

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

6-21  
FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED MAR 25 1976  
DATE ENTERED DEC 11 1978

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Egmont Key *aka*

AND/OR COMMON

Fort Dade Site

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

An island at entrance to Tampa Bay *W of Tampa*

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Tampa

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Sixth 7<sup>th</sup>

STATE

Florida

CODE

12

COUNTY

Hillsborough

CODE

057

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Wild-

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

life refuge

NAME

Multiple, see continuation sheet

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Hillsborough County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Tampa

Florida

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

N/A

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT                     DETERIORATED  
 GOOD      varies,             RUINS  
 FAIR      see below     UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Egmont Key is an island located at the entrance to Tampa Bay. It is approximately 1.75 miles long, on a north-south axis, and .5 miles wide. The average elevation is probably about three feet. Except for a few sand dunes, natural elevations rarely exceed five feet. Vegetation consists mainly of sabal palms, a few Australian pines, various types of shrubs and grass, and an abundance of poison ivy. The island is accessible only by boat. There is no public dock, but small craft can anchor or land on the beaches on both sides of the island, and larger boats can anchor close to the eastern shore.

A lighthouse, dock, and auxiliary structures are maintained by the United States Coast Guard near the north end of the island. Three men are assigned to this light station. The Tampa Bay Pilots Association maintains a station on the southeast side, which includes a dock, a boathouse, a lookout tower, an administration and operations office, one large house, and sixteen cottages belonging to the individual pilots. From eight to twelve men, including the pilots, boat crews, and cook are usually at the pilot station.

Structural ruins of the military installations that once occupied the entire island are abundant. Remnants of the brick and concrete streets remain in good condition, including almost a mile of road between the light station and the pilot station. The massive earth and concrete gun emplacements of the main battery have been stripped of all fittings and fixtures. The concrete emplacements of the light battery at the southwest corner of the island have been undermined by beach erosion. The gutted shells of several original Fort Dade buildings, including the Mess Hall and post jail, remain standing. The ruins of ammunition bunkers, spotting towers, mine handling facilities and other facilities are still identifiable. Debris from living and operating facilities can be found at almost any part of the island.

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Owners:

- 1) U.S. Department of Interior  
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife  
Mr. Glen Bond  
J. N. "Ding" Darling Wildlife Refuge  
Post Office Drawer B  
Sanibel, Florida 33957
  
- 2) U.S. Coast Guard  
Commander (fs)  
Seventh Coast Guard District  
Room 1018, Federal Building  
51 SW 1st Avenue  
Miami, Florida 33130
  
- 3) Hillsborough County  
Board of County Commissioners  
Hillsborough County Courthouse  
Tampa, Florida

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1840-1945

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Egmont Key has been significant as the site of a variety of military activities throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The West Coast of Florida held little attraction for the Spaniards after the early explorations of Narvaez and de Soto. The growing rivalry with France led to Spanish settlements at St. Marks and Pensacola in the late seventeenth century, but it was not until 1757 that Francisco Maria Celi made the first known survey of Tampa Bay entrance and the island that he called "Isla de San Blas Y Barreda" in honor of the Rear Admiral of the Royal Fleet in Havana (Ware, pp. 9, 13, 22). In 1754 the British Admiralty surveyor George Gauld identified the island as "Egmont Key," naming it for John Perceval, second Earl of Egmont, who was then serving as First Lord of the Admiralty (Gauld, p. 24). Bernard Romans, in his survey in 1769, referred repeatedly to "Castor Key," in his directions for entering Tampa Bay (Romans, plates LXXX-LXXXII). The Spanish naval captain, Joseph Antonio de Evia, called it "Cayo de Cruz," or Island of the Cross, in 1783 (Holmes, pp. 97-103).

Commercial fishermen began to operate in Tampa Bay during the Second Spanish period in Florida (1783-1821). There is some indication that they made use of Egmont Key and nearby Mullet Key, but no settlement was attempted. Little use was made of the island during the Second Seminole War period, although a settler's claim was filed under the Armed Occupation Act of 1842 (Carter, Territorial Papers, p. 778). By 1848, however, the settlements around Tampa Bay and the trade they generated had grown to such an extent as to justify the establishment of a lighthouse at the north end of Egmont Key to mark the main entrance to the bay. In the same year Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Lee, on a survey of the southern coast, recognized the military significance of the island and recommended that defensive works be erected (Bickel, pp. 59-60, 64-66). This marks the beginning of a century of military activity on the island.

Following the brief and final Seminole uprisings of the 1850's, some 165 Indians were temporarily encamped on Egmont Key, from which the steamer Grey Cloud eventually carried them to Fort Smith, Arkansas

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA 450 +

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 375 acres (approx.)

UTM REFERENCES

A	17	3	26	4	00	30	5	4	300	B	17	3	26	4	20	3	0	51	3	90	
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING				EASTING		NORTHING							
C	17	3	25	6	20	30	5	13	9	5	D	17	3	25	5	60	3	0	54	3	00

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Includes entire island of Egmont Key.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

William N. Thurston, Chief Preservation Planner

ORGANIZATION

Div. of Archives, History & Records Mgmt.

DATE

February, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

Dept. of State, The Capitol

TELEPHONE

904-488-7365

CITY OR TOWN

Tallahassee

STATE

Florida

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

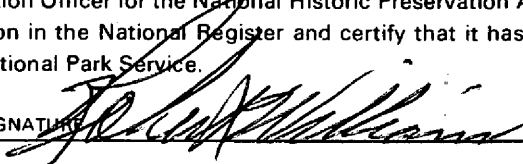
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



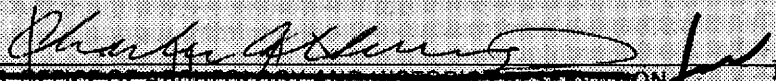
Robert Williams

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 3/18/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER



DATE 12/11/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF

ATTEST: Jann H. Gilmore

DATE 12/8/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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in 1858 (McReynolds, pp. 286-287). The lighthouse was rebuilt in that year, and served during the Civil War, along with several newly constructed buildings, as a base for the Union blockade vessels in the Tampa Bay area. Runaway slaves and Union sympathizers also found refuge there until transported elsewhere (Covington, pp. 142-144).

Little was done to develop the military potential of Egmont Key between the Civil War and the 1890's. The events leading to the outbreak of the Spanish-American War undoubtedly acted as a catalyst, however, and in 1898 an extensive coastal artillery installation was under construction on the island. This was part of the comprehensive coastal defense system developed in the late nineteenth century. The installation at Egmont Key was named Fort Dade. Its heavy battery at the north end of the island, in conjunction with the mortar batteries at Fort DeSoto on Mullet Key to the northeast, dominated the main ship channel leading into Tampa Bay. A battery of smaller weapons at the south end of the island commanded the secondary channel. The entire island was soon given over to military use. Elaborate fire control installations, magazine, storage, repair, and training facilities were constructed to support the military mission of the post, and extensive housing and recreation facilities were provided for the garrison (Map of Egmont Key).

During World War I, Coast Artillery units of the National Guard were mobilized for training and duty at Fort Dade (Florida, Adjutant General, Annual Report, 1917). A mine laying dock was added at the north end of the island in response to the development of submarine warfare. By 1921, however, elaborate coast defense installations were considered obsolete, and Fort Dade was deactivated (Sarles).

Military activity was resumed in World War II. Egmont Key served as a harbor entrance patrol station and provided ammunition storage facilities for vessels entering Tampa Bay. Portions of the island were later used for amphibious warfare and aerial gunnery exercises. Since that time, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Tampa Bay Pilots Association have maintained facilities on the island. In 1974 Egmont Key was declared a National Wildlife Preserve.

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Bickel, Karl A. "Robert E. Lee in Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly, XXVII, pp. 59-60, 64-66.

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Covington, James W. The Story of Southwestern Florida. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1957. pp. 142-144.

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Holmes, Jack D. L. "Two Spanish Expeditions to Southwest Florida, 1783-1793," Tequesta, XXV, pp. 97-103.

Map of Egmont Key. Drawn by C. J. Palachow, September 20, 1936.

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Romans, Bernard. A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida. New York, 1775. Reprint in Floridiana Facsimile and Reprint Series. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1962. Appendix, plates LXXX-LXXXII.

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