

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

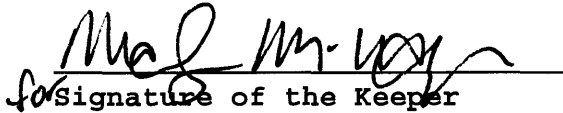
SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 99000047 Date Listed: 2/3/99

Memorial Home Community H.D. Clay FLORIDA
Property Name County State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

2/3/99
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section No. 8: This nomination is amended to add Criterion B, J. C. Penney as significant person, and Criteria Consideration A.

The project is strongly associated with Penney's charitable efforts. It was his largest philanthropic project and reflects his youthful memories of his father's straitened financial circumstances as a Baptist minister.

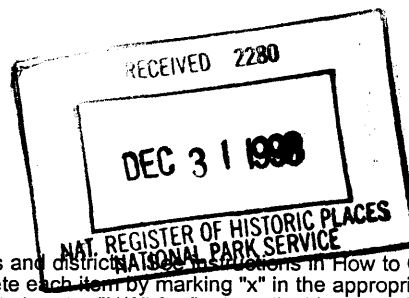
Although the retirement community was constructed by a private individual, the church occupied a central position and the community was restricted to religious workers. For these reasons, Criteria Consideration A applies. The property meets the requirements for this Consideration.

These changes have been confirmed with the Florida SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



99-47

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. 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 MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number Penney Retirement Community

2. Location

street & number roughly S.R. 16, Caroline Blvd., Wilbanks Ave., Studio Rd. N/A not for publication

city or town Penney Farms N/A vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Clay code 019 zip code 32079

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.)

George W. Perry 12/17/98
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) _____

⁴⁰⁶ Mary M. Way Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 2/3/99

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	
24	1	buildings
1	0	sites
2	0	structures
0	0	objects
27	1	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)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

RELIGION: church

RECREATION AND CULTURE: golf course

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

RELIGION: church

RECREATION AND CULTURE: golf course

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th & 20th CENURY REVIVALS:

Late Gothic Revival, French Norman

Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STUCCO

walls STUCCO

BRICK

roof CERAMIC

other GLASS

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)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1926-1948

Significant Dates

1927

1940

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Mills, Alan B.

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository _____

Community Home Community Historic District
Name of Property

Clay Co., FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 60 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	4	2	1	9	6	0	3	3	1	7	2	0	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
2	1	7	4	2	1	8	8	0	3	3	1	6	6	0	0

3	1	7	4	2	1	8	8	0	3	3	1	6	6	0	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4	1	7	4	2	2	3	2	0	3	3	1	6	9	0	0

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 December 1998

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 Penney Retirement Community (Noel White, administrator)

street & number P.O. Box 555 telephone 904/284-8200

city or town Penney Farms state FL zip code 32079

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.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

**MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

SUMMARY

Memorial Home Community Historic District is located in the Town of Penney Farms in Clay County, Florida. The district covering 60 acres contains 27 contributing resources, including a church, apartment buildings, a planned and landscaped community site which includes a golf course, and a pump house. Ranging in height from one to three stories, the apartments and church are in the Late Gothic Revival, French Norman Style, and an inn is in the Colonial Revival Style. The period of historical significance is between 1926 and 1948. Although some buildings have been altered with the addition of porches and room extensions, modern windows and new roof surfaces, they retain a high degree of architectural integrity. A non-contributing modern building is located on the golf course.

SETTING

The Town of Penney Farms is in central Clay County, 8 miles west of Green Cove Springs, and 30 miles southwest of the City of Jacksonville. The town boundary is three miles in length along east/west State Road 16, and one-half mile deep with the historic district lying near its center. The region is rural and has a generally flat landscape. The historic district lies south of the intersection of State Roads 16 and 218; the latter road extends north to Middleburg. The town and Memorial Home settlement is arranged along north/south avenues that run south several blocks off of Highway 16. The retirement community is roughly arranged in a quadrant with Poling Boulevard bisecting it north and south. The two quads along Highway 16 are an open golf course with scattered trees. The two quads south contain the apartments and the church. Non-historic administration buildings and the Town of Penney Farms are adjacent to the retirement community to the west. Residences are scattered along Highway 16 immediately to the east.

An important element of the planned community are the trees which include magnolia, pine, oak, crepe myrtle, and shrubs. Palms line Poling Boulevard (Photo #11). Palms and magnolias were planted along the shoulders of Highway 16 to define the retirement community and the boundaries of the Town of Penney Farms. Thirty-five cast metal lamp posts were installed at the time of the community's construction that are

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2

**MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

arranged along Poling Boulevard, and are more thinly distributed around the apartment buildings and secondary streets (Photo #12). A flag pole is located at a circular green space at the entrance with Poling Boulevard (Photo #13).

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION
BUILDINGS**

All but one of the historic buildings are in the French Norman Style, and were a part of the 1927 construction. They have one, one-and-one-half, or two-and-one-half stories with steeply-pitched complex roofs. There are different types of dormers, and tall, tapered chimneys pierce most roofs. Exterior walls are finished with stucco. Few apartment buildings retain their original metal casement windows, which have been replaced with sash windows. The buildings continue to serve their original functions and retain their architectural integrity to a high degree. A single, Colonial Revival Styled, two-story, brick inn and meeting building was built on the north side of Highway 16 in 1940.

Late Gothic Revival/French Norman

Penney Memorial Church

Penney Memorial Church, located at the south end of Poling Boulevard, is the largest and most ornate building in the retirement community. The church rises the equivalent of three stories at 4465 Poling Boulevard (Photo #1). Constructed on a continuous concrete foundation, the building has an irregular L-shape plan with a steeply-pitched complex roof system of gable, cross-gable, and shed roofs, surfaced with flat ceramic tiles.

A square tower with a flat roof adorned with flared corners rises at the main (north) facade. The tower has a dropped cornice and narrow belt courses. A belfry protected by pairs of wood carved vents is at the third story. A window with a triangular arch opening and a central mullion is in the second story of the tower. The base of the tower contains a pair of oak doors with screened doors, and a cornerstone at the northwest corner inscribed with the date "1926."

A smaller, polygonal tower with a hexagonal roof is set back slightly from the main tower along the northwest elevation. It contains a double-

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 3 **MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

spiral staircase that provides access to the second-story gallery. Narrow windows in both towers contain diamond glazed, leaded stained glass.

The main body of the building has buttresses and a shed roof along the east and west elevations at the first story. Along the east and west elevations there are pairs of leaded glass casement windows at the first story and second/clerestory levels. Shallow, two-story, cross-gables project at the southwest and southeast elevations. Two, one-story gable extensions project from the southeast corner (Photo #2). Stucco serves as the exterior wall fabric and fenestration includes deeply-inset diamond leaded glass casement and 4-light pivot windows with transoms.

The interior of the church has a narthex, nave with flanking aisles separated from the nave by pointed arch arcades, and a recessed chancel. The pipes for an Acelian Company pipe organ are installed in the rear wall of the chancel. On the second story within the tower is a balcony with a stained glass window in the north wall. The window, in two halves, depicts the "Good Samaritan" with the inscription "To James C. Penney, 1927," and the "Sower" and the inscription "With the love and gratitude of those unto whom he ministers." The balcony overlooks the spacious nave with exposed massive arched trusses, and purlins. A sacristy, library, and meeting hall rooms are within the extension on the east.

Apartment Buildings

The apartment buildings are in the French Norman Revival Style. In contrast to the ordered site plan, each building displays an irregular footprint, characterized as an oblong mass with end and offset extensions. Height variations, asymmetrical facades with projecting and receding surfaces, steeply-pitched roofs, and stuccoed exteriors contribute an irregular texture, and pattern to the district. Each building has a unique variety of arrangements and details. The 8 apartments on the corners of the 2 quadrangles are two-and-one-half story buildings. They each contain five apartments and have a variety of roof, tower, and dormer arrangements. The remaining 14 buildings rise either one or one-and-one-half stories. They contain four apartments and have fewer details than their larger counterparts.

The building at 4455 Poling Boulevard (Photo #3) typifies a two-and-one-half-story apartment. The steeply-pitched complex roof system of gable, clipped gable, and hip extensions are interrupted by hip and gable

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 4

**MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

dormers. Four tall, tapered chimneys finished with terra cotta pots pierce the roof.

Directly west of 4455 is 4450 Poling Boulevard (Photo #4). It also is a two-and-one-half story apartment built with a "L" footprint, cross gable roofs with ridges on different levels, but without dormers. This building exhibits many of the common alterations, such as the new roof surface, and metal screened porch extension. At the second story, an open porch which had an area sheltered by the roof has been enclosed. Massive, hand hewn cypress posts and beam, visible on the main, east elevation, are infilled with a window.

Another large apartment is at 3435 Morton Drive (Photo #5). It also exhibits a distinctive steeply-pitched complex roof system of gable, cross-hip, and gable-on-hip extensions surfaced with flat ceramic tile shingles. A polygonal tower rises at the northeast elevation. Four tapered chimneys, the polygonal roof of the tower, eight dormers, seven wall dormers with hip roofs and one gable wall dormer punctuate the roof line, further enhancing the asymmetrical appearance of the building. Rough edged weatherboard and canales in the upper gable ends contrast with the stuccoed walls. Small stoops that protect entrances display modest shed roofs surfaced with ceramic tiles and carved wood beam bracing.

The one-and-one-half-story apartment at 4440 Ott Street (Photo #6) is a good example of the smaller buildings. The steeply-pitched gable roof is interrupted by four shed dormers. Wane edge weatherboard, round canales, and a rectangular slotted attic vent embellish the gable ends. Four chimneys adorned with terra cotta pots pierce the ridge and west slope of the roof. A front-facing cross-gable extension contains an entrance porch trimmed with hewn cypress beams.

Colonial Revival

Completed in 1940, the Colonial Inn is a Colonial Revival Style building, located at 3465 State Road 16 West (Photo #7). A continuous brick foundation supports the building which has a side gable, rectangular main block surfaced with brick, and with one-and-one-half end extensions with horizontal wooden siding. The main block's facade has two story square slender columns, and a central door with a swan's neck pediment. The gable roofs are surfaced with polychromatic slate tiles, and pierced by two chimneys. The extensions have gable dormers and pediments over doors

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 5 **MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

and windows. A porte cochere is attached at the east end of the building. Fenestration includes multi-glazed French doors and 6/6-light double-hung sash windows.

SITE

The northern half of the planned retirement community has a nine-hole golf course that occupies thirty-five acres at the north end of the district (Photos #8-10). The community and golf course are bisected by Poling Boulevard which has a median, is planted with palm trees, and has a flag pole located near the northern end (Photos #11-12). A small service building known as Martin House, stands near the center of the west half of the course. A driving range oriented north/south lies just to the west of this house (Photo #9). Four golf holes are located west of Poling Boulevard, with the remainder placed in the east half of the course. Most fairways include a gentle dog-leg and extend 300 to 400 feet in length. Shrubs and trees help delineate some fairways, several of which are interrupted by a small natural ditch (Photo #10).

STRUCTURES

The pump house at 4320 Poling Boulevard consists of a circular hollow tile and concrete block privacy wall finished with stucco (Photo #12). A wood frame door on the east elevation provides access to the interior well and pump. The walls obscure from view the main well, which is protected by a wood frame shed. A smaller pump substation is located directly south of the church at 3445 Caroline Boulevard.

NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Non-contributing resources include a non-historic small building at 4250 Poling Boulevard (Martin House) in the western half of the golf course (Photo #13). It has a rectangular footprint, hip roof, wood frame walls finished in plywood, metal sash windows, and two entrances. It houses maintenance equipment for the golf course.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 6

**MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES LIST

Buildings	Style	Date
3440 Caroline Blvd.	Norman	1927
3460 Caroline Blvd.	Norman	1927
3480 Caroline Blvd.	Norman	1927
3435 Morton Dr.	Norman	1927
3445 Morton Dr.	Norman	1927
3455 Morton Dr.	Norman	1927
3465 Morton Dr.	Norman	1927
3467 Morton Dr.	Norman	1927
3475 Morton Dr.	Norman	1927
4370 Ott Dr.	Norman	1927
4400 Ott Dr.	Norman	1927
4440 Ott Dr.	Norman	1927
4470 Ott Dr.	Norman	1927
4430 Poling Blvd.	Norman	1927
4350 Poling Blvd.	Norman	1927
4355 Poling Blvd.	Norman	1927
4400 Poling Blvd.	Norman	1927
4405 Poling Blvd.	Norman	1927
4450 Poling Blvd.	Norman	1927
4455 Poling Blvd.	Norman	1927
4465 Poling Blvd.	Norman	1927
3465 State Rd. 16 West	Colonial Rev.	1940
4395 Wilbanks Ave.	Norman	1927
4435 Wilbanks Ave.	Norman	1927

Site

Thaeler Golf Course ca.1928

Structure

3445 Caroline Blvd.	Pump substation	1927
4320 Poling Blvd.	Pump station	1927

Non-Contributing Resource

4250 Poling Blvd.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 1

**MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

SUMMARY

Memorial Home Community Historic District is nominated to the National Register under criteria A and C at the local level in the areas of Social History, Architecture, and Community Planning/Development. The period of historic significance is between 1927 and 1948. The community was developed as a retirement home for clergy and religion workers through the vision and philanthropy of retail magnate James Cash Penney. Memorial Home Community was the largest of three retirement communities developed in Florida by the 1920s. The district contains a large collection of good examples of French Norman Revival architecture. The level of workmanship is very high and the architectural integrity and character have been retained. The planned community, landscape and architecture were designed by architect Alan B. Mills. The community was planned with the church at the center of the residences to reflect the significance of the church in the lives of residents.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Memorial Home Community was the largest philanthropic project of J.C. Penney, who developed one of the most extensive retail department store chains in the United States. He was born in Missouri in 1875, the son of James C. Penney, a Baptist minister and farmer who struggled to make a living for the next two decades. The older Penney coined the term "a hard-shell Primitive Baptist preacher," and served a small Baptist congregation which discharged him in the early 1890s, an event the son never forgot. Following the death of his father and after laboring in several local merchandise stores, Penney left for Wyoming. Throughout his life, Penney identified with the plight of farmers and the clergy. Beginning with a retail store in Kemmerer, Wyoming, he developed one of the largest department store chains in the United States.

In 1923, Penney organized the J.C. Penney Foundation to receive and disburse funds for religious benevolence and charitable purposes. The Foundation hired Daniel Poling, a prominent cleric, skilled organizer and fund raiser, as president.

In the early 1920s Penney began to invest in Florida. In 1921 he established a winter estate at Belle Isle on Miami Beach for himself. He purchased an apartment house in Miami Shores, a turpentine farm and cattle

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 2

**MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

ranch in Alachua County, and two hotels in Green Cove Springs. In 1925, he bought a large experimental farming project that was in financial distress in Clay County, west of Green Cove Springs. Begun in 1921, and known as Long Branch City, the small town plan was organized with a commercial center, residential neighborhood, farm tracts, a depot and railroad tracks to Green Cove Springs, and a cannery. Penney bought the 120,000 acre project for \$400,000. The project foundered by 1923. Penney had begun the Foremost Dairy operation in New York State, and a branch in Florida at the new farms. Renamed Penney Farms, the experiment had a brief period of success, but by 1930, only fourteen families who had cultivated farms remained.

In 1925, Penney, while on a trip to Green Cove Springs, chose to rehabilitate dilapidated cottages, formerly quarters for Dowling-Shands Lumber Company laborers, for the use of retired clergy, YMCA workers, and missionaries. Retired clergy moved into the cottages in September 1925. Their gratitude convinced Penney that this philanthropy was a sound one. In October 1925, residents incorporated "Penmore," an association chartered to promote their "physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual welfare." The association assumed responsibilities for establishing a library, literary committee, Sunday School, and other social and religious activities within the community. The name was changed in 1927 to Memorial Home Community Association.

Memorial Home Community contributed to a growing effort in the United States to provide housing and care for the aged. One of the earliest homes was Sailor's Snug Harbor in New York City, which was organized in 1831 on the former estate of Alexander Hamilton. The Catholic Church led the way in the creation of denominational retirement homes, establishing its first in New Orleans in 1848 and maintaining 127 institutions by the late 1920s. In 1929, religious organizations operated approximately 475 homes for the aged and infirm nationwide. Almost sixty of those were built in the 1920s alone. Although most were run with the financial assistance of a specific denomination, fifty-five were philanthropic enterprises, such as Memorial Home Community, with a religious aspect or connection. Retirement homes were also developed by fraternal organizations, trade unions and occupational groups, private enterprise, federal and state agencies, and various ethnic groups and nationalities. By the 1920s, approximately 1,200 retirement communities supported the elderly throughout the country.

Besides the Memorial Home Community, Moosehaven, a fraternal home of

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 3

**MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

the Loyal Order of the Moose, was established in Orange Park in 1921, and seven years later, the National Carpenter's Union developed a center in Lakeland. Florida by the 1920s contained three retirement homes--one run by a private benevolent, one by a fraternal organization, and one by a trade union.

Penney's personal fortune suffered during the Great Depression. By 1932, he ceased his philanthropy to various organizations and begin rebuilding his personal and corporate wealth. Penney continued to serve as president of the Memorial Home Community Corporation and retained a seat on its board of directors until his death in 1971. By then he had rebuilt his company to 1,660 stores, the fifth largest department store chain in the country.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The retirement home in Green Cove Springs at the Dowling-Shands Lumber Company cottages was immediately viewed critically by the workmen who did not think some of the cottages worth repairing, by Penney who wanted larger vacant properties, and by locals who objected to the retirement program. Penney had just bought thousands of acres in the county, and a relocation soon followed.

Penney always remembered his father's destitution in his final years, and expressed his motivation for founding the Memorial Home Community: "My Father died in 1895, and my mother in 1913. It seemed to me that a chapel surrounded by homes for men and women who had devoutly followed Christ whom my parents served, pouring out their lives for the holy cause in which my parents lived and died, would be fitting as an expression of my gratitude."

In March 1926, Penney announced the construction of 100 new apartments. Architect Alan B. Mills was placed in charge of the estimated \$500,000 project. Mills, a 1907 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Architecture and Engineering, initially worked in the New York City office of Richard Schermerhorn, Jr., a landscape architect. Schermerhorn specialized in city planning, developing master plans for the cities of Great Neck, Lawrence, and Newark, and the Allegheny and Taconic State Parks in New York. Influenced by Schermerhorn's attention to landscapes and the development of parks, Mills established his own design firm about 1915. Between 1921 and 1929 he served as director of architecture and construction for the State of New Jersey. Gifted and

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 4 **MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

tireless at his craft, Mills by 1927 had developed \$10,000,000 in buildings for the state. During the period, he served several terms as mayor in his home town of Florham Park, New Jersey. An interest in golf and landscape architecture resulted in his serving on the advisory committee of the Middle Atlantic Section of the Professional Golfers Association. In 1929, at the conclusion of his Penney Farms work, Mills relocated to Washington, D.C., and organized a partnership Pennington, Lewis & Mills. In 1934, he was appointed by Franklin D. Roosevelt as executive assistant to James Wetmore, acting supervising architect of the Department of Treasury. Under Wetmore, Mills helped develop post office buildings throughout the United States, many of them financed in part through New Deal programs. In 1939, he returned to private practice, organizing the firm Mills, Petticord & Mills. This firm designed notable landmarks in the nation's Capital, including McLean Gardens, Naylor Gardens, and the east and west wings of the National Museum of Natural History. Other projects include Holton Arms School, Riggs Bank, Sperry Rand Building, and several buildings on the campus of George Washington University. The firm briefly associated with McKim, Mead & White in the design of the Smithsonian's Museum of History and Technology.

Mills persuaded several fellow government service employees to assist him with the Memorial Home Community project. Arthur E. Davis, Jr., a 1921 graduate from the University of Pennsylvania's School of Architecture, had also briefly worked in Schemerhorn's studio and as an assistant in the New Jersey office. Alan Krans, an office assistant and draftsman, completed the team that Mills assembled to execute the design of the Memorial Home Community. In April 1925, the architectural team arrived in Green Cove Springs and established an office on the second story of the Green Cove Springs National Bank.

Penney and Mills selected a sixty-acre site for the Memorial Home, south of the Green Cove Springs-Starke Road (State Road 16), and immediately east of the heart of the Town of Penney Farms. The plan occupied blocks 10-12, 21-22, 32-33, 43-44, 54-55, 73-74, 76-77, and 79-80 of the Town Site of Long Branch City.

Mills suggested French Norman styled architecture. As Mills explained, "In the thirteenth century in France, particularly in the section better known as Normandy, church control and influence predominated in all developments. Many small communities were built up around the church in which all activities of the community took place and around which the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 5

**MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

leadership of the community was centered." Mills and Davis provided the overall landscape design, site plans, individual building plans and construction drawings, golf course, and sketches for many details, such as arches, trusses, and memorial and a pipe organ screens. The existing street system of dirt trails was modified to fit the plan. New street names were assigned to commemorate officers of the Penney Foundation and Penney Farms. Connelley Avenue was expanded with the new name of Poling Boulevard, and Hassiman Street was reformed and renamed Caroline Boulevard for Penney's third wife. Concrete pavements, curbs and gutters were installed, and twenty-four buildings were set back south of the state road 600 feet.

Ground was broken on June 5, 1926 with construction of the apartment buildings and church proceeding simultaneously. The cornerstone of the church was set on June 13, 1926. Soon after the Penney Foundation filed a charter for Memorial Home Community. The articles charged the corporation to provide "comfortable homes for clergymen, missionaries, YMCA and YWCA secretaries, and other religious, social, and educational administrators and workers, their wives and other dependents who shall by reason of age, accident or bodily infirmity and by reason of lack of money are not able to care for themselves and need such homes." The apartments contained various numbers of apartments and displayed irregular plans. Irregularly shaped buildings contrasted with the relatively rigid street plan and overall form of the community. The variety of roof and dormer types and projecting towers contributed a picturesque ambiance on the relatively flat landscape.

The buildings were buffered from the road by the 2 northern quadrants occupied by a nine-hole golf course. Poling Boulevard provided the primary access into the community. It included a small circular drive at the state road intersection, a flagpole, and tree lined median. Glen St. Marys Nursery of Baker County, provided palm and magnolia trees that line Poling Boulevard, and other shrubs, which were planted under the supervision of George P. Hoffman, a landscape engineer from Clemson University. The improved State Road 16, opened in June 1927, was also landscaped with magnolia and live oak trees, which still form a canopy along the frontage with Penney Farms. The nursery is one of Florida's most significant historic nurseries, and was the largest in the state at the time of the community's development.

The low wet land under the church required a deep foundation filled with concrete to support the weight of the tower. Much of the wood for roof trusses and decking, wainscot, and moldings in the church and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 6

**MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

apartment buildings was harvested locally from native cypress. Carpenter Bascom Franklin selected the trees, which were cut, finished by hand with adzes at the construction site, and set into place. Scaffolding was built in the church to assist with the placement of the massive king post roof trusses. Franklin would remain to look after the buildings until 1962. Concrete was transported to Penney Farms by rail from Green Cove Springs. Truscon Steel Company of Youngstown, Ohio, supplied steel casement windows. Hollow clay tiles for the walls were obtained from Columbus, Georgia, and the roof tiles were supplied and installed by Mardendale Roofing Company of Jacksonville. The church was also adorned with gifts presented by residents and Penney associates. Ralph Gwinn, the foundation's attorney, provided funds for an Acelian Company pipe organ as a memorial to his mother. In December 1926, the members of Penmore Association, arranged for the manufacture and installation of art glass windows in the tower in "appreciation to Mr. Penney for his wonderful kindness in providing the comfortable and well furnished apartments for us," was in the form of two panels, projected to cost \$500.

The church with adjoining meeting hall and library cost \$116,000. By the close of 1928, the foundation had spent \$1,376,061. Tenants resided in apartments free of charge, supplying only their dishes, food, sheets, towels, and other personal incidentals. Memorial Home Community was largely completed in 1927 and dedicated to Penny's father in an elaborate three-day weekend ceremony held in the church, and extending between April 22 and 24, 1927.

As early as November 1926, residents had moved into apartments in a few completed buildings. By May 1927, sixty-six residents lived at the Memorial Home and all ninety-eight apartments were available. In the winter of 1927-1928, more than eighty apartments were occupied with residents representing sixteen denominations from thirty-two states and Canada. Friends of the residents and state dignitaries visited the community by the thousands.

A visitor and guest speaker to the community in 1944 was Frank S. Mead, cleric, author and educator. He expressed the fears and gratitude of the residents. His father, like Penney's, was a destitute minister at his death. Many clerics had communicated to him the "gnawing fear...of the day they must retire." All residents were religion workers without incomes adequate to support themselves.

During the 1930s and 1940s there was a relatively high degree of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 7

**MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

transition among the residents due, in part, to a high rate of mortality, relocation of residents after the death of a spouse to be closer to family, and the implementation of a monthly maintenance fee. Many people remained permanent residents for extended periods.

The Association and residents developed programs to keep their retirement active. Residents took responsibility for delivering weekly sermons. Work in the library was a popular activity. The church housed two separate congregations at its inception, the Penney Farms Community Church from the town, and residents of Memorial Home Community. Initially, the congregations shared responsibilities for worship services on alternating Sundays, but by the 1930s the townspeople relied exclusively upon retired pastors to fill the pulpit. By 1950, the two assemblies had united into one non-denominational congregation organized as Penney Memorial Church. A constitution and by-laws were adopted in 1951.

A clinic was developed by George P. Hammer, a physician who arrived in 1928. He resided with his family in an apartment at 3440 Caroline Boulevard (Photo #15). The building became known as the "Hospital Cottage" because one of the apartments served as Hammer's office and another as the community clinic. Several of the wives of retired ministers were nurses who were available for home care. Medical fees were set at fifty cents per hour. Hammer left the community in 1934 for a partnership in Hollywood, Florida. Johnson Moore replaced him and served as physician until 1942. The cottage at 3440 Caroline Boulevard contained the home of the resident physician and the community clinic until 1950, when the Quadrangle Building west of the historic district was completed.

During the Great Depression the building at 3465 State Road 16 West, commonly known as "Colonial Inn," was built. Its development was the result of a cooperative effort by the Town of Penney Farms, Foremost Properties, Inc., and the Works Progress Administration. Work began in April 1939. The project was completed in March 1940 at cost of \$40,000. Initially, municipal records called the building the "Community House of Penney Farms," but also commonly referred to it as the community inn. For a brief period, the building also served as a hotel, introducing the third and most commonly applied name, Colonial Inn. Visitors to the community often stayed there, as did Penney, who used its spacious interiors to entertain guests.

In 1963, the Christian Herald who had taken ownership in 1946, turned over management and ownership of the retirement home to Memorial Home

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 8 **MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

Community, Incorporated. Later that year, the name was changed to Penney Retirement Community, Inc. "to perpetuate the memory of its founder and benefactor."

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Colonial Revival

The Colonial Revival style evolved from an interest in the building types used in Colonial America, and experienced a wide popularity from the 1880s until the 1950s. Built with both wood and masonry, characteristics of the style include a symmetrical facade dominated by a centrally located entrance usually accented with a one-story decorated pediment, and/or fan-light transom and sidelights. One-story porches spanning the main facade are also common. Most examples rise more than one story and often have a central block with extension. Side gable or hip roofs are pierced with dormers and chimneys. Double-hung sash windows with multiple lights are arranged symmetrically. Original Colonial building was influenced by the Classical elements of the Georgian Style, and the English architect Robert Adam, resulting in Classical ornamentation on columns, door surrounds, and cornices. Such elements are found in Colonial Revival architecture.

French Norman

Gothic Revival

From the late 19th century until World War II, a Gothic Revival style was popular in America. Gothic architecture is typified by steeply gabled roofs, pointed windows, and main building blocks with cross extensions due to limitations of medieval roof truss engineering. Large buildings were stone and smaller ones were often timber framed. Among the Revival buildings, brick walls were the predominant building material, and the use of steel and wood casement windows was common. Side gabled buildings with cross-gabled extensions, and large, decorated chimneys were typical. Stone, often decorated, was commonly included within masonry walls. Allied with this revival was the application of Gothic building styles to large educational construction known as Collegiate Gothic. In the 1920s, the state constructed brick buildings for their two colleges in Tallahassee and Gainesville. These were done incorporating carved stone and terra-cotta

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 9 **MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

ornamentation, reflecting the influences that Renaissance design had on late Gothic buildings.

This Gothic Revival included the medieval French Norman type of building. The French Norman Style of building is based on precedents of French domestic and agricultural architecture from the Romanesque and early Gothic periods. This picturesque building type served to inspire the elaborate, early Renaissance French chateaus. During the 20th century's Gothic Revival, American designers drew upon English medieval precedents most often, making Norman inspired Gothic Revival buildings rare. Common exterior wall fabrics include half timbering, stucco, wood shingles, and clapboard. Fenestration typically consists of casement or double-hung sash windows, some of which many contain leaded glass. Large chimneys often occupy prominent locations, either piercing a roof eaves, slope, or center ridge, or extending up the facade. Some of the best known examples of Norman Revival architecture in the United States include the community of Arrowhead Woods near Los Angeles, designed like a village, Belcourt Castle in Newport, Rhode Island, and Kent House, a Depression-era model in New York. The style maintained a modest presence in suburban residential architecture through the 1930s.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Memorial Home Community Historic District has a concentration of French Norman inspired Late Gothic Revival Style buildings. The Penney Memorial Church and residential apartments are excellent examples of French Norman Gothic Revival architecture. The level of workmanship is very high and their architectural integrity has been retained. The buildings are arranged within a planned community with the church as its central feature, a feature historically derived from town arrangements in medieval France. The community plan, landscape, and architecture were designed by architect Alen B. Mills.

The Colonial Inn, was constructed as a W.P.A. project, and with its symmetrical facade dominated by a centrally located entrance and swans neck pediment, multi-light window sashes, side gable roofs with dormers, is a good example of Colonial Revival architecture.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 1 **MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beasley, Norman. Main Street Merchant: The Story of J.C. Penney Company,
New York: Whittlesey House, 1948.

Clay County Crescent, (newspaper) November 16, 1934.

Clay County Courthouse, Green Cove Springs, Florida,
Corporation Book 1, 1922; Deeds, and Plat Book 2, p.26.

Eberlein, Harold, and Roger Ramsdell, and Leigh French, Jr., "Farmsteads
and Small Manors of France, Chateau D'Odre," Architectural Record,
January 1926.

Jacksonville Florida Times Union, April 24, 1927.

Kieffer, Elizabeth, Life More Abundant: The Story of a Retirement Community
at Penney Farms, Florida, Penney Farms, Florida: Penney Retirement
Community Association, 1973.

Mead, Frank S., "Sixty acres of Heaven," Christian Herald, May, 1944.

Memorial Home Community Records, Volume 1, 1925-1939.

Nardo, Antonio, Farm Houses, Small Chateaux, and Country Churches in
France, Cleveland: J.H. Jansen, 1924.

New York Times; December 2, 1921; March 31, October 11, November 21, 1925;
March 11, 1926; April 10, 1927; April 24, 1927; June 21, 1935;
December 5, 1952; January 29, 1956; and February 13, 1971.

Penney, James Cash. *Fifty Years With The Golden Rule*. New York: Harper,
1950.

Town of Penney Farms, Minutes, August 24, November 15, 1938; April 14,
1939; February 4, 1944; February 7, 1950.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 Page 2 **MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

Werndli, Phillip, "J.C. Penney and the Development of Penney Farms,
Florida: 1924-1934." Unpublished Thesis. University of Florida. 1974.

Works Progress Administration. Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State
(New York: Oxford University Press), 1939.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 10 Page 1

**MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

Verbal Boundary Description

See attached scaled map of the Memorial Home Community Historic District.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encloses the property associated with the historic buildings and designed landscape owned by the retirement community excluding those adjacent non-historic buildings.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number Photos Page 1

**MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

PHOTOGRAPHIC INVENTORY

1. Memorial Home Community (Penney Farms Retirement Community), Penney Farms
2. Clay County, Florida
3. Sidney Johnston
4. 1997
5. Historic Property Associates Inc., St. Augustine, Florida
6. Penney Memorial Church, facing southeast
7. Photo #1 of 15

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

6. Penney Memorial Church, east elevation, facing southwest
7. Photo #2 of 15

6. 4455 Poling Blvd., facing north
7. Photo #3 of 15

6. 4450 Poling Blvd., facing northwest
7. Photo #4 of 15

6. 3435 Morton Dr., facing southwest
7. Photo #5 of 15

6. 4449 Caroline Blvd., facing north
7. Photo #6 of 15

6. Colonial Inn, facing north
7. Photo #7 of 15

6. Golf course, facing southeast
7. Photo #8 of 15

6. Golf driving range, facing north
7. Photo #9 of 15

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number Photos Page 2

**MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC
DISTRICT, PENNEY FARMS, CLAY CO., FL**

6. Golf course ditch, facing west
7. Photo #10 of 15

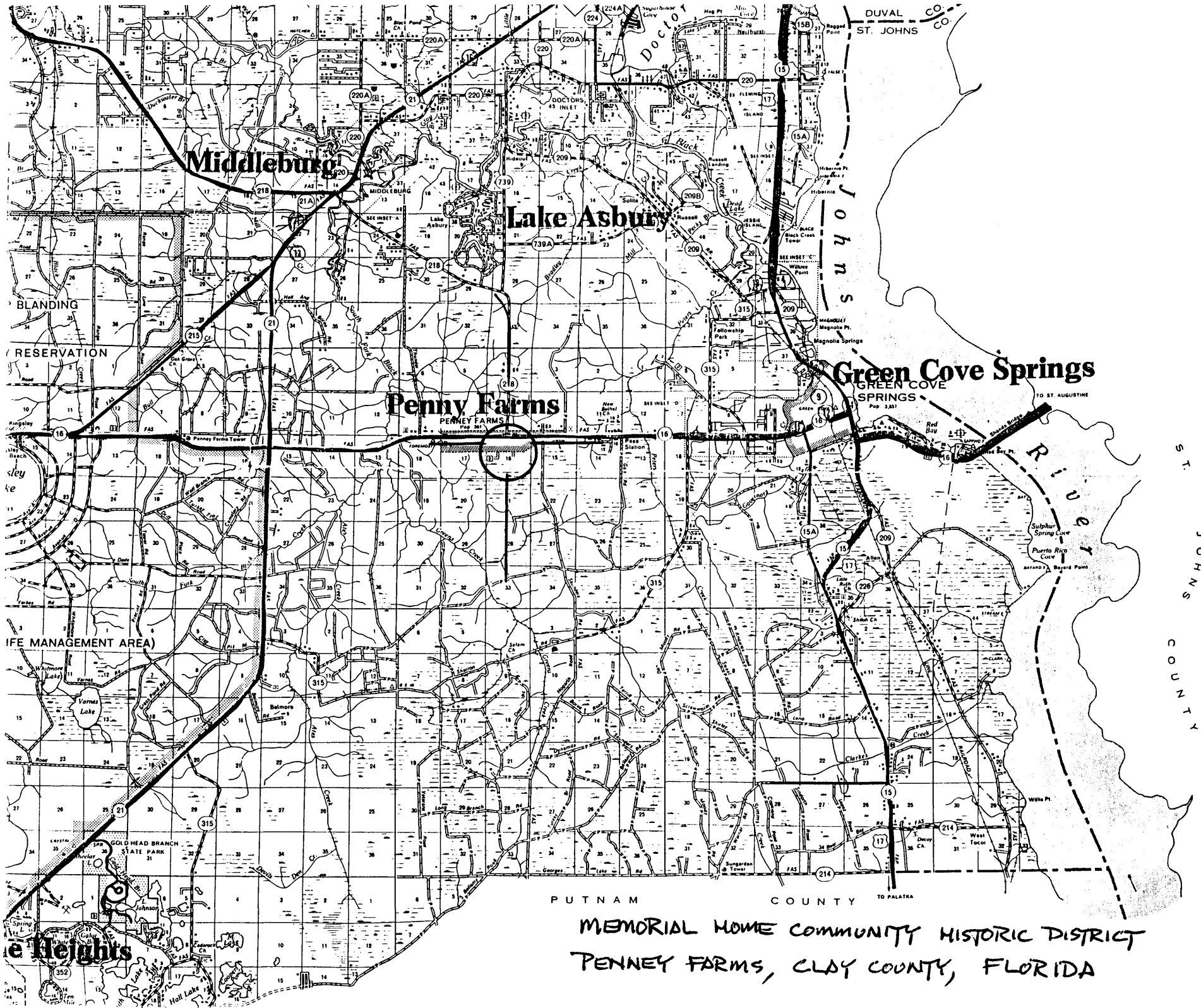
6. Poling Blvd., facing south
7. Photo #11 of 15

6. Poling Boulevard median and flag pole, facing south
7. Photo #12 of 15





6. Pump house, 4320 Poling Blvd., facing west
7. Photo #13 of 15

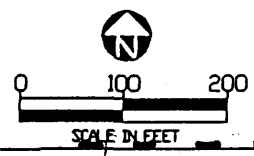
6. Martin House, 4250 Poling Blvd., facing northeast
7. Photo #14 of 15

6. Doctor's clinic, 3440 Caroline Blvd., facing northwest
7. Photo #15 of 15



MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC DISTRICT
PENNEY FARMS, CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA

LEGEND	
CONTRIBUTING BUILDING	
NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDING	
LIGHTPOST	
PHOTO LOCATION	



MEMORIAL HOME COMMUNITY HISTORIC DISTRICT

Penney Farms, Clay County, Florida

