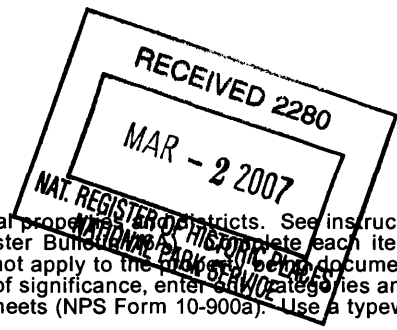


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 38). 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 the appropriate categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name ST. RITA'S COLORED CATHOLIC MISSION

other names/site number FMSF#7672

2. Location

street & number 314 Duss Street N/A  not for publication

city or town New Smyrna Beach N/A  vicinity

state Florida code FL county Volusia code 127 zip code 32168

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.)

Bonbon C. Mattick / DSHPO 2/22/2007  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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

for Daniel J. Vician 4/13/07  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**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)

RELIGION: church

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revival/ Late Gothic Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
walls WOOD  
roof WOOD  
other

**Narrative Description**

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- Criteria A, B, C, D, E, F, G with checkboxes and descriptions.

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):

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, designated landmark, recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey, recorded by Historic American Engineering Record.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1899 - 1924

1956 - 1969

Significant Dates

1899

1956

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State Agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of Repository

#

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

|   |       |                       |                           |
|---|-------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 1   7 | 5   0   6   5   0   0 | 3   2   1   0   5   0   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 Johnston, Sidney/Robert O. Jones, Historic Preservationist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date February 2007

street & number 500 South Brounough Street telephone 850-245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state FL 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 Black Heritage Festival of New Smyrna Beach

street & number 314 North Duss Street telephone 386-424-0008

city or town New Smyrna Beach state FL zip code 32168

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 Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section Number 7 Page 1

**St. Rita's Colored Catholic Mission  
New Smyrna Beach, Volusia Co., FL**

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**SUMMARY**

St. Rita's Colored Catholic Mission is located at 314 North Duss Street in New Smyrna Beach, Volusia County, Florida. It is the oldest surviving church in the city, and the small church is an example of Carpenter Gothic architecture, a variant of the Late Gothic Revival genre. Built in 1899 as Sacred Heart Catholic Church on Faulkner Street, it was moved to its present site in 1956. The building contains approximately 1,200 square feet of interior floor space. The building has an irregular plan with a steeply-pitched front-facing gable roof surfaced with wood shake shingles. It has a small tower/belfry with a flared hip roof, incised into the eastern end of the roof ridge. The wood frame structural system is surfaced with decorative wood shingles, drop siding, and corner-boards. Large decorative brackets support a hip roof that protects the east, main entrance. A small gable extension is at the west elevation which contains the chancel for the church. Approximately the same size as the chancel extension is a cross-gable northern extension at the northwest corner that contained the sacristy. Fenestration is balanced within the body of the church and asymmetrical in the sacristy. Windows are filled with 2/2 and 1/1 double-hung wooden sashes set in pointed arch surrounds. A concrete block pier foundation system supports the building with wood lattice between the piers. During rehabilitation in 1999 and prior to its use as a museum, the northern extension was lengthened by 4 feet.

St. Rita's was rescued from demolition by New Smyrna Beach educator Mary Harrell and the Black Heritage Festival, Incorporated. The historic church currently serves as the Black Heritage Museum to illustrate the history of New Smyrna Beach's historically black Westside community, and St. Rita's Colored Catholic Mission. Well-designed and well-preserved, the building contributes to the sense of time, place, and historical development of the architecture, ethnic heritage, and religion in the City of New Smyrna Beach, through its location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Retaining its late nineteenth century character to a high degree, the building provides important architectural and ethnic heritage links to New Smyrna Beach.

**SETTING**

Located in coastal southeast Volusia County, New Smyrna Beach is approximately twenty miles south of Daytona Beach, and twenty-five miles east of DeLand, the seat of government of Volusia County. Settled as the British Turnbull Colony in 1768 and incorporated as a town in 1888, New Smyrna Beach has a population of 20,048 (2000). The primary thoroughfares include United States Highway 1, historically known as the Dixie Highway, that runs in a north/south alignment west of the New Smyrna Beach Historic District (NR 1990). The other primary thoroughfare into the city is State Road 44, which extends east-to-west, and is locally known as Canal Street. The Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway's tracks run west of and parallel to United States Highway 1.

New Smyrna Beach's historically black Westside Community is west of the FEC tracks and is divided by State Road 44. The St. Rita's Church is five blocks west of the railroad tracks and three blocks north of Canal Street. The building faces east toward Duss Street. A recently established Pettis Park is to the north. At the southeast corner of the park is "Heritage House," an early twentieth century Shotgun type dwelling that was moved to the

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St. Rita's Colored Catholic Mission  
New Smyrna Beach, Volusia Co., FL

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site for use as a museum to depict a traditional African-American home early in the previous century. Several buildings both historic and non-historic are located in the immediate neighborhood. A temporary storage shed stands to the west behind St. Rita's. Landscaping consists of live oak trees and shrubs.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**Exterior**

The exterior walls of St. Rita's are surfaced with horizontal wooden siding. The roof is surfaced with cedar shake shingles. Windows are filled with 2/2 double-hung wooden sashes set in pointed arch surrounds. The foundation is of concrete block piers.

The east façade (Photo #1) has a belfry within a square tower with louvered vents, a flared hip roof, and tapered sides joining with the roof slopes. The gable end is accented with wood shingles cut in chisel, fish scale, rectangular, and saw tooth patterns (Photo #2). A window composed of a pair of narrow 1/1 wooden sashes separated by a mullion is located within the gable. A pair of paneled wooden doors are centrally located and provide the main entrance. They are accessed by a wooden porch, and four steps with wooden handrails. Long brackets support a hip roof that shelters the porch. A window is within the walls on either side of the doors. A rectangular window with 2/2 wooden sash is visible within the north extension wall.

The south elevation (Photo #3) contains three windows evenly distributed within the main building block. Set back from the line of the wall is the gable extension that contains the chancel. The chancel's wall contains one window.

The west, rear elevation (Photo #4) has a louvered vent within the peak of the gable. The sanctuary extension is to the north, with a single door where the two building sections join. The door is accessed by a wooden ramp and protected by a small shed roof.

The north elevation (Photo #5) has three windows set in the main building block, and the gable end of the north cross-gable extension at the northwest corner. The extension gable end contains a louvered vent within the peak of the gable, and a single window in the wall.

**Interior**

The interior has wooden floors, walls, and ceiling. The walls and ceiling are covered with beaded tongue and groove boards. The interior contains approximately 1,200 square feet of floor space currently used for museum display and office spaces. The interior contains the nave or main building block; the chancel, a short extension that sheltered the altar; and the sacristy that has support/office spaces. The ceiling is canted and rises approximately fifteen feet. The original doors have been replaced to meet security and code requirements.

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Section Number 7 Page 3

**St. Rita's Colored Catholic Mission  
New Smyrna Beach, Volusia Co., FL**

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The main (east) entrance opens into the original nave (Photo #6) that is forty feet in length. Providing natural cross-ventilation and interior lighting, six windows open along the north and south walls, and two windows flank the entry doors. The narrow sash window within the gable is incised above the ceiling and finished with a boxed opening that leads to the belfry (Photo #7). The west end of the nave narrows and opens into the chancel extension that measures approximately fourteen feet long (Photo #8). At the narrowing, the short west walls of the nave each contain a niche. The chancel has the same canted ceiling configuration as the nave. The south chancel wall has one window, and the north wall has an entrance into the sacristy. The sacristy has been divided into a vestibule, bathroom (Photo #9), and office (Photo #10).

**ALTERATIONS**

As built in 1899, St. Rita's Church consisted of the nave portion of the building. The chancel was added about 1913 and the sacristy about 1924. The church was moved from its original site at 306 Faulkner Street to this Duss Street location in 1956. Within the last decade the original front and rear doors were replaced. During the rehabilitation into the museum in 1999, the sacristy was extended four feet, and two walls divided the sacristy into three spaces. The walls of the chancel and sacristy were finished in smooth plaster. Modern lighting was installed.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
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Section Number 8 Page 1

**St. Rita's Colored Catholic Mission  
New Smyrna Beach, Volusia Co., FL**

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**SUMMARY**

St. Rita's Colored Catholic Mission is nominated to the National Register for local significance under Criteria A and C in the areas of Ethnic Heritage, Black and Architecture, and Criteria Considerations A, B and G. The building possesses significance for its contribution to the civil rights movement, integration, and religious outreach in New Smyrna Beach in the 1950s and 1960s which extends into the period less than fifty years ago. Built in 1899 as Sacred Heart Catholic Church, the building was relocated fifty years ago, in 1956, by the St. Augustine Catholic Diocese and the Sacred Heart congregation. It was relocated from its original site on Faulkner Street in a white neighborhood of New Smyrna Beach to its present site in the city's historically black Westside neighborhood. Building upon its earlier success with a black Catholic mission known as Madonna House, the diocese relocated the building for the expressed intentions of enlarging the African-American Catholic congregation in New Smyrna Beach and preserving the building from demolition. At that time, the diocese renamed the building St. Rita's Colored Mission. Because the 1899 church was moved to its present site in 1956, it possesses historic significance beginning with that date in association with the community's Ethnic Heritage. In 1969, after the city's Catholics integrated to worship in a single sanctuary, the nineteenth-century building was used to house a clinic and day care center. The 1899 building, with additions in 1913 and 1924, is significant as an excellent example of a Carpenter Gothic church within the context of the Late Gothic Revival genre. The design of the building is consistent with national and statewide trends in architecture.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

**Westside Community & New Smyrna Beach**

The historic Westside community in the City of New Smyrna Beach occupies a relatively late role in the history of Florida. Although the Turnbull Colony and several Spanish land grants were located across the site of the latter-day community, the faint outlines of the Westside settlement did not begin to form until the 1880s. The community developed largely around two large homesteads of Charles Dougherty and Morrison Lewis. A third property owner, John Sheldon's family, began living in New Smyrna in 1883. Sheldon's son, Rodolphus, began investing in property in the Westside community in the 1880s. In 1888, he opened a subdivision that provided four blocks bounded by Mary, Myrtle, and Washington streets, a central feature in the Westside community.<sup>1</sup>

Charles Dougherty, a native of Athens, Georgia, also developed property. Educated at the University of Virginia, Dougherty arrived in Volusia County in 1871 to supervise his father's landholdings. He inherited his father's estate in 1873 and over the following decades acquired still more tracts in coastal Volusia County, most of which he subdivided. Dougherty initially made his base of operations at Port Orange, but moved to New Smyrna in the 1880s. Dougherty eventually owned homes in Daytona Beach and Port Orange, as well as a residence on the west

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<sup>1</sup>Pleasant Daniel Gold, *A History of Volusia County, Florida* (Daytona Beach: P. D. Gold, 1927), 162; Zelia Sweett and J.C. Marsden *New Smyrna, Florida: Its History and Antiquities* (New Smyrna: Zelia Sweett and J.C. Marsden, 1925), 37-41; Michael Schene, *Hopes, Dreams, and Promises: A History of Volusia County, Florida* (Daytona Beach: News-Journal Corporation, 1976), 104; Map Book 6, p. 8, Volusia County Courthouse; Works Progress Administration, *Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), 21, 24.



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St. Rita's Colored Catholic Mission  
New Smyrna Beach, Volusia Co., FL

bank of the Indian River in New Smyrna.<sup>2</sup> In 1883, he subdivided his holdings into twelve blocks. One of New Smyrna's largest nineteenth century plats, the subdivision furnished a plan for development north of the nascent downtown west to Myrtle Avenue. In the Westside community, the subdivision's blocks were designed for homesteads, farms, and groves rather than for dwellings and suburban development. Neatly dividing the subdivision in half, Mary Avenue led to Enterprise Road, which made the former a significant artery west of town.<sup>3</sup>

In 1883, Dougherty sold five acres to immigrant Gustavus Spleiss. A native of Danzig, Germany, Spleiss was impressed with Florida's natural beauty and remained to develop a business. He periodically invested in land and sold property to churches and prospective homeowners in the Westside community. In 1920, his heirs opened Spleiss's subdivision. Dougherty also sold property to George Pitzer and Robert Nelson, which they divided into a large subdivision. The Pitzer and Nelson development presaged a re-division of Dougherty's plan, which created near frenzied activity between 1905 and the 1920s. Dougherty's activities and land sales encouraged neighboring landholders to sell and divide their land. To the west of Dougherty's subdivision lay Morrison Lewis's homestead. A native of Ohio, Lewis had acquired the property in 1881. He built a home and planted citrus. He sold some of the land to Henry Fisher and Samuel Whitney, each of whom planted citrus groves. In 1890, Lewis sold most of his remaining holdings to A. Eltinge Anderson who divided the property into tracts of various sizes.<sup>4</sup>

Although relatively little construction occurred in these formative years of platting the Westside community, the subdivisions set the stage for later developers to open still smaller subdivisions suitable for creating a suburb west of New Smyrna's downtown. Consequently, the Westside community was subjected to an organic process of development, resulting in a patchwork of subdivisions leaving only the faint outlines of the overall plan provided by Dougherty. The resulting organization of streets and relatively small lots influenced the development of the neighborhood.

The arrival of the Blue Spring, Orange City & Atlantic Railroad (BSOC&A) in 1886 linked New Smyrna, with the St. Johns River, and the villages of Lake Helen, and Orange City, in west Volusia County. Its arrival initiated a new era in New Smyrna's growth, encouraging settlement and bringing winter visitors. Few ships could then navigate the shifting bars and tides at nearby Mosquito Inlet, which was later renamed Ponce DeLeon Inlet. In 1887, the population of New Smyrna stood at 150 and the following year the town boasted nearly eighty buildings, including forty-one dwellings, three general stores, and two churches. The cultivation of oranges, commercial fishing, and tourism were principal economic activities. Residents incorporated the Town of New Smyrna, in 1887, and in 1890 the population reached 287.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>New Smyrna News, October 15, 1915; Deed Book M, p. 187, Deed Book O, p. 25, Volusia County Courthouse; Schene, *Volusia County*, 143; T. E. Fitzgerald, *Volusia County: Past and Present* (Daytona Beach: Observer Press, 1937), 173-174.

<sup>3</sup>J. M. Hawks, *East Coast of Florida* (Lynn: Lewis & Winship, 1887), 81; Deed Book L, p. 538, Deed Book Y, p. 200-203, Volusia County Courthouse.

<sup>4</sup>New Smyrna News, 16 January 1914; Hawks, *East Coast of Florida*, 81; Map Book 1, p. 96, Map Book 2, p. 32, Map Book 5, p. 182, Deed Book O, p. 635-636, Deed Book W, p. 168-176, Deed Book 17, p. 754, Deed Book 54, p. 456, Volusia County Courthouse.

<sup>5</sup>Volusia County Commission, *A Pamphlet, Historical and Descriptive of Volusia County* (Jacksonville: DaCosta Printing and Publishing

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St. Rita's Colored Catholic Mission  
New Smyrna Beach, Volusia Co., FL

African-American settlers began to arrive, looking for work, and began to build a community. Some settled in the Westside community, which then was part of a larger region known as New Smyrna's "Cotton Shed Hammock." The hammock's naming probably dates to the Civil War, when smugglers stored cotton bales in the hammock for safe keeping. By 1885, about ten African-American families resided in the town. Most were Floridians, such as W. Carter and M. Alexander, who were servants for merchant P.N. Bryan. Albert and Roberta Boardman, Molly Richson, and L. Lillian worked at F.W. Sams' Ocean House. A native of Nassau, Leo Rhodes was one of the town's few black farmers. F. Bolden of Alabama also owned a farm, and H. Clark, Nelson Cogswell, and George Baker found work on farms, for the railroad, and in the citrus industry.<sup>6</sup>

More development seemed assured for New Smyrna in 1892 with the arrival of the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway. Its owner, Henry Flagler had ambitious plans for Florida's east coast, as he had demonstrated in St. Augustine, where he inspired an architectural renaissance through the construction of ostentatious hotels designed for northern tourists. Flagler extended the line along the east coast, reaching Daytona, in 1892, and crossing the rails of the BSOC&A at New Smyrna, in September 1892. In 1893, Flagler integrated the shortline into his expanding rail system. He pushed farther south and in 1894 reached Palm Beach, and Miami, in early 1896. Although Flagler never developed a grand hotel at New Smyrna, the town soon became a division center servicing locomotives and quartering personnel. Despite the new railroad, economic progress soon languished as freezes in the winter of 1894-1895 devastated orange groves throughout much of Florida, and sent the economy into a downward spiral. Still, the arrival of the FEC in New Smyrna improved access to the area, and the company's infrastructure served as catalyst for development.<sup>7</sup>

Even before the arrival of the railroad, sufficient numbers of settlers had arrived to establish one of New Smyrna's oldest African-American religious institutions, Mt. Calvary Baptist Church. The Reverend Richard Singleton helped organize the congregation in 1886, which soon constructed a sanctuary on Washington Avenue. In 1894, trustees O.J. Anderson, Nelson Cogswell, and S.P. Pratt of the newly-established St. Paul's M.E. Church acquired property from undertaker Gus Spleiss for \$200. The congregation constructed a sanctuary at 519 Washington Street several years later. The development of the churches marked Washington Avenue as an early important social and religious center in the Westside community.<sup>8</sup>

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House, 1888), 22-24; Works Progress Administration, *Florida*, 87; Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census, *Population* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1913), 310.

<sup>6</sup>Florida State Census, 1885, Tenth Precinct, Volusia County, FL; Hawks, *East Coast of Florida*, 76-78; Map Book 4, p. 115 Volusia County Courthouse.

<sup>7</sup>Edward Akin, *Henry Flagler: Rockefeller Partner & Florida Baron* (Kent and London: Kent State University Press, 1988), 141, 144, 162; Rowland Rerick, ed., *Memoirs of Florida* 2 vols., (Atlanta: Southern Historical Association, 1902), 1: 265-267; George Pettengill, "The Story of the Florida Railroads, 1834-1903," *Railway and Locomotive Historical Society* 86 (June 1952), 104-105.

<sup>8</sup>Deed Book 54, p. 456, Volusia County Courthouse; Census Bureau, Twelfth Census, 1900, Enumerated Schedules, Tenth Precinct, Volusia County, FL; the cornerstones of both churches reveal details of the early history of the respective churches.

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St. Rita's Colored Catholic Mission  
New Smyrna Beach, Volusia Co., FL

By 1900, about fifty African-American families lived in New Smyrna. Born a slave in Florida, Leroy Chisholm became an early success story in the community. He and his wife, Cecelia, arrived about 1903. A barber, Chisholm operated his own business, and periodically invested in property in New Smyrna and elsewhere in east Volusia County. He acquired land south of the downtown, and built a home on South Hillsboro Drive. His investments grew and soon he owned several commercial buildings and dwellings in the Westside community. A public school built on Washington Avenue about 1915 was named for him after his death in November 1925.<sup>9</sup>

The Westside community was on both sides of the railroad tracks, although the largest part spread west of the mainline. Even then, the community had many of the trappings of a suburban neighborhood with churches, dwellings, and stores. Residents of the first decade of the twentieth century included August Mills and Henry Mitchell, teamsters who delivered goods by buckboard. Preachers included Walter Brown, George Crawford, Charles Holly, and Oscar Jackson. Pastor Richard Morgan had several daughters; one, Mary, earned a living as an artist, and a son, Berr Morgan, worked as a printer. Moses Person was a merchant who attained prominence in the community. The original name of Sheldon Street was Person Street with the redesignation occurring about 1925. George Alright was the sole black teacher in New Smyrna in the opening decade of the twentieth century. Many residents worked for the railroad. Some early buildings were constructed by Henry Powell, a house carpenter from Alabama.<sup>10</sup>

Between the late 1890s and World War I, the so-called "Progressive Era" was characterized by reform movements in business, education, government, and labor. The Progressive Era wrought substantial changes on Florida's landscape, and New Smyrna experienced renewed development. The most tangible legacies of the era include land reclamation throughout the peninsula and a building boom across the state. New Smyrna shared in the period of growth and expanded significantly. In 1901, the name Hillsborough River was changed to Indian River and an inland waterway provided access to Jacksonville. The town was reincorporated as a city in 1903, and a shell road linked New Smyrna with Daytona, fifteen miles to the north. The population of the city reached 543 in 1900, more than doubled to 1,121 in 1910, and advanced to 2,007 in 1920.<sup>11</sup>

New Smyrna emerged as a railroad center with a roundhouse, shops, and turntable, and a new branch line encouraged development. The roundhouse and shops expanded over time, requiring new laborers, many of them African-American residents, to maintain the rolling stock and locomotives. In 1910, encouraged by reclamation efforts in south Florida and bumper agriculture harvests, the FEC began construction of its Okeechobee branch. Beginning at New Smyrna, the new line paralleled the railroad's existing tracks, but ran inland through the

<sup>9</sup>Census Bureau, Twelfth Census, 1900, Enumerated Schedules, Tenth Precinct, Volusia County, FL; Deed Book 35, p. 197, Deed Book 36, p. 360, 448, Deed Book 54, p. 124, 142, Deed Book 57, p. 174, 474, 508, Deed Book 58, p. 538, Deed Book 62, p. 590, Probate Docket Book A, p. 867, Volusia County Courthouse.

<sup>10</sup>Census Bureau, Twelfth Census, 1900, Enumerated Schedules, Tenth Precinct, Volusia County, FL; Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Map of New Smyrna* (New York: Sanborn Company), 1916, 1924, 1930.

<sup>11</sup>Schene, *Volusia*, 122-123; Census Bureau, Thirteenth Census, 1910, *Population* (Washington, 1913), 310; Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census, 1930, *Population* (Washington, 1931), 214.

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St. Rita's Colored Catholic Mission  
New Smyrna Beach, Volusia Co., FL

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Kissimmee River Valley to Lake Okeechobee. The construction prompted the company to increase its presence in New Smyrna by adding more employees and quarters west of its New Smyrna shops.<sup>12</sup>

Sparked by an influx of settlers and expansion of the rail industry, new subdivisions in the Westside community addressed some of New Smyrna's pressing housing needs. The largest of those, Inwood, opened in 1912. Developed by Electa Gifford and Anna Miller of Rockville Centre, Nassau County, New York, the subdivision occupied much of the former homestead of Morrison Lewis. Gifford and Miller named the streets of the subdivision for local heritage, families, native trees, and presidents. Gifford and Miller named Duss Street for J. S. Duss, a conductor of the Metropolitan Opera of New York, who first visited New Smyrna in 1906 and made the coastal town his winter residence. Duss still composed music in the 1920s, and occasionally entertained local audiences. By 1925, Gifford and Miller had sold most of their New Smyrna properties. The platting of Inwood with its streets and infrastructure provided tangible signs of a suburban character on the Westside community.<sup>13</sup>

By 1910, nearly eighty houses dotted the community and approximately 300 people lived there. Many buildings were assembled by Westside carpenters Edward Davis, William Goodwin, David Livingston, Birch Stover, and brick mason William Brown lived there and built much in New Smyrna. Women worked as dressmakers, laundresses, and waitresses; others stayed home to raise their families. Emily Davis was a nurse. By 1915, the sanctuary of St. Paul's M.E. Church had become too small for its congregation. Several mortgages secured by the trustees assisted in the rebuilding and expansion of the sanctuary. A one-story public school and Mt. Olive Primitive Baptist Church were built on Washington Avenue.<sup>14</sup>

Many residents worked skilled railroad jobs, such as fireman, machinist, or boilermaker. Porters worked at the depot, on passenger trains, and at area hotels. The citrus industry also provided employment, and a few people labored in turpentine camps. Charles Braswell owned a barber shop and James Daley served as pastor of the A.M.E. Church.<sup>15</sup> Willie Master, James NewKirk, and Peter Page owned restaurants and Eric Meeks operated a tailor shop. Ned Johnson opened an automotive repair shop. Helen Meeks, Frances Munas, Lillian Pearsall, Ellen Sharpe, and Clara Wallace taught school and Emily Davis, Ellen Peterson, and Mary Jane Little worked as nurses. Pastors included John Johnson at the Baptist Church and Doshier Joyner at St. Paul's M.E. Church. The vast majority of the approximately 550 people who resided in the Westside community were natives of Florida and

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<sup>12</sup>Allen Morris, *Florida Place Names* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1974), 75-76, 152; Seth Bramson, *Speedway to Sunshine: The Story of the Florida East Coast Railway* (Ontario: Boston Mills Press, 1984), 92-93, 132; Robert Mann, *Rails 'Neath the Palms* (Burbank: Darwin Publications), 18-20; Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Map of New Smyrna*, 1906.

<sup>13</sup>*New Smyrna News*, 2 February 1917, 3 April 1925; Map Book 4, p. 115, Deed Book 59, p. 279, Deed Book 60, p. 170, Volusia County Courthouse.

<sup>14</sup>Mortgage Book 21, p. 382, 388, Volusia County Courthouse; Census Bureau, Thirteenth Census, 1910, Enumerated Schedules, Tenth precinct, Volusia County, FL.

<sup>15</sup>Mortgage Book 21, p. 382, 388, Volusia County Courthouse; Census Bureau, Thirteenth Census, 1910, Enumerated Schedules, Tenth precinct, Volusia County, FL.

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Georgia. Some were from Alabama, North Carolina, and South Carolina, and a few were from Tennessee and New Jersey.<sup>16</sup>

In the 1920s, the nation entered a period of dramatic economic expansion. In Florida, a land boom began in early 1921, and property values rose quickly. Although the boom started in south Florida, particularly Miami, no part of the state escaped the trend. In virtually every city and town new subdivisions were platted and lots sold and resold for quick profits. Sharing in the growth, Volusia County property assessments increased nearly three-fold from \$1 million in 1917 to \$28 million by 1927. New Smyrna's population soared, rising from 2,007 in 1920 to 4,330 at the peak of the boom. The railroad upgraded its New Smyrna shops in 1925 at a cost of \$1,000,000. The largest single employer in the city, the FEC employed nearly 1,000 New Smyrna residents. A new city hall and post office were constructed and plans were unveiled for a deep sea port in 1926. The chamber of commerce reported nearly 150 residences under construction in 1927.<sup>17</sup>

New subdivisions were opened by Gus Spleiss's heirs; businessman E. Kirby Lowd; Norman S. Colee, assistant cashier of the state bank; merchant Rodolphus Sheldon; and William Behne, vice president of the chamber of commerce. These landholders had acquired property in the Westside decades earlier. By 1927, Norman Colee had sold nearly half of his properties along Duss Street north of Enterprise Avenue. Some investors developed houses for speculation or rental income, but few large-scale developments were apparent. Most investments came from small ventures consisting of two or three houses. F.M. Simkins, a road builder who lived along the river, built a house on Duss Street in the Colee subdivision and Charles Clark, the vice-president of East Coast Milling Company, developed a dwelling in the 400 block of North Myrtle Avenue. One of the largest investments came from the E.W. Bond Company of Lake Helen that built four small dwellings at the corner of Enterprise Avenue and Duss Street.<sup>18</sup>

By 1924, the Westside community contained nearly 250 buildings, most of those residences. The growth prompted the local school trustees to expand their education facilities. In June 1926, the New Smyrna architectural firm of Shappell & Weller drafted the plans for a school and the Lewis Construction Company completed the building in

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<sup>16</sup>Census Bureau, Fourteenth Census, 1920, Enumerated Schedules, Tenth precinct, Volusia County, FL.; Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Map of New Smyrna*, 1912, 1916.

<sup>17</sup>*New Smyrna News*, 15 August 1924, 29 May 1925; Florida Department of State, *Florida, An Advancing State, 1907-1927* (Tallahassee, 1928), 14-16, 104, 266; Census Bureau, Fifteenth Census, 1930, *Population*, 214.

<sup>18</sup>Rerick, *Memoirs of Florida*, 2: 438-439; *Florida Agriculturist*, 1 January 1898; Record of Incorporations Book 1, p. 12-13, Judgment Book 2, p. 125, 1925 tax roll, Volusia County Courthouse; *Volusia County Record*, 5 December 1896, 8, 13, 29 August 1913; *New Smyrna Observer*, 7 March 1936; *New Smyrna News*, 16 January 1914; Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Map of New Smyrna*, 1924, 1930, 1938; Plat Book 5, p. 182, Plat Book 6, p. 8, 22, 45, Plat Book 20, p. 82, 1927 tax rolls, Volusia County Courthouse; R.L. Polk, *Volusia County Directory* (Jacksonville, 1924), 537, 540; Census Bureau, Fourteenth Census, 1920, Enumerated Schedules, Tenth precinct, Volusia County, FL.

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1927. Initially referred to as the Mary Avenue School, the building was renamed Chisholm Academy in recognition of community leader Leroy Chisholm about 1935.<sup>19</sup>

In 1925, Florida's speculative land bubble began to deflate, in part, because bank deposits began to decline, and, in part, because in August the FEC announced an embargo on freight shipments to south Florida, where ports and rail terminals were clogged with unused building materials. Bankers and businessmen throughout the nation had begun to complain about transfers of money to Florida. Newspapers suggested fraud in land sales. Large bank withdrawals followed in early 1926, during the traditional season for winter tourists and speculators. By the close of the year forty Florida banks had collapsed. Real estate assessments declined by \$182,000,000 between 1926 and 1928. The Great Depression descended upon Florida three years in advance of the rest of the country.<sup>20</sup>

Development slowed in New Smyrna Beach, where many residents faced unemployment. Placed in receivership in 1931, the FEC implemented several cost cutting measures. In 1932, the company discontinued train service between New Smyrna Beach and Orange City, and abandoned the line in 1934. A tourist camp built for New Smyrna's visitors was dismantled, in part, to compel vacationing motorists to support hotel owners and the emerging motor and tourist courts that began to populate major highways. Most of the buildings in New Smyrna's former tourist camp were removed to new locations, including the Westside community where they provided permanent housing.<sup>21</sup>

The municipal government briefly experimented with developing property in the Westside community. In 1940, city manager W.E. Swoope supervised the platting of the so-called Municipal subdivision, itself a replat of an older development in the community. By 1942, several lots had been sold and a Luna Puckett had constructed a home. Some construction stemmed from the activities of religious institutions such as Mt. Zion Methodist Church at the corner of Enterprise Avenue and Sinnka Street. Another church, Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, was built at 214 North Myrtle Avenue. This church was organized in 1941, and was built during the tenure of the Reverend C.W. Carr.<sup>22</sup>

**Racial Issues**

Being a small-town neighbor in the shadow of world famous Daytona Beach, New Smyrna Beach shared many of the best and worst characteristics of its larger sister city. In the 1930s, both beaches were off-limits to African-Americans who had to vacation at nearby Bethune Beach in south Volusia County, or American Beach, in Nassau County. Beyond those recreational amenities, Daytona Beach was a closed society to blacks. In the 1930s, African-Americans constituted approximately thirty percent of the population of Volusia County.

<sup>19</sup>Minute Book 5, July 9, 1925, June 17, 1926, Volusia County School Board, DeLand, FL; Deed Book 171, p. 454, Volusia County Courthouse; Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Map of New Smyrna*, 1924, 1930, 1938.

<sup>20</sup>Tebeau, *Florida*, 385-87.

<sup>21</sup>Bramson, *FEC*, 19, 107, 117-118, 126-127; Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Map of New Smyrna*, 1924, 1930, 1938.

<sup>22</sup>Plat Book 8, p. 164, 1940, 1942 tax rolls, Volusia County Courthouse; Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Map of New Smyrna*, 1930, 1938.

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Denied access to adequate education, health care, public facilities, and recreational opportunities, blacks often endured the highest degree of discrimination in the urban centers of Daytona Beach, DeLand, and New Smyrna Beach. Additionally, Florida was the most lynch-prone state in the South with at least one extra-legal killing of a black citizen every year, except in 1933. Writing in 1935, college president and black leader Mary McLeod Bethune expressed her "...dislike to have thinking negroes all over the country and world to feel that after 30 years of work and struggle in a community like this [Daytona Beach] that we have not yet awakened the confidence and interest in our white constituency to use their influence to help us provide cultural advantages."

Racial change arrived in New Smyrna Beach, largely through the efforts of persons working in the fields of education, law, and religion. In 1954, the U. S. Supreme Court handed down its *Oliver Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, decision, thereby ending the legality of segregation in America's public schools. Despite the ruling, educational integration came slowly to New Smyrna Beach, and Volusia County. As late as August 1957, a KKK parade of seventy-six automobiles had toured Volusia County, beginning in DeLand and concluding in New Smyrna Beach in an effort to recruit new members.<sup>23</sup> In 1960, the NAACP filed a suit with the support of thirty-four East Volusia County residents to integrate the county's public schools. Formal school integration did not occur until 1970, but only after an order from a federal district court in Jacksonville. In 1960, among the first signs of educational integration in New Smyrna Beach was the newly-organized Sacred Heart Parish School accepting black children into its classrooms.

### Catholic Ministries

Sacred Heart Catholic Church began in 1889, as a mission of St. Peter's Catholic Church in DeLand under the direction of Father John O'Boyle. Eleven years later, after worshipping in the homes of various parishioners, the congregation built its first sanctuary in 1899, at 306 Faulkner Street, three blocks north of downtown and two blocks east of the Indian River. The church was located on property donated by Charles Dougherty. Initially a simple rectangular church with an entrance porch and a belfry, the wood-frame sanctuary was expanded over time with a chancel about 1913, and then a sacristy about 1924. Early pastors serving the church included Thomas Comber, Michael Curley, Joseph Downey, and M. J. Mullally. Perhaps the most renowned of the early pastors was Curley. A native of Ireland, he was ordained in Rome, in 1904, and arrived in DeLand later that year. Curley later rose to distinction as the bishop of St. Augustine, where over a ten year period he helped organize ten new churches in the St. Augustine Diocese. In 1921, he became archbishop of Baltimore. Several of Curley's mission churches, including St. Mary Catholic Church in Korona, built in 1914, and St. Mary Catholic Church in Rockledge, built in 1917, displayed similar features of the original Sacred Heart church in New Smyrna Beach.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup>New Smyrna Beach News, 1 August 1957, 1 May, 17 August 1969; Daytona Beach Evening News, 1 April 1969; Old Sacred Heart/St. Rita's Mission files, Black Heritage Museum.

<sup>24</sup>Charles Gallagher, *Cross & Crozier: The History of the Diocese of St. Augustine* (St. Augustine: Diocese of St. Augustine, 1999), 61-63, 111; Jane Quinn, ed., *The Catholic Presence in Central Florida* (Orlando: Orlando Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, 1988), 1-3, 71-72.

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In 1939, the diocese appointed Father Joseph Driscoll as pastor of Sacred Heart. In 1941, the white congregation of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church on Faulkner Street adopted the Westside community as a mission. That year, under the leadership of Father Joseph Driscoll, three sisters from Our Lady of Christian Doctrine in Nyack, New York, arrived to serve in the mission in a 1920s-era boarding house at 436 North Myrtle Avenue at the corner of Enterprise Avenue. The converted building contained a chapel and social hall with rooms for other parish activities. The diocese adopted the name Madonna House in honor of an older, well-known settlement house on Cherry Street in New York City.<sup>25</sup> The diocese named the chapel St. Rita for the "Patron Saint of the Impossible." Madonna House became a Christian social center that provided assistance to black families. The building and its religious applications served as one of the earliest tangible actions toward pursuing equality and civil rights in New Smyrna Beach.<sup>26</sup>

At New Smyrna Beach, Sister Mary Aimee served as the first superior with Sisters Mary Rose and Clare visiting residents, teaching kindergarten, and tending to some of the other needs of residents. Initially, the three sisters and their mission survived with \$45 per month contributed by the diocese. In addition, Southern Bakery donated five loaves of bread each morning, the Nordmann family provided fresh citrus, and Wipperman's Meat Market provided chickens. Other support came from a retired Navy nurse who provided chocolate syrup to make chocolate milk for the children. A retired Michigan priest, Father Peschong, and his sister, Kate, who lived in New Smyrna Beach, provided the mission with fresh fish each Wednesday and Friday. Father John Connell celebrated the first mass in St. Rita's chapel on 25 December 1941. Later, Sister Genevieve Stanislaus became the superior of the convent and Madonna House. Outraged and provoked by the blatant racism and discrimination still apparent in New Smyrna Beach - especially at the railroad station, public benches, and restaurants in the downtown - Stanilus sat on "colored only" benches at the depot, accompanied black children to the beach, and sat in the rear of buses. Sister Cunningham arrived in 1944 and later recalled some of the deplorable living conditions experienced by many of the Westside residents. Social mores and Jim Crow legislation prevented the sisters from residing in the black community. Still, providing education, food, and spiritual guidance to the Westside community's children, the sisters maintained a presence in the neighborhood between 1941 and 1969.<sup>27</sup>

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE**

In 1956, when the Sacred Heart congregation built a new church near United States Highway 1, the St. Augustine Diocese, Sacred Heart clergy and laity, and Madonna House's clergy, sisters, and laity worked together to relocate the older, abandoned sanctuary into the Westside community. The move expanded the

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<sup>25</sup> Founded in 1902, the Sisters of Our Lady of Christian Doctrine had been organized to minister to thousands of Catholic immigrants who lived in the Lower East Side of New York City in the early twentieth century. After successfully establishing Madonna House on 69<sup>th</sup> Street, the sisters assisted Catholics in other regions of the country, including the dioceses of Charleston, Chicago, and St. Augustine.

<sup>26</sup>Old Sacred Heart/St. Rita's Mission files, Black Heritage Museum.

<sup>27</sup>*New Smyrna Beach News*, 1 May 1969; Old Sacred Heart/St. Rita's Mission files, Black Heritage Museum.



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Catholic presence in the community. In March 1956, Father Thomas Wright of Sacred Heart requested the diocese approve the relocation of the sanctuary to Duss Street, which he described as a "...merely overgrown path..." He indicated that the lots contemplated for the placement of the church did not support any buildings and would have to be cleared of "very dense palmetto growth." Indeed, as late as 1930 not a single building occupied the block into which the sanctuary would be moved. The site was located two blocks southwest of Madonna House, providing for a short walk between the facilities. Later that year, C. E. Bower & Son of Orlando, transported the building to the new site, a move that extended across approximately ten blocks, including United States Highway 1 and the FEC tracks. The Robert L. Arnau Construction Company prepared the Duss Street site, built the new foundation system, removed and replaced the belfry before and after the move, and installed new steps. A member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Arnau had moved from Jacksonville to New Smyrna Beach in 1944 and supervised the construction of the new Sacred Heart Church in 1956. During the era, he served several terms on the New Smyrna Beach city commission and then as mayor in 1958 and 1959.<sup>28</sup>

Father Raymond Schantz served as priest at Madonna House/St. Rita's Chapel in the mid-1950s and conducted the first mass in the relocated church in late 1956. Two years later, the mission built a concrete block social center to the south of the church, a facility that included a kindergarten and nursery. By then, the congregation had grown to about twenty families who celebrated baptisms, confirmations, Communion, along with Friday fish dinners and making repairs to the aging sanctuary. Providing a transition from the Madonna House Chapel to the St. Rita's Mission Church, Montez James, a teacher in the Westside community who helped with the development of a new Chisholm High School, served as the organist in both facilities. Another parishioner, Maggie Lovelace regularly worshipped at St. Rita's Mission and would later work in the Sacred Heart Catholic School cafeteria. In 1957, Winvull Robinson, a black teenager at St. Rita's Mission, asked Sister Margaret Regina if he could join the church. She indicated that he would have to prove his intentions by attending mass every Sunday. Robinson appeared for every mass, attended catechism classes, and then joined the church while in his senior year at Chisholm High School. Later, Robinson earned a medical degree and was hired to head the Psychiatric Department at Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx. About 1958, the diocese sold Madonna House, which reverted to a lodging house for Westside's residents. Over the next several years, various priests were appointed to relatively brief tenures at St. Rita's Mission, including James Murphy, Thomas Radley, Francis Salmon, and Francis Walsh. In 1969, New Smyrna's Catholics integrated, prompting the closing of St. Rita's Mission. In all, between 1941 and 1969, approximately twenty priests and thirty sisters had worked and worshipped in New Smyrna Beach's Westside community. Drawing its roots to the 1940s, St. Rita's Colored Catholic Mission was one of the first central Florida black Catholic churches organized with the assistance and support of whites late in the Jim Crow period and during the era of integration. In the mid-1950s, the relocation of the former white church into the African-American community indicated a lessening of those tensions and the formation of cracks in the wall of segregation. Still, given the climate of intolerance in Volusia County, no

<sup>28</sup>New Smyrna Beach News, 12 April 1956, 30 August 1958, 17 October 1991; Old Sacred Heart/St. Rita's Mission files, Black Heritage Museum.

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small amount of courage attended those actions.<sup>29</sup> In contrast to Mary McLeod Bethune's experience, the black citizens of New Smyrna Beach in the early 1940s and middle of the 1950s "awakened the confidence and interest" of the city's white Catholics, as evidenced by their instituting Madonna House Mission and then relocating the former Sacred Heart Church into their community.<sup>30</sup>

Integration of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church followed in 1969, after which the Catholic diocese converted the former St. Rita's Mission into a neighborhood clinic and day care facility, which was sponsored by the Southeast Volusia Democratic Women's Club. St. Rita's served that function until the late-1980s, when it was abandoned. In 1991, brush was cleared from the property and the Catholic diocese intended to use the building for a heritage center and place for public meetings. Those plans languished and, after several years the city condemned the church. Responding to the threat of imminent destruction, several residents acted to preserve St. Rita's. Retired educator and long-time resident Mary Harrell took a leadership role in rescuing the building. Harrell helped organize the Old Sacred Heart/St. Rita's Restoration Committee and worked with the City of New Smyrna Beach, American Association of University Women, Southeast Volusia Historical Society, and Sacred Heart Catholic Church to save it. In 1997, the committee received a grant for \$27,500 from the Bureau of Historic Preservation to restore the building. In 1999, upon the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the building, the committee received an additional grant for \$70,000 to complete the restoration. That year, the Catholic Diocese of Orlando deeded the building to the Black Heritage Festival of New Smyrna Beach, a non-profit organization, which completed the restoration, installed exhibits in the building, and opened the Black Heritage Museum that year. A museum celebrated the centennial of the sanctuary on December 11, 1999.<sup>31</sup>

### ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The Gothic Revival Style was a popular style in America between 1840 and 1860. The revival was developed in England early in the nineteenth century, and within a couple of decades arrived in the United States. Richard Upjohn and Alexander Jackson Davis employed the style for ecclesiastical buildings. Examples of the style range from Upjohn's masterpiece, Trinity Church in New York City (1839-1846), to his smaller Carpenter Gothic version of St. Luke's in Clermont, New York (1857). The style gained popularity through pattern books, which showed the suitability for domestic applications. Domestic versions include Davis's Glen Ellen in Baltimore, Maryland (1832). The Gothic Revival experienced a renaissance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries known as the Late Gothic Revival. Buildings that embody the style from this later period typically displayed more refined proportions and historically accurate treatments. Few residential models appeared in Florida and most were built in older communities.

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<sup>29</sup>Old Sacred Heart/St. Rita's Mission files, Black Heritage Museum; *New Smyrna Beach News*, 1 May 1969.

<sup>30</sup>Robert E. Snyder, "Daytona Beach: A Closed Society," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 81 (Fall 2002), 164-165, 184-185.

<sup>31</sup>*New Smyrna Beach News*, 1 August 1957, 1 May, 17 August 1969; *Daytona Beach Evening News*, 1 April 1969; Old Sacred Heart/St. Rita's Mission files, Black Heritage Museum.

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Frame Gothic Revival churches, commonly known as Carpenter Gothic, are the most distinctive variety of Florida's Gothic Revival buildings. The majority of these churches represent an early settlement period in Florida's history which was also a period of active mission building by main stream denominations. The late nineteenth century was a time of popularity for the Gothic Revival Style in the United States. Many rural builders were assisted by popular magazines that disseminated information about building trends and styles throughout the country, and railroads that provided affordable distribution of manufactured building products. The denominations with liturgical traditions, specifically Catholics and Episcopalians, had a tradition of building in the Gothic form because it embodied their form of worship. The Gothic form contained a rectangular nave for the congregation. The congregation faced an altar which was sheltered within a distinct extension, the chancel. A side sacristy off of the chancel housed the priests' vestments and altar service was stored. Features of Carpenter Gothic construction included steeply pitched roofs, pointed windows that often included leaded or stained glass. Additional preferred features included belfries or steeples that gave a distinct church appearance, or a laterally attached tower that could contain a belfry and/or a narthex or vestibule. In keeping with true Gothic construction methods, many were built with post and beam timber construction that often left exposed truss work. Decorative vergeboards were sometimes included.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

St. Rita's is executed in the Late Gothic Revival, Carpenter Gothic Style, and is an important architectural landmark in the Westside community of New Smyrna Beach. The building contains a nave, and extensions for a chancel and sacristy. Its distinctive belfry and pointed arch moldings on the windows represent distinctive Gothic architectural characteristics. The exterior wood shingles in the gable end are an expression of local sensibility. The church was built on piers to promote air circulation, a common practice in Florida. St. Rita's is a well-proportioned, detailed example of a late nineteenth century church, and the building retains its historic architectural integrity and character to a high degree.

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

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**ST. RITA'S COLORED CATHOLIC MISSION,  
NEW SMYRNA BEACH, VOLUSIA CO., FL**

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundary encloses a parcel described as lots 9 & 10, block 17, Inwood New Smyrna per OR 4423/3064, otherwise known as 314 North Duss Street. Containing less than one acre, the parcel identification number is 7418-08-17-0090 by the Volusia County property appraiser. See the scaled site plan.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary encloses the property historically associated with the St. Rita's Mission since its relocation to this site in 1956.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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**ST. RITA'S COLORED CATHOLIC MISSION,  
NEW SMYRNA BEACH, VOLUSIA CO., FL**

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**PHOTOGRAPHIC LIST**

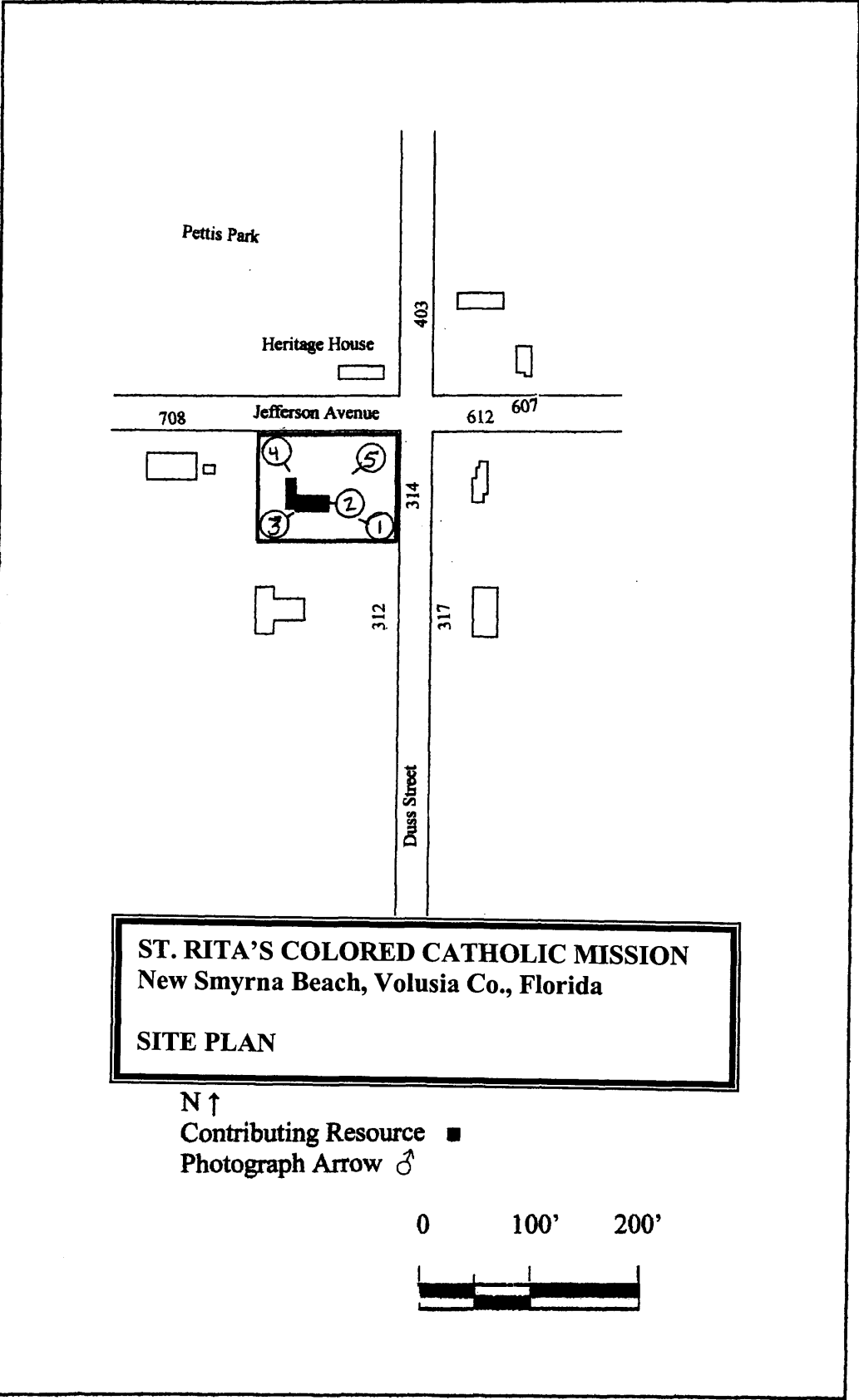
1. 314 North Duss Street, New Smyrna Beach
2. Volusia County, Florida
3. Sidney Johnston
4. April 2006
5. Johnston, DeLand
6. Front, east façade and south elevation, looking northwest
7. Photo #1 of 10

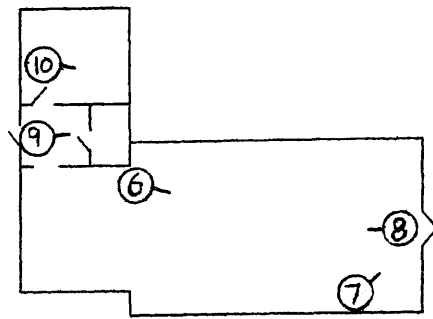
Items 1 – 5 are the same for the remaining photographs.

6. Façade detail and belfry, facing west
7. Photo #2 of 10
  
6. South elevation and west elevation, looking north east
7. Photo #3 of 10
  
6. West, rear elevation, looking northeast
7. Photo #4 of 10
  
6. North elevation, and east façade, looking southwest
7. Photo #5 of 10
  
6. Nave, looking east
7. Photo #6 of 10
  
6. Window with incised ceiling and access to belfry, looking east
7. Photo #7 of 10
  
6. Nave, looking west
7. Photo #8 of 10
  
6. Sacristy vestibule and restroom door, looking east
7. Photo #9 of 10
  
6. Sacristy office, looking east
7. Photo #10 of 10





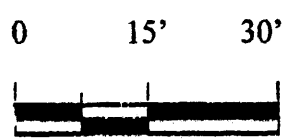


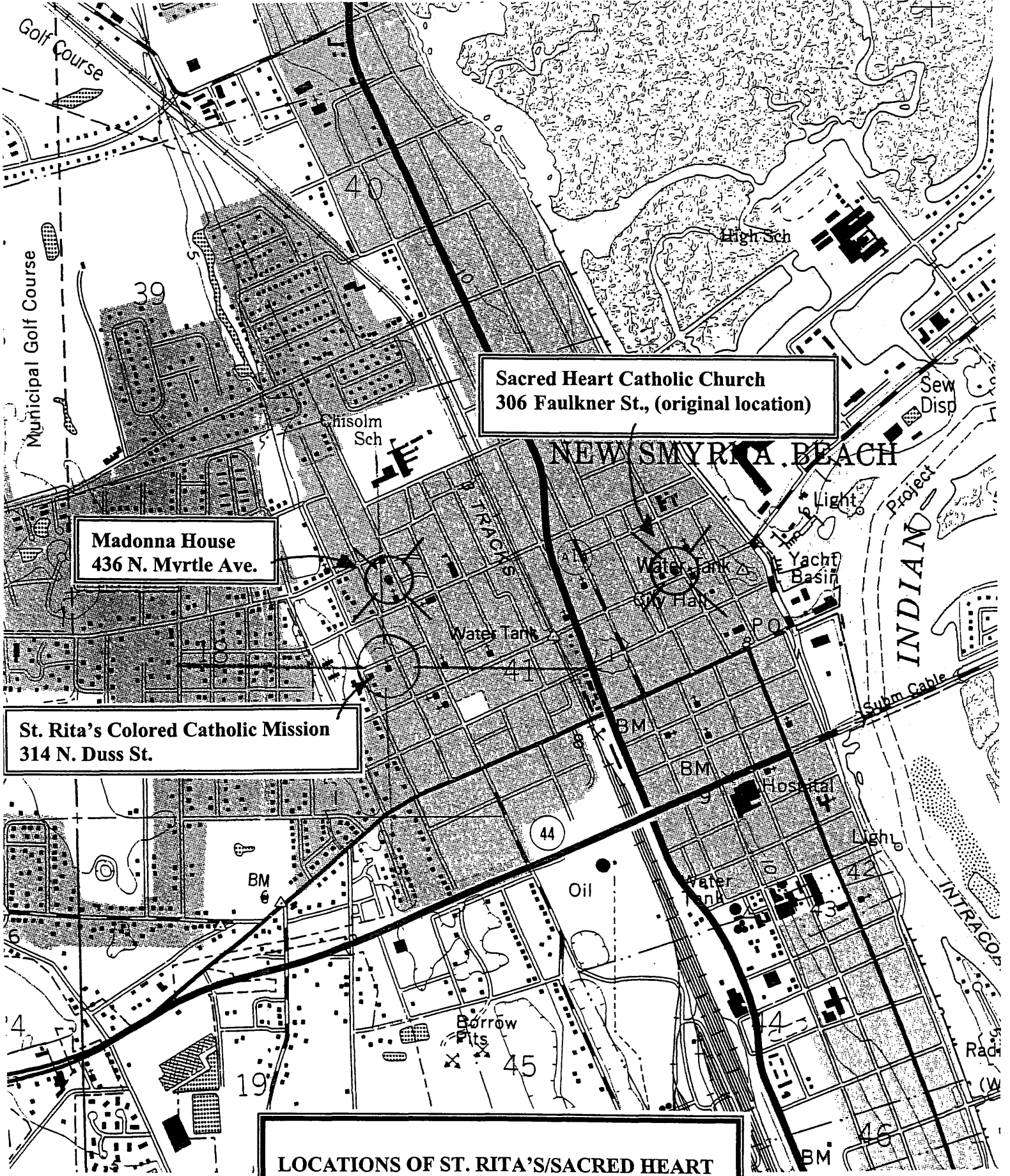


**ST. RITA'S COLORED CATHOLIC MISSION**  
**New Smyrna Beach, Volusia Co., Florida**

**FLOOR PLAN**

N ↑  
Photograph Arrow ♂





**Sacred Heart Catholic Church**  
306 Faulkner St., (original location)

**Madonna House**  
436 N. Myrtle Ave.

**St. Rita's Colored Catholic Mission**  
314 N. Duss St.

**LOCATIONS OF ST. RITA'S/SACRED HEART  
CATHOLIC FACILITIES REFERENCED IN  
NOMINATION**