NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

633

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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HISTORIC RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Thompson Fish House, Turtle Cannery and Kraals

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 200 Margaret Street ☒ N/A not for publication

city or town Key West ☒ N/A vicinity

state Florida code FL county Monroe code 087 zip code 33040

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Susanne P. Walker / Deputy SHPO 5/16/94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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

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

_____
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

_____
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☒ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:) _____

for Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Entered in the National Register — Date of Action 6/23/94

Thompson Fish House, Turtle Cannery and Kraals — Monroe Co., Fl.
Name of Property — County and State

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
- ☒ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
3	0	structures
0	0	objects
5	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE
Processing
Animal Facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE
Specialty Store
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vernacular

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation wood pile; concrete pier
walls wood concrete
metal
roof metal
other

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

Thompson Fish House, Turtle Cannery and Kraals (Name of Property) — Monroe Co., Fl. (County and State)

8. Statement of Significance

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

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

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

~~Commerce~~
Maritime History
Architecture

Period of Significance

ca. 1918-1944

Significant Dates

Ca. 1918

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Norberg Thompson

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- [ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- [ ] previously listed in the National Register
- [ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
- [ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- [x] State Historic Preservation Office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Name of repository:

_____

Thompson Fish House, Turtle Cannery and Kraals
Name of Property

Monroe Co., Florida
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx. 1.5 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	418880	2716480
2			
3			
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bert Render/Sherry Piland, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date May 1994

street & number R.A. Gray Bldg., 500 S. Bronough St. telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Fl. zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

RECEIVED 413
OMB Approval No. 1024-0018
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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Thompson Fish House, Turtle Kraals and Cannery are located on a pier extending from the foot of Margaret Street, on the north side of the island of Key West, Florida. This nomination includes two buildings (the Thompson Fish House at the west end of the pier and the Turtle Cannery building on the south side of the pier). The nomination also includes three structures: the concrete main pier and connecting wooden docks around the buildings and the two turtle kraals separated by the Cannery.

The Thompson Fish House is a rectangular, 1-1/2 story concrete building with a gable roof. The Turtle Cannery is a rectangular, one-story, wood frame building with a gable roof and a rectangular, shed roofed addition at the building's east end.

SETTING

Key West and the Florida Keys separate the shallow waters of the Gulf of Mexico to the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Seven miles south of Key West is the only living coral reef in North America. Ninety miles to the south of Key West is Havana, Cuba and seventy miles west lie the Dry Tortugas and Fort Jefferson.

The buildings and structures addressed in this nomination are located in an area known as the Key West Bight, a land area partially enclosing an embayment which makes a natural harbor. This harbor location provided ready accessibility to the ships coming into Key West with their catch. The Key West Bight is located on the north side of Key West, four blocks east of Duval St., the primary north-south artery on the island and the heart of Key West's historic district. While just outside of the historic district boundary, the Key West Bight area is planned for historic preservation zoning under the city's new (1992) comprehensive plan. Commercial enterprises oriented toward tourism border the site on the south, and marinas adjoin the property on both the east and west sides. Two blocks to the east is the City Electric power plant.

The present day setting for these buildings is much as it was during their historic period. Modern development on the island, spurred by the present day tourism-based economy, is

visible from the site but the water front setting also provides uninterrupted views of the Gulf and the uninhabited islands to the west and north.

CONNECTING DOCK/PIERS

The Turtle Cannery is approached from the south and accessed by a concrete pier, topped with a combination of asphalt and concrete over a shell fill (photo 1). Wood docks surround the Thompson Fish House on the east, north and west sides (photos 2 and 3). The docks are constructed of wooden piles and timber framing. Due to constant exposure, most of the frame members and dock planks have been replaced over the years with lumber of contemporary dimensions. Wood docks also extend along the north and west elevations of the Turtle Cannery Building (photos 4 and 5).

TURTLE CANNERY

The cannery building is located approximately sixty feet out a concrete pier, with the main facade facing east. The building consists of two sections (photo 6). The original portion of the wood frame building has a metal gable roof and measures approximately twenty-one feet by fifty feet. At the east end, covering the original facade of the building, is a wood frame addition with a low shed roof. The building rests on a foundation of wood piles and concrete piers with the exterior sill beams and heavy timbers bolted to the wood piles.

The main facade of the building faces east and is dominated by the addition (photo 7). The main entrance is recessed at the south end of this facade. Another door opening at the north end has been covered with plywood. A rolling wood door is located centrally on this facade and currently has a projecting metal case attached to it. This door is fabricated from timbers, tongue and groove planks, and diagonal bracing. The exterior walls of this addition are covered with "v"-crimp metal siding. The east gable end of the original building is visible over the addition and is sheathed with wood. The south wall of the addition has a small aluminum awning window.

The deteriorated north elevation is pierced by two rolling doors and one window opening (photo 8). This elevation is

sheathed in wood. The original rolling doors have been replaced with doors of plywood and 2" x 4" construction. The window opening at the western end of the wall has no sash. Field observation and evidence indicate a double-hung, six-over-six sash was used at this window. Three pieces of the original upper sash remain fixed in place and are mortised where original muntins were installed.

The west face is sheathed in corrugated metal (photo 5). One window opening, cut in the exterior metal, has been covered with wood siding.

One door and four windows are located on the south elevation (photo 9). Two windows are paired at approximately the center of the wall, each with six-over-six upper sash fixed in place and remnants of a wooden awning above. A window at the west end has a six pane upper sash fixed in place. The window opening at the east end is empty. The door is constructed of vertical tongue and groove boards.

The gabled roof of the original portion of the building is covered with galvanized, corrugated metal and appears to be a replacement of the original roof covering (photo 6). It matches the pattern of the corrugated metal siding in place on the walls of the building. The roof exhibits much less wear and weathering than the metal siding on the walls, but some areas have rusted through. The roof is supported by 2" x 4" rafters and 2" x 6" ceiling joists. The roof structure, in a severely deteriorated state, sags extensively and is on the verge of collapse (photos 4 and 6).

INTERIOR

The interior wall surfaces are sheathed with tongue and groove boards. Walls and ceiling surfaces and trim show past evidence of being painted (photo 10). Tongue and groove ceiling boards run the length of the building.

The 4" x 8" floor joists support 2" x 8" plank flooring. The majority of the floor structure has collapsed with numerous elements missing. Some of the existing plank flooring exhibits evidence of extensive scarification and cuts where turtles were slaughtered.

TURTLE KRAALS

The Turtle Cannery is bounded on the south and north by the Turtle Kraals (pens) with an access boardwalk on the north side between the Cannery and the north Kraal. The construction of the kraals does not impede the free flow of water, but prevents the turtles from escaping. The north Turtle Kraal is defined by, and constructed of, lines of evenly space concrete piles approximately 7" square, tied together along the full length of each row with 2"x 8" wood members, bolted together between piles and spaced with 2" x 4" wood blocks on the opposite faces of each concrete pile (photos 11 and 12). The piles extend from the ocean bottom to a point above high water level. Wood members along all faces are contemporary replacements of original timbers. Along the west side of the kraals the original cross-ties at the top of the piles are still in place and support the west pier decking. The south kraal is defined by rubble stone and concrete retaining walls. The water below the piers and buildings varies from 4' to 17' in depth, and the bottom consists of fine calcareous sediments.

FISH HOUSE

Access to the Fish House is from the south, by way of a concrete pier (photo 13). Exterior wall foundations are of concrete extending from spread footings which have been anchored to the sea bottom beneath the building. A row of piles run the length of the building down the center with heavy timber girders and wood beams spanning from the exterior walls to the center girder and pile supports. The exterior walls of the rectangular building are constructed of concrete approximately 10" thick. The walls exhibit extensive cracking, spalling and deterioration due to rusted reinforcement and infiltration of salt water.

The building has a gable roof, sheathed with galvanized, corrugated metal exhibiting signs of rusting and some deterioration, especially noticeable at the eaves. The gable ends are sheathed with tongue and groove siding (horizontal at the south wall and vertical at the north wall). The south gable end has a central opening, approximately 3' x 6', with plywood panels hinged in a fashion of a dutch door (photo 14). The north gable end has been modified by the installation of a large aluminum awning window (photo 15).

The primary (south) facade presently has three door openings at the first floor level (photo 16). There is a large rolling door at the east end. A contemporary 3' door has been framed just west of the center line of the building for access to the second floor stair. A third door is at the west end of this facade.

The distinguishing feature of the west elevation is a shed roof dormer, near the center (photo 17). A contemporary aluminum awing window fenestrates the dormer (photo 18). Below the dormer is the only opening on this elevation. Originally four feet wide, this door opening has been modified to accept a 3' wide door.

The north end of the building has a central rolling door constructed of 2" x 6" frame members, a horizontal member at the center and diagonal members at the top and bottom panels (photo 19). The door is sheathed with vertical tongue and groove wood on the building side of the frame. The opening has been reduced in size with wood siding infill. A square opening has been cut to the west of the rolling door, approximately 16" square, for ventilation to an added bathroom. East of the central door is a 3' square window opening with security bars.

The east elevation is pierced by a single, large opening and rolling wood door with diagonal cross-members (photo 20).

INTERIOR

The interior has been substantially altered. The major change occurred c. 1978 when the building was modified to add a usable second floor to what had been an open or attic space. The original roof truss members were removed leaving the top chords for rafters (photo 21). One original modified Howe truss remains at the south end of the building. There is evidence of sagging of the rafters due to the removal of truss bottom chords and web members.

The first floor wall surfaces consist of bare and painted concrete. Floors are 2" thick wood planks with numerous patches. Original trap door openings to fish storage pens beneath the building have been enclosed and sealed. The first floor ceiling is of contemporary 2" x 8" joists with plywood second floor

sheathing. Interior wood frame partitions have been added to provide access to the second floor and subdivide the first floor. The first floor has no mechanical heating or cooling systems but does have a modern bathroom installed at the northwest corner of the building.

The second floor is accessed by a stair located approximately in the center of the building. The second floor is subdivided into office spaces at the north end and storage spaces at the south end. The second floor finishes in the north office spaces consist of drywall and acoustic tile ceiling. Second floor framing was installed several feet below the top of the walls in order to provide additional headroom above. The second floor has a contemporary bathroom and an air conditioning system consisting of several through-wall units serving individual office spaces.

ALTERATIONS

The major alteration to the Turtle Cannery building consists of the addition to the front facade. This addition has been documented to the 1950s through historic photographs, but the exact date of the addition is unknown. The major change to the Fish Company building are the interior alterations to provide a usable second floor.

BAY BOTTOM

An archaelogical survey and assessment of the bay bottom in the area of the Thompson Fish House, Turtle Cannery and Kraals was undertaken by David D. Moore, archaeological consultant,in April and May of 1993. The bottom consists of very fine calcareous sediments with sparse floral accumulations. Depressions in the area indicate that bottom disturbance has been occuring for some time, associated with modern commercial and sight-seeing boats. No material that could be associated with the historic turtle fishery was identified. It is felt, however, that the approximately eight inches of modern debris and the soft bottom sediments could easily mask artifacts associated with the fishing and turtling industry.

SUMMARY

The Thompson Fish House, Turtle Kraals and Cannery, over the waters of the inner Key West Harbor (the Bight), at the north side of Key West, Florida, are significant under Criteria A, B, and C. Their long association with the fishing and turtling industries, vital economic resources of Key West and the State of Florida, fulfill criterion A. Additional significance, under criterion B, is related to their association with Norberg Thompson, an important Key West business and civic leader. Under Criterion C, their significance is their importance as the last remaining vernacular buildings of their type in Key West. The Fish House, with its salt water tanks below its floor, and the Turtle Cannery with its adjacent pens, or kraals, for keeping live turtles, are all that remain of an important aspect of Key West's history.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Early Fishing Industry

Fishing has long been an integral part of the socioeconomic fabric of Key West and the Florida Keys. The origins of this industry can be traced to Spanish fishermen from Cuba who were frequenting the Keys at least as early as the 1780s. Even before the first settlement of the Keys, such visits lessened the isolation of the island chain from the "outside world". The shipment of salted fish to Havana via schooners became an important adjunct to the economy of Key West, from the first settlement of that island port in the early 1820s until the late 1870s. Even before the United States acquired Florida from Spain in 1821, fishermen from the Bahamas were making voyages to the Keys. These crews sought sea turtles for the markets of Nassau. In addition, they salvaged shipwrecks. Such commerce forged the origins of strong social and cultural links between the Keys and the Bahamas that lasted well into the twentieth century.

As noteworthy as was the role of Spanish and Bahamian fishermen in "opening up" the Keys, it fell to another group of fishermen to provide the nucleus of the traditions and infrastructure that became characteristic of the Keys' fishing industry for most of the 19th and 20th centuries. These fishermen were primarily from New England, and by the early 1820s, they were sailing down to the Keys each winter in their

live-well sloops and schooners (smacks) to hand-line fish for the markets of Havana. This "Havana market fishery" flourished for the next fifty years. Generally, 20-30 smacks (which also salvaged shipwrecks) were involved annually, and most were based at Key West. The presence of this prosperous fleet fostered the development of shoreside support businesses and activities that contributed to the socioeconomic development of the city. Several of the oldest family lineages in the Keys had ancestral connections with these American crews that settled in the region during the Territorial Period.

By the early 1870s the Cuban government began to levy prohibitive duties on the fish transported on the Key West smacks. As this market disappeared, there was little alternative use for these specialized craft, and by 1885 most of the fleet had been sold off. Yet, the strong reliance of much of the Keys' populace on fisheries continued. The most vital link was with the sponge trade. In the Keys, commercial harvesting of sponges began in 1849. Market demand and value of the product were so great that within a few years over 100 schooners and 200 smaller craft were involved in the fishery and at least 1,400 fishermen were employed in sponge gathering. The value of the fishery averaged $250,000-$300,000 annually through the 1890s. Sponging and the growing cigar making industry sparked a spurt in population on Key West from 9,890 in 1880 to 18,080 by 1890. The importance of sponging to the Keys declined greatly after the turn of the century when the focal point of the industry shifted to Tarpon Springs where diving apparatus was used to harvest sponges.

Fisheries continued to be an essential element of daily life in Key West. To sustain the population, locally caught seafood augmented foodstuffs shipped to the isolated port city from elsewhere. To satisfy this demand, the "Key West market fishery" developed. Small live-well sloops (smackees) were used to make short (1-2 day) trips to local fishing grounds. The catch was generally brought in alive, and island householders often made daily visits to the Key West Bight area to purchase fish directly from fishermen and/or fishmongers operating along that waterfront. Prior to 1890, natural ice was brought to Key West in sailing vessels from Maine. An ice making plant was built on the island in 1890, and as ice became more widely available, a substantial portion of the catch was packed for shipment by steamer to Cuba and to northern markets. In some years, as many as 90 sloops and 100 fishermen were employed in this fishery.

The rudimentary shoreside support infrastructure associated with the fishery underwent significant evolution in the opening decades of the twentieth century.

Twentieth Century Fishery Activity

In 1912, railway service began between Key West and the rapidly growing population centers of the Florida mainland. This opened up new markets for the fishery products of the Keys. The methods of catching and shipping seafood from the Keys underwent even more significant expansion in 1920 when improved ice making and cold storage facilities were completed at Key West. Now, in addition to the rather limited daily catches of the traditional fleet of smackees, large amounts of fish began to be brought in by fishermen operating from powerboats. In the winter, large catches of schooling fish, such as Spanish mackerel, were taken "up the Keys" with nets, and, after being brought to Key West by powered "runboats," were often shipped to northern markets in railway car-sized loads. Thus, what for years had been a rather primitive fishery of mostly local impact, began to be transformed into a large scale regional business.

NORBERG THOMPSON AND THE THOMPSON ENTERPRISES

One of the most prominent businessmen in Key West during the early twentieth century was Norberg Thompson. Thompson was involved in virtually all the industries that sustained the island community: fishing, sponging, shrimping, ice making, turtle soup canning, marine hardware, and cigar box manufacturing. His various business interests were eventually united as Thompson Enterprises.

Thompson, a Key West native, was born in 1884. In 1907, during his senior year at New York University, his father died. Thomas A. Thompson had been a dry goods merchant, and young Thompson was called home to look after the family business. He rapidly involved himself in a variety of business ventures. Prior to leaving New York he set up a contract with the McKesson and Robbins Drug Company as a sponge broker. In 1910 he purchased the A. Granday Canning Company. In 1911 he organized the Key West Box Company and opened a cigar box manufacturing plant on a waterfront lot at the corner of Caroline and William Streets. The plant had a capacity of 7,000 boxes per day. The

Key West Box Company also dealt in cigar makers' supplies. In the fall of 1913, Thompson organized the Thompson Fish Company. As an adjunct to this business he erected the Thompson Ice Company, a 100-ton capacity ice plant, in 1918. In addition to his various business projects, Thompson served on the city Council [1913-1915], served a two year term as Mayor [1915-1917], and served twelve years on the County Commission. Thompson died on his yacht in 1951, at the age of sixty-eight. In 1968 the multi-million dollar Thompson Enterprises holdings, including three blocks of waterfront property, were sold to Sea Farms Inc., a Delaware, Maryland corporation.

Thompson's maritime activities were centered at the foot of Margaret Street, in the Key West Bight area. Although precise documentation of construction dates has not been located, Sanborn maps and city directories provide clarification. None of the buildings associated with Thompson are present on the 1912 Sanborn Map. The 1926 Sanborn map shows the "Thompson Ice Company" on the shore, at the corner of Margaret Street. Extending out from the shore, along a pier, are a building labelled "turtle cannery" and at the end of the pier, a building labelled "store house." In 1918 Thompson purchased shoreline property along the Bight. Both buildings were erected sometime after 1912 and prior to 1926, probably c.1918. The turtle kraals are not identified on the Sanborn maps. They were probably in place by the early 1920s, although documentation for them earlier than the early 1930s has not been located.

Turtle Cannery and Kraals

Norberg Thompson purchased the A. Granday Canning Company in 1910. Armand Granday, a French chef, had established the company in the early 1890s, canning turtle soup made from green turtles which abounded in nearby waters and making and canning green turtle pates. Granday sold the business in 1904 to his nephew, Louis Mouton. Mouton died in 1909 and Thompson purchased the firm the following year, but continued to operate it under the established Granday name. In addition to buying green sea turtles caught in the Keys, the company also imported large numbers of live turtles caught off Central America. In 1919 the firm bought a large schooner, the Marie J. Thompson, for use in this trade. Later, the company commissioned a second large

schooner, the A. M. Adams, for the same purpose. It remained in service until the early 1970s.

City directories of 1906-1927 list the location of the Granday Canning Company at 225 Elizabeth Street. Thus, the building labeled "turtle cannery" on the 1926 Sanborn map was apparently not the principle cannery. It is more likely that it functioned perhaps as a secondary cannery. However, sources from the 1930s clearly indicate that turtle soup was being made in this building. "It is the only plant where green sea turtles are taken directly from the sea to the kettle." The Granday Company was the only company in the United States exclusively processing green turtle products. By 1913, 5,000 to 7,000 turtles were being processed and shipped from Key West yearly to hotels, clubs, and restaurants all over the world. The gelatinous meat of green turtles was used for soup. Green turtle steaks were marketed fresh to housewifes, hotels and restaurants in Key West. A distinctive feature of the Thompson operation were the special pens ("kraals") made of concrete pilings driven into bay bottom shallows, that were used to confine hundreds of turtles, weighing from 50 to 500 lbs. At times, as many as 1,000 turtles were confined in the kraals at one time. The turtles were kept alive, sometimes for several months, until they were needed for canning. Two employees had the job of collecting sea grass as food for the vegetarian turtles. The turtles were butchered in the adjacent cannery building. The daily butchering was a tourist attraction by the early 1930s: "...the sight of it is worth a special trip to the crawls." By 1939 a fifteen cent admission was being charged the spectator. Many turtles were also trussed up and shipped alive to northern markets. The commerce in turtles at the Bight continued until March of 1971 when legislation enacted by Florida effectively ended the fishery.

Thompson Fish Company

City directories indicate various Thompson enterprises at the pier at the foot of Margaret Street and along the adjacent shore, including fishing docks and a sponge exporting business. The building at the end of the pier, labelled on the 1926 Sanborn map as a "store house," was probably the site of the Thompson Fish Company, dealers in fresh and salted fish, organized by Thompson in 1913. At times, over 100 power boats operated out of the Thompson property, many owned outright by the company. Some were used only in the winter for the net fisheries, when they

were manned by crews brought down from northern ports, including, most notably, Wildwood, New Jersey. The core of the Thompson business was wholesaling fish to dealers on the mainland and in Cuba. Of secondary importance was providing seafood for local households. Generally, that market was served by other, smaller, dealers and wharfs located elsewhere around the Bight. By 1939 the Thompson Fish Company was the largest wholesaler of fish in Key West, shipping three million pounds a year. The fish were shipped in ice made by the Thompson Ice Company, constructed in 1918 on the adjacent shore. This was the only plant in the United States making ice from distilled salt water (the ice plant is no longer extant). The fish were trucked out of Key West by another component of Thompson Enterprises, the Thompson Overseas Transportation Company. Over the years Thompson Enterprises grew to include a dry dock, engine repair and boat building facilities, and other subsidiary operations. For many years, the Bight was ringed with wooden wharfs and filled with working schooners moored at anchor. Along the extensive muddy shallows, dozens of sloops and smaller craft were drawn up and beached. Within months after vast beds of shrimp were discovered in 1949 in the Gulf off Key West and the Tortugas, hundreds of shrimp boats from Southern ports began working here. In peak times as many as 500 shrimp trawlers were based at Key West. To accommodate this fleet, much of the Bight was dredged, filled, and provided with concrete bulkheads. Thompson Enterprises also entered the shrimping business, and it was a common sight to see shrimp trawlers docked at the Thompson Fish House. For decades, the earnings of the crews (many of whom became residents) and the workers at the shrimp packing houses, were welcome additions to the local economy.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Thompson Fish House, Turtle Cannery and Kraals have a long association with the maritime industry in Key West and clearly, the businesses operating out of the Thompson property were major factors in the Key West economy. Commercial fishing and turtling were major industries in Key West throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century. Norberg Thompson contributed substantially to the growth and vitality of the maritime industries in the Keys. He also served as Key West Mayor, City Council member, and County Commissioner.

The Thompson Fish House, Turtle Cannery and Kraals, and pier stand today as a testament to the maritime empire built by Thompson. These are the only known extant structures historically associated with Thompson's business interests. By the mid-1980s the profitability of shrimping and other fisheries waned, so that few, if any, full-time commercial fishing craft now operate from the Bight. Most now dock at nearby Stock Island. The Thompson Fish House, Turtle Cannery and Kraals, were recently purchased by the City of Key West in order to preserve the area, to save it from the possibility of massive development, and to provide recognition of the maritime trades so important in Key West's history.

These unique vernacular structures were adapted to the needs of a specific industry and setting. The kraals are the sole extant examples of a type of waterfront structure once commonplace in the Keys during the nineteenth century. Although deteriorated, these structures retain the physical integrity of location, setting, and materials that reflect their historic significance. Walking the pier and viewing these buildings in their original setting and without adjacent modern development, is truly a trip back in time, to an era of major importance and significance to Key West and the State of Florida.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the Thompson Fish House, Turtle Cannery and Kraals is shown as the dotted line on the accompanying map entitled "Site Plan."

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the Thompson Fish House, Turtle Cannery and Kraals, and connecting concrete pier and wooden docks. The southern boundary is defined by the shoreline of the Key West Bight. The properties are contained within parcel "D" described in Bay Bottom Lease #440027185, Official Records Book 1173, pp. 1082-1101, Public Records of Monroe County, Florida.

1) Thompson Fish House and Turtle Kraal
2) Key West, Monroe County, Florida
3) Sienna Leon
4) May 1993
5) City of Key West Planning Department
6) View looking north along pier; south facade of Thompson Fish House at north end of pier
7) Photo no. 1 of 21

Items 2-5 are the same for the remaining photographs

1) Thompson Fish House
6) East elevation, view facing south
7) Photo no. 2 of 21

1) Thompson Fish House
6) East elevation, view facing north
7) Photo no. 3 of 21

1) Turtle Cannery and Kraal
6) North elevation of Cannery, view facing east; Turtle Kraal on left.
7) Photo no. 4 of 21

1) Turtle Cannery
6) West elevation of Cannery, view looking southeast
7) Photo no. 5 of 21

1) Turtle Cannery and Kraal
6) North elevation of Cannery, view facing southwest
7) Photo no. 6 of 21

1) Turtle Cannery
6) East elevation of Cannery, view looking northwest
7) Photo no. 7 of 21

1) Turtle Cannery and Kraal
6) Kraal and north elevation of Cannery on left; west elevation of Cannery on right. View looking southeast
7) Photo no. 8 of 21

1) Turtle Cannery and Kraal
6) South Kraal in foreground; south elevation of Cannery, view facing northwest
7) Photo no. 9 of 21

1) Turtle Cannery
6) Interior detail, ceiling
7) Photo no. 10 of 21

1) Turtle Kraal
6) North Kraal on right; north elevation of Cannery on left; View facing southwest
7) Photo no. 11 of 21

1) Turtle Kraal
6) View of north Kraal; south elevation of Thompson Fish House in background. View facing northeast
7) Photo no. 12 of 21

1) Thompson Fish House and Turtle Cannery
6) View looking north on pier to south elevation of Thompson Fish House. East elevation of Turtle Cannery on left. View facing north
7) Photo no. 13 of 21

1) Thompson Fish House
6) South elevation, view facing north
7) Photo no. 14 of 21

1) Thompson Fish House
6) North elevation, view facing southeast
7) Photo no. 15 of 21

1) Thompson Fish House
6) South elevation, view facing northeast
7) Photo no. 16 of 21

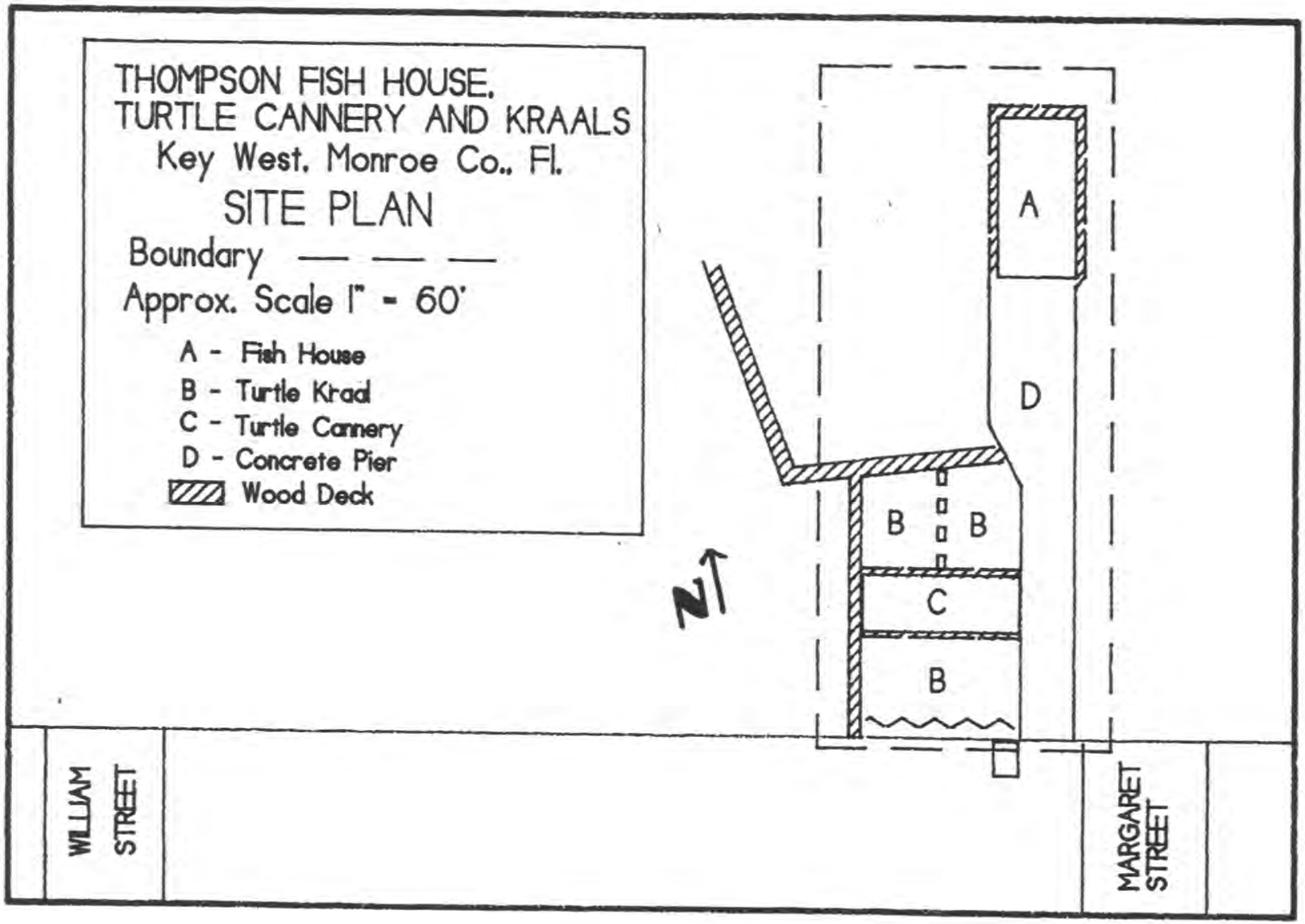
1) Thompson Fish House
6) West elevation, view facing southeast
7) Photo no. 17 of 21

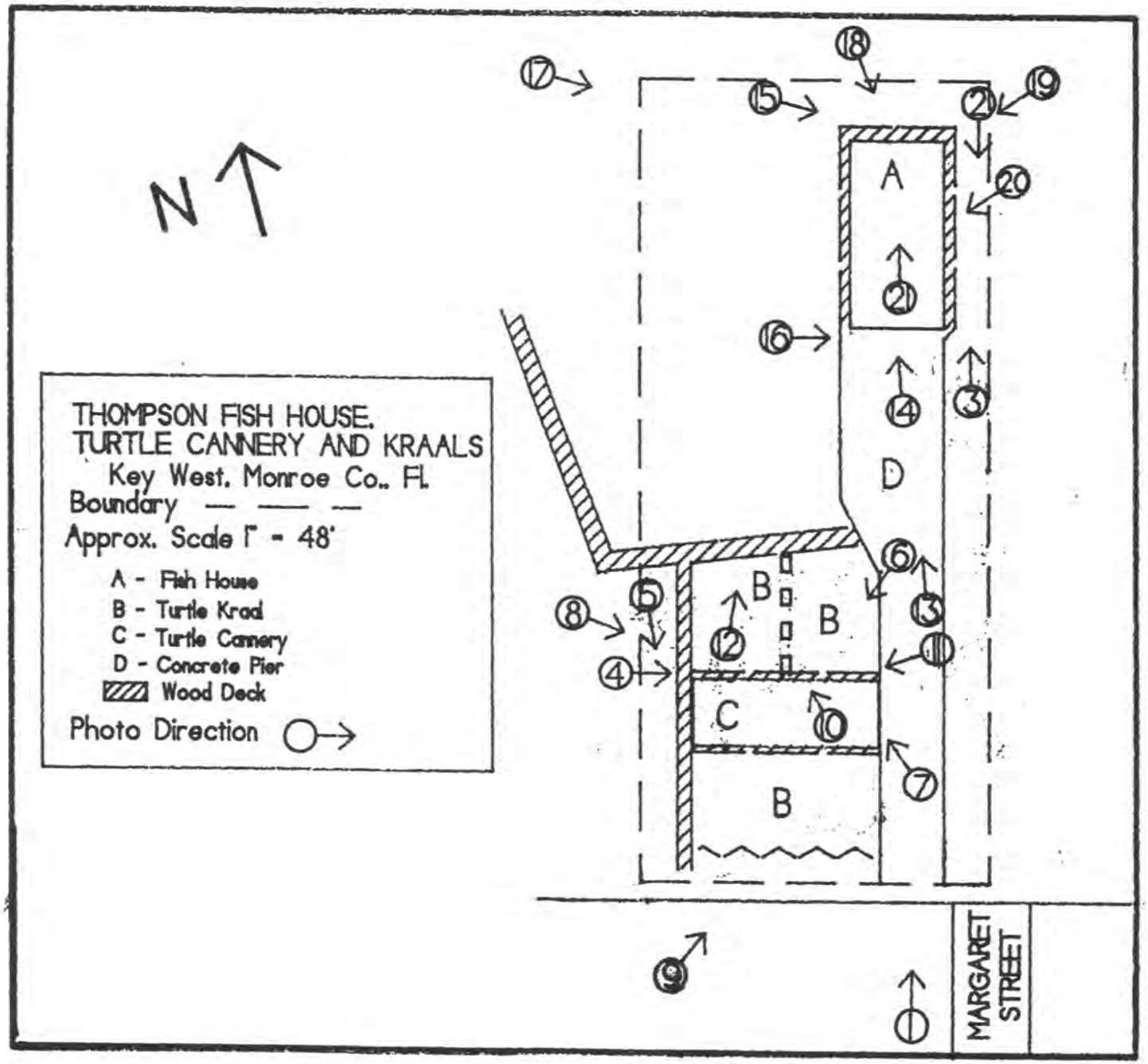
1) Thompson Fish House
6) Detail, dormer, west elevation. View facing southeast
7) Photo no. 18 of 21

1) Thompson Fish House
6) North elevation, view facing southwest
7) Photo no. 19 of 21

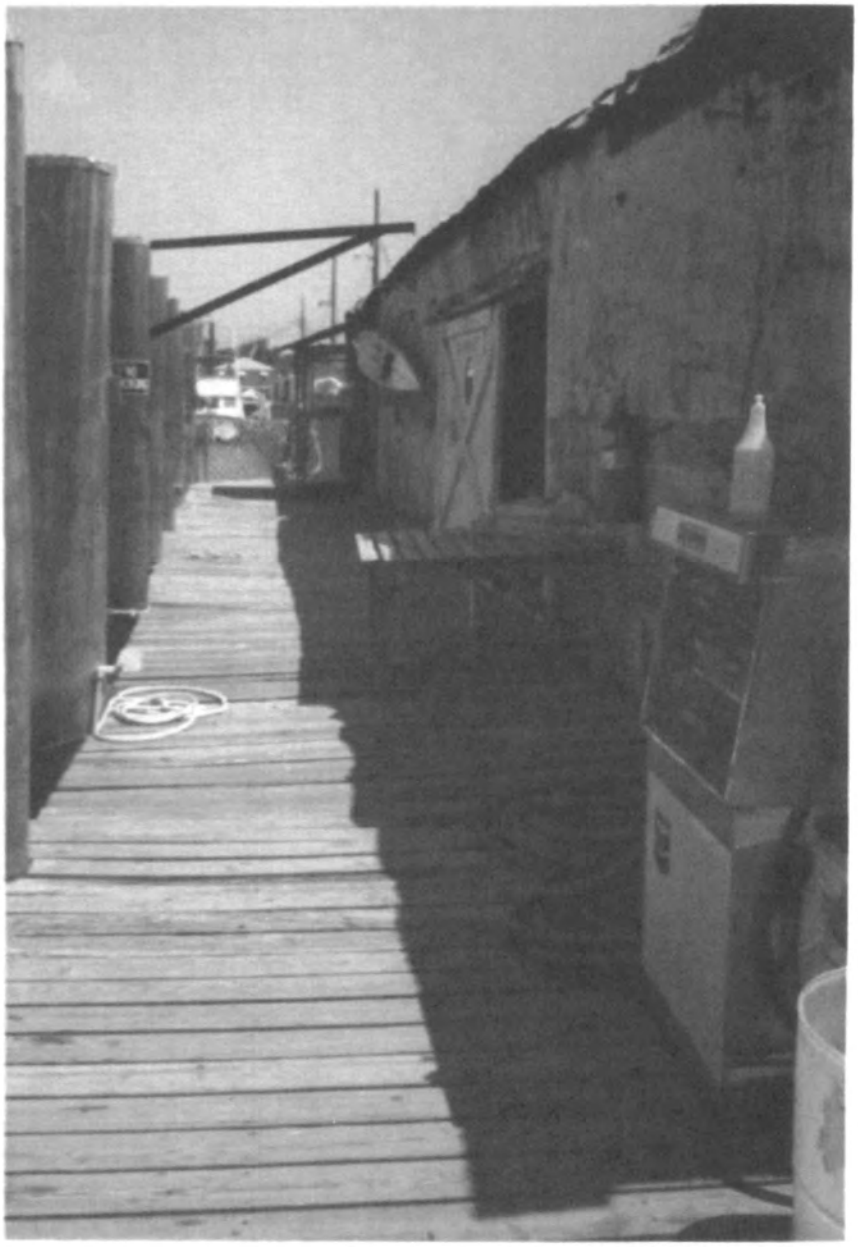
1) Thompson Fish House
6) East elevation, view facing southwest
7) Photo no. 20 of 21

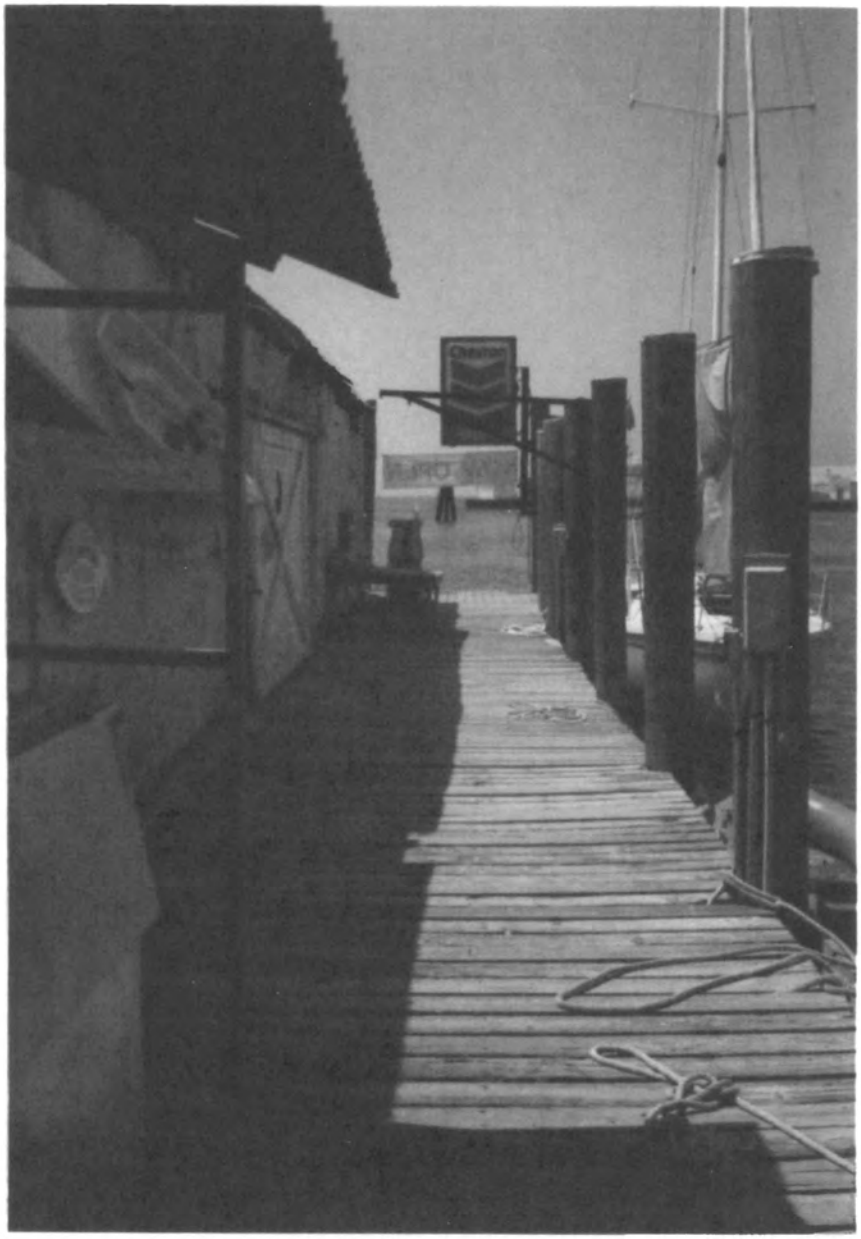
1) Thompson Fish House
6) Detail, interior; view looking up through stairwell at roof framing and second floor space
7) Photo no. 21 of 21

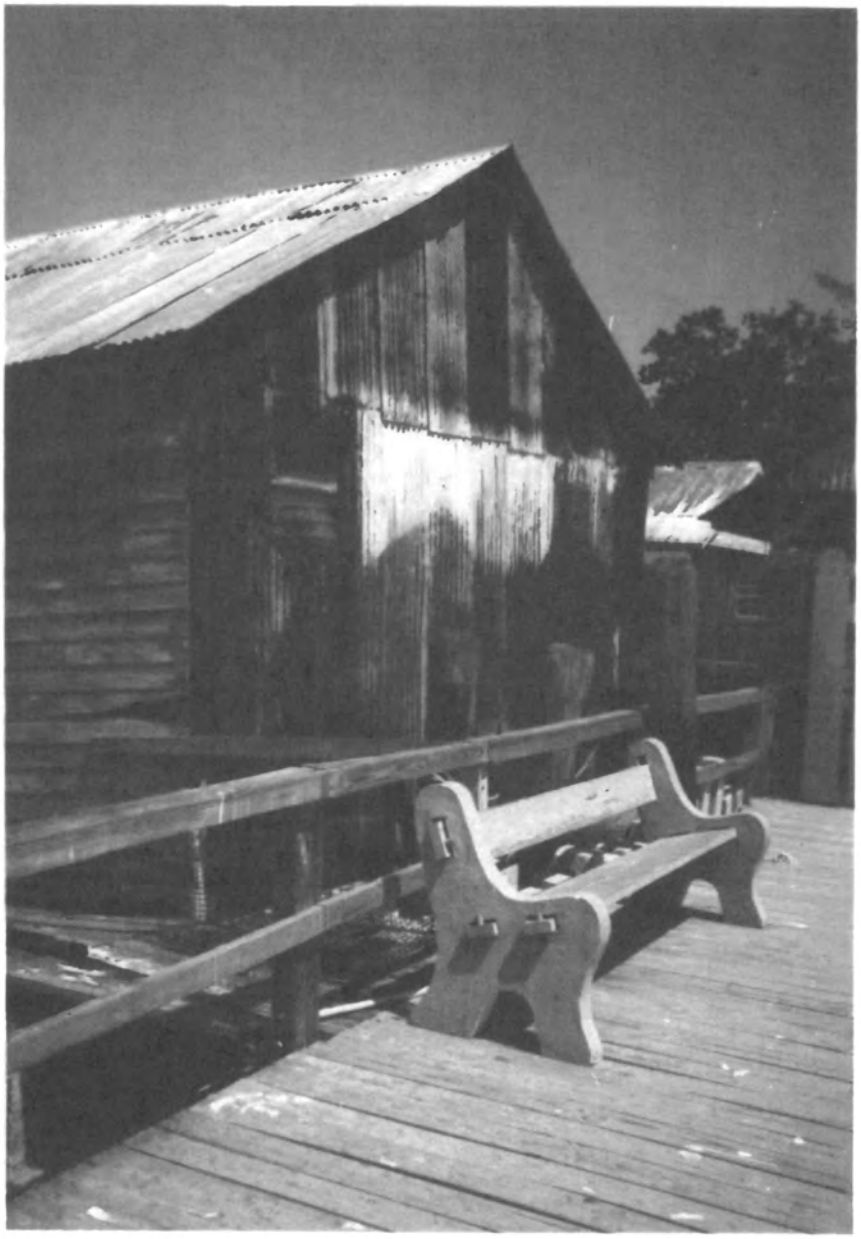

THOMPSON FISH HOUSE.
TURTLE CANNERY AND KRAALS
Key West. Monroe Co., Fl.
SITE PLAN
Boundary — — —
Approx. Scale 1" = 60'
A - Fish House
B - Turtle Kraal
C - Turtle Cannery
D - Concrete Pier
Wood Deck
N
A
D
B
B
C
B
WILLIAM STREET
MARGARET STREET

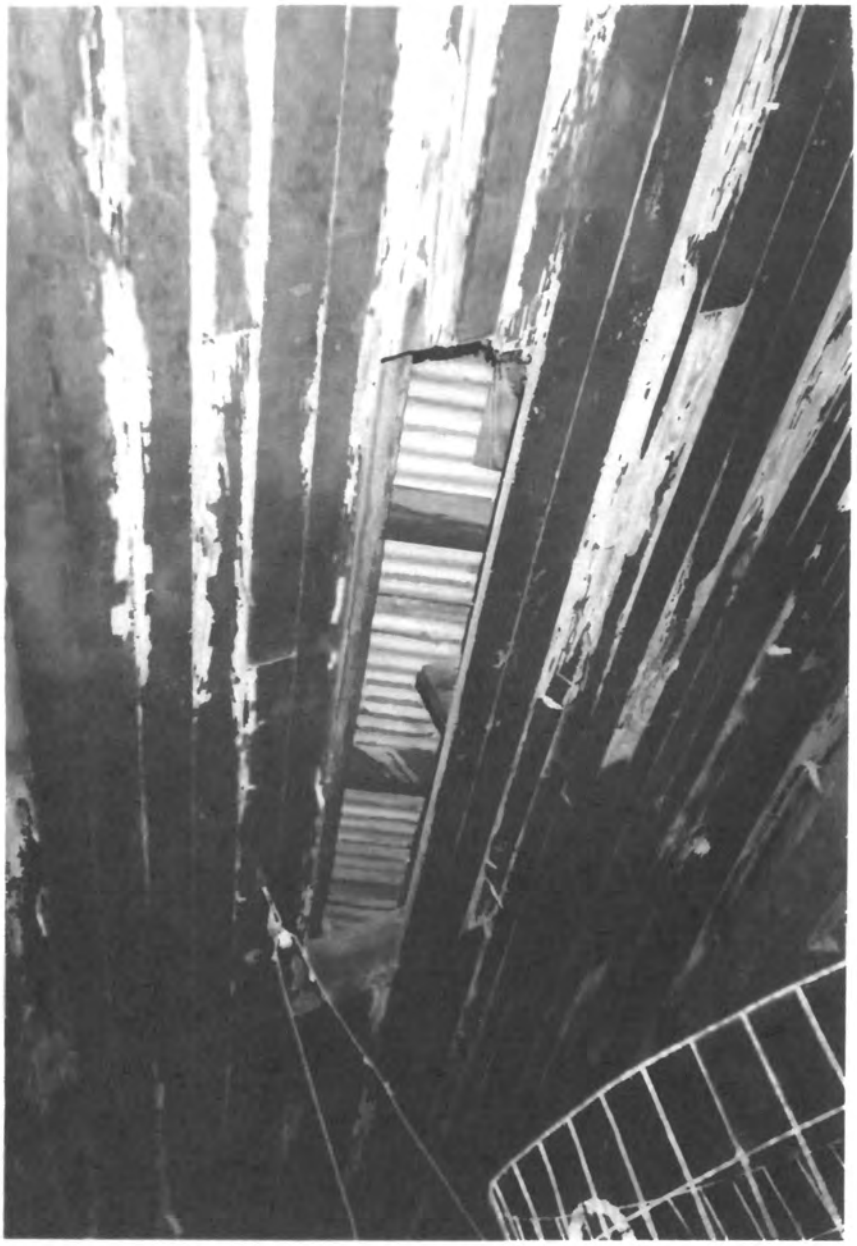

N
THOMPSON FISH HOUSE.
TURTLE CANNERY AND KRAALS
Key West. Monroe Co., Fl.
Boundary — — —
Approx. Scale 1" = 48'
A - Fish House
B - Turtle Krad
C - Turtle Cannery
D - Concrete Pier
Wood Deck
Photo Direction
A
B
B
B
C
D
MARGARET STREET

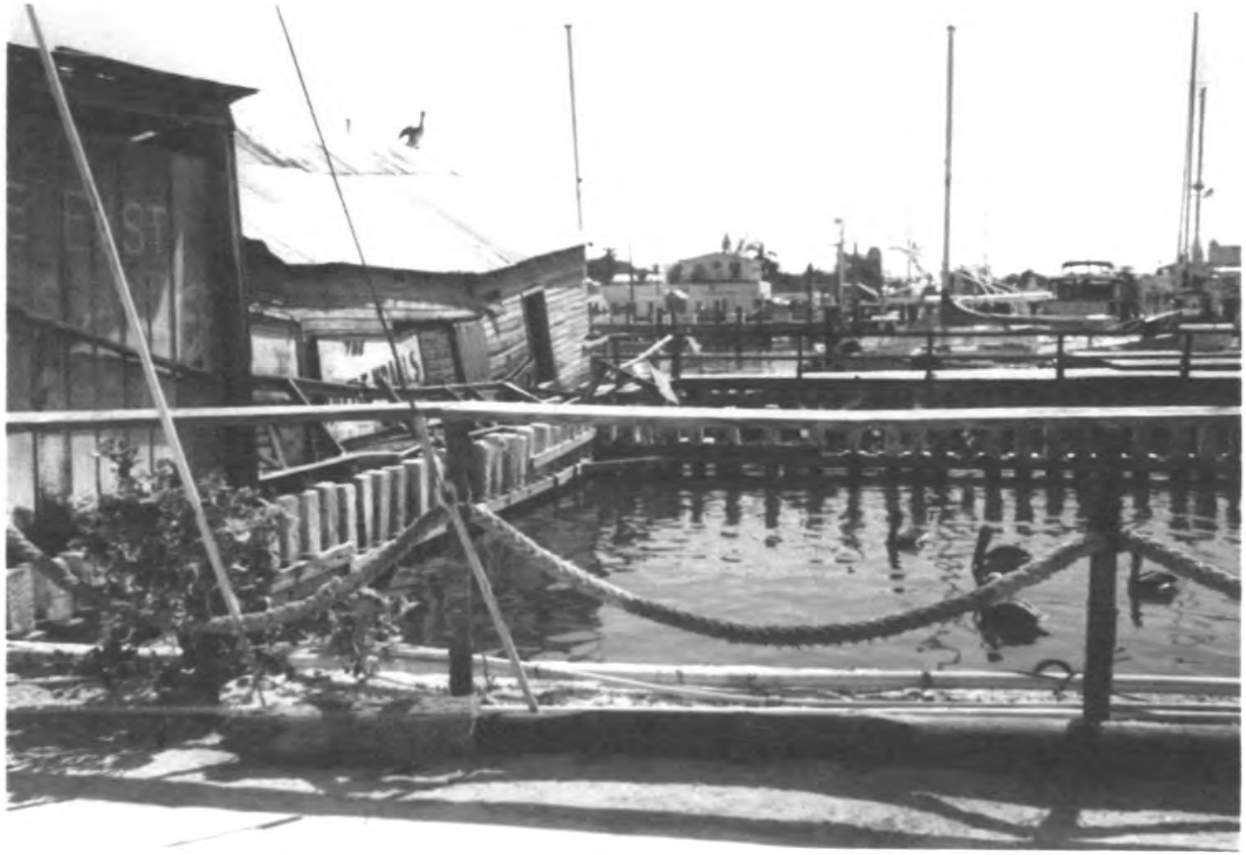
LANDS END
MARINA
CHARTER SERVICE
STARS STRIPES



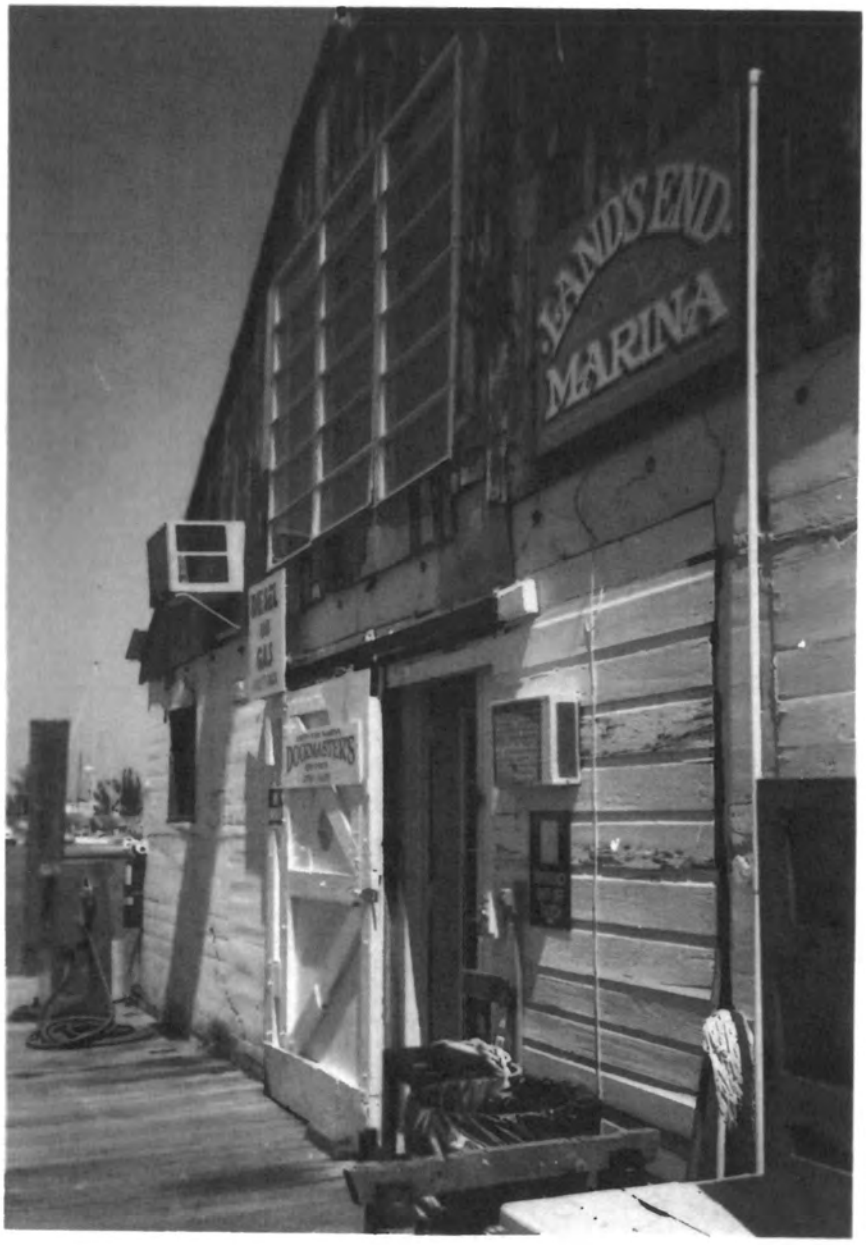


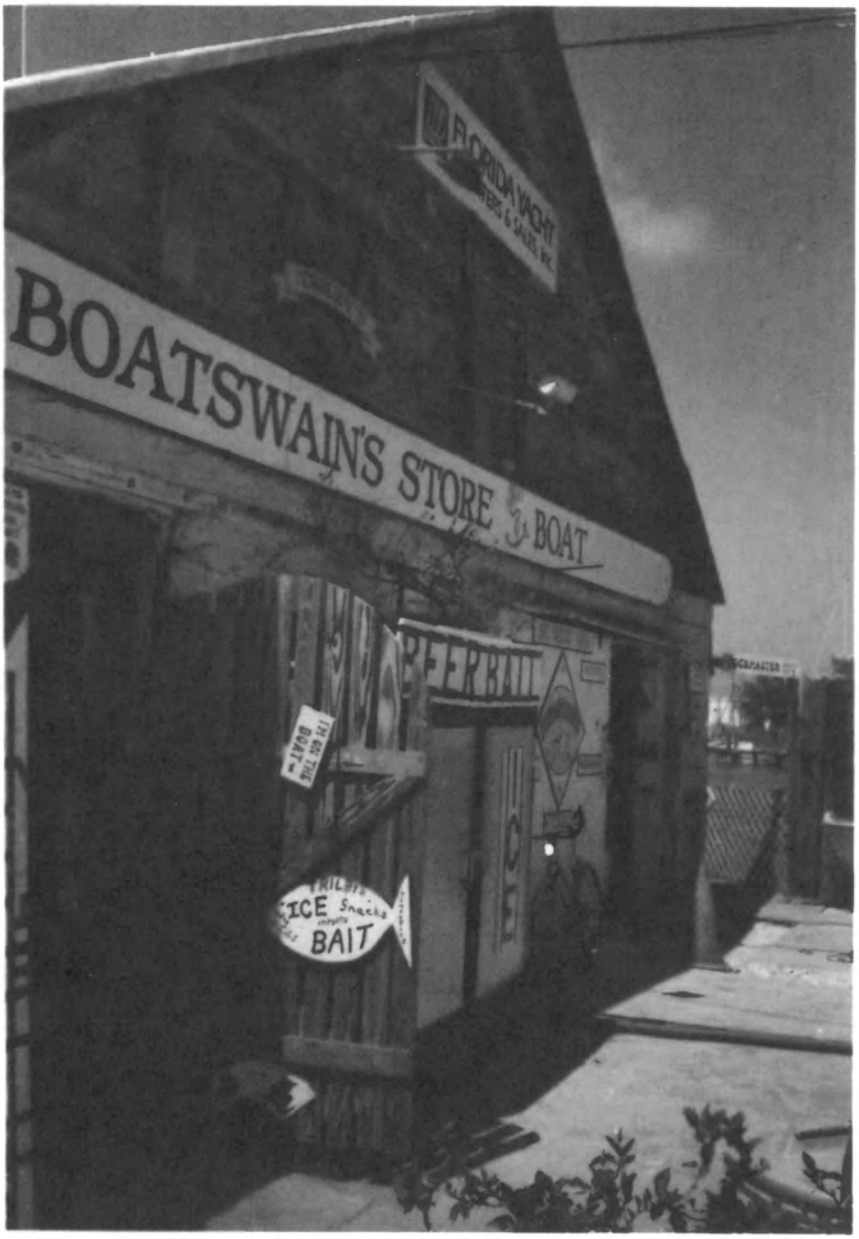


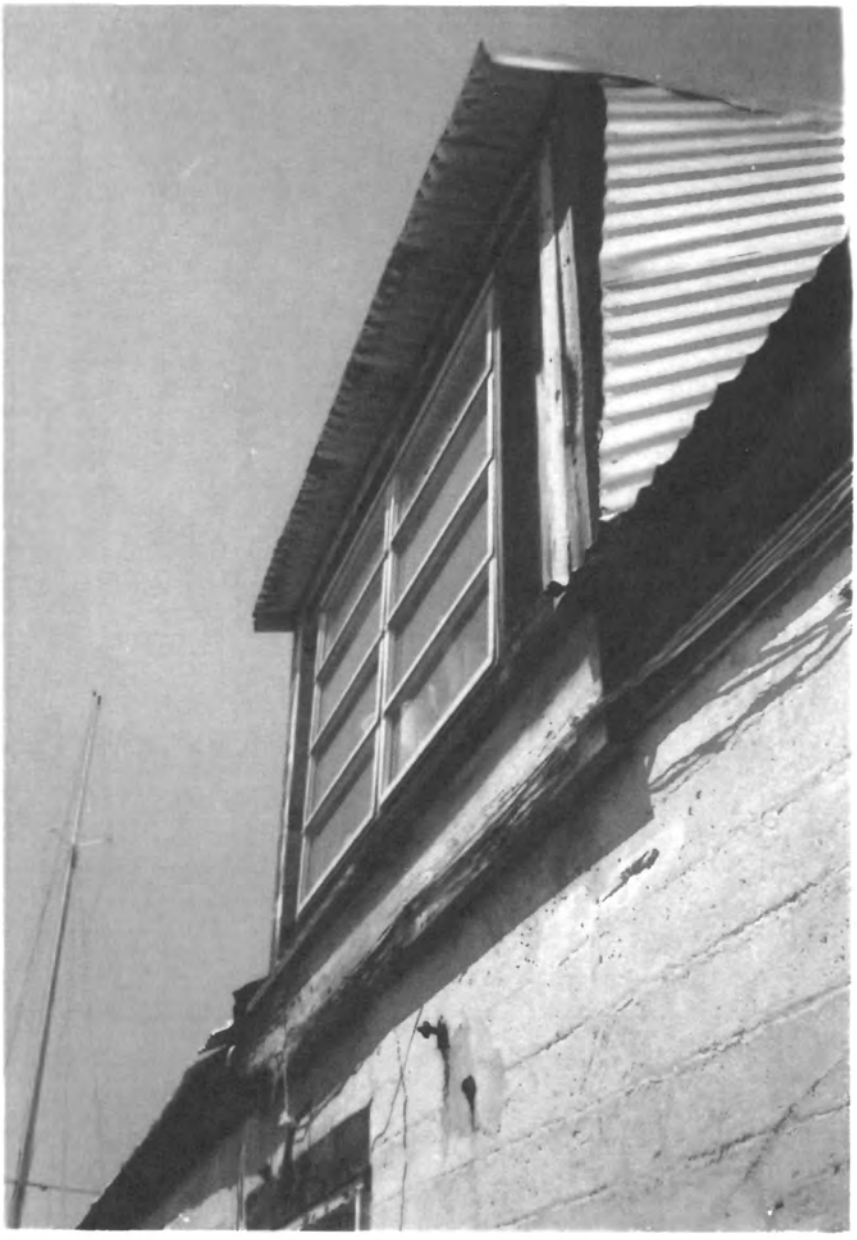


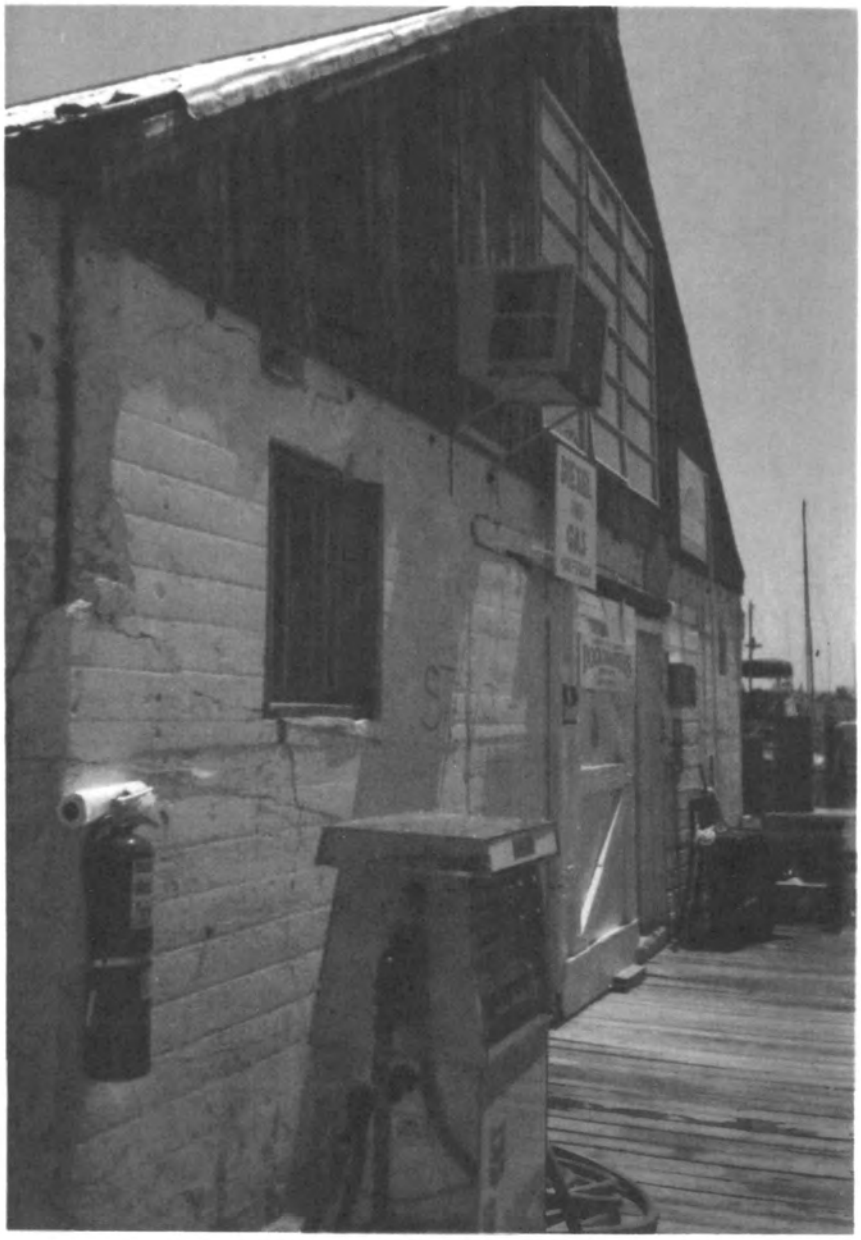


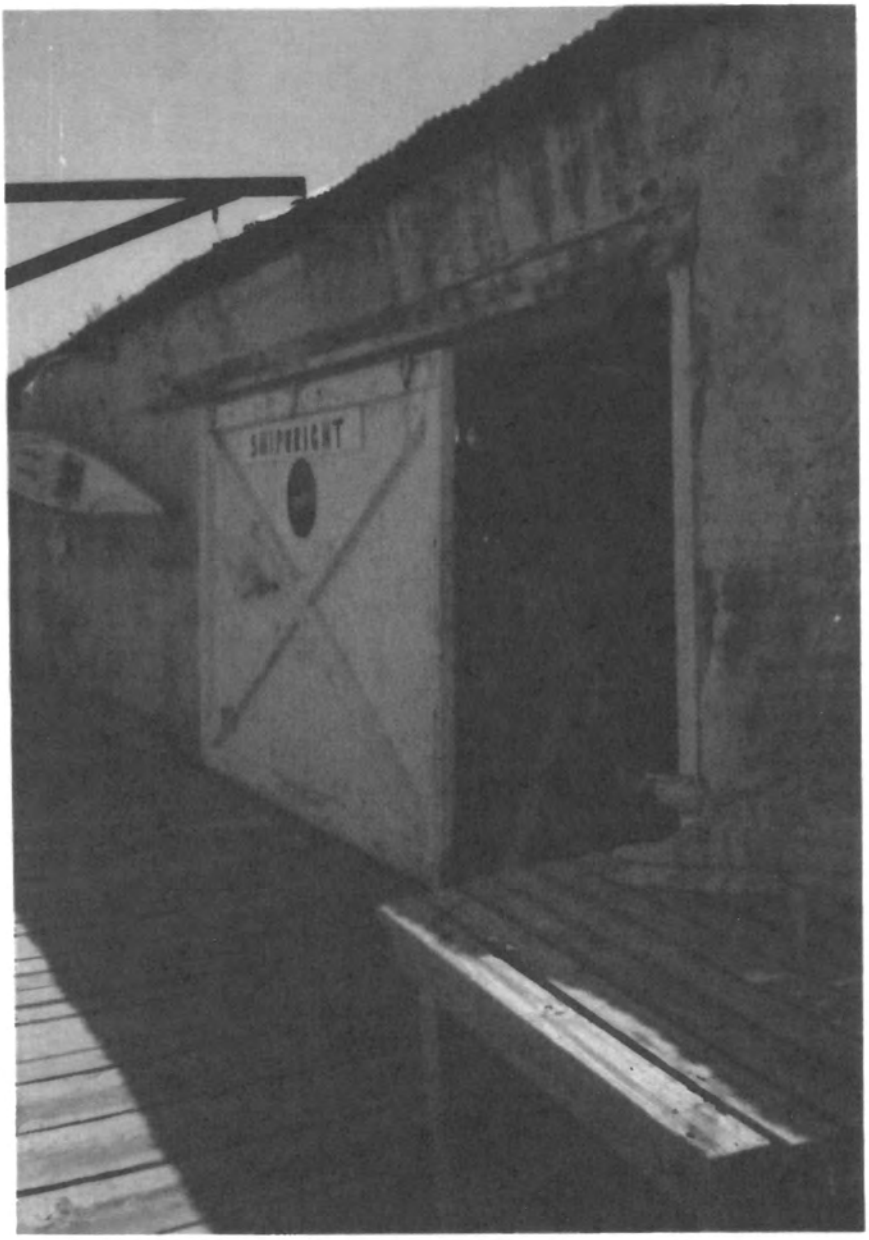
FLORIDA YACHT
CHARTERS & SALES, Inc.
BOATSWAIN'S STORE BOAT
BEER BAR


LAND'S END
MARINA


BOATSWAIN'S STORE & BOAT
BEER BAIL
ICE
ICE Snacks
BAIT






SHIPWRIGHT