the old steeple is perhaps the most distinctive visual landmark in Pass-a-Grille.

Among the milestones in the progress of the development of the town was the building of the first bridge which connected Long Key with the mainland. The bridge was built by W.G. McAdoo who owned considerable real estate north of Pass-a-Grille in what is now the City of St. Petersburg Beach. A brick road was built along what is now Pass-a-Grille Way and Gulf Boulevard to St. Petersburg Beach. The area immediately north of historic Pass-a-Grille experienced a short burst of growth in 1928 with construction of the Don CeSar Hotel. The building of the luxurious hotel also involved the development of the surrounding area, called "Don CeSar Place," which featured winding palm-lined streets and Mediterranean Revival style residences. However, few new homes, and no new hotels, were constructed on the south end of Long Key, and additional construction north of 12th Avenue was quite sparse.



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By the standards of the Florida Boom of the 1920s growth in Pass-a-Grille was exceedingly unspectacular. The first house to be constructed north of 13th Avenue was 1701 Pass-a-Grille Way, built in 1916, and it did not have a neighbor until 1921. When the real estate boom that had swept much of Central and South Florida between 1921 and 1925 collapsed in 1926, only a brick road, a scattering of houses, and a school were interspersed between 13th Street and 31st Avenue. Most of Pass-a-Grille still lay south of 9th Avenue and nearly all of the businesses in the 1920s were strung along the single block of 8th Avenue. These included Jewett's Drug Store, Hardin's Grocery, Verena's Barber Shop, a machine shop, three small hotels, and Mitchell's real estate office.

A series of disasters in 1921 and 1922 brought Pass-a-Grille's "golden age" to an end. On October 21, 1921 a hurricane swept in from the Gulf of Mexico pushing a tidal surge ten feet high into Old Tampa Bay. Fortunately for Pass-a-Grille, the wall of water at the end of Long Key was much lower than at St. Petersburg, possibly because much of the flow in the immediate vicinity of the town was channeled through the nearby pass into Boca Ciega Bay. The violent tropical storm severely damaged the Pass-a-Grille Hotel and caused the hotel dance pavilion that stood at the end of the 23rd Avenue pier to collapse. The town itself was flooded, but only those buildings located directly on the Gulf beach suffered any significant property damage and there was no loss of life.

Even though Pass-a-Grille was spared extensive storm damage, its days as the West Coast's leading beach resort were numbered. In May, 1922, flames consumed the Holloway and Mason hotels and about half of the other buildings on 8th Avenue. Later the same year the Pass-a-Grille Hotel, which had never reopened after being damaged by the hurricane, was also reduced to charred rubble when fire swept the deserted complex. The hotel was not rebuilt, and the property on which it had stood was replatted as residential lots. The Pass-a-Grille Casino, a much smaller building complex inherited the name Pass-a-Grille Hotel soon after its namesake was destroyed. The newer structure was constructed in 1920 and stood on the beach between 9th and 10th avenues. It featured a bath house, snack bar, dance hall, and a few hotel rooms. Eventually, the name "Beach" was added to it, and the facility became the Pass-a-Grille Beach Hotel. This last landmark hotel was lost in 1967 when fire damaged it beyond repair and the remains were demolished.

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In spite of the collapse of the Florida Boom and the onset of the Great Depression some residential construction began to take place on the islands north of Long Key. The Gulf Beaches' second and third municipalities, Boca Ciega City and Sunshine Beach, were incorporated in 1937. This growth continued at a slow but constant pace with the construction of new bridges from the mainland and others linking the islands, until by the beginning of World War II there were a number of small subdivisions and tiny municipalities along the Gulf. The Second World War brought new development with the construction of military bases and coastal defense works throughout the area. The City of St. Petersburg Beach was incorporated in 1943.

After the war development of the beaches began to proceed at a rapid rate, as many thousands of Americans began to move to Florida. The four municipalities then found on Long Key, including Pass-a-Grille, were consolidated into the City of St. Petersburg Beach. The land north of 12th Avenue became prime residential property, and today nearly all of the property between the southern point of Long Key and the Don CeSar Hotel is occupied by structures.

Significance of District

The significance of the Pass-a-Grille Historic District lies in its association with the early settlement of the barrier islands of Pinellas County and the pioneer development of those islands as resort/recreation facilities. Pass-a-Grille was the first incorporated community on the Gulf beaches and was among the earliest of those incorporated in all of what is now Pinellas County. The small wood frame houses, and the handful of commercial buildings on 8th Avenue, reflect the original character of the small seaside town and are the oldest civilian structures on the beaches.

The only large hotel associated with the town's historic period of development (1900-1922) was the Pass-a-Grill Hotel (1906-1922), but it was not physically part of the town since it stood between 23rd and 25th avenues, nearly a mile north of the original town plat. Its loss, therefore, does not bear directly on the significance of the district. The hotels that once stood within the immediate vicinity of the district were all small, one and two-

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story structures that survived only short periods of time. Several such buildings are still found in the district and are used as apartments and transient hotels. These, to some degree, maintain the original visual diversity of the built environment of the district, as do the surviving commercial structures along 8th Avenue.

The vernacular houses individually and collectively have little architectural significance and reflect the semi-permanent and seasonal character of the residency of most of the early settlers of Pass-a-Grille. The houses are small and functional, having little in the way of distinctive decorative elements or lavish comforts. Many of the early residents of the town lived on Long Key only during the winter months and in the cooler periods of spring and fall. The summer weather was much too harsh, because of the intense heat and the millions of mosquitoes that bred in the shallow brackish bays near the island.

The number of continuous and seasonal residents during the historic period of development, therefore, remained small, but the town was still able to claim to be a permanent settlement by 1905 and was formally incorporated in 1911. This fact is remarkable because no other significant development took place on the barrier islands until the mid-1920s, and no other community was incorporated until 1937. The greater part of the dense construction that one now finds on the Gulf islands of Pinellas County has grown up since the 1960s. The Pass-a-Grille Historic District, therefore, reflects a period of settlement and development that is virtually unique to the area's barrier islands.

Archaeological Resources

No archaeological resources have been found within the Pass-a-Grille Historic District. Although once there may have been some evidences of aboriginal use or occupation of the south end of Long Key, these have been lost through development and disturbance of the area since 1900. Not even casual or scattered surface remains of middens, mounds, or features have been observed in any of the recent surveys of the area.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Boundary Description

Begin on the east curb line of Gulf Way at a point parallel with the south property line of 309 Gulf Way, then run north along said curb line to a point parallel with the north property line of 401 Gulf Way, then run east to the east curb line of the unnamed alley at the rear of the property, then run north along said curb line to the north curb line of 5th Avenue, then run west along said curb line to a point parallel with the west property line of 109 5th Avenue, then run north along said property line and continue north along the east curb line of an unnamed alley to a point parallel with the south property line of 605 Gulf Way,

then run west along said property line to the east curb line of Gulf Way, then run north along said curb line to a point parallel with the north property line of 605 Gulf Way, then run east along said property line to the east curb line of the alley at the rear of the property, then run north along said curb line to the north curb line of 7th Avenue, then jog south and run north along the east curb line of the alley at the rear of the buildings along the 700 block of Gulf Way to the intersection of the north-south alley, then run east along the south curb line of said alley to a point paralleling the west property line of 106 8th Avenue,

then run north along said property line and continue across 8th Avenue and along the west property line of 107 8th Avenue to the alley at the rear of the property, then run east along the south curb line of said alley to a point parallel with the west property line of 102 9th Avenue, then run north along said property line to the north curb line of 9th Avenue, then run west along said curb line to the intersection of Gulf Way, then run north along the east curb line of Gulf Way to the intersection of 10th Avenue, then run east along the south curb line of 10th Avenue to the intersection of the alley known as Church Lane,

then run north along the west curb line of Church Lane to a point parallel with the south property line of 103 Gulf Way, then run west along said line to the east curb line of Gulf Way, then run north along said curb line to a point parallel with the north property line of 1205 Gulf Way, then run east along said line to the west curb line of the alley at the rear of the property, then run south along said curb line, crossing 12th Avenue, and continue to the intersection of the east-west alley in the center of the

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block separating 11th and 12th avenues, then run east along the south curb line of said alley to a point parallel with the east property line of 107 11th Avenue,

then run south along said property line to the north curb line of 11th Avenue, then run west along said curb line to the northwest corner of the intersection of an unnamed alley, then run south, crossing 11th Avenue, and continue along the west curb line of the alley known as Church Lane to the intersection of an unnamed east-west alley, then run east along the south curb line of said alley to the intersection of an unnamed north-south alley, then run north along the west curb line of said alley to a point parallel with the north property line of 1004 Pass-a-Grille Way, then run east along said property line to the west curb line of Pass-a-Grille Way,

then run south along said curb line to a point parallel with the south property line of 308 Pass-a-Grille Way, then run west along said property line to the alley at the rear of the property, then run north along the east curb line of said alley to the north curb line of 4th Avenue, then run west along said curb line to a point parallel with the east property line of 108 4th Avenue, then run south, crossing 4th Avenue, along said property line to the alley at the rear of the property, then run west along the north curb line of said alley to the intersection with a north-south alley, then run north along the east curb line of said alley to a point parallel with the south property line of 309 Gulf Way, then run west along said property line to the east curb line of Gulf Way, the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the Pass-a-Grille Historic District are justified by the historic town plan, the geographical location of the district, and its physical development between 1900 and 1922. As indicated in the significance and description narratives, development of the town during the historic period took place approximately four blocks north and south of 8th Avenue. Growth was limited because of the amount of land available at the south end of Long Key and because access to the island was difficult prior to construction of a bridge to the mainland in 1919. The community was slow to develop the necessary power, water, and road facilities that would have encouraged further growth and was bypassed during the Florida real estate boom of the 1920s because

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of a fear of hurricanes, prompted by the one that struck the Gulf Coast in 1921. The existing historic building resources within the district represent approximately 80 percent of the construction that took place during the historic period of development.