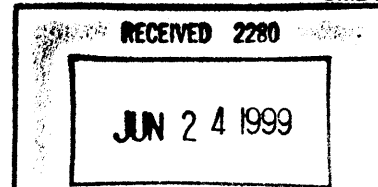


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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions 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 Cleveland Court School

other names/site number Cleveland Court Elementary School/PO5361

2. Location

street & number 328 East Edgewood Drive n/a  not for publication

city or town Lakeland n/a  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Polk code 105 zip code 33803

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.)

[Signature] 6/14/99  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register  See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 7/22/99  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Cleveland Court School  
Name of Property

Polk Co., FL  
County and State

**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            | 0               | buildings  |
| 0            | 0               | sites      |
| 0            | 0               | structures |
| 0            | 0               | objects    |
| 1            | 0               | total      |

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

n/a

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education: School  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education: School  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Colonial Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick  
walls Brick  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Asphalt  
other Cast Stone  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture \_\_\_\_\_

Education \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1928-1949 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1928 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

n/a \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Architect: Mendenhall & Mendenhall

Builder: Streater Brothers

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of Repository \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_

Cleveland Court School  
Name of Property

Polk Co., FL  
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately 2 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

|   |      |         |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|------|---------|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1    | 7       | 4        | 0 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 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 Lisa Parks/Consultant, Barbara E. Mattick/Historic Preservationist Supervisor

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date May 1999

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name Polk County Board of Public Instruction

street & number P.O Box 391 telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Bartow state Florida zip code 33830

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 **CLEVELAND COURT SCHOOL  
Lakeland, Polk Co., FL**

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**SUMMARY**

Cleveland Court School, located at 328 East Edgewood Drive, Lakeland, Florida, is a one story, irregularly shaped, Colonial Revival building. It has gabled roofs with gable parapets. The style is expressed in the red brick exterior, central entrance, general symmetry, multi-light sash windows with fanlights, and mock buttresses. Begun in 1928 and completed in 1929, the school was named for the surrounding "Boom Time" era residential development, Cleveland Heights. The building is modest in both scale and design. The building's floor plan is irregular in shape, with a central entry flanked by two wings forming a modified "J" shape. The building's foundation is a poured concrete footer, with red face bricks and cast stone used as structural and ornamental detail. The Cleveland Court School remains a fully operational public school. As such, the campus of the school contains non-contributing buildings and structures which are outside the period of significance and outside of the National Register boundary. The original, historic school retains the prominent location on the campus, facing the main street access.

**Setting**

Cleveland Court School is at the corner of Edgewood Drive, a significant east-west artery which is currently undergoing expansion, and Carolina Avenue. Although the school remains in a residential area, commercial encroachment continues, with the school being within two blocks of the City of Lakeland's major north-south thoroughfare, State Road 37/Florida Avenue. The historic school building occupies the most visible location among the various buildings on the campus, with the original building facing Edgewood Drive. The building is sited with limited setback, with the front entry only a few feet from the public sidewalk (Photo 1). The surrounding residential development is single family immediately abutting the campus to the north, east and west, and multi-family to the south, across Edgewood Drive. The school campus includes nine detached, non-contributing buildings/structures, but they are not included in the National Register boundaries.

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

**Exterior**

Cleveland Court School was completed in 1929 in the Colonial Revival style, typical of school architecture of the area and period. Brick serves as a main ornamental element on the building. The variegated red face bricks are laid in stretcher bond fashion with each seventh row laid with alternating headers and stretchers. Fenestration is 10/10 sash with fanlights in the auditorium and 6/6 sash throughout the rest of the building.

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Section number 7 Page 2 **CLEVELAND COURT SCHOOL  
Lakeland, Polk Co., FL**

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The foundation is of poured concrete footers and brick piers, with a concrete floor for the auditorium. The original building is irregular in shape with the main front (south) facade projecting from a modified "J" shape (See Floor Plan). Original drawings included plans for expansion to the west wing. The projecting main facade is symmetrical with a gabled parapet and a repeated gable on a portico at the central entrance. The portico is supported by square brick columns laid in stretcher bond fashion with soldier brick at the floor line and at the capital (Photo 2). The face of the portico gable is accented by rectangular cast stone insets and a triple diamond pattern above. The portico gable is further highlighted with soldier brick outlining the parapet. The brick face of the front facade is further ornamented by the use of soldier brick at the floor line and a unique brick pattern providing decoration along the parapet's gabled top. This parapet decoration progresses with the brick laid on angle in stretcher fashion, followed by a course of soldier brick, and four courses of headers. A simple cast concrete coping finishes the design. Centered on the face of the front facade above the gabled portico is a circular vent with keystones.

Flanking the portico on either side is a single 10/10 sash window, with fanlight. Brick arches surround the windows, with header bricks serving as the sills. The east and west sides of the building's front projection contain windows replicating those on the front facade, and separated by mock buttresses, brick pilasters in stretcher bond with cast stone beveled tops (Photo 3). The north end of this front projection terminates into wings. At this intersection on both the east and west wings, are recessed arched entrances to the original building; modified gable roofs cover these entrances (Photo 4). The projection houses the auditorium, while these secondary entrances lead to the corridors within the school.

The wings repeat the brick course work of the front projection, including the brick pilasters (Photo 5). The windows are 6/6 double hung sash, both paired and unpaired, with stretcher brick surrounds and header brick sills. As with the front facade, there is a course of soldier brick at the floor level. A course of soldier brick is at the roof line, serving as the header for the windows. At the corners of the wings, the pilasters are joined. The west wing terminates in a gabled parapet with an off-center arched entrance (Photo 6). The east wing extends further to the north, incorporating the original cafeteria which has since received an addition (Photo 5). An original boiler room exists off the west side of the east wing (Photo 7). At the center of the "J," north of the auditorium, there has been a small administrative offices addition.

**Interior**

The interior configuration has remained essentially as it was built. The front projection with its arched windows houses the auditorium. A six-light transom is above non-original double doors at the main entrance (Photo 8). The interior of the auditorium is an open space with an arched opening at the stage occupying the south wall and side doors leading to the wings of the stage and into the corridor (Photo 9). The stage, as originally designed, is

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Lakeland, Polk Co., FL**

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11 feet deep and 25 feet wide. The auditorium is 60 feet long and 40 feet wide. Walls of the auditorium are of textured plaster and the ceilings are coved. The flooring is carpet over pine.

The corridors remain as unconditioned space. Although the walls have been paneled over, the original square 4" by 4" red glazed tiles of the original flooring remain (Photo 10). The original classroom spaces remain basically as they were original divided. Although drop ceilings have been introduced, the windows, plaster walls, and pine floors, baseboards, door trim, and framing of the original eight foot cork and black boards remain (Photos 11,12). Original classroom door transoms and windows which opened onto the corridors have been paneled over from the corridor side, though the windows are still visible from within the classroom (Photo 13). Original wardrobes have been removed.

Alterations to the original Cleveland Court School building include: electrical, plumbing, and heating upgrades in 1952; the addition of a new kitchen at the north end of the east wing in 1961; the addition of an Administration and storage area at the junction of the east and west wings in 1986; the installation of drop ceilings and lights in classrooms in 1988; and the installation of gang toilets in 1991. Although alterations have been made, the historic Cleveland Court School building retains much of its original architectural character.

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Section number 8 Page 1 **CLEVELAND COURT SCHOOL  
Lakeland, Polk Co., FL**

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**SUMMARY**

The Cleveland Court School, located at 328 East Edgewood Drive, Lakeland, Florida, is significant at the local level under Criteria A and C in the areas of Education and Architecture. Built as an elementary school c. 1928, the building is significant for its relationship to the public education system of Lakeland, Florida, during the 1920s, when the Lakeland Special Tax School District was established. Shortly thereafter it served other educational needs, including adult vocational training, but was returned to elementary school use in 1947. It is one of the few extant school buildings in the county built prior to 1948. The school is architecturally significant as a fine example of the Colonial Revival style as adapted to a public educational building. It has the style's characteristic symmetrical massing, central entrance, masonry walls, and multi-light sash windows with fanlights. The school was designed by the Lakeland architectural firm of Mendenhall and Mendenhall, and constructed by Streater Brothers, also of Lakeland.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

**Early Development of Lakeland (1881-1900)**

In 1881, Abraham G. Munn, a wealthy manufacturer from Louisville, Kentucky, purchased several thousand acres of southern Florida from the trustees of the Florida Internal Improvement Trust Fund. His son, Morris G. Munn, was sent to locate the lands. An eighty acre tract of land among many lakes was selected as a town site and was later surveyed and platted by a second son, Samuel Munn. This site was to become the City of Lakeland.

Development for the state was accelerated by a renewed emphasis on the expansion of railroads. Between 1881 and 1891, 2,566 miles of railroad were placed into operation in the state. The Seaboard Air Line, traversing more than half of northern Florida, began to join the Atlantic Coast Line (Plant System). Abraham Munn granted the railroad significant concessions to ensure that a train stop was brought to Lakeland. In addition to the provision of right-of-way and several acres of terminals and track, at his own expense Munn constructed a station which was more typical of those in larger communities. The completed main line of the South Florida Railroad (later Plant System) from Tampa to Sanford, running through Lakeland, was opened to the public on February 11, 1884. This was the beginning of Lakeland's importance as a railroad town and contributed significantly to its development.

That same month in 1884, Abraham Munn organized the Lakeland Improvement Company along with Samuel A. Hartwell and Charles E. Hillmand for the purpose of laying out "streets, avenues and lots, . . . [for] the sale of the town lots so marked and mapped." Growth was rapid, and Lakeland became incorporated within one year,



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on January 1, 1885. By 1893, Lakeland had become an important shipping and rail yard site, with twenty trains arriving and departing daily. Due to the Lakeland's access to markets, including the Port of Tampa, a local agricultural export industry was created. By the turn of the century, a growing phosphate industry joined citrus production as a local generator of rail traffic and business activity.

**Lakeland's Expansion (1900-1920)**

Initial growth within Lakeland was significant; the population grew to 1000 by 1901, and between 1903 and 1908, it grew from 1200 to 4500. The growth continued, and by 1913, the population reached 8000. Growth brought with it greater demands for public services. Although the state of Florida would receive its greatest impetus for expanding its roadways under Governor John W. Martin's administration in 1925, Polk County would lead the way from 1914 through 1920. A bond issue, the largest ever passed in the South exclusively for road construction, was passed overwhelmingly to create "a road from every town in Polk County to every other town," a goal of 217 miles of new hard surfaced roads. By 1925, an official with the American Automobile Association stated that Polk County was the only county in the United States for which this was true. The highways connected with all the national systems, making Polk County "a veritable paradise for the motorist."

This action had the desired effect of gaining recognition for Polk County and its largest municipality, Lakeland. As a city providing services to its residents, Lakeland was one of the earliest to provide electric lights (1891), followed shortly thereafter in 1901 with a telephone exchange. By 1909, the voters had passed a bond issue for school improvements, light and water improvements, and the extension of water mains. In 1913 a City Hall/Fire Department was constructed, and in 1914 a \$165,000 bond issue was approved for the expansion of the light and water distribution system, fire department and the construction of a hospital. In that same year, Lakeland played host to many statewide conventions, including those of the Florida Bankers Association, the Twentieth Annual Session of Women's Clubs, and the Florida Educational Association. Recognizing its many opportunities, Lakeland established its first tourist headquarters in 1916. Lakeland had a population of 1180 in 1900, but became a city of more than 7000 permanent residents by 1920. By 1925, growth in Lakeland pushed the population to 17,064.

**The "Boom Times" in Lakeland**

In the 1920s, publications touted Florida as a garden paradise. The opportunities for manufacturing were also lauded, with Florida described as the source of numerous raw materials; all that was lacking was manufacturing plants to convert them into products. The question remained: how was Florida to lure these investors? The reply came back, "advertise, advertise, advertise, to tell the world about its climate and its soil, and bring people within its boundaries." Publications were stating that Florida was growing faster than any other part of the

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United States. And "the greatest of all the industries in Florida is building - building homes, hotels, business structures and houses, to provide for the needs of the multiplying population and the increasing swarm of winter visitors." Further contributing to the allure of Florida cities was the constitutional amendment prohibiting state income and inheritance taxes. This resulted in a recruitment of capital into Florida banks and a corresponding speculation on property. Bank clearings of \$88,011,566.97 among the four Lakeland banks in 1924 was indicative of the growth in the area.

The state legislature, through an unusual provision of the Florida Statutes, allowed local governments the privilege of levying a direct tax for publicity purposes. These opportunities boosted many local Chambers of Commerce. Lakeland was recognized as having one of the largest chambers in the country, exceeded only by Los Angeles, which had a population of 1 million. Even among the non-publicity or advertising publications of 1925, Polk County was recognized for its achievements: "Polk County leads the world in production of oranges and grapefruit. A third of Florida's citrus crops are grown here. Nearly half of the world's supply of phosphate is dug from Polk County's soil."

In 1922, Florida Southern College relocated to Lakeland around Lake Hollingsworth, spurring development along the northern shore. In 1924, financiers from Cleveland, Ohio, came to Lakeland, attracted in part due to its serving as the training grounds for the Cleveland Indians. On the southern shore of Lake Hollingsworth they began developing several hundred acres into a grand subdivision, Cleveland Heights. The development included a golf course and lakefront club house.

During the peak "boom" years for Lakeland, 1924 and 1925, the rapid population increase strained the capacity of public utilities, housing and other facilities. The public sector responded with heavy bond issues to meet the abnormal demand. Public improvements on a large scale were launched, and building programs already underway were accelerated until an average of three buildings or more were completed every twenty-four hours. Within the downtown business district, the first high rises were constructed, reflecting the optimism of the period. With the change in scale came stylistic changes as well. Formerly, masonry buildings were predominantly of a vernacular design, with the 1920s came the Mediterranean Revival style that was popularized in South Florida by architect Addison Mizner.

In the latter part of 1925, the building boom slowed, and by 1926 it was evident that the speculative buying craze was over. Contributing to the decline was a breakdown in transportation services, precipitated by a railroad embargo which slowed the shipments of building supplies, and rumored tax changes during 1925 further impacted property transactions. When a hurricane struck Miami in 1926, the hopes of reviving the "boom times" ended. Lakeland, which suffered the decline of the boom as well, continued with its civic improvements which had been previously bonded. By 1928, when the improvements were completed, Lakeland

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found itself an “up-to-date city, an addition to all its natural advantages.” Many of these civic improvements were designed in the stylistic preoccupation of the period, Mediterranean Revival. These included the new city hall and auditorium, public library, fire/police station and public hospital. The Lake Mirror Promenade (NR 1983) was completed that year, having been designed by nationally noted landscape architect Charles Wellford Leavitt. Consistent with the City Beautiful movement, the grand Promenade was constructed as the easterly entrance into the city. Also that year, was the dedication of the National Home of the United Carpenters and Joiners of America, a complex in the Spanish Mission style on 1,950 acres to the north of the city.

**The Great Depression Era**

The effects of the Great Depression were experienced earlier in Florida than elsewhere in the country. The land speculation which had driven prices to inflated levels was common across the state. Lakeland had its share of land speculation, and the economic downturn started appearing in the city as early as the latter part of 1925. Lakeland banks began to fail. The Polk County Trust Company closed for liquidation in July 1926, reopened shortly thereafter, only to close for good in March 1928. The Central State Bank and Trust Company closed its doors in April 1928, and by May 1929, the First National Bank of Lakeland closed. In June of 1930, the Lakeland State Bank and Trust Company closed as well. Had it not been for DuPont interests, the City would have been without a bank. The Florida National Bank was opened by the DuPonts in September 1929, and a second new bank, Peoples Savings Bank, was opened in 1931.

During the 1930s, Lakeland became the spring training camp for the Detroit Tigers (1934), and Frank Lloyd Wright began his architectural designs for the campus of Florida Southern College. Public works projects funded under the Works Progress Administration were undertaken and the city began to revitalize. During the years of World War II, Lakeland and other Central Florida cities served as training grounds for military operations. In 1940, what was later to be known as the Lodwick School of Aeronautics, was established to serve as a primary pilot training school in Lakeland. With the establishment of Drane Field as a base of the U.S. Air Force, the city hosted thousands of airmen. By 1945, Lakeland’s population was 31,461. With the closing of defense installations following the war, however, some residents moved away, and in 1950, the population decreased to 30,851.

**Establishment of Local School Districts**

Earliest written records of the public school system in Polk County are dated from 1886. At the time there was the state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction in Tallahassee, the state capital. This state office was responsible for reviewing the status of school funds under the local boards of public instruction. County school

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superintendents and treasurers were to maintain the financial records of the local schools, but the record keeping was often less than satisfactory.

During this early period of 1886, the Board of Public Instruction of Polk County was responsible for establishing "public free schools" where needed within the county. The County Board established the "Special Tax [School] Districts," which individually served the local communities. These local districts were able to vote on millage and to elect three trustees who served as the district's Board of Trustees. These trustees then had to be officially commissioned by the County Board of Public Instruction. The "Lakeland District" was one of the earliest districts and is referenced in the County Board's minutes of June 1886. The Lakeland District was given an annual budget of \$420, twice the amount of any other district.

Funding for public schools came in part from the county's apportionment of state aid under chapter 5381, known as the "80 percent act." However, during difficult times, such as in 1907, the County Board of Public Instruction found itself requesting the county's share of money from the state. During this period, teachers went without pay for a year. The major source of funds for capital projects came from the leveraging of a millage. A typical action for establishing a millage was for the "Special Tax School District" within the county to obtain a petition representative of twenty-five percent of the qualified electorate in favor of the bond issue. The county Board of Public Instruction then would pass a resolution concurring that the bonds were required for the stated purposes; that the Board agreed with the rate of interest and payment schedule; and that the Board authorized the full election. If the bond issue was passed by a majority of the voters within the district, the County Board of Public Instruction would certify the results, then authorize and execute the issuance of bonds on behalf of the Special Tax School District. The bonds were to be repaid from the taxes obtained from the Special Tax District in which the bond referendum was held. During the 1920s, bonds were issued to support white as well as "colored" schools in Lakeland. The designs of new schools in the 1920s reflected the latest educational theories of the time, incorporating specialized use areas in addition to classrooms within a large building format. There, innovative approaches in presenting curricula were implemented. The buildings also reflected a new interest in the aesthetics of design as an element of community pride, resulting in the hiring of professional architects to design buildings using not only the latest construction techniques but also up-to-date stylistic features.

By 1935 there were 58 Special Tax School Districts and consolidated Special Tax Districts across the county. Over time, proposals were made at the County Board of Public Instruction for the further consolidation of districts. One proposal was for the consolidation of the Highland City District with the Lakeland District. This was opposed by the patrons of the Highland City District who requested that they be consolidated with the Bartow District. By 1941, Chapter 20691 of the 1941 Acts of the Florida Legislature had been established which called for "adequate districts." The Polk County Board of Public Instruction passed a resolution that divided the county "into ten consolidated districts in order to have more adequate school districts in the county

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and in order to comply with the provision of said law.” They placed the issue on a referendum ballot for approval by the qualified electorate for the reorganization of the districts, the election of trustees, and for determination of the district tax millage to be levied for the ensuing biennium. The newly created District 1 then became known as Consolidated Special Tax School District #1, Lakeland, Polk County, Florida. By the late 1950s statewide, school districts were consolidated into county districts, eliminating subdistricts at the county level.

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE**

At the November 4, 1927 meeting of the Board of Public Instruction, architects Mendenhall and Mendenhall (listed on original drawings as “G.D. & A.D. Mendenhall Architects) were appointed as architects to draw plans and specifications for the Cleveland Court School. In December 1927, bids were received by the Polk County Board of Public Instruction for the construction of the school. The contract was let to the lowest bidder, Streeter Brothers (as spelled in official minutes of the Board of Public Instruction, but elsewhere spelled as “Streater Brothers” or “Streator Brothers”) in the amount of \$29,400. An additional plumbing and heating contract was given for approximately \$6,500.

Originally built with seven classrooms, an auditorium, and a cafeteria, the school was built to accommodate the anticipated increase in children to the newly developing neighborhood. However, the economic boom had begun to decline by late 1925, dampening the enthusiasm for new home sales within the new development. By the time the school was opened circa 1929, there were fewer children attending than had been anticipated. The school remained open for one year and then closed due to the lack of a sufficient student population. In the succeeding years the building was placed into use; a novel use of the school building came during the Depression when the school was made available for housing for young couples. In the mid 1930's the school was reopened as Lakeland's Vocational School, for both men and women. Among courses offered were home economics; a “commercial course” which included typing; and machine shop courses, including auto mechanics, mechanical drawing, metal work, wood working and similar trades. These trades become more critical during the early 1940s as the country began facing war. By 1947, the school was reopened as a public elementary school beginning with the first grade. The absence of a public kindergarten was met with a private effort which was allowed to operate a kindergarten in a separate building on the grounds of the school campus, beginning in 1948. The kindergarten was sought by the Cleveland Court Parent Teacher Association, though the project was privately financed initially. The school campus has since grown with the addition of new structures, now totaling nine in addition to the original school house.

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**ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE**

The Colonial Revival style was popular in the United States from c. 1880-1955. Its popularity was a result of the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876. Many state buildings at the Exposition were interpretations of historically significant colonial prototypes. Important included the Connecticut and Massachusetts Pavilions and the New England kitchen. Publicity about the Exposition and appeals for the preservation of Old South Church in Boston and Mount Vernon appeared in publications simultaneously. Long-term efforts to save the buildings were mounted by organizations with patriotic motives and national coverage. Associated with the drives were attempts to preserve indigenous American architecture. About the same time a series of articles about eighteenth century American architecture appeared in the American Architect, the New York Sketch Book of Architecture, and Harpers. Characteristic elements of the style are brick exteriors, symmetrical plan and exterior design, geometrical proportions, hipped or gabled roofs, and regular fenestration with wood sash windows and fanlights.

Cleveland Court was designed by Mendenhall and Mendenhall, architects of Lakeland. During the mid 1920s the firm was responsible for the design of several prominent buildings within Polk County, Florida. Among them are the Mission styled buildings of All Saints Episcopal Church (1923) and the Lakeland Cash Feed (c.1925) building. Both of these buildings are in downtown Lakeland, as are the Vanity Fair Arcade (c.1924) and the Sullivan (c.1924) buildings, each of which are listed as contributing buildings within the Munn Park Historic District. The firm's design of buildings with Mediterranean Revival influences is notable in the Rhodesbuilt Arcade (1924) in Lake Wales in eastern Polk County. George D. Mendenhall was a civil engineer and surveyor who moved to Lakeland in 1912. As early as 1912, the architectural practice of C.D. and H.D. Mendenhall existed. Advertisements were also printed for G.D. & H.D. Mendenhall, Civil Engineer and Architect. Herbert D. Mendenhall was a founding director of the Polk County Association of Registered Architects (founded September 7, 1926). At the time of founding, there were 20 architects in Polk County.

The contractor for the Cleveland Court School was Streater Brothers. The firm was formed c. 1925 by John Baxter Streater with his brothers, Joe and W.H. Streater. John Streater was born in Chesterfield, South Carolina, on November 2, 1874. After completing his schooling in South Carolina he moved with his parents to Lakeland, Florida, in 1893. He began his work initially in Lakeland with his uncle, W.D. McRae, until he became an independent contractor. After a brief partnership with W.F. Kennedy, working under the name of Streater & Kennedy, he established the Streater Brothers contracting firm c. 1925. Among the buildings Streater was responsible for constructing in Polk County were the Davenport City Hall, Polk County Trust Company building, Methodist Church in Winter Haven and public schools. The schools constructed within Polk County, in addition to Cleveland Court School, included Central Avenue School, Webster Avenue School, and the High Schools in Davenport and Dundee. Streater's work in Duval County included the Stockton

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Building, brick plant in South Jacksonville. Cleveland Court School is a fine example of the work of Lakeland architects Mendenhall and Mendenhall, and builder Streater Brothers. Its red brick exterior, central entrance flanked by 10/10 sash windows with fanlights, mock buttresses, and simple cast stone and brick detailing make it a simple, but excellent example of Colonial Revival architecture as applied to the public schools built in the 1920s. The interior is also typical of the period, including an auditorium and classrooms with high ceilings. Less typical of the 1920s, and more typical of later school designs used in Florida, are the single-sided classroom corridors, which remain today as unconditioned spaces.

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**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

That part of Cleveland Court Sub PB 8 PG 32, Block 2, Lots 1 to 33 that encompasses the historic c. 1928 building and the area immediately surrounding it. The area extends to Rogers Terrace on the southwest, Edgewood Drive on the south, Carolina Avenue on the east, the building immediately to the north, and the sidewalks accessing adjacent buildings to the west, as shown on the site plan.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundaries have been drawn to incorporate the entire historic structure, including the attached expansion of the original cafeteria at the north end of the east wing as well as the small administrative offices addition at the north vertex of the east and west wings, and the land immediately surrounding the buildings that historically has been associated with the Cleveland Court School.

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**Inventory of Photographs**

1. Cleveland Court School  
328 East Edgewood Drive
2. Lakeland, Polk County, Florida
3. L.L. Parks
4. 1997
5. City of Lakeland, Community Development Department
6. View of front facade, major entrance, and east and west wings, camera facing north
7. Photograph 1 of 14

Items 1 through 5 above pertain to all photographs listed below, unless otherwise indicated.

6. View of front (south) entry, camera facing north
7. Photograph 2 of 14
  
6. View of west face of front entry projection, camera facing east
7. Photograph 3 of 14
  
6. View of major entrance into west wing, camera facing north
7. Photograph 4 of 14
  
6. View of corner pilaster and east face of east wing, camera facing northwest
7. Photograph 5 of 14
  
6. View of north face of west wing and administration area addition at vertex of east and west wings, camera facing southeast.
7. Photograph 6 of 14
  
6. View of west face of east wing, camera facing northeast
7. Photograph 7 of 14
  
6. View of interior of south and east walls of auditorium, camera facing southeast
7. Photograph 8 of 14

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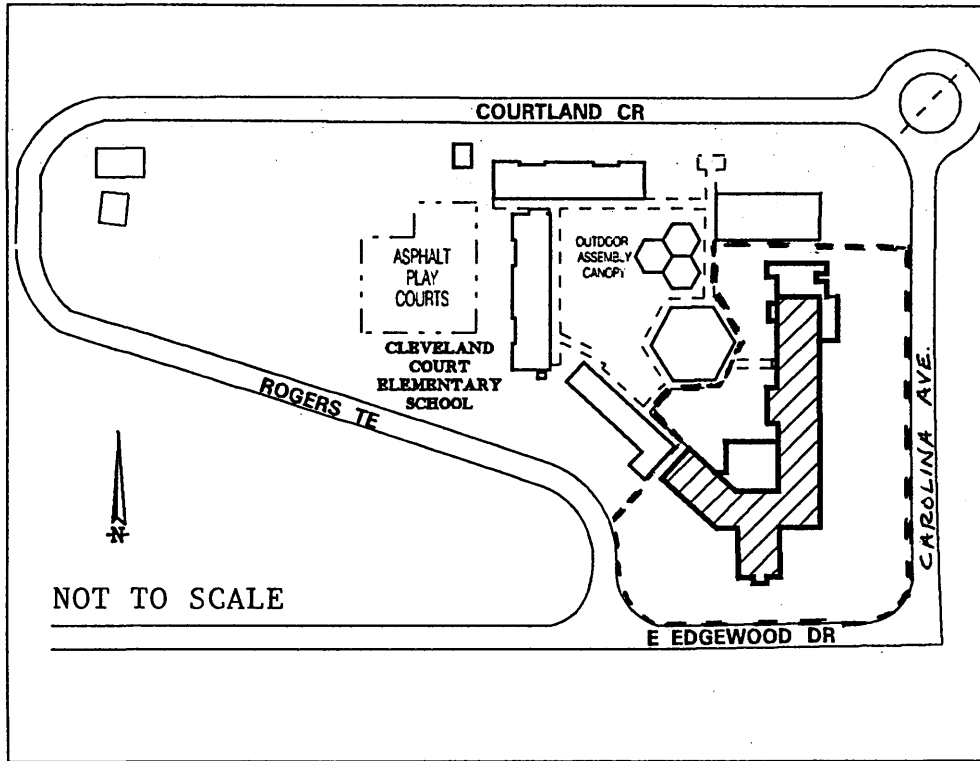
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- 6. View of interior of north and west walls of auditorium, camera facing northwest
- 7. Photograph 9 of 14
  
- 6. View of original tile floor and corridor, camera facing west
- 7. Photograph 10 of 14
  
- 6. View of typical classroom interior, camera facing southeast
- 7. Photograph 11 of 14
  
- 6. View of interior of classroom, camera facing northeast
- 7. Photograph 12 of 14
  
- 6. View of classroom interior with boarded corridor windows, wood floors and trim, camera facing west
- 7. Photograph 13 of 14
  
- 6. View of cafeteria, camera facing southwest
- 7. Photograph 14 of 14

# CLEVELAND COURT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## Boundary and Contributing Structure Map



- Boundary Line
-  Original Structure

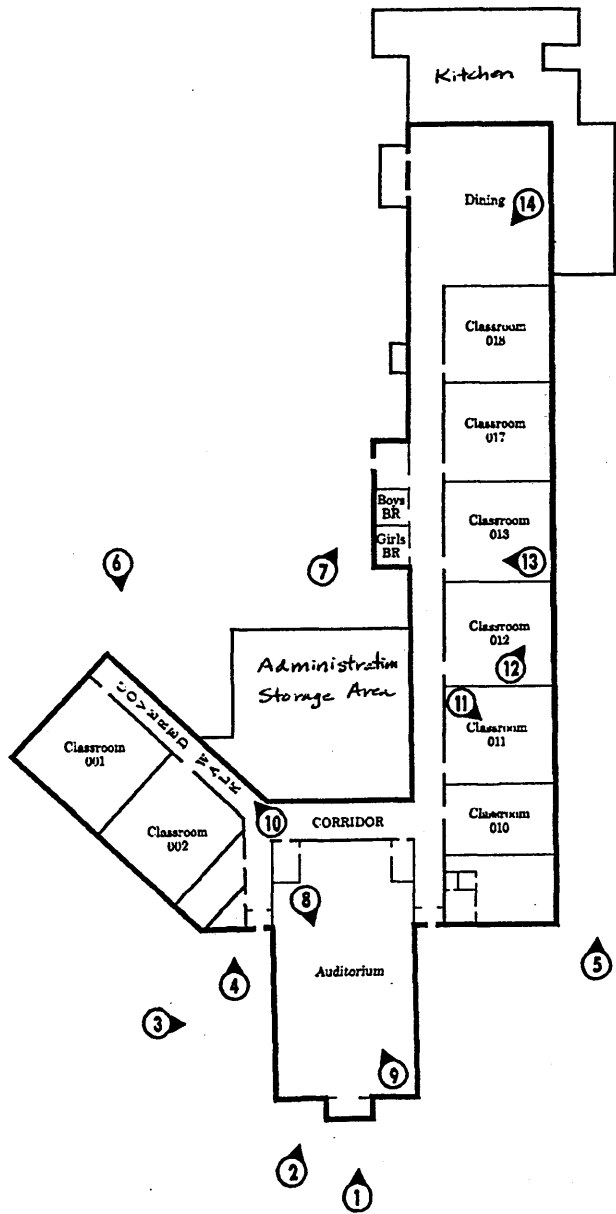
Note: Temporary portable structures not shown

Cleveland Court Elementary School  
328 East Edgewood Drive  
Lakeland, Florida

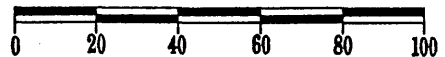
# CLEVELAND COURT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## Floor Plans and Inventory of Photographs

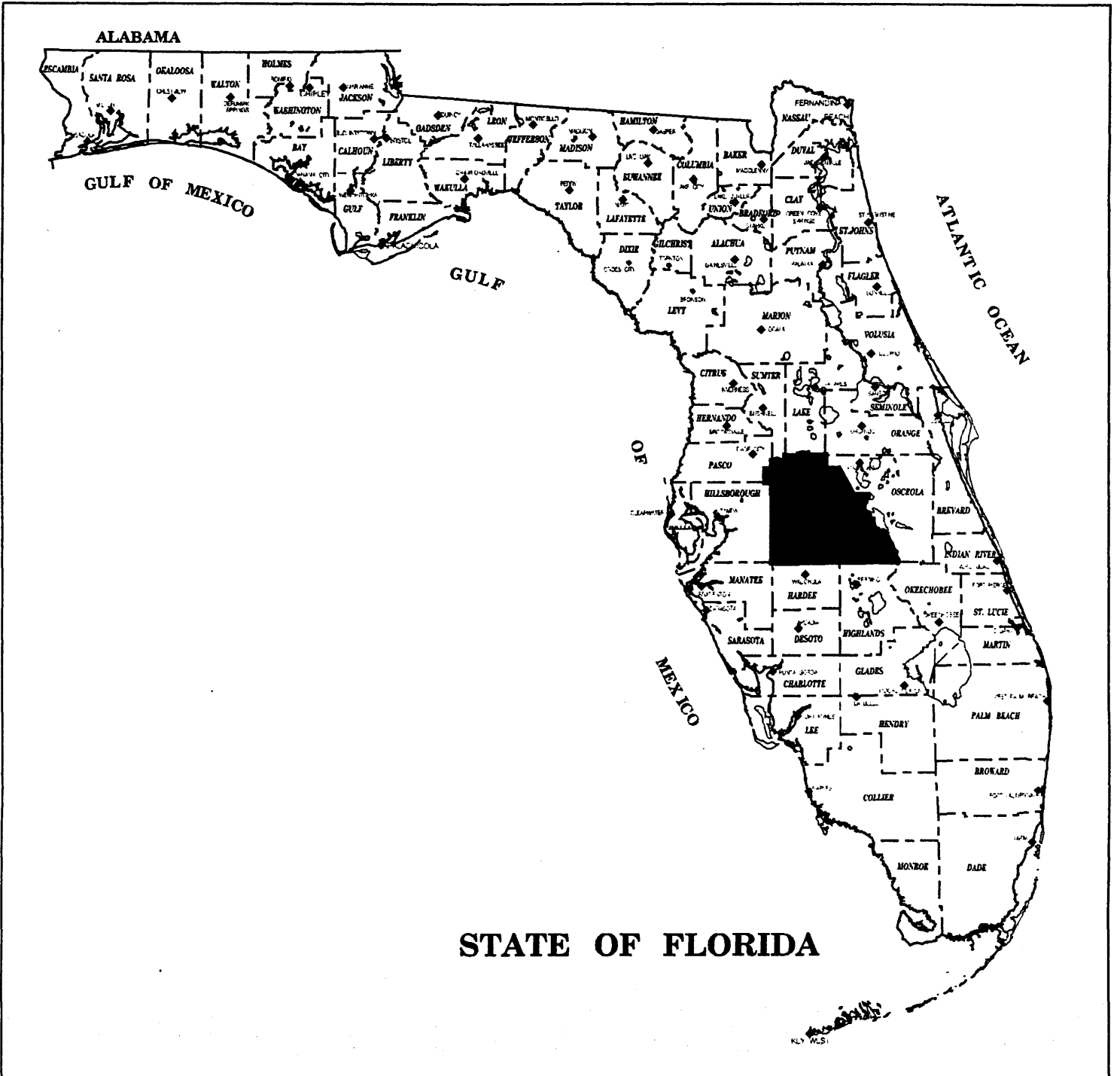
### National Register Nomination



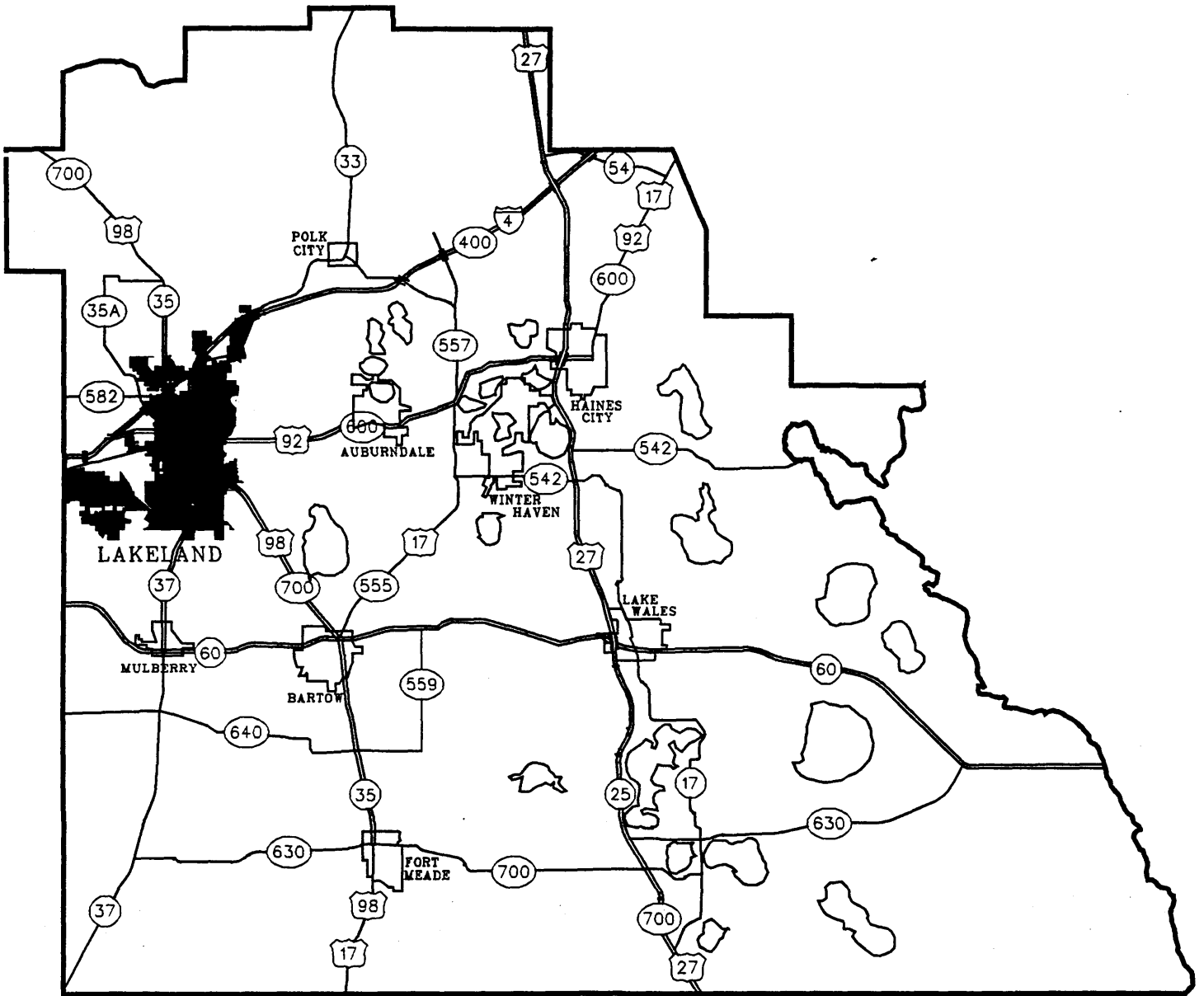
SCALE



# LOCATION MAP POLK COUNTY



# LOCATION MAP CITY OF LAKELAND



## POLK COUNTY