

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name NORTH AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number various (100 Block of North Avenue) N/A not for publication

city or town Lake Wales N/A vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Polk code 105 zip code 33853

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.)

Janet Snyder Matthews 8/22/2001
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Entered in the
National Register

10/12/01

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	
12	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
12	0	total

Name of related multiple property listings

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

"N/A"

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: garage apartment

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: garage apartment

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Frame Vernacular

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD

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)

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

ARCHITECTURE

ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK

Period of Significance

1927-1941

Significant Dates

1927

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

North Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Polk Co., FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property approximately one

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 7	4 4 1 8 2 0	3 0 8 7 1 8 0
	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 Sidney Johnston/Robert O. Jones, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date August 2001

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name various

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

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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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 **NORTH AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT, LAKE
WALES, POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA**

SUMMARY

The North Avenue Historic District occupies approximately one acre in Lakes Wales's historically African-American community northwest of the downtown. It is a residential district extending along the 100 block of North Avenue between Short Street on the east, and "B" Street on the west. The district contains the best preserved collection of historic dwellings in the city's historically African-American community. Comprised of twelve contributing resources, the district contains wood-frame dwellings that rise one-story and display gable roofs, wood siding, and front porches. Composed entirely of Frame Vernacular buildings, the district contains two types of Shotgun houses. The buildings retain their integrity to a high degree.

SETTING

Lake Wales is in southeast Polk County, fifteen miles east of Bartow, the county seat. The population of the city is nearly 10,000. The primary roads consist of U.S. Highway 27 and State Road 60. The railroad tracks of the Atlantic Coast Line (ACL) and Seaboard Air Line (SAL) historically crossed in the city. Lake Wales's historic African-American community occupies the northwest corner of the city. Two National Register historic districts lie to the southeast. One district defines the historic downtown, and the other is a residential area along the south shore of Lake Wales. Several individual landmarks, including a city hall, two churches, and railroad depot, are also listed in the National Register.

The North Avenue Historic District anchors the south end of Lake Wales's historic African-American community. Developed between 1921 and the 1940s, the district once spread farther west and north with a high concentration of buildings. Demolition, fire, and loss of integrity, however, have resulted in this relatively small collection of intact historic dwellings. The historic ACL railroad tracks lie immediately to the east, and a small park of recent origin and non-contributing buildings lie to the north. Although a large neighborhood radiates to the west, most buildings are of relatively recent construction, or are older buildings significantly altered. A vacant site to the south marks a former industrial area built during the historic period. The district takes in parts of two blocks (Photos #1&2). The terrain is relatively flat, and a sidewalk extends along the north side of the street. Mature oak and palm trees offer shade, and most dwellings are landscaped with lawns, border grass, and small shrubs.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The district takes in parts of two historic subdivisions, Lakes Wales Land Company (1921) and Thullbery's second subdivision (1926). The 1921 subdivision created a system of rectilinear blocks running north/south, with lots measuring fifty feet wide by 133 feet long. Thullbery's second subdivision platted previously undivided property into seven blocks. Although some lots were irregular in size, most measured forty-four feet wide and 131 feet long.

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Architectural Styles

The dwellings in the historic district are of Frame Vernacular construction with seven of the twelve built in the Shotgun form. The typical dwelling is one story, although one outbuilding is two stories. Clapboard and drop siding serve as the exterior wall materials. Most buildings are without decorative treatments, but display exposed rafter ends and attic vents. Window treatments range from original double-hung sashes and casement windows to replacement metal windows. Each building continues to serve its original function, and retains its architectural integrity to a high degree.

Shotgun

The seven Shotgun type houses each has a slender profile, and a linear interior room arrangement. Two have facades with offset entrances and a single double-hung sash window; five others have a central door opening on the facade. All have front-facing gable roofs with crimp metal panels and shed roof porches. The wood balloon frames are finished with wood siding and cornerboards. Foundations consist of concrete piers.

Five dwellings are similar to 108 West North Avenue (Photo # 3), which is representative of the Shotgun type of house with a symmetrical facade. The other houses are aligned directly to the west with #108 (Photo #4). A central paneled-wood entrance with a screen door is shaded by a porch with a shed roof supported by wood posts. Corrugated metal panels surface the porch roof, and crimp metal panels protect the front-facing gable roof of the main house. Wood drop siding with cornerboards serves as the exterior wall fabric, and metal windows have replaced the original wood double-hung sashes. A shed extension projects at the rear, or north, elevation, and concrete piers support the dwelling.

The house at 21 West North Avenue (Photo #5) is representative of the more common asymmetrical facade Shotgun type. It has an offset entrance balanced by a double-hung sash window. The front-facing gable roof is surfaced with crimp metal panels, the same material used to protect a shed roof that shades the porch. The roof has little overhang, but reveals exposed purlins and rafter ends. A screen door protects a paneled wood entrance. Wooden drop siding exterior walls are finished with cornerboards. Double-hung sash windows with two-over-two lights and two-light casement windows admit natural light into the interior. A small shed extension projects at the rear, or south, elevation. Devoid of ornamentation, the house is supported by a foundation of concrete piers. This house form is repeated directly to the east at 19 West North Avenue (Photo #6).

Frame Vernacular

The other five dwelling in the district are of Frame Vernacular construction. The largest of those stands at 17 West North Avenue (Photo #7). With a rectangular footprint, the dwelling has a front-facing gable roof surfaced with metal crimp panels, and exposed purlins and rafter ends. A louver vents the attic space. The facade is symmetrical with a central entrance flanked by replacement metal windows. A hip roof supported by wood posts shades the porch. Wooden drop siding finished with cornerboards serves as the exterior wall fabric, and a small shed extension is at the rear elevation. Concrete piers support the house.

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The house at 109 North Avenue has a front gable house with a rectangular footprint (Photo #8). It has a porch that spans most of the main (north) façade. The porch roof is hipped, and supported by two corner columns. The columns are battered which borrows from the Craftsman Style. The house at 103 North Avenue is also a front gable house with a rectangular footprint (Photo #9). It has horizontal siding, and exterior brick chimney. The front porch spans most of the main (north) façade and has a gable roof. The house has wooden vent in the gable in a sunrise pattern. At the peak and ends of both the house and porch gables are stepped wooden brackets. The roofing rafter ends are exposed. With these details the house borrows from the Craftsman Style.

The house at 105 North Avenue has the most complex roof and footprint in the district (Photo #8). A front gable roof shelters the main block of the house, with two cross gables at the northeast corner. The main porch shares the north façade with a northeast gable extension. The two-story rental garage apartment, built in the rear, has a second story enclosed porch sheltered by a hip roof.

List of Contributing Properties

<u>Street Address</u>	<u>Style</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>North Avenue</u>			
17	Frame Vernacular	Residential	c. 1927
19	Shotgun	Residential	c. 1928
21	Shotgun	Residential	c. 1928
103	Frame Vernacular	Residential	c. 1928
105	Frame Vernacular	Residential	c. 1928
105 ½	Frame Vernacular	Residential	c. 1937
108	Shotgun	Residential	c. 1941
109	Frame Vernacular	Residential	c. 1930
110	Shotgun	Residential	c. 1941
112	Shotgun	Residential	c. 1941
114	Shotgun	Residential	c. 1941
116	Shotgun	Residential	c. 1941

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WALES, POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA**

SUMMARY

The North Avenue Historic District is nominated to the National Register for local significance under Criteria A and C in the areas of Community Planning and Development, Ethnic History: Black, and Architecture. The district occupies portions of two subdivisions opened by Lakes Wales's business leaders with the expressed purpose of creating a community for Lake Wales's African-American residents. Both white developers and black homeowners constructed houses in the district. Residents included black merchants, and laborers who worked in the citrus, lumber, and railroad industries. The period of significance is between 1927 and 1941. The historic district is entirely composed of Frame Vernacular residences, including two types of Shotgun houses. The designs are consistent with national and statewide trends in architecture. The district possesses an excellent concentration, linkage, and continuity of buildings united historically and by physical development.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The first lands purchased for development of what became Lake Wales were made in 1905 by representatives of the Sessoms Investment Company of Jacksonville, Florida. They had the intention of establishing a lumber and naval stores business. The railroad's arrival in the area confirmed their decision to expand their developmental activities. In 1911, the group formed the Lake Wales Land Company, purchased 5,000 acres of land near Lake Wales from the Sessoms Investment Company, and employed engineer A. C. Nydegger of Winter Haven to survey and plat their acreage. Earlier that same year, Nydegger had surveyed and platted the town of Sebring, thirty miles south of the Lake Wales location.

In 1909, the Atlantic Coast Line (ACL) Railroad conducted a preliminary survey for a railroad through the area, and construction was completed in 1911. The railroad improved the potential for developing the region's lumber, naval stores, and land sales. The area was picturesque, situated on high, fertile ground, surrounded by lakes, and located in a region whose possibilities for commercial agriculture and residential development were just beginning to be realized.

With the railroad in place, the Lake Wales Land Company proceeded with the task of building a community infrastructure. A school, bank, post office, drug store, commercial buildings, churches, and many residences, numbering more than eighty structures in all, were either completed or under construction in 1915. A second railroad, the Seaboard Air Line (SAL), entered the town on April 5, 1915. A fire department was organized in 1914, the same year that the town got its first telephone exchange. In 1916, the population was estimated at 300.

The village of Lake Wales remained unincorporated until April 1917, when residents organized the first town government. Soon after the end of World War I, Florida embarked upon the most frenzied era of land speculation in the state's history known as the Florida Land Boom of the 1920s. Lake Wales's growth in that period was a product of the boom. Statistics tell a dramatic story. From a base of 795 residents in 1920, the population jumped in five years to an official count of 2,747, an increase which one contemporary writer said

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represented the greatest percentage gain made during that period by any Florida city or town. The number of telephones rose from 117 to 1,032 in that same time span; power connections from 205 to 1,200; and water connections from 191 to 842. Together such figures provide a reliable index to an enormous amount of building activity. The town did not begin to compile building permits until 1922, when forty-nine permits were issued. In 1925 and 1926, 248 and 283, respectively, building permits were granted. The valuation of such activity rose from \$64,389 in 1922 to \$1,278,800 in 1926.

African Americans played an important role in this development. In the opening decades of the town's growth, Blacks had migrated to the area, first working in the turpentine industry, then railroad, lumber, and finally, citrus industries. Most resided northwest of the downtown, and, in 1921, the Land Wales Land Company subdivided a new plat, which effectively organized a community for Lake Wales's African-Americans. Typical of the discriminatory practices of that era, the subdivision was located outside the original town limits, far from the downtown and white residential areas. Within several years, the area was annexed into the city, and significant growth began. By 1924, nearly one hundred buildings filled the subdivision; Lincoln Avenue became the primary artery where churches and commercial buildings appeared. The densest concentration of buildings, however, lies on B Street North between Lincoln and North Avenues. Houses built by citrus associations, and lumber companies packing houses and yards were close to the community because of the adjacent railroad tracks and the ready source of labor provided by African-Americans.

In 1925 the land speculation began to slow, and in 1926 and 1927, construction activity in most parts of the state shut down. The construction of a new city hall and high school, the latter designed by noted Tampa architect M. Leo Elliott, and the continuing prosperity of the citrus industry partly insulated Lake Wales against the immediate effects of the boom's collapse. During the early-1930s, however, development in the city slowed dramatically. The population of Lake Wales, which had reached a high of 5,000 in 1928, had been reduced to 3,400 by 1930. Many residents were forced to seek assistance from federal relief programs.

Led by a bumper citrus crop and increasing tourism, the city began to recover from the worst effects of the Depression after 1935. Some residential growth occurred in the late-1930s as the economy began to recover and Federal Housing Administration (FHA) programs took effect, permitting easier access to credit for prospective homeowners. Building permits issued in the city in 1936 reached their highest total since 1928. Aided by Federal assistance under the Public Works Administration (PWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA), several new buildings, including a cafeteria, civic center, and school, expanded Lake Wales's school infrastructure. Other WPA projects were the construction of the Lake Wales Post Office on West Park Street, a Boy Scout camp, golf course, and alley-way improvements.

The physical development of Lake Wales came to a standstill during World War II. War-related construction did not affect the town as it did the neighboring cities of Avon Park and Bartow that were sites of military training fields. Still, population growth persisted and by war's end stood at 6,210. Development resumed with vigor in the late-1940s as the state entered another period of rapid growth. Once again, citrus led the economic expansion of the city. Lake Wales was spared the devastating effects of Florida's expanding highway system, which ravaged the historic core of numerous cities throughout the state. The two major state highways, north-south U.S. 27, and east-west S.R. 60, which cross one another within the city, skirt its

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downtown business district and historic residential neighborhoods. As a result, Lake Wales retains the appearance it acquired in the first thirty-five years of its development and growth.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Part of the North Avenue Historic District lies on property opened by the Lake Wales Land Company, which was incorporated in 1911. The company began its town building in Lake Wales with the purchase of five thousand acres in what is today the city. The directors hired Winter Haven surveyor A.C. Nydegger to lay out a town plan around which the downtown formed and surrounding neighborhoods developed. Realtor E.C. Stuart served as president, and provided the guiding spirit behind the development. A director of the State Bank of Bartow and the Polk County National Bank, Stuart previously had organized the Town of Bowling Green, Florida. Other founders formed banks, a turpentine and lumber company, and a general store.¹ In 1921, the land company responded to the growing presence of Blacks by platting the Lake Wales Land Company subdivision. A.C. Nydegger laid out the plat, which furnished a plan of development for the growing African-American community. The subdivision was located northwest of the original town limits and typical of the discriminatory practices in that era, far from the downtown and the white residential areas.²

Consisting of twelve blocks, the subdivision stretched from North Avenue to Taft Avenue on its north and south, and from the ACL mainline to E Street on its east and west boundary. The plat provided rectilinear blocks, aligned with their longest axis parallel to the railroad. Most lots measured fifty feet wide by 135 feet deep. Street names reflected a numbering system north and south, and Presidents Taft, Harding, Washington, and Lincoln, for east/west streets. The southernmost street was North Avenue, which had been laid out in 1911 as the northern limit of the town plan. The north/south streets, numbered one through five, about 1940 were re-designated with alphabetic lettering. By 1924, nearly one hundred buildings filled the subdivision, and Lincoln Avenue became the primary artery where churches and commercial buildings appeared.³

Further development was encouraged by the establishment of the Townsend Sash, Door & Lumber Company east of the railroad, the W.C. Sherman Company's lumber mill west of town, and the expansion of the citrus industry. In 1926, businessman Clarence C. Thullbery opened a sub-division at the southeast corner of the land company's plat. An early settler from Illinois, Thullbery helped organize the Lake Wales State Bank in 1915, and acquired real estate in the town the following year. In 1918, he helped organize the Lake Wales Citrus Growers Association. Its expansion and need for additional laborers, in part, prompted Thullbery to open the subdivision to provide additional housing for citrus workers. The association's packing house is three blocks directly south of North Avenue, and astride railroad tracks. Thullbery's citrus holdings soared in the

¹William R. Adams, *Historic Lake Wales* (St. Augustine: Southern Heritage Press, 1992), 13-14, 16, 19-20; George Chapin, *Florida: Past, Present, and Future*, 2 vols., (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1914), 2: 268; Corporation Book B, p. 101, Plat Book 5, p. 11, Plat Book 9, p. 19, Polk County Courthouse, Bartow, Florida.

²Corporation Book B, p. 101, Plat Book 5, p. 11, Plat Book 9, p. 19, Polk County Courthouse, Bartow, Florida.

³Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Map of Lake Wales, Polk County, Florida* (New York: Sanborn Company, 1924); Plat Book 5, p. 11, Polk County Courthouse.

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1920s, and, in 1923, he organized another business, Thullbery Brothers, Incorporated, a farm and grove company, which managed four thousand acres of citrus.⁴

In 1926, after acquiring property south of the Lake Wales Land Company's subdivision, Thullbery turned to Winter Haven's Nydegger to conduct a survey. Nydegger laid out eight blocks of various sizes and shapes. He arranged the three northernmost blocks for residences, and, because of the presence of east/west railroad tracks, the five southernmost blocks lent themselves to industrial development. Seaboard Avenue derived its name from the adjacent railroad, and Dorsett Avenue and Walker Street commemorated family members.⁵

Land sales and development followed on the heels of the subdivision platting. Residences lined the north side of North Avenue by 1924, but later deteriorated or were swept away by fire. Development in Thullbery's property, on the south side of the street, began about 1927, when Edward H. Dudley of Mulberry purchased lots one and two in block eleven. Between 1927 and 1928, he constructed the houses at 17, 19, and 21 West North Avenue (Photos #5,6,7).⁶

The oldest dwelling in the district stands at 17 West North Avenue (Photo #7). Thullbery rented the property to several tenants during the historic period, including Nicy Green, who used the dwelling as a boarding house. Later, Booker T. Johnson, a laborer at the W.C. Sherman Company, lived there. Dudley also built the neighboring dwellings at 19 and 21 West North Avenue (Photos # 5,6). Tenants included J.C. Asbury, Nancy Felten, Delores Johnson, and grove worker Alex Mathis. About 1945, Dudley sold the three houses to Isaac Leeks, whose descendants still retain ownership of the three dwellings.⁷

Following Dudley's lead, Thullbery built several rental properties in the community. One stands at 105 North Avenue (Photo #8). Completed about 1928, the house was sold in 1936 to African-American businessman Marshall Seymour, who owned a clothes cleaning business. Seymour added a two-story garage apartment at 105 ½ North Avenue about 1937. Apartment tenants included teacher Eleazer Jackson, barber Bernard Smith, and laborer Russell Brinson. By 1950, Seymour had opened a confectioner business on Lincoln Avenue.⁸ Thullbery also sold lots to African-American investors and prospective homeowners. Tailor George Graham purchased lot three in block eleven in 1927. The following year, Graham constructed the dwelling at 103 West North Avenue (Photo #9). After Graham's death, his widow, Mary Graham, a dressmaker, resided at the North Avenue house into the 1950s.⁹ Oliver Vaughn purchased lot five, block eleven in 1928. About 1930,

⁴*Lake Wales Highlander*, 13 November 1936; Plat Book 24, p. 21, Corporation Book C, p. 104, Polk County Courthouse; Harry Cutler, *A History of Florida*, 3 vols., (Chicago and New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1923), 2: 319.

⁵Plat Book 24, p. 21, Polk County Courthouse.

⁶Cutler, *Florida*, 2:364; M.F. Hetherington, *History of Polk County, Florida* (Lakeland: M.F. Hetherington, 1928), 229-230.

⁷Deed Book 376, p. 236, Polk County Courthouse; R.L. Polk, *City Directory of Lake Wales, Florida* (Jacksonville: Polk Company, 1928), 276, 302; R.L. Polk, *City Directory of Lake Wales, Florida* (Jacksonville: Polk Company, 1937), 88.

⁸Deed Book 284, p. 413, Deed Book 547, p. 263, Deed Book 549, p. 511, Polk County Courthouse; Polk, *1937 Lake Wales City Directory*, 56, 88; R.L. Polk, *Lake Wales City Directory* (Jacksonville: Polk Company, 1950), 34, 175.

⁹Deed Book 284, p. 413, Polk County Courthouse; Polk, *1937 Lake Wales City Directory*, 56, 88; Polk, *1950 Lake Wales City Directory*, 34, 175.

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Vaughn completed the dwelling at 109 North Avenue (Photo #8). By 1937, railroad porter Cephus Reed lived there, and his widow, Rosa Reed, occupied the dwelling into the 1950s. To supplement her income, Rosa Reed rented out rooms to John Batista, Jr., manager of the Santa Cash Grocery, and laborer Fred Harris.¹⁰

A large dwelling built in the early-1920s on the north side of North Avenue was replaced with smaller Shotgun houses in the late-1930s (Photo #4). In 1937, out-of-town developers Phillip and Anne Katz purchased lot eleven, block one of the land company's subdivision. Earlier in the decade, the City of Lake Wales had seized the property for unpaid taxes. During the Great Depression, the Katzes acquired numerous properties in Lake Wales. The Katzes moved or demolished the existing house, and built the five Shotgun new houses about 1941. Tenants included Elizah Griffin, beer hall owner Benjamin Thomas, laborers Willie Lee and Solomon Pittman, and widow Rosa Williams.¹¹

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Frame Vernacular

The term "Frame Vernacular," the prevalent type of residential architecture in Florida, refers to common wood frame construction techniques employed by lay or self-taught builders. Before the Civil War, residents relied upon local materials and their own methods and designs to construct houses. The Industrial Revolution permitted standardization of building materials and parts and exerted a pervasive influence over vernacular house design. Popular magazines helped to make architectural trends universal throughout the country. The railroad provided cheap and efficient transportation for manufactured building materials. Ultimately, individual builders had access to finished architectural products from which to create their own designs.

Frame Vernacular houses are typically one or two stories in height, with wood balloon frame structural systems and brick pier foundations. Gable or hip roofs usually display steep pitches, which accommodate attic space. Horizontal wooden siding is the common exterior wall material. Porches, most commonly simple entrance or end models, are common features of the style. Fenestration is regular, but not always symmetrical. Windows consists of double-hung sashes or casements, and paneled wood doors often contain glazing. Exterior decoration is sparse and limited to ornamental woodwork.

Shotgun

Between 1870s and the 1940s, the Shotgun was a common residential vernacular form in many African-American neighborhoods in the South. Part of the heritage of the American South, the Shotgun design, with its familiar slender profile, has been historically linked to the region by cultural geographers and folklorists, some of whom report its roots as distant as Haiti, the West Indies, and even Africa. Displaying a linear interior room pattern, the house type appeared in larger cities, such as Charleston, Key West, New Orleans, and Savannah, in

¹⁰Deed Book 377, p. 265, Polk County Courthouse; Polk, *1937 Lake Wales City Directory*, 69, 88; Polk, *1950 Lake Wales City Directory*, 34, 56.

¹¹Polk, *1937 Lake Wales City Directory*, 88; Polk, *1950 Lake Wales City Directory*, 34, 162; Deed Book 399, p. 109, Deed Book 431, p. 42, Deed Book 506, p. 189, Deed Book 564, p. 53, 71, Polk County Courthouse.

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the period of Reconstruction. Both African-American residents and builders, and white developers embraced the Shotgun form to develop subdivisions and housing in urban neighborhoods. Inexpensive to construct on narrow lots, the form gained popularity with Freedmen in villages and towns of the lower Mississippi River valley and the Gulf Coast, and, eventually, throughout the South.¹²

The term, Shotgun, was allegedly applied to the house form by southern whites, who claimed that a person could discharge a shotgun through the dwelling without damaging the walls. Indeed, Haitians do not recognize the term Shotgun, but instead often refer to the house form as “maison basse,” French for low house. The typical Shotgun house displays a slender profile with a front-facing gable roof, porch that extends across the facade, and wood clapboard siding. Carved beams or wood posts often support shed roofed porches. The facade generally displays an offset entrance and a single or pair of double-hung sash windows. Some models have a single central door. Most are built with a wood balloon frame, although a few are executed in brick or finished with stucco. Applied embellishment typically appears on the porch and includes turned posts, jigsaw-cut brackets, and spindles. Wood shingles in variegated patterns often finish the walls of the gable ends. Many dwellings are literally constructed high off the ground, with the foundation piers sometimes rising five feet in height, which lends more presence to the dwelling and helps prevent interior rooms from flooding in low lying areas.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The dwellings in the historic district are of Frame Vernacular construction, including the Shotgun building types. Constructed between c.1927 and c.1941, the dwellings exhibit varying degrees of craftsmanship. Although most are devoid of decorative details, such as brackets or scroll work, they display metal crimp roofs, porches, drop siding, and double-hung sash windows. Those dwellings displaying the Shotgun form are especially interesting with their slender profiles and linear interior room arrangements. Two have facades with offset entrances and a single double-hung sash window; five others have only a central door on the facade. All have front-facing gable roofs with crimp metal panels and shed roof porches. Wood balloon frames are finished with wood siding and cornerboards. Collectively, the buildings in the district represent typical Frame Vernacular and Shotgun architectural forms common in African-American neighborhoods during the early twentieth century.

¹²Philippe Oszuscik, “The Shotgun House,” in *To Build in a New Land: Ethnic Landscapes in North America*, Allen Noble, ed., (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins Press, 1992), 161-166.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC LIST

1. North Avenue Historic District (portion of 100 Block of North Avenue), Lake Wales
2. Polk County, Florida
3. Sidney Johnston
4. November 1999
5. Historic Property Associates, Inc.
6. View of North Avenue from the east boundary, looking west
7. Photo #1 of 9

Items 1 – 5 are the same for the following photographs.

6. View of North Avenue from the west boundary, looking east
7. Photo #2 of 9

6. South, main façade of #108 North Avenue, looking north
7. Photo #3 of 9

6. Row of “shotgun” houses #108 - 116 North Avenue, looking northwest
7. Photo #4 of 9

6. North, main façade of #21 North Avenue, looking south
7. Photo #5 of 9

6. Group of houses, #17 – 103 North Avenue, looking southeast
7. Photo #6 of 9

6. North and east elevations of #17 North Avenue, looking southwest
7. Photo #7 of 9

6. Houses at #105 and 109 North Avenue, looking southwest
7. Photo #8 of 9

6. House at 103 North Avenue, looking south
7. Photo #9 of 9

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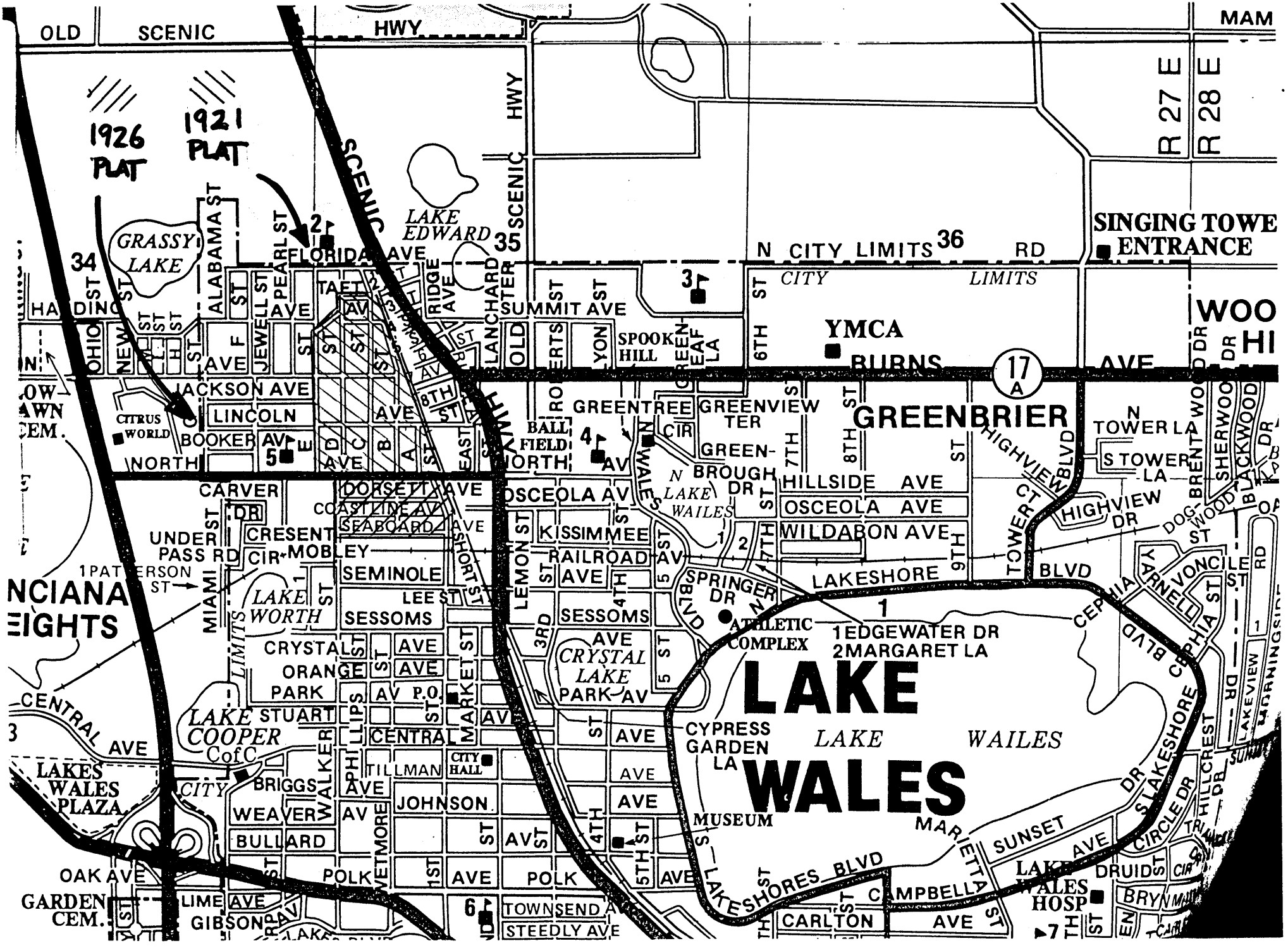
**NORTH AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT, LAKE
WALES, POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA**

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See attached scaled map of the North Avenue Historic District.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary encompasses the best concentration of historic properties in the historically African-American community of the City of Lake Wales.



OLD SCENIC HWY

MAM

1926 PLAT
1921 PLAT

R 27 E
R 28 E

GRASSY LAKE

LAKE EDWARD

SINGING TOWER ENTRANCE

N CITY LIMITS 36 RD

YMCA
BURNS

WOO HI

GREENBRIER

INDIANA EIGHTS

LAKE WAILES

SUNSET AVE

GARDEN CEM.

LAKE WAILES HOSP

TOWNSEND AVE
STEEDLY AVE

BRYN MAWR

