

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



MP 2728

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions on 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 St. Cloud Depot

other names/site number OS1173

2. Location

street & number 915 New York Avenue not for publication

city or town St. Cloud vicinity

state Florida code FL county Osceola code _____ zip code 34769

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.)

Alessa Totane, DSHPO 6/8/18
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State
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) _____

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

7.31.2018

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	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	total

Name of related multiple property listings

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

Florida's Historic Railroad Resources MPS

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

SOCIAL: clubhouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: clubhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN

MOVEMENTS: Prairie Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof METAL

other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Transportation _____
- Social History _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1918-1968

Significant Dates

1918
1943

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Poley, George Milton, architect

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 Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

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

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

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 Andrew Waber, Historic Preservationist

organization Florida Division of Historical Resources date February 2018

street & number 500 South Bronough telephone (850) 245-6430

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32399

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 VFW Post 3227

street & number 915 New York Avenue telephone _____

city or town St. Cloud state FL zip code 34769

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 St. Cloud Depot
St. Cloud, Osceola County, FL

Summary

The St. Cloud Depot is a circa 1918 rectangular Prairie Style brick building with a wide overhanging metal hipped roof supported by prominent wood brackets. The building features two brick chimneys, a hipped dormer, and a slab foundation. Fenestration consists primarily of 9/9 sash and fixed 6-light wood windows. The building still retains its character-defining bay window. Although the interior of the building still retains its original flooring material, it has been opened up during the VFW era to make it more suitable for a clubhouse. It features large open space along with a kitchen, bar, offices, and bathrooms. The original delivery doors have been infilled, but the openings are still visibly present. There is also a non-contributing circa-1983 concrete block building located to the east of the depot. It was added by the VFW post to provide additional space. Although the building obscures the east elevation and is visible from all four elevations, it is easily distinguishable from the depot and can be removed without affecting the historic fabric of the building. Despite the changes that have taken place, the depot still accurately reflects its historic 1968 appearance and retains sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register.

Setting

The St. Cloud Depot is located adjacent to the historic downtown commercial core of St. Cloud, Florida. The city, which is one of two incorporated cities within Osceola County, is approximately 26 miles south of Orlando in Central Florida. The estimated population of St. Cloud is a little under 48,000 people.¹ The immediate surroundings of the depot are heavily developed. To the north of the depot is the modern city hall, which is a substantial building. To the east, west, and south of the depot are primarily commercial buildings. Immediately south of the depot is a small city of St. Cloud police substation. The original railroad tracks were removed shortly after the rail line was abandoned in the 1940s and are no longer extant.

Physical Description

The St. Cloud Depot is a one-story rectangular Prairie Style brick building with a wide overhanging metal hipped roof supported by prominent wood brackets (Photo 1). The building features two brick chimneys, a hipped dormer, and a slab foundation. Fenestration consists primarily of 9/9 sash and fixed 9-light wood windows. Approximately halfway up the building's exterior walls, there is a continuous concrete band that extends around the building. The brick pattern along most of the building is Flemish bond, but there are two continuous soldier courses of vertical bricks, one adjacent to the concrete band and another near the base of the building. The building is surrounded by brick pavers and an asphalt parking lot.

¹ City of St. Cloud, "City Facts – St. Cloud, FL," <http://www.stcloud.org/DocumentCenter/View/16054>.

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Exterior

The north and south elevations of the building are very similar in appearance with the exception of one crucial difference (Photos 1-2). The main (north) façade of the building still features its character-defining bay window (Photo 3). Otherwise, both elevations feature infilled historic delivery doors, 9/9 sash windows, hipped dormers with vents, a continuous concrete band roughly halfway up, and single doorways with some doors replaced. The west elevation is plain and balanced, with four fixed 9-light windows (Photo 4). The visibility of the east elevation is heavily impacted by the circa 1983 building, but otherwise is very similar in appearance to the west.

Interior

The interior of the depot still retains its original flooring but otherwise has been heavily impacted by the 1950s and 1960s era VFW changes (Photos 5-9). The interior character of the building today reflects its historic usage as a clubhouse rather than its usage as a passenger station. The building features a large central open space and bar on the north, with the kitchen on the south, public restrooms on the southwest corner, and offices and storage rooms on the southeast corner. Drop ceilings have been installed to accommodate modern amenities (Photo 10). The ceiling is decorated with various military unit insignias. Some of the original walls have been removed, but the remnants of the walls are still very much visible in the floor (Photo 11).

Alterations

There have been a number of alterations that have taken place to the depot since its construction in 1918. Originally, it was located adjacent to a railroad track that ran on the north side of the station. There was also a wood freight station on the opposite side of the tracks. This circa 1910 freight station was originally built on the location of the current brick depot and was moved across the tracks when the brick station was built. After the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad ceased rail operations along the Narcoossee line, it ripped up the tracks and removed the wood depot. The parking lot surrounding the depot has covered over the remnants of the railroad bed. After the Veterans of Foreign Wars took over the station, they made some modifications to the building, including removing some of the historic interior walls, installing a kitchen and bar, moving the restrooms to the southwest corner of the building, and infilling the original delivery doors on the north and south elevations. These changes took place during the period of significance, however, and are considered historic alterations to the building. Following the construction of the circa 1983 building to the east, a small breezeway was constructed connecting the two buildings. This breezeway was not constructed in a manner that involved the removal of historic fabric and can be removed without adversely affecting the original building. Some of the doors have been replaced on the depot as well but were done while keeping the original openings. The roof has been replaced and there have been some modifications relating to modernization, including the installation of drop ceilings, HVAC, and electricity.

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Non-Contributing Resource

There is one non-contributing resource to this nomination, which is the circa 1983 concrete block building built to the east of the depot (Photo 12). It is a rectangular building with a hipped roof, slab foundations, and small single story wood addition onto the west. The building is connected to the depot via a breezeway. The building is considered non-contributing due to age.

Integrity

As the St. Cloud Depot is still in its original location, it retains sufficient integrity of location. The setting has been affected, with the railroad tracks torn up and paved over and the wood freight station torn down. This change took place in 1943, however, and is considered historic. Although a large modern city hall building has been built to the north, the depot still maintains its visual connection to the historic downtown commercial core located to the south. The building retains sufficient integrity of setting and association. Despite the changes, the building retains most of its historic fabric including the exterior brick, wood windows, and interior flooring. It also retains much of its character-defining design features, including the rectangular shape, wide overhanging hipped roof with brackets, and protruding bay for the ticket windows. The interior changes all took place during the historic VFW period and are considered historic alterations. Hence, the building retains sufficient integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Although the circa 1983 building completely obscures the east elevation of the depot and is visible from all three other elevations, it was clearly built in a manner to assure that the integrity of the depot was preserved. None of the historic fabric of the depot was removed, the concrete block building could be removed without affecting the depot, and the concrete block building is easily distinguishable from the depot. Hence, the building retains sufficient integrity of feeling.

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Summary

The St. Cloud Depot is being proposed for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local level in the areas of Transportation and Social History. The period of significance extends from its date of construction in 1918 to 1943, when the depot ceased railroad operations, and from when the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post Number 3227 assumed control in 1943 to 1968. From 1918 to 1943, the depot served as the passenger station for the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. Although automobile travel grew exponentially by the 1920s, the railroad still served a vital function in shipping supplies and people during the Land Boom of the 1920s. The proximity to the railroad was essential to both the founding and growth of St. Cloud. Starting in 1943, the depot was acquired by the VFW, who repurposed the building as a clubhouse. From its founding, VFW Post 3227 has been a locally significant veteran's support and community service organization. Although the exterior of the depot retains a high degree of integrity, the building as it sits now more properly conveys its historic usage as a clubhouse, primarily as a result of interior changes.

The St. Cloud Depot contributes to the Florida's Historic Railway Resources MPS under Associated Historic Contexts: Disston Era Expansion and Consolidation, 1881-1903; Progressive Era and World War I, 1904-1920; Florida Land Boom, 1921-1928; Great Depression, 1929-1941; and World War II and the End of the Steam Era, 1942-1949. It also contributes under Associated Property Type F.1 Railroad Stations and Office Buildings.

Historic Context

History of St. Cloud

The origins of what is now St. Cloud, like much of central Florida, dates back into the early 1880s after the purchase of four million acres of land by wealthy northern industrialist Hamilton Disston. As a stipulation for the purchase, Disston was to drain the land and was entitled to half of any new land resulting from the project. He formed the Atlantic & Gulf Coast Canal & Okeechobee Land Company to carry this out. Starting in 1882, the company began intensive work in dredging and lowering the water levels of Lake Tohopekaliga. The work, completed in 1884, lowered the lake eight feet in depth and exposed thousands of acres of land that included what is now St. Cloud.²

It was at about this time that sugarcane production began in the immediate area. The town's name owes its origins indirectly to the St. Cloud Plantation, which was a sugar growing operation founded by Rufus E. Rose in 1884. Sensing further opportunities, Disston entered into a partnership with Rose in the late 1880s and expanded the enterprise to over 1,800 acres. Disston later bought out Rose to assume full ownership. To further

² Brenda J. Elliott, "Historical and Architectural Survey City of St. Cloud Project Report," City of St. Cloud (Kissimmee, FL: Brenda J. Elliott & Associates, May 1993), p. 9-11.

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develop these operations, Disston established the Florida Sugar Manufacturing Company, which managed a sugar factory that processed the raw sugar, and also built the St. Cloud Sugar Belt Railway (SCSBR), which he finished in 1891. This railroad was a small line that ran 14 miles from Kissimmee to Narcoossee. The location of what is now the town of St. Cloud was a railroad stop originally known as Sunnyside. A small community of African American and Italian workers drawn to area to work for Disston's sugar operations formed nearby. By the mid-1890s, however, the St. Cloud Plantation and the sugarcane industry in the area began to flounder. After Disston's death the plantation operations ceased. The SCSBR became part of the South Florida Railroad and was incorporated into the larger Plant System of railroads. By 1902, it was part of the Atlantic Coastline Railroad (ACL).³

St. Cloud Soldiers Colony and Founding of St. Cloud

The area remained largely undeveloped until 1909, when the *National Tribune*, the newspaper of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) sought land suitable for the establishment of the veterans' colony. On the advice of wealthy New Yorker Raymond Moore, the newspaper, through its subsidiary the Seminole Land and Investment Company, acquired 35,000 acres, land which included what is now St. Cloud. By April 1909, the company selected a town site, naming it St. Cloud, and hired William King to lay out the colony. The company sold off parcels of land in 5 acre allotments. The new settlement grew very quickly, with phone lines installed and houses and streets laid out within months of the site's acquisition. The *National Tribune* also operated a local newspaper, the *St. Cloud Tribune* and a post office was established. There were also several businesses established and in operation that year, including a hotel and grocery. By September 1909, the ACL ran two daily trains between Kissimmee and Narcoossee.⁴

The number of Union veterans residing in the town were sufficient for the establishment of a new GAR post, the Lucien L. Mitchell Post No. 34 in January 1910. There were 86 veterans who were founding members of the post. By February 1910, there was an estimated 1,700 people living in the city, with roughly 100 arriving every day. The first community wide celebration took place in February 1910, as a large barbeque, parade, and flag pole raising in honor of the birthday of Abraham Lincoln. By 1911, the state of Florida formally granted articles of incorporation to the town of St. Cloud. Given its foundation as a retirement colony for veterans, the city of St. Cloud has from its beginnings had close connections to veterans' organizations. The early leaders of the town's government often had close ties to the GAR. The GAR Hall quickly became an important social and political gathering place for the town. The decision to formally incorporate was made following a community meeting at the GAR Hall. The first municipal elections were held at the hall as well. By the 1910s, the city saw continued expansion, especially in its downtown commercial core. In 1911, the municipal government mandated that all new construction between the railroad, 12th Street, Massachusetts Avenue, and Florida

³ Elliott, p. 11-13.

⁴ Elliott, p. 15-18.

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Avenue be made of fireproof materials, an area known as a fire limit. Aided in part by this ordinance, the downtown core soon became built out with brick commercial buildings. To assist in this, the city also improved its infrastructure, paving the roads, improving drainage, adding electricity, laying sidewalks, and beautifying the parks.⁵

Original ACL Depot

The city's location along the ACL was crucial to its development, as settlers as well as building supplies moved into St. Cloud via the railroad. By January 1910, there was a ticket office and express office installed at St. Cloud and arrangements were already being made for the construction of a new depot. The depot, which was completed in February 1910, was a combination freight and passenger station. It was a square wood building measuring 50 feet across. This new depot could not keep up with the rate of growth of the new town, however, and by the mid-1910s, it was already too small.⁶ Many St. Cloud residents lived here seasonally, which was made possible by the railroad. The depot quickly became a social gathering place for those seeing friends off. One writer noted such a scene:

Many old soldiers spend only winters there [in St. Cloud], returning to their northern homes when the trees begin to bud and the birds to sing.

Monday morning the writer, who lives at a station beyond St. Cloud, was coming into Kissimmee and as the train rolled into the depot at St. Cloud, there floated on the air the strains of that beautiful song, "God Be With You Till We Meet Again," and there by the side of the train stood a choir of aged men and women telling their friends good-bye with as sweet music as we ever heard.

There were many moist eyes in that multitude as the train left the station. A most fitting farewell.⁷

⁵ Elliott, p. 19-24; *Kissimmee Valley Gazette*, "St. Cloud Happenings," February 18, 1910; *Kissimmee Valley Gazette*, "Grand Celebration," February 18, 1910.

⁶ *Kissimmee Valley Gazette*, "St. Cloud Colony," January 21, 1910; *Kissimmee Valley Gazette*, "St. Cloud Happenings," February 18, 1910.

⁷ *Kissimmee Valley Gazette*, "Affecting Scene at St. Cloud Depot," March 27, 1914.

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View of wood St. Cloud Depot, circa 1910s
(Source: State Archives of Florida)

Historic Significance - Transportation

Fight to Secure Depot

Feeling that the wooden depot was inadequate for the town, the citizens of St. Cloud began clamoring for a new one. The idea was first proposed at a meeting of the local Ladies Improvement Club in 1914, and soon a committee on the depot was formed through the city's Board of Trade. The leaders of this push were F.F.H. Pope and Lewis D. Frost, who personally represented the city at several public meetings on the matter. The ACL was reluctant to build this station, however. In April 1915, the town, represented by Frost and Pope, made a personal appeal before the state railroad commission. The commission ruled in their favor, ordering the ACL to relocate the existing depot and repurpose it to exclusively handle freight and to build a new passenger depot on the location of the older one. The ACL, in an attempt to comply with the order, formally submitted to the commission a proposed plan for the construction of a new wood depot, which the commission approved. As

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they attempted to build it, however, the municipal authorities stepped in and refused to issue a permit on the grounds that the proposed building was within the fire limits of the city. The ordinances also prohibited the movement of wooden buildings in the fire limits as well, which restricted the ACL's options on relocating the older depot. The city threatened to prosecute anyone attempting to construct the building as proposed. Viewing the cost of building a brick depot as prohibitive, the railroad company simply refused to obey the state railroad commission's order. Despite their complaint, the railroad commission did not view their reason for failure to comply as a legal one, and fined the ACL \$500 and requested a court order forcing them to build the station. The company appealed, however, and the case made it before the state supreme court. The court ruled in favor of the ACL, finding that the order from the commission implied the construction of a wood building in direct violation of municipal ordinances. The court also ruled that the commission did not fully consider whether the new facilities justified the added expense to the company or the benefits of public of the new facilities.⁸

The news of the supreme court's ruling was met with much consternation in the community. The decision proved to be a serious setback and caused some to doubt whether the depot would be built at all. Despite this, the matter was far from resolved. Within days of the ruling, members of the commission were already in St. Cloud, giving personal reassurances of their continued interest in the case.⁹ In April 1916, two officials from the ACL, including general superintendent John C. Murchison, attended a contentious public meeting of the St. Cloud Board of Trade. At the meeting, citizens voiced their frustrations with the railroad, with some threatening to seek the business of rival lines. Murchison presented blueprints of a rebuilt wood depot replacing the older one at the meeting, which was roundly voted down by those in attendance. Sensing a hostile feeling towards the railroad, Murchison made a report on the matter back to the ACL. The matter was not considered further, however, until December 1916, when the state railroad commission held another meeting, which was postponed to January 1917. By this time, given the continued growth of the city, even the railroad company recognized the need for improved facilities. After a full consideration of the costs of construction and a review of the business generated by St. Cloud, the commission ruled once again in favor of the people of St. Cloud and ordered the construction of a combination freight and passenger station.¹⁰

The dimensions of the depot ordered by the commission were precise:

⁸ *State ex rel. Burr et al v. Atlantic Coast Line R. Co.*, 70 So. Rept., 941-942 (Florida Supreme Court, 1916); *St. Cloud Tribune*, "Opening Depot Educational Treat and Financial Success – Nets Over \$500.00 for Red Cross," May 9, 1918; Railroad Commission of the State of Florida, "In the Matter of Depot and Station Facilities at St. Cloud" [Order No. 481], in *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Railroad Commission of the State of Florida* (Tallahassee, FL, 1916), p. 72-73.

⁹ *St. Cloud Tribune*, "Supreme Court Gives Depot at St. Cloud a Big Black Eye," February 17, 1916.

¹⁰ *St. Cloud Tribune*, "Citizens of St. Cloud Demand Brick Depot or None at All," April 6, 1916; Railroad Commission of the State of Florida, "In the Matter of Depot and Station Facilities at St. Cloud" [Order No. 541], in *Twenty-First Annual Report of the Railroad Commission of the State of Florida* (Tallahassee, FL, 1918), p. 164-167; *St. Cloud Tribune*, "R.R. Commission Issus [sic] Order for New Station in St. Cloud," January 11, 1917.

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Waiting room for white passengers to contain not less than 775 square feet of floor space, and adjoining thereto a ladies rest room with floor space of not less than 6 feet 6 inches by 10 feet, and a ladies' toilet room to be entered from the rest room, with floor space of not less than 4 feet 6 inches by 10 feet. Also a men's smoking room with floor space of not less than 6 feet 6 inches by 10 feet, and a men's toilet room, to be entered from the smoking room, with floor space of not less than 4 feet 6 inches by 10 feet.

Waiting room for colored passengers to contain not less than 285 square feet of floor space, and adjoining thereto a toilet room for women with floor space of not less than 4 feet 6 inches by 10 feet, and a toilet room for men, with floor space of not less than 4 feet 6 inches by 10 feet.

Also a ticket window for both white and colored passengers as provided by law. Freight ware room to contain not less than 1,656 square feet of floor space, and a covered shed on the end of the said building with not less than 612 square feet of floor space, and a platform adjacent to and along the side of the ware room to contain not less than 760 square feet of floor space.

A suitable and sufficient room for the proper handling, storage and care of baggage.

It is further ordered that between the offices of the passenger depot and the freight ware room there shall be an open passageway under the main roof of the building 16 feet in width.¹¹

Constructing the depot

Following this order, another mass meeting took place in St. Cloud between the ACL, the city council, and the citizens of St. Cloud. Although the commission's order was for a combination passenger and freight station, after some negotiation, the ACL kept the original wood depot and moved it north of the tracks, where it functioned exclusively as a freight house (Figure 1). The city agreed to provide land to the company for this purpose, but the process was once again delayed when it was discovered that the strip of land for the relocated building was too narrow and that the company would need to use part of the street. The city could not grant this, however, unless it had state legislature approval, which it was able to do. Because of these delays, the arrangements for the new depot did not begin until August 1917. In September of that year, the ACL began soliciting bids for contractors with the goal of finishing by December. Work on the relocation began in October 1917 and construction of the brick depot began shortly afterwards. The architect for the depot was George M. Poley and the superintendent of construction was R.E. Hall.¹²

¹¹ Railroad Commission of the State of Florida, "In the Matter of Depot and Station Facilities at St. Cloud" [Order No. 541], 166-167.

¹² *St. Cloud Tribune*, "St. Cloud to Have New Brick Station to Handle Business," August 9, 1917; *St. Cloud Tribune*, "Depot Work Being Rushed; Old Station is Moved Away," October 18, 1917; *St. Cloud Tribune*, "Depot to Finished by Dec. 15," September 6, 1917.

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Dedication ceremonies of St. Cloud Depot, May 1918
(source: State Archives of Florida)

Work on the depot was finished and the building opened to the public in May 1918. As the nation was still very much entangled in World War I, the Ladies Improvement Club used the grand opening as an opportunity to hold a large benefit for the St. Cloud Chapter of the American Red Cross. Festivities started on May 3, 1918, with a parade and flag raising ceremony which led from the GAR Hall to the depot followed by speeches, musical performances, and a dance at the GAR Hall. The following day, on May 4, there was a large “Trip Around the World” event held in the depot itself, with booths set up at various points across the depot full of educational information about various countries around the world. The event was a success and raised over \$500 for the Red Cross.¹³

¹³ *St. Cloud Tribune*, “Opening Depot Educational Treat and Financial Success – Nets Over \$500.00 for Red Cross,” May 9, 1918.

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St. Cloud, Osceola County, FL

ACL Depot



Postcard of St. Cloud Depot circa 1930s
(source: University of Central Florida Libraries, Special Collections, and University Archives)

By the time the depot was built in 1918, the railroad was already starting to see increased competition from automobiles. By 1914, the Dixie Highway was built through St. Cloud on its way to Kissimmee. Despite this, the depot still saw plenty of business. After the end of World War I, St. Cloud, like many places across Florida, was swept up into the Land Boom. The railroad proved crucial in moving the building supplies into the area. There was an express office established in the east portion of the passenger depot. By the 1940s, however, declining business on the line forced the ACL to shut down railroad operations. The older freight depot was demolished and the railroad right-of-way was abandoned (Figure 2). By 1943, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) had taken over the building.¹⁴

¹⁴ Elliott, p. 30-31, 39.

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St. Cloud, Osceola County, FL

Historic Significance – Social History

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), which was created in 1913, was the result of a merger of several smaller veterans organizations that were founded after end of the Spanish-American War, the oldest of which dates back to 1898. As the GAR was a closed membership available only to Union veterans of the Civil War, the veterans from the Spanish-American War were forced to form their own organizations. One important reason for the survival of the VFW was its commitment to keeping open membership to all war veterans who served overseas, not just Spanish-American War veterans. The organization's influence and power skyrocketed after World War I, as it grew from 4,000 members before World War I to over 60,000 by 1921, making it the second largest veteran's organization in the country after the American Legion.¹⁵

Founding of VFW Post 3227

Although founded primarily for Civil War veterans, the town of St. Cloud also had a population of Spanish-American War veterans. They were soon joined by veterans of the First World War. As the Civil War veterans slowly started to either move away or die, the other veterans became more prominent in the community. In 1935, a group of 30 veterans of the Spanish American War and World War I formed the Osceola Post 3227, which was approved by the national organization. In 1943, Post 3227 acquired the old brick depot from the ACL and set about repurposing the station into a clubhouse.¹⁶

¹⁵ National Register of Historic Places, VFW Walter R. Mickens Post 6021 and William Weech American Legion Post 168, Key West, Monroe County, Florida, 12000300, Section 8, Page 4.

¹⁶ Johnnie Hayes, "History of VFW Post 3227" [unpublished manuscript], p. 2-3.

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VFW Era of St. Cloud Depot¹⁷



St. Cloud Depot during early VFW post era, circa 1961
(source: VFW Post 3227)

By the time the VFW took over the depot, it had replaced the GAR and the United Spanish War Veterans as one of the largest and most important veteran's organizations in St. Cloud. The American Legion also had an active presence in St. Cloud and the two organizations often had overlapping memberships and collaborated with each other. By the early 1960s, membership of the VFW post grew to 116 people. In addition to providing support to a number of national social and political prerogatives, the VFW Post 3227 and its women's auxiliary functioned as important community service organizations. The post opened the building to a variety of social gatherings, including Christmas parties, Memorial Day celebrations, community dinners, and wedding anniversaries. One important event for the local post was the annual Poppy Day, which was held every year near Armistice Day. The money was raised through the sale of poppies, which were worn in honor of the deceased veterans. The proceeds from the sale were then given over to help support disabled veterans. A longtime supporter of local athletics, in 1963, members of the post actually purchased the materials and rebuilt the grandstand for the St.

¹⁷ The undated articles referenced in this section all come from a scrapbook kept by the VFW Post 3227. The names of the newspapers are also unknown but presumed to be local St. Cloud area newspapers.

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Cloud High School Athletic Field. The post was an active supporter of the city's blood bank, providing both financial support as well as allowing use of the facilities for their purposes. The post was active in the VFW "Light-a-Bike Program," which involved the distribution of reflective safety tape for bicycles.¹⁸



VFW Light-a-Bike Promotional Photograph
(source: VFW Post 3227)

Post 3227 was also involved in political activism, aided in large part to the effectiveness of the national organization in securing benefits for veterans. This activism also extended into public outreach. The VFW sponsored the Voice of Democracy Program, which took place in Osceola County high schools. The program was designed to encourage patriotism amongst students by having them present a script on "What America Means to Me." During the election of 1962, the local post was engaged in a program called "Get Out the Vote,"

¹⁸ Joseph C. Bell, "Veterans of Foreign Wars Prove Very Active in Community Work" [undated article circa 1960s]; Fred Ford, "VFW Poppy Day this Saturday" [undated article circa 1960s]; Joseph C. Bell, "VFW Joins Aux. in Yule Party" [undated article circa 1960s]; Joseph C. Bell, "V.F.W. Post and Auxiliary Here Celebrated 28th Birthday Event" [undated article circa 1960s]; Joseph C. Bell letter to D.A. Wagner, March 1, 1963; "VFW Reflective Tape is Offered Free to Cyclists" [undated article circa 1960s].

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in which they canvassed the community encouraging people to vote. They also provided transportation to the polls.¹⁹

Historic Context – After 1968

The St. Cloud Depot remains to this day associated with the VFW. With the construction of the adjacent concrete block building, much of the activities have moved out of the old depot. Despite this, the building still hosts a variety of important functions for the local post, including food service. The post has gone through some changes over the years, but despite this retains sufficient integrity to qualify for listing in the National Register.

Architectural Context

George Milton Poley, Architect

George M. Poley (1880-1967) was the architect of the St. Cloud Depot. Born in 1880 in Pennsylvania, Poley was involved for a number of years early on in his career with railroads. Among his earliest work was with the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad in Waterbury, Connecticut. He wrote a paper titled “The Reinforced Concrete Locomotive House at Waterbury,” which was published by the Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers in 1909. By 1910, he was living in Savannah, Georgia, working as an architect for the Central of Georgia Railway, a position he held until circa 1914.²⁰ By the mid-1910s, he was under the employ of the ACL, and was called upon to draw up plans for their depots and buildings. Many of the smaller ACL depots from between 1915 and 1920 such as those in DeLand and Green Cove Springs were likely designed by Poley.²¹ By 1920, Poley was employed by the RJ Reynolds Company in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, as a company architect for their factory. He was one of the original residents of National Register listed Reynoldstown Historic District. This was a planned company town that he likely played a role in helping to build.²²

¹⁹ Joseph C. Bell letter to Henry E. Thompson, October 15, 1962; W.B. Stephens letter to Joseph C. Bell, September 26, 1962; “Democracy Contest Winners Listed,” [undated article circa 1960s].

²⁰ Savannah Directory Publishing Company, *Savannah City Directory 1910* (Savannah, GA: Savannah Directory Publishing Company, 1910), p. 469; Savannah Directory Publishing Company, *Savannah City Directory 1914* (Savannah, GA: Savannah Directory Publishing Company, 1914), p. 468

²¹ Florida’s Historic Railroad Resources, Section E, p. 28-29.

²² George M. Poley Household, 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Winston-Salem Ward 3, Forsyth County, North Carolina, Roll T265_1298, p. 35B, Enumeration District 91; National Register of Historic Places, Reynoldstown Historic District, Winston-Salem, Forsyth County, North Carolina, 08000111, Section 7, p. 34.

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Section number 9 Page 1 St. Cloud Depot
St. Cloud, Osceola County, FL

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Kissimmee Valley Gazette. "Affecting Scene at St. Cloud Depot," March 27, 1914

_____, "Grand Celebration," February 18, 1910.

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_____. "St. Cloud Happenings," February 18, 1910.

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_____. *Twenty-First Annual Report of the Railroad Commission of the State of Florida*. Tallahassee, FL, 1918.

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St. Cloud, Osceola County, FL

_____. "Depot to be Finished by Dec. 15," September 6, 1917.

_____. "Depot Work Being Rushed; Old Station is Moved Away," October 18, 1917.

_____. "Opening Depot Educational Treat and Financial Success – Nets Over \$500.00 for Red Cross," May 9, 1918.

_____. "R.R. Commission Issus [sic] Order for New Station in St. Cloud," January 11, 1917.

_____. "St. Cloud to Have New Brick Station to Handle Business," August 9, 1917.

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_____. "V.F.W. Post and Auxiliary Here Celebrated 28th Birthday Event."

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Unknown author. "Democracy Contest Winners Listed."

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Section number 10 Page 1 St. Cloud Depot
St. Cloud, Osceola County, FL

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary encompasses all of parcel number 012630000101290120 of the Osceola County, Florida, Property Appraiser Office records.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the area historically associated with the railroad and VFW post operations.

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Section number Photos Page 1 St. Cloud Depot
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Photographs

Name of Property: St. Cloud Depot

City of Vicinity: St. Cloud County: Osceola State: Florida

Photographer: unknown Date Photographed: September 2016

Description of Photographs(s) and number, including description of view indicating direction of camera

1. View of main (north) façade, facing south
2. View of rear (south) elevation, facing north
3. Detail view of bay, facing southeast
4. View of east elevation, facing west
11. Detail view of flooring
12. View of non-contributing concrete block building, facing west

Photographer: Rick Hilburn Date Photographed: January 2017

Description of Photographs(s) and number, including description of view indicating direction of camera

5. Interior view of office, facing southeast
6. Interior view of bar, facing southwest
7. Interior view of dining area, facing east
8. Interior view of bay, facing north
9. Interior of east wall, facing east
10. Detail view of drop ceiling

Photographer: Unknown Date Photographed: Circa 1960s

Description of Photographs(s) and number, including description of view indicating direction of camera

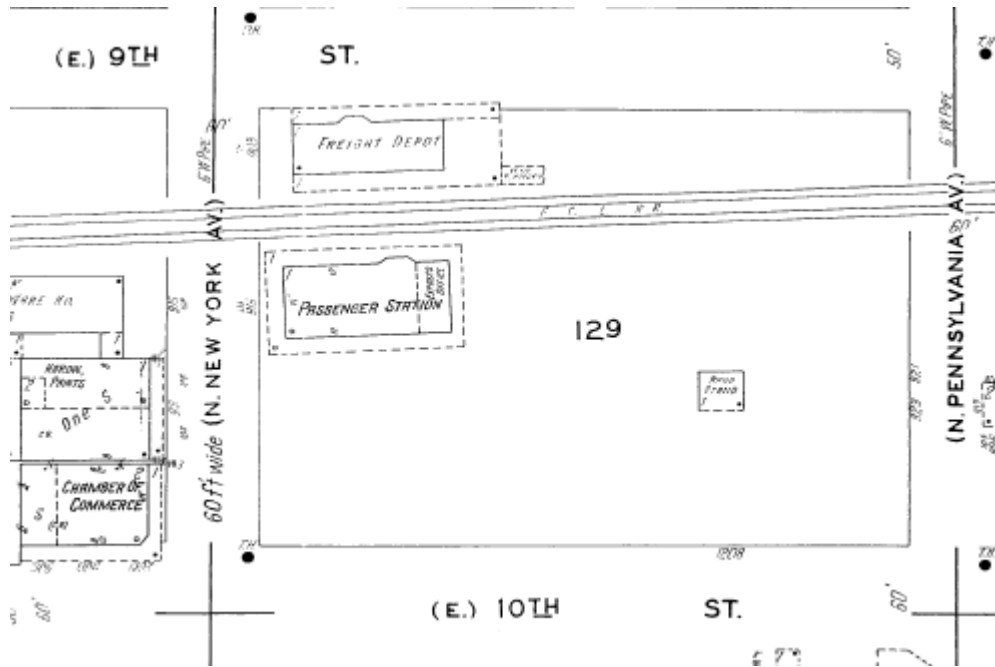
13. Historic interior view of VFW ceremony
14. Historic view of VFW members doing yardwork
15. Historic view of VFW members doing yardwork
16. Historic view of VFW members in front of depot

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Section number Figures Page 1 St. Cloud Depot
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Figure 1



St. Cloud Depot is clearly referenced in this 1931 Sanborn map image
(source: Sanborn Map Company (1931))

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National Park Service

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Section number Figures Page 2 St. Cloud Depot
St. Cloud, Osceola County, FL

Figure 2



This 1944 aerial image of the St. Cloud shows that by this time, the original freight depot was demolished and the railroad company had already abandoned the right-of-way

(Source: "Aerial Photographs of Osceola County," University of Florida Digital Collections, <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00071774/00005/94x?coord=28.26100073779735,-81.30469590771406,28.23226899738623,-81.26349717724531> (1944), Flight 5C)

St. Cloud Depot

915 New York Avenue
St. Cloud, Osceola Co., FL

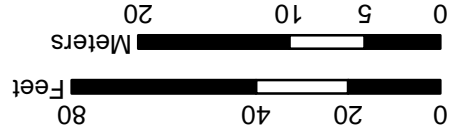
UTM:
17R 472206 3124853

Latitude: 28.2493
Longitude: -81.2833

Datum: WGS84

Date: 2/15/2018

1:500



Basemap Source: Source: Esri,
DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar
Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS,
USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping,
AerGRID, IGN, IGP, swisstopo,
and the GIS User Community

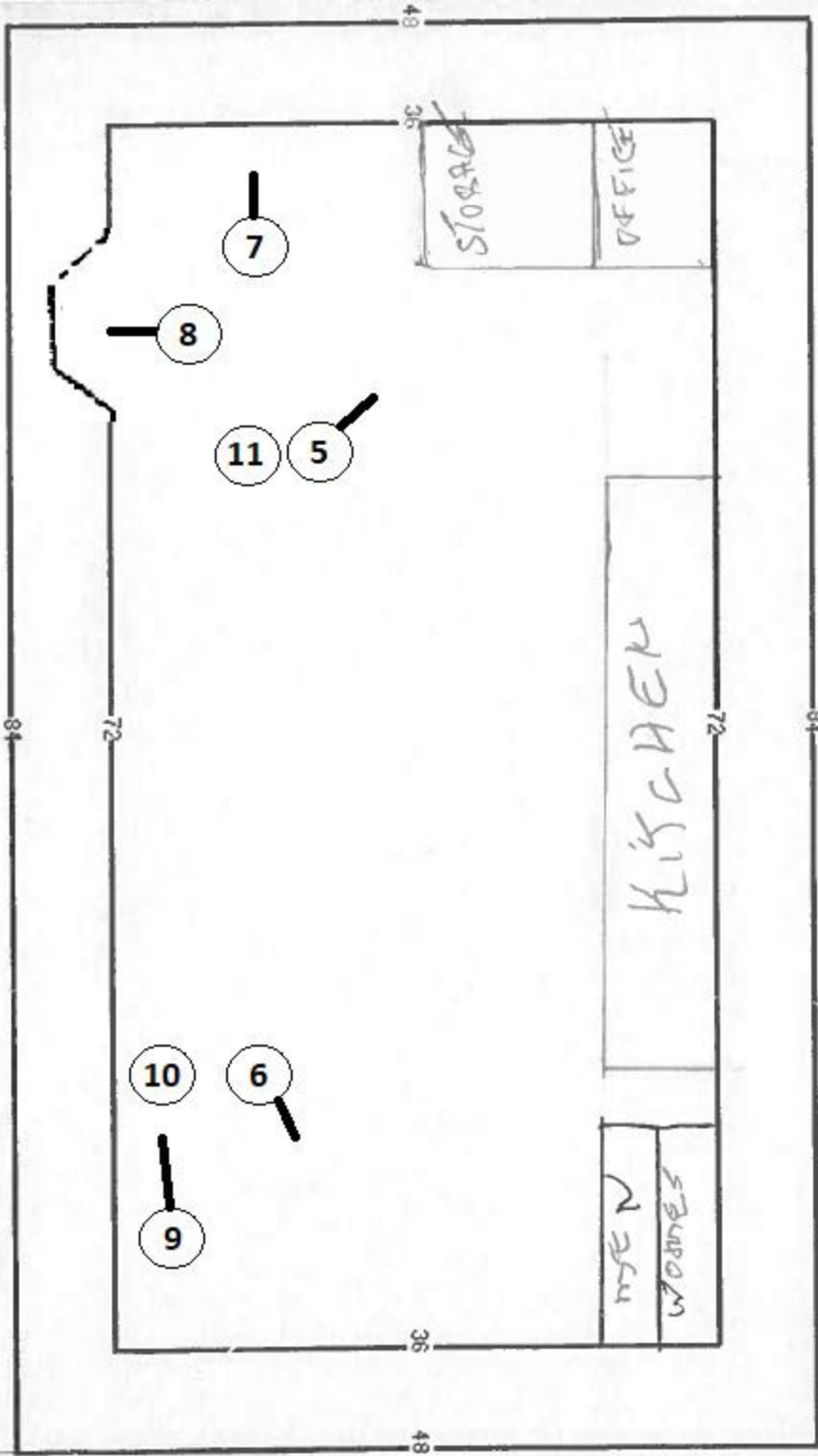


E

N

S

W



St. Cloud Depot

915 New York Avenue
St. Cloud, Osceola Co., FL

UTM:
17R 472206 3124853

Latitude: 28.2493
Longitude: -81.2833

Datum: WGS84

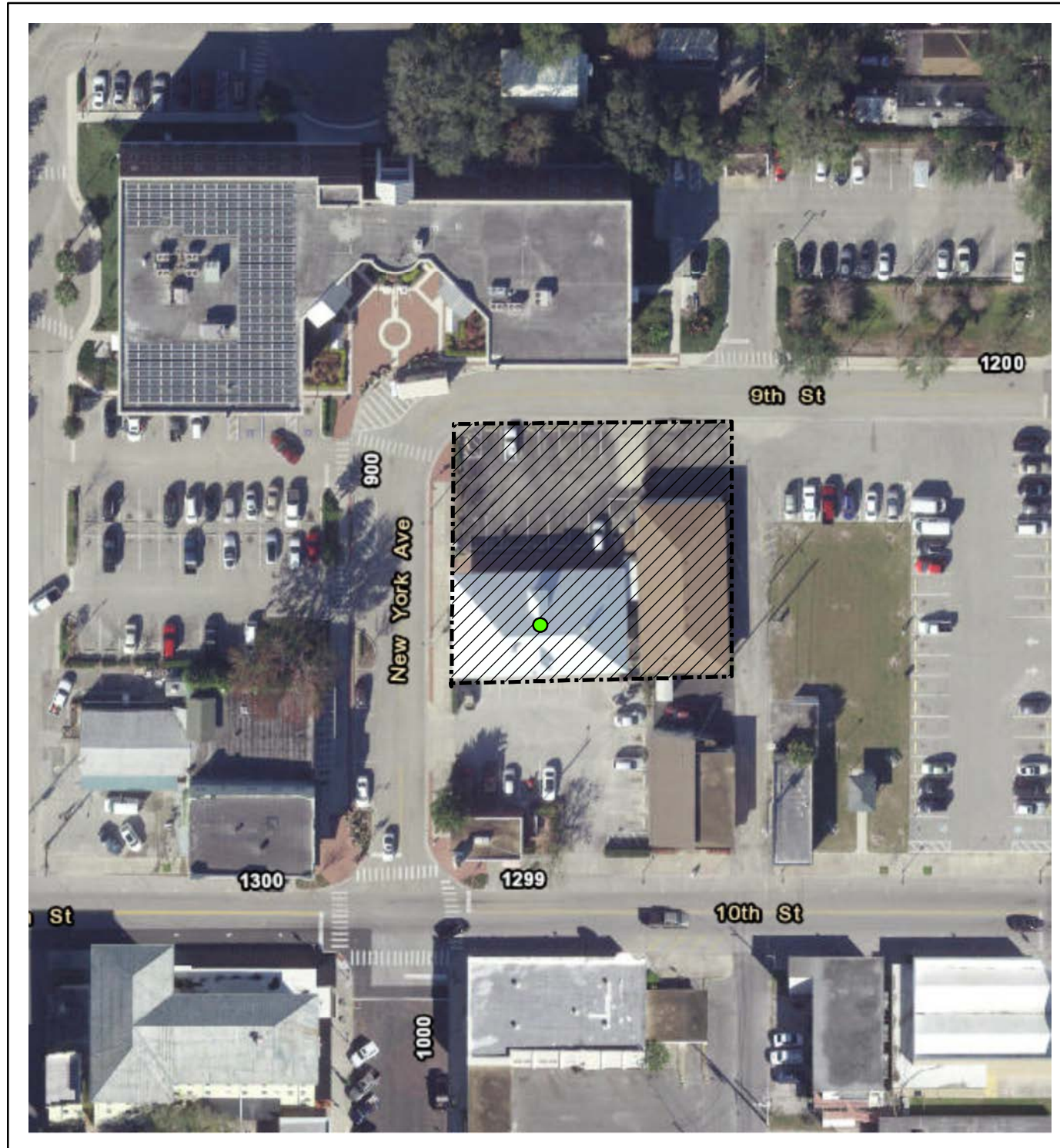
Date: 2/15/2018

1:1,000

0 40 80 160 Feet

0 10 20 40 Meters

Basemap Source: Source: Esri,
DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar
Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS,
USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping,
Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo,
and the GIS User Community



St. Cloud Depot

915 New York Avenue
St. Cloud, Osceola Co., FL

UTM:
17R 472206 3124853

Latitude: 28.2493
Longitude: -81.2833

Datum: WGS84

Date: 2/15/2018

1:10,000



0 425 850 1,700
Feet

0 105 210 420
Meters

Basemap Source: Source: Esri,
DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar
Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS,
USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping,
Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo,
and the GIS User Community





PARKING FOR VETERANS MEMBERS ONLY

PLEASE KEEP SEATS CLEAR

VETERANS AFFAIRS
1275 W. 10TH ST.
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA
352-385-1111

VFW ONLY

VFW ONLY

VFW ONLY

VFW ONLY





NO PARKING
FOR TRUCKS
OR BUSES ONLY



915

BINGO
TUESDAY
EVENING







Wall of Honor



Some Gave All

A table with a white tablecloth and a chair, positioned in front of the Wall of Honor. The table is set with a small display, possibly a plaque or a book, and a vase with flowers.

MEMORIAL OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA





EXIT



LINDA THE TAIL
BECAUSE OF THE BEAR





U.S. NAVY
JIM & RUTH
AHEARN

ARMY-110
1948
DINO
PAC 50

John In Memory of
482nd
Army Engineer Corp
VED Life Member



45th INF. DIV.
13th INF. REGT.
THUNDERBIRDS

100% ANIMAL
100% NO TOXIC
ALLERGENS & NOT FREE
BOWLING













UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 6/22/2018 Date of Pending List: 7/9/2018 Date of 16th Day: 7/24/2018 Date of 45th Day: 8/6/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 7/31/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor

KEN DETZNER
Secretary of State

June 18, 2018

Dr. Julie Ernstein, Deputy Keeper and Chief,
National Register of Historic Places
Mail Stop 7228
1849 C St, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Dr. Ernstein:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **St. Cloud Depot (FMSF#: 80S01173), in Osceola County**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The related materials (digital images, maps, and site plan) are included.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ruben A. Acosta".

Ruben A. Acosta
Supervisor, Survey & Registration
Bureau of Historic Preservation

RAA/raa

Enclosures