

Brief History
of
Jackson Guard

96CEG/CEIEA

Jacobs Engineering Group

February 2021

Joe Meyer

6-49-26-35-1-389 (10-100) 1910
Military Service Headquarters, Valparaiso, Fla.

The history of Jackson Guard is tied to the establishment of the Choctawhatchee National Forest and the Depression Era Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt designated portions of Santa Rosa and Walton Counties (including present-day Okaloosa County) as the Choctawhatchee National Forest (Figure 1), the first National Forest east of the Mississippi River. At that time the, Choctawhatchee National Forest encompassed approximately 468,000 acres.

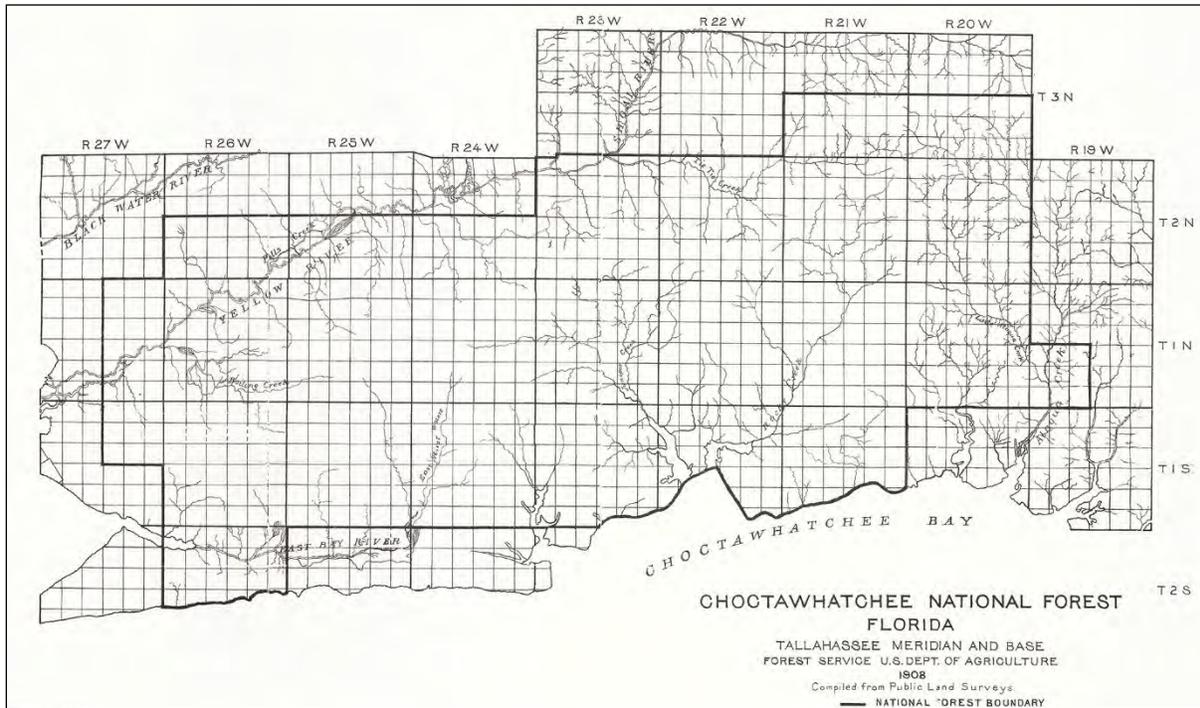


Figure 1: Original Boundary of Choctawhatchee National Forest in 1908.

The Forest Service constructed a Headquarters on Gainers Bayou called Camp Pinchot in 1910. Choctawhatchee National Forest was the first forest devoted to the operation and study of the Naval Stores Industry. The Forest Service began a variety of studies which included the use of a cup and gutter system to prolong the production of pine pitch from the longleaf pine forest. In addition, the Forest Service made numerous improvements to forest with the construction of roads, telephone lines, fire lines and fire lookout towers. By 1917 several roads had been improved and Turpentine Camps mapped, however, Camp Pinchot is the only Ranger Station shown on the Choctawhatchee National Forest map (Figure 2).

The first map to show a Ranger Station in the current location of Jackson Guard is in 1929. However, at that time the Ranger Station is referred to as the Niceville RS (Figure 3). Figure 4 is an image provided by the US Forest Service and shows the Niceville Ranger Station in 1922. The side bar reads “Operation and Information, Improvements, Dwellings, Florida. Office, lookout tower and Flag Pole. Niceville Ranger Station. Taken by Hill 1922.” This indicates that the Ranger Station was in use years prior to the production of the 1929 map.

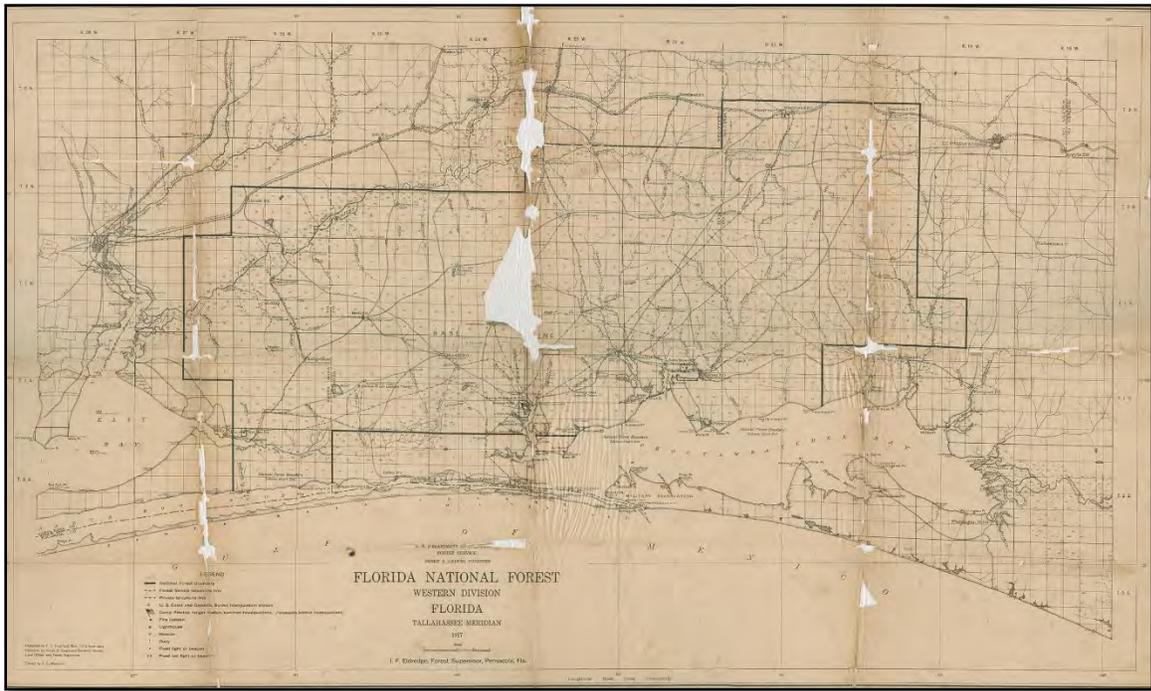


Figure 2: 1914 map of the Choctawhatchee National Forest

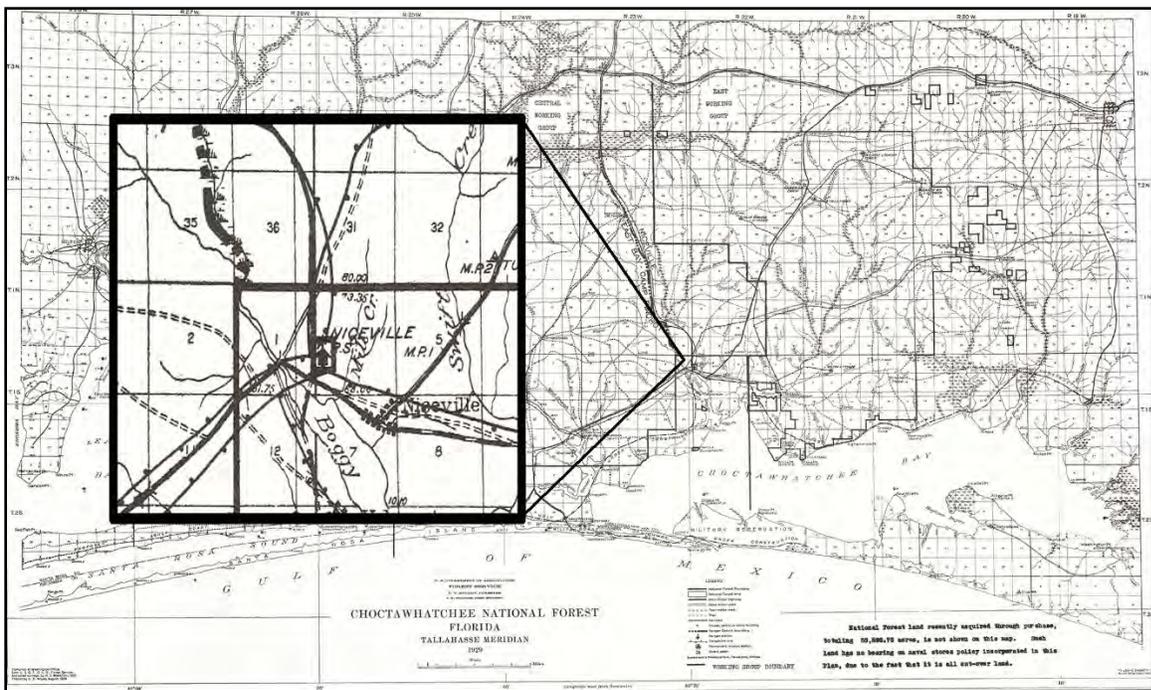


Figure 3: 1929 Choctawhatchee National Forest Map showing Niceville Ranger Station.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE

210
Ho-2

Choctawhatchee National Forest transferred to War
Department, 1940



165433 0 - Operation and Information, Improvements,
Dwellings, Florida.
Office, lookout tower and Flag Pole, Niceville
Ranger Station.
Taken by Hill 1922

Figure 4: 1922 photograph of the Niceville Ranger Station.

A 1936 USGS quadrangle map shows the area as “Ranger Sta. Jackson” and the 1939 Choctawhatchee National Forest map also shows the area as “RS Jackson” (Figure 6.)

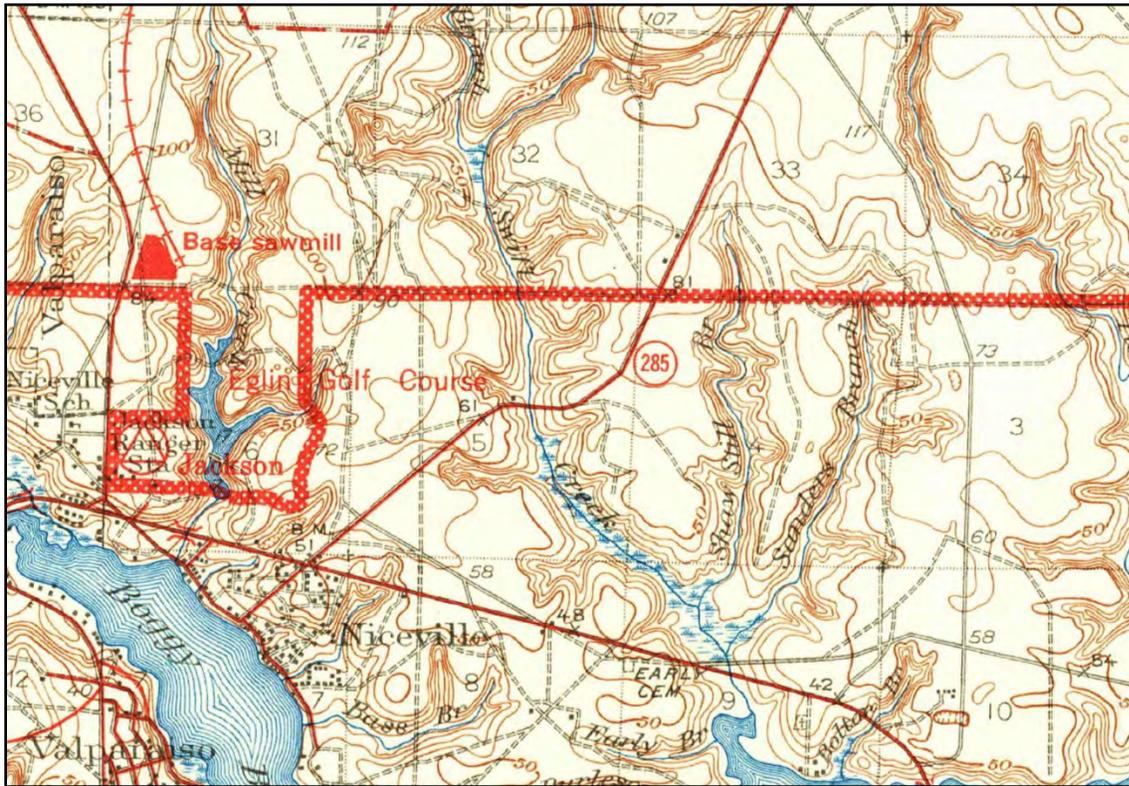


Figure 5: Portion of 1936 USGS Quad showing Ranger Station Jackson.

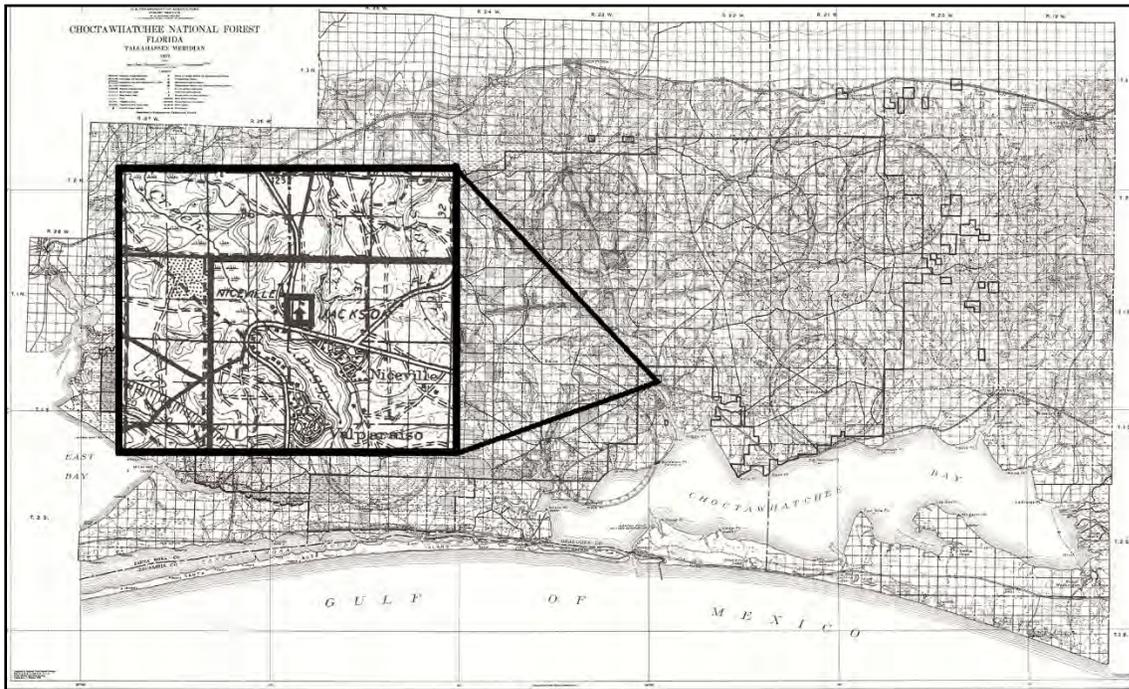


Figure 6: 1939 Choctawhatchee National Forest Map showing Ranger Station Jackson

Based on these maps, sometime between 1929 and 1939, the name of the Niceville Ranger Station had changed to Jackson Ranger Station. The US Forest Service provided a 1935 image of the Jackson Ranger Station that shows a number of improvements to the area (Figure 7). It also reveals the Jackson name being associated with the area prior to the 1936 map. It is believed the Jackson name is associated with military activities of Andrew Jackson in the local area, however this has not been verified with historical research.



Figure 7: 1935 image of Jackson Ranger Station.

Of course, during this time, the Country was experiencing the Great Depression. President Roosevelt's "New Deal" programs were underway. Just north of Jackson Guard was Civilian Conservation Corp Camp F-3 which was to assist the Forest Service in developing and maintaining the Choctawatchee National Forest from 1933 to 1939. The camp was vacant from October 1939 to October 1940. From October 1940 to July 1942 the camp was designated Camp AF-1 which was devoted to developing the Valparaiso Bombing and Gunnery Range. During that same time period, the Choctawatchee National Forest was transferred to the Department of Defense along with many of the structures including Jackson Ranger Station. Throughout World War II and continuing today the area has been used for the management of Natural Resources. Today, the area is widely known as Jackson Guard and houses the Natural Resources Section of Environmental Management Branch under Eglin's 96th Civil Engineering Group.