

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 1

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**SUMMARY**

The Royal Rural Historic District is an African American agricultural community located in Sumter County, Florida. Royal is three miles northwest of Wildwood, five miles southwest of Oxford, and six miles east of The Villages, Florida. The landscape is characterized by rolling hills zoned for agricultural use and private residency. Like much of Central Florida, Royal's integrity is threatened by development. The district's significance centers on Royal's status as a Black Homesteader Colony (Friefeld et al. 2019). These settlements were in remote locations, primarily western states. At the time of Royal's settlement in the late 1800s, peninsular Florida was likewise a remote and difficult area to homestead. Like their western counterparts, Royal's earliest African Americans residents acquired properties through the Homestead Act of 1862. However, unlike other Black Homesteader Colonies, descendants of Royal's original homesteaders retain ownership of these and additional properties. A direct connection to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. These connections remain visible in the landscape with the existence of prominent communal and agricultural resources including tobacco barns, cane presses, community buildings, and cemeteries. There are 62 contributing resources including 28 buildings, 6 objects, 10 archaeological sites, 1 historic cemetery, and 5 Traditional Cultural Properties within the 3,501 acres comprising the district. While many non-contributing resources are present, their existence is evidence of an evolving community whereby families divide properties for descendants, who occupy and improve their lands. In addition, many descendants have purchased neighboring properties beyond those homesteaded by their ancestors. As such, many non-contributing resources at the time of listing will become eligible as they pass the 50-year benchmark in coming years.

**SETTING**

The Royal Rural Historic District is set within the unincorporated community of Royal, Sumter County, Florida (Figure 1). The surroundings are rural, consisting of open fields and pastures, forested parcels, and low density rural residential properties. To the south and southwest are forested wetlands associated with Lake Panasoffkee and the Withlacoochee River, except at the junction of I-75 and State Route 44, where there is a concentration of low density commercial and industrial development. To the north and west are open pastures used for horse and cattle ranches. Immediately to the east is the forested Wildwood Girl Scout Camp. Further to the northeast and east are the suburbanized neighborhoods associated with Wildwood and The Villages.

Although the district remains primarily rural, the area around it continues to transition to a suburban setting. Sumter County's population has been steadily increasing since the 1970s, driven by the expansion of The Villages, a majority White community that is purported to be the largest retirement

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 2

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

community in the nation. The population of Sumter County in 1990 was 31,577 and by 2000 had risen to 53,554 (US Census). The county's population according to the 2020 US Census has reached 129,938. Development continues to threaten the integrity and cultural fabric of Royal.

As the district preserves its integrity of setting as a rural community, the district boundary is defined by areas that are or have been associated with documented African American activities (homesteading, home ownership, farming, ranching, religious and cultural activities, etc.). The district includes important landscape elements such as agricultural fields, wooded lots, and roads aligned to section lines. Boundaries (described in detail in Section 10) were selected to follow property lines that coincide with roads, fences, and field edges as they existed during the period of significance (1870-1974). Many of these features correspond to the historic grid sections established in the 1840s by the Public Land Survey, which provided the framework for the issuance of homesteads to free Blacks in the 1870s, the start of the district's period of significance. The grid of 20-, 40-, 80-, and 160-acre plots is visible in historical and modern aerial imagery.

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

The following description follows the outline in *National Register Bulletin 30: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes* and includes a description of the current appearance of the district, its component resources, a description of the processes of change within the district and their impact upon its integrity for listing. Following a general description of the district, the narrative addresses the following: current and historic land uses and activities, patterns of spatial organization, responses to the natural environment, cultural traditions, circulation networks, boundary demarcations, vegetation, buildings, structures and objects, clusters, archaeology, traditional cultural properties (TCPs), and small-scale elements.

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The Royal Rural Historic District encompasses 3,501 acres. It intersects portions of Sections 21, 22, 23, 28, 27, 26, 33, and 34 in Township 18 Range 22 (Figures 1 & 2). It contains a total of 608 resources, with 62 contributing and 546 non-contributing (mostly buildings and structures built toward the end of or following the period of significance).

Primary access to the district is via County Roads (CR) 229, 231, and 237 from the north and south, CR 222 and 462 from the east and west, and CR 475 along the western boundary (Figure 1). These are two-lane, paved roads located along section lines that provide access to smaller farm or field roads, which

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

are a mix of unpaved and improved throughfares. The landscape within the district consists of small fields up to 40 or 80 acres in size, wooded lots, and residential parcels delineated by fences, tree lines, and other elements. Most of the fields remain in use as pastures and/or for small-scale crop farming.

The district's residential parcels include multiple clustered residences in various vernacular architectural styles constructed by the descendants of the original homesteaders or by families that settled in Royal during the period of significance. These clusters correspond to the original homesteads and are distributed across much of the district. Non-residential buildings include a bridge over Interstate 75, churches, a community center, a historic cemetery, and Traditional Cultural Properties. The physical and symbolic center of the district is the final surviving element of the former Royal Rosenwald School located at 9569 CR 235, which currently houses the offices of Young Performing Artists, Inc. (YPAs).

Interstate 75 bisects the district from northwest to southeast, but it is effectively screened from view by wooded lots, minimizing its impact on the design and setting of the district. The main road in the district, CR 462, crosses east to west over the interstate via an overpass.

The district's boundary encompasses the original properties secured by African Americans through the Homestead Act of 1862, additional properties purchased by African Americans during the period of significance (1870-1974), and White-owned areas that have been documented as being significant to the economic and social activities of Royal's African American residents for more than a century.

**PROCESSES**

*Land Uses and Activities*

Principal and significant land use in the Royal Rural Historic District involves small scale, non-industrial agricultural activities throughout the period of significance (1870-1974). Historic homesteads and associated outbuildings, fields, and pastures remain the dominant features of Royal's landscape. The central hub of the community is intact, concentrated along County Road 462. Historically, this area contained schools, community centers, churches, a post office, masonic lodge, and many local shops. Many of these buildings survive to the present. Agriculture remained the community's main enterprise until the late 1980s (USDA 1988) and is honored today through community events that include sugar cane harvesting, watermelon patches, household gardening, and raising livestock to consume and sell.

The major human forces that have shaped and organized Royal are intertwined with sociopolitical factors dating to initial settlement. The original settlers and founders of the community were newly emancipated, formerly enslaved people who pursued farming to achieve self-sufficiency and support

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 4

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

their families (O'Dell 1997). While African Americans in Royal today sometimes refer to their ancestors' deeded properties as resulting from Special Field Orders No. 15 (often known by the signature phrase "40 Acres and Mule"), documentary research confirms that Royal's initial Black residents settled land within the district's boundary by receiving deeds for their properties through the Homestead Act of 1862. This act was passed to encourage migration into frontier areas, which included large portions of peninsular Florida at the time. The act required five years of residence on the property before receiving the title for a small fee (The Center for Legislative Archives 2019). As such, we know that Royal's founding families began arriving in the 1860s, and oral histories suggest that early settlers encountered a small community of free Blacks complete with farms and a church (Graf 1993).

These founding families began farming, logging, and turpentine dipping (Young Performing Artists (YPA's) Inc. 2010). They cleared properties, built log cabins, and worked on the land to satisfy the requirements of the Homestead Act of 1862. They farmed their lands, primarily growing tobacco and sugarcane, and raising livestock such as cattle and hogs. A large variety of other crops were grown in small gardens for subsistence, a practice that continues to the present.

Roads connecting to and running through the community remain primary transportation routes today. As families grew, the descendants of the original settlers inherited portions of the original acreage allotted to their ancestors for the construction of new homesteads. The style of these homesteads changed from the original cabins, generally following local rural Florida vernacular styles (Photo 5) (Haase 1992). These farms were small-scale family enterprises focused on supporting the family with cash crops and subsistence farming. A measure of economic success is visible in the fact that many families invested in small-scale mechanization, purchasing equipment like tractors and cane presses. These changes constituted small-scale, non-industrial farming activities.

Land uses and activities have retained much of the historical agricultural uses into the 21st century. The total acreage of the district is 3,501, of which 92% is zoned agricultural or residential (Figure 2); the remaining 8% is zoned for non-agricultural activities including institutional (e.g., schools), public spaces (e.g., playgrounds, cemeteries), and other uses (parking lots, repair shops, etc.). This reflects a slightly reduced percentage of the historical agricultural land given the development pressures on Royal and other rural locations in Florida. A reduction in farming also resulted from the changing economic and political climate surrounding small-scale family farms during the mid-20th century. The integrity of the landscape is threatened by the expansion of The Villages, which has seen unprecedented growth in recent decades. Interstate and Turnpike expansion projects to accommodate the increased population further threaten the landscape. Interstate 75 already bisects Royal. The construction of this interstate highway took place during the period of significance and should be seen as an additional contribution to

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 5

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

the landscape since transportation projects are historically positioned in ways that target working class and/or minority neighborhoods (Porter 2004). In addition, the construction of this highway did not result in the destruction of Royal, whose residents were able to traverse on foot or by motor vehicle via at least one bridge crossing the highway, thus maintaining the historical connections within Royal.

*Patterns of Spatial Organization*

The landscape within the historic district is characterized by small fields, residential lots, and wooded areas that correspond to broader development patterns established when the community was first homesteaded in the nineteenth century (1860s and 1870s). Today, family farms are extended family farms, and consist of older homesteads with newer, neighboring homes established by the children and relatives of earlier residents. These homes are clustered around family-owned agricultural buildings and fields, providing insight into the pattern of historical spatial organization branching out from the oldest, central farmsteads that originated in the homesteading period. Historic roads and lanes connect the district and follow the grid established by the public land survey system. Fences and planted lines of trees divide farmsteads from one another. This pattern of spatial organization and development is most visible along County Roads 462 and 222, which bisect the district east to west.

The larger story of development that occurred in Royal through the early 1970s is reflected in the landscape and resources of the district. An aerial photograph from the USDA dating to 1941 (Figure 3) shows a well-developed downtown area in the center of the landscape area. This is surrounded by rectangular agricultural fields in a well-kept condition. By this time roads had become oriented east-west or north-south and a network of trails and footpaths are clearly visible throughout the study area. The northern area of the study area remains wooded, and the southern portion is still dominated by ponds and wetlands. This aerial documentation pre-dates the construction of the Florida Turnpike and I-75. All other roads mentioned elsewhere in the report are visible, and a closer inspection of the aerial reveals that most are apparently well-maintained dirt roads. The district retains its historic pattern of spatial organization and therefore integrity. See Section 8 for greater analysis of the district's development.

*Response to the Natural Environment*

The patterns of social organization in Royal were intimately tied to the natural environment. The community is located within the Sumter Upland physiographic region (White 1970). This topography is characterized by gently rolling hills near the study area, and low hills and valleys becoming more common as one moves away from the study area and towards the center of the peninsula. Elevation in

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 6

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

the landscape ranges between 13 meters (42 feet) and 29 meters (95 feet). The climate is characterized by warm and relatively humid summers with mild and dry winters.

Approximately half of the annual rainfall occurs between June and September. Responses to the natural environment center on modest terraforming activities associated with raising various crops (e.g., tobacco, sugarcane). Extended periods of dry weather or droughts are not uncommon and furrow irrigation systems are required for most crops. The small channels required for furrow irrigation were constructed through manual labor, like the many sharecropped farms in other parts of Florida and the South. Although mechanization took root in nearby communities, industrial agriculture remained rare in Royal. Farms in the county are diversified owing to the variety of suitable soils, which are well-represented in the district. Crops commonly grown include watermelons, tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, and squash. Historically, this has also included the cultivation and processing of tobacco and sugarcane. Several informants discussed ongoing, albeit small-scale growing, pressing, and boiling of sugarcane. Beef production remains one of the leading income producers, and most beef is sold through livestock auctions in nearby Webster as has been done for generations (USDA 1988:2-3).

Approximately 1/3 of the land in the district is covered by poorly drained soil. This corresponds to the many low-lying, depressional, and swampy areas. The other 2/3 of the district is covered by well drained areas. These correspond to agricultural areas, including manure production and orchards in recent years.

*Cultural Traditions*

Few free Black rural towns founded during Reconstruction survive in the present. Fewer still retain the agricultural practices that defined them historically. Similar rural African American towns in Florida, such as Rosewood, Santos, and Eatonville were either destroyed through overt violence, displaced by infrastructural improvements, or face significant threats from development today. These threats remain common at the national level, and similar communities such as Nicodemus in Kansas (Hosbey 2016) survive as largely depopulated places. Nicodemus' population in 2020 was just 14 (US Census).

Royal is the last *living* rural, historically African American community in the nation. Its residents preserve a way of life that was once common across the US but has largely disappeared. It stands alone as the only one to survive with a significant population still occupying the original lands homesteaded by their ancestors more than 150 years ago. Royal's survival is due in large part to the perseverance of Royal's residents. Efforts to commemorate this history, by groups such as the local masons, the Royal Women's Group, Busy Bees Youth Club, and individuals like Beverly Steele and organizations like Young Performing Artists, Inc. (YPAs), also play a significant role in preserving this heritage.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 7

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Educating the next generation about historic agricultural practices and commemorating African American history is crucial to understanding the significance of Royal in a nation where few similar communities exist.

The original settlers and their descendants grew tobacco and sugarcane, raised cattle and hogs, grew cotton, as well as various other crops (e.g., watermelon), and fished the town's many ponds and lakes. Oral histories describe how residents grew and processed these major crops. Activities specifically discussed in such resources focus on harvesting, curing, and selling tobacco, often from a very young age. Tobacco was grown and processed in a similar way. Men and boys would lay out the rows and prepare the soil by hand. Women and girls would plant the tobacco. Oral histories recount the process being done by hand into the early 20th century with some mechanization such as the use of tractors by mid-century (Runnels 1979; Caruthers 2024; Dunlap and Keiler 2024; Hughes 2024; Huff and Jenkins 2024; Jenkins 2024; Williams 2024).

Small-scale sugarcane processing continues to the present. Historically, sugarcane was grown in fields and harvested by hand with cane machetes. The stalks were taken to the cane presses and fed into the rotating metal drums powered by mules or donkeys. Evidence shows that recent, more commemorative, small harvests might be turned by hand. The cane juice drips out from the mechanism's spigot, and the fibers of the plant are expelled from the opposite side of the mill. From there, the cane juice is taken to a boiler housed in a small shed or larger polebarn, where it is boiled for hours to reduce it into a dark-colored syrup. Implements for skimming (e.g., large ladles) were handmade by previous generations from materials available in the district (Marsenburg 2013).

Other ways Royal's residents celebrate their community, and history occurs every Father's Day weekend. Typically coinciding with Juneteenth, the community of Royal has hosted a Homecoming celebration since the 1960s. During this time descendants return to Royal to celebrate their history and maintain community connections. This event began originally as several smaller family gatherings that eventually merged into one large event for the entire community and visitors (Marsenburg 2013). In recent years, this event has attracted thousands of participants from across the state of Florida and nation.

**COMPONENTS***Circulation Networks*

The main and historic artery of Royal is County Road 462. It runs east-west through the community and constitutes the central hub of Royal. The school, churches, and other community buildings are located

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 8

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

along this road. Historically and in the period of significance the central hub had a post office, gas station, and shops. To the west, County Road 462 eventually turned south, intersecting with U.S. Highway 44. This north-south section of road is now County Road 475. To the east, County Road 462 steps south a couple of times until it crosses Highway 301 in Wildwood (Figure 4).

Oral histories describe transportation of tobacco to Jacksonville via truck convoys, residents walking to Oxford for work, and walking across Royal to visit relatives (O'Dell 1997). Historic aerial photography shows the main roads described above, as well as a network of walking paths that branch out from the central hub to other parts of the community and to outside towns (Figures 3, 5, and 6). Born in 1927, Catherine Latimer recalled how folks moved about Royal, "a lot of this was still woods, we knew right where the shortcuts were, it was all dirt roads, too" (O'Dell 1997). These walking paths were vital to the cohesiveness and longevity of the community.

*Boundary Demarcations*

Patterns of land ownership and use begin with the original GLO patents granted to Royal's founders. Each family had 40, 80, or 120 acres which was subsequently subdivided and deeded to children of the original settlers and their families. Some land was donated to public spaces such as the cemetery, churches, and a public school which now serves as a community center and public park. County Roads follow land patent boundaries while some smaller paved and unpaved roads follow footpaths and today intersect historic family properties from one end of Royal to the other.

Fences were built around homesteads to protect the homes from free ranging livestock. Hogs were kept corralled and fenced in family plots. Cattle were historically both free ranging and fenced in. Residents regularly recall that livestock were free ranging during the day, intermingling with those of their neighbors. Ownership was determined by cropped or notched ears; however oral histories suggest most of the time cows responded to their owner's calls and returned to fenced in areas in the evenings. Due to Florida laws that effectively ended free ranging livestock in the mid-20th century, many of the fields are now fenced-in with post and barbed wire, and livestock remain on the same property all day long.

*Vegetation Related to Land Use*

Much of the landscape is comprised of open, grassy fields. Native trees and shrubs have grown along some fence lines and beside roads. Some historic residences, agricultural buildings, and ruins also have trees and shrubs growing in and over them. Historically, fields not used for livestock were agricultural fields for tobacco and sugarcane cultivation. Changes in United States laws favoring large-scale,



**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 9

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

industrial agriculture for tobacco and sugarcane meant that few areas continued to commercially grow these crops (Vogeler 1981; Friedberger 2014). Royal was one such exception to the national trends disturbing small family farms. These traditions continue to the present in Royal, although the scale of such operations has been reduced as other forms of employment superseded small-scale, family farming in Florida and elsewhere. Today, these crops are grown for local use and to celebrate Royal's cultural heritage and share it with others (Runnels 1979, Marsenburg 2013).

*Buildings, Objects, Structures, and Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs)*

The Royal Rural Historic District is home to several different kinds of contributing resources including buildings, objects, and structures as well as traditional cultural properties (TCPs) dating to the period of significance (Figure 7). Buildings, objects, and structures are commonly used to determine eligibility for inclusion on the NRHP, but TCPs remain less common. Several areas within the Royal Rural Historic District's boundary fit the definition of a TCP as outlined by the National Park Service, which defines TCPs as areas that have associations with cultural practices, traditions, lifeways, and other social institutions of a living community. TCPs in Royal are associated with practices that are still observed in the community. TCPs are included in the Sites count for purposes of this nomination.

*Contributing Residences*

The first residences in Royal were built by the founding families. These were described as cabins surrounded by swept yards and fencing. Swept yards were a common African American practice dating to the time of enslavement (Battle-Baptiste 2011). Because none of these original cabins are extant in Royal, it is unclear whether they were single pen pioneer buildings, dog-trot cabins, or a mix of types. Similarly, their construction style or materials are not apparent, however contemporary analogues offer an idea. The style of the rest of the residences conforms with the period of construction and local trends in rural Florida. Many of the other residences follow a masonry or frame vernacular, minimal traditional, or otherwise unornate, bungalow or ranch style depending on when they were built.

The Polly Wideman Childhood Home (2.2, Photo 4) was built in 1912 and is in a hall-and-parlor frame vernacular style that likely followed the initial, simpler cabins built by Royal's founders. Cladding is board and batten with side gables covered with metal roofing. It is in a state of disrepair with missing windows and warped foundations. It is one of the few remaining buildings that are both associated with descendants of the original Royal settlers and an important cultural figure, Polly Patterson Wideman. Associated structures nearby are outbuildings constructed during a similar period as the oldest residence and later residences of relatives (Jannie Jackson residence (2.5, Photo 7), Leola James home (2.6, Photo 8), Howard Patterson residence (2.7, Photo 9), George and Polly Wideman tobacco barn (3.2, Photo 17),

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 10

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

and Howard Patterson Outbuilding (5.3, Photo 34)). Polly Wideman (nee Patterson) married George Wideman and was Howard Patterson's sister.

The Mae Ollie Mosley Homestead is a Jim Walter kit home built in 1962. The Jim Walter Company began building homes in 1942 and specialized in building completed exteriors, or shells, leaving the completion of the interior to the homeowner. It is a frame building on masonry piers. Horizontal wood siding covers the exterior and appears to have had what potentially was an open carport extension removed, as the dropped gable roofline is visible on the eastern side of the house. This building is located on a portion of property that belonged to Royal founder James Mathews and is associated with a descendant of the original founders of Royal.

*Contributing Tobacco Barns*

The agricultural structures follow a more utilitarian stylistic pattern, where the sheds are frame vernacular board and batten or unenclosed pole barns. The tobacco barns are more uniform, but simple square footprint gable roof masonry vernacular buildings. The remaining tobacco barns are all of a similar style and construction and were constructed in the mid-20th century. It is likely these replaced older wood frame tobacco barns as the buildings aged and the community grew. These buildings are tall one-story structures in a masonry vernacular style. Made primarily of concrete block, they have various blocks along the ground level turned on their side (holes exposed) for ventilation. Side gabled roofs are covered with 5V crimp sheet metal, with no windows or porches. (Ingram 2015).

*Contributing Cane Presses*

Cane presses in Royal (4.1, photo 24; 4.2, photos 25-27; and 4.3, photos 28-31) have manufacturer information visible on their iron siding, and research indicates they were produced until the 1940s. The current owner of the property of one of the cane presses indicated that cane processing has occurred as recently as 2013 and later (Marsenburg 2013). The remainder of the barns vary in their style and use. 4.3 is a simple open pole barn, used as a boiler house for the associated cane boiler and press. 5.1 (Photo 13) and 5.2 (Photo 2) are frame vernacular pole barn sheds with board and batten siding, likely used for more general or multiple purposes.

*Contributing Commercial and Community Buildings*

Royal's first gas station (7.1, photo 38), a dry cleaner (7.2, photo 39), and the post office site (8.10, Figure 8) comprise the identifiable commercial buildings and sites. These are located along CR 462. The Post Office site is in the center of the community and records indicate it operated from 1891 to 1907. The other two structures, the gas station and dry cleaners, were constructed in the mid-20th century of concrete block, with an asphalt shingle mansard roof and gabled roof with 5V crimp metal, respectively.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 11

These commercial structures demonstrate a period of economic growth beginning in the late 19th century that continued through the mid-20th century, when many of the other structures were constructed in the community.

Community structures in Royal include the masonic lodge (6.1, photo 35), the school and cafeteria (6.3, photo 37) located in what is considered the heart of the community. These structures are masonry vernacular constructed of concrete block. The lodge has a gabled roof with 5V crimp metal roofing; the cafeteria and community center have asphalt shingles on hipped roof.

*Contributing Cemetery*

There is one main cemetery for the Community of Royal (photos 1 and 2), located centrally and to the south of the main community area. It is just off County Road 229 and is on an open field that gently slopes to the west. The majority of vegetation is on the northern boundary of the cemetery. It is on property that originally belonged to an original African American settler of Royal named Lewis Graham. Many locally important figures and descendants of the original founding families of the community are buried here. The earliest identifiable burial dates to 1885 and the cemetery remains in use today. It is one of the oldest extant resources in the community.

*Contributing Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs)*

Royal is home to at least five places associated with recreational, subsistence, and religious activities. These TCPs are associated with water features located across the community (Figure 9). Oral histories document numerous activities on these properties (Dunlap and Keiler 2024; Hughes 2024; Williams 2024). The five remaining TCPs are likely an incomplete inventory as Florida's aquifers continue to shrink, lowering the water table and turning once permanent ponds and lakes into intermittent, semipermanent, or even nonexistent water features (Dunn 2019).

*Non-Contributing Buildings and Structures*

The non-contributing buildings and structures within the district are primarily non-contributing due to age. They are in a variety of styles, some modern houses built after the period of significance, and are mostly masonry or prefabricated. Some properties have small, prefabricated aluminum sheds. A church built after the period of significance is on the parcel associated with the post office.

*Clusters*

The spatial arrangement of Royal is grouped in three levels of increasing scale. First level is the individual homestead; the second level involves multiple homesteads in family groups; the third level looks at clustering within the community. The first level is the average homestead. Historically it would

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 12

have consisted of a main family home, an enclosed barn or shed, and a tobacco barn. These homesteads would have also had a garden, cane and tobacco fields, hog pens, and fenced-in areas for cattle. Cane presses were either in the open or in a pole barn, with the boiler in a separate building, either a pole barn or enclosed barn.

The second level involves a couple of homesteads, in family groupings. They are usually near the main homestead, and those family units often share the agricultural buildings such as barns, sheds, tobacco barns, and cane presses.

The third level shows clustering of community and commercial buildings within the village center, or central hub of Royal. It functions as a central hub today and is visible in historic maps and aerials as such and lies generally around the intersection of CR 462 and CR 235. Moving away from the hub, the second level clustering of family units within their ancestor's original 40, 80, or 120 acres.

*Archaeological Sites*

A total of 19 previously identified archaeological sites are located within the community boundaries. Nine of the archaeological sites within the community boundary are prehistoric campsites, habitation sites, low-density lithic scatters and quarries (8SM76, 8SM77, 8SM81, 8SM82, 8SM88, 8SM130, 8SM131, 8SM775, 8SM777), and are considered non-contributing.

The remaining ten archaeological sites are historic and were occupied or utilized within the period of significance for the community and are therefore considered contributing. The FPC Substation site (8.1) was identified and excavated by Piper Archaeological Research, Inc. in 1989. The other contributing sites (8.2-8.10) were identified by informant interview, historic map review, and remote sensing. LiDAR remains an important method for identifying historical structures in the Southern US (Harmon et al. 2006). Analysis of 2018 LiDAR produced by the Florida Department of Transportation reveals these structural aspects within the Jesse Woods' Home site (8.3, Figures 10 and 11) and the Wilson Family Homestead site (8.6) (Figure 12). In these areas, rectangular features corresponded with building footprints and structures verified with historical aerial imagery. LiDAR analysis of 8.4, 8.5, and 8.6 also show agricultural ridging (Figures 13-15).

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 13

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

*Small-scale elements*

Near the community center, a historic marker details the history of Royal and its founders. Along CR 235A, facing the intersection with CR 462, a sign reads “Dillie Bryant Memorial Hwy”. CR 235A marks the eastern edge of Dillie Bryant’s original 80 acres deeded in 1885.

From the roads across the community, agricultural equipment such as tractors and miscellaneous hand tools, old and new, are visible near barns, sheds, and pole barns, representing the historic and modern agricultural land use predominant in the community. Cattle gates join some fields with others, while some open directly onto the road. Various kinds of cattle fencing are visible across the community, most consisting of woven wire or barbed wire on round wooden posts.

While tobacco and sugarcane are no longer the primary agricultural products produced in Royal, the tools, equipment, fencing, and gates demonstrate continuing agricultural and animal husbandry practices are visible across the district.

**CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**

The inventory is organized into nine categories of contributing resources and a summary of noncontributing resources. The nine categories of contributing resources are: Cemetery, Residential Buildings, Tobacco Barns, Cane Presses and associated buildings, Barns and Sheds, Community Structures, Commercial Structures, Archaeological Sites, and Traditional Cultural Properties.

Some of the properties have been previously surveyed as part of the Community of Royal Cultural Resources Assessment Survey conducted in 2017 by Digital Heritage Interactive, LLC for Young Performing Artists, Inc. (YPAs) funded by a small matching grant by the state of Florida. One site (FPC Substation) previously recorded by Piper Archaeological Research, Inc. in 1989, and the Royal Community Center by Beverly Steele from Young Performing Artists, Inc. (YPAs) in 1998.

Properties that contribute to the character of the landscape predate 1974 and are often associated with descendants of the original settlers of Royal, are on original Government Land Office purchased properties by the original settlers of Royal, and the majority are currently owned by descendants of those original settlers. Properties comprised of agricultural lands or woodlands which do not contain any structures are considered contributing sites to the landscape.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 14

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

***CEMETERY (1)***

1.1 810 CR 229 (SM00084) Oak Hill Cemetery (Photographs 1-2)

The cemetery gate faces east toward CR 229 and open fields across the road. Most burials are located towards the front of the property, which gently slopes down towards the back. The cemetery was a portion of the original property belonging to the Royal settler, Lewis Graham. The cemetery was established in approximately 1885 (the earliest visible date on a gravestone) and is still in active use today. Many historic and culturally significant residents of Royal are buried here, including Rev. Matthew Beard, who died at 115 years of age and preached the Sunday before his passing.

***RESIDENTIAL RESOURCES (28)***

2.1 P407 W C-462 (SM00976) Primas and Mary Massey Residence (Photograph 3)

This residence was built in 1946. It is a one-story house, built in a minimal traditional, bungalow style made of concrete block. There are no ornamentations or dormers. The front porch is closed and incised, a few feet from CR462 and visible from the road. The single front-facing gable encompasses the enclosed porch; roofing material is metal. Below the gable, the façade is horizontal tongue-and-groove wood siding with a vent located below the eaves. Windows are boarded over and not visible. The front porch is closed, incised, and north-facing. It is adjacent to a tobacco barn [3.1] which is associated with the same owners. Landscaping is overgrown, and the building is in disrepair and vacant. This property is a portion of land initially owned by Hampton Anderson (1885), who was one of the founders of Royal. It is currently owned by descendants of the original settlers of Royal.

2.2 434 CR 226 (SM00978) Polly Wideman Childhood Home (Photograph 4)

This building is a one-story hall and parlor frame vernacular residence built in 1912. The side gabled roof is covered with 5V crimp sheet metal. Exterior fabric is board-and-batten; some of the siding on the western façade have been covered by a green waterproofing or protective fabric. Some areas show the board and batten siding has rotted and exposed portions of the interior. Windows are single hung sash wooden windows; however, some windows are missing. The front entry porch is on the eastern half of the building, south facing, projecting, and open with a flat metal roof. Landscaping is overgrown, and the building is in disrepair and vacant. The residence is associated with other nearby houses and agricultural structures associated with the Patterson family and their descendants [2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 3.2, 5.3]. The Pattersons are descendants of some of the original settlers of Royal. Oral history suggests that Polly Patterson Wideman grew up in this house. She was Royal's second oldest resident (b. 1903, d. 2012), and is considered an important cultural figure in the community.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 15

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

2.3 478 E C-462 (SM00982) Reverend Robert Simmons Residence (Photograph 5)

This is a one-story bungalow residence constructed in 1946. It is stacked front gabled with metal roofing. Windows are wooden single hung sash. The front porch is south facing, open, and projecting. Below the eaves there is vertical tongue-and-groove wood siding. The whole house is elevated with a concrete block foundation. Landscaping is overgrown, and the building is in disrepair and vacant. It is on a portion of land that was part of an original settler of Royal's property, William Harley. According to neighbor interview, belonged to Reverend Robert Simmons. There is also a tobacco barn on this property associated with the same owner [3.3].

2.4 420 E C-462 (SM00996) Reverend Robert Simmons Homestead (Photograph 6)

This building faces CR 462 and is a one-story painted concrete block ranch style residence built in 1951. Roofing is side gable covered with asphalt shingles. Below the eaves is covered with vertical tongue-and-groove wood siding. Windows are single hung sash metal. An open projecting front porch protects the entryway, bottom half is enclosed, and the top half has screens. An incised carport is on the eastern side of the structure. This building is in good condition and is still in use. Neighbor interview suggests this property was part of Reverend Robert Simmons' Homestead, associated with structure a tobacco barn [3.3] and another residence [2.3]. The structure is on a portion of the original property that belonged to William Harley, an original settler of Royal.

2.5 434 CR 226 (SM00979) Jannie Jackson Residence (Photograph 7)

This building was built in 1958 (Photo 7). It is one-story masonry residence in a minimal traditional bungalow style. The siding is painted concrete block with worn paint. There is no ornamentation or dormers. The roof is offset stacked front-facing gable, covered with asphalt shingles. Below the eaves, there is vertical tongue-and-groove wood siding with vents. Some of that siding has deteriorated and has been covered with a green waterproofing or protective fabric. Other areas have been covered with asphalt shingles. There are no porches and windows are boarded up. This building is on the same property as the Polly Wideman Childhood Home [2.2]. Landscaping is maintained; however, the building is in disrepair and vacant.

2.6 9812 CR 231 (SM00980) Leola James Residence (Photograph 8)

Built in 1959, this building is a one-story residence in minimal traditional style. Most of the paint has worn off the concrete block exterior. The single side gabled roof is covered in asphalt shingles. Vertical tongue-and-groove siding is below the eaves. Some windows and the front entrance are boarded up; exposed windows are wooden single hung sash, and likely original to the residence. The foundation appears to have shifted and has left a visible crack along the northeast corner of the structure. Although the landscaping is maintained, the building itself is in disrepair and vacant.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 16

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

2.7 539 CR 231 (SM00992) Howard Patterson Residence (Photograph 9)

This building was constructed in 1955 (Photo 9). It is an offset stacked front-gabled structure covered in metal. The porch is closed and incised, and its windows have decorative corrugated metal awnings. Windows are aluminum single hung sash. The exterior fabrics are asphalt shingles and tar paper which cover the original wood siding. Landscaping is overgrown and the building needs some repairs, but it is actively used as a residence. Neighbor interviews suggest this building was Howard Patterson's residence as an adult, and there is an associated outbuilding on the property as well [5.3]. Howard Patterson was one of James Patterson and Ellen Bloom Patterson's children, and brother to Polly Patterson Wideman.

2.8 133 E C-462 (SM00993) Plas and Molly Lewis Homestead (Photograph 10)

This is a one-story minimal traditional residence built in 1962. Exterior fabric is concrete block. Ground plan is a front-facing U-shape, and the metal roof is cross gable, with a hipped roof on the western extension. Windows have been removed. Landscaping is overgrown, and the building is in disrepair and vacant. This property is a portion of land that originally belonged to Sandy Robinson, an original settler of Royal. It is adjacent to and associated with neighboring historically significant residences and agricultural structures. It is on a portion of a property that belonged to Sandy Robinson, one of the first settlers of Royal.

2.9 245 W C-462 (SM00994) Barney Lewis Homestead (Photograph 11)

This is a one-story ranch residence. Built in 1963, it has an L-shaped ground plan with a cross-gable roof covered in asphalt shingles. Exterior fabric is vertical wood siding. Windows have metal awnings with a couple altered to accommodate window air conditioning units. This building is in good condition and is still in use. It is on a portion of property that belonged to James Mathews, an original settler of Royal. It is adjacent to and associated with neighboring historically significant residences and agricultural structures and may be owned by descendants of the original settlers of Royal.

2.10 407 E C-462 (SM00995) Mae Ollie Mosley Homestead (Photograph 12)

This building was constructed in 1962 and is a Jim Walter kit home (Photo 12). It has a side gable roof with a rear extension on the eastern portion that has a flat roof. Roofing material is asphalt shingles. It has a combination of single hung sash and horizontal sliding metal windows. The porch is open incised and north-facing with metal columns with lattice railing. The home sits on masonry piers. A dropped gable roof line is visible on the eastern side of the house, suggesting an extension, possibly a carport, was removed. This building is in good condition and is still in use. Neighbor interviews suggest that this house was the first Jim Walter kit home constructed in Royal (Steele 2017, personal communication). These homes were designed and built by the Jim Walter Corporation located in Tampa, Florida. They



**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 17

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

were completed exteriors, or “shells”, leaving the homeowner to complete the inside. It is also on a portion of property that originally belonged to James Mathews, an original settler of Royal.

2.11 601 E C-462 (SM00997) Elliot and Beatrice Mathews Homestead (Photograph 13)

Constructed in 1962, this building is a one-story concrete block ranch residence. Exterior fabrics are concrete block, stone veneer, and wood siding. The roof is cross-gabled, with a centered gable with incised entry porch. The front entrance has a front-facing gable, and the façade below this gable features stone veneer. The rest of the exterior is painted concrete block, with horizontal tongue-and-groove siding. The eastern side of the structure has an incised carport. Windows are single hung sash metal. This building is in good condition and is still in use. Neighbor interviews suggest this property was part of the Elliot & Beatrice Mathews Homestead. It is on a portion of the original property that belonged to James Mathews, an original settler of Royal.

2.12 563 E C-462 (SM00998) Mother Melba Keiler Homestead (Photograph 14)

This is a single-story bungalow style residence constructed in 1941. The exterior fabric is horizontal lap wood siding. The metal roof is front gable with an open projecting a hip roof porch. The windows are wood single hung sash. This building is in good condition and is still in use. Neighbor interviews suggest this property was part of the Mother Melba Keiler Homestead, a descendant of the original settlers. It is on a portion of the property that belonged to an original settler of Royal, James Mathews.

2.13 9744 NE 2nd Dr. (SM00999) Nelson Brooks Sr. Homestead (Photograph 15)

This building is a one-story minimal traditional residence constructed in 1946. Windows are a combination of original wooden single hung sash and metal awning replacements. The roof is front gable, and the eaves have brackets. The front porch is open, projecting, screened in, with a flat roof. The roofing is a combination of 5V crimp sheet metal and corrugated metal, presumably used as a repair. The building needs some repairs, but it is actively used as a residence. This residence is adjacent to a cane boiler and press [4.3] and associated with neighboring historically significant residences and agricultural structures and is owned by descendants of the original settlers of Royal. It is on a portion of the original property that belonged to William Harley, one of the first settlers of Royal.

2.14 2061 E C-462 (SM01351) Elnora Woods Residence (Photograph 16)

This building is a single wide mobile home constructed in 1961 and contains exterior decorative elements and flares typical of the time period (Photo 16). Exterior fabric is metal siding, and windows are aluminum awning and original. One window is damaged and covered with plastic. This residence is a portion of the original GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Emma Jefferson. Jefferson

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 18

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

homesteaded and then owned the original 80 acres from the United States General Land Office since at least November 1888 and was one of the original African American settlers of Royal.

2.15 698 E C-462 (SM01353) Deanna Jenkins Residence (Photograph 17)

This building is a masonry ranch constructed in 1971. The front entry porch is south-facing and wraps around the western side. Windows are single hung sash. Asphalt shingles cover the side gable roof. The residence is on a portion of the original GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Dillie Bryant.

2.16 9797 CR 235 (SM01354) Allean Smith Residence (Photograph 18)

This building is a frame ranch constructed in 1971 (Photo 18). The exterior fabric is a combination of a brick façade and horizontal siding. The roof is asphalt shingle cross gable with an enclosed projecting entry porch. Windows are aluminum awning. The residence is on a portion of the original GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Dillie Bryant.

2.17 9060 CR 231 (SM01355) Flossie Sesler Residence (Photograph 19)

This building is a frame ranch constructed in 1961 (Photo 19). The exterior fabric is horizontal wood siding. The roof is an asphalt shingle side gable with a front gable over the enclosed projecting porch. Windows are aluminum awning. This residence is associated with descendants of Jacob Susler, one of the original African American homesteaders of Royal. Flossie Sessler married Eric Sesler, a direct descendent of Jacob Susler, and was a direct matrilineal descendant of Hampton Anderson and Sandy Robinson, one of the original founding families of Royal.

2.18 1259 CR 228 (SM01356) Delvernia Lewis Residence (Photograph 20)

This building is a masonry ranch constructed in 1972. Exterior fabric is concrete block, brick, and horizontal wood siding immediately under the gabled roof. The roof is cross gable, stepped, with a partially enclosed front projecting porch. The property is on a portion of the original 160 acres belonging to GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Henry Gattis.

2.19 9429 CR 231 (SM01357) Eugene & Allie Davis Residence (Photograph 21)

This building is a masonry ranch residence constructed in 1969. Exterior fabric is concrete block with vertical wood siding on the jutting enclosed front entry. Roofing is metal side gabled. An aluminum screen porch addition is on the northern side of the building. Windows are a combination of aluminum single hung sash and aluminum awning. This property is on a portion of the original 120 acres belonging to GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Hampton Anderson.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 19

2.20 311 NW 85th Blvd. (SM01358) William A. Jackson Residence (Photograph 22)

This building is a masonry minimal traditional building. The exterior fabric is concrete block. Roof is metal, side gabled. Windows are a combination of aluminum awning and panel slider. An open aluminum awning carport addition is on the north side of the building, and one window has been partially enclosed for a wall air conditioning unit. This residence is on a portion of the original 80 acres belonging to GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Dicey Ludley.

2.21 189 W C-462 (SM01359) Jesse L & Angelina James Residence (Photograph 23)

This is a masonry ranch residence constructed in 1962. The exterior fabric is concrete block with horizontal wood siding under the roof gables. Roofing material is asphalt shingle on the side gable roof with a central jutting room and front gable. This property is on a portion of the original 120 acres belonging to GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Hampton Anderson.

2.22 9226 CR 231 (SM01360) Catherine Steele Residence (Photograph 24)

This building is a masonry ranch residence constructed in 1969. It is an L shape masonry ranch. Exterior fabric is concrete block and decorative wood trim. The roof is cross gable covered with metal. Windows are a combination of aluminum single hung sash and awning. This residence is associated with descendants of the original African American homesteaders of Royal. Cathine Steele was a direct matrilineal descendant of Hampton Anderson and Sandy Robinson.

2.23 39 W C-462 (SM01361) Rochelle V. Lewis Residence (Photography 25)

This building is a masonry ranch constructed in 1970. The exterior fabric is concrete block and vertical wood siding under the gables. The roof is a cross gable covered in asphalt shingle. There is an enclosed incised carport on the western side; a partially enclosed, screened projecting entry porch is in center of the front façade that faces north. This property is on a portion of the original 120 acres belonging to GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Hampton Anderson.

2.24 38 E C-462 (SM01362) Rosa S. Hubbert Residence (Photograph 26)

This building is a frame vernacular residence constructed in 1962. Exterior fabric is horizontal wood siding. The side gabled roof is covered with metal. An open, screened entry porch is in the center of the front façade that faces north. The residence is on a portion of land owned by an original settler of Royal, William Harley.

2.25 9140 CR 231 (SM01363) Susie Steele Residence (Photograph 27)

This building is a masonry ranch residence constructed in 1972. Exterior fabric is concrete block and decorative stone façade. The roof is side gable covered with asphalt shingles. Windows are single hung

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 20

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

sash aluminum. A metal awning was added as an addition on the southeastern side of the building to function as a porch and carport. This residence is associated with descendants of original African American homesteaders of Royal. Susie Steele was a direct matrilineal descendant of Hampton Anderson and Sandy Robinson.

2.26 9792 CR 235A (SM01364) Joseph, Doretha & Luveni Lawson Residence (Photograph 28)

This building is a masonry minimal traditional residence constructed in 1971. Exterior fabric is concrete block. There is a central incised entry porch that is partially enclosed and screened. The roof is hipped and covered with metal. Windows are single hung sash aluminum. This building is associated with building the Joseph Lawson Screened Outbuilding [5.4]. The residence is on a portion of the original GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Dillie Bryant.

2.27 638 E C-462 (SM01365) Constance Johnson Residence (Photograph 29)

This building is a masonry ranch residence constructed in 1969. The exterior fabric is a painted stone front façade and concrete block. A single open incised carport is on the western side of the residence; the entry is an open projecting porch. The roof is scalloped asphalt shingle on cross hipped roof. Windows are single hung sash. The residence is on a portion of the original GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Dillie Bryant.

2.28 1211 CR 222 (SM01366) Purcell Sesler Residence (Photograph 30)

This building is a masonry ranch residence constructed in 1970. The exterior fabric is plaster over concrete block with decorative stone façade elements. The cross-gable roof creates a U shape, with the open front porch in the middle. One end is an enclosed room and the other is an open carport. The roof is covered with metal. Windows are a combination of single hung sash and two panel sliders. This residence is a portion of the original GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Emma Jefferson. Jefferson homesteaded and then owned the original 80 acres from the United States General Land Office since at least November 1888 and was one of the original African American settlers of Royal.

**TOBACCO BARNS (8)**

3.1 407 W C-462 (SM00985) Primas Massey Tobacco Barn (Photograph 31)

This is a one-story masonry tobacco barn made of concrete block with some blocks along the ground level on their side, with holes exposed, to provide ventilation (Photo 31). The side gabled roof is covered with metal and is partially visible but mostly caved in. There are no windows or porches. This tobacco barn is on the same property as the Primas and Mary Massey Residence [2.1]. It is on a portion of property that belonged to an original settler of Royal, Hampton Anderson. Oral histories with residents

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 21

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

suggest construction dates to the mid-20th century. The tobacco barn is much like other tobacco barns found throughout Royal and represents a continuation of traditional African American life dating to the mid or late 1800s.

3.2 309 CR 226 (SM00977) George & Polly Wideman Tobacco Barn (Photograph 32)

This is a one-story masonry tobacco barn made of concrete block with some blocks along the ground level on their side, with holes exposed, to provide ventilation. The side gabled roof is made of metal roofing material, and there are no windows, porches, or other features. Oral histories with residents suggest construction dates to the mid-20th century. It is associated with neighboring structures [2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, and 5.3] The tobacco barn is much like other tobacco barns found throughout Royal and represents a continuation of traditional African American agricultural life dating to the mid or late 1800s.

3.3 478 E C-462 (SM00983) Reverend Robert Simmons Tobacco Barn (Photograph 33)

This is a one-story masonry tobacco barn made of concrete block with some blocks along the ground level on their side, with holes exposed, to provide ventilation. The side gabled roof is covered with metal roofing, and there are no windows, porches, or other features. The entrance is boarded up and is facing severe structural damage with blocks separating along the front east-facing elevation. This tobacco barn is on the same property as the Rev. Robert Simmons, Jr., Residence [2.3]. It is on a portion of land owned by an original settler of Royal, William Harley. Oral histories with residents suggest construction dates to the mid-20th century. The tobacco barn is much like other tobacco barns found throughout Royal and represents a continuation of traditional African American life dating to the mid or late 1800s.

3.4 9852 NE 2nd Dr. (SM01001) Sylvester Erving Tobacco Barn (Photograph 34)

This is a one-story masonry vernacular tobacco barn made of concrete block, with two blocks along the ground level on their side (holes exposed) for ventilation. Oral histories with residents suggest construction date was mid-20th century. The side gabled roof is covered with 5V crimp sheet metal, and there are no windows or porches. The front façade has a crack from the top of the doorway to the roof line. It is an example of a masonry tobacco barn found throughout Royal and represents a continuation of traditional African American life dating to the mid or late 1800s.

3.5 10005 CR 237 (SM01002) Lens Patterson Tobacco Barn (Photograph 35)

This is a one-story masonry vernacular tobacco barn. It is made primarily of concrete block, with two blocks along the ground level on their side (holes exposed) for ventilation. Oral histories with residents suggest construction date was the middle of the 20th century. The roof has collapsed completely. There are no windows or porches. The front façade has "TOBACCO" painted in an arch over the doorway, as

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 22

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

well as a tobacco pipe, tobacco plant, and a leaf. The side façade has some faded and indistinguishable artwork painted in red. The structure is an example of a masonry tobacco barn found throughout Royal and represents a continuation of traditional African American life dating to the mid or late 1800s.

3.6 8763 CR 231 (SM01007) A.W. Lee Tobacco Barn (Photograph 36)

This is a one-story masonry vernacular tobacco barn. It is made primarily of concrete block, with two blocks along the ground level on their side (holes exposed) for ventilation. Oral histories with residents suggest construction date was the middle of the 20th century. The roof has collapsed completely. There are no windows or porches. It is an example of a masonry tobacco barn found throughout Royal and represents a continuation of traditional African American life dating to the mid or late 1800s.

3.7 9005 CR 231 (SM01009) Willard James Tobacco Barn (Photograph 37)

This building is a one-story masonry vernacular tobacco barn. It is made primarily of concrete block, with two blocks along the ground level on their side (holes exposed) for ventilation. Oral histories with residents suggest construction date was the middle of the 20th century. There are no windows or porches. It is an example of a masonry tobacco barn found throughout Royal and represents a continuation of traditional African American life dating to the mid or late 1800s.

3.8 9783 CR 235 (SM01010) Willie Smith Tobacco Barn (Photograph 38)

This building is a one-story masonry vernacular tobacco barn. It is made primarily of concrete block, with two blocks along the ground level on their side (holes exposed) for ventilation. Oral histories with residents suggest construction date was the middle of the 20th century. There are no windows or porches. The barn is on a portion of land owned by Dillie Bryant, one of Royal's original homesteaders. Her sister, Delia, married into the Smith family. The barn is an example of a masonry tobacco barn found throughout Royal and represents a continuation of traditional African American life dating to the mid or late 1800s.

***CANE PRESSES AND BOILERS (3)***4.1 374 W C-462 (SM01005) Zettie Williams Cane Press (Photograph 39)

This resource is a sugar cane press made by Chattanooga Plow Company and was produced until the early 1940s. It is made of cast iron and mounted on a masonry pedestal. The arm has been replaced with a metal pole, weighted with concrete block. Oral histories indicate that cane growing and processing in Royal started with its original African American settlers and continues to this day. It represents a continuation of traditional African American life dating to the mid or late 1800s is associated with the Zettie Williams Polebarn Shed [5.1].

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 23

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

4.2 9019 CR 231 (SM01004) Sutton James Cane Press (Photographs 40-42)

This is a sugar cane press made by Goldens' Foundry and Machine Company and was produced until the early 1940s. It is made of cast iron and mounted on a masonry pedestal. Oral histories indicate that cane growing and processing in Royal started with its original African American settlers and continues to this day, and as such, represents a continuation of traditional African American life dating to the mid to late 1800s.

4.3 9744 NE 2nd Dr. (SM01000) Nelson Brooks Sr. Cane Boiler and Press (Photograph 43-46)

This is a boiler house that is a simple pole barn with a gable roof supported by wooden posts, which has collapsed to the north. Beneath the pole barn is a cane boiler constructed of brick with a concrete overlay. One copper sits adjacent to the furnace and chimney. The cane press used on the property sits atop wooden posts. Owner interview indicates the press was moved onto those posts recently (approximately last 10 years). The press was made by Golden's Foundry and Machine Company and was produced until the early 1940s. It is located on a portion of property that once belonged to William Harley, one of the first settlers of Royal. The current owner of the property indicated that cane processing has occurred as recently as 2007. Oral histories indicate that cane growing and processing in Royal started with its original African American settlers and continues to this day.

***BARNs AND SHEDS (4)***

5.1 566 W C-462 (SM00990) Zettie Williams Pole Barn Shed (Photograph 47)

This building is a one-and-a-half story frame vernacular pole barn shed. Construction date is estimated to be mid-20th century. It has a gabled roof covered with 5V crimp sheet metal. Windows are on gable ends with wooden casement and appear to be original to the structure. The exterior fabric is board and batten siding, which extends onto the enclosed southern portion of the structure. The original door was replaced with a new metal door to the enclosed section.

5.2 4337 N CR 475 (SM00753) Pole Barn (Photograph 48)

This is a one-story frame vernacular pole barn. It is in the board and batten style with a gable roof covered with 5V crimp sheet metal. It is adjacent to and associated with neighboring historically significant residences and agricultural structures.

5.3 9938 CR 231 (SM00991) Howard Patterson Homestead Outbuilding (Photograph 49)

This is a one-story frame vernacular outbuilding, constructed in 1941 or later based on aerial photography and property records. It is a front gabled structure covered with 5V crimp sheet metal. The

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 24

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

door is simply framed with sheet metal covering. The structure is in ruinous condition and near complete collapse. It is near other Patterson family-owned structures and in a similar style [2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, and 3.2]. According to neighbor interview, this structure was part of the Howard Patterson homestead. Howard Patterson was one of James Patterson and Ellen Bloom Patterson's children, and brother to Polly Patterson Wideman.

5.4 9792 CR235A (SM01352) Joseph Lawson Screened Outbuilding (Photograph 50)

This building is a masonry minimal traditional residence constructed in 1971. Exterior fabric is concrete block and wood frame screen. The roof is gable and covered with metal. This building is associated with building the Joseph, Doretha & Luveni Lawson Residence [2.26]. The building is on a portion of the original GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Dillie Bryant.

**COMMUNITY STRUCTURES (3)**6.1 515 E C-462 (SM00984) Royal Masonic Hall/ F&AM #129 (Photograph 51)

This structure is a two-story concrete block Masonic Lodge and is reminiscent of other masonic lodges. According to the county property appraiser, the date of construction was 1958. The windows are single pane aluminum awning. The main part of the structure has a rectangular exterior plan, but there is a small protruding single-story room with a shed roof type on the western side of the structure. It appears to be the main entrance, which faces north. Property research indicates that the Lodge is F&AM #129 and was built in 1958. The property records also demonstrate that the property was sold Nov. 8, 1944 by N. Mathews to the Trustees of F&AM #129, who were "SD Pickett, Wm. Anerson [sic], and Toney Brooks". Grantors and Grantees appear in census records as an original settler or descendants of original settlers. N. Mathews was a descendant of the original owner of the property, James Mathews, who registered a land patent in Royal on December 26, 1891. Toney Brooks was one of the original settlers and recipient of a land patent in Royal on August 8, 1885. Wm. Anerson [sic] (William Anderson) appears on a 1900 census living in a home adjacent to (and likely a relative of) Hampton Anderson, whose land patent was registered August 20, 1885.

6.2 9605 CR 235 (SM00503) Royal Community Center (Photograph 52)

The property contains the Royal Community Center, which is a concrete block building with hipped roof and asphalt shingles (Photo 52). The significance of the building is its use as a meeting and gathering space for the Community of Royal. The site commemorates the legacy of early African American settlers in the area, particularly as it relates to the centrality of education (and the original Black Schoolhouse in Royal) common to many African American communities. The property is a portion of 80 acres owned by an original African American settler, Dillie Bryant.



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 25

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

6.3 9567 CR 235 (SM01006) Royal Elementary School and Middle School Cafeteria (Photograph 53)

This is a one-story masonry vernacular school lunchroom turned cultural education center. It was built in approximately 1950. Exterior fabric is stucco over concrete block. The roof is hipped and covered with asphalt shingles. Windows are fixed glass blocks group horizontally in two rows. They are placed above door height. Oral histories indicate that the school has existed in one form or another on this parcel. Reverend Alfred Brown built the first church and school in Royal in approximately 1874. The school was initially a one-room wooden structure without a lunchroom. A later incarnation of the school was built with permission of Sumter County by school trustees Perman E. Williams, Sal Rich, McAurthur Woods, C.C. Dunlap, Richard Smith and Mitchell Steele during the 1930s. Oral histories describe this school as a three-room wooden schoolhouse that repurposed lumber from the previous school structure. Sumter County furnished the building materials for the final version of the Royal School. Richard Smith donated land for the ten-room schoolhouse. Oral histories indicate that the materials from the previous schoolhouse were used to build a lunchroom for the newly constructed school. That wooden lunchroom was used until 1945, after which the current standing concrete block lunchroom was built in its place. The school was deeded from the District School Board of Sumter County to the County and torn down in the 1980s to make way for a fire station and community center. The 1945 lunchroom [5.2] remains and is now the Alonzo A. Young, Sr., Enrichment and Historical Center. It was donated to Young Performing Artists, Inc. (YPAs) by the Sumter County Board of County Commissioners in 2007. The property is a portion of 80 acres owned by an original African American settler, Dillie Bryant.

**COMMERCIAL RESOURCES (2)**

7.1 East of 358 W C-462 (SM01008) Royal's 1st Gas Station/Convenience Store (Photograph 54)

This is a one-story commercial vernacular gas station/convenience store. A neighbor interview suggests this gas station/ convenience store was constructed in the early to mid-20th century. Exterior fabric is concrete block with asphalt shingles on a mansard roof. The structure has metal awning windows. The entrance faces west; immediately south of the structure is a paved area that has been grown over. The roof has partially collapsed, and vines are growing over much of the building, including through the roof and inside the structure. Oral histories indicate that this was the first gas station and convenience store in Royal and is tied to the historic development and growth of the community.

7.2 9437 CR 241 (SM00981) Plas Lewis Residence and Dry Cleaners (Photograph 55)

This is a one-story masonry vernacular residence turned commercial building that is now abandoned. Based on the construction style and its similarity to other masonry vernacular structures, it is estimated that the structure was built in the mid-20th century. The front gable roof is covered with metal and covers most the structure; the northern and front section of wall and roofing are missing, so it is unclear

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 26

whether the front gable extended to the front elevation of the structure or not. Windows are boarded, and plants are growing throughout the interior. Neighbor interviews suggest the structure was initially home to Plas Lewis (1892-1971), then later became the first Dry Cleaners in Royal. This building was owned by a descendant of the original settlers of Royal and later evidence of a growing local economy. It is on a portion of the original property that belonged to one of the first settlers of Royal, Sandy Robinson.

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES (10)*****8.1 839 CR 231 (8SM00075)**

Piper Archaeological Research, Inc. conducted surface collection and shovel tests on this site and found whiteware and stoneware sherds. These artifacts place the site well within the period of significance for the landscape, and its proximity and association with neighboring historically significant residences and other contributing resources indicate descendants of Royal are associated with this site. Noncontributing (NC) resources on these parcels include a single-family wood frame home that was built in 2000, powerlines, a pole barn and two utility sheds built in 2014.

**8.2 10005 CR 237 (8SM01003) Lens Patterson Homestead (Photograph 56)**

This was a masonry vernacular building, likely a residence (Photo 56). Its age is estimated based on its construction, as being the mid-20th century. The structure has no roof or windows; only a south-facing wall remains. It appears that the concrete blocks have been salvaged and repurposed in an unknown location. The structure is adjacent to the Lens Patterson Tobacco Barn [2.8]. Neighbor interviews also associate the structure and the property as belonging to the Lens Patterson Homestead. Lens Patterson was brother to Polly Patterson Wideman [2.2, 3.2] and Howard Patterson [2.7, 5.3] and a descendant of the first settlers of Royal. There are no standing buildings or structures on this site beyond the ruins of this homestead.

**8.3 1256 CR 228 (8SM01334) Jesse Woods's Home**

The parcel is still owned by the Woods family today and had the home that belonged to Jesse Woods (Figures 10 and 11). His grandfather, Toney Brooks, was a formerly enslaved individual of African descent and one of the founders of the community of Royal. After emancipation, Brooks homesteaded and then owned the original 120 acres from the United States General Land Office since at least August 1885 and was one of the original African American settlers of Royal. While the home no longer stands, the remains are visible on recent LiDAR and at least one historic aerial dated to 1941. There are no standing buildings or structures on this site.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 27

8.4 11361 CR 222 (8SM01335) Sesler Homestead

The property is attributed to Fred Sesler, who was the grandson of the original GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Jacob Susler [sic]. Susler owned the original 80 acres from the United States General Land Office since at least August 1883 and was one of the original African American settlers of Royal. The property is relatively clear of trees and vegetation and is associated with a homestead and family garden. Rectangular features outside of the current built noncontributing structures are visible on LiDAR (Figure 13). Noncontributing (NC) resources include an open covered work area and utility shed built in 2006.

8.5 9301 NE 7TH PATH (8SM01336) Rhoena and Merline Sesler Homestead

The property is a portion of the original property owned by the original GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Flora James. James homesteaded and then owned the original 80 acres from the United States General Land Office since at least November 1888 and was one of the original African American settlers of Royal. The property is mostly fields clear of trees, with exception of the road-facing portion and a line of trees that divide the property in half. Evidence of agricultural ridging visible on LiDAR (Figure 14). There are no standing buildings or structures on this site.

8.6 9407 NE 15th St. (8SM01337) Wilson Family Homestead

The property is a portion of the original GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Jesse Wilson. Wilson homesteaded and then owned the original 80 acres from the United States General Land Office since at least August 1883 and was one of the original African American settlers of Royal (Figure 15). Historic aerial and LiDAR show evidence of a structure on property, and agricultural ridging is visible on LiDAR along the northern three-quarters of the parcel. There are no standing buildings or structures on this site.

8.7 1382 E C-462 (8SM01338) Matthew Beard Homesite

The property is attributed to a significant member of the community, Reverend Matthew Beard. He is known for his occupation as a religious official who reportedly lived to 115 years of age. He married Angerine Brooks, the daughter of the original GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Toney Brooks, one of the original African American settlers of Royal. Reverend Beard is reported to have attended a trade school in Canada before becoming a mason in 1913. There are no standing buildings or structures on this site.

8.8 9641 CR 235A (8SM01339) Johnsons Homestead

The property is a portion of the original GLO land patent owner and homesteader, Thomas James. James homesteaded and then owned the original 40 acres from the United States General Land Office since at

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 28

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

least June 1898 and was one of the original African American settlers of Royal. Noncontributing (NC) resources include a concrete block residence with an open incised entry porch on the northwest corner that was built in 2006.

8.9 9882 CR 229 (8SM01340) Stokes Homestead

This is a portion of the original GLO land patent recipient and homesteader, Emma Jefferson. Jefferson homesteaded and then owned the original 80 acres from the United States General Land Office since at least November 1888 and was one of the original African American settlers of Royal. Noncontributing (NC) resources include a one-story concrete block residence built in 1977, four mobile homes built after the period of significance, two modern aluminum sheds of unknown date, a pole barn and utility shed built in 2006.

8.10 598 E C-462 (8SM01341) Royal Post Office

The property has the remains of Royal's Post Office, which operated from 26 June 1891 until 2 January 1907 according to "A Chronology of Florida Post Offices, Handbook No. 2" (Figure 8). SM01341 is centrally located within the Community of Royal, with the school (now an enrichment and historical center) to the north [6.2, 6.3], a history of churches on and near the property, and the Masonic Hall [6.1] across the road to the south. The structure was used as a post office for a relatively short time, however its proximity to other historically significant community structures represents the longevity and continuity of the community. Historic aerial shows evidence of structures on the property. Noncontributing (NC) resources include a church built in 2001 and storage shed. The church was established as the Missionary Baptist Church in 1887. Later, the name was changed to Second Bethel Baptist Church before being relocated to its current position.

***TRADITIONAL CULTUTURAL PROPERTIES (5)***

9.1 9337 N C-475 "The Sinkhole"

The largest wetland in the Royal Rural Historic District and served as a primary location for many activities, particularly community events such as festivals and baptisms as well as providing an important source of food during hard times (Caruthers 2024; Dunlap and Keiler 2024; Hughes 2024; Huff and Jenkins 2024; Jenkins 2024; Williams 2024).

9.2 412 E SR 44 "The Mudpit"

A wetland in the Royal Rural Historic District and served as a primary location for many activities, particularly community events such as festivals as well as providing an important source of food during hard times (Caruthers 2024; Dunlap and Keiler 2024; Hughes 2024; Huff and Jenkins 2024; Jenkins

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 29

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

2024; Williams 2024). Located between African Americans homesteads owned by Dicey Ludley and Lewis Graham.

9.3 Unassigned Location CR 229

A wetland in the Royal Rural Historic District and served as a primary location for many activities, particularly community events such as festivals as well as providing an important source of food during hard times (Caruthers 2024; Dunlap and Keiler 2024; Hughes 2024; Huff and Jenkins 2024; Jenkins 2024; Williams 2024). Located between African Americans homesteads owned by Dicey Ludley and Lewis Graham.

9.4 Unassigned Location CR 222

A wetland in the Royal Rural Historic District and served as a primary location for many activities, particularly community events such as festivals as well as providing an important source of food during hard times (Caruthers 2024; Dunlap and Keiler 2024; Hughes 2024; Huff and Jenkins 2024; Jenkins 2024; Williams 2024). Partially located on lands homestead by David Brooks, an African American who was granted his property in 1888.

9.5 Unassigned Location CR 237

A wetland in the Royal Rural Historic District and served as a primary location for many activities, particularly community events such as festivals as well as providing an important source of food during hard times (Caruthers 2024; Dunlap and Keiler 2024; Hughes 2024; Huff and Jenkins 2024; Jenkins 2024; Williams 2024). Located on land adjacent to properties owned by African Americans in the 1950s and earlier.

***NONCONTRIBUTING (NC) BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, OBJECTS, SITES***

Noncontributing buildings comprise of mobile homes, homes, sheds and barns. There is a total of 546 noncontributing resources consisting of 428 buildings, 109 structures, and 9 archaeological sites. Resources described as sheds, pole barns, car ports, and awnings were classified as structures, while those described as garages, greenhouses, and barns were classified as buildings. Two playgrounds were classified as playgrounds. While they are owned by descendants of the original settlers of Royal, they were constructed after the period of significance.

Note that small-scale noncontributing elements such as fencing and other structures that support agricultural landuse were not counted as individual resources. This also includes noncontributing objects, which are often abandoned automobiles and farm equipment that may be later than the period of

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 30

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

significance. Also not counted are potentially noncontributing archaeological sites within the landscape are prehistoric, dating to before the period of significance. These were not studied by the relevant resource surveys and there is insufficient documentation to establish boundaries and fully evaluate contributing or non-contributing status.

### **ALTERATIONS**

The construction of I-75 during the 1960s impacted the community in a few ways. During the construction of the highway, the main artery road through the community of Royal was county road 462. Following construction of I-75, this road crosses the interstate via an overpass allowing residents to travel across the community and maintain daily connections with neighbors and relatives while attending church services, community meetings, and other events.

Historic properties belonging to families and descendants of Royal's founders, Sandy Robinson, James Mathews, William Harley, and Harriett and Richard Johnson were divided and reduced to make way for construction of the highway and the right-of-way. Sandy Robinson's property was reduced by 4.8 acres; James Mathews' by 5.9; William Harley's by 10.2 acres, splitting the property into one 14.5-acre property west of the interstate and 55.3-acre property east of the highway; and the Johnson's by 5.8.

Interstate access was built into Highway 44, south of the proposed landscape boundary. This area grew into a busy thoroughfare as the population of The Villages grew and expanded. Commercial businesses concentrate along the intersection of I-75 and Highway 44. Some of the growth has extended northward toward Royal on property that belonged to original African American settler Lewis Graham. His descendants reside on portions of the original acreage in the proposed district, while other areas containing a campground, trucking company, plant nursery, and other businesses on properties north of Highway 44 on County Road 229 are south of the boundary.

### **INTEGRITY**

The surviving resources of the Royal Rural Historic District are still in their original or historic locations. Hence the district retains its integrity of location. The resources within the district also retain a direct association with the African American community of Royal.

Although the community of Royal has faced development pressure, the general setting of the district remains predominantly rural. Fields and pasture across Royal tend to be rectangular in shape. Along I-75, it is clear the highway bifurcated the landscape. Fields are triangular, some lots are awkward, with

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 31

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

some pre-1960s residences uncomfortably close to the right-of-way (2.8, Photo 16). The overpass on CR 462 is a bottleneck, but on that offers an easy way to move between east and west. Although the construction of Interstate 75 had a significant impact on the district's setting, the interstate's construction began in the 1960s and is considered a historic alteration. The issue of the impact of Interstate 75 on the contiguity of the community also is a common one faced by African American communities across the country in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The community on both sides of the interstate retain a singular identity and their cultural and familial connections to/within Royal.

The district has undergone several changes over the course of its long history. All the original cabins or homesteads dating to <1900 are no longer extant. Many of the historic buildings onsite have either been demolished or heavily altered. There has also been a significant amount of non-historic infill, with over 400 buildings and structures within the district postdating 1974. The community of Royal has also largely turned away from agriculture, which historically remained a backbone of its economy going well into the 1980s. As a result, large fields of tobacco and sugarcane have been replaced by pasture and small-scale agriculture. Evidence of past agricultural use is still found across the district.

Despite these changes, taken as a whole, the Royal Rural Historic District retains the 11 landscape characteristics used to evaluate the integrity of rural historic landscapes. It still conveys the general feeling of a historic African American rural community. Special consideration should be given to the extreme scarcity of Royal as a district type, as it was a historic rural Black homesteader community. Like other Black communities, it was shaped and impacted by the larger social and economic forces brought on by segregation, but retains integrity of location, association, setting, and feeling.

**INVENTORY**

Address	Year	Style	Current Use	C/NC	Reason	FMSF No.
<b>COUNTY ROAD 216A</b>						
1271	1985	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1331	1989	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1331	1989	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1331	1989	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1331	1989	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1331	1989	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1331	1989	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1331	1989	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1331	1989	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1331	1989	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1331	1989	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 32

1331	1989	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1331	1989	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1850	2016	No Style	Feed Shelter	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1850	2016	No Style	Metal Canopy	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1850	2016	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1850	2016	No Style	Enclosed Barn	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1850	2016	No Style	Metal Canopy	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
<b>COUNTY ROAD 222</b>					
N/A	1872-1970	No Style	TCP	Contributing	Retains Integrity
98	1974	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
175	1999	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
261	2003	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
443	c.2000	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
443	c.2000	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
443	c.2000	Prefabricated Shed	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
760	2019	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
760	2019	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
798	1992	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
800	2010	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
802	1989	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
804	1998	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
804	1998	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
849	2005	No Style	Metal Garage	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
849	2005	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
877	2020	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
892	1979	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1076	2003	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1076	2003	No Style	Metal Canopy	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1150	1989	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1150	1989	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1150	1989	Masonry Apts	Multifamily Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1150	1989	Masonry Apts	Multifamily Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1150	1989	Prefab Carport	Prefab Carport	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1150	1989	Awning	Prefab Carport Awning	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1211	1970	Frame Ranch	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded
1267	1985	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1299	2006	Millennium Mansion	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1355	1991	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1355	1991	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1369	1998	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1405	2013	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1407	2010	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1417	1996	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 33

1417	1996	Prefabricated Shed	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1435	c.2000	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1443	1999	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1471	1992	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1485	1982	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1509	2003	No Style	Frame Garage	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1509	2003	Frame Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1553	1976	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1553	1976	No Style	Garage	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1653	1975	No Style	Garage	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1653	1975	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1765	2002	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1804	1987	Frame Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1834	1972	Brick Ranch	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
1837	2001	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
11361	1880-1972	No Style	Archaeological Site	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01335
11361	2006	No Style	Carport/Open Porch	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
11361	1982	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>COUNTY ROAD 223</b>						
9692	1983	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9692	1983	No Style	Frame Barn	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10054	2020	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10220	1973	Frame Ranch	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
<b>COUNTY ROAD 226</b>						
309	1950	Masonry Vernacular	Tobacco Barn	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00977
390	1988	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
434	1912	Frame Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00978
434	1958	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00979
435	1988	Frame Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
521	1993	Frame Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>COUNTY ROAD 228</b>						
1060	2002	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1172	2013	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1256	c.1940	N/A	Archaeological Site	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01334
1259	1972	Masonry Ranch	Residence	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
1266	1994	Vernacular Frame	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1301	1996	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1328	1990	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1350	2018	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1360	1983	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1363	1997	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1392	1995	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 34

1397	1980	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1397	c.2000	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1400	1997	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1406	1993	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1434	1990	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1446	1978	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1447	2003	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1448	1986	Frame Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1474	1983	Prefabricated home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1489	2005	Millennium Mansion	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1516	1979	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1582	1991	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1644	1995	No Style	Pole Barn	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1644	1995	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1644	1995	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1644	1995	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1723	2010	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1728	2013	Frame No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age

**COUNTY ROAD 229**

N/A	1872-1970	No Style	TCP	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00084
8772	c.2000	No Style	Barn	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8848	1988	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8848	2011	No Style	Polebarn/Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8920	2004	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8920	2004	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8920	2004	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8934	c.1905	N/A	Cemetery	Contributing	Retains Integrity	
8920	2004	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9038	2015	No Style	Masonry Warehouse	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9038	2015	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9038	2015	No Style	Masonry Outbuilding	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9038	2015	Mobile Office	Mobile Office	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9038	2015	No Style	M-Shaped Roof Greenhouse	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9038	2015	No Style	Rounded Roof Greenhouse	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9359	1999	No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9359	1999	No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9359	1999	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9568	2017	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9604	1983	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9677	2008	Masonry School	Multiple Use	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9677	2008	No Style	Pavilion	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 35

9698	2008	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9698	2008	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9707	1997	No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9707	1997	No Style	Metal Carport/Awning	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9707	1997	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9782	1998	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9798	1983	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9854	1968	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
9882	1880-1972	N/A	Archaeological Site	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01340
9882	1999	Frame No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9921	2022	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9921	c.2000	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
N/A	c.2000	No Style	Electric Substation	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10115	2012	No Style	Pole Barn	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10115	2012	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10115	2012	No Style Frame	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10115	2012	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10143	1996	Frame Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10169	c.2000	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10173	c. 2000	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10173	1974	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
10175	1997	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10175	1997	Frame Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10181	1999	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10255	1987	Frame Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10255	1987	No Style	Frame Barn	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10268	1999	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10268	1999	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10321	1992	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10447	1990	Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10454	2003	Millennium Mansion	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>COUNTY ROAD 229P</b>						
797	2000	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
810	1880-1972	No Style	Archaeological Site	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01340
810	1977	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
810	1977	No Style	Open Carport	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
810	1977	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
833	2019	Vernacular Frame	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
836	1880-1972	No Style	Archaeological Site	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01340
836	2005	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
836	2005	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
867	1977	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 36

913	2003	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
935	1980	Frame Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
944	1880-1972	No Style	Archaeological Site	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01340
944	1999	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
944	1999	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
961	1980	Frame Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>COUNTY ROAD 231</b>						
346	2005	No Style	Open Stables w/ Cupola	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
346	2005	No Style	Frame Barn	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
346	1968	No Style	Lg Polebarn w/ Cupolas	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
346	1962	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
346	c.1970	No Style	Hay Feed Shelter	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
346	c.1970	No Style	Hay Feed Shelter	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
391	1990	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
419	2020	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
434	1912	Frame Vernacular	Vacant Residential	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00978
434	1958	Masonry Vernacular	Vacant Residential	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00979
467	2016	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
467	2016	Prefabricated Shed	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
539	1900	Frame Vernacular	Residence	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00992
539	c.2000	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
839	c.1880-1905	No Style	Site, Agricultural	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00075
839	2000	Frame Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
839	2000	Frame Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
839	2000	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
839	2000	No Style	Feed Shelter	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8584	2003	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8604	1930	Frame Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
8680	1981	Frame Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8680	1981	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8680	c.2000	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8680	c.2000	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8726	1974	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
8763	1950	Masonry Vernacular	Tobacco Barn	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01007
9005	1950	Masonry Vernacular	Tobacco Barn	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01009
9005	1980	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9005	1980	Masonry Bungalow	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9019	1950	Other	Cane Press	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01004
9019	2007	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9020	1989	No Style	Carport/Awning	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9020	1989	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9020	1989	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 37

9020	1989	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9026	1994	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9060	1961	Frame Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
9140	1972	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
9192	2023	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9226	1969	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
9252	1985	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9260	2006	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9269	2021	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9339	2001	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9340	2011	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9363	1991	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9365	1999	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9377	1989	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9429	1969	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01357
9429	c.2000	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9431	2001	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9812	1959	Minimal Traditional	Single Family Residential	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00980
9938	1941	Frame Vernacular	Shed	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00991
9964	1974	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
<b>COUNTY ROAD 235</b>						
9562	1973	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
9569	1945	Masonry Vernacular	YPA's Inc. Organization	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01006
9641	1987	Masonry Vernacular	Community Center	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00503
9641	1987	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9641	1987	No Style	Pavilion/Awning	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9641	c.2000	No Style	Playground	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9641	c.2000	No Style	Playground	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9641	c.2000	No Style	Basketball Court	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9641	c.2000	No Style	Volleyball Court	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9641	c.2000	No Style	Metal Dugouts	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9648	2005	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9657	2015	Frame No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9673	2002	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9688	1992	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9719	2009	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9725	1996	Frame No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9783	1950	Masonry Vernacular	Tobacco Barn	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01010
9783	1967	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
9797	1971	Masonry Ranch	Residence	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
9815	2016	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9849	1977	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 38

9873	1987	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9907	1984	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>COUNTY ROAD 235A</b>						
9561	1973	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
9561	1988	No Style	Polebarn Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9568	1986	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9579	1984	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9641	1880-1972	No Style	Archaeological Site	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01339
9641	2006	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9682	2017	Frame No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9700	1989	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9700	1989	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9700	1989	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9725	1996	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9792	1971	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
9792	1971	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01364
9792	1994	Masonry Vernacular	Unknown	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01352
9798	1999	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9798	1999	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9804	1995	Frame No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9813	2012	Millennium Mansion	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9813	2012	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9813	2012	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9863	1970	No Style	Polebarn Shed	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
9863	1970	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
9863	1974	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
9891	2005	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9891	1990	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9891	2005	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9891	2005	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9891	2005	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9891	2005	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9891	2005	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9891	2005	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9897	1986	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9897	1986	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9945	1996	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>COUNTY ROAD 237</b>						
N/A	1872-1970	No Style	TCP	Contributing	Retains Integrity	
10005	1950	Masonry Vernacular	Tobacco Barn	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
10005	1950	Masonry Vernacular	Ruins/Vacant	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
10005	1993	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10101	1984	Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 39

10129	2010	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10129	2010	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10176	2012	Quonset Hut	Storage/Industry	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10211	2007	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10335	2001	No Style	Stables	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10335	2001	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10335	2001	Quonset Hut	Storage/Industry	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10335	2001	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10335	2001	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10468	2003	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10474	2002	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>COUNTY ROAD 241</b>						
9090	2009	No Style	Frame Barn	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9090	2009	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9090	c.2000	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9107	2006	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9141	1975	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9188	2009	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9188	2009	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9193	1970	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
9196	1994	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9208	1991	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9238	1986	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9238	1986	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9260	2009	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9266	2023	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9316	1989	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9402	1998	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9425	2003	Block No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9434	1993	Frame Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9437	1950	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00981
9437	1994	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9456	1996	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>E C-462</b>						
38	1962	Frame Vernacular	Residence	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01362
54	1995	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
74	1967	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
133	1962	Minimal Traditional	Vacant Residential	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00993
287	2000	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
313	2012	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
352	1997	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
365	1999	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 40

368	2020	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
371	1978	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
390	2012	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
407	1962	Minimal Traditional	Residence	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00995
420	1951	Frame Vernacular	Residence	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
420	1973	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00996
477	1989	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
478	1946	Bungalow	Residence	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00982
478	1950	Masonry Vernacular	Tobacco Barn	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00983
515	1958	No Style	Masonic Lodge	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00984
563	1941	Bungalow	Residence	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00998
563	1948-1971	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
598	1891-1907	No Style	Site/Church	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01341
598	2001	No Style	Prefab Metal Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
598	2001	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
601	1962	Masonry Ranch	Residence	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00997
638	1969	Masonry Ranch	Residence	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01365
698	1971	Masonry Ranch	Residence	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01353
773	1986	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
776	1975	Millennium Mansion	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
776	1975	No Style	Prefabricated Garage	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
822	2000	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
895	2009	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1026	2004	Millennium Mansion	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1026	2004	No Style	Garage	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1248	2002	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1248	2002	Millennium Mansion	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1265	2021	Millennium Mansion	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1292	1985	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1292	1985	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1292	2006	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1318	1992	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1318	1992	No Style	Polebarn	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1382	1999	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1382	1999	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1425	2021	Millennium Mansion	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1478	2001	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1612	1996	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1648	1974	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
1648	c.2000	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1648	c.2000	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1679	2022	Millennium Mansion	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 41

1765	1994	Frame Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1765	1994	No Style	Frame Barn	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1934	2008	Frame No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1945	1985	No Style	Barn	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1945	1985	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1945	1985	Millennium Mansion	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1945	1985	No Style	Polebarn Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1945	1985	No Style	Polebarn Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>W C-462</b>						
N/A	1950	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01008
4	2016	Millennium Mansion	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8	2003	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8	2003	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8	2003	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8	2003	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8	2003	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
8	2014	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
39	1970	Masonry Ranch	Residence	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01361
134	1990	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
139	1998	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
189	1962	Masonry Vernacular	Residence	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01359
189	1998	Millennium Mansion	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
245	1963	Frame Vernacular Ranch	Residence	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00994
352	1999	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
354	1998	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
358	2001	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
374	1950	Other	Cane Press	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01005
374	1990	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
374	1990	No Style	Frame Barn	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
407	1946	Minimal Traditional	Single Family Residential	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00976
407	1950	Masonry Vernacular	Tobacco Barn	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00985
481	2002	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
481	2002	No Style	Garage	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
498	1998	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
566	1941	Frame Vernacular	Shed	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00990
566	2006	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
644	2008	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
658	2012	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
658	2012	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
712	c.2000	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
712	c.2000	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
712	c.2000	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 42

800	2011	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
800	2011	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
800	2011	No Style	Carport/Awning	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>N C-475</b>						
9337	1872-1970	No Style	TCP	Contributing	Retains Integrity	
9337	1950	No Style	Barn	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00753
10119	1997	No Style	Horse Barn with Cupola	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10119	1997	No Style	Barn /enclosed 2nd Flr	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10119	1997	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>NE 104TH BLVD</b>						
1060	1950	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
1118	1993	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1146	1992	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1146	1992	Ruin	Vacant Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1182	2000	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1202	1996	Frame Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1202	2006	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1225	2006	Masonry No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
1225	2023	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>NE 12TH DR</b>						
10386	1990	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10390	1990	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
10390	1990	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>NE 12TH ST</b>						
9781	1983	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9781	1983	No Style	Prefab Metal Carport	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9795	1993	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9988	1997	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>NE 15TH DR</b>						
9565	1993	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9615	1988	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9615	2006	No Style	Polebarn Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9689	1998	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9689	1998	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9745	1994	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>NE 15TH ST</b>						
N/A	1880-1972	No Style	Archaeological Site	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01338
9298	1986	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9370	2008	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9407	1880-1972	No Style	Archaeological Site	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01337
9581	1984	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9581	1984	No Style	Frame Vernacular Barn	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 43

9625	1990	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9642	1988	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>NE 17TH PATH</b>						
9786	1986	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9786	1986	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9844	1988	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9844	1988	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9844	1988	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9844	1988	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9855	1995	Millennium Mansion	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>NE 2ND DR</b>						
9633	1999	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9643	1993	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9667	2000	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9721	2009	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9744	1946	Frame Vernacular	Residence	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM00999
9744	1940	Frame Vernacular	Cane Boiler	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01000
9765	1990	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9852	1950	Masonry Vernacular	Tobacco Barn	Contributing	Retains Integrity	SM01001
9852	1969	Masonry Vernacular	Barn	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded	
<b>NE 5TH ST</b>						
10022	1979	Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>NE 6TH BLVD</b>						
9609	1996	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9632	2003	Frame No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9669	1985	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>NE 7TH PATH</b>						
9274	1988	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9301	2001	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9301	2001	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9316	2014	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9316	2018	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9348	c.2000	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9355	1996	Masonry Ranch	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9393	1980	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
9426	c.1990	Frame Prefab Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>NE 87TH RD</b>						
977	1985	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
977	1985	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
977	1985	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	
<b>NE 92ND RD</b>						
631	1975	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age	

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 44

660	1999	Frame No Style	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
689	1997	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
990	2007	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
<b>NE 97TH RD</b>					
1430	1994	Prefabricated home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
1445	1962	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded
<b>NE 99TH BLVD</b>					
10	2012	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
<b>NE 9TH ST</b>					
10065	1997	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
10065	1997	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
10065	1997	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
10074	1997	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
10112	1996	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
10140	1990	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
10140	1990	Prefabricated Shed	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
10156	1991	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
10170	1986	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
10170	1986	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
10170	1986	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
10170	1986	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
10170	1986	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
10199	2002	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
10230	1974	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded
<b>NE 9TH TER</b>					
8570	1996	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
8574	2015	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
8596	2014	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
8608	1998	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
8608	1998	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
8620	1999	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
8696	1972	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded
<b>NW 85TH BLVD</b>					
302	2007	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
302	2007	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
302	2007	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
311	1962	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded
311	1974	No Style	Polebarn Shed	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded
350	2007	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
350	1968	Frame Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded
367	1973	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded
375	1949	Frame Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 45

375	1961	Masonry Vernacular	Single Family Residential	Potentially Contributing	Not Recorded
491	1986	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
<b>NW 87TH RD</b>					
331	1985	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
<b>SE 12TH ST</b>					
9851	2006	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
9851	2006	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
9851	2006	No Style	Polebarn Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
9851	c.2000	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
9851	c.2000	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
9851	c.2000	No Style	Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
<b>E SR 44</b>					
412	1872-1970	No Style	TCP	Contributing	Retains Integrity
<b>W SR 44</b>					
492	2017	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
492	2017	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
492	2017	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
492	2017	No Style	Prefabricated Shed	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
492	2017	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
492	2017	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age
492	2017	Prefabricated Home	Single Family Residential	Non-Contributing	Non-Contributing Age

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 1

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**SUMMARY**

The Royal Rural Historic District is the only Black Homesteader community in the United States retaining a significant population of descendants of the original homesteaders. Royal is significant at the local, state, and national levels under Criterion A for Ethnic Heritage: Black, Settlement/Exploration, Community Planning and Development, and Agriculture and Criterion D: Archaeology. The period of significance extends from c. 1870 to 1974.

Unlike similar sites, such as the National Historic Site of Nicodemus, Kansas (Hosbey 2016), Royal's descendant population has not been significantly displaced. Rather, they continue to purchase and develop additional properties beyond the lands originally homesteaded by their ancestors. The contributing resources – particularly the archaeological sites and Traditional Cultural Properties – hold unparalleled potentials to reveal aspects of African American lifeways in 20<sup>th</sup> century America.

These potentials center on understanding how property ownership impacted African American communities during the 20th century, a time when most rural Black communities were threatened with disruption by infrastructural projects, overt violence, and other pressures. The resources in Royal provide rare information regarding community development, family history, intergenerational wealth, and expressions of individual and collective identity as they relate to African American history.

The district's significance centers on Royal's status as a Black Homesteader Colony (Friefeld et al. 2019). These settlements were in remote locations, primarily western states. At the time of Royal's settlement in the late 1800s, peninsular Florida was likewise a remote and difficult area to homestead. Like their western counterparts, Royal's earliest African American residents acquired properties through the Homestead Act of 1862. However, unlike practically all other Black Homesteader Colonies, descendants of the original residents retain ownership of these and additional properties; a direct connection to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that persists to the present.

Royal's persistence as the nation's largest surviving Black Homesteader Colony is nationally unique, the only other example being the National Historic Site of Nicodemus, Kansas (Hosbey 2016). Additionally, the targeting of Black communities nationwide for infrastructural projects such as transportation and power corridors is not unique to Sumter County or Florida. While the vast majority of Royal has been and continues to be owned by African Americans – a significant feature in and of itself – property ownership is not an excluding factor for determining an area's significance to African American history. This includes areas worked by enslaved peoples of African descent and Black tenant farmers. Plantations and Postbellum lands leased to African Americans were almost exclusively in White ownership. The district's cultural landscape includes dwellings, agricultural structures, open pastures, agricultural fields, wetlands, and wooded swamplands that retain this character.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 2

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

The community of Royal is part of a much broader history of people of African descent in the state of Florida. The following pages first offer a brief introduction to this history beginning in the 1500s until the early 21st century. The goal of this broader history is to frame the significance of Royal in terms of the state's remarkable African American history. This is followed by a history of Sumter County to frame Royal within its local context. Sumter County was established in 1853 and was the state's 29th county, although its current boundaries were not set until the 1880s. The final section provides a history of Royal itself, drawn from the work of local historians and community activists like Beverly Steele.

*Spanish and British Rule: 1513-1821*

Peoples of African descent have been a part of Florida's history since the initial discovery of the lands referred to by the Spanish as La Florida. Free Africans were among the crews of the first European explorers to reach this area (Landers 2000:19; Rivers 2000:3; Landers 2013:180-181). Throughout the late-1600s and early 1700s enslaved Africans from nearby locations continued to seek sanctuary in St. Augustine, which would grant it if one converted to Catholicism.

Many runaway slaves were granted sanctuary and eventually received a town unto their own in 1738. Located just two miles north of St. Augustine, this new town was named Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mosé. The town was abandoned for more than a decade following the attack by British forces from Georgia in 1740. Eventually, the town was fortified and reoccupied until Spain lost Florida to the British in 1763 (Landers 1995; Deagan and MacMahon 1995), which coincided with the end of the First Spanish Period in Florida (1513-1763).

Although slavery remained a feature of the First Spanish Period, people of African descent had many paths towards freedom, including purchasing their way out of slavery. These paths mostly vanished under British rule. For two decades (1763-1783) the British instituted the same plantation economy as elsewhere in their colonies. Within several years, Africans became the largest segment of Florida's population (Schaefer 1995; Landers 2013). The beginning of the American Revolution (1775) exacerbated this trend and Loyalists flooded into East Florida. Under British rule White Floridians restricted the movement of both enslaved and free Blacks, adopted Slave Codes similar to those in South Carolina, and increasingly subjected slaves to inhumane treatment (Landers 2013:186-187).

After the Revolution, British Loyalists fled Florida and the Second Spanish Period commenced (1783-1821). Enslaved Blacks once again sought sanctuary in Florida, and the population of free Blacks continued to grow. They worked for the Spanish government as laborers, guards, and skilled craftsmen. While laws in the newly formed United States of America forbade Africans from competing with

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 3

Whites, no such laws existed in Spanish Florida. Free Blacks could own land and operate businesses of their choosing.

The increasing power of the young USA signaled the first impediment to free Black life in Spanish Florida. Spain relented to growing pressure from the nation's Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, and revoked sanctuary in 1790. The intervening decades saw increased pressure from the USA to curb the freedom of free Blacks in Spanish Florida, whom White planters in nearby states feared would incite their slaves to rebel. In response to this perceived threat, numerous raids by Americans (covertly supported by the government) were launched into Florida in the following years (Landers 2013:191-192).

*Territorial Period and Reconstruction: 1821-1877*

The change of government signaled by the US taking possession of Florida deeply affected the state's African American population. Although the US agreed to honor the rights of free Blacks as part of their treaty with Spain, it increasingly instituted a system of slavery similar to other areas in the southern states (Rivers 1995). In the following decades, a growing number of enslaved Africans in the state hailed from the low country of Georgia and South Carolina as planters moved south into the new territory. The increasing restrictions during this time also drove free Black to migrate to Cuba and elsewhere in the Caribbean (Landers 2013:191-193).

Deepening ties between free Blacks and the Seminoles continued during this period. This is certainly the case at several settlements throughout the state where Black Seminoles and maroons lived in the years following the destruction of Prospect Bluff. Several researchers have suggested that the growing connections between Seminoles and Africans represented a key reason the Second Seminole War began in 1835 (and which ended in 1842). These researchers argue that Whites, and planters in particular, became increasingly outraged by what they saw as the intentional harboring of escaped slaves by Seminole groups, which Seminoles would do after allowing runaways to prove themselves through a system of vassalage (Klos 1995). This has led several researchers to interpret the Second Seminole War as one of the largest slave rebellions in our nation's history (Rivers 2000). The Seminoles also owned a number of enslaved Black people but the slavery practiced by them was markedly different from that seen in the plantation belt. Enslaved people owned by the Seminoles often lived in their own settlements nearby with minimal supervision and were expected to provide their owners with food and to help with the defense of the area from intruders. Free and enslaved Black interpreters often rose to positions of influence within the tribe by serving as intermediaries between white and native worlds. Negotiations between the tribe and the American government often broke down after suspicions raised by these interpreters. Across the state during these years, maroons settled numerous sites, only to relocate later as American forces attempted to capture and relocate them to the Indian Territories further west. These places included sites like Pilaklikaha within Paynes Prairie in Alachua County (Weik 2012), Angola



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 4

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

along the Manatee River Sarasota County (Baram 2012; Howard 2013), various locations in the Everglades and around Miami, and eventually leaving the US altogether to settle in the Bahamas where descendants remain to this day (Howard 2002).

By 1861, the population of Florida included 104,424 Whites and 61,745 African American slaves, most of whom resided in the state's northern counties, particularly in Middle Florida, where slave labor provided most of the raw materials such as cotton (Solomon and Erhart 1999:320). Early in the Civil War, several port cities fell to Union control. Between 1861 and 1862, Apalachicola, Fernandina, St. Augustine, and Jacksonville (which would change hands several times) joined Pensacola and Key West as Union ports. These areas as well as news from Union raids alerted enslaved Africans to the possibility of emancipation. Upwards of 1,000 slaves escaped Florida and enlisted in the Union. As such, the experience of most of Florida's enslaved African American population changed little during this time (Rivers 2000).

Some enslaved people experienced a disruption to their daily lives following the massive salt works boom, which emerged to support the Confederate Army (Taylor 2013: 249). These enslaved people were relocated to new locations, primarily in the panhandle, to work large and small salt works. Elsewhere, enslaved people were impressed into service with the Confederate government. They toiled at building fortifications, collecting food supplies, and other jobs to support the rebels. In South Florida, where Black and White populations were still low, many African Americans found themselves near Union forces or ports. Due to the lower population density in this area, enslaved people worked with a more diverse set of skills, and thus were able to find employment with the Union beyond becoming soldiers (Solomon and Erhart 1999).

Aside from a few skirmishes and battles, the largest of which occurred in Olustee, Florida emerged from the Civil War relatively intact and in much better shape than other southern States. However, negative feelings towards African Americans were exacerbated with Black suffrage, causing significant social strain. In many parts of Middle Florida, White planters simply left and relocated to more central counties like Brevard, Orange, Hillsborough and elsewhere (Shofner 2013:264). In other areas, African Americans who exercised their newly won right to vote found themselves outnumbering their White neighbors, and numerous African Americans entered political office.

During Reconstruction, conservative planters, merchants, and bankers coerced freed Blacks to vote against their own interests by denying them credit and land rentals. More violent means of Black repression emerged as well. The Ku Klux Klan and other racist groups violently discouraged African Americans from exercising their new rights. Black leaders and their allies were beaten or killed. The racial unrest this caused around the state contributed to mounting tensions which reemerged in later years. The rise of violent interpersonal attacks against African Americans would reach its nadir in the

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 5

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

early and mid-20th century. Lynching, dynamite bombings, and race riots would eventually cast a dark shadow across the state (Ortiz 2005).

Various reports during this time encouraged largescale settlement of peninsular Florida. This included the journal of George Franklin, who undertook a tour of South Florida for the Freedmen's Bureau. His and other accounts encouraged both Blacks and Whites to migrate to these sparsely populated areas of the state (Kenney 1995; Rivers 2013). The election of several Conservative democrats at local, state, and national levels in the 1870s signaled the end of Reconstruction-era progress for African Americans, just at a time when large portions of the state were opening. Still, in the years that followed African Americans settled in these new areas, expanded their businesses, continued to support educational causes, and even incorporated majority Black towns. This occurred in spite of increasing segregation, and deeply affected the tapestry of Florida's multiracial landscape for generations to come.

The final quarter of the nineteenth century proved a paradoxical one for Florida's African American population. Reconstruction ended in 1877, and the conservative Democratic Party ran several successful campaigns across the state, beginning with the elections of George Drew in 1876 and Bloxham in 1880. Drew instituted the convict lease system, which leased state penitentiary inmates to private business, a system which disproportionately affected the state's African American population (Miller 2000; 2012). African Americans began to see their newly won political power dwindle and largely vanish by the end of the 1880s. In 1885, with the election of Governor Edward A. Perry, a new state constitution was ratified which struck down the previous, more liberal constitution written in 1868. Among the changes implemented by the 1885 constitution was the imposition of a poll tax. While the poll tax affected both African American and poor White voters, its intended impact on Black voter turnout became quickly apparent. White voter turnout between 1888 and 1892 dropped from 86 percent to 59 percent, and Black voter turnout plummeted from 62 percent to just 11 percent during the same period (Graham 2013:284). The poll tax, in combination with various forms of interpersonal and structural violence, effectively disenfranchised African Americans from participation in the state's political arena. Two years after the poll tax was initiated, in 1887, a state law was passed that required separate train cars for Black and White passengers. Within a decade of the end of Reconstruction, legislated segregation had taken root in Florida.



*Convicts leased to harvest timber.*

*Source: Florida Memory Image Number RC12880.*

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 6

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Settlement of peninsular Florida continued during this time with the establishment of numerous railroads by Henry Plant, William Chipley, and Henry Flagler. These railroads first linked cities like Jacksonville and Pensacola to a developing national network, and were quickly extended to Kissimmee, Tampa, Palm Beach and eventually reaching Miami in 1896 (Turner 2008). The growing rail lines opened vast areas of the state to new economic and industrial ventures. This included phosphate mining, expanded cattle ranching, a burgeoning lumber industry, turpentine and naval stores manufacturing, tobacco, fishing, and the cultivation of oranges. Several of these industries either employed African Americans or allowed them the opportunity to develop self-sufficiency. Although Blacks were increasingly cut off from political representation, several state schools catering to them began operating during this time. These included the establishment of the State Normal School for Negroes in 1887, later changed to the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1905 (and later becoming a university in 1953).

Several Black towns were settled across the state during this time. Well-known examples include Eatonville and Rosewood. Rosewood is remembered because of the 1923 race riot which destroyed the town and scattered its community elsewhere in the state and nation (González-Tennant 2016). Although never incorporated, Rosewood nonetheless became a prosperous African American community in the decades following statehood and transitioned to a majority African American community by 1900. This transition occurred in part local Whites were willing to sell land to African Americans. Another rural location with a similar, although less violent history is the community of Santos near Ocala. This community was settled in the late 1880s and received a post office in 1883. It would eventually be displaced through development associated with the failed Cross Florida Barge Canal (Nelson 2011). Eatonville, incorporated in 1887, is one of the oldest surviving African American communities in the nation. A gain, a White landowner was willing to sell land to African Americans. Eatonville is also remembered for several notable African Americans who lived or were born there, including the



*Ruins of a burned African American home in Rosewood, Florida, 1923.*  
*Source: Florida Memory Image Number RC12408.*

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 7

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

anthropologists and folklorist Zora Neale Hurston. In other locations across the state significant African American population centers emerged. By the mid-20th century, most of the rural Black settlements had dissolved as younger generations migrated to cities for educational and economic opportunities.

This was partly due to the continued growth of the state's African American population, which reached 92,000 in 1870 and had grown to more than 265,000 by 1900 (Rivers 2013:445-446). African Americans outnumbered Whites in many of the state's cities, including Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Daytona, Palatka, Sanford, and Marianna. This population growth was also the result of migration from other southern States, with large numbers of African Americans moving to the state during this time from Georgia and South Carolina. A vibrant Black middle class arose during these years, concentrated in many ways in Jacksonville and Duval County. Elsewhere, successful Black businessmen, farmers, and growers either dominated local markets or proved crucial to the success of their White neighbors who relied on Black skills to successfully explore these new industries (Rivers 2013:450-451). Across the state educated and skilled African Americans developed networks that supported educational institutions, business ventures, and recreational activities (e.g., American Beach near Fernandina).

These and similar events drove a reversal of the population growth which had characterized the state's African American population in previous centuries. The mass exodus of Florida's Black population coincided with a larger migration of southern African Americans to northern cities, where equal or greater levels of prejudice and racism would continue to work against Black achievement. This Great Migration deeply impacted the state of Florida (Adler 1995). In 1900, African Americans constituted 44 percent of the state's population, a number which dropped to 25 percent by 1945. In many places, the local Black population was reduced by one-third, as in Live Oak and Lakeland. Elsewhere, larger percentages left, probably half from Palatka, Miami, and DeLand. Many of these places boasted significant, and successful African American populations prior to this migration. Larger cities experience similar or greater migrations with 3,000 to 5,000 leaving Tampa, and 6,000 to 8,000 leaving Jacksonville's historically successful Black community (Rivers 2013: 454).

The subsequent brain and talent drain weakened Florida's African American population, but brave citizens stepped forward to lead the community through the remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Black newspapers like Pensacola's *Florida Sentinel* and the *Tampa Bulletin* circulated news of interest to the community. New chapters of the NAACP were formed across the state and fought for equal access to education and fair representation under the law. Greater segments of Florida's white population stood alongside their black neighbors during this time. In 1937, state senator Ernest Graham (father of future Florida governor Bob Graham) successfully fought to repeal the poll tax. Unfortunately, White support for African American rights were uneven, to say the least. Violence erupted in Groveland in 1949 following the torture of four African Americans (and murder of two of them) by Lake County sheriff Willis McCall, who falsely accused them of raping a white woman. Lake County voters would go on to reelect McCall every four years until 1972 (Rivers 2013: 463). Two years later, the Ku Klux Klan

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 8

dynamited the home of Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore, who were instrumental in the fight for equal rights in the state.

Violence once again erupted, this time around Royal. A lynching nearly occurred in November 1956 when Jesse Woods was accused of whistling at a white woman while shopping at a store in Wildwood. He was arrested then bailed out by his father, who attempted to bring him home. However, they were met with hostilities that convinced them that the younger Woods would be safer staying in the Wildwood jail overnight. While there, a mob of white men broke into the jail, beat Woods, and left him for dead near the Withlacoochee River, over 11 miles from Wildwood along Highway 44. Woods was able to drag himself to the edge of a dirt road, where he was found by his uncle and aunt. They were able to give him first aid and eventually took him to safety, far from Royal. No other incidents occurred surrounding near-lynching. Perhaps the town was spared the fate of many other African American towns in Florida due to its relative isolation and distance from railroads.

The Civil Rights Movement in Florida during the 1950s and 1960s followed similar trends in other southern states. Sit-ins, beach wade-ins, and bus boycotts occurred across the state. African Americans participating in these events were often met with violence. Police officers stood by as African Americans were attacked with axe handles and baseball bats in Jacksonville's Hemming Park during a sit-in protest in 1960, and the violent reaction by St. Augustine citizens in 1964, televised nationally, is credited with contributing to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act (Rivers 2013:464). The threat of violence began to recede, and African Americans and their allies succeeded in securing basic civil liberties.

The 1960s began a new trend in the state wherein African Americans entered public service (outside of local educational institutions). The brutal suppression of Black suffrage and political representation that began after Reconstruction and grew throughout the twentieth century began to turn. Frank Cunningham became a city commissioner in Riviera Beach in 1962, and African Americans began winning other local elections. In 1982, Joe Lang Kershaw became the first Black state legislator since 1889. This was followed by Gwendolyn Cherry who became the first Black woman elected to the Florida House of Representatives, and within two decades Carrie Meek, Corrine Brown, and Alcee Hasting would all be elected to the US Congress, something that had not happened in the state since 1876 (Rivers 2013:465).

Although Jim Crow and Ku Klux Klan intimidation have largely receded into the state's past, new challenges face Florida's African American communities. The economic hardships affecting the state in the 2000s and later have hit Black communities especially hard. Defaulted mortgages and similar predatory tactics have meant lost homes and new challenges. Development and gentrification continue to threaten historic Black neighborhoods across the state. African American representation at the state level has waned since the 1990s.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 9

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**History of Sumter County**

The land that would become Sumter County spent the first decade of the Territorial Period (1821-1845) as part of the Seminole Reservation created by the Treaty of Moultrie Creek in 1824. As a result, many events associated with the Second Seminole War took place in or around Sumter County. A major domestic policy of President Andrew Jackson centered on the removal and displacement of Native American tribes living east of the Mississippi River. In 1830, the Indian Removal Act was passed, which provided the legal mechanism for enforcing this removal by authorizing the federal government to “trade” land west of the Mississippi River for native land. In order for this law to have its intended effect, however, the government needed to renegotiate preexisting treaties with the tribes and they were not above using chicanery and deception to achieve this end. The Second Seminole War began when Seminoles disputed a treaty they were cajoled into signing. The US ignored these requests and ratified the Treaty of Payne’s Landing in 1834. This treaty provided the Seminoles with three years to move west of the Mississippi River and marked 1832 as the beginning of that period. By 1835, mounting pressure between Seminoles and the US military reached a head. Instead of attempting to reach a peaceful solution, the US military began to prepare for war with the Seminoles.

The Second Seminole War was partially fought in response to the treatment of Black Seminoles. There is archaeological evidence at the site of Kettle Island (SM00056) that populations pushed into Sumter County during this time. This site is located along the Withlacoochee River west of the southern portion of Lake Panasoffkee, approximately 8 miles southwest of the community Royal. Historical accounts from the 1830s suggest that this group of free Blacks (most likely Black Seminoles) were successful horticulturalists who supported local groups of Seminoles during this time (Mitchem and Weisman 1987; McCarthy 2007). Family historians have previously noted that oral histories with early African American residents in northern Sumter County mention encountering African Americans already in the area when they settled in locations like Royal in the 1870s and later (Nichols 2002). It is very likely that these oral traditions are referencing earlier populations of Black Seminoles in the area.

After the Second Seminole War, many of the remaining Seminoles were either pushed further south in the state or removed to reservations further west. Prior to statehood, which occurred in 1845, the area of Sumter County was a part of Mosquito County. By 1850, this had divided multiple times, and the area of Sumter County was a part of Marion and Hillsborough counties. Sumter County was established in 1853 and named after the Revolutionary War General Thomas Sumter, reflecting the migration from South Carolina to peninsular Florida that took place during the mid-1800s. The modern boundaries of Sumter County were defined in 1887, after the formation of Lake County.

The first town established in Sumter County was Adamsville, which remains an unincorporated community. A one-room courthouse was built there in 1839. Other early towns include Sumterville and Center Hill (formerly Tuckeho, settled in 1840). Later towns followed, including Wildwood, Bushnell,

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 10

Oxford, Coleman, and Webster. Although many of these areas were settled earlier, most towns in the county associated their founding with the establishment of their first post office. Sumterville's first post office began operation in 1854. Wildwood did not receive a post office until 1881 and Bushnell's post office began operation in 1885. In 1861, the county seat was moved to Sumterville where a new courthouse was constructed. This courthouse burned in 1909, and the county seat subsequently moved to Bushnell (Sprinkle 1939).

During the antebellum period, John Tompkins and Granville Beville brought the first enslaved African Americans to the county from Georgia, to assist with their gristmill operation near Bushnell (Sprinkle 1939). In 1860, the first US census after the establishment of the county showed a population of 1,549, of which 549 were listed as enslaved Blacks or Mulattos (8th US Decennial Census). The county's population nearly doubled in the following ten years, reaching 2,952 by 1870, of which 980 were African Americans. Total population in 1880 was 4,686 (3,501 White and 1,185 Black), and by 1890 the population was 5,363 (3,864 White, 1,498 Black, and 1 Indian). Population growth appears to slow between 1880 and 1890, but this artificially lowered due to the separation of Lake County in 1887.

Most of the early settlers raised citrus, grazed cattle, or otherwise engaged in agricultural work (Reeves 1989:98). Much of this early production was for the benefit of those living in the county. That changed with new railroads crossing the county in the 1880s. The first railroad arrived at Wildwood from Jacksonville in 1880 and was extended to Tampa in 1884 (Sprinkle 1939; Turner 2008). Improved roads and railroad service, coupled with the Homestead Act of 1862 (and its impact following the Civil War), helped grow the county's population. Although rail service had reached Wildwood relatively early in the county's history, it was the establishment of additional rail lines in the 1880s that boosted the county's economy. This provided new ways of exporting citrus and other products. Bushnell was established as a rail stop in 1885, the same year that postal service arrived there. The town of Coleman was established in 1882 and became known as the "cabbage capital of the world" (Reeves 1988:98). Beginning in the late 1800s, Sumter County became one of the leading vegetable producing counties in the US. This ended with the Great Depression in the 1930s, and economic growth has never fully rebounded.

The Florida Turnpike and I-75 were established in the 1950s and 1970s, respectively, and have done little to change the economic fortune for most of the county. The single largest development in the county's history is The Villages, a retirement (age 55+) community located in northeastern Sumter County, and bordering Wildwood. The location was originally home to a mobile home park called the Orange Blossom Gardens. Developers took a different route in the 1980s and modeled their new development on the nearby Del Webb community Sun City. Sales began to improve and by 1992, the development was officially named The Villages. The community boasted a population of only 8,333 people in 2000 (US Census). In the last two decades, the population has skyrocketed to an estimated 157,000 people in 2016, which is similar or even larger than the entire population of Sumter County. This is possible because a densely populated portion of The Villages is located in Marion County.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 11

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**History of Royal**

According to GLO land grants and US Census records, Royal's settlers were William Harley, Jesse Wilson, Jake Sesler, John Ludley, Dicey Ludley, Dillie Bryant, Henry Gattis, Lewis Graham, Richard and Harriett Johnson, Hampton Anderson, Toney Brooks, Flora James, Emma Jefferson, David Brooks, James Mathews, Isaac Hughes, Sandy Robinson and Thomas James. The federal census lists birthplaces for founders, all of whom were born in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. Many of their oldest children were also born in these states, suggesting that families formed prior to moving to Royal.

The Homestead Act of 1862 is referenced on the land patents for the original settlers in the vicinity of Royal. The race of these settlers is provided through federal census records. The Homestead Act of 1862 was passed primarily to encourage western migration and required five years of residence on the property before receiving the title for a small fee (The Center for Legislative Archives 2019). The majority of Black Homestead Colonies are in the Great Plains. Most of these communities have all but disappeared, often through overt violence or development-led displacement (Noll and Tegeder 2009; Gonzalez- Tennant 2018). One founder property in Royal, that of Thomas James, who received his title in 1887, cited the Land Act of 1820. This Act ended the ability to purchase public domain land on a credit or installment system. Instead, it reduced the cost of land for average Americans and was most often used in the western frontier of the country (Genovese 2011).

Ultimately, the Community of Royal is best conceived of as a Black Homestead Colony. US and State census records show a pattern of chain migration whereby settlers invited relatives and their families to join the homesteader colony (1870 US Census, 1885 Florida Census). During its initial settlement period, Royal was reportedly called "Pickettsville," a name attributed to either the picket fences delineating the property of Royal settlers James and Sallie Pickett, or their name. This first period of development began sometime prior to 1870. While the US census is known for undercounting non-White minorities (West and Fein 1990), records show that at least seven Black settler families were already living in Royal by July 2, 1870. Royal's recorded Black residents in 1870 include:

- James and Sarah Pickett (b. 1842, 1844 resp.; both from North Carolina) and their four children;
- Hamp Anderson, his wife Betsey (both b. approx. 1835 South Carolina) and their six children;
- Sandy Robinson, his wife Laura (b. Approx. 1843 and 1842 resp.; South Carolina) and their three children;
- David Brooks, his wife Nellie (b. Approx. 1847 Georgia and 1850 Florida, resp.) and their two children;
- Isaac Hughes and wife Margaret (b. 1841 Georgia and 1846 South Carolina, resp.) and their three children;
- Delia [sic] ("Dillie") Bryant b. 1840 (Georgia) and her four children;



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 12

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

- William Hardy [sic] (“Harley”), his wife Mary (b. 1836 and 1839 resp.; Georgia) and their five children.

William Harley was the first to receive the deed for his property 1875 for 80 acres near what would become the central part of the community. As mentioned above, he was recorded as living in Royal as early as 1870. Harley’s family acreage was the most impacted by the construction of I-75, with a loss of 10.2 from a total of 80 acres for the highway and right-of-way.

Royal’s second period of development took place between 1882 and the early 1910s. In addition to renaming the community to Royal, federal and state census record a rapid growth in residents occurred during this time. This is further evidenced by the appearance of additional commercial and community structures. African Americans continued to learn of Royal through familial networks. Royal quickly became known as a location where African Americans could own property and engage in various business activities. Faced with increasing restrictions elsewhere, it is likely that Royal became very attractive in the years following the end of Reconstruction. The increased access to the county made possible by rail travel may have also played a role, although a railroad never passed through Royal.

Thomas James was the last settler to receive the deed for his property in 1892, and the growth in Royal is significant enough that the town has a post office by June 26th, 1891 (Bradbury and Hallock 1962), located in the central hub of the community along CR 462. After the closure of the post office in 1907, the post office (and Royal addresses) converted to Wildwood. While some Royal residents worked as waged laborers in nearby Oxford or Wildwood, most continued to work and farm their homesteads.

Royal saw sustained growth in the 1920s and 1930s as well. By the 1930s, oral histories in Royal attribute the creation of the Work Projects Administration (WPA) providing employment to several community members to build a new, larger school in Royal to accommodate growing numbers of children in the community. The school would close in 1970 as a result of desegregation, and children were bused to nearby, majority-White schools. It is likely that while residents inevitably felt the impacts of the Great Depression, they were insulated from the worst effects as agricultural activities were not impacted to the same degree in Florida as elsewhere. Also, the community’s long-term familiar support networks would have played a central role, as it did in other Black communities during times of economic stress (González-Tennant 2018).

Furthermore, several federal actions provided protection for agricultural communities during this time, and during “these years, Congress passed a vast amount of legislation to benefit farming, culminating...in the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938” (Friedberger 1988: 5). The Act effectively was “designed to support the price of farm commodities by controlling production and managing

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 13

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

supplies” (ibid 1988: 5). The main commodities supported by this program were grains, but they also included dairy, tobacco, and sugar. Royal’s residents likely benefitted from this legislation for a time.

Support systems included the masonic lodge, women’s groups, and churches. The masonic lodge served as an important mutual benefit organization for the community of Royal. Their lodge was the largest community building outside of the churches and was centrally located on CR 462. Groups could hold functions at the lodge, such as school dances and community group fundraisers. The ‘Royal Women’s Group’ sole purpose was to address some of the

concerns of community members and needs while removing that pressure from the local churches (Steele 2022, personal communication). Fundraisers took the form of barbeques, fish fries, chicken dinner sales and the like to benefit those in need or experiencing financial hardship. Many of these community organizations continued into the 1970s or later.

This legislation surrounding agriculture during the Great Depression also led to the beginning of modern industrial agriculture allowing agribusiness and government to grow closer. Throughout the mid-20th century, many small farmers were bought out by neighbors wanting to grow their businesses, and a great deal of attention was placed into the efficiency of farming, leading to increasingly intensive mechanization (Friedberger 1988: 6). As certain industrial farms became more profitable, this process snowballed across the US.

Friedberger suggests this culminated in the mid-1970s when “...the Department of Agriculture under Earl Butz endorsed the notion that the best of all possible farms produced the most goods with the least labor” (1988: 6). Royal’s residents continued small-scale farming by hand during the latter part of the 20th century,



*Royal Women’s Group, unknown date*



*Child stands in Royal tobacco field, circa 1950s*

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 14

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

with only minor amounts of mechanization. Focus on tobacco and sugarcane waned but was never entirely abandoned. Sugarcane processing continues, albeit on a smaller scale as a way of commemorating their history.


Today, residents of Royal, descendants of the area's 19th century Black homesteaders live on the original lands obtained by their ancestors. This is a direct and tangible connection with the first period of settlement and development. Buildings and structures from Royal's other periods of growth still stand. Tobacco barns were built and rebuilt across Royal until at least the mid-20th century. The investment in masonry construction reflects continued agricultural prosperity in the community. Families continue traditional agriculture even now. They raise cattle and hogs. Small scale cane processing takes place each fall and winter across the community (Marsenburg 2013).

### Homestead Act of 1862 and Florida

The Homestead Act of 1862 was a pivotal piece of legislation in the 19th and 20th century, turning public domain land to citizens. Approximately 270 million acres, or 10% of the United States was claimed by homesteaders with this Act (National Park Service 2021). The majority of these claims were in the Great Plains, specifically Nebraska, Colorado, Montana, the Dakotas, and Oklahoma.

In Florida, about 10% of the total land area was claimed by homesteaders under this Act, or about 3,326,712 acres to 28,096 (National Park Service 2021). Florida's homesteading claims were approximately 1% of the total land acquired by homesteaders under the Act in the United States. The total area claimed in the Community of Royal by Black homesteaders

27



**The United States of America,**  
TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING:

Homestead Certificate No. 568  
Application 2212

Whereas, there has been deposited in the General Land Office of the United States a CERTIFICATE of the Register of the Land Office at Timnerville Florida, whereby it appears that, pursuant to the Act of Congress approved 20th May, 1862, "To secure Homesteads to actual settlers on the public domain," and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of William Harley has been established and duly consummated in conformity to law for the South Half of the north west quarter of Section Twenty Seven, in Township sixteen North of Range Twenty Two East, in the District of Land subject to sale at Timnerville Florida containing Eighty acres, and more or less of an acre

according to the Official Plat of the Survey of the said Land returned to the General Land Office by the SURVEYOR GENERAL.

Now know ye, That there is therefore granted by the UNITED STATES unto the said William Harley the tract of Land above described: To Have and to Hold the said tract of Land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said William Harley and to his heirs and assigns forever:

In testimony whereof, J. Myerson S. Grant, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the Seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed.

Given under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the First day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and Eighty Seven, and of the Independence of the United States the Thirtieth

BY THE PRESIDENT: U. S. Grant  
By D. D. Crockett, Sec'y.  
L. A. F. Farnsworth, Recorder of the General Land Office

William Harley was the first of Royal's Black settlers to receive a land patent, dated July 1, 1875.



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 15

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

was 1800 acres. In Florida, very little of this original homesteading land remains in the hands of descendants, Black or White.

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE**

**Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage: Black (1872-1974)**

The Royal Rural Historic District contains the largest concentration of resources historically associated with the rural African American community of Royal. The community was effectively a Black Homesteader Colony in existence since at least 1870. The community's original settlers were recently emancipated slaves hailing from Georgia and the Carolinas. These founders used the Homestead Act of 1862, which required they build and homestead their land for five years, to obtain patents, or deeds, to their properties. Royal's founders obtained titles to their land between 1875 and 1892. With landownership, the founders and their families were able to attain self-sufficiency and independence, steadily earning income from cash crops such as tobacco and sugarcane, and livestock like cattle and hogs.

Some of Royal's residents walked to the neighboring town of Oxford, FL, to work in exchange for pay or meat and produce (O'Dell 1997). However, many members of Royal comment on the importance of the freedom that came with landownership as well as the limitations on what work was available to African Americans in the early to mid-20th Century. Catherine Latimer, Royal resident born in 1927, recalled, "That's the way it was. If you didn't work for yourself, you worked for the white folks. That was the only work available. You either washed and ironed clothes, cleaned houses, worked on farms or picked oranges. There was nothing else to do" (O'Dell 1997).

Royal's significance is based on its location nationally, in the state, and locally. The Homestead Act of 1862 was created to entice homesteaders to move out into new territories obtained by the United States. Similar communities, or Homestead Colonies were created by



*Royal residents in tobacco patch (circa 1950s).*



*Butchering hogs in Royal (1971).*

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 16

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Black Homesteaders in the Great Plains with The Homestead Act (Edwards et al. 2017); however, Royal's homesteaders were limited by geography and land size in Florida. Similar rural African American towns in Florida, such as Rosewood and Santos were either directly destroyed through racial violence or displaced through development. The combination of geography and geology played a significant role in protecting Royal from destruction and development, allowing a community representative of a Black lifestyle that has vanished from most places to remain largely intact in Central Florida.

**Criterion A: Agriculture (1872-1974)**

Agriculture remained the lifeblood of Royal going into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The Royal Rural Historic District contains the highest concentration of resources associated with the agricultural operations of the community during the period of significance.

The early homesteaders were heavily involved in farming, growing tobacco and sugarcane, and raising livestock to both feed themselves and provide necessary income to sustain their families. The community's residents held fast to traditional methods of agriculture.

Oral histories recall harvesting and processing tobacco and sugarcane by hand (Runnels 1979; O'Dell 1997; Runnels 1979). A few mentions of minor equipment used to make things easier, such as a tractor are recorded. In practice, the majority of families chose or had to maintain traditional ways of farming, specifically doing things by hand, with only minor mechanization towards the mid-20th century. Women and girls helped with agriculture, but also did work to supplement income and products from the farm. They often worked in the neighboring town of Oxford. The money they earned there would allow them to purchase goods from a country store that they could otherwise not grow, raise, or manufacture by hand on the farm.



*Patterson family processing tobacco by hand (circa 1959).*



*Raising hogs in Royal (circa 2022).*

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 17

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Criterion A: Settlement/Exploration and Community Planning and Development (1872-1974)**

Royal is an African American community founded by free Blacks in the years following the Civil War, who arrived during the Reconstruction Era (1865-1877 in Florida). This was part of the larger southern migration from Georgia and the Carolinas to Florida during this time (Ortiz 2005) and mirrors the development of Black Homesteader Colonies in western state like Nicodemus, Kansas (Hosbey 2016) as settlement involved clusters of families moving in groups, or colonies. As with other colonies, the initial historical settlement of Royal is documented through General Land Office (GLO) patents granted to homesteaders who spent at least five years on their property. In total, 40 properties within the district boundary were secured in this way between 1854 and 1898. Most of the homesteader properties – 31 of the 40 – were secured by African Americans between 1875 and 1898. In Royal, the initial landscape includes three African American landowners for every single White-owned property. Furthermore, many White landowners were absentee landowners. Oral and published histories with African Americans (Steele 2019) and White (Nichols 2002) families document the presence of African Americans on the White-owned properties throughout the period of significance. This includes White landowners renting homes to African Americans, leasing land to African Americans for farming, and employing African Americans in domestic and agricultural settings. Census records in the 20th century offer further evidence of these relationships by documenting which Whites owned properties in Royal while residing in nearby towns like Wildwood to the southeast. Over time, African American families have expanded their ownership to include portions of many of the historically White-owned properties. The agricultural and residential nature of individual properties and the overall district remains largely intact. Additionally, most of the original properties secured by African Americans through the Homestead Act of 1862 are still owned by descendants. These descendants honor their ancestors through a variety of agricultural-themed practices (e.g., small-scale sugarcane harvesting).

The district's significance in Settlement/Exploration and Community Planning and Development is best illustrated through an examination of its patterns of spatial organization. Historic settlement in Royal initially focused on the areas with the best soil for agriculture, most of which occurred following the 1848 GLO survey (Figure 16), which shows little development or agricultural activity in the area. Historical settlement is documented through deeds acquired via the Homestead Act of 1862 with fully 33 of the 48 properties being homesteaded by African Americans (Figure 17). By 1895 the original settlers' homesteads as well as community and other buildings were arranged along one major road (Figure 18) which roughly corresponds with the later County Road (CR) 462 (see Figure 19), evidence that Royal was locally recognized as a cohesive community. It was during this time that Royal's post office opened on June 6, 1891 (Bradbury and Hallock 1962:73), and other community improvements began. Today, churches, stores, and community centers are in this central portion of the community, with homesteads and farmsteads extending outward.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 18

As the community grew, descendants purchased new properties as family clusters expanded onto nearby land that did not originally belong to Royal's founders. Homes and farms were built in the western section of the community along CR 462, either on properties previously owned by or leased from Whites. This pattern of growth extended westward into slightly less productive soil regions and away from the neighboring towns of Oxford and Wildwood. Oral histories recount that some of Royal's residents walked the handful of miles to work in Oxford or Wildwood, but explicitly did not stay after sunset. Today, such places are referred to as Sundown Towns (Loewen 2005). It is not surprising to find such overt hostility in rural Florida. Oral histories demonstrate how Royal residents persisted and even thrived under such challenging conditions. The hostility of these neighboring communities likely encouraged expansion of Royal westward. In the early to mid-20th century, tobacco was often sold in Jacksonville. If a neighbor's truck had issues, they would move the tobacco over to another truck to ensure all members could be paid for their harvest (Steele 2022, personal communication).

The nearest railroad to the community runs north south, through the towns of Oxford and Wildwood (see Figure 1). While the distance to markets required extra effort for Royal's farmers to sell their products, it is likely that distance to the railroad insulated the community from destruction as happened to other rural African American communities in Florida. For instance, Rosewood was destroyed during a weeklong episode of violence in 1923 (González-Tennant 2018), while residents of Santos were displaced by the ultimately failed cross Florida barge canal in the 1930s (Noll and Tegeder 2009). These towns were located along preexisting transportation routes, as in the case of Rosewood, or in the proposed route of future transportation routes, as with Santos. The railroad never arrived in Royal. While this caused the residents inconvenience when hauling their agricultural products to market, it also served to protect the town from earlier development threats, but development once again threatens the Community of Royal today.

These historical developments are documented through historical maps, aerial imagery, and census records. Royal's development in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is visible on a 1936 Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) map (Figure 6). By this time Royal is an orderly community centered along CR 462, with additional residences and farms clearly marked along CR 475 to the west and CR 216A to the north. The buildings visible along CR 216A were occupied by families who may have considered themselves residents of Oxford as this road was not initially connected to Royal's central district, but this would change by the mid and late 20<sup>th</sup> century these roads became a part of Royal as the community expanded northward. The same is not the case for the single structure on the eastern edge of CR 462, which is clearly part of the expanding agricultural landscape of Royal (Figure 7). Aerial imagery in Figure 7 clearly shows paths between all these areas, further reinforcing historical accounts (Nichols 2002) and oral histories regarding the presence of African Americans on properties regardless of the race of the property owner.



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 19

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

While it may be tempting to equate ownership of properties with use, census records and other historical maps provide important clarification regarding landuse in Royal during the period of significance. It was common practice for landowning Whites to employ both poor Whites and African Americans in various jobs. Figure 20 represents parcel ownership by race in 1959. The underlying parcel map was produced by the J. M. Smedley, Publisher INC. company in 1959. Census records record the races of most of these owners (a handful of property owners could not be located and are represented as Unknown).

Census records prove useful in other ways when charting historical patterns of spatial organization in Royal. The 1950 federal census divides the portion of Sumter County around Royal into five enumeration districts (Figure 21). District 60-1 is located in incorporated Oxford. District 60-2 is the northern area of the county excluding district 60-1 and including most of Royal. Districts 60-6 and 60-7 divide the incorporated portions of Wildwood. District 60-8 includes the rural areas around Wildwood, including some southern portions of Royal. Enumeration districts often informed or were informed by election precincts. These district boundaries effectively limit Royal's political power by dividing the area's largest African American population center between two election precincts.

Figure 10 displays routes of the 1950 US Census recorder. The recorder moved into and out of Royal repeatedly over several weeks in April and May 1950. Many of the listed landowners, particularly White owners with larger tracts of land, are not resident on their properties. White absenteeism was a common element of sharecropping and tenant farming in Florida and other Southern states during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and remains a conditioning factor for the loss of intergenerational wealth by African American communities across the country (Ortiz 2005; Ouzts 1996; Reid 1979; Reid and Bennett 2012).

In Royal, the 1950 census provides two local examples illustrating this point (Figure 23). The first includes a large parcel owned by J. M. Boen in the southwestern portion of the district. The census doesn't appear to indicate any full-time residents on the southern portion of the property, although aerial imagery clearly shows the northern half to be under cultivation in the 1940s and 1950s. The property was worked by African Americans at this time living on neighboring properties, with accounts of at least one tenant farmer and/or sharecropper living on the property itself (Hughes 2024). This is corroborated by the existence of at least one contributing structure that survives to the present (contributing structure 5.2). Others recall specific activities in this structure, including Etta Huff who remarked that the "barn is still up there and stuff" as she discussed her memories of harvesting tobacco "because my Daddy had contracted me out" to the property owner (Huff and Jenkins 2024).

Additional evidence for White absenteeism is present across multiple censuses. The owner of this property, J. M. Boen appears in the 1930, 1940, and 1950 censuses as residing in enumeration district 60-



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 20

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

6. Specifically, the Sunset Park neighborhood of Wildwood, Florida in 1950 (see Figure 24). The same holds true for the property surrounded by Boen’s parcels, that of C.P Davis. This parcel was deeded to Davis by the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund of the State of Florida in 1944 (Figure 13), and lists his residence in Winter Haven, Florida, more than 80 miles away from his property in Royal.

Oral histories document numerous activities on these properties. Livestock grazing as well as fishing were popular activities at areas referred to as “The Sinkhole” and “The Mudhole” – part of a network of permanent and semi-permanent lakes, ponds, and other wetlands across the southern half of the community (Figure 14). According to long-time Royal resident Maitland Keiler, fishing on these properties, particularly “The Sinkhole” located on the properties owned by Boen and Davies “fed a lot of people in Royal” (Dunlap and Keiler 2024). Cliff Hughes fondly remembers residents using the same area for “frying fish around there” as well as growing tobacco and watermelon crops (Hughes 2024). Nearby areas on Figure 14, particularly those to the west of Interstate 75 in the southern half of the community persist as sites of memory for many residents. In the words of Maitland Keiler, recent activities have “filled in all the places and we don’t have nowhere out here to fish no more” (Dunlap and Keiler 2024). Perhaps more significantly, Minister Florine Williams recalled how her grandfather, a Baptist pastor “used to baptize people in that sinkhole” until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Williams 2024).

A second example of White absenteeism is a parcel owned by C.W. Huey, who does not show up in any of the census records for this area, meaning they either live outside of the surrounding communities or purchase the property after 1950. Census sheets 15 and 16 from enumeration district 60-2 (Figures 27 and 28) list the families living around this property in 1950. There are at least five households listed between the Woods and Sessler properties, both of which were owned by African Americans. All five households are African American, and aerial imagery from 1941 (Figure 29) shows these five buildings on the property.

Royal’s growth continued through the remainder of the period of significant (1870-1974) despite the addition of Interstate 75 prior to the late 1960s (Figure 4). Many of the dirt paths from previous decades have been converted to unimproved or paved roads, evidence of community growth and cohesion within the district’s boundary. Planners were clearly aware of Royal’s historical roots and its need for a transportation corridor connecting the eastern and western sides of the settlement, leading to the inclusion of a bridge for CR 462. A power corridor is clearly visible in Figure 4 running through the west-southwest corner of the district’s boundary. This historical corridor itself may be eligible for inclusion on the NRHP (Kramer 2010) and has become a part of Royal’s historical landscape 60 or more years ago (well before the end of the period of significance). A more recent subsurface pipeline now follows this corridor, but neither improvement significantly impacts the agricultural aspects of these properties, or the visual integrity of the landscape.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 21

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Aerial imagery from 1941 (Figure 3), 1951 (Figure 5), and 1960 (Figure 6) fully delineates Royal's historical boundaries during the period of significance. The aerials from 1941 and 1951 demonstrate increasing development along the northern and western boundaries. The 1960 aerial imagery (Figure 6) shows considerable clearing along the western, northern, eastern, and southeastern portions of the boundary. The southwest portion remains undeveloped owing to the large wetlands present in the area, although Royal's African American residents continued to use these areas for cultural, social, and religious activities until at least the end of the period of significance (1972).

By the late 1960s, highways were being built and extended across Florida. A 1966 USGS Quad map (Figure 29) includes I-75 and illustrates how this road bisected the historical community of Royal. A number of other features are also visible on this map. The Royal Memorial Cemetery, Royal School, and New Jerusalem Church are all clearly labeled. Also, several roads have been improved during this time and are marked as paved. The wetlands and ponds in the project's study area remain prominent. Interestingly, evidence of prior industrial operations are visibly labeled as sandpits, although much of this area today has been developed into a series of truck stops servicing travelers on I-75. Many of the roads in the study area follow the original GLO land patents discussed previously, and numerous structures are recorded across the area. Those original properties were divided and deeded to relatives and children, forming family farm clusters.

The Royal Rural Historic District contains the oldest extant resources associated with the African American community of Royal. Founded by Black homesteaders, the original residences constructed starting in the 1870s are no longer extant. The district contains buildings and structures that were built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when many of the original homesteaders were still alive.

**Criterion D: Archaeology**

Unlike the history of White/Anglo America, African American history is plagued by a lack of historical documentation. The list of Black diaries, newspapers, and other primary resources pales in comparison to that available for White/Anglo Americans. African Americans have been, in the words of anthropologist Eric Wolf, one of the many groups, many peoples "without history" (Wolf 1982). Increasingly, researchers interested in reconstructing the lives – particularly the everyday lives – of African Americans have turned to archaeology (Orser 2023).

One of the greatest challenges for archaeologists examining the African American experience is accessing sites beyond the plantation. Of growing interest are sites associated with the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These are periods when African Americans forged communities in the face of severe hardships. Many of these difficulties resulted in the destruction of Black places. Increasingly

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 22

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

referred to as infrastructural violence, the growth of 20<sup>th</sup> century America often involved the violent displacement of minority communities and the destruction of relevant archaeological data.

The archaeological sites of Royal provide a nationally unique opportunity to explore African American history during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The previous *Criterion A: Settlement/Exploration and Community Planning and Development (1872-1974)* section includes information regarding several archaeological sites in Royal that hold the potential to provide new information on community development, family history, intergenerational wealth, and expressions of individual and collective identity as they relate to African American history. Nowhere in the country is there a similar group of resources that *remain in the hands of African American property owners*.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adler, Jeffrey S.

1995 Black Violence in the New South: Patterns of Conflict in Late-Nineteenth-Century Tampa. In *The African American Heritage of Florida*, edited by David R. Colburn and Jane L. Landers, pp. 207-239. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Battle-Baptiste, Whitney

2011 Black Feminist Archaeology. Left Coast Press, Chicago.

Baram, Uzi

2012 Cosmopolitan Meanings of Old Spanish Fields: Historical Archaeology of a Maroon Community in Southwest Florida. *Historical Archaeology* 46(1):108-122.

Bittle, George C.

1966 The Florida Militia's Role in the Battle of Withlacoochee. *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 44(4): 303-311.

Bradbury, Alford G. And E. Story Hallock

1962 A Chronology of Florida Post Offices, Handbook No. 2. The Florida Federation of Stamp Clubs.

Caruthers, David. Interview by Beverly Steel. February 3, 2024. On file with Young Performing Artists, Inc. (YPAs), Wildwood, Florida.

The Center for Legislative Archives

2019 The Homestead Act, May 20, 1862. The National Archives, Washington, DC.

<<https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/homestead-act>> Accessed 15 June 2022.

Covington, James W.

1993 *The Seminoles of Florida*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Deagan, Kathleen and Darcie MacMahon

1995 *Fort Mose: Colonial America's Black Fortress of Freedom*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Dunlap, Cliff and Maitland Keiler. Interview by Beverly Steel. February 2, 2024. On file with Young Performing Artists, Inc. (YPAs), Wildwood, Florida.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 9 Page 2

Dunn, John M.

2019 *Drying Up: The Fresh Water Crisis in Florida*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Edwards, Richard, Jacob K. Friefeld, and Rebecca S. Wingo

2017 *Homesteading the Plains: Toward a New History*. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.

Friedberger, Mark

2014 *Farm Families & Change in 20th-Century America*. The University Press of Kentucky. Lexington.

Friefeld, Jacob, Mikal Brotnov Eckstrom, and Richard Edwards.

2019 African American Homesteader "Colonies" in the Settling of the Great Plains. *Great Plain Quarterly* 39(1):11-38.

Gates, Paul Wallace

1940 "Federal Land Policy in the South: 1866-1888". In *The Journal of Southern History* 6 (3): pp. 303-330.

Genovese, Peter S.

2011 *Relief Act of 1821 In The American Economy: A Historical Encyclopedia, Vol. 1*. Cynthia Clark Northrup, Ed. pp. 376-377

González-Tennant, Edward

2016 Hate Sits in Places: Folk Knowledge and the Power of Place in Rosewood, Florida. In *Excavating Memory: Material Culture Approaches to Sites of Remembering and Forgetting*, edited by Maria T. Starzmann and John R. Roby, pp. 218-241. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

2018 *The Rosewood Massacre: An Archaeology and History of Intersectional Violence*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Graf, Bill

1993 "Time Stands Still in Sumter Town." *Daily Commercial*. April 25, 1993.

Graham, Thomas

2013 The First Developers. In *The History of Florida*, edited by Michael Gannon, pp. 276-295. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 9 Page 3

Haase, Ronald W.

1992 *Classic Cracker: Florida's Wood-Frame Vernacular Architecture*. Pineapple Press, Sarasota, FL.

Harmon, James M., Mark P. Leone, Stephen D. Prince, and Marcia Snyder.

2006 "Lidar for Archaeological Landscape Analysis: A Case Study of Two Eighteenth-Century Maryland Plantation Sites." *American Antiquity* 71 (4): 649–70.

Hosbey, Justin

2016 "I Looked With All The Eyes I Had": Black Women's Vision And The Stakes Of Heritage In Nicodemus, Kansas. *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development* 45(3/4):303-347.

Howard, Rosalyn

2013 "Looking for Angola": An Archaeological and Ethnohistorical Search for a Nineteenth Century Florida Maroon Community and its Caribbean Connections. *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 92(1): 32-68.

Howard, Rosalyn

2002 *Black Seminoles in the Bahamas*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Huff, Etta and Marchahal Jenkins. Interview by Beverly Steel. February 3, 2024. On file with Young Performing Artists, Inc. (YPAs), Wildwood, Florida.

Hughes, Clifford. Interview by Beverly Steel. February 2, 2024. On file with Young Performing Artists, Inc. (YPAs), Wildwood, Florida.

Ingram, Sonja.

2015 *Pittsylvania County Tobacco Barn Survey: Final Report*. Richmond: Preservation Virginia.

Jenkins, Zelma. Interview by Beverly Steel. February 2, 2024. On file with Young Performing Artists, Inc. (YPAs), Wildwood, Florida.

Kenney, Patricia L.

1995 LaVilla, Florida, 1866-1887: Reconstruction Dreams and the Formation of a Black Community. In *The African American Heritage of Florida*, edited by David R. Colburn and Jane L. Landers, pp. 185-206. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 9 Page 4

Klos, George

1995 Blacks and the Seminole Removal Debate, 1821-1835. In *The African American Heritage of Florida*, edited by David R. Colburn and Jane L. Landers, pp. 128-155. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Kramer, George.

2010 *Corridors of Power: The Bonneville Power Administration Transmission Network Historic Context Statement*. Report Prepared for the Bonneville Power Administration, Portland, Oregon.

Landers, Jane

2013 Free and Enslaved. In *The History of Florida*, edited by Michael Gannon, pp. 179-194. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Landers, Jane G., editor.

2000 *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Landers, Jane

1995 Traditions of African American Freedom and Community in Spanish Colonial Florida. In *The African American Heritage of Florida*, edited by David R. Colburn and Jane L. Landers, pp.17-41. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Loewen, James W.

2005 *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*. The New Press, New York.

Mahon, John K.

1998 The First Seminole War, November 21, 1817-May 24, 1818. *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 77(1) 62-67.

Mahon, John K.

1967 *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Marsenburg, Theresa (producer)

2013 Florida Crossroads – Florida's Black Heritage Trail: The Central Florida Region, Part 1. State of Florida Department of Education.

McCarthy, Kevin M.

2007 *African American Sites in Florida*. Pineapple Press, Inc., Sarasota.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 9 Page 5

Miller, Vivien M. L.

2000 *Crime, Sexual Violence, and Clemency: Florida's Pardon Board and Penal System in the Progressive Era*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Miller, Vivien M. L.

2012 *Hard Labor and Hard Time: Florida "Sunshine Prison" and Chain Gangs*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Millett, Nathaniel

2000 *The Maroons of Prospect Bluff and Their Quest for Freedom in the Atlantic World*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Mitchem, Jeffrey M. and Brent R. Weisman

1987 Changing Settlement Patterns and Pottery Types in the Withlacoochee Cove. *The Florida Anthropologist* 40 (2): 154-166.

National Park Service

2021 National Historic Park Nebraska – About the Homestead Act. <<https://www.nps.gov/home/learn/historyculture/abouthomesteadactlaw.htm>> Accessed 15 June 2022

National Park Service

2021 National Historic Park Nebraska – Homesteading in Florida. <<https://www.nps.gov/home/learn/historyculture/homesteading-in-florida.htm>> Accessed 15 June 2022

Nelson, Blue

2011 Structural Racism and the Destruction of Santos, Florida. *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter*. 14(4):1-13.

Nichols, Hulon H.

2002 *Long Hammock Memories*. St. Petersburg: Ideal Publishing Co., Inc.

Noll, Steven and David Tedeger

2009 *Ditch of Dreams: The Cross Florida Barge Canal and the Struggle for Florida's Future*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 9 Page 6

O'Dell, Liesl

1997 Granddaughter of Slave Remembers Life in Rural Sumter County. *The Daily Commercial* 9 Feb: C1-C2.

Orser, Charles E.

20203 *Living Ceramics, Storied Ground: A History of African American Archaeology*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Ortiz, Paul

2005 *Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organizing and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920*. Berkley: University of California Press.

Oubre, Claude F.

1978 *Forty Acres and a Mule: The Freedmen's Bureau and Black land Ownership*. Louisiana State University Press. Baton Rouge, LA.

Ouzts, Clay

1996 Landlords and Tenants: Sharecropping and the Cotton Culture in Leon County, Florida, 1865-1885. *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 75(1):1-23.

Porter, Tana Mosier

2004 Segregation and Desegregation in Parramore: Orlando's African American Community. *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 82(3):289-312.

Reeves, F. Blair

1989 St. Johns. In *Guide to Florida's Historic Architecture*. Pp. 77-79. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Reid, Debra A. and Even P. Bennett, editors

2012 *Beyond Forty Acres and a Mule: African American Landowning Families Since Reconstruction*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Reid, Joseph D.

1979 White Land, Black Labor, and Agricultural Stagnation: The Causes and Effects of Sharecropping in the Postbellum South. *Explorations in Economic History* 16(1):31-55.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 7

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Rivers, Larry Eugene

2013 The Twentieth Century and Beyond. In *The History of Florida*, edited by Michael Gannon, pp. 444-469. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Rivers, Larry Eugene

2000 *Slavery in Florida: Territorial Days to Emancipation*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

Rivers, Larry E.

1995 A Troublesome Property: Master-Slave Relations in Florida, 1821-1865. *The African American Heritage of Florida*, edited by David R. Colburn and Jane L. Landers, pp. 104-127. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Runnels, Jim

1979 Legwork & a legacy. *Florida Magazine*. 29 July.

Schaefer, Daniel L.

1995 Freedom Was as Close as the River: African Americans and the Civil War in Northeast Florida. *The African American Heritage of Florida*, edited by David R. Colburn and Jane L. Landers, pp. 157-184. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Schofner, Jerrell H.

2013 Reconstruction and Renewal, 1865-1877. In *The History of Florida*, edited by Michael Gannon, pp. 260-275. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Solomon, Irvin D. and Grace Erhart

1999 Race and Civil War in South Florida. *Florida Historical Quarterly* 77(3): 320-341.

Sprinkle, Ira T.

1939 Brief History of Sumter County, Florida. Paper collected by the Works Progress Administration's Historical Records Survey. Electronic Resource:  
<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/321156>.

Steele, Beverly.

2019 "Hello, Somebody!": *Beverly Steele's 40 Acres & A Mule Stories*. Royal, Florida: Amazon Digital Services.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 8

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Taylor, Robert A.

2013 The Civil War, 1861-1865. In *The History of Florida*, edited by Michael Gannon, pp. 244-259. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Tolnay, Stewart E. and E. M. Beck

1995 *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882-1930*. Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Turner, Gregg M.

2008 *A Journey into Florida Railroad History*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

US Department of Agriculture, National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

1988 *Soil Survey of Sumter County, Florida*. Washington, DC: Soil Conservation Service.

Vogeler, Ingolf

1981 The Myth of the Family Farm: Agribusiness Dominance of U.S. Agriculture. Westview Press, Inc. 1981. Routledge, New York. 2019.

Weik, Terrance M.

2012 *The Archaeology of Antislavery Resistance*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Weisman, Brent R.

2013 Florida's Seminole and Miccosukee Peoples. In *The History of Florida*, edited by Michael Gannon, pp. 195-219. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

West, Kirsten K. and David J. Fein

1990 Census Undercount: An Historical and Contemporary Sociological Issue In *Sociological Inquiry* 60(2):127-141

White, W. A.

1970 *The Geomorphology of the Florida Peninsula*. Tallahassee: Florida Department of Natural Resources, Geological Bulletin No. 51.

Williams, Florine. Interview by Beverly Steel. February 2, 2024. On file with Young Performing Artists, Inc. (YPAs), Wildwood, Florida.

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

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 9

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Young Performing Artists (YPA's), Inc.

2010 "Royal Community History as recalled by Catherine Latimer", Young Performing Artists (YPA's) Inc., Private Collection. Royal, Florida.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 10 Page 1

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Royal Rural Historic District is in sections 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 33, and 34 of Township 18S Range 22E all being in Sumter County, Florida. The landscape is roughly bounded by CR 475 on the west, CR 216A on the north, CR 223 on the east, and properties just north of Hwy 44 on the south. Figure 30 shows the corners of the district, and specific UTM coordinates are provided below. All coordinates are in NAD 83 UTM 17N.

Beginning at Point 1 move 15,833 feet east to Point 2, then 5,795 feet south to Point 3, then 161 feet south to Point 4, then 635 feet south to Point 5, then 2,614 feet west to Point 6, then 2,663 feet south to Point 7, then 2,653 feet west to Point 8, then 245 feet south to Point 9, then 238 feet west to Point 10, then 349 feet south to Point 11, then 515 feet west to Point 12, then 257 feet south to Point 13, then 264 feet west to Point 14, then 190 feet south to Point 15, then 273 feet west to Point 16, then 331 feet south to Point 17, then 9,232 feet west to Point 18, and return to Point 1 by moving 10,608 feet north.

ID	UTM Coordinates	ID	UTM Coordinates
1	14N 390829mN 3198422mE	10	14N 393941mN 3195518mE
2	14N 395653mN 3198385mE	11	14N 393940mN 3195411mE
3	14N 395637mN 3196619mE	12	14N 393784mN 3195414mE
4	14N 395631mN 3196571mE	13	14N 393782mN 3195336mE
5	14N 395630mN 3196377mE	14	14N 393701mN 3195336mE
6	14N 394833mN 3196388mE	15	14N 393701mN 3195279mE
7	14N 394823mN 3195576mE	16	14N 393618mN 3195279mE
8	14N 394015mN 3195588mE	17	14N 393617mN 3195179mE
9	14N 394013mN 3195513mE	18	14N 390804mN 3195190mE

**Boundary Justification**

The district's boundary encompasses the original properties secured by African Americans through the Homestead Act of 1862, additional properties purchased by African Americans during the period of significance (1870-1974), and White-owned areas that are documented as being significant to the economic and social activities of Royal's African American residents. Today, the majority (92%) of Royal remains zoned for agricultural and/or private residences (Figure 2).

The settlement of Royal began with 40 GLO Patents received between the 1870s and 1890s (Figure 17), 31 of which were granted to African Americans. These homesteaders constitute the founding families of

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 2

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Royal and include the descendants of Toney Brooks, David Brooks, William Harley, Lewis Graham, James Mathews, Harriett and Richard J. Johnson, Thomas James, Hampton Anderson, Sandy Robinson, Henry Gattis, Emma Jefferson, Flora James, Jake Susler, Dillie Bryant, Jesse Wilson, Dicey Ludley, and Isaac Hughes. The town grew quickly and by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was home to a post office and dozens of farms arranged around the central corridor defined by CR 462 (Figure 19). Aerial imagery from the 1940s (Figure 3), 1950s (Figure 4), and 1960s (Figure 5) show the expansion of Royal, bordered by undeveloped properties along its southern, western, and northern edges. Census records (Figures 24, 27, 28) and additional property research (Figure 25) document that most of this growth was associated with African Americans subdividing their properties and acquiring new parcels previously owned by absentee White landowners (Figure 20). Absenteeism (Figure 23) is demonstrated with a thorough review of census and property records, particularly the 1950 US Federal Census.

Figure 31 breaks the bounding parcels of the district into 12 groups (A-L). Parcels are combined in groups based on shared characteristics justifying their use as bounding parcels for the Royal Rural Historic District. Not all parcels have assigned addresses, additional evidence of the continued rural nature of the Royal Rural Historic District. Addresses are included when available.

Group A includes all or portions of parcels C21-005, C21-022, C22-085 (10474 CR 237), C22-083 (10468 CR 237), C21-024, C22-089, C21-021 (10119 N C-475), C21-006 (346 CR 231), C22-092, C22-090, C22-091, and C22-077. These parcels are included because of long-term engagement with these properties by African American residents of Royal despite being homesteaded and owned by White/Anglo residents. The McKinney family owned this property for generations (see Figure 20). African American residents of Royal – including but not limited to Mr. Mike James, Theodore Brooks, and Hosea Sesler – planted and harvested watermelons and other crops that were sold in nearby communities (e.g., Webster, Sumter County).

Group B consists of a single property, parcel C22-80. It defines the boundary of Royal because D. Gray owned it (see Figure 20) in the 1950s (and later), a member of Royal's African American community.

Group C includes parcels C22-008 and C22-082 (10454 CR 229). These parcels define the boundary as they form a part of the corridor between the northeast and northwest corners of the boundary.

Group D consists of a sole property, parcel C23-010. It defines the boundary of Royal because L.T. Brooks owned it (see Figure 20) in the 1950s and later, a member of Royal's African American community. He also owned nearly 80 acres running directly south of this parcel.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 10 Page 3

Group E includes parcels C23-075 (1331 CR 216A), C23-080 (1271 CR 216A), C23-010, C23-065, C23-060 (10344 CR 223), C23-061 (10282 CR 223), C23-012 (10220 CR 223), C23-102, C23-085(804 CR 222), C23-011 (1834 CR 222), C23-041 (1852 CR 222), C23-103, and C23-104 (10054 CR 223). These parcels are included because of long-term engagement with these properties by African American residents of Royal despite being homesteaded and owned by White/Anglo residents, although portion of C21-065 was homesteaded by David Brooks (see Figure 17). The Warnock family owned this property for generations (see Figure 20). African American residents remember this family as ranchers more than farmers and many worked for them as cooks, maids, etc. The Warnock property is fondly remembered as a place where families could freely pick fruits and nuts (e.g., citrus, pecans) that grew there. Residents have referred to this area as the “Backwoods” to define the northern boundary of Royal. The oldest member of the Warnock family still considers their property to be in Royal.

Group F consists of parcels C26-160, C26-001 (1765 CR 222), C26-130, C26-083 (9692 CR 223), and C26-026. These parcels are part of the original homestead grants of John Ludley (see Figure 17) and most remained in African American ownership through the period of significance (see Figure 20).

Group G includes parcels C26-166, C26-013 (1945 E C-462), and C26-014 (3365 CR 222). They are included as a natural boundary to Royal, with most retaining their rural zoning (see Figure 2).

Group H consists of parcels C26-102 (1489 CR 228), C26-019 (1447 CR 228), C26-094 (1723 CR 228), C26-095 (1728 CR 228), C26-021, C34-002 (8772 CR 229), C34-057, C34-033 (8570 NE 9TH TER), C34-032 (8574 NE 9TH TER), C34-028 (8596 NE 9TH TER), C34-031 (8608 NE 9TH TER), C26-020 (1474 CR 228), C26-066 (1516 CR 228), C26-075, C26-043 (1582 CR 228), C26-080 (1644 CR 228), C35-003, and C34-056 (977 NE 87TH RD). These parcels help define the boundary because they are part of the original homestead grants of Jesse Wilson, Toney Brooks, Henry Gattis, and Lewis Graham (see Figure 17) and many remained in African American ownership through all or part of the period of significance (see Figure 20).

Group I includes parcels C34-003, C34-015 (412 E SR 44), and C33-008 (8763 CR 231). They define a portion of the southern boundary because the contain contributing resources include TCPs 9.2 and 9.3 (see Figure 9).

Group J consists of parcels C33-019 (427 NW 85TH BLVD), C33-006 (311 NW 85TH BLVD), and C33-005 (375 NW 85TH BLVD). These parcels help define the boundary because they are part of the original homestead grants of Dicey Ludley (see Figure 17) and many remained in African American ownership through all or part of the period of significance (see Figure 20).

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 4

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Group K includes parcels C33-001 and C28-013 (9337 N C-475). They are included because Isaac Hughes (see Figure 17) homesteaded portions of them and they include TCP 9.1 and Structure 5.2 (see Figure 9).

Group L consists of parcels C28-010 (839 CR 231) and C28-066. They form a portion of the boundary because they were owned by G. James, H. Peterson, and Zettie Williams, African American residents of Royal during (and after) the period of significance (see Figure 20).



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number      Add. Doc.      Page      1     

**Additional Documentation (Figures, plans, historic photos)**

**List of Figures:**

- Figure 1 – Location of Royal Rural Historic District.  
Figure 2 – Parcels by Landuse in the Royal Rural Historic District.  
Figure 3 – 1941 USDA Aerial Imagery of the Royal Rural Historic District.  
Figure 4 – 1966 USGS Quadrangle Map of the Royal Rural Historic District.  
Figure 5 – 1951 USDA Aerial Imagery of the Royal Rural Historic District.  
Figure 6 – 1960 USDA Aerial Imagery of the Royal Rural Historic District.  
Figure 7 – Contributing Resources of the Royal Rural Historic District.  
Figure 8 – Site Map of the Royal Post Office Site (8.10).  
Figure 9 – Contributing TCPs.  
Figure 10– Site Map of Jesse Woods' Home Site (8.3).  
Figure 11 – LiDAR Data for Jesse Woods' Home Site (8.3).  
Figure 12 – Site Map of the Wilson Family Homestead Site (8.6).  
Figure 13 – LiDAR Data for the Sessler Homestead Site (8.4).  
Figure 14 – LiDAR Data for the Rhoena & Merline Sessler Site (8.5).  
Figure 15 – LiDAR Data for the Wilson Family Homestead Site (8.6).  
Figure 16 – 1848 GLO Survey Map of the Royal Rural Historic District.  
Figure 17 – Homestead Act of 1862 Deeds Royal Rural Historic District.  
Figure 18 – 18995 USGS Topographic Map of the Royal Rural Historic District.  
Figure 19 – 1936 FDOT Map of the Royal Rural Historic District.  
Figure 20 – Parcel Ownership by Race (1959) in the Royal Rural Historic District.  
Figure 21 – US Census Enumeration Districts (1950) in Northern Sumter County, Florida.  
Figure 22 – US Census Taker Routes (1950) in the Royal Rural Historic District.  
Figure 23 – Absentee Owner Examples in the Royal Rural Historic District.  
Figure 24 – Page from 1950 US Census Regarding Home of J. M. Boen.  
Figure 25 – Deed to C. P. Davis Listing Town of Residence as Winter Haven, Florida (1944).  
Figure 26 – Wetlands in the Vicinity of Royal.  
Figure 27 – Page from 1950 US Census Listing African American Homes on C.W. Huey Property.  
Figure 28 – Page from 1950 US Census Listing African American Homes on C.W. Huey Property.  
Figure 29 – Black Homes on C. W. Huey Property.  
Figure 30 – Royal NRHP District Boundary.  
Figure 31 – Boundary Parcel Groups.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number      Photos      Page   1  

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered in the order they are referenced in the manuscript, and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log.

Property Name: Royal Rural Historic District

City or Vicinity: Wildwood County: Sumter State: FL

Photographer: Ed Gonzalez-Tennant & Alex Nalewaik Photograph Dates: Dec 2017 – Aug 2022

**Description of photograph(s) and number, including description of view indicating direction of camera:**

1. Oak Hill Cemetery (810 CR 229), taken facing southwest.
2. Oak Hill Cemetery (810 CR 229), taken facing northwest.
3. Primas & Mary Massey Residence (407 W C-462), taken facing south.
4. Polly Wideman Childhood Home (434 CR 226), taken facing northeast.
5. Rev Robert Simmons Residence (478 E C-462), taken facing north-northeast.
6. Reverend Robert Simmons Homestead (420 E C-462), taken facing northwest.
7. Jannie Jackson Residence (434 CR 226), taken facing north.
8. Leola James Home (9812 CR 231), taken facing southwest.
9. Howard Patterson Residence (539 CR 231), taken facing northwest.
10. Plas & Molly Lewis Homestead (133 E C-462), taken facing south.
11. Barney Lewis Homestead (245 W C-462), taken facing south.
12. Mae Ollie Mosley Homestead (407 E C-462), taken facing southeast.
13. Elliot & Beatrice Mathews Homestead (601 E C-462), taken facing southeast.
14. Mother Melba Keiler Homestead (563 E C-462), taken facing southwest.
15. Nelson Brooks, Sr. Homestead (9744 NE 2nd Dr.), taken facing west.
16. Elnora Woods Residence (2061 E C-462), taken facing southeast.
17. Deanna Jenkins Residence (698 E C-462), taken facing north.
18. Allean Smith Residence (9797 CR 235), taken facing northeast.
19. Flossie Sesler Residence (9060 CR 231), taken facing west.
20. Delvernia Lewis Residence (1259 CR 228), taken facing southeast.
21. Eugene & Allie Davis Residence (9429 CR 231), taken facing east.
22. William A Jackson Residence (311 NW 85th Blvd.), taken facing west.
23. Jesse L & Angelina James Residence (189 W C-462), taken facing south-southwest.
24. Catherine Steele Residence (9226 CR 231), taken facing east.
25. Rochelle V Lewis Residence (39 W C-462), taken facing south.
26. Rosa S Hubbert Residence (38 E C-462), taken facing north.
27. Susie Steele Residence (9140 CR 231), taken facing southeast.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number      Photos      Page   2  

28. Joseph, Doretha & Luveni Lawson Residence (9792 CR 235 A), taken facing east.
29. Constance Johnson Residence (638 E C-462), taken facing north.
30. Purcell Sesler Residence (1211 CR 222), taken facing south.
31. Primus Massey Tobacco Barn (407 W C-462), taken facing south-southeast.
32. George and Polly Wideman Tobacco Barn (309 CR 226), taken facing west.
33. Rev. Robert Simmons Tobacco Barn (478 E C-462), taken facing west.
34. Sylvester Erving Tobacco Barn (9852 NE 2nd Dr.), taken facing west.
35. Lens Patterson Tobacco Barn (10005 CR 237), taken facing northeast.
36. A.W. Lee Tobacco Barn (8763 CR 231), taken facing east.
37. Willard James Tobacco Barn (9005 CR 231), taken facing east.
38. Willie Smith Tobacco Barn (9783 CR 235), taken facing east.
39. Zettie Williams Cane Press (374 W C-462), taken facing northeast.
40. Sutton James Cane Press (9019 CR 231), taken facing north-northeast.
41. Sutton James Cane Press (9019 CR 231), taken facing north-northeast.
42. Sutton James Cane Press (9019 CR 231), taken facing east.
43. Nelson Brooks, Sr. Cane Boiler & Press (9744 NE 2nd Dr.), taken facing east.
44. Nelson Brooks, Sr. Cane Boiler & Press (9744 NE 2nd Dr.), taken facing northeast.
45. Nelson Brooks, Sr. Cane Boiler & Press (9744 NE 2nd Dr.), taken facing northwest.
46. Nelson Brooks, Sr. Cane Boiler & Press (9744 NE 2nd Dr.), taken facing south.
47. Zettie Williams Polebarn Shed (566 W C-462), taken facing east-northeast.
48. Pole Barn (4337 N CR 475), taken facing east.
49. Howard Patterson Homestead Outbuilding (9938 CR 231), taken facing north.
50. Joseph Lawson Screened Outbuilding (9792 CR 235A),
51. Royal Masonic Hall (515 E C-462), taken facing southwest.
52. Royal Community Center (9605 CR 235), taken facing east.
53. Royal Elem. & Middle School Cafeteria (9567 CR 235), taken facing south.
54. Royal 1st Gas Station - No Physical Address (Parcel C28-036), taken facing northeast.
55. Plas Lewis Home (9437 CR 241), taken facing southeast.
56. Lens Patterson Homestead (10005 CR 237), taken facing east-southeast.
57. Agricultural fields in southeastern portion of community, across road from cemetery, facing southeast.
58. View along NE 15th St., taken facing south.
59. On CR 475, western edge of boundary, taken facing south-southeast.
60. On CR 228, near intersection of CR 229, taken facing east.
61. On E C-462, between CR 235A and CR 229, taken facing west.
62. On E C-462, between CR 235 and CR 235A, taken facing west, looking toward Royal's central area.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Royal Rural Historic District

Name of Property

Sumter County, FL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number      Photos      Page   3  

63. On CR 222, between CR 235 and 235A, taken facing west.
64. Pasture, on CR 222, between CR 235 and 235A, taken facing north.
65. On CR 235A, between E C-462 and CR 222, taken facing north.
66. Royal's Historic Marker, on CR 235, between C-462 and CR 222, taken facing northeast.
67. Reproduction cane boiler, next to the Royal Elementary and Middle School Cafeteria, taken facing south- southeast.
68. Pasture, on W C-462, between CR 231 and CR 241, taken facing northwest.
69. On W C-462, between CR 231 and CR 241, taken facing east.
70. Pasture, on W C-462, between CR 231 and CR 241, taken facing northwest.
71. On W C-462, between CR 231 and CR 241, taken facing east.
72. On CR 231, between W C-462 and NW 87th Rd, taken facing south.
73. On CR 231, between W C-462 and NW 87th Rd, taken facing south.
74. On CR 231, between W C-462 and NW 87th Rd, taken facing south.