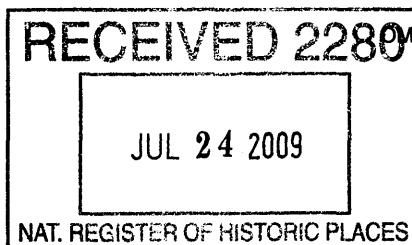


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See 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 any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter 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 MENGE-HANSEN MARINE WAYS

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 5605 Palm Beach Boulevard

N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Fort Myers

N/A ☐ vicinity

state FLORIDA

code

FL

countv Lee

code

071

zip code 33905

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.)

Barbara C. Mattick / Interim SHPO 7/20/2009
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Ball 9-2-09

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ buildings
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
2	0	structures
1	0	objects
4	0	total

Name of related multiple property listings

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/Marine Vessel Service and Repair

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Museum

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE/Wood Frame Vernacular

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Wood Pilings

walls Wood

Metal

roof Metal

other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **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

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 36) 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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE**Period of Significance**c. 1890-1948**Significant Dates**c. 18901948**Significant Person**Menge, John & Frederick**Cultural Affiliation**N/A**Architect/Builder**Arch: Crandall Marine Railway CompanyBlder: Menge, John & Frederick**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of Repository

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property less than one**UTM References**

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	4	2	0	7	8	0	2	9	5	2	0	0	0
Zone	Easting			Northing											
2															

3															
Zone	Easting			Northing											
4															

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared Byname/title Mikki Hartig Consultant/Carl Shiver, Historic Preservationistorganization Bureau of Historic Preservation date July 2009street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333city or town Tallahassee state Florida 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 Pat Riley, General Manager, Leward LLCstreet & number 5605 Palm Beach Boulevard telephone (239) 693-8122city or town Fort Myers state Florida zip code 33905

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

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

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

MENGE-HANSEN MARINE WAYS
FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The Menge-Hansen Marine Ways located at 5605 Palm Beach Boulevard in Fort Myers, Florida, consists of a c. 1890 marine ways constructed of wooden tracks mounted on iron pilings that extend from the bank of the Orange River to a date-stamped iron steam engine driven winch that was used pull riverboats out of the water for hull repair, cleaning, and maintenance. Another ways, constructed in 1948, consisting of a short length of standard railroad tracks anchored to a concrete base, was used for removing pleasure craft and fishing boats from the water for hull repairs and maintenance. Also found on the property is a c. 1930 Wood Frame Vernacular workshop whose exterior walls are sheathed in board-and-batten siding and corrugated metal sheets that was historically associated with the repair of boats and boat engines on the site. The c.1890 and c. 1948 marine ways are distinctive surviving examples of marine technology used in hoisting boats out of the water for hull repairs and maintenance.

SETTING

The city of Fort Myers is located on the west coast of Florida and is the county seat and commercial center of Lee County, Florida. Its population was 48,208 in the 2000 census. According to 2008 estimates, the population is 68,689. The city is one of two major cities that make up the Cape Coral-Fort Myers Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). As of 2008, the population estimate for the metropolitan area was 623,725. Established in 1886, Fort Myers is the historical and governmental hub of Lee County and is the gateway to the Southwest Florida region, which is a major tourist destination in Florida. The winter homes of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford, both primary tourist attractions in the region, are located on McGregor Boulevard in Fort Myers. The Menge-Hansen Marine Ways is found on the western bank of the Orange River, a tributary of the Caloosahatchee River, and is accessed by Palm Beach Boulevard (State Road 80), a major east/west central Florida thoroughfare that extends east to west across the state of Florida from Fort Myers to West Palm Beach. In the immediate area of the property, there is a mix of residential and commercial uses. A large waterfront mobile home park, Orange River Mobile Home Park, is a short distance to the west. Modern commercial businesses are on the other side of Palm Beach Boulevard. A large non-historic residential development is to the east.

DESCRIPTION

c. 1890 Marine Ways and Machinery

One of the two existing marine ways on the site and its associated machinery are original to the Menge Steamboat and Marine Ways dating to c.1890, the date found stamped on the steam winch. Two wood tracks mounted on iron pilings extend up the bank of the Orange River toward the winch. The ways was used to pull boats out of the water for hull repair, cleaning and maintenance. The railway was constructed by the Crandall Marine Railway Company founded in Newport, Rhode Island, about 1840. The marine railway manufacturing

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Section number 7 Page 2 MENGE-HANSEN MARINE WAYS
FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

business was founded by William Hazard Crandall who owned a shipyard in Newport. He constructed his own marine railway using steam power, wrought iron chain and crude iron rollers to haul vessels out for repairs. This was an era of tremendous coastwise and transatlantic shipping since there were few railroads and no roads of consequence. The coasting ships were sailing vessels, some with steam power of very modest tonnage and well suited to the marine railway concept.¹ Over the decades, the company constructed dry docks and marine ways at various sites in the United States, Europe, and Asia, producing the ways at Fort Myers c. 1890. The railway was built using timber cradles and timber track with metal rollers bearing on timber piles. The ways at the Menge-Hansen site was constructed as a kit and shipped with its steam hoist to Florida where it was assembled.² A c. 1910 photograph of the ways (Photo 1) shows the framework of the ways when it only a decade old and had a yacht and a tugboat waiting for service. Ships were hauled from the Orange River along the wood and metal rail system by a chain or cable using a donkey steam engine (Photo 2), or more correctly, the Dolbeer Logging Engine named after its inventor John Dolbeer in 1881. This type of engine was invented in the United States and patented in 1882. John Dolbeer had been a marine engineer before becoming involved with logging. The steam donkey, or donkey engine is the common nickname for a steam-powered winch, once widely used in, but not limited to logging operations.³ They were also found in the mining, maritime, and nearly any other industry that needed a powered winch. The engines were usually designed around a vertical boiler giving the winch a small footprint permitting smaller, more space-efficient designs. Although no longer in use, the marine railway is still found at its original location (Photos 3-4). The much rusted winch machine, manufactured by Louis A. Tarr, Inc., in Baltimore, Maryland, (Photos 5-7) is still located at the head of the railway at the Menge-Hansen site: however, it no longer retains its vertical boiler.

c. 1948 Marine Ways

Two metal tracks which were laid c.1948 to allow for the hoisting of pleasure boats out of the water for hull repairs and maintenance, remain unaltered on the site. Boats were loaded onto a wooden trolley with railroad car wheels and pulled out of the water using a pickup truck (Photos 8-9).

c. 1930 Workshop Building

Exterior

The Wood Frame Vernacular maintenance building (Photos 10-12) was constructed c.1930 by Hans Christian Hansen.⁴ Oriented with its pedestrian entrance facing southwest, it is, in part, constructed over a part of the south bank of the Orange River. The building is one-story in height with a rectangular plan and rests on wood

¹ The Crandall Dry Dock Story, 1840-1990, <http://www.crandalldrydock.com/history.html>.

² Carl Shiver, Telephone Interview with Pat Riley, Owner of the Menge-Hansen Railway Property, January 12, 2009.

³ "John Dolbeer Steam Engine," <http://www.steamengine.com.au/steam/sawmill/donkey/index.html>.

⁴ Hansen, A. Ernest, Personal Communication with Sarah Payton and Carrie Scupholm, January 8 & 27, 2004.

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MENGE-HANSEN MARINE WAYS
FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

pilings where the building extends out into the Orange River. A wood plank ramp provides pedestrian access into the structure on the south. The exterior walls are original board and batten siding except on the south facade wall which is surfaced with corrugated 5-V metal crimp sheet metal that covers the original vertical plank wood siding. A gable roof, surfaced with corrugated sheet metal, covers the structure. The primary elevation displays a large sliding metal entrance door. There is also a wood sliding door found on the northwest elevation of the building. Six, independently placed, 2/2-light original wood double hung sash windows align the southeast elevation. Fenestration along the northwest elevation is identical to that on the southeast, except for one 4/4-light sash window. The north end of the building, facing the river, features a porch formed by an extension of the gable roof that is supported by two wooden posts. The north wall has a wooden door and a single 2/2-light wood double hung sash window.

Interior

The interior of the building (Photos 13-14) is rough and unfinished and open. Roof trusses and structural framing are exposed. The original heart pine floor remains. Contents of the building include a multitude of tools and equipment used to repair boats over many past years.

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Section number 8 Page 1

MENGE-HANSEN MARINE WAYS
FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The Menge-Hansen Marine Ways is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for providing service and repair for marine vessels in Florida during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and under Criterion B for the brothers John Frederick and Conrad Menge who contributed greatly to the development of water transportation in the Caloosahatchee river valley and central Florida from the 1880s into the 1910s. The brothers were skilled boat builders and were associated with the construction and repair of steamboats for more than two decades. The c.1890 Menge Marine Ways and its steam-powered winch are closely tied to development of Florida's marine industry and intracoastal transportation prior to the coming of the railroad. The c.1930 Hansen Marine Ways & Marina maintenance building and the c.1948 metal marine ways are also historically significant for being associated with the continuing marine repair activities dating from the 1930s and 1940s in Fort Myers and Florida.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Following the Civil War, the Reconstruction period took place to prepare the southern states to return to the Union. Although the state of Florida was officially returned on July 25, 1868, settlement of the Florida peninsula was slow, with new communities consisting of only a few settlers, and one or two stores because of a lack of overland transportation. Lee County remained largely undeveloped until around 1870 and 1890 when land speculators began promoting Florida as a paradise destination. Surveys of southwest Florida were conducted in 1871 and 1874. The land was described by one surveyor as "third rate pine and river swamp."⁵

By the 1880s, the State of Florida was in a financial crisis linked to public lands. An Act of Congress in 1850 turned over to the states for drainage and reclamation all "swamp and overflow land." The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund was created, and in 1881, the Trustees began to search for a buyer for the Florida land.⁶ Hamilton Disston (1844-1896), a member of a prominent Philadelphia saw manufacturing family, entered into an agreement with the State of Florida to purchase four million acres of the "swamp and overflow land" for one million dollars. In exchange, Disston promised to drain and improve the land.⁷

Disston formed the Florida Land and Improvement Company.⁸ His goal was to drain the Lake Okeechobee district and swamp lands to create farm land. In addition, he wanted to establish a waterway transportation link from the Gulf of Mexico to Lake Okeechobee and to the settlement of Kissimmee where he had his headquarters. His plan created numerous jobs and opportunities and brought people from outside the state to

⁵State of Florida, Department of Environmental Protection, 1873a., Field Notes, Volume 222.

⁶Tebeau, Charlton W., A History of Florida (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1971), p. 347.

⁷Ibid., pg. 278.

⁸Also known as Atlantic, Gulf Coast and Okeechobee Land Company.

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Section number 8 Page 2 MENGE-HANSEN MARINE WAYS
FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

settle in Florida. On February 3, 1883, the Florida Land and Improvement Company purchased Lot 1, of Section 34 in Township 43, South, Range 24, East, which included what would become the marine ways site.⁹

John Frederick Menge was the son of a German immigrant who at the time was a civil engineer and boat builder living in New Orleans, Louisiana. He was hired by the Disston Dredging Company to construct dredges to operate on the Caloosahatchee River and to create drainage canals. The first five dredges were constructed in Cedar Key c.1882 by John Frederick and his brother, Joseph, using the Menge Patented Dredge (Photo 15) developed by their father Anten Menge in Louisiana.¹⁰ Menge served Disston well and was eventually promoted by Disston to Captain, putting him in charge of dredging at Lake Okeechobee at the early age of twenty-two. All of the dredging was carried out in the decade between 1880 and 1890. The original Menge Patented dredge was worn out on the job and abandoned in 1888. The other dredges constructed in Cedar Key by the Menge brothers shared a similar fate.¹¹ After the Lake Okeechobee waterway was dredged, Disston's project moved to the straightening of Caloosahatchee River on the west coast of Florida in what would become Lee County. Conrad Menge, another of John Frederick's brothers, joined him on the dredge. Conrad was also a boatman and engineer in Louisiana and was experienced sufficiently to join Disston's operation at the age of seventeen.¹² Soon after arriving, John Frederick had been introduced to the large and prominent Hendry family, and he married one of Captain Frances Hendry's daughters, Virginia, in 1886 and moved into Fort Myers.

Historical Information

In 1888, after the dredging was completed Conrad and John Frederick made a decision to establish a business together on the Caloosahatchee River. They received two boats from Hamilton Disston, the Gopher and the Mamie, and built a boat to service citrus groves along the river. The boats may have been in payment for dredging services provided to Disston. In 1888, the Menge brothers purchased their first steamboat, the Anah C and, in 1890, they purchased their first streamliner, City of Athens.¹³ That same year, they founded the Menge Brothers Steamboat Line. They located it a still unsettled area on the west bank of the Orange River, a branch of the Caloosahatchee River then known as Twelve Mile Creek. They constructed a marine ways and a blacksmith shop (non-extant) to service their vessels. In south Florida during the late 19th century there were few dry docks or other facilities for repairing vessels. To repair a vessel below the water line, it had to be placed on a ways, or railway, and out of the water. There were few harbors, except for those that nature had provided.

⁹State of Florida, Tract Book, Volume 22, undated.

¹⁰ Conrad Menge, "Early Dredging in the Lake Okeechobee Region," unpublished manuscript, September 28, 1947, pp. 7-8.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹²Hawkins, Betty, Twice Upon A Time Bollinger's Business Service, Fort Myers, FL 33901, undated, pg. 16..

¹³ Stahl, Jo H. Captain Conrad Menge, April 2, 1982. Manuscript on file at Fort Myers Historical Museum, Fort Myers, FL.

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FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

The Menge Brothers Steamboat Line grew large and at one time they operated at least eight ships. Only a few other major marine ways had been established in the South outside of New Orleans and Key West. The Menge line provided freight and passenger service to Punta Gorda, Tampa, and Cedar Key. Pleasure excursions along the Caloosahatchee River were becoming popular, and by the 1890s steamboats were becoming the preferred means of transportation. The line was the largest central Florida line, dominating the Caloosahatchee River and the coastal waters of the Gulf of Mexico from 1890 to 1915. They transported not only passengers but also citrus, furniture, supplies, mail, and livestock. Their boat the Suwanee carried passengers and freight between Fort Myers and Fort Lauderdale.¹⁴

In 1900, Conrad married and moved into Fort Myers across the street from his brother. John Frederick had become good friends with Thomas Edison. When the Menge brothers purchased the steamboat Suwanee in 1905, Edison was so taken by the boat that he immediately chartered it for a pleasure trip with his wife Mina and several friends. Edison took more trips on the Suwanee than any other ship between 1905 and 1913. The Edisons, accompanied by a party of friends, would charter the boat for several days or a week. Edison was very fond of fishing and liked to go up the river and down to the Gulf.¹⁵ Either John Frederick or Conrad was personally at the helm when they set out on an excursion.¹⁶ The boat was also chartered each season by parties from New York. These people often arrived in Punta Gorda in their private railroad cars. Since there was no railroad to Fort Myers at the time, the Suwanee would pick them up at Punta Gorda for trips along the river and the Gulf Coast.¹⁷ The Suwanee wrecked in a hurricane in the fall of 1926. The storm blew the boat ashore on the south side of Lake Okeechobee near Moore Haven.¹⁸ Both brothers became great friends with Edison, and in 1904 they had a vessel constructed bearing his name, the Thomas A. Edison (Photo 16).¹⁹ Built at Apalachicola, Florida, it ran passengers and light freight on the Caloosahatchee River between Fort Myers and Fort Thompson at the head of the tidewater on the southern bank of the Caloosahatchee. She was tied up at the Lee County Packing House with a full load of fruit on the night of January 30, 1914, at low tide. The packing house caught fire and was destroyed; the Thomas A. Edison, hard aground at low tide, went up with it.²⁰

Eventually, trains became the preferred method of transporting goods, and cargo shipping by steamboat was replaced by pleasure boats. Additionally, by 1912, paved roads were completed in Fort Myers and the surrounding areas. The popularity of the automobile reduced the need for steamboats and eventually led to

¹⁴ Fort Myers News Press, January 29, 1937.

¹⁵ Conrad Menge, "Early Dredging in the Lake Okeechobee Region," unpublished manuscript, September 28, 1947, p. 9.

¹⁶ Hawkins, Betty, Twice Upon A Time, Bolinger's Business Service, Fort Myers, FL 33901, undated, pg. 17; Fort Myers News Press, September 27, 1969.

¹⁷ Conrad Menge, "Early Dredging in the Lake Okeechobee Region," unpublished manuscript, September 28, 1947, p. 10.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Hawkins, pg. 17.

²⁰ "Steamboat Museum, <http://www.steamboats.com/museum/models3.html>.

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MENGE-HANSEN MARINE WAYS
FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

their demise. In 1912, with the heyday of steamboats having past, the Menge brothers sold their line but maintained a shipyard. Nevertheless, their business was dissolved in 1915.²¹ John Frederick went to work for the Atlantic Coastline Railroad but Conrad Menge missed being around boats. After living for approximately two years in nearby Estero, Florida, he and his family returned to Fort Myers and entered into a partnership with Hans Christian Hansen, and together they purchased the old marine ways on the Orange River where the Menge line had been hauled and serviced in the early years.²² The Menge and Hansen Boat Ways business focused primarily on constructing and repairing boats. Early in the Menge-Hansen partnership, the site endured two natural disasters, a major fire followed by the hurricane in 1926.

Henry Ford was introduced to the Menge-Hansen Marine Ways in 1927. While visiting his friend Thomas Edison in Fort Myers, he traveled to the site and met Conrad Menge. Ford was involved in developing Greenfield Village in Michigan next to the Edison Museum in that state. He wanted to recreate the Suwanee which sank in Lake Okeechobee during the 1926 hurricane. In 1930, Conrad, Ford, and his chauffeur went to the lake to salvage the engines. Ford commissioned Menge and Hansen to recreate the original hull. The boat was built on the marine ways site on the Orange River at Fort Myers and sent to Dearborn, Michigan, for assembly. A year later, the boat remained unassembled and Ford asked Conrad to come to Michigan to assemble it. Ford encouraged Conrad to stay after the boat was complete, and Conrad brought his family to Michigan where, for several years, he served as the skipper of the boat narrating stories to the sightseers. Conrad also rebuilt Edison's electric launch, the Reliance, for display in the Edisonia collection and gave informational lectures to groups visiting Greenfield.²³ He and his sons also did other projects for Ford and at least one of his sons, his namesake, Conrad, Jr., continued as an instructor after his father's death. Conrad Sr.'s memoirs are part of Greenfield Village which became his family's second and his final home. Conrad, Sr., died in 1956.²⁴

Hans Christian Hansen

Hans Christian Hansen was born near Copenhagen, Denmark in 1871. As a young man, he trained in carpentry and shipbuilding and served five years as an apprentice on various sailing vessels in Europe. He married his childhood sweetheart, Sanne Ipsen in 1898. He left Denmark for the United States with his wife and his two oldest children, Siegfried and Albert. He soon learned of a Danish colony at Erie, Pennsylvania, where he went to work in the shipyards, learned English, and was recognized for his skills. He was soon able to send for his family and save enough money to establish his own boatyard. City fathers recognized his

²¹ Stahl, Jo H. Captain Conrad Menge, April 2. Manuscript on file at Fort Myers Historical Museum, Fort Myers, FL.

²² Hawkins, p. 17

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Fort Myers News Press, January 1, 1995.

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Section number 8 Page 5 MENGE-HANSEN MARINE WAYS
FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
SIGNIFICANCE

craftsmanship, and he was commissioned to raise and restore the sunken flagship of Admiral Oliver Perry, the brig USS Niagara, out of Misery Bay in time for the 1913 centennial celebration of the Battle of Lake Erie.²⁵

After completing the restoration of the Niagara, Hansen moved to Fort Myers, Florida, with his family. He became partners with John Frederick Menge.²⁶ The hurricane that struck Fort Myers in 1926 destroyed the buildings at the boat repair site; however, the c. 1890 marine ways and the steam winch machinery survived. Shortly thereafter Hansen acquired complete ownership of the business and site and built a maintenance shop c.1930 to continue servicing boats. The marine business had changed and the operation worked mostly on recreational boats. Hansen built an office and several sheds on the property, and constructed a number of boat storage sheds on the Orange River to rent to boat owners.

During World War II, recreational boat use was prohibited to conserve fuel. During those years the property was vacated except for a night watchman who resided in a small shed (non-extant). After the war, business resumed and in 1948 Hansen constructed an additional metal rail ways to continue the repair of the hulls of small yachts and pleasure boats. During the 1950s, Hans Hansen's son, A. Ernest Hansen, had begun purchasing the property from his father and uncles in hopes of consolidating the entire site again. In 1960, Hurricane Donna hit between Naples and Fort Myers. The storm caused considerable damage to what was by then known as Hansen Marine Ways and Marina. Buildings and the shed for storing boats were lost. The decade brought further changes and struggles to the business. Fiberglass boats became popular and they were not so easily hoisted up on the marine ways for repair. Hansen was forced to simply service older boats and focus on renting boat slips. Hans Hansen died in 1963.²⁷

In 1980, the repair of boats ceased but the site remained a marina. The office (non-extant) closed and never reopened. The entire operation focused on the marina aspect of renting slips, and the buildings were allowed to deteriorate. In 2005, the property was sold by to the current owner, Leeward LLC. Deteriorated buildings were demolished but repairs were made to preserve the c.1930 maintenance building and its contents for use as a museum, and the c. 1890 marine ways and machinery and the c.1948 marine ways were preserved on the site in their original locations for the enjoyment and education of visitors.

²⁵ Perry engaged the British fleet on Lake Erie near Sandusky, Ohio, on September 13, 1813. The Niagara was deliberately sunk by the U.S. Navy in the winter of 1813-1814, along with the brig Lawrence to protect them from the harsh winter weather.

²⁶ Fort Myers News Press, January 10, 1970, "Hansen Family".

²⁷ Ibid.

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MENGE-HANSEN MARINE WAYS
FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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MENGE-HANSEN MARINE WAYS
FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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MENGE-HANSEN MARINE WAYS
FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Boundary Description

An approximately .3 acre portion of the property described in tax parcel 34-43-25-00-00008.0010, Township 43S, Range 25E, Section 34. PARL IN SEC 34 AND 35 AS DESC IN INST#2005-150295 LESS INST 2006-305548

Boundary Justification

The historic boundaries of the Menge-Hansen Marine Ways includes that portion of the above parcel shown on the accompanying historic property map.

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MENGE-HANSEN MARINE WAYS
FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Menge-Hansen Marine Ways
2. 5605 Palm Beach Boulevard, Fort Myers (Lee County), Florida
3. Unknown
4. c. 1910
5. Pat Riley, Leeward, LLC
6. c. 1890 Marine Railway, Looking North
7. Photo 1 of 16

1. Dolbeer Donkey Steam Engine
2. Stock Photo from Google
3. Unknown
4. c. 2007
5. N/A
6. View Unknown (Not Shown on Site Plan)
7. Photo 2 of 16

1. Menge-Hansen Marine Ways
2. 5605 Palm Beach Boulevard, Fort Myers (Lee County), Florida
3. Pat Riley
4. 2008
5. Pat Riley, Leeward, LLC
6. c. 1890 Marine Railway, Looking South
7. Photo 3 of 16

Items 1-5 are the same to the remaining photographs

6. c. 1890 Marine Railway, Looking West
7. Photo 4 of 16

6. c. 1890 Marine Railway, Looking North
7. Photo 5 of 16

6. Steam Winch, Looking West
7. Photo 6 of 16

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MENGE-HANSEN MARINE WAYS
FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

6. Steam Winch, Looking West

7. Photo 7 of 16

6. c. 1948 Ways, Looking North

7. Photo 8 of 16

6. c. 1948 Ways, Looking East

7. Photo 9 of 16

6. c. 1930 Workshop, South Facade and Southeast Elevation, Looking West

7. Photo 10 of 16

6. c. 1930 Workshop, South Facade, Looking North

7. Photo 11 of 16

6. c. 1930 Workshop, West Elevation, Looking East

7. Photo 12 of 16

6. c. 1930 Workshop, Interior, Looking South

7. Photo 13 of 16

6. c. 1930 Workshop, Interior, Looking Southwest

7. Photo 14 of 16

1. Early Caloosahatchee River Dredge

2. Location Unknown

3. Unknown

4. c. 1885

5. Pat Riley, Leeward, LLC

6. View Uncertain

7. Photo 15 of 16

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MENGE-HANSEN MARINE WAYS
FORT MYERS, LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Steamboat Thomas A. Edison
2. Traveling on the Caloosahatchee River
3. Unknown
4. c. 1905
5. Pat Riley, Leeward, LLC
6. View Unknown
7. Photo 16 of 16